



# The 2024 Tech Pro's Guide to Data-Powered Marketing

How 50 Technical Leaders See  
the Future of Data Collection &  
Activation





# Methodology

We interviewed 50 senior technical leaders across a variety of leading AdTech, MarTech, and Data-as-a-Service providers. We supplemented this research with publicly available data from Statista, Salesforce, Spiceworks, and Capterra.

## Representative sample of respondent companies in the study:

- Comscore
- Double Verify
- Experian
- Foursquare
- Integral Ad Science
- MParticle
- LexisNexis
- LiveRamp
- Rakuten Advertising
- Treasure Data
- And many other respected organizations

## Sample of the technology officers responding:

- CTO
- VP of Engineering
- VP of Global Operations
- VP of Operations
- VP of Product Development
- VP of Technology
- Director Data Products

# Executive Summary

It's easy to find reports that cover insights about marketing data from the marketers themselves. But what about market insights from the professionals who own the back-end operations? There are important opinions and real decisions that need to be surfaced, soon, about:

- Exploding data volumes
- Ability to process data in real-time
- Data clean rooms
- Changes to bread-and-butter approaches to digital marketing
- Privacy regulations that change constantly at the local, national and global level

**The marketing data industry is deeply dependent on its technical back-end. In order to keep the insights flowing, this back-end must be constantly monitored, managed and optimized. How are senior tech leaders thinking about current and future challenges?**

**As you'll see, senior leaders are formulating hypotheses about how to ensure a smooth transition into solving tomorrow's marketing data challenges. How do you and your organization compare to the findings in this report?**

*– Dan Jaye, Founder and CEO, Aqfer*



# The Impact of Changing Technology on Technical Operations

Major Drivers of Operational Change:



Legacy technology  
& technical debt



Emphasis on different  
capabilities needed in  
a changed world



Stricter data privacy  
requirements

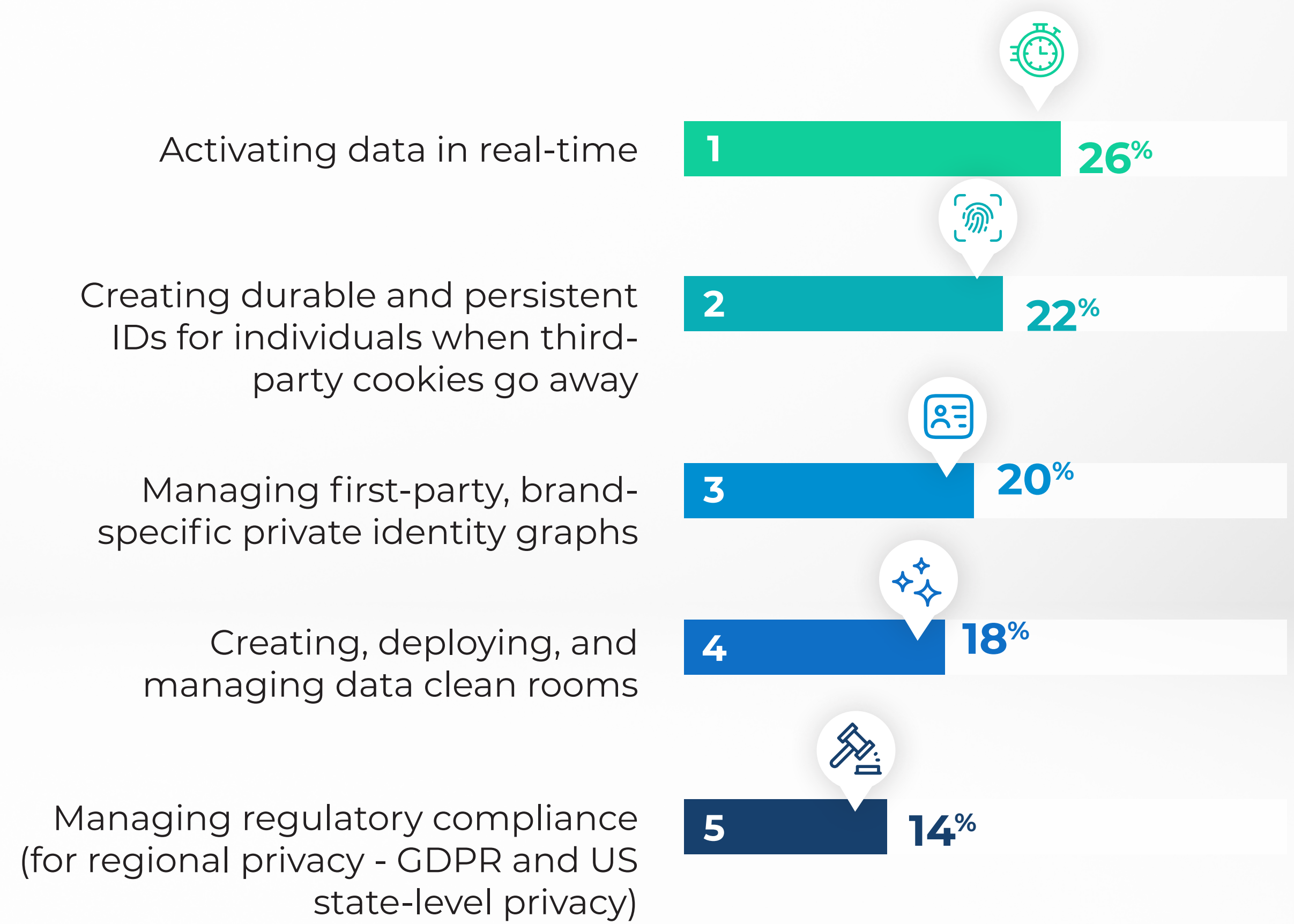


Need for faster access  
and real-time data



Changing technology  
has changed the  
technical capabilities  
that the industry  
values

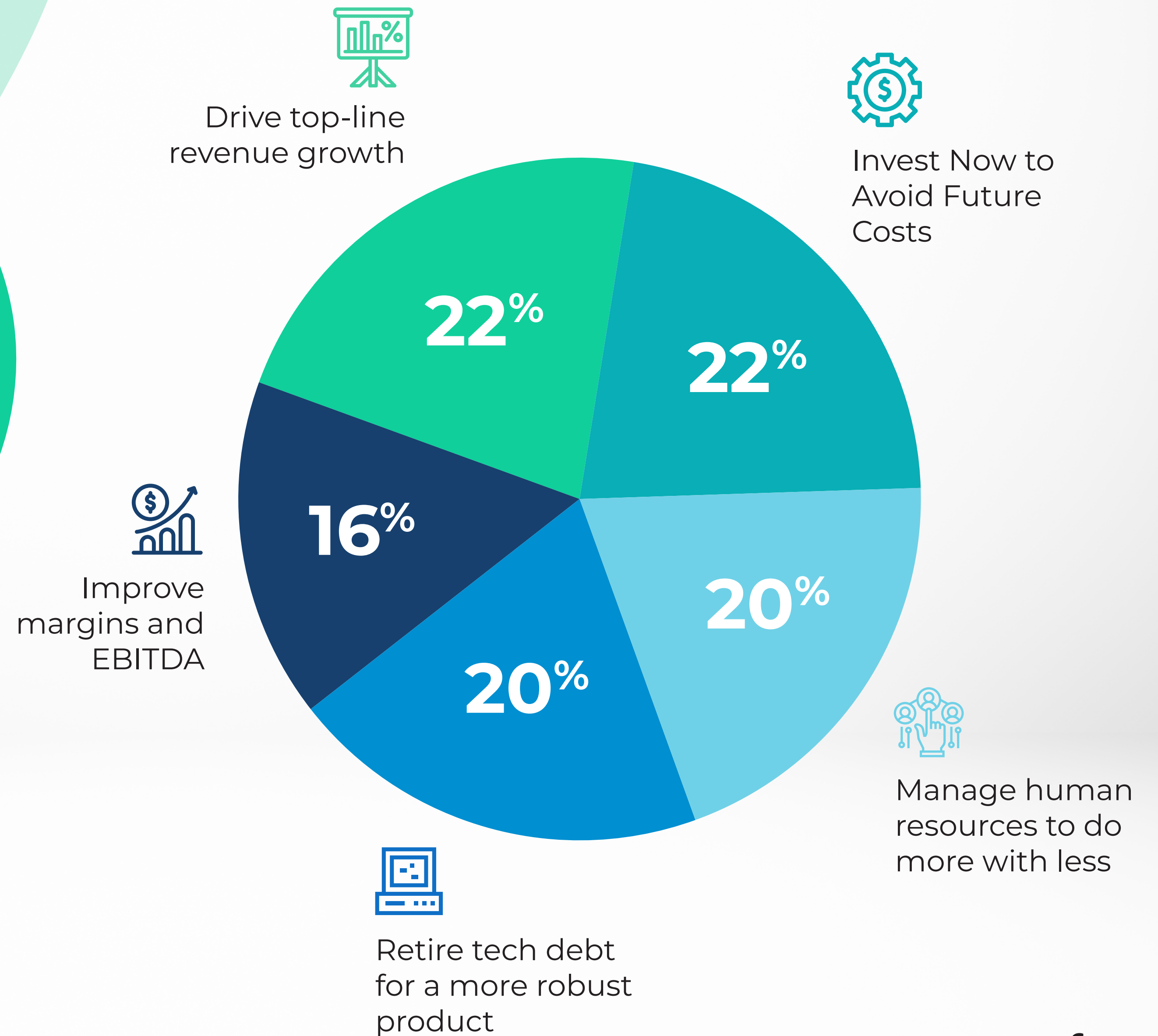
## Top 5 Technical Capabilities Ranked by Importance to Respondents:





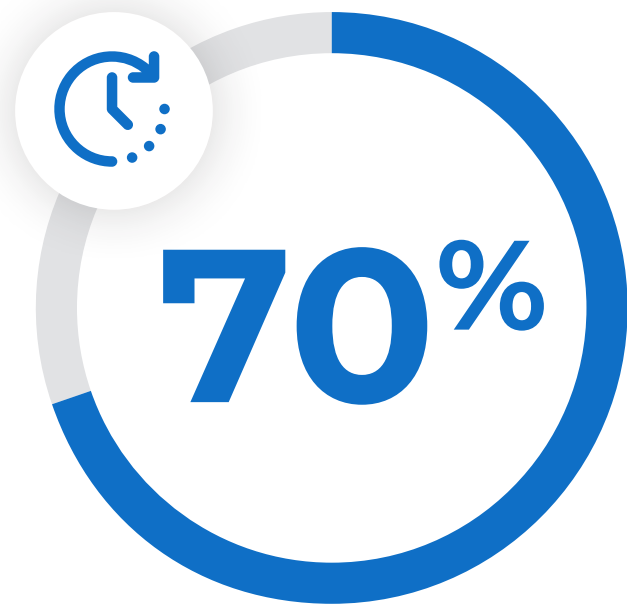
# Leaders are Split on the Top Factors Guiding Future Data Infrastructure Decisions

Ultimately, results show that success will require a balanced investment approach to people, processes, and technology.





**Companies are drowning in data,  
but starving for knowledge.** There are  
many large new sources of data, but it is  
difficult to extract value.



find organizing the data  
for analytics difficult and  
time- consuming



find managing the data  
for applications an inhibitor  
to effective analytics



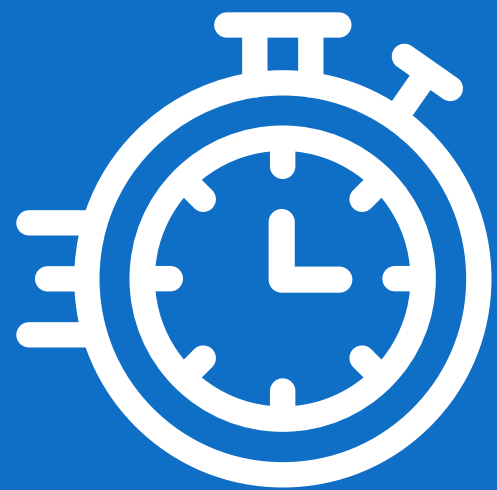
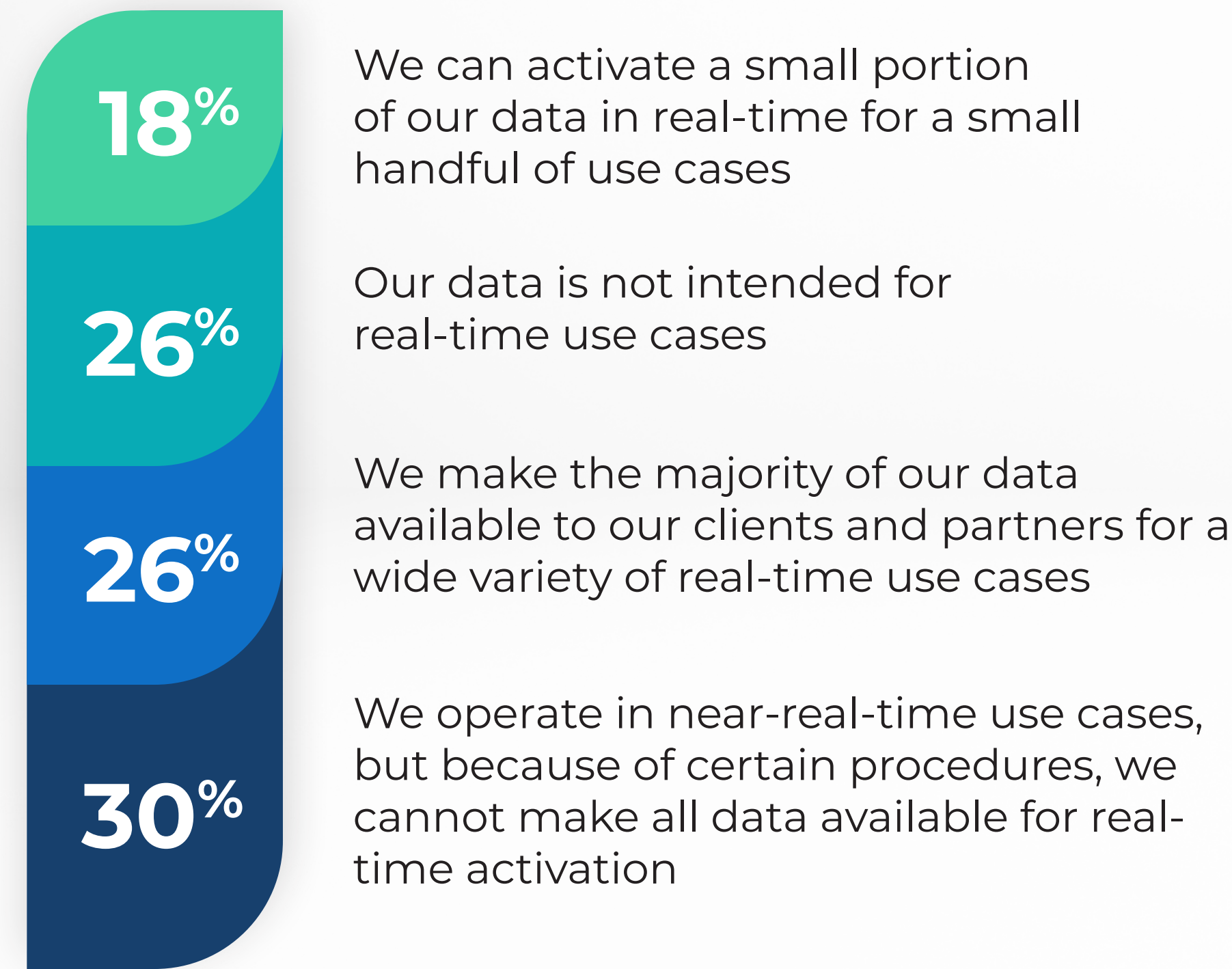
find organizing the data  
for effective marketing  
outreach is difficult





**WE ASKED:**

**How would you describe your ability to activate data (yours or your clients') in real-time at the point of engagement with consumers?**



**Approximately 32% of respondents** stated it is critically important to activate data in real time for clients.

Operationally, we believe companies will continue to push boundaries to work with and act on real-time data.

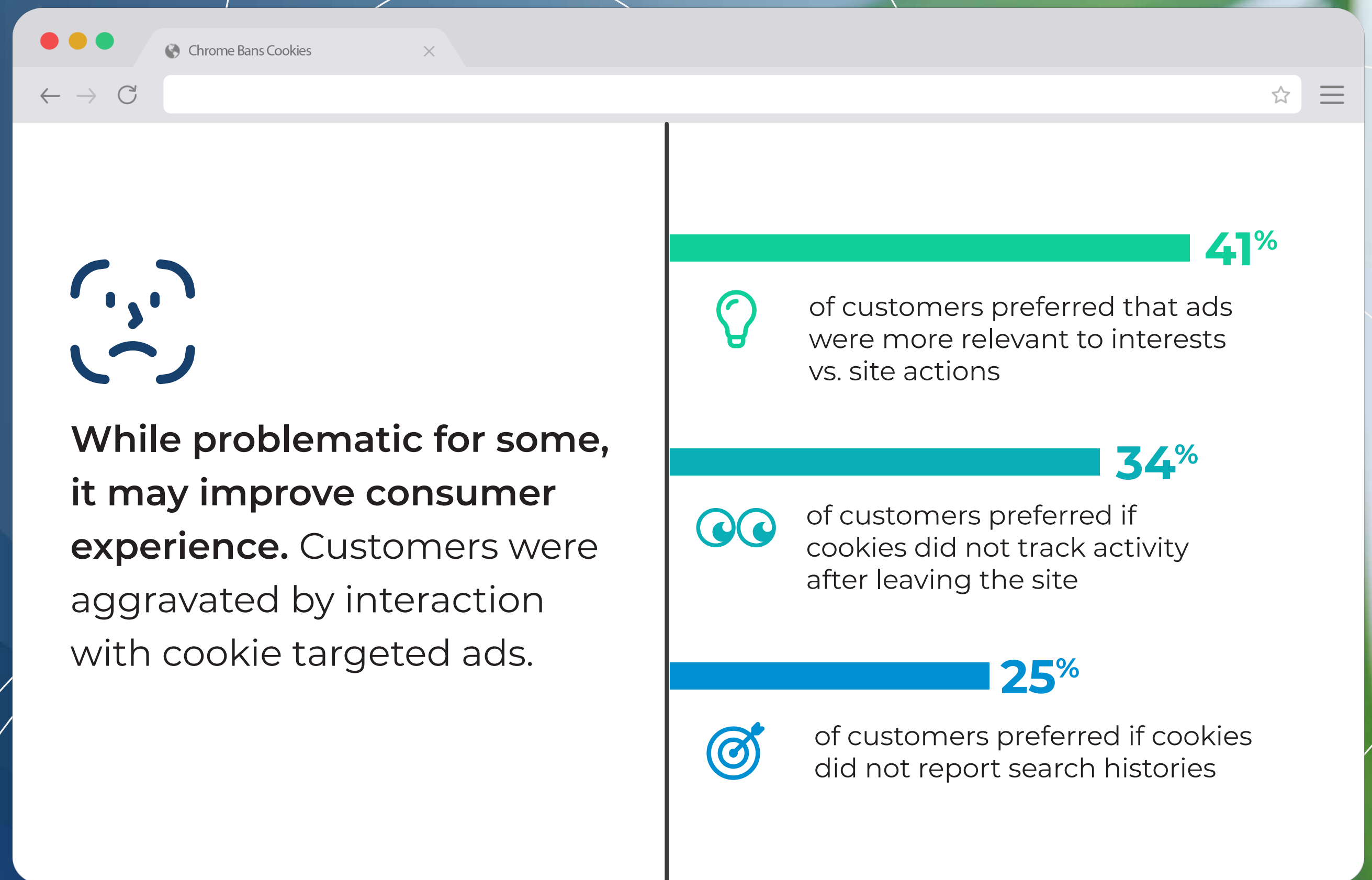


# Cookie Deprecation Will Have Major Impacts

## 90%

of respondents believe publishers and brands will be **seriously affected** when cookies are banned from Chrome.

*Cookie removal will begin Jan 1st, 2024 and will be completed by December 31st, 2024.*



*Published by Statista Research Department, Jan 6, 2023*





# Don't Wait and See

In today's competitive marketplace, a wait and see approach won't be effective. Don't lose your competitive edge by watching and copying competitors.



Our survey of industry perceptions indicate a lack of strategic focus and preparation for the end of cookies in Chrome.



**50% of respondents** say that their own company and/or clients will be **seriously affected** when cookies are banned from chrome. However, **only 5%** think their peers and competitors will be affected.





# The Cookiepocalypse Clock is Running Out

Degree of Reliance on Third-Party Cookies in Digital Advertising in the United States:

51%

**VERY IMPORTANT:**

It makes up a majority of the data my company uses

32%

**SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT:**

We have a string mix of first- and third-party cookie data

7%

**NOT IMPORTANT:**

We've switched to other data sources following the initial Google announcement

10%

**NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL:**

We never used third-party cookie data

Source: Statista.com



## Cookie Deprecation is Pushing Ad Dollars to Non-Digital Channels

According to a survey conducted among marketers in the United States:

The net optimism score\* increased most for pay television (+19%) and decreased most for targeted desktop ads (-13%).

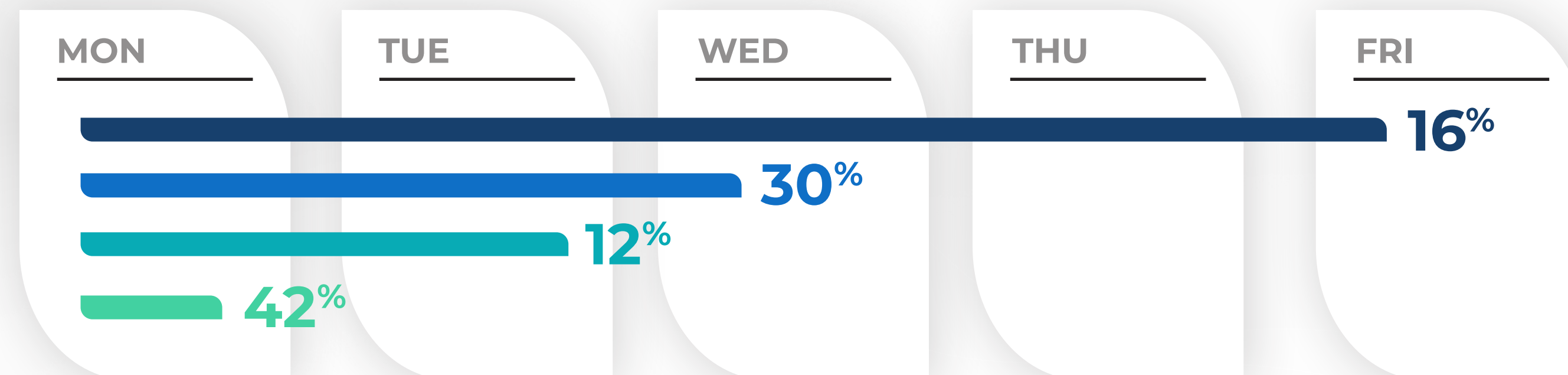
\* Net optimism score is defined as the difference between the share of respondents planning an ad spending increase and those planning an ad spending decrease.



# Technical Debt Prevents Engineers from Focusing on Driving Real Value

As engineers are forced to do non-productive tasks focused only on “keeping the lights on,” they are impeded from developing new features and functionality that can drive improvements to the company’s bottom line.

**Percent of the Week** Engineers Spend Wrestling with Legacy Systems and Issues of Technical Debt



■ 4 or more days per week   ■ 2-3 days per week  
■ 1 or 2 days per week   ■ Less than 1 day per week



## 46% Report

spending half their week on paying down tech debt







**WE ASKED:**

**How would you describe your current situation regarding privacy compliance?**

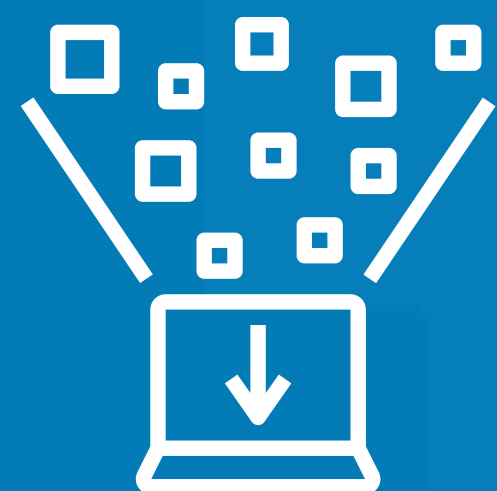


**Providers Need to Help Brands Improve Data Privacy**

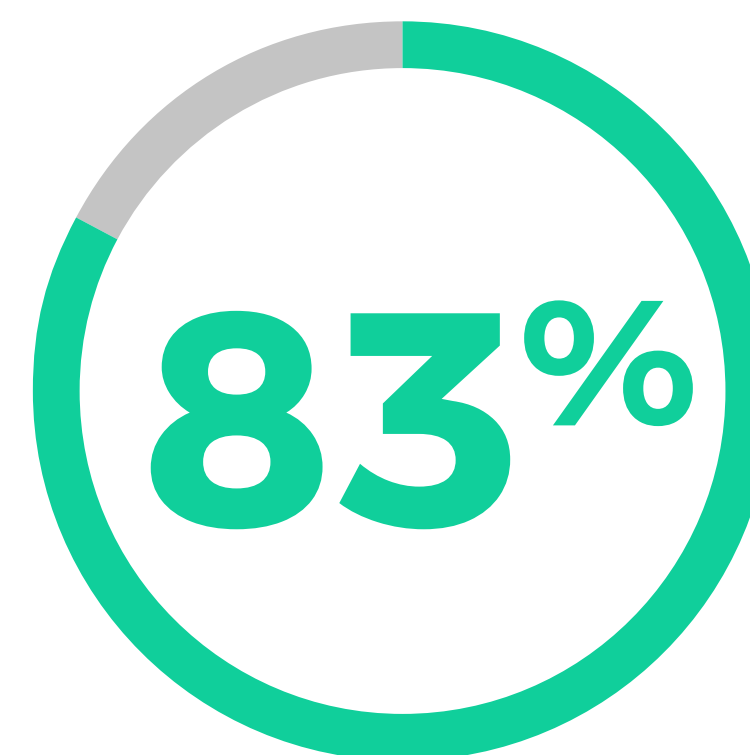
Only one out of four respondents actively makes privacy recommendations to clients. In an era where customers are expecting more transparency about how their data is used coupled with increasingly more regional regulations such as the EU’s GDPR, Brazil’s LGPD, and a host of US state-level privacy laws in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Virginia, Utah, and more; brands need an expert to navigate the complexities of privacy and compliance. Of course, there is also the ethical reason to do this in that it is good business - especially when realizing that 91% of customers say they’re more likely to trust a brand with their info if the brand shows commitment to protecting it. Ultimately, this is an opportunity for service providers to lean in and assist their clients in ways that improve the entire industry.

*Source: Salesforce Trends in Customer Trust*





# Data Clean Rooms Are More Important Than Ever



of respondents agreed that it is critically important to have a clean room that can ingest data from any platform in order to meet the needs of advertisers, publishers and industry partners







**For 30% of respondents,**  
activating large new sources  
of data is problematic.

Data is the fuel for AI. Artificial intelligence is a data hog; effectively building and deploying AI and machine learning systems require large data sets.



## 5 Common Big Data Challenges

- 1 Finding data is not easy
- 2 The data may be inconsistent, noisy, ambiguous or incomplete
- 3 Data is stored in silos
- 4 Data security and protection are overlooked
- 5 There's a shortage of qualified personnel in big data analytics



“The development of a machine learning algorithm depends on large volumes of data, from which the learning process draws many entities, relationships, and clusters.”

–Philip Russom of TDWI





# Are You Properly Equipped for the AI Arms Race?

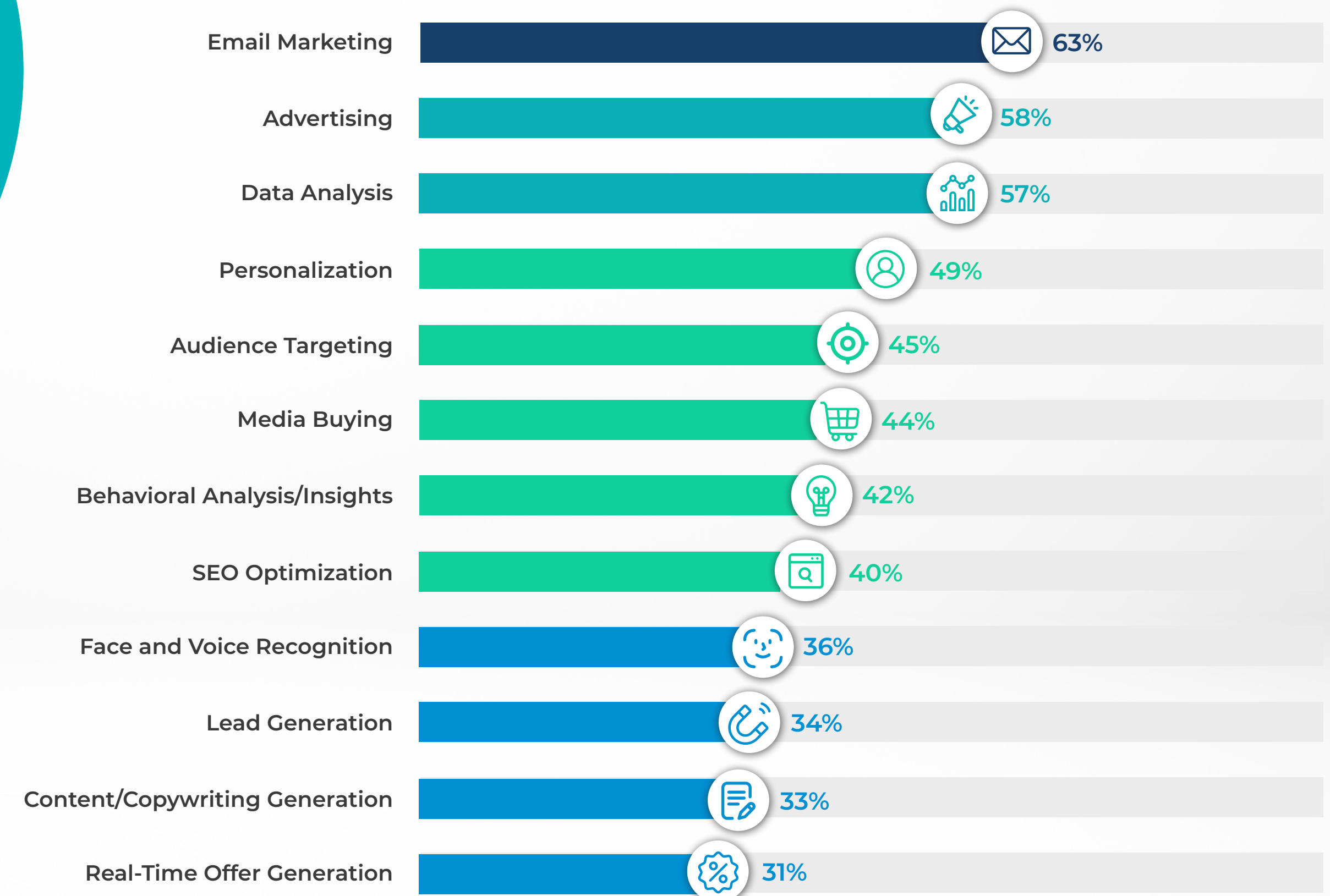
Welcome to Real Competition Fueled by Artificial Intelligence.

From 2023-2028 ad & marketing solution providers will be competing on how well they use AI & ML to inform the marketing activities.

## More data...more problems to deal with :

- Joining Data Sets
- Inconsistent Match Keys
- Data from CRM, CDPs and Ad Platforms
- 3rd Party Data Sources
- Transaction Data
- Raw Logs

Areas in which companies are using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) tools according to marketing professionals in the U.S.



Sources: Spiceworks, Capterra



## We Asked:

What are the top areas your organization plans to invest in through 2024?







## About the Sponsor

Aqfer offers a **Marketing Data Platform-as-a-Service** that empowers marketing solution providers and their customers to bring applications to their cloud data, facilitating **ruthlessly efficient** data collection and management to deliver real-time insights, decisions, and activation in a privacy-first world.

As a low-code alternative to building everything in house, clients are able to supercharge their IP and accelerate their business with the Aqfer platform. Specifically, Aqfer provides future-ready solutions for identity management and resolution, secure data collaboration via data clean rooms, media analytics and attribution, and universal tag management. Collectively, these solutions enable marketing solution providers to bring configurability, repeatability, and scalability to their own offerings along with substantial cost savings and efficiency improvements.



# We love to talk about data.

We're here to help and answer any questions about big data, data integration, data analytics, performance and pricing. We look forward to hearing from you.

## Have a question?

Drop us a note at [info@aqfer.com](mailto:info@aqfer.com)

## Continue Your Learning Experience

### Ways to Learn More



Guided case study review



Personalized demonstration geared to the areas of data technology important to you



Evaluation and road map to seeing better alternatives



Simple question and answer session with an expert to satisfy your curiosity





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