

FROM SCANS TO STRATEGY

How Marketers Use QR Codes in 2025



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Executive summary

Since 2020, **QR Code usage has skyrocketed**—first out of necessity, then as a powerful tool in every marketer’s playbook. By 2023, our [Bitly QR Code Trends Report](#) showed global scan rates continued to soar. Now, in 2025, we’re seeing something even more exciting: QR Codes evolving from quick-access tools into key drivers of engagement and action.

Based on insights from 250 marketing professionals, this year’s report reveals a clear shift. Marketers aren’t just using QR Codes to share information.

They’re using them to spark interactions, guide journeys, and convert audiences across physical and digital touchpoints.

QR Codes have become a strategic asset for marketers across industries.

From product packaging to out-of-home ads, they’re directly connecting customers to brands and moving audiences to action.

Despite their widespread adoption, there’s still plenty of room for marketers to stand out with these handy tools. Marketers who invest in branded experiences, deeper analytics, and trustworthy scan destinations will be **better positioned to connect with customers** in meaningful ways—and prove the impact of every campaign.



Key takeaways

01

QR Code usage verges on universal as investment accelerates across channels

QR Code usage is widespread, with over 90% of survey respondents saying they use this technology. Marketers are now deploying QR Codes across touchpoints and channels, including email, events, product packaging, and in-store displays.

02

Timely incentives capture attention and drive real engagement

No longer just tools for sharing information, QR Codes now drive action and engagement. About 50% of marketers use this tech for time-sensitive promotions and event registrations, turning QR Codes into tools for delivering experiences.

03

Marketers need deeper insights into the consumer experience to maximize results

More than half (55%) of marketers think a lack of understanding holds consumers back from using QR Codes. To take full advantage of this tech, marketers need more insight into the consumer experience.

04

QR Code analytics unlock new opportunities for valuable first-party data

Most marketers (50% or more) focus campaign measurements on scan numbers and timing. However, QR Codes present a significant opportunity for marketers to collect first-party post-scan data.

05

Advanced features like customization and redirects boost QR Code value

Standard QR Codes no longer meet marketers' needs. 98% of respondents think customization is important for QR Code tools and 69% need an option that allows for frequent link redirects.

06

QR Codes are gateways to a connected future with integrated touchpoints

Even though QR Code adoption is already high, 86% of marketers plan to increase usage further in the coming year. To get more value from this tech, they need tools that support their customization needs, measurement goals, and integrations with marketing tools.

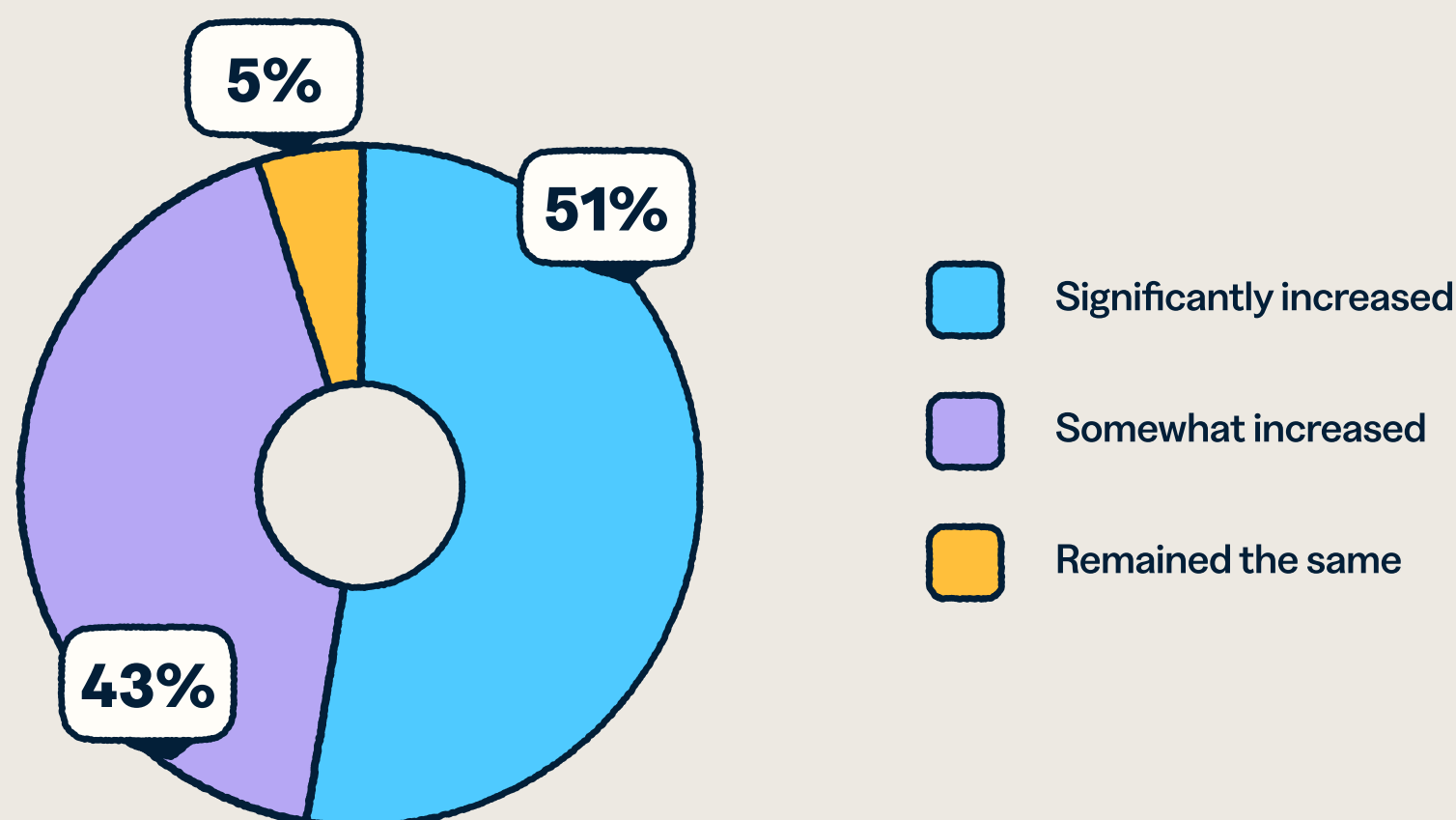
INSIGHT #1

QR Code usage verges on universal as investment accelerates across channels

What started as a niche tool has now become a marketing staple. QR Code usage has expanded across nearly every industry and business type, with adoption nearing universal levels. And the momentum isn't slowing down—93% of marketers say they've increased their QR Code usage in the past year, and more than half have significantly scaled up.



How much has your usage of QR Codes increased over the past 12 months?

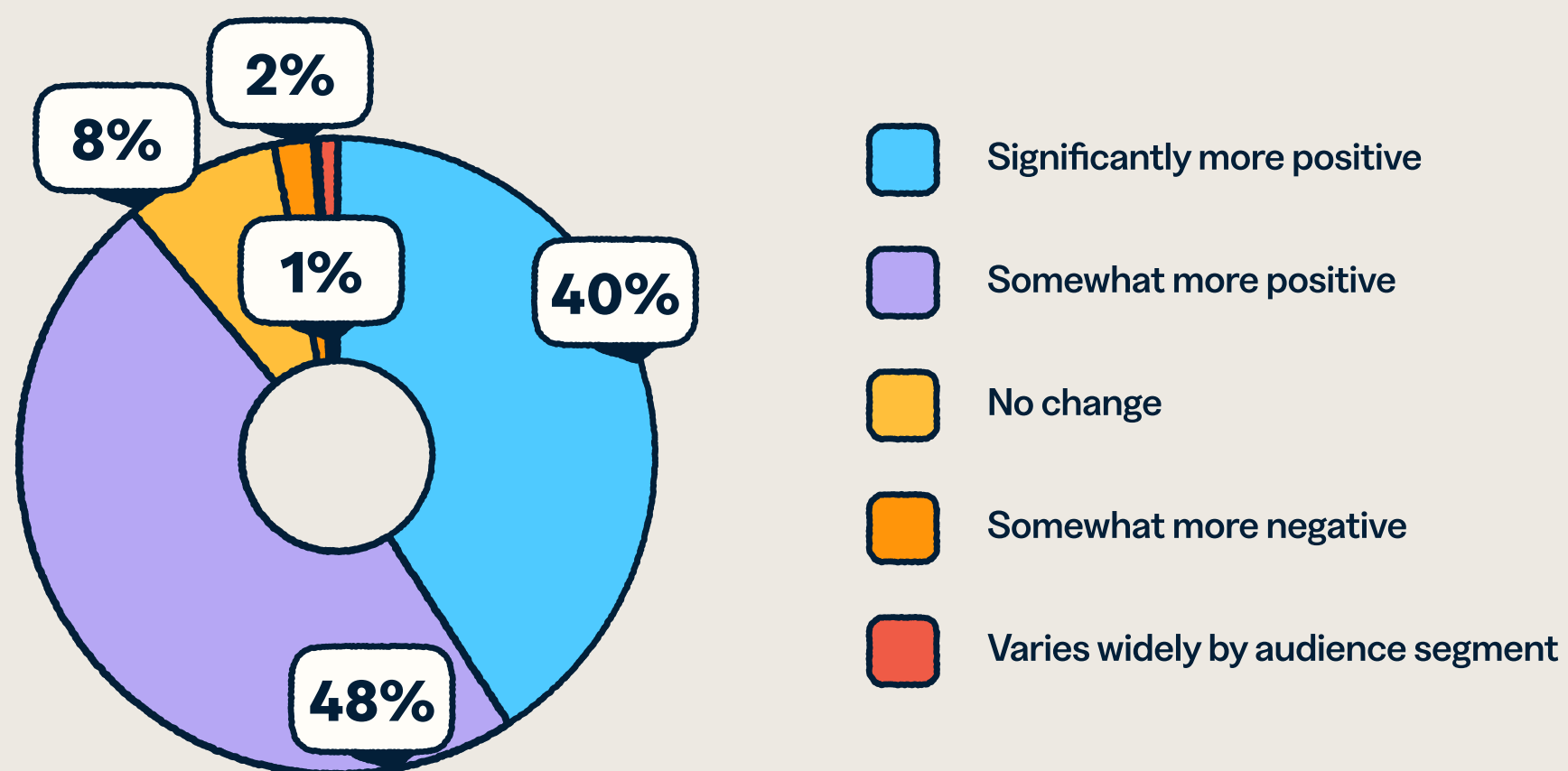


INSIGHT #1

Sentiment is overwhelmingly positive. In fact, 88% of marketers say consumers have become more receptive to QR Codes, with 40% reporting a significantly more favorable response over the past 12 months. The takeaway? Audiences are more willing than ever to scan—and marketers are taking notice.



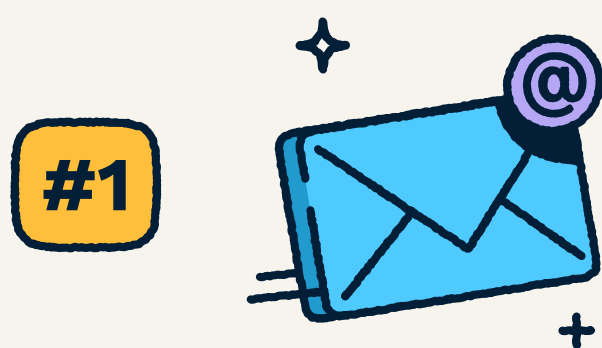
How do you think consumer sentiment to QR Codes has changed in the past 12 months?



QR Codes are showing up across more touchpoints, more often. Marketers are weaving them into everything from email campaigns and digital ads to direct mail, product packaging, and in-store signage. But instead of using a single QR Code once along the journey, brands are building entire connected experiences. They're bringing together digital and physical moments that guide customers every step of the way.

INSIGHT #1

When incorporating QR Codes into your marketing efforts, which of the following channels do you use?



Email
47%



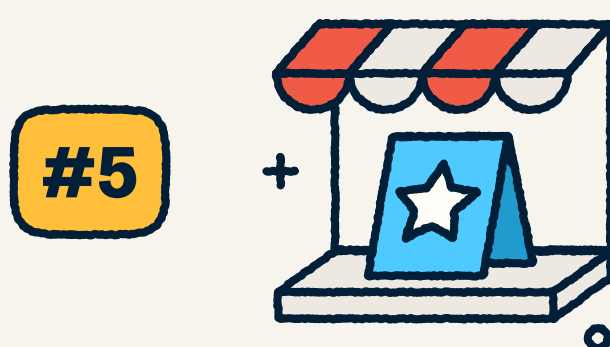
Product packaging
46%



Events
43%



Print ads
40%



In-store displays
40%

INSIGHT #1

Marketers are using email – one of the most tried and true, effective marketing channels – and incorporating it into their multichannel strategy to further enhance their campaigns and their customers' experiences.

Let's say someone scans a QR Code on an in-store display—it might take them to an exclusive RSVP page for an upcoming event. After they register, they get a digital ticket emailed to them with another QR Code. At the event? More QR Codes that unlock additional content, offers, or experiences to continue engaging customers, wherever they are. Retail marketers are able to do the same with coupons, exclusive access and any digital redemption done in-person, but made easy with the QR Codes as a digital pass. Every scan moves the customer forward and **can be used to drive customer loyalty.**



“We ran a QR Code campaign for a retail client, linking in-store displays to exclusive online offers, which boosted conversions by 35% in three months. The seamless digital bridge drove engagement, proving how frictionless access fuels consumer action.”

UserEvidence verified survey respondent

Rad Power Bikes is a great example of this strategy in action. As North America's largest electric bike brand, they've integrated QR Codes across their RadRetail stores. Customers scanning in-store signage or product tags are instantly connected to online resources—product specs, exclusive offers, and accessories that help them make confident purchase decisions.

INSIGHT #1

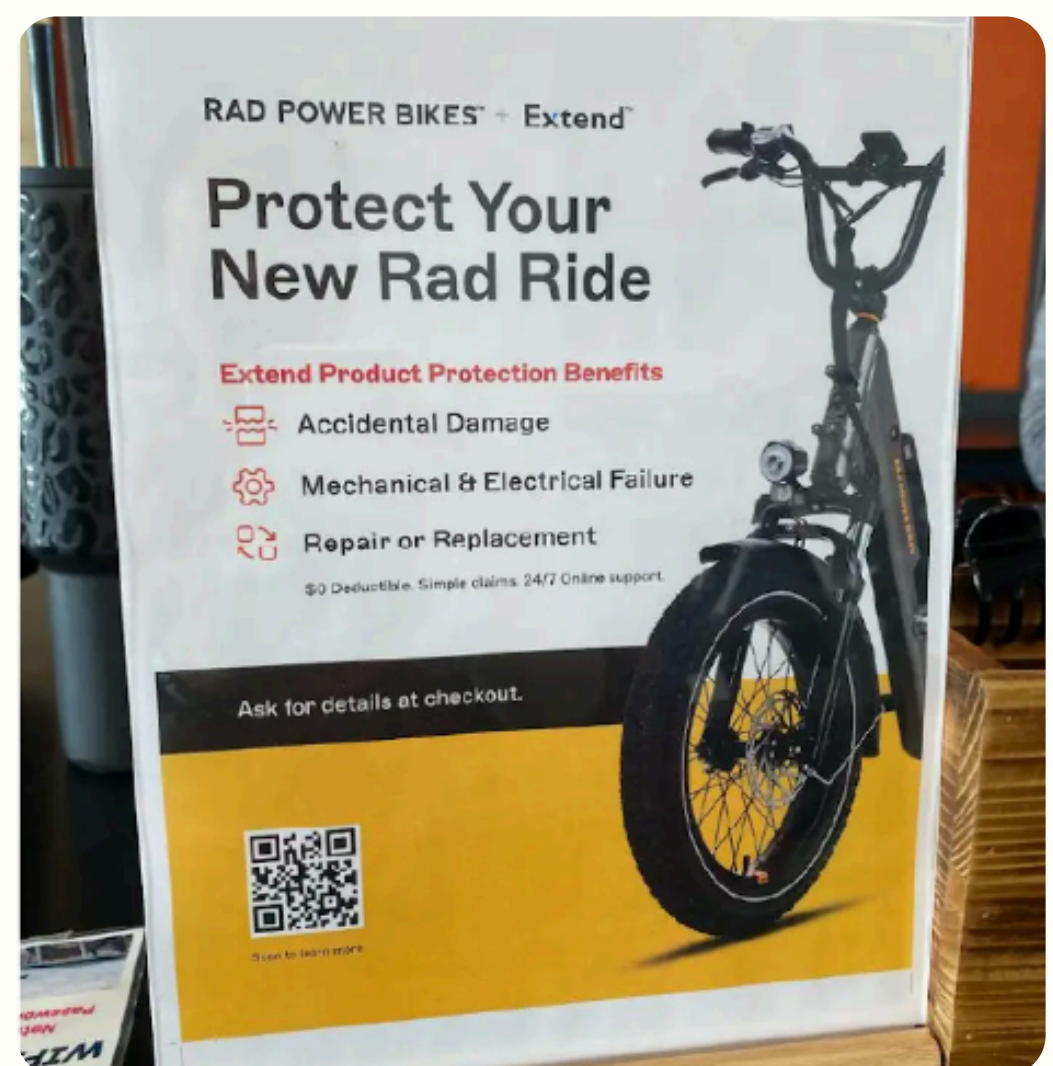


“Many of the resources we want to direct our customers to are online, so we print QR Codes on signage across our retail stores to guide customers to our product pages and social media channels to give them easy access to more information.”

Lauren Rothering

Senior Brand & Product Marketing Manager, Rad Power Bikes

By placing QR Codes at key moments, marketers are removing friction and creating seamless pathways that turn interest into action.



Rad Power Bikes' in-store QR Codes

Timely incentives capture attention and drive real engagement

QR Codes have come a long way from their early days as static info-sharing tools. Today, marketers are tapping into their full potential—using them to create time-sensitive offers, boost participation, and nudge customers toward action in the exact moment it matters.

Promotional offers and coupons are the most popular use case for QR Codes, with more than half (51%) of marketers using these tactics to generate timely engagement and conversions. Another 49% use them to drive event awareness and registrations, making it easier than ever for people to RSVP on the spot.



“Bitly makes it quick and easy for interested parties to register for our events, ensuring we capture their attention in the few seconds we have. With QR Codes and short, memorable links, we remove barriers to entry, increasing participation. Beyond registration, the tool also helps us gather valuable metrics. We can track which departments show the most interest, identify early registrants, and analyze the reach of our advertising.”

Kimberly M.

Enterprise (> 1000 emp.) Education Management Company

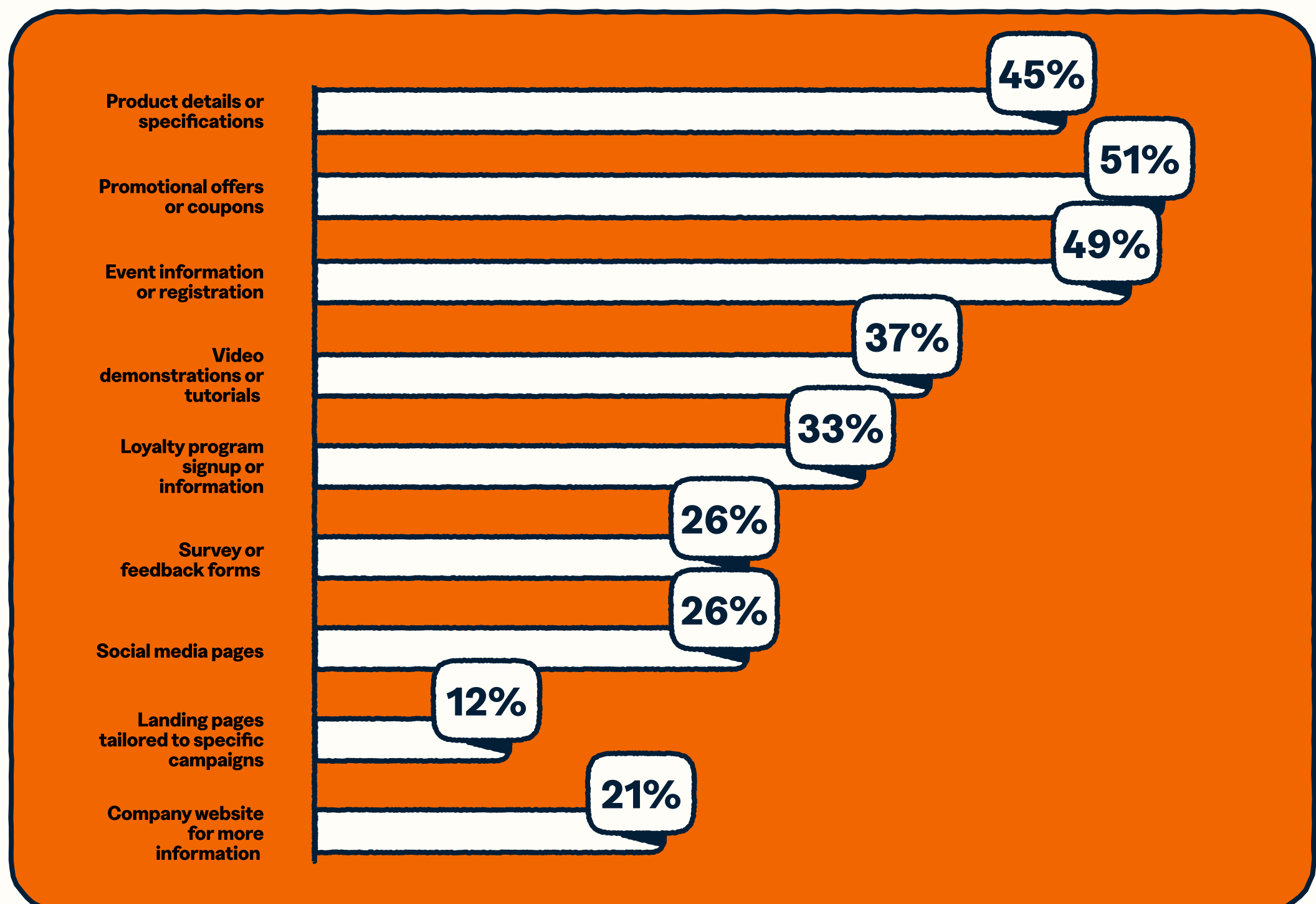
INSIGHT #2

But engagement doesn't stop at the conversion point. Marketers are building smarter QR Code strategies that support the entire customer journey.

37% of marketing respondents use QR Codes for video demos or tutorials—ideal for prospects who are deep in the consideration phase of the customer journey. An additional 33% use QR Codes to drive loyalty program signups, taking advantage of critical moments that turn one-time buyers into repeat advocates.



What type of content or resource do your QR Codes typically link to?



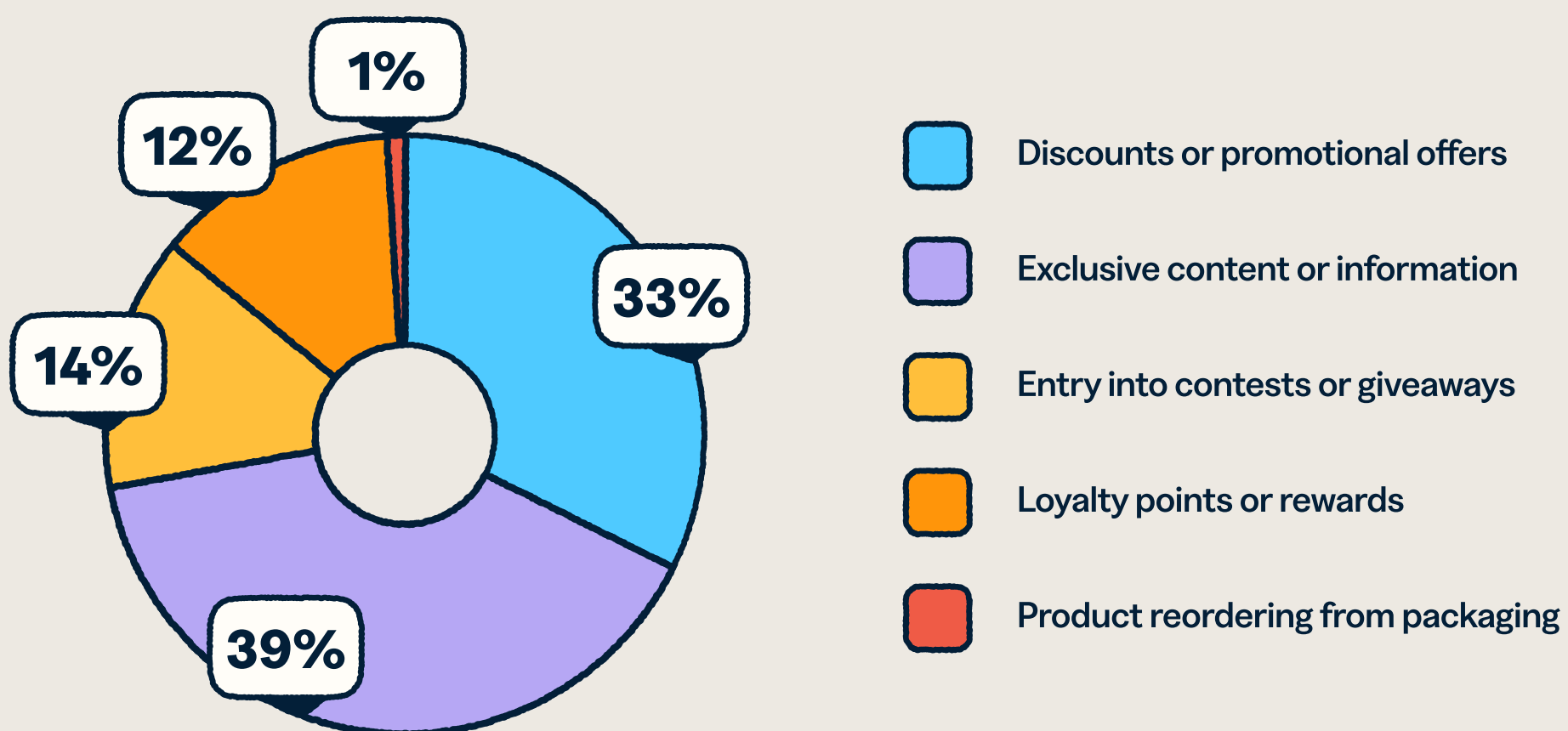
INSIGHT #2

That said, the original use case still holds strong: 45% of marketers still use QR Codes to deliver product details and specs, while 26% link out to company social media pages to keep the conversation going.

What sets today's top-performing QR Code campaigns apart? A sense of exclusivity and urgency. 39% say exclusive content is most effective for encouraging customers to scan these codes, while 33% of marketers report that discounts and promotional offers contribute to the highest scan numbers.



What incentives have proven most effective in encouraging consumers to scan QR Codes?



INSIGHT #2

While fewer marketers currently use QR Codes for contests (14%) or loyalty points (12%), those tactics are growing. Together, they signal a broader trend: QR Codes are now experiential, interactive, and built for deeper consumer engagement.

Curology, for example, is using Bitly QR Codes to build seamless, personal experiences. The custom skincare and haircare company uses QR Codes throughout the customer journey—from order inserts to product packaging—connecting shoppers to everything from quick solutions and time-sensitive discounts to free product offers and easy reorders.





“Adding QR Codes to all of these touchpoints has helped us reach our goals over the past few quarters. QR Codes give us the opportunity to tell our story, invite customers to explore more products, and become part of our growing community.”

Becca Rudman

Brand Marketing Manager, Curology

The result is a frictionless path that feels less like a campaign and more like a conversation.

INSIGHT #2




Complete your routine

with a FREE personalized formula

→ EXCLUSIVE OFFER ON BACK (WORTH OVER \$50)

Join the 90% of people who see clearer skin in 3 weeks*


*In a clinical trial of 150 Curology patients. Self-reported. Results may vary.



Before After

Results shown are after 7 months of Curology.

Get paired with a Licensed Dermatology Provider




Sign up for Curology to connect with a real dermatology expert who gets to know your skin

Your provider prescribes a personalized formula designed for your unique skin concerns—like acne, clogged pores, dark spots, texture, fine lines, or even rosacea—all while supporting you throughout your skincare journey.


Subject to consultation.

3 Steps to customize your routine




Start your free consultation

Connect with a Licensed Dermatology Provider to share your skin goals and a few selfies




Get your personalized formula

Your provider then prescribes a formula made for your unique skin concerns



Never run out again

Get your personalized formula and other must-haves delivered to your door, every 2 months



Scan this exclusive QR code to redeem your **FREE OFFER** (worth over \$50)

curology.com/retail-offer

*Free trial is 30 days + \$4.95 for \$8.95. Consultation required. Once prescribed, pick your plan. Cancel at anytime. Results may vary.

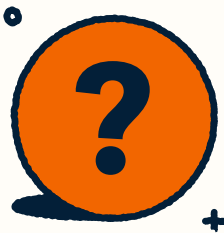
Curology's promotional QR Code campaign

INSIGHT #3

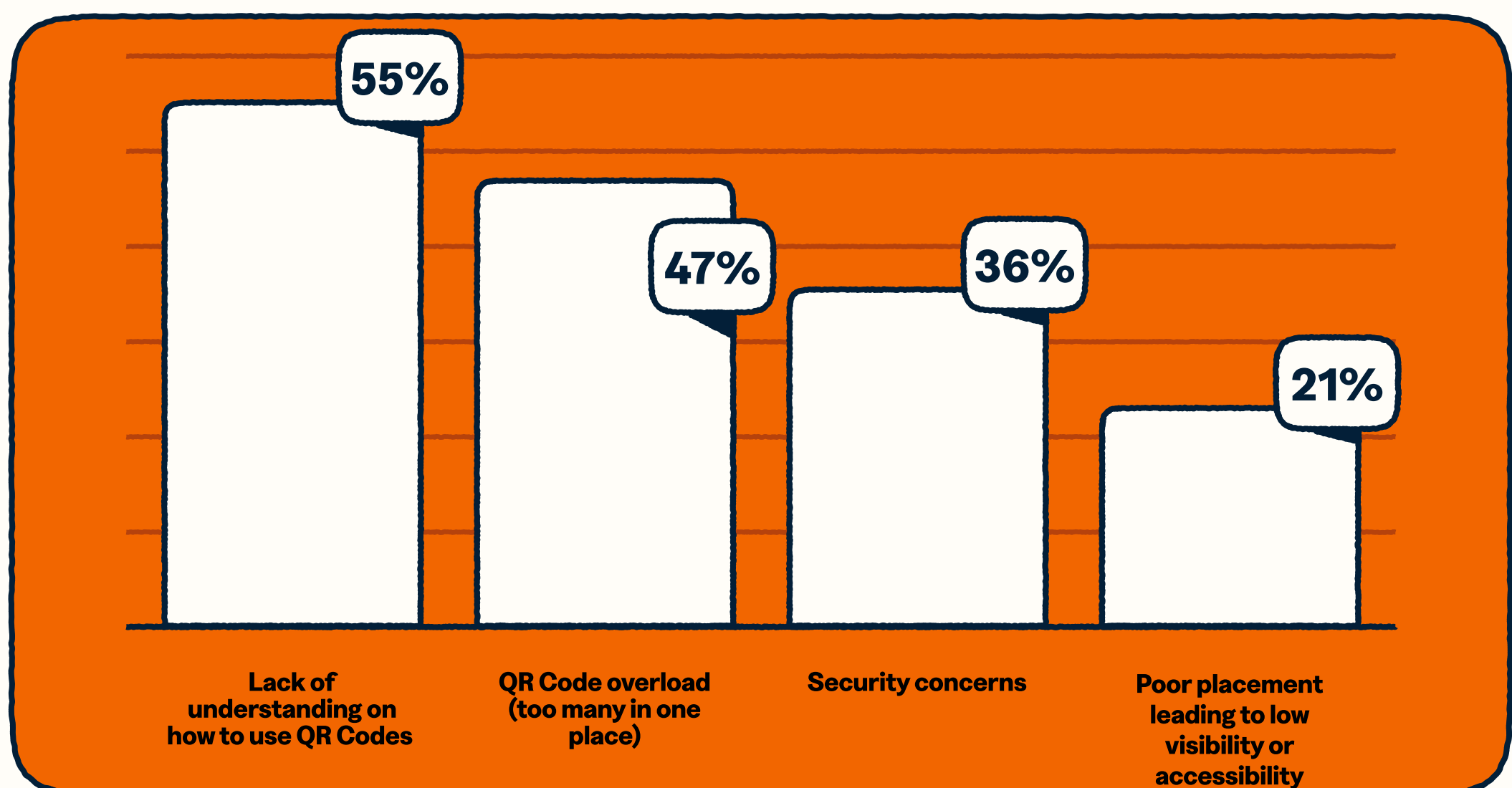
Marketers need deeper insights into the consumer experience to maximize results

QR Codes offer a powerful way to connect with consumers, but many marketers are still leaving value on the table. While adoption is high, the key to maximizing impact lies in better understanding what customers want, expect, and hesitate over.

Respondents report that the biggest obstacles to more widespread consumer adoption are a lack of understanding (55%) and QR Code overload (47%). Some marketers also say that security concerns (36%) prevent customers from scanning QR Codes, and poor placement (21%) leads to low visibility or accessibility.



What barriers do you think consumers face when interacting with QR Codes?



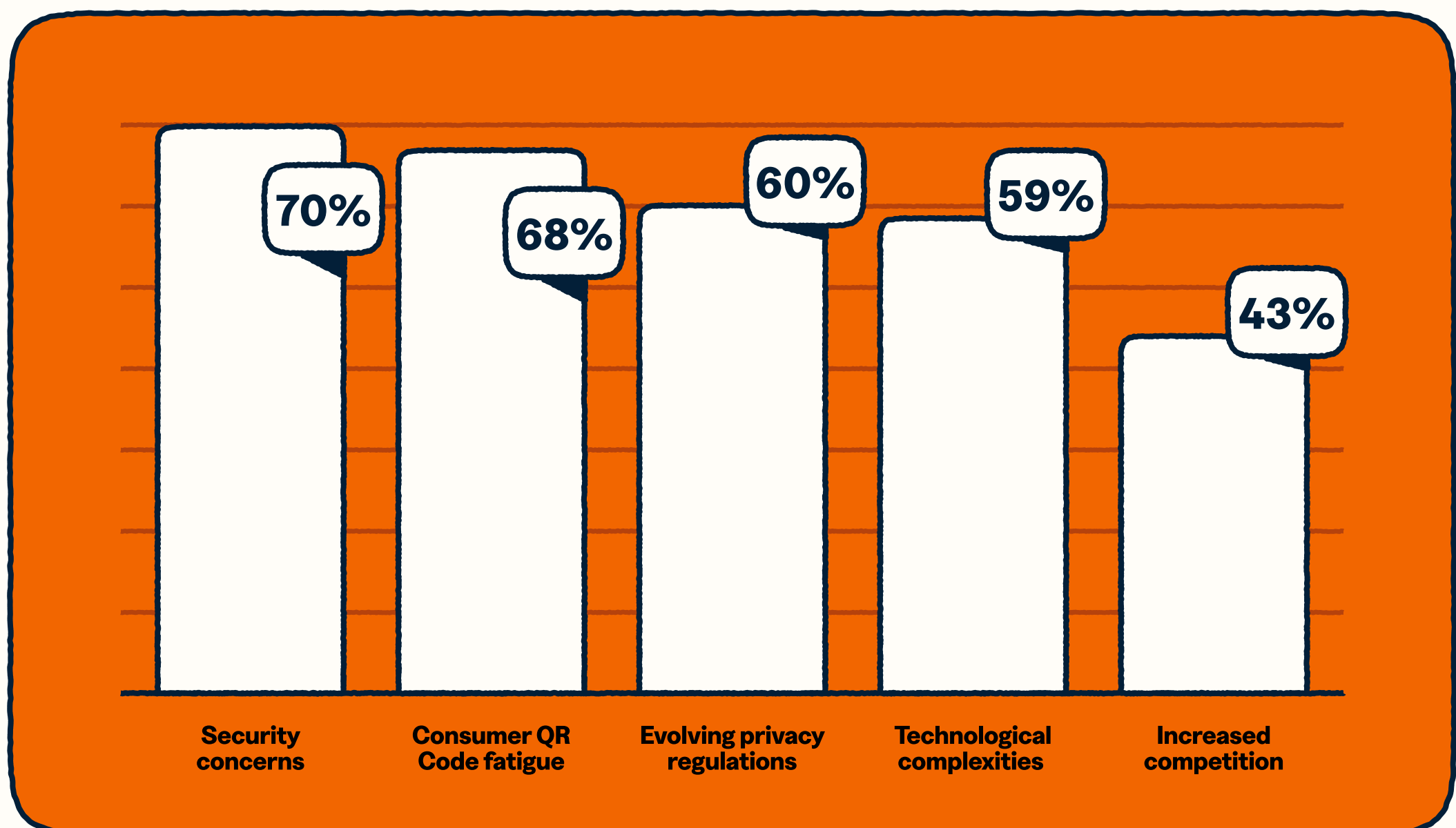
INSIGHT #3

These hurdles suggest one thing: many customers are curious, but still cautious. Without a clear reason to scan or confidence in where it leads even the most creative campaigns can get overlooked.

That's why trust and transparency are just as important as where and when a QR Code appears. Marketers see this shift happening—70% say security will remain a top priority, and 60% expect privacy regulations to influence how QR Codes are used going forward.



What challenges do you anticipate facing with QR Code marketing in the coming years?



INSIGHT #3

To meet these expectations, marketers are doubling down on two key areas: messaging and the tools behind the tech.

QR Codes with clear, compelling **calls-to-action** (CTAs) do more than grab attention—they turn curiosity into action. When paired with thoughtful messaging, brand recognition, and a secure, flexible platform, they give people every reason to scan with confidence. That’s how marketers build trust, drive engagement, and create experiences that truly connect.

Given growing concerns around security, a QR Code solution that prioritizes **trust and safety** is no longer a nice-to-have. Marketers need tools that protect their brand, prevent misuse, and make customers feel confident every time they scan.



“[Bitly's] biggest impacts are on branding, efficiency, and trustworthiness levels. It has certainly helped us (a new brand) continue to get our brand out there via branded short links that we publish often in myriad places. We also heavily rely on the QR code tool. The ability to customize the QR codes has been excellent for our visual asset branding as well.”

UserEvidence verified survey respondent

INSIGHT #4

QR Code analytics unlock new opportunities for valuable first-party data

Marketers have come a long way since the early days of QR Code usage. But when it comes to measurement, many are just getting started. While scan rates are rising and use cases are expanding, most teams haven't yet tapped into the full potential of QR Code analytics.

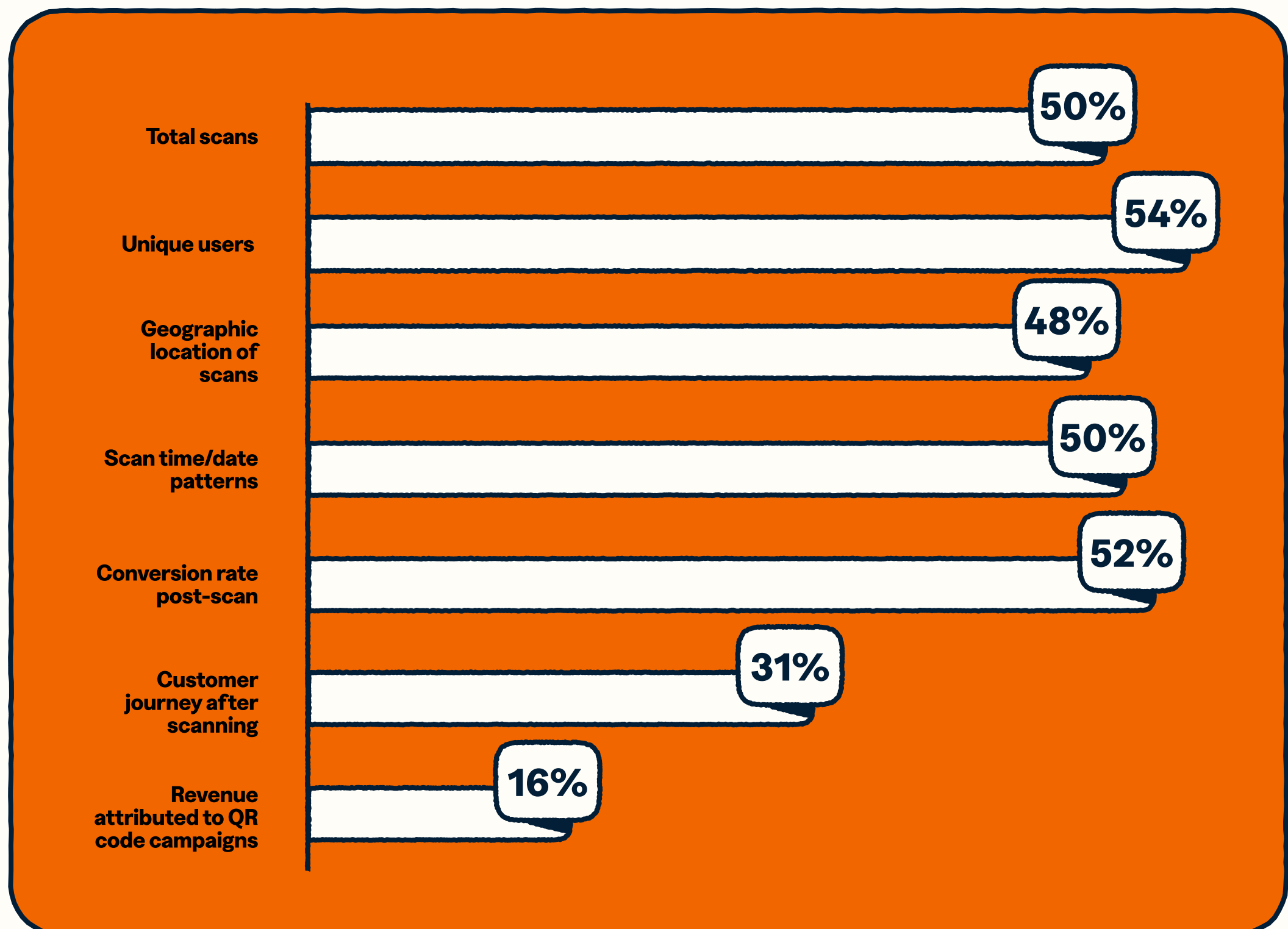
When tracking performance, marketers focus primarily on scan activity—54% measure unique users, and 50% track total scans. Many also look at time of scan (50%) and location (48%).

More than half (52%) report tracking conversions, showing a shift toward outcomes. But only a third (31%) monitor the post-scan journey, and just 16% tie QR Codes directly to revenue.

INSIGHT #4



Which metrics do you consider most valuable when measuring QR Code performance?

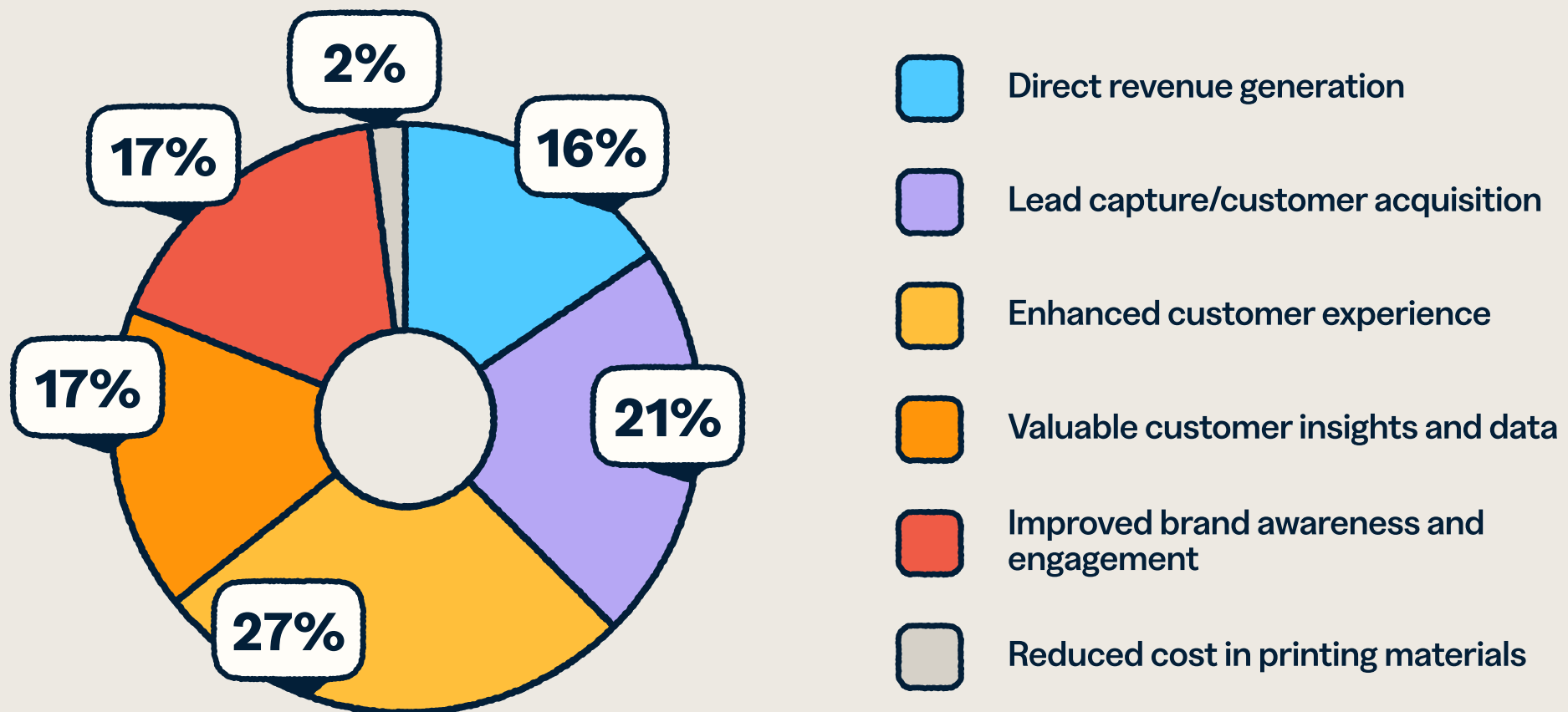


These metrics reflect the value marketers say they're getting from QR Codes today: enhanced customer experience (26%) and lead capture (21%) top the list. Only 17% cite customer insights, and 16% point to direct revenue generation.

INSIGHT #4



What is the primary business value you receive from using QR Codes?

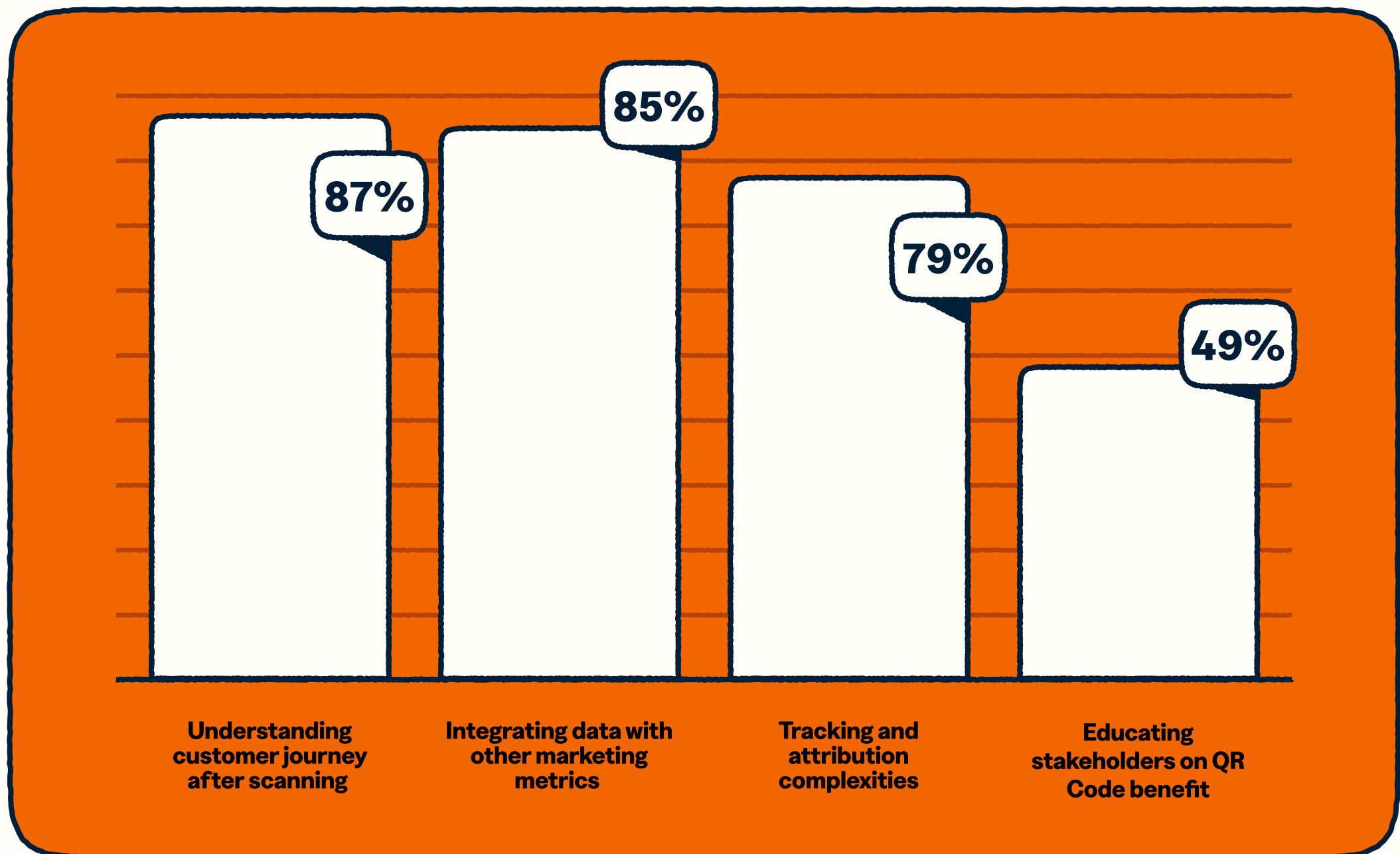


Without the right solution in place, marketers report challenges with demonstrating QR Code ROI. Most (87%) struggle to understand the post-scan customer journey. QR Code attribution and cross-channel measurement are also major hurdles, with 85% of marketers reporting difficulty integrating QR Code data with other marketing metrics.

INSIGHT #4



What are the top challenges you face in demonstrating the ROI of QR Codes?



To close this gap, marketers need analytics tools that go deeper. They need to be able to connect scans to business outcomes, track behavior across channels, and turn engagement into measurable results.

Some are already leading the way, pairing QR Codes with campaign landing pages, goal-oriented UTMs, and centralized tracking systems:

INSIGHT #4



“Everything is centralized, QR Codes, event landing pages, and UTMs. Great tracking metrics. I use it daily for my social media and event activities.”

Estefania G.

Kantox

Advanced analytics are especially valuable as marketers explore new ways to drive revenue. Take conversational commerce, for example. From chatbots to AI-powered assistants, these tools help customers make purchases in real time—and QR Codes are a seamless way to launch that experience. Whether it’s for reorders, upsells, or loyalty-building moments, smarter QR Code tracking turns scans into meaningful, measurable outcomes.



“[Bitly] helps me to have better control over my links assigned to a given campaign, where I can see all the statistics and the impact of the link or QR Code shared.”

Micael Landim

Director, Universidade de Santiago - Cabo Verde

With real-time insights, customizable dashboards, and the ability to monitor performance across touchpoints, QR Code analytics not only track success but also help shape it. Marketers who embrace this opportunity will be better positioned to optimize campaigns, prove ROI, and connect every scan to a measurable outcome.

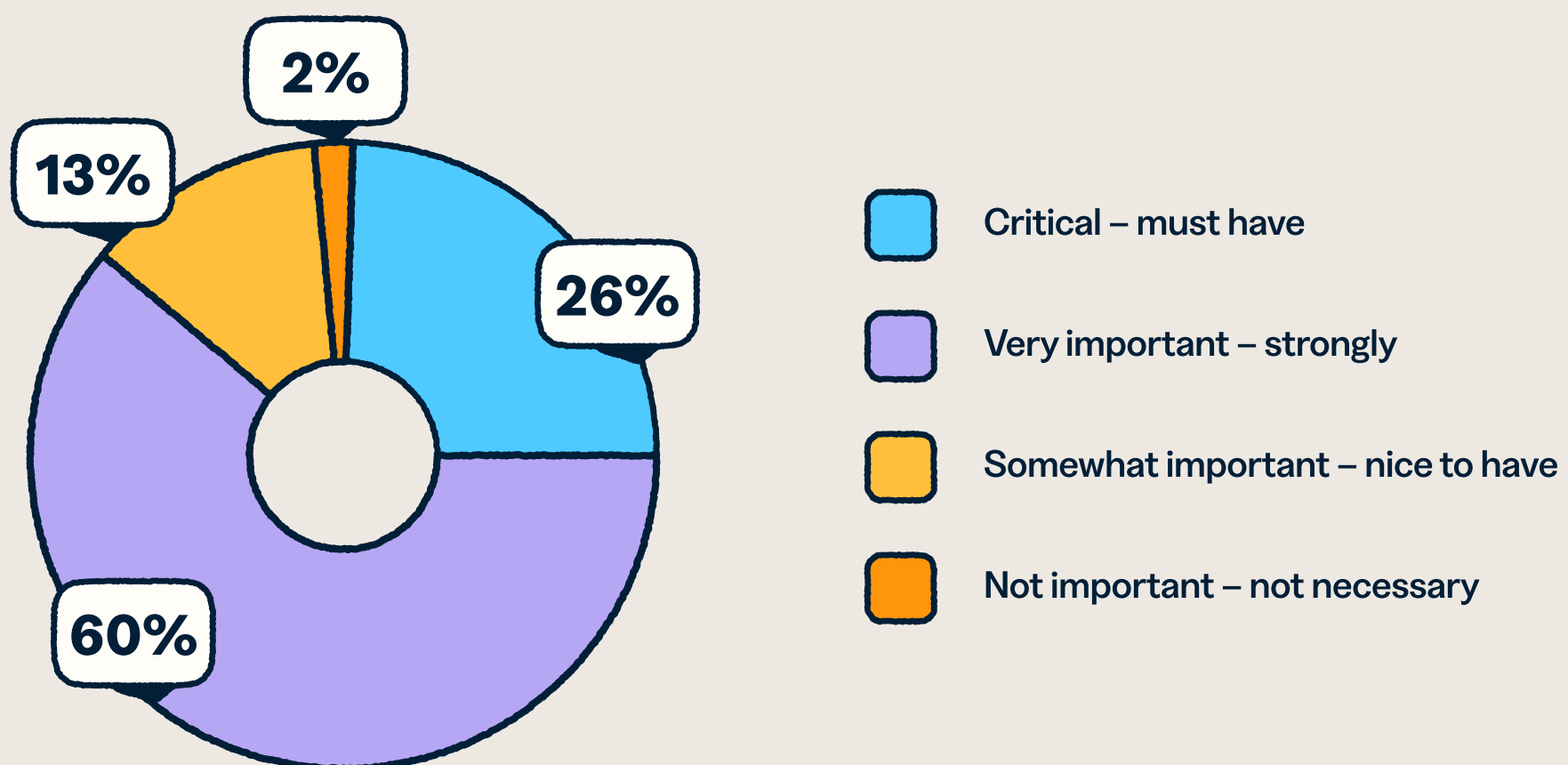
INSIGHT #5

Advanced features like customization and redirects boost QR Code value

Today's QR Codes are far more than scannable black-and-white squares. They've evolved into fully **branded, flexible touchpoints** that are essential tools for marketers looking to create cohesive, high-impact campaigns. For most, customization is no longer a nice-to-have. 86% of marketers say the ability to customize QR Codes is critical or very important.

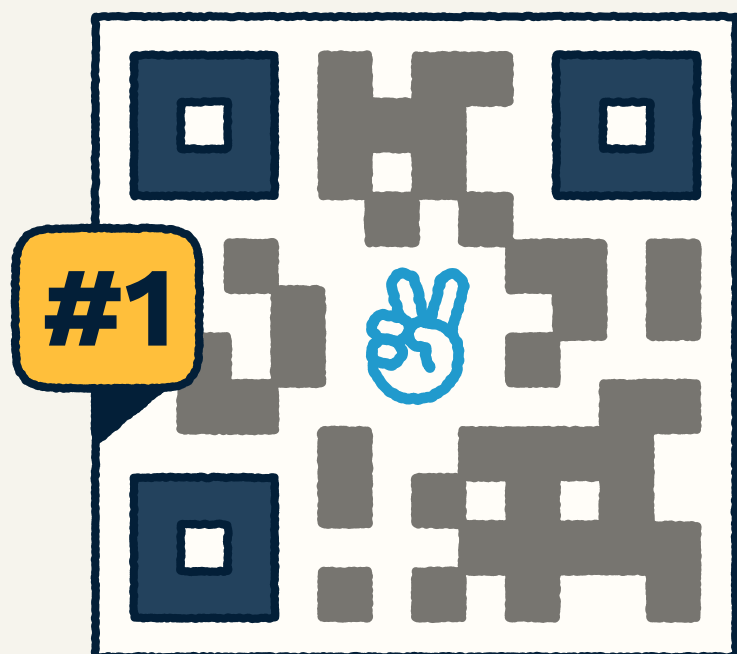


How important do you think it is to customize the design of your QR Codes?



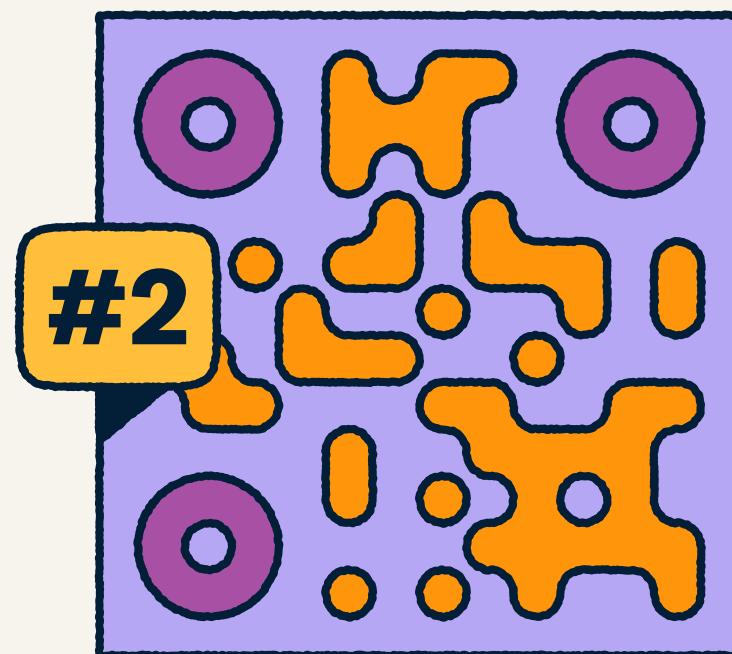
INSIGHT #5

What aspect of QR Code customization do you find most valuable?



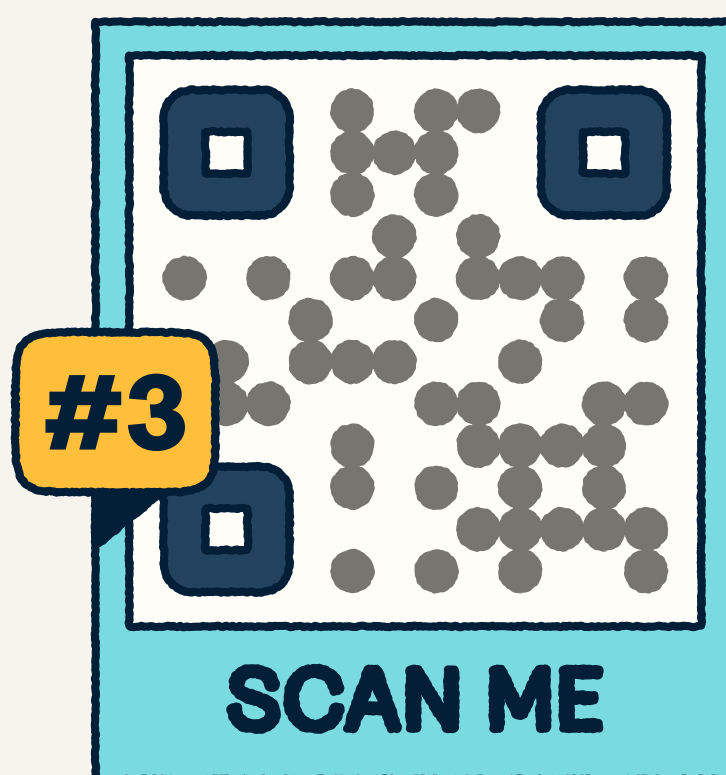
Adding a business logo

49%



Selecting custom colors

38%



Unique frames or
patterns

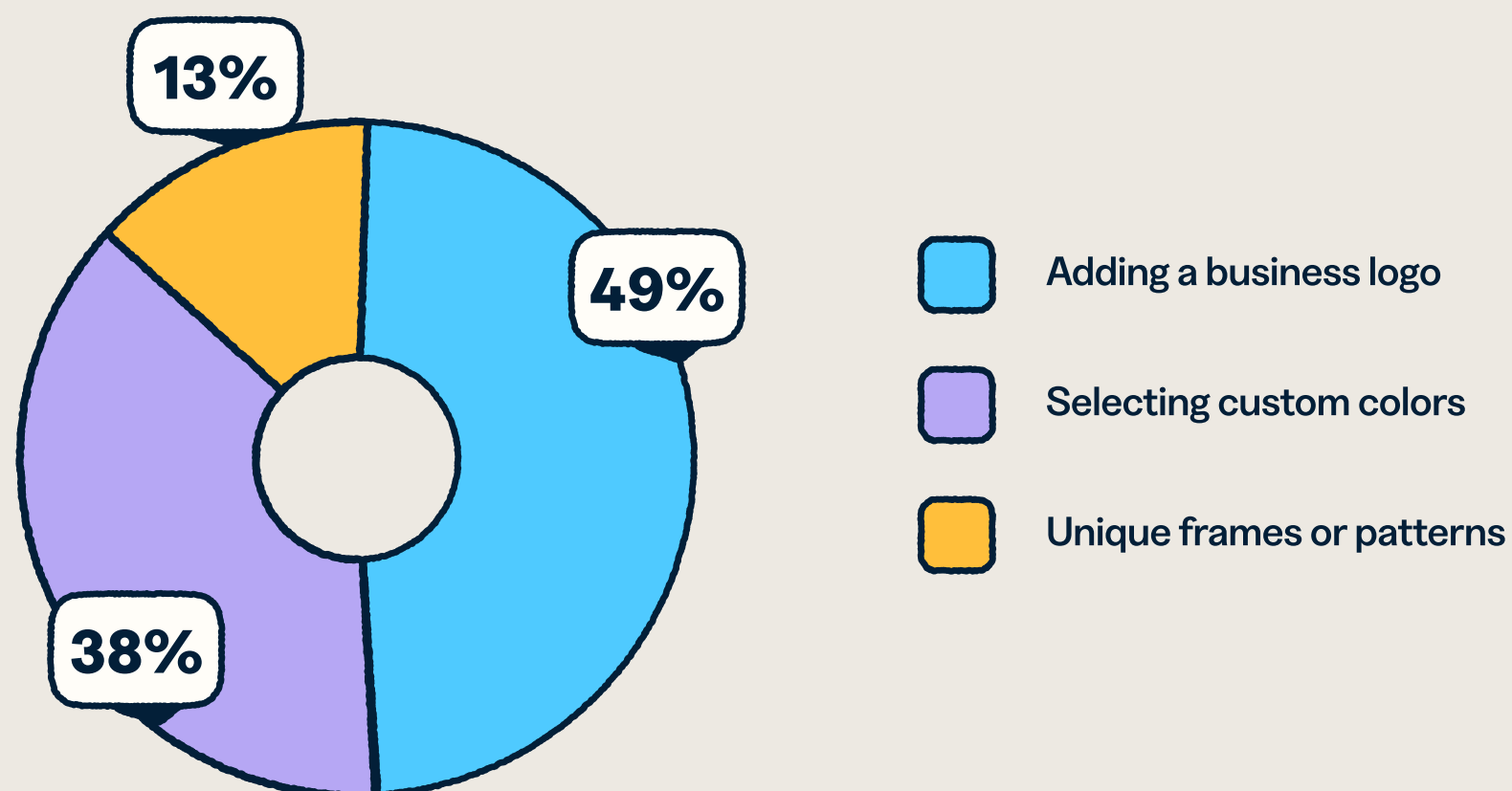
13%

INSIGHT #5

While specific customization needs vary, most marketers (49%) find value in adding a business logo. Many also seek a solution that allows custom colors (38%) and unique frames or patterns (13%).



What aspect of QR Code customization do you find most valuable?



These **visual enhancements** do more than look good—they build trust and create a seamless brand experience. A branded QR Code that leads to a mobile landing page with a matching aesthetic reinforces credibility and improves engagement.

INSIGHT #5

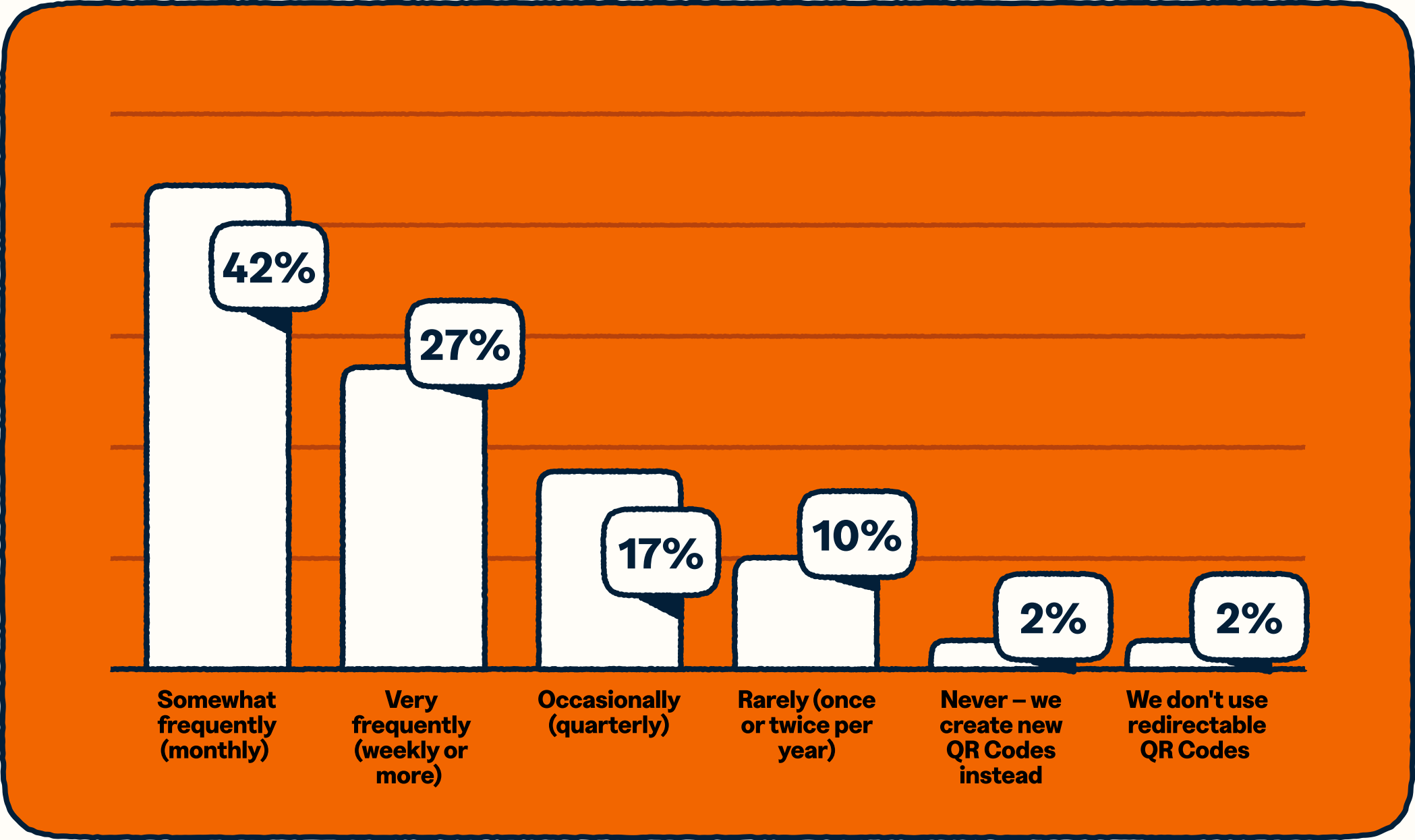


“Branded QR Codes help bridge donor generational gaps by providing a tech link to our giving portal. Branded QR Codes also provide a readily identifiable product for print and digital media.”

UserEvidence verified survey respondent



How frequently do you update or redirect the destination of your QR Codes after they’ve been deployed?



INSIGHT #5

In addition to visual consistency, marketers are also seeking flexibility. Campaigns evolve, and their QR Codes need to keep up, too. 69% of marketers say they update QR Code destinations at least somewhat frequently after deployment.

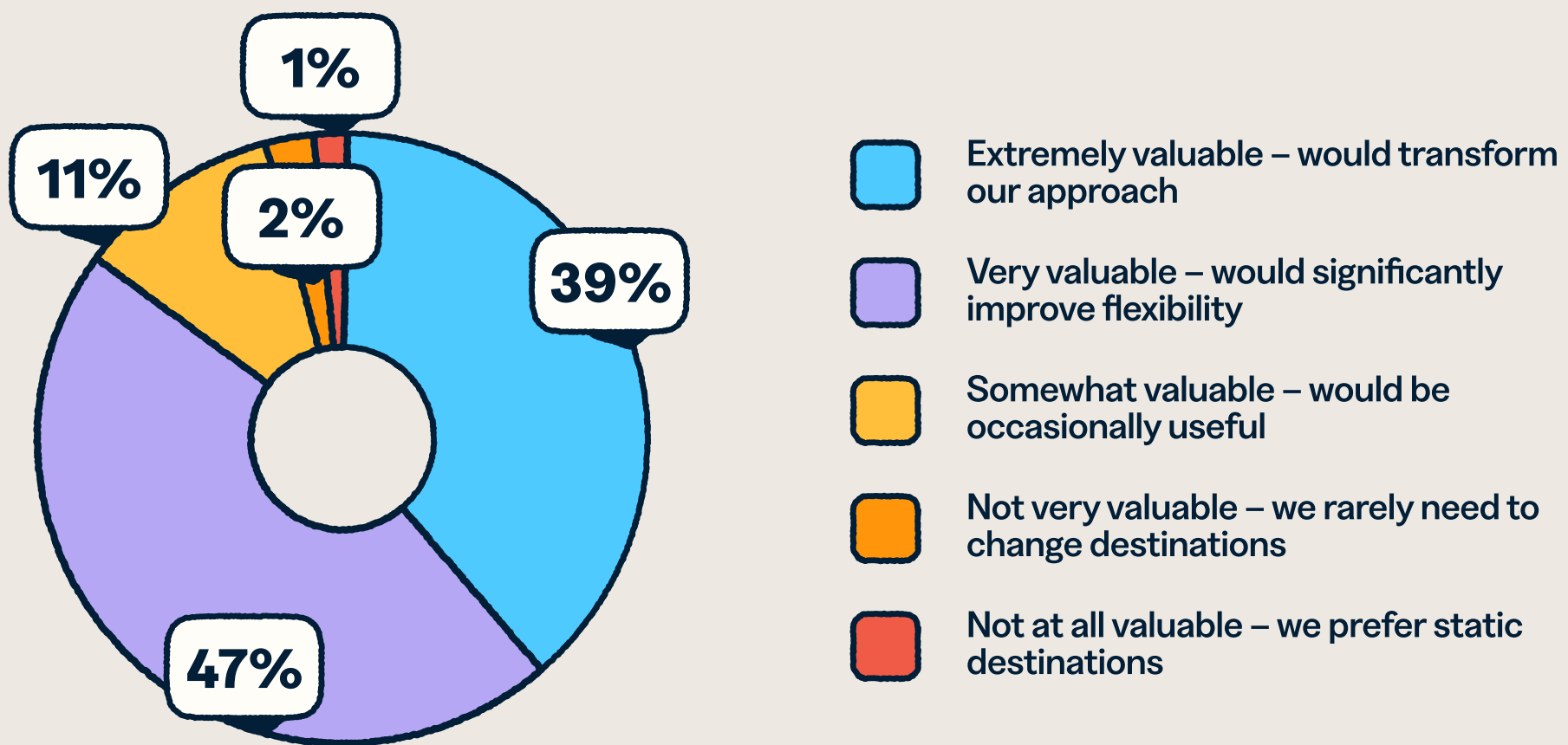
Replacing QR Codes isn't always practical, especially when distributing printed campaign assets across locations or products. As a result, QR Code redirect capabilities are in high demand and are often considered an essential feature. Whether fixing an error, launching new content, or extending a campaign, the ability to update the destination without reprinting saves time, money, and effort.

Most marketers (86%) say that a QR Code tool with redirect capabilities would be very or extremely valuable for improving marketing agility. By **editing the URL destination**, marketers can make instant updates to existing QR Codes, allowing them to continue using campaign assets while sending customers to the correct resource or landing page.

INSIGHT #5



How would the ability to change QR Code destinations after deployment impact your marketing agility?



“We ran a QR Code campaign for a retail client, linking in-store displays to exclusive online offers, which boosted conversions by 35% in three months. The seamless digital bridge drove engagement, proving how frictionless access fuels consumer action.”

UserEvidence verified survey respondent

Marketers who treat QR Codes like static tools are missing out. With features like customization and redirects, QR Codes become dynamic drivers of trust, engagement, and performance—no matter how your campaign evolves.

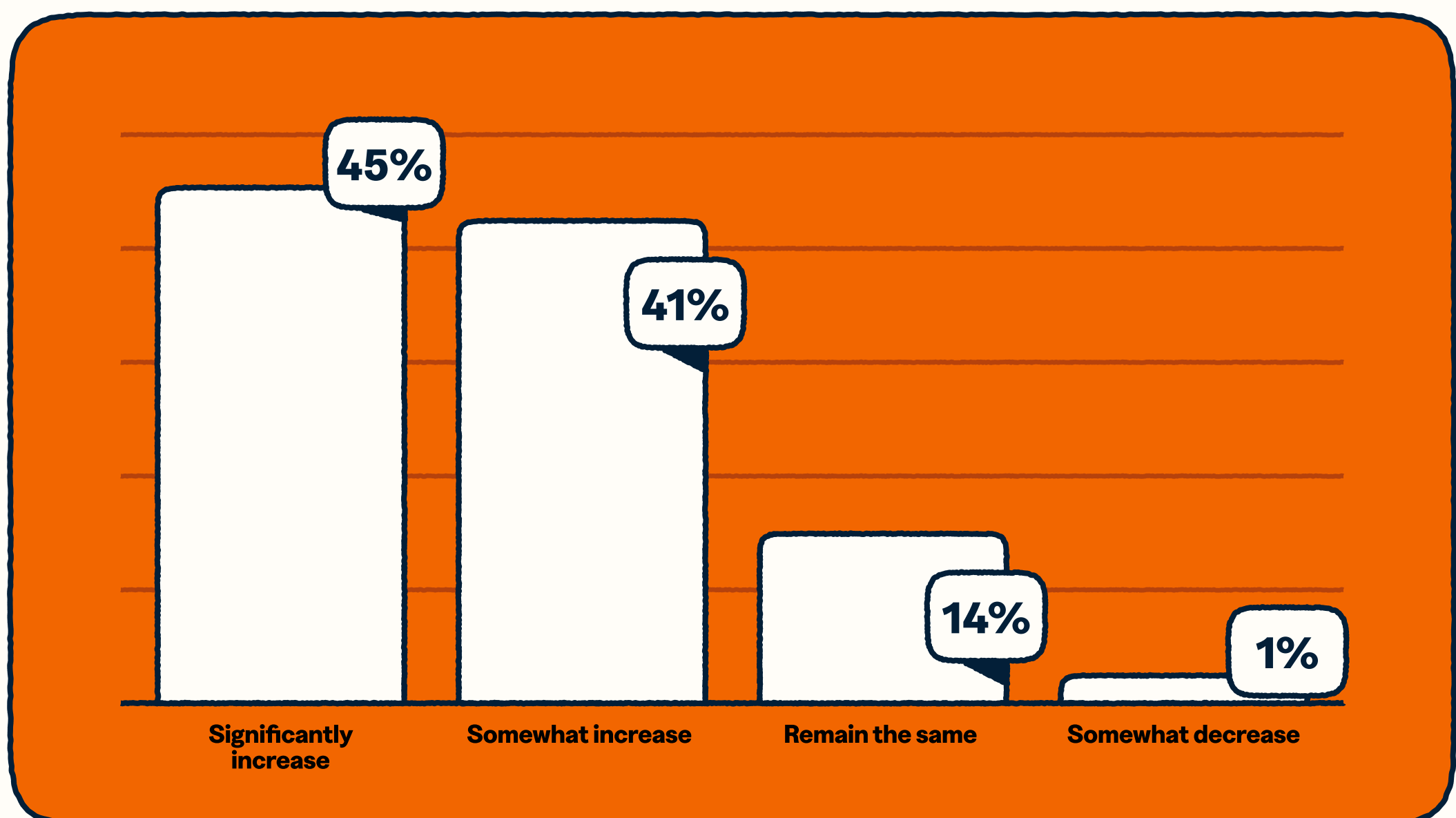
INSIGHT #6

QR Codes are gateways to a connected future with integrated touchpoints

The outlook is clear. QR Code adoption is on the rise. An overwhelming 86% of marketers anticipate increasing their QR Code usage in the coming year, with almost half (45%) expecting significant growth.



How do you expect your usage of QR Codes to change over the next 12 months?

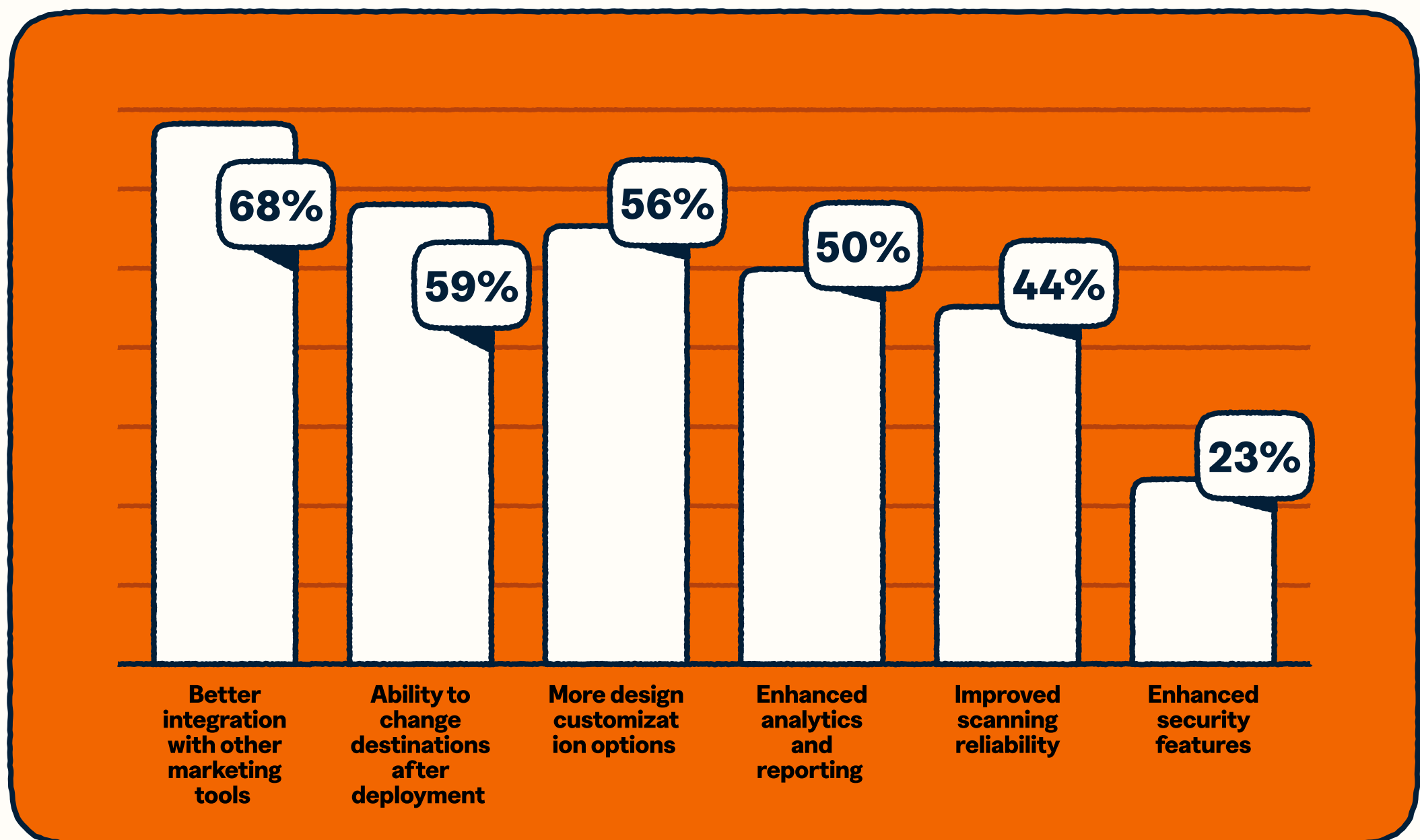


INSIGHT #6

As they consider changes to their marketing technology stack, marketers increasingly prioritize QR Code solutions that offer advanced features. Capabilities like redirects (59%), design customization (56%), and enhanced analytics and reporting (50%) represent some of the greatest value adds for QR Code campaigns.



What feature would most increase the value of QR Codes for your business?



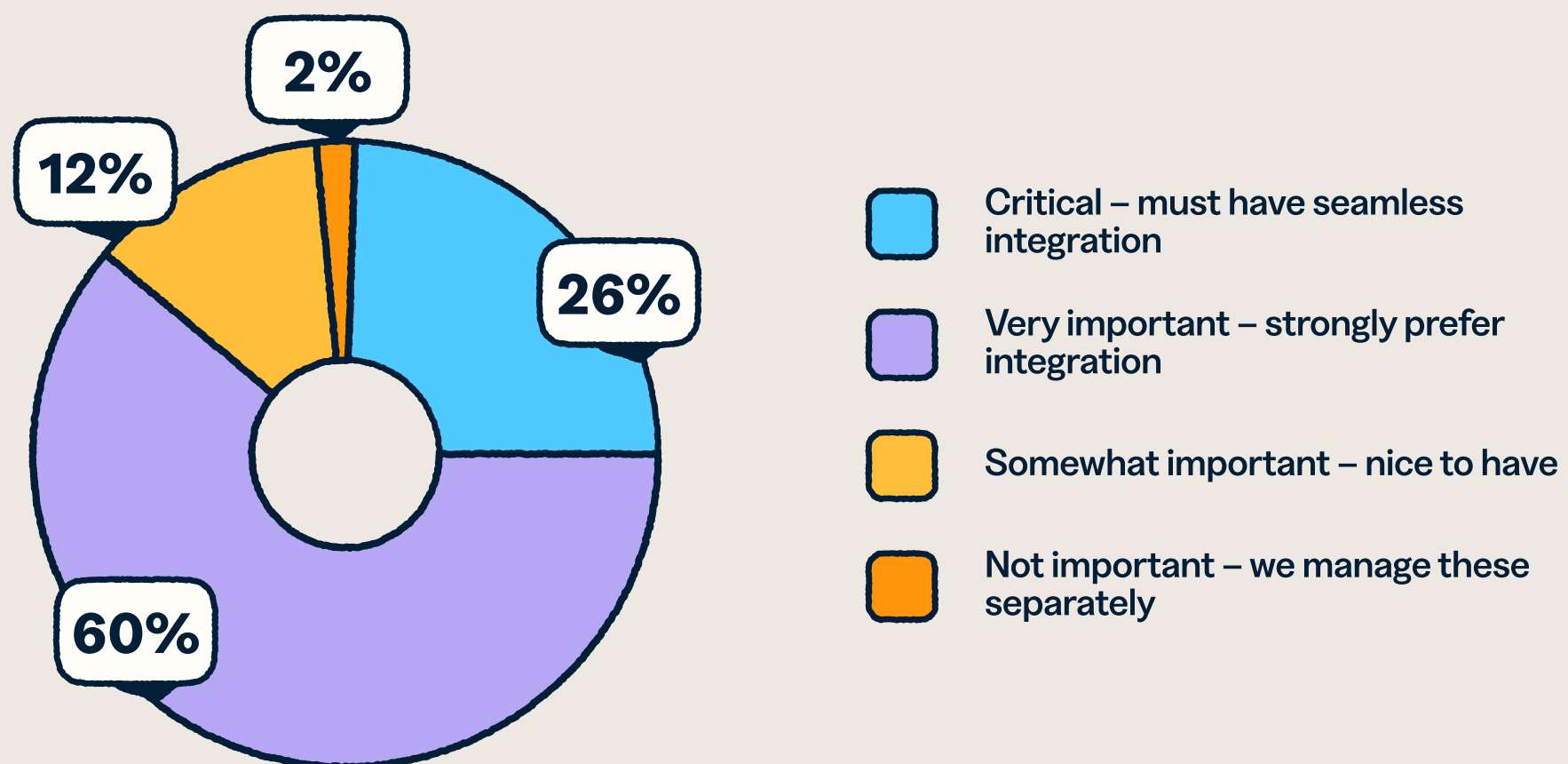
INSIGHT #6

But above all, marketers value integration. Nearly every respondent (98%) says it's at least somewhat important that their QR Code platform integrates with their existing tools—whether it's a CRM, design software, analytics dashboard, or marketing automation platform.

From design apps to social media scheduling tools to customer relationship management (CRM) platforms, the right software integrations save marketers time, reduce the potential for error, and create a more connected workflow.



How important is integration between your QR Code platform and your existing marketing tools?



INSIGHT #6



“Bitly helps us manage multiple URLs throughout our campaigns and provides customizable QR Codes when needed. We often use it for its redirect features. I have an entire automation that relies on Bitly integration and API with Make. It helps me provide Bitly as a tool to the rest of my team without giving them direct access to my account. I love Bitly!”

Tiffany Travelute

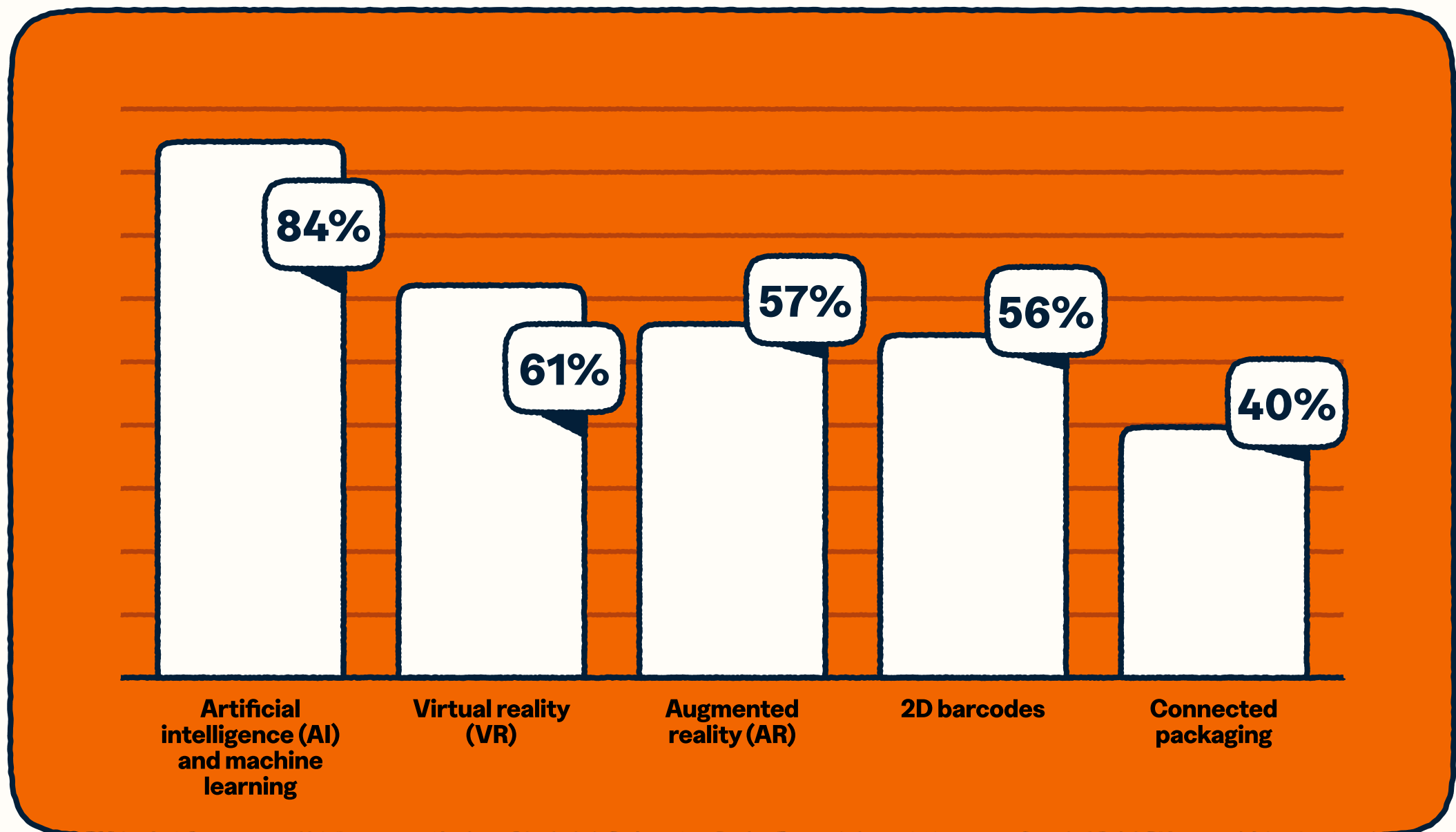
Digital Product Manager, Pioneers

Looking ahead, many marketers anticipate getting even more value from QR Code campaigns by integrating new technologies and trends. Respondents plan to incorporate AI and machine learning (84%), VR (61%), AR (57%), 2D barcodes (56%), and connected packaging (40%).

INSIGHT #6



Are there new technologies or trends you plan to integrate with QR Codes in the future?



QR Codes have moved far beyond utility and are now core to how modern marketers build connected, measurable experiences. The future belongs to brands that treat every scan as a chance to inspire action, deepen trust, and deliver value at every touchpoint. With the right solution in place, QR Codes aren't just part of your strategy—they power it!

Conclusion

This report highlights a major shift in how marketers use and think about QR Codes. Once just a tool for linking to websites, QR Codes have evolved into dynamic, branded touchpoints that bridge physical and digital experiences across the customer journey.

Today's marketers are using QR Codes to drive real-time engagement, guide users through integrated workflows, and capture measurable outcomes. From redirects and design customization to analytics and API integrations, as expectations rise, so does the need for advanced capabilities. The future points toward even deeper innovation, with AI, AR, and connected packaging on the horizon.

But to unlock the full potential of QR Codes, marketers must look beyond the scan. Deeper analytics, attribution, and strategic integration are key to turning every scan into insight—and every touchpoint into a smarter, more connected brand experience.

What does this mean for marketers? QR Codes are no longer side players. With the right tools and approach, they're central to how modern marketers connect, convert, and grow.

Methodology and demographics

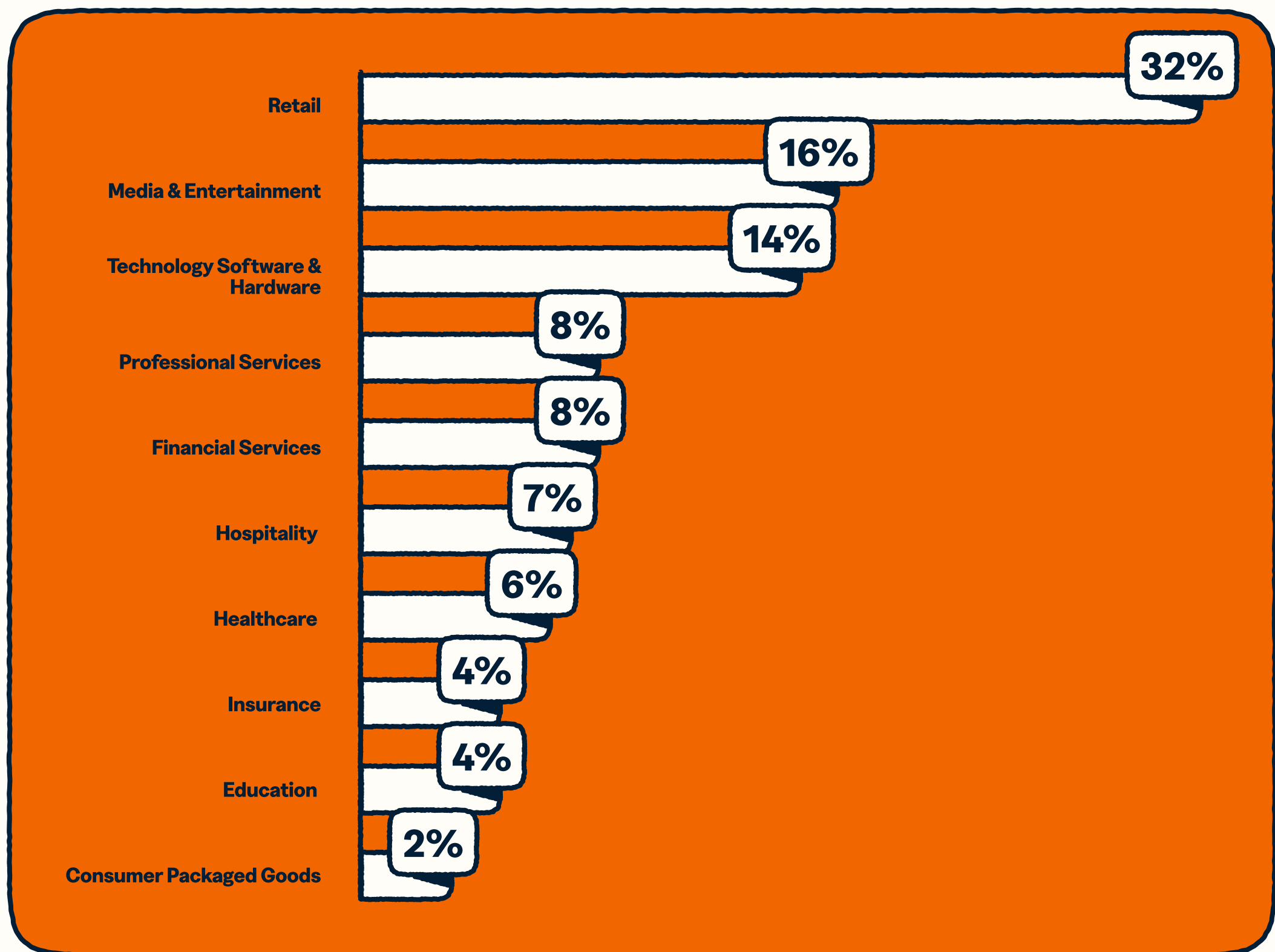
Bitly commissioned an independent market survey from UserEvidence of 250 mid-market and small business professionals involved in marketing and customer engagement strategies in North America and Europe. The research sample was vendor-neutral and did not target Bitly or UserEvidence customers, although they were not excluded from participating.

Survey respondents work within industries ranging from financial services (8%) to hospitality (7%) to consumer packaged goods (2%). The most common are retail (32%), media and entertainment (16%), and technology software and hardware (14%).

METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHICS



In which industry are you working?

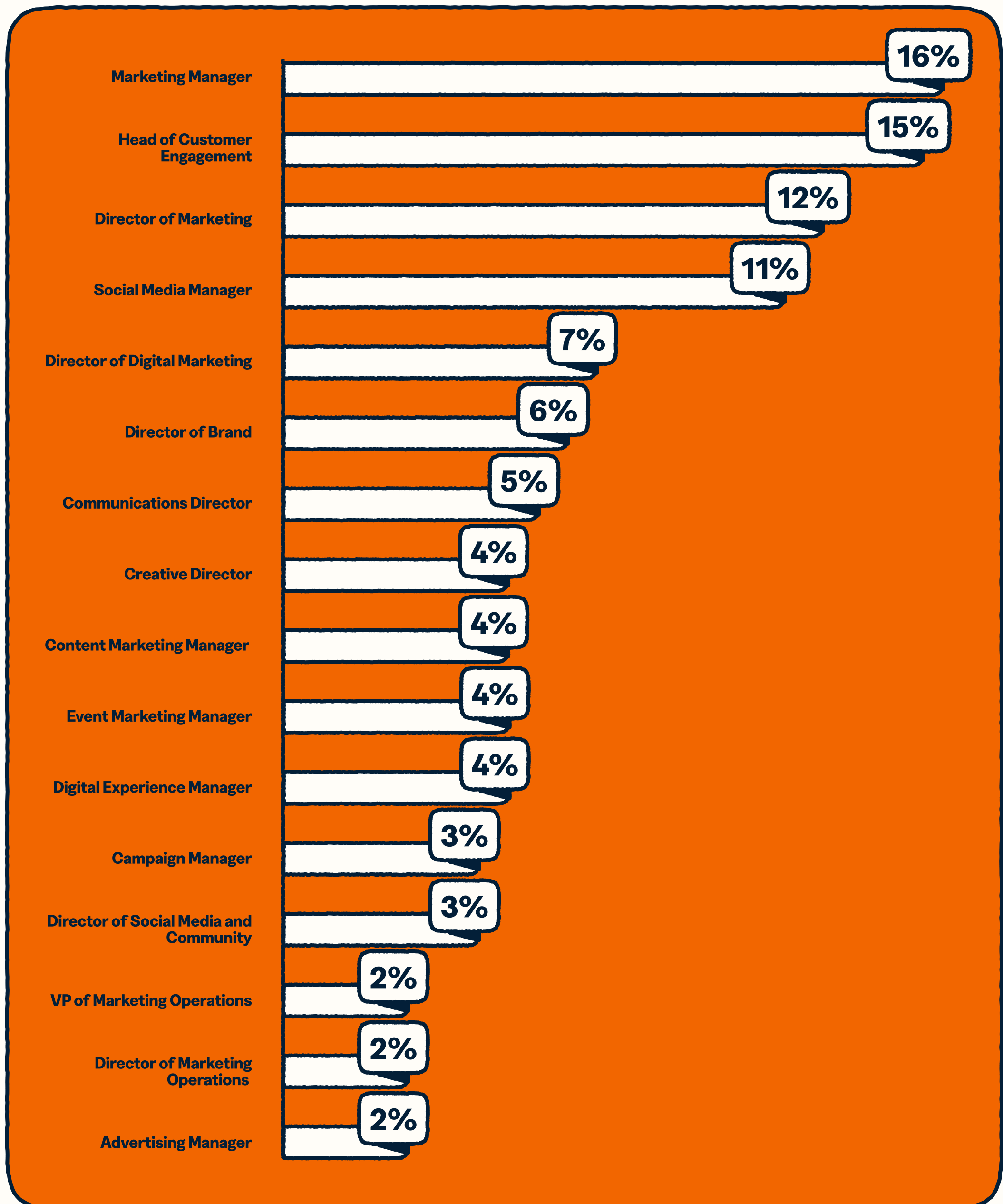


Respondents primarily work in marketing, communications, social media, and advertising. Titles range from vice president to manager. 45% hold director-level titles, while 33% hold manager-level titles.

METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHICS



What title most closely aligns with your current title?





About UserEvidence

UserEvidence is a software company and independent research partner that helps B2B technology companies produce original research content from practitioners in their industry. All research completed by UserEvidence is verified and authentic according to their research principles: Identity verification, significance and representation, quality and independence, and transparency. All UserEvidence research is based on real user feedback without interference, bias, or spin from our clients.

UserEvidence research principles

These principles guide all research efforts at UserEvidence—whether working with a vendor’s users for our Customer Evidence offering, or industry practitioners in a specific field for our Research Content offering. The goal of these principles is to give buyers trust and confidence that you are viewing authentic and verified research based on real user feedback, without interference, bias, and spin from the vendor.

USEREVIDENCE RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

01 Identity verification

In every study we conduct, UserEvidence independently verifies that a participant in our research study is a real user of a vendor (in the case of Customer Evidence) or an industry practitioner (in the case of Research Content). We use a variety of human and algorithmic verification mechanisms, including corporate email domain verification (i.e., so a vendor can't just create 17 Gmail addresses that all give positive reviews), and pattern-based bot and AI deflection.

02 Significance and representation

UserEvidence believes trust is built by showing an honest and complete representation of the success (or lack thereof) of users. We pursue statistical significance in our research, and substantiate our findings with a large and representative set of user responses to create more confidence in our analysis. We aim to canvas a diverse swatch of users across industries, seniorities and personas—to provide the whole picture of usage, and allow buyers to find relevant data from other users in their segment, not just a handful of vendor-curated happy customers.

03 Quality and independence

UserEvidence is committed to producing quality and independent research at all times. This starts at the beginning of the research process with survey and questionnaire design to drive accurate and substantive responses. We aim to reduce bias in our study design, and use large sample sizes of respondents where possible. While UserEvidence is compensated by the vendor for conducting the research, trust is our business and our priority, and we do not allow vendors to change, influence, or misrepresent the results (even if they are unfavorable) at any time.

04 Transparency

We believe research should not be done in a black box. For transparency, all UserEvidence research includes the statistical N (number of respondents), and buyers can explore the underlying blinded (de-identified) raw data and responses associated with any statistic, chart, or study. UserEvidence provides clear citation guidelines for clients when leveraging research that includes guidelines on sharing research methodology and sample size.



About Bitly

Bitly is the world's leading Connections Platform, empowering businesses to create memorable connections with their customers at every physical and digital touchpoint. From Fortune 500 companies to small businesses, millions of people around the world rely on Bitly for custom short links, QR Codes, and landing pages that are easy to create, share, and manage. Bitly also provides the tools to track and optimize every interaction, helping businesses understand what drives the greatest impact.

