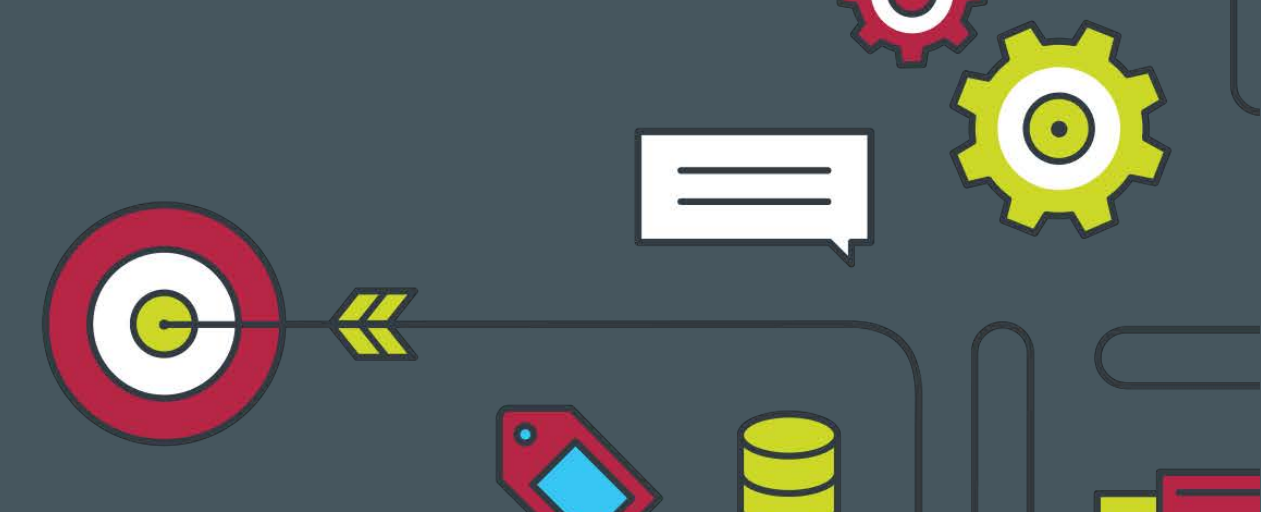
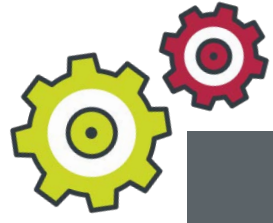


The 7 Capabilities of Exceptional Thought Leadership Marketers



1. Patient Champions
2. Disciplined Navigators
3. Truth Seekers
4. Argument Shapers
5. Audience Builders
6. Digital Enlighteners
7. Sales Accelerators





#1 - Patient Champions.

Leaders are willing to make the strategic investments in people, technologies and programs necessary to develop big ideas and shape the market.



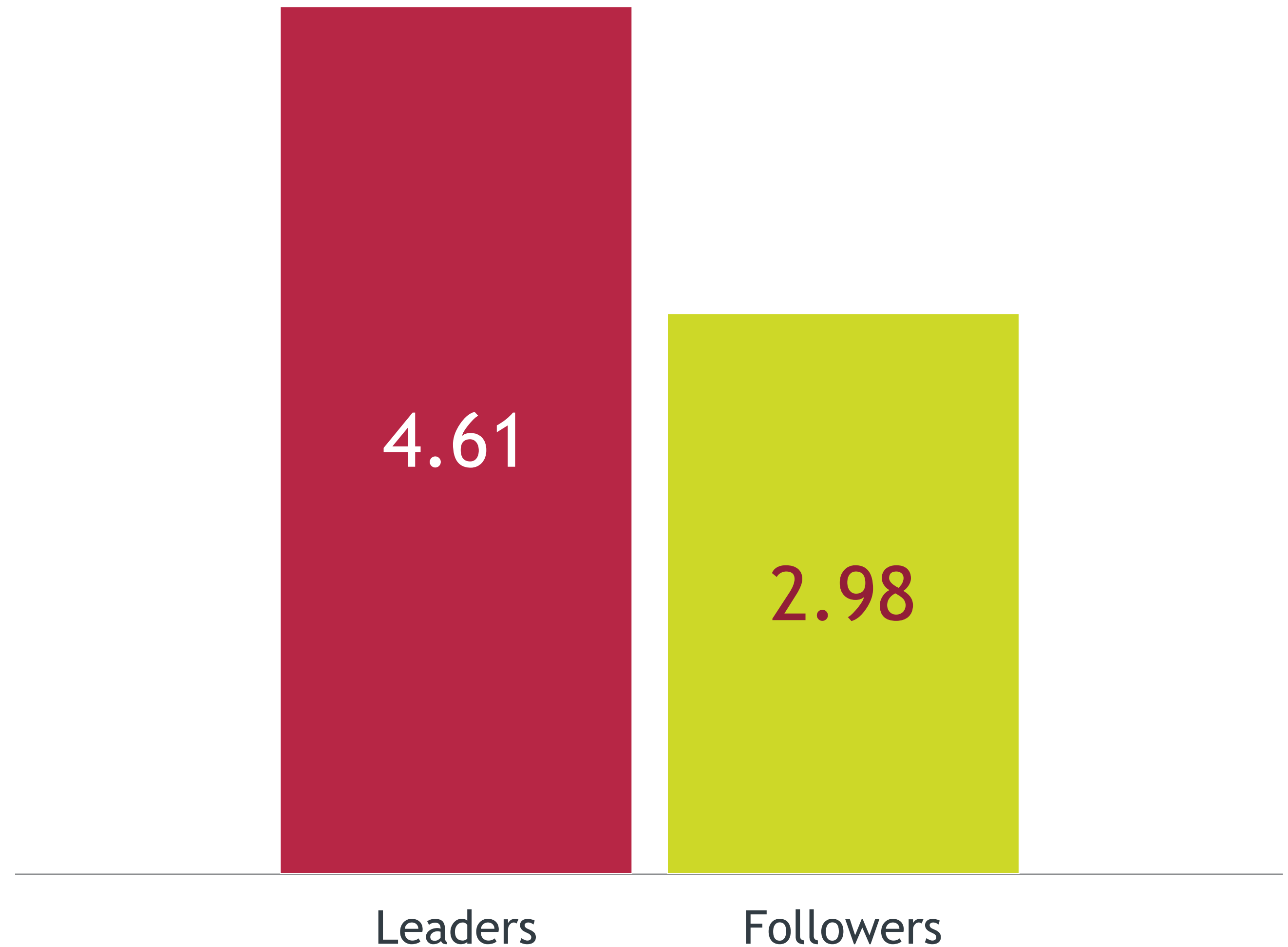
Leaders have earned big commitment from the top of their organizations.

How much value organizational leaders are perceived to place on thought leadership.

Scale:

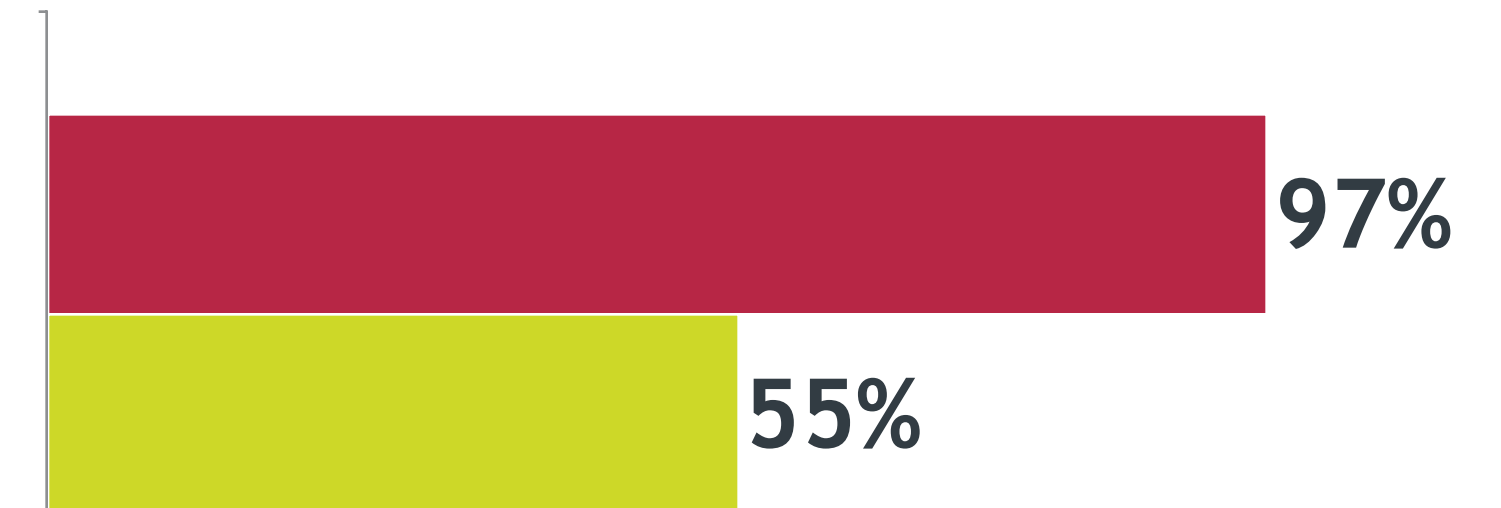
5 = Extremely high value

1 = No value

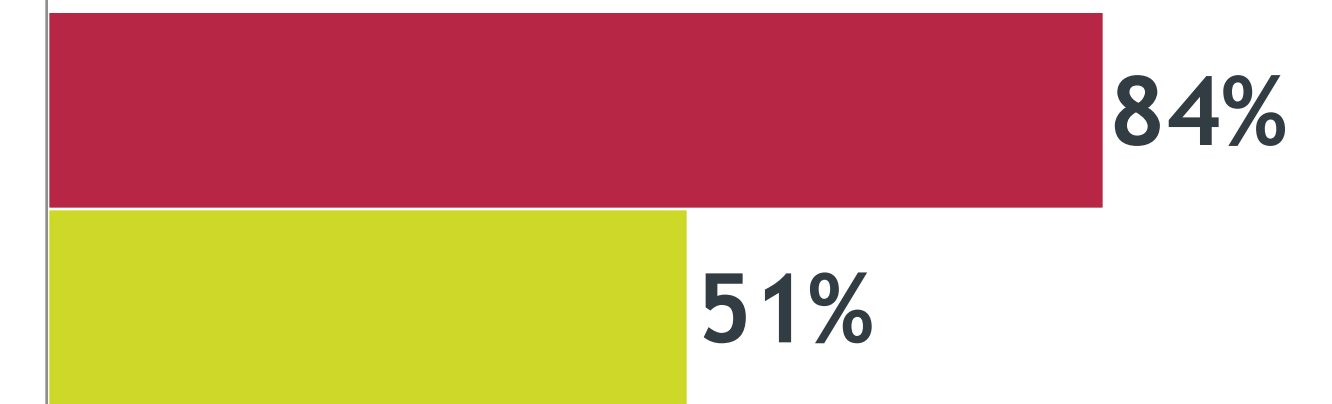


To earn that commitment *leaders* leverage data, involve executives personally and find ways for them to hear from others.

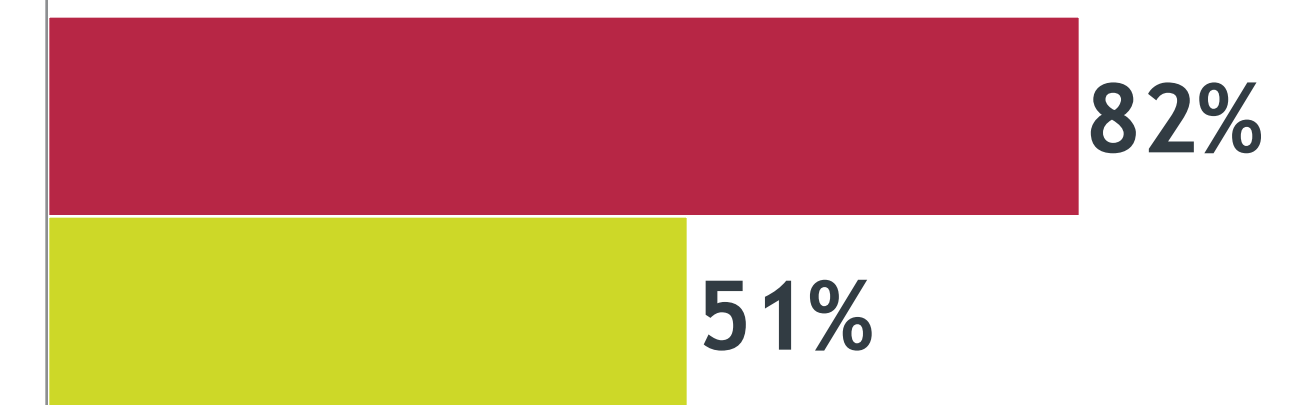
Seeing data on how thought leadership marketing has generated leads for our firm



Their personal involvement in thought leadership



Hearing their peers outside marketing explain its importance

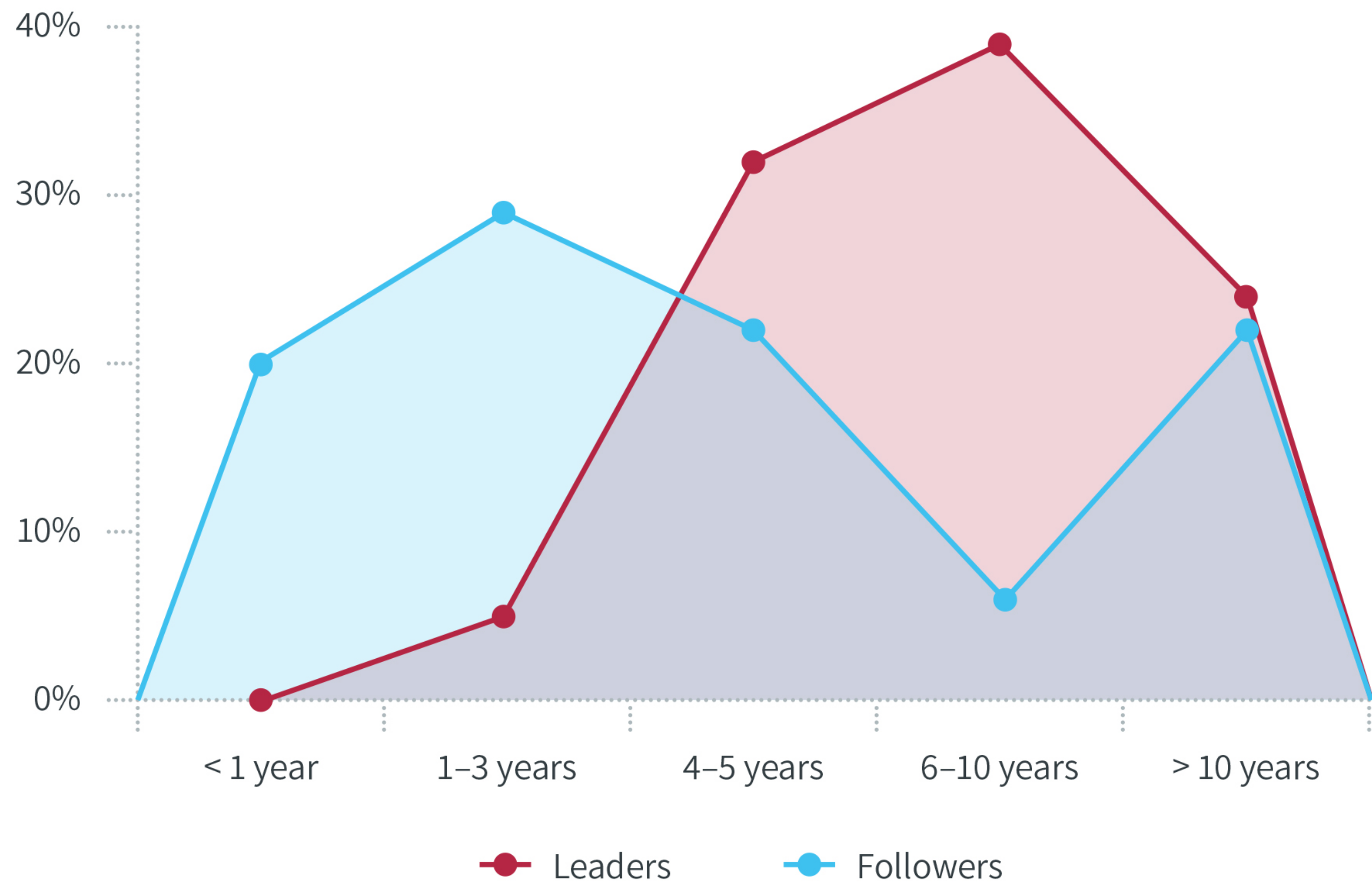


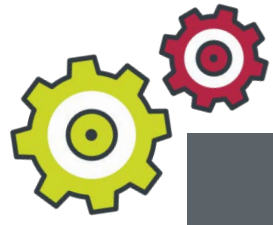
Leaders
Followers

Percentage of respondents stating each factor was “extremely important” (5) or “very important” (4).

Importantly, *leaders* recognize it takes patience to be exceptional.

How long firms have been investing in thought leadership marketing.





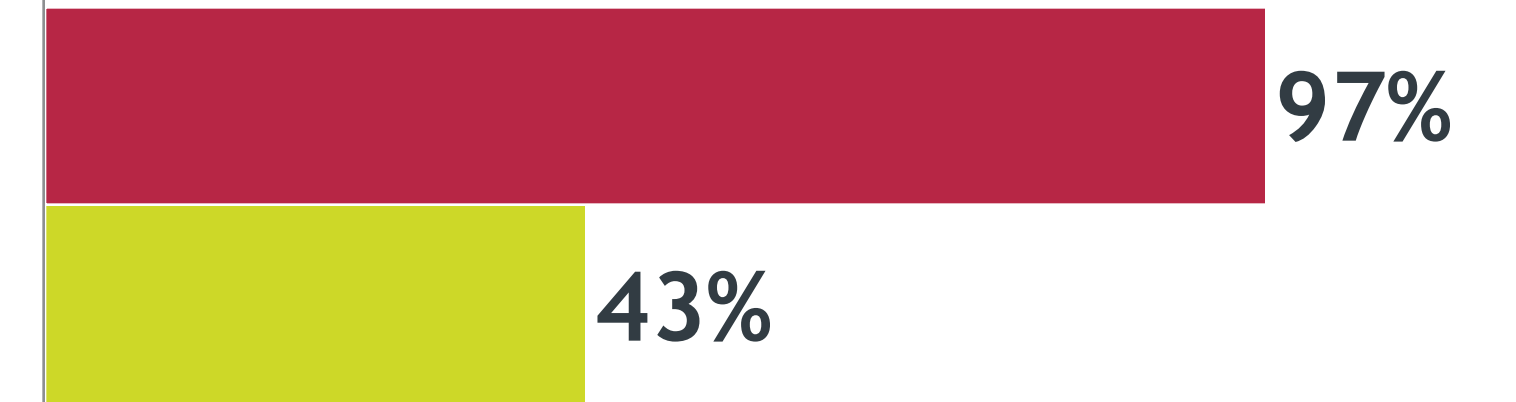
#2 - *Disciplined Navigators.*

Leaders know where they're trying to go, what topics they want to own, what quality looks like, and have the necessary policies and processes in place to produce it.

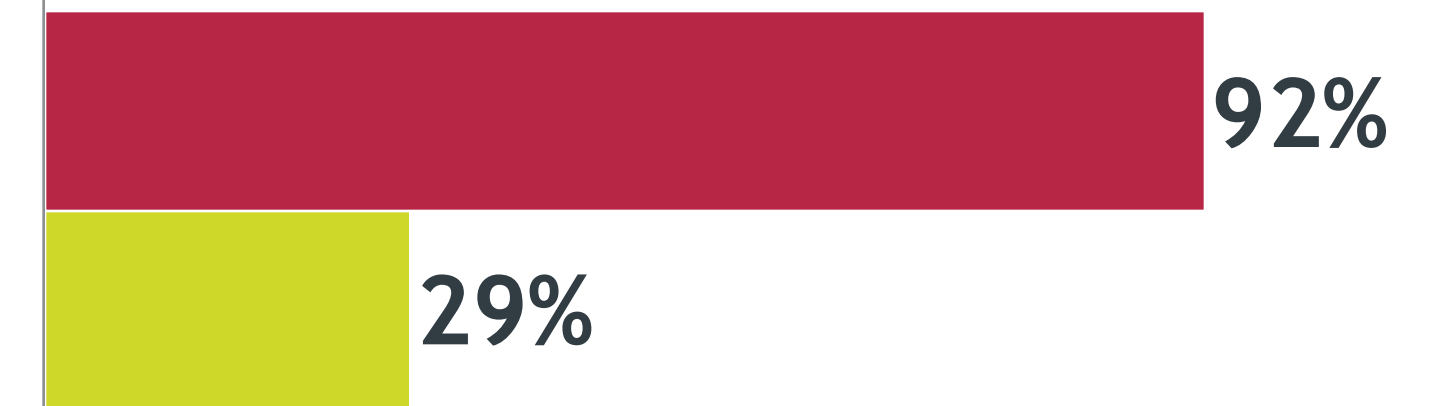


Leaders set clear business goals and routinely knock them down.

We set annual goals for our thought leadership marketing activities



Our goals include both activities and outcomes



We consistently achieve those goals



Leaders
Followers

Percentage of respondents that agree with these statements.

Leaders get agreement on topics and enforce rigorous quality standards.

Have firm-wide agreement on topics

92%

33%

Have explicit, documented and shared content quality standards

84%

14%

Regularly enforce those standards

97%

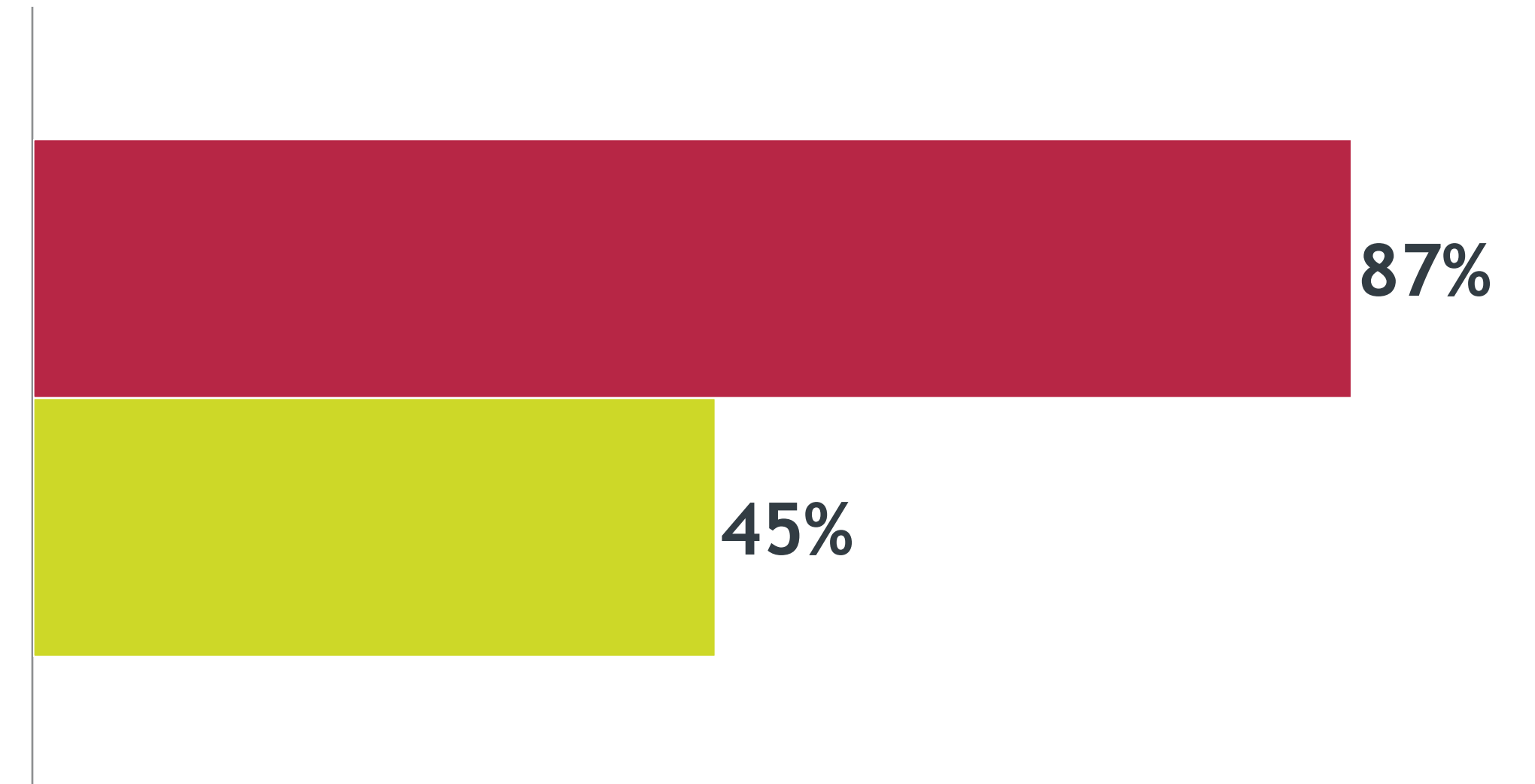
35%

Leaders
Followers

Percentage of respondents that agree with these statements.

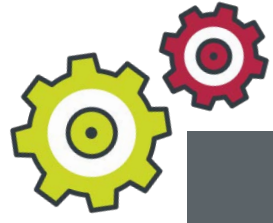
Leaders have the desire, tools and ability to prove ROI from their investments.

We can prove ROI from our investments



Percent of respondents who “strongly agree” (5) or “agree” (4) with this statement.

Leaders
Followers

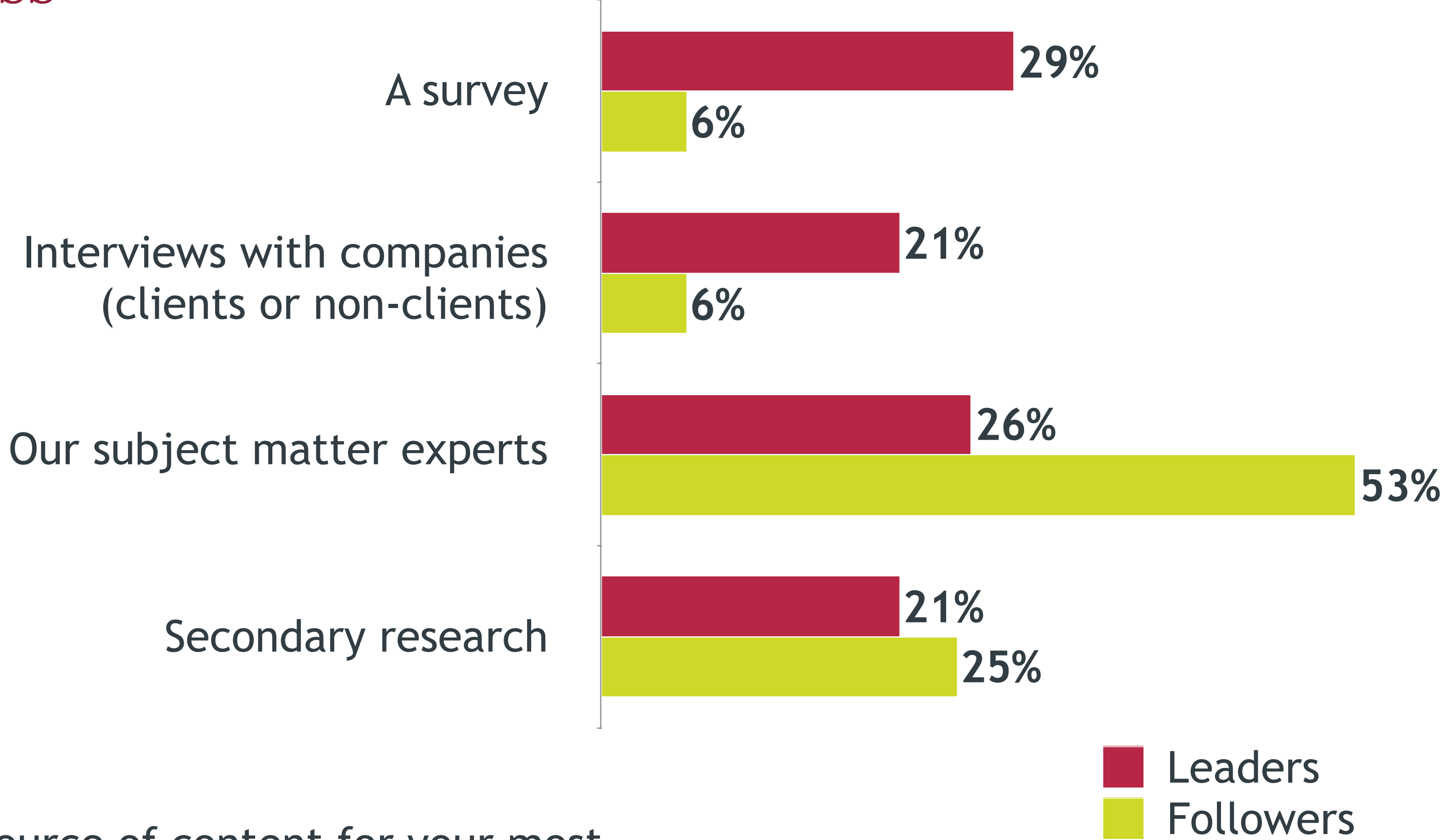


#3 - Truth Seekers.

Leaders fall in love with the problem. They regularly invest in original primary research to shed new light on how they can solve it better than anyone else.

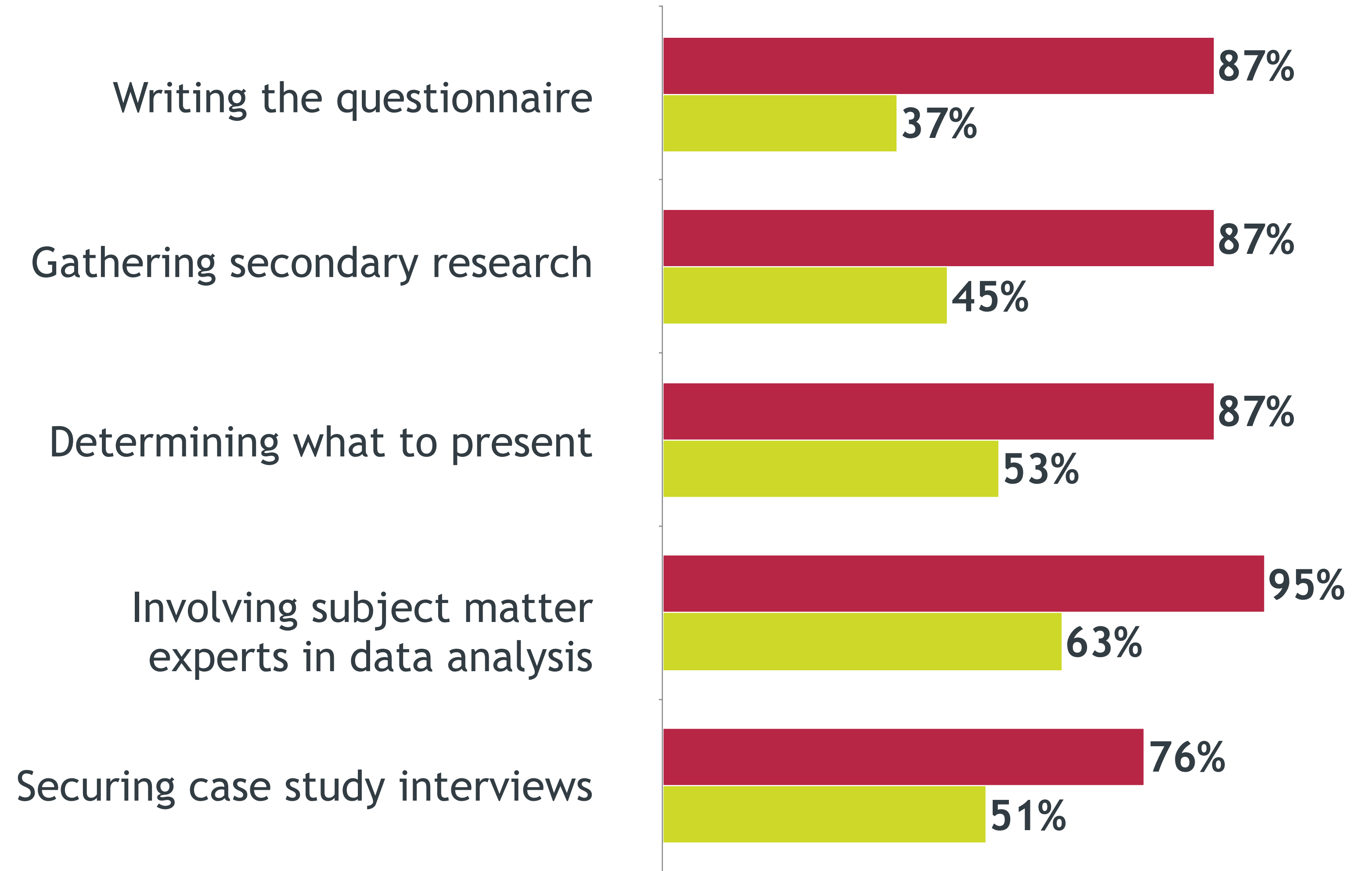


Leaders rely on primary research to shed new light on critical business problems.



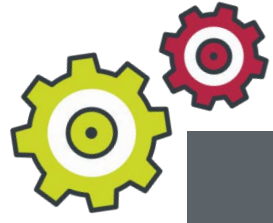
Q: What was the most important source of content for your most successful thought leadership marketing campaign between 2015 and 2017?

Leaders bring more rigor to the research process itself.



Q: How important are the following factors in conducting thought leadership studies? Percent of respondents stating each factor is “extremely important” (5) or “very important” (4).

Leaders
Followers

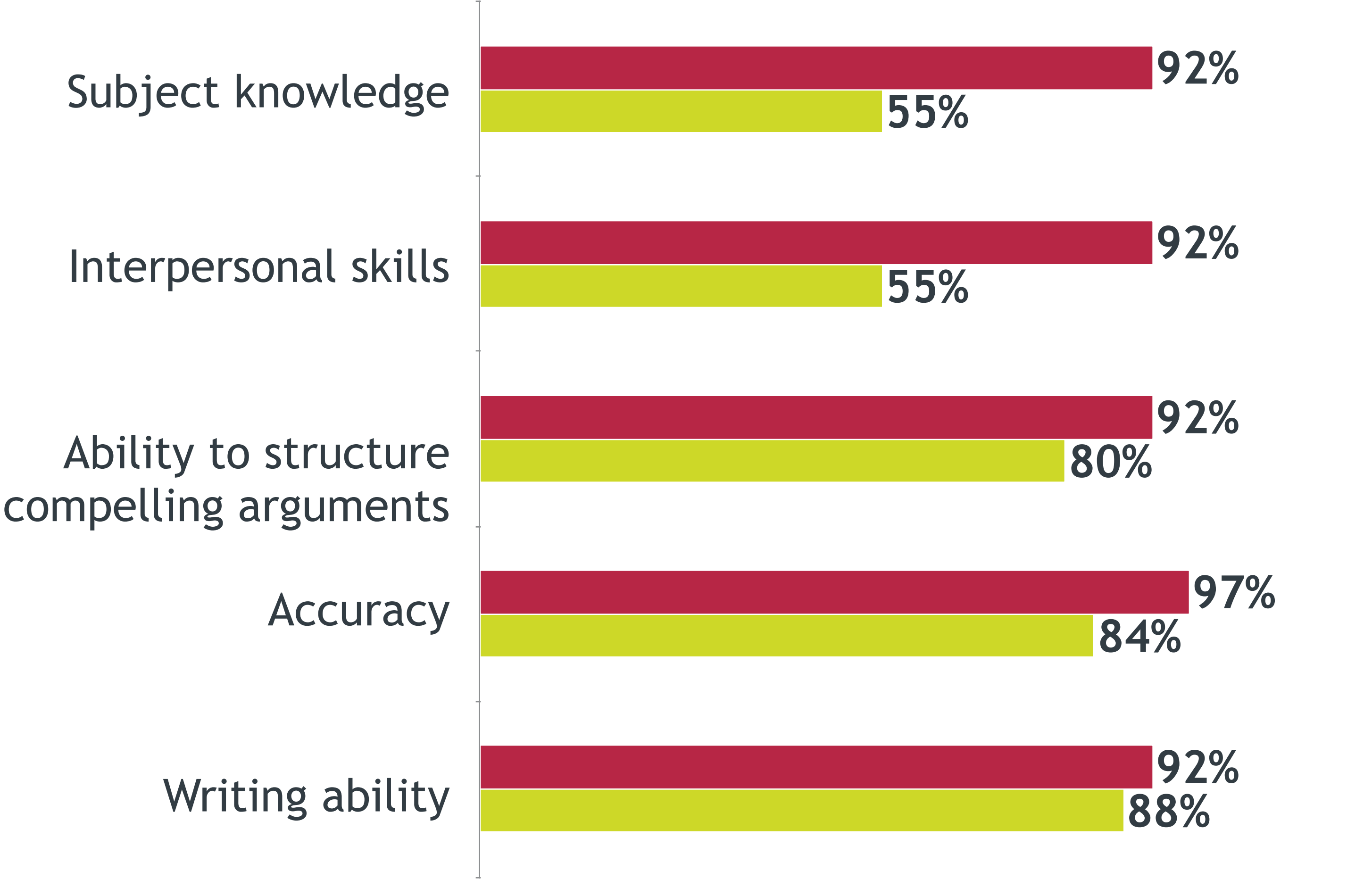


#4 - Argument Shapers.

Leaders invest in content developers who bring a unique ability in helping to shape the fundamental arguments of their subject matter experts.



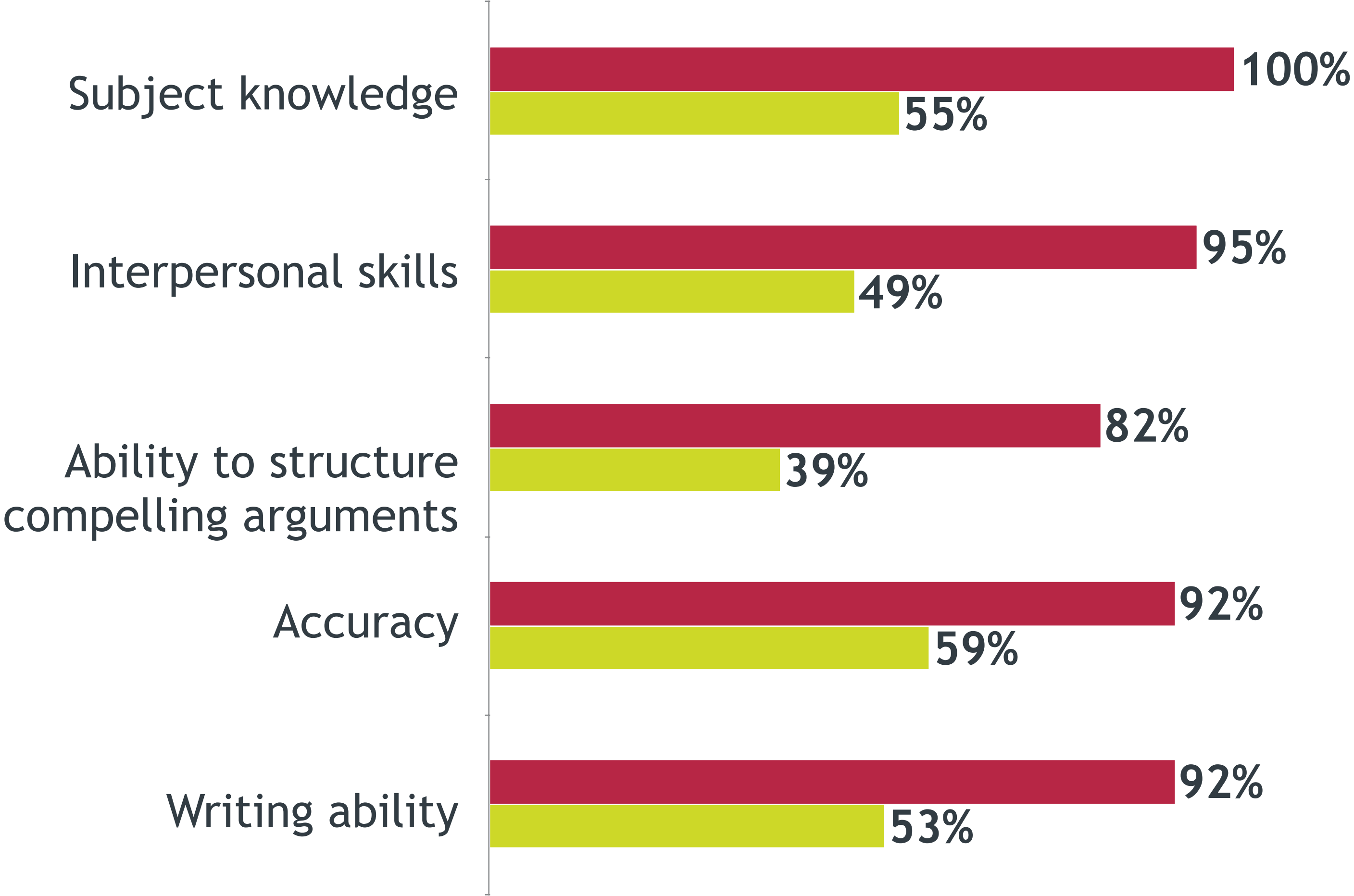
Leaders value subject knowledge and interpersonal skills more than their peers



Q: How important are the following skills in producing compelling content? Percent of respondents answering “extremely high importance” (5) or “high importance” (4)

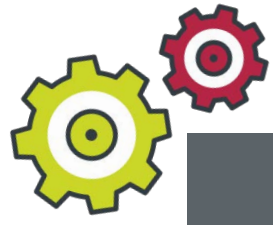
Leaders
Followers

Leaders are more likely to have those unique and rare skills within their teams



Q: Please rate the degree to which your firm currently possesses these capabilities? Percent of respondents answering “extremely high degree” (5) or “high degree” (4)

Leaders
Followers

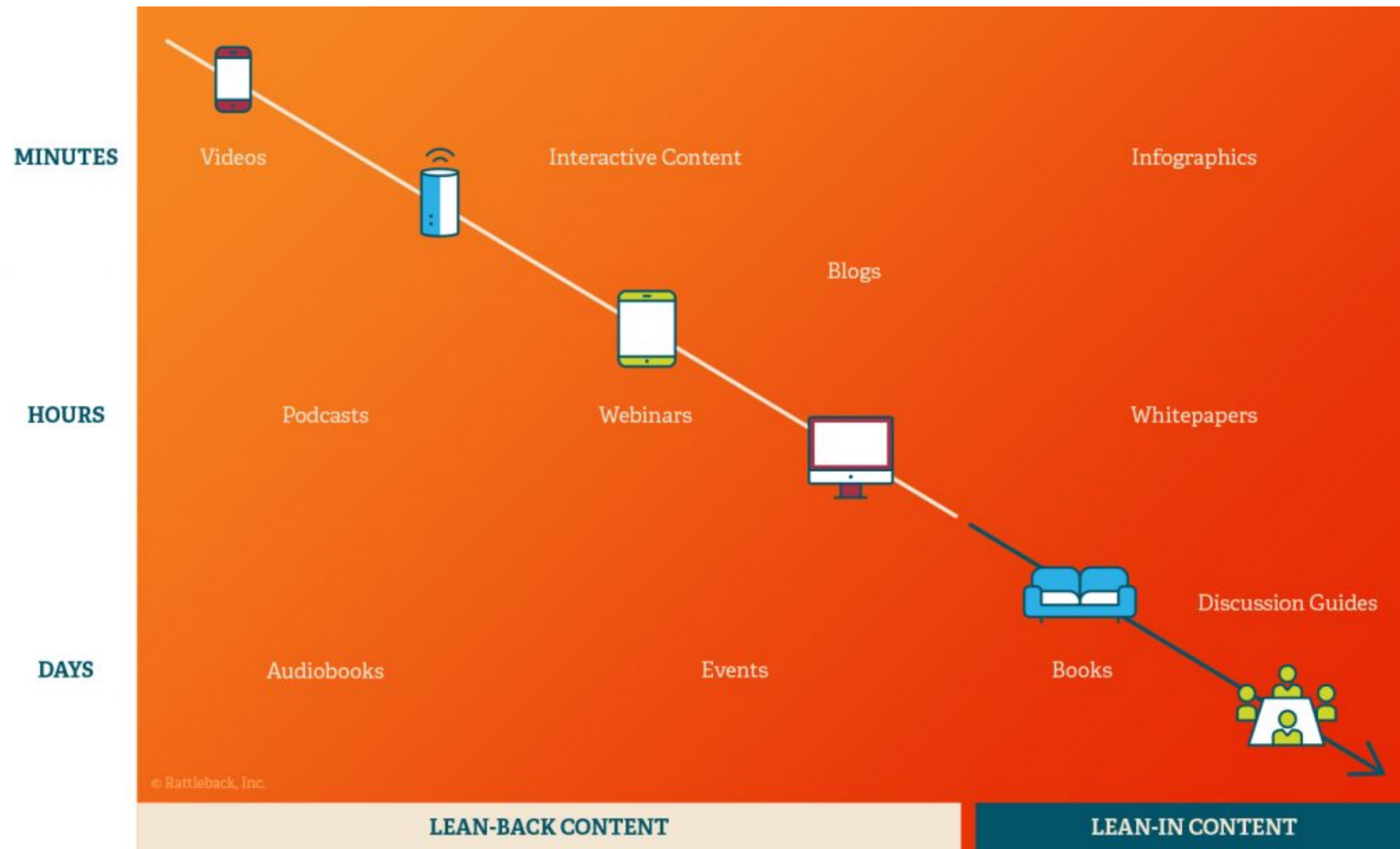
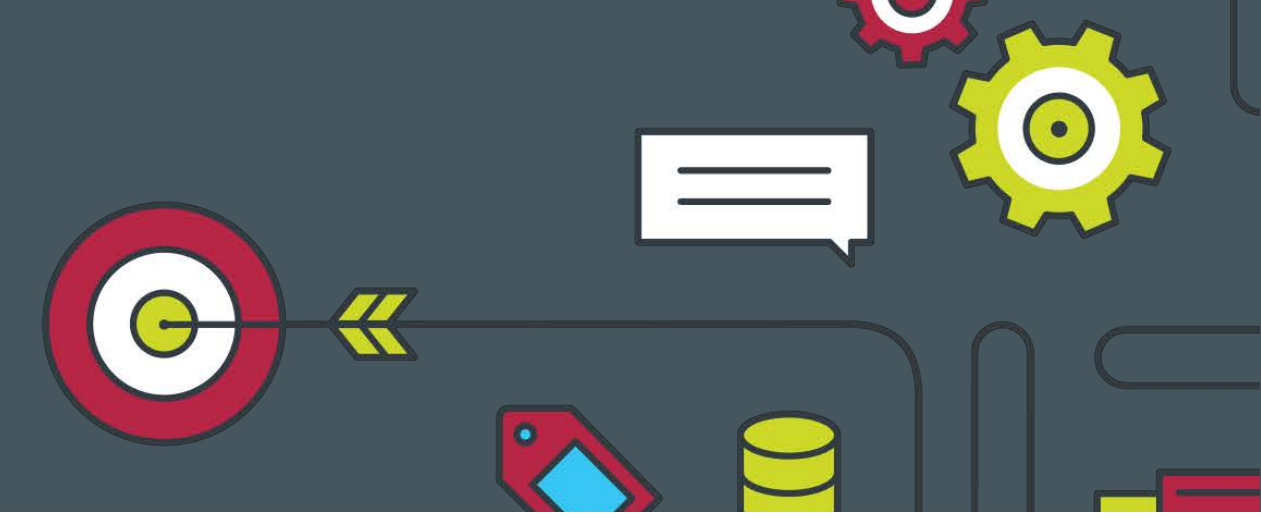


#5 - Audience Builders.

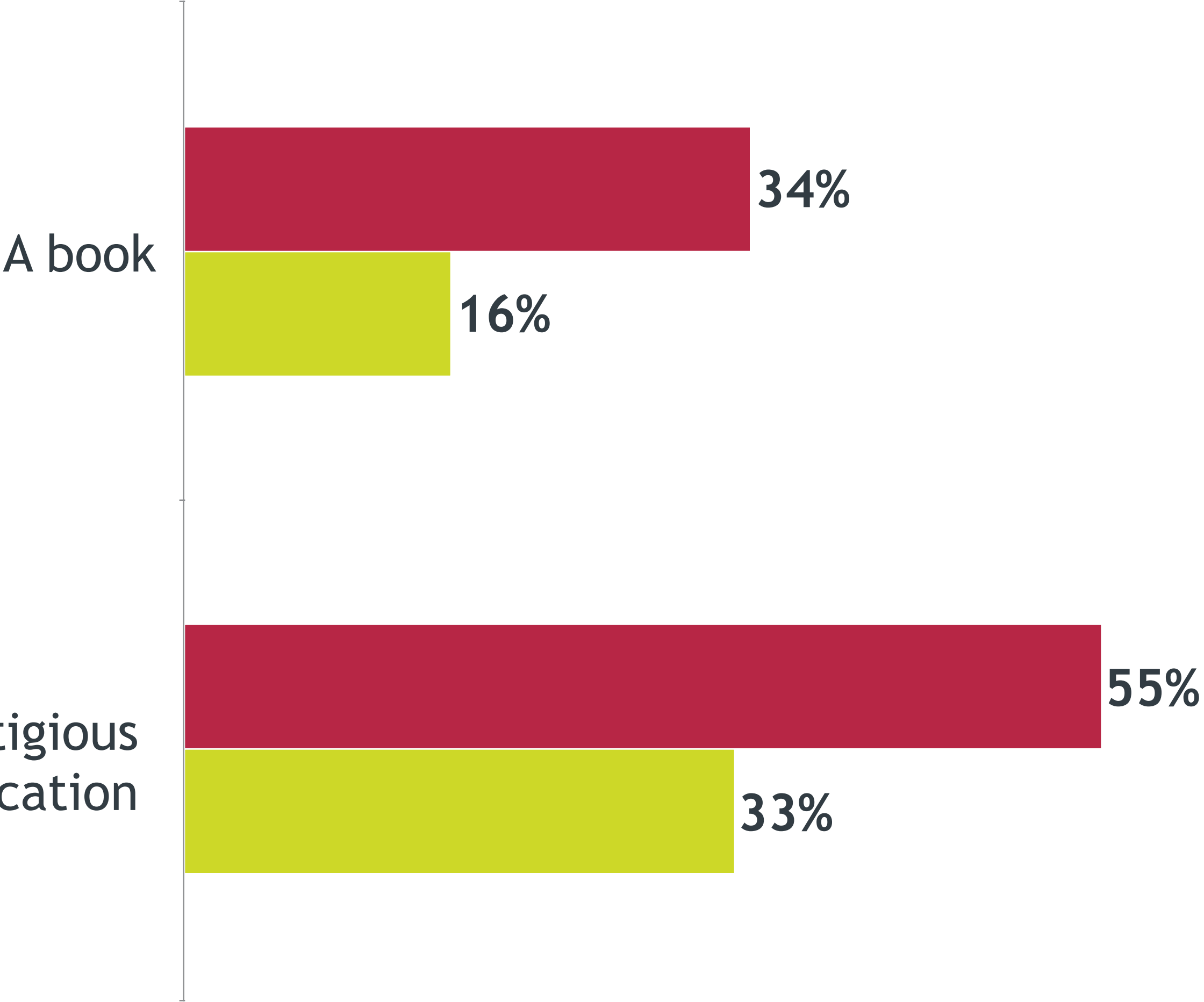
Leaders know how to cut through the noise of the new media landscape to meet clients where, when and how they learn.



The thought leadership marketing content continuum



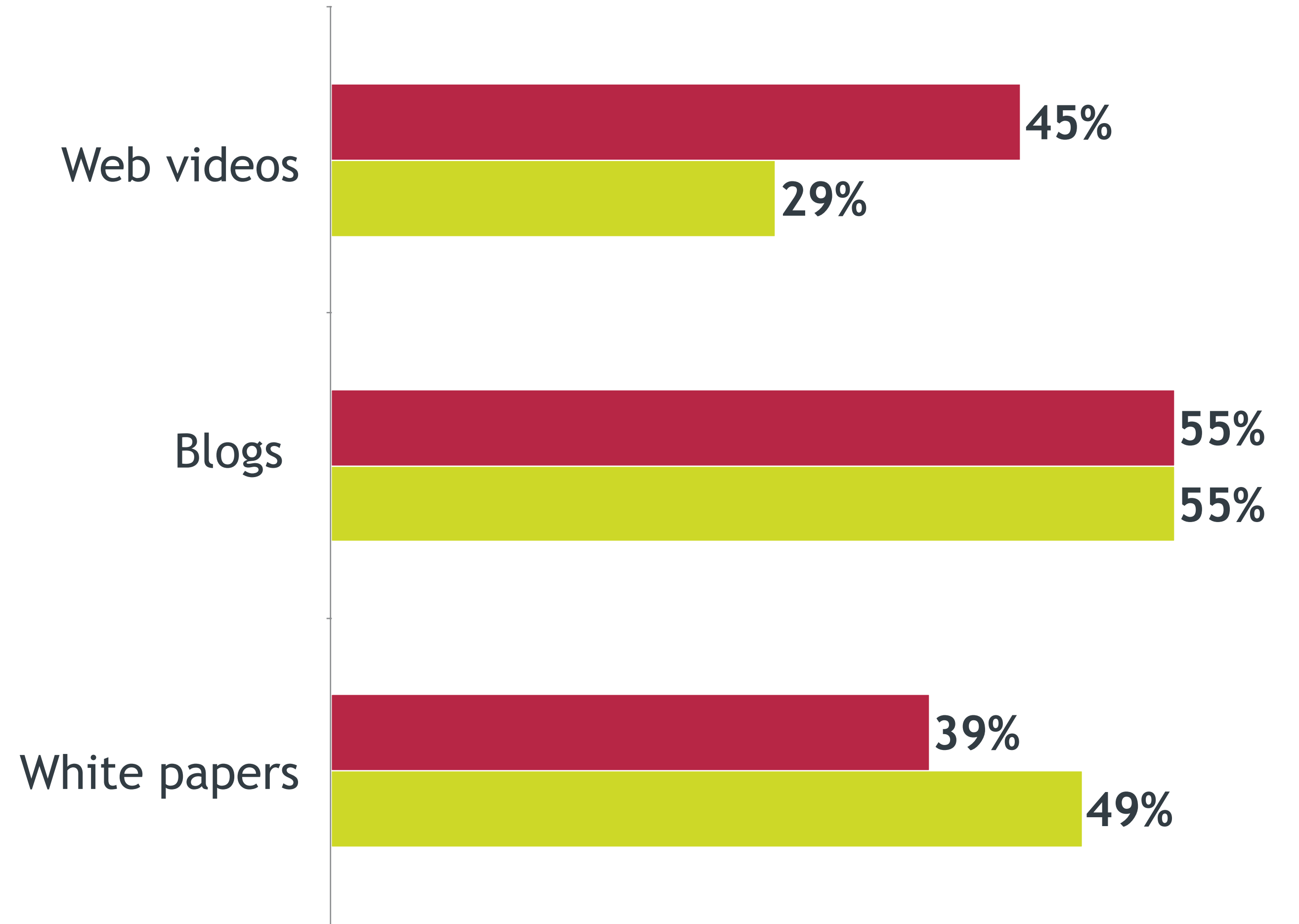
On the *earned media* front, *leaders* place more emphasis on arbiters of quality than their peers



Q: Which of the following assets were part of your most successful thought leadership campaign between 2015-2017?

Leaders
Followers

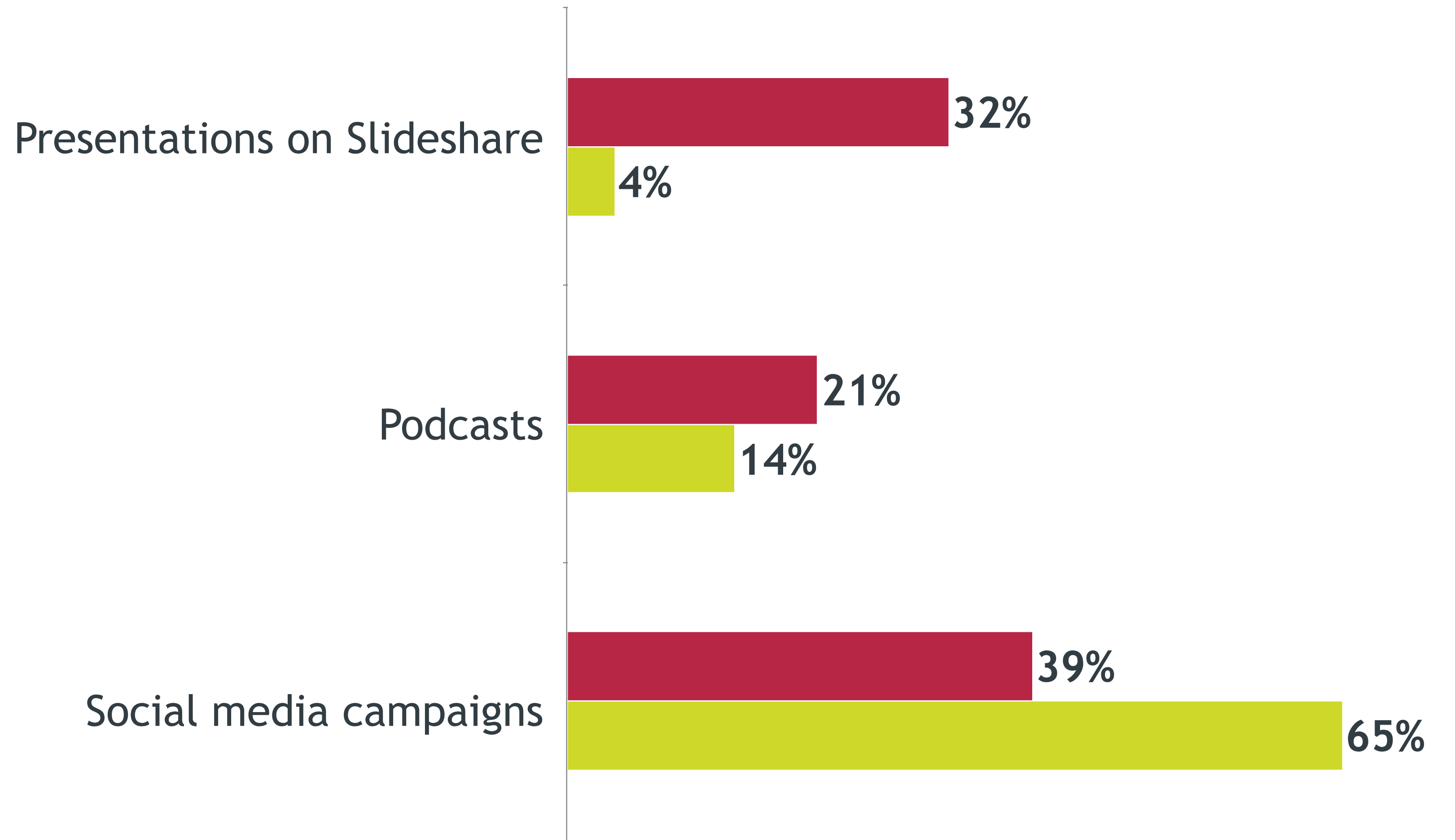
On the *owned media* front, *leaders* are ramping up investments in digital, lean-back content



Q: In your most successful thought leadership campaign between 2015-2017, which of the following did you use to promote your content?

Leaders
Followers

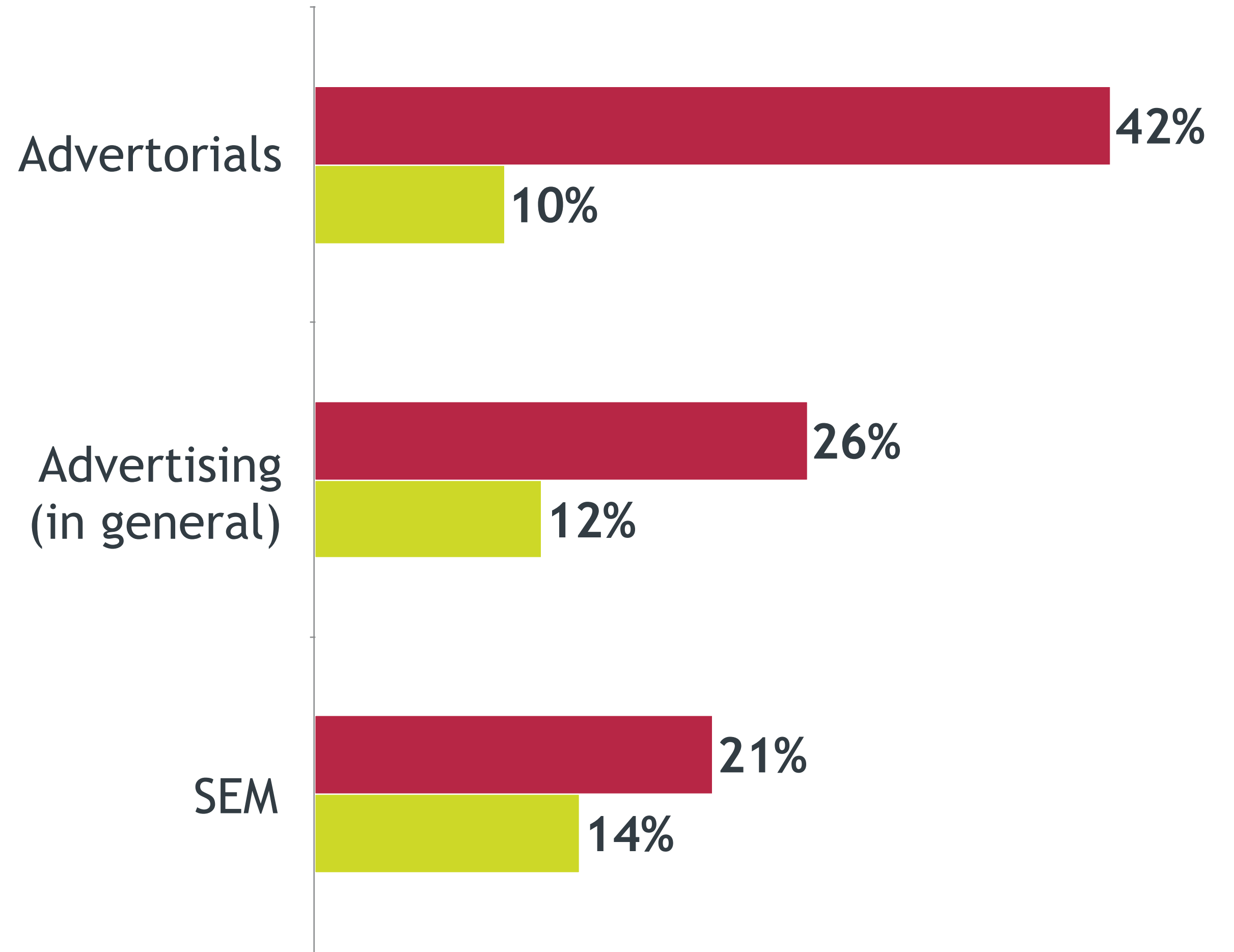
On the *social media* front, *leaders* use social as publishing platforms rather than marketing channels.



Q: In your most successful thought leadership campaign between 2015-2017, which of the following did you use to promote your content?

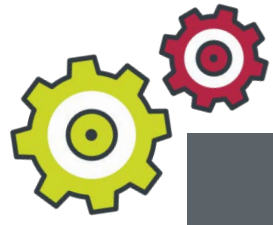
Leaders
Followers

On the *paid media* front, *leaders* are more aggressive than their peers.



Q: In your most successful thought leadership campaign between 2015-2017, which of the following did you use to promote your content?

Leaders
Followers



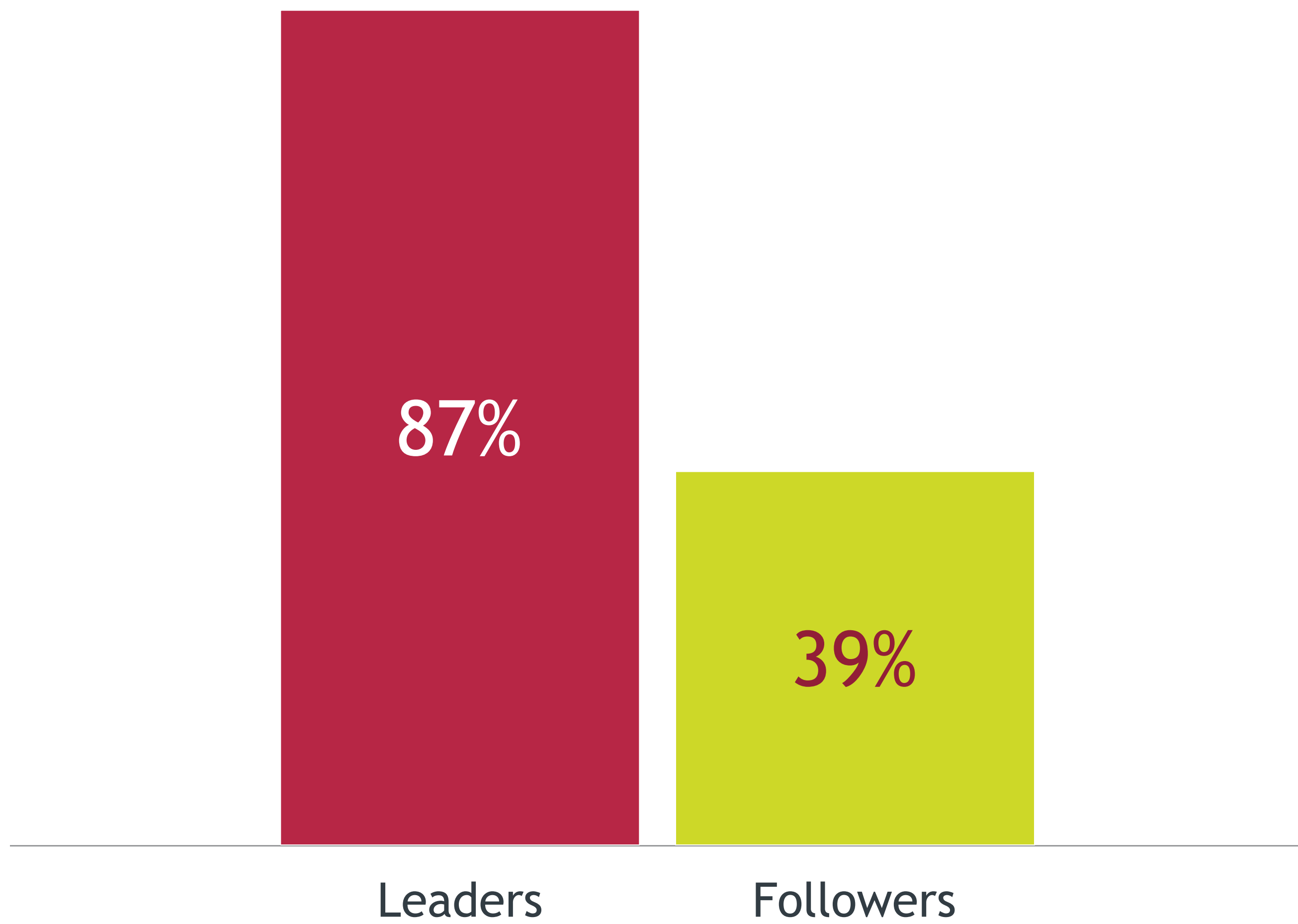
#6 - *Digital Enlighteners.*

Leaders see digital technologies as the central medium that drives everything else. This digital-first mindset enables them to shape clients learning and buying processes long before a conversation happens.



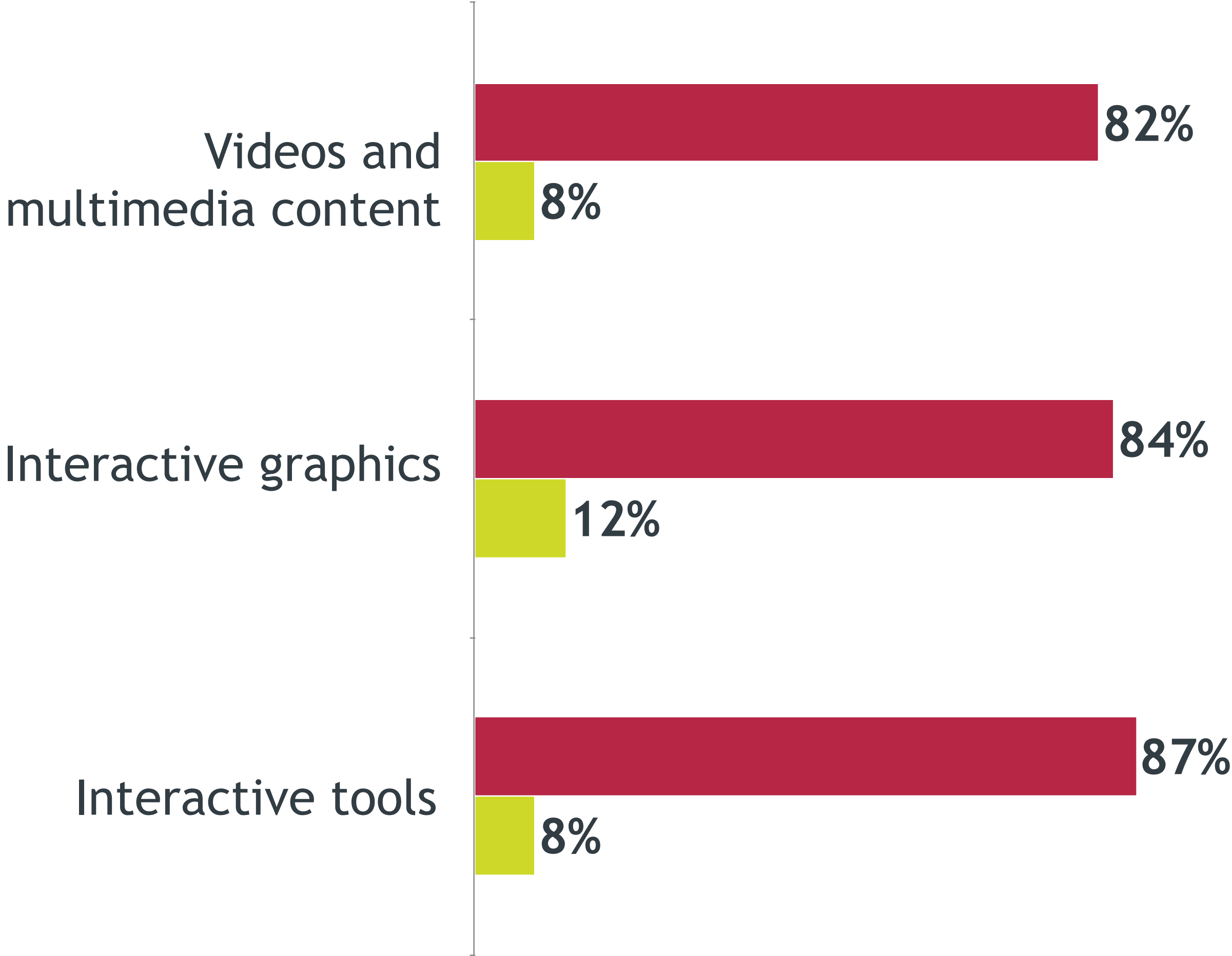
Leaders see their website as their most valuable marketing asset. Period.

Our website is our most valuable marketing asset



Percent of respondents who “strongly agree” (5) or “agree” (4) with this statement.

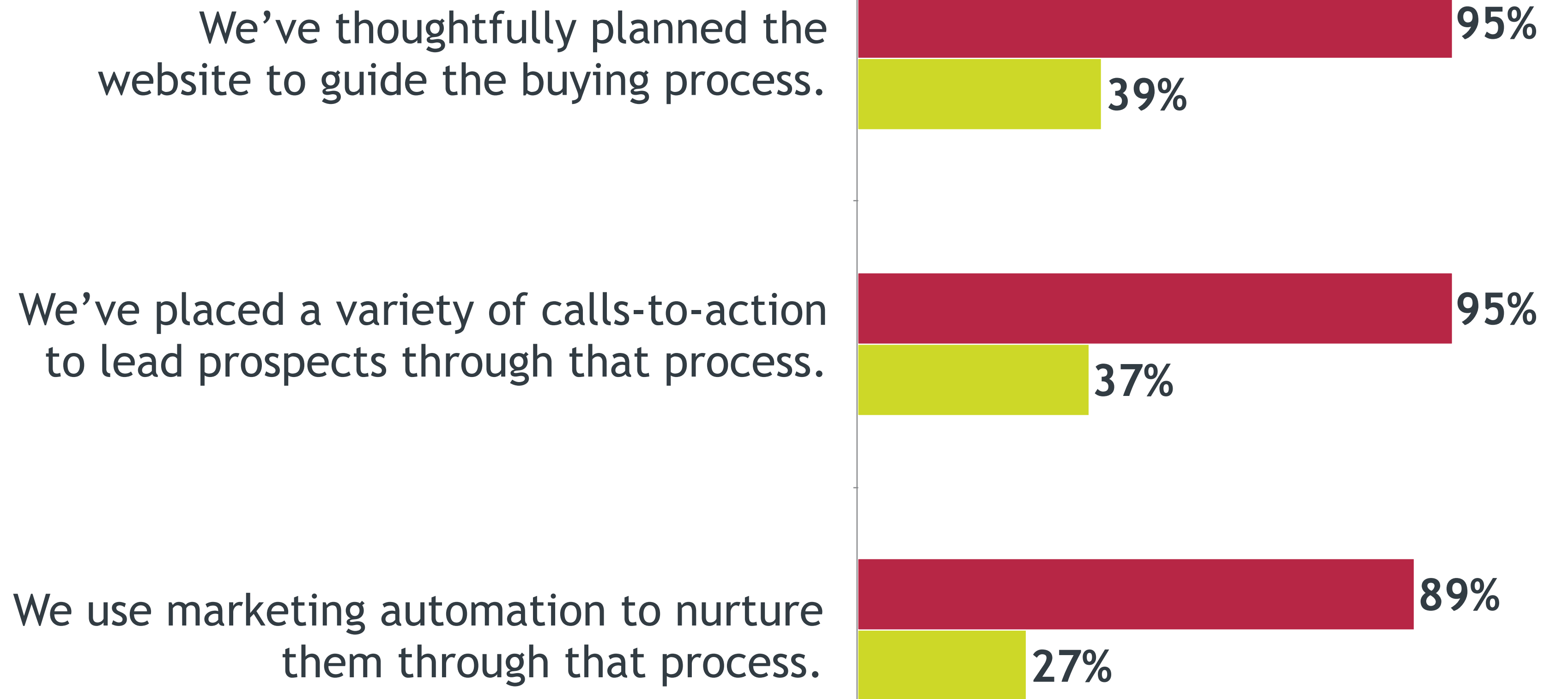
Leaders use the web to provide compelling, interactive content experiences.



Percent of respondents who use these forms of interactive content in their thought leadership programs “always” (5) or “most of the time” (4).

Leaders
Followers

Leaders guide the buying process digitally.

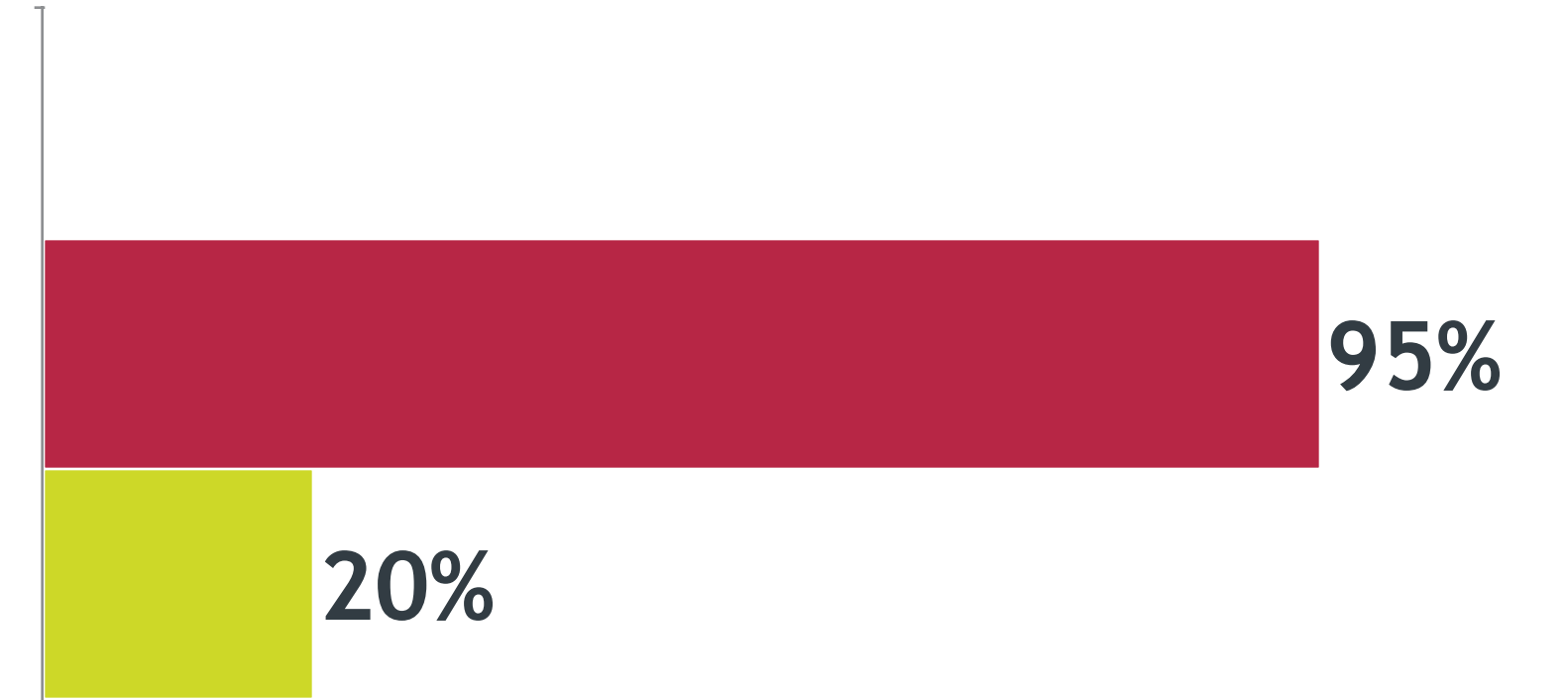


Percent of respondents who “strongly agree” (5) or “agree” (4) with these statements.

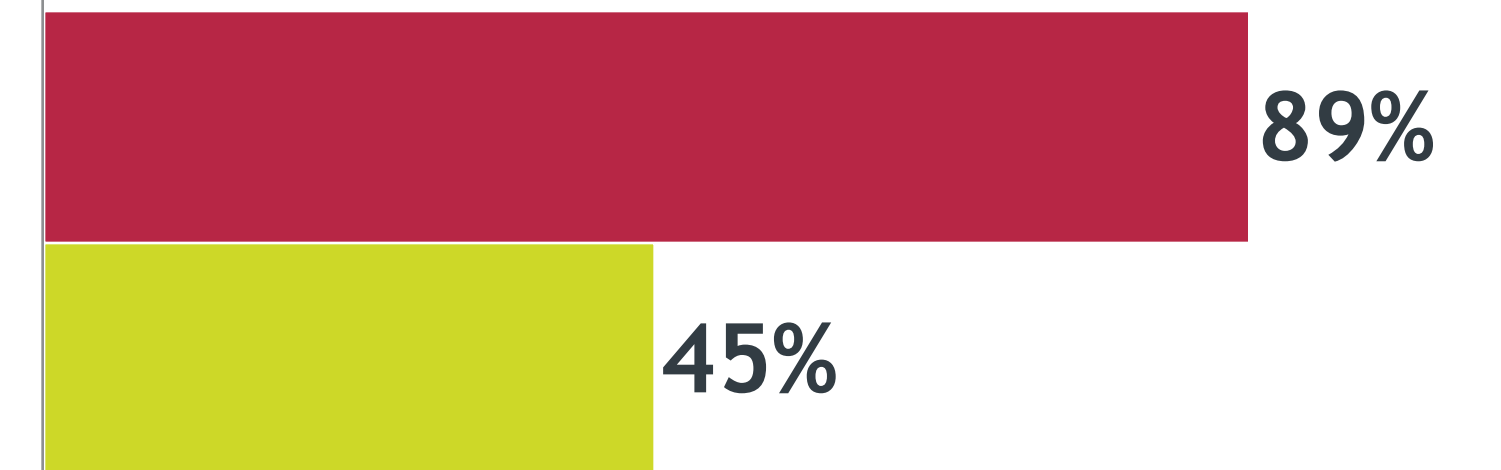
Leaders
Followers

Leaders use digital technologies to take control of the buying process.

We use lead scoring to identify high potential prospects for proactive sales outreach.



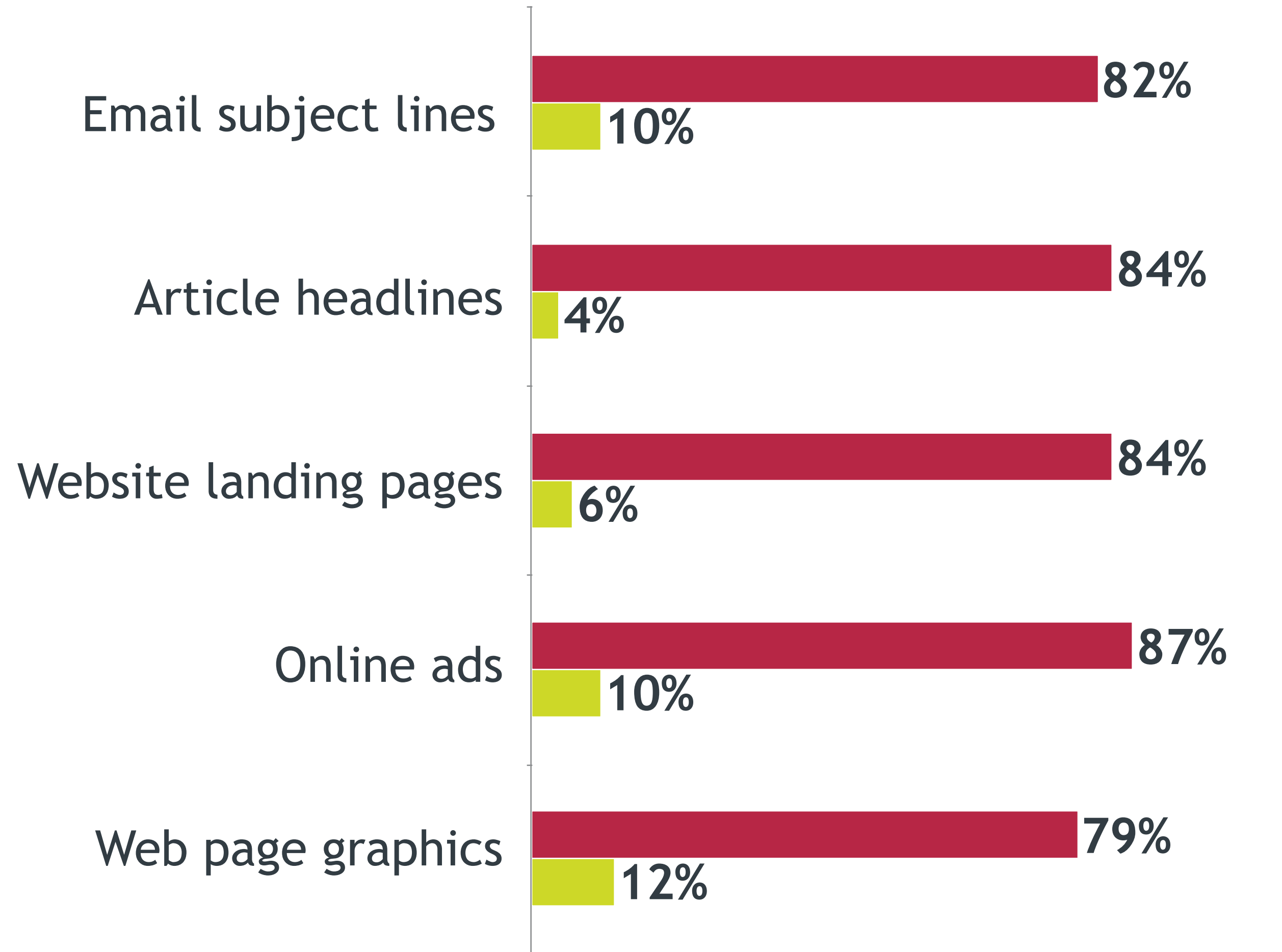
Our sales team conducts proactive outreach to prospects who've demonstrated interest in our offerings.



Percent of respondents who “strongly agree” (5) or “agree” (4) with these statements.



Leaders bring a “continuous improvement” mentality to their work



Percent of respondents who “always” (5) or “most of the time” (4) A/B test these elements of their digital marketing efforts.

Leaders
Followers

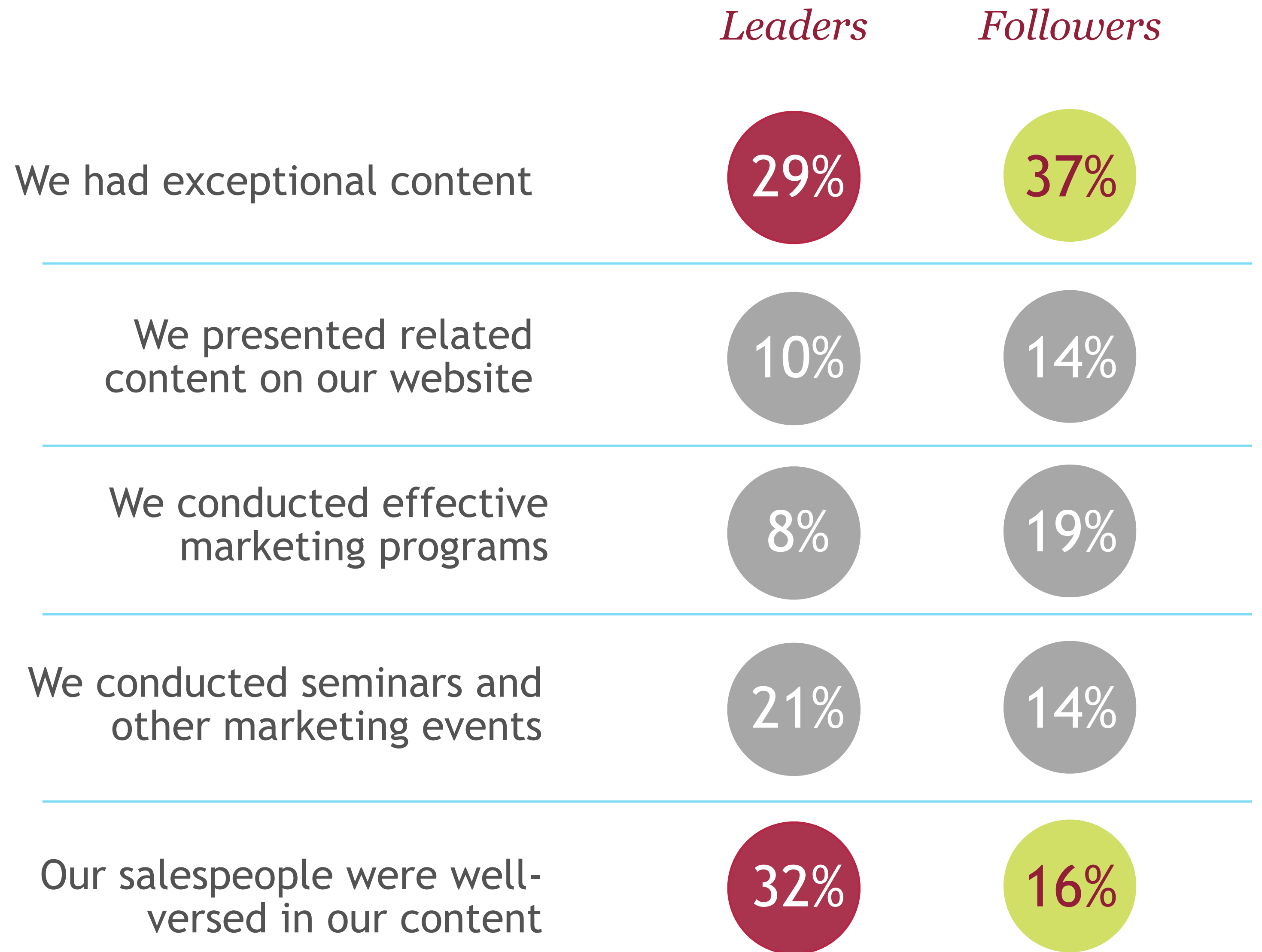


#7 - *Sales Accelerators.*

Thought leadership cannot exist within a bubble. *Leaders* work diligently to engage the people in the firm that have the most ability to make or break the success of a program – the sales team.



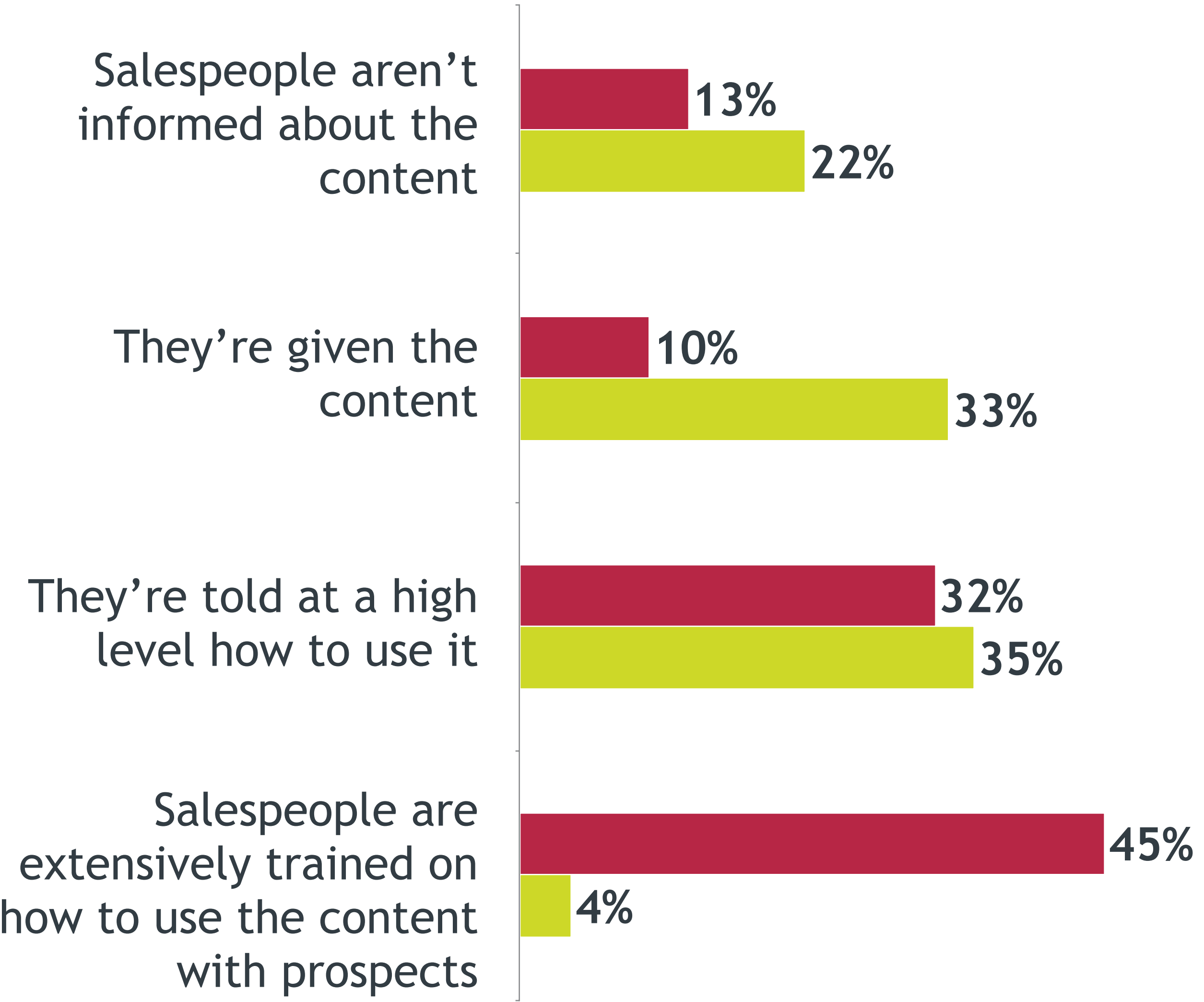
Leaders recognize that success happens in the “last mile.”



Percent of respondents who ranked each factor as the #1 most important factor in the success of their most successful campaign between 2015-2017.

Ranked Most Important

Leaders do everything possible to enable their sales teams to sell from the thought leadership they develop.



Percent of respondents who agreed with each statement.

Leaders
Followers

About the Authors



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Bob has helped clients across a range of B2B sectors publish their thinking in the right places (including numerous books, 20+ *Harvard Business Review* articles and opinion pieces in the *Financial Times*, *BusinessWeek*, *Forbes*, *CIO* magazine and other leading publications).

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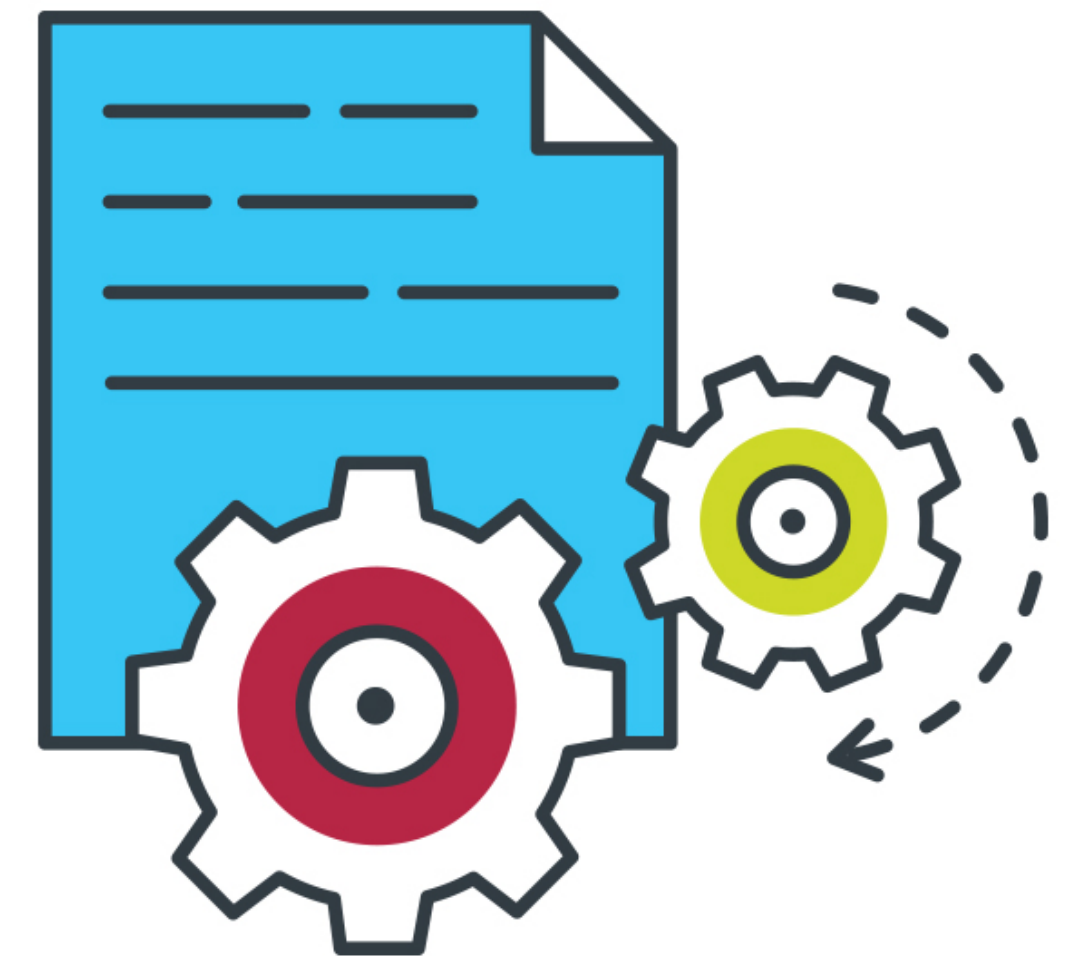
Rattleback.

Research Sponsor

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About the Research

- Research objectives:
 - Document the state of the profession
 - Determine the characteristics of top performers
- Surveyed 312 B2B companies in North America during Spring / Summer 2018
- Recruited online via email, social media and panel recruitment by Phronesis Partners
- 35 questions exploring budgets, mindsets, processes, behaviors, characteristics of firms and teams



Produced By



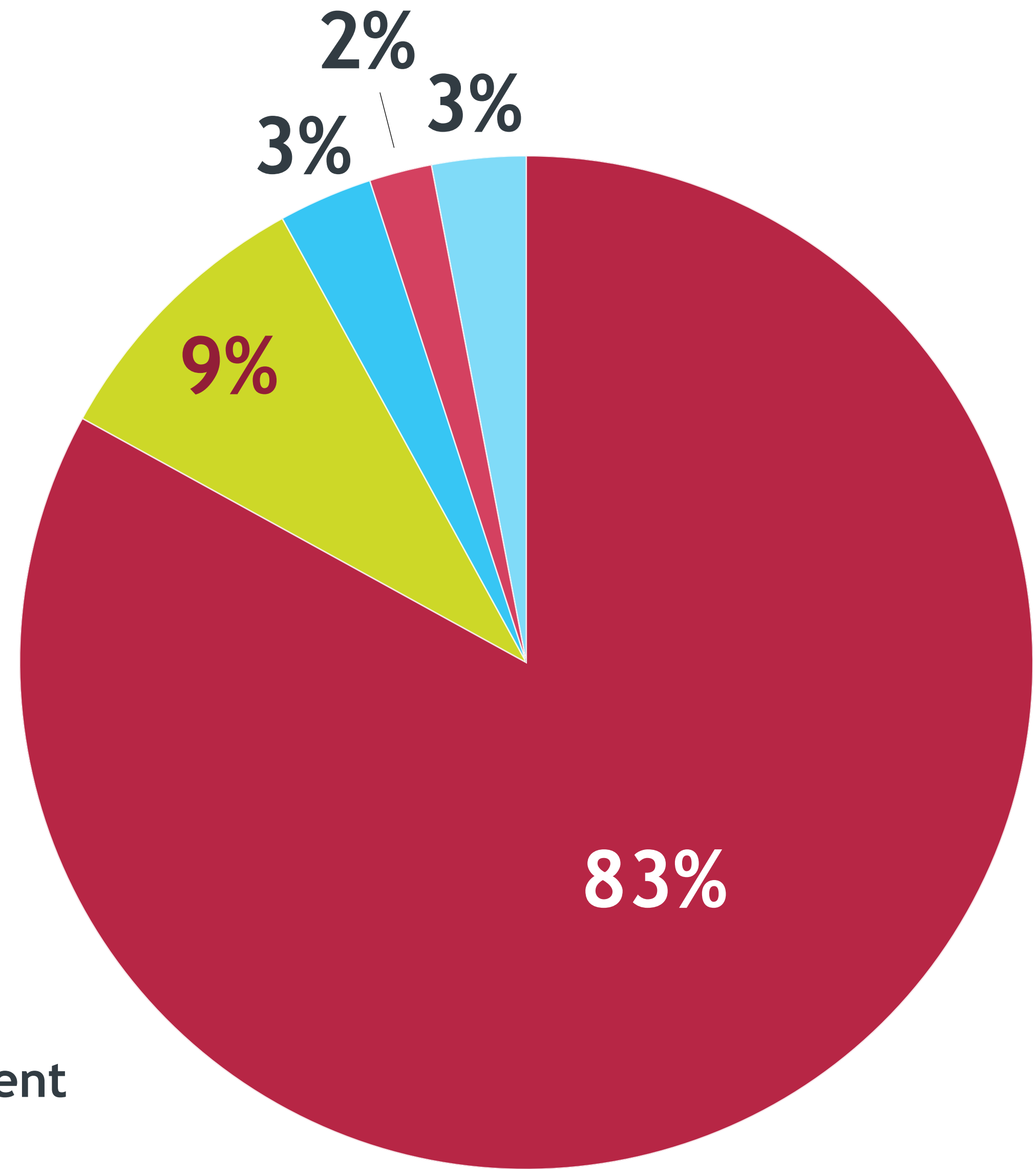
Rattleback.

Research Sponsor

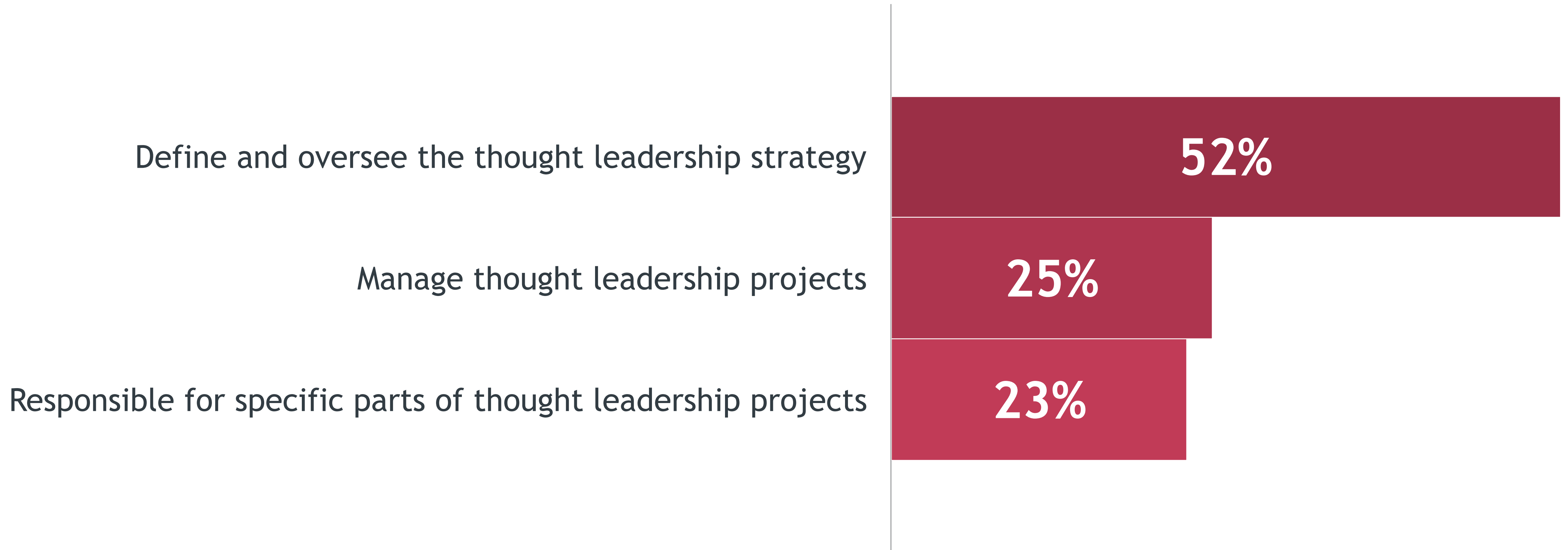
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Respondents were primarily marketers and editorial leaders...

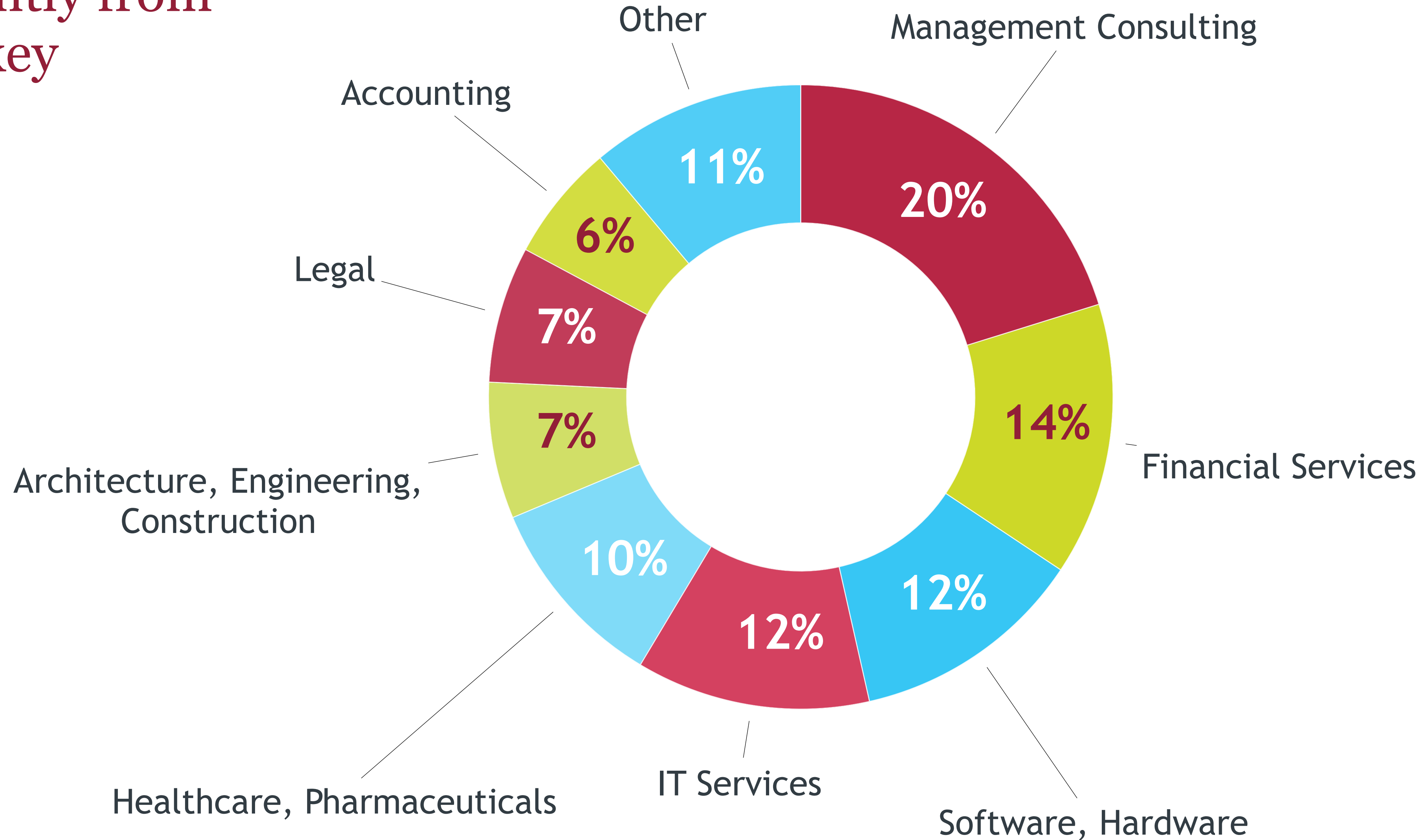
- Marketing / Editorial
- CEO / COO / Partner
- Sales
- Practice / Service Line Management
- Other



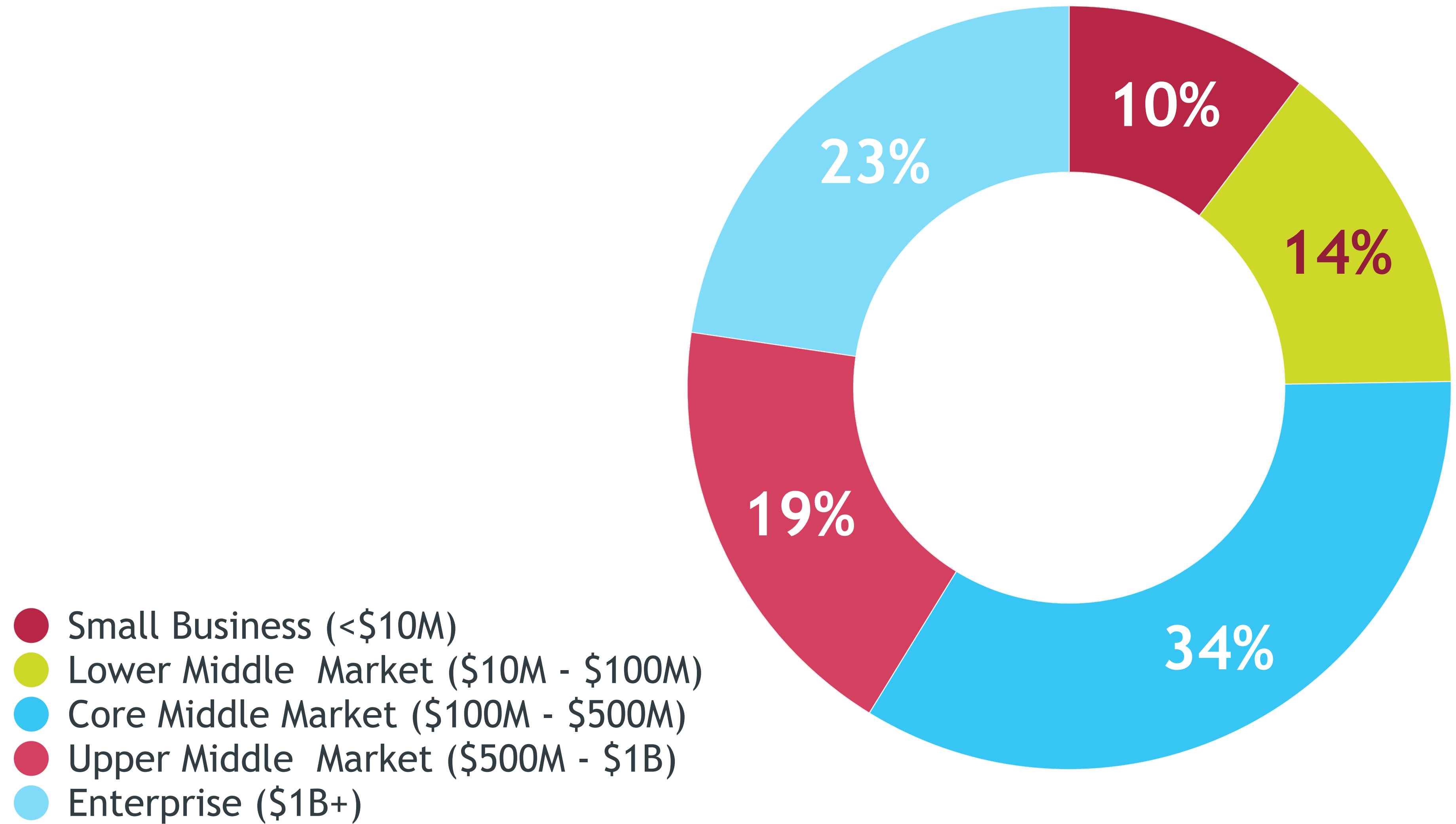
...With responsibility for setting the thought leadership agenda...



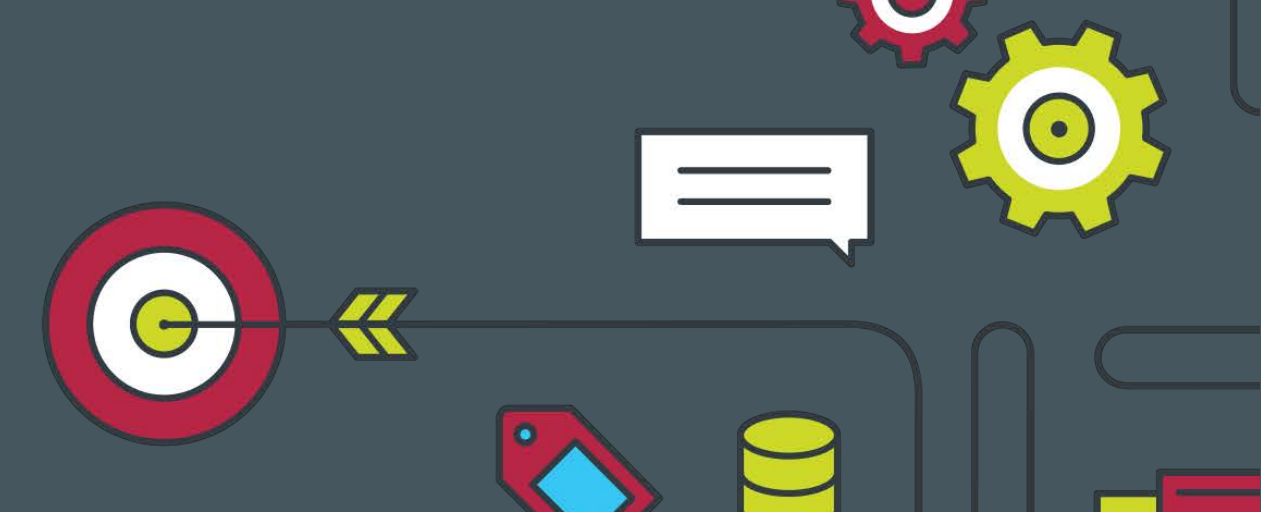
...Predominantly from one of eight key sectors...



...In companies of all sizes...



How we separated the best from the rest.



- Identified attitudinally
 - *Leaders* stated their thought leadership marketing was “extremely effective at generating strong market awareness and business leads” = 12% of sample.
 - *Followers* stated their thought leadership marketing was “not at all effective” or “not so effective” = 16% of sample.
- Same metric we used in 2015 and 2016 consulting firm studies.

