

Modern marketing in India

The use of mobile in the digital marketing mix

in association with the MMA

WARC

MMA



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Takeaways

1. Brand awareness is the most common key objective when running mobile marketing campaigns in India. As for marketing channels, TV and display are considered the most effective channels when run alongside mobile.

2. Social is the most used and most prioritised channel for mobile marketing. Nearly nine-tenths (86%) of respondents are using social in their mobile marketing strategy. YouTube, LinkedIn and Facebook are the biggest platforms for display marketing, while Twitter and Instagram are dominating partnership and sponsorship marketing.

3. Marketing professionals in India are expecting mobile budget growth this year. Three in four (75%) are expecting their mobile budget to increase this year. Last year, just over half said the same (55%).

4. Mobile commerce has been accelerated due to the pandemic. Four in five (82%) marketers have experienced improved m-commerce capabilities and just under half (46%) of Indian marketers have named commerce via mobile devices as the most significant consumer behaviour in 2021.

5. The cookie-death will have a significant effect on the marketing industry. Even though the end of the third-party cookie has been delayed, three in five marketers are predicting an impact to their business from its 'death'.

6. The future of mobile technology seeks to connect the online and offline, particularly through AI and machine learning, IoT and voice. Respondents are investing significant budget into mobile martech to ensure they keep up with the latest innovations in the industry, especially as interest in AI grows.

What this means for...

Advertisers

- COVID-19 has led to further improvements in digital and mobile marketing capabilities for advertisers.
- Growth in m-commerce and shoppable media over the last few years is providing brands with new opportunities to both reach consumers and monetise mobile audiences.
- Brands need to work hard to ensure they are respecting their consumers' need for privacy, upholding the relevant privacy laws and still finding innovative ways to reach audiences to keep growing.

Agencies

- As digital and mobile budgets are growing, it is important that agencies support their clients by helping them adapt to developing consumer behaviours, such as the rise of m-commerce, and advancing technologies, such as AI.
- Agencies can also play a key role in helping brands to develop the data expertise required for post-cookie success, especially as first-party data becomes more important.

Media owners

- Media owners that have invested in capturing and analysing rich audience data will be in a better position to capitalise on the eventual demise of the cookie.
- As the online landscape changes, media owners are finding new ways to monetise audiences, whether through m-commerce, sponsored content or more traditional display and video advertising.

Mobile marketing objectives and capabilities

Over the time that WARC has carried out this survey with the MMA, the role of mobile in the arsenal of marketers has grown significantly. Today, more than two in three marketers are incorporating a mobile-first approach in their marketing. As smartphone technology becomes more and more sophisticated, marketing professionals have needed to increase both investment and focus on improving digital and mobile competences.

This chapter looks at the mobile capabilities of Indian marketers, and how it is being used in the media mix.

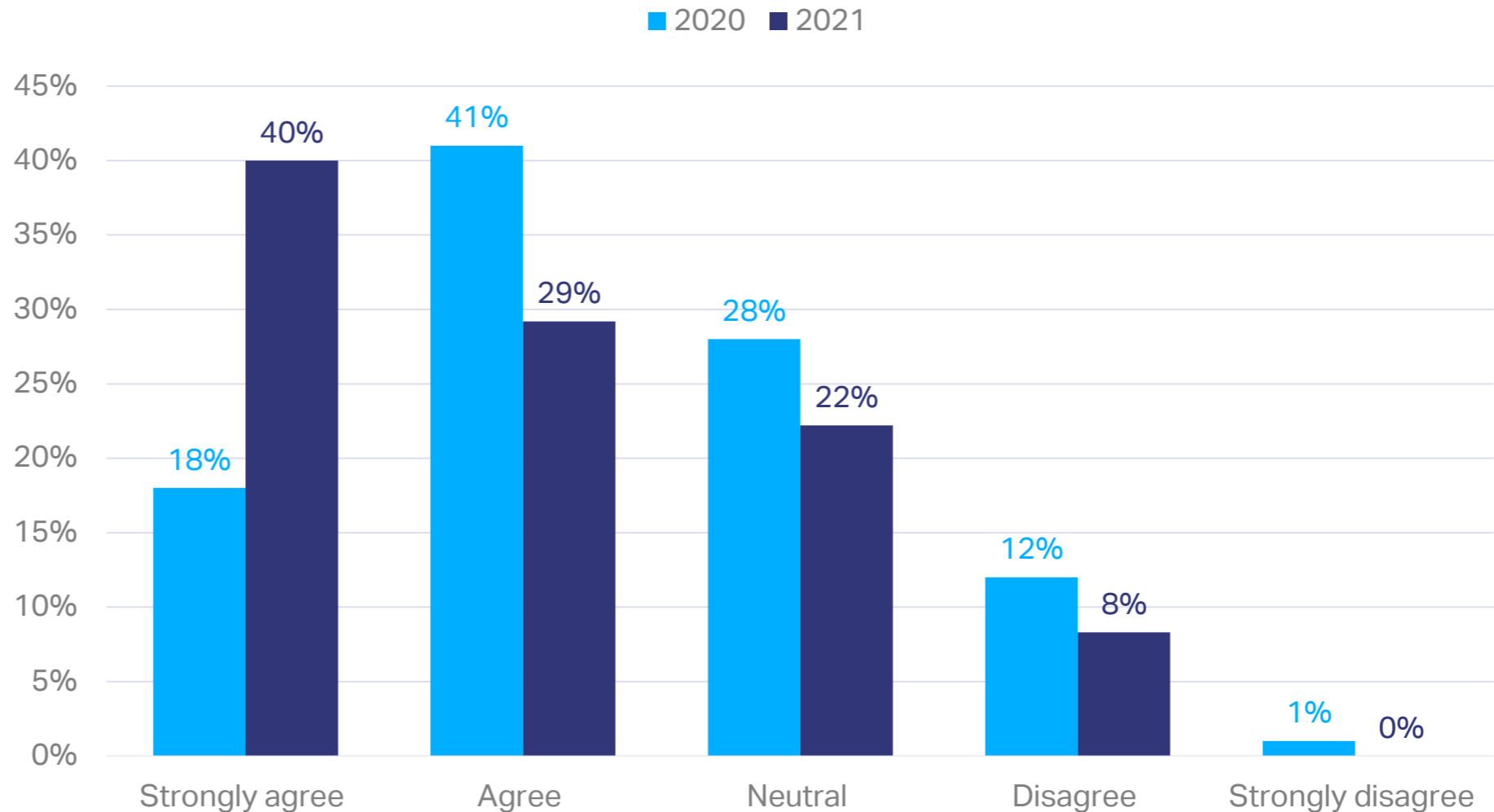
Two-thirds (69%) of Indian respondents have adopted a mobile-first approach

In India, mobile has become more prominent as a result of COVID-19 and more marketers are adopting a mobile-first approach with their marketing strategy.

Since 2020, the proportion of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement has increased by 22 percentage points (pp), from 18% to 40%.

In the last year alone, there has been a 10pp increase in respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, demonstrating mobile growing position in the greater modern marketing picture.

“We have adopted a mobile-first approach with our marketing strategy”

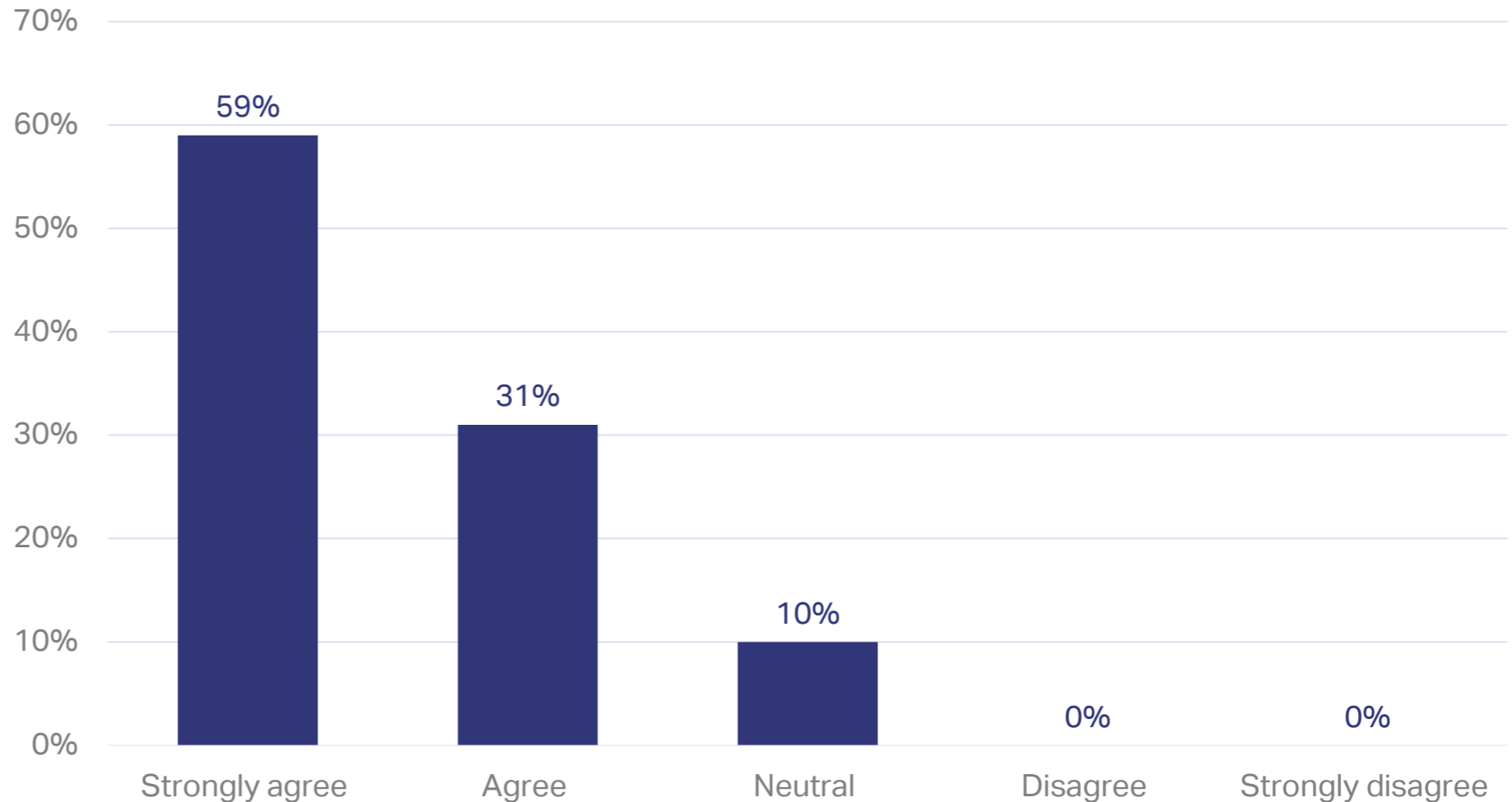


Marketers have increased their focus on mobile capabilities

When COVID-19 struck, consumers were unable to go to physical stores and were encouraged to stay home. As a result, businesses had to adapt. To many, this meant accelerating digital transformation and building a greater digital / mobile presence.

Three in five respondents strongly agree (59%) and one-third agree (31%) that the pandemic has led to increased focus and investment in their digital / mobile capabilities. Overall, 90% of respondents have made steps to improve their digital marketing capabilities.

“The pandemic has resulted in an increased focus and investment in our digital / mobile marketing capabilities”

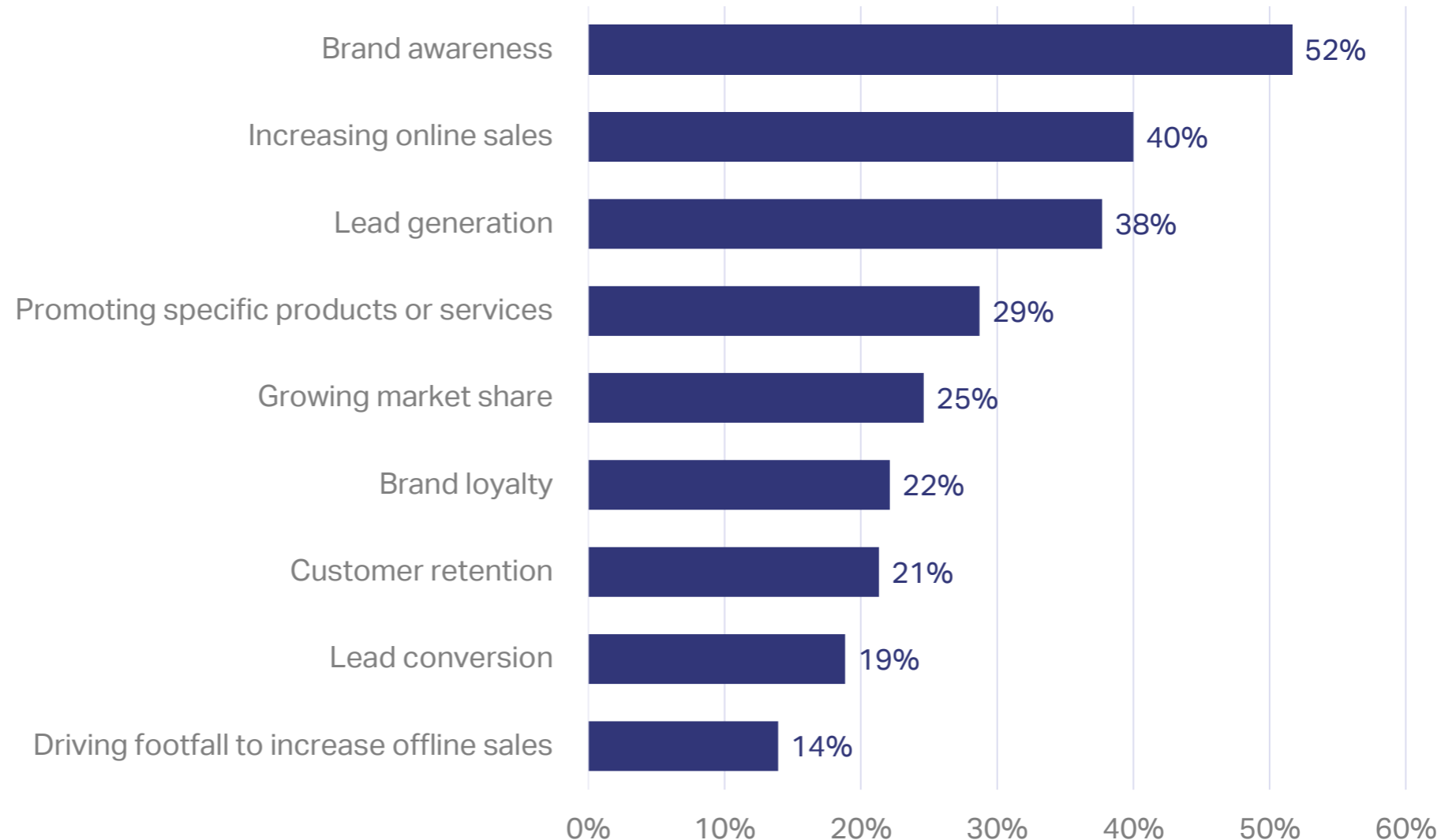


Brand awareness is the key objective when marketing via mobile

Over half (52%) of marketing professionals say brand awareness is a key objective. Furthermore, two in five say increasing online sales (40%) and lead generation (38%) are important objectives.

This year, marketers need to reconsider both long-term and short-term objectives as they bake uncertainty into their planning. Putting marketing plans on ice in 2021 may no longer fit the moment, even if COVID-19 is still prevalent.

Which of the following are your / your typical client's key objectives when marketing via mobile?



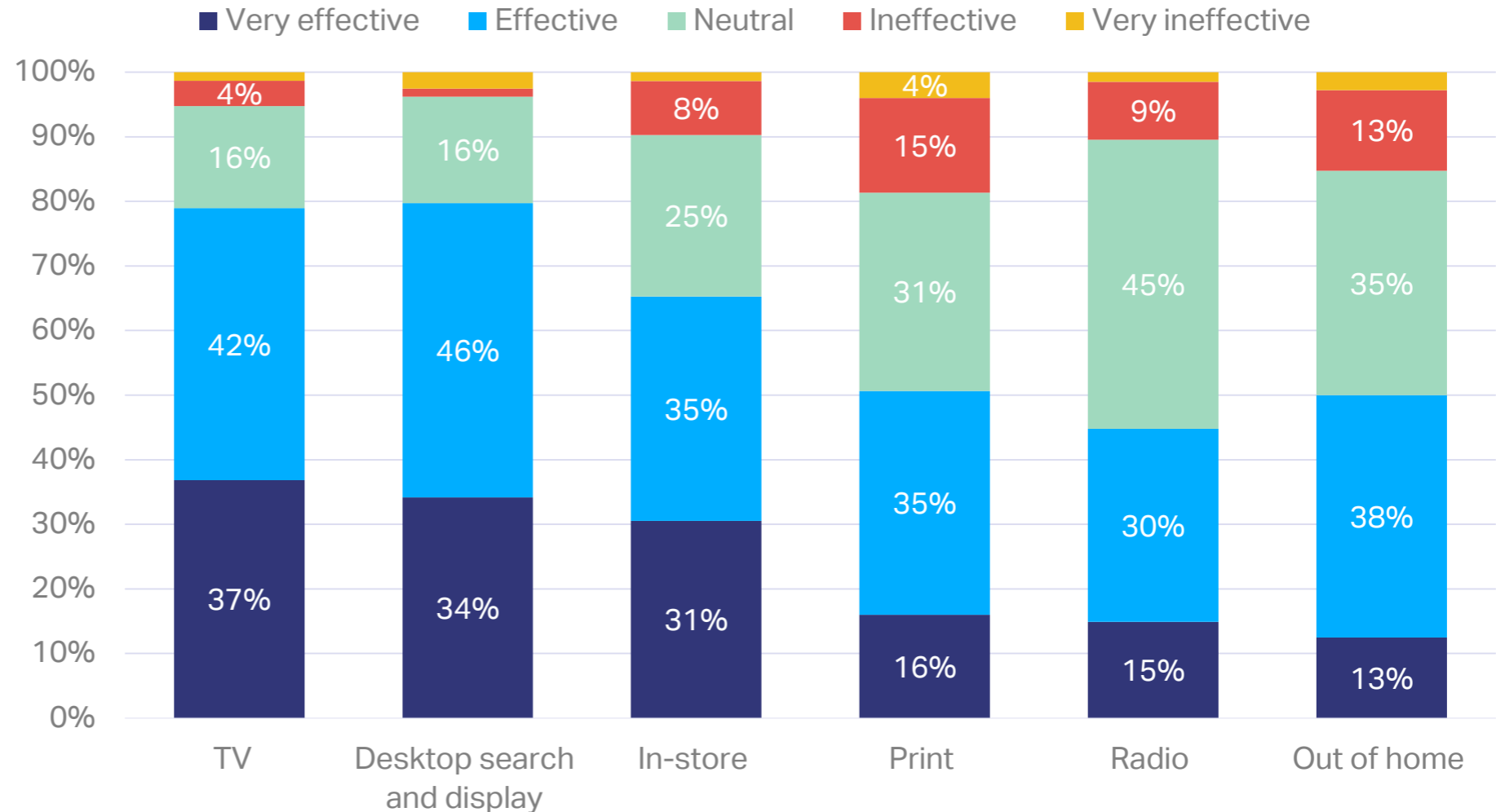
TV is the most effective media channel when used with mobile

Overall TV and desktop search and display are considered nearly equally effective (79% for TV, 80% for desktop), but more respondents rank TV as very effective.

Many Indian consumers are multiscreening, consuming content on their mobile phones while watching TV, and, thus, content is not confined to a single platform. Marketers today will need to build campaigns to run cross-platform in order to maximise impact.

Notably, print (15%), radio (9%) and out of home (13%) were considered ineffective by around one-tenth of respondents.

In your experience with media plans, please rate the effectiveness of the following media channels when used alongside mobile:

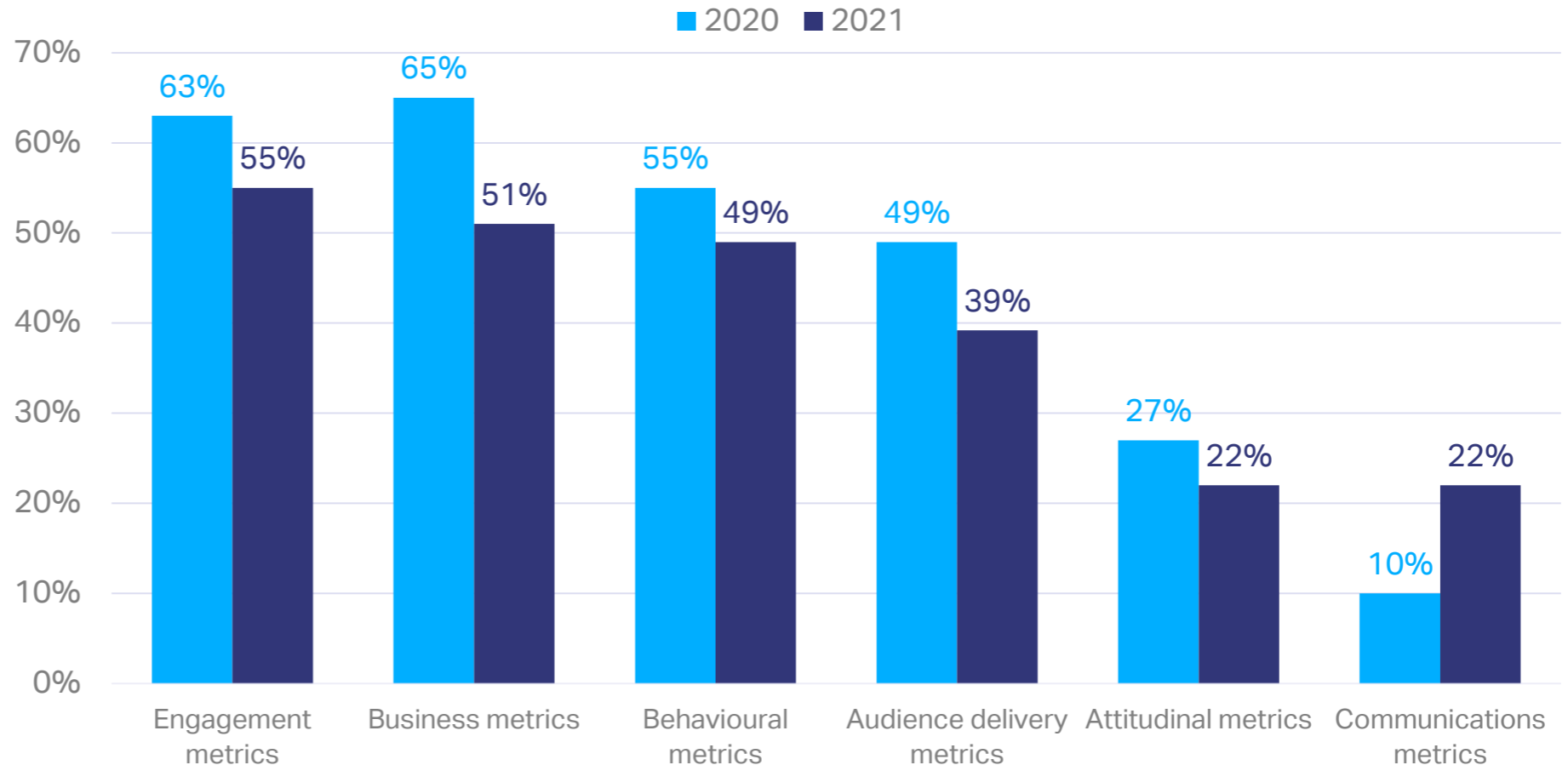


Engagement metrics are most used for effectiveness in 2021

Over half (55%) of Indians use engagement metrics when measuring effectiveness on mobile, taking over last year's top spot from business metrics (51%).

However, proportionally, respondents were more likely to use these metrics in 2020 than in 2021 as all options have decreased since last year, with the exception of communications metrics. While only 10% were using communications metrics in 2020, one-fifth (22%) of respondents are this year.

Which of the metrics below do you or your clients most use to measure mobile marketing effectiveness?



Engagement metrics: Video completion rates, social sharing, CTR etc.

Behavioural metrics: Post-click engagement, traffic to sites etc.

Business metrics: ROI, incremental sales, profit, LTV

Audience delivery metrics: Impressions delivered by target groups, or viewable impressions

Attitudinal metrics: Awareness, image and other brand KPIs based on surveys

Communications metrics: PR value

Mobile budgets

After a year when marketing budgets have been significantly impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, mobile, as a medium, was one of the most resilient. In last year's survey, the proportion of Indian marketers expecting to increase their budgets in light of the pandemic was 55% – a significant proportion given most global economies were heading for recession.

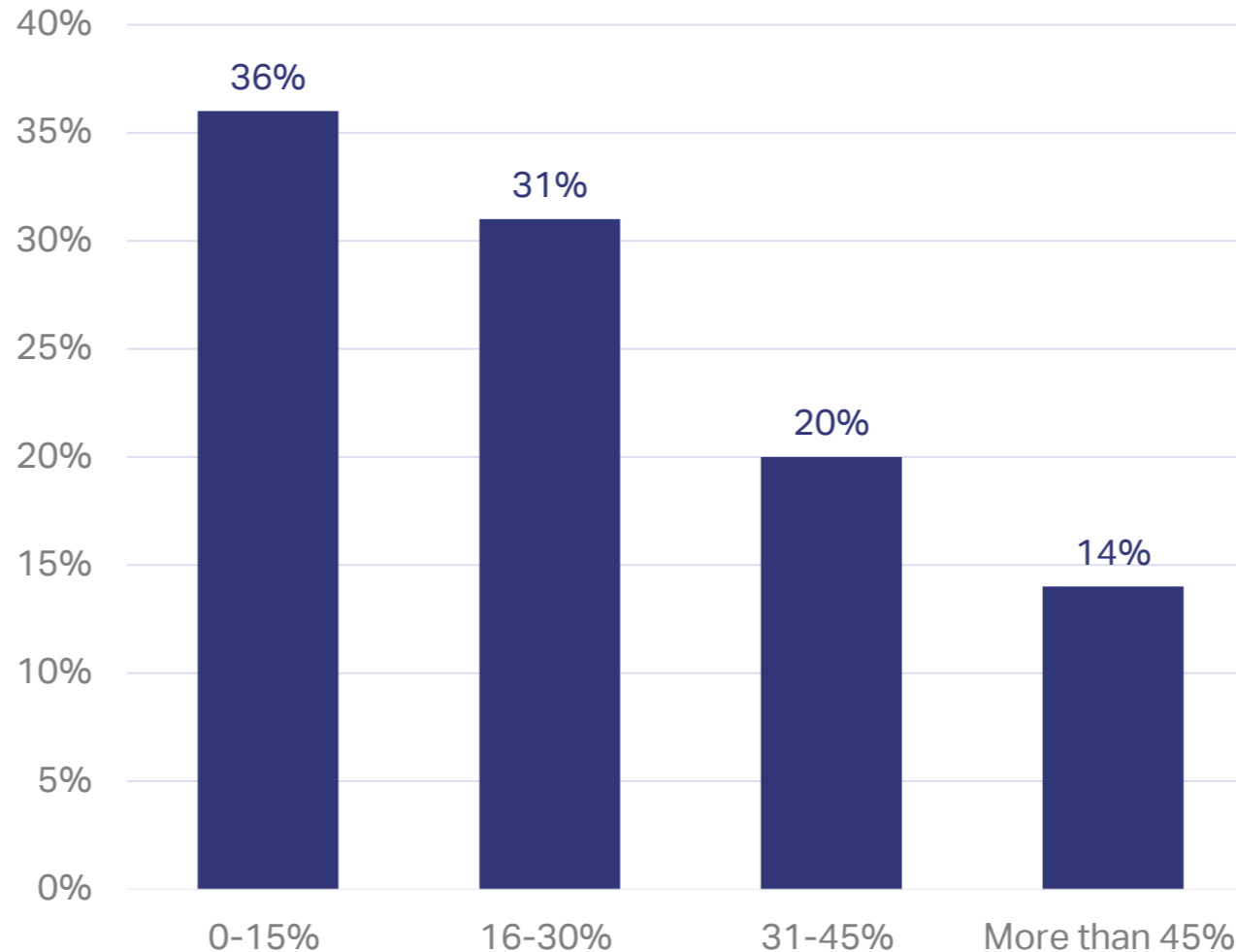
This year, as we emerge from the pandemic, the figure has jumped to 75%. With social media and m-commerce technologies rapidly developing, mobile budgets look set to head in only one direction.

Over one-third of marketers (36%) are allocating 0-15% of their budget to digital / mobile

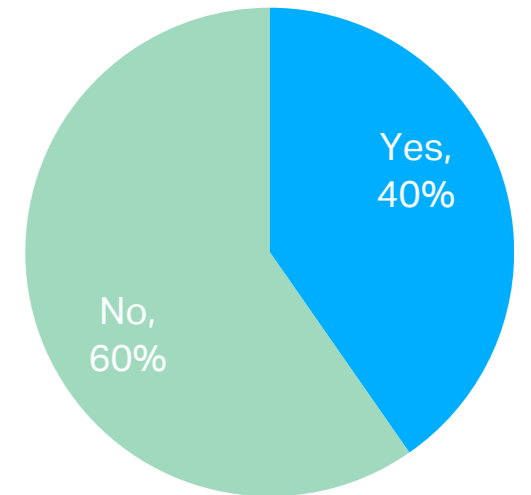
Just over one-tenth (14%) of respondents are spending more than 45%. This is the opposite pattern to what can be seen in the APAC version of this report, where 36% are allocating more than 45% and 20% are allocating 0-15%.

For three out of five marketers (60%), mobile is not treated as a separate entity within the digital budget, reflecting the integration of mobile into marketing plans across digital platforms. The remaining two in five (40%) view the mobile marketing budget as separate to the digital marketing budget.

What percentage of your or your clients' typical marketing and advertising budgets are being allocated to digital / mobile marketing and advertising?



Is mobile marketing a separate item within your digital marketing budget?

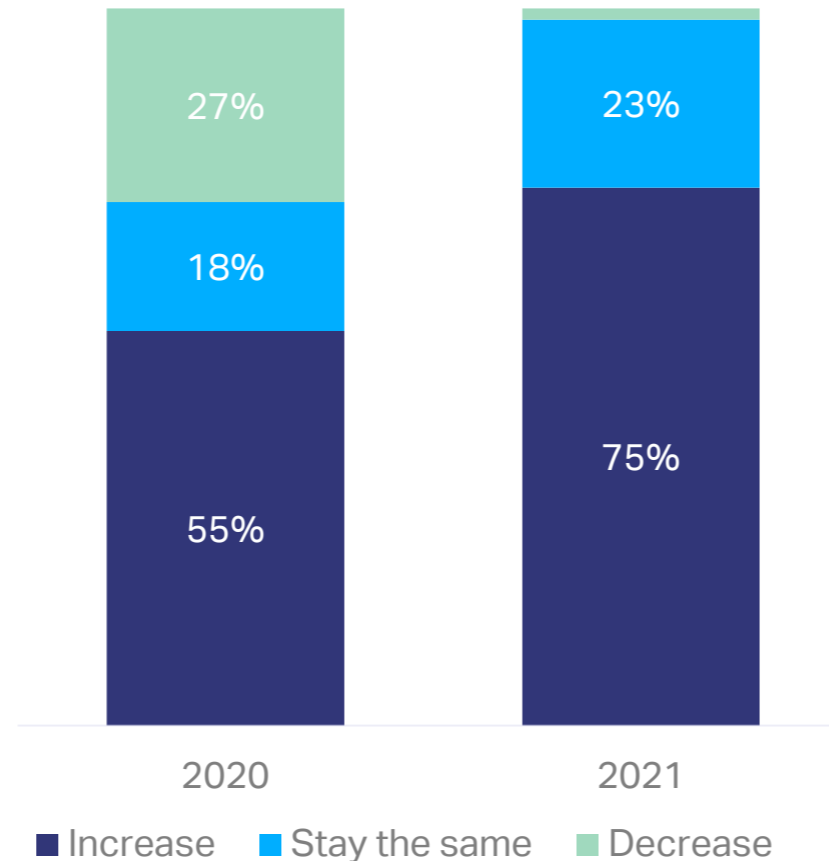


Three-quarters of Indian marketers are expecting increasing budgets

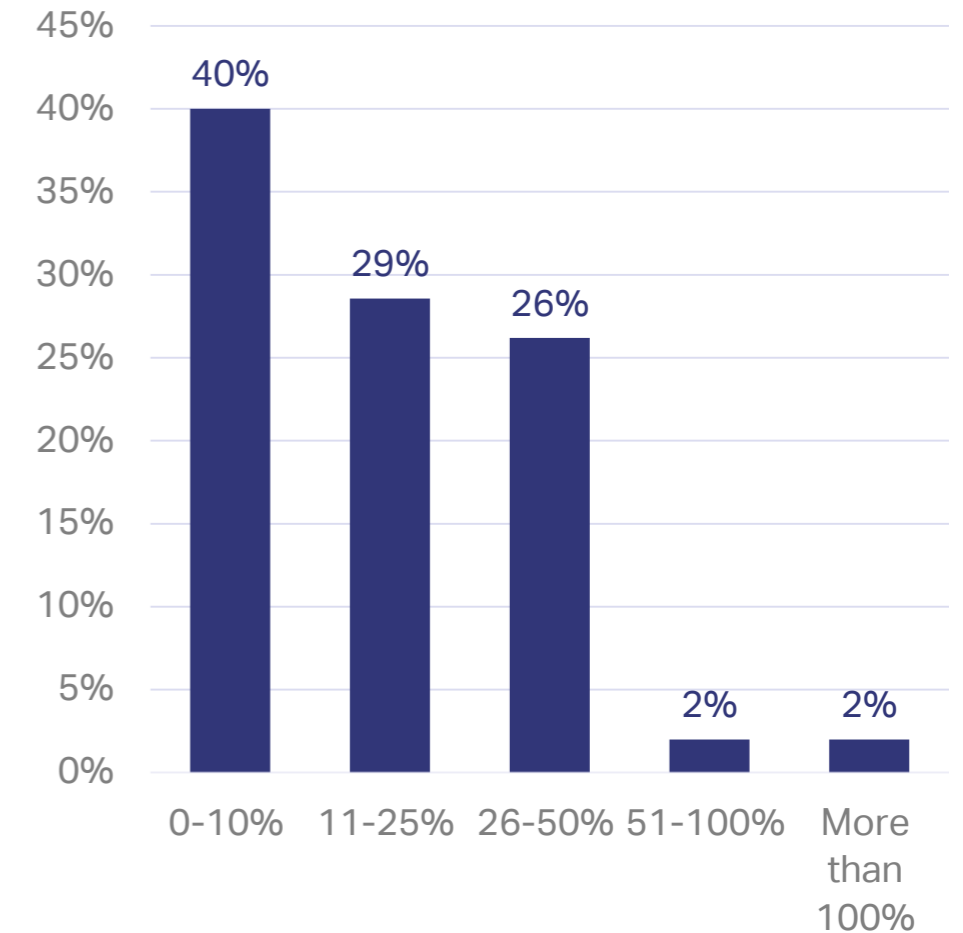
In 2020, just over one-quarter (27%) of marketers in India were expecting a budget decrease. This year, a mere 2% are expecting the same. This clearly illustrates the strong recovery mobile has had following the initial uncertainty of COVID-19.

Furthermore, marketing professionals are hopeful of growth in the next 12 months. Three-fifths (59%) of those expecting an increase are also expecting double-digit growth. In 2021, mobile advertising spend in India is predicted to be worth over \$1.9bn, according to [WARC Data](#).

How do you expect your / your client's mobile marketing and advertising budgets to change over the next twelve months?



By how much do you expect your / your typical client's mobile advertising budgets to grow over the next twelve months?



Note: Left chart – question was worded slightly differently in 2020: “Now, given the Coronavirus outbreak, how do you expect your / your clients’ mobile marketing and advertising budgets to change over the next twelve months?”

Mobile is social

In India, nearly 90% of all responding marketers use social media as part of their mobile marketing strategies. With its ability to drive brand awareness, participation and user-generated content, social media is a key link between offline and online marketing strategies, and the flexibility and accessibility of mobile make the two effective partners.

Social platforms are increasingly providing brands with ways to monetise their mobile audiences, and the growth of in-platform display advertising, influencer partnerships, and, more recently, shoppable media has been significant.

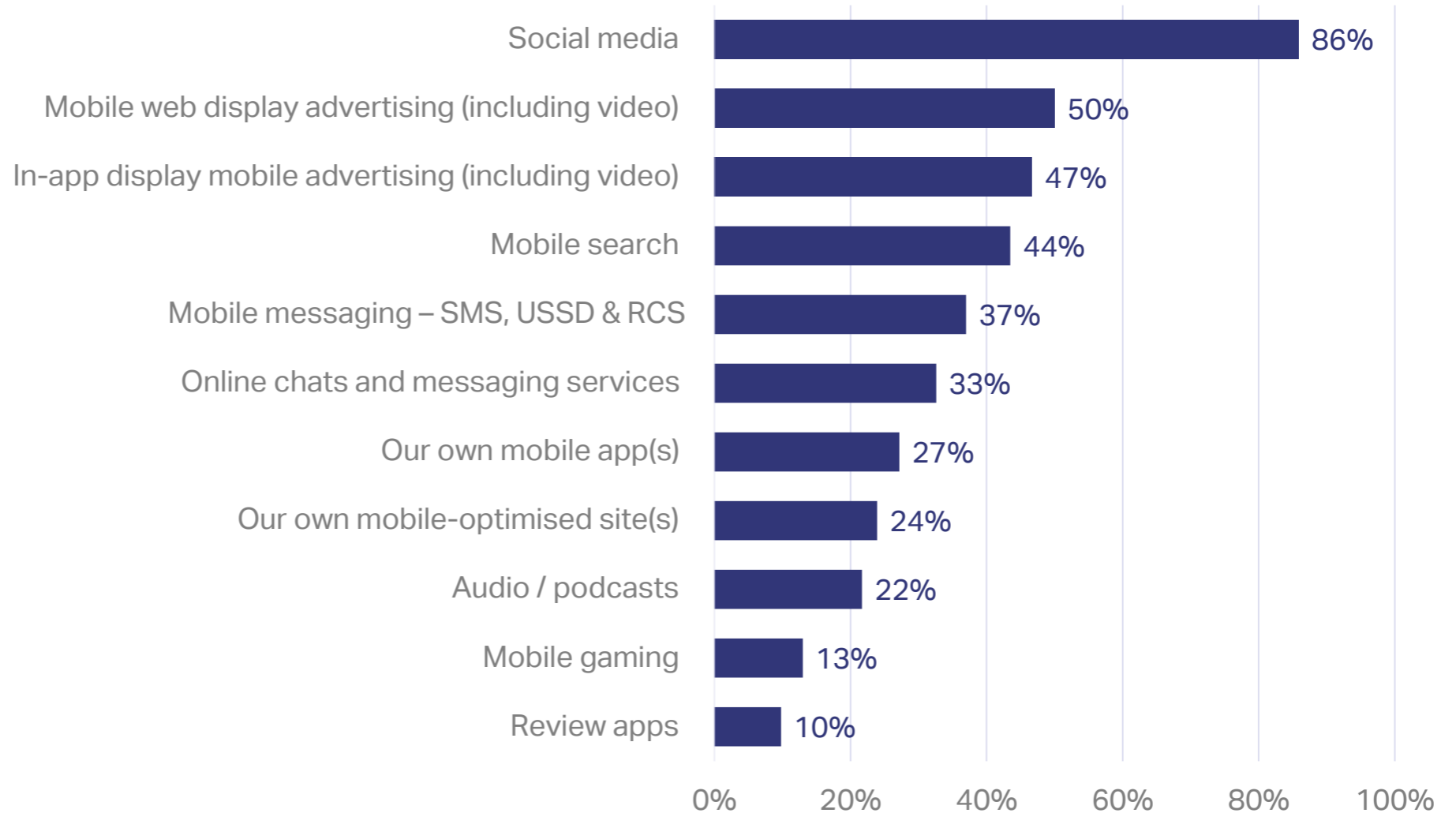
Social media is the most used marketing and advertising type

Nearly nine in ten (86%) respondents are using social media within their strategy.

Mobile web display (50%) and in-app display (47%) are second and third most used in 2021 and play a significant role in mobile marketing.

In recent research from [YouGov](#), three in five Indian consumers (56%) said they were engaging more with social media ads, more than any other country. Indians are also the most trusting, as 48% say they find social media advertising somewhat trustworthy or trustworthy.

Which of the following mobile marketing and advertising types are currently part of your / your typical client's marketing strategy?

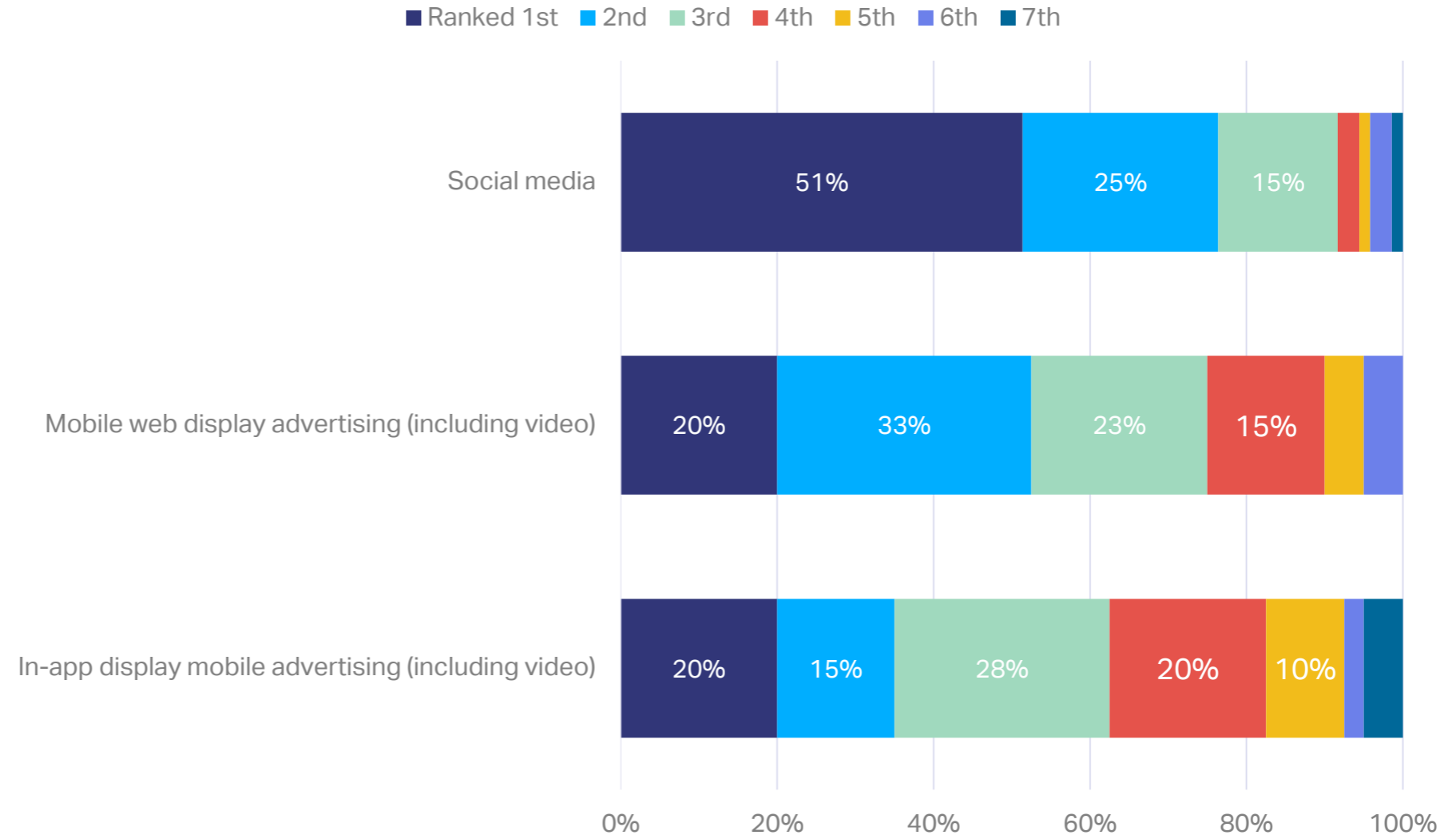


Social media is the highest priority among marketers

Social media is the most important marketing activity for mobile, both in terms of how many marketers are using it and its priority compared to other advertising types. Of the respondents who said they use social in their marketing, 51% of them said it was their biggest priority.

Web display (ranked 1st or 2nd by 53%) is considered more important than in-app display (ranked 1st or 2nd by 35%), despite both being second and third most used and only being separated by 3%, respectively.

Rank the following mobile marketing and advertising types in order of priority for your / your typical client's marketing activities in 2021?



Note: showing the top three advertising types based on respondent counts

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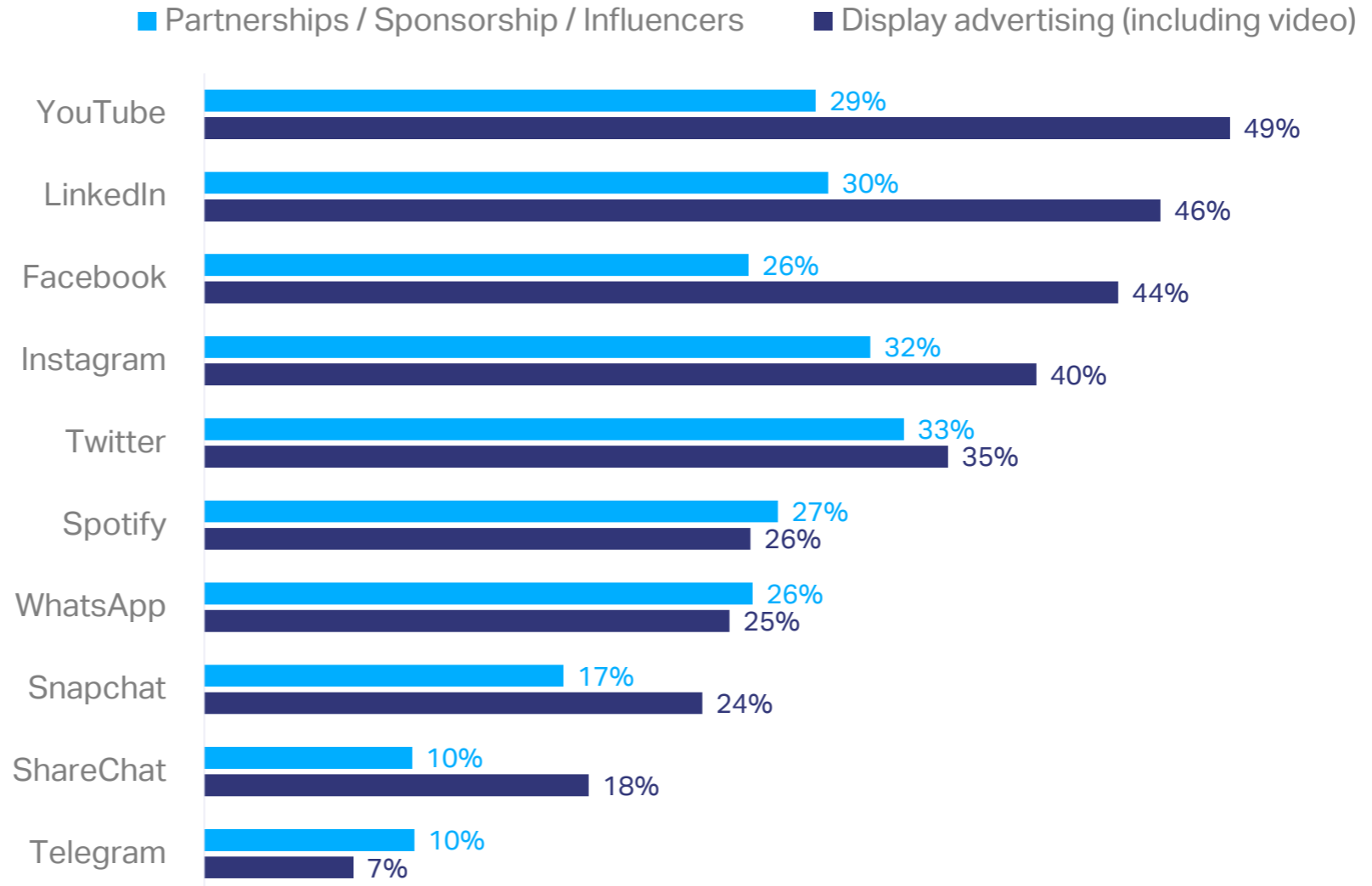
Half of respondents have run display advertising on YouTube (49%)

YouTube is the most used platform for display advertising, surprisingly followed by LinkedIn (46%), ahead of Facebook (44%).

Twitter (33%) and Instagram (32%) are the most used platforms for partnerships, sponsorships and influencers.

Most of the key players are established US-based platforms. ShareChat is the only Indian platform listed and has only been used by 18% for display advertising so far, landing it second from the bottom. However, it is also the youngest platform on the list (launched in 2015) and it remains to be seen if it will be more used in the future.

For each of the social media platforms listed, select if you have used it for each of the content types: partnerships, display.



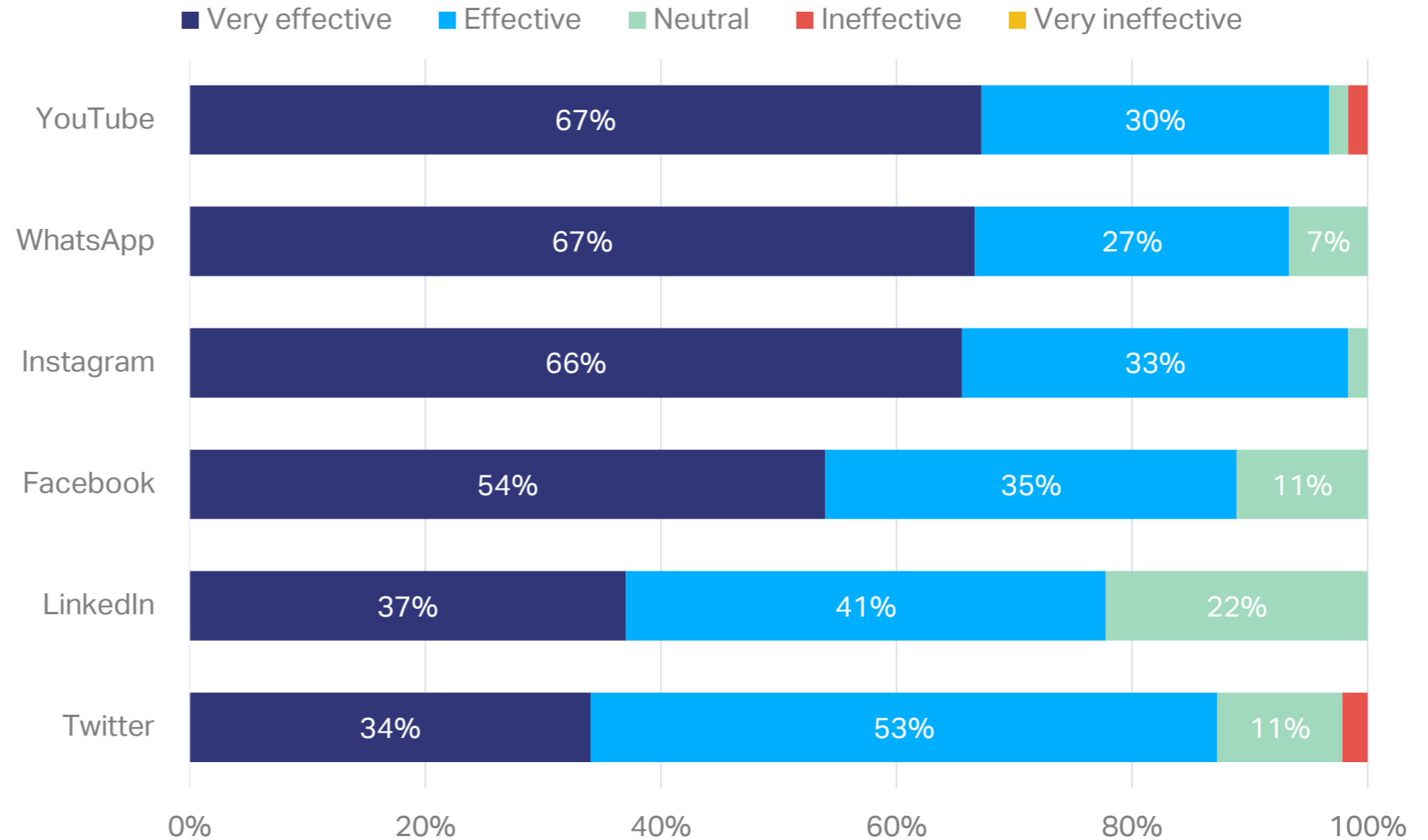
YouTube and WhatsApp are the most effective platforms on mobile

The previous charts have shown how interlinked mobile is with social media. This also extends to the individual social media platforms. These platforms are all considered either effective or very effective when used with mobile.

Two in three respondents (67%) say YouTube and WhatsApp are very effective, closely followed by Instagram (66%) and Facebook (54%).

While LinkedIn was the second most used platform for display it drops down the list when it comes to effectiveness.

Rate the social media platforms below in terms of their effectiveness when used with mobile:



COVID-19 drives m-commerce transformation

The accelerative impact of COVID-19 on digital transformation has been well-documented. This impact has been seen most significantly in e-commerce, when lockdown restrictions meant shopping online had to fill the offline gap and 82% of respondents have seen improved m-commerce capabilities as a result.

The combination of this increased e-commerce demand with increased use of social media has led to more purchase journeys being completed on mobile and innovations in shoppable media – a significant opportunity for marketers to monetise their mobile audiences.

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mobile marketing strategy

“The pandemic has revolutionised the digital space coupled with the penetration of smartphones in India. Indians are a lot more digital savvy than before and this has been leveraged by my company to connect with customers. Our digital marketing strategy, despite the pandemic, has ensured that the core aspects of creating awareness and lead generation have not been compromised.”

- Board level, Consultancy, India

“Share of sales through e-commerce has increased significantly, and so, focus on digital marketing budgets has increased. And yes it continues to be so in 2021.

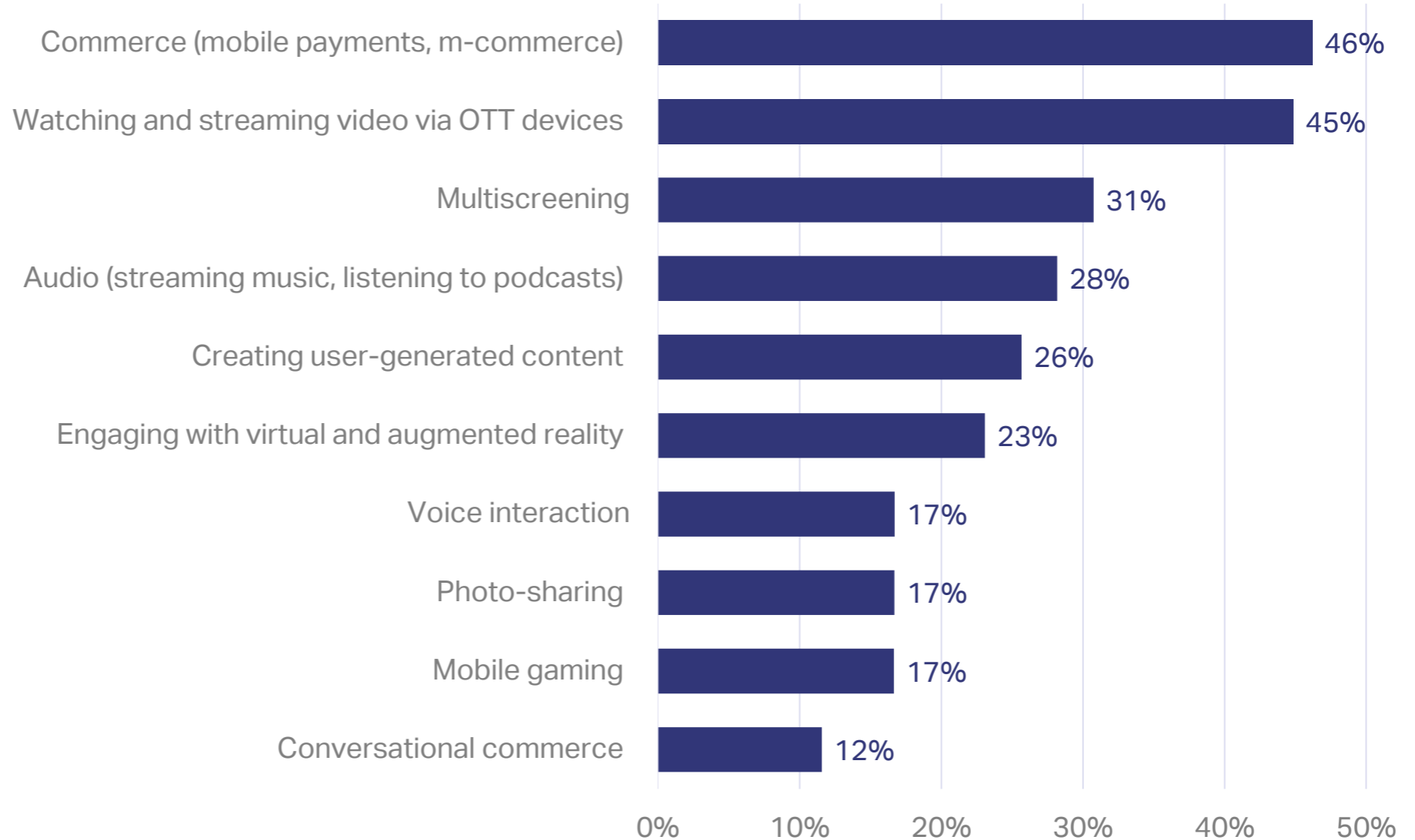
- VP, Advertising agency, India

Commerce is having the biggest impact on the marketing industry in India

In the last year, Indian consumers have become used to shopping online and commerce is now the most important consumer behaviour in India. Marketers now need to look ahead in order to grow in the competitive landscape.

Mona Jain, APB Network’s Chief Revenue Officer says COVID-19 was a catalyst for online content consumption and this has led to a massive growth in OTT and digital adspend. Understandably, watching and streaming via OTT devices (45%) is the second most significant activity, followed by multiscreening (31%).

Of the following consumer behaviours that are increasingly involving mobile devices, which do you think have the most significance for the marketing industry?

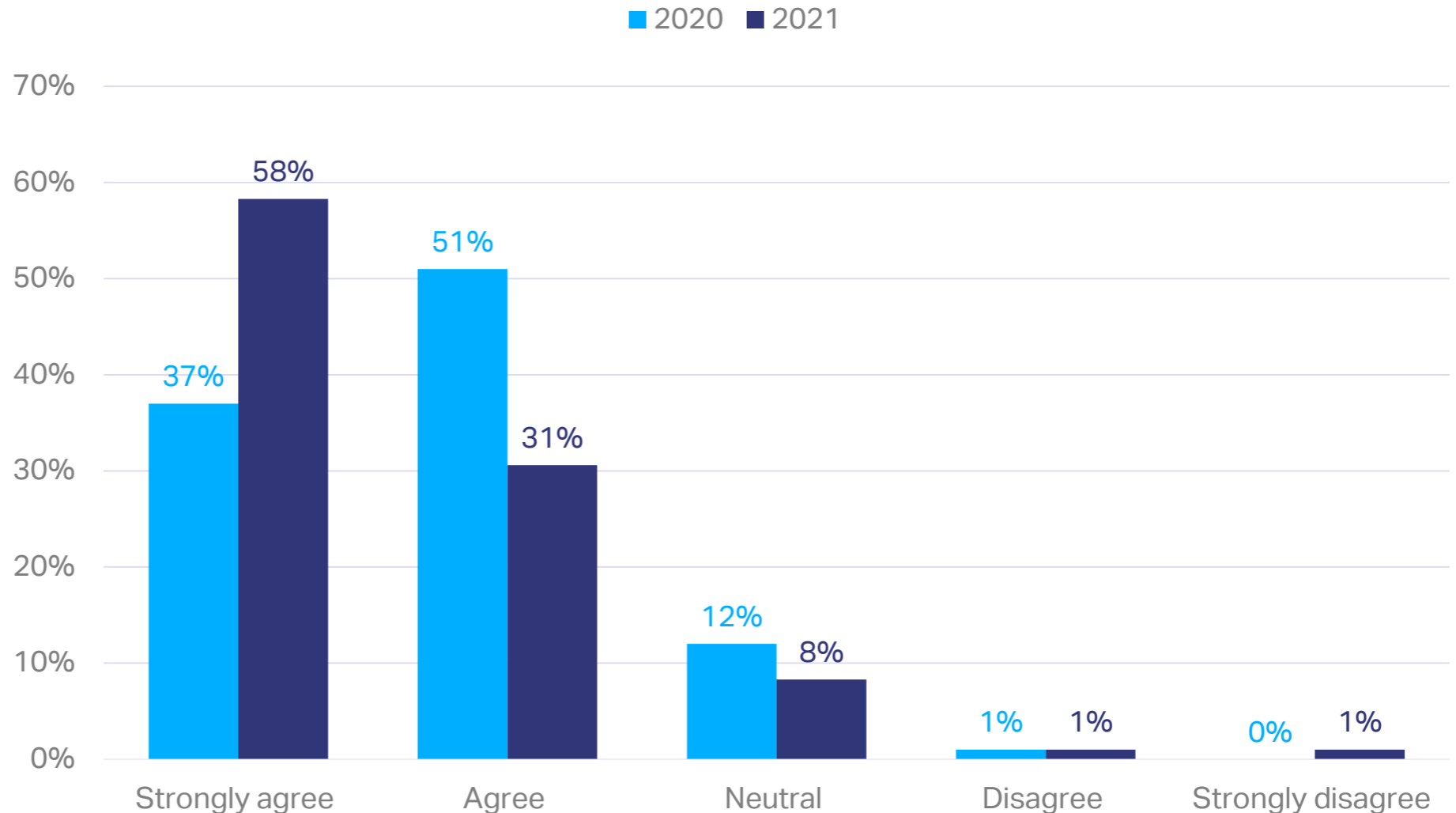


Mobile is playing a bigger role in the purchase journey

Nine in ten (89%) marketing professionals in India agree or strongly agree that mobile plays a significant role in the purchase journey in 2021. This year, the majority of respondents have said that they strongly agree: an increase of 21pp in one year.

India is treating mobile as a key driver for omnichannel marketing. According to InMobi Pulse: 63% of Indians use their mobile to discover new products, 77% to research and explore, and 62% to make purchases. Mobile can be considered the epicentre of the digital ecosystem in India and it is expected continue to play a big role in the purchase journey.

“Mobile plays a significant role in the purchase journey of our typical customer”

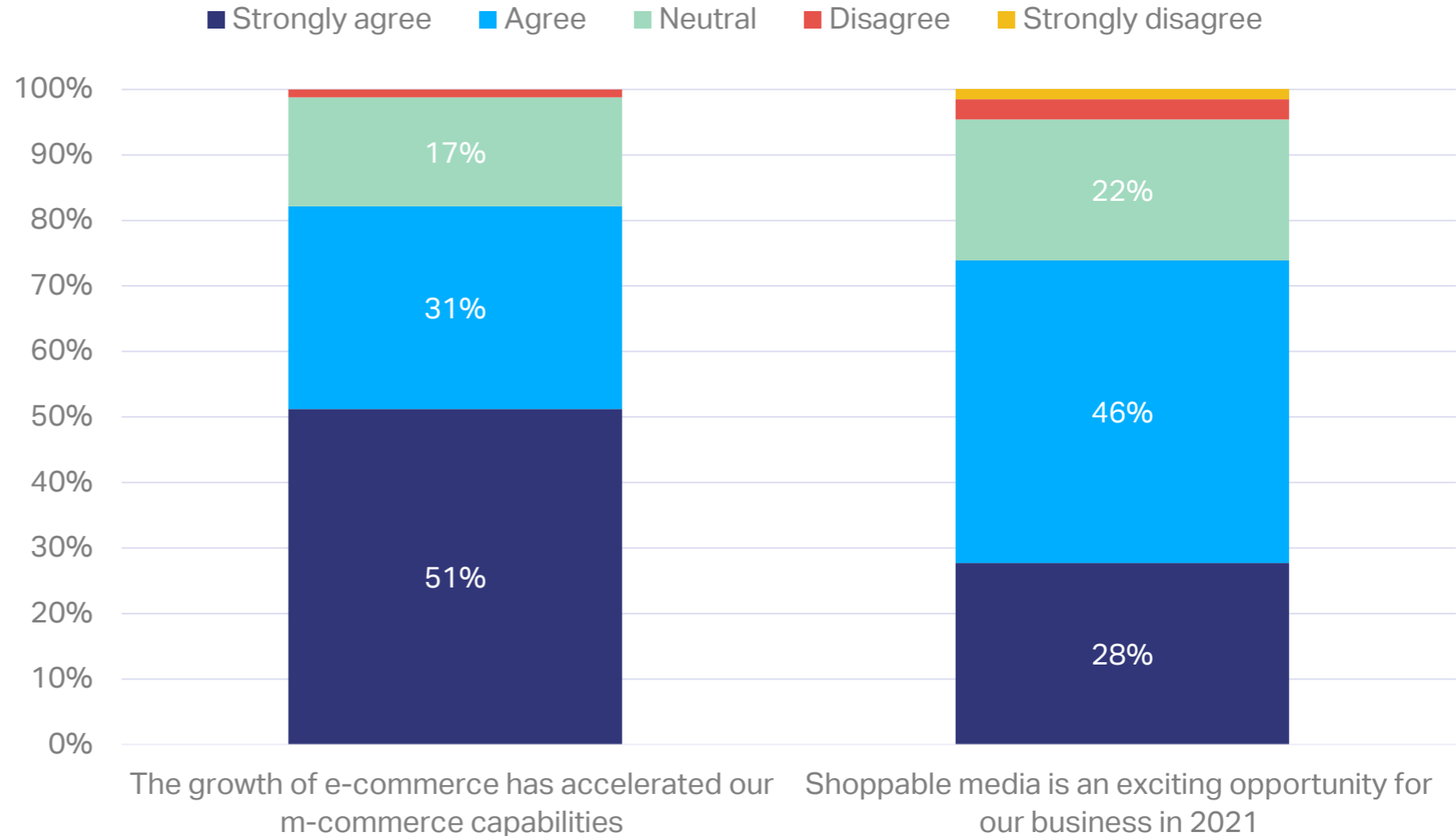


Four in five (82%) respondents have accelerated their m-commerce capabilities

M-commerce uptake in APAC has long been ahead of other regions and as a result of the recent e-commerce growth, marketers in India are improving their m-commerce capabilities even further.

Social media, in particular, assumed an important role as a digital store-front during COVID-19. Four in five (81%) respondents say shoppable is an exciting business opportunity in 2021. Recent research from Shopify found that two-fifths (41%) of 18-34 year olds in India have made a purchase via social media and that is likely to increase in the future.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about mobile?



Targeting in a cookie-free era

The end of the third-party cookie may have been postponed, but the coming change in targeting, tracking and measurement is still set to significantly impact marketing strategies for more than 60% of respondents. And with consumer concerns about privacy being the second biggest barrier to mobile growth in the region, the subject of privacy needs to be approached with sensitivity.

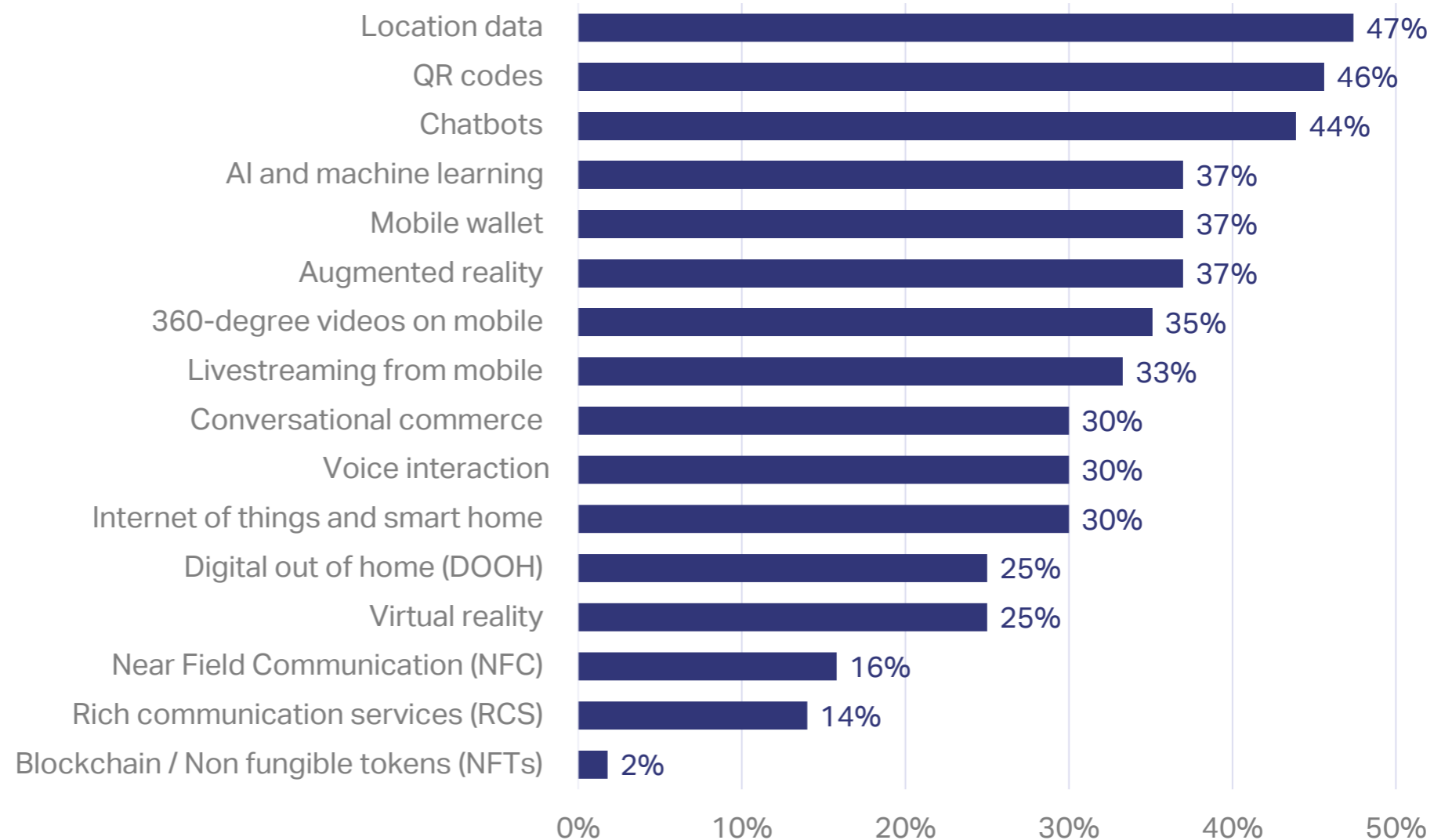
Over the next year, marketers will need to strengthen their first-party data strategies, or build partnerships to access such data, to gain attention in a crowded marketplace.

The majority (55%) of respondents will use location data this year

One of the more surprising consequences of the pandemic was the comeback of QR codes. QR codes are now the second most used mobile technology in 2021 (46%). In the days of social distancing we are likely to continue to see 'touchless tech' like QR for ordering food or entering social venues going forward.

Location data can be used to tap into consumer habits and shopping patterns. Geo-located ads deliver hyper-contextualised data and, with smartphones considered ubiquitous by many, half (47%) of Indian marketers are harnessing the power of location.

Are you / your typical clients planning to use any of the following and their associated mobile technologies in 2021?

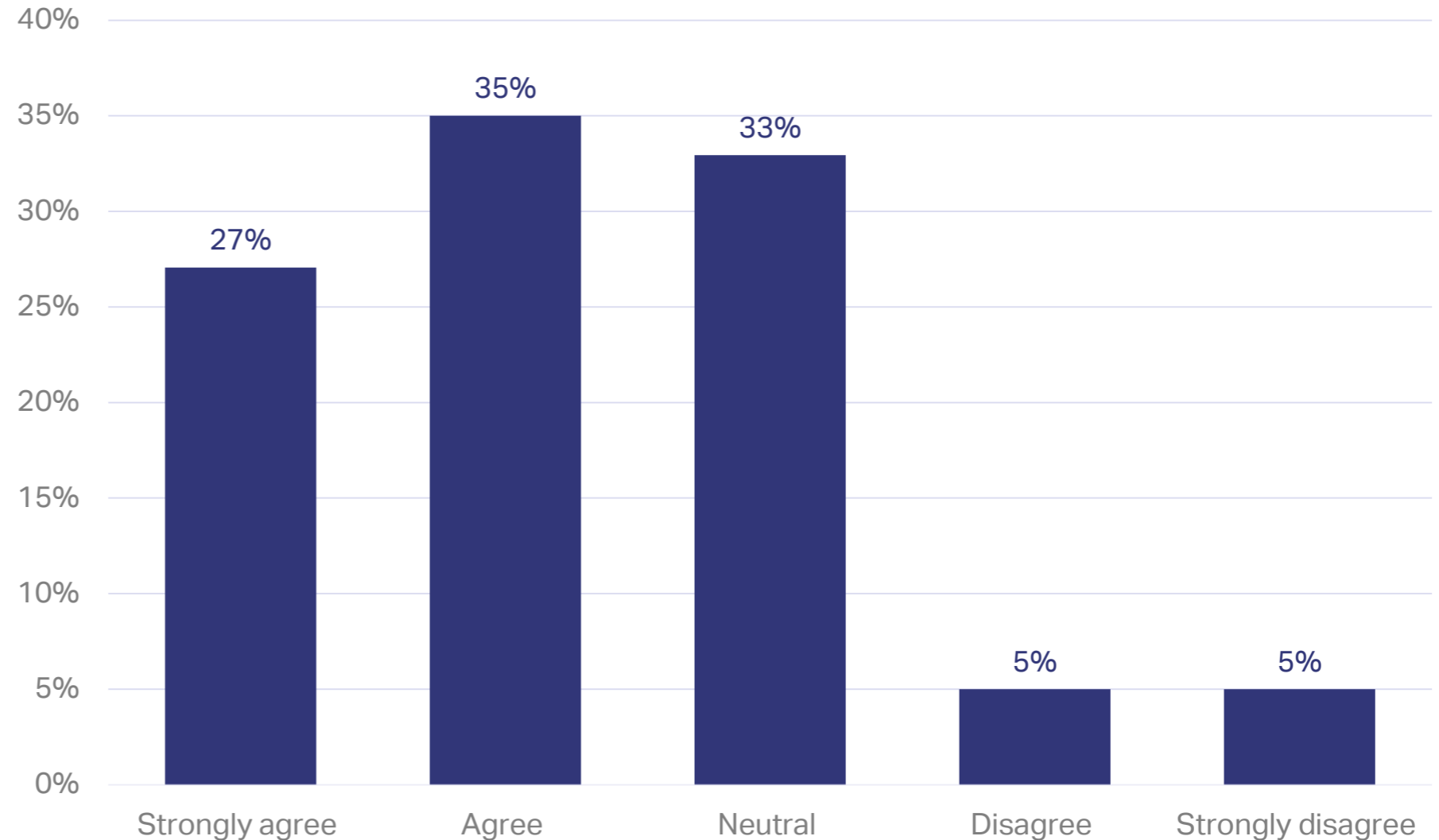


Three in five (62%) feel the ‘death of the cookie’ will have a big impact on mobile

Over one in four (27%) strongly agree and over one-third (35%) agree, while exactly one-third feel neutral.

The cookie has been a core part of the internet’s advertising ecosystem since its invention in 1994, and as third-party cookies will no longer be supported in 2023, marketers will need to find new ways to identify and target online audiences as well as cap frequency to make sure users are not overexposed to the same creatives. As the ‘cookie-death’ has been delayed, there may be a lost sense of urgency, but brands still have an opportunity to turn privacy into a competitive advantage.

The ‘death of the cookie’ will significantly impact mobile marketing strategies



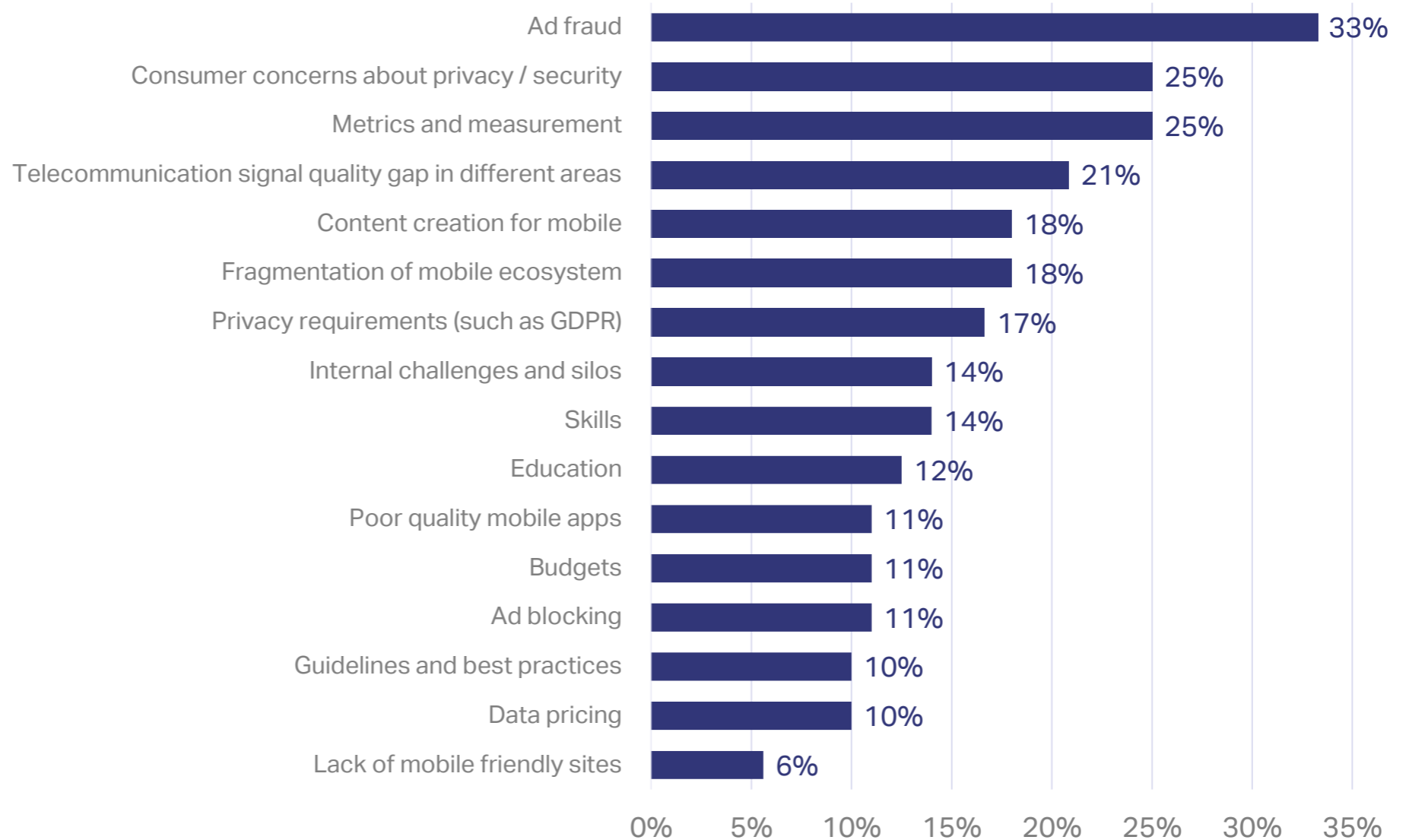
Ad fraud (33%) is the biggest barrier to mobile growth

One-third of respondents view ad fraud as a big barrier to growth, followed by consumer privacy concerns and metrics (25%).

Ad fraud is a prominent concern across Asia and India is no exception. Gaming is the vertical with the most app ad fraud, but India is also seeing a large amount of click flooding in the shopping vertical.

Almost 80% of the population now have mobile phone connections. Although access to mobile and internet services is growing, 21% of respondents still see telecommunication signal quality gaps in different areas as a barrier to growth.

In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers to the growth of mobile marketing and advertising in India?



Impact of IDFA changes and the phasing out of the cookie

“A number of initiatives are being done to build on first-party data. Additionally, we are working with our partners on solutions to mitigate the impact. The additional breathing time being provided is a relief.”

- VP, Advertising agency, India

“This presents an opportunity for brands to rethink their identity programs and how – and who – they partner with for their digital media dollars.

- VP, Consultancy, India

The future of mobile technology

The speed of innovation within digital marketing continues to drive mobile marketing forward. These innovations are linking offline and online together like never before, and marketers are making significant investments in mobile marketing technologies to ensure they keep up with their competition.

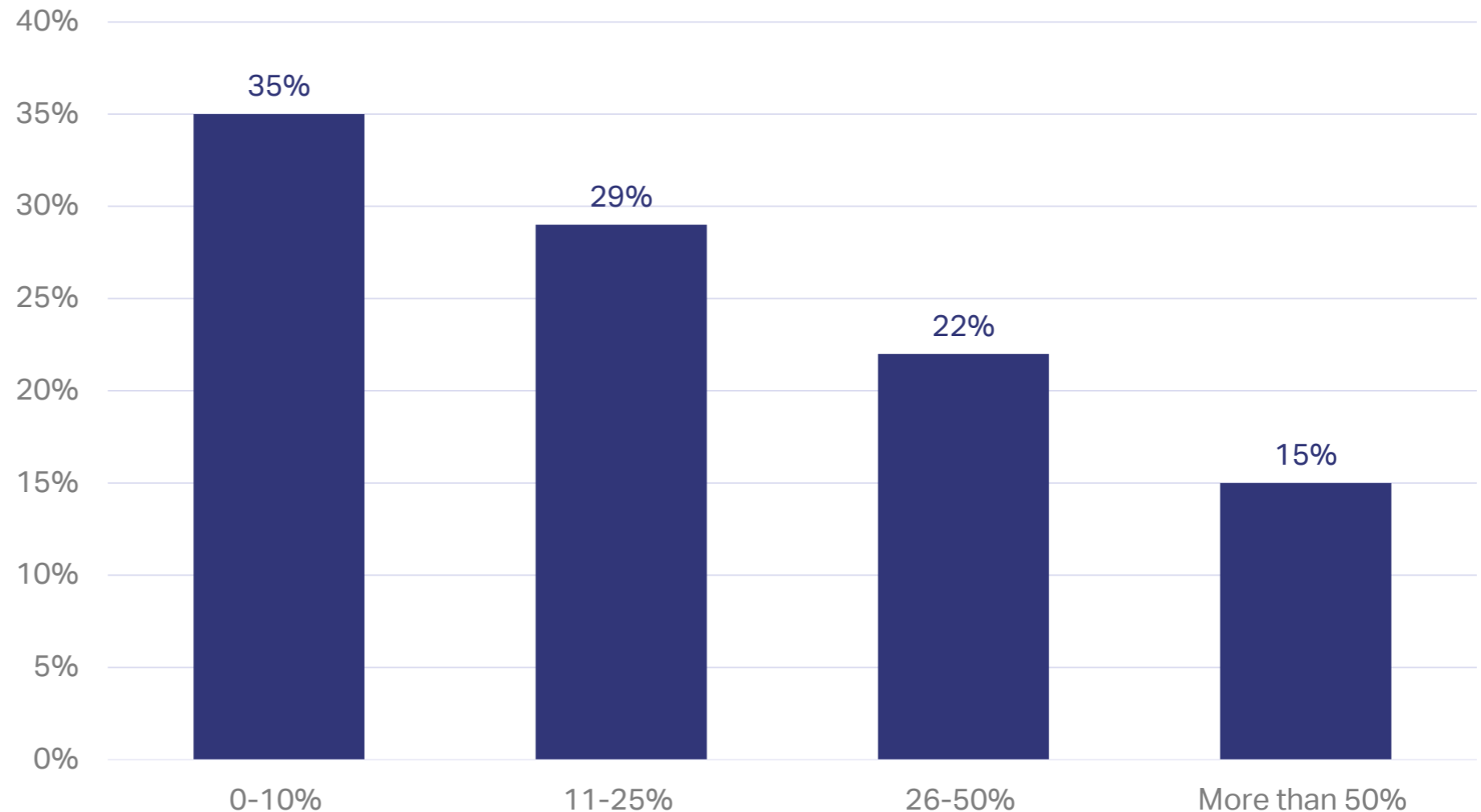
We asked respondents what technologies they thought would be most significant in five years' time. More than two in five pointed to artificial intelligence and machine learning – technologies that promise to improve efficiency and precision in reaching the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

Nearly two in five marketers (37%) are investing more than a quarter of their budget in mobile martech

Over one in three (35%) marketers are investing 0-10% of their budget in mobile martech, while just under one in three (29%) are spending between 11-25%.

While lacking technological capabilities can be a barrier to martech adoption, in the right hands, the combining of tech and data can greatly enrich the customer experience. For example, automation and AI can streamline digital marketing efforts and make ad recommendations feel personalised and useful.

How much of your budget for 2021 will be invested in mobile marketing technology?

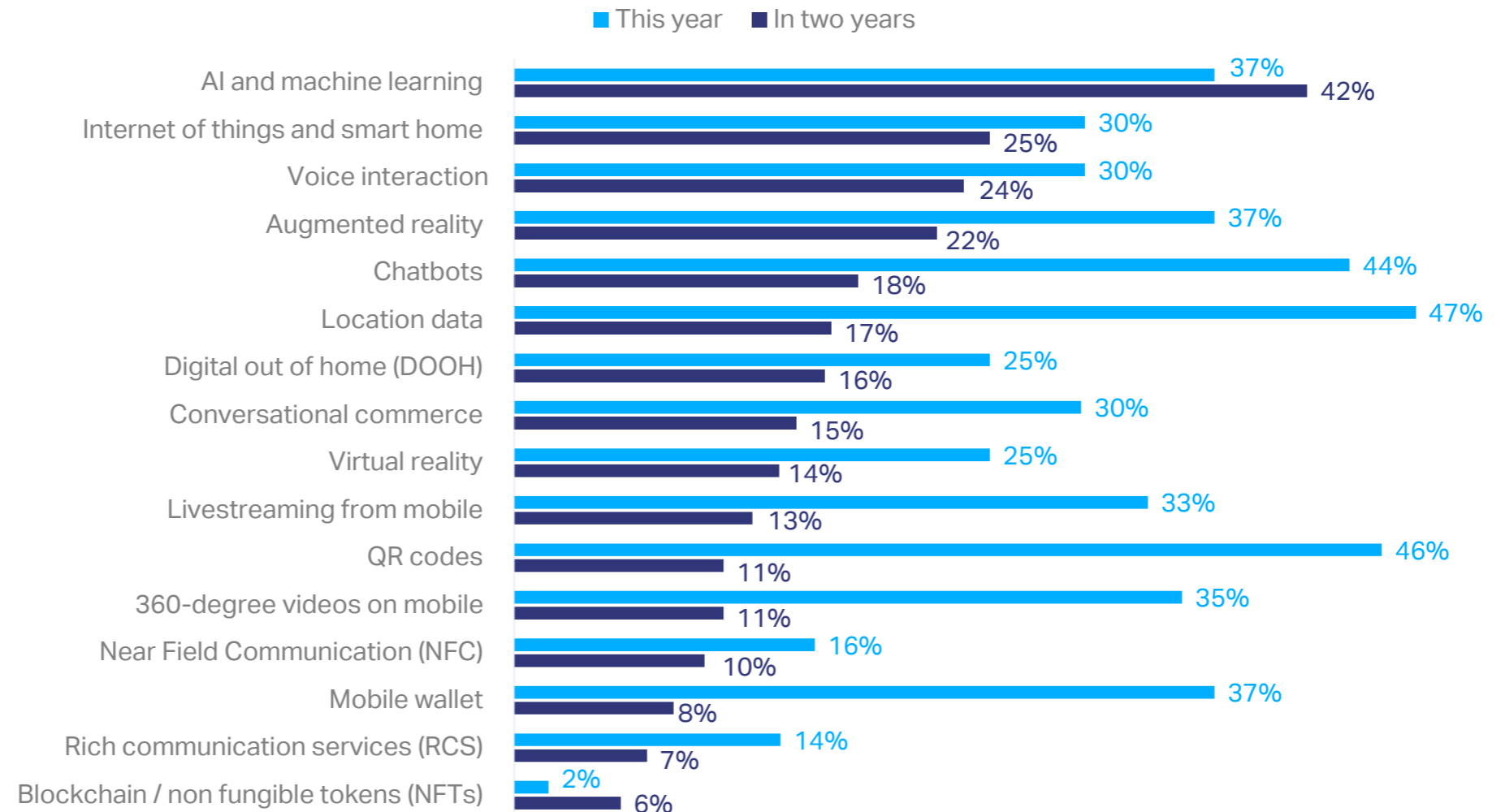


AI and machine learning will be the top technology in two years (42%)

Internet of things (25%) and voice interaction (24%) are predicted to be two of the more important technologies in the next two years.

Furthermore, QR codes, which have seen a boost during COVID and are used by half of respondents today (46%), might become more ubiquitous in the next two years and may therefore not be as significant (11%).

Are you / your typical clients planning to use any of the following and their associated mobile technologies in 2021? / Which of these technologies do you expect to be most significant in two years' time?



About

About the study

This report is based on an online survey of 122 marketing professionals, carried out in July and August 2021.

The survey link was disseminated to WARC and MMA lists, and respondents received a complimentary copy of the report.

Respondents were based in India, and were a mix of client-side, agency, media owner and technology vendor marketers.

About WARC

Warc.com is an online service offering advertising best practice, evidence and insights from the world's leading brands. WARC helps clients grow their businesses by using proven approaches to maximise advertising effectiveness. WARC's clients include the world's largest advertising and media agencies, research companies, universities and advertisers.

About the MMA

The MMA is the only marketing trade association that brings together the full ecosystem of marketers, martech and media companies to architect the future of marketing, whilst delivering growth today. Committed to science and questioning, the MMA invests millions of dollars in rigorous research to enable marketers with unassailable truth and actionable tools. By enlightening, empowering and enabling marketers, the MMA shapes future success, while also propelling business growth.

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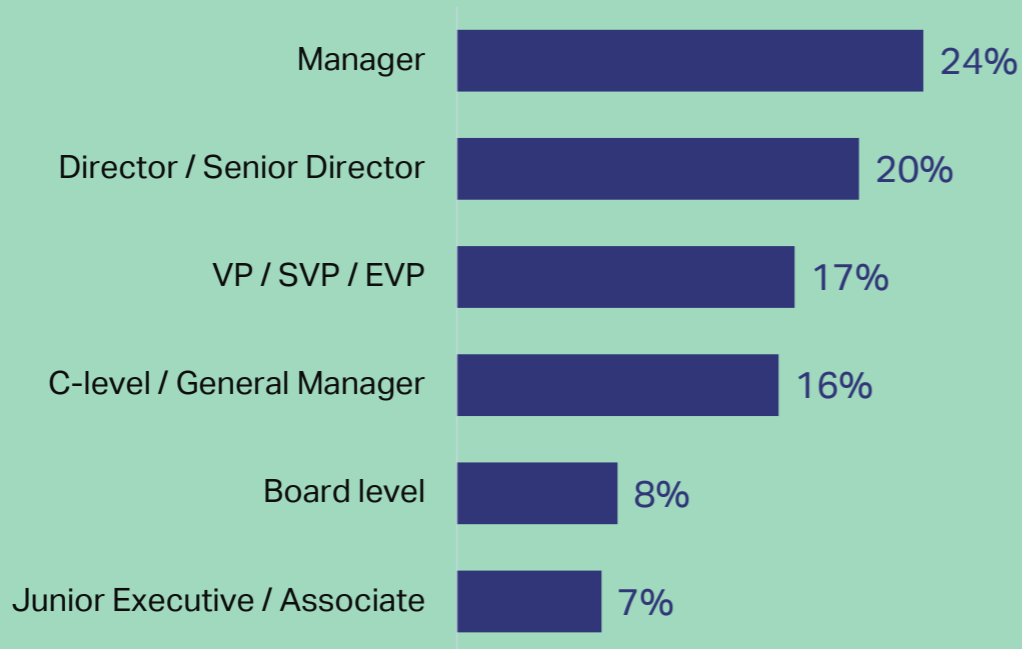
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Demographics

The survey was conducted in India. Respondents are most likely to work for advertising agencies. In terms of job role, most respondents hold manager or director positions.

Job role



Note, In some charts, percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Advertising agency option includes creative, digital and media agencies

Company type

