



CFE Media™

In partnership with

TREW
MARKETING
Smart Marketing for Engineers™

Marketing to Engineers

April 2014

inspiring engineering interaction



Table of contents

Section	Pages
Introduction and methodology	3
Summary	4
Full results	5-14
Age comparison	15-26



Introduction and methodology

Overview

Marketers in charge of targeting technical audiences are grappling with the shift toward online and content marketing and how to implement an approach that effectively engages an engineering audience. They need to understand the types of content engineers require to better perform in their jobs, and where, why and how they look for and use this content in the evaluation and purchase process (or, “throughout the buying cycle”). While research exists in the consumer and broad B2B markets about content marketing and published surveys touch on the technical professional’s use of content, we identified a gap and embarked upon taking a deeper dive into this area to educate and inform marketers of the most effective ways to target this highly technical audience.

CFE Media and TREW Marketing performed this research by targeting this audience—the engineer—to learn about how they find, use and engage with content to help them better do their job.

Sample

The sample was selected from recipients of CFE Media’s publications for whom email addresses were available and combined with a list of recipients provided by TREW Marketing.

Method

Recipients were sent an e-mail asking them to participate in this study. The e-mail included a URL linked to the online questionnaire.

Data collected: February 27, 2014, through March 10, 2014

Number of respondents: 705

- *Margin of error: +/- 3.7% at a 95% confidence level*

Incentive: Participants were offered the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$50 VISA gift card.



Summary

Engineers rely on vast amounts of information each day to do their jobs, so it's no surprise to find that engineers use a variety of both traditional and newer content sources to obtain the necessary facts and trusted opinions to make an informed buying or specifying decision. Engineers will dig deep to better understand an issue, corresponding options, and potential outcomes when making a product or system recommendation. Engineers are inquisitive and yet skeptical of sales hype, and thus need to feel very comfortable with the technical aspects of a product prior to making a recommendation.

Notable insights

The average age of engineers involved with industrial applications is 50+, however there are only small differences in where engineers over 40 and under 40 go to find reliable new product information (search engines, vendor websites, trade publications, etc.).

When researching the latest products or technologies, engineers most often use product specifications, reviews, trade publication articles, and case studies/application stories.

Engineers are very comfortable with downloading and viewing PDF files (preferred over other delivery methods).

66% of respondents will go through three or more pages of search results, much deeper than the average consumer.

The most valuable sources of information are supplier/vendor websites (86%), search engines (84%), trade publications (78%), and trade publications' websites (67%).

54% of respondents search for content several times per week.

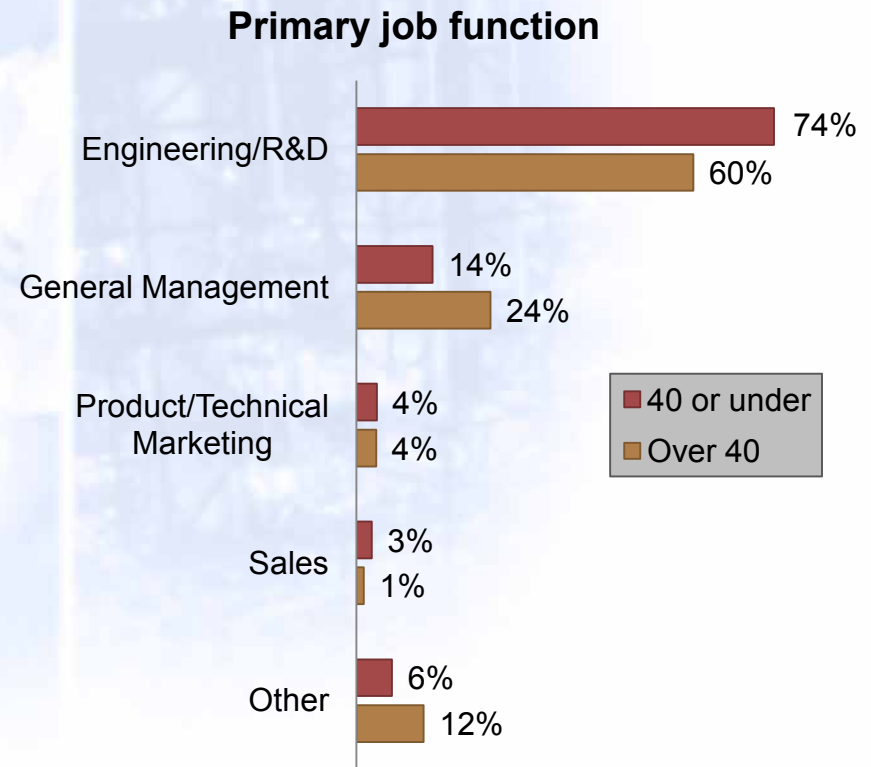
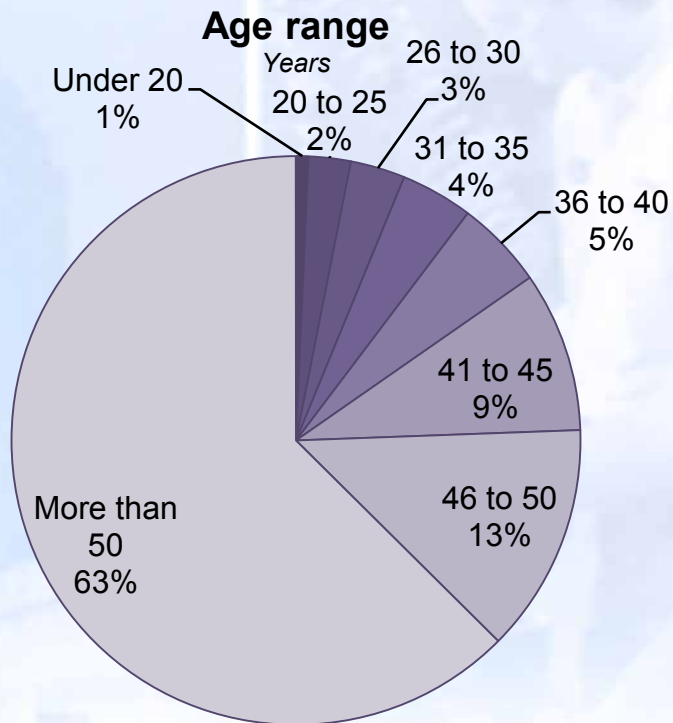
74% of respondents are more likely to do business with a company that regularly produces new or updated content.



Full results

Respondent profile

Eighty-five percent of respondents are more than 40 years old, and the majority have engineering and/or research and development responsibilities.

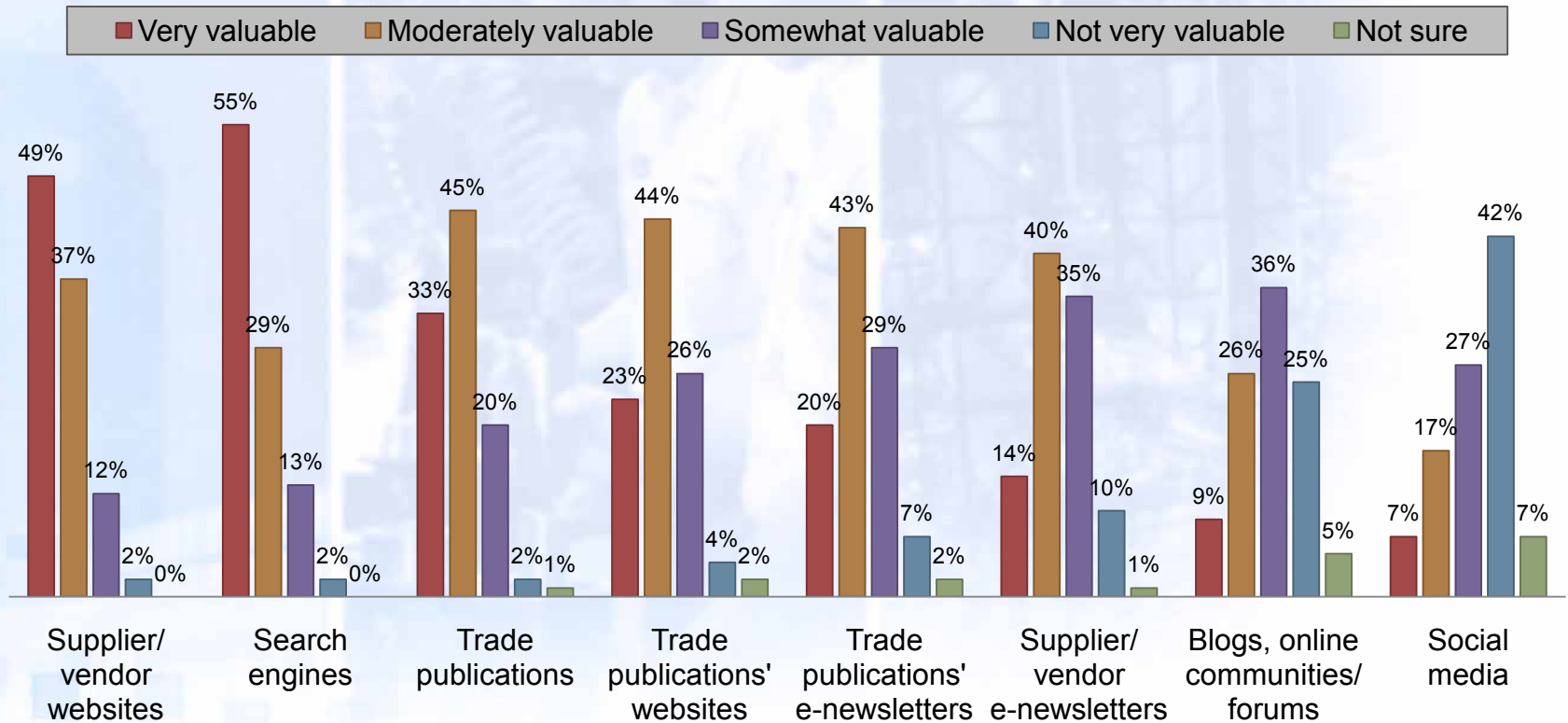


Q: Which of the following ranges includes your current age? (n=702)

Q: What is your primary job function? (n=111; 596)

Valuable information sources

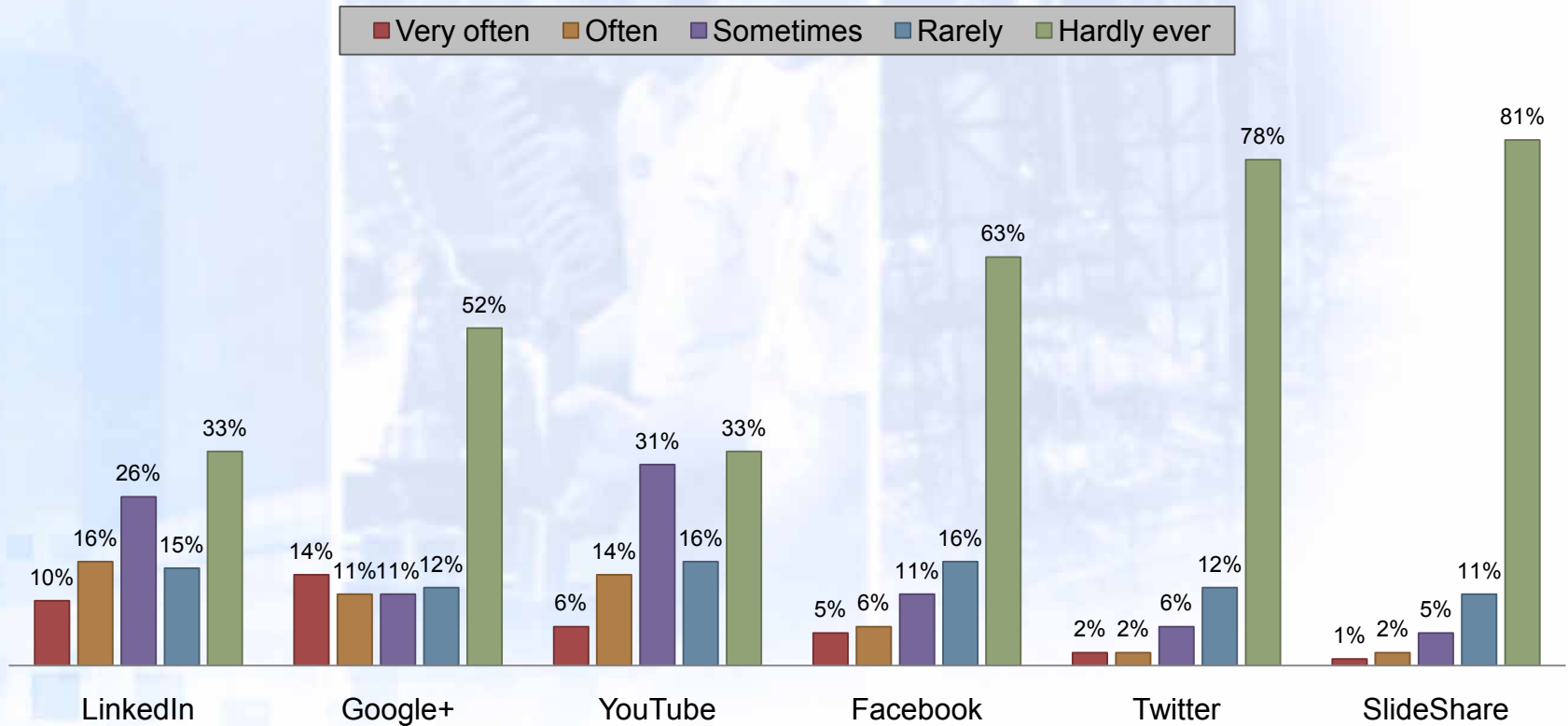
The most valuable sources of information, according to respondents, are supplier/vendor websites (86%), search engines (84%), trade publications (78%), and trade publications' websites (67%).



Q: In your opinion, how valuable are the following sources when seeking information on the latest engineering technologies, industry trends, and products? (n=705)

Social media channels as a source

LinkedIn (26%), Google+ (25%)*, and YouTube (20%) are the top three social media sites used for work-related information.

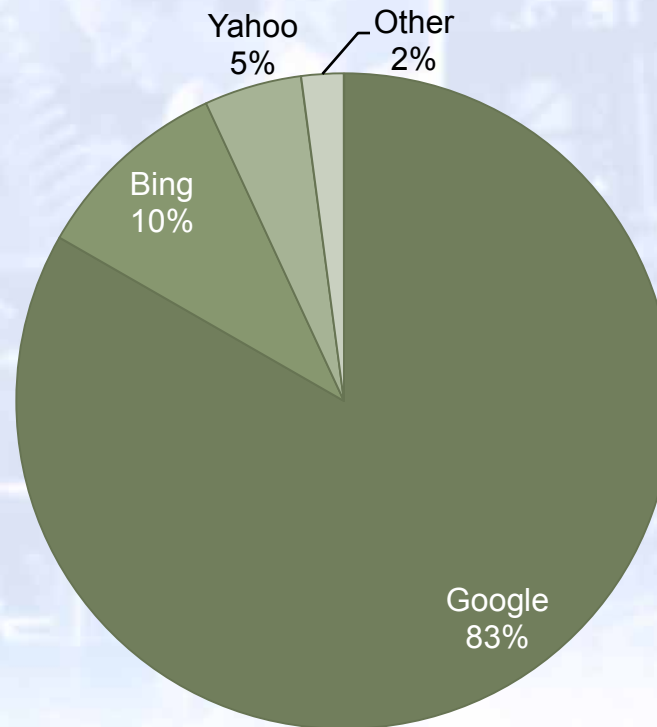


Q: How often do you use the following social media channels as a source for work-related information? (n=704)

*There may have been some confusion between Google+ and Google.

Search engines

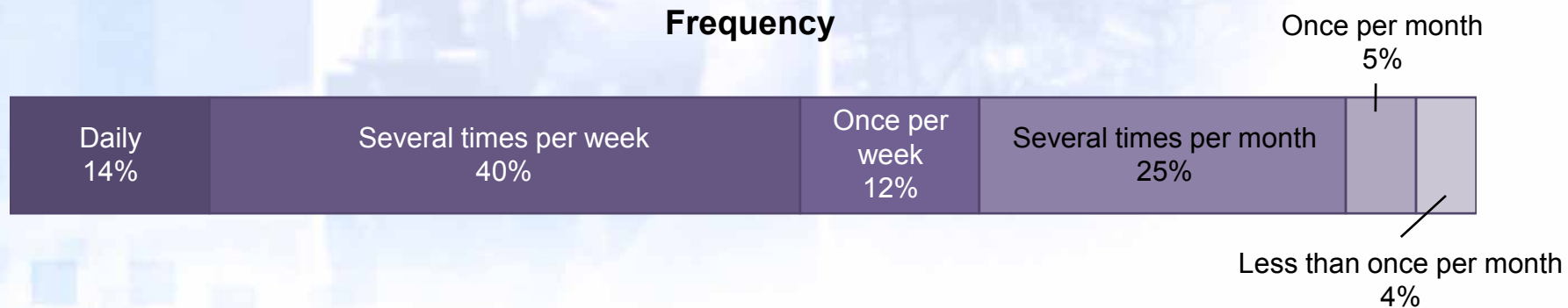
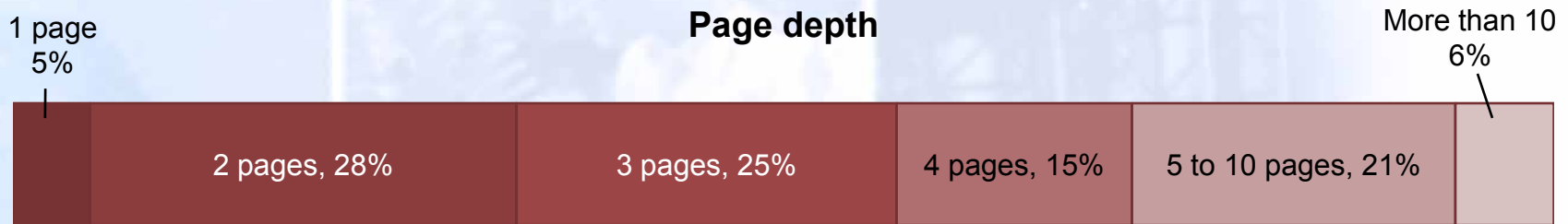
Google is the overwhelming choice with 83% of respondents primarily using Google to search for content.



Q: Which search engine do you most often use in your work? (n=705)

Searching for content

Sixty-seven percent of respondents will view three or more pages of search results before settling or revising their search terms. Forty percent search for content several times per week, with 14% searching daily.



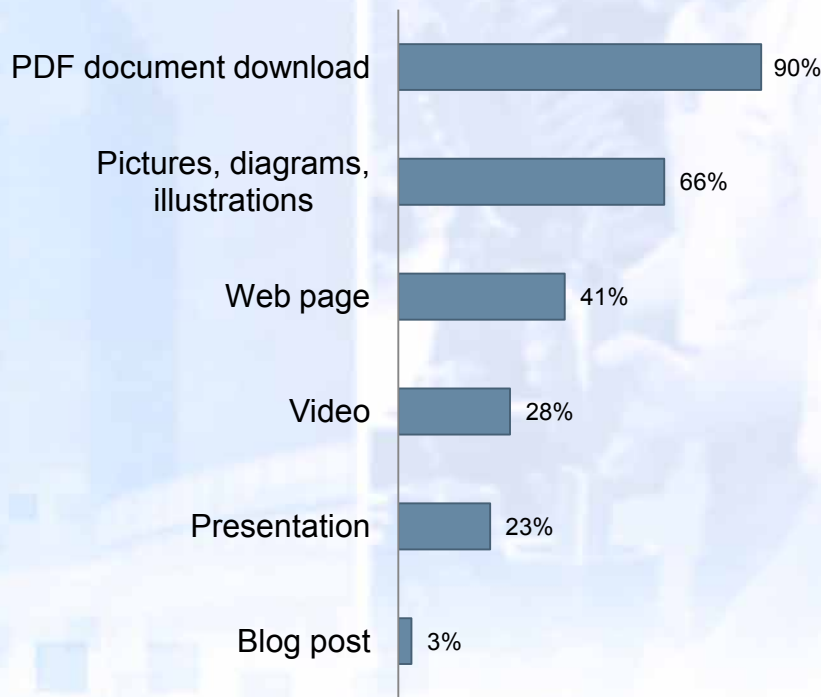
Q: When searching for information on a topic using a search engine, how many pages of results are you willing to view before you select one or start your search over? (n=705)

Q: How often did you seek out content, such as that listed in the previous question, in the last 6 to 12 months to help you in your job? (n=705)

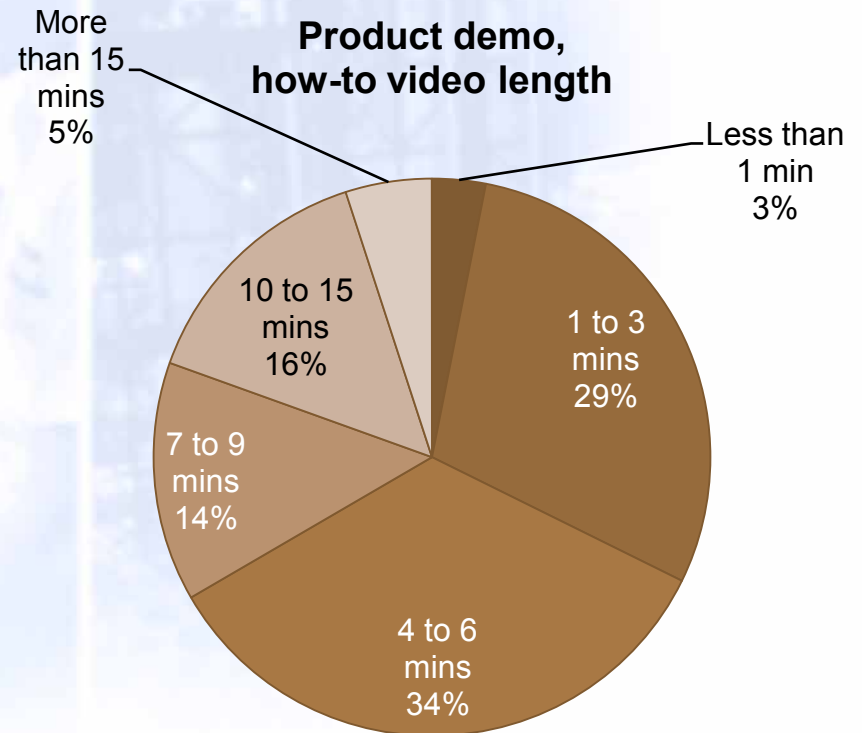
Content formats

The majority of respondents prefer to view content as downloadable PDF files, and 34% are willing to watch a product demo or how-to video that is between 4 and 6 minutes long.

Format preference



Product demo, how-to video length

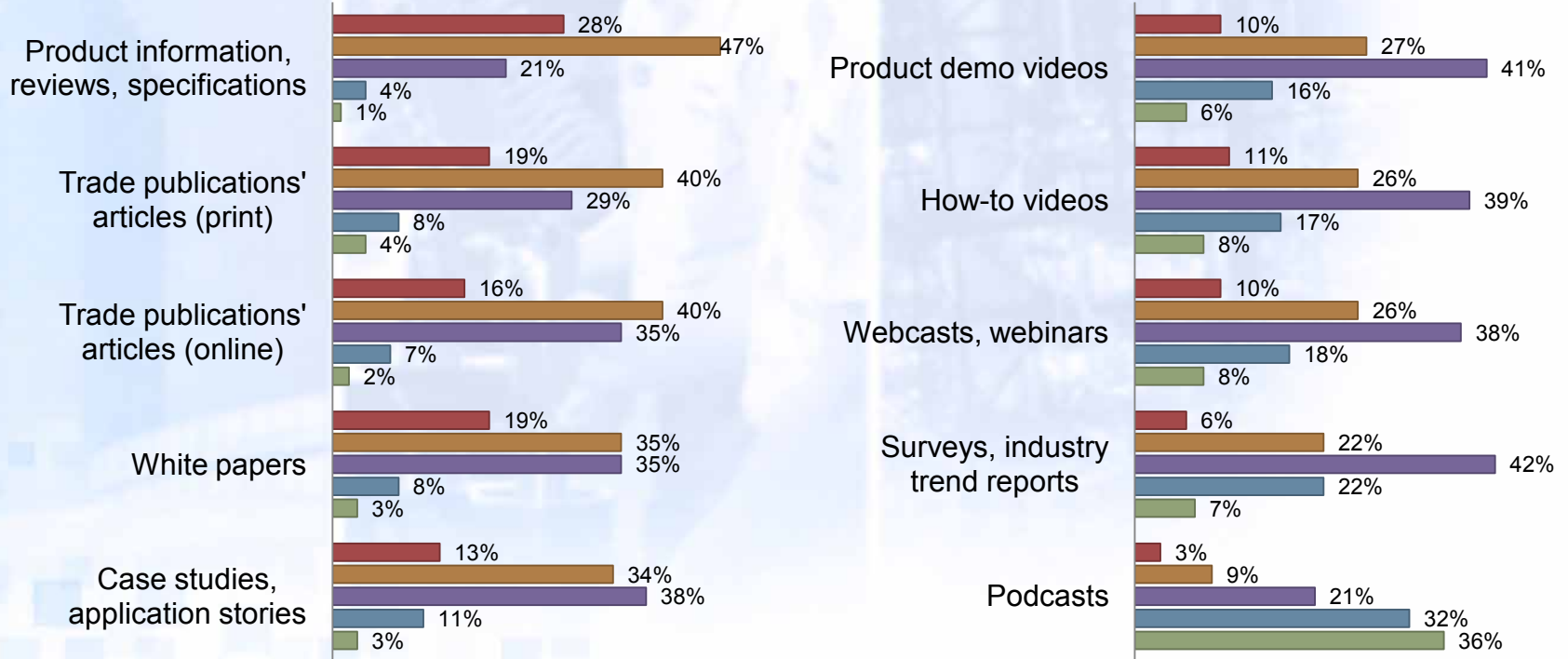
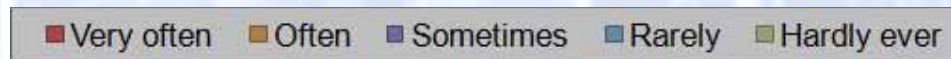


Q: In what format do you prefer to view content? (n=705)

Q: How long are you willing to watch a product demo or how-to video? (n=705)

Content used

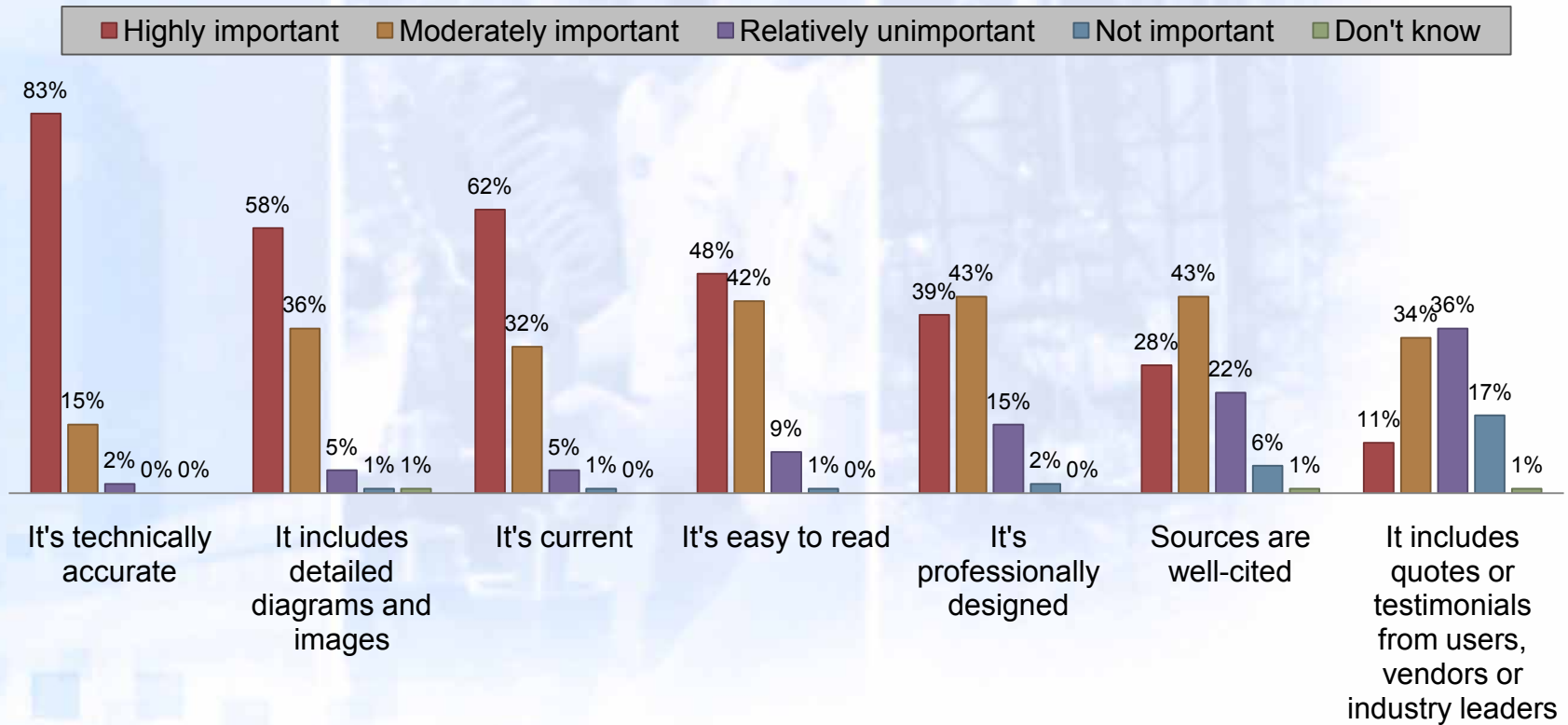
The top content types used by respondents are product information, reviews and specifications (75%); trade publications' print articles (59%); trade publications' online articles (56%); and white papers (54%).



Q: How often do you use the following types of content when researching the latest engineering technologies, industry trends, products, and services? (n=705)

Important content qualities

The top three important aspects of content that respondents look for are technical accuracy (98%), detailed diagrams and images (94%), and current information (94%).

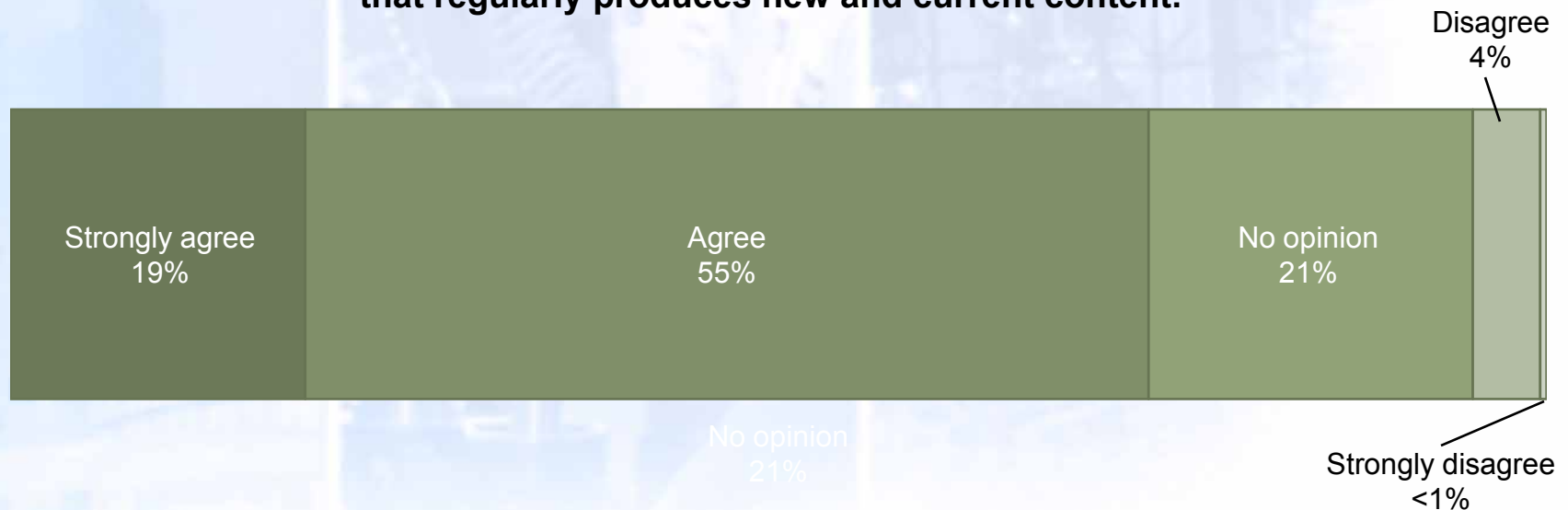


Q: How important (helpful) to you are the following aspects of content? (n=705)

Value of producing content

Seventy-four percent of respondents agree that if a company produces new and current content they are more inclined to work with them in the future.

“You are more likely to do business with a company that regularly produces new and current content.”



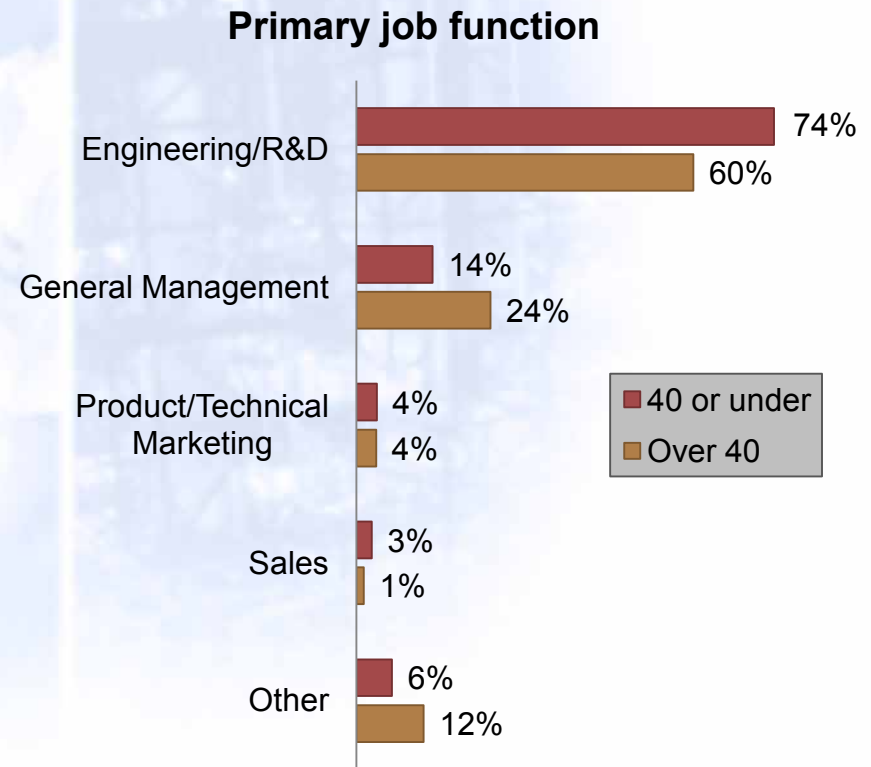
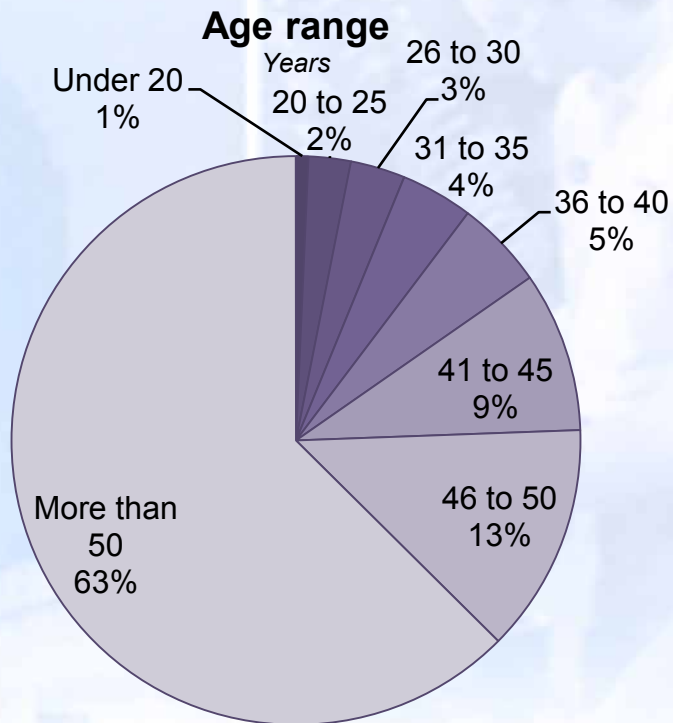
Q: Agree or disagree: You are more likely to do business with a company that regularly produces new and current content. (n=705)



Age comparison

Respondent profile

Eighty-five percent of respondents are more than 40 years old, and the majority have engineering and/or research and development responsibilities.

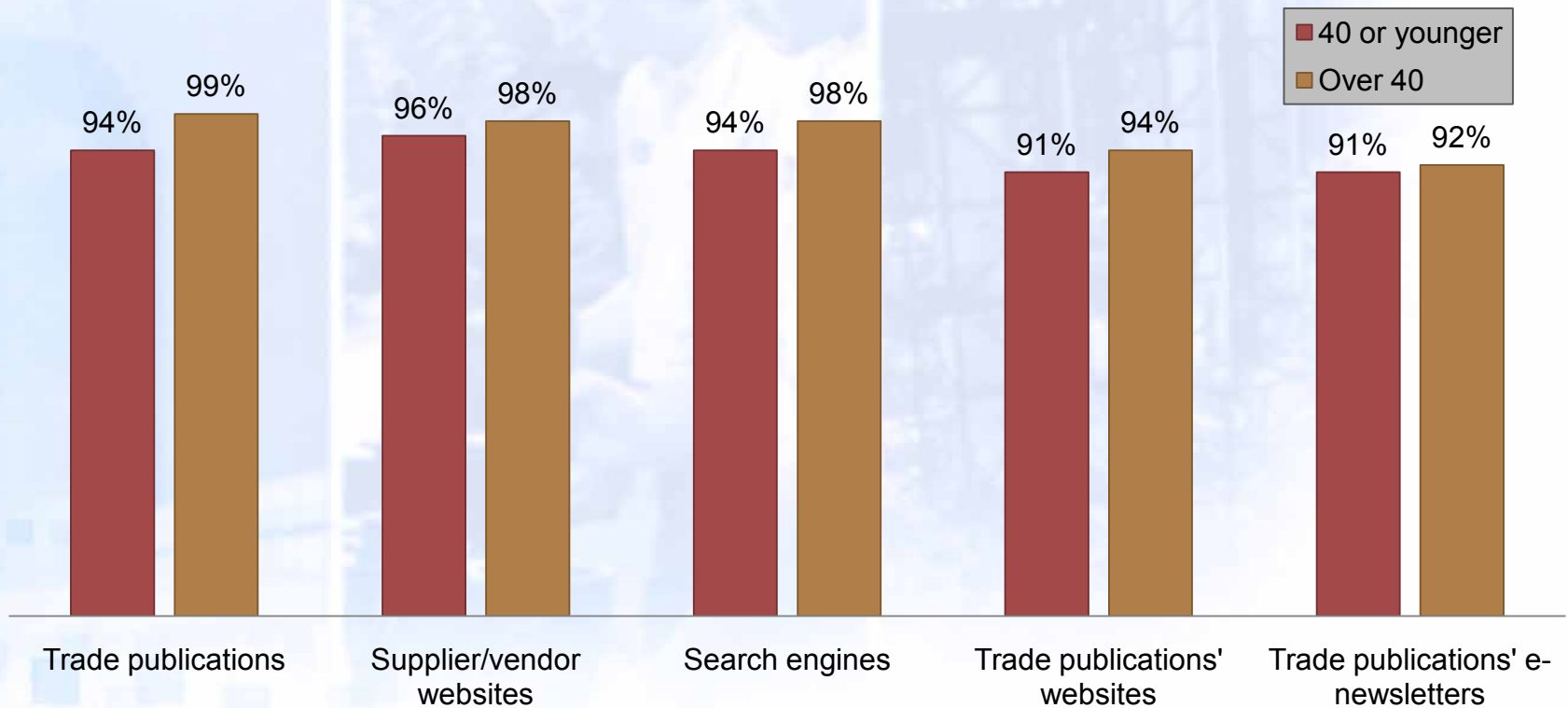


Q: Which of the following ranges includes your current age? (n=702)

Q: What is your primary job function? (n=111; 596)

Top 5 valuable information sources

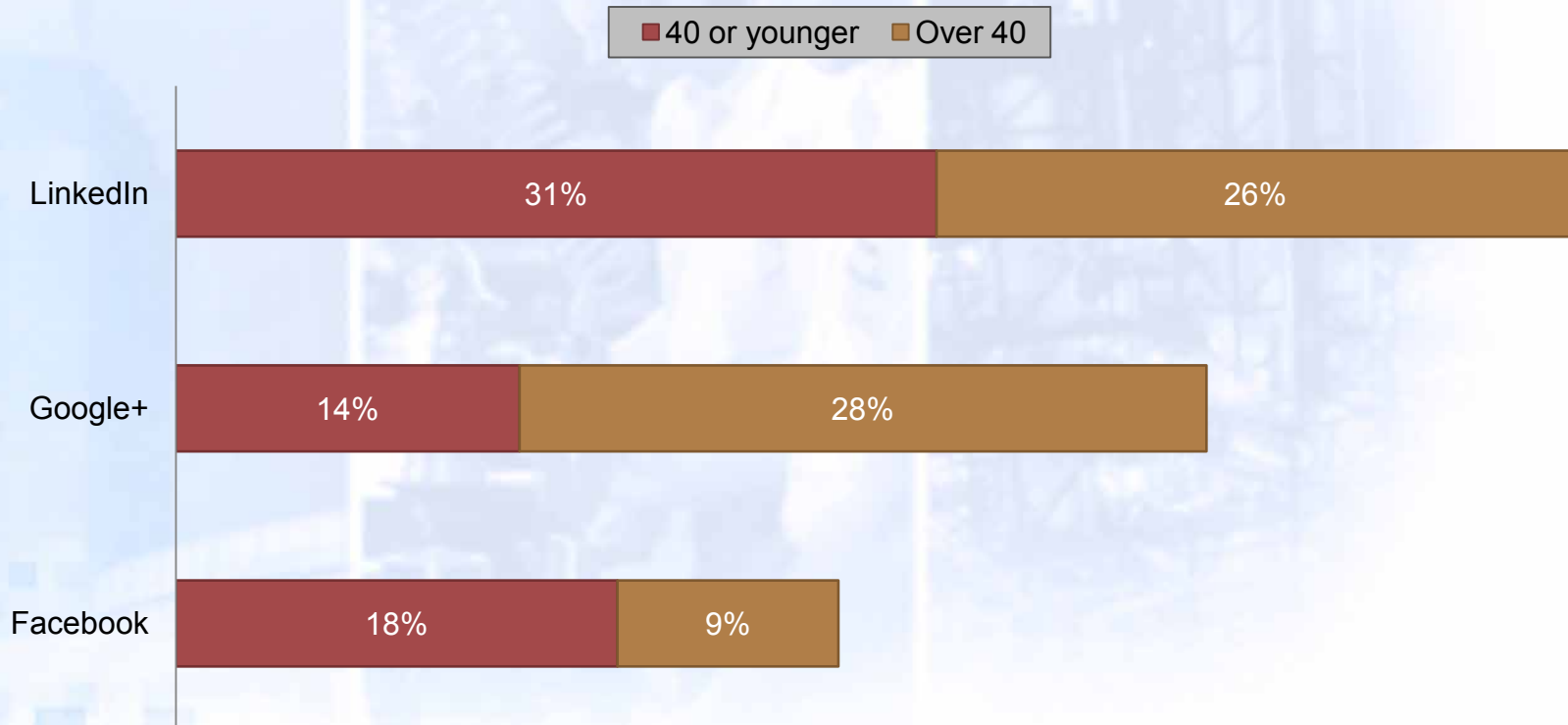
Ninety-eight percent of respondents over 40 years old and 94% of those under 40 consider Internet search engines to be a highly, moderately, or somewhat valuable source of information on the latest engineering technologies, industry trends, and products.



Q: In your opinion, how valuable are the following sources when seeking information on the latest engineering technologies, industry trends, and products? (n=111; 596)

Social media channels as a source

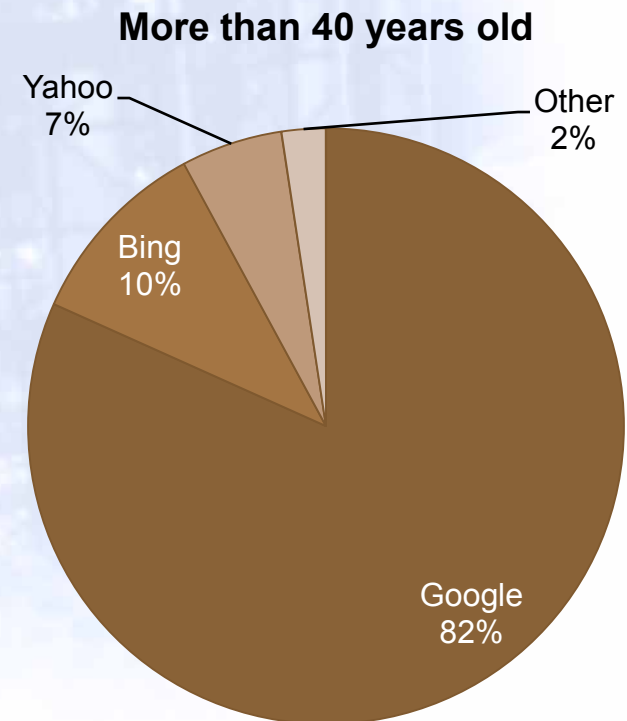
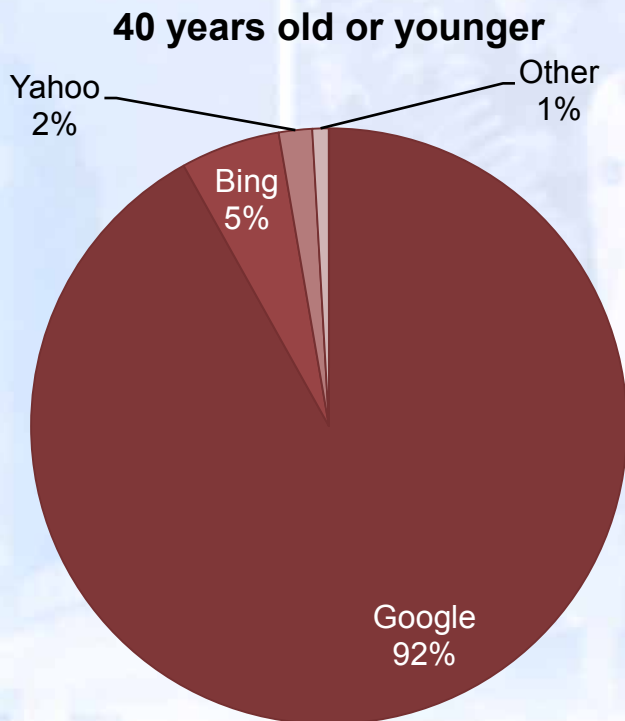
Thirty-one percent of respondents under 40 cited using LinkedIn “very often” or “often” as a source for work-related information, while 28% of older respondents use Google+ for the same purpose.



Q: How often do you use the following social media channels as a source for work-related information? (n=111; 595)

Search engines

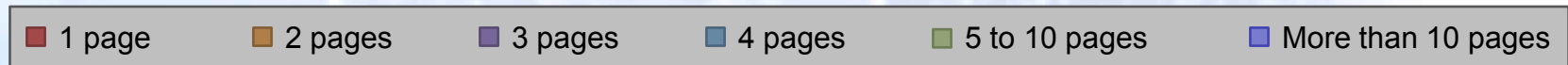
Google was the most preferred search engine according to 92% of respondents under 40 and 82% of respondents older than 40. Bing was 5% more likely to be used by respondents over 40 than under.



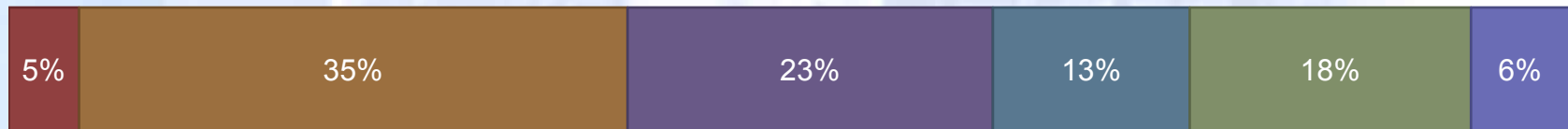
Q: Which search engine do you most often use in your work? (n=111; 596)

Page depth

69% of respondents older than 40 will view more than two pages of search results before selecting one or restarting their search, while 60% of respondents under 40 said the same.



40 years old or younger



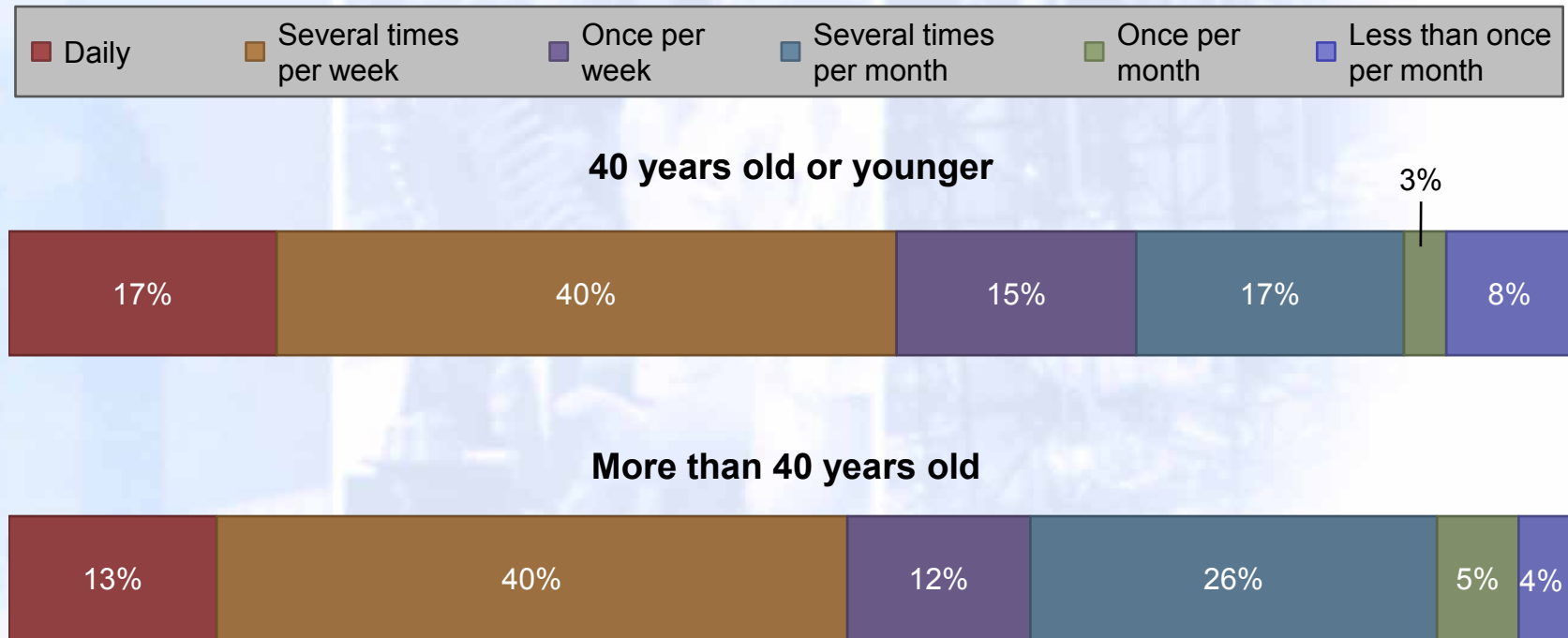
More than 40 years old



Q: When searching for information on a topic using a search engine, how many pages of results are you willing to view before you select one or start your search over? (n=111; 596)

Seeking content frequency

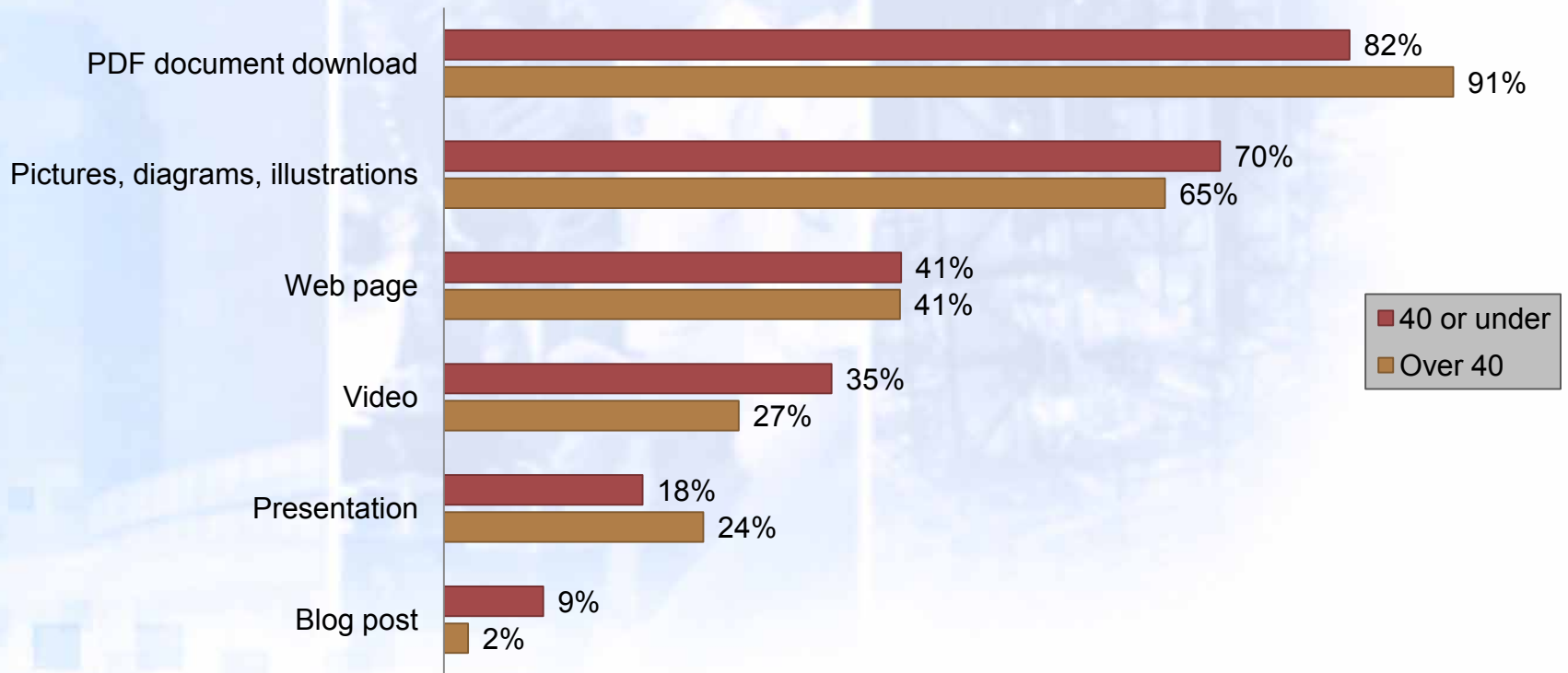
72% of respondents 40 years old or younger seek out content at least once per week, if not more often, compared to 65% of the remaining respondents.



Q: How often did you seek out content, such as that listed in the previous question, in the last 6 to 12 months to help you in your job? (n=111; 596)

Format preference

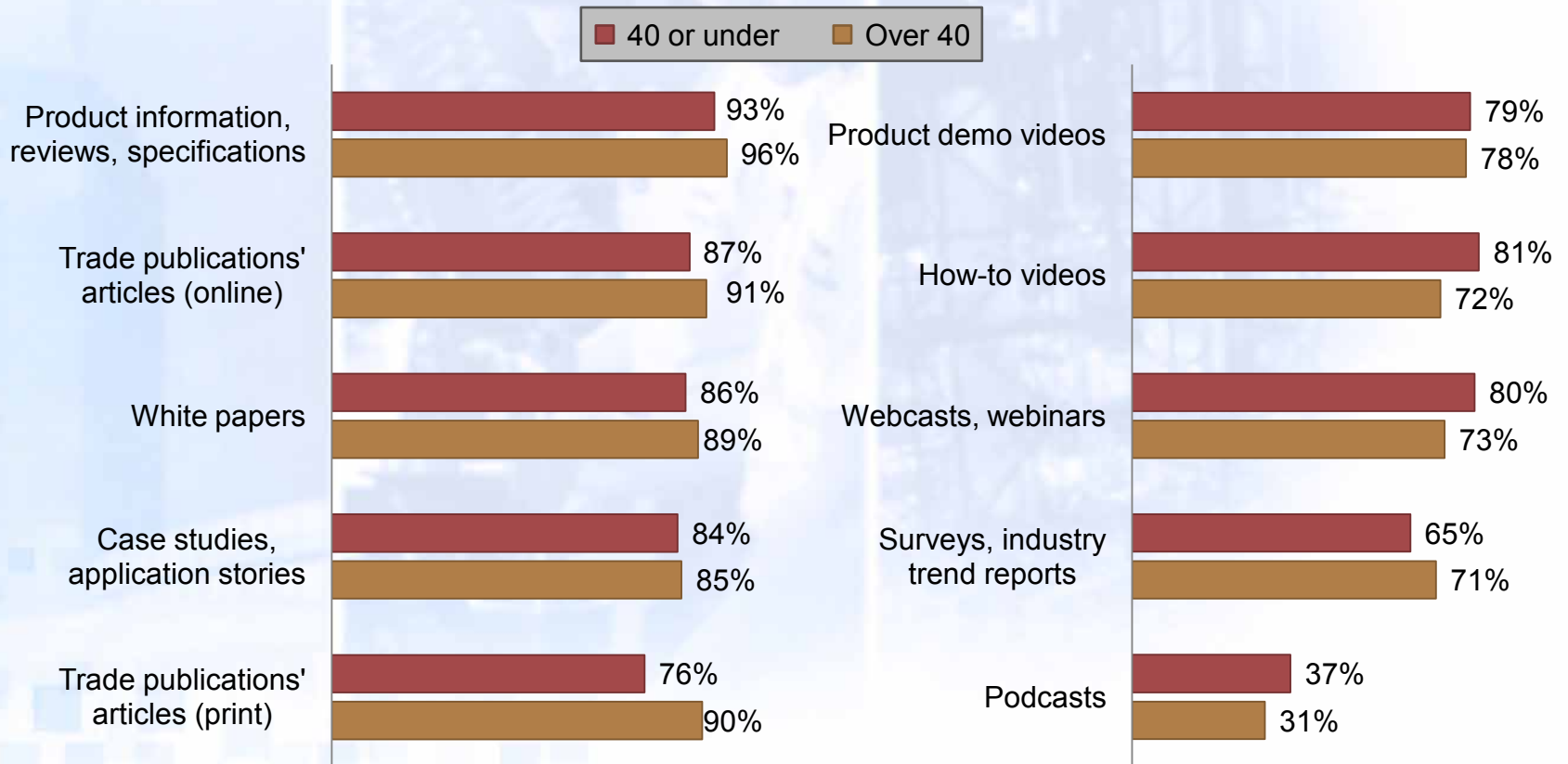
Ninety-one percent of respondents over 40, and 82% of those 40 or younger, prefer to download a PDF when viewing a document. More than one-third of respondents under 40 prefer to view a video, compared to 27% of those over 40.



Q: In what format do you prefer to view content? (n=111; 596)

Content used

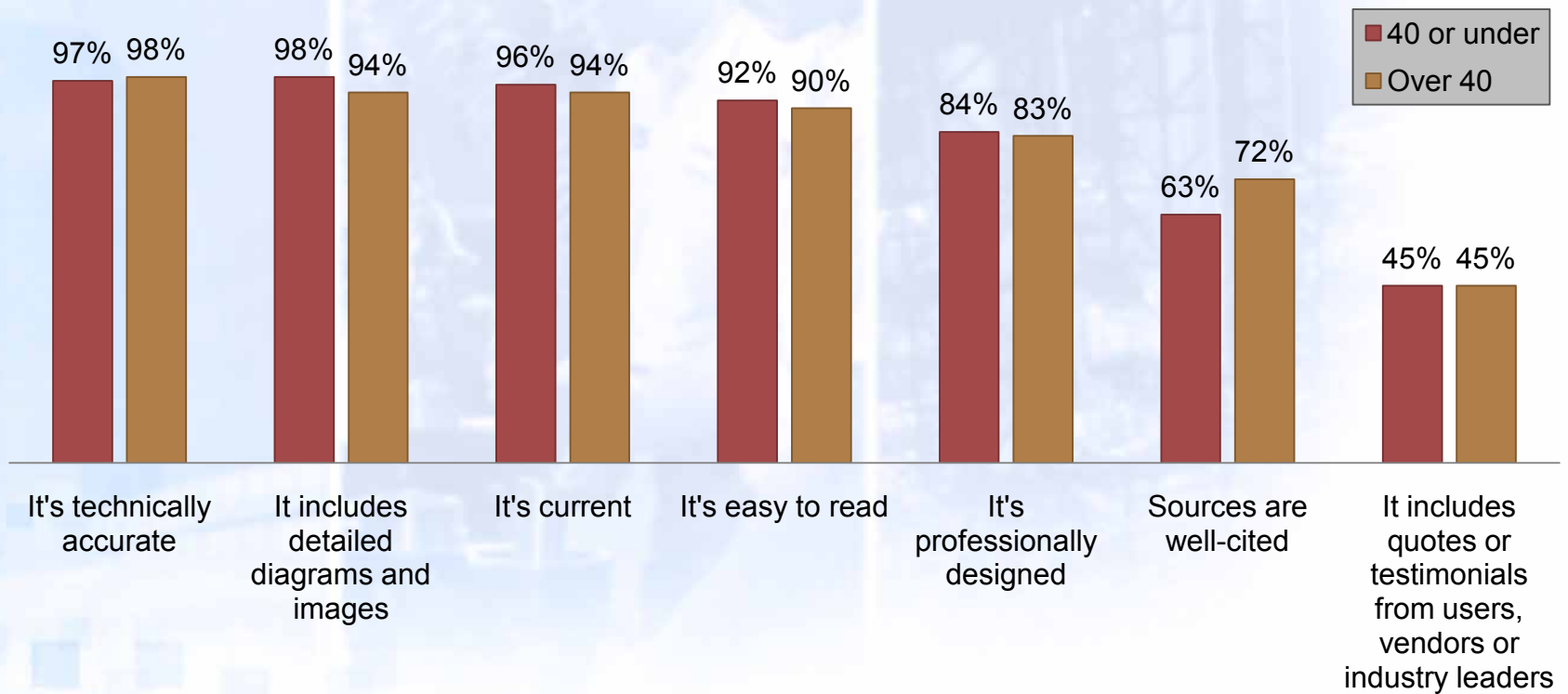
When researching the latest engineering technologies, industry trends, and services, the majority of respondents use product information, online trade publications' articles, white papers, and case studies.



Q: How often do you use the following types of content when researching the latest engineering technologies, industry trends, products, and services? (n=111; 596)

Important content qualities

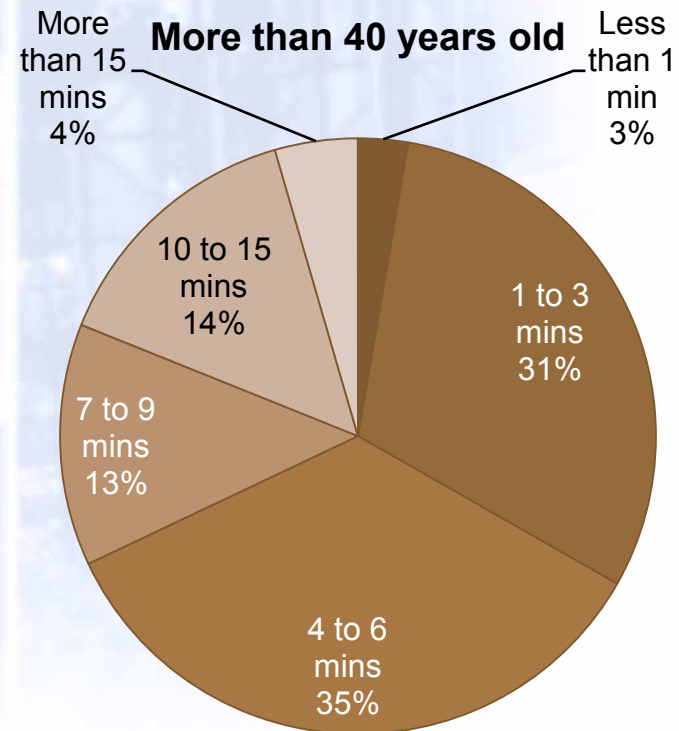
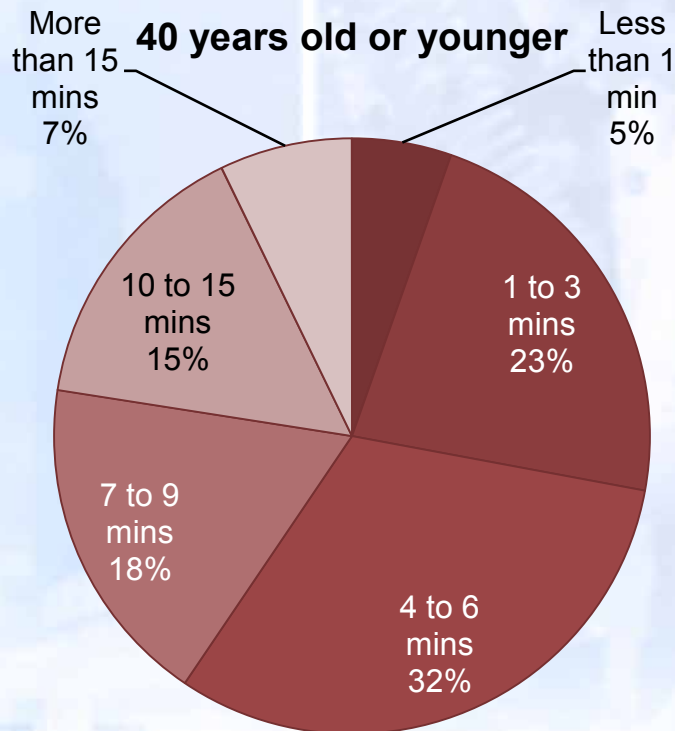
The majority of all the respondents agree that content is most helpful when it is technically accurate, includes detailed diagrams and images, is current, and is easy to read.



Q: How important (helpful) to you are the following aspects of content? (n=111; 596)

Product demo, how-to video length

Two-thirds of respondents more than 40 years old are willing to watch a product demo or how-to video that is between 1 and 6 minutes long, while 73% of those 40 or younger will watch for 1 to 9 minutes.



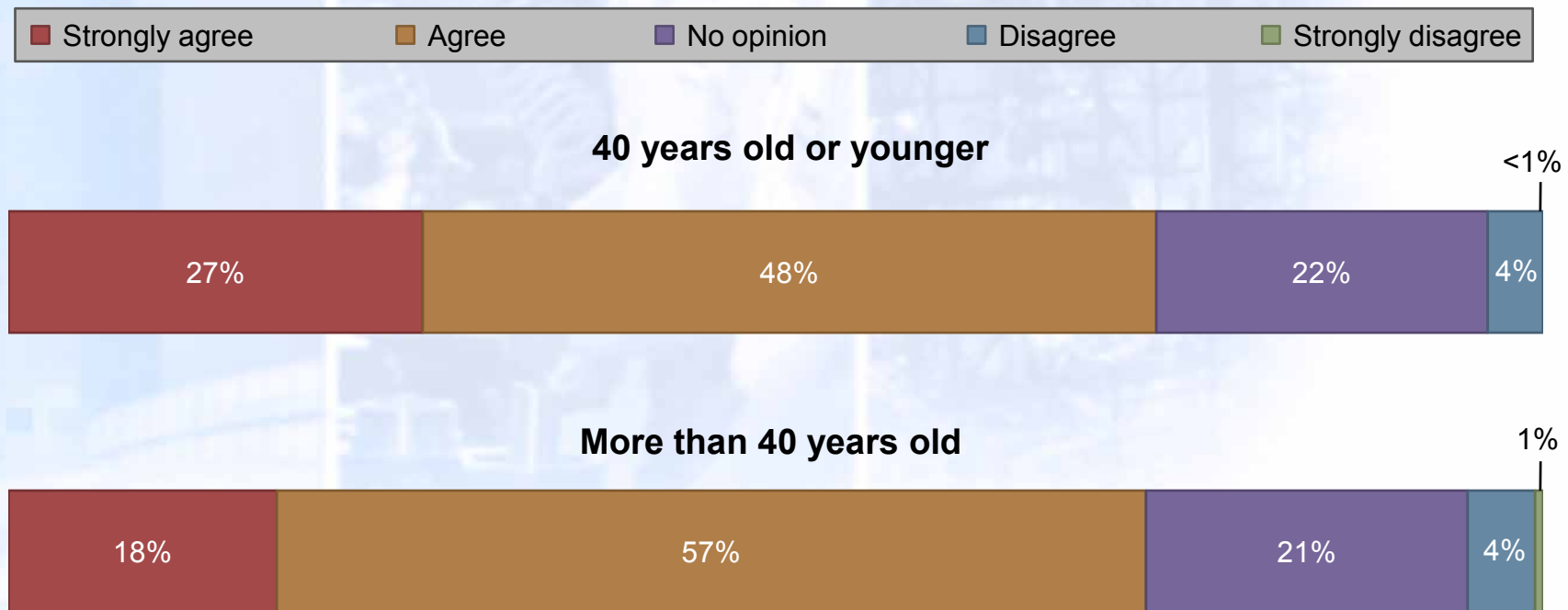
Q: How long are you willing to watch a product demo or how-to video? (n=1111; 596)

Value of producing content

Seventy-five percent of all respondents agree that they are more likely to do business with a company that regularly produces new and current content.

Agree or disagree:

“You are more likely to do business with a company that regularly produces new and current content.”



Q: Agree or disagree: You are more likely to do business with a company that regularly produces new and current content. (n=111; 596)