

WHITE PAPER

The 2024 state of content planning

Uncover the best practices in editorial planning — from the teams to the tools involved



 **WG Content**
Strategy and Creation



Executive summary

The amount of content an organization needs to fuel their marketing, communications and business development goals is staggering. So is the time it takes to plan for all that content.

For over two decades, WG Content has been collaborating with marketing teams to plan and develop content. To get a glimpse of the state of content planning today, we partnered with Researchscape to uncover how organizations tackle planning and what challenges they face.

Nearly 170 respondents shared an inside look at how their organizations plan content. You'll find the results in this white paper, including answers to questions like:

- What formats are teams using to plan content initiatives?
- What roles are typically involved in content planning?
- How are content plans connected to strategy?
- How much content development is outsourced and how do organizations set up content contributors for success?
- What are the top challenges in content planning?
- What metrics are organizations using to prove the value of content?
- How are organizations using AI in content planning?



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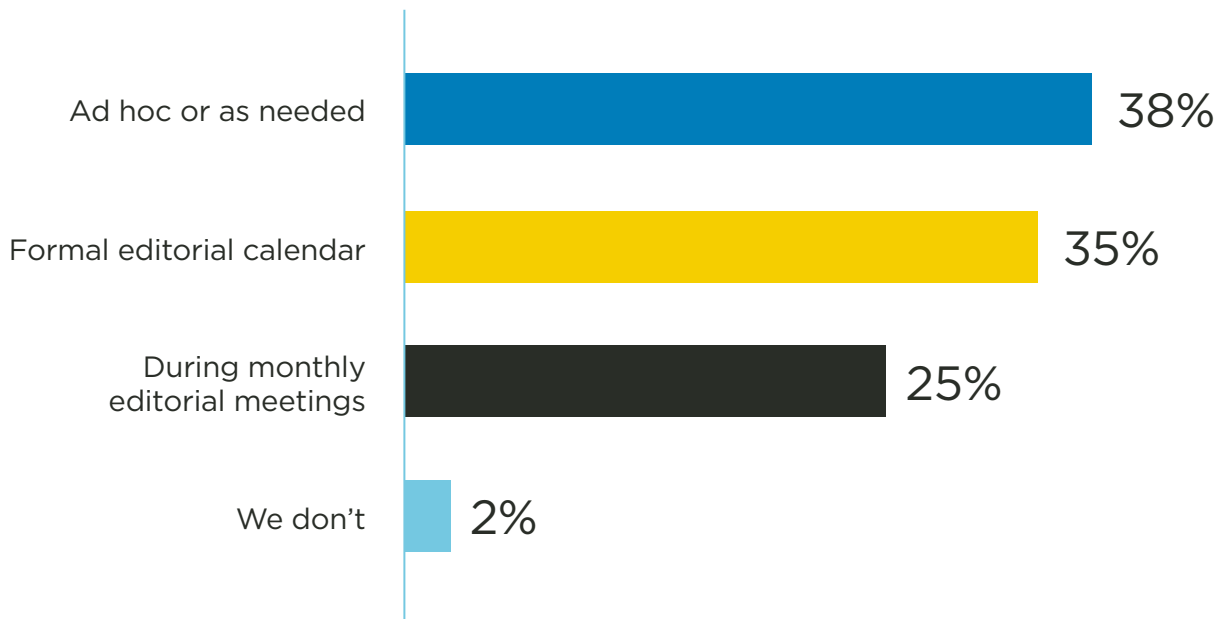
// We hope you find this white paper helpful as you optimize your content plans.



Content planning

When asked how their organization typically plans content, the majority of respondents (38%) indicated that they do it 'ad-hoc' or as needed. This was followed by 35% who use a formal editorial calendar. Those who have monthly editorial meetings were next (25%).

How does your organization primarily plan for content initiatives?



Get more helpful tips on editorial calendars:

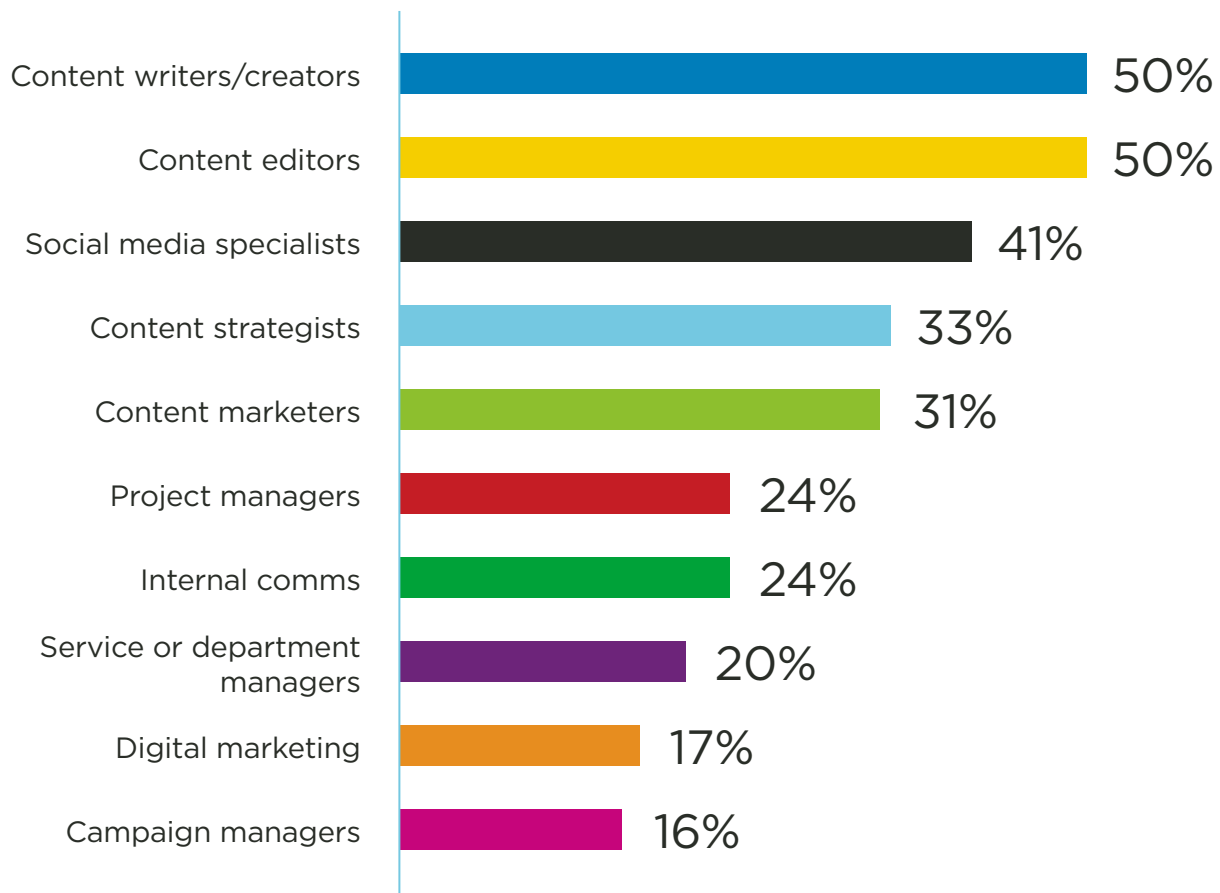
- [Create a robust blog editorial calendar](#)
- [How to fill your editorial calendar](#)
- [Tips on blog publishing frequency](#)



Roles in content planning

The main roles involved in content planning across all respondents are writers (50%), editors (50%) and social media (41%). Out of the top 10 most selected options, campaign managers and digital marketers are the two roles least likely to be involved in planning. Only 5% of respondents indicated they involve partners or agencies in content planning.

What roles are part of content planning? (Top 10 most selected options.)



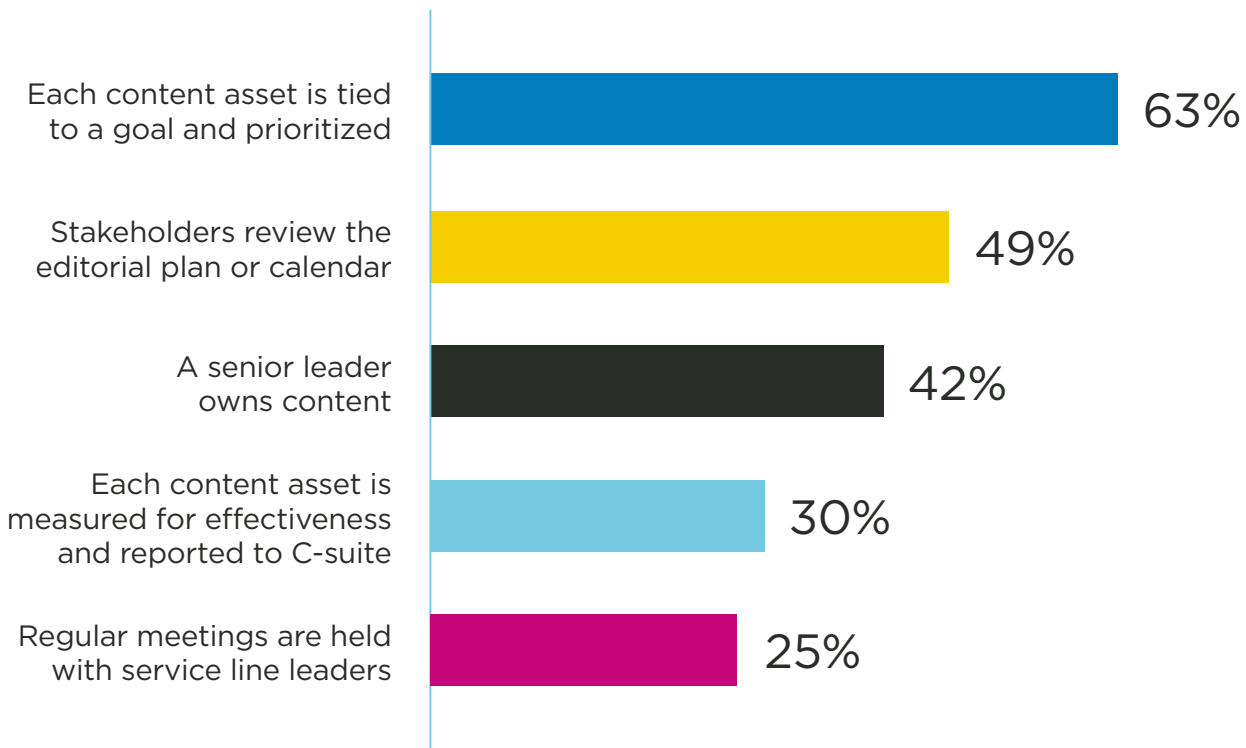
While most respondents don't include their partners or agencies in content planning, inviting them into your planning conversations can make them an even stronger asset for your team.



Business strategy

Tying content initiatives to overarching strategy is essential. Overwhelmingly, respondents make sure each content asset is tied to a goal and prioritized (63%). Almost half of respondents indicate stakeholders review the editorial plan or calendar.

How do you ensure business strategy informs content planning?



Create content with a purpose. Think about:

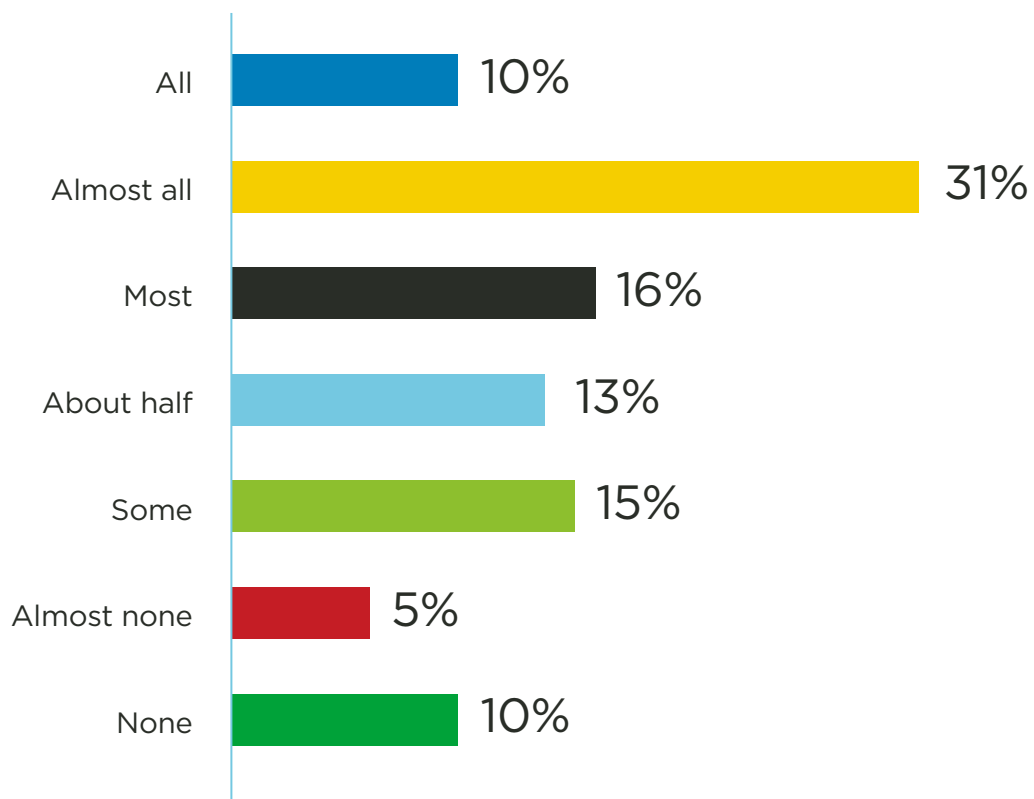
- What is the goal? (ex: drive volume for a specific service)
- Who is the audience?
- What audience pain point are you addressing?
- What is the call-to-action?



Outsourcing content

Over 40% of respondents indicate they outsource all or almost all of their content writing while, only 10% indicate they don't outsource any writing.

How much content writing do you outsource?



Outsourcing content creation allows you to:

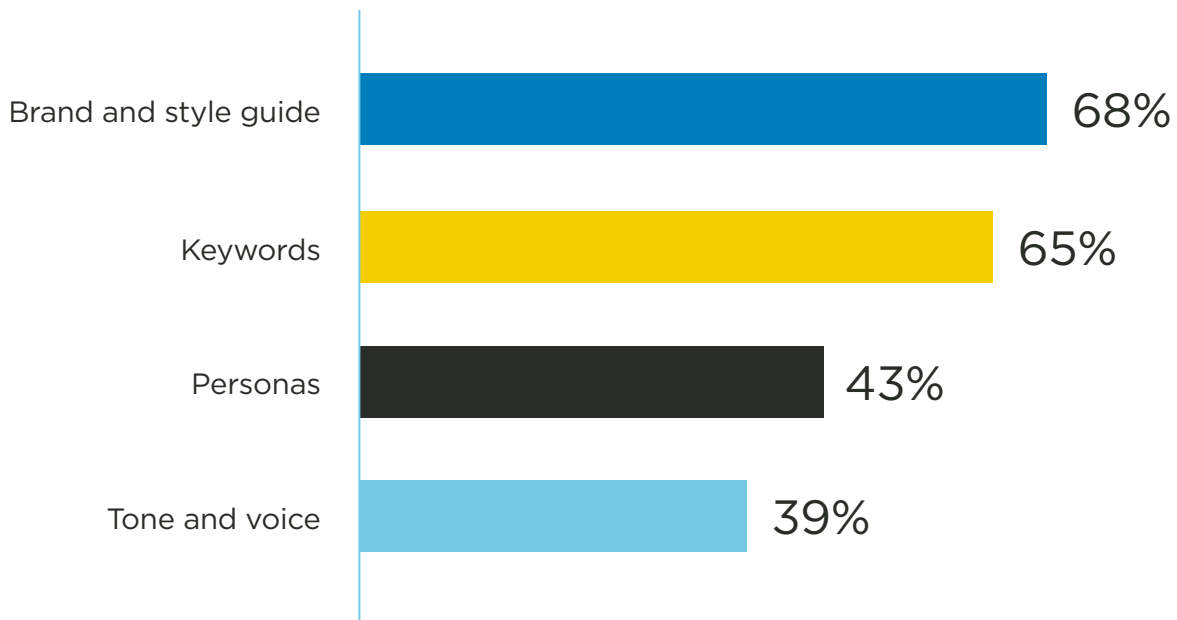
- Ensure high-quality content
- Scale content production up or down as needed
- Access proven writing talent and expertise



Tools and guidelines

With 85% of respondents indicating they outsource at least some of their content writing, it's important to set up external writers for success. When looking at the tools and guidelines organizations use to assist writers, brand and style guides (68%) and keywords (65%) are shared most often.

Which of the following tools and guidelines do you utilize to assist writers?



Get more helpful tips on writing tools and guidelines

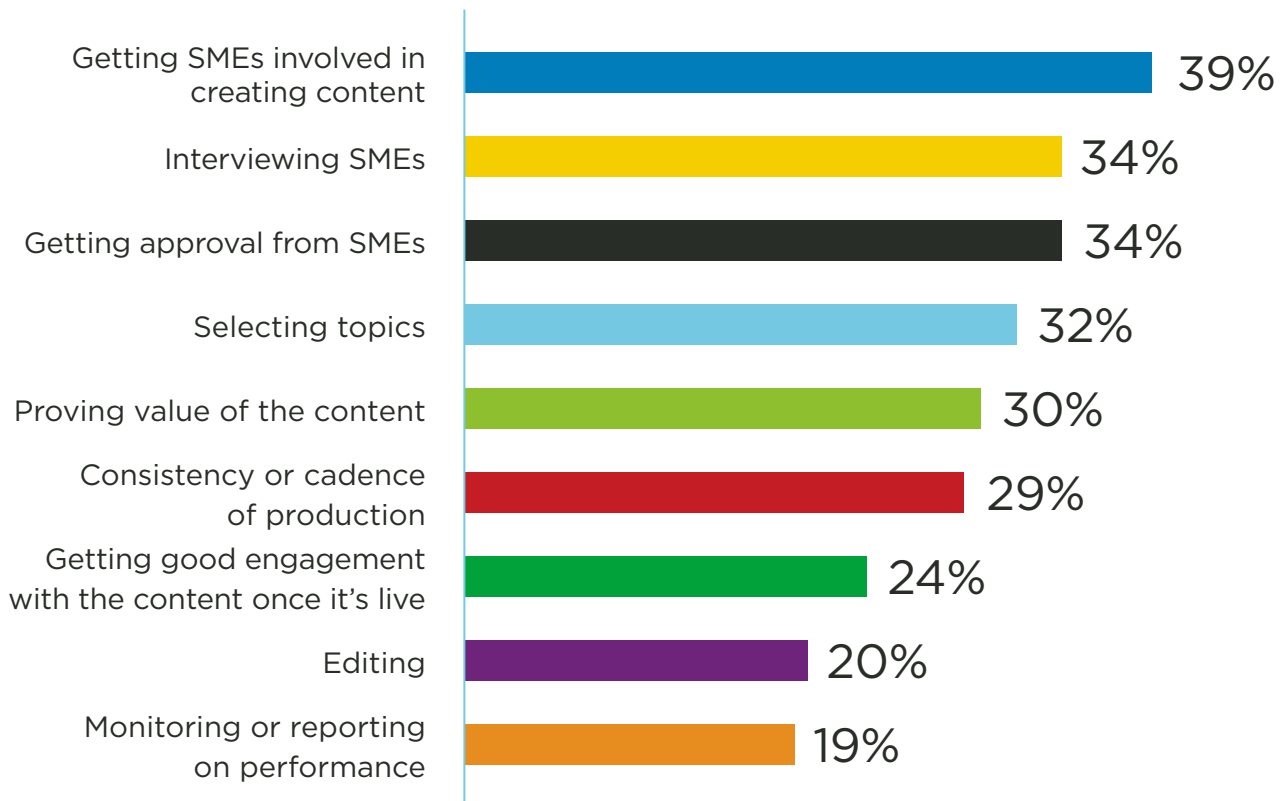
- [Essential elements of a style guide](#)
- [How to choose effective SEO keywords](#)
- [5 ways to create a strong brand voice](#)



Top challenges

The top-rated challenge for all respondents was getting subject matter experts, aka SMEs, involved in creating content (39%). This was followed by interviewing SMEs and getting approval from SMEs, which tied with 34%. Selecting topics and proving the value of content were also top challenges.

What are your organization's top challenges with content development?



3 tips to get SMEs involved in content creation:

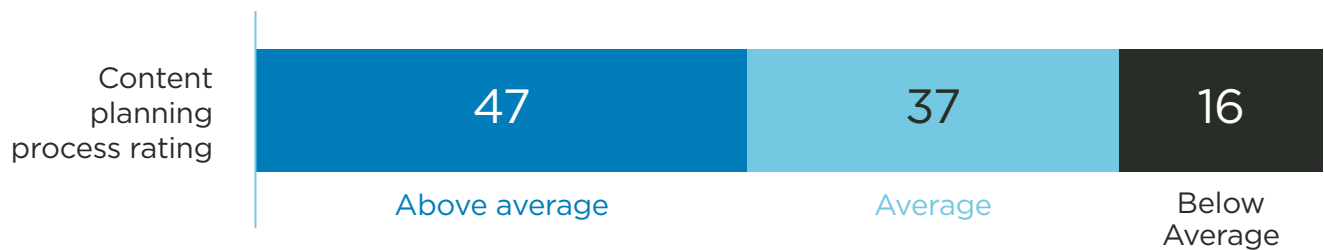
- Get approval from the C-suite to use the SME's time for interviews
- Give SMEs a reason to participate; it helps build their brand as a thought leader
- Be the champion of content: always share the value content delivers



Content performance

When it comes to content planning processes, 37% rate their processes as above average. Half of respondents indicate content performance is very or extremely successful. Another 42% see performance as somewhat successful.

How would you rate your organization's content planning process?



How would you rate your organization's content performance?



53% of organizations say they could improve content planning processes. Are you one of them? Follow these six tips:

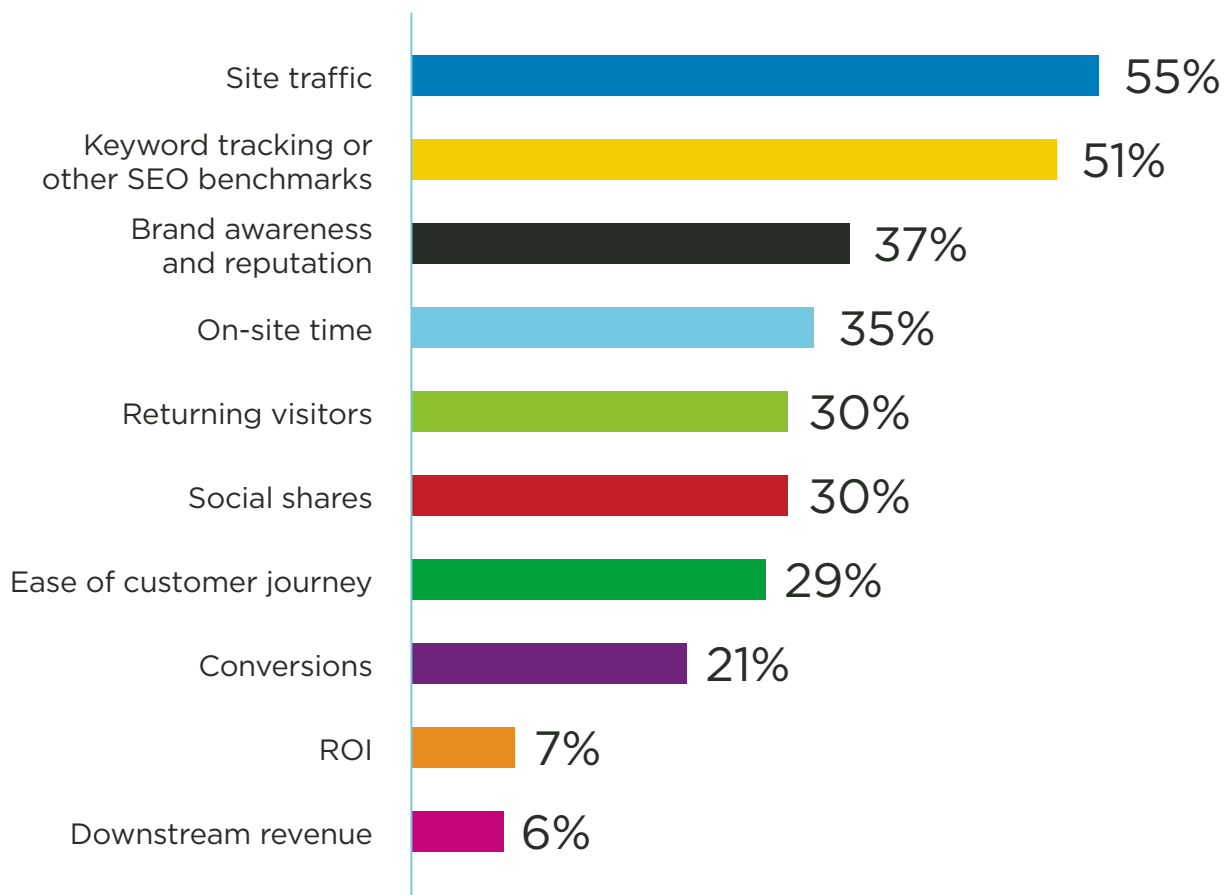
1. Create an editorial calendar
2. Research keywords
3. Organize workflows
4. Build a distribution plan
5. Measure results
6. Be consistent



Content performance

Site traffic (55%), keyword tracking or other SEO benchmarks (51%) and brand awareness and reputation (37%) are the top ways organizations analyze content performance. Conversions, ROI and downstream revenue are the least used performance metrics.

How do you analyze content performance?



6 effective content KPIs you should be tracking

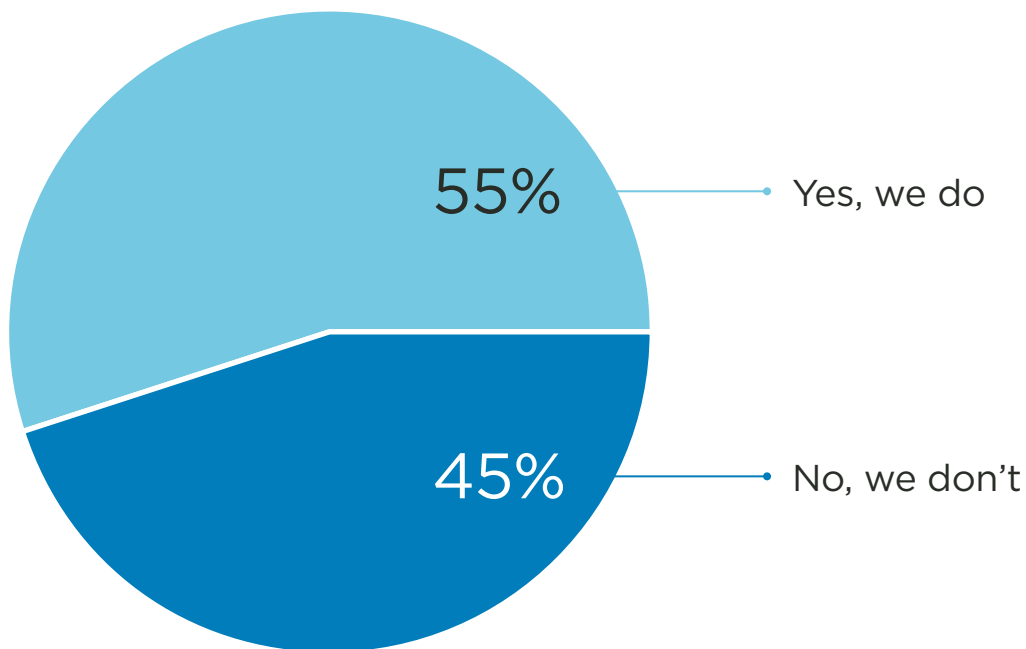
1. Website traffic metrics
2. Engagement
3. Bounce rate
4. Brand awareness
5. Audience feedback
6. Leads, sales and revenue



AI and content planning

A little over half of respondents (55%) indicate they use AI for content planning while 45% do not use AI. While “thinking about it” was an option, none of the respondents indicated they are still considering whether to use AI or not.

Does your organization use AI for content planning?

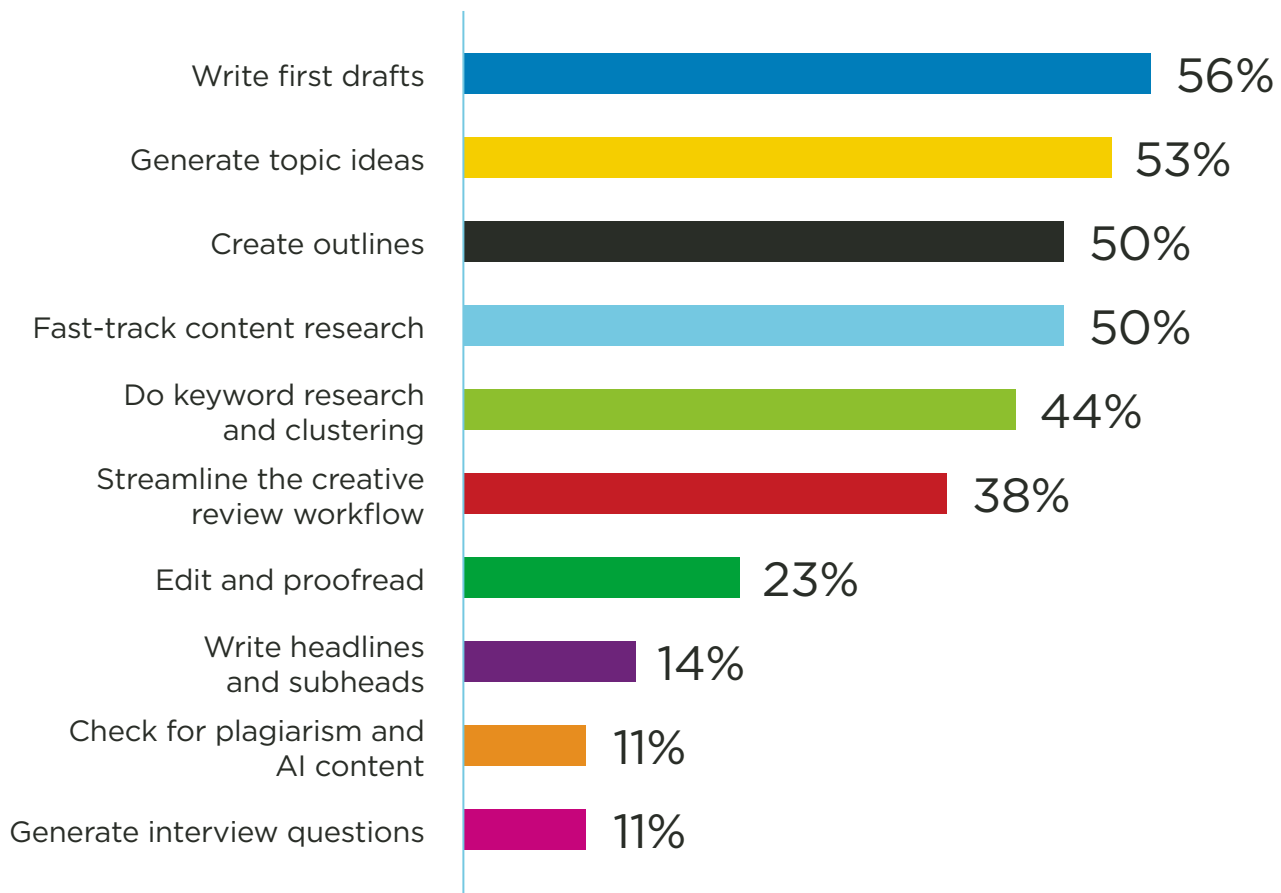




AI use cases

For those who are using AI, the top use cases include writing first drafts (56%) and generating topic ideas (53%). Creating outlines and fast-tracking content research are tied for third with 50%. Generating interview questions and checking for plagiarism are the least used.

How is your organization using AI?



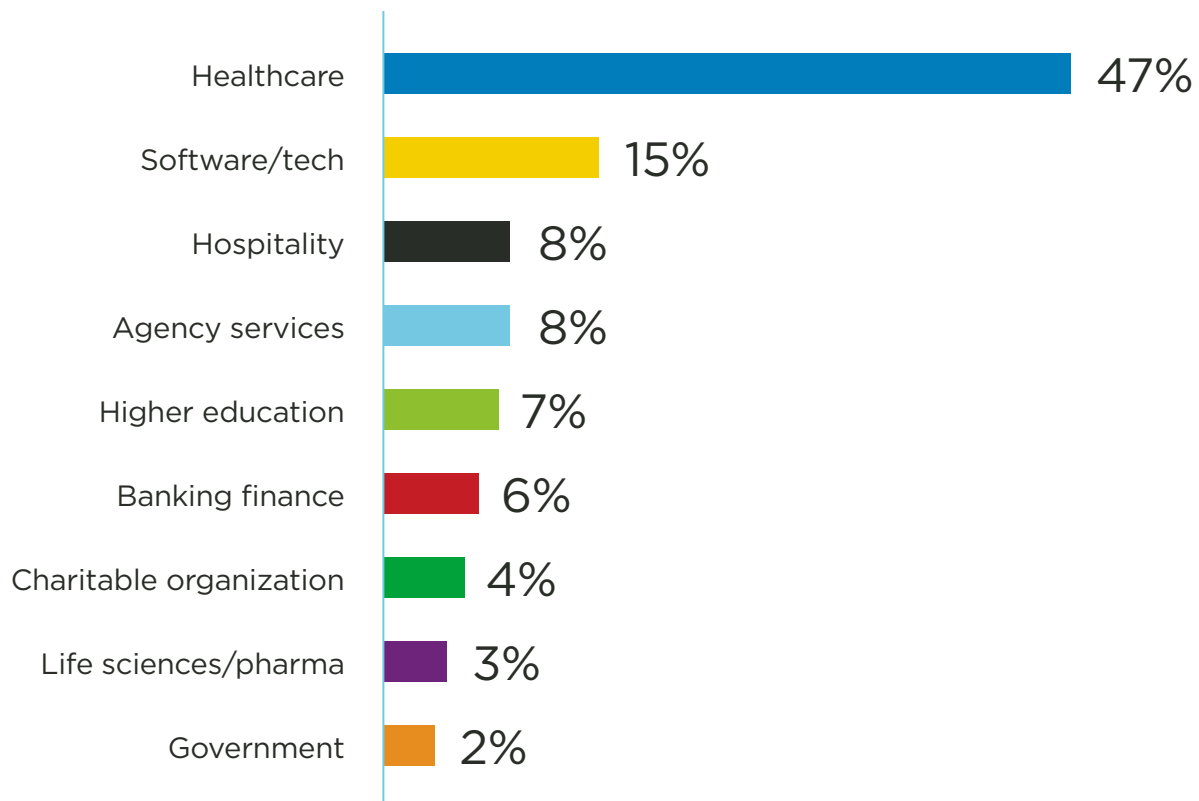
Remember: authentic, human content will have more value as AI-generated content floods the web.



Survey methodology

The results in this report are from an online survey that was fielded from October 17 to November 27, 2023. There were 168 respondents to the survey. The responses were not weighted. The majority of respondents are in the healthcare industry, followed by software, tech and hospitality.

I work in...



This survey was developed in partnership with Researchscape and promoted with O'Dwyer's PR News.

About WG Content

More than 20 years ago, WG Content became the first company to focus solely on content for the healthcare industry. Year after year, our ultimate mission is to put relationships at the center of all we do. As savvy communicators with combined decades of content strategy and creation, we partner with clients to drive traffic to websites, optimize search, capture leads, provide bold marketing solutions and much more. All while cultivating unique soft skills that create strong connections. Every day, our team works to shape meaningful content experiences and build lasting relationships for caring clients — one word at a time.

// Visit wgcontent.com or email hello@wgcontent.com

