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Strategic Markets

Content & Purchasing Decision Trends Report

Information Needs & Preferences

MAY 2023

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SECTION 1.

Introduction

Introduction

In today's fast-paced, digital world, it's crucial for companies to build trust with customers while **providing engaging, valuable information.** Content marketing has become a great strategy to help companies establish a positive brand reputation, attract new customers and generate more sales.

According to a recent HubSpot report, the top challenges marketers face with content marketing are creating content that generates leads, finding ideas for new content and creating content that receives high levels of engagement. Over 60% of marketers measure **the success of their content marketing strategy through sales.***

In The International Surface Event survey, we examine **content marketing preferences and perceptions** of industry professionals in relation to their research and purchasing decision processes. In addition, we look at key details on **how they make buying decisions** for their business in today's marketplace.

The data in this survey will provide **critical insights to help you plan** your content marketing strategy and improve customer engagement.

* Daniel, Kirsty. "The State of Media & Content Planning in 2022" HubSpot, April 12, 2022. https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/state-of-content-marketing-infographic

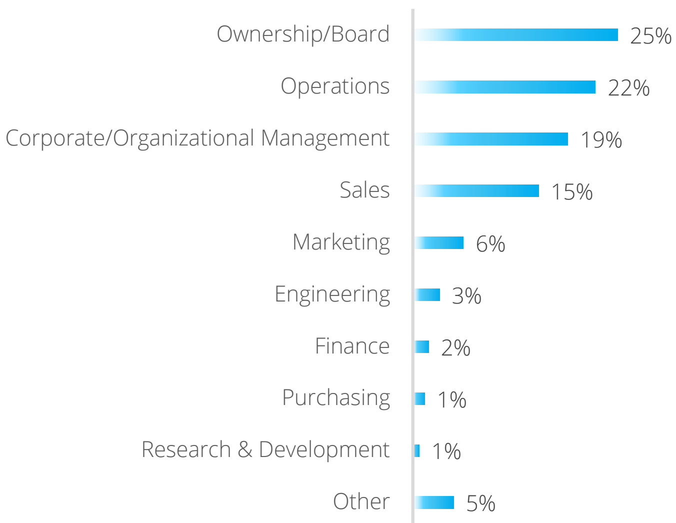
SECTION 2.

Respondent Profile

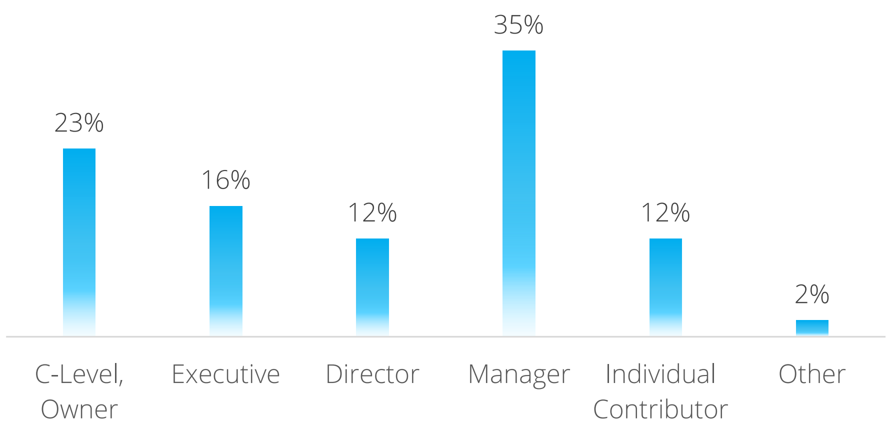
Primary Job Function & Job Level

A variety of job functions are represented in the sample, most commonly Ownership/Board (25%) followed by Operations (22%), Corporate/Organizational Management (19%), and Sales (15%). The vast majority (86%) hold some degree of managerial responsibility, including 39% with Executive level or higher positions.

Primary Job Function



Job Level



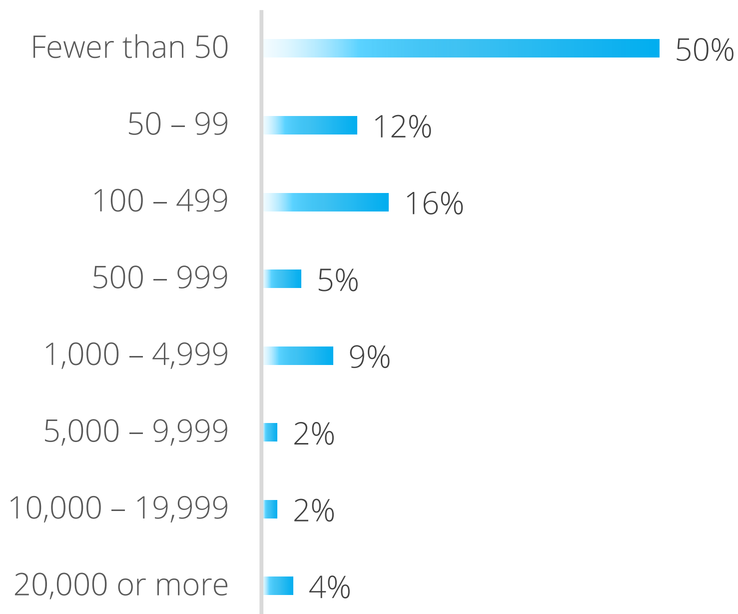
Company Size & Purchase Involvement

While the sample includes companies of all sizes, most respondents (62%) represent small companies, with fewer than 100 employees.

88% are involved in specifying or purchasing

The vast majority of respondents are involved in specifying and/or purchasing for their organizations (88%).

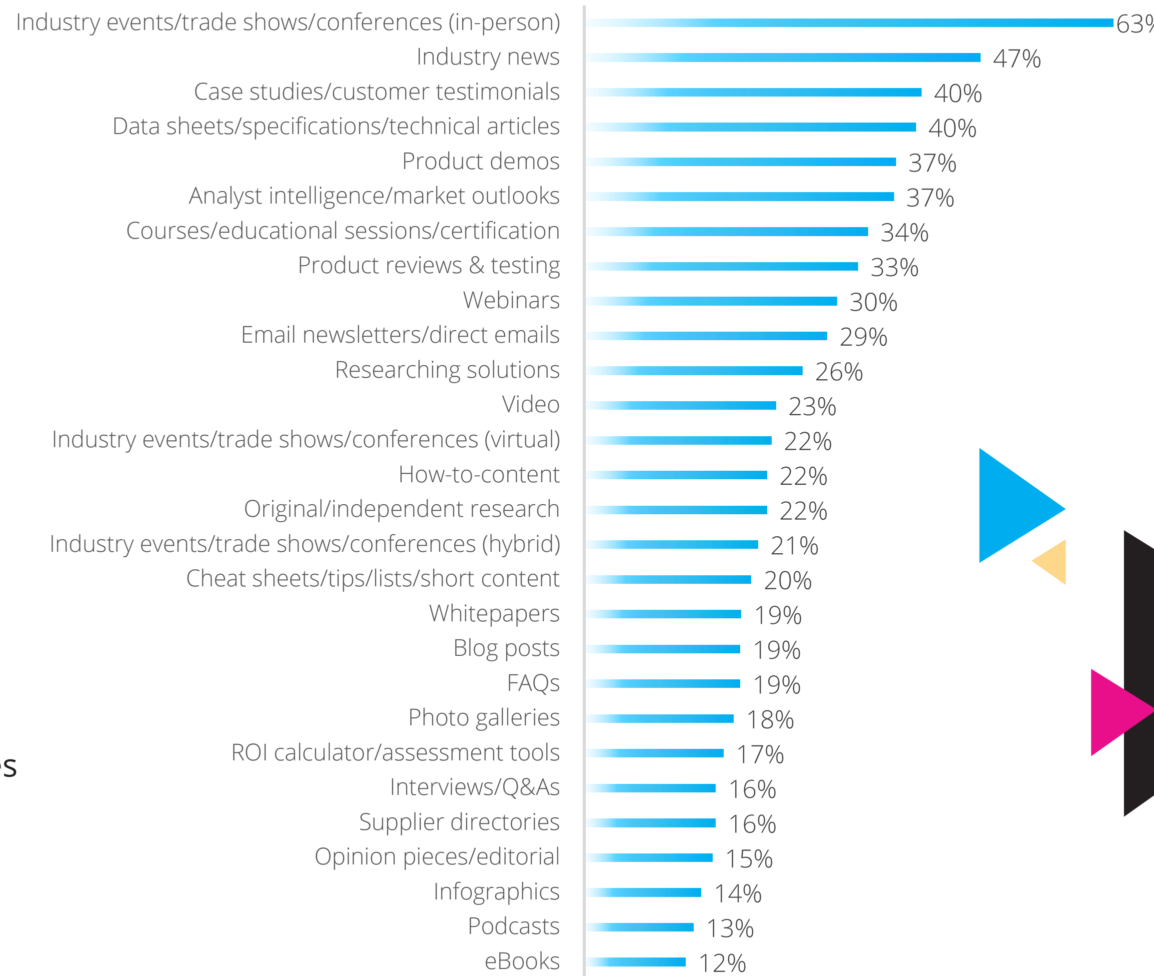
Company Size: Number of Employees



SECTION 3.

Content Types & Sources Used Most Heavily

Content Types Used for Researching Solutions



When researching solutions for their organizations, respondents indicate the **heaviest reliance** on:

- In-person industry events
- Industry news
- Case studies/customer testimonials
- Data sheets/specifications/technical articles
- Product demos
- Analyst intelligence/market outlooks

Content Types Used for Purchasing Decisions

When looking to inform purchasing decisions, respondents indicate the **heaviest reliance** on:

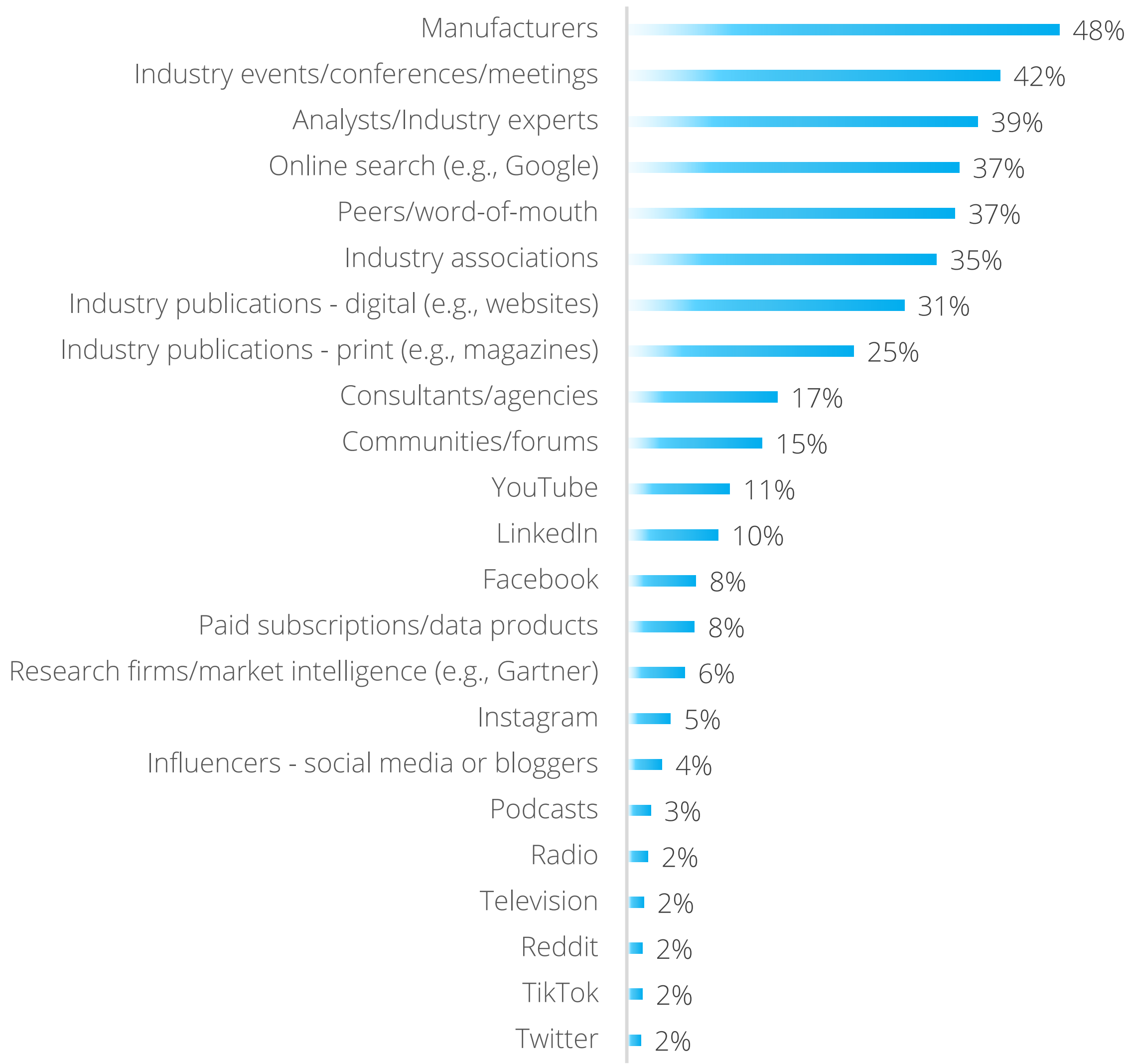
- In-person industry events
- Product demos
- Product reviews & testing
- Data sheets/specifications/technical articles
- Case studies/customer testimonials
- Analyst intelligence/market outlooks
- Industry news

Sources of Content Used for Researching Solutions

When researching solutions for their organizations, the sources of content respondents rely on **most heavily** include:

- Industry events/conferences/meetings
- Analysts/industry experts
- Industry publications – digital
- Manufacturers
- Online search
- Industry associations

Sources of Content Used for Purchasing Decisions



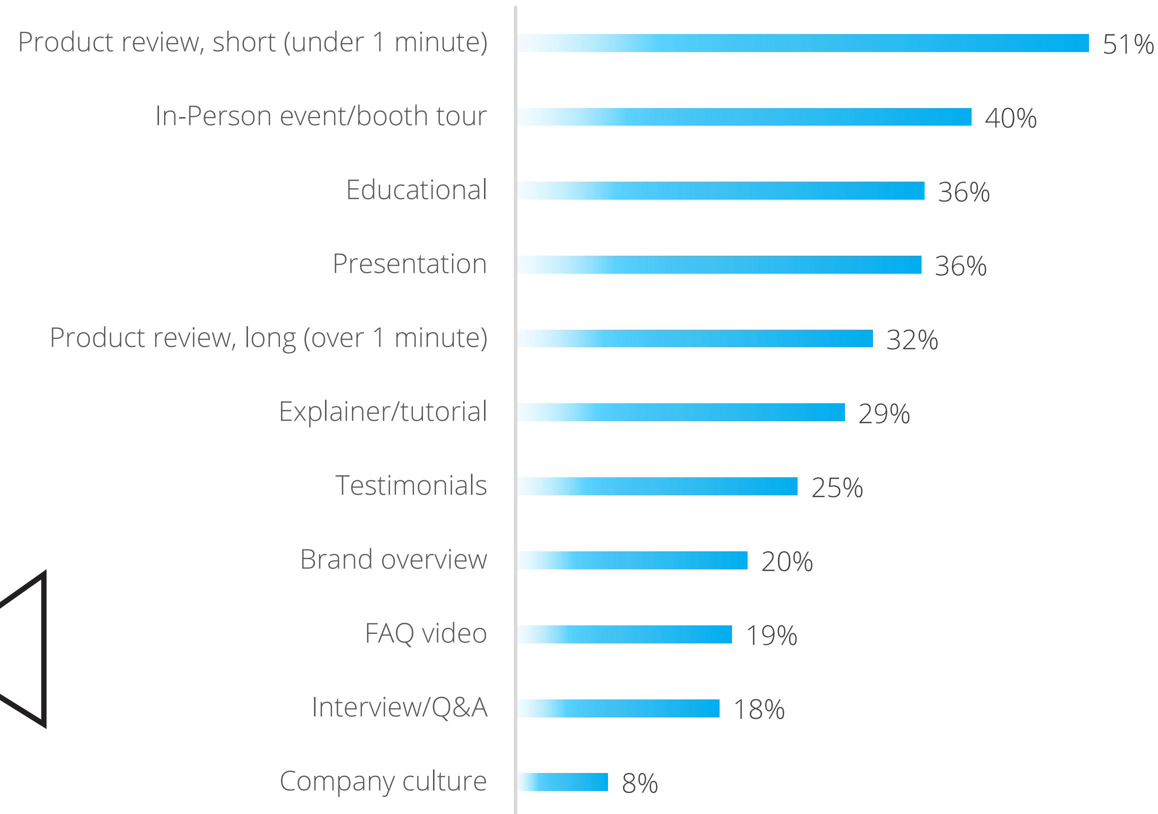
When making purchasing decisions, the sources of content respondents rely on **most heavily** include:

- Manufacturers
- Industry events/conferences/meetings
- Analysts/industry experts
- Online search
- Peers/word-of-mouth
- Industry associations

Most Helpful Types of Video Content

The types of video content respondents find **most helpful** include:

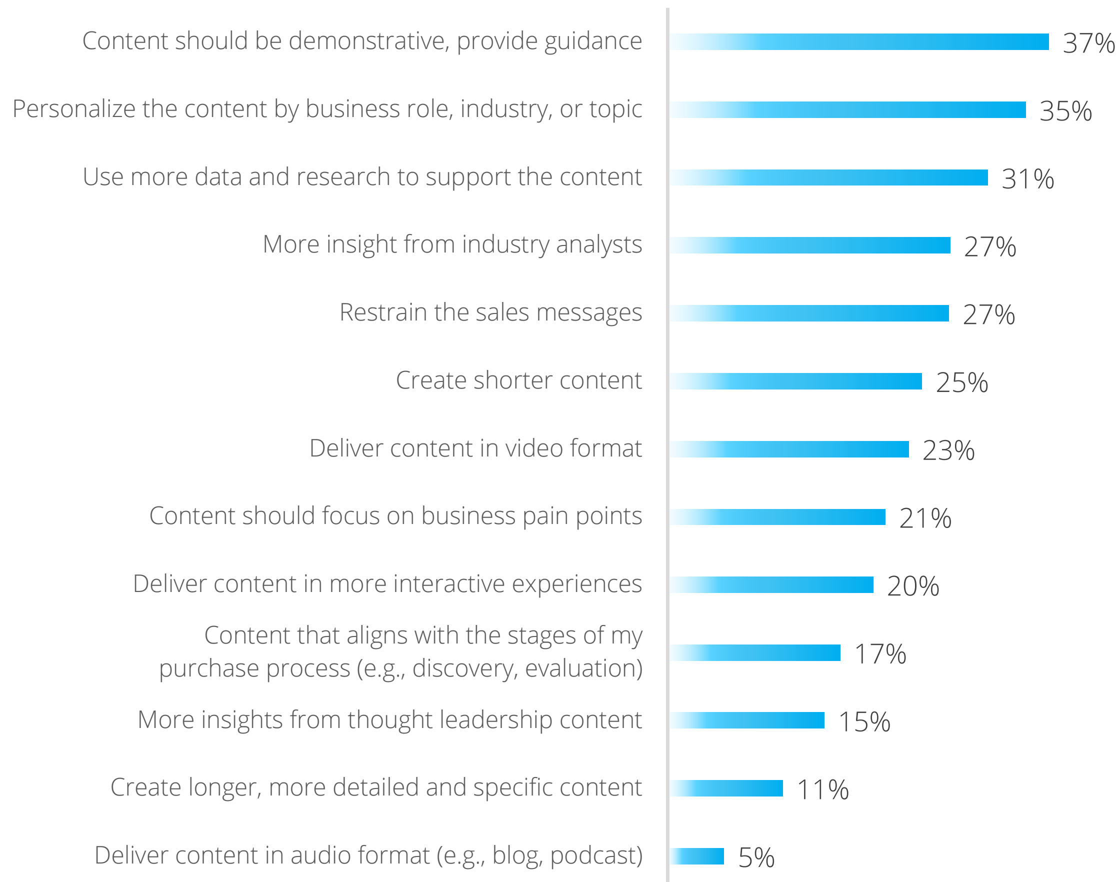
- Short product review
- In-person event/booth tour
- Educational
- Presentation



SECTION 4.

Content Perceptions & Preferences

Recommendations for Improving B2B Digital Content



In order to improve the quality of digital content, respondents would most like to see B2B marketers:

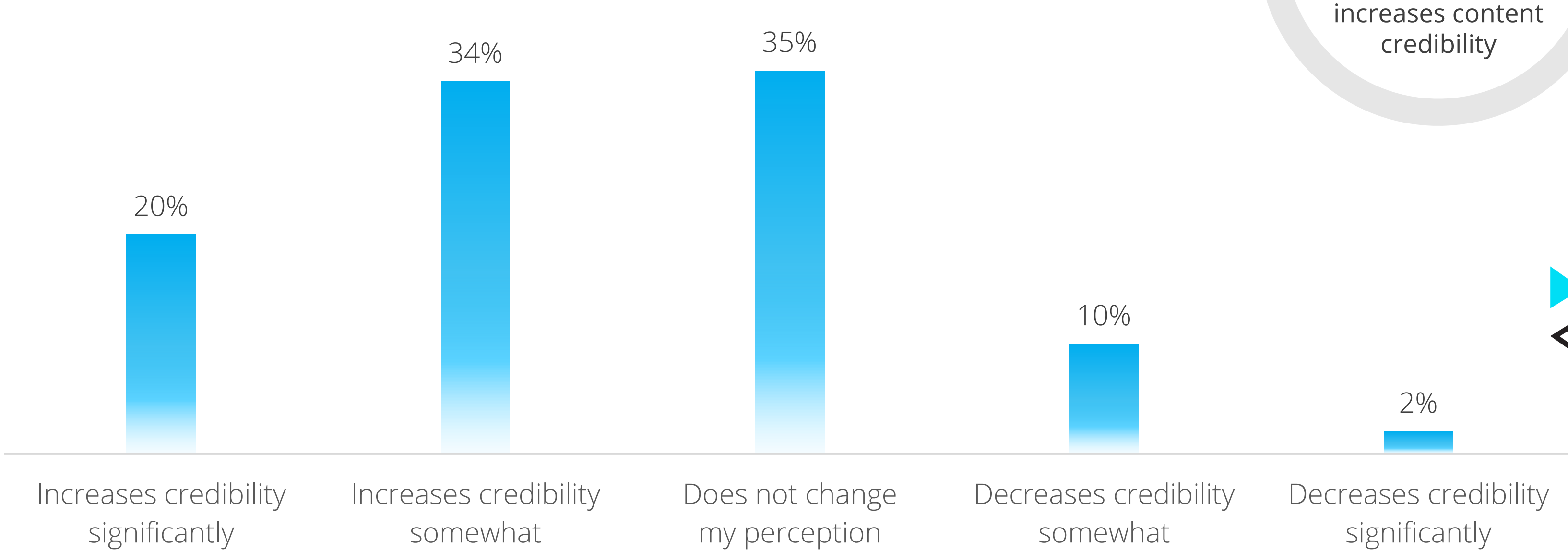
- Provide guidance through demonstrative content
- Personalize the content
- Use more data and research to support the content

Impact of Third-Party Involvement on Content Credibility

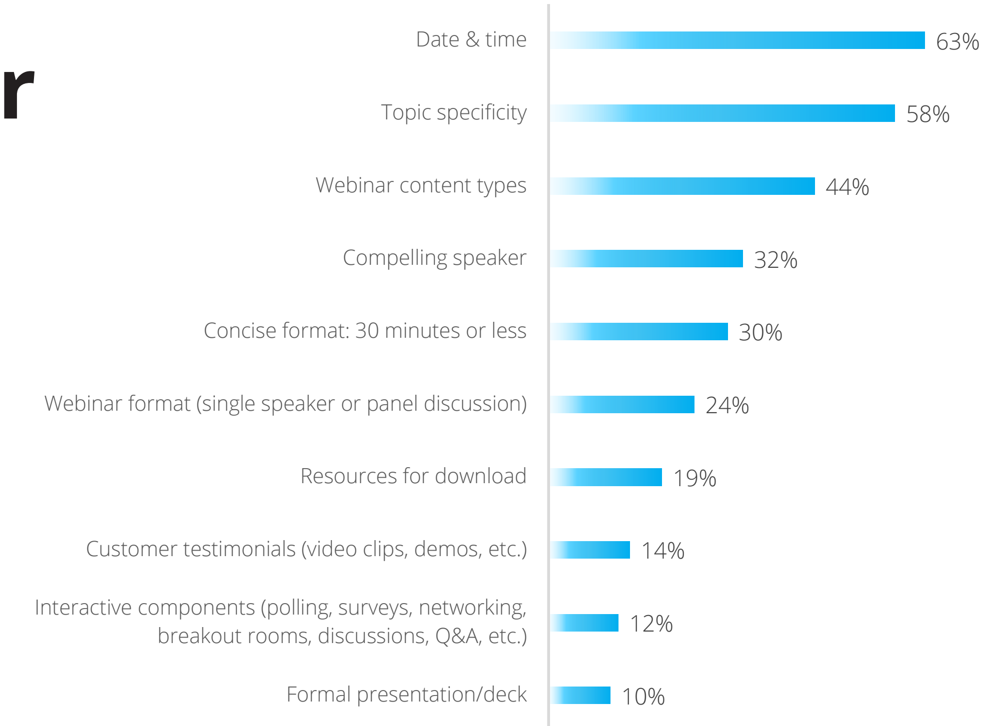
Most respondents (54%) find the involvement of an independent third-party **increases the credibility of content.**

54%

find 3rd party involvement increases content credibility



Key Considerations in Deciding to Attend a Webinar



When attending, or making the decision to attend a webinar, respondents are **most likely to consider:**

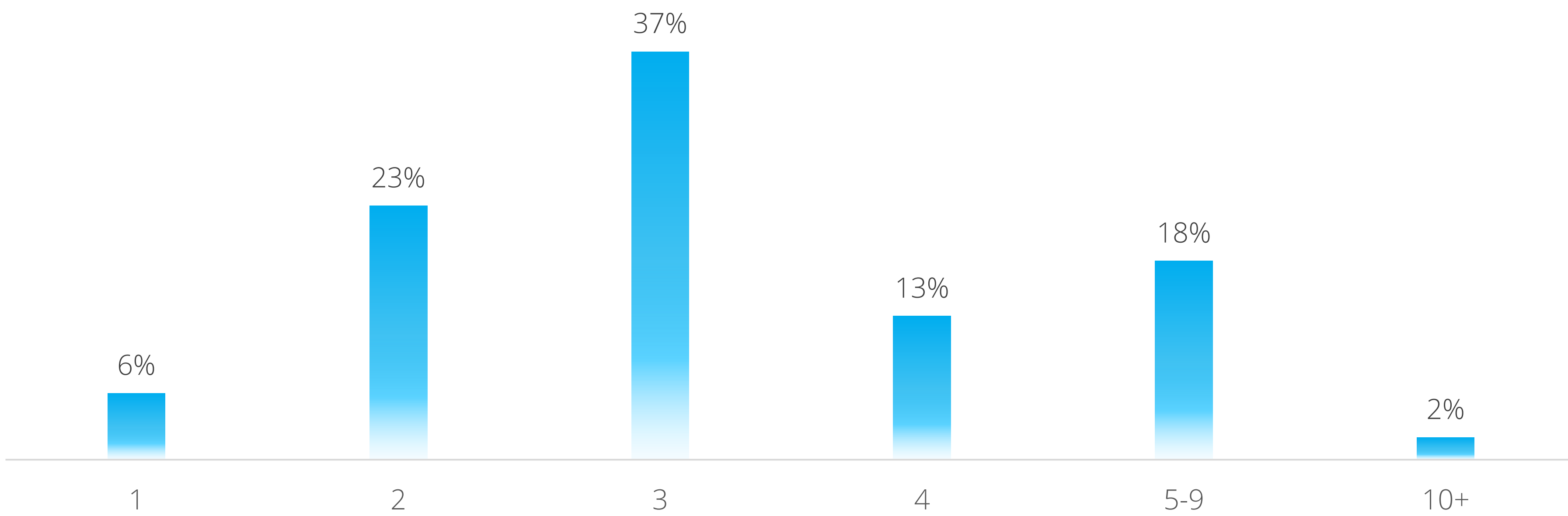
- Date and time
- Topic specificity

They are **least driven** by:

- Formal presentation/deck
- Interactive components

Average Number of Content Pieces Downloaded/Consumed

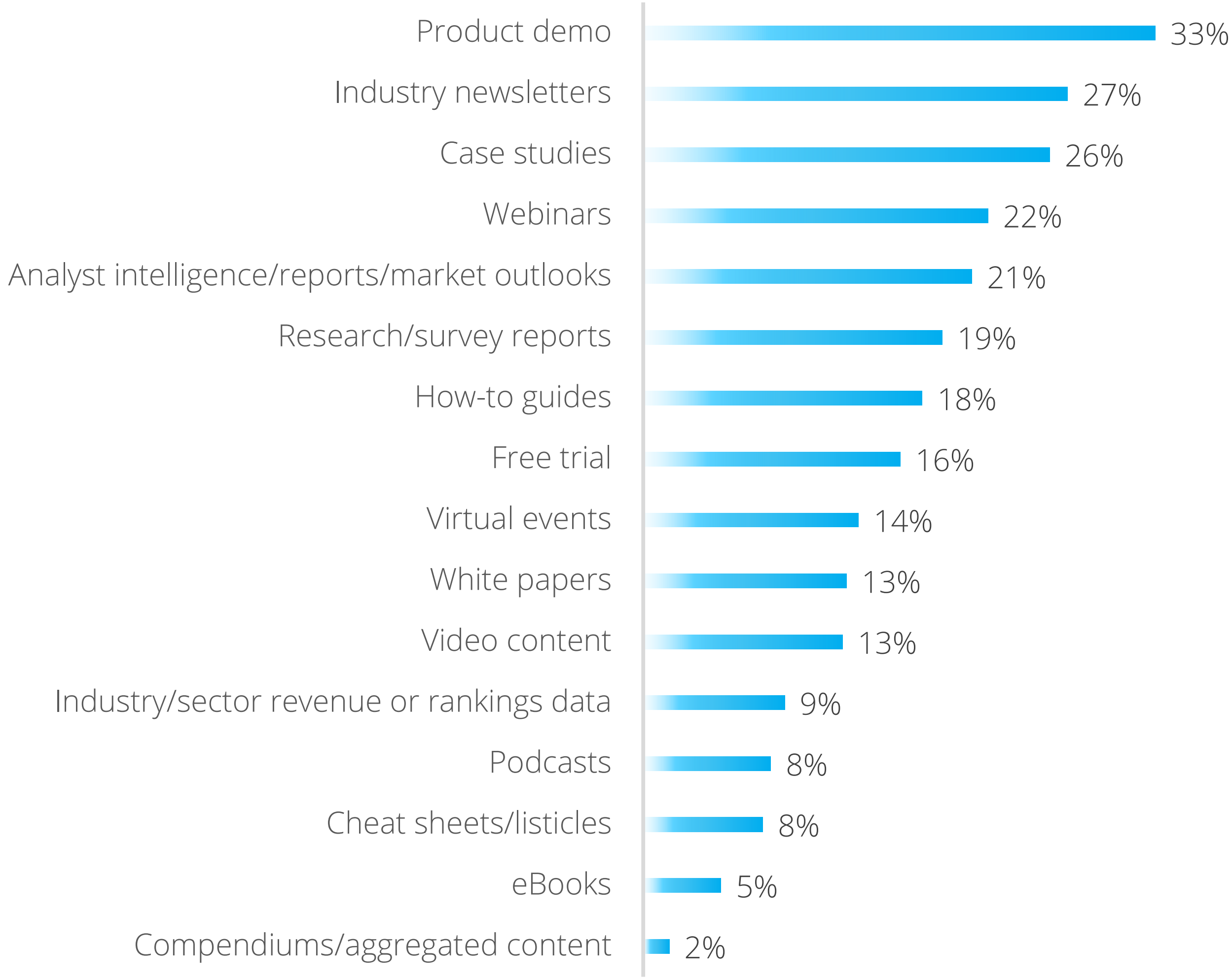
When researching products and services for a business need, the typical respondent reports downloading and/ or consuming an average of **four content pieces** online before speaking directly with a sales representative.



Types of Content for Which Respondents are Willing to Register

Most respondents (70%) are **willing to register for content** by sharing professional and/or personal company information, most commonly **in order to access:**

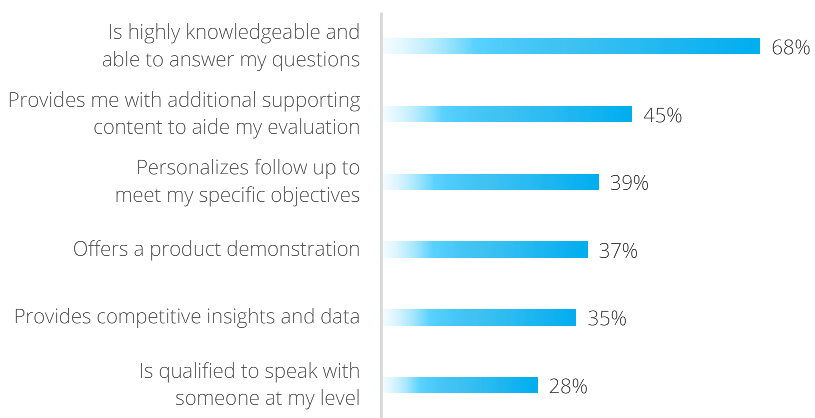
- Product demos
- Industry newsletters
- Case studies



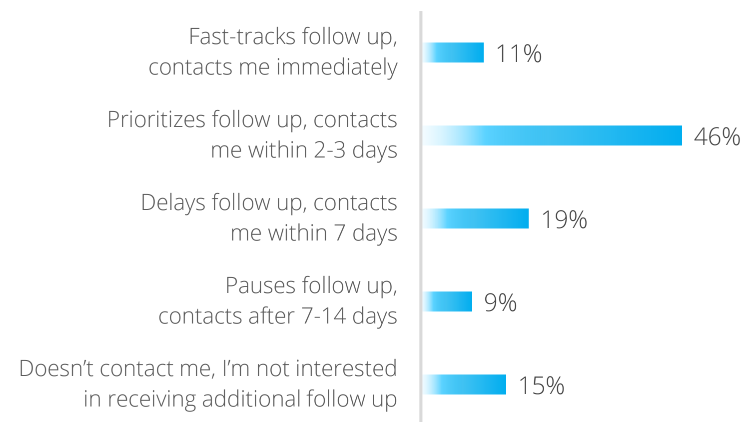
Sales Rep Follow-Up: Communication Attributes & Timing

After downloading or consuming information related to a specific solution, respondents are most looking for sales rep follow-up from **someone highly knowledgeable who can answer their questions** (68%). The vast majority (85%) are open to **receiving follow-up communication** from a sales rep, most commonly **within 2-3 days** of downloading/consuming information (46%).

Important Sales Communication Attributes after Downloading Content Related to a Specific Solution



Preferred Timing for Sales Communication Follow-Up



SECTION 5.

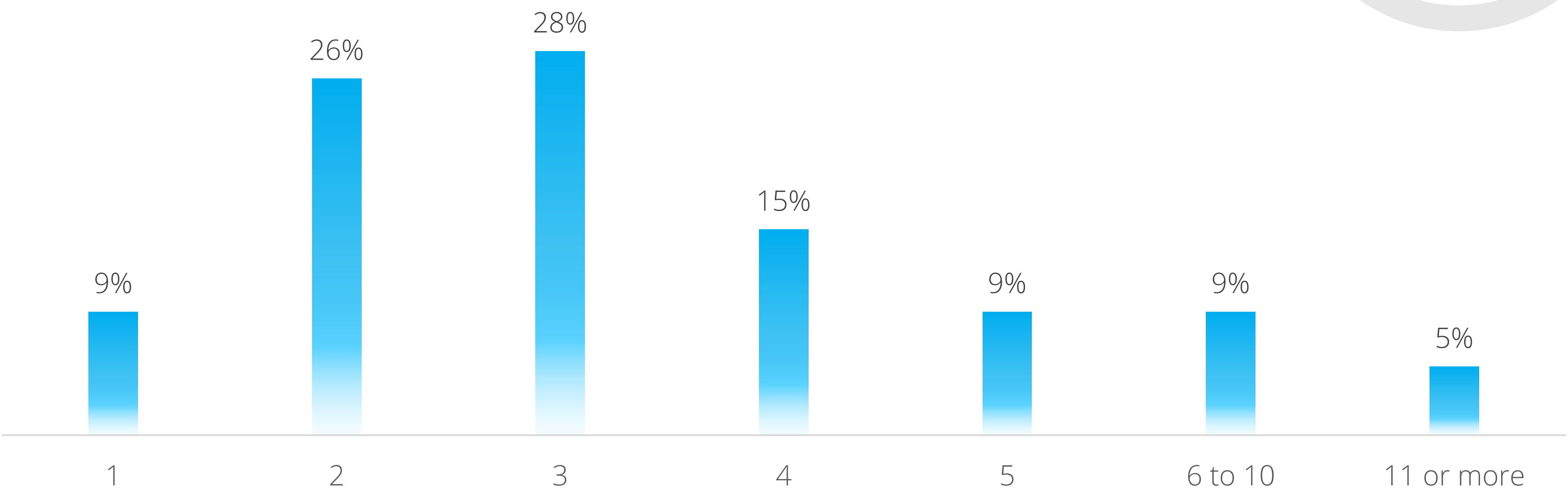
Purchasing Decision Detail

Number of People Involved in Major Purchasing Decisions

On Average 0f 94% of respondents report fewer than 5 people are involved in major purchasing decisions at their organizations.

94%

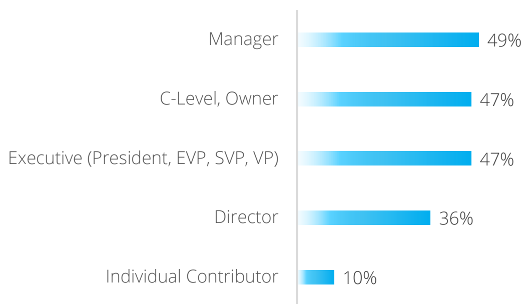
Fewer than 5 people typically involved in major purchasing decisions



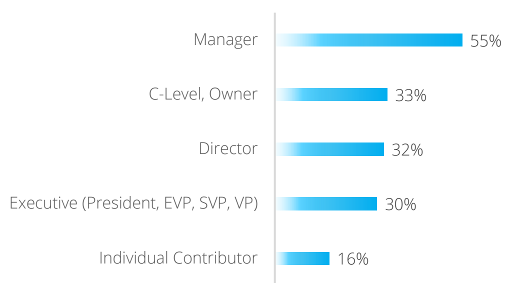
Roles Involved at Various Stages of the Purchase Process

A variety of roles are involved in establishing the need for purchase, most commonly Managers, C-Levels, Owners, and Executives. Managers are most likely to identify a short list of vendors, and C-Levels, Owners and Executives are most likely to make the final purchase decisions.

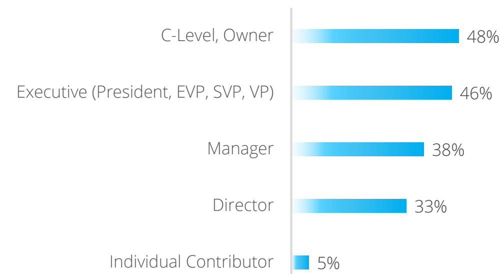
Establishing the Need for a Purchase



Identifying Short List of Vendors



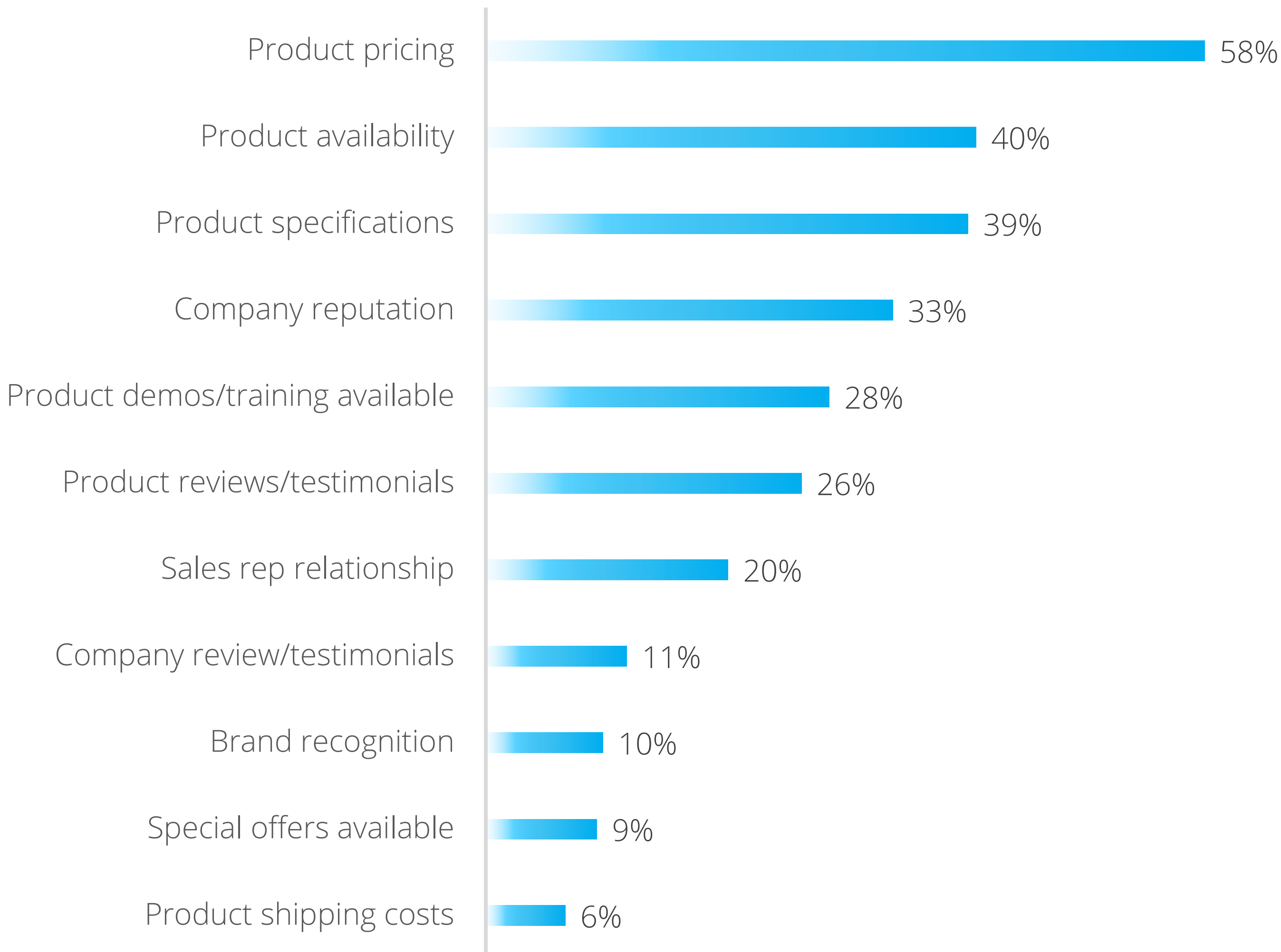
Making the Final Purchase Decision



Key Factors in Purchase of a New Product or from a New Vendor

When considering purchasing a new product or from a new vendor, the **top factors influencing the purchase.**

- Product pricing
- Product availability
- Product specifications
- Company reputation



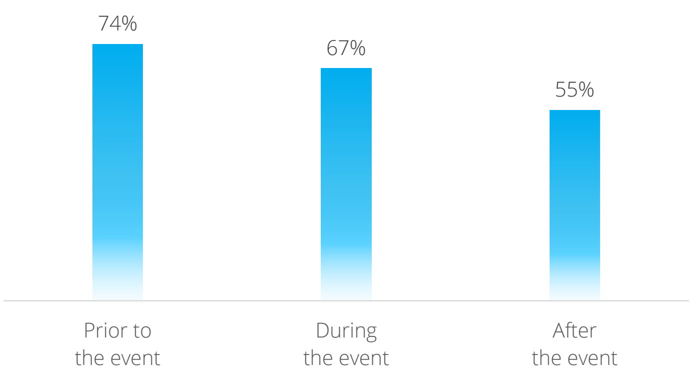
SECTION 6.

Industry Events: Preparation & Attendance

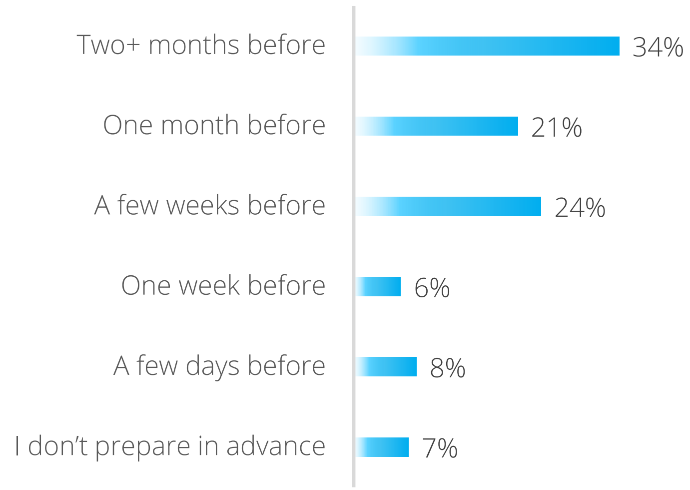
Content Consumption Behavior Surrounding In-Person Events

Virtually all respondents (97%) report attending in-person industry events. While they are most likely to search for related content and resources prior to the event (74%), half do so after the event as well (55%). Almost half (55%) begin looking at content and resources at least one month before the event they plan to attend, including 34% who do so 2+ months in advance.

Content Consumption Around an In-Person Industry Event: When Respondents Search for Related Content & Resources



Lead Time Prior to an Industry Event When Respondents Begin Looking at related Content & Resources



Typical Means of Preparing for an In-Person Industry Event

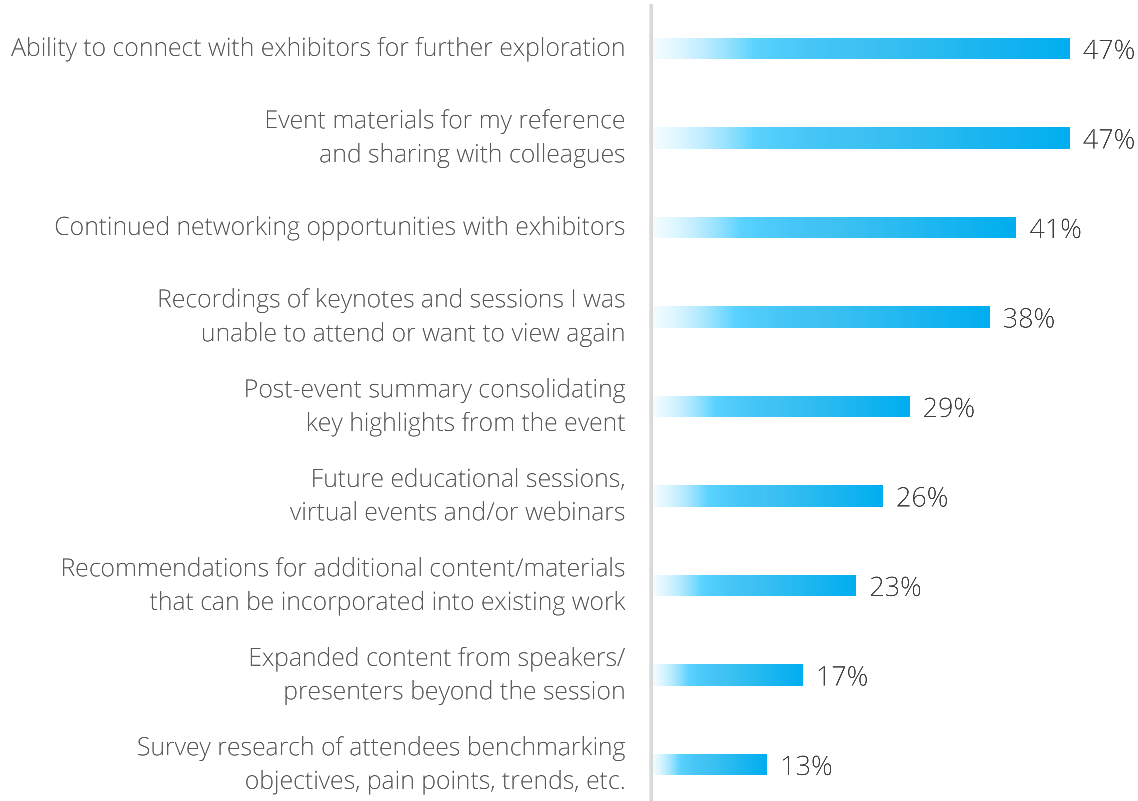
In preparation for an in-person industry event, respondents engage in a variety of actions, **most commonly**:

- Visit the event website
- Review the agenda
- Review speakers and sessions
- Search for exhibitors in certain categories

Post-Event Opportunities: Improving the Overall Event Experience

After attending an in-person industry event, half of respondents report the following would **improve their overall event experience**:

- Ability to connect with exhibitors
- Event materials for reference and sharing
- Recordings of keynotes and sessions
- Continued networking opportunities with exhibitors



Thank You

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