

Trade Show Marketing Insights Report 2019

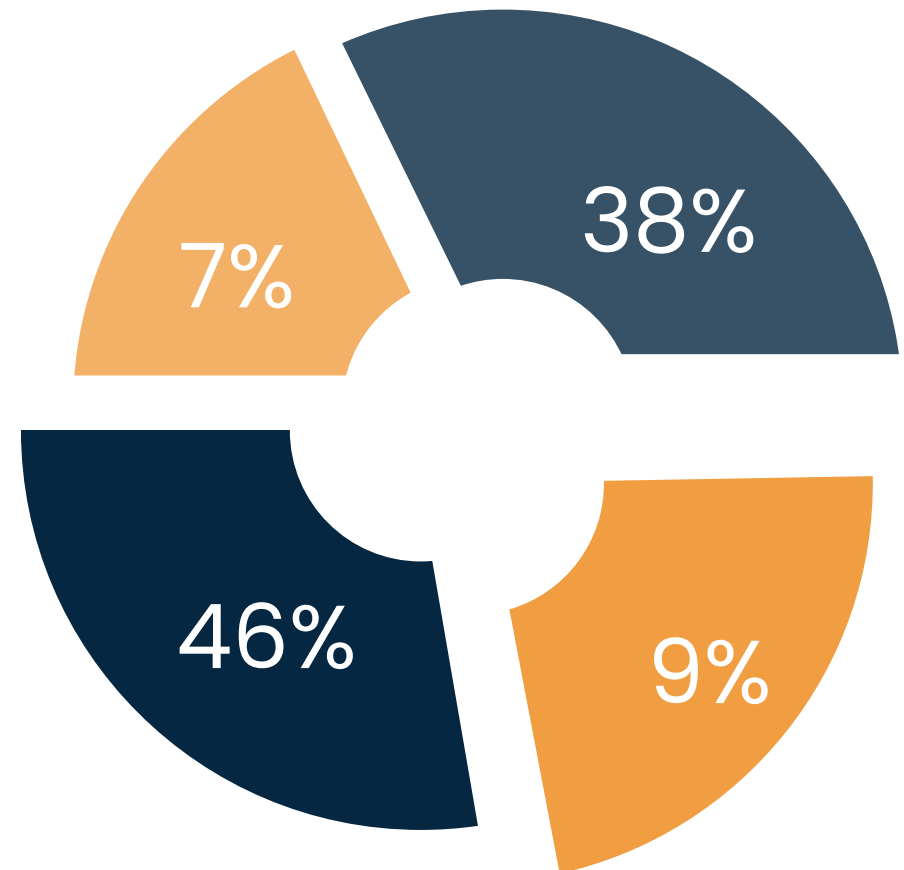


What function best Describes you?



Commentary:

The Social Effect & Feathr are pleased with the breadth & depth of the survey respondents. Survey participants come from most continents, and represent large organizers such as Reed, UBM/Informa, Clarion & Messe Frankfurt to Associations putting on one trade show per year.



Split between Exprom & Visprom marketing Budgets

 **EXPROM**

 **VISPROM**

Commentary:

It's difficult applying an average as the surveyed results ranged from 0% to 100% of overall marketing budgets split between Exprom and Visprom marketing. However, when we consolidate the mid-range results it's more like a 50/50 budget split.



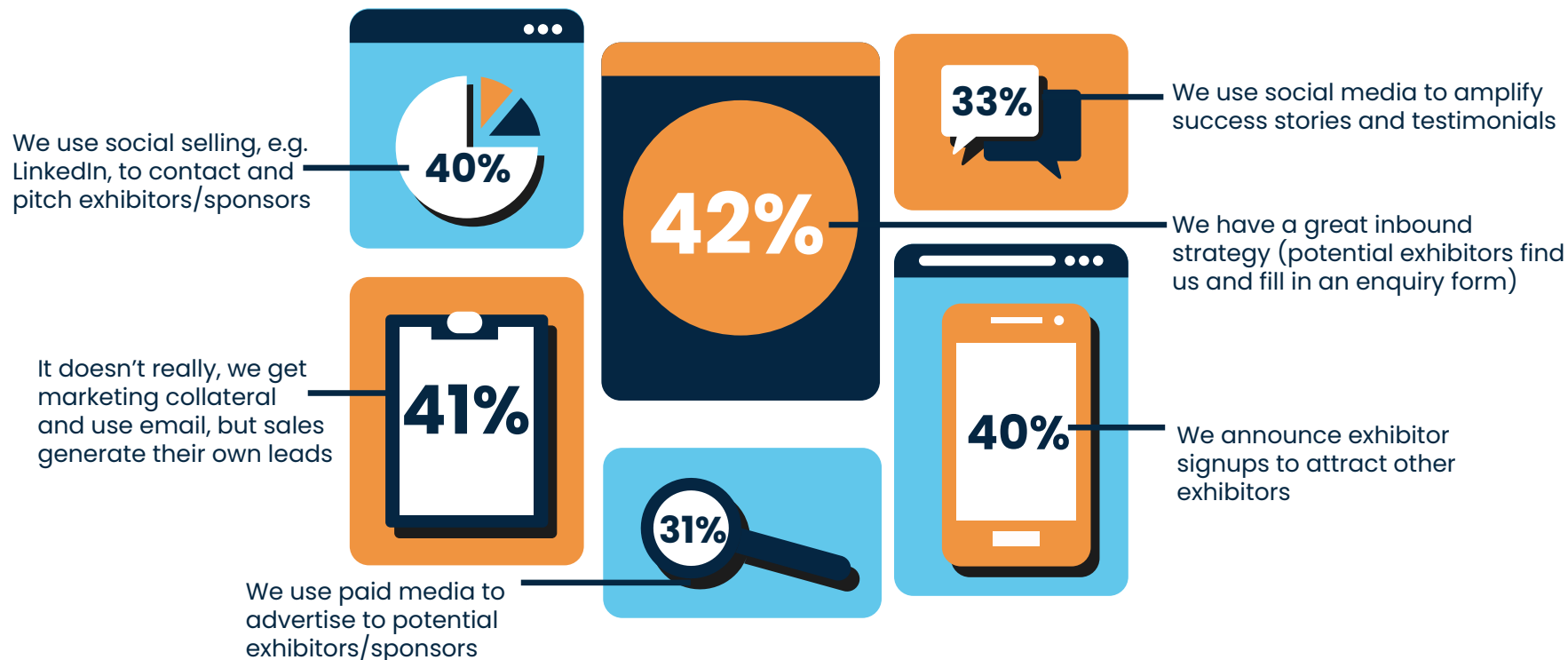
How does your marketing support your exhibitor promotion?

Commentary:

While digital marketing proactively supports exhibitor promotion, there is no consistency in what form that support takes – this in itself is surprising.

Surprisingly, less than half of all respondents (40%) use social to announce new exhibitor signings and even less (33%) use it to amplify exhibitor success stories and testimonials. Only 31% of respondents use paid media tactics to drive exhibitor inquiries, yet 42% have great inbound lead-generation strategies.

If you have a strong inbound lead-generating website, then using paid media to increase traffic (exhibitor prospects) to your website would perfectly complement your strategy. The most surprising result is that only 40% of respondents are using LinkedIn for social selling to support exhibitor marketing. This is a massive missed opportunity.

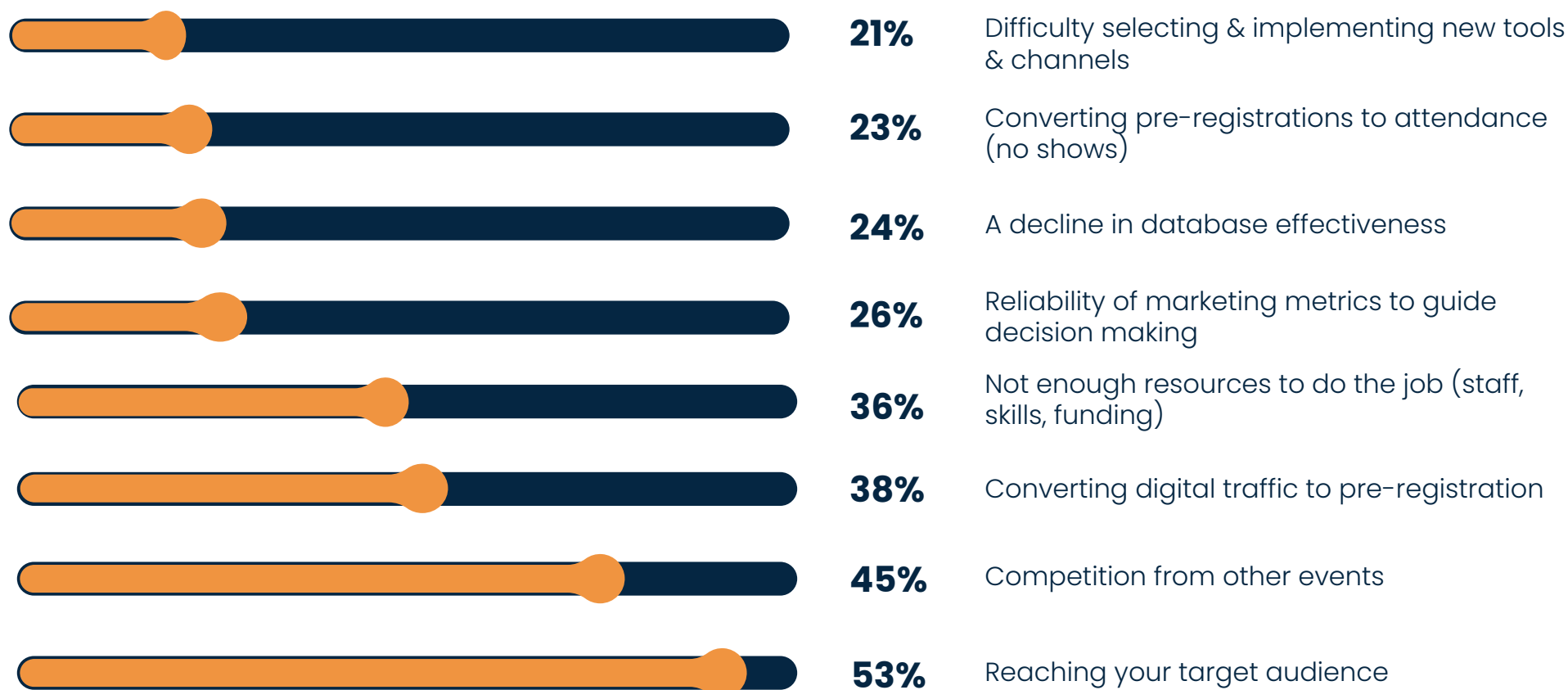


What are your biggest marketing challenges for growing your exhibition attendance?

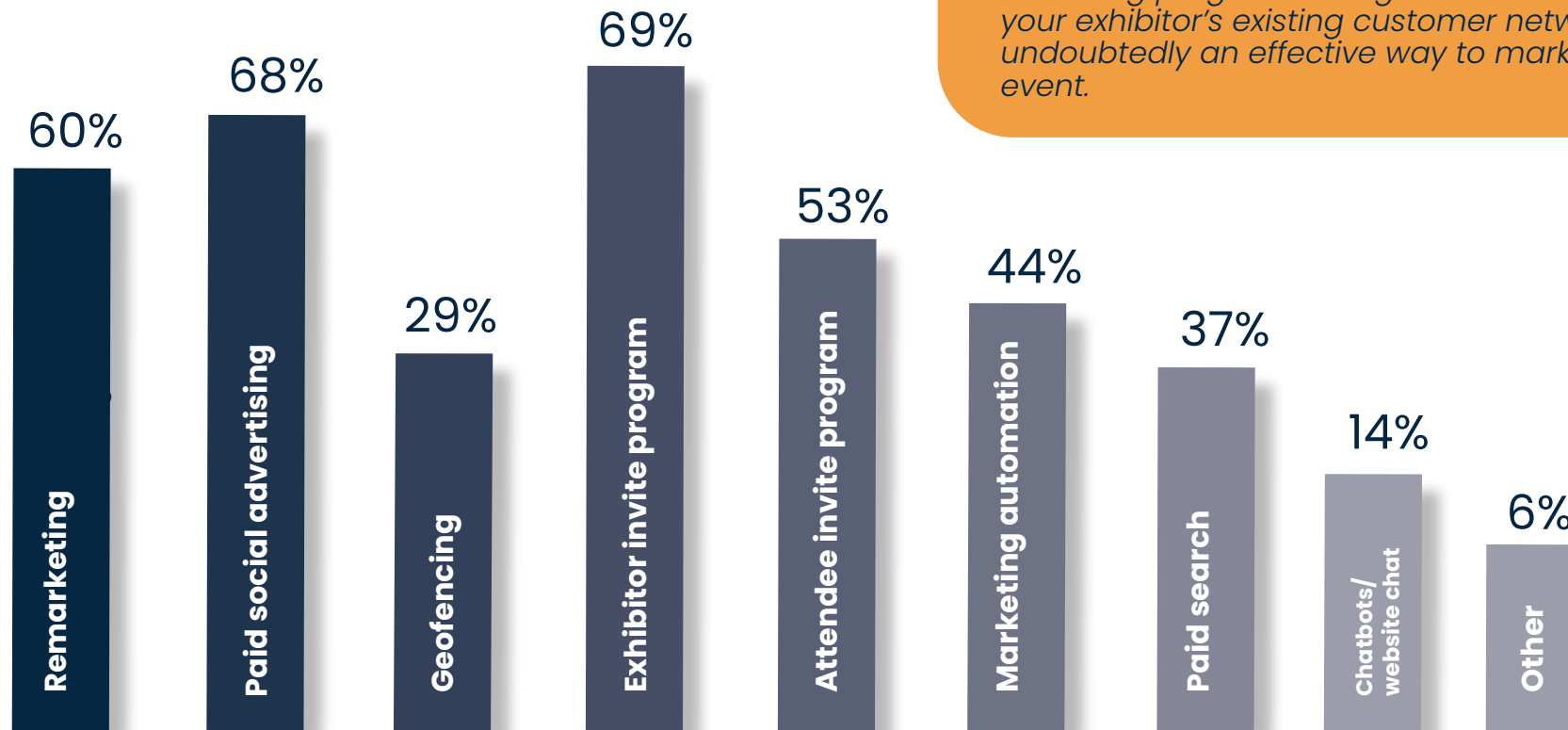
Commentary:

Reaching your target audience is clearly the biggest marketing challenge among survey recipients at 53%, followed by 'Competition from other events' at 45%.

Organizers need to put 'Reaching your target audience' into two distinct buckets. First, there is reaching a 'new audience' which is made up of event prospects that have never heard of your event and the second bucket is reaching your previous attendees. Both require different strategies.



What marketing tools/ channels do you currently use?



Commentary:

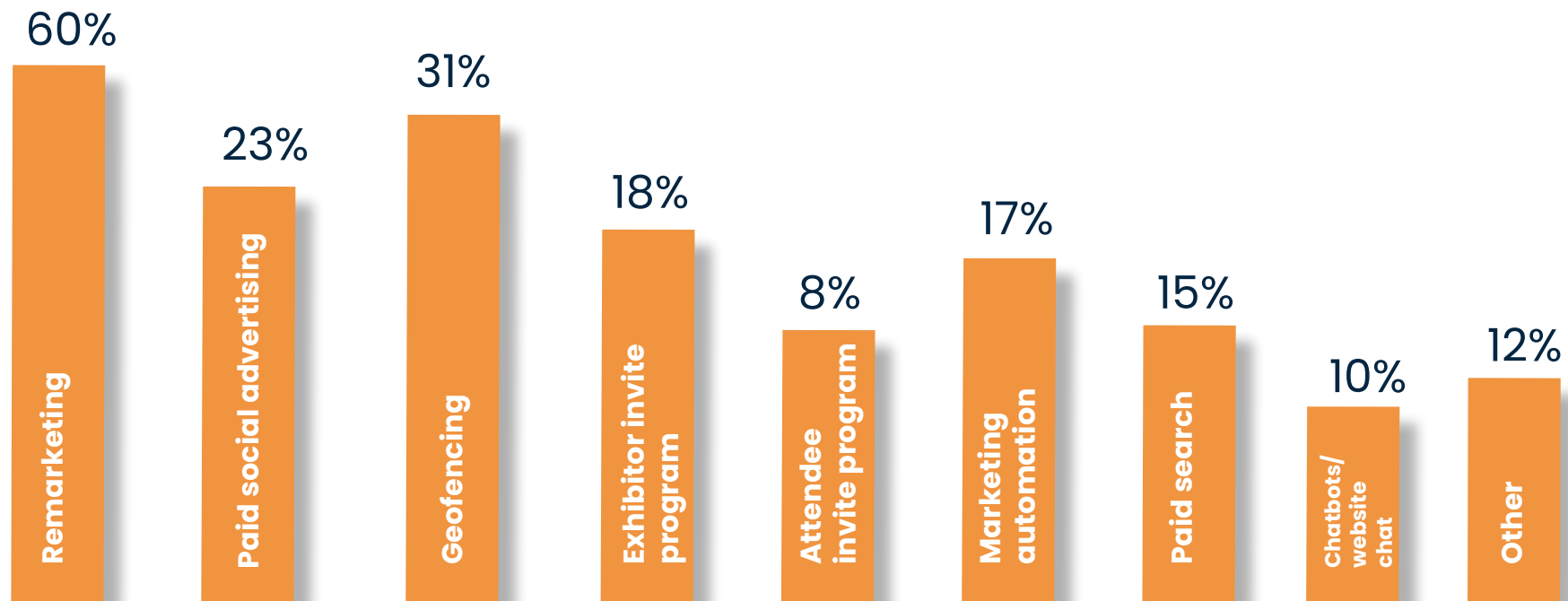
We purposefully didn't include email marketing in the survey answers as we wanted to explore the use of less common tools and channels. With exhibitor invite programs (69%), paid social advertising (68%) and remarketing (60%), we get a strong indication of where the majority of the survey recipients are focusing their marketing efforts.

We were pleasantly surprised that 'exhibitor invite programs' came in at number one. Marketing programs designed to leverage your exhibitor's existing customer network is undoubtedly an effective way to market your event.

What marketing channels did you implement for the first time last year?

Commentary:

With 60% of our survey recipients implementing retargeting for the first time over the last year, it's clear that there's a strong focus on trying to re-engage event traffic that didn't convert on their previous visits to event websites.

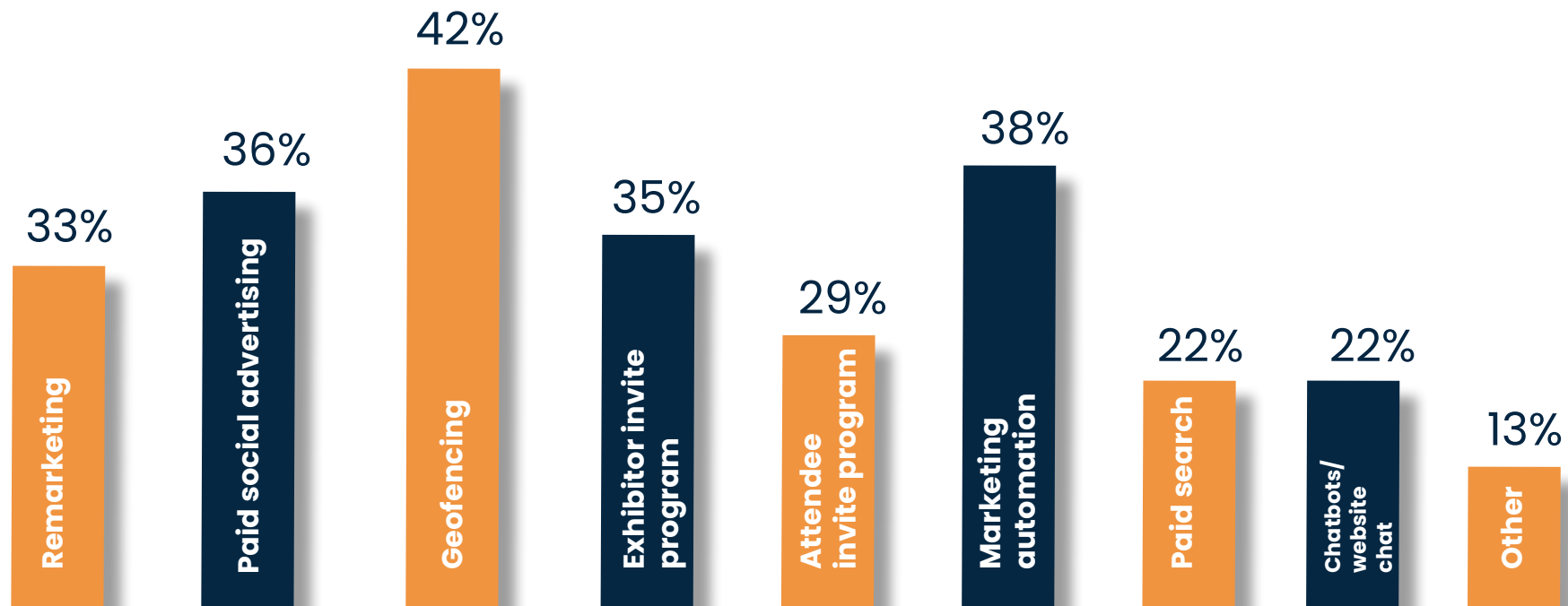


What marketing tools / channels do you plan to implement this year?

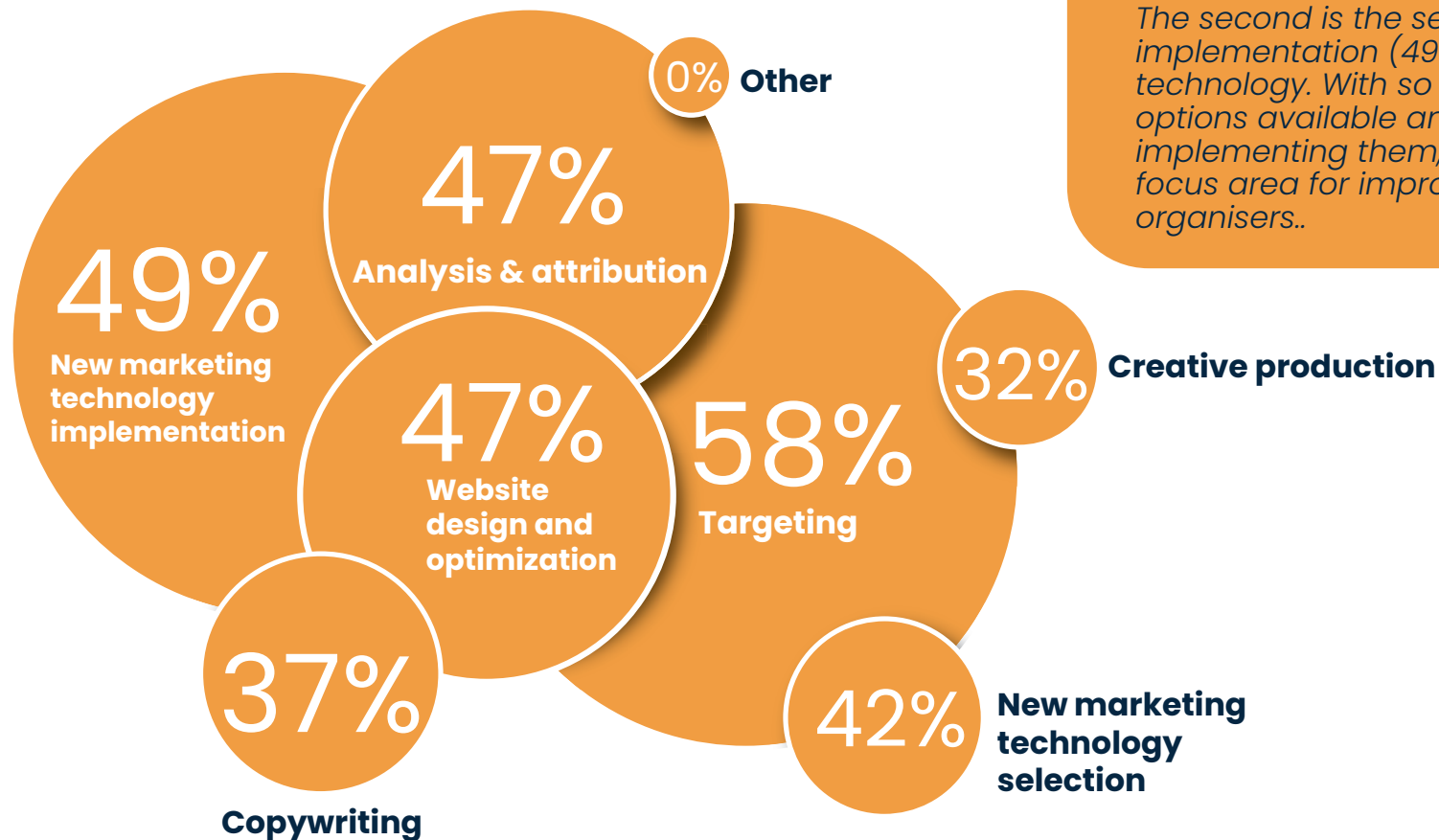
Commentary:

In the coming year, some event marketing plans will include the following tools and channels: geofencing (42%), marketing automation (38%) and paid social (36%).

What's most interesting about geofencing is that it can be used to target event attendees while attending competing events (geo conquering), and also as a way to generate additional revenue from your exhibitors.



In which areas do you think your marketing has the most room for improvement?



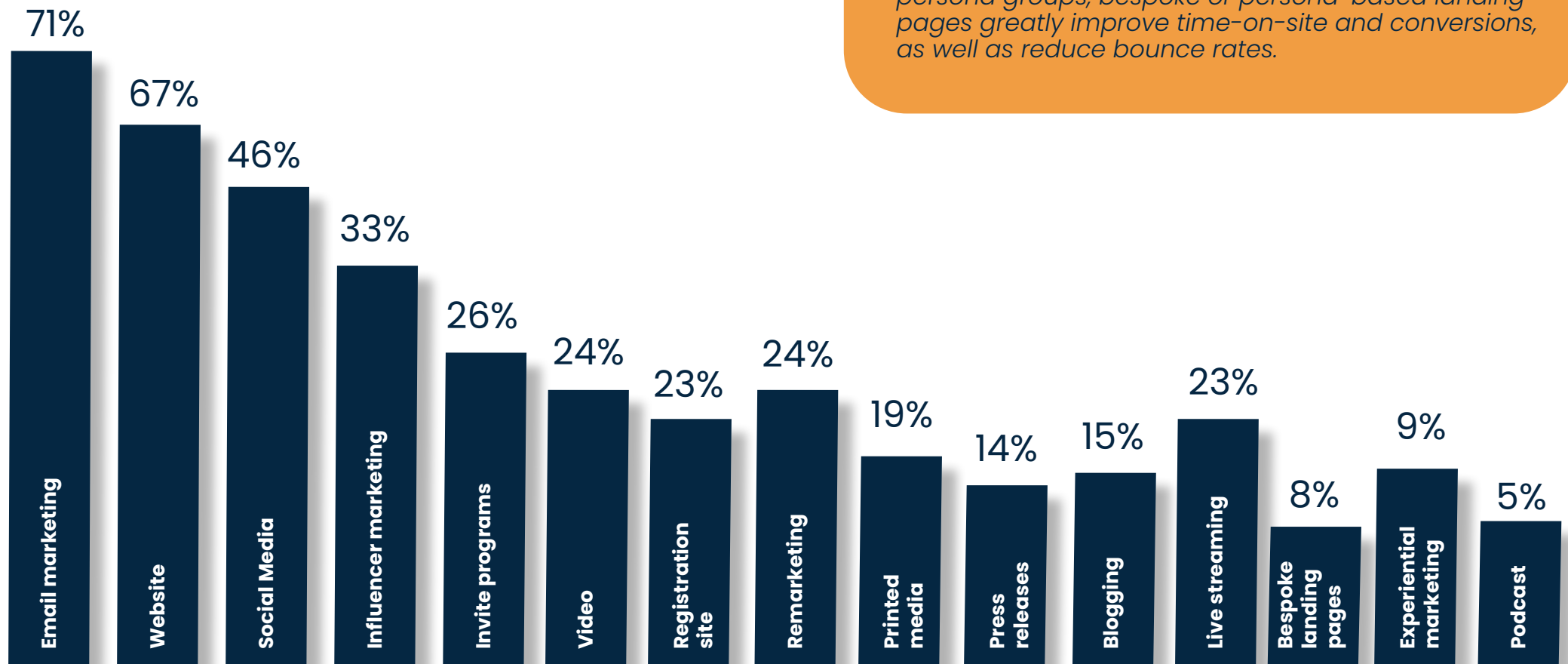
Commentary:

We can segment 'room for improvement' into two categories:

First, and in line with the top challenges listed previously in this survey, we have 'targeting' (58%), analysis & attribution (47%) and website design & optimisation (also 47%).

The second is the selection (42%) and implementation (49%) of new marketing technology. With so many marketing technology options available and the complexities involved in implementing them, this is clearly a challenge and focus area for improvement for many trade show organisers..

What are the most effective tools for your event marketing?



Commentary:

It's no surprise that email (71%), Website (67%) and Social Media (46%) are the top three marketing tools for trade show marketers.

What is a little more surprising is that 'bespoke landing pages' is second to last at 8%. As trade show audiences are generally broad and contain multiple persona groups, bespoke or persona-based landing pages greatly improve time-on-site and conversions, as well as reduce bounce rates.

Do you use website analytics to track which channels are sending you the most registrations?



YES
50%



NO
38%



I DON'T KNOW
12%

Commentary:

Only 50% of survey recipients are using analytics to understand which channels are producing registrations. This seems counterintuitive when our survey respondents also find 'reaching their target audience' and 'converting digital traffic to pre-registration' as major challenges.

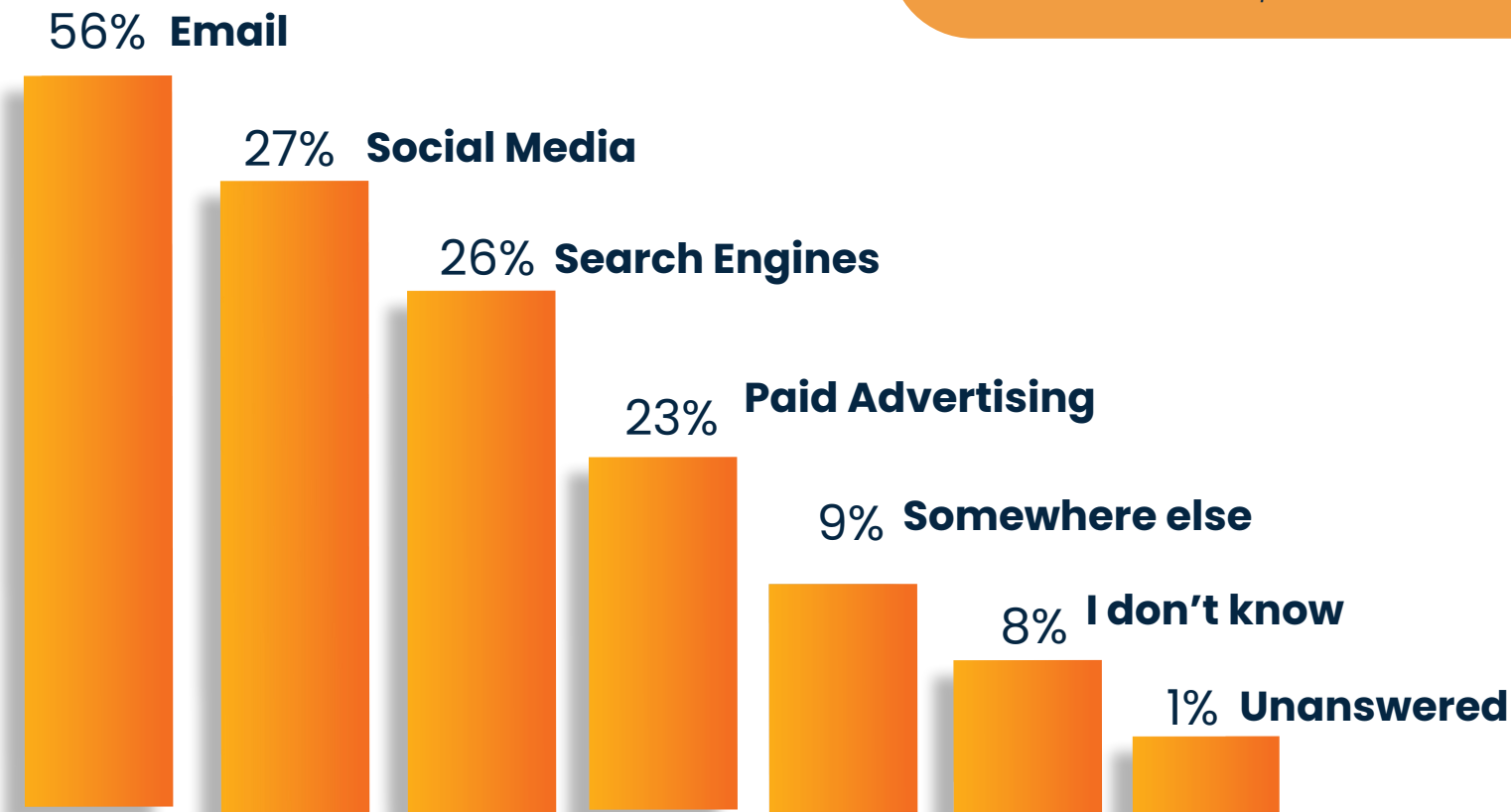
Without robust analytics, it's impossible to spend marketing budget smartly or even start a discussion on ROI.

Where does most of your website traffic come from?

Commentary:

Again, no surprise with the top four answers – email (56%), social media (27%), search engines (26%), and paid advertising 23%.

What is a surprise is that as digital marketers, we know that 'I don't know' likely includes 'direct traffic' which often makes up 20% to 40% of total traffic.



Do you do your marketing in-house, through an agency, or via a selection of different providers?

Commentary:

The majority of recipients do their marketing inhouse (65%).

Three of the top four marketing challenges listed above are: 'reaching their target audience' 2) 'converting digital traffic to pre-registration' 3) 'Not having enough resources (staff, skills, funding)'. With this in mind, it's imperative that organisers start investing in their teams or start using specialist agencies and providers.



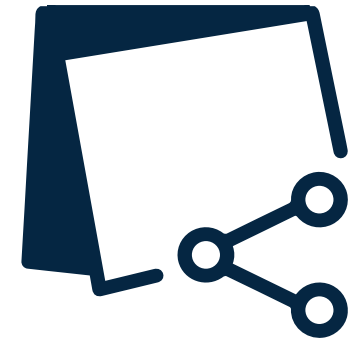
WE DO EVERYTHING IN HOUSE

65%



WE WORK WITH AN AGENCY

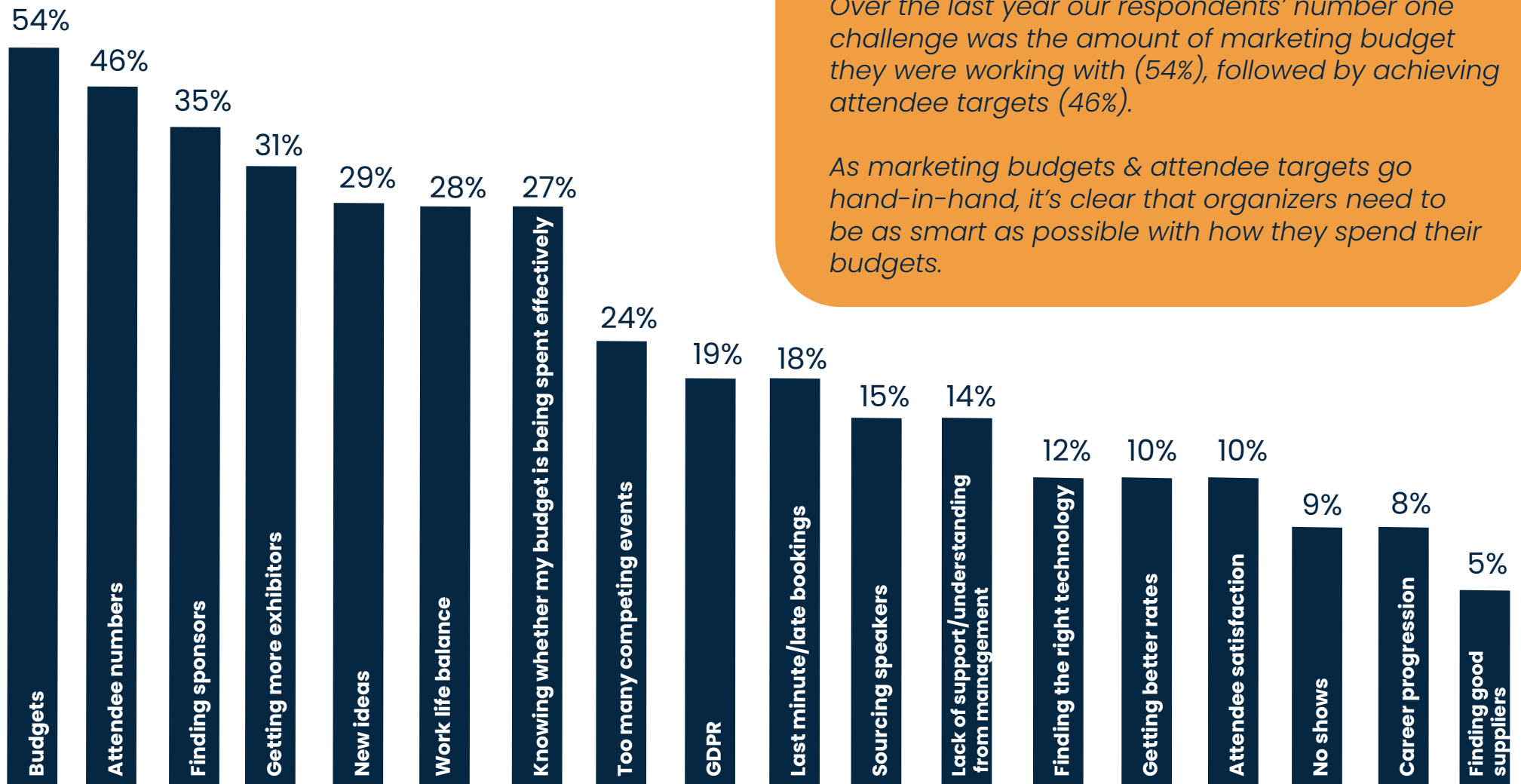
9%



WE USE DIFFERENT PROVIDERS

26%

What were your biggest challenges last year?



Commentary:

Over the last year our respondents' number one challenge was the amount of marketing budget they were working with (54%), followed by achieving attendee targets (46%).

As marketing budgets & attendee targets go hand-in-hand, it's clear that organizers need to be as smart as possible with how they spend their budgets.

This survey was run by:



The Social Effect is a specialist event marketing agency that believes there's always a smarter, faster and better way to market your events. Visit our website to find out more:
<https://thesocialeffect.com>



Feathr is the digital marketing toolkit built for specifically for events. Feathr's lineup of tools like Ads, Invites, and Conversations work together to help you do your best marketing and grow event attendance.
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