

# Founders and Marketers Opinion Survey 2023





# Executive Summary



**Siddharth Dwivedi**

*(Co-Founder and Head of Growth XOR Labs)*

The world is changing. But so are markets. And more so, marketing. The rise of generative AI tools is impacting the way marketing teams are structured, plans are made, and activities are pursued.

While in the global slowdown and turmoil, the Indian market is still thriving. We wanted to look at how Indian founders, marketers, and agencies think about marketing in this financial year.

We conducted this survey with the objective to understand what marketing may look like this year.

Respondents were from brands and agencies across India covering over a dozen industries including retail and e-commerce, healthcare and wellness, ed-tech and education, fashion, and technology. The survey focused on understanding three key aspects: growth, ad spends and platforms, and team collaboration.

The survey revealed that despite the challenges most marketing teams and brands aim to increase ad spends on performance marketing platforms. Google and Meta still remain the favorites while other platforms are seeing a rise in adoption.

Here are some key findings.



# Key Findings

1. **37.70%** of the agencies and **39.06%** of the brands see rising customer acquisition cost as their biggest growth hurdle.

## 2. Three key growth challenges for marketers:

- Rising customer acquisition cost - **38.40%**
- Poor conversion rates - **25.60%**
- Finding new customers - **17.60%**

3. **48.44%** of brands think that SEO will be crucial for their growth in 2023.

4. Apart from ROAS and CAC, the conversion rate is the most tracked metric in agencies **83.33%** and brands **75.00%**.

## 5. Most tracked metrics by marketers apart from ROAS and CAC:

- Conversion rate - **79.20%**
- Average order value - **55.20%**
- Revenue with channel breakdown - **51.20%**

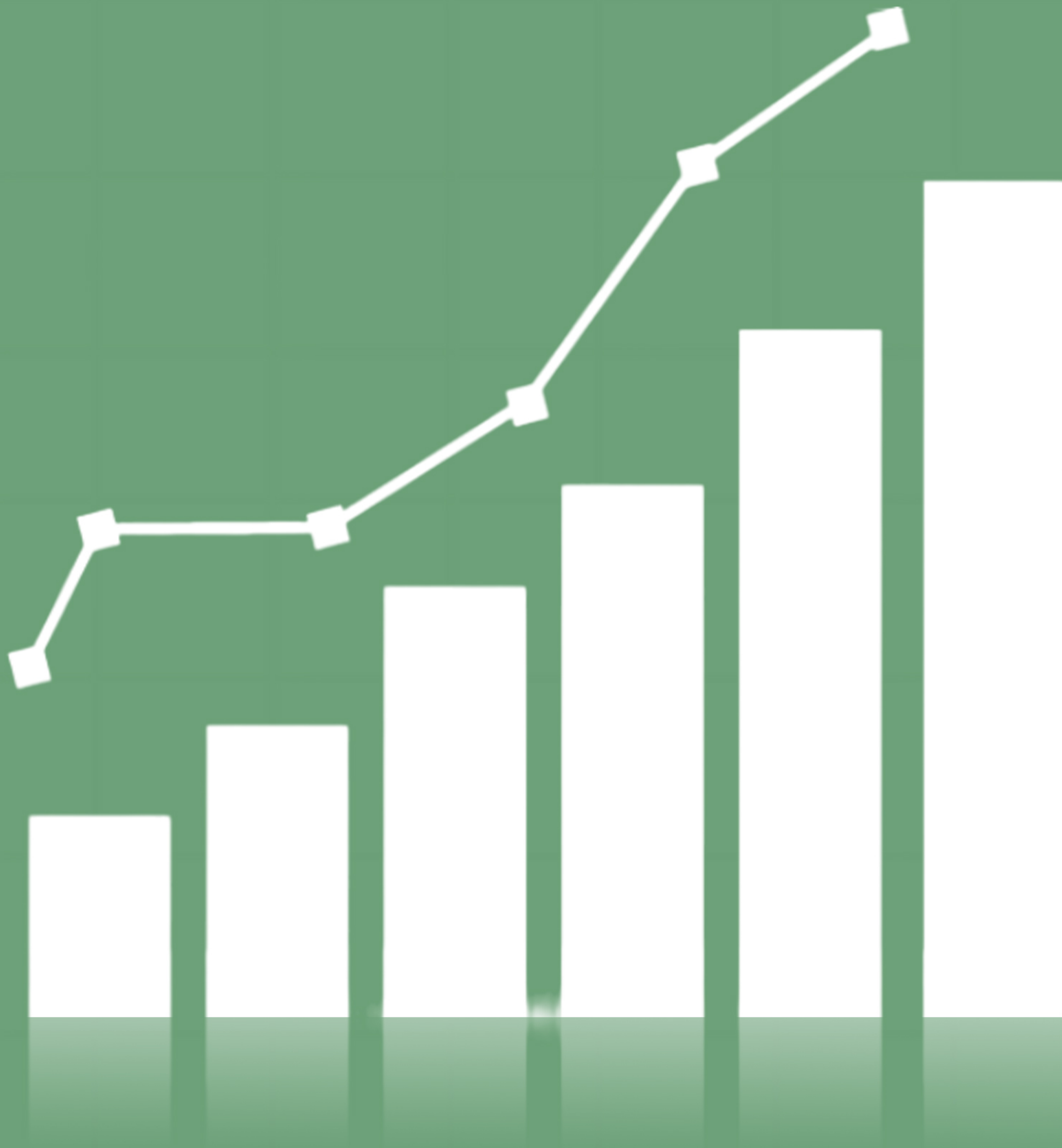
6. **44.00%** of marketers track the lifetime value of customers as a key metric.

7. Respondents have increased their ad spends on Google Ads and Meta Ads by **66.40%** and **64.00%** respectively.

8. **73.33%** of the agencies rely on team training sessions to train their teams while only **48.44%** of the brands do so.



# Section 1: Growth

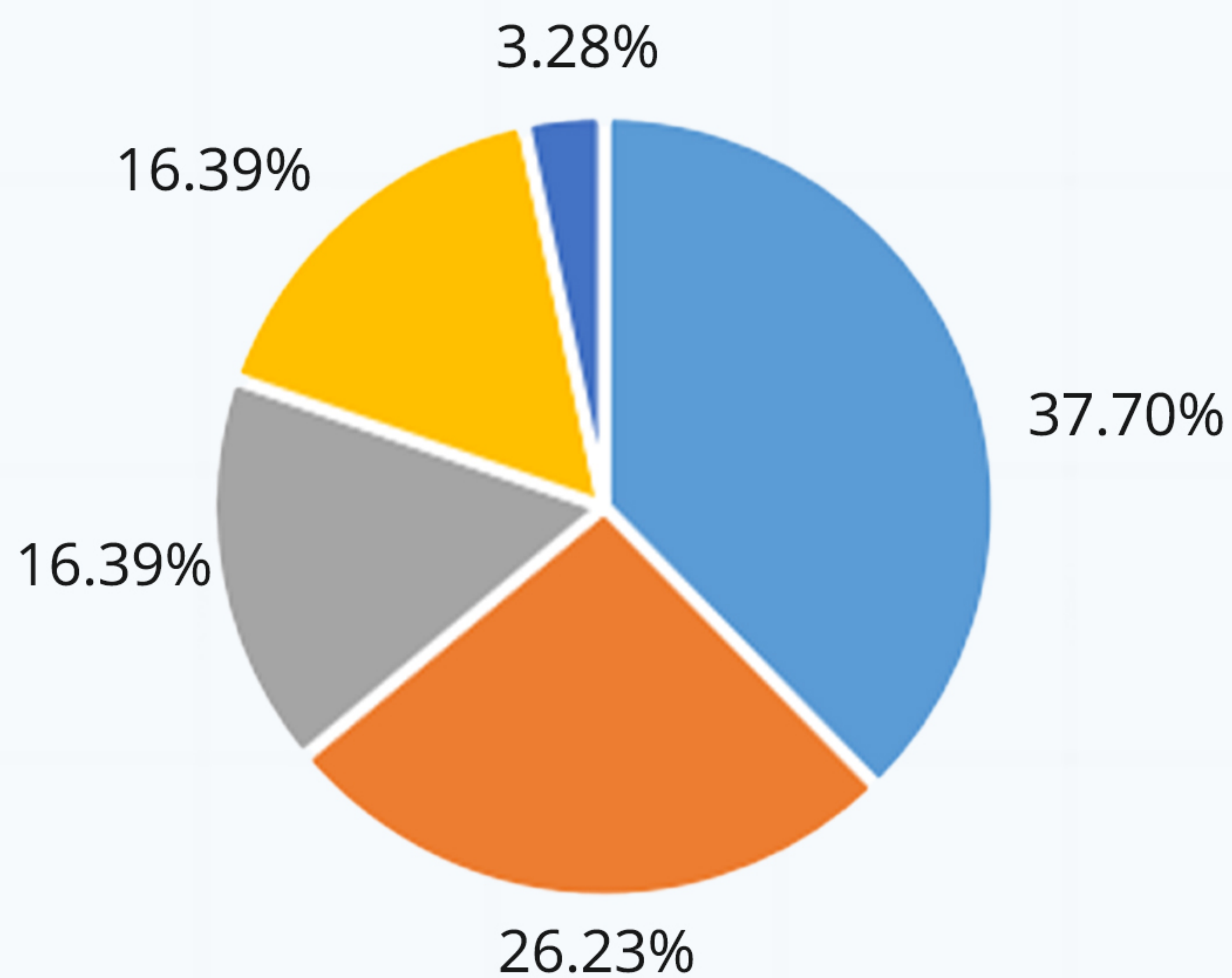




## 1. What has been the biggest growth hurdle for you in the last 6 months?

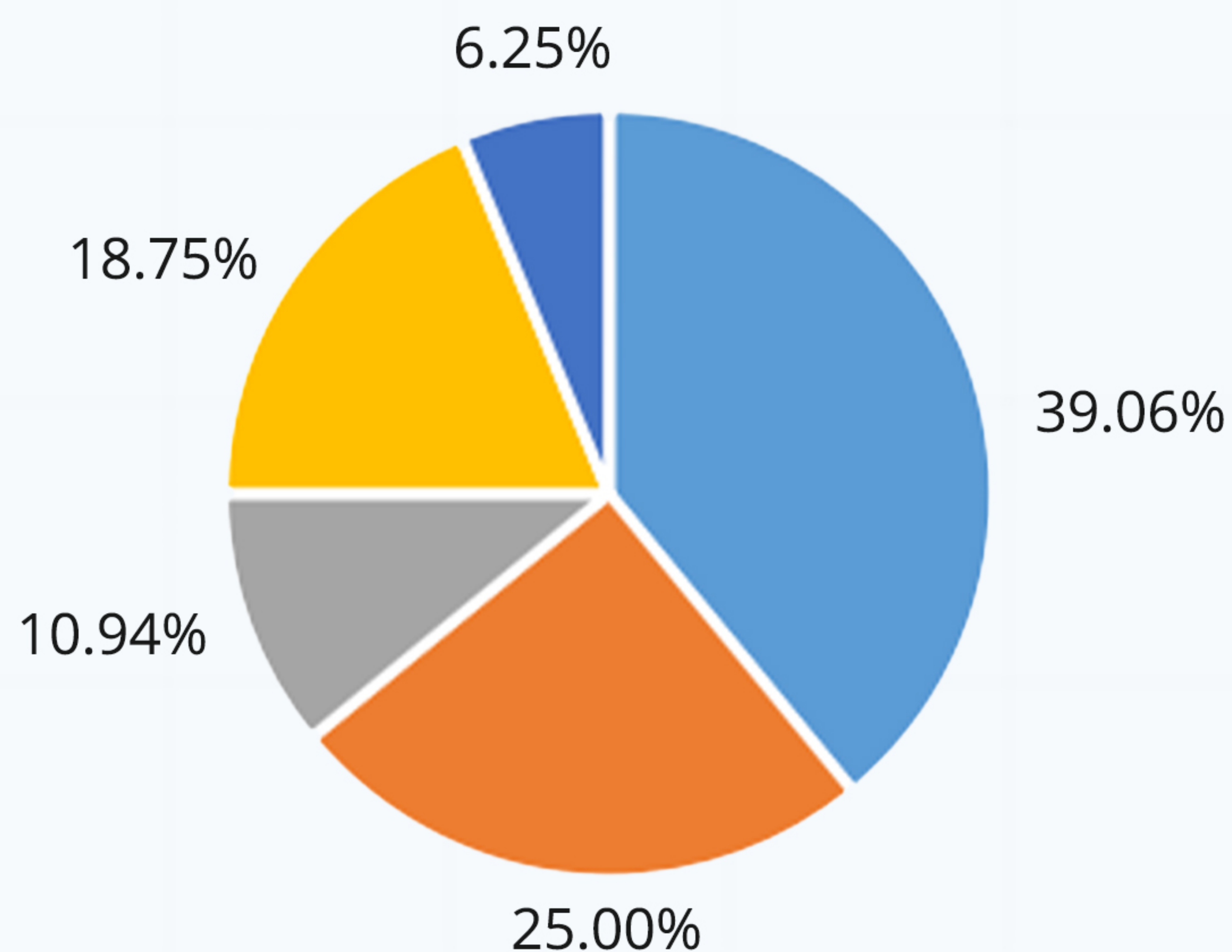
In the pursuit of growth, brands and agencies aim to attract more customers.

But according to the survey majority of them are facing challenges with customer acquisition.



### Agency (%)

- Rising customer acquisition cost
- Poor customer retention
- Poor conversion rates
- Finding new customers
- Others



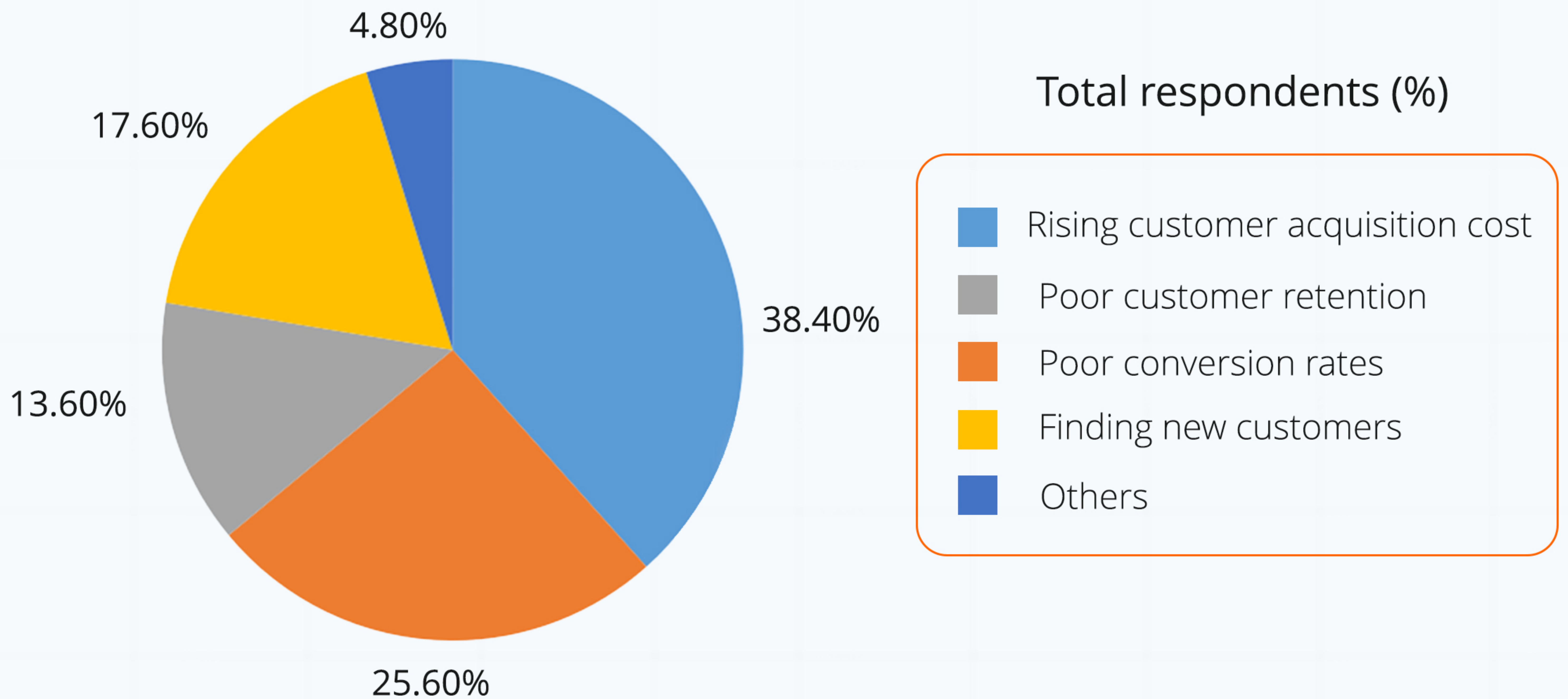
### Brands (%)

- Rising customer acquisition cost
- Poor customer retention
- Poor conversion rates
- Finding new customers
- Others

About **37.70%** of agencies and **39.06%** of brands struggle with rising customer acquisition costs.

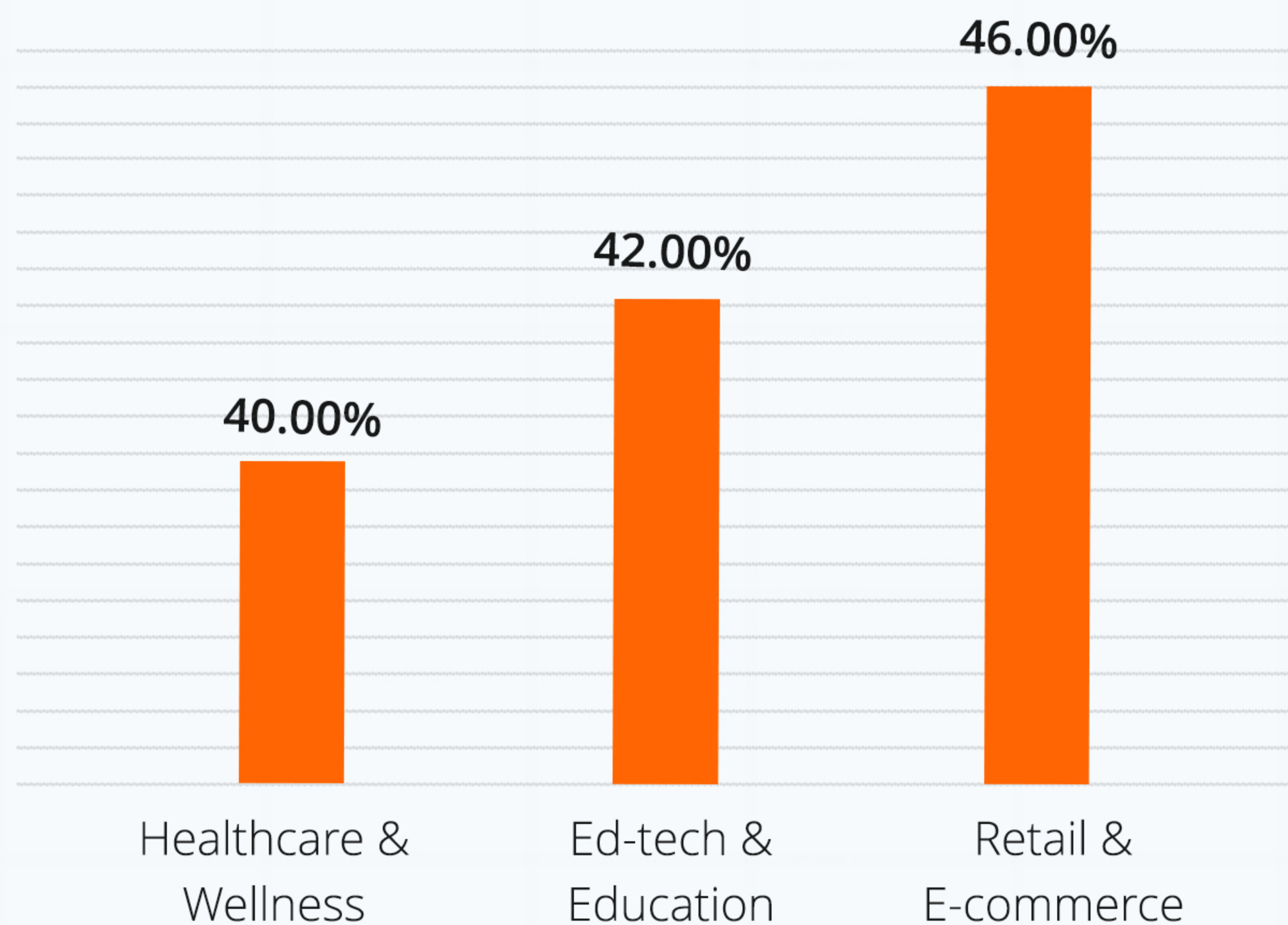


On top of that, finding new customers and finding them at a desirable cost is also a challenge. As we can see **25.60%** of respondents also struggle with conversion rate while **17.60%** are facing challenges in finding new customers.



### Industry Corner:

Industries struggling with a rising customer acquisition cost.

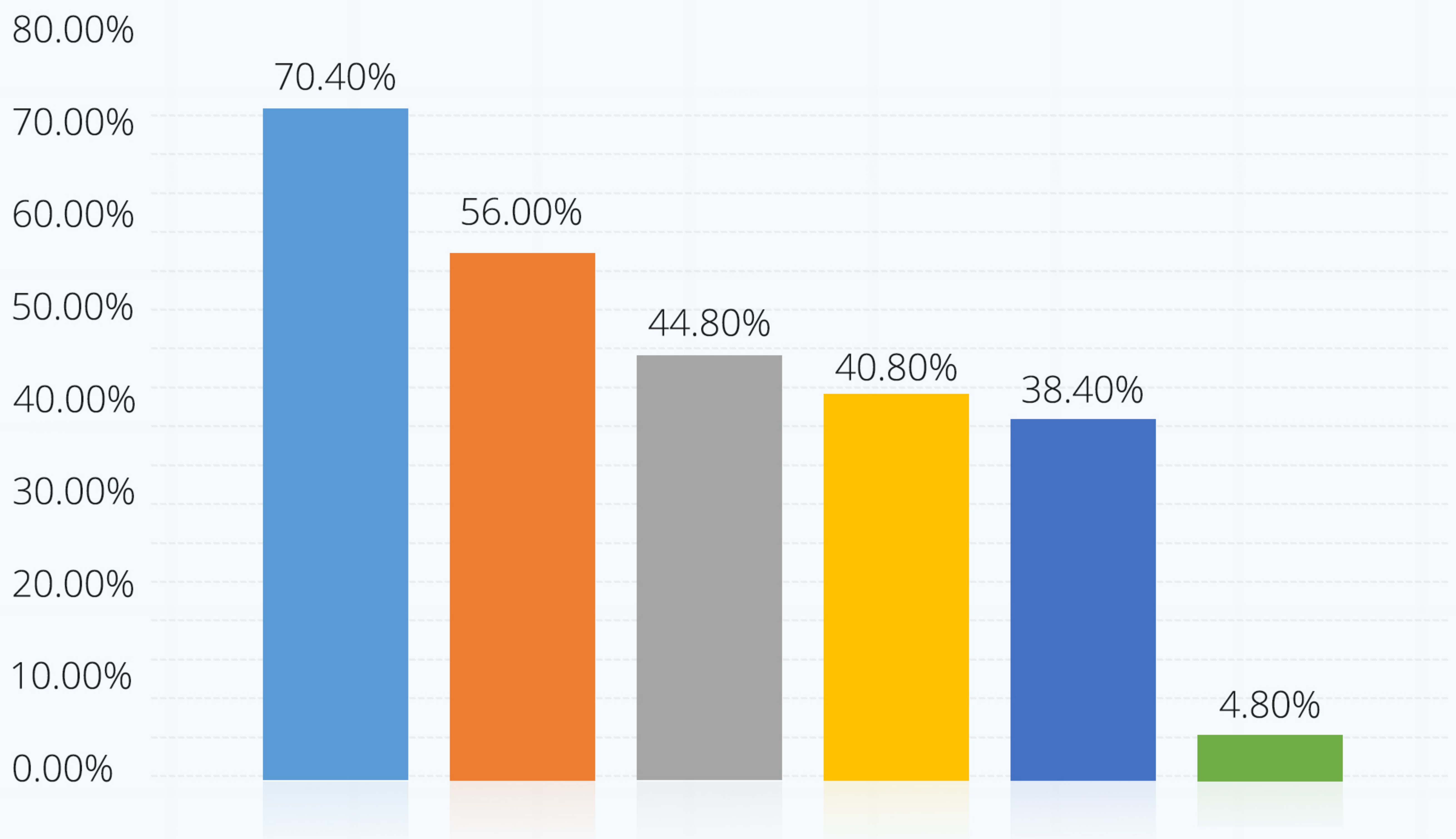
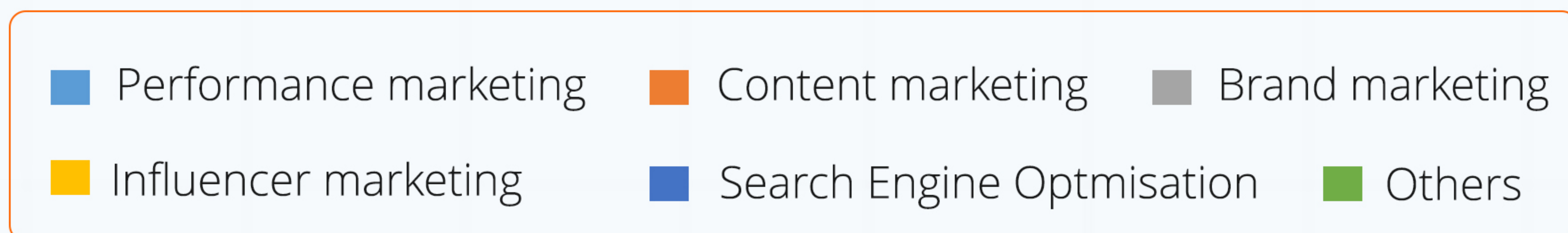




## 2. Which marketing activities do you think will be crucial for growth in this financial year?

As per the survey, **70.40%** of the respondents believe that performance marketing is crucial for growth.

Total respondents (%)



But that's not all.

Marketers are also embracing a multi-channel approach for the next phase of growth.

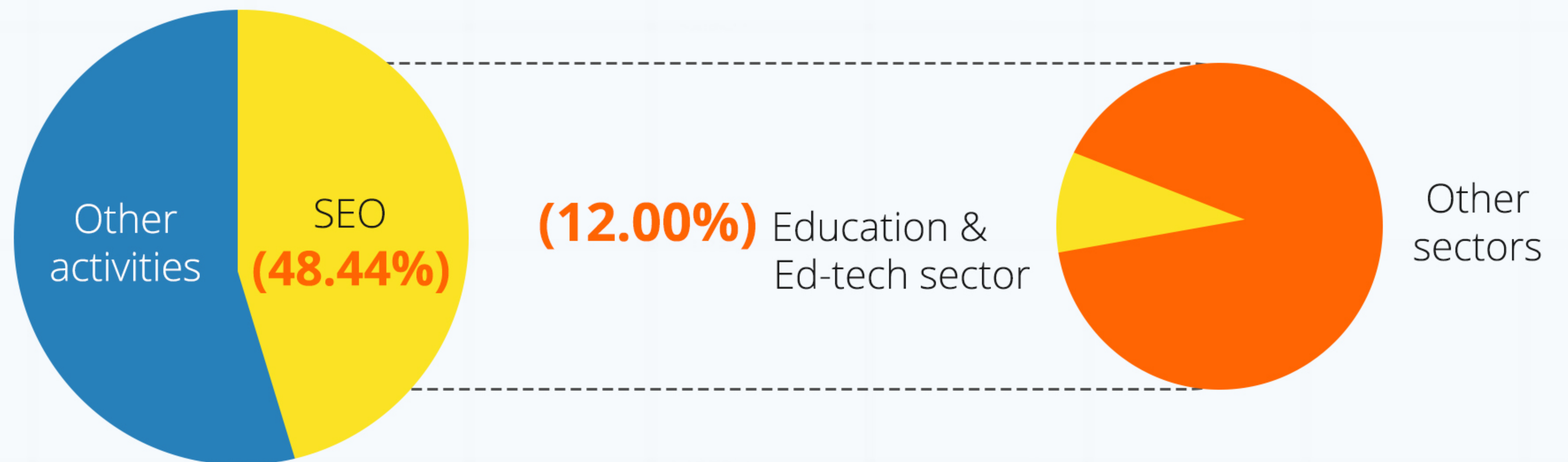
**75.00%** are preferring **two or more** marketing activities, and **61.00%** are diving into **three or more**.

Content marketing is acknowledged by **56.00%** of respondents, and **44.80%** see the power of brand marketing for this year's growth.



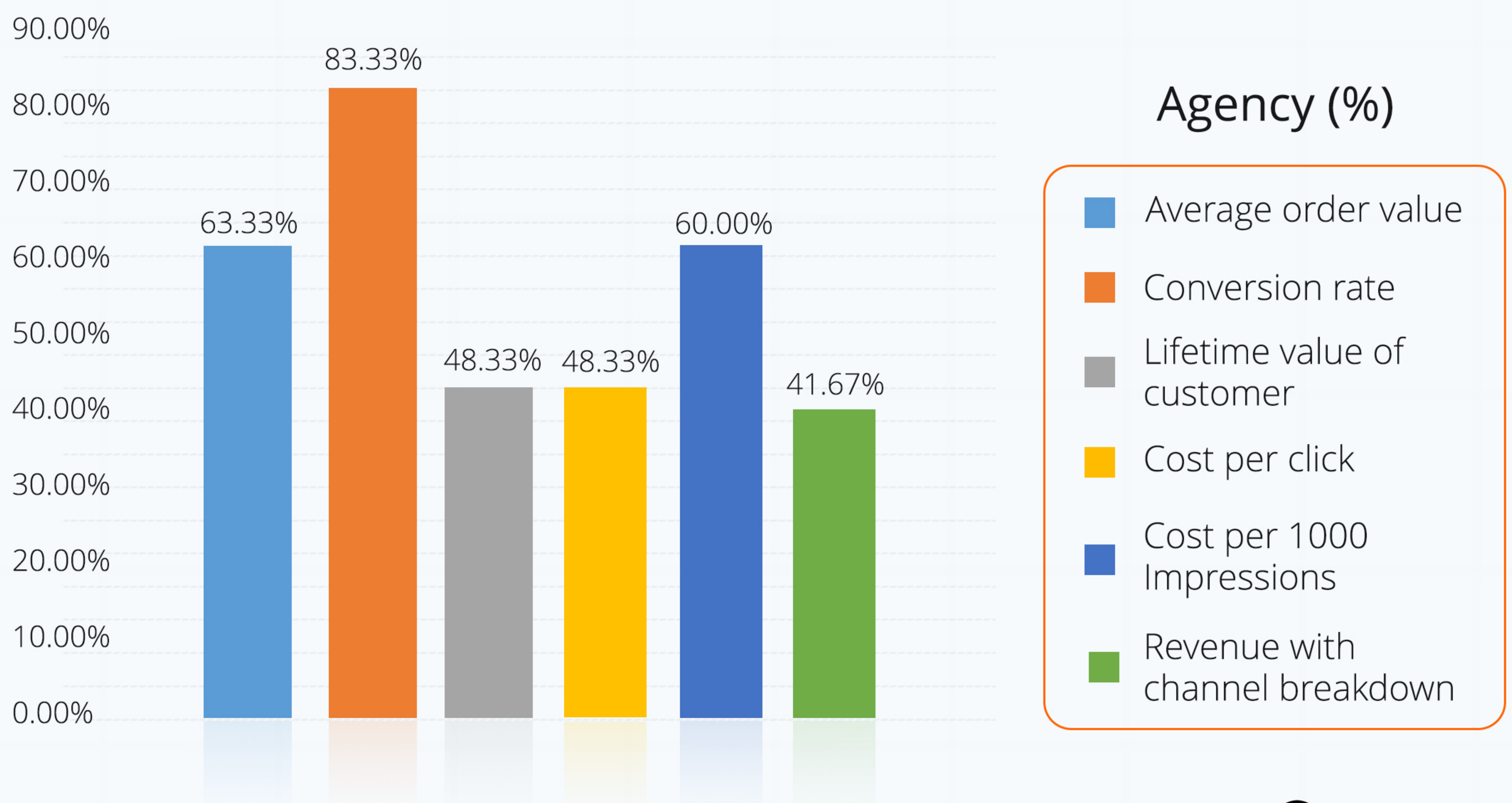
### Industry corner:

**48.44%** of brands consider SEO a crucial activity. But, out of those in the education and ed tech sector, where platform models predominantly dominate, only **12.00%** consider SEO as a crucial activity

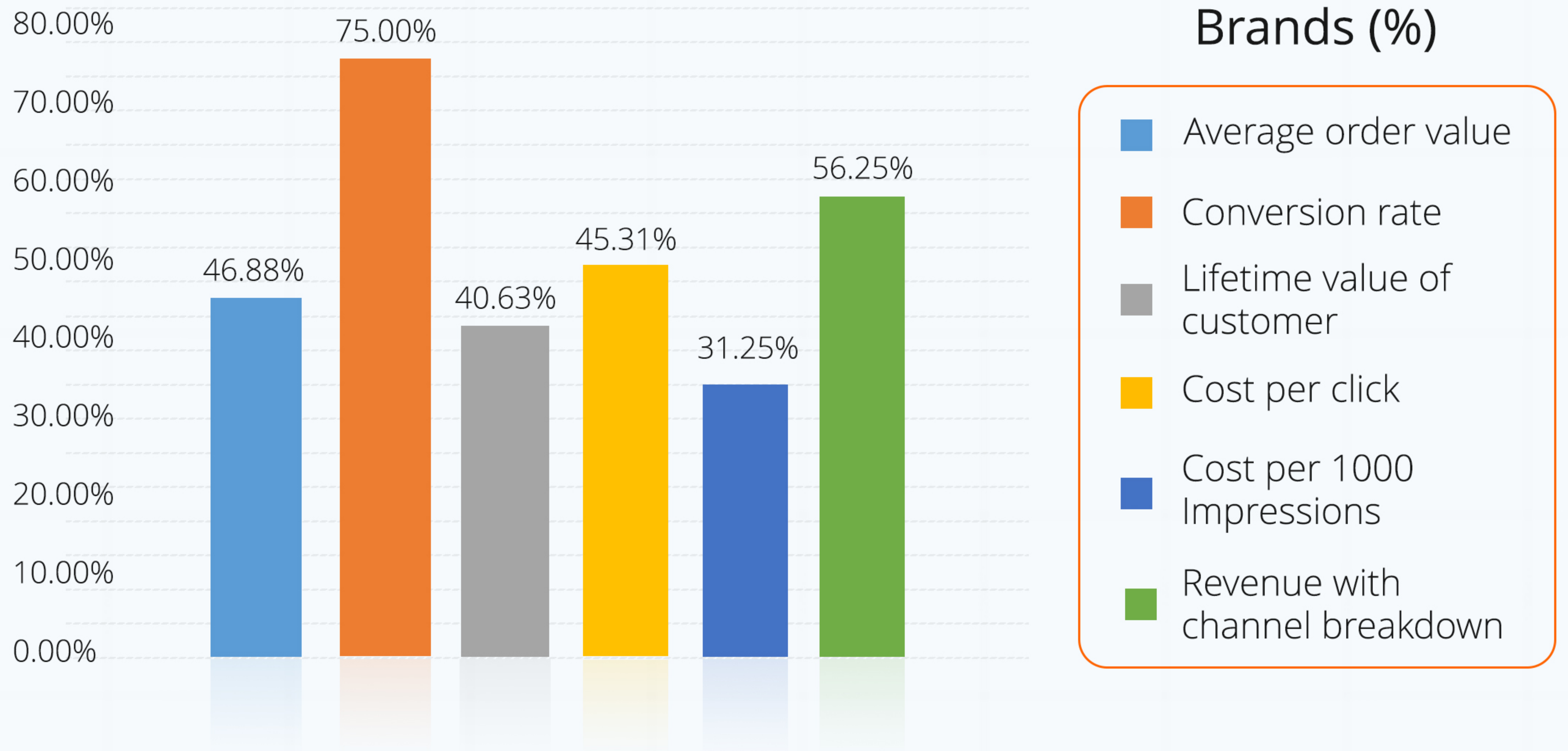


### 3. Apart from ROAS and CAC, which of the following metrics do you actively track in your organization?

Apart from ROAS and CAC, **83.33%** of agencies and **75.00%** of brands also consider conversion rate as an important key performance indicator.







However, agencies are also more concerned with the cost of ad delivery. As **60.00%** of the agencies track CPM on a daily basis while only **31.25%** of brands do so.

Given the product and business type, marketers also opt to monitor multiple metrics.

**73.00%** of the respondents actively track more than **3 metrics** while, **62.00%** track more than **4 metrics**.


## Industry corner:

“

Only **12.00%** of respondents track LTV in the wellness Industry.

”



**Siddharth Dwivedi**Co-Founder and Head of Growth  **XOR Labs**  
The Growth Marketing Agency

"Growth is a function of brand, product, positioning, and distribution. While we're internally seeing brands ramping up distribution with Meta and Google, the most successful of them are also adding new channels, strengthening, positioning, and finding gaps for new products"

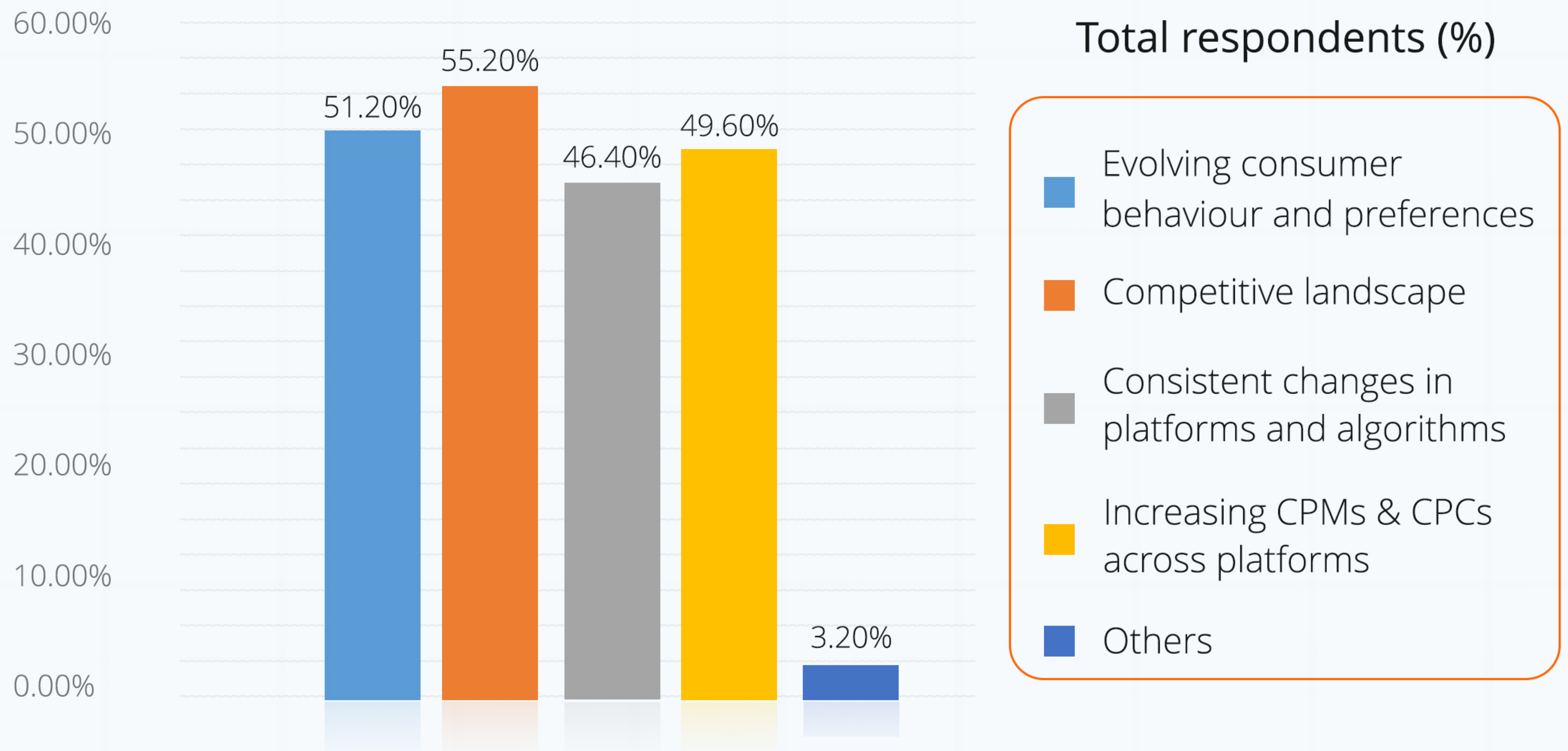
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#### 4. What external factors do you consider as challenges for growth?

**30.00%** E-commerce and **35.00%** wellness sector consider increasing CPMs & CPCs across platforms as an external challenge for growth.

Achieving significant growth necessitates a well-rounded approach that extends beyond just tracking internal metrics. **55.20%** of respondents identified the competitive landscape as the primary external obstacle hindering their growth.





There are multiple other factors that respondents consider as their external challenges for growth apart from the competitive landscape.

As per the table, it is clearly visible that respondents are facing more than one challenge that impedes their growth.

Factors	Agency	Brand
Evolving consumer behavior	53.33%	50.00%
Competitive landscape	56.67%	53.13%
Consistent changes in platform algorithm	41.67%	39.06%
Increasing CPMs & CPCs across platforms	53.33%	50.00%
Others	5.00%	4.69%

Suprisingly, **71.00%** agencies and **61.00%** brands face more than two external challenges.



## Watch India's fastest growing brands talk about XOR Labs:



"XOR Labs perfectly understood our business implications & focused on quality acquisitions, which was very critical to us"

**Amit Purohit**  
CoFounder and CEO



[Click here to watch testimonial](#)



"XOR Labs has been like having an in-house marketing team."

**Sahil Bansal**  
CoFounder and CEO

**Mac Singh**  
CoFounder and CMO



[Click here to watch testimonial](#)



"Facebook number previous to XOR Labs coming into the picture was somewhere around 1.5 to 2.0 in terms of ROAS. Now, it's gone to 3.5."

**Rakesh Sareen**  
Founder & CEO



[Click here to watch testimonial](#)



"In the last 5-6 months, we've actually seen more than 50% growth in our"

**Sahil Chopra**  
CoFounder



[Click here to watch testimonial](#)



# Section 2: Platforms & Ad Spend

 **Meta**  
Business Partner

  
Google Partner

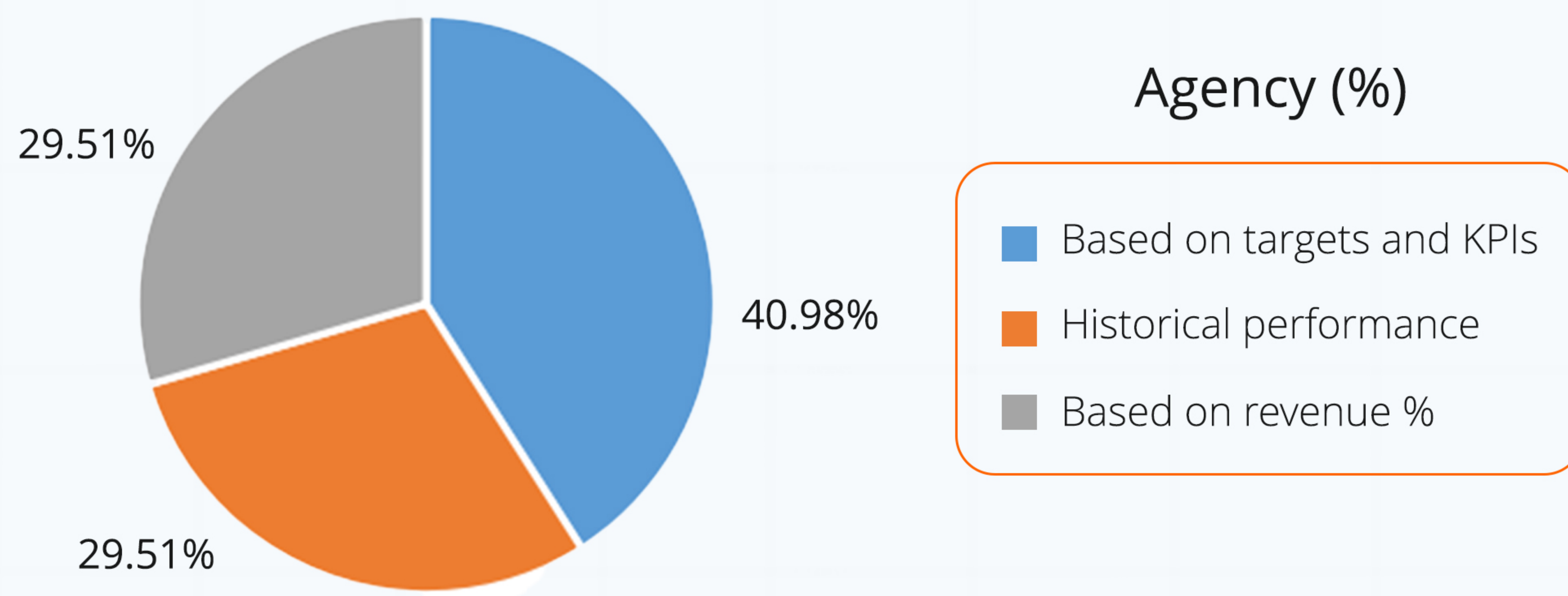
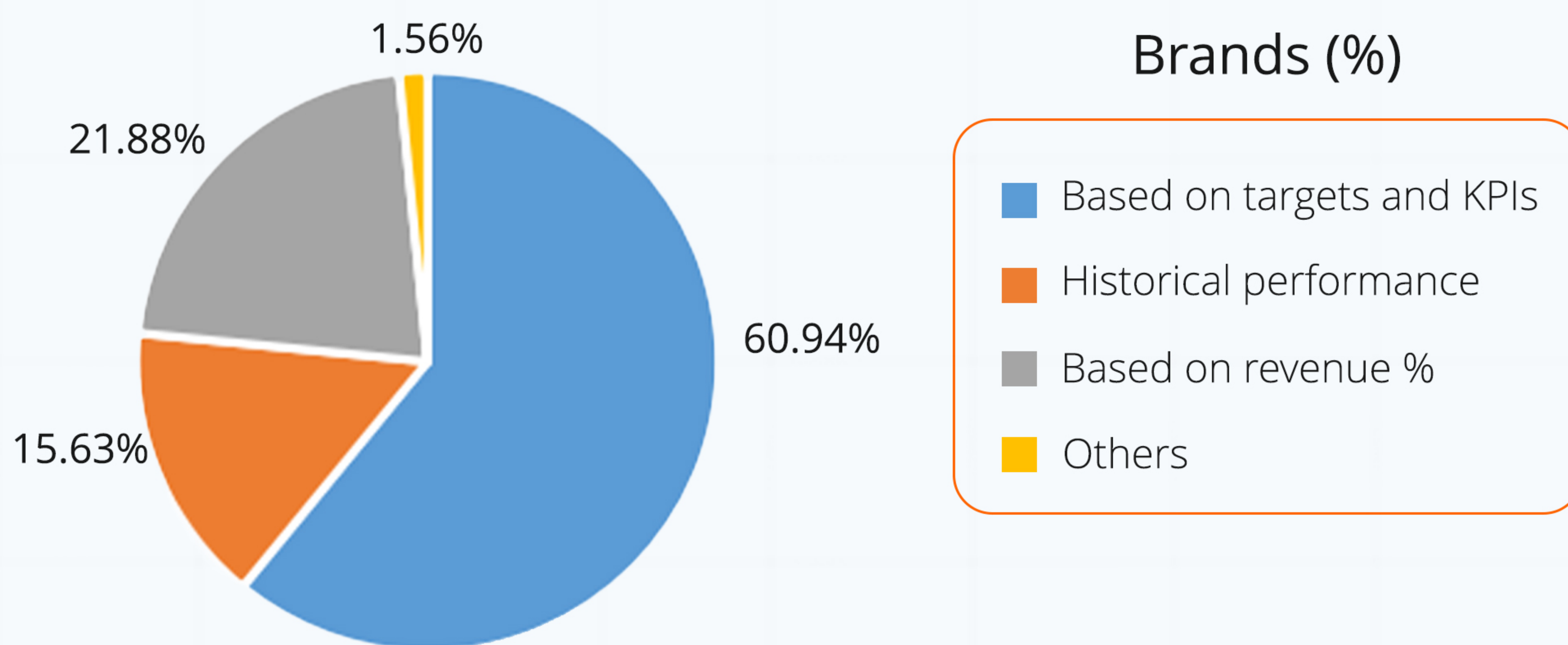
 **amazon ads**

  
MARKETING  
PARTNER



## 1. What's the ad spend allocation strategy in your organization?

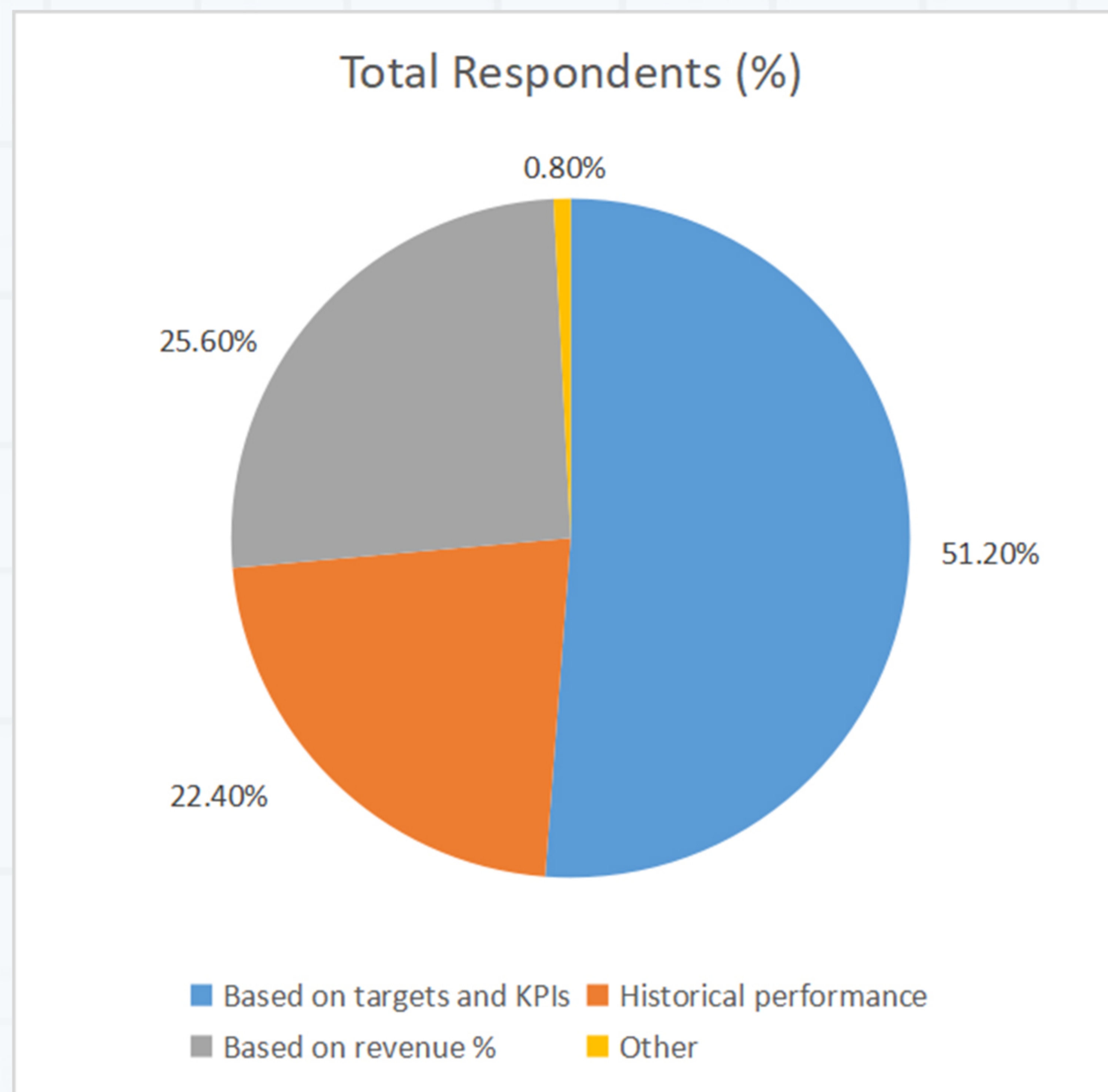
Making the most of your budget requires prudent ad spend allocation. Ad spend is based on different factors but **40.98%** of agencies and **60.94%** of brands primarily prefer keeping target KPIs as crucial.



**29.51%** of the agencies also prefer to allocate their ad spend based on the historical performance of campaigns. But, almost half of the brands **15.63%** do so.

Other than this, **25.60%** of respondents allocate their ad spend based on revenue%, which is a challenge in itself.

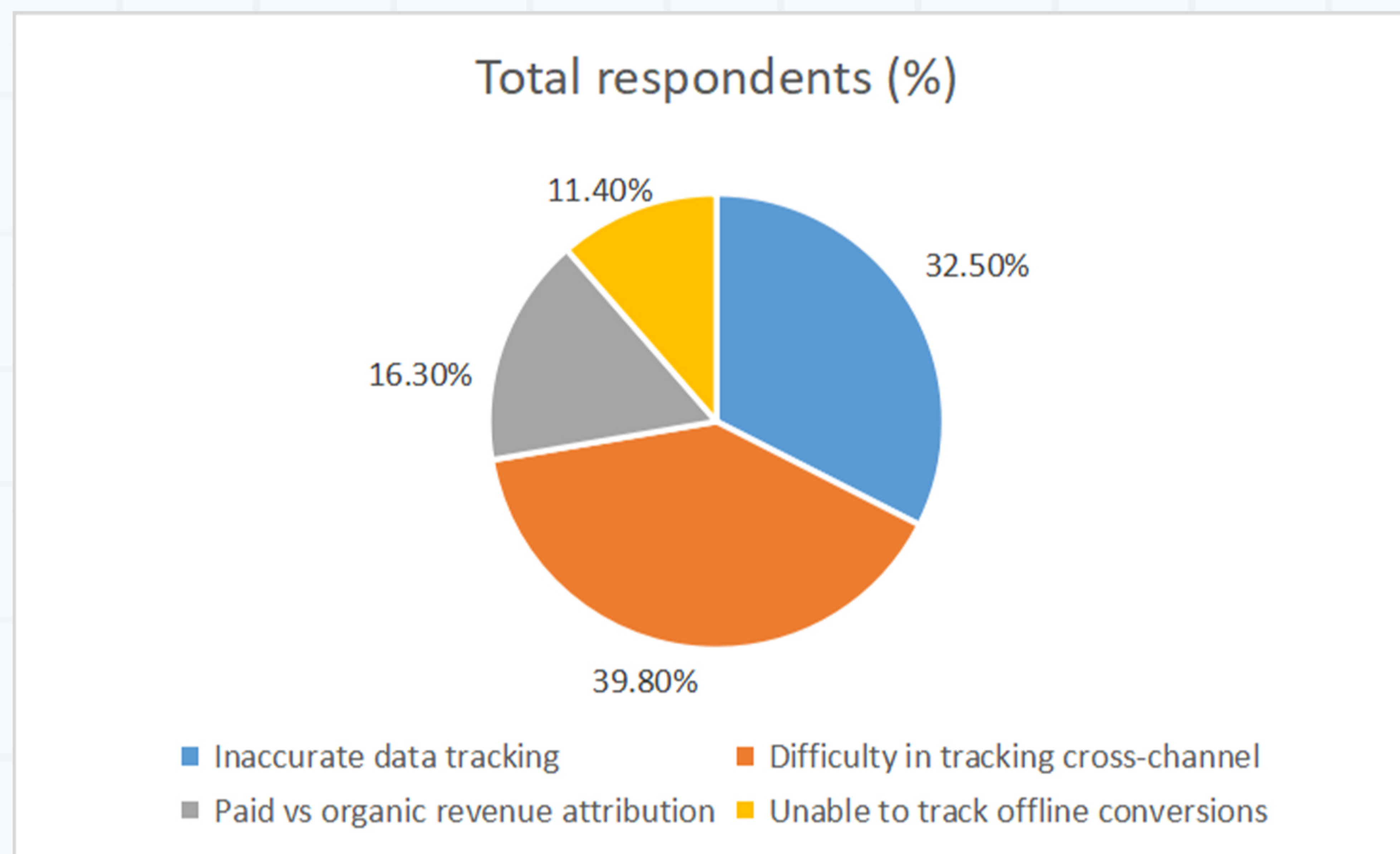




## 2. What is your biggest challenge in measuring ROI and attributing revenue across multiple channels?

Marketers employ a multifaceted approach to reach their intended audience, utilizing a plethora of platforms and channels.


However, each channel comes with its own set of challenges. **39.80%** of the respondents find it difficult to implement cross-channel tracking effectively.

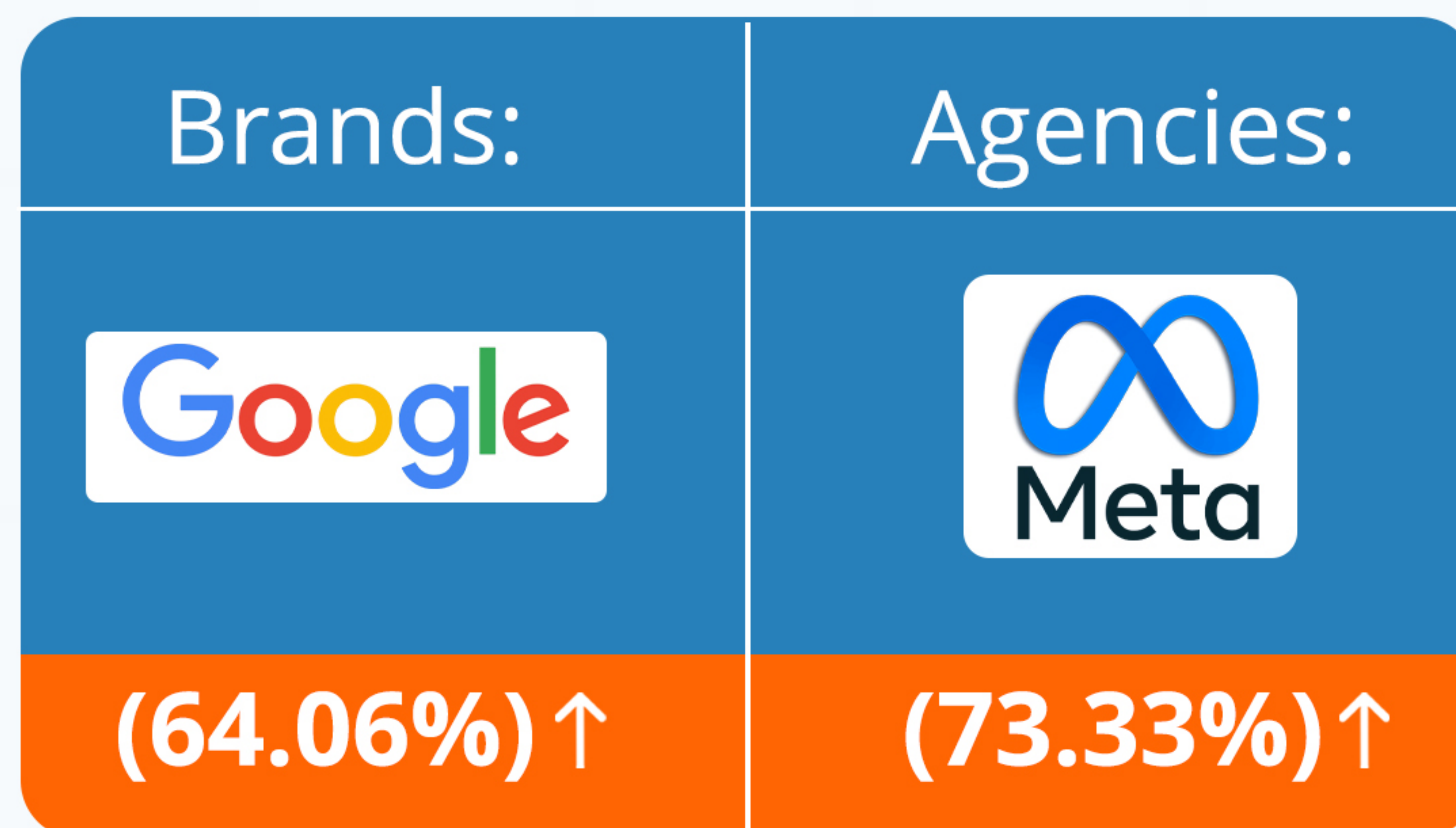




**23.08%** of brands are concerned about paid vs organic attribution but, only **8.62%** of the agencies find it challenging.

### 3. Which platforms have you increased ad spends on in the last 6 months?

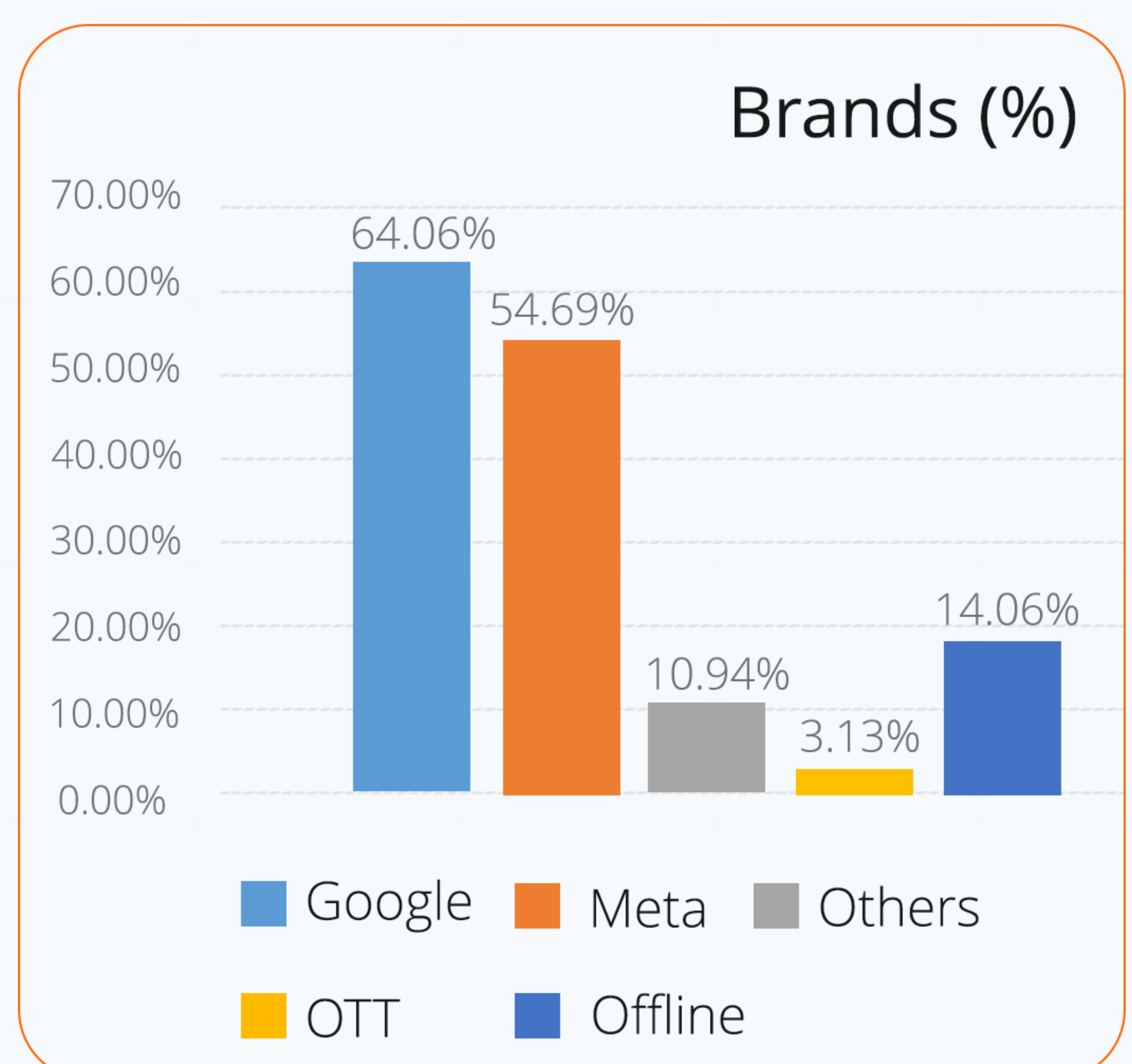
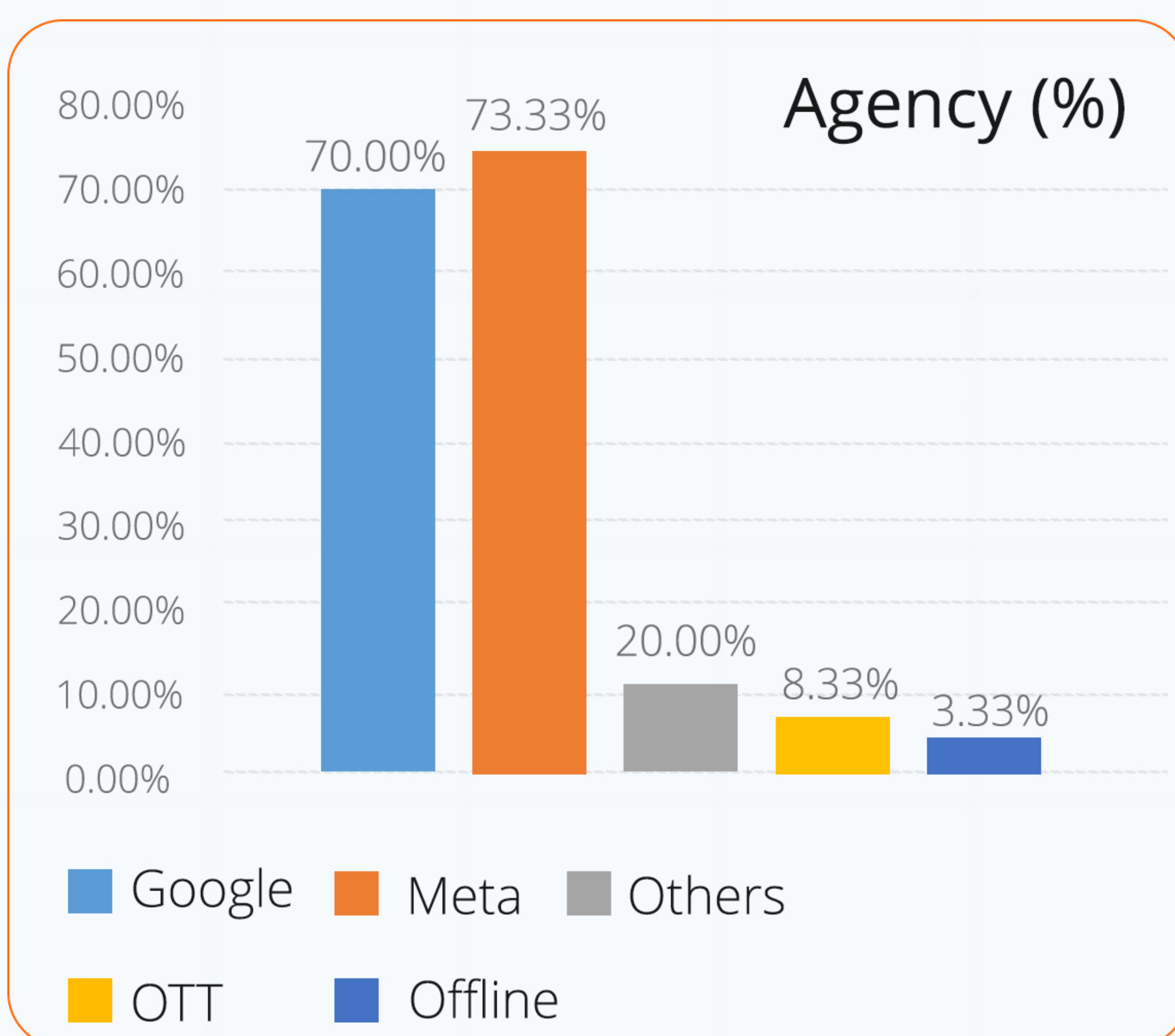
Increase in ad spend 



Respondents are not just relying on Google & Meta. As we can see

→ **14.06%** of brands has increased their ad spend on offline platforms while

→ **8.33%** of agencies have increased it on OTT platforms.

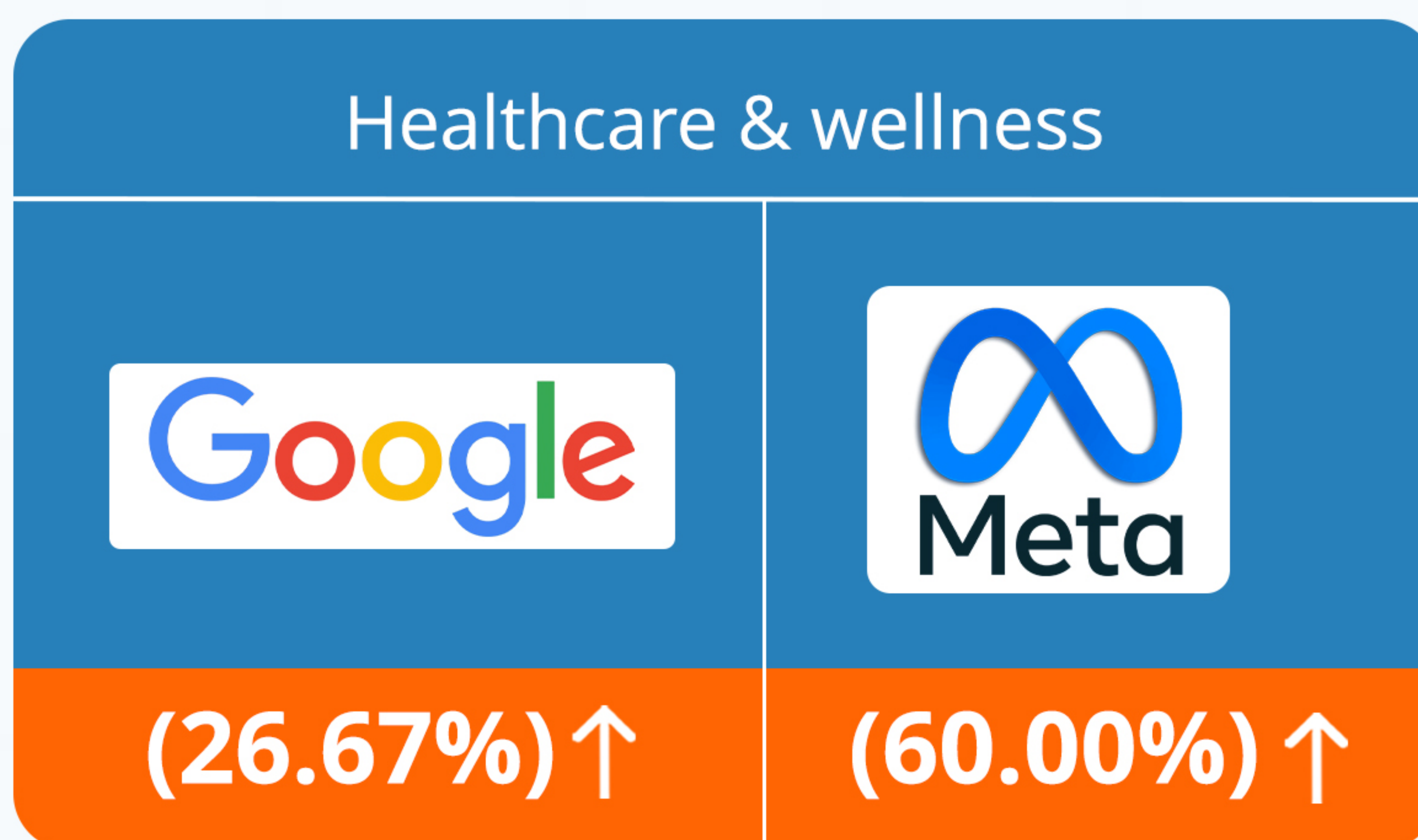




**20.00%** of agencies and **10.94%** of brands have increased their ad spend on platforms like **Taboola**, **Quora** etc.

## Industry corner:

There was a major push seen on ad-spend on Meta and Google in **healthcare & wellness** sector.



**Nitin Jain**

Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer  **XOR Labs**  
The Growth Marketing Agency

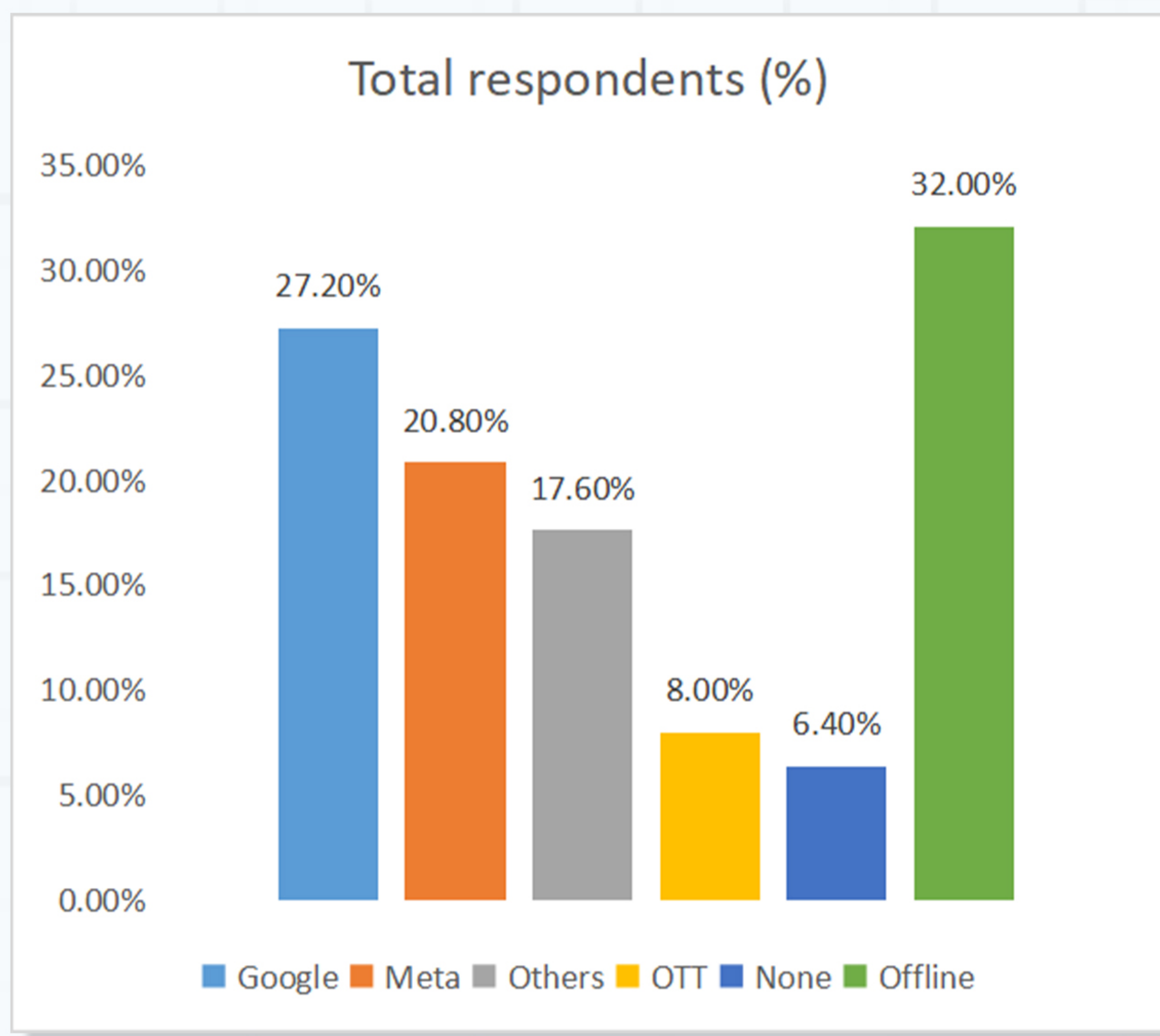
While rising CPMs, tracking, and attribution are posing challenges for performance marketers. I believe performance marketing will evolve. The emphasis will shift from focusing on end conversion metrics, such as purchases and lead generation, to prioritizing brand visibility and multiple customer touchpoints.

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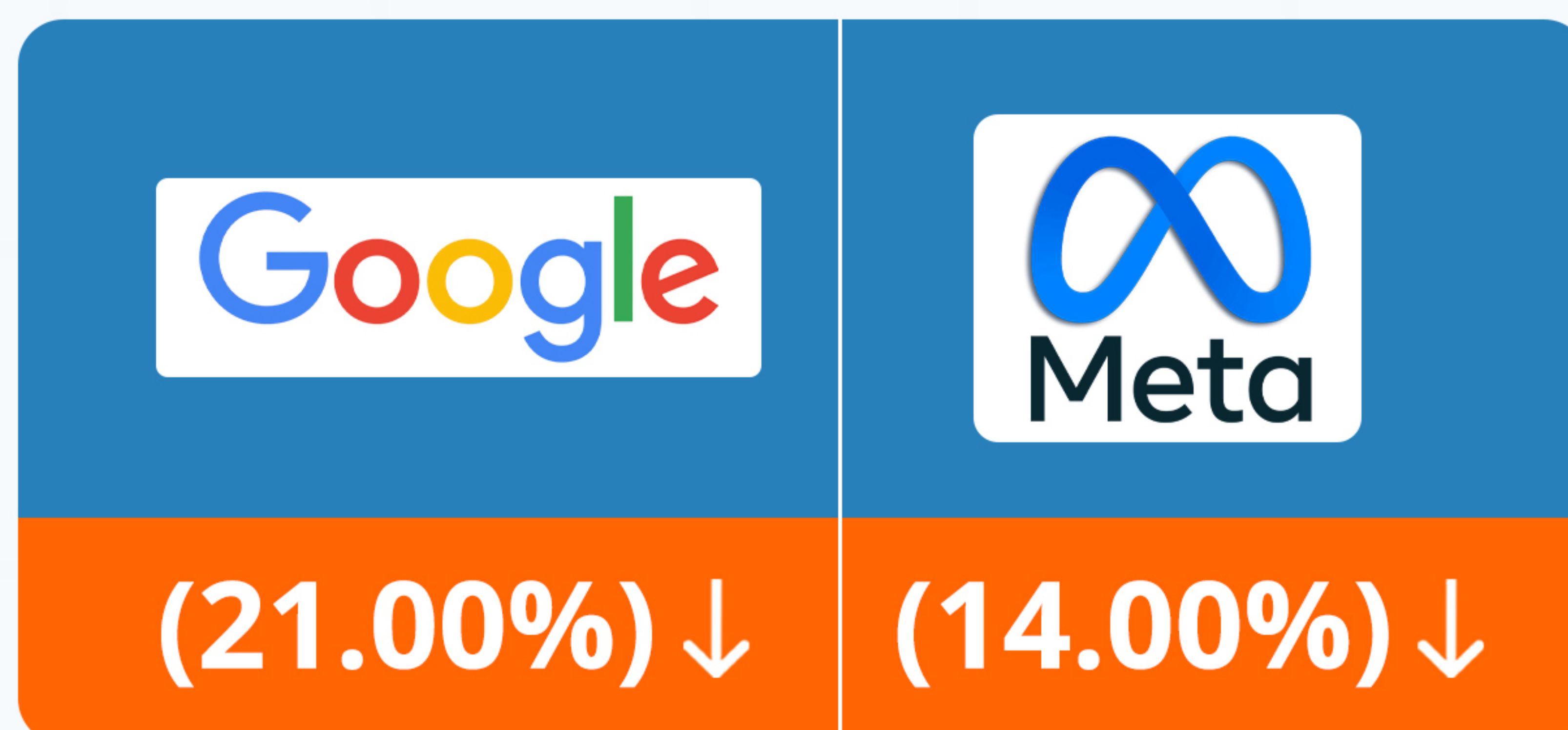
#### 4. Which platforms have you decreased ad spends on in the last 6 months?

**32.00%** of the respondents are reducing their ad spends on offline platforms.



#### Industry corner:

Retail and E-commerce Sector (decreased ad spend) 





# Section 3: Team and Collaboration

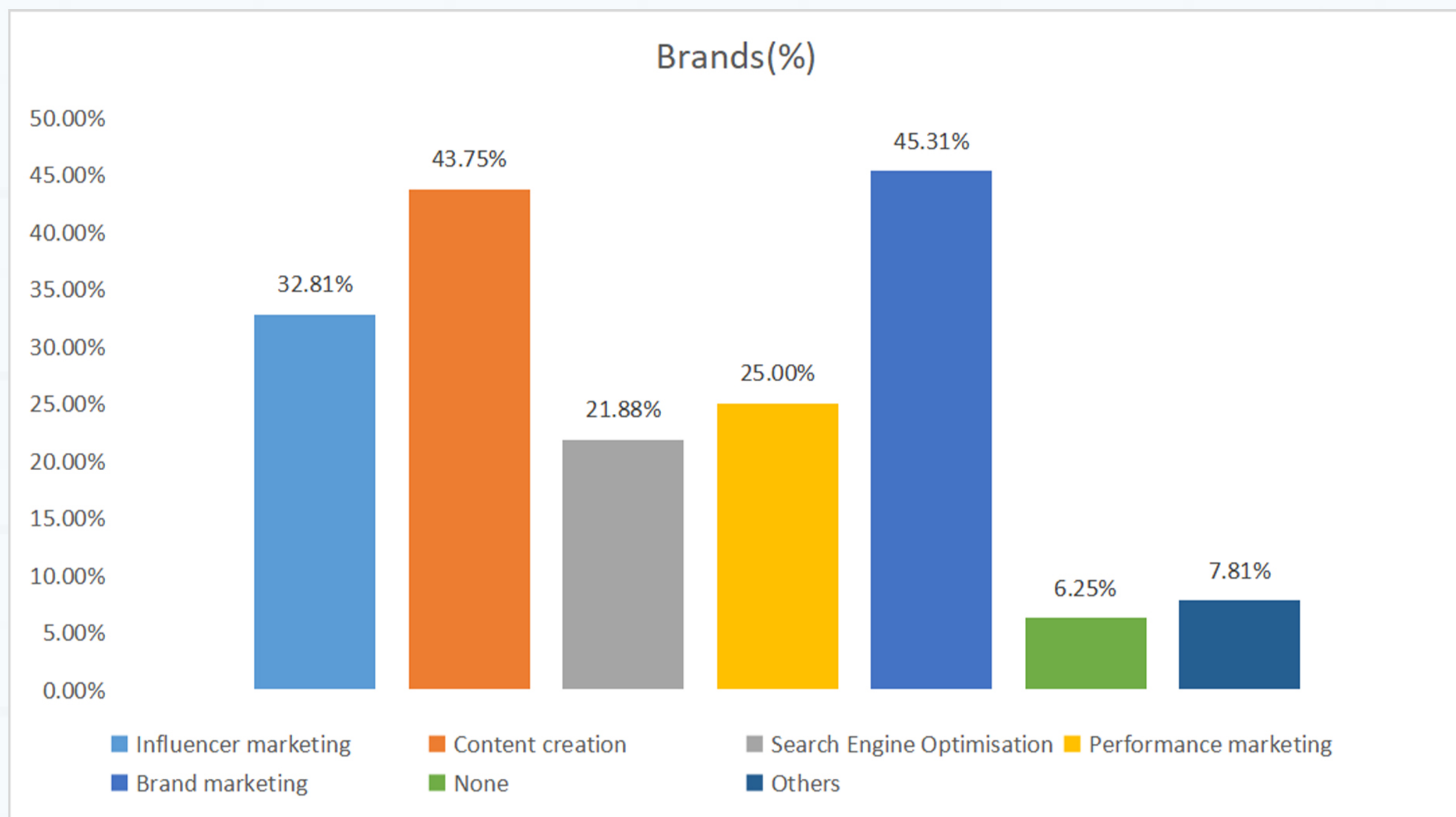




## 1. Which of the following marketing activities do you prefer to outsource?

Outsourcing requires a financial commitment.

As per the data, it is seen that **45.31%** of the brands outsource brand marketing followed by content creation **43.75%** and performance marketing **25.00%**.



And, interestingly, **(42.00%)** of respondents prefer to outsource more than **3 activities**.

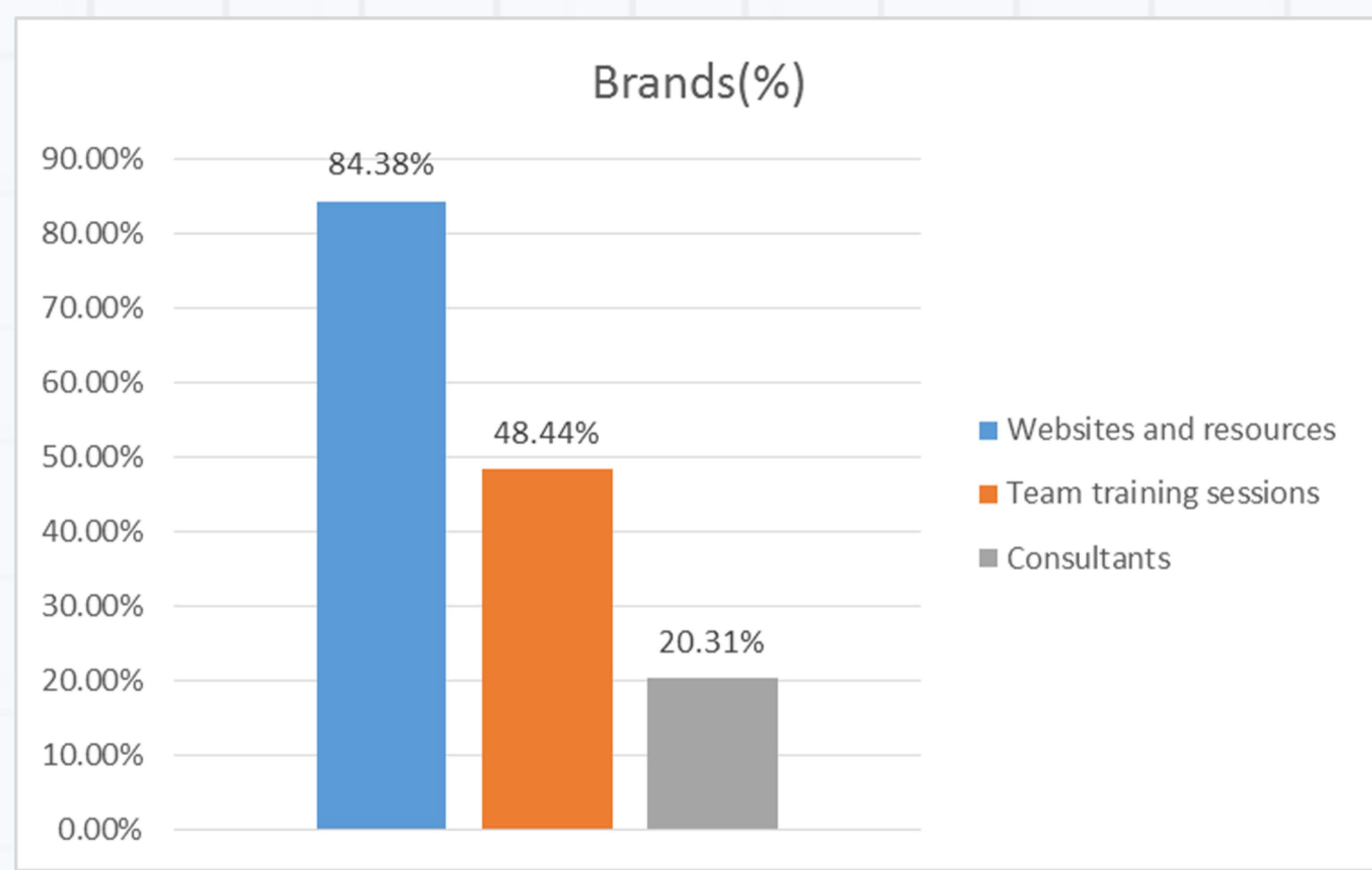
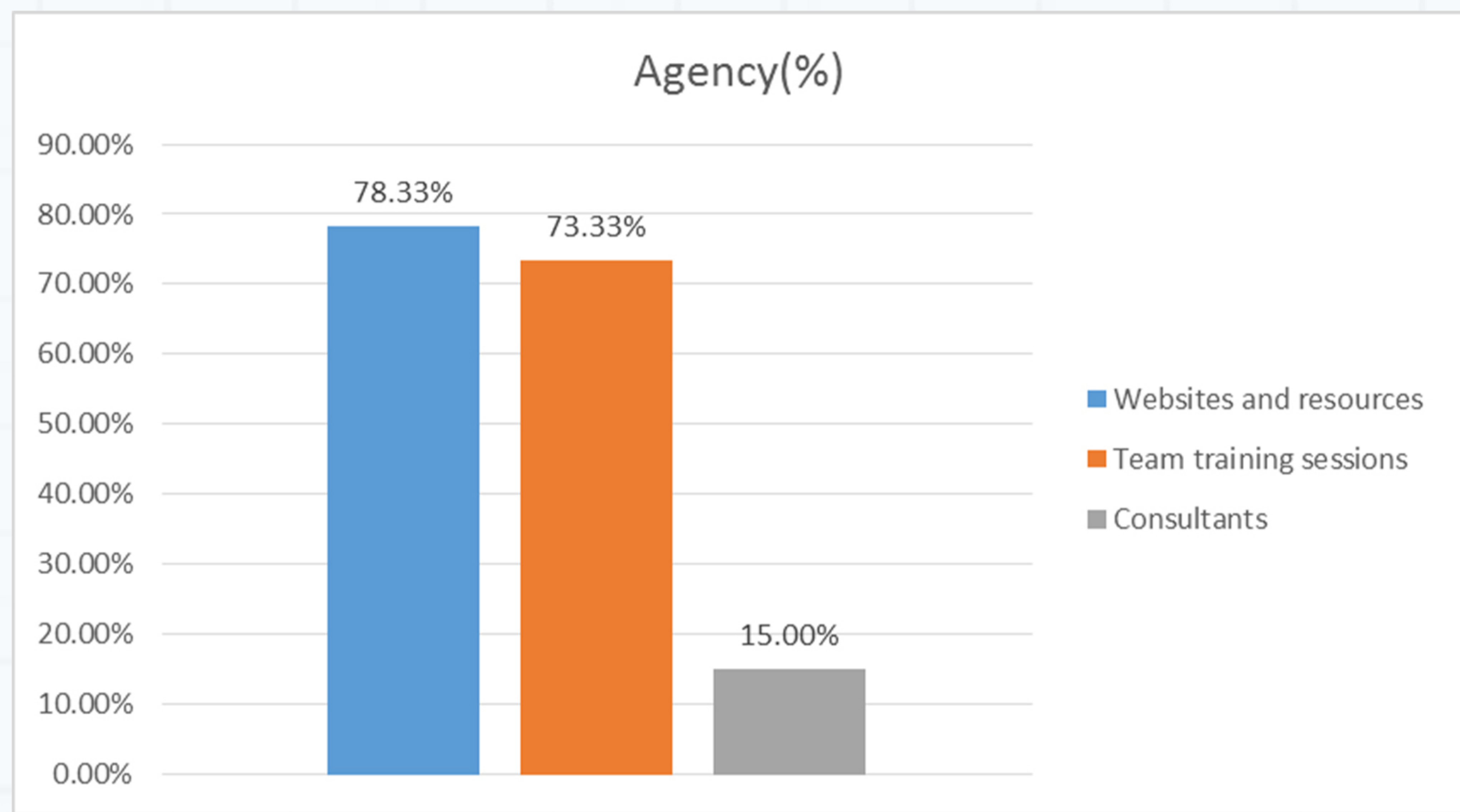
Industry corner:

“ Only **21.00%** education and ed-tech companies outsource brand marketing. ”



## 2. How do you keep your current marketing teams updated with recent trends and updates?

Marketing teams should be kept updated with recent trends to stay ahead of their game. **(73.33%)** of the agencies are in favor of team training compared to almost half of the brands **(48.44%)**.



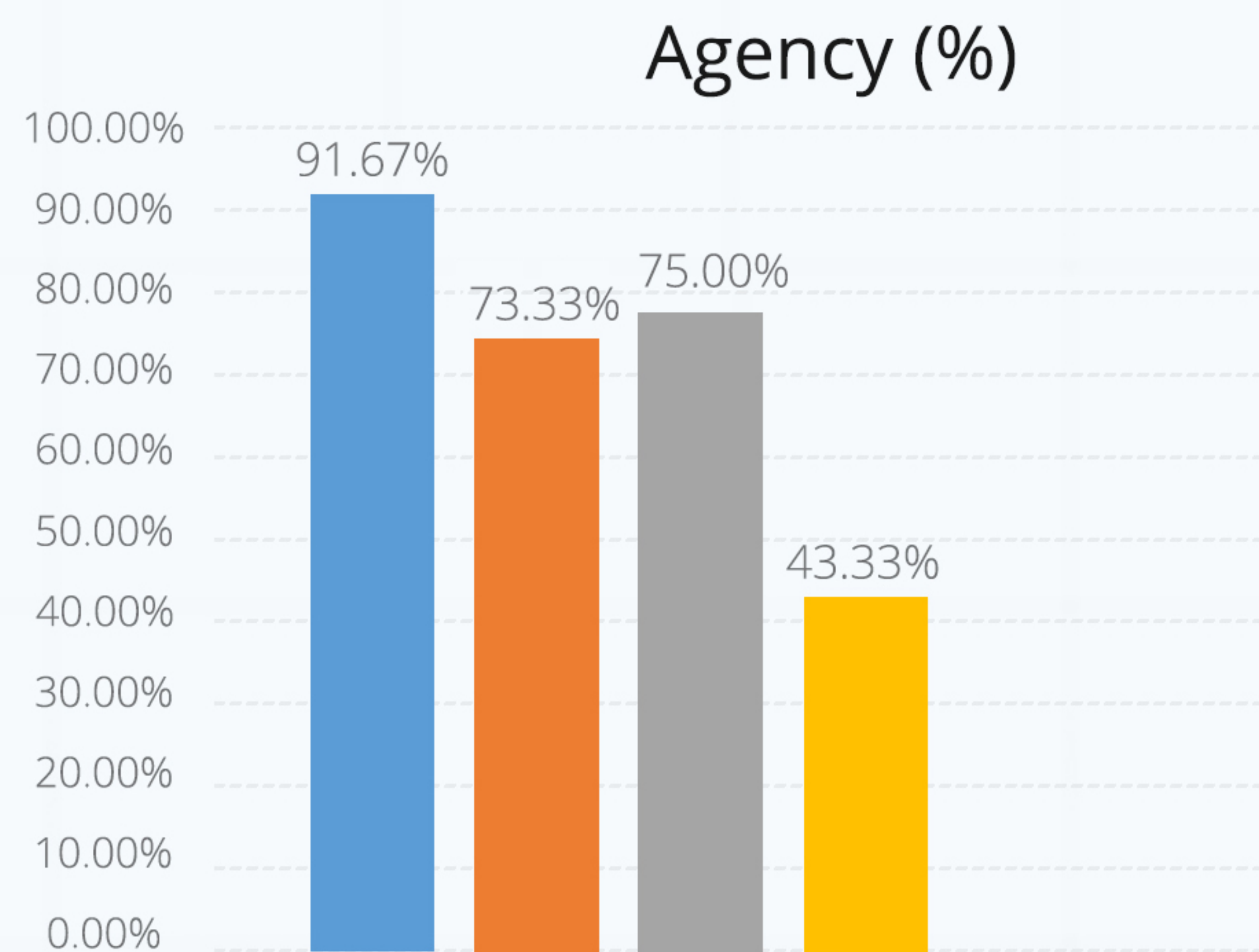
While only **(17.06%)** of respondents use consultants to update their teams with new marketing trends and technologies.



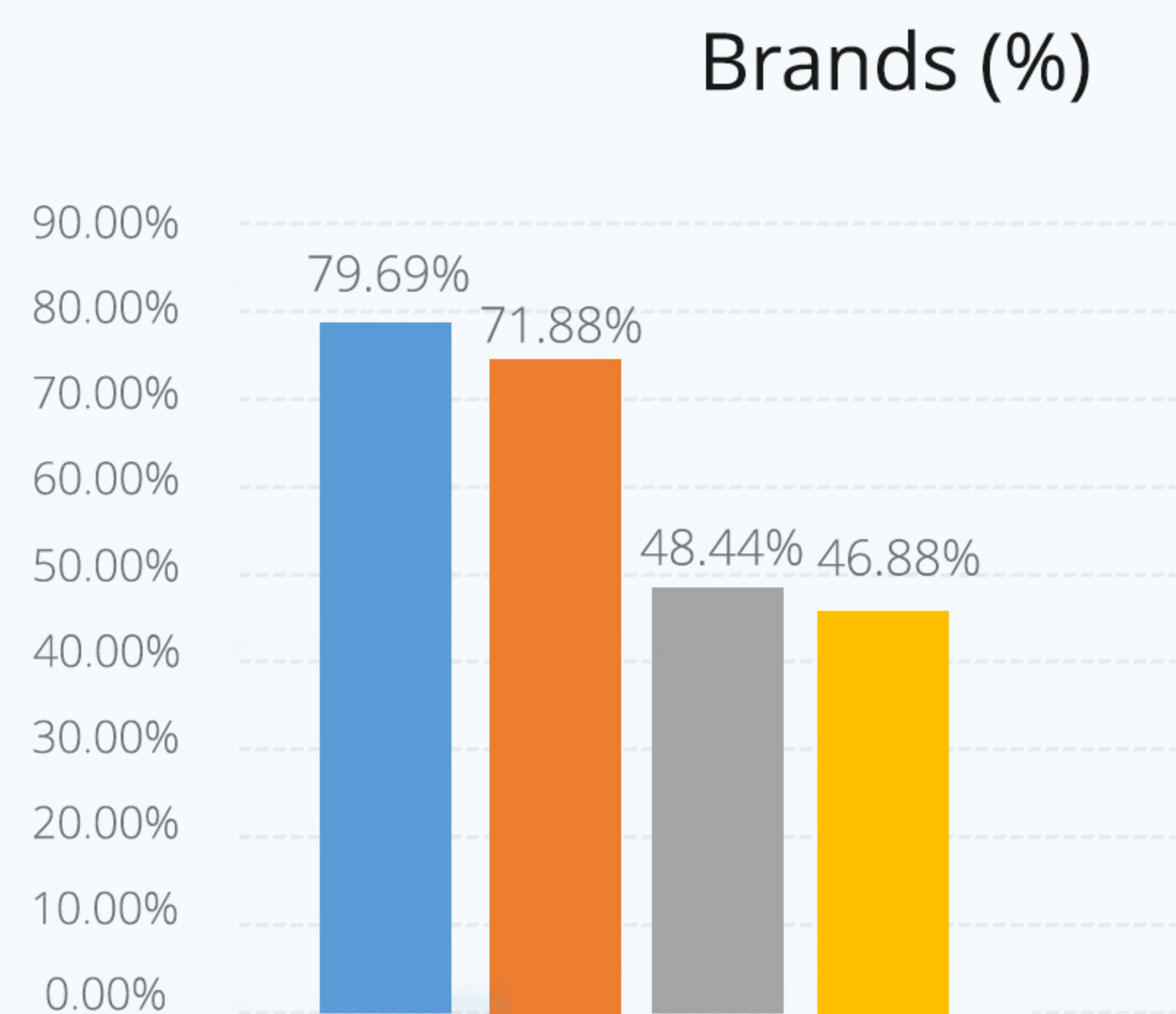
### 3. Which of the following skills do you look for while hiring a marketing candidate?

As your organization grows, so does the demand for more capable hands on deck.

Well, while hiring marketing candidates, **91.67%** of agencies and **79.69%** of brands consider domain knowledge as the most important factor.



■ Domain knowlege    ■ Communication skills  
■ Cross function knowlege    ■ Team leading qualities



■ Domain knowlege    ■ Communication skills  
■ Cross function knowlege    ■ Team leading qualities

It is interesting to notice that **75.00%** of the agencies look for communication as a key skill set as compared to only **48.44%** of the brands.



**Sahil Bansal**  
 Founder 

"Today's marketing teams need a mix of creative and analytical skills. The team needs to be open to learning, collaborative, adaptable to changes and embrace new trends and technologies. Today's changing marketing landscape means either you hire all the skill sets or get external partners to help deliver the business outcomes."



# About Us:

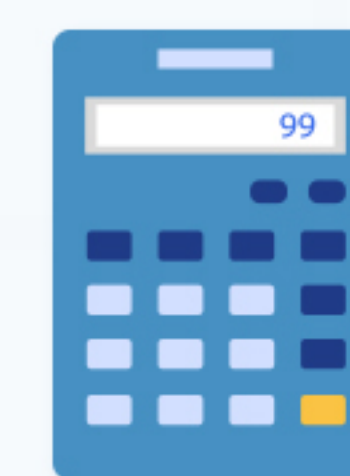
XOR Labs is a new-age growth marketing agency that works across the funnel to solve business problems using modern digital transformation tools.

**We help solve complex business growth challenges** by targeted media buying, creating digital experiences, and driving powerful insights from marketing data.

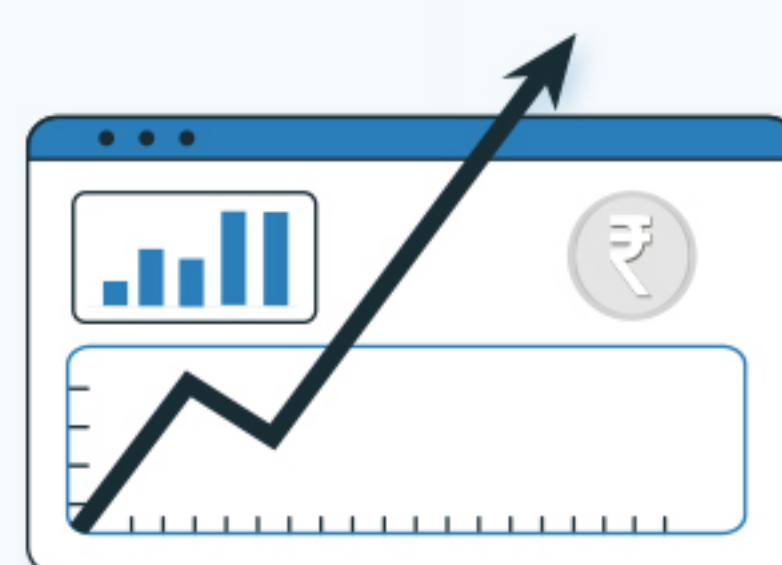
What we have done so far.



14 industries & **200+ brands**  
Served



**₹350 cr+**  
ad budget managed



**₹1,200 cr+**  
revenue generated for our clients

***And most importantly, built lasting relationships.***