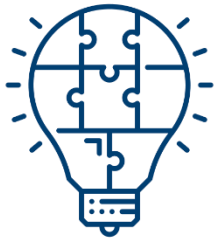
EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Survey Summary Report

March 2024

K014232

ABOUT THIS REPORT



In February 2024, APQC conducted a survey to understand how current and emerging technologies impact KM teams, programs, and capabilities.

This report explores the role KM teams play in their organization's digital strategy and how emerging technology is enabling KM. Topics include:

- KM and its role in technology strategy and implementations
- Current state of implementation for technologies enabling KM, including advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence
- Top drivers and barriers for successful technology implementation
- Change management effectiveness when implementing technology

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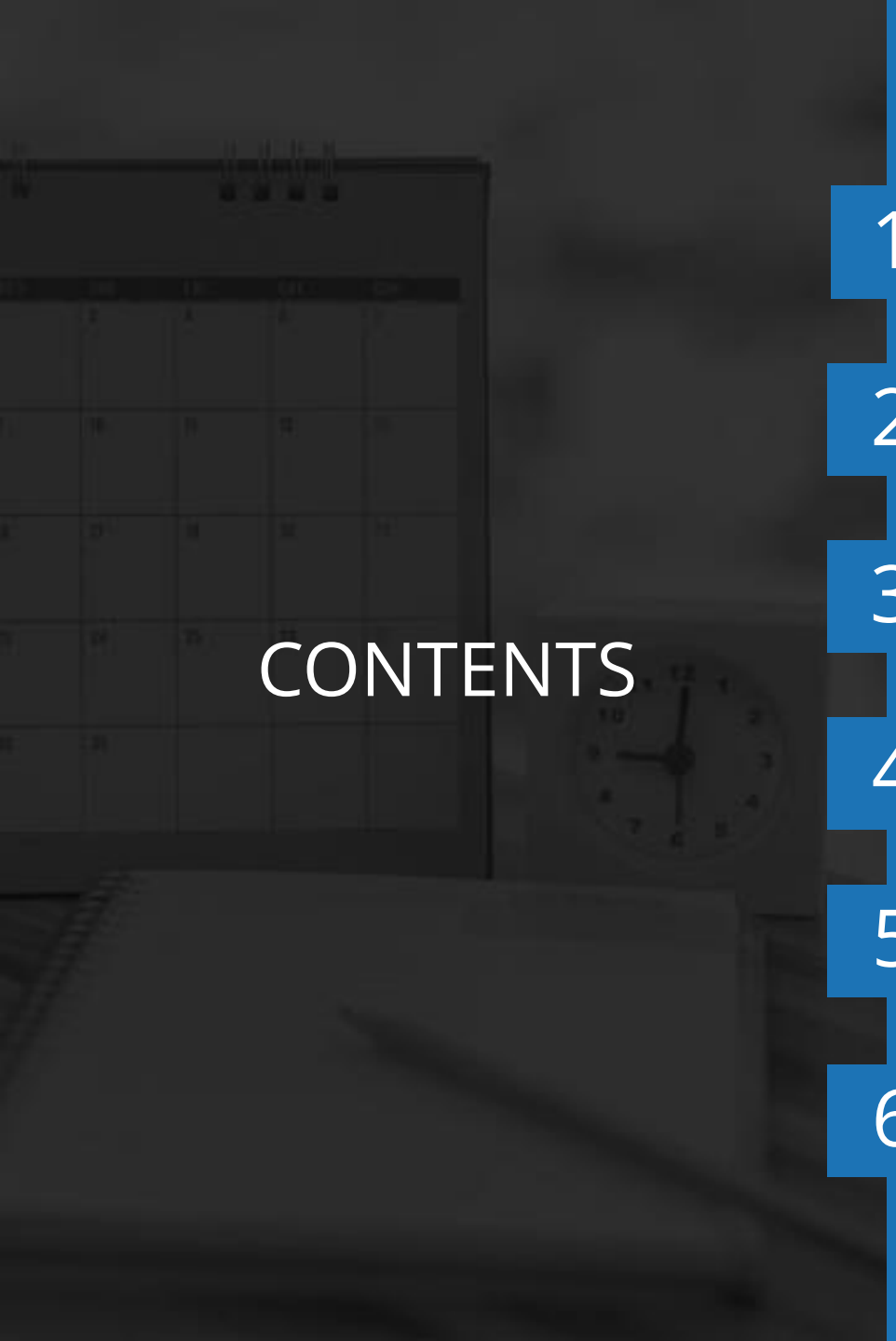
Valid Global Participants



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KEY TERMS

- **Team collaboration/digital workplace apps** refers to technology-enabled collaboration. Virtual collaboration may be synchronous (e.g., virtual meetings, chat) or asynchronous (e.g., project sites, discussion boards, email) and is vital to enable collaboration among dispersed employees in remote or hybrid workplace environments, but it is also commonplace in fully in-office environments.

- **Search and discovery** refer to an employee's ability to enter a query (e.g., "vendor process" or "how do I add a new vendor") and a software program searches through one or more databases to return results that contain or relate to that query. Search can also include the use of filtering and navigation tools, such as drop-down lists, to surface or refine results or intelligent/AI driven engines. Discovery is usually contrasted with search, which requires users to know what they are looking for in order to find it.

- **Robotic process automation (RPA)** refers to process automation that is server-based and combines process steps with decision models or business rules with little to no human oversight. Typically applied to high-volume transactional processes with limited variation and clearly outlined business rules or decision models

- **Knowledge graph** A graph that represents a network of entities (e.g., terms, concepts, topics, people, content items) and illustrates the relationships between them, typically through machine learning and/or natural language processing. In KM, knowledge graphs are used to integrate information into an ontology and apply reasoning to derive new knowledge. Knowledge graphs can be used to build or enhance KM capabilities (e.g., chatbots, semantic search, recommendation engines, taxonomies) as well as to understand knowledge-related needs, trends, and opportunities.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** refers to computer capabilities that can learn, solve problems, and adapt through perception of their environment. AI is sometimes used interchangeably with the term cognitive computing. One key distinction between these two terms is that cognitive computing supports human decision-making whereas AI makes decisions.

- **Generative AI** refers to a type of AI that can learn from data and use it to create brand new, unique artifacts such as media (text, images, music, video, code or data), processes, applications, learning methods, synthetic data and models of physical objects. Some examples include OpenAI's Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer (ChatGPT), Google's Bard, Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E 2.

- **Change management** refers to the application of a structured process or set of approaches to transition employees, teams, and/or an entire organization to a desired future state. In the context of KM, change management often involves support from senior leaders, internal communications campaigns, formal and informal training, and rewards and recognition to motivate participation.

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KM IN ORGANIZATIONS

KM PROGRAM MODEL

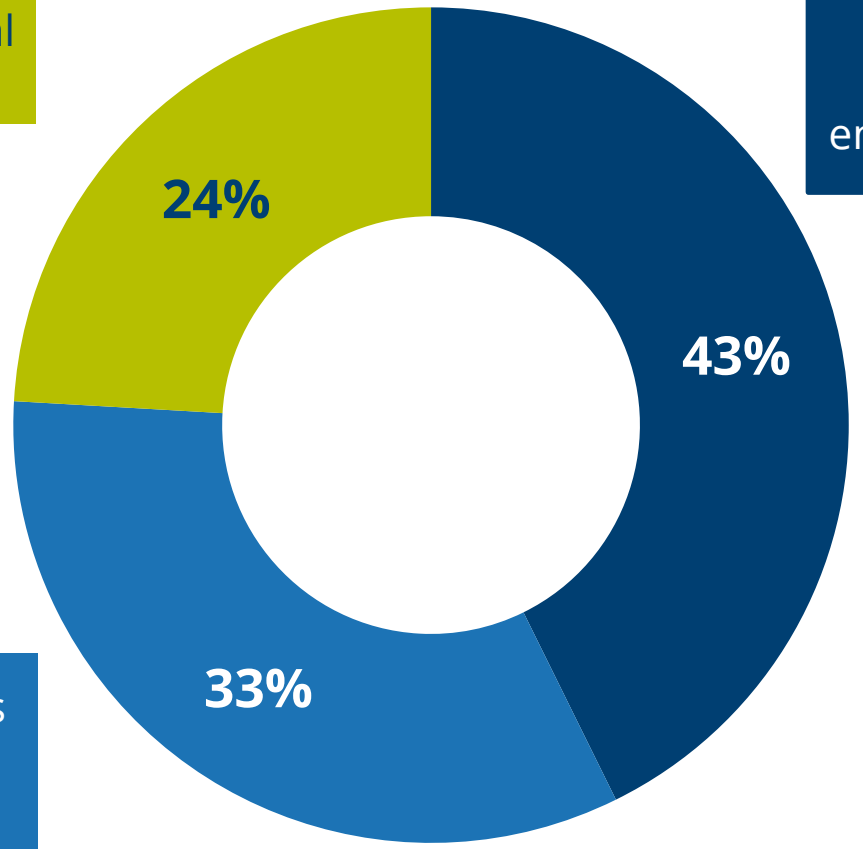
Scope and reach of KM within organizations

Almost half of participating KM programs extend their scope to the enterprise level within their organizations.

One-third are supporting KM for a specific function, and one-quarter are leveraging a federated model, which involves a centralized KM team in partnership with a divisional or functional KM team.

This may provide more flexibility for business groups to adapt KM to their needs, especially when the central KM team provides services for many different stakeholder groups.

Federated: centralized KM + divisional/functional KM teams



Enterprise: applies to the entire organization

Functional: applies to one business division/function

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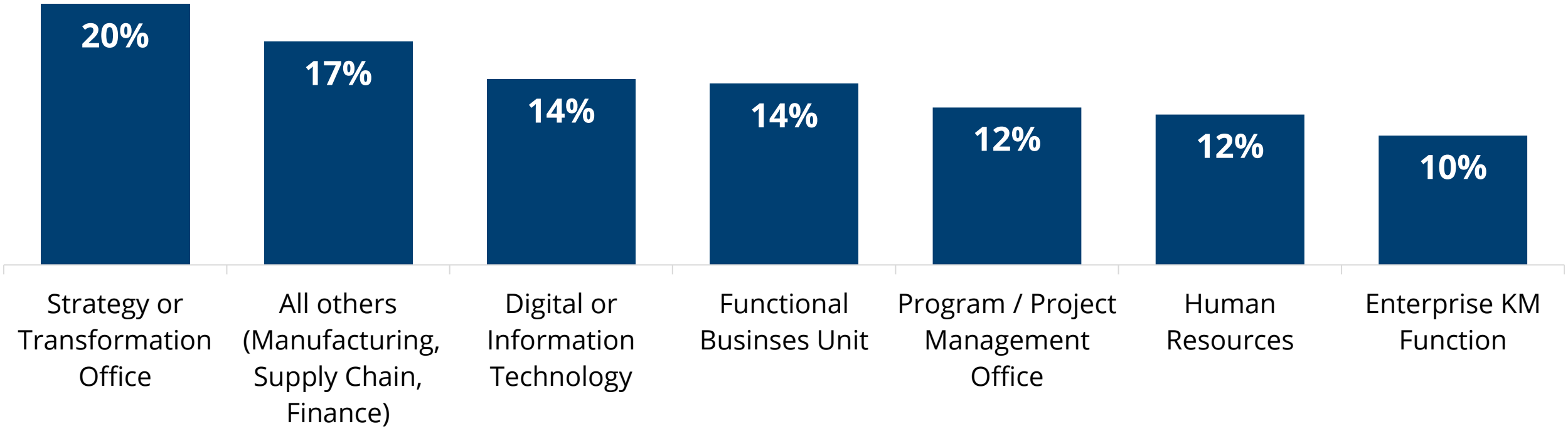
KM REPORTING STRUCTURE

Most KM teams are reporting to a strategy function or transformation office, or to a support organization such as manufacturing or supply chain. Evenly split are KM teams reporting to functions such as digital or information technology, a functional business unit, a program/project management office or human resources. A smaller number report belonging to an enterprise KM function.

Reporting structures for KM teams and functions within organizations.



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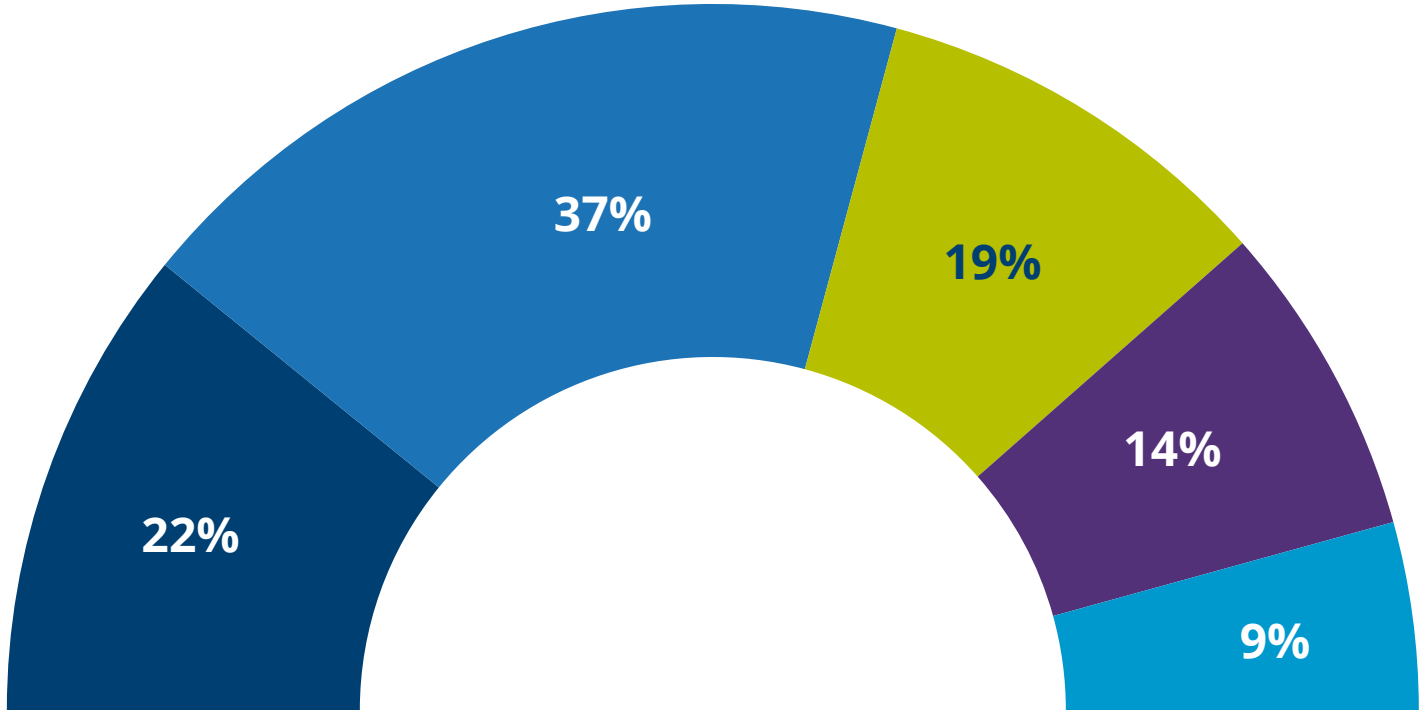
ORGANIZATIONAL KM MATURITY LEVEL

A majority or respondents report their organization's level of maturity in KM is just getting started or developing. One-quarter are standardizing or optimizing their programs, with a small number already innovating or operating at a very high level of maturity. Note that these results are based on the respondent's perceived level of maturity and may not be derived from a formal KM maturity assessment.

Current level of assessed maturity for knowledge management within organizations.



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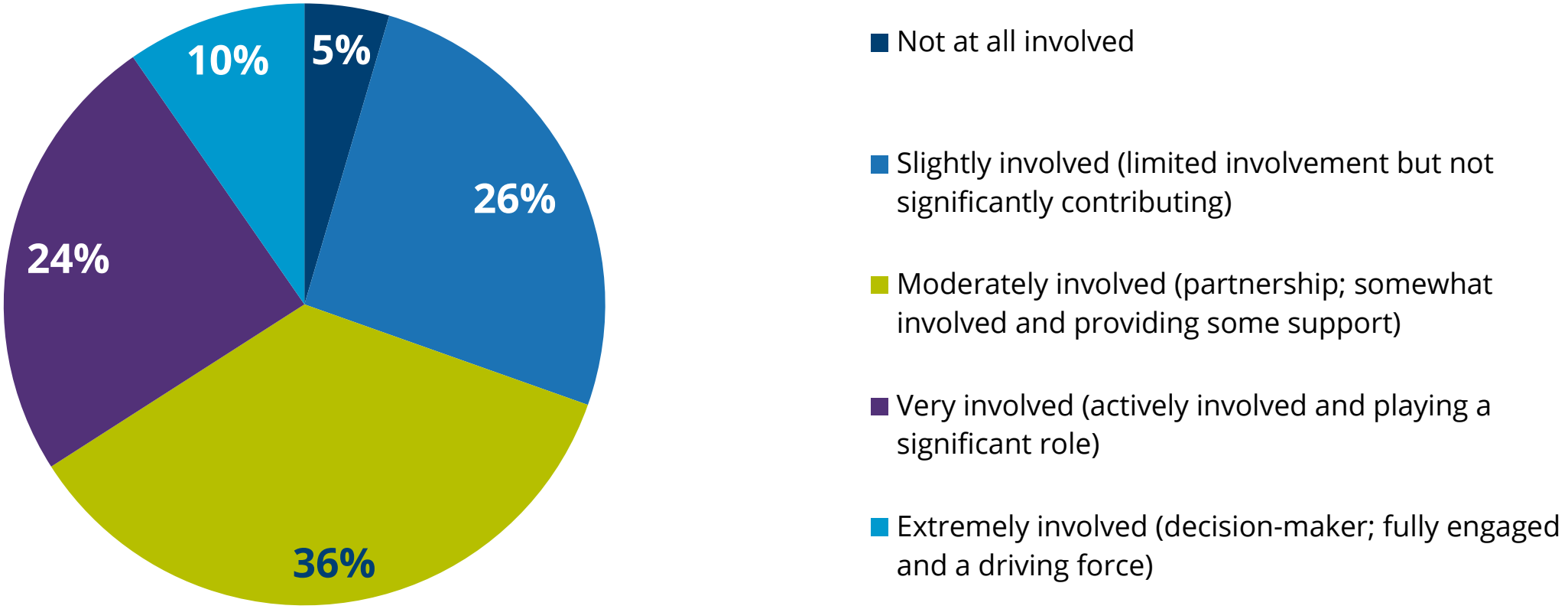
KM INVOLVEMENT IN TECHNOLOGY

KM INVOLVEMENT IN DIGITAL STRATEGY

The KM team as a key stakeholder in their organization's digital strategy continues to grow with one-third of respondents reporting they are at least actively involved and playing a significant role with some of those fully engaged as a decision-maker. Over one-third are at least moderately involved in the partnership and support of a digital strategy, with 15% still reporting only slight involvement or not involved at all.

Level of involvement KM teams have in an organization's digital transformation strategy, roadmaps and implementation.



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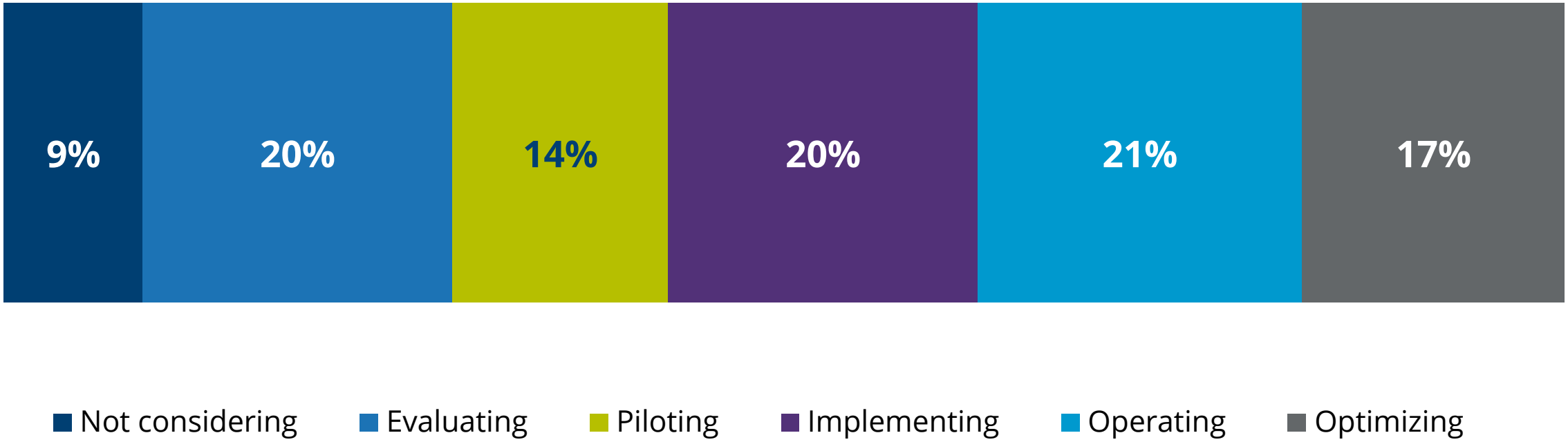
SEARCH AND DISCOVERY

Search and discovery tools have been around for several years now and continue to remain a priority for KM. A majority of respondents are currently implementing, or already operating and optimizing their search and discovery solutions. Just over one-third are piloting or evaluating solutions with the smallest amount not considering any search and discovery tools within their organizations.

Extent to which organizations are deploying search and discovery tools to enable KM approaches.
(e.g., knowledge sharing, communities and networks, content management, lessons learned, etc.).



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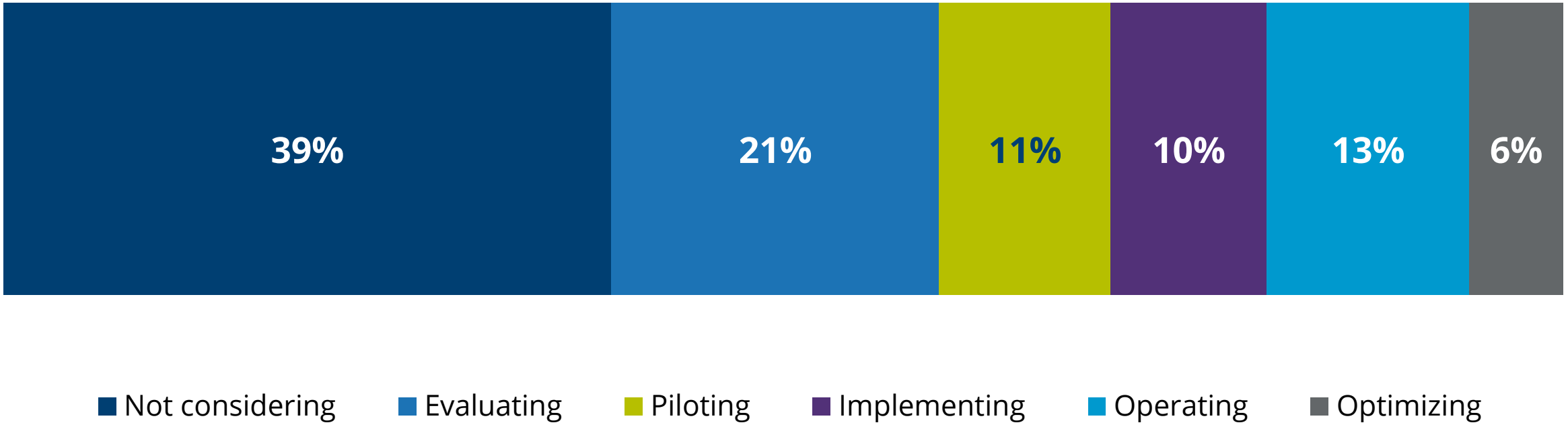
ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA)

Automating routine tasks using advanced technology continues to trend in most organizations. A majority of respondents continue to report they are not considering RPA as part of their digital strategy yet. Around one-third are implementing, operationalizing or optimizing RPA, while another one-third are evaluating or piloting.

Extent organizations have deployed robotic process automation (RPA) for KM processes.



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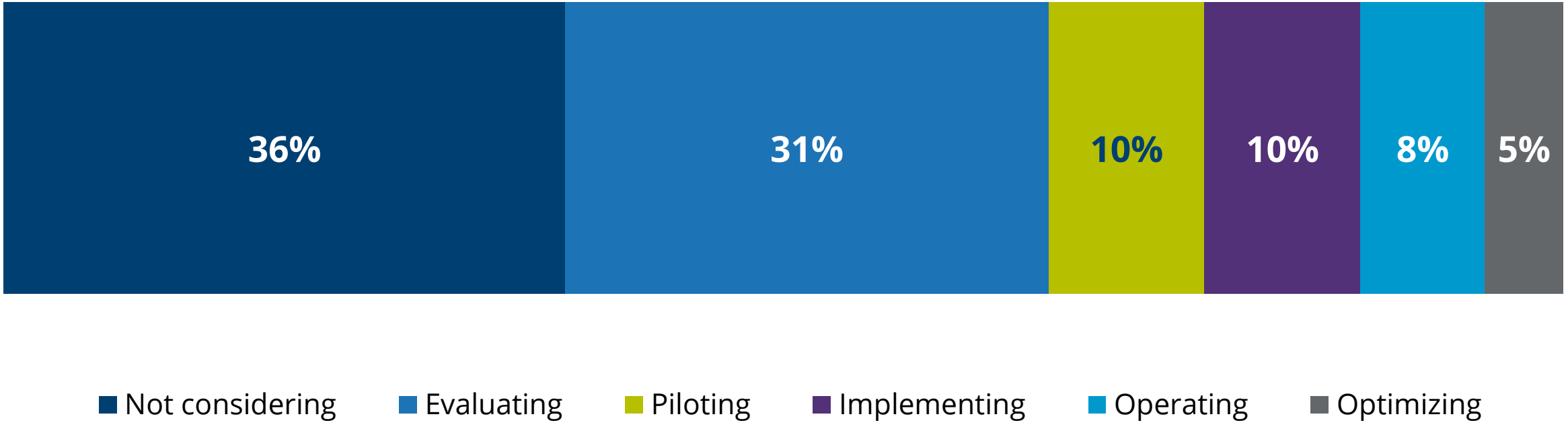
KNOWLEDGE GRAPHS

Knowledge graphs are beginning to gain momentum within some organizations. Almost one-quarter of respondents are implementing, operationalizing or optimizing the use of knowledge graphs. With almost half either evaluating or piloting, over one-third still continue to report they are not considering knowledge graphs as part of their digital strategy yet.

Extent organizations have deployed knowledge graphs.

A graph that represents a network of entities (e.g., terms, concepts, topics, people, content items) and illustrates the relationships between them, typically through machine learning and/or natural language processing



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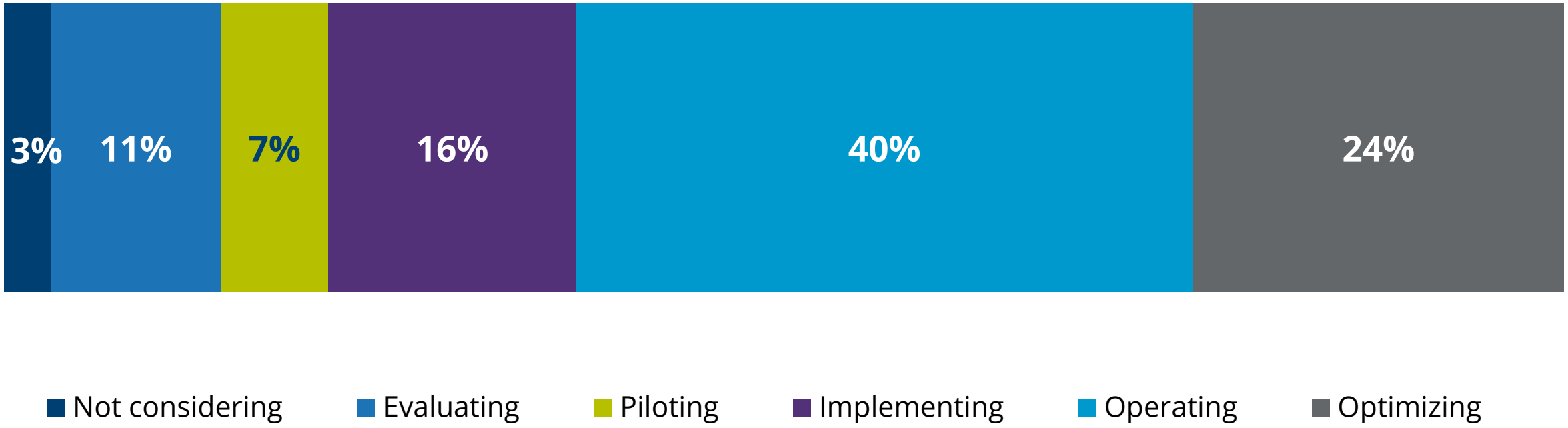
TEAM COLLABORATION/DIGITAL WORKPLACE APPS

A majority of respondents are currently operationalizing and optimizing their virtual collaboration and digital workplace app solutions. While over on-third are in the process of implementing, piloting or evaluating solutions. With flexible, remote and hybrid work arrangements present in most organizations, very few are not considering the use of virtual collaboration or cloud-based solutions to some extent.

Extent to which organizations are deploying team collaboration/digital workplace apps such as MS365 for KM approaches.
(e.g., knowledge sharing, communities and networks, content management, lessons learned, etc.)



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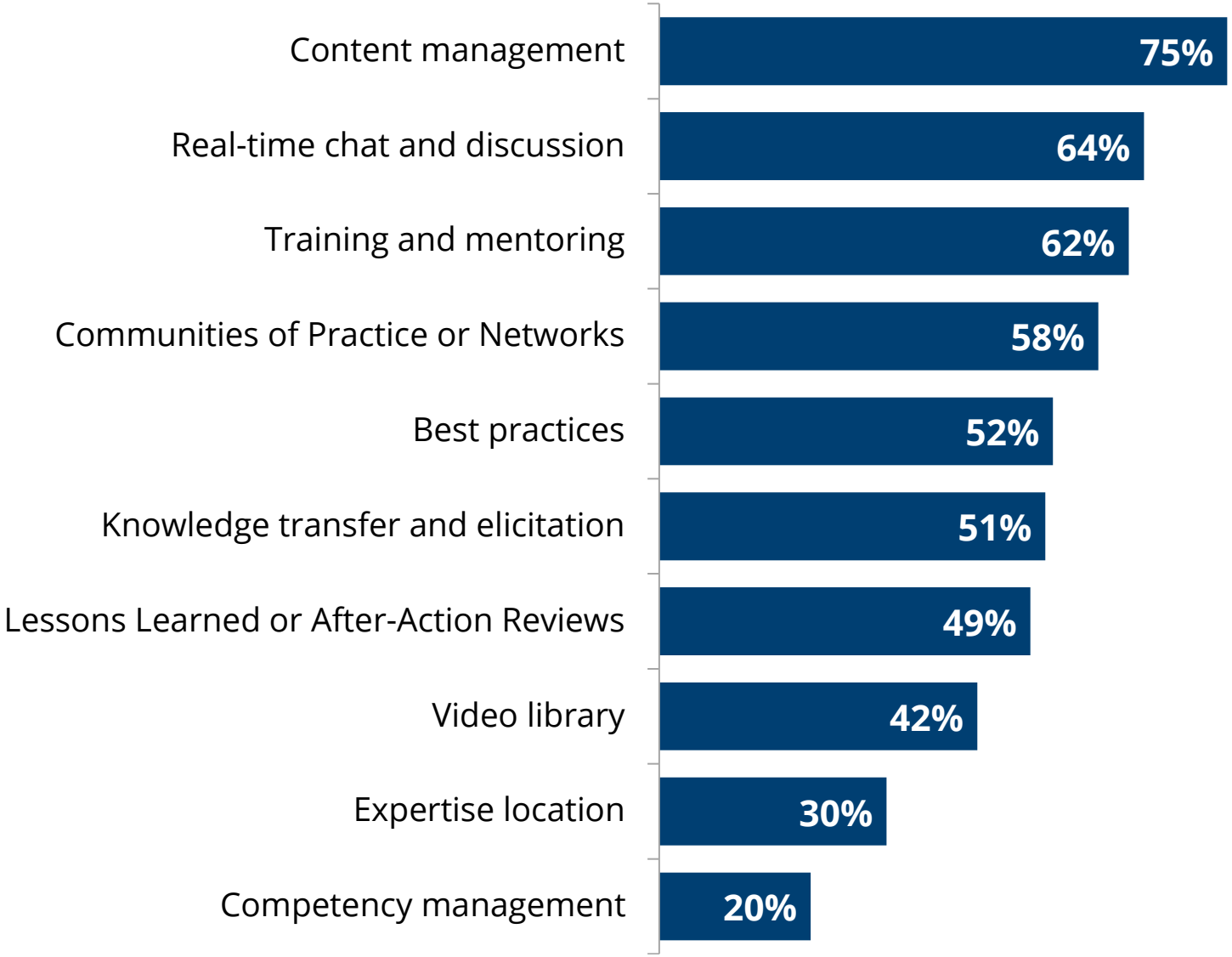
TEAM COLLABORATION/DIGITAL WORKPLACE APPS

Extent to which KM approaches are currently enabled with an organization's team collaboration / digital workplace apps.



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A large majority of respondents are leveraging team collaboration and digital workplace apps for KM solutions like content management, real-time chat, training and communities of practice.

The ongoing capabilities of workplace apps continues to enable critical KM capabilities like the sharing of best practices and conducting lessons learned virtually; along with the ability to access experts and upskill employees more efficiently and effectively.

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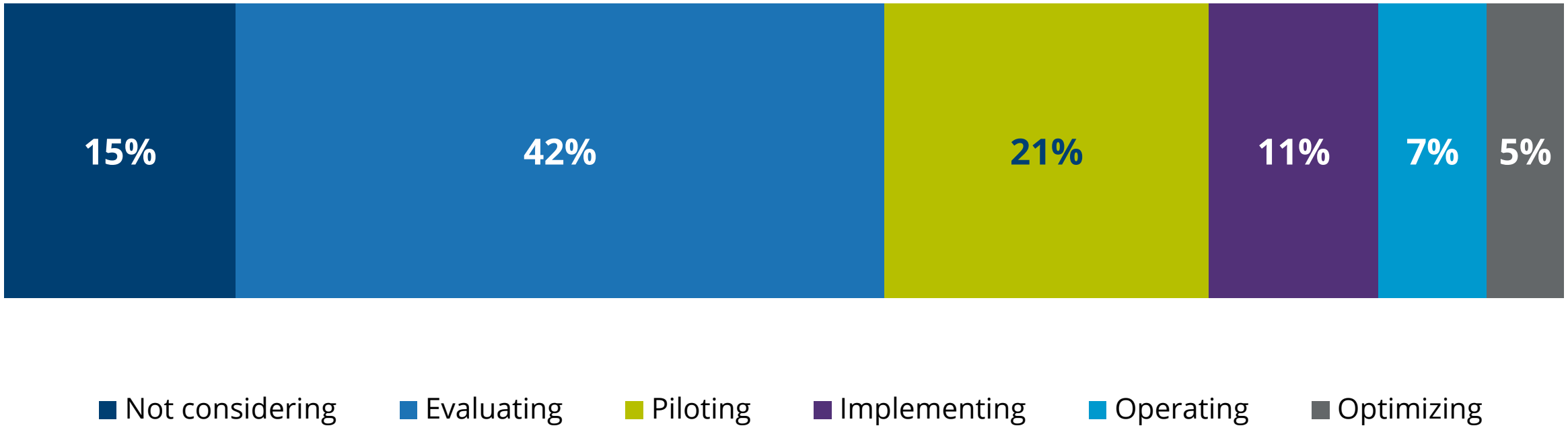
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DEPLOYMENT

One of the fastest growing technologies in organizations continues to be artificial intelligence (AI). A majority of respondents report that they are either evaluating or piloting these advanced capabilities. Almost one-quarter are now implementing, operationalizing and even optimizing AI or generative AI capabilities and tools to enable KM within their organizations.

Extent organizations have deployed AI/generative AI capabilities and tools to enable KM.



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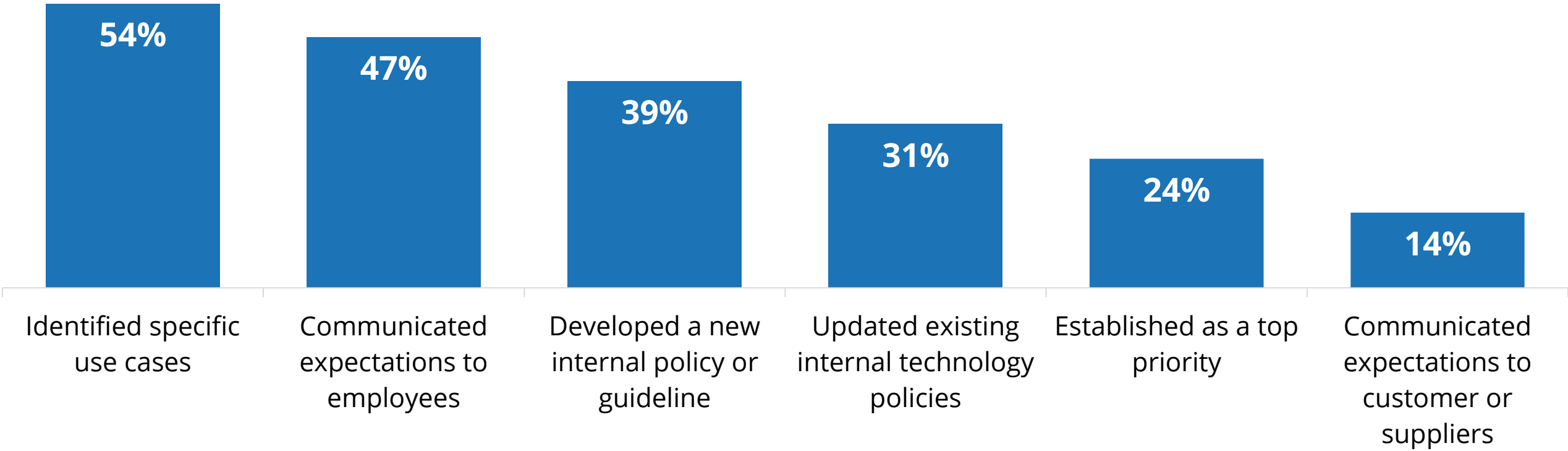
INTERNAL USE OF GENERATIVE AI

Because AI is one of the fastest growing technologies in organizations, one-third of respondents report they have updated existing internal technology policies and over a third have developed a new policy or guideline to address employee use. Almost half have communicated expectations on internal use of AI or Generative AI tools to employees and over half have identified specific use cases for consideration.

How organizations address the internal use (policies, practices, business rules) of generative AI technologies.



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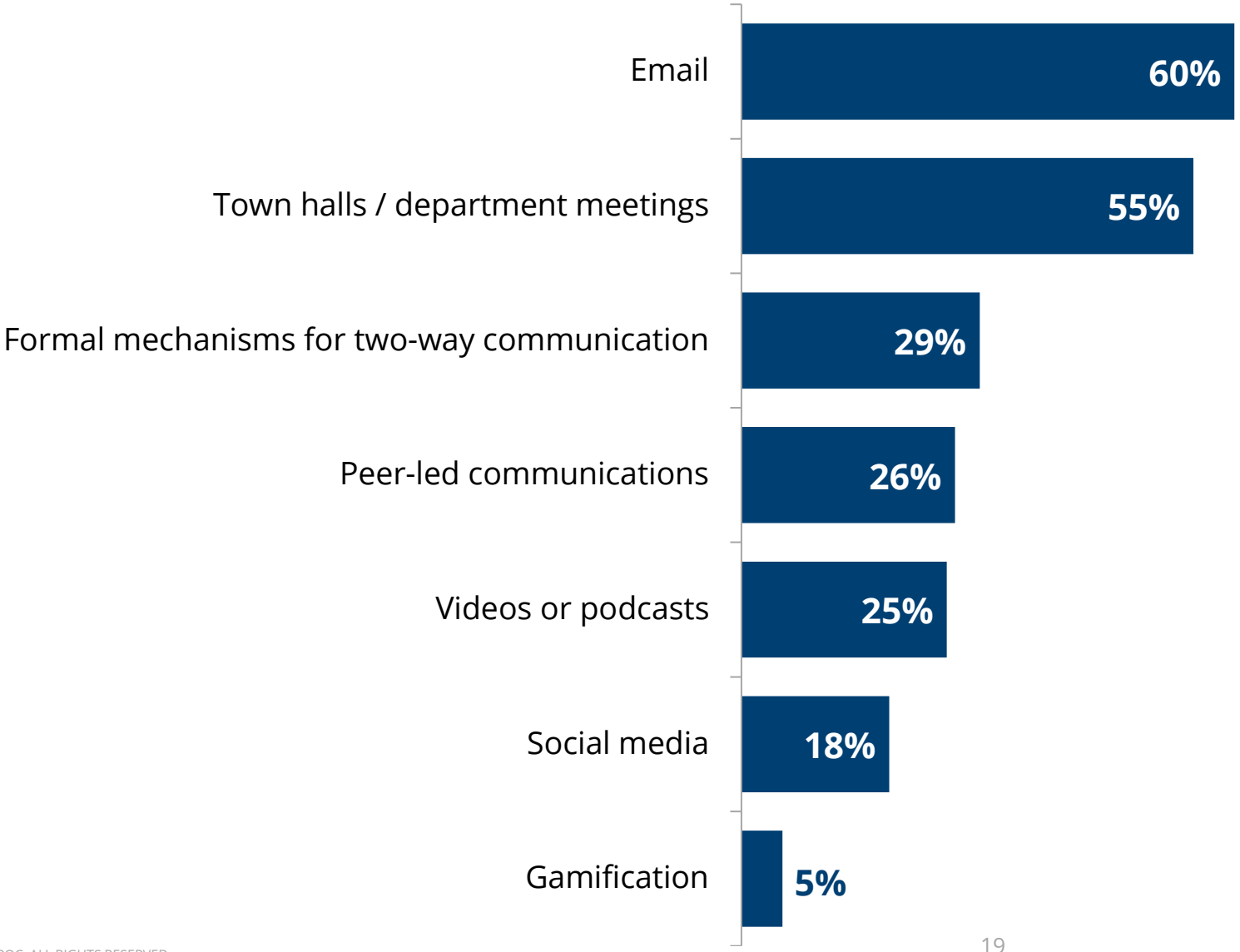
COMMUNICATION METHODS FOR TECHNOLOGY

How organizations communicate expected norms and processes to employees for emerging technologies like AI/generative AI for KM.



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Organizations are communicating expectations on the internal use of AI or Generative AI tools to employees, and a majority report leveraging existing communication capabilities such as email and town halls or department meetings as the key method of delivery.

About one-quarter of respondents use other formal mechanisms, such as two-way communications, videos, and social media.

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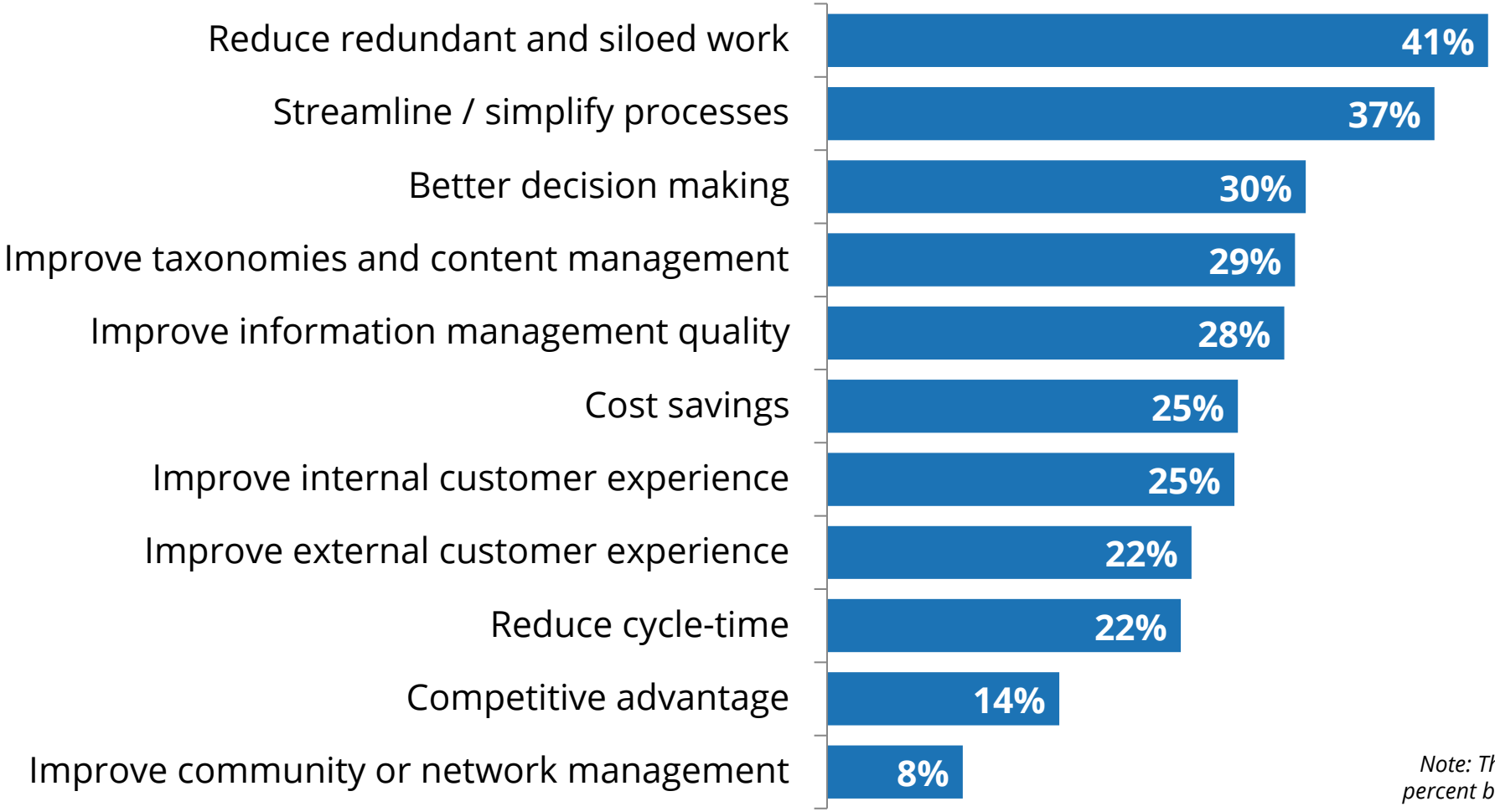
EXPECTED BENEFITS OF AI DEPLOYMENT

Over a third of respondents list reducing redundant and siloed work and streamlining or simplifying processes as the top benefits expected from deploying AI solutions. Almost one-third believe AI will provide better decision making, improve taxonomies and content management and improve the quality of information management overall.

Expected benefits of the deployment of AI/generative AI for KM within organizations.



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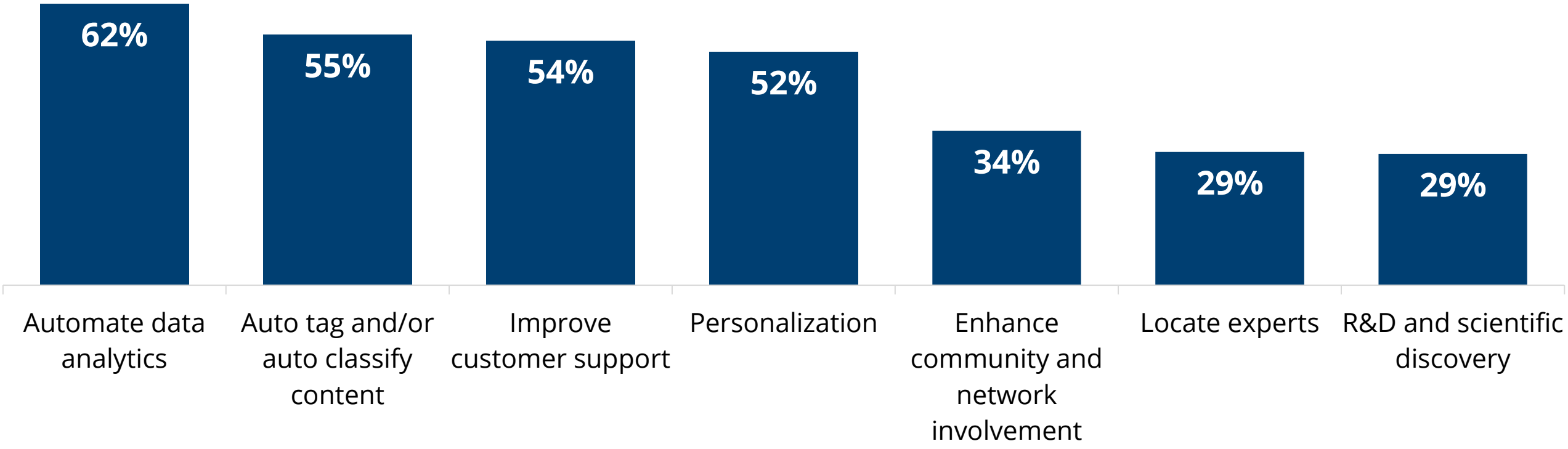
POTENTIAL USE CASES FOR AI

A large majority of respondents report that data analytics automation is the top use case for leveraging AI. Just over half report auto tagging or auto classification of content, improving customer support, and personalizing content as potential use cases for AI.

Potential KM use cases being considered for the application of AI (not including generative AI) within organizations.



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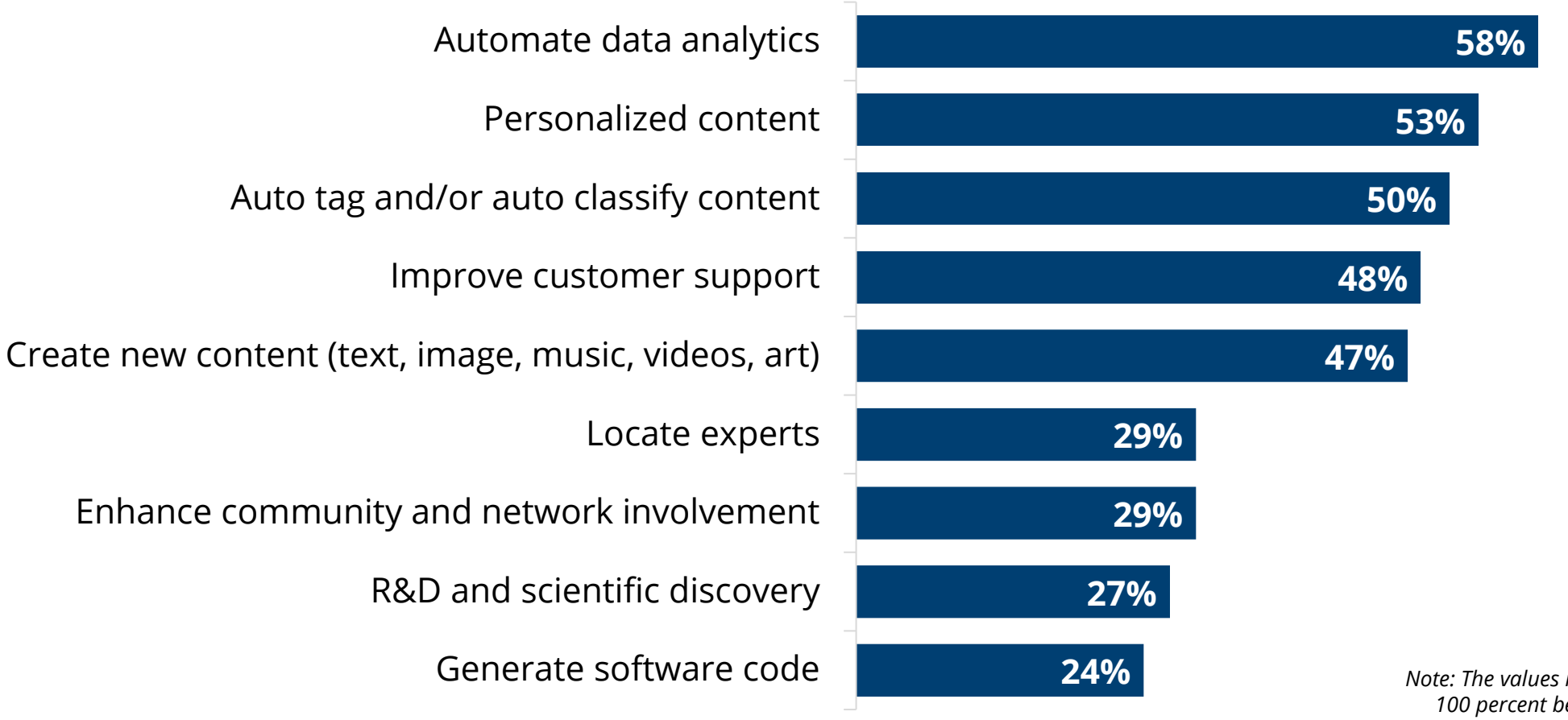
POTENTIAL USE CASES FOR GENERATIVE AI

Not surprisingly, a large majority of respondents also report that data analytics automation is the top use case for leveraging generative AI. Around half also report personalized content, auto tagging or auto classification of content, and improving customer support as their potential use cases. However, for generative AI, almost half report the creation of new content as an important use case, something only generative AI can do.

Potential KM use cases organizations are considering for the application of generative AI ONLY within organizations.



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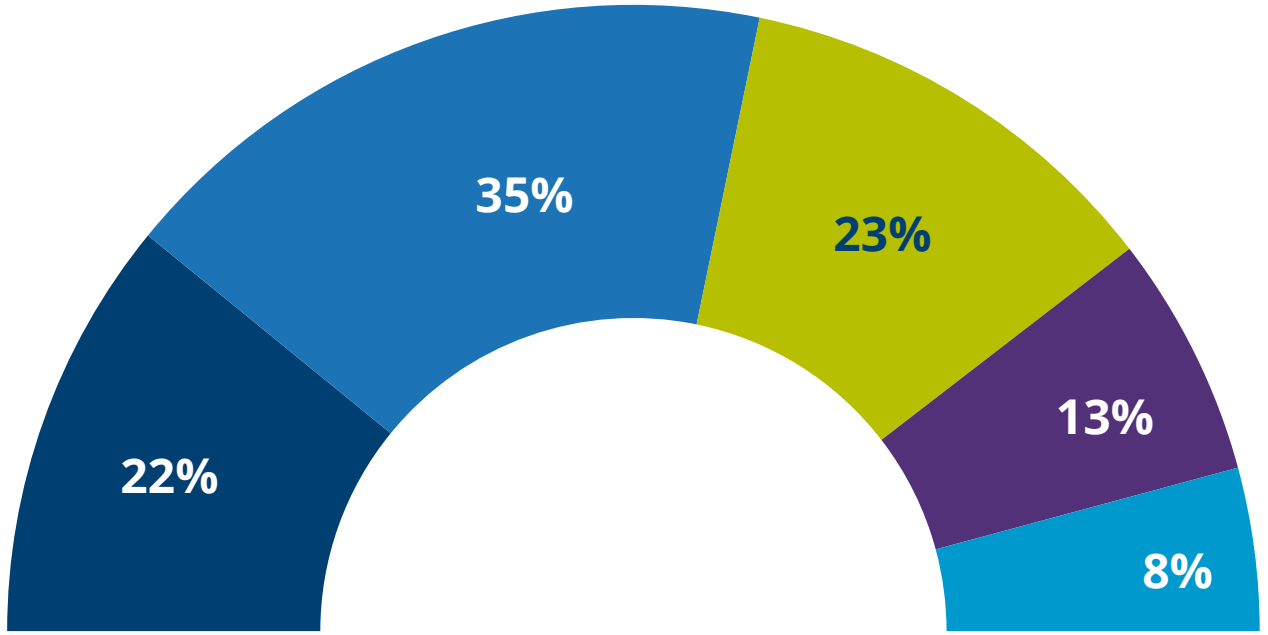
AI INVESTMENT FOR KM RIGHT NOW

Less than one-quarter of respondents report their organizations are very invested or extremely invested in AI for KM, along with almost one-quarter moderately invested. Over one-third are slightly invested and just under one-quarter are not at all invested in AI for KM right now.

Expected current level of investment in AI/generative AI for KM.



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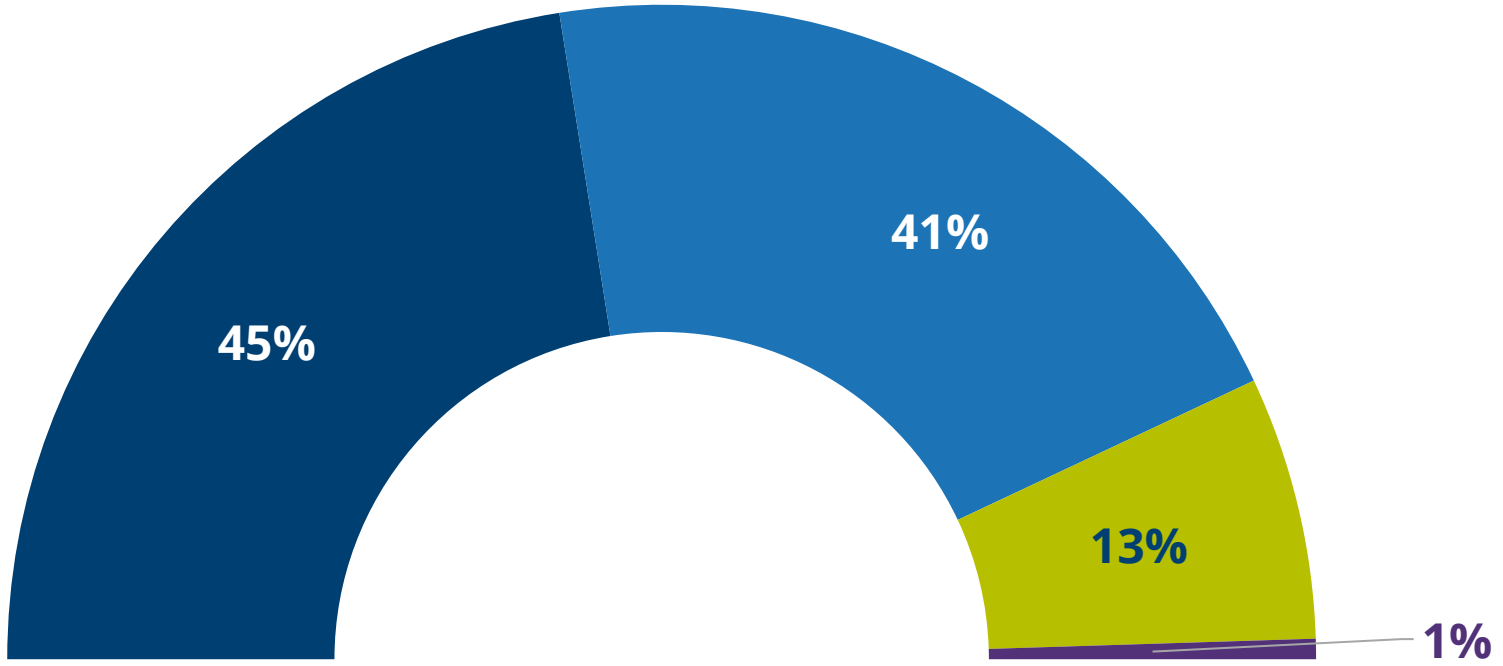
EXPECTED CHANGE IN AI INVESTMENT FOR KM

A large majority of respondents believe their organization's investment in AI will increase either a little or a lot over the next 12-18 months. A small percentage believe the investment will not change, and almost no one is expecting a decrease in investment. Due to the rapid development and capabilities of many new AI technologies, investment in AI will likely continue for the foreseeable future.

Extent to which organizations expect their investment in AI/generative AI to change over the near term (12-18 months).



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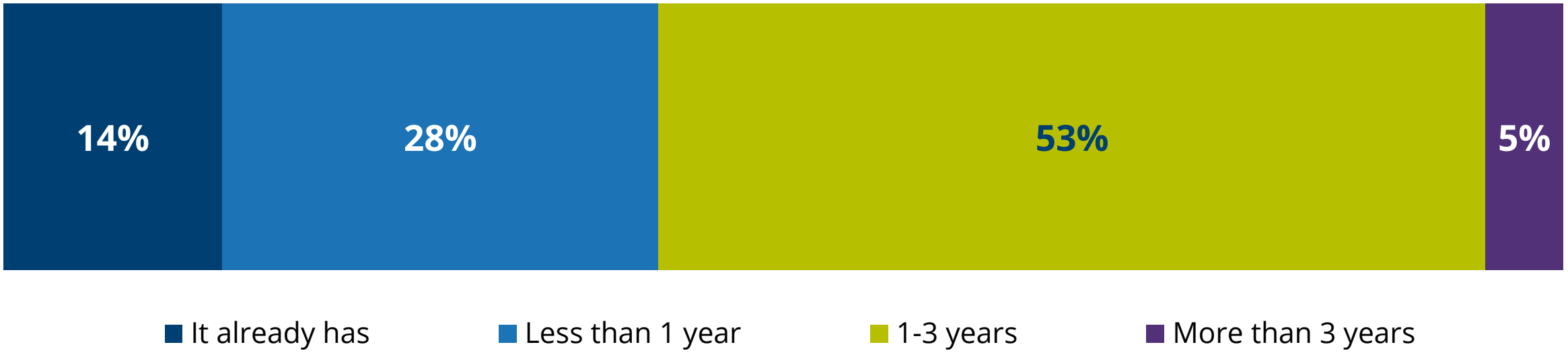
TIME TO EXPECTED AI/GENERATIVE AI BENEFIT

A majority of respondents report one to three years before seeing a benefit from their AI or generative AI solution deployments. Just over one-quarter believe it will be less than one year, and some already report tangible benefits. A small number of respondents still believe it will be more than five years before they are able to capitalize on benefits from AI or generative AI solutions in their organizations.

When organizations expect AI/generative AI to begin delivering tangible benefits for KM.



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TOP DRIVERS & BARRIERS

DRIVERS FOR KM TECHNOLOGY

Over one-third of respondents believe the top driver for technology to enable KM is to improve knowledge sharing and collaboration. At least one-third report improved productivity and efficiencies and better access to content and information as key drivers. These continue to be common drivers for most KM programs and capabilities within organizations, and technology is likely to remain a critical enabler to success.

Top drivers for leveraging a technology strategy for KM within organizations.

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BARRIERS TO KM TECHNOLOGY

Over one-third of respondents are competing with other changes in their organization, while almost one-third believe a lack of documented or standard processes and the cost of implementation could impede necessary technology implementations. At least one-quarter report the lack of strategy, security and governance concerns, employee resistance and integration challenges as barriers to leveraging technology for KM.

Top barriers for leveraging a technology strategy for KM within organizations.

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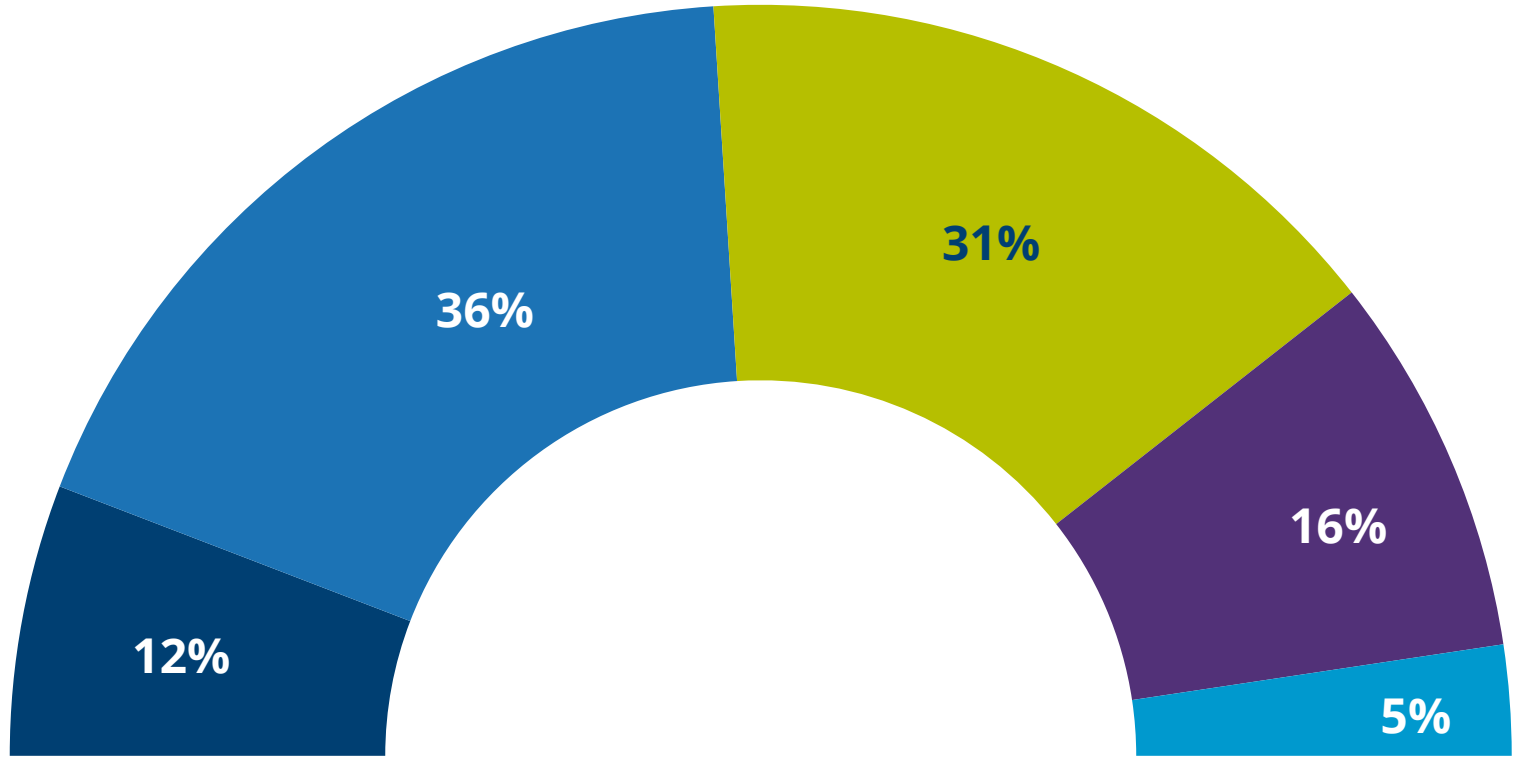
CHANGE MANAGEMENT FOR TECHNOLOGY

CHANGE MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT

Less than one-quarter of respondents are either very invested or extremely invested in change management within their organizations. About one-third are moderately invested, while almost half are only slightly or not at all invested. Improving change capabilities and skillsets remains a priority focus area for KM teams so it is likely this investment will continue to increase over time.

Extent organizations invest in change management practices and skillsets to support technology implementation for KM.



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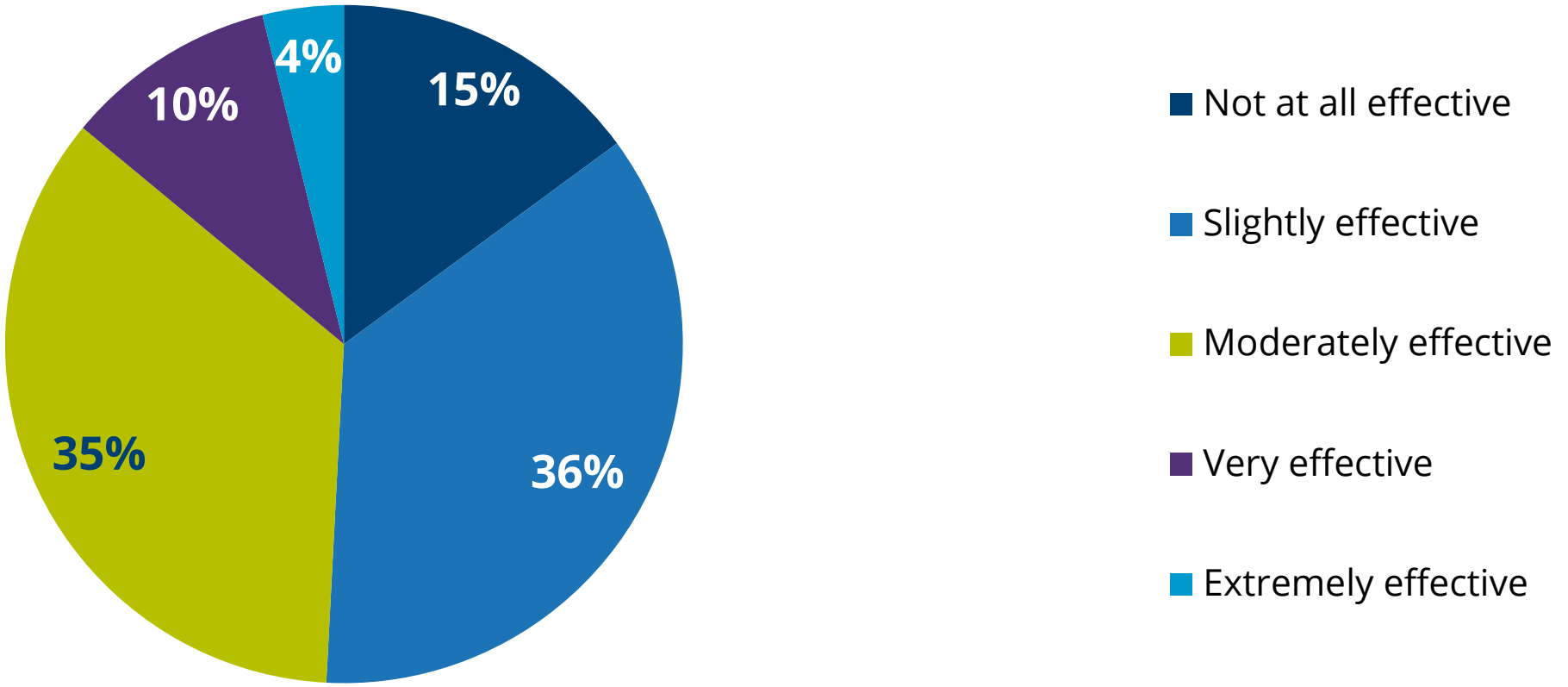
CHANGE MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

A majority of respondents believe change management is not at all effective or only slightly effective within their organizations. More than one-third believe they are moderately effective while only a small percentage report they are either very or extremely effective. Improving change capabilities and skillsets remains a priority focus area for KM teams so it is likely the effectiveness will increase over time.

Effectiveness of current change management practices within organizations in helping to achieve successful technology implementations for KM.



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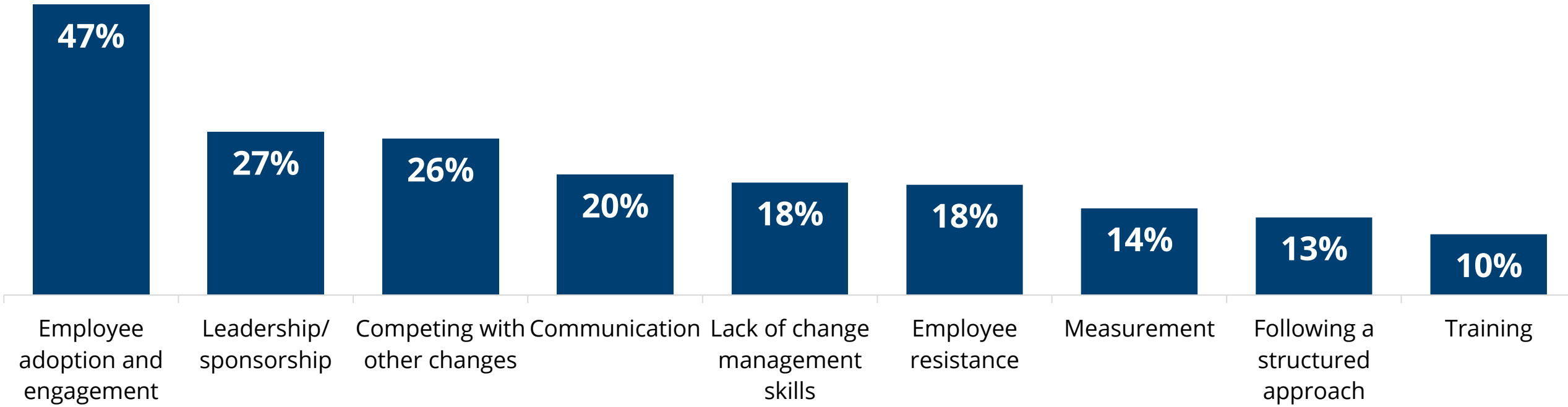
BARRIERS TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT

A majority of respondents report employee adoption and engagement as the top barrier to change within their organizations. Just over one-quarter believe leadership and competing with other changes are the next top barriers. And less than one-quarter report communication, lack of change management skills, employee resistance, measurement, following a structured approach and training as additional barriers.

Areas of change management organizations most struggle with when implementing technology for KM.



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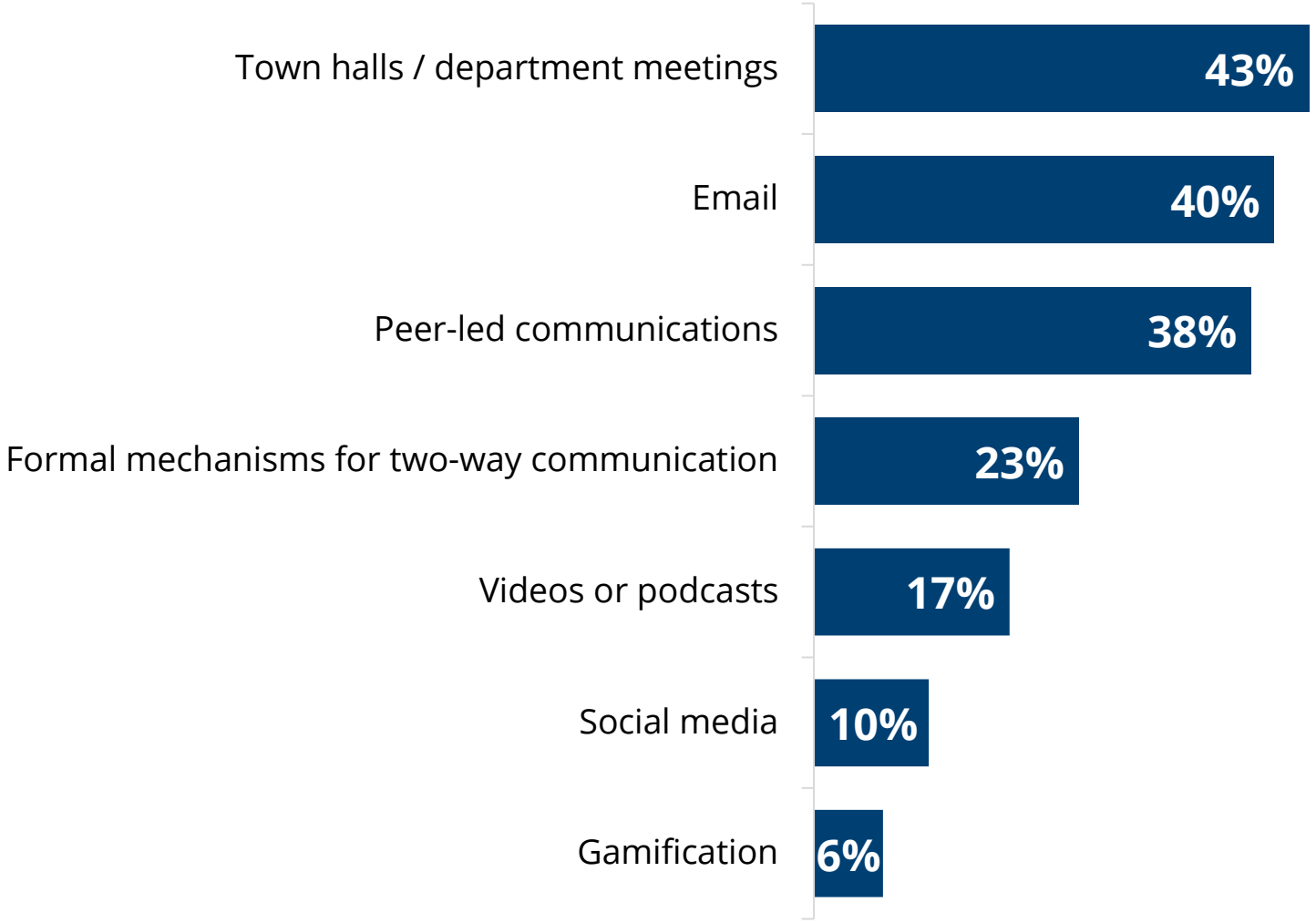
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION METHODS

Consistently, when asked about communication methods, KM practitioners report town halls and department meetings as the top, most effective method of communication within organizations.

Closely following with over one-third of respondents reporting are email and peer-led communications. While less utilized, other effective communication channels include videos, social media, and gamification.

Note: The values in the graph displayed do not add up to 100 percent because it was a "select top two" question.

Communication methods most effective within organizations when implementing technology changes for KM.



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LEADERSHIP / SPONSORSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Almost half of respondents believe supporting the change with time, budget and resources as the top area of improvement for leaders and sponsors of change. Almost one-third report leading by example, while about one-quarter believe measuring change effectiveness, communicating effectively and rewarding and recognizing the desired behavior as areas of opportunity.

Areas of improvement for leadership / sponsorship when managing technology changes for KM within organization.

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PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Top 10 Industries	
Services/Legal/Professional	11%
Financial Services/Banking	9%
Government/Military	8%
Software/Tech	7%
Consumer Products/Packaged Goods	6%
Pharmaceutical	6%
Retail and Wholesale	6%
Healthcare	5%
Automotive	5%
Insurance	4%

Other industries also included: Telecom, Mining, Industrial Products, Petroleum/Chemical, Aerospace, Utility, Education, Construction, Non-Profit, Agriculture, Rental, Waste Management/Environmental, and Research Organization.

Role	
Head of Business (Chairman, CEO, President)	2%
VP/Senior Executive (CFO, CIO,CKP)	12%
Director/Senior Manager	37%
Manager	21%
Project Manager/Specialist/Analyst	22%
Educator	2%
Consultant	3%
Student/Intern	1%

FTE's	
Fewer than 100	4%
100-999	12%
1,000-9,999	36%
10,000-49,999	32%
50,000-99,999	9%
100,000 or more	7%

Region	
Americas (North, Central, South, & Canada)	49%
EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa)	27%
APAC (Asia Pacific)	24%

Revenue	
Less than $100 million USD	9%
$100 million to less than $500 million USD	10%
$500 million to less than $1 billion USD	17%
$1 billion to less than $5 billion USD	24%
$5 billion to less than $10 billion USD	14%
$10 billion to less than $20 billion USD	15%
$20 billion or greater USD	11%

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