

How Engineers Find Information 2019

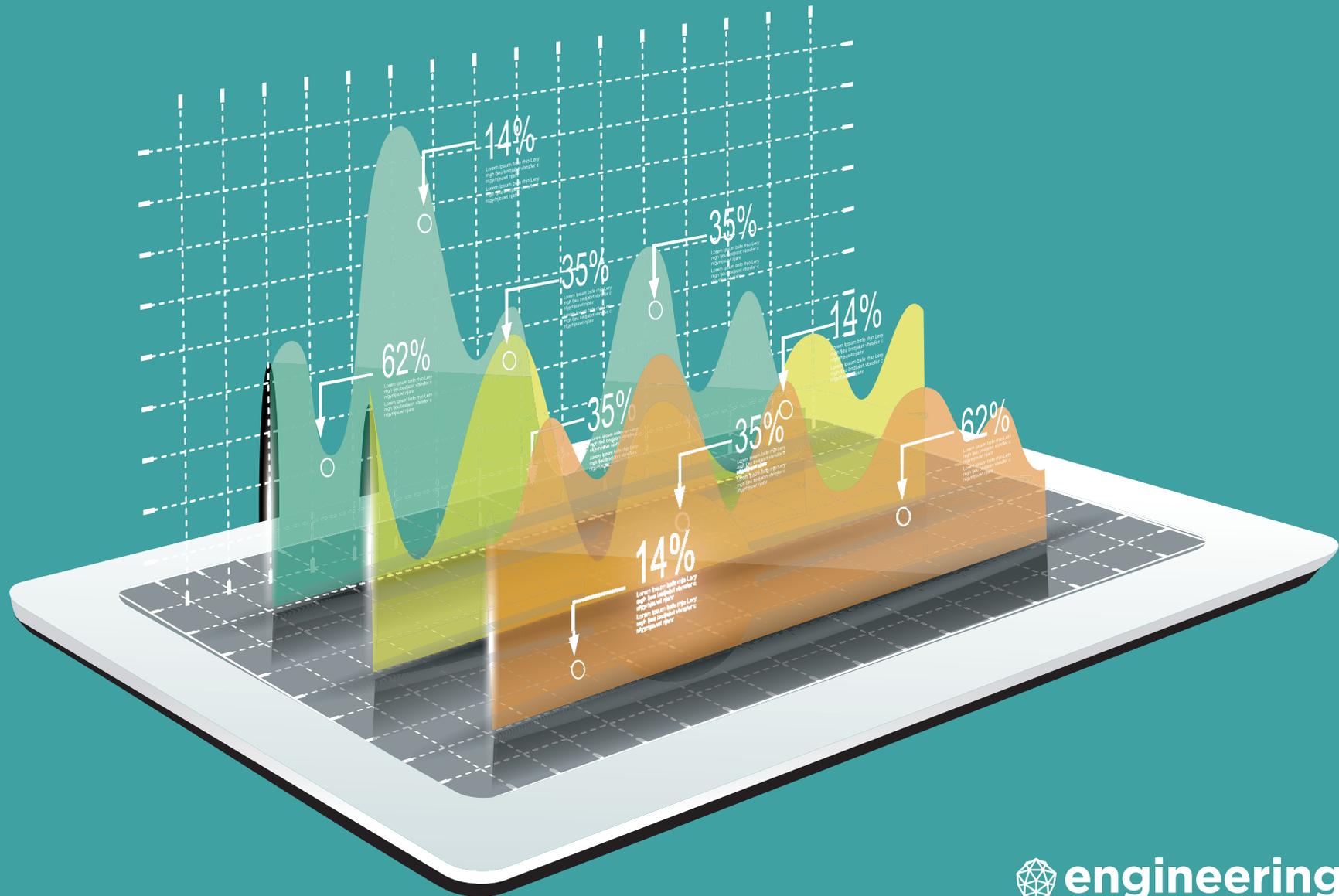




Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3	Decision Maker Format Preferences	18
Meet Our Expert Panel	4	Engineers and Sponsored Content.....	19
How Are Engineers Consuming Content?		How do Engineers Interact with Marketing?	
Content Consumption Growth Story	6	Engineers and Account-Based Marketing.....	21
Content Consumption & Decision Making Authority.....	7	Engineers and Chatbots.....	22
Consumption by Platform.....	8	Engineers, Thought Leadership and RFPs.....	23
Mobile Phone Consumption.....	9	Expert Closing Comments	
Age and Mobile Phone Consumption	10	Final Thoughts and Recommendations.....	25
Thirty-Day Consumption Trends.....	11	Demographics	
Channel Consumption Change 2017 to 2018.....	12	Job Role.....	28
Age and Consumption by Channel.....	13	Industry.....	29
How Engineers Prefer to Access Information.....	14	Regions Represented.....	30
How Engineers Engage with Email.....	15	Level of Decision Making Input.....	31
What Are Engineers Consuming?			
What Content Formats do Engineers Regularly Access?	17		



Executive Summary

Engineering.com has been surveying engineering professionals on their information consumption habits since 2014. This year's study was the largest ever, with 1540 engineering professionals participating.

We conduct this survey to help B2B technology marketing understand how their target prospects engage with technical content. This knowledge should help marketers navigate the shifts towards digital from print and to plan their own strategies for both inbound and outbound approaches.

Here are a few key findings from the survey:

- Purchasing decision makers are the largest consumers of information, averaging over 12 hours per week.
- 84% of all engineering content consumption is now digital
- Vendor websites outpace social media and print as preferred sources of information among engineering professionals age 36-65
- 36% of engineering professionals say they'd request a proposal from a vendor based on thought leadership content, proving a direct link between content marketing and pipeline.

To help add context, we've invited marketing experts to provide commentary on the study's findings. We are delighted to have Achinta Mitra of Tiecas Inc. and Elizabeth Ruscitto and Dmitry Shamis of HubSpot along with us this year.

We also are grateful to the 1540 engineering professionals who took time to participate in the study. Thanks to their generosity and candour, we'll all do a little better at marketing to them in 2019.

Thanks for reading,
John Hayes



Meet Our Expert Panel



John Hayes, President of Engineering.com

John and his team at engineering.com help marketers across the engineering spectrum create content and campaigns that inform designers, engineers, and manufacturers about the latest technology shaping their industry.

He is the author of the Digital Marketing for Engineers eBook and blog.



Elizabeth Ruscitto, Director of Developer Relations at HubSpot

Elizabeth is responsible for leading the strategy that engages developers across the HubSpot platform. She loves to build and scale diverse software, hardware, and marketing programs through thoughtful storytelling and community creation. Elizabeth holds a masters degrees from Syracuse University in Information Management and Innovation.



Achinta Mitra, President of Tiecas, Inc.

Achinta is the founder and President of Tiecas, Inc., a Houston-based industrial marketing and consulting company that has been in business since 1987. He is a Mechanical Engineer with an MBA in Marketing. That's why he calls himself a marketing engineer.

Achinta provides practical insights and actionable marketing advice through his blog Industrial Marketing Today.



Dmitry Shamis, Sr. Director of Creative at HubSpot

Dmitry is responsible for the ideation, concepting, and creative execution for all of HubSpot's global marketing campaigns. An engineer by trade, Dmitry enjoys solving problems in creative ways and collaborating with partners from diverse backgrounds. Dmitry holds a bachelor's degree from New York University where he studied Sports and Entertainment Marketing.

How Are Engineers Consuming Content

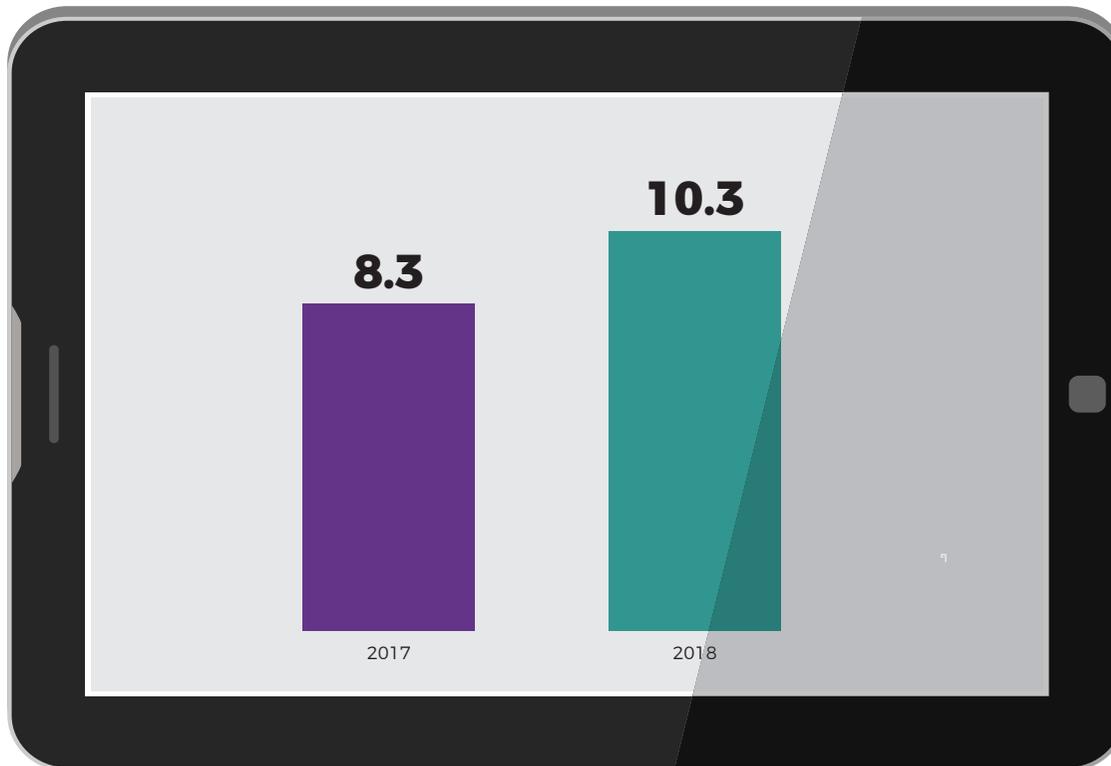




Engineers are Consuming 24% More Content Than They Were a Year Ago

Last year this survey revealed that the average engineer spent upwards of a work day's worth of time each week accessing engineering information. That was great news for marketers who rely on delivering content to help engineers find their solutions. This year, the survey shows that the time engineers spend consuming content has grown to 10.3 hours per week, which provides marketers with even more opportunities to connect their content to this audience.

2017 vs. 2018 Content Consumption in Hours



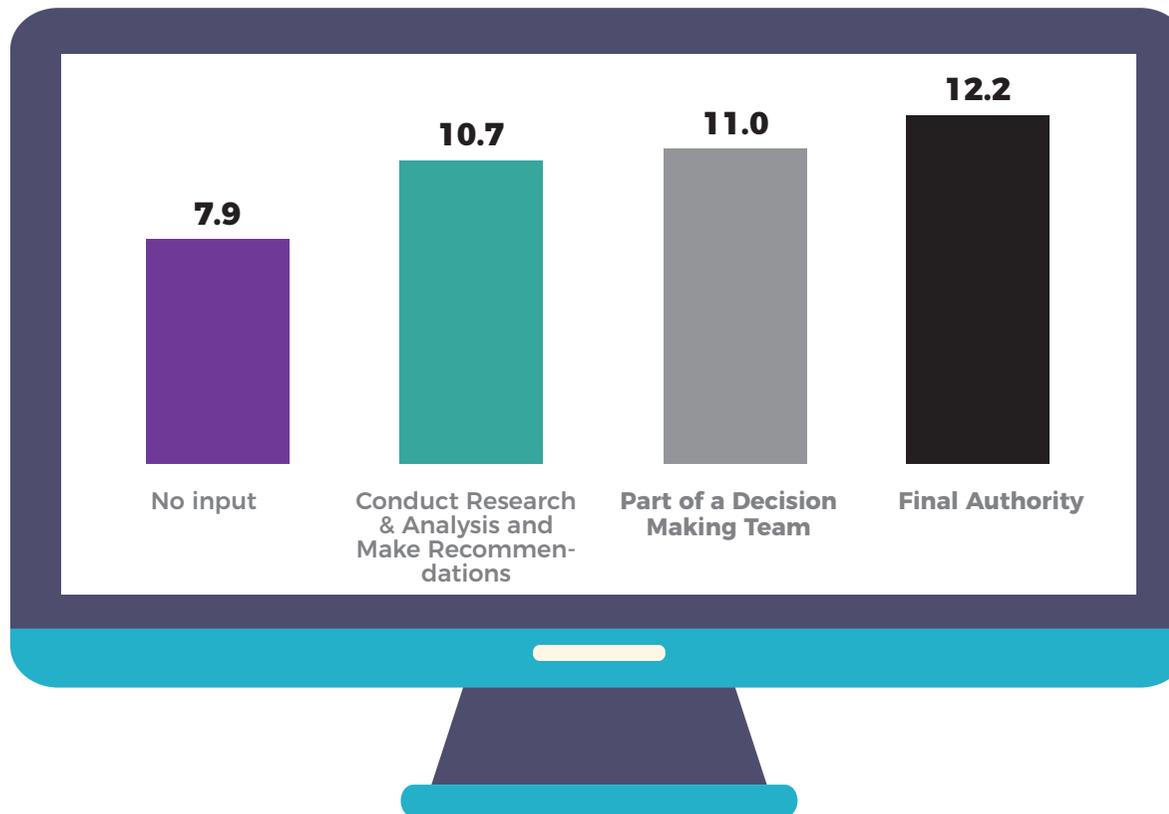
Dmitry: 25% of a traditional 40 hour work week is a lot of time. It makes me think Engineers in 2019 are looking for resources to solve exciting new problems within emerging technology.

Q In an average week, approximately how many hours do you spend accessing engineering information via the following?: Computer, mobile phone, tablet, and print. Chart shows summed average hours across all devices.

The Amount of Information Consumed Correlates with Level of Decision Making Authority

The survey results showed a difference in content consumption patterns between those who have input in making decisions and those who do not. The more authority a respondent has in the decision-making process, the more total information they consumed.

Decision Making Responsibility and Content Consumption



Elizabeth: What's surprising is the amount of research and analysis that happens by those on the decision-making team or those contributing to the recommendation pool. Creating content aimed at decision-makers has the most value, but creating content that will reach and engage any member of that team can also create a referral opportunity.



John: What does this mean for marketers? Opportunity. There is value in creating content aimed at decision-makers such as cost/benefit analyses, industry trends, peer survey results, etc. This kind of content may not generate huge volumes of traffic, but if you can create content that will help with decision making, the data shows these people will make time to consume it.

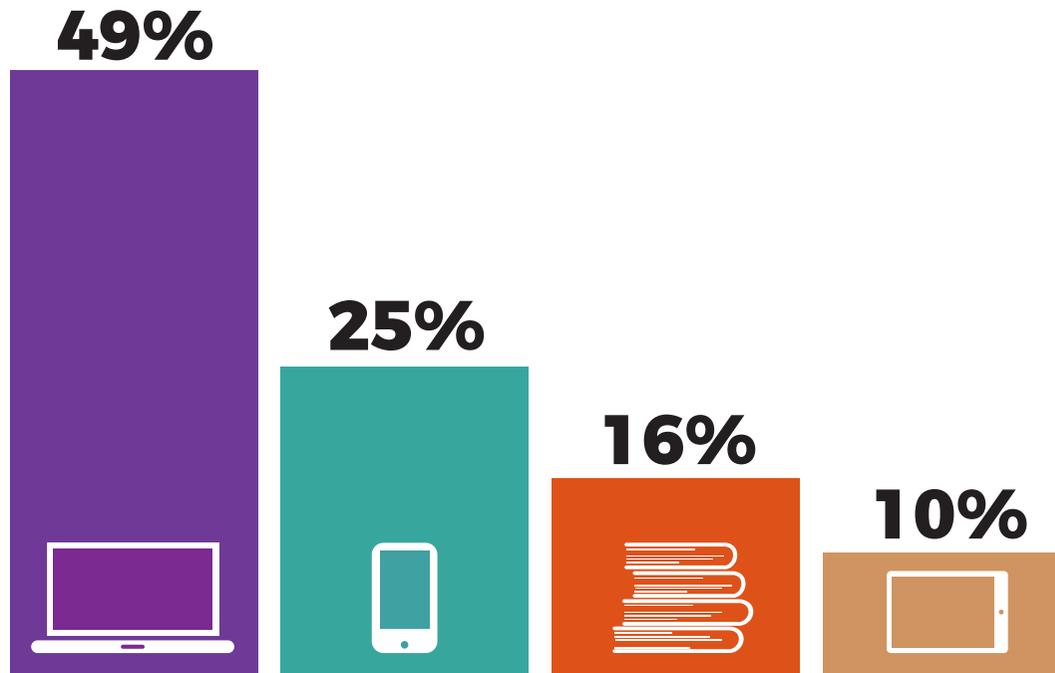
Q In an average week, approximately how many hours do you spend accessing engineering information via the following?: Computer, mobile phone, tablet, and print. Chart shows summed average hours across all devices.



84% of All Content Consumption is Digital

Clearly, engineering professionals are spending a lot of time consuming content. Overall, as a population, where is that consumption occurring? That's what is shown below. 49% of all consumption occurs via a computer, 25% occurs on a mobile phone, 16% by reading a print publication, and 10% occurs on a tablet.

Content Consumption by Platform



Elizabeth: If 49% of consumption occurs via a computer and engineers spend over 10 hours per work

week consuming content, that could be a signal to marketers about timing for campaigns. Check the performance of your current digital strategies against your channel, medium, and networks to make sure your personas are seeing your information at the right time in their decision-making journey.



Dmitry: If 84% of content being consumed is digital, that makes SEO strategies that much

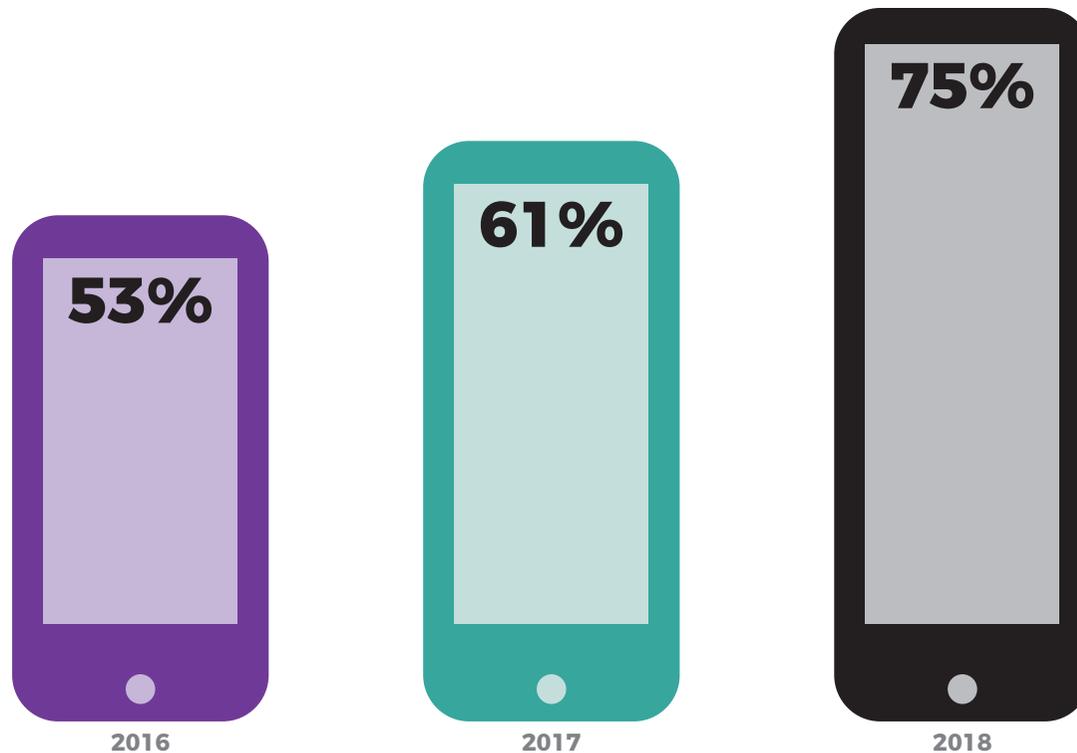
more valuable. Engineers are spending almost nine hours a week consuming content. You should make sure your content gets found

Q In an average week, approximately how many hours do you spend accessing engineering information via the following?

Mobile Phone Use for Content Consumption Shows Y-o-Y Growth of 23%

Results like this are almost a foregone conclusion at this point, with just about every person qualified to be an engineer owning a smartphone. Still, it's interesting to see that adoption rates are still jumping upwards with double digit year-over-year growth.

Adoption of Mobile Devices for Information Consumption by Engineering Professionals



John: This data confirms that having a mobile presentation strategy is increasingly

important. We are seeing 24% of engineering.com's traffic coming from mobile. As a result, we are recommending that clients focus on content that's easily accessible, starting with sponsored stories. We also recommend that any gated content be formatted for mobile consumption, even if that means just emailing a link or downloadable.



Achinta: I've seen a steady increase in mobile usage by engineers in the past year. However, there

is a difference between the content consumed on mobile versus desktop/laptop. Reading emails, signing in remotely for webinars and filling out short forms for content downloads are popular on mobile. Desktop is still the preferred mode for long-form content. Optimizing for various screen sizes has become very important.

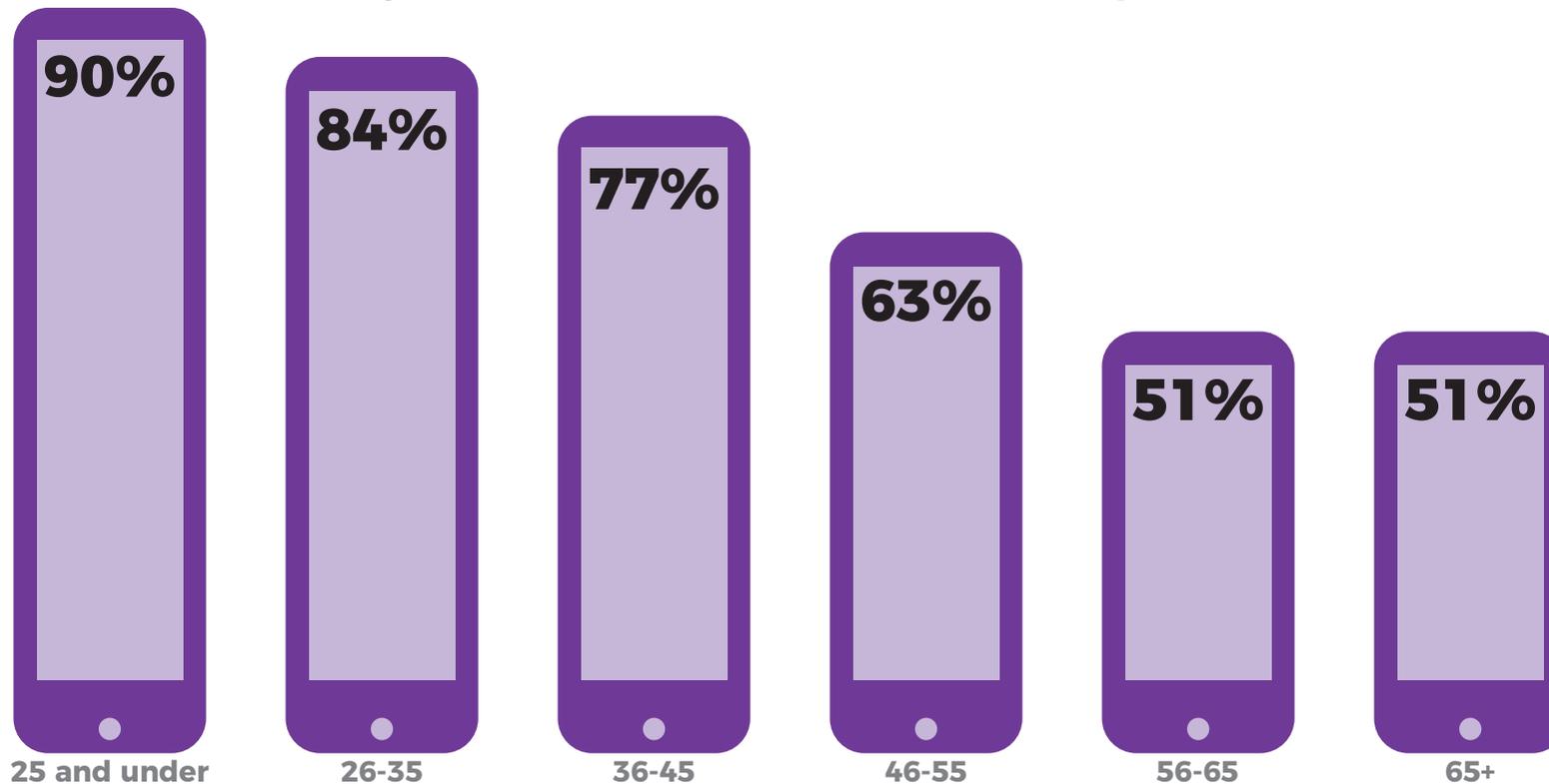
Q In an average week, approximately how many hours do you spend accessing engineering information via the following?



For the First Time Ever, Across All Age Groups at Least 1 in 2 Engineers Uses a Mobile Phone for Content Consumption

One of the knocks on mobile content was that it was less necessary because older engineers – those making important decisions – were not the ones accessing information via their phone. That has changed. For the first time ever, in every age group at least 50% of people are accessing engineering content via their phone.

Age and Mobile Phone Content Consumption



Q In an average week, approximately how many hours do you spend accessing engineering information via the following? Showing percentage of respondents who did not select "Do not use a smartphone"

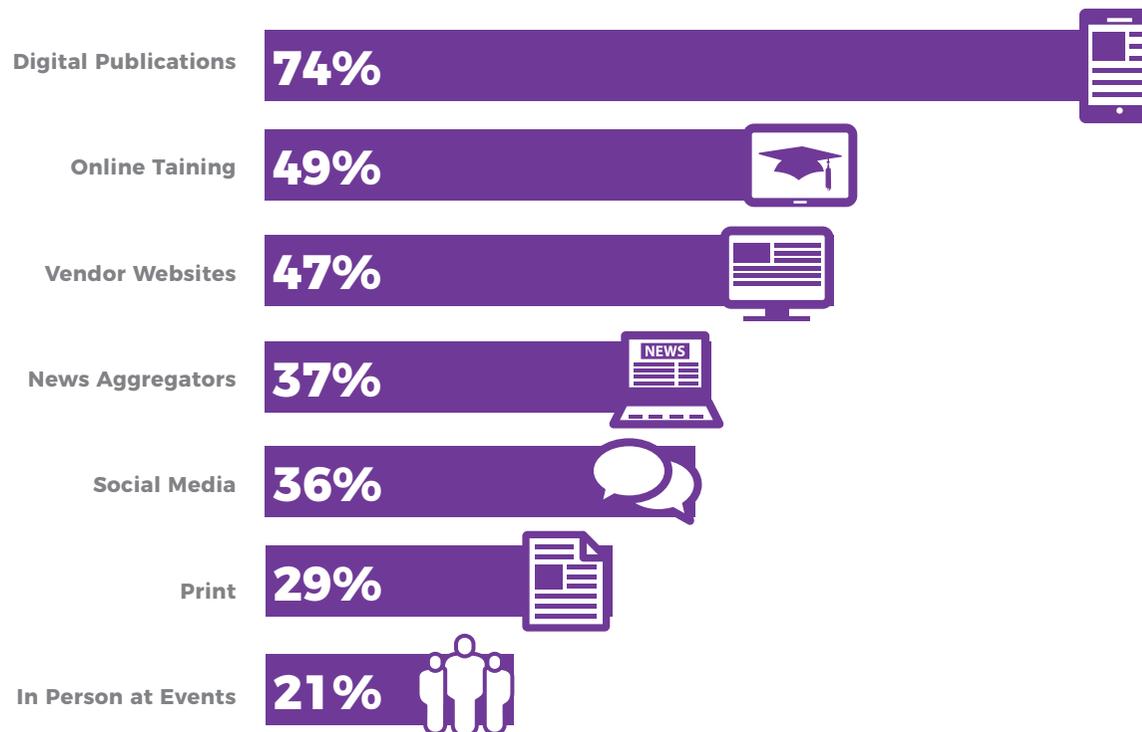


When Asked About Their Information Gathering Over the Last 30 Days, Digital Publications Remained the Most Popular Medium

Digital publications were the most commonly accessed form of engineering information, followed by online training and then (good news for marketers) vendor websites.

The poor showing for print media reflects a continuing trend—a trend of which print publishers are well aware. Some have even given up their magazines in favor of digital-only distribution.

Thirty Day Content Consumption by Channel



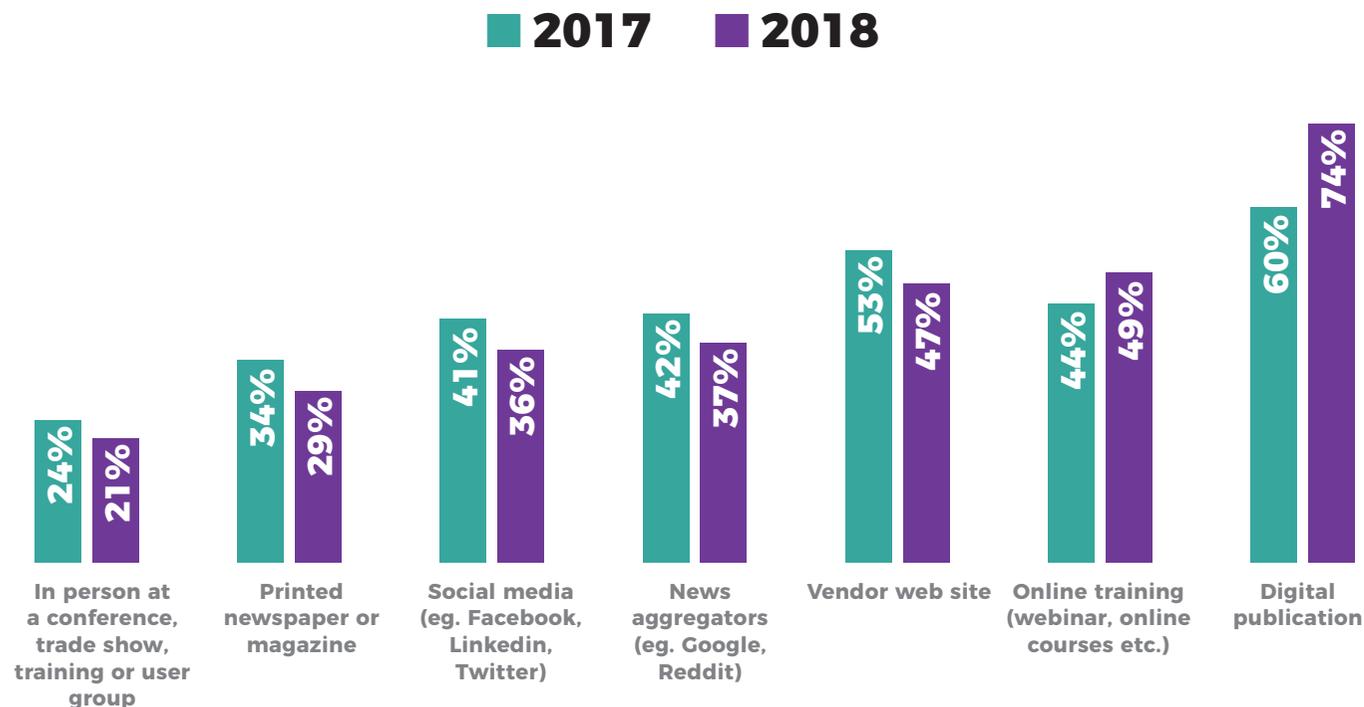
Achinta: Online training is especially important for systems integrators and distributors of engineered systems. Many OEMs rely on these people to provide training and after-sales support to end users. Engineers, especially the less experienced ones, rely on vendors to educate them as in-house resources become more scarce and senior engineers retire.

Q Which of the following have you used in the last month as a source of engineering information? [Check all that apply]

When Comparing the results of this survey to last year, only digital publications and online training showed growth

In the table below you'll find the data from 2018 juxtaposed with that of 2017. There are two really interesting trends. First, there was a drop in use year-over-year in 5 of the 7 categories asked about. Secondly, digital publications took a major leap forward in readership, growing by 23% since last year.

Channel Consumption Change 2017 to 2018



John: While it may be disheartening to think that your social media posts or company websites are seeing reduced visibility, I think there is a good lesson here. The two categories that saw growth are the most educationally oriented. Follow their lead and try a webinar or a sponsored article that focuses on solving your prospects' problem and less so about your product, and see what happens.



Elizabeth: It makes sense to see digital publications and online training being the most accessed mediums, as leaders grapple to make sense of established and emerging technologies when making decisions. The data also aligns with trends around continuing education as we have the most age-diverse workforce in history right now. Try a short form article on a blogging platform or an online training module hosted by a platform agnostic publication.

Q Which of the following have you used in the last month as a source of engineering information? [Check all that apply]

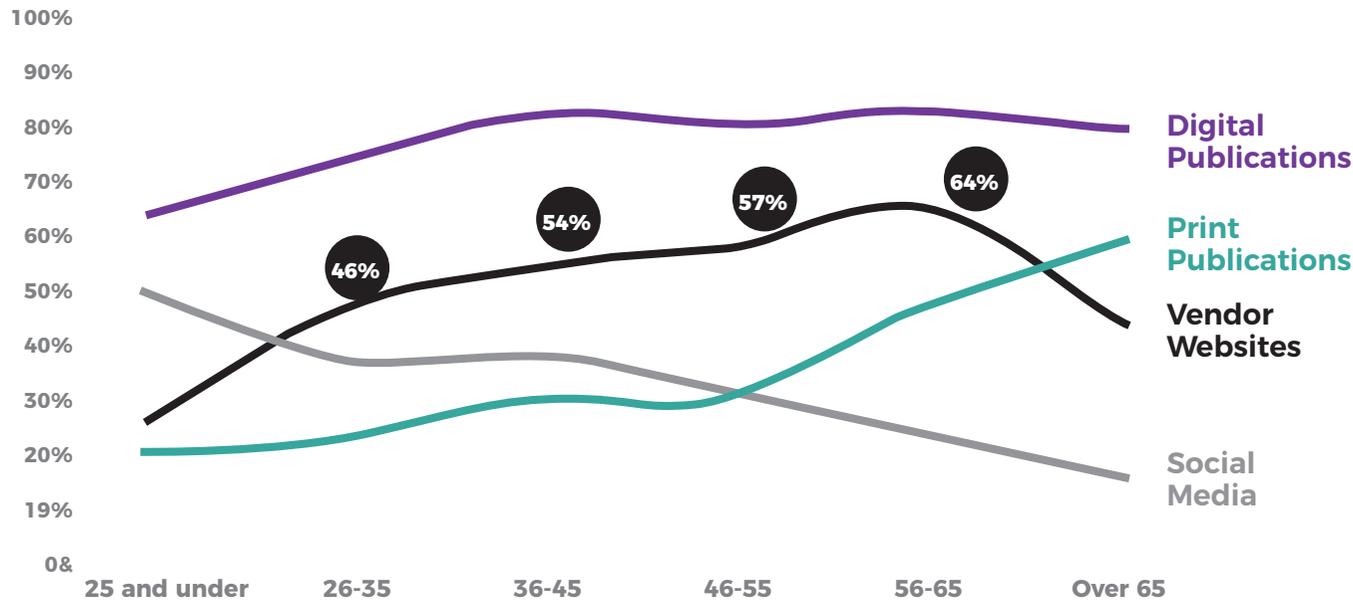
Good News Marketers! Your Sites Are The Second Most Popular Information Source in the Key 36-65 Age Range

In the chart below, the vertical Y axis shows the percentage of survey respondents who said that they consumed a particular type of media over the past 30 days. On the horizontal axis are the various age cohorts of respondents broken into 10 year increments.

For marketers, the great news is that your sites outpace social media and print for the key 36-65 age range.

The opposing directions for Print and Social are also interesting to see, if not surprising. For younger engineers, they're more likely to source information from their social media accounts before they ever pick up a print magazine. For their peers older than 55, the opposite is true.

Age and Consumption by Channel



Dmitry: The value of marketing to your audience

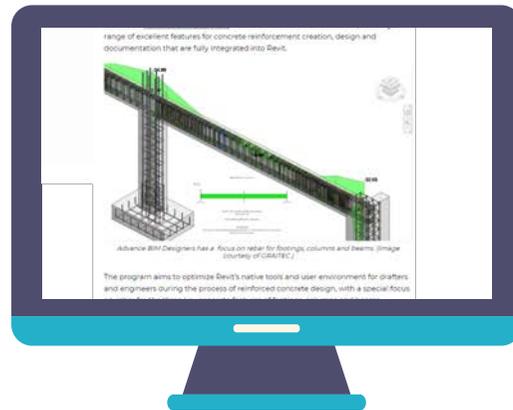
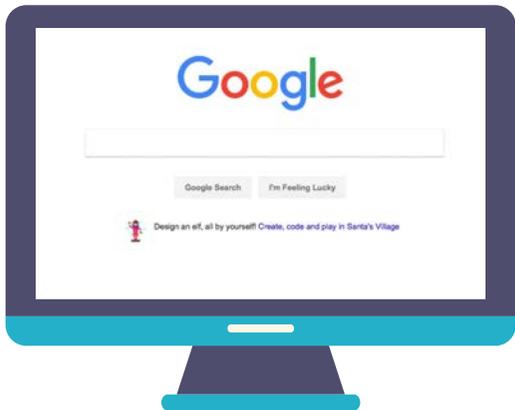
can't be overstated here. Different demographics will focus on different sources for their content so creating one version of something and just linking to it everywhere won't work anymore. Tailor your message to the appropriate audience.

Q Which of the following have you used in the last month as a source of engineering information? [Check all that apply]

Search, Digital Publications and Email Remain the Preferred Means to Acquire Information Among Engineers

We've seen this same pattern repeating for several years now.

Engineers prefer finding what they're looking for by just searching Google, the same as the rest of us. Second to search, going to a trusted publication is preferable, and after that they like to see relevant and interesting information show up in their inbox.



Q What are your preferred ways of acquiring engineering information? [Check all that apply]



John: Is it just me, or do these ranks

really look like some type of process? An engineer searches for something they need information about, they find it on a publisher's site, and if the content is truly excellent, they subscribe to receive similar information via email.

Engineers Rank Email as a Preferred Means of Acquiring Information, But What About Declining Email Open Rates?

Engineers say that they prefer to receive information via email, but marketers for years have been lamenting falling email open rates. How did the engineers in the study say they interact with email?

There are 51% of engineers who say that they will at least open every email sent to them. This means that filters are doing a wonderful job, because I don't think any of us has a 51% open rate on our emails. Rather, it's likely that these engineers are referring to the emails they actually see—that promised land of the primary inbox and not Google's "Updates" tab or Microsoft's "Other".

On a more positive note, 96% of engineers at least will consider an email in front of them, so marketers just need to figure out how to get their emails seen.

How Engineers Interact with Email



Dmitry:

Every year is the year email "dies", but

it's not actually going anywhere. Send emails that are segmented and customized to your reader's interests. 96% of engineers will give you a chance, but that number drops by almost half if the subject line isn't relevant to the reader.

Q How do you process emails that land in your inbox?

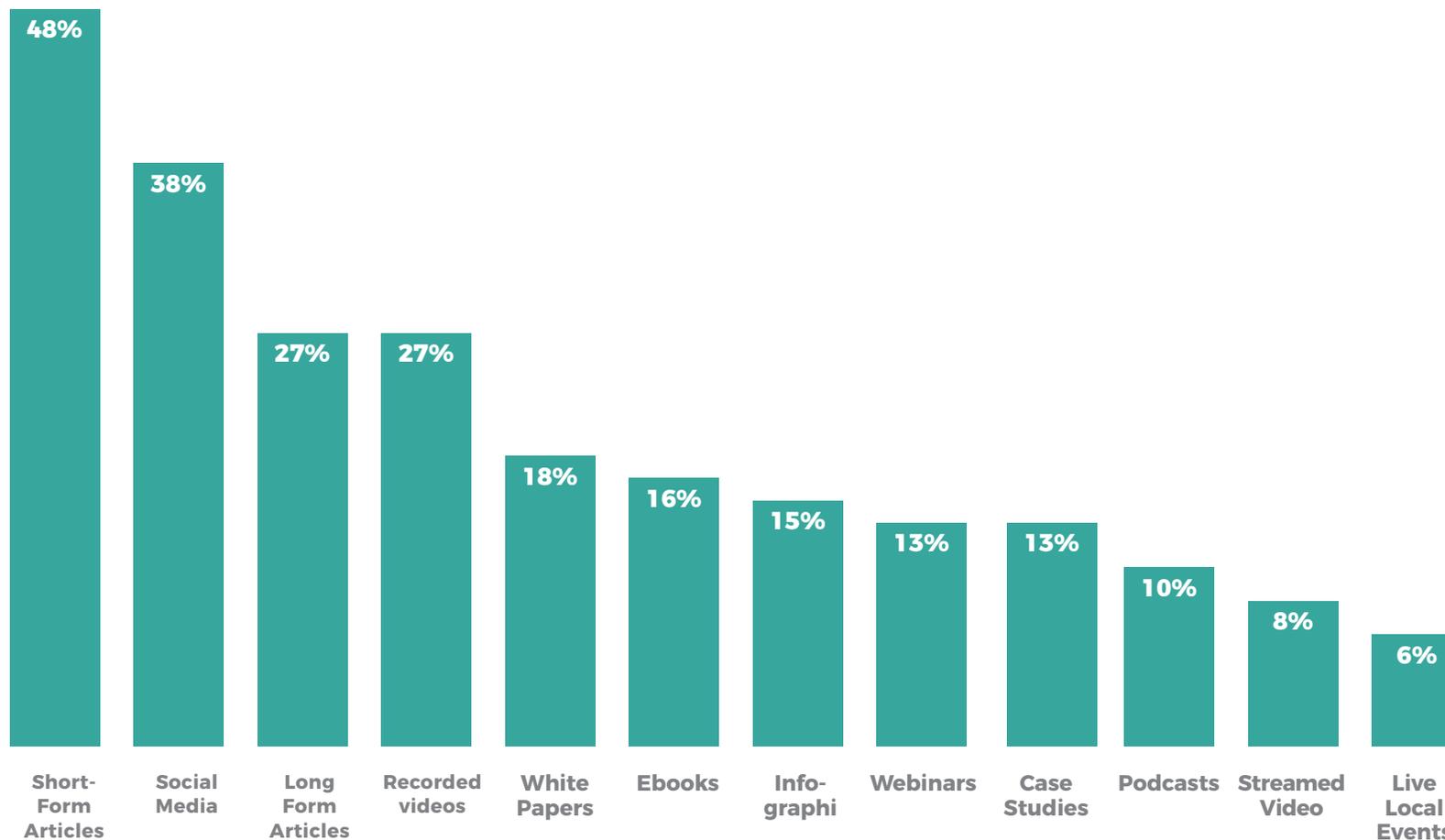
What are engineers consuming?



Engineers Routinely Access Short-form Content, but Long-form is Important

The usage rates below show the percentage of all engineering professionals in the study who used each type of content on a weekly basis. The results below indicate that they more frequently consume short form articles and social media posts, but longer form articles and video aren't far behind.

Weekly Consumption by Content Format



Achinta:
Downloadable CAD files, parametric search applications and

interactive part number builders are just a few of the other content assets that are very important if you target Design Engineers. Collectively, I refer to them as “sales enablers” because they lead to a purchase more than 75% of the time (According to independent research studies). These may not be the conventional content marketing assets that marketers think about, but they are critical to specifiers. Unless the component or part is “designed in,” the functional buyer (Purchasing) can't issue the PO or send out RFQs.

Q Approximately how often have you accessed engineering content of the following types over the last twelve months?

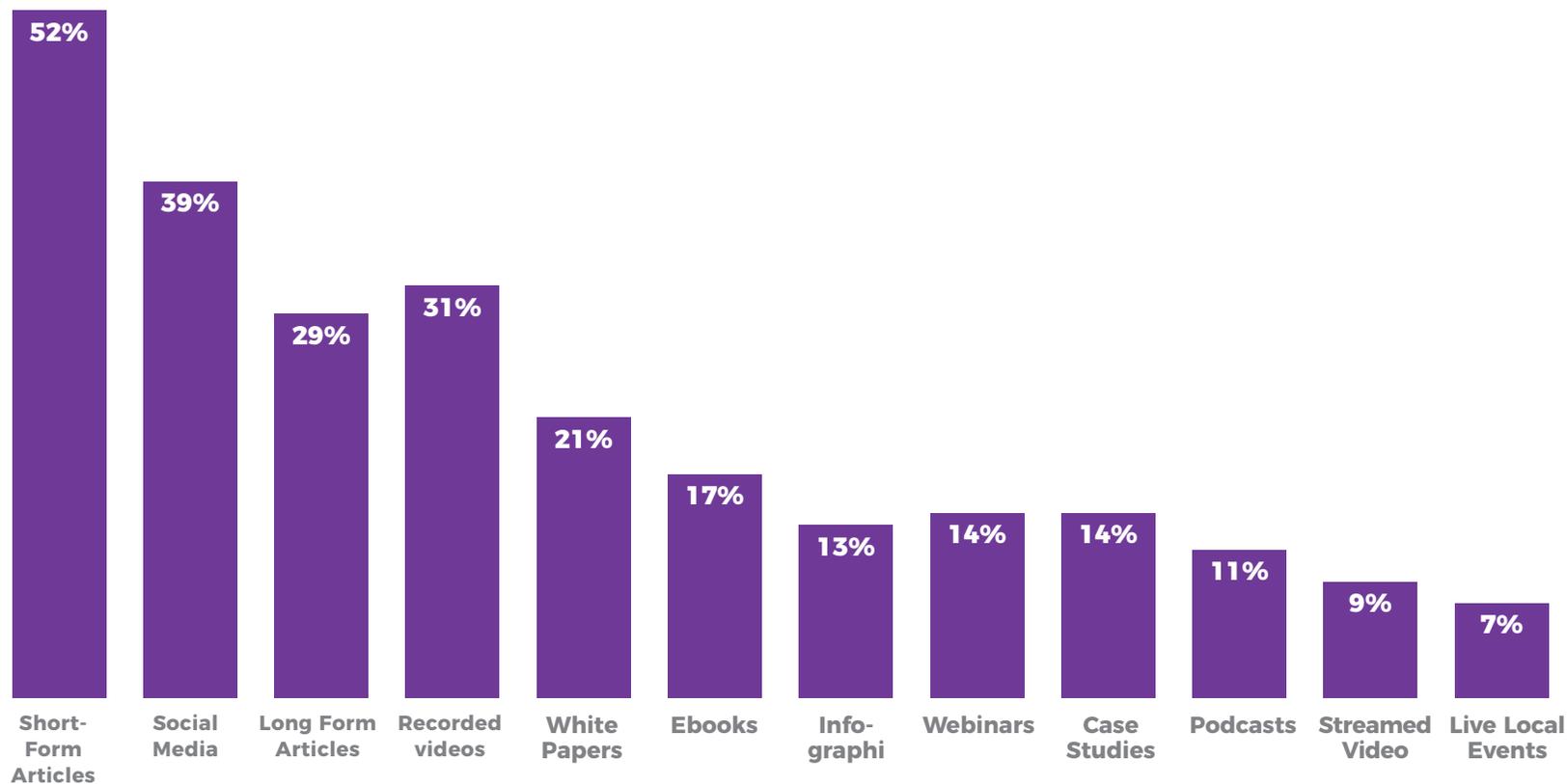


There is No Secret Content Formula for Accessing Decision Makers

How many ideal buyer personas include the words “decision maker” in them? Of course, all marketers want to reach the decision makers – they’re the shortest path from your marketing content to a purchase order.

In an ideal world, the content consumption patterns of decision makers would be unique from their peers. However, that’s not what the data shows. They are, in fact, just about the same as every other engineering professional; decision makers just spend more time consuming overall.

Decision Maker Weekly Consumption by Content Format



John: While there is value in reaching decision makers, it is

also vitally important to reach the influencers on the decision making team because these people can include or exclude your solution from their consideration set. The good news is that the same information channels that reach the influencers should also reach decision makers.



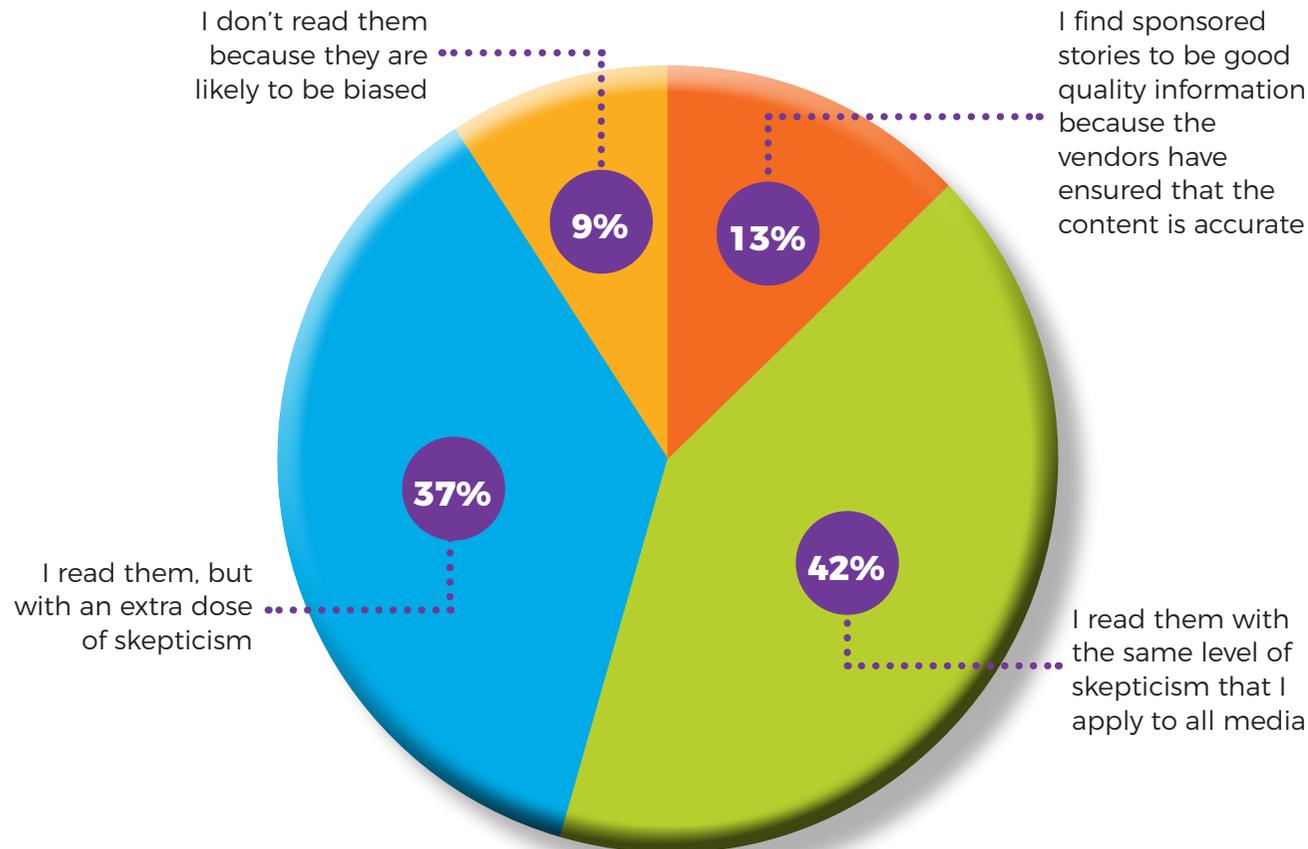
Approximately how often have you accessed engineering content of the following types over the last twelve months?

Do Engineers Care Whether Content is Sponsored? Not Really.

Nine out of ten engineers read sponsored content. More than half view them as favorably or more favorably than unsponsored content.

For marketers, the data below suggests that there is no reason to fear sponsoring content on sites outside your own. If a website exists that serves your ideal buyer persona(s), then it makes sense to see whether that site is willing to run sponsored content.

Engineers and Sponsored Content



Elizabeth: Sponsored content is an opportunity to reach new audience members and build brand awareness, especially through professional communities where you can tap into their established leadership and trust through engaged community members.



Dmitry: To build brand awareness it's important to get out in front of new audiences. This is an area where I think there's a great opportunity to make new friends and see if you can't gain some more readers in the process.

Q How do you treat engineering stories that are sponsored by vendors?

How do engineers interact with marketing?



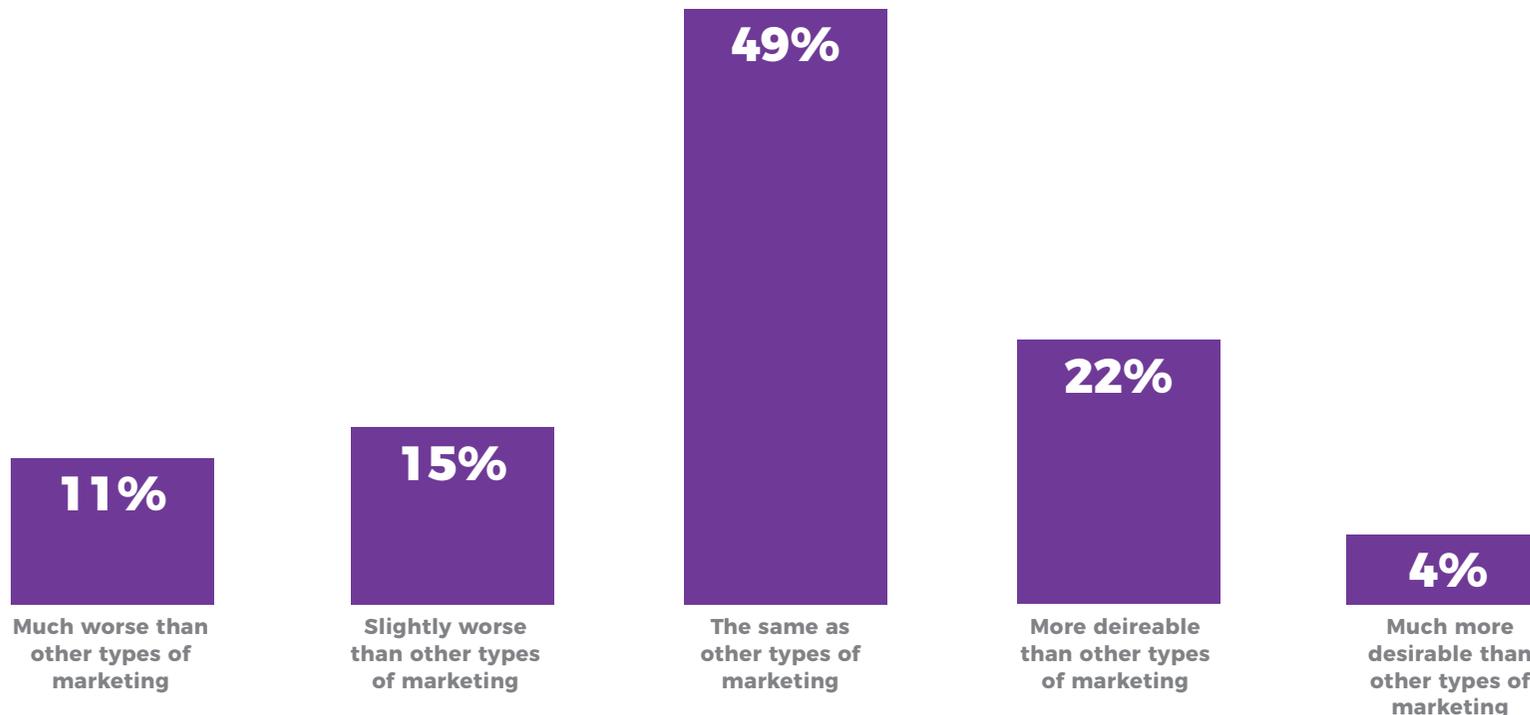
Engineering Professionals are Indifferent to Account Based Marketing

The survey asked whether engineering professionals, as a prospect, found their contact with ABM to be better, worse, or the same as more traditional marketing. The results were a classic bell curve, with equal numbers of engineers finding the idea of ABM to be positive and an equal number viewing it negatively.

Of course, with great marketing, ABM or otherwise, the prospect won't feel they're being marketed to. Rather, they're being provided assistance through helpful information.

For marketers wanting to try ABM, these results don't indicate whether you should or you shouldn't try it.

Engineers and Their Opinions of ABM



John: So, should you try ABM? With marketing innovation moving so fast I don't think you can afford not to test many new techniques. I say give it a shot and let your own results be your guide.

Q Account-Based Marketing (ABM) is a popular tactic many vendors are employing. Its hallmarks are personalized content that is tailored specifically to your company by name and addresses your unique needs. Given this definition, what best describes your opinion of this type of marketing?



Chatbots May Be The Future of Marketing, But We're Still Early in the Adoption Curve

More than 4 out of 5 engineering professionals have seen a chatbot on a website. Of those, only 1 in 4 found it to be useful. That being said, the vast majority didn't even bother trying to interact with the bot.

For marketers wanting to experiment with this exciting technology, the data would indicate that you're going to need to experiment a lot with your greeting to convert those "seen but not interacted" into experimenters.

Engineers and Their Interactions with Chatbots



Dmitry: It's still early days for chatbots but I strongly believe that as bots get smarter, they'll become more relevant to the buyer journey. There are so many great tools out there to build a chatbot, that it feels like a missed chance to not try it out.

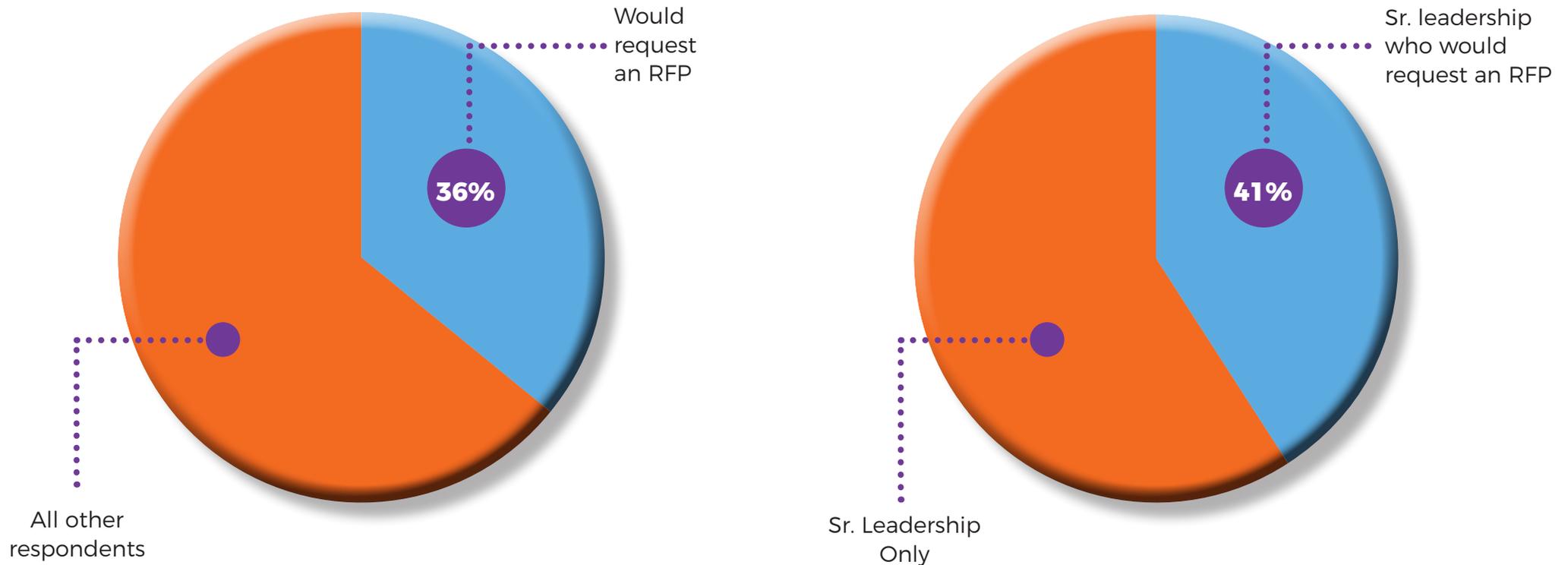
Q Many websites are now using chatbots to help direct visitors to the content and information most relevant to the visitor's needs. Which of the following best describes your interactions with chatbots?



High Quality Content Turns Into Opportunities. 36% of Engineers Would Request an RFP Based on Thought Leadership

The promise of content marketing has always been that you will build a trusted relationship with an audience and that the trust will lead to revenue. The good news for marketers is that the data shows this is indeed the case. Not only would more than a third of engineering professionals request a proposal based on a great piece of content, the number was even high among senior leaders (Directors and above).

Engineers, Thought Leadership and RFPs



Q How likely are you to request a proposal from a vendor based on their thought leadership? We are defining thought leadership as authoritative content that demonstrates expertise on topics that are important to your industry.

Expert Closing Comments





Closing Comments By Expert Panel



John Hayes, engineering.com

There are definitely a few surprise findings in this year's report. Right off the bat, I was floored to see that overall content consumption by engineering professionals is up 24% from just last year. That's great news for every content marketer out there. Working with a lot of marketers, we know that creating enough quality content can be a real challenge. In fact, it was the number one challenge we found in our research report 2018 Budget Trends in Industrial & Technology Marketing.

For marketers trying to generate buy-in for their content efforts, there is a lot of other great news, too; from the finding that vendor websites are the 2nd most popular source of engineering information to the fact that 2 out of 5 executives would place an RFP based on great thought leadership content. I'm also happy to see digital publications continue to prove their value by being the most commonly accessed information channel, and for the positive views engineers hold of sponsored content.



Elizabeth Ruscitto, HubSpot

It may be a bit obvious but engineers are savvy consumers too. They want to create trusted relationships with brands and publications by continuing to learn so they can make the best decisions for their teams, companies, and careers. For marketers and community professionals, this is an opportunity to make sure your content is focused (regardless of format). Think about making the search habits of engineers work for you through channel and platform syndication by using a variety of mediums to create a cohesive strategy that can reach any member of the decision-making team where and when they consume content.



Achinta Mitra, Tiecas, Inc.

Overall, the findings from this research study match what I see on the ground, working with manufacturers and engineering companies every day. Digital marketing is definitely the way to engage with engineers and your website should be the foundation of this strategy. The primary purpose of all other tactics should be to drive people to your site and convert them into qualified leads with technically accurate content that is relevant to the challenges and problems faced by engineers in their daily work. You earn their trust with content they can rely on.

Downloadable CAD files are big time savers; they improve accuracy across designs and reduce time to market. This strategy helps buyers move through their buying journey and aligns very nicely with the self-select and self-serve mode preferred by most engineers and industrial professionals.



Dmitry Shamis, HubSpot

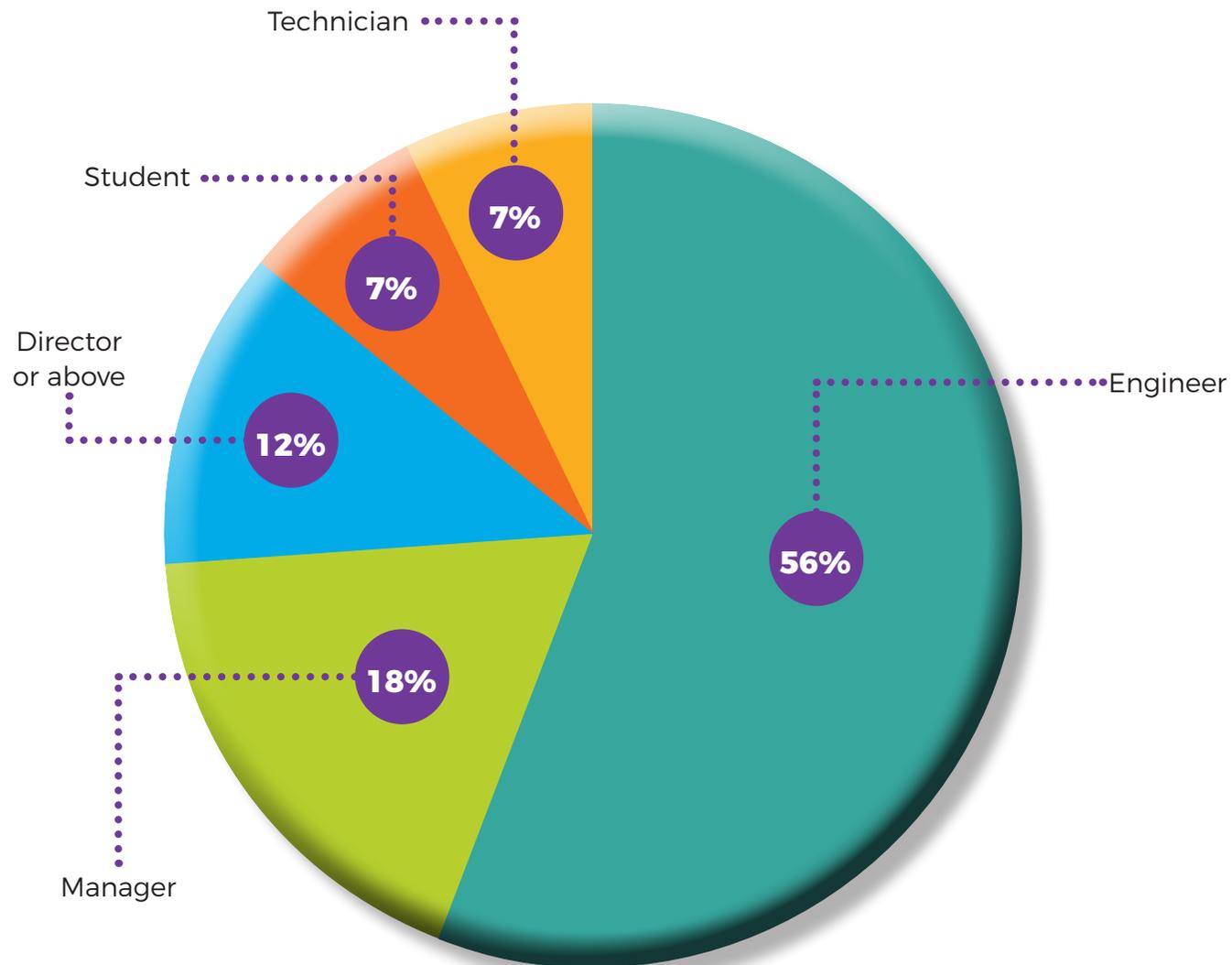
With content consumption further shifting into digital (84%) and mobile (75%) consumption, you just can't ignore the fact that you need to make your content discoverable, responsive, customized, and informative. No pressure! None of these lessons are new, but if you want to see your content convert, you also now need to be consistent. Consistency is key because you'll generate traffic, develop yourself as an authority, and hopefully get some backlinks in the process so that you continue to be discovered via search.

The other thing that stands out to me is the medium of your content. Short-form and long-form articles are huge, but almost one-third of decisionmakers watch videos. This is a trend I imagine will grow. As you think about your content strategy and where you post that content, think about who's consuming it and where.

Demographics



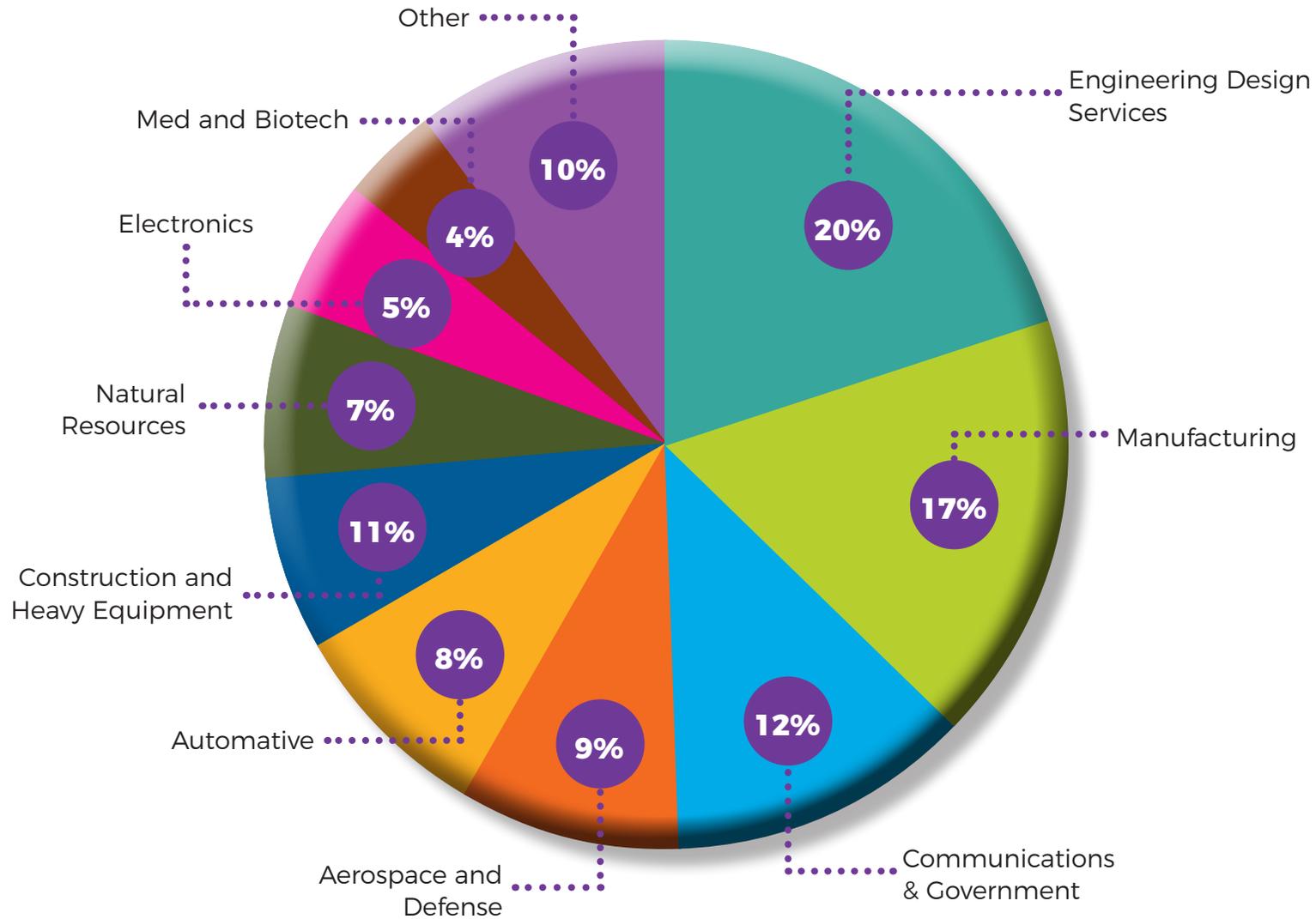
Job role



N=1540



Industry



N=1540



Regions Represented

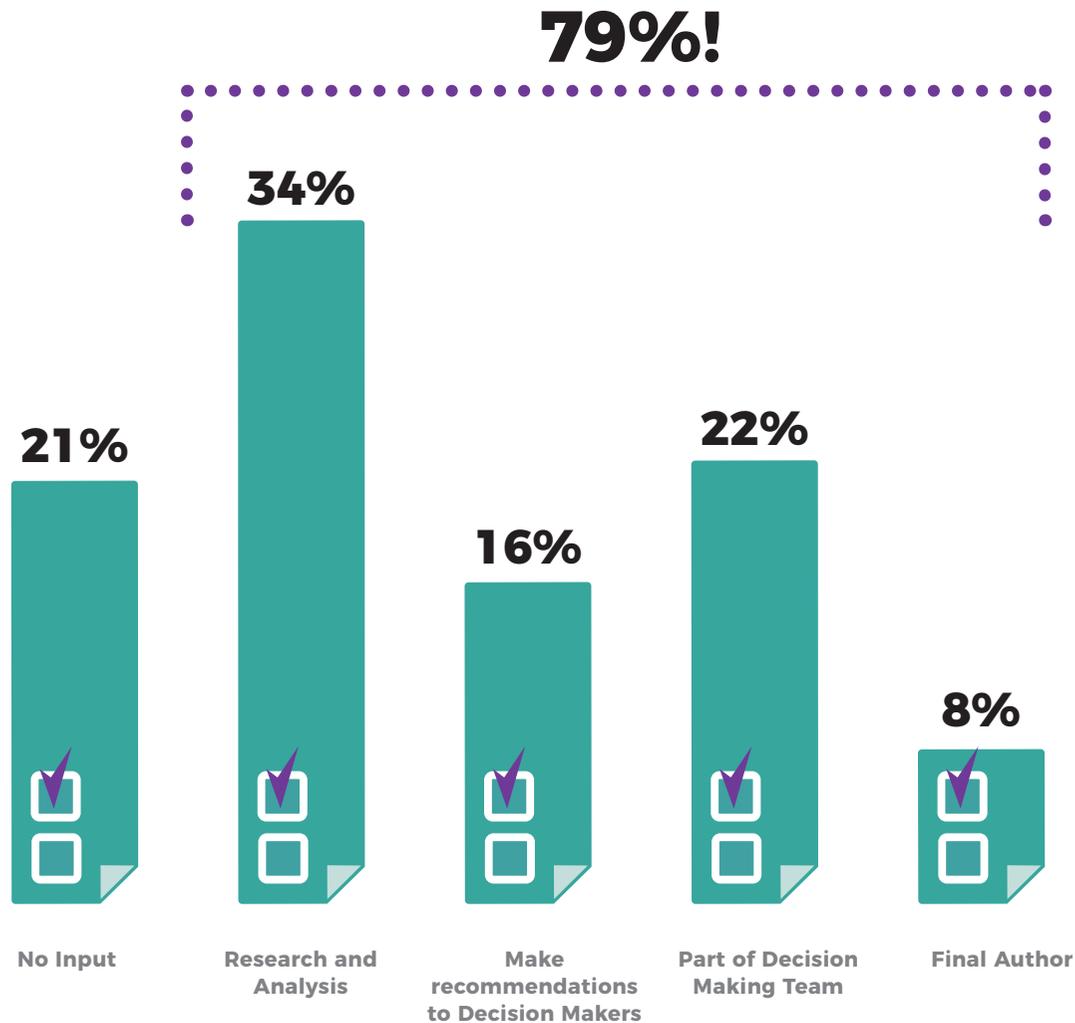
Respondents came from across the globe, but overwhelmingly from the United States



N=1540



Level of Decision Making Input



N=1540