
State of Customer Marketing

2022 Edition

 influitive



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Introduction: Executive Summary

Customer Marketing Hits Mainstream

Organizations continue investing in customer marketing in order to effectively compete and grow in the *age of the customer*. This field has seen explosive growth and industry-wide adoption since our benchmark report in 2017. In fact, compared to our 2020 report, we've seen an 11% increase in companies adopting customer marketing programs and a 9% increase in customer marketing budgets either growing or being maintained. This report also revealed:

- **98%** of executives rated customer marketing as either very important or important to the overall success of their organization.
- **93%** of executives considered customer marketing very important or important to their company's selling efforts.
- **92%** of respondents said their customer marketing budgets are growing or solid.
- **85%** of respondents have a customer advocacy program, while 82% have an online customer community.
- **76%** of respondents believe their customer marketing program will have greater importance over the next year compared to the previous twelve months.

Influitive The #1 Tool For Customer Marketers

There are over 8,000 companies¹ competing to be a part of an organization's martech stack. However, for customer advocacy and online customer community, Influitive was listed as the top tool in both categories by customer marketers. Moreover, customer marketers using Influitive see the following gains and priorities over their industry peers:

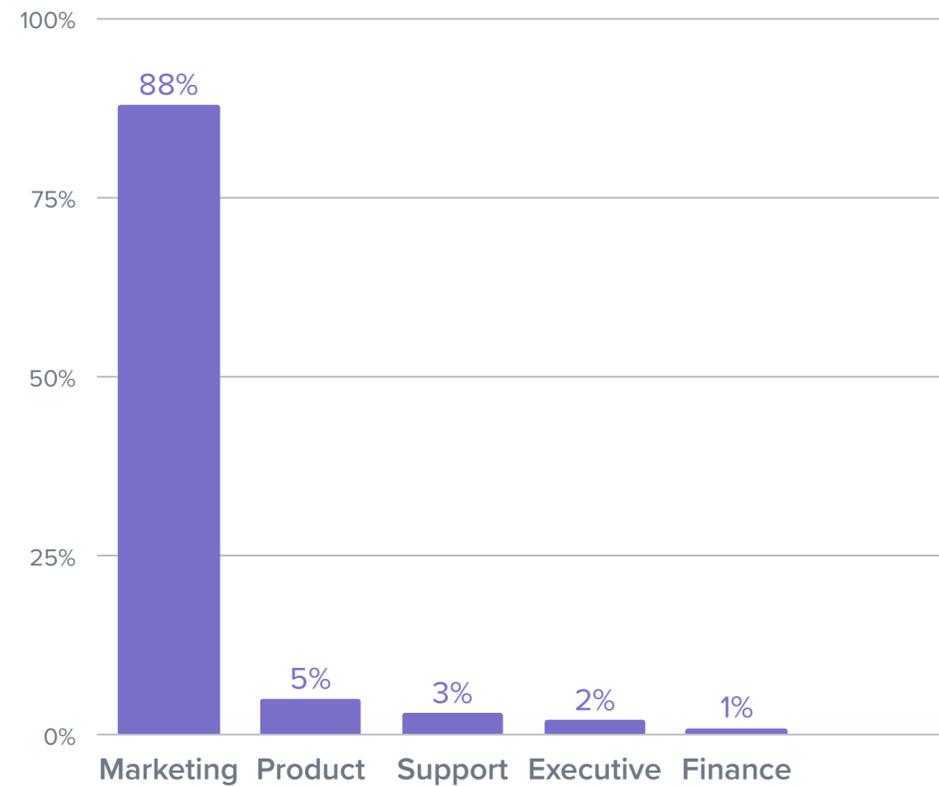
- **79%** of Influitive customers (versus 72% of non-Influitive customers) said their customer marketing budgets are growing or solid.
- **79%** of Influitive customers (versus 66% of non-Influitive customers) are either satisfied or very satisfied with their customer marketing efforts.
- **67%** of Influitive customers (versus 50% of non-Influitive customers) reported having moderate or significant revenue gains over the past year due to their customer marketing efforts.
- **58%** of Influitive customers (versus 44% of non-Influitive customers) saw an increase in the number of customer advocates compared to 2020.
- **42%** of Influitive customers (versus 9% of non-Influitive customers) have already or will combine advocacy and community programs under one team to streamline and improve customer engagement.

Methodology

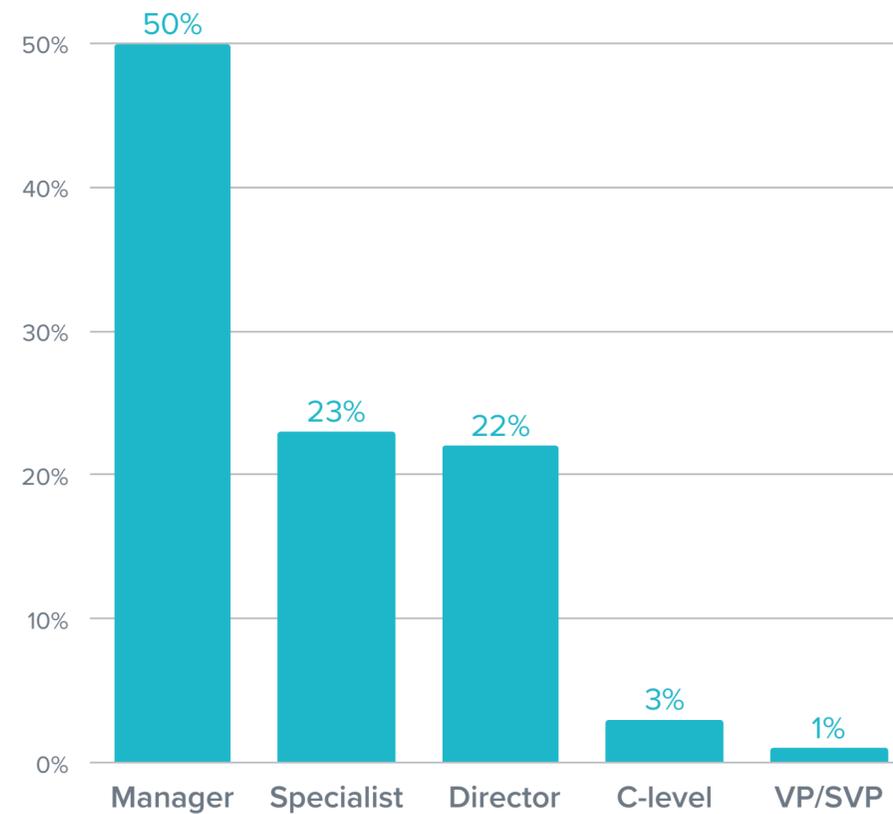
The 2022 State of Customer Marketing Report includes responses from 206 customer marketing professionals who completed our online survey in November 2021. Respondents were asked to participate by Influitive via email, social media outreach, and during the 2021 [Influitive Live virtual conference](#). Of the total respondents, 54% are Influitive customers and 46% are non-customers.

You can see the remaining demographics below:

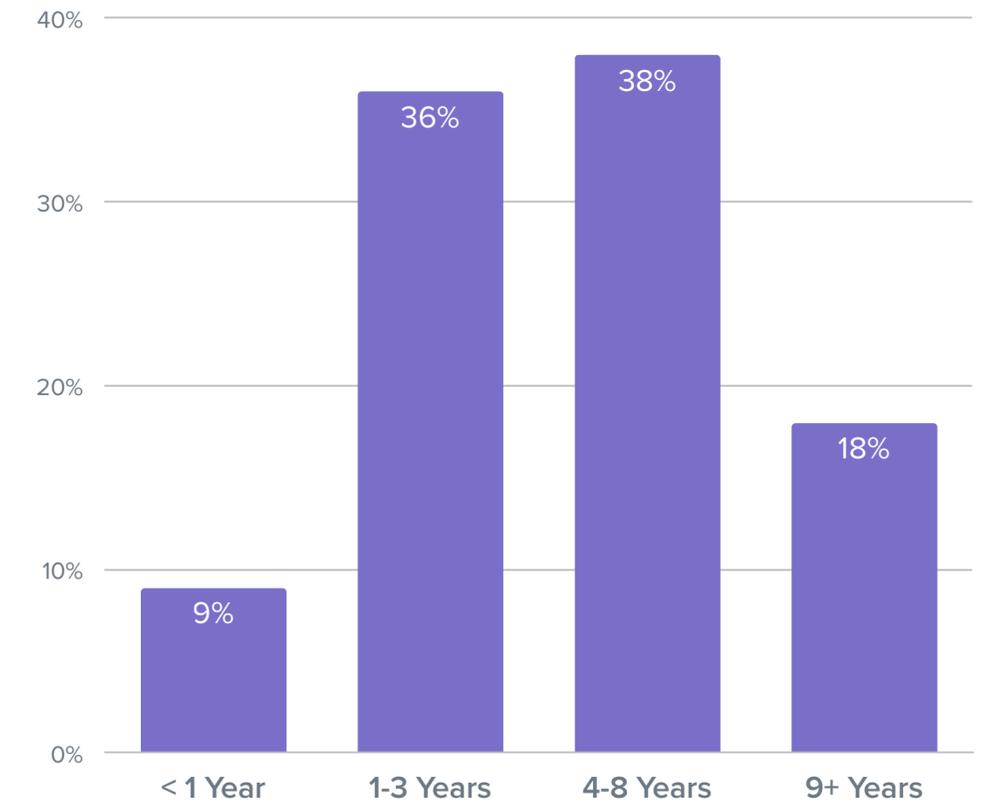
What business department do you work in?



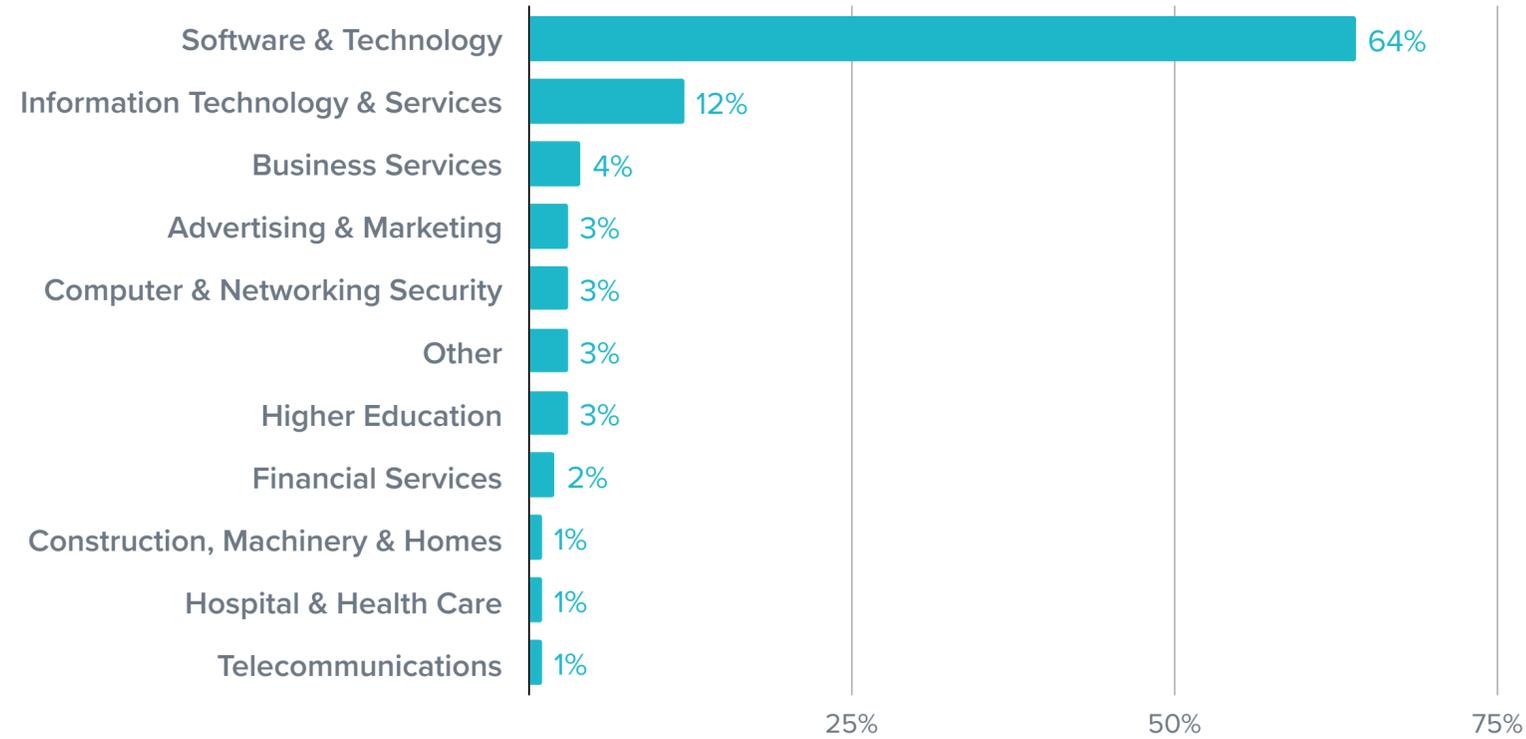
What is your management level?



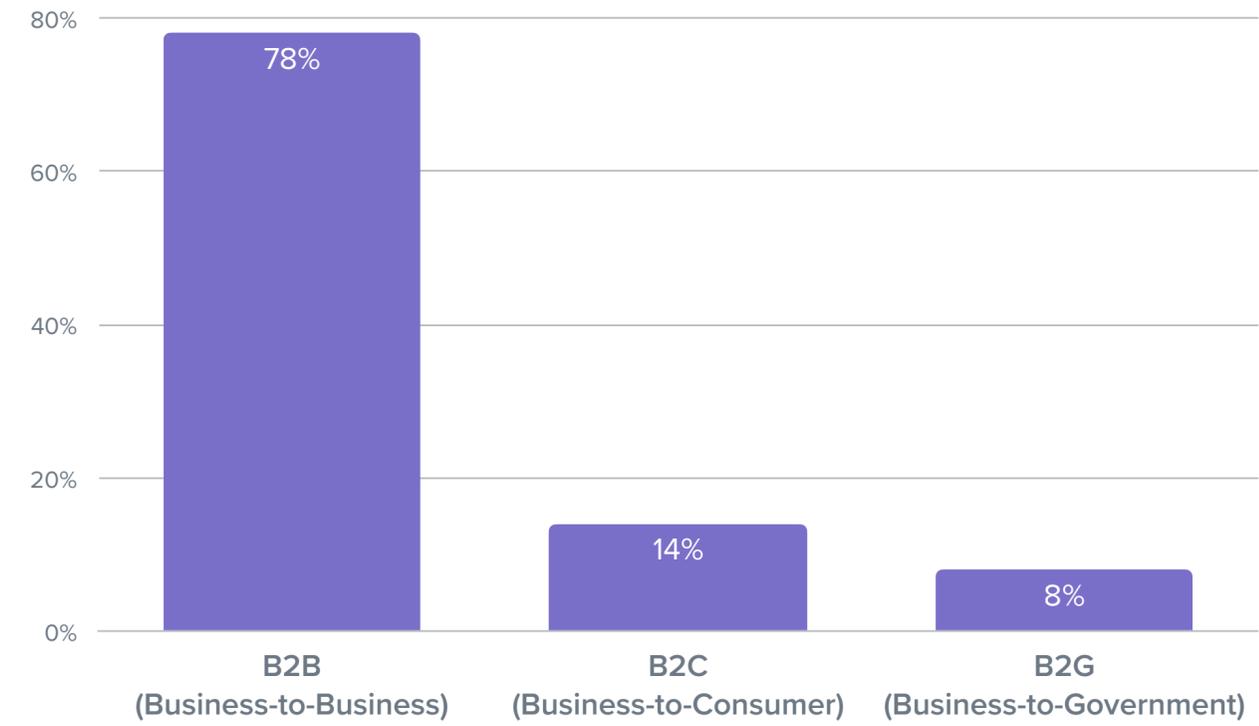
How long have you been working in customer advocacy or marketing?



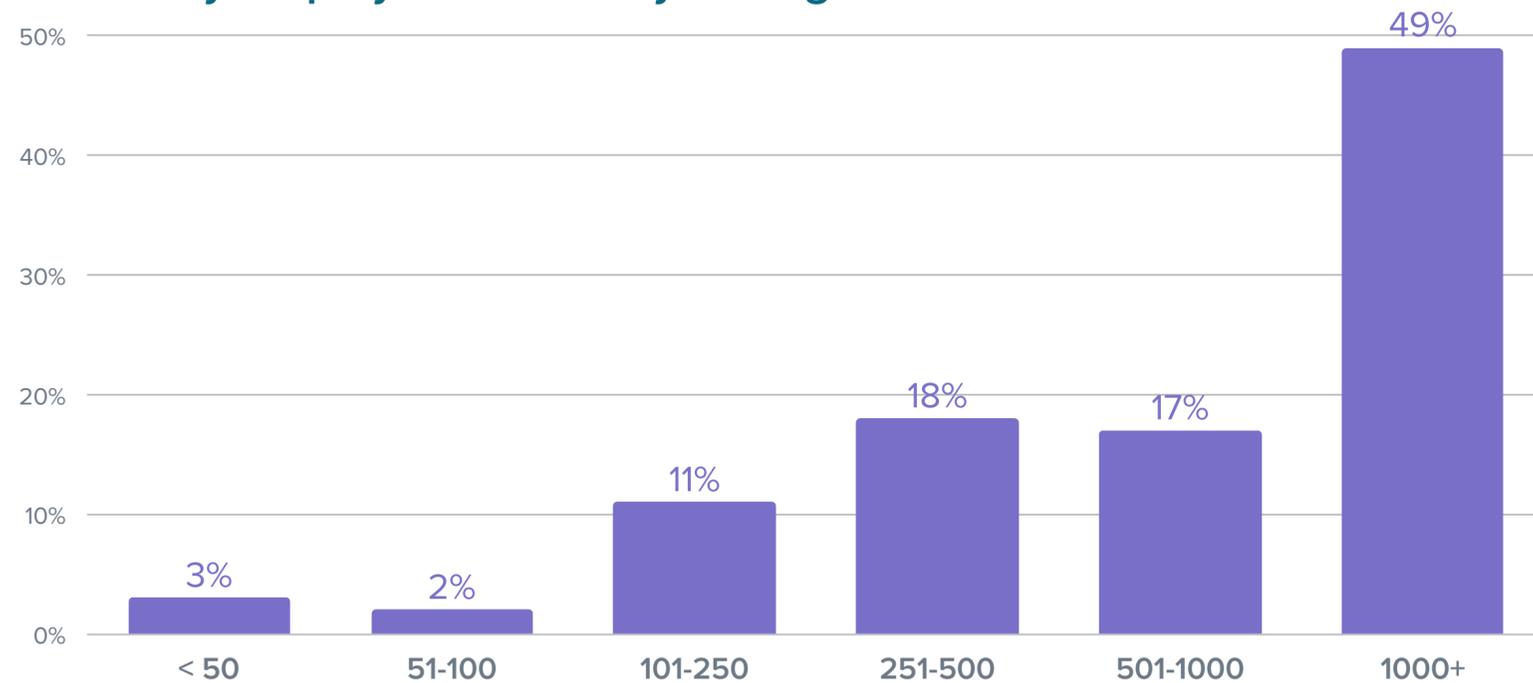
Which best describes the principal industry of your organization?



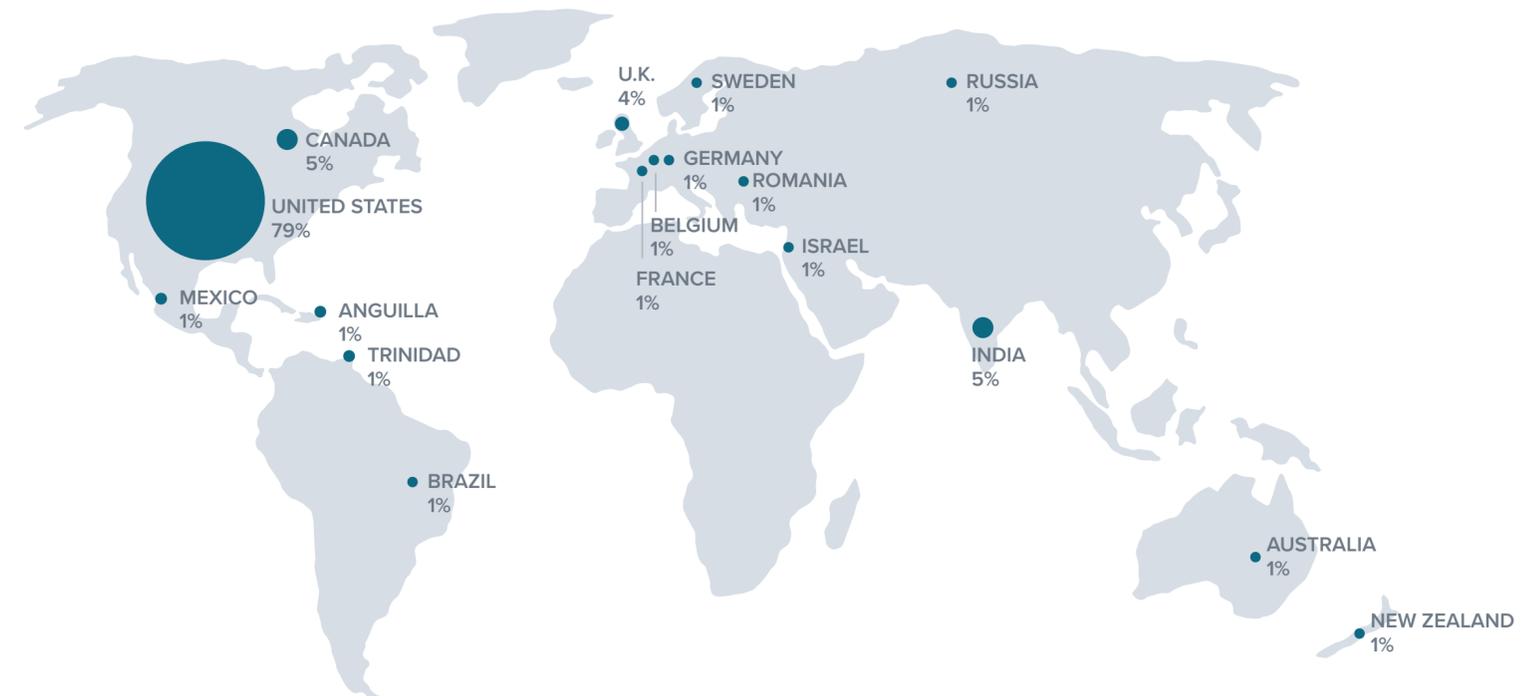
Which market is your organization focused on?



How many employees work at your organization?



What country are you based in?



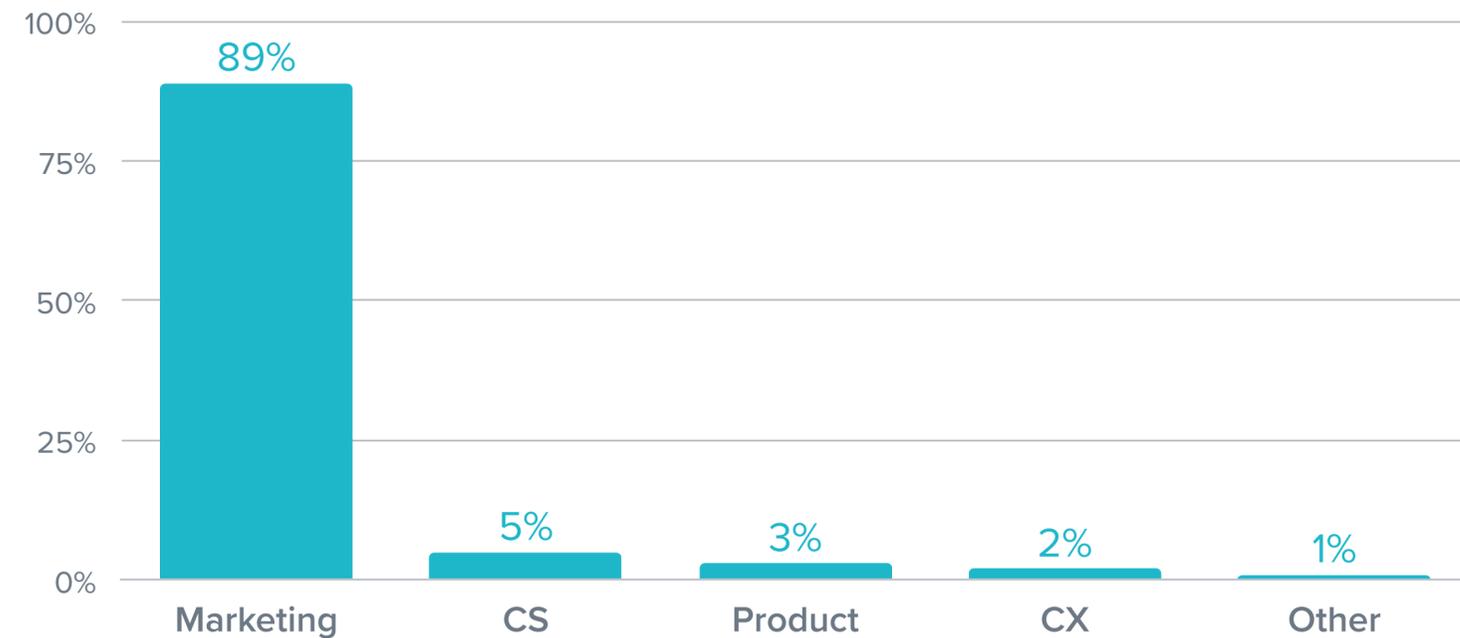
Today's Customer Marketer

This section will explore the role of the modern customer marketer, including where their team sits within an organization, team size, their roles and responsibilities, and what metrics they are typically measured against.

Customer marketing roles and responsibilities still overwhelmingly reside in marketing

When asked which department customer marketing rolls up into, **89%** of respondents said marketing. This was followed by customer success (5%), product (3%), and just 2% in customer experience. One percent of respondents answered 'Other,' with responses including operations and communications.

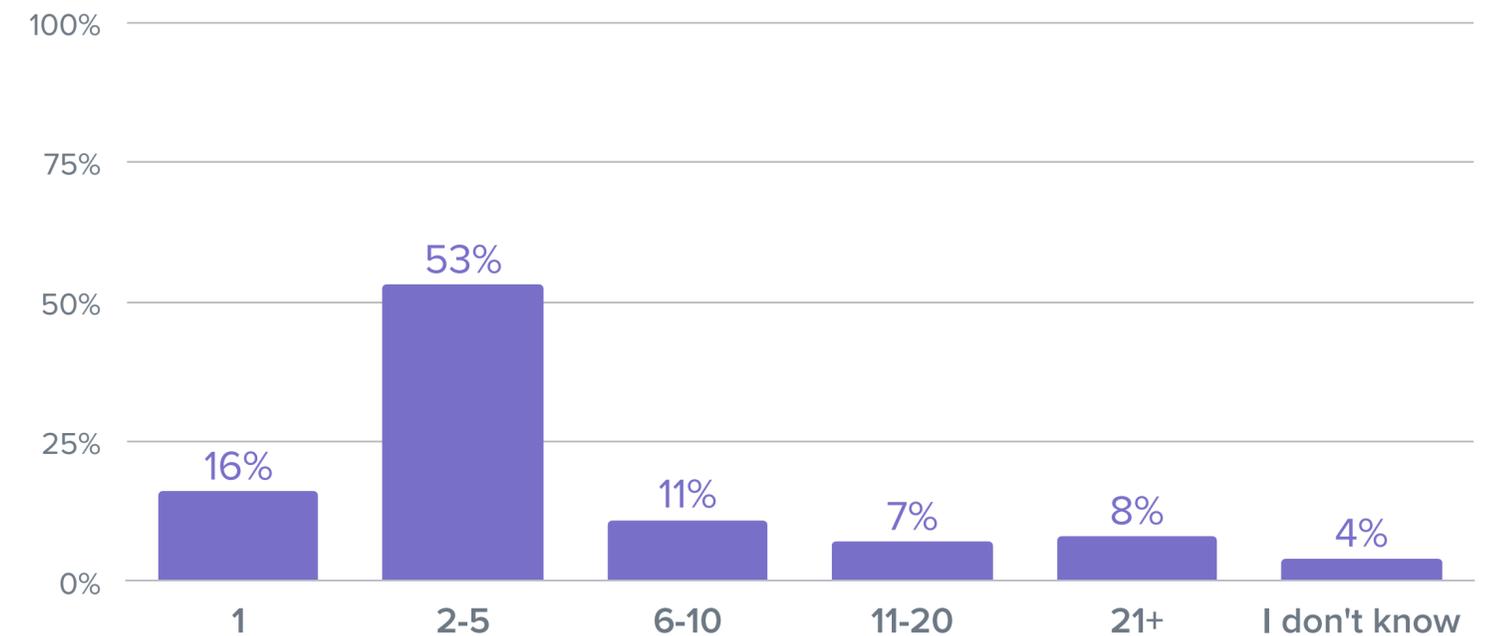
In your organization, which department does customer marketing fall into?



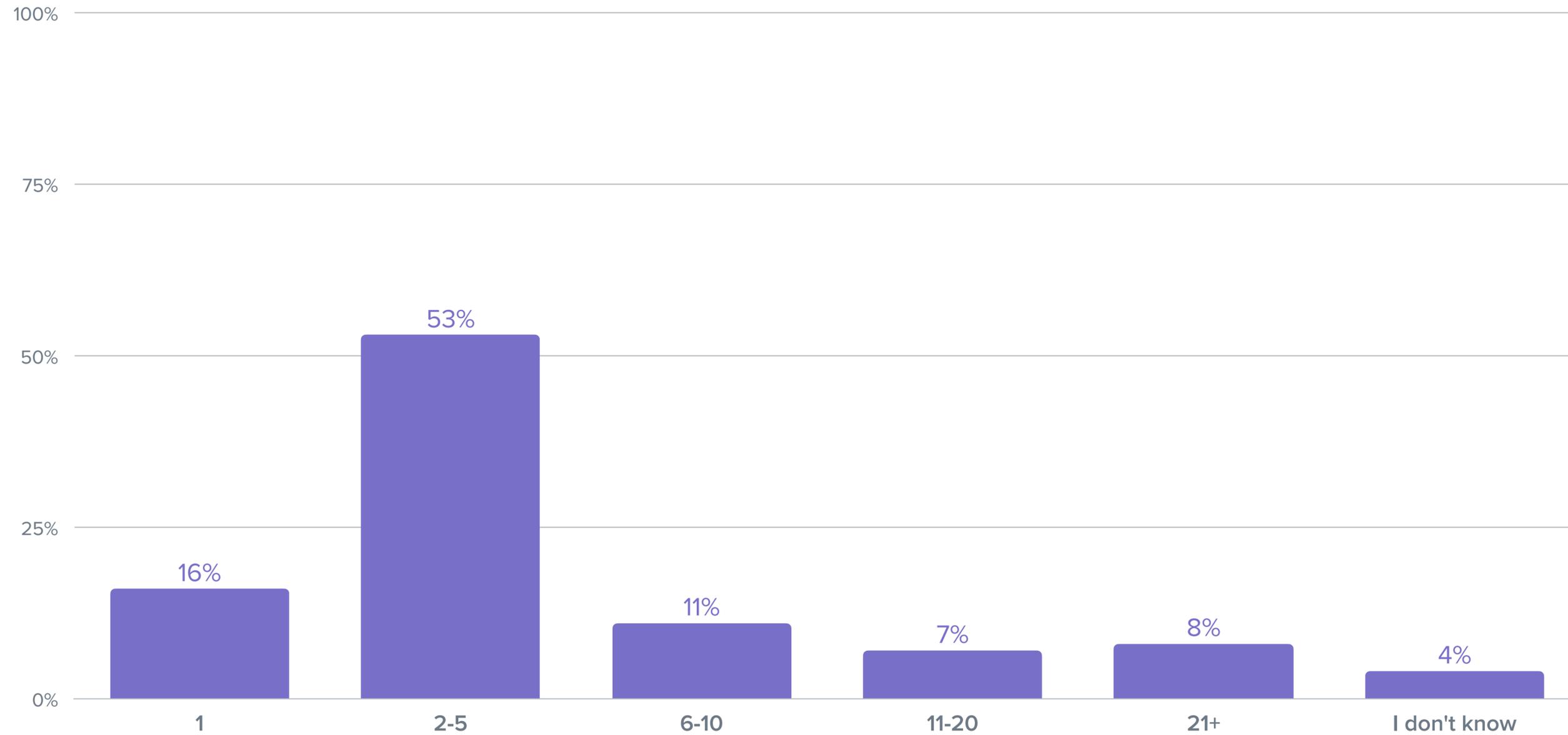
Customer marketing teams remain relatively lean

In 2020, more than **60%** of organizations surveyed have fewer than six team members responsible for customer marketing. This year, nearly 70% fall into this category. This was followed by 6-10 employees (11%), over 21 employees (8%) and 11-20 employees (7%). Four percent of those surveyed were unsure of their organization's team size.

Approximately how many full-time employees are on your customer marketing team?



Approximately how many full-time employees are on your customer marketing team?



The marketing tech stack continues to grow

Respondents were asked which vendors across a number of categories were part of their organization's marketing tech stack in 2021.

The top results are listed below:

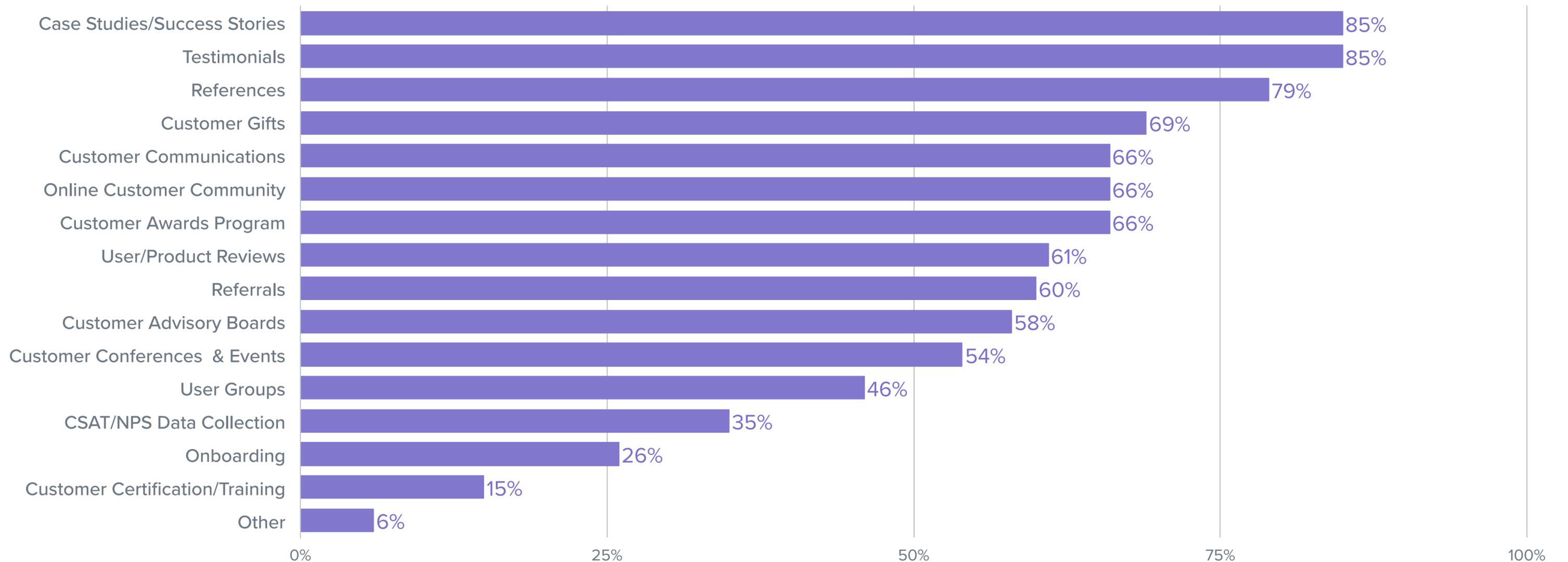


Top customer marketing activities still include case studies and testimonials

When asked in 2020 about the responsibilities of the customer marketing team, the top three were case studies/success stories (83%), testimonials (79%) and advocate marketing (72%). This year, **case studies/success stories and testimonials** tied at **85%**, which was followed by **references (79%)** and **customer gifts (69%)**. Less common activities included customer satisfaction/NPS (35%), onboarding (26%), and customer certification and training (15%).

In your organization, which of the following customer activities do you believe is the responsibility of your Customer Marketing team?

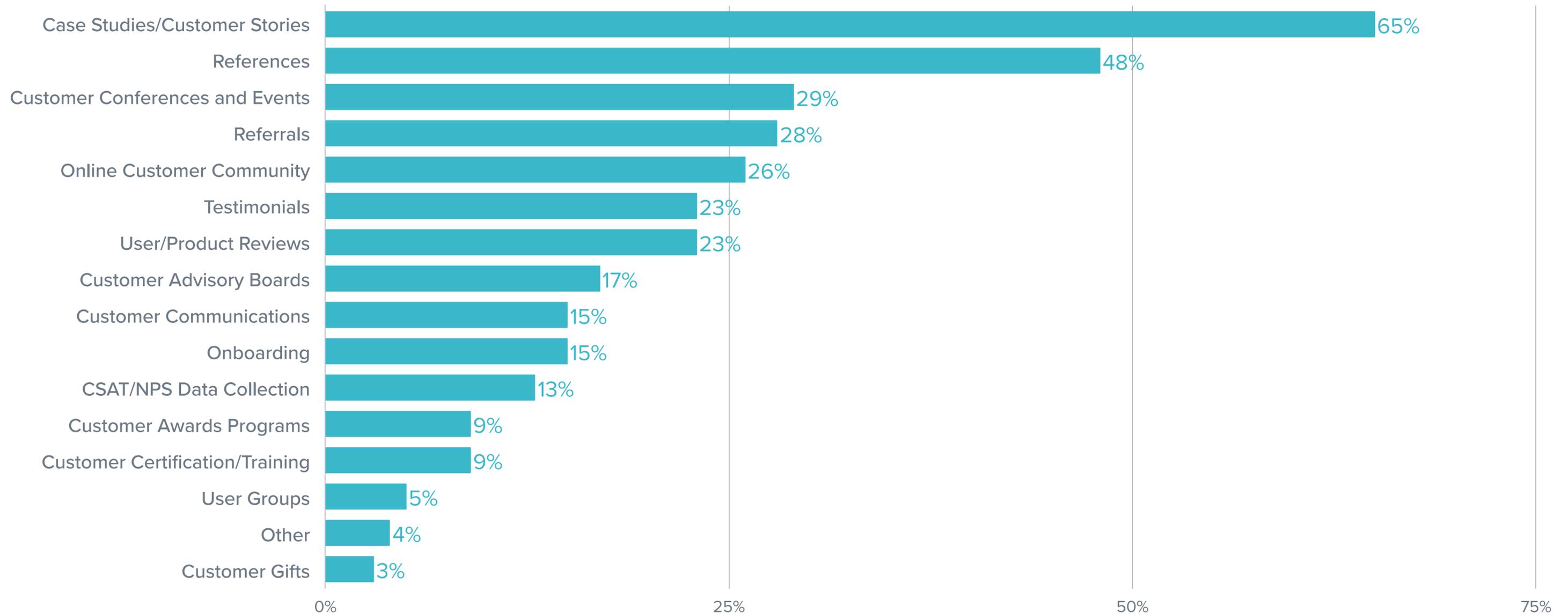
PARTICIPANTS CHECKED ALL THAT APPLIED



For this 2022 edition, respondents were also asked to identify which three customer activities they believe are the biggest value drivers for their business. In this scenario, **case studies/success stories** remained the top activity (**65%**), and was followed by **references** (**48%**) and **customer conferences and events** (**29%**). While customer gifts was named one of the top 3 responsibilities by respondents, only three percent ranked it as top value driver for their business.

Which of the following customer activities do you believe are the biggest value drivers for your business?

PARTICIPANTS CHOSE THREE OPTIONS



When we evaluated top activities by management level, we noticed slight nuances between what executives value most compared to program managers. While **76%** of Executives noted **user/product reviews** as a responsibility of customer marketers, only 59% of program managers said the same. However, when asked which three customer activities they believe are the biggest value drivers for their business, **33%** of program managers selected **referrals** while only 15% of executives did. Both demographics identified testimonials as a top activity for customer marketers, but was only identified as a top three value driver by 20% of executives and 26% of program managers.

When comparing Influitive customers to non-customers, some similarities and discrepancies persisted between top activities. For example, the top 3 customer marketing activities performed by Influitive customers are **testimonials and case studies/success stories**, followed by managing an online customer community (74%). Conversely, **73%** of non-Influitive customers identified **case studies/success stories and testimonials** as their top performed activity, which was closely followed by references (67%). Only 40% of non-customers manage an online customer community. Meanwhile, **60%** of Influitive customers are responsible for **user/product reviews**, whereas only 47% of non-customers said the same.

Top Three Customer Marketing Activities Performed vs. Top Three Value-Driving Customer Marketing Activities

EXECUTIVES

Top Customer Marketing Activities Performed	Top Value-Driving Customer Marketing Activities
1. Testimonials	1. Case Studies/Customer Stories
2. Case Studies/Customer Stories	2. References
3. References	3. Customer Conferences & Events

PROGRAM MANAGERS

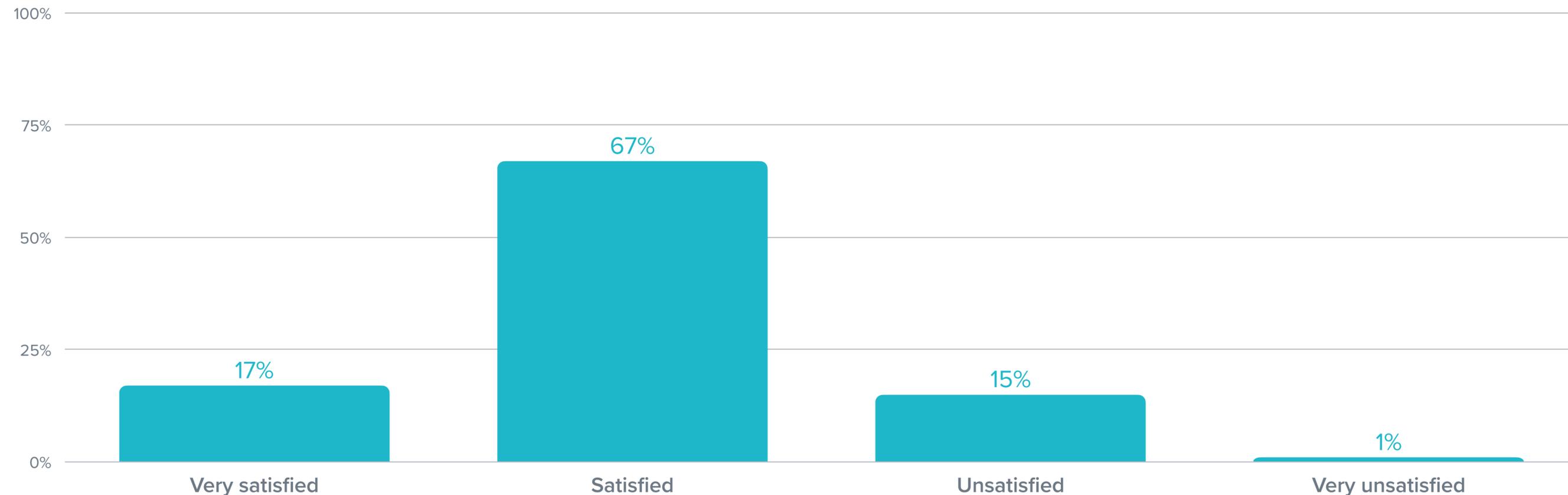
Top Customer Marketing Activities Performed	Top Value-Driving Customer Marketing Activities
1. Testimonials	1. Case Studies/Customer Stories
2. Case Studies/Customer Stories	2. References
3. References	3. Referrals

Customer marketers remain overwhelmingly satisfied with their efforts

Eighty-four percent of respondents said they were **satisfied or very satisfied** with their customer marketing efforts, which is up 12% from last year. Meanwhile, 15% of customer marketers are unsatisfied with their efforts, and just 1% are very unsatisfied.

When comparing these results by management level, **91%** of executives (director level and above) said they were **satisfied or very satisfied** with their customer marketing efforts, while 83% of program managers (manager level or below) said the same thing. **Seventy-nine percent** of Influitive customers are satisfied or very satisfied with their customer marketing efforts whereas only 66% of non-Influitive customers said the same.

How satisfied are you with your organization's customer marketing efforts?



Respondents were asked, “in an ideal world, what ways would you improve your customer marketing efforts?”

Here is a collection of those open-ended responses, which centered around resourcing, alignment, and having more internal buy-in:

In an ideal world, what ways would you improve your customer marketing efforts?

“I would double down on scaling customer marketing.
We are very good at 1:1 but don't have ways to do this for more/smaller customers.”

“More data-driven decision-making. More support to map and build the entire customer journey.”

“Setting more clear distinctions between customer success, product, community, and sales responsibilities.”

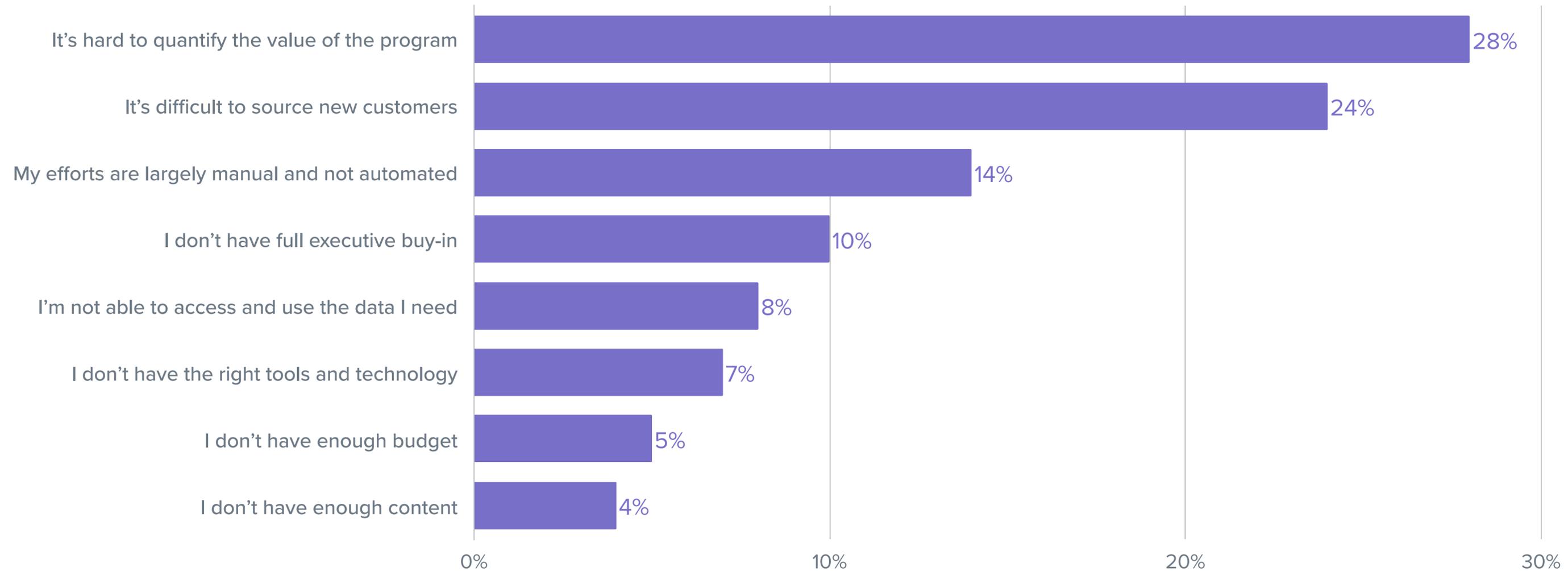
“Customer Marketing needs to be everyone’s priority. A top-down and bottom-up approach to recruiting, nurturing, and mobilizing customers would be beneficial to everyone.”

“We’d have a bigger team! More people means you can impact more customers.
Community engagement and advocacy teams should scale just like customer success and support does.”

Demonstrating value and sourcing new customers are top challenges for customer marketers

When asked what top challenge customer marketers face when managing their customer marketing programs, **28%** of respondents expressed difficulty **quantifying the value of their program**. This was closely followed by **difficulty sourcing new customers (24%)** and a **lack of automation (21%)**. Lowest ranked challenges included not having enough budget (5%) and not having enough content (4%).

What are the top challenges you face when managing your customer marketing program? (Ranked #1)



When comparing these results by management level, executives identified difficulty quantifying program value as their top challenge, whereas program managers said difficulty sourcing new customers was their top challenge. Further, **13%** of program managers said **getting executive buy-in** was their biggest challenge and **9%** of executives cited **budget constraints** as a top challenge. Both B2B and B2C customers expressed difficulty quantifying the value of their program as their top challenge (27% and 30% respectively).

Twenty-seven percent of Influitive customers cited **difficulty sourcing new customers** as their top challenge, whereas **26%** of non-Influitive customers said **quantifying their program value** was their biggest challenge.

Regardless of business type or management level, the same challenges persist amongst customer marketers worldwide.

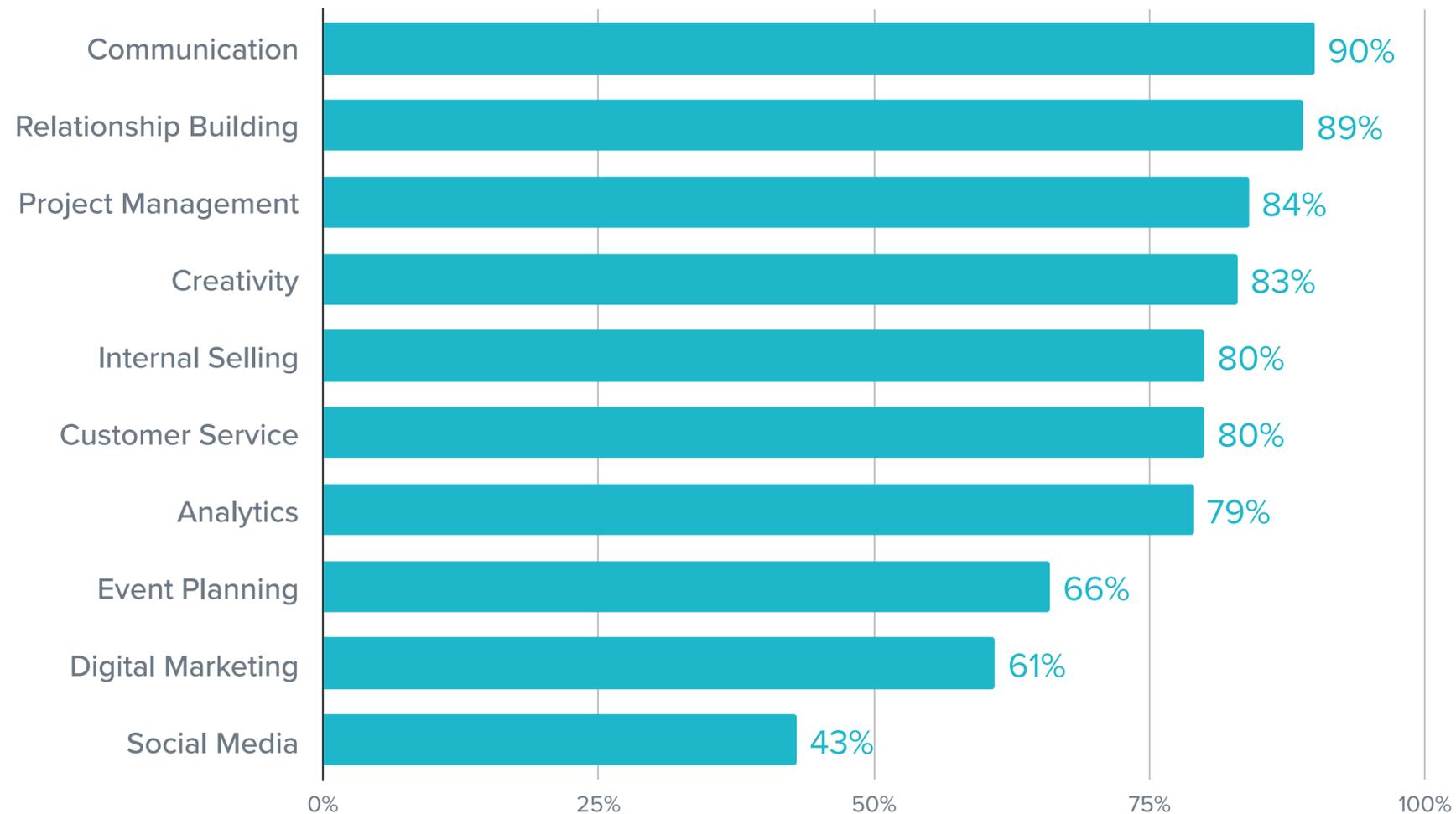


The overall skill set of customer marketers remains the same

When asked which skills are important to having success with customer marketing, **90%** of respondents said **communication**. This was closely followed by **relationship building (89%)**, **project management (84%)**, and **creativity (83%)**. Social media scores the lowest, with only 43% of respondents classifying it as important.

Which of the following skills are most important to having success with customer marketing?

PARTICIPANTS CHECKED ALL THAT APPLIED.



Compared to 2020, the most valued skills have seen a slight shift.

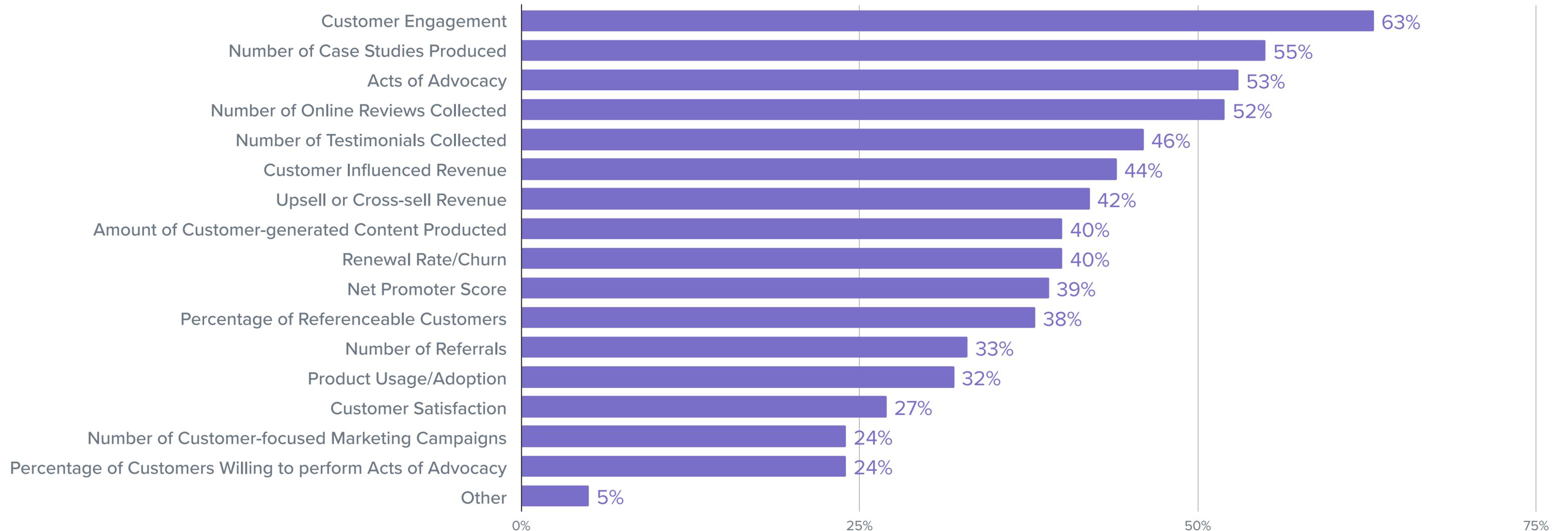
Top Customer Marketing Skills in 2020	Top Customer Marketing Skills in 2022
1. Relationship Building, Communication (tie)	1. Communication
2. Creativity	2. Relationship Building
3. Customer Service	3. Project Management
4. Project Management	4. Creativity
5. Analytics	5. Internal Selling

Customer marketing metrics have matured and diversified significantly

When asked in 2020 what customer marketing metrics were used to measure effectiveness, the top three were: customer engagement (63%), acts of advocacy (60%) and the number of customer-focused marketing campaigns (47%). This year, **customer engagement** remained the top metric (**63%**), but was followed by **number of case studies produced (55%)** and **acts of advocacy (53%)**. Only 24% of respondents selected the number of customer-focused marketing campaigns this year.

In your organization, which of the following metrics are used to measure the effectiveness of your customer marketing efforts?

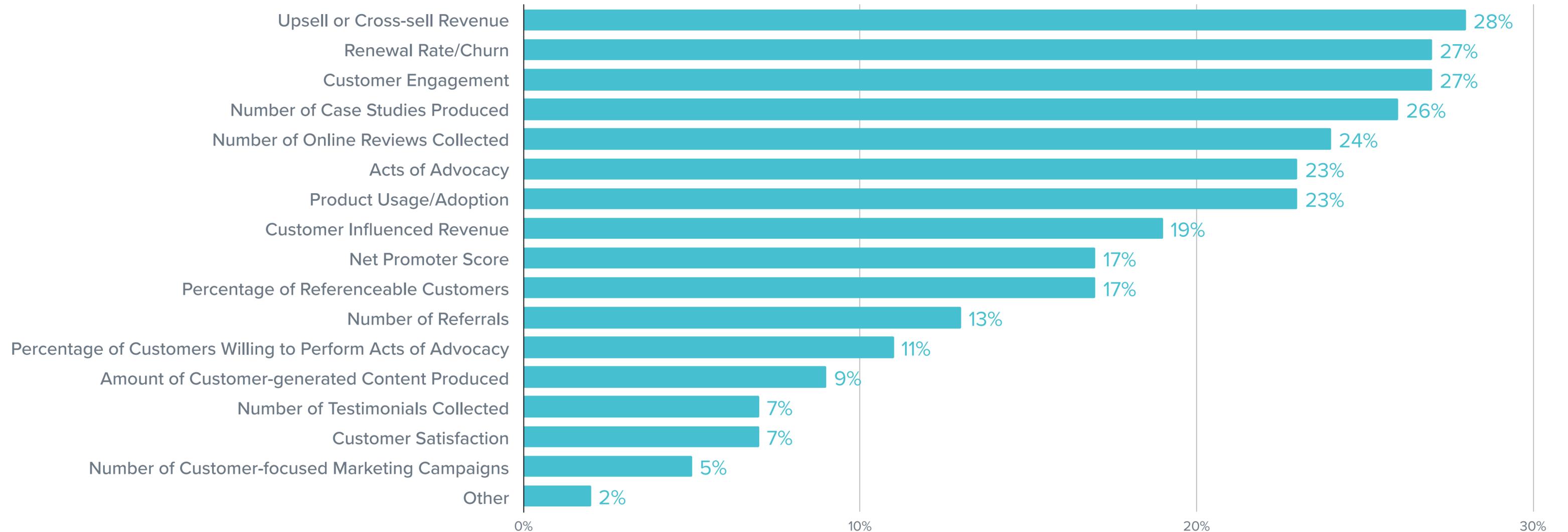
PARTICIPANTS CHECKED ALL THAT APPLIED



Choosing from the same list, respondents were also asked to select the most valuable three metrics used to measure the effectiveness of their customer marketing efforts. **Upsell or cross-sell revenue** was the top choice (**28%**), followed by **renewal rate/churn** (**27%**), and **customer engagement** (**27%**). This showed a larger discrepancy between which metrics customer marketers collect overall and which ones are most valued by their business.

Please select the top 3 metrics your organization values most for measuring the effectiveness of your customer marketing efforts

PARTICIPANTS CHOSE THREE OPTIONS



Similar nuances exist when comparing responses by management level. According to executives, the top three metrics recorded were the **number of online reviews collected (61%)**, **customer engagement (59%)**, and the **number of case studies produced (52%)**. However, when asked to select the top three metrics their organization values most for measuring the effectiveness of their customer marketing efforts, executives chose more revenue-focused metrics like up-sell/cross-sell (39%) and renewal/churn rate (37%).

According to program managers, the top three metrics recorded were **customer engagement (64%)**, **the number of case studies produced (57%)**, and **acts of advocacy (55%)**. When asked which metrics are the top three value drivers for their organization, their top two metrics remained unchanged, but up-sell/cross-sell revenue took the third spot at 26%.

Top Three Measured Customer Marketing Metrics vs. Top Three Most Valued Customer Marketing Metrics

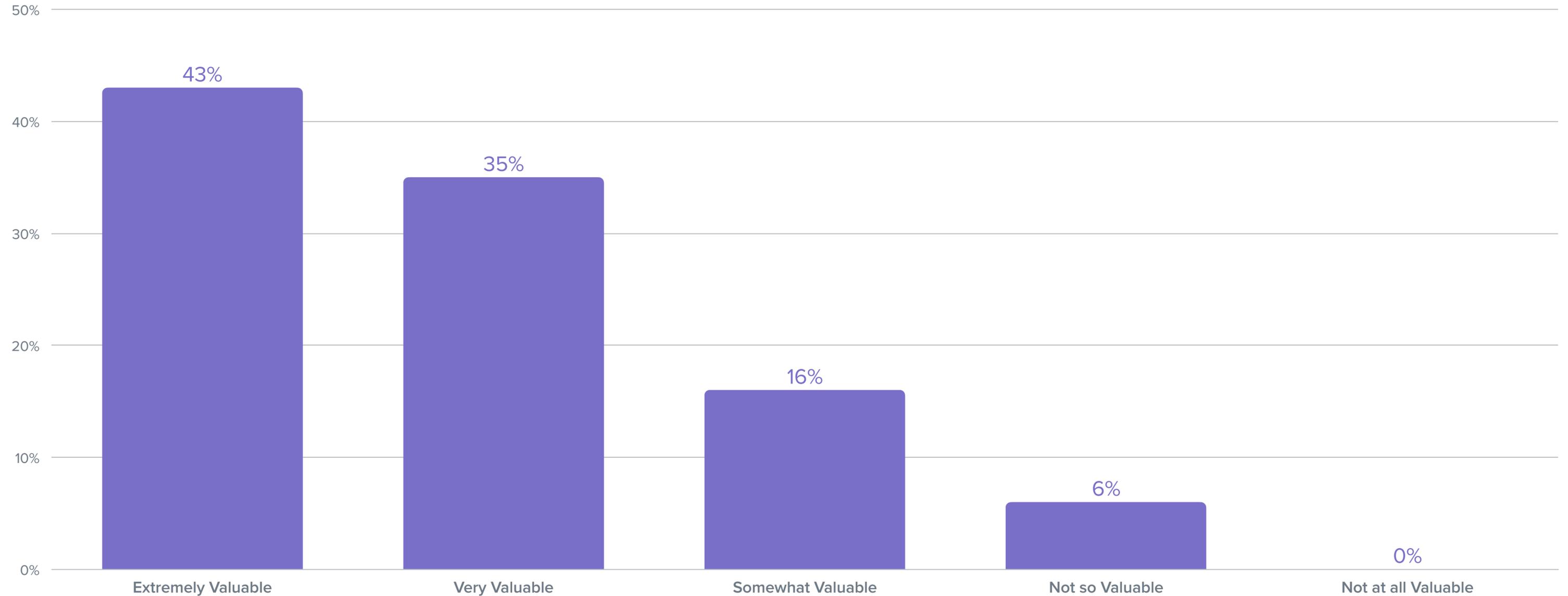
EXECUTIVES

PROGRAM MANAGERS

Most Commonly Measured Customer Marketing Metrics	Customer Marketing Metrics Most Valued by Organizations	Most Commonly Measured Customer Marketing Metrics	Customer Marketing Metrics Most Valued by Organizations
1. Number of Online Reviews Collected	1. Renewal Rate/Churn	1. Customer Engagement	1. Customer Engagement
2. Customer Engagement	2. Upsell/Cross-sell Revenue	2. Number of Case Studies Produced	2. Number of Case Studies Produced
3. Number of Case Studies Produced	3. Number of Case Studies Produced/ Number of Online Reviews Collected (tie)	3. Acts of Advocacy	3. Upsell/Cross-sell Revenue

When asked how valuable customer referrals compared to leads generated from other marketing sources (like events, ads, and email marketing), **78%** of respondents rated them as **very or extremely valuable**.

In your opinion, how valuable are customer referrals compared to leads generated from other marketing sources (e.g. events, ads, email marketing)?



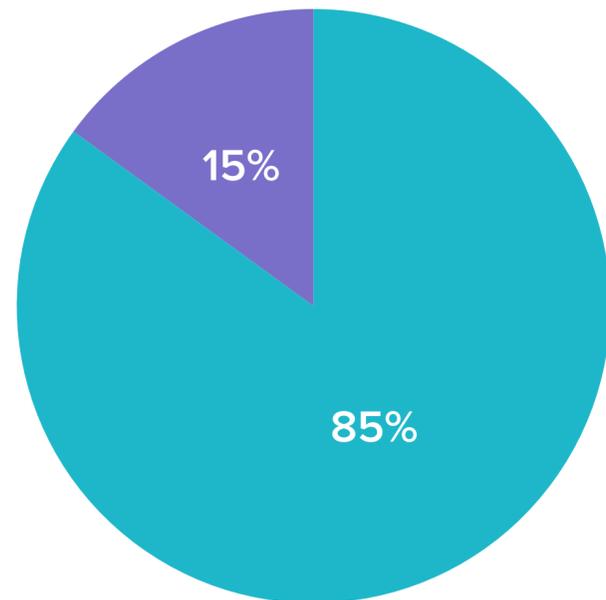
Customer Advocacy and Community

The lines between customer marketing and online community management continue to blur and both customer advocacy and online customer community programs have grown and matured.

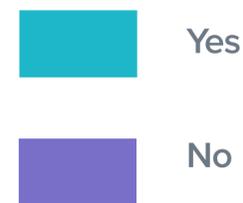
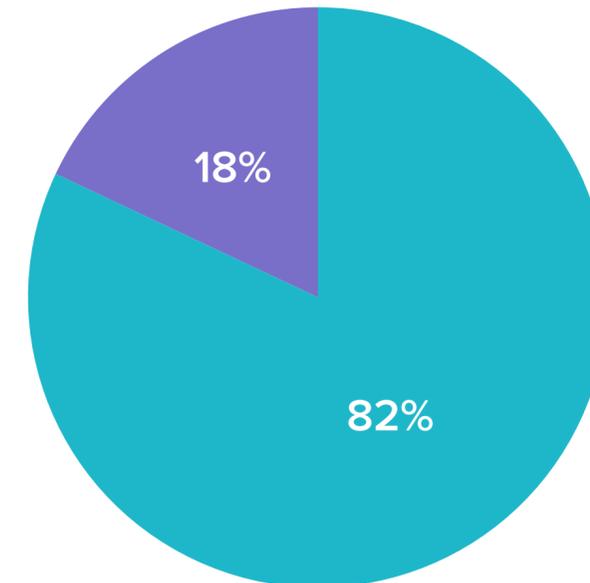
Companies continue to rapidly invest in customer advocacy and online customer community programs

Specifically, **85%** of respondents have a **customer advocacy program**, while **82%** have an **online customer community**. Compared to 2020 results, where 74% of respondents said they had a customer advocacy program and 72% had an online customer community, there has been double-digit growth in both areas. This shows that customer advocacy and online community programs continue to mature at a rapid pace, and is poised to approach a near 100% adoption rate over the coming years. This is remarkable progress for the customer advocacy and online community industry, which has existed for well over a decade.

Does your organization have a customer advocacy program?

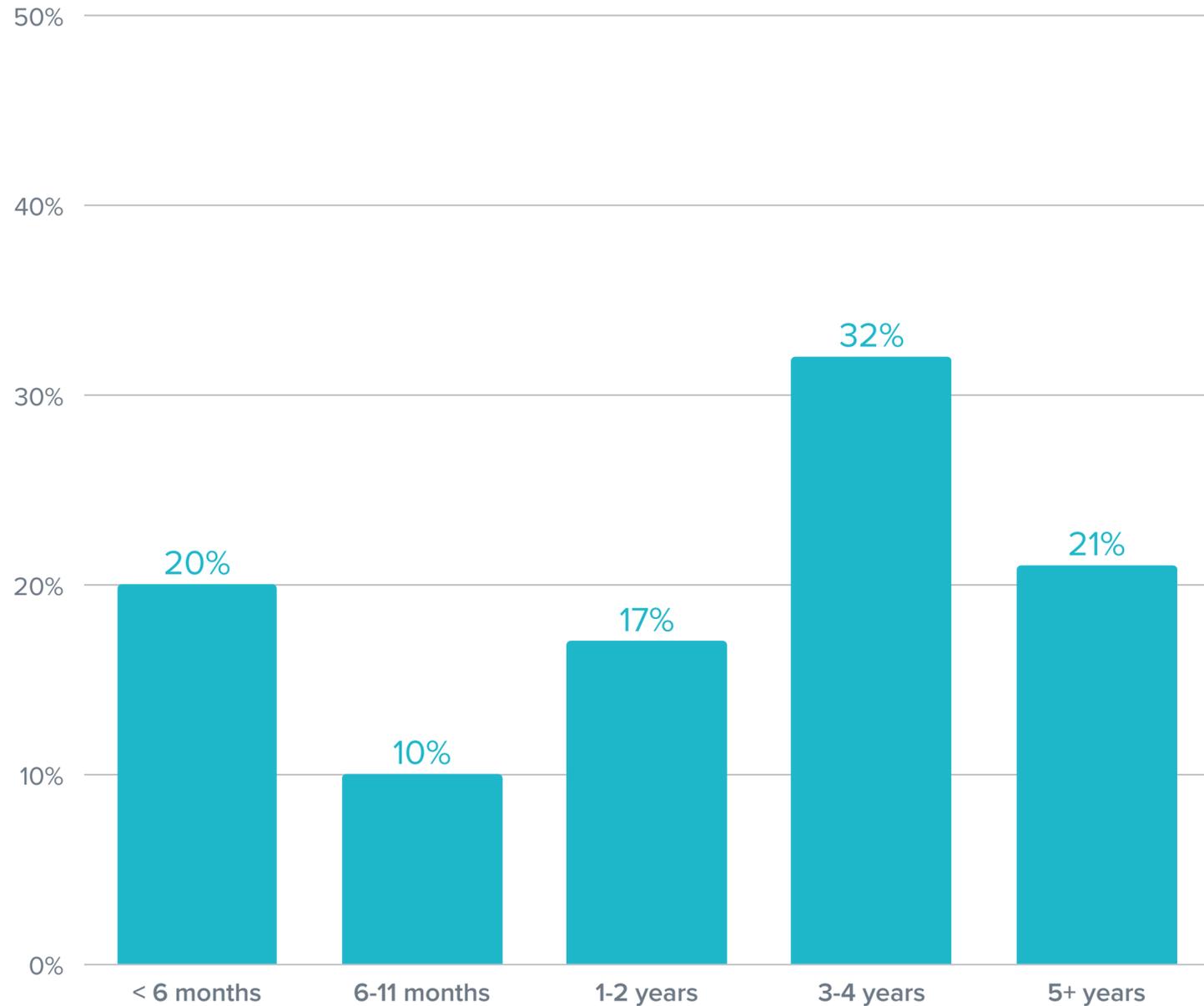


Does your organization have an online community for customers?

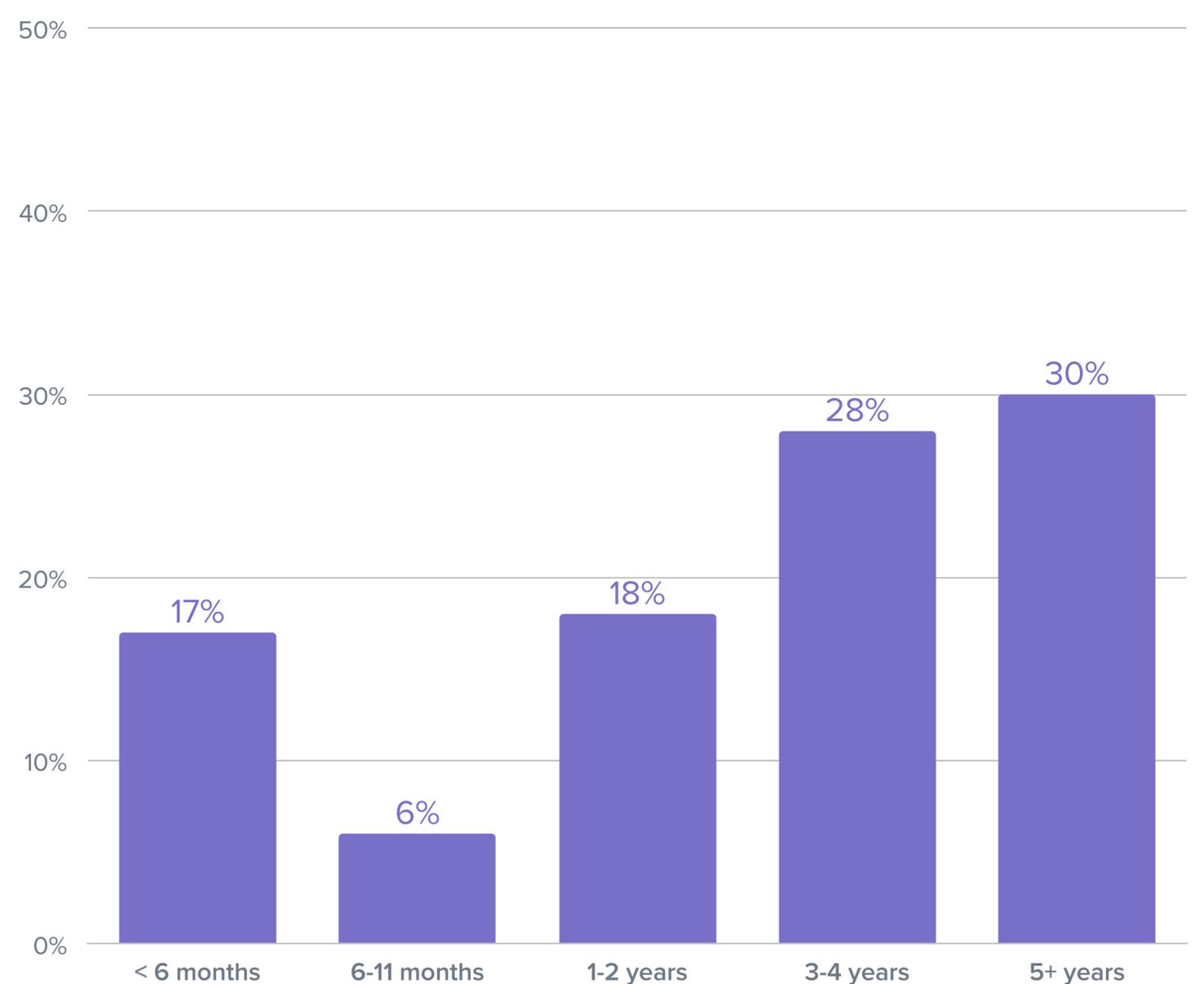


Of those who have a customer advocacy program, **32%** of them have existed **between three to four years**. For those who have an online community program, **30%** of them have existed for **at least five years**.

How long has your organization's customer advocacy program existed?

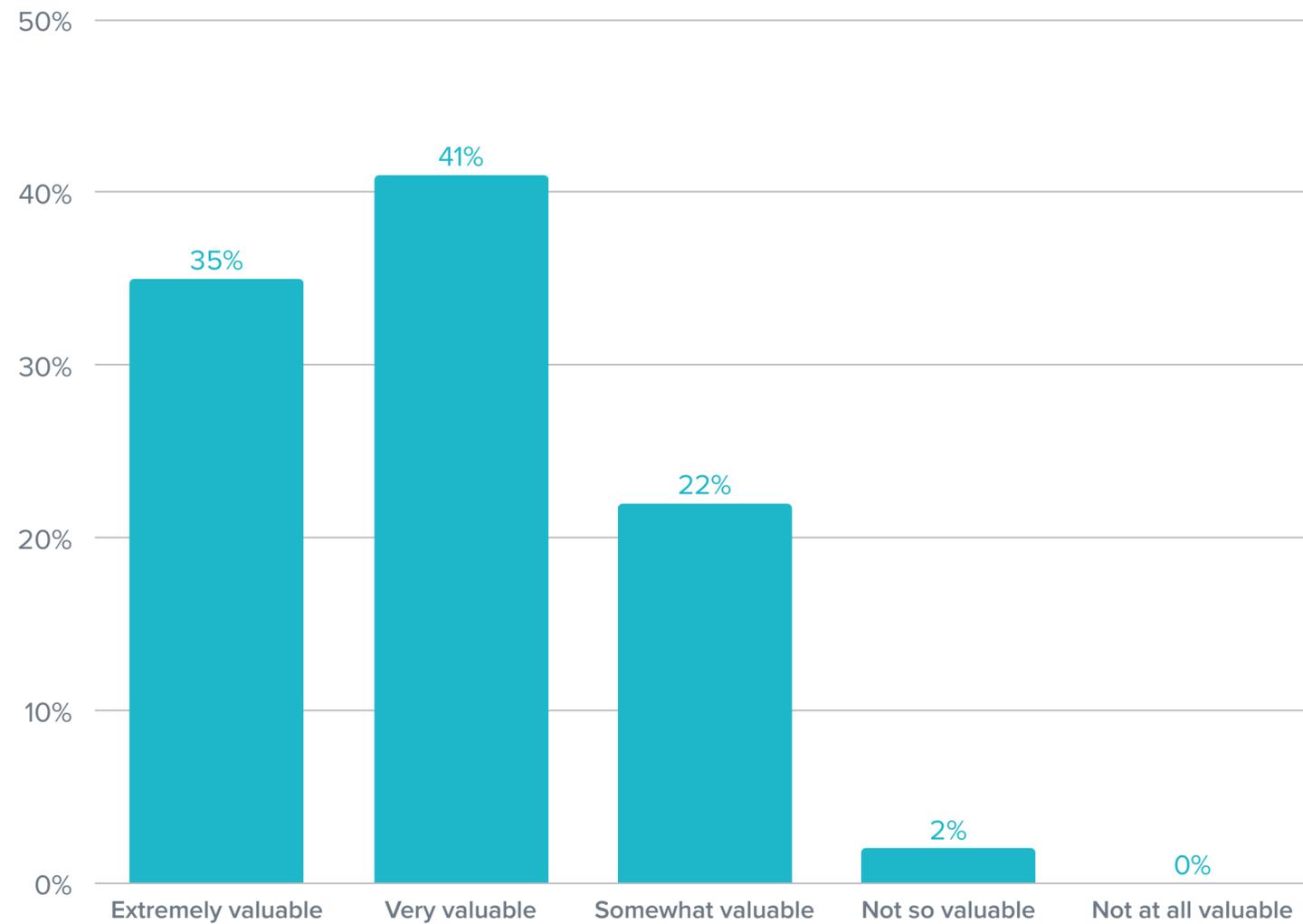


How long has your organization's online community for customers existed?

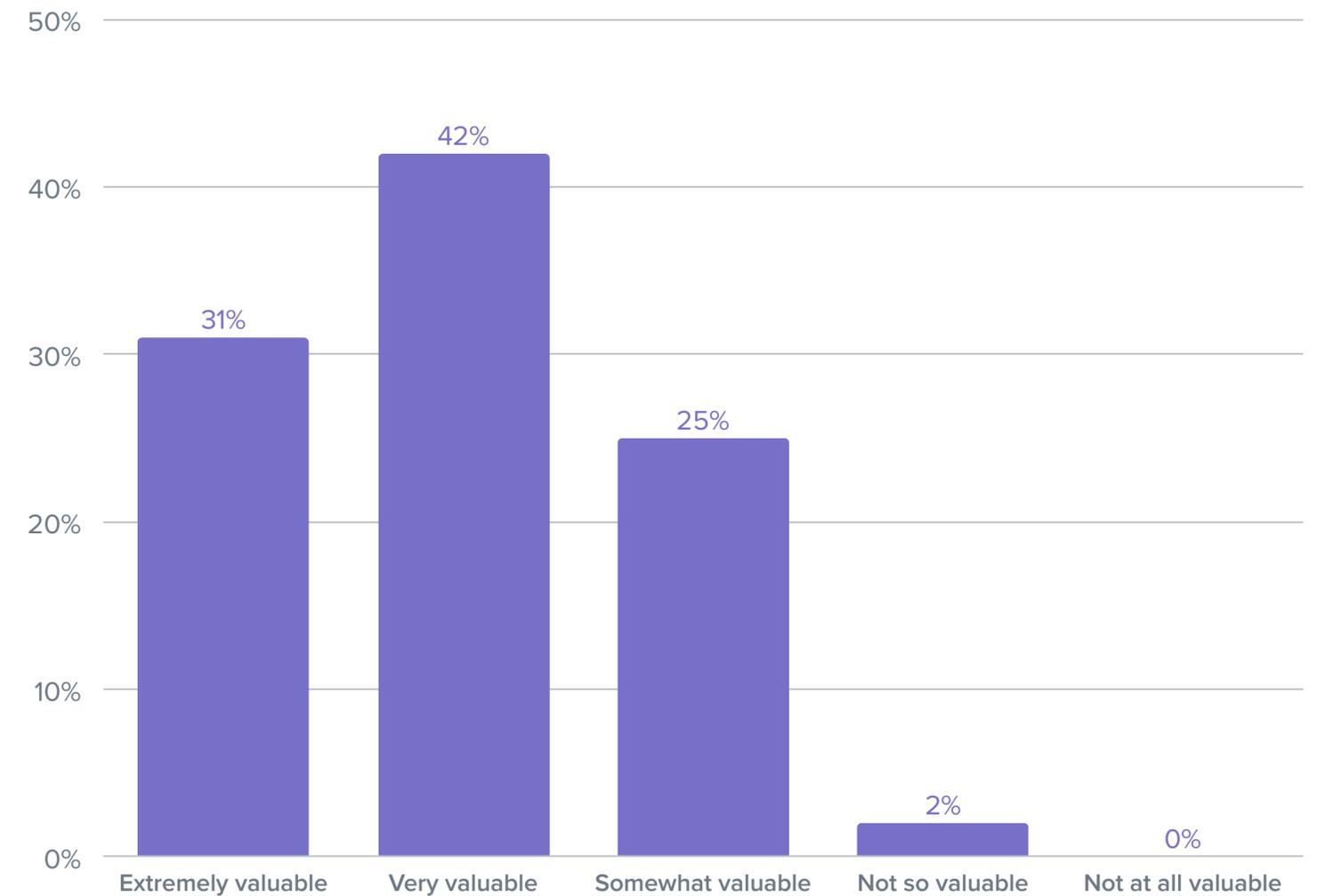


When it comes to business value, **76%** of respondents said their customer advocacy program was either **very or extremely valued** by their organization. Meanwhile, **73%** of respondents said the same about their organization's online community program.

In your opinion, how valuable is your customer advocacy program to the organization?

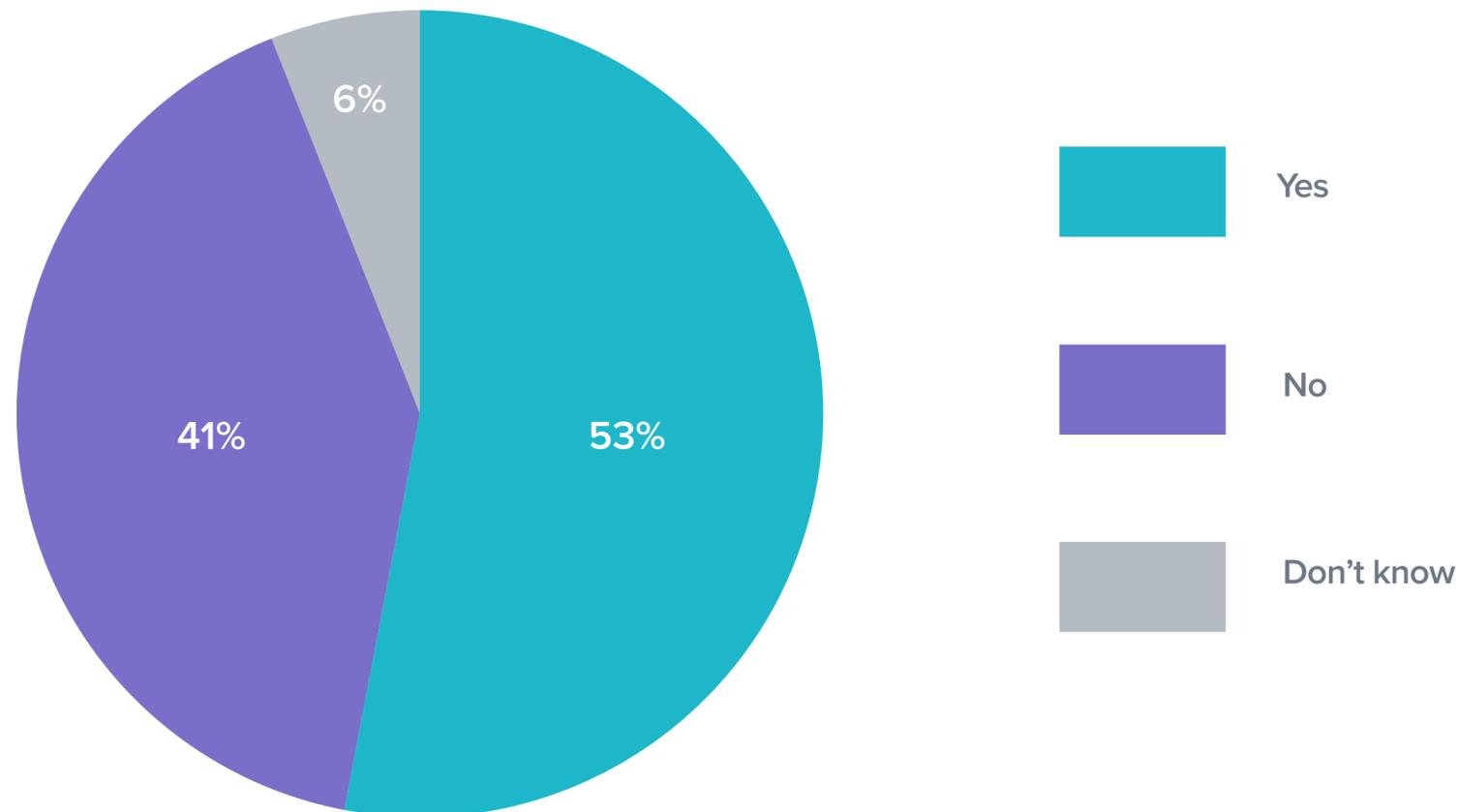


In your opinion, how valuable is your online community program to the organization?



Over half of respondents (**53%**) shared that their customer advocacy and online community programs **were managed separately**. That said, **41%** stated that these programs were **managed together**. These results are nearly identical to what was uncovered in 2020 (51% and 43% respectively.)

Is your customer advocacy program and online community program separately managed?



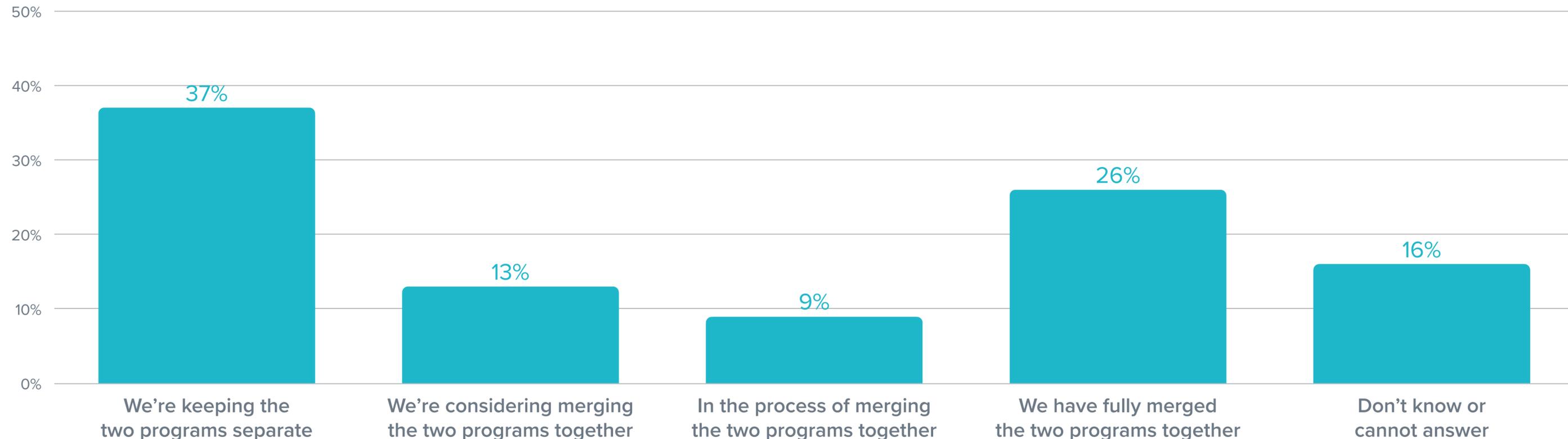
When comparing Influitive customers to non-customers, **38%** of Influitive customers said their customer advocacy and online community programs **were not managed separately**, whereas only **5%** of non-Influitive customers said the same. The majority of Influitive customers launch a combined advocacy and community program, with their community being a private “community of advocates.” In this environment, they may have a public-facing open community that co-exists with their Inluitive program that, through integration, will incentivize advocates for external community participation.

Influitive customers are already tapping into the future of customer advocacy, where engagement is incentivized and rewarded across the entire customer journey. Alongside the massive adoption of customer advocacy and online customer community programs, this is a sure sign that advocacy and community are very mature categories.

The desire to merge customer advocacy and online communities persists

When asked which of the following statements best represents their organization's plans for its customer advocacy and online community programs, **37%** said they're **"keeping their programs separate."** Conversely, **22%** said they were either **considering or already in the process of merging** these programs together, while **26%** said their programs were **already "fully merged together."** When looking holistically, **48%** of respondents have either already merged these two programs, are considering merging them, or are in the process of doing so today. Some uncertainty remains, as 16% said they were unsure or couldn't answer the question, although this uncertainty has decreased by 17% since our 2020 survey.

Which of the following statements best represent your organization's plans for its customer advocacy and online community programs?

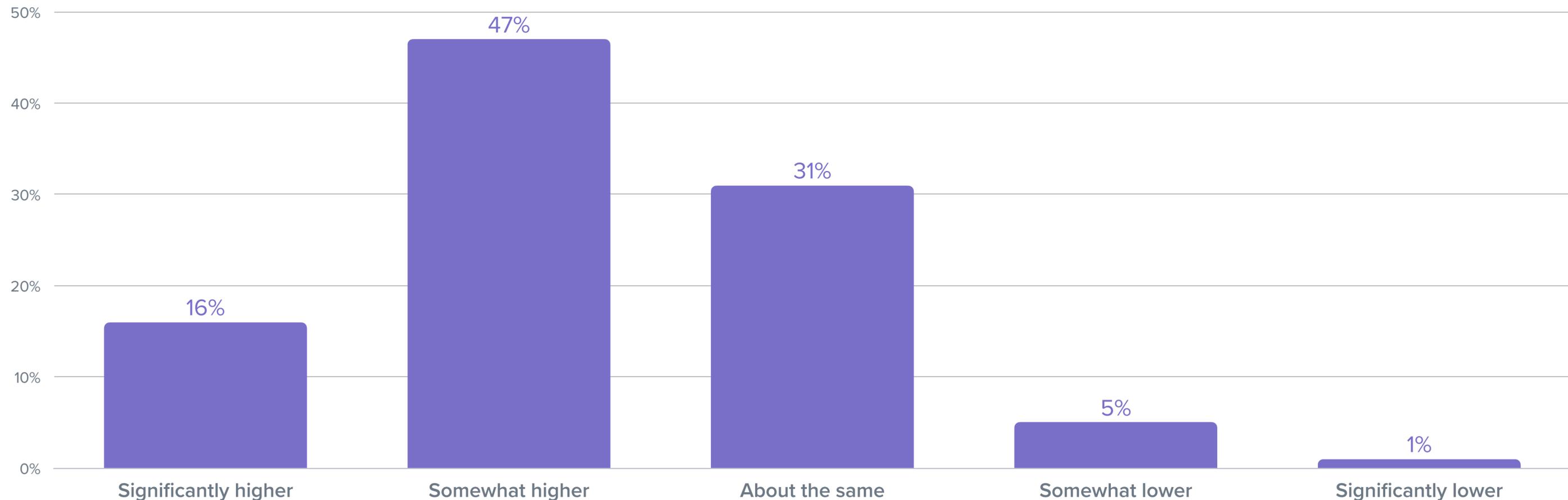


When comparing Influitive customers to non-customers, **42%** of Influitive customers said they were **either considering, already in the process, or have already merged** their customer advocacy and online community programs together. Conversely, only **9%** of non-Influitive customers said the same.

Companies keep getting better at turning customers into advocates

Sixty-three percent of respondents saw an **increase in customer advocates** compared to the previous year. Thirty-one percent of respondents believe their advocate count remained about the same, and 6% saw a decrease in advocates. When comparing Influitive customers to non-customers, Influitive customers saw 14% more success in growing their customer advocates than non-customers.

In your estimation, how does the percent of customer advocates for your organization today compare to the previous year?



On average, respondents consider about **24%** of their **customer base to be advocates**. This is much higher than the industry standard², which is between 10-15%, but slightly lower than last year (31%).

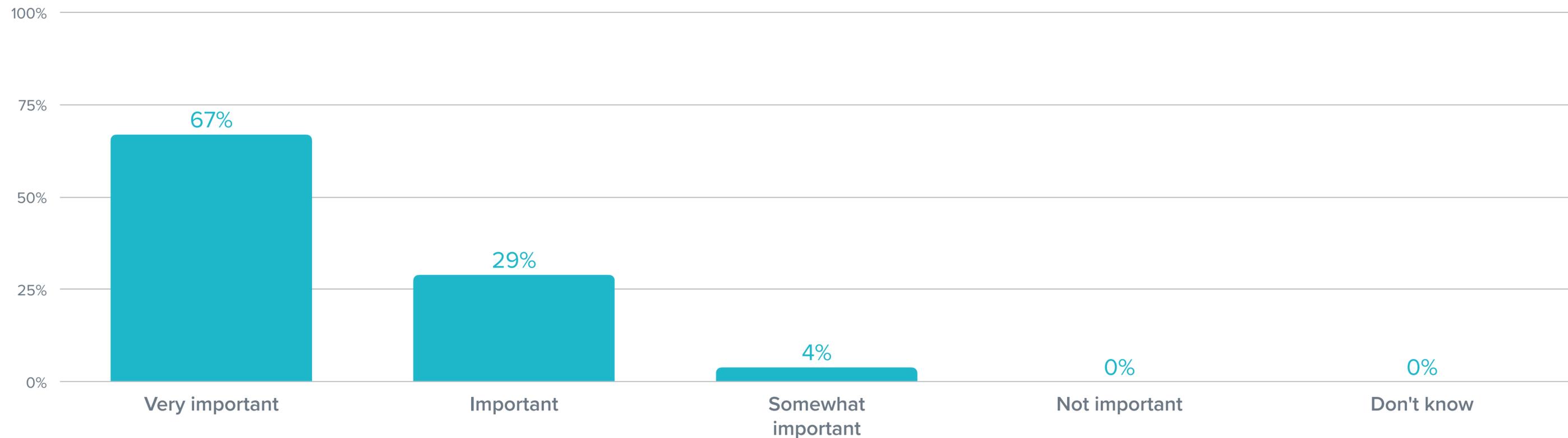
The Business Impact of Customer Marketing

Lastly, we explored the quantitative business impact of customer marketing and how the function will be budgeted and prioritized going into 2022.

Customer marketing remains a significant business contributor

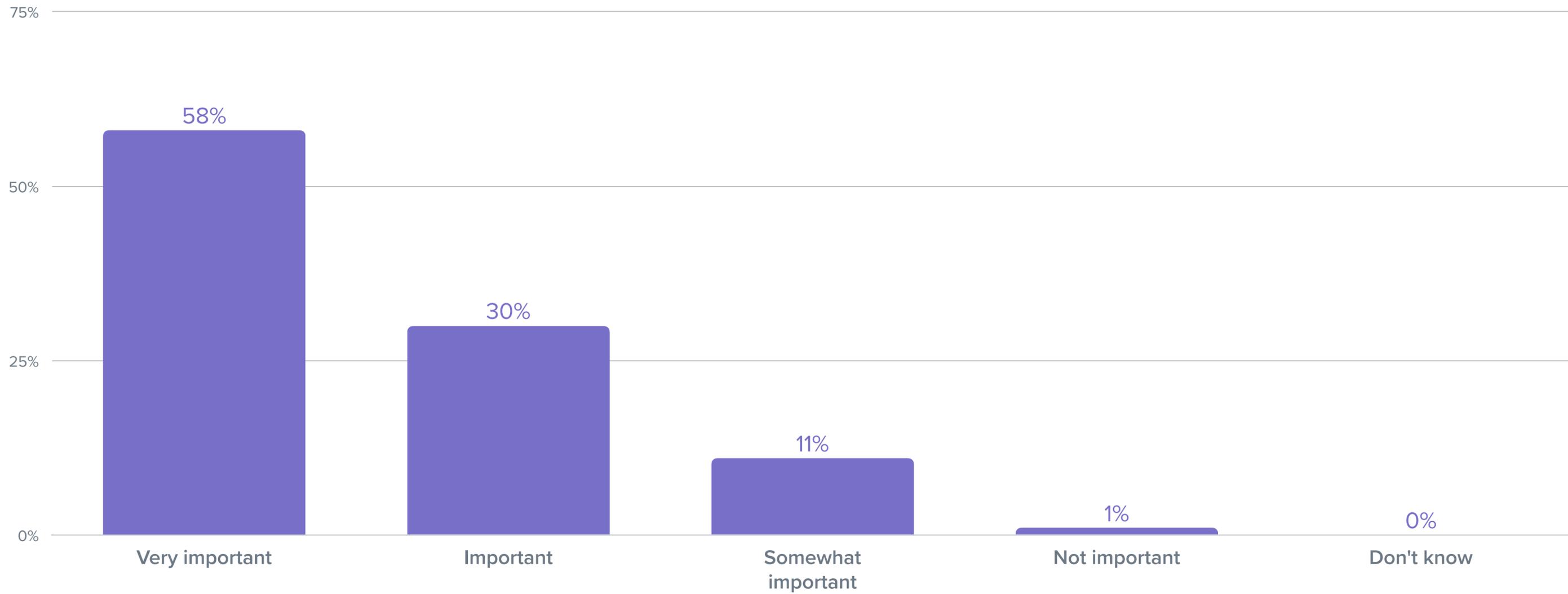
When asked how important customer marketing is to the overall success of their organization, **96%** of respondents classified it as either **very important or important**, up three percent from last year's survey. No respondents considered it unimportant. This sentiment remained high when broken down by management level, with 98% of executives and 96% of program managers rating customer marketing as either very important or important to the overall success of their organization.

In your view, how important is customer marketing to the overall success of your organization?



This sentiment remains the same for selling efforts, as **88%** of all respondents consider customer marketing either **important or very important for supporting their organization's selling efforts**. Only 1% of respondents classified it as not important. This result remains unchanged from our 2020 survey results. When viewed by management level, 93% of executives and 88% of program managers considered customer marketing very important or important to their company's selling efforts. Given this positive sentiment from executives and program managers alike, it's safe to say that customer marketing is here to stay!

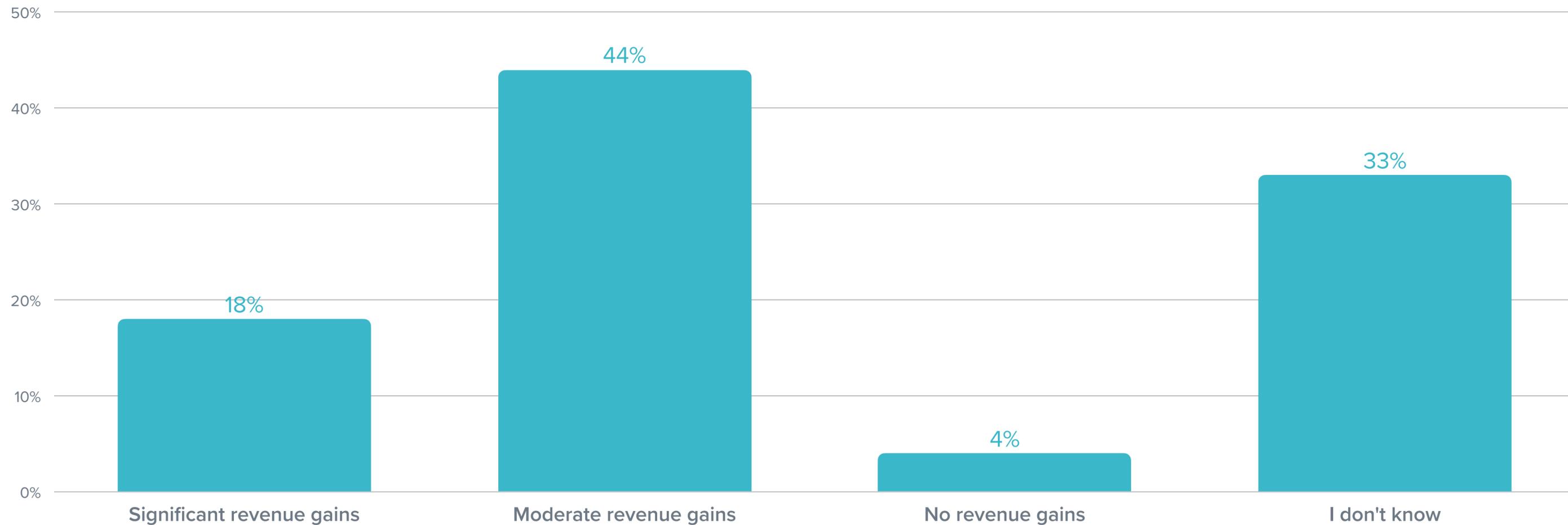
In your view, how important is customer marketing to supporting your organization's selling efforts?



Customer marketing continues making a significant impact on revenue

Of those surveyed, **62%** reported that their customer marketing efforts resulted in **moderate or significant revenue gains** over the past year. This is identical to our 2020 survey results. Meanwhile, 4% reported no revenue gains and 33% were unsure of their revenue growth in this year's survey.

Over the past year, how has your organization's customer marketing efforts impacted revenue?

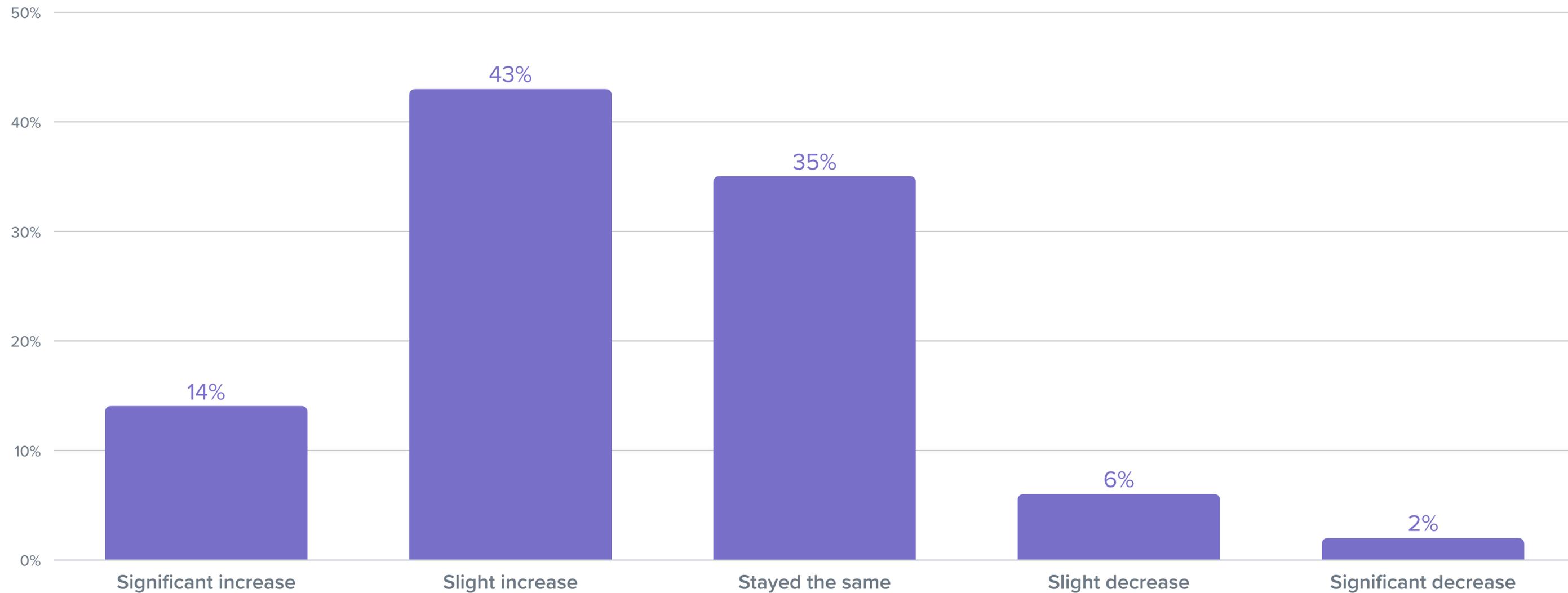


Sixty-seven percent of Influitive customers reported having **moderate or significant revenue gains** over the past year due to their customer marketing efforts. This is **17% higher** than what non-Influitive customers experienced.

Customer marketing budgets continue to grow

When asked how their 2021 customer marketing budget changed compared to 2020, 57% received a slight or significant increase, while 35% had the same budget. Only 6% received a slight decrease and 2% experienced a significant budget decrease. Nearly half (**46%**) reported similar results in 2020, resulting in an increase of 11% over the last year. Customer marketing is a bigger priority than ever before, with **92%** of respondents noting their **budgets are solid or growing**.

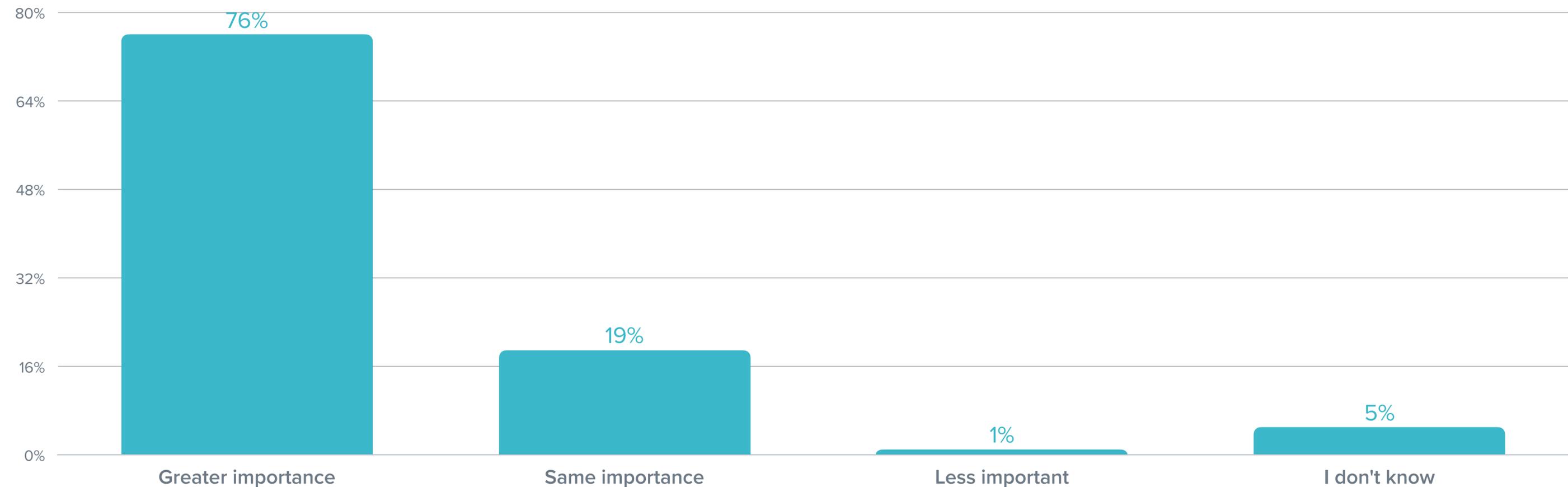
How has your 2021 customer marketing budget changed compared to last year?



Customer marketing will be a significant priority for 2022

This year, **76%** of respondents believe that **customer marketing would become very important** in the future. This sentiment holds strong from 2020, with a 4% growth in positive sentiment. Meanwhile, 19% predict having the same importance and only one percent believe their program will become less important in the coming year.

Over the next year, how much importance will your customer marketing program have compared to the previous 12 months?



Sixty-eight percent of Influitive customers believe **customer marketing will have greater importance** in the coming year, and 63% of non-Influitive customers share the same optimism. When comparing responses by management level, 77% of program managers said customer marketing will have greater importance, while 74% of executives shared that positive sentiment.

Conclusion

This year's survey reaffirms the importance of using customer marketing as a strategy for achieving revenue gains.

This optimism rings true with industry analysts. According to recent Forrester research³ presented at Influitive Live 2021, 81% of B2B technology decision-makers say vendors must have customers who are genuine advocates and share credible, authentic stories about how they help their customers succeed. This echoes earlier research shared at their 2021 B2B Summit⁴: high-performing organizations are 3X more likely to report a significantly greater investment in customer marketing.

While nearly 60% of respondents saw their customer marketing budgets grow in 2021, industry research suggests that this growth will continue and favor marketing software. Gartner's 2021 State of Marketing Budgets Survey⁵ found that technology spend will continue to account for the largest proportion of marketing budgets, and 29% of work that was previously carried out by external agencies has been moved to in-house teams over the last 12 months.

Despite this, customer marketing remains a lean function that is responsible for more customer-centric activities and metrics than ever before and top challenges around demonstrating program value and automating tasks persists. It's important to invest wisely in technology and seek advice from service firms who are experienced in helping companies build scalable and strategic customer marketing programs as they can speed up time-to-value and tie activities to data-driven outcomes.

“In 2022 we predict that the funding marketers put towards engaging with buyers and customers is going to shift from being about net new acquisitions and towards existing customers for retention and advocacy.”



Laura Ramos
Vice President, Principal Analyst

FORRESTER®

About Influitive

The engagement platform of choice for advocacy, community, and loyalty

Since our inception 10 years ago, Influitive has powered nearly 100 million acts of advocacy for customers that has generated nearly \$1 billion in ROI value. How have we done this? By generating extreme customer engagement using our four areas of expertise:



Targeting

Our powerful segmentation engine lets you target content and activities based on profile, geography, responses, and more.



Gamification

Our best-in-class engagement mechanics includes points and badges, creating friendly competition and authentic customer engagement.



Personalization

Our scalable platform lets you personalize every aspect of what members see and do, providing a fulfilling user experience.



Rewards

We leverage proven methodologies for loyalty programs to design a rewards catalog that matches what your customers value.

“Influitive is the ideal solution for driving customer advocacy initiatives. My customers love being involved in our hub and regularly express satisfaction in their experience.”



Andrew Sevilla

Senior Director, Customer Advocacy



Informatica™



The leading provider of engagement software for customer advocacy and online communities

 influitive

www.influitive.com

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 2. <https://influitive.com/influitive-live-customer-journeys-step-by-step-guide/>
 3. <https://influitive.com/influitive-live-2021-forrester-keynote>
 4. <https://influitive.com/blog/2021-forrester-b2b-customer-engagement/>
 5. <https://www.gartner.com/en/marketing/research/annual-cmo-spend-survey-research>