



2016 BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT

CREDITS

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Content Strategy Alliance Business Survey Report

Background

Last year, Steven Grindlay and Noreen Compton, founders of the Content Strategy Alliance (CSA), approached me to work with them on developing a survey specifically designed for the business community. Two assumptions underlying the survey were:

1. There is a lack of understanding in business of what content strategy is, how it functions and the benefits of utilizing a content strategist.
2. If businesses understood what content strategy was and the business problems it could help solve, they would be more inclined to establish and support content strategy roles and functions.

As the CSA had recently published a survey for practitioners of content strategy, this one was geared and limited to business owners, C-Level executives, directors and senior managers. Although the final tally of responses could be considered low with 85 participants, the survey does provide insights into how the business community perceives, utilizes and envisions the role and value of content strategy within their organizations.

Although the survey was made available to the global community, over 76% of respondents were from the U.S., followed by 5% each from Canada, the UK and India. The Netherlands, Andorra, Switzerland, Italy, Nigeria and Norway were represented by one or two participants. Regardless of location, advertising/PR/marketing were the best-represented industries, followed by technology and the Internet.

Most participants were owners or managers of small businesses with 100-1000 employees. Regardless of the participant's role or company size, 97% of respondents affirmed that they have engaged in the practice of content strategy, defined as "Getting the right content to the right user at the right time through strategic planning of content creation, delivery and governance." More than half have at some point employed a content strategist.

Interestingly, more than half of the audience were also familiar with the somewhat-new term "Intelligent Content" and how it applies to the role of content strategy.

Role of a Content Strategist

Although more than half of the participants skipped the question, 30 people stated that they have hired a content strategist as a dedicated full-time staff member versus six who have only hired a content strategist as a consultant on a project basis. When asked about tasks that the content strategist performed, the top 10 categories included:

1. Content Marketing (76%)
2. Creating a content strategy for a project (74%)
3. Content Management Systems (66%)
4. Creating a content strategy for your organization (66%)
5. Content Audit (64%)
6. Copywriting (64%)
7. Analytics (58%)
8. Competitive Analysis (56%)
9. Content Matrix (51%)
10. Keyword Research (51%)

When asked what cross-disciplines the content strategist would work with, over 74% selected content creators, marketing, creative, digital strategists, user experience and editorial. Less than 40% thought of content strategy as interacting with IT, development or service centers.

Where Content Strategy Fits in the Organization

When it comes to where businesses see the role of content strategy, a third of respondents felt the role belonged on the corporate, business and functional levels. Another 35% saw it strictly as an executive function on the corporate level and only 10% identified content strategy at the functional level. Contrasting this to where content strategy actually has a role today, 28% placed it at the corporate level as an executive function, 21% selected it at the functional level, 16% at the business level, and 13% don't have a content strategy in place at all.

Content Strategy seems to be something people value, with 35% indicating they currently have a department dedicated to content strategy in their organization, 48% place it as a sub-function of another department, 10% don't do content strategy, and 5% only do it on an as-needed basis.

When asked about the contribution content strategy has made to their company, the 61 people who answered the question listed the following:

1. Established us as a thought leader (57%)
2. Helped us meet the needs of our users (57%)
3. Created competitive advantage (47%)
4. Increased customer loyalty (41%)
5. Increased sales and profitability (41%)

Although most participants said that content strategy was part of their annual budget, 40% could not identify how much of it was allocated in their annual budget.

Challenges

The biggest challenges faced by organizations to implement content strategy were:

1. Finding a qualified candidate (32%)
2. Convincing others that content strategy can deliver tangible and measurable benefits that outweigh costs (30%)
3. Budget restraints (23%)

Finding the Right Candidate

Most (87%) respondents would look to recruit a content strategist (both consultant and full-time) on LinkedIn, followed by personal connections, job boards, content strategy meet-ups, and lastly recruiters or Google groups.

Some obstacles identified in hiring a content strategist included:

1. Lack of understanding of the roles and functions of a content strategist (40%)
2. Lack of industry-wide definition of what a content strategist does (35%)
3. Finding qualified personnel with the requisite experience (35%)
4. Overall budget constraints (31%)
5. The role is covered by other people in the organization (24%)

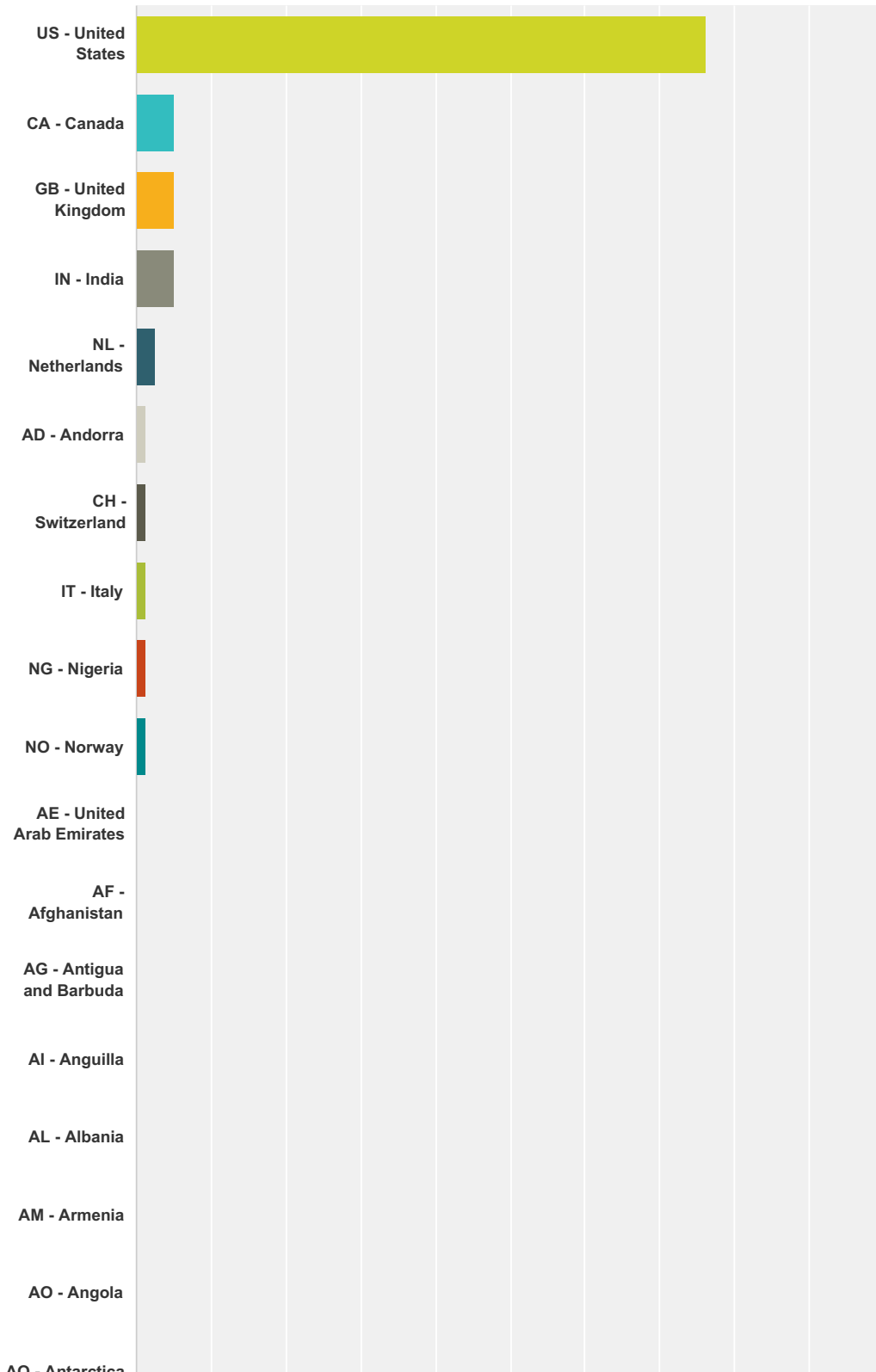
Compensation

When it comes to pay, 42% indicated they would pay a freelancer (with five to 7 years experience) \$81-100 USD/hour, with 20% choosing \$51-80 USD/hour. Annual salaries did not measure up as well, with over 35% selecting \$75,000-100,000 USD and 28% selecting \$50,000 -75,000 USD.

- Lisa Trager

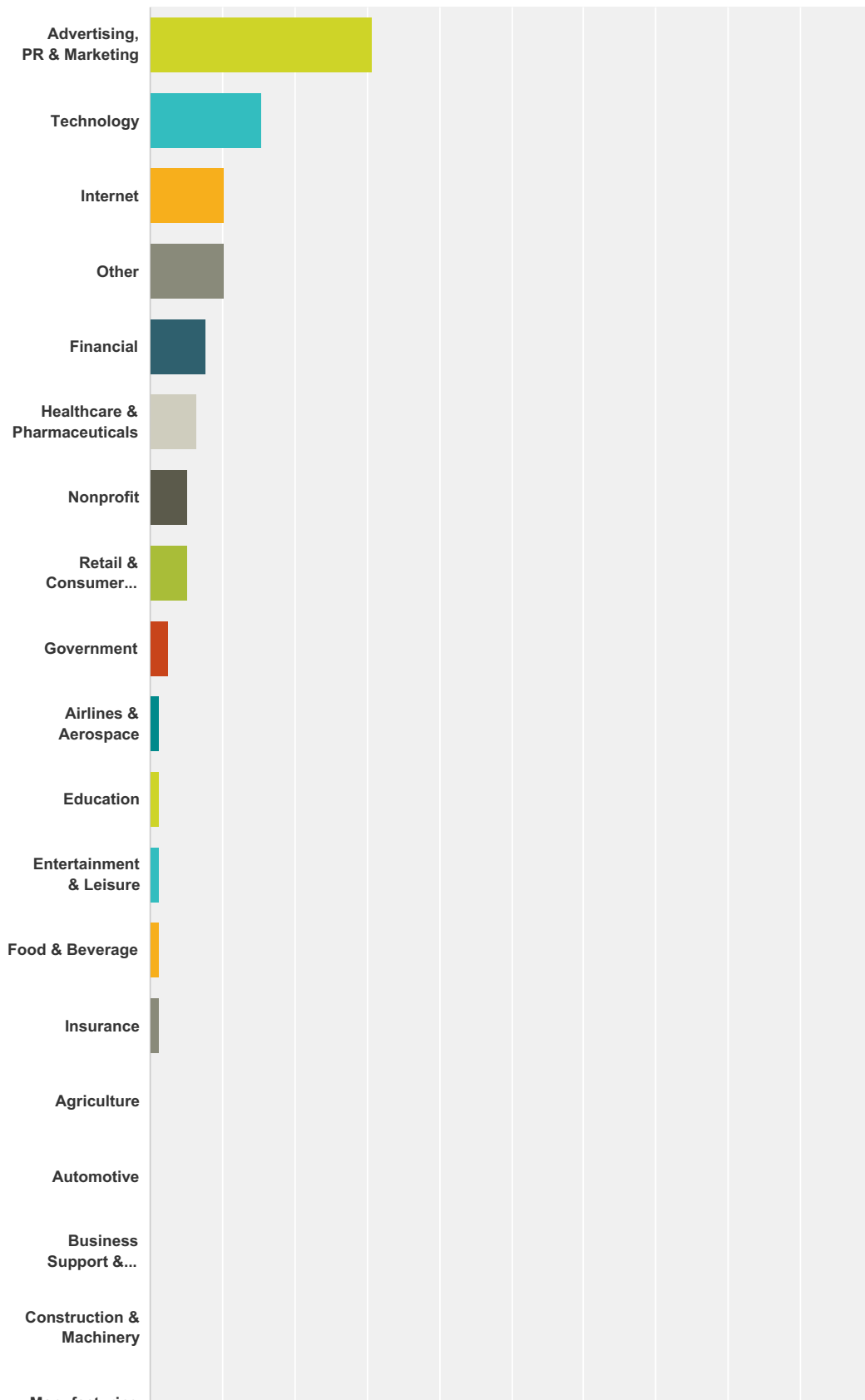
Q1 Where is your business located? If your business has multiple locations, please select country where your headquarters are located.

Answered: 80 Skipped: 5

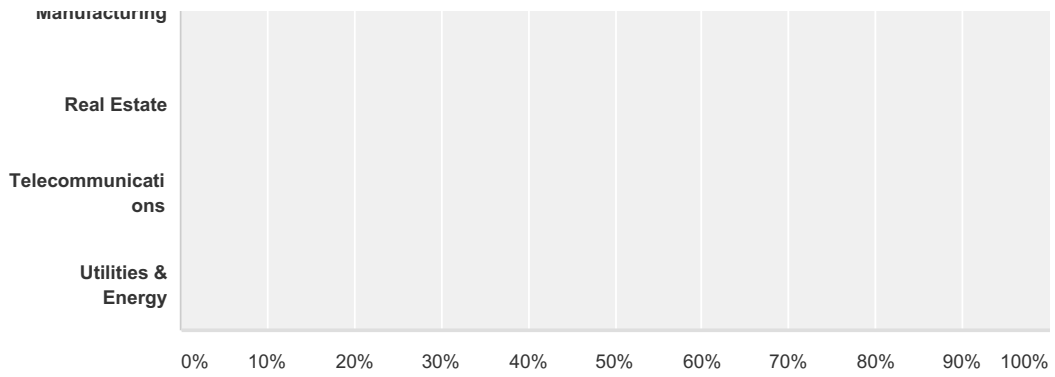


Q2 Which industry sector best describes your business?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 7



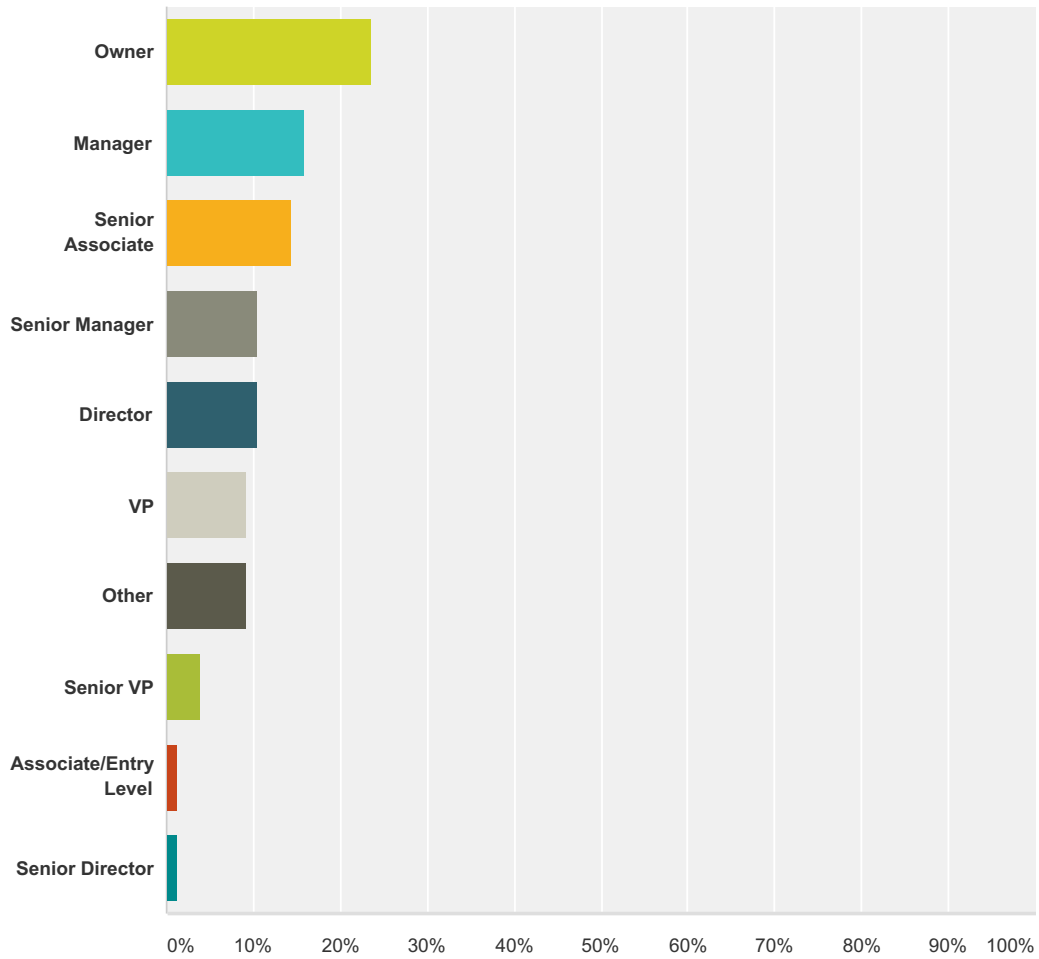
2014 CONTENT STRATEGY ALLIANCE BUSINESS SURVEY



Answer Choices	Responses	
Advertising, PR & Marketing	30.77%	24
Technology	15.38%	12
Internet	10.26%	8
Other	10.26%	8
Financial	7.69%	6
Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	6.41%	5
Nonprofit	5.13%	4
Retail & Consumer Durables	5.13%	4
Government	2.56%	2
Airlines & Aerospace	1.28%	1
Education	1.28%	1
Entertainment & Leisure	1.28%	1
Food & Beverage	1.28%	1
Insurance	1.28%	1
Agriculture	0.00%	0
Automotive	0.00%	0
Business Support & Logistics	0.00%	0
Construction & Machinery	0.00%	0
Manufacturing	0.00%	0
Real Estate	0.00%	0
Telecommunications	0.00%	0
Utilities & Energy	0.00%	0
Total		78

Q3 Which of the following best describes your position in your organization?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 9

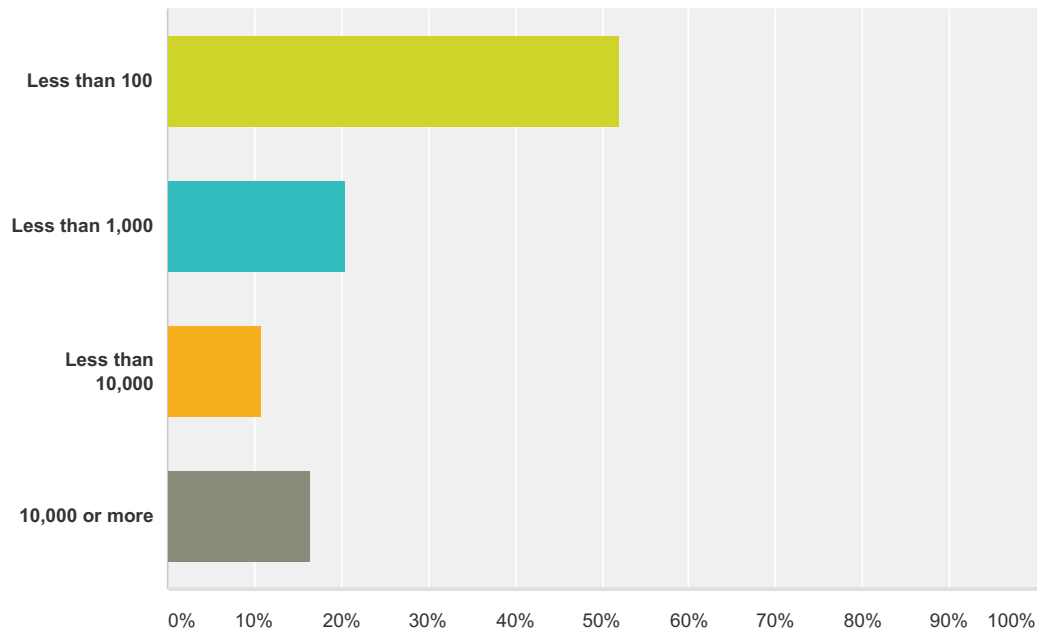


Answer Choices	Responses
Owner	23.68% 18
Manager	15.79% 12
Senior Associate	14.47% 11
Senior Manager	10.53% 8
Director	10.53% 8
VP	9.21% 7
Other	9.21% 7
Senior VP	3.95% 3
Associate/Entry Level	1.32% 1
Senior Director	1.32% 1

Total	76
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Q4 How many employees work in your organization?

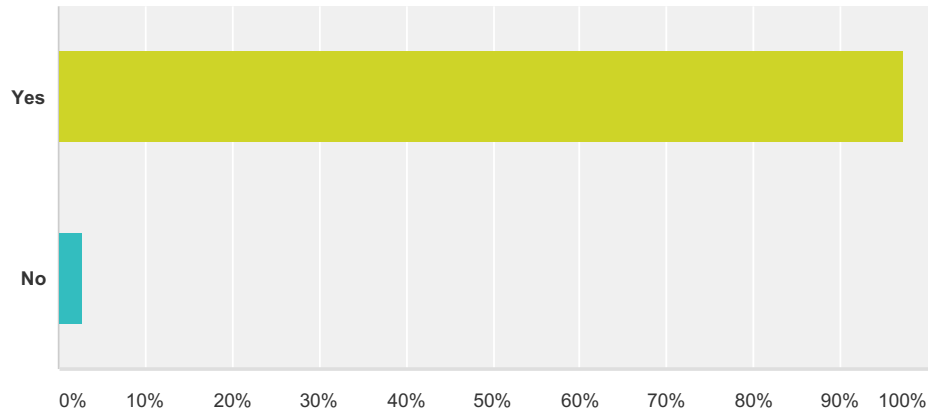
Answered: 73 Skipped: 12



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 100	52.05%	38
Less than 1,000	20.55%	15
Less than 10,000	10.96%	8
10,000 or more	16.44%	12
Total		73

Q5 If Content Strategy is defined as “Getting the right content to the right user at the right time through strategic planning of content creation, delivery, and governance,” have you ever engaged in the practice of content strategy?

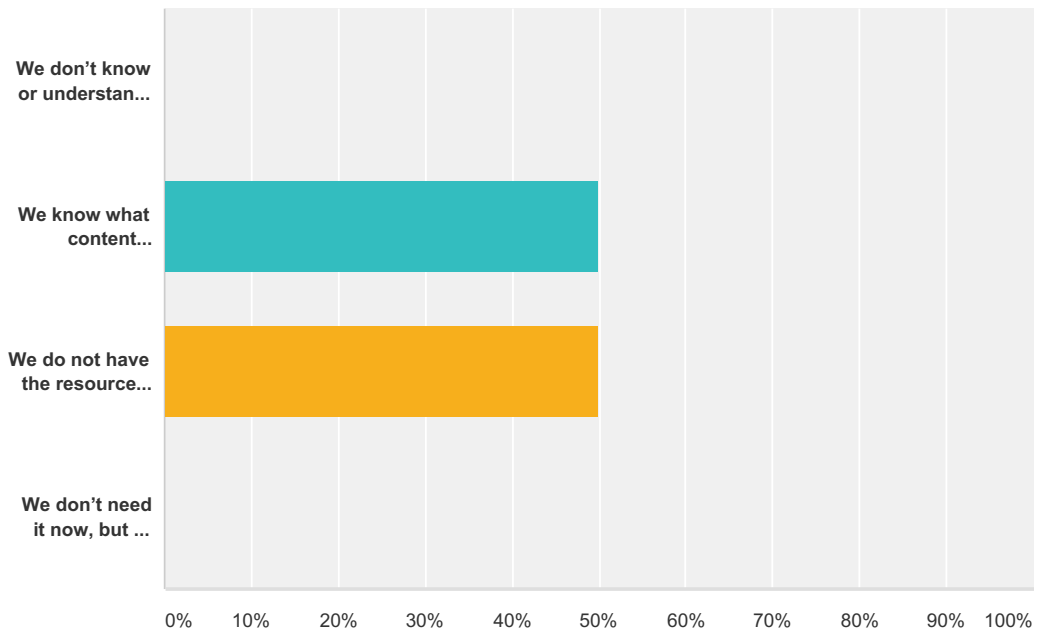
Answered: 73 Skipped: 12



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	97.26% 71
No	2.74% 2
Total	73

Q6 We have not engaged in CS Practices because:

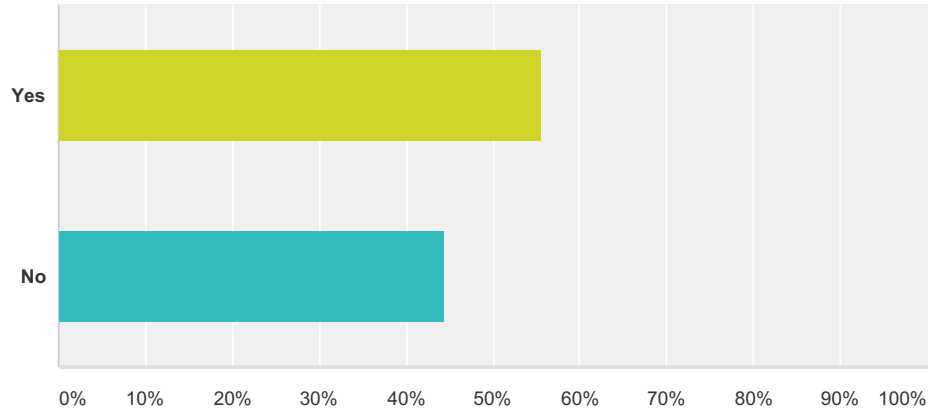
Answered: 2 Skipped: 83



Answer Choices	Responses
We don't know or understand what Content Strategy is.	0.00% 0
We know what content strategy is, but we don't believe that it is an appropriate solution for our business at this time.	50.00% 1
We do not have the resources or expertise to initiate a content strategy function at this time.	50.00% 1
We don't need it now, but we are planning on implementing a content strategy function in the near future.	0.00% 0
Total	2

Q7 Are you familiar with the term “Intelligent Content” and how it applies to the role of content strategy?

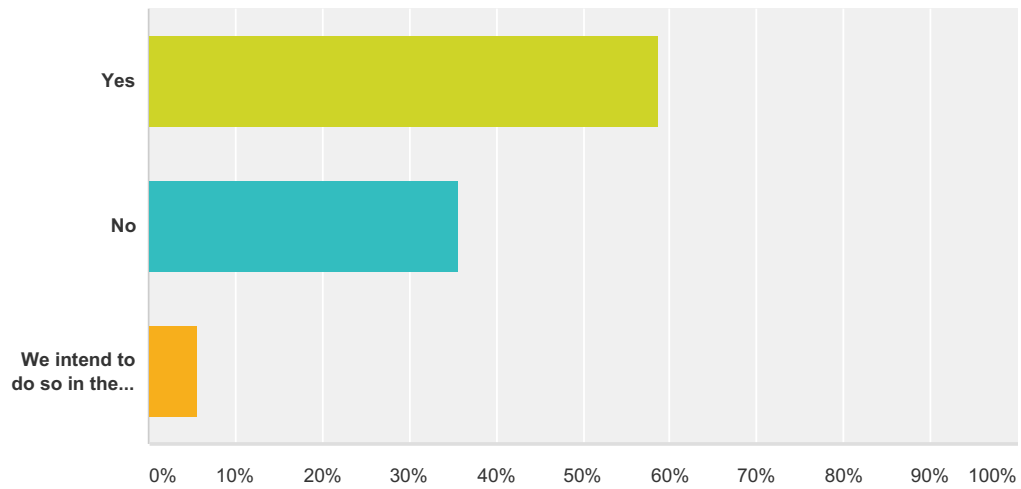
Answered: 72 Skipped: 13



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	55.56% 40
No	44.44% 32
Total	72

Q8 Has your company ever employed a content strategist?

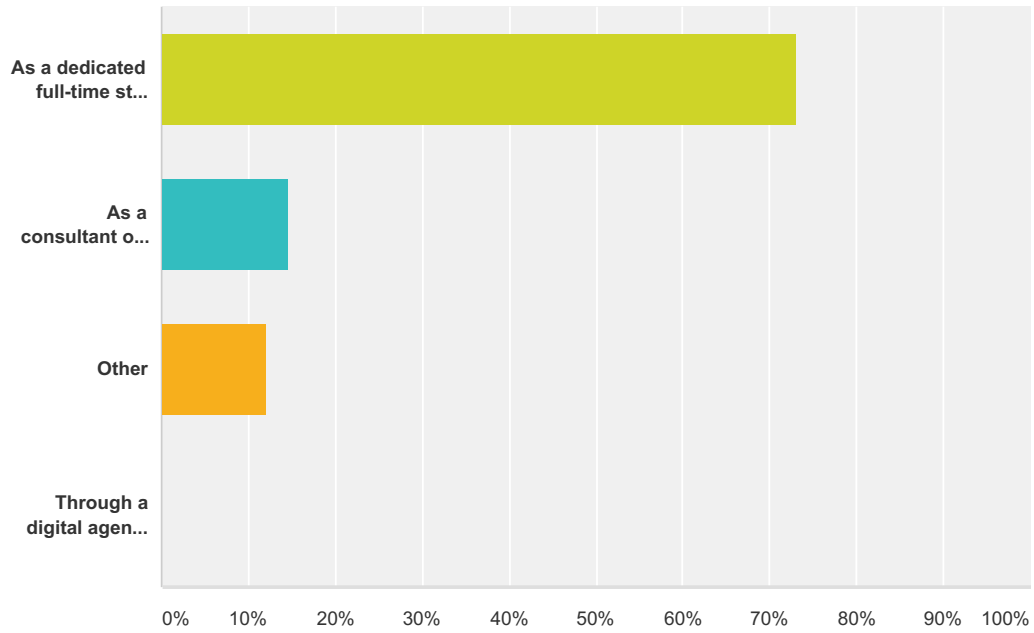
Answered: 70 Skipped: 15



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	58.57% 41
No	35.71% 25
We intend to do so in the future.	5.71% 4
Total	70

Q9 How was that person hired or engaged?

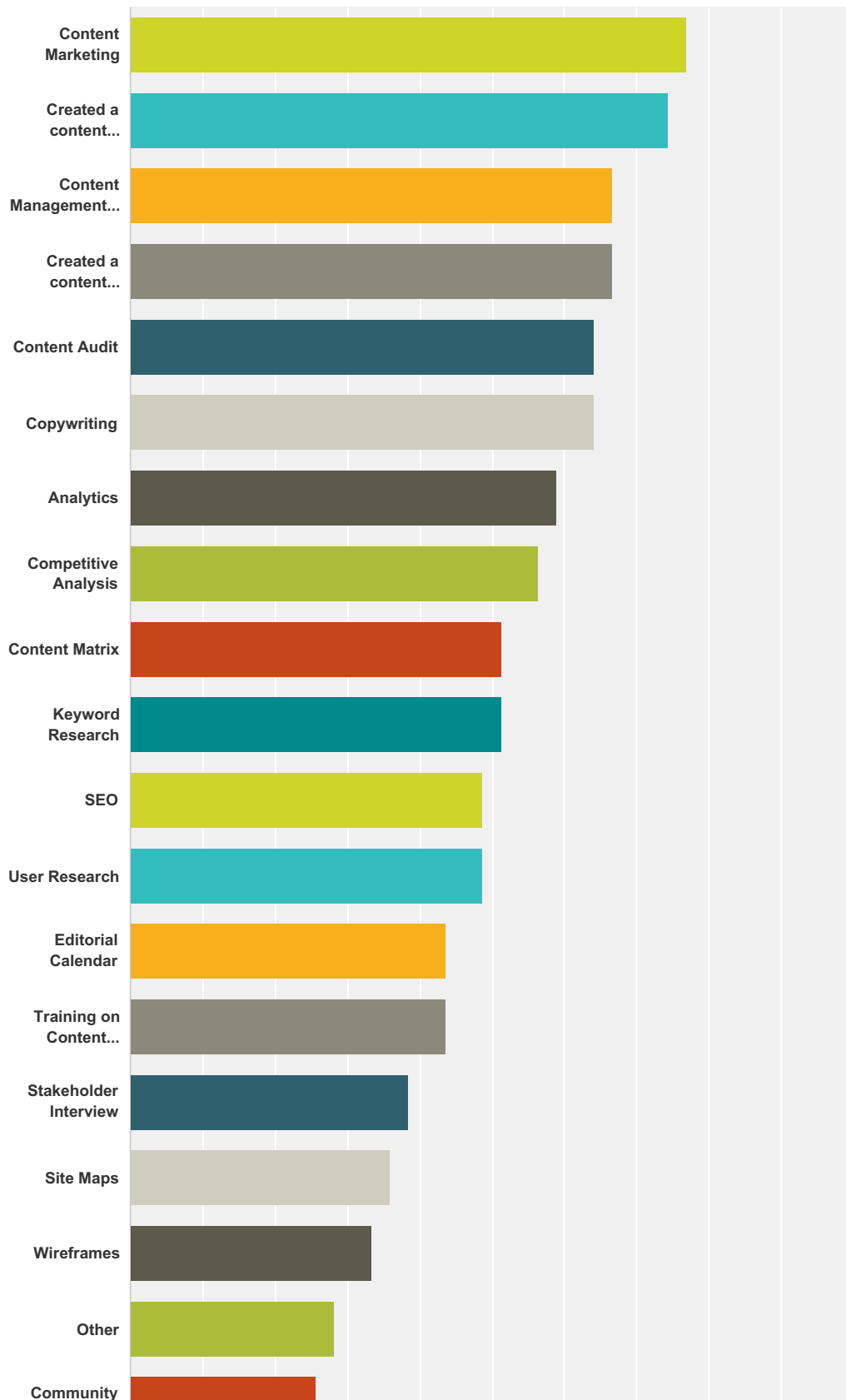
Answered: 41 Skipped: 44



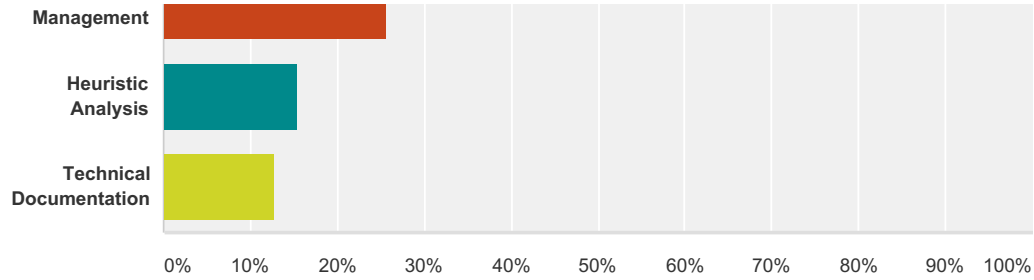
Answer Choices	Responses
As a dedicated full-time staff member.	73.17% 30
As a consultant on a project basis.	14.63% 6
Other	12.20% 5
Through a digital agency as part of a wider digital project.	0.00% 0
Total	41

Q10 What tasks did the content strategist(s) perform? Select all that apply.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 46



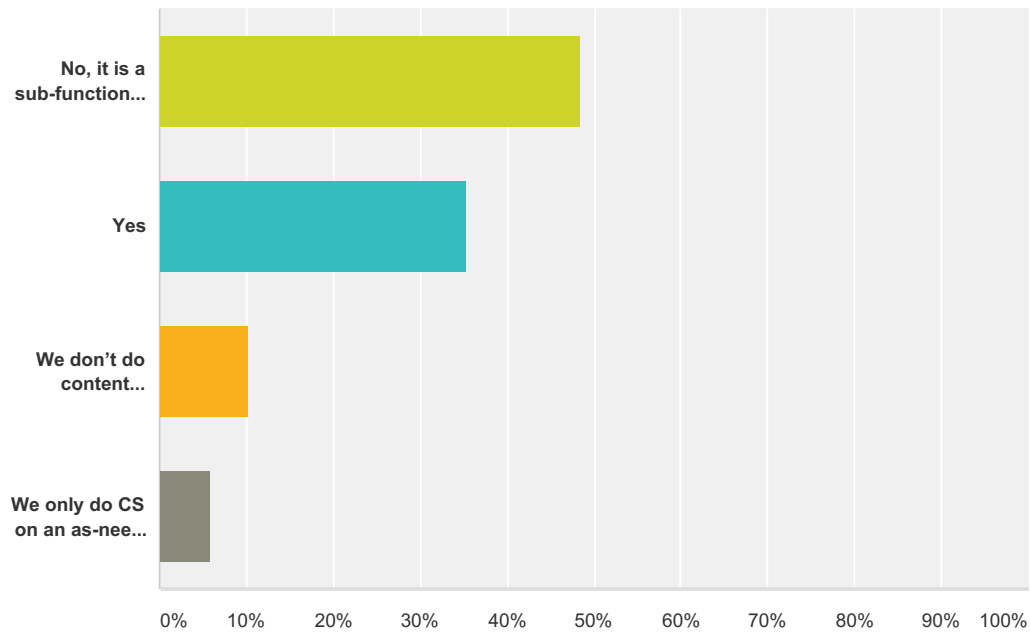
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Answer Choices	Responses	
Content Marketing	76.92%	30
Created a content strategy for a project	74.36%	29
Content Management Systems (CMS)	66.67%	26
Created a content strategy for your organization	66.67%	26
Content Audit	64.10%	25
Copywriting	64.10%	25
Analytics	58.97%	23
Competitive Analysis	56.41%	22
Content Matrix	51.28%	20
Keyword Research	51.28%	20
SEO	48.72%	19
User Research	48.72%	19
Editorial Calendar	43.59%	17
Training on Content Strategy	43.59%	17
Stakeholder Interview	38.46%	15
Site Maps	35.90%	14
Wireframes	33.33%	13
Other	28.21%	11
Community Management	25.64%	10
Heuristic Analysis	15.38%	6
Technical Documentation	12.82%	5
Total Respondents: 39		

Q11 Do you have a department dedicated to Content Strategy in your company?

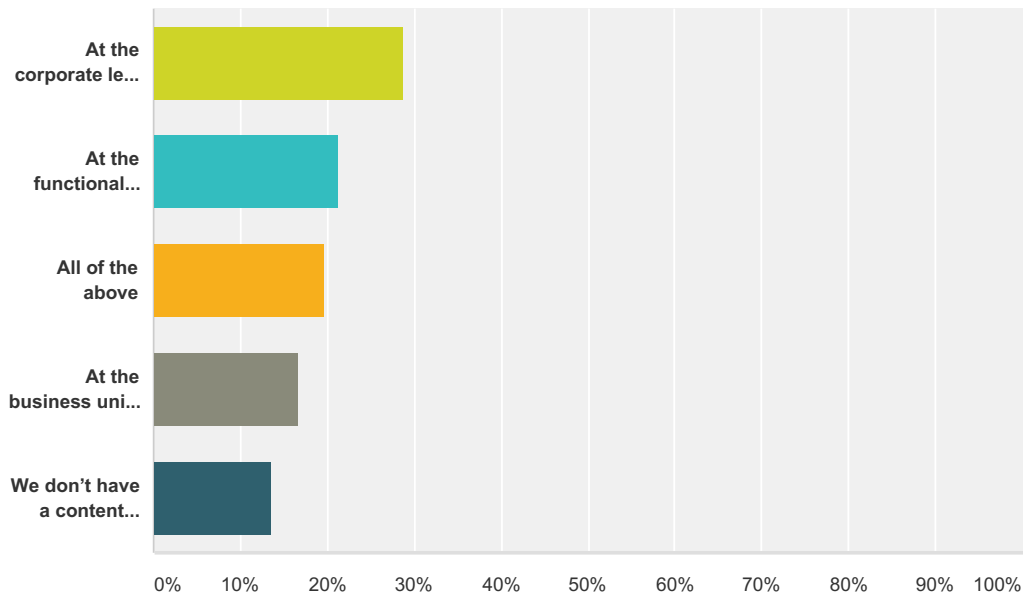
Answered: 68 Skipped: 17



Answer Choices	Responses
No, it is a sub-function of another department.	48.53% 33
Yes	35.29% 24
We don't do content strategy.	10.29% 7
We only do CS on an as-needed basis for a specific project(s).	5.88% 4
Total	68

Q12 Where does content strategy fit today into your strategic hierarchy?

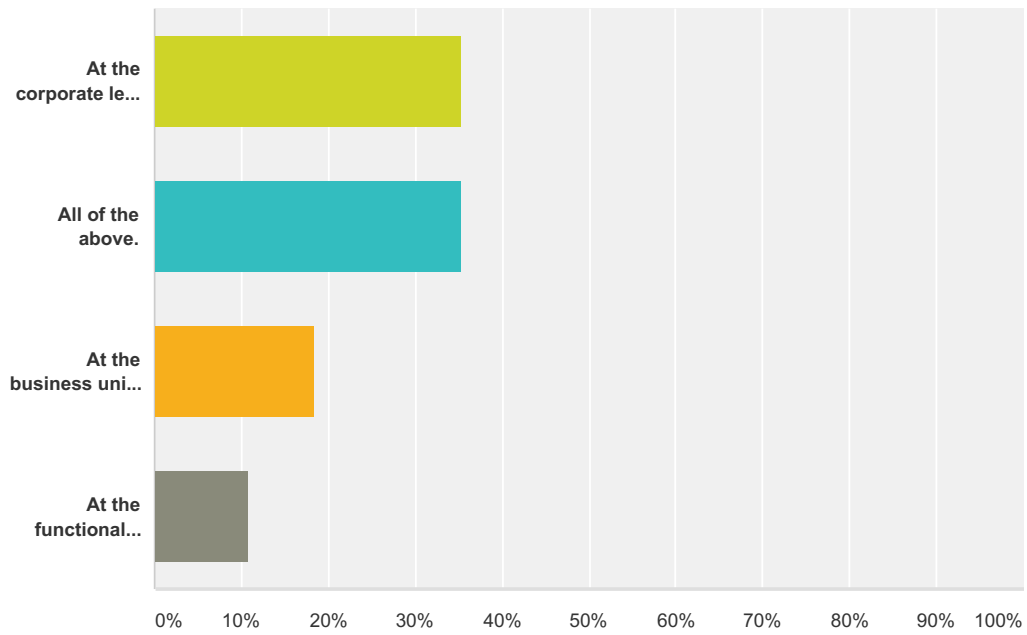
Answered: 66 Skipped: 19



Answer Choices	Responses
At the corporate level as an executive function	28.79% 19
At the functional level	21.21% 14
All of the above	19.70% 13
At the business unit level	16.67% 11
We don't have a content strategy.	13.64% 9
Total	66

Q13 Ideally, where SHOULD the role exist in your organization?

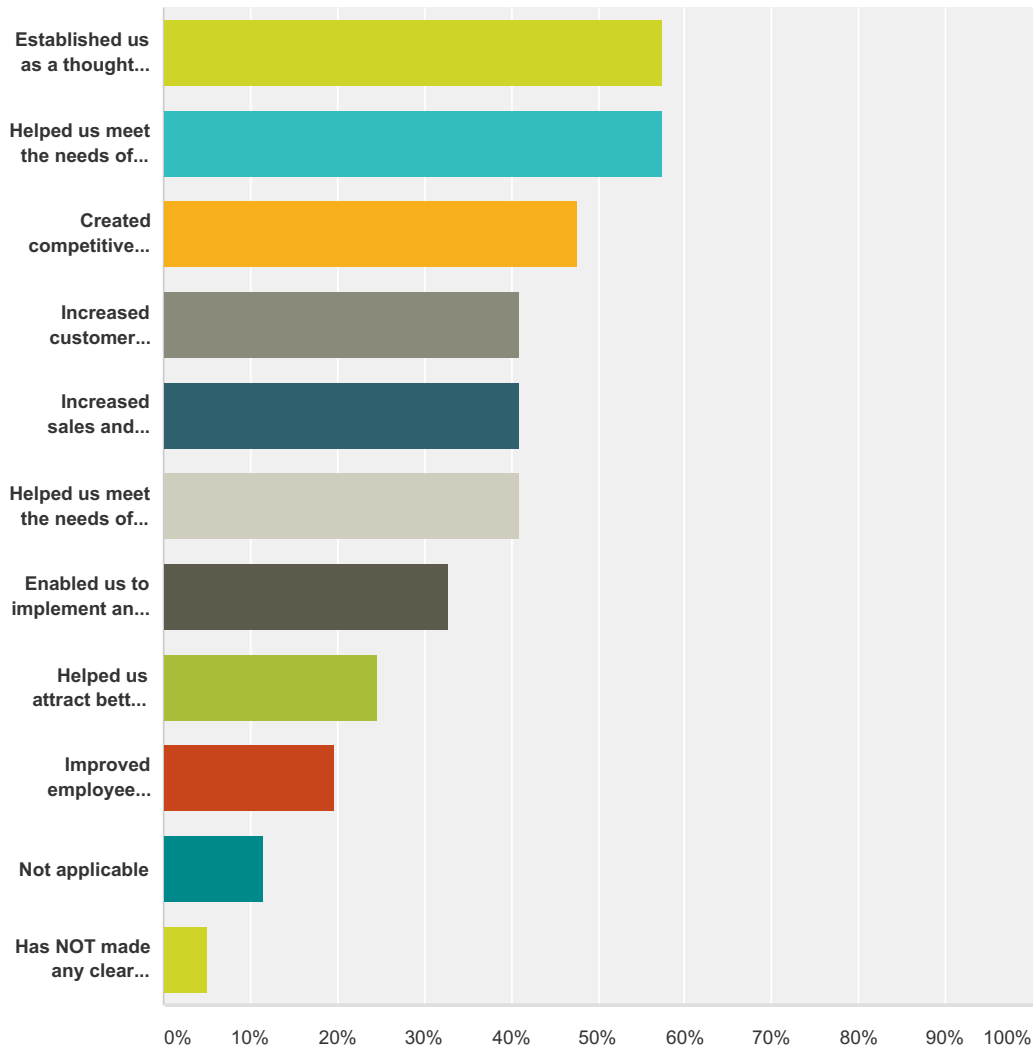
Answered: 65 Skipped: 20



Answer Choices	Responses
At the corporate level as an executive function.	35.38% 23
All of the above.	35.38% 23
At the business unit level.	18.46% 12
At the functional level.	10.77% 7
Total	65

Q14 What contribution has content strategy made to your company? Select all that apply.

Answered: 61 Skipped: 24



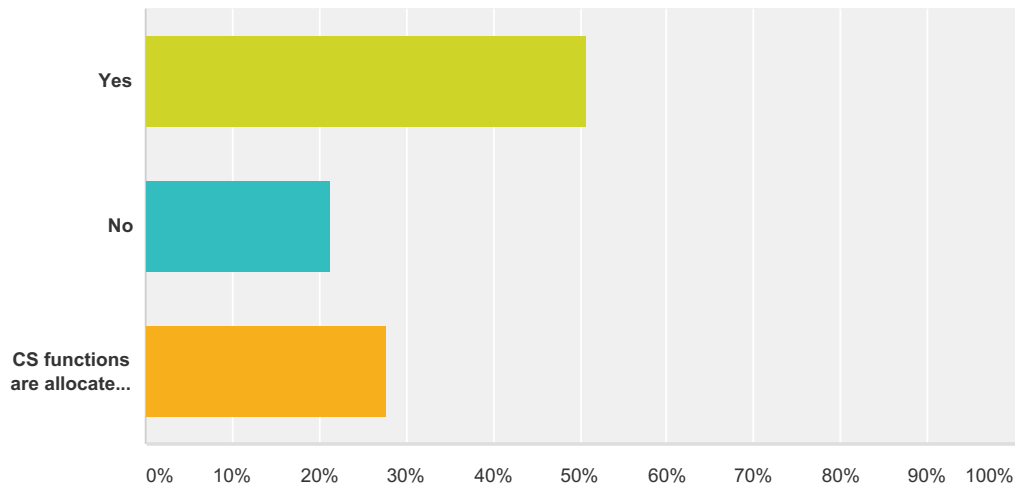
Answer Choices	Responses
Established us as a thought leader	57.38% 35
Helped us meet the needs of our users	57.38% 35
Created competitive advantage	47.54% 29
Increased customer loyalty	40.98% 25
Increased sales and profitability	40.98% 25
Helped us meet the needs of internal business units and stakeholders	40.98% 25
Enabled us to implement an omnichannel strategy	32.79% 20
Helped us attract better qualified employees	24.59% 15

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Improved employee productivity	19.67%	12
Not applicable	11.48%	7
Has NOT made any clear improvements	4.92%	3
Total Respondents: 61		

Q15 Is content strategy part of your annual budget?

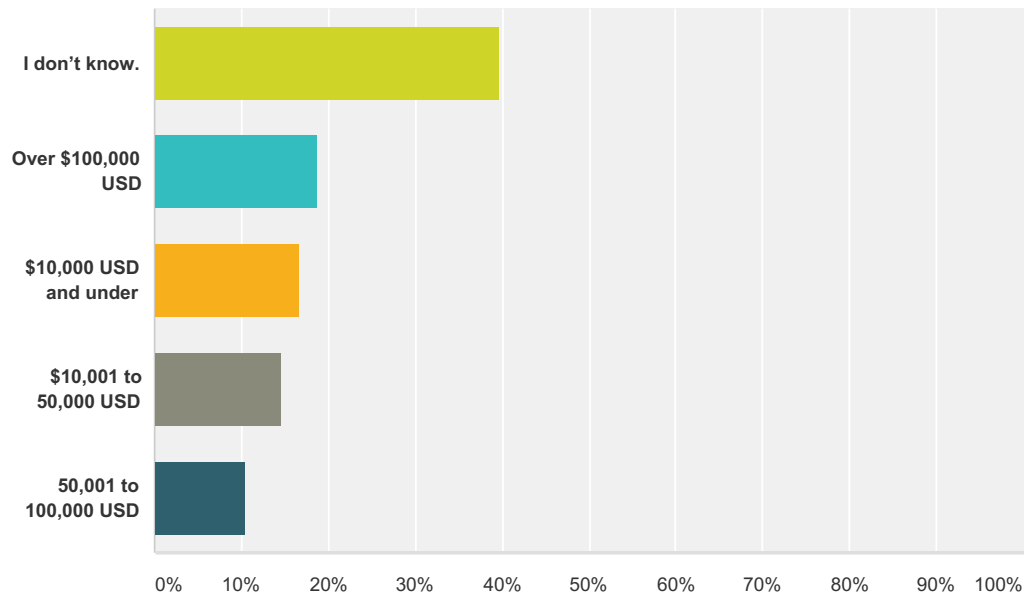
Answered: 61 Skipped: 24



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	50.82%	31
No	21.31%	13
CS functions are allocated from other departmental budgets as needed.	27.87%	17
Total		61

Q16 How much of your annual budget is allocated for content strategy?

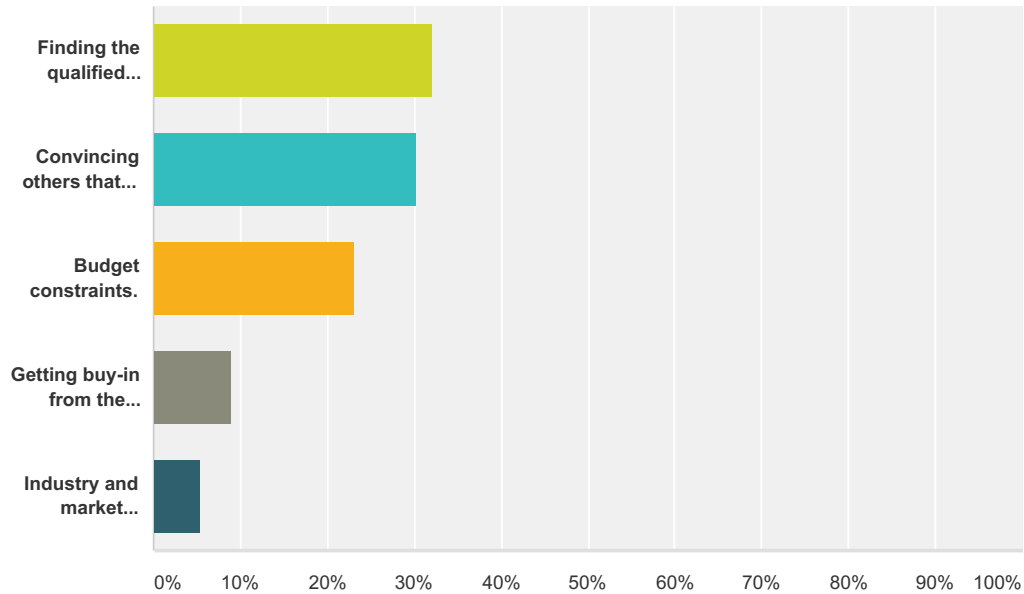
Answered: 48 Skipped: 37



Answer Choices	Responses
I don't know.	39.58% 19
Over \$100,000 USD	18.75% 9
\$10,000 USD and under	16.67% 8
\$10,001 to 50,000 USD	14.58% 7
50,001 to 100,000 USD	10.42% 5
Total	48

Q17 What would be the biggest challenge faced by your organization to implement content strategy as a far-reaching and ongoing practice?

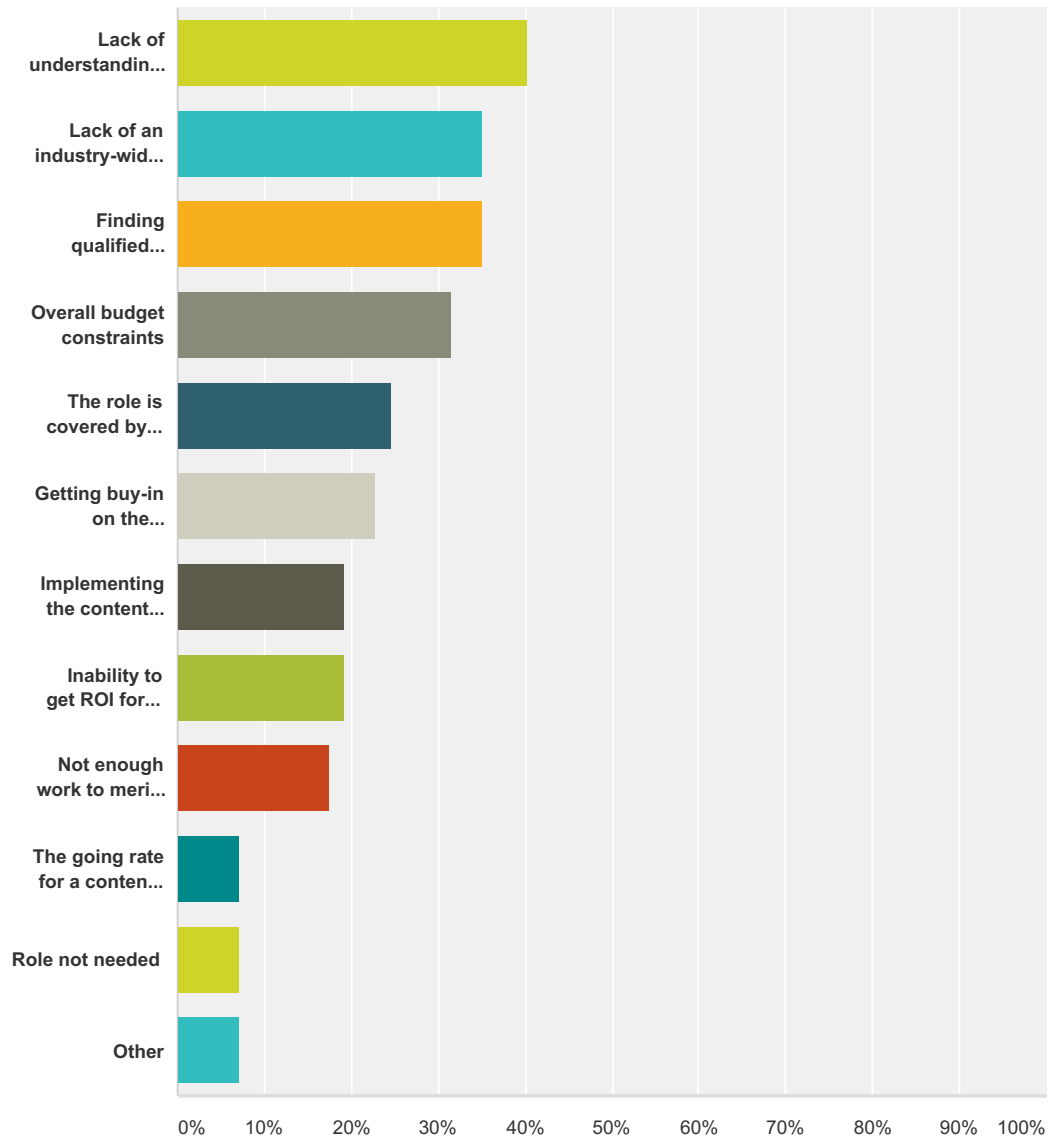
Answered: 56 Skipped: 29



Answer Choices	Responses
Finding the qualified personnel with the requisite expertise to design and lead the development and ongoing management of the CS structure.	32.14% 18
Convincing others that Content Strategy can deliver tangible and measureable benefits that outweigh the costs.	30.36% 17
Budget constraints.	23.21% 13
Getting buy-in from the executives.	8.93% 5
Industry and market uncertainty.	5.36% 3
Total	56

**Q18 What do you think are the biggest obstacles in hiring a content strategist?
Select all that apply.**

Answered: 57 Skipped: 28



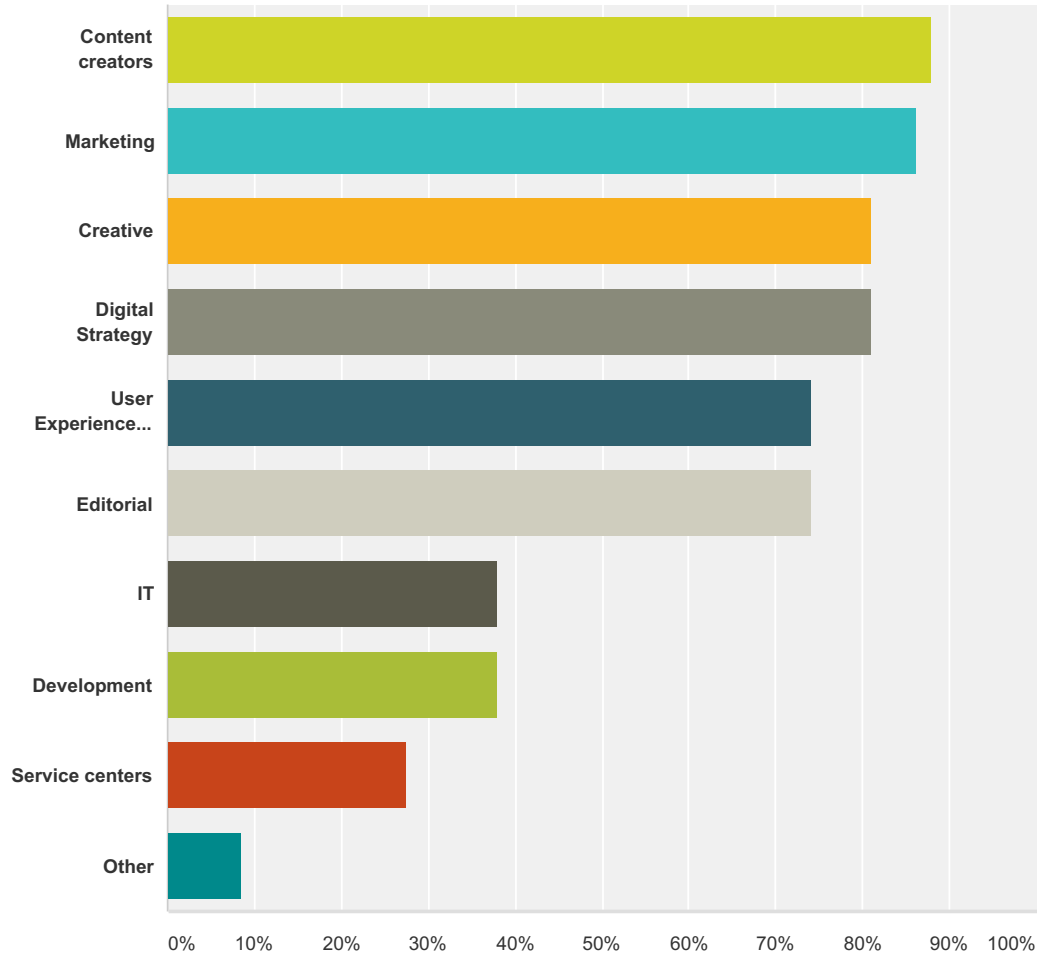
Answer Choices	Responses
Lack of understanding within our organization of the roles and functions of a content strategist	40.35% 23
Lack of an industry-wide definition of what a content strategist does	35.09% 20
Finding qualified personnel with the requisite expertise	35.09% 20
Overall budget constraints	31.58% 18
The role is covered by other people in the organization	24.56% 14
Getting buy-in on the executive level	22.81% 13

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Implementing the content strategy once it has been defined	19.30%	11
Inability to get ROI for hiring a content strategist	19.30%	11
Not enough work to merit a full-time position	17.54%	10
The going rate for a content strategist is too expensive for our budget	7.02%	4
Role not needed	7.02%	4
Other	7.02%	4
Total Respondents: 57		

Q19 What cross-disciplines do you envision a content strategist working with? Select all that apply.

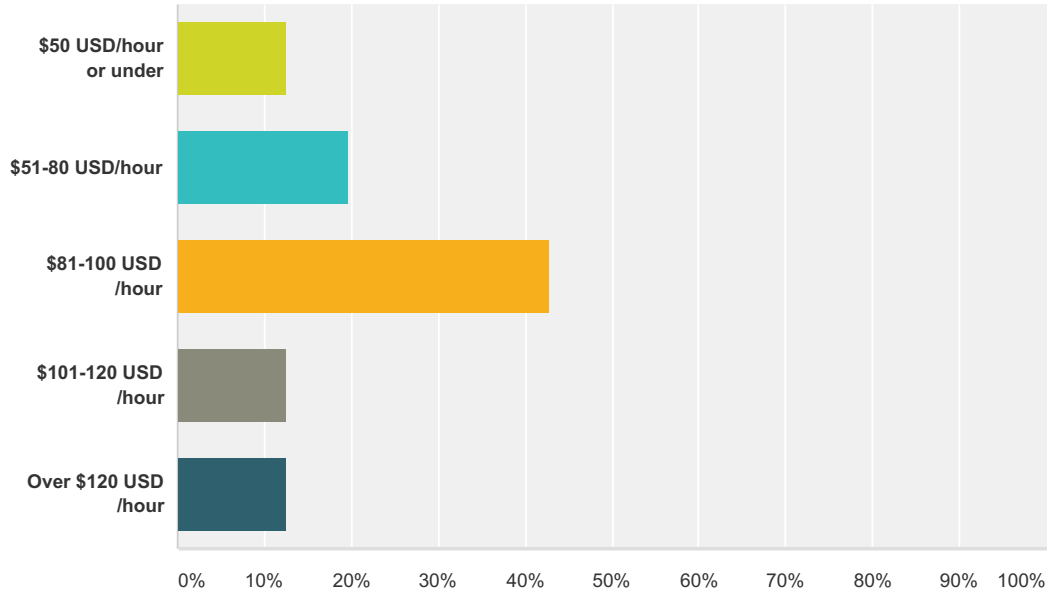
Answered: 58 Skipped: 27



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Content creators	87.93%	51
Marketing	86.21%	50
Creative	81.03%	47
Digital Strategy	81.03%	47
User Experience Design	74.14%	43
Editorial	74.14%	43
IT	37.93%	22
Development	37.93%	22
Service centers	27.59%	16
Other	8.62%	5

Q21 What would you pay a freelance content strategist who has at least 5-7 years of experience?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 29

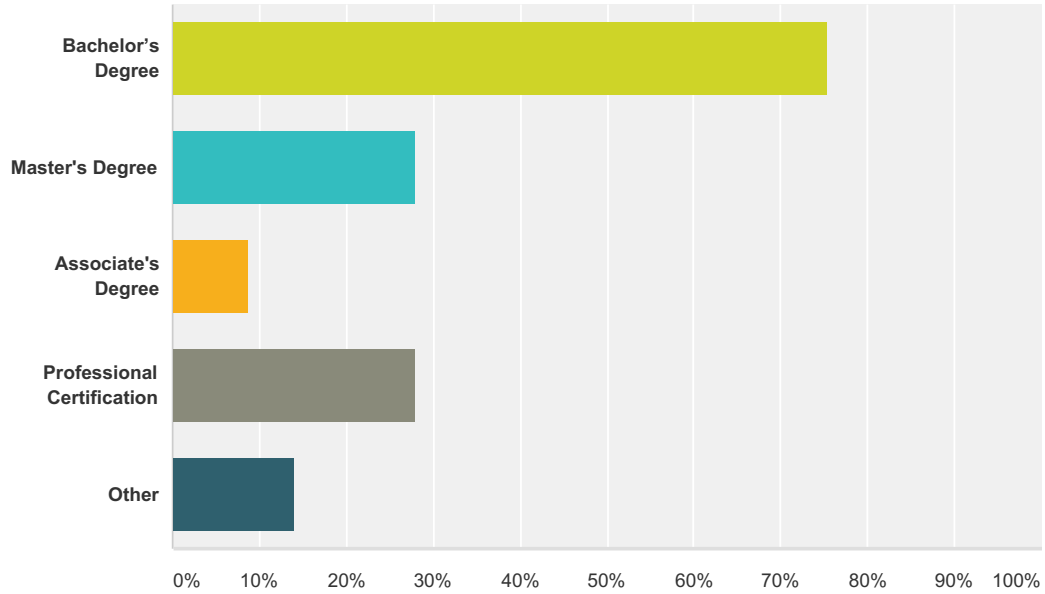


Answer Choices	Responses	
\$50 USD/hour or under	12.50%	7
\$51-80 USD/hour	19.64%	11
\$81-100 USD /hour	42.86%	24
\$101-120 USD /hour	12.50%	7
Over \$120 USD /hour	12.50%	7
Total		56

Total Respondents: 58

**Q20 What type of education or training do you think a content strategist should have?
Select all that apply.**

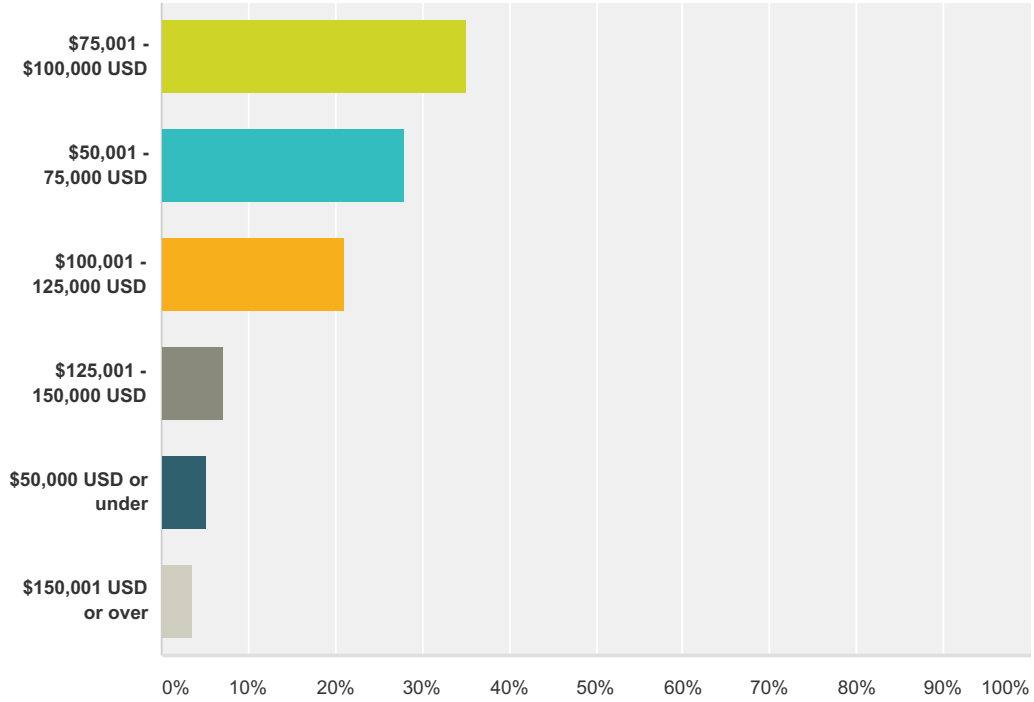
Answered: 57 Skipped: 28



Answer Choices	Responses	
Bachelor's Degree	75.44%	43
Master's Degree	28.07%	16
Associate's Degree	8.77%	5
Professional Certification	28.07%	16
Other	14.04%	8
Total Respondents: 57		

Q22 What annual salary would you pay a staff content strategist who has between 5-7 years of experience?

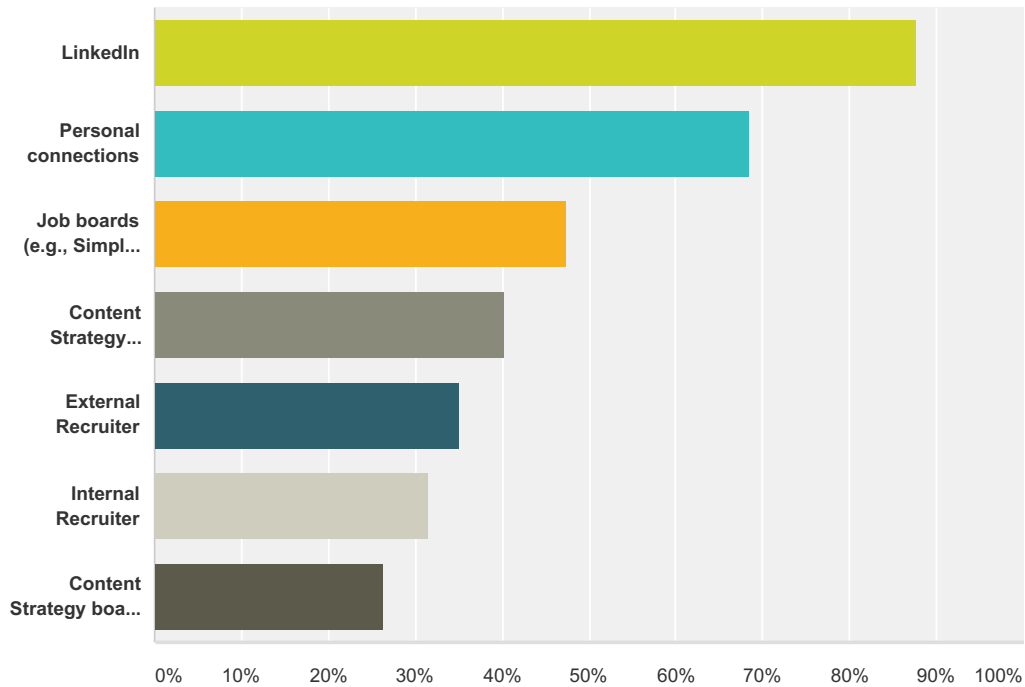
Answered: 57 Skipped: 28



Answer Choices	Responses
\$75,001 - \$100,000 USD	35.09% 20
\$50,001 - 75,000 USD	28.07% 16
\$100,001 - 125,000 USD	21.05% 12
\$125,001 - 150,000 USD	7.02% 4
\$50,000 USD or under	5.26% 3
\$150,001 USD or over	3.51% 2
Total	57

Q23 Where would you look to recruit a content strategist for a project or full-time role? Select all that apply.

Answered: 57 Skipped: 28



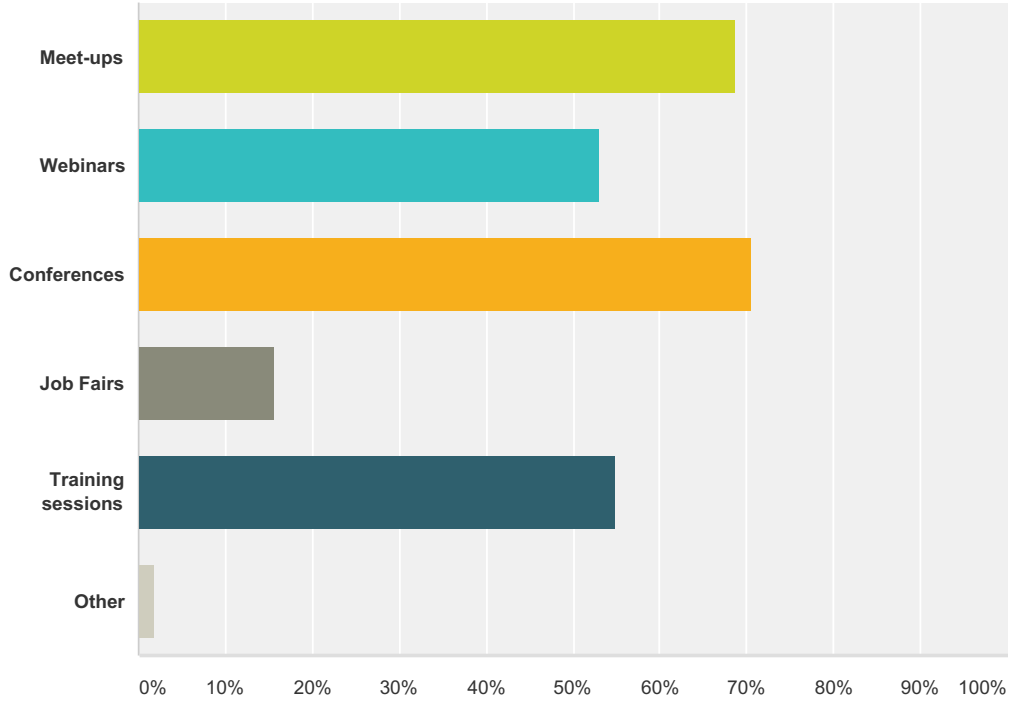
Answer Choices	Responses
LinkedIn	87.72% 50
Personal connections	68.42% 39
Job boards (e.g., Simply Hired, Monster, Dice, Workopolis, etc.)	47.37% 27
Content Strategy Meet-ups	40.35% 23
External Recruiter	35.09% 20
Internal Recruiter	31.58% 18
Content Strategy boards on Google Groups or Google Plus	26.32% 15
Total Respondents: 57	

Q24 Please share any thoughts or questions you have about content strategy, this survey or the Content Strategy Alliance. We want to know!

Answered: 9 Skipped: 76

Q25 Would you like to see any of these types of content strategy events in your area? Select all that apply.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 34



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Meet-ups	68.63%	35
Webinars	52.94%	27
Conferences	70.59%	36
Job Fairs	15.69%	8
Training sessions	54.90%	28
Other	1.96%	1
Total Respondents: 51		