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Built to Grow: Understanding and Leveraging Data on AEC Buyers

Presenters



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What we'll discuss today...

- › Top challenges in our industry
- › 3 ways buyer behavior is changing
- › 5 ways high growth firms are responding
- › Q&A



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INDUSTRY CHALLENGES



The pace of change in the marketplace

- **New competitors** are entering the space
- Mergers and acquisitions by **larger firms** and **investment portfolios** are changing the competitive landscape quickly
- Effectiveness of marketing **strategies and tactics** fluctuate
- **Technology** continues to evolve rapidly
- Geographic distance matters less in **customer experience**



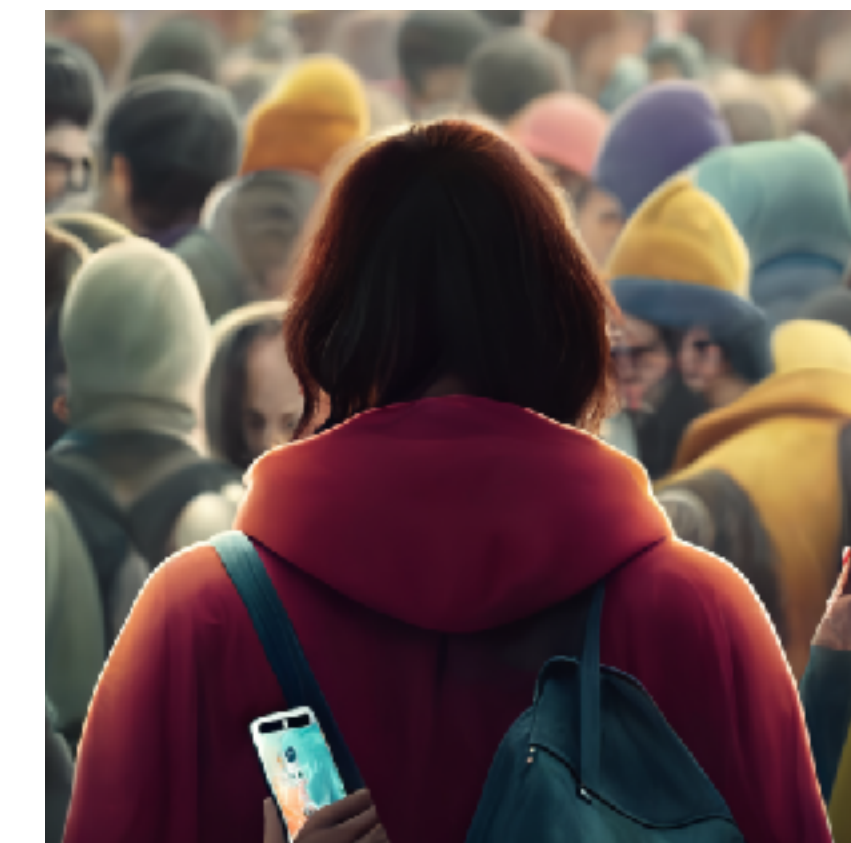
Your buyers and customers are changing too

- They are more **informed** and expect consistency, transparency, and value at every turn
- They are more **demanding** and covet personalization, responsibility, and accountability
- They are **impatient** and expect simplicity, convenience, and proactive experience



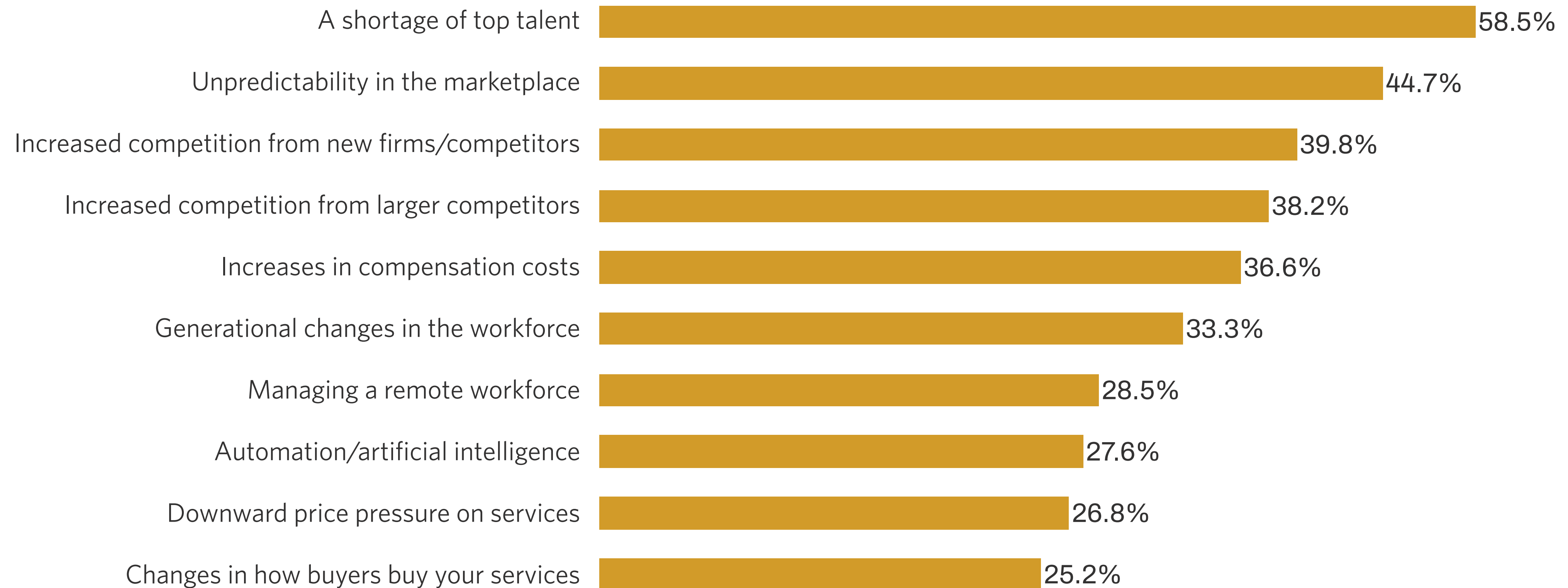
Generative AI is bringing new differentiation challenges

- **Pretend experts** are on the rise
- Spam and **digital clutter** is increasing
- Unhelpful, **self-serving content** is a liability
- Basic, **informational content** becomes less valuable



Industry AEC challenges

Today's Top Challenges for AEC Firms

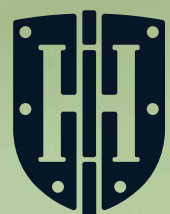


SOURCE: 2024 HIGH GROWTH STUDY: AEC EDITION



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3 WAYS BUYER BEHAVIOR IS CHANGING



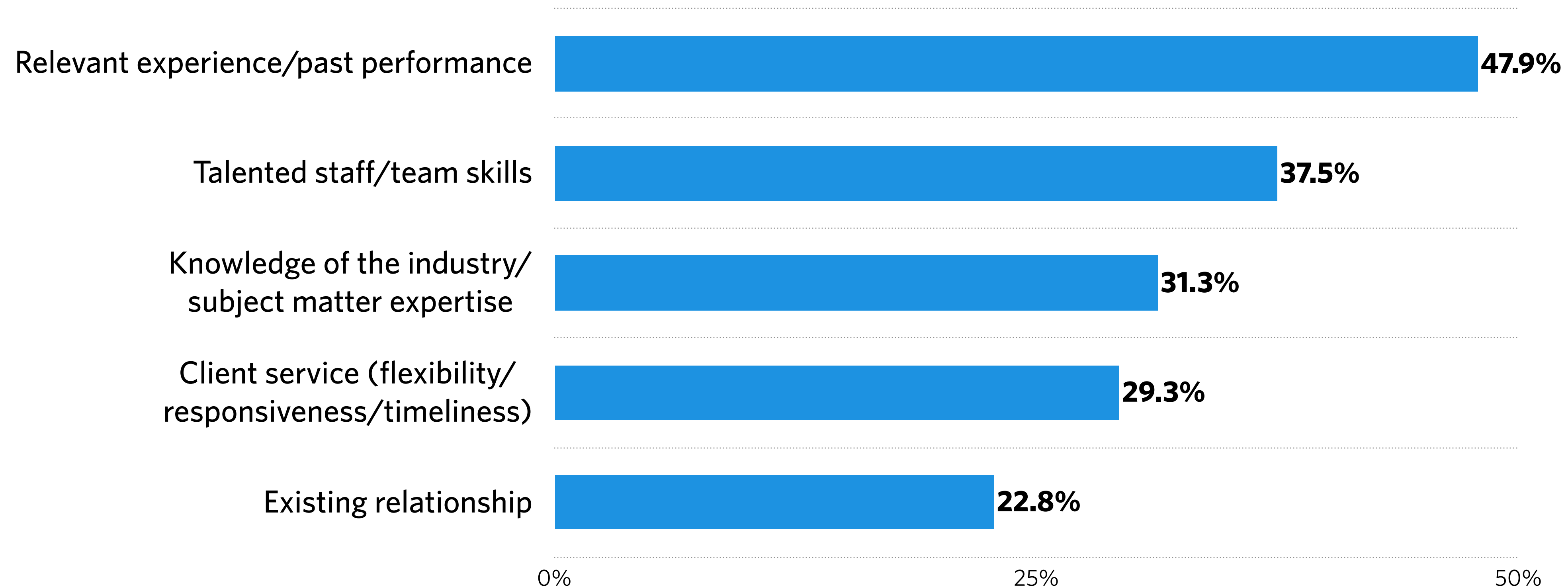
Top Buyer Behavior Changes

1. Relevant experience matters more than ever
2. Buyers have diversified their search channels
3. Buyer concerns have shifted massively



1. Demonstrating relevant experience leads the way

Top 5 Methods Buyers Used to Evaluate AEC Firms

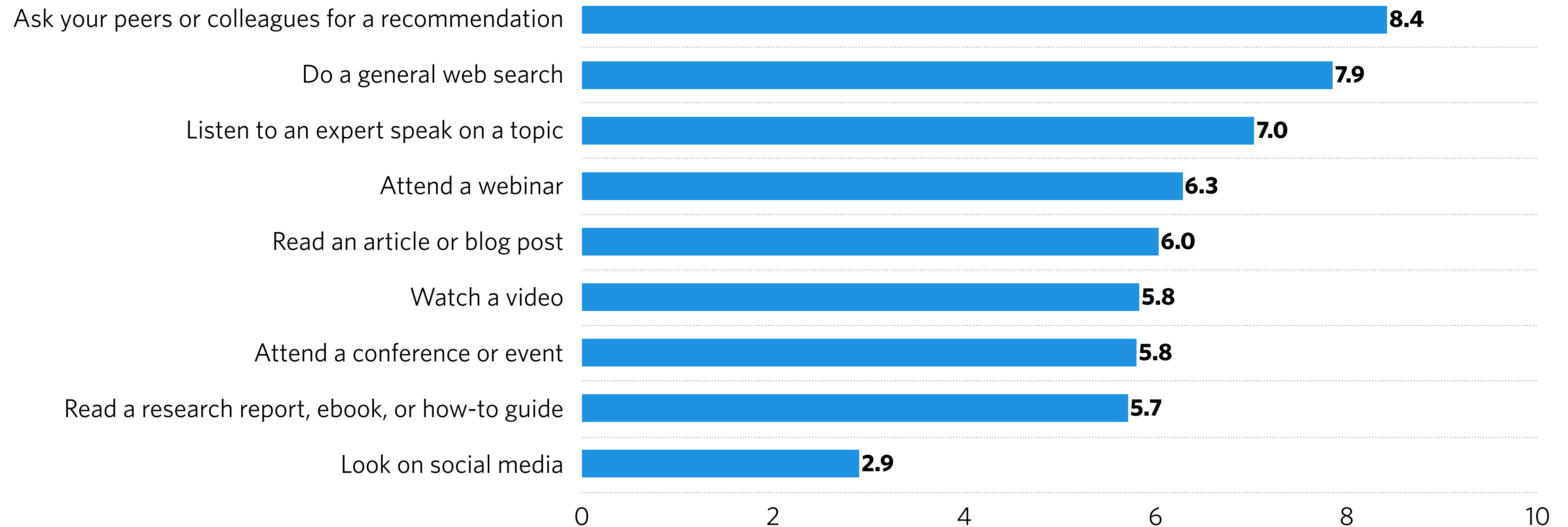


SOURCE: INSIDE THE BUYERS BRAIN: AEC EDITION



2. Buyers diversified how they search for solutions

How Buyers Search for Work-Related Topics (0-10 score)

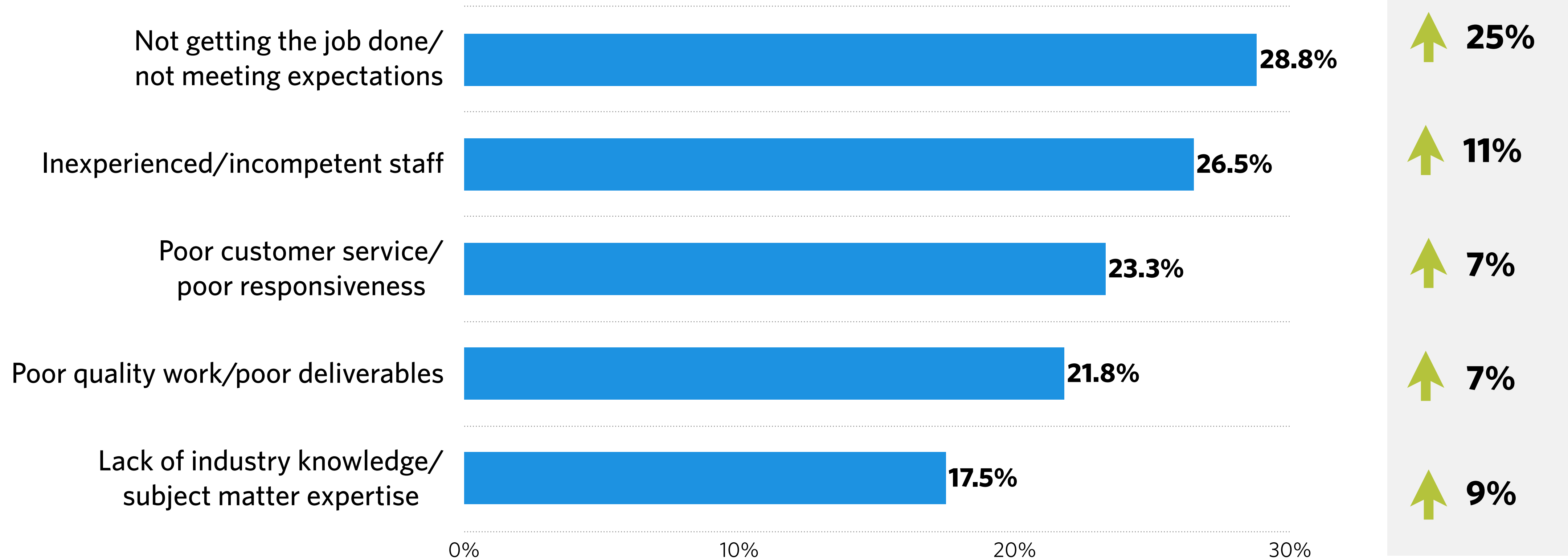


SOURCE: INSIDE THE BUYERS BRAIN: AEC EDITION



3. Buyers are desperate to avoid incompetency

Top 5 Concerns When Selecting Professional Services Firms



SOURCE: INSIDE THE BUYERS BRAIN: AEC EDITION



Reaching today's buyers takes a unified approach



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4 WAYS HIGH GROWTH FIRMS ARE RESPONDING



Strategy 1:

Increase Cohesion with Business Development and Marketing

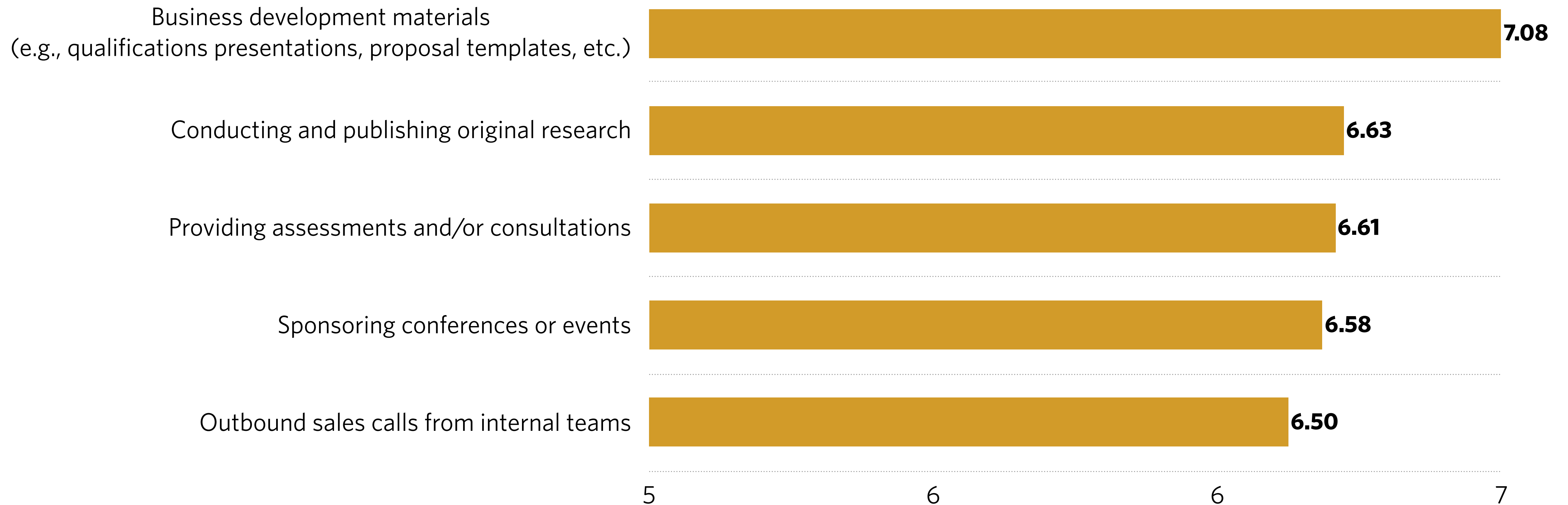


Between 2023 and 2024, High Growth firms reported a 46% increase in adoption of outbound sales calls from internal team members



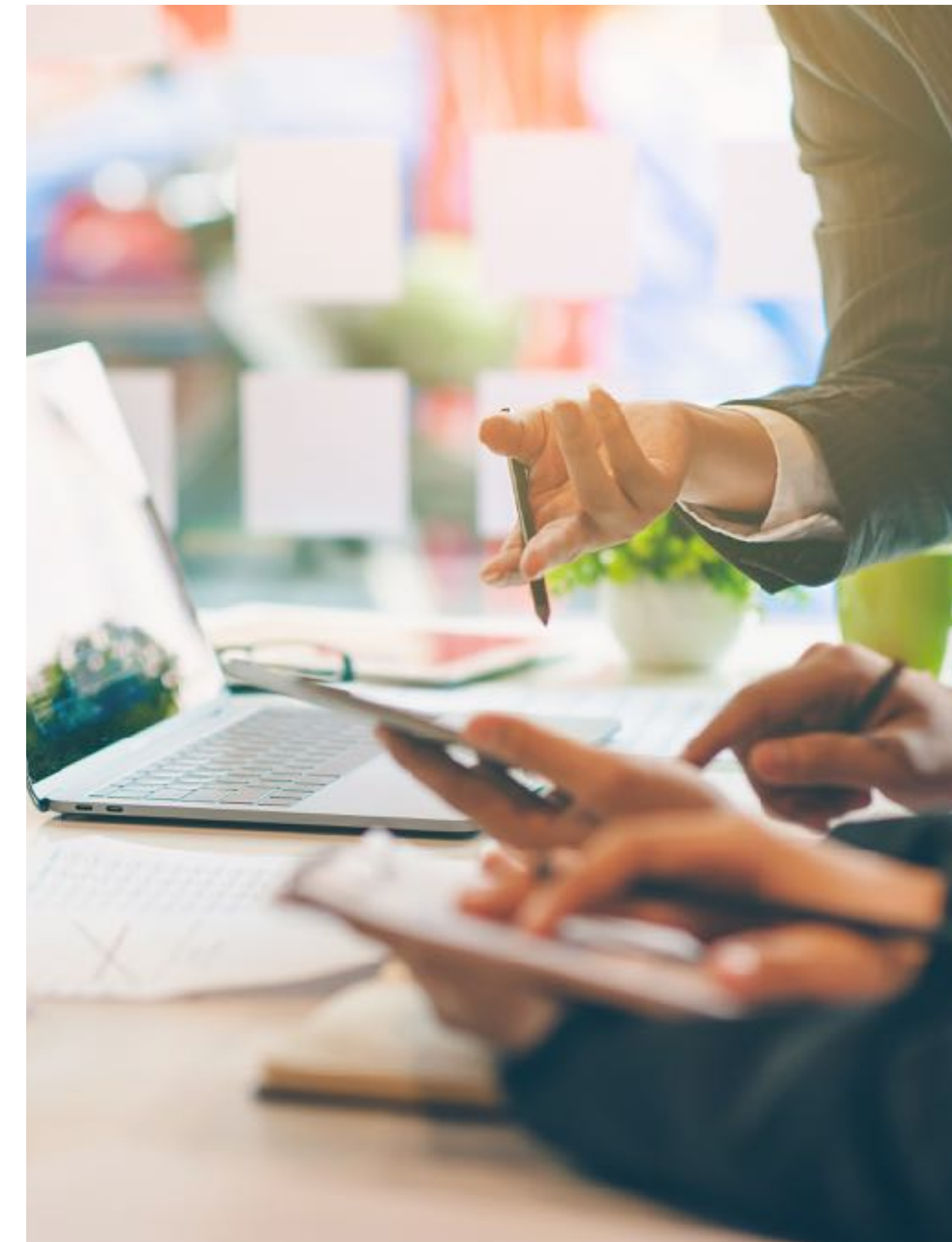
High Growth firms integrate marketing and BD

Top 5 High Growth Firms' Level of Investment (Time and Money) in Marketing Techniques



How to connect marketing and business development

- Invest in infrastructure that helps you understand what's working and what's not
- Leverage technology to understand prospect and client engagement and conversion
- Move beyond the catch all “contact us” and align offers with relevant intent of the users
- Utilize high-quality content, consultation offers, and live demo offers to initiate a dialogue with qualified target audiences



Turn generic collateral into relevant closing material

- › Tailored messaging
- › Client results and testimonials
- › Industry awards
- › Featured experts
- › Clear point of contact
- › Validated on your firm's high-performance website



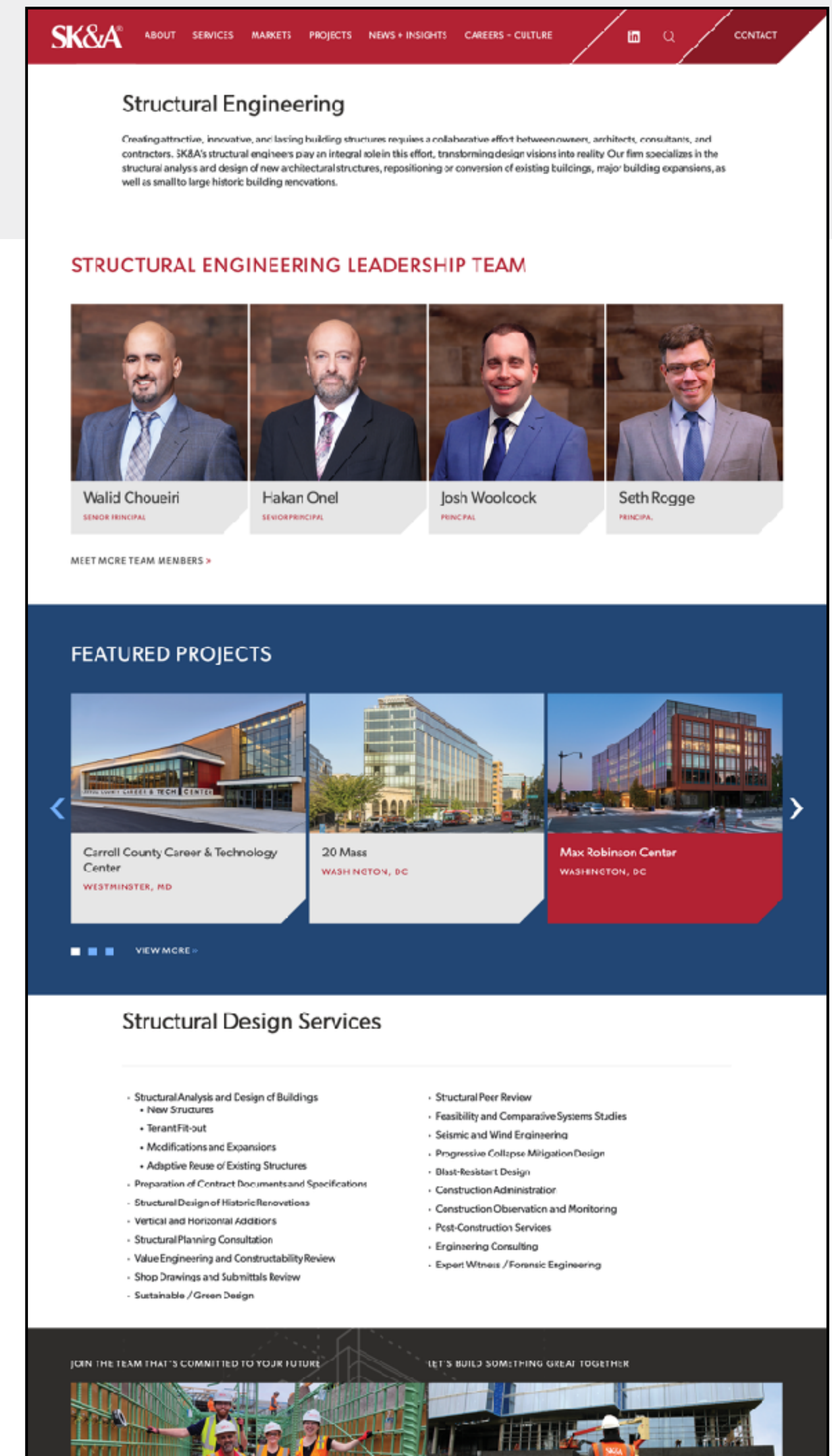
A foundational website value: brand validation

- › Homepage captures users attention
- › Messaging highlights key differentiators and positioning
- › User experience makes it easy to navigate to key pages
- › Featured project pages and thought leadership content validates past performance and the expertise of your team
- › Branding assets are used consistently and capture attention
- › Unedited stock imagery is avoided



AEC website trends

- Beautiful photography and video
- Relevant project portfolio items are featured on nearly every page of the website
- Experts are featured prominently on services/industry pages
- Locations pages function as small micro-sites and connect users with content relevant to that geographic region



Questions to consider...

- › Do your website and business development materials offer a compelling reason for prospects to contact you?
- › Does your offer strategy point to relevant and useful information?
- › Are your business development materials relevant and up-to-date?
- › Do you have infrastructure that attributes action to outcome?



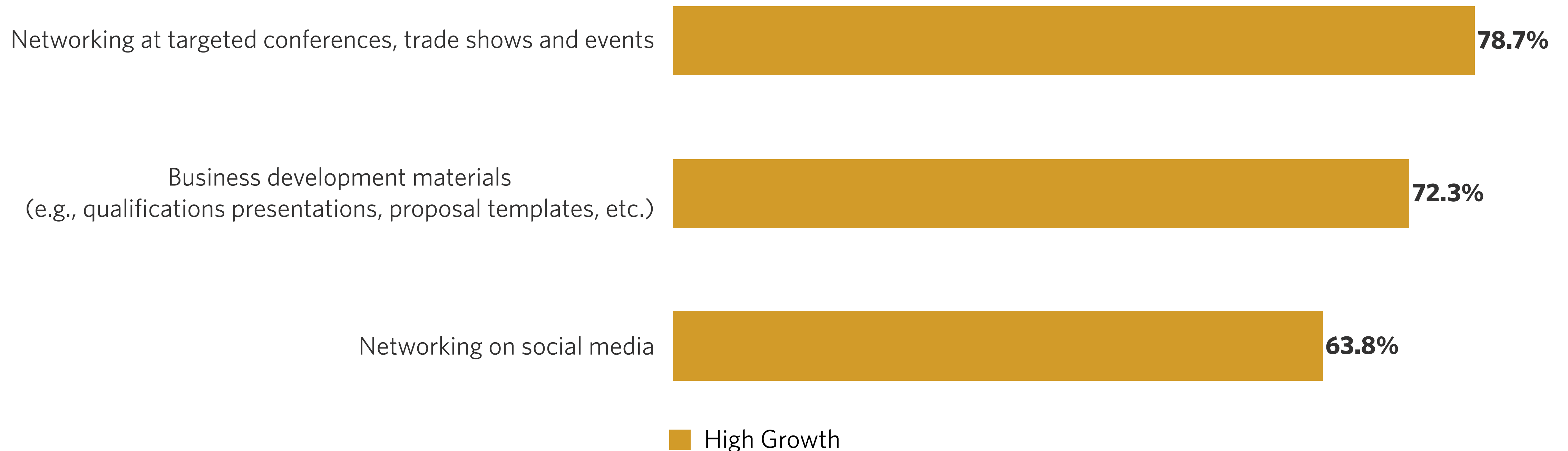
Strategy 2:

Get Your Experts Networking Outside of the “Office” Again



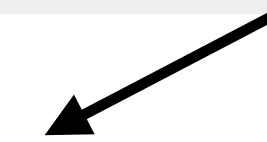
High Growth firms utilize the power of networking

The Top 3 Most Utilized Marketing Techniques by High Growth AEC Firms



Connecting offline activity to your marketing program

Often neglected



Planning Phase

- > Booking
- > Logistics
- > Travel/Hotel
- > CRM, sales tools and metrics
- > Target accounts

Promotions/Outreach

- > Offer strategy
- > Email campaign
- > Landing pages
- > Brief attendees
- > Social media strategy
- > Paid/Social targeted ads
- > Digital PR Outreach
- > Presentation deck
- > Marketing materials, handouts, business cards, display banner, postcard, tchotchkes/swag

During Event

- > Social media engagement for attendees
- > Booth/table
- > Networking meetings
- > Track opportunities

Post-Event

- > Schedule debrief
- > Enter leads in CRM
- > Attendee lists
- > Follow up with leads
- > Thank you to host and coordinators
- > Blog on key insights and takeaways from event



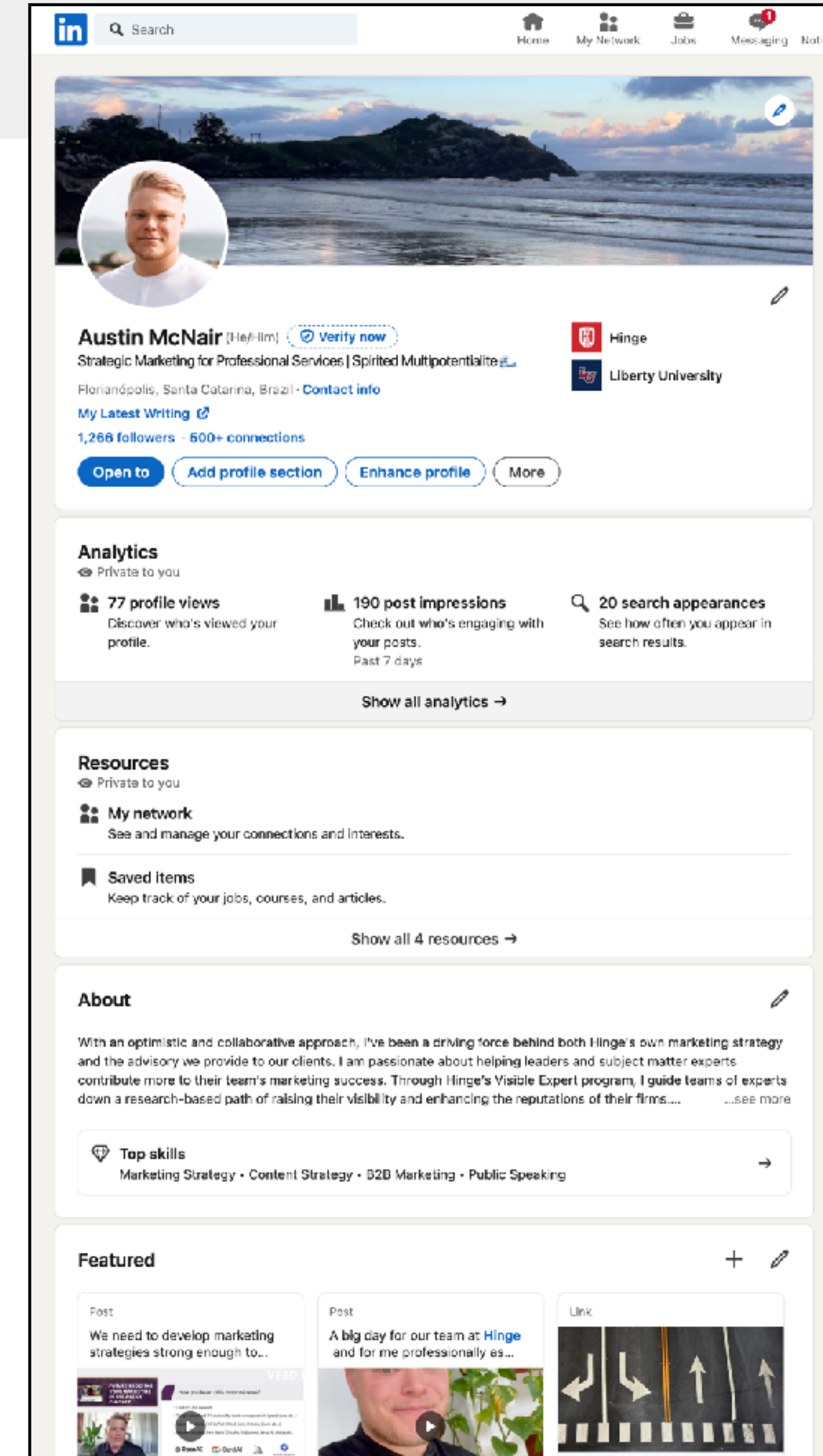
Our goals for increasing adoption of LinkedIn

- To position the firm as a thought leader in its industry
- To increase visibility in targeted industry/market groups online, joining the conversation across social channels
- To increase web traffic and content subscribers
- To increase downloads and interactions on your website
- Increase in number of qualified inbound leads



Ways marketing teams support their experts

- Provide training and support to grow their LinkedIn audience
- Make it easy to access and produce new and existing thought leadership content
- Support in more advanced ways of posting content such as video, images, etc...

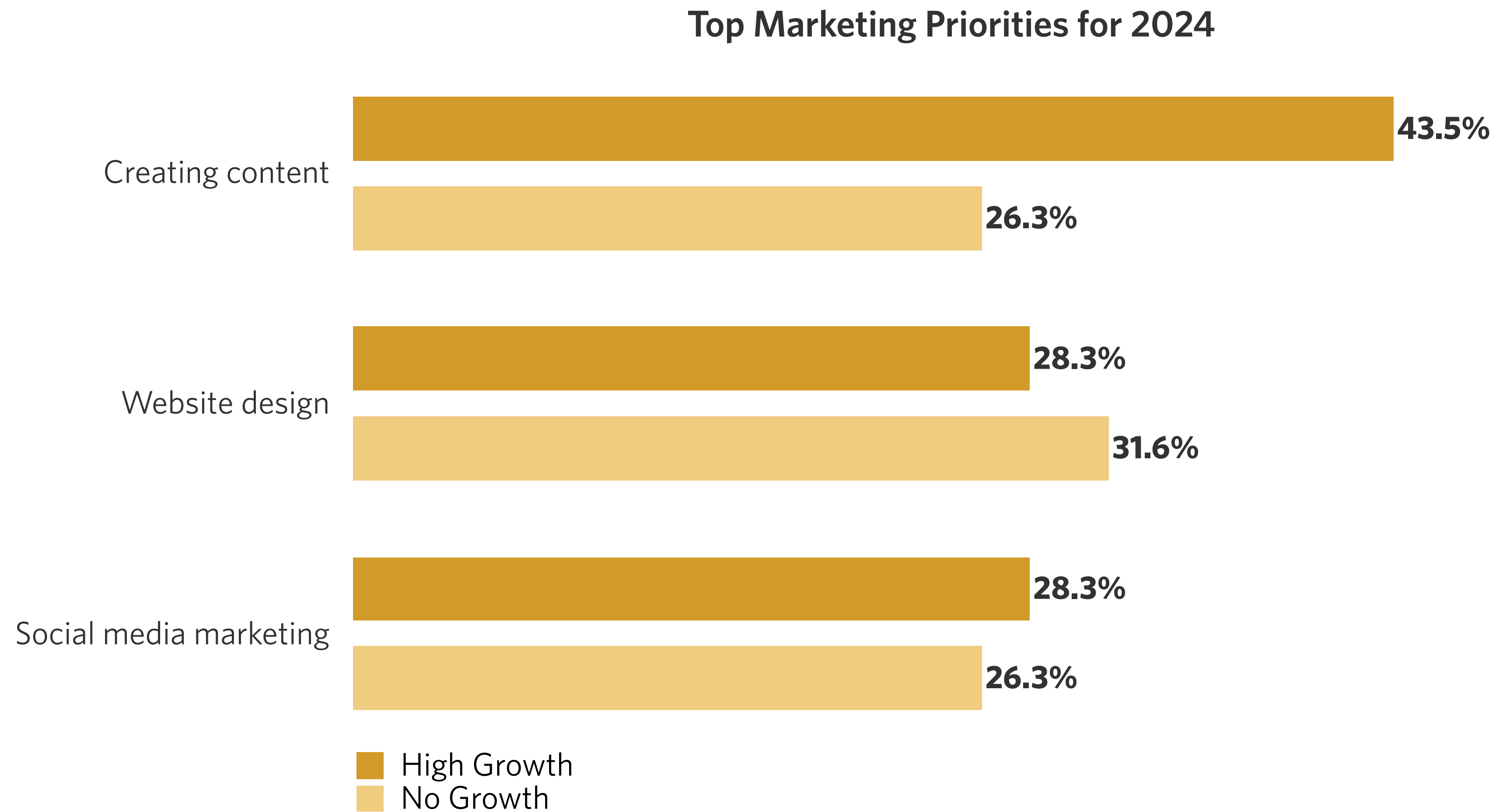


Strategy 3:

High Quality, Original
Thought Leadership
Content



High Growth firms are prioritizing content



Higher quality, original content

- › Case stories (25% increase)
- › Educational webinars (22% increase)
- › Thought leadership on social (14% increase)
- › Marketing video (14% increase)
- › Blog posting (13% increase)

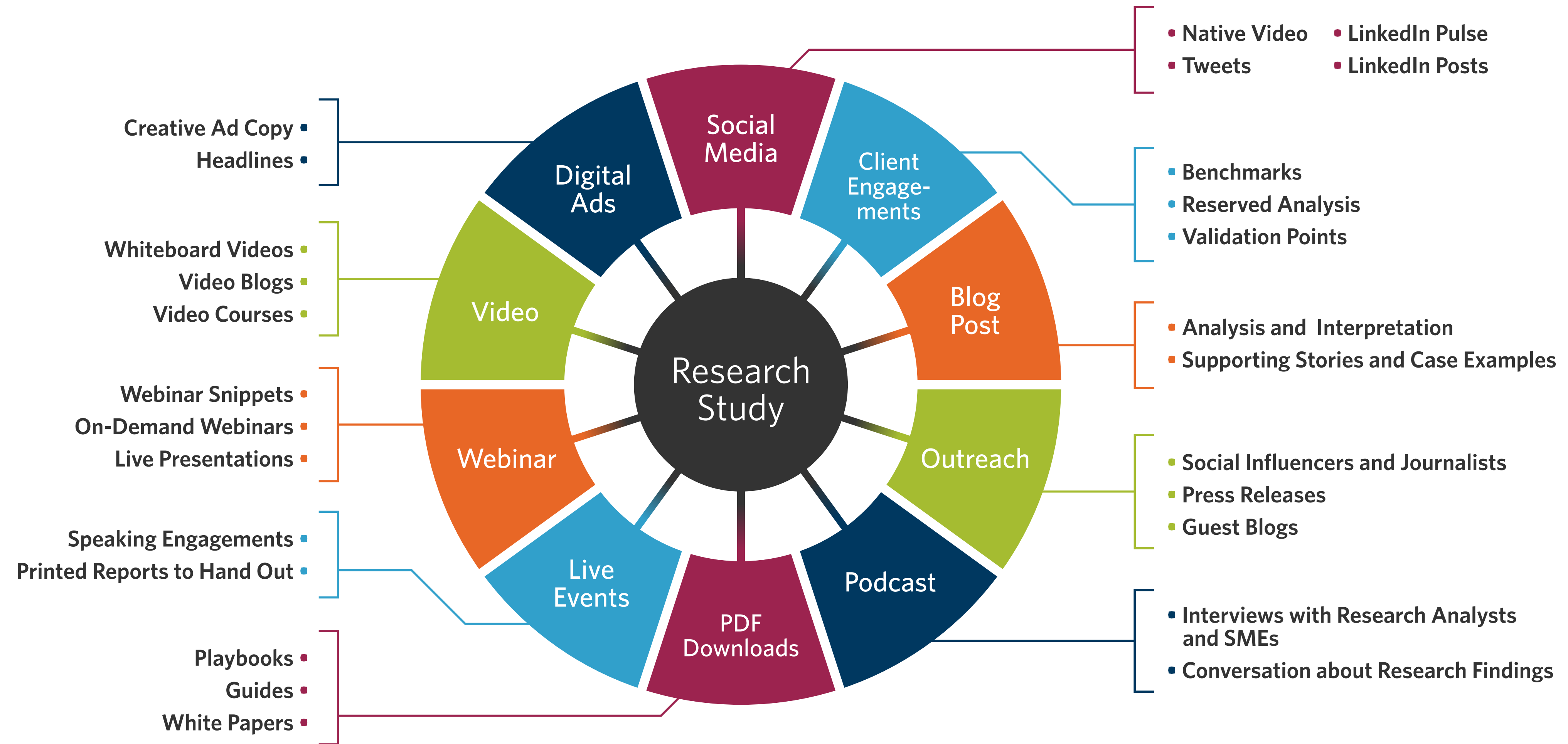


Trends unique to our industry

- › **Research reports:** High growth firms listed research as content as the 4th most impactful marketing technique—likely for its value as original material unique to their firm
- › **Video Content:** High growth firms were nearly twice as likely to utilize YouTube or similar video hosting platforms as a part of their marketing tools



Repurposing is necessary



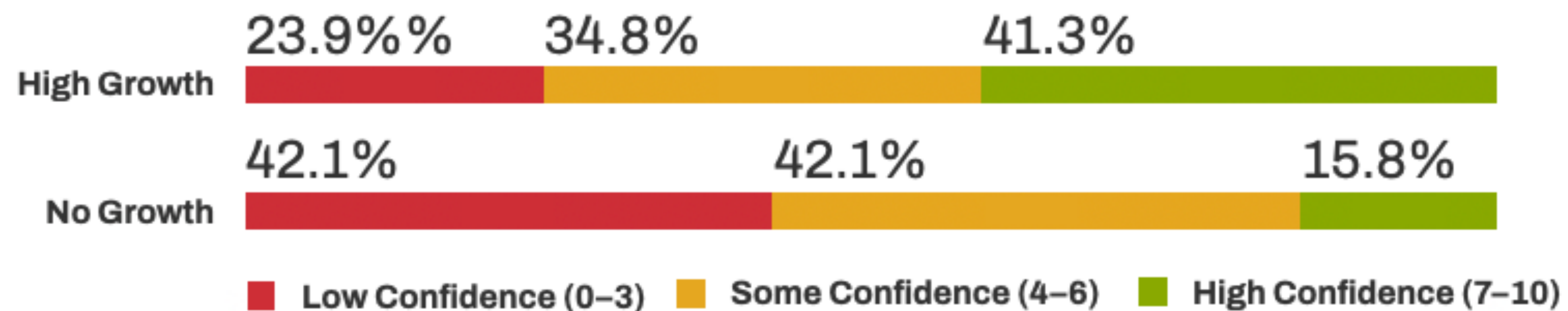
Strategy 4:

Improve Tracking and Campaign Attribution



High Growth firms have more confidence in attribution

Confidence in Tracking Metrics



Implement a campaign mindset

- › Beginning and end date
- › Goals and outcomes (success KPIs)
- › Established budget
- › Leader and core team
- › Tracking mechanisms in place
- › Clear attribution, results



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VALUE

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TAKE THE SURVEY

Thank you! Questions?



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