



BORRELL™

June 2025

Highlights from Borrell's 2025 Local Advertiser Survey

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Most local advertisers are very small businesses with fewer than 25 employees and no full-time marketing employees (Slide 6-7)
- Average ad budgets could be 3.5% higher than 2024; one in five will increase. (Page 13)
- On average, 4.4% of gross revenues are spent on advertising. (Page 9)
- Regardless of overall budget changes, 36% plan to add a new media in 2025. (Page 14)
- 46% of advertisers bought 5+ media types in 2024. On average, advertisers buy 5 types. (Page 10)
 - Social media was the #1 media purchased in 2024. An average of \$11,800 was spent on social media in 2024, and 48% say it's very/extremely effective. (Page 15)
 - Social media spenders report higher levels of effectiveness than those who use social media for free. Case in point, those spending on Facebook find it 20 points more effective than those who only use free elements of the site. (Page 12) Social media is also a top 5 media type for having data-driven
- Top media types expected to increase in 2025 are social media and SEM. (Page 26)
- More feel they are spending the appropriate amount on advertising (41%) than feel they're either under-(30%) or over-(14%) spending. They understand this based on business growth being on/off track and the influx or lack of leads generated. (Slide 17)
- 44% have a process for measuring ROI. Confidence in that method is fairly high (69 out of 100). (Slide 18)
- Advertisers with ROI processes rely more on analytics and transactional data, while others still rely on gut/word of mouth. (Slide 19)

ABOUT THE STUDY



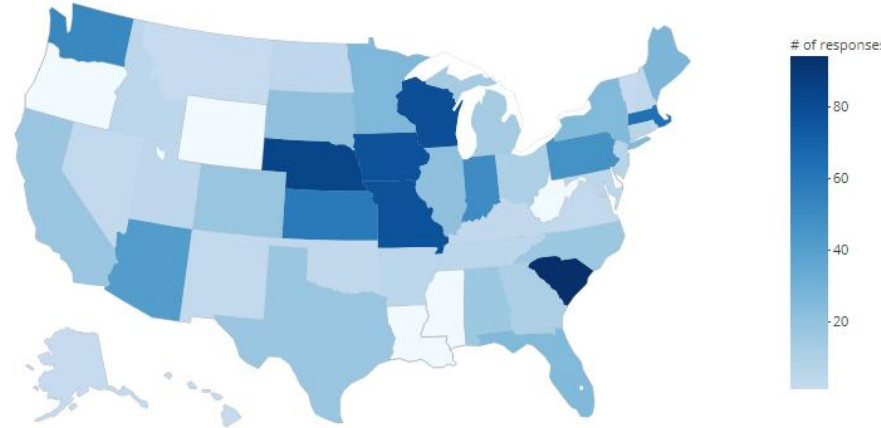
1,248 Respondents

Participants were invited through the active advertiser lists of various media companies across the country. These results represent only advertisers who completed all questions.

Average Age of Respondent

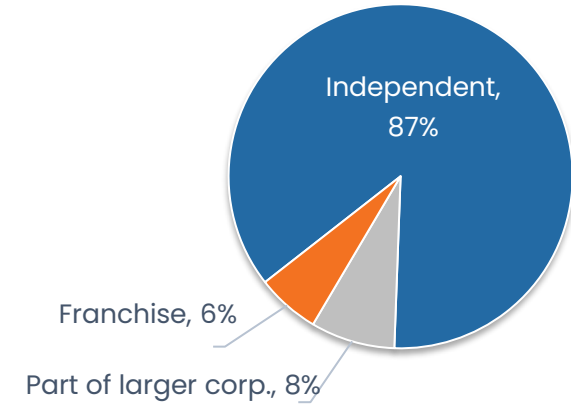
54

Respondents by State

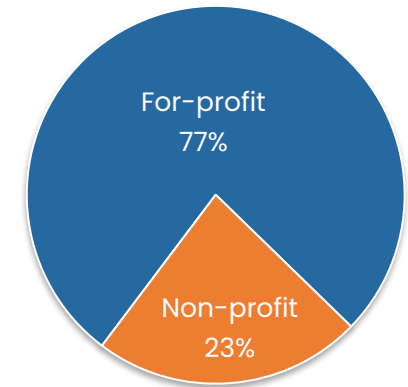


Region	%
Midwest	42%
South	16%
Northeast	15%
West	12%
Unknown	16%

Types of Businesses



Profit Status of Business



Survey Questions

Q. Which of the following best describes your business?
Q. Is the company you work for a for-profit or not-for-profit organization?

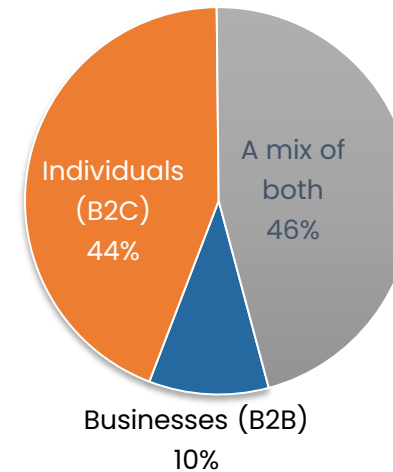
INDUSTRY PROFILE

13% of all respondents work in construction, 11% work in retail trade, another 9% work in professional services.

Industries Represented

	%	#
Construction/Contracting	13%	162
Retail Trade	11%	134
Professional & Business Services	9%	115
Healthcare and Social Assistance	8%	99
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	8%	96
Education	6%	75
Finance and Insurance	6%	71
Building/Auto/Home Repair/Maint. Services	5%	60
Restaurants & Food/Beverage Services	4%	56
Real Estate, Rental or Leasing	4%	53
Manufacturing	3%	40
Government/Public Administration	2%	27
Orgs: Religious, Civil, Prof , Grantmaking, etc	2%	26
Personal Care Services	2%	25
Transportation	2%	21
Agriculture	1%	18
Wholesale Trade	1%	8
Utilities/Public Services	1%	7
Accommodation	0%	6
Media or Advertising	0%	2
Data/Telecommunications	0%	2
Other	12%	145

Type of Customers Served



Top 10 Individual Biz Types

1. Medical offices
2. Cleaning services
3. Agriculture
4. Nursing, Residential Care, Assisted Living
5. Passenger Transportation
6. Tourism/Travel/Event Planning
7. Staffing/Employment Services
8. Sporting Goods (retail)
9. Utilities/Power/Water
10. Printing/Sign-making

Survey Questions

- Q. Which of the following industries best categorizes the company you work for?
Q. Does your company primarily serve individuals or businesses?

Total responses for advertiser survey n=1248

BUSINESS PROFILE

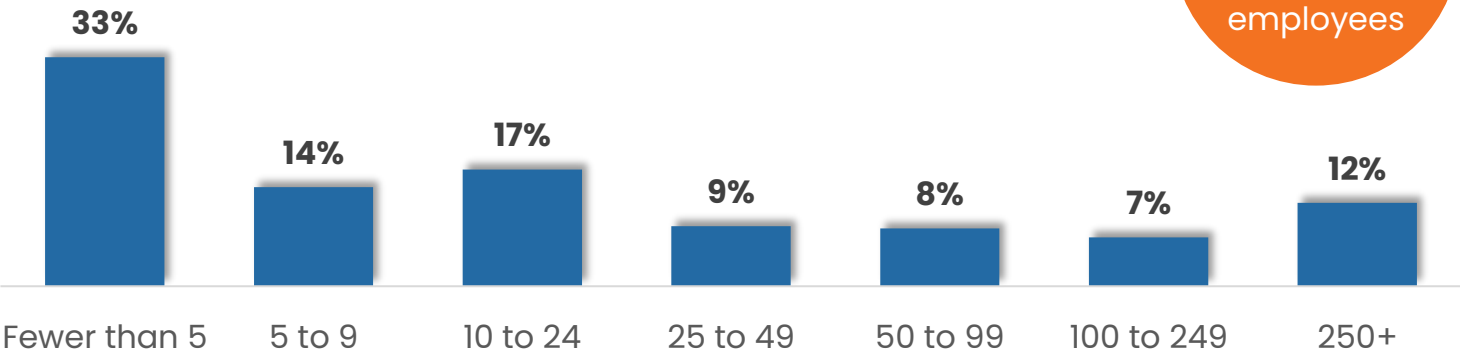
52% of advertisers have been in business for 30+ years; most have fewer than 25 employees.

Number of Employees

33%
Have fewer
than 5
employees

Number of Employees	
Fewer than 5	33%
5 to 24	31%
25 or more	36%

64% of advertisers responding have fewer than 25 employees.



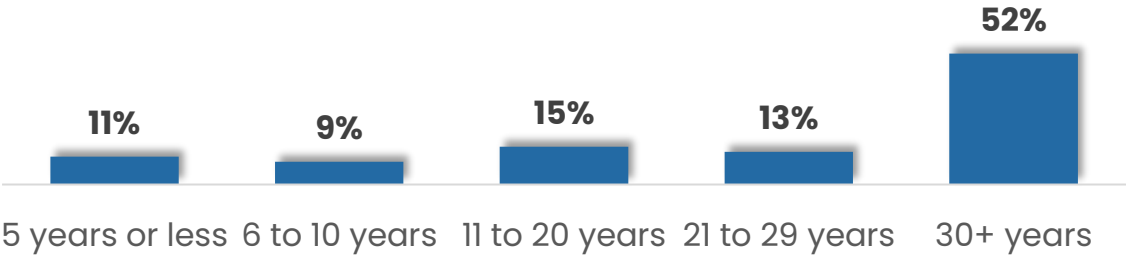
Survey Questions

Q. How many years has the company you work for been in business?

Q. About how many full- or part-time employees work at the business you currently work for (at all locations combined)?

Total responses for advertiser survey n=1248

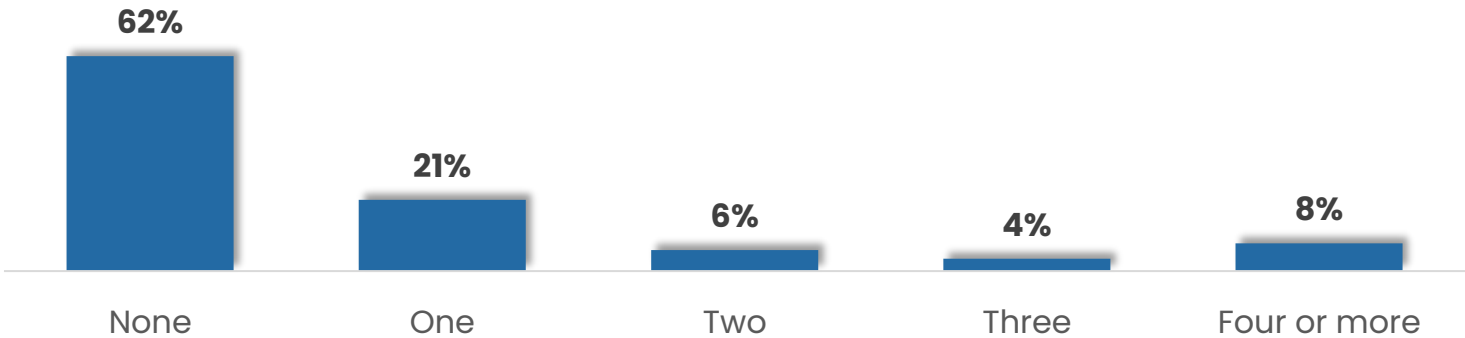
Years in Business



MARKETING TEAM SIZE

62% of advertisers have no full-time marketing employees.

Number of Full-Time Marketing Employees



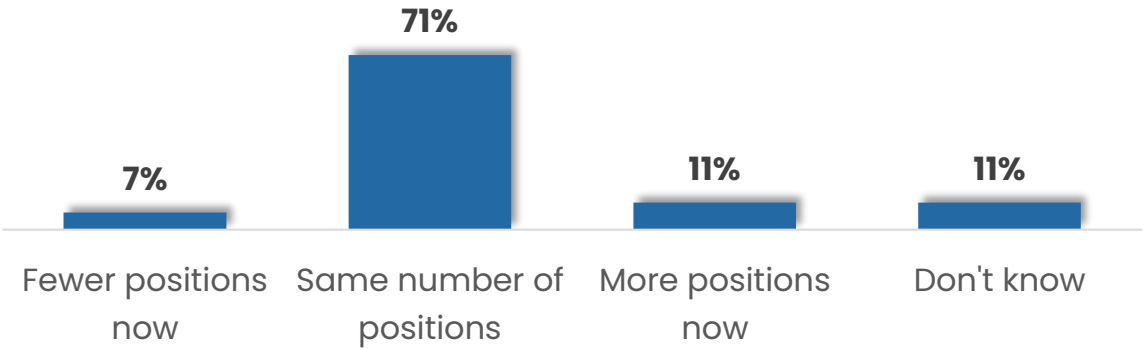
Survey Questions

Q. How many FULL-TIME marketing positions are employed at your company (where marketing is their only function and they are paid as an employee, and not as a contractor or consultant)?

Q. How has this changed over the past two years, if at all?

Total responses for advertiser survey n=1248

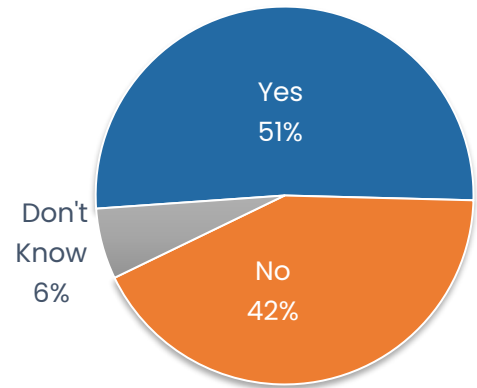
Change Over Past Two Years



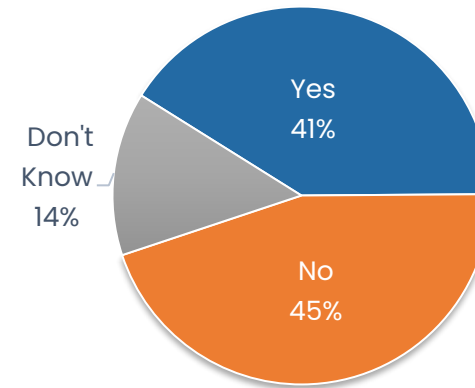
INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

51% of advertisers are involved with the Chamber of Commerce, 41% with the BBB.

Chamber of Commerce



Better Business Bureau (BBB)



Survey Questions

Q. Are you or your company involved in either of the following organizations in any way (e.g., as a member or participant)?

Total responses for advertiser survey n=1248

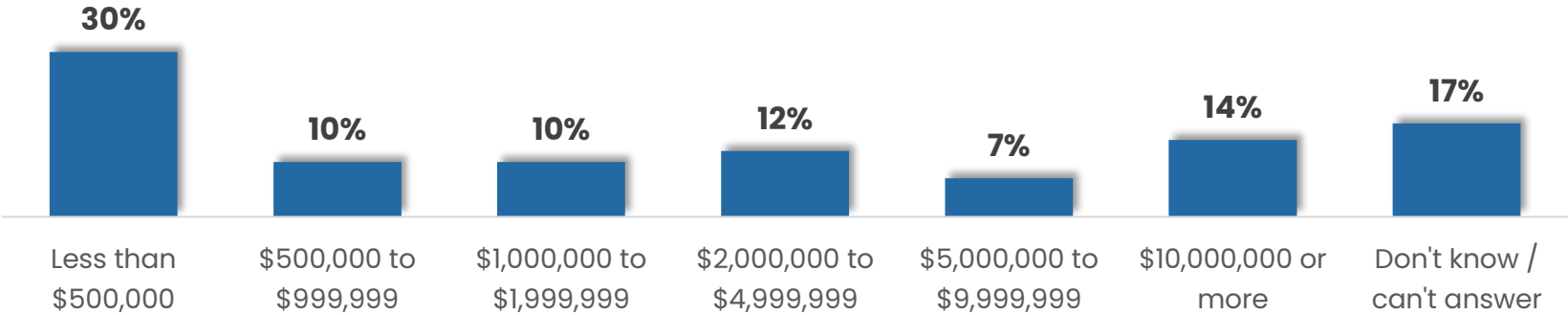


COMPANY REVENUE PROFILE

More than half of participants have ad budgets below \$15K.
On average, 4.4% of gross revenues is spent on advertising.

Gross Annual Revenue

Under \$1MM	40%
\$1MM to <\$5MM	22%
\$5MM+	21%

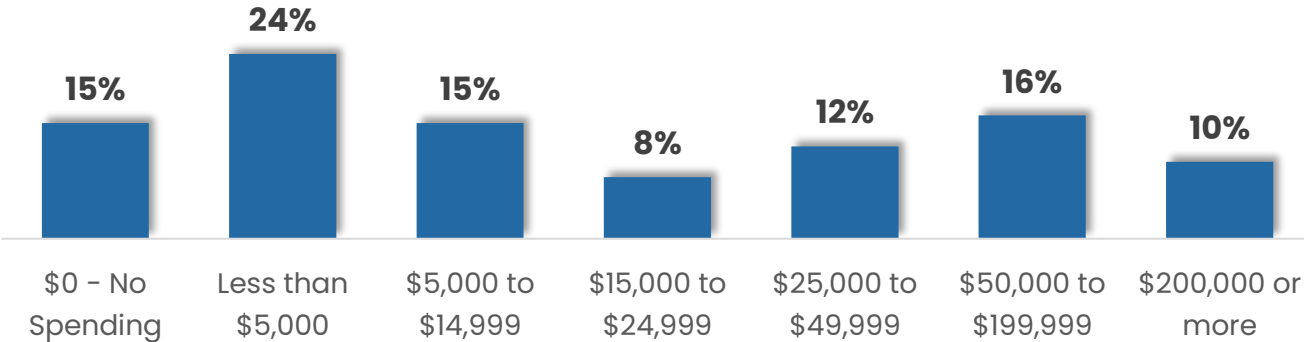


2024 Estimated Ad Spending

Under \$15k	55%
\$15k to \$49k	19%
\$50k+	26%

AVG % of Gross Revenue
Spent on Advertising

4.4%



Survey Questions

Q. What is the range of gross annual revenues for your business?

Q. About how much money (US \$) did your company spend IN TOTAL on advertising last year - in 2024?

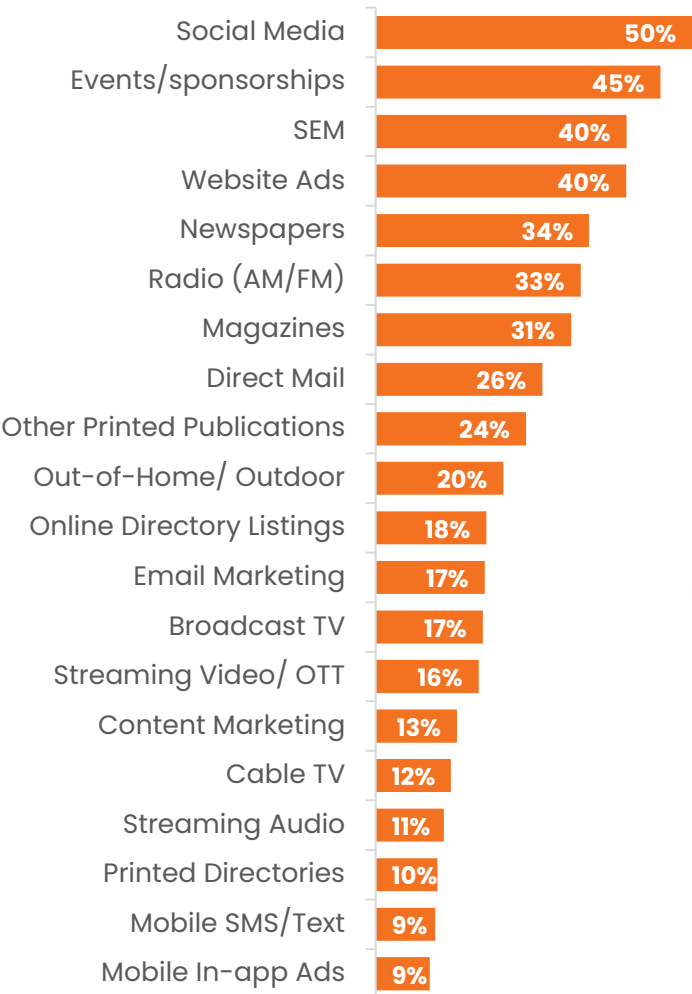
Total responses for advertiser survey
n=1248



MEDIA TYPES PURCHASED

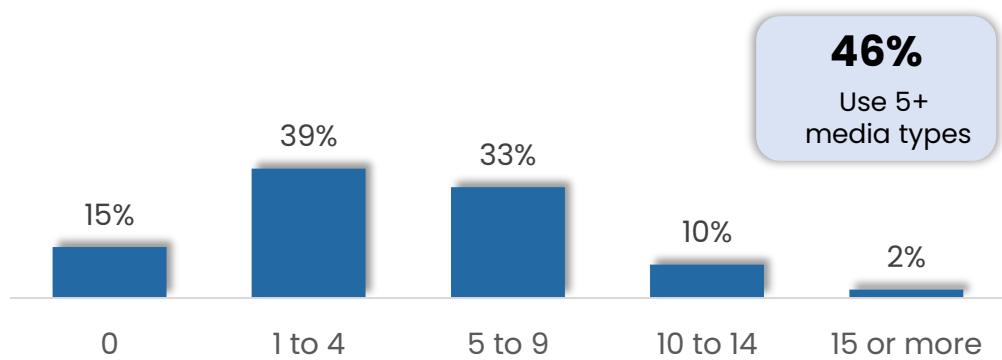
Social media was the #1 media type purchased in 2024. The average advertiser buys 5 different types of media.

Types Purchased in 2024

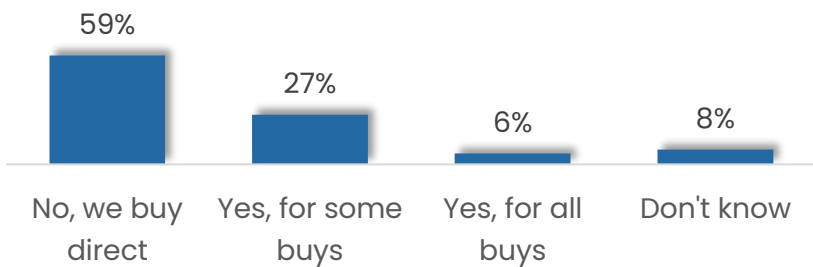


5
Average
number of
media types
purchased

Number of Media Types Bought/Managed



Uses Intermediaries to Buy Media



Survey Question

Q. Which of the following media types did your company BUY last year (2024)? Select all that apply.

Q. Does your company use intermediaries like an agency, or media buying firm to place any of its media buys?

Total responses for advertiser survey n=1248



DIGITAL PLATFORM USE & EFFECTIVENESS

8 in 10 local advertisers use Facebook marketing (free or paid), and nearly 4 in 10 using it say it's very/extremely effective

Usage + Effectiveness Ratings

		% Used (n=1248)	Users n=	% of Users Rated it Very/Extremely Effective	
Facebook		84%	1053	37%	Highest
Instagram		62%	771	34%	2 nd Highest
LinkedIn		48%	605	20%	
Facebook Messenger		41%	515	17%	
YouTube		35%	441	28%	3 rd Highest
Yelp		22%	273	10%	
X (Twitter)		19%	236	13%	
TikTok		18%	226	22%	
Pinterest		13%	158	8%	
Snapchat		9%	111	20%	
Reddit		6%	72	17%	
WhatsApp		6%	70	11%	

Survey Questions

Q. Which of the following digital platforms did your company use for advertising/marketing purposes in 2024? Select all that apply. All advertisers n=1248 Q. Please rate the overall effectiveness of those digital platforms you've used (Options: Not at all, slightly, moderately, very, extremely, or don't know) Bases vary by platform as shown in table

PAID VS. FREE DIGITAL PLATFORM USE & EFFECTIVENESS

More advertisers buy ads from Facebook than use it only for free. The top paid platforms report much higher effectiveness among buyers than free-only users with the exception of X which has low effectiveness for advertisers across the board.

79%

of advertisers spent money with at least one social media platform in 2024

2024 Digital Platform Paid vs. Free Users + Effectiveness

		% of Adv Who Buy	Buyers n=	% of Buyers say Very/Extremely Effective	% of Adv Who Use Free Only	Non-Buyers n=	% of Free Users say Very/Extremely Effective
Facebook		48%	600	46%	36%	453	26%
Instagram		27%	343	48%	34%	428	23%
LinkedIn		10%	131	38%	38%	474	15%
YouTube		10%	122	54%	26%	319	18%
FB Messenger		8%	99	30%	33%	416	13%
TikTok		4%	48	42%	14%	178	16%
Yelp		4%	45	24%	18%	228	7%
X		3%	34	9%	16%	202	9%

Survey Questions

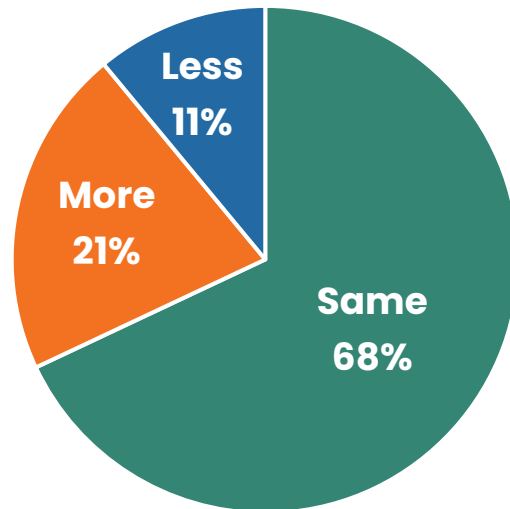
Q. Which of the following digital platforms did your company use for advertising/marketing purposes in 2024? Select all that apply. (Total advertisers n=1284) Q. Please rate the overall effectiveness of those digital platforms you've used (Options: Not at all, slightly, moderately, very, extremely, or don't know) Bases vary by platform as shown in table



2025 AD BUDGET OUTLOOK

While most plan to keep their overall ad spending about the same in 2025, one in five report an increase in their expected Spending, bringing the average spending estimate for 2025 up nearly 4% year over year.

Expected 2025 Ad Budget vs. 2024



Respondents' Estimated Total Ad Spending

2024 **\$84,800**

2025 **\$87,800**

+3.5%

*average change in annual ad spending
for respondents in 2025*

Survey Questions

Q. About how much money (US \$) did your company spend IN TOTAL on advertising last year -- in 2024? Q. Earlier, you estimated you will spend [X] on advertising in 2024. Earlier, you estimated you spent [X] on advertising in 2024 What do you expect your company will spend on advertising this year (in 2025)?

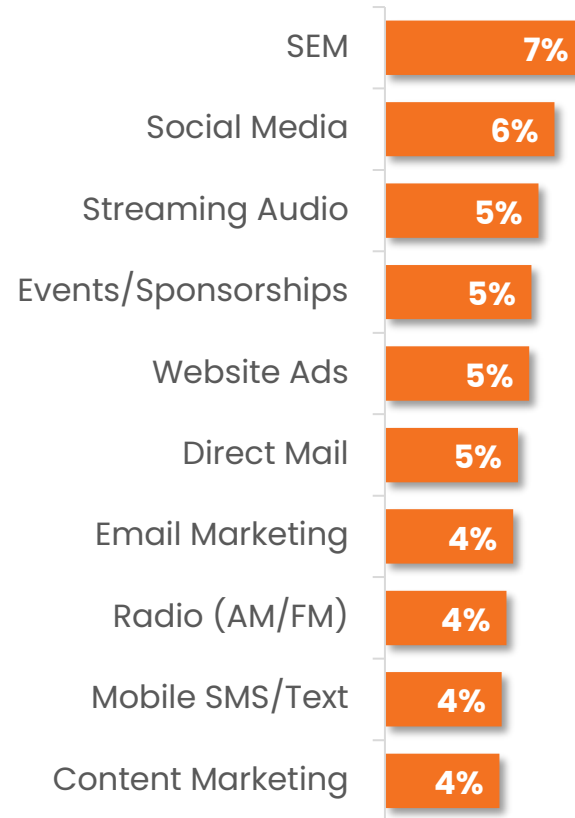
Total responses for advertiser survey n=1248



2025 AD BUDGET OUTLOOK

More than a third of advertisers plan to try a new media type in 2025 that they haven't used before.
SEM leads the way.

Top 10 Media Expected to Buy in 2025, Not Purchased in 2024



36%

Plan to try
something
new

Survey Questions

Q: Do you plan to buy any NEW types of media in 2025 that you did not buy last year? Select all that apply. All advertisers n=1248



MEDIA METRICS

SEM and social media stand out as effective mediums being used by about half of advertisers. Those using SEM spend more than the average for all media types, but its effectiveness is deemed worth it. The net interest for SEM of +16 is the second highest of all 20 media shown.

	Bought in 2024	% of Buyers Find it Very/ Extremely Effective	2024 Average Spending	Expect to Add or Increase in 2025	Expect to Decrease or Cut in 2025	Net Interest 2025 (Increase - Cut)
Social Media	50%	48%	\$11,800	24%	5%	+19
SEM	40%	51%	\$21,500	20%	4%	+16
Website Ads	40%	36%	\$12,300	15%	5%	+10
Events/sponsorships	45%	31%	\$16,100	13%	6%	+7
Streaming Video/ OTT	16%	44%	\$20,900	9%	3%	+6
Content Marketing	13%	35%	\$6,300	7%	1%	+6
Streaming Audio	11%	21%	\$12,200	8%	2%	+6
Mobile SMS/Text	9%	35%	\$3,000	7%	1%	+5
Mobile In-app Ads	9%	34%	\$3,700	6%	1%	+4
Email Marketing	17%	29%	\$5,500	7%	4%	+3
Direct Mail	26%	37%	\$16,300	9%	6%	+3
Broadcast TV	17%	35%	\$37,800	5%	4%	+1
Out-of-Home/ Outdoor	20%	27%	\$16,300	6%	5%	+1
Cable TV	12%	36%	\$23,900	4%	3%	+1
Online Directory Listings	18%	18%	\$4,300	4%	4%	0
Printed Directories	10%	7%	\$3,400	1%	4%	-2
Radio (AM/FM)	33%	34%	\$15,500	8%	10%	-3
Other Printed Publications	24%	19%	\$4,400	4%	7%	-3
Newspapers	34%	19%	\$6,700	5%	10%	-5
Magazines	31%	18%	\$8,000	5%	10%	-5
Average	24%	31%	\$12,500	8%	5%	+4

How to read:

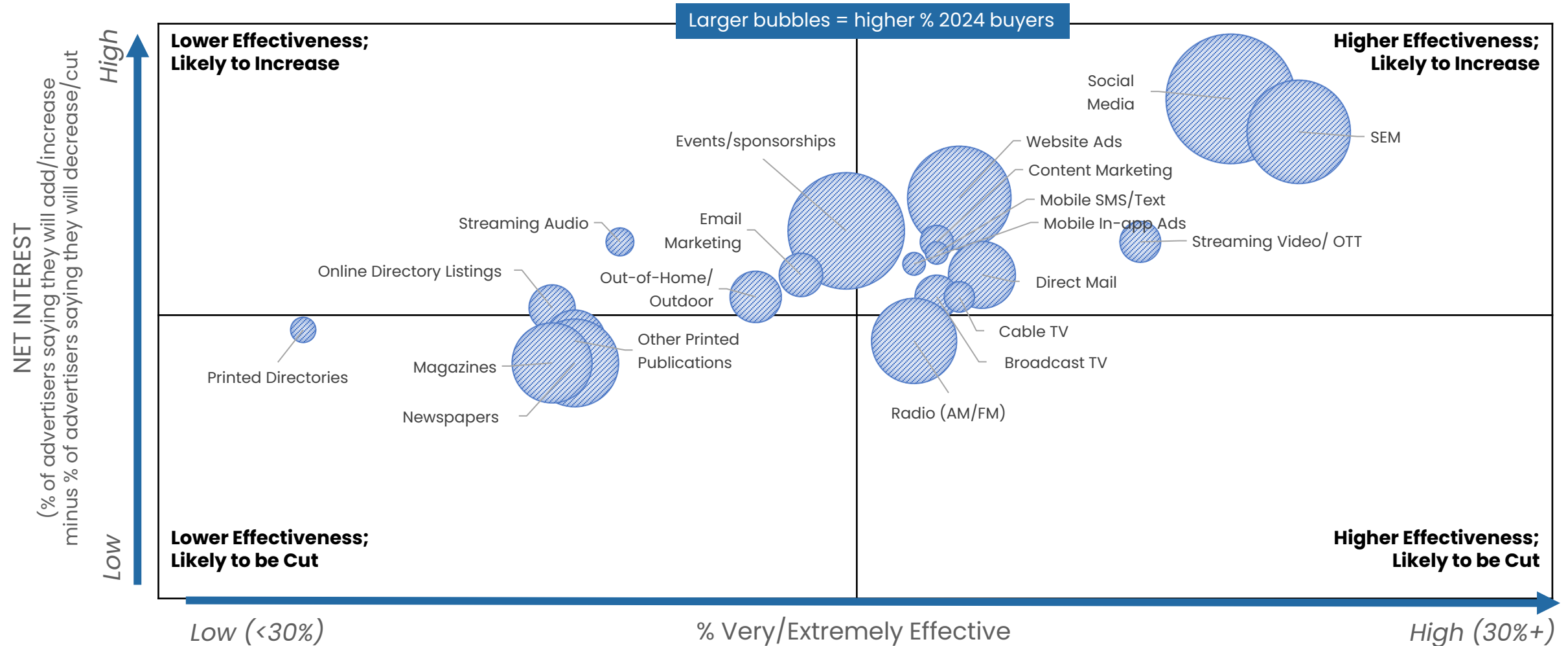
- 50% of advertisers surveyed bought social media advertising in 2024.
- 48% of those buying event advertising found it to be very/extremely effective.
- Social media ad buyers spent, on average, \$11,800 in 2024
- 24% of all advertisers expect to add or increase their social media ad spending, while 5% expect to cut or reduce their spending in 2024.
- This is a net interest for event advertising of +19 points.

Survey Questions

Q. Which of the following media types did your company BUY last year (2024)? Select all that apply. Q. About how much money did your company spend on each of those types of advertising? Q. Please rate the overall effectiveness of each media you used in 2024. (% Very/Extremely) – Bases vary by media use. Q. Please tell us if you will continue to use each of these media types MORE, about the same, LESS, or not at all in 2025. Q. Do you plan to buy any NEW types of media in 2025 that you did not buy last year? Select all that apply. All advertisers n=1248

MEDIA BUBBLE MATRIX

Social media and SEM come forward as the most optimistic growth for 2025 – effectiveness likely increases interest



Survey Questions

Q. Which of the following media types did your company BUY last year (2024)? Select all that apply. Q. About how much money did your business spend on each of those types of advertising? Q. Please rate the overall effectiveness of each media you used in 2024. (% Very/Extremely) – Bases vary by media use. Q. Please tell us if you will continue to use each of these media types MORE, about the same, LESS, or not at all in 2025. Q. Do you plan to buy any NEW types of media in 2025 that you will not have purchased this year? Select all that apply. All advertisers n=1248

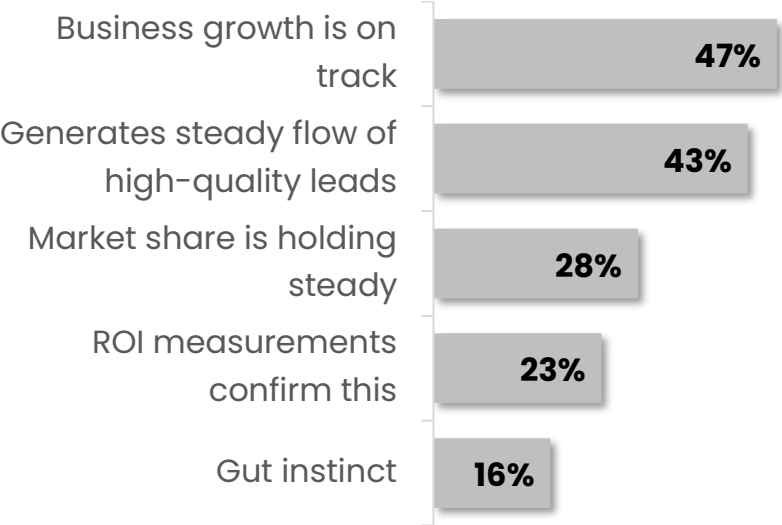
AD SPENDING ATTITUDES

41% of advertisers believe they are spending the right amount on advertising. Most say they believe this because their business growth is on track or they are receiving a steady flow of high-quality leads

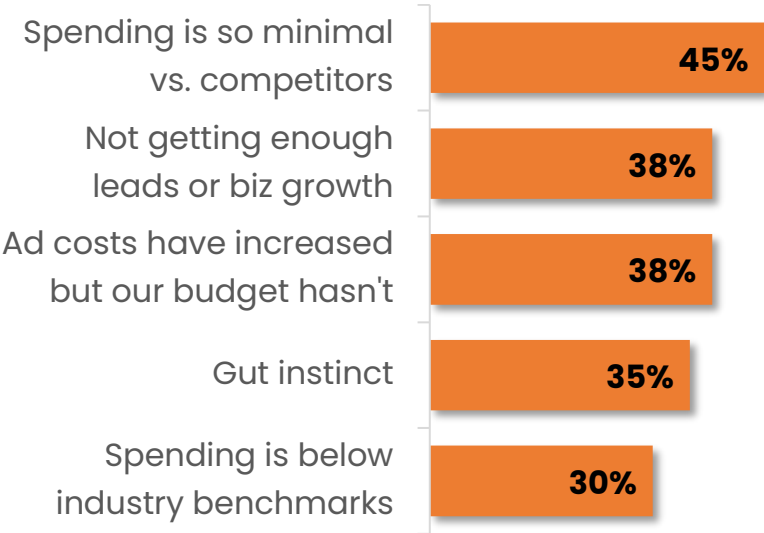
Feeling About Ad Spending



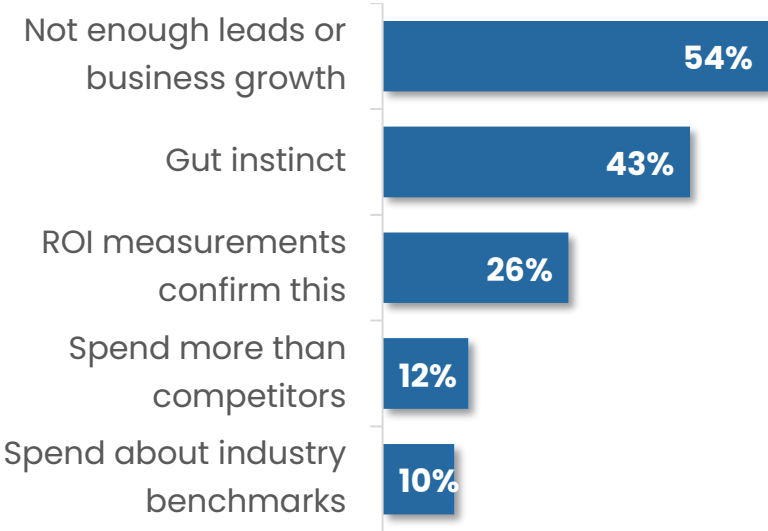
Top 5 Reasons Believe Spending Appropriate Amount (n=438)



Top 5 Reasons Believe Underspensing (n=318)



Top 5 Reasons Believe Overspending (n=145)



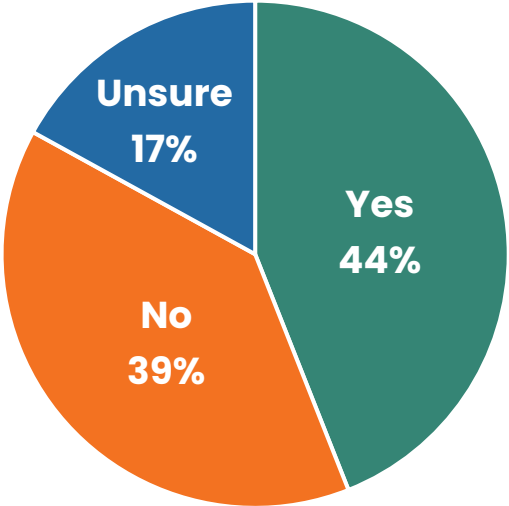
Survey Questions

Q: Which statement best represents how you feel about the AMOUNT your company spends on advertising? What leads you to believe your company is [SPENDING THE RIGHT AMOUNT/UNDERSPENDING/OVERSPENDING] on advertising? Select all that apply. All advertisers n=1248

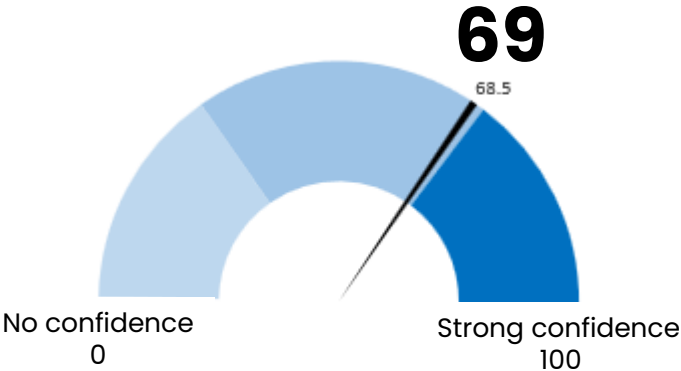
ROI PROCESSES

44% of advertisers have an ROI process and feel fairly confident about it (69 out of 100). Most have developed their own framework which often combines multiple approaches and sources of data.

Company Has An ROI Process



Confidence in ROI Method



Method of Establishing Process

We combine multiple approaches from different sources	33%
We developed our own in-house method or framework	31%
We use built-in ROI tracking features from ad platforms (e g , Google Ads, Meta)	13%
We rely on an agency or consultant to do this for us	8%
We follow a standardized template from a trade or professional association	5%
Other	4%
Not sure / Don't know	4%

Survey Questions

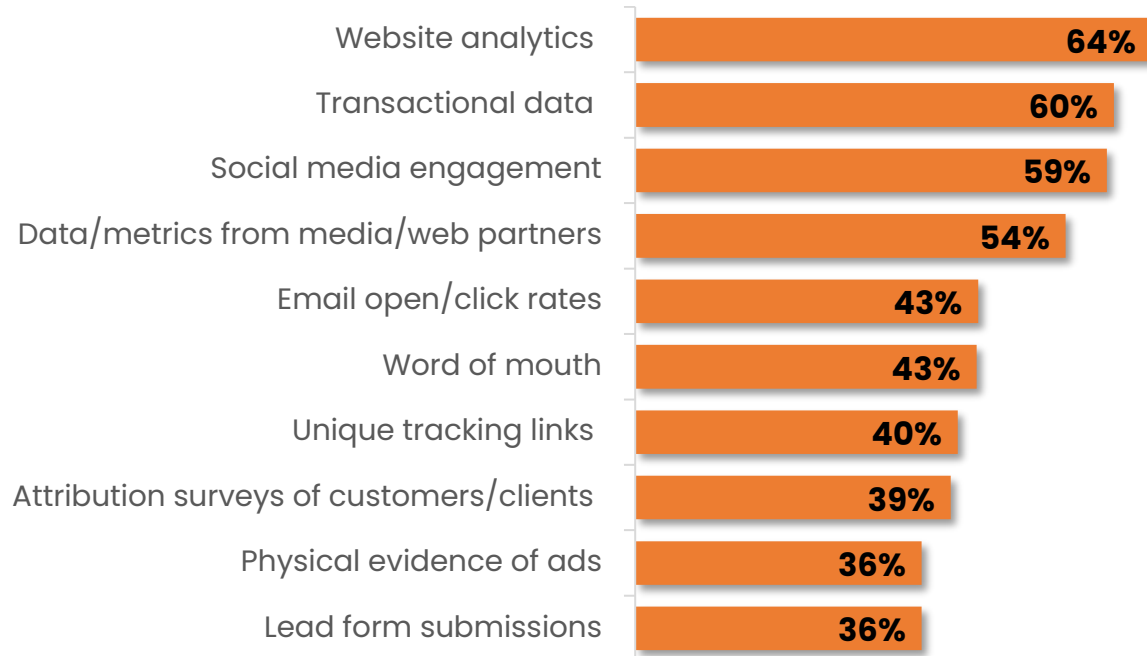
Q: Does your company currently have a process for measuring and understanding ROI of your company’s marketing? How much confidence do you have in the method your company uses to calculate ROI of marketing? How did your company establish its process for measuring ROI? Select one option that best fits 0= Not confident; 100 = Extremely confident; Advertisers Buy 1+ Media n=1248; Has ROI Process n=468

SUCCESS METRICS

Advertisers who have an ROI process are more likely to rely on website analytics and transactional data to judge success. Those who do not have an ROI process are more likely to rely on word of mouth or social media engagement.

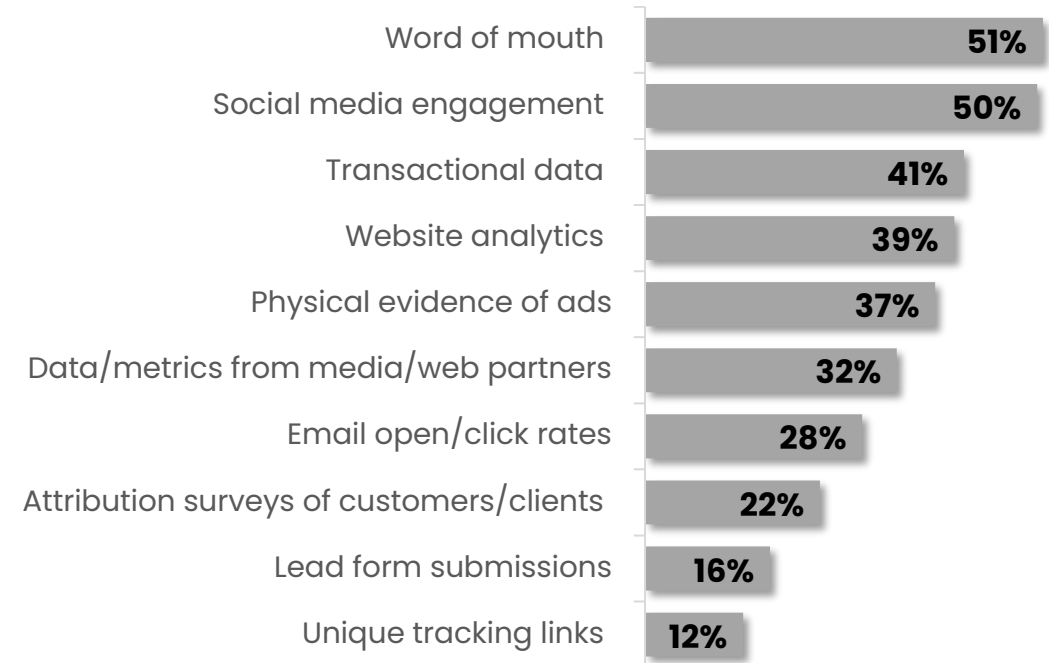
HAS ROI PROCESS

Information Rely on to Determine Success



HAS NO ROI PROCESS

Information Rely on to Determine Success



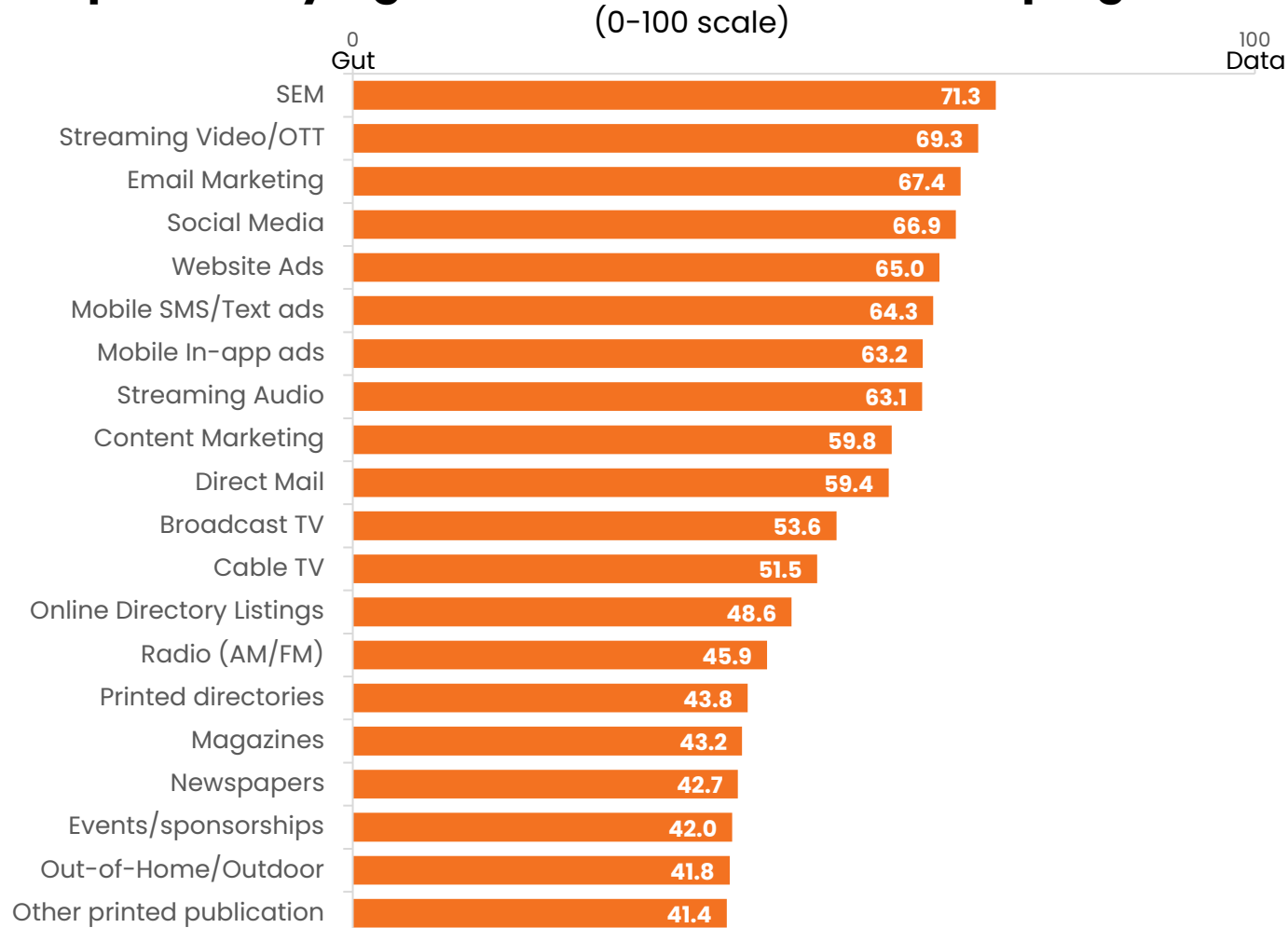
Survey Questions

Q: Which, if any, of the following types of information do you rely on to determine if a marketing campaign was successful? Select all that apply. Advertisers Buy 1+ Media n=1248; Has ROI Process n=468; No ROI Process n=409

RELIANCE ON DATA

Advertisers are most likely to use data to determine campaign success for SEM, streaming video and email marketing

Depth of Relying on Data to Determine Campaign Success



Survey Questions

Q: Would you say your company relies more on gut or on data when determining if a campaign on each type of media worked? 0 = Gut; 100 = Data. Advertisers who buy each media. Base sizes vary from 107 to 627.

SUGGESTIONS FROM ADVERTISERS

We asked respondents to let us know how media companies could improve. These are a few of their answers.

Better Tracking/ Metrics

"Dashboard integration such as Salesforce."

"If you can offer very concrete ways of showing ad buying effectiveness other than '# of eyeballs we have' - can you tie things to actual new leads or buyers?"

"We would love more data, especially for digital ads. How many people clicked, total number of impressions, etc... For print materials, distribution metrics, response to ads data, etc..."

Be Affordable

"We need more affordable opportunities to get involved. Advertising costs are hard to when we're seeing attendance through organic channels."

"Marketing needs to be MORE AFFORDABLE for small businesses."

"Have flexible options that fit any kind of budget"

Increase Industry Knowledge

"Know our market. Many media companies think they can take their expertise and apply it to higher ed but it's a niche. You are marketing to parents and students. It takes skill and knowledge."

"Research the companies you're pitching to and give them proposals that are specific to their industry. Understanding what your client needs without them having to hand hold you is really what convinces us to purchase with other companies."

Local Advertiser Survey Summary | Fielded Apr - June 2025



QUESTIONS?

Thank you for your participation in our autumn survey. If you have questions about these results or would like to reach us, call 757-221-6641 or email us at research@borrellassociates.com.