



## Content Matters 2023 Report

# Teams, Budgets & Goals

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Eight in 10 marketers say the importance of using content as a revenue driver has increased. But getting the C-Suite to invest in content teams, budgets, and goals isn't always easy. Especially when leadership takes the shortsighted view that content marketing is mere PR and salesy-type blogs.

Great, data-driven content has the real power to reach an audience, build a sales funnel, drive commerce, and retain existing customers. The secret to unlocking all this? Tracking the ROI of your content efforts—proving the value of what you publish and the teams and dollars that produce it. When you do, the content budget and headcount will come, as will the sales and monetization.



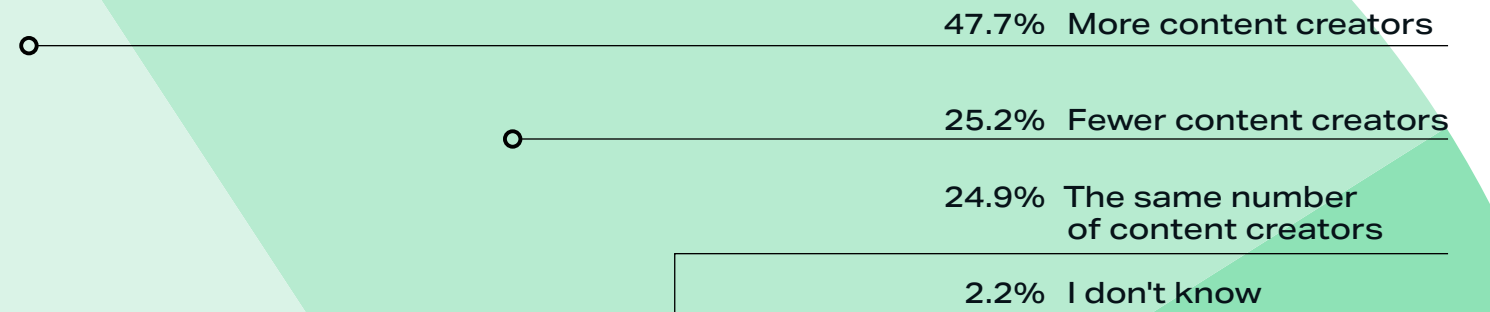
Jary Carter, CRO  
WordPress VIP

# Why teams are still growing

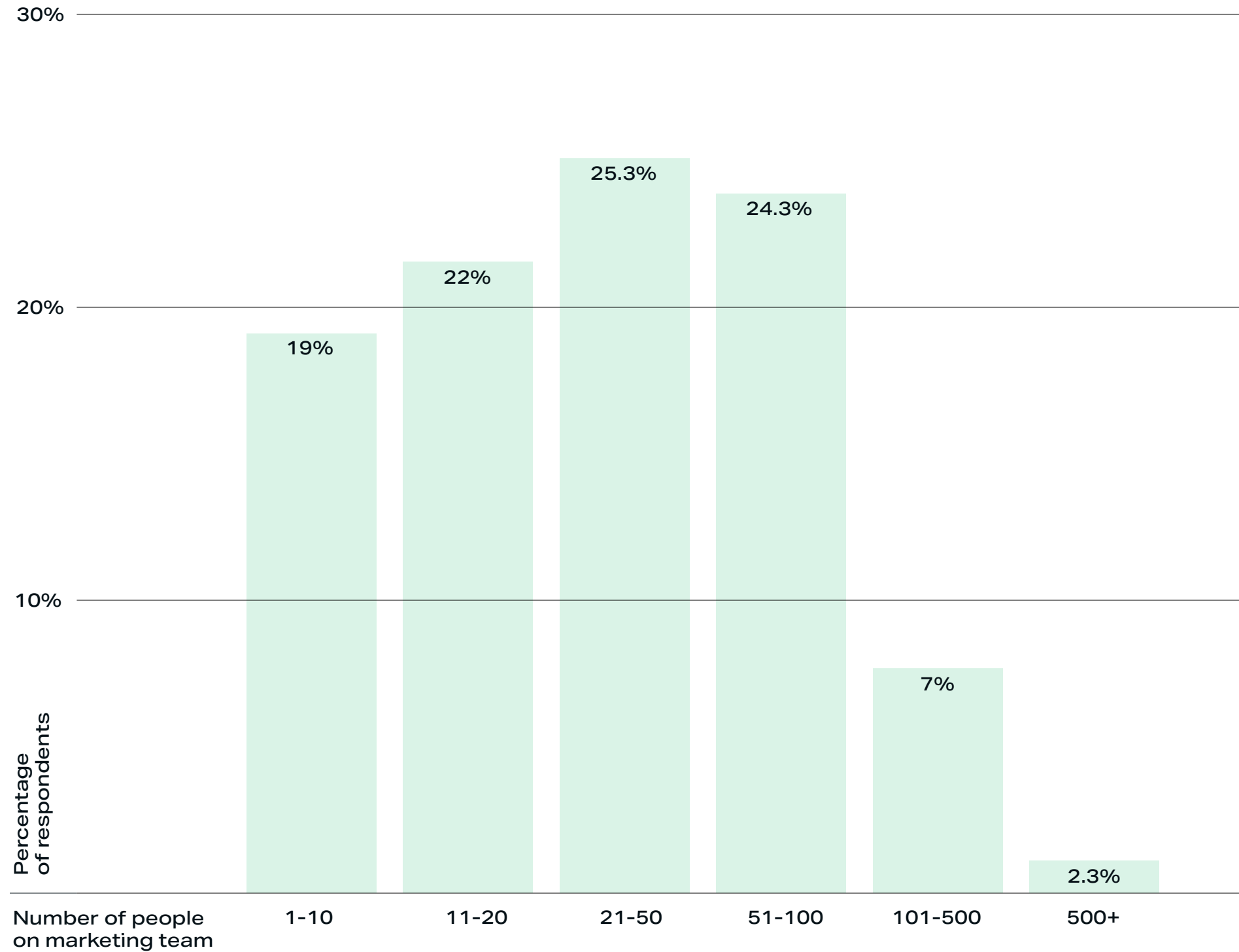
Marketing teams continue to make up only a small percentage of an organization's headcount. But those teams largely continue to grow, even despite fears over inflation, rising interest rates, and roller coaster markets. Even more promising, the number of internal content creators has grown substantially compared to 2022.

Organizations that prioritize tracking content ROI—proving the value of content and the teams that produce it—stand to be in a better position to maintain or even increase their headcount.

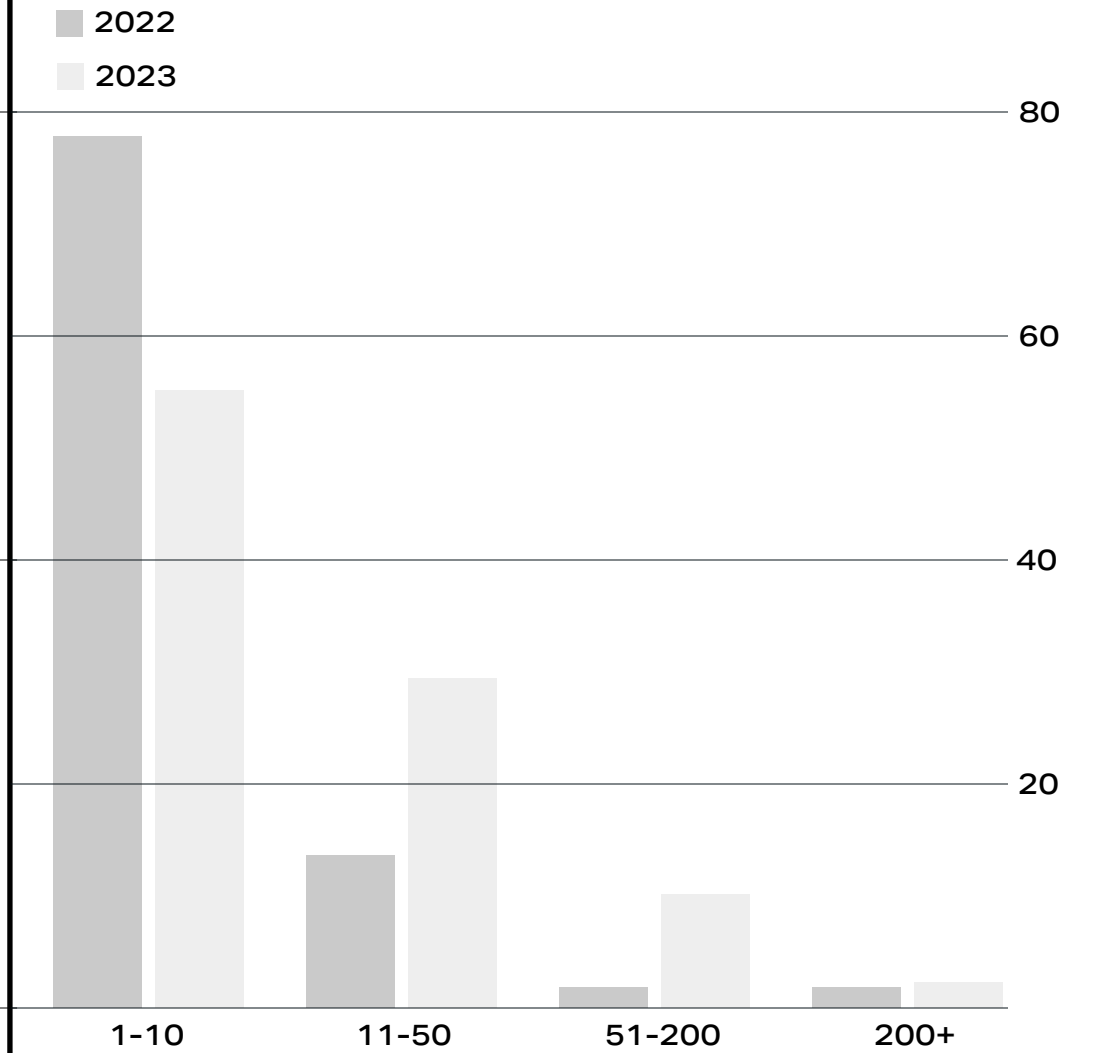
## Change in number of content creators over the past 12 months



# Marketing team size



Change in number of people creating content, by year



Number of people creating content	2022	2023
1-10	79%	56%
11-50	14%	30%
51-200	2%	10.4%
200+	2%	2.5%

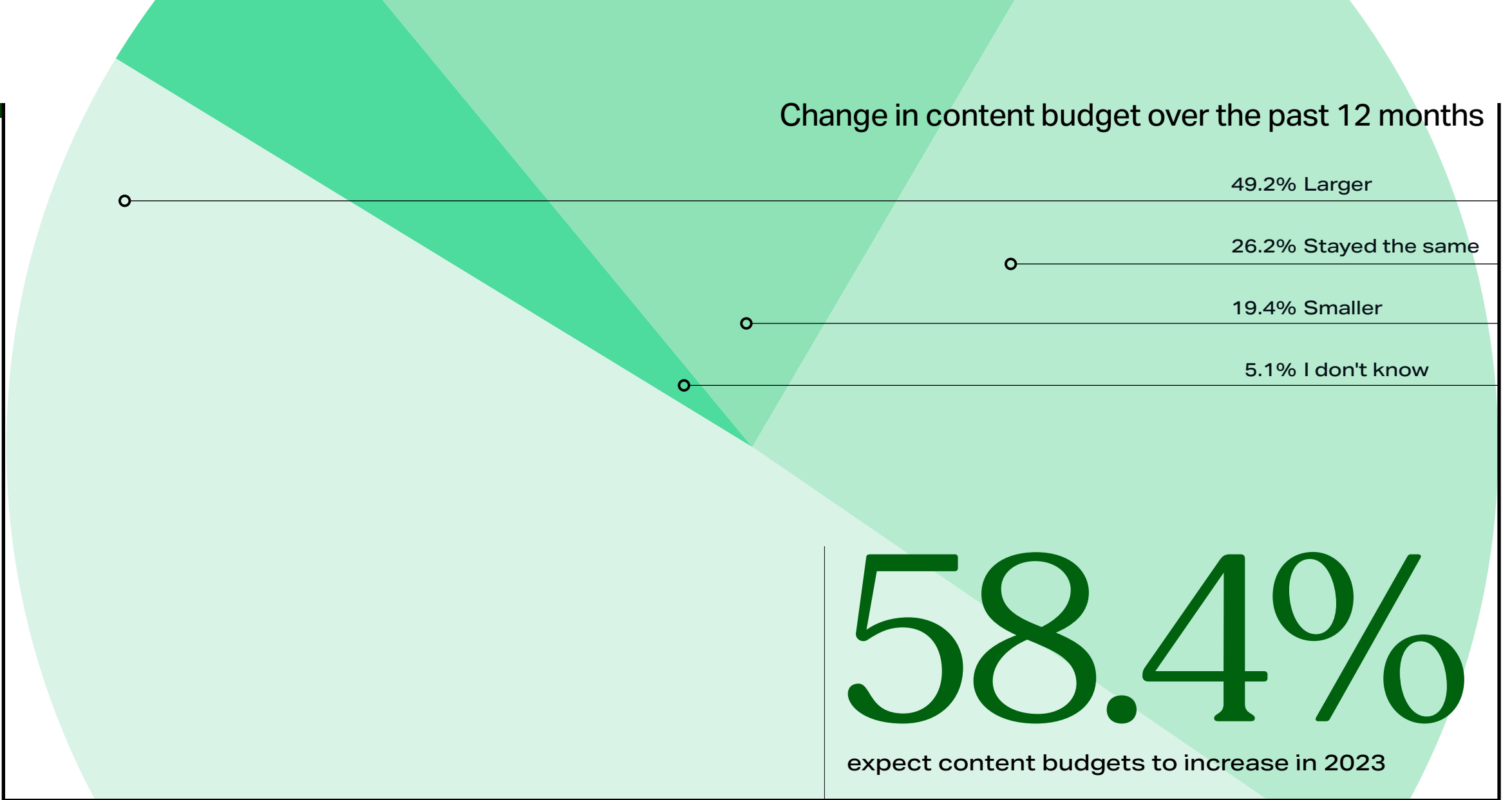
# Good news: budgets are increasing

Last year, 42% of respondents expected their content marketing budgets to increase. Based on results from this year's survey—they did.

Despite global economic uncertainty, marketing budgets are expected to increase again next year, proving the essential value of content marketing for organizational success, even in shaky times. For those that expect their budgets to decrease, it is almost solely due to economic factors.

As a declining economy raises concerns, the ability to tie ROI to content will only increase in importance over the next year.

Change in content budget over the past 12 months



# 58.4%

expect content budgets to increase in 2023

Percentage of marketing budget spent on content	
11-30%	35.1%
5-10%	26.1%
31-50%	16.4%
I don't know	9.9%
Less than 5%	6.1%
More than 50%	5.8%

**Contracted content creators and agencies continue to be the most popular budget item, followed by content management tools.**

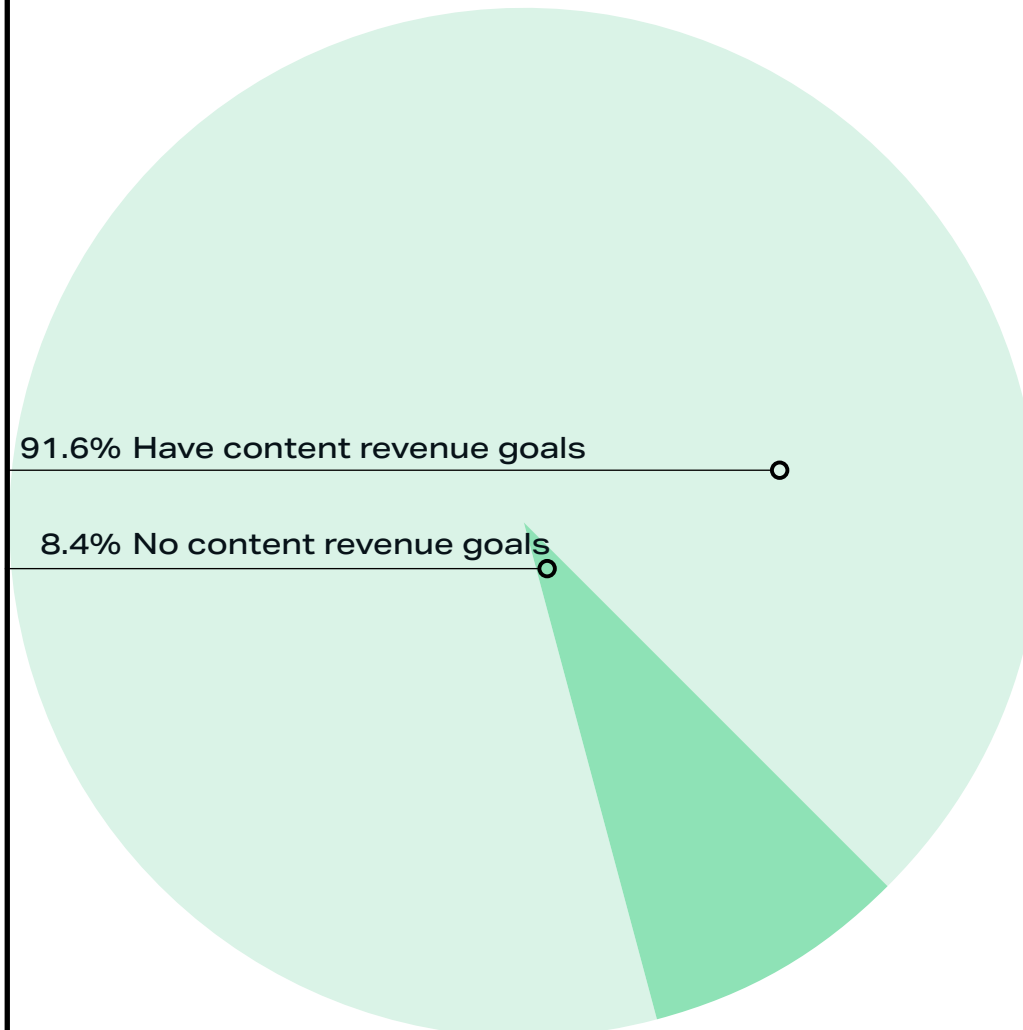
# Tying content to ROI

As the economy and business goals shifted over the past year, the need to drive revenue through content became increasingly important. Despite **brand awareness** remaining the top purpose for creating content, **generating revenue and sales** jumped from #5 to #2 in this year's survey.

It's clear: when you have revenue goals tied to content, senior leadership is more likely to understand the value of your content marketing efforts. If you're struggling to get leadership buy-in, tie your content goals back to revenue to prove value.

Additionally, in times of economic recession, customer retention and expansion become crucial to business success. Only 33% of people use content to build loyalty with existing customers, so we expect this to increase over the next year, along with the percentage of those who use content to nurture leads as the quantity of leads decline.

## Organizations where leadership understands the value of content



### Most effective content type for driving revenue

Advertising placements	18%
Selling content products	17%
Drive traffic to products for sale	14%
Content paywalls/subscriptions	14%
Sponsored content	11%
Drive traffic to sales team	11%
Retain and expand existing customers	7%
Donations	5%
Affiliate sales	3%

# 9 in 10

teams with leadership buy-in have revenue goals tied to content

**Advertising placements remain the #1 most effective revenue driver. With the need for revenue from content marketing increasing, we expect a larger portion of budgets to be dedicated to advertising next year.**



# 82%

say the importance of using content as a revenue driver has increased

## Purpose of content marketing

Create brand awareness	41%
Generate sales/revenue	38%
Generate demand/leads	38%
Build credibility/trust	38%
Build loyalty with existing customers	33%
Support the launch of a new product	30%
Educate audience	27%
Drive traffic to ads	26%
Build a subscriber audience	26%
Nurture leads	22%
Drive attendance to events	21%

## What about media? Keeping revenue top of mind

Media organizations create content with the goal of generating revenue, but also to earn the loyalty (and retention) of customers. Their content goals are much more evenly distributed than non-media organizations, proving each audience touch point matters when it comes to the buying process.

## Purpose of content for media

Generate sales/revenue	42.1%
Educate audience	40.7%
Create brand awareness	40.0%
Drive traffic to ads	37.9%
Build credibility/trust	37.1%
Build loyalty with existing customers	37.1%
Generate demand/leads	36.4%
Drive attendance to events	32.9%
Build a subscriber audience	32.1%
Support the launch of a new product	27.9%
Nurture leads	22.1%

## More time, please!

The biggest challenge is overwhelmingly a lack of resources. The struggle for content marketing teams seems to be keeping up with demand—they need more time, more people, or both.

“Hiring talent is absolutely the biggest challenge.”

—EDITOR

### Biggest content challenge

<b>Resources</b>	People, talent, time, budget, and other resource limitations	44.4%
<b>Economy</b>	Struggles related to a slowing economy and pandemic-related challenges	16.0%
<b>Analytics</b>	Proving results, measuring ROI, and other analytics-related issues	12.3%
<b>Competition</b>	Breaking into a saturated or well-established market	11.8%
<b>Leadership</b>	A lack of leadership buy-in or ineffective leadership	4.0%
<b>Quality</b>	Producing high-quality content	3.7%
<b>Engagement</b>	Lack of audience engagement, lead generation, and revenue created by content	2.9%
<b>Strategy</b>	Trouble forming an effective content strategy and follow-through	1.9%
<b>Videos</b>	Generating and distributing video content	1.3%

# Prove content ROI and secure buy-in

To connect your content with revenue and secure buy-in, focus on conversion data—the measure of how effectively your content pushes visitors to make decisions and take valuable actions on your website. To monitor and optimize your content strategy, set up concise conversion events and track them in your analytics tool using meaningful attribution models.

Don't put the same generic conversion label on every visitor action you deem valuable. Be specific. Wherever you can, differentiate between your various desired actions with unique labels. This way you can pinpoint areas on your website that need better visibility or stronger calls to action.

Conversion can mean a thousand different things, with an array of related attribution models to choose from. Need direction on where to start? Read on.

On the next page is a conversion strategy worksheet—a clean and easy way to track your BOFU content strategy. Once completed, keep it handy for your team's reference.

Fill in the worksheet below according to your website's desired visitor actions and associated goals.

	Example	1	2	3
<b>Action:</b> a valuable action you want your visitors to take on your website	click subscribe, request a demo, download XYZ asset, purchase a product			
<b>Goal:</b> the goal each action helps you achieve	increase paying subscribers, gain sales leads, acquire contact info, earn revenue			
<b>Label:</b> the label that describes each conversion action <small>(make it unique and meaningful so you know what to look for in your analytics tool)</small>	"subscription", "demo request", "asset download", "purchase"			
<b>ROI Tier:</b> the priority or relative value of each conversion action	low, medium, high			

**Attribution models in content analytics tools help you attribute your content to those valuable visitor actions. But don't lean on one attribution model alone. Reference data from various models to get the complete picture of your content marketing ROI.**

Here's a quick breakdown of the [four attribution models](#) that Parse.ly surfaces in our dashboard:

- **First touch:** credits the page seen first in the 30 days before conversion
- **Linear: shares** credit across every page that was seen before conversion
- **Last touch:** credits the last page (landing page, homepage, product page) where conversion occurred
- **Last post touched:** credits the [last post](#) (blog article, video, ebook) seen before conversion occurred.



## About WordPress VIP

Creating better customer experiences is what WordPress VIP is all about. Built on the flexibility and ubiquity of WordPress, our CMS platform empowers more content creators to build more content for more audiences faster. And deliver it across their digital channels of choice.

With built-in content analytics powered by Parse.ly, we make working with data easy for creators and marketers, giving them the insights they need to focus their content strategy and prove ROI. And with our enterprise-grade security and reliability they can be confident that they're building on a solid, scalable foundation.

[Get a demo](#)