

DOOR4



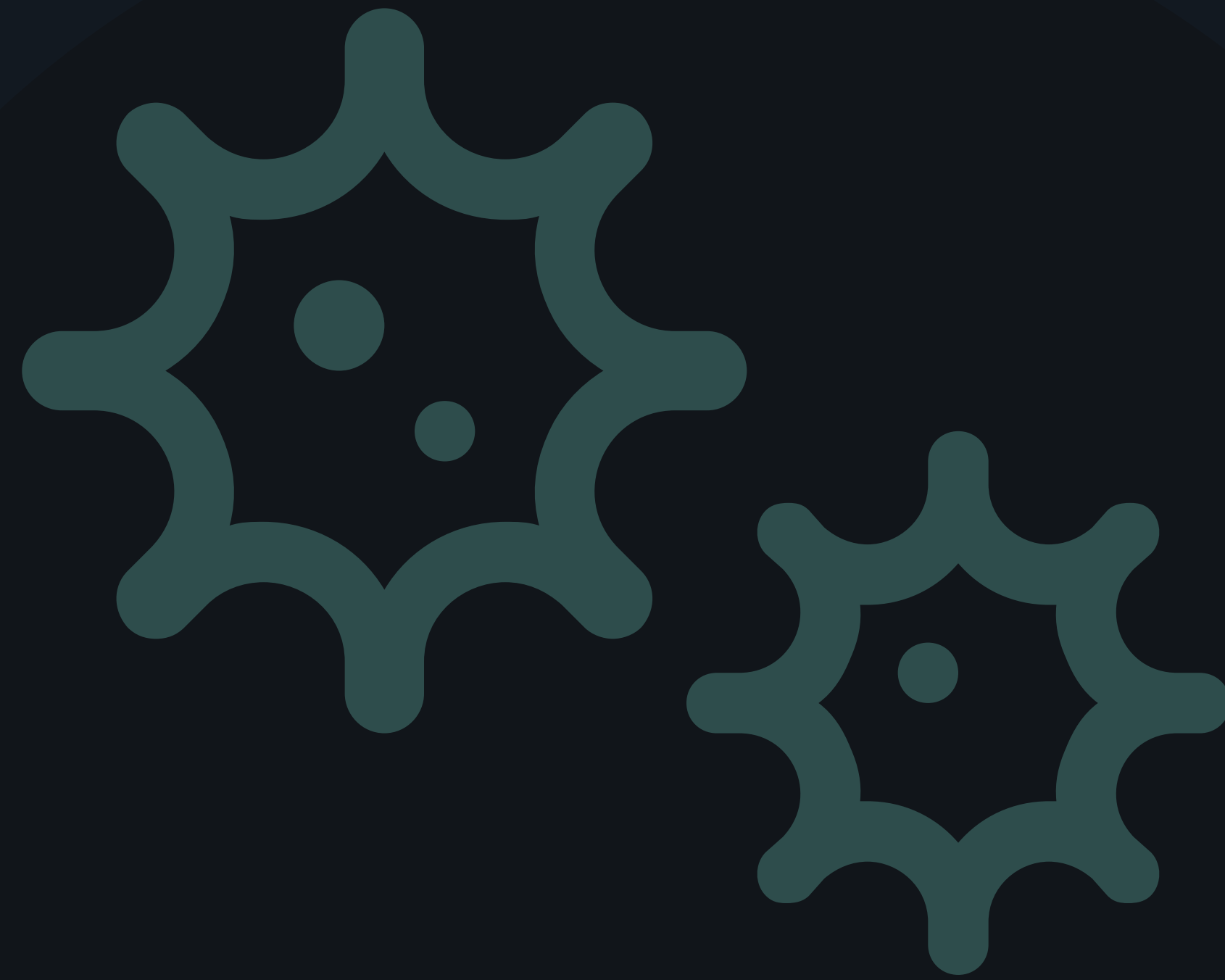
MARKETING IN ADVERSITY 2021



DOOR4

Marketing in Adversity 2021

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OVERVIEW

It's a fact that a major economic threat comes around, on average, every decade, and can last for a single quarter or several. In 2020, the threat to our economy - and our businesses - was a pandemic.

We can't be prepared for every eventuality - threats are many and varied; and the world, society, the marketplace and technology evolve quickly.

However, we can make our businesses resilient in the future by looking at what has happened before, seeing the patterns, noting what worked, and planning accordingly.



**WE CAN MAKE OUR
BUSINESSES
RESILIENT BY
LOOKING AT WHAT
HAS HAPPENED,
NOTING WHAT
WORKED, AND
PLANNING
ACCORDINGLY.**



WHAT WE SAW DURING LOCKDOWN

Door4 works with businesses to optimise experience and performance to help them increase revenue. We continued to do this during the pandemic, all the way through lockdown #1 and lockdown #2.

Some of our clients continued to thrive; some struggled; some evolved into different propositions. We onboarded many new clients during this time too.

What we observed was varied - surprising, expected, disappointing and heartening in equal measure.



THE SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

With our Marketing in Adversity survey, we wanted to review and assess what wider impacts the pandemic might have on British business, especially those who transact or rely upon generating leads from their websites.

The responses and data from the survey were equally varied. They do offer hope that businesses can prepare to meet adversity head-on using both reactive and long-term digital marketing strategies.

The survey was open to all UK businesses. Around half of responses came from Door4's current or recent clients.

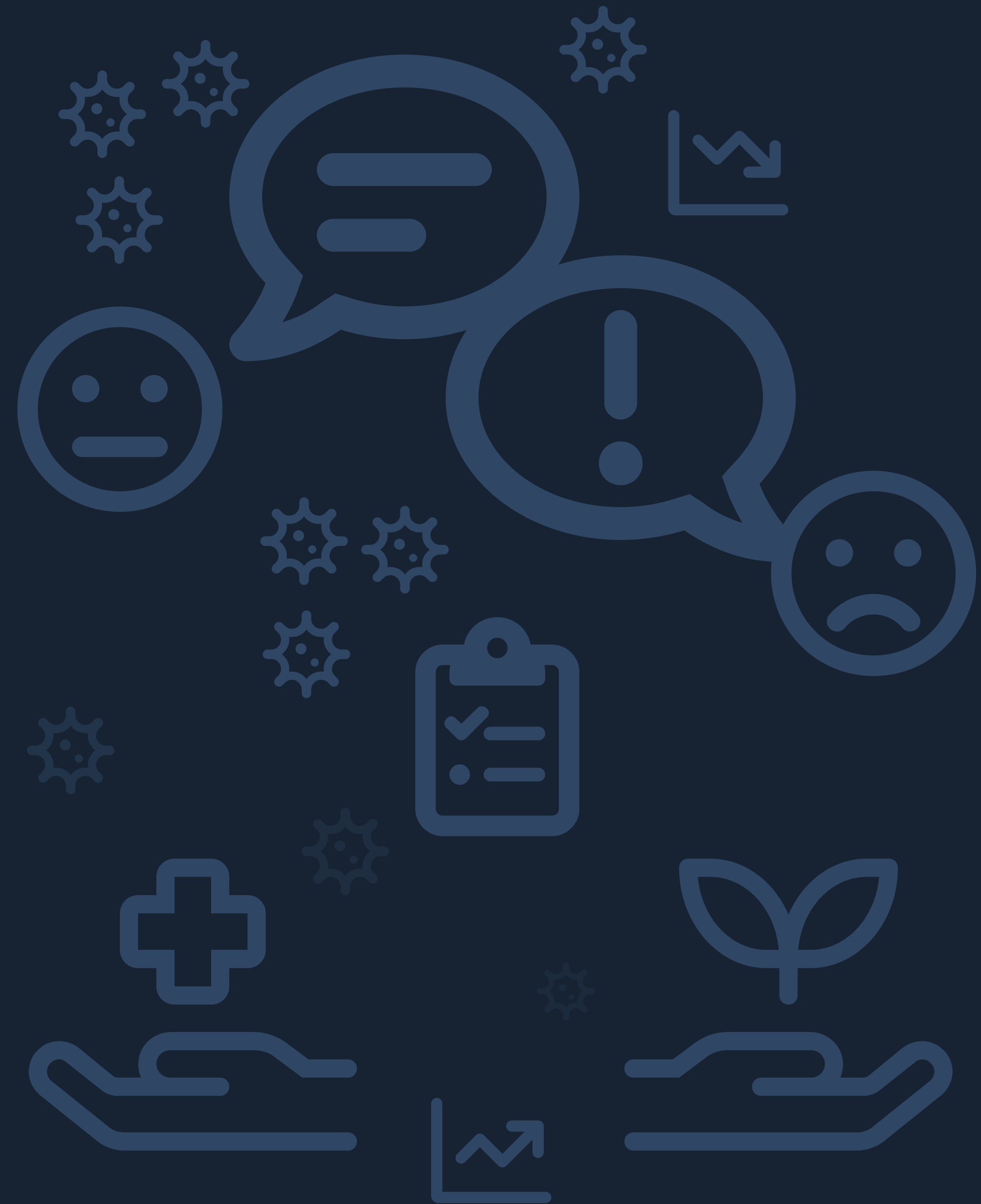


THE SURVEY HYPOTHESIS

We set out to discover insights to help businesses, like yours, through the impending recession.

You don't need our research to tell you how **"CHALLENGING"** and **"UNPRECEDENTED"** 2020 was (indeed, our respondents used these words the most to describe the last few months).

However, our data has created insights on what worked and what didn't during lockdown conditions, plus actions you can take to help your business survive and even thrive during 2021.



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CONTEXT



WHAT WE FOUND (AND EXPECTED)

Many businesses, despite the struggles of 2020, saw opportunities and are keen to act upon them.

The sentiment through the data, was that businesses finally got time to take stock.

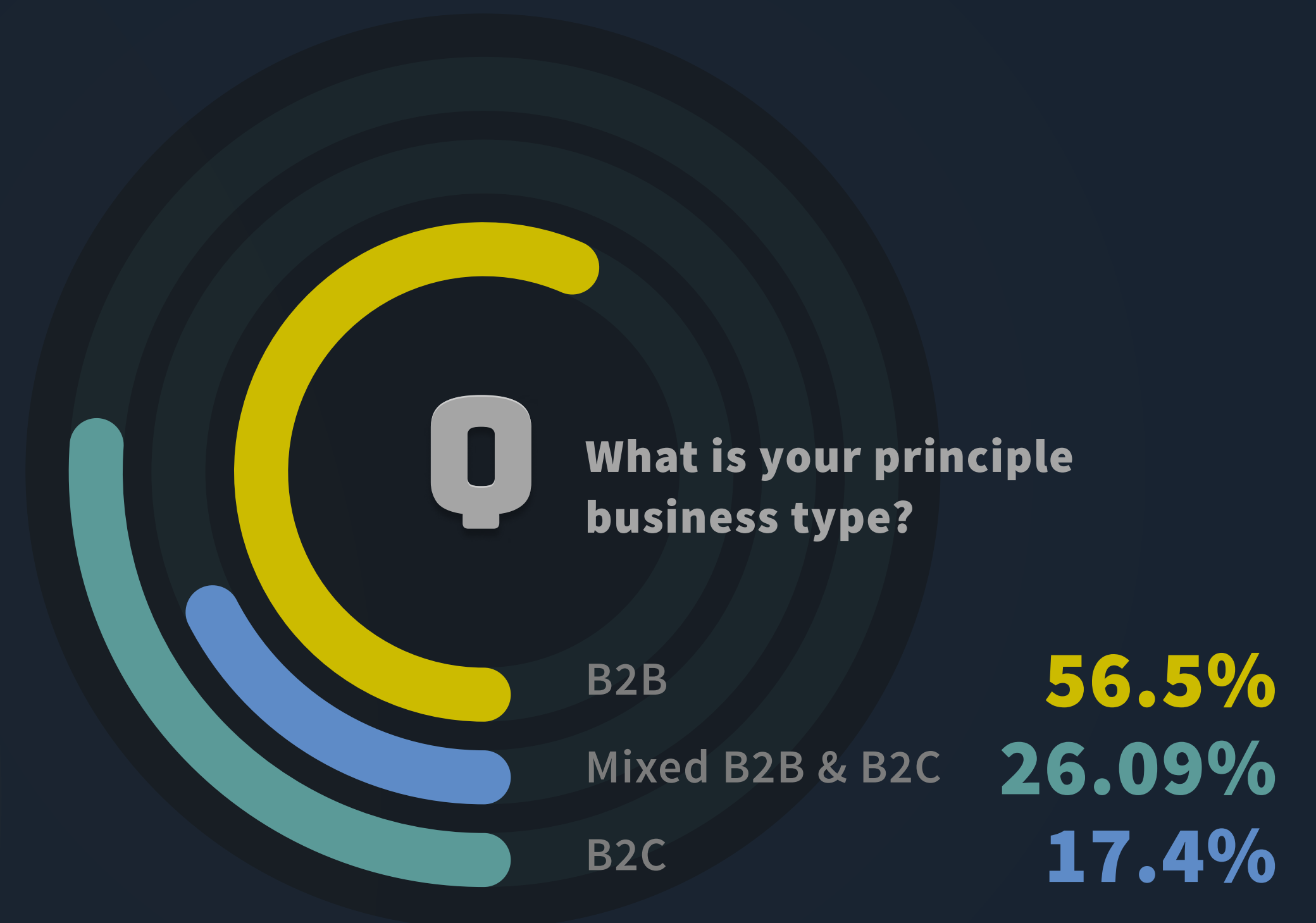
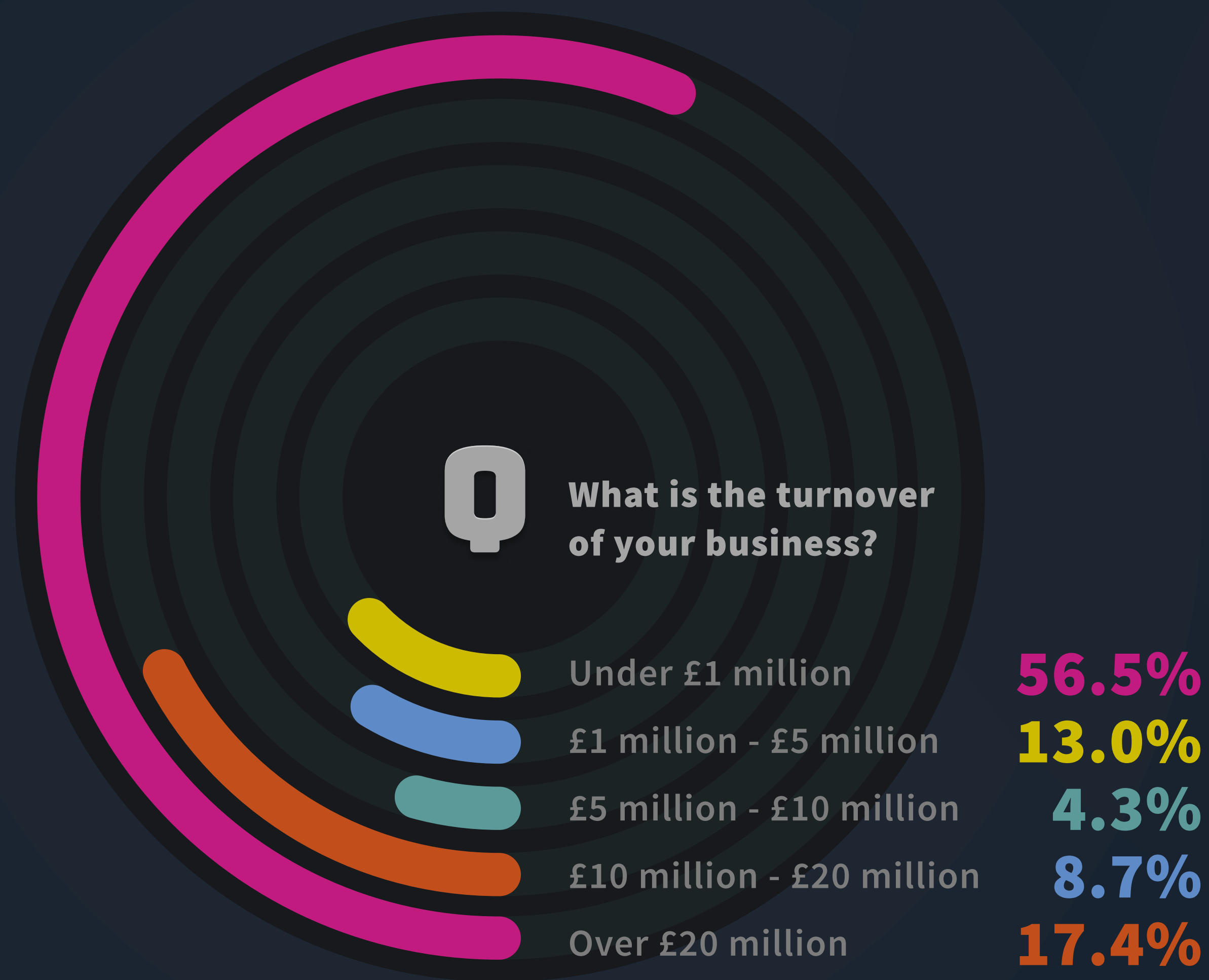


WHAT WE FOUND (UNEXPECTEDLY)

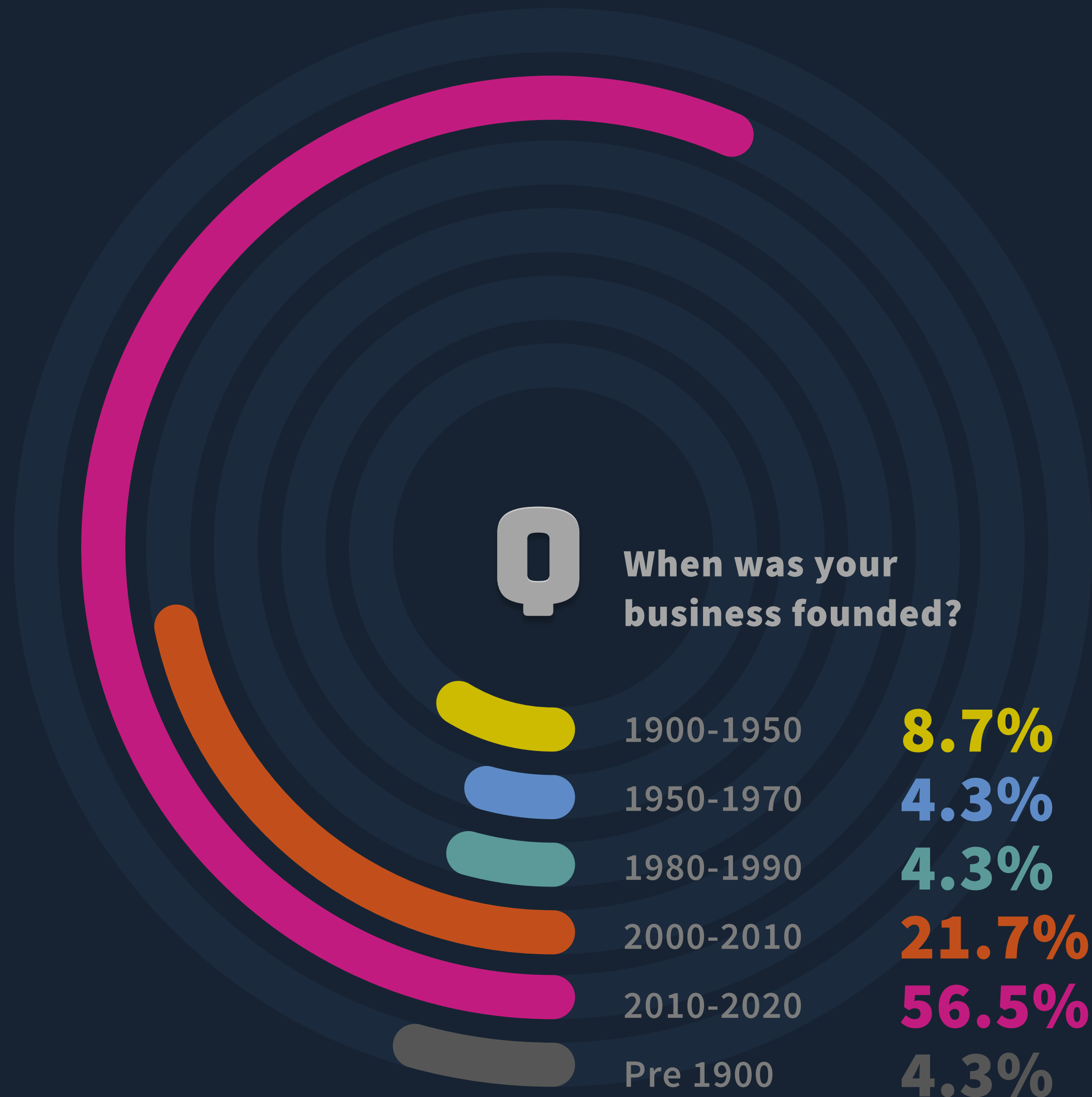
We saw a clear correlation between businesses valuing “long term” channels (i.e. SEO/Content) and having a lower propensity to make redundancies or require furloughed staff.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS



WHO DID WE ASK?



INSIGHTS

Almost a quarter have weathered several recessions, the advent of e-commerce, two world wars and several pandemics.

(Note: none of these companies supply the military or healthcare sectors.)

Oldest responding business has been there and seen it all... incorporated in 1877!

A quarter weathered the economic downturn of the 1980s.

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IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON PLANS

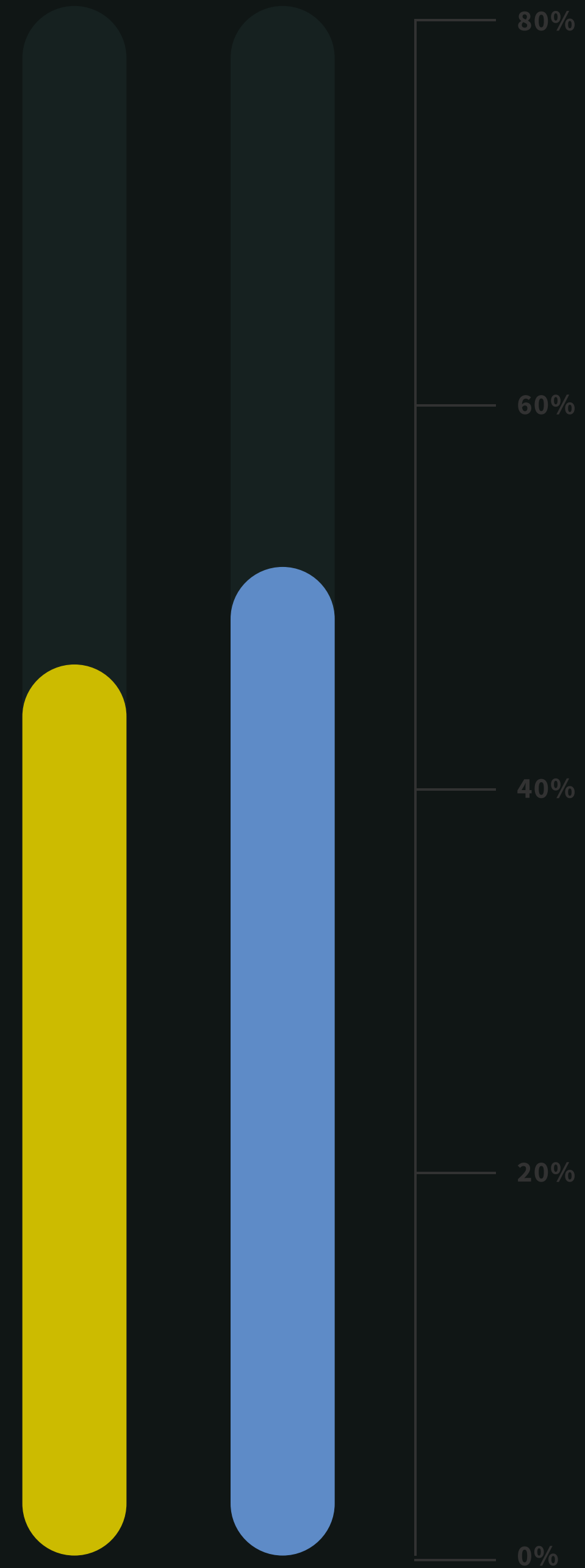


DON'T WORRY! IT'S NOT JUST YOU!



Did you have a documented digital marketing plan before COVID-19

No **47.8%**
Yes **52.2%**



LACK OF PLANNING DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE AGAINST...



**BUSINESSES
ONLINE REVENUE**



TURNOVER



TYPE



AGE

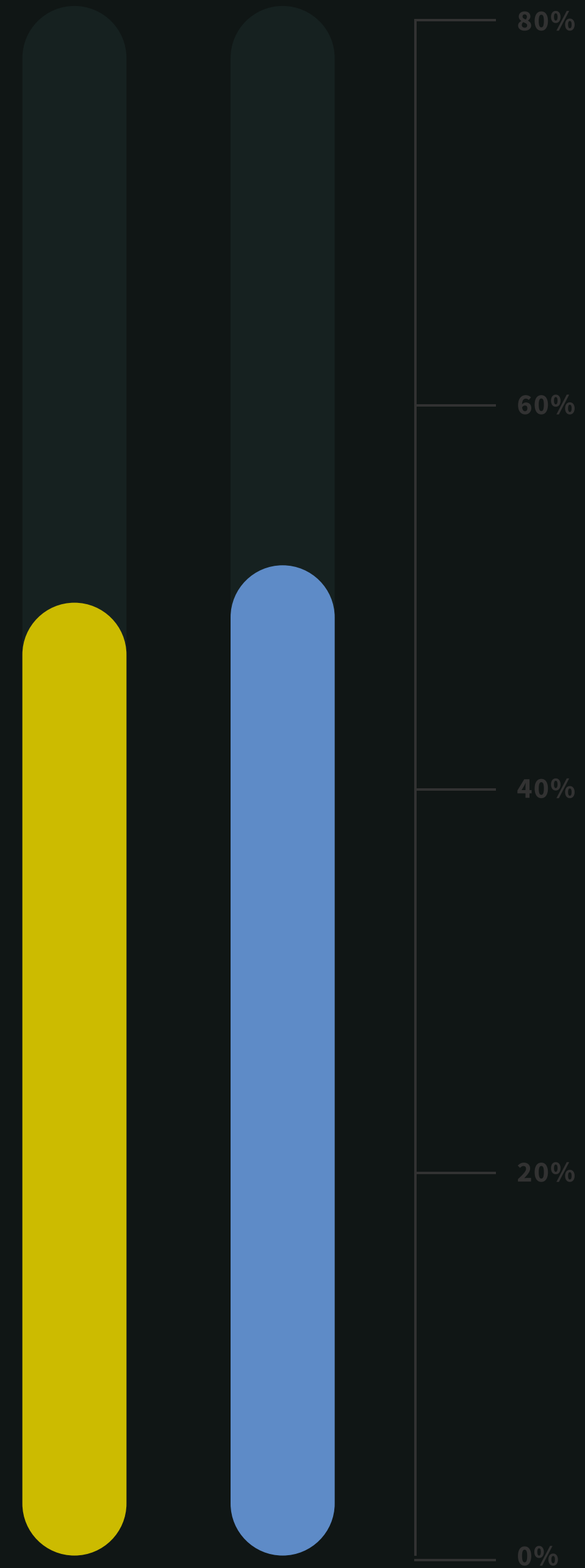
Businesses online revenue, turnover, type or age was not an indicator of whether a business would have a documented digital marketing plan.

AND **HALF** OF THOSE WITH A PLAN FOUND THEIR PLANS TO BE UNFIT FOR PURPOSE IN ADVERSITY...



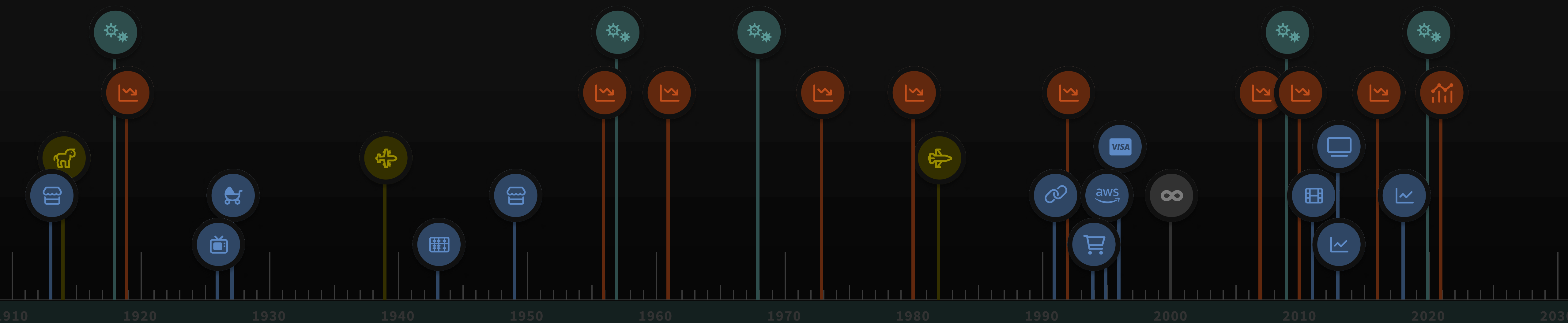
Were the recommendations in your digital marketing plan clear and fit for purpose?

No **49.7%**
Yes **50.3%**



WAS IT A SURPRISE?

Selective UK timeline of economic recessions, pandemics and other notable events showing that adverse events are ongoing.



1913 Clark & Debenham, which became Debenhams, celebrates its centenary

1914 World War I

1918 Spanish Flu pandemic

1926 John Logie Baird unveils his mechanical television to the public

1927 The world's population reaches 2 billion

1939 World War II

1943 Colossus, the world's first computer, is switched on

1949 Harrods, initially a grocery store, celebrates its centenary

1956 Recession

1957 Flu pandemic

1961 Recession

1968 Flu pandemic

1973 Stock Market crashes

1980 UK House price crash

1982 Falklands War

1991 Tim Berners-Lee launches the World Wide Web

1992 Black Wednesday ERM withdrawal

1994 First e-commerce transaction made

1995 Amazon and Ebay launch

1996 Authorize.net (Visa) online payments launched

2000 DOOR4 set up from a small office in Nelson, Lancashire

2007 Global Financial Crisis

2009 Swine Flu pandemic

2010 UK launches Austerity programme

2011 'Contagion' movie released

2013 First Black Friday sales

2013 IMRG puts UK e-commerce revenue at £91B

2016 Leave wins Brexit referendum

2018 ONS puts UK e-commerce revenue at £688B

2020 Coronavirus pandemic

2021 UK EU transition period ends

DESPITE FEW HAVING PLANS, MANY MANAGED TO ADAPT



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

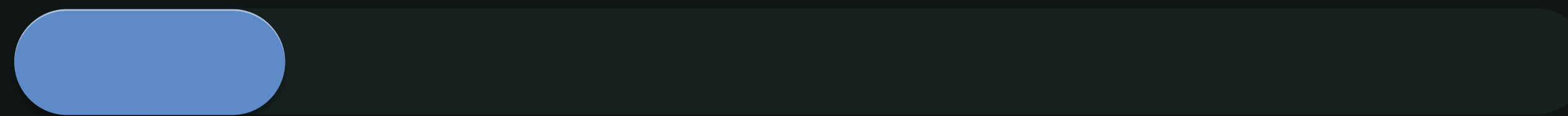
63%

of businesses adapted their service in response to the crisis



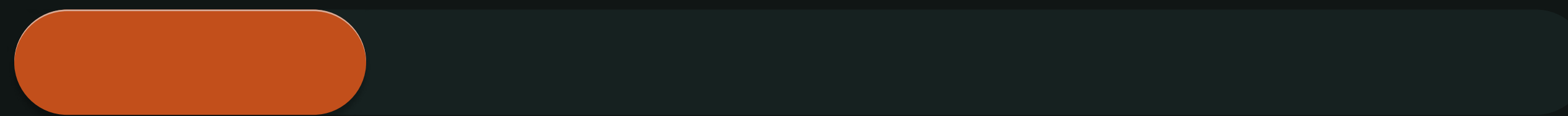
15%

Increased the volume (but retained the same service)



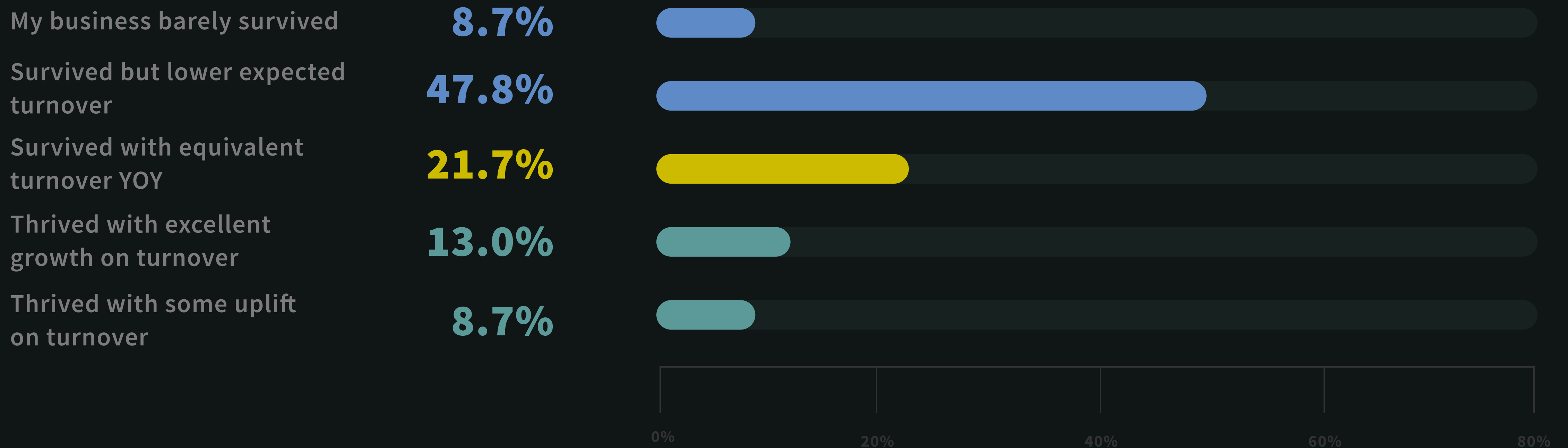
20%

businesses needed to offer completely different services



0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

OVER 40% OF RESPONDENTS RECEIVED BETTER OR EXPECTED TURNOVER

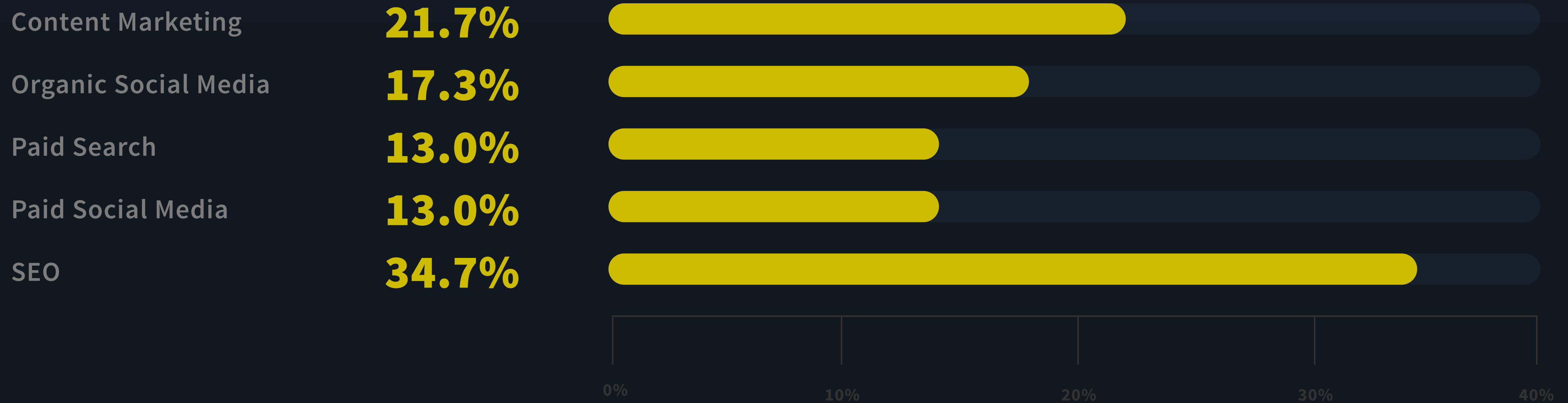


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**THE 2020 RESPONSE TO
ADVERSITY**



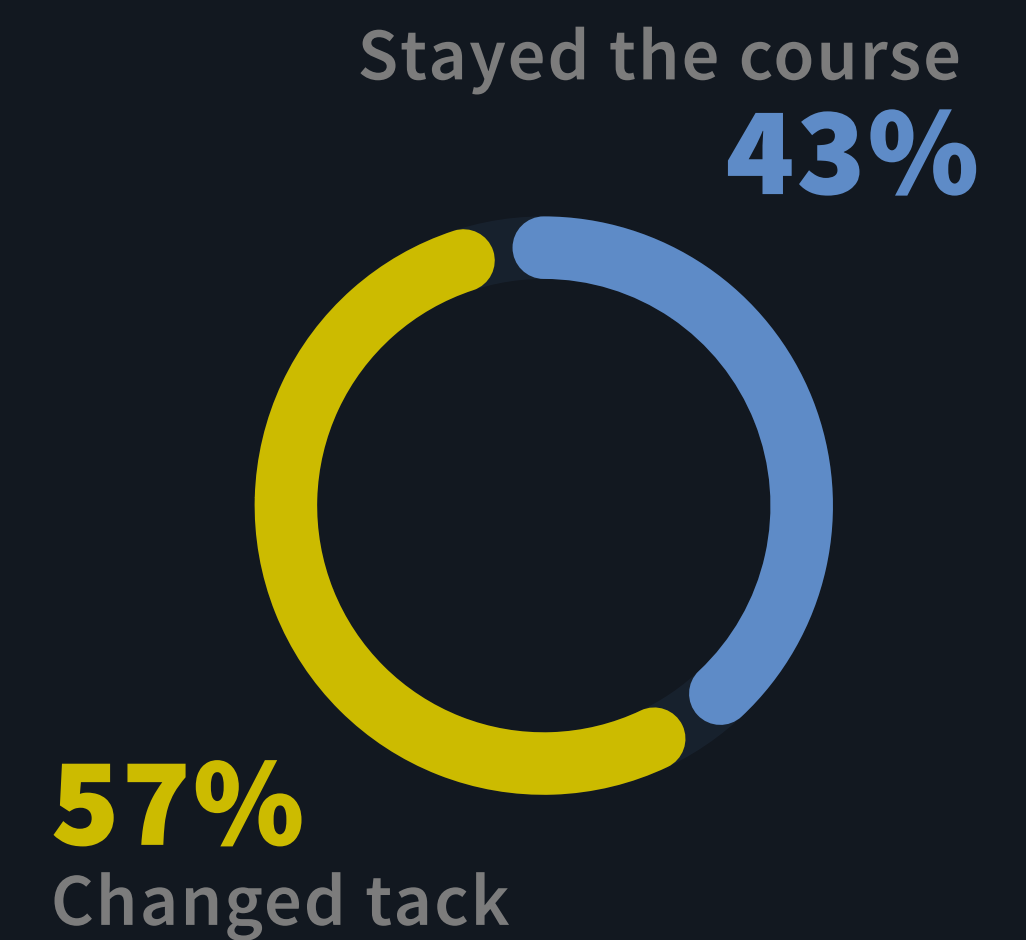
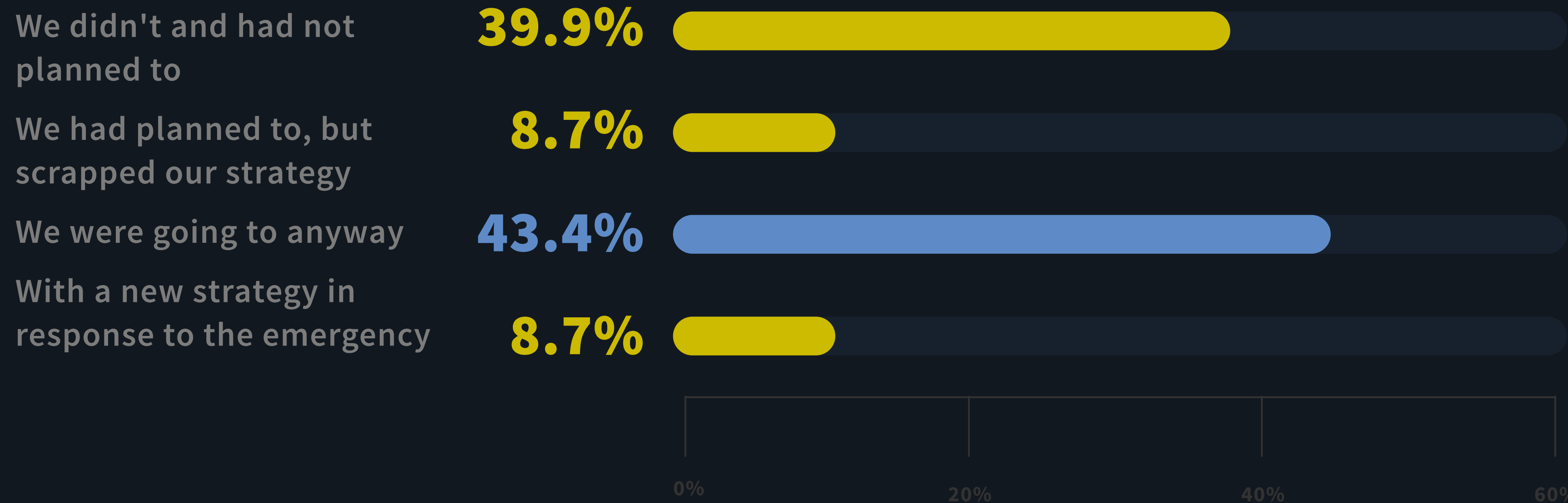
WHICH ONE ELEMENT OF YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY IS CRITICAL TO YOUR BUSINESS?



OVER HALF OF THE BUSINESSES HAD INCREASED THEIR MARKETING SPEND IN Q1

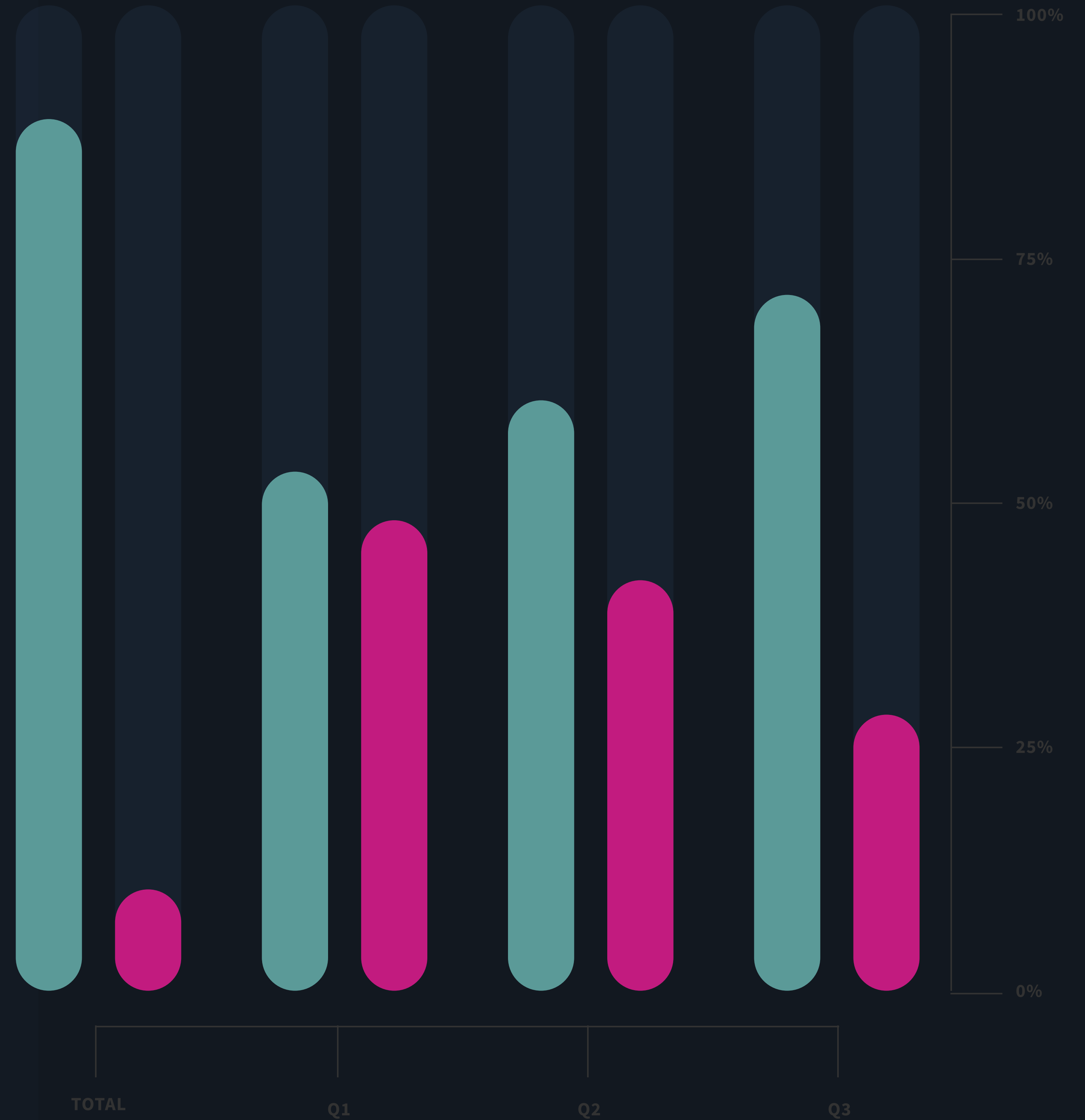
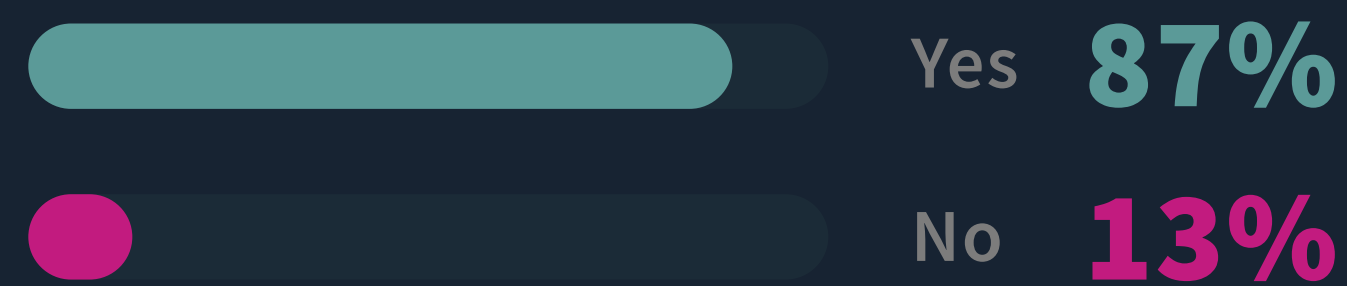


Q Why did you spend the way you did during Q1?



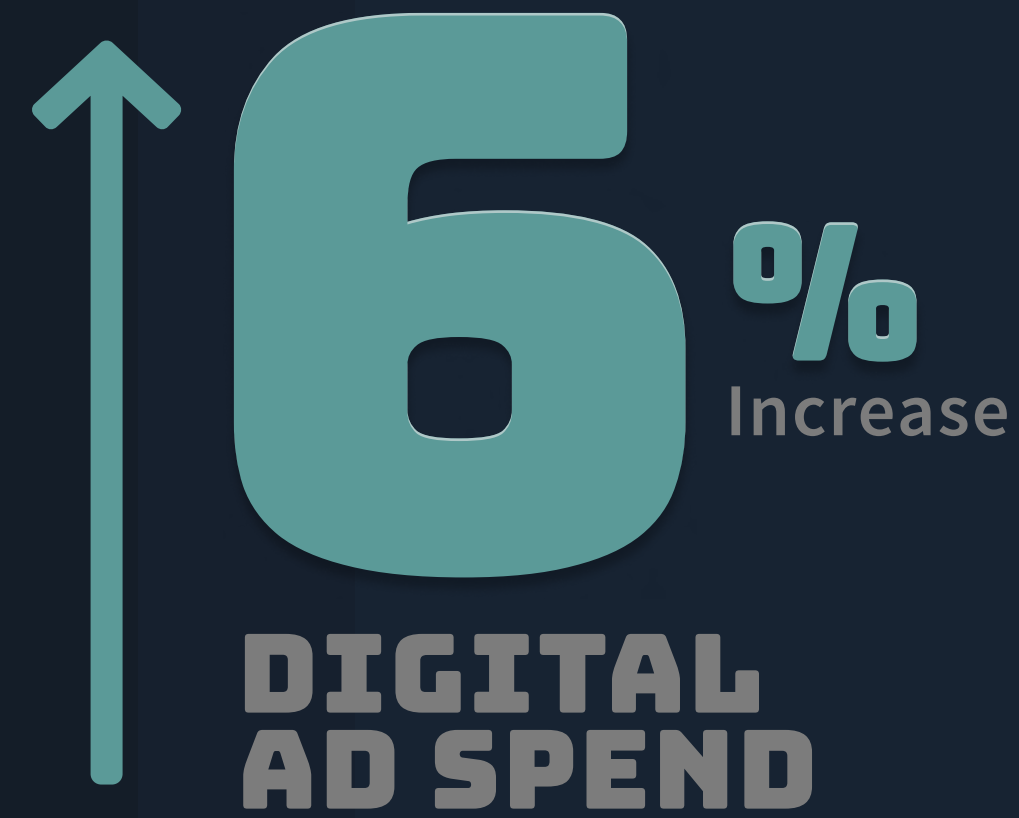
BY THE END OF Q3, 87% OF BUSINESSES HAD INCREASED SPEND...

Q Did you increase your Digital Marketing Spend?

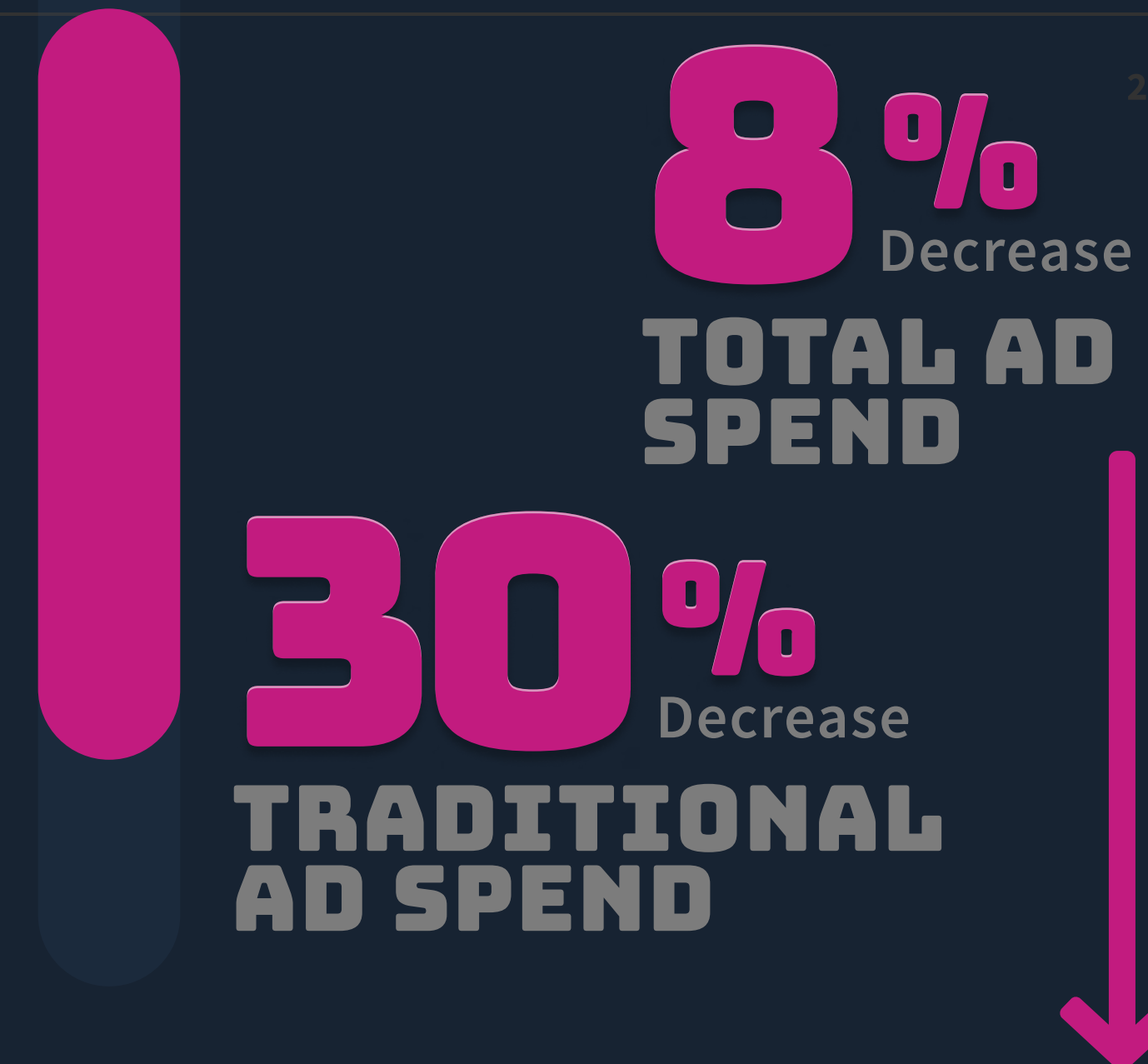


THIS IS IN LINE WITH IAB RESEARCH

Overall ad spend fell during 2020,
but spend on digital increased.



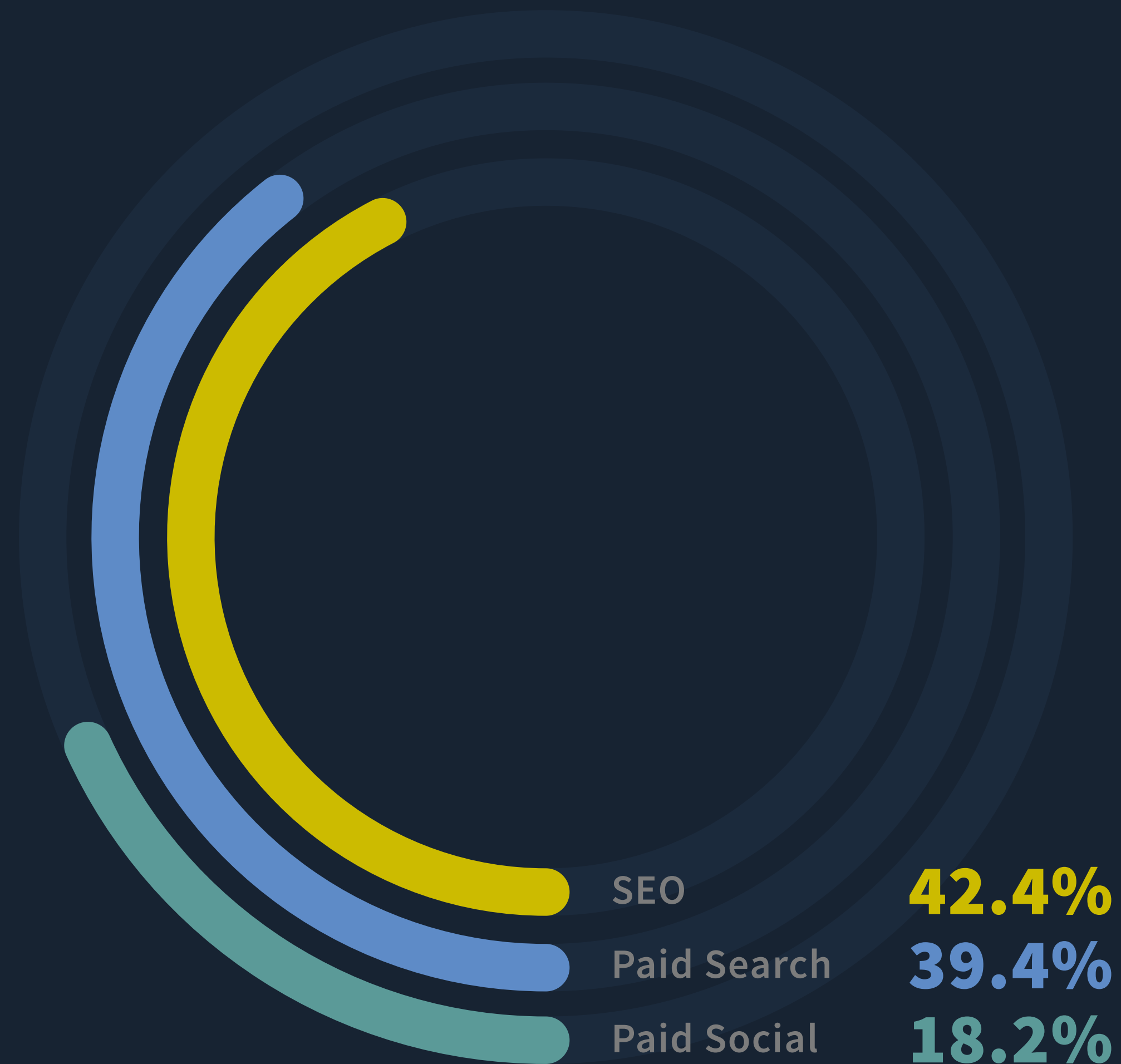
2020



2020

Source: https://www.iab.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/200831.SpendResearchStudyNo6.FINAL_.pdf

SEARCH SEEMED TO BE THE WINNER...



Of our respondents, only 18% increased their spend in Paid Social - this is in contrast to recent years where Paid Social has continually seen rises in channel spend.

This aligns with the link we noticed between businesses that invested in long-term digital marketing and not furloughing/laying off staff. How?

- 1** Paid Search gives direct results for those looking to hunker down
- 2** SEO gives a long term investment, for which many industries saw as 'temporary' impact, and will help give level footing for the impending recession
- 3** Paid Social at the start of lockdown felt opportunistic by some brands

Worth noting the IAB saw a significant increase in Paid Social spend by 25%.

We feel this came through in Q2 and Q3 where we saw this increase to 18% of respondents.

ALSO, FACEBOOK WAS GETTING BAD PRESS, AT A TIME WHERE BUDGETS WERE ALREADY UNDER PRESSURE

#StopHateForProfit began in July 2020 aimed to force Facebook to tackle misinformation and its approach to Hate Speech.

At Door4 we were having conversations with clients who wanted to tighten budgets because of Covid-19. They were influenced enough by the PR to cut social media budgets first and focus on search channels.

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**UNEXPECTED
FINDINGS...**



THIS IS WHERE IT GETS INTERESTING - AND CURIOUSLY UNRELATED TO ADVERSITY...

In any research piece, the most interesting insights are typically those you did not seek to find.

A few ways we had the ability to cut this information was by channel. As a digital agency, we see value in all channels - from those that can be used to light up short term tactics, to others that can be harnessed to blaze a trail through longer term strategies.

So, while we were drawing correlations based on the answers to the questions we originally asked, we also considered short vs long-term thinking in businesses.

Specifically, how did the businesses ethos, approach or culture correlate to our data findings...



HOW DID THE BUSINESSES ETHOS, APPROACH OR CULTURE CORRELATE TO OUR DATA FINDINGS?

LOOKING PAST DATA

To be clear, our original intention was to see what digital marketing had worked for business during an adverse economic environment.

For full disclosure, the people on this project are obsessed fascinated by the relationships between human behaviour, business culture and brand communications.

So, it was only natural that discussions would shift to the bigger picture.

We saw an interesting pattern.

We believe the data shows how the characteristics of a business (ethos, approach, culture) relate to its readiness for adversity, based on the channels they invest in.

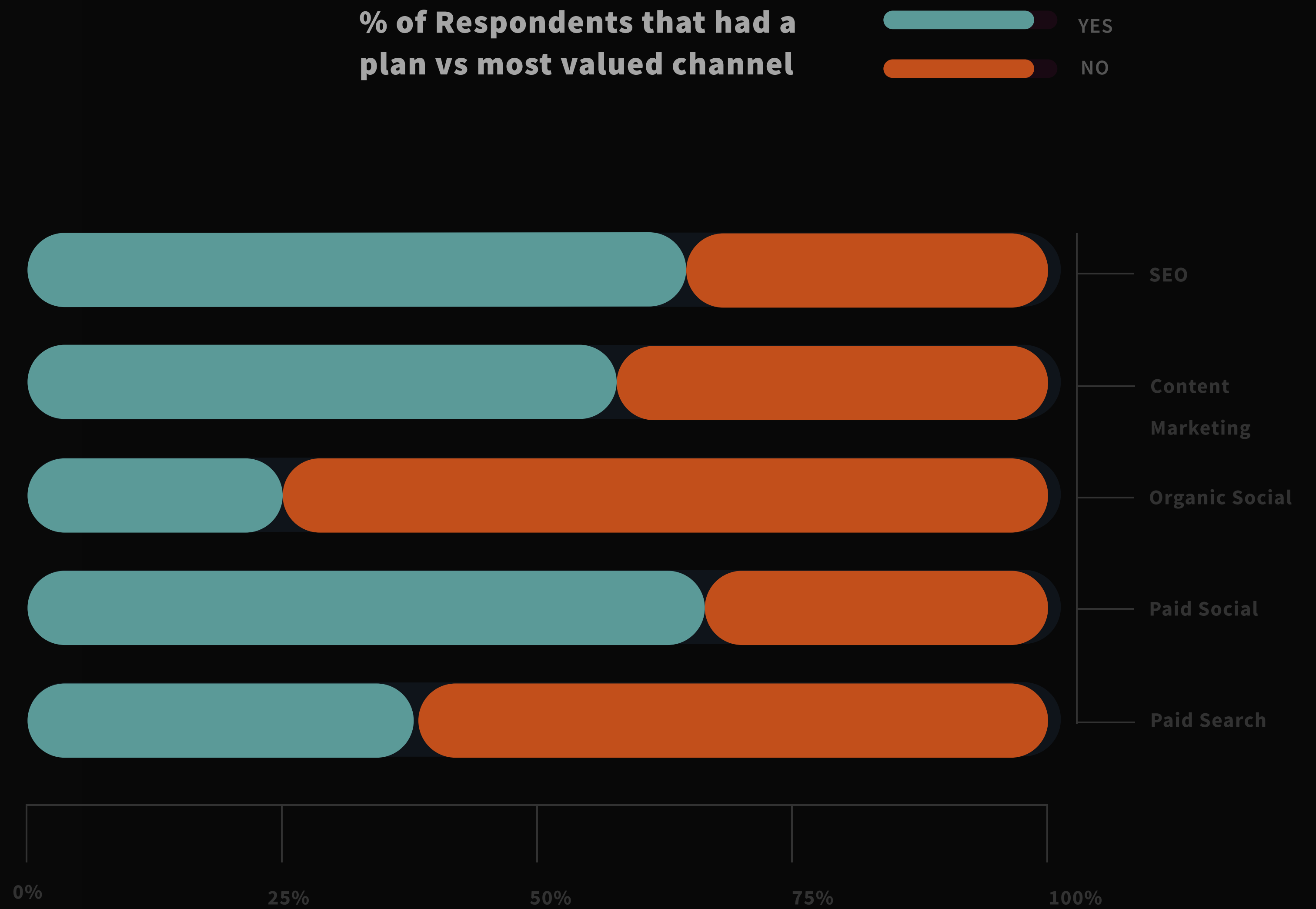
Look at what we saw...



**DO THE
CHARACTERISTICS
OF A BUSINESS
RELATE TO ITS
READINESS FOR
ADVERSITY, BASED
ON THE CHANNELS
THEY INVEST IN?**

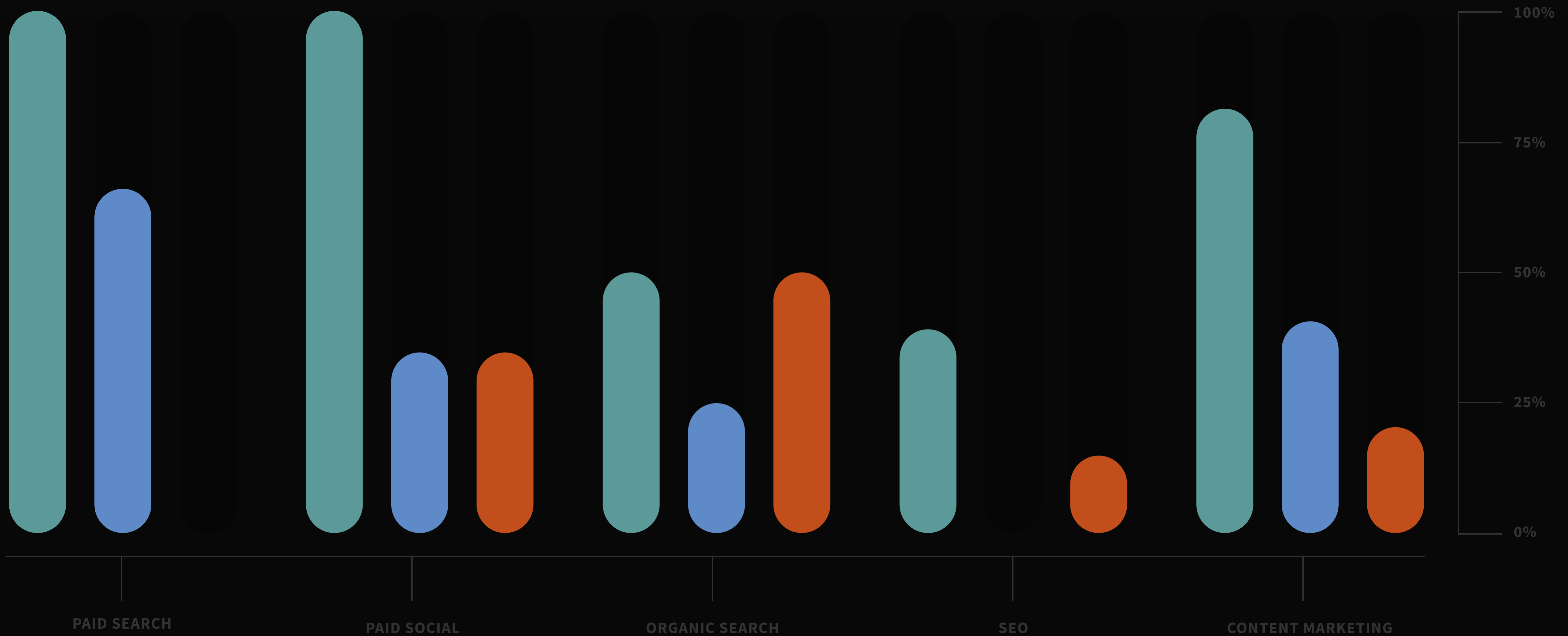
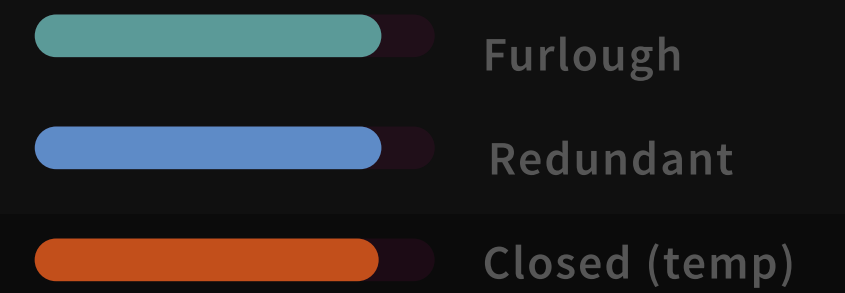
SEO VS PAID SEARCH MINDSETS

Brands that value SEO and content marketing were more likely to have a documented marketing plan than those that prioritised Paid Search.



SEO VS PAID SEARCH MINDSETS

Respondents that value paid channels had a higher propensity to furlough staff and make redundancies in response to adversity.



PARTING THOUGHTS

Just because this correlation exists, it does not mean a brand focusing on Paid channels is doomed to be a victim of short-termism.

Nor are we suggesting that a brand investing in Organic channels, which typically build over time, can't impact short-term results. Our experience (and case studies) show that it's not that clear cut.

However, we do believe Paid is valued in businesses that focus on short-term results from the top. And that Organic channels focus on long-term results.

(And yes, we were mean having people just pick one... as they're all important!)

The Latin phrase opposite is a fitting sign-off: in other words, correlation doesn't mean causation... but we're keen to find out more. It's an interesting theory to pursue during next year's survey.



**POST HOC ERGO
PROPTER HOC**

**AFTER THIS;
THEREFORE
BECAUSE OF THIS**

The West Wing

Series 1, Episode 2

THE MILLION POUND QUESTION

We'll be asking this question next year in pursuit of more robust data on our theory.



DO BUSINESSES THAT VALUE
LONGER TERM MARKETING
STRATEGIES HAVE A
CULTURE AIMED AT THE
LONG TERM VISION
VS
**SHORT TERM KPI
MANAGEMENT?**

WE ASKED FOR A SINGLE WORD TO DESCRIBE 2020.

“

CHALLENGING

Was how 37.50% of the brands that valued SEO described 2020. A truly stoic response.

Also: cool, calm, imperturbable, unflappable, detached, dispassionate, impassive, imperturbable, patient, philosophical...

“

FUBAR, WHIRLWIND

Respondents who valued Paid Social and Paid Search showed a tendency to make dramatic declarations.

These emotive exclamations reveal a deeply-held appreciation of the ability to wrap a complex message into a single word that won't bust the character count...

“

ROLLERCOASTER

Brands that most valued Content Marketing are secret thrill-seekers, with 40% describing the last year as a “Roller-Coaster”, “roller-coaster” or “rollercoaster”.

On the same page but clearly not using the same style sheet...

“

UNPRECEDENTED

We can all agree that it's been

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SUMMARY



HOW SHOULD WE USE MARKETING IN ADVERSITY?

The overall message is to create (and document) a marketing plan, one that accounts for challenging times as well as business-as-usual. We can't plan for every possible threat but we can at least sketch out possible ways forward.

- What works for one business won't necessarily work for another - tailor strategy and tactics to your business
- Consider your revenue streams and if they can be diversified, for example by using online channels
- Engage with agency partners you can rely on to meet the challenges you face
- Line your ducks up - make your online channels fit for purpose and performing well
- Invest in the marketing mix for better bullet-proofing with a blend of long term (e.g. SEO and content) and short term (e.g. Paid) strategies and tactics for easier pivoting



INVEST IN THE MARKETING MIX FOR BETTER BULLET-PROOFING WITH A BLEND OF LONG TERM AND SHORT TERM STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR EASIER PIVOTING

A FINAL WORD FROM OUR SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Q KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

“ Invest in high quality digital content as a key strand of our event programming.

“ Use digital to engage with employees working from home and keep teams connected with the business more.

“ I'd distribute budgets differently.

“ Reduce wastage of spend but increase budgets on the back of data.

“ I'd produce certain content earlier.

“ I would have implemented more of the ideas we had sooner than we did.

“ I would have started the strategy earlier.

“ Spend less.

“ I'd take the opportunity to improve digital content.

“ We would have done more online paid for digital advertising sooner and had a better website response to the pandemic.

“ Reconsider business focus, all eggs are currently in the 'getting people together in a room/venue' basket... we cannot be in this situation again.

“ Come out stronger with a new plan.

“ I'd make more use of LinkedIn to build an audience.

“ I'd reduce our focus on less in-demand services such as event management and strategic planning. I'd put more into tactical quick-win revenue generating opportunities such as webinars, PPC, paid social etc.

“ I'd stop answering the phone and work in the garden.

“ Spend more.

ABOUT DOOR4

Door4 helps businesses exceed **commercial goals**. Using data, insight and creativity, we optimise digital performance to **maximise profit**. We **reach** your audience, **convert** them into customers, and enable you to **scale**. And we build a **collaborative relationship**, becoming an indispensable partner.

This report was researched and produced at Door4 by Sean Dwyer, Jackie Yeadon and Darren Taylor.

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