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clearscope

# Content Marketing Trends & Insights

in 2023

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# INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence, machine learning, economic instability — is content marketing a dying industry?

**In our opinion, far from it — and we have facts to back it up.**

**Siege Media** and **Clearscope** teamed-up to create the 2023 Content Marketing Trends Report for content marketers, by content marketers.

You're in good hands. Siege Media is an SEO-focused content marketing agency dedicated to creating best-in-class content for over a decade. Clearscope is an SEO content optimization platform that levels up your content with seamless integrations.

**We surveyed 278 content marketers** to understand their content strategy, goals, and their plans for the future (and the future of AI).

The results? Investment in content marketing is higher than ever, and for a good reason. From blog content, videos, podcasts, social media, eBooks, and interactives, the development you need to beat the competition is no easy feat. When businesses properly direct content marketing efforts, there's no question that they see results. Although AI content generation is not up to par quite yet, we're eagerly anticipating how it evolves over time.

In this report, we'll dive into these topics with key takeaways in the hopes that these insights catapult your content strategy efforts in the year ahead — **up and to the right.**



# WHAT'S IN THE REPORT

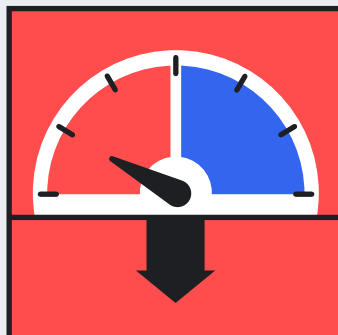
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# CONTENT MARKETING BY THE NUMBERS

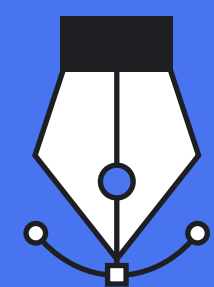
## ⚡ Key Trends for 2023



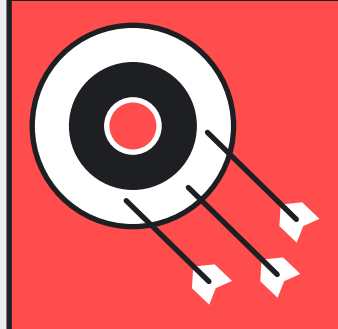
Quality matters: 54% of businesses who **spend over \$2,000+** on a piece of content report their **content marketing strategy to be very successful.**



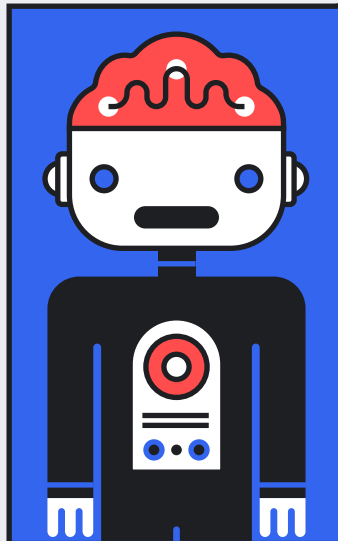
Those who spend **less than \$15,000** monthly on their content strategy are **74% more likely to see lower performance** versus those who spend \$25,000+.



When businesses dedicate **10%-50% of their content marketing efforts towards content design**, they are **33% more likely to report very successful results** versus those who dedicate nothing.



**Businesses that spend the least on content marketing struggle to succeed** in publishing volume, lead generation, and measuring ROI.



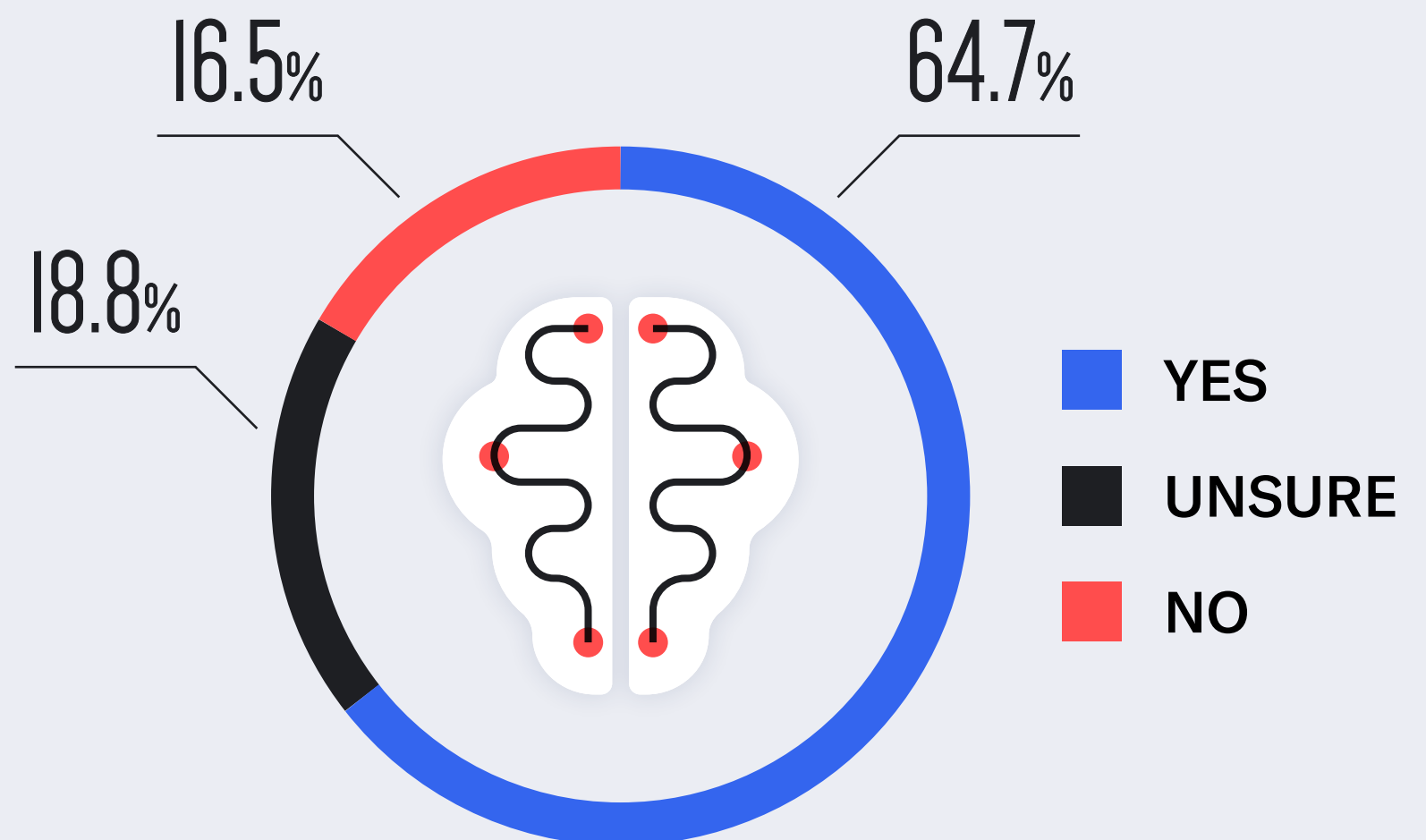
While 19% of businesses who use AI content generation tools reported experiencing a very successful content strategy, **24% of businesses who do not use AI content generation tools also reported experiencing a very successful content marketing strategy.**

The jury is still out on the influence our robot friends have on outcomes.

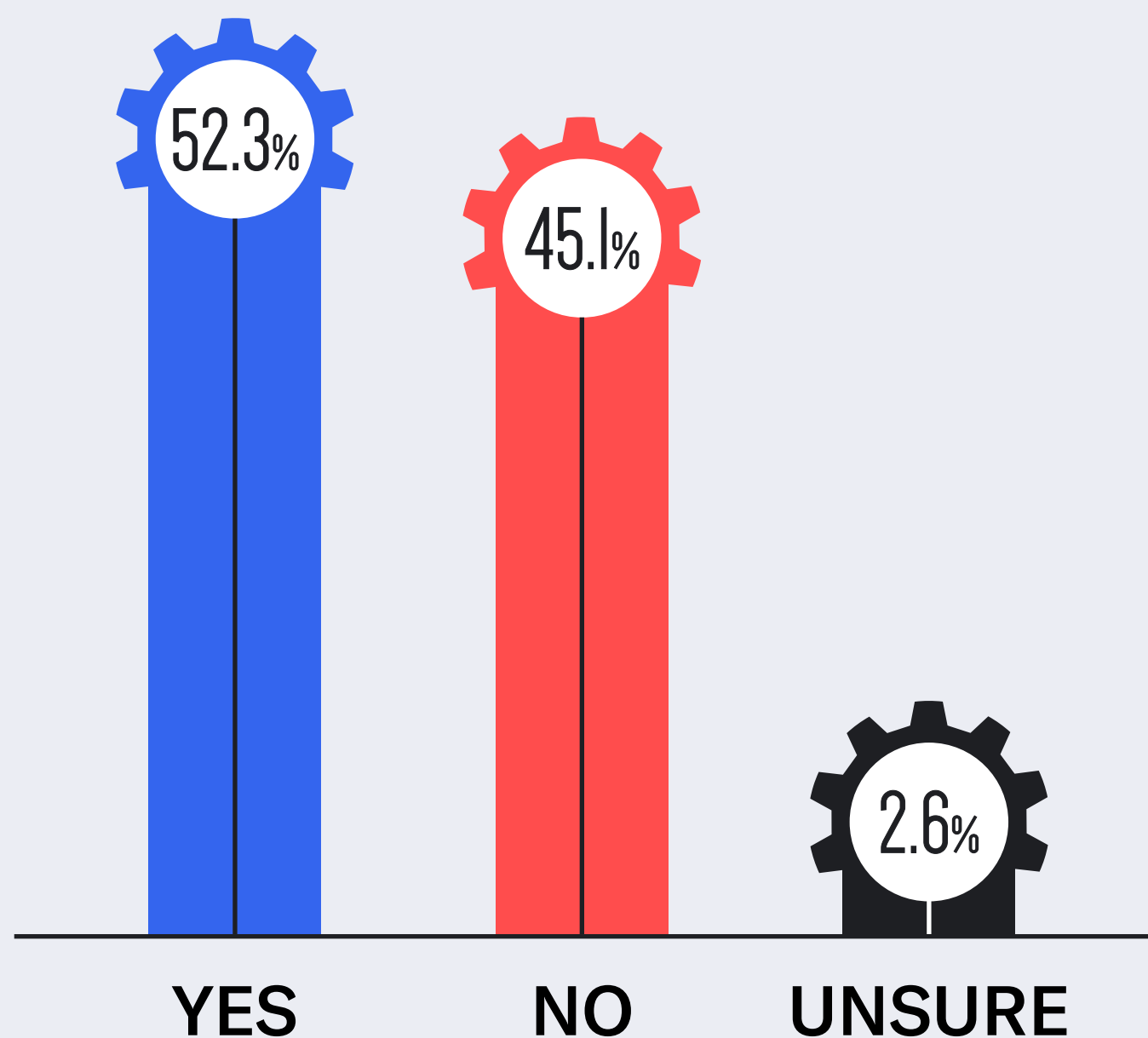
# AI CONTENT GENERATION TOOLS

**⚡** Don't rely solely on AI content generation tools to help your business rank quite yet.

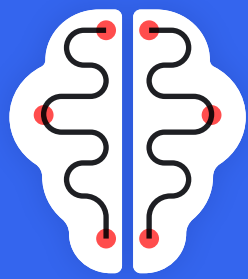
**Do you plan to use AI content generation tools to assist your content marketing efforts in 2023?**



**Are you currently using AI content generation tools to assist your content marketing efforts?**



# AI CONTENT GENERATION TOOLS (CONT'D.)



62% of B2B and 38% of B2C businesses **plan to use AI content generation tools to assist their content marketing efforts** in 2023.



## KEY TAKEAWAY

Do we think AI content generation tools are something to pay attention to?

Yes, but we don't think robots are coming for our jobs just yet. Our results show that 19% of **businesses who use AI content generation tools** report experiencing a very successful content strategy.

Meanwhile, 24% of **businesses who don't use AI content generation tools** also report experiencing a very successful content marketing strategy.

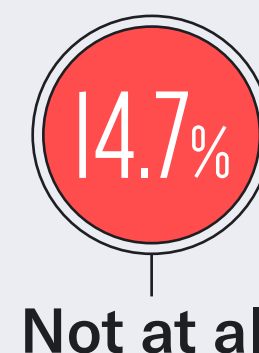
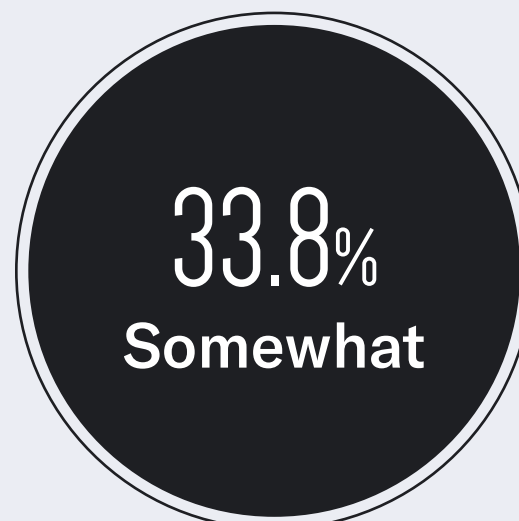
What does this mean?

We understand that the biggest selling point for these tools is how they can create content quickly and at a fraction of the cost of hiring a writer. But, as of now, it doesn't compare to human-generated high-quality content. We'll keep an eye on it, though, and we're happy to incorporate AI as long as the highest-quality content is the ultimate destination.

# LINK BUILDING

⚡ Although the strategies are changing, link building is here to stay.

**How prominent is link building in your content strategy?**



While 64% of B2B businesses currently execute link building in their content marketing efforts versus 36% of their B2C counterparts, **all businesses that incorporate link building report a 45% higher success rate** in their overall content strategy than those that don't.



## KEY TAKEAWAY

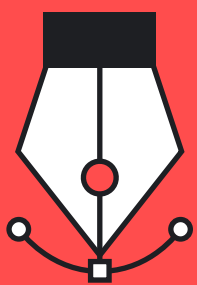
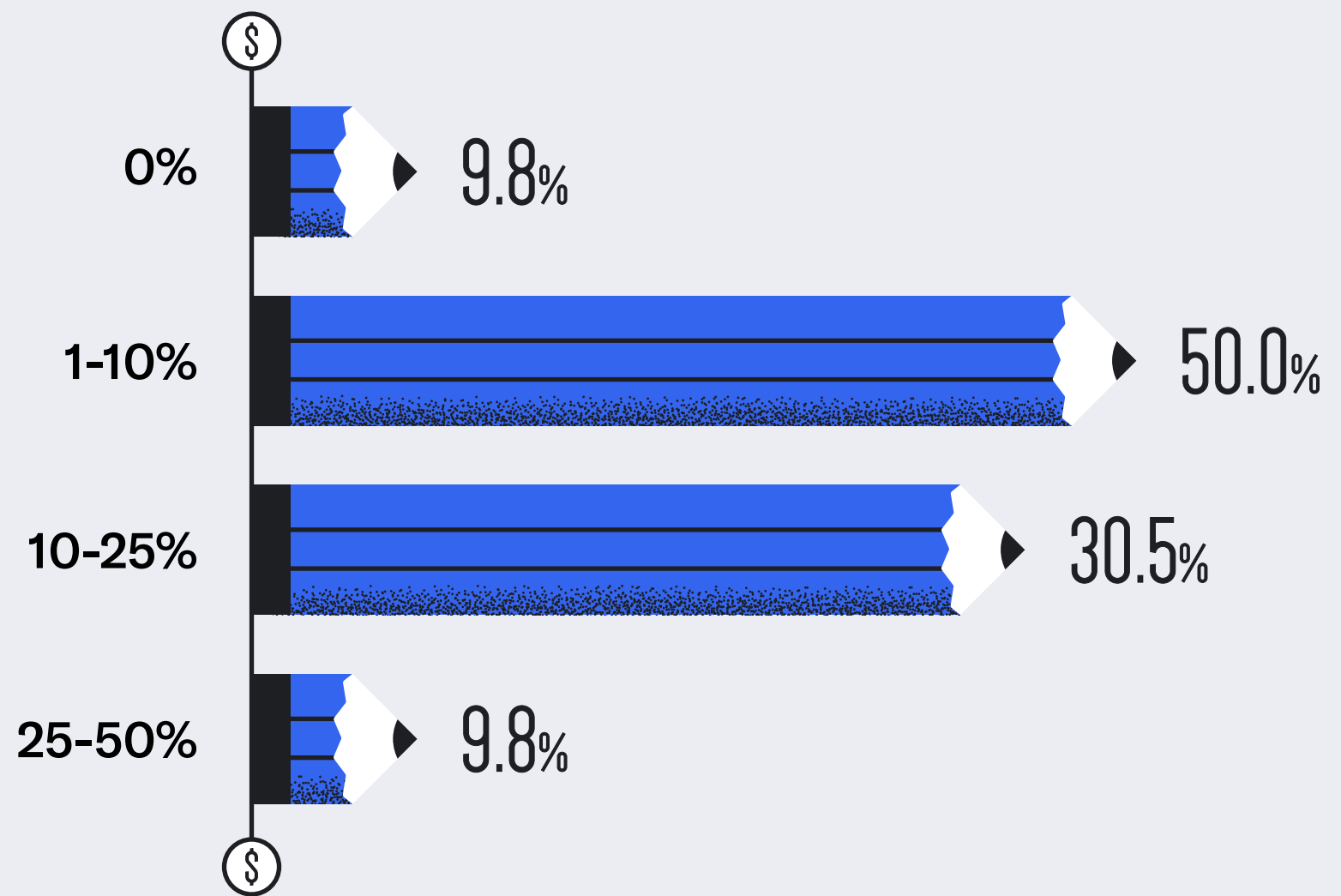
We're at an interesting crossroads with the current state of link building.

Recent announcements from Google suggest that links may get devalued a bit in the future. However, this may be encouraging businesses to deprioritize their efforts. **The fact is that links still matter** — but great content will attract links naturally compared to a sole focus on manual outreach.

# CONTENT DESIGN

⚡ From buzzword to necessary strategy — content design is clearly proving its worth.

**How much of your budget is dedicated to content design?**



When businesses dedicate **10%-50% of their content marketing efforts towards content design**, they are **33% more likely to report very successful results** versus those who dedicate nothing.



## KEY TAKEAWAY

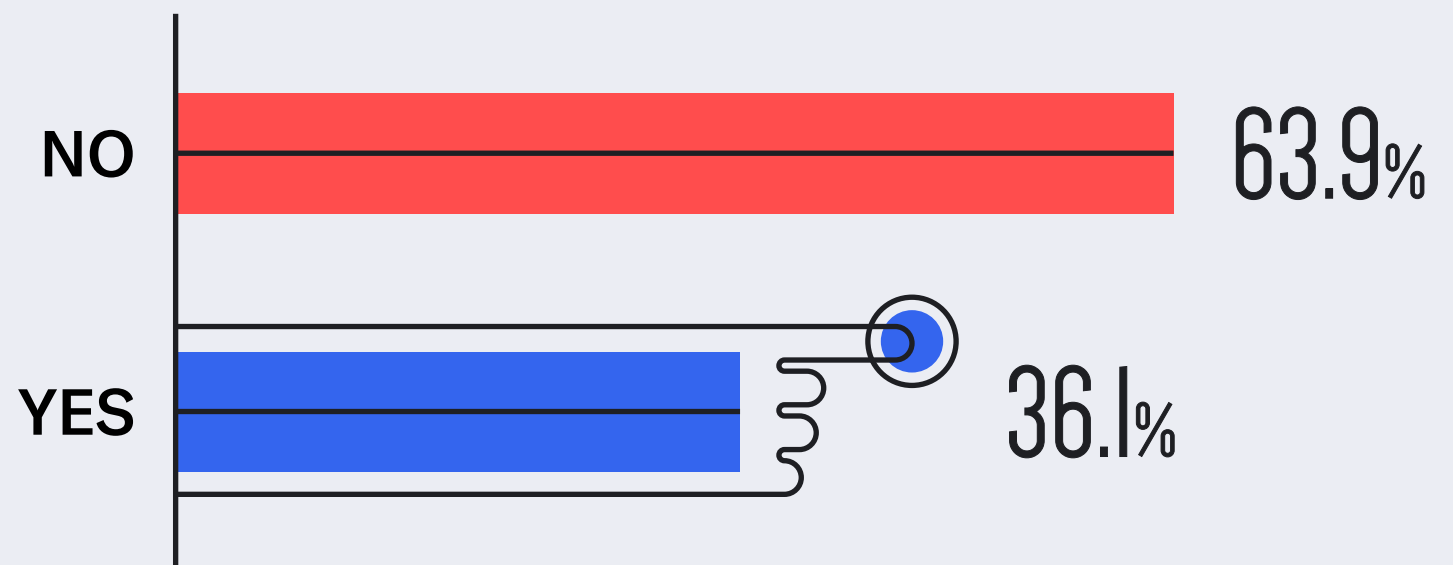
Originally, “content design” seemed like an unnecessary cross-pollination of words used to make rebrands for tech companies more trendy. Little did we know, the best content marketers were pioneering content design all along. **Since SERPs are more competitive than ever, poor content design may leave you behind the eight ball.**



# CONTENT TYPES

⚡ Where is the vast majority prioritizing their efforts?

**Do you currently create interactives as part of your content marketing strategy?**



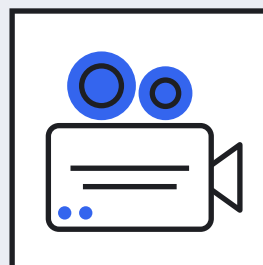
**Which content medium are you leveraging the most?**

Websites & Blogs



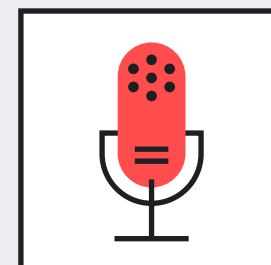
89.8%

Videos



5.3%

Podcasts



3.0%

eBooks



1.5%



## KEY TAKEAWAY

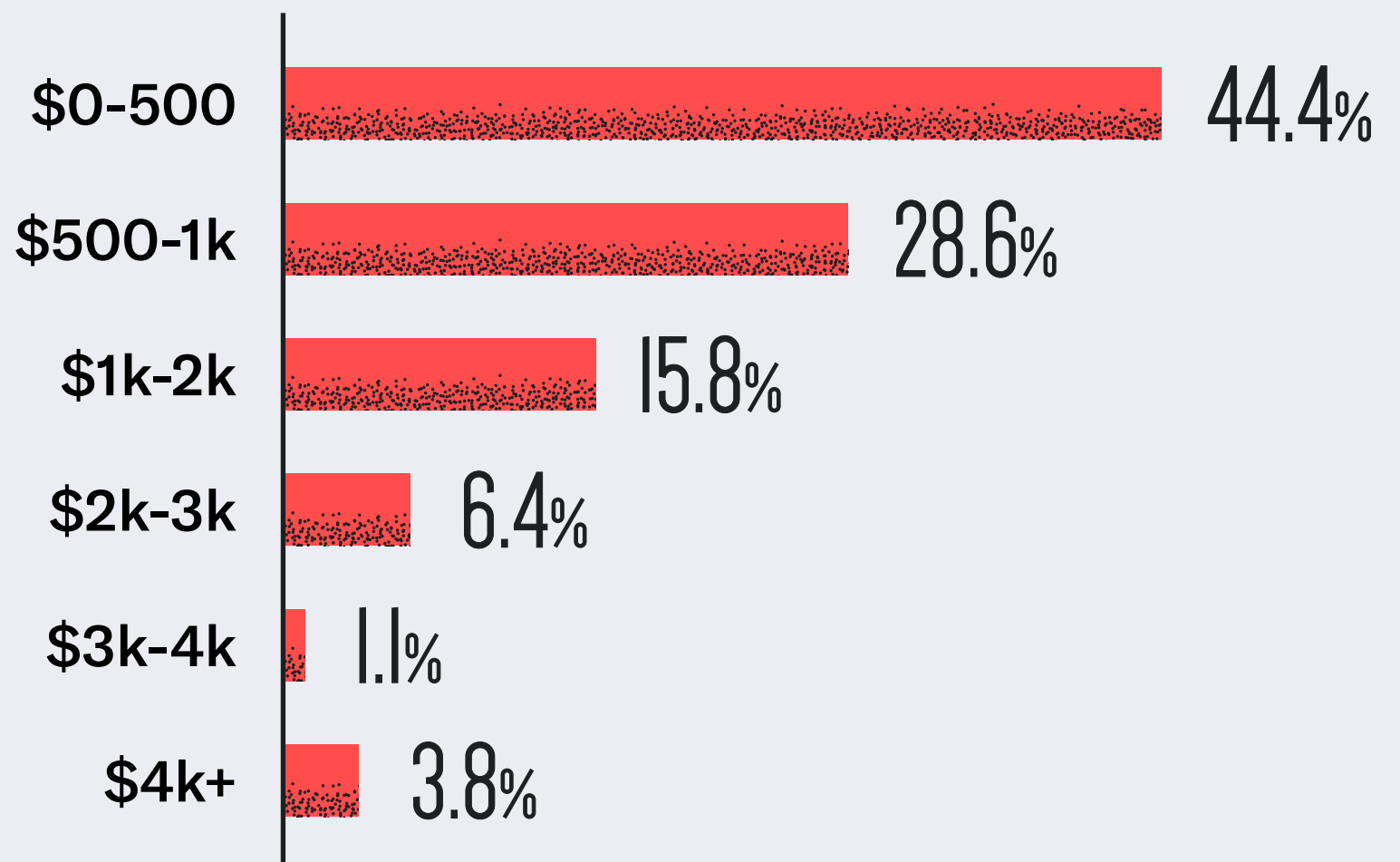
Given our field, it makes sense that 89% of content marketers leverage their website and/or blog the most. So, how can you stand out from the overwhelming majority? Enter: interactives.

It's no secret that interactives are magnets for link building and can almost single-handedly power your link acquisition strategy. Plus, it's significantly harder for a competitor to replicate that strategy. If you're a part of the 64% who don't leverage interactives, consider the number of passive links you may be missing out on.

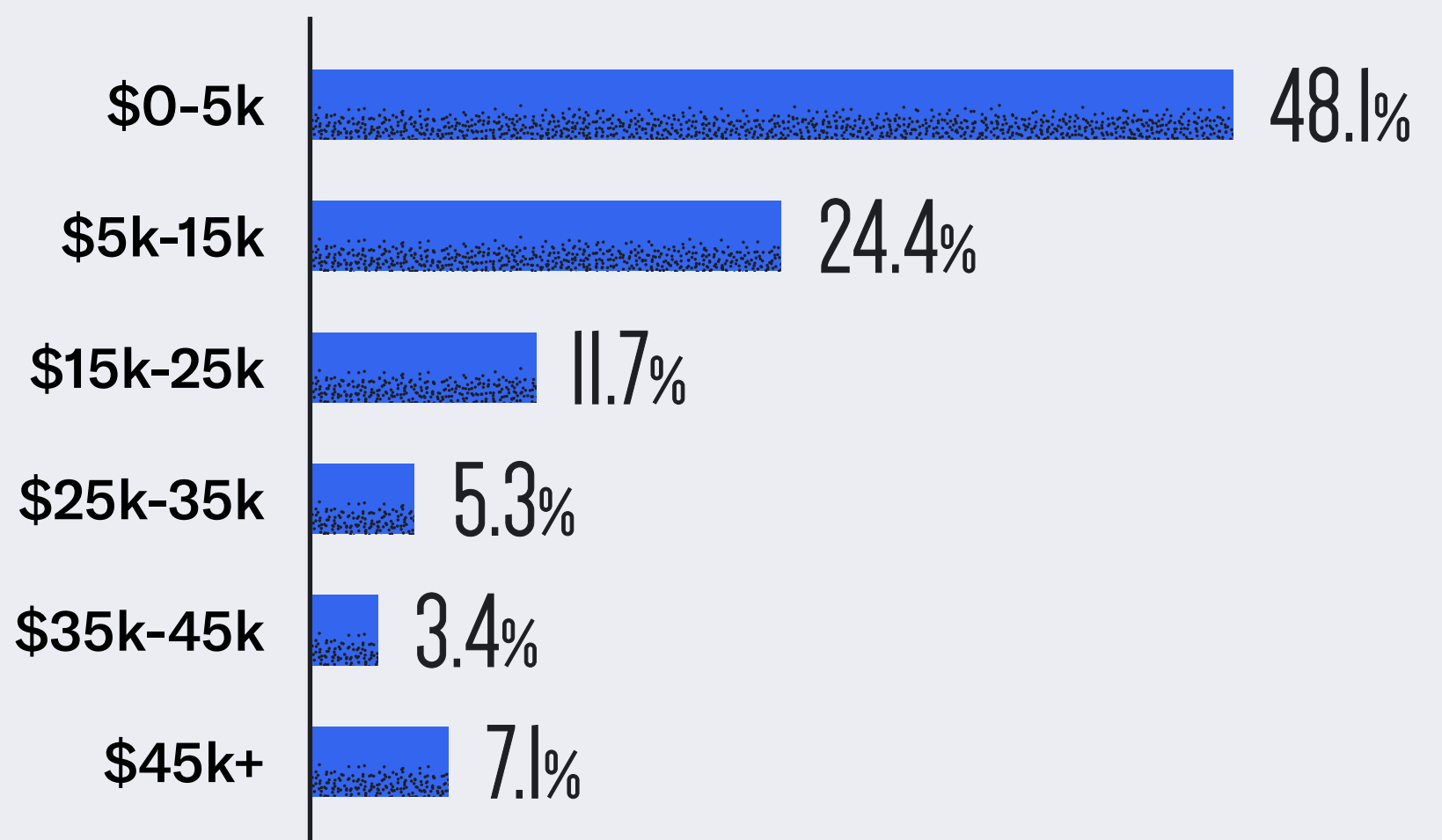
# CONTENT MARKETING BUDGETS

⚡ Does it take money to make money? Most of the time. But creativity and strategic focus can help more than you think.

**What is the average cost of a piece of content you create, including management costs?**

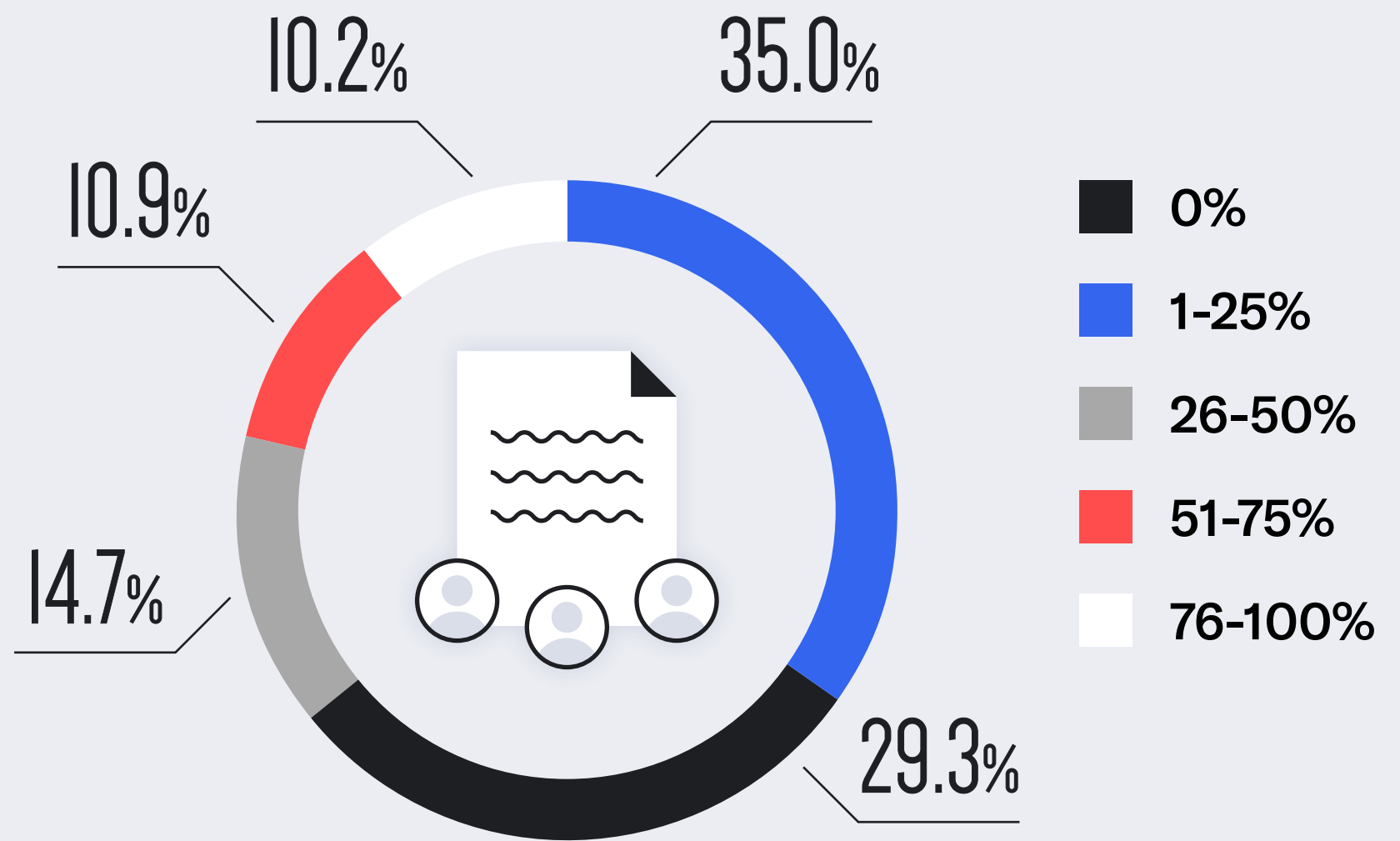


**What is your monthly content marketing budget?**



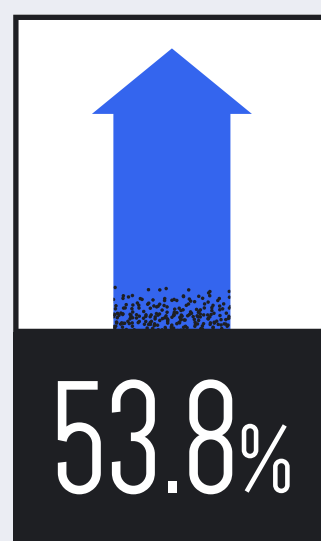
# CONTENT MARKETING BUDGETS (CONT'D.)

**What percentage of your content budget do you outsource?**

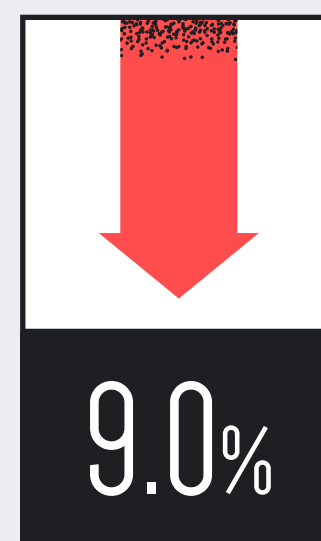


**What does your content marketing budget look like for 2023?**

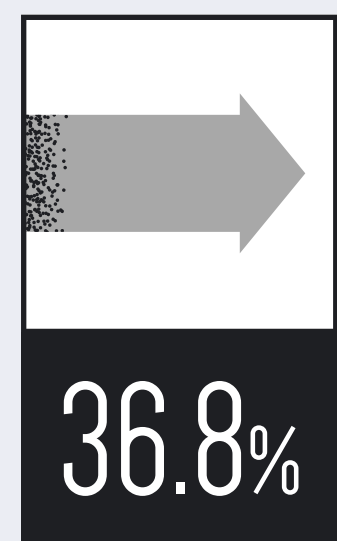
**It will increase**



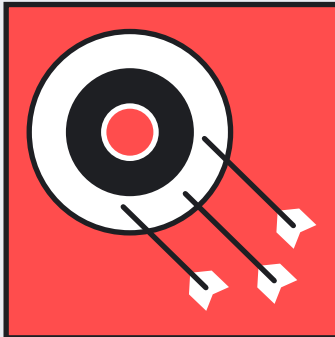
**It will decrease**



**It will stay the same**



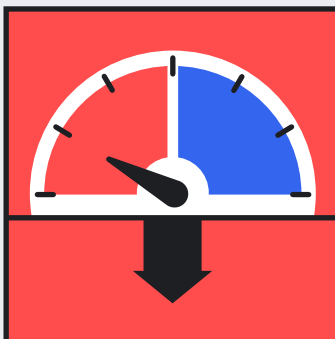
# CONTENT MARKETING BUDGETS (CONT'D.)



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Those who spend **less than \$15,000** monthly on their content strategy are **74% more likely to see lower performance** versus those who spend \$25,000+.



## KEY TAKEAWAY

We know content marketing isn't cheap. This is why we're not necessarily surprised by these numbers. And with 54% of businesses planning to increase that budget, content is only going to keep getting better.

However, let's not ignore that 37% of businesses with tighter budgets still report finding success. **So, as long as you're using a team that focuses resources and efforts in the right place, the results will come.**

# CONTENT MARKETING: THE HIGHS AND LOWS

**⚡** With every win, there are bound to be some obstacles when the competition is fierce.

**What are the biggest challenges you face when developing content?**

**Volume**

27.8%



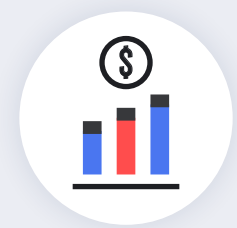
**Generating Leads**

22.6%



**Measuring ROI**

20.7%



**Generating Links**

12.0%



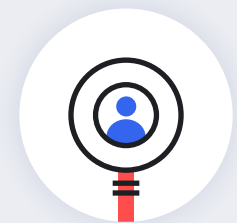
**Ideation**

11.7%

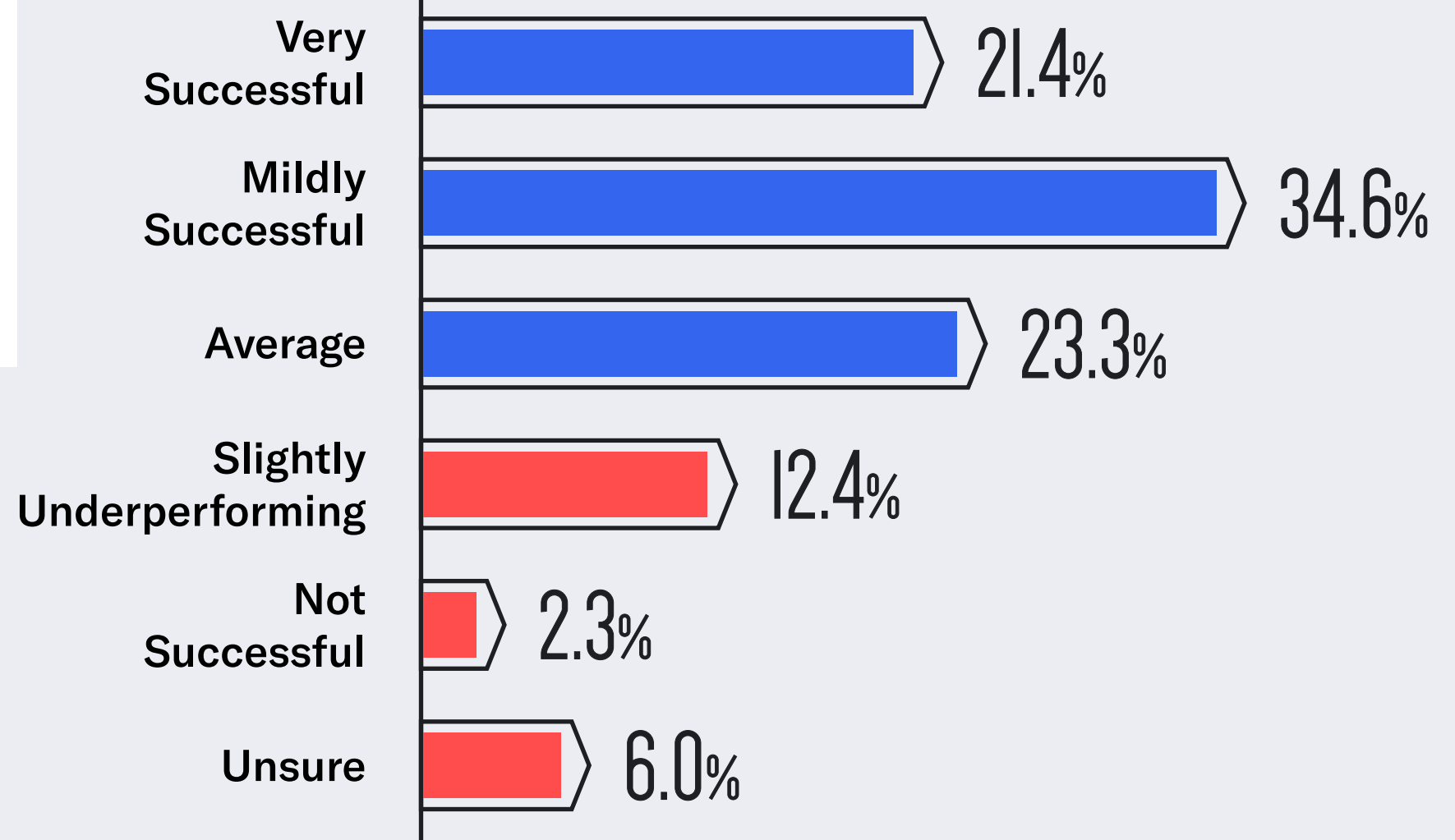


**Finding a Target Audience**

5.3%



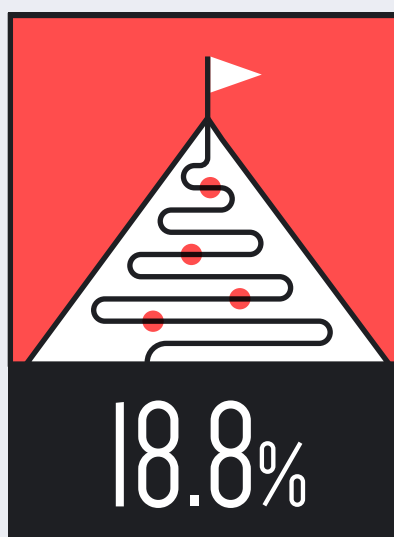
**How successful do you feel your content marketing strategy is?**



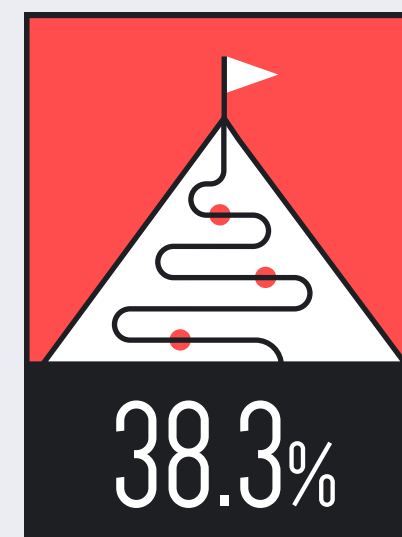
# CONTENT MARKETING: THE HIGHS AND LOWS (CONT'D.)

**How competitive would you say your industry is?**

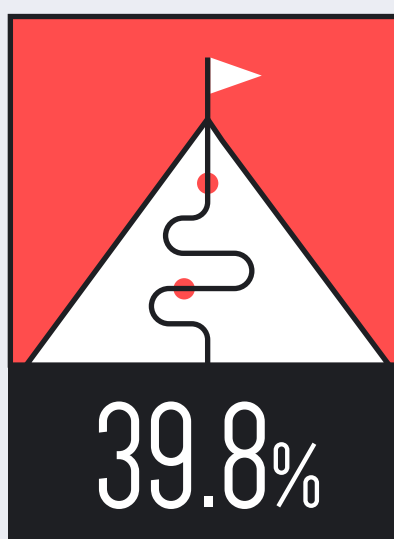
Hyper-Competitive



Very Competitive



Competitive



Not Very Competitive



## KEY TAKEAWAY

We're happy to see respondents are playing the content marketing game well — and what may have felt foreign 10 years ago now feels like a talented pool of content marketers and SEOs constantly evolving the standard of great content. Hence, the competitive nature of every industry.

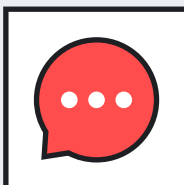
What did we find interesting? Resources feel like the Achilles' heel to generate north star results. We suggest a new focus — optimization. **Put your time and budget into maintaining and optimizing existing content. Less resources, faster rankings.**

# WHAT THE INDUSTRY IS SAYING



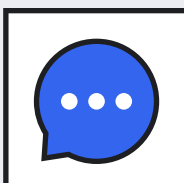
“There's certainly a place for AI content in various marketing tactics and some content creation, but ..., it can't compete with the quality that stems from real life experience and expertise. Perhaps that will change over time, but ... focusing on Google's notion of E-E-A-T is not only great for SEO, but also leads to higher quality content.”

**Lily Ray, SEO Consultant, Senior Director, Amsive Digital**



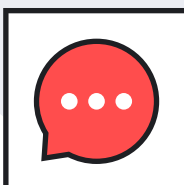
“I'm not surprised to see a very clear correlation between content budget and results. The fact is, content marketing is getting more competitive by the day. Which means success now requires a significant investment in content strategy, writing, (and as the report specifically highlights) design. I've seen this firsthand: We recently doubled our content budget. And our traffic started to quickly climb.”

**Brian Dean, CEO, Exploding Topics**



“I see content marketing budgets becoming much more efficient, which either leads to higher content output or lower investments with constant output. I have a strong viewpoint that AI tools are already making content generation more efficient, and more businesses will accept and lean into that to get a competitive advantage.”

**Kevin Indig, Growth Advisor, Founder, Growth Memo**



“Companies that don't work generative AI content tools into their content strategy will find themselves eclipsed very quickly. Generative AI is a force multiplier that will speed up content efforts and yield increased returns.”

**Michael King, Founder, iPullRank**

# WHAT THE INDUSTRY IS SAYING



“Google's PR messaging has worked to deflect the importance of links for years, but the reality is they remain significantly effective.”

**Cyrus Shepard, Founder, Zyppy**



“There is definitely a place for AI generated content, but the idea that it will suddenly replace all content is overblown. AI content serves a purpose when content is used just to report out facts like in a product description, a list of items, or a report on facts; however, when actual intellect and emotion are required, AI is a long way away from taking on this role.”

**Eli Schwartz, Growth Advisor, Author of Product-Led SEO**



“In an era in which mediocre, non-unique content generation has become a commodity, developing comprehensive, insightful, expert quality content that [fulfills, engages, and delights] the audience with top-notch experiences through the different stages of their search journey is now a must, not only with text but [also] video, images and any format that connects with [their users'] needs and maximizes value, visibility and reach.”

**Aleyda Solís, Intl. SEO Consultant, Founder, Orainti**



“I’m surprised to see that content budgets are increasing from 2022 to 2023. I have to wonder if that’s due to some companies moving from in-house resourcing to outsourcing. Many companies are being asked to do more with less right now. So, even if your budget is increasing, I think it’s wise to get really smart with how you spend those resources.”

**Kameron Jenkins, Content Team Lead, Shopify**



# ABOUT SIEGE MEDIA // ABOUT CLEARSCOPE

**Siege Media** is a team of clever creatives, sharp marketers, and savvy SEOs working together to create amazing content and make sure the world sees it. Interested in getting to know us more? Visit our website to learn more about our services.

**Clearscope** is an AI-powered content automation platform that helps their customers drive search traffic. With the philosophy of seamless adoption of their platform to enhance your content needs, Clearscope is at the cutting edge of content marketing innovation.

## THANK YOU

Thank you for reading the 2023 Content Marketing Trends Report from Clearscope and Siege Media.

We hope you feel as empowered as we do. These insights help us navigate the current state of our field and encourage us to think outside the box. If we learned anything from this report, it's simple: Content marketing isn't going anywhere, but its trends are always changing — and we'll be here when they do.

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