



State of Local SEO

Industry Report

2020

MOZ

Local search maps out real-world communities, connecting residents and travelers to businesses that can fulfill their needs. How those connections happen is a constantly shifting puzzle which local SEOs seek to analyze and solve.

This survey data is a snapshot of local SEO, both before and during COVID-19, including a section devoted specifically to data gathered during the public health emergency. It delves deeply into the priorities of brands and their marketers. The good news is that we see a strong emphasis on organic assets: marketers are embracing the power of websites, building robust on-site strategies that complement and strengthen their work on third-party platforms like Google My Business. This means many businesses are in a strong place to further grow their organic presence and find new ways to get their products and services to consumers, from local e-commerce to curbside pickup.

Local search marketing has always existed in a state of rapid and continuous change. Read on to see the priorities and knowledge of marketers and local business owners, and use this data to prepare and build an agile, future-forward strategy.

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High Level Takeaways

1 Local SEO work isn't confined to experts, but requires diverse expertise

Marketing even a single-location business requires the help of many hands. From writers to webmasters, from in-store staff to marketing departments and external agencies, executing a local SEO campaign is collaborative and diverse.

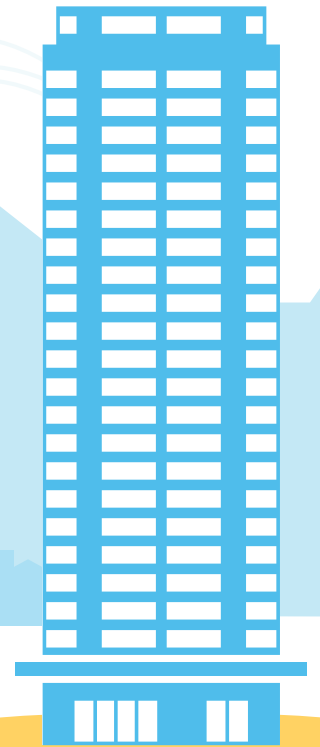
The truth is, marketing professionals with dozens of job titles are doing the actual work of local SEO. This survey reflects that diversity. There's a demand for education, services, and tools at every level to help with organization, analysis, strategy, and implementation.



Business of all sizes demonstrate they understand the value of a strong SEO strategy

As the competition to rank higher and drive more traffic gets increasingly fierce, more businesses are resourcing SEO with dedicated personnel. This year, 77% of respondents shared that they have one or more SEOs on staff – up 8% from last year.

Local queries account for almost half of Google's two trillion searches per year. When moving up a spot on a search result page equates to big traffic wins, businesses both large and small are vying to come out on top.



We've seen a boom in offline strategy focus and growth

Whether to feed or fight Google's substantial control of online local search marketing, a dramatic 19% YoY increase in survey respondents said they are involved in making offline marketing suggestions.

Competitive marketers will go beyond digital to learn what it's like in the trenches – to actually run a retail store, a restaurant, franchise, or large medical center. In-depth, niche industry knowledge can mean the difference between “good enough” and “groundbreaking” when it comes to local strategy.



4 Marketers almost universally agree: reviews are powerful

Where the larger search industry uses the concept of expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness (EAT) to guide their understanding of Google's algorithms, local SEOs are doubling down on local business reviews as a fundamental trust factor.

Across the board, marketers agree that reviews impact Google's local rankings. Beyond that, reviews shape reputation, impact conversions, and drive both customer service and sales. They're a force that cannot be ignored when crafting a modern local strategy.



5 2020 is the year of the customer

Local marketers operate in a world where Google rules nearly all. From the SERP experience to the tools used to track and analyze performance, success seems impossible outside of the search giant's influence.

But customer engagement goes beyond the local pack. With on-page SEO considered #1 in organic ranking factors, reputation management booming, and offline strategy on the rise, opportunity awaits outside of the Google My Business profile. And with consumer habits shifting dramatically under the influence of COVID-19, knowing your audience and catering to their unique needs is more vital than ever.

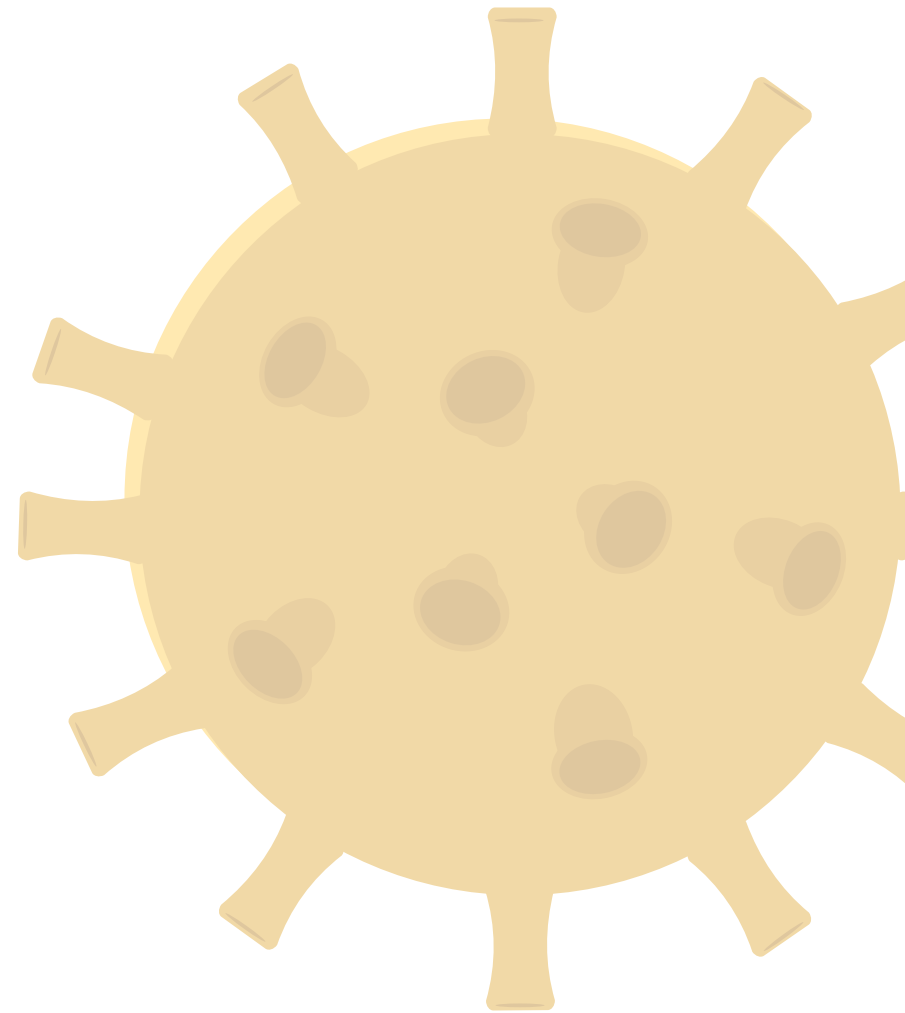
Optimizing for the customer is this year's golden rule – whether they're visiting your website or your flagship store.



6 Most brands made COVID-19 adaptations quickly and plan to keep them permanently

Nearly three-quarters of respondents to our COVID-19 impact survey swiftly implemented new methods of customer fulfillment (such as e-commerce, delivery, curbside pickup, takeout, or teleservices) and over half intend to maintain these offerings in the future.

While an emergency has driven overnight adoption of new services for safety's sake, it will be consumer convenience that assigns long-term value to these options. It's a positive show of strength that businesses have demonstrated agility in meeting both sudden and evolving future demands.





The C-19 Impact

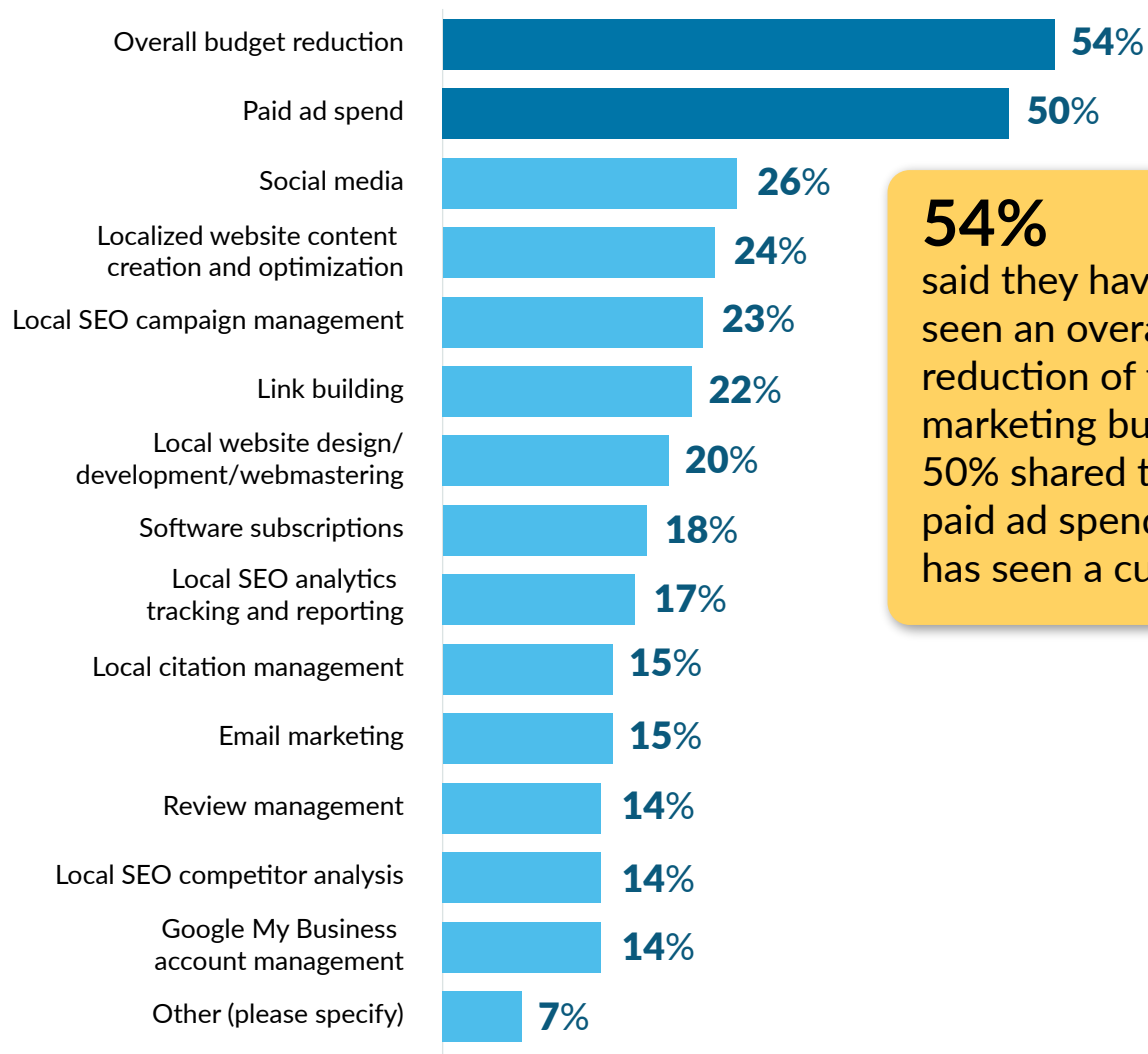
Local marketing in the time of COVID-19

Marketing budgets are being cut across the board

In addition to half of respondents seeing a paid advertising cuts, tasks like improving local website content, link building, and citation management have all experienced lesser but significant budgetary restrictions.

It will be many months before a complete analysis can be done of how COVID-19 has impacted the search marketing industry, but it's reasonable to predict that agencies with clients in non-essential categories will face greater challenges than those with a strong client base in verticals considered essential.

Please select all of the areas in which you've seen cutbacks



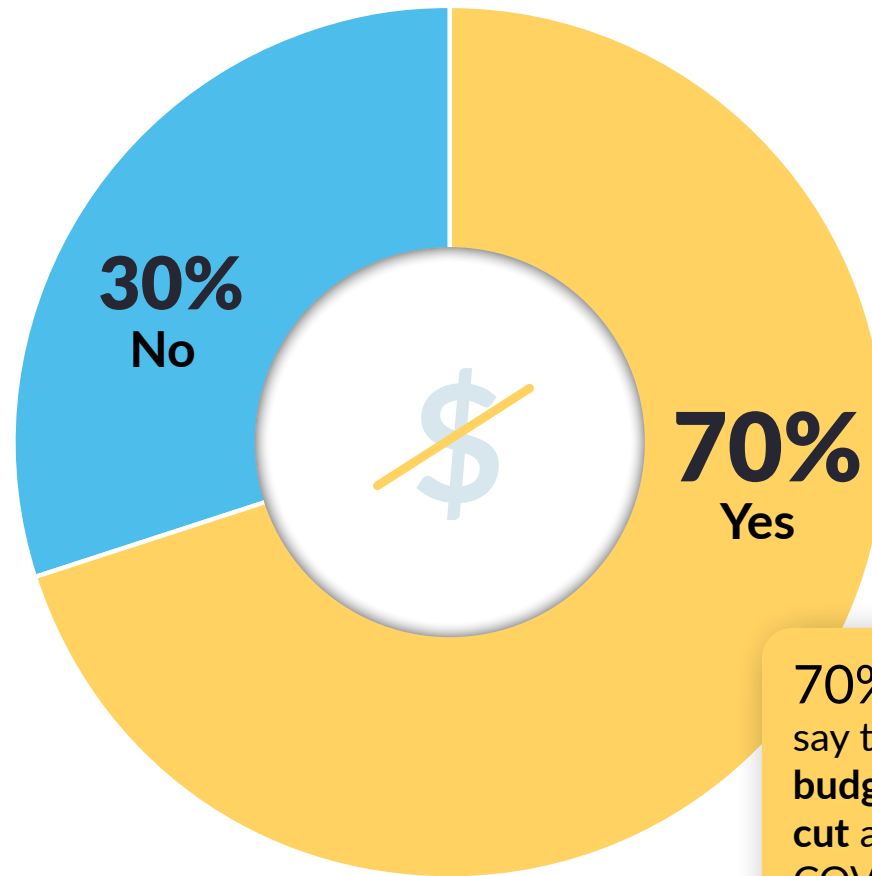
54% said they have seen an overall reduction of their marketing budget. 50% shared that paid ad spending has seen a cut

Tighter marketing belts call for a razor-focus on proven tactics

With both brands and agencies seeing significant cuts to marketing budgets, now is the time to sharpen your focus on proven strategies instead of experimental campaigns.

SEO, content development, and all forms of customer communication (social, email, messaging) are time-tested methods for being visible and accessible to the public just when it's needed most. Focus on location data accuracy, website optimization, timely and informative content, and staff trained and available to solve consumer and client problems.

Has your brand or clients' marketing or SEO budget been cut as a result of COVID-19?

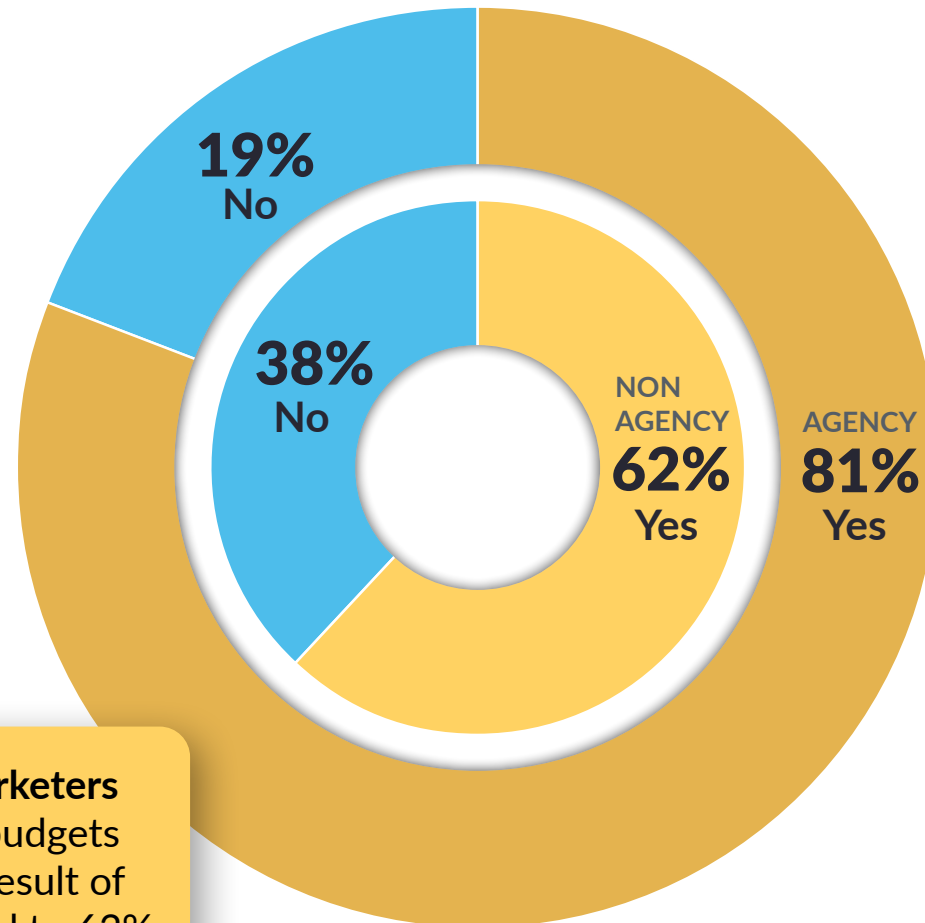


Marketing agencies are feeling budget cuts most

19% more marketing agency staff are experiencing the effects of budget cuts than their non-agency counterparts.

Make an airtight case for how to re-allocate spending on the most proven SEO tactics while trimming back in other areas – you may be able to decrease loss of budget. With paid advertising investment down, try using case studies to prove how long-term funding for SEO, content development, and audience intelligence delivers results that could positively impact both retention of budget and clients.

Has your brand or clients' marketing or SEO budget been cut as a result of COVID-19?



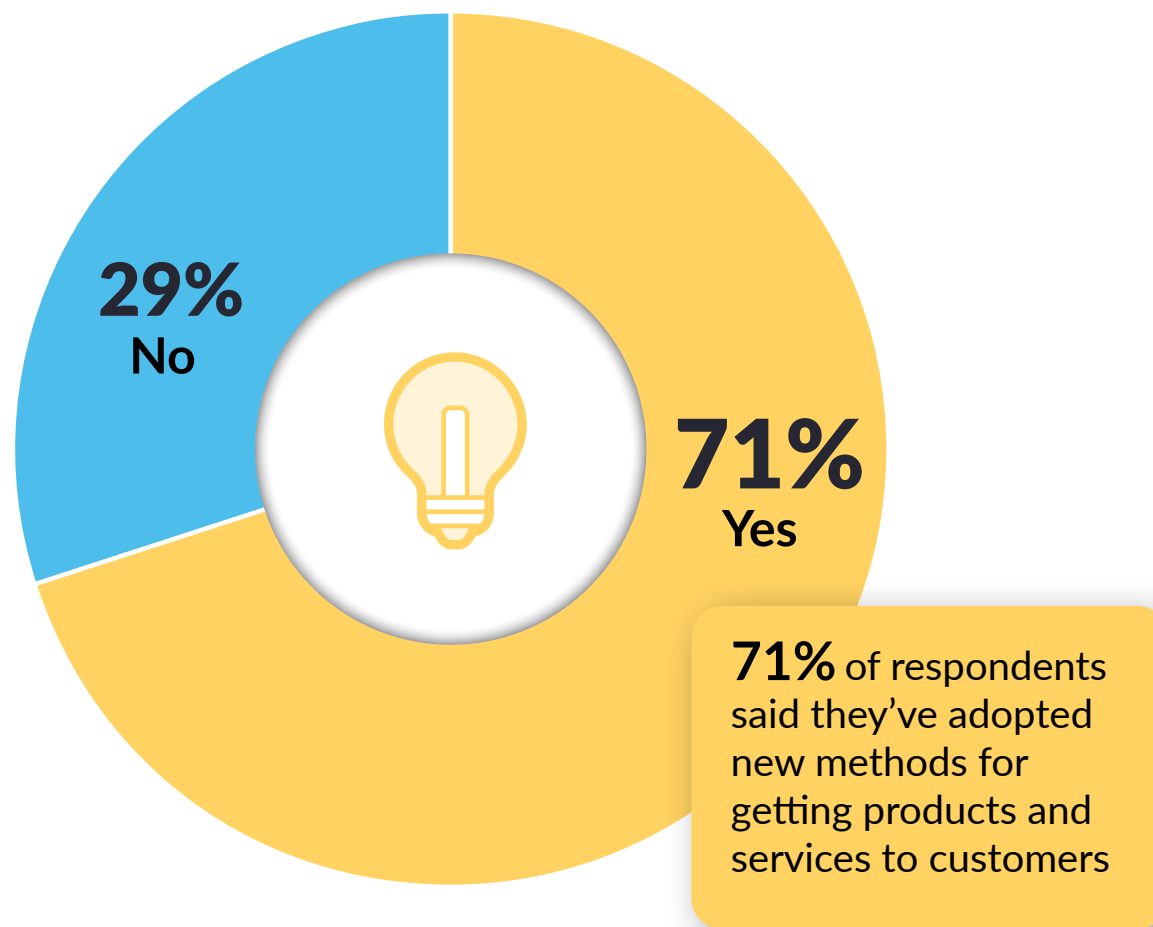
81% of agency marketers say that marketing budgets have been cut as a result of COVID-19 compared to 62% of non-agency marketers

Businesses have made rapid, agile moves to stay operational

Hats off to the 71% of businesses which swiftly implemented e-commerce, curbside pickup, delivery, video conferencing, and other measures to keep communications and transactions moving during the public health emergency.

If there is good news to tell, it's that the technology for these innovative solutions already existed prior to C-19, enabling quick transitions for many brands. Opportunity remains for the other 29% to catch up and serve customers in vital ways.

Have new methods for getting products/services to customers been implemented by your brand/clients that were not previously part of strategy? (For example: e-commerce, curbside pickup, delivery, or video conferencing)

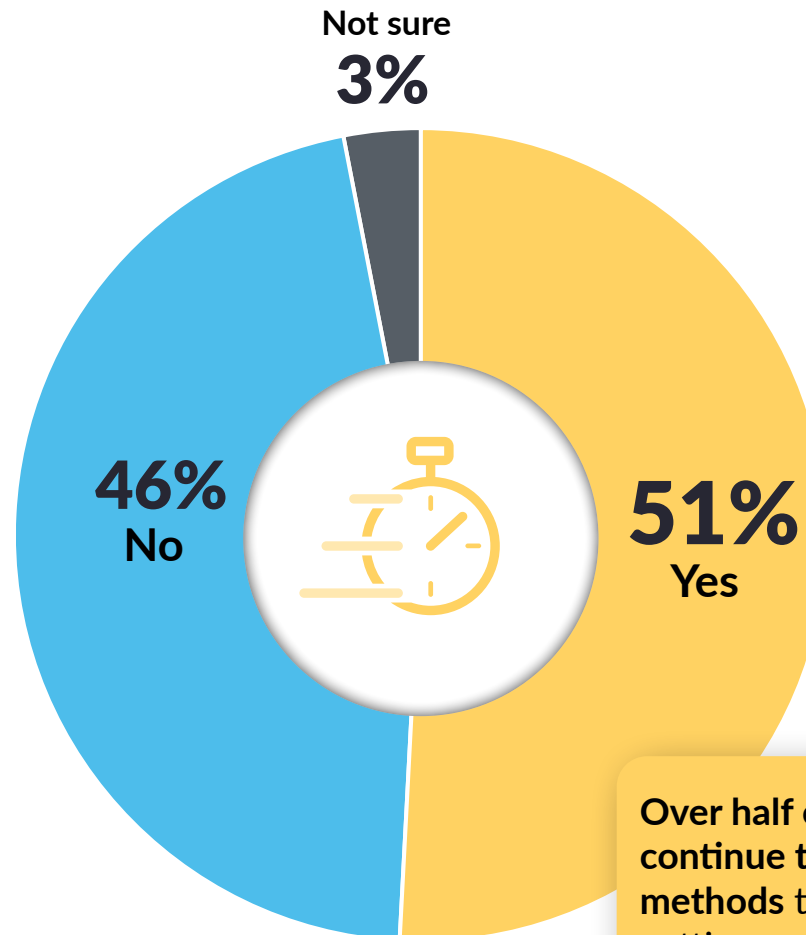


New strategies are here to stay for the majority of brands

Direct-to-consumer, buy-online-pickup-in-store, and even curbside delivery predated COVID-19 on a small scale, but now necessity has driven nearly all brands to explore demand for convenient consumer experiences. Over half of business say they will continue to offer these expanded forms of customer service.

For some companies, this could pave the way for core operational changes, such as employing fewer in-store clerks and more in-house delivery staff, and some analysts are seeing opportunity for the rise of robotics.

Will these new methodologies be continued post-COVID-19?



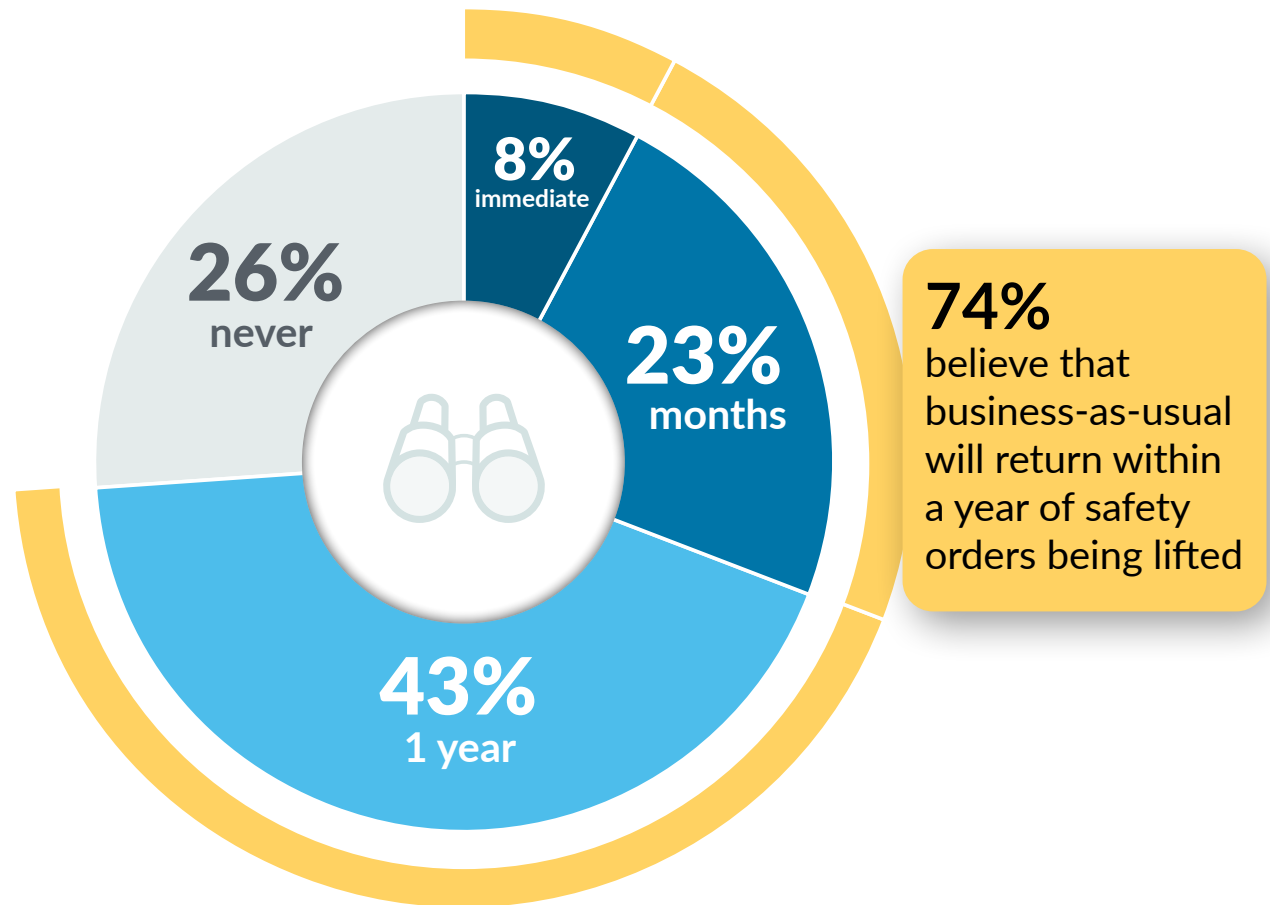
Over half of businesses will continue to invest in the new methods they've launched for getting products and services to customers

Business-as-usual will return, but it will take time

Both brands and marketers have a hopeful take on the future, largely agreeing that we'll eventually return to a more normal state of operations. Signs of this could include less necessity for protective equipment and measures and a gradual uptick in foot traffic.

In the meantime, do your utmost to implement and communicate the measures you're taking to ensure that customers are safe and well-served. This clear communication is essential to your current operations.

The pandemic is currently significantly altering human behavior, from working remotely, to impacting local foot traffic in favor of product delivery, to sparking hoarding and supply chain issues. Which of the following statements best represents your predictions for the post-COVID local business scenario:



The State of the Industry

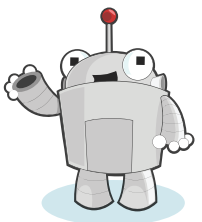
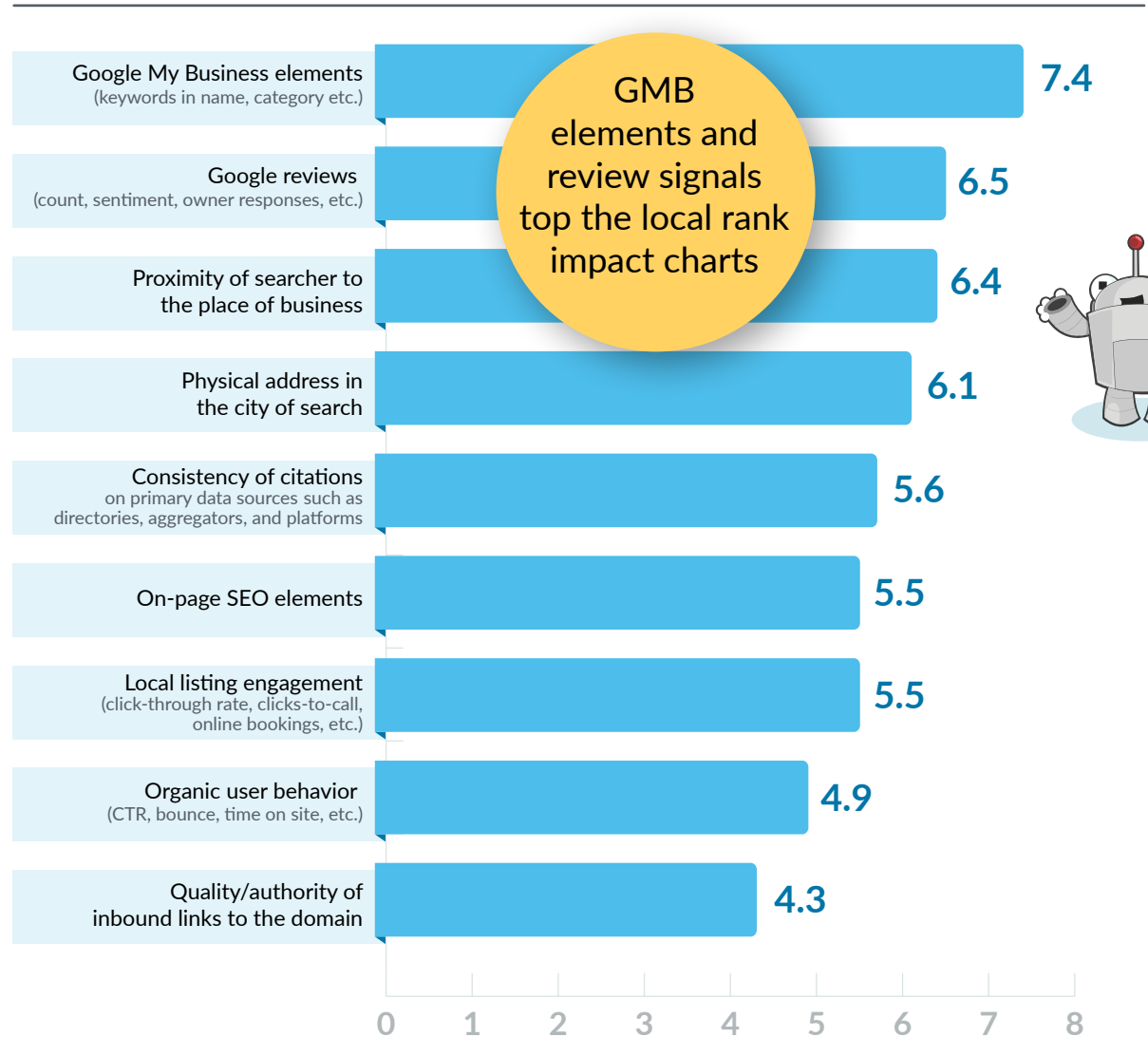
Rankings, search engines, and SERP features

Proximity comes in third among local ranking factors

This year's survey hit us with a big surprise. Breaking with tradition, respondents placed user-to-business proximity third in local ranking factors, below both Google My Business and review signals.

Proximity has long been billed as the top local ranking factor by search experts. In this survey, people of all job titles (including agency workers) scored proximity third. The fact that its importance was downplayed even by SEO professionals could indicate a shift in what's being observed in the Google trenches. It could also point to an increased focus on elements like GMB features and reviews which, unlike proximity, can be controlled.

How important are the following ranking factors in generating local-specific search results? Rank from most (10) to least (1) important.



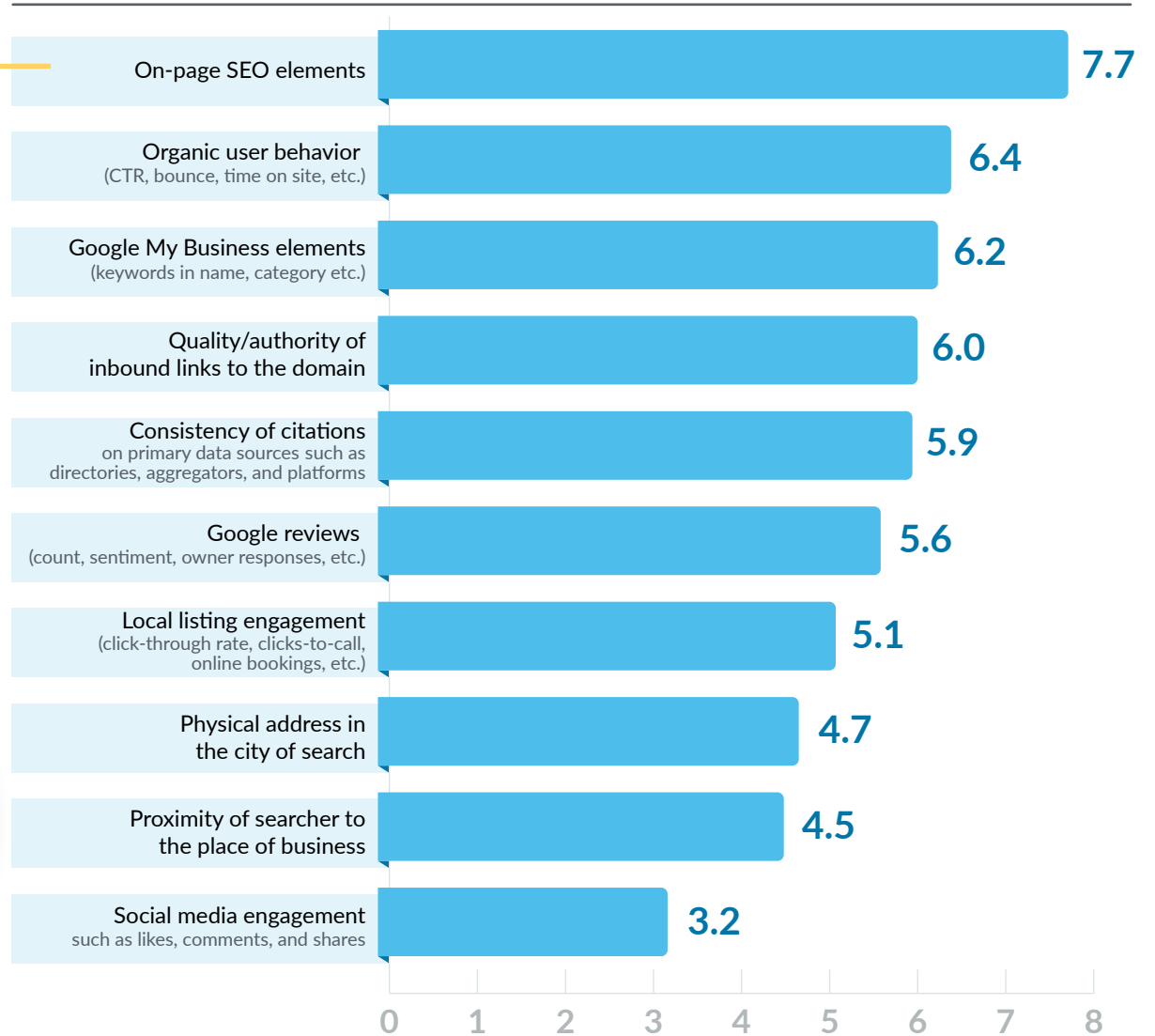
On-page SEO claims #1 in organic ranking factors

While on-site SEO still claims the greatest impact on organic SERPs, local marketers are reporting that user behavior takes second place in our respondents' observed ranking factors.

2020 is your year to focus on the user. Optimize title and meta data so that it not only ranks well, but wins clicks. Publish both instant gratification and long-form content to satisfy and sustain searchers, and focus on improving user experience to keep site visitors engaged and on-page.

Website optimization still leads the way in competing for organic SERP visibility

How important are the following ranking factors in generating organic search results such as web pages and featured snippets? (Rank 1-10)

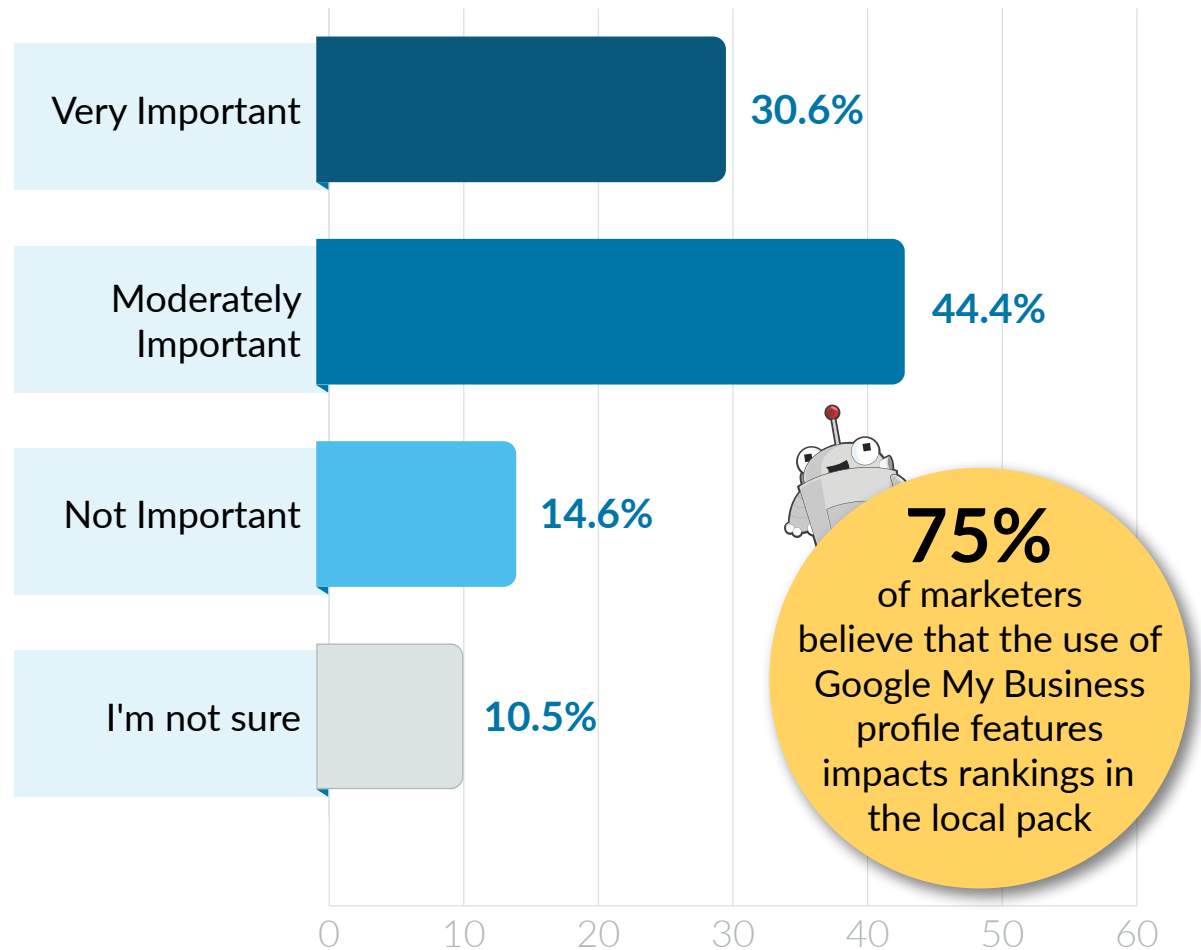


Maximize GMB management offerings

The results are clear: there's a widespread belief in the power of Google My Business to directly influence local pack rankings. That's where your opportunity lies.

Google My Business has an ever-growing and changing feature set that requires both time and expertise – things many businesses lack. Focus your attention on GMB management, including categories, reviews, descriptions, menus, Posts, Q&A, photos, and analysis to impact local rankings.

How important is the use of other Google Business Profile features (such as Posts and Q&A) in determining local pack rankings?

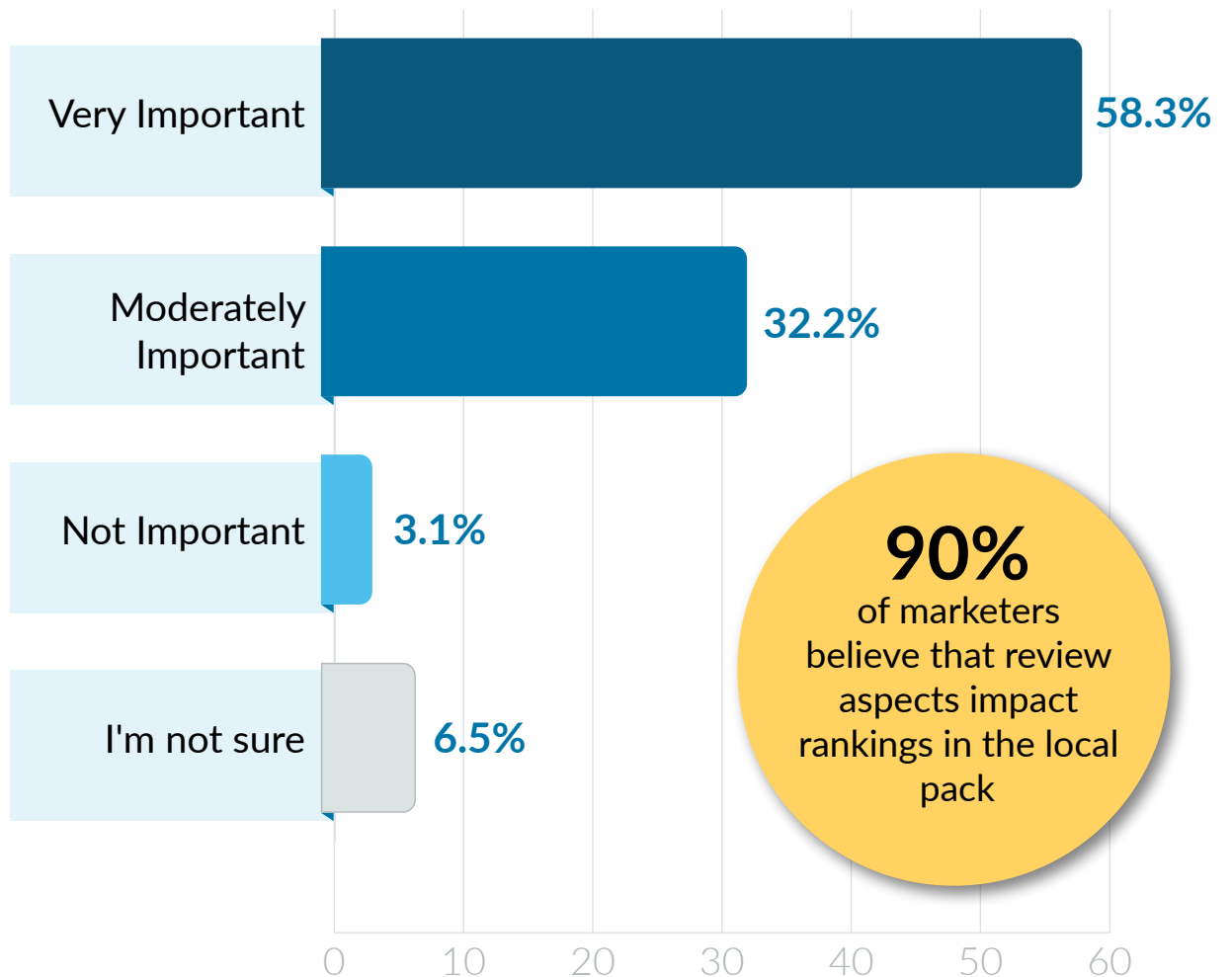


If you don't have a review strategy, you should

A whopping 90% of respondents reported that review signals (such as quantity, diversity, velocity, ratings, and responses) impact local rankings.

SEOs have their work cut out for them here — in a good way. Craft in-house strategy and client services that include review education, acquisition, fast response rates, negative review remediation, and ongoing sentiment analysis. No brand can afford to ignore its reviews, and many will require help implementing robust management.

How important are aspects of reviews in determining local pack rankings?

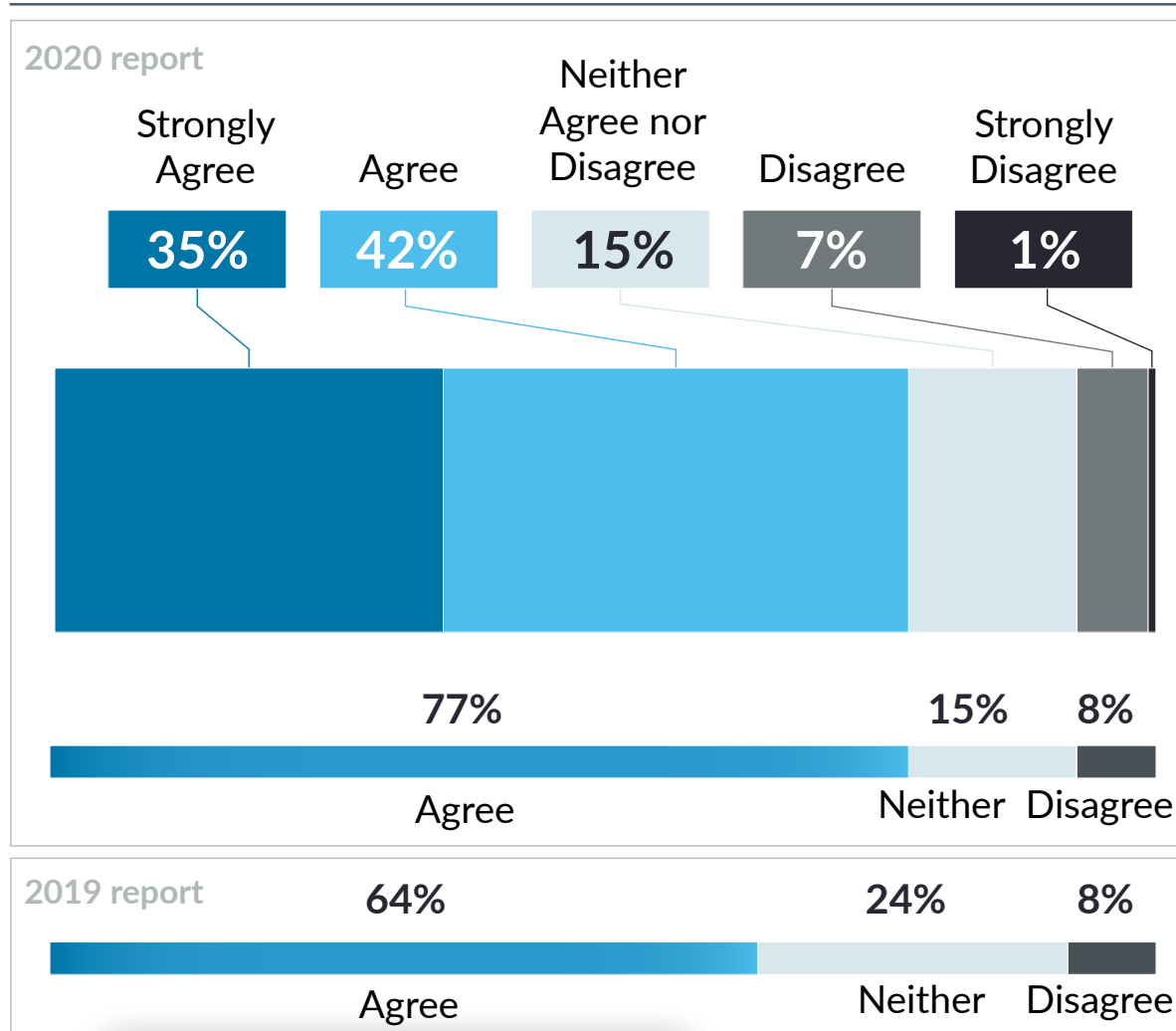


Google is your new “homepage”

Popularized by local SEO expert Mike Blumenthal, the idea of Google as the “new homepage” is picking up steam, with 78% of respondents agreeing that the SERPs serve as a one-stop shop for local searchers. The rise of SERP features means traditional rankings are moving further down the page. Local results satisfy users with zero clicks. Google is capturing and serving more and more of the customer journey themselves.

When a third party controls so much of the user experience, find ways to lean into it – and to fight back. Maximize your presence on Google My Business while optimizing your organic site as well. In a world where Google can flip a switch and change everything, a strong organic presence is your saving grace.

Google is becoming the new “homepage” for local businesses.

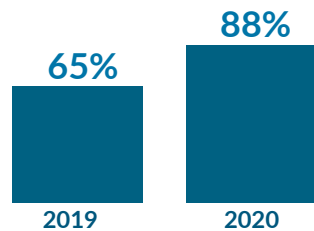


20%
more respondents YoY agree that Google is becoming the new local business “homepage”

<https://moz.com/blog/2020-local-seo-success>

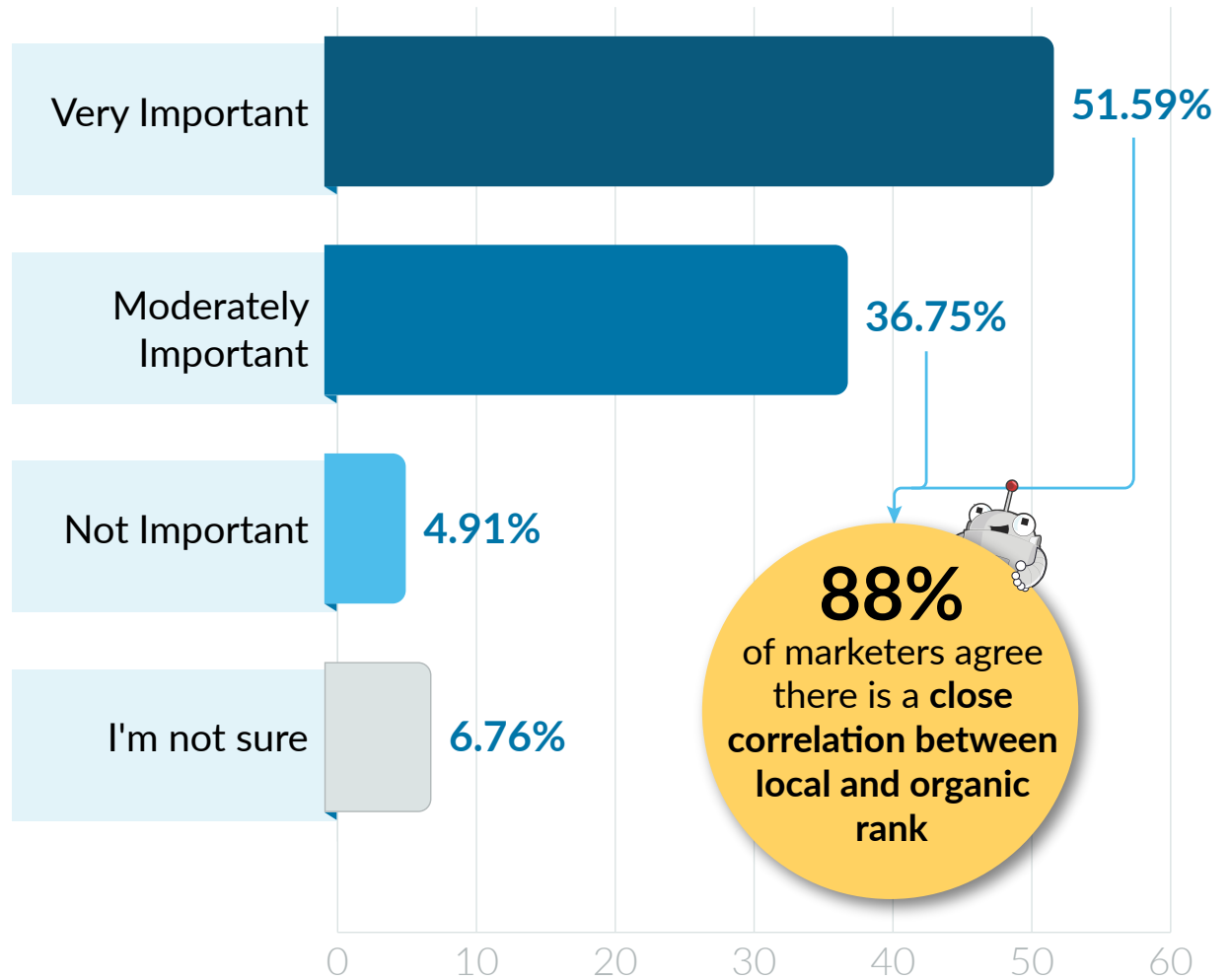
Organic and local rankings are closely intertwined

This year, 35% more marketers agreed that ranking highly in organic search results increases the likelihood that a business will rank in the local pack.



Even though Google is becoming the new homepage, you can't rely on third-party sites alone for rankings and traffic. **Websites still matter and will continue to matter. A lot.** To rank in both the local packs and organic search, businesses must resource SEO activities such as local content creation, local link building, and on-page best practices to make sure their sites are well-optimized for valuable keywords and searcher intent.

How important are aspects of organic search rankings in determining local pack rankings?

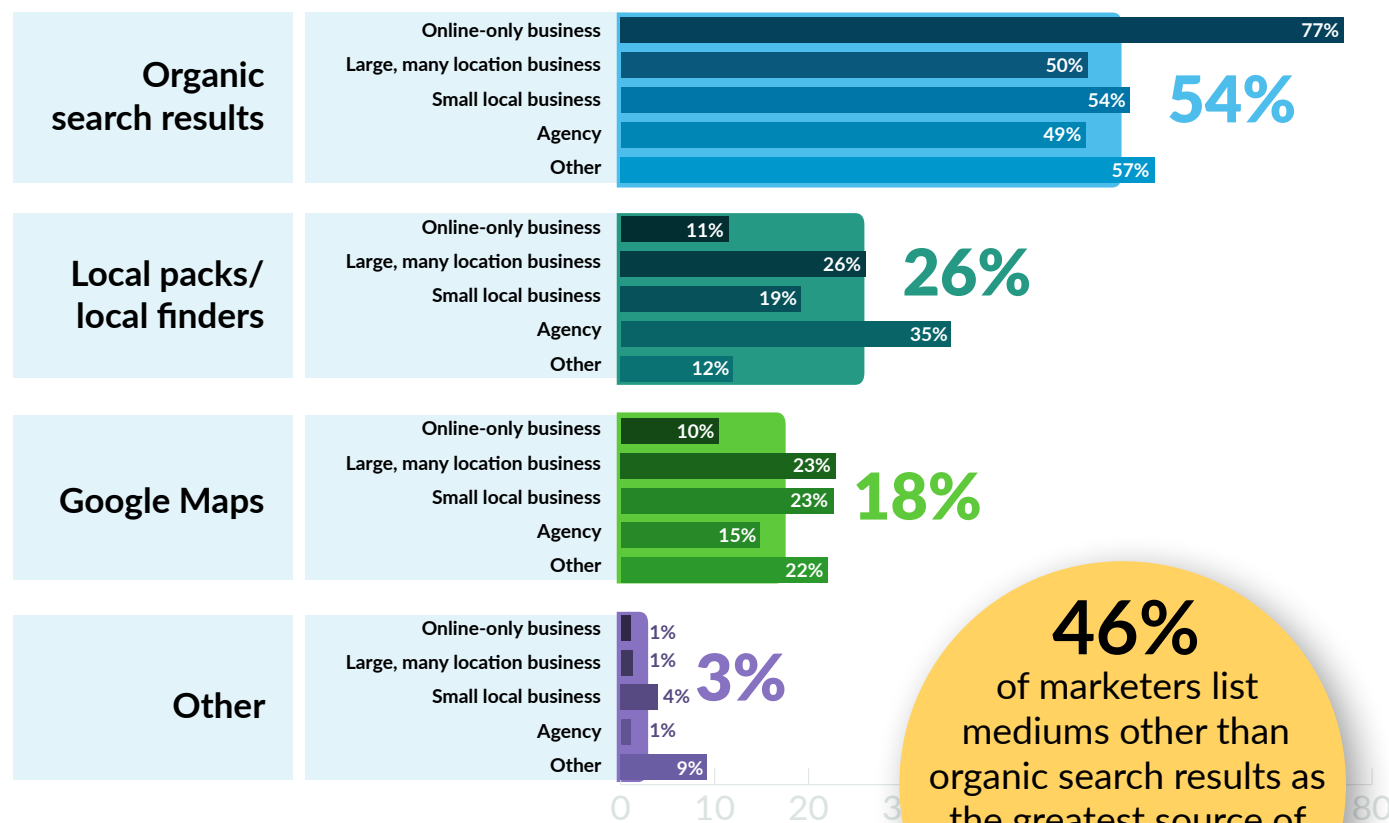


Organic rules engagement, but keep an eye on Maps

It's clear that respondents consider feature-rich organic SERPs to be their key driver of engagement. This is consistent across company type, size, and even across industry.

But keep a close eye on the rise of Google Maps. As the default maps option for Android users and a top choice for other devices, it's a go-to tool for how consumers navigate their community. With the majority of the local search industry's focus going to local packs, the nuances of Maps have yet to be explored and could represent significant opportunity for savvy marketers.

Which local search medium is currently the greatest source of consumer engagement for your company/clients?



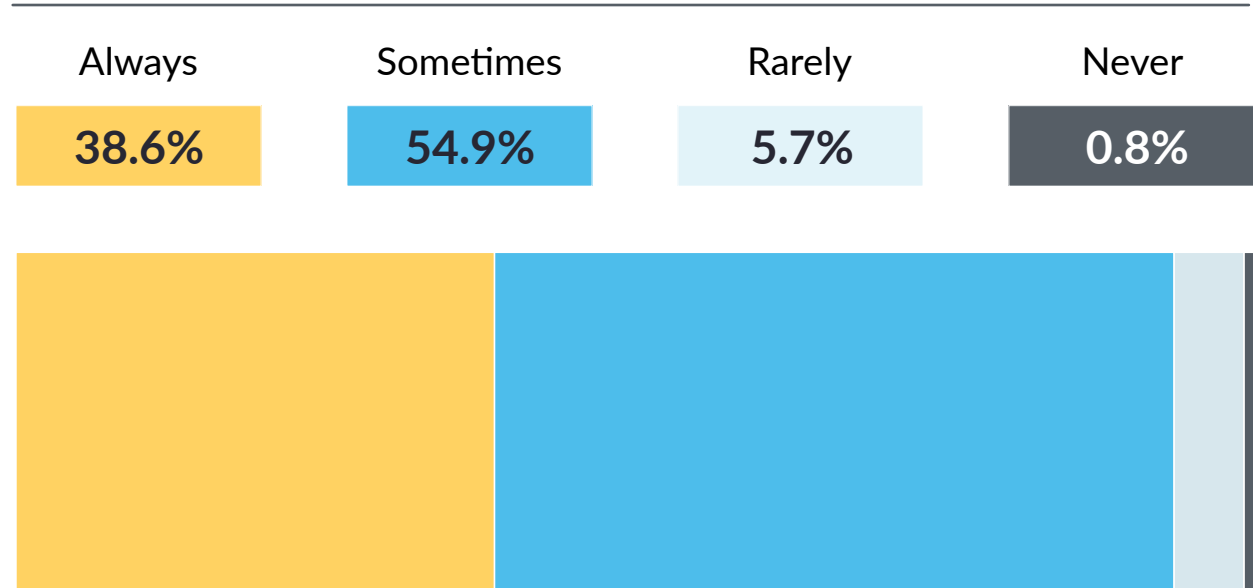
46% of marketers list mediums other than organic search results as the greatest source of consumer engagement for their company.

Google's focus on proximity fails to satisfy

Respondents are seeing quality local results only half of the time. Google's emphasis on showing users the nearest options may not translate into the best options, sowing dissatisfaction among marketers.

When proximity edges you out for desired keywords, look for search language that widens Google's map radius. It's the hidden wins in your geographic markets that could make all the difference.

How often does Google's emphasis on searcher proximity generate quality local search results?



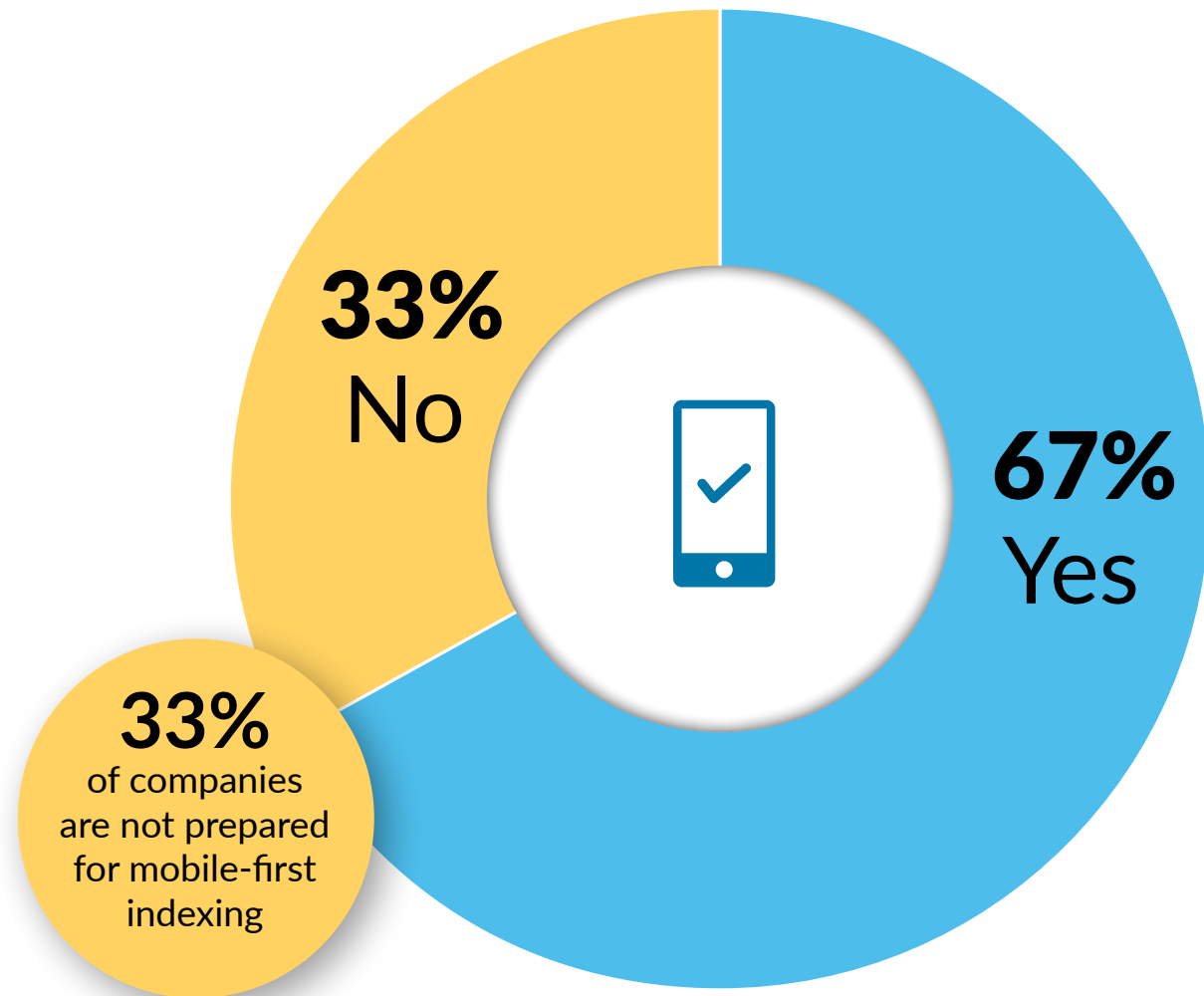
Only 6% of marketers believe that Google's emphasis on proximity **rarely or never** generates quality results

Mobile-first is here – and businesses still aren't prepared

Google has been creeping closer to going fully mobile-first for years. Sixty-three percent of Google's US organic search traffic originates on mobile, and by September 2020 the search engine will shift to mobile-first indexing for all websites. **In spite of this, a full one-third of local marketers feel their companies are not prepared.**

Responsive site design, single URLs, and overall mobile-friendliness will be integral to preparing for the switch to full mobile-first. Getting mobile right is non-negotiable, and marketers who make it a priority will come out ahead.

My company/clients are fully equipped for Google's mobile-first index.



Local SEO Strategy

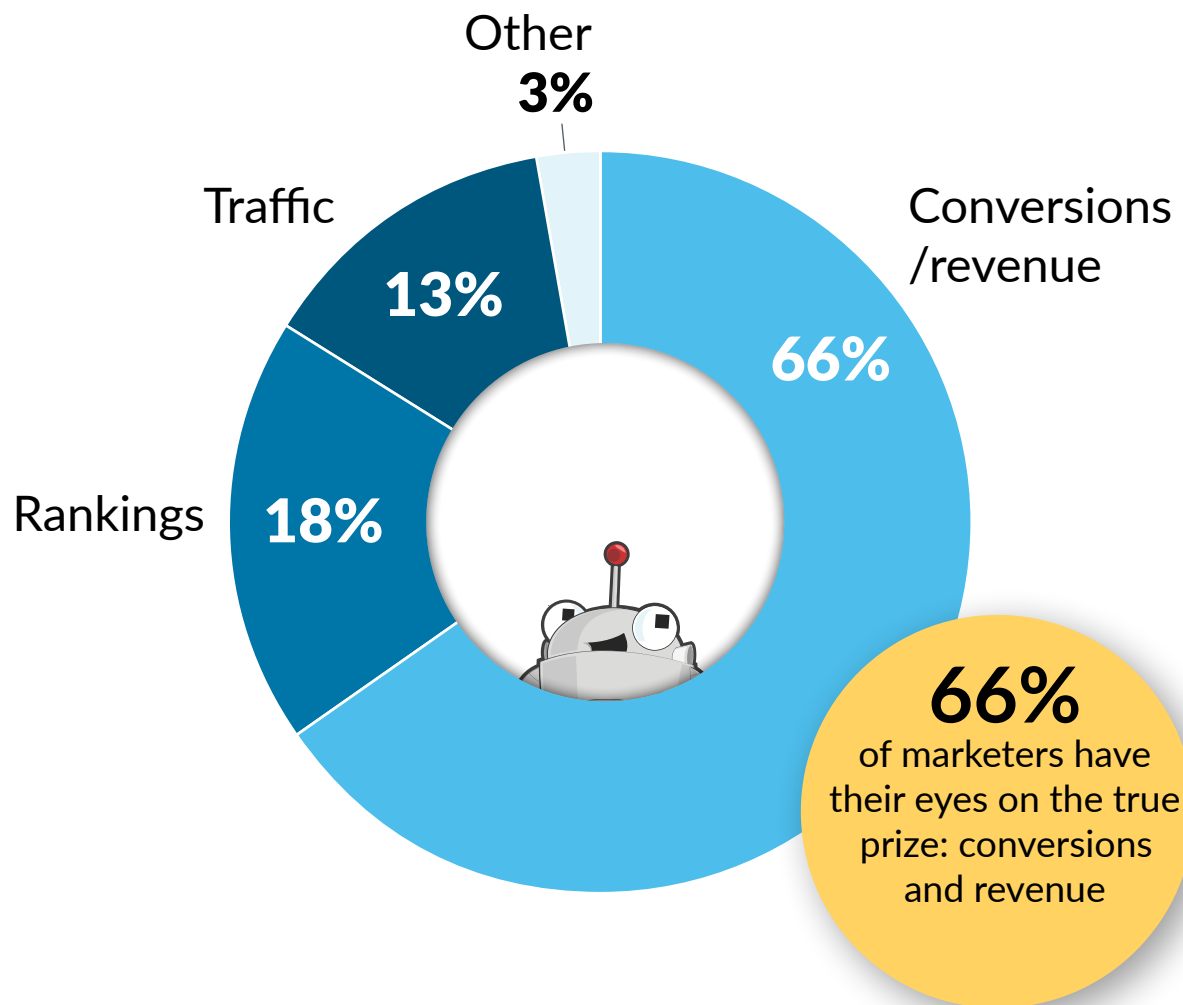
Goals, priorities, and measuring success

High-value business goals take priority in the local industry

Take a moment and celebrate this one, because it has big implications for our industry. SEOs have successfully shifted from a rankings-first approach to one that centers on the end goals: **conversions and revenue**. Numbers have remained consistent on this point for the past two years — a good sign.

If you have yet to make the leap, it's time to recognize that Google's rankings have become fluid and highly customized to searcher location. It's no longer useful to conceptualize the SERPs from a "#1 ranking" mindset. Now, agencies can zoom in on the two constants for business owners: the never-ending need for engagement and revenue.

My company/clients care most about:



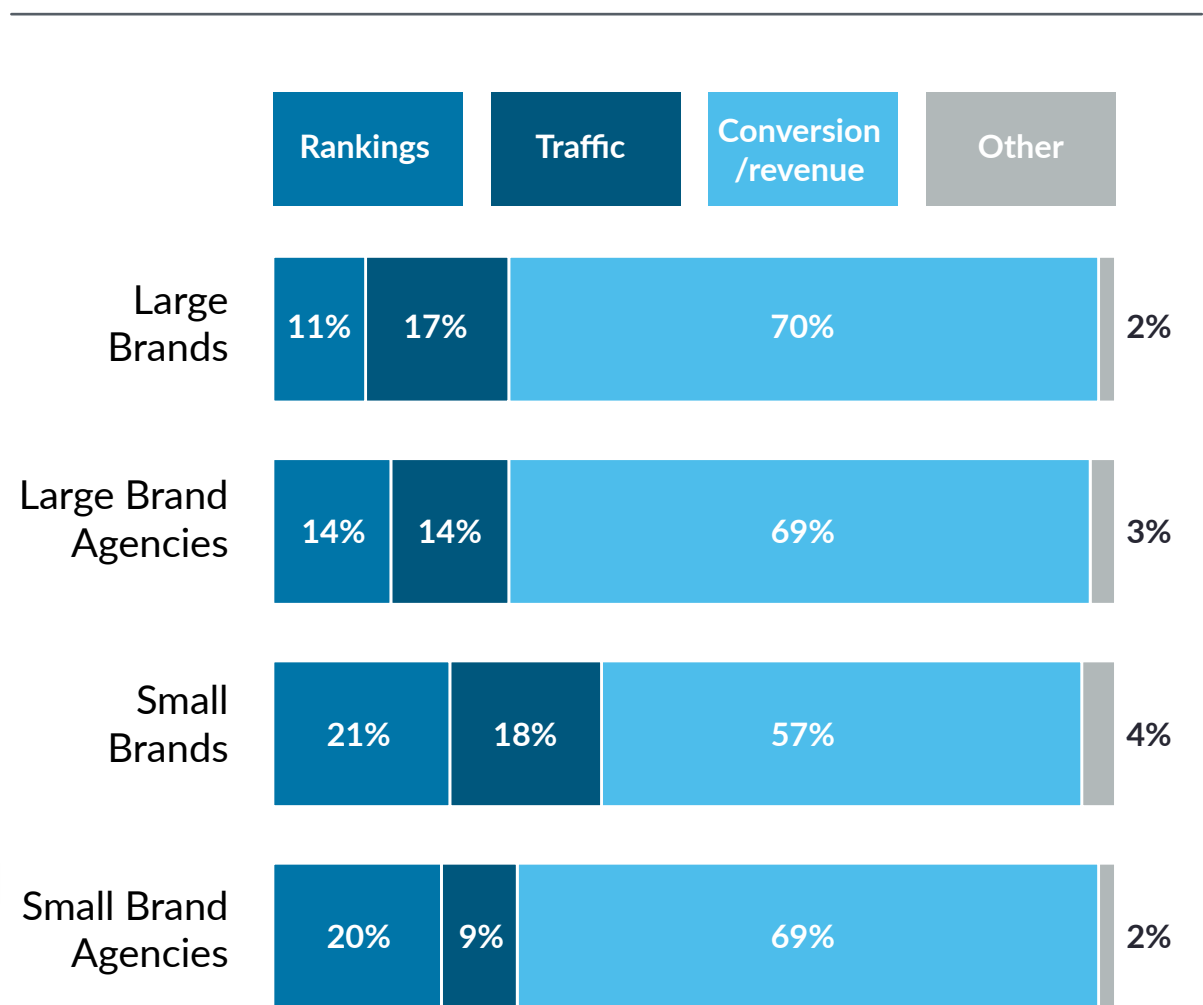
Big players care least about a rankings-first approach

Larger brands and agencies have been the most successful in moving away from a rankings-first mindset, with about 70% of their emphasis placed on high-value business goals.

Smaller brands may require the most help to accurately track and evaluate conversions and revenue.

Agencies and large brands place the greatest emphasis on conversions and revenue

My company/clients care most about:



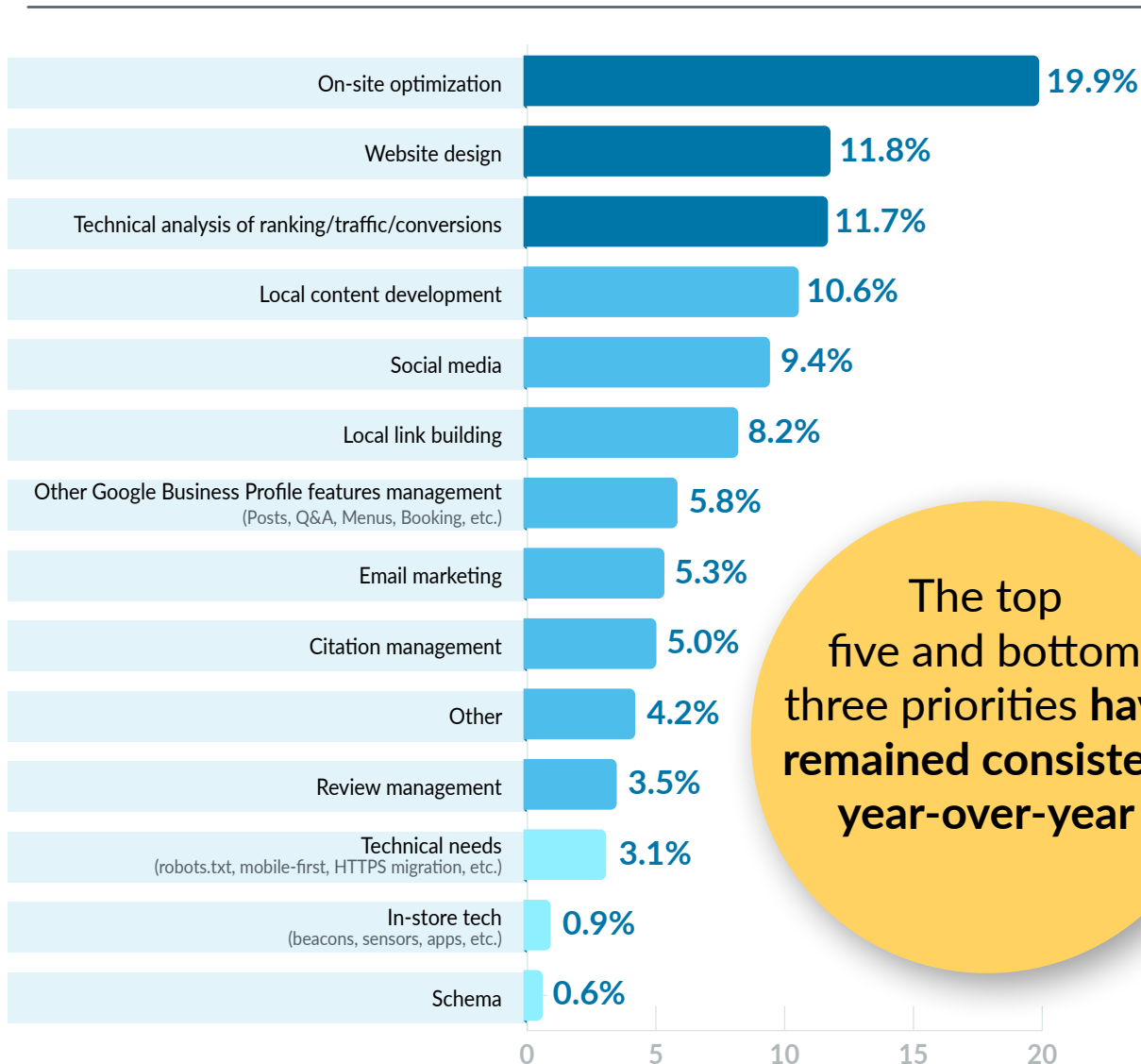
Strategic priorities remain unchanged

This data reveals three narratives:

- The top 3 and bottom 5 local marketing priorities have been identical YOY, indicating consistency of approach
- On-site optimization wins the day, emphasizing the ongoing importance of organic SEO
- The variety of responses demonstrates just how many skills are required for a full local SEO campaign

Marketers are clearly confident in how they promote local businesses, but a lower priority on needle-moving tactics like link building could indicate a need for better resources, given that it's still a widely practiced strategy among our respondents.

In my day-to-day work, the one service my local business clients or company request the most help with right now is:



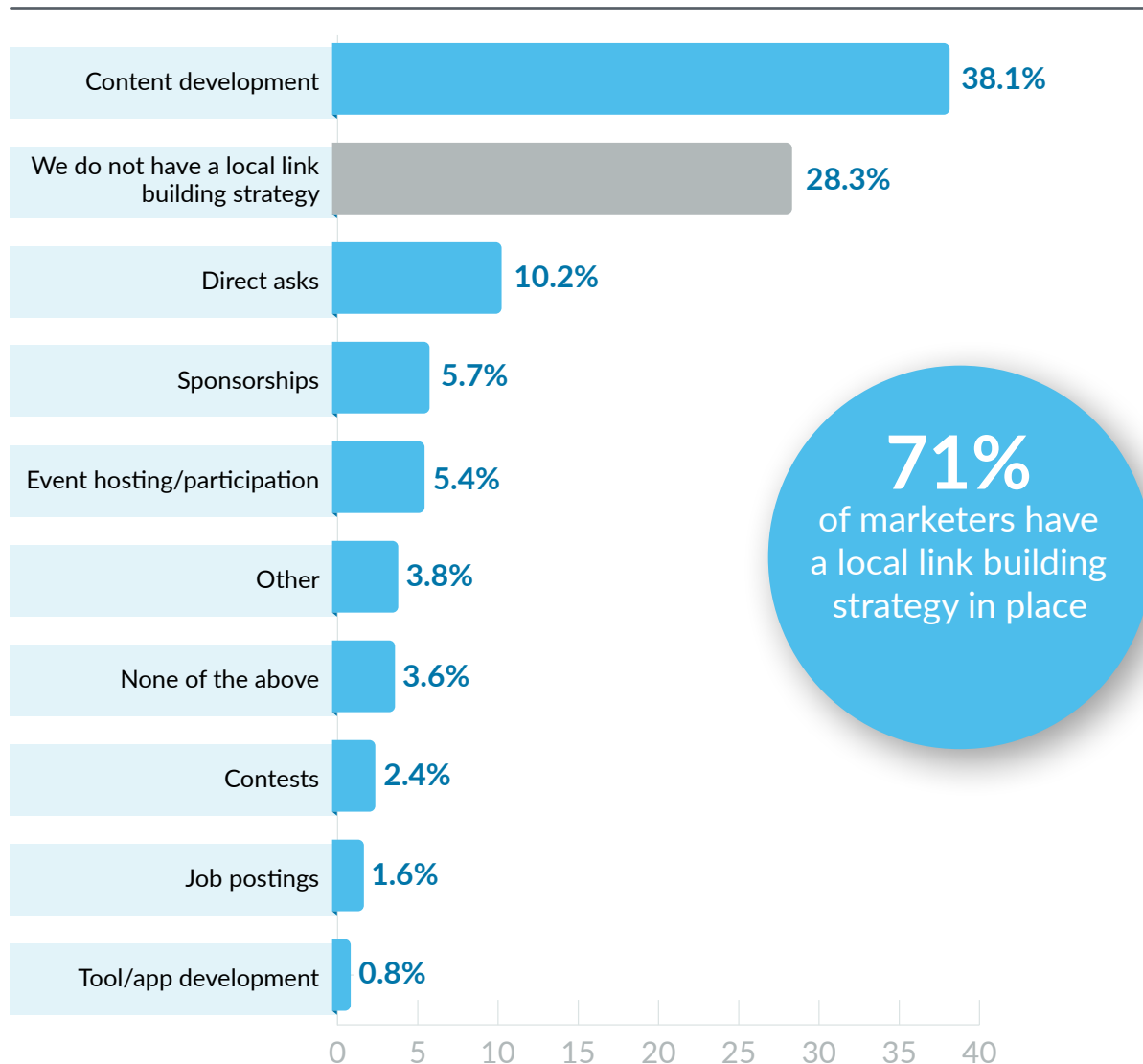
The top five and bottom three priorities have remained consistent year-over-year

Local link building is a powerful (and popular) strategy

More respondents this year said they have a local link building strategy, but 29% are overlooking it as a powerful local SEO tactic. Ignoring the work of building links and unstructured citations means ceding priceless SERP territory to your competitors.

There were a few concerning tactics listed in the “Other” category (such as buying local links, which could result in a Google penalty), but happily, the vast majority of local marketers are investing in content development to earn links naturally.

When it comes to building local links, the strategy that has the best ROI for me right now is:



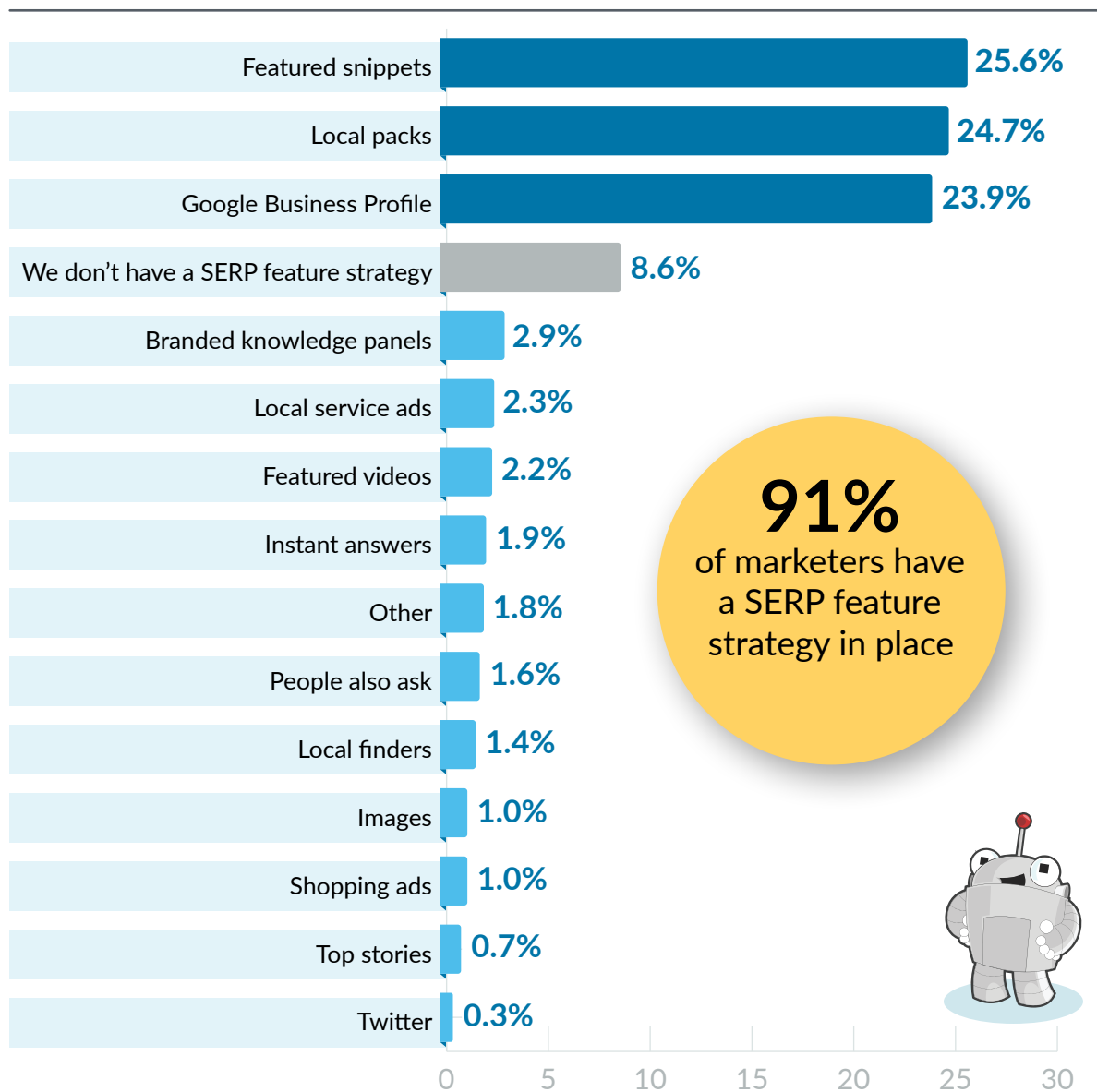
71%
of marketers have a local link building strategy in place

SERP features are serious business

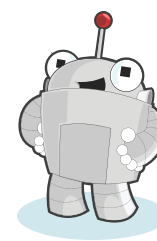
Featured snippets have been in the spotlight this year, and that's reflected in the survey: they beat out local packs as the number-one SERP feature local marketers care about. And in a win for modern SEO, only 9% of respondents reported having no SERP feature strategy at all.

Zero-click SERPs aren't as new and strange to local SEOs as they are to the greater marketing community. The increase in the number and types of snippets means it's time to take advantage of engagement options on third-party interfaces like Google. Don't rely on websites alone for conversions.

What SERP feature do you care the most about?



91%
of marketers have
a SERP feature
strategy in place



Local SEO Tactics

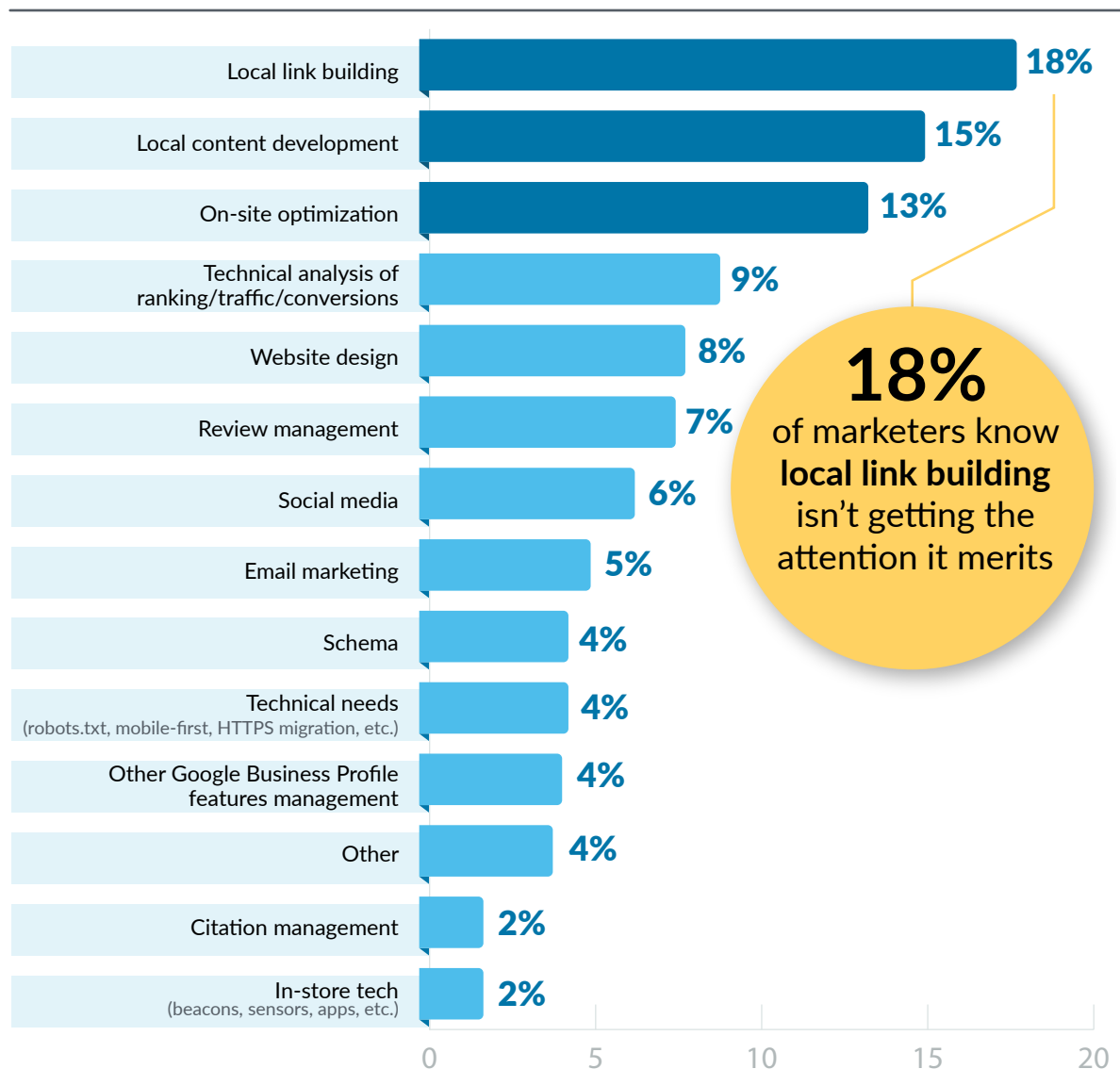
Areas of emphasis, areas lacking emphasis, and tools

Across brand size, tactical priorities remain the same

Local link building, local content development, and on-site optimization top the wish list for the activities marketers want resourced.

It's these three tactics that move the needle when the rest of your local SEO campaign is in place. Go to bat for resources that boost rankings, increase traffic, and ultimately result in conversions and revenue.

The one activity I most want my clients or company to devote more resources to is:



18% of marketers know local link building isn't getting the attention it merits

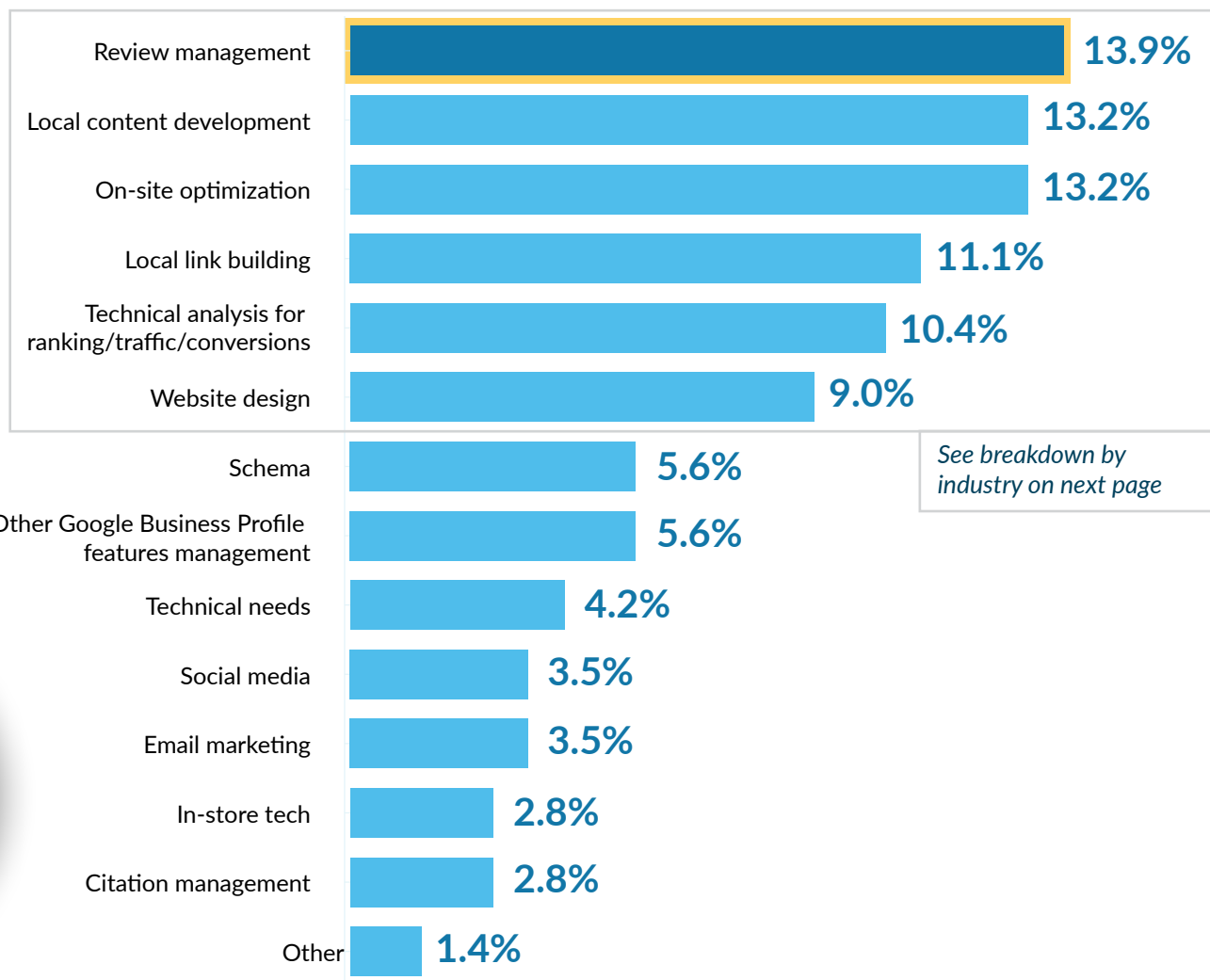
Enterprise marketers want more resources for review management

It's a truth that resonates even with marketers at the largest companies: reviews = reputation. Managing the complexities of online sentiment requires the right tools, techniques, and time.

Review management gone wrong is a customer service nightmare. When it's neglected and ignored, brands face customer attrition and loss of loyalty even as their negative reputation flourishes. Invest in review management now and reap the benefits of a healthy reputation later.

14%
of large enterprises want more resources devoted to review management

The one activity I most want my clients or company to devote more resources to is: (sliced by enterprise)



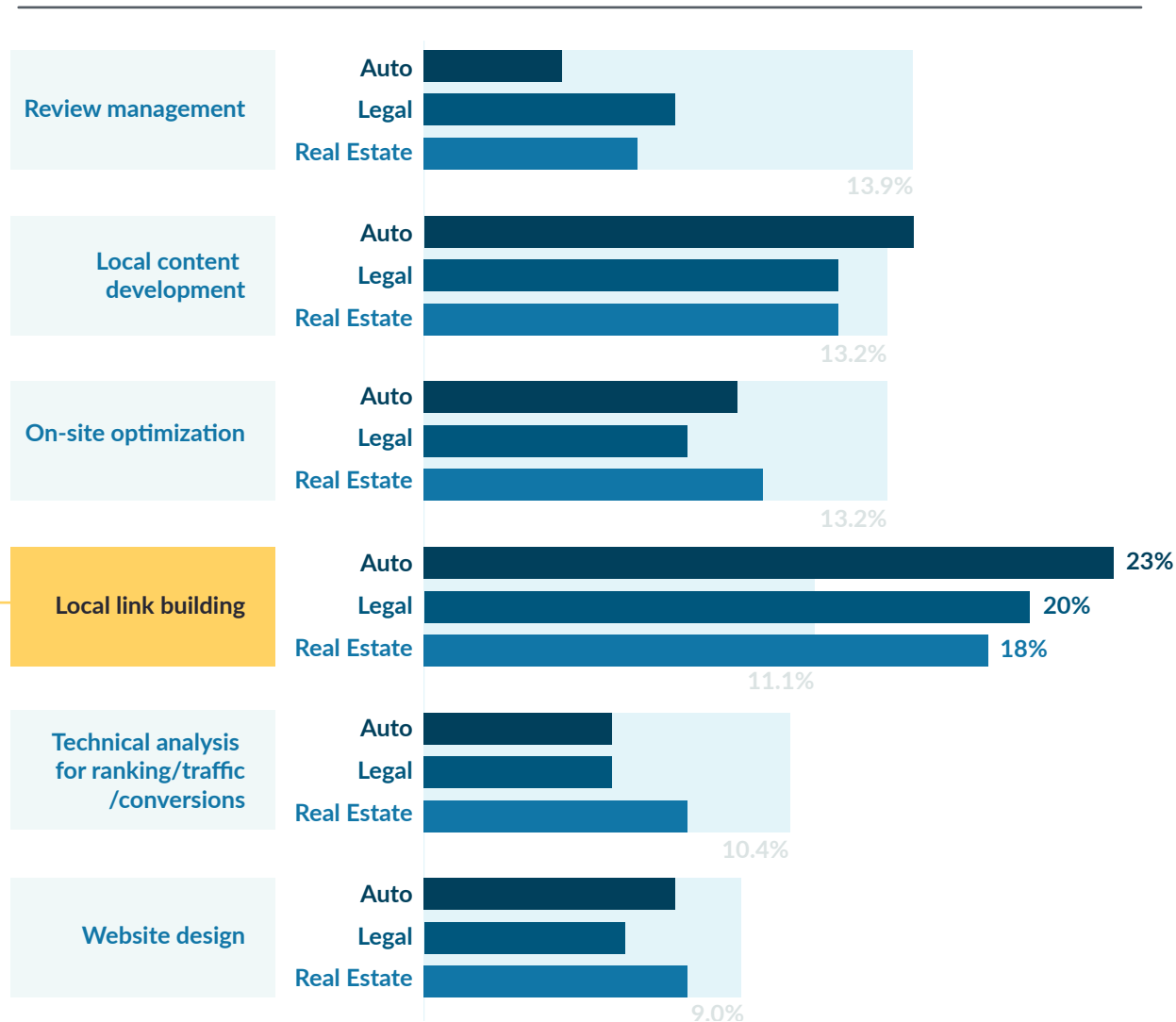
Link building is in high demand by three industries

Automotive, real estate, and legal industry professionals are clamoring the loudest for devoted link building resources.

These are some of the most competitive local verticals. As such, they've realized that winning authoritative new links will create critical ranking breakthroughs when no other method delivers.

The most competitive industries call the loudest for **more link resources**

The one activity I most want my clients or company to devote more resources to is: (Sliced by industry)

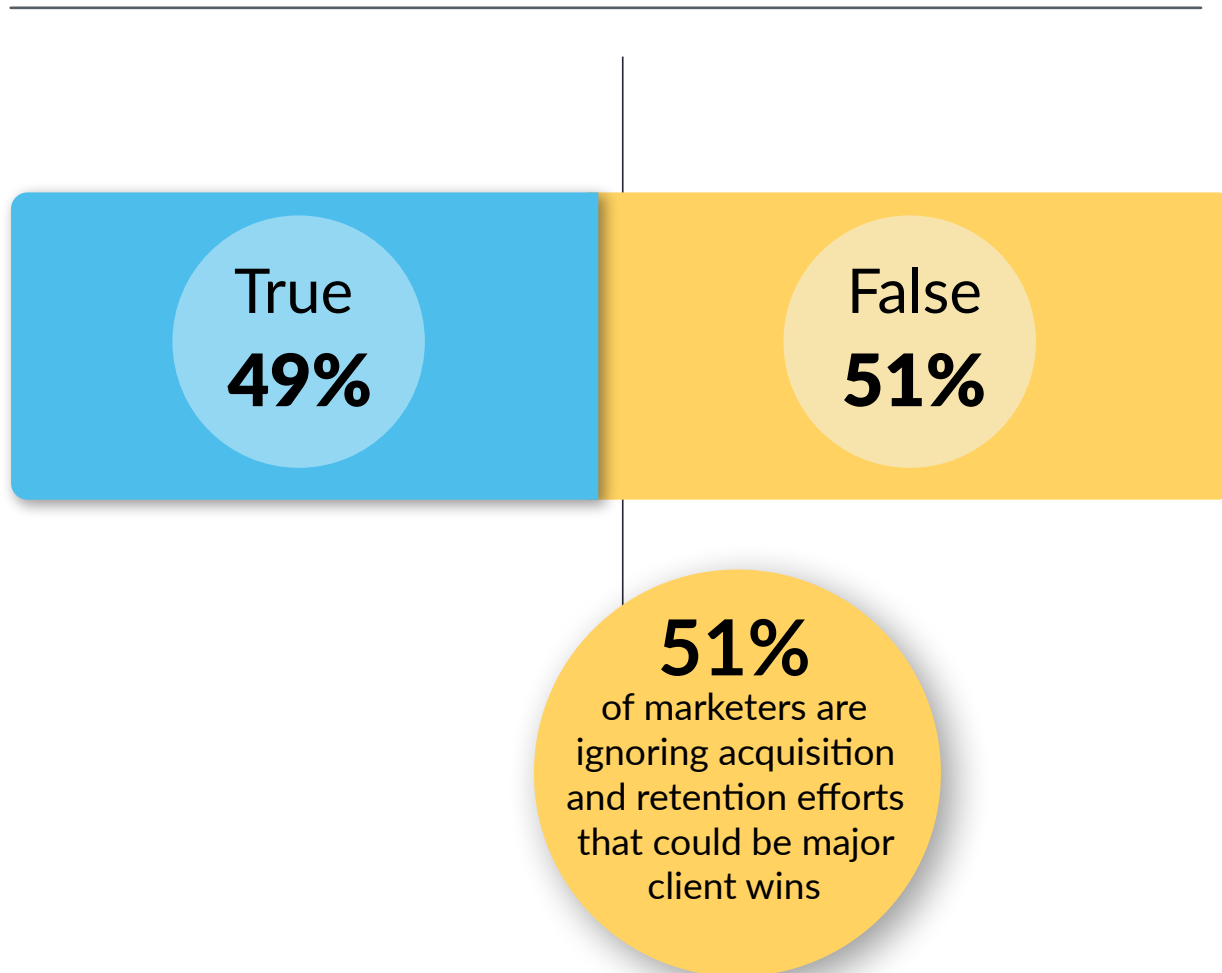


Despite offline boom, word-of-mouth marketing and loyalty programs left on the table

Every word-of-mouth referral is a gift to a local business. And because it's more costly to acquire new customers than to keep existing ones happy, successful loyalty programs should be valued as well.

What happens off the web can make a substantial competitive difference for clients. Right now, only half of the industry has embraced offline word-of-mouth marketing and loyalty campaigns, leaving acquisition and retention streams on the table. It's an area where the local SEO industry has yet to fully mature.

My company/clients are emphasizing offline word-of-mouth marketing and loyalty programs.

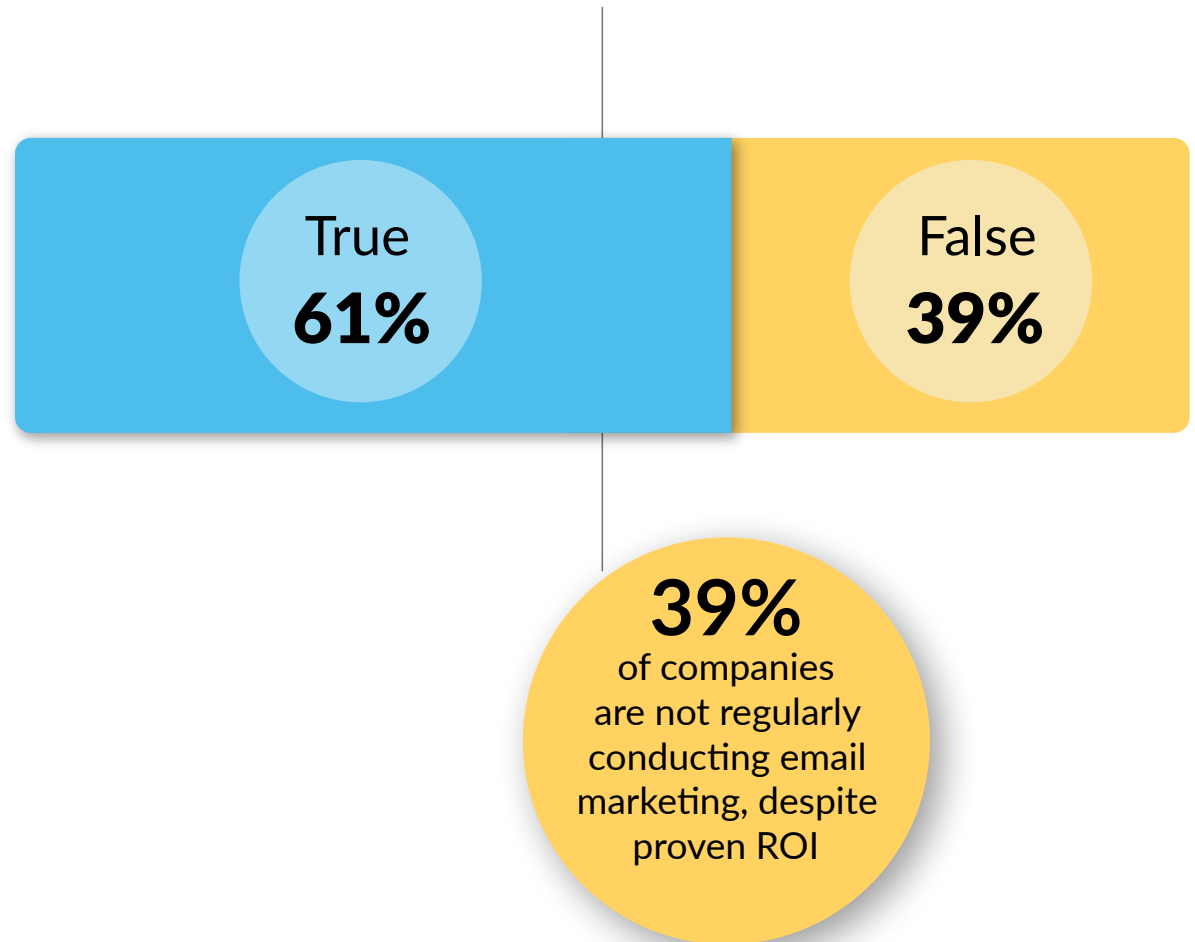


Email's high ROI still ignored by many

Year-over-year, there's been only 3% growth in the number of respondents engaged in email marketing campaigns.

Study after study shows that email marketing delivers some of the highest returns on investment, generating \$38 for every \$1 spent. With more than one-third of survey respondents overlooking it, the competitive advantage falls to brands who actually utilize this tried-and-true customer communications channel.

My company/clients are regularly conducting email marketing.

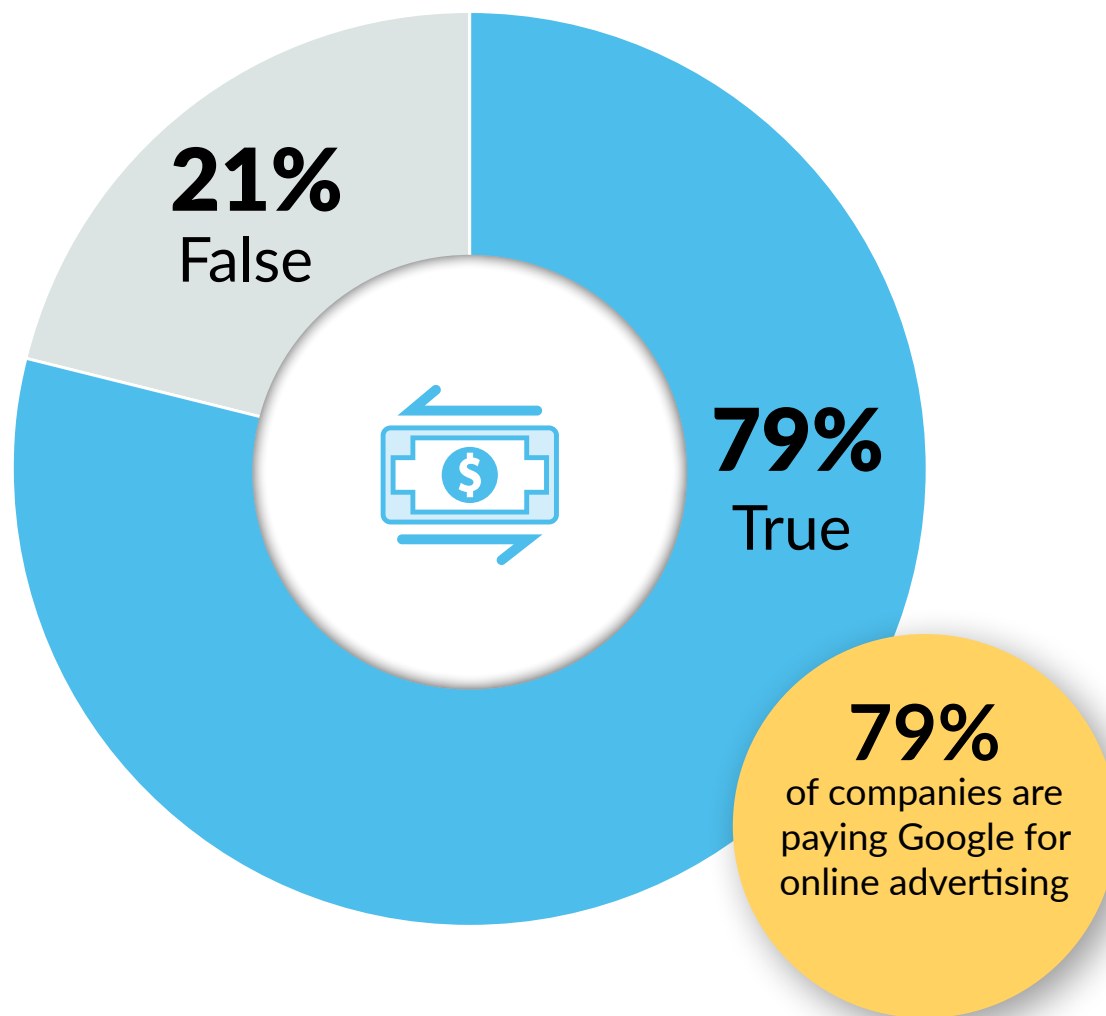


10% more marketers are paying for visibility on Google

YoY growth in the number of respondents paying for online advertising or leads in the form of Google Ads, Local Service Ads, and other programs is a big win for Google.

While competing in tough markets often requires investing in PPC, we recommend that local business marketers find ways to reduce their clients' dependence on Google. [Feed quality data to the search engines](#), fight spam and violations in your industry space, and focus on improving your organic presence.

My company/clients are paying Google for online advertising or leads in the form of Google Ads, Local Service Ads, etc.

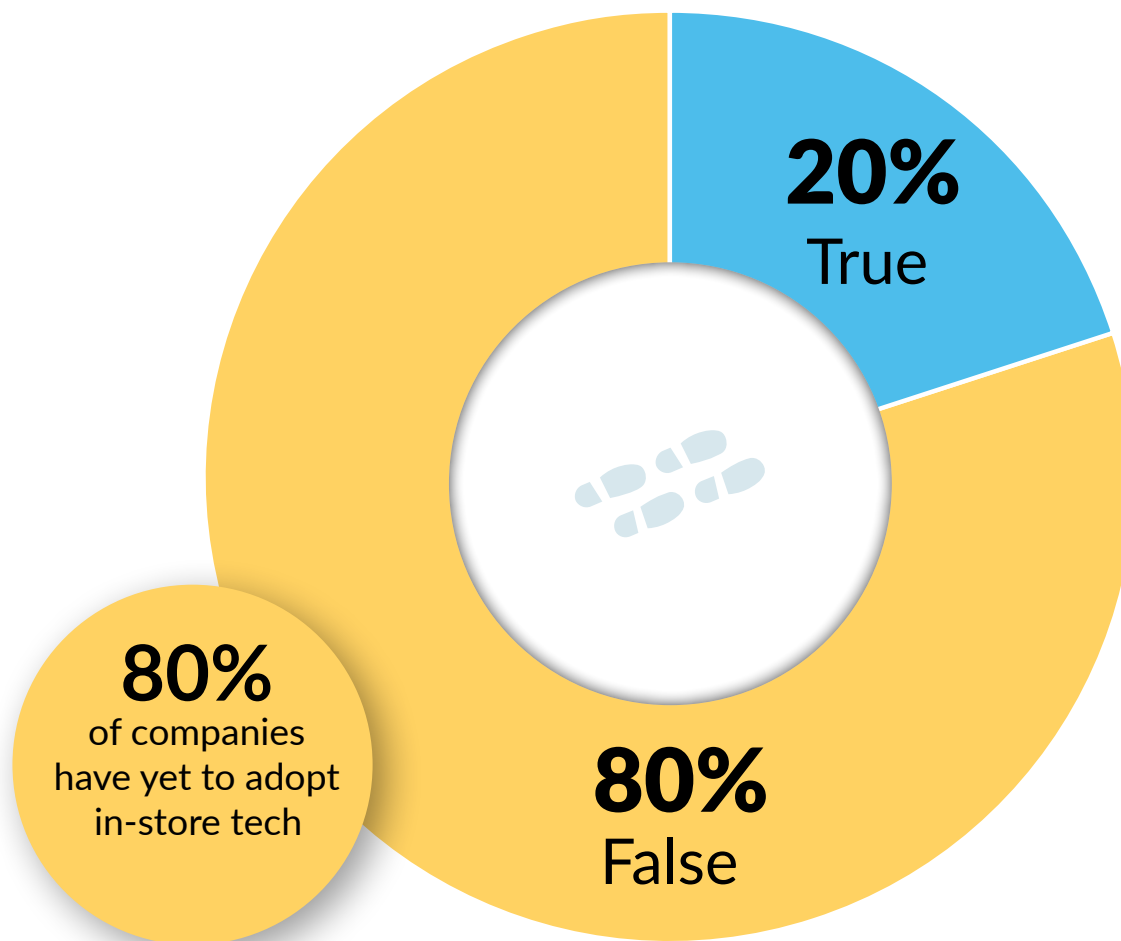


Be open to innovation but beware industry hype

Just a couple of years ago, SEO industry publications were teeming with headlines on in-store tech. Our survey indicates no real growth in adoption of elements like beacons, sensors, QR codes, Wi-Fi analytics, or visual analytics. While developments continue in this area, it could be that actual implementation is mostly confined to large enterprises.

The trajectory on in-store tech is a good lesson in staying curious about innovation while practicing healthy discretion. Not every emergent technology is worth exploring just because it's new. Evaluate trends as they relate to your unique needs and only invest in the best.

My company/clients are utilizing in-store tech, like beacons, sensors, in-store apps, QR codes, Wi-Fi analytics, visual analytics, etc.

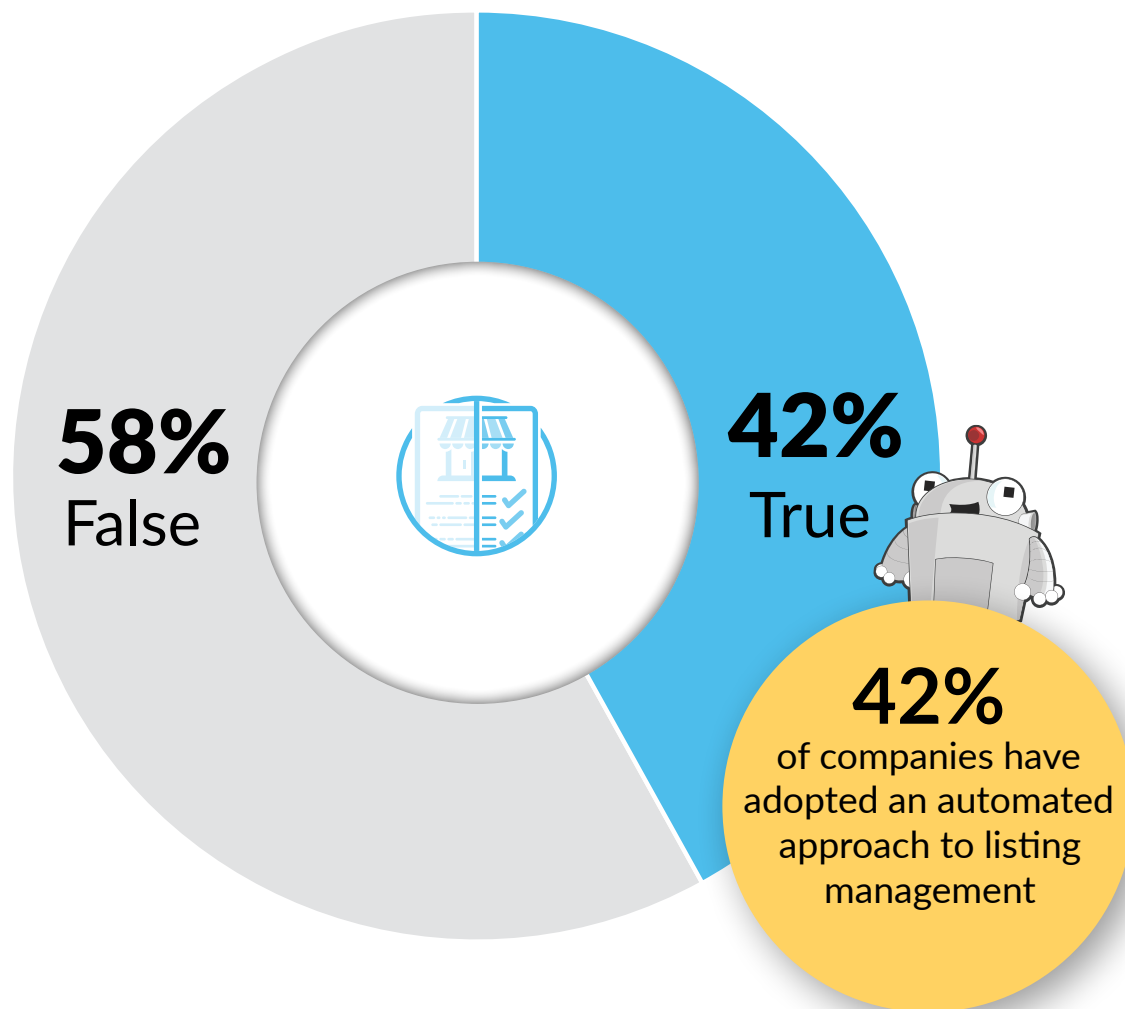


Automated solutions help scale big data changes

When a location's data changes, software can simplify and scale listings management. From multi-location enterprises to single-location businesses, updating core business information across the web means a significant investment of both time and money. And when 75% of shoppers who encounter helpful search results are more likely to visit stores, getting it wrong can mean confused customers and lost revenue.

Nearly half of respondents rely on the help of local SEO software to manage data like location openings, closures, moves, merges, re-brands, duplicates, review responses, Q&A, changes to hours of operation, publication of posts and other actions across multiple listings.

My company/clients have adopted an automated approach to listing management.



<https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/how-digital-connects-shoppers-to-local-stores/>

Local SEO in the Organization

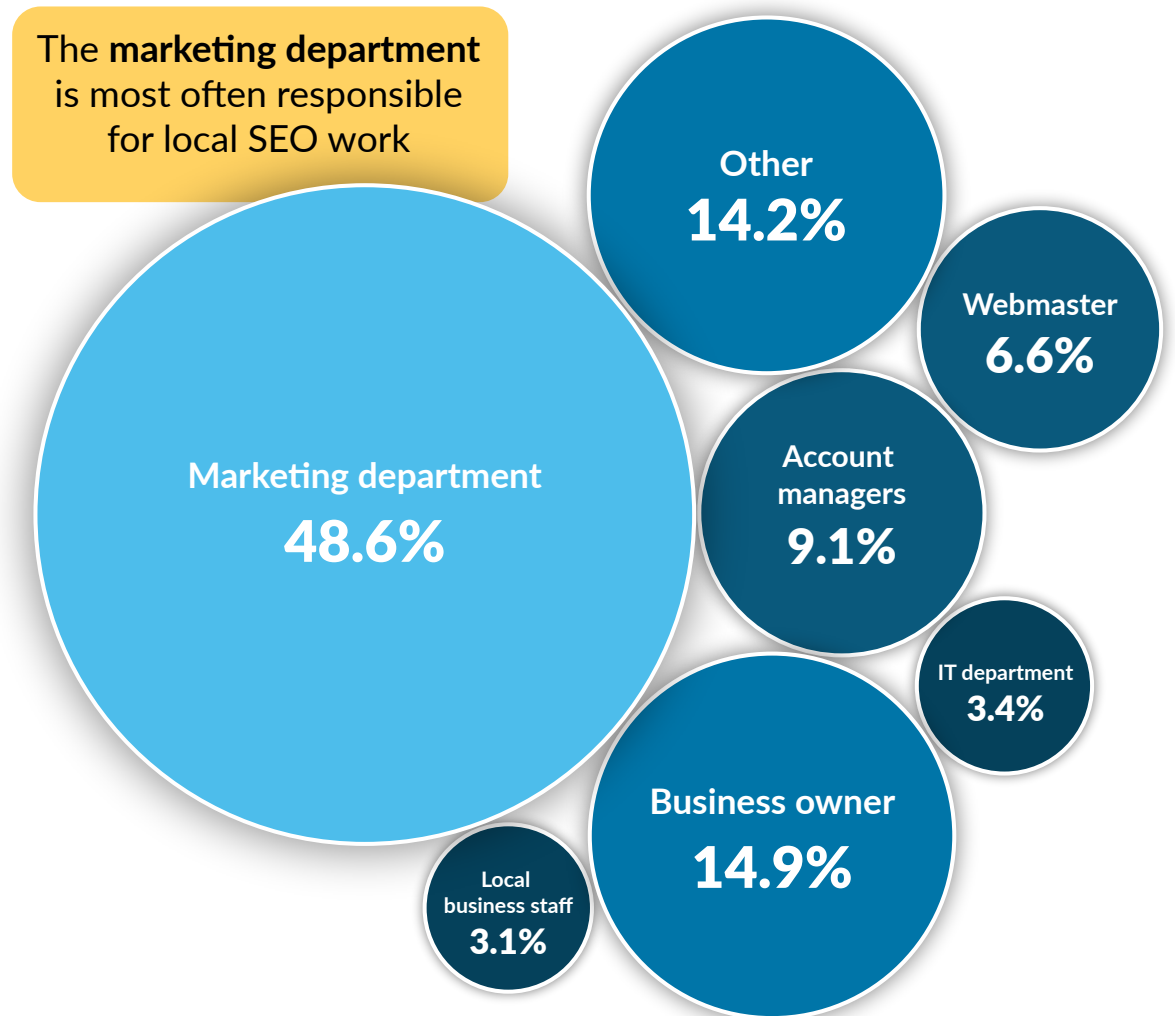
SEO staffing, training, outsourcing, and tools

Marketing departments aren't the only ones doing local SEO

Across all segments, the majority of respondents listed the marketing department as being responsible for local SEO work. That's not the whole story, though — answers varied widely depending on size and company type.

Seventy-five percent of large companies with many locations relied on the marketing department for local SEO. Smaller local businesses saw a split, with business owners handling the work 36% of the time and marketing departments 39%. Agencies saw even more variability: responsibilities for local SEO lay with either the marketing department (40%), account management (15%), or a dedicated SEO department (18%).

What department in your organization is responsible for local SEO work?



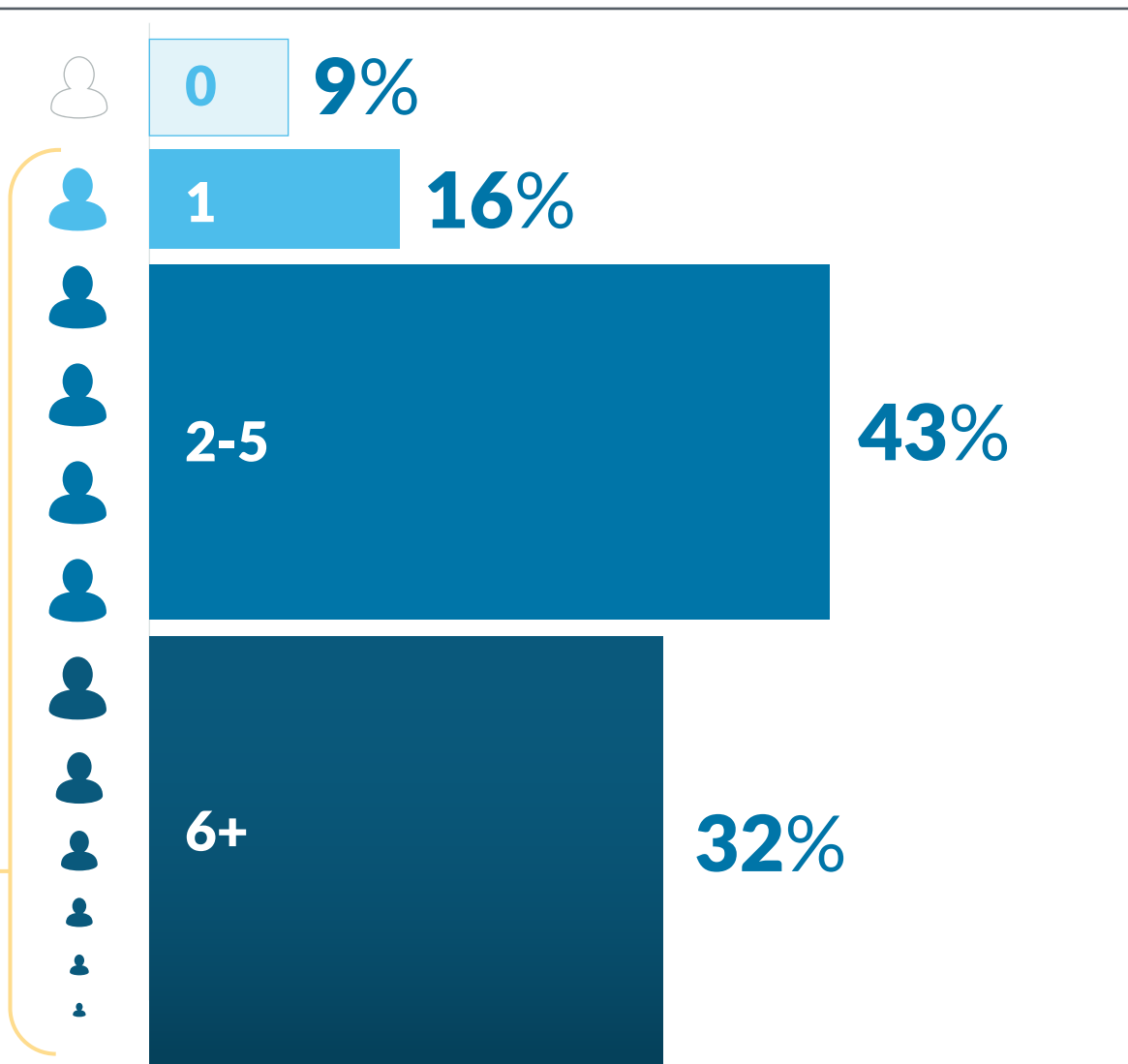
Most large, multi-location businesses resource SEO

The vast majority of large, multi-location businesses (100+ locations) have at least one full-time employee dedicated to SEO and 36% of these enterprises have six or more full-time SEOs.

While the majority of these enterprise businesses understand the value of SEO and are resourcing it accordingly, almost 10% remain behind the curve. If your competitors are staffing SEO experts and you've yet to make a hire, it might be time to consider the gaps you're leaving open for competitors to fill.

91%
of large, multi-location businesses have a full-time SEO resource

Number of full-time employees dedicated to SEO, as reported by business with 100+ locations:



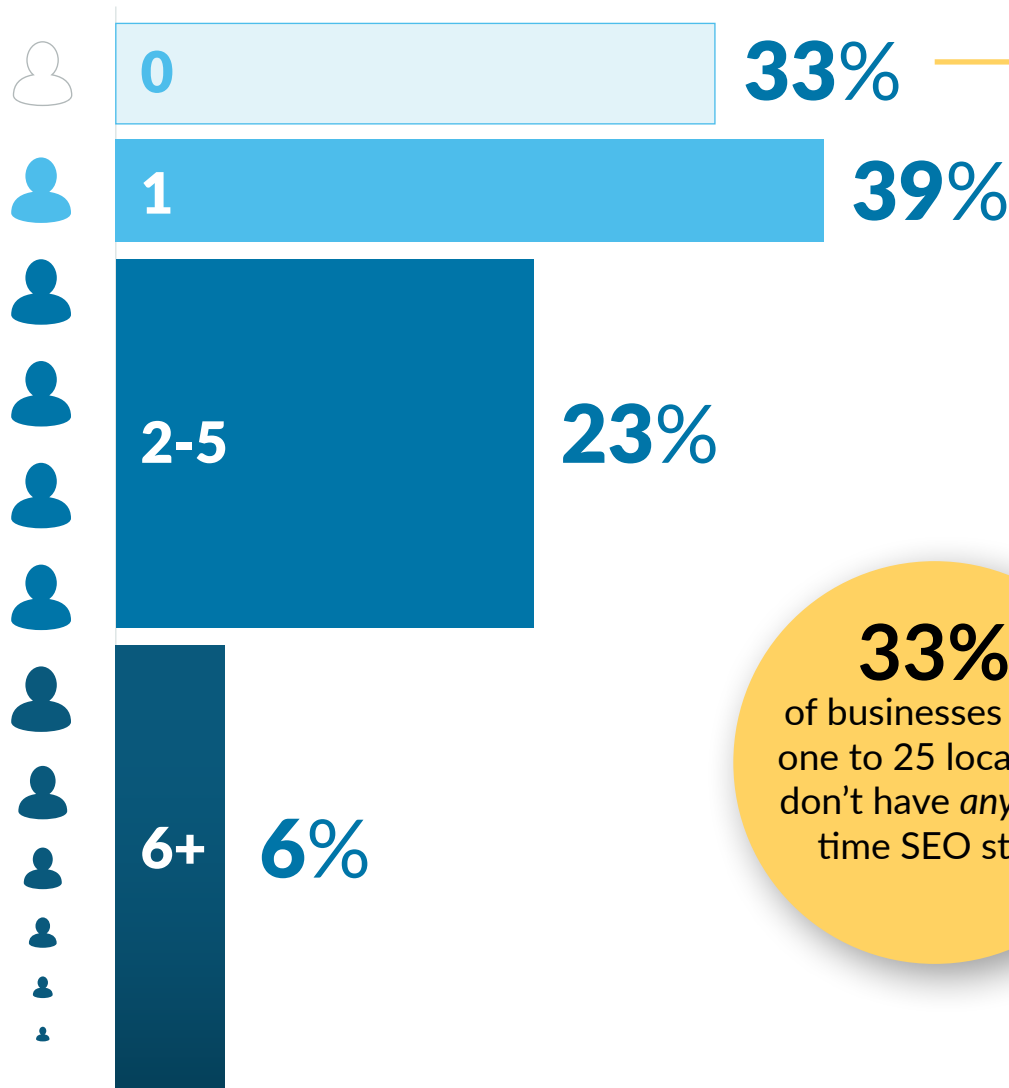
Full-time SEO staff is rarer for SMBs

A third of brands with twenty-five or fewer locations have no full-time SEO staff.

Combined with the fact that 40% of SMBs outsource some or all of their local SEO work, this is a ripe market for agency and consultant outreach. Tailoring your offerings to specific SMB needs could pad your client list and boost your bottom line.

And for those small- to medium-sized businesses that have no SEO on staff at all, the time is right to make a change. An expert devoted to maintaining and improving your online presence is now table stakes – without one, you're behind the curve.

Number of full-time employees dedicated to SEO, as reported by businesses with 1-25 physical locations



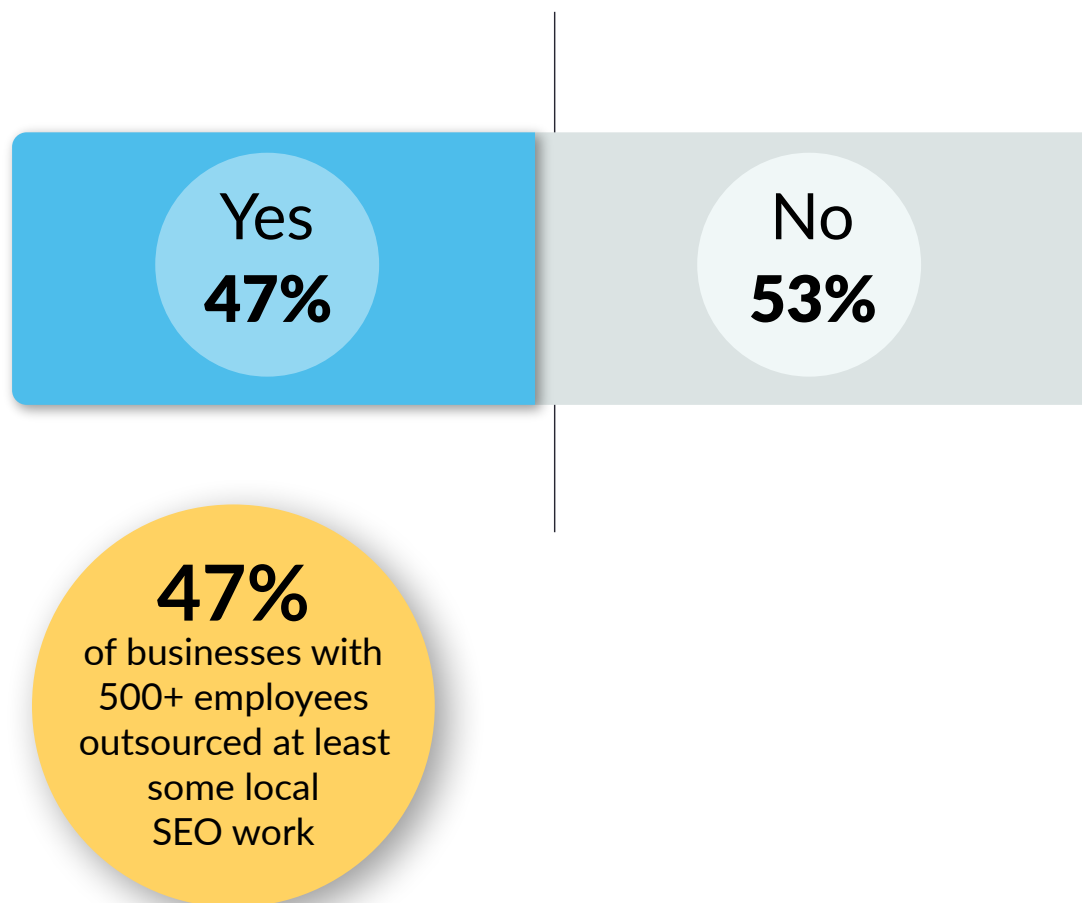
33%
of businesses with one to 25 locations don't have any full-time SEO staff

Large businesses outsource nearly half of local SEO work

Despite over 90% of multi-location enterprises staffing a full-time SEO, 47% also outsource at least part of their local SEO work. There's plenty of opportunity for agencies and consultants to work with in-house marketers — especially those offering custom packages, niche expertise, and specializations in different verticals.

In-house SEOs shouldn't resign themselves to "doing it all" — seek relief in working with outside marketers with particular expertise. Agencies and consultants ought to search out opportunity within industry verticals and tailor their pitches accordingly.

Do you outsource any part of your local SEO work? (as reported by companies with 500 or more employees)

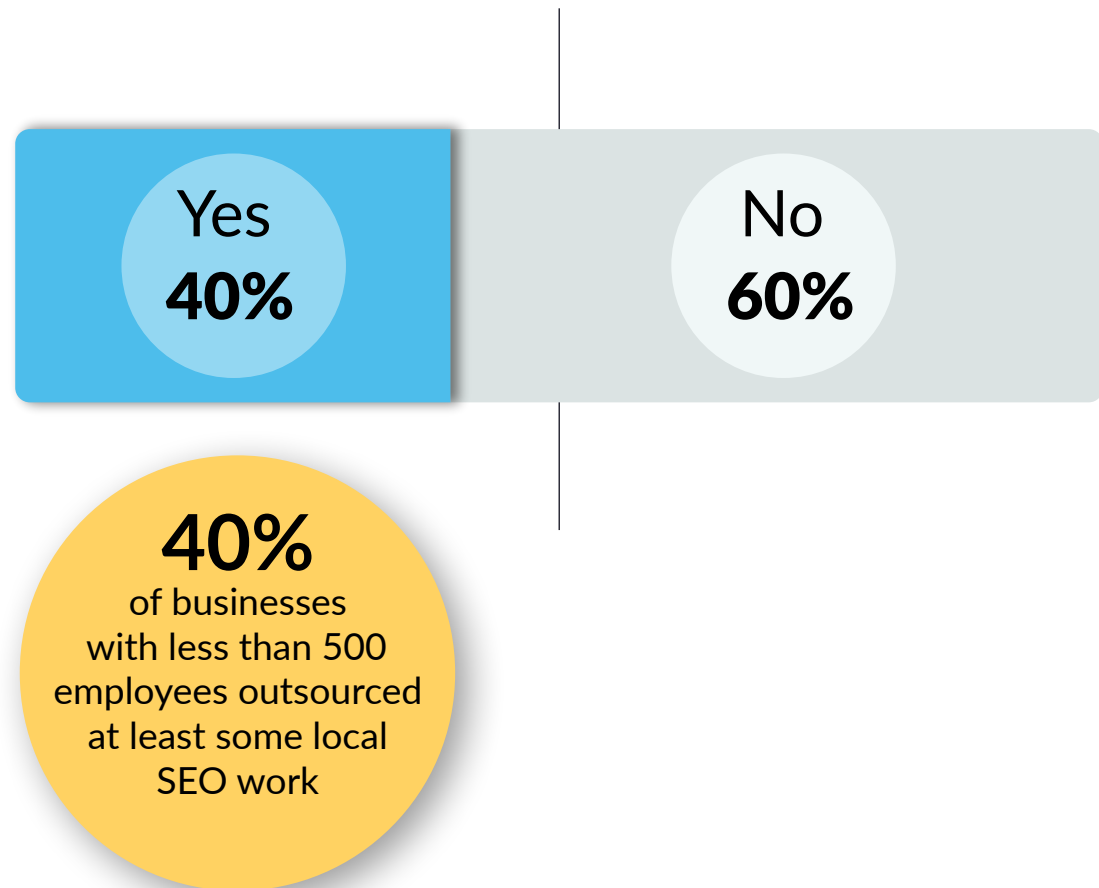


Small to mid-sized businesses also look to outside help for local SEO

Outside help with local SEO is in demand across the board, with 40% of small- to medium-size businesses searching out assistance with some part of their work.

But when we compare that number to the previous stat, we see that it's more common for SMBs to tackle all local SEO in-house than for enterprises. Smaller budgets and fewer resources could contribute to this fact. Maximizing the resources you have at your disposal – whether that's education, SEO automation software, or good old-fashioned elbow grease – is key for SMBs that want to do it all.

Do you outsource any part of your local SEO work? (as reported by companies with less than 500 employees)



Clients can ask for anything – be prepared to serve them

Opportunities abound for agencies and consultants providing local SEO services. Businesses outsourcing this work have a holistic view of their needs – and that means there are plenty of gaps to fill across an array of tasks. From analytics to competitive audits to managing GMB listings, citations, and reviews, a balanced skillset is a must.

But that isn't to say there's no need for specialty consultants or niche areas of focus. Your team could win outsourcing contracts if your service is well-known for your expertise surrounding a specific need.

Do you outsource any part of your local SEO work? (as reported by companies who outsource some local seo work)



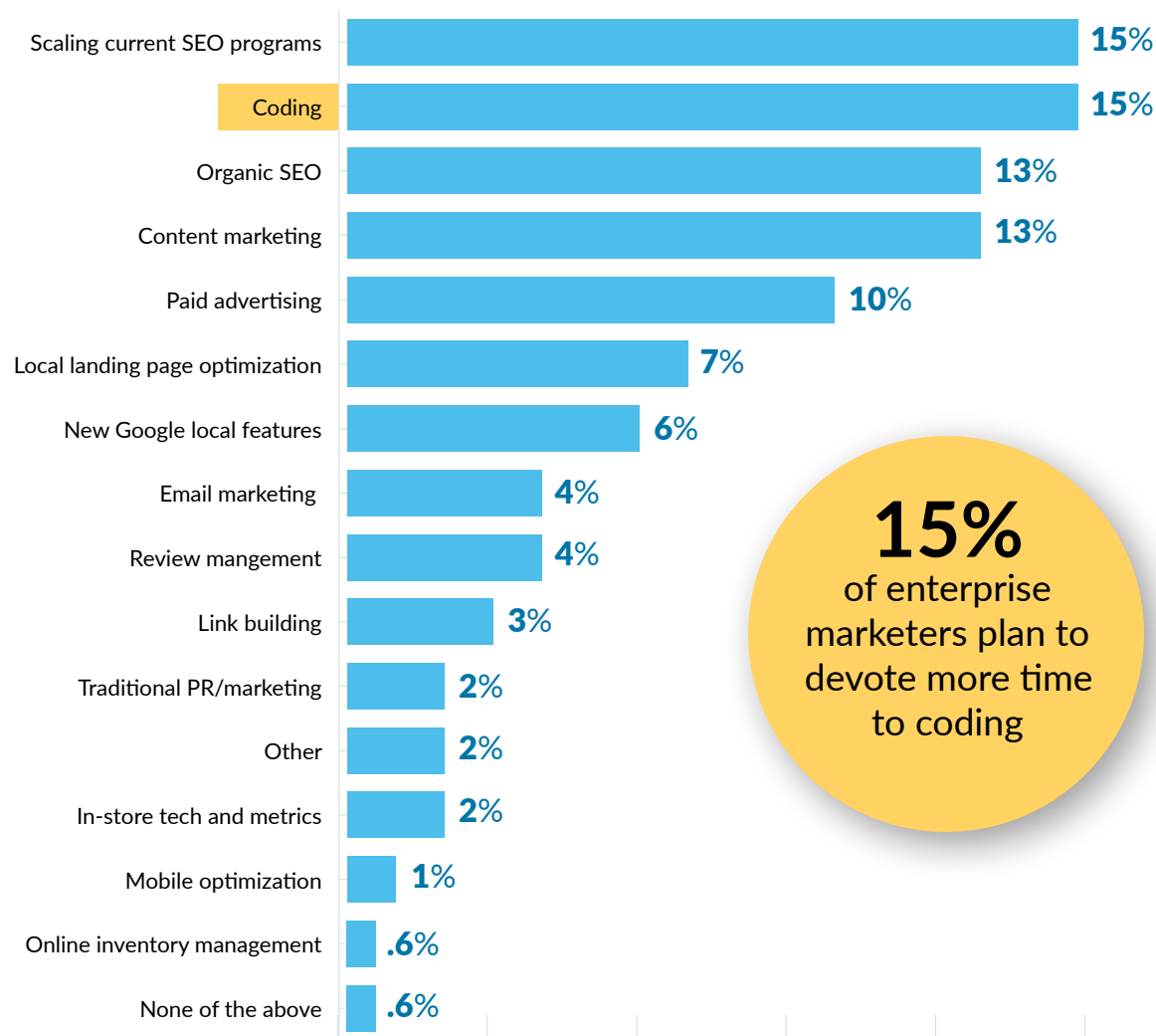
Requests for local SEO assistance come in every flavor

Enterprise marketers cite SEO and tech as top priorities

Big-brand marketers also get to see trends with better clarity. Their vantage point may indicate the direction the industry is taking in general.

Top focus on scaling SEO programs, improving organic SEO, and cultivating coding skills (Schema.org, JavaScript, app development, etc.) indicates an industry that's determined to thoughtfully guide customers at every stage of their journey. Whether supporting ease of discovery via good SEO or ensuring frictionless transactions via good interfaces, the goal is a visible, effortless, retentive customer experience.

Based on my read of the local SEO industry, the one thing I'll be devoting more of my own time to studying in the next 12 months is:

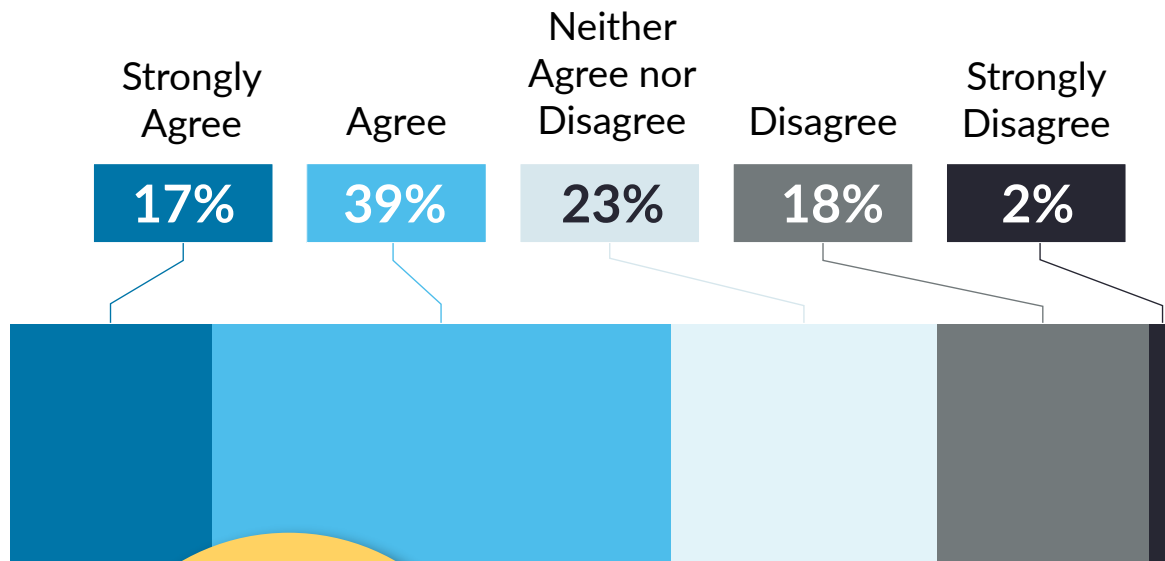


The local industry is upping its training game

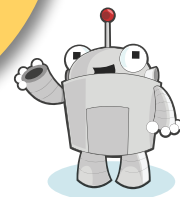
2020 respondents seem more satisfied with local SEO training than in 2019, with only 43% stating that there aren't enough quality resources to train teams and clients.

Even with 57% favorability, however, it's clear that there's still work to be done here. With a significant number of both enterprises and SMBs maintaining in-house SEO staff, access to core training and continuing education is vital in a constantly evolving industry like local search.

There are enough quality local SEO training resources that I can use to educate my team/clients.



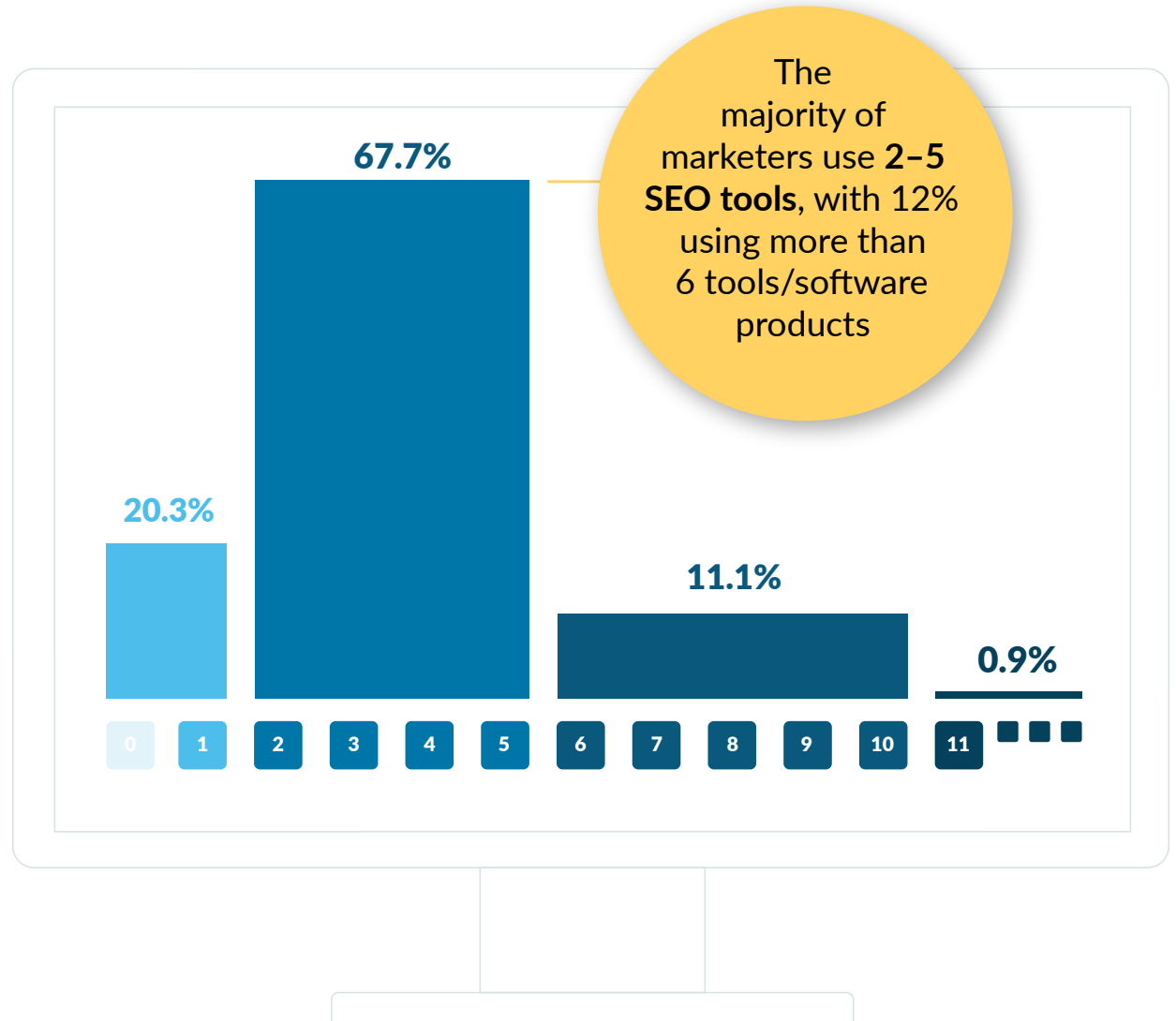
57%
of marketers believe that there are enough quality local SEO training resources available



Multiple tools for multiple goals

The vast majority of respondents rely on more than one SEO tool for their work, with the bulk falling in the two- to five-tool range. It's not surprising, given that all-in-one software can be complemented by a niche solution and vice-versa. The data indicates that SEOs are willing to choose the best tool for the job, even if that means they're using multiple solutions.

I would estimate the number of local SEO tools/software products I use to complete a local search marketing campaign would be:

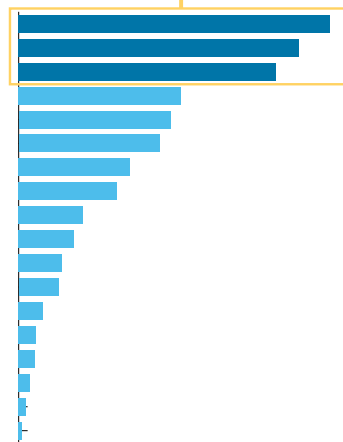
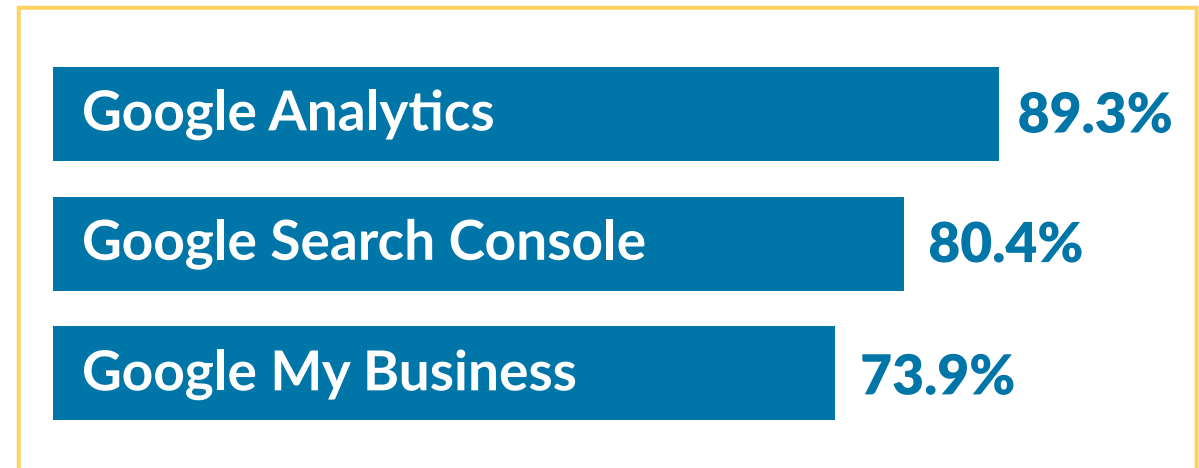


Google rules every roost

Google's taken over more than just the SERPs. A startling majority of local marketers rely on Google tools to track, analyze, and report on their work, as well as determine ROI. It's concerning for a single company to have so much control over the local ecosystem, but it's a conundrum – to win the Google game, you have to play by their rules.

Work on improving your organic visibility and combine that with a robust review strategy that encompasses both Google and non-Google properties. Aim to be everywhere your customers look, including alternative platforms like Apple Maps and local resources like your chamber of commerce. Think outside the SERPs and don't fear creative solutions.

I am using the following solutions for tracking, analysis, reporting, and determining ROI:

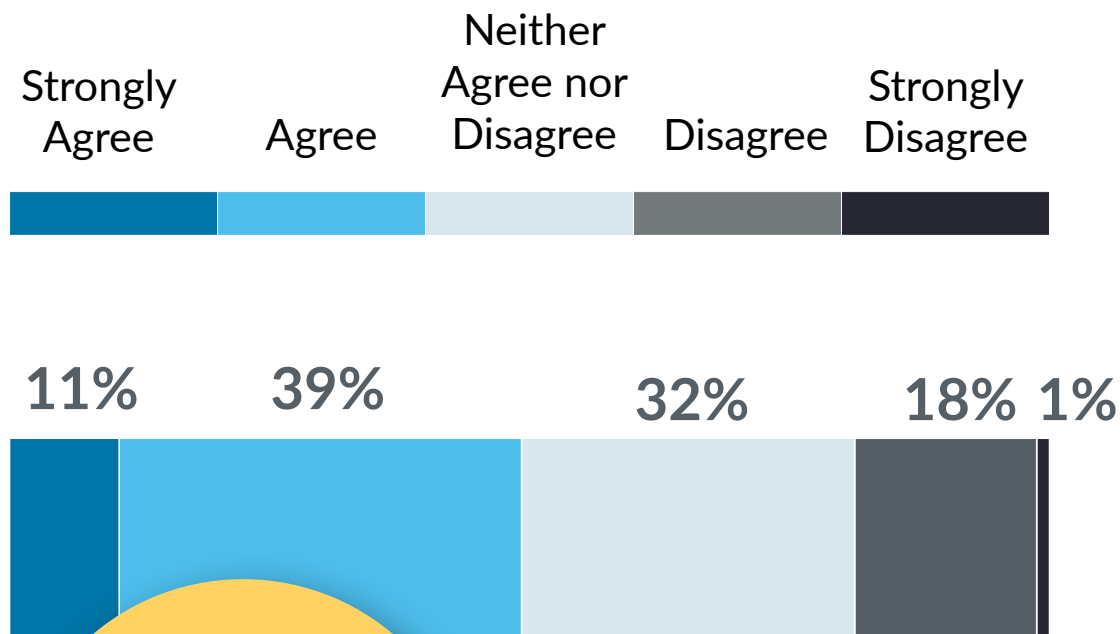


Most respondents are dependent on Google's tools

Have local SEO tools kept up with the times?

An even half of respondents believe that yes, local SEO tools are keeping pace with industry changes, while another 32% aren't quite sure and almost 20% disagree. Local seems to change with greater rapidity than traditional search, which may represent a challenge for traditional toolsets to keep up. And with Google tools eclipsing third parties when it comes to top solutions, it makes one wonder just where the disconnect lies.

Software providers/SEO tools are keeping up with the changes in local search:



50% of marketers believe that SEO tools are keeping up with the changes in local marketing; 32% are on the fence

Methodology

In December 2019 through February 2020, we surveyed 1000+ professionals working in local marketing, asking them 40 questions about their work in the industry. Responses were analyzed individually, by marketer type, by company size, company type, and as a whole. Respondents represent a broad range of local marketers across industries, marketing job titles, and role level.

As a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we decided to launch a follow-up survey in March 2020. This addendum included six questions focused on how this unforeseeable event has impacted marketers. 306 professionals, across business types and sizes, completed the second survey.

About Moz

We're the leader in search engine optimization (SEO) technology and local search management. Founded in 2004 and headquartered in Seattle, we offer world-class SEO education and software to help marketers find their competitive edge in an increasingly online world.

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