

Trends in Technical Communication

Findings from the Adobe Technical Communication Survey 2020





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Demographics

Survey respondents

The 2020 edition of the Adobe Technical Communication Survey is fueled by the opinions and practices of 1600+ industry professionals from 60 countries. They represent a mix of technical writers, information developers, managers, content strategists and other roles — working in small, medium and large organizations.



1600+
Respondents



32+
Industries

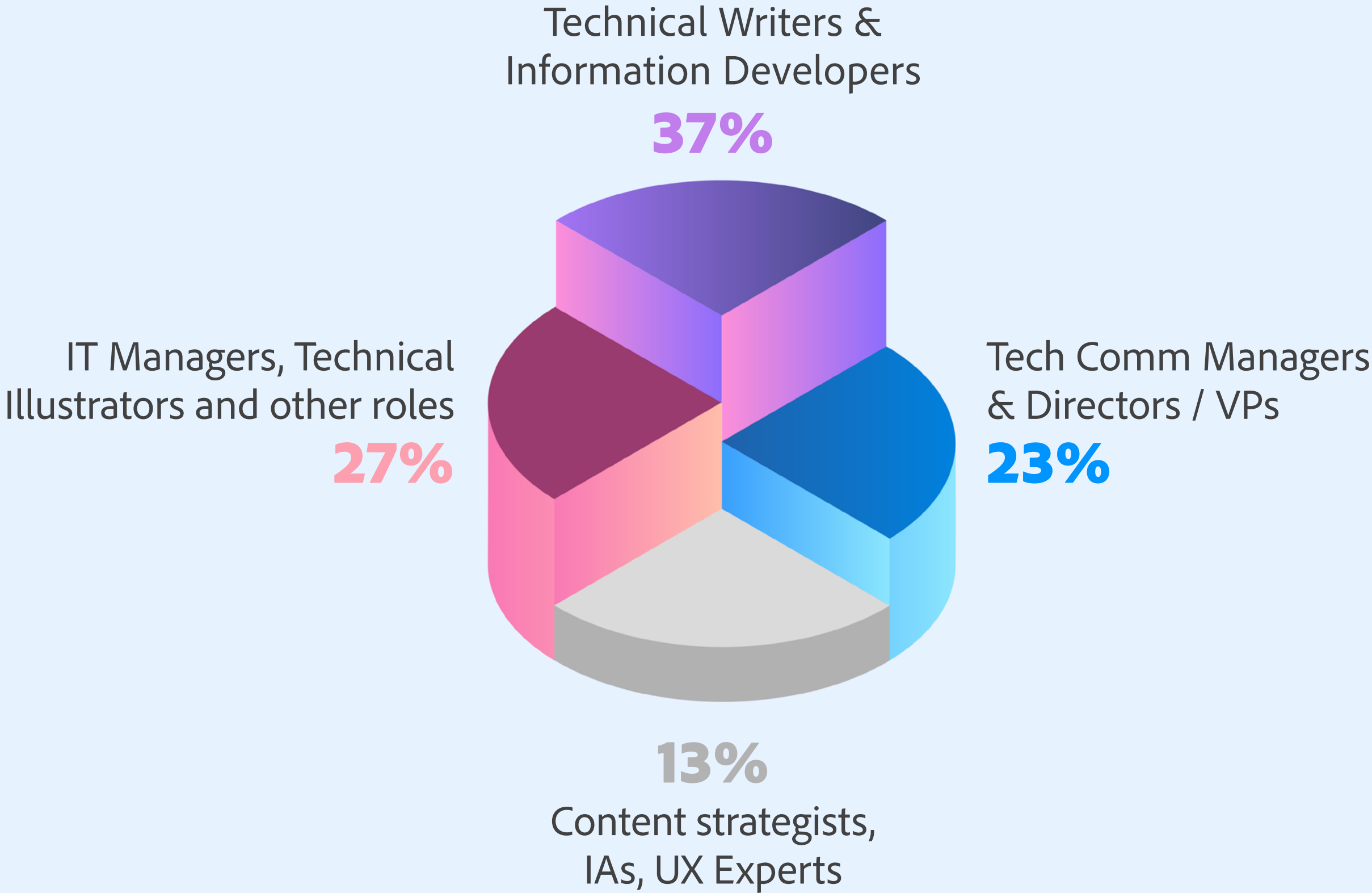


29
Questions asked

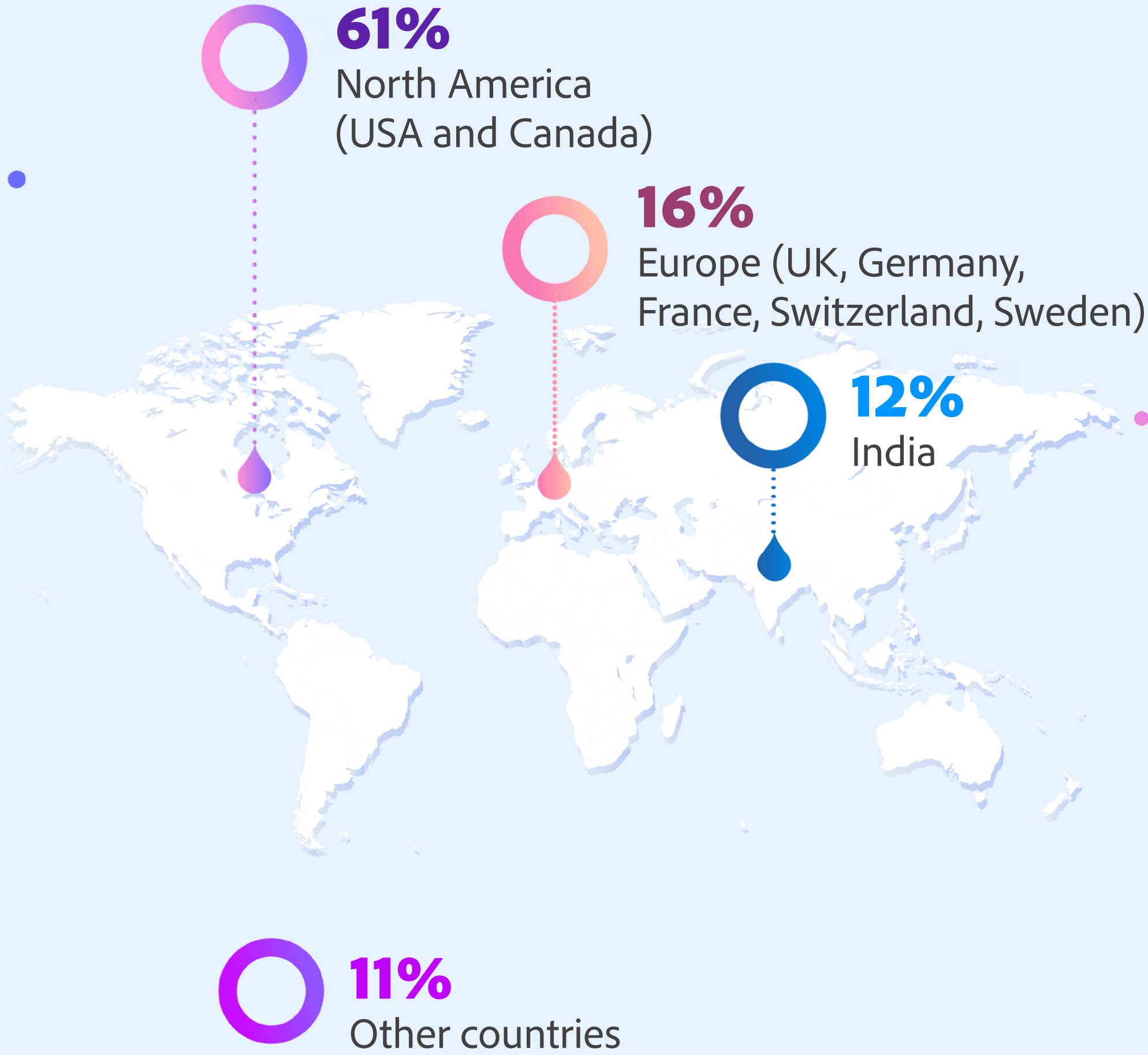


60
Countries

Job title

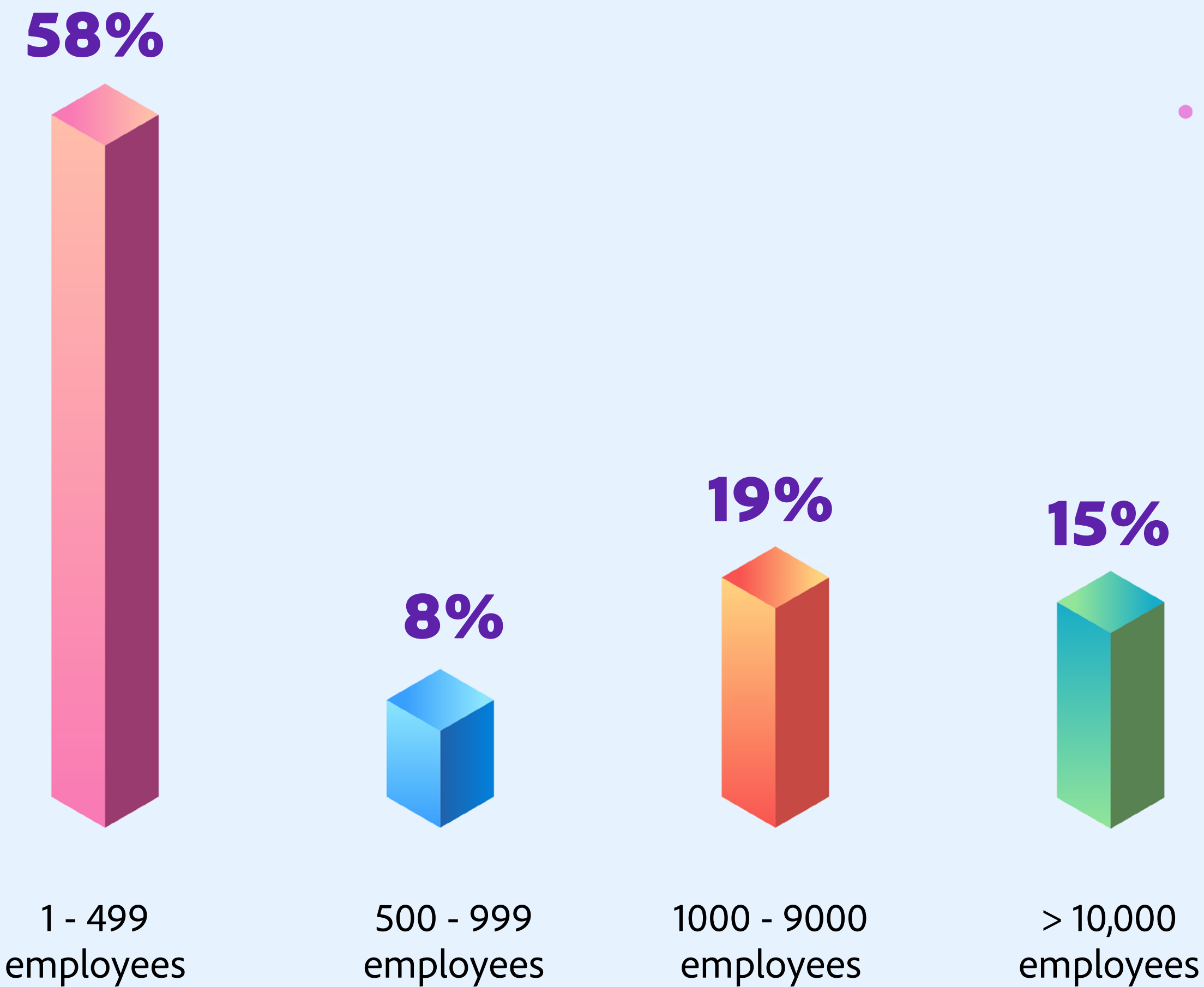


Country of residence



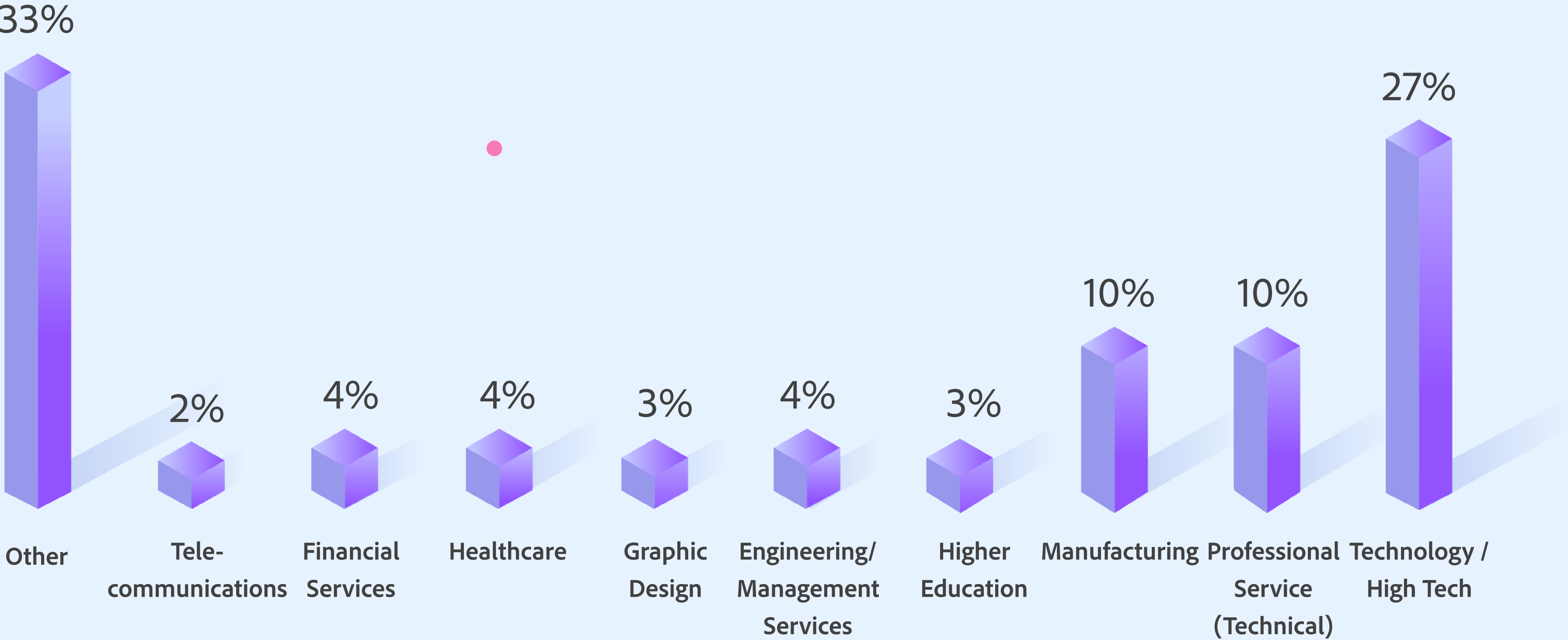
*Including other countries in Europe, and Asia Pacific

By number of employees in an organization



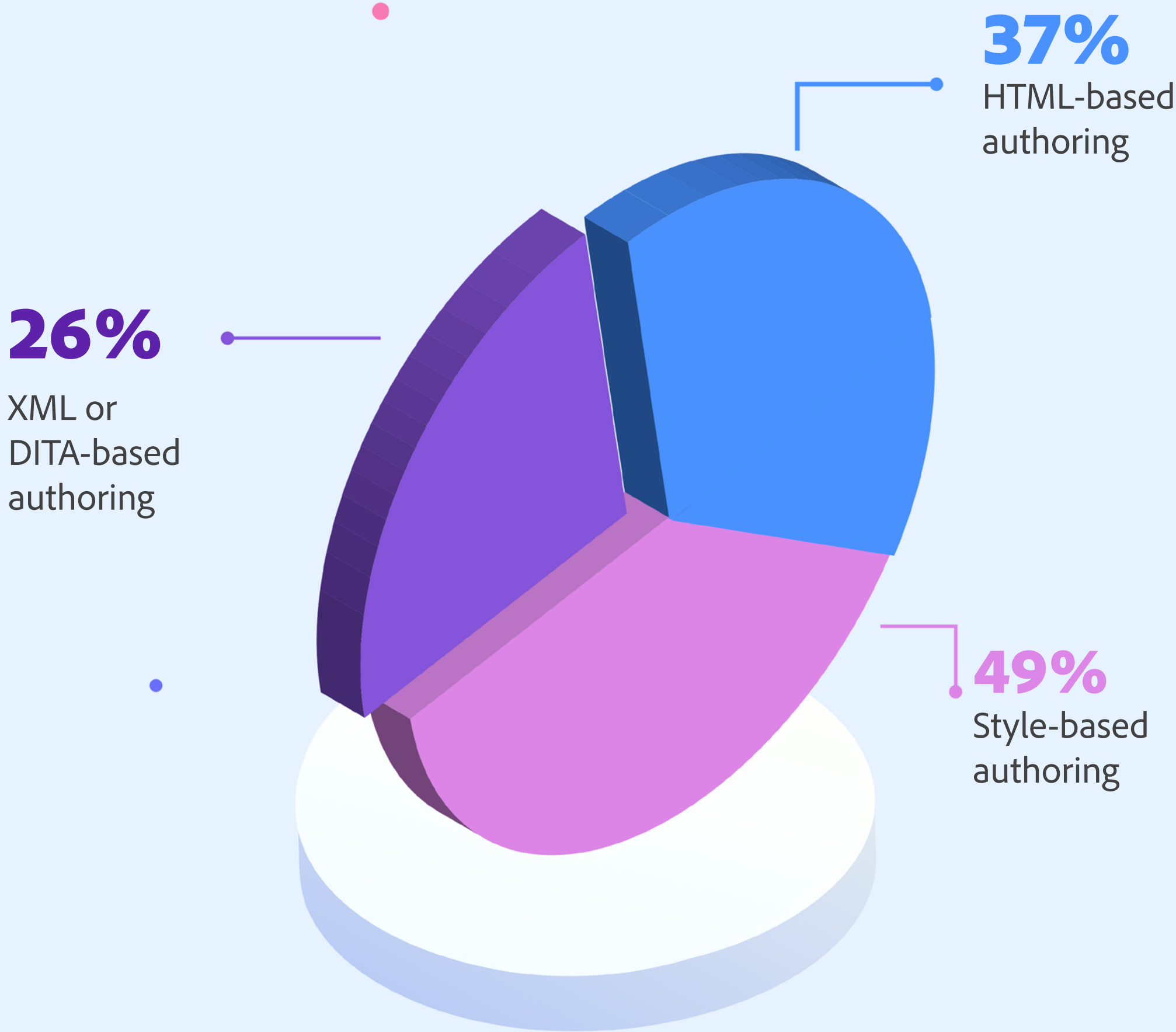
By industry

Survey participants represent a diverse range of industries where technical communication is created and published as a part of organizational and regulatory needs, with 27% working in the Technology or High Tech sector.



Content authoring formats

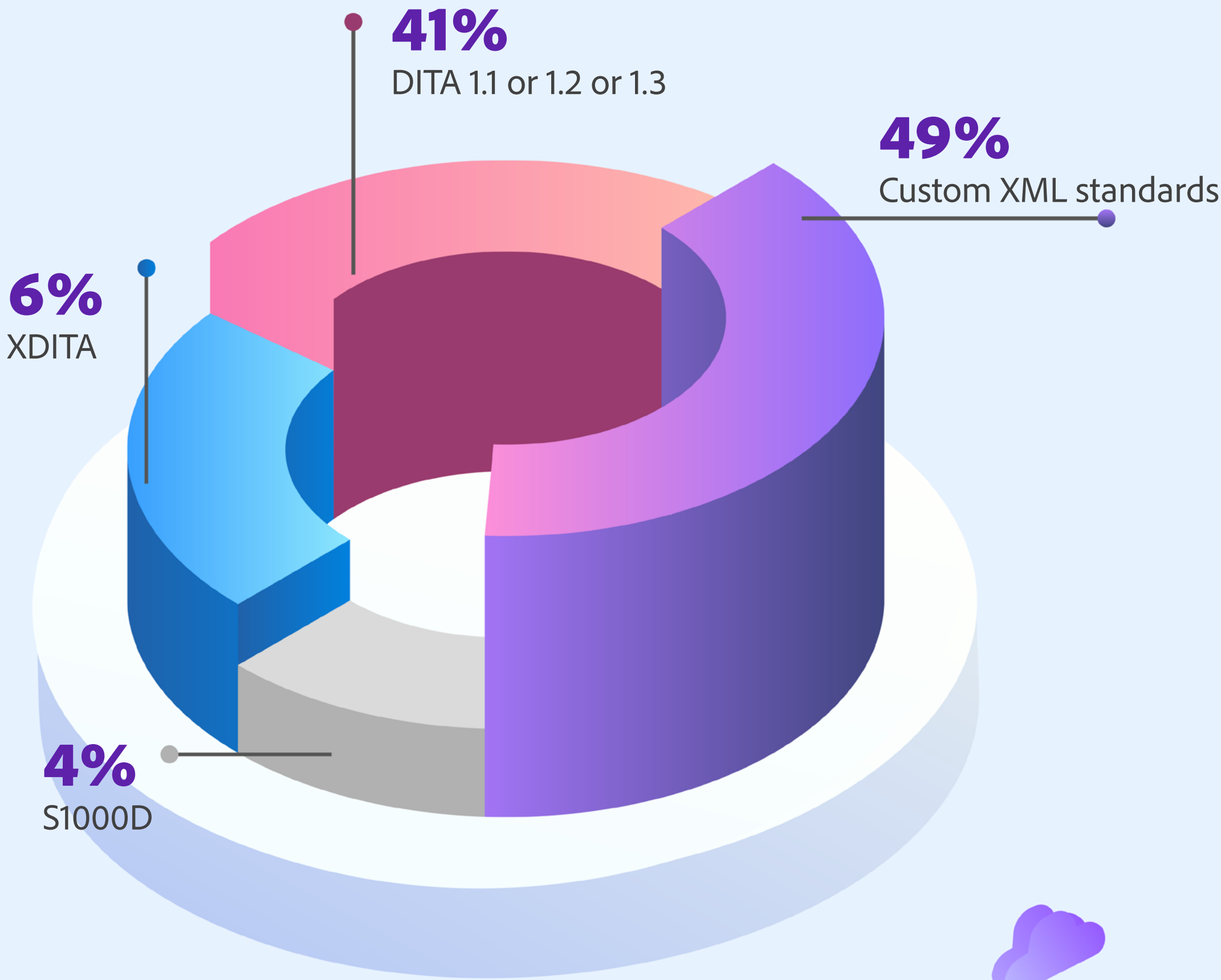
While style-based authoring continues to be dominant, the industry is seeing a shift towards HTML, XML or DITA-based authoring. A significant portion of respondents say they use different authoring workflows basis their requirements for the task at hand.



The total adds up to 112% because some respondents prefer more than one content authoring format.

Content authoring formats (XML)

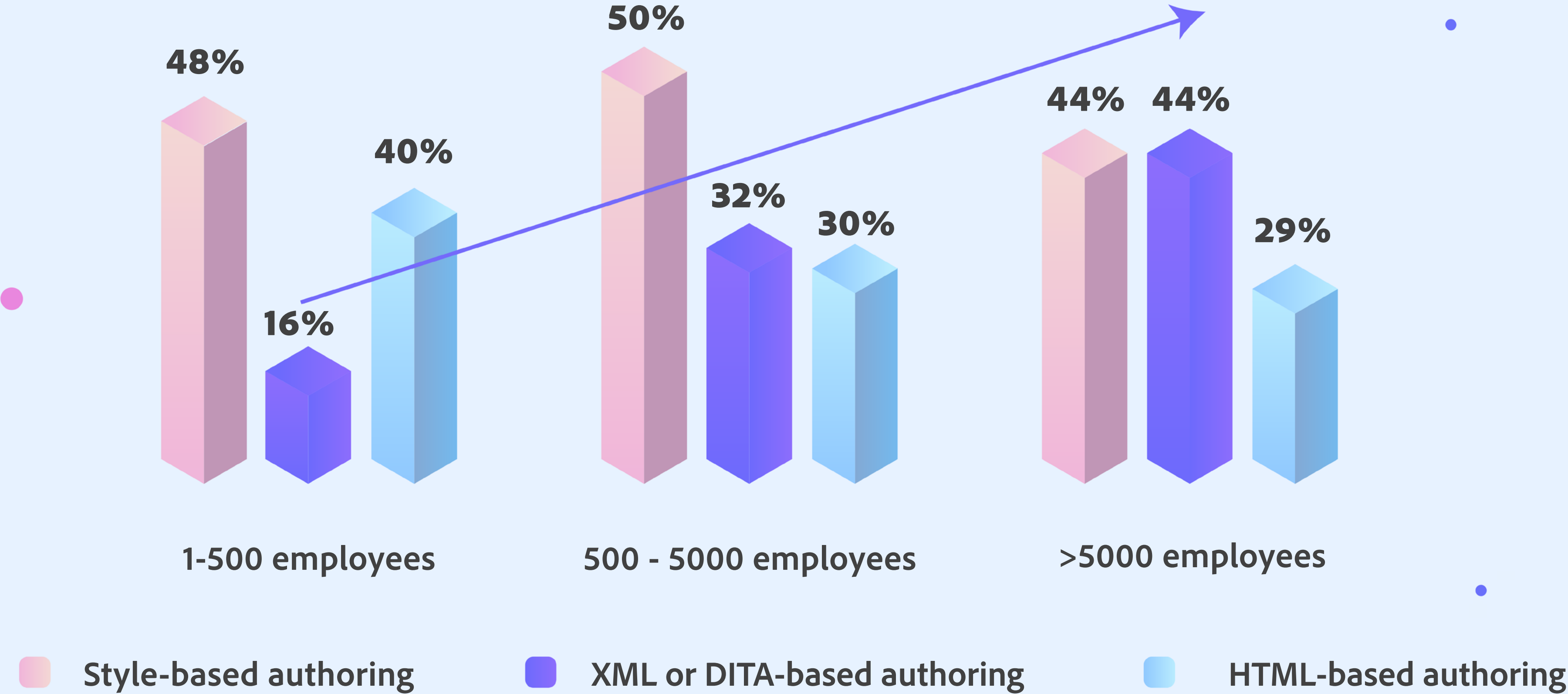
From the 26% of respondents who prefer XML or DITA-based authoring, there's a marked preference for Custom XML standards to meet the specific requirements of various industries and organization-specific use cases. 41% of respondents author in the latest or an earlier version of DITA while 4% use S1000D – a standard popularly used in AeroSpace and Defense industries.



Structured content adoption

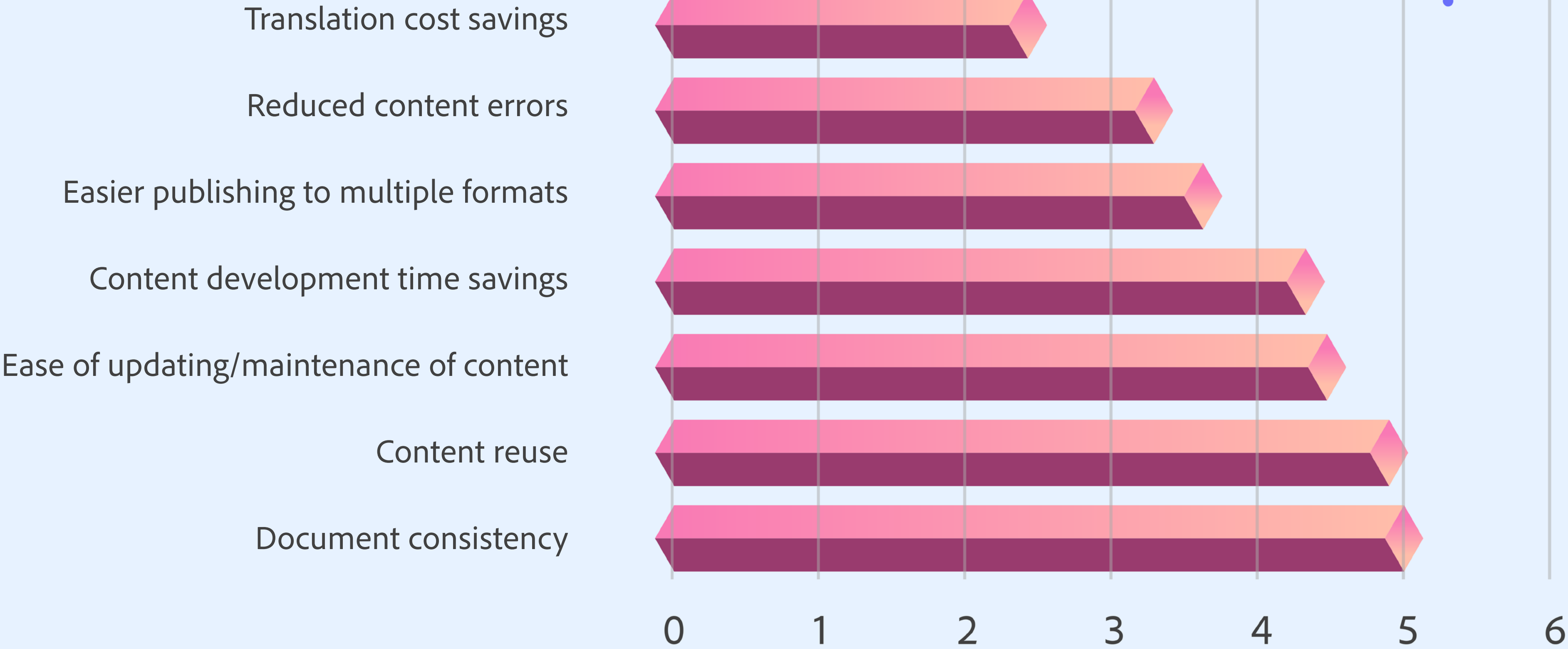
Impact of the organization size on structured content adoption

As organizations scale, there's an increased adoption of structured authoring for easier creation, management and publishing of content.



Benefits of XML-based Authoring

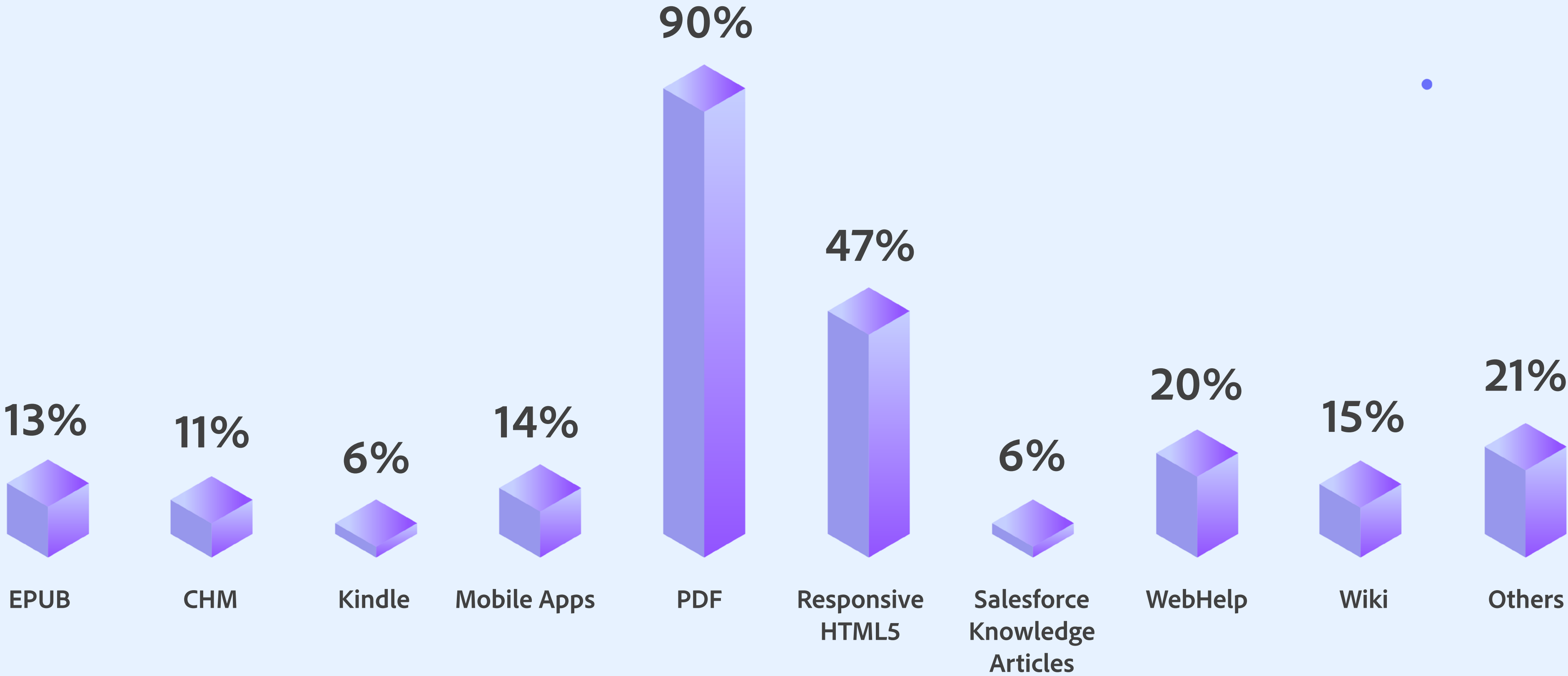
While organizations see cost savings, it isn't their main reason for moving to structured authoring. The shift is driven by a need for content consistency, tighter control over quality and efficient content reuse.



Content delivery channels

Preferred delivery channels

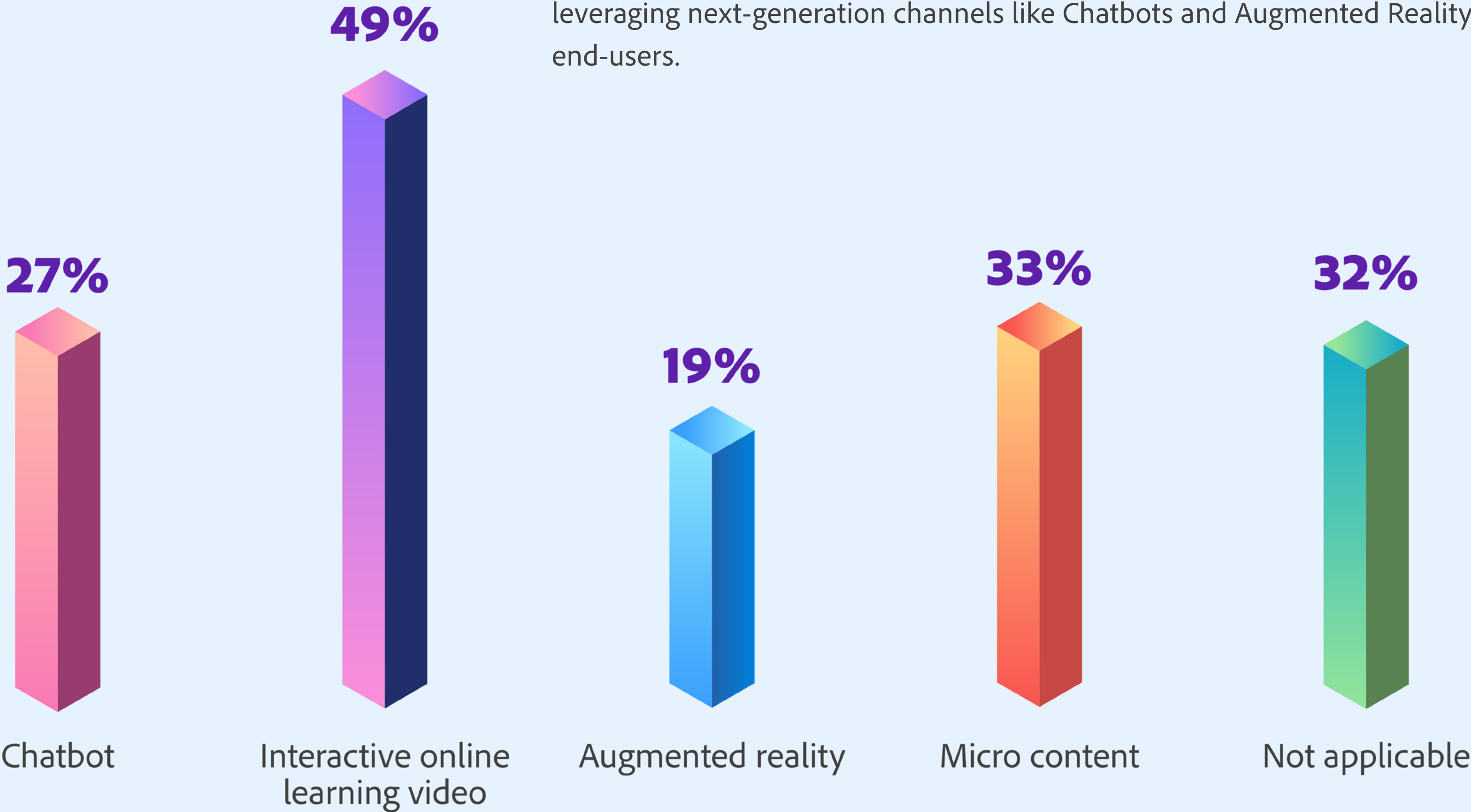
PDF continues to be the top format of choice for publishing content, followed by Responsive HTML5 which renders well across devices and different screen sizes.



Content interaction experience

Emerging technology preferences for content delivery and enhancement

Technical authors are going beyond text, enriching their content with interactive online videos, audio and other multimedia elements. The creation of Micro content is on the rise to fuel delivery of snippets to search engines, blogposts, and more. There is also an increased interest in leveraging next-generation channels like Chatbots and Augmented Reality to engage with end-users.

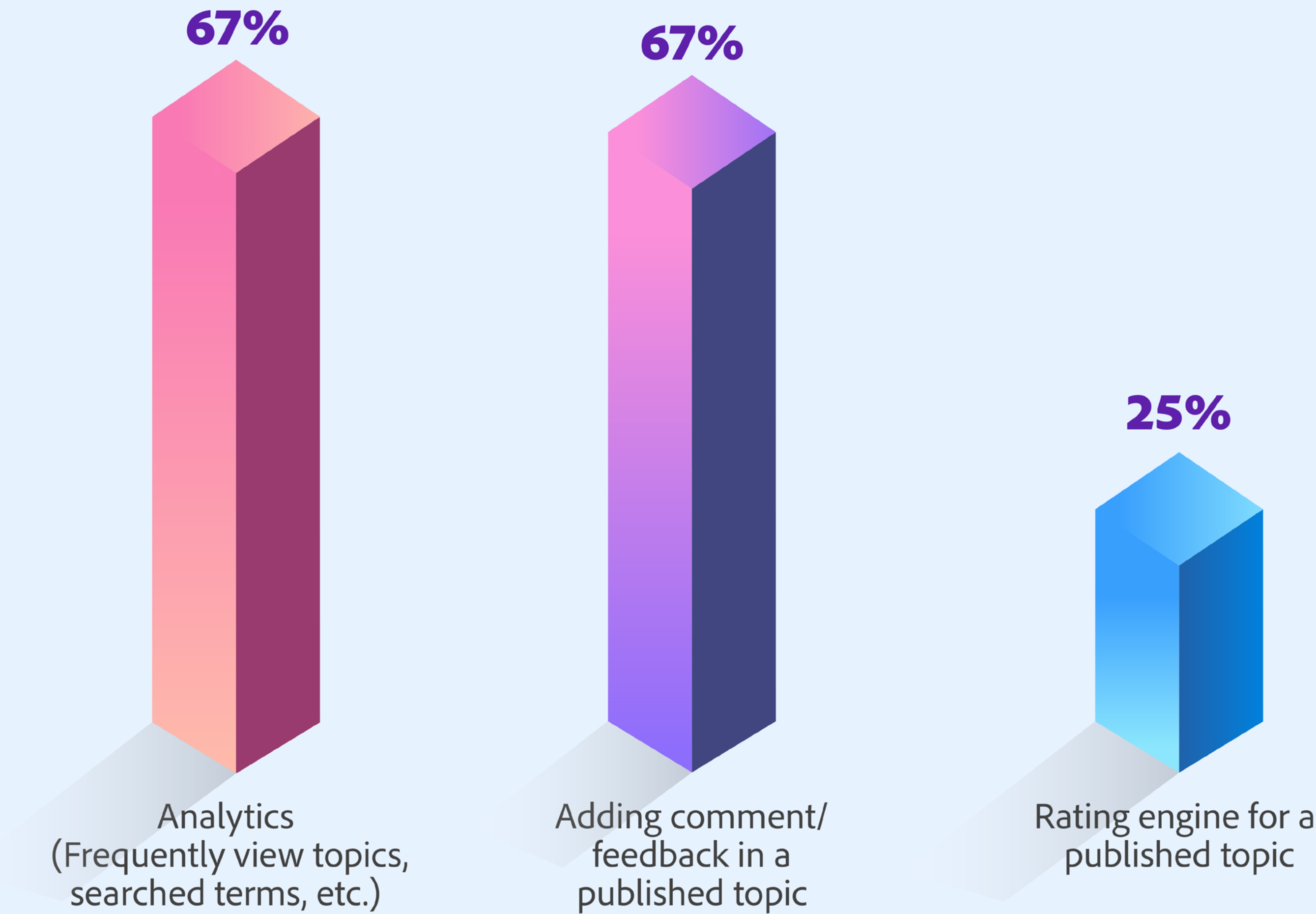




| Consumer feedback

Channels for consumer feedback on content

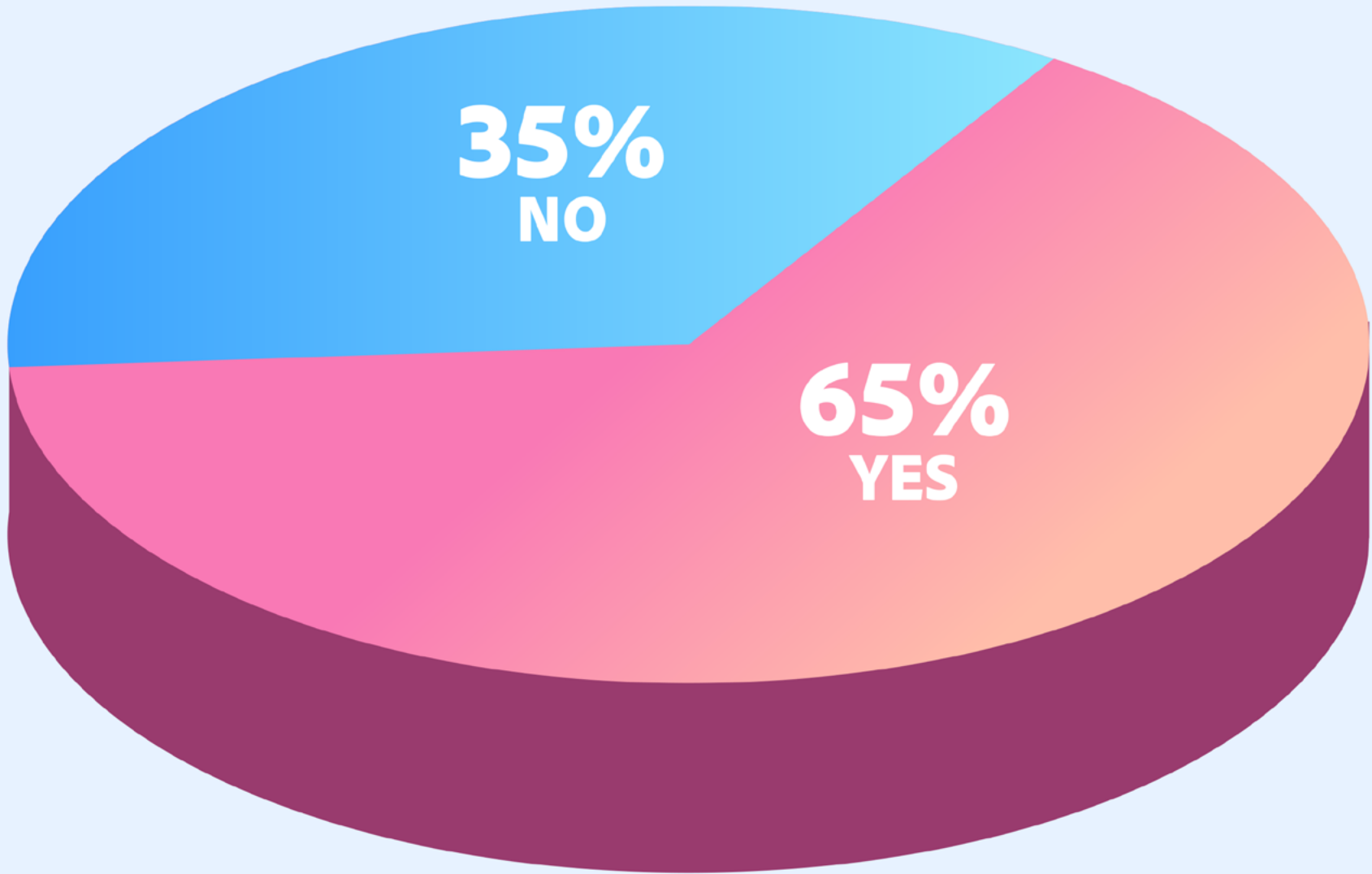
Content professionals are looking to optimize their content strategies by analyzing consumption and gathering consumer feedback on published content. This helps them surface more relevant information faster for a superior customer experience.



Desktop vs Web-based authoring

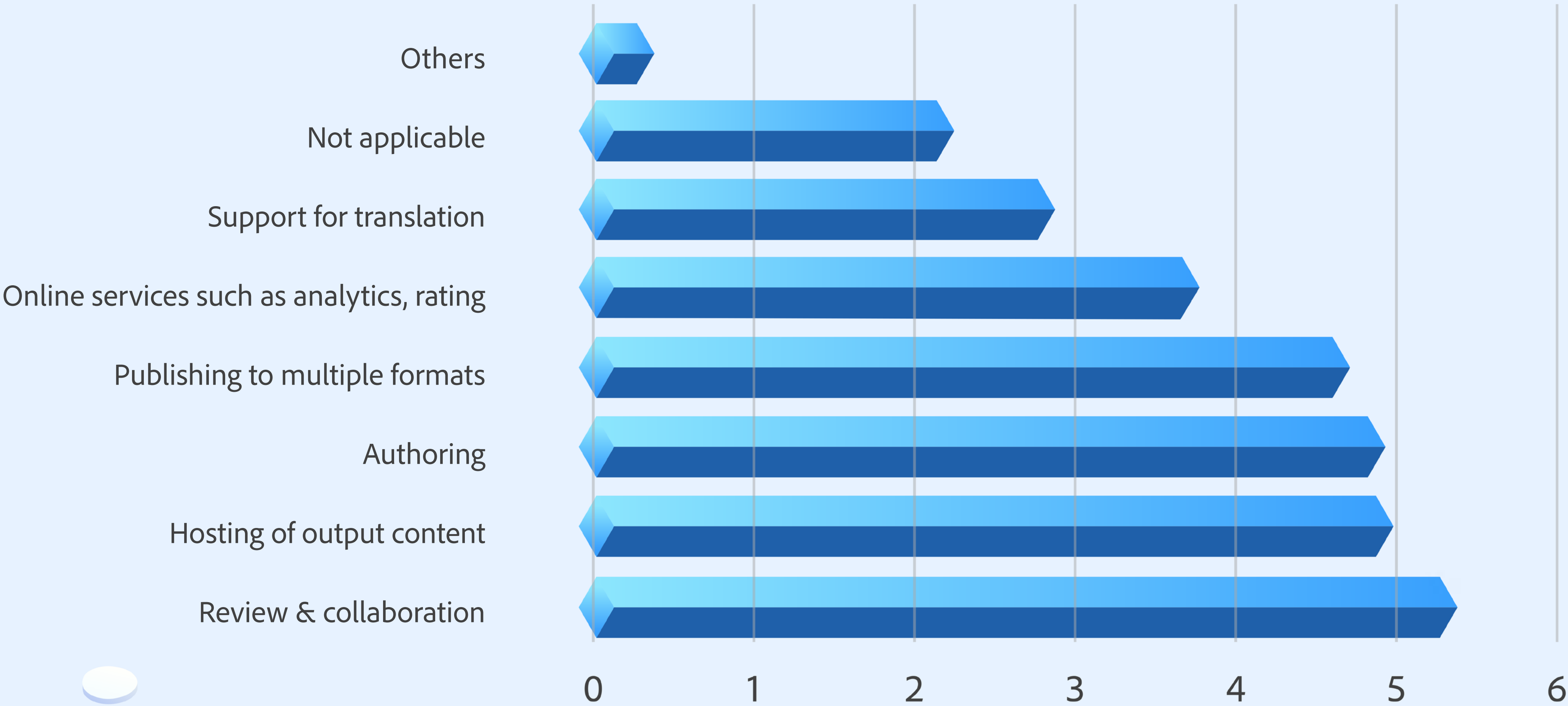
Foreseeing a movement to cloud-based solutions

A clear majority of survey respondents have moved or plan to move to web-based authoring, thus eliminating location or device dependencies.



Main triggers for moving to web-based authoring

The increased preference for web-based authoring solutions is driven by the need for multiple team members and subject matter experts to review and collaborate on content.



| Managing content

CMS usage

A significant portion of respondents use a Content Management System (CMS) or Version Control as a part of their content workflow.



57%
Respondents
use a CMS



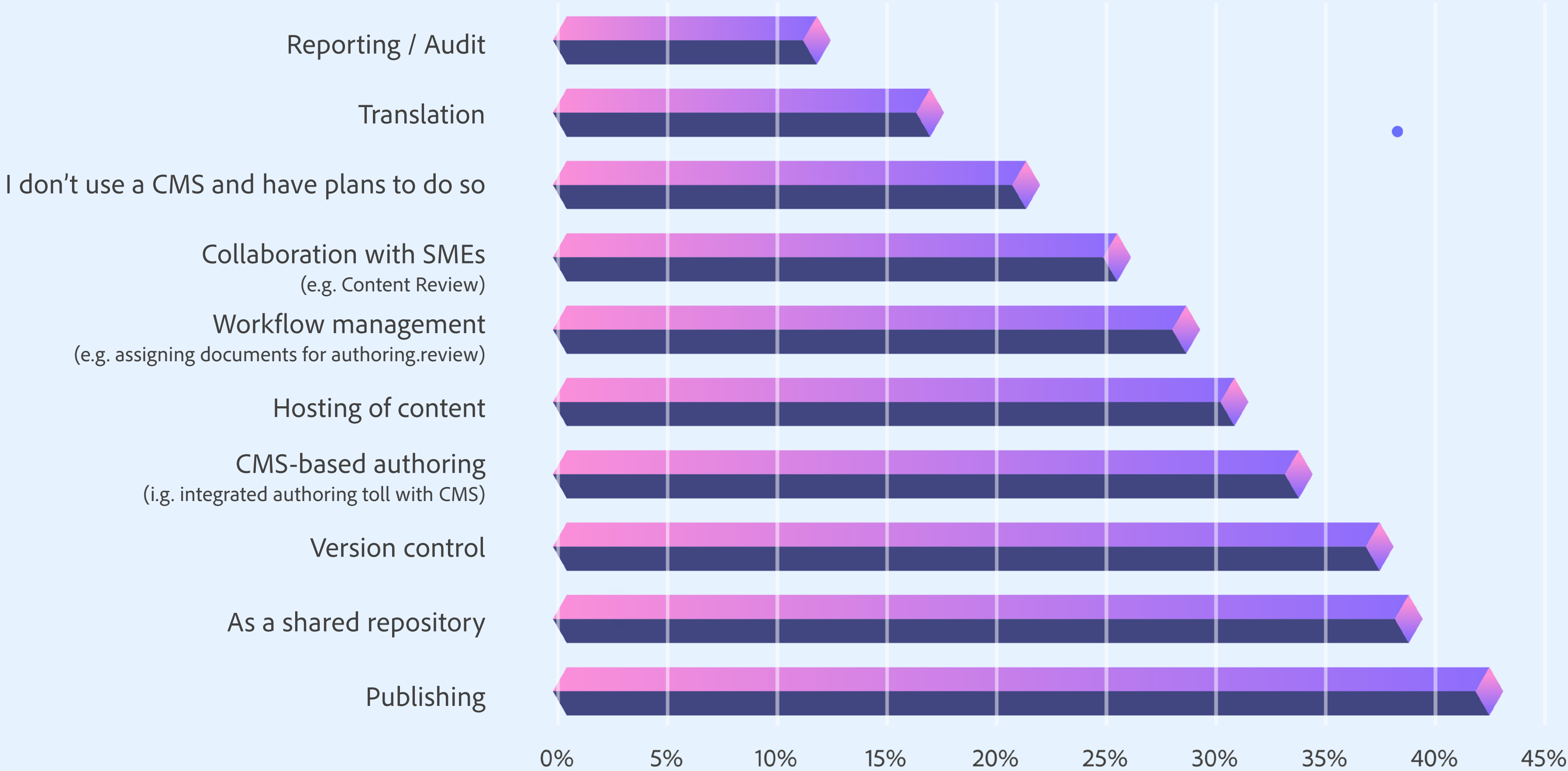
37%
Respondents
do not use a CMS



19%
Respondents
use Git/GitHub

Reasons for using a CMS

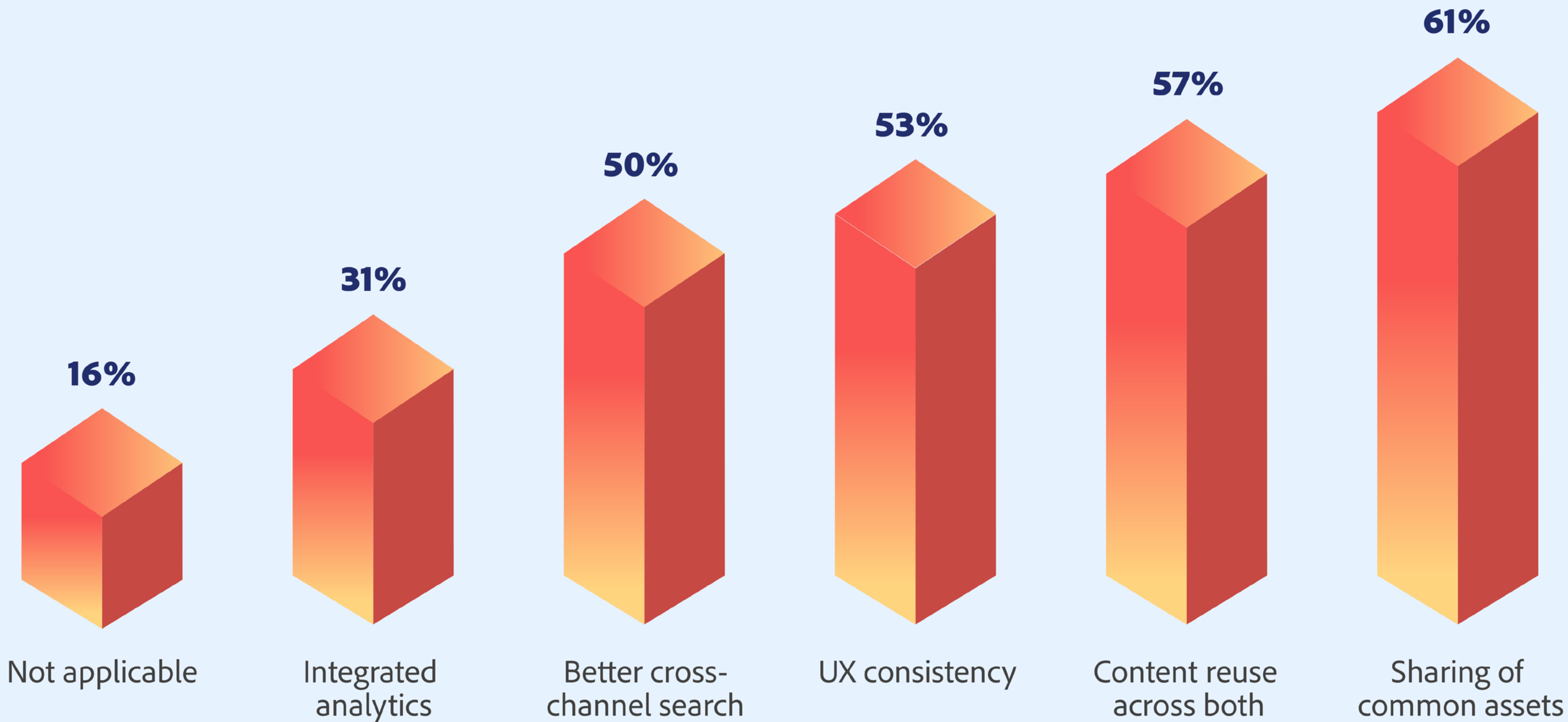
The top reasons for using a Content Management System (CMS) are powerful publishing capabilities, as a shared repository, tracking changes using version control and the ease of authoring.



Synergies between marketing and technical content

Use cases for driving synergies between marketing and technical content

Organizations are increasingly seeing the sharing of assets and enabling content reuse across marketing and technical documentation departments as drivers of business success.



Summary of survey findings



Organization size

- Technical communication team sizes grow with the size of the organization



Authoring format

- Style-based authoring continues to be dominant (~ 50%)
- XML-based authoring increasingly popular in medium to large organizations
- Out of those who prefer structured authoring, 41% are using DITA
- The main driver for moving to structured content is content quality and content consistency, not cost savings



Web-based authoring

- A clear majority have moved or plan to move to web-based authoring
- Review and collaboration are major drivers for web-based solutions



Publishing format

- PDF is the most popular output channel, followed by Responsive HTML5



Consumer feedback

- Analyzing content consumption and gathering consumer feedback is becoming increasingly important



CMS

- Companies are primarily using a CMS for publishing, as a shared repository, version control and authoring



Content reuse

- Sharing of assets and content reuse across departments is becoming increasingly critical for business success

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