



The state of digital experiences in higher education

2024 survey report





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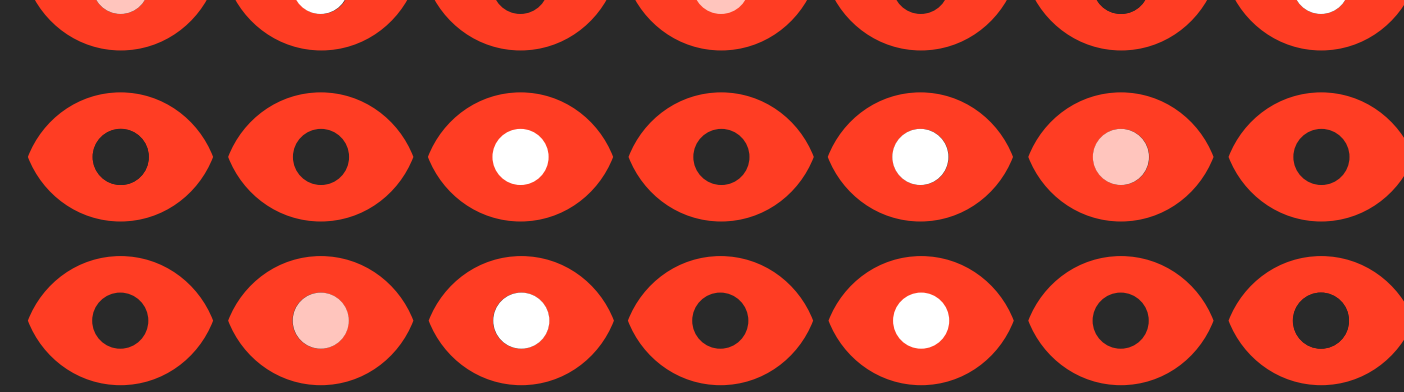
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Introduction and key findings





This survey considers stakeholders from marketing, admissions, continuing education, professional development, and teaching and learning. It highlights how digital platforms are being used and their role in connecting the educational ecosystem.

Digital experiences open a world of possibilities. By spotlighting emerging trends and best practices, our report serves as a guiding light for institutions to further embrace the transformative power of video solutions, thereby expanding their reach and achieving academic excellence in the digital age.



Introduction

Higher education has undoubtedly embraced digital experiences. In our annual survey, we examine the profound impact of digital experiences on academic institutions and aim to identify the evolving digital landscape across departments and schools.

Digital experiences help improve accessibility and inclusivity for remote students and individuals facing various challenges. They also provide the flexibility that today's students require and expect, to combine education with work and life and learn at their own pace. This survey uncovers how institutions use digital platforms to extend their reach and foster inclusivity. We'll also touch on the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its growing role within academia.

Methodology

We commissioned a survey of 450 part-time and full-time professionals across six key departments: Continuing Education, Teaching and Learning, Marketing, Alumni Relations, Admissions, and Professional Development, with 75 representatives from each. The survey respondents hail from the US, UK, the Netherlands, and Italy, and all work in higher education.

This report was administered online by Global Surveyz Research, an international research firm. The respondents were recruited through a global B2B research panel in February 2024. The average time spent on the survey was between 5 minutes and 30 seconds. The questions were randomized to prevent order bias in answers.

Key Findings

For most academic, research and marketing departments, digital experiences play an important role

63% of higher education professionals use digital platforms for seminars, workshops, and study groups, 62% for research conferences and symposiums and 55% for virtual campus tours.

The top three KPIs are revenue, engagement, and qualitative feedback

42% of respondents say revenue is their main KPI, closely followed by engagement (36%) and qualitative feedback (36%).

Top challenges when creating digital experiences: calculating ROI, managing budgets, and optimizing technology use

The top 3 challenges for academics creating digital experiences were calculating ROI (33%), managing budgets (31%), and getting the most out of technology (28%). While these findings call out costs, digital experiences are still less expensive than in-person ones, which can quickly eat up budgets.

Repurposed content is typically used for 4 to 6 months

Out of 95% of respondents who repurpose content, 54% say it has a shelf life of 4 to 6 months. This trend seems consistent across departments, with Continuing Education clocking in slightly less time. 14% say repurposed content is great for 7 to 12 months, while 25% say it's really closer to 1 to 3 months.

Analytics from digital experiences are used to track and predict student success, gain audience insights, and measure ROI

Data collection and analytics within digital experiences are primarily used to measure student performance (62%) and gain audience insights (46%). Only 33% use analytics to measure the ROI from digital experiences. Lastly, 8% say their digital solutions don't collect enough data or have strong enough analytics, pointing out room for improvement.

Not using AI? You're a bit behind

60% of respondents use AI for automation, spearheaded by the Marketing (84%) and Teaching and Learning (69%) departments. Marketing (59%) and Alumni Relations (52%) also use AI to generate content. A negligible percentage is not using or has no plans to use AI in the future.

Where do digital experiences need a helping hand? Accessibility features such as dual-screens and multilingual support

The primary features that need improvement are dual screens for sign language (55%), multilingual support (52%), automation and generative AI (47%), and captioning (43%).

Institutions are still relying on third-party solutions for analytics and data collection

Most institutions (74%) use third-party solutions when it comes to analytics and data collection in their digital experiences despite concerns about data security, compliance risks, loss of data control, dependency, costs, data quality, lack of customization, and ethical issues, further complicated by Google's recent elimination of third-party cookies.

Survey report findings



In-person, virtual, and hybrid experiences

This survey looked at the experiences organized by higher education professionals and found a 48-52 split between in-person and digital experiences, suggesting balanced use of both in higher education.

Figure 1.
In-person, virtual, and hybrid experiences



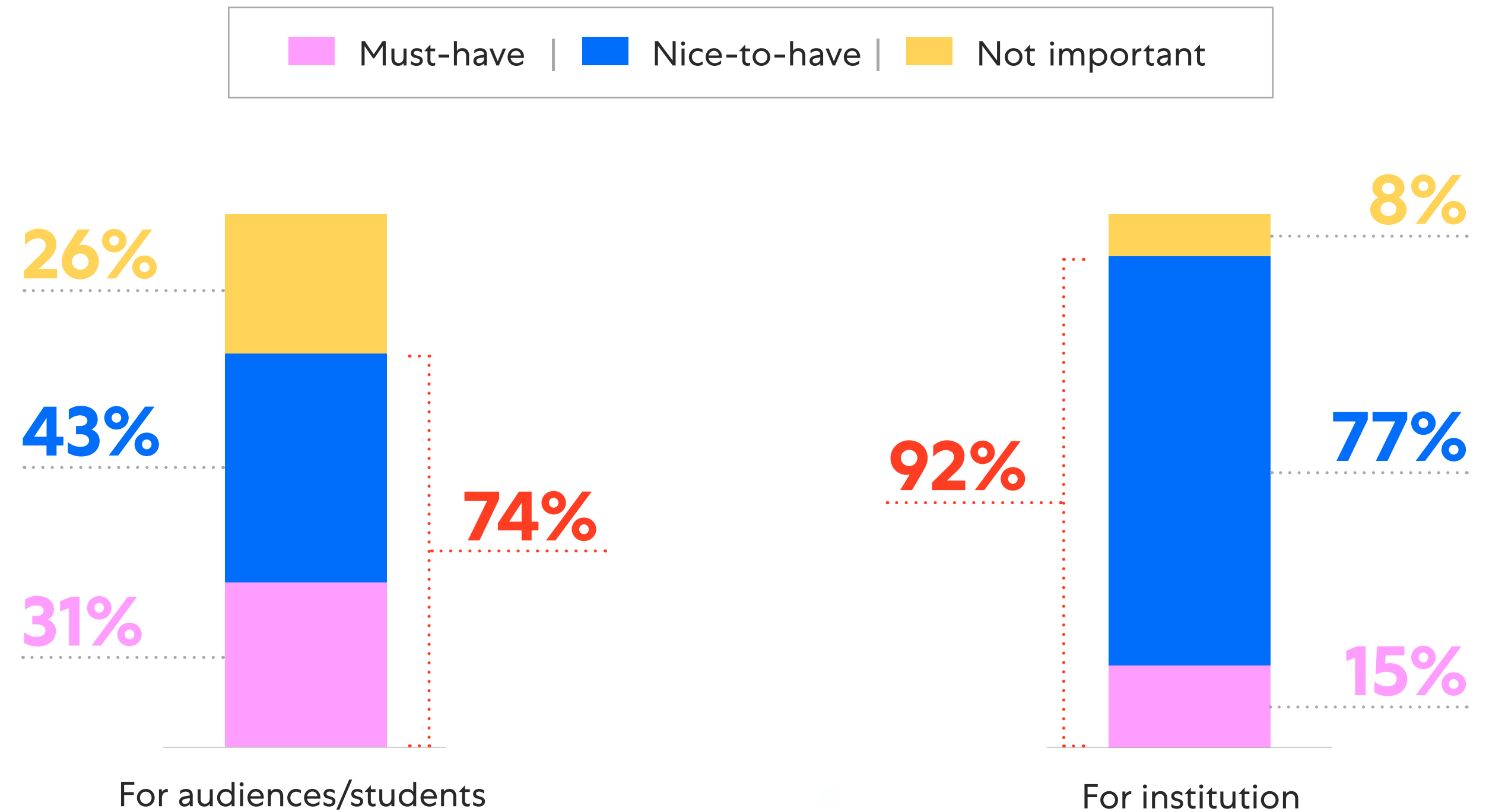
Importance of video-based content and digital experiences

92% of respondents understand the value of video-based content and digital experiences for institutions, but 77% view them as nice-to-have, while only 15% consider them must-haves.

In contrast, opinions regarding the importance of digital experiences for students and other audiences were more polarized. 26% of respondents said video-based content and digital experiences are not important, while 31% feel they are essential, and 43% say they're nice to have.

Figure 2.

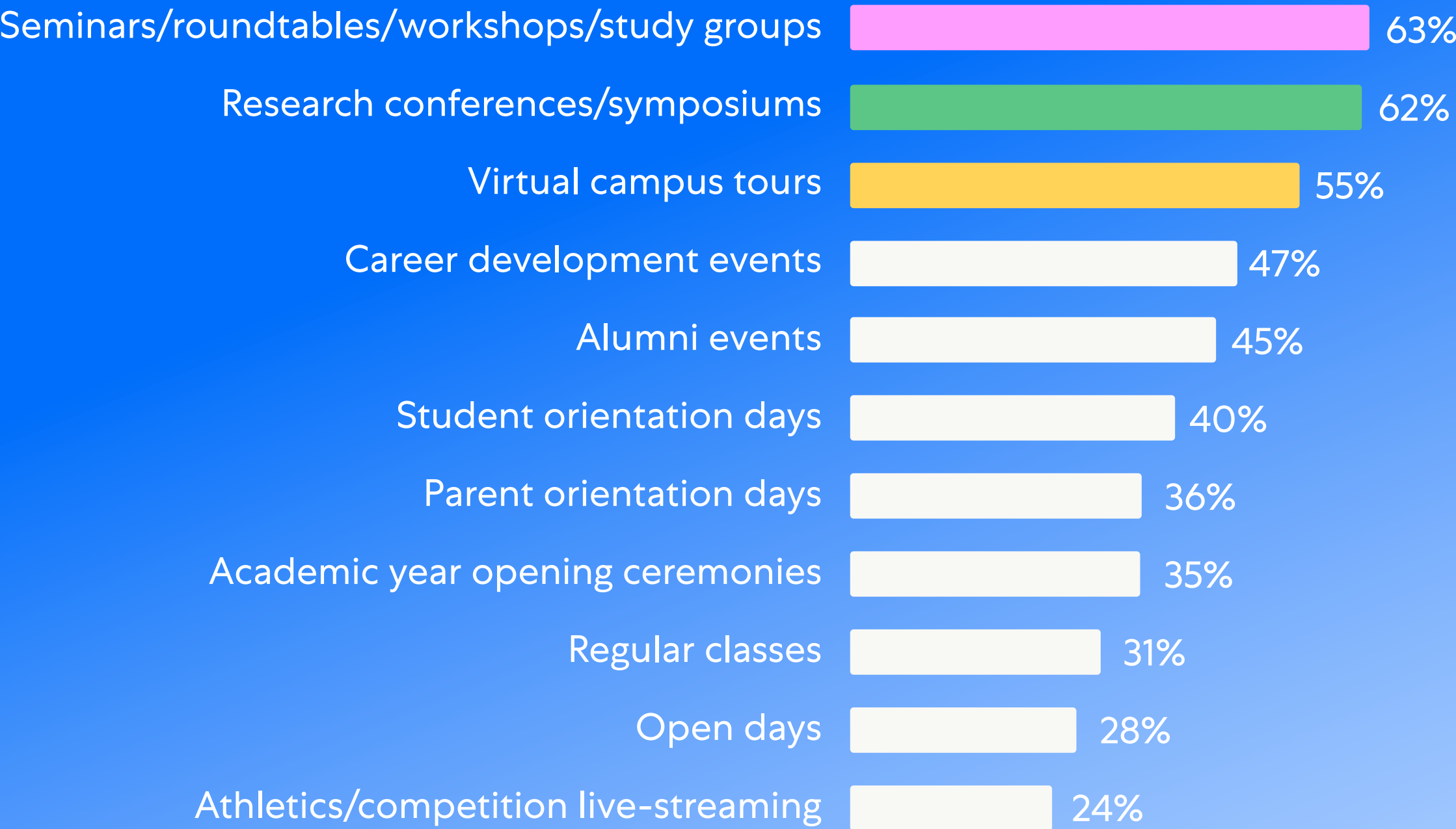
How do respondents rate the importance of video-based content and digital experiences for institutions and audiences/students



Different types of higher education events are hosted virtually

Digital experience platforms are versatile in facilitating a wide array of academic events, from seminars to student recruitment. Among the top events hosted digitally, 63% are seminars, roundtables, workshops, or study groups. A close second, 62%, chose research conferences or symposiums. Additionally, virtual campus tours emerged as a popular application, chosen by 55%.

Figure 3.
The top events hosted digitally



* Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%

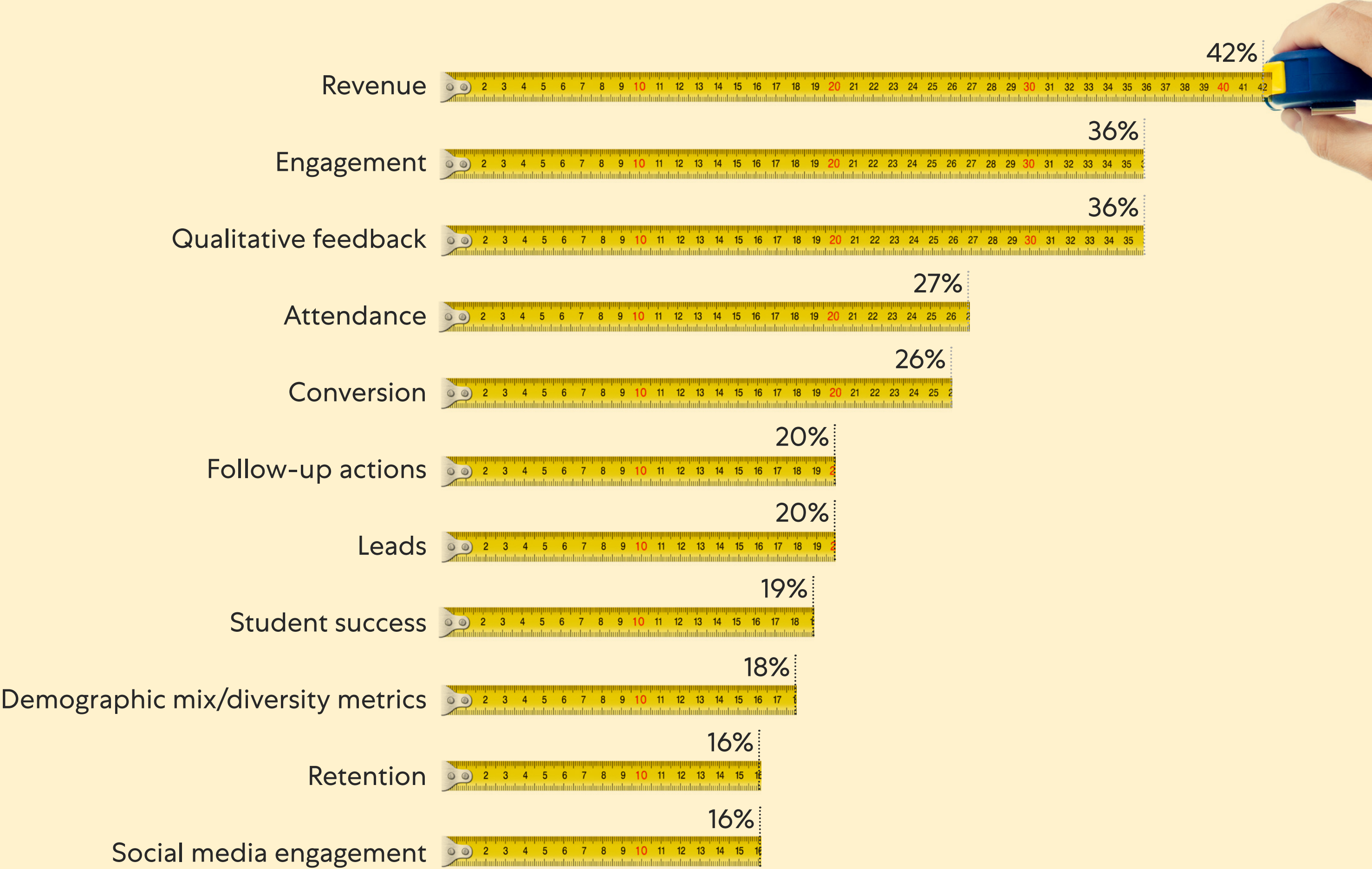


Top KPIs for evaluating digital experiences and video solutions

Everyone who took this survey is actively using KPIs to evaluate digital experiences and video solutions within their institutions. Among the top KPIs were **revenue** (42%), **engagement** (36%), and **qualitative feedback** (36%).

Additionally, attendance and conversion metrics ranked within the top 5 KPIs for evaluating digital experiences. What’s intriguing is how important revenue is as the top KPI for most departments. This suggests that finances play a major role in the assessment of digital experiences, potentially indicating a greater emphasis on admissions and marketing efforts. Conversely, student success only ranked 19% as a top KPI.

Figure 4.
Top KPIs for evaluating digital experiences and video solutions experiences



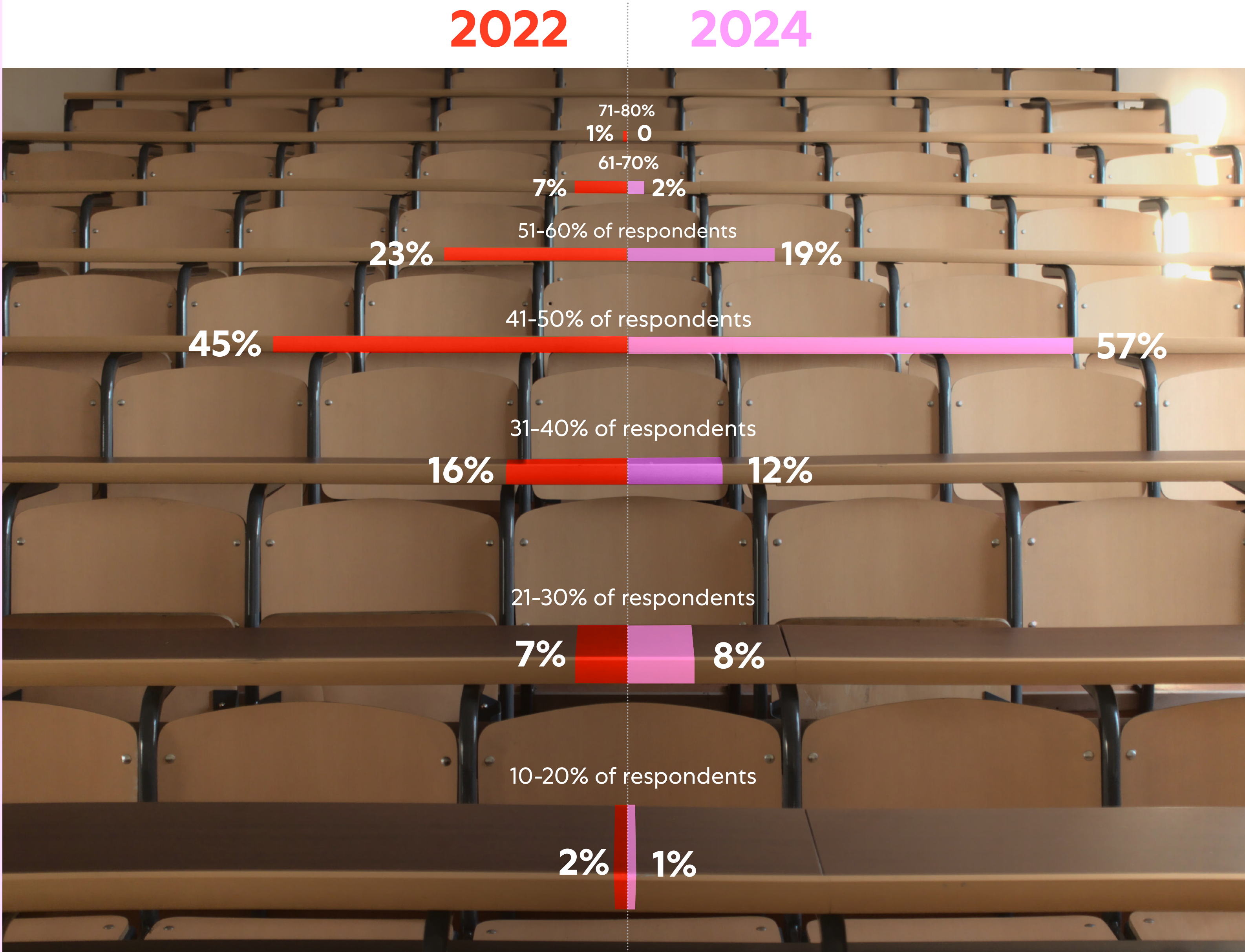
* Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%

Comparing digital experiences attendance in 2022 vs. 2023

Our survey examined how many people attended digital experiences in higher education in 2022 compared to 2023. In 2022, 45% of respondents reported an average attendance rate of 41-50%, while in 2023, the percentage increased to 57%, representing a notable **12% increase**.

Interestingly, the second most common attendance rate range reported was 51-60%, with a slight decrease in 2023 compared to 2022.

Figure 5.
Comparing digital experience attendance in 2022 vs. 2023



Top challenges in creating digital experiences

The main challenges higher education professionals experienced were economic in nature, with calculating ROI being the top (33%), followed closely by cost concerns (31%), and third, getting the most out of technology (28%). This economic focus is different than previous years, which were mainly focused on engagement and production.

Surprisingly, challenges related to accessibility, data security, and audience engagement ranked lower this year. This shift in priorities may reflect a growing emphasis on budgets and operational efficiency. Perhaps it also indicates that the technology is catching up on accessibility and data security, and that digital experience adoption in higher education has matured, with users looking to maximize the vast advantages digital experiences offer and increase return on their investment.

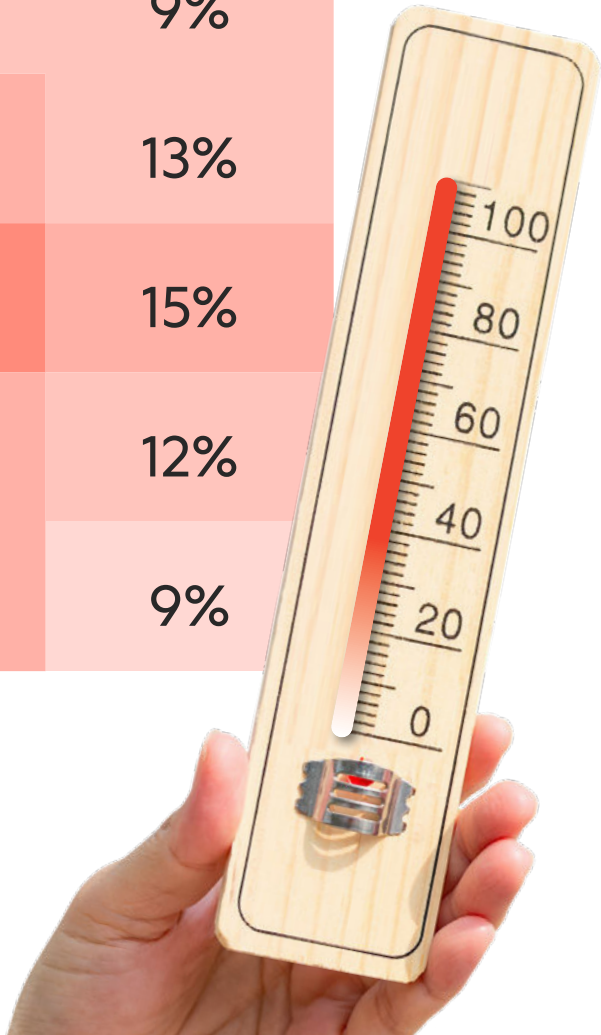
Post-event follow-ups emerged as a notable challenge for admissions, in contrast to the minimal concern expressed by respondents from alumni relations.

While cost is a significant concern, digital experiences are still more cost-effective than traditional in-person events.

Figure 6.
Top challenges in creating digital experiences

	All respondents	Admissions	Alumni Relations/ Development	Continuing Education	Marketing	Professional Development	Teaching & Learning
Calculating ROI	33%	27%	43%	27%	36%	33%	35%
Cost (video platform, content production, etc.)	31%	21%	37%	27%	43%	29%	28%
Understanding and getting the most out of the technology	28%	24%	32%	23%	29%	28%	29%
Production quality	24%	17%	32%	23%	24%	29%	16%
Collaborating with others to organize, create and host the event	23%	19%	24%	19%	35%	13%	29%
Too many digital platforms to juggle and sync	22%	15%	15%	21%	29%	21%	33%
Legacy systems (integration, etc.)	22%	27%	28%	15%	23%	23%	20%
Audience engagement	19%	24%	21%	16%	16%	16%	20%
Developing content	16%	21%	21%	16%	19%	11%	9%
Accessibility	16%	21%	11%	16%	16%	17%	13%
Data security and privacy	15%	23%	11%	11%	9%	23%	15%
Promotion and attracting the right audience	14%	19%	11%	15%	13%	17%	12%
Post-event follow-up	14%	29%	4%	17%	7%	17%	9%

* Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%



Repurposing video content is here to stay

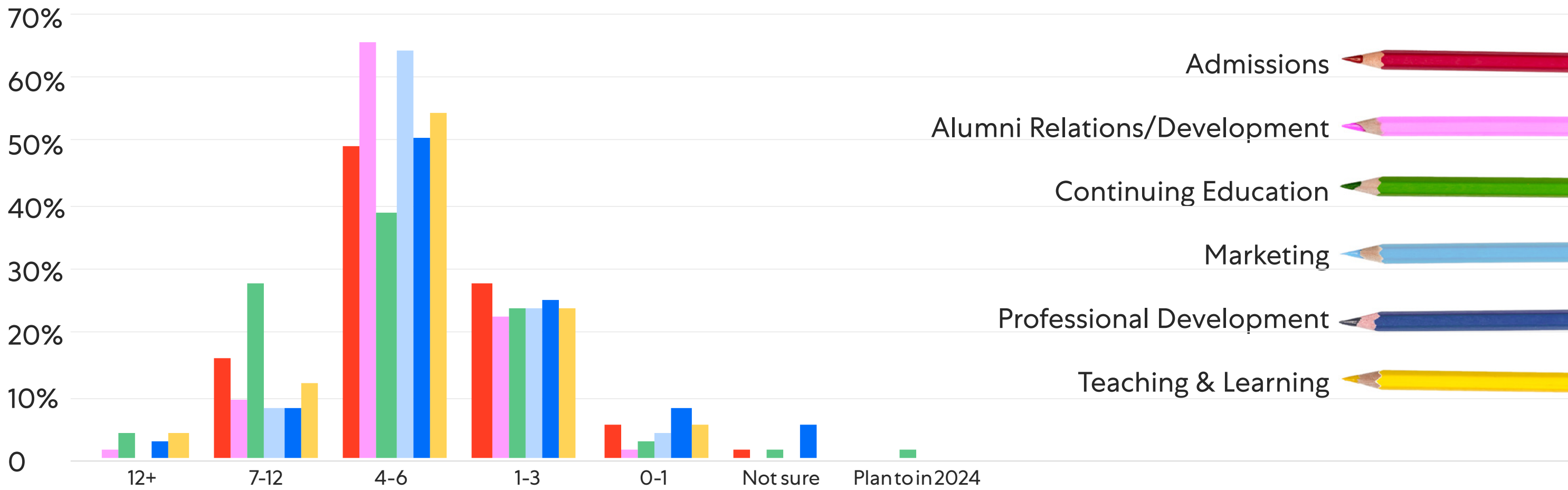
95% of respondents indicated that they engage in repurposing video content. Among them, the most common shelf life for repurposed content is 4 to 6 months (54%). This trend was consistent across departments, although slightly less pronounced for Continuing Education.

Additionally, 14% of respondents reported a shelf life of 7 to 12 months, while 25% reduced that to 1 to 3 months. 2% reported a shelf life exceeding 12 months, while only 4% said 0 to 1 month.

Figure 7.
Shelf life of repurposed video content (in months)



Figure 8.
Shelf life of repurposed video content per department (in months)

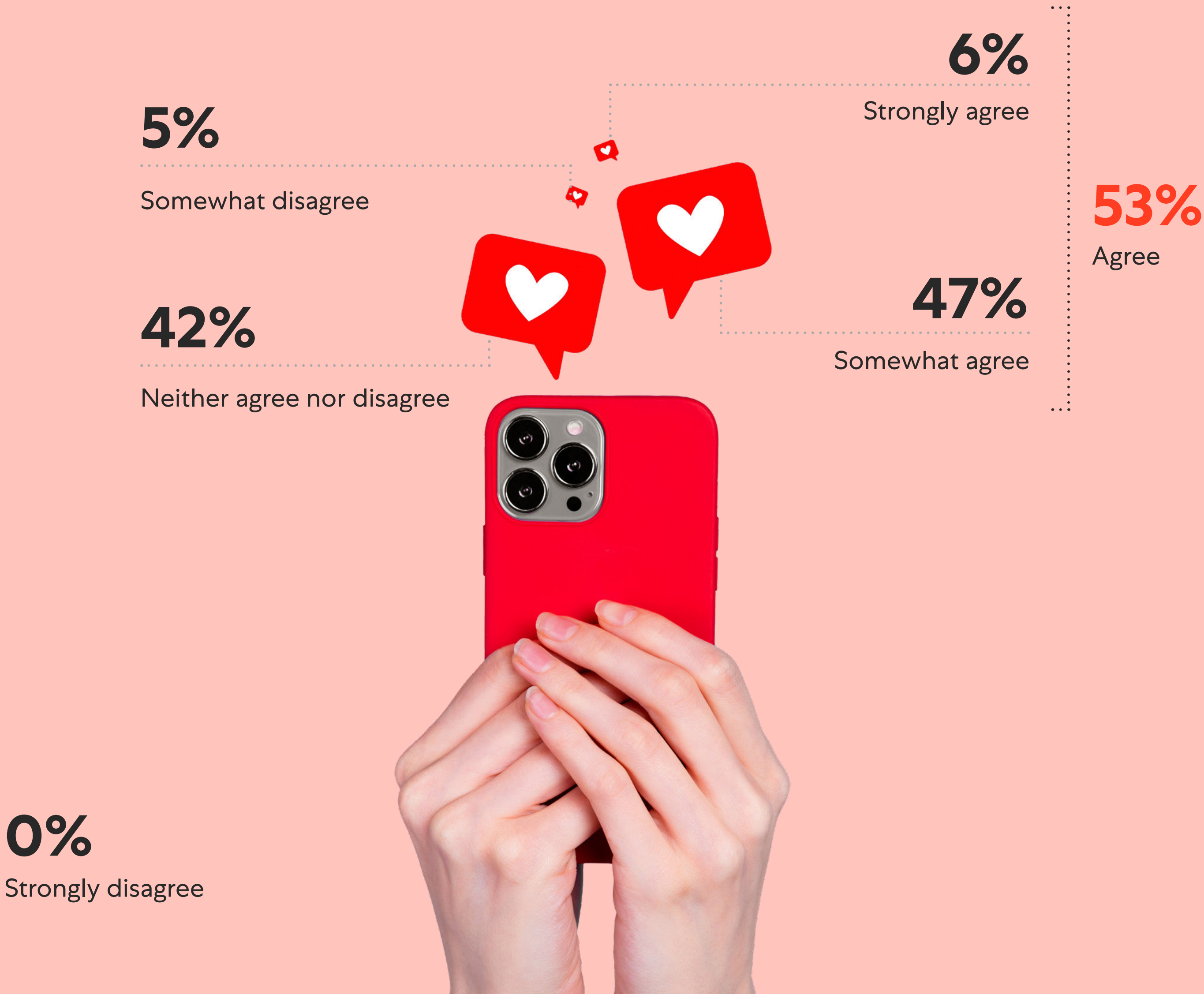


Digital experiences play a vital role in building community and engagement

53% of respondents agreed that digital experiences play a vital role in building community and engagement. Diving deeper, 6% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, 47% somewhat agreed, and 42% neither agreed nor disagreed. The smallest percentage (5%) somewhat disagreed with the statement.

Despite differing opinions, the majority still view digital experiences as an essential part of community engagement within higher education.

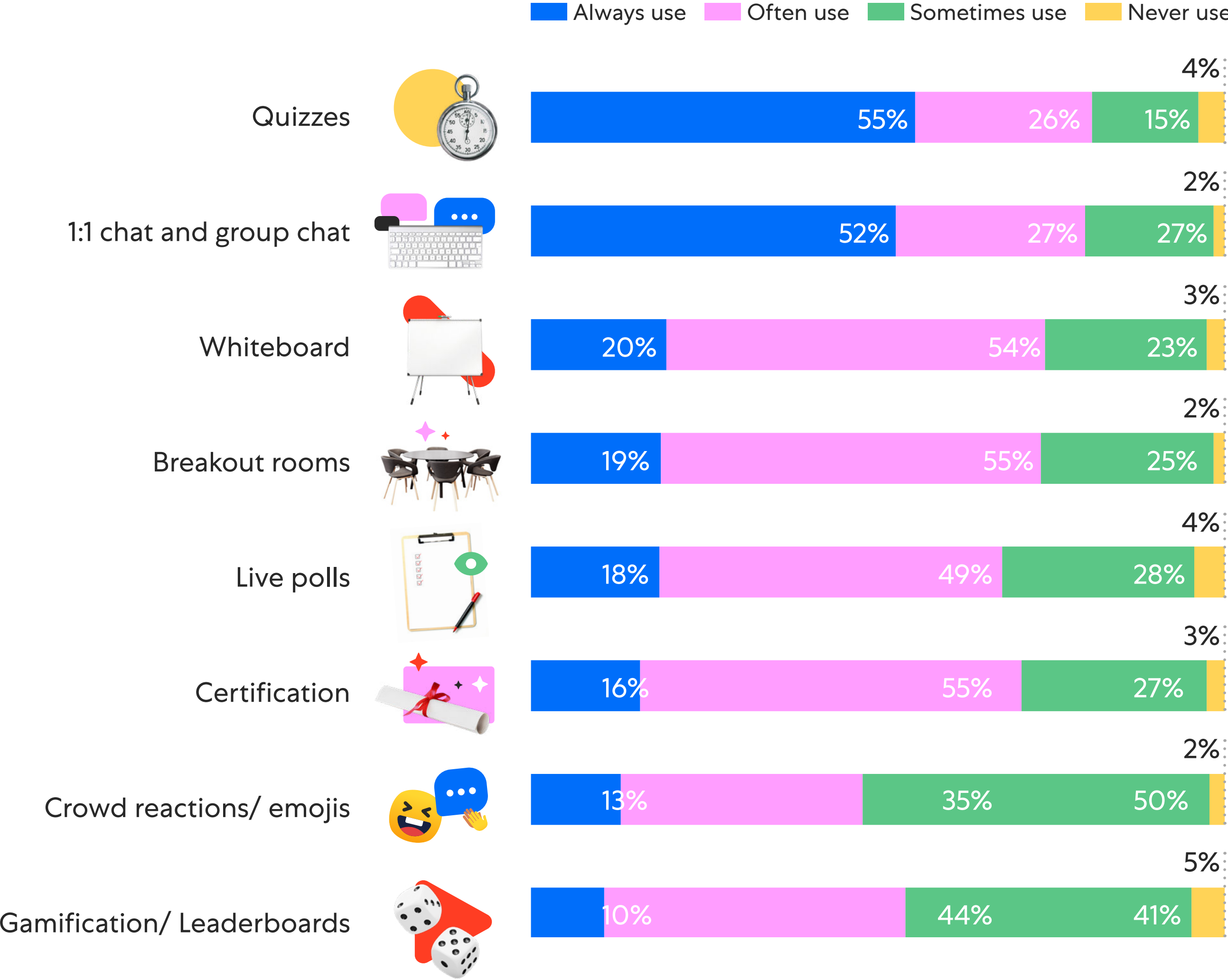
Figure 9.
Digital experiences play a vital role in building community & engagement



Rules of engagement: Quizzes and chat tools take the lead

Quizzes and chat tools emerged as the most-used engagement tools in digital events. 55% of professionals in higher education always use quizzes during digital experiences, 26% often use quizzes, and 15% sometimes use them. Likewise, 52% always use chat, 27% often use chat, and 19% sometimes use it.

Figure 10.
Usage level of engagement tools in digital events

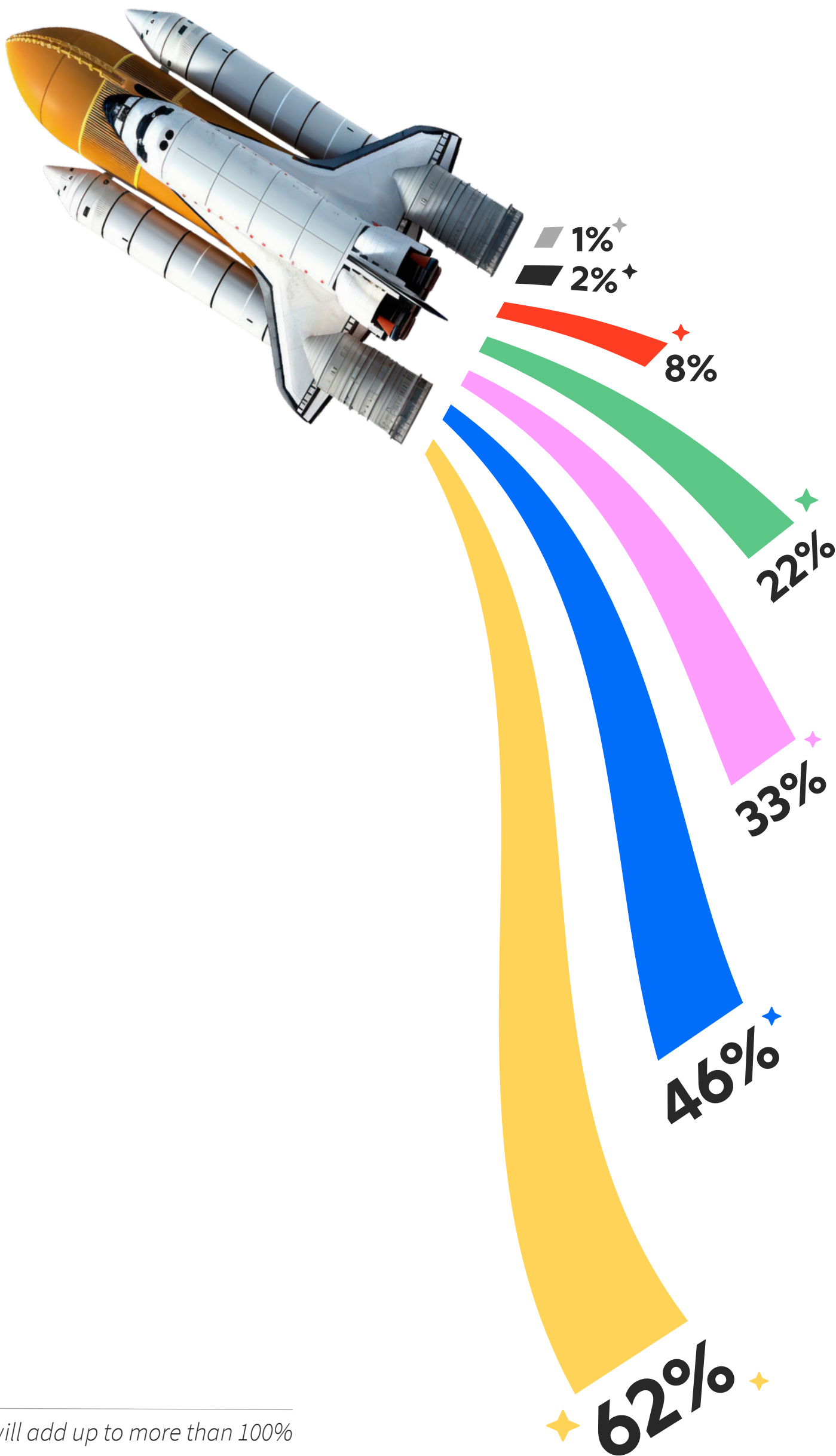


Top ways data is used from digital experiences

Among the top ways data is used from digital experiences, measuring student performance emerged on top, with 62% mainly using data for this reason. Additionally, 46% reported using data and analytics to better understand their audience. Measuring the performance of digital experiences ranked third (33%). It's noteworthy that while ROI measurements were the most important KPI for evaluating the success of digital experiences, only a minority of respondents reported using data and analytics for this reason. 8% of respondents said their digital experience solution doesn't collect enough data to gain valuable insights, highlighting a potential space for improvement.

Figure 11.
Top ways data is used from digital experiences

- ✦✦ Measure our students' performance
- ✦✦ Gain knowledge and insights about our audiences
- ✦✦ Measure the performance of our digital experiences (ROI)
- ✦✦ Score leads (prospective students)
- ✦✦ Would like to use it, but our digital experience solution does not have (sufficient) analytics...
- ✦✦ Would like to use it, but don't have the know how
- ✦✦ Don't use it because data and analytics currently don't hold any value for us



* Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%

Higher education professionals are embracing AI technology

Our survey highlighted the many uses of AI in digital experiences among higher education professionals. Most notably, 60% use AI to automate repetitive tasks, while 39% use it to boost audience engagement. Additionally, 35% generate content with AI (mainly in marketing at 59% and alumni relations at 52%).

A small percentage of respondents feel AI should not be used in higher education. Perhaps their opinion stems from the fact that at this time, AI still poses a few ethical, moral, and potentially fundamental challenges in higher education: generative AI could threaten the development of learning, original thinking, and critical analysis, and complicate student assessment.

Despite this, AI seems to already have been largely adopted in higher education. The benefits must outweigh these challenges.

Figure 12.
How AI fits into the digital experience mix for higher education



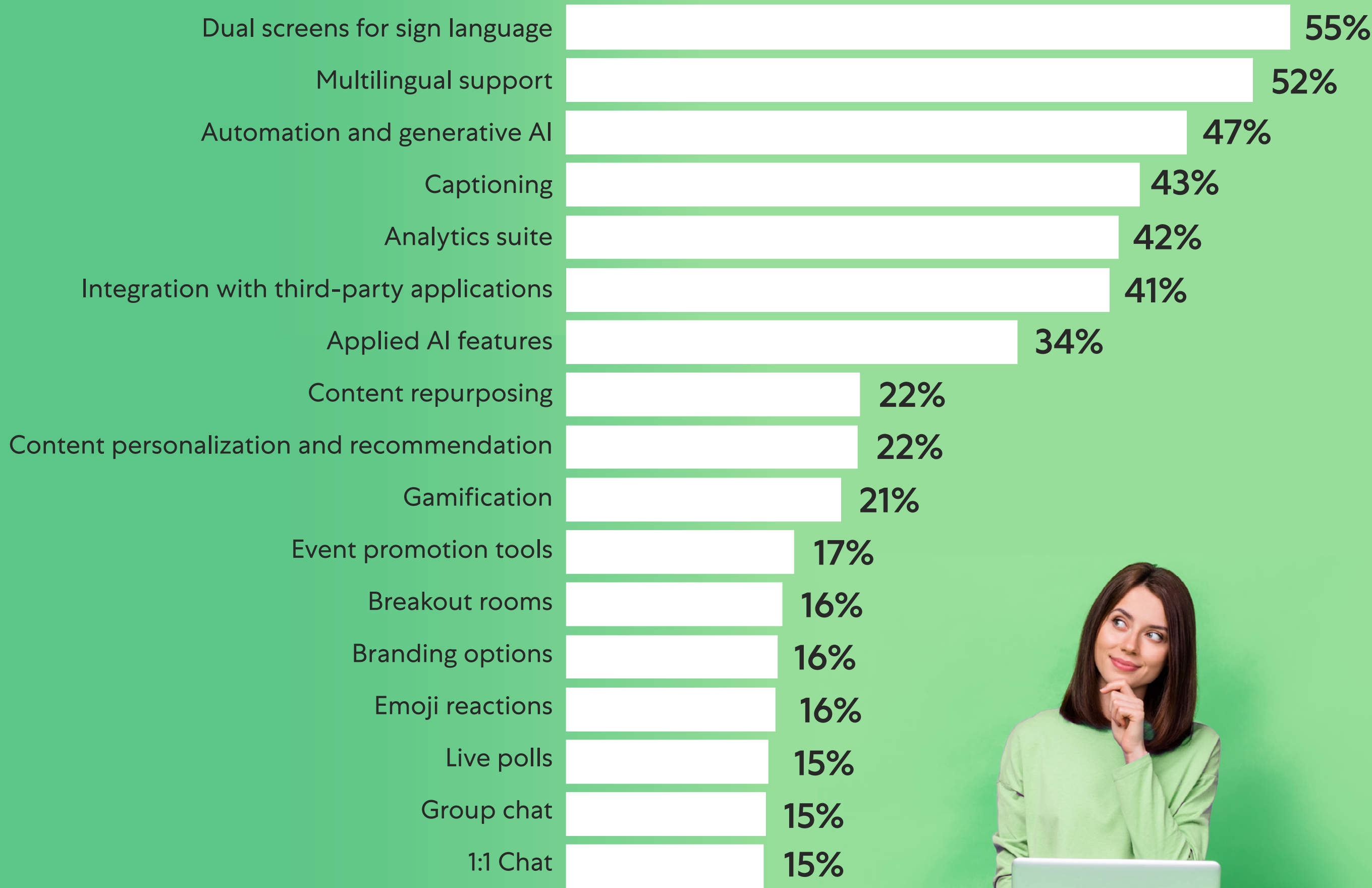
* Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%

Accessibility features are top of mind

The top features needing improvement include dual screens for sign language (55%), multilingual support (52%), automation and generative AI (47%), and captioning (43%). Notably, three of the top four features are related to accessibility.

Interestingly, classic engagement features like emojis, polls, and chat must be working well, as they ranked low on the list of needing improvement.

Figure 13.
What features need the most improvement?



* Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%

Third-parties used for different event tasks

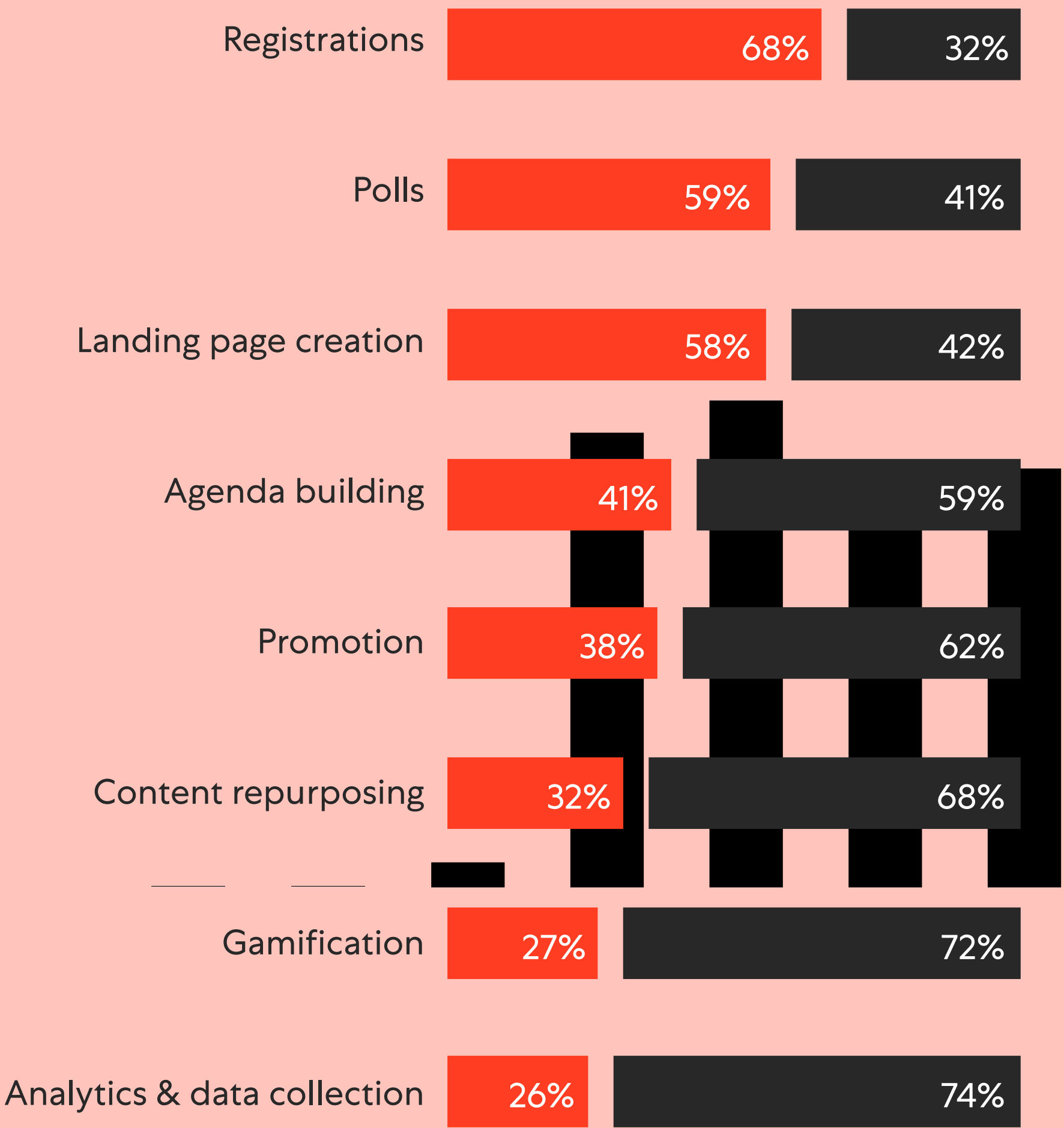
74% of respondents turn to third-party solutions for analytics and data. This is interesting as a third-party solution presents a host of potential risks regarding data security, compliance, data control, dependency, costs, data quality, lack of customization, and ethical issues, further complicated by Google's recent elimination of third-party cookies. Likewise, respondents turn to third-party solutions for other tasks like agenda-building, promoting, and content creation.

In contrast, most respondents rely on their digital experience platform for registrations, polls, and landing page creation.

Events and webinars are an amazing way for the institution to generate first party data and bypass all hurdles presented by third-party cookies rules.

Using a single platform for all these different tasks saves costs while avoiding data privacy and security issues.

Figure 14.
Third-parties used for different event tasks



"We use our virtual event/classroom platform"



"We use a dedicated third-part solution"



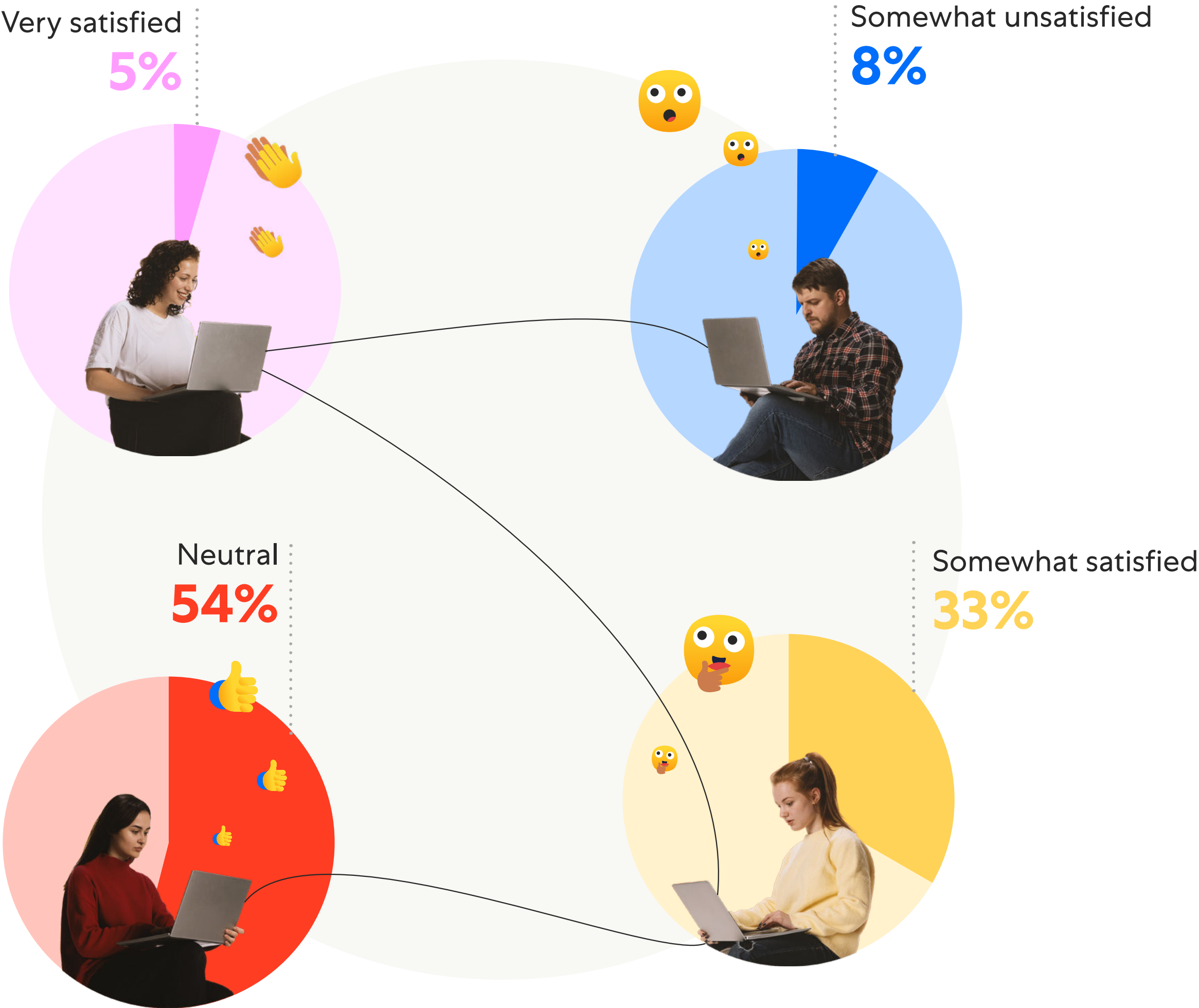
* Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding up of numbers

Room for a new digital experience platform

We looked at how satisfied professionals in higher education are with their current digital experience solution. The findings revealed that only 38% were totally satisfied, with 4.4% being very satisfied and 33% somewhat satisfied. Yet, the majority (54%) remained neutral, while 8% are somewhat unsatisfied.

These results suggest there’s room for greater satisfaction. This trend may indicate that respondents often inherit solutions from management with little say on their selection.

Figure 15.
How satisfied professionals in higher education are with their current digital experience solution



Demographics



Figure 16.
Country

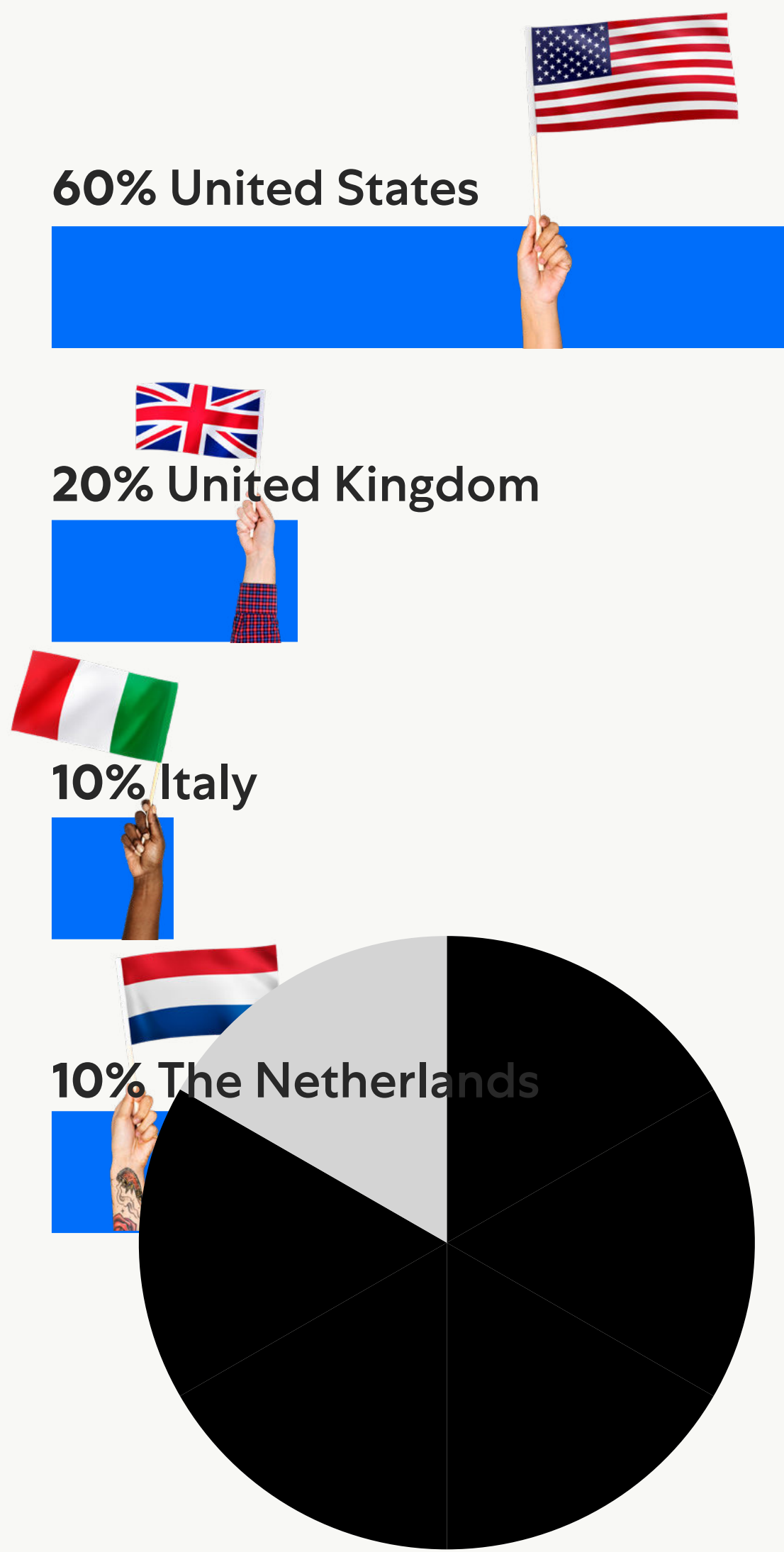


Figure 17
Department

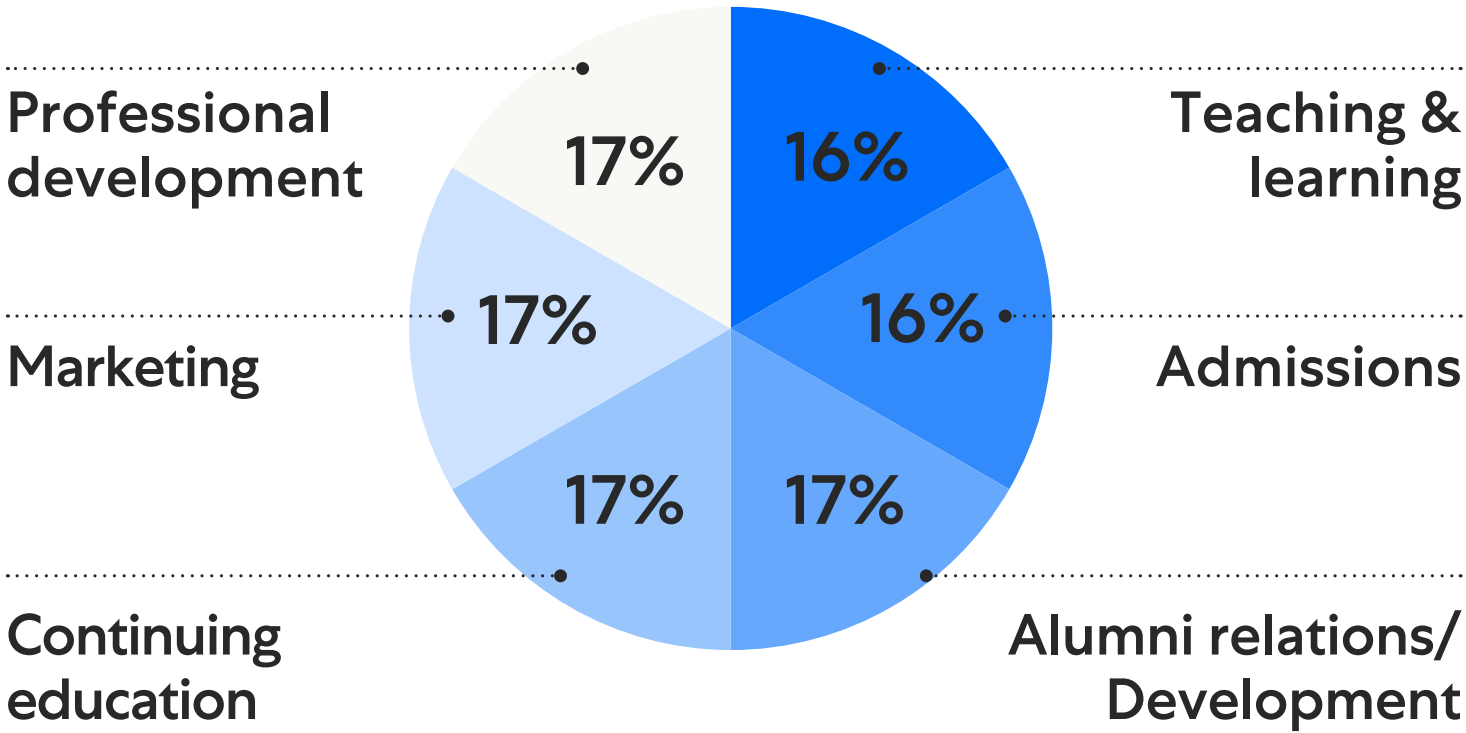


Figure 18
Employment status

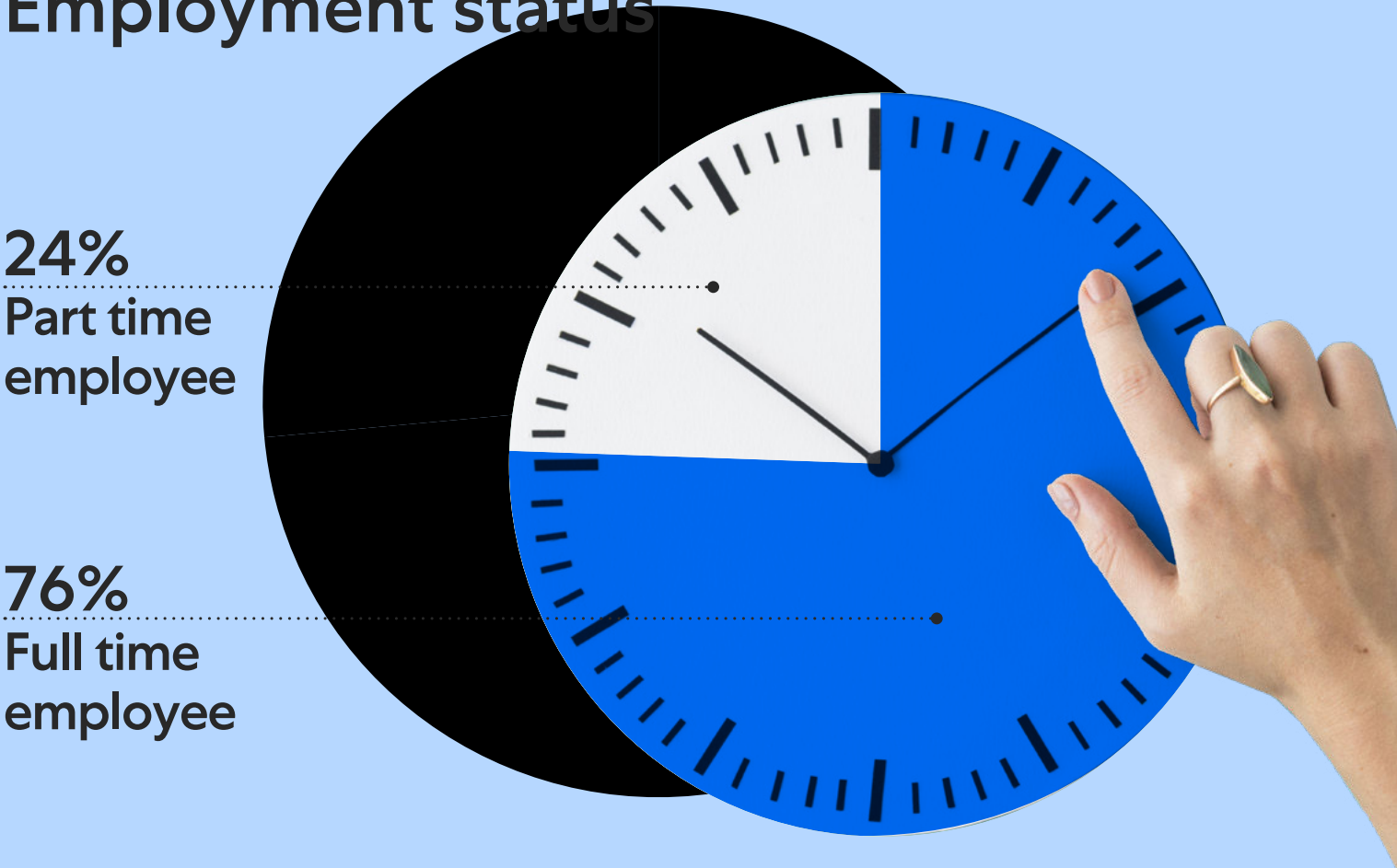
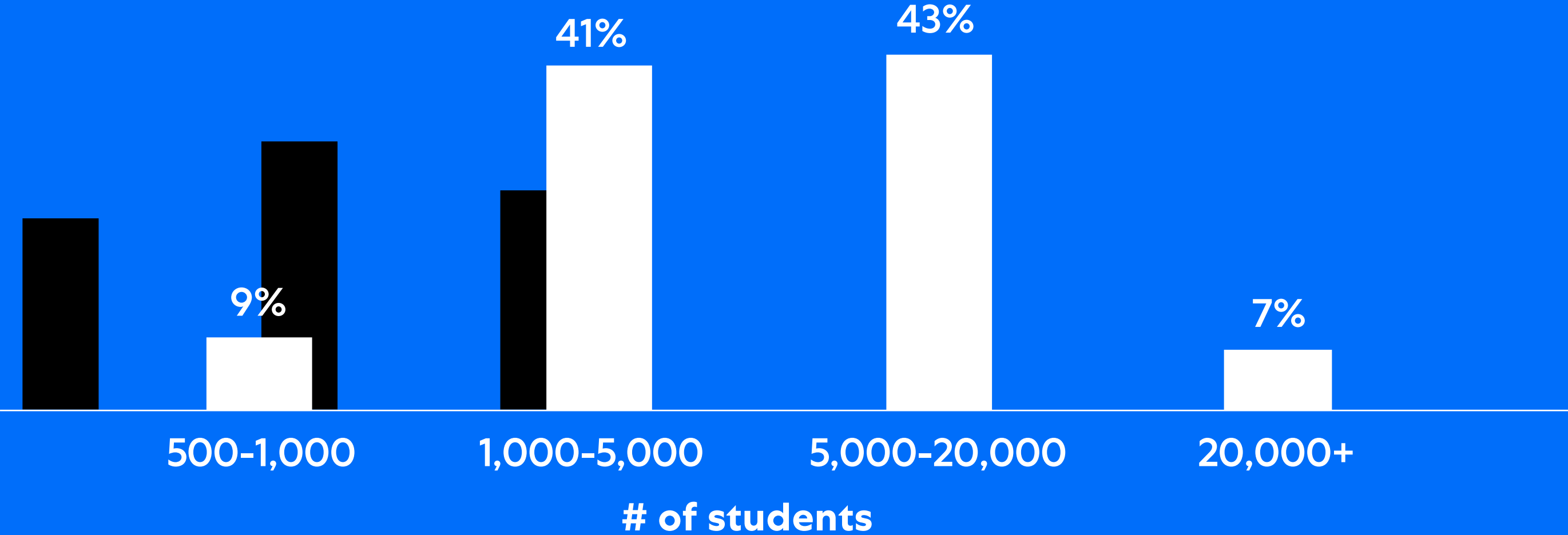


Figure 19.
Student population



About Kaltura

Kaltura provides real-time, live, and on-demand video experiences for online educational programs and virtual learning that bring both educators and students closer than ever. From a fully integrated LMS video layer, virtual classrooms, lecture capture, and webinars, to live recruitment, alumni events, and more - Kaltura's AI-enhanced off-the-shelf products offer flexibility, modularity, and ease of integration. Our products empower any size institution to create interactive digital experiences that are engaging, personalized, and accessible to all.

