kolsquare

3rd Annual Edition

THE FUTURE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

The 2026/2027 Outlook

1.100+ industry professionals reveal the state of play

THE FUTURE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

The 2026/2027 Outlook

INTRODUCTION

Now in its third year, Kolsquare's annual survey of the influencer marketing industry finds a channel scaling with real conviction. Values and ethics are now embedded in the process, from creator selection to execution. Specialist influencer marketing roles are becoming the norm, as brands use tech to scale influence and integrate it more deeply into the marketing mix.

Nearly nine in ten brands and agencies (89%) expect to raise their spend over the next 12 months, up from 75% a year ago, and 85% grew the number of creators they work with over the past year. The share working with 100 or more influencers has doubled since 2024, and budgets that once topped out in the tens of thousands now routinely run into the hundreds, with a median of €367.000 at companies with 1.000 or more employees. Money and ambition are moving in the same direction, and fast.

As strategies scale, so do the standards attached to them. Brands are asking more of creators, moving beyond baseline compliance toward values, with demands to stand up against bullying, disclose the use of filters and raise environmental awareness all climbing. In the markets where such schemes exist, nearly three in ten now expect creators to hold a 'Responsible Influence' certificate or complete formal training, a bar that barely existed a few years ago. This is the move towards Responsible Influence that Kolsquare has always championed as a Certified B Corp, and it is fast becoming a condition of partnership rather than an afterthought.

> "Brands' vigilance also reflects a deeper shift: they know their responsibility does not end when a partnership is signed. For sensitive products, protecting the public and preserving the creator's credibility must come first."

Carine Fernandez, Founder & CEO influencer marketing Agency Point d'Orgue, President UMICC.

Meanwhile, Influence is earning a more serious seat at the table. Four in five brands now treat it as a core growth driver or an important supporting channel, yet just one in ten describe their approach as fully integrated across the marketing mix, a sign that investment is still outrunning maturity. It is being woven into everyday marketing through organic and sponsored content rather than being saved for set-piece moments.

Measurement is following the money towards business outcomes, with sales and the return on influencer campaigns (ROI) now among the metrics marketers rely on most, even as confidence in measuring them lags.

> "Investment is advancing faster than vision, because it remains hard to connect individual influencer activations to broad, cross-cutting objectives: affiliation and conversion, awareness, consideration. Until influence is built into a full-funnel logic, with objectives and measurement aligned with the rest of the marketing mix, strategic maturity will keep running behind budgets."

Fanie Genovese, Head of Social Media, digital marketing agency **Better&Stronger**

Underpinning all of it is a technology layer that has moved from the edge to the core. Some 84% of organisations now use AI or automation in their influencer work, most often to analyse audiences, detect fraud and sharpen targeting, and dedicated platform use has jumped to 65% from 39% a year ago. The operational scaffolding of the channel is being rebuilt in real time.

The industry has crossed a threshold. It has moved from experiment to infrastructure, from awareness to accountability, and from gut feel to measured performance. Growth alone is no longer the story. The brands that pull ahead in 2026 and beyond will be those that pair it with maturity: sharper measurement, deeper creator relationships and a real commitment to Responsible Influence. That is the future of influencer marketing, and the standard Kolsquare is working with the industry to set.

The Kolsquare Team

METHODOLOGY

The 2026 edition, The Future of Influencer Marketing, is based on a quantitative online survey of 1.123 marketing decision-makers at brands and agencies across seven European markets: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, the Nordics and Benelux. It is the largest sample in the study's history, up from 613 respondents in 2025 and 373 in 2024, providing a robust basis for the year-on-year comparisons that run through this report.

Respondents are senior marketers. Roughly seven in 10 hold director-level roles or above, including CMOs, heads of influencer marketing, PR directors and social media leads, and 96% either make the final decision on influencer strategy, budgets and partner selection or provide direct input. Participants represent medium and large organisations across a wide range of sectors, from marketing and advertising to retail, technology, fashion, beauty, finance and food and beverage. Two-thirds work at companies with more than 100 employees.

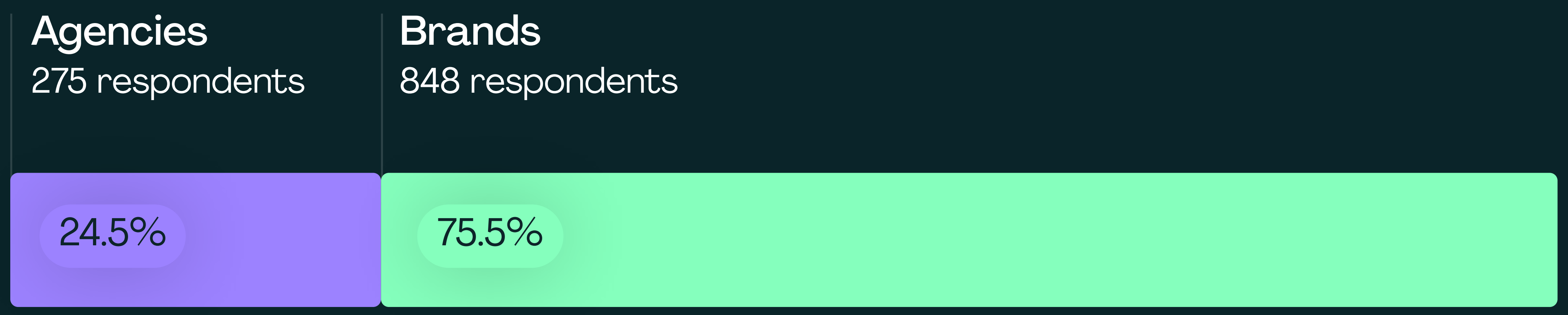
The 2026 survey was conducted by B2B International, with fieldwork carried out in May and June 2026. The two prior waves were run by NewtonX. The 2024 edition covered five markets and surveyed brands only. The 2025 edition expanded to seven markets and added agencies. Because the research partner and sample changed across waves, year-on-year figures are reported only where the base is robust.

Results are shown unweighted. Significance testing uses a False Discovery Rate correction at $p = 0.05$. Base sizes vary by question because some questions were asked only of relevant sub-groups.

12 COUNTRIES, 1.123 RESPONDENTS

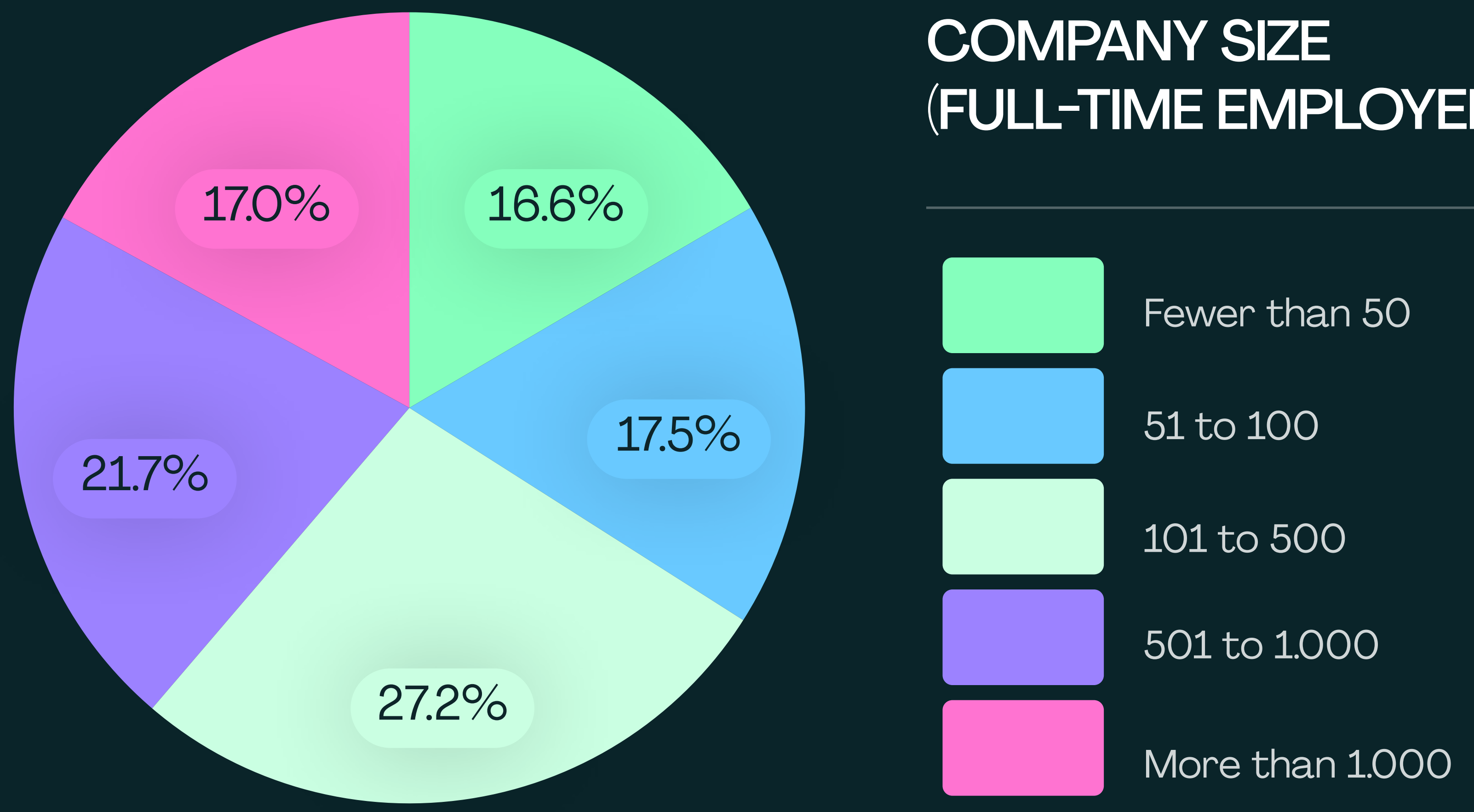
METHODOLOGY

RESPONDENT PROFILE — BRANDS AND AGENCIES

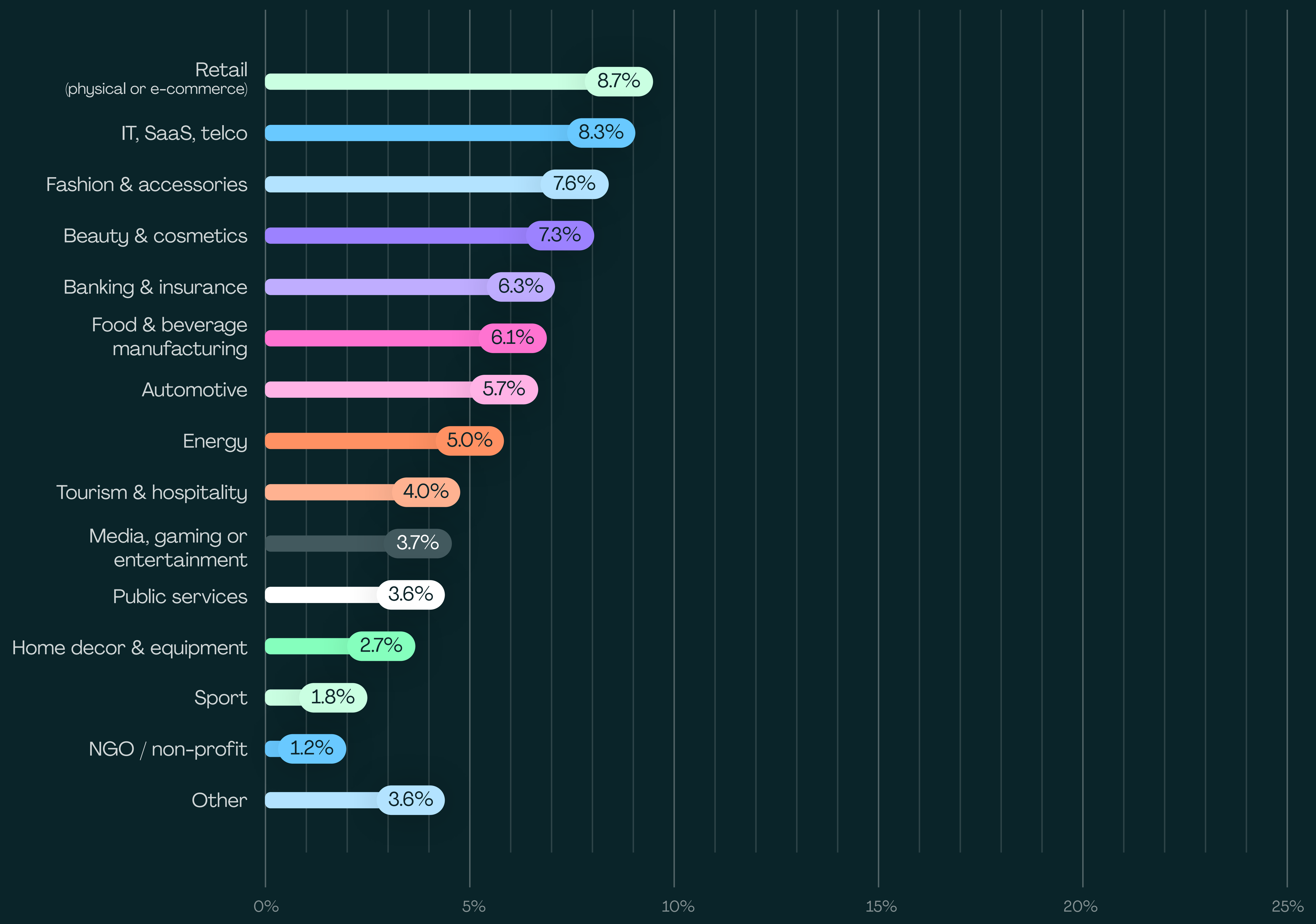


RESPONDENT PROFILE — BY COMPANY SIZE

COMPANY SIZE
(FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES)

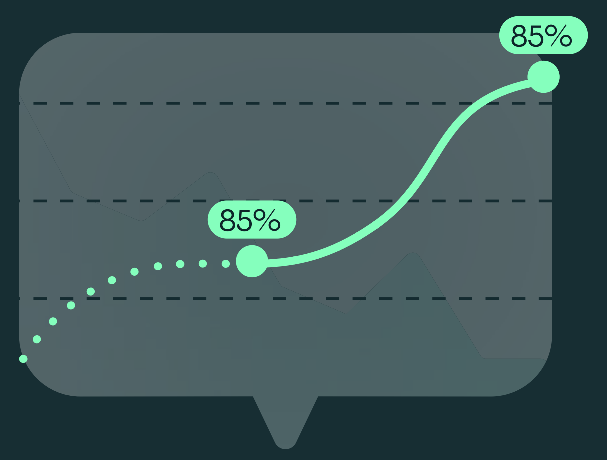


BRAND RESPONDENTS BY SECTOR



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Managing Influencer Marketing



Growth is near-universal: 85% of brands and agencies grew the number of influencers they work with over the past year, and 85% expect to grow it again in the year ahead.

Rosters are scaling up: the share of marketers working with 100 or more influencers has doubled since 2024, from 18% to 37%, while the share working with fewer than 50 has fallen from 65% to 44%.

77%

of brands run influencer marketing in-house

most often with agency support, while full outsourcing jumped to 23%.

Budgets

Budget growth is accelerating, with

89%

of brands and agencies expecting to increase their influencer marketing spend over the next 12 months, up from 75% in 2025 and 54% in 2024.

>1/4

Earning its place on the P&L: influencer marketing already drives more than a quarter (28.6%) of marketing-driven revenue for 29% of brands, and 11% or more of it for 68% of brands.

Spend is scaling up, with 60% of organisations now investing more than €100.000 a year in influencer marketing and 36% more than €200.000. The share spending under €50.000 has fallen to 16%, from 24% in 2025.

Enterprise budgets run deep: median influencer marketing spend reaches

€312K

at companies with 500 or more employees

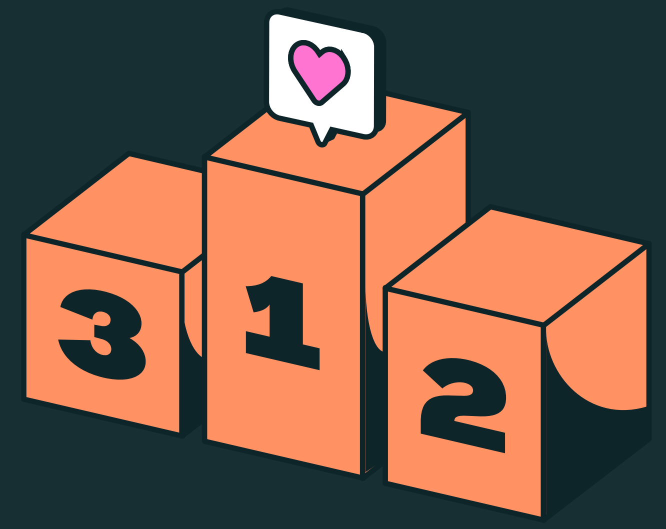
€367K

at companies with 1.000 employees or more.

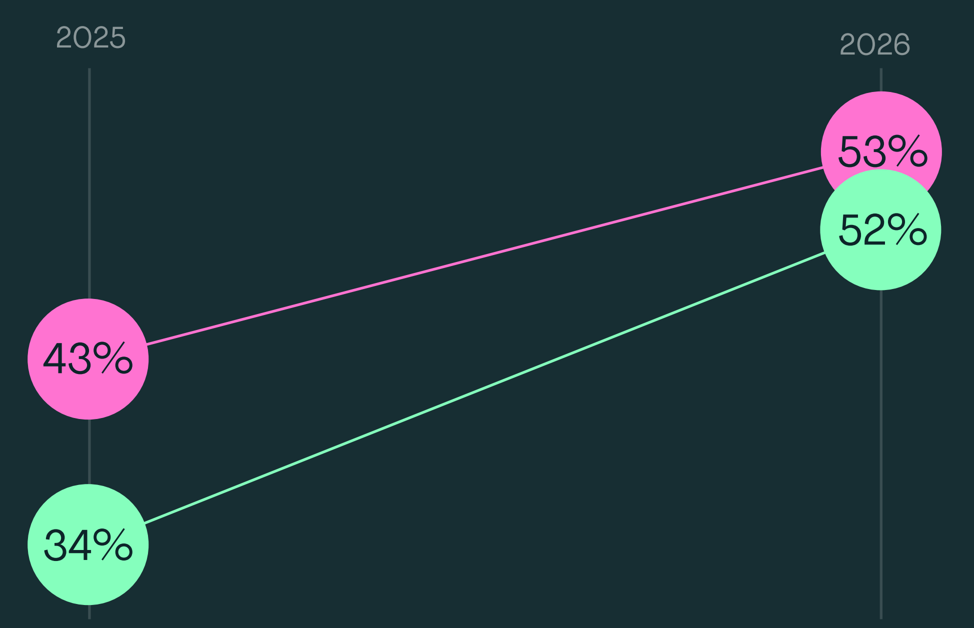
Appetite continues to build for activations that led last year. Paid media to boost influencer content (63% investing more, up from 57% in 2025) and long-term partnerships (59%, up from 54%) remain the top areas for increased budget, ahead of UGC (53%, up from 51%).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Strategy

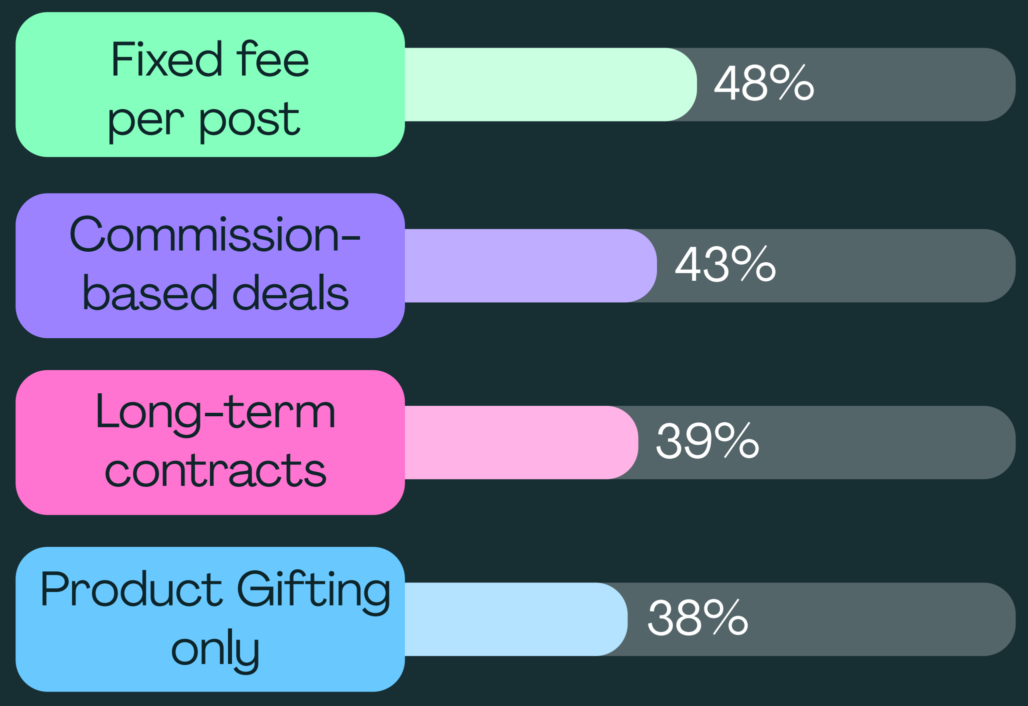


Influence is now embedded: 79% of brands treat it as a core growth driver or an important supporting channel, and only 3% still call it experimental.



Organic influencer campaigns and sponsored content are the main routes brands use to weave influencer marketing into everyday content.

Hybrid payment models are increasingly common, and no single model dominates.



Channels and KPIs

37%

Engagement rate is still the KPI marketers rely on most, at 37%, and has topped the list in all three waves of the study. Views rank second at 34%.

Use of TikTok for influencer marketing declined 12 points to 67%, as marketers diversify and experiment with new channels. Instagram use is still near-universal at 91%.

30% campaign ROI

33% promo codes & affiliate links

30% website visits

Outcome metrics now feature prominently among the most-relied-on KPIs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

AI and Tech

84%

of brands and agencies use AI or automation in influencer marketing

Use of dedicated influencer marketing platforms has surged to 65%, up from 39% in 2025.

Challenges and Opportunities

The values-led conditions brands place on creators are rising fast: requiring them to stand up against bullying (up nine points to 34%), raise environmental awareness (up to 30% from 17%) and disclose their use of filters (up to 24% from 15%).

3/10

Nearly three in ten marketers (29%) now require creators to hold a **'Responsible Influence'** certificate or complete training where such schemes exist.

The top challenges nominated by marketers are near-evenly matched. Striking the right balance between influencer freedom and brand control (29.5%) and rising costs (29.4%) lead, just ahead of platform algorithm changes (27%) and measuring campaign ROI (27%).

Social commerce is climbing the opportunity list, cited by 34%, up from 28% in 2025, alongside steady demand for authentic, values-driven creator content (36%).

UNITED KINGDOM

THE COMMERCIAL ACCELERATOR

The most commercially minded market: influencer marketing is a core growth driver, measured hard on ROI and scaled through agencies.

A core growth driver.

UK brands are the most convinced in Europe that influencer marketing drives growth. 38% call it a core growth driver, ahead of every other market and the 31% European average. And where most markets default to seeing it as a supporting channel, the UK is the least likely to: 37%, versus 48% Europe-wide. It earns its keep, too: half of UK brands say influencer marketing drives 11 to 25% of their marketing-driven revenue, 11 points above the European market average, and 11% credit it with driving more than half of their marketing revenue.

Measured hard on performance.

Measurement is unashamedly commercial. UK marketers lean on metrics like campaign ROI (38% against a European average of 30%), conversions and lead generation, and website visits more than most, and on softer signals such as sentiment far less. Influencer selection runs on the same logic, led by engagement rate (48% against 38%) rather than content quality.

Scaled through agencies.

To scale, the UK reaches outside. It is among the most agency-reliant markets, with 30% fully outsourcing influencer marketing compared to the European average of 23% and another 29% pairing an in-house team with agency support against 25%. Influencer rosters run large, with one in five marketers working with 250 to 999 influencers a year (20% against 15%), spanning every tier from nano to macro.

Bullish, and built on standards.

Confidence is high and climbing. Nearly a third of UK brands expect to grow their influencer roster sharply in the year ahead (31% against a European average of 22%), and short-form video leads their opportunity list (55% against 49%). Standards carry weight as well: the UK is among the most demanding on clear disclosure of sponsored content (49% against 41%) and compliance with advertising rules (52% against 48%).

"The biggest shift needs to be from awareness-first thinking to commerce-first thinking. As attribution improves, influencer marketing will move from being viewed as a media channel to becoming a genuine revenue channel."

Jamie Love, CEO & Founder, Monumental Marketing

1 MEET THE INFLUENCER MARKETERS

FRANCE

THE PRINCIPLED PRAGMATIST

France asks a lot of its creators and keeps a tight grip on spend: principled, methodical and organic-first.

Ethics sets the bar.

France draws Europe's firmest lines around creator conduct. More than half of French brands, 52%, will not work with influencers who promote sensitive or controversial products, nine points above the European average. Compliance with content transparency rules is another line they draw, at 50% against a European average of 48%, and more than a third want creators who visibly stand up against bullying and discrimination.

A distinctive scorecard.

France keeps its own counsel on measurement, reading success differently from its neighbours. French marketers lean hard on impressions (38% against a European average of 28%) and earned media value (24% against 15%) while all but ignoring reach (15% against 27%).

Organic over sponsored.

When French brands activate creators, they favour the feed over the ad break. Organic influencer campaigns (58%) edge out sponsored content (42%), a reversal of the European pattern, and homemade UGC shows up more often too, at 28% against a European average of 21%. The instinct is for content that looks native.

Measured growth, cost in focus.

A quarter of its brands still call their strategies very early stage, at 25% against a European average of 16%, the mark of a market formalising carefully rather than fast. When budgets rise, they climb in measured 20-to-49% steps rather than big leaps. Cost is the nagging worry, cited by 34%, alongside the perennial tug-of-war between creator freedom and brand control (35%) as key challenges.

"Lacking a fully integrated influencer strategy is not necessarily a sign of falling behind. It is a question of choice and trade-offs: some brands need a structured annual strategy, others one-off activations around key cultural moments."

Evan Nataf, Co-Founder, influencer marketing agency Beastly

MEET THE INFLUENCER MARKETERS

GERMANY

THE DISCIPLINED PROFESSIONAL

A confident market: structured, performance-minded and quick to put influencer content behind paid media.

A confident market.

German strategies are settled. Two in five brands, 40%, call their approach established, against 31% across the region, and few are still finding their feet. When they organise, they favour a hybrid: 32% run influencer marketing in-house with agency support, against 25%, the clearest lean toward that model in the region.

Built for performance.

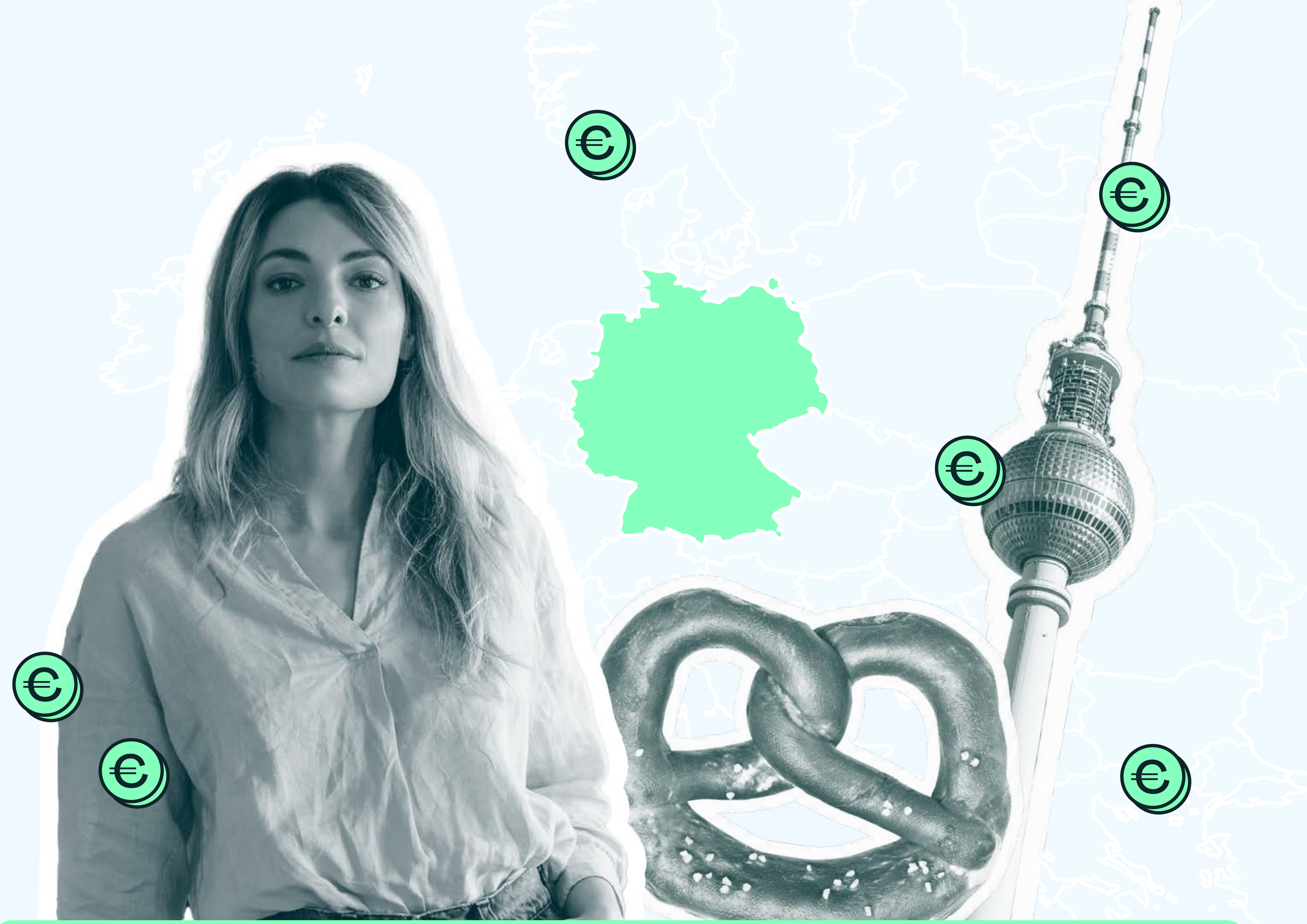
German brands treat influencer content as performance media. They push it through paid social and paid media far harder than the rest of the region, at 53% against 41%, and lean on sponsored content more heavily too (58% against 52%). Measurement follows suit: reach (36% against a European average of 27%), click-through rate (29% against 24%) and conversions (26% against 21%) all sit above the norm.

Data-led creator selection, formal deals.

German brands pick creators on data, weighing audience interests (43% against a European average of 33%) and a creator's past-campaign success (35% against 30%) more than most. They also make heavier use of long-term contracts (45% against 39%) and of royalty or licensing deals, where creators earn a share of sales or usage rights rather than a flat fee (39% against 29%).

Bigger creators, bigger budgets.

Germany reaches for bigger creators and spends to match. Macro-influencer use is among the highest in the region, at 68% against 60%, and budgets run large, with 58% spending more than €150.000 a year against 47%.



"Most brands treat maturity as something that happens automatically once the budget gets big enough, and it doesn't work that way. You can hire ten specialists and double the spend and still end up with brand, performance and legal all working off different spreadsheets."

Jeanette Okwu, Founder & CEO, beyondINFLUENCE, Chairwoman, BVIM

MEET THE INFLUENCER MARKETERS

THE QUALITY-FIRST CURATOR

Content and values come first: micro-influencer-led, co-creative, and guided more by sentiment and ethics than by hard performance metrics.

Quality and craft lead selection.

Italian brands pick creators on craft first. Content quality and style tops their selection list, at 51% against the European average 42% and the highest of any market, and they care more than most about audience interactions and sentiment (35% against 26%) and ethical conduct (32% against 25%). Fit beats reach: Italy leans on micro influencers (75% against 71%) and uses mega and celebrity creators less than any other market.

Values-led, and measured softly.

Values run through the Italian approach. A corporate ethics charter is the top condition brands set for creators, at 57% against the European average 45% and the highest of any market. Measurement stays soft: Italian marketers reach for sentiment more than most (23% against 15%) and for hard performance metrics like conversions, CTR or CPM far less.

Co-creation over paid.

Italy prefers content made with creators over paid placements. Co-creation runs well ahead of the norm, at 38% against the European average 28%, and UGC is higher too (27% against 21%), while influencer content in paid ads lags (23% against 31%). Pay follows the same instinct: hybrid gifting-and-commission deals sit well above average and flat fixed fees are the lowest of any market.

Settled, steady and upbeat on AI.

Italian strategies are settled rather than experimental. Just 8% are at the very early stage, and Italy reports fewer sharp pain points than most, from rising costs (24%, compared to the European average 29%) to managing creator relationships (9% against 18%). AI use matches the European rate at 84%, applied selectively, and the market is among the most optimistic markets about AI as an opportunity.

"We often confuse measurability with meaning. A number can be easy to report and still be difficult to interpret."

Raffaella Pierpaoli, Head of Content & Social, digital agency Intarget

THE TECH-FORWARD OPTIMIST

Europe's fastest adopter of platforms and AI, growing quickly on modest budgets and bullish on what comes next.

Europe's tech front-runner.

Spain is the region's technology pacesetter. It posts the highest adoption of dedicated influencer marketing platforms, at 73% against the European average 65%, and the most extensive use of AI, with 52% using it across multiple use cases. All told, 87% use AI in some form, above the European average.

Bullish on what comes next.

Spain is optimistic about where this is heading. Deeper integration of influencer content into paid media tops its opportunity list, at 50% against the market average of 39% and the highest in the region, and appetite for authentic, values-driven content runs high too.

Growing fast on modest budgets.

The momentum is unmistakable. Spanish brands are among the most likely to have grown their influencer roster sharply in the past year. The spending intent is there too: 41% of marketers plan budget increases of 10 to 19% (against 35%), and a healthy 14% expect bigger jumps of 50 to 99% (compared to the European average 10%). The base is still modest, though, with more brands clustered in the €10.000 to €50.000 spending range than the European norm.

Focused on proof.

Spanish marketers worry about proof. Measuring campaign ROI and ROAS weigh on Spanish marketers more than most, as do platform algorithm changes (31% against 27%).

"Audiences increasingly prefer authentic content, so genuine collaborations with creators improve trust, boost engagement and strengthen brand loyalty, resulting in more effective marketing outcomes."

VP, Influencer Marketing, Media, gaming or entertainment, budget spend €200–500K, Spain

MEET THE INFLUENCER MARKETERS

NORDICS

(Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway)

THE CAUTIOUS STEWARD

Careful and conduct-conscious, steady rather than bold: influencer marketing is a supporting channel, and data is the sticking point.

Established but supporting.

Nordic influencer strategies are settled, but the ambition is measured. Few brands say strategies are at the very early stage (8% against the European average 16%), and more define their strategy as established (37% against 31%). That said, just 20% see influencer marketing as a core growth driver, the lowest reading of any market and well shy of the European average of 31%.

Steady, and polarised on spend.

Growth is measured rather than rapid. More Nordic brands expect budgets to hold flat than in any other market (16% against 8%), and rosters skew small, with a quarter working with 10 or fewer influencers (24% against 17%). Yet spending is polarised: fewer sit in the mid-range bands, while more report the very largest budgets, with 10% spending €1M to €3M against 6%.

Conduct and disclosure.

Nordic brands are likelier than anywhere else to ask influencers to disclose or avoid filters, at 37% against a European average of 24%, and more likely than most to require compliance with a corporate ethics charter (52% against 45%) and rules against featuring minors for commercial purposes.

Wrestling with data.

Data is the sticking point. Nordic marketers are likelier than any other market to name a lack of reliable data as a challenge (30% against 22%), and to feel swamped by too much of it (21% against 12%). No surprise, then, that better measurement frameworks and a push into new platforms top their opportunity list.

"A creator's impact extends far beyond a single post or click. It shapes brand perception and drives purchases weeks or even months later, and traditional attribution models weren't built for that reality."

Jakob Wigselius, CEO Scandinavia, United Influencers / ELLE Norway

1 MEET THE INFLUENCER MARKETERS

BENELUX

(Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg)

THE COMMERCE-DRIVEN PROFESSIONAL

Higher budgets and ROI-first measurement, backed by a structured, certified approach.

Growing, with bigger budgets.

Growth here is strong and well-funded. A quarter of Benelux brands grew their influencer roster sharply in the past year, at 25% compared to a European average of 16%, and budgets run high, with 45% spending more than €200.000.

ROI comes first.

Nowhere is the focus on return sharper. Benelux marketers lean on campaign ROI as a KPI more than any other market, at 44% against a European average of 30%, and stack up other hard metrics behind it: social media mentions (35%), cost per acquisition (24%) and click-through rate (29%), all at above market average.

Early and broad on AI.

AI is near-universal, used by 87% of Benelux brands and agencies, with almost no one ruling it out. It is put to work early, in campaign planning (62% against a European average of 52%) and influencer discovery (57% against 49%).

Structured and certified.

The approach is notably formal. Requiring creators to hold a Responsible Influence certificate or complete training is far more common than average, at 41% against a European average of 29%, even as Benelux sets fewer conditions than most on avoiding sensitive products. The same instinct shows in what they see ahead: Benelux brands are the keenest of all on greater professionalisation and standardisation of the sector as a key opportunity for the sector (37% against 29%).

"Most brands are currently using AI as a digital rearview mirror rather than a GPS. Content analysis and performance tracking are low-hanging fruit; they automate what we already know. The real value lies in predictive AI, using machine learning to forecast campaign ROI, cultural relevance, and long-term audience alignment before a single contract is signed. Moving from passive analysis to active prediction is the next maturity leap the industry must take."

Clo Willaerts, Steering Committee Member, Influencer Marketing Alliance

2 MANAGING THE SCALE-UP

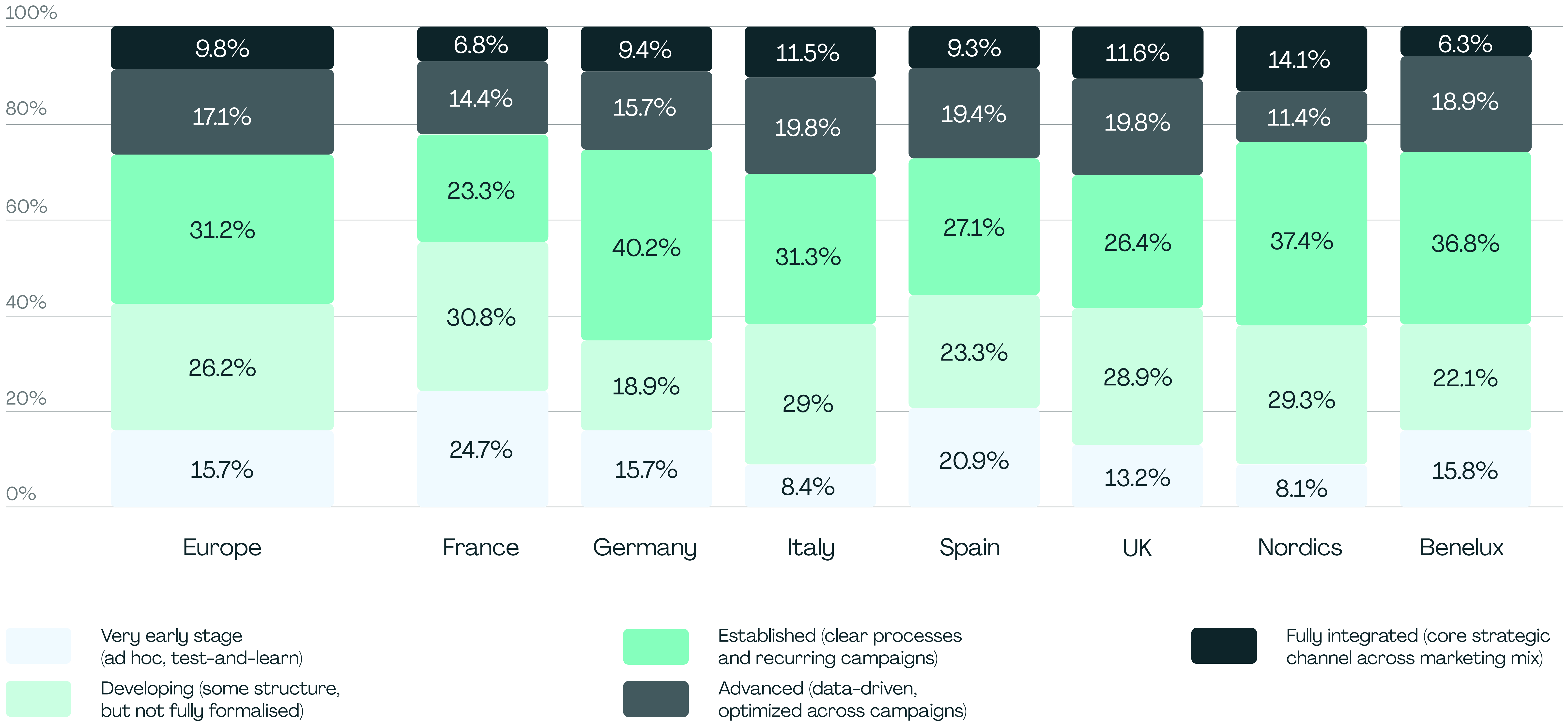
Brands are scaling influencer marketing fast, but growing into it more slowly. Rosters expanded almost everywhere last year, with 85% of brands and agencies working with more influencers than a year ago and another 85% planning to expand again in the year ahead. The UK leads the way, with 31% of marketers expecting a significant jump in influencer rosters. Maturity is catching up more gradually: 58% now run an established strategy or better and 10% call it fully integrated, with Germany and the Nordics furthest along at 40% and 37% established. And for all the growth, most brands keep the work close, with roughly three-quarters (77%) running activations in-house in some form.

> "Influencer marketing today spans campaign creative, creator vetting, contract law, paid amplification, event production, social commerce and attribution: half-dozen specialist jobs, not one hire. Yet the standard setup is a one-and-a-half-person internal team trying to replicate an agency stack. Running those disciplines as one system is what we call a holistic influencer strategy, and no brand outside the very largest can justify that headcount internally. Rising outsourcing isn't a failure of ambition; it's what mature procurement looks like."

Ertan Anadol, Founder & CEO,
creative influencer agency TANKE

FOR BRANDS

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE MATURITY OF YOUR COMPANY'S INFLUENCER MARKETING STRATEGY?

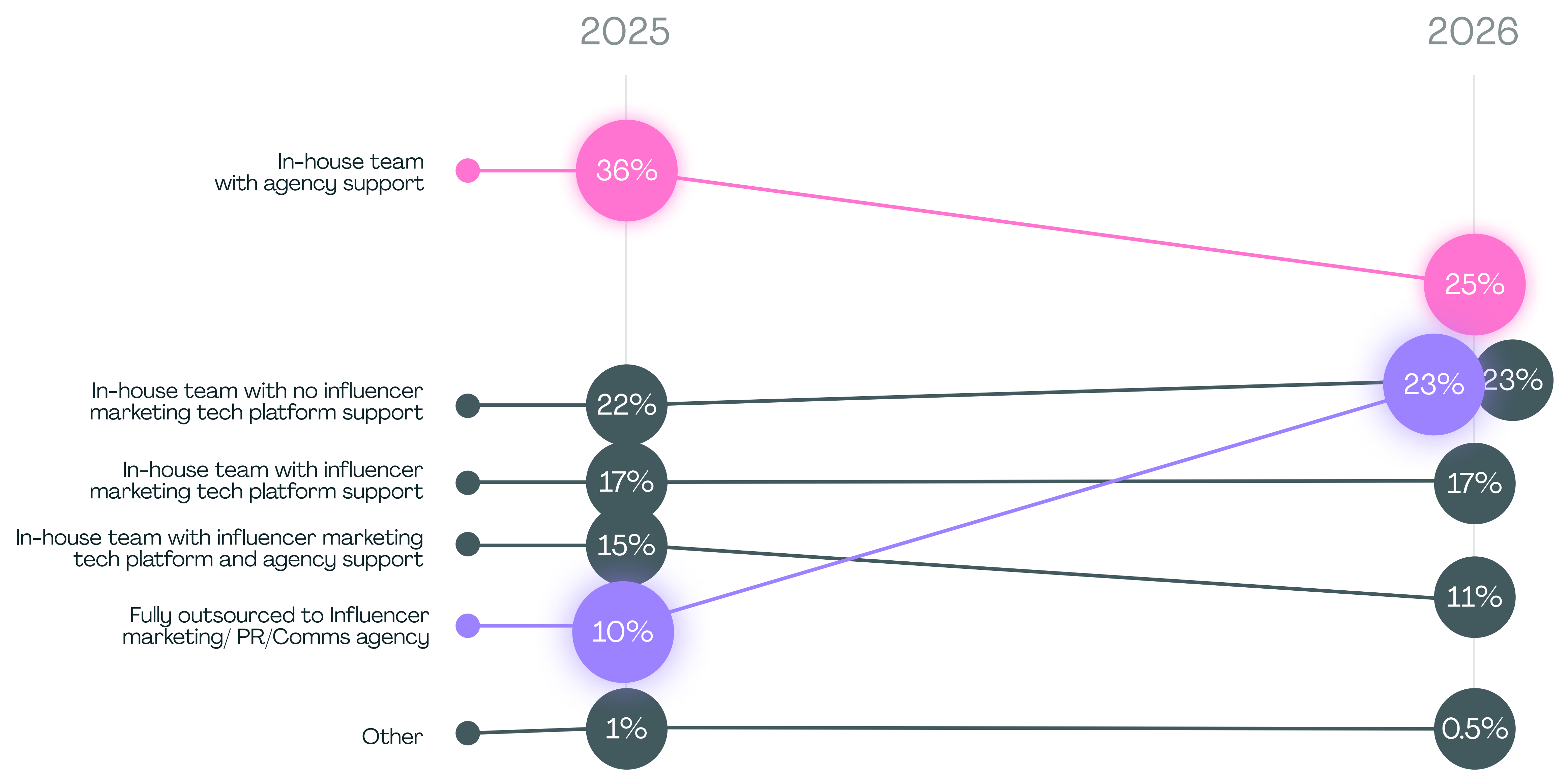


WHO MANAGES INFLUENCER ACTIVATIONS FOR YOUR COMPANY?

FOR BRANDS

Brands want control, but not to go it alone. Roughly three-quarters (77%) run influencer marketing in-house, most often with agency support, the single most common model at 25%. Full outsourcing remains a minority at 23%, but it has jumped from 10% a year ago as more brands hand the work over wholesale. Another 29% pair an in-house team with a dedicated platform, a sign of maturing operations.

🇪🇺 EUROPE



"The in-house versus outsource debate isn't binary. High-growth brands don't pick a side; they build a hybrid. They hire internally to own the strategy and brand voice, then partner with an agency to unlock scale, specialisation, and creative firepower."

Scott Guthrie, Director, Influencer Marketing Trade Body, UK

BY COUNTRY

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Fully outsourced to Influencer marketing/ PR/ Comms agency	22%	18%	21%	20%	30%	29%	22%
In-house team with no influencer marketing tech platform support	30%	23%	18%	30%	15%	22%	19%
In-house team with agency support	23%	31.5%	30%	17%	29%	22%	23%
In-house team with influencer marketing tech platform support	16%	18%	15%	21%	17%	10%	24%
In-house team with influencer marketing tech platform and agency support	7%	9%	16%	12%	9%	14%	12%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%

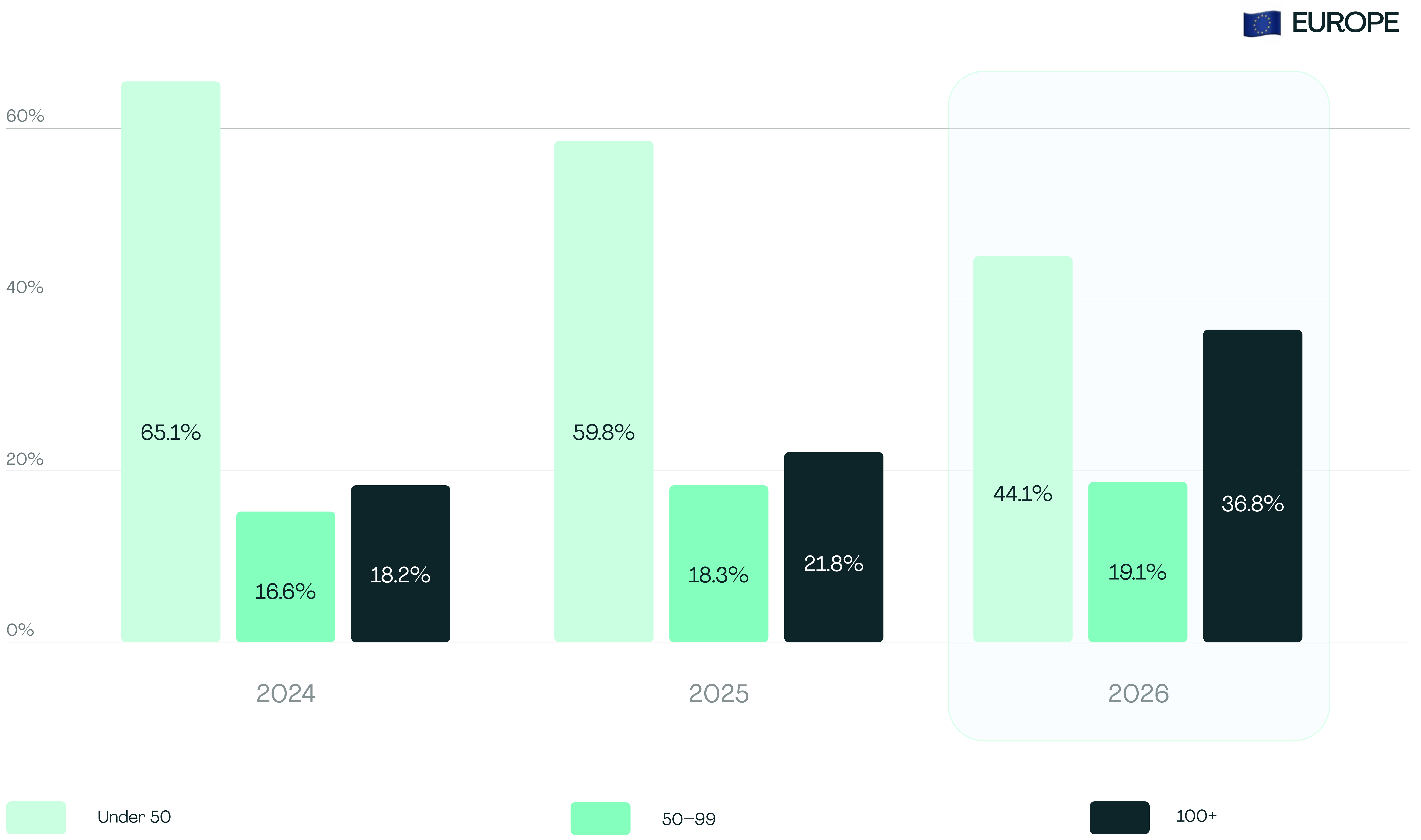
FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

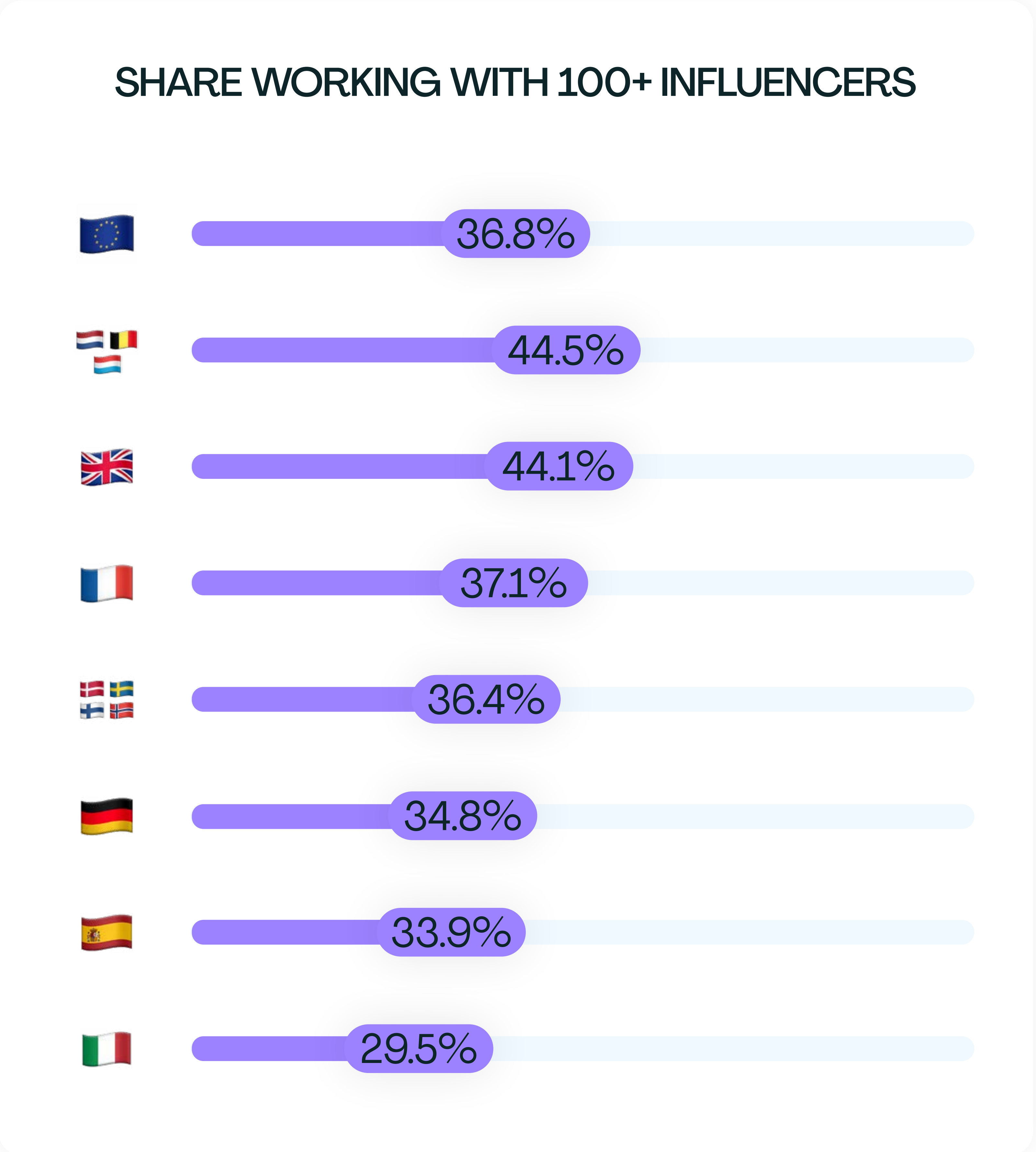
APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY INFLUENCERS DO YOU WORK WITH ANNUALLY?

Most strategies are still small and selective: 44% work with fewer than 50 influencers a year. But the centre of gravity is shifting up. The share working with 100 or more has doubled since 2024 as the under-50 share fell sharply, and it reaches about 44% in Benelux and the UK. Rosters widen sharply with company size, from 8% of the smallest firms working with 100-plus influencers compared to 61% of the largest firms.

"The sheer volume of creators to manage makes communication and coordination hugely time-consuming."

Influencer Marketing Director,
Retail, budget spend £200–500K, UK

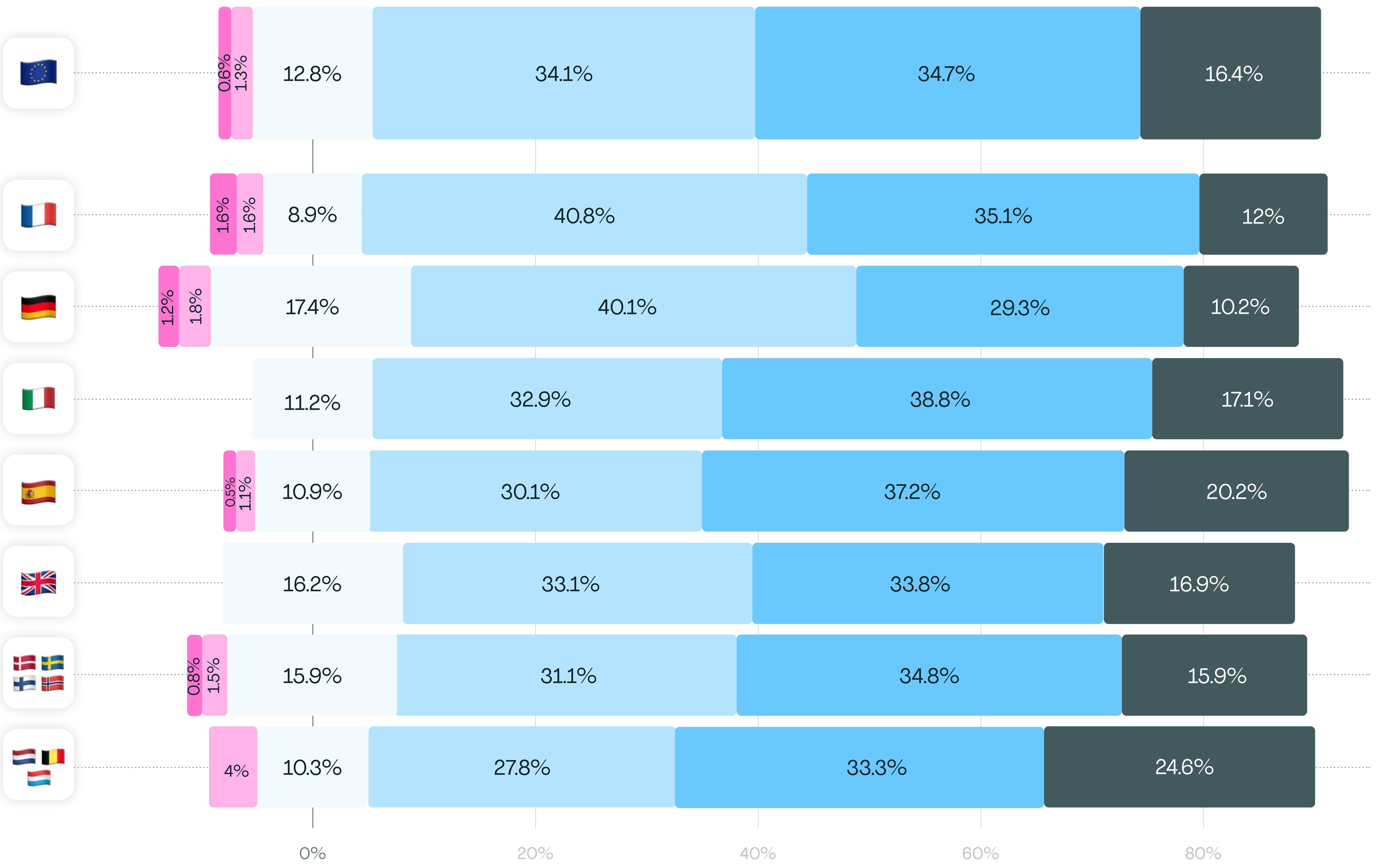




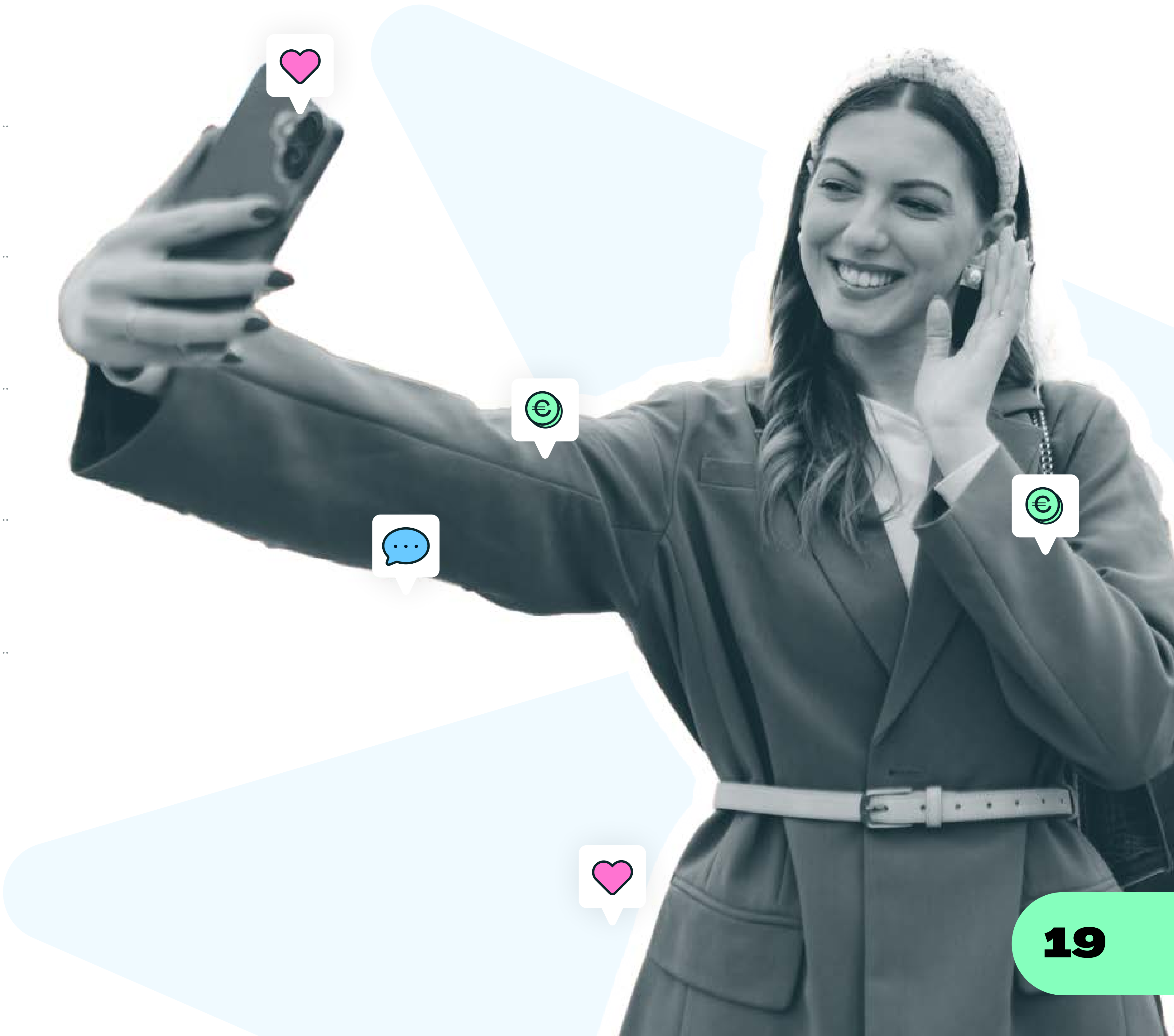
HOW HAS THE NUMBER OF INFLUENCERS YOUR COMPANY WORKS WITH CHANGED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

Almost no one pulled back. Just 2% of companies cut their roster over the past year, while 51% grew it moderately or significantly, marking influence as a rising priority rather than a line to be trimmed. Benelux pushed hardest, with 25% expanding their roster by 50% or more.



Increase significantly (50% or more)
Increase moderately (10%–49%)
Increase slightly (less than 10%)
Stay the same
Decrease slightly (less than 10%)
Decrease moderately (10%–49%)
Decrease significantly (50% or more)

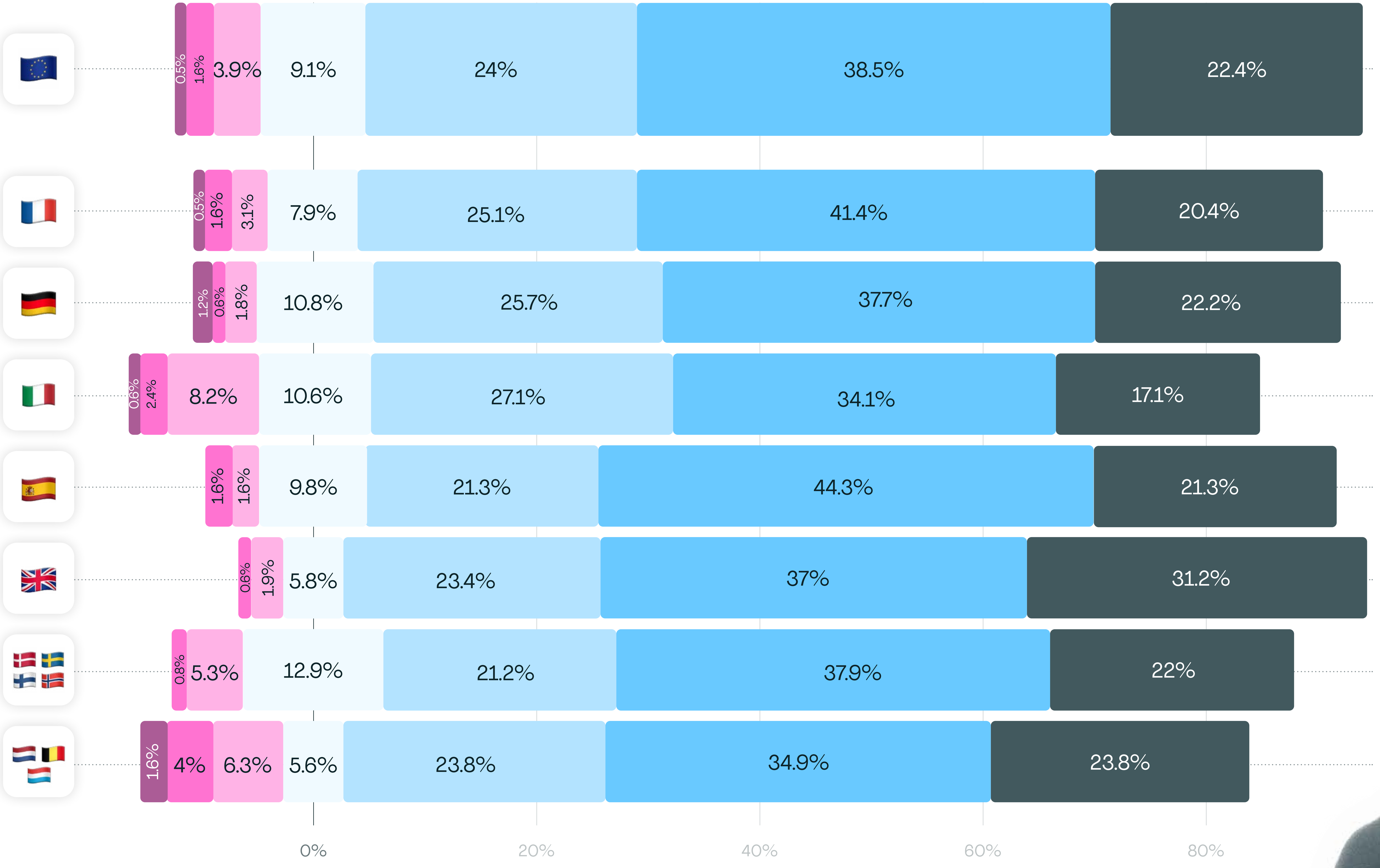


kolsquare

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

HOW DO YOU EXPECT THE NUMBER OF INFLUENCERS YOUR COMPANY WORKS WITH TO CHANGE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

Momentum is set to build, and nowhere more than in the UK, where 31% of brands plan to grow their roster significantly next year, far above every other market. Across Europe, that is up from the 16% that expanded their rosters sharply over the past year, a sign of rising confidence in influencer marketing.



- Increase significantly (50% or more)
- Increase moderately (10%–49%)
- Increase slightly (less than 10%)
- Stay the same
- Decrease slightly (less than 10%)
- Decrease moderately (10%–49%)
- Decrease significantly (50% or more)

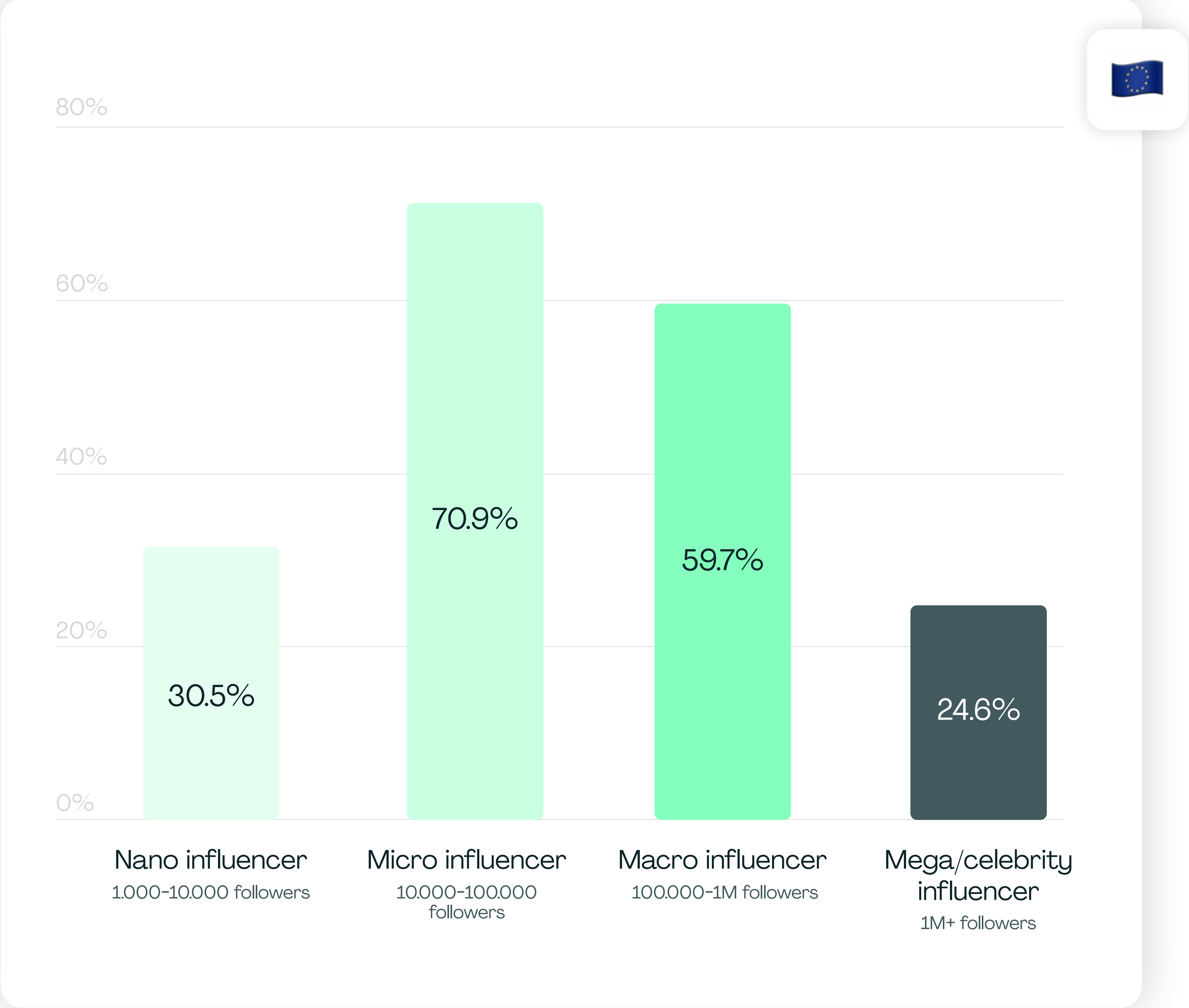
«Influencer marketing is not too complex to run in-house, but there is a lack of seniority, and good profiles for those positions are scarce. Turnover is high, and often the people in these roles take all the knowledge with them when they leave. So for a company, the investment in doing this in-house is sometimes too high, or the return comes too slowly.»

Klara Verzele, Founder KLARENCE agency, board member Influencer Marketing Alliance (BE)

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF INFLUENCERS DO YOU WORK WITH?

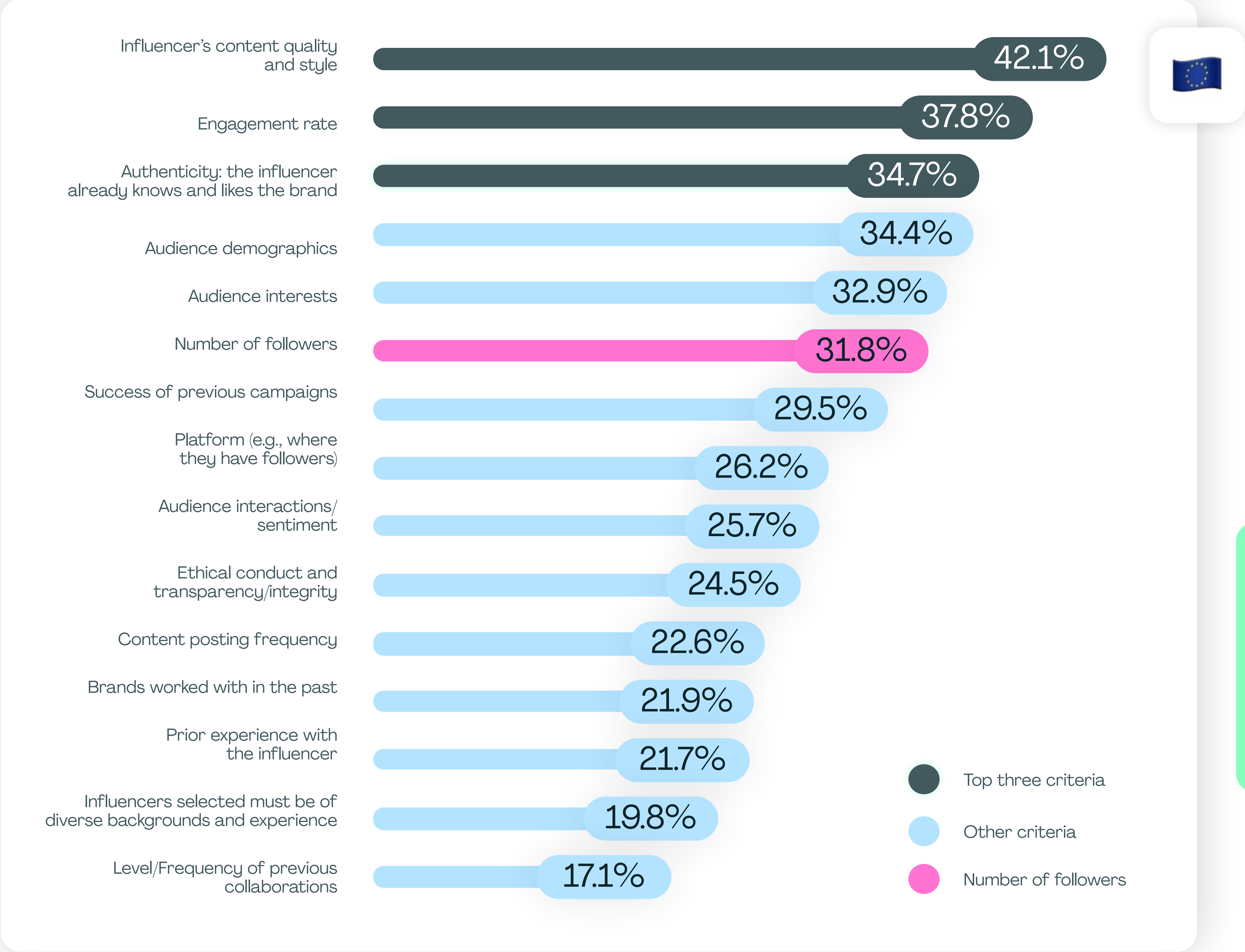
Brands cluster around the middle tiers. Micro influencers are the mainstay at 71%, with macro close behind at 60%, while nano and mega or celebrity creators trail at 31% and 25%. That mid-tier tilt has held since 2024, though 2026 saw every tier ease back from a 2025 high, nano most of all. The pull is toward engaged, cost-efficient audiences over celebrity reach.



FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA WHEN SELECTING AN INFLUENCER TO WORK WITH?

Fit beats fame. Content quality and style is the top selection criterion at 42%, ahead of engagement rate (38%) and authenticity (35%), while raw follower count ranks lower at 32%. Engagement rate has climbed since 2024, a shift toward judging creators on performance and fit rather than sheer audience size. The priorities hold across markets and maturity levels, with one exception: companies with fewer than two years experience lean noticeably more on follower count.



"There are simply too many of them, and they are very different, which makes it more difficult to find the right people who are a good fit for the company."

Marketing Manager, Marketing agency, budget spend €150–200K, Germany

3 WOVEN INTO THE MIX

Influencer marketing has settled into the wider marketing mix as a versatile support act, not a standalone growth engine. Most brands (48%) call it an important supporting channel and 31% a core growth driver, a conviction strongest in the UK at 38% and one that deepens with experience. It runs mainly through organic influencer content (53%) and sponsored campaigns (52%), both up sharply since 2025, and works across the funnel. Payment models are broadening in step: fixed fees per post remain the most common model at 48%, but commission (43%), long-term contracts (39%) and gifting deals are now widely used, pointing to more performance-minded, longer-term creator relationships.

"The issue is not investment anymore, it is integration. Many brands have understood that influencer marketing works, but they still manage it as a campaign layer rather than as a strategic layer. When it is planned separately from paid media, PR, brand strategy or commerce, the channel can grow in volume without really growing in maturity."

Raffaella Pierpaoli, Head of Content & Social, digital agency Intarget

FOR BRANDS

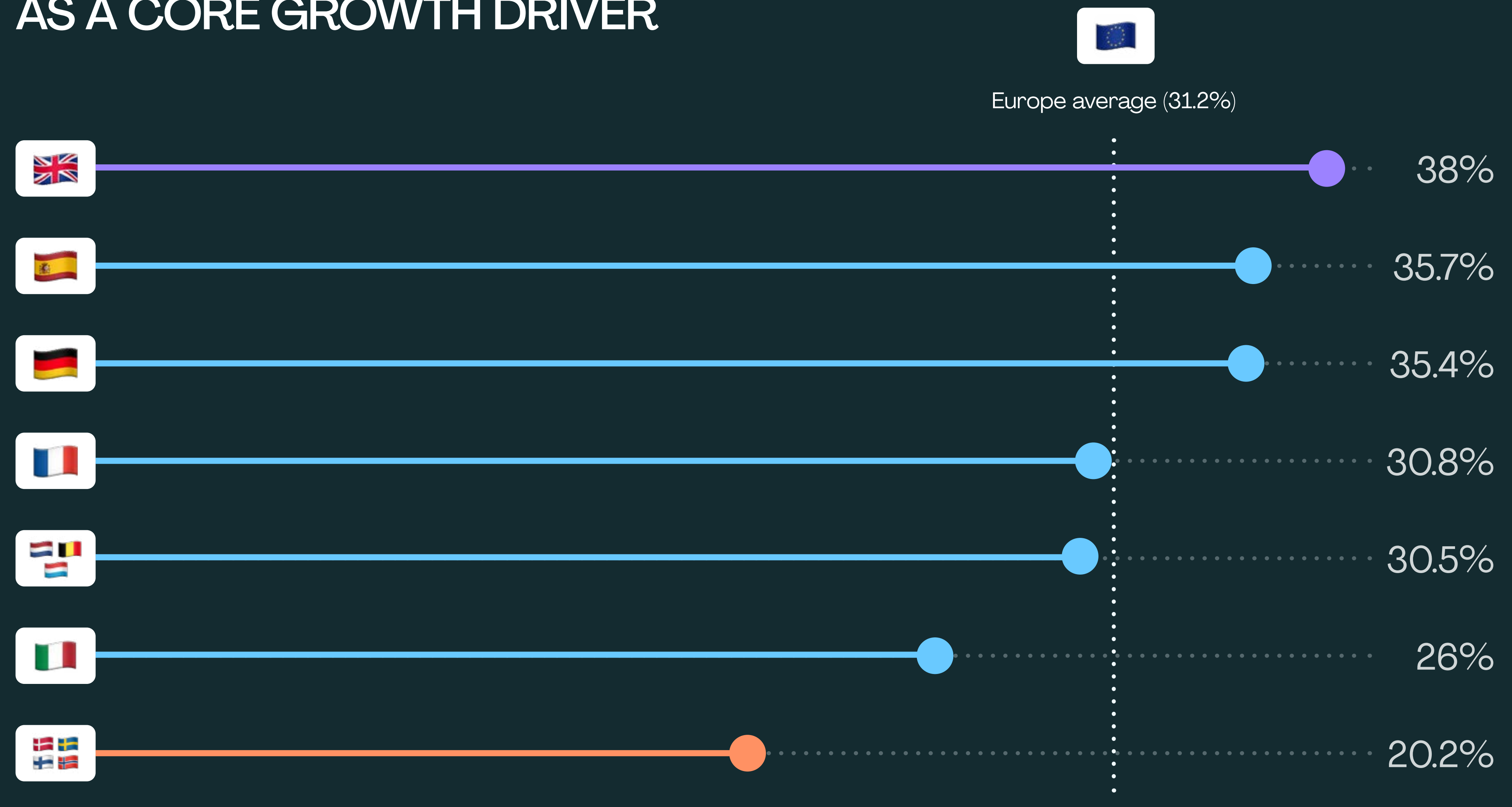
WHAT IS THE MAIN ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN YOUR OVERALL MARKETING STRATEGY?

79%
as core growth driver or important supporting channel

18%
see it as a tactical / campaign-based lever

3%
see influencer marketing as experimental.

% VIEWING INFLUENCER MARKETING AS A CORE GROWTH DRIVER

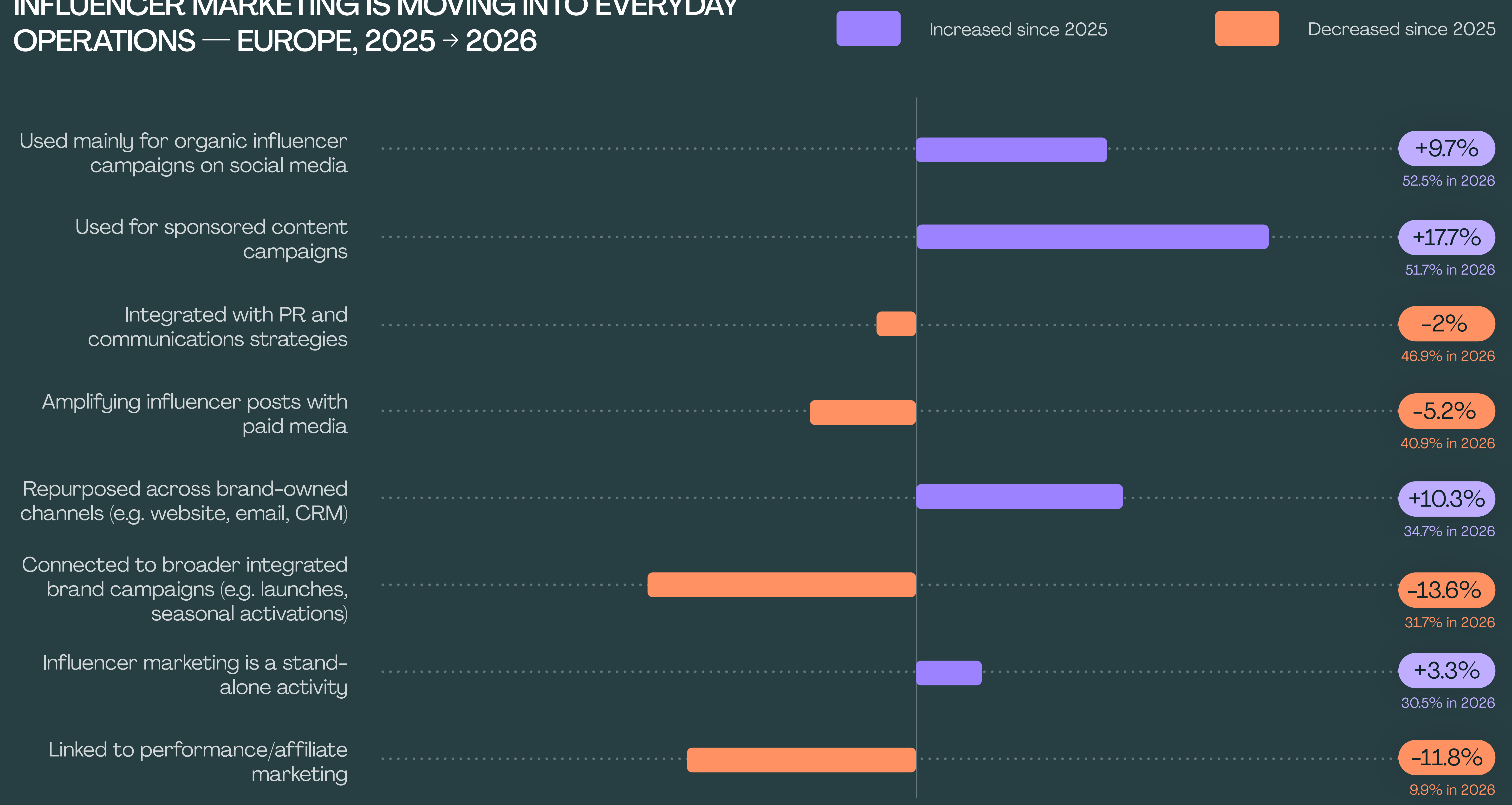


Conviction deepens with experience: brands with nine years or more' track record are the most likely to call it a core growth driver.

HOW IS INFLUENCER MARKETING INTEGRATED INTO YOUR COMPANY'S OVERALL MARKETING MIX?

FOR BRANDS

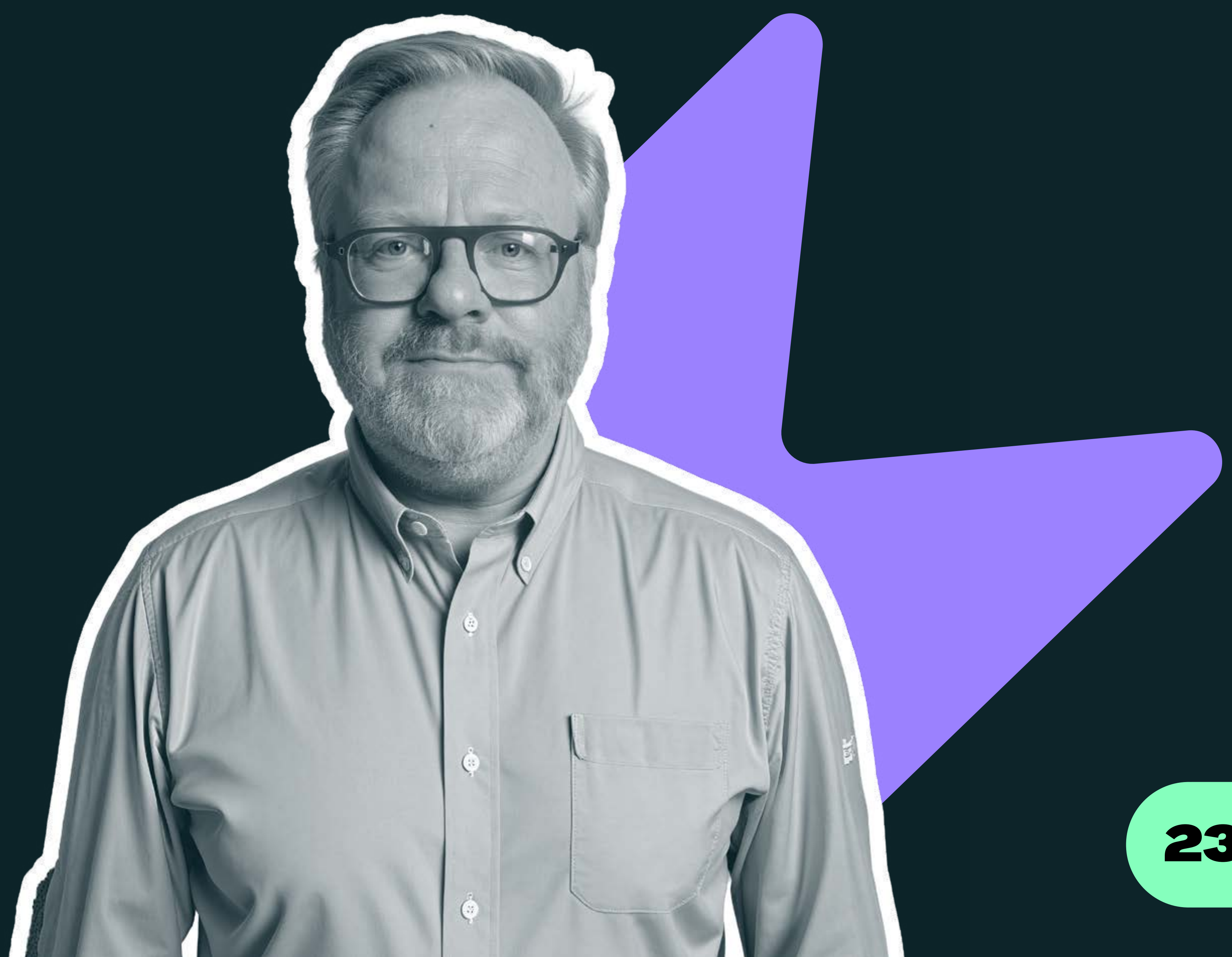
INFLUENCER MARKETING IS MOVING INTO EVERYDAY OPERATIONS — EUROPE, 2025 → 2026



Influencer marketing plugs into the marketing mix mainly through social content. Organic influencer campaigns (53%) and sponsored content (52%) are the leading integration routes, with PR and communications close behind (47%). Both jumped since 2025, while use within broad integrated brand campaigns (32%, down from 45%) and links to performance and affiliate marketing (10%, down from 22%) fell sharply. About three in ten still run influencer marketing as a stand-alone activity.

"Systems beat effort. Yet, for some brands, creator marketing has scaled faster than its infrastructure. Thankfully, our members are seeing a rapid shift here. Today, CMOs debate strategic issues covering impact, integration, scale, and governance, replacing the historic battles to simply 'sell in' the channel's value and fight for larger budgets."

Scott Guthrie, Director, Influencer Marketing Trade Body, UK



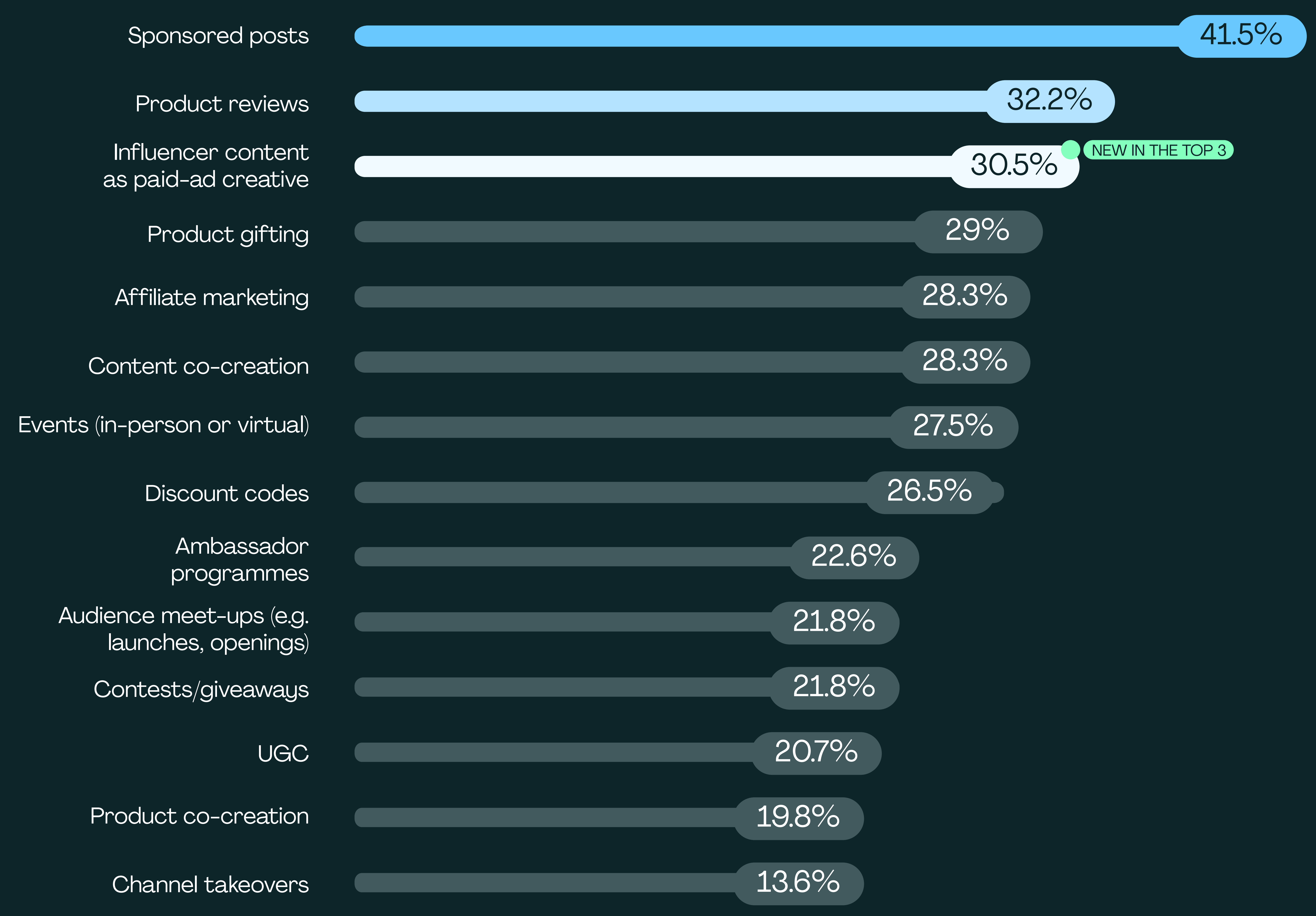
Organic content (53%) and sponsored campaigns (52%) now lead integration, with PR close behind (47%).

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

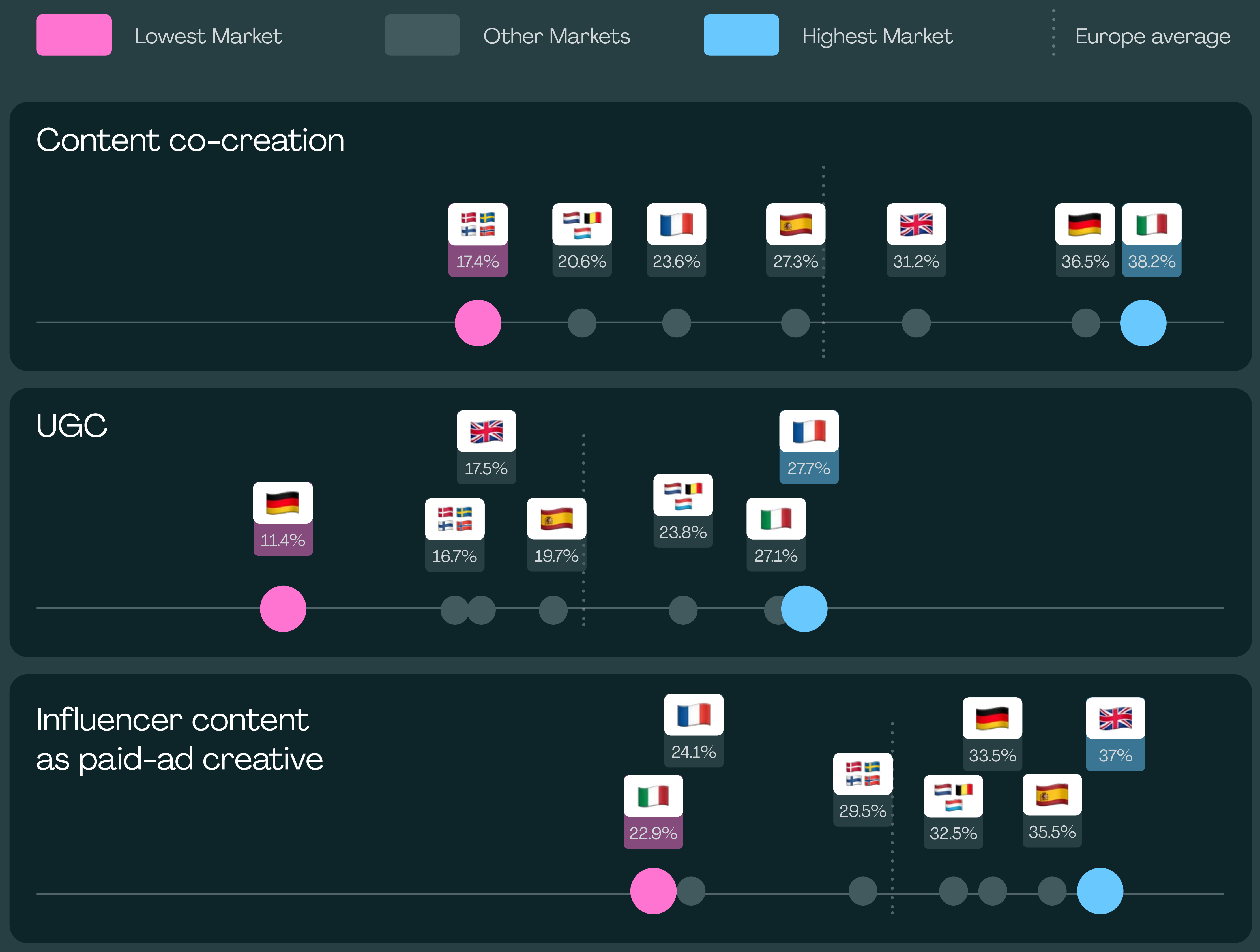
IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS DOES YOUR COMPANY MOST USE INFLUENCER MARKETING?

Brands are spreading their bets. Sponsored posts remain the most common use at 42%, followed by product reviews (32%) and gifting (29%), but influencer content in paid ads has broken into the top three at 31%.

EUROPE



MOST TACTICS ARE UNIFORM, BUT THREE DIVERGE SHARPLY BY MARKET



HOW ACTIVATIONS MAP TO THE FUNNEL

Activations differ most at the top and bottom of the funnel, while mid-funnel use is near-universal.

Sponsored posts, gifting and paid-ad content skew to awareness, and discount codes and affiliate links to conversion, but almost every activation is used for mid-funnel engagement.

	Top of the funnel	Middle of the funnel	Bottom of the funnel
Awareness Workhorses (Used mainly top-of-funnel)			
Sponsored posts	61.2%	50.9%	26%
Product gifting	54.9%	53.7%	24.8%
Influencer content in paid ads	54.2%	50.4%	36.7%
Events (in-person or virtual)	52.8%	53.1%	30.4%
Audience meet-ups (e.g. launches, openings)	51%	55.9%	31.4%
Channel takeovers	49%	51%	34.6%
Engagement anchored (Used broadly, peak mid-funnel)			
UGC	46.8%	63.1%	41.2%
Product reviews	45.3%	59.9%	33.4%
Product co-creation	44.6%	52.3%	37.8%
Ambassador programmes	44.9%	53.1%	37%
Content co-creation	44.3%	58.2%	30.8%
Contests/giveaways	38.4%	60.4%	29.4%
Conversion drivers (Used mainly bottom-of-funnel)			
Affiliate marketing	39.9%	48.4%	42.8%
Discount codes	36.3%	48.3%	49.7%

"I clearly see a strong shift towards performance-driven influencer marketing. Many organisations are in a 'testing' phase, wanting to understand whether influencer marketing can directly contribute to sales and prove its value beyond awareness and engagement."

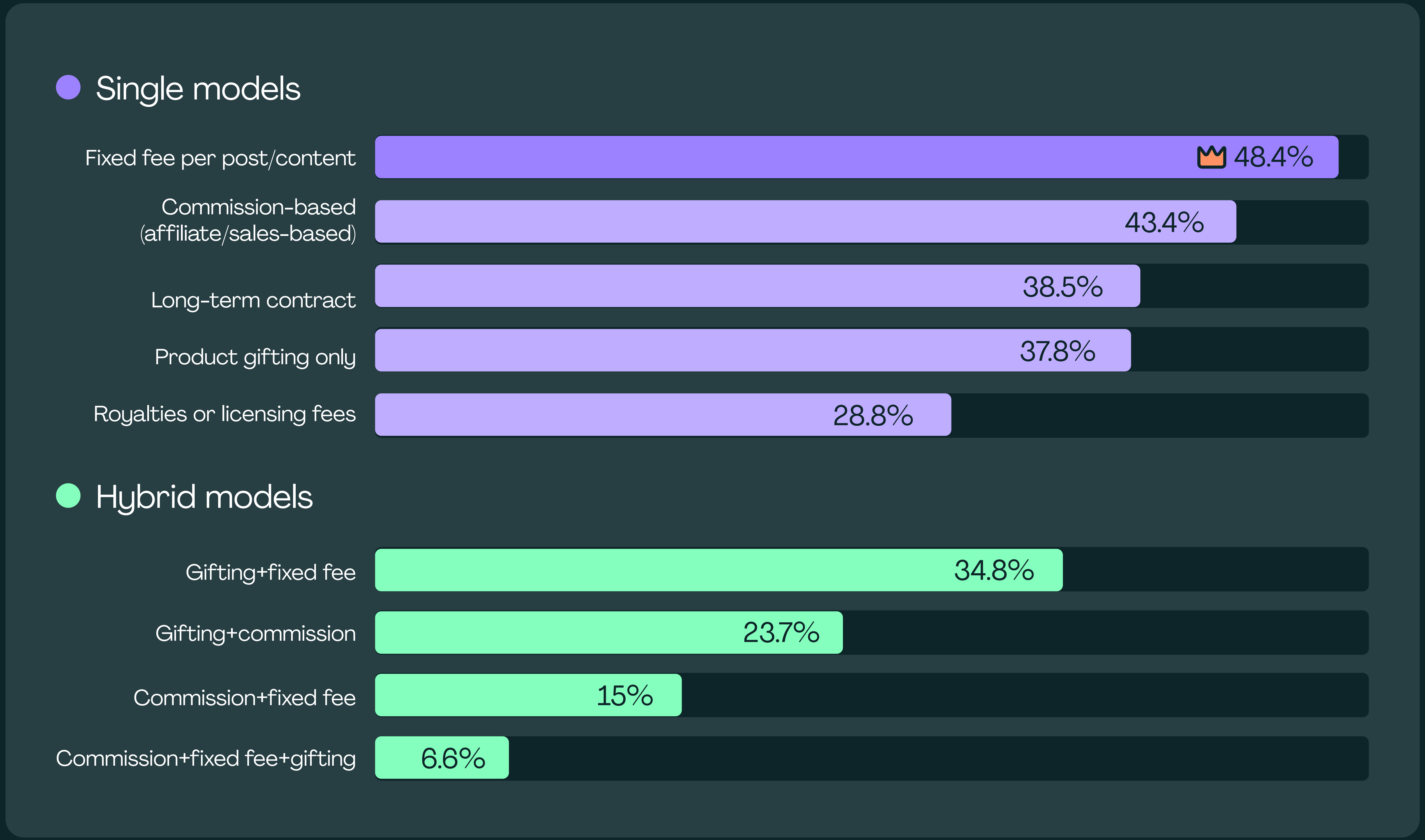
Marek Myślicki, President,
SPIM (Polish Influencer Marketing Association)

COMPENSATION MODELS

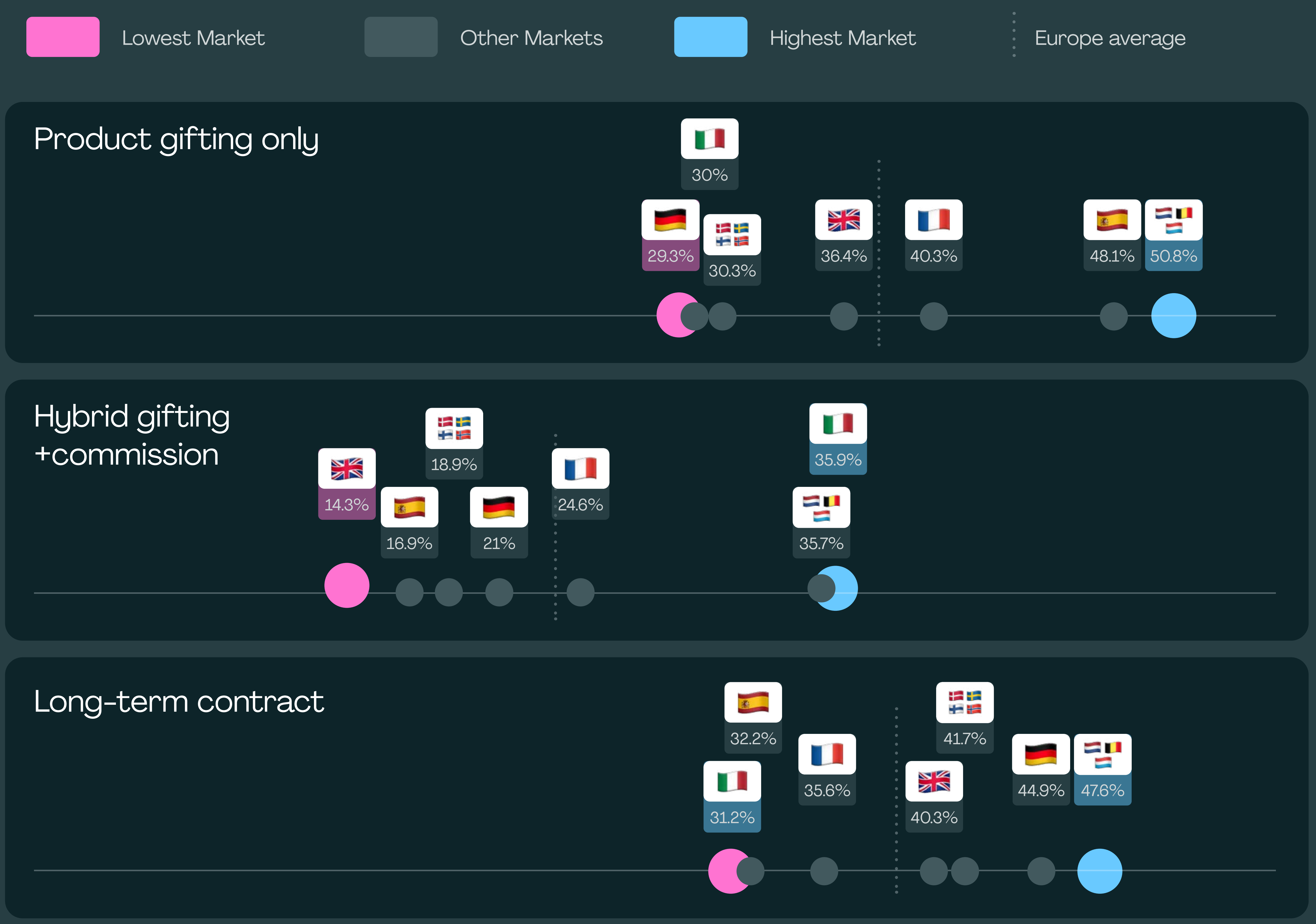
FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHAT COMPENSATION MODELS DO YOU USE IN INFLUENCER COLLABORATIONS?

No single pay model wins out. Fixed fees per post lead at 48%, but commission, long-term, gifting and royalty deals are all common and all gained on fixed fees in 2026, with hybrids a category of their own. Agencies lean on fixed fees more than brands, at 59% versus 45%.



COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY VARIES BY MARKET (EUROPE, 2026)



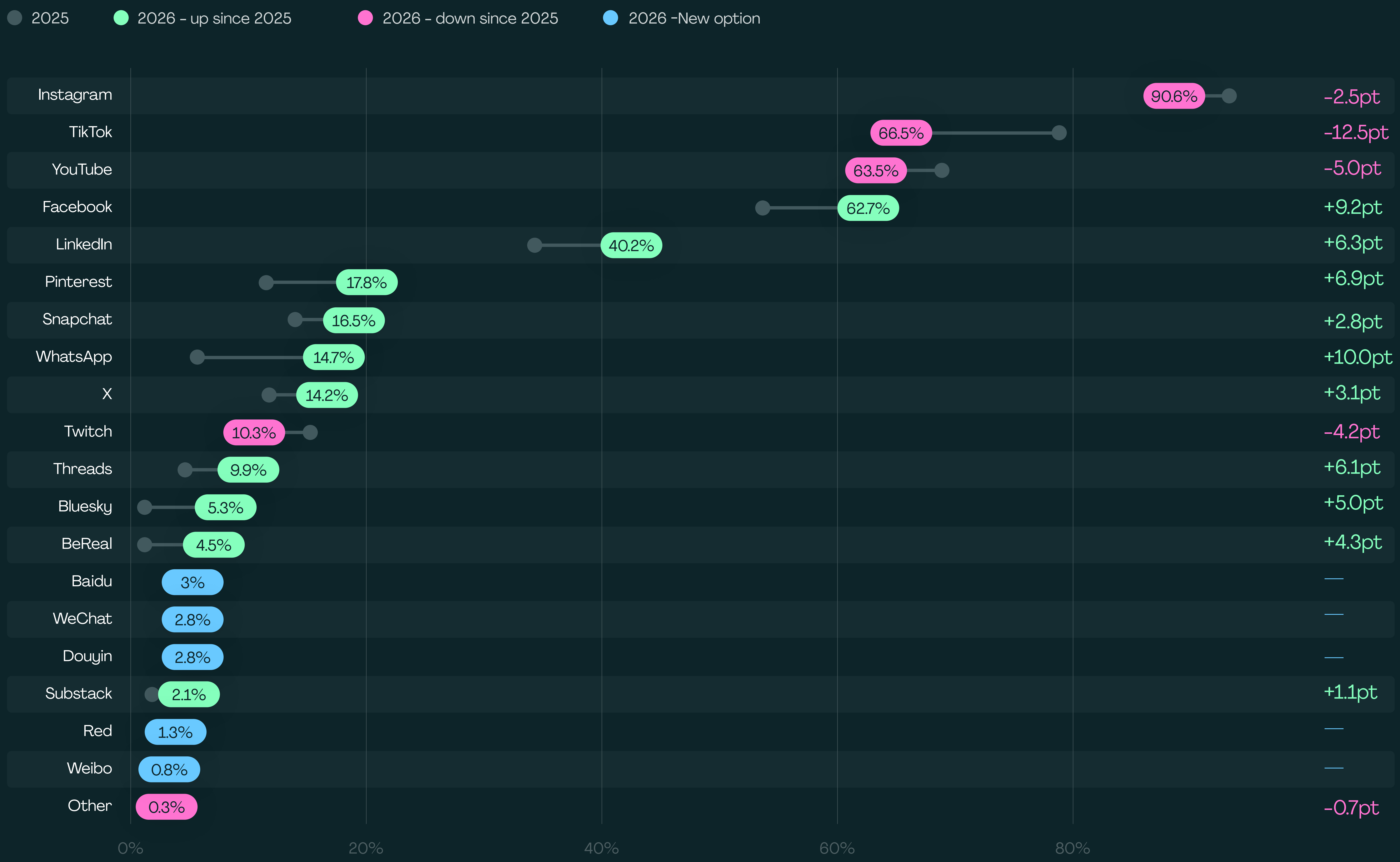
"Without fixed rates, prices fluctuate considerably, which makes it difficult to build a budget and ensure fair payment."

Head of Influencer Marketing,
Energy, budget spend €200–500K, Spain

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

ON WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS DO YOU RUN CAMPAIGNS? (Select up to 5)

Marketers are diversifying. The platform mix is widening as brands spread budgets across more channels and test newer ones. Instagram still anchors it, used by nine in ten brands and agencies (91%) and more than 20 points clear of any rival. TikTok is the story of the year: Use of the short-video platform slid to 67% from 79%, dropping across all seven markets, a genuine pullback rather than a quirk of the sample. The gains are elsewhere. WhatsApp tripled to 15% as brands test messaging, and LinkedIn pushed to 40%. Threads and Bluesky also saw healthy rises.



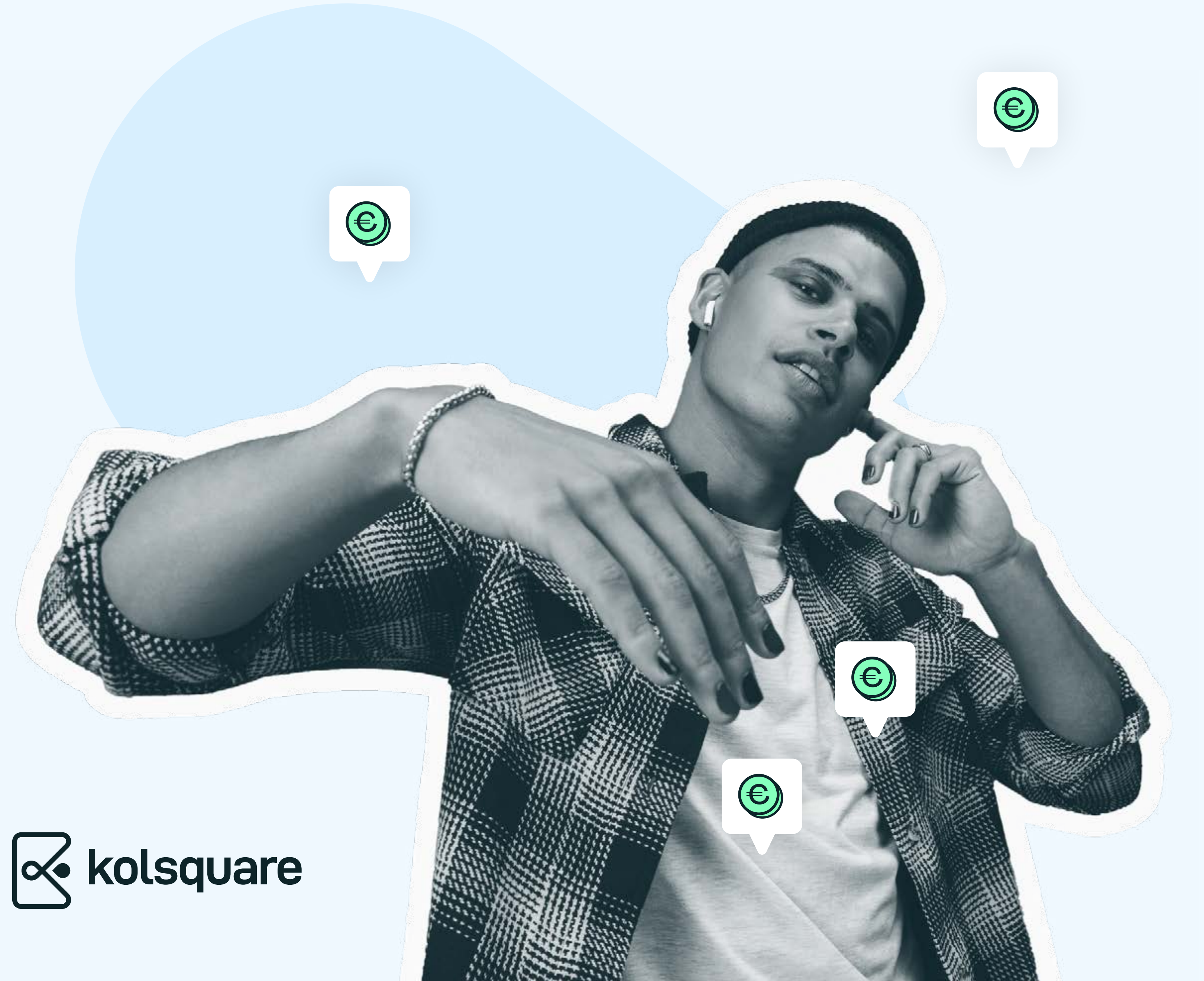
> "The most successful brands don't separate influencer, affiliate, paid social and e-commerce. They build one creator ecosystem where every piece of content has multiple jobs. Investment has increased faster than organisational change, which is why maturity hasn't kept pace."

Jamie Love, CEO & Founder, Monumental Marketing

4 BUDGETS ON THE RISE

Budgets are climbing, and fast. **Nearly nine in ten organisations (89%) expect to raise their influencer marketing spend over the next 12 months, up from 75% in 2025 and just 54%** in 2024, and fewer sit at the lowest budget bands than a year ago. The appetite is broad but uneven: strongest in Spain and the UK (both 93%) and Benelux (91%), coolest in the Nordics (83%). Agencies and brands are almost equally bullish (90% and 89%), but agencies plan steeper rises, with 43% eyeing increases of 20% or more against 38% of brands.

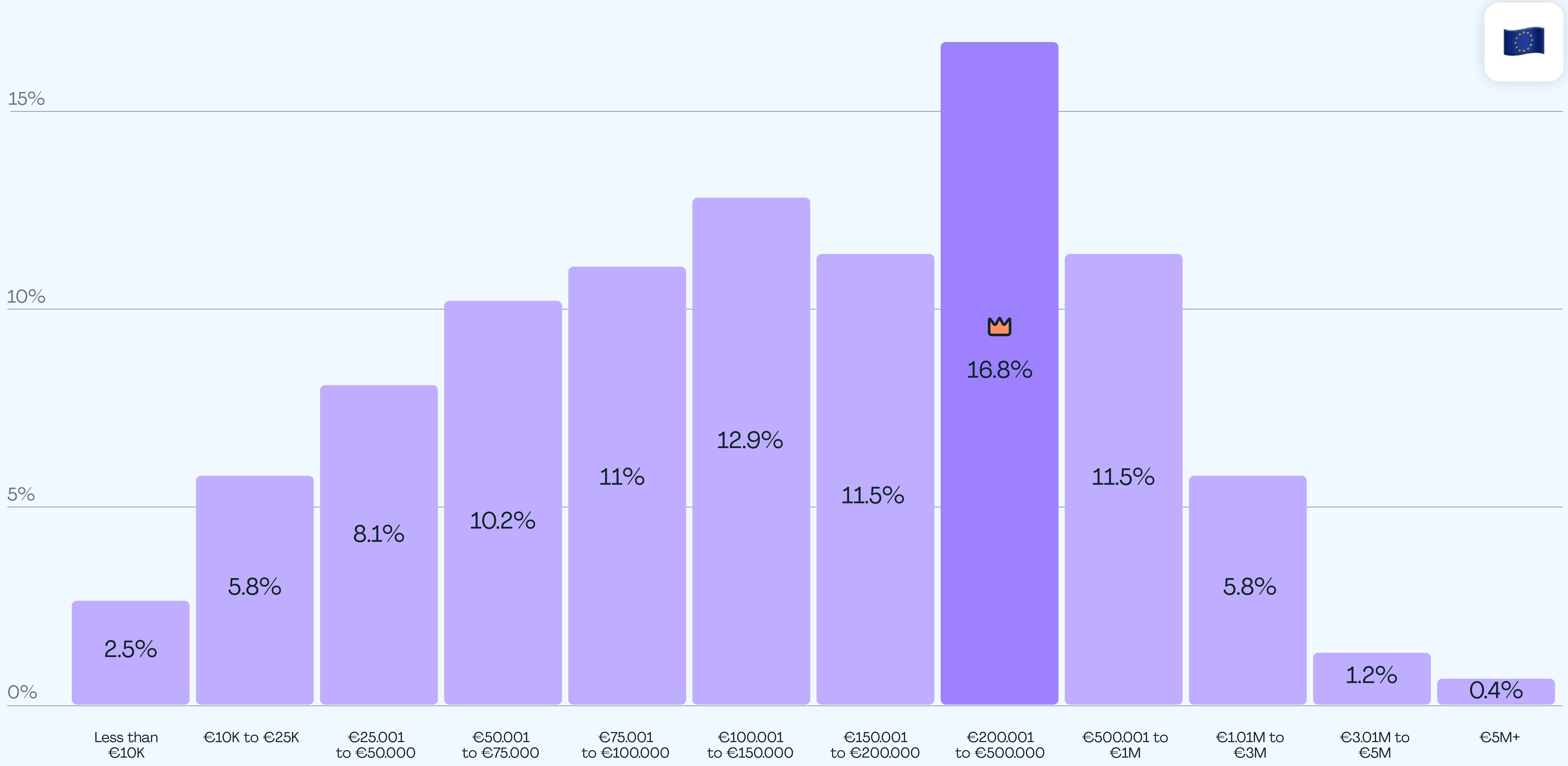
Budgets scale sharply with company size. **Median influencer marketing spend reaches €312.000 at companies with 500 or more employees and €367.000 at those with 1.000 or more**. Across the full cohort the median is €144.000, pulled lower by the many smaller firms in the sample, where spend runs well below enterprise levels. The climb is steep and consistent, from a median of €52.000 at companies with fewer than 50 employees to €137.000 in the 101-to-500 band and past €300.000 at enterprise scale.



FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

HOW MUCH DID YOUR COMPANY SPEND ON INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR?

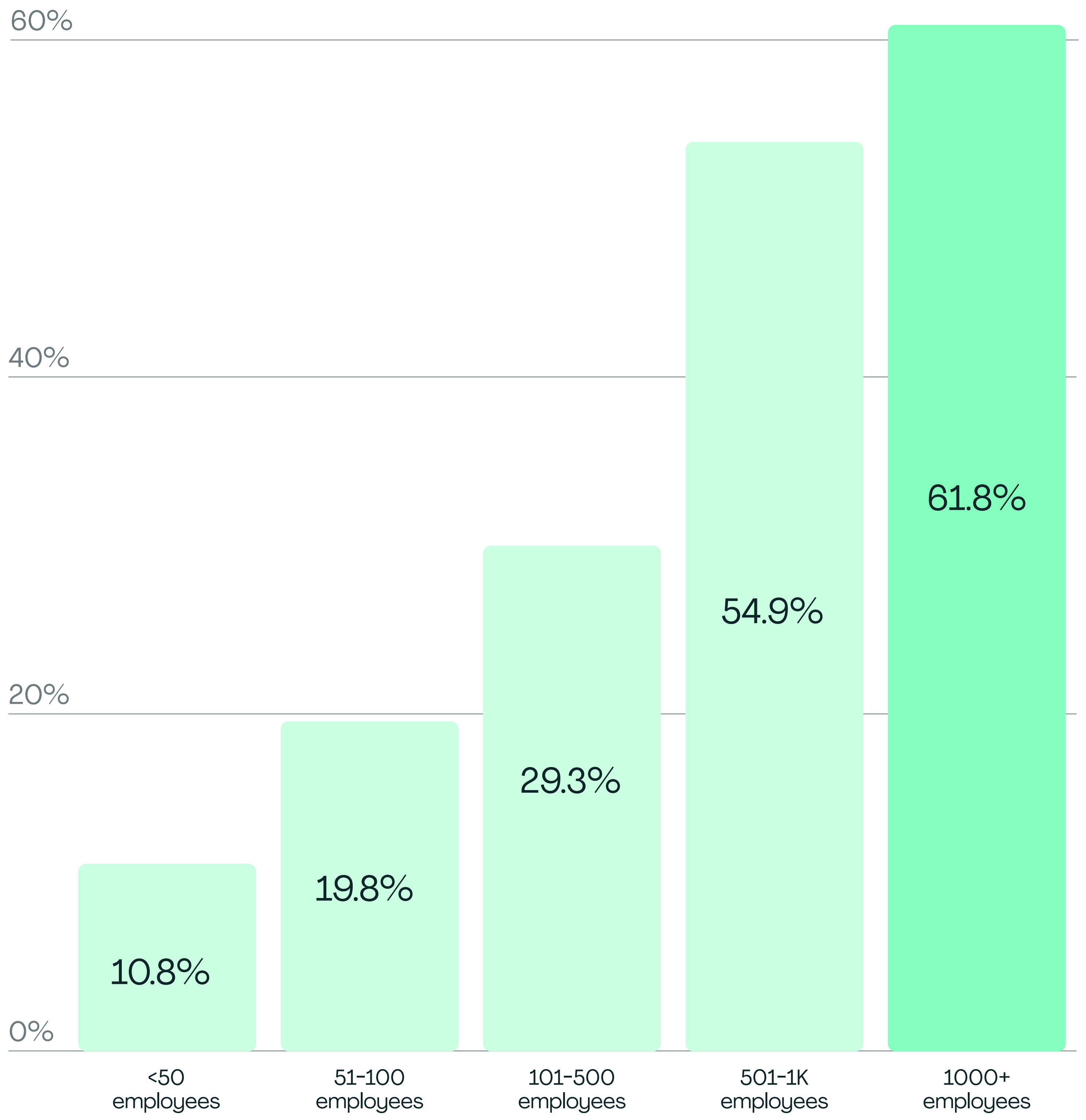
Note on the data: The 2025 report put median spend at €175.000, but that figure is not directly comparable. The 2025 sample carried a higher proportion of enterprise companies and big spenders, which pushed its median up. On a consistent, like-for-like basis the median rose from €127.000 in 2025 to €144.000 in 2026.



FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

HOW MUCH DID YOUR COMPANY SPEND ON INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR?

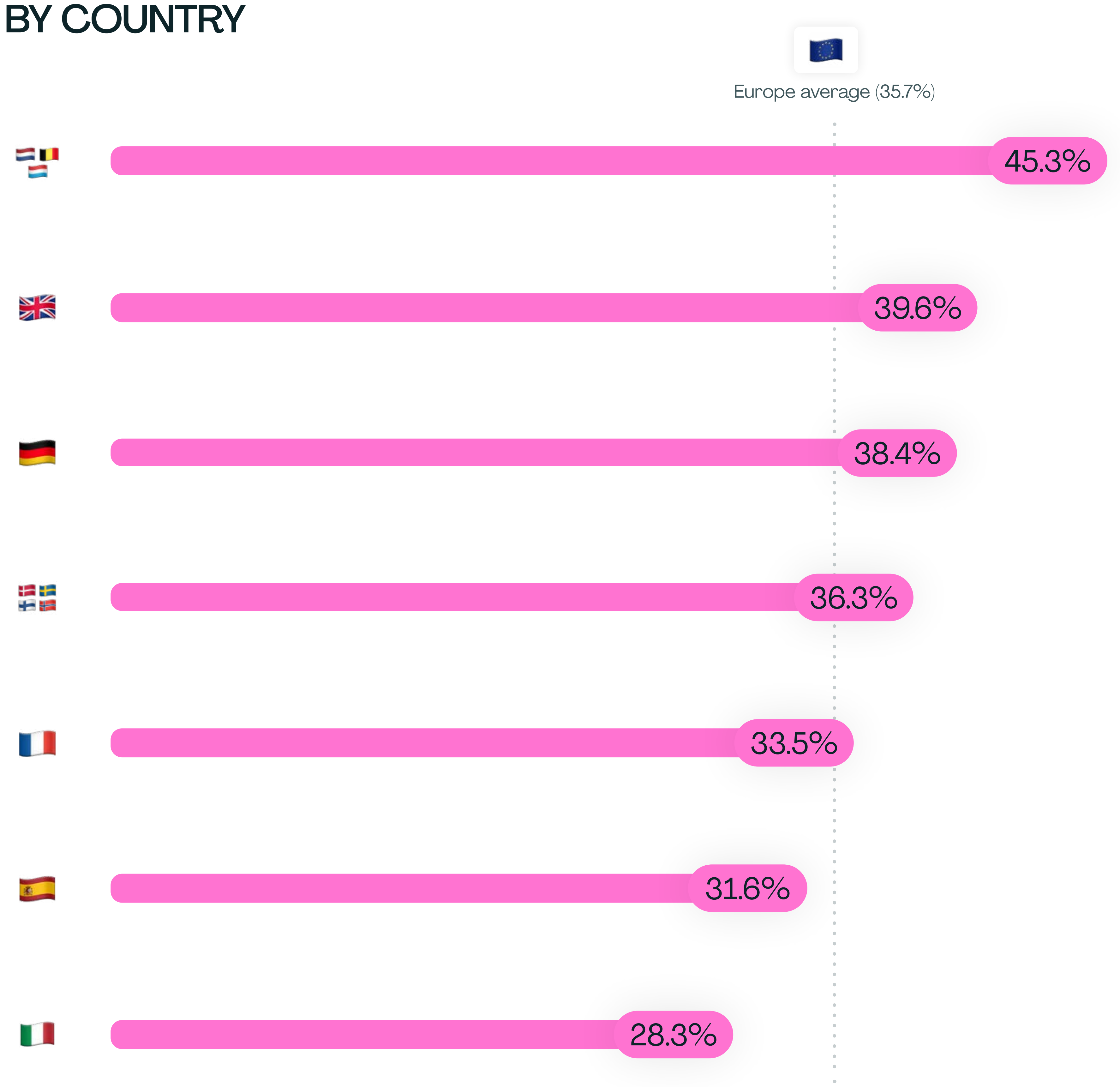
% SPENDING €200K+ ANNUALLY BY EMPLOYEE COUNT



"The industry has grown faster than the operating model around it. Scaling spend is much easier than transforming how an organisation plans, measures and executes creator marketing. The challenge is that many organisations are still structured in silos, where different teams own different budgets, KPIs and technologies."

Jakob Wigselius, CEO Scandinavia, United Influencers / ELLE Norway

% SPENDING €200K+ ANNUALLY BY COUNTRY

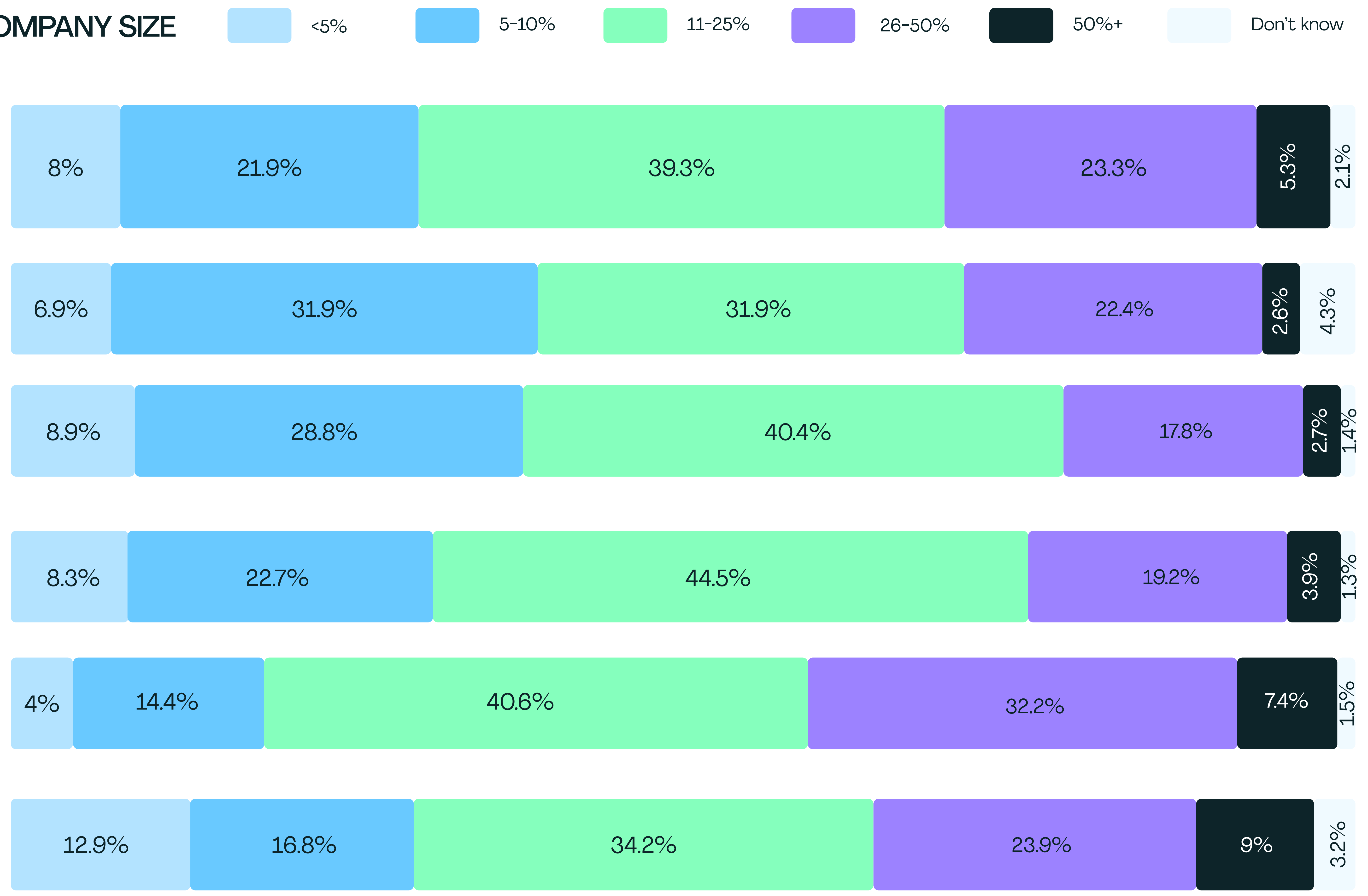


WHAT SHARE OF YOUR COMPANY'S TOTAL MARKETING-DRIVEN REVENUE IS INFLUENCED BY INFLUENCER MARKETING?

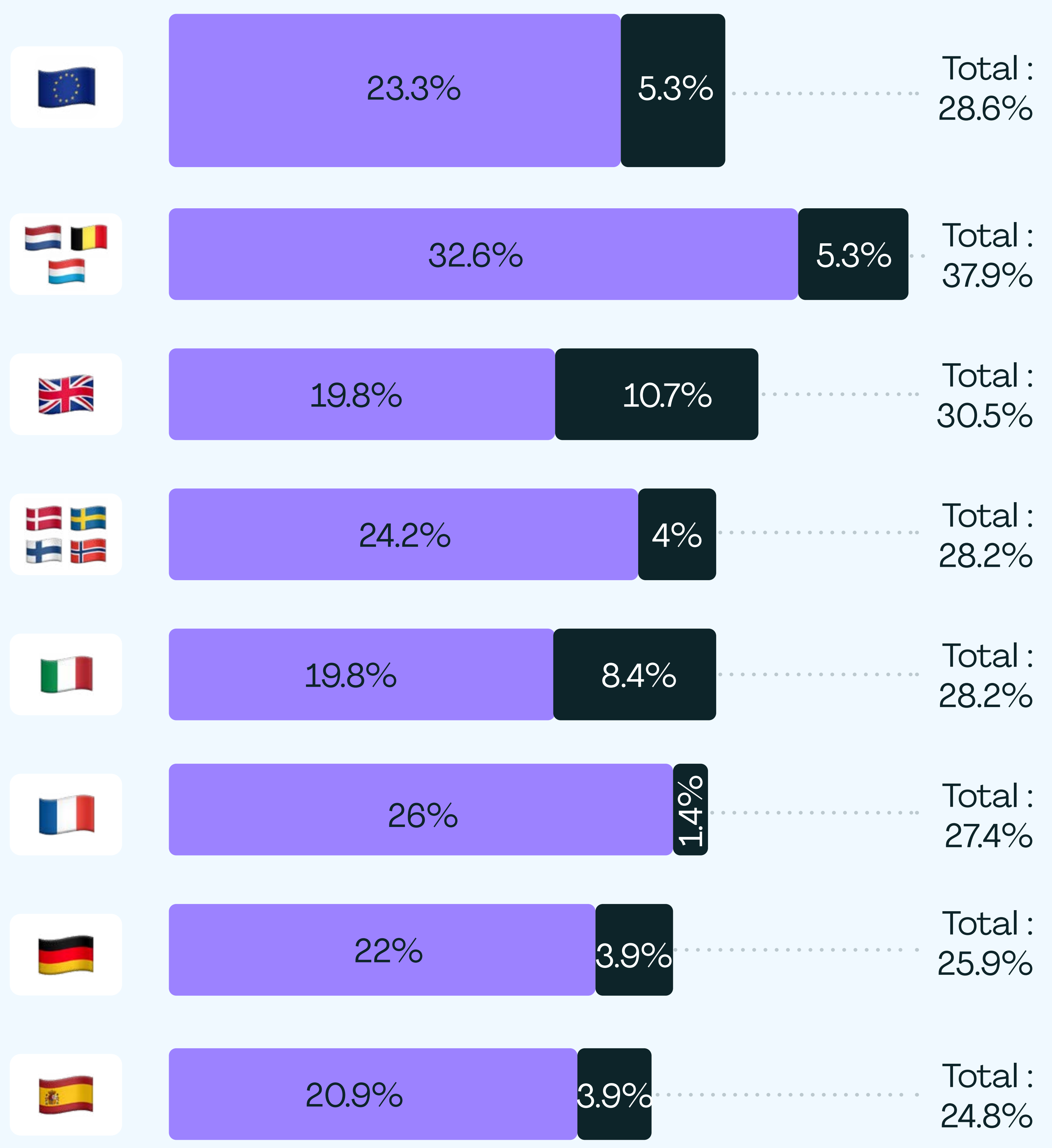
> "New monetisation models are moving influencer marketing from awareness spend to measurable, outcome-based investment."

Head of Influencer Marketing,
Energy, budget spend €200–500K, Spain

BY COMPANY SIZE



Zoom : the 26%+ segments, by countries



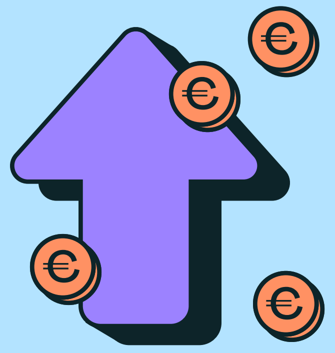
FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

HOW DO YOU EXPECT THE AMOUNT YOUR COMPANY SPENDS ON INFLUENCER MARKETING TO CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

90% of Agencies and 89% of Brands expect budgets to rise in 2027.

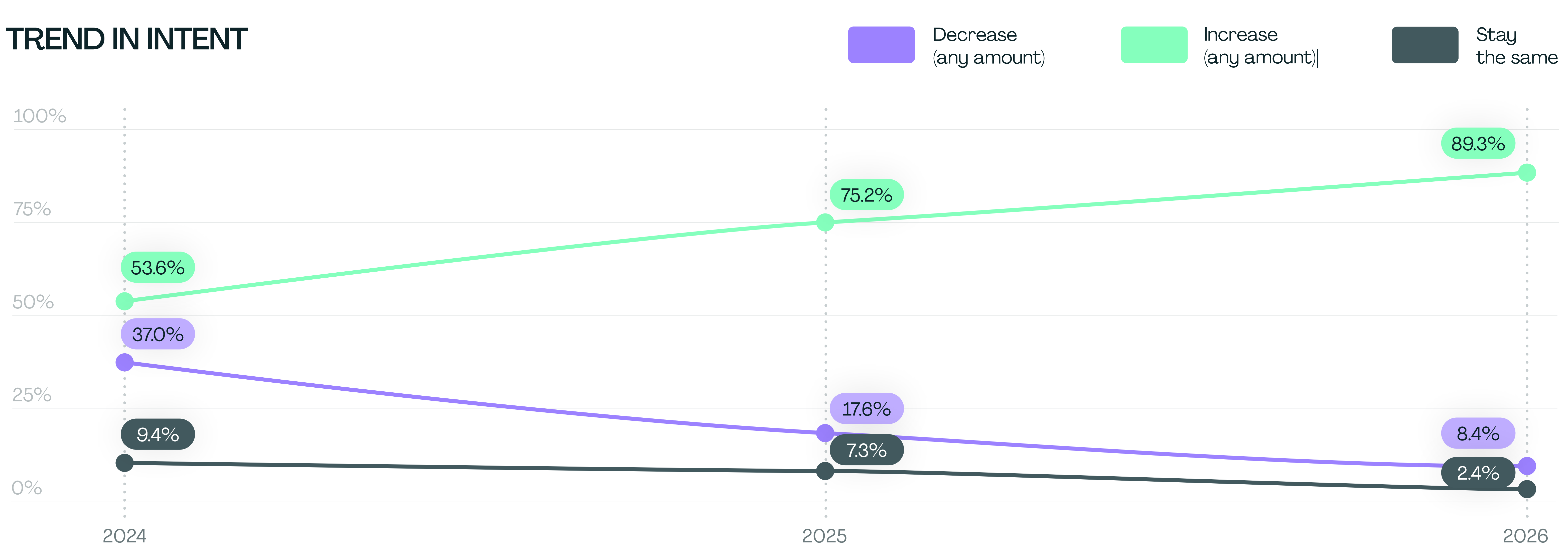
90%
For Agencies

89%
For Brands

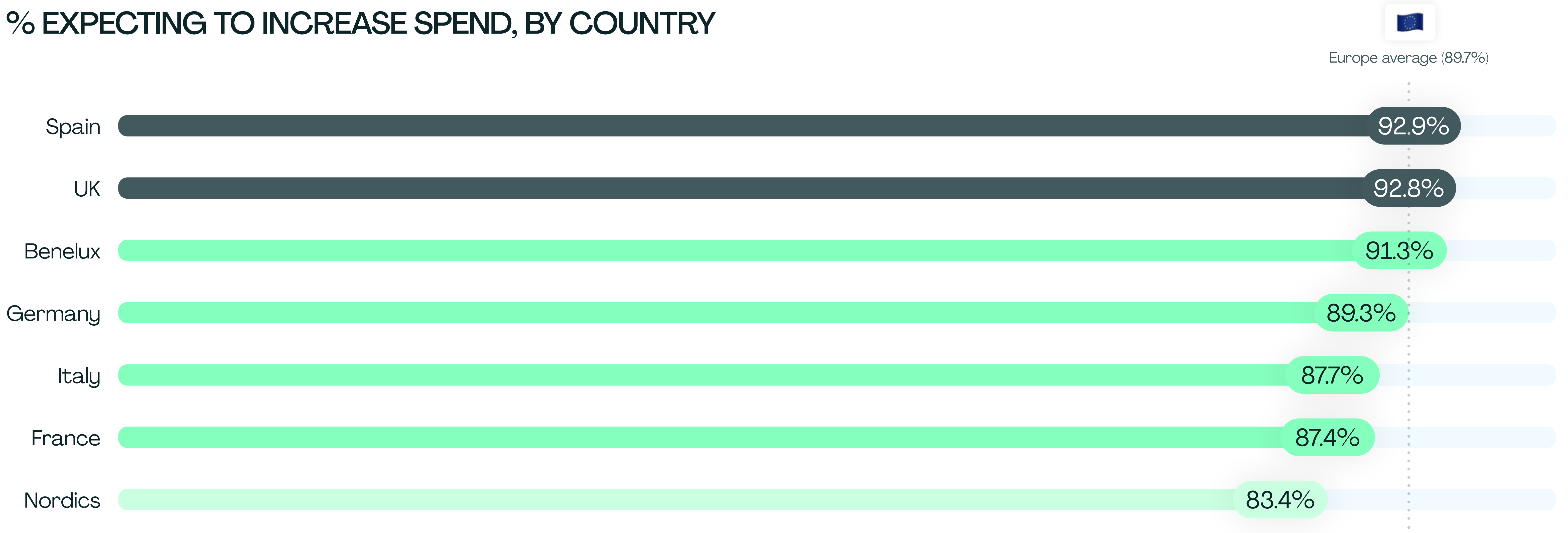


Agencies skew to bigger rises: 43% plan increases of 20%+ vs 38% of brands.

TREND IN INTENT



% EXPECTING TO INCREASE SPEND, BY COUNTRY

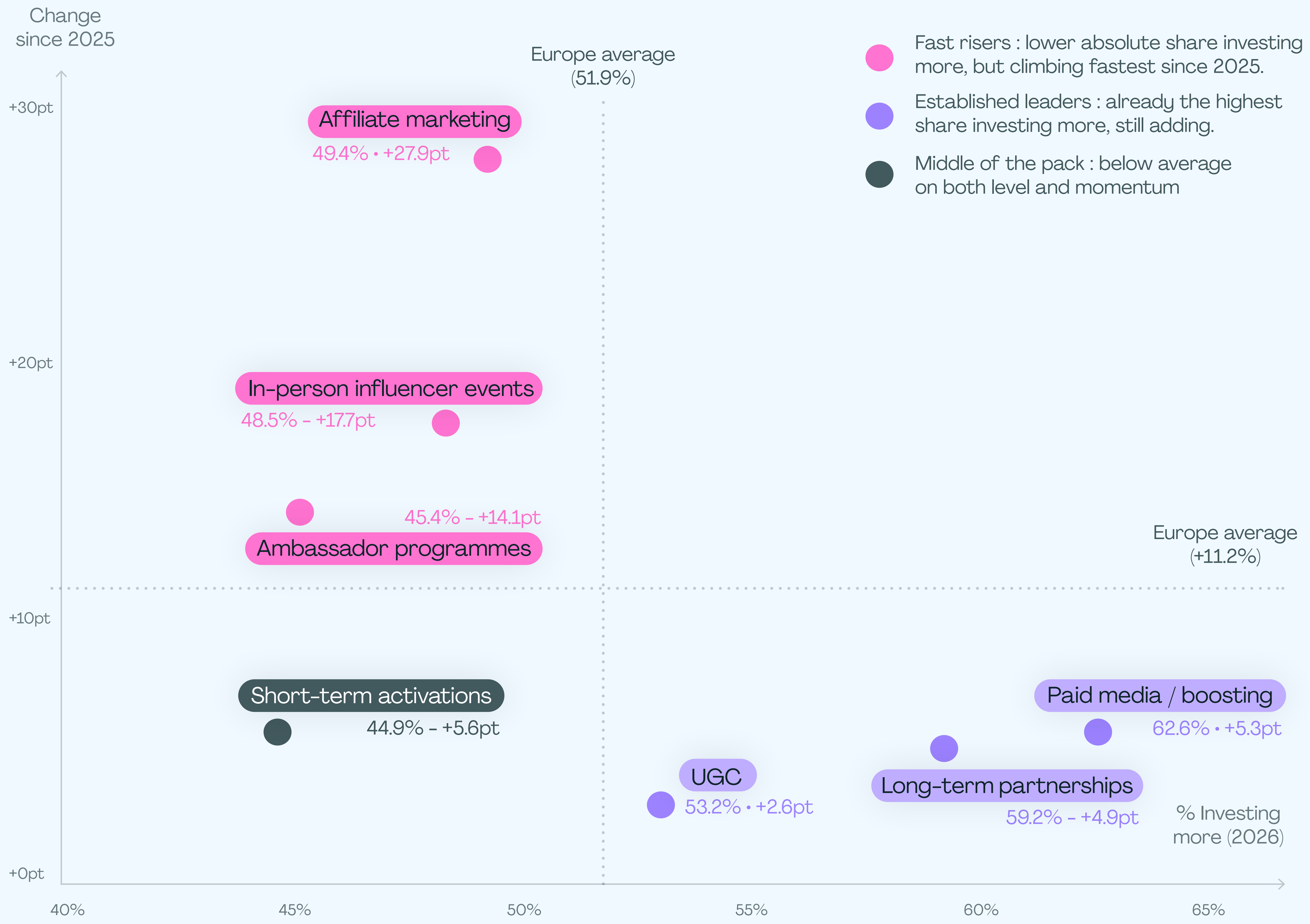


HOW DO YOU EXPECT ALLOCATION OF YOUR BUDGET TO CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

Every area is set to gain, with none seeing more organisations cut than add. Paid media and boosting draw the most new budget (63% investing more), followed by long-term partnerships (59%) and UGC (53%). Appetite has strengthened across the board since 2025, with in-person events and ambassador programmes among the areas climbing most steeply.

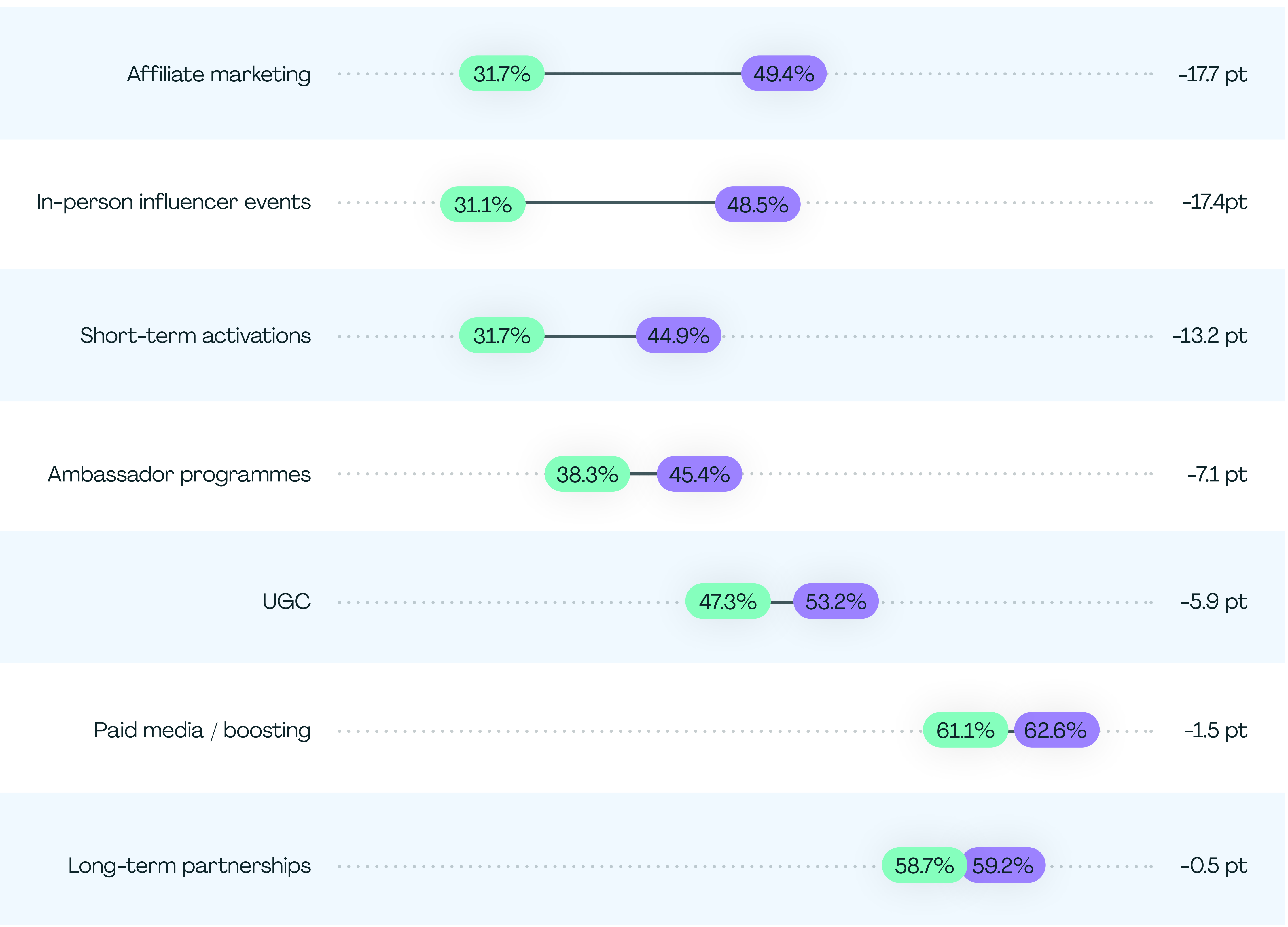
MOMENTUM VS. LEVEL: WHAT'S RISING, WHAT'S ALREADY AHEAD

EUROPE



GERMANY LAGS THE FIELD ON NEW INVESTMENT

Germany
All market average



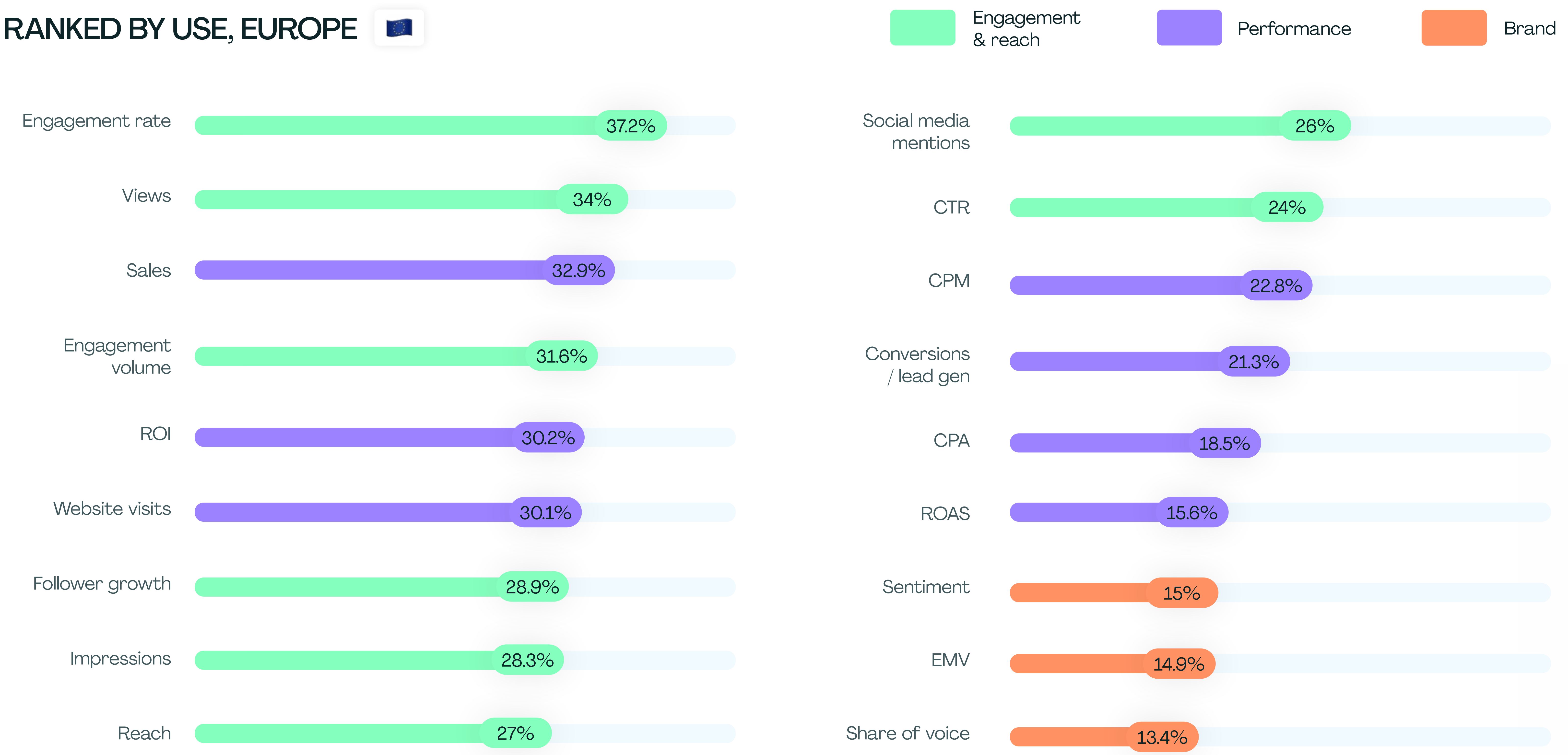
FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHICH KPIS DO YOU MOST RELY ON WHEN EVALUATING INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGNS?

Engagement rate and views are the most-relied-on KPIs, with performance measures such as sales and campaign ROI close behind, and brand metrics used least, a preference for the signals easiest to observe on-platform. The metrics that lead each stage shift across the funnel (reach and views dominate awareness, engagement rate and CTR lead mid-funnel, and ROAS and conversions come to the fore at the bottom), so marketers match measures to campaign objectives rather than applying one number everywhere.

The gap this year is confidence: only 41% are extremely confident even in engagement rate, the top KPI, though views and impressions score higher. And certainty varies sharply by market, strongest in Spain and the UK and weakest in Germany.

RANKED BY USE, EUROPE



"Reach and engagement rates are easily accessible via platform dashboards, creating an illusion of control, while true ROI remains notoriously difficult to isolate. Marketers cling to these metrics because they have to justify budgets to leadership, even if they secretly doubt the depth of the data. We need to shift the conversation from superficial clicks to actual conversion and attribution models."

Clo Willaerts, Steering Committee Member, Influencer Marketing Alliance

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHICH KPIS DO YOU MOST RELY ON WHEN EVALUATING INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGNS?

Standout over-indexers

	Europe	France	Germany	Italy	Spain	UK	Nordics	Benelux
Engagement rate	37.2%	40.8%	38.3%	32.4%	31.7%	40.3%	41.7%	36.5%
Views	34%	32.5%	32.9%	37.6%	37.2%	31.2%	34.1%	31.7%
Sales	32.9%	39.8%	34.1%	31.2%	27.9%	30.5%	29.5%	36.5%
Engagement volume	31.6%	37.2%	24.6%	25.3%	35%	31.2%	34.1%	34.1%
ROI	30.2%	23.6%	28.1%	30%	25.7%	38.3%	25.8%	44.4%
Website visits	30.1%	29.3%	27.5%	32.9%	26.8%	35.7%	30.3%	28.6%
Follower growth	28.9%	34%	27.5%	30%	24.6%	26%	32.6%	27%
Impressions	28.3%	37.7%	25.7%	25.9%	23.5%	30.5%	28%	25.4%
Reach	27%	15.2%	35.9%	31.8%	24%	26%	33.3%	25.4%
Social media mentions	26%	24.6%	26.9%	23.5%	23.5%	20.1%	31.8%	34.9%
CTR	24.4%	24.6%	28.7%	16.5%	21.9%	26%	25.8%	29.4%
CPM	22.8%	28.8%	21.6%	14.7%	26.2%	18.2%	22%	27.8%
Conversions / lead gen	21.3%	20.9%	26.3%	11.2%	24%	30.5%	18.9%	15.9%
CPA	18.5%	15.7%	16.8%	15.9%	21.9%	18.2%	18.9%	23.8%
ROAS	15.6%	17.3%	16.2%	10.6%	18%	16.2%	10.6%	19.8%
Sentiment	15%	13.6%	17.4%	22.9%	18%	9.1%	7.6%	14.3%
EMV	14.9%	23.6%	12.6%	12.4%	14.8%	11%	13.6%	14.3%
Share of voice	13.4%	10.5%	14.4%	11.8%	13.1%	15.6%	12.1%	17.5%

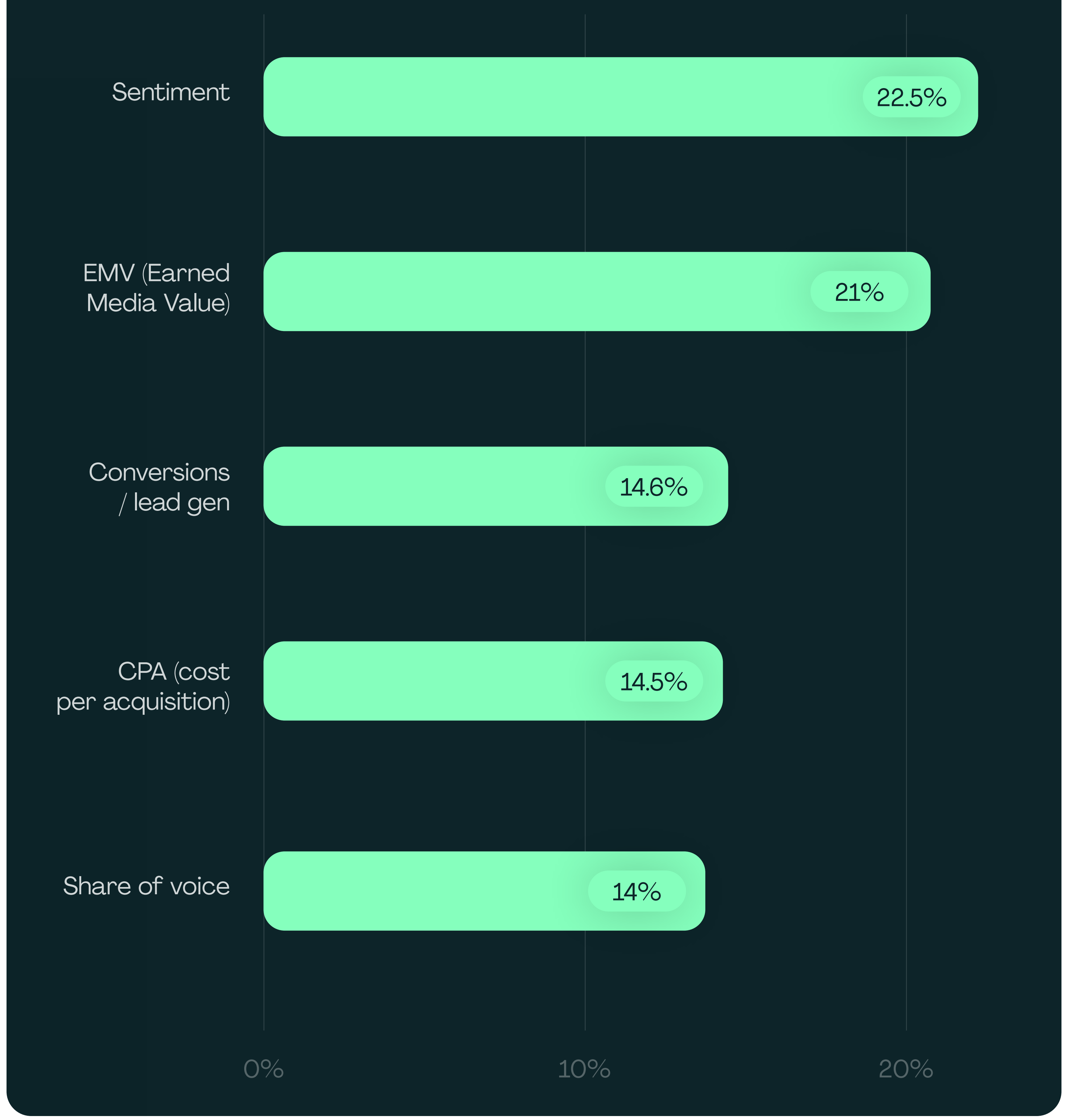
FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU IN YOUR ABILITY TO MEASURE AND ATTRIBUTE THE RESULTS OF INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGNS IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING KPIS?

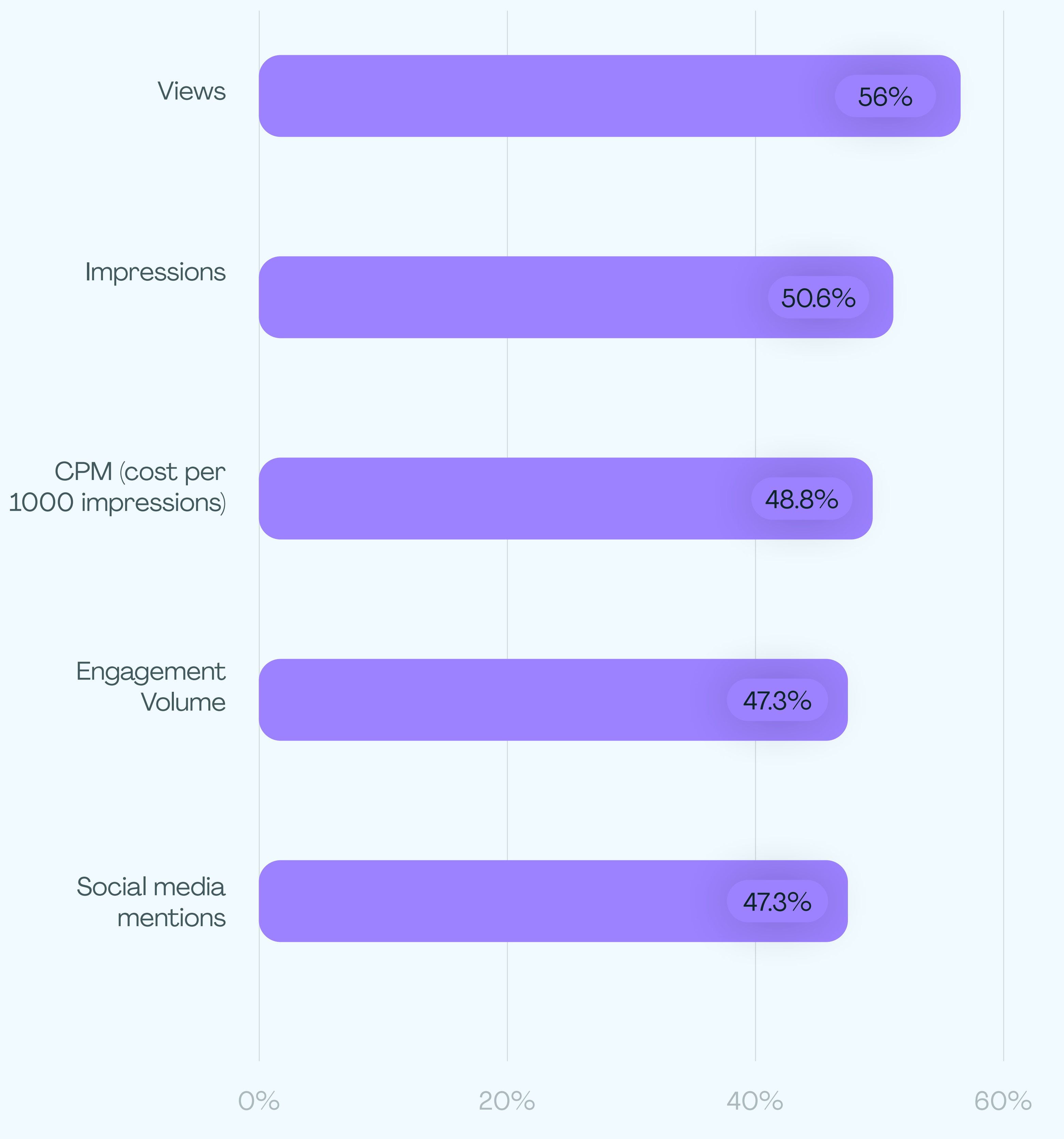
“For years, reach and engagement rate have been the reference KPIs for organic content, and by extension they have been applied to influence. That is the real paradox: these metrics are built for organic content, while influence is paid content. The question is less whether marketers can measure them than whether they are using the right indicators for the right kind of content.”

Fanie Genovese, Head of Social Media, digital marketing agency Better&Stronger

TOP 5 KPIS MARKETERS ARE LEAST CONFIDENT MEASURING



TOP 5 KPIS MARKETERS ARE MOST CONFIDENT MEASURING



AT WHICH FUNNEL STAGE(S) EACH KPI IS USED

	Top of the funnel	Middle of the funnel	Bottom of the funnel
Awareness metrics			
Reach	61.1%	41.6%	28.4%
Views	55.5%	44%	24.6%
Impressions	55%	41.8%	28.9%
Social media mentions	53.1%	51.4%	26%
CPM (cost per 1.000 impressions)	49.2%	50.8%	30.5%
EMV (Earned Media Value)	47.9%	50.9%	26.9%
Share of voice	44.7%	45.3%	32%
Engagement metrics			
Engagement ate	38.8%	65.6%	21.3%
Engagement volume	44.5%	63.1%	26.5%
CTR (click-through-rate)	42%	61.7%	33.2%
Sentiment	36.7%	58%	33.1%
Follower growth	46.9%	55.9%	33%
Website visits	40.2%	55%	31.1%
Conversion metrics			
Sales (Promo-codes/affiliation)	36.6%	42.3%	44.2%
ROI	34.5%	50.1%	47.2%
CPA (cost per acquisition)	32.7%	45.7%	47.6%
Conversion/lead gen	31%	41%	52.3%
ROAS	30.3%	41.1%	56%

"Metrics to look at for ROI in 2027 : average views, watch time, retention, quality of comments. Shares, saves, sends shows that you're relatable. Because if you're doing this you show intent as a user."

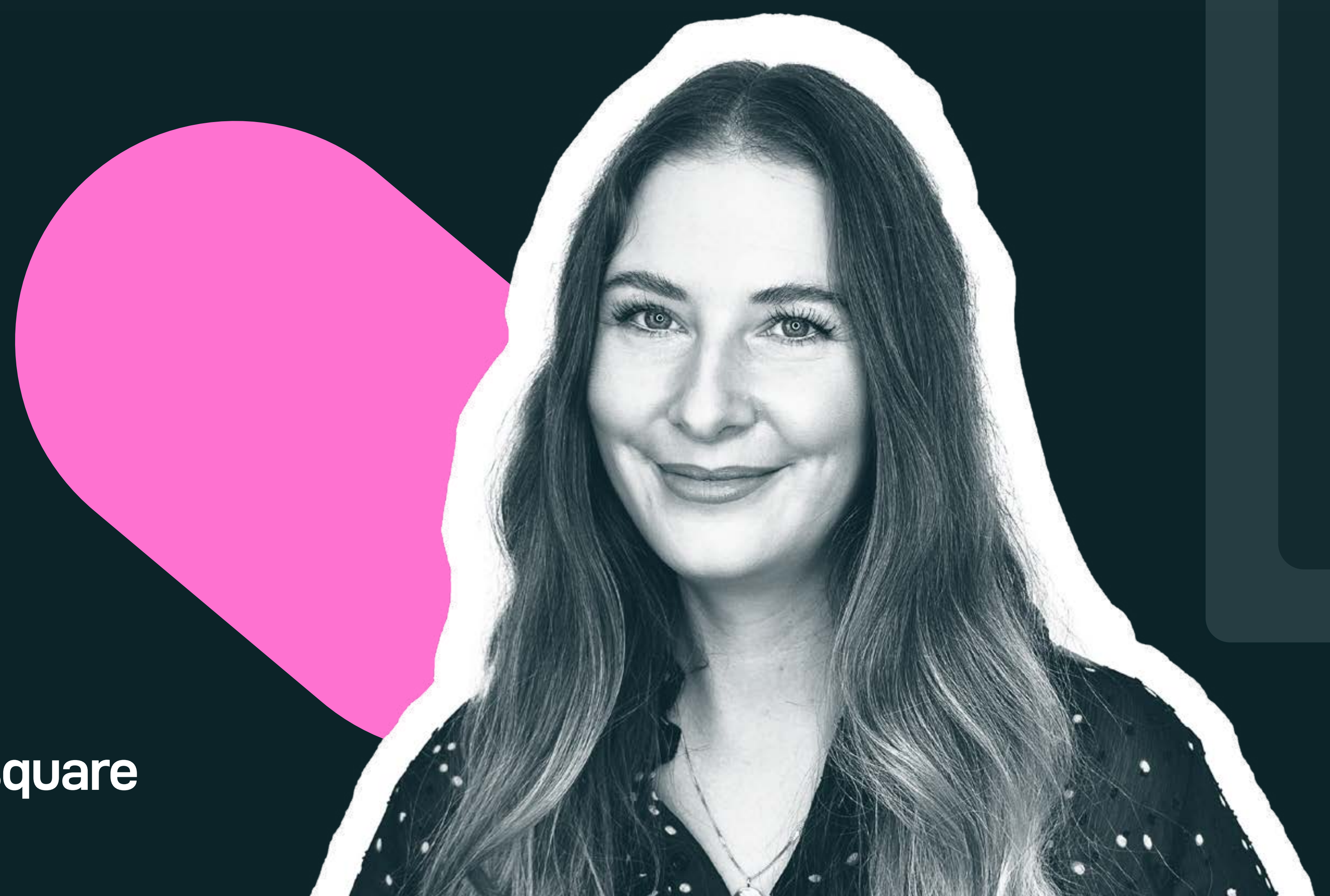
Klara Verzele, Founder KLARENCE Agency, board member Influencer Marketing Alliance (BE)

6 AI AND PLATFORMS GO MAINSTREAM

Technology has become central to influencer strategies. AI or automation is now used by 84% of organisations, with most of the rest exploring it. The deepest use concentrates in Spain and the UK and among the longest-tenured and largest companies. AI serves analysis more than forecasting: audience analysis and fraud detection (62%), content analysis (59%) and campaign planning (52%) lead, while predictive and reporting uses trail. Dedicated influencer marketing platforms have surged in step, used by 65% of organisations, up from 39% in 2025. For the holdouts, the barrier is capacity rather than doubt: a lack of internal resources or expertise leads at 44%, ahead of cost (38%).

"The next competitive advantage won't come from using more AI. It will come from knowing where to stop using it. AI helps me decide who to talk to. It doesn't tell me who I'll build a lasting partnership with."

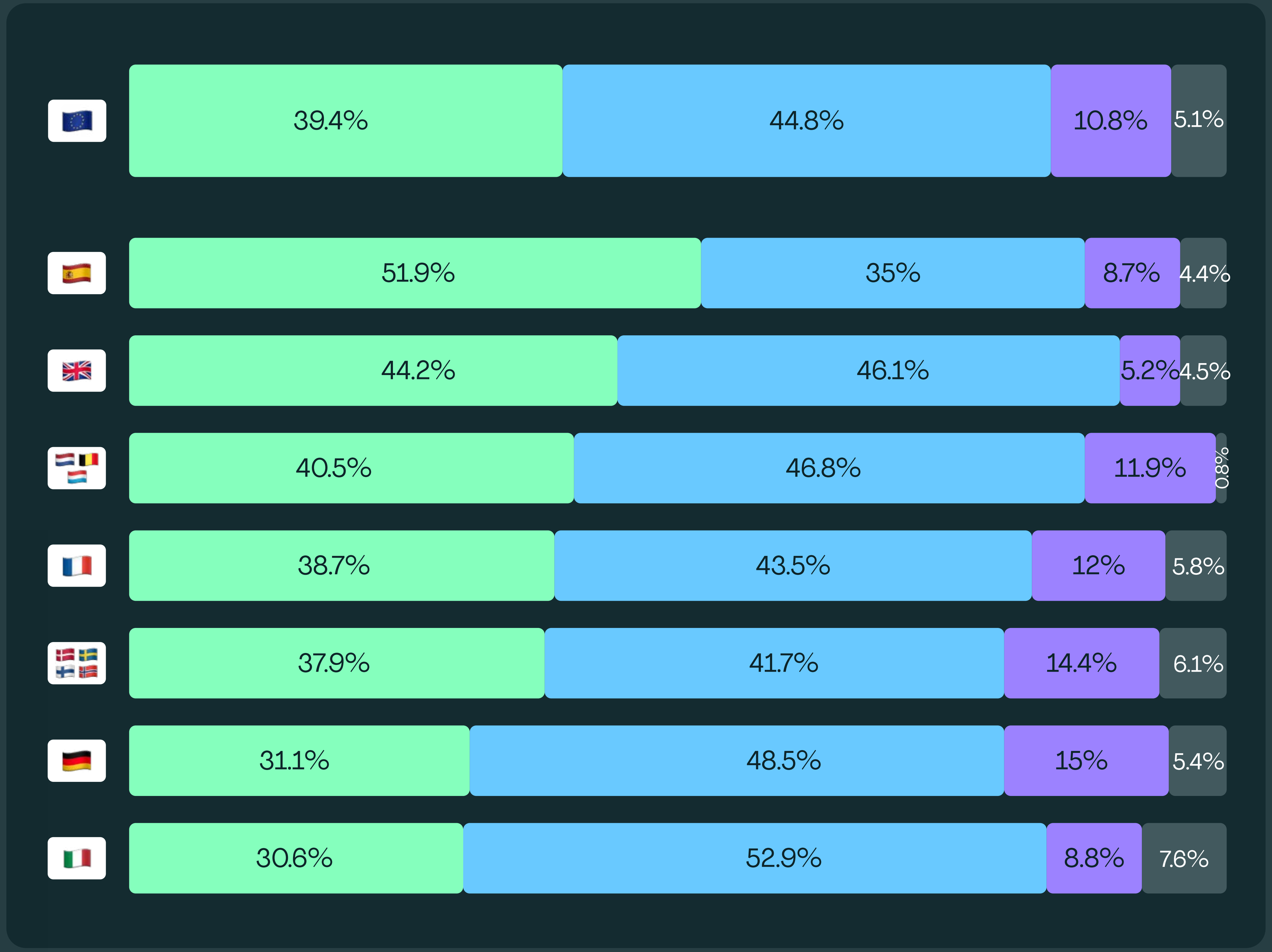
Solbritt Beranek, Engagement & Project Manager, World Animal Protection



FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

DOES YOUR COMPANY CURRENTLY USE AI OR AUTOMATION IN INFLUENCER MARKETING?

- Yes, extensively across multiple use cases
- Yes, for specific use cases
- No, but we are exploring it
- No, and we are not currently considering it



84%

already use AI or automation.

39%

extensively

45%

for specific cases

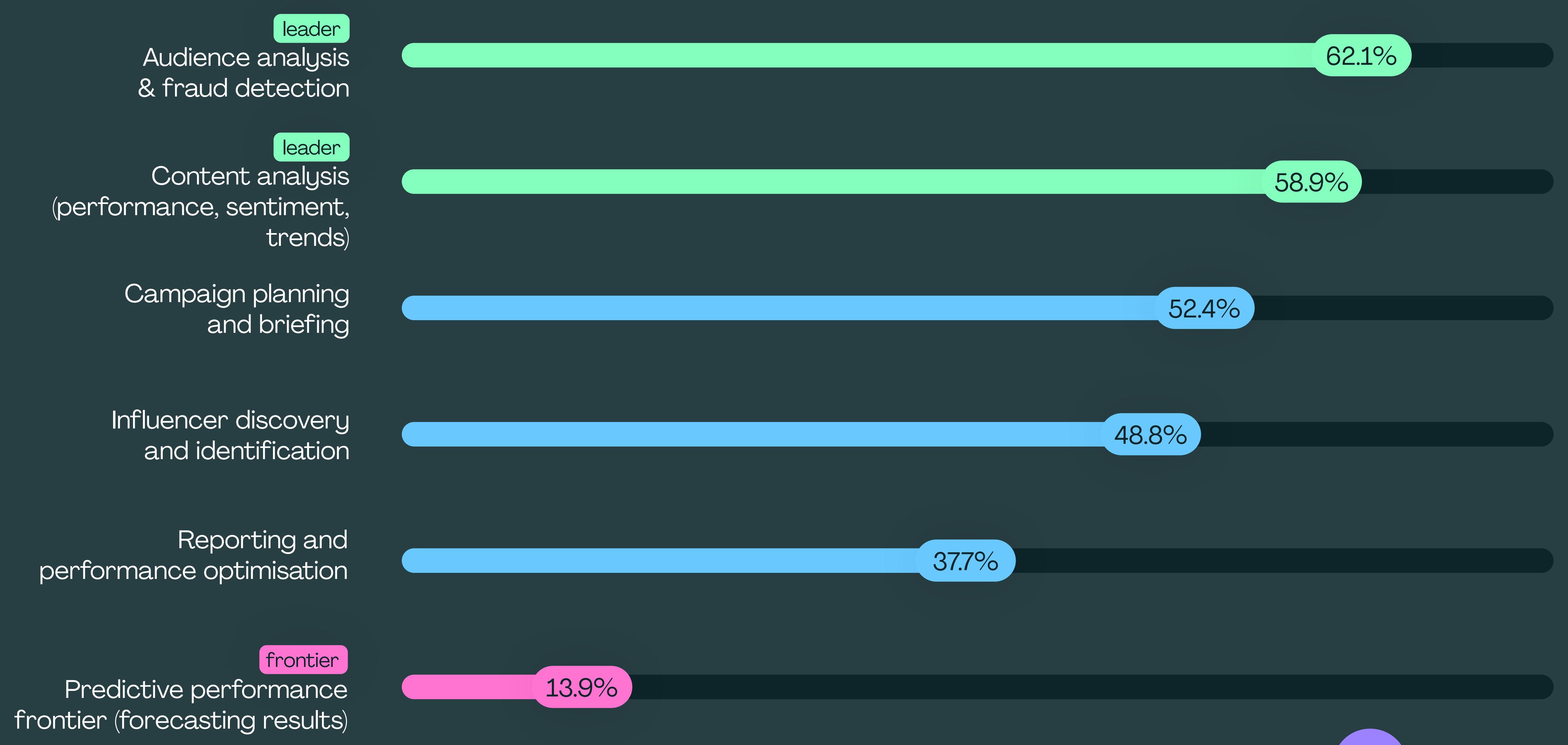
5%

aren't considering it.

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

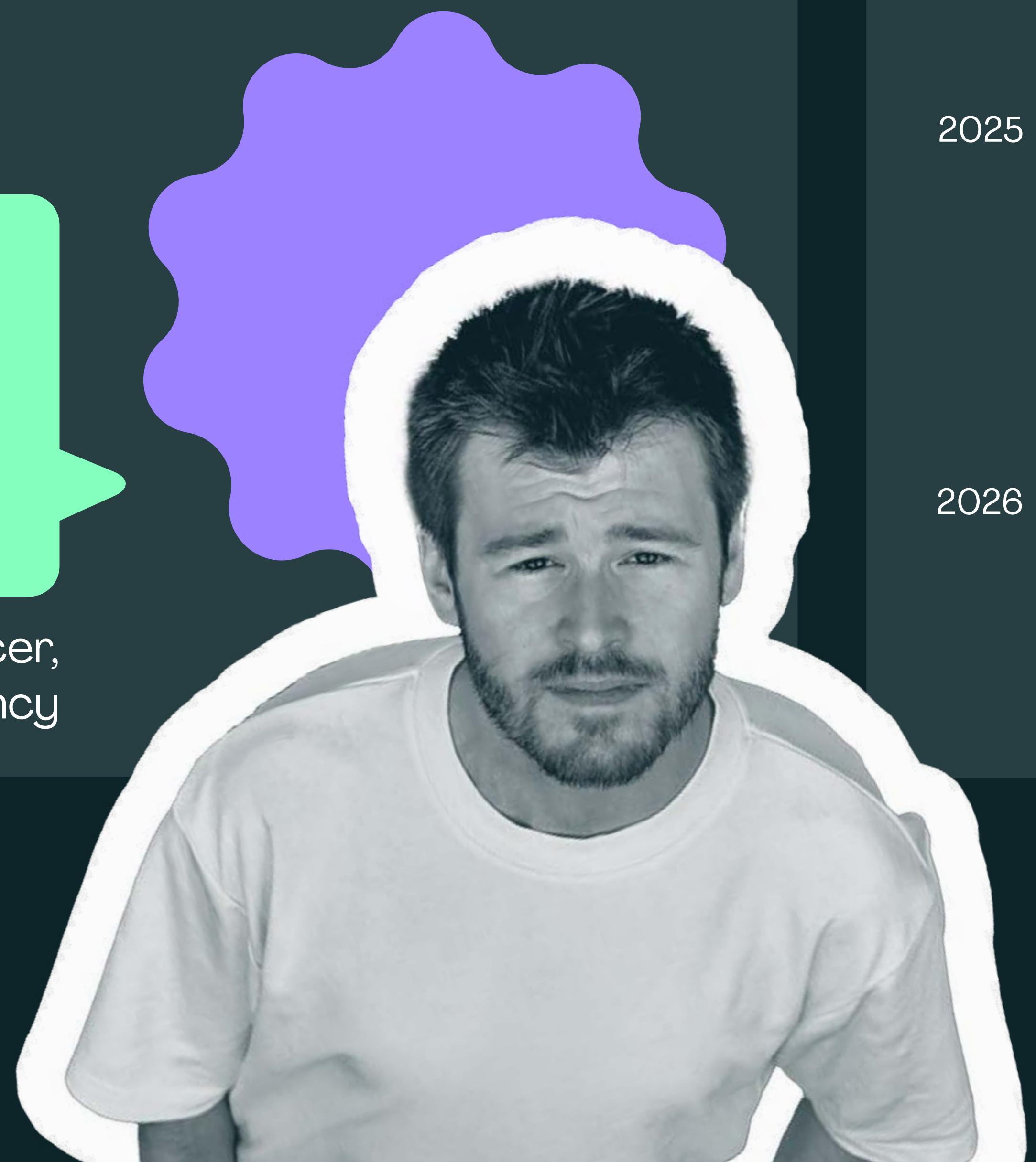
FOR WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING USE CASES DO YOU USE AI OR AUTOMATION?

Base = AI users (945)



"We use AI for both analysis and prediction. But let's be honest: predictive tools are still harder to deploy and not yet fully reliable on certain topics. That's probably what explains the gap we see across the industry. It isn't a lack of ambition, it's a lack of tool maturity and of client understanding."

Thomas Angerer, Co-founder & Chief Creative Officer, BeInfluence Agency

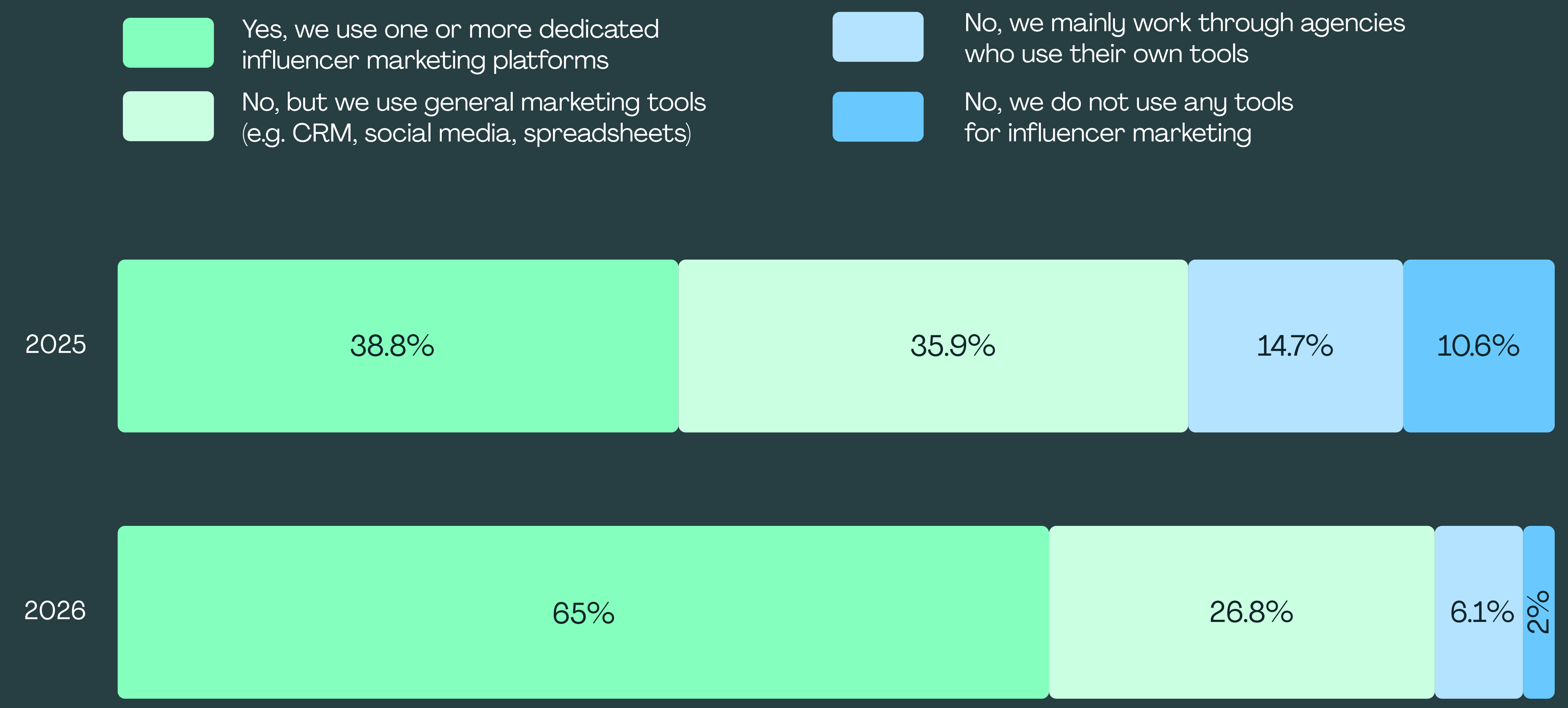


FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

DOES YOUR COMPANY CURRENTLY USE A DEDICATED INFLUENCER MARKETING PLATFORM TO MANAGE YOUR STRATEGY?

65%

now use a dedicated influencer marketing platform, up from 39% in 2025.



FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

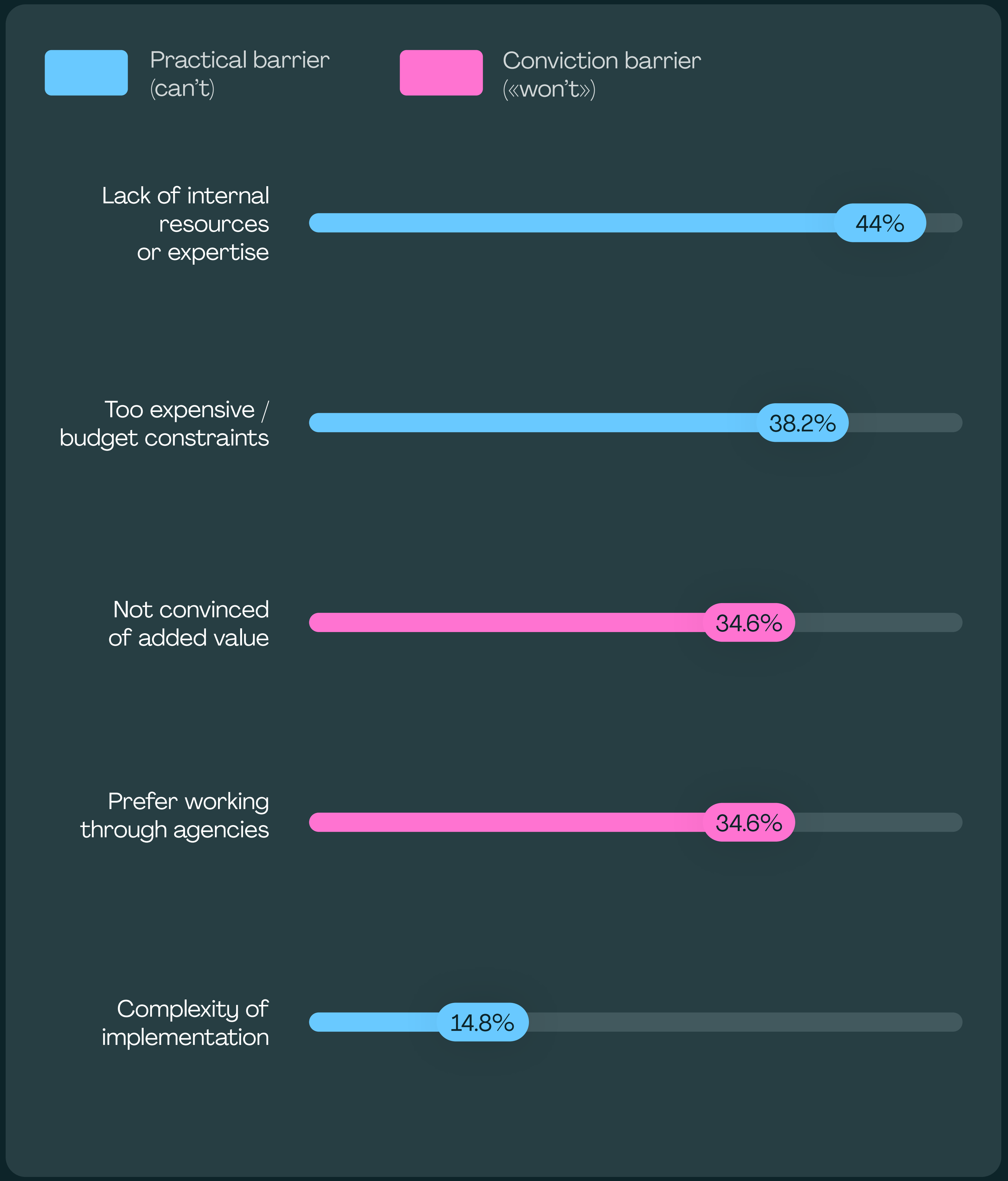
FOR WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TASKS IS YOUR INFLUENCER MARKETING PLATFORM MOST USEFUL?

Base = platform users (730)

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHY DO YOU NOT USE AN INFLUENCER MARKETING PLATFORM?

Base = non users (393)



"The challenge will be to use AI not to standardise audiences, but to better understand their individuality and deliver increasingly personalised experiences. Spotify does this very well with their Wrapped. When will we see the equivalent from a beauty brand for their Gen Z audiences?"

Evan Nataf, Co-Founder,
Influencer marketing agency Beastly, France

7 HEADWINDS AND HORIZONS

Ethics are formalising, challenges are converging, and optimism runs high. Brands are asking more of creators, pushing beyond baseline compliance towards values-led conditions and, in many markets, formal certification. No single challenge dominates, with a tight cluster of cost, creator control, platform algorithms and measurement leading the field within three points. Optimism centres on short-form video (49%) and AI (45%), the two levers marketers see as biggest for the year ahead.

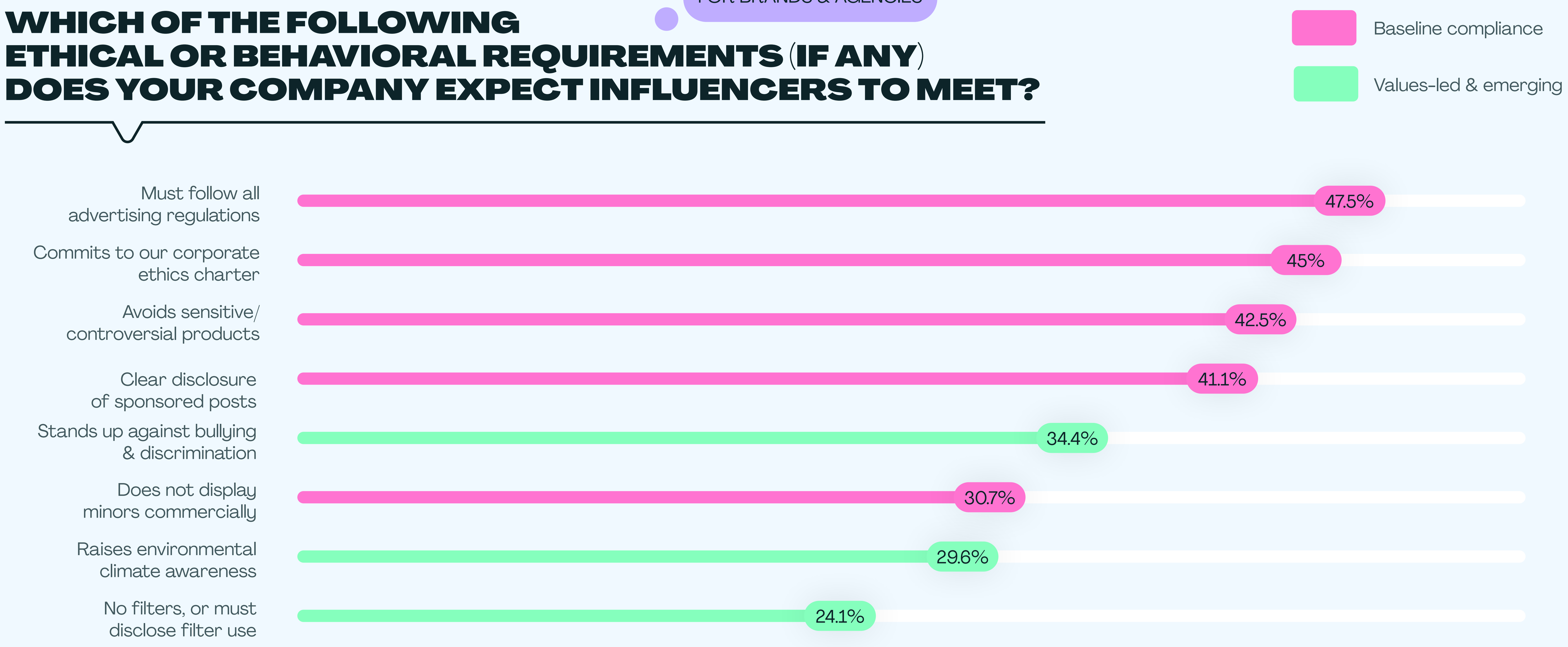
> "The brands creating the biggest impact are the ones that stop treating influencers as media channels and start treating them as long-term partners. You can buy reach. You can't buy values."

Solbritt Beranek, Engagement & Project Manager, World Animal Protection

Ethical expectations are broadening from baseline compliance towards values and accountability. Regulatory basics still lead, adhering to advertising rules (48%), corporate ethics charters (45%), avoiding sensitive products (43%) and clear disclosure of paid posts (41%). For the first time, the study also tracks whether brands require a 'Responsible Influence' certificate or training; although such schemes are relatively new, adoption is already strong, at 29% across the markets where they apply and as high as 41% in Benelux, 31% in Spain and 29% in France. The fastest-rising conditions are values-led: standing up against bullying is up nine points to 34%, environmental awareness up to 30% from 17%, and disclosing filters up to 24% from 15%. Markets pull in distinct directions, with Italy most insistent on corporate ethics (57%), France on avoiding sensitive products (52%), the UK on disclosure (49%) and the Nordics on filters and honest imagery (37%).

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ETHICAL OR BEHAVIORAL REQUIREMENTS (IF ANY) DOES YOUR COMPANY EXPECT INFLUENCERS TO MEET?



NEW FOR 2026

Methodology note: 'Must have completed Responsible Influence certificate or training' is a new option for 2026. Respondents name three conditions on average each year, so adding a new attribute spreads responses across more options and lowers the year-on-year percentages of the existing conditions. This reflects a broadening set of expectations, not a fall in standards. The ranking of the leading behaviors is unchanged from previous years. The certificate option was shown only in countries where such programmes are available.

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ETHICAL OR BEHAVIORAL REQUIREMENTS (IF ANY) DOES YOUR COMPANY EXPECT INFLUENCERS TO MEET?

Nordics leads on filters & honest imagery (37%)

57%

Italy leads on corporate ethics charter

52%

France leads on avoiding sensitive products

UK leads on clear disclosure (49%)

Benelux leads on 'Responsible Influence' certificate (41%)

FASTEST-RISING CONDITIONS

"Self-regulation is the most efficient, accessible and agile way to guarantee a sustainable influencer marketing sector. It protects the interests of the followers by guaranteeing ethical content, of the influencers (securing trust) and brands (protecting brand safety). Thanks to the national influencer certificates, creators can learn the rules and are guided through this process."

Patrick Marck, Director, Influencer Marketing Alliance & FeWeb (Belgium)

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES WHEN RUNNING INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGNS TODAY?

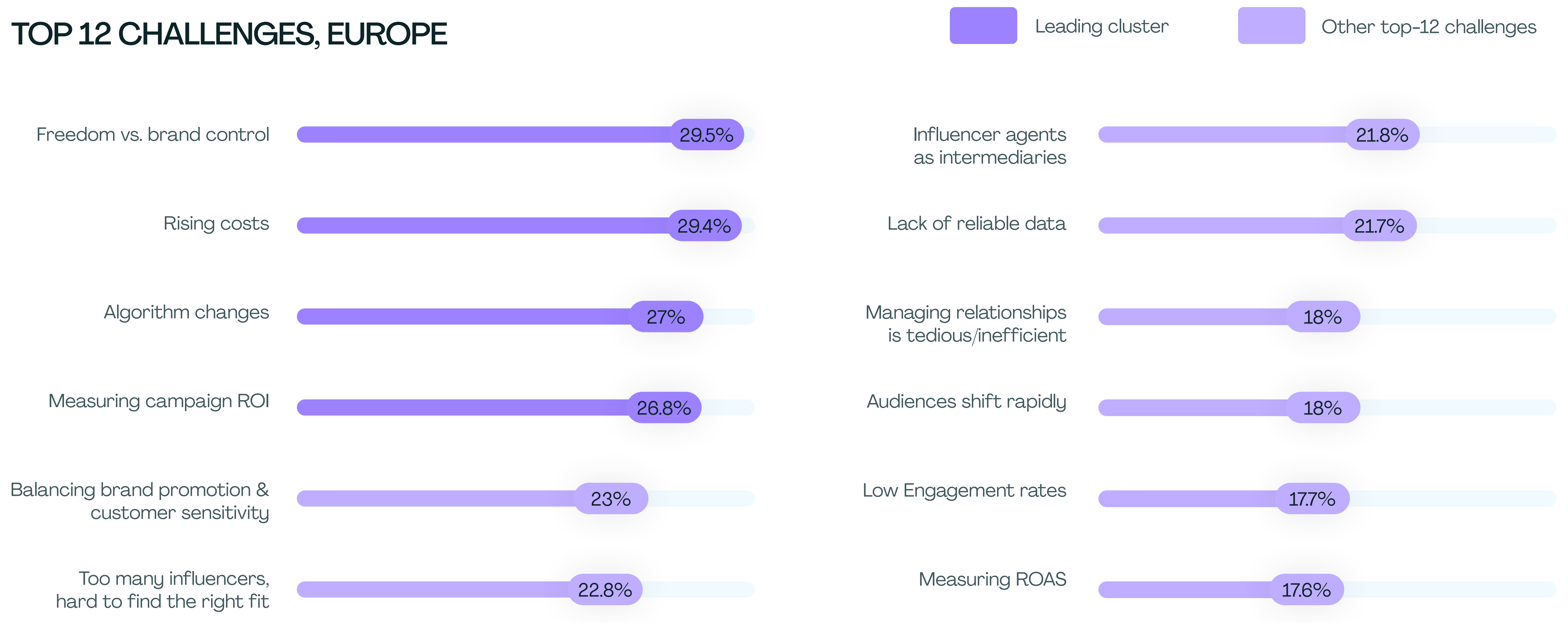
Two challenges sit almost level at the top: influencer freedom versus brand control (29.5%) and rising costs (29.4%). Platform algorithm changes (27%) and measuring campaign ROI (26.8%) sit just behind. Cost pressure weighs most on smaller companies (33% of firms under 50 employees versus 26% of the largest) and is felt most acutely in France (34%) and least in Italy (24%), while Benelux is most troubled by algorithm changes (33%) and Spain by measuring ROI (30%).

Year on year, rising costs have climbed from fourth place in 2024 to second in 2026, while the freedom-versus-control tension has eased from a 2024 peak of 41% but still leads. Measuring ROI and ROAS were offered as a single combined answer before 2026 and were split into two this year, so both show no earlier rank.

"Balancing influencer freedom and brand control is hard without losing authenticity or message consistency."

VP, Marketing, Fashion & Accessories, budget spend £200–500K, UK

TOP 12 CHALLENGES, EUROPE



Six further challenges, cited by 12-15%

- Management not convinced of value (14.7%)
- Don't get enough ROI (14.3%)
- Increasing administrative burden (14.0%)
- No set fee structure (13.8%)
- New regulatory requirements (13.3%)
- Too much data, overwhelming (12.4%)

"Measuring ROI" and "Measuring ROAS" were one combined answer before 2026 and split into two this year, so both are new to the ranking.

"Higher budgets mean higher client expectations. The channel is reaching maturity and now has to prove performance on par with the classic levers: out-of-home, TV, social media. On ambassador programmes, two forces are converging. Rising costs, which are manageable through a long-term approach, and a crisis of confidence, which you work through by having the same creator speak up more regularly. On physical events, it's above all a Gen Z expectation: to live brand experiences alongside creators, not just watch them online."

Thomas Angerer, Co-Founder & Chief Creative Officer, BeInfluence Agency

FOR BRANDS & AGENCIES

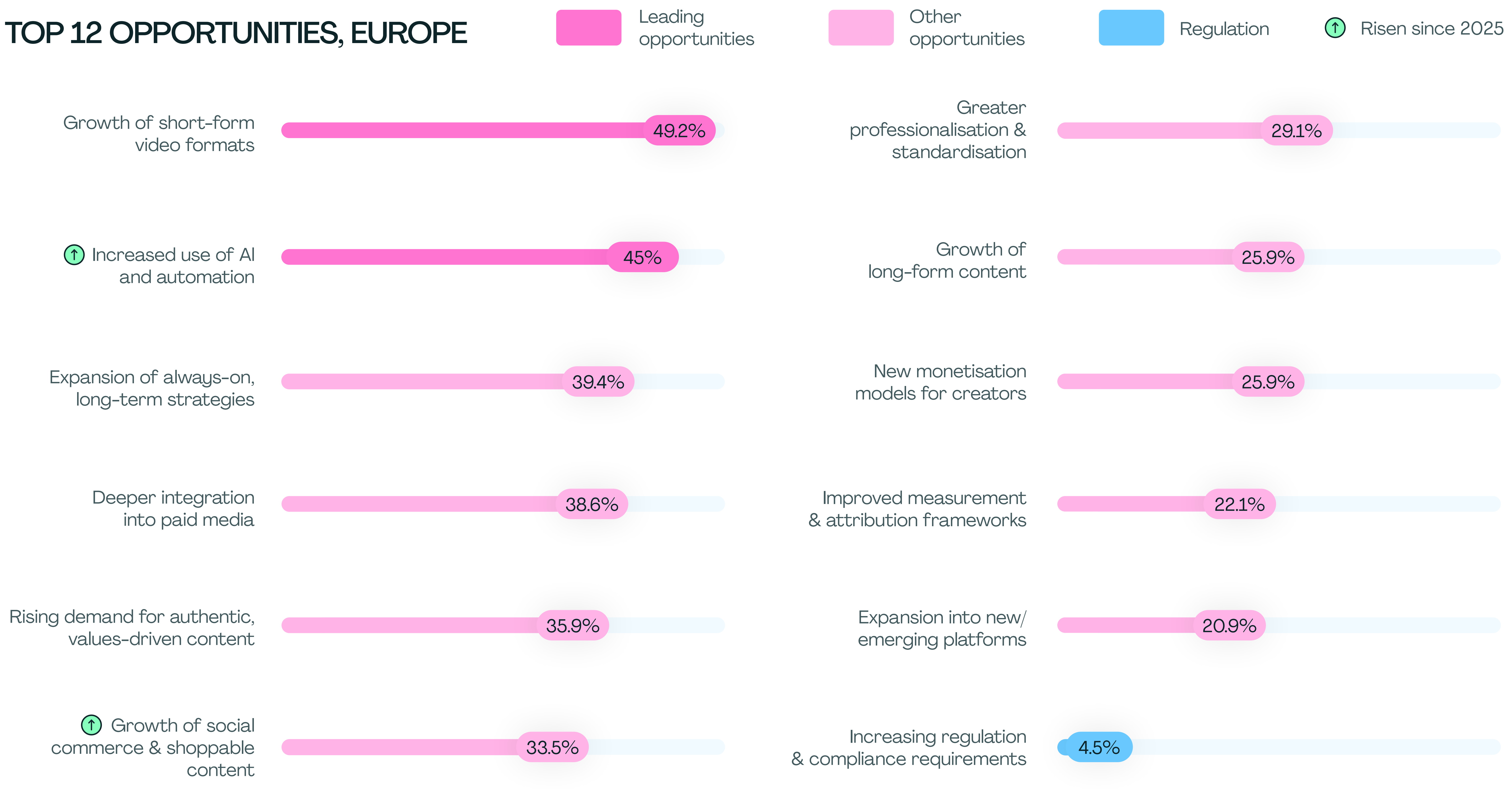
WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE INFLUENCER MARKETING INDUSTRY IN THE YEAR AHEAD?

Optimism is broad and future-facing. Short-form video is seen as the biggest opportunity by a wide margin (49%), ahead of greater use of AI and automation (45%, up from 41% in 2025) and always-on, long-term influencer strategies (39%). Social commerce is climbing fast, cited by 34% against 28% a year ago, while appetite for authentic, values-driven content holds firm at 36%. Regulation is the clear outlier, seen as an opportunity by just 5%.

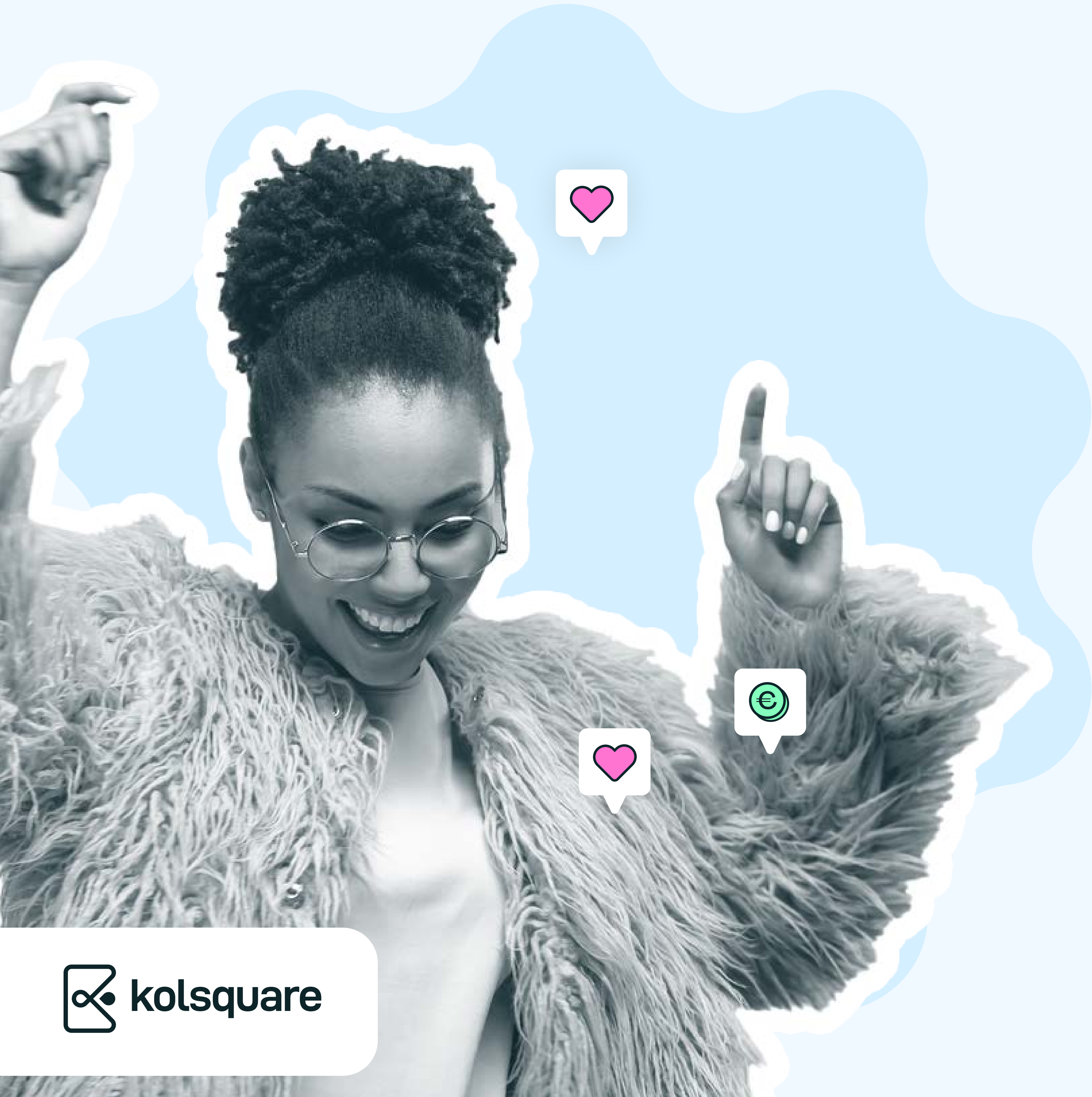
"Short-form videos are well suited to travel content and clearly support bookings and brand awareness for our properties."

Head of Social Media, Tourism & Hospitality,
budget spend €200–500K, Italy

TOP 12 OPPORTUNITIES, EUROPE



Some apparent declines (deeper paid-media integration, values-driven collaborations, industry professionalisation) partly reflect three new answer options added in 2026 - long-form content, measurement frameworks, and regulation - which spread responses across more choices rather than signalling reduced interest.



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HOW DOES YOUR INFLUENCER MARKETING STRATEGY STACK UP AGAINST THE MARKET LEADERS?

What separates the brands driving real revenue from those still guessing? We built a model with **B2B International**, analysing **848 brands** to pinpoint the **eight practices that actually move revenue**, and show where your strategy wins and where it needs work.

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HOW YOUR SCORE IS BUILT

Operational readiness + Campaign execution + Market reach

?/100
YOUR SCORE

8 practices, weighted by statistical modelling • with B2B International - 848 brands

ABOUT KOLSQUARE

Kolsquare is a Global Influencer Marketing Intelligence platform helping brands and agencies build, manage, measure, and scale influencer marketing strategies with data-driven insights.

Combining advanced data analytics, AI, and machine learning technologies, Kolsquare enables marketing teams to discover the right creators, understand their audiences, manage campaigns from end to end, measure impact, and benchmark performance against industry standards.

Trusted by more than 2.000 global and national brands and agencies, Kolsquare provides access to one of the world's most comprehensive creator intelligence databases, covering millions of creators across 180 countries and major social platforms including Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat and Twitch.

Certified B Corporation

As a Certified B Corporation, Kolsquare is committed to advancing Responsible Influence by promoting transparency, ethical collaborations, and more sustainable practices across the creator economy.

In October 2024, Kolsquare joined Team.Blue, one of Europe's largest private technology groups and a leading digital enabler for businesses and entrepreneurs.

Team.Blue brings together more than 60 brands across web hosting, domains, e-commerce, online compliance, lead generation, application solutions, and social media.

www.kolsquare.com

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B2B International is one of the world's most experienced business-to-business market research companies, operating globally with specialists in every major region. Its bespoke research has helped more than 900 leading brands make smarter, insight-driven decisions. Its thought leadership research turns rigorous data into credible, evidence-based content. B2B International conducted the fieldwork for the 2026 edition of this study.

To learn more, head to www.b2binternational.com

AUTHORS

- Sophie Douez, Journalist
- Lucie Torres, SEO & Content Manager
- Quentin Bordage, Founder + CEO

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