

Post-Pandemic
Pathways to

Trust

B2B Technology Purchase Decision Study

January 2021



ROB ROY
CONSULTING

The post-pandemic trust challenge

In October 2020, Rob Roy Consulting surveyed 625 U.S.-based B2B tech buyers to see what most influences their decision to trust and buy from specific vendors.

Most buyers start with a presumption that vendors are stretching the truth.

The question is, how do B2B tech vendors differentiate themselves as trustworthy?

And what marketing channels and storytelling techniques are most effective in driving leads, accelerating deals, and nurturing stronger customer relationships?

This study reveals the most effective differentiated pathways to trust in a post-pandemic environment.



Tech industry's crisis of trust ...

Hewlett-Packard admits \$8.8 billion accounting scandal at British unit

Facebook again refuses to ban political ads, even false ones

Twitter's Problem Isn't the Like Button
The platform's design encourages negativity, abuse and harassment. That needs to change.



facebook®



amazon

wework

LinkedIn™

Google

LinkedIn Co-Founder Apologizes for Funding Misinformation Campaign Against Roy Moore

'Go back to work': outcry over deaths on Amazon's warehouse floor

"YOU DON'T BRING BAD NEWS TO THE CULT LEADER":
INSIDE THE FALL OF WEWORK

How Google's search algorithm spreads false information with a rightwing bias



... exacerbated by COVID-19.

facebook

COMCAST

amazon



zoom



Google

LinkedIn

TikTok



wework



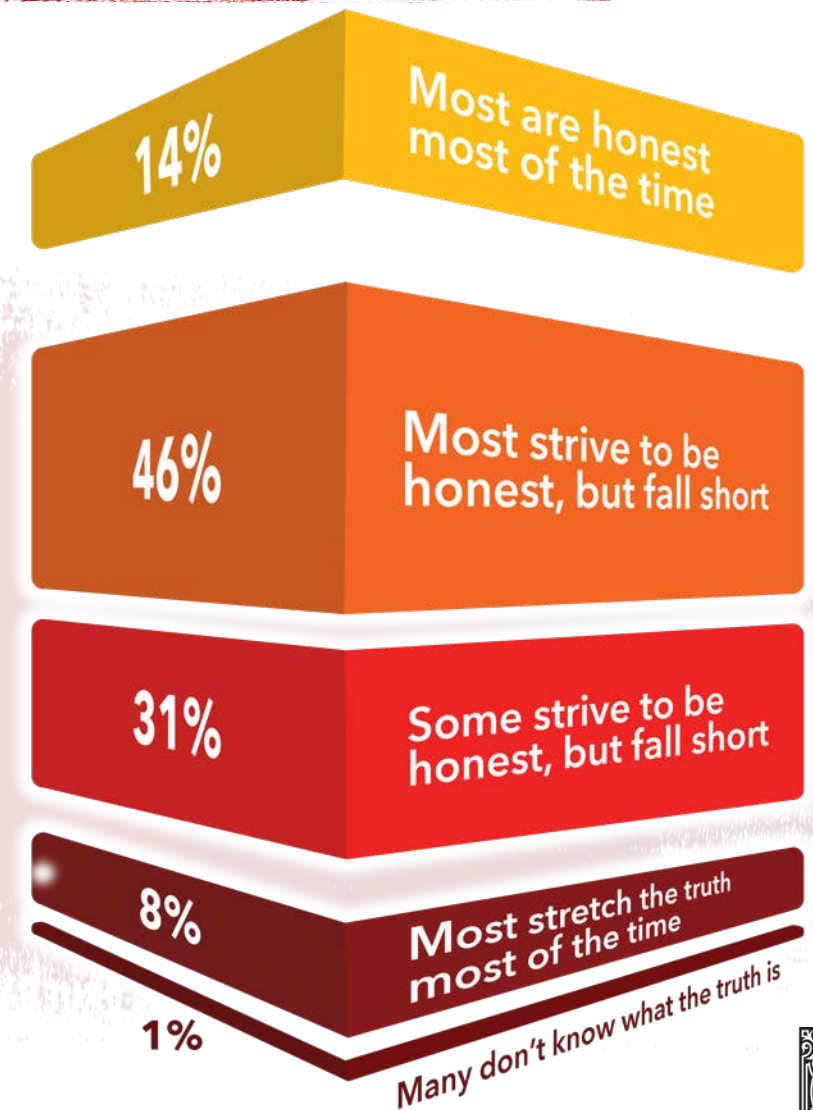
There was a crisis of trust in 2019 ...

We asked: *"To what extent do you feel technology vendors are being honest with you?"*

A staggering

86%

believed that most tech vendors fell short of the mark



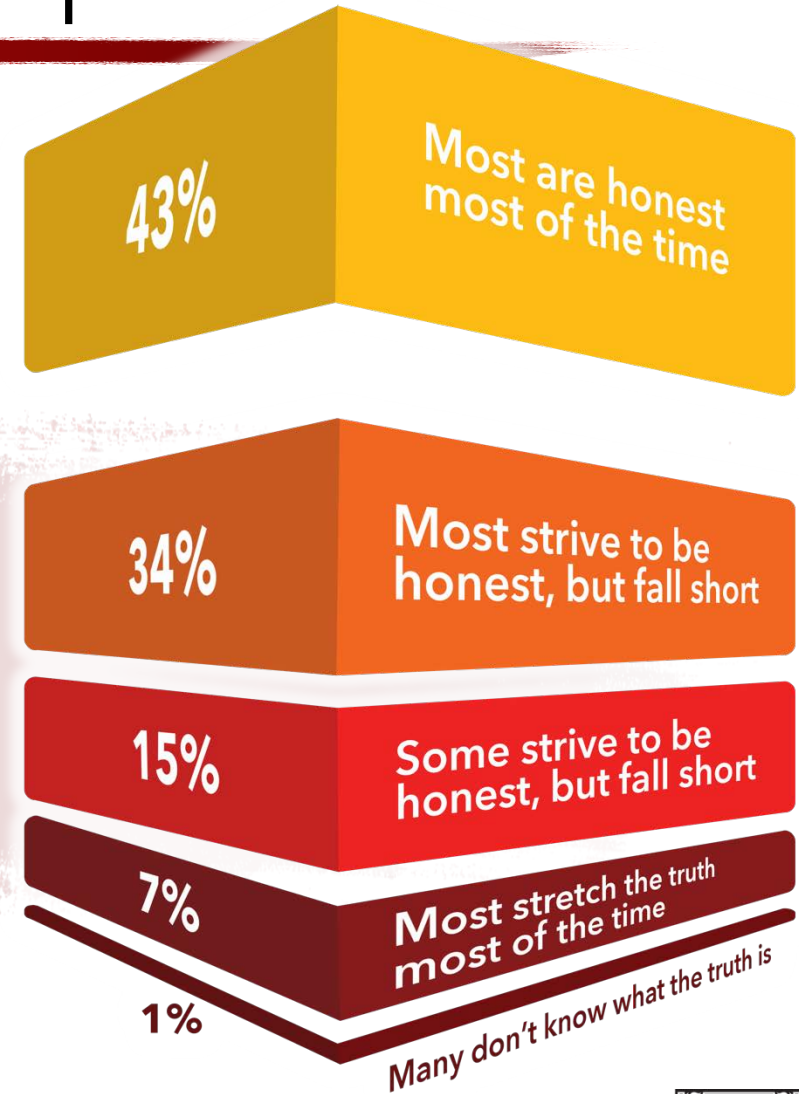
... and earning trust remains an uphill battle

We asked: *"To what extent do you feel technology vendors are being honest with you?"*

57%

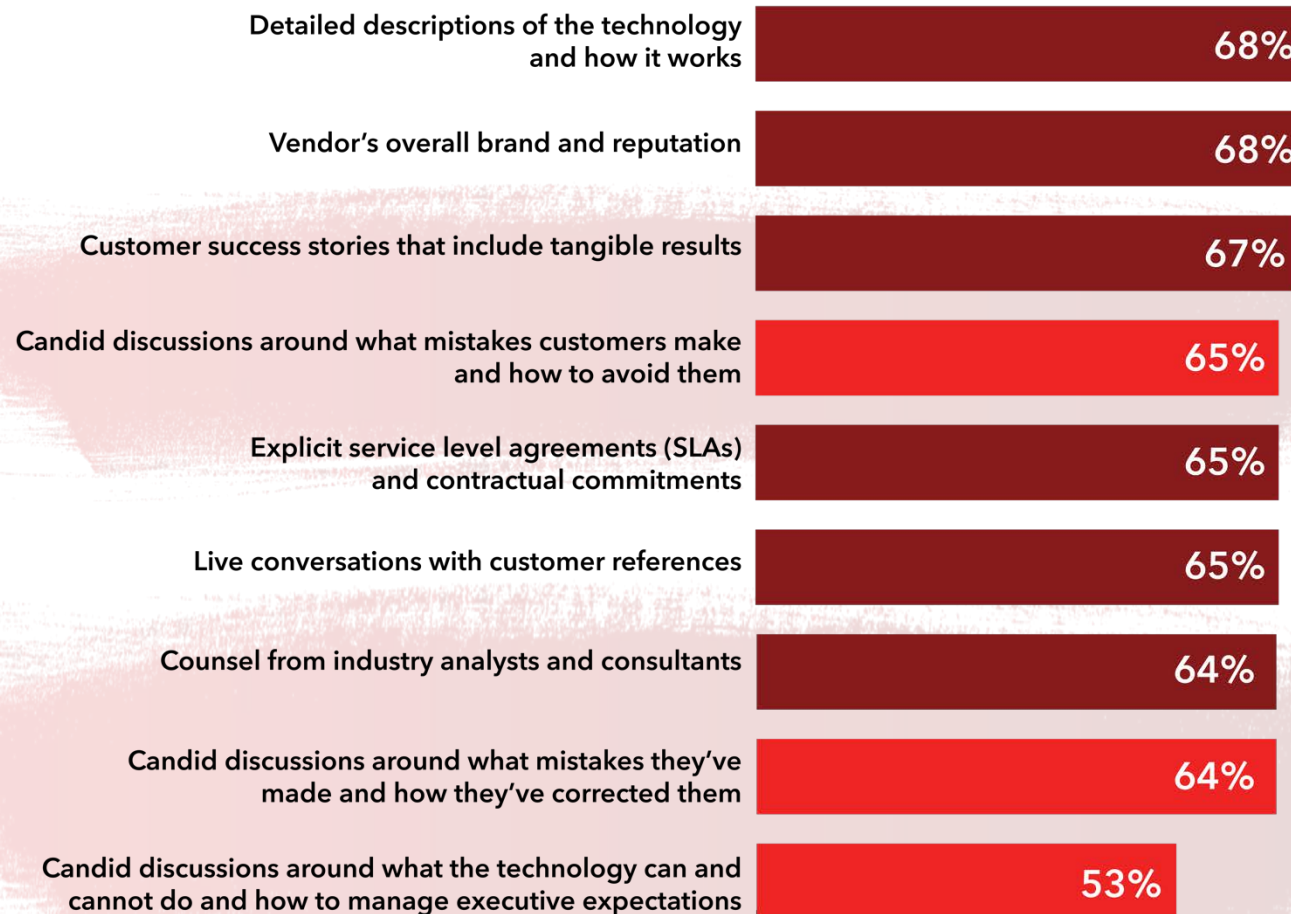
continue with the assumption that vendors fall short of being honest, with varying degrees of skepticism.

Although down from 86% in 2019 – it's still critical for B2B tech vendors to differentiate themselves as trustworthy.



Differentiated pathways to earning trust

“How likely are each of the following to convince you a vendor is being honest with you?”



Talking about mistakes, lessons learned and how to avoid vendor hype offer differentiated – and equally effective – pathways to earning buyers' trust.



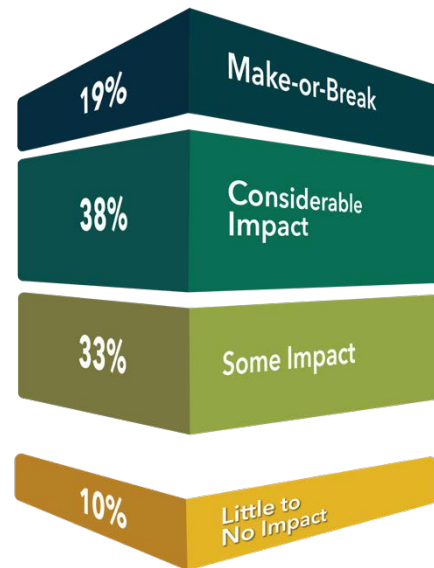
What impacts B2B tech buyers' trust in vendors?



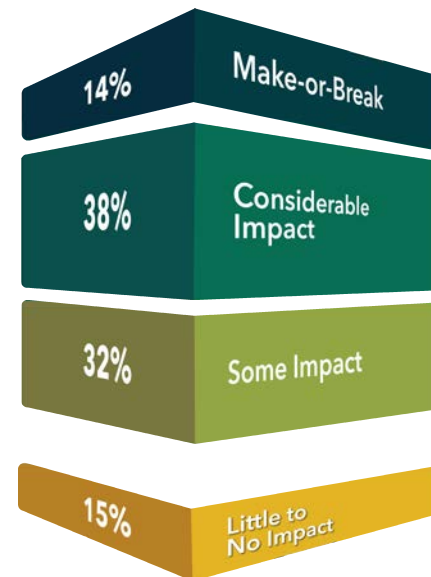
Vision and values, not just value propositions

To what extent do each of the following impact your decisions?

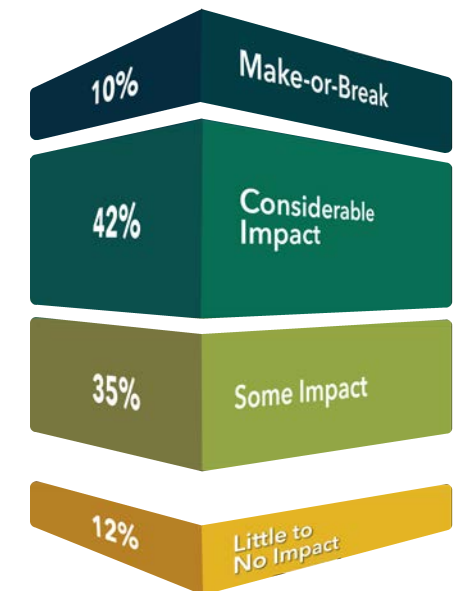
Vision, Mission and Purpose



Actions on Racial Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and Social Justice



Environmental Sustainability Practices



Post-pandemic: Getting into the RFP

*“When considering a large B2B purchase, how valuable do you find the following sources of information in determining which vendors you will include in a request for proposal (RFP) or product pitch?”
(Extremely/Very valuable)*

As the world has gone virtual, some “traditional” marketing channels are gaining traction.



Asked last year but not this year: Online user review sites

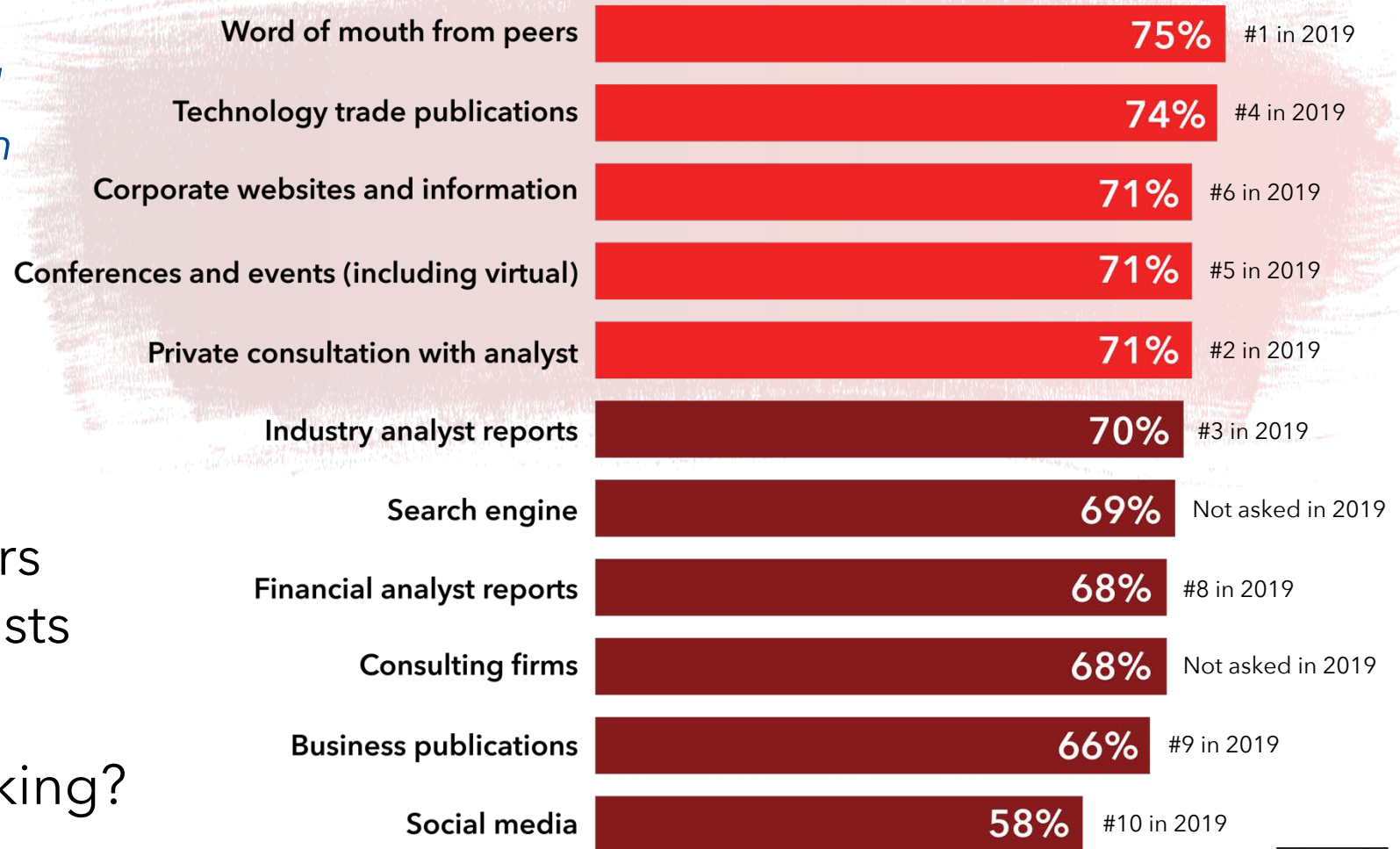


Post-pandemic: Winning the business

*“When considering a large B2B purchase, how valuable do you find the following sources of information in determining which vendors you will ultimately select?”
(Extremely/Very valuable)*

Word of mouth from peers
and analysts shape short-lists
and final decisions.

So, how do you get them talking?

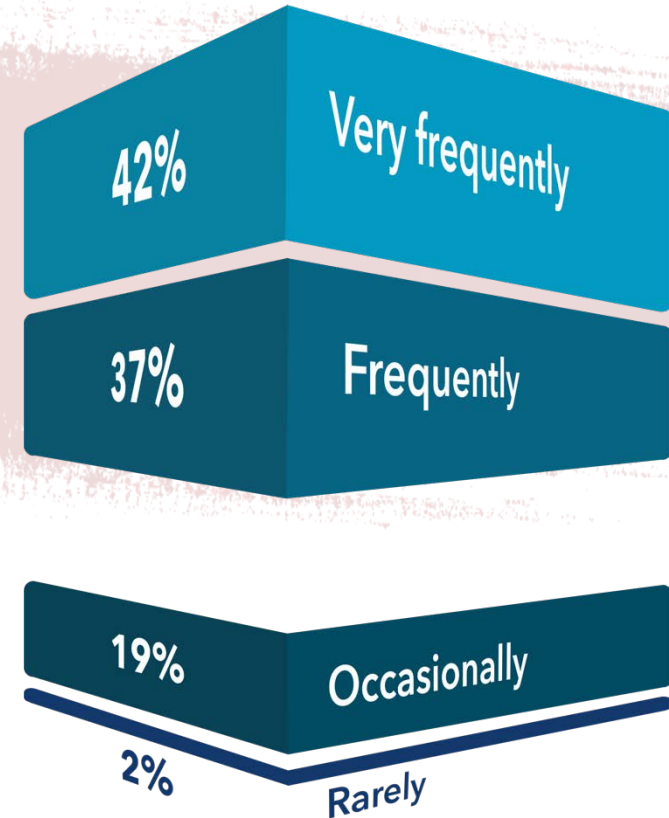


Word-of-mouth transcends marketing channels

“How often does word-of-mouth from people like yourself impact how you set your business priorities?”

79%

said word-of-mouth and discussions with peers reshape their business priorities and what categories of technology they spend money on.



Word of mouth matters more than ever.

It shapes budget priorities before an RFP is even issued.

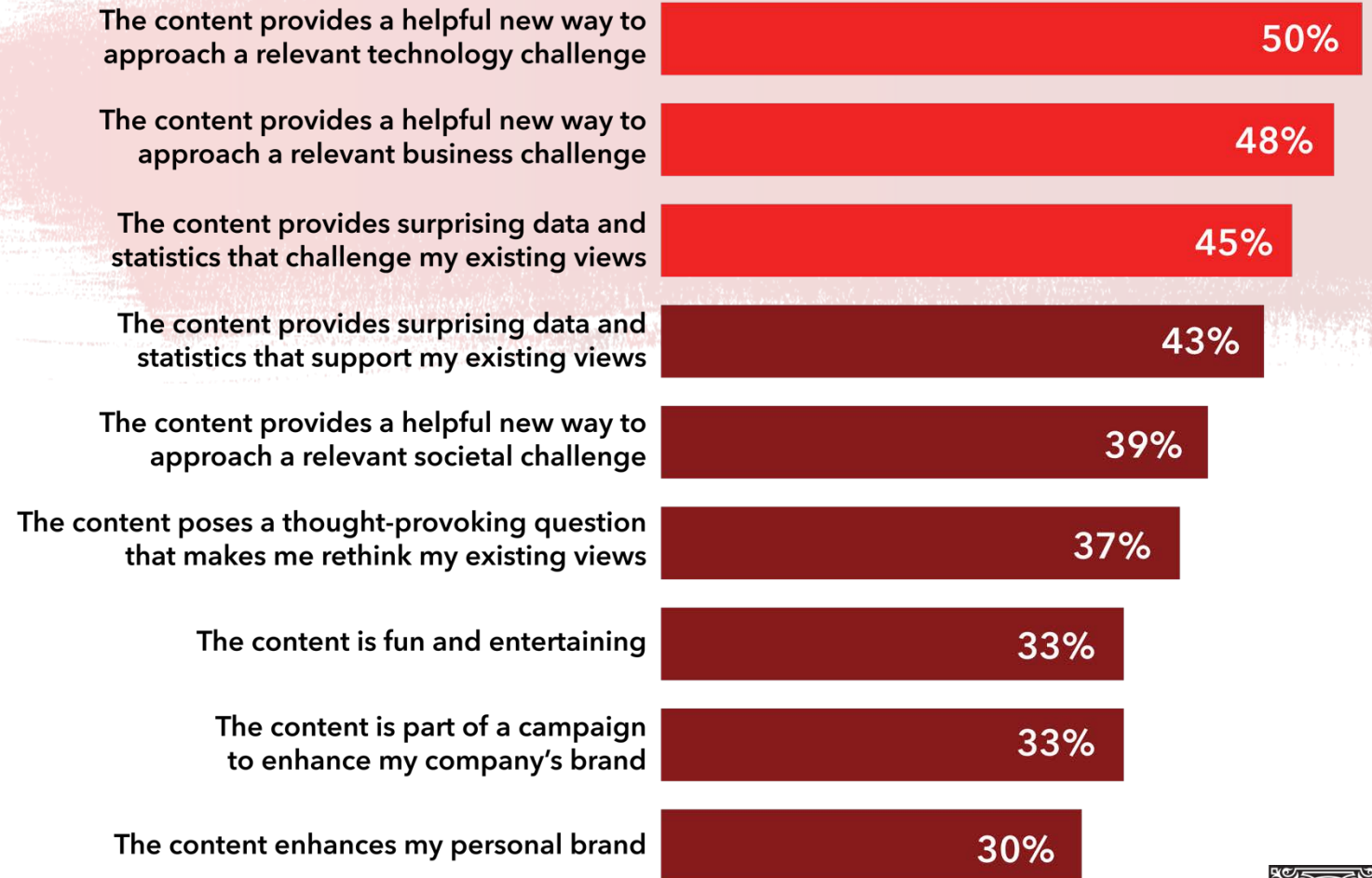


Generating word-of-mouth

“What motivates you to share relevant content with your peers?”

Vendors can drive word-of-mouth by:

- **Reframing** technology and business challenges
- **Challenging** existing views



Peer recommendations matter
even more post-pandemic



Post-pandemic, tech decision makers are talking and relying on each other more for counsel

"How valuable do you find the following sources of information in determining which vendors you will include in a product pitch?"

2019: Word-of-mouth **62%**

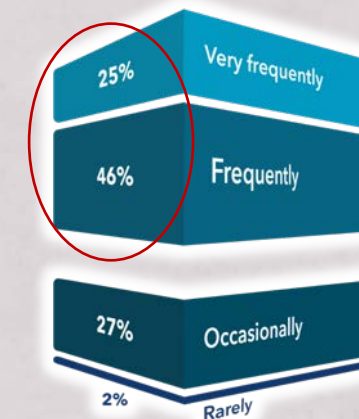


2020: Word-of-mouth **74%**

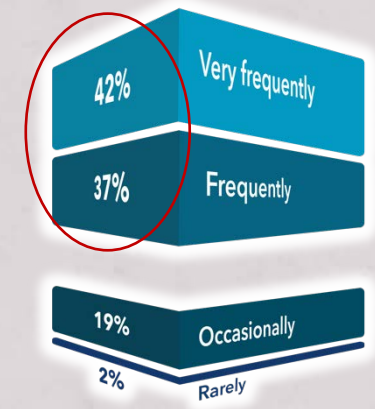


"How often does word-of-mouth your peers impact your business priorities?"

2019: Freq/Very Freq **71%**



2020: Freq/Very Freq **79%**



"When considering a large B2B purchase, how valuable do you find the following sources of information?"

2019: Word-of-mouth **67%**



2020: Word-of-mouth **75%**



The Traditional Trust Equation

The old trust model remains useful, but was grounded in self-oriented considerations of “What am I doing, what value am I providing, and what am I innovating?”

$$\text{Trust} = \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Credibility} + \\ \text{Reliability} + \\ \text{Intimacy} \end{array} \right) \div \text{Self-Orientation}$$



The **Emerging** Trust Equation

The emerging trust model is more inclusive and focuses on **other**-oriented considerations of "How are **we** connecting, what are **we** learning, and what are we **co-creating**?"

$$\text{Trust} = \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Curiosity} + \\ \text{Integrity} + \\ \text{Empathy} \end{array} \right) \div \text{Fear}$$



Recommendations and reflections

1. Curate candid discussions among peers

*What kinds of lessons learned and strategic questions could **you** use to drive discussion?*

2. Talk about purpose, mission and values

*What kind of **future** are you working to build, and what **values** do you live by?*

3. Demonstrate real-world commitment to social issue

*What do your **actions** say about your commitment to racial equality and environmental impact?*

4. Be transparent

*What mistakes made and lessons learned could **you** talk about to earn trust?*

5. Be the voice of reason

*Which industry myths and overhyped promises could **you** challenge?*

6. Find differentiated pathways to building trust

*Where could changes to your marketing channel mix help you **break through** the white noise?*

7. Turn honesty into a competitive advantage

*What are the unspoken truths of **your** industry, and which ones are most useful to address?*



Methodology



Population

This study was fielded via Survey Monkey in September 2019 and analyzed in October 2020. It asks many of the same questions we asked in a survey fielded by Cambia Information Group in September - October of 2019. The sample size of our 2019 study was 500 U.S.-based B2B tech decision makers.

At the end of 2020, we surveyed 625 U.S. B2B technology decision-makers.

For the purposes of this study, B2B technology decision-makers were defined as those who are:

1. **Solely responsible** or with **final-decision making authority** over technology purchases for their company, or
2. The **head of the team** responsible for making these decisions, or
3. A **member of the team** responsible for making these decisions.

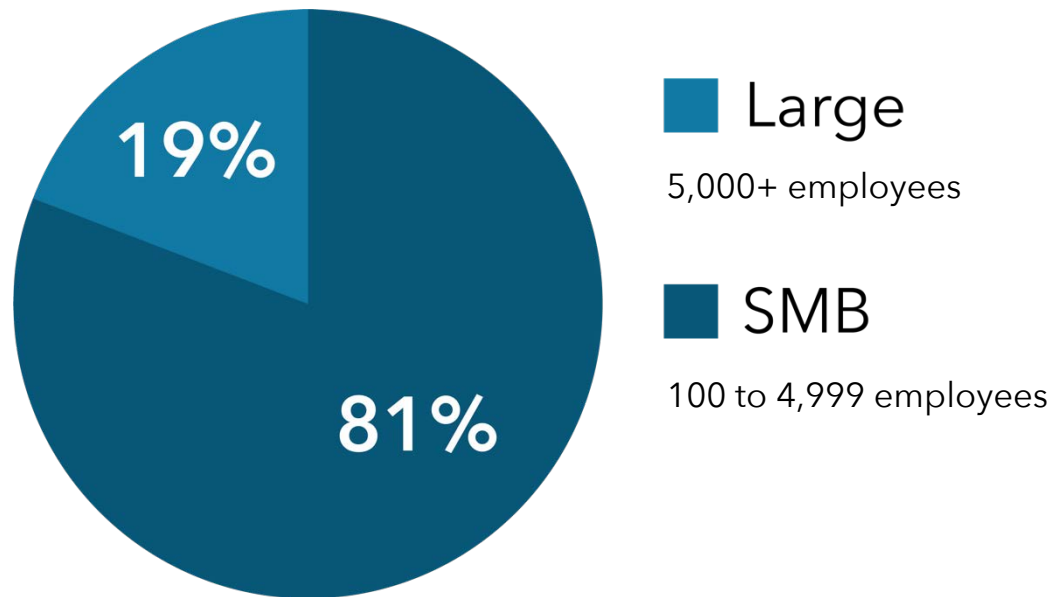
Additionally, respondents were required to work in companies with 100+ employees and an annual IT budget of \$50,000+.



Segments

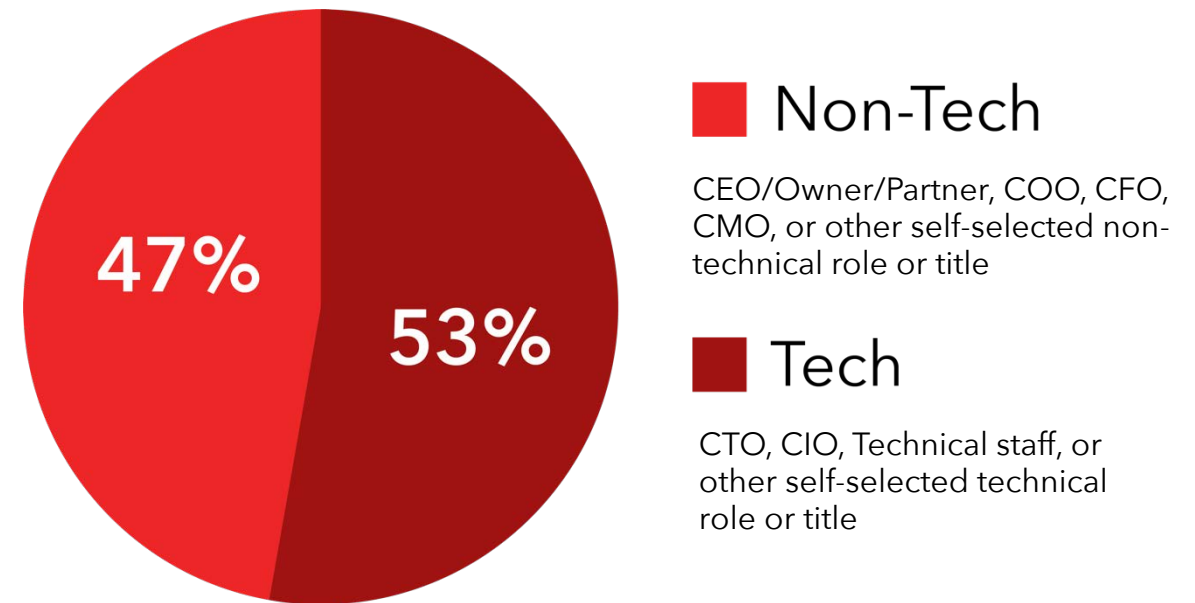
Two audience sub-groups are highlighted in this report:

Company Size



IT Professionals

(based on title)



N=625

We talked to people of all backgrounds in the technology field, not just tech-specific roles



For more information, or to request a live presentation and Q&A session for your organization, please contact:

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