



IGNITE   
VISIBILITY

# SEO STUDY REVEALS THE BIGGEST INVESTMENTS OF 2023

# WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- Multimedia content has swept SEO content marketing
- Video content is by far the most popular form of rich media
- What marketers believe to be the greatest threats to the SEO industry
- Marketers do not believe TikTok to be a threat to SEO, despite the hype

## OVERVIEW

2022 was a transformative year for SEO, ushering in rumors of TikTok displacing Google and paving the way for the most multimedia and enhanced features we have ever seen in search. With so many exciting developments happening at once, how are marketers reacting? *The results will surprise you.*

**We surveyed 121 marketers about both their present SEO and content strategies and their outlook going into 2023.**

*Here's a look at what we found:*

- **Over 74% of marketers now use creative assets** (images, videos, etc.) in their content, representing transformative growth from previous years.
- **73% of marketers will incorporate YouTube** into their SEO strategy in 2023, another massive increase YoY.
- Despite the dire predictions, **most marketers saw no change in rankings after the Helpful Content Update**, with far more respondents seeing an increase in rankings rather than a decrease.
- **Almost three times more marketers rated internal links as more important than external links as a ranking factor.** This was a shocking change.
- **34% of marketers will spend most of their budget on video content.** Stunningly, only 10% of marketers will spend most of their budget on blog content.

**Want to learn more?** Read on to our full report.

# MARKETERS ARE SPLIT ON THE GREATEST THREAT TO SEO



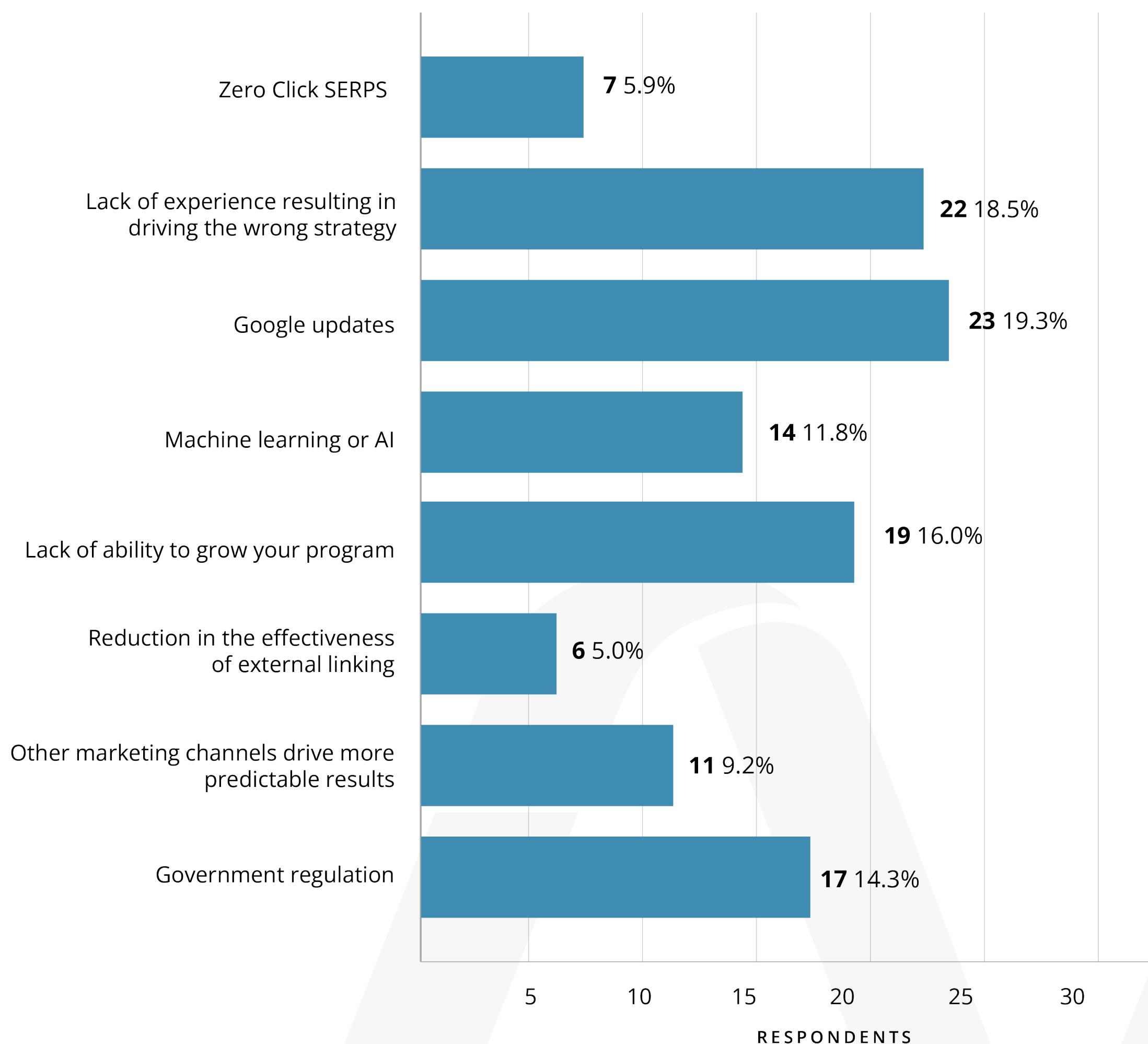
When asked, marketers can't settle on the single biggest threat to SEO. The most popular culprit was Google updates—like the infamous Helpful Content Update—shifting the face of SEO with little to no warning.

But that's nothing particularly new. What is new, however, are advanced AI chatbots that can not only respond to search queries with ultra-personalized responses but allow follow-up responses in the context of the user's entire conversation.

Even though ChatGPT—the chatbot that sparked the conversation—was only weeks old by the time of our survey, machine learning, and AI were the fourth most popular choice. When we asked Ignite Visibility CEO John Lincoln to comment on AI, he had this to say:

“You can bet that ChatGPT and Google Bard will become yet another opportunity to promote a business online. Those who are first to market and understand the inputs will be able to capitalize.”

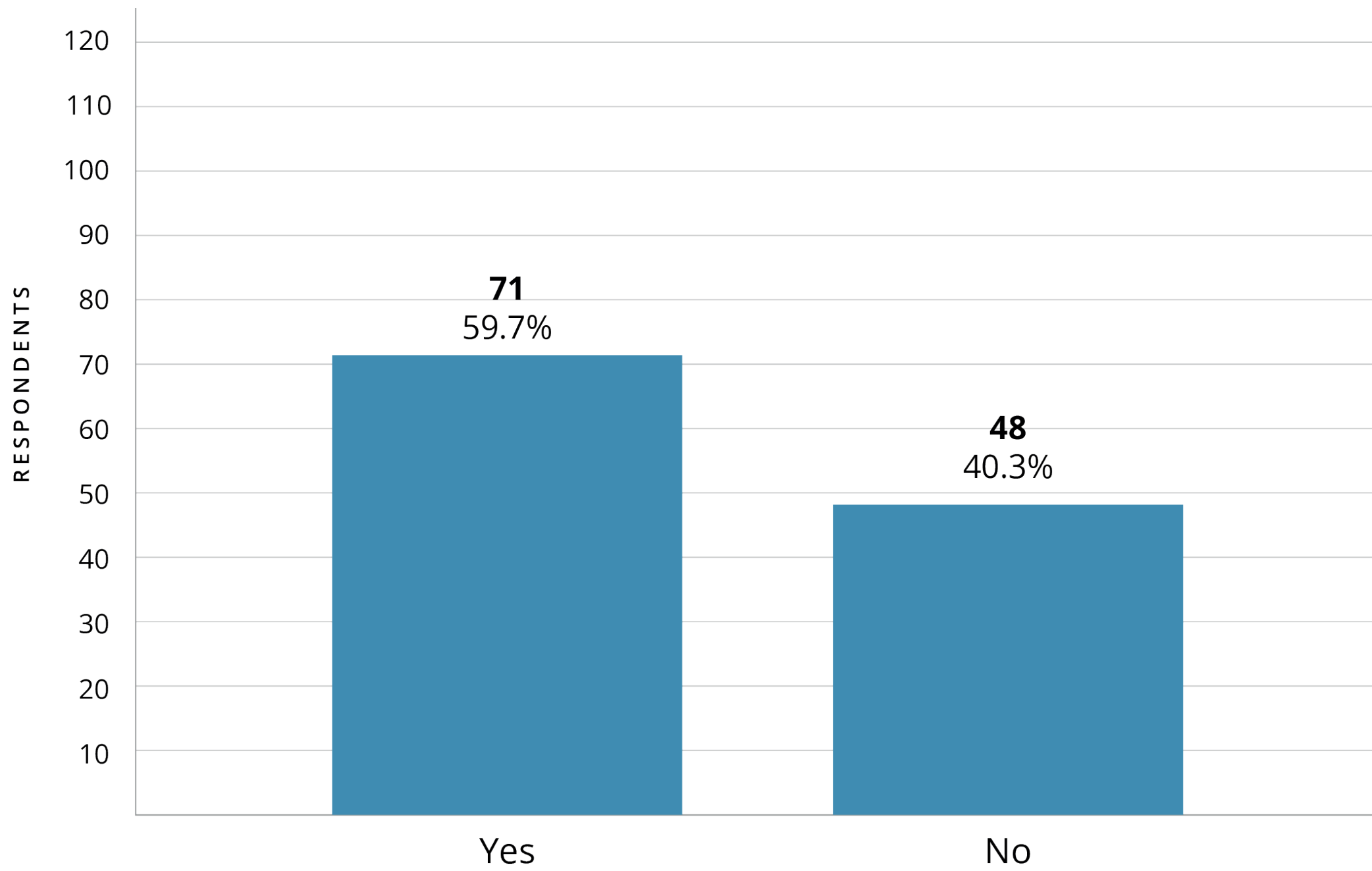
*What is the greatest threat to the SEO industry?*



# SEO SPENDING WILL INCREASE

Uncertainty about the future hasn't affected investment in search. 59% of marketers will spend more on SEO in 2023.

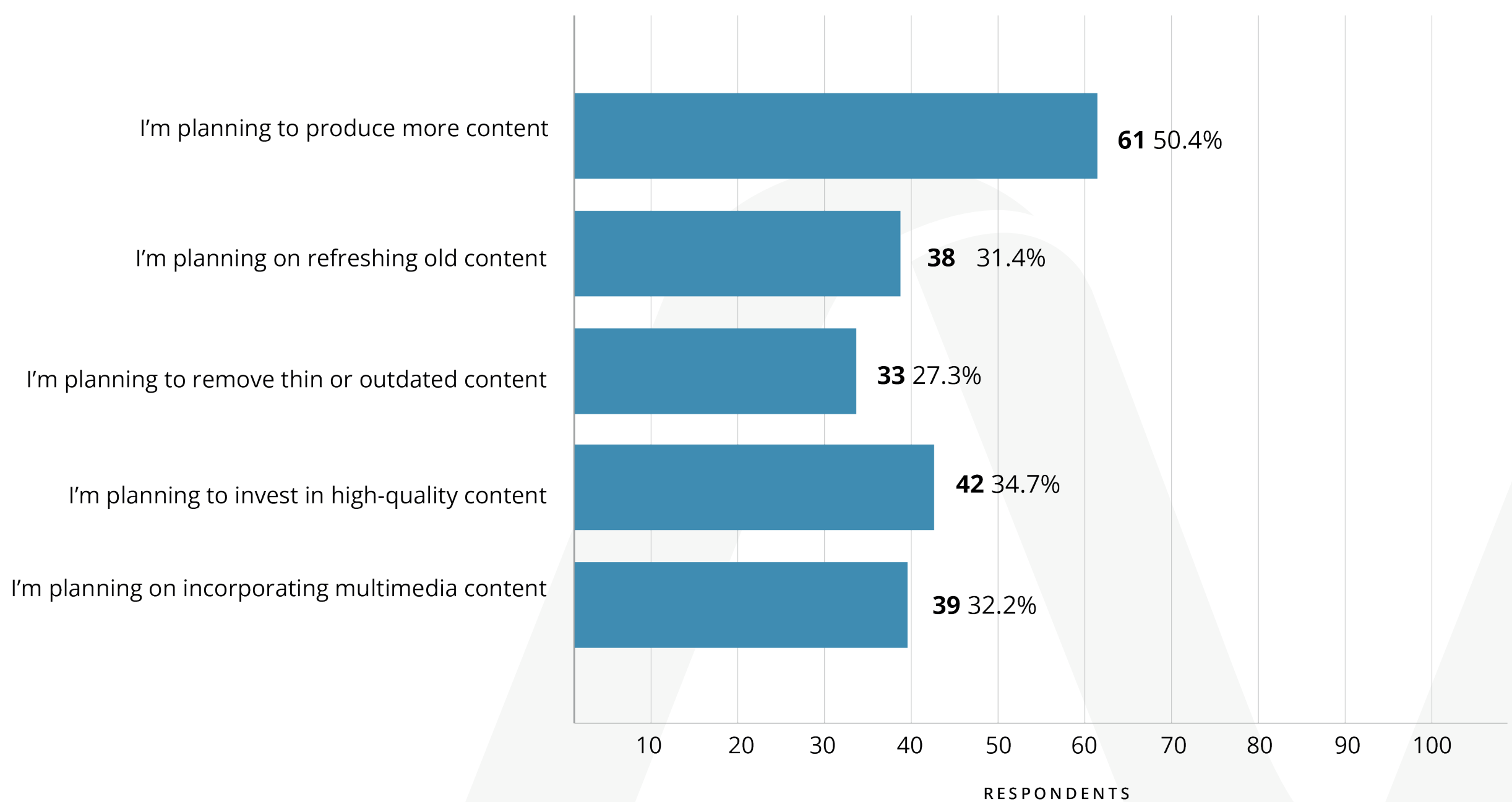
*Do you expect to spend more on SEO in 2023?*



# MARKETERS ARE TAKING A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO GOOGLE UPDATES

Rather than accepting results as they come, marketers are employing a variety of responses to Google's greater emphasis on content quality.

*How will Google's Helpful Content Update affect your 2023 content strategy? Please select all that apply.*



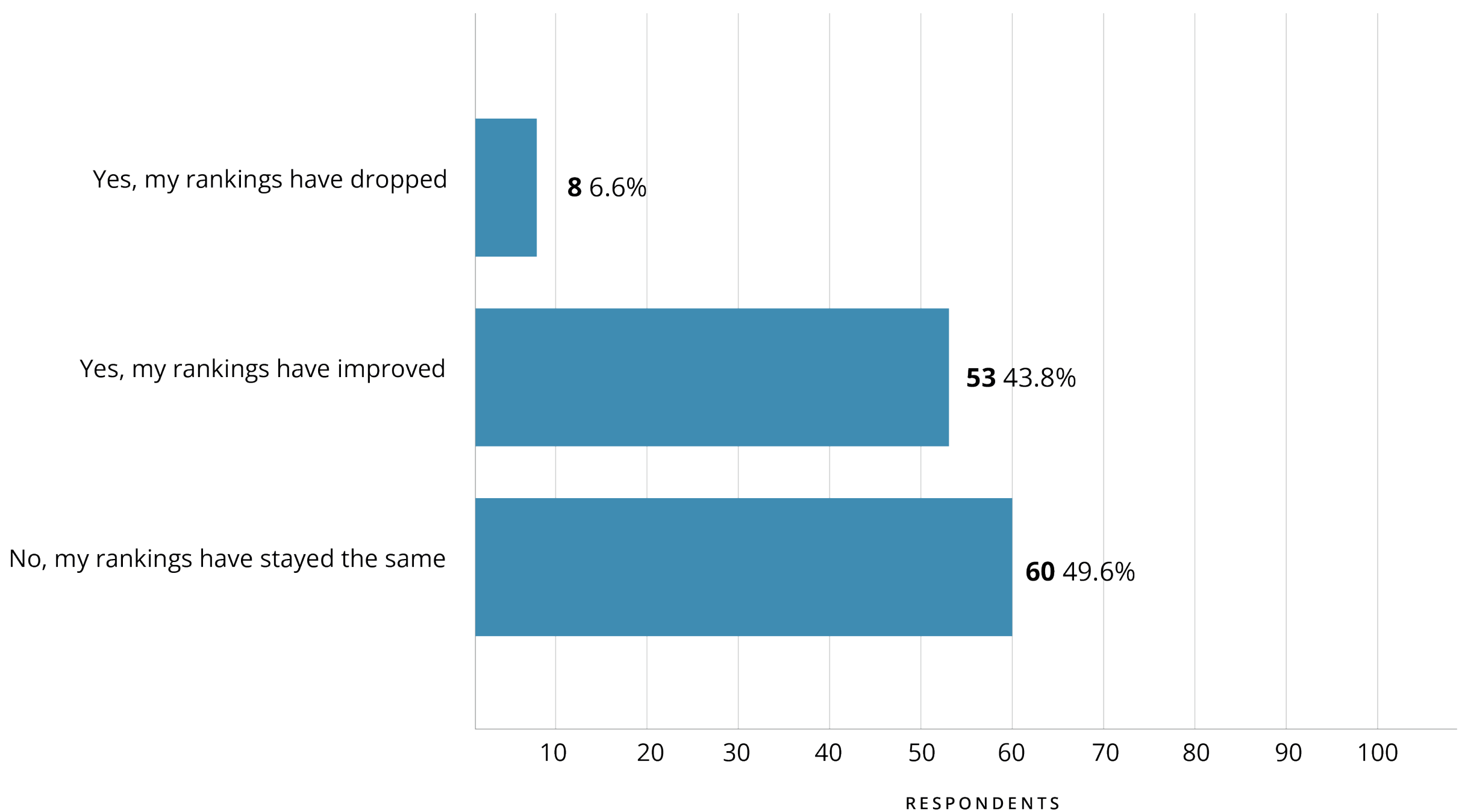
While responses vary, the most popular one is simply to produce more content. This isn't too surprising, since most marketers didn't see a significant change in rankings after Helpful Content (and if they did, the change was positive).

## HELPFUL CONTENT UPDATE

According to the study, only 6.6% of marketers saw their rankings decline with the Helpful Content Update, and the majority of marketers thought their rankings stayed the same or improved; that's a good sign Google's getting things right considering the expertise of our respondents.

These positive results have inspired people to invest in high quality content, plan to incorporate more multimedia, remove thin content, and refresh old content. Out of all these things, producing more content was the biggest focus for most people.

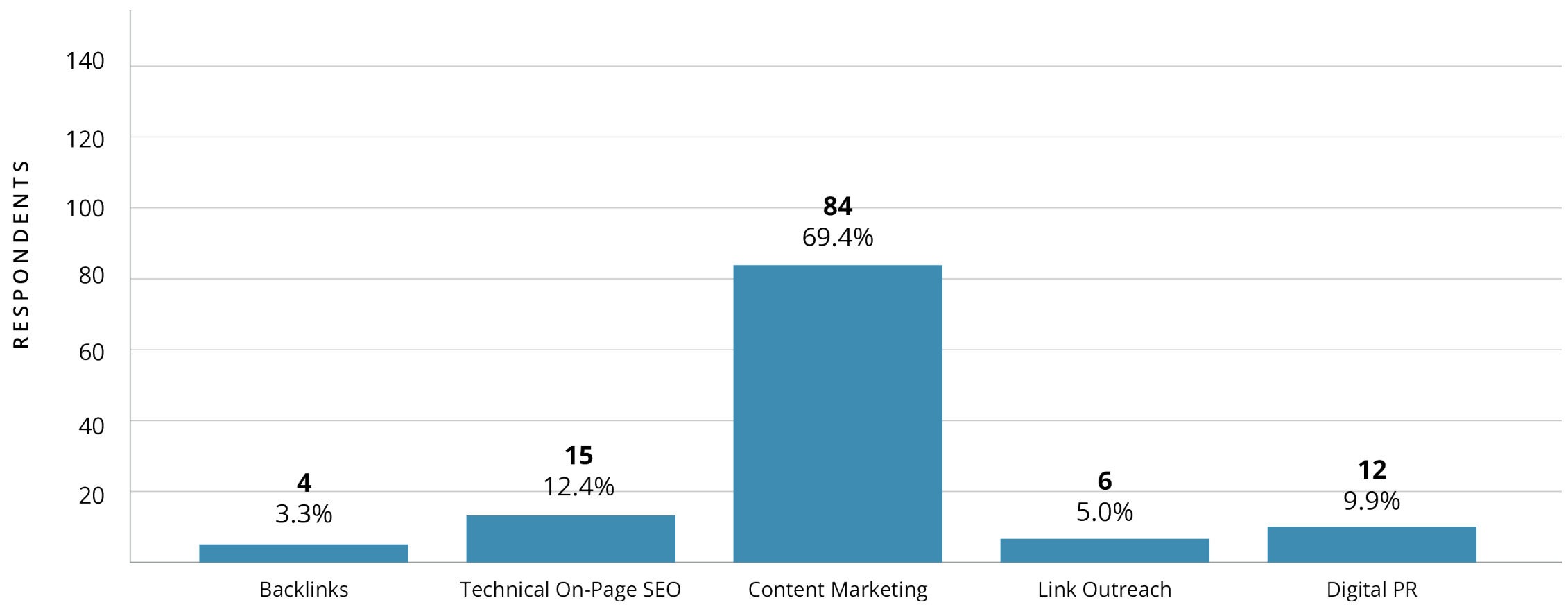
*Have you seen an impact in your rankings since Google's Helpful Content Update?*



## OLD SCHOOL LINK-BUILDING TACTICS RATED LEAST IMPORTANT TACTIC FOR SECURING RANKINGS

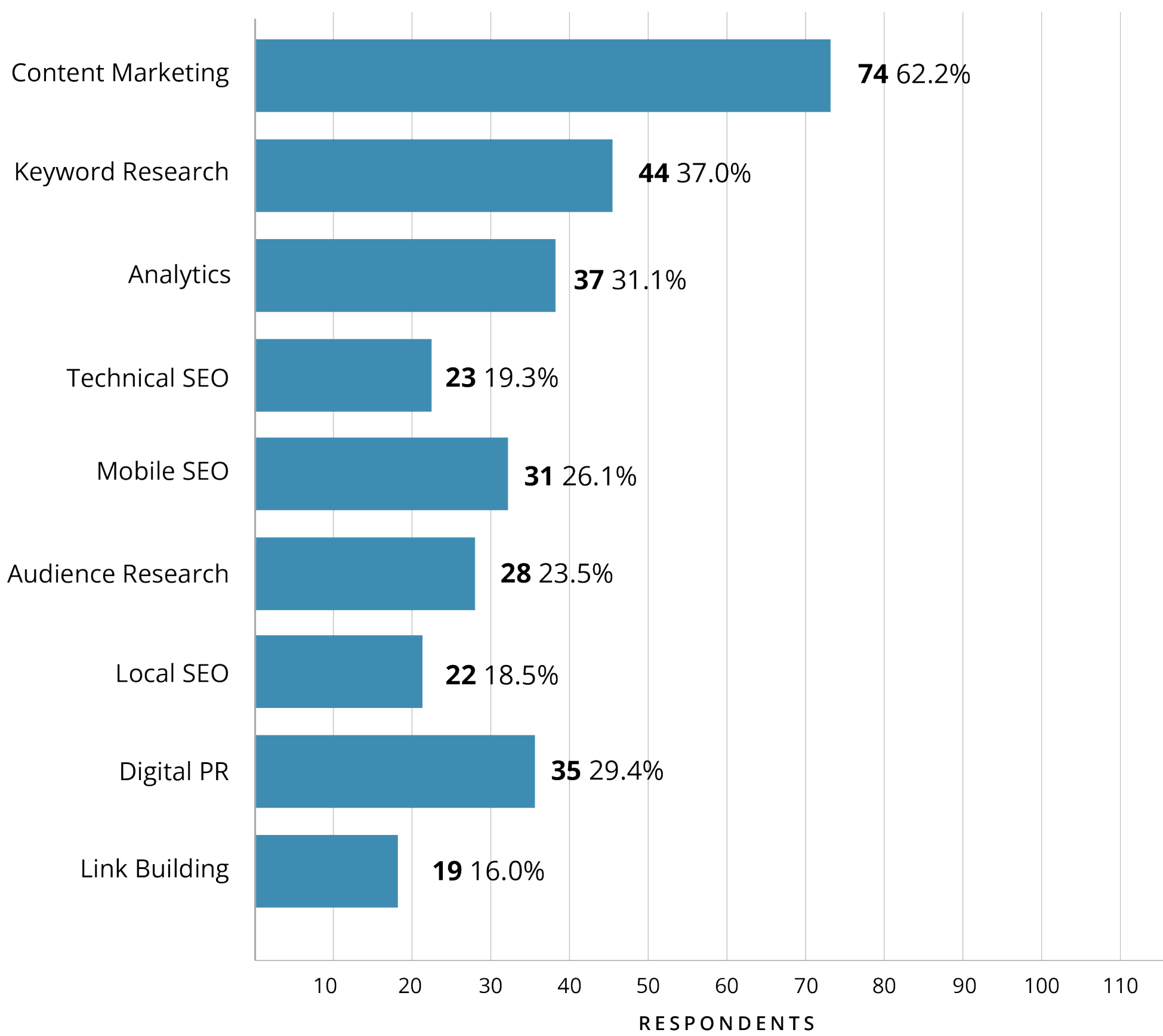
Our respondents showed that link-building-related activities were their least-prioritized SEO efforts. Rather than investing time in more linking strategies, marketers are focused on creating great content.

*Which strategy is your top priority for securing great rankings?*



When it comes to budgeting, link building found itself in last place. Only 16% of marketers will spend most of their budget (emphasis on most) building external links in 2023.

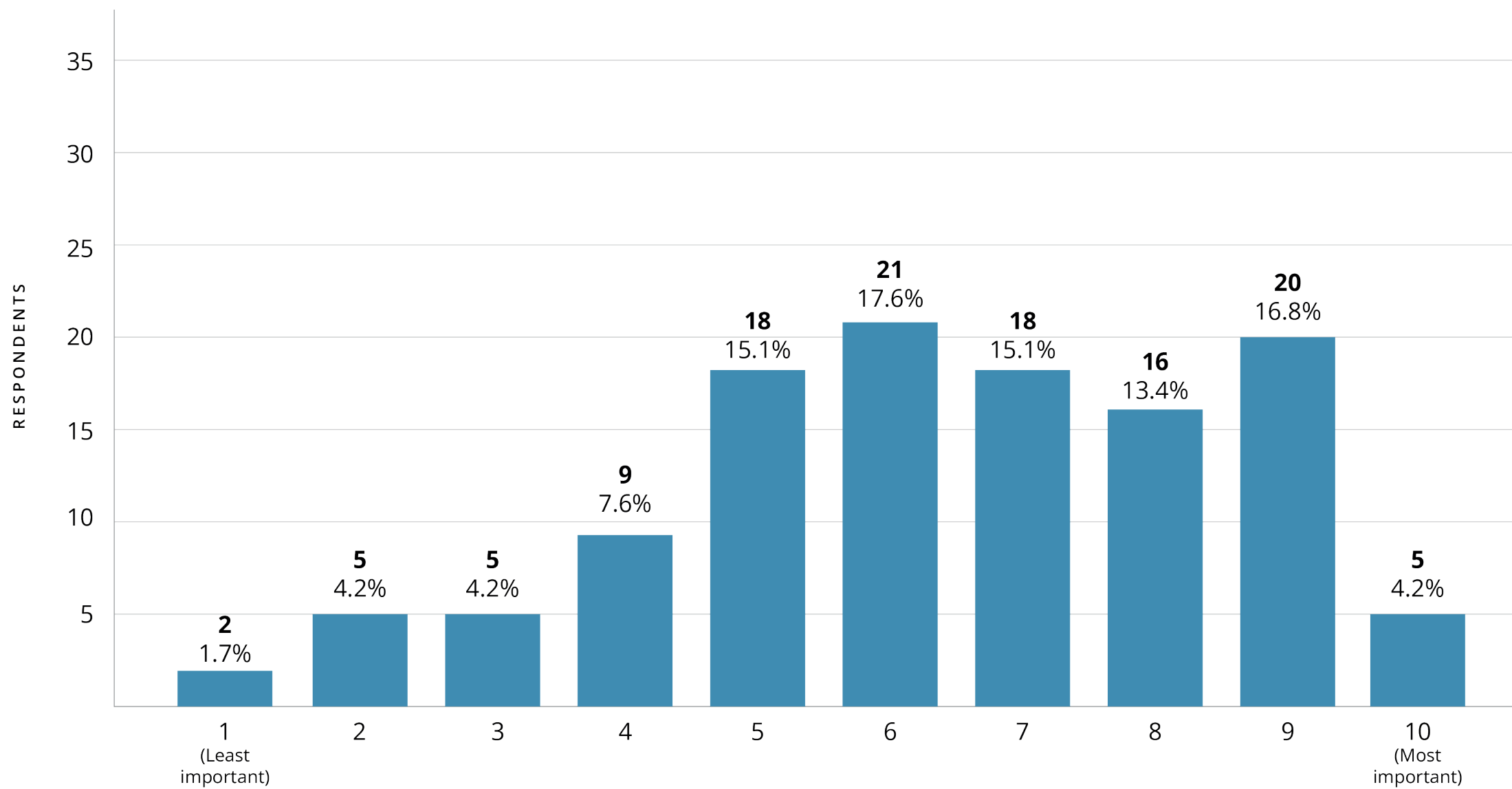
*What aspects of SEO do you plan to spend most of your budget on in 2023?  
Please select all that apply.*



But just because we're seeing a shift away from external links doesn't mean marketers are ignoring them entirely. Backlinks still enjoy widespread recognition among marketers as a significant ranking factor. Strategies have shifted to more modern ways of link building through Digital PR. Content marketing is where marketers will spend the bulk of their budget, focusing on producing content that brings value to readers.

*"Today, the best way to get links is by creating great content such as studies, graphics, eBooks and more. Marketers are recognizing that,"* said Lincoln.

Rate your perceived impact of each of the ranking factors from 1-10.  
External links.

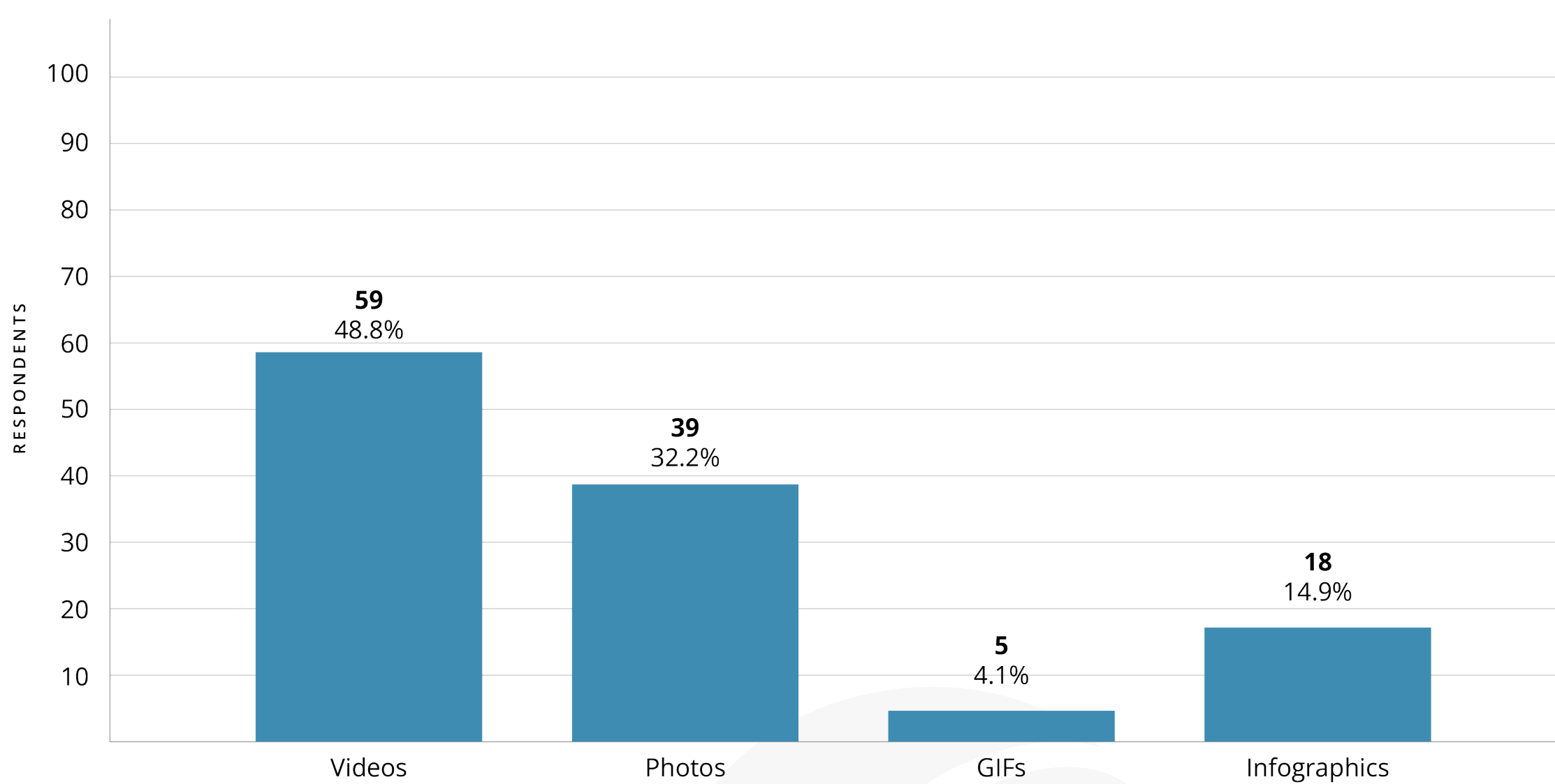


## VIDEO ON THE RISE



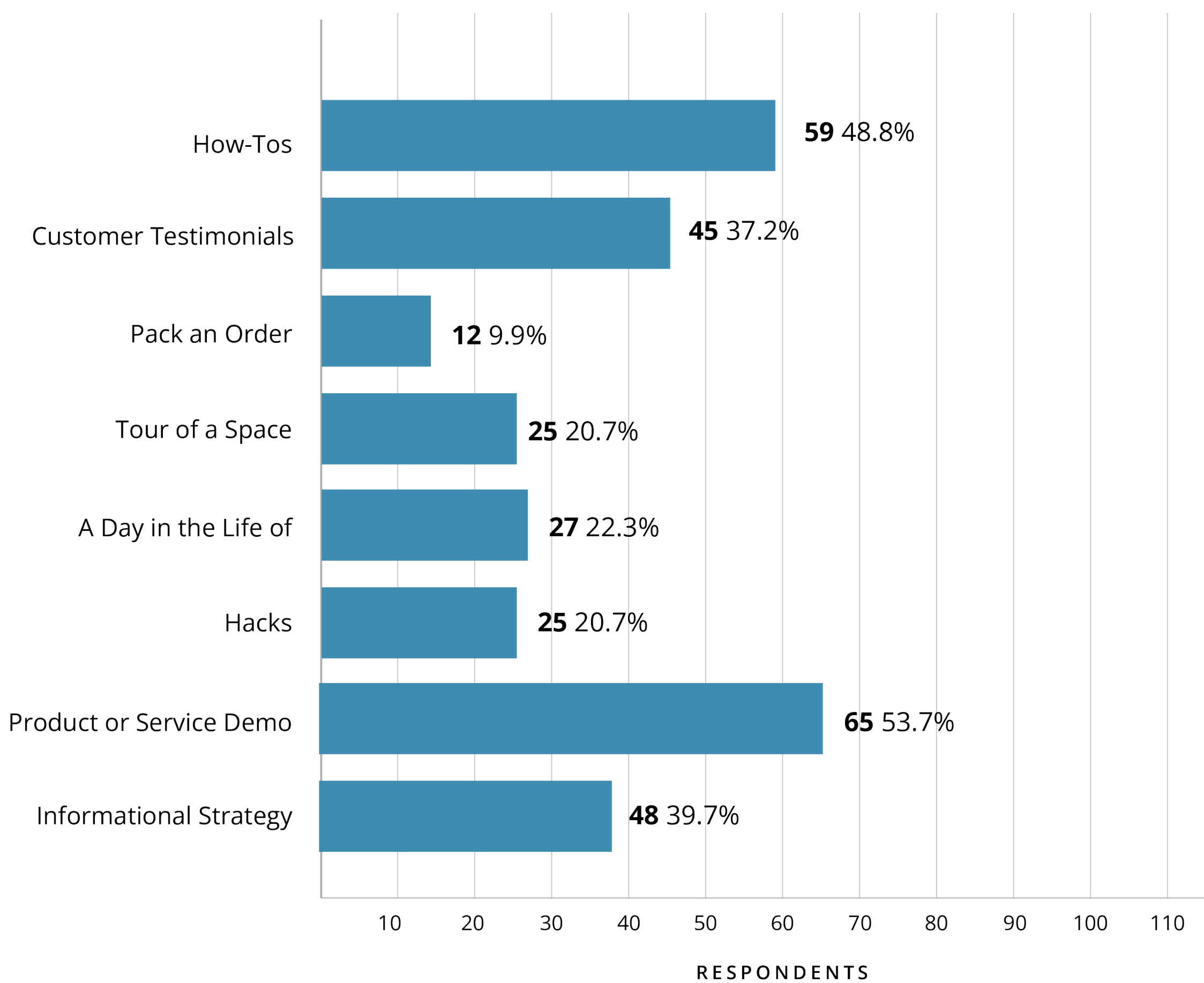
49% of marketers find video to be the most valuable form of creative content they produce.

What kinds of creative content do you find the most valuable?



As for the type of video content, it is extremely diverse. Demos and how-tos are the most popular, but we found a relatively balanced representation across all formats.

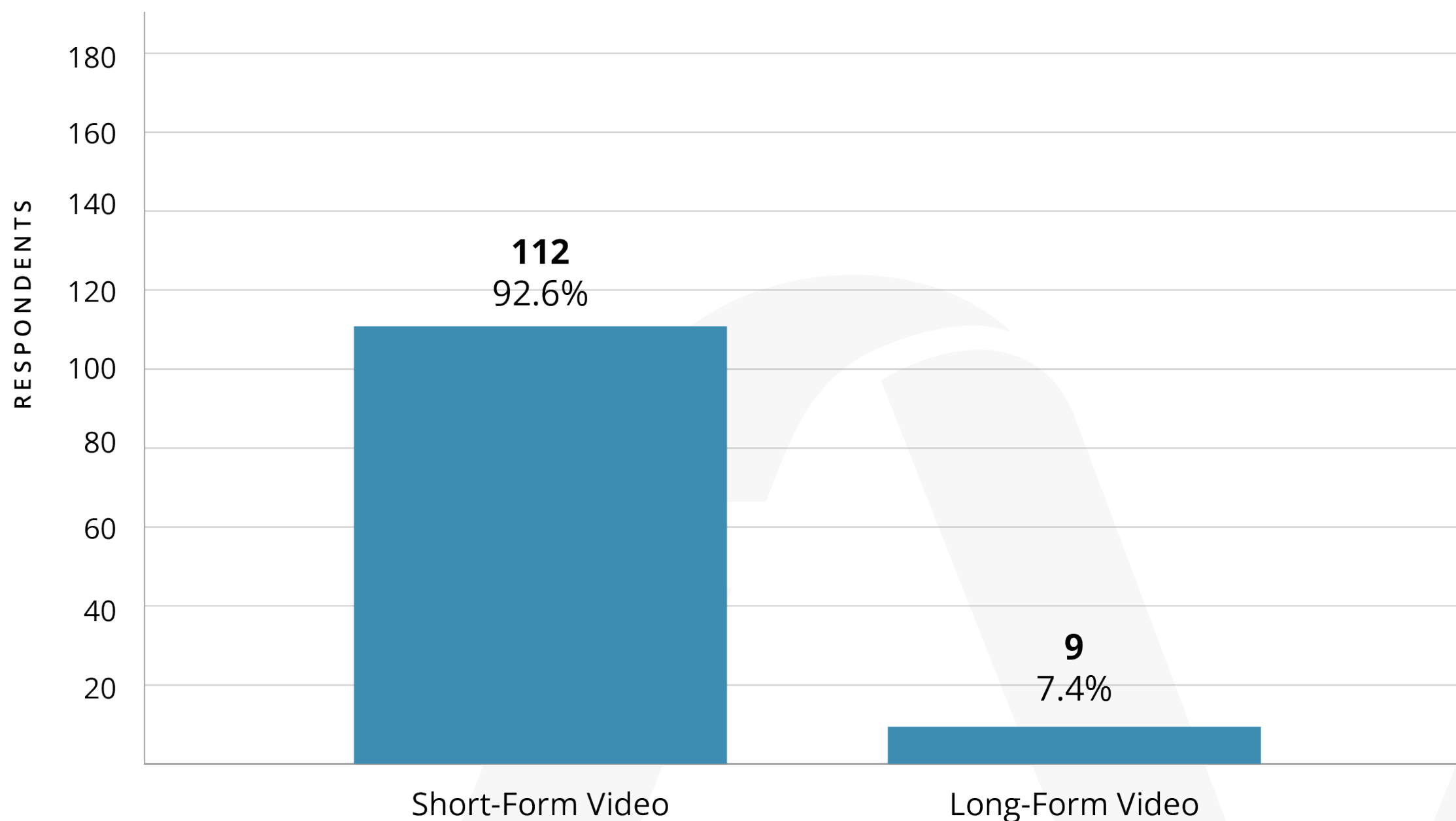
What types of videos are you planning on creating in 2023?  
Please select all that apply.



## ROI IS HIGHEST WITH SHORT FORM VIDEOS

When asked what videos get the best ROI for advertising campaigns, 92% said short form video—perhaps the most striking finding from the study. People clearly prefer short, highly edited, high-impact videos over long-form content.

What videos get the best ROI for your online advertising campaigns?





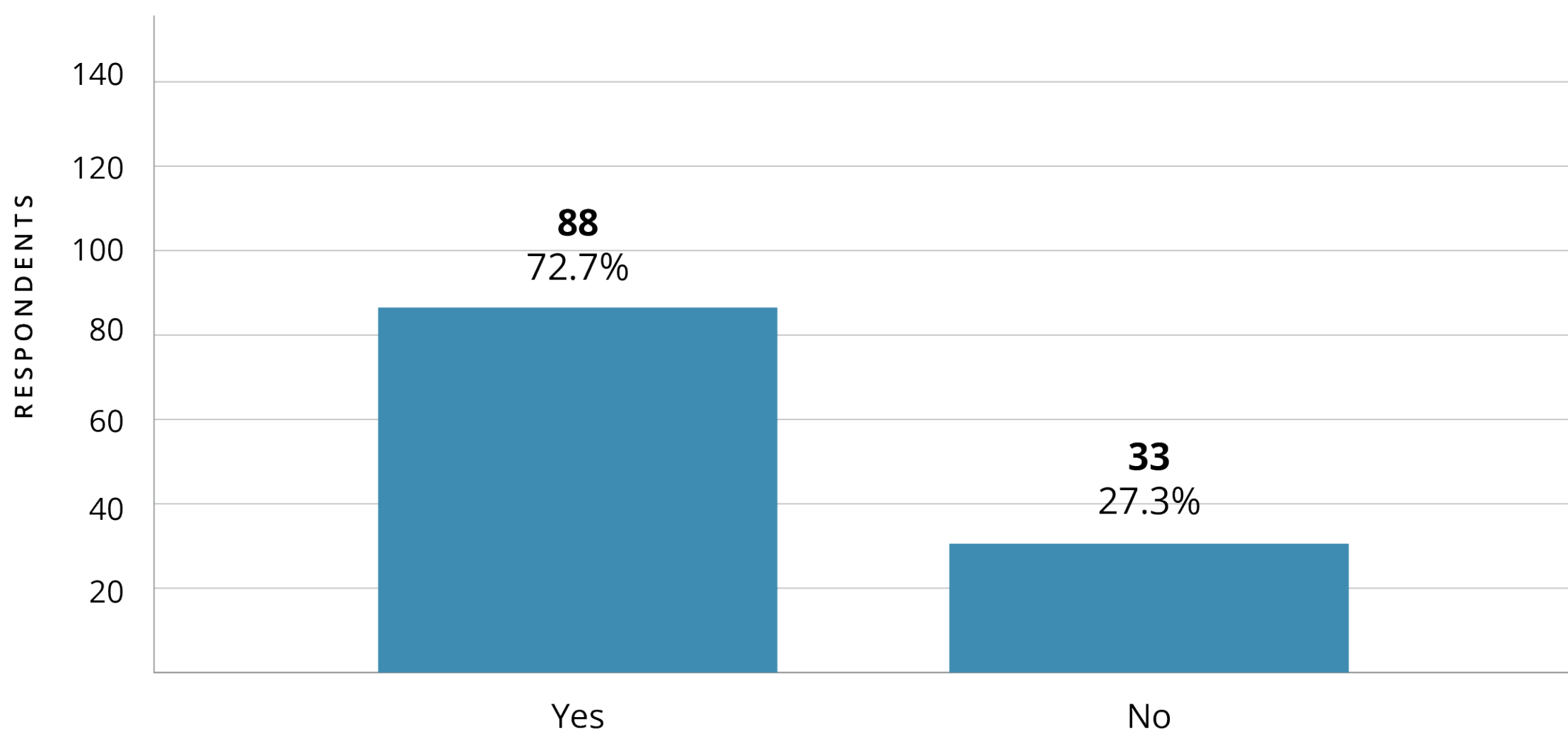
As consumer demand for short-form videos grows, we expect this growing trend to continue. How-tos, product demos, testimonials, and other formats are all fair game for the short-form takeover.



## YOUTUBE WILL PLAY A BIG PART IN SEO STRATEGY

For the first time, we see that over 90% of people expect Youtube to be part of their SEO strategy for 2023. In the past, this wouldn't have been the case. However, as Google's HTML area becomes more competitive, more YouTube videos are showing up there as well.

*Will YouTube be part of your SEO strategy in 2023?*



It's critical for companies to have a YouTube strategy that not only helps rank their HTML page but also helps their video rank across Google Video, Google Search and on YouTube. Hence, YouTube is becoming an increasingly important part of video and SEO efforts, and we'll see this only grow in the coming years.

## BUDGETING FOR 2023



According to respondents, video and social content will be where marketers spend the most of their budget in 2023. With everything becoming more shareable and video-centric, this is indicative of where we see the web heading.

A majority of respondents reported that content marketing has been highly effective for them in generating new business last year, while only 4% said it had been highly ineffective.

Among the most important channels for business in 2023, social media is where conversions happen.

Across respondents' websites, social media ranked first, followed by organic SEO and direct advertising. Paid media and email marketing came in fourth and fifth, respectively, followed by affiliate marketing.

As more and more consumers use social media every day, this proves its power as a major channel for business.

## TAKEAWAYS

SEO is changing and marketers are investing more. We're seeing more robust SEO strategies that include video. As Google continues to prioritize quality content, marketers are investing more of their time and budget into creating people-first content.

Those willingly embracing new strategies will lead the way, while those stubbornly sticking to old disciplines will find themselves left behind. With us potentially witnessing an AI-centered paradigm shift going into 2023, innovation and execution will be key to success.