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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Search Engine Journal's State Of SEO looking ahead to 2025.

Between 2023 and 2024, SEO professionals seem to have gone from a confident position to being placed on the back foot.

In the 2023 survey, we reported that SEO professionals were expanding offerings and investments in expectation of budgets increasing.

Unfortunately, 2024 has seen a lot of movement in the opposite direction. Disruptions from technology and platform business decisions have resulted in more budget challenges and significant interruptions in performance.

The 2024 survey ran in April, a month before the Google I/O announced AI Overviews and other changes.

SEO professionals reported that algorithm updates, AI technology, and budget constraints are significant barriers to success. Complex changes in Google Search have also changed how SEO professionals measure success in 2024.

This year's report has more writing, insight, and advice in order to help contextualize the data. We hope this additional guidance helps you navigate the murky waters of SEO in 2025.

Top Five Insights From The State Of SEO Survey

(And One Joke)

Respondents said ...
#1 SEO Challenge Is:

2024: Algorithm Changes
2023: Content

Question
Why is content less of a challenge and algorithm change more of a challenge in 2024?

Answer
Having the most helpful, expert content no longer automatically earns you a top spot in the SERPs.

Respondents said ...
SEO Industry Changes Will Come From:

#1 AI
#2 Google Updates

SEO Performance Disruption Will Come From:

#1: Generative AI In Search Platforms
#2: AI-Generated Content

Question
How do you stand out amid generative AI disruption and unpredictable SERP fluctuations?

Answer
You must lean into audience research. People still need things; they still want genuine experiences and expert opinions. Your competitive advantage has to come from knowing who needs you, what for, why, and where they're most likely to see you.

Respondents said ...

#1 Barrier To Their SEO Success Is:

Budget

#1 Reason Their SEO Clients Leave Is:

Budget

Respondents said ...

#1 Tracked SEO Metric Is:

Keyword Rankings

#2 Tracked SEO Metric Is:

Organic Pageviews

Respondents said ...

The Top Most Difficult To Find Skills In SEO Are:

#1 Technical SEO

#2 Data Analysis

The Most Desired Skills In SEO Candidates Are:

#1 Soft Skills

#2 Building & Executing SEO Strategies

Question

Everyone is feeling the squeeze. Your competitors are getting scrappy. How do you eke out an edge in SEO right now?

Answer

Ignore trying to game the SERPs. Google is playing by unknowable (and seemingly unwinnable) rules right now. Pour all of your focus into creating great content that best serves your ideal customer. Work with marketing to get your content onto platforms where your customer hangs out.

Question

How do SEO professionals adjust when their core success metrics fluctuate wildly due to circumstances beyond their control?

Answer

Remember to build business value into your tracking. When fighting for budget and resources, telling a story that connects your efforts to conversions, leads, and sales is critical. The quality of your traffic matters. Dig into what brings in high-quality users and focus on those efforts.

Question

How can SEO professionals build their careers amid so much disruption both in SEO performance and the industry as a whole?

Answer

Build rare and desirable skills. SEO is becoming more integrated into other parts of marketing. SEO professionals – who build exemplary collaborative skills and learn to speak the languages of other disciplines – will have desirable skill sets.

Respondents said ...

46.3% Almost half of all SEO professionals are "content goblins"

Deconstructing A Year Of SEO Disruption & Volatility

IN THIS SECTION →

The Biggest Challenges In SEO

These challenges are significantly different from what SEO professionals were most concerned about in 2023.

Content, the top difficulty back then, has now dropped to fourth place in 2024. Algorithm changes have moved from the third most challenging task to now claiming the top spot.

The top 6 "most difficult" answers remain consistent from year to year. Their order may have changed, but the pool of most significant SEO challenges remained stable over long periods of time.

SEO Challenge **#1**

Algorithm Changes

SEO Challenge **#2**

Link Building

SEO Challenge **#3**

Technical SEO

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What Are The 3 Most Difficult Tasks Of SEO?
2024 Responses

Algorithm Changes
22.2%

Link Building
16.2%

Technical SEO
13.4%

Content Strategy & Production
12.9%

Rapid Onset Of New Technologies
11.8%

Analytics
8.1%

Keyword Strategy
6.7%

On-Page SEO
4.6%

Local SEO
3.1%

None Of The Above / Don't Know
1.0%

Top 6 2023 Responses

Content (Production/Marketing/Strategy)
13.8%

Technical SEO
8.8%

Algorithm Changes
8.6%

Rapid Onset Of New Technologies
8.5%

Analytics
8.0%

Link Building
7.6%

*Please note that the responses to this question changed between 2023 and 2024. However, the top 6 responses appear in both sets of answers, so we can compare their overall positions.
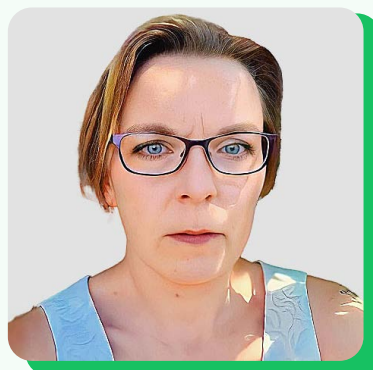
Search Engine Journal®
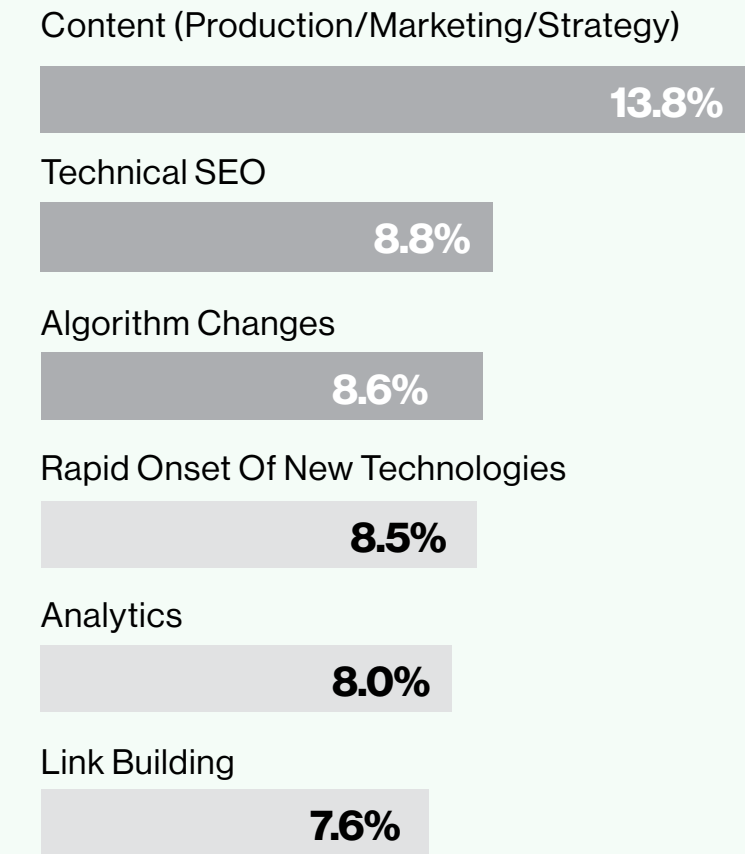
Question

Why Is Content Less Of A Challenge & Algorithm Changes More Of A Challenge In 2024?

"Algorithm changes are calling long-held assumptions about content strategy into question. Content itself is changing. Basic content is getting swallowed up and fed into algorithms for zero-click experiences. SEO pros are wrestling with what quality and helpfulness look like in this new dynamic, but understanding what the algorithms are doing and why comes first in the hierarchy."

Angie Nikoleychuk
Behavioral Data Analyst,
Search Engine Journal

"SEO pros are still concerned about content, but the real confusion comes from the mixed messaging – and mixed performance – about how Search algorithms prioritize content. They're asking: Why are non-expert UGC responses showing up instead of real expertise for queries? Why did Google let AI-generated responses run roughshod over the very idea of helpfulness, accuracy, and authority? What does "helpful content" mean and how do you demonstrate it to Google's algorithms, which are supposed to prioritize user satisfaction?"

Ben Steele
Managing Editor,
Search Engine Journal

"Algorithm changes topped the list of SEO challenges in 2024, jumping ahead of content production. But don't panic. Instead of obsessing over every update, focus on what users want. As the report shows, SEO pros struggle with 'mixed messaging' about how search algorithms prioritize content. Remember, if you're genuinely helping people and providing value, you're on the right track, regardless of algorithm tweaks."

Matt Southern
Senior News Writer,
Search Engine Journal

"The last 18 months has seen more significant and impactful algorithm changes for years. For those that don't remember the catastrophic effect of Florida, or even Panda and Penguin, this might feel like SEO is imploding, but the industry has been dealing with these cycles for the last 25/30 years. The only way to build an SEO strategy is to provide the best user experience on every level. By doing this, you should buffer yourself against the roller coaster of up and down. The only way to fully protect yourself is to diversify and not be fully dependent on Google for traffic. Build lists and build an audience away from a third party."

Shelley Walsh
SEO Content Strategist,
Search Engine Journal

Question

Why Is Link Building On So Many SEO Professionals' Minds As A Top Difficulty?

"Everything about SEO has become more difficult after a year of disruptive updates and technological advances. This is calling long-standing wisdom and strategy across the industry into question. I don't think many people buy Google's attempt to downplay the importance of links. But I think SEO pros recognize that concepts such as quality and helpfulness apply to links as well. Building links that make sense and provide genuine user value is difficult."

Ben Steele
Managing Editor,
Search Engine Journal

"Link building difficulty increased from 2023 to 2024, becoming the second biggest challenge for SEO pros. Why? Because everyone's doing it, and Google's smarter about detecting manipulation. The data shows 'Superior Content' is the best link building strategy. Focus on creating valuable resources that naturally attract links. It's more work upfront, but as the trends indicate, quality content is key to link building success."

Matt Southern
Senior News Writer,
Search Engine Journal

"It has always been difficult to do link building well. To get the foundation of links you want, think about creating a halo of citations around your brand that creates mentions in all the spaces where your brand should be mentioned. As an extra layer on that, you then want to think about creating a reason for other sites to mention your brand. And doing that in a way that is not easily replicated. I'm not a fan of creating sensationalist digital PR campaigns for media links. My approach is to create authority around a brand through new research and expert input. It's easy to sell a story to a tabloid newspaper to get 15 minutes of fame. It's much harder to build respect and lasting authority through valid contribution."

Shelley Walsh
SEO Content Strategist,
Search Engine Journal

SERP Volatility

All eyes are on the SERP. Algorithm changes, generative AI in Search, and SERP features are eating everyone's lunch, and SEO pros are struggling to adapt.

Updates move the SERPs around, competitors get boosts you weren't expecting, or you get pushed down underneath them. New SERP features start stealing traffic. SEO pros are battling with an environment where there are fewer clicks to go around.

Algorithm changes are rocking the entire industry. Your competitors are getting scrappy to keep up.

Competition In Your Industry SERPs Throughout 2023

Easier
7.8%

More Difficult
69.8%

No Change
22.4%
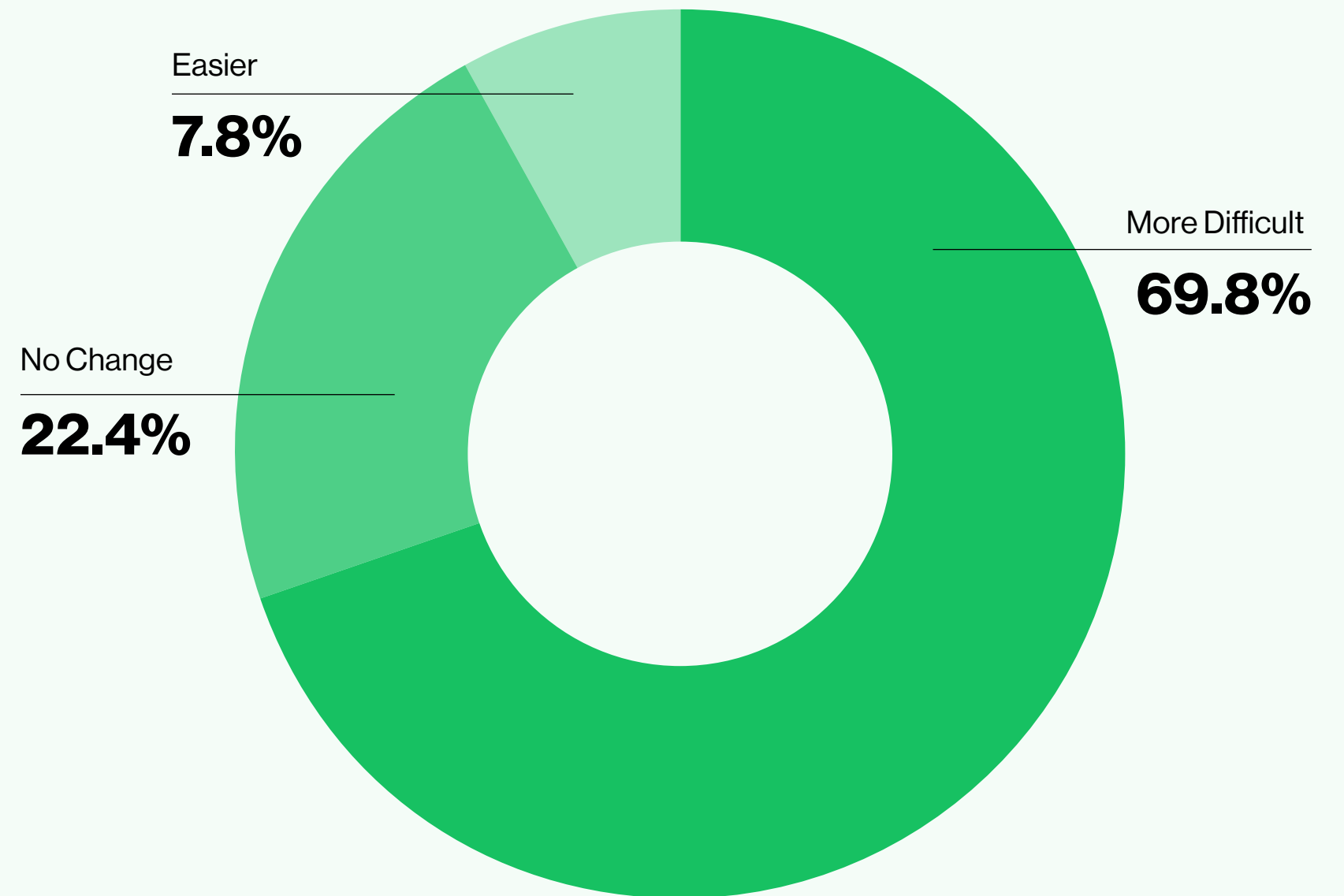
40.4% of respondents said that Google updates, either core updates (30.2%) or helpful content updates (10.2%), caused the most instability in their traffic.

20.5% cited competitors as the main disruptive force.

These disruptions, combined with generative AI tools and platform features, are forcing SEO pros to rethink their approach to audiences, content strategy, traffic, and user engagement.

What Catalyst Caused The Most Instability In Your Traffic In 2023?

Core/General Algorithm Updates

30.2%

Competitors

20.5%

SERP Features/SERP Changes

13.5%

Helpful Content Updates*

10.2%

Google Result Quality

9.8%

*In March 2024, the helpful content system was rolled into the core ranking system.

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STATE OF SEO 2025   **13**

The Biggest Barriers To SEO Success

SEO budgets suffer in an environment where many businesses tighten purse strings. Sudden changes in SEO performance prove difficult to recover from. This likely impacts the budgets SEO professionals have available to them. Unfortunately, all of these challenges are connected and feed into one another.

The disruptions of 2024 stand in stark contrast to how SEO pros felt about algorithm updates in 2023.

Barrier #3

Competition In SERPs

Barrier #2

Google Algorithm Updates

Barrier #1

Budget & Resources

How Have Core, Or Otherwise Significant Changes In Google's Algorithms, Impacted Your SEO Efforts Over The Past Year?
Results From 2023

Overall Positive
55.9%

Helped my SEO efforts a lot
24.2%

Helped my SEO efforts a little
31.7%

Neither helped nor hurt my SEO efforts
17.3%

Overall Negative
23.1%

Reduced my SEO efforts a lot
9.5%

Reduced my SEO efforts a little
13.6%
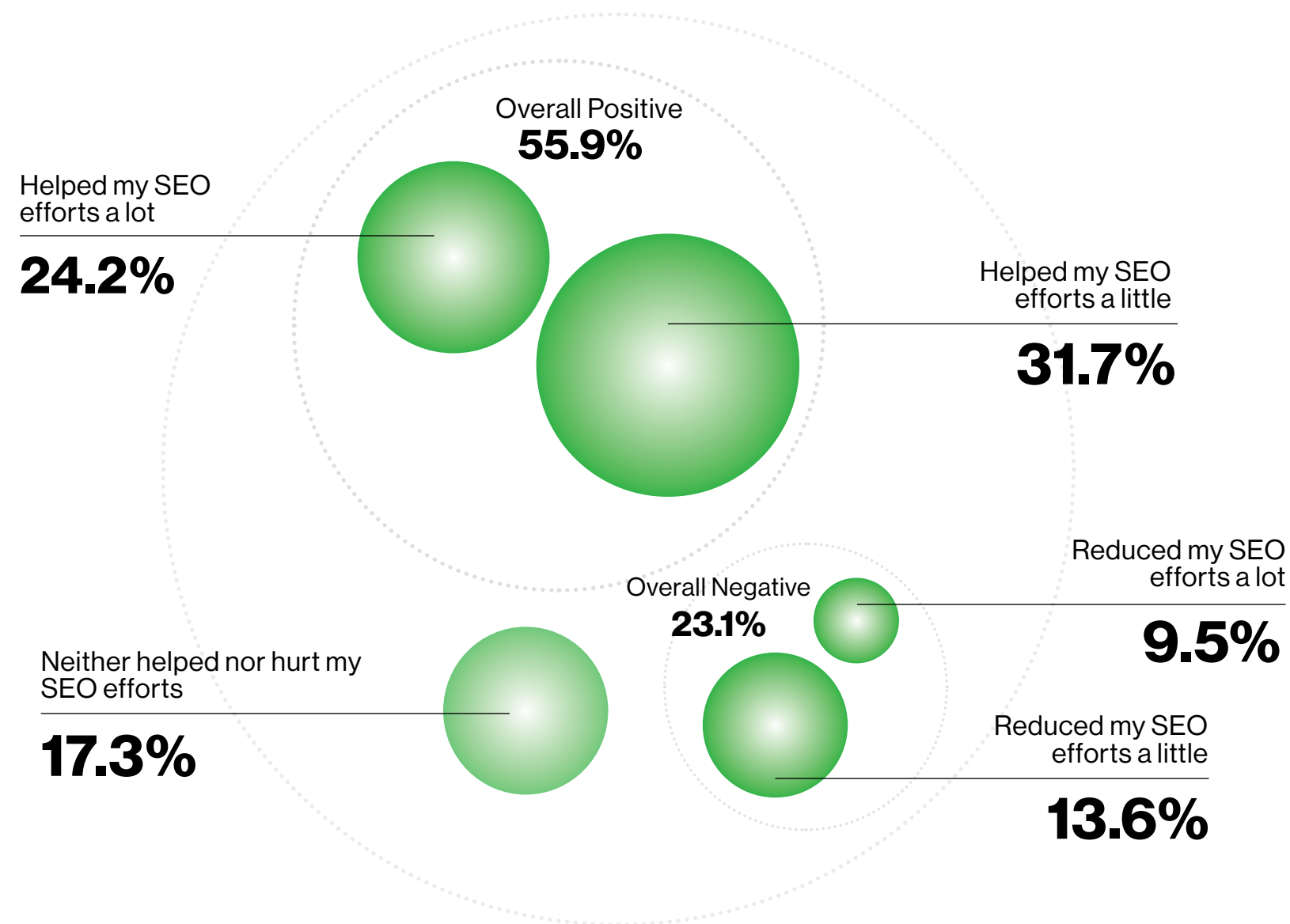
More than half of 2023 respondents said algorithm updates helped their SEO efforts. Budgets were also the top 1 barrier in 2023, indicating that SEO professionals struggle to acquire budget no matter the circumstances.

In 2024, we see performance issues compounding one another.

Everyone is feeling the squeeze. Your competitors are getting scrappy. How do you eke out an edge in SEO right now?

Resources On Google Algorithm Updates

⟶ **SEJ Ebook: Ranking Systems & Signals 2024**

⟶ **Google Algorithm Updates & Changes: A Complete History**

⟶ **Algorithm Updates Have Become the Biggest Risk In SEO**

In The Last 12 Months, What Were Your Biggest Barriers To SEO Success?

Budget/Resources
19.4%

Google Algorithm Updates
18.0%

Competition In SERPs
13.5%

Alignment With Other Departments
10.5%

Scaling Processes
9.3%

Strategy Issues
8.9%

Spam In SERPs
7.0%

User-Generated Content In SERPs
6.0%

"The challenges we're facing in 2024 are not new; they are part of doing SEO.

Here's my advice:
Google Algorithm Updates: Keep your eyes on where the ball is going, not where it is. In other words, anticipate changes and prepare accordingly.

Competition: Expect growing competition. Avoid copying others; instead, enhance content quality, streamline processes, and use AI wisely. Always prioritize unique and insightful content."

Steven van Vessum
Director of Organic
Marketing, Conductor

"To gain an edge in competitive SEO, become obsessed with audience insights. 'Superior Content' is the top link building strategy, but don't neglect other approaches like alternative media strategies and public relations. With budget constraints being the top barrier to SEO success, you need to work smarter. Leverage AI and automation for efficiency, but maintain a human touch in strategy and creativity. Stand out by solving problems your competitors haven't even identified yet."

Matt Southern
Senior News Writer, Search
Engine Journal

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Generative AI-Driven Volatility

We talked about barriers, challenges, and what SEO professionals find difficult. What do SEO pros expect going forward? We asked two forward-looking questions:

In the next two years, what do you think will impact the biggest shifts in the SEO industry?

What do you think will be the No. 1 most significant disruption in SEO performance in the next few years?

Unsurprisingly, AI was high on the list for both answers.

Future Shifts In The SEO Industry

Generative AI
29.0%

Google Updates
16.6%

Changes To Google's Market Share
13.3%

Future SEO Performance Interruptions

Generative AI In Search
36.3%

AI-Generated Content
23.8%

Generational Changes In How People Use The Internet
15.8%

In 2023, respondents expected "Competition For Talent" to be the top driver of changes in the SEO industry. It's barely on the radar in 2024.

The change makes sense if budgets are continuing to shrink. SEO pros seem less focused on expanding and more on staying afloat through current and future disruption. All eyes are on generative AI, and the sentiment among SEO pros seems to be a growing concern.

There's an interesting mix of top answers between the impact of AI and the internet changing as a whole, either with changes to platforms or in how users act.

Google hasn't actually lost much market share, but the crowd calling the death of SEO or the death of Google seems louder than ever. To be fair, Google appears to have made a number of very public blunders that have gone beyond the sphere of SEO and digital marketing. There's also hot debate about changes in how users – especially young users – search, shop, and consume information.

Read More: Resources On Generative AI In Search

⟶   **Google AI Overviews: New Research Offers Insights**

⟶   **Google's AI Overviews Documentation: Key SEO Insights**

⟶   **Google Dials Back AI Overviews In Search Results, Study Finds**

In The Next Two Years, What Do You Think Will Impact The Biggest Shifts In The SEO Industry?

Generative AI
29.0%

Google Updates
16.6%

Changes To Google's Market Share
13.3%

Zero-Click Searches
13.2%

Phase Out Of The Third-Party Cookie
9.7%

Industry Regulation
7.3%

Competition For Talent
5.9%

Site Security
3.8%

Other (Please Specify)
1.3%

What Do You Think Will Be The Most Significant Disruption In SEO Performance In The Next Few Years?

Generative AI In Search (SGE*, Copilot, etc.)

36.3%

AI-Generated Content

23.8%

Generational Changes In How People Use The Internet

15.8%

E-E-A-T & Trusted Sources

8.7%

New Search Algorithm Breakthroughs

7.3%

SERP Features

2.8%

Knowledge Graph And Entities

2.4%

Other (Please Specify)

1.8%

Structured Data

1.1%

*At the time of the survey, "AI Overviews" had not been released.

In 2023, 21% of respondents predicted that generative AI would cause the most significant disruption in Search.

If you gave that answer in the 2023 survey, give yourself a pat on the back. Oh boy, were you ever right.

Generative AI is applying pressure on all sides – from the tools people use to integration into platforms and Search algorithms.

However, its broader impact on user behavior and the validity of its threat to major search platforms remains to be seen.

"I would advise you not to get swept up in AI hype or fearmongering. Whenever I talk to regular people who use generative AI (please talk to people who aren't marketers about this), they tell me it's a novelty that they approach with skepticism and struggle to find consistent uses for. I wouldn't count on Google's imminent demise, and I would remember it's still the top source of traffic to websites. In the near future, whatever disruptions come for SEO will be from search engines and how people use them."

Ben Steele
Managing Editor, Search Engine Journal

Budget Is The Biggest Pain Point For Service Providers

While the responses indicate an overall stable level of turnover among SEO service providers, the reason clients leave has changed significantly since 2023.

Budget cut is not only the new top 1 reason, but by a larger margin.
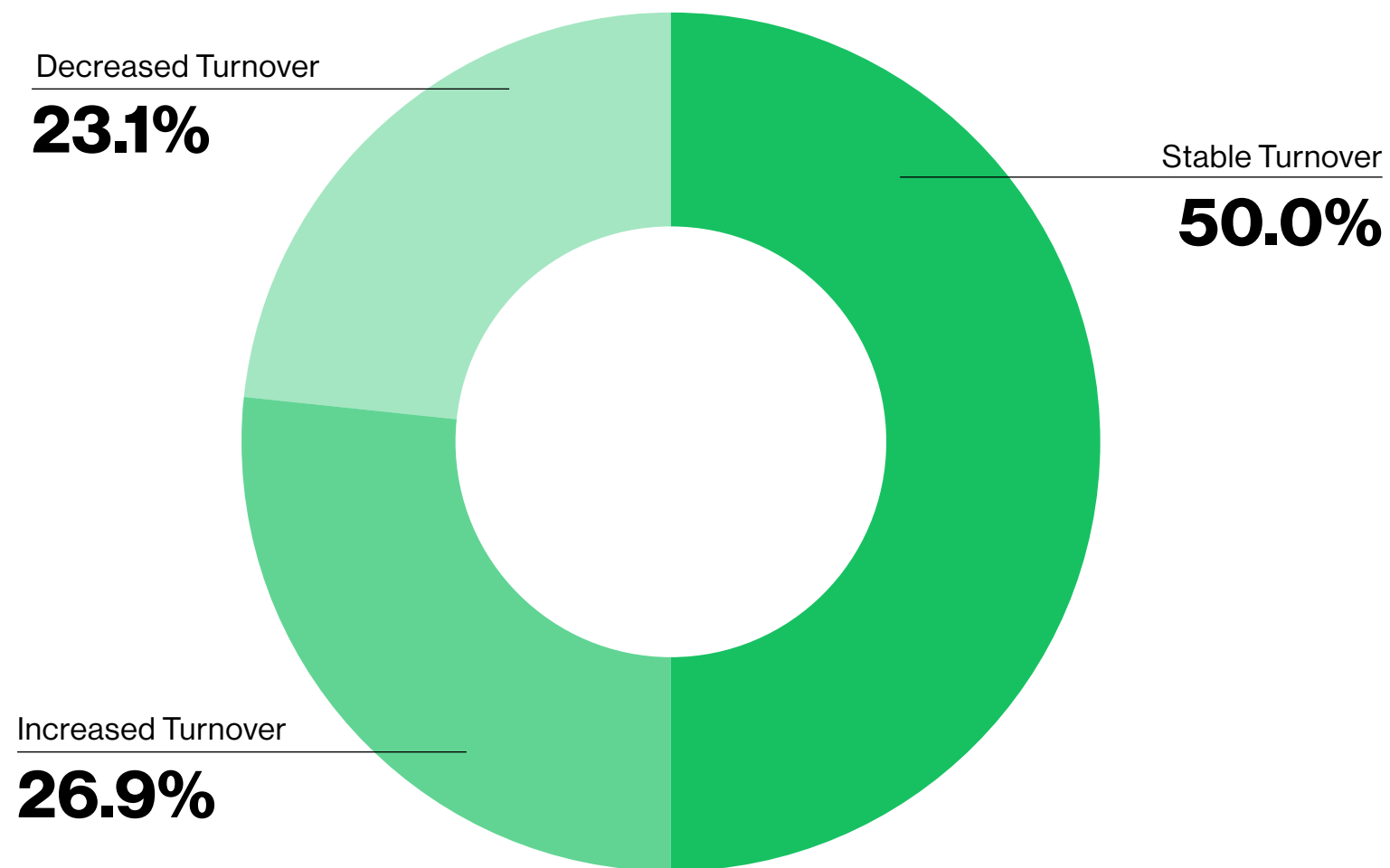
#1 Cause Of Client Turnover In 2024

41%
Budget Cut

#1 Cause Of Client Turnover In 2023

30%
Dissatisfied With Quality Of Traffic

Is Your Rate Of Client Turnover Increasing Or Decreasing?

Decreased Turnover
23.1%

Stable Turnover
50.0%

Increased Turnover
26.9%

What Is The Biggest Cause Of Client Turnover?

Budget Cuts
41.0%

Disappointed With ROI
11.5%

Dissatisfied With Rankings
9.0%

Moving Services In-House
7.7%

Culture Fit Or Interpersonal Dynamics
6.4%

Disappointed With Volume Of Organic Search Traffic
6.4%

Dissatisfied With Quality Of Traffic
5.1%

Going To Competitors
5.1%

Reallocating To Other Marketing Methods
5.1%

Other (Please Specify)
2.6%
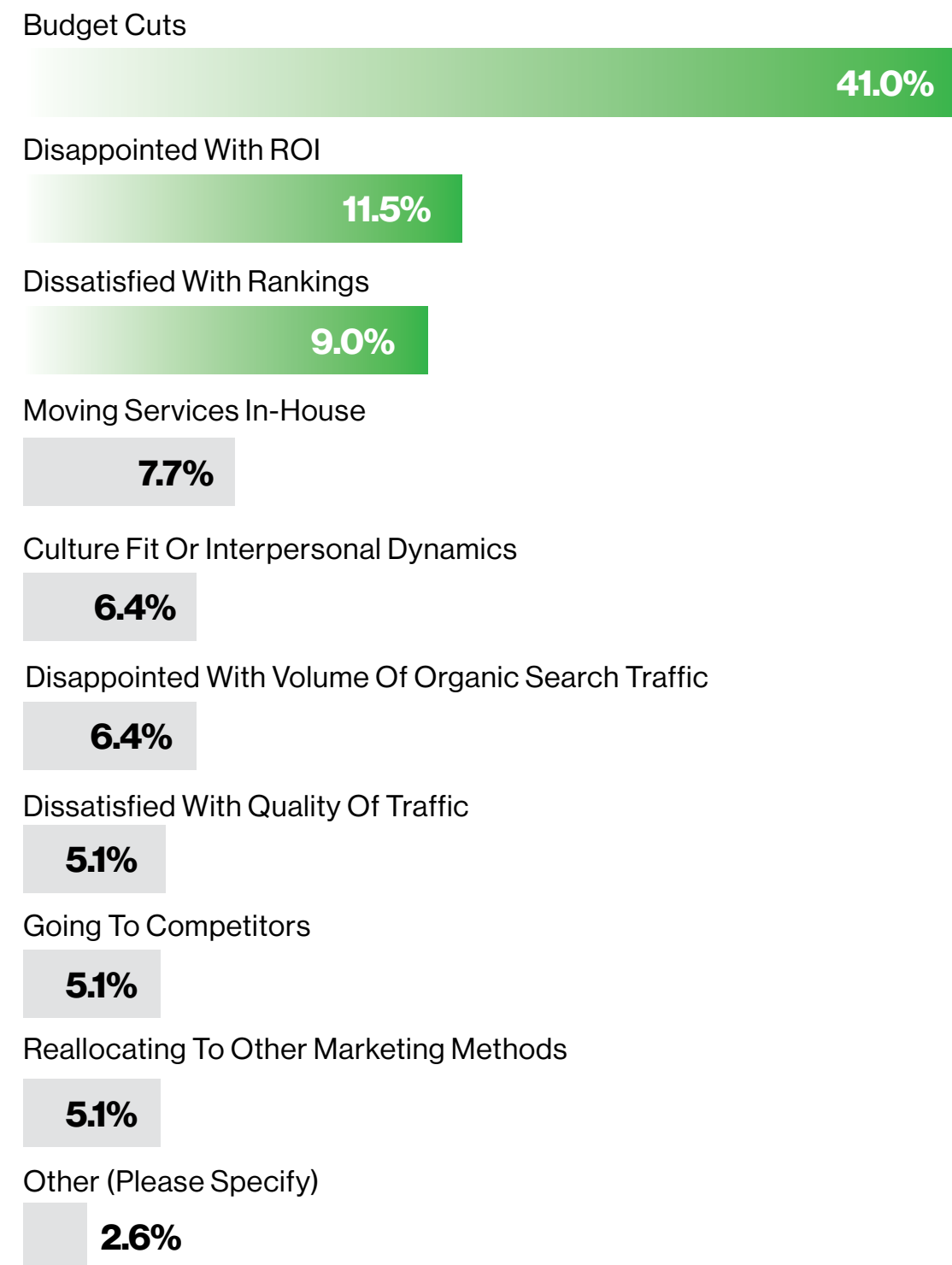
Disruption, Volatility & Budget Takeaways

All of the issues raised in this section are connected to one another. Budget stress currently exists at the intersection of three main forces:

1 Industry trends that contribute to reductions in marketing and SEO spending.

2 The lingering impact of inflation and recession impacting consumer spending.

3 Significant SEO performance interruptions driven by Google's products and decisions and the emergence of generative AI.

What can SEO professionals do to shore up performance and justify budgets when spending is conservative across the board?

"When you're talking about budgets, make sure you are talking to the person who actually holds that budget.

Time and time again, I see folks who are running great campaigns get the rug pulled out from underneath them because the progress and data they are sharing with their POC aren't making it high enough in the organization to make it a priority.

If you want to secure your budget, make sure you are talking to the actual budget holder, or, at the very least, the data and progress are reaching them so they know it's having an impact and should be prioritized in the budget next year."

Pat Reinhart
VP of Services & Thought Leadership, Conductor

"User satisfaction is key to performance. The effectiveness of your content and strategy should also be measured in how users respond to it. Make this part of your data storytelling to focus on the positive impact of your work. To improve performance this way, you need to live and breathe user experience. Where is the critical content on a page? How long does it take a user to find it? What do they have to do or scroll past to discover what they're looking for? Assess your content organization, page layout, and ads. Assess how well your content fulfills real user intent and needs. If you can find and make an impact on high-value audiences, you will have positives and silver linings to report no matter what happens in the broader industry."

Katie Morton
Editor-in-Chief, Search Engine Journal

Almost Half Of All SEO Pros Are Content Goblins

We asked the respondents to self-identify based on the objectively correct SEO categories noted in The Verge's shocking exposé on how we're all ruining the internet.

Apart from just how many parking tickets get handed out at conferences, there are actually some interesting insights here. Yes, this is serious now.

Of the 20% of respondents who answered "Other," most didn't know what the question referred to.

It is a great reminder that not everyone who does SEO is part of the social media, influencer, or publishing ecosystem. Even large hubbubs can pass audiences by. There are always more people you can reach.

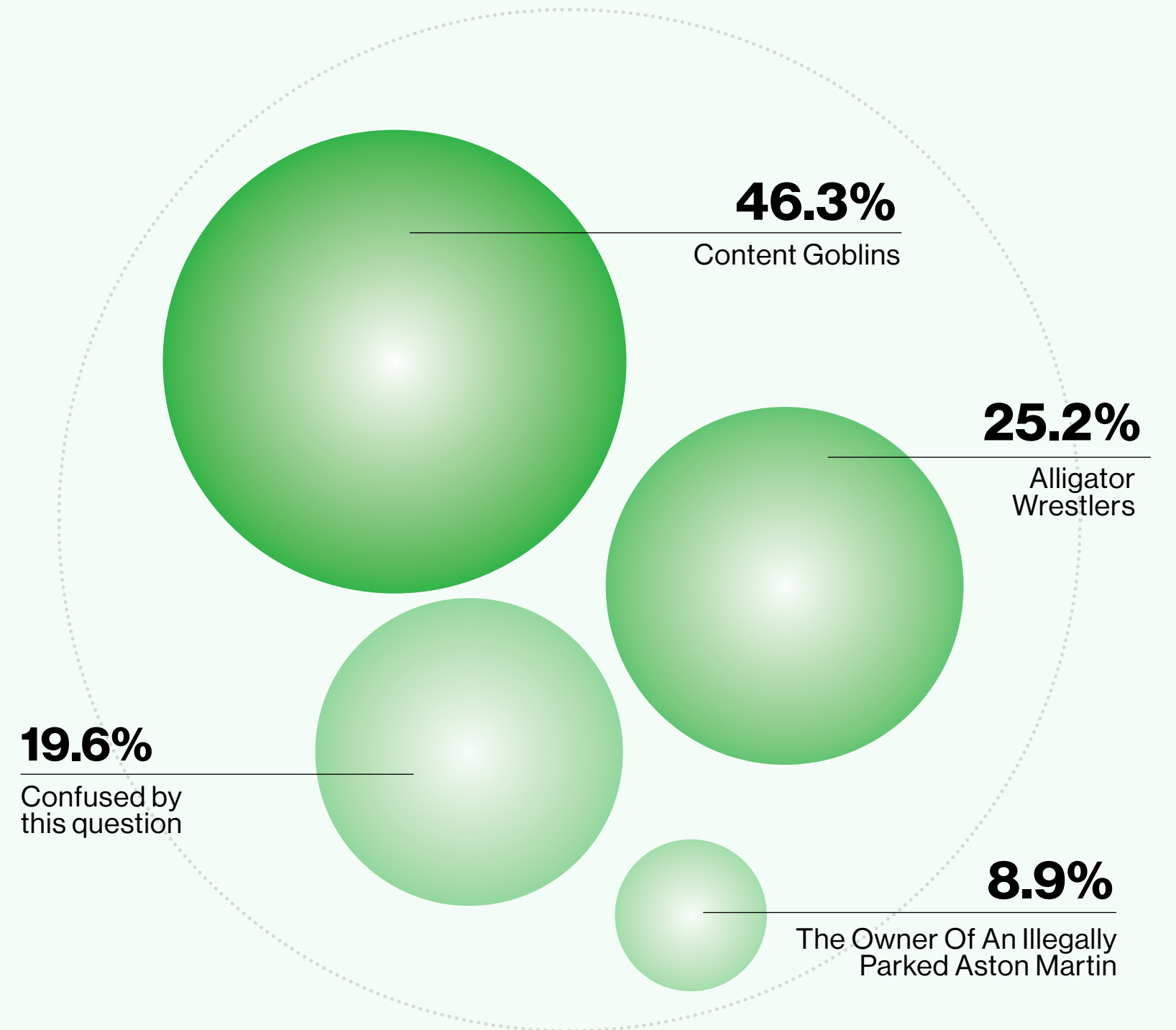For fun, here are some of our favorite responses from the "Other" category.

| Google Whisperer | Curious George |
| Tortured Soul | A Real Mutt Of An Advertising Guy |

SEJ Can Officially Confirm That SEO Professionals Are:

46.3%
Content Goblins

25.2%
Alligator Wrestlers

19.6%
Confused by this question

8.9%
The Owner Of An Illegally Parked Aston Martin

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Leaning Forward Into Disruption: Strategies & Solutions

2

IN THIS SECTION ⟶

2.1 SEO Professionals Are Going "Back To Basics" – But Maybe Not In A Good Way

2.2 Focusing On Quality In The Next 12 Months

2.3 Superior Content Is Key To Link Building
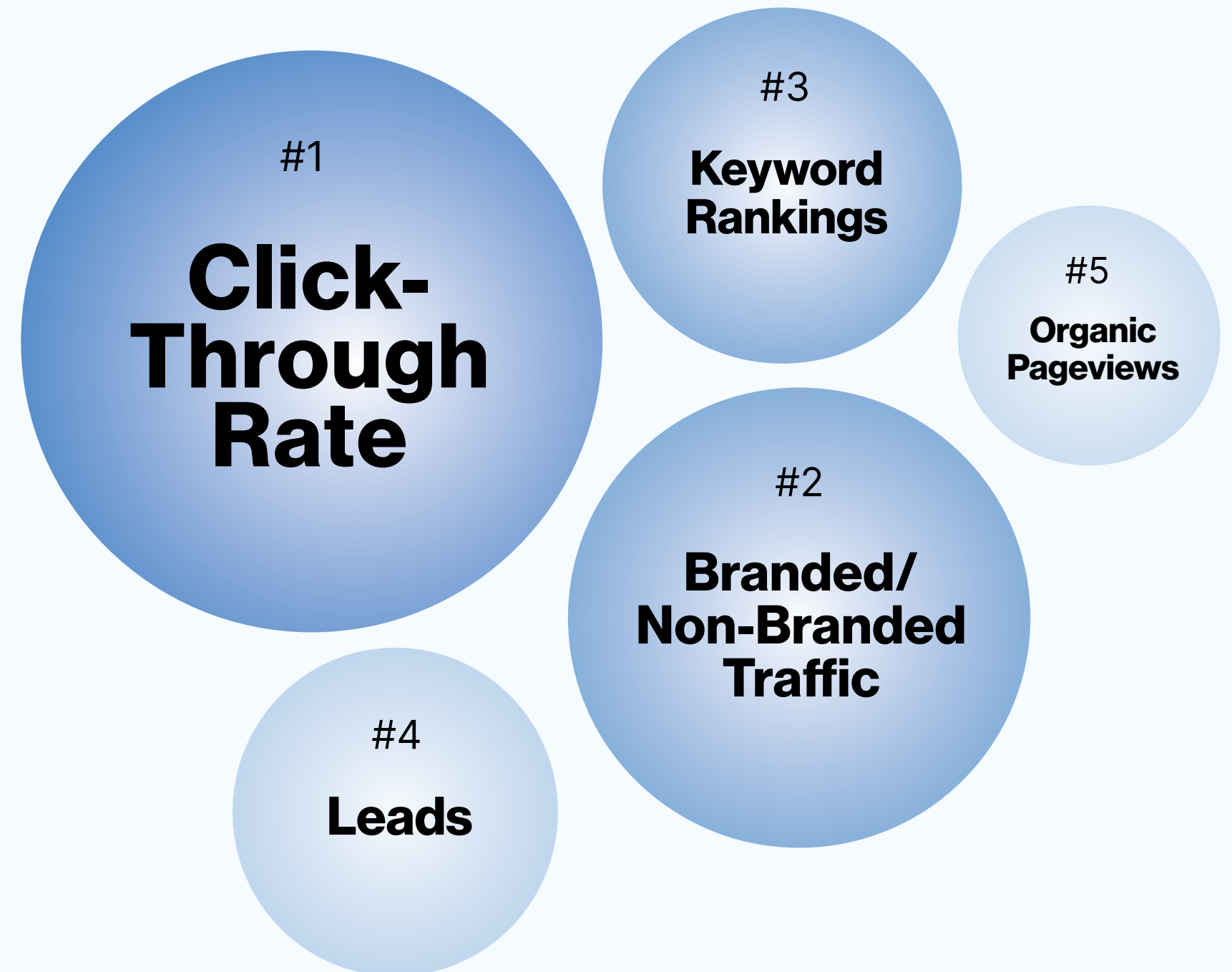
2.4 What The Heck Does "Quality" Mean?

2.5 Agency & SEO Service Business Strategies For Success

SEO Professionals Are Going "Back To Basics" – But Maybe Not In A Good Way

It's natural to expect that when rankings and pageviews suffer, SEO professionals will adjust their strategies, tracking, and reporting to attempt to diagnose and fix the problems. But it's important not to get caught up in reactionary thinking.

In 2023, The Top Performance Metrics That SEO Professionals Tracked Were:

#1 **Click-Through Rate**

#3 **Keyword Rankings**

#5 **Organic Pageviews**

#2 **Branded/ Non-Branded Traffic**

#4 **Leads**

In the 2023 report, we said that it was a good sign that SEO pros were pivoting to metrics that tied to business goals. CTR, branded traffic, and leads were highly relevant to revenue and business goals.

Keyword rankings and pageviews are not necessarily relevant to business goals. They're the main metrics being disrupted right now, but it's critical to lean into disruption to discover opportunities and change strategies.

What are you trying to rank for and why?
Do you deserve to rank for a particular query?
If your traffic has been disrupted, was that traffic impacting your business goals?

At SEJ, we've taken the opportunity to analyze what content is driving meaningful connection and action – a strategy you'll see on the next page.

In 2024, The Top Performance Metrics That SEO Professionals Used To Measure Success Were:

#1
Keyword Rankings
20.0%

#2
Organic Pageviews
11.7%

#3
Click-Through Rate
8.9%

#4
Conversions/ Goal Events
8.7%

#5
Average Time On Page
5.5%

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Focusing On Quality In The Next 12 Months

When it comes to productive efforts, SEO professionals are focusing on quality, user experience, and business goals in the next 12 months.

You can see that while they're tracking the metrics being disrupted, many agree that the solution lies in building audiences that directly support business goals and the bottom line.

One way we see the SEO industry changing is that good SEO pros are becoming more selective about their target traffic. For most businesses, attempting to drive massive traffic from the broadest audiences isn't the best business strategy.

It's more important than ever to create content that will draw in the right users to support the business goals.
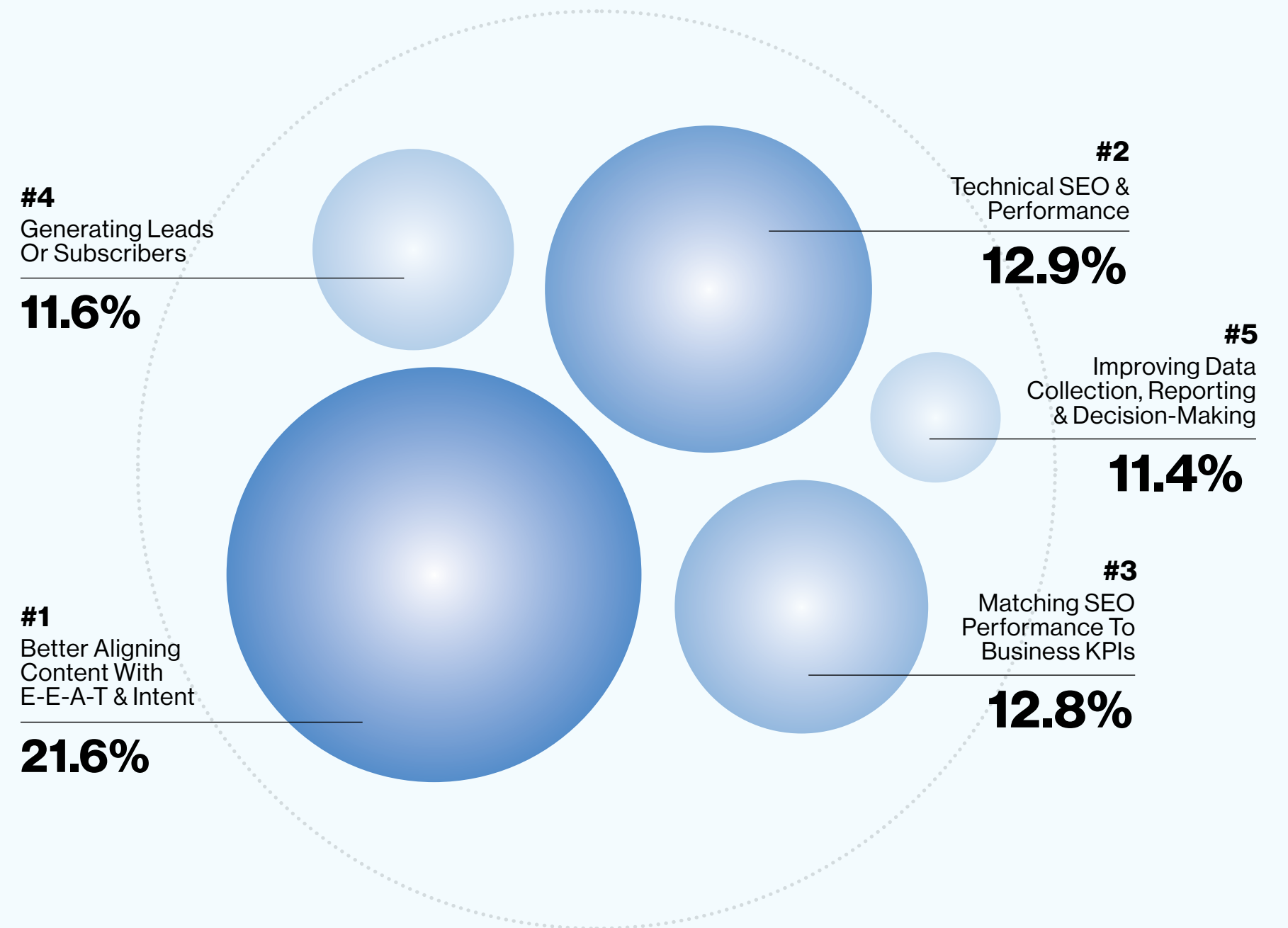
Make sure your content appeals to your ideal customer.

Optimize your SEO strategy and your content to engage and convert high-value users.

Pay close attention to your engagement metrics that you can tie to business goals. Use this data to provide better experiences for the people who take action on your website.

Everything in Search is moving toward quality – that includes traffic.

Top Focus Areas In The Next 12 Months

#4
Generating Leads
Or Subscribers

11.6%

#2
Technical SEO &
Performance

12.9%

#5
Improving Data
Collection, Reporting
& Decision-Making

11.4%

#1
Better Aligning
Content With
E-E-A-T & Intent

21.6%

#3
Matching SEO
Performance To
Business KPIs

12.8%

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Which Areas Do You Intend To Focus On Most In The Next 12 Months?

Better Aligning Content With E-E-A-T & Intent
21.6%

Technical SEO & Performance
12.9%

Matching SEO Performance To Business KPIs
12.8%

Generating Leads Or Subscribers
11.6%

Improving Data Collection, Reporting & Decision-Making
11.5%

Escalating Content Production
9.5%

Link Building
8.7%

New Automations
5.9%

PR & Influencer Partnerships
4.5%

Other (Please Specify)
1.1%

Which Metrics Did You Use Most To Measure SEO Performance In The Last 12 Months? (Top6)

Keyword Rankings
20%

Organic Pageviews
11.7%

Click-Through Rate (CTR)
8.9%

Conversion And Goal Events
8.7%

Average Time On Page
5.5%

Backlinks
5.4%

Superior Content Is Key To Link Building

Links are still a top ranking factor. Cool? Cool.

But SEO pros find links much more difficult this year. The trend toward building quality user experiences is making everything harder. But it's also helping SEO pros focus on what really matters to relevant, motivated audiences.

We asked respondents about their link building strategies, and content quality was the top pick.

What Have You Found To Be The Most Effective Link Building Strategy?

Superior Content (Than Your Competitors')
18.1%

Alternative Media Strategies (Infographics, Video, Tools, etc.)
13.7%

Public Relations/Journalism
13.7%

Guest Posting
12.9%

E-E-A-T & Trusted Sources
12.8%

Reviews/Testimonials
9.8%

Broken Links
6.4%

FAQ/Resource Page
6.4%

Other
3.3%

Comparison Pages
2.9%

The first step in link building is to create superior content – you must be worthy of links.

Link building may be an old-school SEO strategy, but it's still relevant in cutting-edge AI algorithms.

Existing in a conceptually relevant way to other entities, businesses, publishers, and topics is becoming more important.

So, relevance is more important than ever. Your resources need to solve real, specific problems.

As algorithms get better at assessing the connections between entities, the topical appropriateness and user experience of links will likely become more important factors.

AI algorithms, knowledge graphs, and entities are complicated topics. Learn more with the resources below.

Read More: Resources On Link Building

⟶   **4 Types Of Data Campaigns In Digital PR For SEO**

⟶   **SEJ Ebook: Link Building for SEO: A Complete Guide**

⟶   **SEJ Ebook: The Dark Side Of Link Building**

⟶   **How To Build A Diverse & Healthy Link Profile**

What The Heck Does "Quality" Mean?

Words like "quality," "good," "helpful," and "relevant" can have elusive definitions in SEO. Our best advice is to get a better understanding of the users you want to attract, the content they want to consume, and what types of content would serve your ideal customer's journey.

Google doesn't know, specifically, what's helpful for your audience. If you're frustrated by the answers that Google representatives give about quality and helpfulness, you're not alone. Site owners and SEO professionals from all walks of life – running all types of websites, from hobby sites and reviews to small businesses – are exasperated at having their sites pushed out of search by AI, poor-quality content, and massive user-generated content platforms like Reddit and Quora. Responses from Google, putting the onus on site owners for quality, seem to contradict the reality of search results pages plainly.
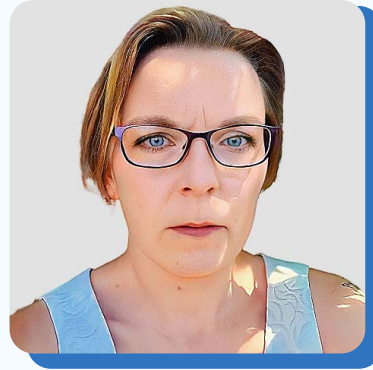
"The phrase 'single, unified customer experience' comes up often in conversations among enterprise marketers. It's not just appearing in a channel, publication, or on social media; it's about serving the right experience where and when a user is ready."

Angie Nikoleychuk
Behavioral Data Analyst, Search Engine Journal
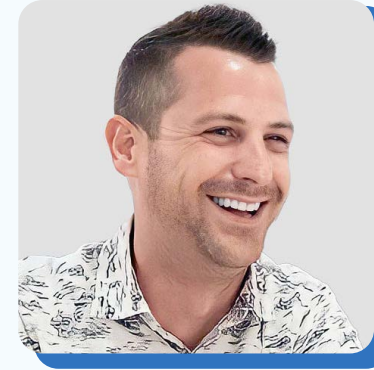
"Stop worrying about defining what 'quality' means to Google; it's a waste of time. What your audience is looking for is simple: content that answers their question with specific points (specificity), an understanding of who the person creating that content is (authorship), and a site that doesn't run like crap (technical health). Folks that have the most trouble with this overthink the definition of what 'quality' or 'helpful' content is. If you are running a site, you should have a good command of what types of content your audience engages with and, in turn, should create that type of content for them. If you don't know the type of content your audience wants, then spend your time learning that; you will be rewarded tenfold."

Pat Reinhart
VP of Services & Thought Leadership, Conductor

'Quality' is relevant to whatever best connects with your target audience and engages them. Historically, SEO has been focused on driving organic traffic, it then began to consider conversions and now we have evolved into building and engaging audiences. In 2024, SEO should be considering integrating SEO as one element in the marketing approach and diversifying the reliance on Google search. Google can still be leveraged to gain visibility but then hard work is needed to build that audience and engage them. The 'quality' is in knowing how to leverage Google to do this, what traffic is useful to you and what traffic has no value. 'Quality' is content that cannot be replicated by AI. 'Quality' is a strategy that cannot be easily replicated by your competitor. 'Quality' is about creative thinking and effort."

Shelley Walsh
SEO Content Strategist, Search Engine Journal

But while Google spins the merry-go-round, working out what your audience wants is your job. Google (allegedly) measures how effective you are at serving those audiences. But when Google isn't doing that effectively on a broad scale, your knowledge of your audiences' needs becomes even more critical so that, at the least, you're optimizing outcomes with the users you reach.

Get to know your audience better. Then, leverage that knowledge to provide exceptional experiences to your audience. Work with your marketing team to give your users plenty of chances to convert in as many places as possible, including your website, newsletter, and social media.

Read More: Resources On Content Quality

⟶   **Google E-E-A-T: What Is It & How To Demonstrate It For SEO**

⟶   **260k Search Results Analyzed: Here's How Google Evaluates Your Content [Data Study]**

⟶   **Google's E-E-A-T & The Myth Of The Perfect Ranking Signal**

⟶   **SEO Experts On Helpful Content: It's Bigger Than You Think**

⟶   **SEJ Ebook: SEO Trends 2024**

⟶   **Why Does A Content Strategy Fail?**

⟶   **Purna Virji: Why It's Time To Reinvent And Future-Proof Your Approach To Content Marketing**

⟶   **Robert Rose: The Three Pillars Of Content Marketing Strategy**

"What does 'quality' mean in SEO today? As Angie Nikoleychuk points out, it's about creating a 'single, unified customer experience.' Don't just focus on keywords. Quality means understanding your audience deeply and delivering content that meets their needs better than anyone else. It's about relevance and solving real, specific problems. Remember, Google is trying to measure how effective you are at serving those audiences' needs."

Matt Southern
Senior News Writer, Search Engine Journal

"Don't insult your audience by wasting their time. Give them tools to find the information they need quickly and remove fluff from your content. That includes SEO fluff.

It's tempting to include long introductions and a bunch of basic 'what is' content at the beginning of your pages. But this isn't usually a good experience. Cut your introductions down and move basic queries with simple answers out of the meat of your content. You can save them until the end or create FAQs with them.

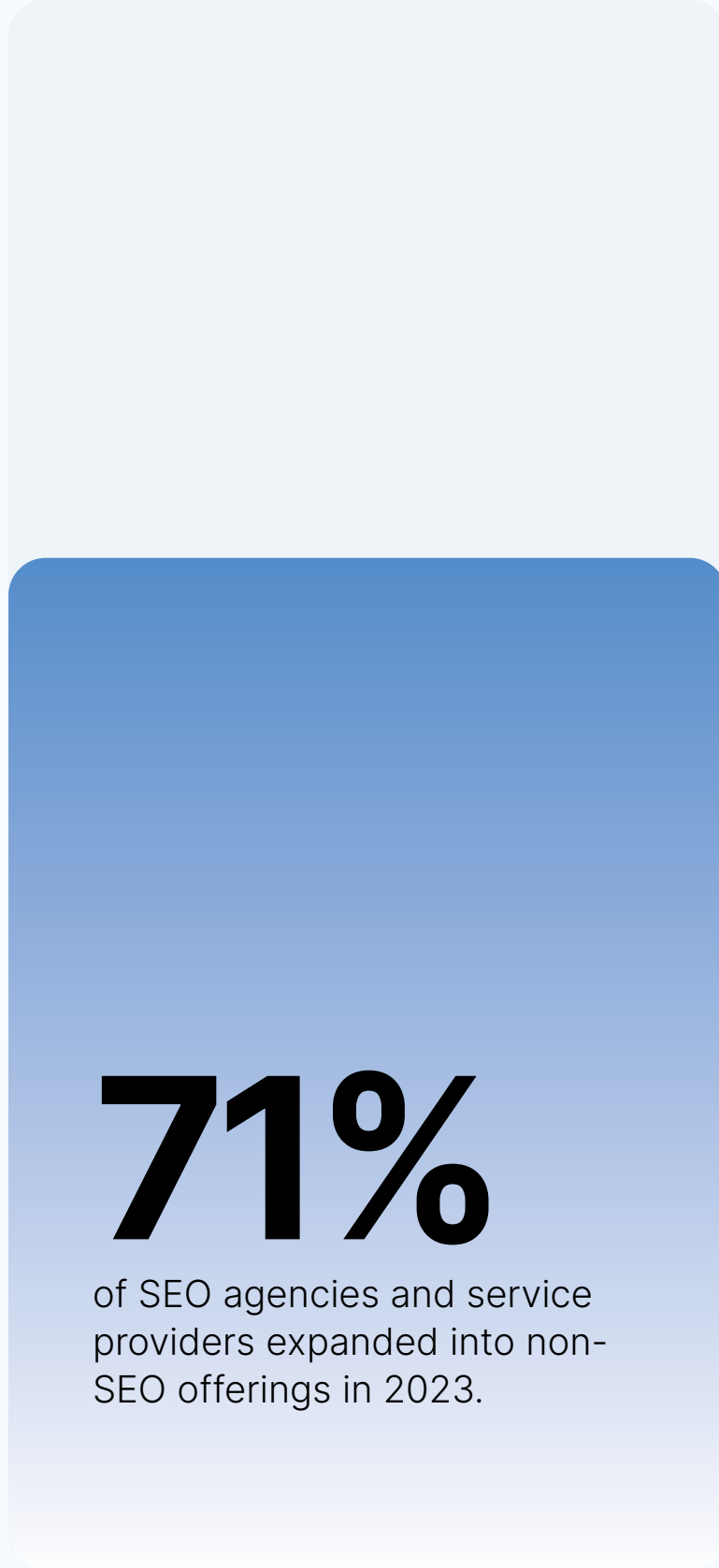Offer navigation tools on your pages such as tables of contents and skip links.

Quality is about service. Make it as easy as possible for the user to find what they're looking for."

Katie Morton
Editor-in-Chief, Search Engine Journal

Agency & SEO Service Business Strategies For Success

Many agencies and service providers feel the impact of disruption and budget reduction. Budget is the No. 1 challenge faced by SEO professionals across the board. For service providers, that means lost business.

71%

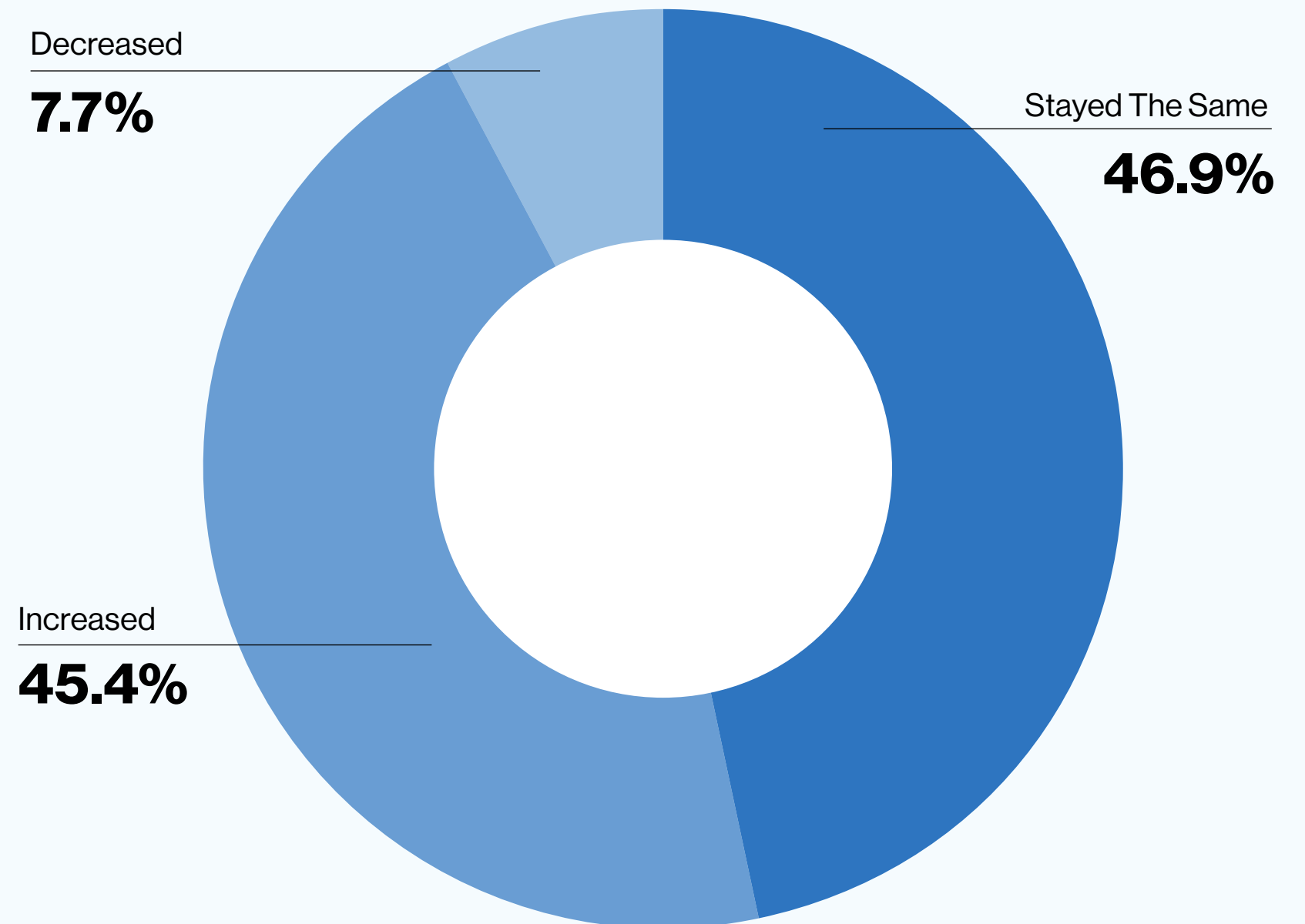of SEO agencies and service providers expanded into non-SEO offerings in 2023.

89%

of SEO agencies and service providers plan new expansions of services in 2024.

It seems initially surprising to see that service providers increased their rates, but it does make sense.

The question asked about 2023. Many service providers expanded their offerings during that time; 68% of the agency SEO professionals we surveyed said they would increase hiring. Increased staffing likely led to increased costs.

Unfortunately, quite a few businesses are now feeling the squeeze. Those who invested in expanding their teams may feel the budget pinch more.

Have You Changed Your Rates In 2023?

Decreased
7.7%

Stayed The Same
46.9%

Increased
45.4%

Are You Planning To Expand Into Non-SEO Offerings This Year?

Social Media Marketing
16.5%

Email Marketing
14.2%

Conversion Optimization
13.5%

Lead Generation
13.5%

Not Expanding
10.5%

Web Development
10.0%

PR
9.5%

Web Design
9.3%
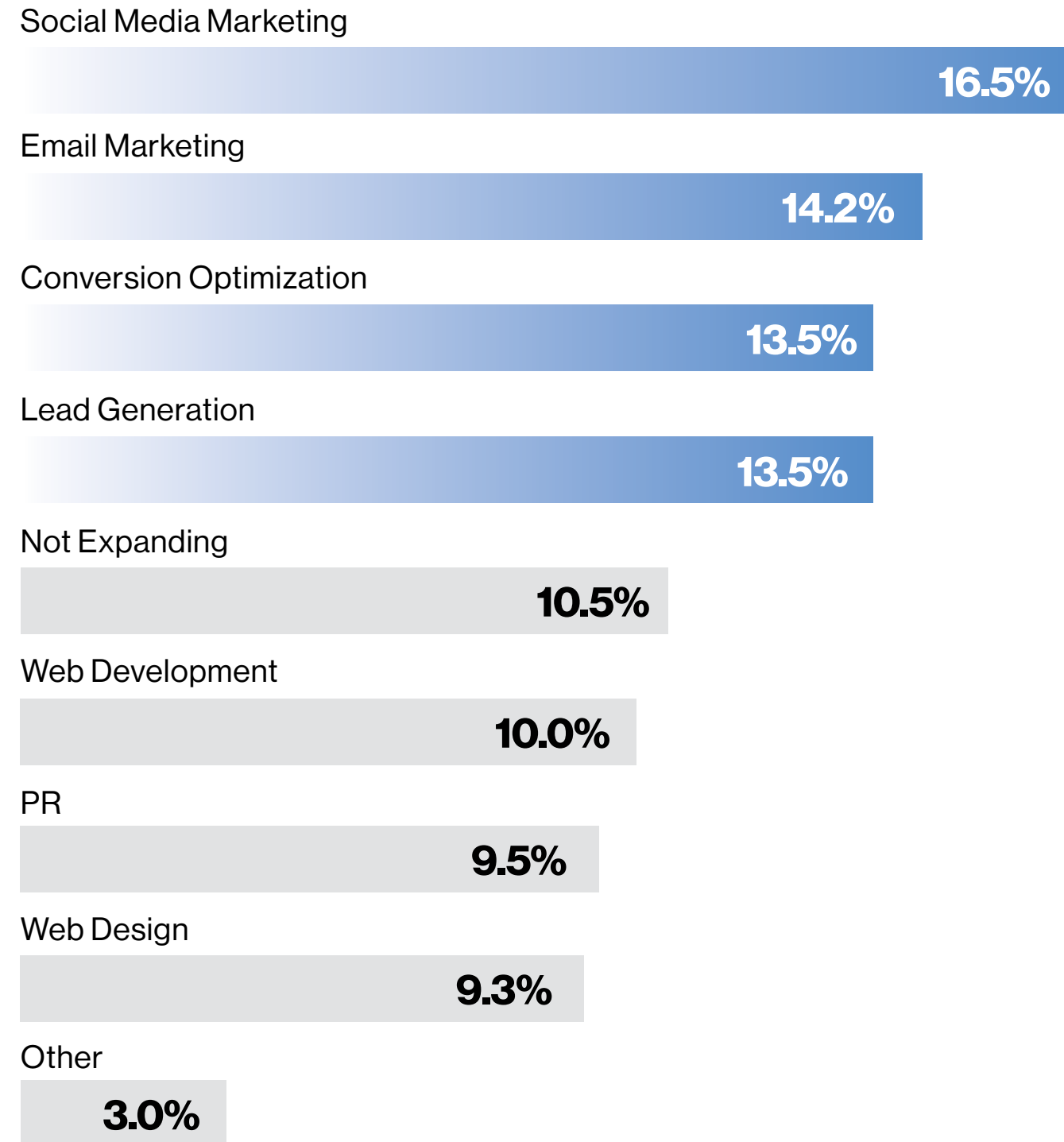
Other
3.0%

Did You Expand Into Non-SEO Offerings Last Year?

Did Not Expand
28.7%

Social Media Marketing
18.5%

Conversion Optimization
12.2%

Email Marketing
9.7%

Other
8.2%

Web Design
7.1%

Lead Generation
6.1%

Web Development
5.8%

PR
3.6%

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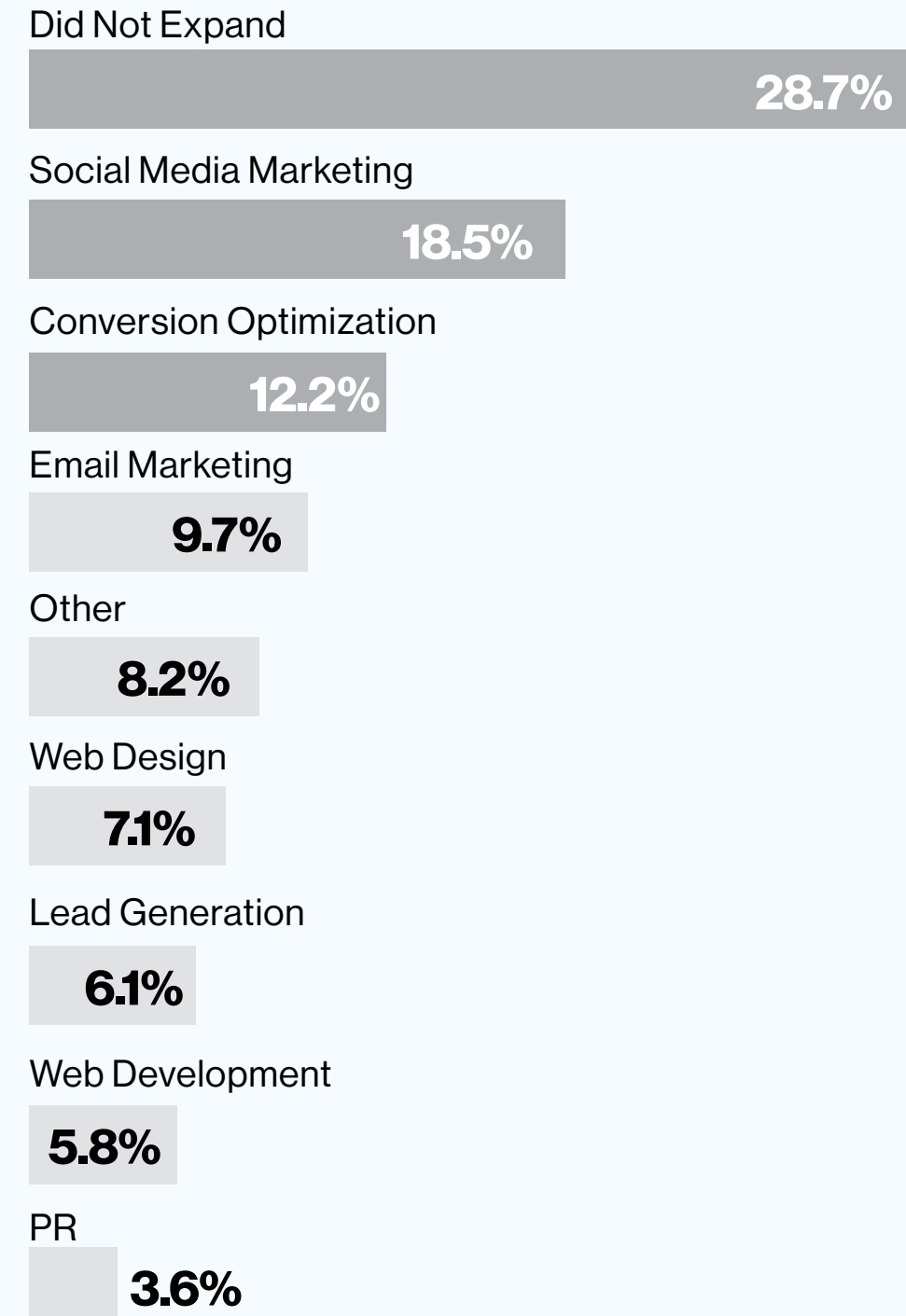
SEO is becoming more integrated with other marketing efforts. The more that Google and other search engines focus on intent, user experience, and user engagement, the more critical it becomes to understand your audience holistically as an SEO.

It makes sense that a lot of agencies and SEO providers would lean into social media for a few different reasons:

- ✓ Offering social media services is a way to gain new clients and upsell existing clients, paving the way for more revenue.

- ✓ You are already creating great content for your clients' websites. It makes sense that you would leverage that content by adapting it for use on social media while maintaining quality and user experience.

- ✓ A well-rounded offering that combines SEO and all aspects of content strategy, including social media, makes you a better strategist and service provider.

- ✓ Social media is a goldmine of information about target audiences, including where they hang out online, who they follow, and what specific questions and problems they have.

Social media may not drive traffic, but not much beats it as a way to understand who your audience is, what they care about, and who they engage with.

In addition, email marketing is perhaps the number one way to cultivate engaged and loyal audiences right now, so it's also high up on wishlists for the coming months.

SEO and audience insights go hand in hand, forcing SEO professionals to expand their horizons.

It's becoming increasingly clear that the job of SEO doesn't begin and end with ranking and traffic. SEO pros must learn to collaborate with other teams, operate in different channels, and develop integrated strategies that account for entire user journeys. Increasingly, those journeys are starting in places other than Search.

Software & AI Tools In SEO

3

IN THIS SECTION ⟶

**3.1** Managers & Company Leaders Are Seeking New Software

3.2 Most Generative AI Investment Is Optimistic But Cautious

3.3 Generative AI Investment May Improve Productivity, But It's More Difficult To Track Bottom Line Impact

Managers & Company Leaders Are Seeking New Software

There are no surprises in the software that SEO professionals currently use. Analytics, SEO audits, and keyword research take the top 3. It's interesting to note that many SEO professionals seem to be looking for new solutions for basic tasks like analytics and audits.

Top 3 Tasks Managers & Above Use Software To Manage

#1
Analytics
22.8%

#2
SEO Audits
17.8%

#3
Keyword Research
17.2%
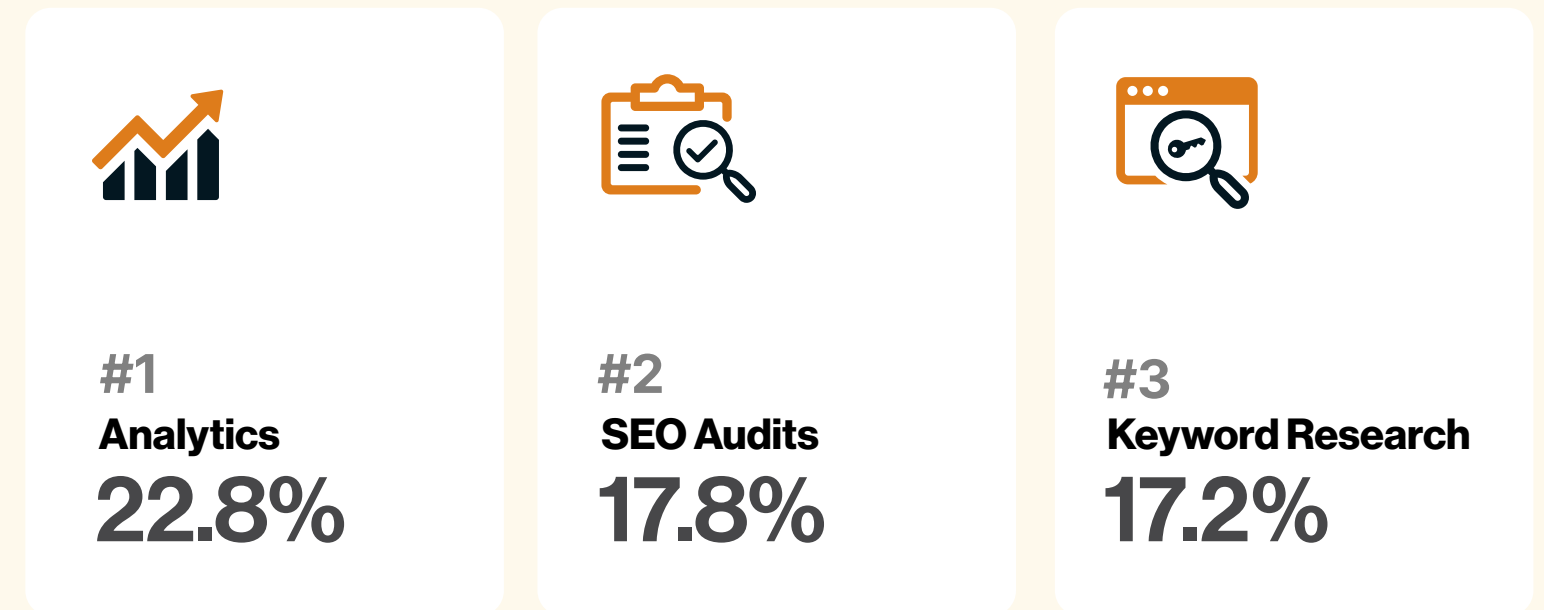
Will You Increase Your Investment In Automation Software Or AI-Powered Services In 2024?

(Respondents: directors, executives, freelancers, small business owners)

No
13.2%

Yes
46.4%

Not Sure/Still Planning
40.4%
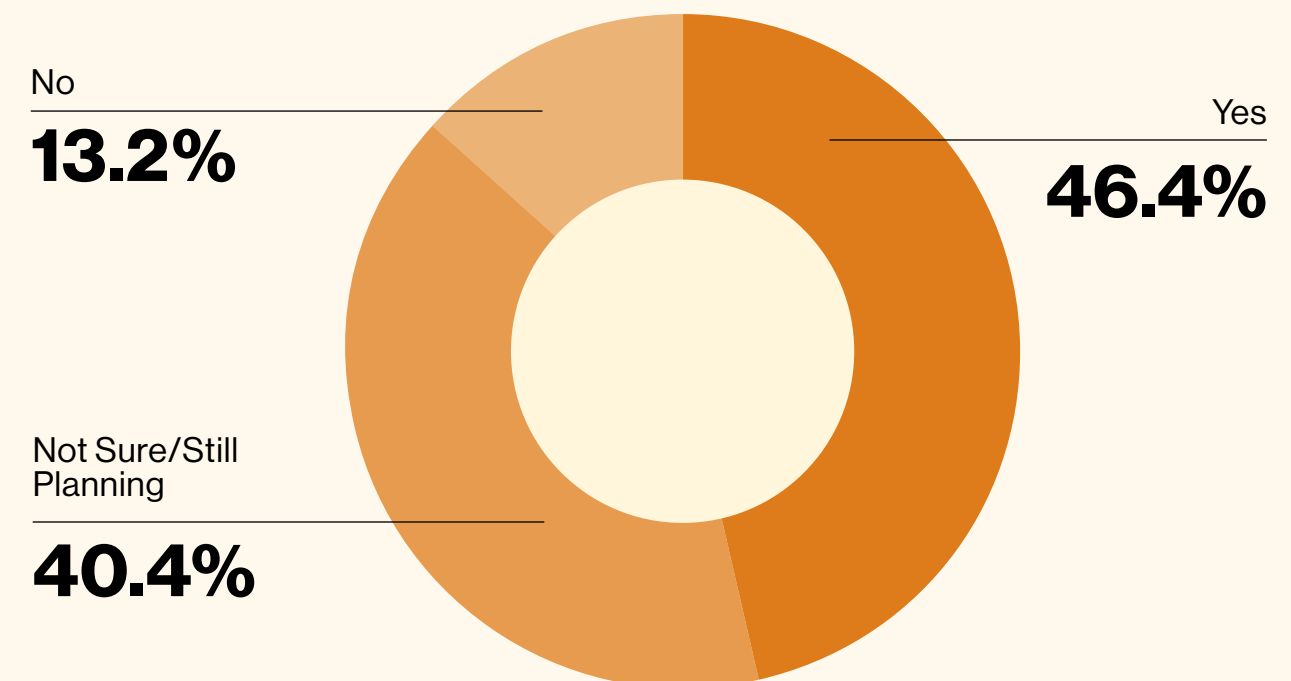
Top 3 Tasks Managers & Above Will Acquire New Software To Manage
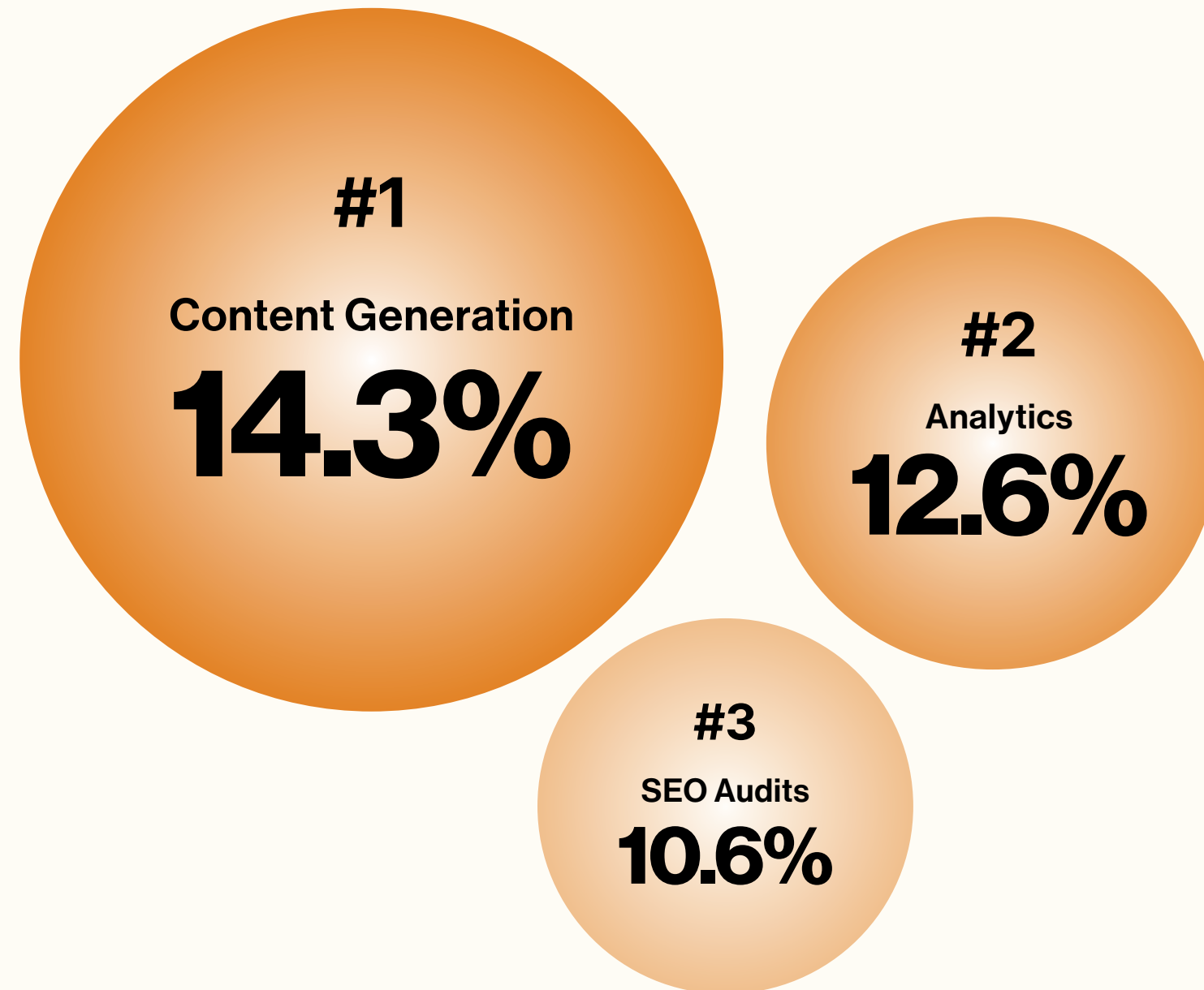
#1

Content Generation

14.3%

#2

Analytics

12.6%

#3

SEO Audits

10.6%

We do have to talk about the No. 1 pick for new software: content generation.

Tools based on generative AI certainly have their places, and AI has existed in content processes for years already, thanks to apps like Grammarly.

But be careful not to offload tasks to algorithms when what they need is more direct human involvement and insight. Don't leave the crucial task of content creation to generative AI tools without human creativity, insight, and fact-checking.

Read More: Resources On Implementing Generative AI

→ **SEJ Ebook: Leveraging Generative AI Tools For SEO**

→ **Revolutionizing SEO With Google's Search Generative Experience**

→ **Humans Vs. Generative AI: A Head-To-Head Ad Copy Content Test [Data Study]**

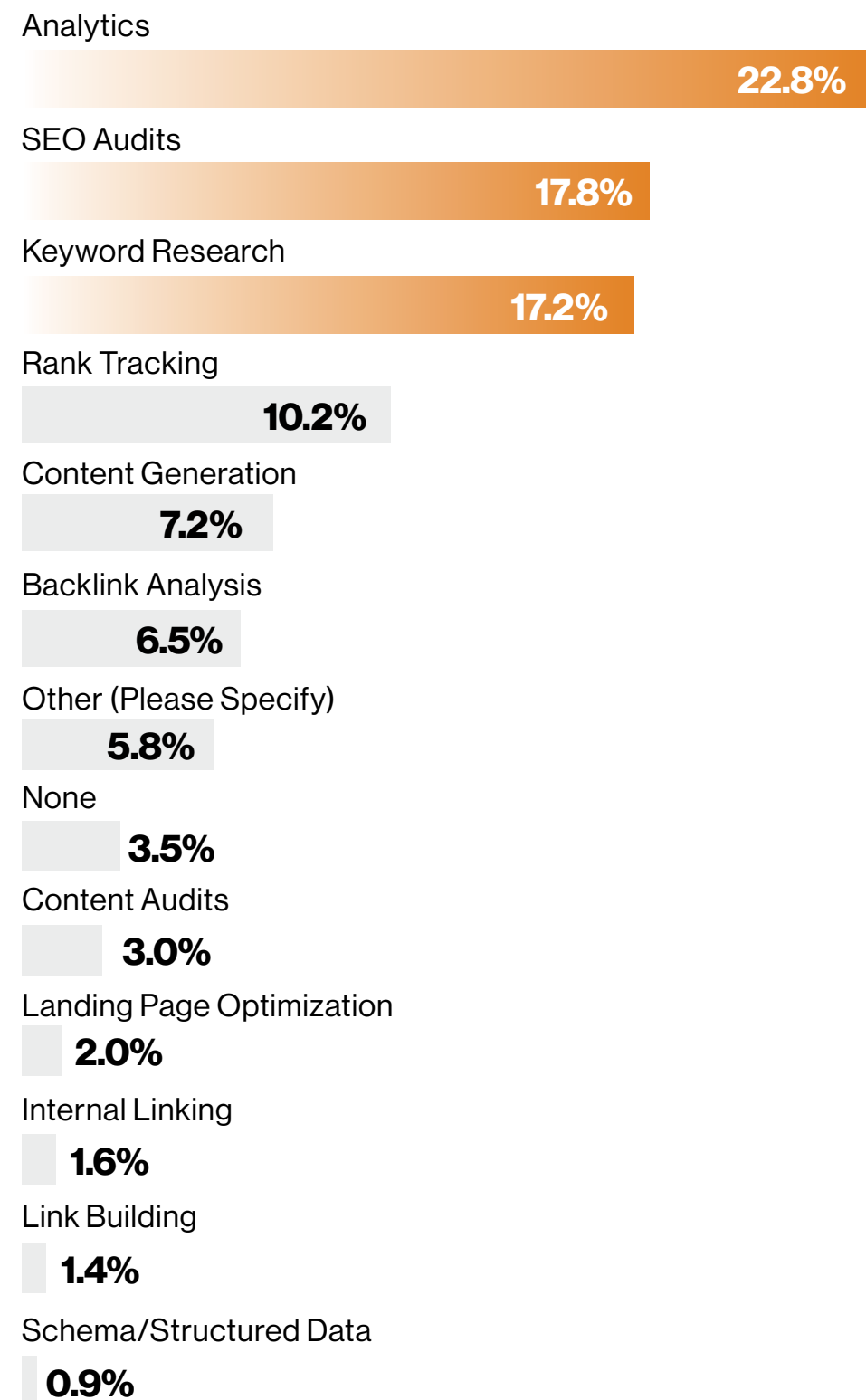→ **The 10 Best AI Writers & Content Generators Compared**

→ **Using AI Ethically In SEO**

→ **MozCon 2024: Britney Muller On How To Use Gen AI In Marketing**

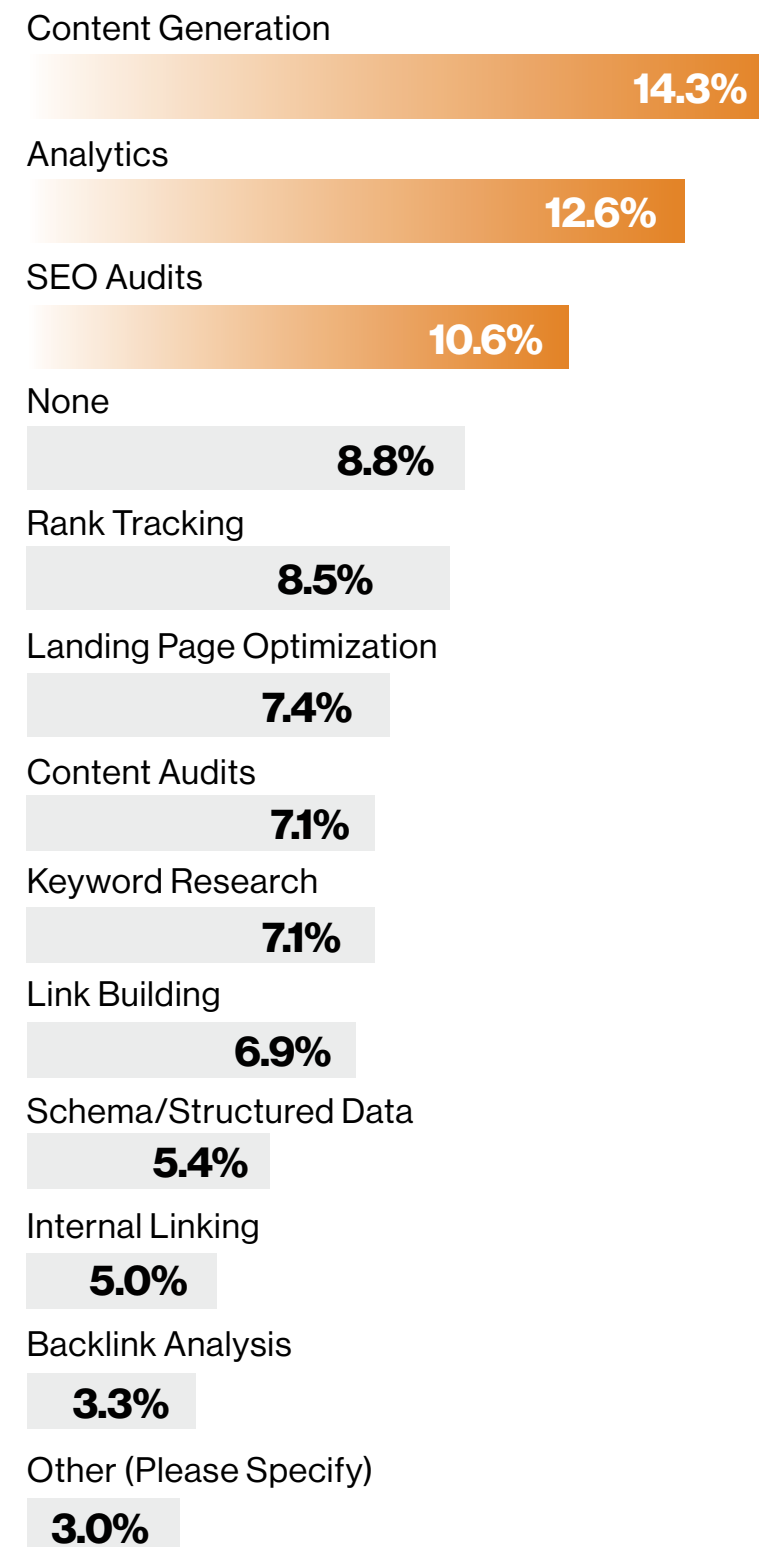→ **The Impact Of AI And Other Innovations On Data Storytelling**

→ **Google Stresses The Need To Fact Check AI-Generated Content**

What SEO Tasks Do You Currently Use Software To Manage?

Analytics
22.8%

SEO Audits
17.8%

Keyword Research
17.2%

Rank Tracking
10.2%

Content Generation
7.2%

Backlink Analysis
6.5%

Other (Please Specify)
5.8%

None
3.5%

Content Audits
3.0%

Landing Page Optimization
2.0%

Internal Linking
1.6%

Link Building
1.4%

Schema/Structured Data
0.9%
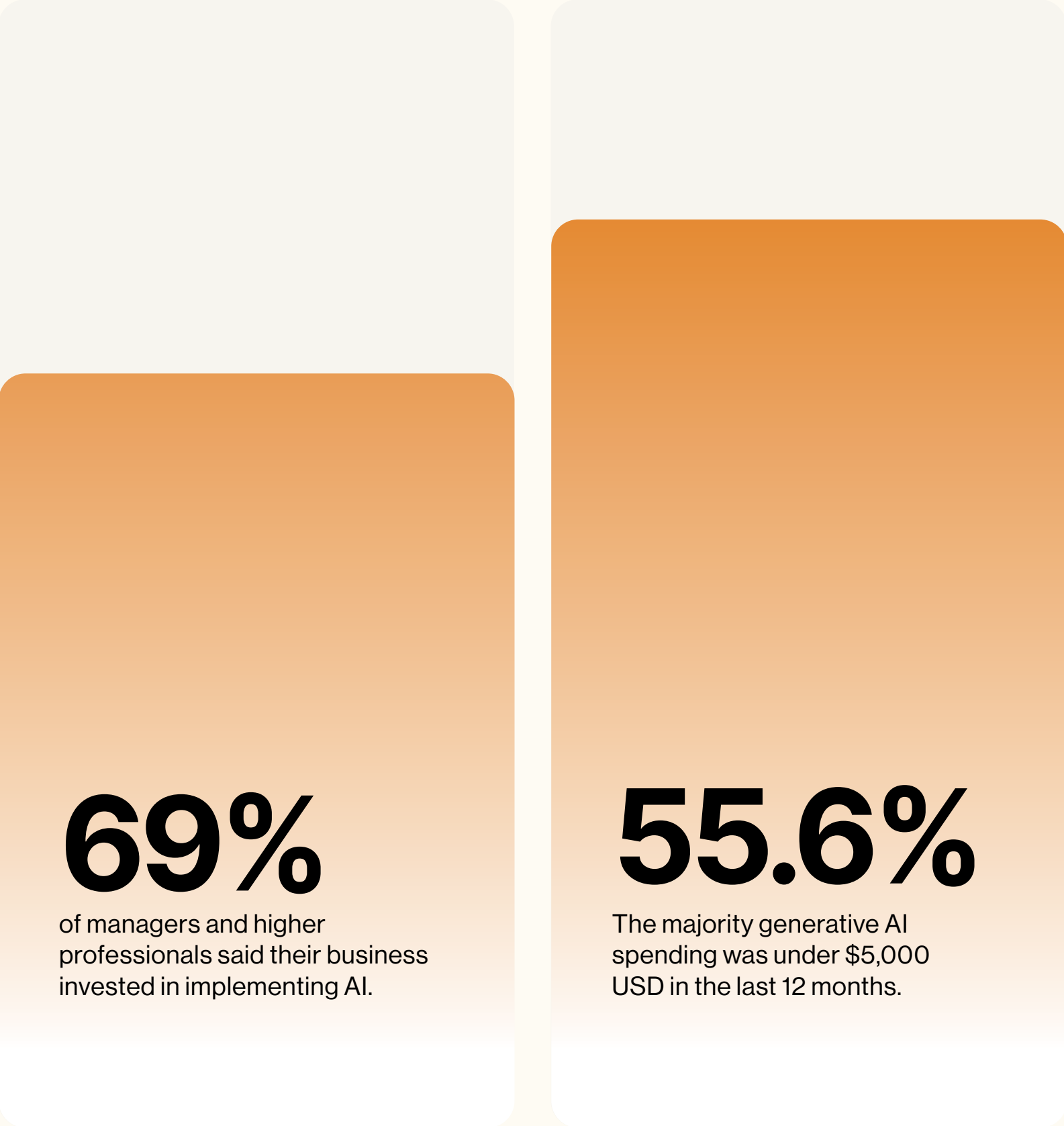
Which Tasks Or Responsibilities Are You Looking To Automate With Software In 2025?

Content Generation
14.3%

Analytics
12.6%

SEO Audits
10.6%

None
8.8%

Rank Tracking
8.5%

Landing Page Optimization
7.4%

Content Audits
7.1%

Keyword Research
7.1%

Link Building
6.9%

Schema/Structured Data
5.4%

Internal Linking
5.0%

Backlink Analysis
3.3%

Other (Please Specify)
3.0%

Most Generative AI Investment Is Optimistic But Cautious

Despite the low dollar value spend evident in the answers, it's important to note that direct money spent doesn't account for the full cost of implementing new tools and processes.

60.6% of manager-level and above respondents said they spent at least some employee time on generative AI. Labor is often a company's largest expense, and an exact labor spend is much more difficult to account for than money spent on tools.

69%

of managers and higher professionals said their business invested in implementing AI.

55.6%

The majority generative AI spending was under $5,000 USD in the last 12 months.

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Did You Spend Employee Time Or Spend On Software To Implement Generative AI?

(Respondents: managers, directors, executives, business owners)

Both
35.1%

Did Not Invest In Generative AI
31.0%

Invested Employee Time
25.5%

Invested In Software Spent
8.4%

Despite the low dollar value spend evident in the answers, it's important to note that direct money spent doesn't account for the full cost of implementing new tools and processes.

60.6% of manager-level and above respondents said they spent at least some employee time on generative AI. Labor is often a company's largest expense, and an exact labor spend is much more difficult to account for than money spent on tools.
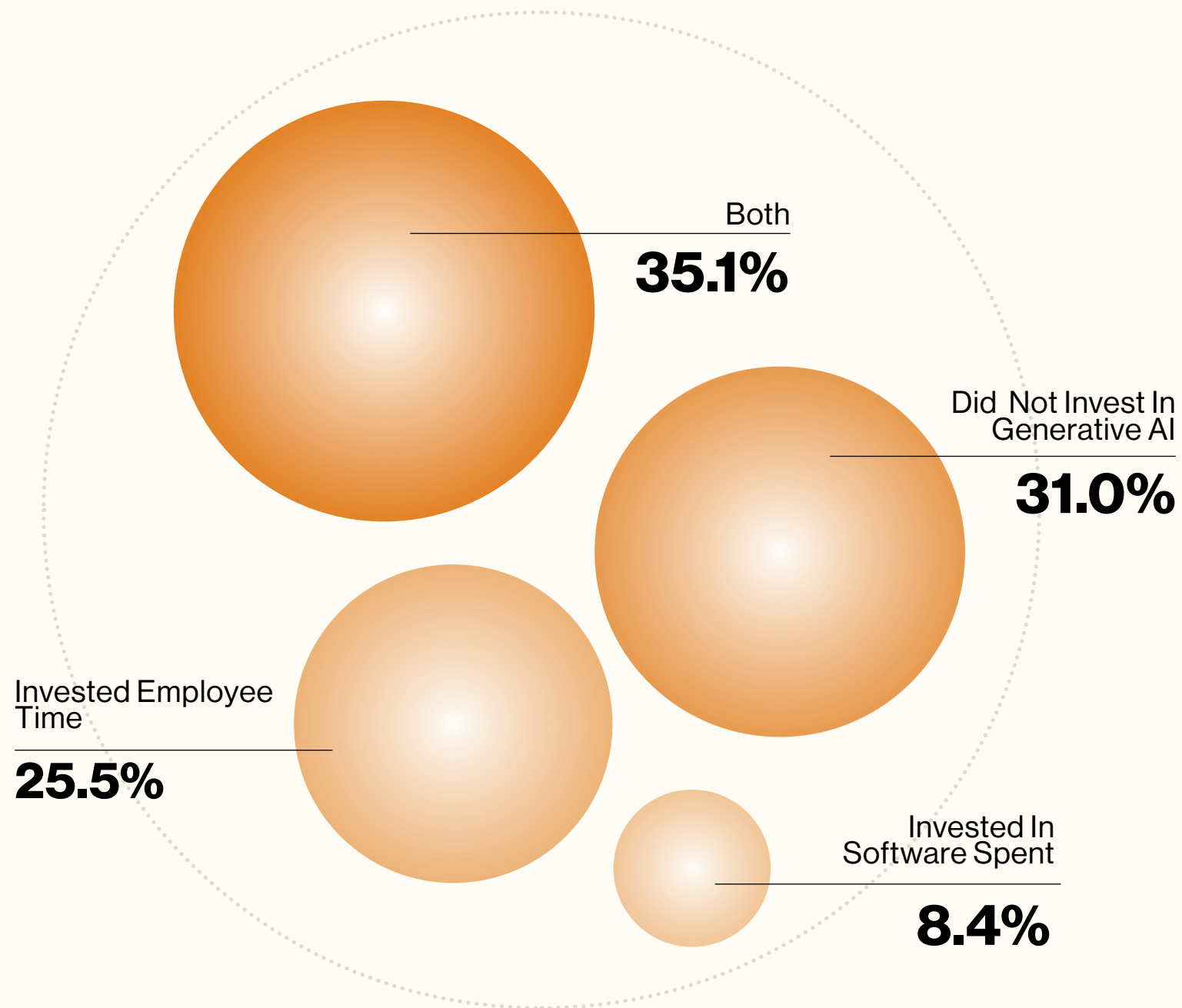
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Identify tasks and processes that AI can improve and begin with small experiments. Avoid fully automating your content creation workflow initially, as it may fail. Learning to use AI effectively is a crucial new skill.
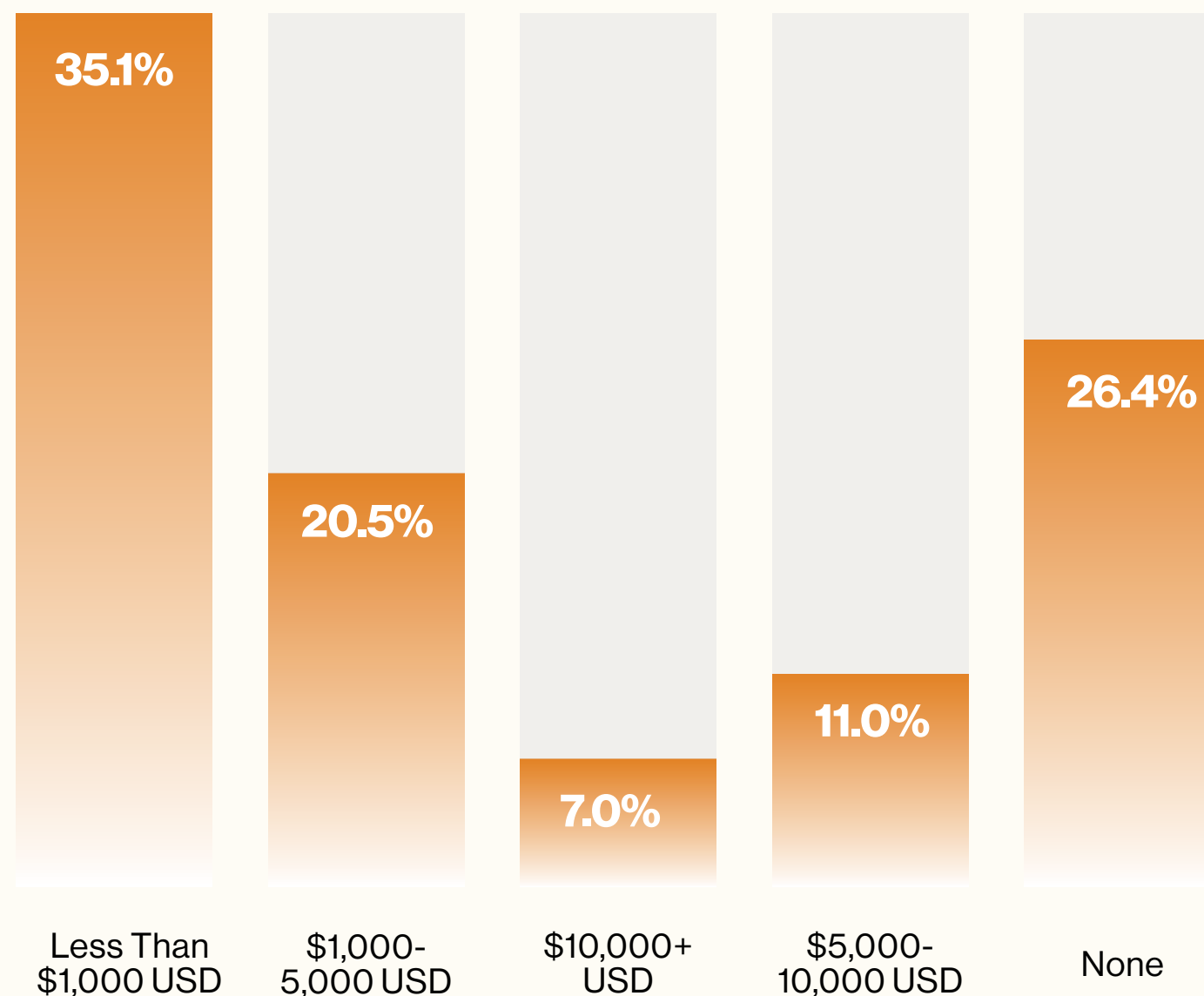
Start small and gradually expand. AI investments can be modest. Experiment with popular AI tools like ChatGPT and Claude to assess their value.

Steven van Vessum
Director of Organic Marketing, Conductor

How Much Would You Estimate Spending On Implementing Generative AI In the Last 12 Months?

(Respondents: directors, executives, business owners, freelancers)

Category	Percentage
Less Than $1,000 USD	35.1%
$1,000-5,000 USD	20.5%
$10,000+ USD	7.0%
$5,000-10,000 USD	11.0%
None	26.4%

Why is there a discrepancy between those answering that they did not invest in generative AI?

31% said "Did Not Invest In Generative AI" in the first question.
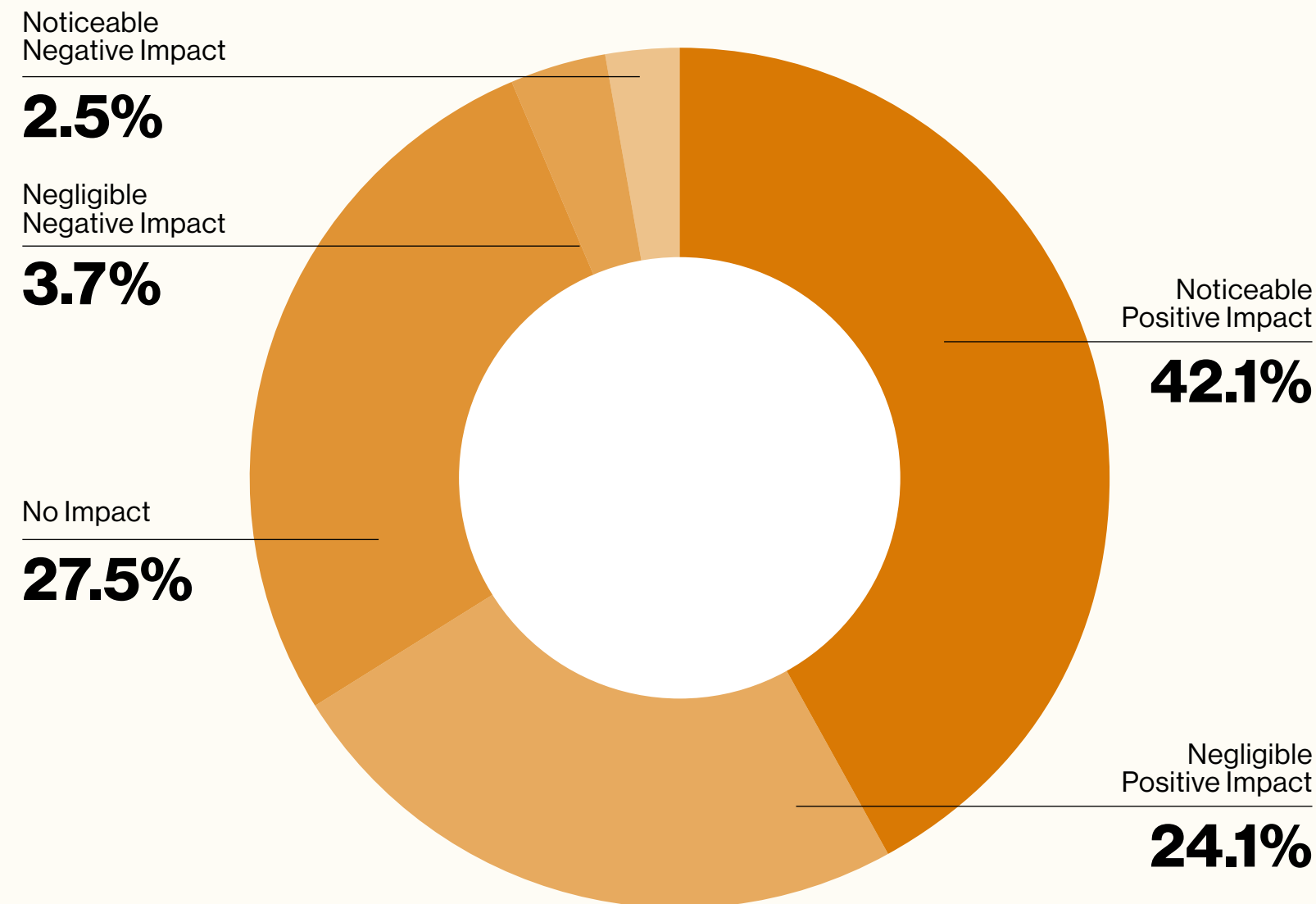26.4% said "None" when asked about spending.

The chart on the left includes only directors, executives, small business owners, and freelancers, who are most likely to know exact dollar figures on investment. Managers and non-managers are excluded.

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Generative AI Investment May Improve Productivity, But It's More Difficult To Track Bottom Line Impact

66.3% of directors, executives, business owners, and freelancers said generative AI improved productivity.

It's important to note that this survey asks only for opinions, not proof. That makes these questions potentially susceptible to bias. Should you take it on trust that respondents who said they paid money for something are looking at its impact objectively? That's up to you.

What Impact Did Your Investment In Generative AI Have On Your Workflows Or Internal Performance?

Noticeable Negative Impact
2.5%

Negligible Negative Impact
3.7%

No Impact
27.5%

Noticeable Positive Impact
42.1%

Negligible Positive Impact
24.1%

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What Impact Did Your Investment In Generative AI Have On Revenue?

Total Negative
6.7%

Total Positive
47.5%

Noticeable
Positive Impact
28.7%

Negligible
Positive Impact
18.8%

Noticeable
Negative Impact
2.3%

Negligible
Negative Impact
4.5%
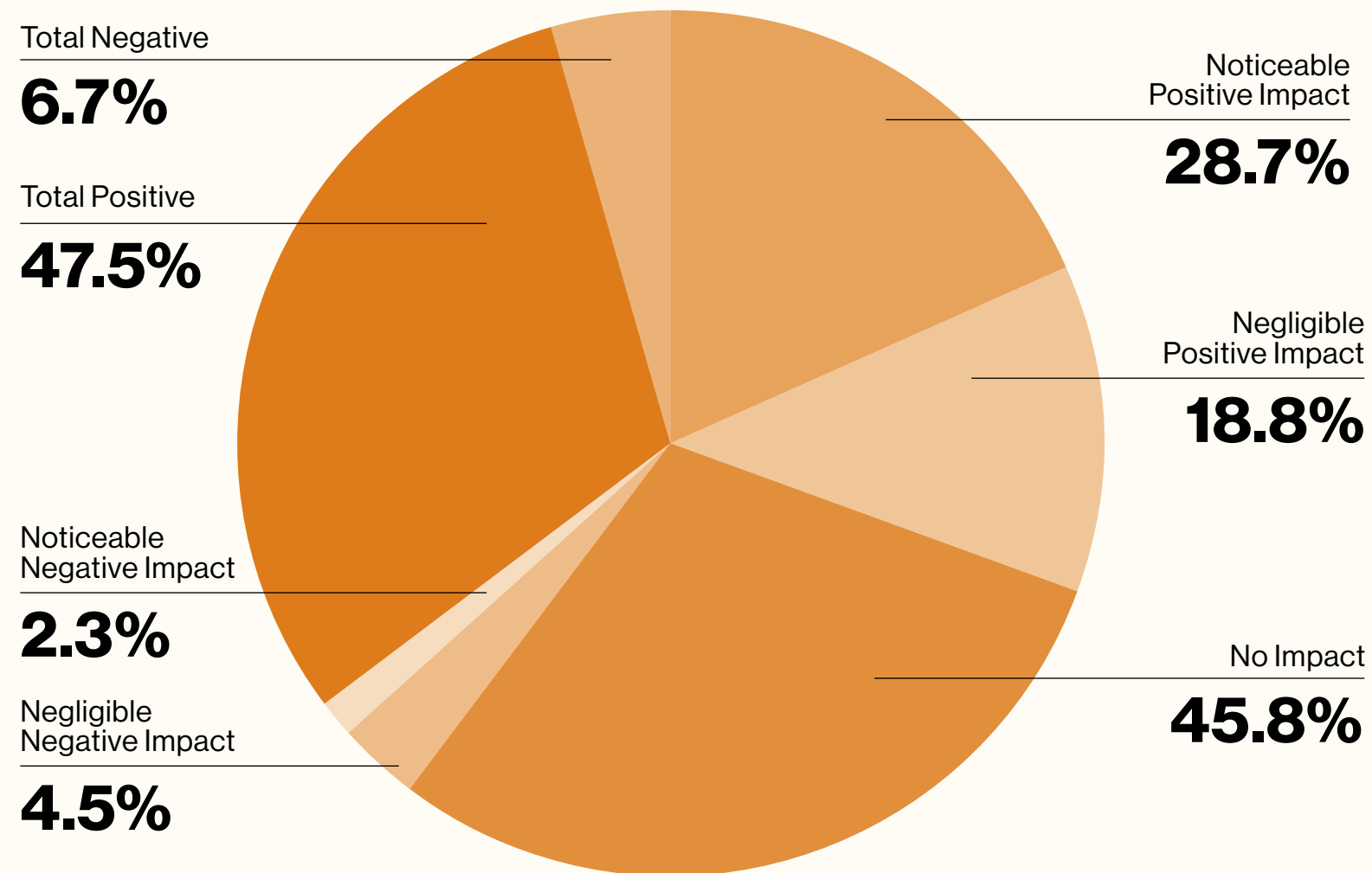
No Impact
45.8%

47.5% of directors, executives, business owners, and freelancers said generative AI had a positive impact on revenue.

Almost as many (45.8%) said it had no impact.

While it's likely that respondents noticed a positive productivity impact with generative AI, they seem much less confident in reporting financial impact. In both questions, very few respondents reported a negative impact.

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SEO Career Development

4

IN THIS SECTION →

4.1 Skill Gaps In The SEO Industry

4.2 Technical & Soft Skills Are Key To Career Advancement

4.3 Building A Career During SEO Disruption

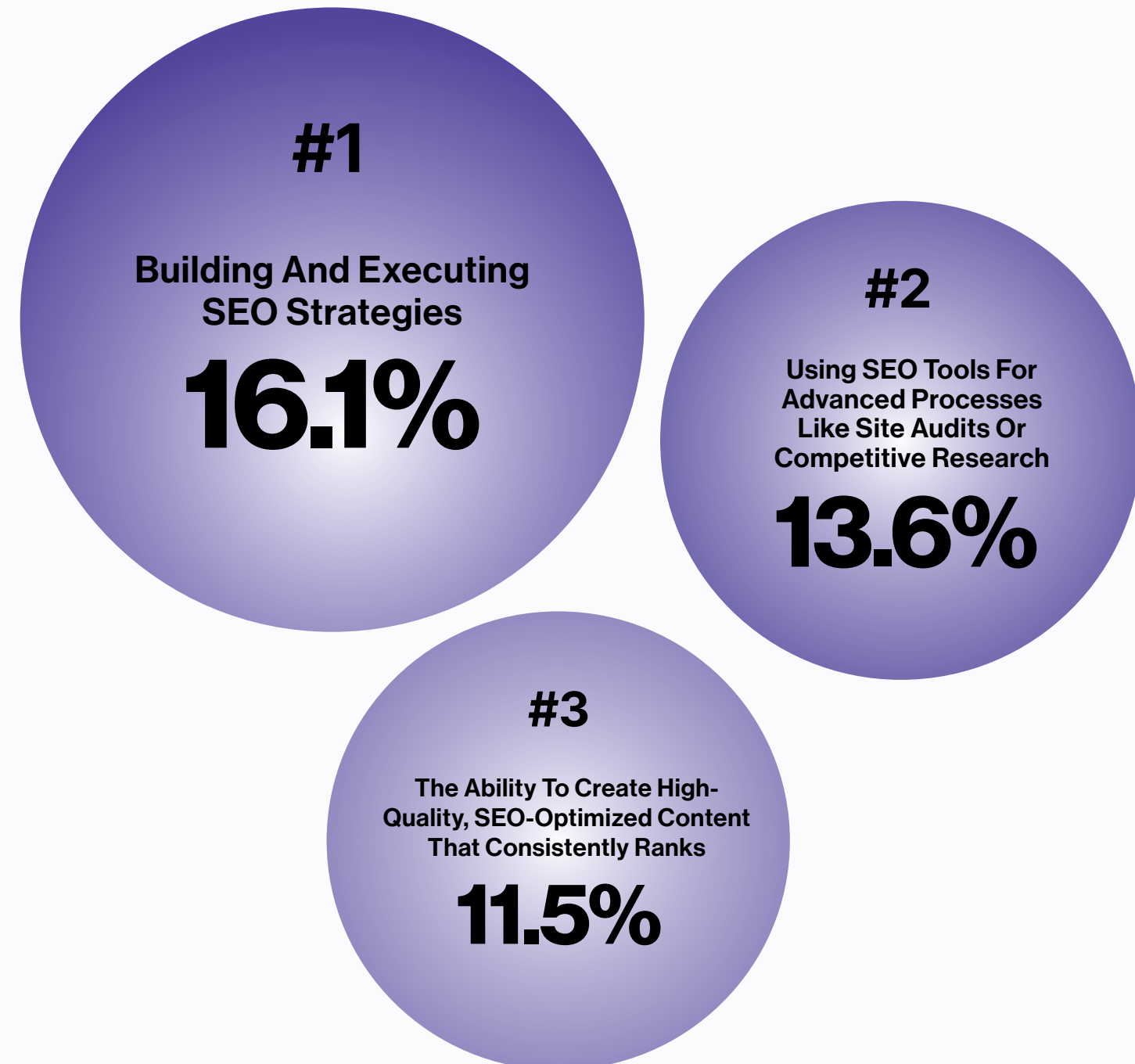4.4 People Will Always Need To Search For Things

Skill Gaps In The SEO Industry

The difference between the results from the charts can be a little difficult to analyze due to the nature of the questions, how they were asked, and the fact that respondents were invited to give "up to three" answers.
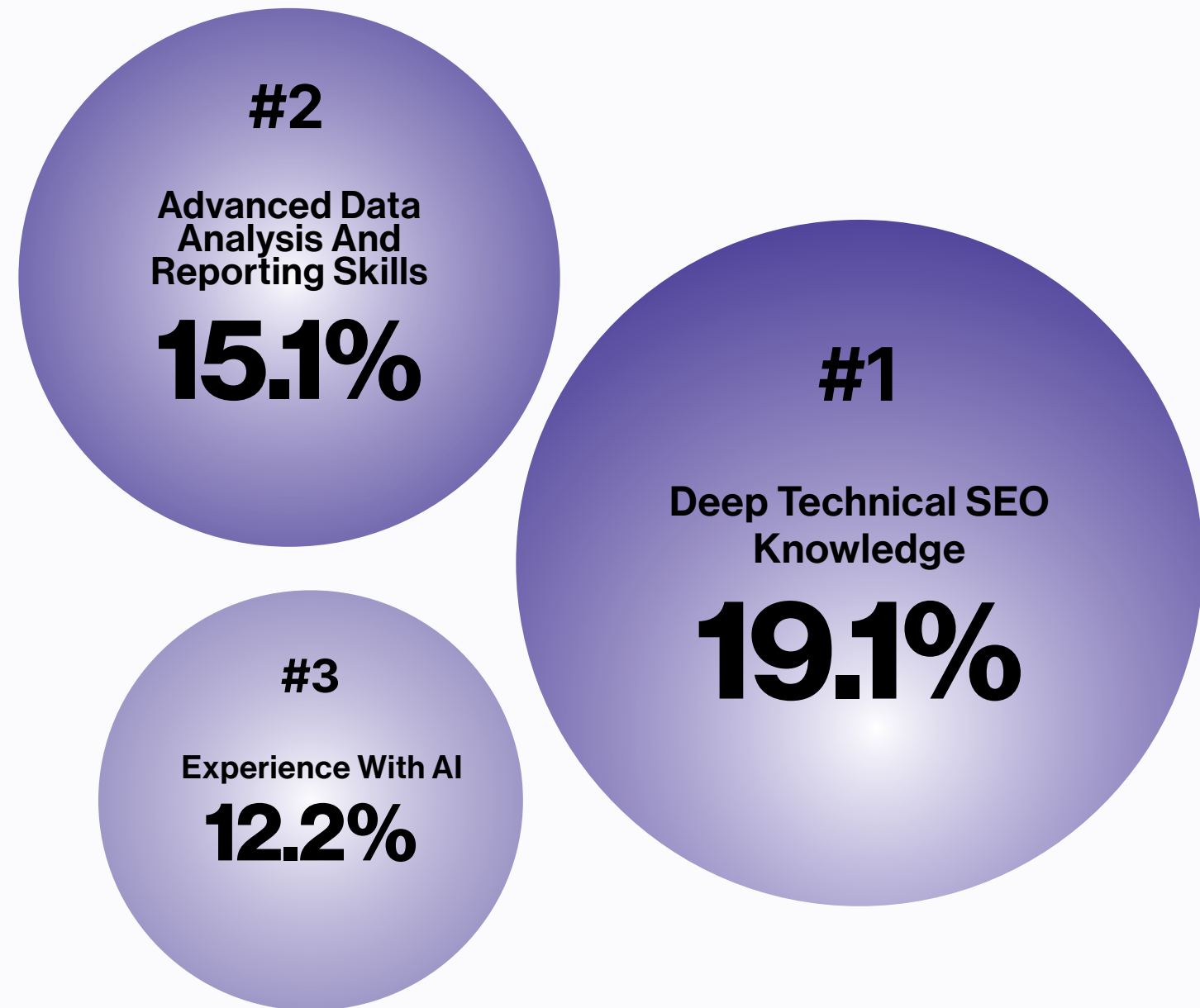
That's why you'll see that data analysis is in the top 5 for both questions. Different people are picking those skills for different contexts. When taken together, the results indicate that:

1. Few SEO professionals (6.8%) have a high level of confidence in their ability to keep up with the industry and changes in SEO.

2. SEO professionals generally have high confidence in their skills in strategy, research, audits, and ranking.

3. Many SEO professionals are not confident in their technical ability, analysis skills, and experience with AI.

Top 3 Skills SEO Professionals Have High Confidence In

#1

Building And Executing SEO Strategies

16.1%

#2

Using SEO Tools For Advanced Processes Like Site Audits Or Competitive Research

13.6%

#3

The Ability To Create High-Quality, SEO-Optimized Content That Consistently Ranks

11.5%

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Top 3 Skills SEO Professionals Have Low Confidence In

#2

Advanced Data Analysis And Reporting Skills

15.1%

#1

Deep Technical SEO Knowledge

19.1%

#3

Experience With AI

12.2%

It seems that the SEO industry contains more strategizers, researchers, and content specialists than it does consummate technical experts.

The response with the highest overall percentage across answers to the the two survey questions (shown on the next page) is 19.1% of SEO professionals report a low confidence in technical SEO.

Since most website platforms do the basic technical tasks for you these days, the response makes sense. But it does mean technical SEO is an area where you can distinguish yourself from other candidates. Depending on the team makeup, being able to communicate with or fill in for developers effectively could be an advantage.

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Which Of These SEO Skills Would You Say You Have A High Level Of Confidence In?

Building And Executing SEO Strategies

16.1%

Using SEO Tools For Advanced Processes Like Site Audits Or Competitive Research

13.6%

The Ability To Create High-Quality, SEO-Optimized Content That Consistently Ranks

11.5%

Advanced Data Analysis And Reporting Skills

10.3%

Soft Skills, Such As Effective Communication And Collaboration

10.0%

Experience With AI

8.5%

Specific Niche Subject-Matter/Business Sector Experience

7.9%

Deep Technical SEO Knowledge

7.8%

Leadership Ability

7.5%

On Top Of Changing Industry Trends And SEO Strategies

6.8%

Which Of These SEO Skills Would You Say You Have A Low Level Of Confidence In?

Deep Technical SEO Knowledge

19.1%

Advanced Data Analysis And Reporting Skills

15.1%

Experience With AI

12.2%

Specific Niche Subject-Matter/Business Sector Experience

9.8%

On Top Of Changing Industry Trends And SEO Strategies

9.1%

The Ability To Create High-Quality, SEO-Optimized Content That Consistently Ranks

7.8%

Using SEO Tools For Advanced Processes Like Site Audits Or Competitive Research

7.4%

Building And Executing SEO Strategies (Project Management)

7.2%

Leadership Ability

6.4%

Soft Skills, Such As Effective Communication And Collaboration

6.0%

If you have a decent web developer, solid CMS, and a well-maintained website, technical SEO can often be a minor issue. Running audits and sending recommendations to a friendly developer significantly offload the amount of work an SEO professional has to do on the technical side.

But not all businesses have developers who are available or friendly to SEO recommendations. Many SEO pros find themselves needing to be advocates for the UX and technical changes they need. If there isn't an existing communication process you can navigate, then speaking some of the same language as developers can help you build relationships with them.

In other situations, an SEO may be called in where there are no development resources or to fix previous technical mistakes. The required knowledge to pull people out of the fire on technical issues can help distinguish you as an SEO professional and hone your understanding of websites and UX.

Read More: Resources On Technical SEO & Data Analysis

⟶ **SEJ Ebook: Advanced Technical SEO: A Complete Guide**

⟶ **SEJ Ebook: How To Do An SEO Audit: The Ultimate Checklist**

⟶ **SEJ Podcast: Why You Should Switch To An Always-On SEO Auditing Strategy**

⟶ **12 Essential SEO Data Points For Any Website**

⟶ **What Is Quality Data And How It Connects Search, Content, And AI Success**

⟶ **How To Develop Great Data Studies – The 5R2 Roadmap To Great Data Story**

⟶ **What Data Science Can Do for Site Architectures**

Technical & Soft Skills Are Key To Career Advancement

Leading on from the previous pages, SEO pros who are likely to be involved in hiring decisions (manager-level and above) say that technical SEO is the hardest skill to find. Despite not appearing in the top 3 difficult-to-find skills, soft skills are the top 1 hiring priority.

While the discrepancy between responses to the two questions may seem odd, it's not difficult to see them as aligned. Building and executing successful SEO strategies – on a broad level – requires sound technical knowledge, audience insights, and the ability to work with other teams.

SEO is becoming more integrated into other disciplines and workflows. It also takes more data from other marketing efforts to build SEO strategies that account for the current demands of audiences and algorithms.

Top 3 Most Difficult To Find Skills In SEO Candidates

#1

Deep Technical SEO Knowledge

18.9%

#2

Advanced Data Analysis & Reporting

14.8%

#3

Building & Executing SEO Strategies

10.0%

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Top 3 Skills Valued In Hiring Decisions

#1

Soft Skills

18.2%

#2

Building & Executing SEO Strategies

15.7%

#3

Ability To Create Content That Ranks

13.8%

Creating content that ranks isn't just a checklist to follow. It requires more than being a great writer or even a great SEO. It requires collaboration and a holistic understanding of audiences, their journeys, and their needs. Not one person needs to have all of this expertise, but one person must be able to source it and apply it correctly.

Although "leadership ability" ranked low on both questions, these kinds of skills sound like the makings of a leader. In SEO, a combination of technical and soft skills could be the key to building effective strategies and campaigns. Leadership is not just about your experience and knowledge; it's also about how you align people and resources to achieve strategic goals.

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What Are The Most Difficult Skills To Find In SEO Candidates?

Deep Technical SEO Knowledge

18.9%

Advanced Data Analysis And Reporting Skills

14.8%

Building And Executing SEO Strategies

10.0%

The Ability To Create High-Quality, SEO-Optimized Content That Consistently Ranks

9.9%

On Top Of Changing Industry Trends And SEO Strategies

9.6%

Specific Niche Subject-Matter/Business Sector Experience

8.7%

Soft Skills, Such As Effective Communication And Collaboration

8.6%

Experience With AI

7.7%

Using SEO Tools For Advanced Processes Like Site Audits Or Competitive Research

5.1%

Leadership Ability

4.3%

Other (Please Specify)

2.5%

What Skill Do You Prioritize When Hiring?

Soft Skills, Such As Effective Communication And Collaboration

18.3%

Building And Executing SEO Strategies

15.7%

The Ability To Create High-Quality, SEO-Optimized Content That Consistently Ranks

13.8%

Deep Technical SEO Knowledge

13.3%

Advanced Data Analysis And Reporting Skills

8.2%

Other (Please Specify)

8.0%

On Top Of Changing Industry Trends And SEO Strategies

7.1%

Specific Niche Subject-Matter/Business Sector Experience

5.0%

Using SEO Tools For Advanced Processes Like Site Audits Or Competitive Research

4.3%

Leadership Ability

3.9%

Experience With AI

2.6%

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Building A Career During SEO Disruption

Disruption presents opportunities to people who can adapt, cut through hype and misinformation, and consistently deliver results. Reliably delivering SEO results isn't easy right now, even for seasoned professionals. Many businesses are being forced to come to terms with the fact that they didn't belong in certain SERPs or didn't deserve certain audiences.

That's before mentioning the disruption coming from ranking changes that don't seem to make any logical sense, and platforms like Google that seek to keep traffic for certain queries for themselves.

SEO pros need to know not just how to get traffic, but how to identify and attract valuable traffic that contributes to business goals. If you want to stand out as an SEO strategist, you need to understand how to identify the right opportunities and build the soft skills to advocate for them.

Where Do You Find The Strongest Talent When Hiring?

LinkedIn
39.4%

Referrals/Networking
20.7%

Job Website Or Job Bank (Monster, Indeed, etc.)
13.8%

Other (Please Specify)
8.8%

Recruiting Agency
7.1%

SEO/Marketing Job Boards
5.0%

Own Website
3.2%

Other Social Media Network
2.1%

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SEO might be becoming more integrated with other marketing strategies and platforms, but that doesn't make true SEO knowledge any less valuable. SEO strategies that provide long-term business value are driven by a variety of skills, including data analysis, content production, and technical execution. They're driven by deep audience insights, which you must acquire through a mix of data sources, such as analytics software, direct feedback, competitor analysis, and trends research.

SEO professionals say they find the strongest new talent on LinkedIn and through direct referrals. Networking, collaborating with others, and interacting with the broader community seems like the best way to get noticed and discover opportunities to enhance your career.

It's also an opportunity to learn from other professionals to increase your skills, keep up with the industry, and demonstrate your insight.


"Run Your Own Site(s): While reading up on best SEO practices and industry trends is important, nothing will make you a better SEO strategist than running your own site. Having 100% control of something and being able to test, break, and grow with no red tape will give you more confidence in your ability than working on someone else's site.

Lean Into Technical: Your technical abilities will set you apart moving forward in SEO. Learn as much as you can and sharpen your skills in auditing, coding, AI, etc. With this skill set, you will have many more opportunities open up for you.

Develop Your Soft Skills: In short, learn how to talk to people, sell your ideas, and show off your work in an educated way. Many SEOs have been held back by their inability to speak to higher-ups in a simplistic way and not too far into the weeds. If you can master this, many more doors will open."

Pat Reinhart
VP of Services & Thought
Leadership, Conductor
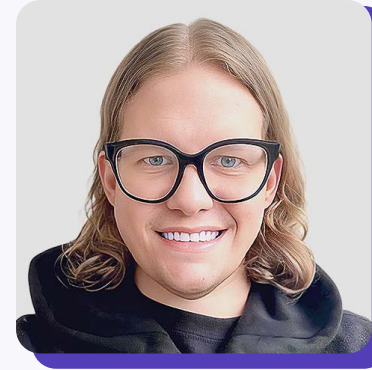
"Building an SEO career during disruption? The report shows LinkedIn is the top platform for finding new talent, with 39.4% of respondents favoring it. Network there, showcase your skills, and learn from others. Develop a diverse skill set including data analysis, content production, and technical execution. In this rapidly changing field, your ability to adapt and grow is your biggest asset."

Matt Southern
Senior News Writer,
Search Engine Journal

"In any time of flux, focus on the fundamentals. Solve your customer's needs and problems. Communicate with messaging that supports your customer. Build a brand that has a strong identity. These are all the fundamentals of marketing and what will be important to SEO. For anyone building a career in SEO, learn how to build a brand, how to communicate and how to market cross channel. Combine this with technical understanding and you put yourself in the best position to adapt with the coming changes."

Shelley Walsh
SEO Content Strategist,
Search Engine Journal

People Will Always Need To Search For Things

There's a lot of concern about AI-driven disruption in 2024.

And the concern is warranted. As helpful as AI and generative AI can be, some of their implementations are legitimate threats to online businesses and SEO professionals who work for and serve them.

As a reminder, anyone who has been doing SEO since 2019 has been optimizing for modern transformer-based AI algorithms for five years already. While everyone else has been telling us that AI will kill SEO, you've been doing the work. So, even if they're right, you are still the best person to help businesses adjust to a new audience dynamic.

The biggest dangers, however, come from:

- ✅ AI disruption within existing platforms.
- ✅ Changes to discovery and user journeys.

AI implementation is making it more challenging to acquire traffic for informational "top funnel" queries.

At the same time, social platforms are themselves incorporating ad and direct shopping experiences that reach users directly where they hang out.

Social networks may not send much traffic, but they could be where audiences find out about you and where journeys begin. SEO professionals, especially service providers, are starting to see social networks as places to engage and research audiences, as well as leverage the content they're already creating.

AI, changing user habits, social media, and just what the heck "quality" means are high on the lists of things keeping SEO professionals up at night.

Modern SEO takes prudence and the ability to answer difficult questions like:

- ✅ Why are we targeting this keyword?
- ✅ Does it offer value to us beyond traffic volume?
- ✅ Can we answer this query in a unique way, or is it so top-level that Google can harvest the traffic with simple SERP features?
- ✅ Do we know the intent of the query, and can we satisfy it?

Beating AI takes knowledge AI doesn't have: insights about the people in your audiences and the problems they're trying to solve.

Moving forward, successful SEO might look like accepting the losses brought on by Search features, like AI overviews, and focusing on finding and nurturing the most valuable audiences.

It may require a different mindset than just focusing on traffic volume.

Thank You For Reading State Of SEO 2025

We hope you find the data and insights useful as we all try adapting to the whiplash from 2024 updates and releases.

If you're interested in learning what the experts have to say about coming trends in their own words, subscribe to the SEJ newsletter to get notified about the coming PPC & SEO Trends ebooks at the end of the year.

For each ebook, we ask our colleagues in the SEO industry what they think the year ahead will bring.

Don't miss out on all the expert insights.

Subscribe to SEJ Today.

In about a week, you'll receive an email asking you to fill out a survey about this ebook. Please let us know what you think – we read the responses!

For example, many of you mentioned in the 2023 survey that you wanted more insights and takeaways. We hope this edition provides them!

Limitations & Survey Notes

1,003 people responded to our fourth annual State Of SEO survey. The responses came from a diverse group of professionals in the SEO industry from multiple countries.

Results were rounded to one decimal place. This rounding process may introduce slight anomalies.

These results reflected a statistically significant portion of Search Engine Journal's audience of SEO professionals. By virtue of that fact, this survey has a sample bias. SEO is a diverse, global industry; we don't claim the final word on industry trends. Nevertheless, we hope they spark conversations with your peers.

When survey respondents were asked to self-report on the effectiveness of their activities, there was a high probability that confirmation bias would influence their answers. Questions about the effectiveness of strategies or implementations should be taken as sentiment analysis and not as reflections of objective reality.

We included several multiple-choice questions with up to three-answer inputs in the survey. They were noted when they appeared and were weighted by the total number of response, meaning they could have up to three times more responses than there were participants.

Thank you to all our survey participants who made this report possible and to our official sponsor:

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