

MARKETING  
TO THE

# C-suite

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Content that cuts through

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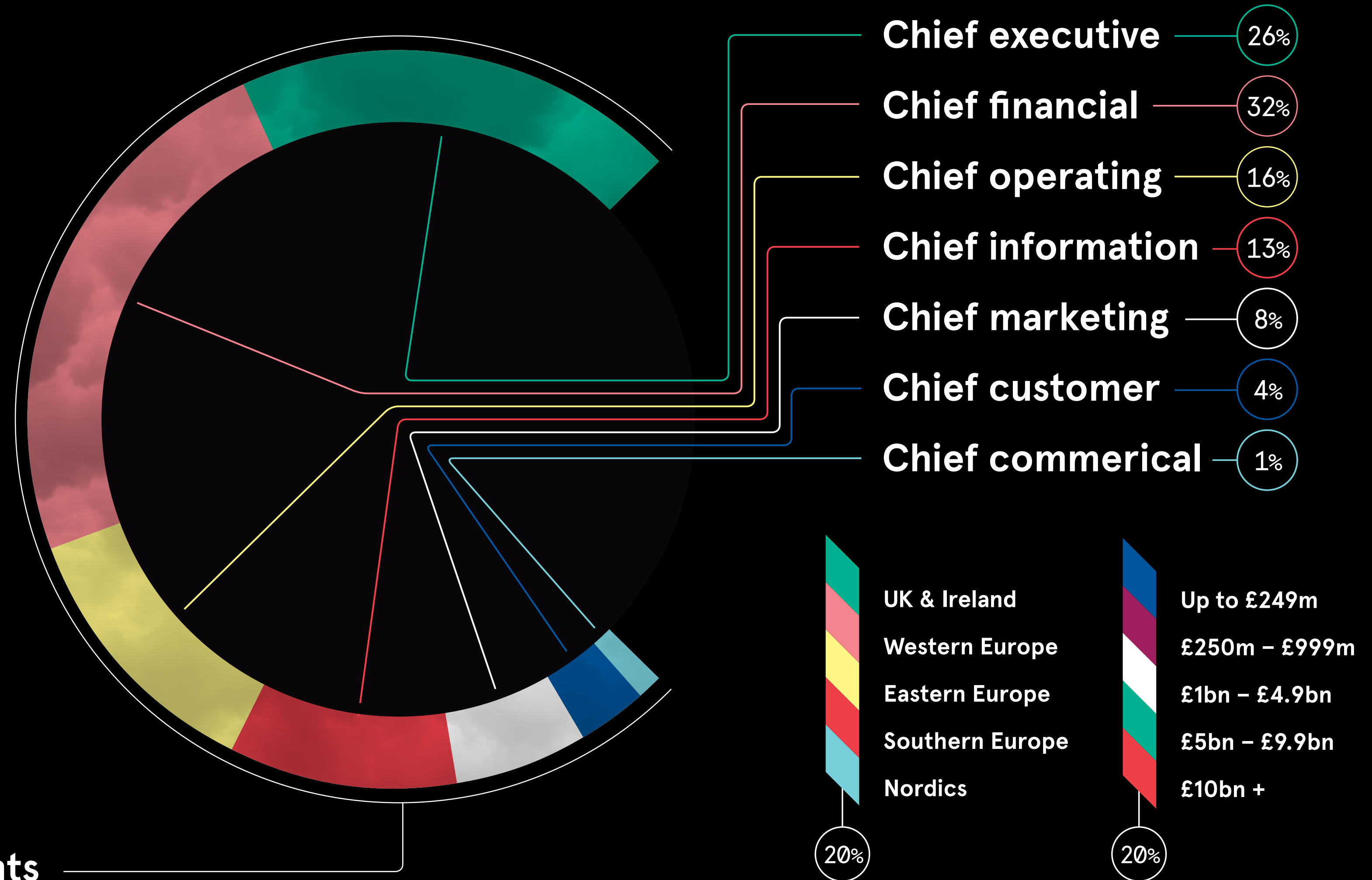
RACONTEUR

# The Research

What sets high-performance content apart from the rest? What does credibility mean in the eyes of the C-suite? What role do editorial and design play in securing attention?

We set out to answer these questions by speaking to 500 senior executives and investigating how the C-suite really consume content.

**500 C-suite respondents**



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# Contents

“

To cut through, businesses need to be brave and have a high tolerance for risk”

Tom Goodwin  
Zenith Media

“

The key to success is simple. You must be relevant and superior”

Mark Schaefer  
Marketing consultant

“

Creating great content isn't easy. If it were, everybody would be doing it”

Jason Miller  
Linkedin

Wise  
words

# The Case for Content

# Appetite

C-suites have a strong desire, with more than two in three prepared to seek out and read content from brands they trust.

33%

## — Hungry

I have a voracious appetite for content and actively seek out and/or subscribe to content from a wide range of businesses

37%

## — Discerning

I only pay attention to content from brands and businesses that I know or am already familiar with, or that is shared or recommended to me by someone I know and trust

23%

## — Pragmatic

I'm always willing to look at something for the first time from a brand or business but if it doesn't resonate I'll probably ignore that provider in the future

17%

## — Conservative

I tend to rely on content from a small number of brands and businesses I know and trust, and have little appetite for discovering content from new sources

# Need

Business leaders do recognise the important role that content should play in making purchase decisions.



When I need confidence or reassurance I'm making the right decision on who I'm buying from"

55%



When I'm evaluating or comparing the expertise of specific brands or businesses"

54%



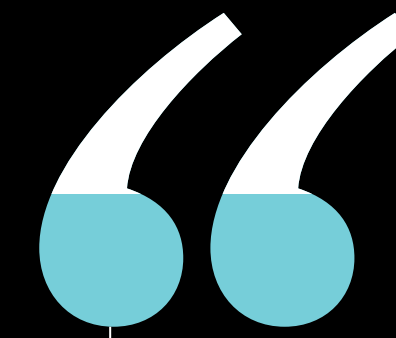
When I'm looking for potential advisors, suppliers or partners to help me tackle a specific problem"

51%



Ongoing – just keeping abreast of the latest thinking and trends"

50%



When I'm looking for value-add from current advisors, suppliers or partners"

46%

# Action

The value of thought leadership speaks for itself with the c-suite reporting multiple positive actions on reading good content.

## Top 8 actions taken as a result of reading CPB

Asked the producing brand or business to meet with me to discuss how they might be able to help my business

1

Purchased products or services from the producing brand or business

2

Initiated an action within my organisation as a direct result of the content I reviewed

3

Sent to colleagues with a request that we meet and discuss the implications for our business

4

5

6

7

8

Changed my opinion about the producing brand or business, in a positive way

Sent the content to colleagues inside my organisation

Sent the content to a contact or peer(s) outside of my organisation

Shared the content with a positive recommendation on social media



# A Question of Credibility

UK MOBILE PAYMENTS READINESS

- UK score
- Global average

Australia

71%

find most CPB boring, expected and repetitive, lacking original thought and fresh thinking

65%

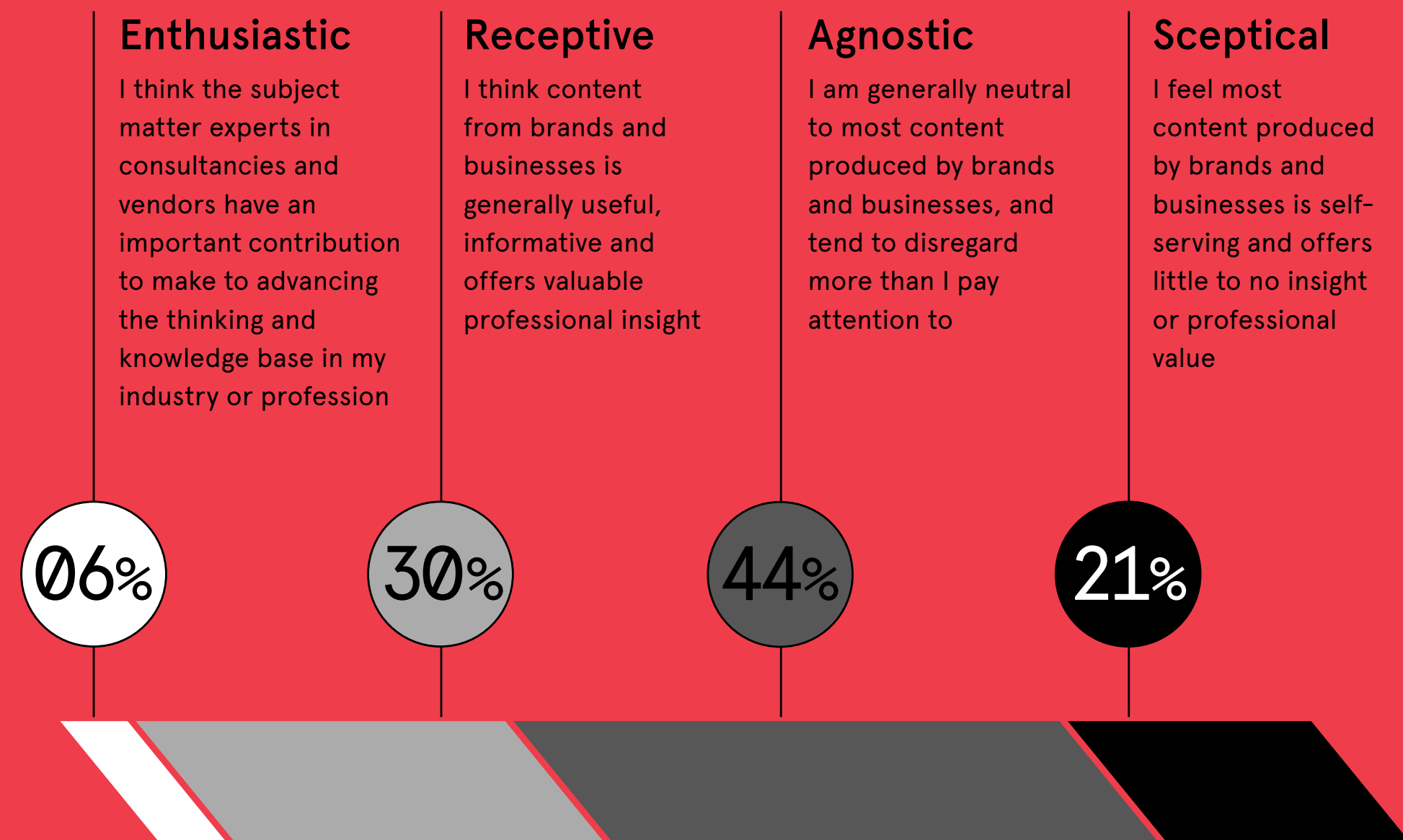
feel most CPB see simply provides commentary on established industry trends rather than creating and leading future-focused conversation

48%

distrust most content produced by brands and businesses because it tends to be too self-serving

# Disillusion

There is a strong negative perception of the quality of most content produced by brands (CPB), with concerns about originality and bias.



# The Chief

**84%** think it is boring, expected & repetitive

**61%** think it lacks editorial quality

**Executive**

**Financial**

**68%** think it simply provides commentary on established industry trends

**64%** prefer it to take bold, contrarian or even provocative points-of-view

**Marketing**

# Officer's Perspective

**58%** think it is too self-serving

**70%** expect depth and substance

# (In)credibility

There is a strong negative perception of the quality of most content produced by brands (CPB), with concerns about originality and bias.

How credible do you find most content you encounter produced by brands or businesses?

51%

think most CPB lacks credibility



# Bridging the Credibility Gap

£291m

£100m

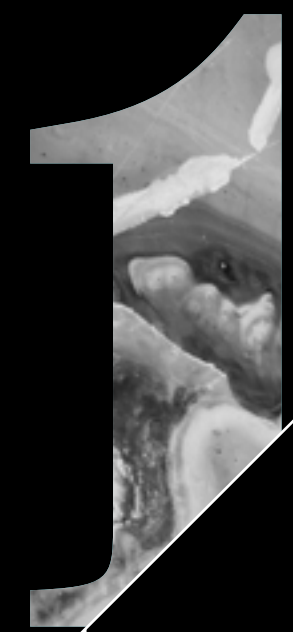
83%

77%

CEMEA

MATURE APAC

EMERGING ASIA



build

Influence



find your

Voice



take a

Position



catch the

Eye

1

**build**

**Influence**

Partnering with respected third-parties, whether publishers, organisations or key opinion leaders, makes content more appealing to the C-Suite.

**NO1**

reason C-suite pick up content: author or producer is a recognised

**EXPERT**

1

build

Influence

Whilst co-creation is optimal, getting your content shared by respected industry figures is also effective.

## Top 5 factors to make the C-suite read

If the author or producer is a recognised expert in my industry or profession

50%

If it's shared or recommended by a respected or influential figure in industry

47%

If the content is based on original, primary research or empirical evidence

42%

If it's shared with me or recommended by someone I know or trust

42%

If the content is hosted or published by a respected independent platform

40%





**find your  
Voice**

Brands might know their subject but they're considered weak at turning it into a narrative. Marketers must invest in professional storytellers.

**61%**

feel most CPB  
**lacks editorial  
quality**



# take a Position

The C-Suite want more than a report of the facts, they want an insight that tells them something new and challenges the status-quo.

65%

feel most CPB simply provides **commentary** on established industry trends

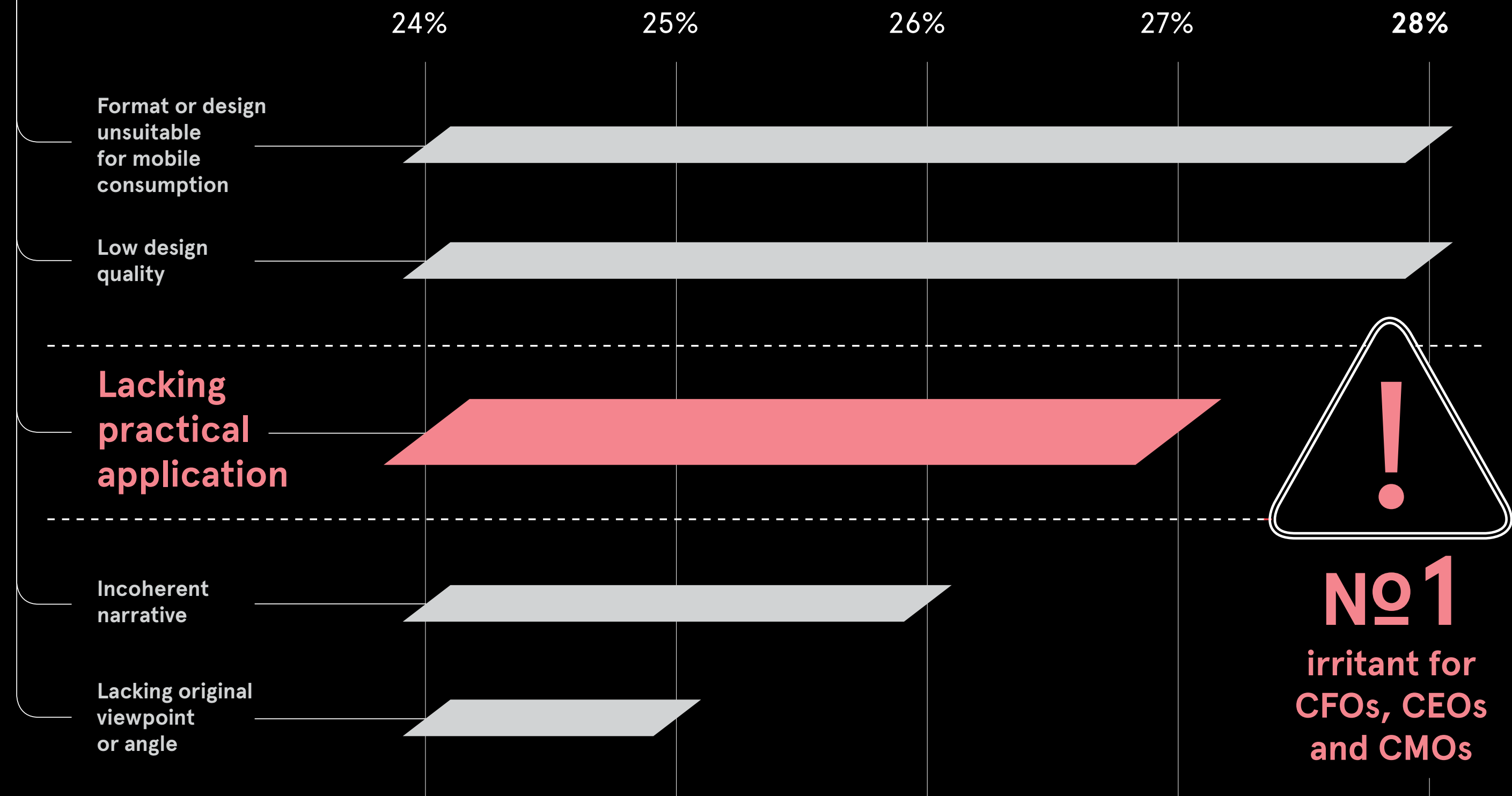
64%

prefer a **bold, contrarian** or **provocative point-of-view**

# The Chief Executive Financial Marketing Officer's Perspective

## What frustrates the C-suite?

Unlike C-suite peers, for CEOs, CFOs and CMOs the lack of practical application is the greatest irritation with content produced by brands.



# The Chief Executive Financial Marketing Officer's Perspective

**51%**  
of  
CEOs

**46%**  
of  
CFOs

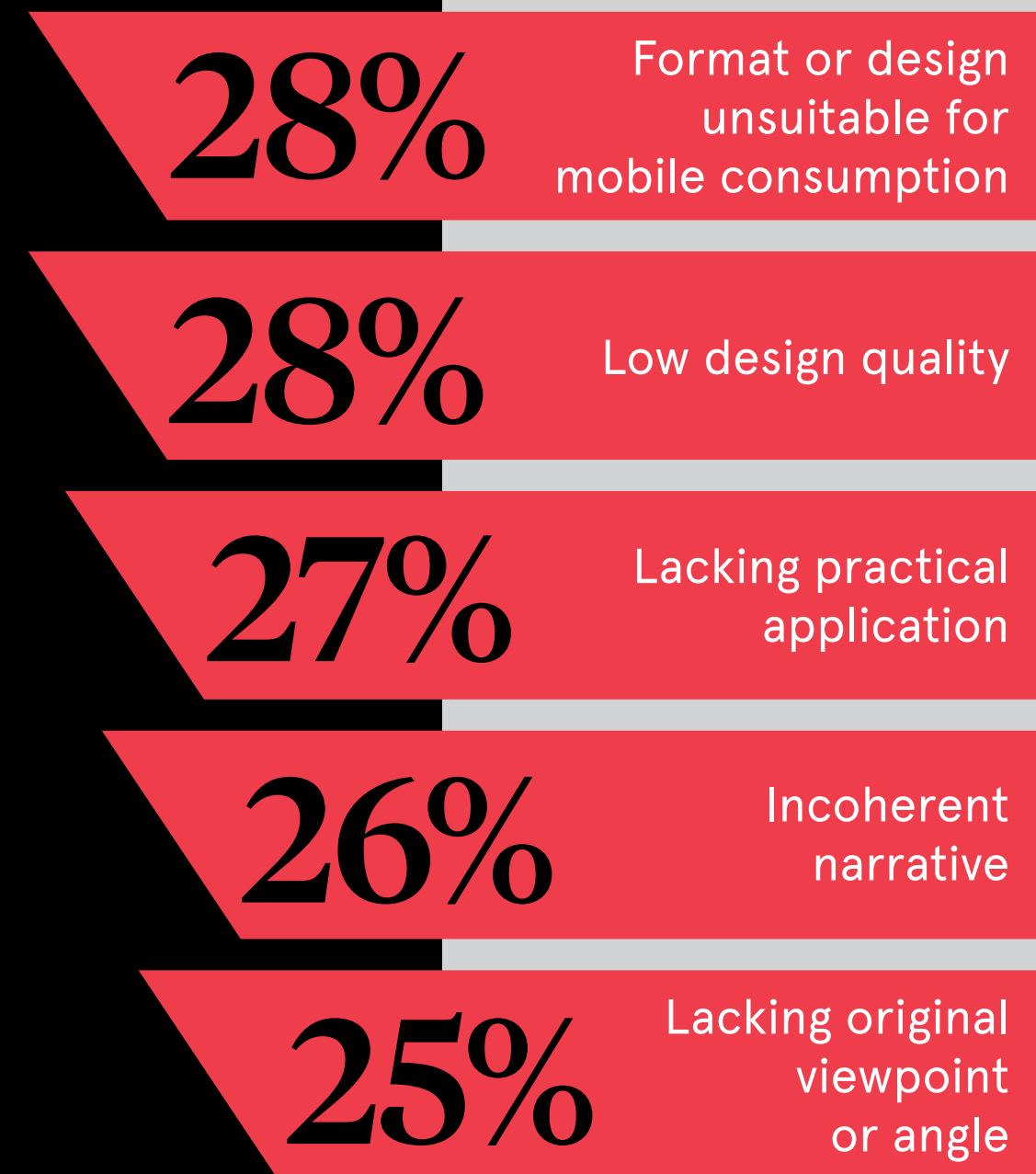
**55%**  
of  
CMOs

**consider clear recommendations and  
conclusions the most compelling reason  
to read branded content**

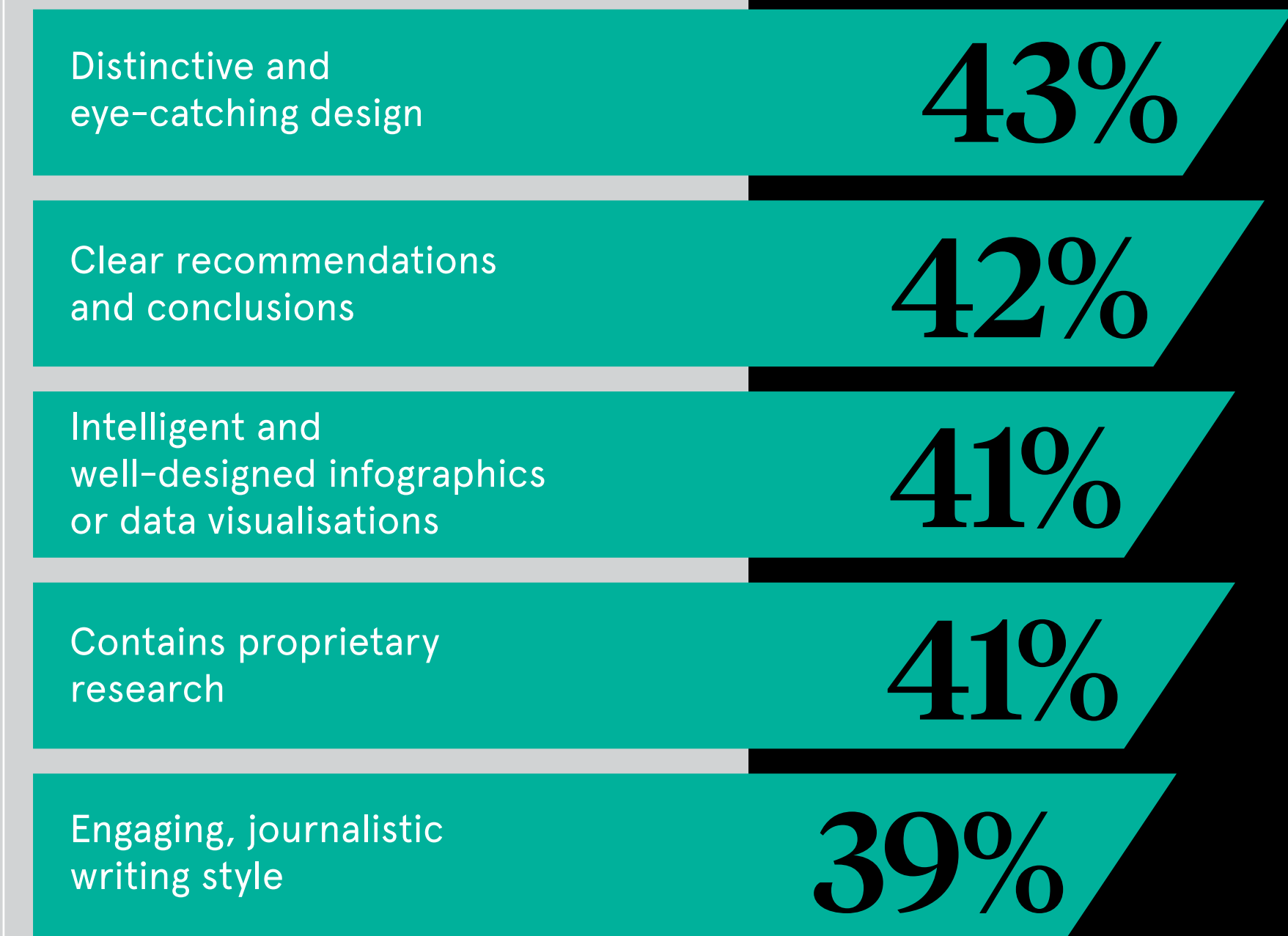
# 4 catch the Eye

Design can make the difference between engaging and irritating the C-Suite. The difference between success and failure.

## Top 5 irritation factors



## Top 5 engagement factors



# 4

## catch the Eye

Design should be an integral component of content rather than simply a nice-to-have, it is the delivery vehicle for a brand's message.

# 57%

think not enough  
brands take **design**  
and  
**layout**  
seriously enough

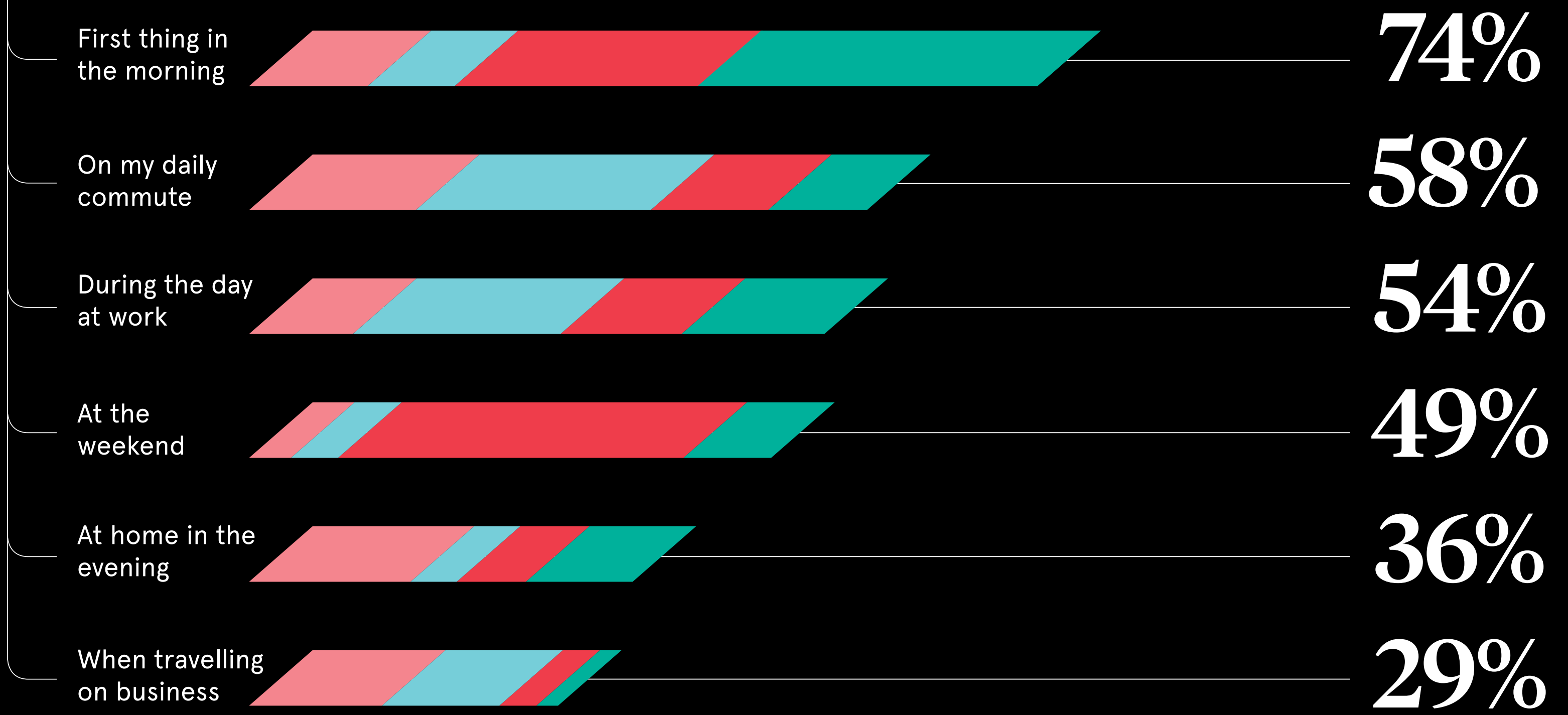
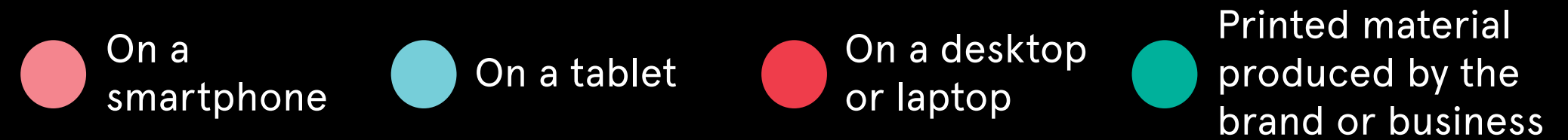
# Getting into View

A person wearing a white dress shirt and a dark tie is shown from the chest up. They are holding a pen in their right hand, positioned over a document. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red color, creating a monochromatic effect.

# Access

C-suites consume CPB within and outside work hours with the traditional mediums of desktop or laptop and written printed material from the brand preferred.

## How the C-suite access content

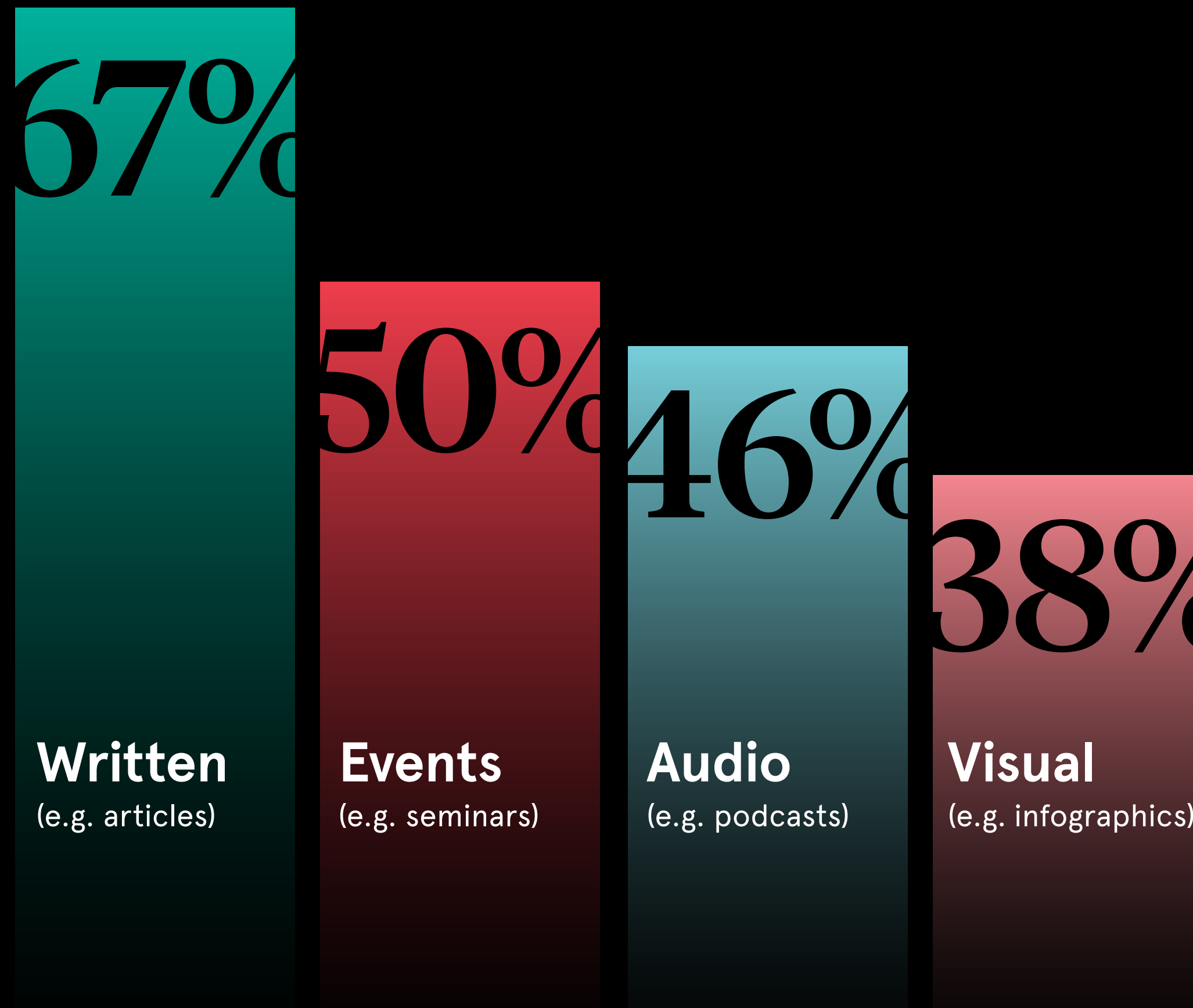




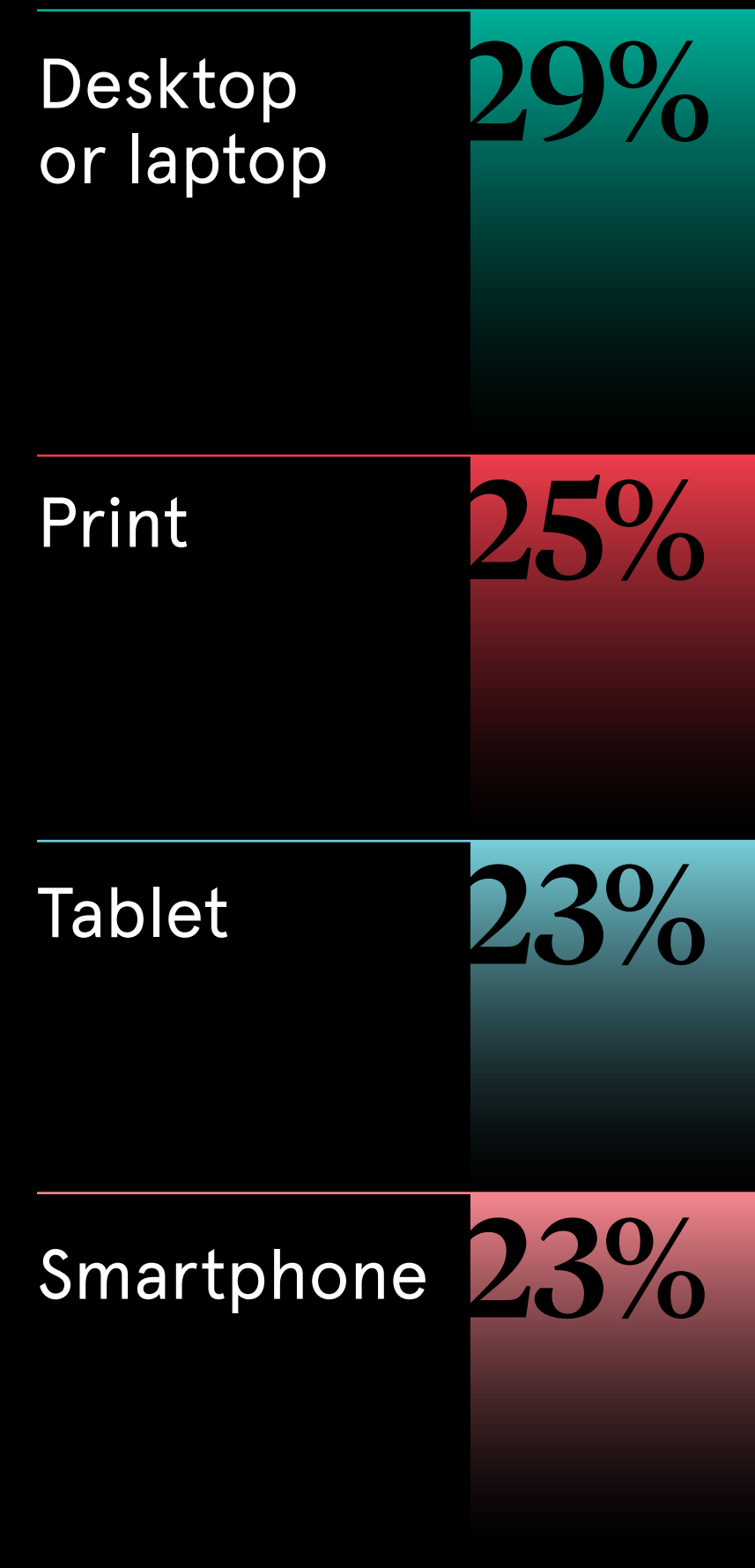
# Access

The C-Suite still prize the written word above newer formats and show enthusiasm for traditional mediums.

## Preferred format



## Preferred medium



# Share

Getting your content in front of the C-Suite through a respected third-party is proven to incline them to read.

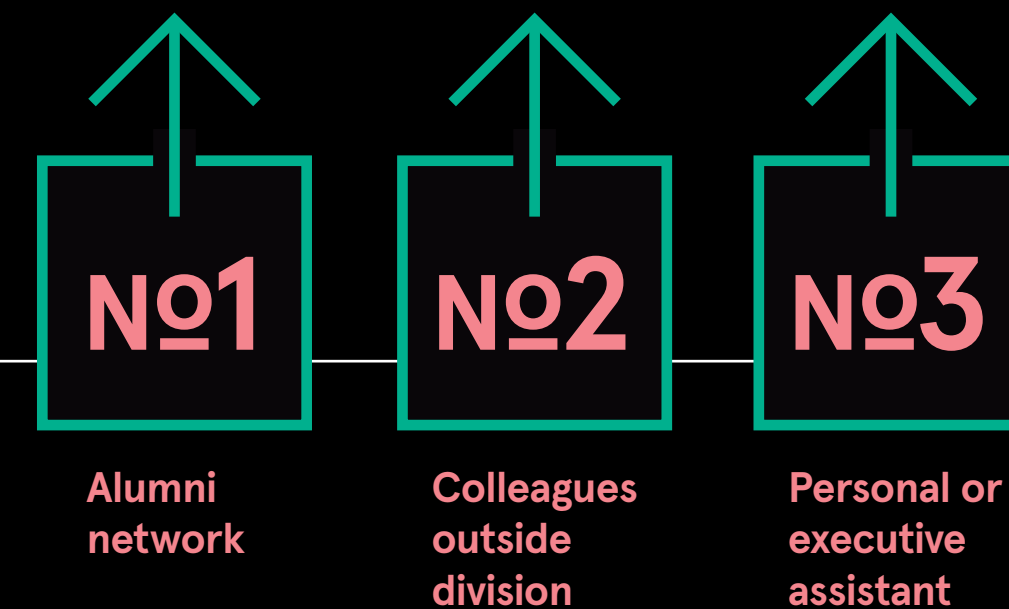
## Get it shared

Most sharable formats



↑  
**No 1**  
for

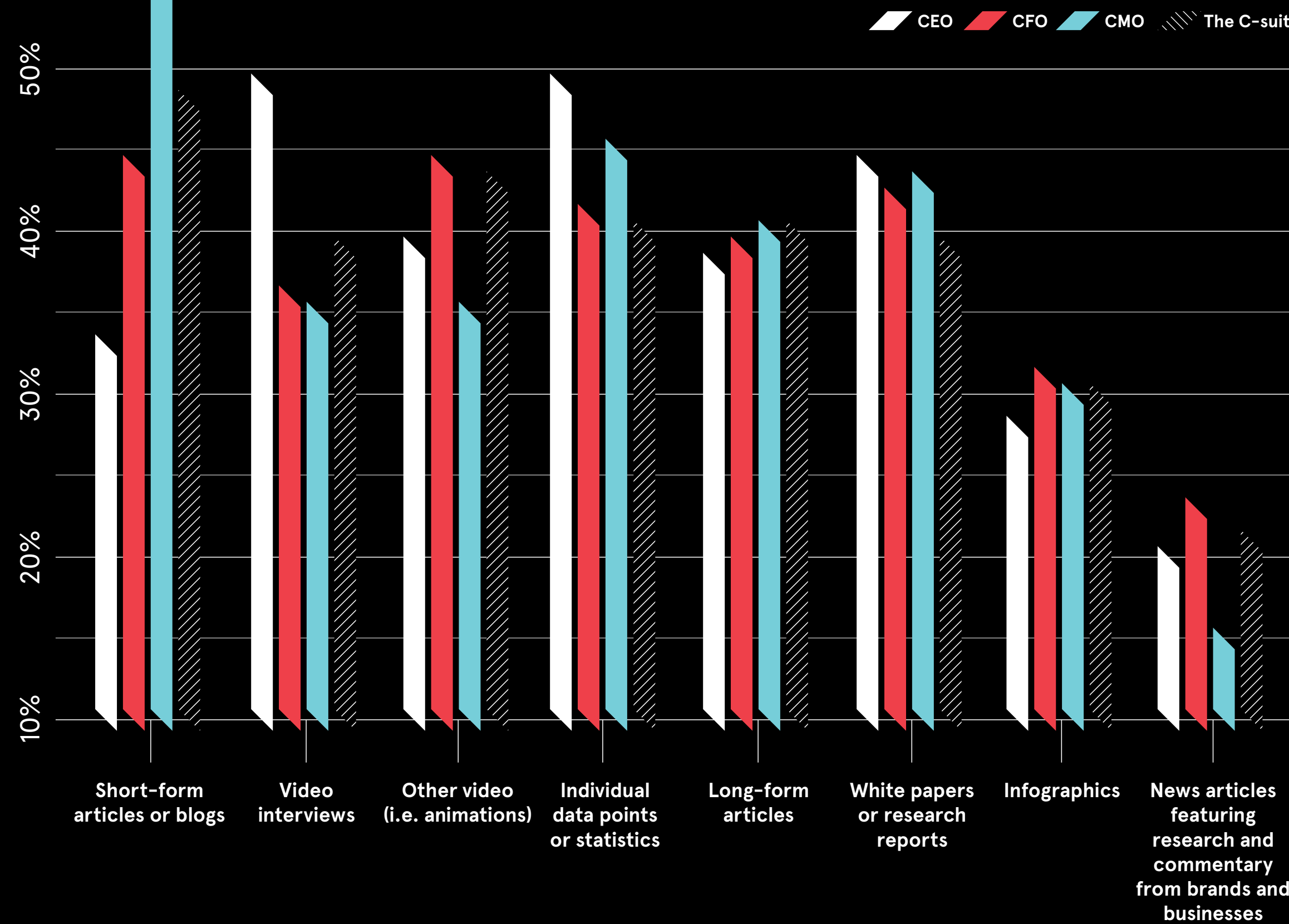
## Top 3 sharers of content



# The Chief Executive Financial Marketing Officer's Perspective

Whilst many formats are actively shared, it pays to consider what specifically gets through with your target audience.

### Formats most commonly shared with C-suite



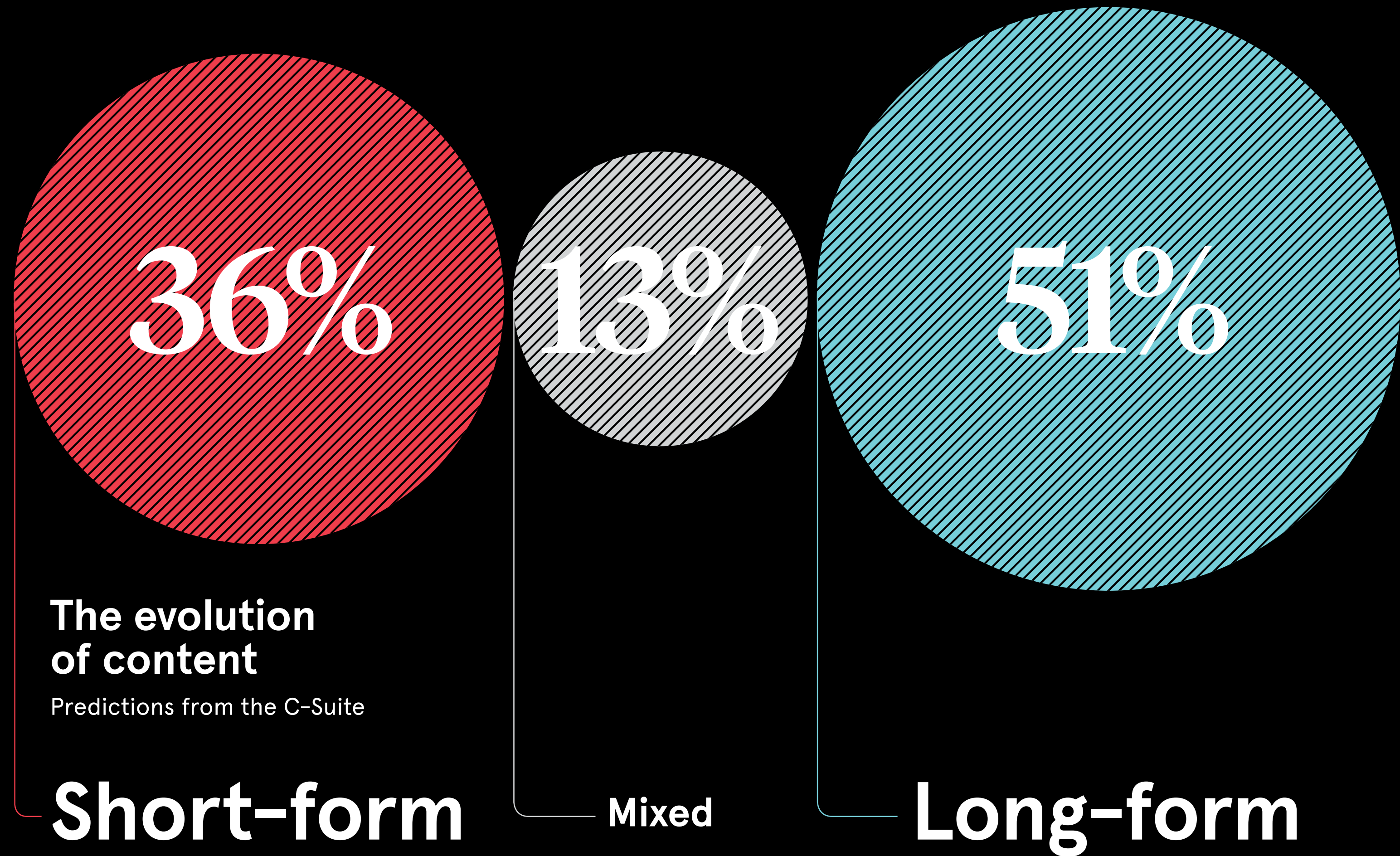
# The Future of Content

# Forward

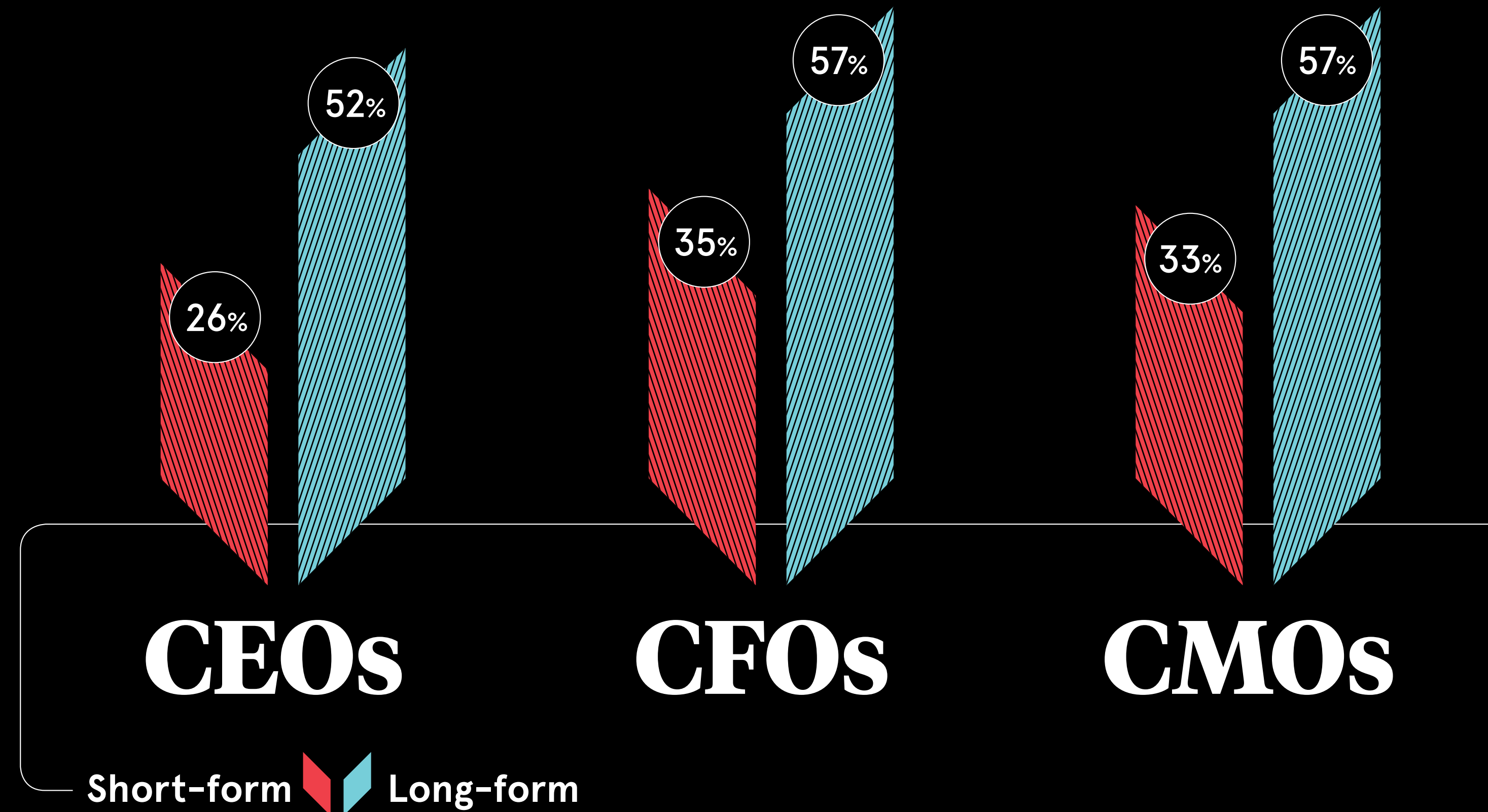
According to European C-suites, the future is long-form, with

**in-depth, insightful**

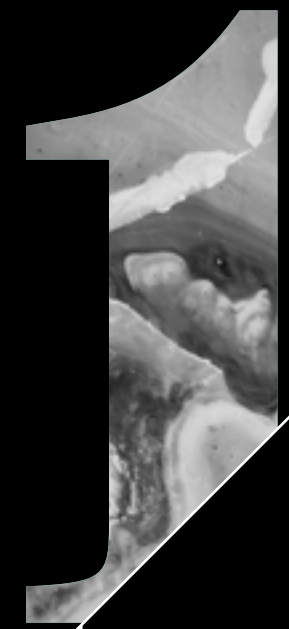
content most preferred.



# The Chief Executive Financial Marketing Officer's Perspective



# Recap



build

**Influence**

by working with  
recognised  
industry experts



find your

**Voice**

to give yourself  
a distinguished  
editorial character



take a

**Position**

that gives a  
perspective and  
an insight they  
can act on



catch the

**Eye**

with distinctive,  
premium design

RACONTEUR

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