

Content Marketing

Behind the Scenes



Contents

03. The Intro

07. The Work

14. The Team

26. The Workflow

49. The Insider View

51. The Conclusions

The Introduction

It is 2019 and content marketing is looking at an incredible growth in both magnitude and complexity. The industry has come a long way. It's grown from just a few channels to dozens, from a couple of formats to hundreds, from a few outputs to thousands. It is mesmerizing what a marketer can do today when almost any idea is feasible.

Technology has brought content marketing to where it is today. Beyond creating new channels, it has helped brands reach new possibilities, form deeper connections with their customers, and achieve great results with fewer costs.

It has brought new opportunities, but with each new opportunity came new demands. Demands for more content. It has led to the magnitude that we now see in content marketing. A new peak in the amount of produced content.

This incredible volume implies more responsibility, bigger teams, more complex workflows, and higher risks. However, the way marketers work together hasn't caught up with technology and demand. The habits, the tools, and the processes are archaic and the output suffers as a result.

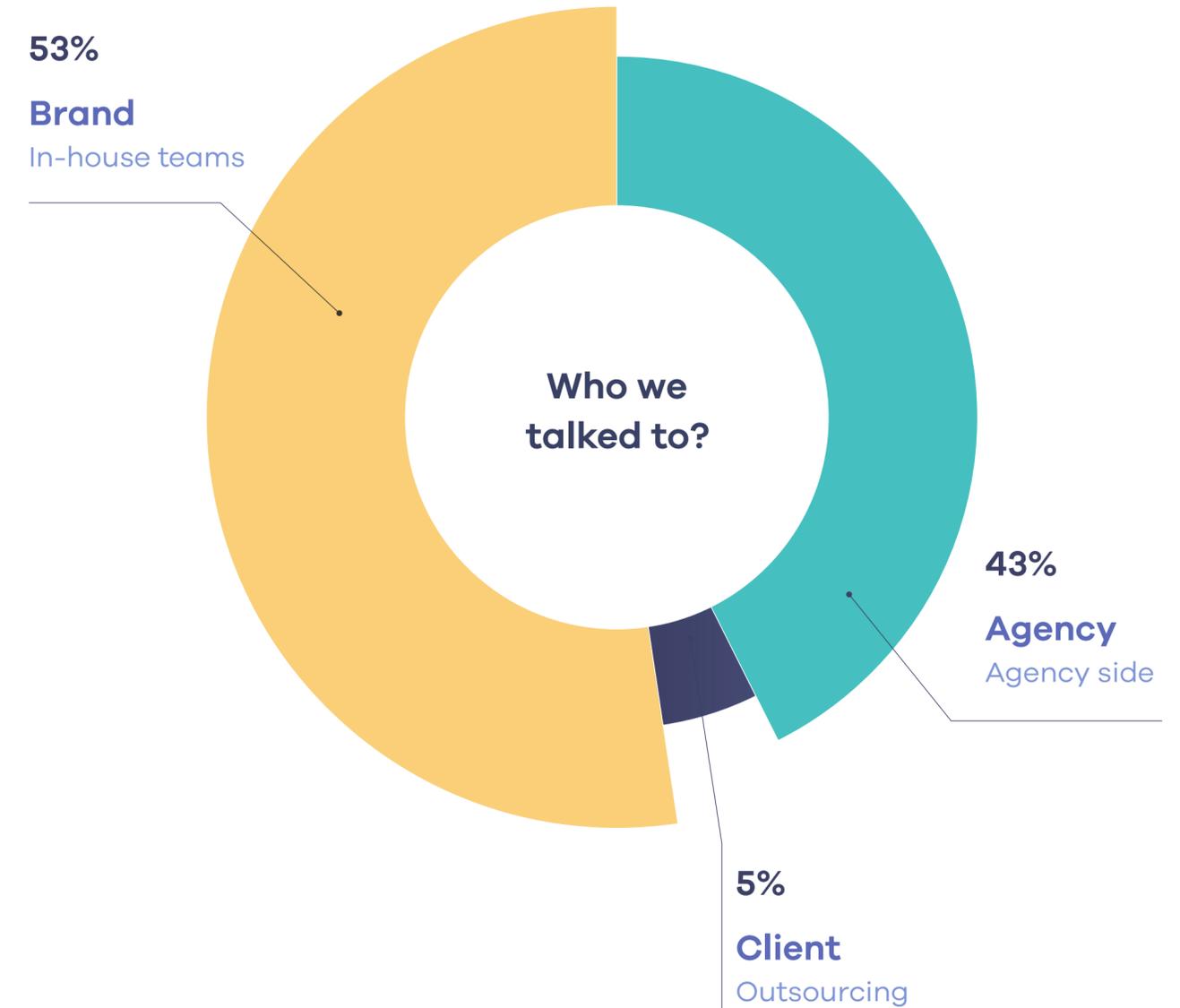
Nevertheless, demands have to be met and marketers are struggling. In their constant running pace, they never stop to take a helicopter view and identify the obstacles. What is slowing content marketing down? How efficient are today's processes? How much is lost due to poorly defined workflows?

These questions don't have a research-based answer. Yet.

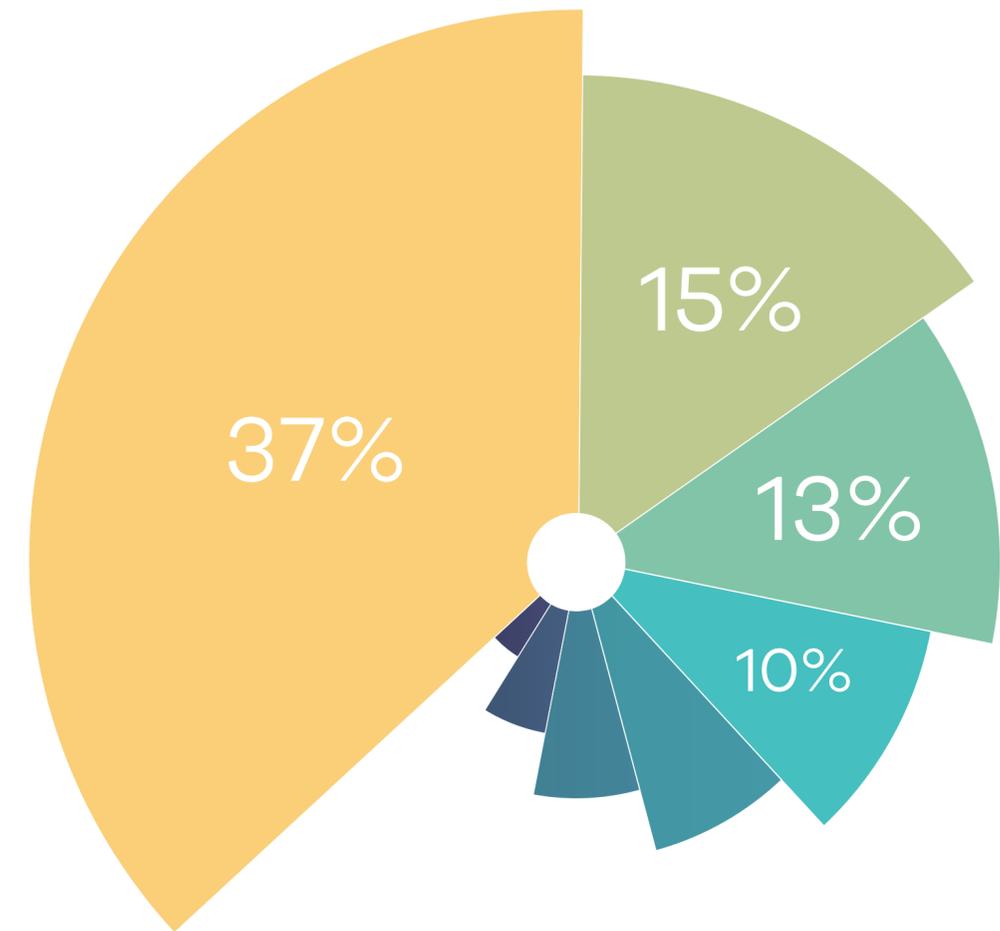
That is why we decided to help and take that objective helicopter view for all content teams that want to do better and get prepared for what the future will bring.

What we analyzed

In order to truly understand what the state of content marketing work is today, we asked over 200 marketers around the world how they work together. Our results are based on professionals working on both the agency side (43%) and in the brands' in-house teams (53%). We've even reached out to a few companies that are outsourcing content marketing efforts—clients (5%).



In search of an accurate and complete view, we didn't want to limit our findings to copywriters or team leaders only. So study respondents work in several fields from the strategy side to video editing. While 37% work in content strategy, 15% are copywriters, 13% are part of project management and 10% handle publishing.



What you'll find in the report

The report dives deep into the work of content marketers, their team, their workflows, and their insider view.

The work chapter will explore the amount of content that is being produced recurrently. It will showcase how many pieces are being created and highlight the extent that content marketing has reached today.

The team chapter will dig deeper into who is involved in today's content marketing cycles. It will go through the titles of these professionals and their role in the process as well as the geo-distribution of the team.

The workflow part will zoom in on how these teams collaborate in order to create so much content quickly

and qualitative. Throughout the chapter, we'll investigate how marketers communicate, share work, give feedback, review, and approve. This part will also reveal what are the workflow components marketers consider to be the biggest time wasters.

As for **The insider view** chapter, it will bring out how the current state of content marketing is seen through the eyes of the professionals in the industry. This part will explore what the level of satisfaction is amongst marketers and what specifically creates distress.

The Work

Before even attempting to understand how content marketing teams look like or how they work together, it is necessary that we define content demand. Why is it constantly increasing?

Ever since 1440, channels have been on the rise. From the printing press to posters, billboards, radio, tv, websites, social media, mobile - channels have been developing. And with each new channel, content demand reached a new peak. Teams had to re-think their work and start producing more.

Channels, however, aren't the only factor that contributed to increasing content demand. New technology has

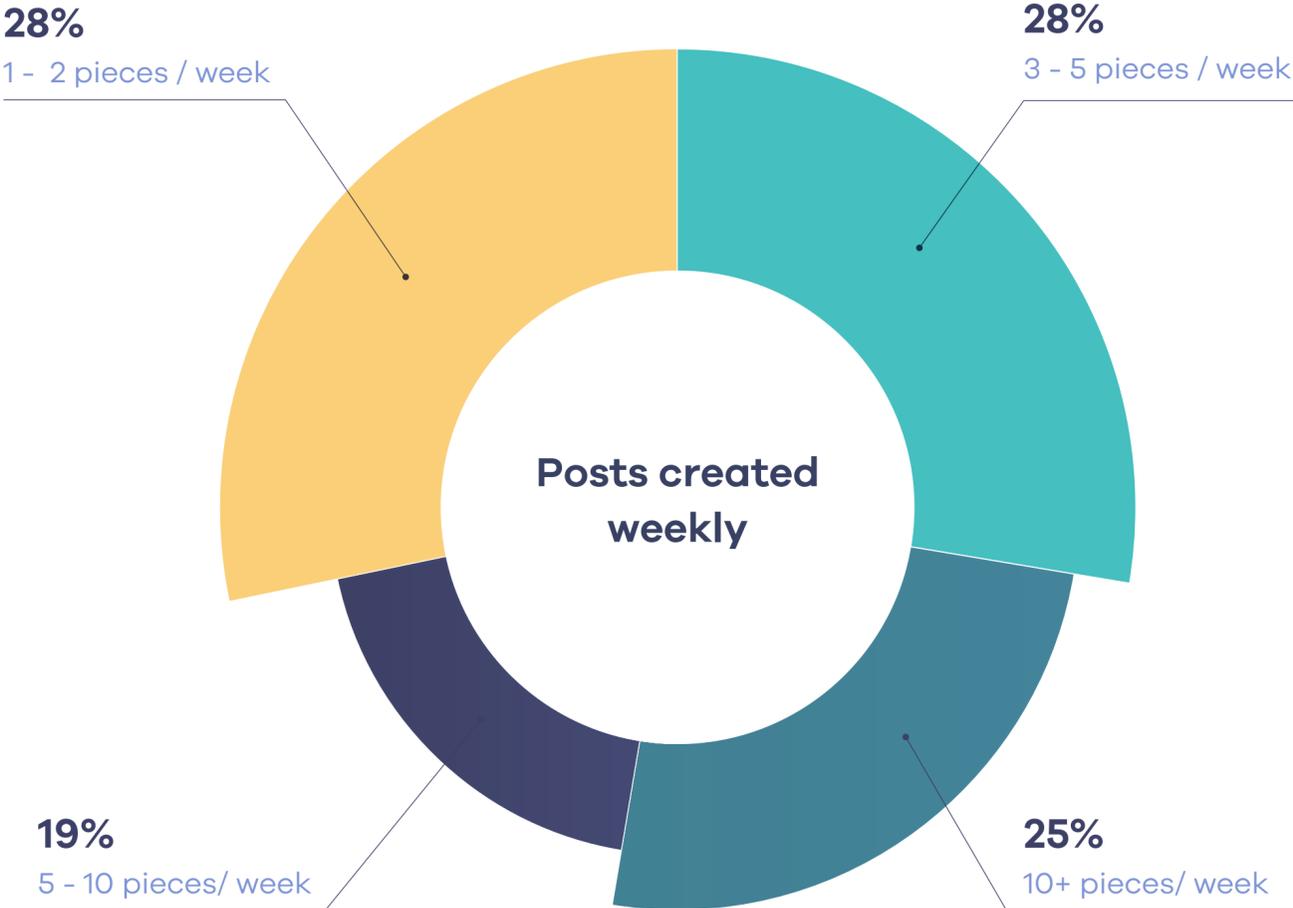
enabled brands to deliver personalized content and experiences directly to their audiences. However, leveraging personalization technology requires planning, creating, and orchestrating a vast amount of content tailored to different segments, personas, channels, and customer journey stages. Again, a new peak of content demand.

The question remains, where is content marketing today? What peak has it reached?

How much content is actually being produced?

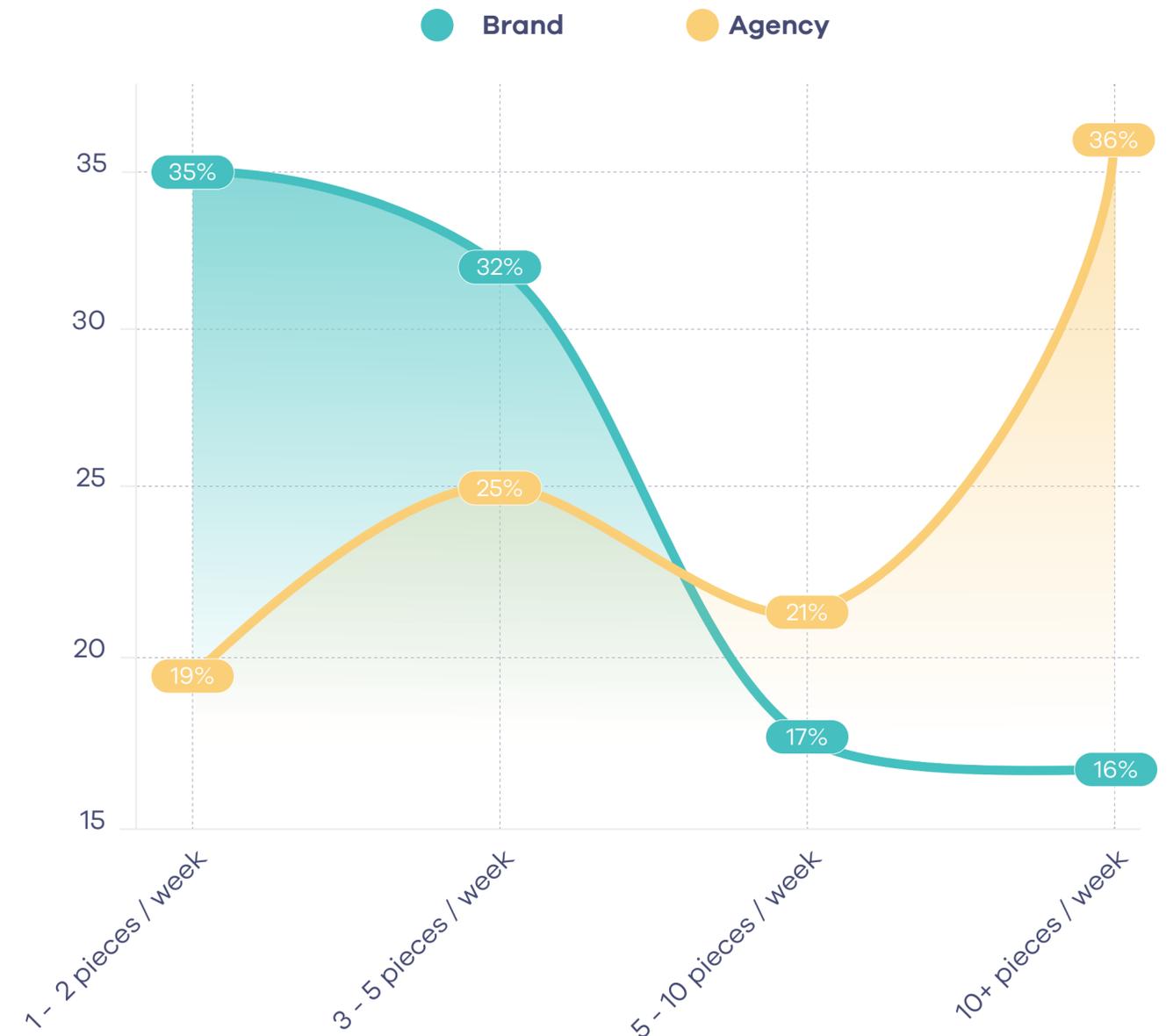
The answer is - quite a lot. 44% of marketers produce over 5 pieces of content per week. In this research, we considered content marketing any valuable, relevant, and consistent branded content including news, videos, infographics, case studies, podcasts, blog posts, newsletters, eBooks, whitepapers, and other assets.

Even though content can take many forms and sizes, 5 pieces per week is a lot regardless. 10 pieces per week already summon an army. A blog post, which is one of the simplest forms of content, takes an average of **3 hours and 28 minutes** to create. 5 blog posts amount to 17 hours per week which is almost half the total working hours of a marketer.



Research shows agency teams produce much more content than in-house brand teams. 57% of agency teams produce over 5 pieces of content per week while only 33% of in-house teams claim the same amount.

It is understandable when considering agencies serve multiple brands and in-house teams don't. But while it may seem logical, these results should point out one of two possibilities. Either agency teams are much larger than in-house teams or in-house teams have many other responsibilities besides content. We'll find in the next chapter of this report, that content teams are not that different in size from an agency to a brand, so we can jump to the second hypothesis. In-house teams work on many fronts and content creation is often just one of their responsibilities.



How much distribution does this content require?

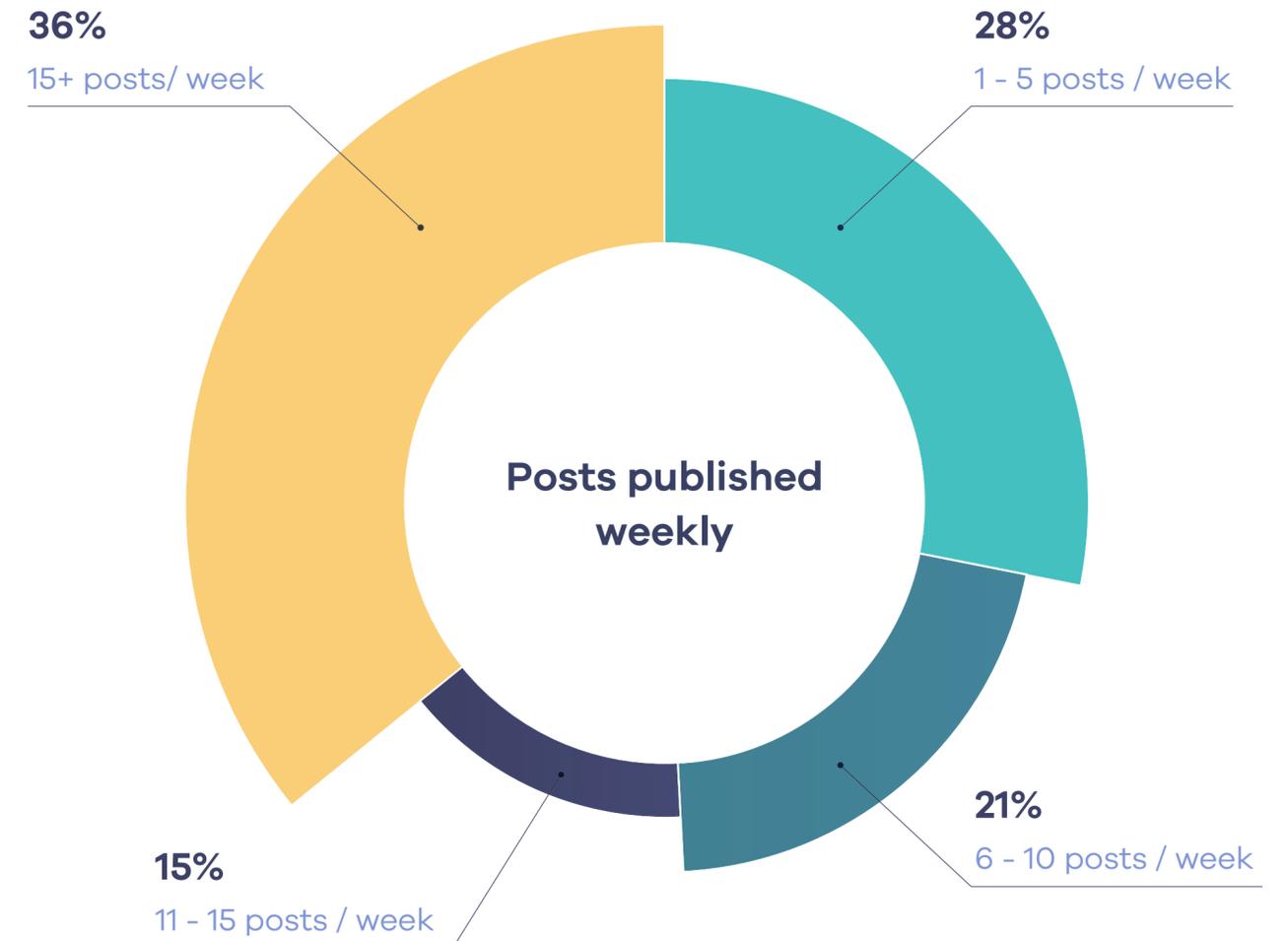
Marketers know that content isn't anything without distribution. Brands don't create valuable pieces to make their mothers proud, and their audience doesn't just type in landing page URLs. Content has to be shared and marketers don't only have to create it but to also get prospects interested in consuming it.

That leads us to social media - one of the most popular distribution channels. While some brands may choose to try offline, others may buy TV ads, almost all will share on social media. But these channels come with their own chaos and management demands.

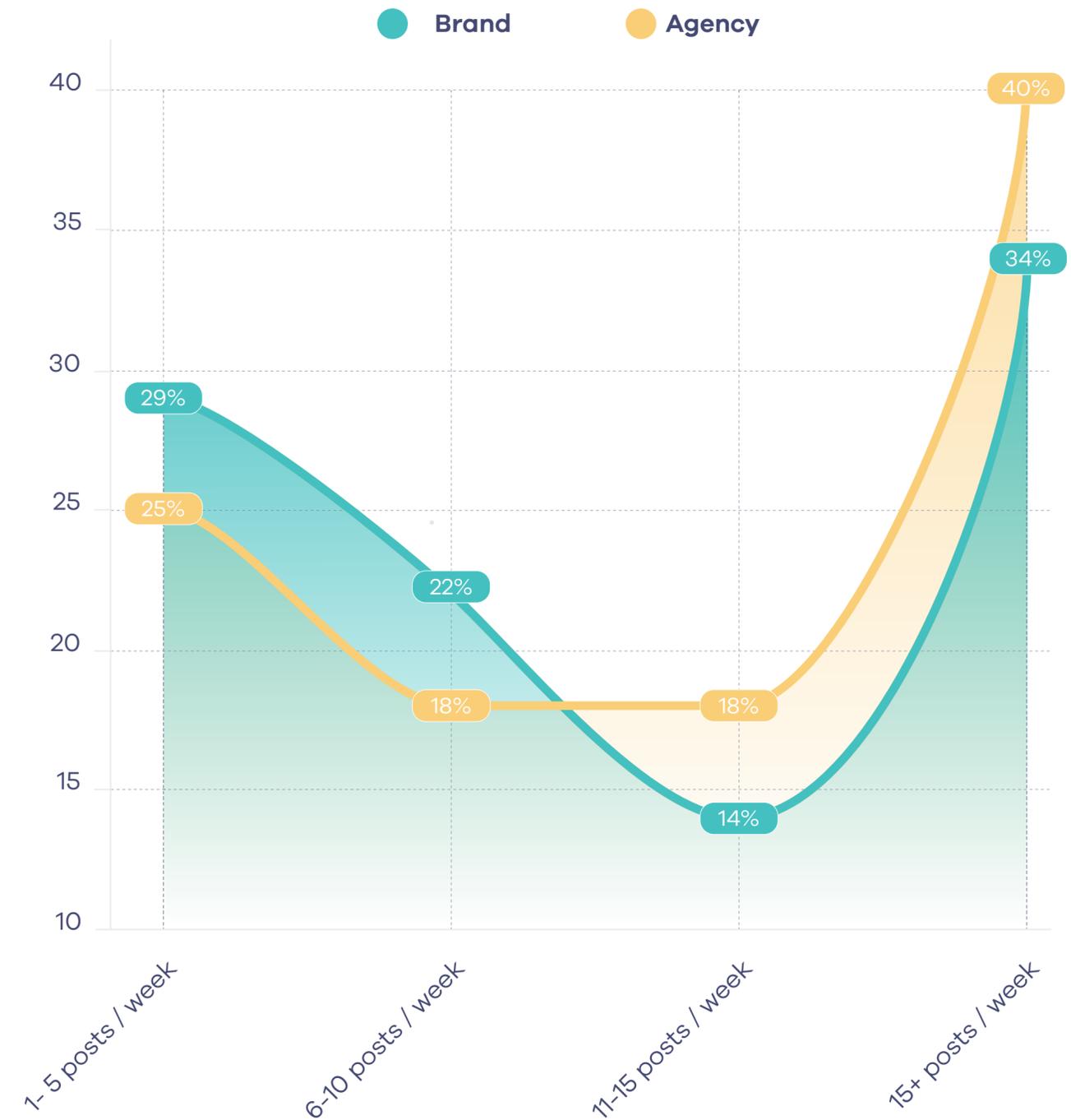
They're not just open billboards, but algorithm-based systems on which presence has to be planned, built, tweaked, maintained. And there are many networks where brands have to publish posts. Most popular platforms are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Each of these has particularities, preferences, and require different tactics to achieve success.

The more platforms, the higher the demand for the number of posts. How many posts? Not to be redundant, but a lot.

We're looking at 51% of content marketing teams publishing more than 11 social media posts per week. Taking into account that each social network is high maintenance, and implies daily management it's starting to add up.



As for the differences between agency teams and in-house teams, stats look quite similar. 40% of agencies produce more than 15 social media posts per week, brands remaining behind with only 6 p.p. less. Every fourth agency posts around 1-5 social media posts per week, while 29% of brands produce the same amount. 36% agencies stand in the middle producing between 6 and 15 posts per week.



To conclude...

We're looking at an industry in which 44% of teams produce over 5 content pieces per week and 51% publish more than 11 social media posts weekly. While agencies may produce more content, in-house teams have their hands full as well, 48% of them publishing more than 11 posts per week.

It is important to note that while content demand is at an all-time high today, it's predicted that it will only increase in the future. Technological developments are

not slowing down either, as AR, VR, and AI are becoming more accessible to the general public. Access means an audience and where there's an audience, there's need for content.

Such demands amount to a lot of time, people, and coordination. It is necessary that we grasp the entire picture of today's teams to understand if we're ready for what the future brings.

The Team

How many people are involved in content marketing processes?

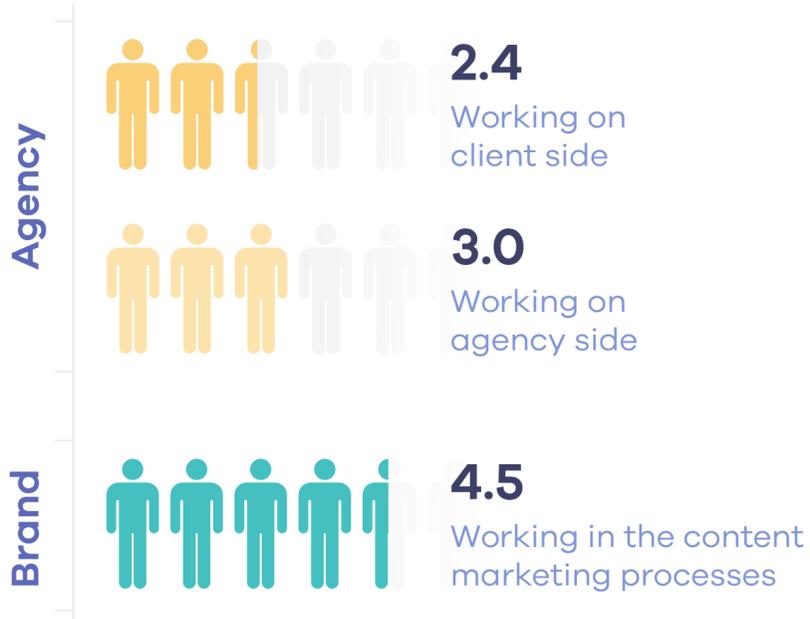
Increasing demands lead to a huge amount of content being produced that requires lots of distribution on many channels. Behind all these efforts stand big and complex teams that are doing their best to meet and satisfy the consumer's need for content.

That is the logical reasoning we believe in. So let's find out how content marketing teams look at the moment.

The average agency team has 2 people working from the client side and 3 involved in the agency, while an average of 4 people from in-house teams manages the content marketing processes.

While it may not seem quite like an army, consider that many companies started to adapt to the digital era with a marketing intern that could write some thoughts and share some posts. Take into account as well that this is an average that takes into account both small companies of less than 10 and big enterprises of more than 1000. For example, [G2 Crowd's](#) content marketing team is composed of 25 people from a total of 50 from the marketing team. And that's just one example.

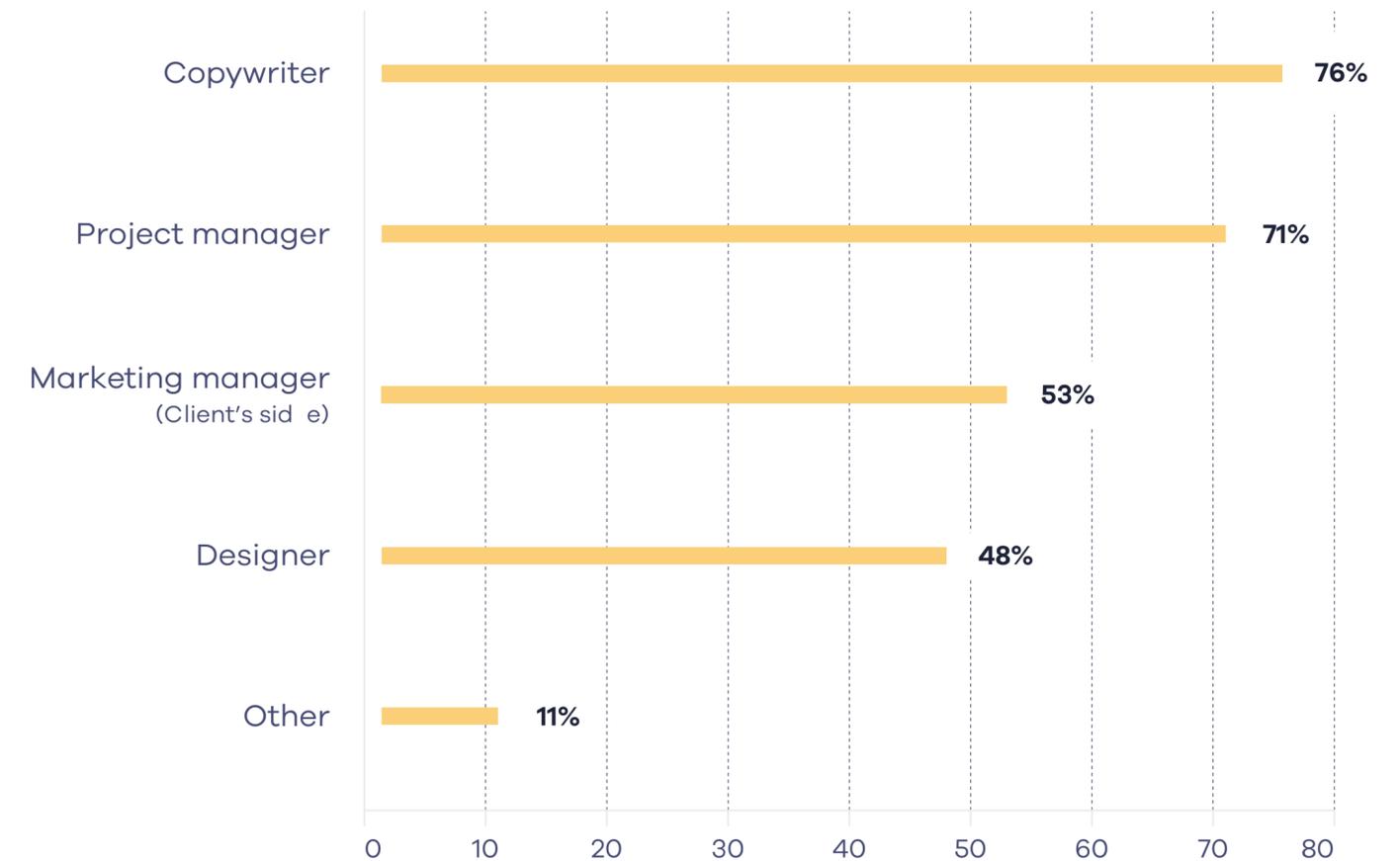
How many people are involved in content marketing processes?



Who is involved in content marketing processes?

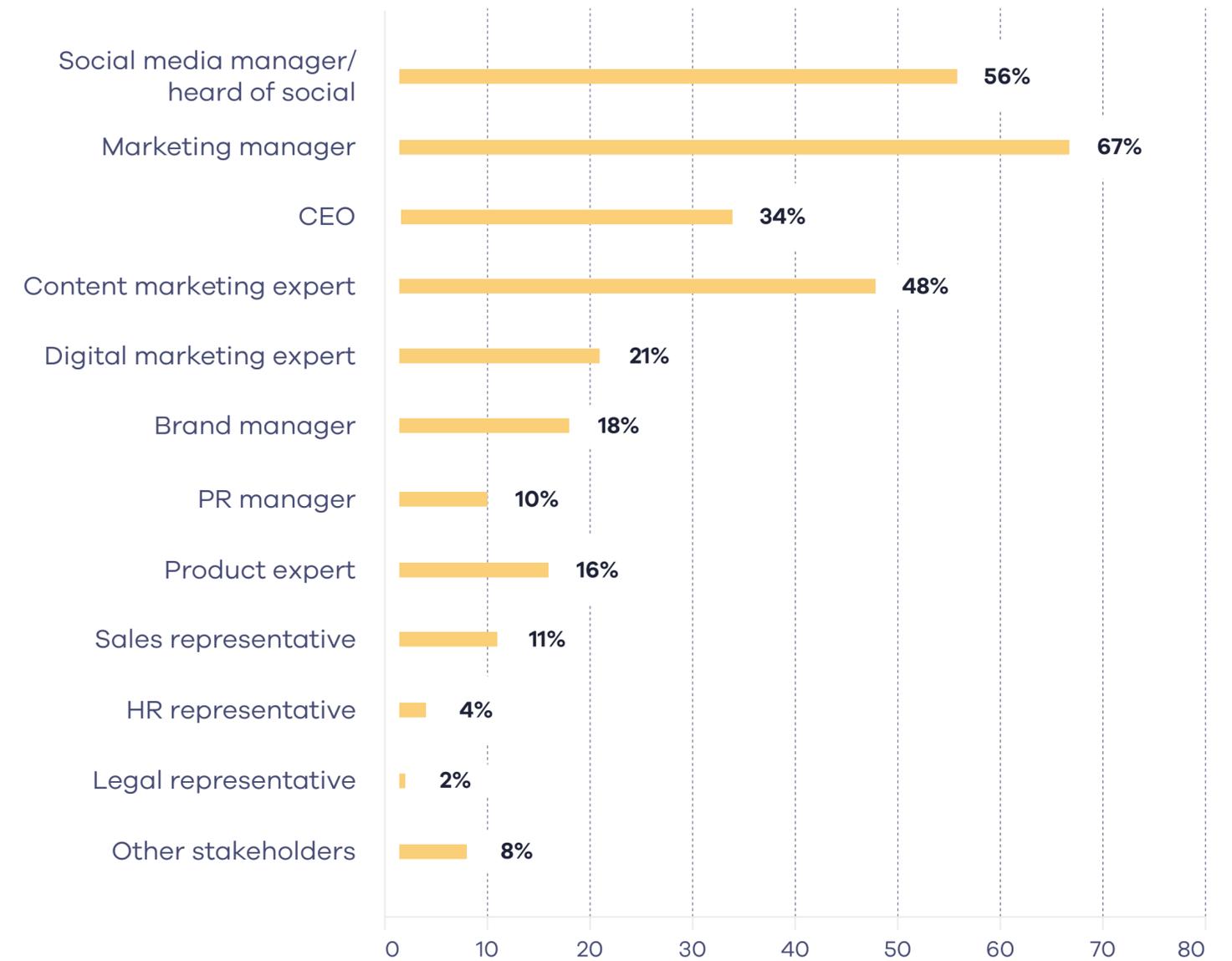
To fully understand the state of today's content marketing teams we wanted to dig deeper and not only find out how many people are involved in content marketing but who they are specifically. What are their roles and how do they contribute to the landscape?

For agencies, the most commonly involved are Copywriters, 76% of respondents mentioning them as main contributors to the content marketing process. The Project Manager is still a key part of the process in most agencies (71%) coordinating efforts and keeping a clear communication line with the client. From the client's side, the Marketing Manager is frequently involved with 53% of agencies referencing them. 48% also use a Designer for the necessary assets.

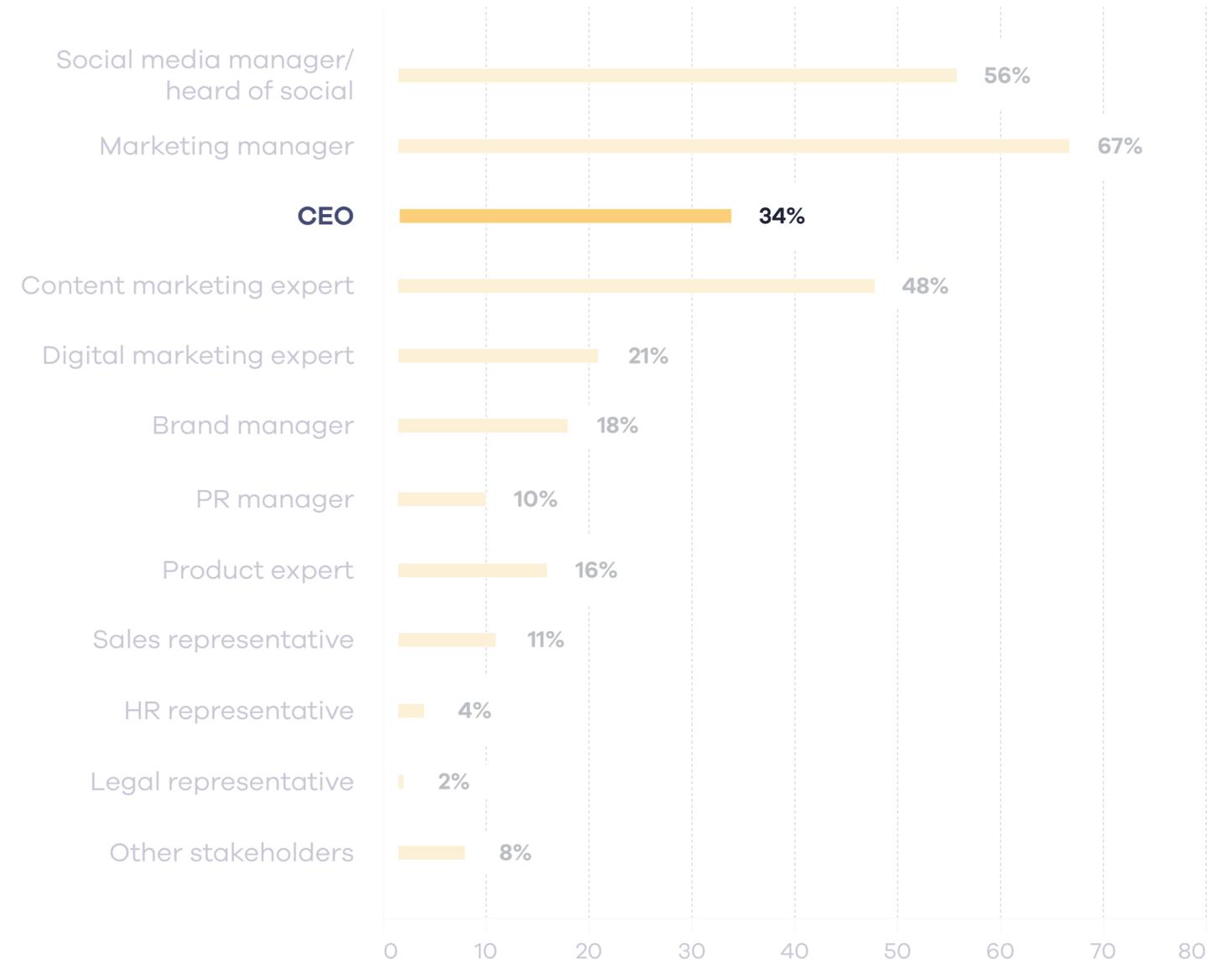


When it comes to brands' in-house teams, most commonly involved are Marketing Managers (67%), Social Media Managers or Head of Social (56%), and Content Marketing Experts (48%).

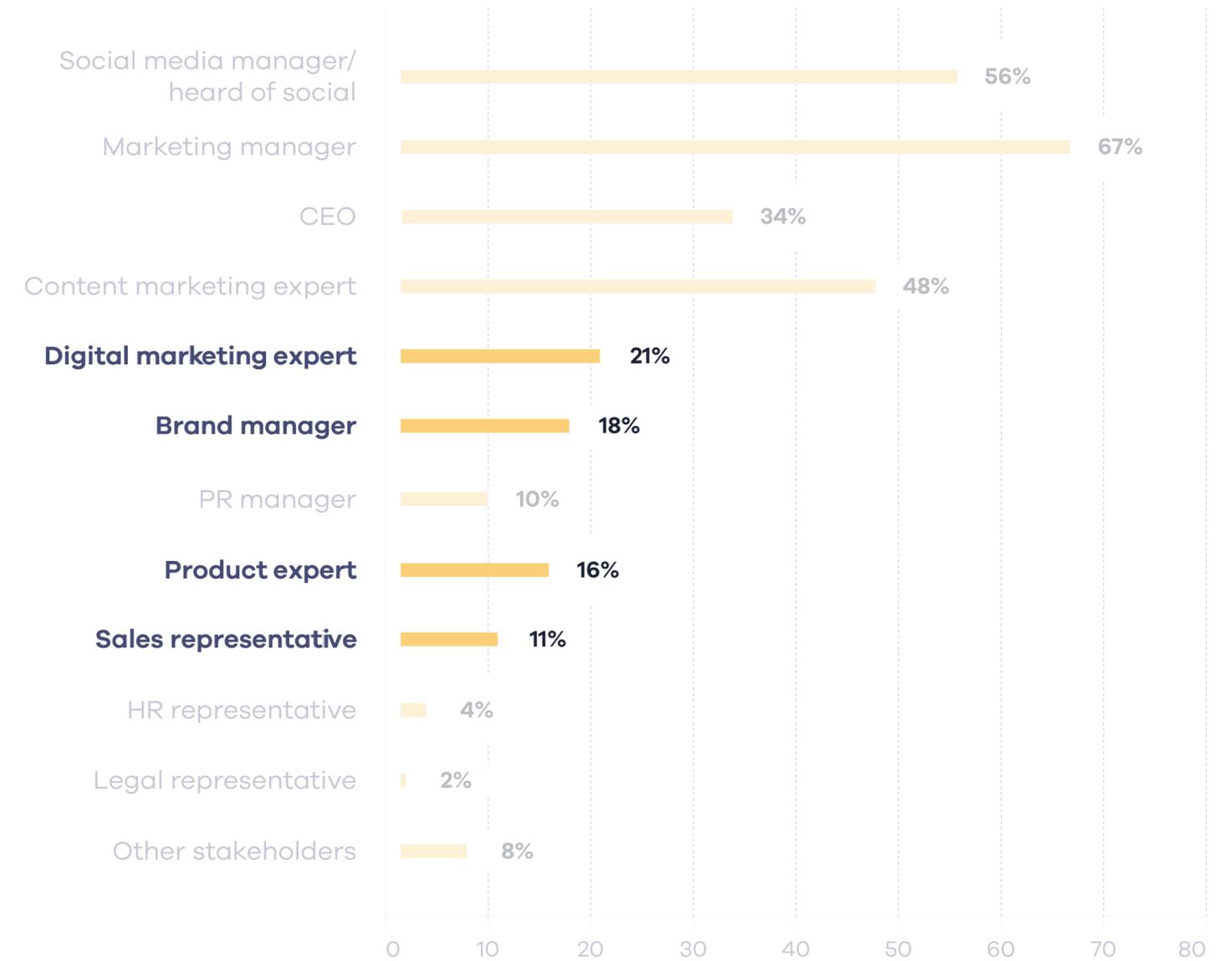
These, however, form the core team - the professionals who focus on content, its production, perfection, and results. But throughout these processes, an ideal workflow requires several pairs of eyes and points of view from multiple parts of the company.



Results show that, interestingly enough, the CEO is also involved in the content marketing process in more than 34% of teams. This high percentage showcases how important content marketing efforts are considered today. It is no longer 'one of the initiatives' but an essential part of a company standing at its core.



The Digital Marketing Expert is part of 21% of teams, followed by Brand Managers (18%), Product Experts (16%), and Sales Representative (11%).



Digital Marketing Experts usually focus on building and implementing an integrated strategy across channels and tactics. They coordinate all efforts on all fronts and help specialists maintain the decided strategy and vision.

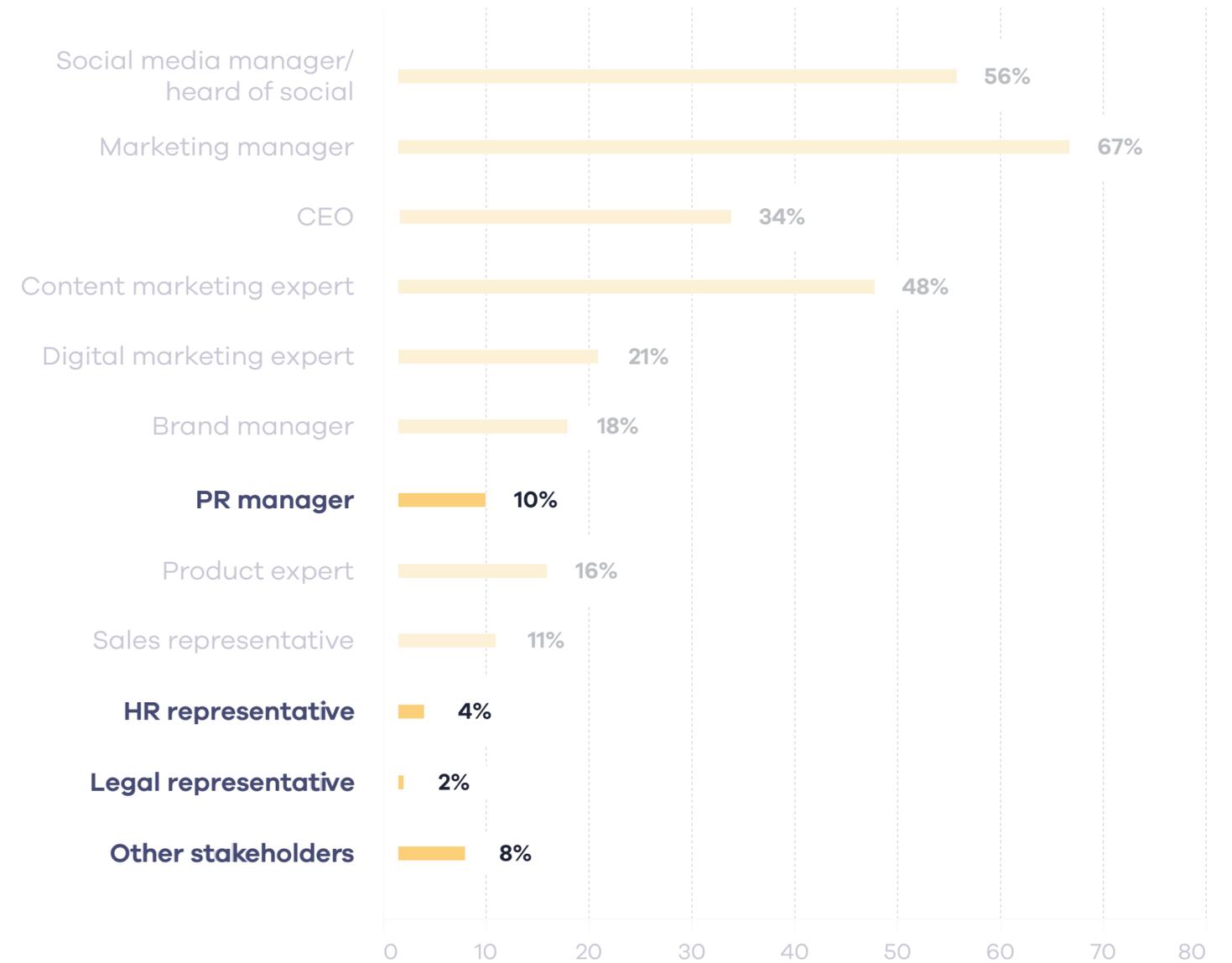
Brand Managers are involved in content marketing to ensure consistency in all external comms. Content marketing happens on many channels, with many messages, and at high speed. To maintain a brand reputation it's essential for Brand Managers to oversee materials and strategies.

Product Experts are the ones that truly understand and know everything there is about what the company is

selling. Their contribution to content marketing mainly revolves around the accuracy of product-focused messages. Product Experts also best understand the particularities and competitive advantages.

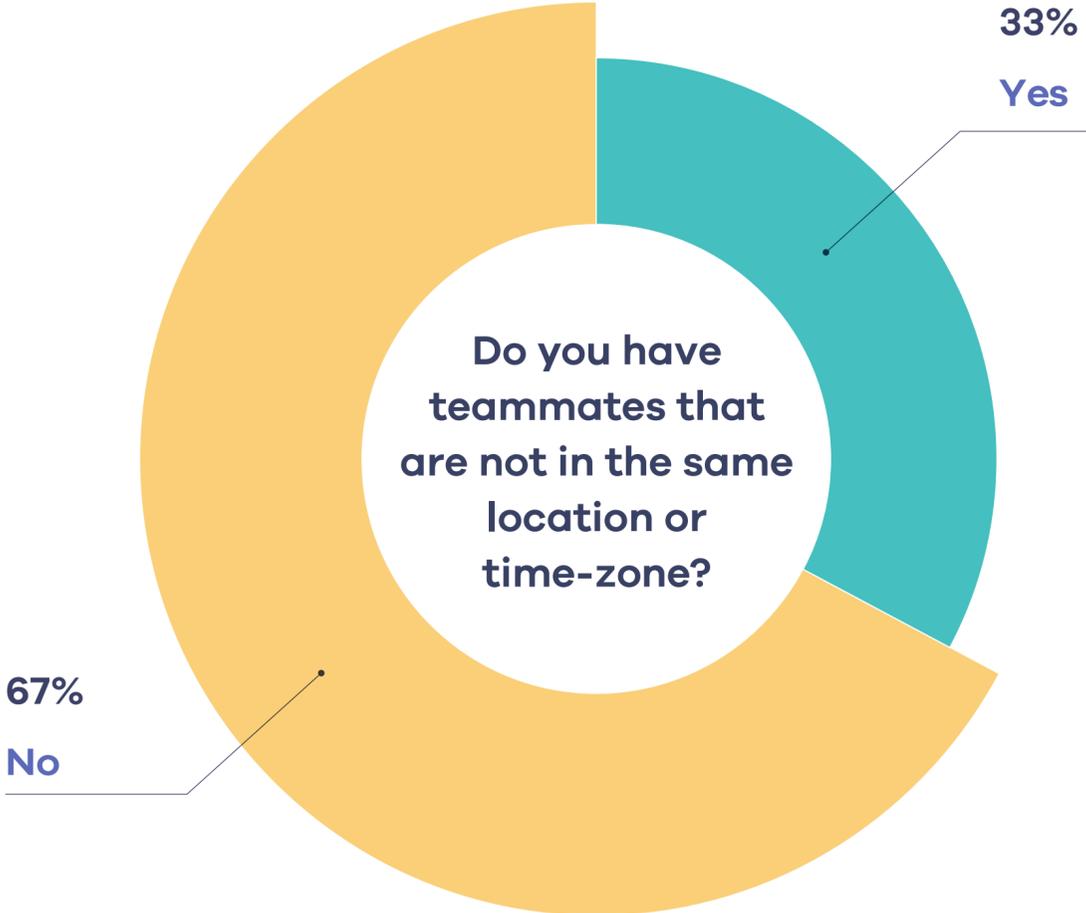
Sales Representatives are essential to the process since content's purpose is to attract, engage, and provide leads. Sales Representatives understand the audience, have direct contact with the prospect, and can help with valuable insights into what and how should be communicated.

PR Managers (10%), HR representatives (4%), Legal representatives (2%), and other stakeholders (8%) were also mentioned by respondents.

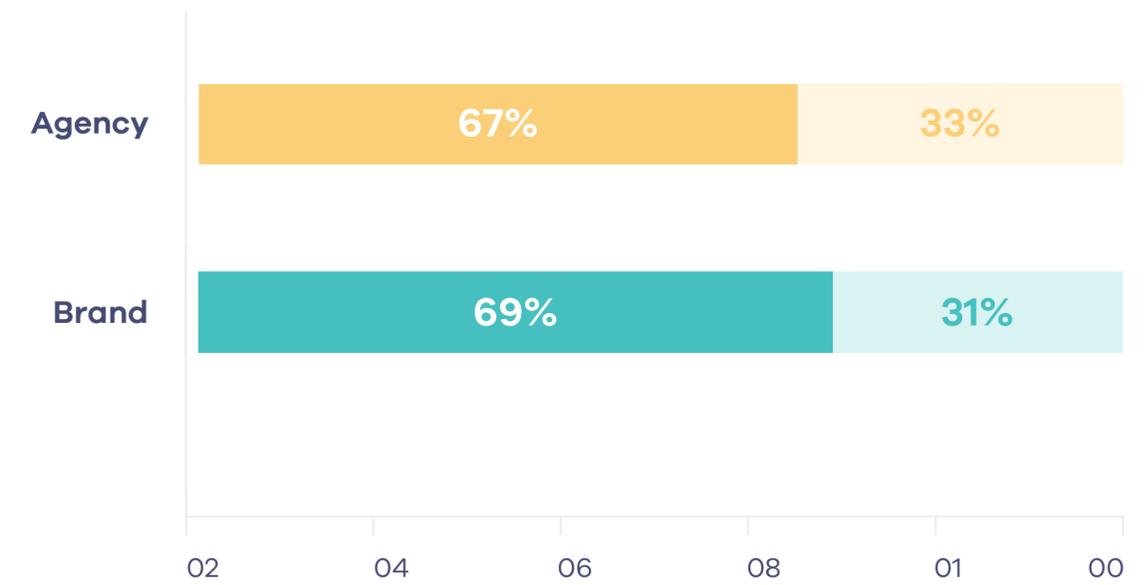


How are teams distributed?

To fully understand what the content marketing teams look like in 2019, we asked respondents if their team includes professionals that are not in the same location or time-zone. 33% said yes. 33% of teams work with people around the globe and communicate remotely only.



Between brands and agencies, it appears that the latter is more likely to work remotely and have remote employees or collaborators. 36% of agencies said they have colleagues working in a different location, while only 31% of brands mentioned the same.



We live in a global world and while that brings immense advantages like flexibility and employee satisfaction, it comes with its own set of challenges. Remote work implies digital communication mainly and often different time zones. If remote teams don't have a very solid workflow and collaboration processes, delays, miscommunication, and distress are bound to happen.

Teams are increasing in size, diversifying in roles, and expanding in locations. Content marketing is no longer an isolated set of efforts that gets somewhere lost in the

comms team. It has spread its web and stands at the heart of an organization gathering around it HR, Product, Brand marketing, and many other parts. Working in the same physical location is no longer a given. Teams are dynamic and spread across the globe. There hasn't been a time when workflows have played a more important role in the success of a brand. So the workflows of today's content marketing teams have to be solid, steady, and future proof. Are they?

The Workflow

When production is high and teams are large, diverse, and dispersed, inefficiency starts to become a real problem and present high risks. The peak that content has reached needs a flawless machine behind in order to be conquered.

Seamless collaboration is key in well-functioning content machines. So how do the current collaboration habits look like?

How much time does collaboration take?

Clearly, a lot of time is spent on the actual production of content, but due to its extent, many hours spent in collaboration are added to the mix.

On average, it takes 5.4 days from the creation to the actual publishing of a piece of content. It was interesting to find that brand teams have a slower process, estimating an average of 5.6 days, as opposed to agency teams with only 4.9 days. That can be caused by a higher level of bureaucracy in companies as opposed to agencies who prefer to bend the rules.

Days it normally take from content creation to content publishing



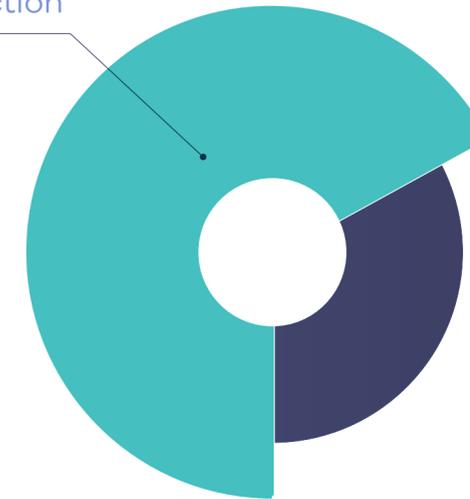
It's relevant to note that 42% of teams have a longer cycle than 5 days. Simply put, 42% of content teams start producing content at least a week before it's scheduled to go live.

What happens during that time? Overall it seems that 33% of the entire content production cycle is spent on communicating about the produced content. This includes reviews, feedback, implementation of feedback, and approval.

Time spent on:

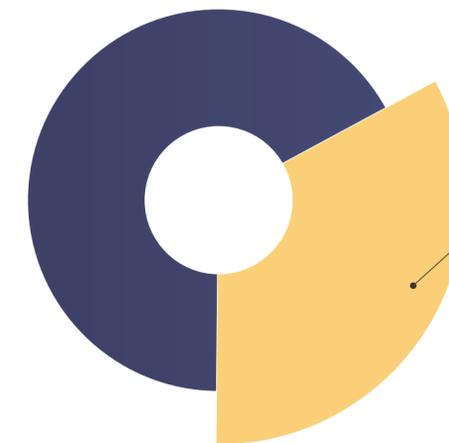
67%

content
production

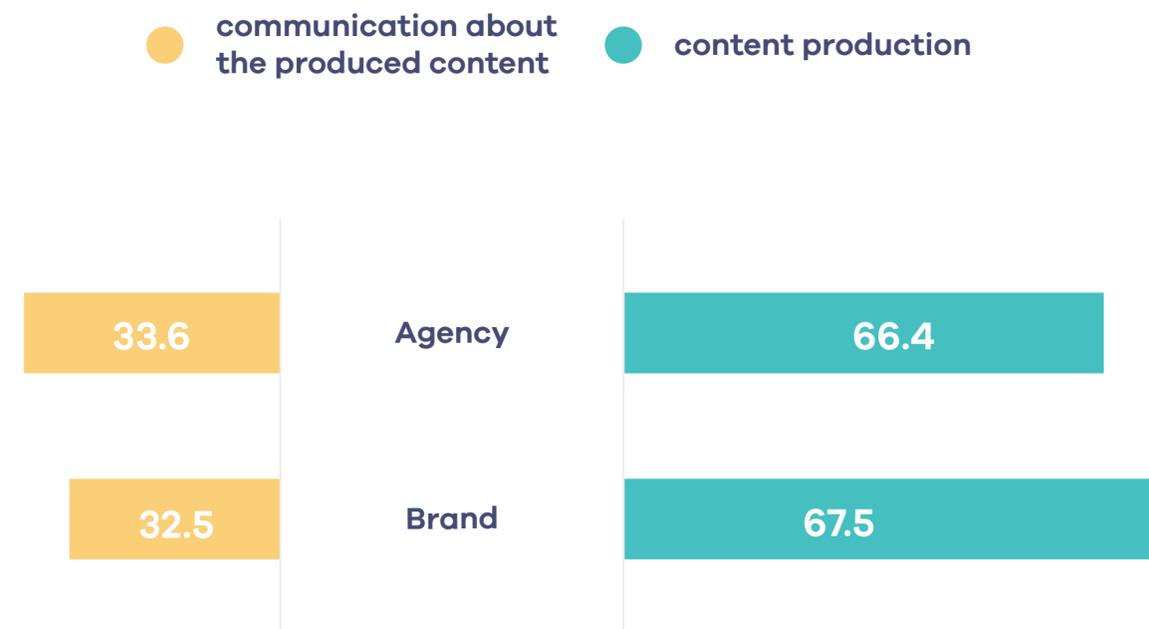


33%

communication
about the produced
content



Agencies spend 33.6% of their time collaborating on content which is more than in-house teams. Collaboration between agencies and brands is known to have more challenges. Alignment is more difficult to achieve and communication tends to be more chaotic.



Even so, more than a third of the content production cycle being spent on collaboration is still a lot. Optimizing this essential component of the workflow would be highly beneficial. It is not to say that collaboration isn't important, it is in fact key to maintain high quality, consistent, and vision-oriented content. However, its importance should not be directly proportional to the

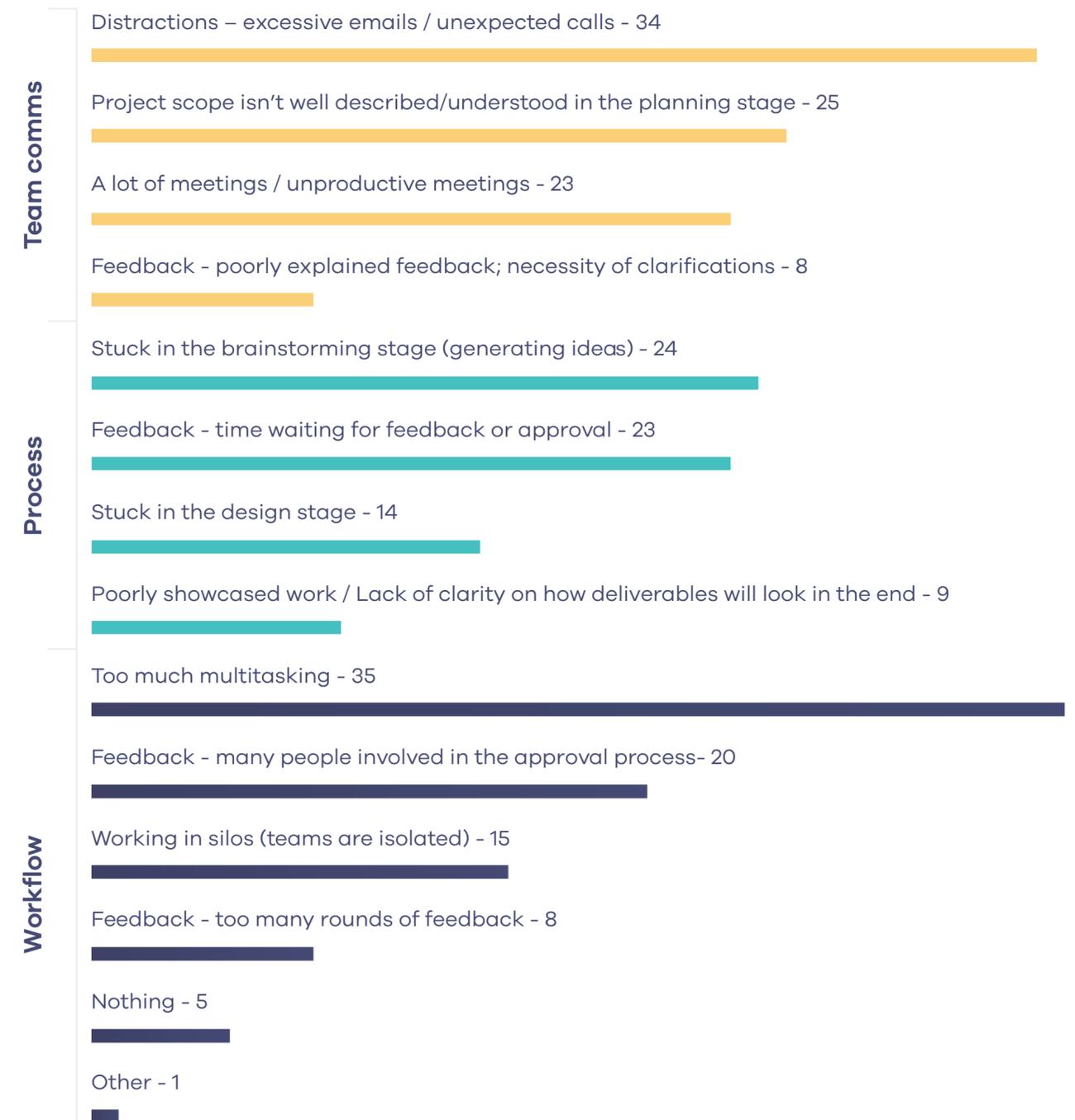
time spent on it. While it is critical that collaboration happens across departments, teams, and professionals, its efficiency defines its success.

Collaboration is currently faulty due to poorly defined processes, a mishmash of tools, and a chaotic workflow. Bottlenecks form across each part of the process and cause constant time waste.

What are the main time wasters?

To completely grasp what exactly is holding back content teams, we asked marketers what they consider to be the biggest bottlenecks in the collaboration process.

We found that multitasking, emails, and calls are the habits that stand in the way of efficient collaboration in content marketing today. 35% of respondents consider that too much multitasking is inefficient, showcasing again that marketers are overwhelmed. Chaotic processes most often lead to multitasking because deep work is no longer an option.



Meetings as a way to communicate and share ideas also have a great impact on team efficiency. As a general habit, meetings take a lot of time, they are disruptive, and also affect the energy and motivation of a team.

When it comes to processes, the brainstorming phase seems to be the most problematic. Marketers feel they constantly remain stuck in it and it takes more than it should to generate ideas.

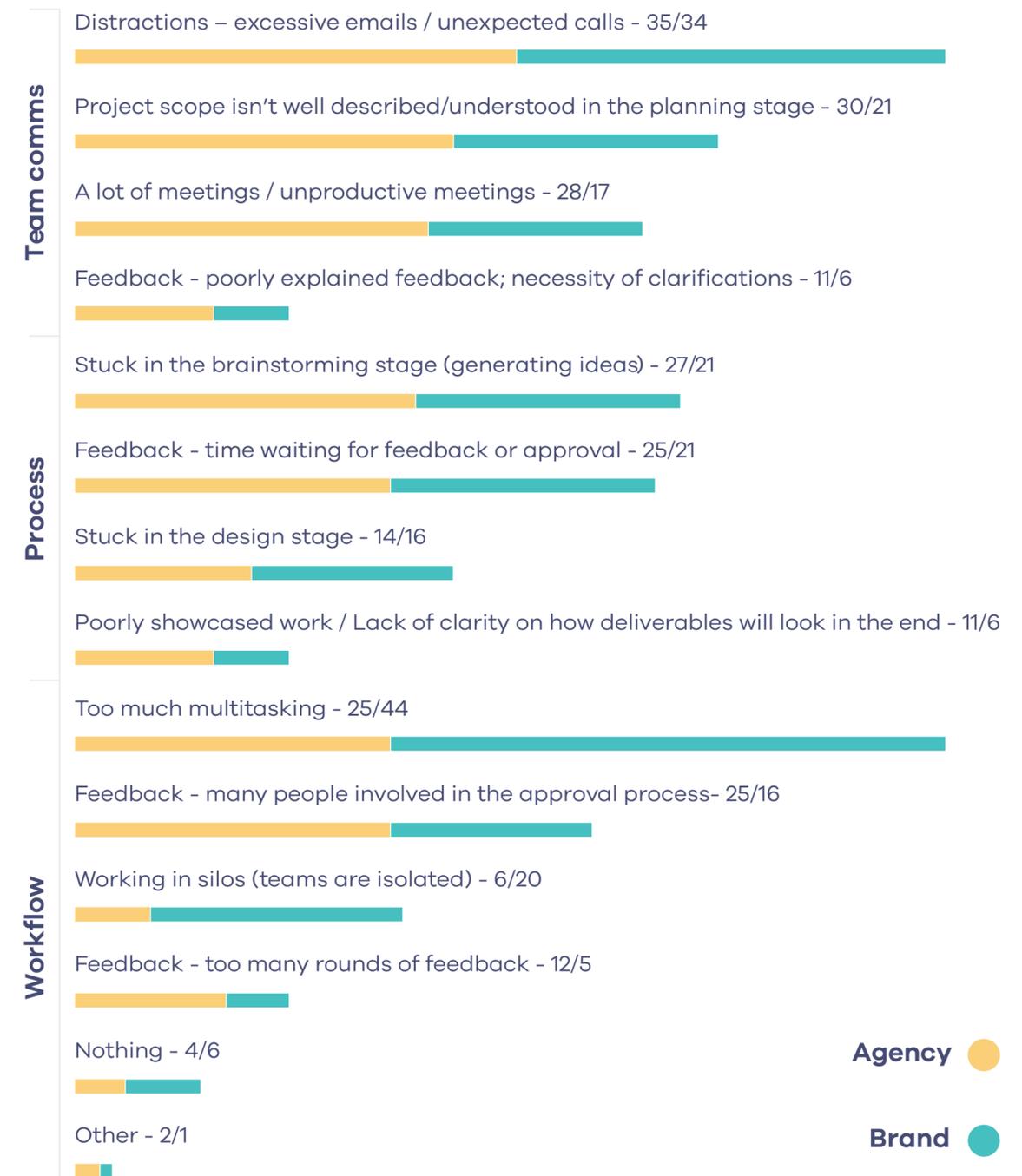


Time spent on waiting for feedback or approval is considered just as wasteful as long brainstorming phases. Typically, this is not due to feedback itself but to the process of sharing feedback overall. If work is showcased through a presentation, feedback is requested via email, and communicated through phone calls, the process becomes long and sloppy.

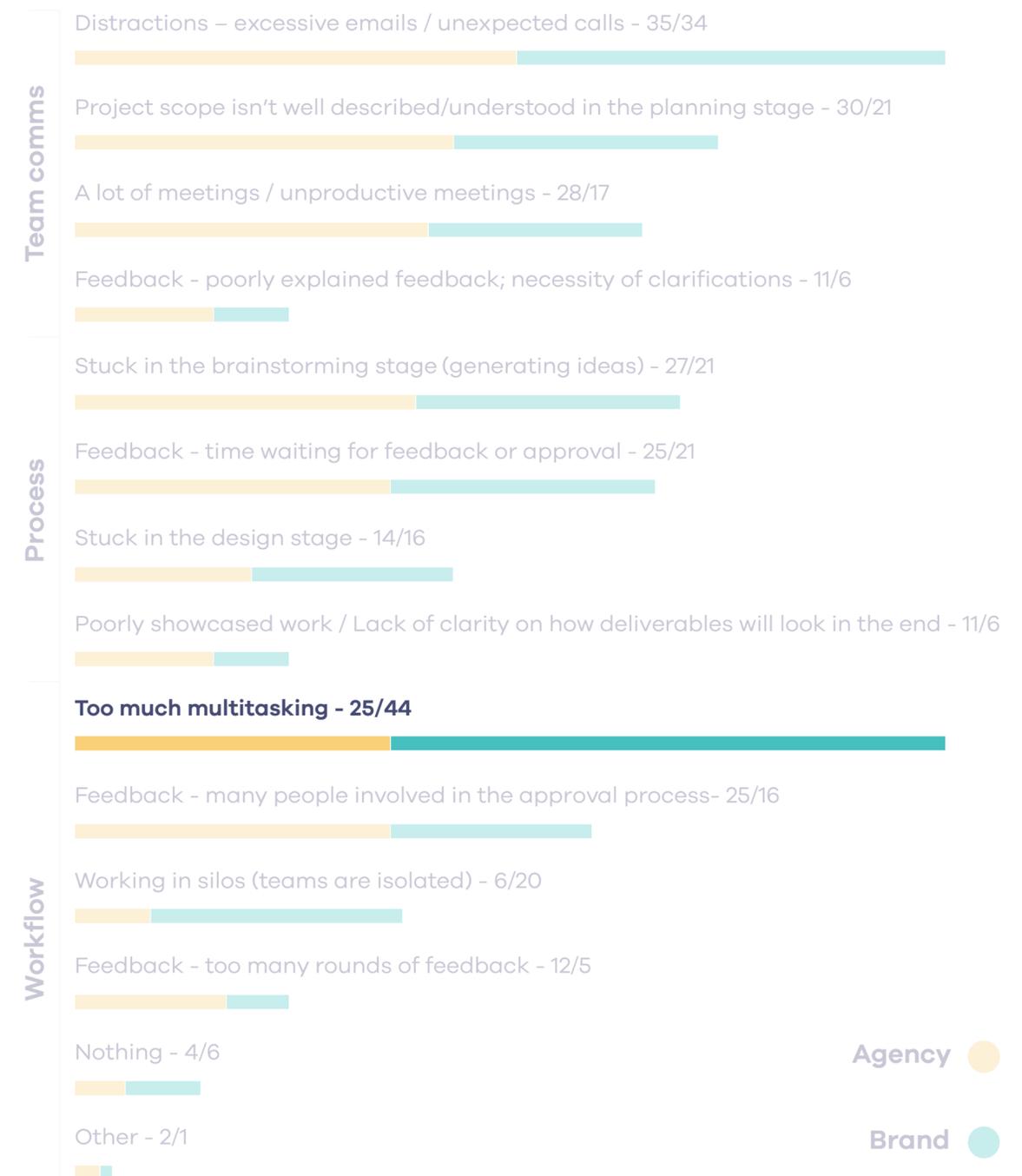
As for the workflow, besides multitasking, the number of people involved in a feedback loop causes delays. If we recall from the team chapter, many other professionals besides the core team usually get involved. PR, Product experts, HR, and Legal have been mentioned. However, integrating a content team with the entire organization is critical for success. So the solution would not be to reduce the number of people but to make the process as smooth as possible.



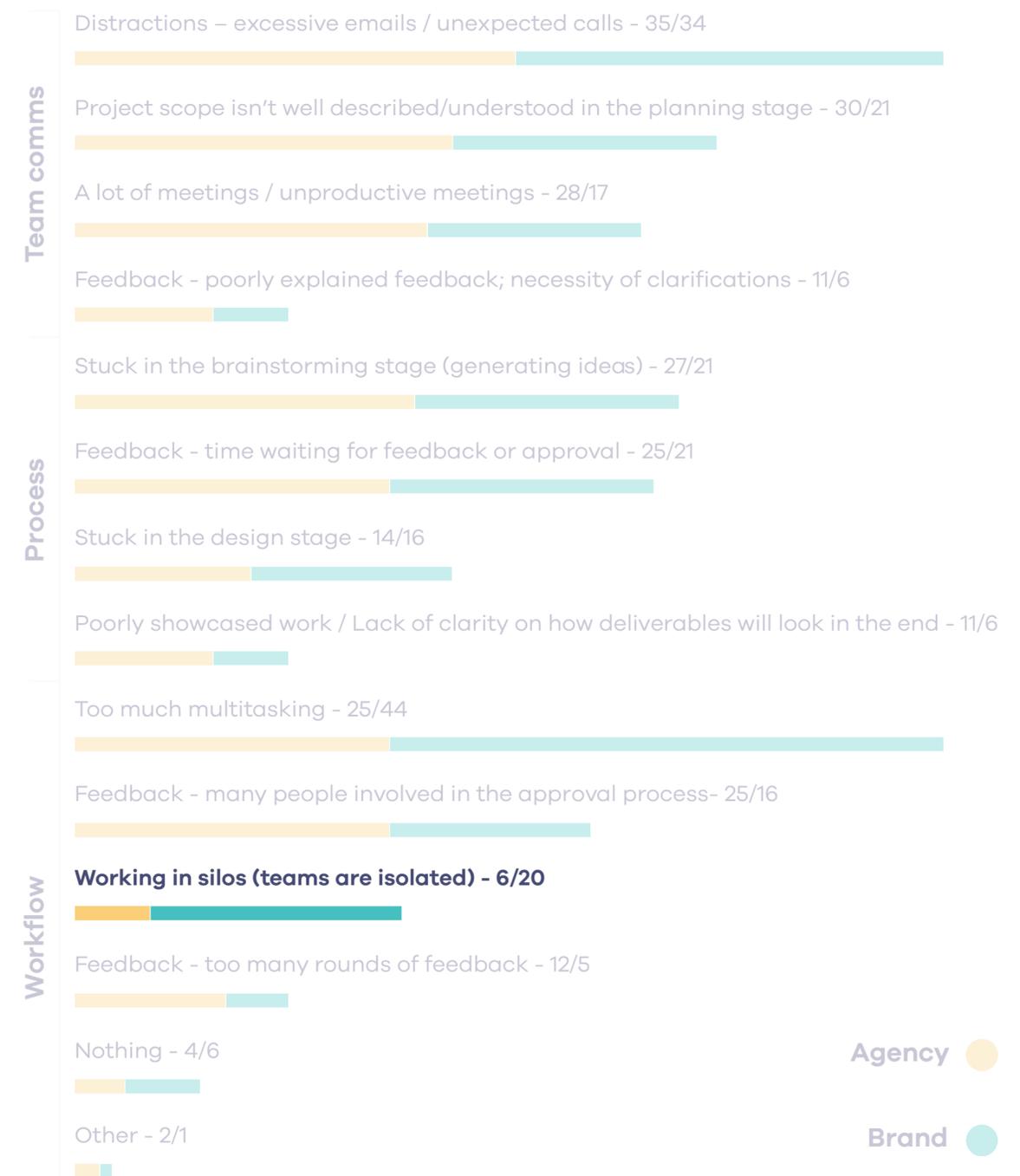
When splitting the data into agency teams and brands, intriguing differences pop out. Firstly, it becomes clear that emails and calls are frustrating universally.



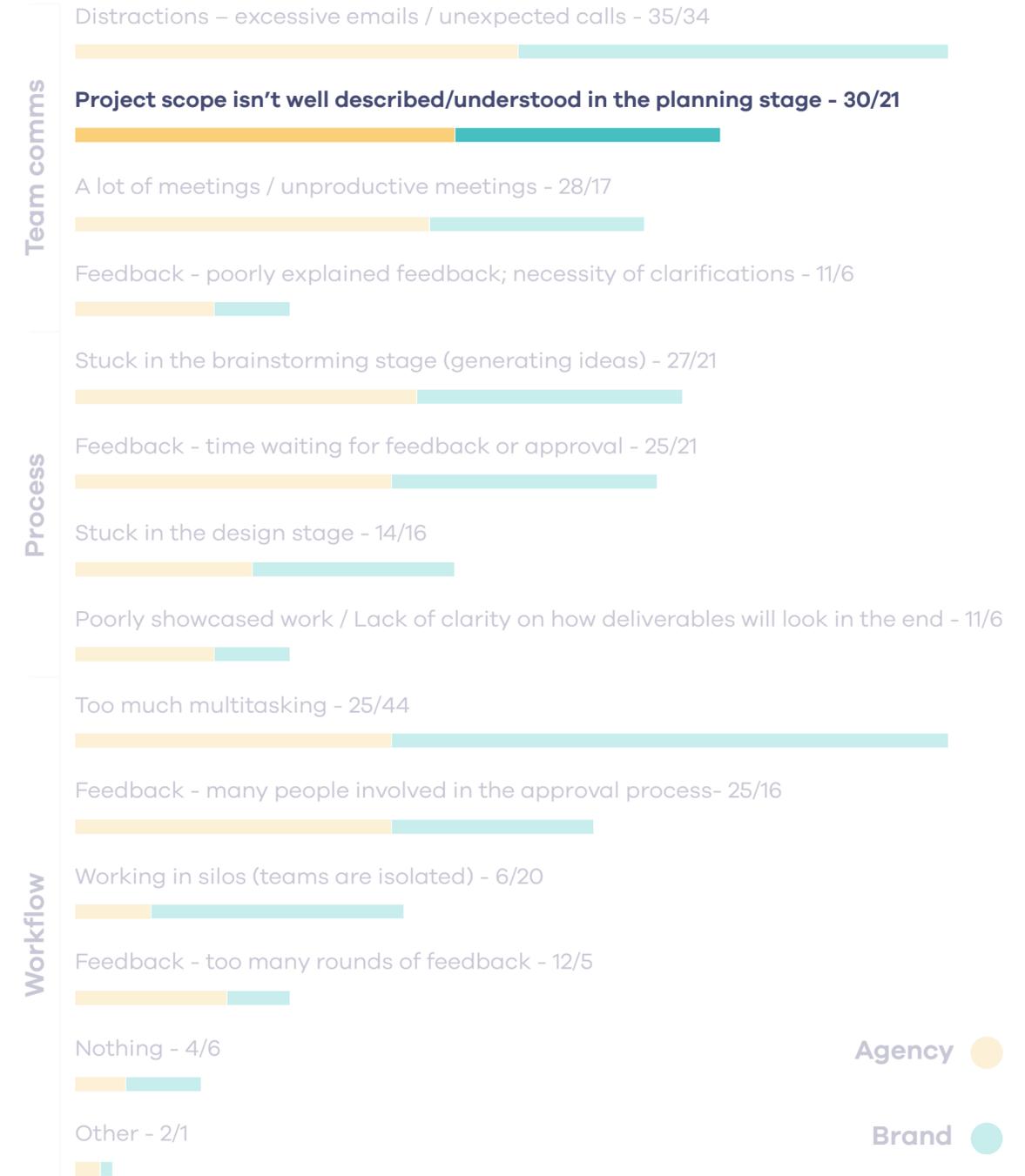
The second captivating fact is that 44% of in-house team members consider multitasking a time-wasting issue as opposed to only 25% of agency teams who would agree. This points to a conclusion we drew earlier in this report: brand in-house teams work on many fronts.



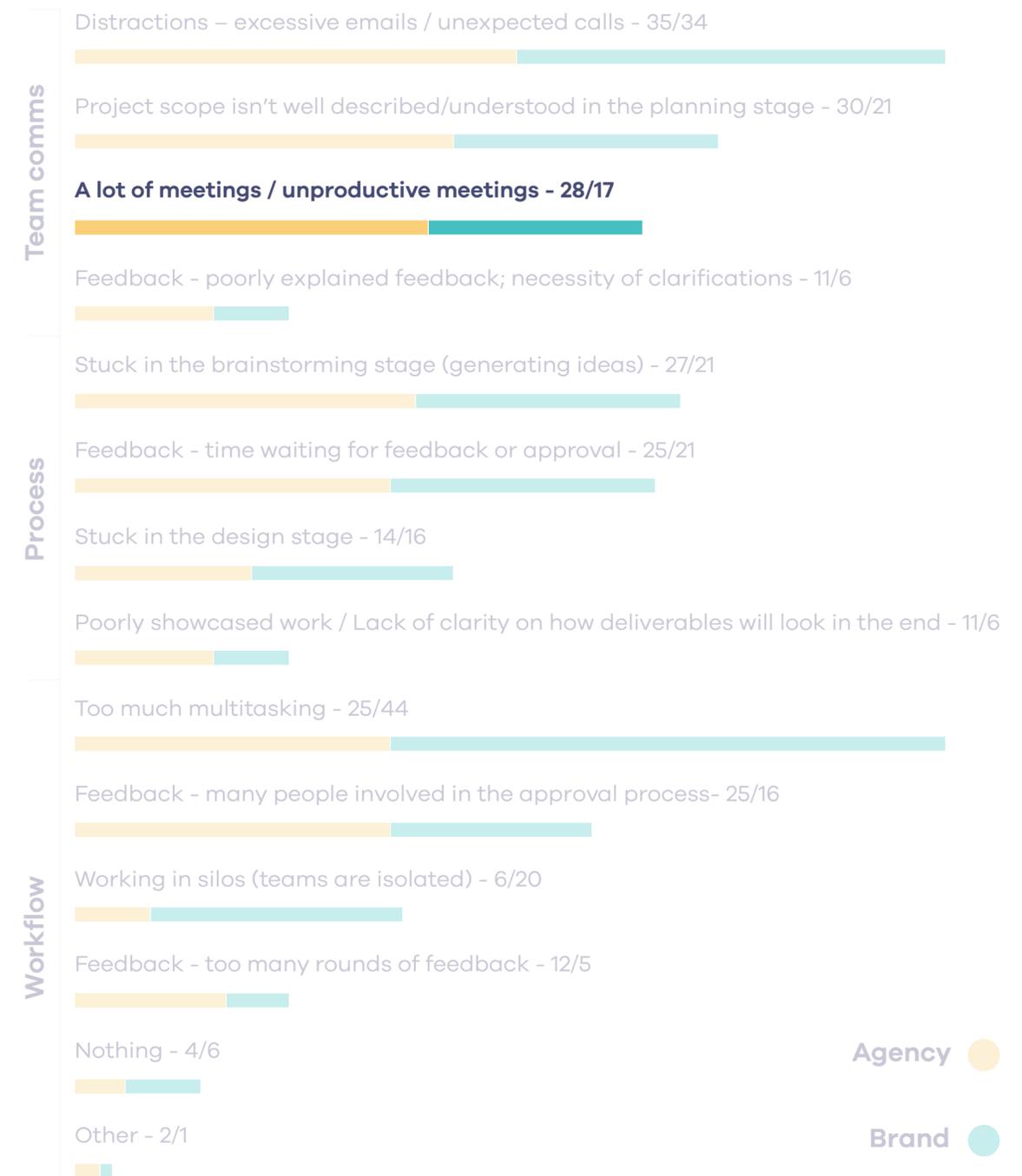
Working in silos is also a much bigger problem for brand teams with 20% considering it a time-waster. It's common for larger corporations to lose touch between teams and for work to be duplicated, communication scattered and flawed, and contact limited. However, silos represent a huge liability and disadvantage in our tech-driven world. Competitors win through spontaneity, collaboration, and flexibility.



Poorly defined and communicated strategies have a larger impact on agency teams being mentioned by 30% of respondents. Amongst brand teams, only 21% considered the same. Communication and alignment between agencies and clients have never been easy. It's been a challenge since the start and it's only increased in gravity. A poorly defined project scope causes project delays, a longer feedback process, and a general state of frustration. Alignment has to be ensured from the first conversation to the smallest piece of feedback.

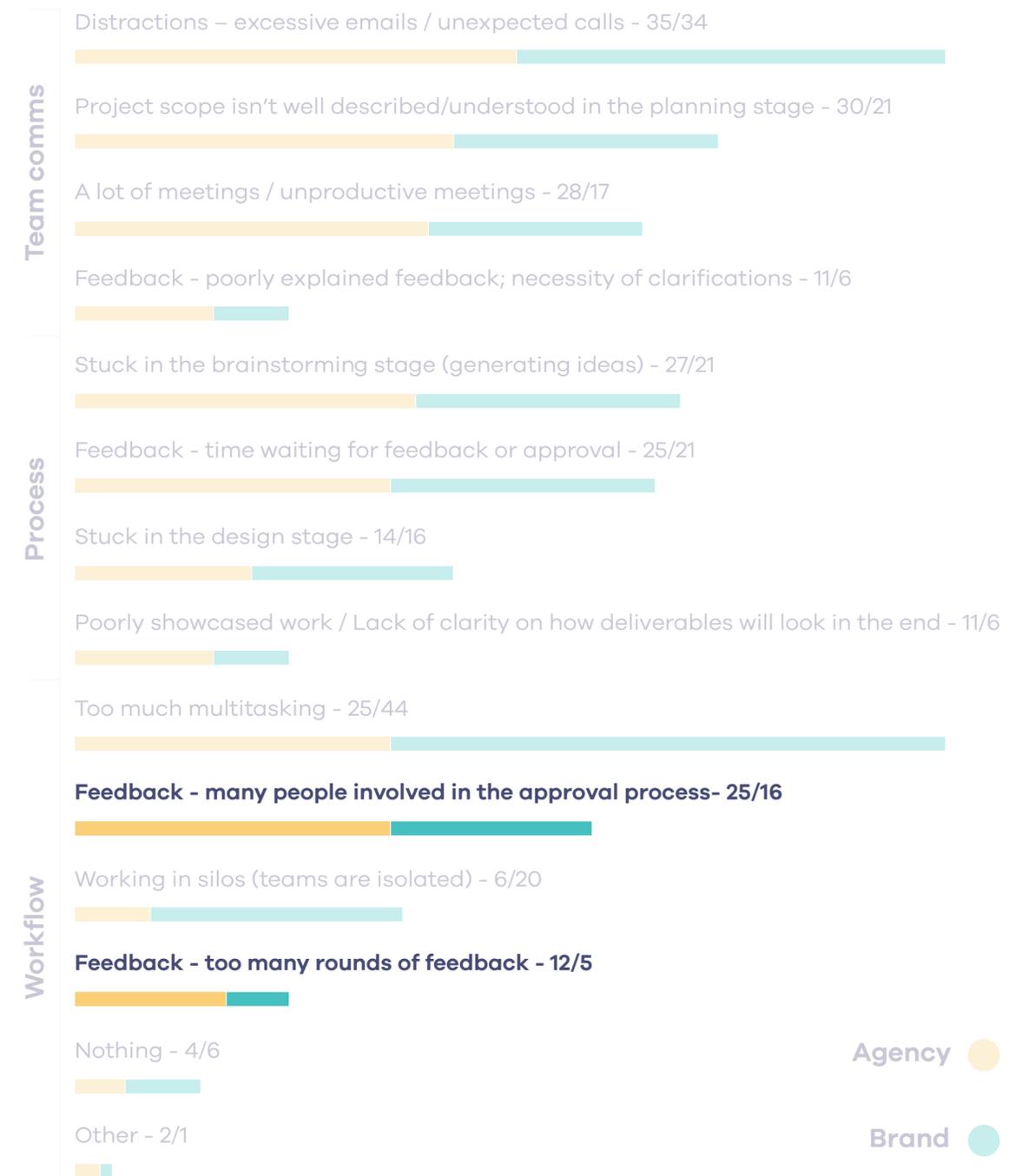


Meetings are another sore spot for agencies. 28% of them selected it as a time waster as opposed to 17% from brand teams. Side by side, the fact that agencies consider both that alignment is faulty and meetings are unproductive is captivating. It goes to show that meetings aren't effective in ensuring alignment and other tactics and tools have to be used to get everyone on the same page.



Lastly, both the number of people involved in the approval process and the number of rounds of feedback stand in the way of agency teams being effective. While a well-defined strategy from the start could highly reduce rounds of feedback, the process in itself can and should be optimized.

Overall, these results showcase that several parts of collaboration cause inefficiencies and represent obstacles to a seamless workflow. In light of the fact that content demand is only expected to increase, it is vital for each company to analyze and optimize their workflow.

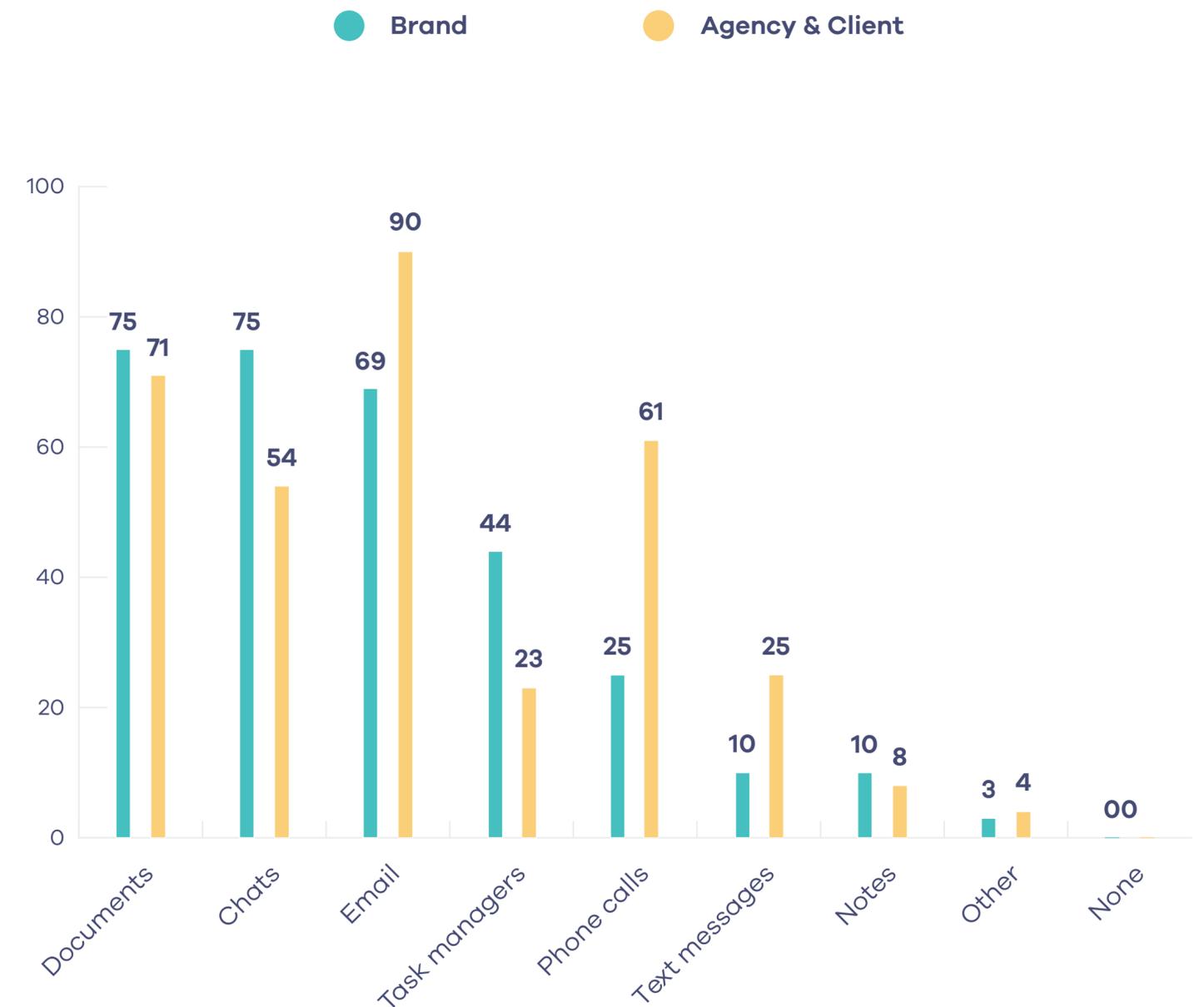


What are the tools used for collaboration?

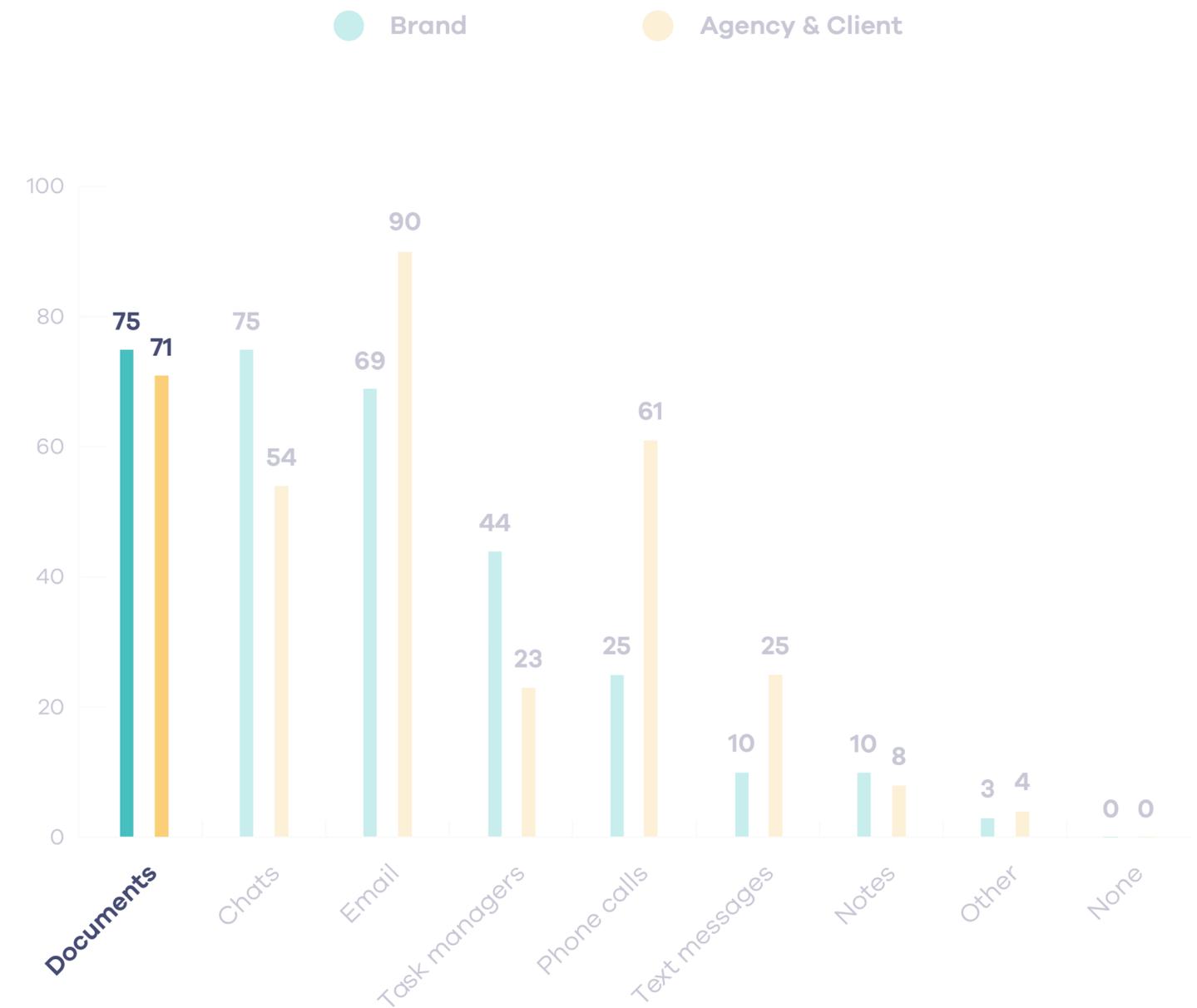
The previous sub-topic has clearly shown there are many grievances against the current state of content collaboration. Multitasking is not productive, emails are distracting, meetings are chaotic, and feedback processes are time-wasteful.

In order to get closer to the “why” behind these claims, we wanted to find out what are the tools teams use to communicate today.

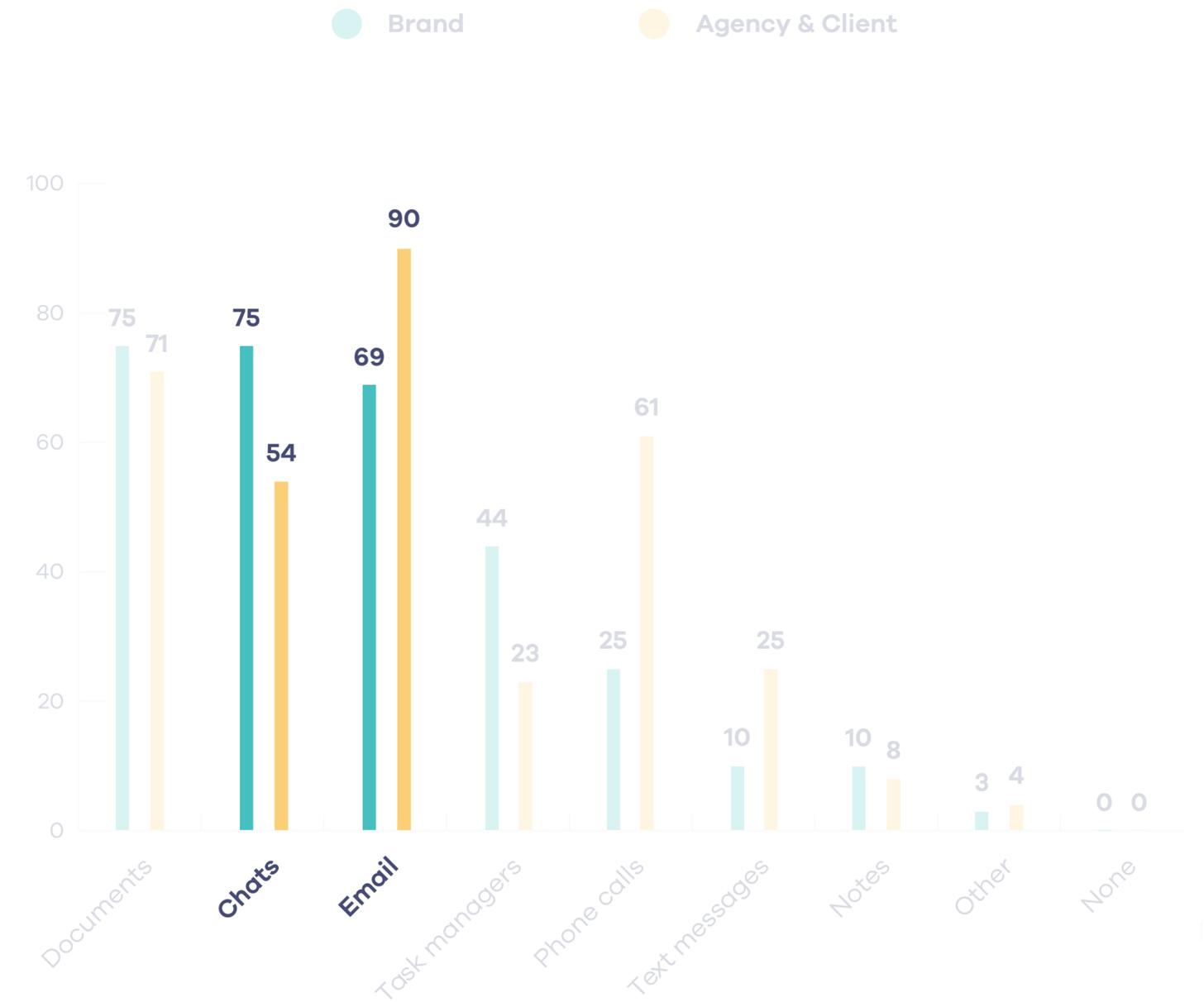
At a glance, there are a lot of tools used to interact. The high number in itself causes chaos, confusion, and distractions. Without clear paths and collaboration habits, miscommunication is bound to appear.



Documents, chats, and emails are the most popular. Documents, selected by 75% of brands and 71% of agencies, seem universally used to communicate and share work. They represent a satisfactory method of showcasing text-based work such as blog articles. However, documents are not suitable for more visually-oriented content like infographics, whitepapers, or social media posts. Such work should be showcased in environments that offer the necessary possibilities to preview it as it were live. It is the only way to prevent misunderstandings and keep feedback relevant and well-informed.

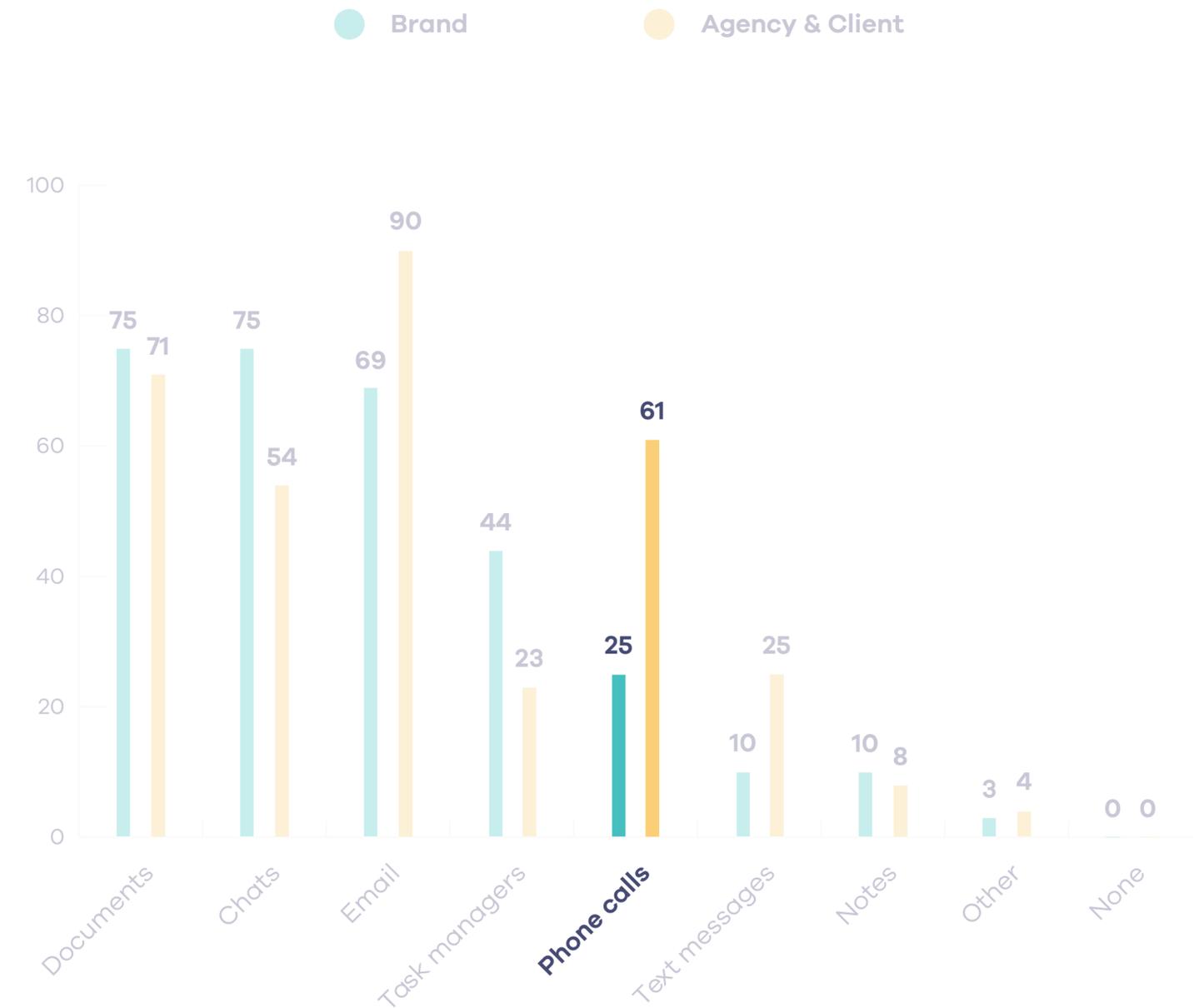


Chats are more commonly used by in-house brand teams (75%) than agencies (54%) which can have logical reasoning. Chat tools are usually chosen by corporations to be used between employees and most often don't have the option to invite external members.



On the same note, emails are undoubtedly the mean-of-choice for agencies and clients as 90% selected it as the way they most often communicate. Since chats are usually used internal-only, it is evident why email is so conventional. Nonetheless, conventional does not imply adequacy. On the contrary, studies show that employees spend 28% of their time managing emails and that the average employee opens their email 36 times in an hour.

Phone calls represent one of the most distracting and intrusive ways of sharing information. It is also one of the most vulnerable since spoken communication is lost, forgotten, and misinterpreted. Yet, 61% of agencies turn to their smartphones to get in touch, get feedback, or share thoughts.

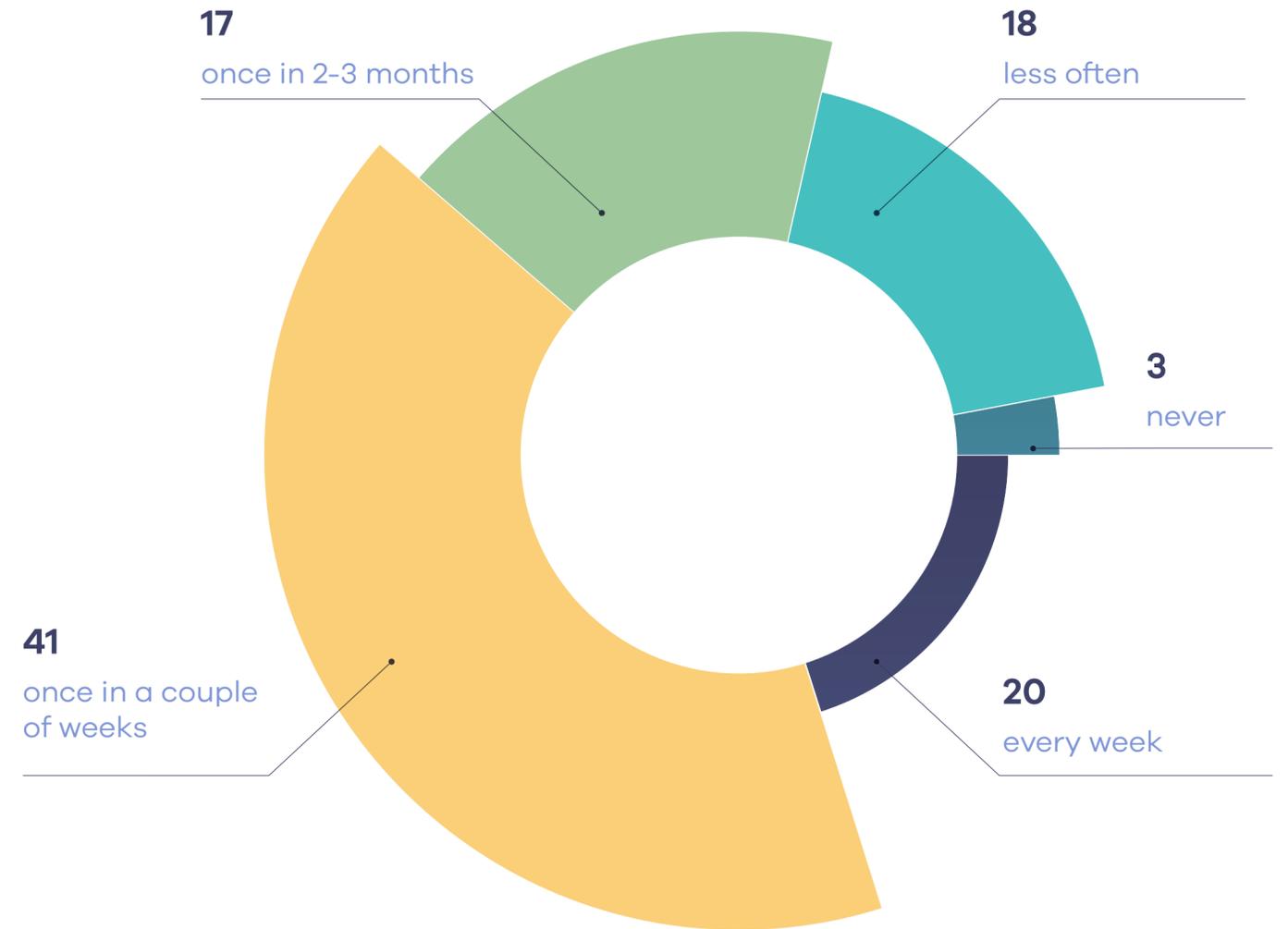


It becomes clear that tools stand at the root of content marketing workflows and can make or break how seamless collaboration actually is. A mishmash of tools creates not only distractions and chaos, but leads to miscommunication and ultimately mistakes that can damage a brand's reputation.

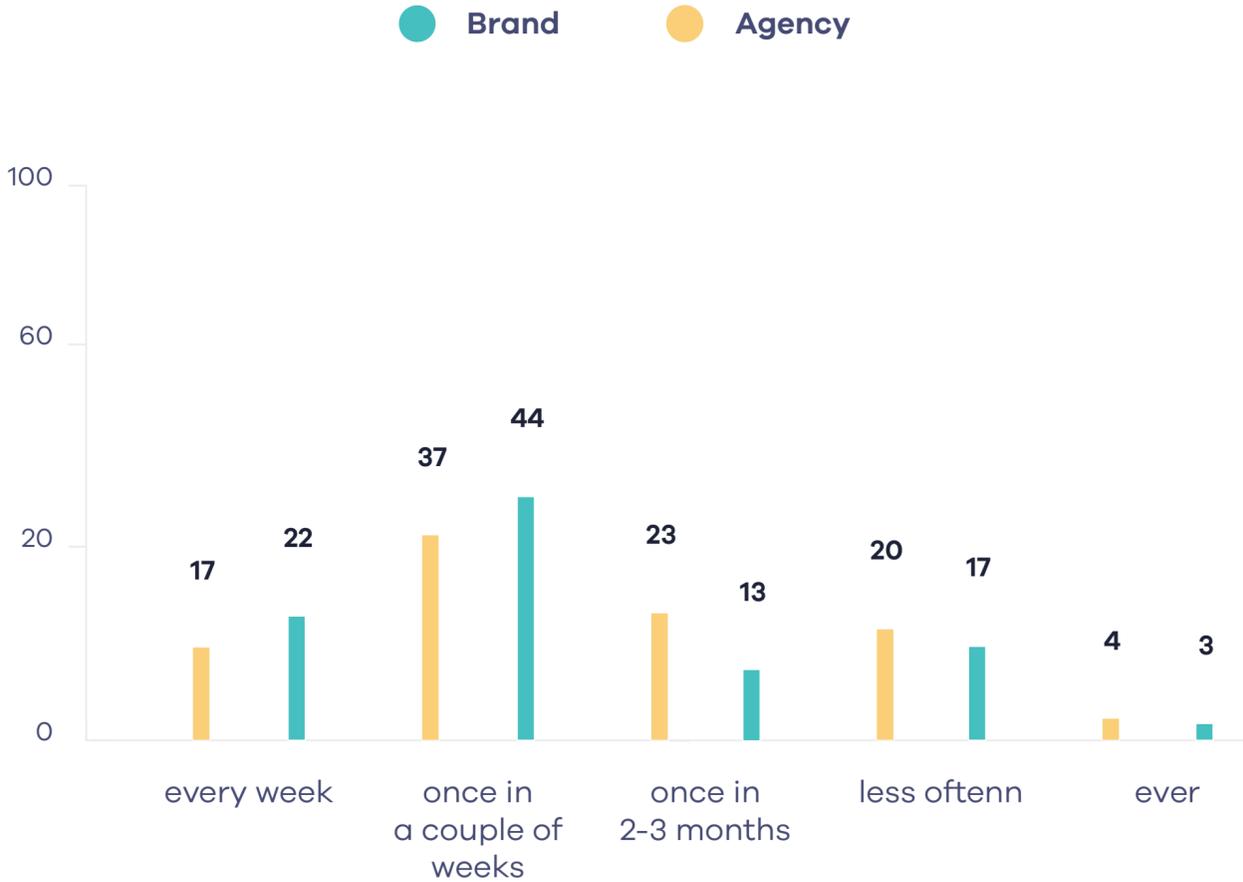
How does that reflect in campaign delivery?

A dysfunctional workflow can work against the productivity of a team, their results, and their punctuality. For a holistic image of today's workflow, we wanted to understand how often campaigns get delayed. Here's what we found:

61% of content marketing teams have delayed projects at least once in a couple of weeks, and 20% of them encounter this issue on a weekly basis. Only 3% of marketers say they never have delayed campaigns. To them, we can only say congratulations.



Between agencies and brands, surprisingly, it appears that brand teams are less punctual. 66% of in-house teams have project delays every other week, while only 54% of agencies fall into the same category. Agencies still face frequent delays only 24% stating that they rarely or never postpone their projects.

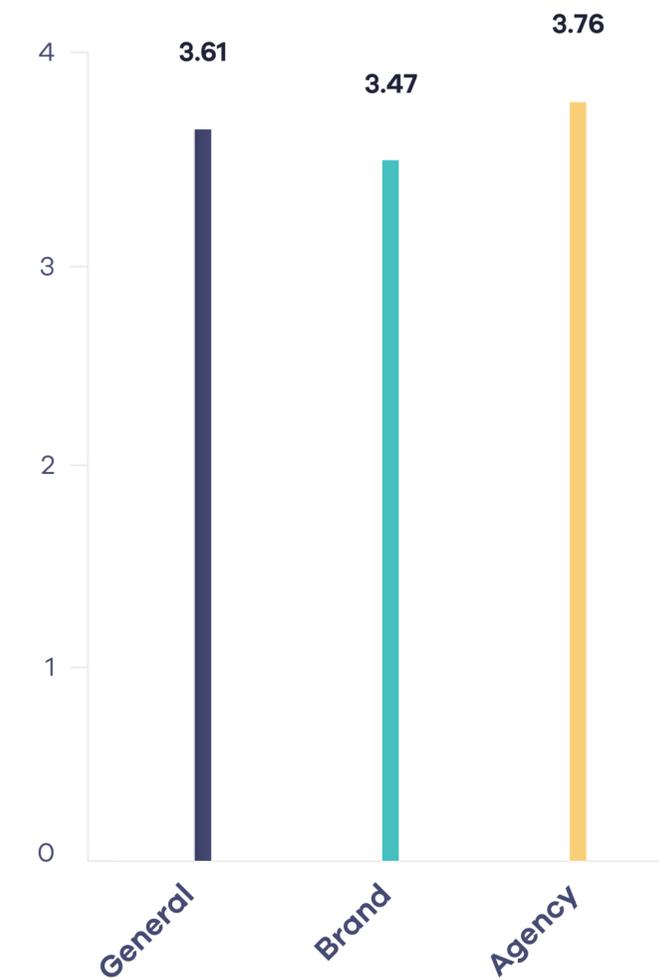


The Insider View

Such a landscape is bound to have an impact over the satisfaction and state of mind of the professionals involved. So how do marketers feel about the current processes?

Generally, the average level of satisfaction is 3.61 on a scale of 1 to 5 with in-house teams seeming much more distressed. Brand teams reached an average of only 3.47 as opposed to agency teams that reached 3.76.

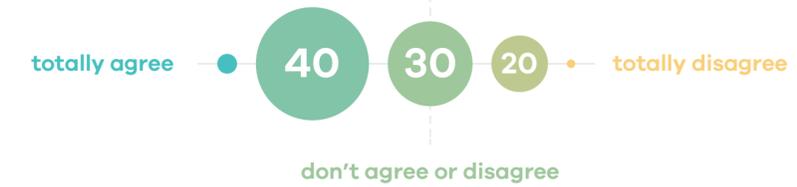
The general level of satisfaction is just a glimpse and can't accurately present marketers' beliefs. To that end, we've dug deeper to report what exactly is satisfactory and what not for content professionals.



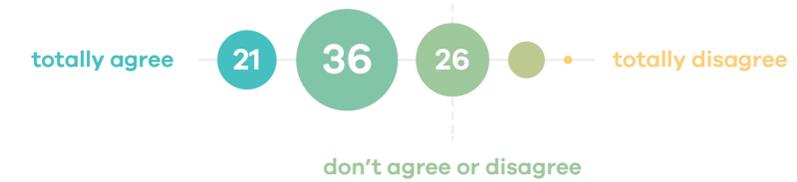
93% of in-house teams aren't fully satisfied with the entire content marketing process, only 57% of marketers consider their team communication somewhat efficient, and only 17% are entirely happy with their team's feedback process. Overall, brand content teams consider the entire content marketing process to be the problem.

Brand

I am satisfied with the entire content marketing process



I consider the team communication to be time efficient



I am satisfied with our feedback process



I consider our team to be strategically aligned



Agencies, on the other hand, are most dissatisfied by the efficiency of client communication, only 23% being entirely happy with it.

What is concerning about these stats is that marketers feel unease with their current content marketing processes. All the while, these exact processes, and workflows are vital to a team's success. The problem seems to remain that marketers are overwhelmed and don't stop to audit what is going well and what should be improved.

Agency

I always understand my client's expectation towards my content marketing work



I consider the client communication to be time efficient



I consider we're strategically aligned with the client



The Conclusions

Through this report, we wanted to take a holistic view of today's content marketing landscape. In order to do that we investigated the topic from two points of view. The first was to understand where content demands and production are at the moment. The second point of view was to look at the content marketing teams and how they work together. With these two answers, we can contrast and compare how teams have adapted to the increasingly fast pace that technology imposed.

What we've discovered is that the demands are high. 44% of marketers produce over 5 pieces of content per week and 51% of teams publish over 11 social media posts per week.

Processes and tools, however, don't seem to have caught up. With too much multitasking affecting the productivity of 35% of marketers and 34% pointing to emails as

distractions, challenges become evident.

As for tools, documents, emails, and phone calls still represent the main ways to showcase work and collaborate on it.

These stats showcase that there's a mishmash of tools and processes that ultimately represent bottlenecks in content marketing. These obstacles firstly lead to inefficient teams and secondly are cause for miscommunication, distress, and mistakes.

To stand out and win in the competitive environment, brands need to be firstly fast and flexible, and secondly, cautious.

Speed is required to leverage opportunities as they appear.

Did this data hit too close to home?



Get your team on the same page

Planable is a collaboration platform for brand content. With Planable social media teams work better together and save time on coordinating content. The product makes it easy to visualize, approve and publish social content from one shared space. They're trusted by over 4000 teams to simplify their content workflows.



Stay informed

We are Social Media (WeRSM) is one of the world's leading independent sources of digital marketing news and insight, covering social media marketing, the connected lifestyle, and a lot in between. Over the years, they've become a valuable resource that thousands of top agency and brand professionals trust to stay up-to-date on a daily basis.

Methodology

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To identify and evaluate the difficulties encountered in creating content marketing assets

SAMPLE

For this survey, 2 samples were used:

- Agencies - 102
- Brands and clients - 137 (126 & 11)

General Sample – 239 respondents

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was done through the CAWI method (self-administered through a web link). The link was programmed on the “Typeform” platform, shipped by the customer.

FIELD WORK TIMING

February 25th, 2019 – March 24th, 2019.

