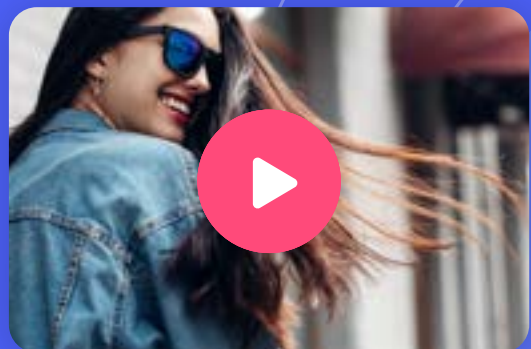


The Bazaarvoice channel mix study

Discover how a PESO framework can help balance paid, earned, shared, and owned efforts to win the digital shelf



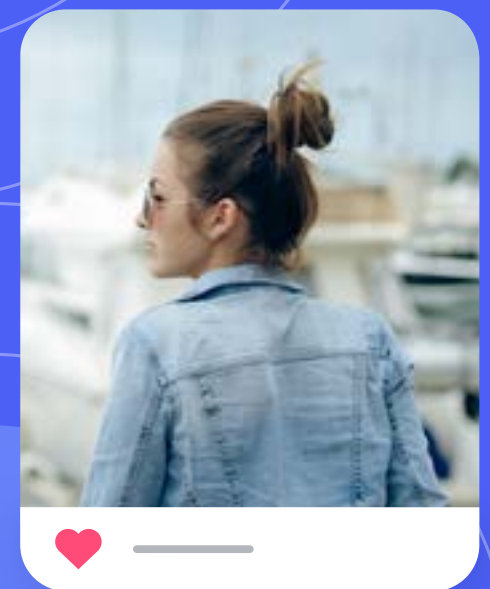
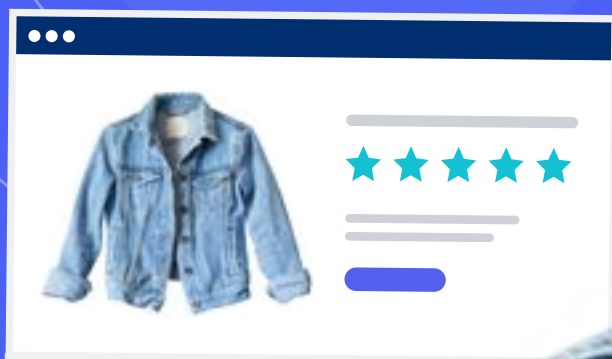
PAID



EARNED



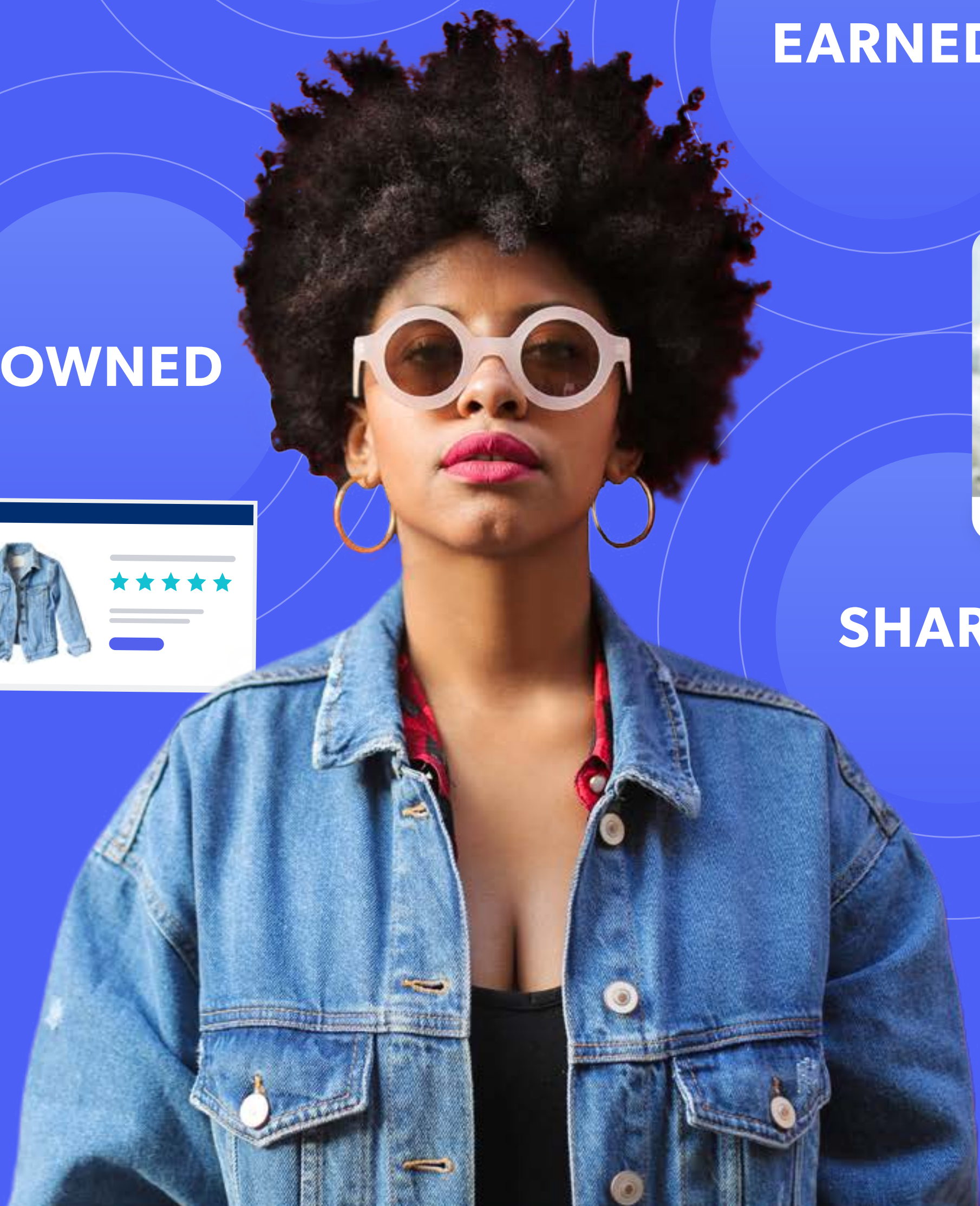
OWNED



SHARED



bazaarvoice™



What's inside

Introduction.....	3
Most content teams (and budgets) are siloed	4
Paid media faces headwinds	6
SEO drives earned content performance	7
Leading businesses are embracing shared content	8
The economy is driving budget cuts	9
The “AND” approach to content and channel mix	10
Populate rich PDPs with branded and organic content	11
Key takeaways.....	15

Introduction

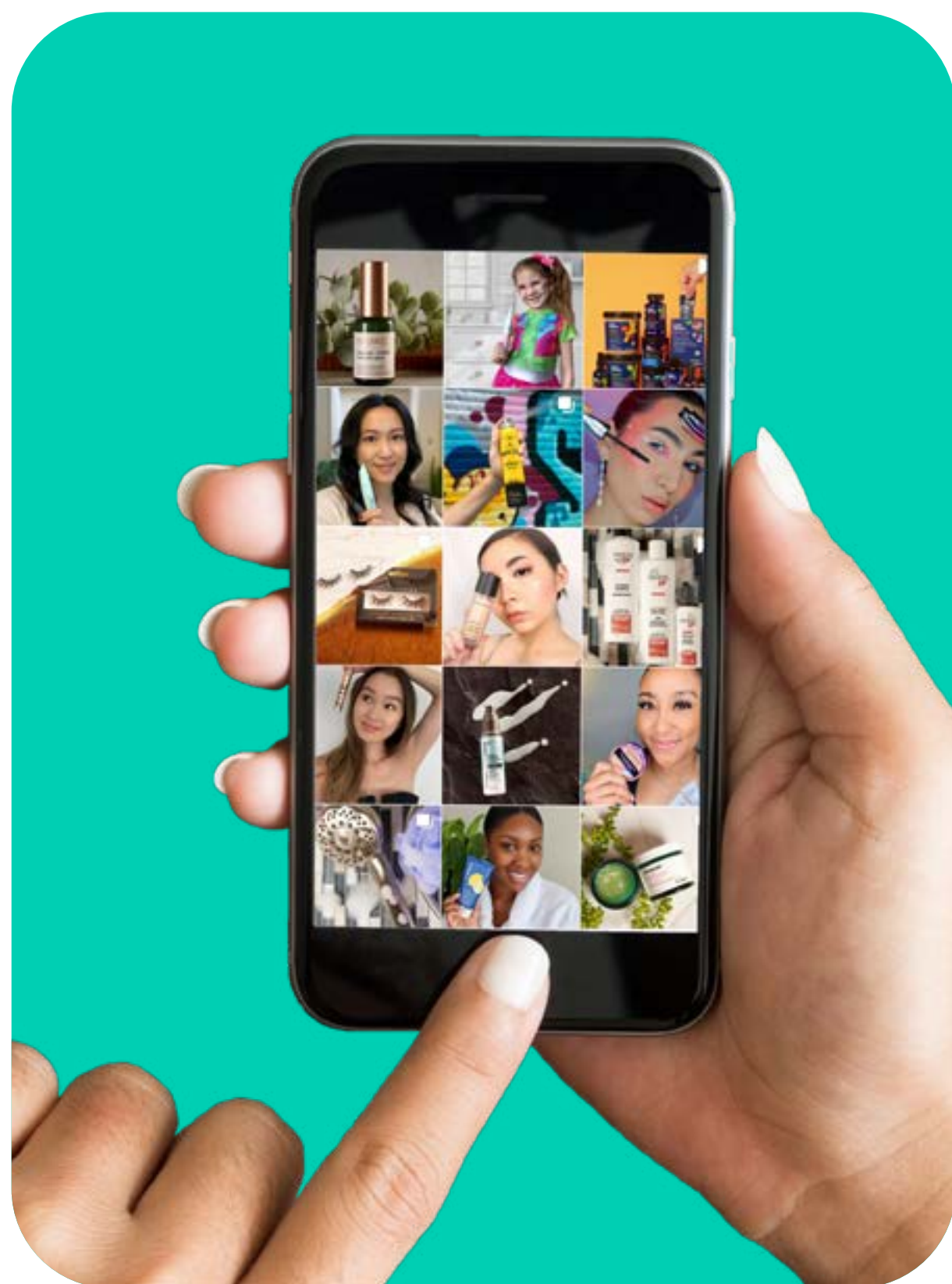
Commerce today happens wherever and whenever brands and shoppers find each other. And with instant and always-on connectivity, commerce is everywhere—always at our fingertips, online and offline.

Engaging consumers by pushing messages through advertising no longer works. And as shoppers embrace the return to more personal, conversational experiences, brands must connect their paid, earned, shared, and owned content efforts into a cohesive content strategy that nurtures these human-to-human connections.

The one constant across it all? The voice of the customer is key.

But are brands keeping pace with these shopper demands?

We surveyed over 400 brands and retailers from six countries (UK, US, Canada, Germany, France, and Australia) to find out¹. Our study explores how marketing teams around the world organize and align their content creation and advertising efforts and offer guidance for achieving a balanced channel mix.



For years, brands have always leaned on paid channels to amplify branded content, tactics, and offers. In fact, more than \$700B was spent on paid advertising alone in 2022. Now we are seeing a rebalancing to optimize the MMM (marketing mix modeling) as consumers are yearning for organic content from other shoppers i.e. earned and shared content and channels. As Bazaarvoice's CMO, I too am hunting for the perfect mix.

Zarina Stanford | CMO at Bazaarvoice

Most content teams (and budgets) are siloed

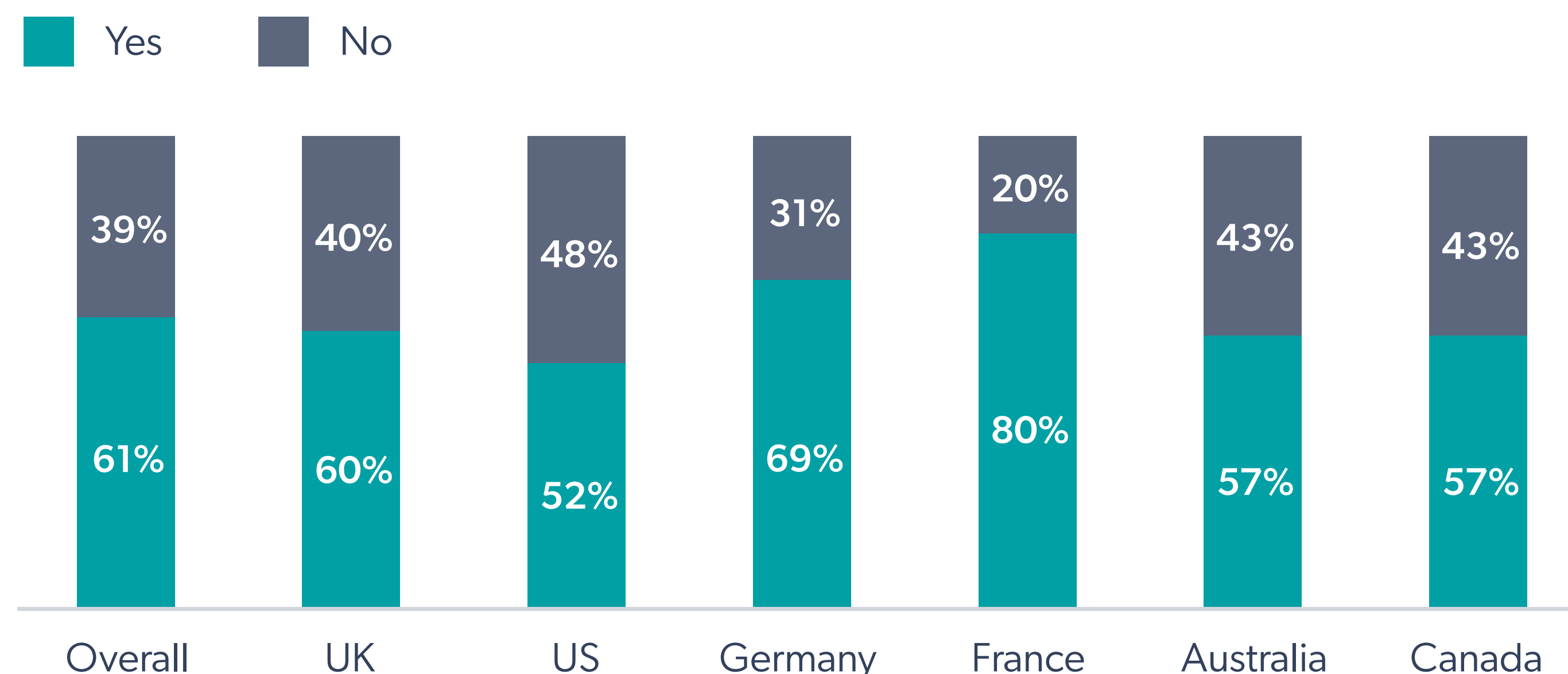
Content is king AND queen. Yet, many brands and retailers still don't have a holistic, company-wide content strategy, with most survey respondents identifying their content teams as siloed.

61% of respondents said their e-commerce, content, and social resources sit on different teams. While 70% of these teams report they are fully aligned on content production, the remaining 30% are only somewhat or not aligned on content efforts. And only 17% of brands and retailers have a centralized budget that does not divide paid, earned, shared, and owned (PESO) content.

Content alignment also varies significantly by region.

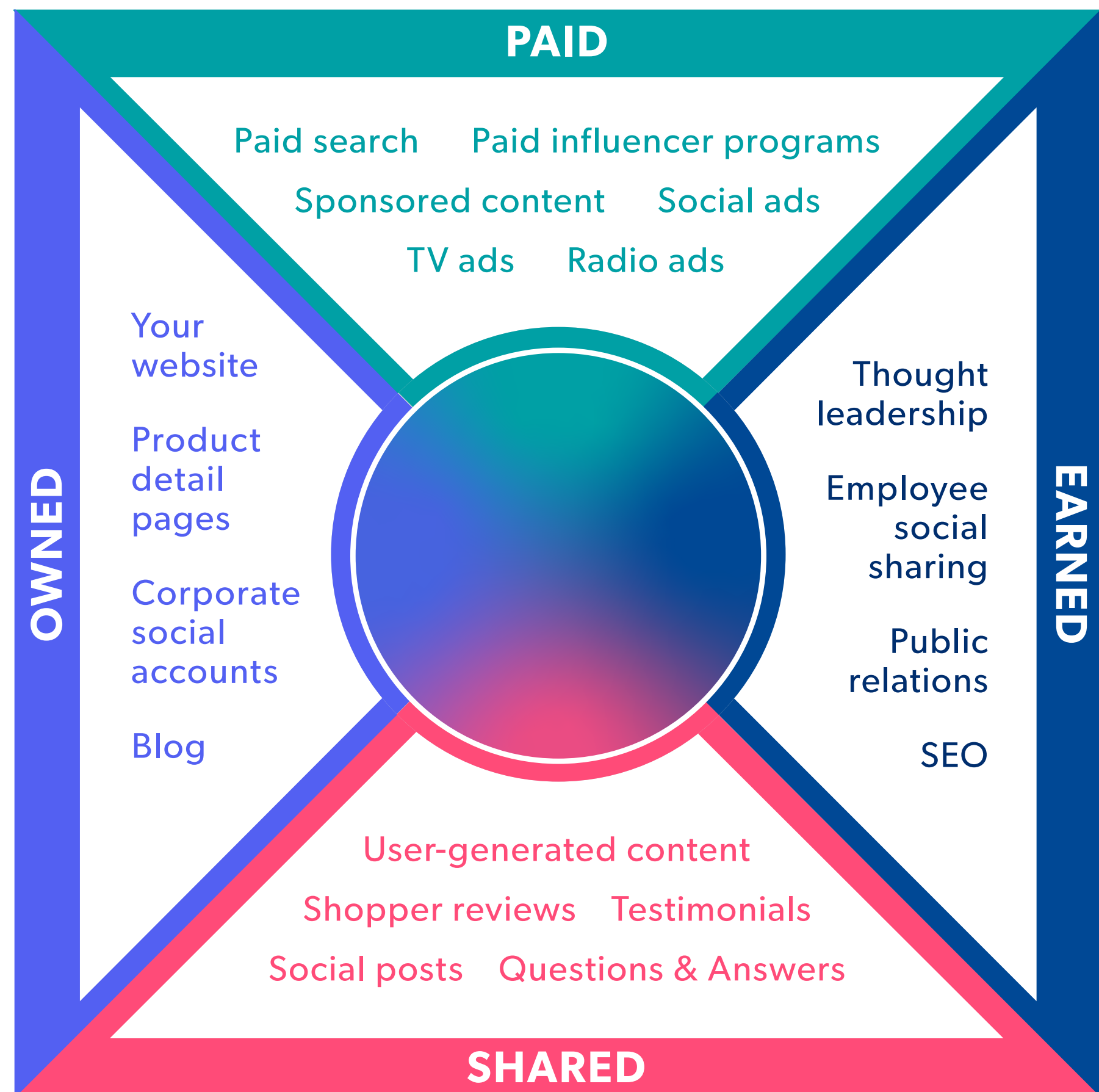
Businesses in France are most likely to have their content and social resources sit in different teams (80%), while those in the U.S. are least likely (52%). 84% of U.S. and 80% of German companies were most likely to say their e-commerce, content, and social teams were fully aligned on planning and executing content — while those in Australia were least likely (56%).

Q. DO YOUR E-COMMERCE, CONTENT AND SOCIAL RESOURCES SIT IN DIFFERENT TEAMS?



The PESO model blends four media types — paid, earned, shared, and owned — into an integrated and measurable communications strategy. It integrates:

- **Paid:** Advertising content and channels you pay for
- **Earned:** Non-paid content created from publicity
- **Shared:** Organic user-generated content created by customers
- **Owned:** Content and channels you create, own, and manage



Asked which elements could be better aligned, 100% of U.S. respondents said their content strategy could be better aligned. Many also reported their teams could be more aligned on content planning (57%) and business reporting (43%).

Canadians were most likely to say teams needed better alignment on objectives (71%), Germans were more likely than other countries to say goals (40%), KPIs (80%) and content planning (60%), the French were more likely to say budget (46%), and Australians the most likely to say same reporting lines (17%).

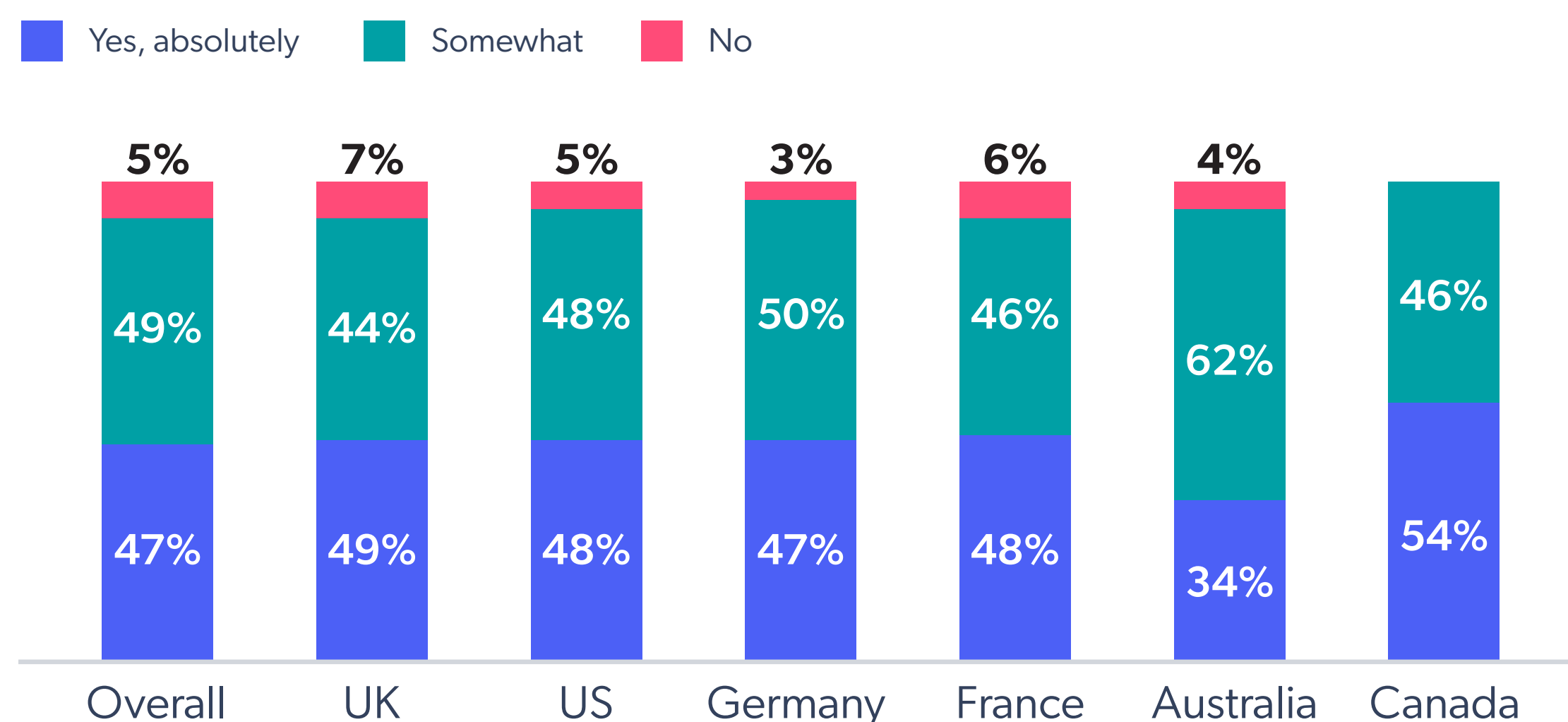
The siloed approach to content planning and execution makes it unnecessarily challenging for brands to keep up with content demand. Overall, only 22% of our survey respondents said they keep up with demand for fresh content and minimum retail requirements.

Paid media faces headwinds

Thanks to deprecation of cookies and other third-party identifiers, paid media is getting less effective, harder to manage, and trickier to measure. 47% of survey respondents can measure the success of their paid advertising activities, while 48% reported they could “somewhat” measure their paid performance. 5% said they could not gauge the success of their paid advertising at all.

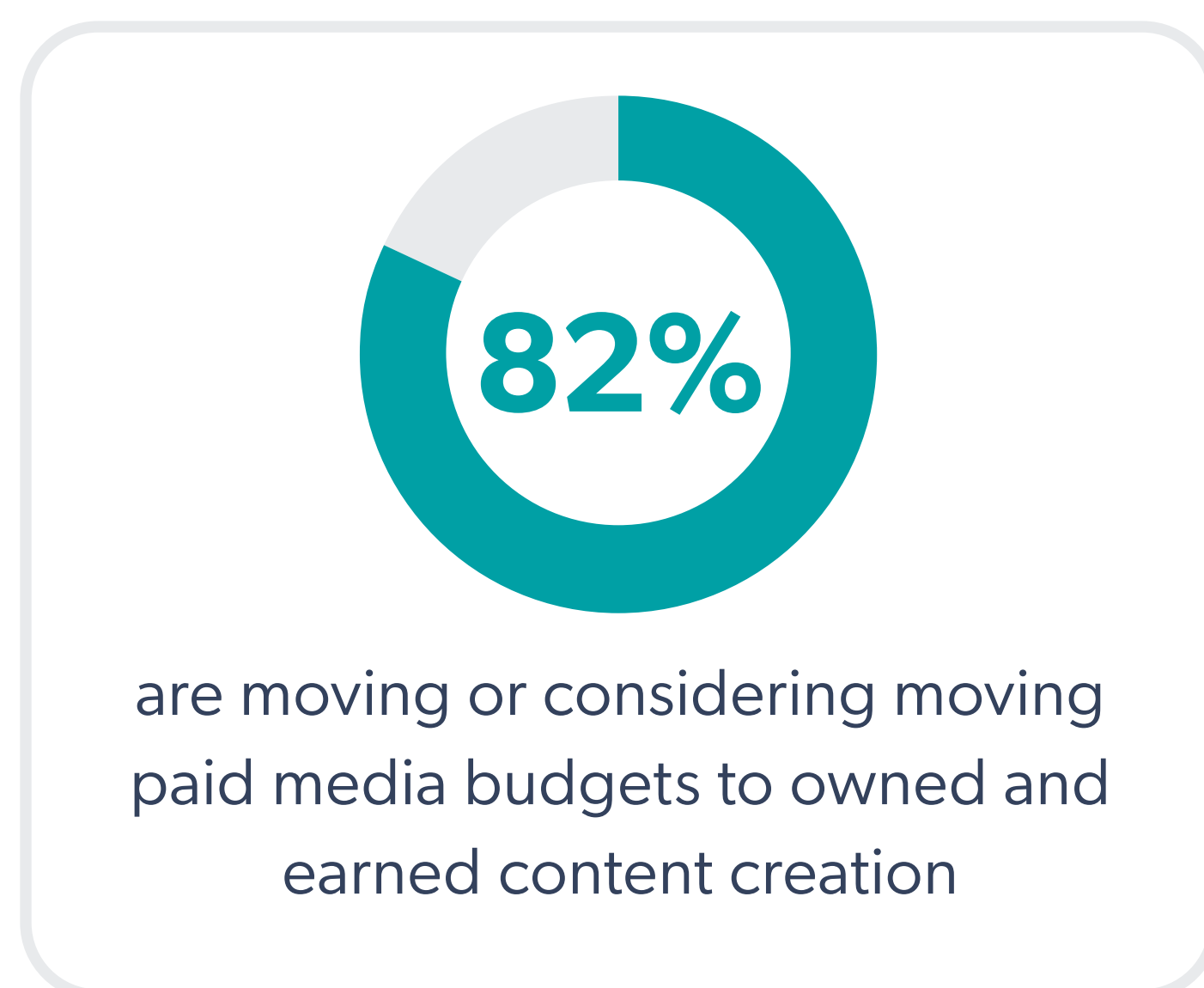
Australian businesses were least confident in their paid measurement capabilities, with only 34% responding they can absolutely gauge success. Canada topped the scale with 54% of brands and retailers fully confident in measuring paid activity.

Q. CAN YOU GAUGE HOW SUCCESSFUL YOUR PAID ADVERTISING IS?



With over half of our respondents feeling less confident in measuring paid performance, paid advertising initiatives may be on the chopping block.

82% of respondents are moving or considering moving paid media budgets to owned and earned content creation. And this chunk of change could be significant — 4% of respondents would consider moving 6%-10% of their paid budget, and another 47% plan to re-allocate more than 10%.



SEO drives earned content performance

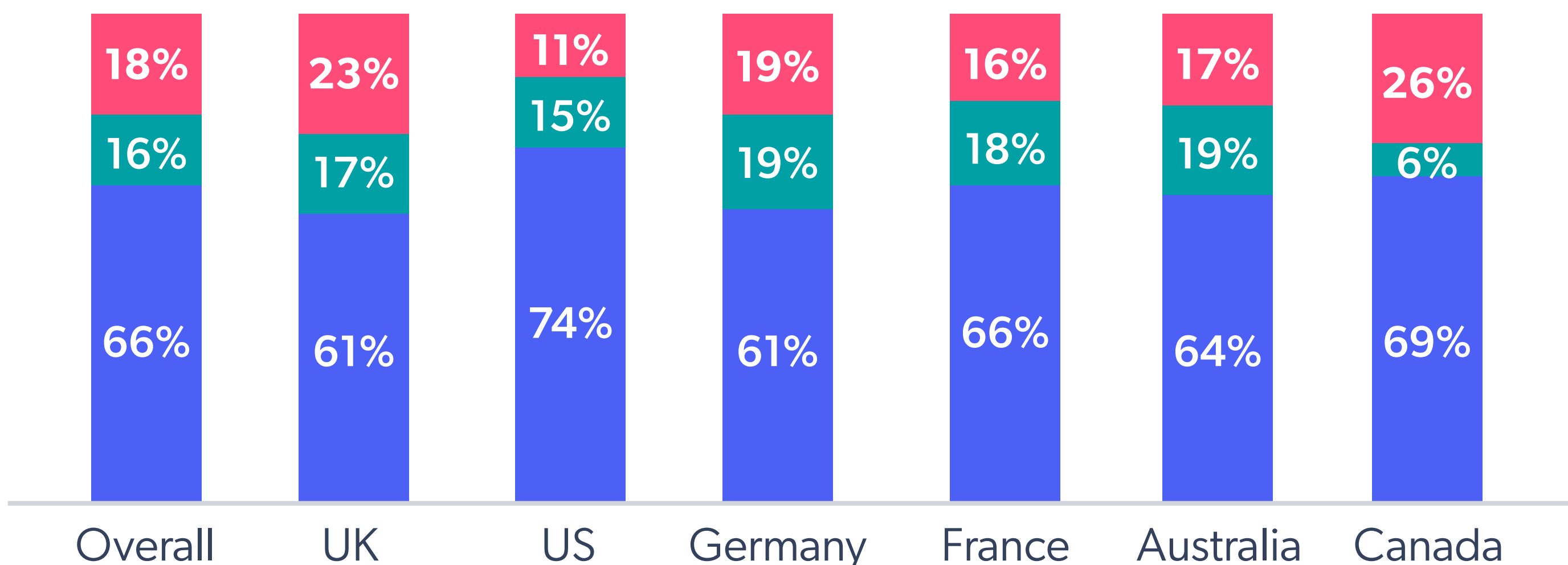
When it comes to earned content, search engine optimization (SEO) offers one of the strongest returns on investment — up to 12:1². Optimizing your product pages for search can reduce the cost of customer acquisition by 87%³. Not only does SEO bring more traffic to your website, but an effective SEO strategy can also improve conversions and drive revenue across channels.

According to our survey, 66% of companies have made SEO/organic search a critical part of their content strategy, but the numbers vary across geographies. Brands and retailers in the U.S. are most likely to say they make SEO/organic search a critical part of their content strategy (74%), while those in Germany and the U.K. are least likely (61% for both).



Q. IS SEO A CRITICAL PART OF YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY?

■ Yes, absolutely ■ Somewhat ■ No



What does social commerce have to do with SEO improvements?

Fresh content from reputable sources is a major component of Google's ranking criteria. One of the best ways to add this content to your product pages is through user-generated content, like product reviews and Q&As.

Google recognizes that when it comes to products or services, customers are the experts. The search engine considers product pages with **authentic customer reviews** to be authoritative sources — and rewards them in the rankings.

Customers also naturally include valuable keywords in their content, boosting your page's potential to rank as search engines crawl the new content.

Leading businesses are embracing shared content

Brands and retailers increasingly recognize the importance of shared content, often curated through social media. 62% of our respondents said they have a robust strategy in place around social commerce, and another 25% are currently working on it.

Nearly a third (29%) of shoppers turn to social platforms to research products⁴, and 74% report that shopper photos increase their likelihood of buying. 50% of consumers say these shopper photos make them more confident in a purchase than the brand's professional photos⁵.

Your social media channels and the social content you bring to your brand sites (and other experiences) are increasingly important throughout the many stages consumers move through as they make purchase decisions:

Show me.

Use content that shows what a product looks like in real life. Feature helpful product photos and videos that showcase sizing and fit.

Convince me.

Consumers want to see products in context, from consumers they can relate to. For example, how would this coat look on a small frame?

Inspire me.

Shoppers might not know what they're looking for. Social media content can inspire shoppers to buy things they didn't know existed.

But it's not just social content that convinces consumers to buy — other user-generated content like reviews, Q&A, and quotes also play an important part. 78% of people say product reviews from other customers are the most influential factor in their purchase decisions⁵.

Given its ability to attract and convert shoppers, 86% of our survey respondents believe that more authentic user-generated content in their paid and owned media would improve the performance of their ads and content.

The economy is driving budget cuts

With today's economic uncertainty, brands and retailers are expected to do more with less. 61% of respondents said the recession would impact their budget, and another 20% are unsure. Of these, 81% expect to reduce their marketing budget, and 34% expect to reduce their team's headcount.

As a result, ROI is under increased scrutiny. 73% of survey respondents are focused on improving their marketing dollars' ROI, and another 17% plan to.

These budget cuts come at a time when consumers are demanding ever more content. Companies have increasing content needs to support personalization initiatives, as well as ongoing product page search engine optimization programs. Shoppers also consume content in many channels and prefer different kinds of content at different stages of the buyer's journey.

The result is you have to acquire more content, and you have to do it at a lower cost. The only way to make it happen is through extreme efficiency — **you need to be able to build and scale reusable, fit-for-purpose content that drives ROI.**

The “AND” approach to content and channel mix

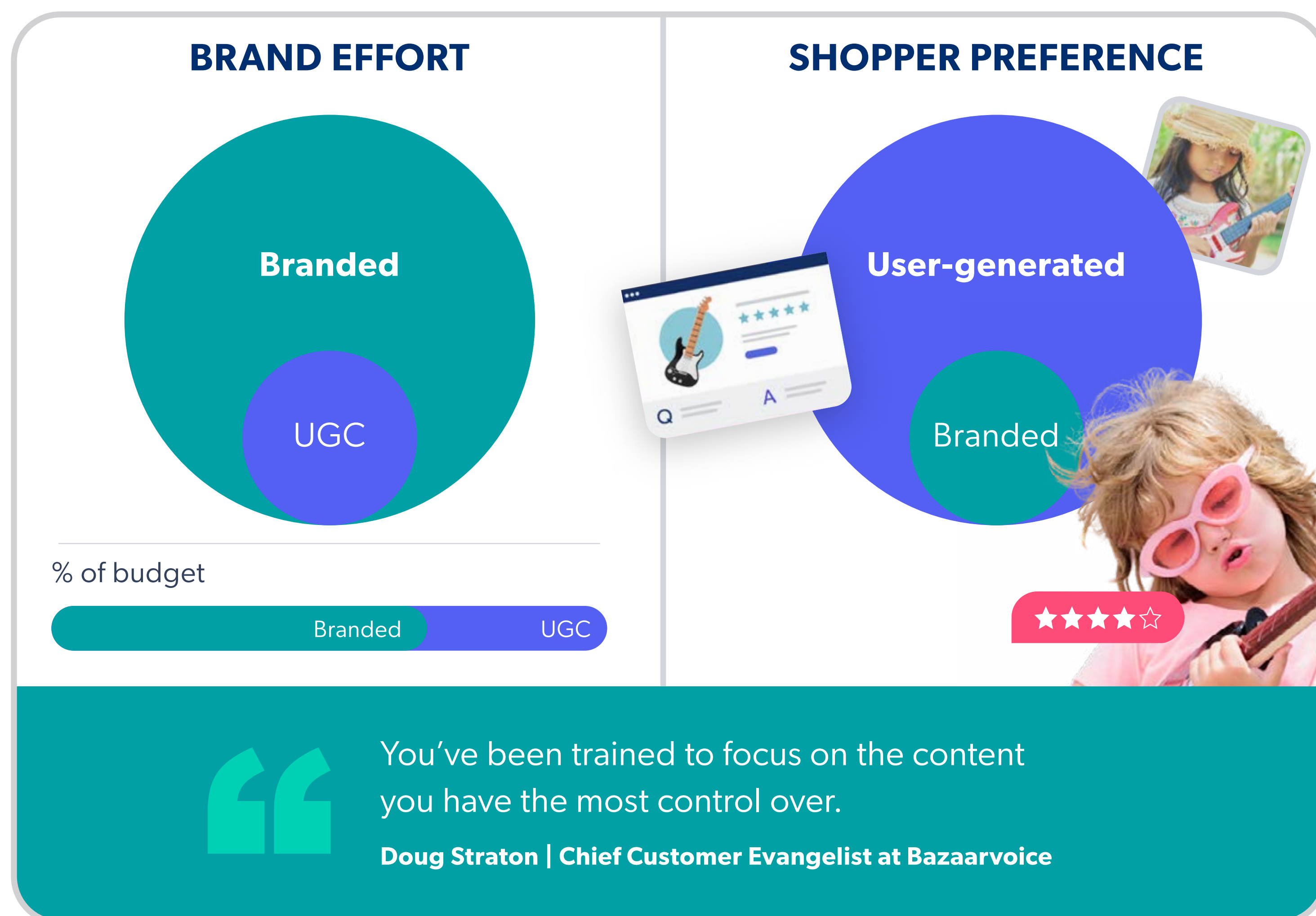
While paid and owned efforts are expensive and resource-intensive, adding more earned and shared content to your mix brings efficiencies to your production — and drives results.

Unfortunately, many marketers are getting tripped up by content bias. We naturally focus on the things we have the most control over and the things we’re investing in most. For brands, that’s typically owned content promoted via paid advertising.

2.4x

Consumers are **2.4x more likely to say UGC is more authentic than branded content**

The Content Bias



This focus on creating and promoting owned content comes largely at the expense of shared and earned content. This approach is the complete opposite of what customers want. 36% of the 8,000+ shoppers surveyed in our 2022 Bazaarvoice Shoppers Experience Index said brand advertisements do nothing for them when making a purchase decision. But 78% of shoppers said product reviews from other customers are most influential to their purchases⁵.

To better meet consumer demand under economic pressures, brands should think more holistically about a cohesive content strategy that shifts the mix toward shared and earned content. We call it the 'AND' strategy. It's not one type of content over another. This strategy ditches the content bias to **balance the production of paid, earned, shared, AND owned content according to shopper preferences in an efficient content supply chain.**

A digital content supply chain approach allows you to shift your marketing strategy from content creation to content **collection, curation, and distribution** — to gain economies of scale. You'll end up with authentic, user-generated content that consumers prefer.

Populate rich PDPs with branded and organic content

An 'AND' content strategy, powered by an efficient content supply chain, not only helps you deliver on consumer demands within budget — it's also key to winning the digital shelf.

The popularity of social is impacting our commerce experiences off of social. Optimize your digital shelf to grow wherever your customers are, including all the channels and touchpoints where people discover, learn, and buy from your brand online.

The convergence of paid, earned, shared, and owned content (and how shoppers interact with that content) is giving rise to the **rich product detail page (PDP) — a shopping experience that flips the traditional e-commerce experience on its head.**

The rich PDP aids shoppers in buying decisions

Unlike the traditional product page that begins with a product and surrounds it with supporting content, the rich PDP begins with images and other user-generated content, which serve as a gateway for learning about products.

Since research is a key factor in a shopper's journey, it's important to facilitate learning through your content. 74% of online shoppers conduct research before making a purchase, 59% in-store shoppers show the same behavior⁴.

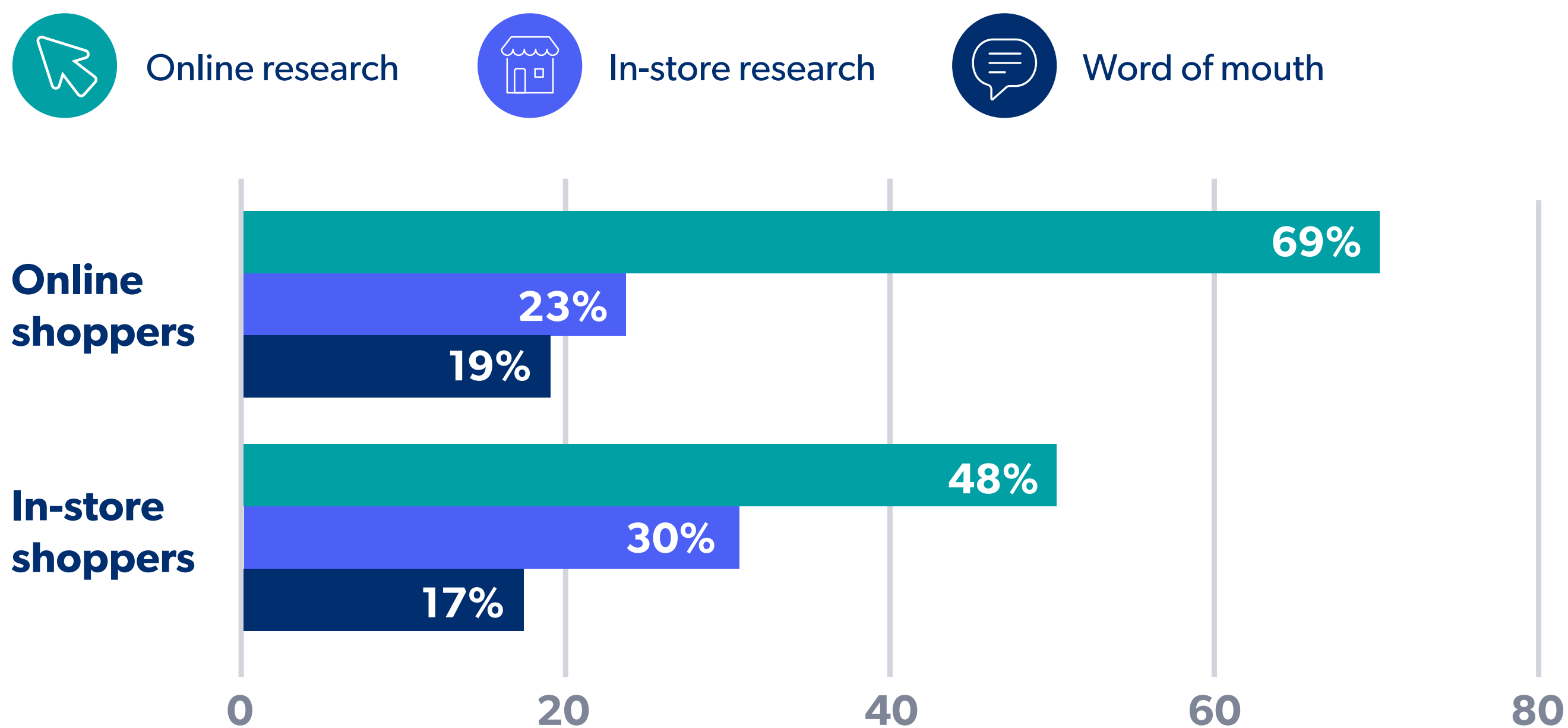
Online shoppers primarily conduct this research through:

- Web browser searches (64%)
- Brand websites (60%)
- Retailer websites (55%)

55% of in-store shoppers also conduct research through web browser searches⁴.

User-generated content, like reviews and shopper photos, plays a key role in the research process for online and in-store shoppers. From images and videos to ratings and reviews, user-generated content represents some of the top things shoppers look for to make confident purchases.

SHOPPER RESEARCH BEHAVIOR PRIOR TO PURCHASING



Shoppers' research preferences

When shoppers interact with relevant user-generated content, brands and retailers see up to a 145% lift in conversion, increased revenue per visitor, and increased average order values⁴.

Balancing and organizing your various types of content into rich PDPs allows them to serve as one central repository to efficiently populate all of your touchpoints — social, search, web, apps, syndication, and in-store displays — with content that drives conversions.

This is how you will win the shelf (both digital and IRL).

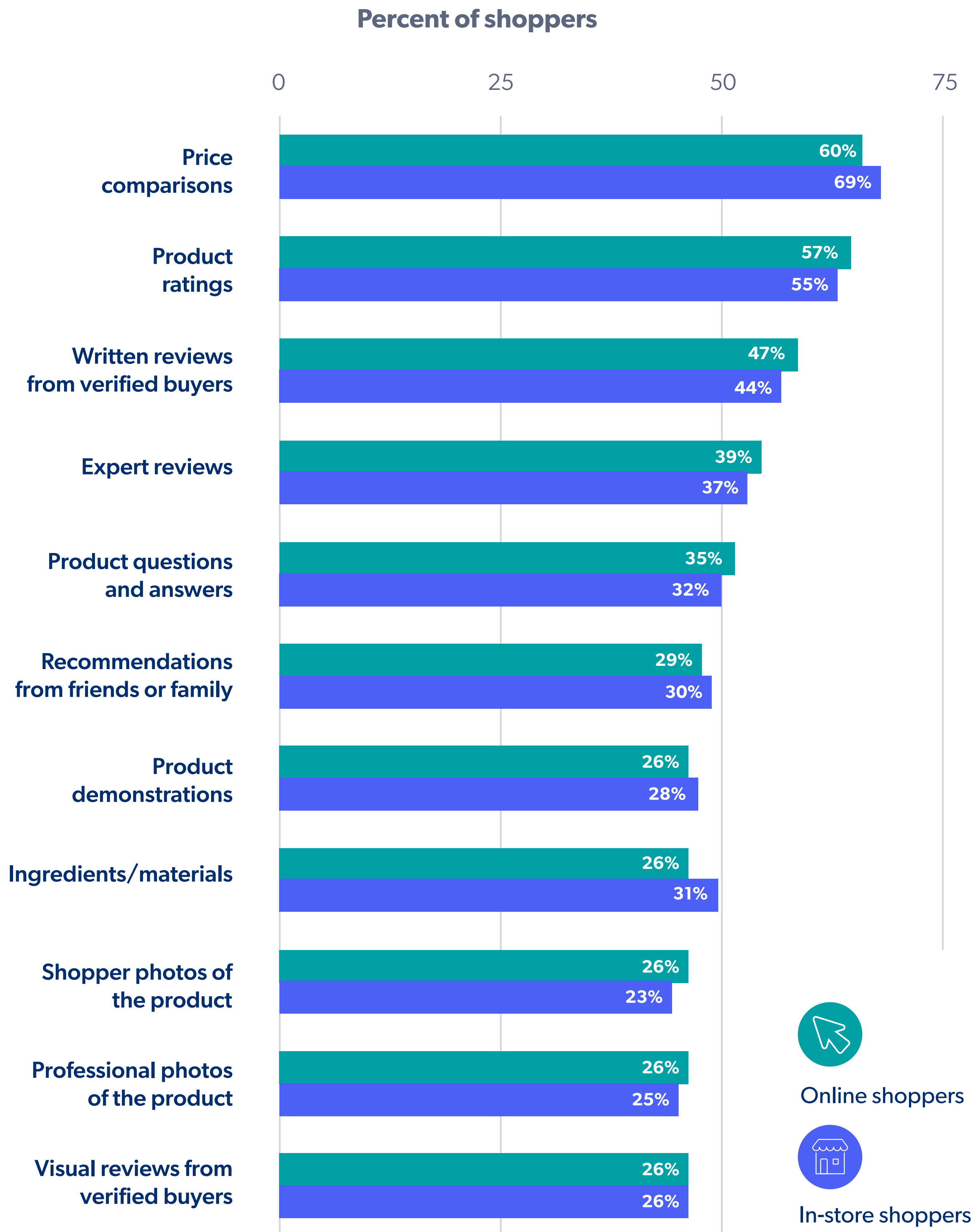


Wherever you are and whatever your industry, balancing the content and channel mix is key. Let us help you find your bazaar voice. #findyourbazaarvoice.

Zarina Stanford | CMO at Bazaarvoice



User-generated content, like reviews and shopper photos, plays a key role in the research process for both online and in-store shoppers.



Key takeaways

- Paid, earned, shared, and owned content programs are still primarily managed in silos. Only 17% of brands and retailers have a centralized budget that does not divide branded and organic content.
- Marketers are struggling to measure paid performance accurately. Many have shifted significant budgets from paid to earned and shared content.
- SEO drives performance in the earned content space, and most marketers invest in SEO/organic search as part of their content strategy. Search performance is also becoming more popular as a social commerce KPI.
- Brands are prioritizing user-generated content. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents said more authentic shopper content in their paid and owned media would improve performance.
- The ongoing recession is driving a heightened focus on ROI. Most marketers are working with less budget, and about a third of respondents said headcount would be cut, too.
- Brands should adopt an 'AND' strategy focusing more on earned and shared content. Creating rich PDPs from this content will allow you to efficiently cater to consumers' content preferences — and win the digital shelf.

Supercharge your commerce engine with Bazaarvoice

Collect, display, and distribute authentic, user-generated content at scale to drive brand and pipeline growth while reducing your operating costs and enjoying greater ROI.

[Learn more](#)

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Making shopping smarter.