

11TH ANNUAL

B2C CONTENT MARKETING

BENCHMARKS, BUDGETS,
AND TRENDS



INSIGHTS FOR 2021



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SURVEY TERM DEFINITIONS

Content marketing: A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

Success: Achieving your organization’s desired/targeted results.

Note: In instances where we observed notable year-over-year differences, this report contains comparisons with findings from last year’s 10th annual survey—reported on in *B2C Content Marketing 2020: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends*.



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Welcome to our annual B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends report. Here we present the results from B2C marketers who replied to our 11th Annual Content Marketing Survey.

The events of 2020 have certainly reshaped how organizations conduct their marketing. At the time of this survey, content marketers were still reeling from the events that took place during the first half of 2020. As we usher in 2021, we are still facing constant change and uncertainty.

Many B2C marketers reported adjusting quickly when the pandemic hit; perhaps their companies were doubling down on digital, heavily engaging in virtual events, or trying to keep on top of rapidly changing analytics resulting from more people being at home and online. All these scenarios created the need for new content, formats, and strategies.

As we move into 2021 in a world where most gatherings are still limited, direct-to-consumer will continue to drive B2C. Successful B2C marketers will focus on creating content experiences and building relationships in the digital world.

B2C content marketers are becoming more strategic.

Seventy-three percent of respondents report their organization has a content marketing strategy. Of those, 42% have a documented strategy, up from 33% the previous year. See page 7.



They responded quickly when the pandemic hit.

Eighty-two percent agree their organization made quick changes due to the pandemic. The top reported adjustment was “changed our targeting/messaging strategy” (63%). See pages 8 and 9.

Many have small content marketing teams.

Consistent with our past research, 52% report their organization has a small (or one-person) marketing/content marketing team serving the entire organization. See page 13.



Livestreaming video saw a big jump in use.

When we looked at the content types B2C marketers are using compared with one year ago, livestreaming video had the biggest increase (35% vs. 13% the previous year). See page 20.

Nearly half have established online communities.

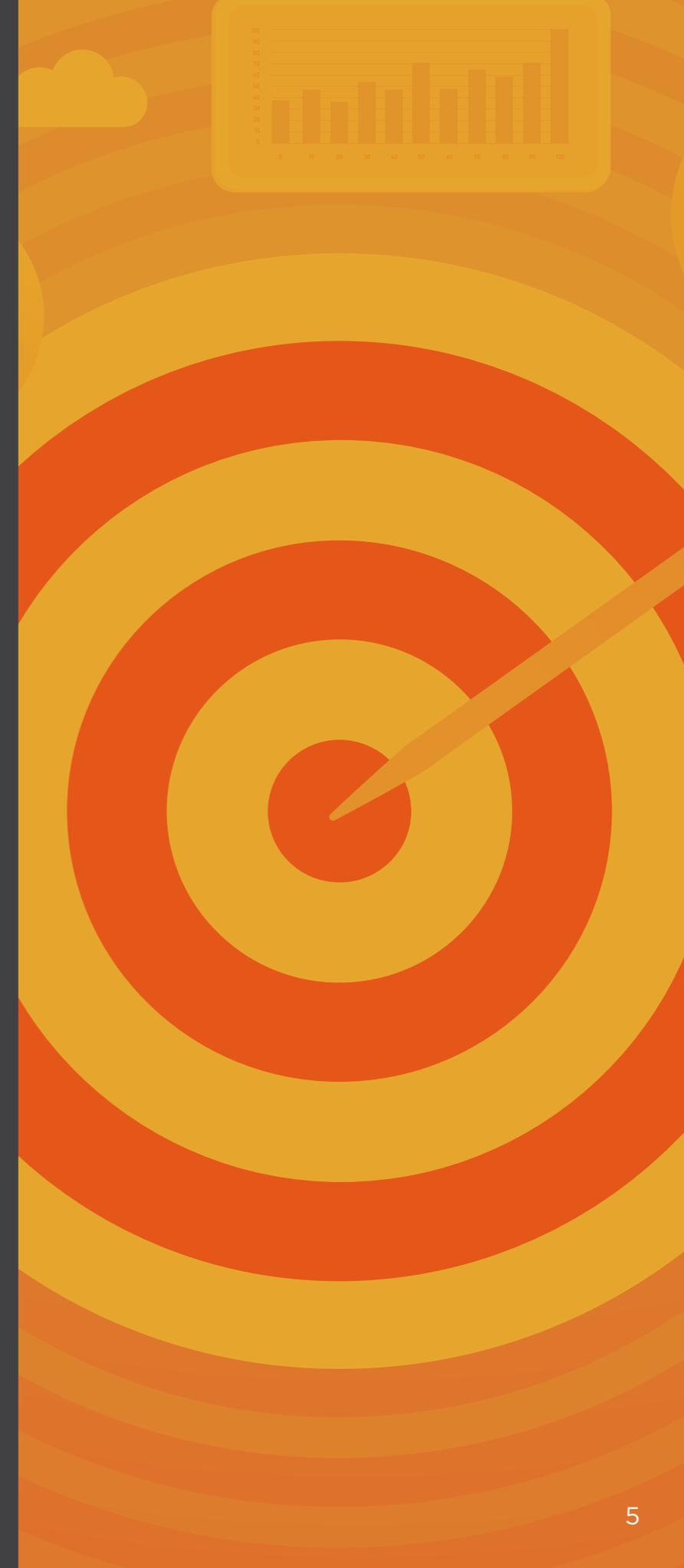
Forty-eight percent say their organization has established an online community. The survey defined an online community as a *space where your audience can engage with each other and your brand in the form of discussions, posts, surveys, etc.* See page 21.



Facebook is the top social media platform.

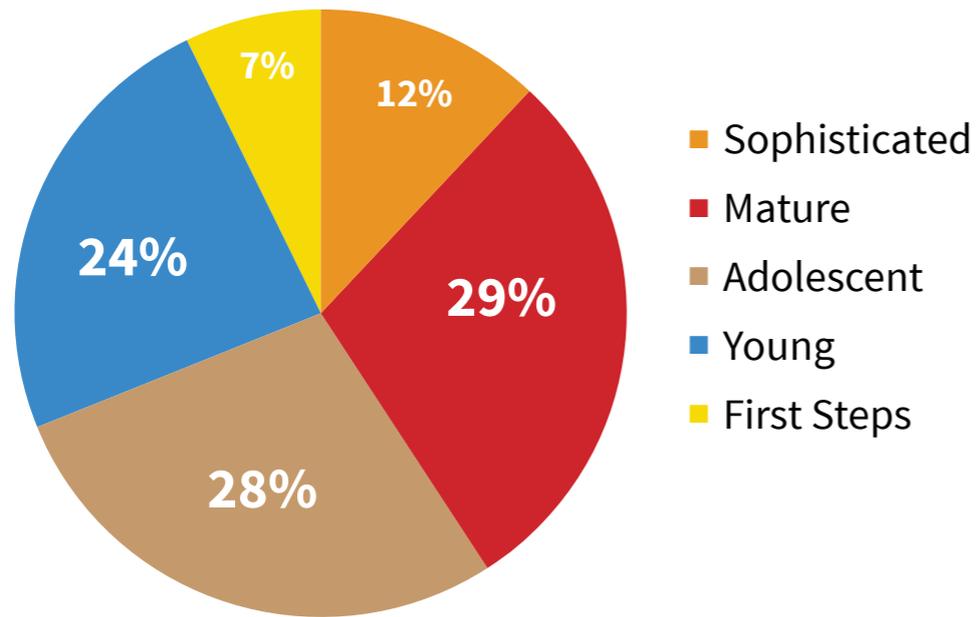
Facebook is the social media platform that B2C marketers use most often (both organic and paid). That was also the case last year. The use of organic Instagram and YouTube increased over last year, by seven and 10 percentage points, respectively. See pages 23 and 25.

MATURITY & STRATEGY



41% of B2C marketers report their organization is in the sophisticated/mature phase of content marketing maturity.

How B2C Marketers Rate Their Organization's Content Marketing Maturity Level



Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

SOPHISTICATED

Providing accurate measurement to the business, scaling across the organization

MATURE

Finding success, yet challenged with integration across the organization

ADOLESCENT

Possessing a business case, seeing early success, becoming more sophisticated with measurement and scaling

YOUNG

Experiencing growing pains, challenged with creating a cohesive strategy and a measurement plan

FIRST STEPS

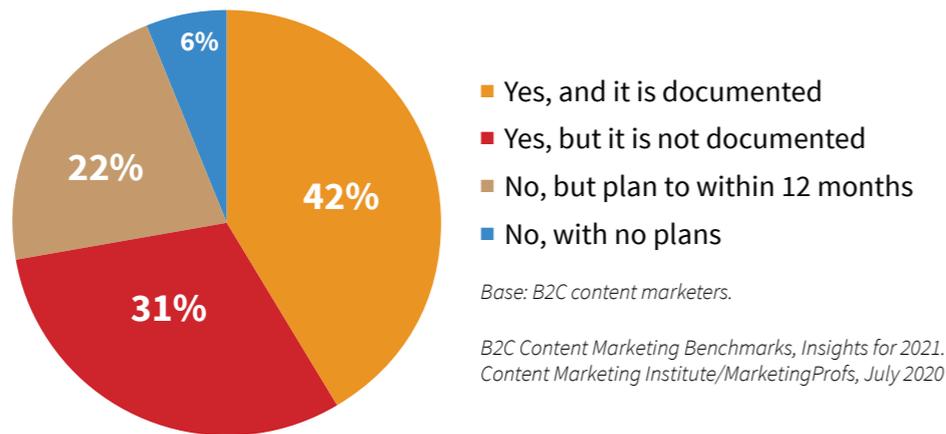
Doing some aspects of content, but have not yet begun to make content marketing a process

MATURITY & STRATEGY

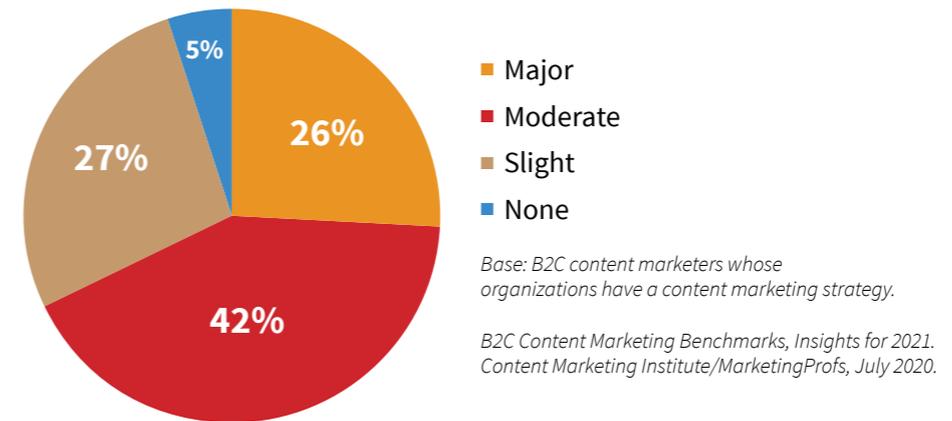
42% of B2C marketers indicate their organization has a documented content marketing strategy, up from 33% the previous year.

- ▶ 68% report their organization made major or moderate adjustments to their content marketing strategy in response to the pandemic.
- ▶ 51% describe the adjustments as both short- and long-term.

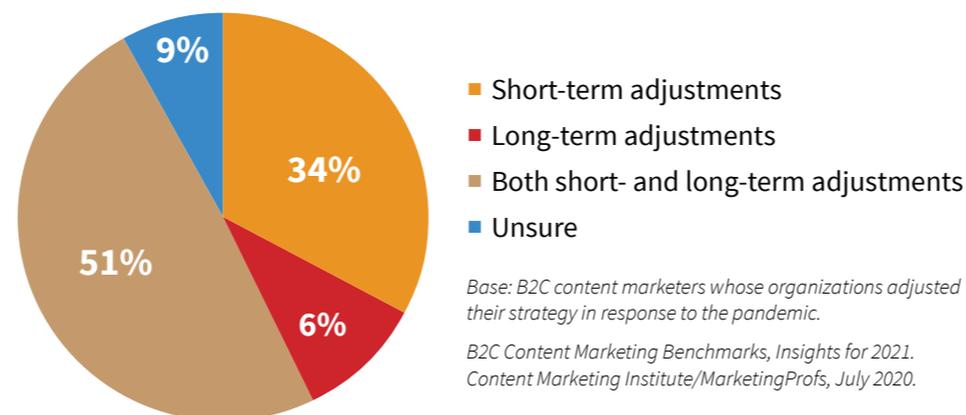
Percentage of B2C Marketers With a Content Marketing Strategy



Impact of Pandemic on B2C Content Marketing Strategy

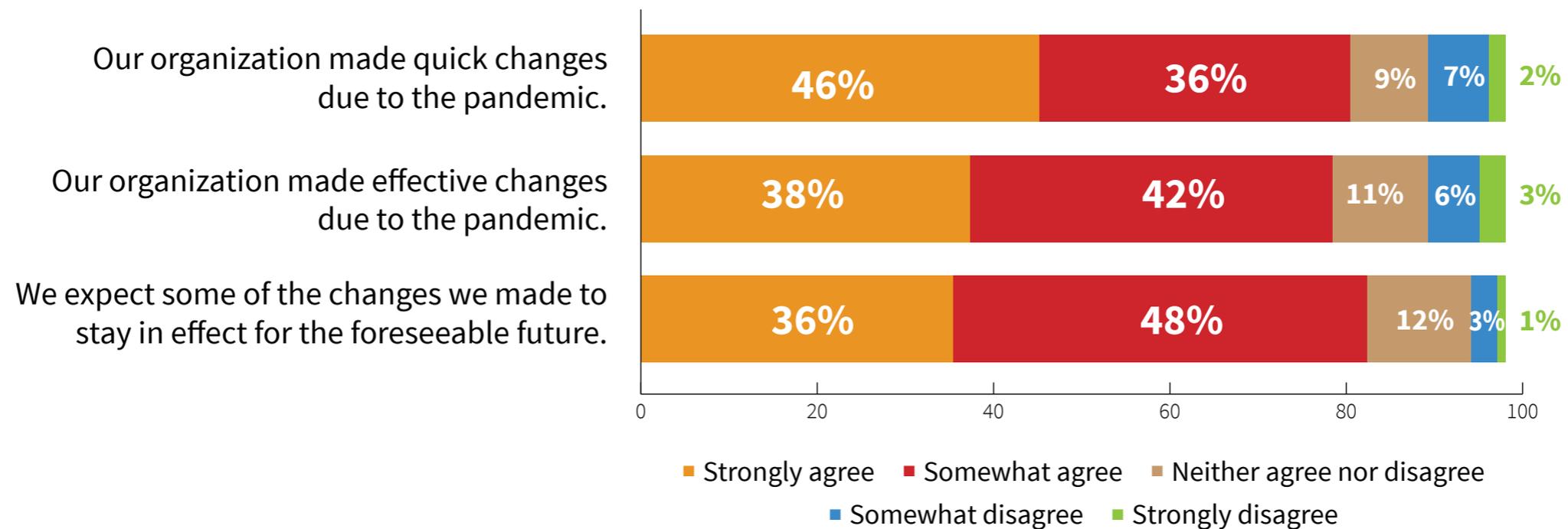


Nature of Adjustments Made to B2C Content Marketing Strategy as a Result of Pandemic



Most B2C marketers surveyed agree their organization made quick and effective pandemic-related changes and expect the changes to stay in effect for the foreseeable future.

B2C Marketers' Opinions About Changes Their Organization Made to Content Marketing in Response to Pandemic



*Base: B2C content marketers who answered each statement.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.*

63% of B2C marketers surveyed changed their messaging/targeting strategy in response to the pandemic. Far fewer took actions such as revisiting customer personas (18%) and changing their content marketing metrics (13%).

Content Marketing Changes B2C Organizations Made in Response to the Pandemic



Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations made at least one of the changes shown on the aided list. Multiple responses permitted. B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

TEAM STRUCTURE & OUTSOURCING



60% of all respondents said the size of their content marketing team was the same as 12 months ago. Around one-third of those from large organizations reported an increase.

Size of B2C Content Marketing Team Compared With 12 Months Ago

	All Respondents	1-99 Employees	100+ Employees
Increased	27%	21%	34%
Stayed the same	60%	67%	52%
Decreased	13%	13%	15%

*Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.*

Large B2C organizations tend to have bigger content marketing teams, often in the two- to five-employee range.

B2C Organizations' Content Marketing Team Size (Full Time/Dedicated to Content Marketing)

	All Respondents	1-99 Employees	100+ Employees
11+	7%	2%	13%
6-10	6%	3%	10%
2-5	37%	31%	42%
1	25%	29%	20%
0 (no one is full time, dedicated)	26%	36%	15%

Base: B2C content marketers.

B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

Half of the B2C marketers surveyed report small (or one-person) marketing/content marketing teams serving the entire organization.

B2C Organizations' Content Marketing Team Structure

	All Respondents	1-99 Employees	100+ Employees
We have a small (or one-person) marketing/content marketing team serving the entire organization.	52%	70%	32%
We have a centralized content marketing group that works with multiple brands/products/departments throughout the organization.	23%	17%	30%
Both — We have a centralized group and individual teams throughout the organization.	20%	10%	31%
Each brand/product/department has its own content marketing team.	5%	3%	7%

Base: B2C content marketers.

B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

49% of B2C marketers report their organization outsources at least one content marketing activity, with large companies being more likely to outsource.

Does Your B2C Organization Outsource Any Content Marketing Activities?

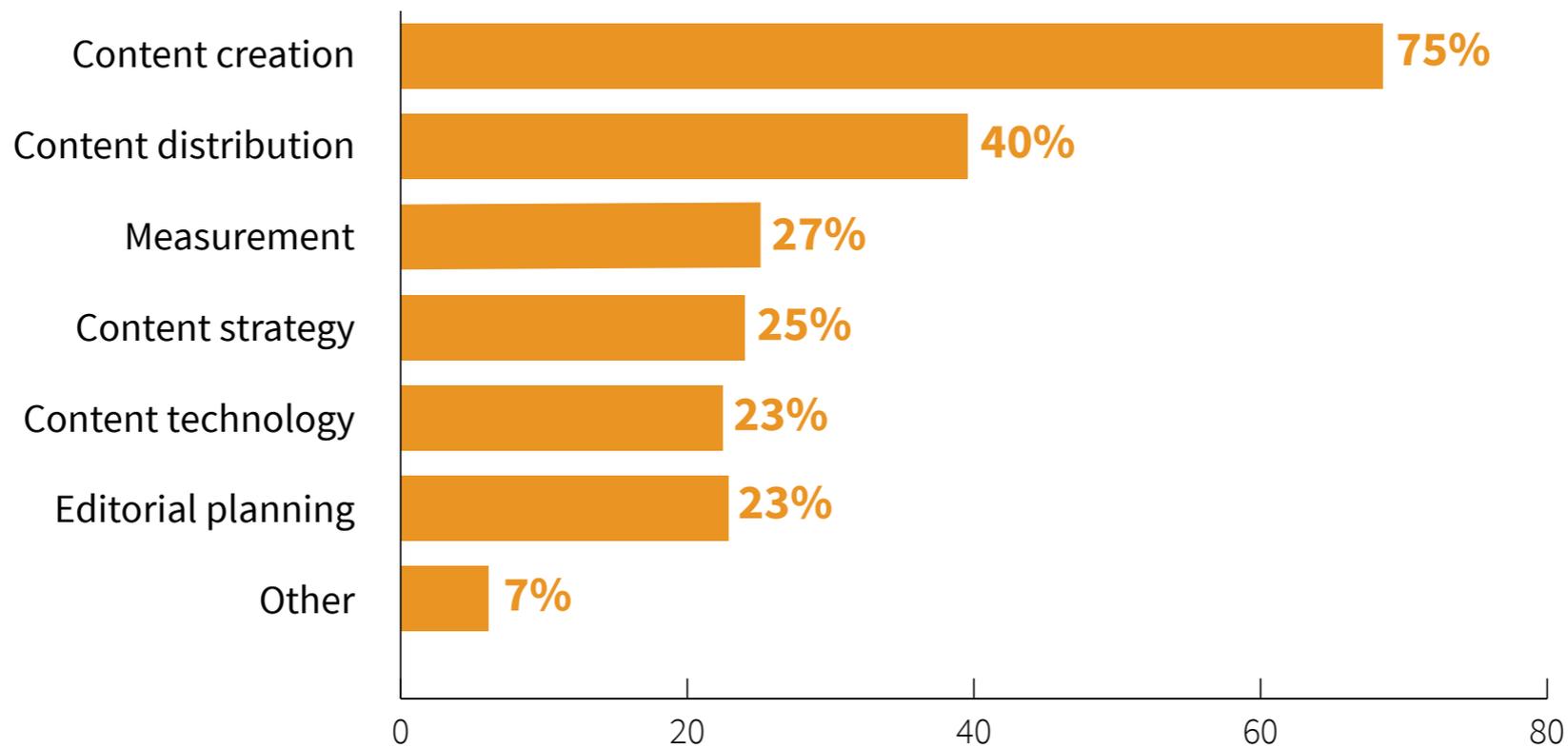
	All Respondents	1-99 Employees	100+ Employees
Yes	49%	42%	56%
No	51%	58%	44%

Base: B2C content marketers.

B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

Among those who outsource, content creation is the activity most outsourced by far.

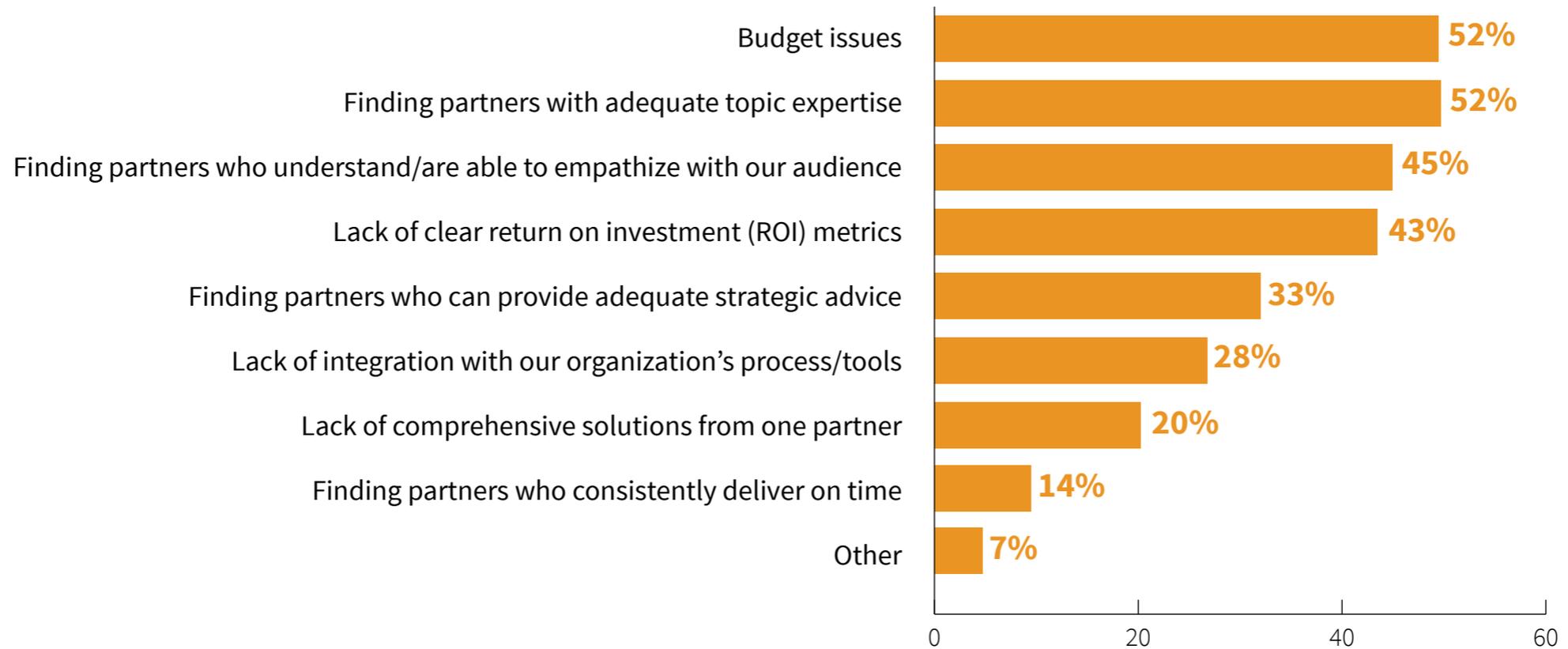
Content Marketing Activities B2C Organizations Outsource



Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations outsource at least one content marketing activity. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

B2C marketers who outsource at least one content marketing activity say their biggest challenges are budget issues (52%) and finding partners with adequate topic expertise (52%).

Top 5 Challenges When Seeking Outsourced B2C Content Marketing Help



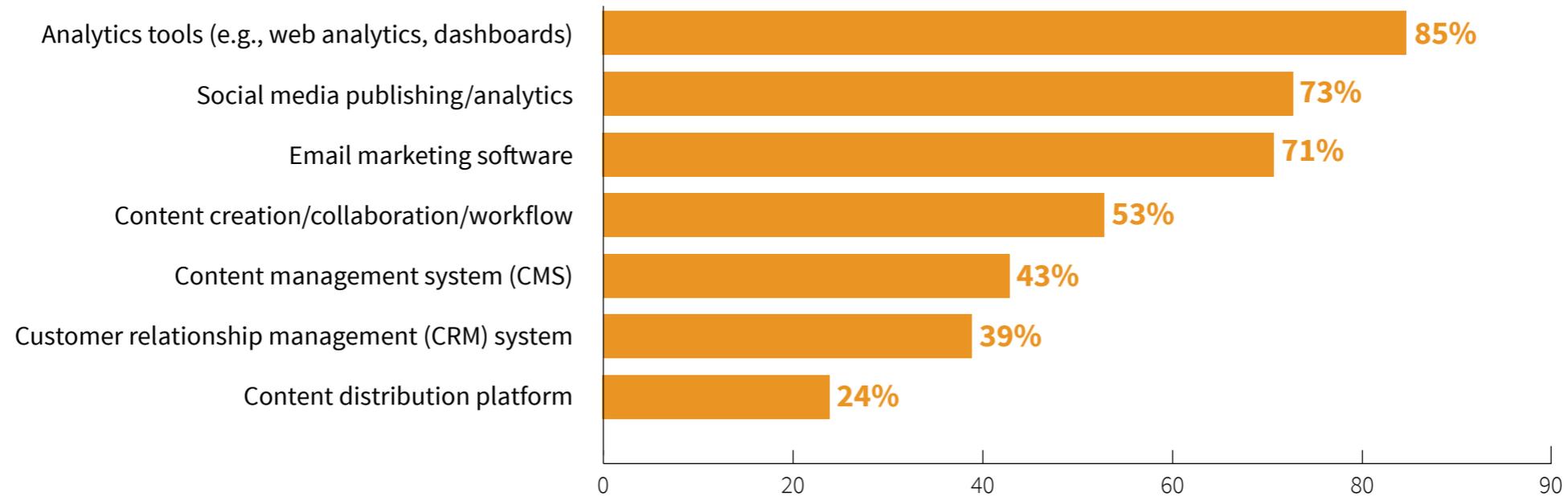
Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations outsource at least one content marketing activity. Aided list; up to five responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

CONTENT CREATION & DISTRIBUTION



The top three technologies B2C marketers report using to assist with content marketing are analytics tools (85%), social media publishing/analytics (73%), and email marketing software (71%).

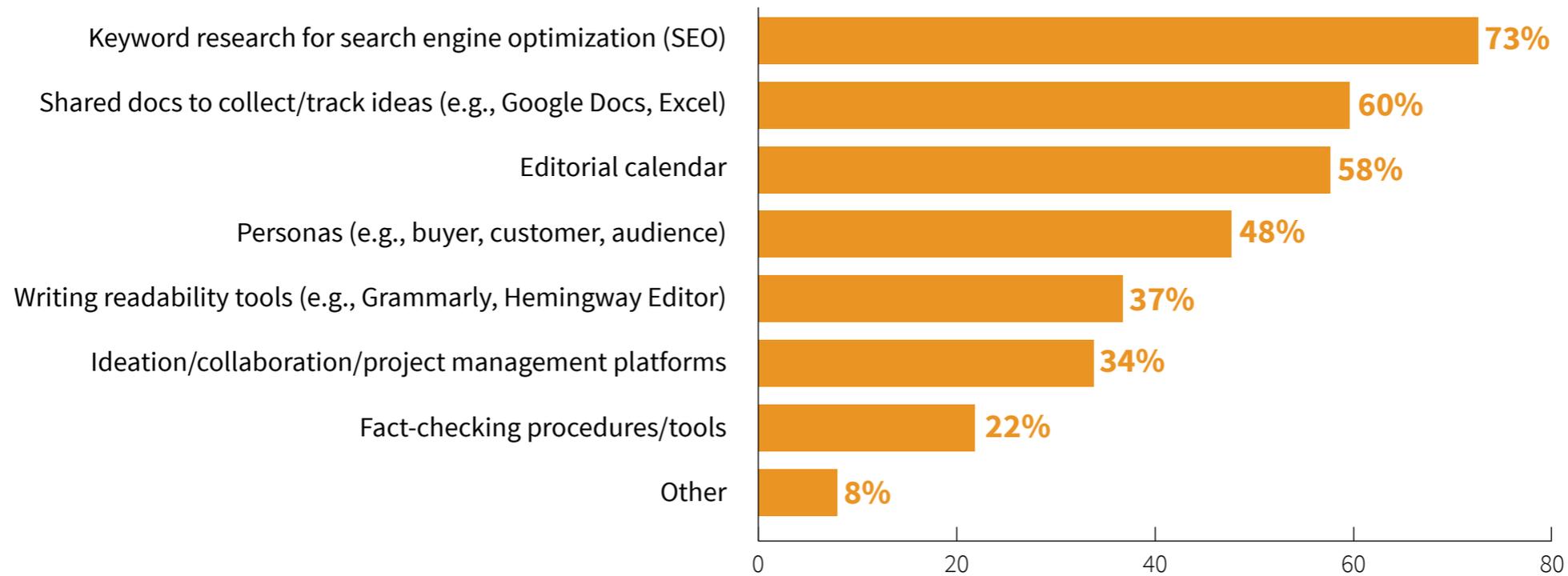
Technologies B2C Organizations Use to Assist With Content Marketing



Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingPros, July 2020.

73% of B2C marketers say they use keyword research tools for search engine optimization (SEO) during the content creation process.

Editorial Tools B2C Marketers Use While Creating Content



Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

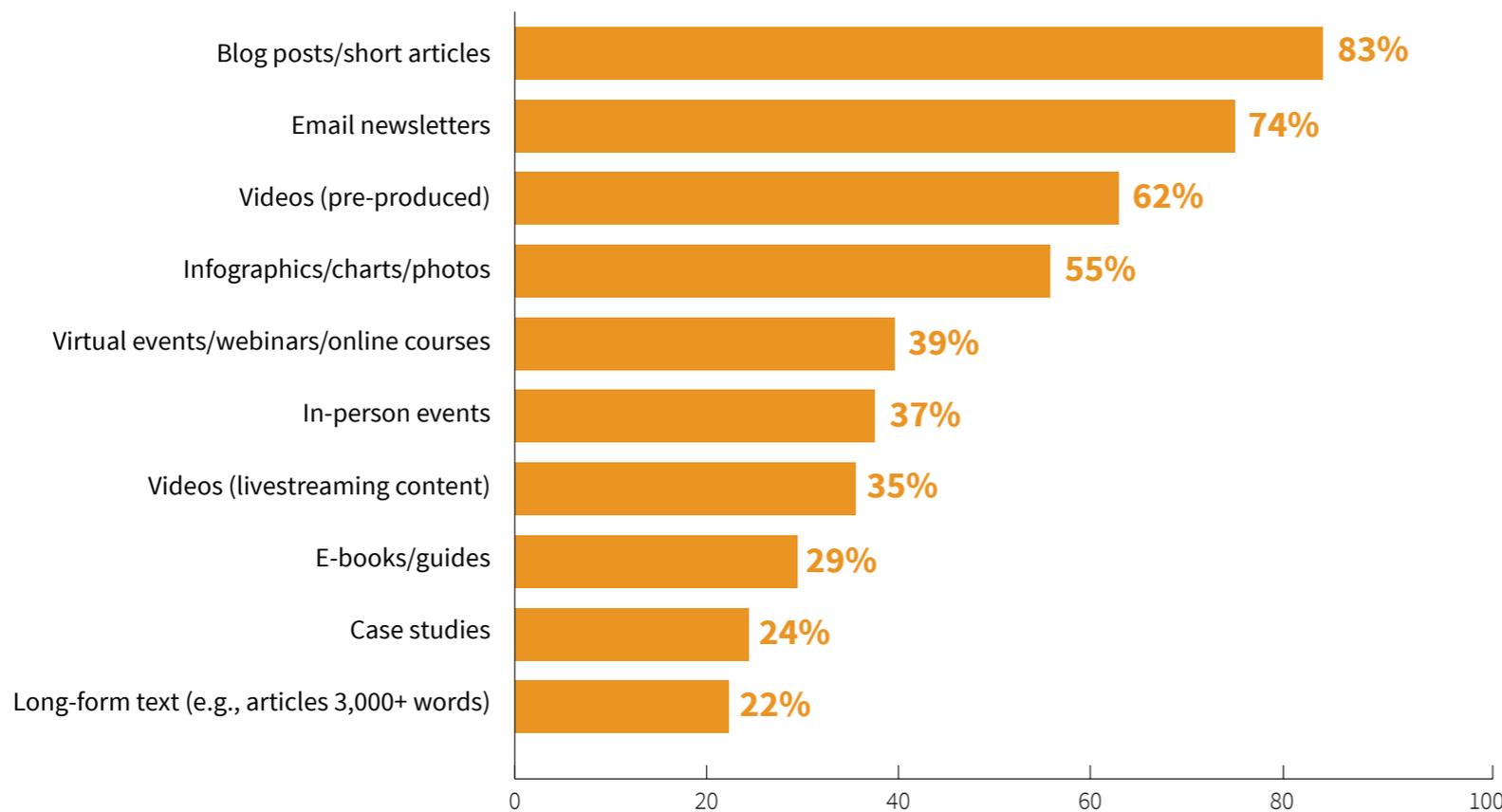
CONTENT CREATION & DISTRIBUTION

The top four types of content B2C marketers report using are blog posts/short articles (83%), email newsletters (74%), videos (pre-produced) (62%), and infographics/charts/photos (55%).

Notable differences from last year:

- ▶ Virtual events/webinars/online courses increased to 39% from 27%.
- ▶ In-person events decreased to 37% from 50%.
- ▶ Livestreaming content increased to 35% from 13%.

Content Types B2C Marketers Used in Last 12 Months



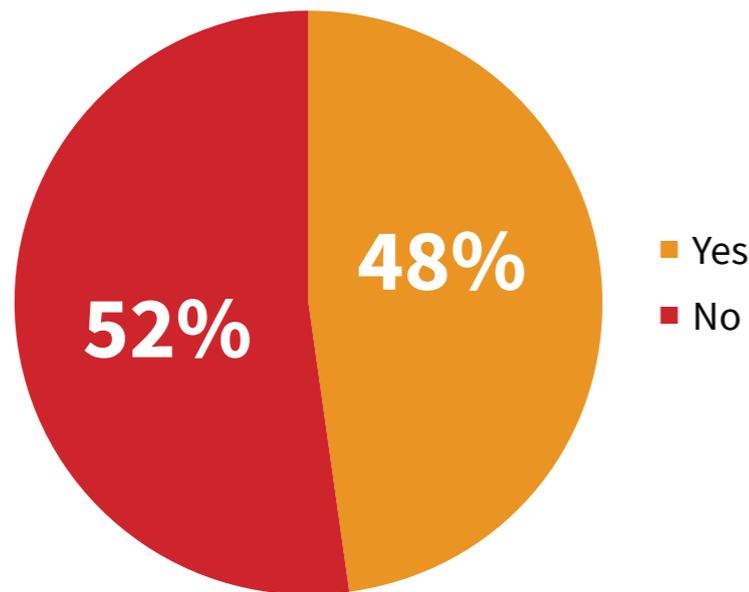
Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

B2C marketers who use at least two content types reported that **blog posts/short articles, email newsletters** (tied at 26%), and **pre-produced videos** (13%) produced the best overall content marketing results for their organization in the last 12 months.

Other content types used in last 12 months: Digital magazines (19%), podcasts (19%), print magazines (18%), research reports (13%), white papers (13%), print books (7%), and other (8%).

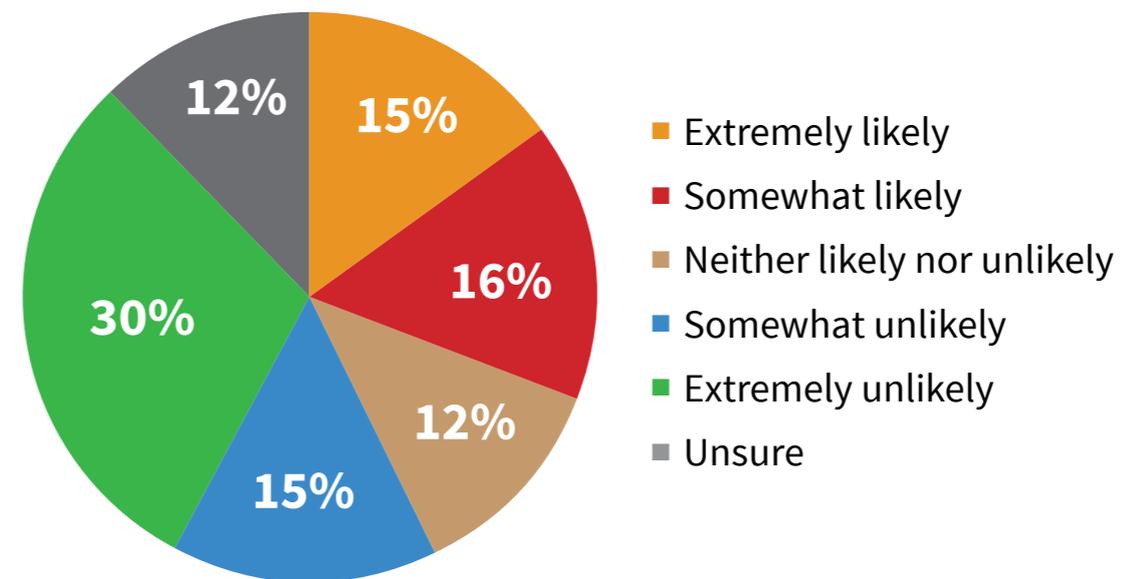
48% of B2C marketers indicate their organization has established an online community. Among those who have not, 31% say they are likely to within the next 12 months, while another 45% say they are unlikely to.

Has Your B2C Organization Established an Online Community?



Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

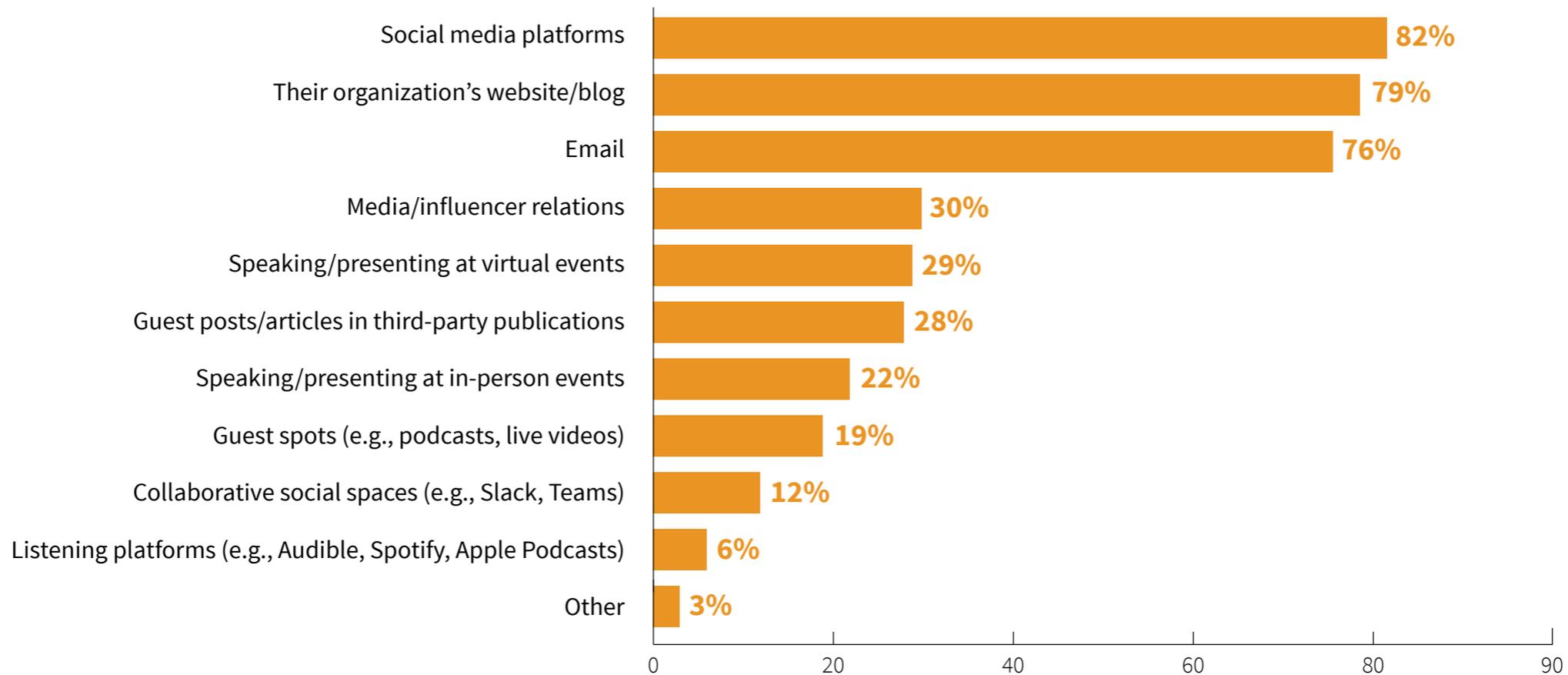
How Likely is Your B2C Organization to Establish an Online Community in the Next 12 Months?



Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations have not established an online community.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

The top three organic content distribution channels B2C marketers report using are social media platforms (82%), their organization’s website/blog (79%), and email (76%).

Organic Content Distribution Channels B2C Marketers Used in Last 12 Months



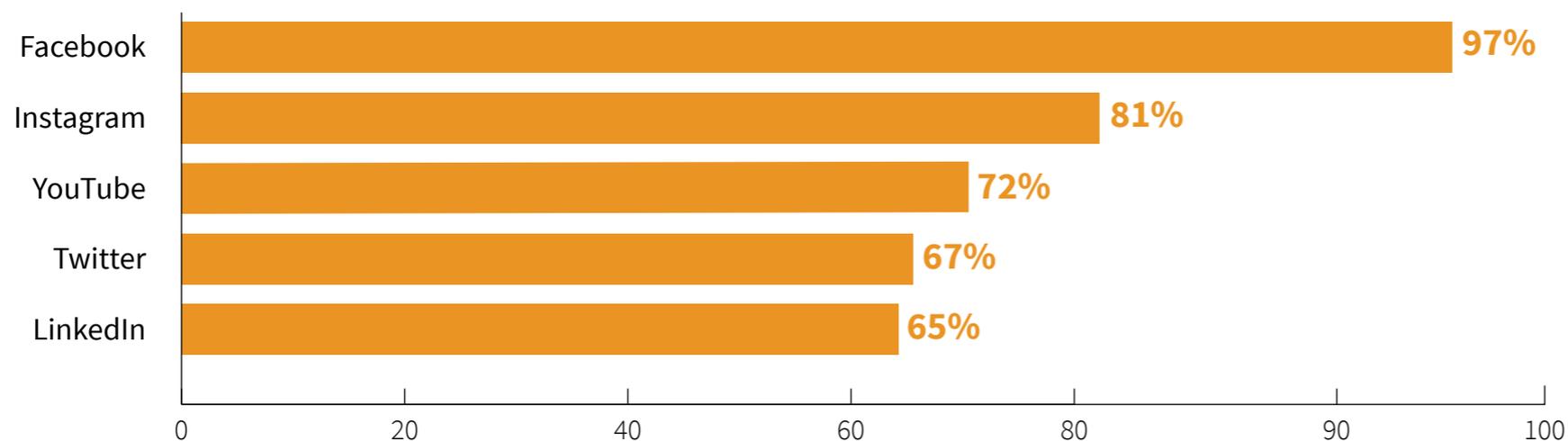
Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

B2C marketers use Facebook as their top organic social media platform for content distribution.

These percentages are similar to last year, with two notable exceptions:

- ▶ Instagram increased to 81% from 74%.
- ▶ YouTube increased to 72% from 62%.

Organic Social Media Platforms B2C Content Marketers Used in Last 12 Months



Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations used organic social media platforms to distribute content in the last 12 months.

Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

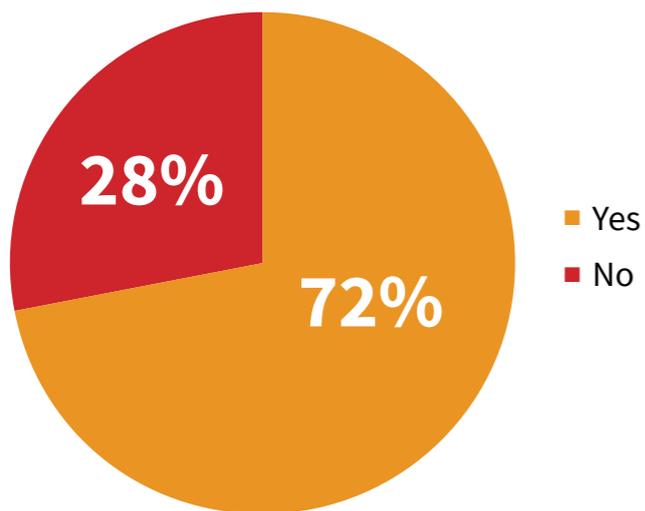
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

B2C marketers who use at least two organic social media platforms reported that **Facebook** (59%) and **Instagram** (21%) produced the best overall content marketing results for their organization in the last 12 months.

Other organic social media platforms used in last 12 months: Pinterest (29%), Snapchat (10%), Medium (6%), Quora (5%), Reddit (5%), TikTok (4%), and other (3%).

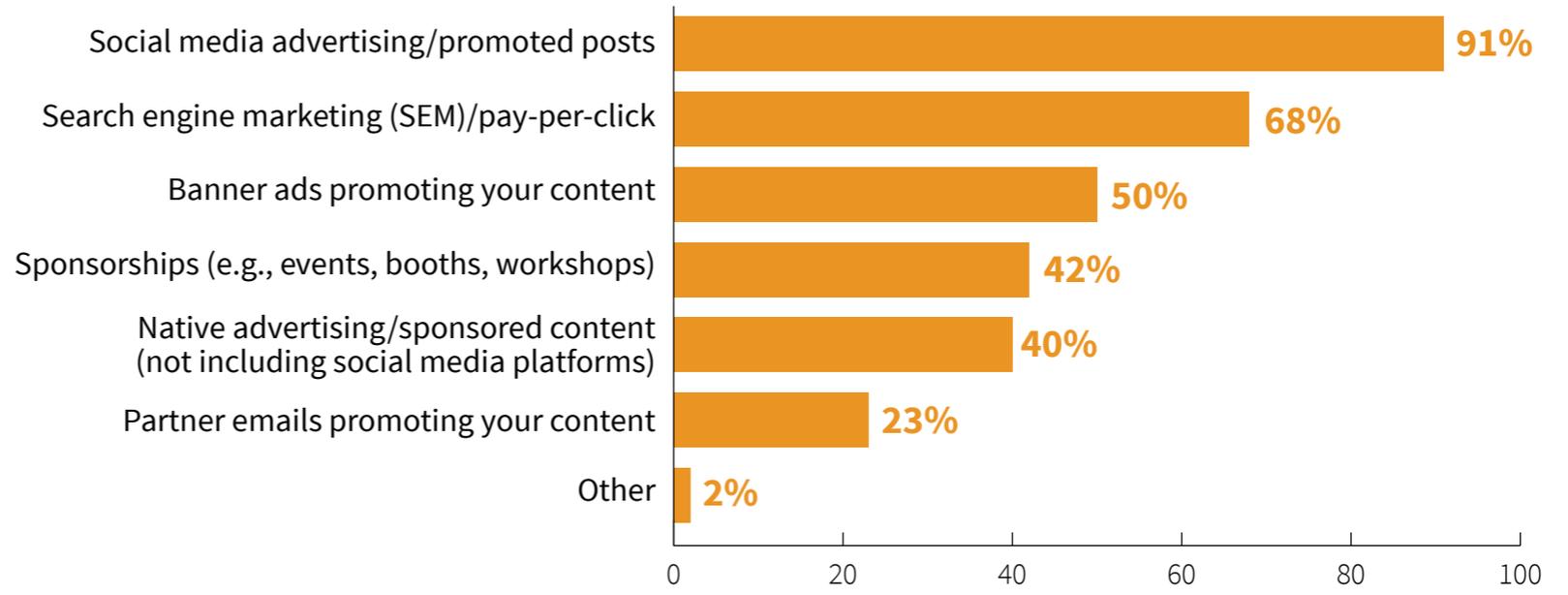
72% of B2C marketers used paid channels to distribute content in the last 12 months, compared with 85% the previous year. The types used, as well as the proportion of respondents who use each one, are nearly identical to last year's findings.

Did Your B2C Organization Use Any Paid Distribution Channels for Content Marketing Purposes in the Last 12 Months?



Base: B2C content marketers.
 B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021.
 Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

Paid Content Distribution Channels B2C Marketers Used in Last 12 Months

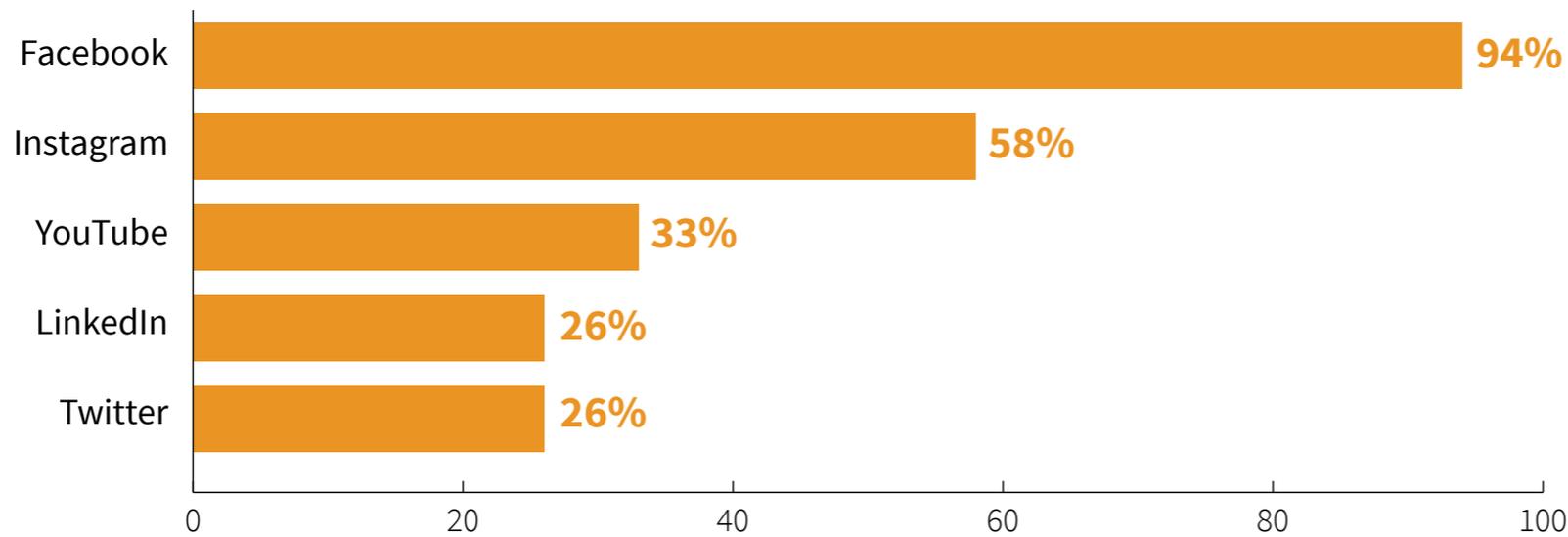


Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations used paid content distribution channels in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
 B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021.
 Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

Of all the paid distribution channels they use, B2C marketers said **social media advertising/promoted posts** (45%) and **search engine marketing (SEM)/pay-per-click** (31%) produced the best overall content marketing results for their organization in the last 12 months.

Of the B2C marketers who use paid advertising on social media, the two platforms they use most often are Facebook (94%) and Instagram (58%).

Paid Social Media Platforms B2C Content Marketers Used in Last 12 Months



Other paid social media platforms used in last 12 months: Pinterest (12%), Quora (3%), Snapchat (3%), Reddit (2%), TikTok (2%), and other (5%).

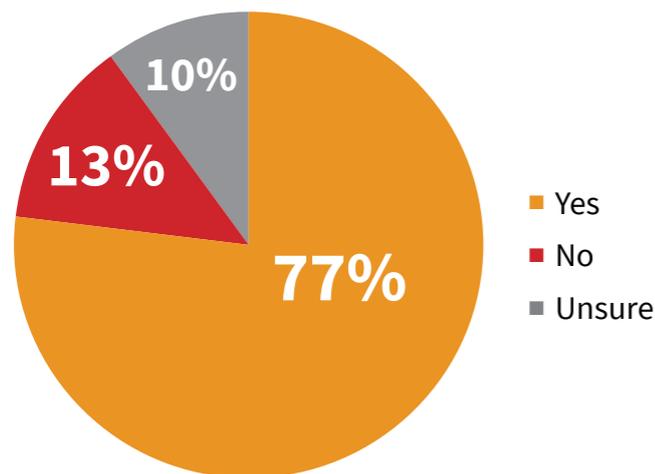
Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations used paid social media platforms to distribute content in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

METRICS, GOALS & OVERALL SUCCESS



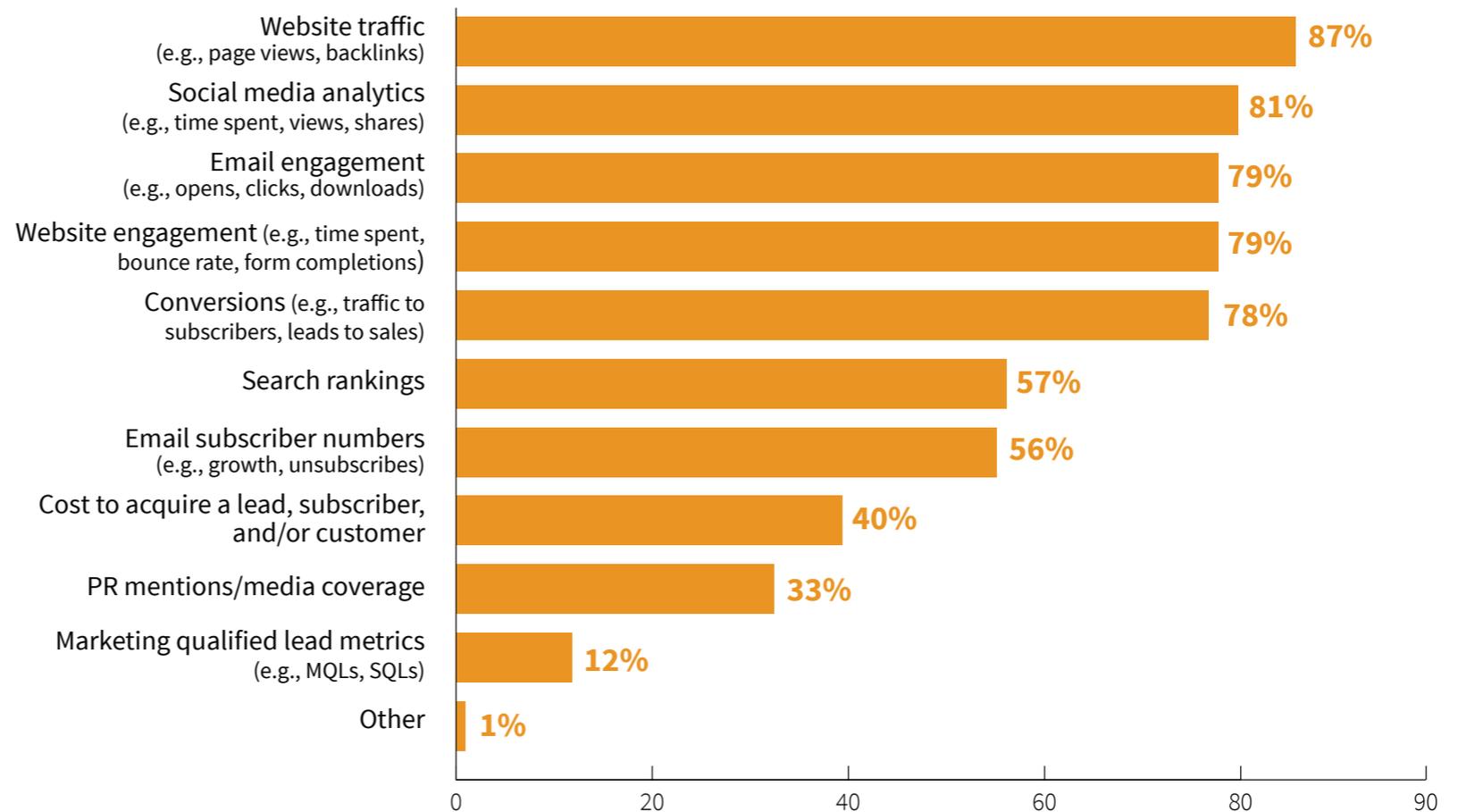
77% of B2C marketers report their organization uses metrics to measure content performance. Website traffic (87%) is the metric they use most often.

Does Your B2C Organization Use Metrics to Measure Content Performance?



Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021.
Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

Metrics B2C Organizations Tracked to Measure Content Performance in Last 12 Months



Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations use metrics to measure content performance.
Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

METRICS, GOALS & OVERALL SUCCESS

B2C marketers continue to report using content marketing successfully to reach numerous goals.

Notable differences from last year:

- ▶ Build credibility/trust increased to 76% from 65%.
- ▶ Build loyalty with existing clients/customers increased to 70% from 55%.
- ▶ Build a subscribed audience increased to 55% from 38%.

Goals B2C Marketers Have Achieved by Using Content Marketing Successfully in Last 12 Months

	All Respondents	As Reported One Year Ago*	As Reported Two Years Ago**
Create brand awareness	81%	84%	79%
Build credibility/trust	76%	65%	67%
Educate audience(s)	71%	75%	65%
Build loyalty with existing clients/customers	70%	55%	63%
Build a subscribed audience	55%	38%	45%
Generate sales/revenue	54%	48%	52%
Generate demand/leads	52%	61%	57%
Nurture subscribers/audiences/leads	48%	49%	42%
Support the launch of a new product	44%	51%	40%
Drive attendance to one or more in-person or virtual events	37%	36%	33%

*See B2C Content Marketing 2020: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends

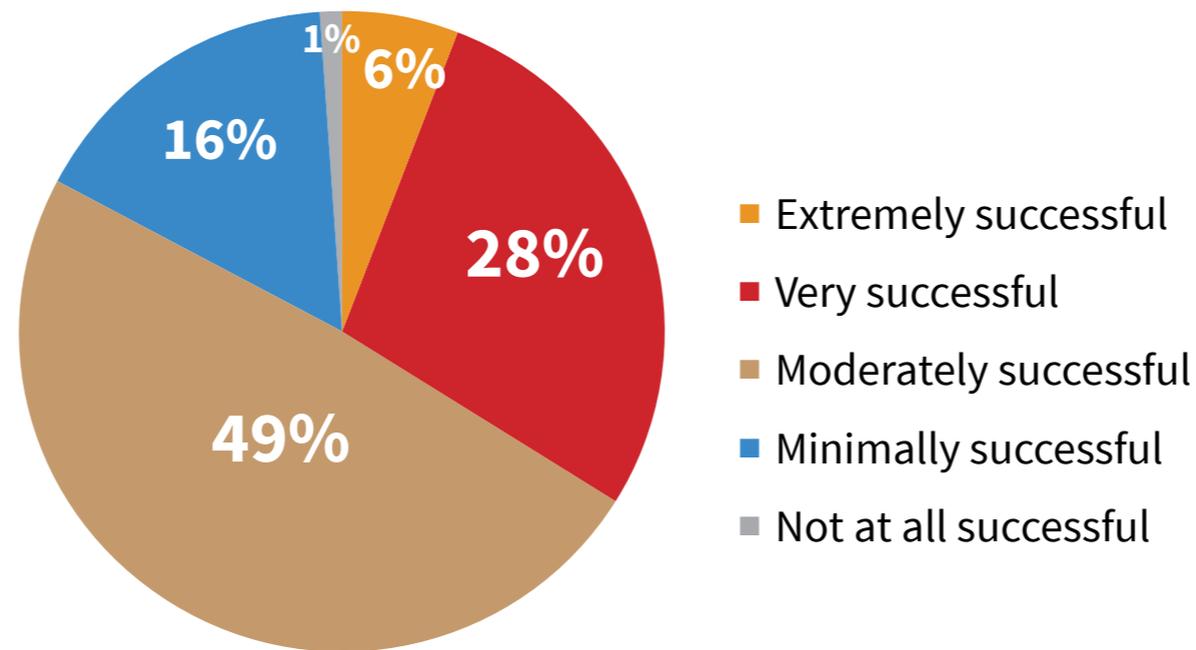
**See B2C Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends

Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

34% of B2C marketers say their organization was extremely or very successful with content marketing in the last 12 months; another 49% say it was moderately successful.

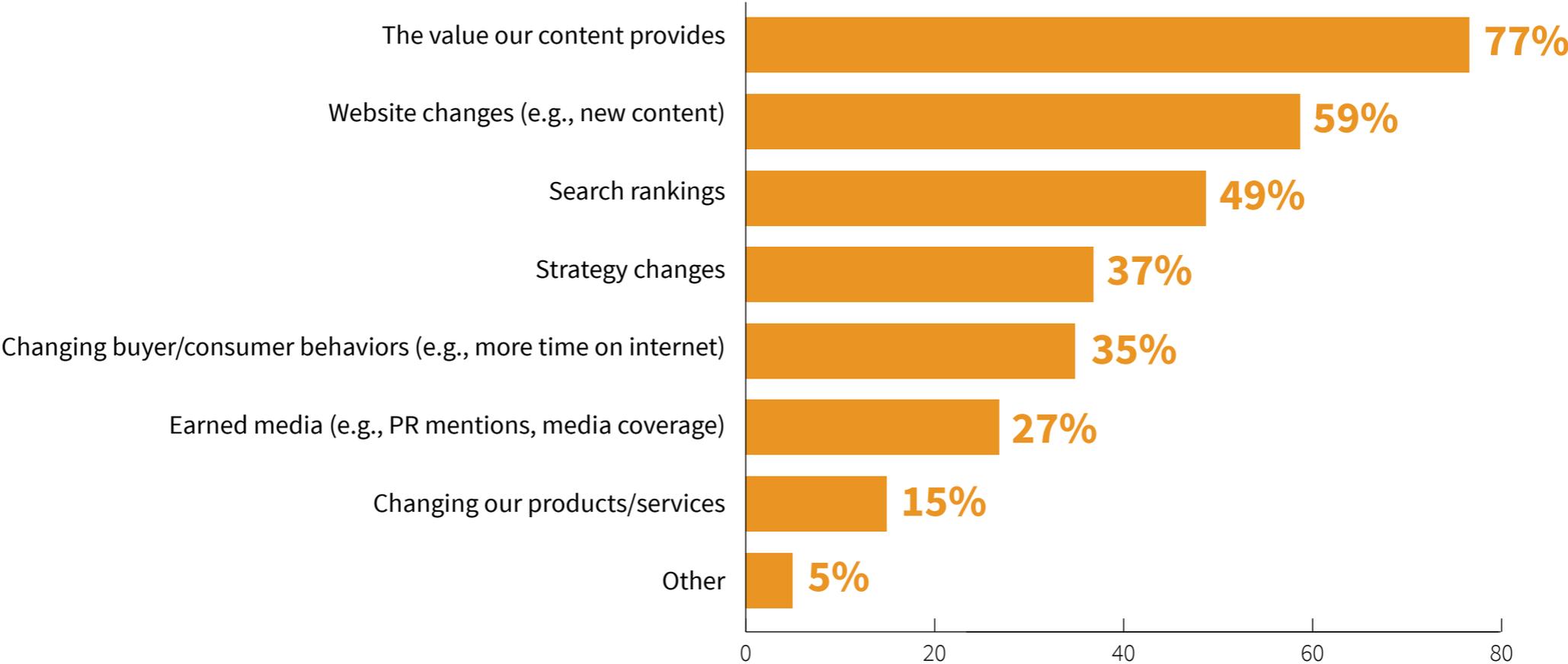
How B2C Marketers Rate Their Organization's Overall Level of Content Marketing Success in Last 12 Months



Base: B2C content marketers; aided list. B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

B2C marketers who reported high levels of content marketing success (extremely/very successful) said the top two factors contributing to that success were the value their content provides (77%) and website changes (59%).

Factors B2C Marketers Attribute to Their Organization's Content Marketing Success in Last 12 Months



Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations were extremely/very successful with content marketing in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

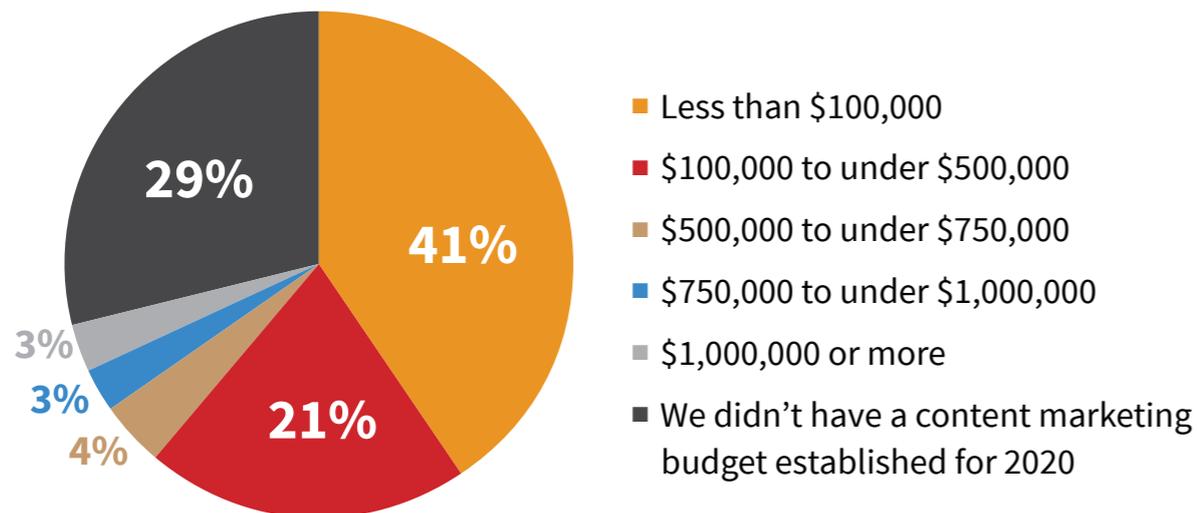
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

BUDGETS & SPENDING



Most respondents went into 2020 with a content marketing budget. As 2020 progressed toward the midpoint, one-third of B2C respondents decreased their content marketing spending, but 50% made no change.

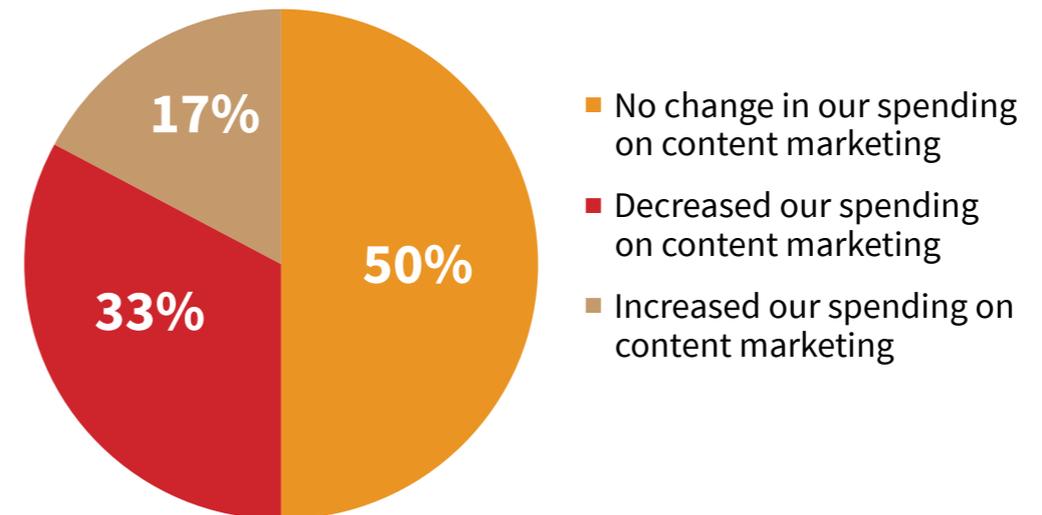
2020 Annual Budget for B2C Content Marketing: Pre-Pandemic (Average)



Note: The question read: “Prior to the pandemic, approximately how much had your organization budgeted for 2020 content marketing (not including salaries), in U.S. dollars?”

Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

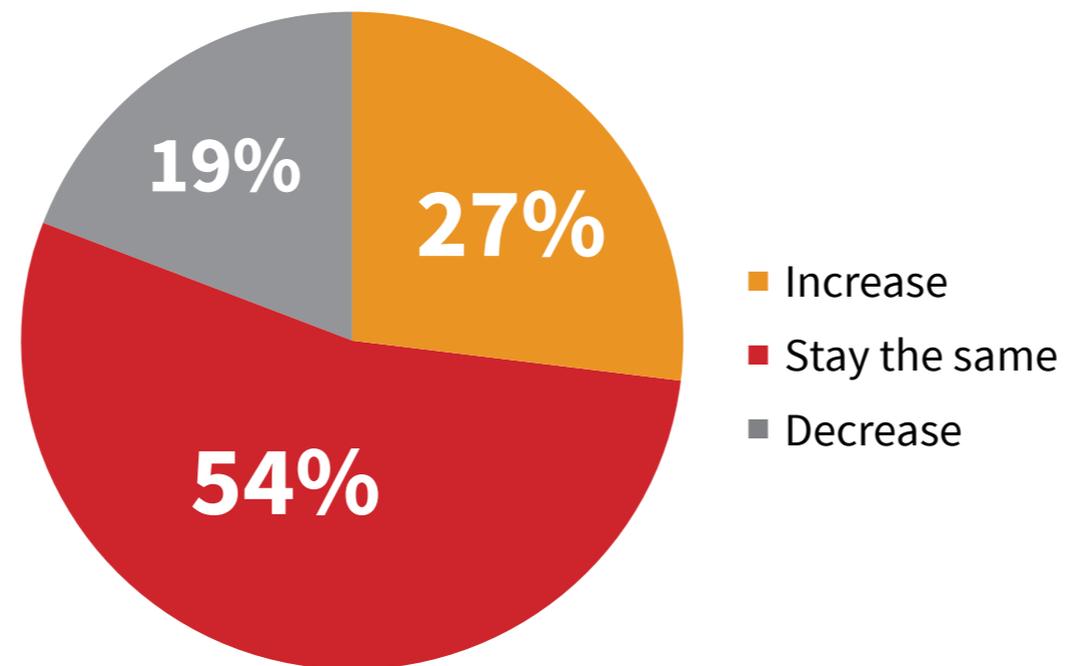
Change in B2C Content Marketing Spending in H1 2020 in Response to Pandemic



Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

The majority of B2C respondents expected to spend about the same on content marketing during the second half of 2020 as they did during the first half.

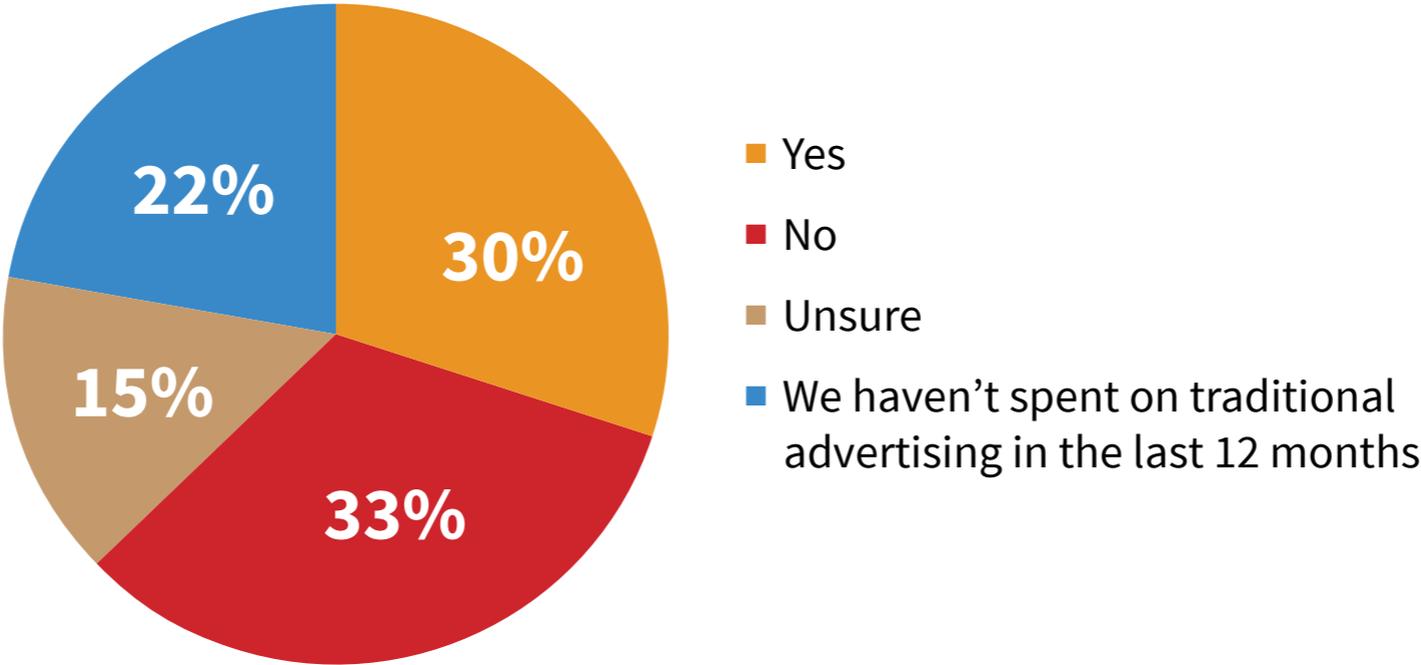
B2C Marketers' Estimated Change in Content Marketing Spending: H2 2020 vs. H1 2020



*Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.*

30% said their B2C organization had shifted traditional paid advertising dollars to content marketing in the last 12 months.

Did Your B2C Organization Shift Paid Advertising Dollars to Content Marketing in the Last 12 Months?



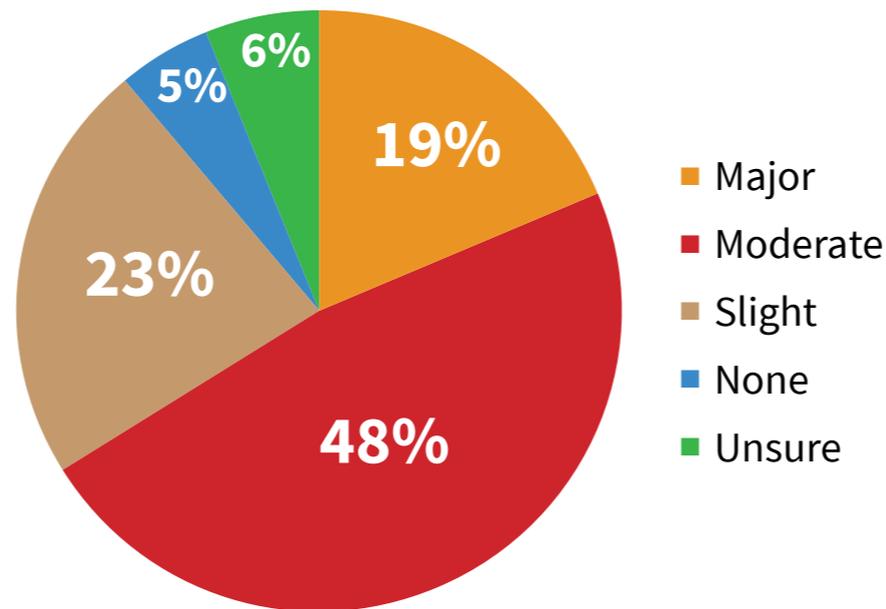
Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

INSIGHTS FOR 2021



67% of B2C marketers felt the pandemic would have a major or moderate long-term impact on their organization's overall content marketing success.

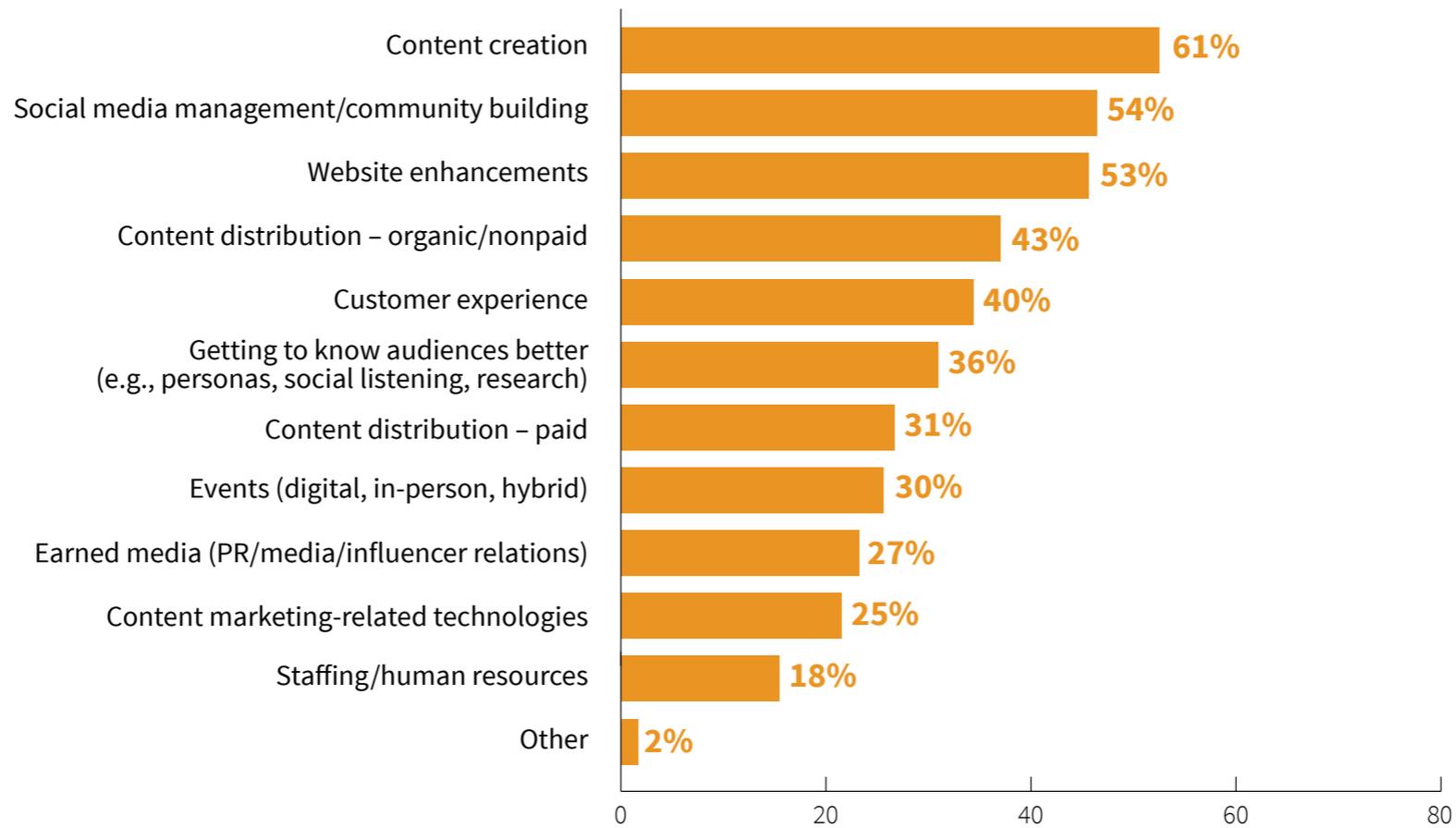
Long-Term Impact B2C Marketers Think Pandemic Will Have on Their Organization's Content Marketing Success



Base: B2C content marketers.
B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

B2C respondents predict the top content marketing areas their organizations will invest in during 2021 are content creation (61%), social media management/community building (54%), and website enhancements (53%).

Top 5 Areas of Content Marketing B2C Marketers Think Their Organization Will Invest in During 2021



Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; maximum of five responses permitted.
 B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Insights for 2021. Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2020.

ACTION STEPS FOR MOVING FORWARD

By Robert Rose, Chief Strategy Advisor, CMI



Stop Waiting For The New Normal—We’re Already In It

Welcome to 2021. You know, we spent so much time in 2020 struggling for an answer to “what now,” that it seemed impossible to plan for 2021. And now we’re all wondering if 2021 is simply a replay of last year.

What can we do, then? We often mistakenly believe that “what now” means we should take the experiences we had in 2020 and try to predict the new normal future. Will it be summer when we get back to normal? Will the vaccines help? Will the economy improve? We often plan our “what now” road map based on an assumption that our previous experience helps us to see around corners.

Spoiler alert: No one really knows what will happen.

What we do know is that as B2C marketers, developing direct relationships with consumers will increasingly depend on great digital experiences. So, we can start planning with a self-assessment of our content marketing plan. Remember that answering “what now” is not trying to plan for “what’s next.” Look at all the things that evolved this past year. What things do you want to keep? What do you want to change? What should you and your team stop doing? Then, with those things in mind, ask yourself how you and your team might change to prepare for whatever comes next.

Content Marketing Is Cool—But Content Operations Make It Work

As 2021 begins, we’re seeing more B2C businesses begin to in-source many elements of content creation, production, and management, particularly within large companies.

(continued on next page)

This move to “in-house” services, however, is fueling a broader evolution in building a more creative and media-fluent service to the overall business.

As content marketers, it’s not enough to just understand how to create blogs, infographics, or other media assets.

We need to understand how content operations work at scale. That means understanding technology, governance, and how to structure content so that it can be reused, repackaged, and leveraged across silos.

It won’t be long before your business starts looking hard at how to make content more efficient—and measurable at scale. Content marketers that have skill sets and knowledge beyond just creating powerful content will be ready to evolve and lead that charge.

Get Your Audience Data Plan Together

Customer data is going to become an increasingly precious commodity. As we saw from this year’s research, “building credibility and trust” is a huge goal for content marketing now. You’ll need the data in order to know where and how to be trustworthy. But you’ll need to be trustworthy in order to get the data. If that sounds like a Catch-22, it is. But delivering value to audiences before they become customers is the way out of it.

If you’re looking for measurability, there will be no other foundational element as important as connecting your content marketing experiences and being able to have a 360-degree view into the audience you are engaging. This includes, of course, the data that customers willingly, trustingly, and emotionally give to you as part of that program. This is what Forrester calls “Zero Party Data.” We just call it building an audience.

METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

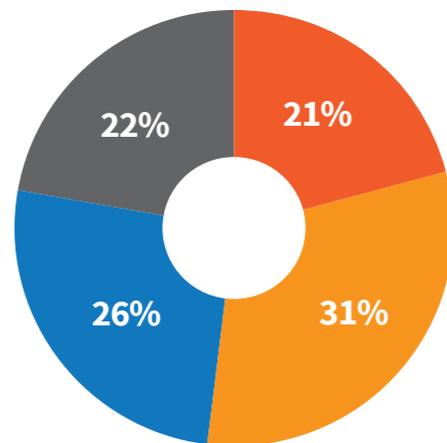
This report is based on the results of the Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs 11th Annual Content Marketing Survey. The online survey was emailed to a sample of marketers using lists from CMI and MarketingProfs. A total of 1,707 recipients from around the globe—representing a range of industries, functional areas, and company sizes—replied to the survey in July 2020. This report presents the findings from the 233 respondents who indicated:

- ▶ Their organization is a for-profit B2C company, with the majority (66%) based in North America.
- ▶ Their organization has used content marketing for at least one year.
- ▶ They are a content marketer, involved with the content marketing function, and/or someone to whom content marketing reports.

Note: In instances where we observed notable year-over-year differences, this report contains comparisons with findings from last year’s 10th annual survey—reported on in [B2C Content Marketing 2020: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends](#). Some percentages shown in this report do not total 100%, due to rounding.

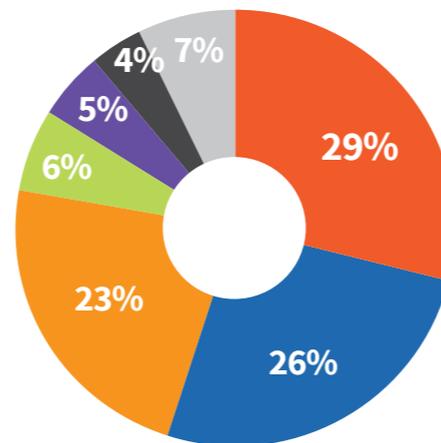
Find all our past research at ContentMarketingInstitute.com/research.

Size of B2C Company (by Employees)



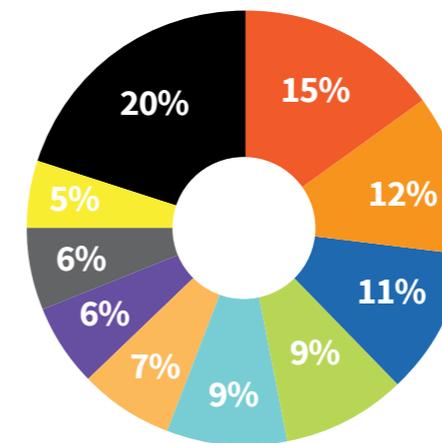
- Micro (fewer than 10 employees)
- Small (10-99 employees)
- Medium (100-999 employees)
- Large (1,000+ employees)

B2C Content Marketing Job Function



- Senior leadership (e.g., CEO, owner, CMO, VP, GM)
- Marketing management
- Content creation/content management
- Marketing operations
- Advertising/PR/comm management
- Sales/business management
- Other

B2C Industry Classification



- Retail/e-commerce
- Financial services/banking/insurance
- Agency (content marketing, advertising, digital, PR)
- Healthcare/med/pharma/life sciences
- Travel/tourism/hospitality
- Manufacturing
- Education
- Professional services
- Technology/IT/software/hardware
- Other

Thanks to all the survey participants who made this research possible and to everyone who helps disseminate these findings throughout the content marketing industry.

About Content Marketing Institute

[Content Marketing Institute](#) is the leading global content marketing education and training organization, teaching enterprise brands how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multichannel storytelling. CMI's [Content Marketing World](#) event, the largest content marketing-focused event, is held every fall in Cleveland, Ohio, and [ContentTECH Summit](#) event is held every spring in San Diego, California. CMI publishes [Chief Content Officer](#) for executives and provides strategic consulting and content marketing research for some of the best-known brands in the world. Content Marketing Institute is organized by Informa Connect. Learn more at [ContentMarketingInstitute.com](#)

About Informa Connect

Informa Connect is a specialist in content-driven events and digital communities that allow professionals to meet, connect, learn, and share knowledge. We operate major branded events in Marketing, Global Finance, Life Sciences and Pharma, Construction and Real Estate, and other specialist markets, and connect communities online year-round.

About MarketingProfs

MarketingProfs is a business-to-business marketing education company—a growing community of more than 550,000+ marketers who aspire to learn, connect, and lead. Its training and education programs include webcasts, master classes, workshops, and its flagship event, the MarketingProfs B2B Forum. And its community offers the support and networking modern marketers need—as a department of 1 or 1,000. Learn more at [MarketingProfs.com](#).