

# 8 marketing trends in 2025:



consumer perspectives  
on AI and social media

## About the research

AI: mixed bag for consumers

Human touch still matters

AI skepticism can hurt brand image

Gen Z most skeptical about AI

Social media grows in influence

The viral product is real

Expert or celebrity:  
who's more influential?

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# About the research

AI and social media. These two developments promise to reshape the way consumers get information, connect with companies, make purchases, and build loyalty for their favorite brands. The reality is, it's already happening.

Marketers have a lot of options for how they harness AI and social media, and where they invest their time and budget. In today's fast-moving marketplace, marketers can't afford a misstep—determining which strategies will land with consumers and which might be a turnoff is critical.

To better understand the consumer perspective, we surveyed<sup>1</sup> 2,329 adult US consumers on how AI and social media marketing activities would impact their buying decisions, and influence their opinions of companies. The survey was powered by [SurveyMonkey](#), the AI-powered platform for surveys and forms, built for business, loved by users. Read on to learn about some surprising findings on consumer beliefs and preferences.

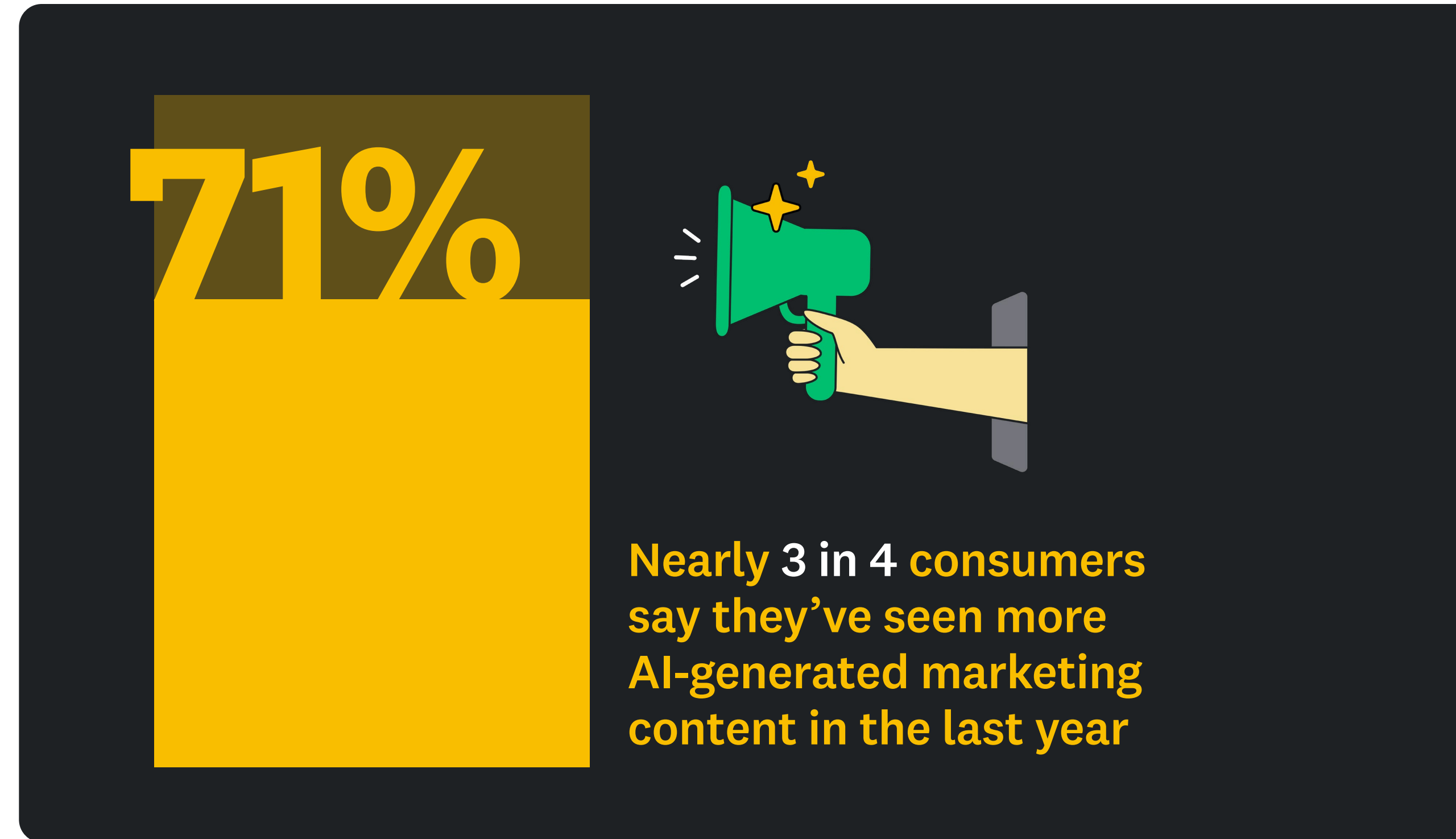


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## AI: mixed bag for consumers

Consumers have strong feelings about AI, especially AI-generated content. From ads to social media posts or images, consumers believe they are interacting with AI frequently.

This aligns with findings from other studies. AI is prevalent—both as a tool for businesses and in a variety of ways for consumers. From articles, to influencers, to ads, consumers are aware that companies are harnessing the technology to target their personal interests and preferences.



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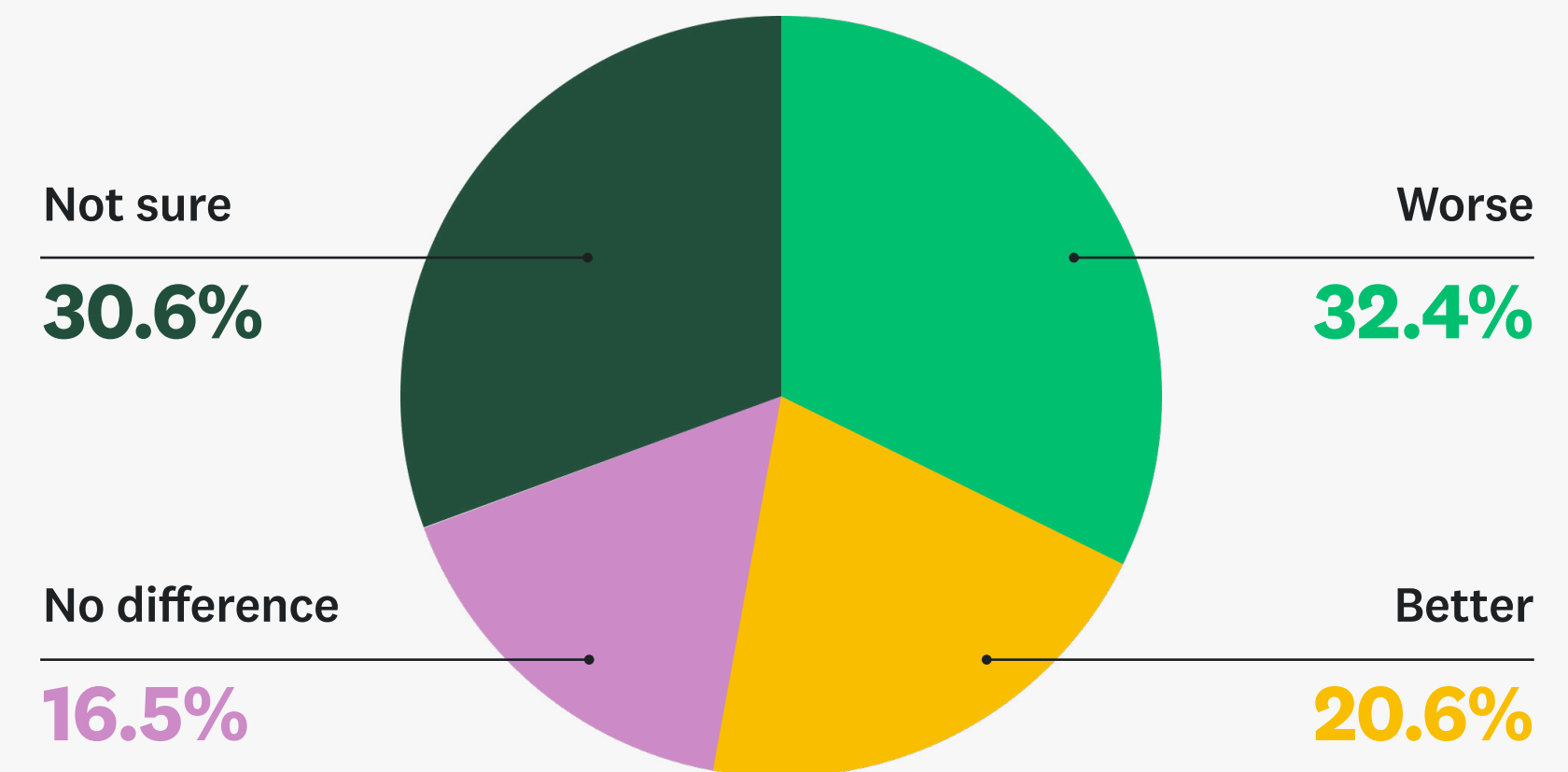
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And it appears to be working. [In a separate survey of marketing pros](#),<sup>2</sup> seven out of ten marketers say AI helps them reach goals and stay competitive. And, in [another AI study](#),<sup>3</sup> 59% of Americans believe AI will have a major impact on their lives.

Whether consumers are actually seeing more AI is a bit of a guess. Because of the varying quality, AI-generated content can be hard to detect and that uncertainty could create confusion for consumers.

However, a consumer's opinion is their reality. When asked whether AI or humans were better at creating content, **only 20% of consumers said AI was better, about a third said AI was worse, and just under a third weren't sure.**

FIG.1 | IS AI BETTER AT CREATING CONTENT THAN A HUMAN?



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### Human touch still matters

Does AI know better? Consumers don't seem to think so, with eight in ten maintaining that a human would do a better job at understanding them than AI.

Content created by AI also comes with complaints, starting with authenticity. **Almost half of consumers believe content generated by AI is not authentic, and 28% say it lacks creativity.**

#### KEY TAKEAWAY

As you finetune your personalization strategies and marketing content, keep consumer sentiment about AI in mind. Because even if your content isn't AI-generated, consumers are on the lookout for content that doesn't feel thoughtful or unique.

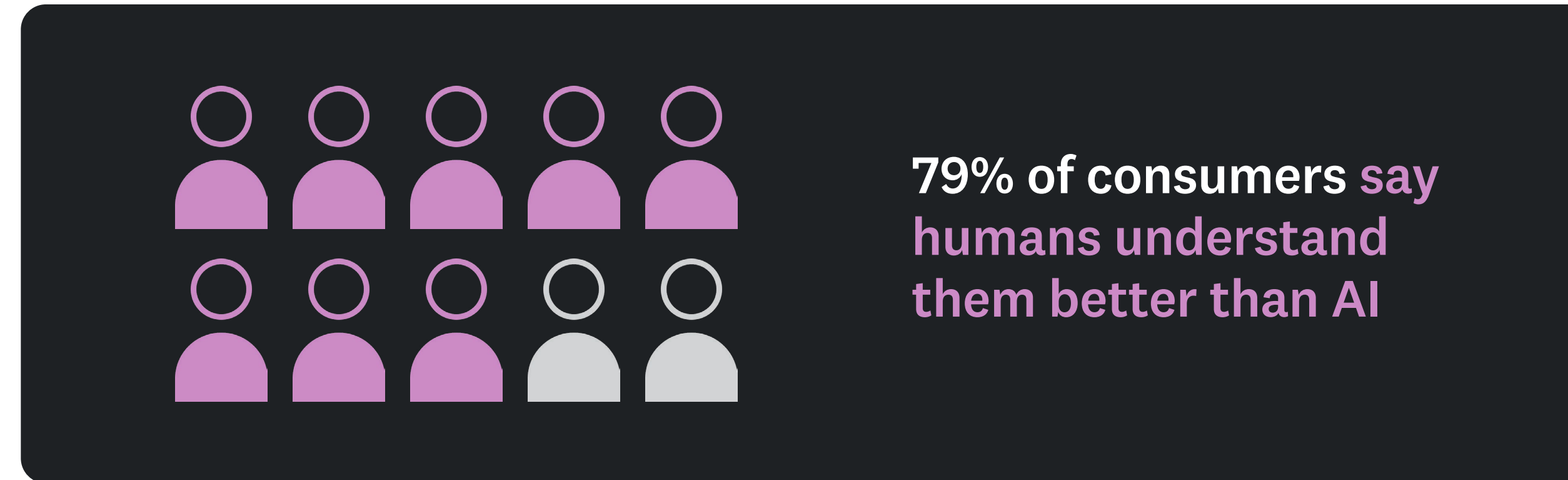
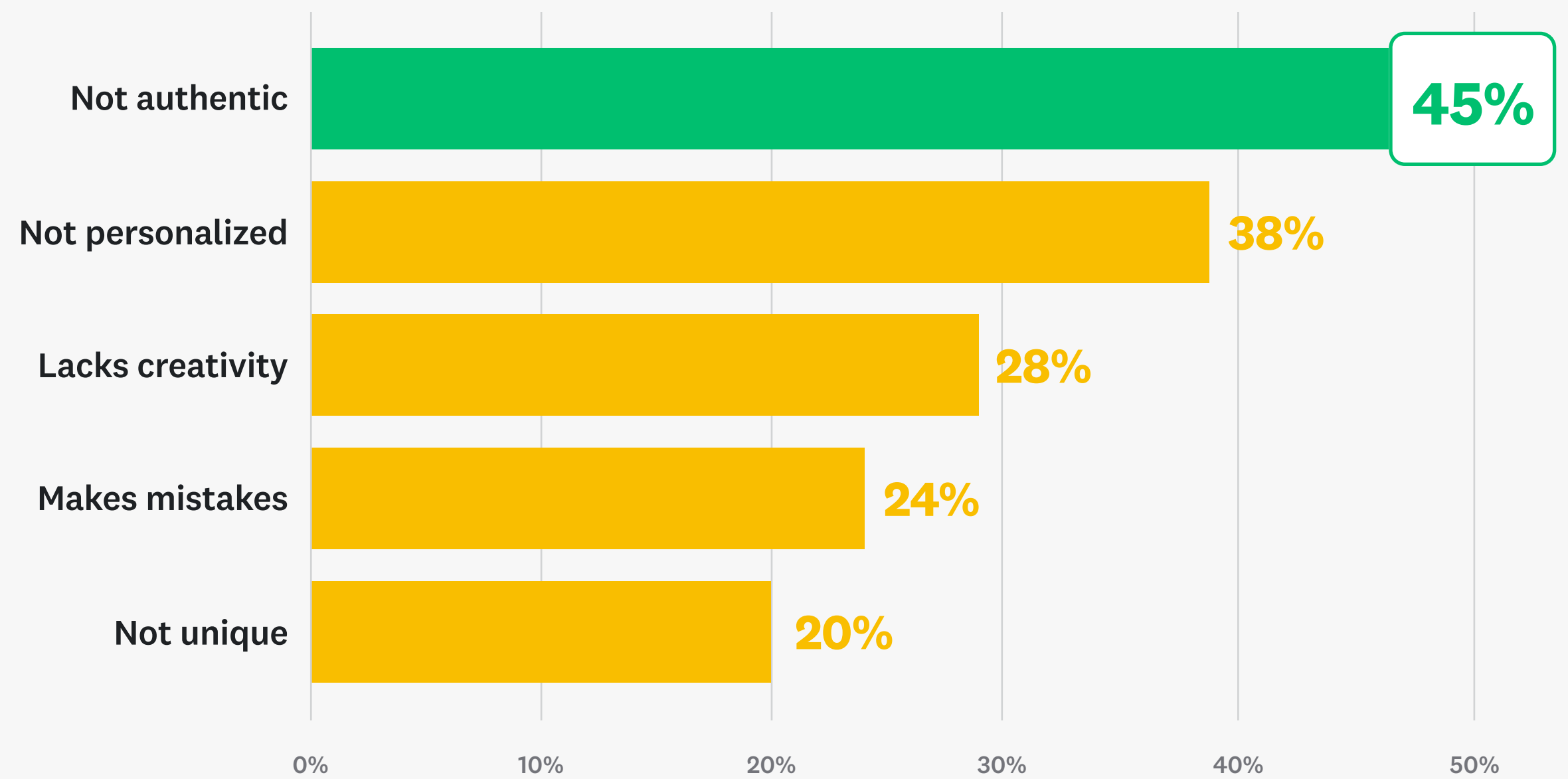


FIG.2 | TOP CONSUMER COMPLAINTS ABOUT AI



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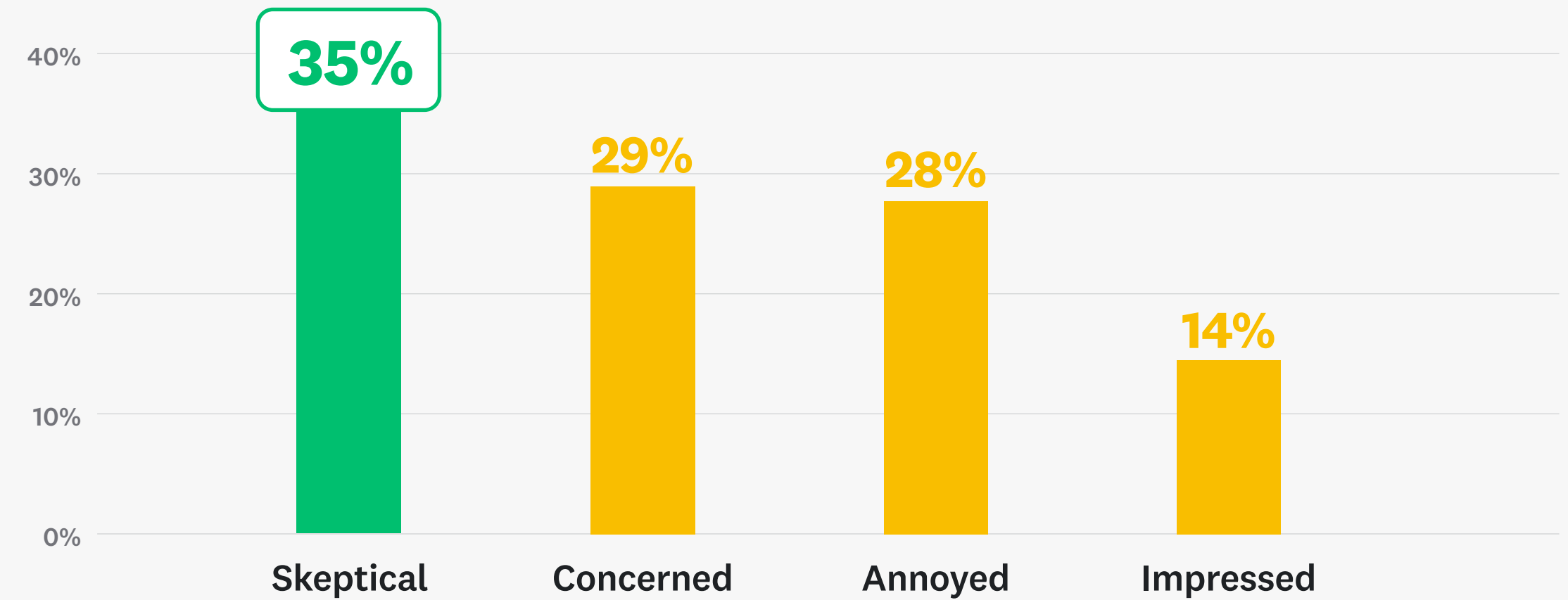
## AI skepticism can hurt brand image

Do companies that use AI to generate marketing content risk a backlash from a wary consumer audience? Possibly.

From annoyed to creeped out, consumer feelings are less than positive.

When asked how they feel about companies that use AI-generated content, **over a third (35%) of consumers said they were skeptical, the top response, and another 29% said they were concerned.**

FIG.3 | HOW CONSUMERS FEEL ABOUT COMPANIES USING AI-GENERATED MARKETING CONTENT



These feelings can have consequences. **Almost half (46%) of consumers said they would have a negative perception of companies that used AI to generate content.**

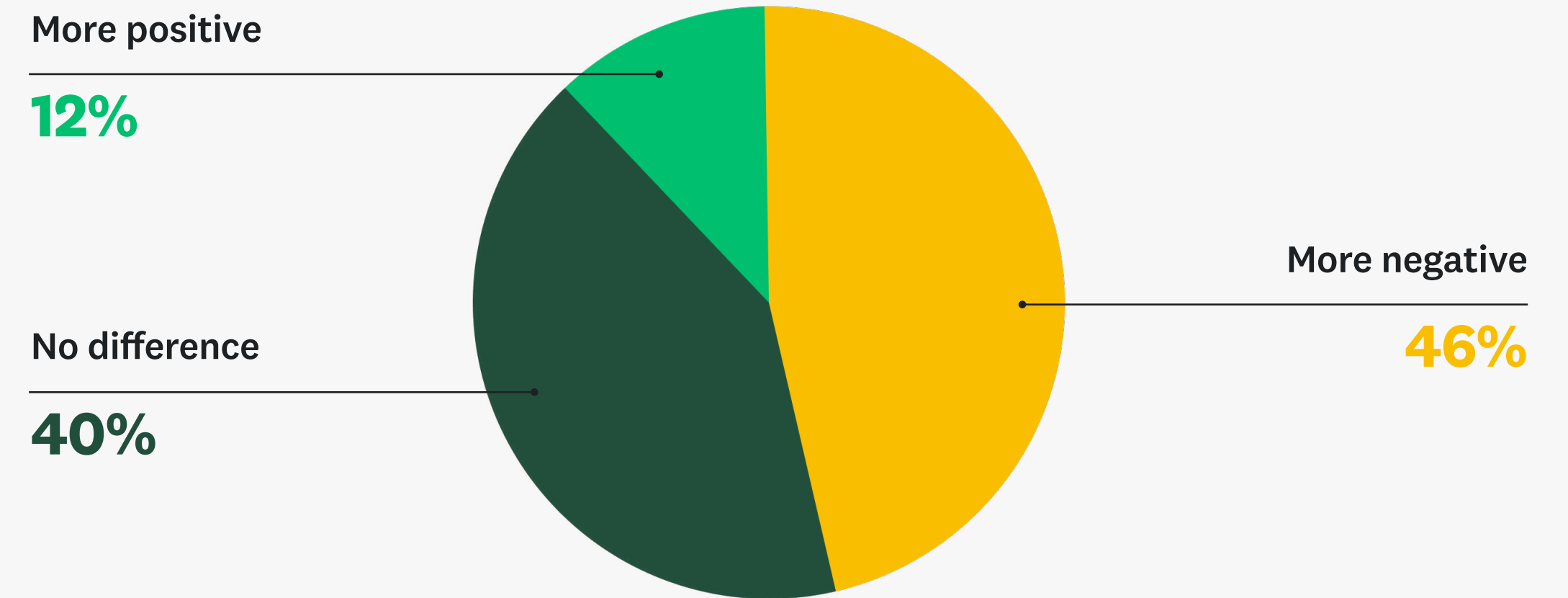
AI could have a negative impact on purchase habits as well, with 43% of consumers saying they're less likely to buy from a company that relies on AI-generated content for marketing.

Only 12% of consumers say they would be more likely to purchase from a company that uses AI-generated content.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Planning to launch AI-driven content? Test it in the real world, before it goes live, by getting feedback from customer segments in your target market with a [concept testing survey](#). Follow up your [concept test](#) with a [CX survey](#) to see if your AI content is hitting the mark with the audience you're trying to reach.

FIG.4 | DO YOU HAVE A MORE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE VIEW OF COMPANIES THAT USE AI-GENERATED CONTENT IN THEIR MARKETING?



**43% of consumers are less likely to purchase from a company that uses AI-generated content**



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Some would think this consumer skepticism might make companies hesitant to dive into AI. But, marketers have already embraced the technology.

[Marketers report](#)<sup>2</sup> measurable impact from using AI. Seven out of ten say AI helps them meet their performance metrics, and 72% say it helps them stay competitive.

69%



**7 out of 10 marketers report that AI helps them meet their performance metrics and achieve their goals**





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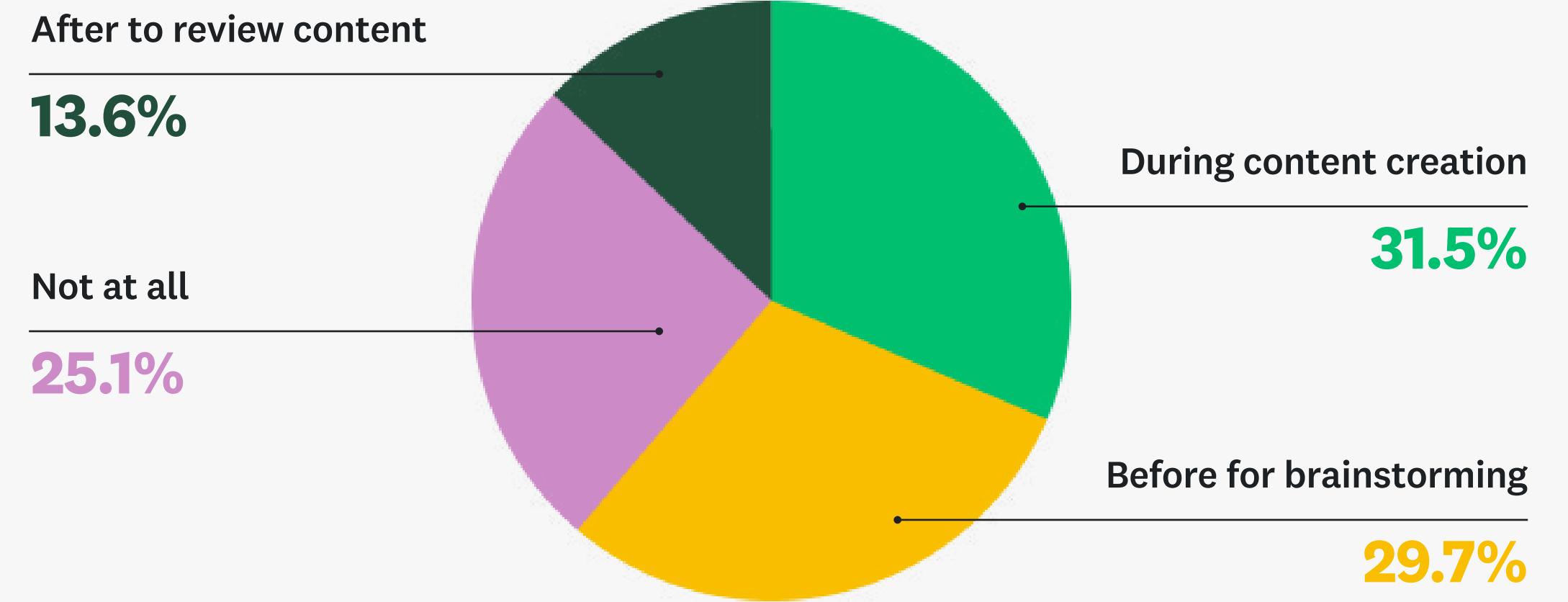
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AI is also being used for a variety of tasks. Content creation tops the list, followed by planning and strategy, customer outreach, and engagement.

When using AI for content creation, **most marketers find it useful during the creation process, followed by those who use it before for brainstorming.**

FIG.5 | WHEN MARKETERS SAY AI IS THE MOST USEFUL (DURING THE CONTENT CREATION PROCESS)



HOW MARKETERS CAN STAY RELEVANT AND READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

**Boost your approach to AI and find more ways to win in 2025. Priya Gill, head of global marketing at SurveyMonkey, shares strategies you need to know.**

Priya Gill  
Head of Global Marketing  
SurveyMonkey

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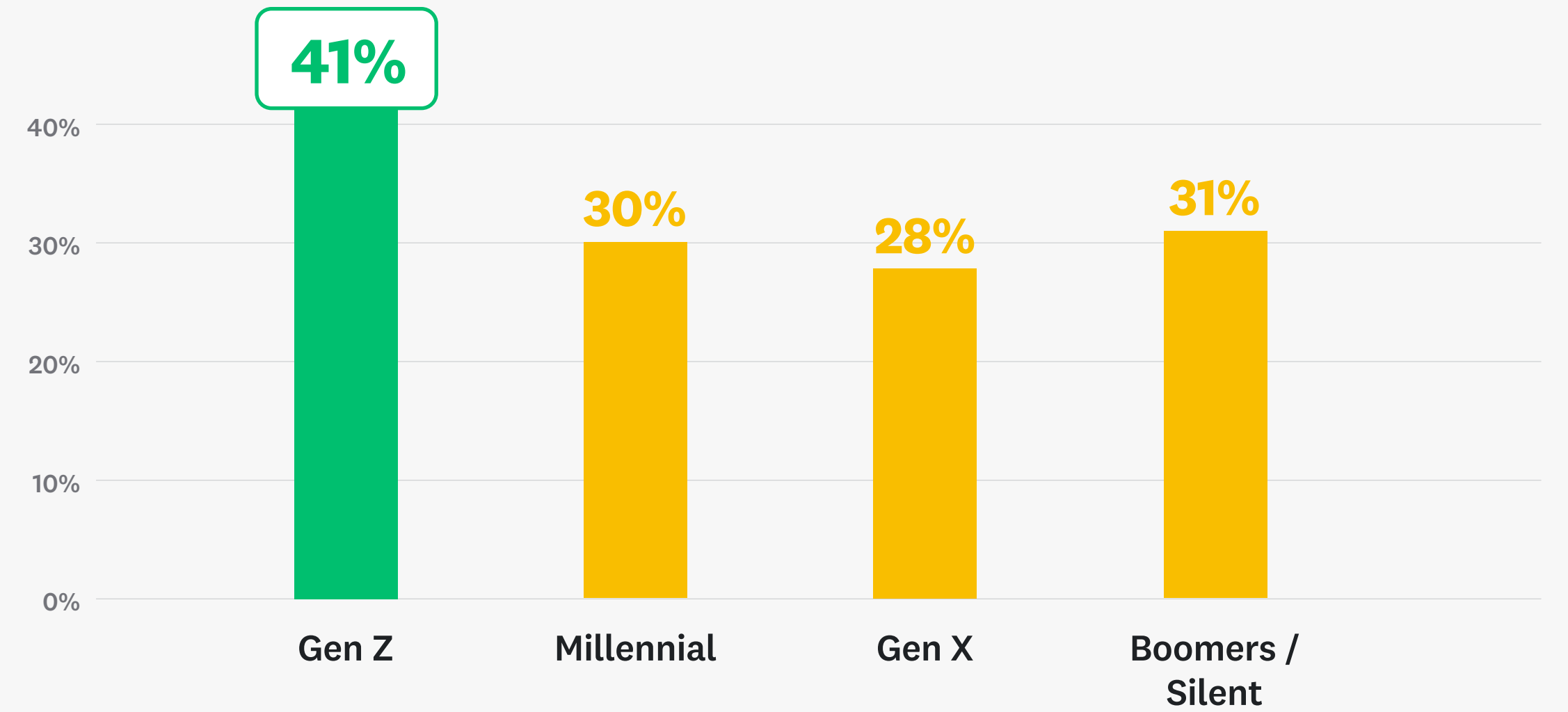
## Gen Z most skeptical about AI

It would be easy to assume that younger people are more accepting of AI compared to older generations, but our data shows that's not necessarily true.

**Out of all generations we surveyed, Gen Z is the most critical of AI-generated content in marketing.**

Other than Boomers, Gen Z is also the generation that is least likely to do business with companies that use AI for content.

FIG.6 | AI IS WORSE THAN HUMANS AT CREATING MARKETING CONTENT (BY GENERATION)



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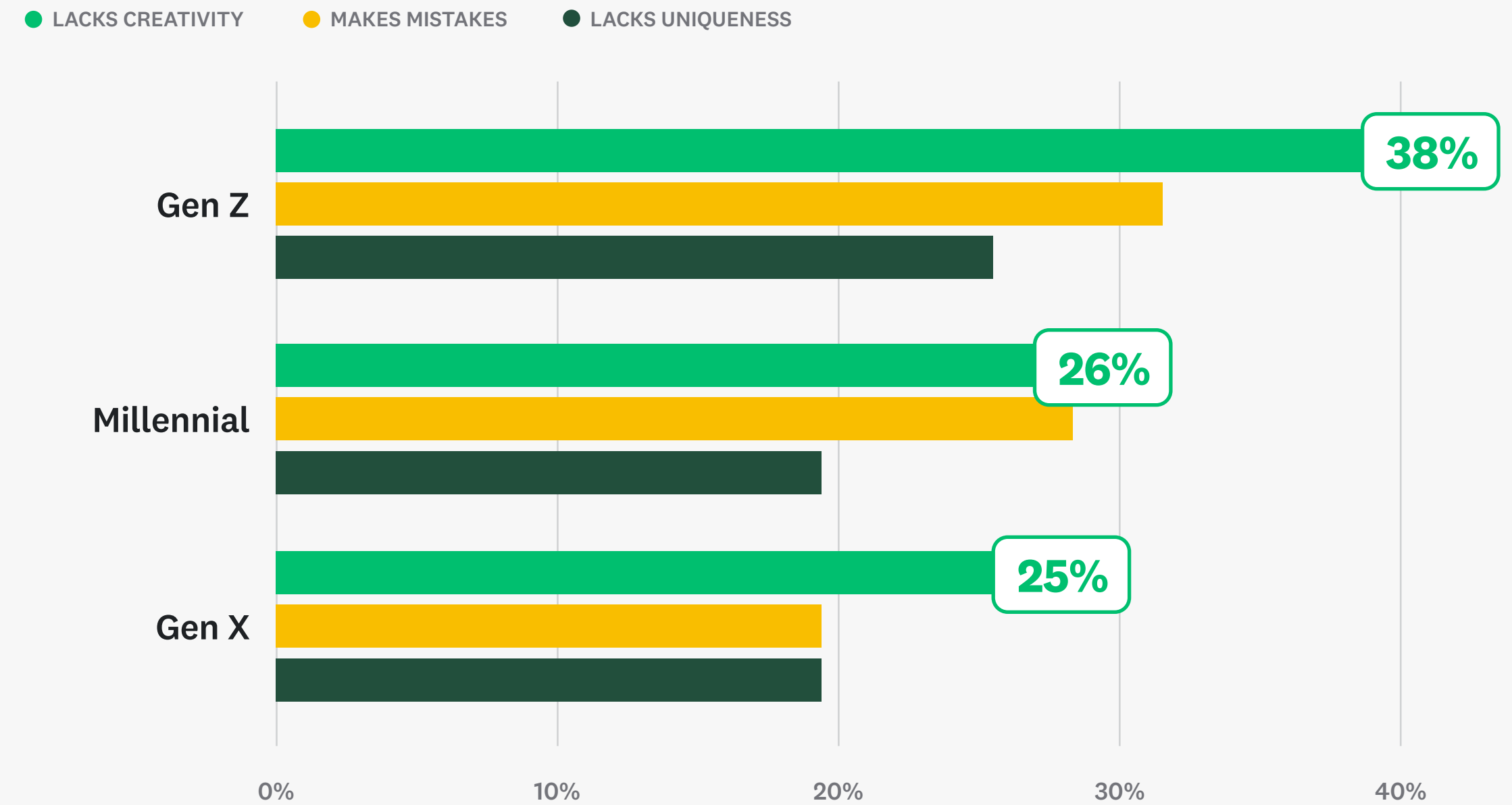
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Consumers' reasons for disliking AI content are varied, and provide some insights into where AI might be falling short.

**The biggest criticism is that AI-generated content lacks creativity, followed by the belief that it makes mistakes.**

Whether or not it's true, these insights point to areas of opportunities for marketers to up their authenticity.

FIG.7 | CONSUMER COMPLAINTS ABOUT AI (BY GENERATION)

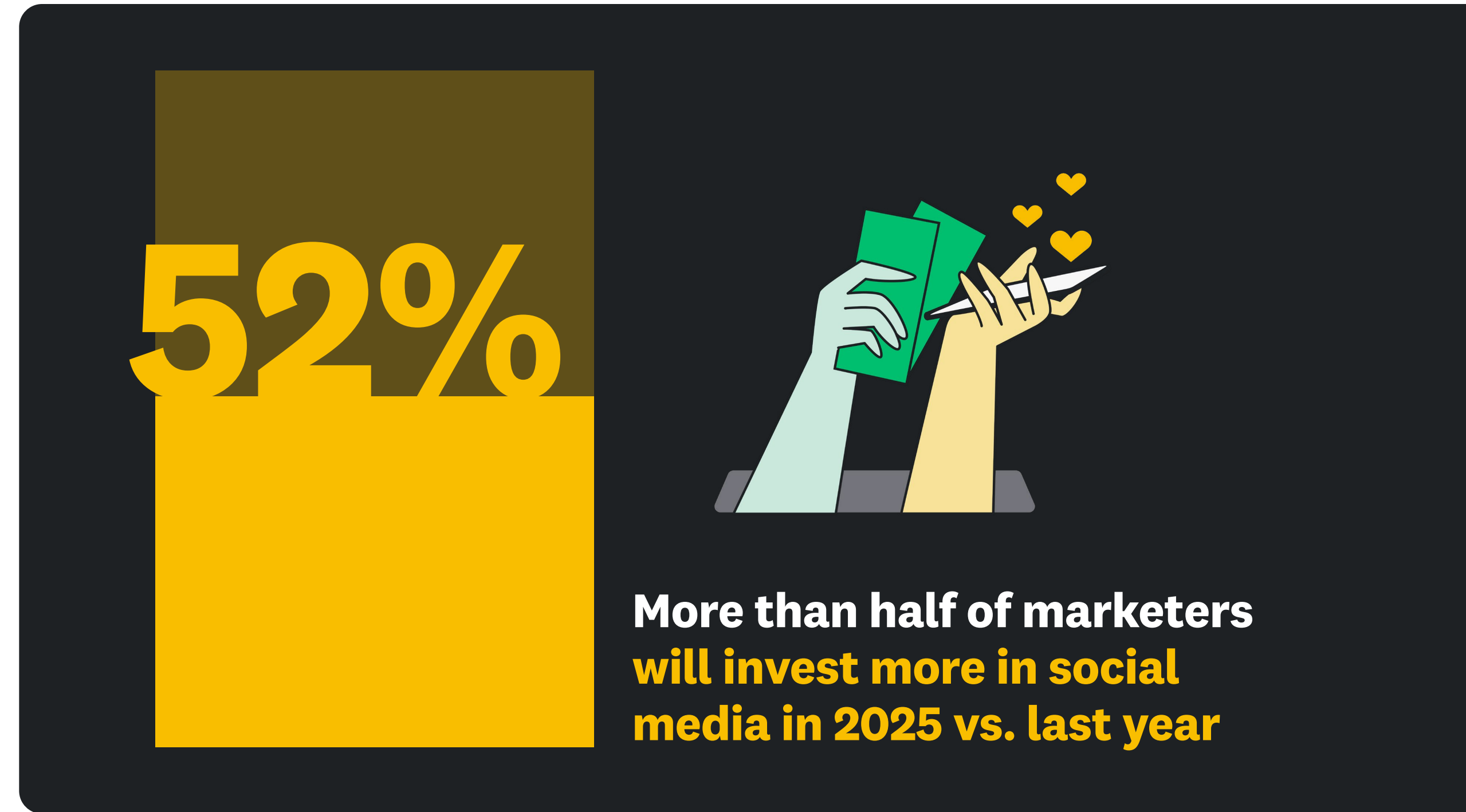


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## Social media grows in influence

It's going to be an interesting year for social media. Despite major industry shifts, social media platforms are where consumers go to connect, get information, seek recommendations, and make purchases for products and services.

Marketers are on all in—74% say social platforms are strategically important, and over half (58%) say they will invest more this year.



52%

More than half of marketers will invest more in social media in 2025 vs. last year

The infographic features a large yellow number '52%' on a dark background. To the right, an illustration shows two hands: one holding a smartphone and the other holding a pen, with several yellow hearts floating above them. Below the illustration, the text reads 'More than half of marketers will invest more in social media in 2025 vs. last year'.

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## The viral product is real

Social media plays a growing role in how people find products—and word-of-mouth is a powerful thing.

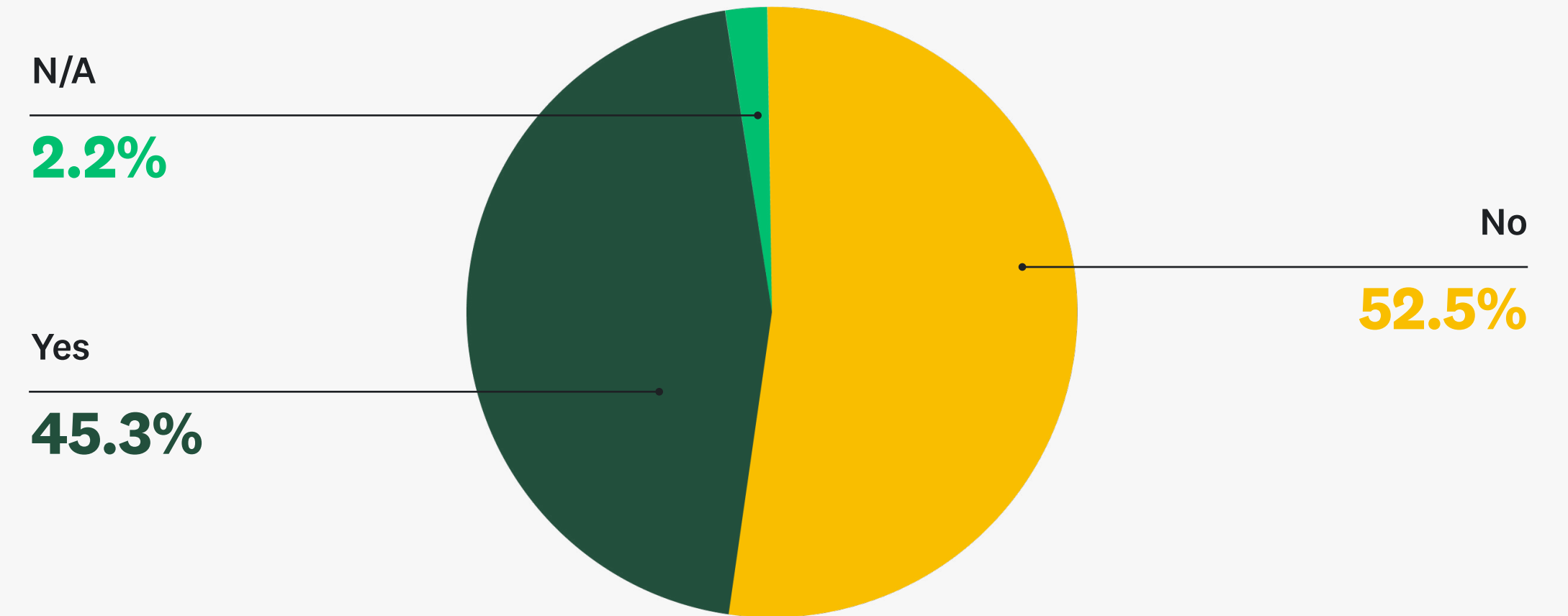
**Almost half of consumers have purchased a product based on an influencer's recommendation, and 58% believe the hype when a product goes viral.**

Younger generations are even more likely to buy in; about two thirds of Gen Z and Millennials believe in the promise of viral products, compared to just 44% of Boomers.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

Influencer endorsements do make an impact. And if Gen Z is a target audience for your brand, you need to understand what platforms they're on and what's generating buzz—so you don't get left out of the conversation.

FIG.8 | CONSUMERS WHO HAVE PURCHASED BASED ON INFLUENCER'S RECOMMENDATION



**66% of Gen Z consumers believe the hype when a product goes viral**



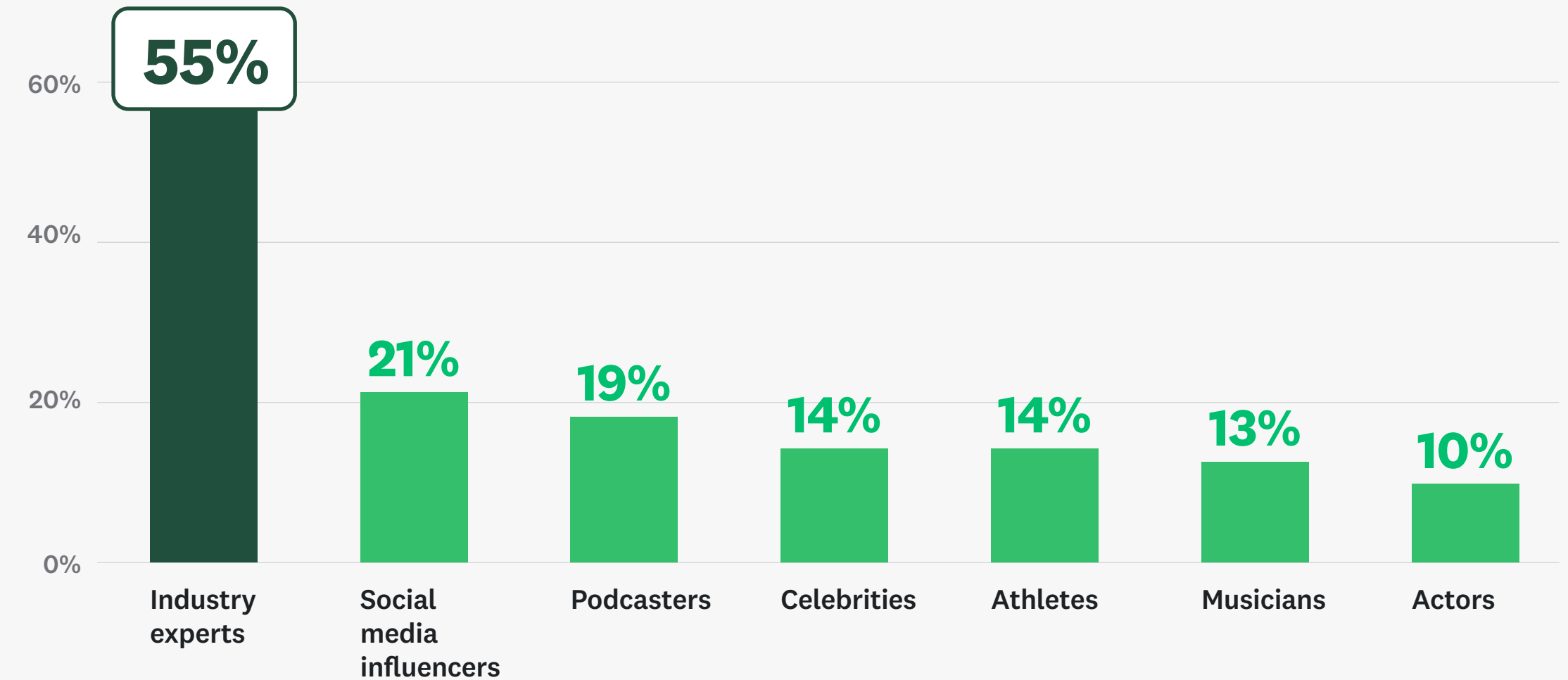
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## Expert or celebrity: who's more influential?

Who consumers take their advice from varies. **Over half (55%) pay attention to industry experts**—the leading type of influencer.

Two out of ten consumers say they listen to social media influencers, and about the same amount (19%) respond to podcaster endorsements.

FIG.9 | CONSUMERS RANK THE VALUE OF ENDORSEMENTS



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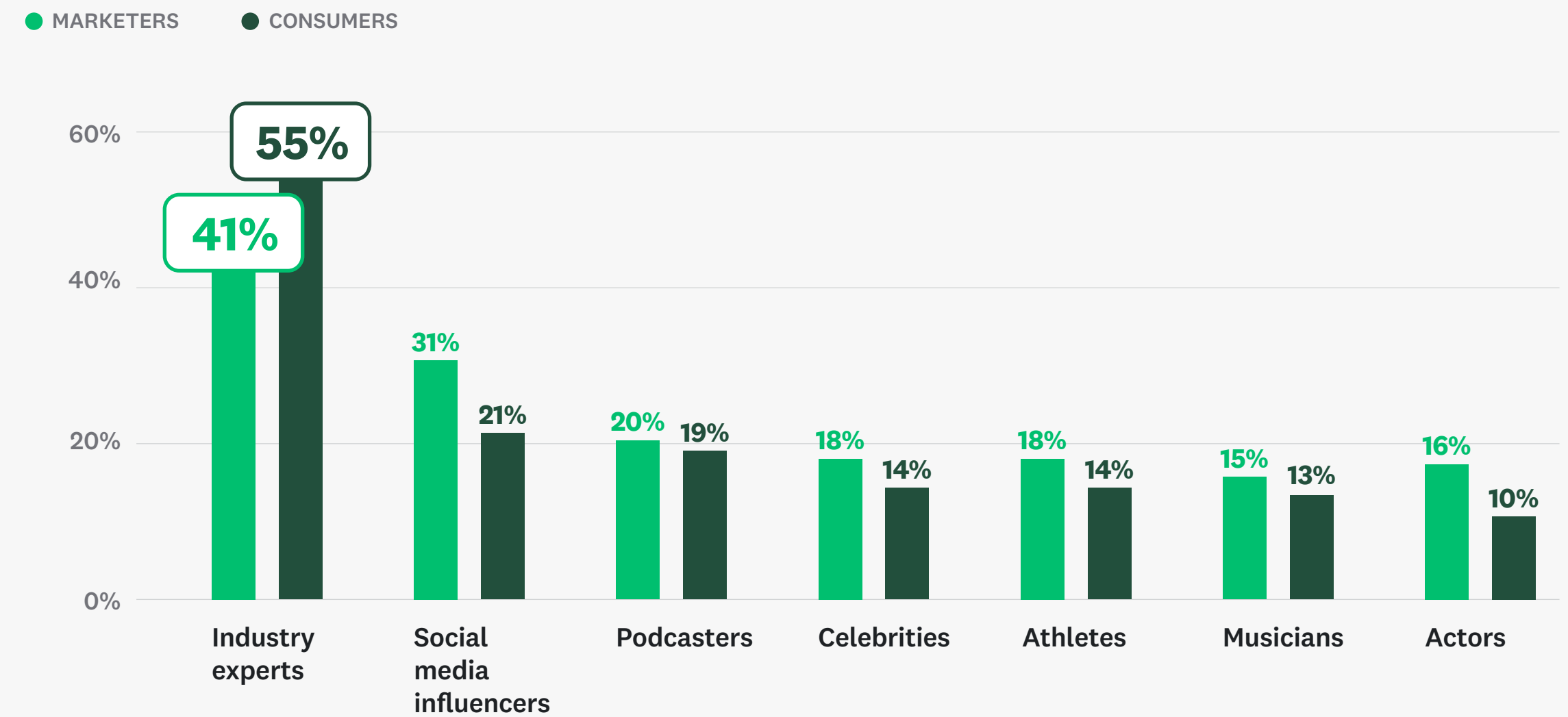
We identified a gap in the influencers that consumers value, and the influencers that marketers turn to.

While marketers focus on the importance of celebrity endorsements and recommendations, consumers are a little more practical.

**Over half (55%) of consumers want to hear from industry experts for endorsements. In comparison, only 41% of marketers prefer to use industry experts for endorsements.**

Marketers are more likely to listen to social media influencers, which almost a third (31%) say are important, compared to 21% of consumers. Celebrities, athletes, actors, and musicians also rank lower on the influence scale for consumers than for marketers.

FIG.10 | MARKETERS VS. CONSUMERS: TOP BRAND ENDORSEMENTS



KEY TAKEAWAY

Marketers may be putting too much stock in the appeal of celebrities, versus other types of influencers who have a more authentic connection with a product, service, or industry. Evaluate your influencer partnerships carefully, because consumers are doing the same.



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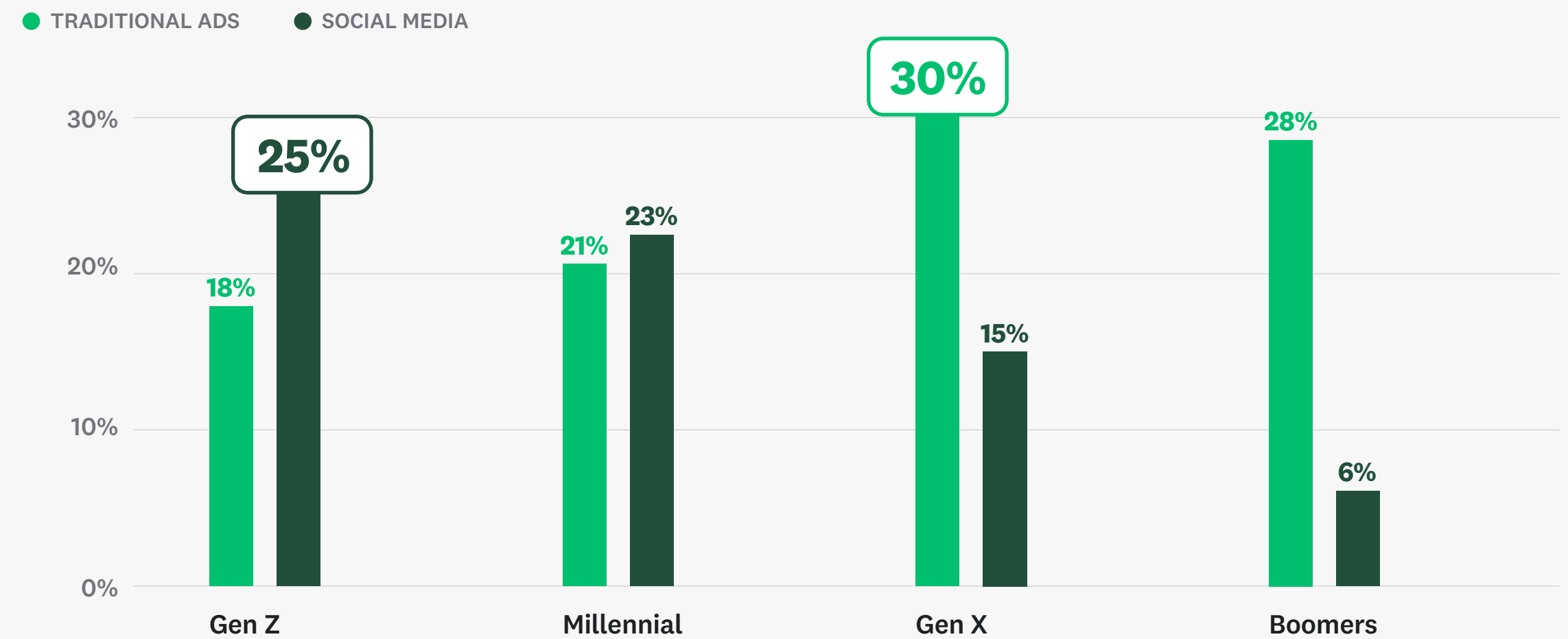
## Generational divide: which platforms and influencers matter

Understanding how consumers will respond to marketing means digging into demographics. From Gen Z to Millennials, Gen X to Boomers, marketing influence varies widely by generation.

For example, only 24% of all consumers respond to traditional ads, and social media only resonates with 17% of all consumers.

**However, a significantly larger percentage (30%) of Gen Xers respond to traditional ads, and a larger percentage (25%) of Gen Z respond to social media marketing.**

FIG.11 | WHAT TYPE OF MARKETING RESONATES THE MOST? (BY GENERATION)





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The power of a given influencer varies by generation. Just under half (45%) of consumers report making a purchase based on a recommendation from a social media influencer.

However, when filtering by generation, **almost six out of ten (55%) of younger generations have made a purchase based on an influencer**, compared to only about a quarter of Boomers. (see chart top right)

Who those influencers are varies by generation as well. **For all generations, industry experts top the list, but for Gen X, it's the top influencer by a long shot.** (see chart bottom right)

Gen Z has a tendency to get their product endorsements from a variety of areas, and are almost 2X as likely as Gen X to be influenced by social media influencers.

FIG.12 | CONSUMER PURCHASES BASED ON SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER (BY GENERATION)

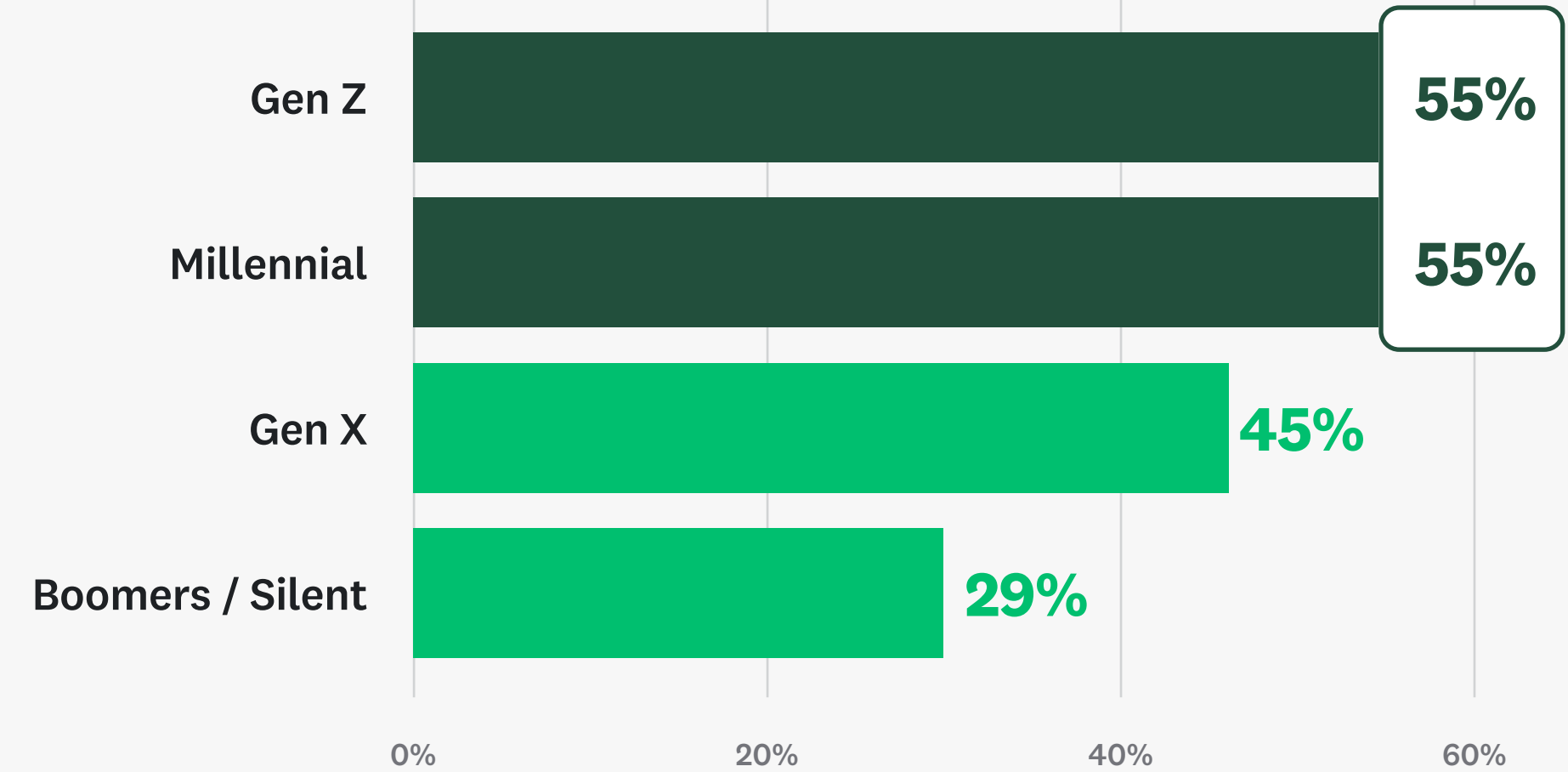
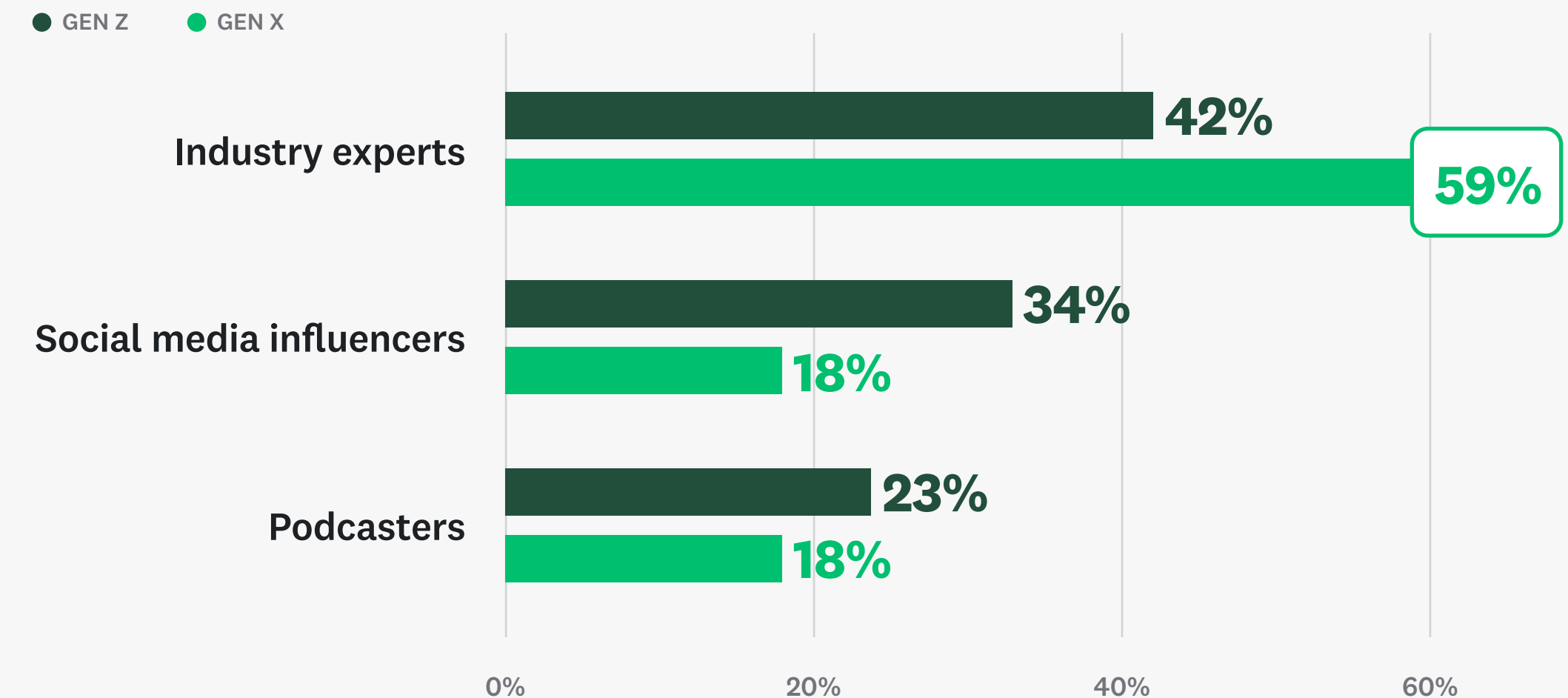


FIG.13 | WHERE CONSUMERS GO FOR PRODUCT ENDORSEMENTS (BY GENERATION)



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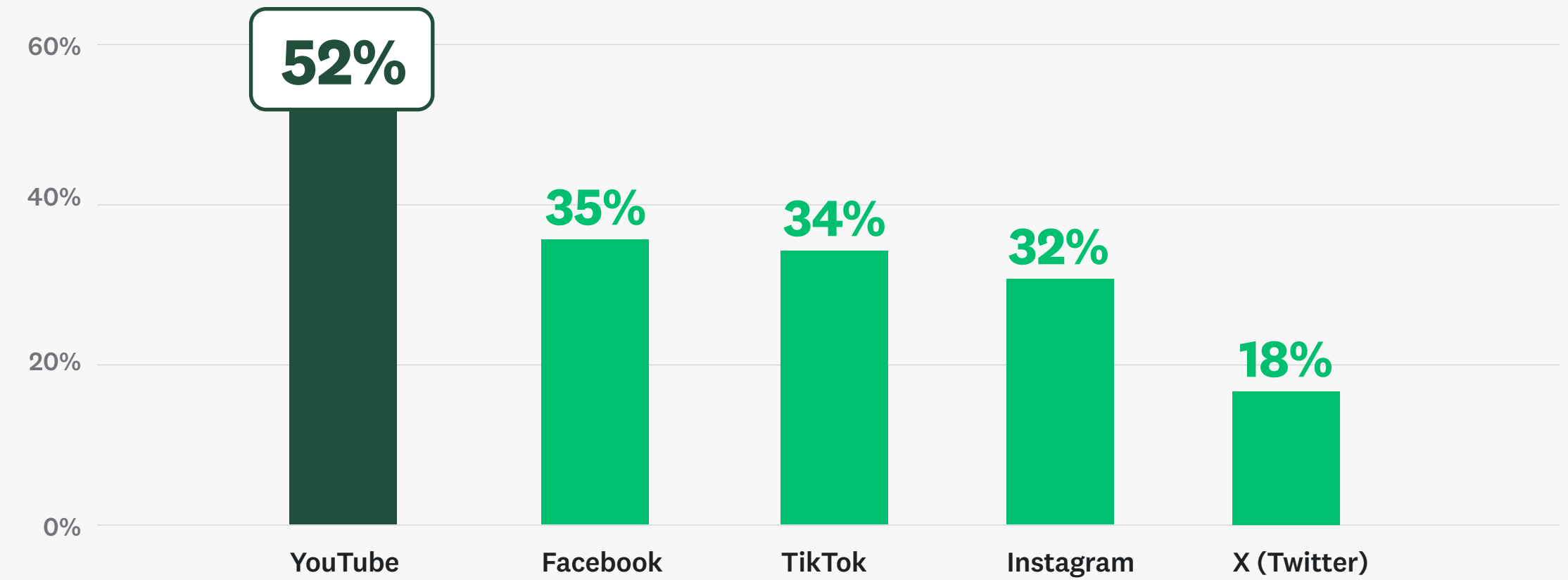
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Consumers' social habits will likely shift with the changes to platform fact-checking and biases. Four out of ten (42%) consumers say there's no difference between the trustworthiness of influencers on different social media platforms.

**However, amongst consumers who believe there is a difference, YouTube is ranked most trustworthy, followed by Facebook and TikTok.**

**FIG.14 | MOST TRUSTWORTHY SOCIAL PLATFORMS**  
(AMONGST CONSUMERS WHO THINK THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PLATFORMS)



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## Summary

This year promises to be a wild ride for consumers as political, technological, and social developments change the marketing landscape. Marketers will have their hands full trying to reach consumers where they are and tap into their preferences in a fast-moving marketplace.

Find out more about these key trends and more from the marketer's perspective. Read [our report](#) on the state of marketing, and get insights into how marketers plan to tap into social media and AI to stay competitive.



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## METHODOLOGY

<sup>1</sup>This SurveyMonkey study was conducted on January 9-16, 2025 among a sample of 2,329 adults in the US. Respondents for this survey were selected from the more than 2 million people who take surveys on our platform each day. The modeled error estimate for this survey is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. Data have been weighted for age, race, sex, education, and geography using the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to reflect the overall demographic composition of the United States.

<sup>2</sup>This SurveyMonkey study was conducted on January 9-16, 2025 among a sample of 416 self-identified marketing professionals in the US. Respondents for this survey were selected from the more than 2 million people who take surveys on our platform each day.

<sup>3</sup>This SurveyMonkey AI sentiment study was conducted from October-December 2024 among 25,030 US adults, with a  $\pm 1.0\%$  margin of error. Data weighted to reflect US demographic composition.

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