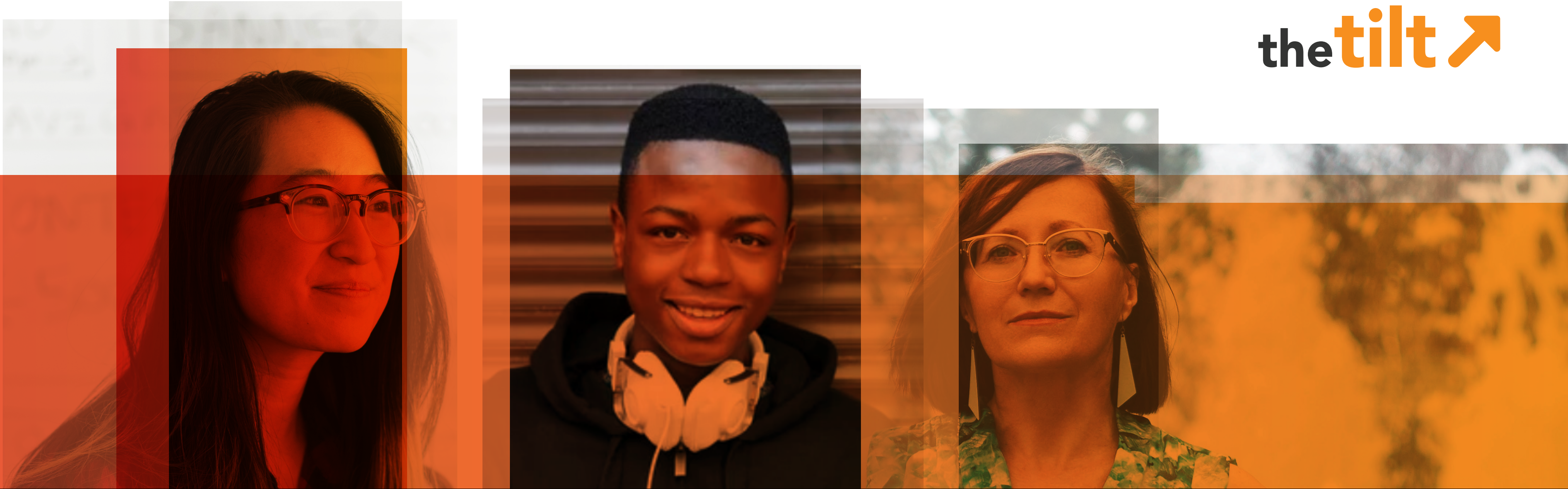


2021

CONTENT ENTREPRENEUR
BENCHMARK RESEARCH

SUPPLEMENT

the tilt 



The Unconventionals

Who are content entrepreneurs? And why do they see entrepreneurship as their ticket to financial and professional self-determination?

In this data-rich supplement to the main report, we review all the research findings.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: ANN HANDLEY AND UNEMPLOYABLE

Content entrepreneurs (CEs) make money by turning valuable and interesting content into revenue streams. Some are solopreneurs making a comfortable income based on sharing their unique expertise with a niche audience. Others are powering high-growth content ventures that employ many. All are part of a new movement of professionals pursuing work on their own terms.

The Tilt published *The Unconventionals* to get a deeper understanding of content entrepreneurs. The benchmark study of over 1,400 respondents looked into the minds, motivations, and aspirations of content entrepreneurs. What does it take to build a successful content business? What motivates the leap from traditional employment to independent creator? And how will this group of unconventional thinkers influence the future of work?

In this data supplement, review the findings question by question and discover results not seen in the primary report. To read *The Unconventionals* primary report, visit thetilt.com/research.

WHO DID WE STUDY?

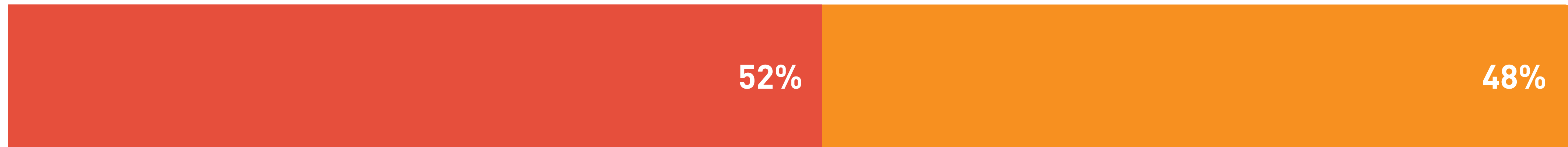
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY GENERATION

■ Gen Z (9-24 years) ■ Millennial (25-40 years) ■ Gen X (41-56 years) ■ Boomer (57-75 years)



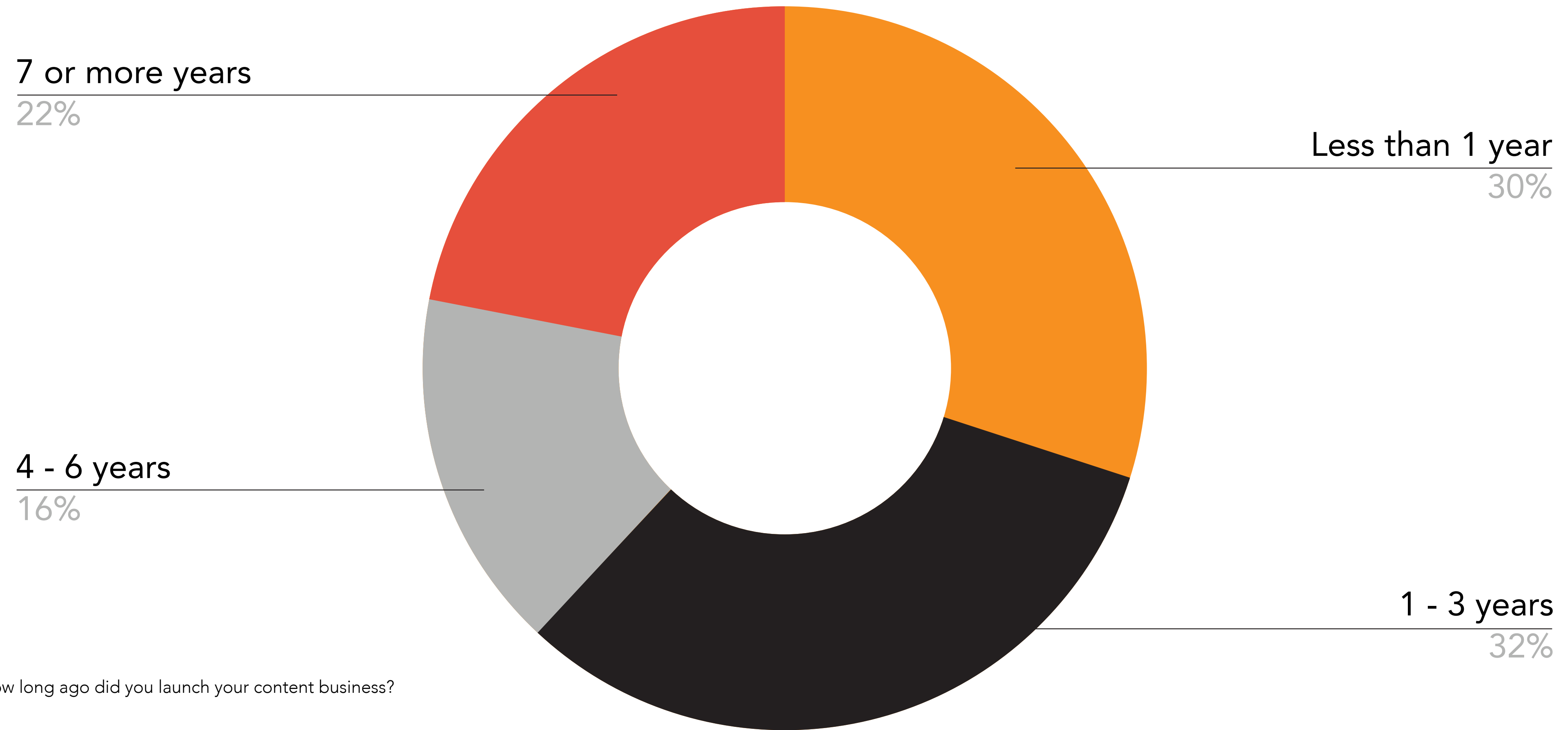
FULL-TIME VS. PART-TIME

■ Content business full time ■ Content business as side gig



WHO DID WE STUDY?

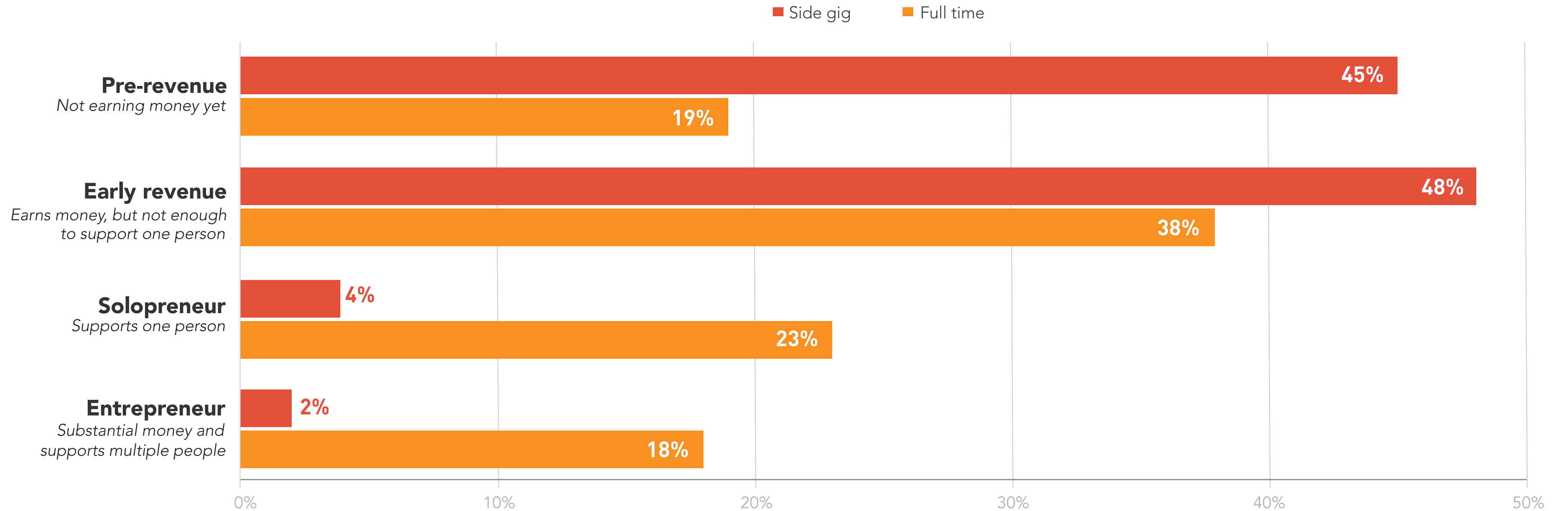
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY YEARS IN CONTENT BUSINESS



Q: How long ago did you launch your content business?

FINANCIAL MATURITY

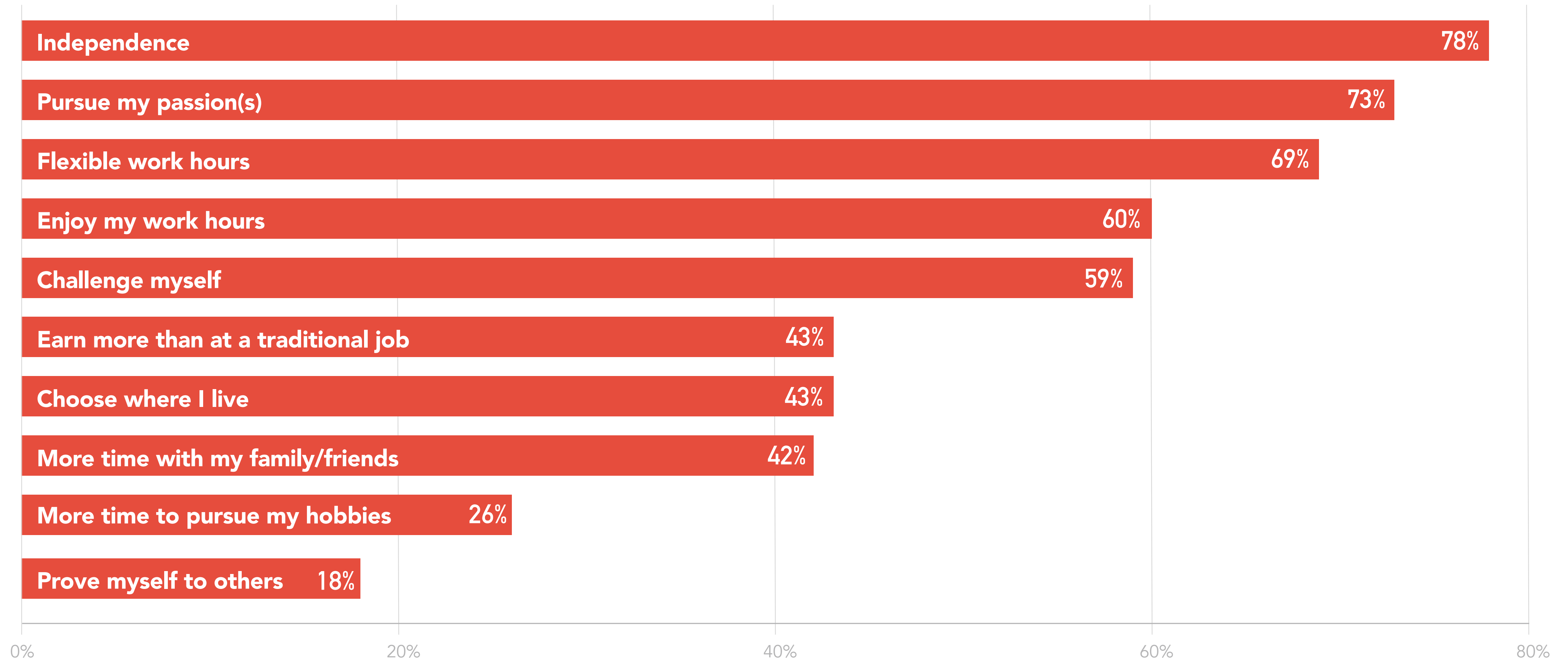
More than 40% of full-time content entrepreneurs are supporting at least one person



Q: Which of the following statements best describes your content business?

BENEFITS OF CONTENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Lifestyle issues overwhelmingly selected over traditional factors like compensation



Q: What are the benefits of content entrepreneurship for you?

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BENEFITS OF CONTENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY YEARS IN BUSINESS

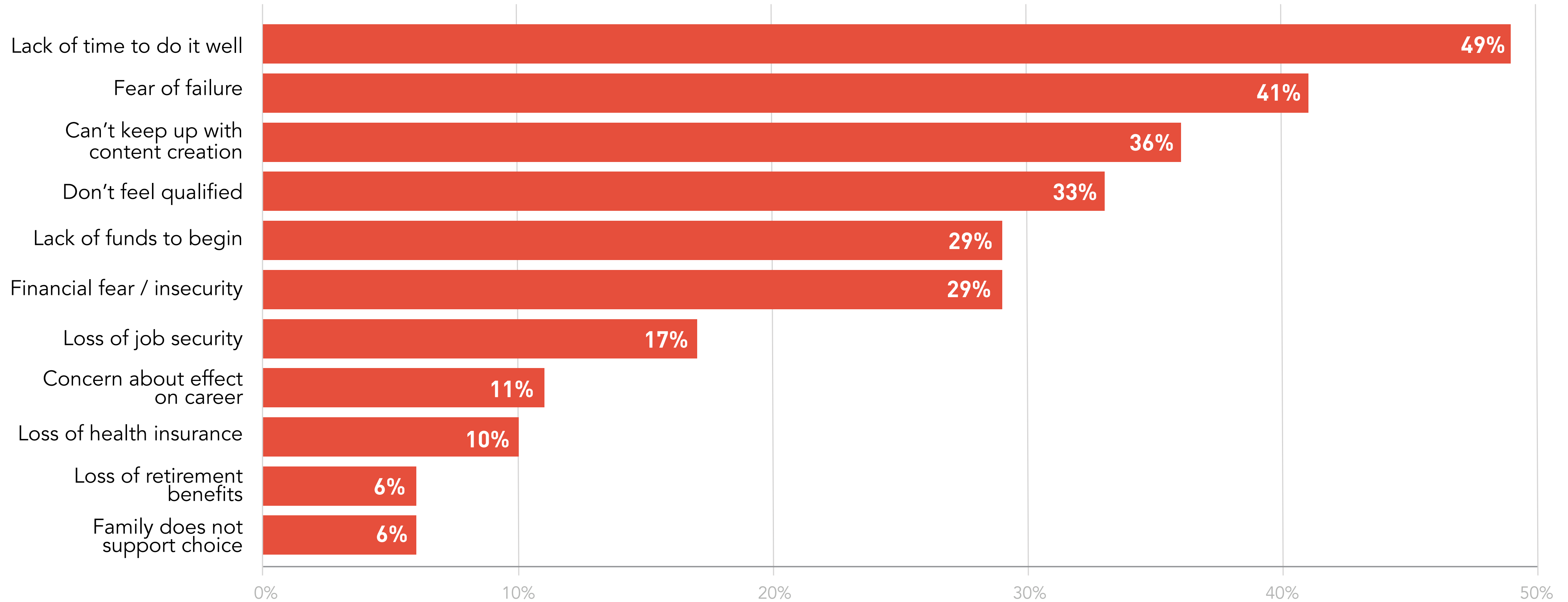
Lifestyle issues overwhelmingly selected over traditional factors like compensation



Q: What are the benefits of content entrepreneurship for you?
Showing selected responses that highlight changes over time.

BARRIERS TO LAUNCHING A CONTENT BUSINESS

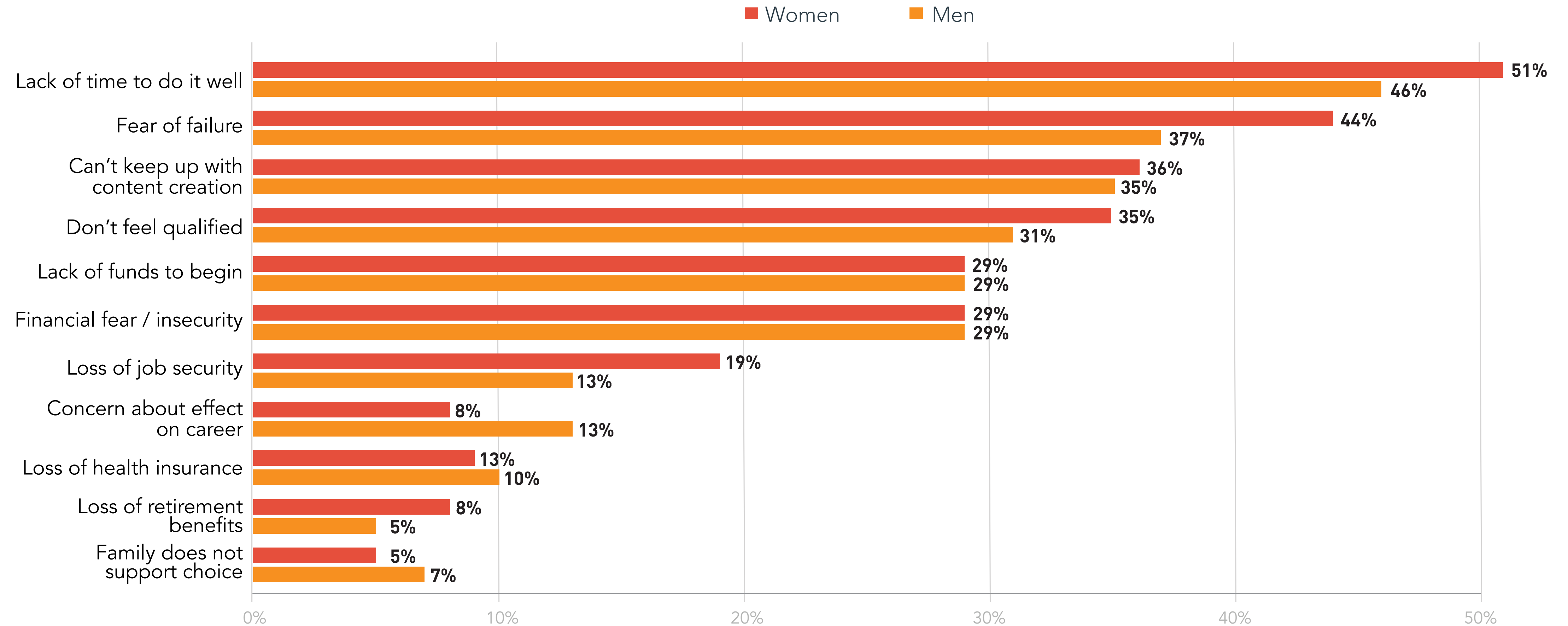
Lack of time and fear of failure are top reasons would-be entrepreneurs stay on sidelines



Q: What prevents you from launching a content business?

BARRIERS TO LAUNCHING A CONTENT BUSINESS BY GENDER*

Lack of time and fear of failure were the most frequently cited regardless of gender identity.



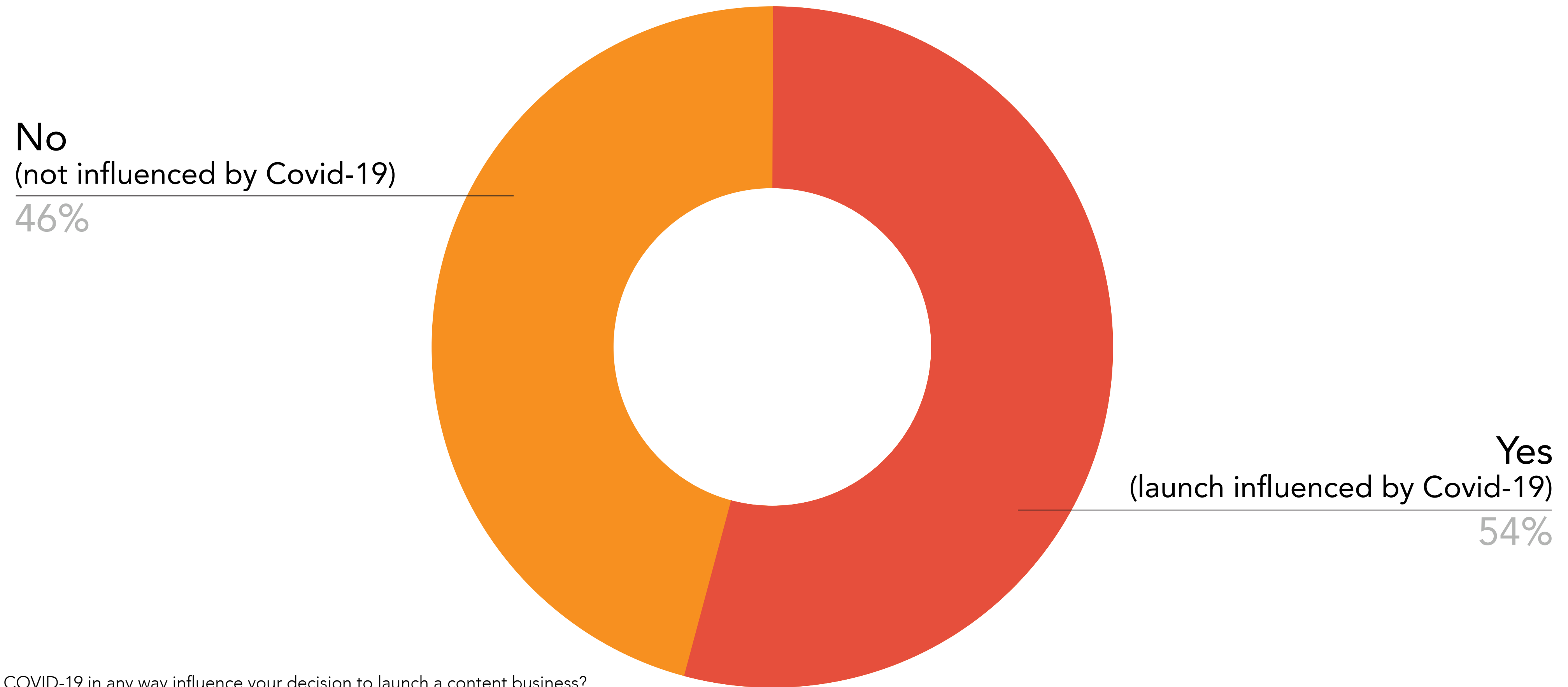
Q: What prevents you from launching a content business?

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* Nonbinary responses not shown because they make up less than 2% of the overall sample, meaning the differences found between nonbinary and other genders are not statistically significant.

COVID LAUNCHES A NEW COHORT OF CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS

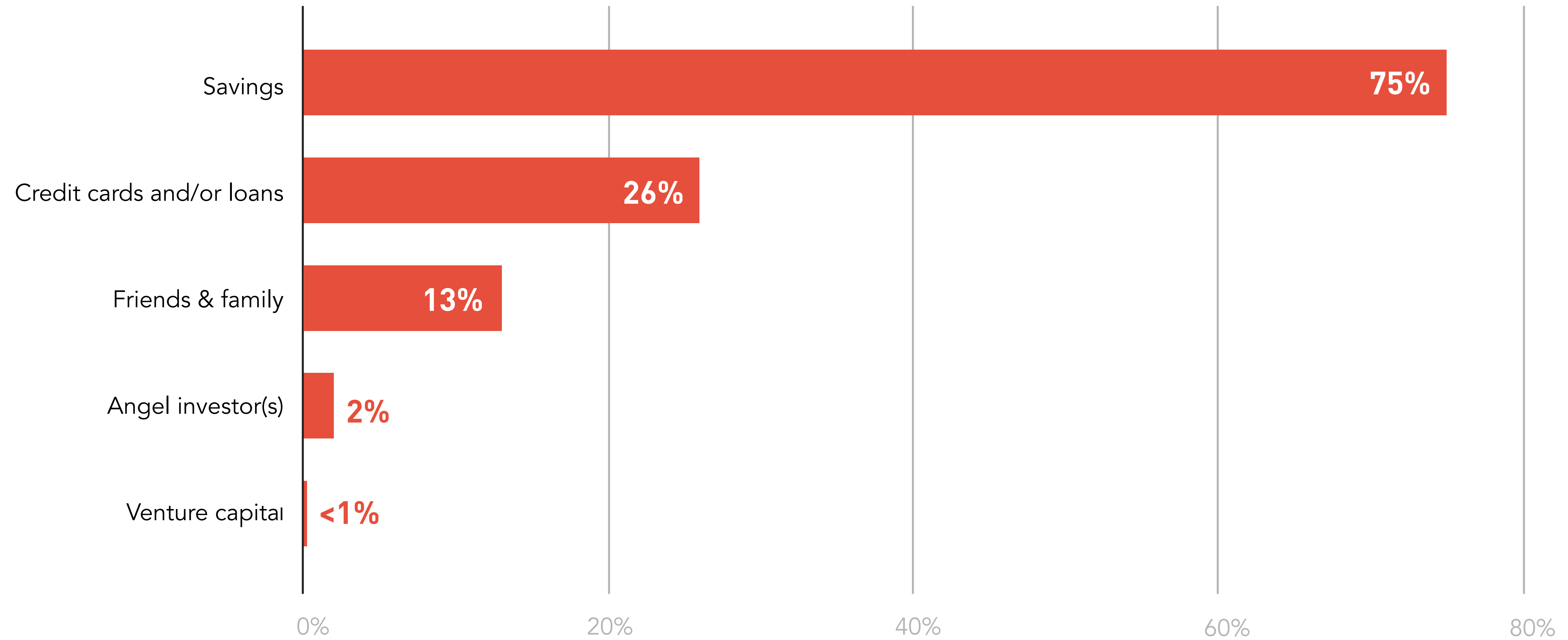
More than half of those who launched in the last year were influenced to do so by the pandemic.



Q: Did COVID-19 in any way influence your decision to launch a content business?

MOST RELY ON SAVINGS TO FUND THEIR CONTENT BUSINESS LAUNCH

A tiny fraction take investor money

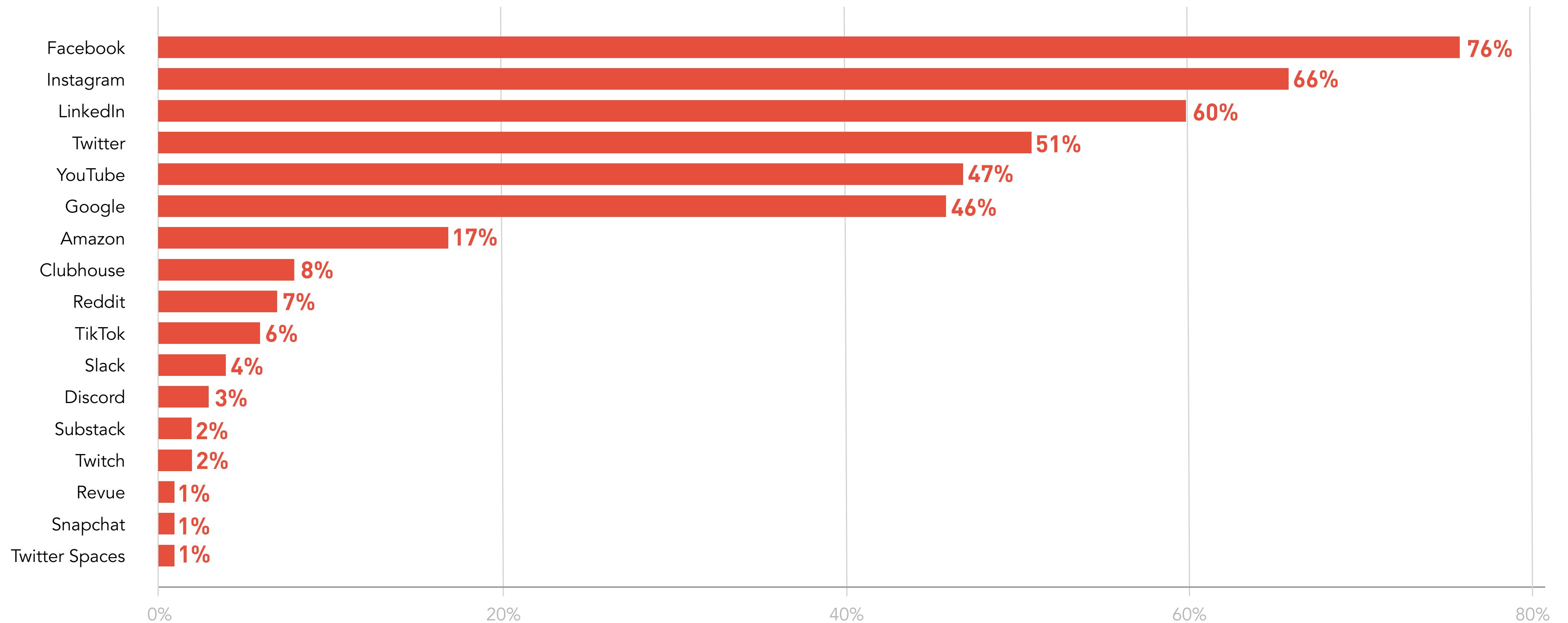


Q: How have you funded your content business? Select all that apply.

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SOCIAL CHANNELS USED BY CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS

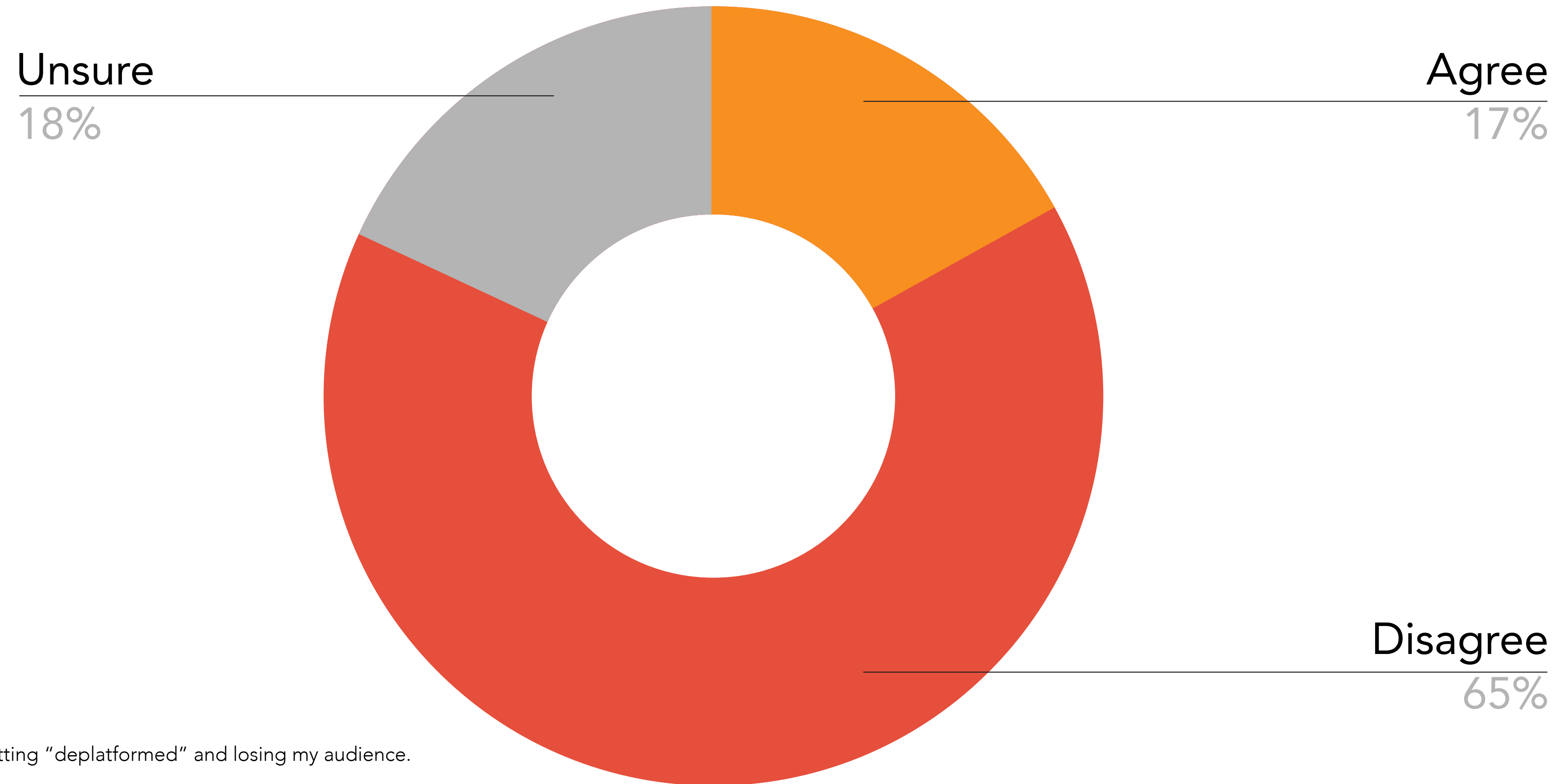
Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn dominate for this cohort of entrepreneurs



Q: Which of these channels do you use to reach your audience?

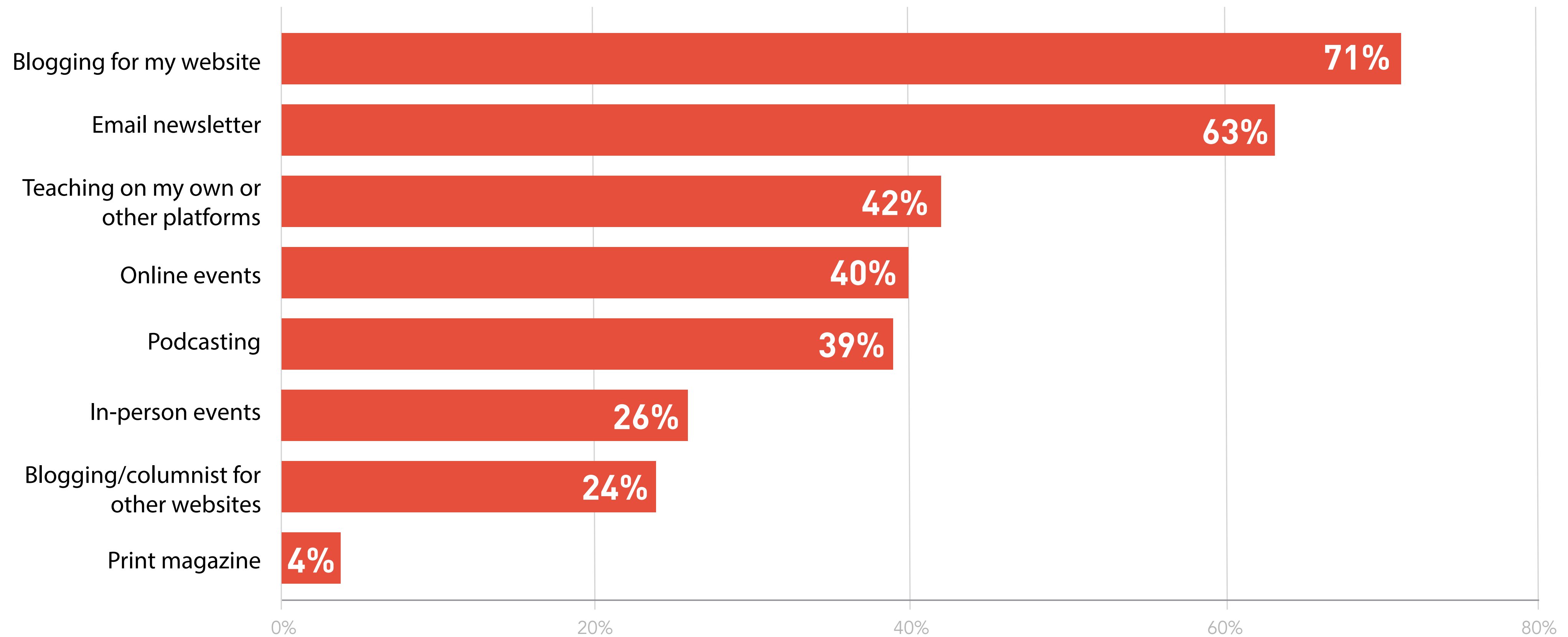
IS DEPLATFORMING A RISK FOR CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS?

Despite heavy reliance on Big Tech, most content entrepreneurs not concerned about getting deplatformed



WHICH OWNED CHANNELS DO CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS USE MOST OFTEN?

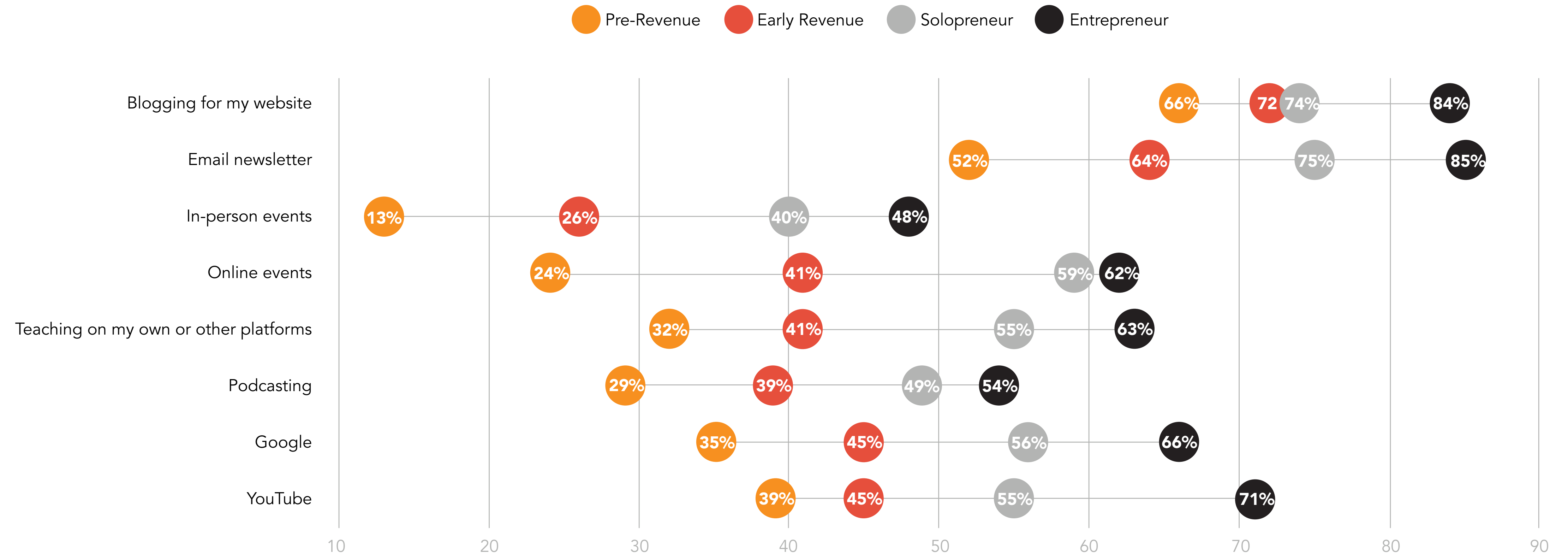
Blogging and email newsletters most common by a wide margin



Q: Which of these channels/media do you use to reach your audience?

WHAT CHANNELS DO HIGHER-REVENUE ENTREPRENEURS USE TO REACH THEIR AUDIENCE?

Entrepreneurs much more likely to leverage owned channels, such as blogging and email



Q: Which of these channels do you use to reach your audience?
 Showing selected responses where differences are greatest between segments.

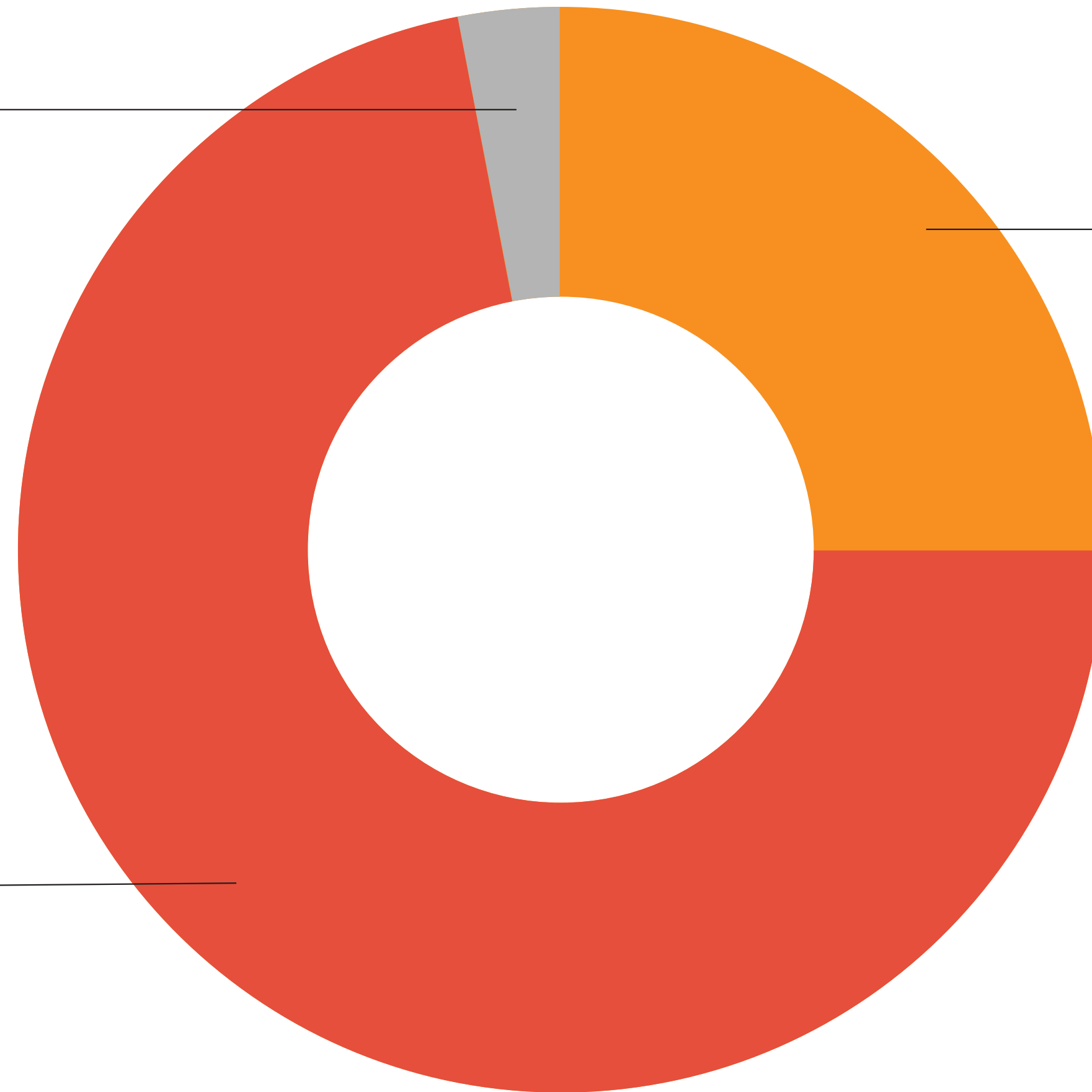
SINGLE-CHANNEL CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS

Just 1 in 4 full-time content entrepreneurs consider their content business a single-channel business

Unsure
3%

Yes, single channel
25%

No, not single channel
72%

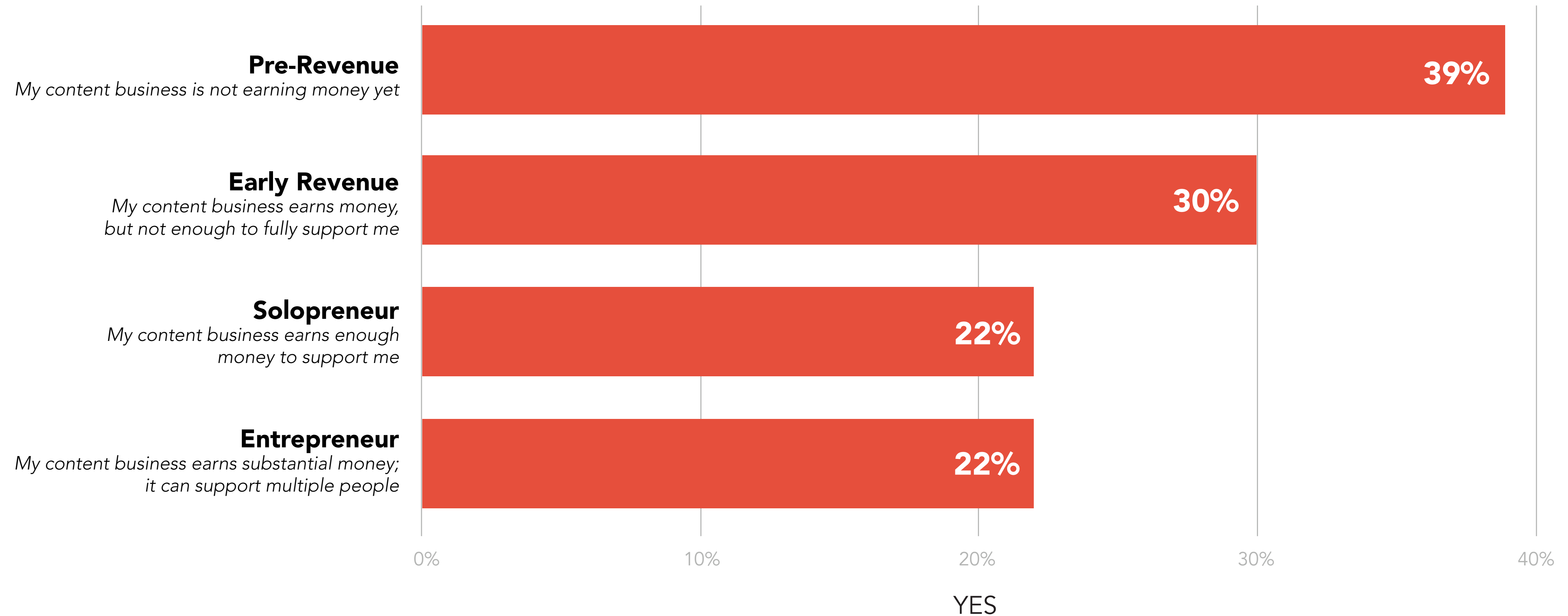


Q: Would you describe your content business as primarily a single-channel business? (Showing full-time CEs only.)

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SINGLE-CHANNEL CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS BY FINANCIAL MATURITY

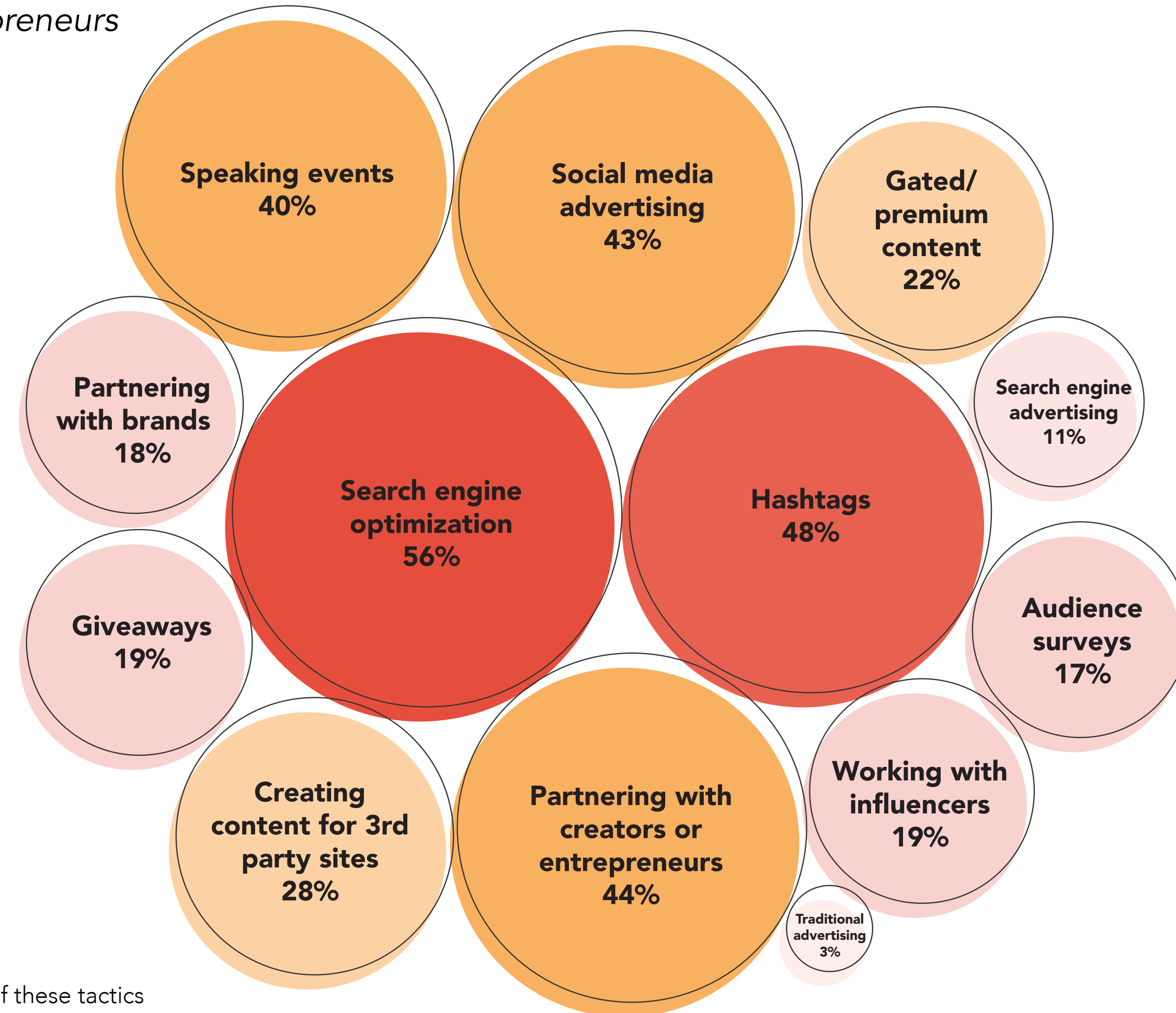
Single-channel businesses less common for established content entrepreneurs



Q: Would you describe your content business as primarily a single-channel business? (Showing "yes" responses.)

HOW DO CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS GROW THEIR AUDIENCE?

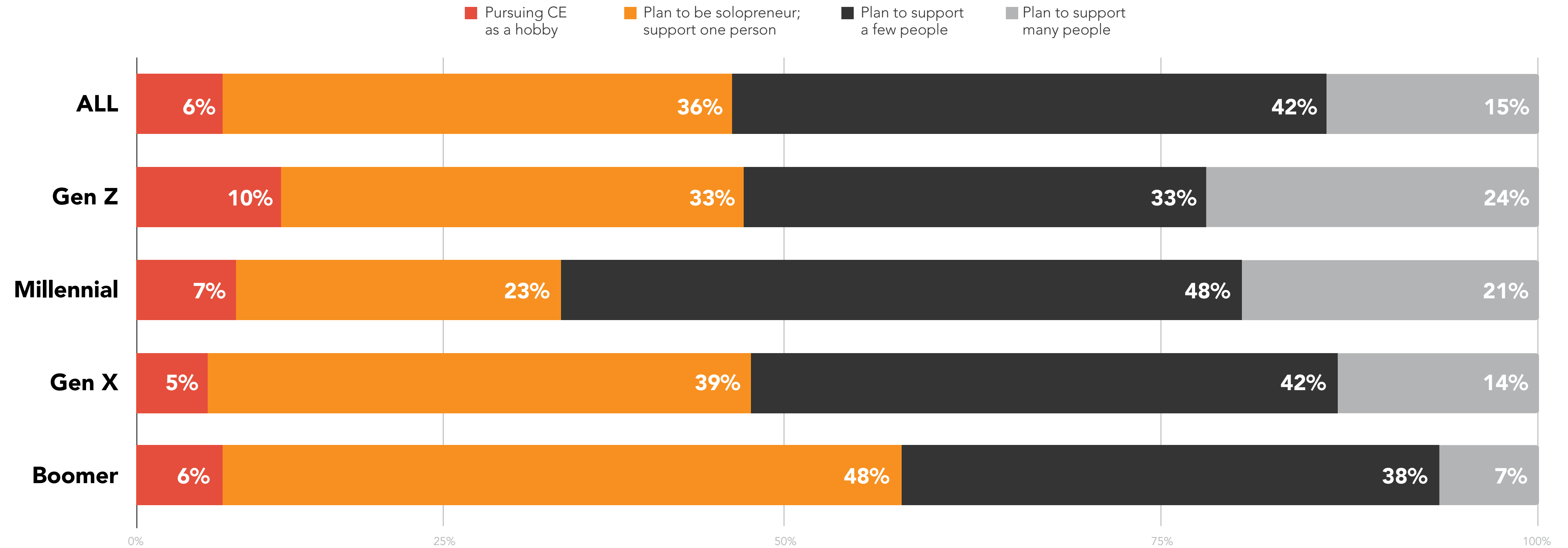
SEO a top tactic for content entrepreneurs



Q: Aside from using social media generally, which of these tactics do you use to grow your audience?

LONG-TERM AMBITIONS FOR THE BUSINESS

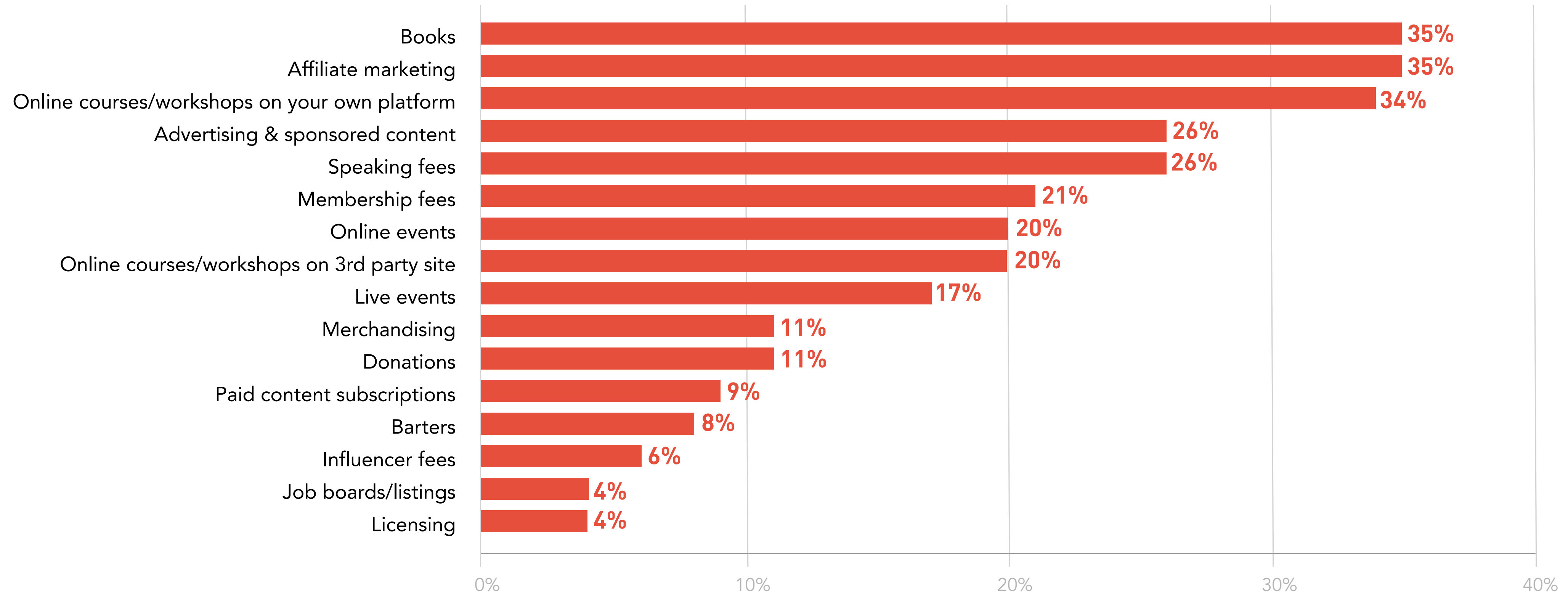
Few aspire to build business as a hobby; millennials are most likely to hire and work with others.



Q: Which of the following statements best describes your long-term ambitions/plans for your content business?

MONETIZATION TACTICS VARY WIDELY AMONG CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS

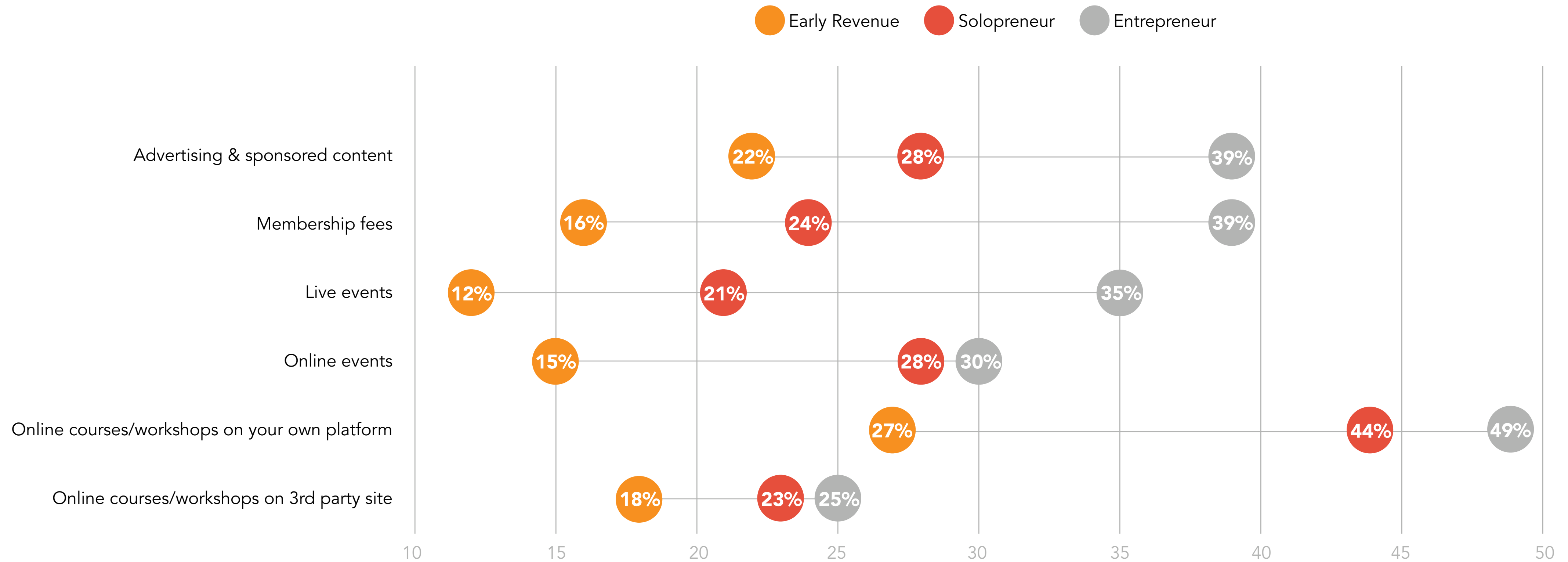
Revenue from books, affiliate marketing and online courses top the list



Q: Which of these strategies do you use to make money?

WHAT CHANNELS DO HIGHER-REVENUE ENTREPRENEURS USE TO MONETIZE THEIR CONTENT?

Education, membership fees and advertising much more commonly used by established CEs



Q: Which of these strategies do you use to make money?
 Showing selected responses where differences are greatest between segments.

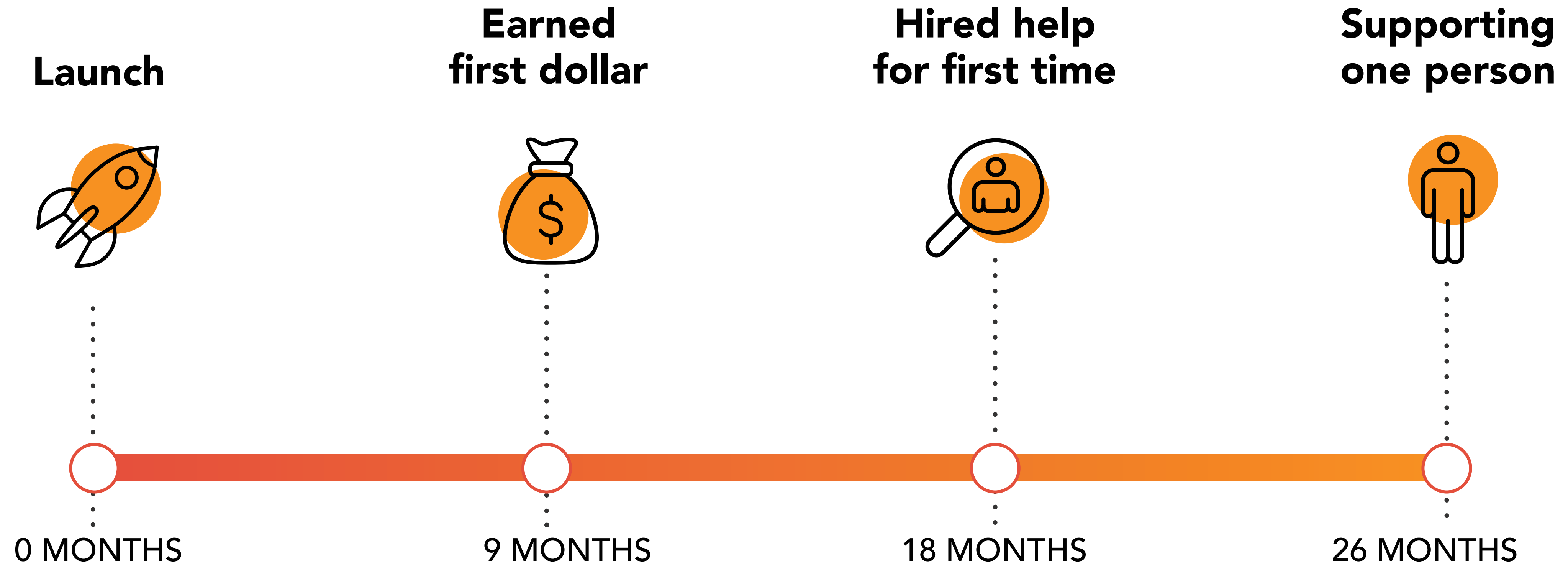
AVERAGE NUMBER OF REVENUE CHANNELS USED

Content entrepreneurs with higher levels of revenue tend to use more monetization channels

	Number of revenue channels
My content business earns money, but not enough to fully support me	2.8
My content business earns enough money to support me (or 1 person)	3.5
My content business earns substantial money; it can support multiple people	4.1

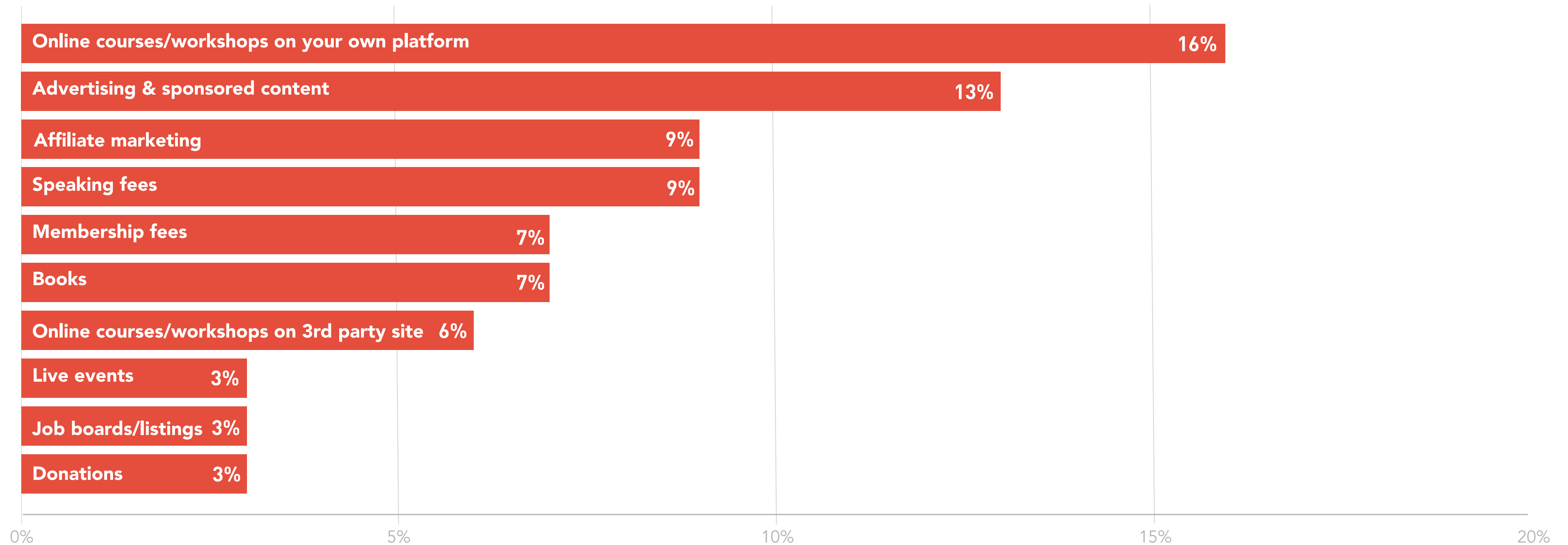
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL CONTENT BUSINESS?

On average, content entrepreneurs need 26 months from launch to supporting a single person from revenues



MOST PROFITABLE REVENUE CHANNELS

No single monetization channel overwhelmingly dominates as most profitable, but online courses and advertising chosen most often



Q: Of those channels you use to monetize content, which one is most profitable?

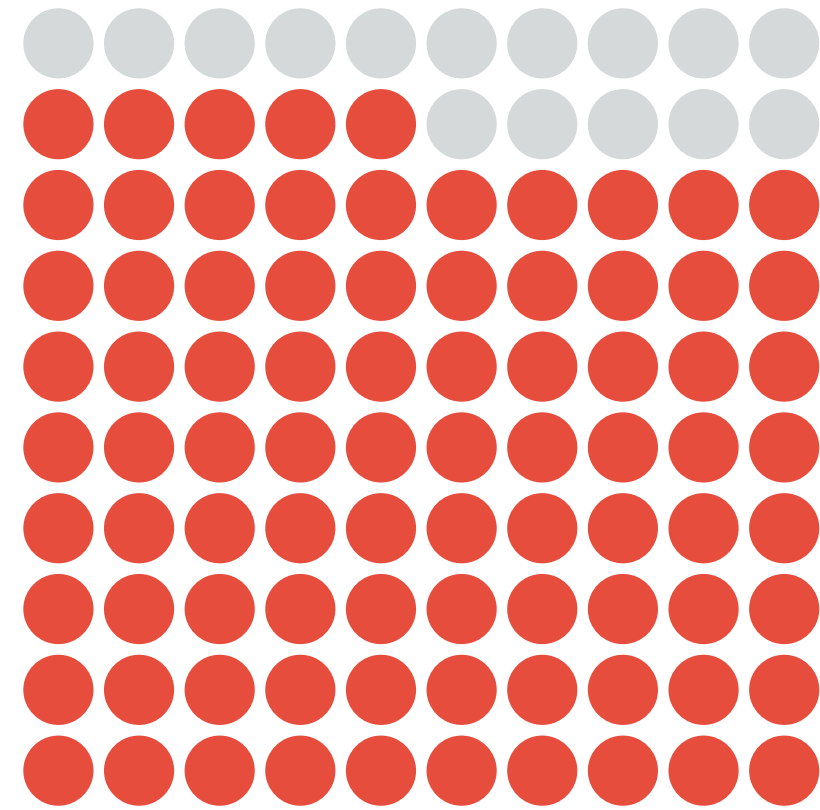
HOW MUCH DOES THE BUSINESS BRING IN?

For many content entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship affords them a modestly comfortable living while doing something they find satisfying

	Gross revenues (median)
Full time CEs (all)	\$50,000
Full time CEs with 4 or more years experience	\$100,000
Full time CEs with 7 or more years experience	\$125,000

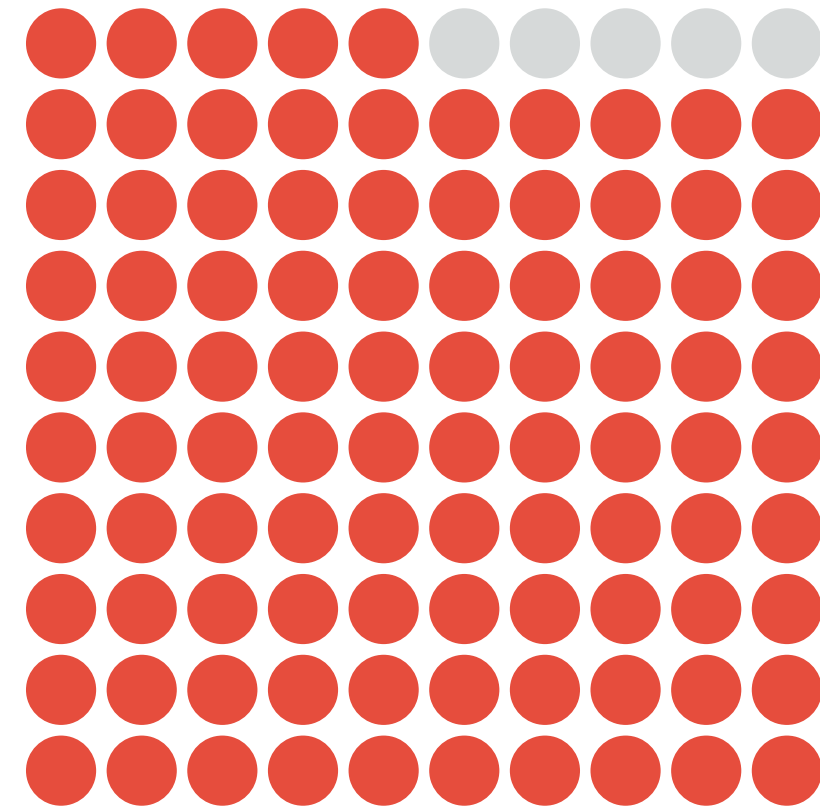
CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS ARE FIERCE INDEPENDENTS

"Do you think a college degree is required to succeed as a CE?"



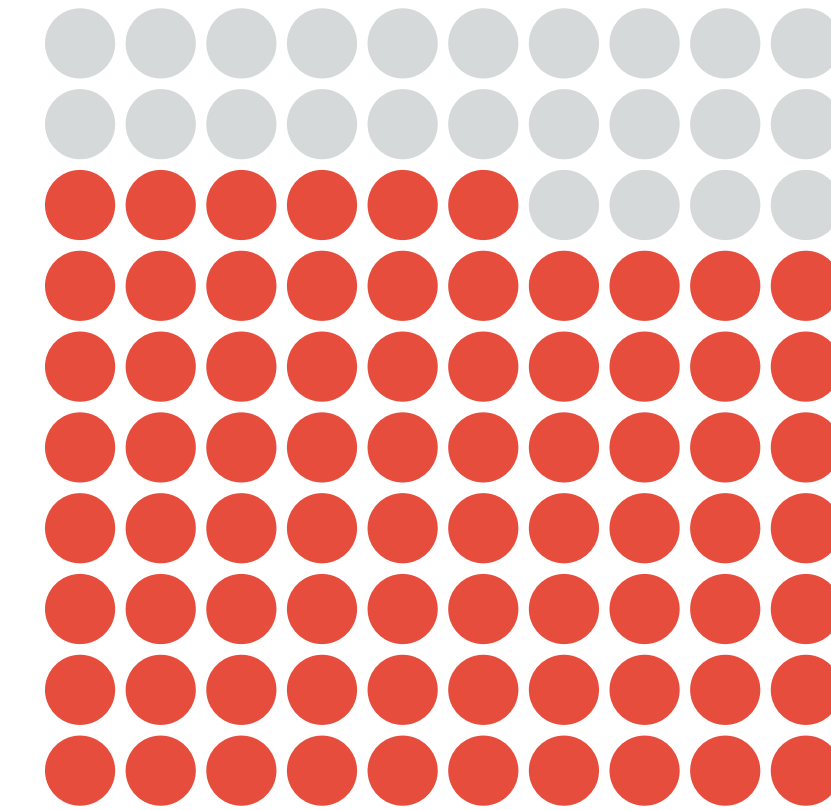
85% SAY "NO"

"I can operate my content business anywhere with reliable internet."



95% SAY "YES"

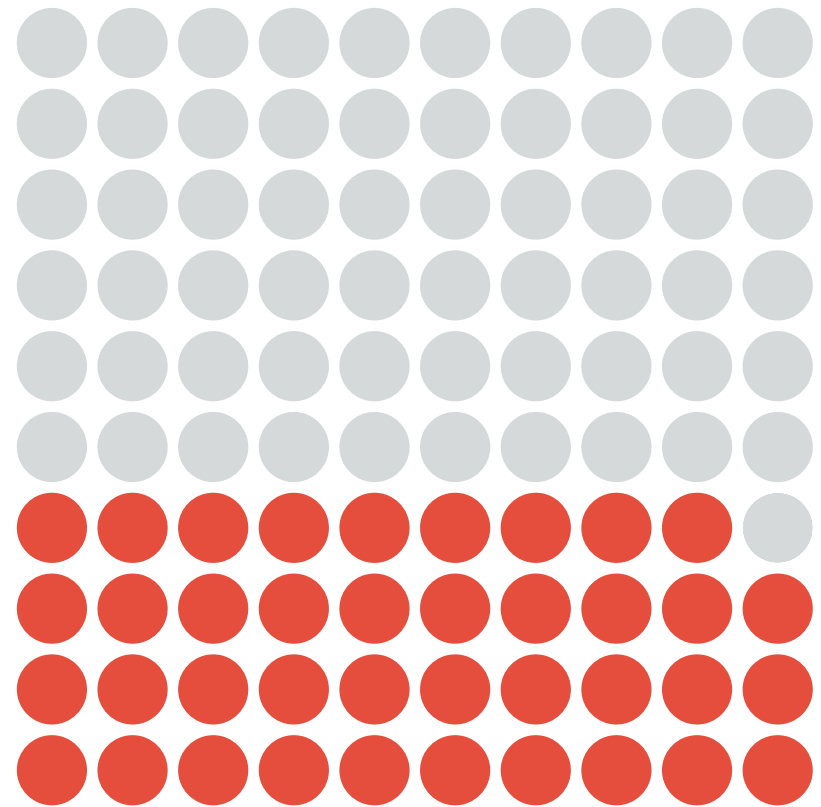
"Once you've been a content entrepreneur, it's hard to go back to traditional work."



76% SAY "YES"

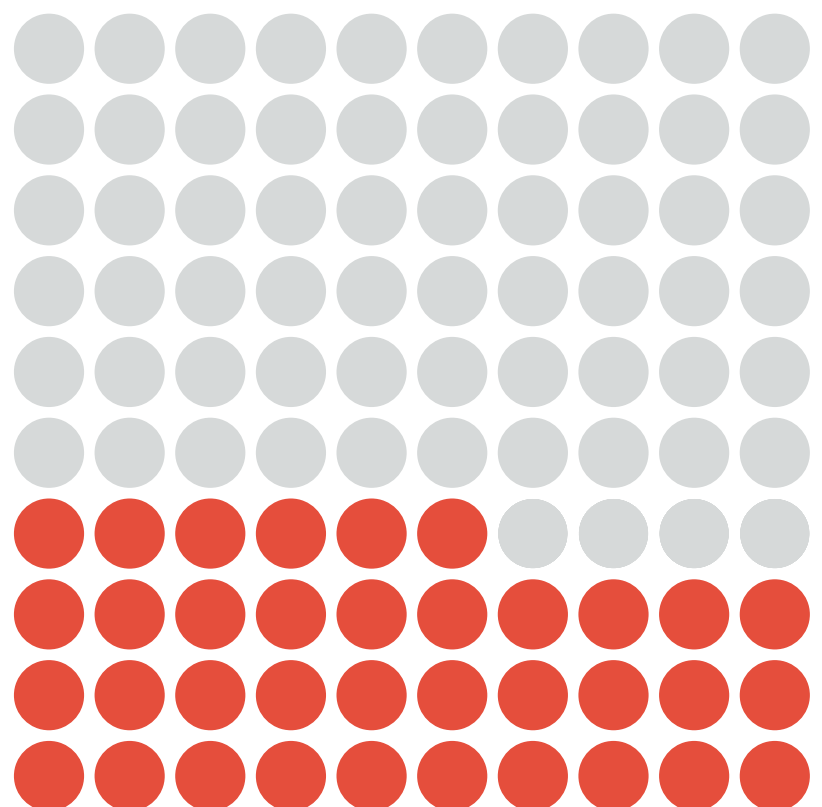
1 IN 3 CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS FEEL MISUNDERSTOOD

"My family doesn't understand what I do."



39% SAY "YES"

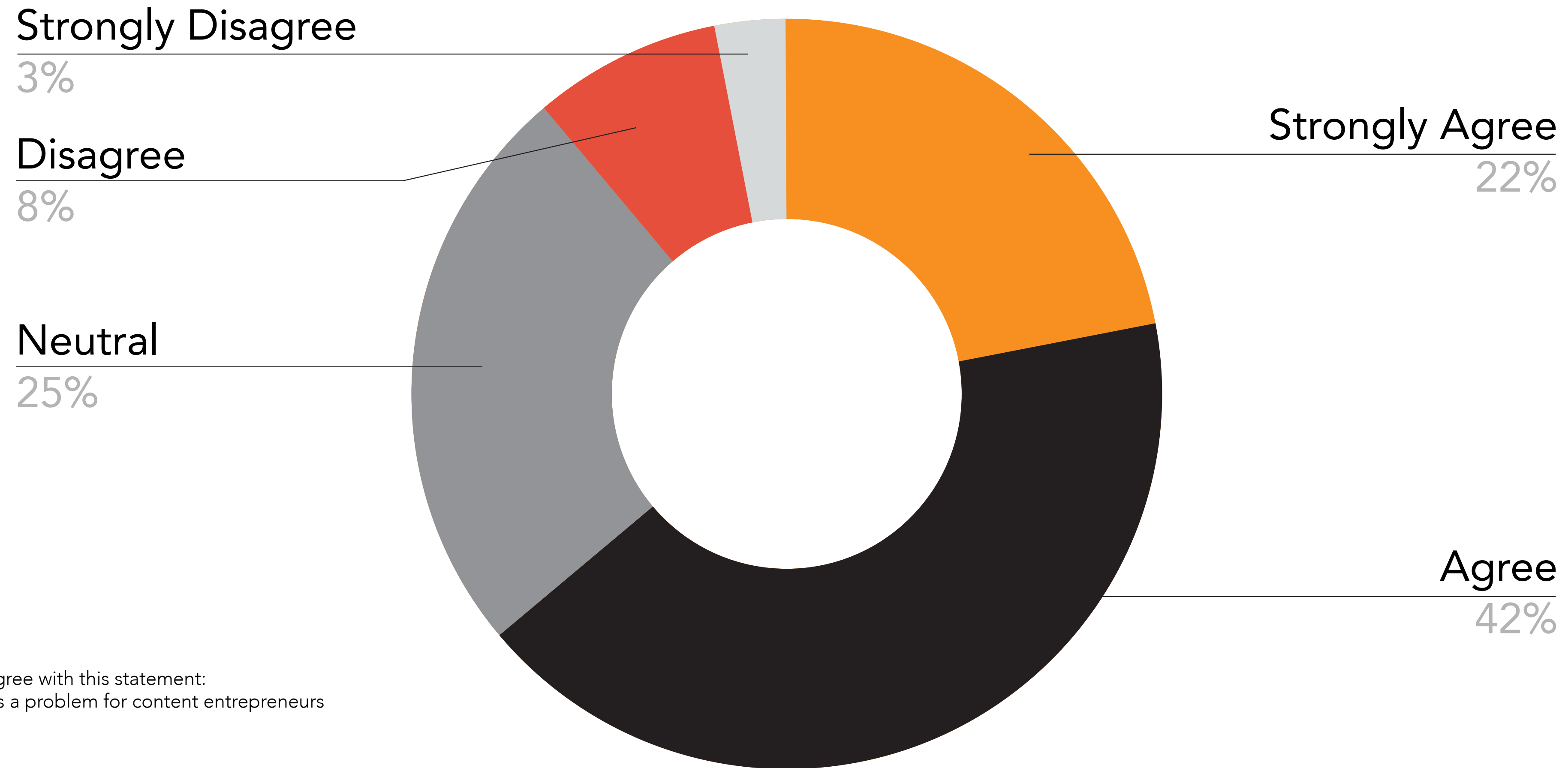
"My friends don't understand what I do."



36% SAY "YES"

MORE THAN 2 IN 3 AGREE BURNOUT IS A PROBLEM

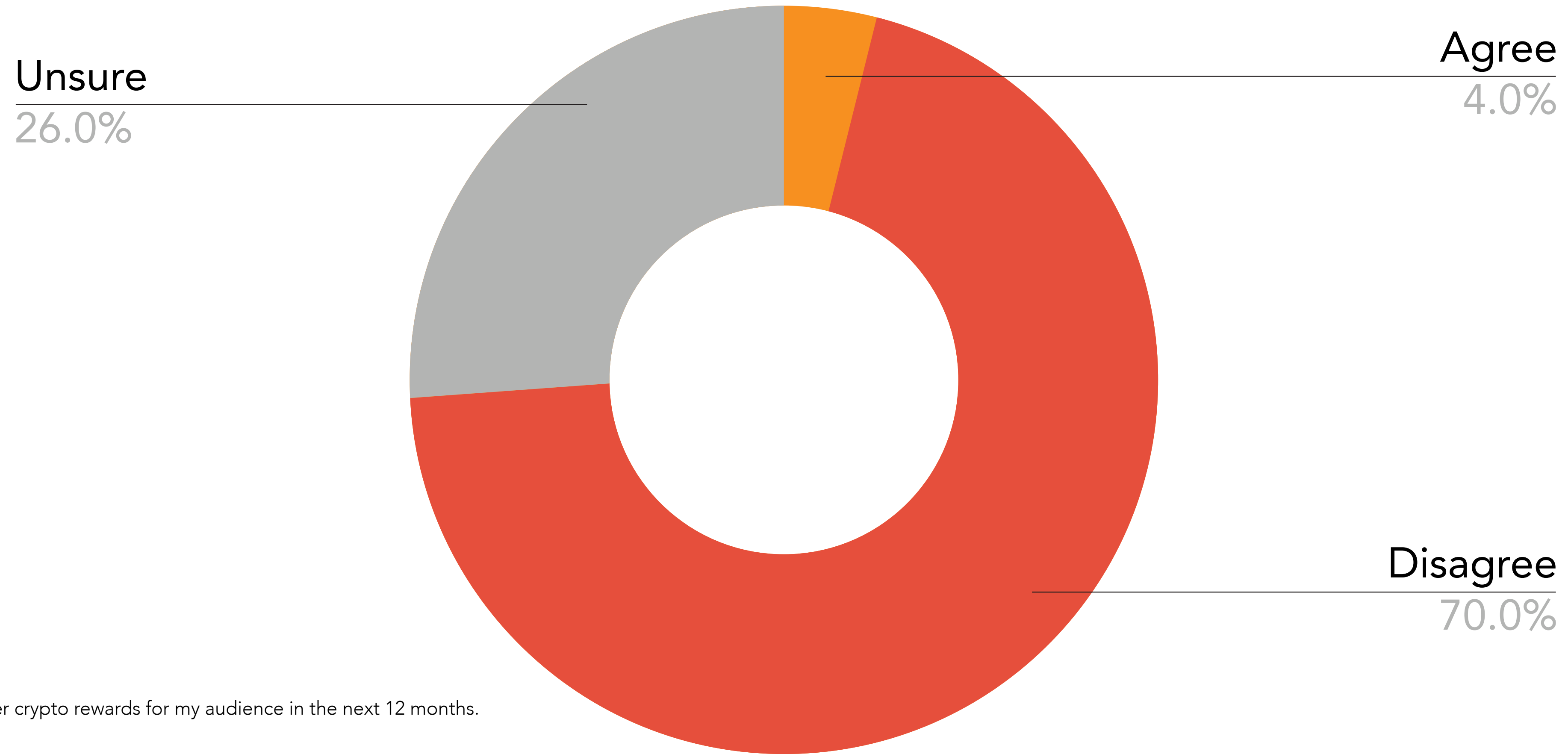
Millennials are much more likely to view burnout as a problem; 3 in 4 feel this way



Q: Do you agree with this statement:
Burnout is a problem for content entrepreneurs

CONTENT ENTREPRENEURS JUST STARTING TO EXPERIMENT WITH CRYPTO REWARDS

Three in 10 are considering social tokens, creator coins or NFTs.



I plan to offer crypto rewards for my audience in the next 12 months.

EXIT PLANNING

Most content entrepreneurs are not engaged in exit planning, a sign perhaps that many ventures are personality-driven

ENGAGED IN EXIT PLANNING?



TYPE OF EXIT PLANNING



Q: Have you ever done any exit planning (i.e., planning ahead about selling your business for profit or transferring ownership)?

Q: Would you describe your exit planning as formal or informal?

SURVEYED AUDIENCE

GENDER

Female	55%
Male	44%
Nonbinary	1%

GENERATIONS

Generation Z	5%
Millennial	32%
Generation X	40%
Boomer	23%

INDUSTRIES (TOP 10)

Business	19%
Marketing	16%
Education	11%
Health & Fitness	9%
Lifestyle	7%
Arts, Crafts, DIY	3%
Entertainment	3%
Science & Tech	3%
Travel & Events	3%
Cooking & Food	2%

YEARS SINCE CONTENT BUSINESS LAUNCH

Less than 1 year	30%
1 - 3 years	32%
4 - 6 years	16%
7 or more years	22%



We're Turning Content Creators into Content Entrepreneurs

The Tilt is a twice-weekly newsletter for content entrepreneurs. Each edition is packed with the latest news, strategies, and tactics, plus inspiring creator stories and exclusive education, all to help you create, grow, and monetize better.

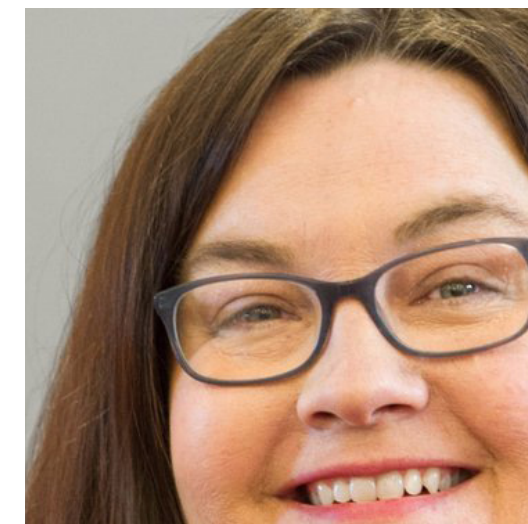
Let us know how we can help and support your journey.

Contact us using the form [here](#) or shoot us a message at tilt@thetilt.com

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