State of the Conversion Optimization Industry Report 2018
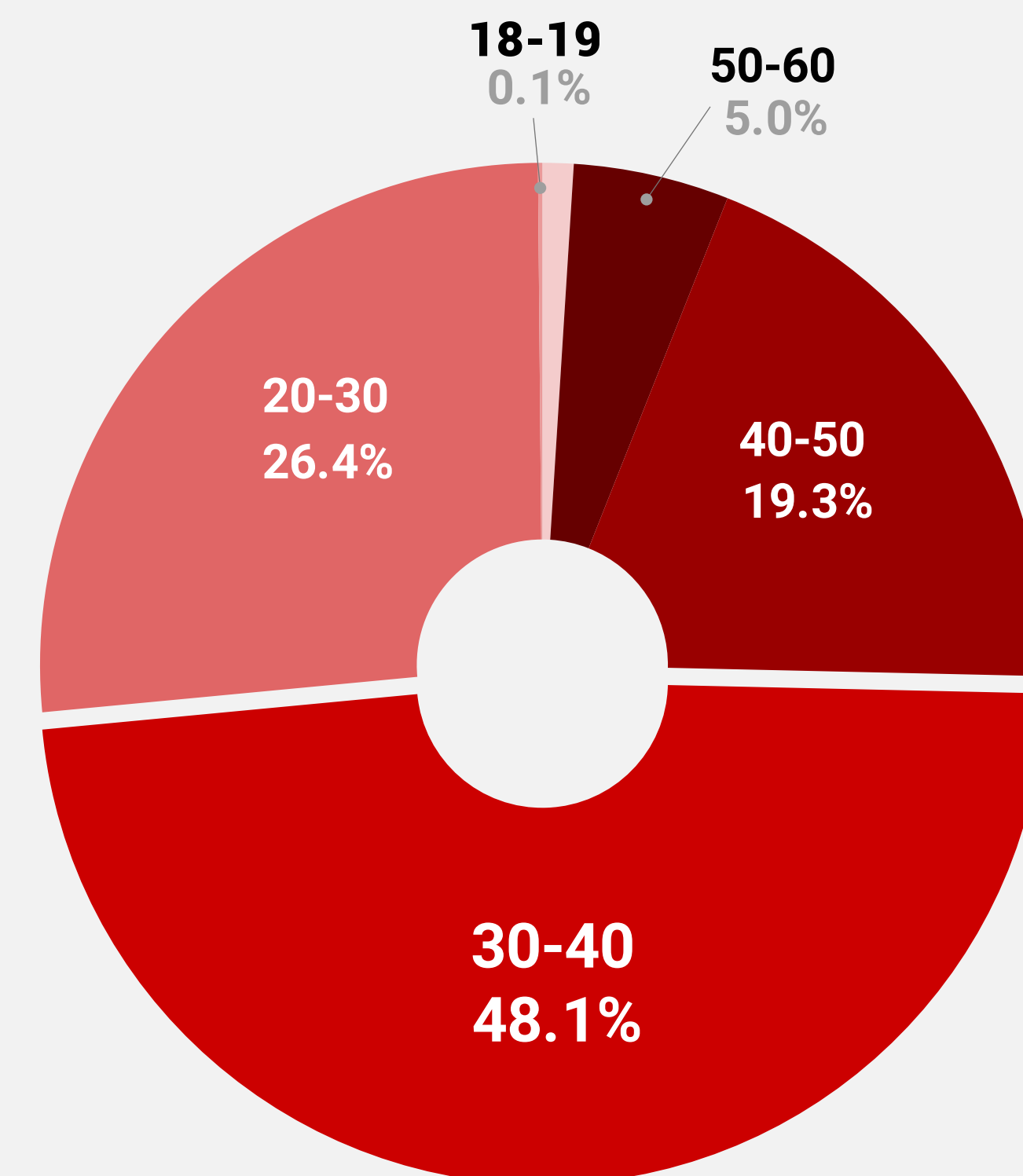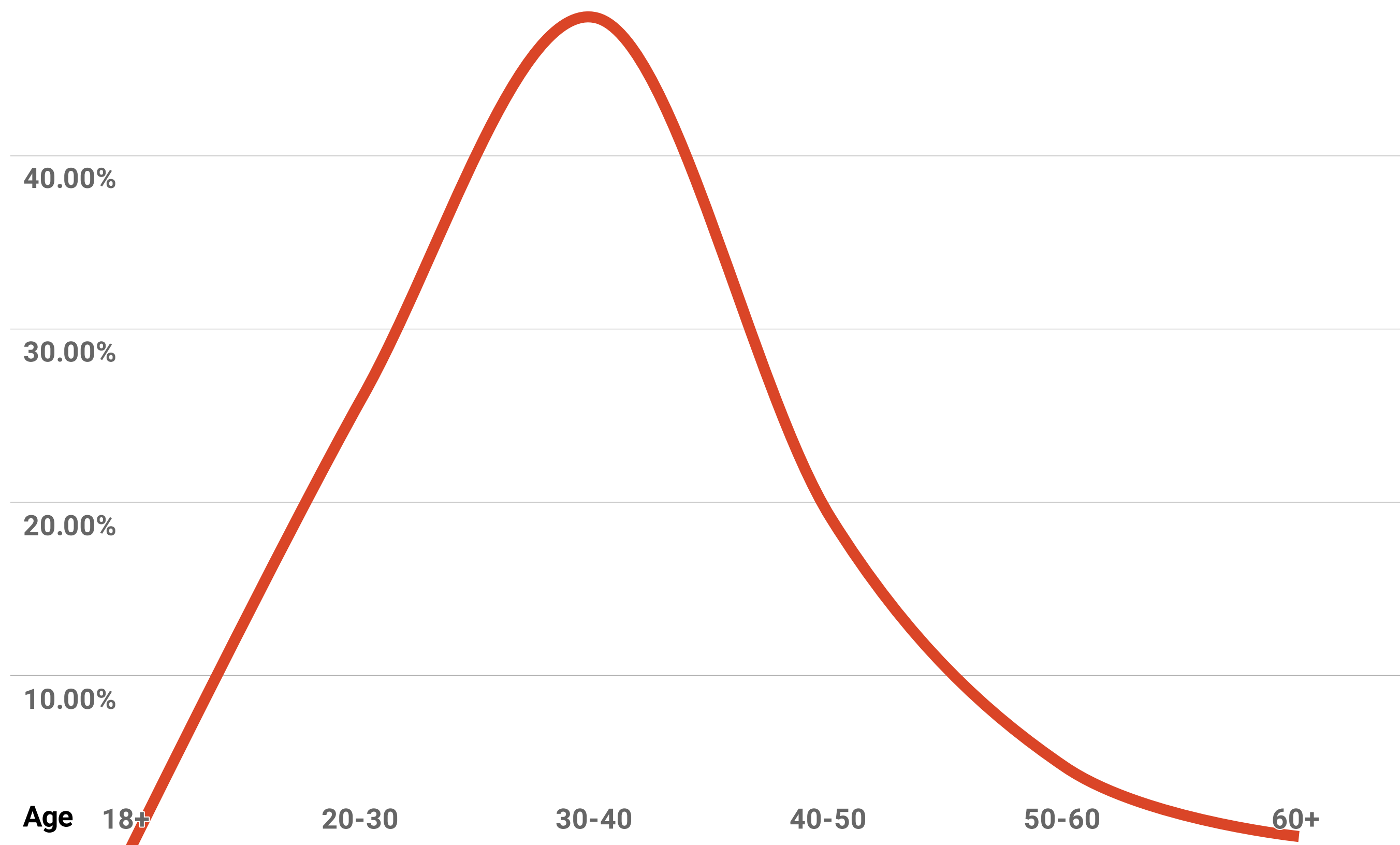
To assess the state of the Conversion Optimization Industry in 2018, we gave a 26 question survey to 701 people who work in the optimization space.

This year we partnered with VWO, the all-in-one platform that helps you conduct visitor research, build an optimization roadmap and run continuous experimentation.This partnership resulted in a great success as we were able to reach more than double respondents compared to last year.
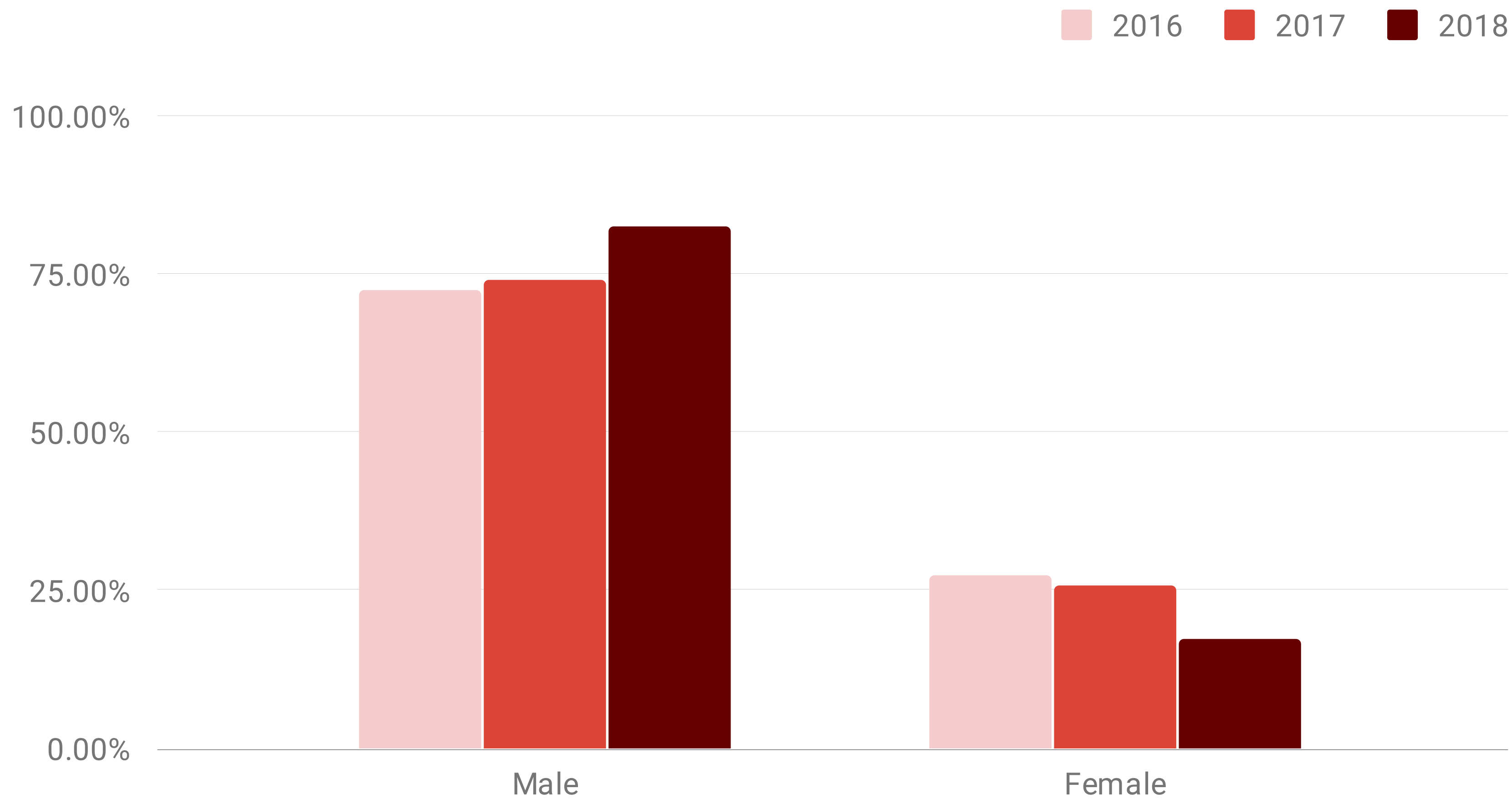
This is the third issue of the State of the CRO Industry Report (the first one was published in 2016) and — with three datasets available — we begin to see some trends happening in the CRO space.
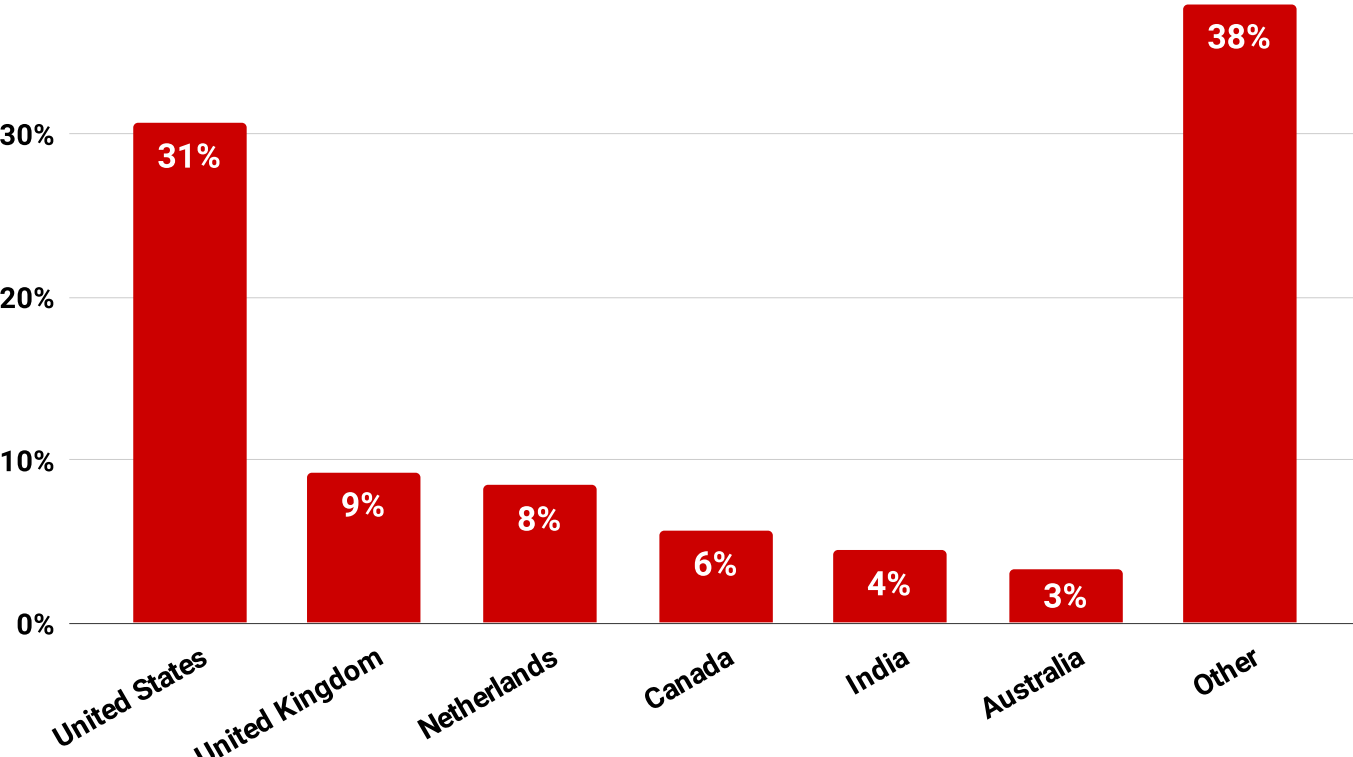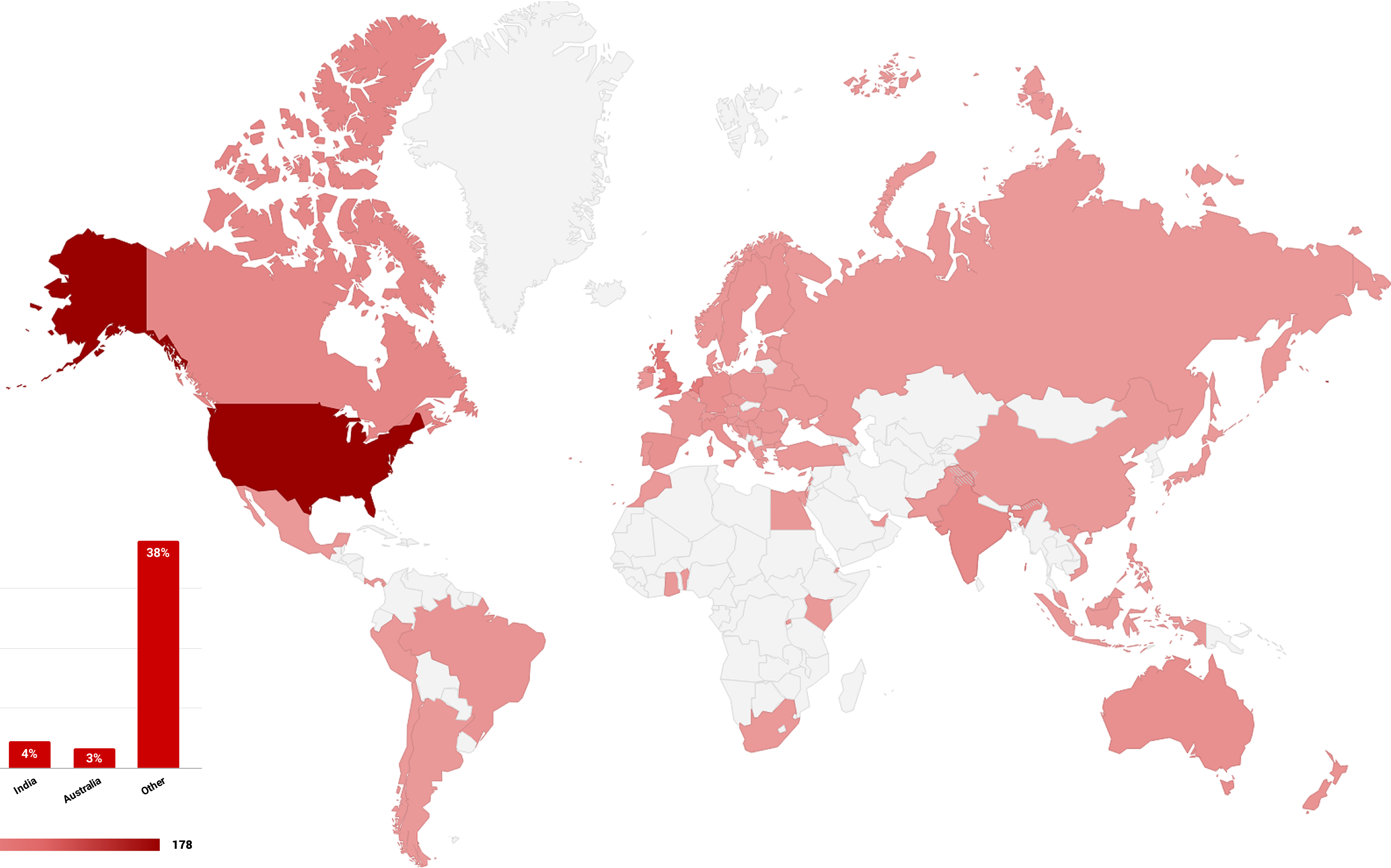
CXL VWO

Demographics: Age

Demographics: Gender

Location

What kind of CRO work do you do?

Legend: Agency | In-house | Other

Bar chart:
- 2016: Agency 39%, In-house 58%, Other 3%
- 2017: Agency 48%, In-house 53%
- 2018: Agency 43%, In-house 57%

X-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60%

Pie chart (2018): In-house 57%, Agency 43%
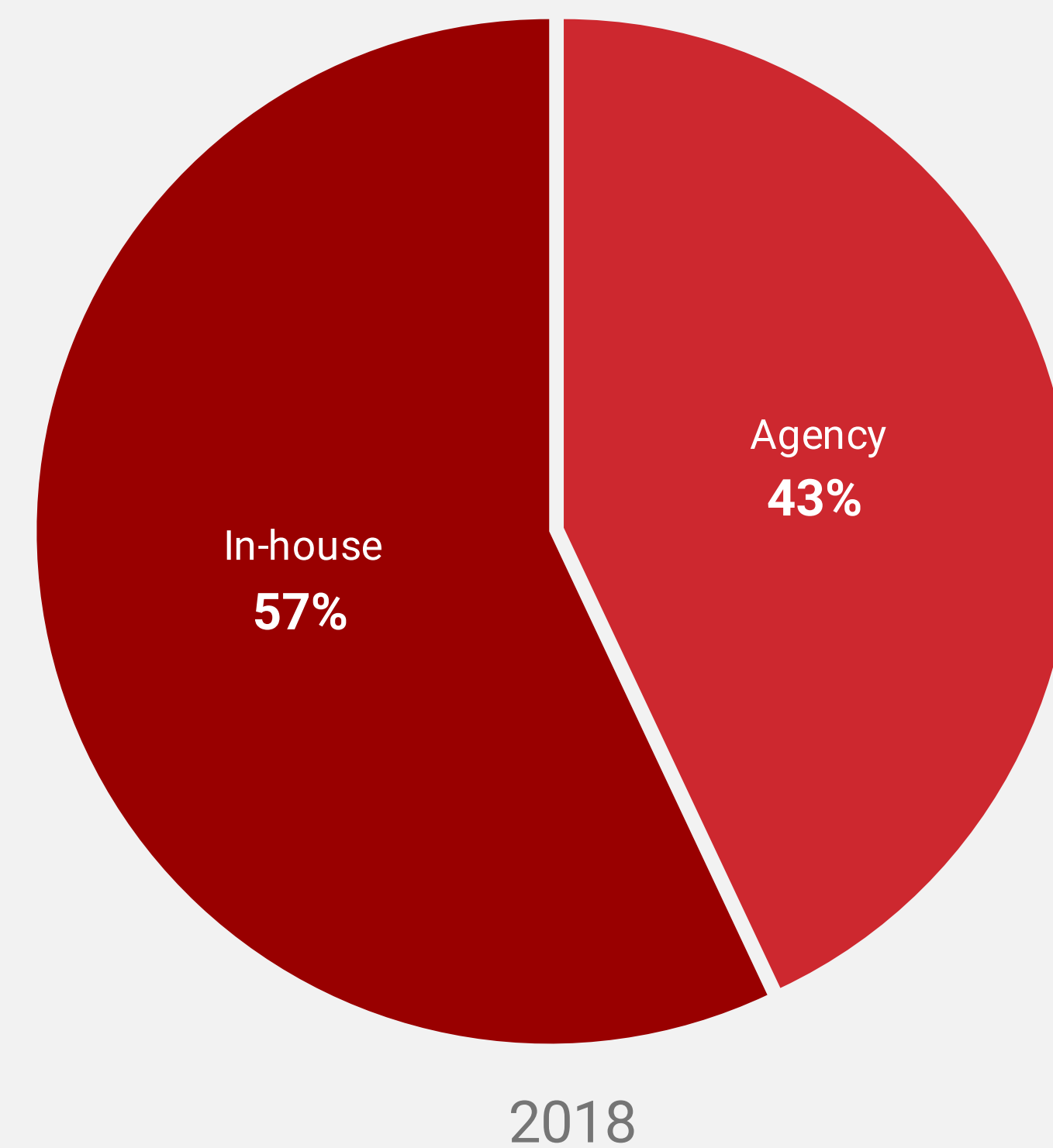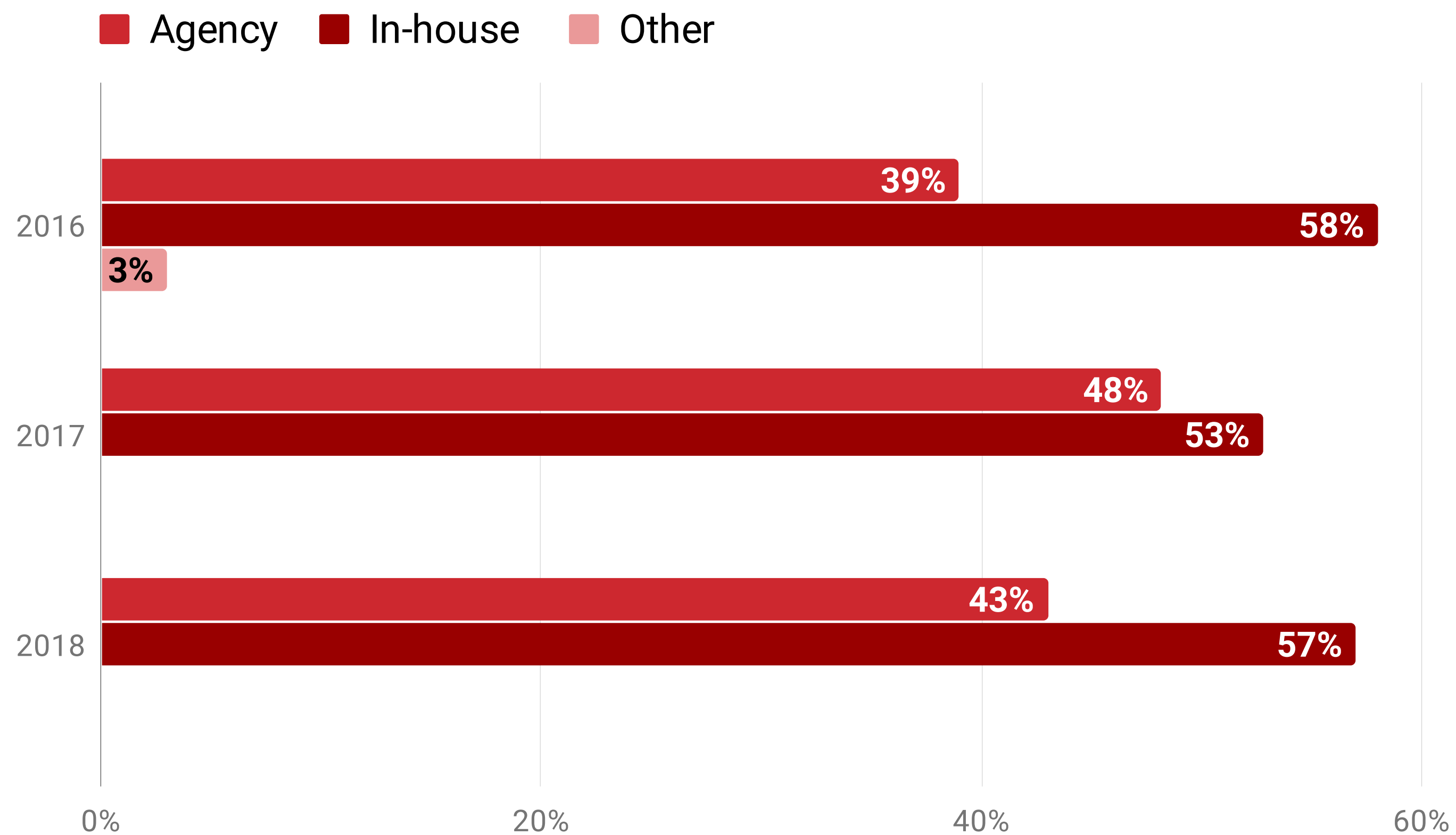
What kind of company do you work for?
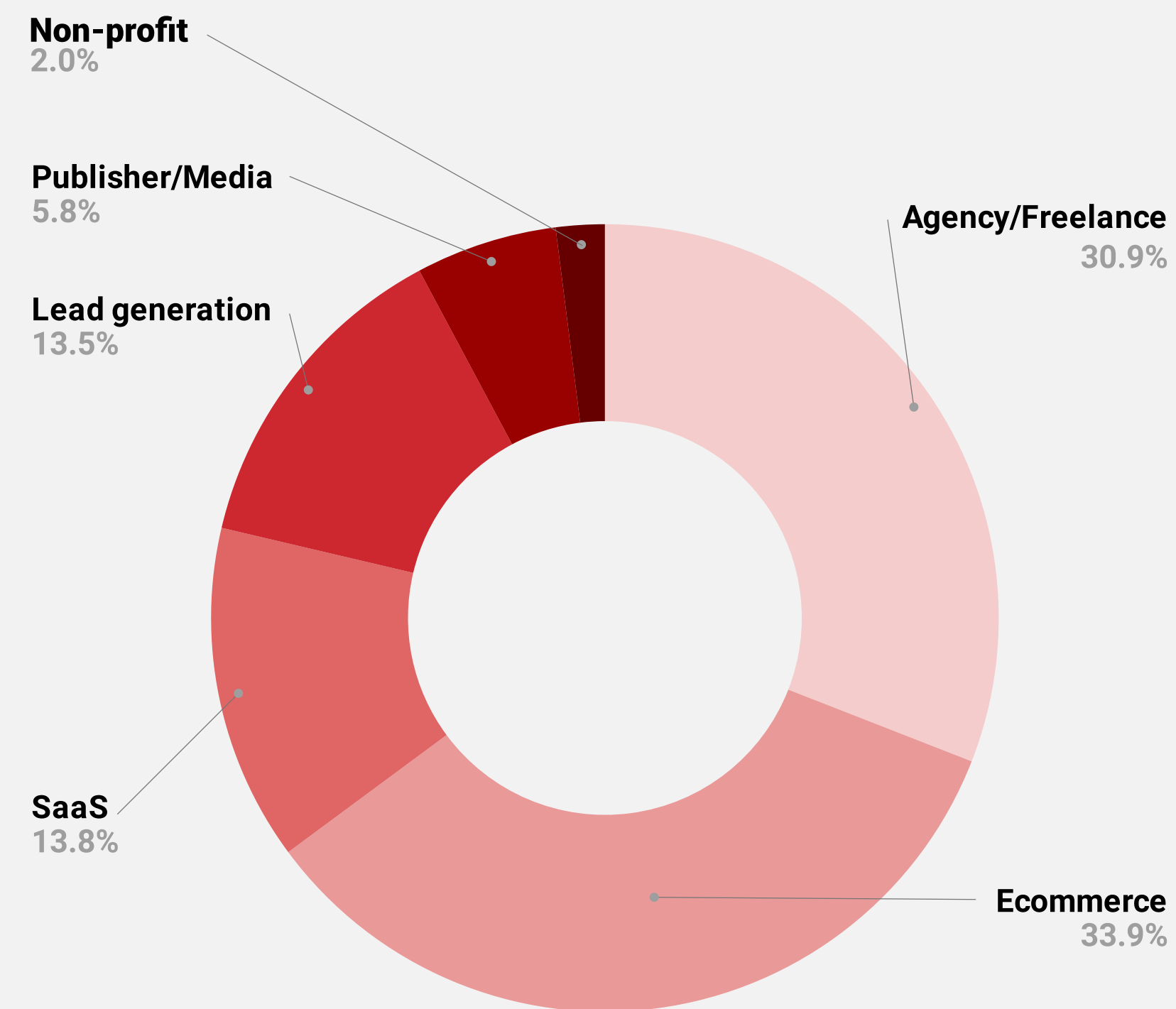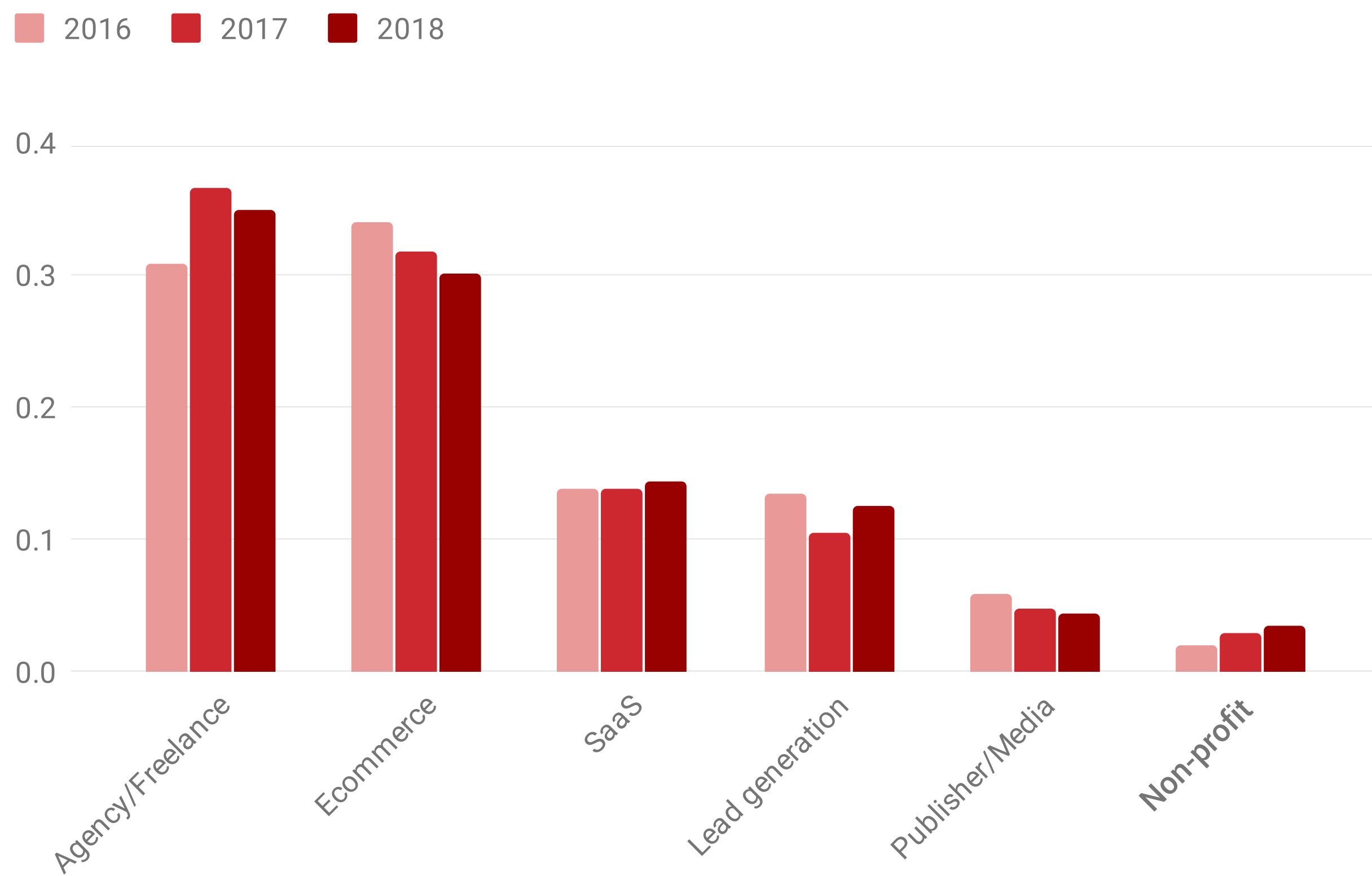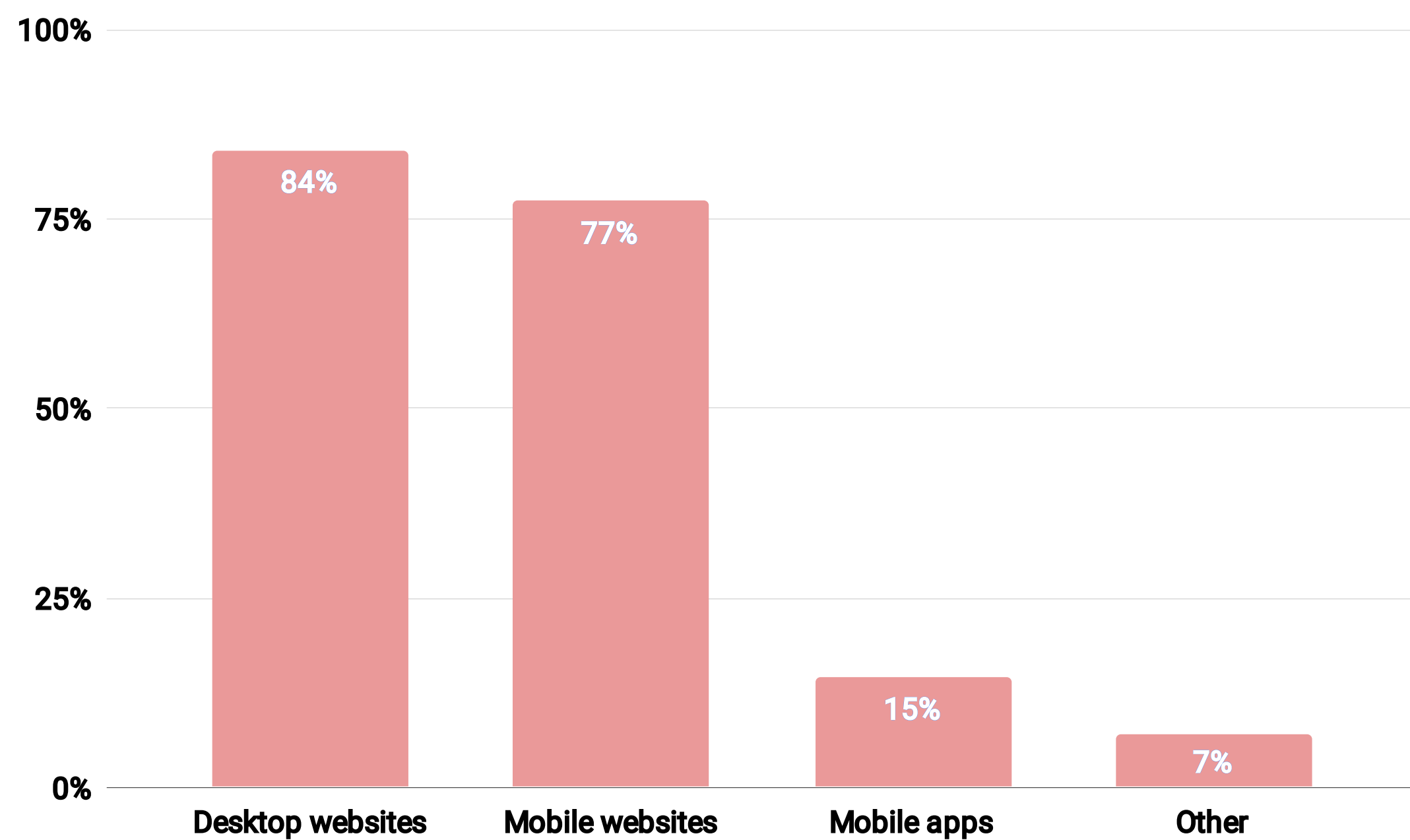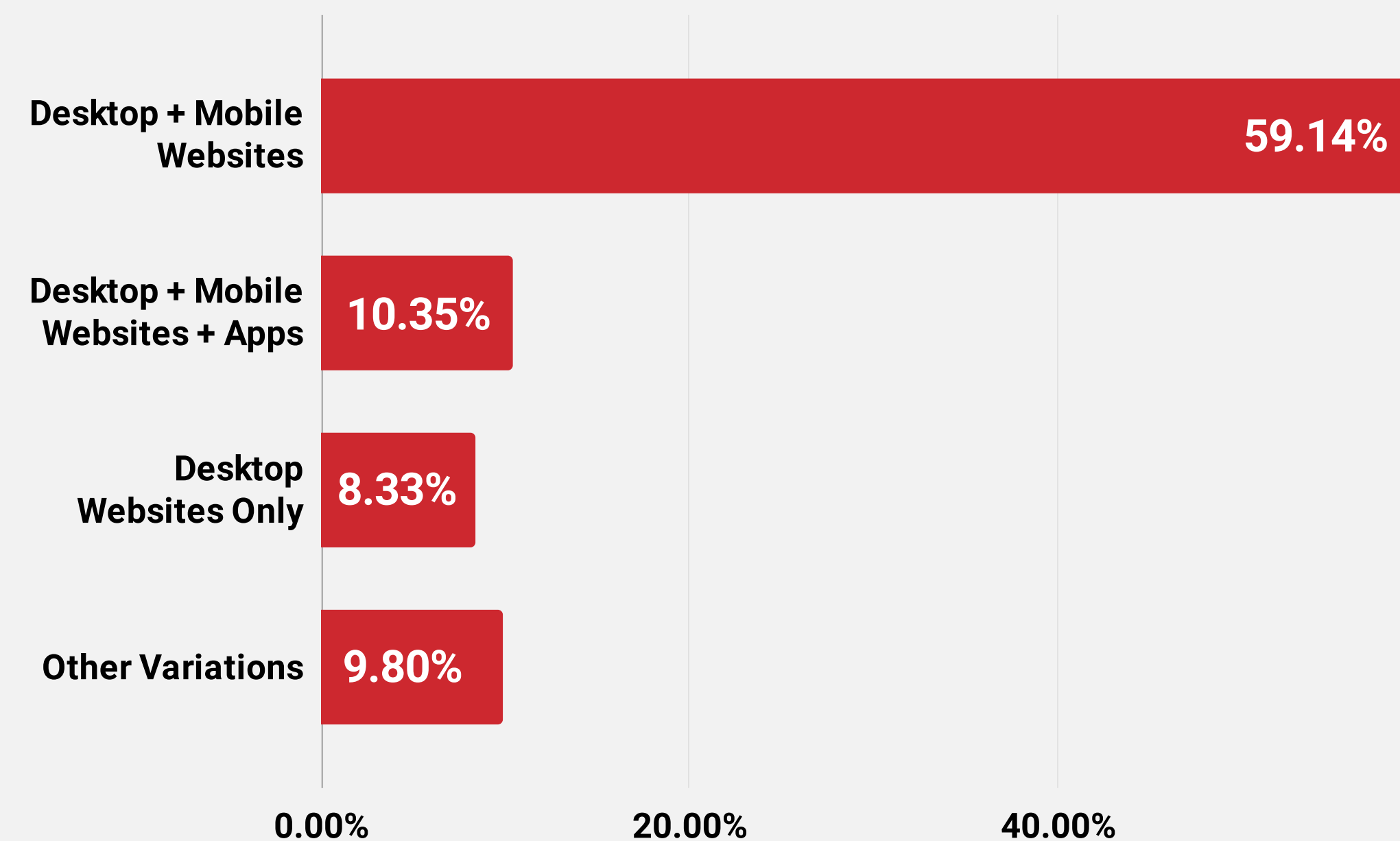
Work experience: How long have you worked in a CRO role?

Annual salary (USD)

Salary Range	Percentage
$150,000 or more	6.02%
$100,000 to $149,999	13.87%
$75,000 to $99,999	16.61%
$50,000 to $74,999	25.18%
$35,000 to $49,999	14.60%
$25,000 to $34,999	9.31%
Less than $25,000	14.42%
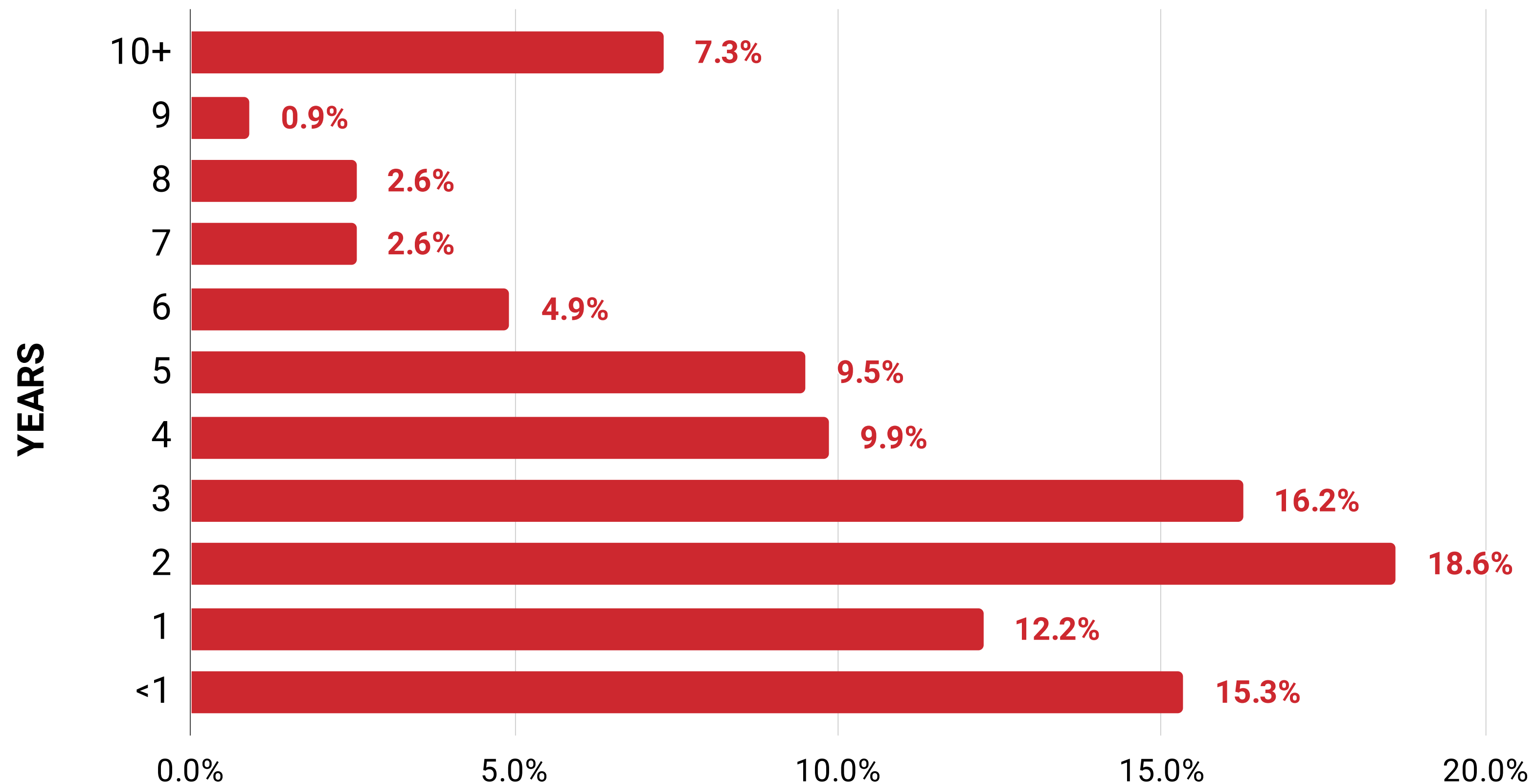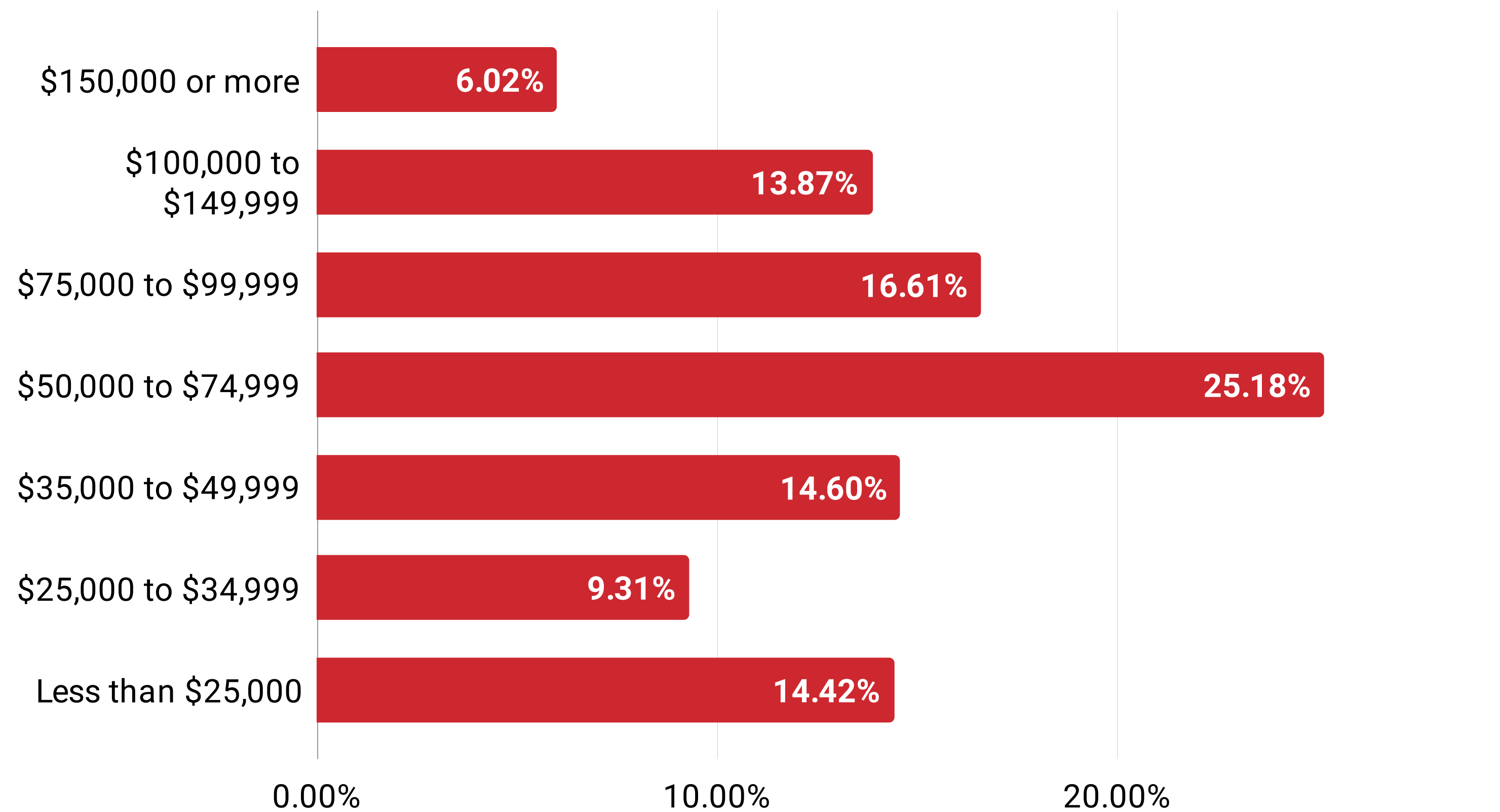
Annual salary by country
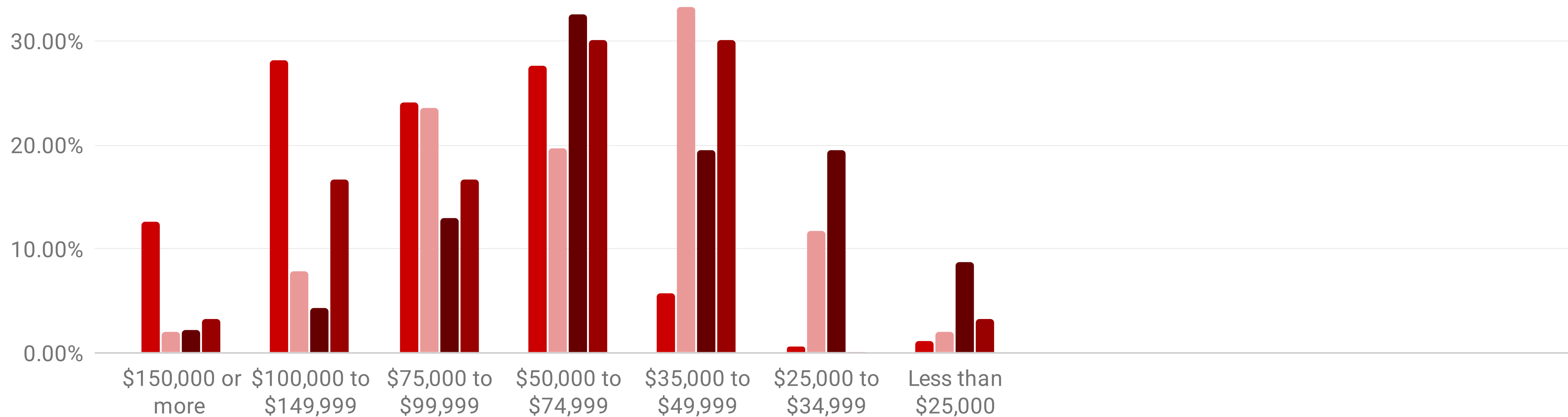
Annual salary by industry
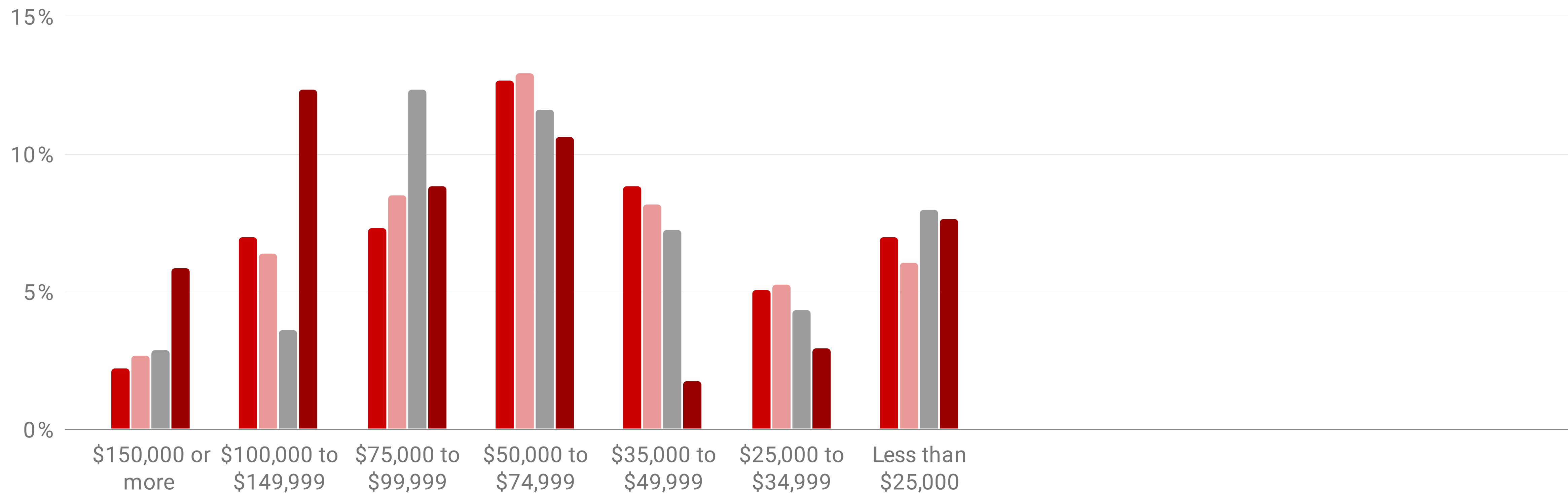
Annual salary (USD) by work experience

Who does CRO in your organization?

Legend: 2016, 2017, 2018

A specific team of people
- 2016: 30%
- 2017: 29%
- 2018: 33%

A single dedicated person
- 2016: 29%
- 2017: 30%
- 2018: 29%

People across teams
- 2016: 20%
- 2017: 17%
- 2018: 22%

CRO is nobody's primary job
- 2016: 21%
- 2017: 23%
- 2018: 16%

X-axis: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%
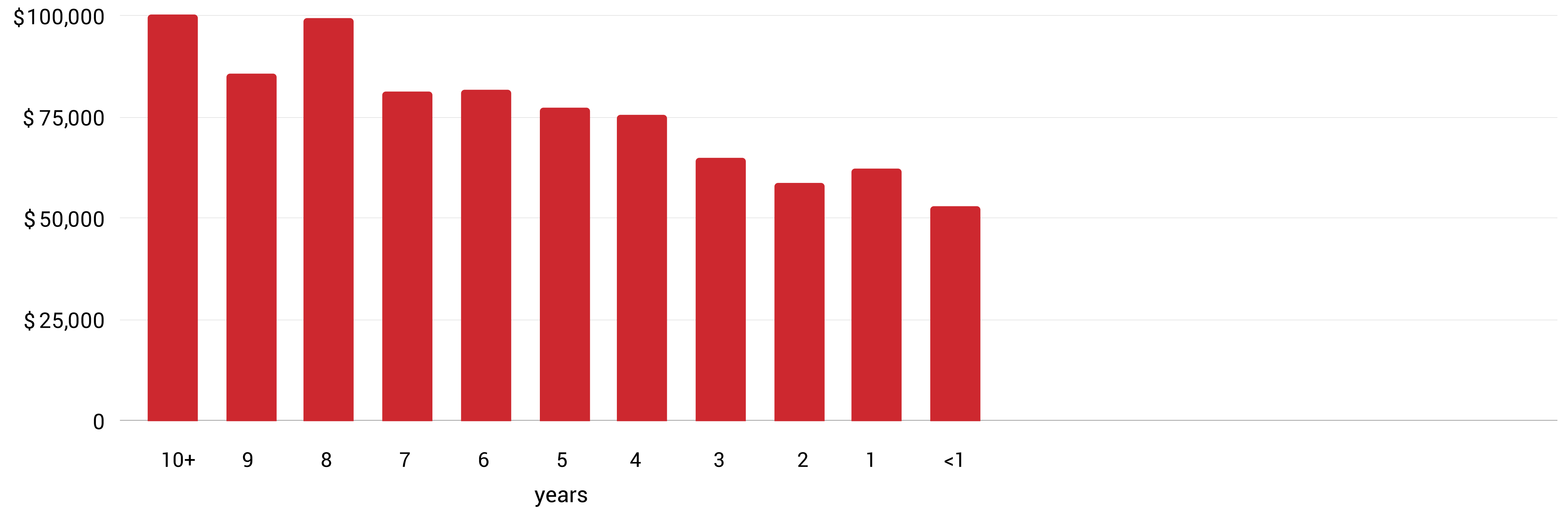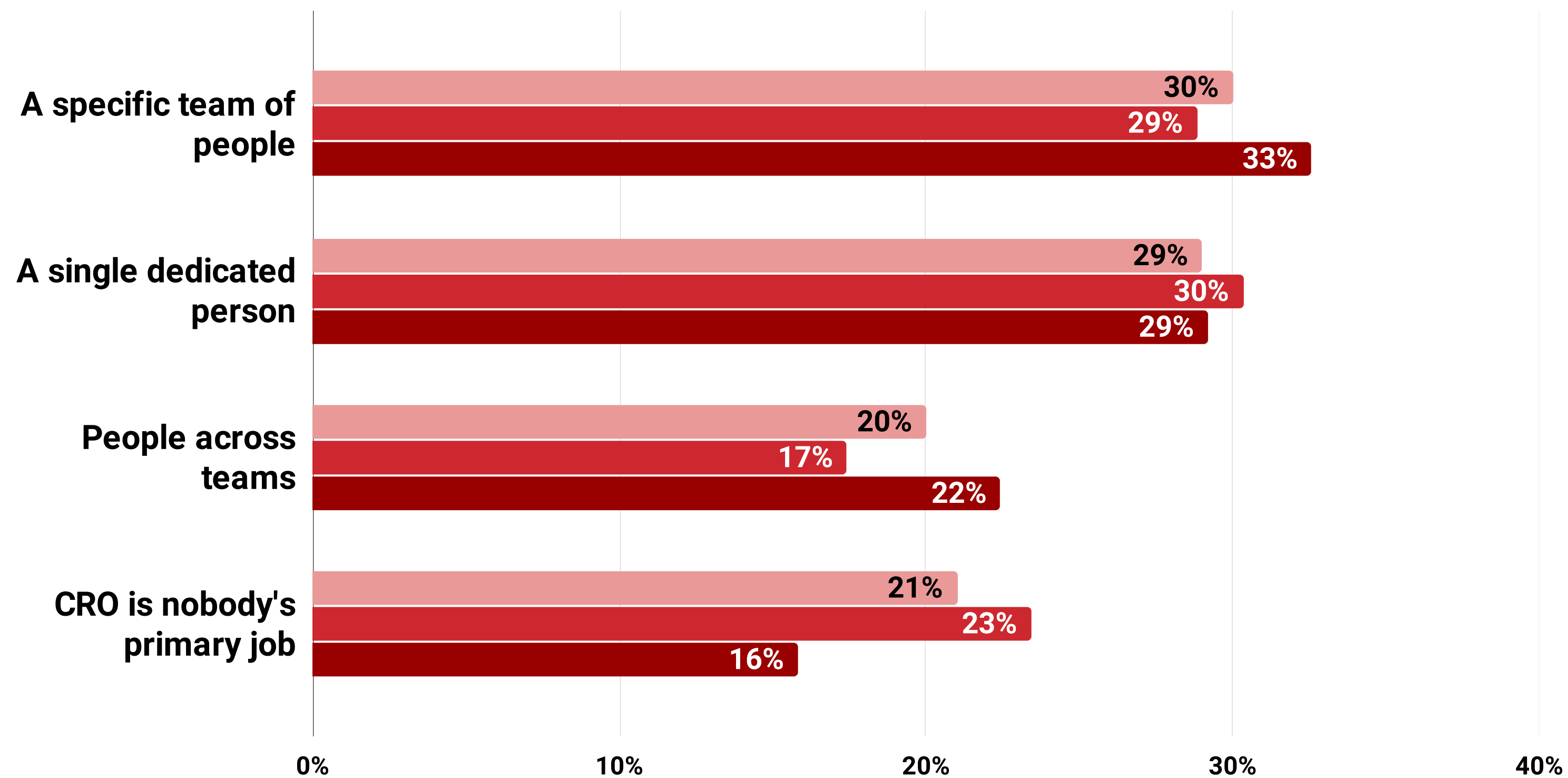
Who does CRO in your organization (by industry)?

How often do you meet with others on your optimization team to discuss CRO?

By industry

Only when necessary
29.2%

Daily
14.9%

Weekly
30.6%

Bi-weekly
11.8%

Monthly
10.9%

Quarterly
2.6%

Ecommerce   Agency   SaaS   Lead Gen

Daily
Weekly
Bi-weekly
Monthly
Quarterly
Only when necessary

0%   10%   20%   30%
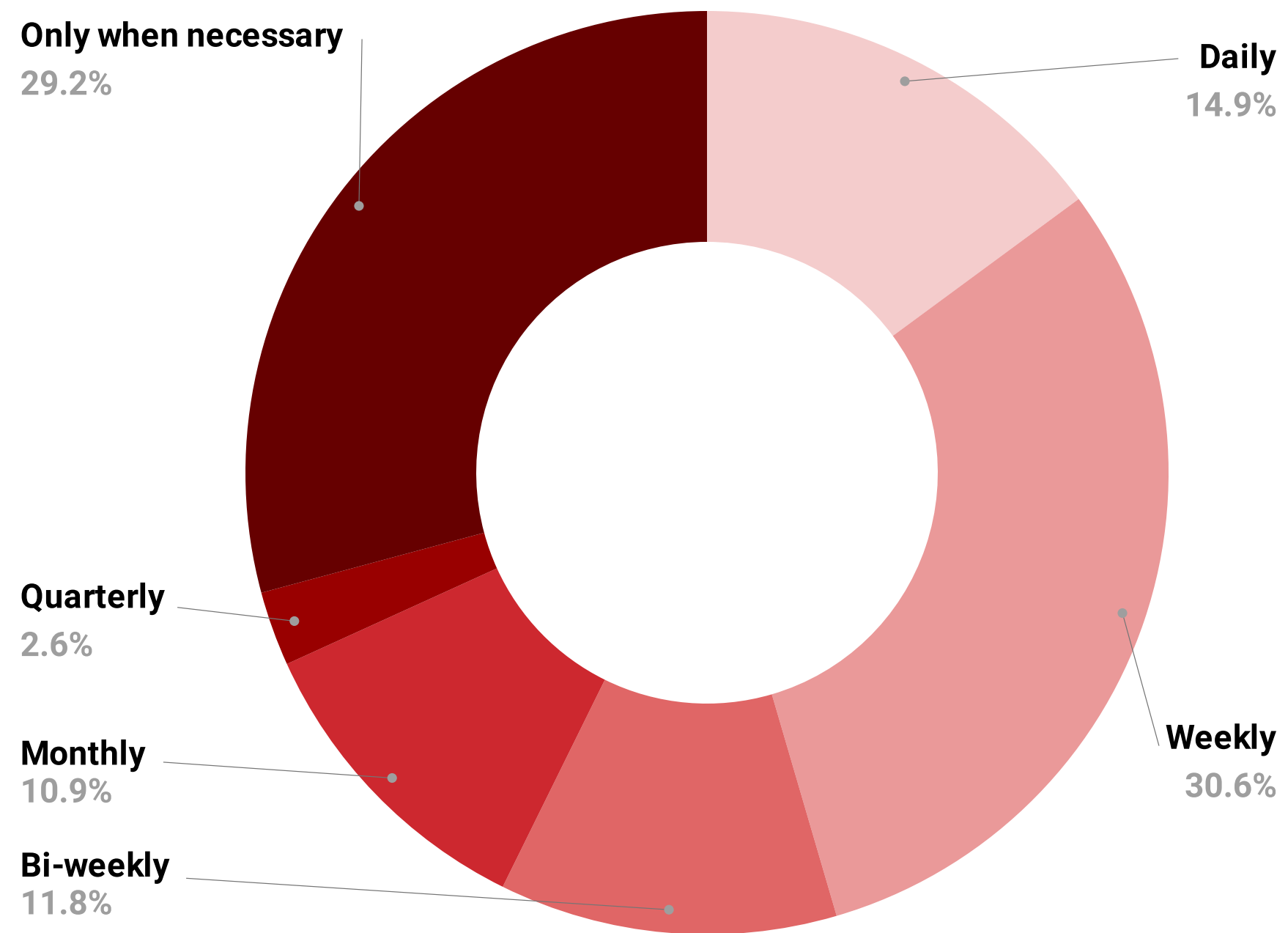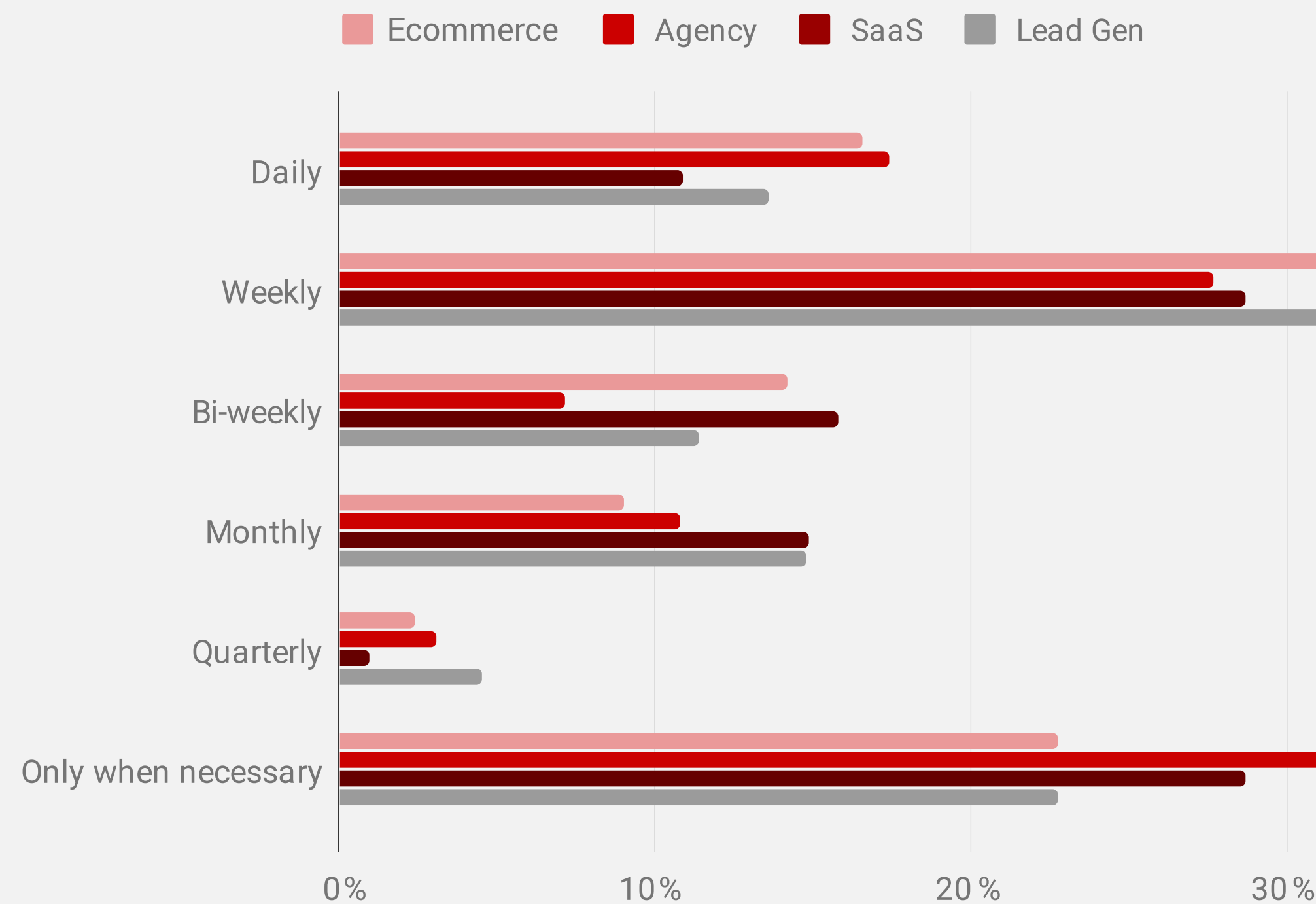
Does your team have a conversion optimization process that you follow?

By industry

2016   **2017**   **2018**

Yes, it is documented/structured.
- 32%
- 36%
- 38%

Yes, but it isn't documented/structured.
- 42%
- 39%
- 39%

No.
- 26%
- 25%
- 24%

Ecommerce   Agency   SaaS   Lead Gen
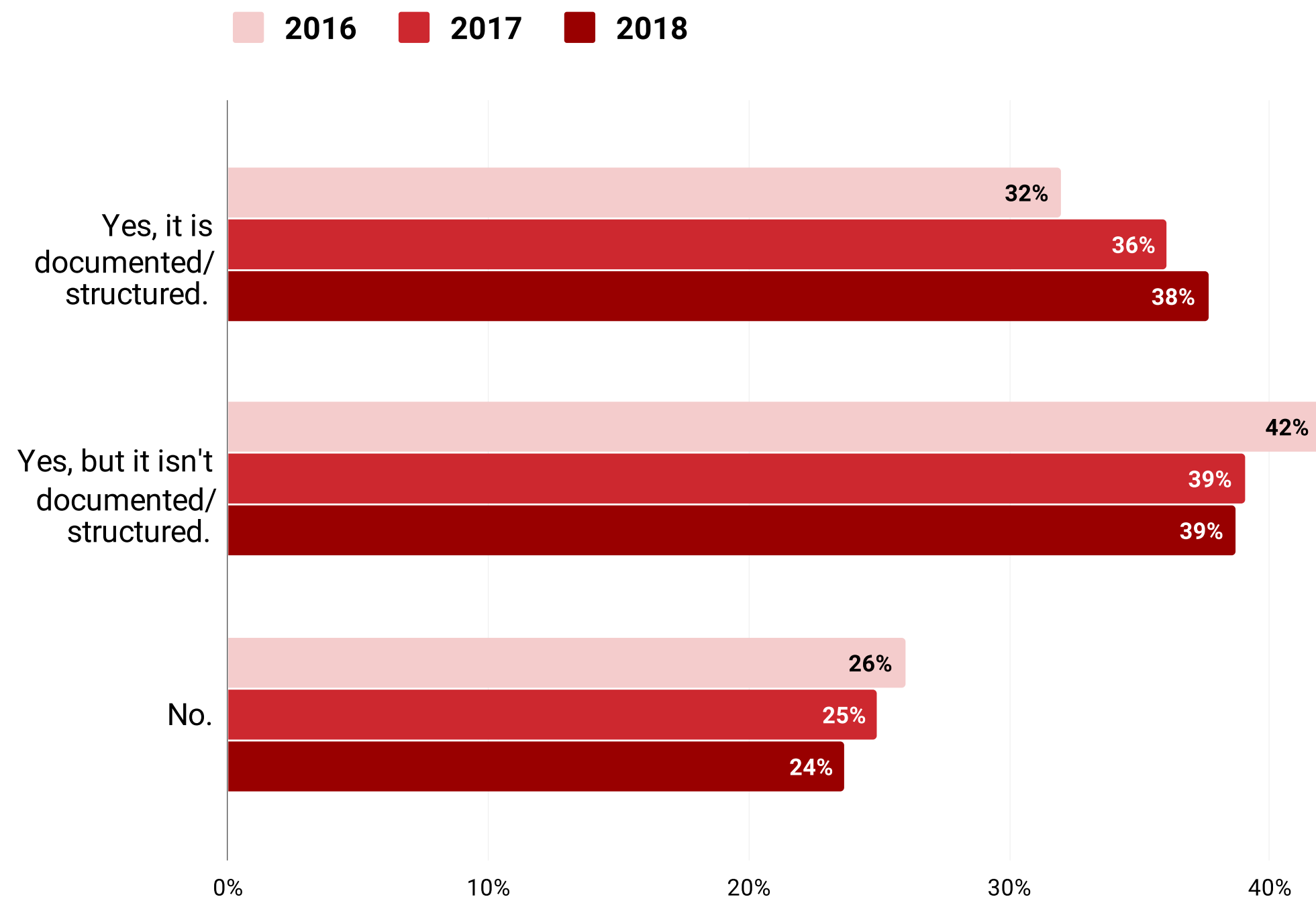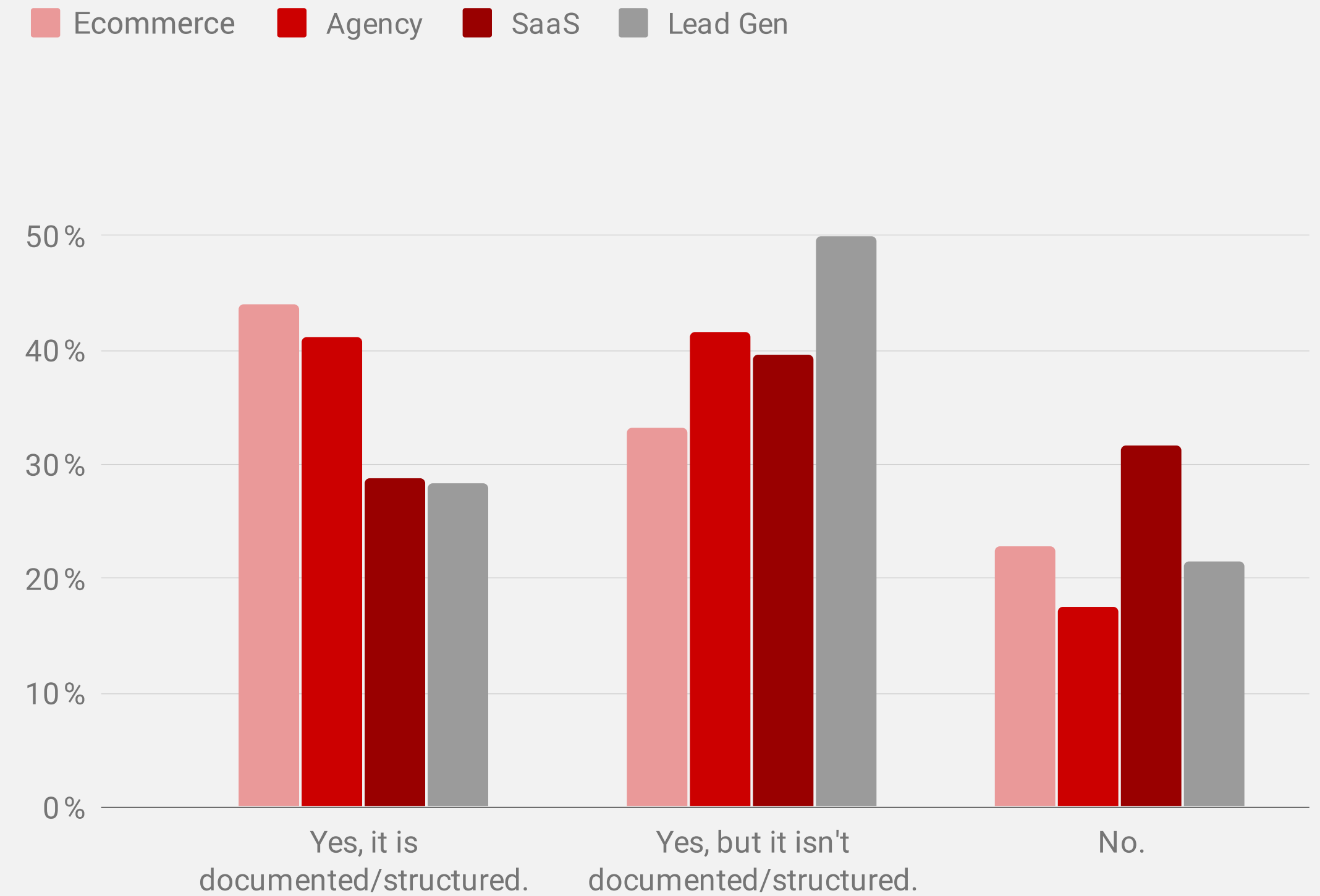
Do you have a formal conversion/user research process for extracting insights?

No
38.8%

Yes, we have created our own
39.4%

Yes, we use ResearchXL
6.9%

Yes, we use some other
14.9%

By industry

- Ecommerce
- Agency
- SaaS
- Lead Gen

Categories: Yes, we have created our own process / Yes, we use ResearchXL / Yes, we use some other process we found / borrowed / No
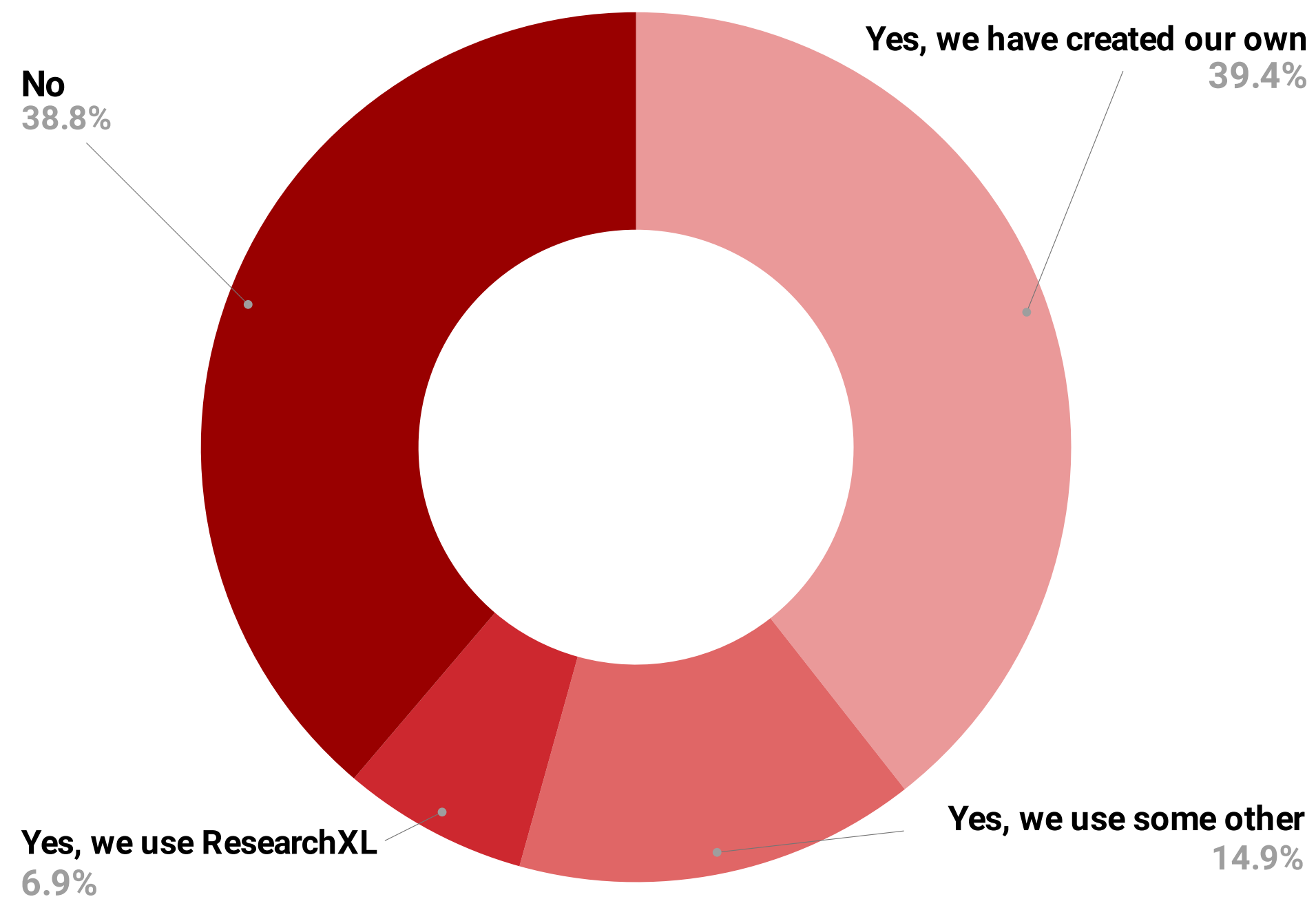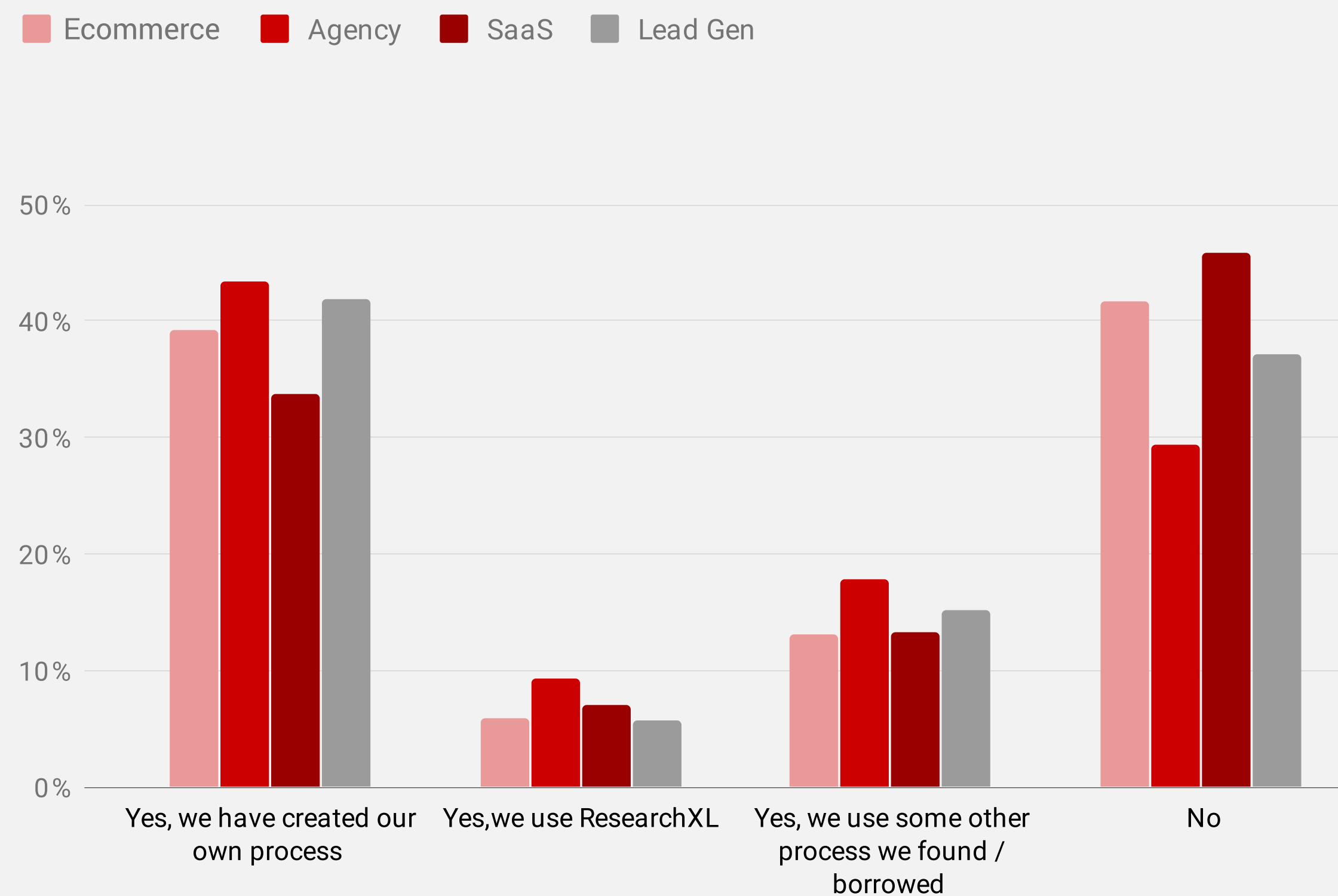
Do you have a test prioritization framework that you follow?
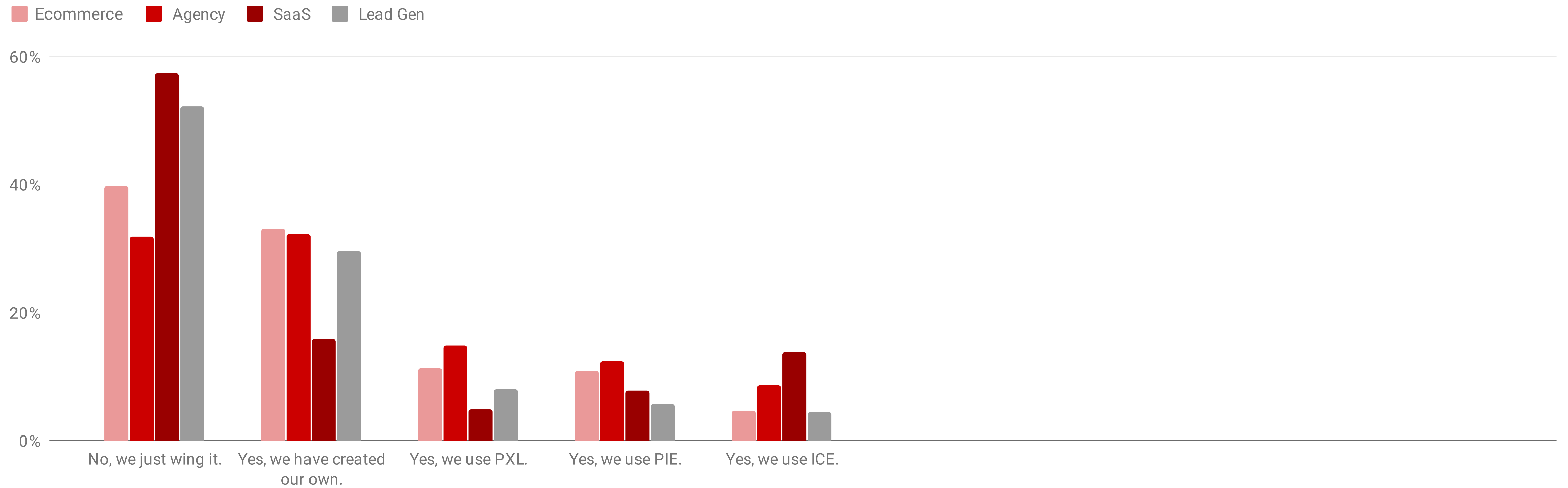
Legend: Ecommerce, Agency, SaaS, Lead Gen

Categories: No, we just wing it. | Yes, we have created our own. | Yes, we use PXL. | Yes, we use PIE. | Yes, we use ICE.

How are CRO test results typically archived?

Not archived
20.7%

Use a dedicated testing
workflow tool
9.4%

Archived in the
testing tool
27.2%

Results are
exported out
42.7%

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

	Use a dedicated testing workflow tool	Archived in the testing tool	Results are exported out	Not archived
2016	7%	32%	37%	24%
2017	8%	28%	42%	21%
2018	9%	27%	43%	21%

Usefulness of methodology

Methodology	Score
Digital Analytics	4.4
A/B Testing	4.3
UX / Design	4.1
Copywriting	3.8
Psychology /	3.7
User Testing	3.7
Customer Survey	3.5
Personalization	3.4
Click Maps /	3.4
Website Polls	2.9
Eye Tracking	2.5
Biometric	2.1

Score

CXL   20

Usefulness of Methods (scale 1-5)

Digital Analytics
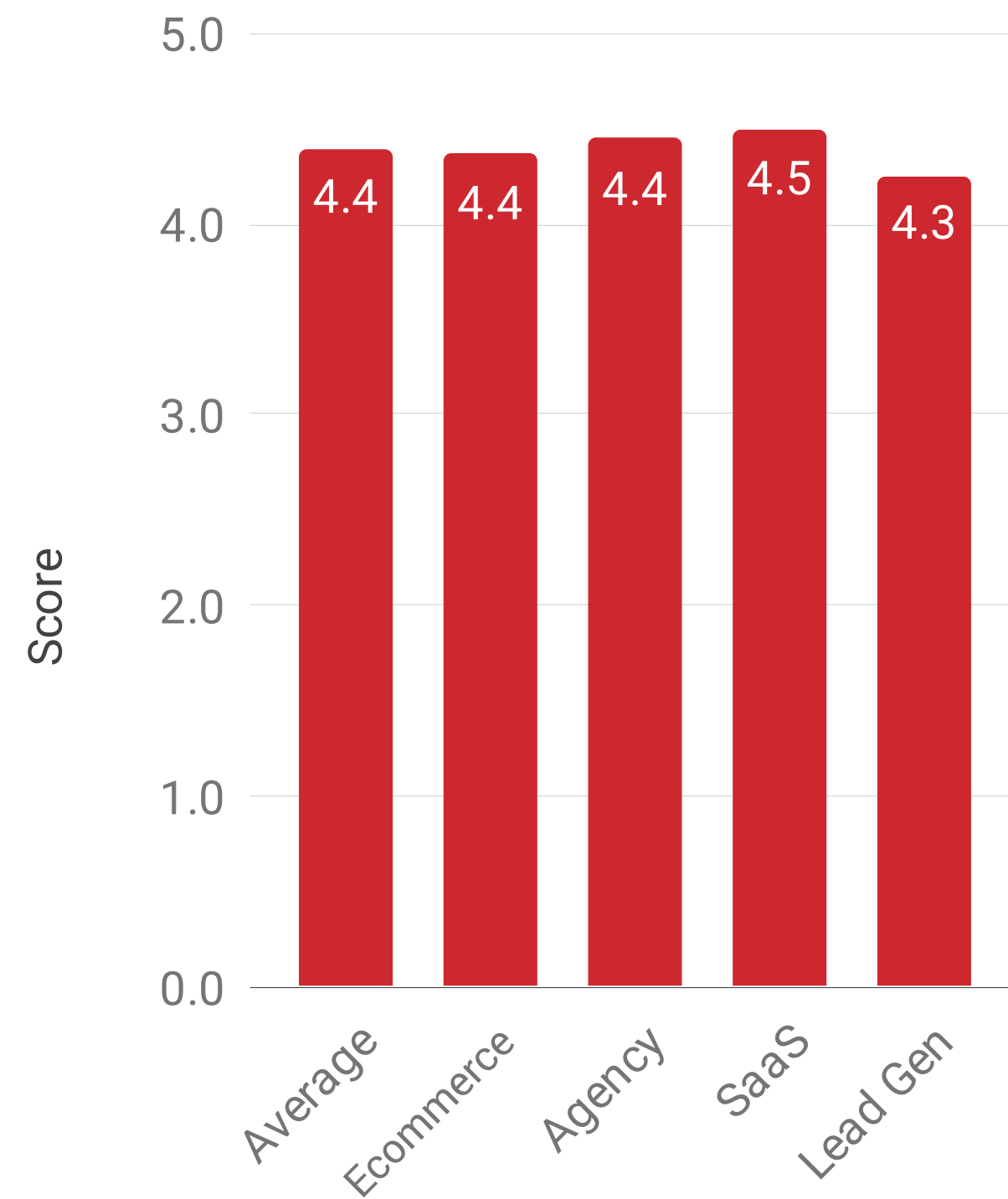
A/B Testing
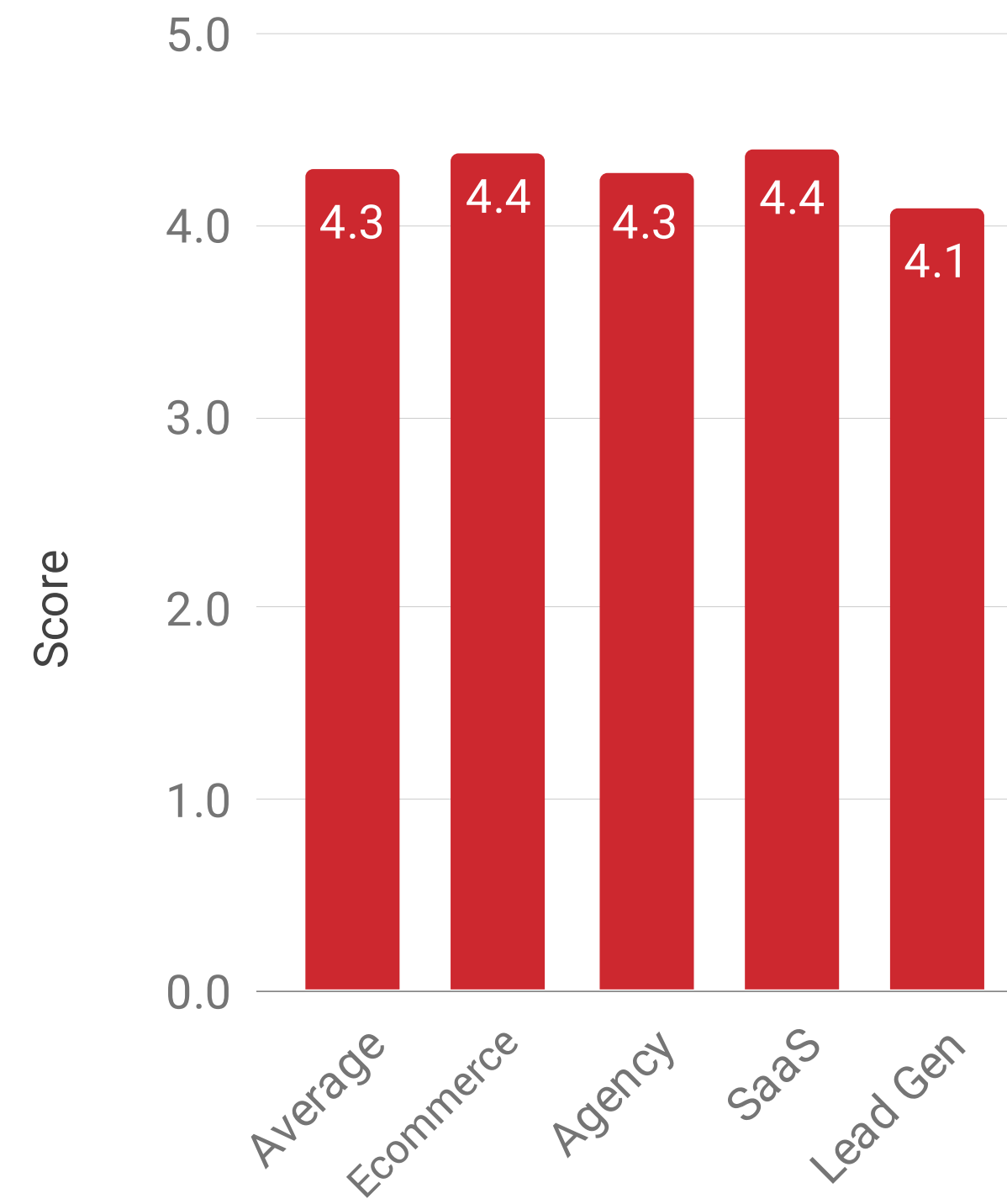
UX / Design
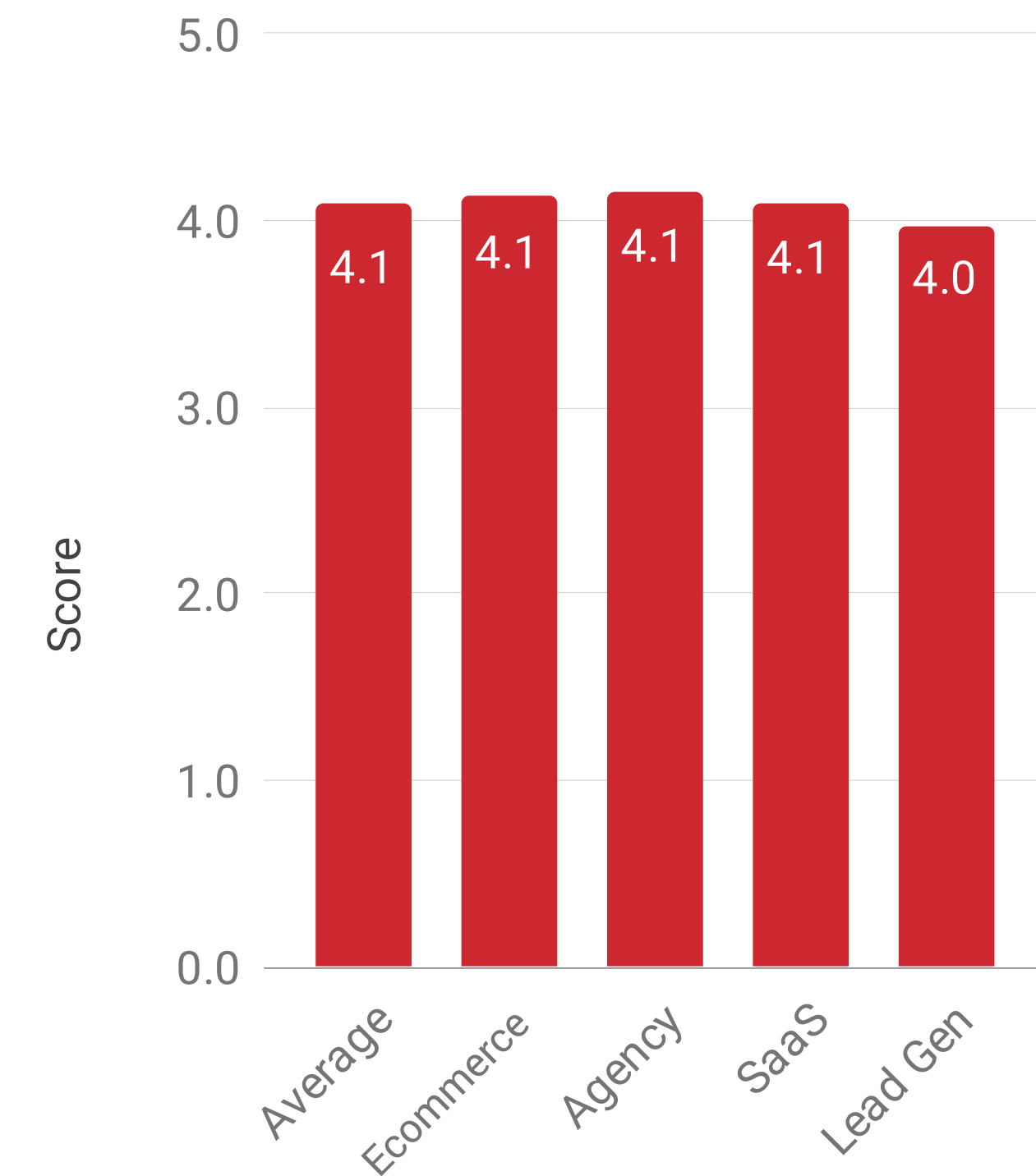
Usefulness of Methods (scale 1-5)

Copywriting
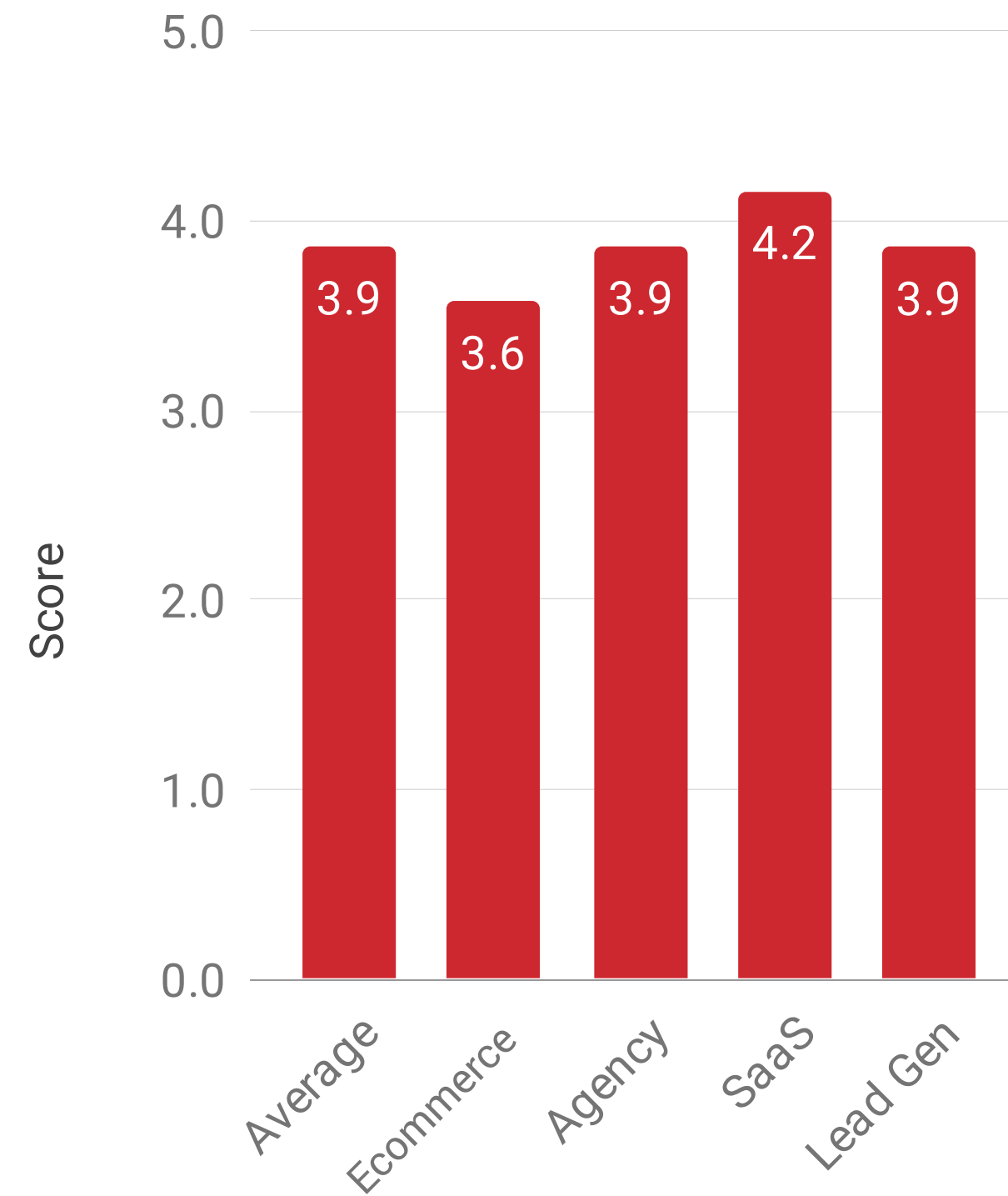
User Testing
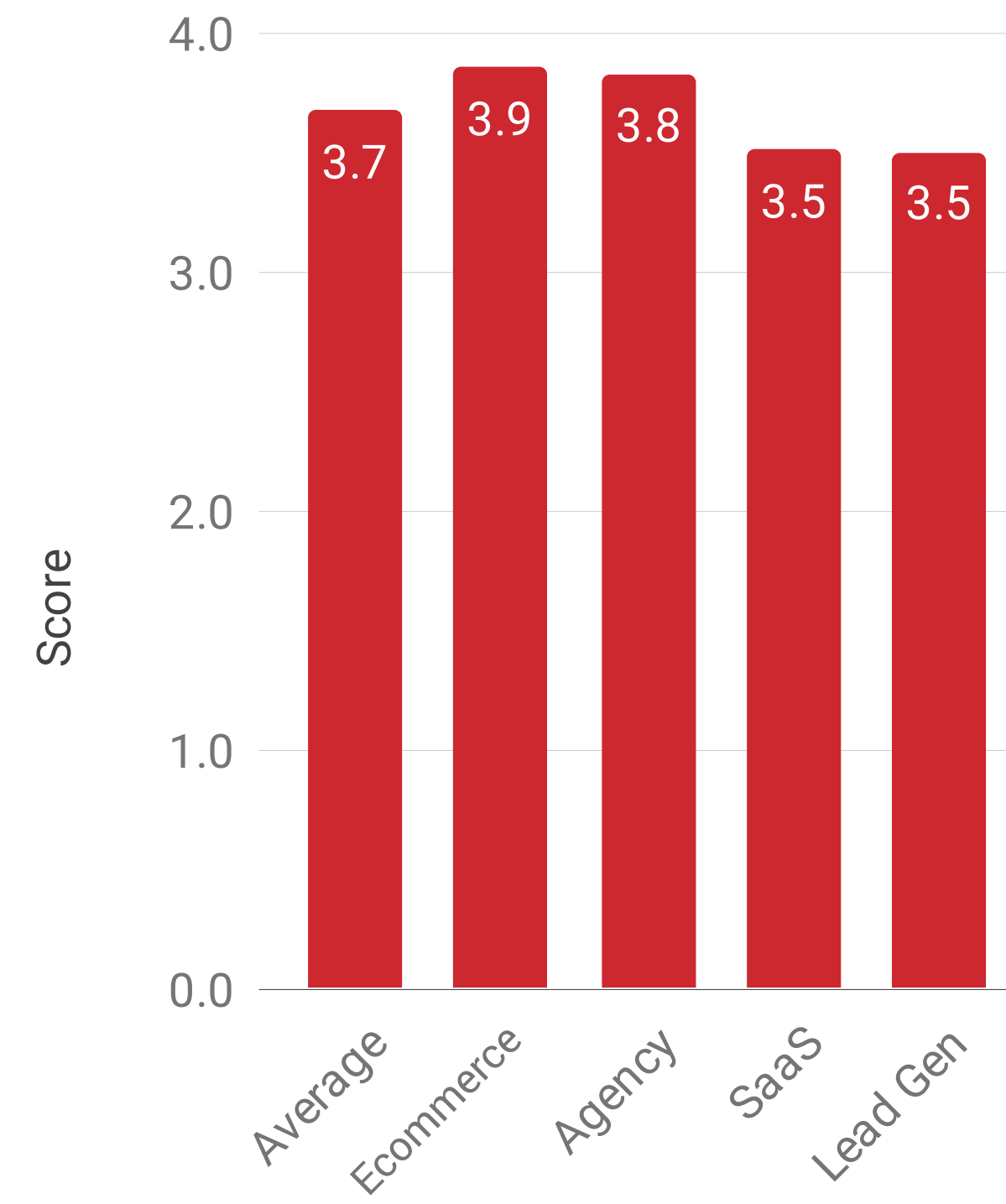
Psychology / Persuasion
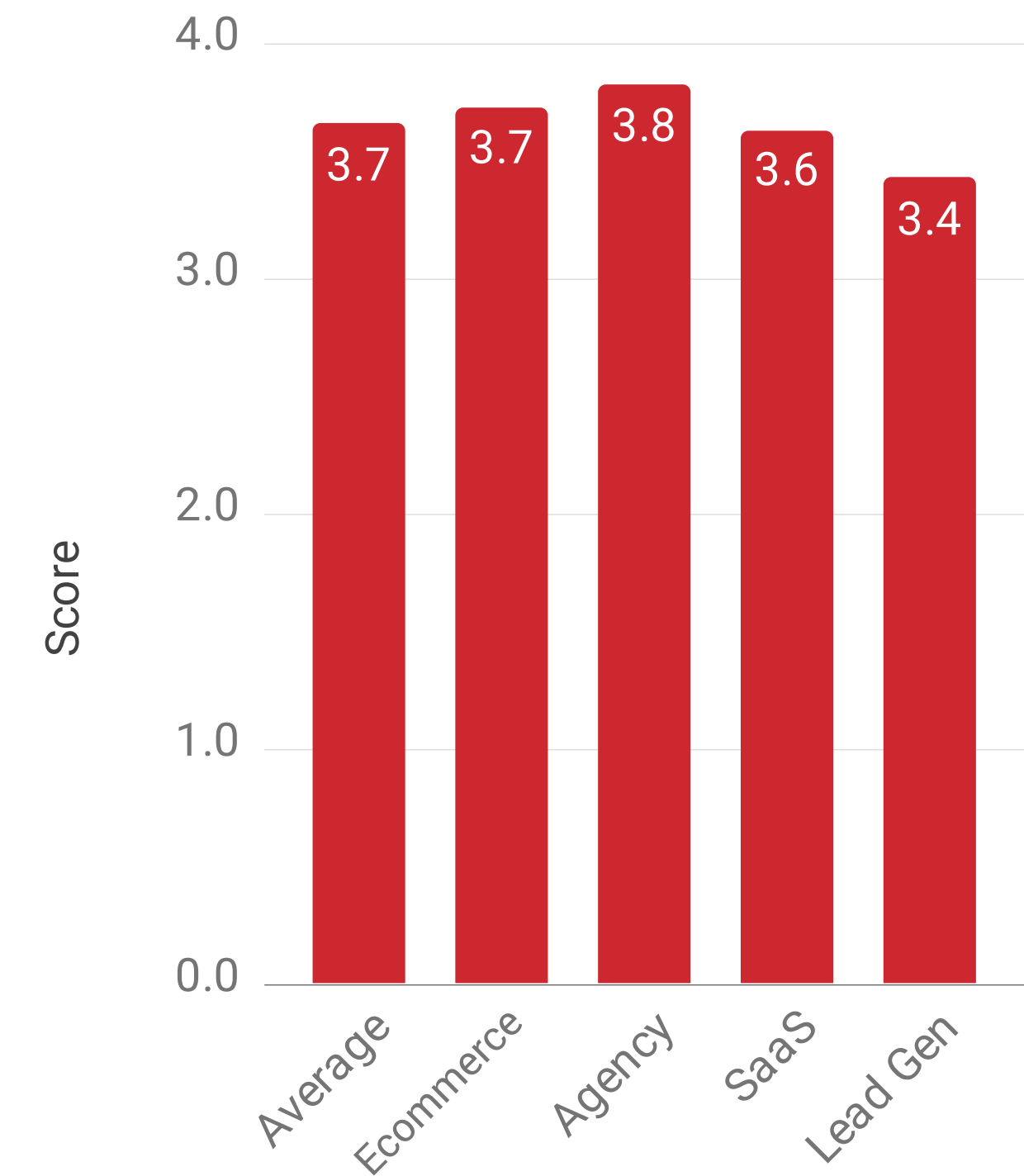
Usefulness of Methods (scale 1-5)

Click Maps / Scroll Maps / Mouse Hover Maps

Score

Average	Ecommerce	Agency	SaaS	Lead Gen
3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.4

Personalization

Score

Average	Ecommerce	Agency	SaaS	Lead Gen	Media
3.4	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.3

Customer Surveys

Score

Average	Ecommerce	Agency	SaaS	Lead Gen
3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.2
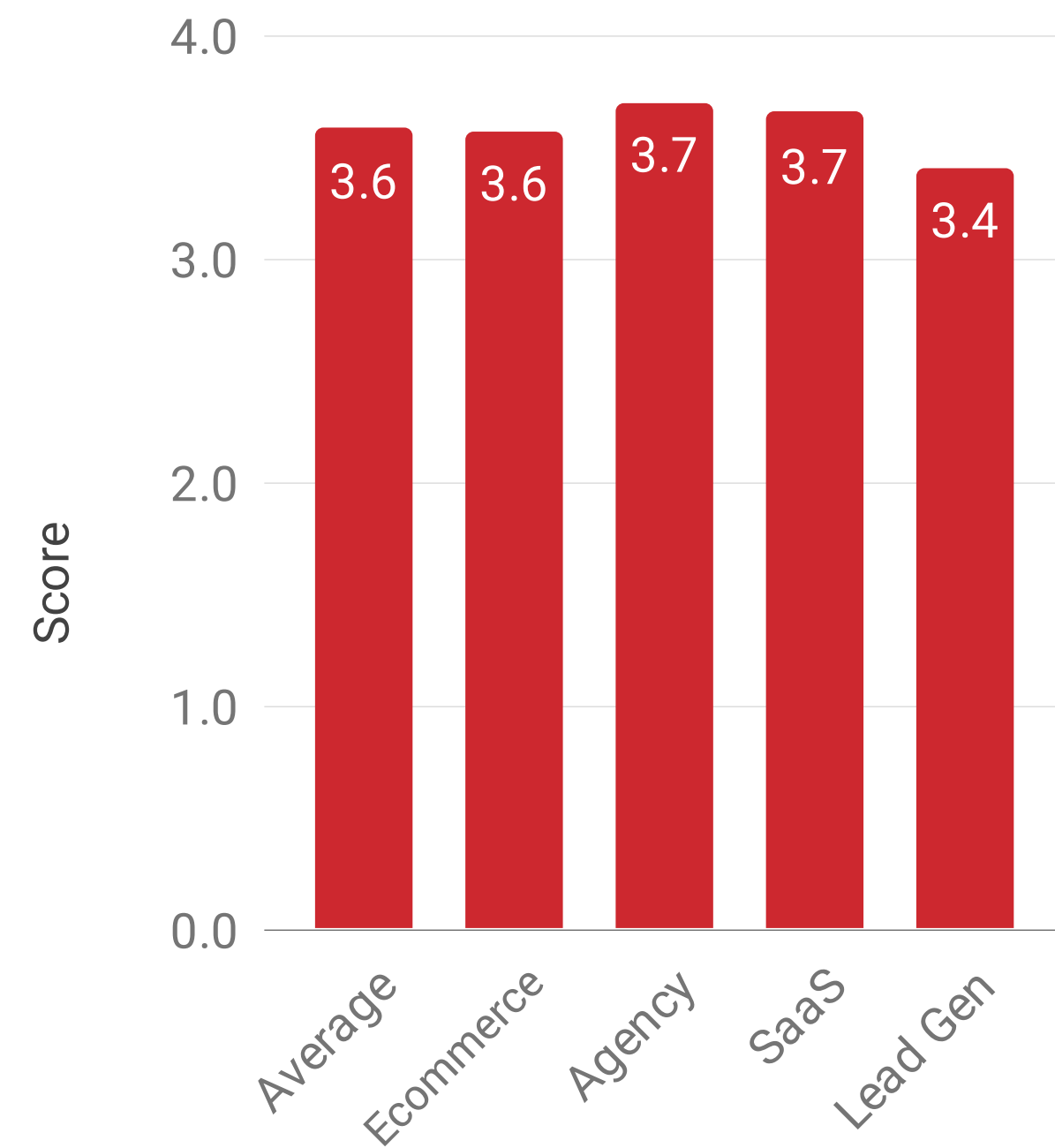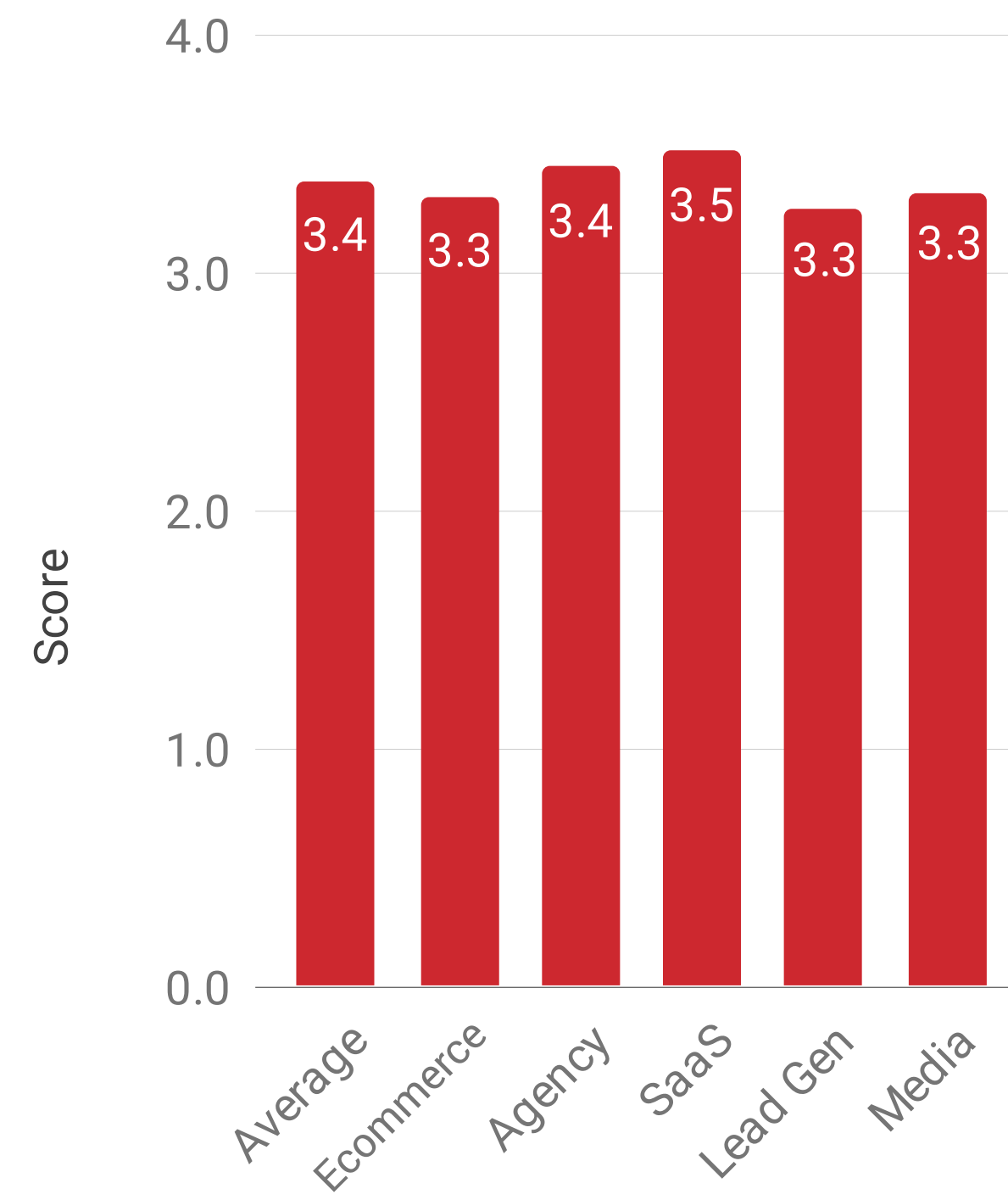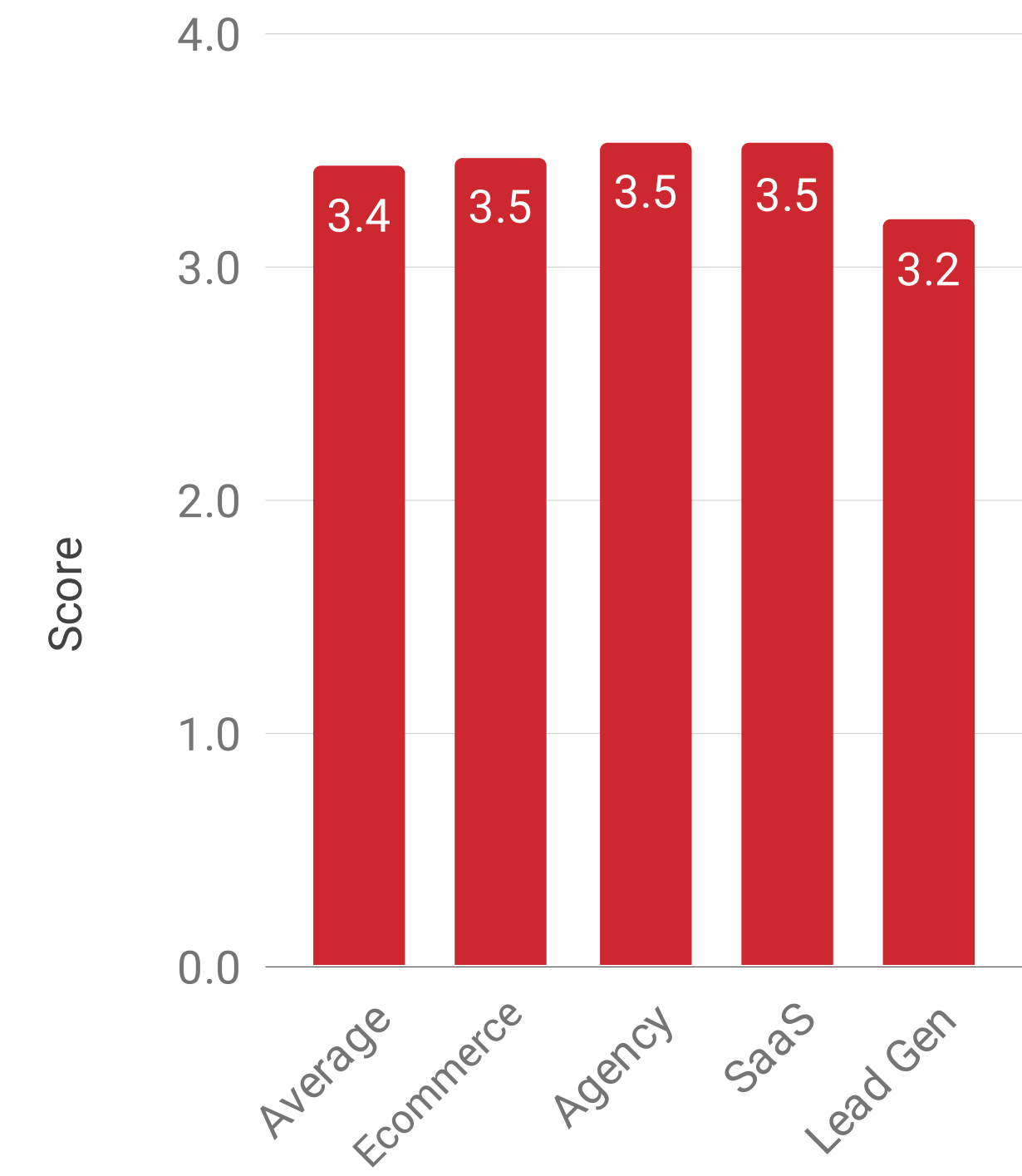
Usefulness of Methods (scale 1-5)

Website Polls

Score

Average	Ecommerce	Agency	SaaS	Lead Gen
2.9	3.0	3.1	2.8	2.9

Eye Tracking

Score

Average	Ecommerce	Agency	SaaS	Lead Gen
2.5	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.3

Biometric Research

Score

Average	Ecommerce	Agency	SaaS	Lead Gen
2.1	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0
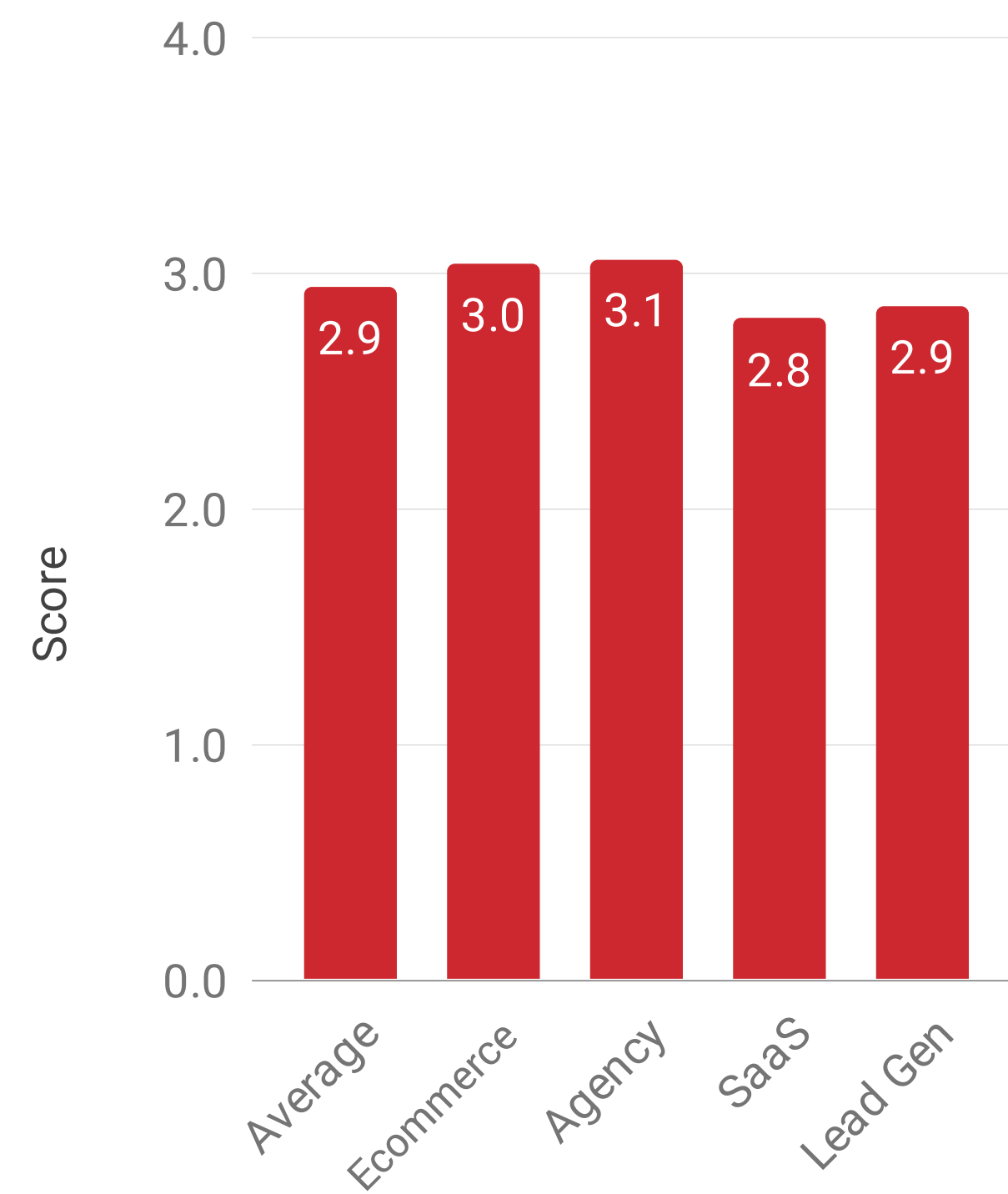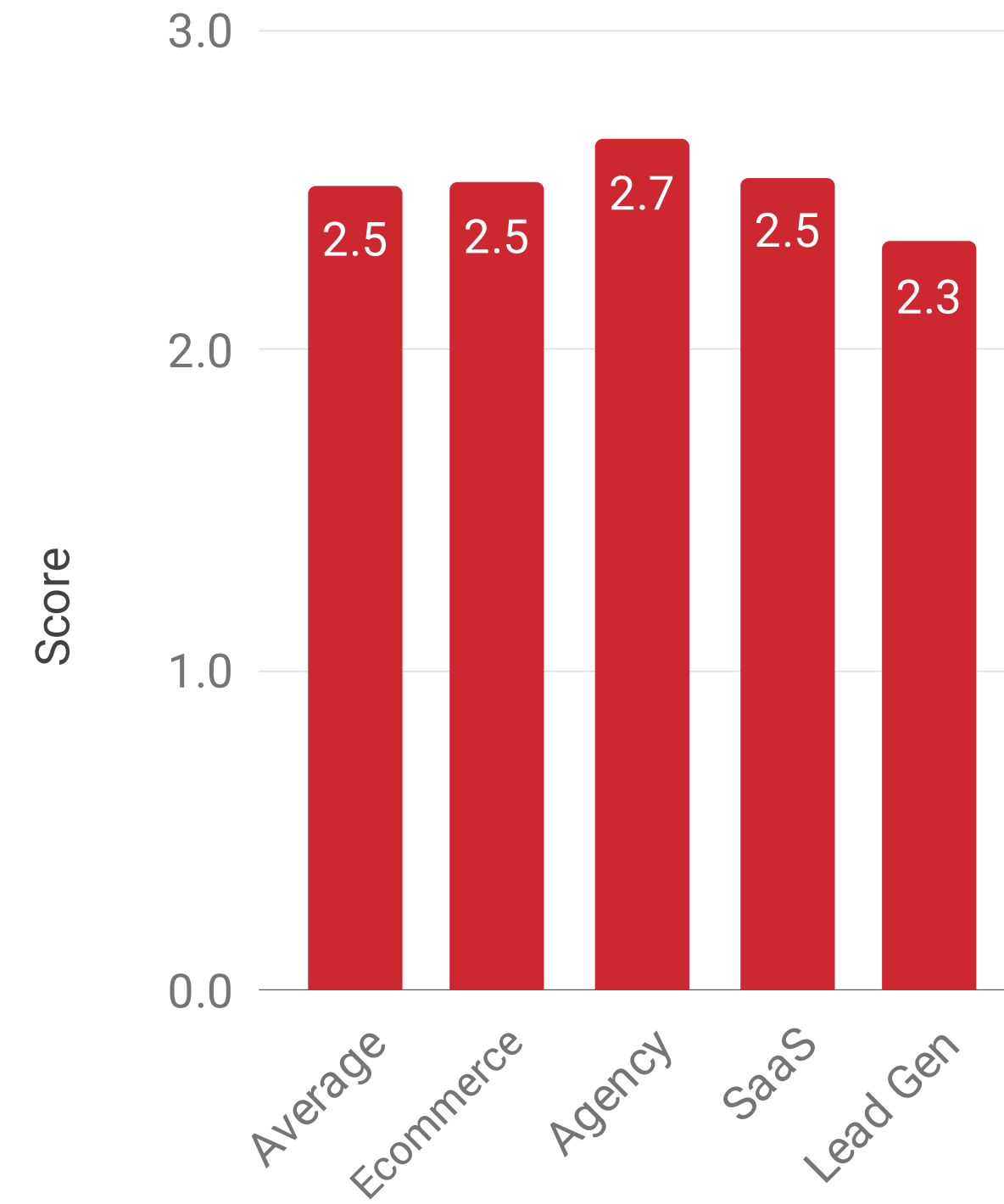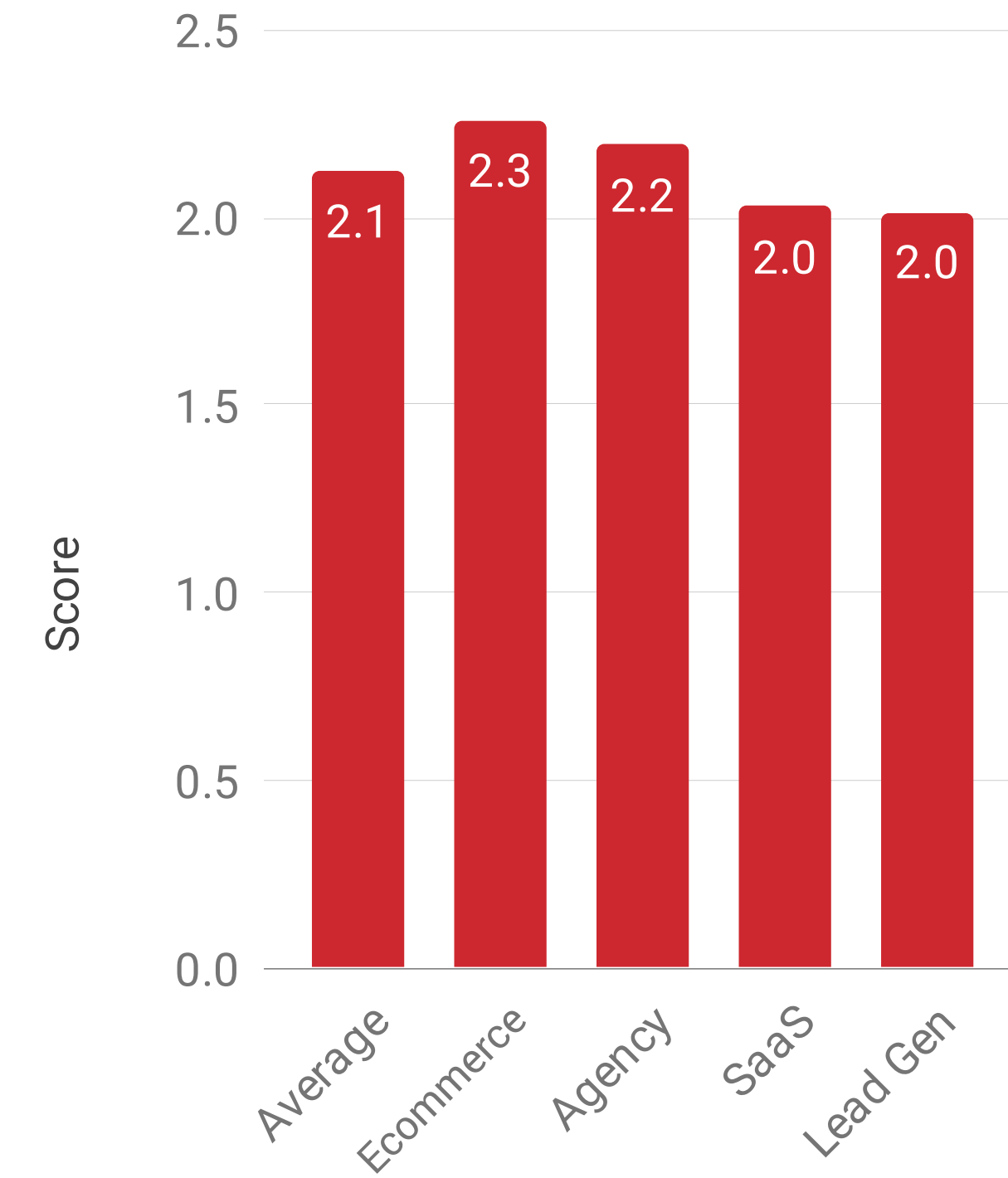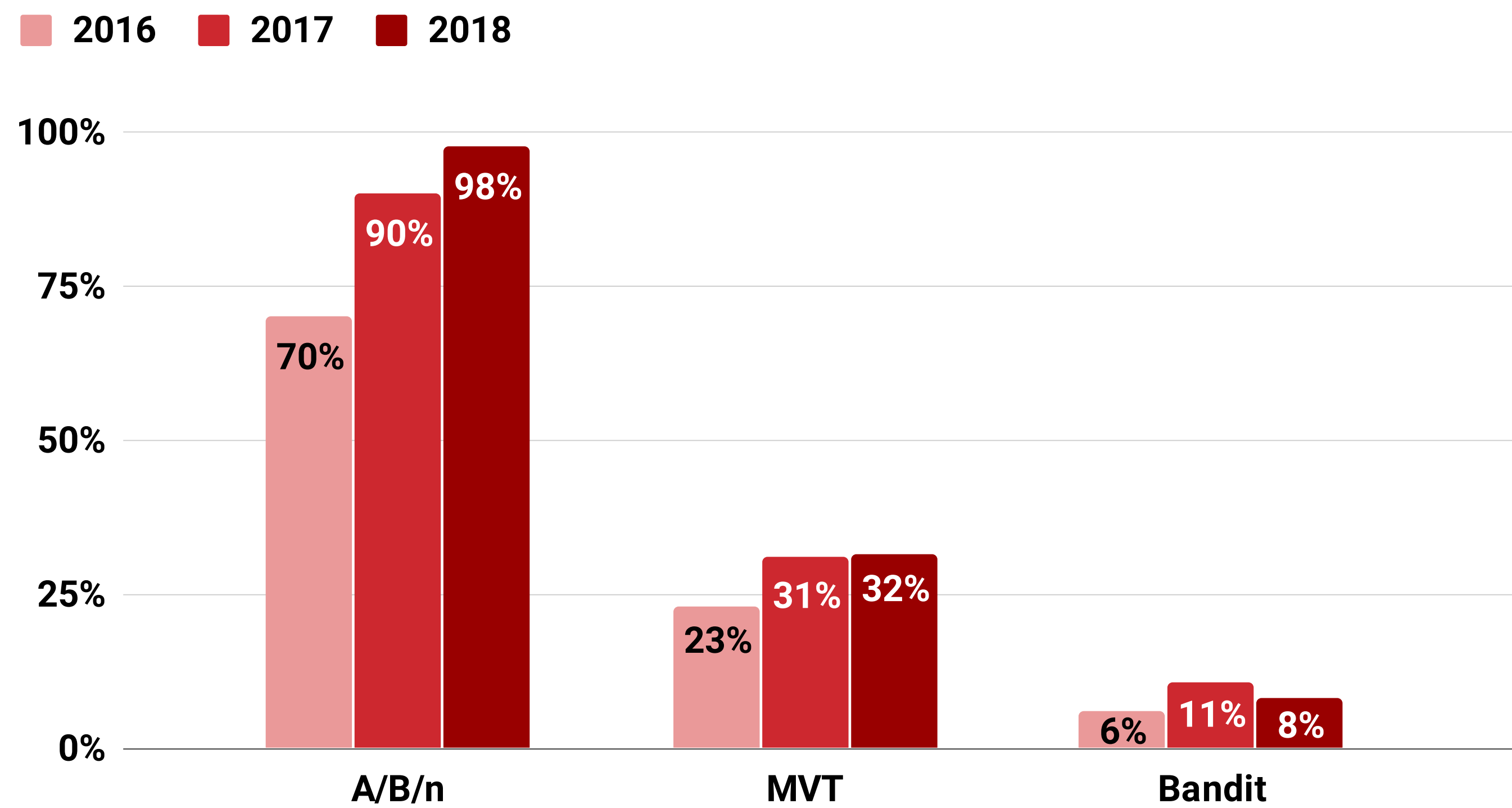
Test type combinations
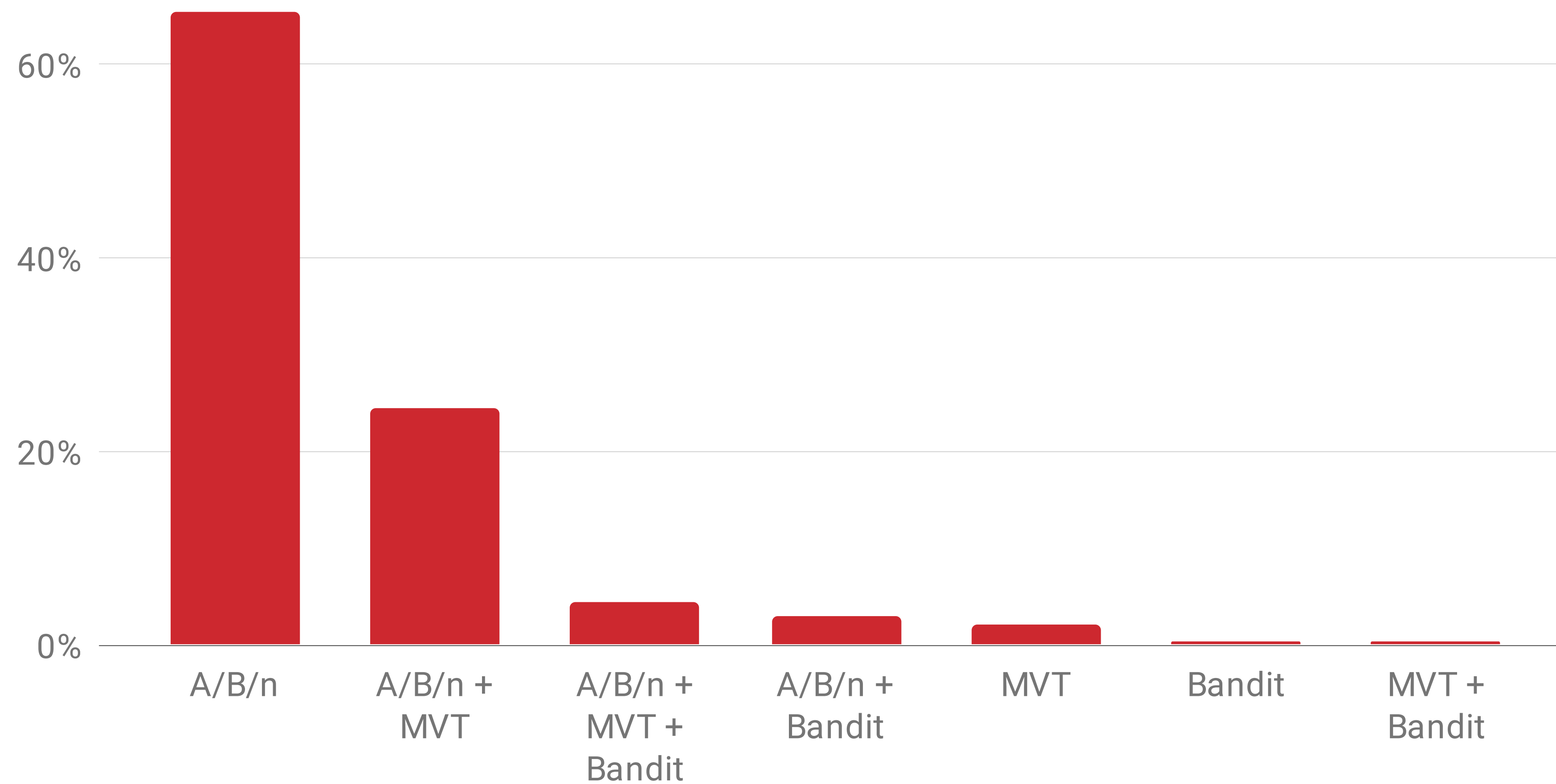
Does your optimization team have a standardized stopping point for A/B tests?

No
47.2%

Yes
52.8%
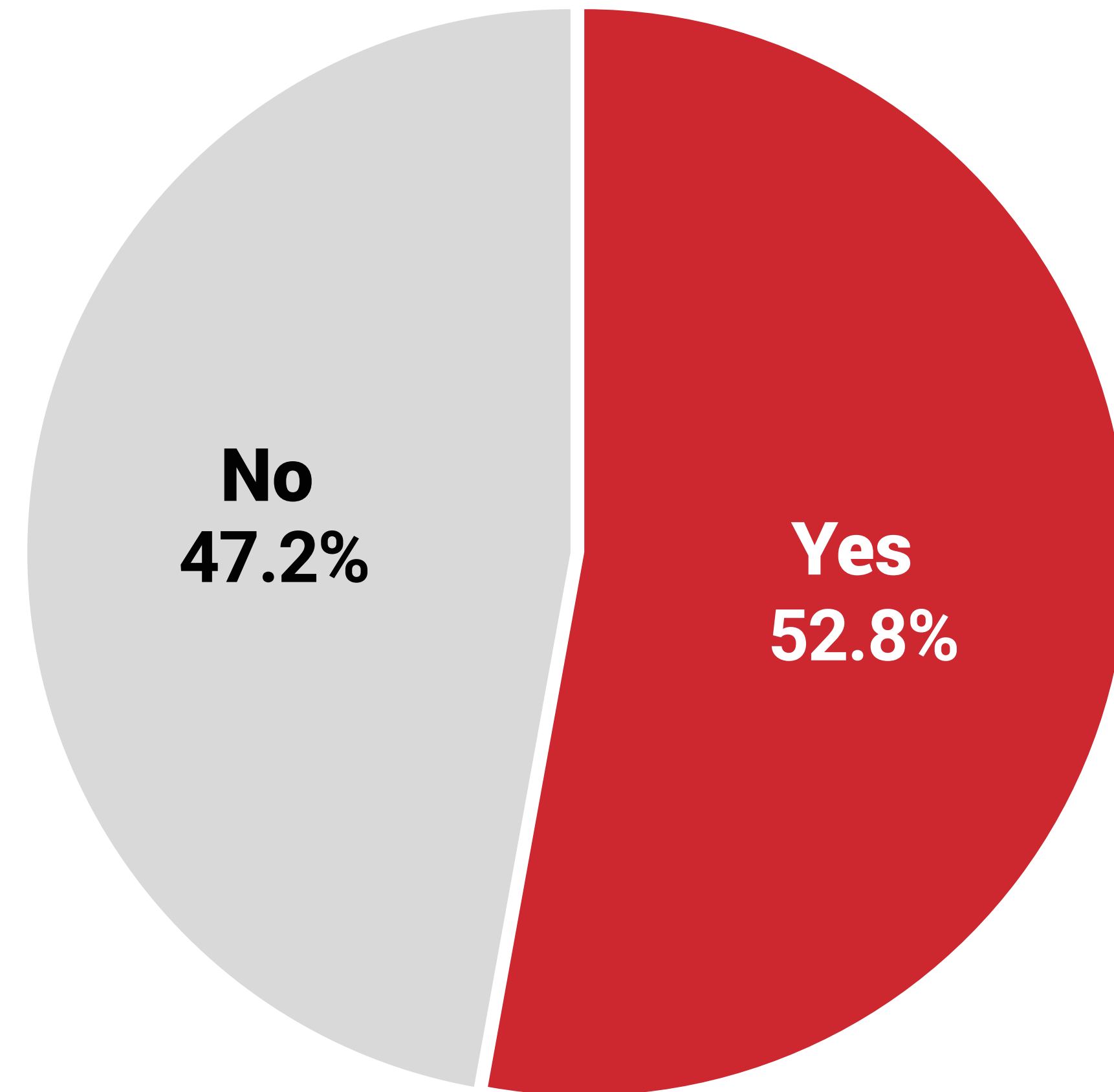
How many tests does your Team run every month?

By industry

■ 2017 ■ 2018

20+ 7%
6%

11-19 4%
5%

5-10 16%
20%

3-4 25%
26%

1-2 48%
42%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

■ eCommerce ■ Agency ■ SaaS ■ Lead Gen

50 %

40 %

30 %

20 %

10 %

0 %

20+ 11-19 5-10 3-4 1-2
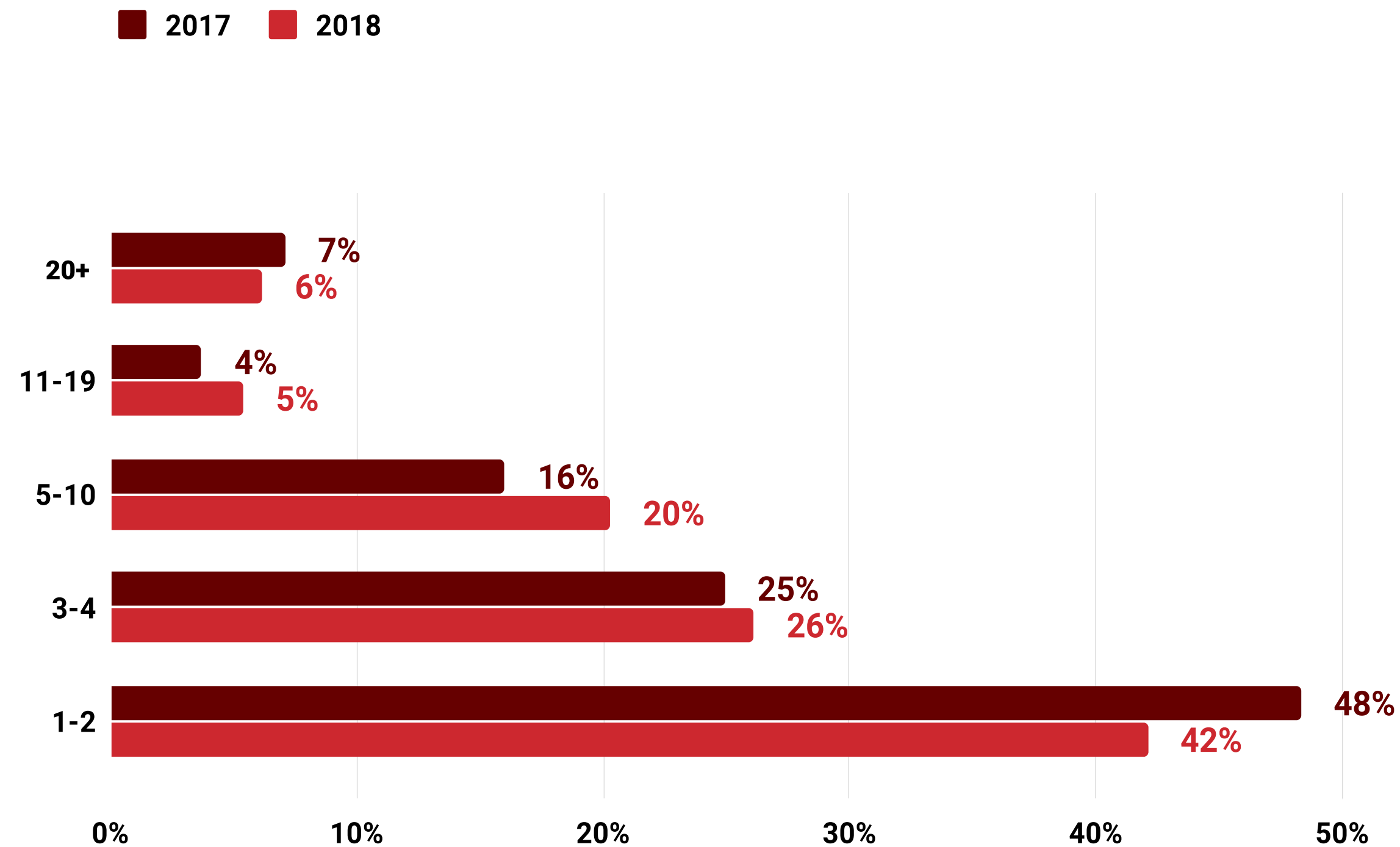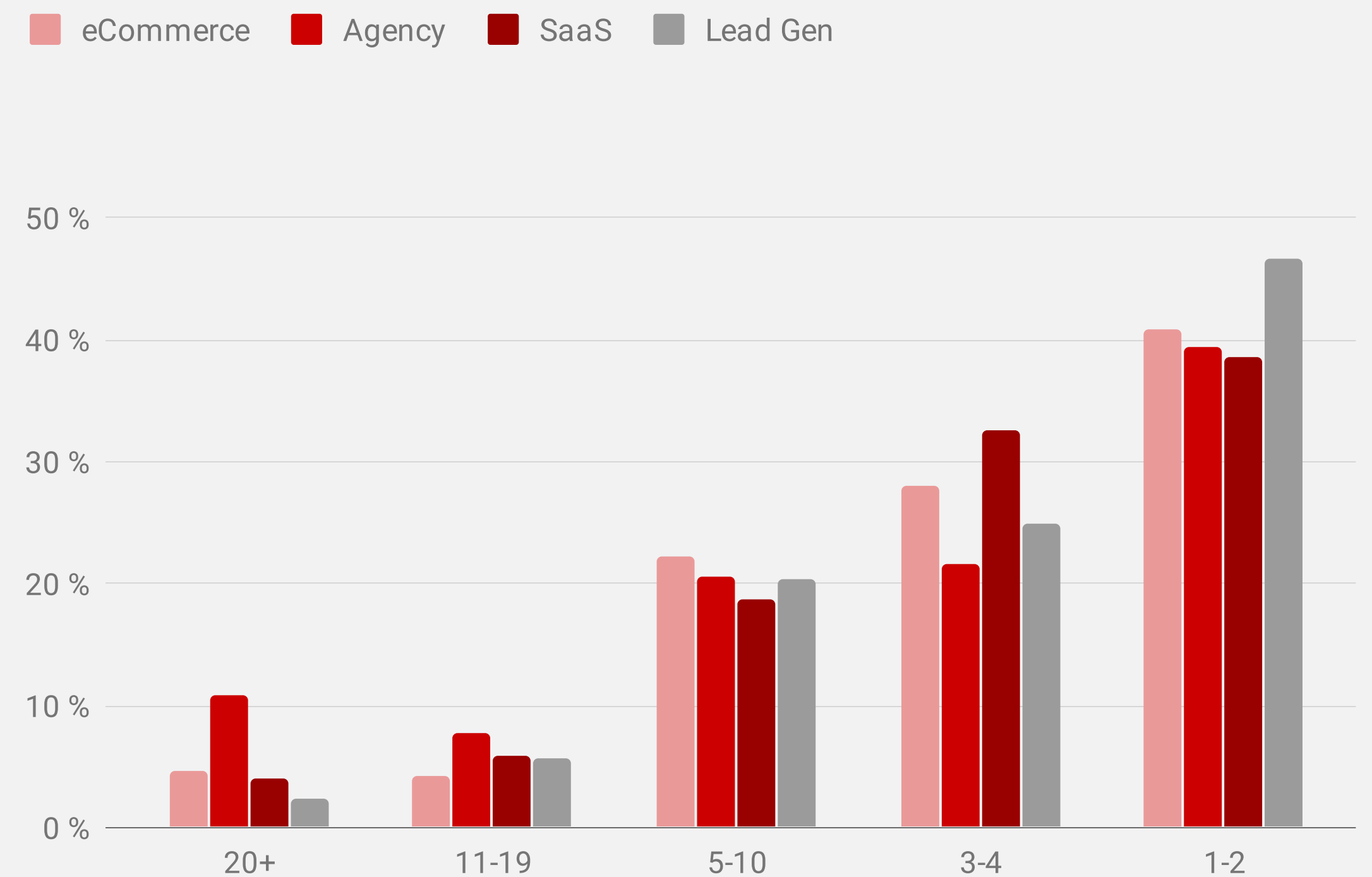
Effectiveness of conversion optimization in 2018 vs 2017

By industry

Donut chart:
- More 56.4%
- The same 37.0%
- Less 6.6%

Bar chart legend: eCommerce, Agency, SaaS, Lead Gen

Categories: More, The same, Less
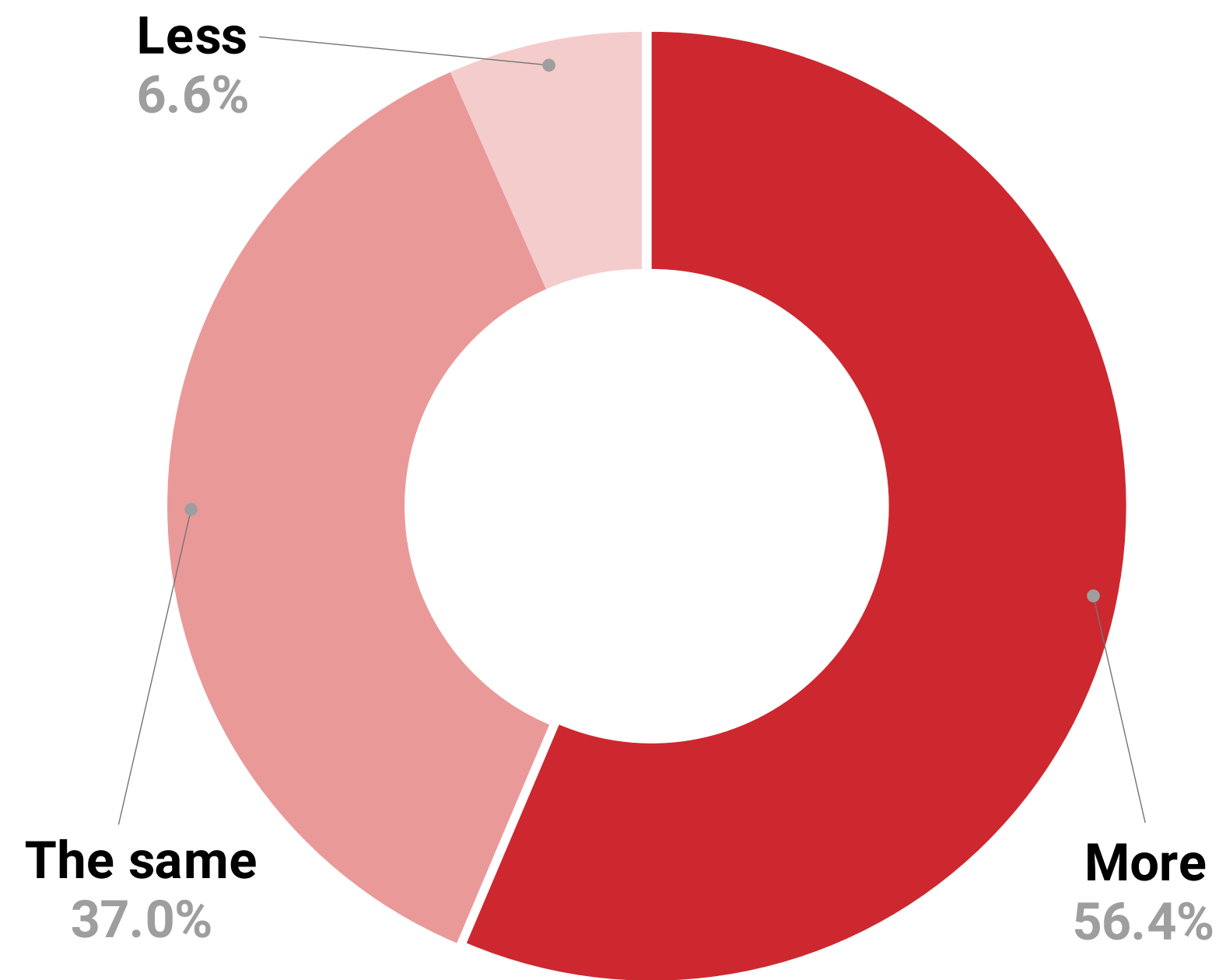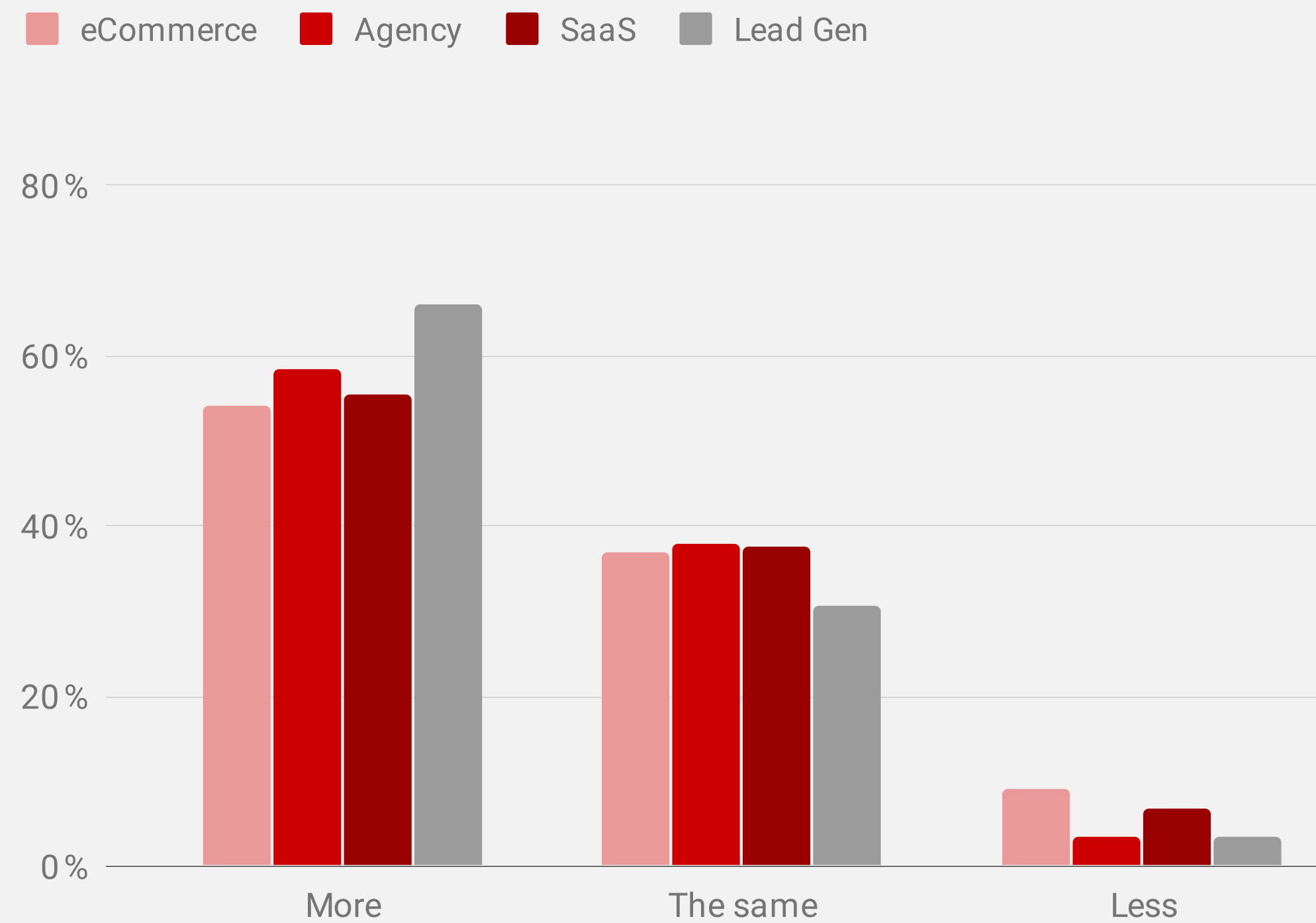
Priority of conversion optimization 2018 vs 2017

By industry

Less
7.8%

More
60.8%

The same
31.3%

eCommerce Agency SaaS Lead Gen

80 %

60 %

40 %

20 %

0 %

More   The same   Less
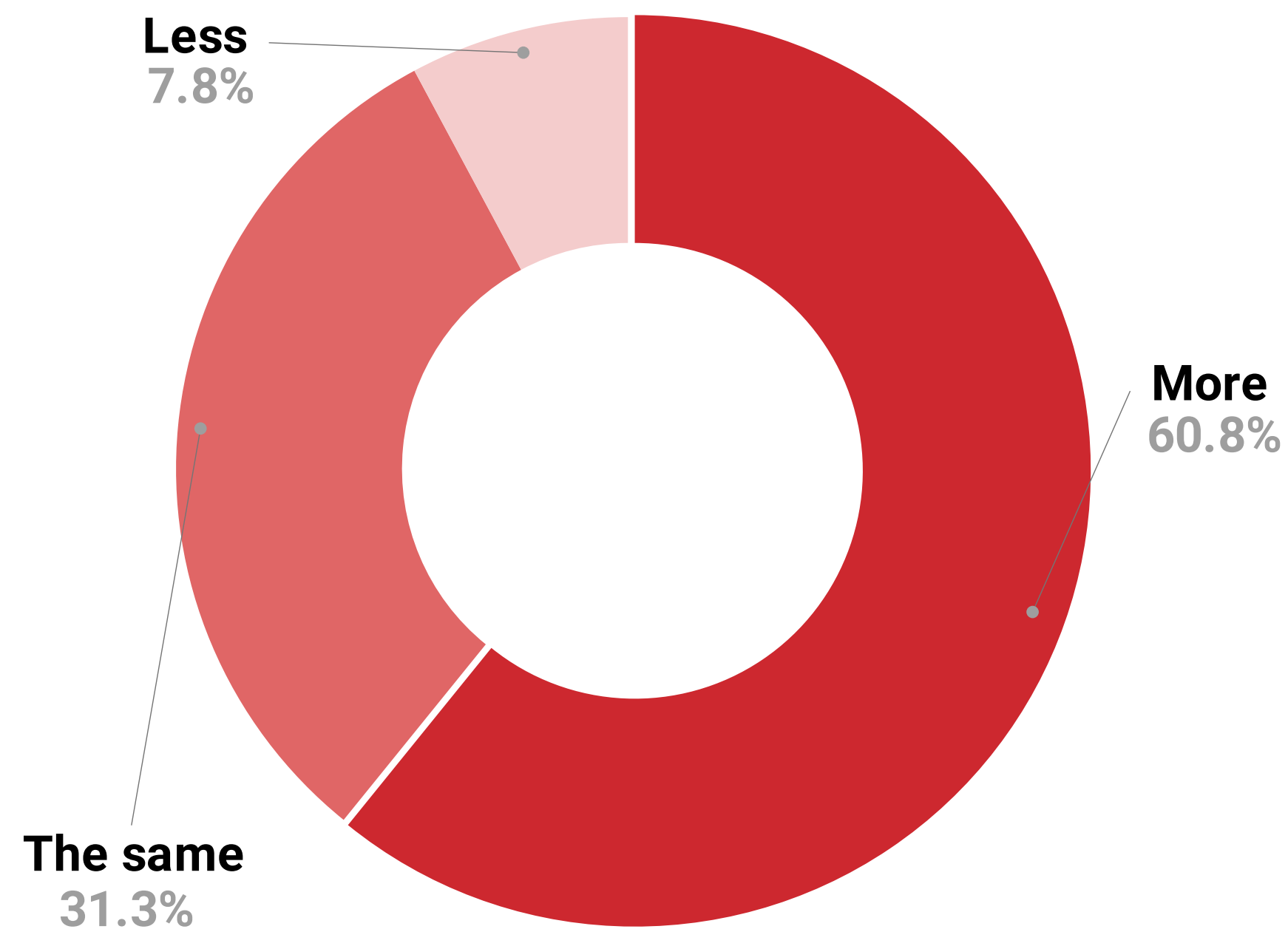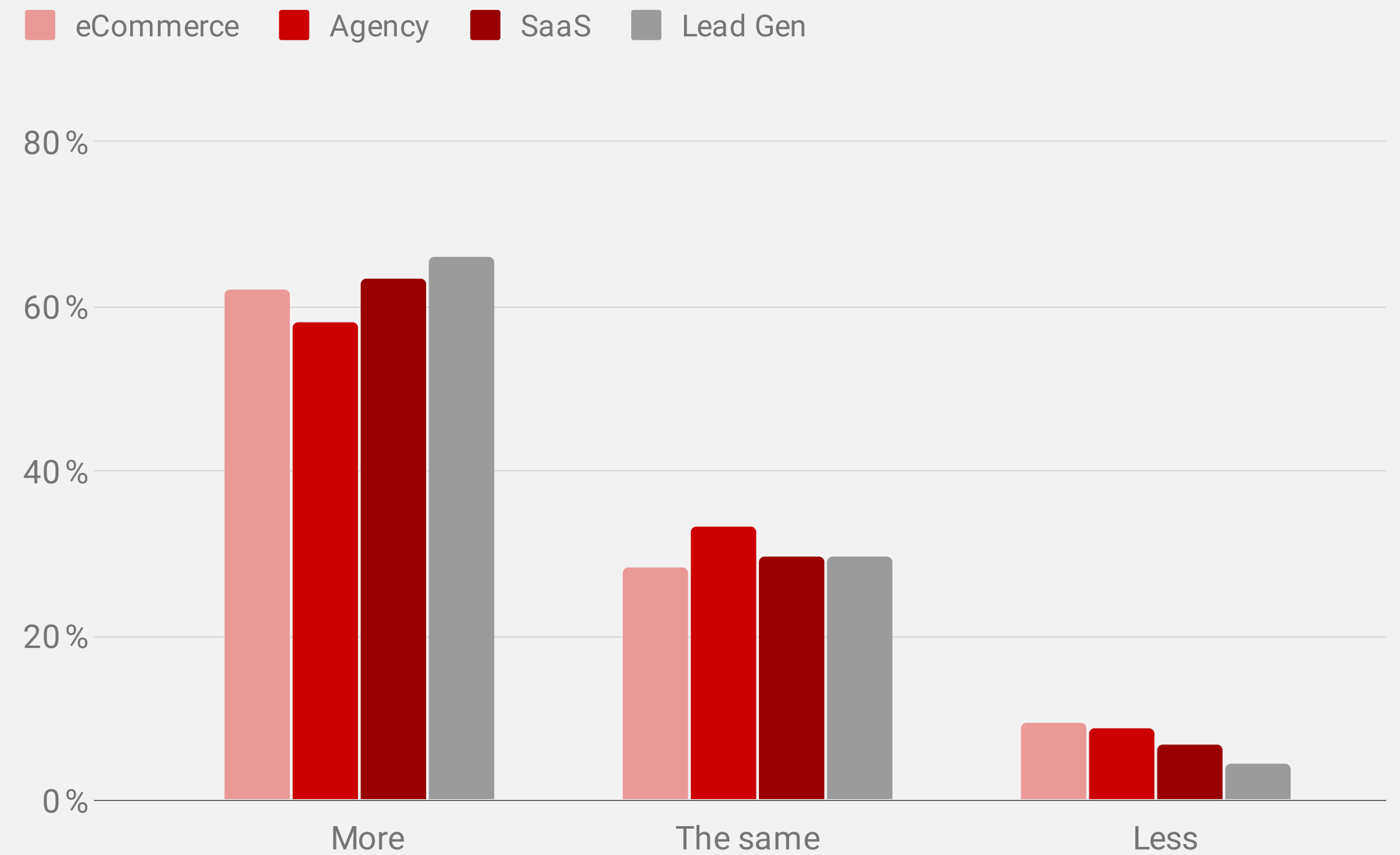
CRO budget 2018 vs 2017

By industry

Less
6.3%

More
45.0%

The same
48.7%

eCommerce   Agency   SaaS   Lead Gen

60%

40%

20%

0%

More   The same   Less
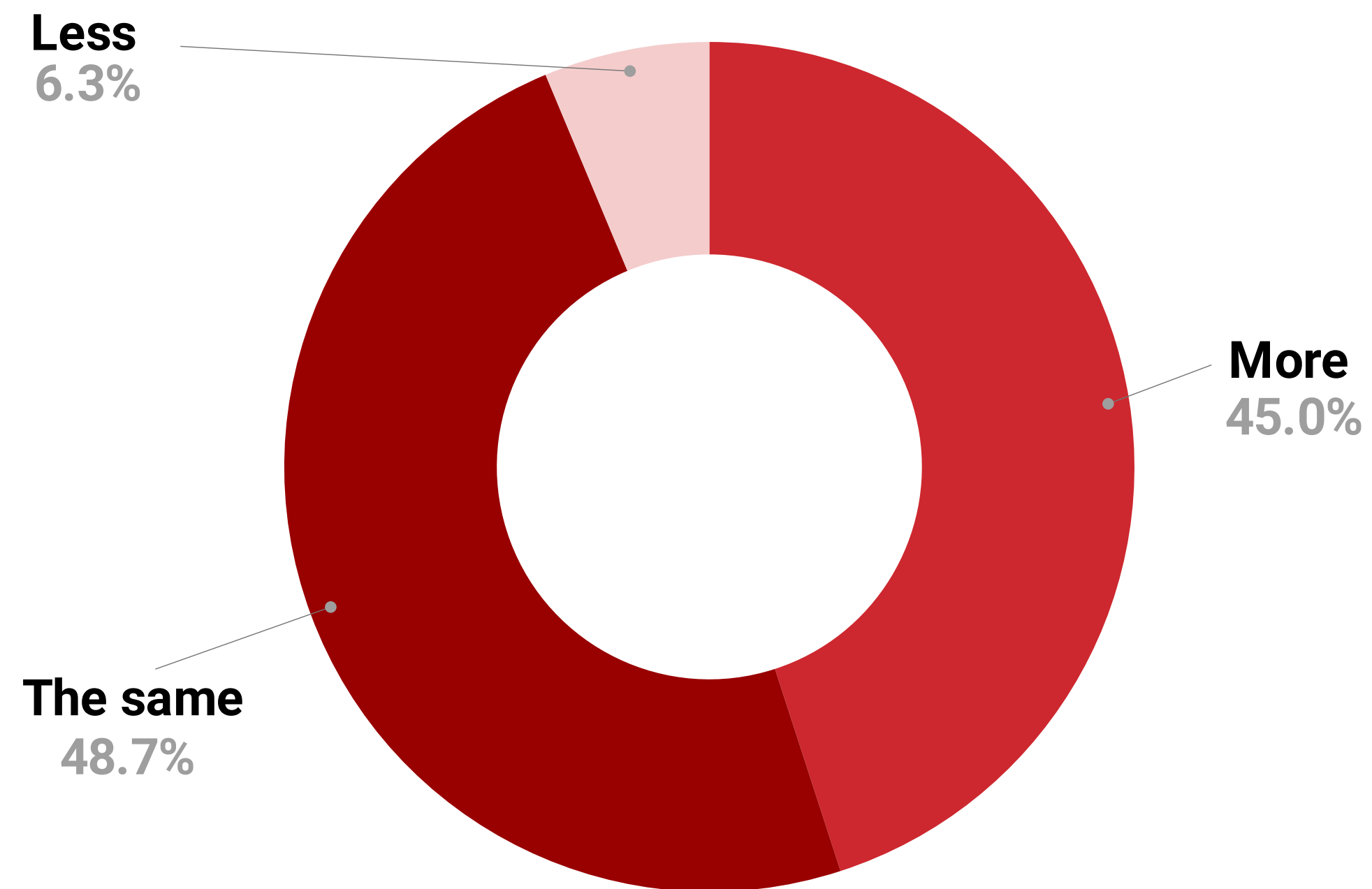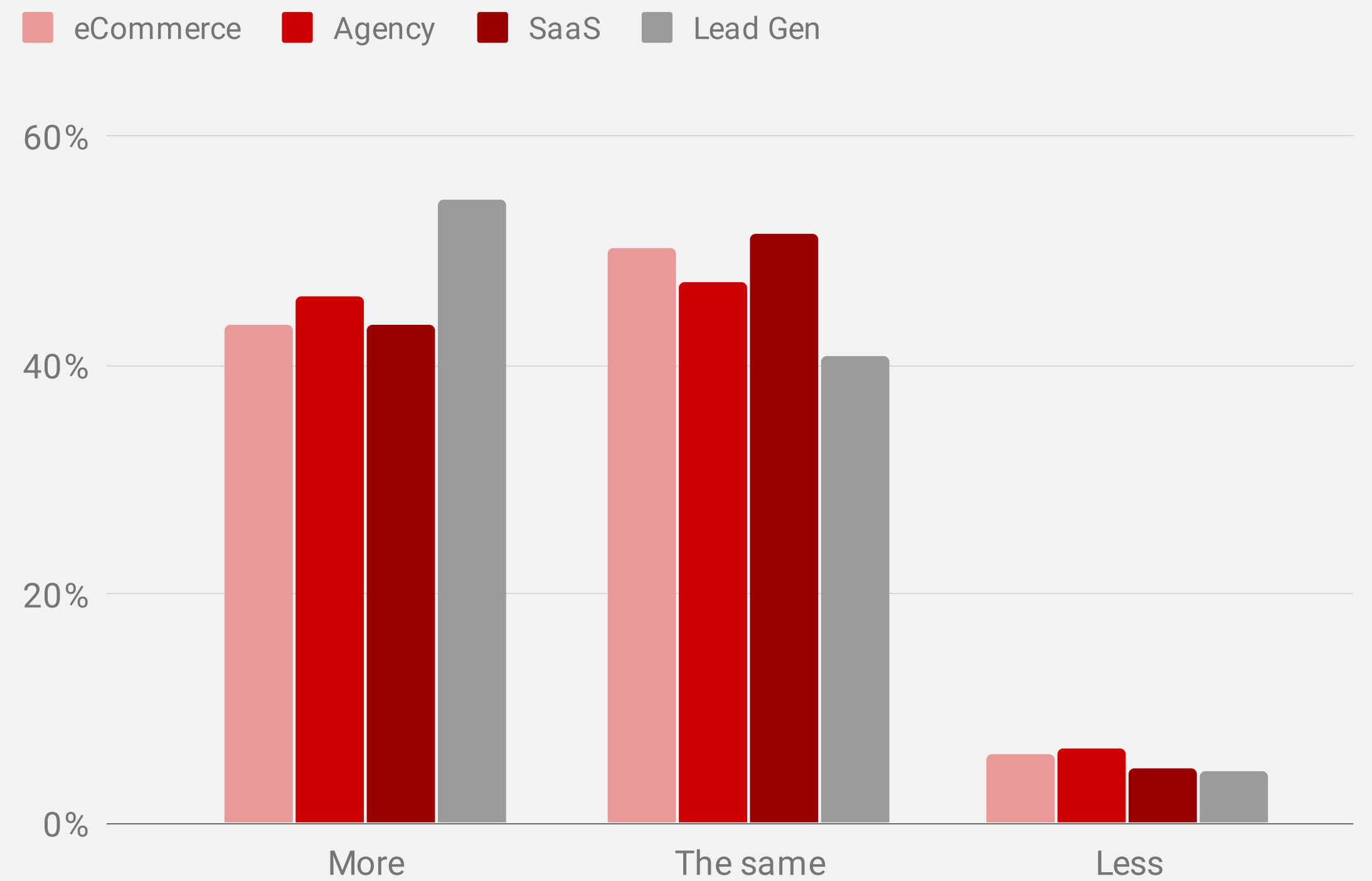
Does CRO have its own budget?

Legend: ■ 2017 ■ 2018

- No, CRO is not mentioned specifically.
  - 2017: 47%
  - 2018: 42%
- Yes, it's part of the marketing budget.
  - 2017: 27%
  - 2018: 12%
- Yes, it's part of the overall budget.
  - 2017: 10%
  - 2018: 36%
- Yes.
  - 2017: 16%
  - 2018: 9%

x-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%
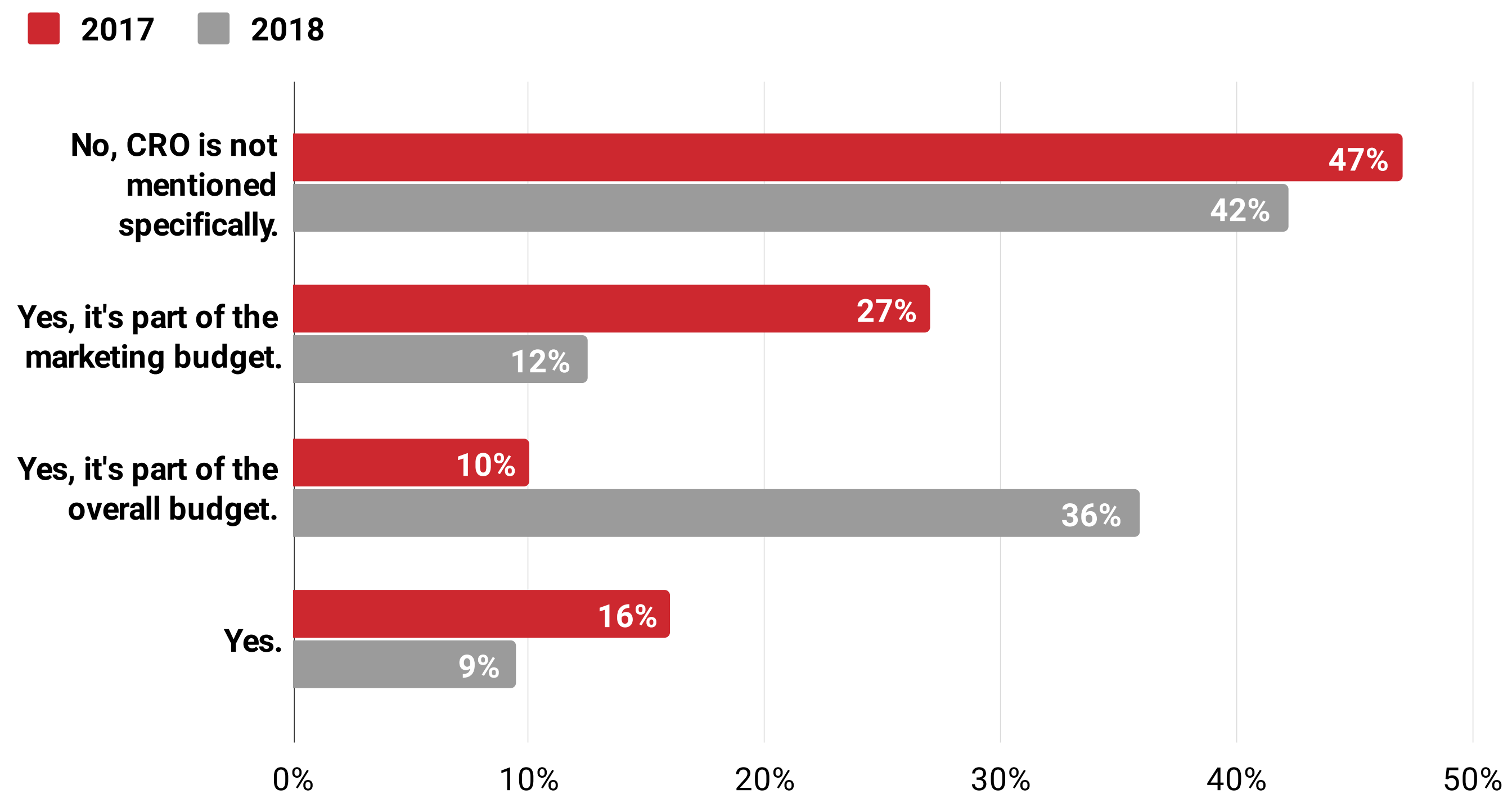
Summary

	SCORE	Has documented process	CRO is done in team	Meets at least weekly	Has formal research process	Runs at least 4 experiments /month	Has a test prioritization framework	Has A/B/n standard stopping point	Tracks winning tests	Tracks average lift per test	Archives results	Shares tests results	Uses website personali-zation	Improved effective-ness	Increased priority	Increased budget
Ecommerce	59.20%	44.08%	44.55%	51.66%	58.25%	68.20%	60.19%	50.71%	65.40%	66.82%	81.04%	87.20%	50.24%	54.03%	62.09%	43.60%
Agency	59.04%	41.03%	54.87%	45.13%	70.68%	68.72%	68.21%	48.72%	62.56%	59.49%	82.05%	73.33%	48.21%	58.46%	57.95%	46.15%
SaaS	53.88%	28.71%	45.54%	39.60%	54.08%	61.03%	42.57%	40.59%	62.38%	64.36%	76.24%	79.21%	51.49%	55.45%	63.37%	43.56%
Lead Gen	59.32%	28.41%	51.14%	46.59%	62.79%	71.29%	47.73%	44.32%	73.86%	67.05%	79.55%	84.09%	46.59%	65.91%	65.91%	54.55%
Media	53.80%	35.48%	48.39%	41.94%	61.29%	71.59%	51.61%	45.16%	54.84%	51.61%	77.42%	77.42%	41.94%	51.61%	61.29%	35.48%
Non Profit	45.38%	28.00%	68.00%	20.00%	36.00%	80.65%	24.00%	44.00%	28.00%	48.00%	56.00%	84.00%	52.00%	36.00%	44.00%	32.00%

Issues

We collected 580 responses on the question "what are you struggling with?" We analyzed the responses and identified 39 different "pains" common among CRO professionals.

We assigned a score to each answer and ranked each issue/pain.

6 issues are responsible for 50% of the total "pain score".
The first 14 issues sum up to 80% of the total score.

Pain Coverage	Issue	Pain	Nature
50%	Establishing a process	100%	Internal
	Learning	91%	Internal
	Educating client	53%	Both
	Prove ROI	51%	Internal
	Time & budget constraints	44%	Internal
	Integrate CRO in the business	40%	Internal
80%	Get management onboard	38%	Internal
	Getting clients	30%	Internal
	Wrong expectations	23%	External
	Traffic	23%	Both
	Building CRO Team	22%	Internal
	Client participation	17%	External
	Technical skills	17%	Internal
	Cooperation between development units	16%	Internal
100%	Conflict with product managers	14%	Internal
	Tracking KPIs / results	11%	Internal
	Segmentation	10%	Internal
	Slow development speed	10%	Internal
	Quick fix requested	9%	External
	Blind use of "best practices"	9%	Internal
	Keep decisions data-driven	8%	Internal
	Own marketing	7%	Internal
	Results ownership	6%	Internal
	Recruiting CRO specialists	6%	Internal
	Sharing insights	6%	Internal
	Slow feedback from client	5%	External
	CRO low priority task	4%	Both
	Content	4%	Internal
	Overlapping tests	4%	Internal
	Use of antiquated platforms	4%	External
	Contradictory Information	3%	Both
	Outsourcing	3%	Internal
	Funnels	2%	Internal
	Deatached from "feelings"	2%	Internal
	Tools	2%	Internal
	Prioritization	2%	Internal
	Research	2%	Internal
	Handling brick and mortar	2%	Internal
	Niching	1%	Internal

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