

2025

INDUSTRIAL BUYING INFLUENCE & MEDIA USAGE in Pet Food Manufacturing



METHODOLOGY

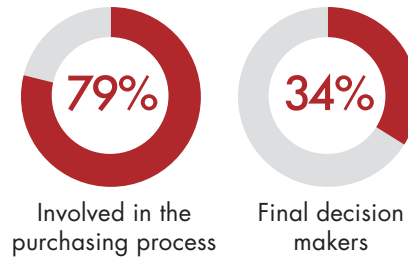
Petfood Forum and Petfood Industry's Industrial Buying Influence & Media Usage in Pet Food Manufacturing report uses data collected from a survey that asked 19 questions about the global pet food manufacturing industry's purchasing process and how they use media during their research to buy, as well as several questions about the demographics of respondents.

- AUDIENCE: Engaged audience of Petfood Industry and Petfood Forum brands, including pet food manufacturers, co-manufacturers, co-packers and brand owners. Job functions include research & development, food safety, regulatory, marketing, sales, production and senior management.
- PROMOTION: Survey was delivered via email
- DATES: March 12 - April 1, 2025
- 360 respondents

Petfood Forum and Petfood Industry partnered with Readex Research, a market research company, to complete the survey.

DEMOGRAPHICS

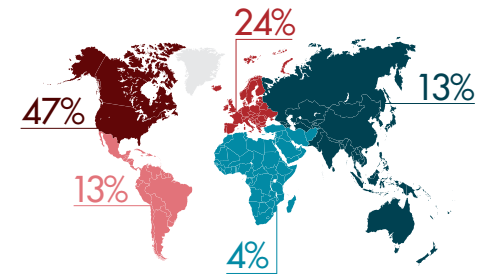
Purchasing influence



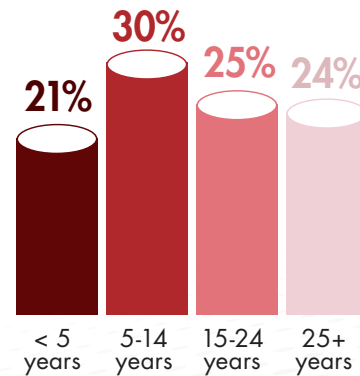
Areas of influence



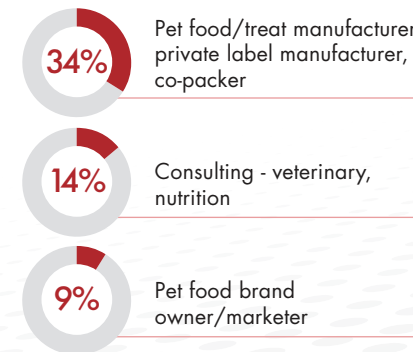
Geography



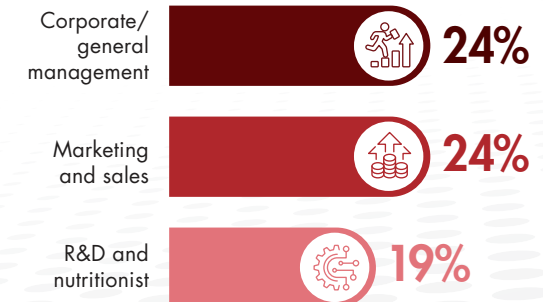
Industry tenure



Industry segment



Job functions



TAKEAWAYS



Purchasing
intent

89%

of purchasers could evaluate technology, products or equipment within the next 12 months.

TAKEAWAY

Purchasers in the pet food industry are open to new solutions. Now is not the time to cut back on marketing. Purchasers use an average of 10 sources when researching a purchase, making it essential to tailor messages to different stages of the Buyer's Journey and diversify marketing channels to reach them at the right moment.



Educational
content

73%

of purchasers rely on vendor content, such as white papers, case studies and technical documents, during their purchasing process, especially when they are beginning their research.

TAKEAWAY

Demonstrating thought leadership and providing clear information communicates your value, builds trust, and can keep a company on the list when purchasers begin narrowing their options.



Ad and
sponsorship
influence

75%

of respondents indicated that sponsorship of industry events impacts their perception of the companies involved.

TAKEAWAY

Event sponsorship has a strong impact on purchasers. 76% took an action, such as engaging with the sponsor at the event or researching the company, as a result of sponsorship, and 47% said it positively influenced their impression. Strategic investments in sponsorship can yield meaningful returns.



Global buyer
contrast

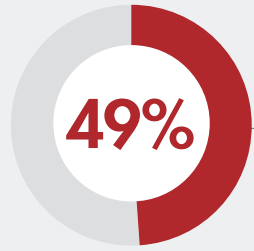
87%

of purchasers in Latin America and Asia took action due to an ad in the past year. Purchasers in these regions also indicated that they were more likely to read content if it was sponsored (43% in Latin America and 40% in Asia).

TAKEAWAY

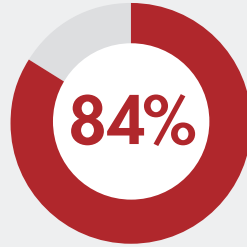
Purchasers in the developing markets of Latin America and Asia are more likely to be influenced by ads and sponsored content than those in the developed markets of the United States, Canada and Europe. They are eager to engage with suppliers and learn about possible solutions. In comparison, influencing purchasers in developed markets may require more effort.

MEDIA USAGE



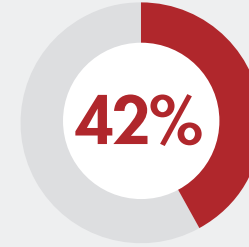
Industry websites

49% of industry professionals visit industry websites at least weekly.



Industry magazines

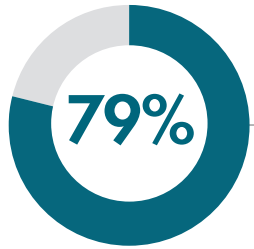
84% of industry professionals use industry magazines when performing tasks for their jobs.



Digital content

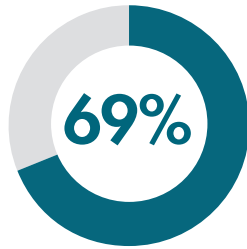
42% of industry professionals said research reports, digital reports and ebooks were among the top 3 most helpful information sources to their job or business.

PURCHASING BEHAVIOR



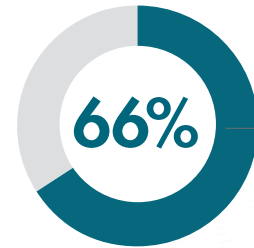
Events

79% of purchasers rely on in-person events as information sources during their purchasing research.



Replacing vendors

69% of purchasers indicate they could replace vendors within the next 12 months.



Content creation

66% of respondents agree that they are more likely to do business with a company that creates and shares content in industry media.



ADVERTISING & EVENT SPONSORSHIP INFLUENCE



Ad effect

80% of industry purchasers took an action as a result of ads in industry trade media.



Shortlist inclusion

59% of industry purchasers say a company's advertising, promotions, sponsorships or communications have led to respondents including the company on their shortlist when they're doing purchasing research.



Event sponsorships

52% of respondents agree that they are more likely to do business with a company that sponsors tradeshows or events.

76%

of respondents have **taken an action** as a result of a company sponsoring an event, like researching the company or interacting with it at the event.



58%

of respondents say that companies who sponsor events show that they are **committed to supporting the industry**.

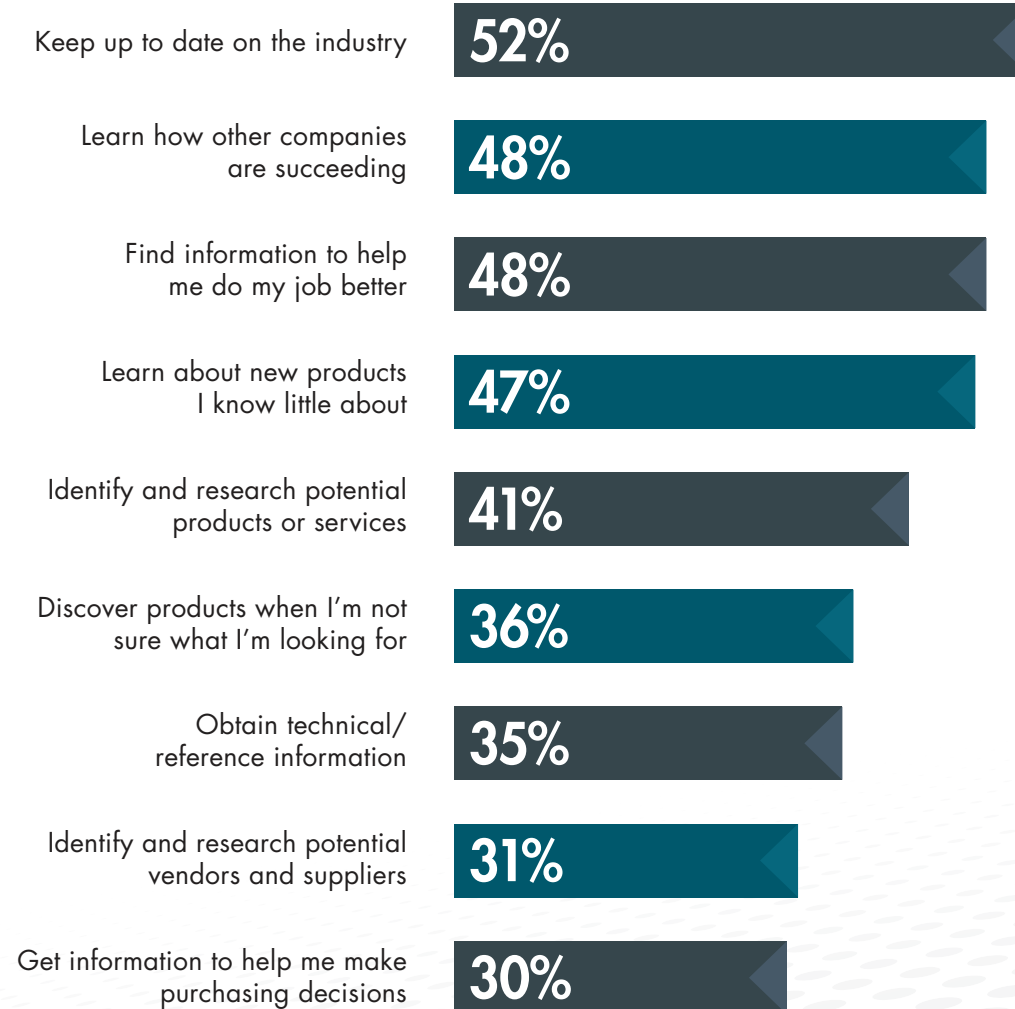
MEDIA FORMATS, SOURCES & USAGE

How the industry uses media



INDUSTRY MAGAZINES

How industry professionals use industry magazine articles in their job:



INSIGHT

Magazines are the crossroads of industry information formats. 84% of industry professionals use them in their jobs. The chart shows that a significant percentage use magazines for **each of the reasons given. With such a large percentage using this format, advertising in industry magazines will get your message in front of 4 out of 5 industry professionals**, regardless of why they are reading the magazine.

51% of respondents use **advertisements** in industry media for one or more of these reasons, with 23% indicating they rely on advertisements for identifying and researching potential vendors and suppliers. 19% rely on advertisements to help them discover products when they're not sure what they're looking for.



INDUSTRY MEDIA WEBSITES

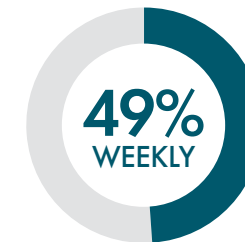
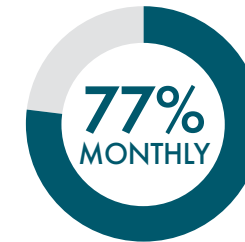
How industry professionals use industry media websites in their job

INSIGHT

Like industry magazines, industry media websites satisfy multiple needs, with 79% of industry professionals using them for at least one of the listed reasons.



Industry media website visit frequency

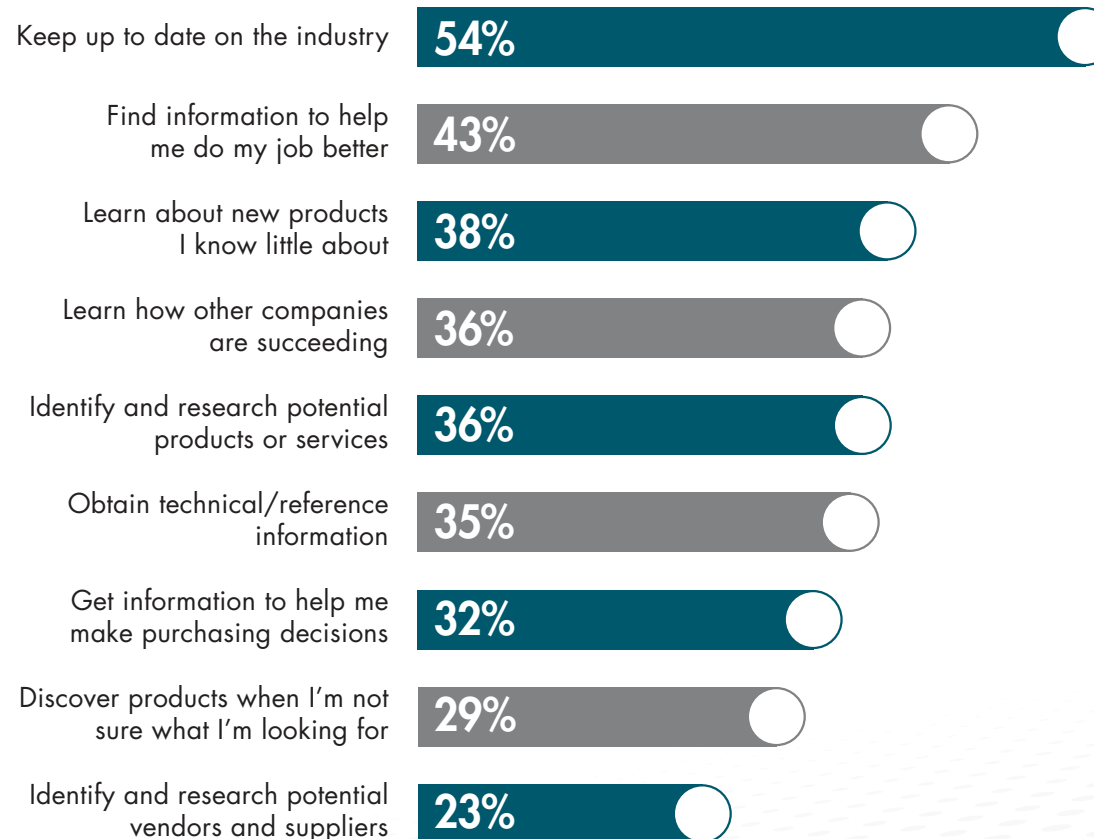


INSIGHT

Nearly half of industry professionals (49%) visit industry media websites at least weekly and 77% visit at least monthly. Media websites serve multiple purposes for the industry and are a resource for the purchasing process. **Partner with industry media to share informative content - such as whitepapers, technical documents and ebooks - about your solutions. Providing high-quality information to potential clients is a win-win.**

INDUSTRY NEWSLETTERS

How industry professionals use **industry newsletters** in their job:



INSIGHT

It's not surprising that "keeping up to date on the industry" is the most common use for newsletters. 81% of industry professionals use newsletters for at least one of the reasons given. The need to keep up on the industry suggests that professionals may use newsletters more frequently than other sources, making these products **a great way to obtain repeat touchpoints with potential clients.**



INDUSTRY EVENTS

How industry professionals use **industry events** in their job:



GLOBAL INSIGHT

Industry events are the #1 most helpful information source for industry professionals in the United States and Canada. The high value placed on in-person events for professionals from these countries suggests that suppliers who want to engage and sell to companies in those countries would benefit from prioritizing a presence at in-person events. Trade show booths, tabletops, sponsorships, speaking opportunities and networking are all great ways to maximize your exposure to these industry professionals.

INSIGHT

74% of industry professionals rely on industry events for at least one of the reasons given.

Results from Petfood Forum's 2025 feedback survey support these findings. When asked to identify the most valuable aspects of the event, 68% of attendees said meetings with suppliers and 85% said networking with industry partners, colleagues and suppliers. Further, 75% found new companies to do business with, confirming that event presence can positively affect business development.

52% of respondents agree that they are more likely to do business with a company that sponsors tradeshows or events.



SOCIAL MEDIA & VIDEO SHARING

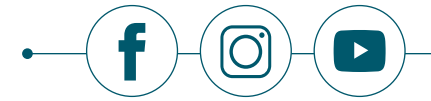
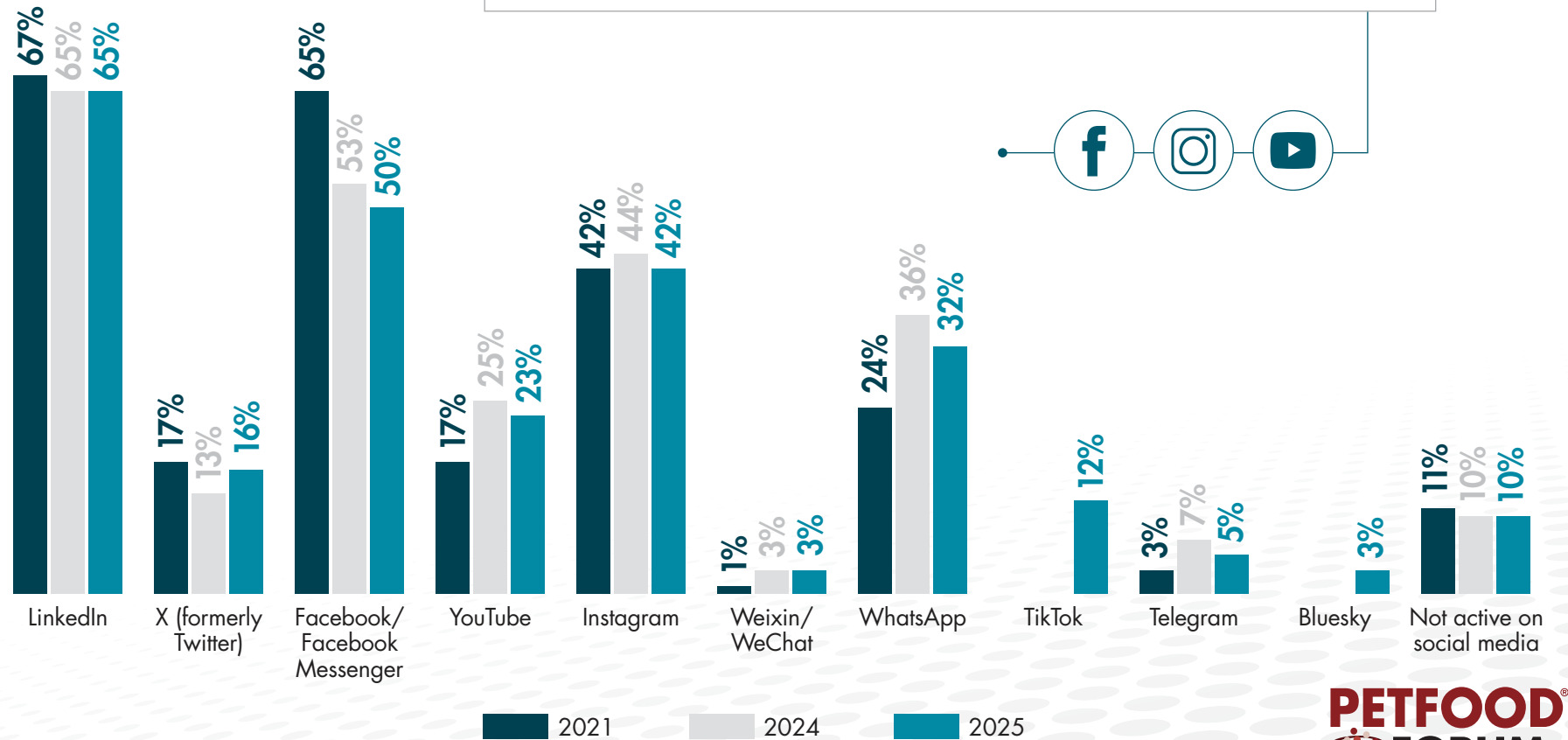
Social media platforms used for work:

INSIGHT

90% of industry professionals maintain active profiles on social media. **Industry professionals using social media in their personal lives can still consume industry ads** when they are in their feed regardless of their reason for using the social media platform.

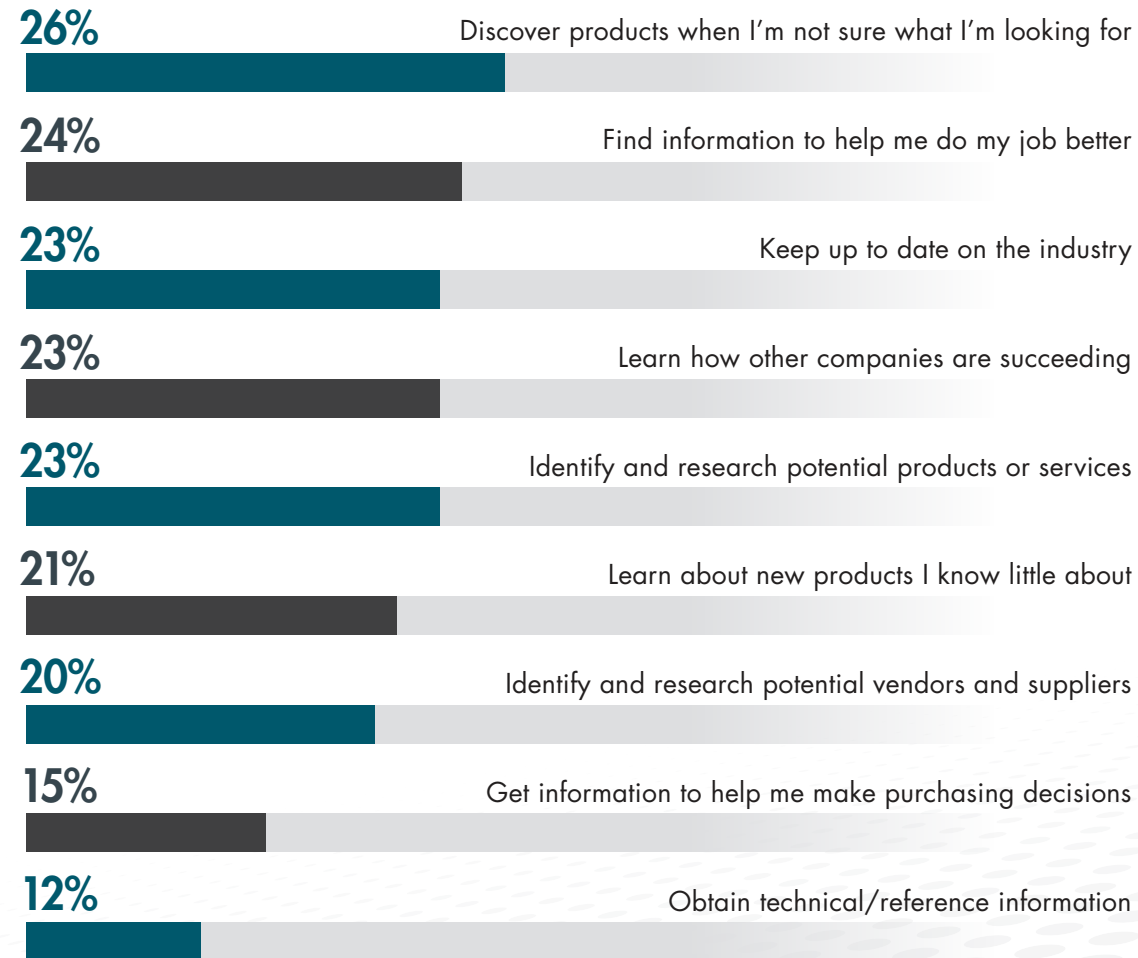
GLOBAL INSIGHT

73% of European industry professionals maintain an active profile on LinkedIn, 28 points higher than the second-most used platform (Facebook/Meta). Suppliers targeting industry professionals in Europe may want to develop a campaign using LinkedIn.



SOCIAL MEDIA & VIDEO SHARING

How industry professionals use **social media & video sharing tools** in their job:



INSIGHT

Industry professionals use social media and video sharing for more general needs, like discovering products when they're not sure what they're looking for. They use other sources when specific or detailed information, such as technical and reference information, are needed.



PURCHASING & THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

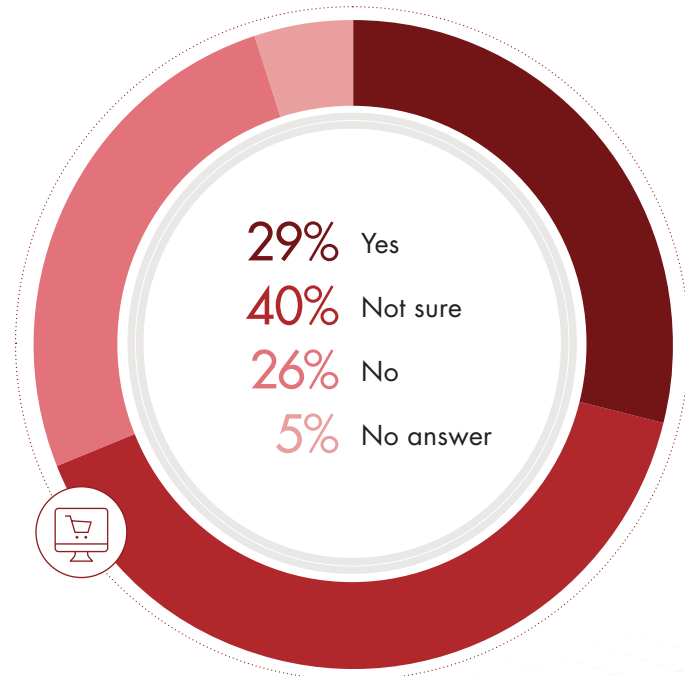
How purchasers use information sources when making decisions



UPCOMING PURCHASING DECISIONS

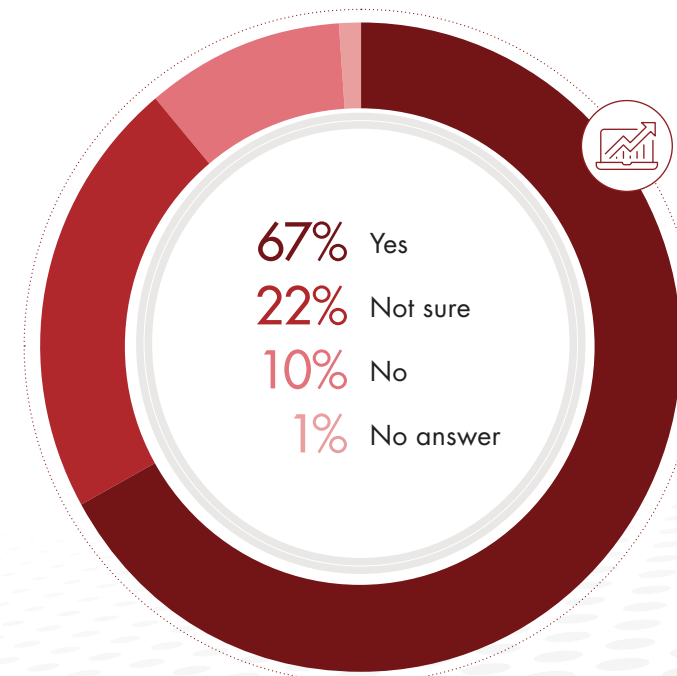
Planning on replacing any vendors or suppliers within the next 12 months

69% of respondents could replace suppliers within 12 months



Planning to evaluate new technologies, products or equipment in the next 12 months

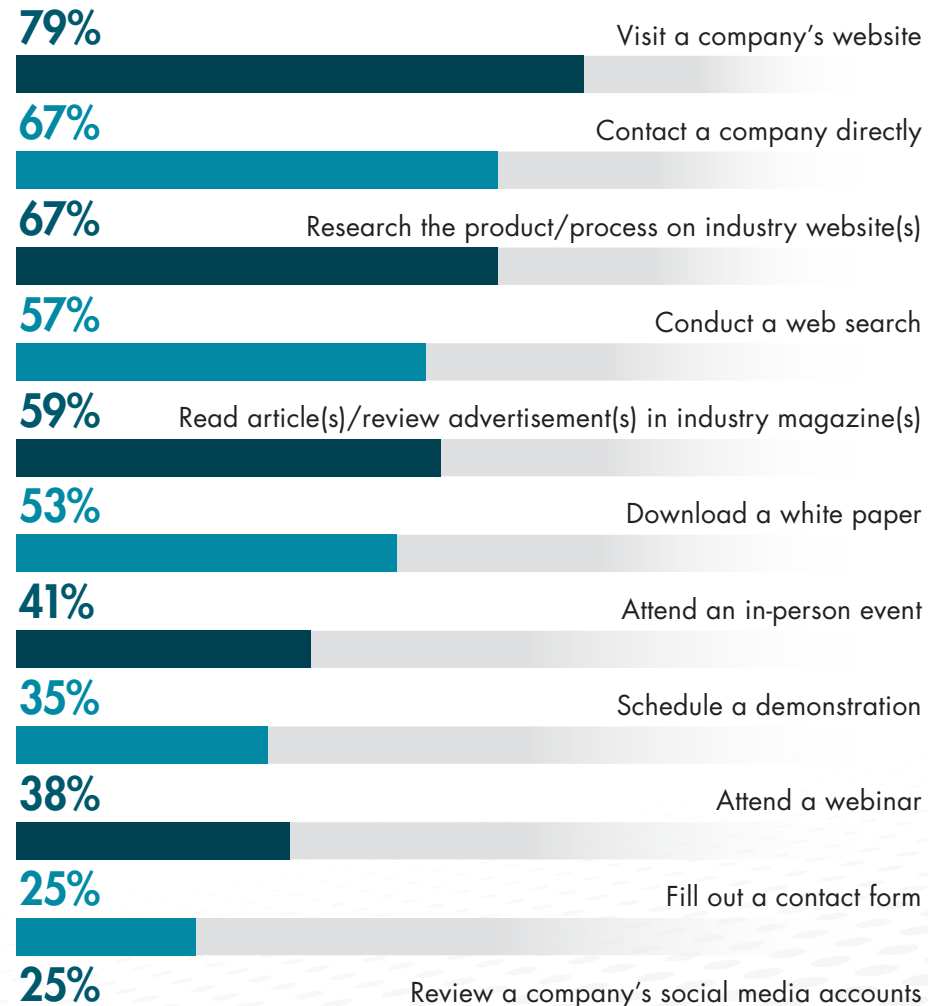
89% of respondents could evaluate new technologies, products or equipment within 12 months



LIKELY ACTIONS TAKEN when researching suppliers

INSIGHT

With fewer than a quarter of respondents saying they wouldn't take any of the listed actions when researching suppliers, your content plays a crucial role. Four out of five visit a potential supplier's website, so make sure yours is easy to navigate. **Help potential clients do business with you by making information about your products and services clear, accessible, and easy to understand.**



INSIGHT

This question appeared in the 2024 Petfood Industry audience survey, and there are some interesting shifts in the 2025 results. The percentage of respondents likely to read an article or review ads in industry magazines jumped from 50% to 59%, and those likely to research a product or process on an industry website rose from 63% to 67%. **Partnering with industry media helps you reach potential clients where and when they're actively gathering information.**

BUYER'S JOURNEY

The Buyer's Journey is the process a potential customer goes through from identifying a need or problem to making a purchase decision.

IT HAS 4 STAGES:

STAGE 1: Starting to think about the purchase

STAGE 2: Begin researching options

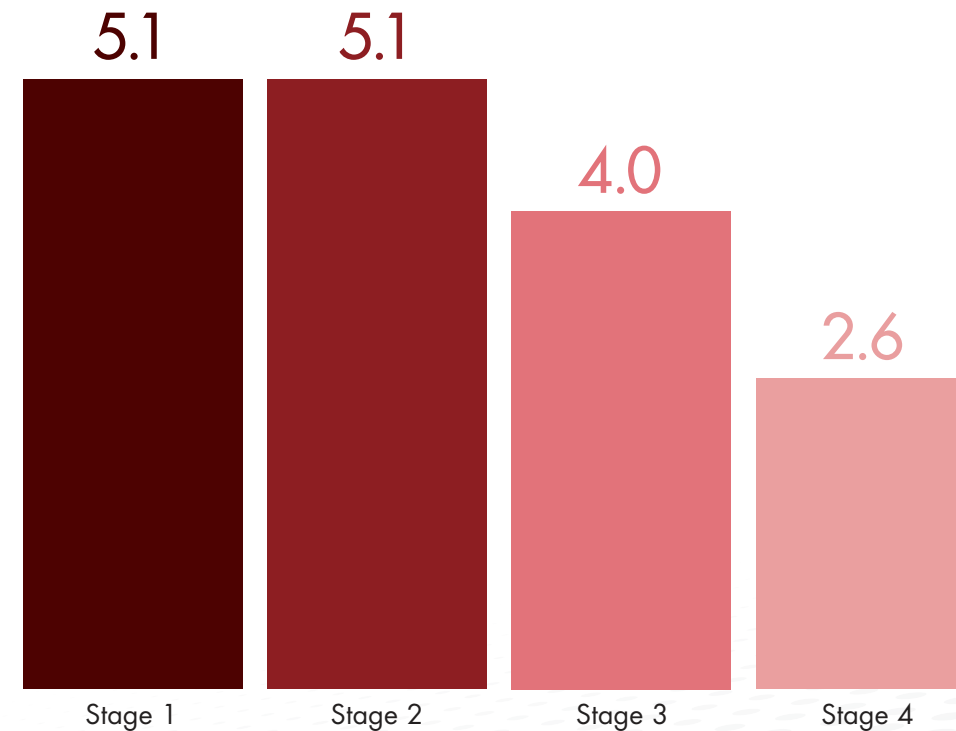
STAGE 3: Narrowing down the choices

STAGE 4: Finalizing the decision

Purchasers rely on different information sources and formats during each phase in the journey.

Suppliers seeking to sell to pet food manufacturers will benefit from learning when and why each information source is used and targeting their messages to where the purchaser is in the Buyer's Journey.

Average number of formats used during each stage of the Buyer's Journey



Purchasers use progressively fewer information sources as they move through the Buyer's Journey, using 5 formats on average during Stages 1 and 2 and decreasing to only 2 or 3 formats during Stage 4.

BUYER'S JOURNEY:

▶ Any stage summary

Information formats and sources industry purchasers use **during any stage:**

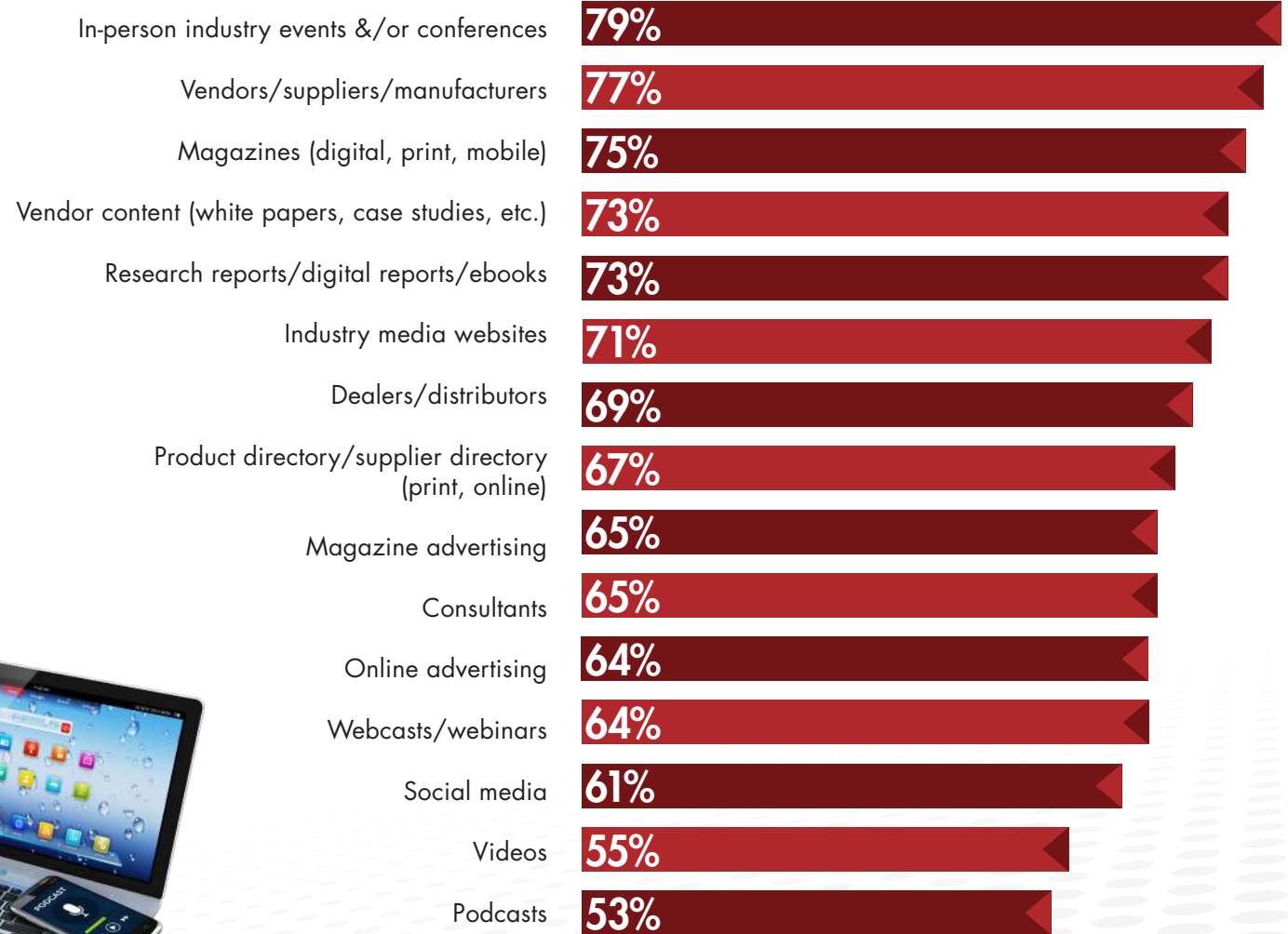
INSIGHT

All sources and formats included in the study are:

- used at all stages of the Buyer's Journey.
- important at some point in the Buyer's Journey.

The high usage of in-person events and conferences, industry magazines and industry websites suggests that **purchasers trust information from industry sources** to help them with their research to buy.

Suppliers and their content are among the most relied-upon sources, with about three-quarters of respondents saying they use them at some point in the Buyer's Journey.



BUYER'S JOURNEY:

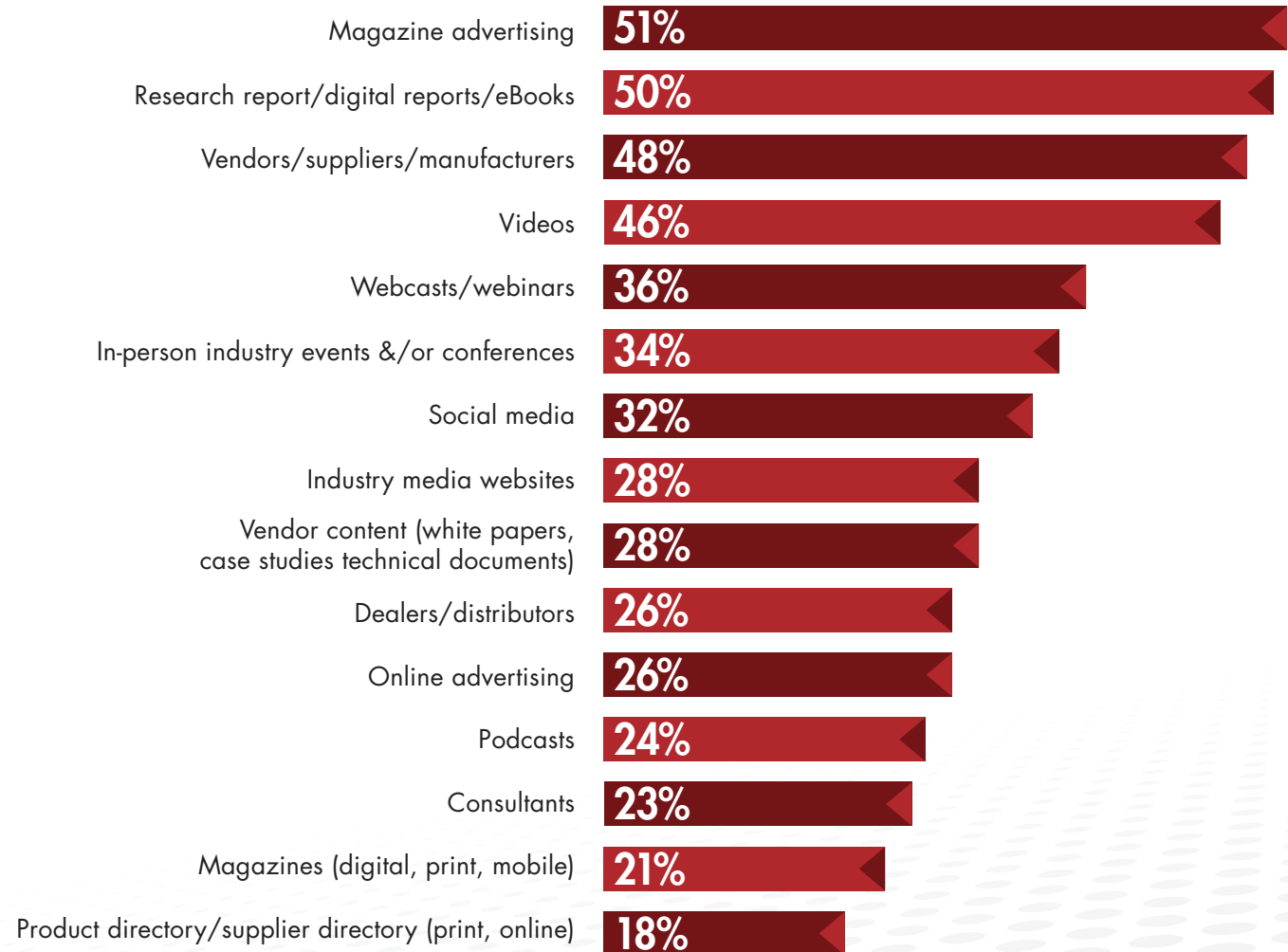
▶ Stage 1

Information formats and sources industry purchasers use when they're **starting to think about the purchase**:

INSIGHT

When purchasers realize they have a problem to solve, over half rely on online or magazine advertising when they're starting to think about solutions. Advertisements in these placements **should focus on building interest and trust in the brand** so the purchaser remembers them when they advance to the next step in the process.

The higher instance of research report/digital reports/ebooks selections shows purchasers are seeking out content that provides insightful information about their upcoming purchase. These sources can **help purchasers understand both the context around the problem they need to solve and more specific potential solutions.**



BUYER'S JOURNEY:

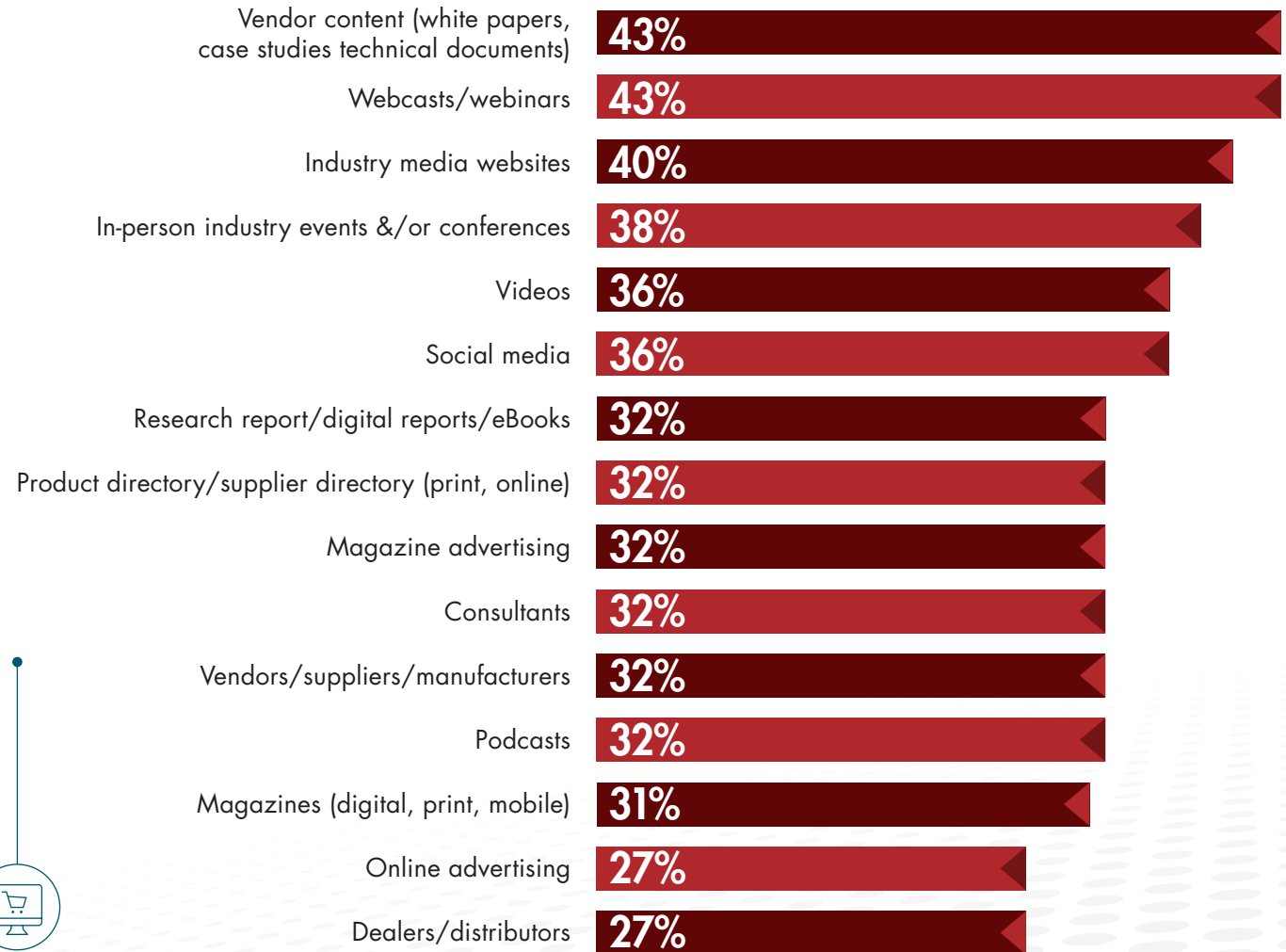
► Stage 2

Information formats and sources industry purchasers use when they're **beginning to research options**:

INSIGHT

When purchasers are researching their options for a purchase decision, they seek **informative content that will help them evaluate their choices objectively**. Five of the top 6 selections for Stage 2 – webcasts/webinars, vendor content, industry media websites, in-person industry events, and videos – are content-focused. These information sources are great options to demonstrate value and expertise that can help purchasers make informed decisions. Partnering with an industry media brand to promote your content on its site and working with an industry magazine to be included in an issue's content are great ways to **share meaningful information that can help inform a purchaser's research**.

The higher instance of vendor content selections show that purchasers are **looking for more detailed information** when they are narrowing down their choices. A theme of the survey results is the importance of educational content, which can demonstrate success stories and overcome objections.



BUYER'S JOURNEY:

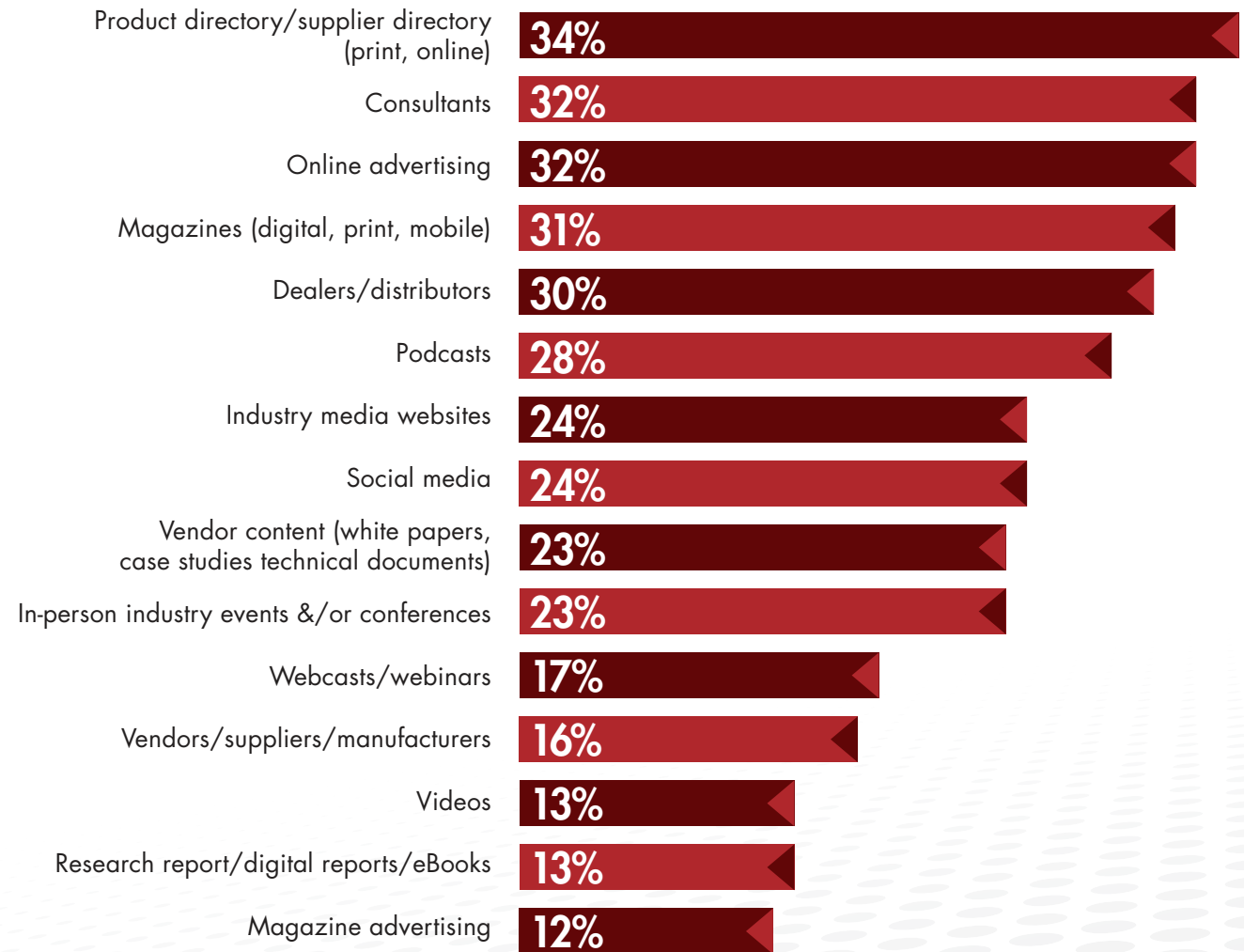
► Stage 3

Information formats and sources industry purchasers use when they're **narrowing down their choices**:

INSIGHT

The higher instances of consultant and dealers/distributors selections suggest that purchasers are seeking information from and working with **knowledgeable people** at this stage. Continue to use content-focused channels to stay top of mind and reinforce value messaging until they make a decision.

One-third of purchasers use product directories & supplier directories at this point to **start identifying companies that offer the solutions they need**. Companies with solutions for pet food manufacturers will want to be listed in these sources to ensure their company and its products are included when potential clients are researching solutions they offer.



BUYER'S JOURNEY:

▶ Stage 4

Information formats and sources industry purchasers use when they're **making their final decision**:

INSIGHT

The top formats for Stage 3 and Stage 4 are the same, only in a slightly different order. The lower percentages at this stage show that purchasers use fewer sources for this stage than the previous stages, suggesting that their **reliance on people-focused sources becomes more pronounced at this final stage**.



ADVERTISING & SPONSORSHIP INFLUENCE

How promotions affect perceptions and actions



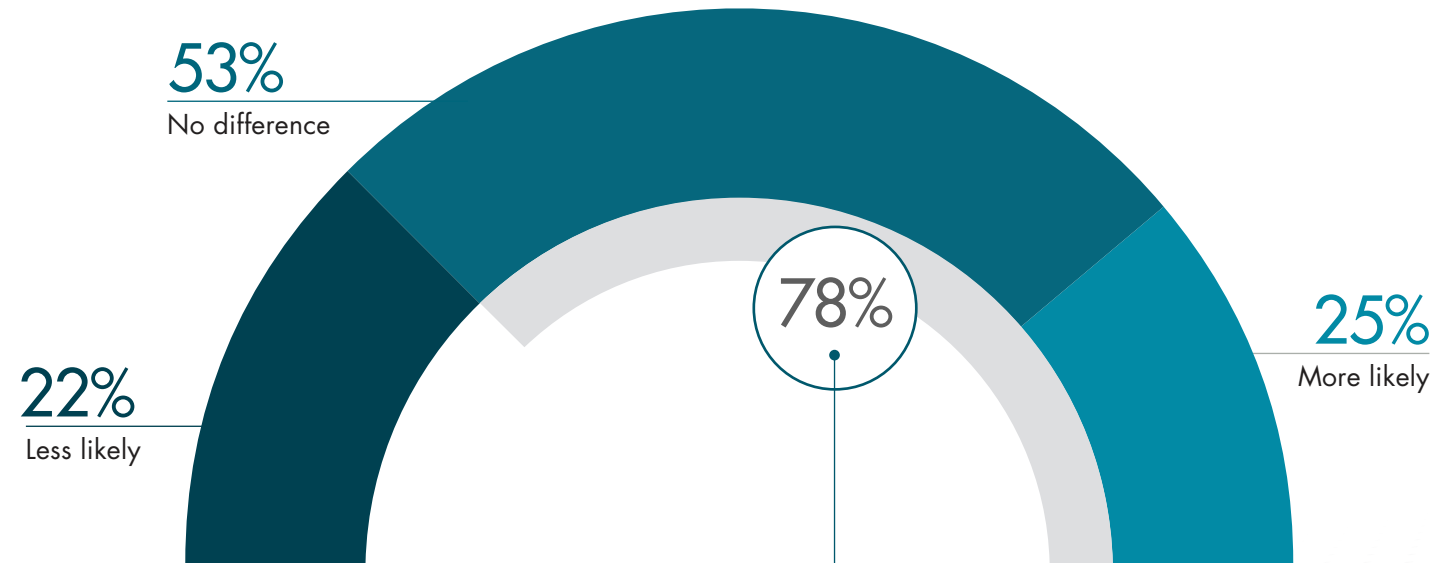
SPONSORED CONTENT

INSIGHT

66% of respondents agree that they are more likely to do business with a company that creates and shares content in industry media.

GLOBAL INSIGHT

43% of industry professionals in Latin America and 40% of professionals in Asia are more likely to read content if it's sponsored. In contrast, only 16% of those in Europe and 18% in the United States and Canada are more likely to read content if it's sponsored.

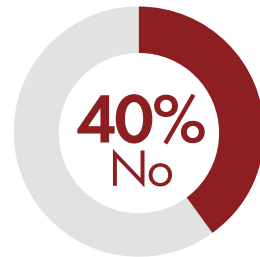
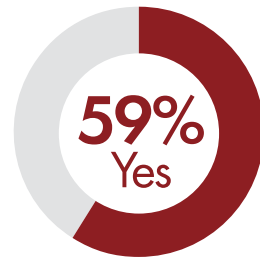


INSIGHT

78% of industry professionals are either more likely to read content if it's sponsored or indifferent to whether it's sponsored, suggesting that there isn't a downside to sponsoring content or making it available to the industry. **The days of sponsored content being approached with suspicion are over.**

ACTIONS TAKEN DUE TO ADS

Has a company's advertising, promotions, sponsorships or communication programs led to inclusion on the shortlist during your research to buy?



GLOBAL INSIGHT

76% of industry purchasers in Asia answered Yes, significantly higher than other global regions. 63% of purchasers in Latin America, 44% in Europe and 54% in the United States and Canada answered Yes.

INSIGHT

58% of purchasers visited the advertiser's website and 41% went to a link or clicked on the ad, which usually goes to the advertiser's website. The difference between these percentages – 17 points – suggests that ads have a longer tail. Even if the ad isn't clicked, additional purchasers are visiting the advertiser's website at a different time, arriving through a different source (Google, direct).

48% of respondents agree that they are more likely to do business with a company that advertises its products or services in industry media.

Actions taken due to ads

Visited the advertiser's website



Went to a link/clicked on the advertisement



Shared the ad with a colleague



Saved the ad for future reference



Followed the advertiser on social media



Recommended/purchased the product/service



Contacted the advertiser for more information



Indicated at least one



GLOBAL INSIGHT

Purchasers in the developing markets of Latin America and Asia are more likely to be influenced by ads and sponsored content than those in the developed markets of the United States, Canada and Europe. They are eager to engage with suppliers and learn about possible solutions. In comparison, influencing purchasers in developed markets may require more effort.

87% of industry purchasers in Latin America and Asia took an action due to an ad in the past year. In contrast, 72% of those in Europe and 79% of those in the United States and Canada took an action.

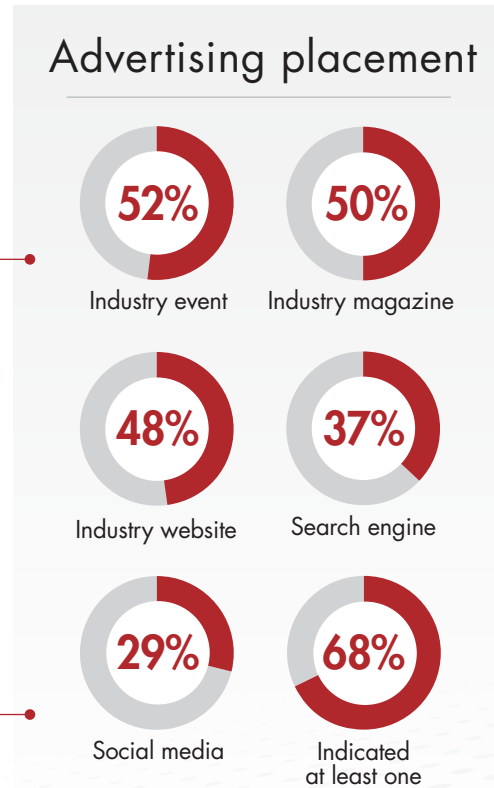
MESSAGE PLACEMENT INFLUENCE

on company impression

The percentage of respondents indicating that message placement influences their impression of the company positively

INSIGHT

More than two-thirds of respondents indicated that advertising in one of the placements listed positively influences their impression of the advertiser. Highest is industry events with 52% followed by industry magazines at 50%.



INSIGHT

56% of respondents indicated that one or more of the sponsorship placements listed have a positive influence on their impression of the sponsor. **The most influential sponsorship placement is industry events**, with nearly half (47%) responding positively.

GLOBAL INSIGHT

42% of respondents in the United States and 41% of respondents in Europe said they were likely to have a more positive impression of companies that sponsor events.

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Respondents in Latin America and Asia were more likely to be positively influenced by advertisements, regardless of placement. Nearly three-quarters of respondents in Latin America said industry events and industry website placements created a positive impression (70% and 74%, respectively). Respondents in Asia were most likely to be positively influenced by advertisements in industry magazines (69%).

THE INFLUENCE OF EVENT SPONSORSHIP

How industry event sponsorship impacts attendees' actions and thoughts

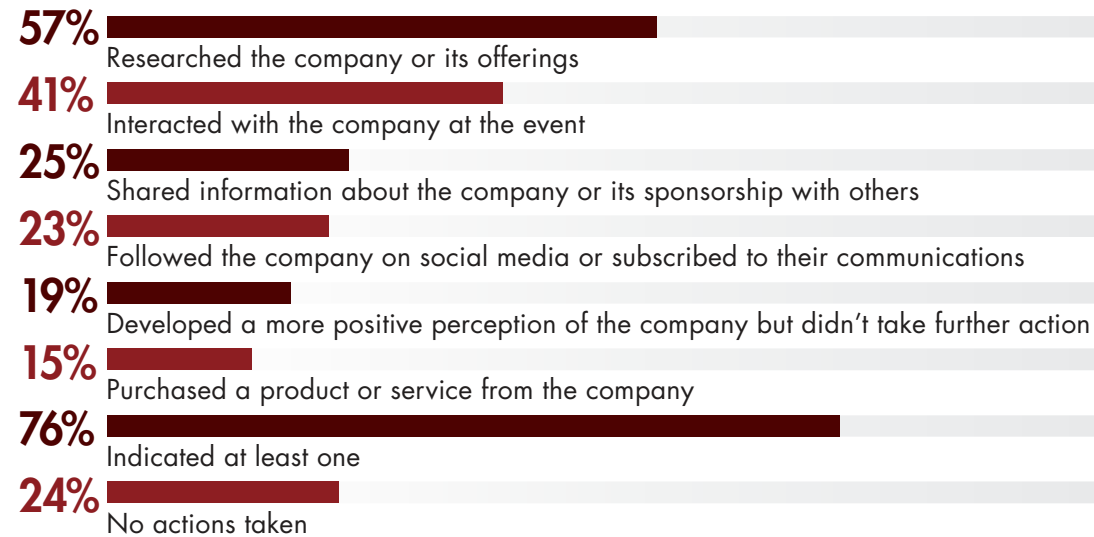
GLOBAL INSIGHT

38% of Asian respondents say that sponsoring an event makes the sponsor's products or services more appealing.

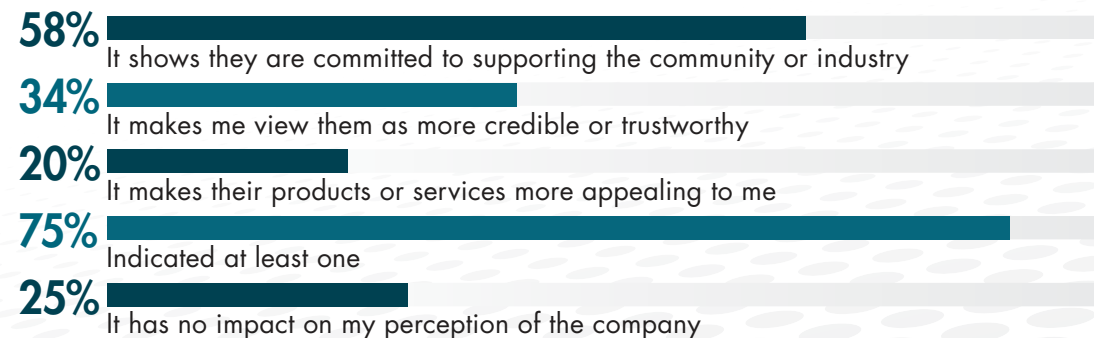
INSIGHT

58% of respondents say that companies sponsoring events demonstrate a commitment to supporting the industry or community. This creates a **positive emotional and mental association with your brand's intentions**. Additionally, one-third view sponsors as more credible or trustworthy, while only 25% say event sponsorship has no impact on their perception of the company.

Actions taken due to company event sponsorship



Event sponsorship impact on company perception



INSIGHT

Event sponsorship initiates both immediate and future actions. 41% of respondents say that they have interacted with a company at the event due to its sponsorship. 57% say they researched the company or its offerings. 76% of respondents took one or more of the listed actions.

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Respondents in the United States, Canada and Latin America are more likely to interact with companies at the event than respondents in Europe or Asia. 48% of American and Canadian respondents and 45% of Latin American respondents selected this choice.

SUMMING UP

Industry media's role in the pet food manufacturing industry's purchasing process.

The data and insights in this report offer a greater understanding of the global pet food manufacturing industry's purchasing process and how these companies use media during their research to buy. The metrics and context can inform your marketing decisions and ensure that you maximize your opportunities to connect with current and potential clients through industry media.

Partner with Petfood Forum and Petfood Industry to reach our verified pet food industry audience around the world through our media and event channels. Our team will work with you to develop a custom media plan tailored to help you meet your goals and objectives. Contact us at advertising@wattglobal.com.



Purchasers in pet food manufacturing rely on a wide range of industry sources, including events, websites, magazines, and newsletters, to do their jobs and make informed buying decisions. With so many formats to choose from, companies need to maintain a presence across multiple media channels to effectively reach buyers at every stage of the Buyer's Journey.

NEXT STEP: Review your brand's presence across industry media sources and determine which phase of the Buyer's Journey your messaging supports.

Are you present across multiple channels with coordinated messaging and placement? Diversify your product formats and refine your messaging or placement as needed to strengthen your impact.



Educational content plays a key role in guiding purchasers through the Buyer's Journey. 73% of people involved in purchasing use content from suppliers, such as whitepapers, webinars and technical reports, during their research. Sponsored content is viewed positively or neutrally by 78% of respondents. Partnering with industry media to distribute this valuable information will accelerate a supplier's reach into a larger pool of potential clients.

NEXT STEP: Assess your content marketing strategy.

Is your content reaching the right audience? Are you publishing it in the right places?



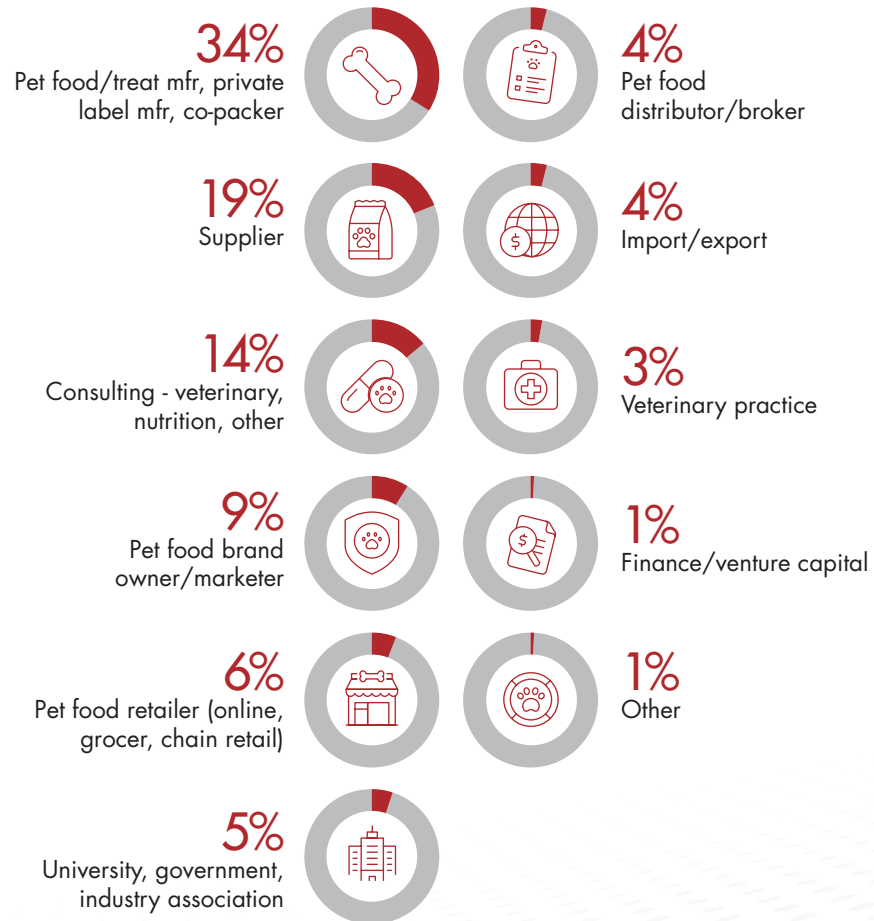
Sponsoring events is a smart investment for companies looking to build stronger relationships with potential buyers. Three out of four respondents say event sponsorship positively shapes their perception of a company, and over 75% took action as a result of event sponsorship, such as researching the company or engaging at the event. Additionally, more than half agree they are more likely to do business with companies that sponsor industry events.

NEXT STEP: Assess your company's strategy for industry events.

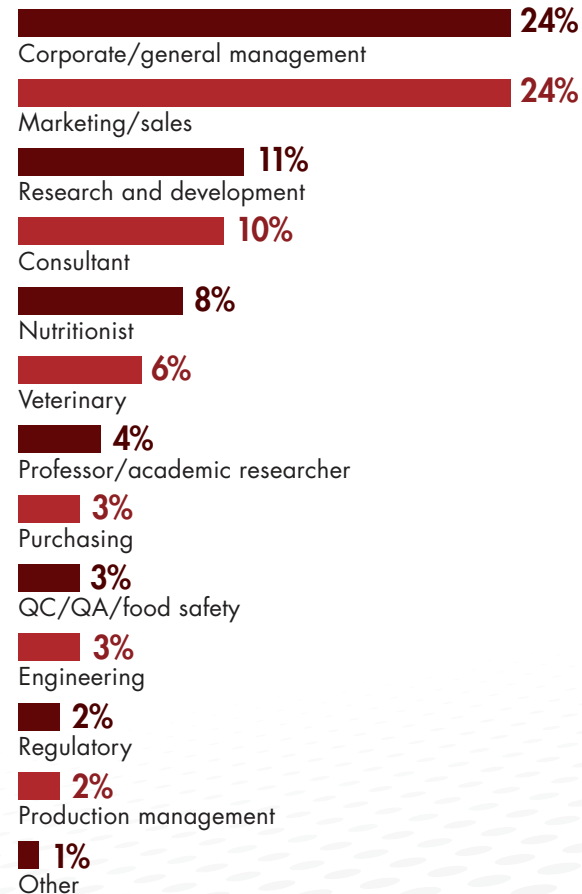
How are you ensuring your brand stands out and is fully prepared to engage buyers before, during, and after the event? Invest in event sponsorships to build trust and drive action among potential buyers.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

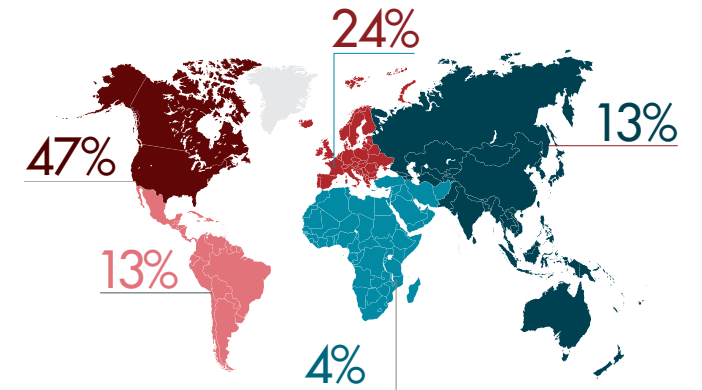
Primary businesses



Job functions

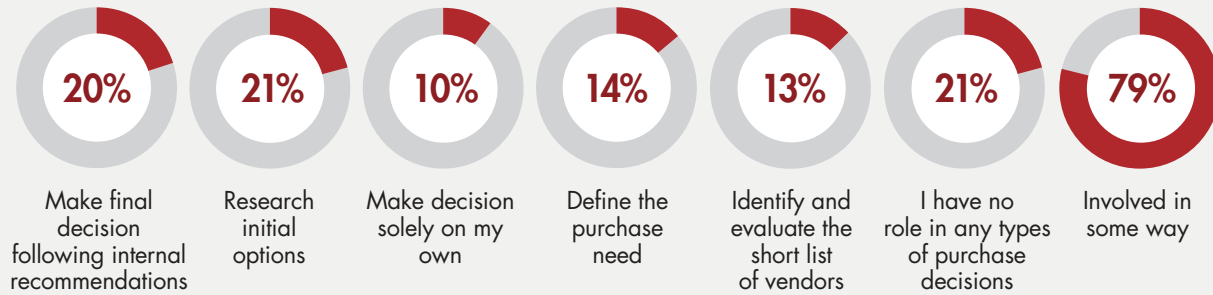


Geographic region worked from

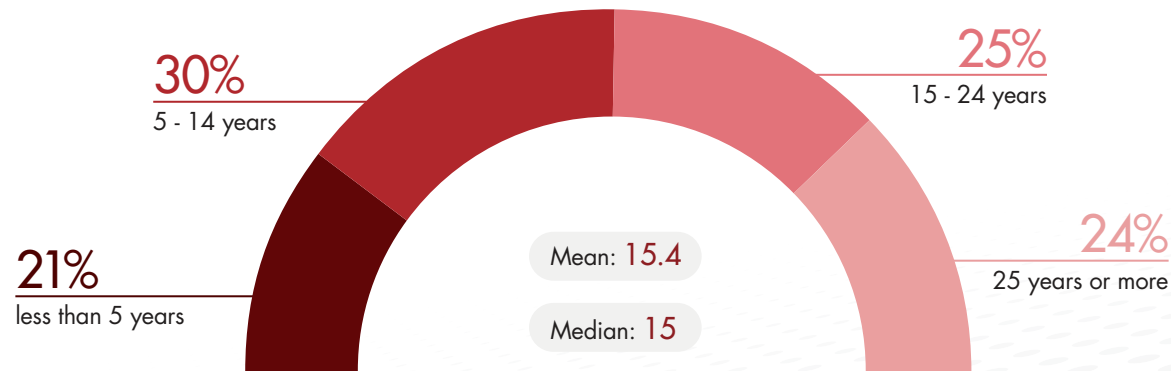


RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

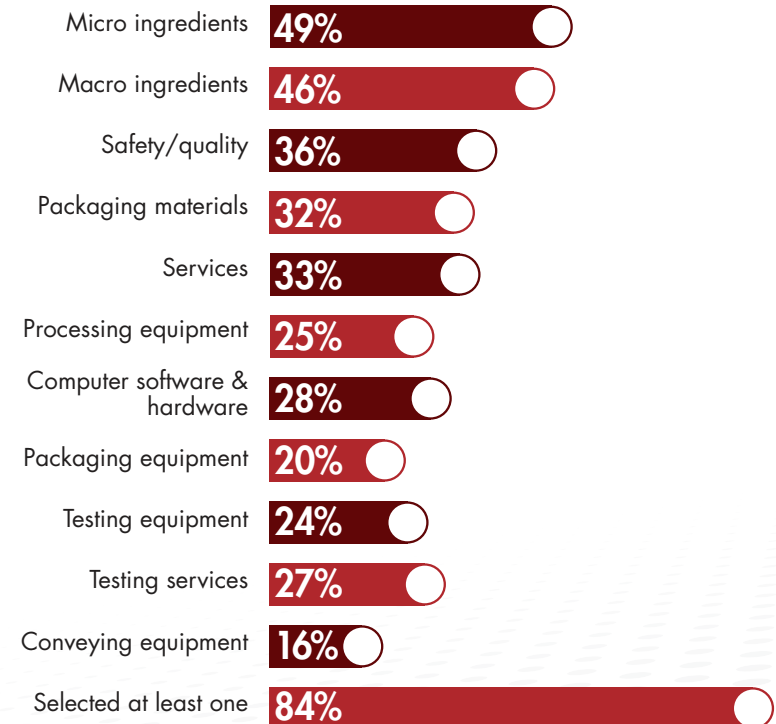
Purchasing roles



Industry tenure



Areas of purchasing influence



ABOUT PETFOOD INDUSTRY & PETFOOD FORUM

Monthly magazine

Our monthly trade magazine (print/digital) covering feature topics and expert industry opinions.

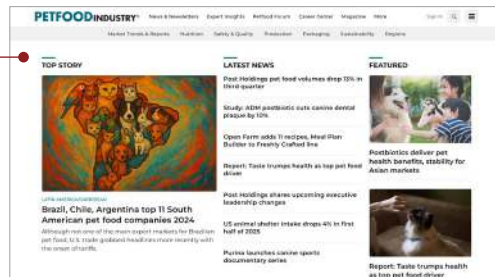


Podcasts

Our industry-focused podcast, which comes out every other Wednesday and covers any and all industry hot topics.

Website

Our flagship website, covering industry news of the day as well as hosting our Top Companies and product databases, podcast transcripts, and expert opinions.



Events

Our flagship annual “by industry, for industry” trade show and conference in Kansas City, as well as regional Petfood Forum conferences in Asia, Europe and Brazil.



Newsletters

Our newsletters, which cover hot topics and news of the day.



Webinars

Our monthly (and sometimes more often) series which feature various industry experts discussing a variety of hot topics with the goal of education.

