W VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Content Matters 2023

Martech Trends Report

wpvip.com

Content matters, and the right tools have never been more important

In 2022, our *Content Matters Martech Trends Report* revealed just how central marketing technology was to the discipline across industries and organization types. We found the very act of content creation was bound up in marketing technology: 89% of orgs in our survey integrated martech tools directly with their content management system (CMS). There was a hunger for great solutions and seamless tools integration.

Now, in 2023, our findings show that organizations have leaned even more fully into the trends that emerged in 2022, with big impacts on content investment and expectations.

Nowhere is that more evident than with artificial intelligence. We asked respondents how they're currently using, and what they expect from, generative AI. What they shared revealed an industry that has already embraced this technology, while remaining thoughtful about its impacts both micro (e.g., workplace efficiency) and macro (e.g., ethics and morality).

Elsewhere, we see data-driven cultures dominating the landscape—organizations increasingly expect content to drive measurable business outcomes. Here, the platforms and tools they use to build their tech stacks really do count, especially when securing executive buy-in and budget. We found this is particularly evident with the analytics tools organizations are adopting to showcase the impact of content.

Finally, we also saw a surge of adoption in various categories—personalization, multivariate testing, digital asset management—making them near-ubiquitous.

As you'll read, content has never mattered more—and the tools that comprise an organization's marketing tech stack have never been more important.

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

AI isn't coming. It's here.

In the short time since AI burst into the zeitgeist, it has already become ubiquitous.

Of our respondents, only 3% said they don't use AI, or don't know how their team uses AI.
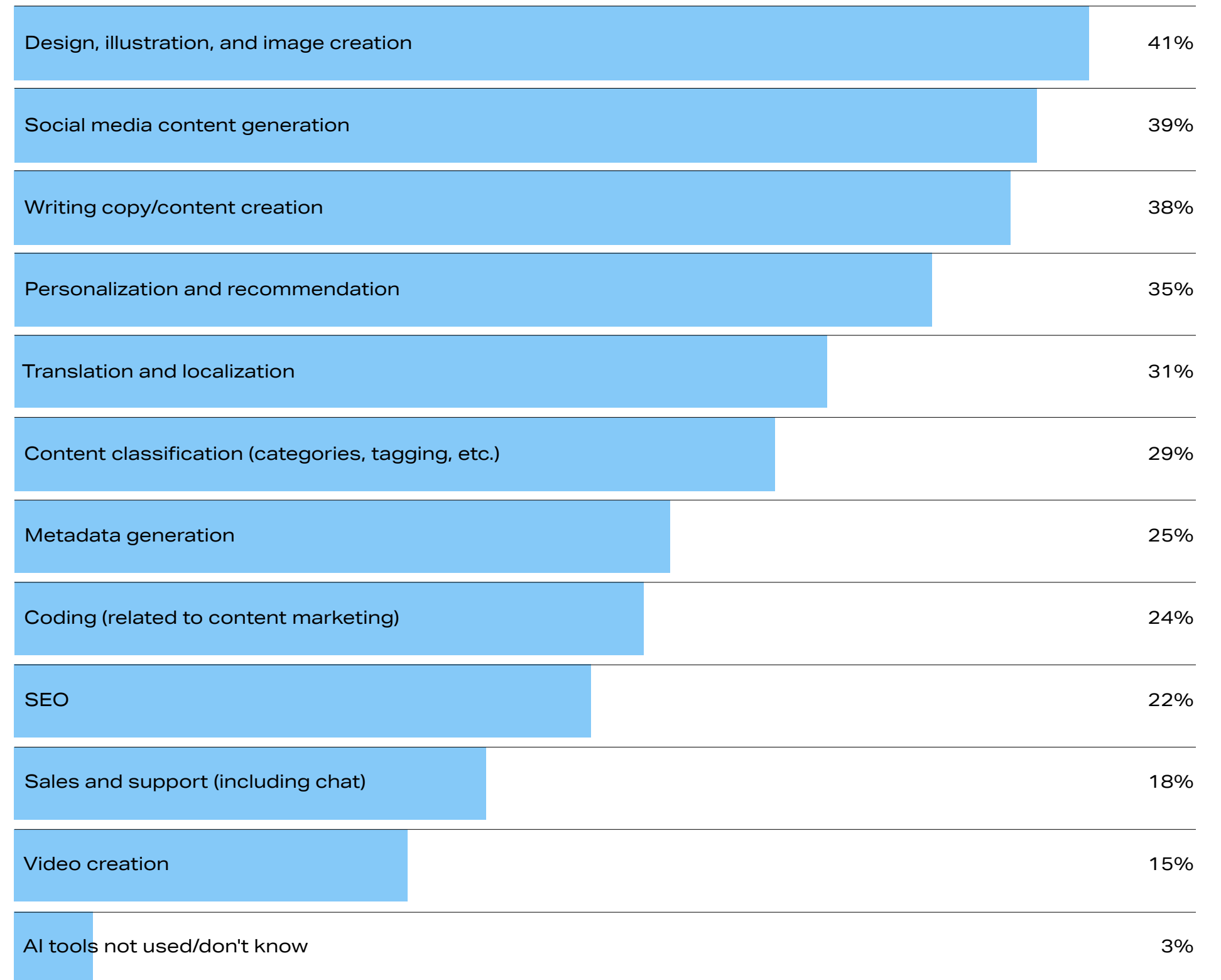
Creative assistance tops the use cases among our respondents: 41% use it for design and illustration, 39% for creating social media assets, and 38% for writing copy.

And there's significant usage for the content "backend": metadata generation (25%), content personalization and recommendation (35%), and taxonomy/classification (29%).

Hot take:

When discussing AI disruption, there is much attention paid to the need for workers to upskill. Our data shows that those building martech platforms are going to need to uplevel their offerings, too. The widespread enthusiasm for this technology means that users will expect pervasive AI integrations. Platforms that don't offer this will risk being abandoned.

What AI tools are used for

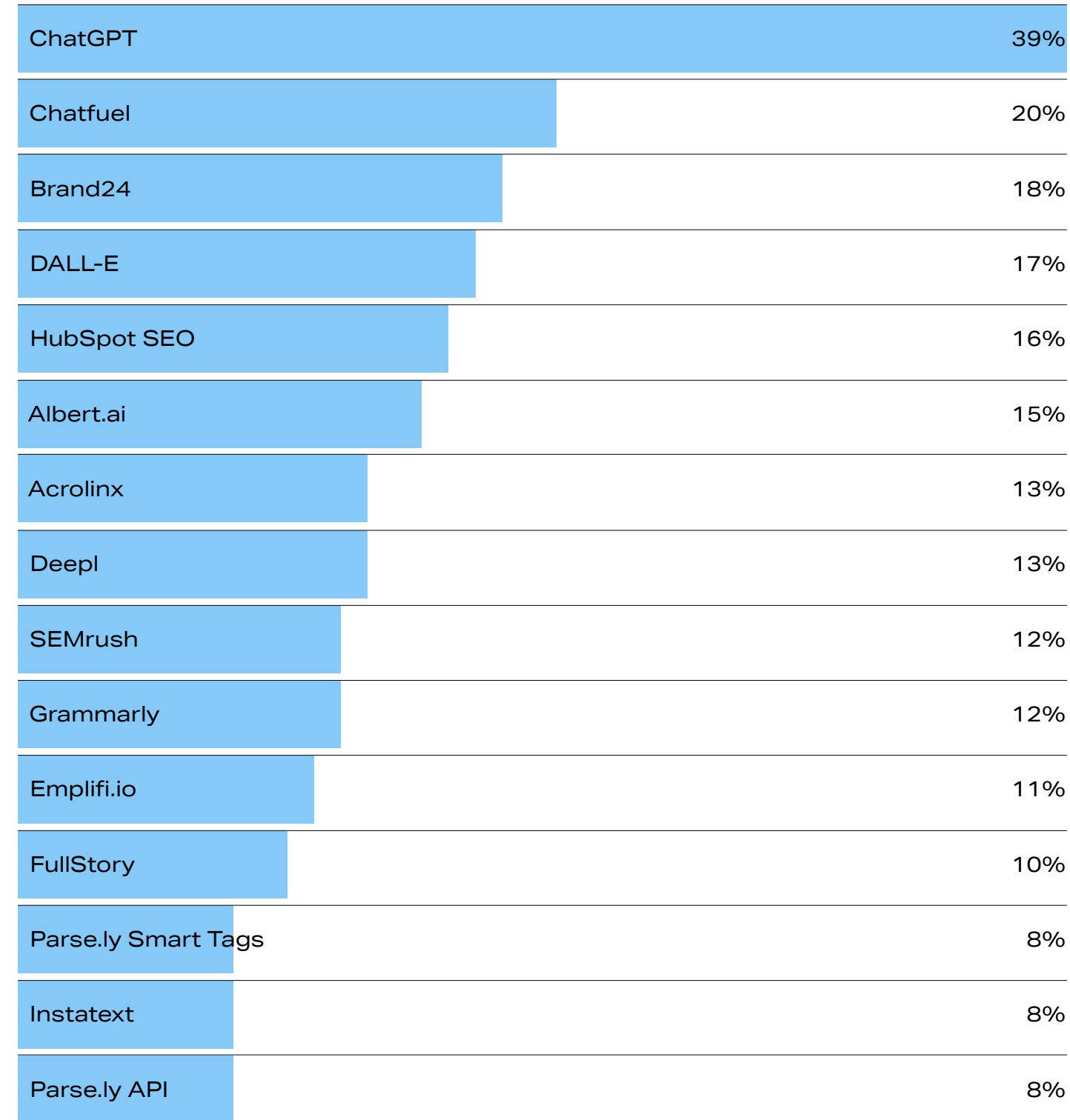| Use case	Percentage
Design, illustration, and image creation	41%
Social media content generation	39%
Writing copy/content creation	38%
Personalization and recommendation	35%
Translation and localization	31%
Content classification (categories, tagging, etc.)	29%
Metadata generation	25%
Coding (related to content marketing)	24%
SEO	22%
Sales and support (including chat)	18%
Video creation	15%
AI tools not used/don't know	3%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

What AI looks like for tech stacks

The effects of the AI revolution are already showing up in the types of tools teams use—and how they allocate budget.

ChatGPT is the most widely adopted AI tool, with almost 40% of respondents using it. But there is a robust ecosystem of emergent tools for different use cases bursting on the scene, giving martech companies many ways to win. Of note: Parse.ly and HubSpot are using AI to enhance their existing offerings. It won't just be purpose-built AI for AI's sake that thrives in the years ahead.

More than half of respondents expect to spend more than $5,000 on AI tools this year; 9% expect that number to exceed $50K.
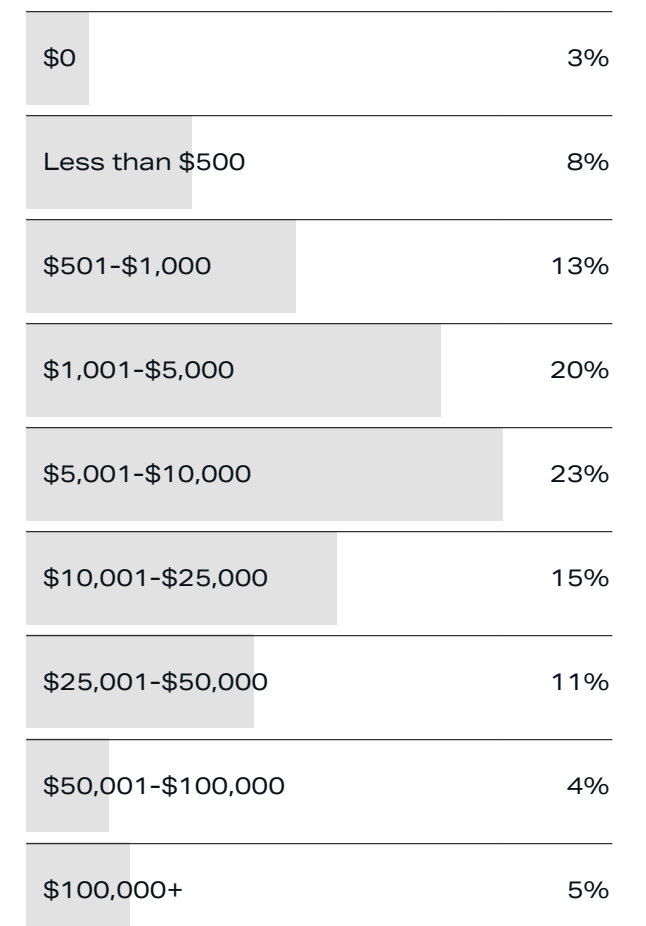
AI tools used

Tool	%
ChatGPT	39%
Chatfuel	20%
Brand24	18%
DALL-E	17%
HubSpot SEO	16%
Albert.ai	15%
Acrolinx	13%
Deepl	13%
SEMrush	12%
Grammarly	12%
Emplifi.io	11%
FullStory	10%
Parse.ly Smart Tags	8%
Instatext	8%
Parse.ly API	8%

Hot take:

One theme our research uncovered is the far-reaching impact platform selection can have on enthusiasm for innovation. We expect to see that borne out in AI spending going forward, especially at those businesses that already exhibit data-driven cultures.

Amount spent on AI tools this year (in USD)

Amount	%
$0	3%
Less than $500	8%
$501–$1,000	13%
$1,001–$5,000	20%
$5,001–$10,000	23%
$10,001–$25,000	15%
$25,001–$50,000	11%
$50,001–$100,000	4%
$100,000+	5%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Expectations and hopes

When we asked our participants to expound on AI, we found widespread optimism about the technology's potential, tempered with concerns about its implementation.

Respondents generally find AI helpful in improving work efficiency, expanding human intelligence theory, and making tasks easier. However, there are worries about AI's maturity, accuracy, and potential ethical issues. Also top of mind were transparency, interpretability, data security, AI's decision-making process, interaction with humans, and resource requirements.

Hot take:

Users of AI technology are asking the right questions, giving us hope that, as developers make new tools, they'll be responsive to user feedback and subsequently design products emphasizing ethics, privacy, and security.

"AI has really contributed immensely to content creation for my organization."

"It has made work easier for us in so many ways."

"It is very convenient to use, but some aspects are still immature and need personnel to polish."

"I hope the security is higher."

"Fear of privacy disclosure, [it's] not safe [to use]."

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Revenue and investment

There are widespread new expectations that content is a revenue driver.

- 69% of respondents said their companies tie revenue goals to content, a drastic increase over the 27% that did last year.

- Among the organizations most heavily invested in content marketing (allocating more than 50% of marketing budget), ad placements, selling content products, sponsored content, and subscriptions/paywalled content are the most-used revenue drivers.

- Content marketing budgets have been spared cuts, and in many cases have actually increased, despite the uncertain economic climate: 28% of respondents say their budgets have stayed the same, while 49% have seen them increase.

Organizations with revenue goals tied to content
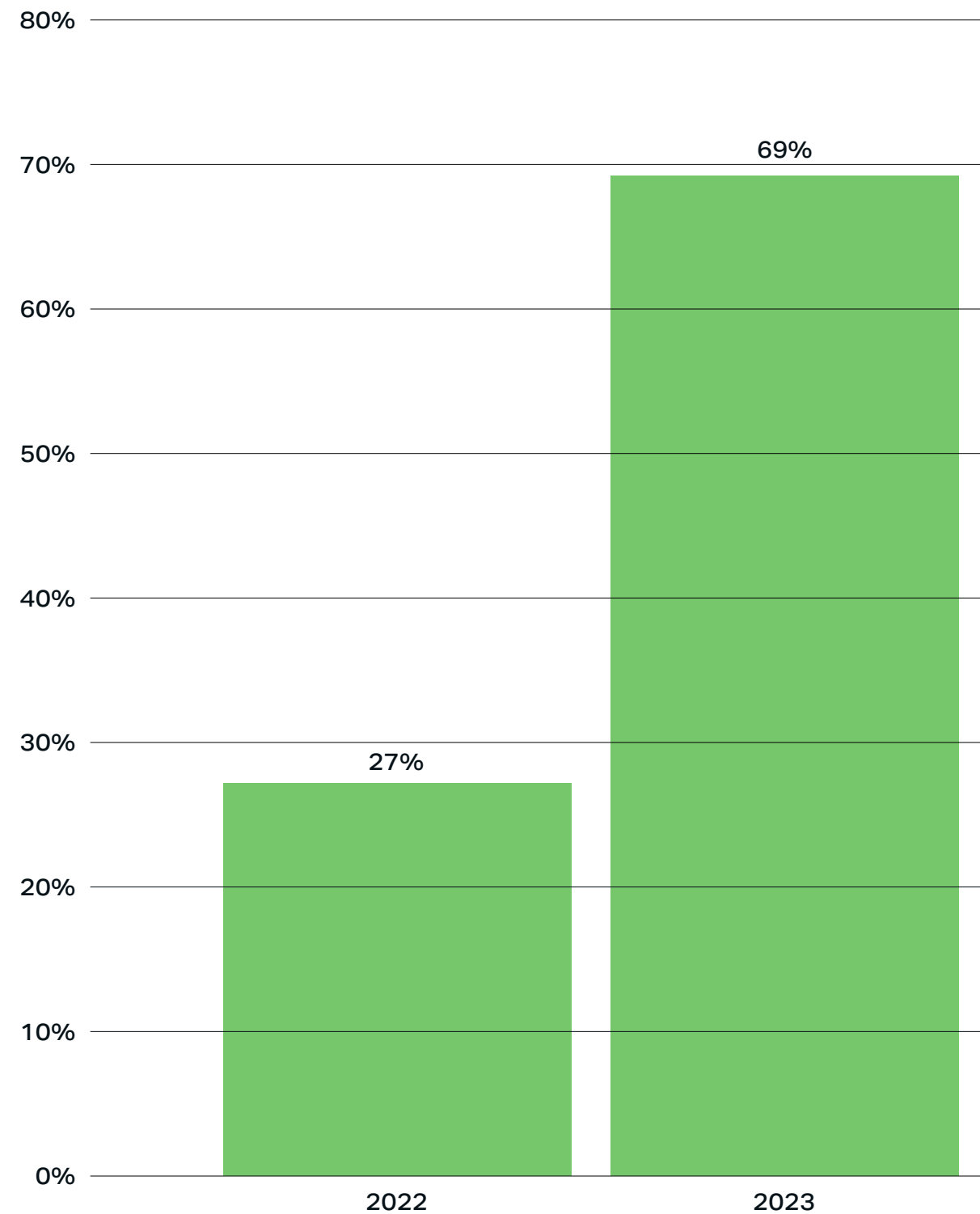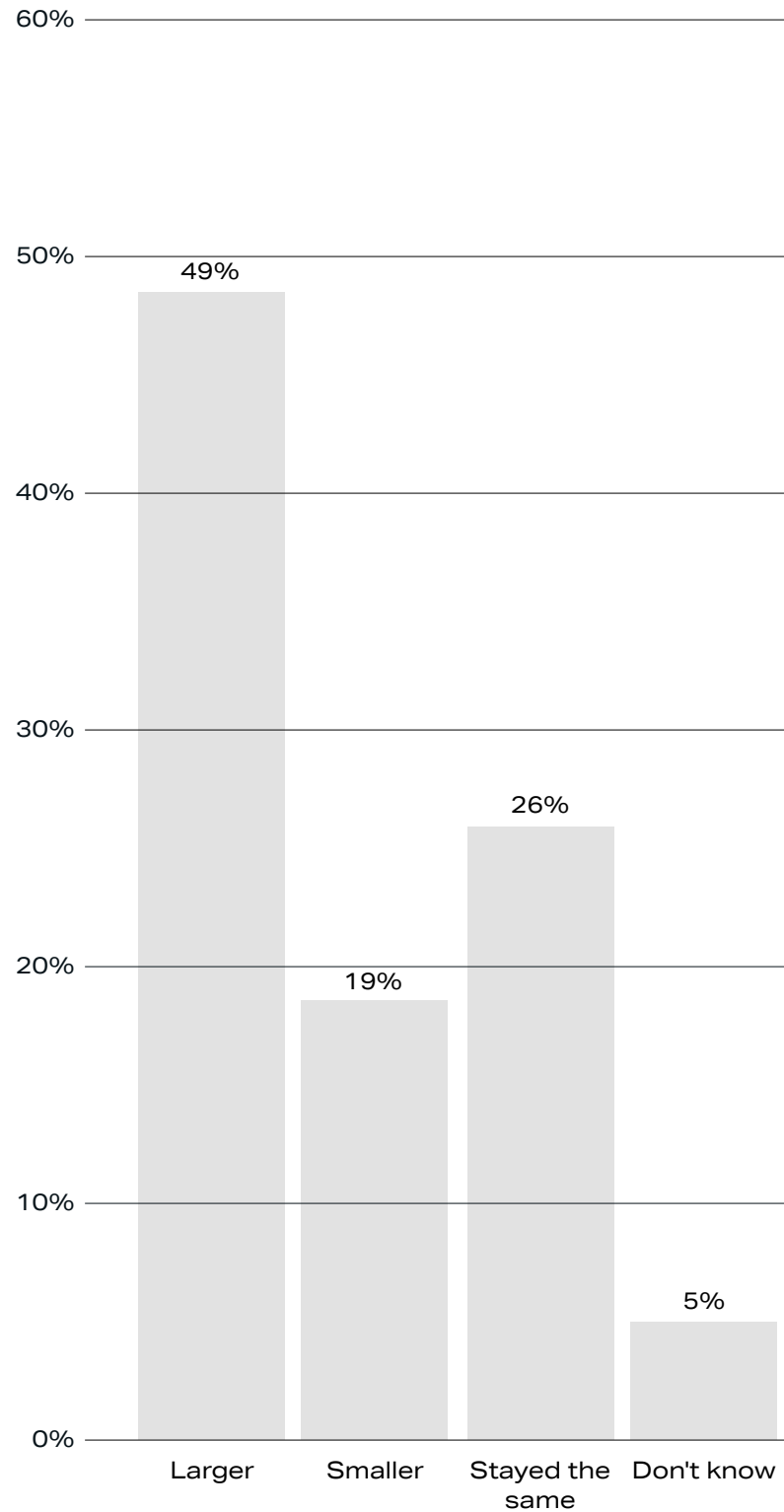

Hot take:

Industry-wide belt tightening has increased accountability. Initiatives have to demonstrate measurable value to receive continued support, and content is no exception.
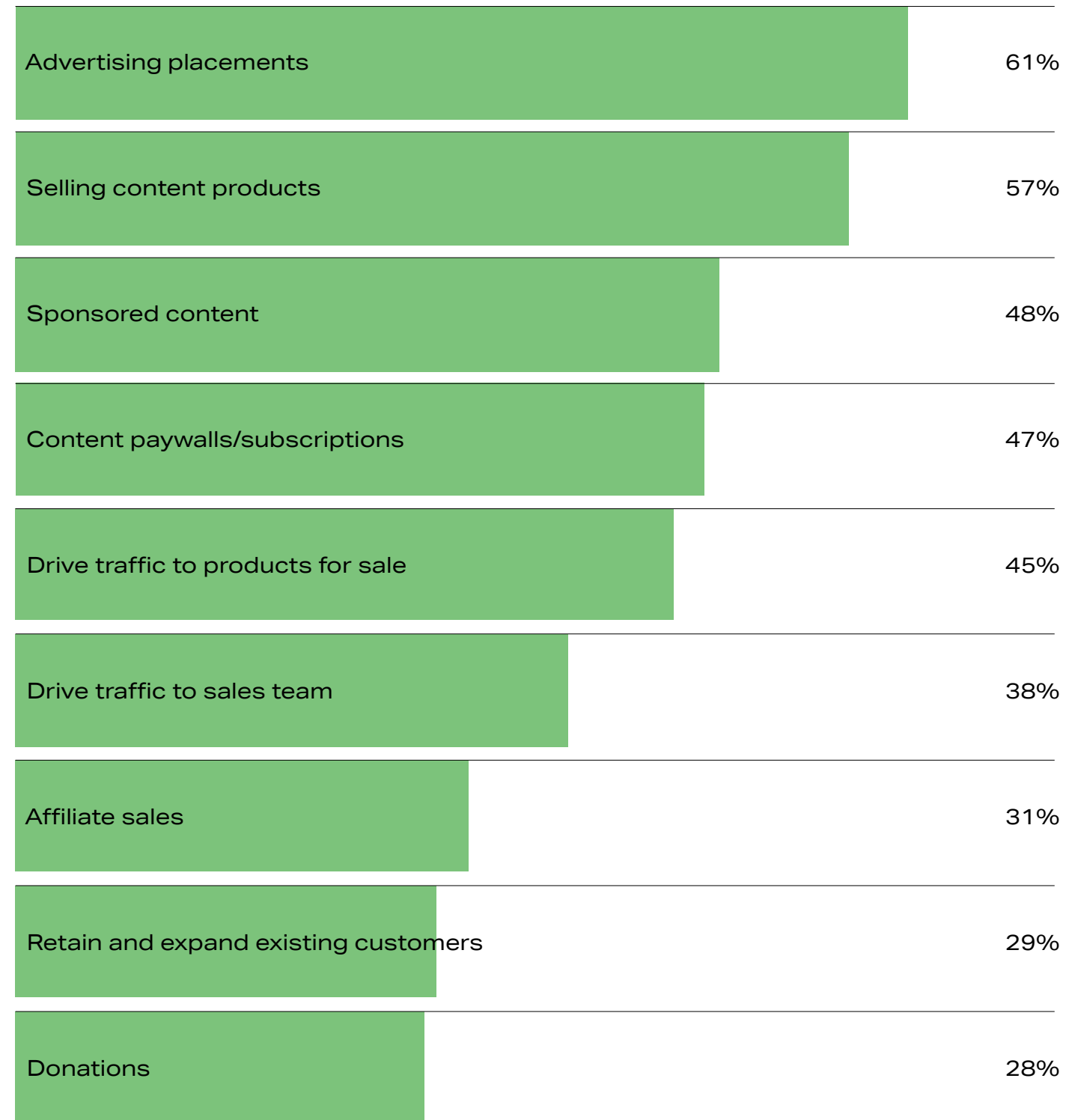
This creates an opportunity for those who focus on the science of marketing. There will be an increased appetite for tools and people that can measure performance and impact.

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Change in content marketing budgets in the past 12 months

Category	Percentage
Larger	49%
Smaller	19%
Stayed the same	26%
Don't know	5%

Ways organizations use content to drive revenue

(for orgs who spend over 50% of their annual marketing budget on content marketing)

Way	Percentage
Advertising placements	61%
Selling content products	57%
Sponsored content	48%
Content paywalls/subscriptions	47%
Drive traffic to products for sale	45%
Drive traffic to sales team	38%
Affiliate sales	31%
Retain and expand existing customers	29%
Donations	28%

The democratization of martech tools

Even though there is an increased appetite for "marketing science people" in organizations, ongoing belt-tightening suggests that martech tools need widespread adoption, helping non-scientists get their hands on the data and work with it. This means tools like Parse.ly that drive higher adoption in organizations will win out, as they require fewer "scientists" to operate them.

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Measurement and testing

Organizations have embraced measurement and testing, making it core to their cultures.

- Two-thirds (66%) work at data-driven orgs while 22% say their orgs want to embrace a data-driven approach.

- Content creation is being approached scientifically. It is highly unusual for organizations not to measure the content they make: only 9% of respondents work at places where content performance isn't measured.

- More than nine in 10 (95%) are looking at content performance at least monthly.

- Orgs that run A/B and multivariate tests on their content are the norm: 46% test at least weekly, 39% monthly.

Data-driven content marketing

Data-driven	66%
We're getting there	22%
Not data-driven	10%
Don't know	2%
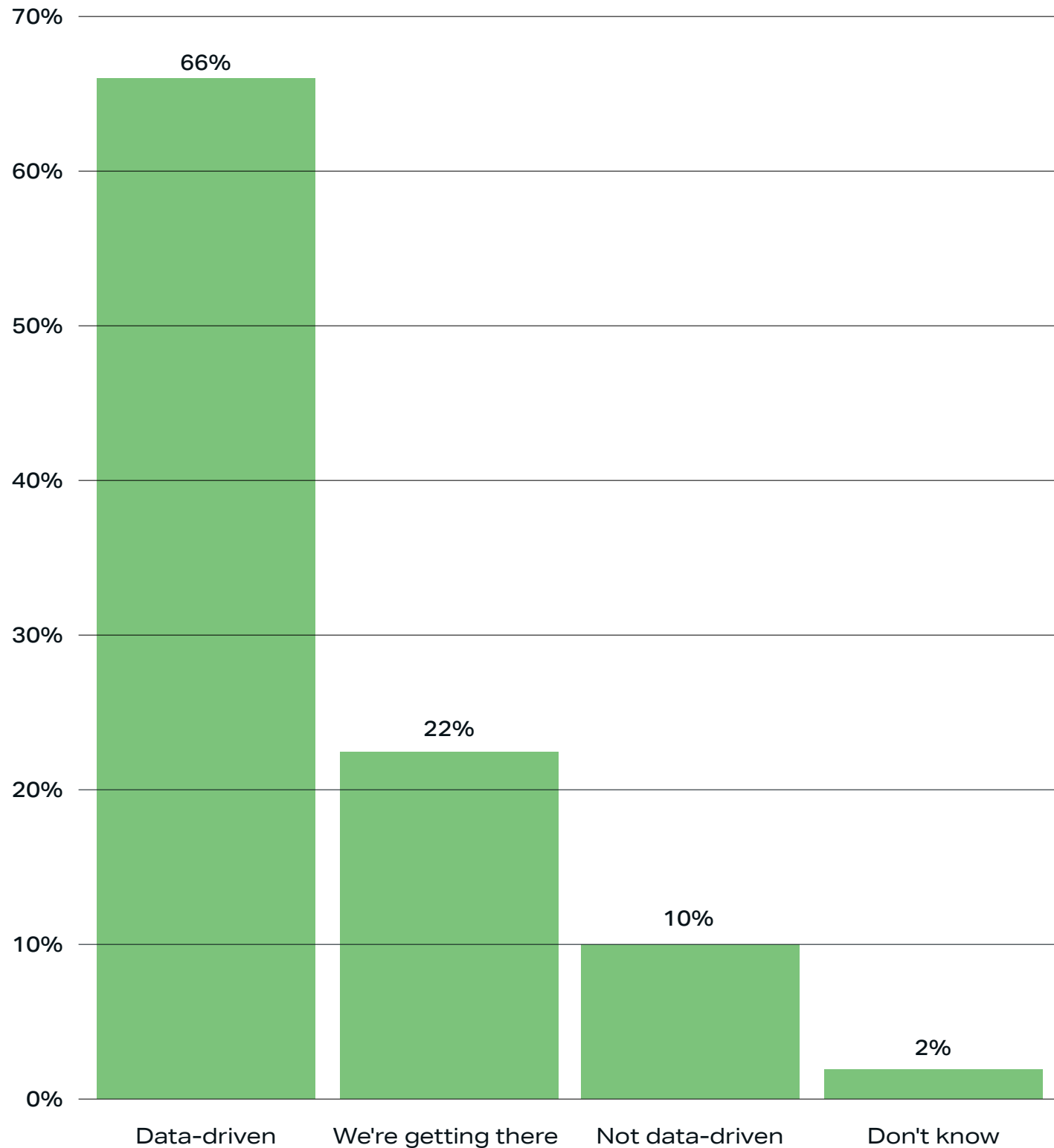
Hot take:

The widespread adoption of a scientific approach to content marketing will elevate the discipline's profile. As performance and impact are rigorously measured, it will become easier to advocate for further investment, which in turn will drive impactful work.

This story is one of technology adoption driving organizational transformation. Underpinning the change are the choices marketing teams make when assembling their martech stacks.

How often companies ran tests on content materials in the past 12 months

- Once: 2%
- Twice: 9%
- Once per day or more: 11%
- Once per week: 35%
- Once per month: 39%
- Not at all: 1%
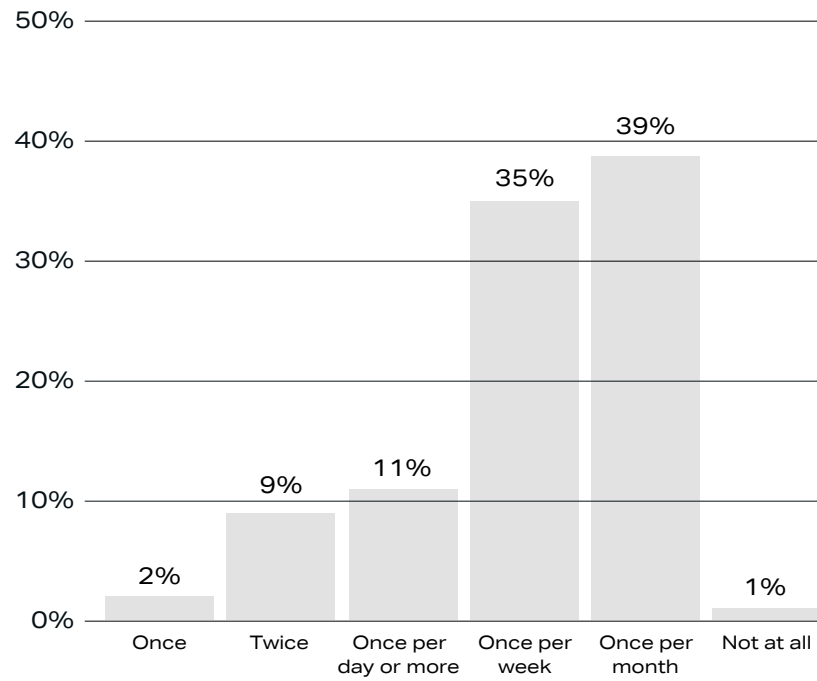
How often companies looked at content marketing performance data in the past 12 months

- Daily or more: 21%
- Weekly: 43%
- Monthly: 31%
- Yearly or less: 4%
- Never: 1%
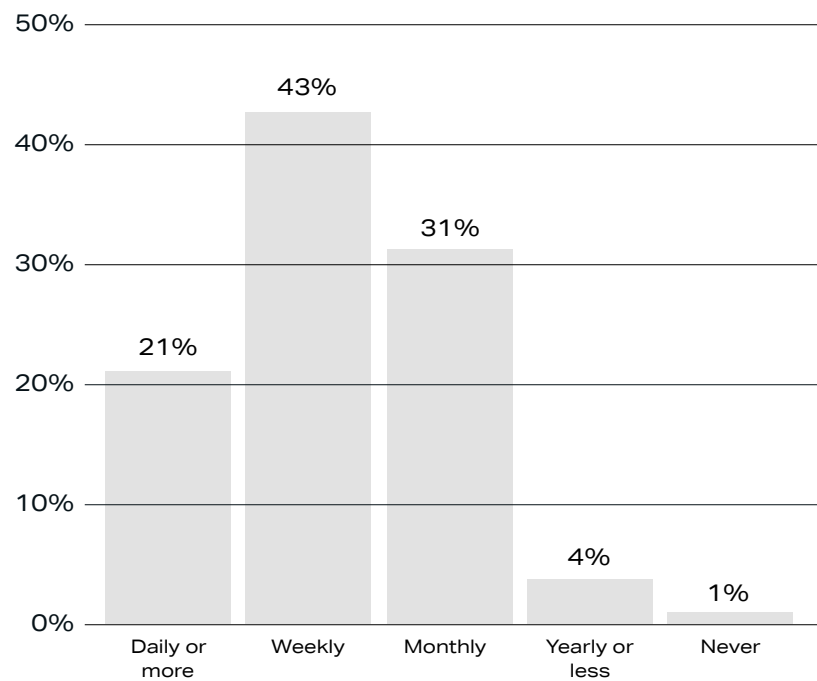
Percent of companies that measure the performance of their content

- 86% Measure
- 9% Don't measure
- 5% Don't know

VIP | Enterprise WordPress
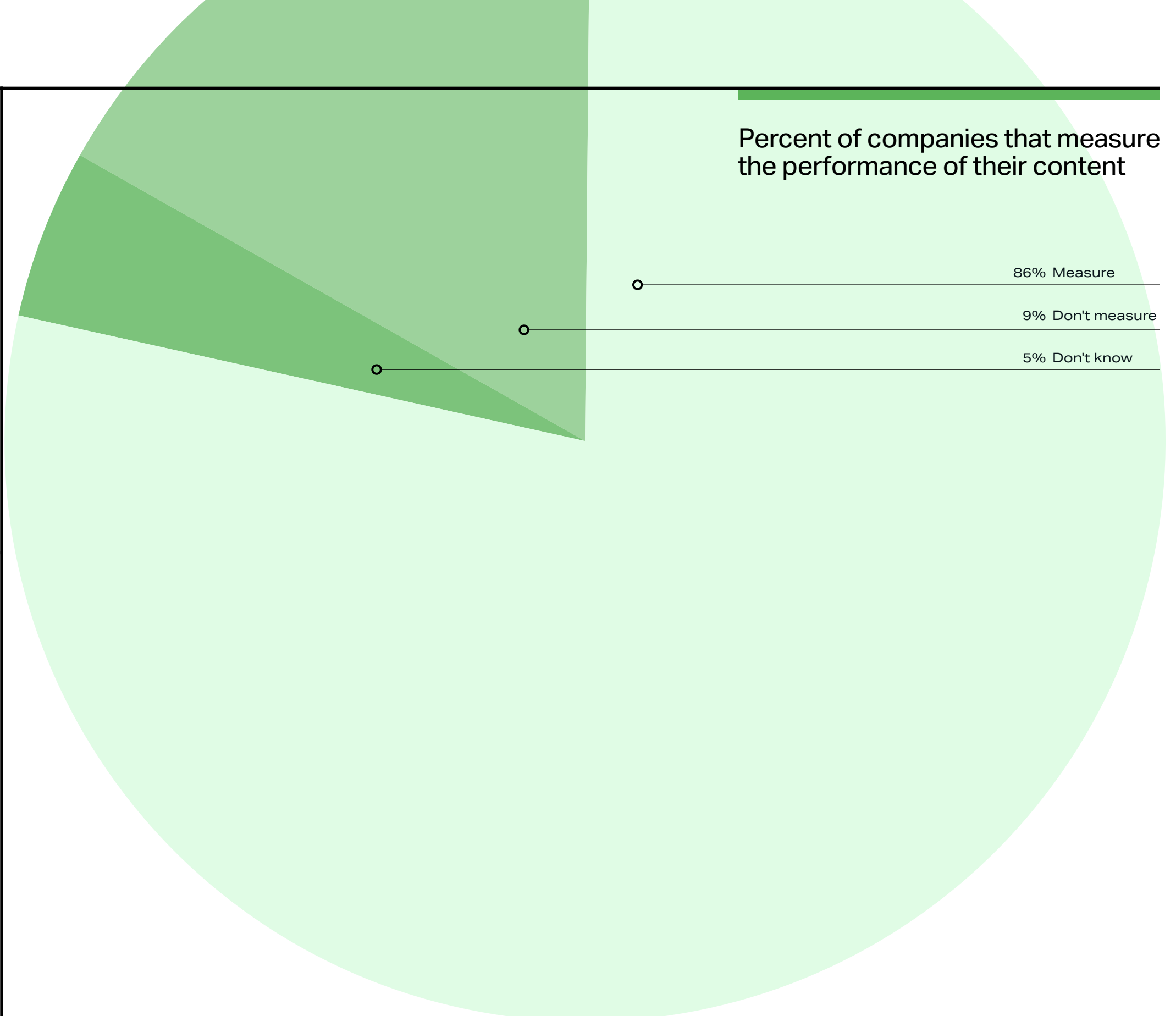
Revenue expectations

The expectation that content drives revenue is widespread, regardless of the tools in a team's martech stack.
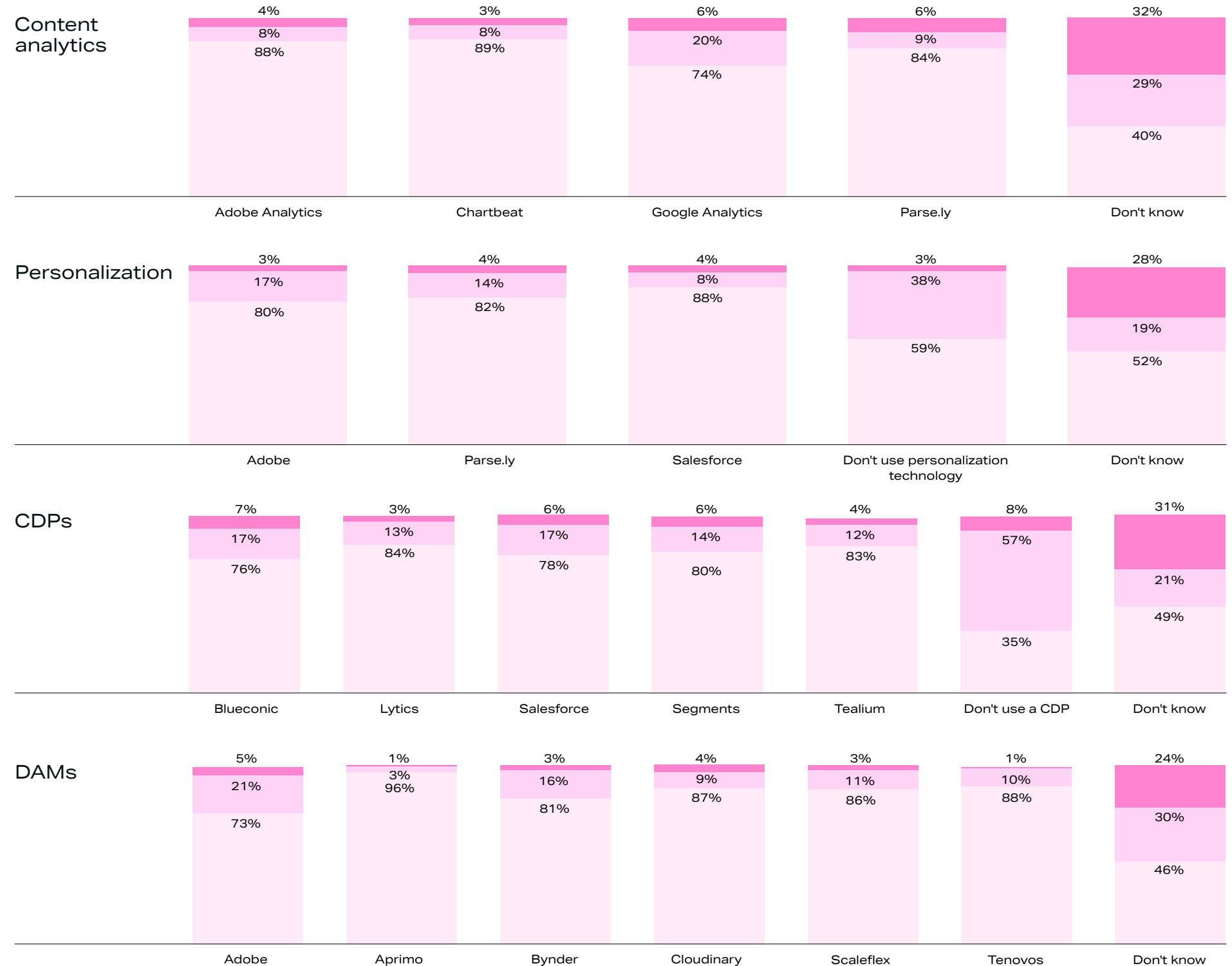
- Far and away, the lowest expectation for content's revenue impact is at organizations that don't use purpose-built martech tools, or where respondents are unaware of what tools they use.

- The association was most pronounced when discussing customer data platforms (CDPs), where 57% of those who don't have a CDP said they lack revenue goals tied to content.

Hot take:

As content's revenue impact becomes greater and more visible, sales leaders will be incentivized to pursue closer collaboration with marketing teams.

Percent of organizations with revenue goals tied to content, by analytics tool used

Has revenue goals
Has no revenue goals
Don't know

Content analytics

Adobe Analytics	Chartbeat	Google Analytics	Parse.ly	Don't know
4%	3%	6%	6%	32%
8%	8%	20%	9%	29%
88%	89%	74%	84%	40%

Personalization

Adobe	Parse.ly	Salesforce	Don't use personalization technology	Don't know
3%	4%	4%	3%	28%
17%	14%	8%	38%	19%
80%	82%	88%	59%	52%

CDPs

Blueconic	Lytics	Salesforce	Segments	Tealium	Don't use a CDP	Don't know
7%	3%	6%	6%	4%	8%	31%
17%	13%	17%	14%	12%	57%	21%
76%	84%	78%	80%	83%	35%	49%

DAMs

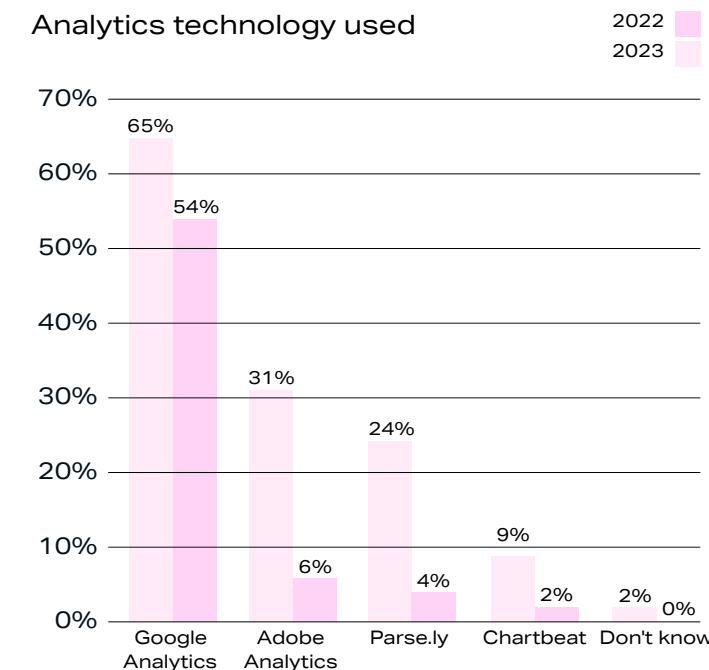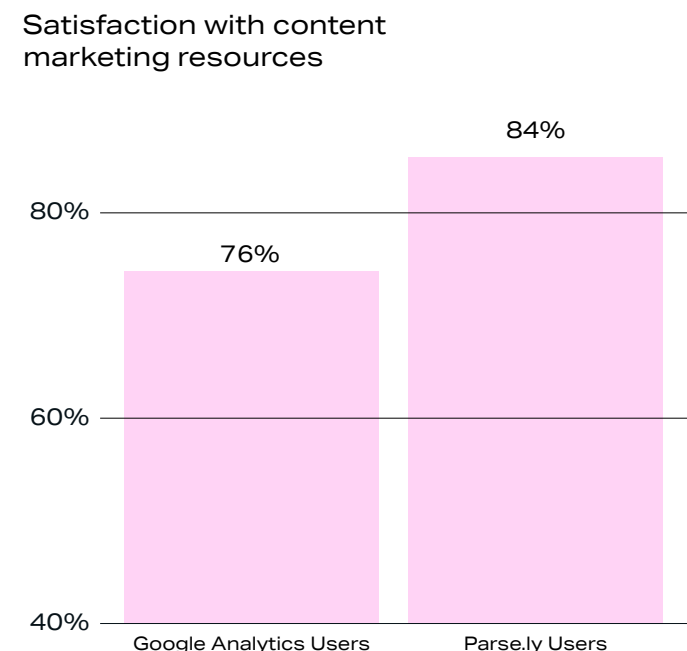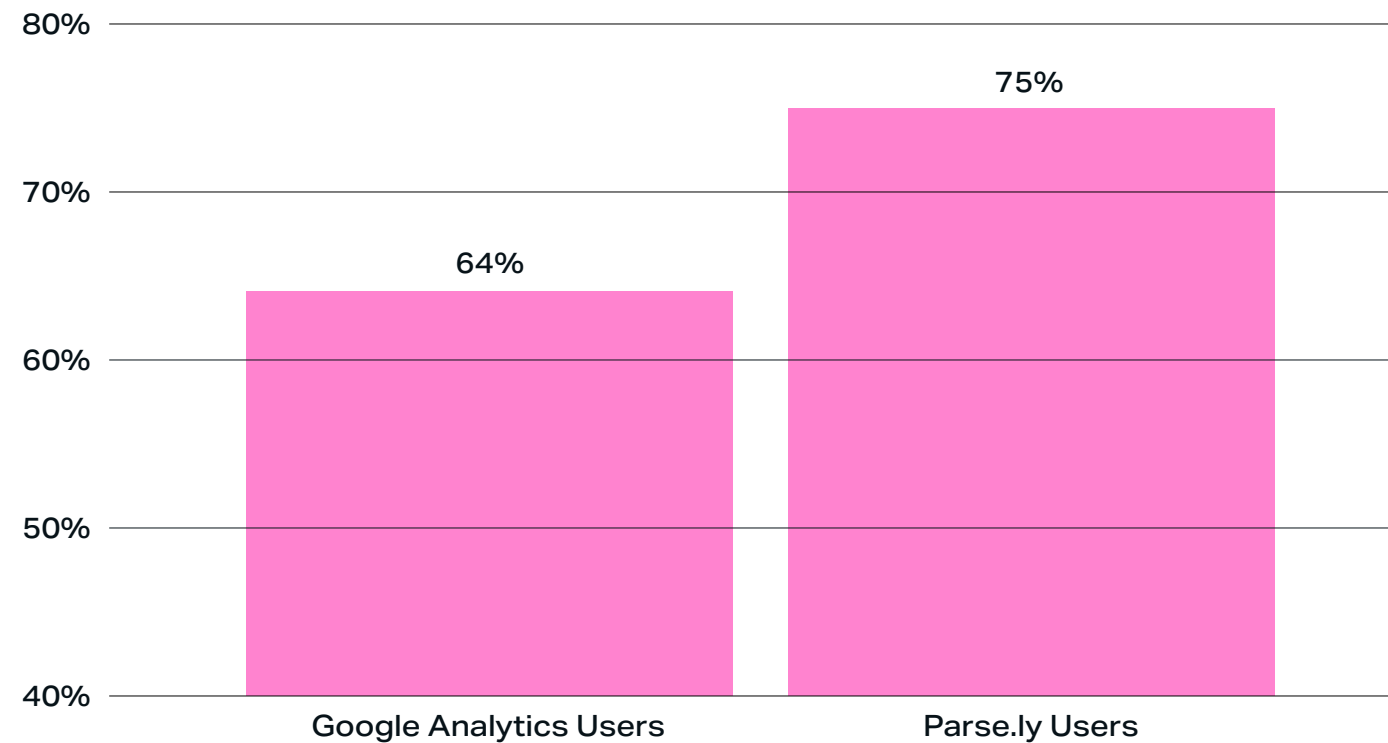| Adobe	Aprimo	Bynder	Cloudinary	Scaleflex	Tenovos	Don't know
5%	1%	3%	4%	3%	1%	24%
21%	3%	16%	9%	11%	10%	30%
73%	96%	81%	87%	86%	88%	46%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Analytics tools

When it comes to content analytics, there is a wide gap between incumbent and challenger brands. A more complex picture emerges when we look at how these tools are used, and the impact they create.

- Google Analytics is the most widely used tool (65%), followed by Adobe Analytics (31%), Parse.ly (24%), and Chartbeat (9%).

- Usage remains consistent when we drill down to company size, with one exception. Adobe has notably more usage among mid-size to large companies than it does among small companies.

- Differences emerge when looking at impact and usage by platform. For example, 75% of Parse.ly users say their companies are data-driven vs. 64% of Google Analytics users. More than eight in 10 (84%) Parse.ly users say they have sufficient content marketing resources, vs. 76% for Google Analytics.

Data-driven content marketing

Google Analytics Users: 64%
Parse.ly Users: 75%

Satisfaction with content marketing resources

Google Analytics Users: 76%
Parse.ly Users: 84%

Analytics technology used

Legend: 2022, 2023

- Google Analytics: 65%, 54%
- Adobe Analytics: 31%, 6%
- Parse.ly: 24%, 4%
- Chartbeat: 9%, 2%
- Don't know: 2%, 0%

Hot take:

The disparities that emerge between users of different platforms show the power of technology choices to shape culture and influence organizational design.

Analytics technology used, by company size

Number of employees:
- 1,001+
- 201-1,000
- 0-200
- No answer / don't know

Google Analytics:
- 66%
- 61%
- 68%
- 64%

Adobe Analytics:
- 38%
- 40%
- 26%
- 20%

Parse.ly:
- 25%
- 25%
- 23%
- 24%

Chartbeat:
- 11%
- 10%
- 8%
- 6%

Don't know:
- 4%
- 1%
- 3%
- 2%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress
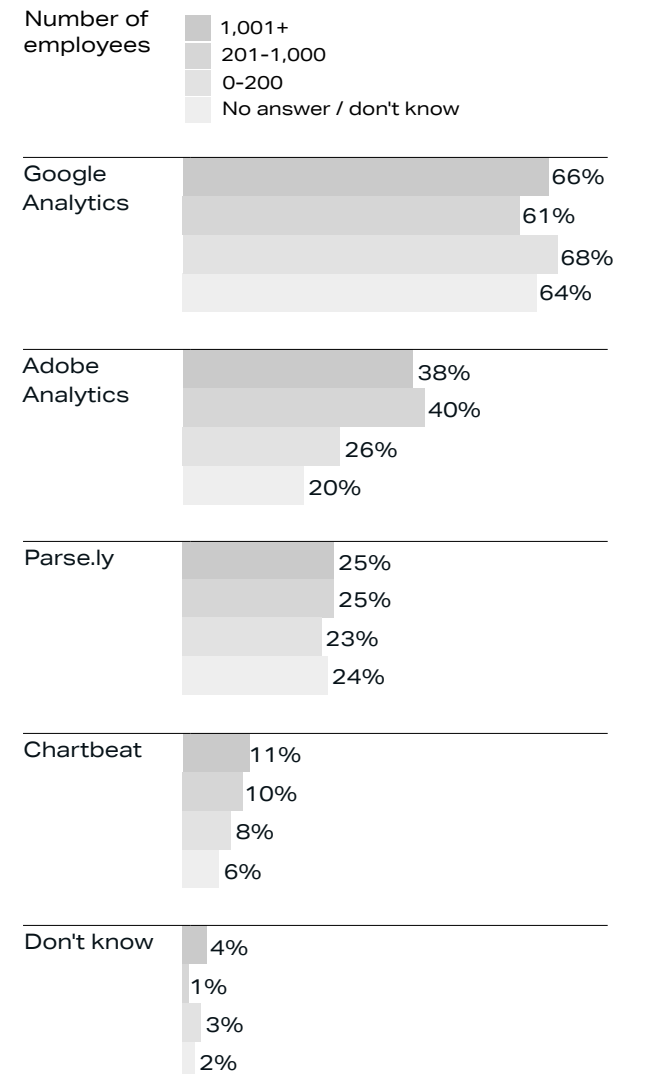
Pain points with analytics tools and processes

Based on the open-ended responses in our survey, the main challenges faced by respondents are inaccurate and incomplete data, time and labor constraints, lack of skilled professionals, data processing speed, data authenticity, and trust in the analysis tools.

Other issues mentioned include data storage, retrieval, siloed data, tool and process complexity, and cost and resource limitations.

Hot take:

Winners in the martech space will be solutions that lower barriers to adoption. Simply installing a new tool won't get the job done. People need to know how to use it, and they need to use it regularly. Easy-to-use tools drive interaction (and habits).

Pain of personalization

"Our personalization is limited due to budget. We'd like to add more sitewide personalization than what we are currently integrating into the user experience."

Pain points with testing content materials

"Lack of skilled resources to understand big data analytics. Uncertainty in the data management landscape."

"Separating signal from noise and isolating variables that drive traffic."

"Being able to measure and iterate quickly enough without ample dedicated resources."

"Proving real lift vs. cannibalization of other content."

Problems with analytics tools and processes

"We need to be able to integrate more best practices and get up to speed on how to use tools and processes."

"A lack of formalized training on how to best use the analytics tools."

"We currently use GA. It doesn't suit our needs exactly in the newly pushed GA4, but other platforms are more expensive than our budget."

"Onboarding and teaching knowledge."

"Bandwidth and time for content creators to dive into data and make strategy changes."

"Determining what's trending due to popular engagement vs. finding a niche audience."
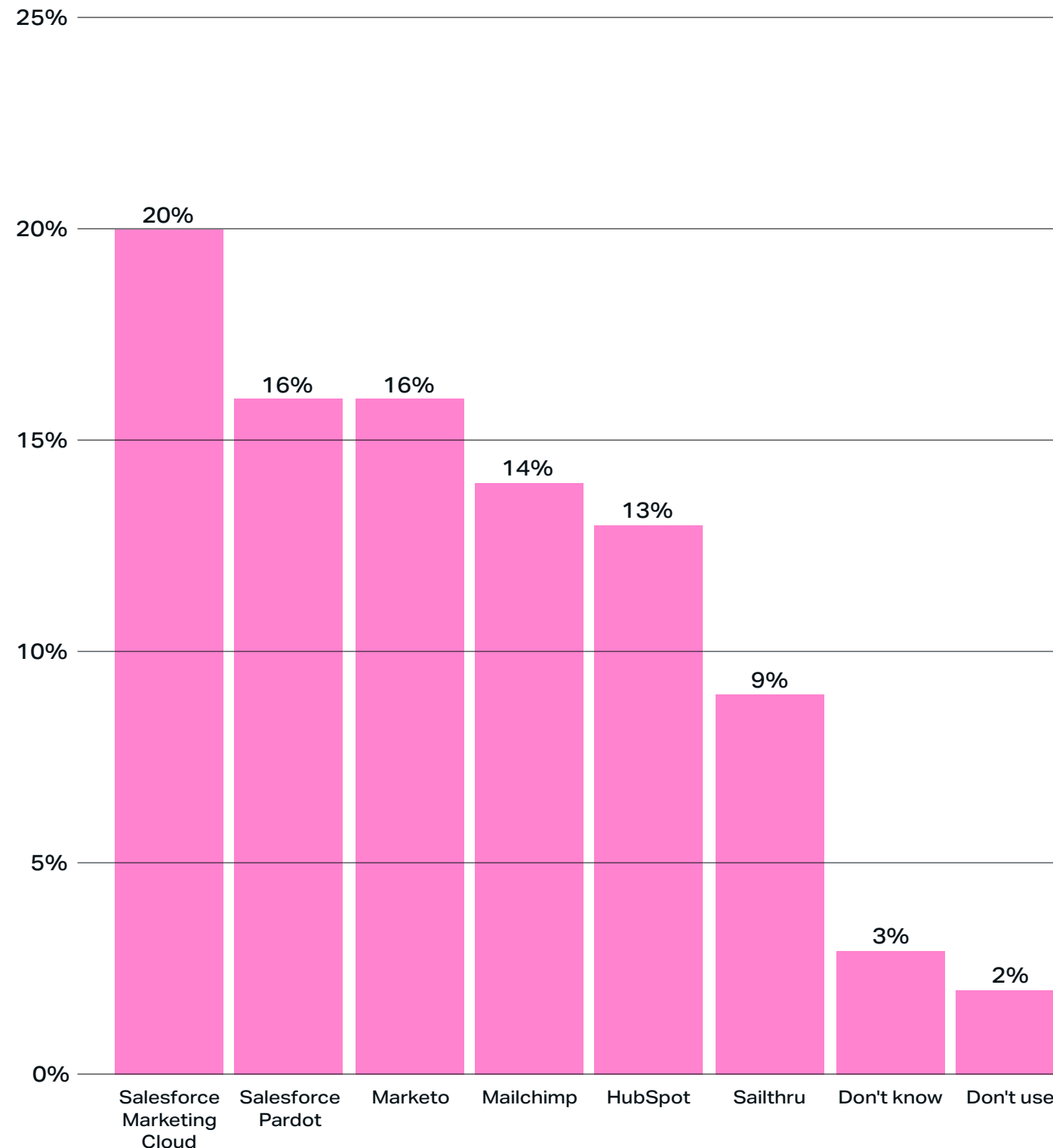
VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Marketing automation

Our *Martech Trends 2022 Report* found that marketing automation was a highly fragmented market. With a handful of exceptions, this year's study shows that remains the case.

Unlike other product categories we examined, there were fewer clear winners among marketing automation tools.

- The top email platform was Salesforce Marketing Cloud (20%), with Marketo and Salesforce Pardot (16%) tied for second.

- Salesforce Marketing Cloud (28%) and Marketo (24%) also enjoy the most adoption at the largest organizations.
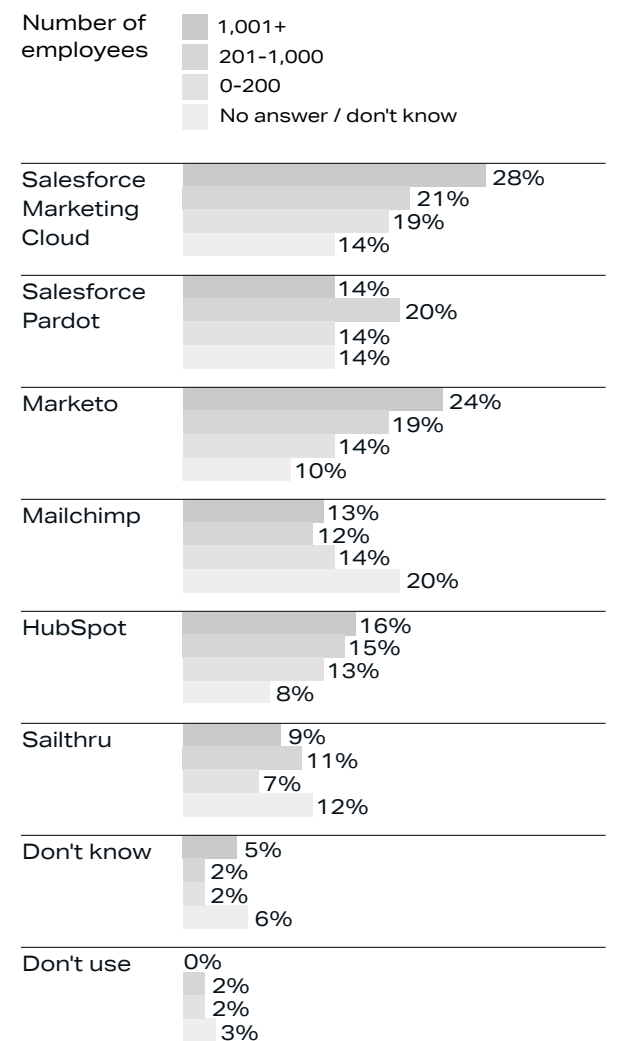
Email marketing technology used

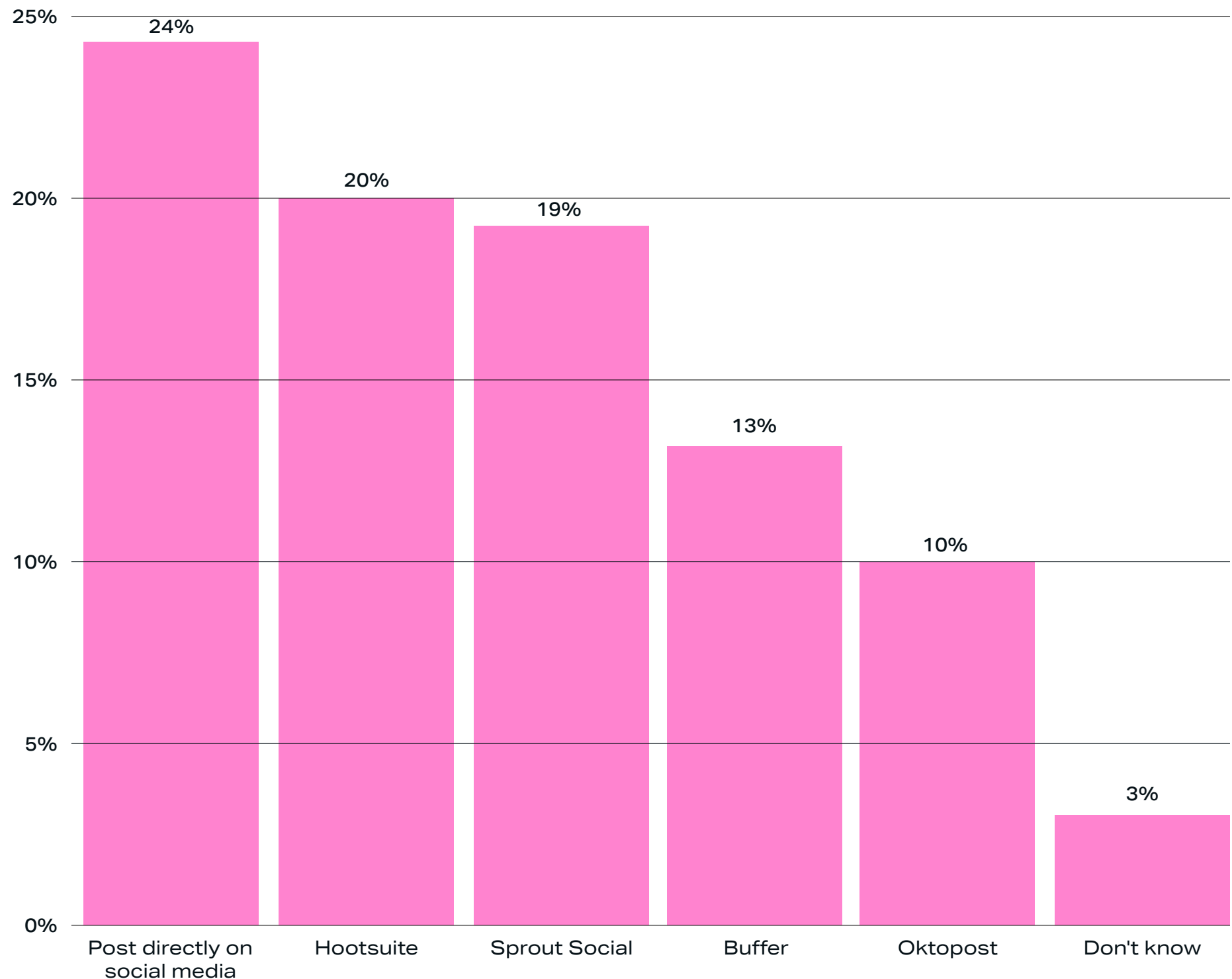| Category	Percentage
Salesforce Marketing Cloud	20%
Salesforce Pardot	16%
Marketo	16%
Mailchimp	14%
HubSpot	13%
Sailthru	9%
Don't know	3%
Don't use	2%

Hot take:

The relatively high level of small organizations posting directly to social indicates there is an opportunity for social management brands to better communicate the value they bring to their customers.

Email marketing technology used, by company size

Number of employees:
- 1,001+
- 201-1,000
- 0-200
- No answer / don't know

	1,001+	201-1,000	0-200	No answer / don't know
Salesforce Marketing Cloud	28%	21%	19%	14%
Salesforce Pardot	14%	20%	14%	14%
Marketo	24%	19%	14%	10%
Mailchimp	13%	12%	14%	20%
HubSpot	16%	15%	13%	8%
Sailthru	9%	11%	7%	12%
Don't know	5%	2%	2%	6%
Don't use	0%	2%	2%	3%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Social media marketing technology used

Bar chart:
- Post directly on social media: 24%
- Hootsuite: 20%
- Sprout Social: 19%
- Buffer: 13%
- Oktopost: 10%
- Don't know: 3%

Curiously, the most popular social media tool turns out to be "none at all." Nearly one-quarter (24%) of respondents simply post directly to social platforms. That picture changes when looking at usage by organization size. Among mid-size (201-1000) and large (1001+) companies, Hootsuite is the most popular tool (25% and 24%, respectively), ahead of Sprout Social (21% and 23%, respectively).

Social media marketing technology used, by company size

Number of employees:
- 1,001+
- 201-1,000
- 0-200
- No answer / don't know

Post directly on social media:
- 18%
- 17%
- 27%
- 34%

Hootsuite:
- 24%
- 25%
- 16%
- 19%

Sprout Social:
- 23%
- 21%
- 19%
- 12%

Buffer:
- 18%
- 14%
- 12%
- 10%

Oktopost:
- 13%
- 13%
- 8%
- 8%

Don't know:
- 8%
- 2%
- 3%
- 4%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress
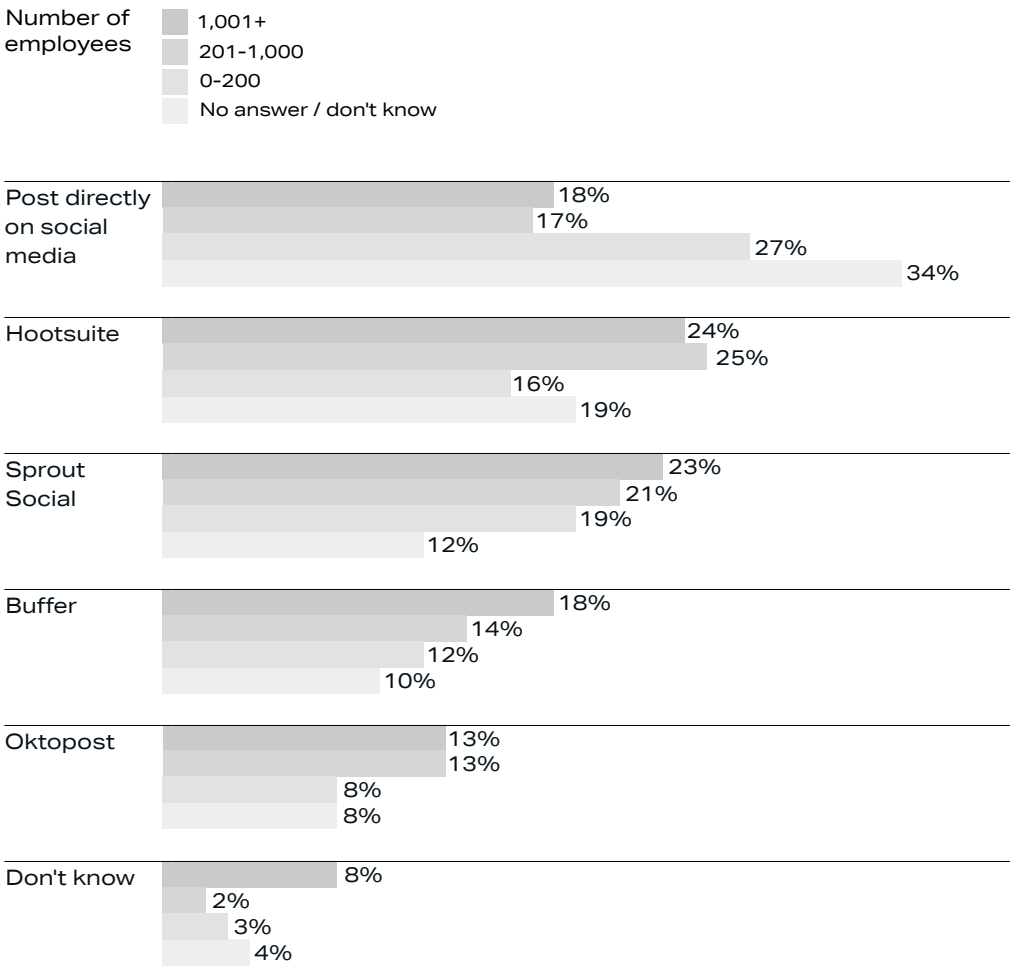
Customer data platforms

Among customer data platforms (CDPs), there was a clear divide between incumbent and challenger brands.

- Salesforce topped CDPs at 55%, far ahead of Segment at 29%.

- Based on usage by company size, Salesforce's dominance is even more pronounced among the largest companies, where 64% rely on it.

- A full 15% of small companies don't employ a CDP, more than double the figures for mid-size (just 3%) and larger (7%) companies, respectively.
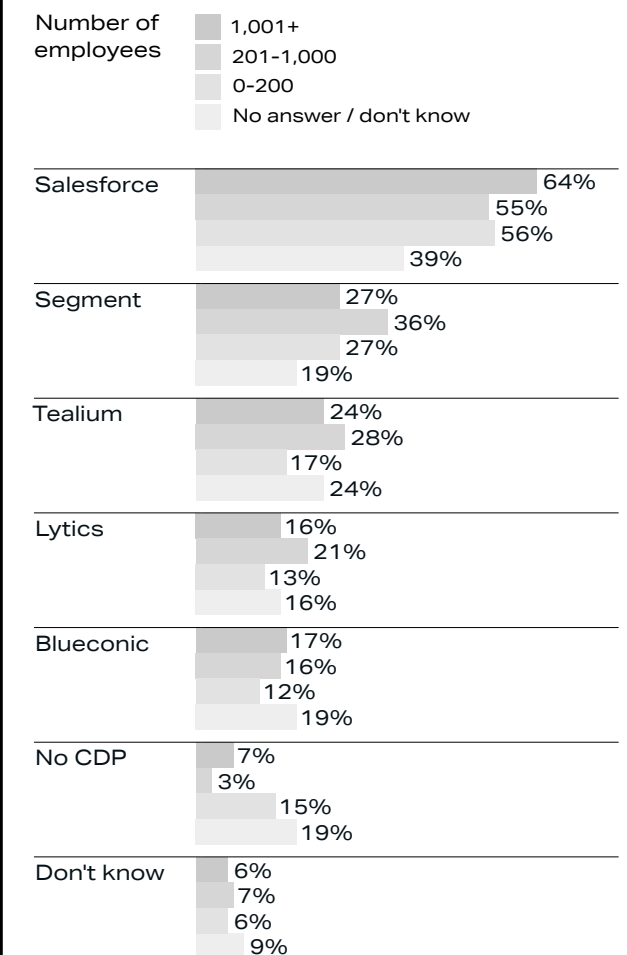
CDP used

Salesforce	55%
Segment	29%
Tealium	22%
Lytics	16%
Blueconic	15%
No CDP used	11%
Don't know	7%
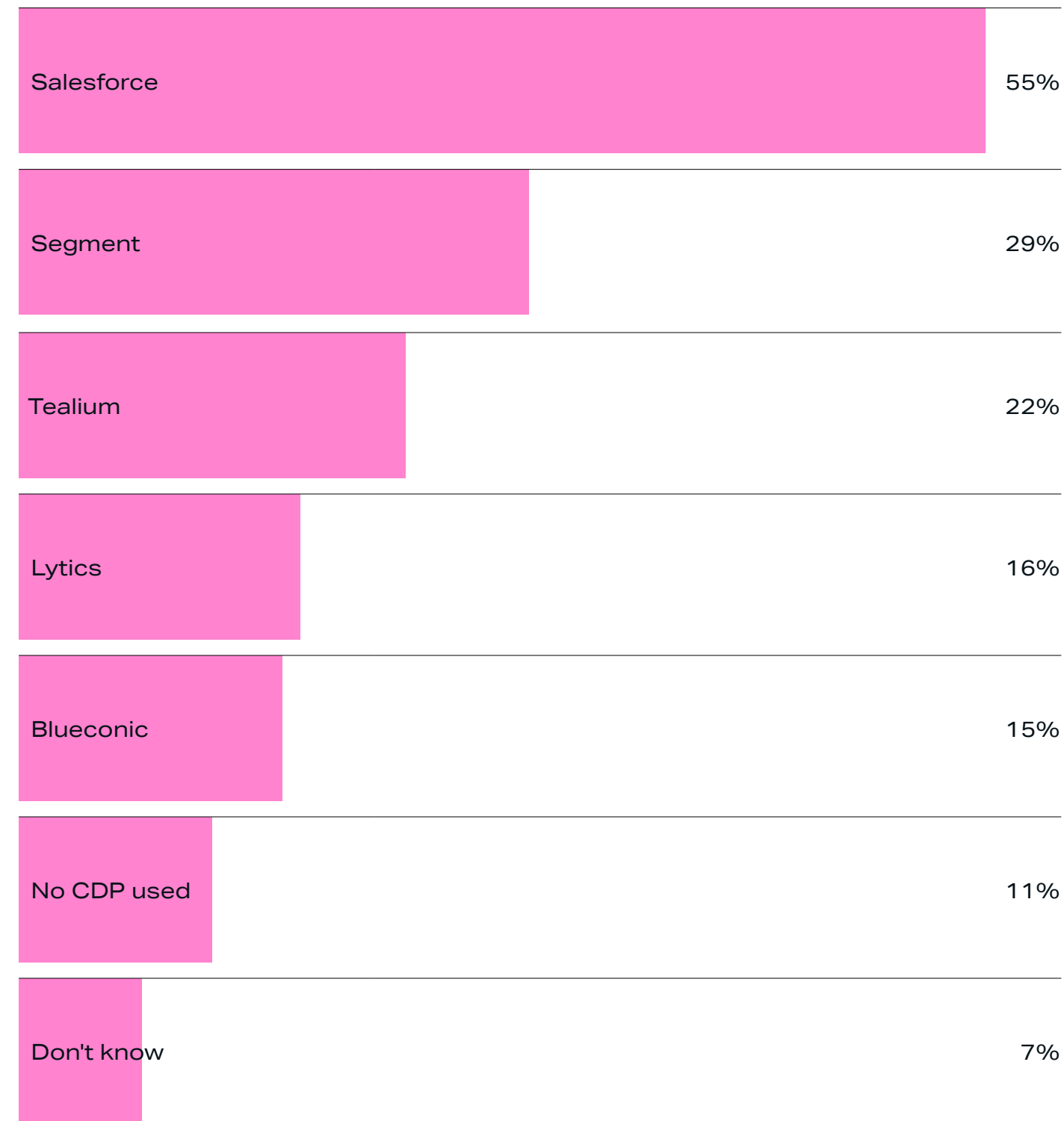
Hot take:

The 7% CDP usage stat suggests there are still companies at the enterprise level operating with siloed data and thus delivering fragmented customer experiences. Upshot? This is both an opportunity for providers, and a grave threat to those companies operating in the dark.

CDP used, by company size

Number of employees:
- 1,001+
- 201-1,000
- 0-200
- No answer / don't know

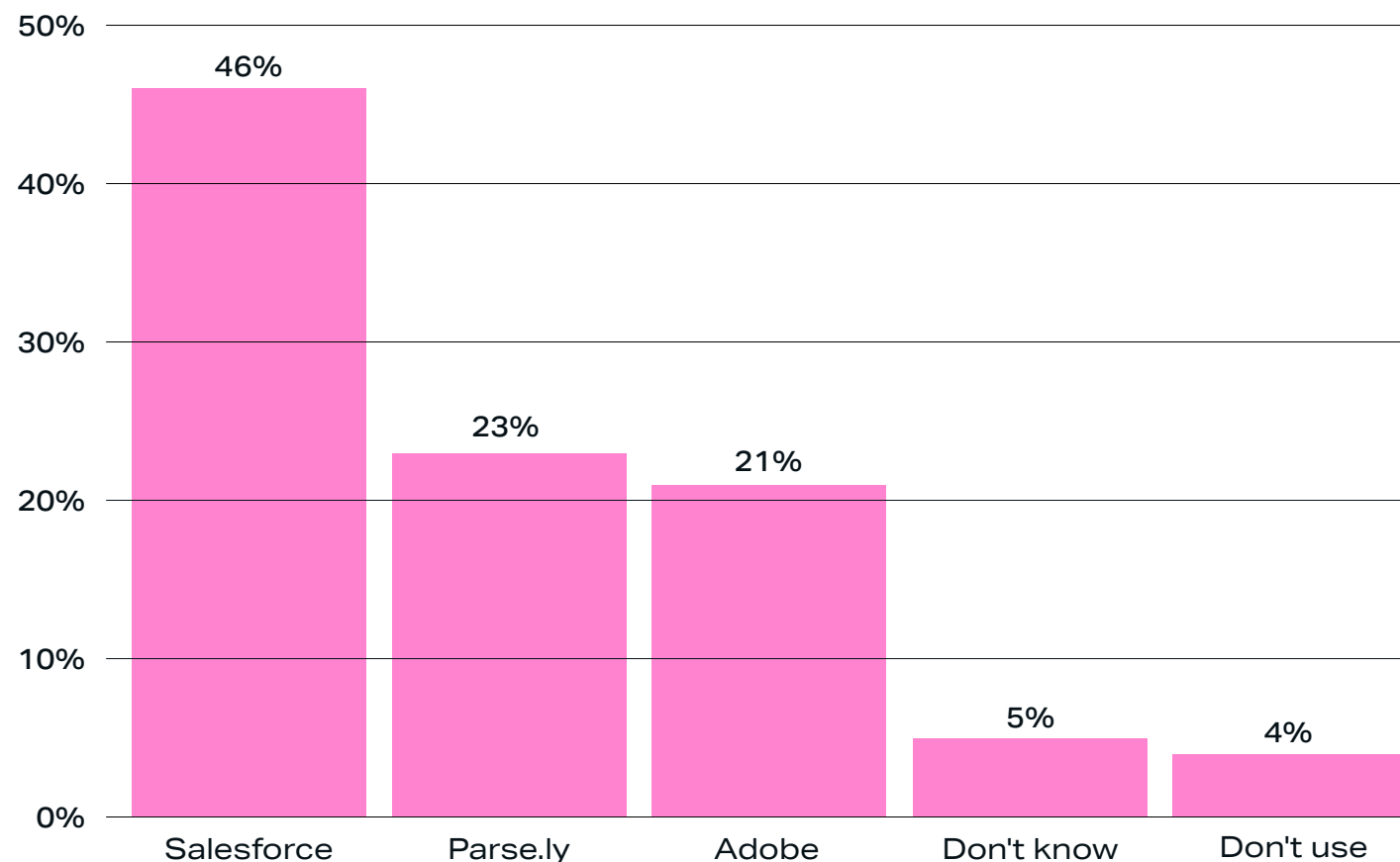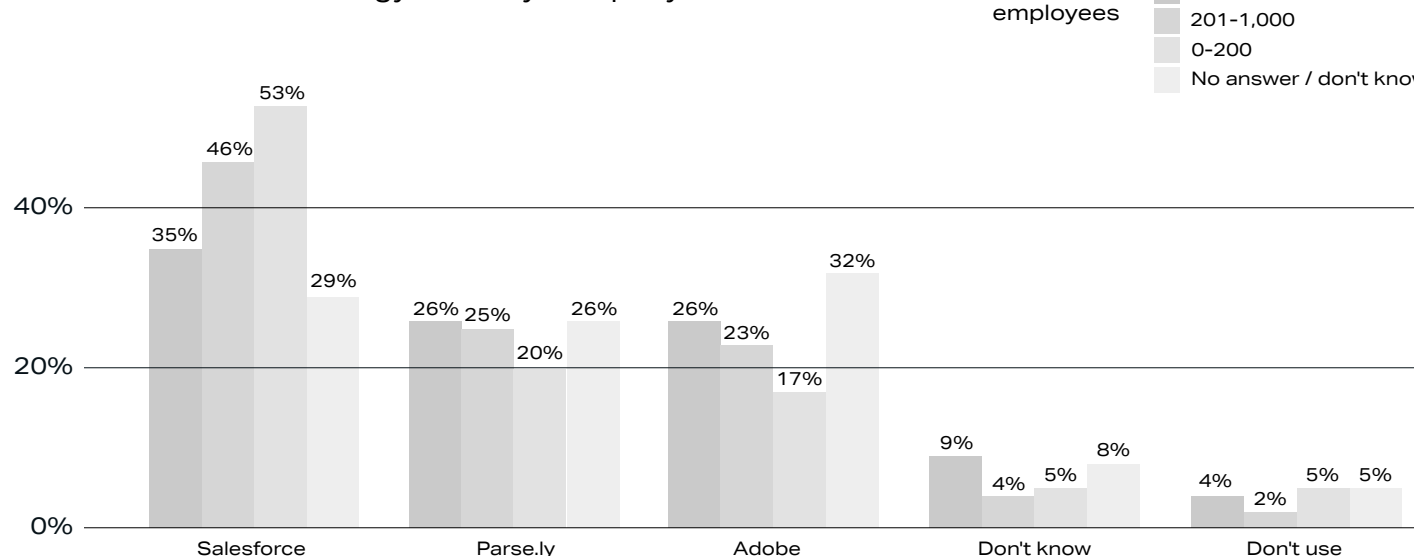|	1,001+	201-1,000	0-200	No answer / don't know
Salesforce	64%	55%	56%	39%
Segment	27%	36%	27%	19%
Tealium	24%	28%	17%	24%
Lytics	16%	21%	13%	16%
Blueconic	17%	16%	12%	19%
No CDP	7%	3%	15%	19%
Don't know	6%	7%	6%	9%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Personalization

Our *Martech Trends 2022 Report* found that 45% of respondents used personalization technology. Twelve months later, that picture looks much different—with a huge increase in adoption of these technologies.

- 74% of respondents said their organization has a personalization strategy; only 4% said they didn't have personalization technology.

- 46% use Salesforce, followed by Parse.ly (23%) and Adobe (21%).

- The larger the company, the smaller Salesforce's dominance—falling from 53% at the smallest companies (under 200 employees) in our survey to just 35% at orgs with 1,000+ employees.

Personalization technology used

Category	Percentage
Salesforce	46%
Parse.ly	23%
Adobe	21%
Don't know	5%
Don't use	4%

Personalization technology used, by company size

Number of employees:
- 1,001+
- 201–1,000
- 0–200
- No answer / don't know

| Category	1,001+	201–1,000	0–200	No answer / don't know
Salesforce	35%	46%	53%	29%
Parse.ly	26%	25%	20%	26%
Adobe	26%	23%	17%	32%
Don't know	9%	4%	5%	8%
Don't use	4%	2%	5%	5%

Hot take:

The introduction of AI into personalization technologies will make them even more essential. We are likely to see a personalization arms race, as consumers quickly raise their expectations for content relevance and tune out anything that doesn't satisfy them.

Organizations with content personalization strategies

- 74% Has personalization strategy
- 21% Has no personalization strategy
- 6% Don't know

VIP | Enterprise WordPress
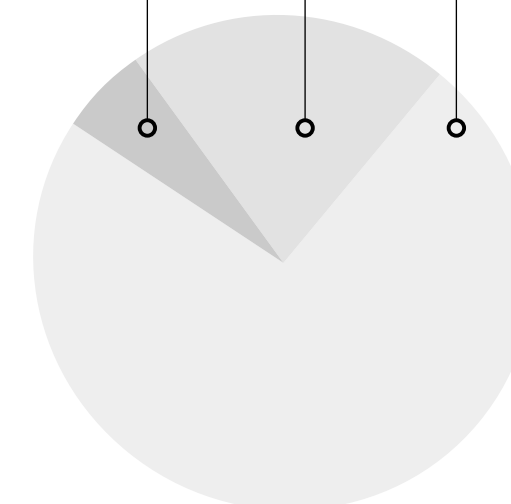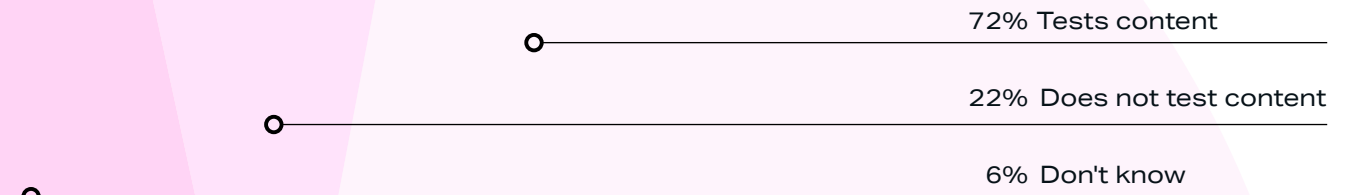
Multivariate testing

Multivariate testing has taken off in the past year, so much so that the capability has become standard operating procedure across the board.

- In our *Martech Trends 2022 Report*, 23% of respondents said they used testing technology. That number swelled to 72% this year.

- For testing, Google was most popular at 41%, followed by Optimizely at 24%.

- Usage is roughly consistent across business size, with the exception of Nelio, which was noticeably more popular with mid-sized companies.
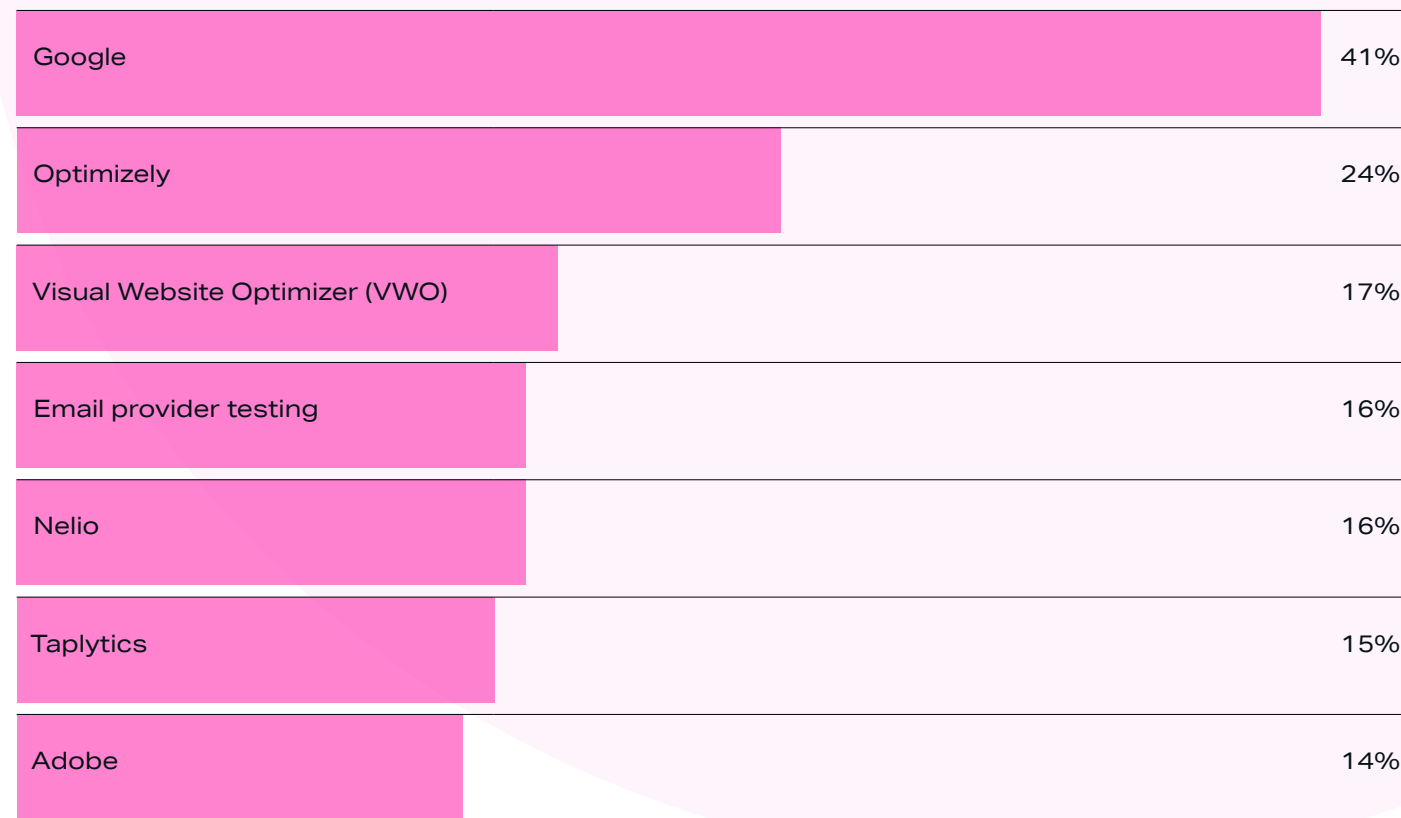
Hot take:

It's notable that the percentage of companies using email provider testing is the same across all company sizes, showing how important testing has become. Even with smaller budgets, companies of 200 and fewer employees are buying purpose-built testing software at the same pace as their larger rivals.
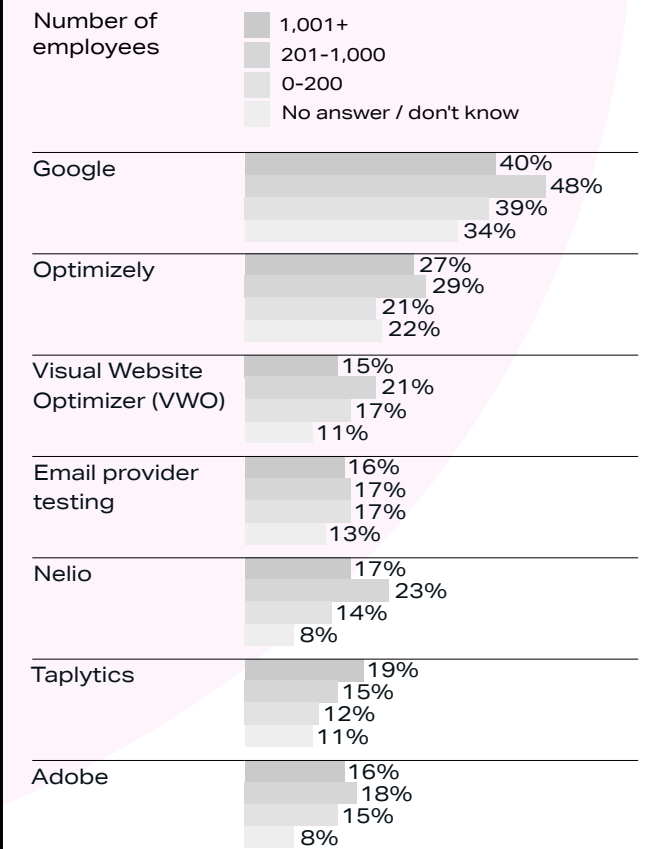
Testing content

72% Tests content

22% Does not test content

6% Don't know

Technology used to test content materials

Google	41%
Optimizely	24%
Visual Website Optimizer (VWO)	17%
Email provider testing	16%
Nelio	16%
Taplytics	15%
Adobe	14%

Technology used to test content materials, by company size

Number of employees

- 1,001+
- 201–1,000
- 0–200
- No answer / don't know

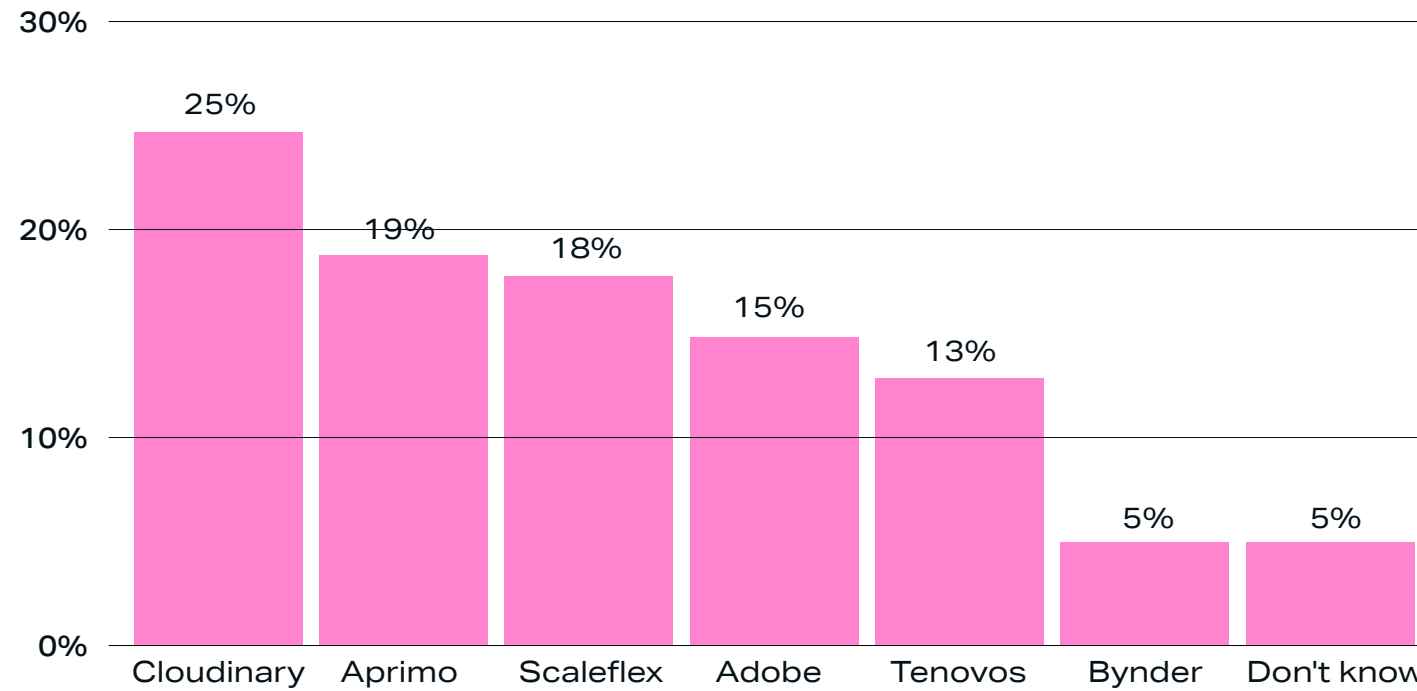|	1,001+	201–1,000	0–200	No answer / don't know
Google	40%	48%	39%	34%
Optimizely	27%	29%	21%	22%
Visual Website Optimizer (VWO)	15%	21%	17%	11%
Email provider testing	16%	17%	17%	13%
Nelio	17%	23%	14%	8%
Taplytics	19%	15%	12%	11%
Adobe	16%	18%	15%	8%

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Digital asset management (DAM)

Last year, only 32% of survey respondents reported using digital asset management (DAM) technology. In just 12 months, that percentage has more than doubled: 69% of this year's respondents said their company uses DAM.
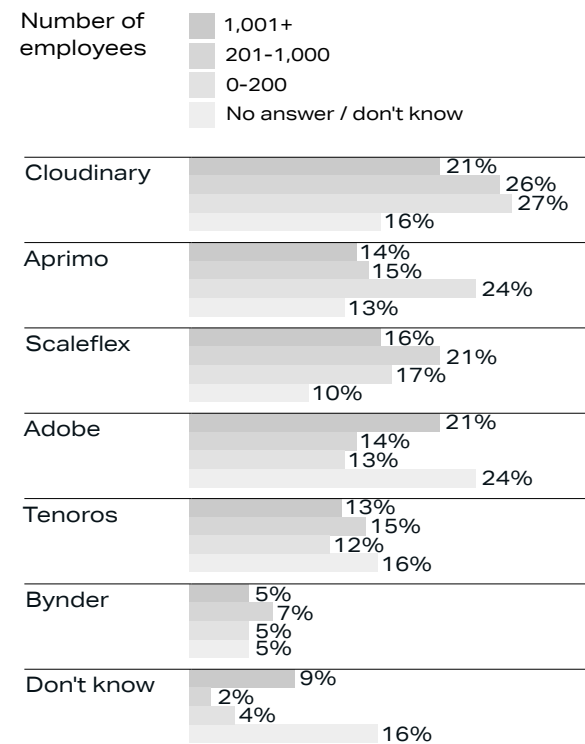
Cloudinary is the most popular DAM technology (25%) followed by Aprimo (19%). Storing/retrieving assets (40%), workflow management (38%), and optimizing assets (34%) were the most-used DAM features.

Adobe and Aprimo are notable for the differences in usage across company size. Adobe is used far more at the largest companies, while Aprimo has a larger market share at the smallest companies.
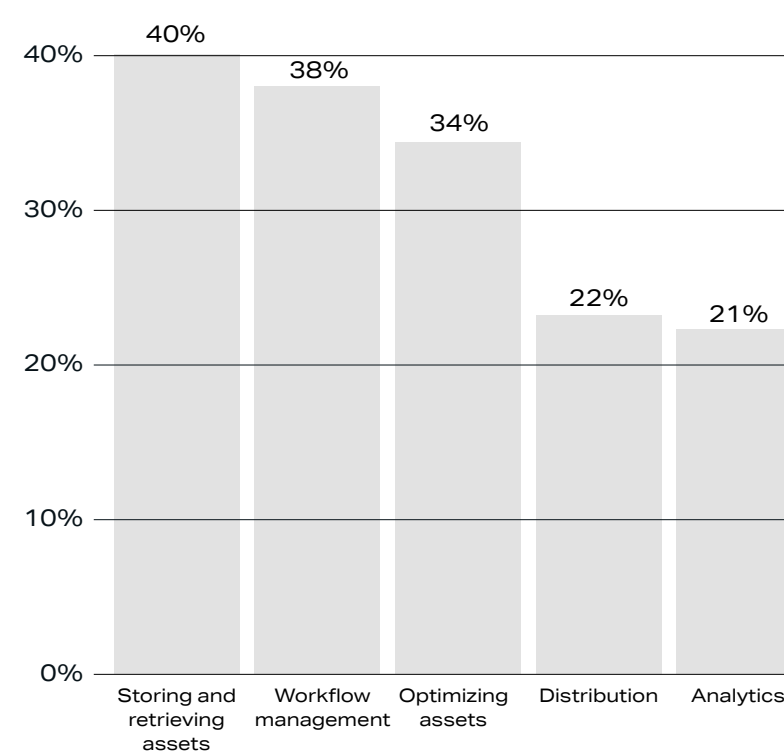
DAM technology used

Cloudinary	25%
Aprimo	19%
Scaleflex	18%
Adobe	15%
Tenovos	13%
Bynder	5%
Don't know	5%

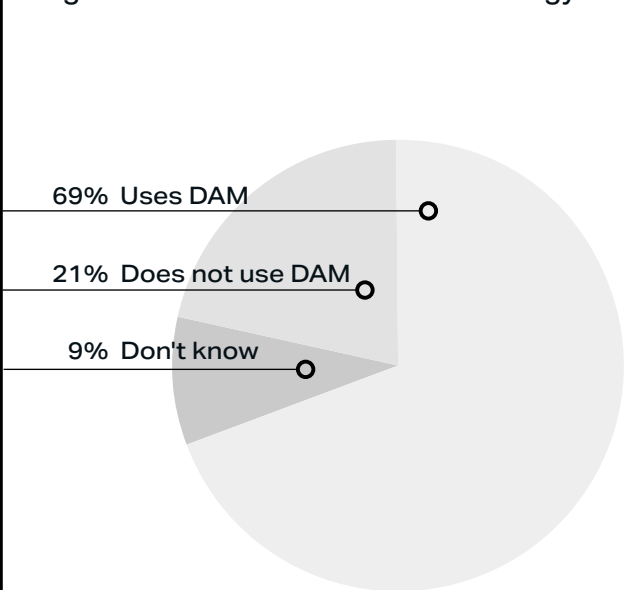**Hot take:**

In our *Content Matters 2023 Report*, we learned that the number of people creating content in companies has increased drastically. For example, 10.4% of our respondents in 2023 said between 51 and 200 people created content where they work. In 2022, that was just 2.0%. This increase might be driving the surge in DAM adoption. As more employees get involved in content creation, coordinating assets and workflows becomes an imperative.

DAM technology used, by company size

Number of employees
- 1,001+
- 201–1,000
- 0–200
- No answer / don't know

	1,001+	201–1,000	0–200	No answer / don't know
Cloudinary	21%	26%	27%	16%
Aprimo	14%	15%	24%	13%
Scaleflex	16%	21%	17%	10%
Adobe	21%	14%	13%	24%
Tenoros	13%	15%	12%	16%
Bynder	5%	7%	5%	5%
Don't know	9%	2%	4%	16%

DAM technology features used

Storing and retrieving assets	40%
Workflow management	38%
Optimizing assets	34%
Distribution	22%
Analytics	21%

Organizations that use DAM technology

- 69% Uses DAM
- 21% Does not use DAM
- 9% Don't know

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

It's a data-driven world

Given the difficult economic environment organizations are navigating, an extensible martech stack is an absolute necessary. With every team looking to be as judicious as possible with time, resources, and budget, decisions can't be made without rigorous testing and measurement on everyone's plate.

Based on this year's findings, we expect increased incorporation of AI into marketing tech stacks and marketing ops roles, evolving in tandem. As they do, new possibilities for improving marketing effectiveness will emerge and further cement martech's centrality to organizations.

The overwhelming percentage of respondents to our martech survey working at data-driven companies speaks to how widespread appreciation for content analytics is today. For without the democratization of insights these tools provide, it's harder to generate executive support for expanding content marketing budgets and efforts.

The surge in adoption of certain technologies also caught our eye. The dramatic uptick in personalization tech, multivariate testing, and DAMs shows that these tools are seen as essential, not nice-to-haves.

Looking ahead, we expect a virtuous cycle of measurement, testing, iteration, and success that will further steep companies in the benefits of being data-driven. Martech will only become more important, as will the stewards of those tools: marketing ops teams. We forecast an increasing profile, and increasing demand, for those roles across industries.

When we look back on 2023, there's no doubt that we'll see this was a year in which content mattered more than ever before and so did the tools we use to create, test, and measure that content.

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

Proving the value of content

As we did for our inaugural Content Matters survey and report, we wanted to understand the role content and content marketing play in today's organizations. That meant uncovering how businesses are using content for growth, how they're prioritizing content creation and channels, the analytics tools they're using, and the trends they see heading into 2023.

We sent out digital surveys, designed and built on the Crowdsignal platform, in November 2022. We asked a series of content marketing-focused questions related to marketing activities and budgets, marketing technologies, distribution channels, metrics, and revenue. There were 1,554 unique respondents across various roles, industries, company types and geographic location (84% from the United States).

Industry

Technology	13%
Consumer electronics	11%
Agency, research, consulting	9%
Media, publishing	9%
Financial services	9%
Education, arts, humanities	8%
Retail, ecommerce	7%
Energy, utilities, telecommunications	6%
Agriculture, forestry, mining	6%
Healthcare, pharmaceutical, life sciences	5%
Consumer packaged goods	4%
Transportation, logistics	3%
Hospitality, food, travel	3%
Sports	2%
Other (nonprofit, insurance, construction)	2%
Public sector, government	1%

Company size

0-50	17%
51-200	29%
201-400	23%
401-1000	17%
1001-10000	11%
10001+	3%
I don't know	1%

Company type

B2C	41%
B2B	33%
Both B2B and B2C	24%
Nonprofit	3%

Role

Manager of content marketing	17%
Director/VP of content marketing	16%
Director/VP of marketing (not content marketing)	12%
Manager of marketing (not content marketing)	10%
Individual contributor (content marketing)	9%
CMO	8%
Other C-level	7%
Analyst	5%
Individual contributor (not content marketing)	4%
Editor	3%
Developer	3%
Other (Project manager, communications, etc.)	3%
Journalist	1%
Product owner	1%

The best companies run the web with WordPress VIP.

WordPress VIP combines the ease and flexibility of WordPress—the CMS that runs 43% of the web—with unmatched scalability and security for the enterprise. Our solutions are trusted by iconic media titans, major brands, and government agencies. With WordPress VIP, brands can scale their web presence, enable their teams to produce more web content, and use data to continuously improve content performance, eliminating wasted effort while maximizing ROI.

Get a demo

VIP | Enterprise WordPress

WP VIP | Enterprise WordPress

wpvip.com