

B2B

CONTENT MARKETING 2019

Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America



SUCCESS, MATURITY & COMMITMENT

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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: Success is defined as achieving your organization’s desired/targeted results.

CHART TERM DEFINITIONS

All Respondents: B2B North America content marketers, all of whom indicated their organization has been using content marketing for at least one year (see p. 42 for more details).

Most and Least Successful: The “most successful” (aka “top performers”) are those who characterized their organization’s overall content marketing approach as extremely or very successful (Top 2). The “least successful” characterized their organization’s approach as minimally or not at all successful (Bottom 2).

Some charts in this report compare Most Successful vs. All Respondents vs. Least Successful. If a chart shows data for All Respondents only, there were minor differences between the three groups, or any large differences between Most and Least appear in a sidebox.

CAUTIONARY NOTE

Attempts to compare this year’s findings with past years’ findings should be undertaken cautiously. This year, qualified respondents differed from prior years in that qualification was based on whether their organization has been using content marketing for at least one year.

WELCOME



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Welcome to our ninth annual B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America report. We surveyed content marketers worldwide about a range of content marketing topics including strategy, audience development, technology proficiency, and content types. This report presents the data from the B2B content marketers in North America.

Although issues such as changes in SEO and social media algorithms are top-of-mind for B2B content marketers, they are accustomed to rapid changes in technology that often enable them to do their jobs faster, with better results. When the process-related components of the content marketer's job are efficient, time is freed up to better serve the *audience*, discovering and developing the types of content they truly want and need.

We hope you find this research helpful as you plan for 2019!

KEY FINDINGS

81%

The two biggest benefits of a documented content marketing strategy are that it aligns team around common mission/goals (81%) and makes it easier to determine which types of content to develop (81%).

96%

96% of the most successful content marketers (aka “top performers”) agree that their organizations have built credibility and trust with their audience.

42%

Well-researched personas can help teams create successful content; however, too few content marketers are actually talking with customers to understand their needs (42%).

77%

B2B content marketers primarily use email (87%) and educational content (77%) to nurture their audience, and may be missing other opportunities (e.g., only 23% are using community building/audience participation to bring new voices to the table).

90%

Nearly all of the most successful B2B content marketers (90%) prioritize the audience’s informational needs over their sales/promotional message, compared with 56% of the least successful.

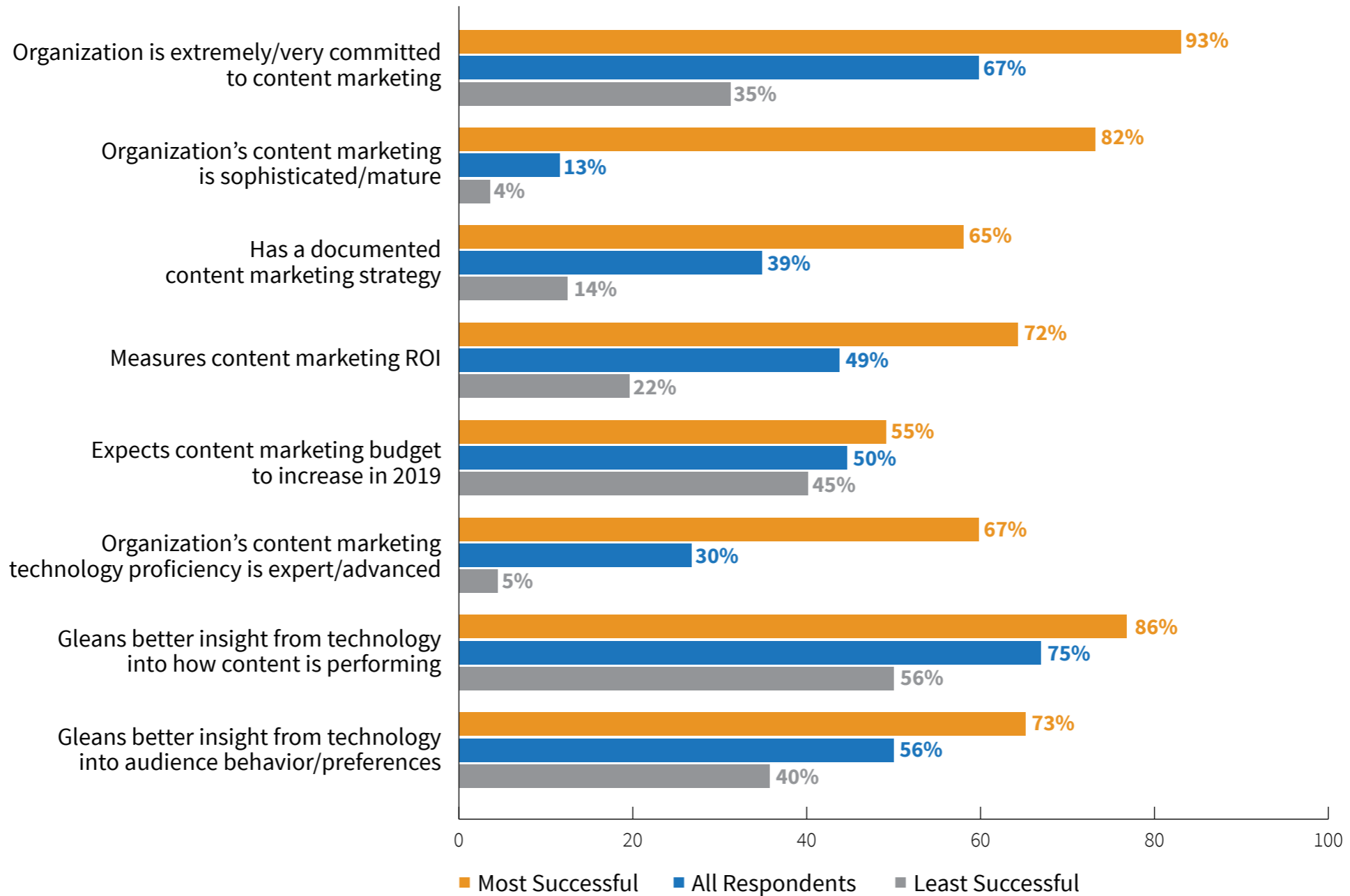
56%

Content creation is the area of content marketing where there has been the most reported increase in spending over the last 12 months (56%).

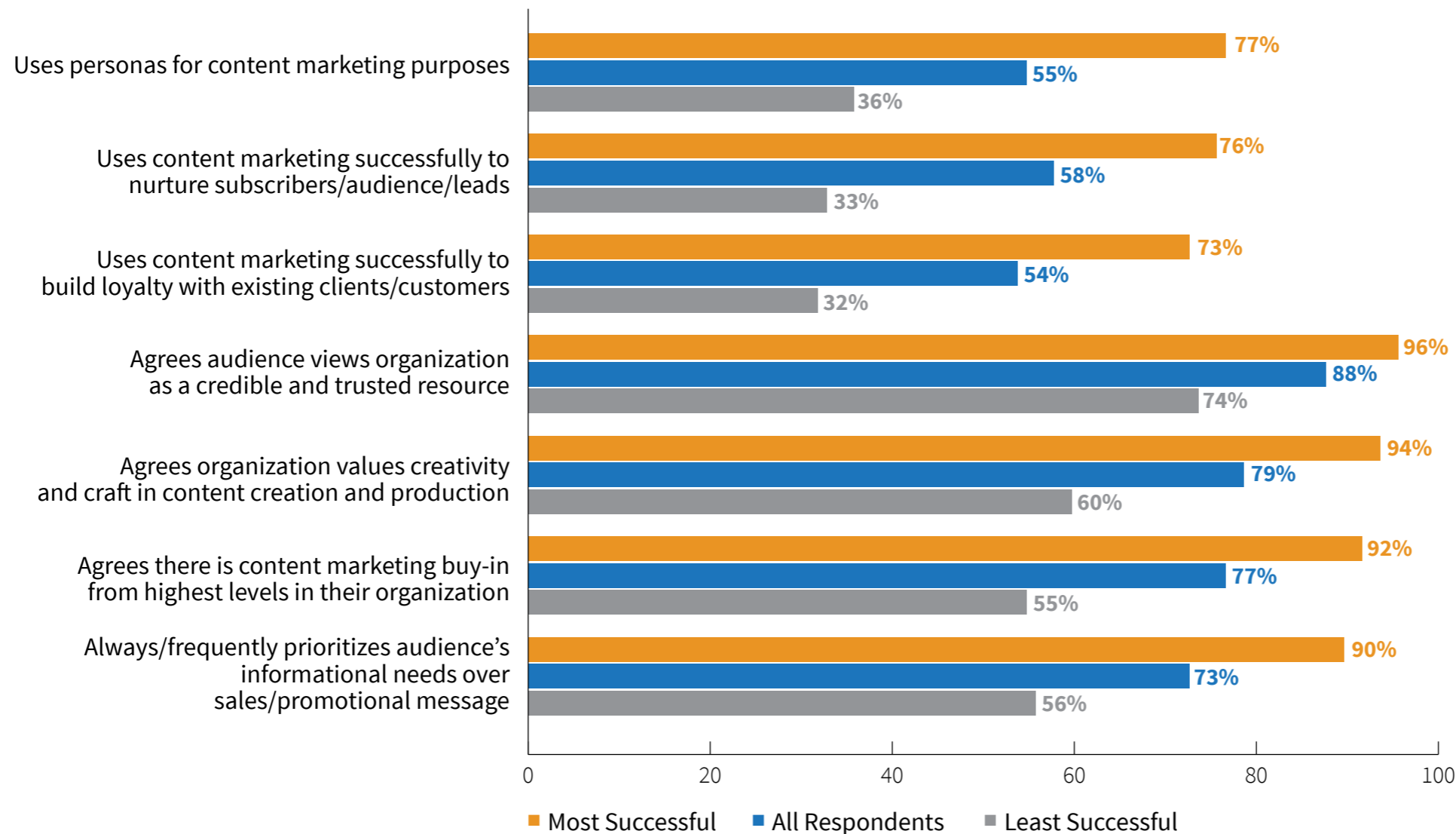
61%

Changes to SEO/search algorithms is the top content marketing issue of importance to organizations (61%), followed by changes in social media algorithms (45%), and content marketing as a revenue center (41%).

This Year's B2B Content Marketing Top Performers At-A-Glance



This Year's B2B Content Marketing Top Performers At-A-Glance



**Chart term definitions: A top performer (aka "most successful") is one who characterizes his or her organization's overall content marketing approach as extremely or very successful. The "least successful" characterize their organization's approach as minimally or not at all successful.*

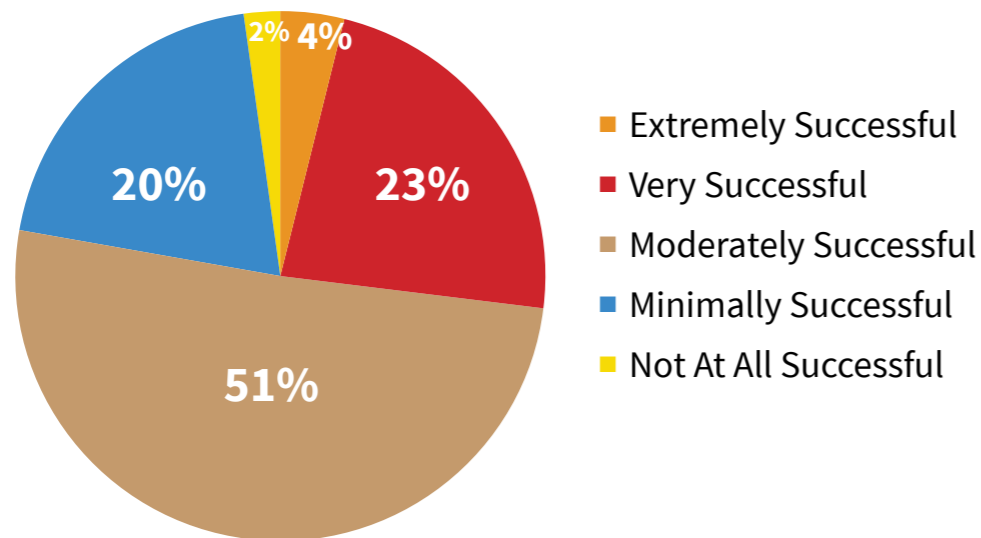
Base: B2B content marketers.

2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

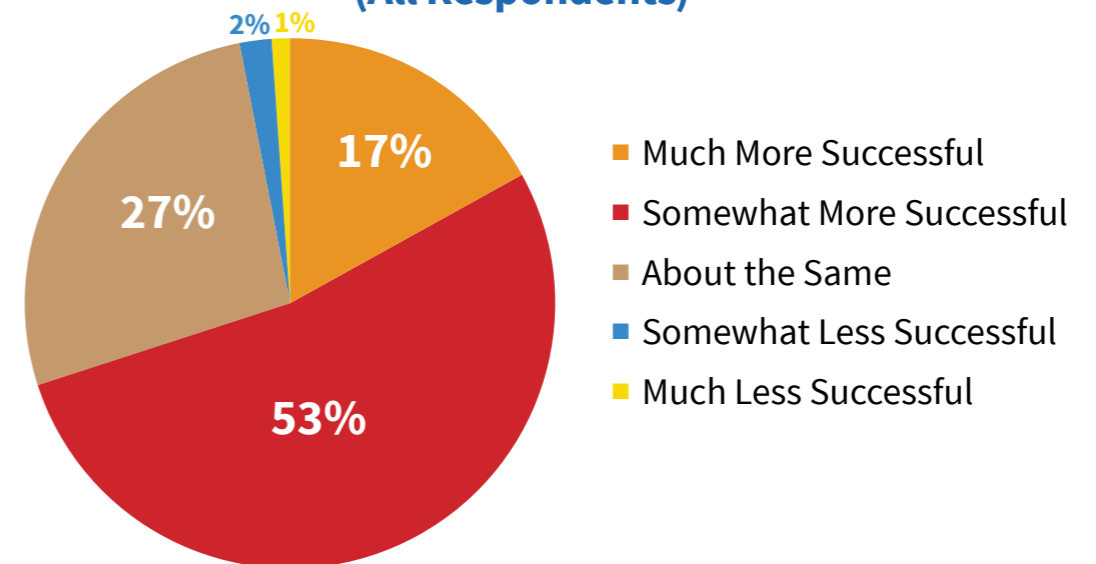
SUCCESS, MATURITY & COMMITMENT

70% of B2B content marketers say their organization’s content marketing is much/somewhat more successful compared with one year ago.

How B2B Marketers Rate Their Organization’s Overall Level of Content Marketing Success (All Respondents)



How B2B Marketers Rate Their Organization’s Content Marketing Success Compared With One Year Ago (All Respondents)



Note: The survey defined success as achieving your organization’s desired/targeted results. This report defines the Top 2 respondents (extremely/very) as “most successful” or “top performers,” and the Bottom 2 (minimally/not at all) as “least successful.”

Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.

Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.

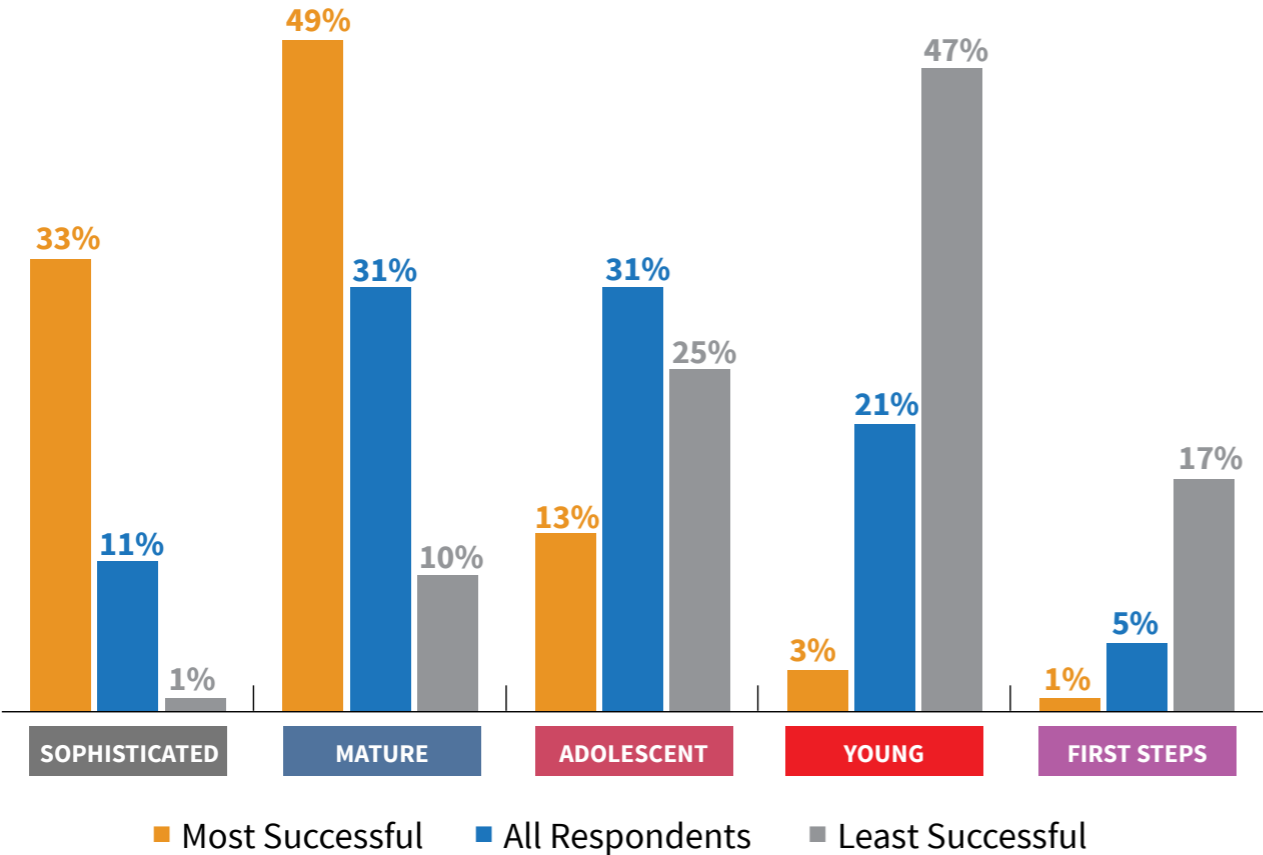
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

As an organization grows in content marketing maturity, its success is likely to increase.

The majority of the most successful B2B content marketers report that their organization is in the mature/sophisticated phase of content marketing maturity. The least successful are often in the young/first steps phase.

How B2B Marketers Rate Their Organization’s Content Marketing Maturity Level



Note: 3% of respondents said unsure. • Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.
 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

SOPHISTICATED

Providing accurate measurement to the business, scaling across the organization.

MATURE

Finding success, yet challenged with integration across the organization.

ADOLESCENT

Have developed a business case, seeing early success, becoming more sophisticated with measurement and scaling.

YOUNG

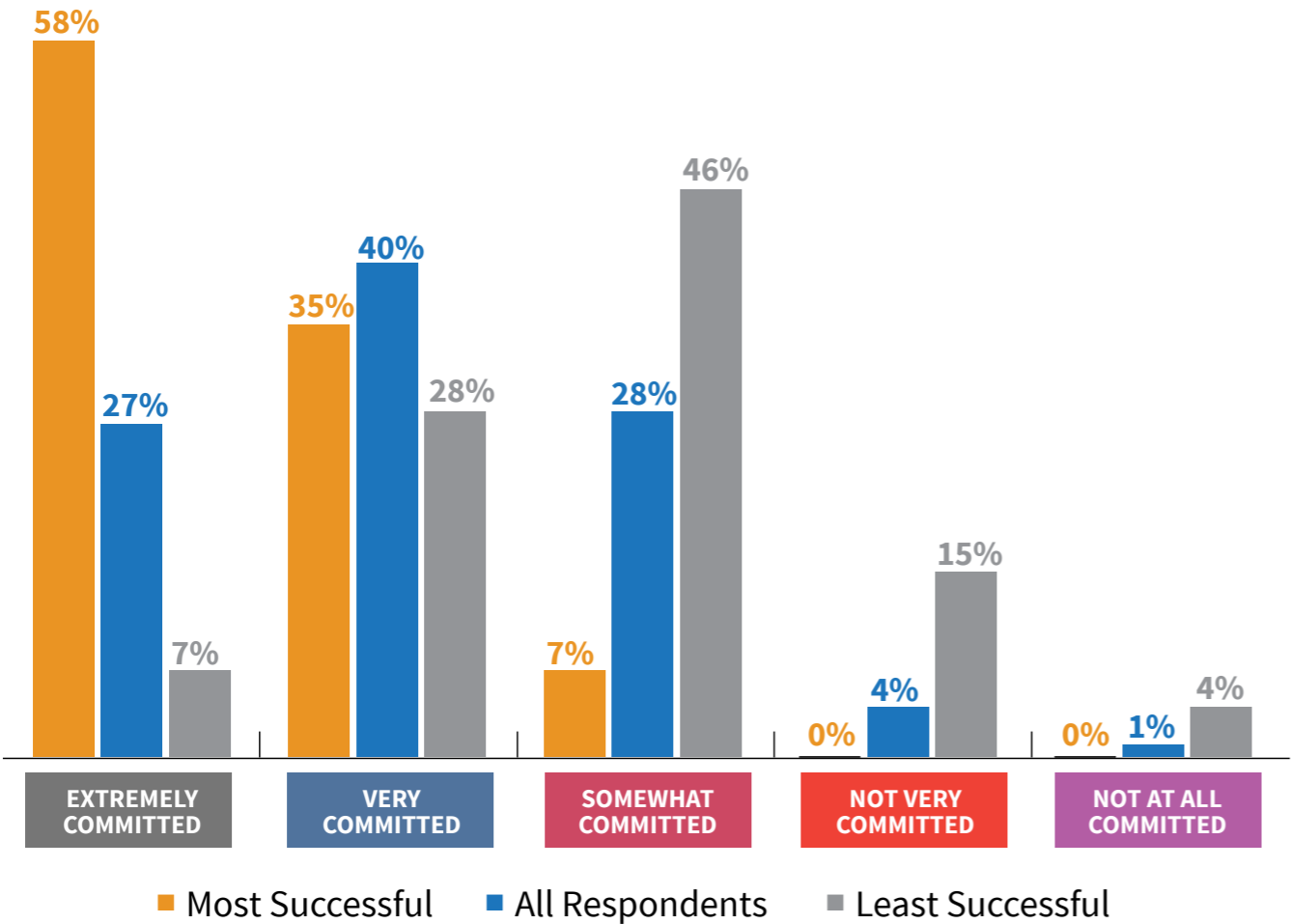
Growing pains, challenged with creating a cohesive strategy and a measurement plan.

FIRST STEPS

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

93% of the most successful B2B content marketers report their organization is extremely/very committed to content marketing.

How B2B Marketers Rate Their Organization's Commitment to Content Marketing



CMI/MarketingProfs' annual content marketing research consistently shows that a strong commitment to content marketing often yields a higher level of overall success.

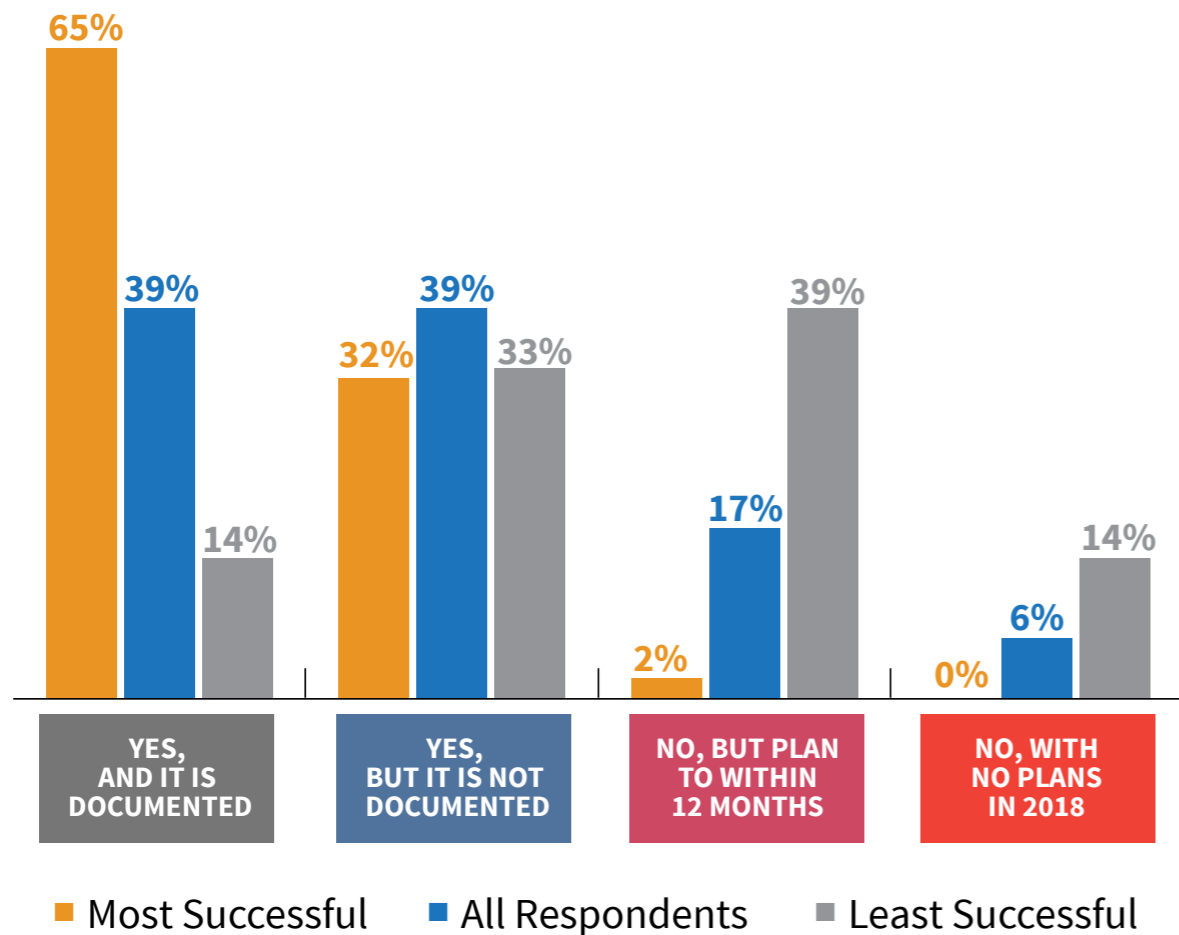
This year's findings show that even the least successful have higher commitment levels than might be expected, indicating perhaps that their organizations are willing to give content marketing the necessary time to produce the desired results.

Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

STRATEGY & OPINIONS

A documented content marketing strategy is often a key indicator of content marketing success.

Proportion of B2B Marketers With a Content Marketing Strategy

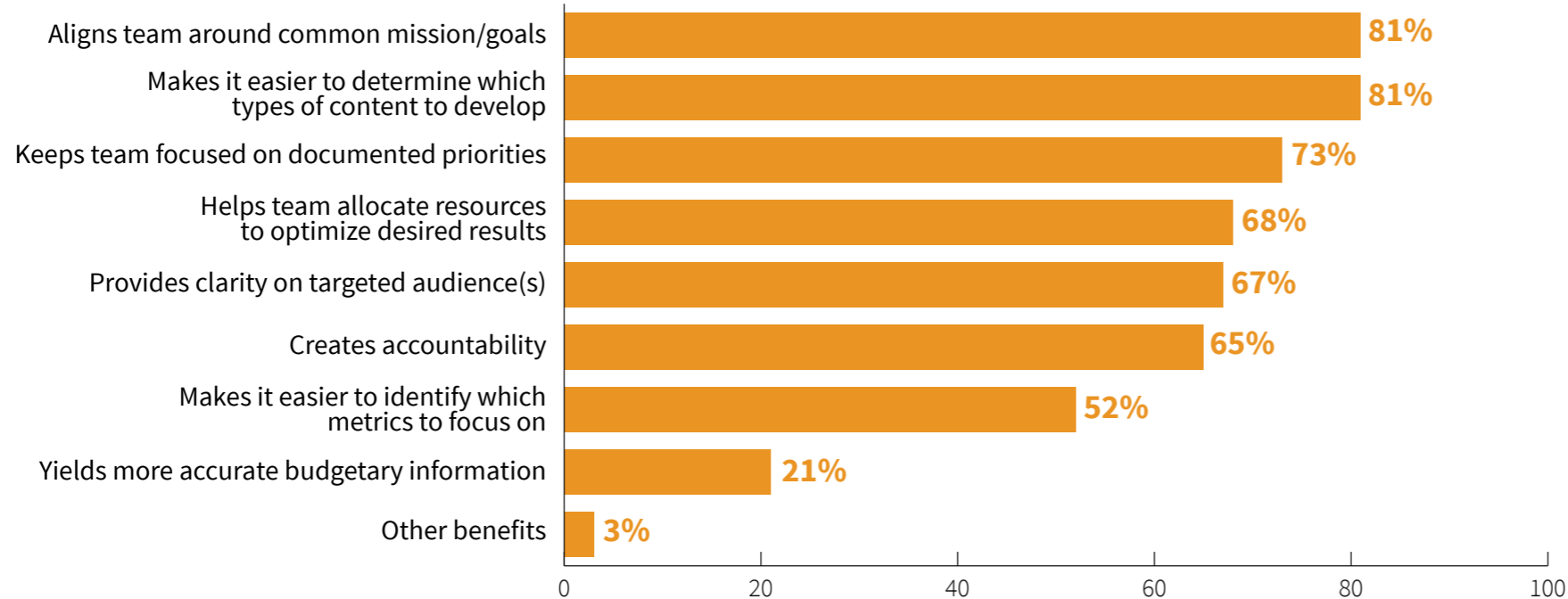


The most successful content marketers are far more likely than their less successful peers to have a documented content marketing strategy (65% vs. 14%).

Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

B2B marketers say the top benefits of a documented content marketing strategy are that it aligns the team around a common mission/goals and makes it easier to determine which types of content to develop.

**Benefits of a Documented B2B Content Marketing Strategy
(All Respondents)**



Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations have a documented content marketing strategy. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

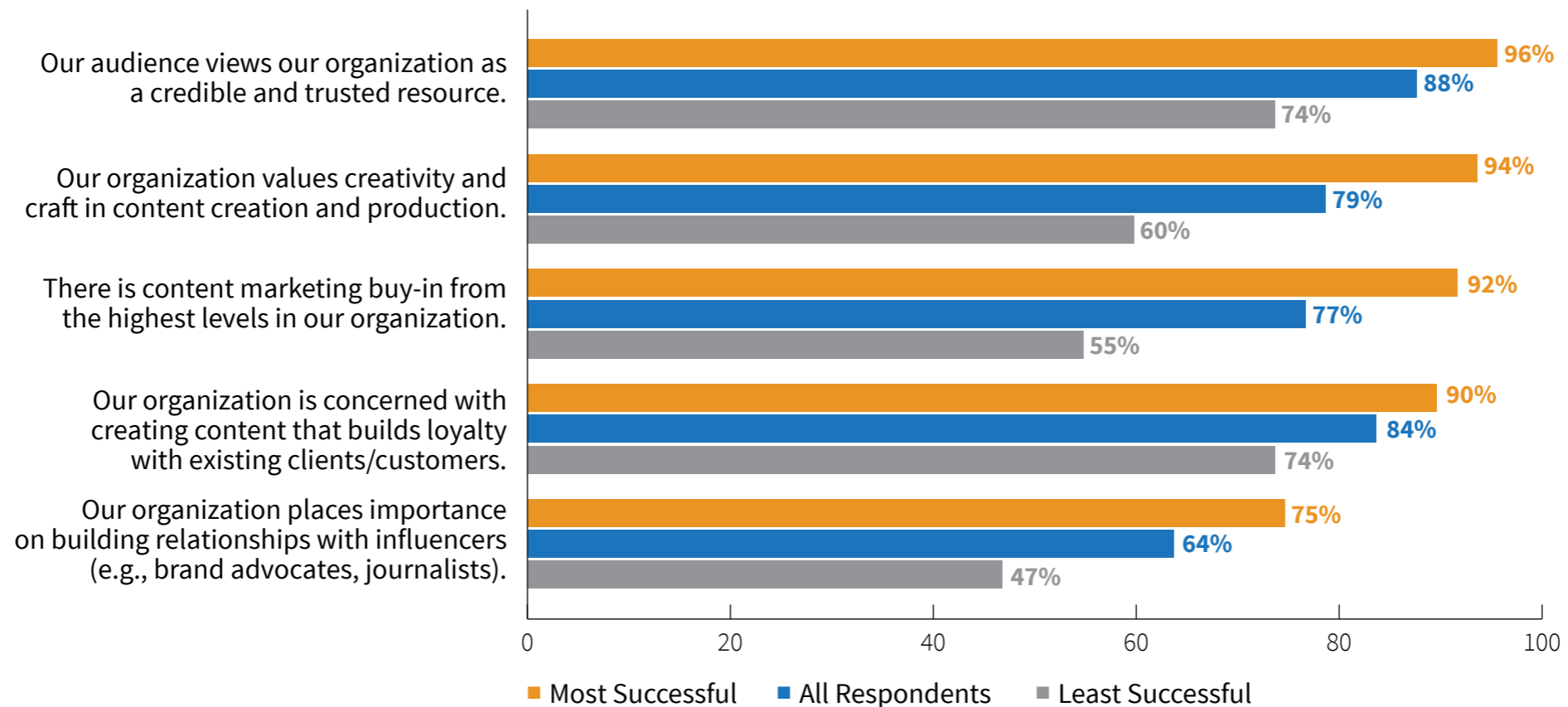
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Another CMI study, conducted with LinkedIn in October 2017, found that 75% of companies with high content marketing/sales alignment have a documented content marketing strategy, whereas only 41% of those with low alignment have a documented strategy.*

*Source: Content Marketing: Unlocking Sales & Marketing Performance. Content Marketing Institute and LinkedIn. Results based on the responses of 208 B2B marketers in North America.

96% of the most successful B2B content marketers agree that their audience views their organization as a credible and trusted resource.

B2B Marketers' Opinions About Content Marketing in Their Organization (Strongly/Somewhat Agree)



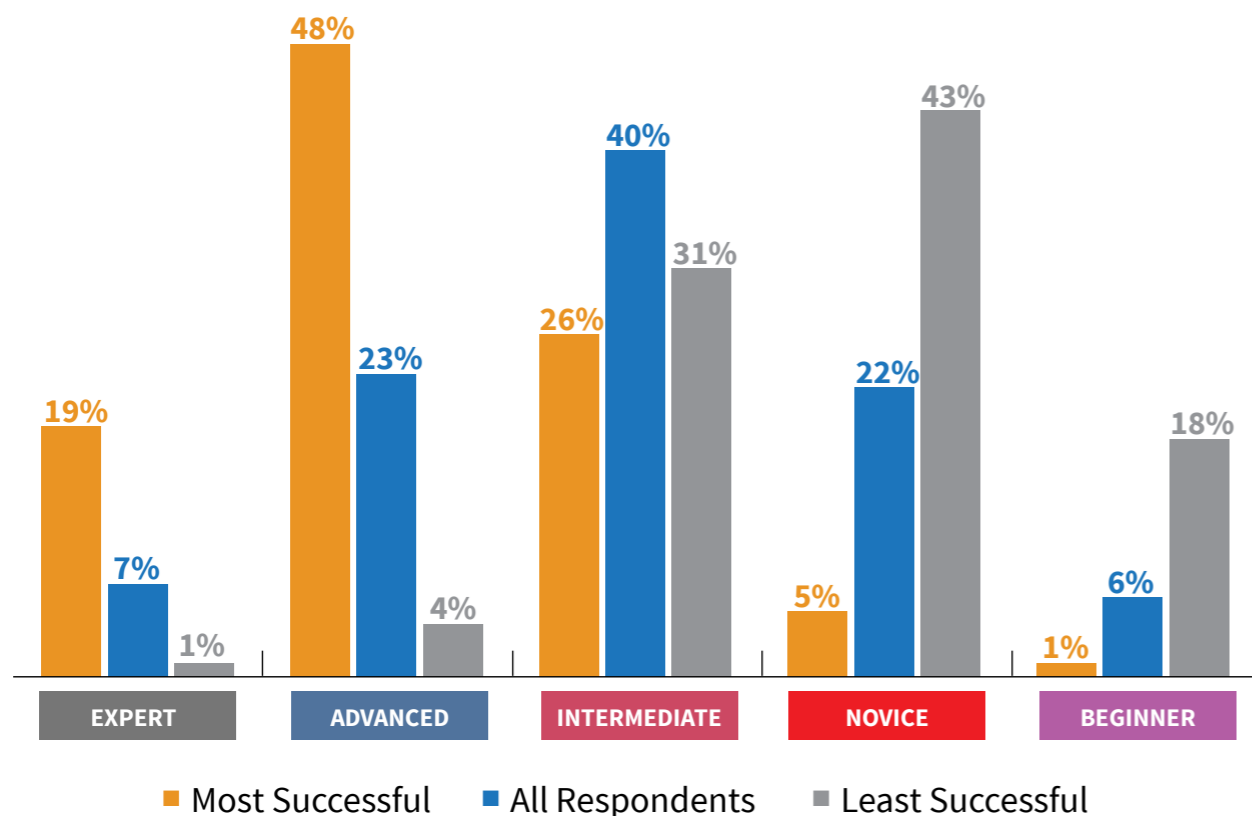
Base: B2B content marketers who answered each statement; aided list.
 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

TECHNOLOGY USE & PROFICIENCY

About one out of three (67%) of the most successful B2B marketers describe their organization’s proficiency with the use of content marketing technology as expert/advanced.

The least successful respondents report their organizations are, for the most part, just beginning to use—or are growing in their use of—content marketing technologies (beginner/novice phases).

B2B Marketers’ Proficiency With Use of Content Marketing Technology



EXPERT

Content marketing technology is integrated across the organization, experiencing the benefits.

ADVANCED

Finding success, yet challenged with integrating content marketing technology across the organization.

INTERMEDIATE

Becoming more consistent with the use of content marketing technology, seeing early success.

NOVICE

Growing in use of content marketing technology, but not using it consistently.

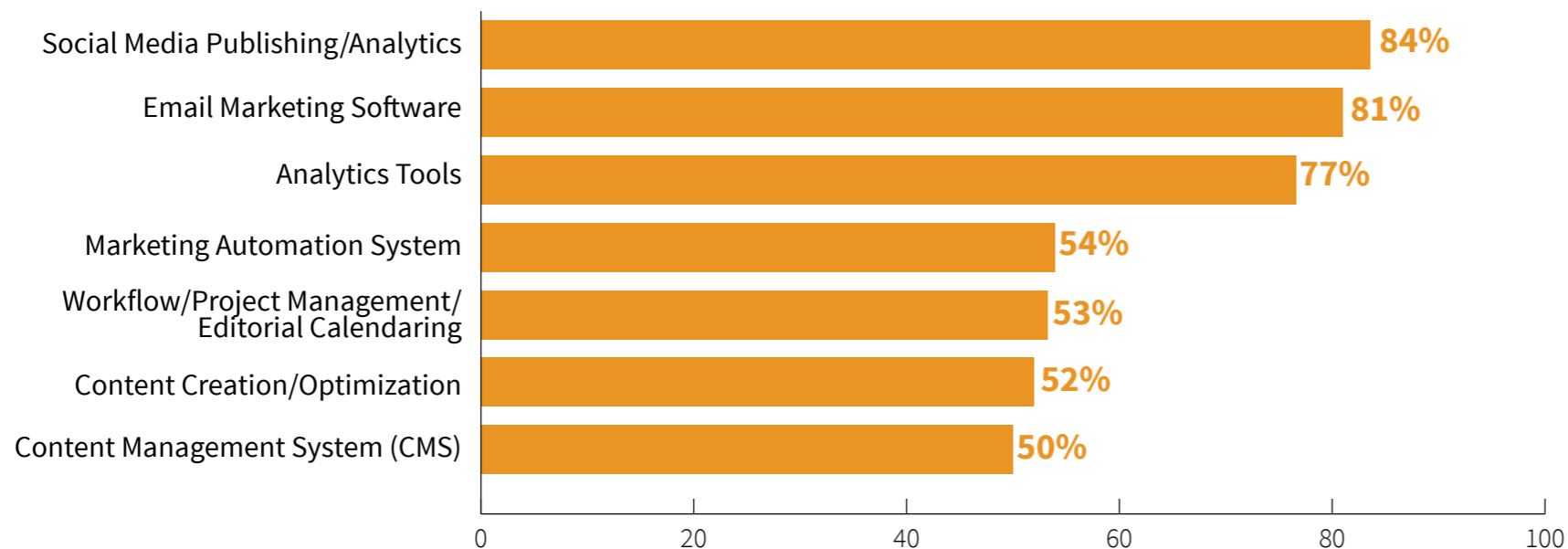
BEGINNER

Just started using one or more content marketing technologies.

*Note: 6% of respondents said unsure.
Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations use one or more of the listed technologies presented on the survey; aided list.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

The top three technologies B2B marketers use to assist with managing their content marketing efforts are social media publishing/analytics, email marketing software, and analytics tools.

Types of Technologies B2B Marketers’ Use to Assist With the Management of Content Marketing Efforts (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations use one or more of the technologies listed. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Other technologies used:

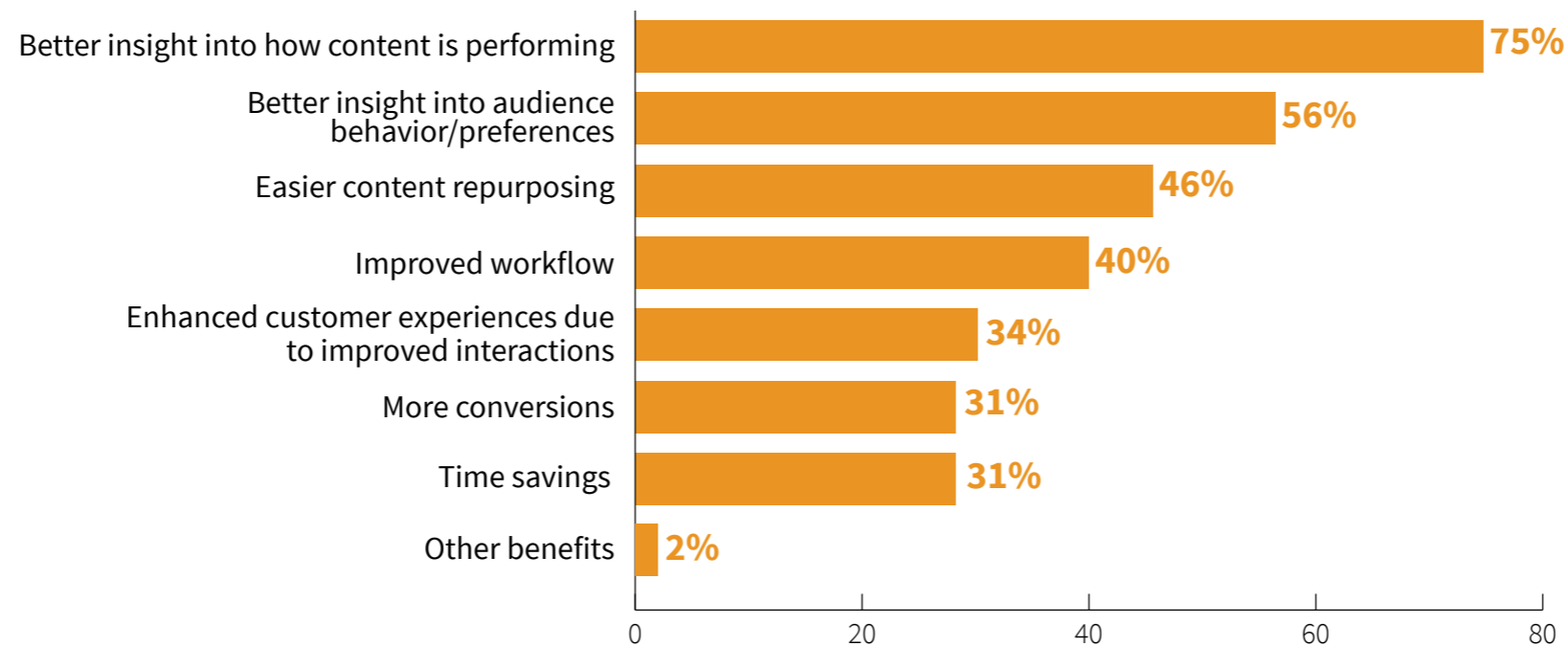
Content Syndication/Promotional Tools (27%); Integrated Content Marketing Platform (CMP) (12%); Chatbots (7%); and Artificial Intelligence (AI) (4%).

Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Analytics Tools.....	88%	64%
Marketing Automation System.....	63%	39%
Workflow/Project Management/Editorial Calendaring.....	62%	37%

B2B marketers say the top benefit of using content marketing technology is that it provides better insight into how content is performing.

Benefits B2B Marketers' Derive from Using Content Marketing Technologies (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations use one or more of the technologies listed. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

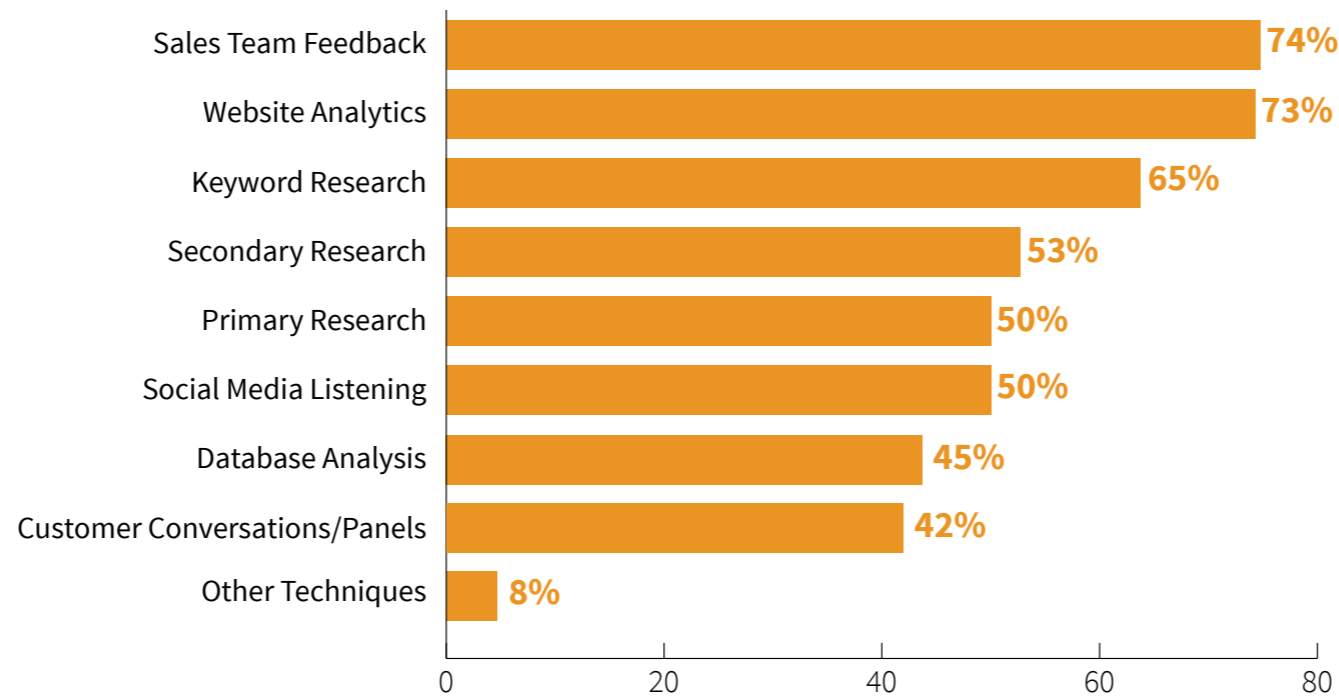
Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Better insight into how content is performing.....	86%	56%
Better insight into audience behavior/preferences.....	73%	40%
Enhanced customer experiences due to improved interactions.....	49%	21%

AUDIENCE RESEARCH & NURTURING

Sales team feedback, website analytics, and keyword research are the top three techniques B2B content marketers use to research their audience.

Techniques B2B Marketers Use to Research Their Target Audience for Content Marketing (All Respondents)



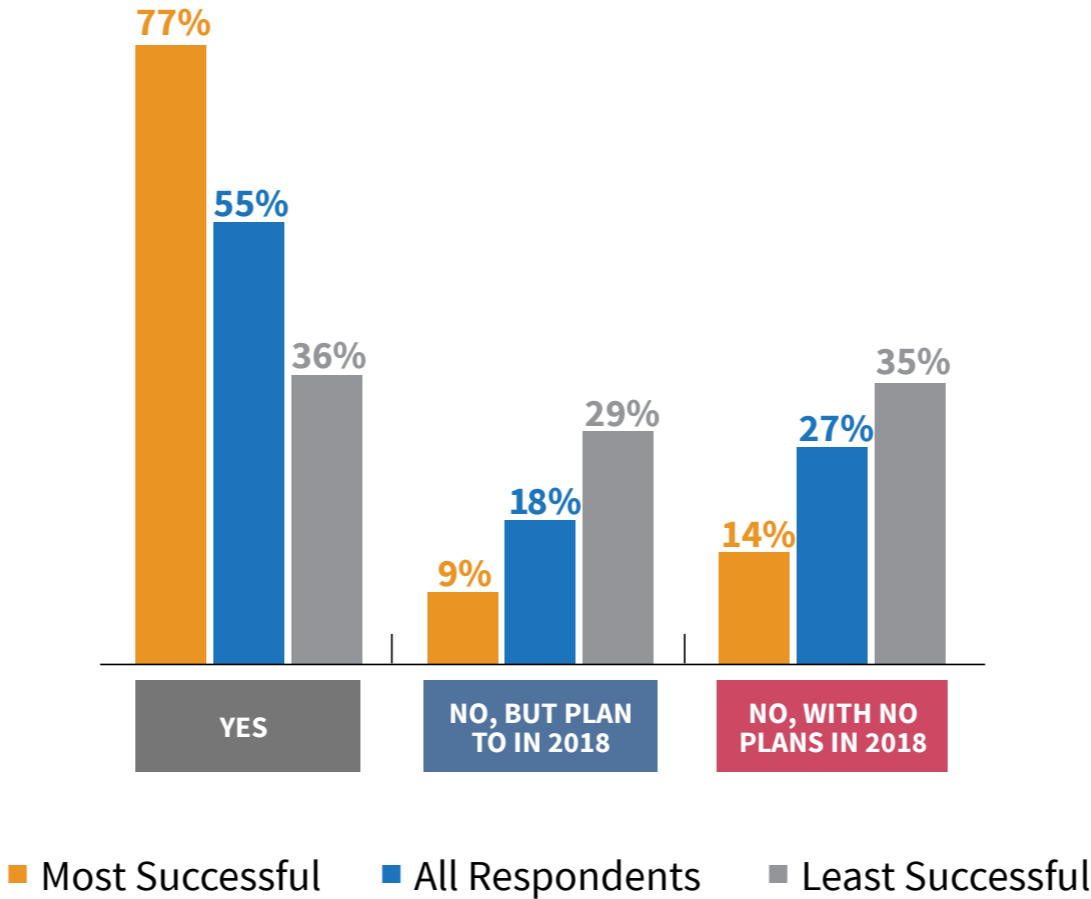
Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations research target audiences. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Primary Research.....	64%	35%
Customer Conversations/Panels	56%	25%
Database Analysis.....	55%	32%

77% of the most successful B2B content marketers use personas, compared with 36% of the least successful.

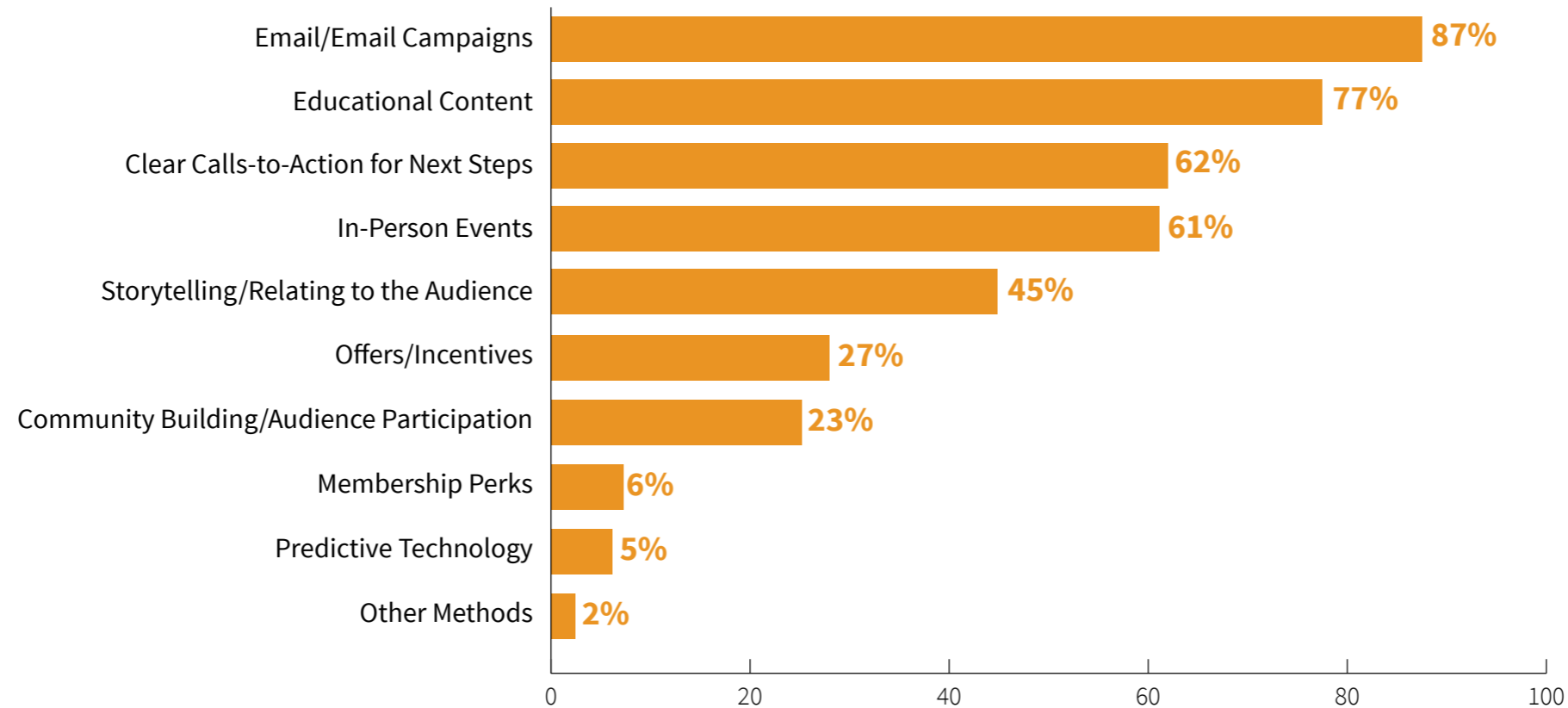
Proportion of B2B Marketers That Use Personas for Content Marketing Purposes



Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

B2B content marketers nurture their audiences primarily via email and educational content.

Content Marketing Methods B2B Marketers Use to Nurture Their Audience



Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations nurture their audience. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

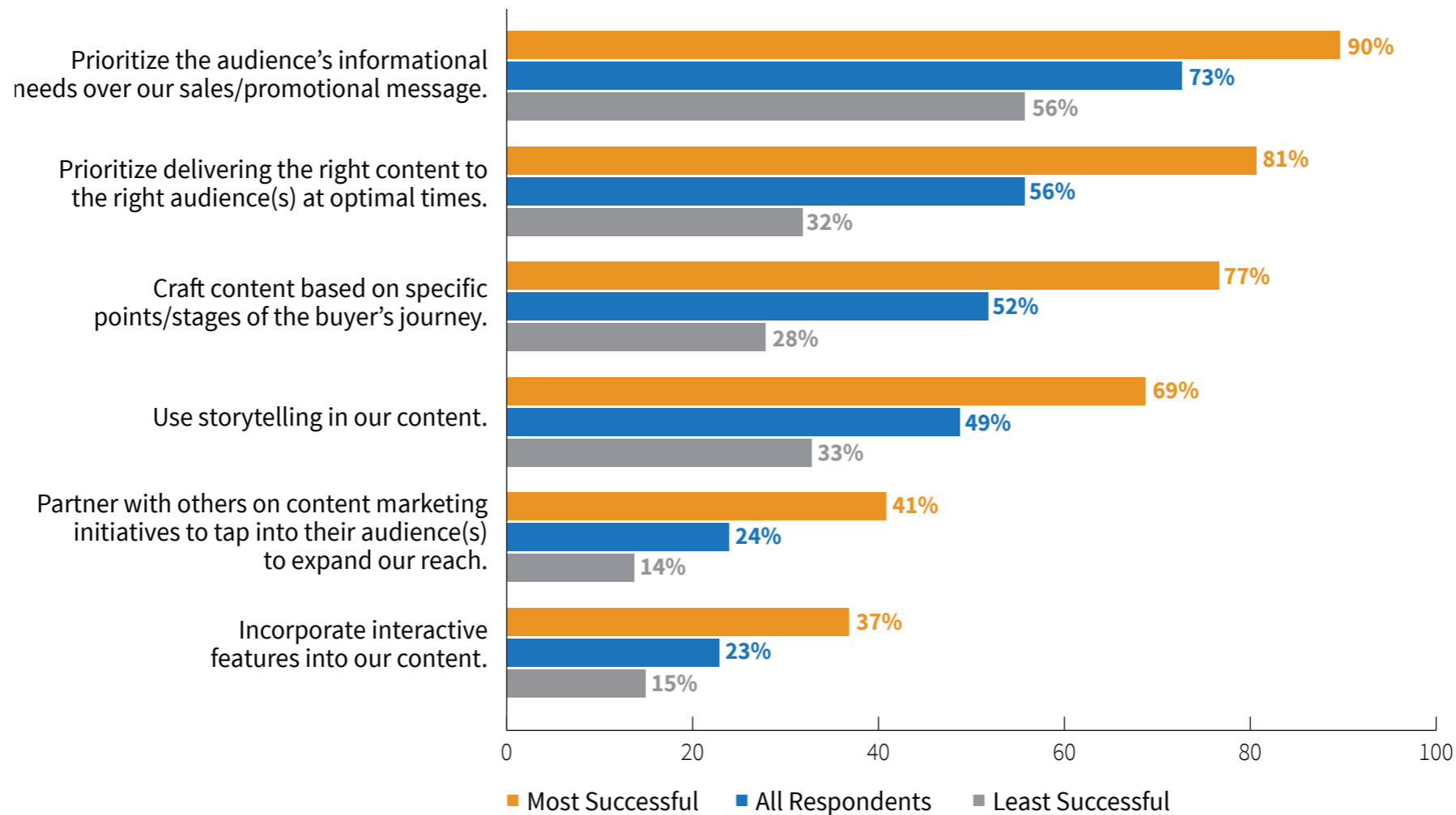
Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Clear Calls-to-Action for Next Steps.....	78%	52%
Storytelling/Relating to the Audience	54%	38%
Community Building/Audience Participation.....	36%	14%

CONTENT CREATION & DISTRIBUTION

The differences in how the most and least successful B2B content marketers approach content creation are readily noticeable.

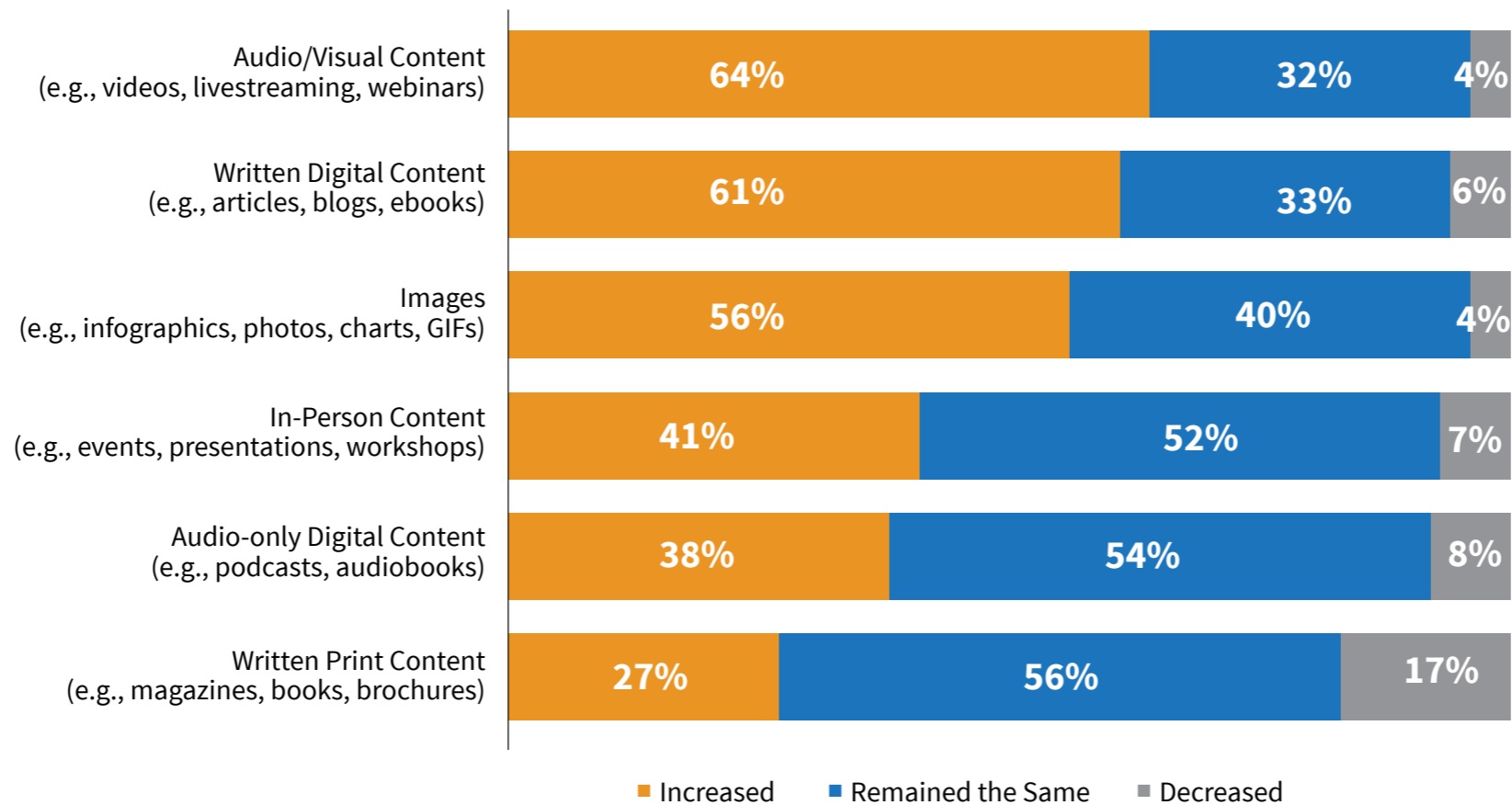
Concepts B2B Marketers Always/Frequently Take Into Account While Creating Content for Their Organization



*Base: B2B content marketers who answered each statement.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

The majority of B2B content marketers increased their use of audio/visual content, written digital content, and images compared with one year ago.

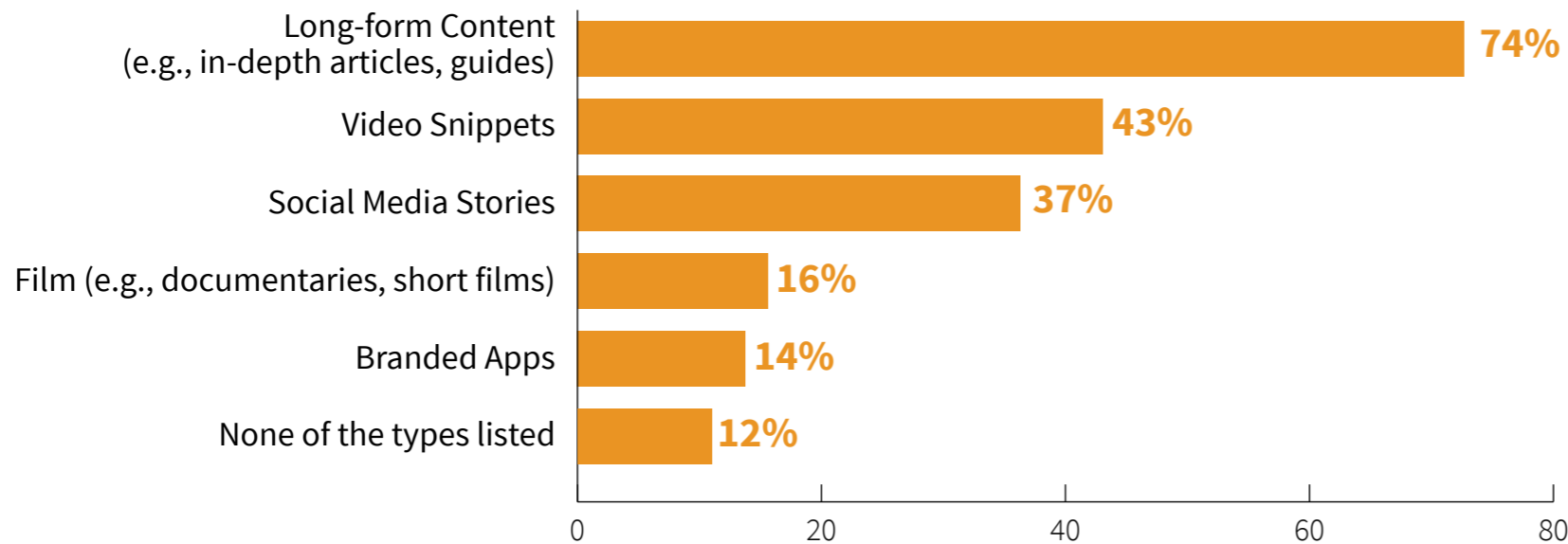
How B2B Marketers Have Changed Their Use of Content Types/Formats Compared With One Year Ago (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations use each of the listed types/formats. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

74% of B2B content marketers say they've used or developed long-form content in the last 12 months.

B2B Content Marketers' Use or Development of Select Types of Content in the Last 12 Months (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations used/developed one or more of the nine listed types in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Other types used:

Games/Gamification (e.g., contests, badges) (7%); Dedicated Livestreaming Channel(s) (7%); Experiential Content (e.g., VR/AR, immersive) (7%); and Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH) Placement (5%).

Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Long-form Content (e.g., in-depth articles, guides)	90%	74%
Video Snippets	54%	43%
Social Media Stories	51%	36%

Another CMI study, conducted in April 2018, found that B2B marketers rated blog posts/articles, white papers, and case studies to be the most effective types of content for the early, middle, and late stages of the buyer’s journey, respectively.

In Which Stage of the Buyer’s Journey Is Each Content Type Most Effective* When Used for Demand Generation Purposes?

	Early Stage (Awareness/Interest)	Middle Stage (Consideration/Intent)	Late Stage (Evaluation/Purchase)
Blog posts/articles	73%	21%	6%
Case studies	18%	42%	40%
Ebooks	56%	39%	6%
In-person events	35%	33%	32%
Interactive content	46%	46%	8%
Podcasts	57%	35%	7%
Videos	54%	40%	6%
Webinars	36%	47%	17%
White papers	34%	53%	14%
Other types of content	36%	37%	27%

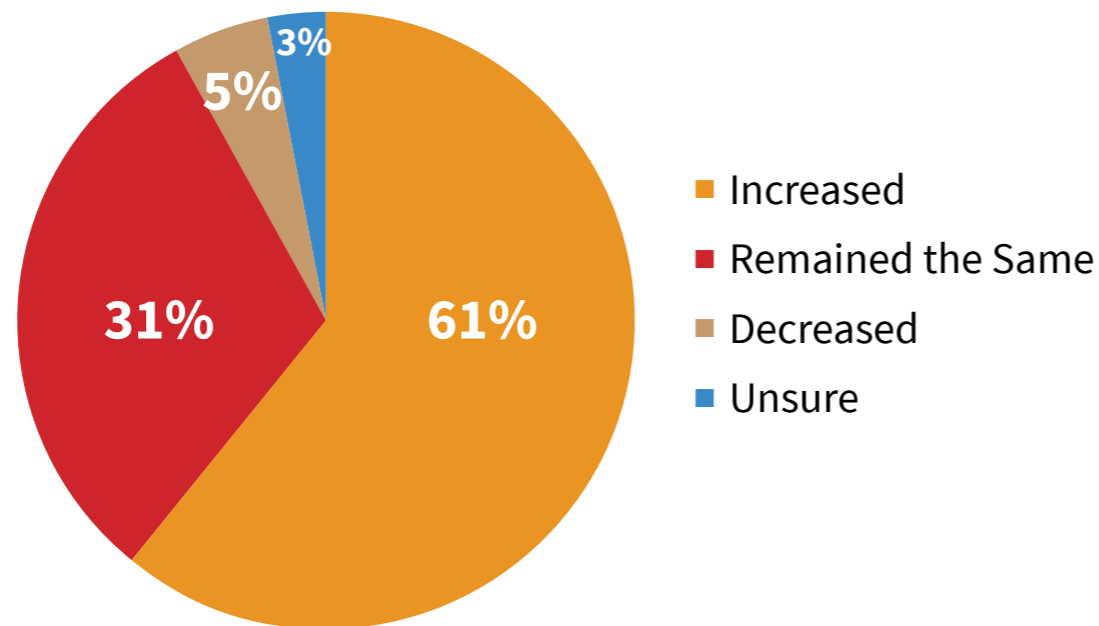
**Effective was defined as succeeding at moving leads/potential customers to the next stage (e.g., generating an initial inquiry, nurturing a lead through the buying process or convincing/persuading someone to make a purchase) based on your organization’s specific objectives.*

Base: 192 global for-profit marketers, primarily B2B in North America, who use content marketing to generate demand. Aided list.

Source: Using Content Marketing to Generate Demand, Create New Audiences. Content Marketing Institute. October 31, 2018 release date.

61% of B2B marketers increased their use of social media for content marketing purposes compared with one year ago.

How B2B Marketers' Use of Social Media for Content Marketing Has Changed Compared with One Year Ago (All Respondents)



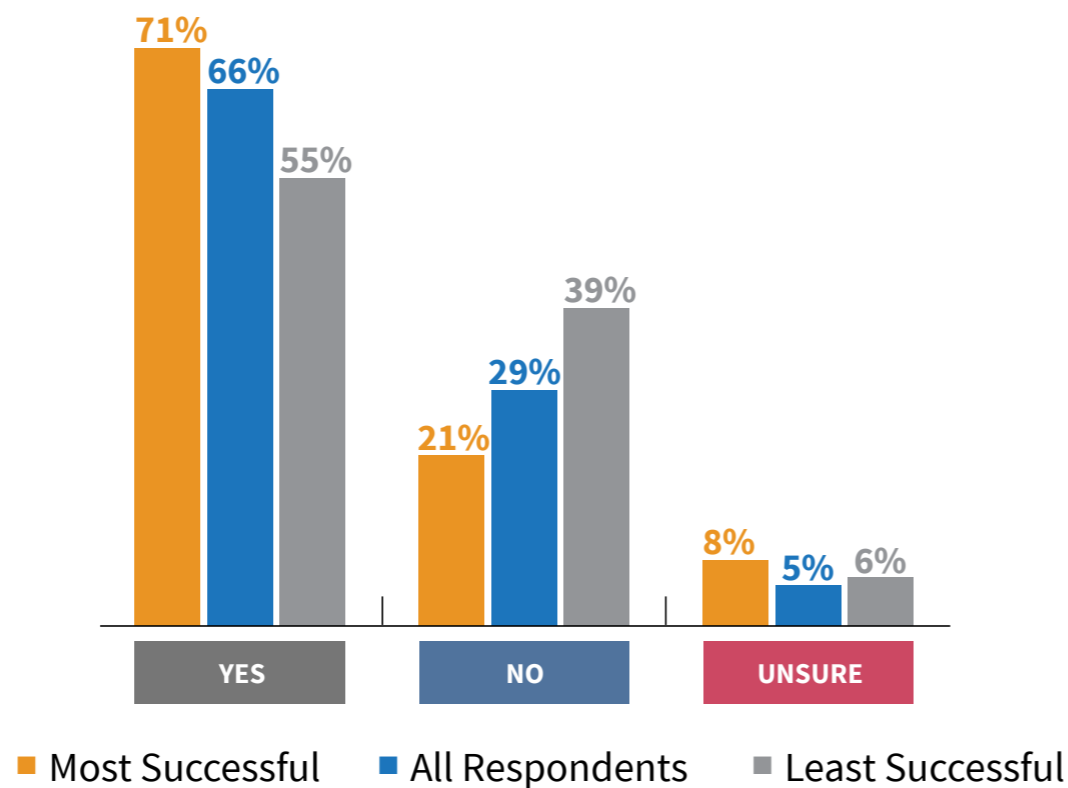
Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations have used social media for content marketing for at least one year. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Past CMI/MarketingProfs annual content marketing research has consistently identified LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook as the top three social media platforms B2B marketers use for content marketing purposes.

Instead of inquiring this year about specific platforms, we asked if issues such as changes in social media algorithms and data privacy had led content marketers to decrease their use of social media. We found no signs of slowing down, with only 5% reporting a decrease in use.

71% of the most successful B2B content marketers use paid methods to distribute content, compared with 55% of the least successful.

Proportion of B2B Marketers That Have Used Paid Methods to Distribute Content in the Last 12 Months



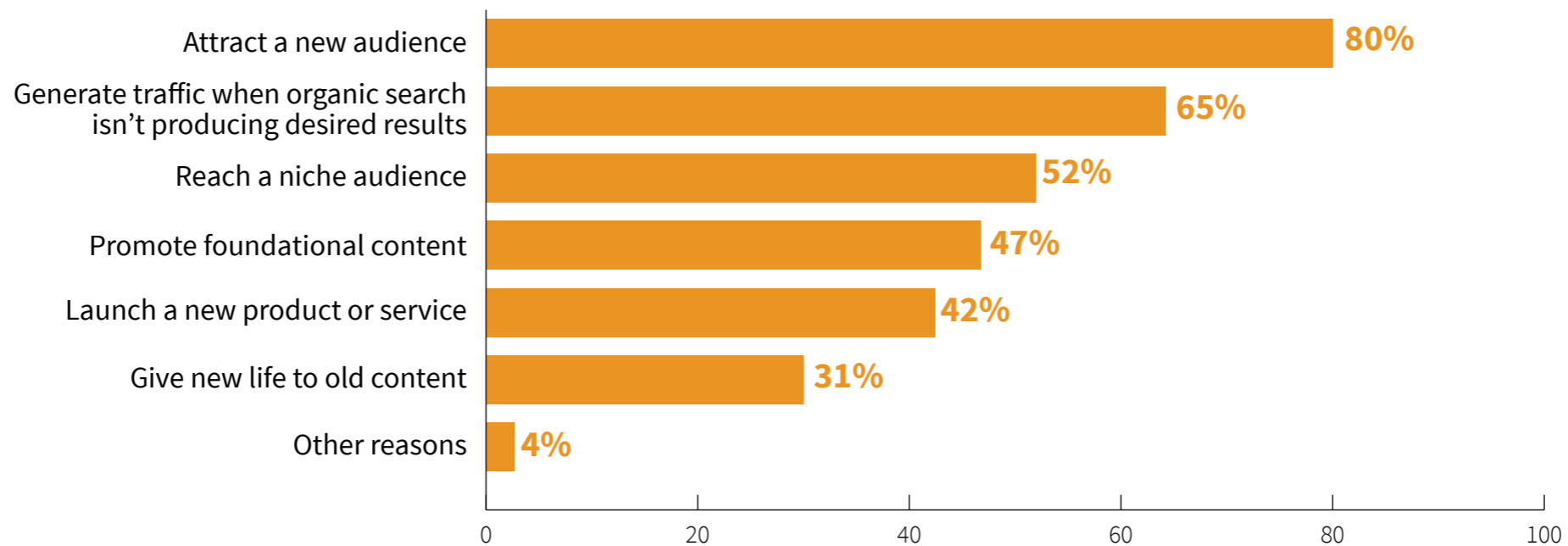
Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Last year’s CMI/MarketingProfs annual content marketing research (as reported in the 2018 version of this report) found that email, social media platforms, and blogs were the top three formats B2B marketers used to distribute content.

This year, we asked respondents if they use paid methods to distribute content. The majority said yes.

The top reason why B2B content marketers use paid methods to distribute content is to attract a new audience.

Reasons Why B2B Marketers Use Paid Methods to Distribute Content (All Respondents)



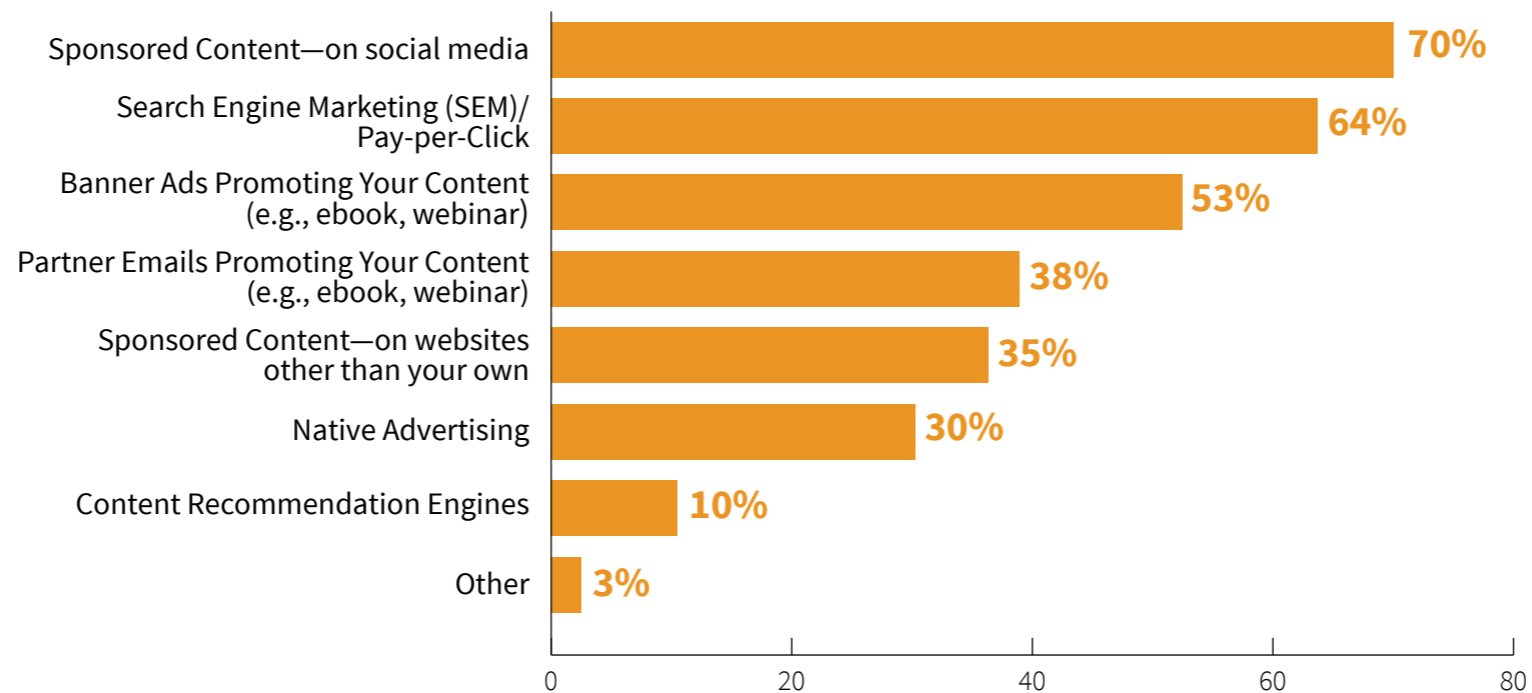
Base: B2B content marketers who have used paid methods in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing

Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Attract a new audience	83%	73%
Reach a niche audience.....	58%	45%
Give new life to old content	43%	27%

Sponsored content on social media and search engine marketing (SEM) are the top two paid methods used.

Types of Paid Content Distribution Methods B2B Marketers Use (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers who have used paid methods in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

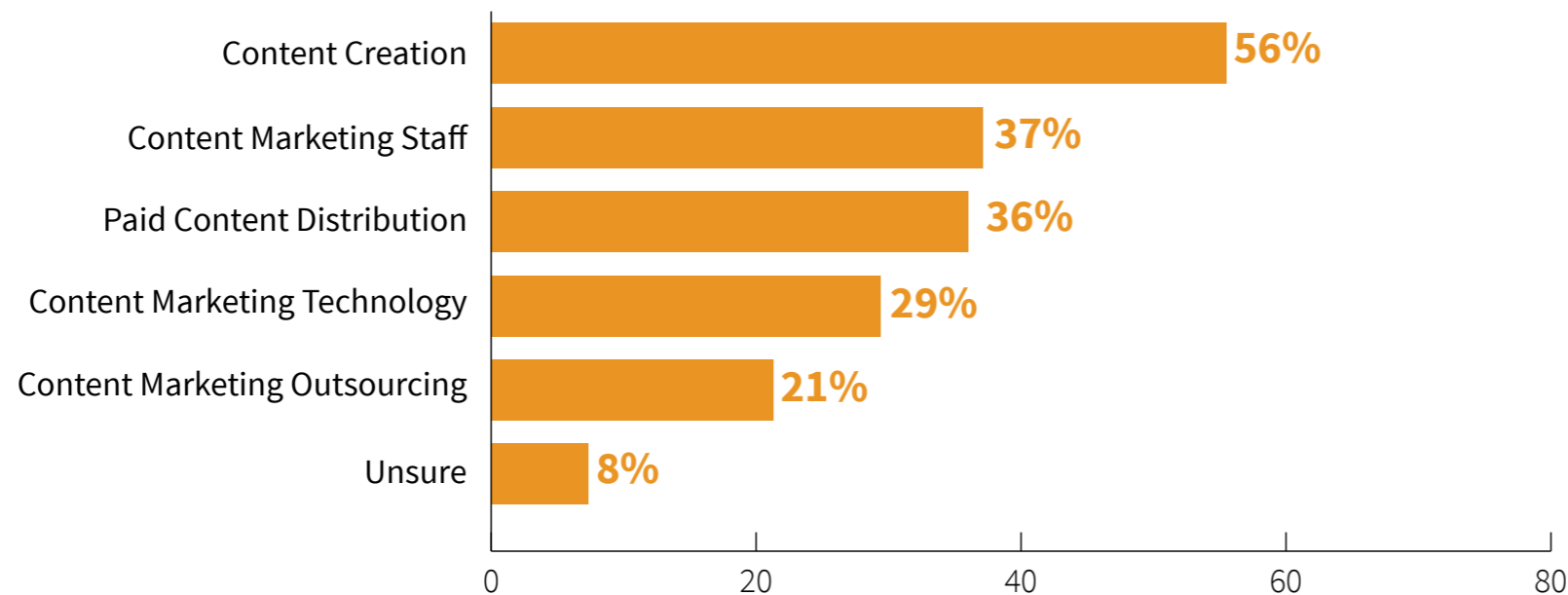
Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Sponsored Content—on social media	74%	62%
Banner Ads Promoting Your Content.....	59%	46%
Partner Emails Promoting Your Content.....	51%	30%

BUDGETS & SPENDING

B2B content marketers increased spending on content creation more so than other areas of content marketing in the last 12 months.

Areas Where B2B Content Marketers Increased Spending in the Last 12 Months (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers whose organization increased spending in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

The top three skills they're looking for?

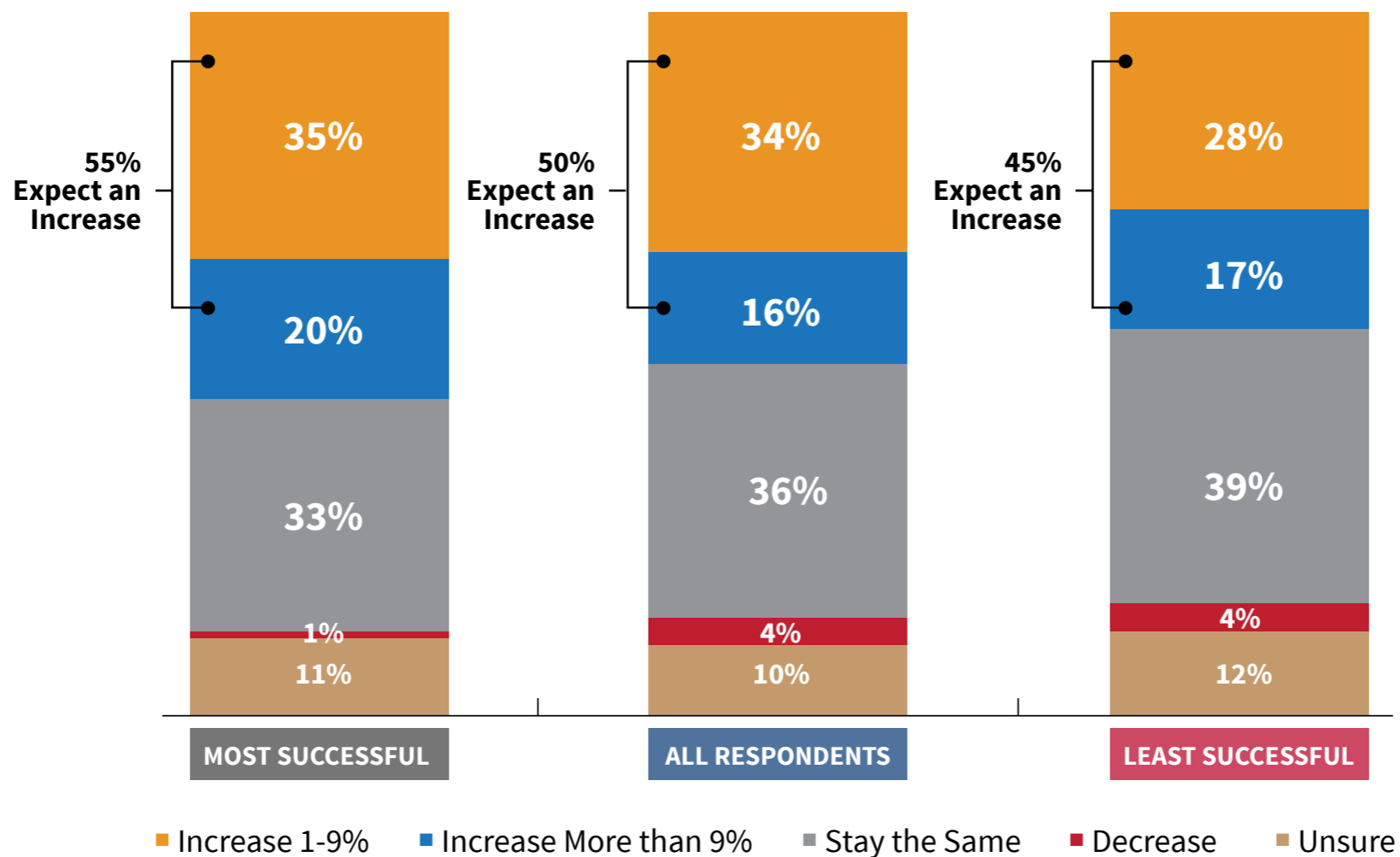
- ▶ Marketing 71%
- ▶ Business/Strategy.... 38%
- ▶ Journalism 33%

Base: Respondents who increased spending on content marketing staff.

Note: There were no noticeable differences between the most and least successful content marketers for any of the findings presented on this page.

Around half of B2B marketers expect their content marketing budget to increase in 2019.

B2B Marketers' Expected Change in 2019 Content Marketing Budget Compared With 2018

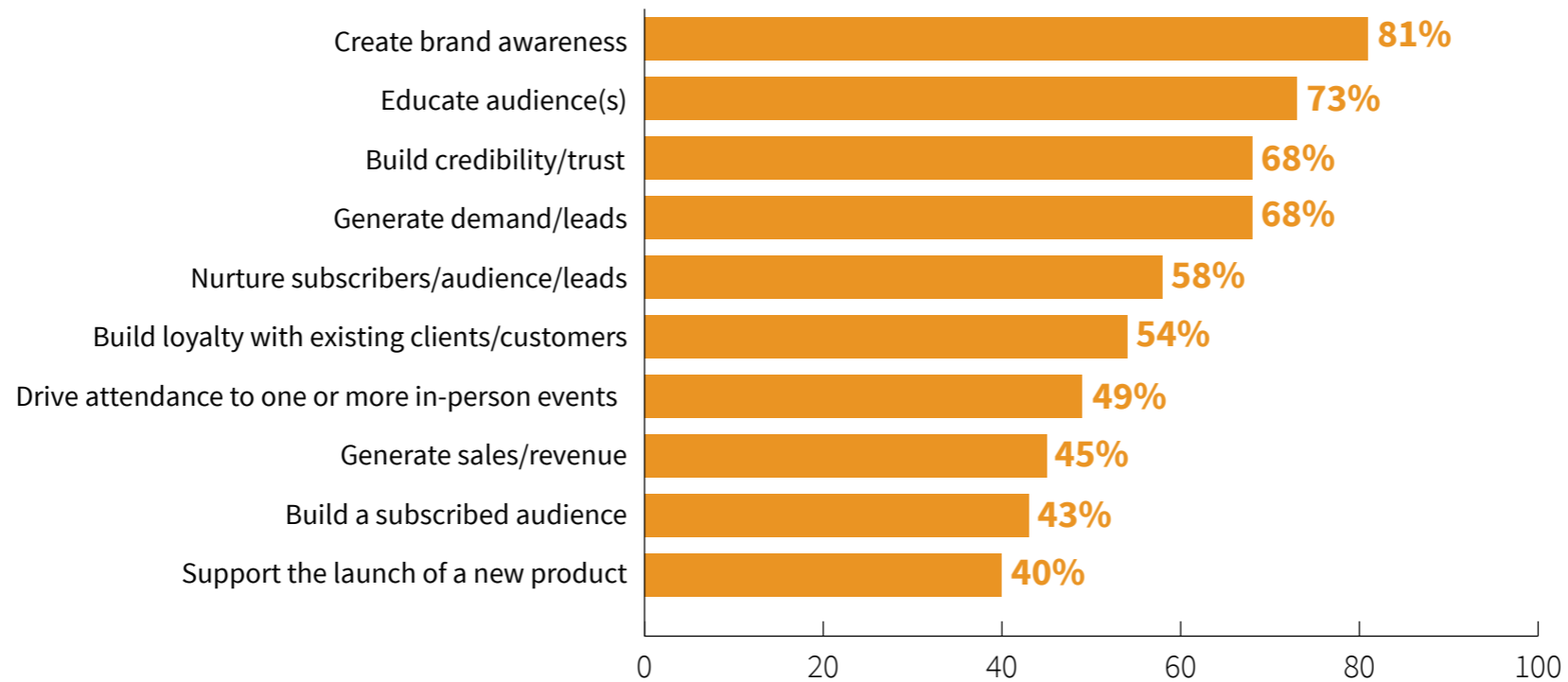


Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

GOALS & METRICS

B2B marketers have used content marketing successfully over the last 12 months to create brand awareness, educate audience(s), build credibility/trust, generate demand/leads, and more.

Goals B2B Marketers Have Achieved by Using Content Marketing Successfully in Last 12 Months



Note: 4% said none of the above.

Base: B2B content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

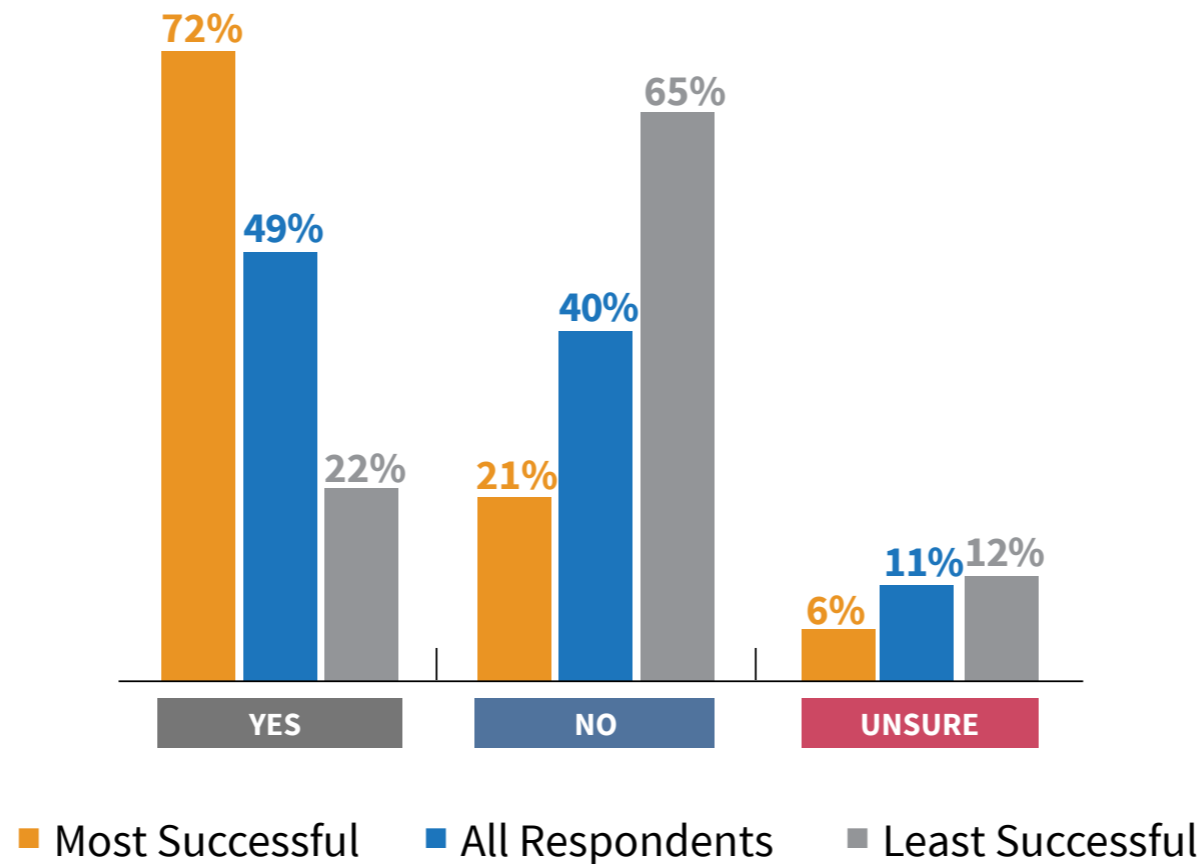
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Nurture subscribers/audience/leads.....	76%	33%
Build loyalty with existing clients/customers	73%	32%
Generate sales/revenue.....	68%	19%

72% of the most successful B2B content marketers report their organization measures content marketing ROI.

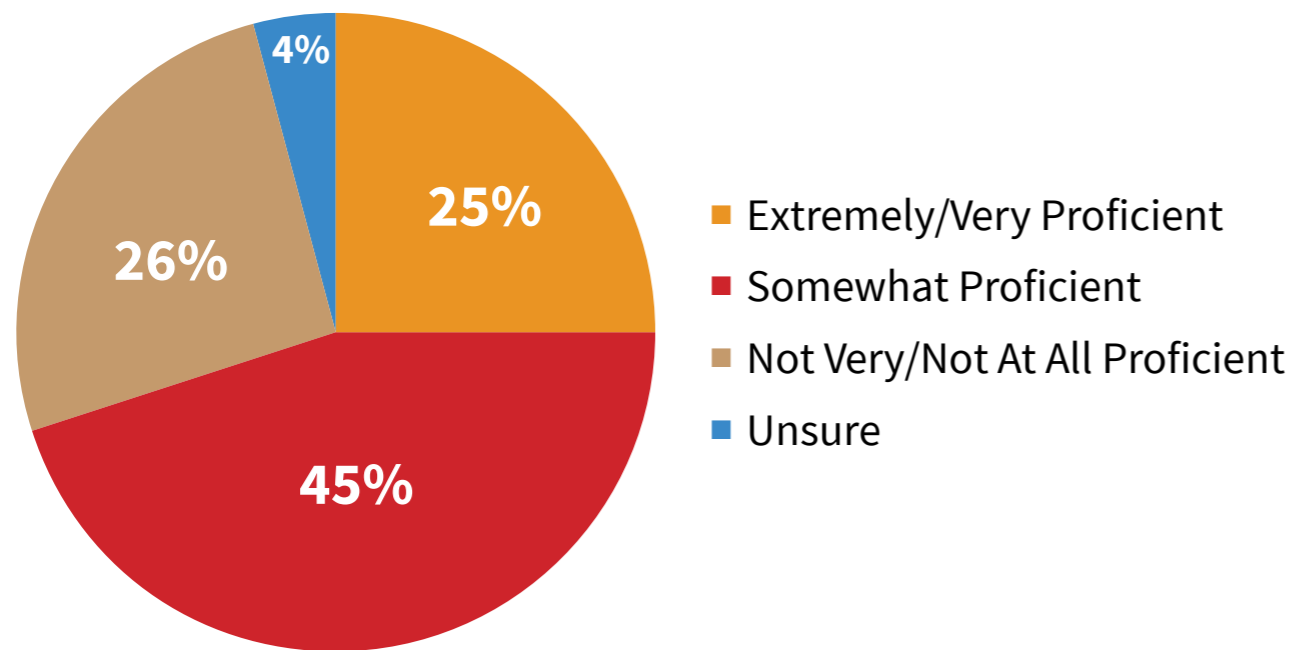
Proportion of B2B Organizations That Measure Content Marketing ROI



*Base: B2B content marketers.
2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

25% of B2B content marketers say their teams are extremely/very proficient at using the metrics their team has selected.

How B2B Content Marketers Rate Their Proficiency With Using Selected Metrics (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers whose organizations use metrics to measure success at achieving content marketing goals. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

There are many metrics and techniques available for measuring content marketing results. The key is to identify the metrics that will yield the most meaningful insights based on specific goals.

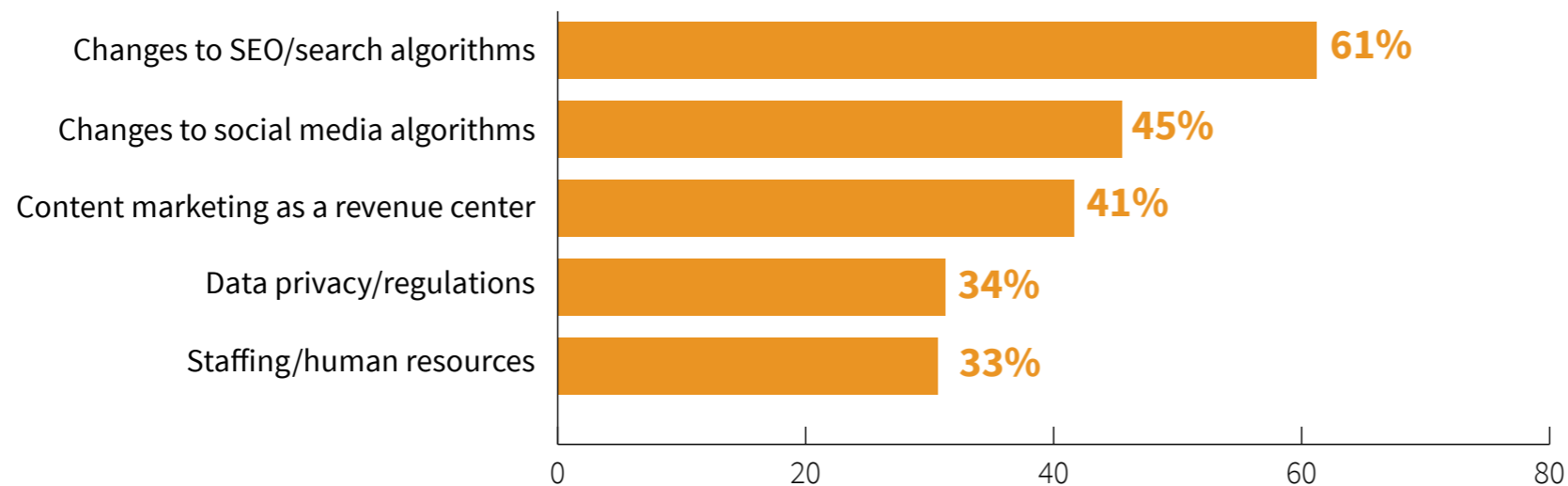
This chart shows how proficient B2B content marketers say their teams are with using the metrics they've selected. Those reporting low proficiency may have a need for training, or the metrics used may need to be reevaluated.

It's worthwhile to note that those who are most proficient at using the right metrics work in organizations that are more likely to measure the ROI of their content marketing efforts.

ISSUES & TOP PERFORMER CHARACTERISTICS

B2B marketers say changes to SEO/search algorithms is the top content marketing issue of importance to their organization in 2018.

Top 5 Content Marketing Issues of Importance to B2B Organizations in 2018 (All Respondents)



Base: B2B content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted. 2019 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Other issues cited:

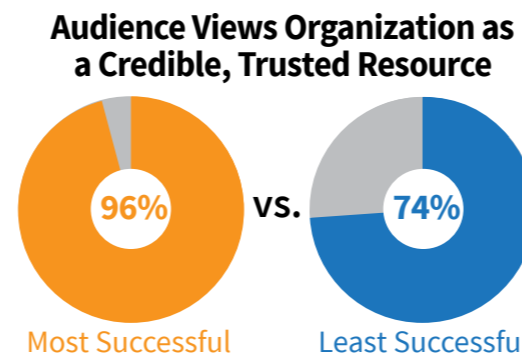
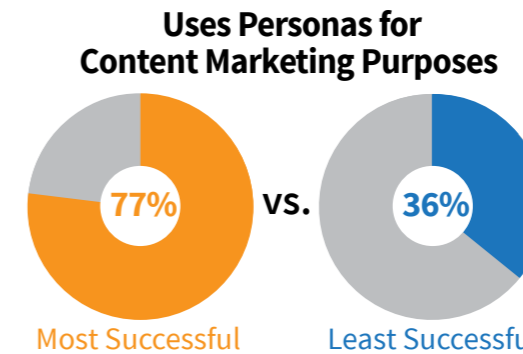
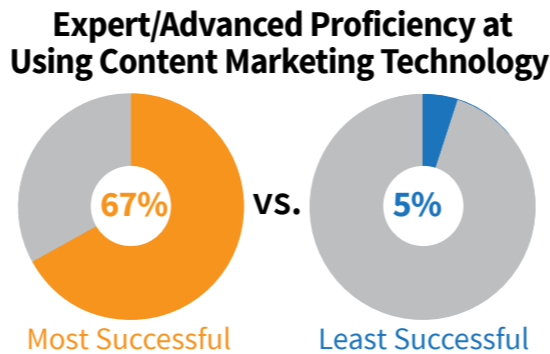
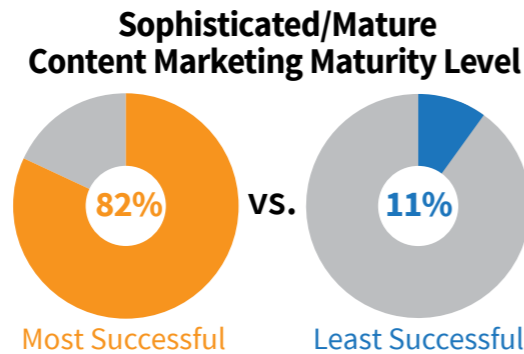
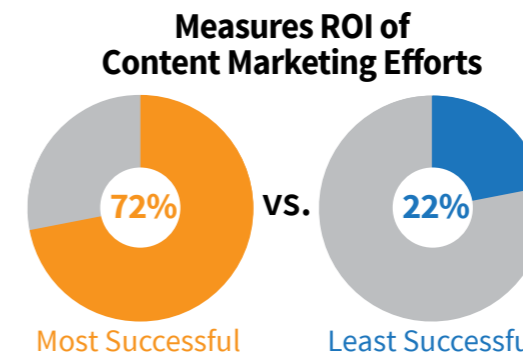
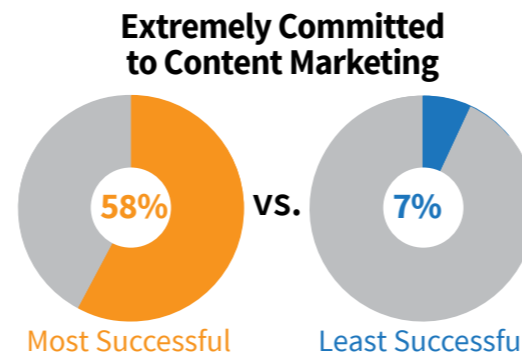
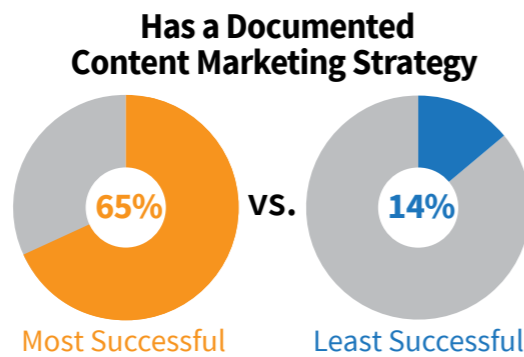
AI Technologies (14%); Preparing Content for Voice Search (13%); Content Security (e.g., encryption, ID theft) (13%); Public’s Trust Issues with Media (12%); Unsure (7%); and Other Issues (3%).

Three Largest Differences Between the Most and Least Successful

	Most	Least
Data privacy/regulations	38%	26%
AI technologies	19%	7%
Preparing content for voice search.....	17%	8%

7 Characteristics of Top-Performing B2B Content Marketers

CMI/MarketingProfs' annual content marketing research consistently shows that the most successful B2B content marketers often have distinguishing characteristics that set them apart from their less successful peers. While not a complete list, here are seven characteristics based on this year's data.

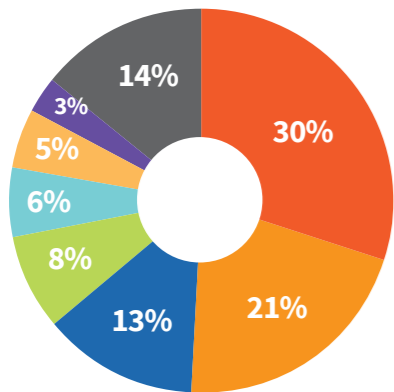


B2B Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America was produced by **Content Marketing Institute** and **MarketingProfs** and sponsored by **Conductor**.

The 9th Annual Content Marketing Survey, from which the results of this report were generated, was mailed electronically to a sample of marketers using lists from Content Marketing Institute, MarketingProfs, The Association for Data-driven Marketing & Advertising (ADMA), and WTW Media, and UBM Technology Group.

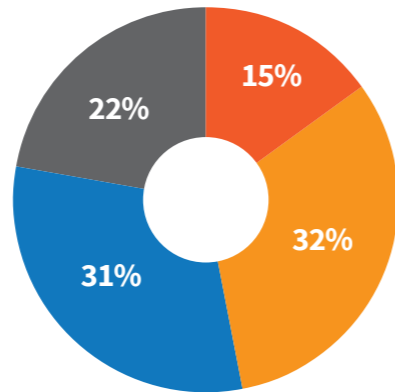
A total of 1,947 recipients from around the globe—representing a full range of industries, functional areas, and company sizes—replied to the survey during June and July 2018. This report presents the findings from the 771 North America respondents who indicated their organization is for-profit, primarily selling products/services to businesses (B2B), and has been using content marketing for at least one year.

B2B Industry Classification



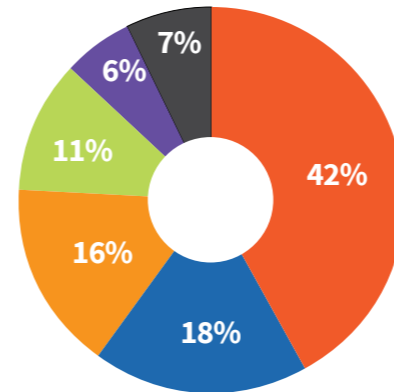
- Technology/IT/Software/Hardware
- Agency (Content Marketing, Advertising, Digital, PR)
- Manufacturing
- Consulting
- Professional Services
- Financial Services
- Healthcare/Medical/Pharmaceuticals
- Other

Size of B2B Company (by Employees)



- Micro (Fewer than 10 Employees)
- Small (10-99 Employees)
- Midsize (100-999 Employees)
- Large (1,000+ Employees)

B2B Content Marketing Job Title/Function



- Marketing/Advertising/Communications/PR Management
- Content Creation/Management (Writer/Creative Director/Editor)
- Corporate Management (CEO/Owner/President/CMO/CCO)
- Marketing—Staff/Support/Administration
- General Management (GM, VP)
- Other

Note: This year's methodology differs from prior years. This year, we qualified respondents based on whether their organization has been using content marketing for at least one year, and whether they are a content marketer, someone who is involved with the content marketing function, and/or someone to whom content marketing reports.

Thanks to all the survey participants and distribution partners 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 September in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and [ContentTECH Summit](#) event is held every spring. CMI publishes the quarterly magazine [Chief Content Officer](#), and provides strategic consulting and content marketing research for some of the best-known brands in the world. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about CMI. Content Marketing Institute is organized by UBM, which in June 2018 combined with Informa PLC to become a leading B2B information services group and the largest B2B Events organizer in the world. To learn more and for the latest news and information, visit www.ubm.com and www.informa.com.

About MarketingProfs

MarketingProfs is the most trusted name in marketing education, giving marketers worldwide the tools and training they need to exceed their goals. Its on-demand training, live online events, and in-person conferences help individuals, small teams, and large teams increase efficiency, productivity, and (best of all!) revenue. Find out how learning can change your life: marketingprofs.com.

About Conductor

[Conductor](#) provides a full solution for content marketers who want to get content found in organic channels like search. Our platform empowers your content marketing efforts from ideation through iteration so that you can create the content that will bring your customers value. Our services team provides education and SEO strategy to help you master organic marketing and drive traffic and revenue.

This is what you've been looking for: **PROOF THAT CONTENT MARKETING WORKS.**

Conductor performed the **first-known scientific study** investigating the impact of educational content on customers. The results showed:

- ▶ Respondents were **131% more likely to purchase** from a brand immediately after reading content from that brand
- ▶ **78% of respondents found a brand “helpful”** and **64% found it “trustworthy”** immediately after reading content from that brand—and these numbers increased by **8-9% one week later**

Finally, here are hard numbers that demonstrate the impact of your work.

This study shows that when you put your customers first and create valuable content for them, you grab their attention, gain their loyalty, and win their business.

DOWNLOAD THE FREE RESEARCH HERE
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