

# State of Conversion Optimization 2019

**CXL**

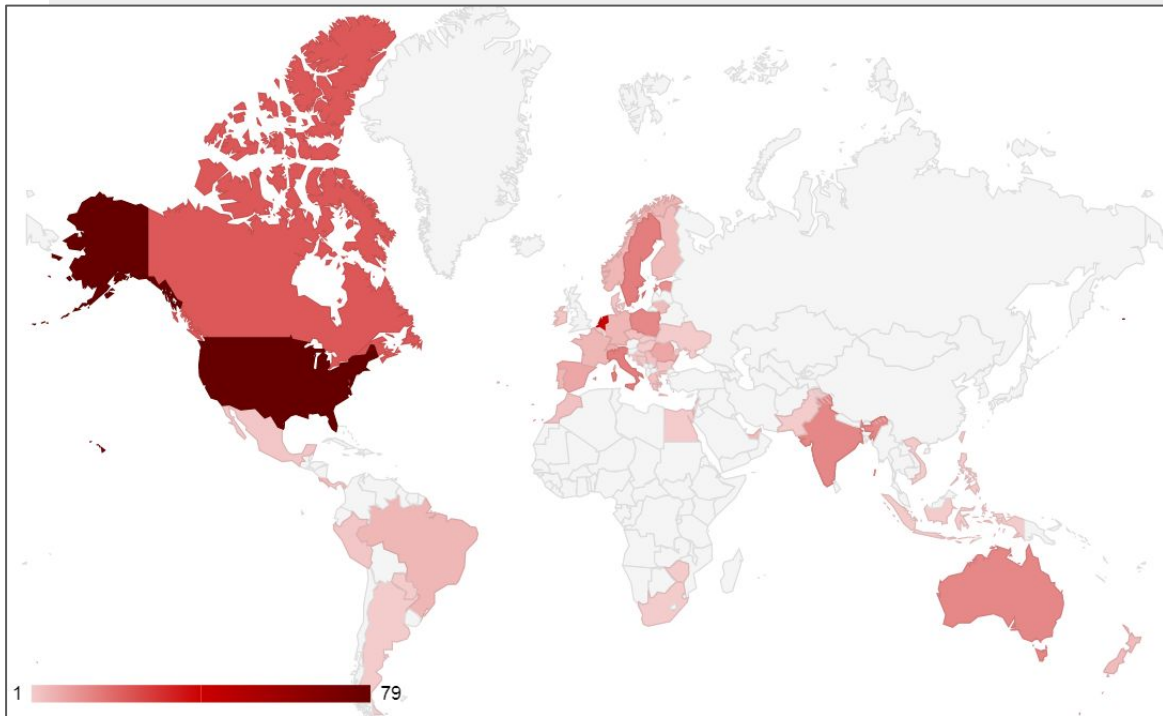
*AB Tasty*

# 381 respondents, 53 countries

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Some 79 respondents came from the United States, the most of any single country. The Netherlands (39) and Canada (23) trailed.

Overall, 173 responses came from Europe and 104 from North America.

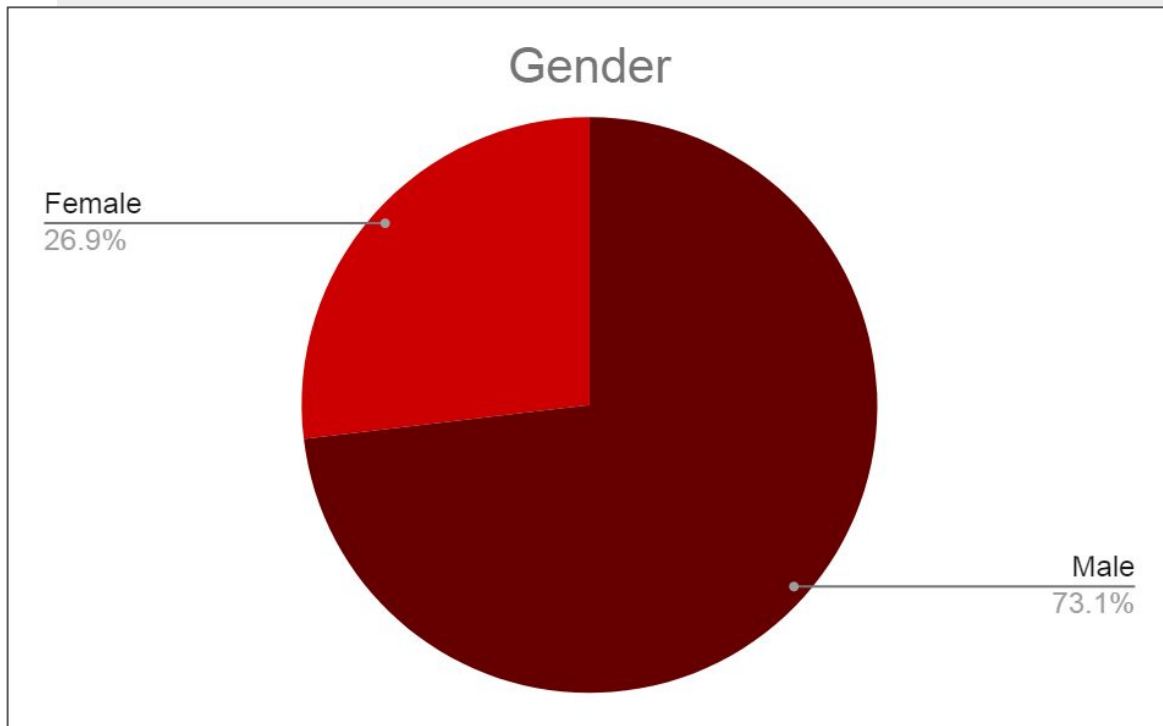


# Gender

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As found in previous surveys, about one quarter of conversion optimization practitioners are female.

That figure doesn't seem poised to change soon. Even among younger cohorts (<30, <25), the gender breakdown was similar (26% and 28%, respectively).



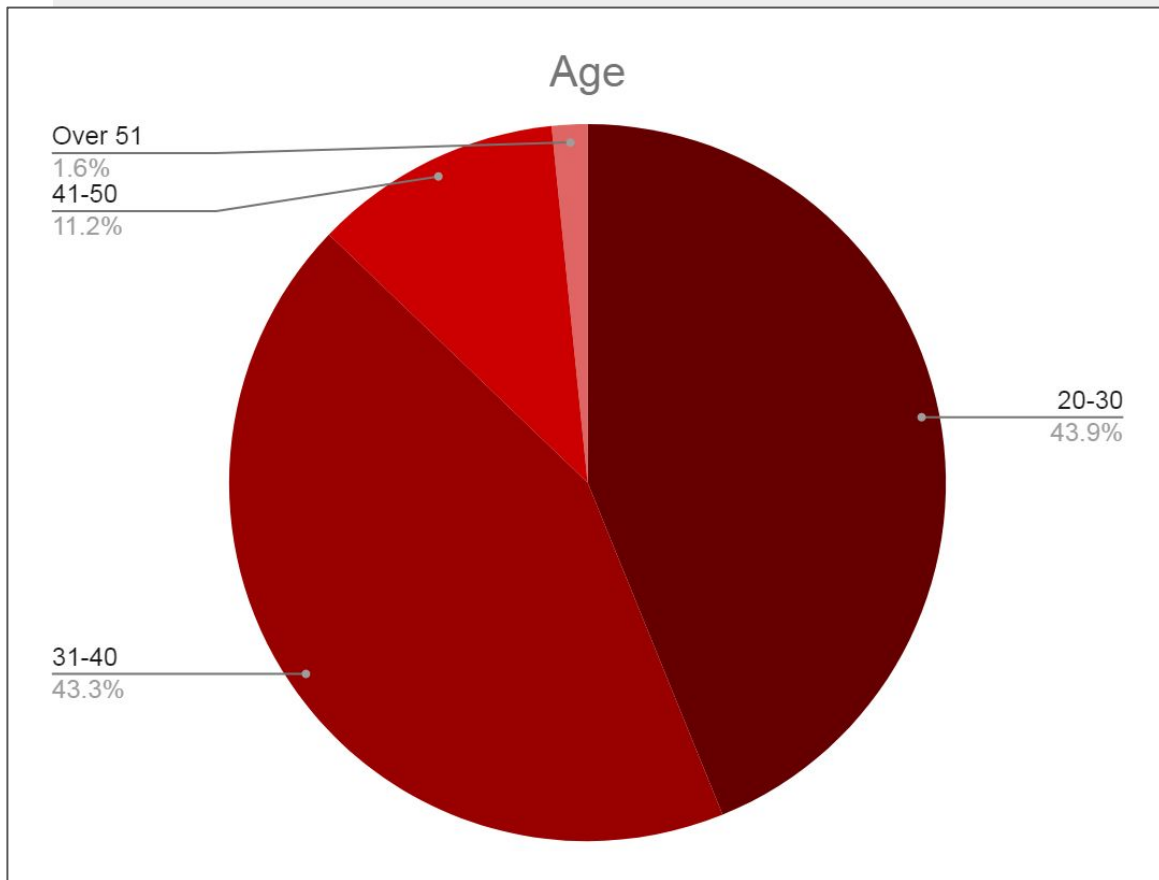
# Age

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Conversion optimization remains a young industry.

For several years, the average (and median) practitioner has been in their early 30s.

This year, the average age was 32.8, and the median was 31.

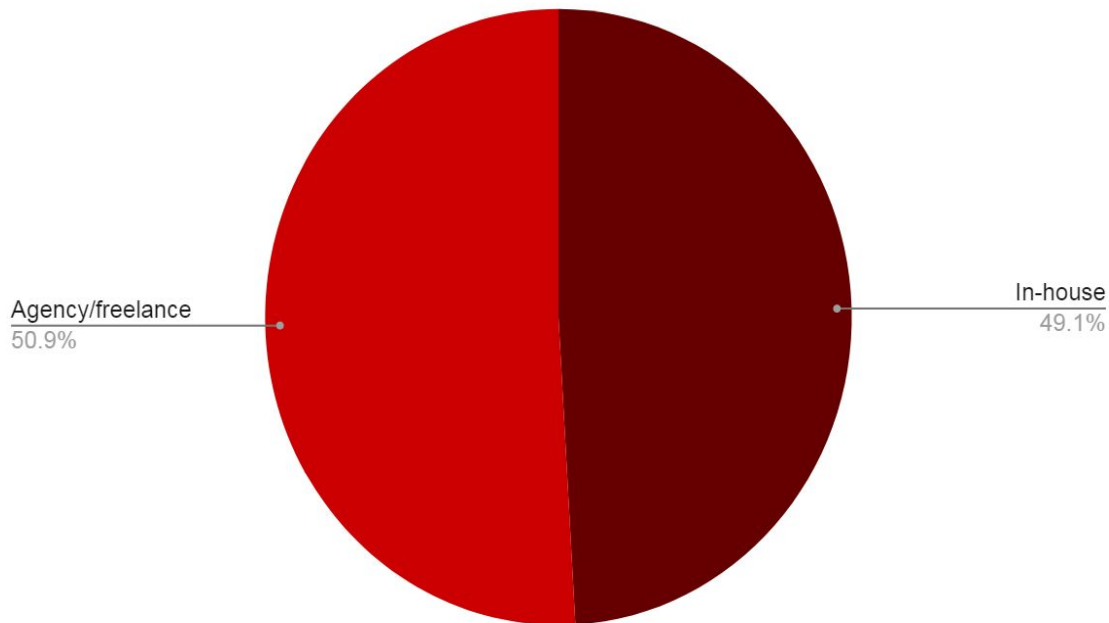


# Agency vs. in-house

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We had an almost even split between in-house and agency CROs.

What type of conversion optimization (CRO) work do you do?

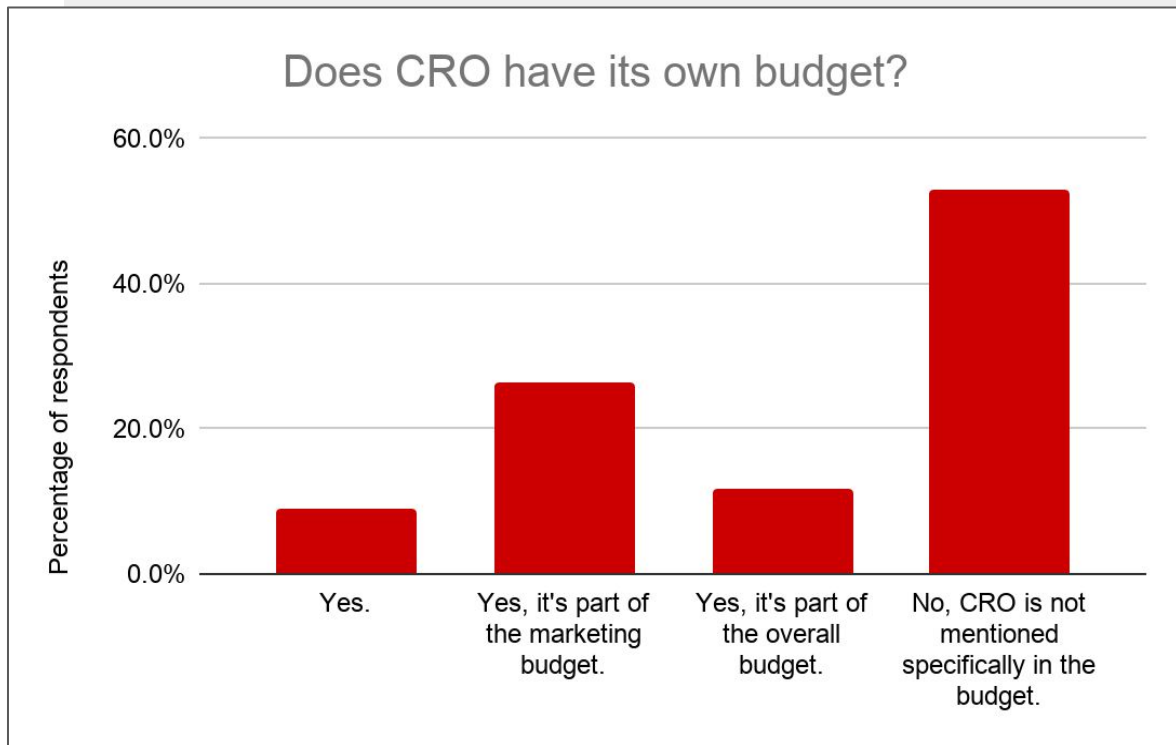


# In-house budgets

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CRO had its own budget just 47% of the time for in-house optimizers, even when that budget was lumped into a larger marketing or company budget.

Only 9.1% of conversion optimization programs had dedicated budgets.



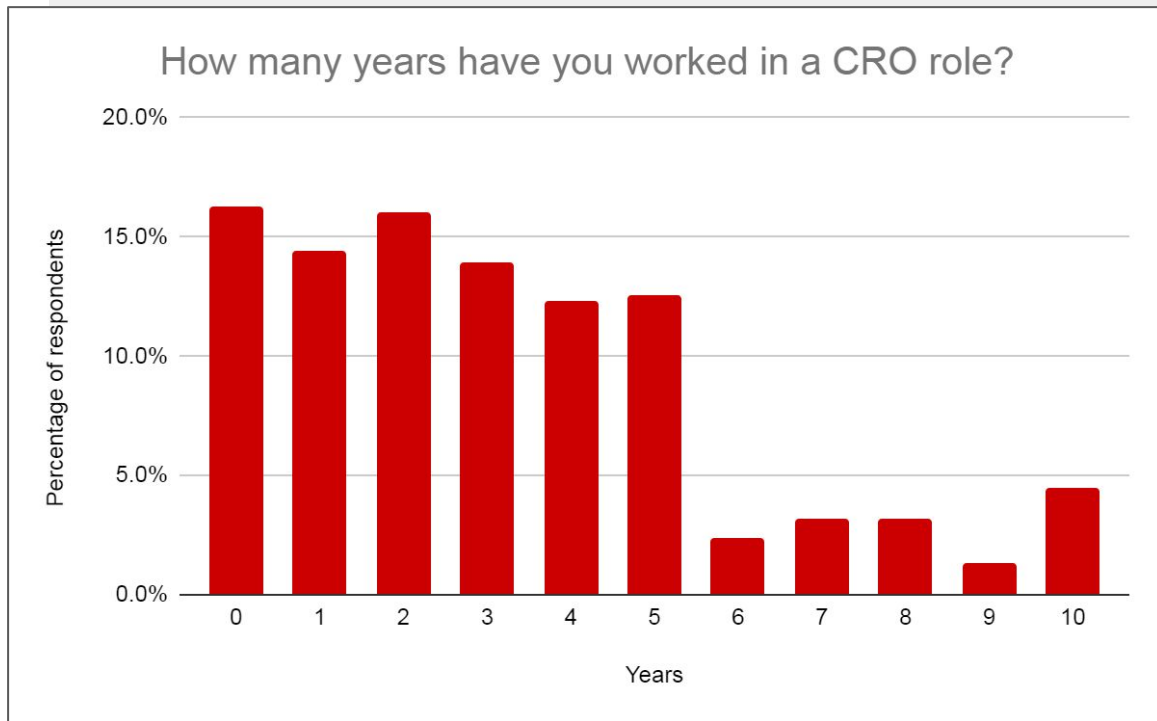
# CRO experience

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The CRO industry is staffed by practitioners with just a few years of experience.

Some 60.6% of optimizers have no more than two years' experience.

The optimizer with more than five years of CRO experience is a rare find, indeed.



# Average salaries

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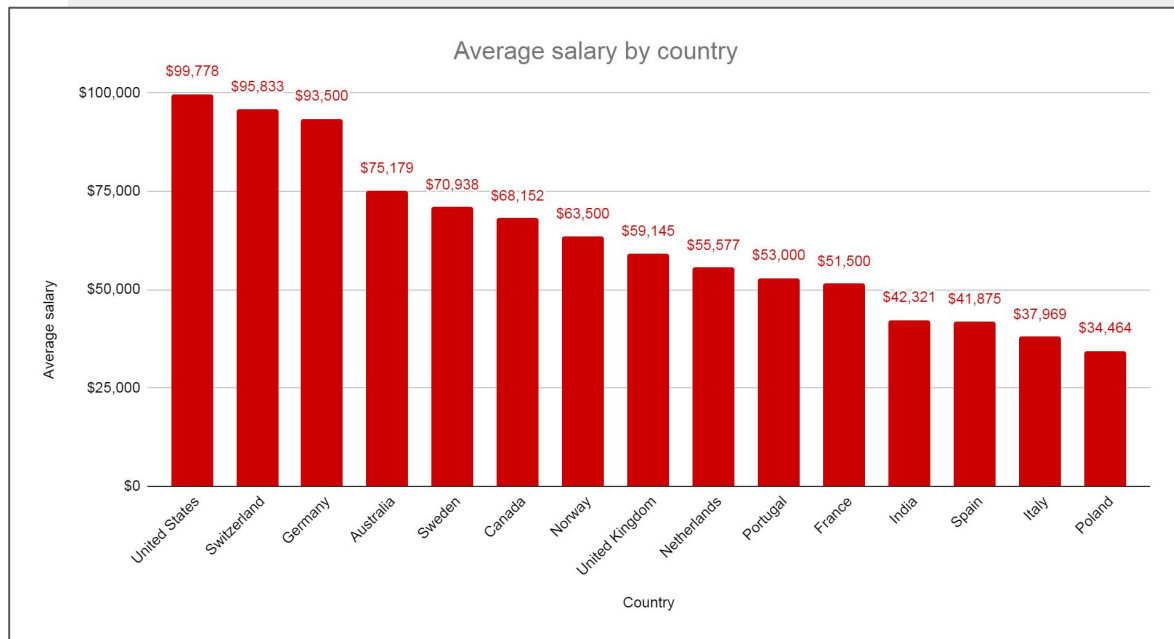
While the average salary is just over \$64,000, similar to previous years, compensation varies considerably by country.



# Average salary by country

In past surveys, the United States or Australia has led the salary race.

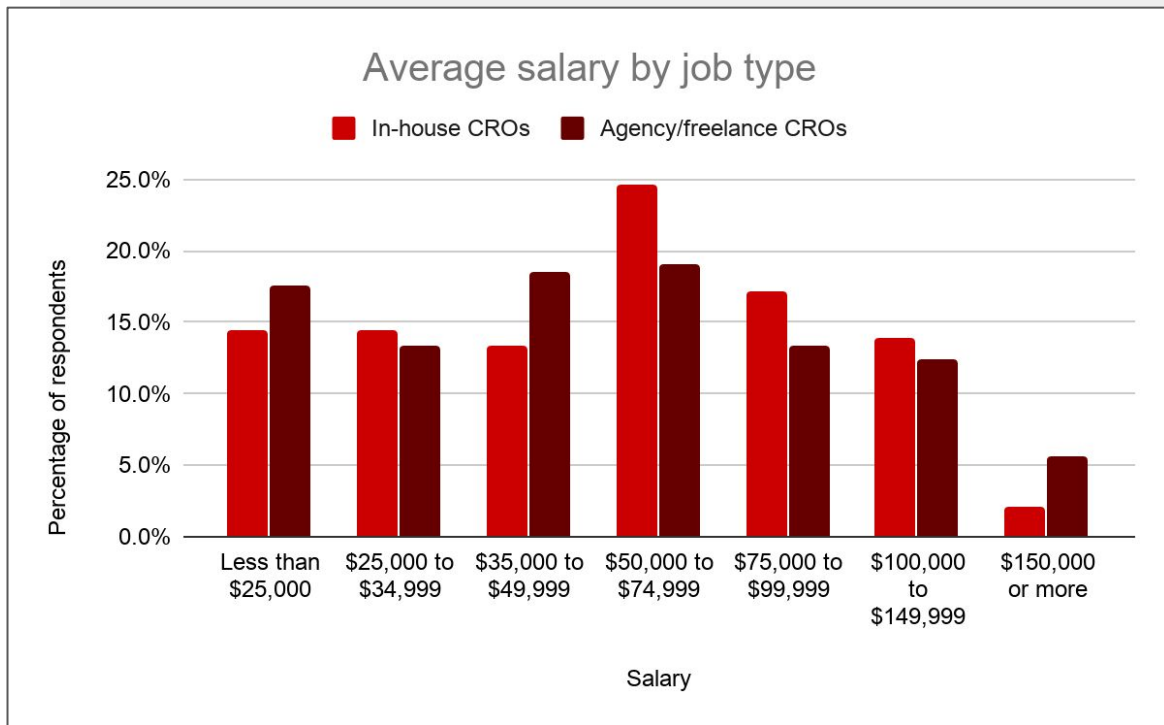
This year, Switzerland and Germany join the United States as the only countries with average salaries above \$90,000.



# Average salary by job type

Most of those commanding the highest salaries work at agencies, but *in-house* salaries were consistently higher in the upper tiers.

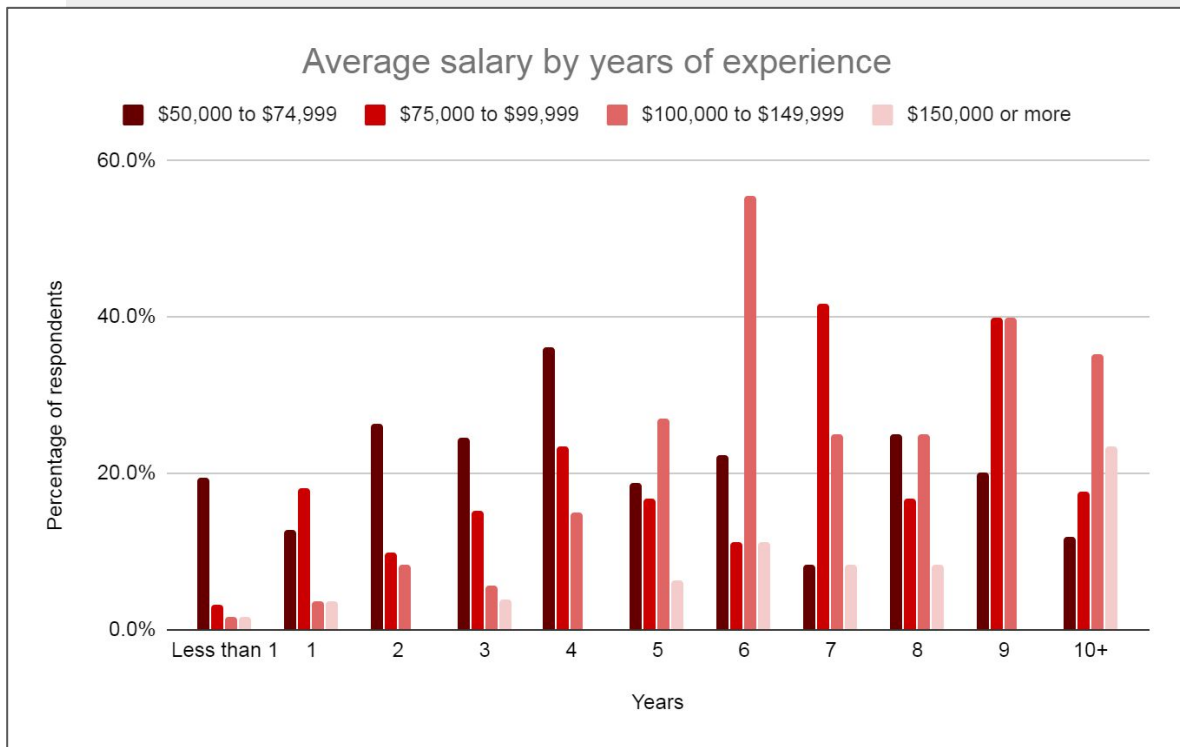
The variable nature of work as a freelancer may explain why agency/freelance CROs represented a greater percentage of salaries below \$50,000.



# Average salary by experience

Experience commands a higher salary, plain and simple. Most of those earning \$100,000+ have at least 5 years of experience.

Interestingly, the 5-year mark is also where we saw a steep drop-off for CRO experience—seasoned analysts are rare and valuable.



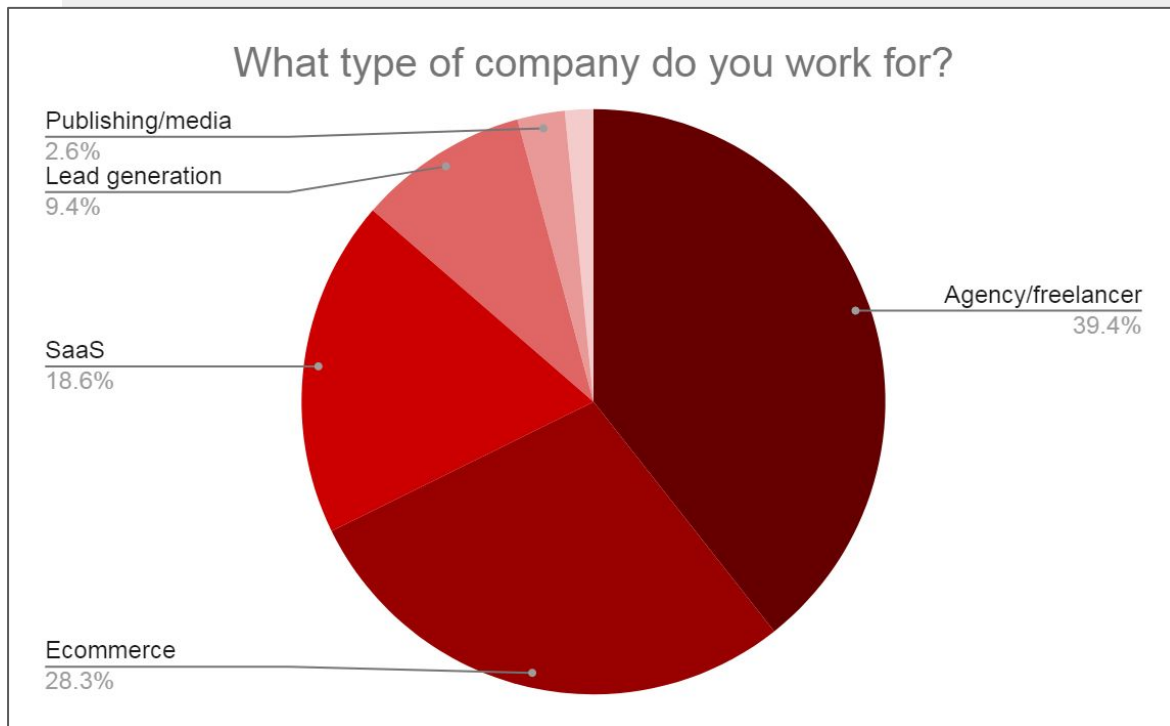
# Industries

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A plurality of respondents work in agencies or as freelance CROs.

Ecommerce and SaaS companies comprise the bulk of the remaining respondents.

(The smallest slice, 1.6%, is for non-profit and government.)



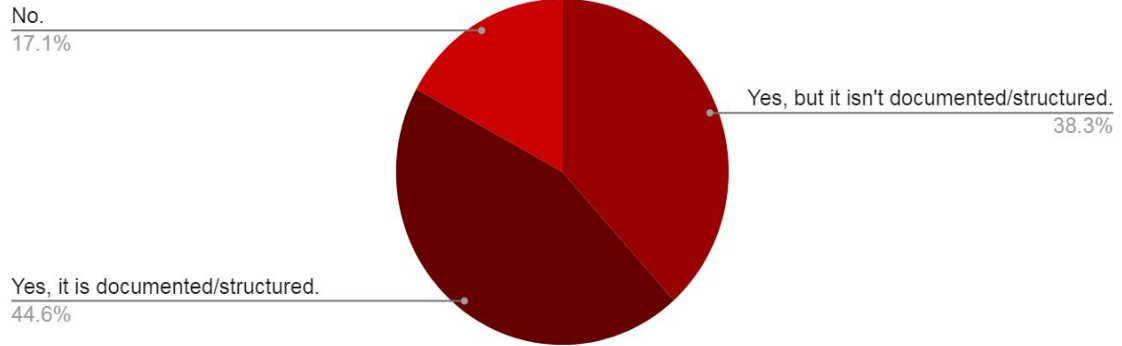
# Process

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While only 17.1% have *no* process, another 38.3% have one that isn't well documented or structured.

That sounds a lot like there is no real process—certainly not one that's consistent throughout an organization and useful for training new employees.

Does your team follow a process for conversion optimization?

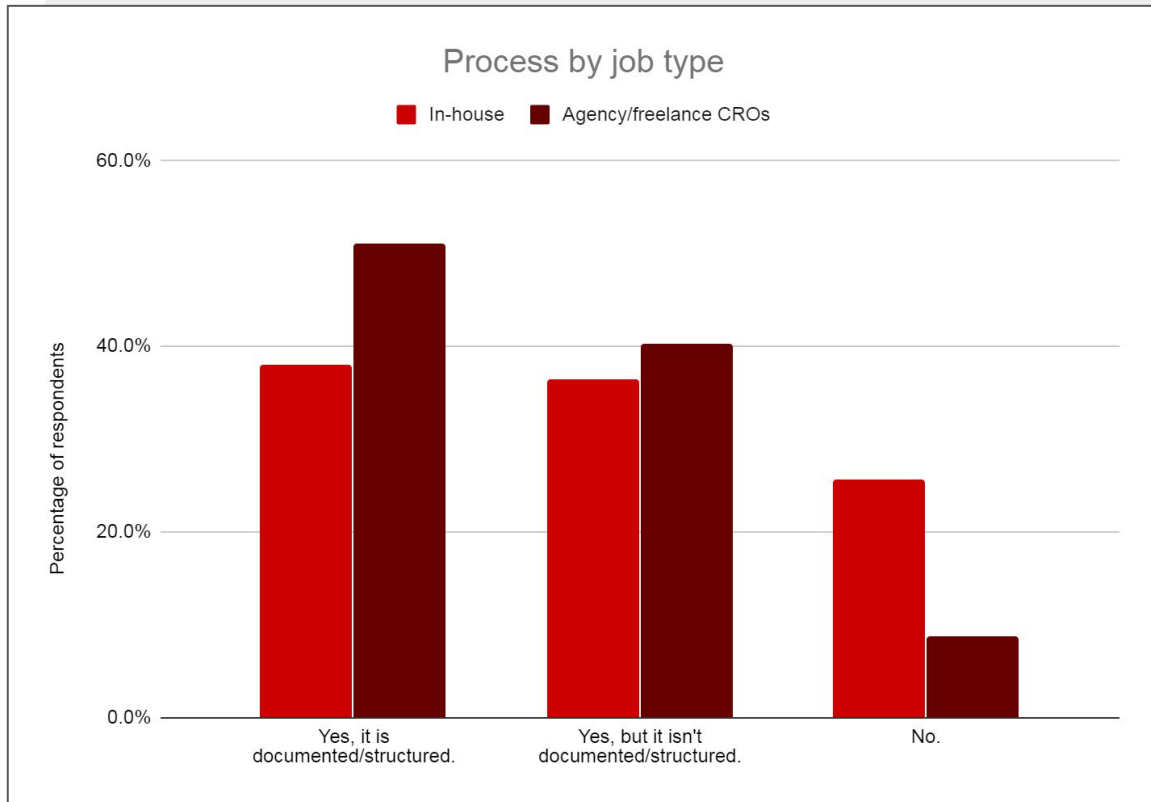


# Process by job type

If you want to learn process, go to an agency.

Agencies and freelancers won across the board for having documented (and undocumented) processes.

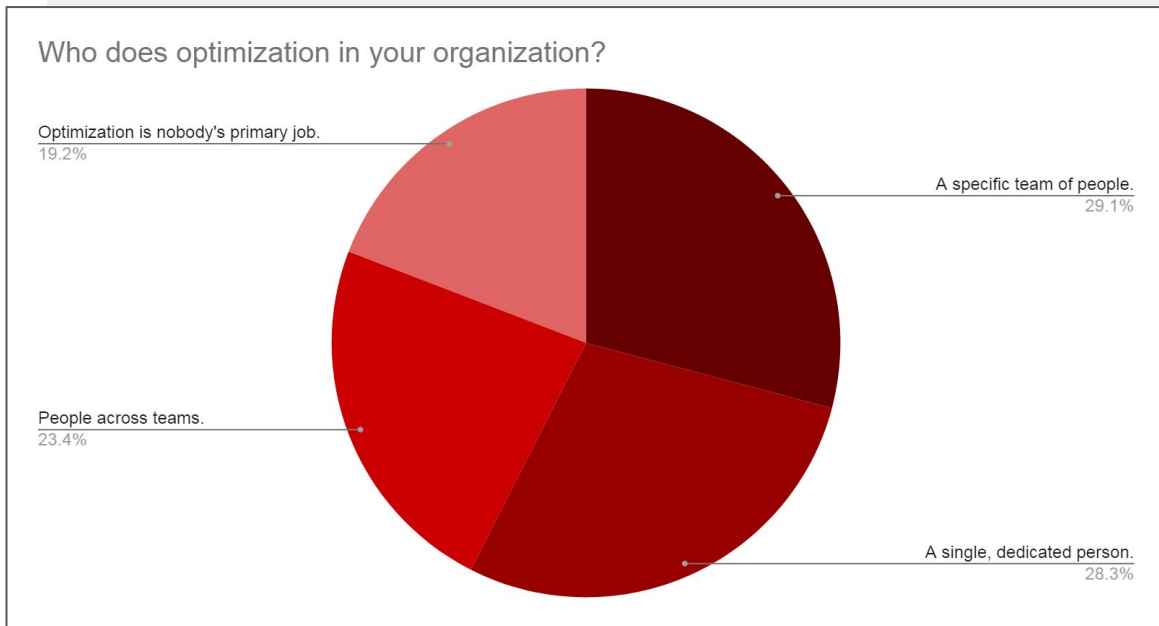
Just 9% had no process, compared to more than 25% of in-house CROs.



# Team structures

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CRO teams are split almost evenly among several setups: dedicated teams, individuals, cross-team groups, and the perilous “optimization is nobody’s primary job.”



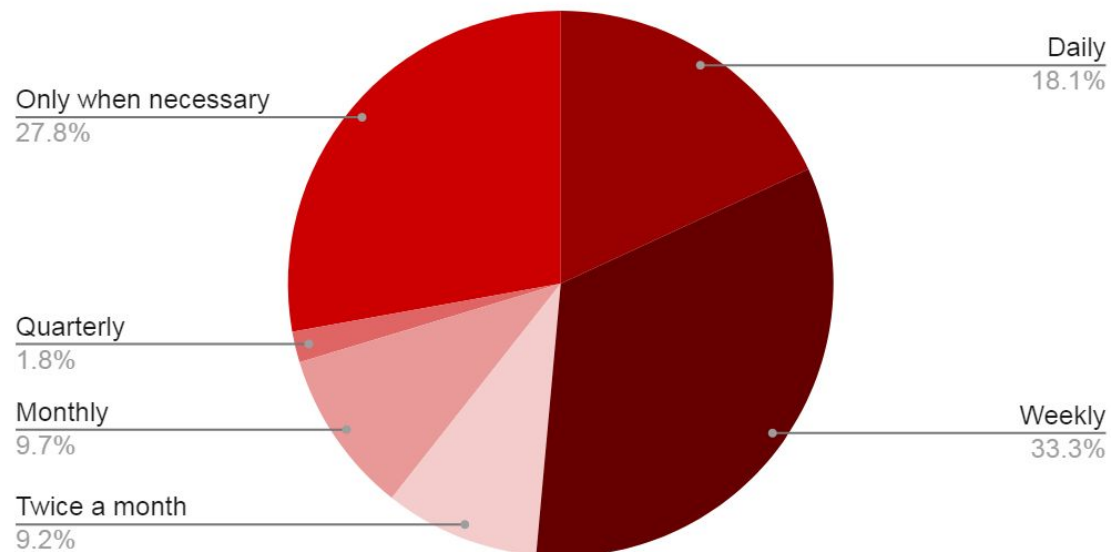
# CRO meetings

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Most CRO teams (51.4%) meet at least once per week.

While that suggests close coordination, nearly one in three teams meet only a few times per year—if at all.

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

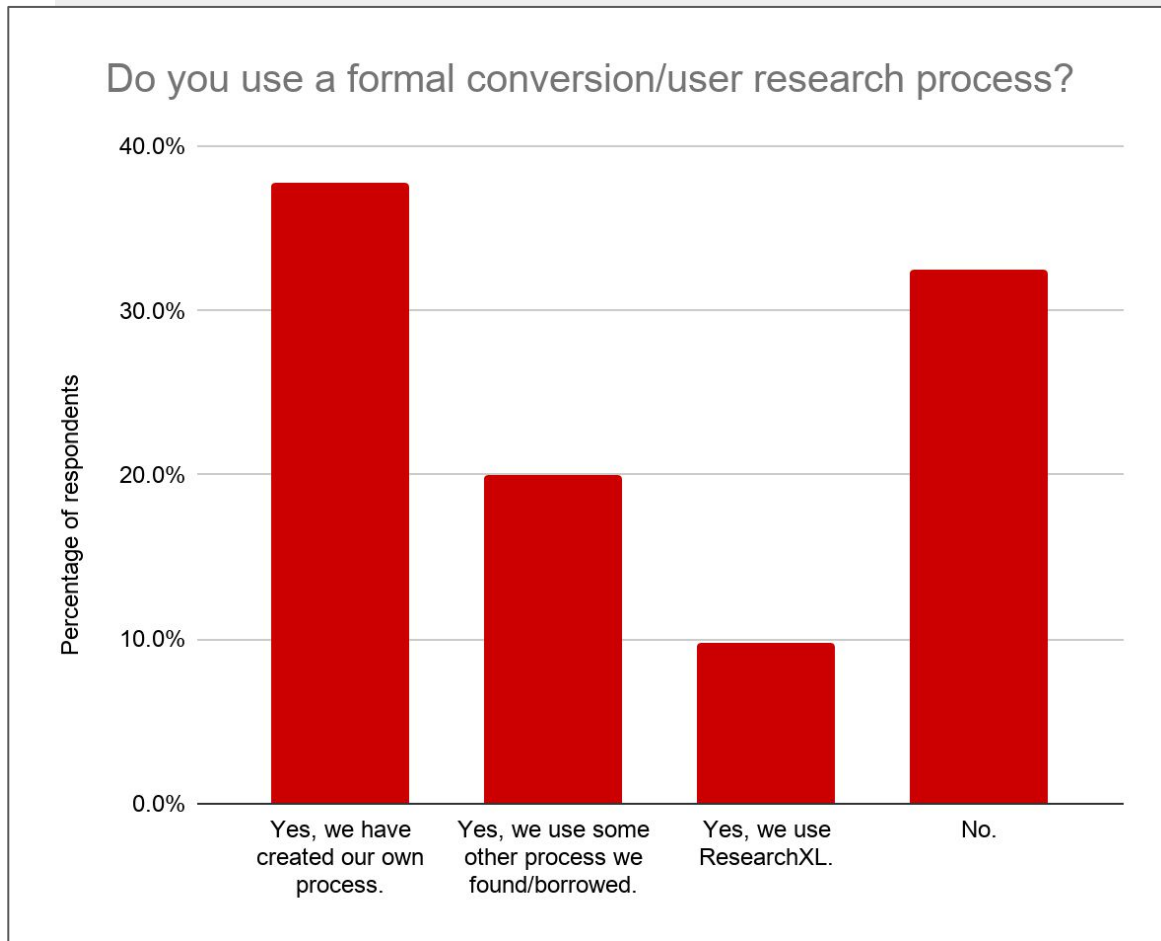


# Research processes

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If there is a research process, it's probably home grown.

Nearly one in three CROs still have no process at all for conversion research.

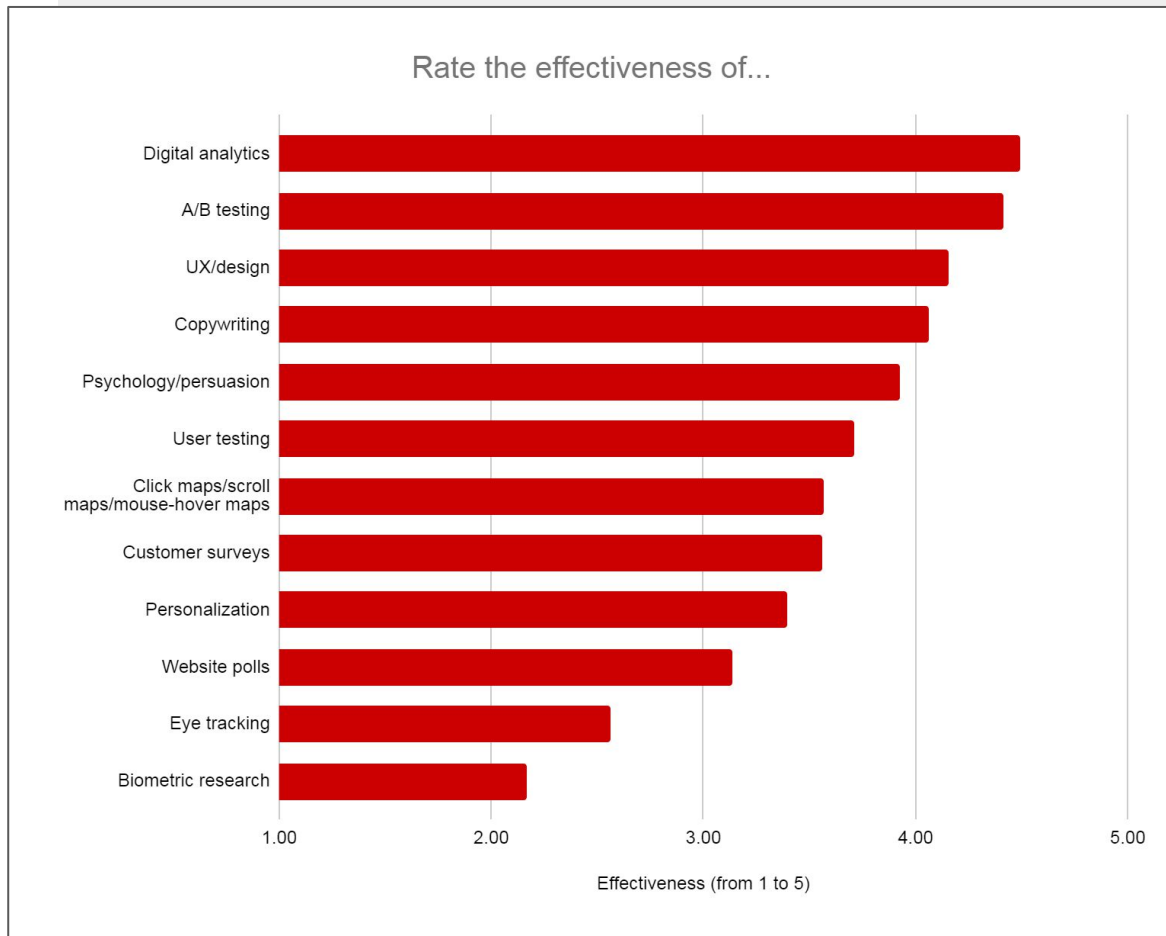


# What works?

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Digital analytics to inform A/B tests of UX and design elements (and copy) is the proven strategy for most analysts.

More complex and expensive components of CRO programs, like eye tracking and biometric research, remain near the bottom.



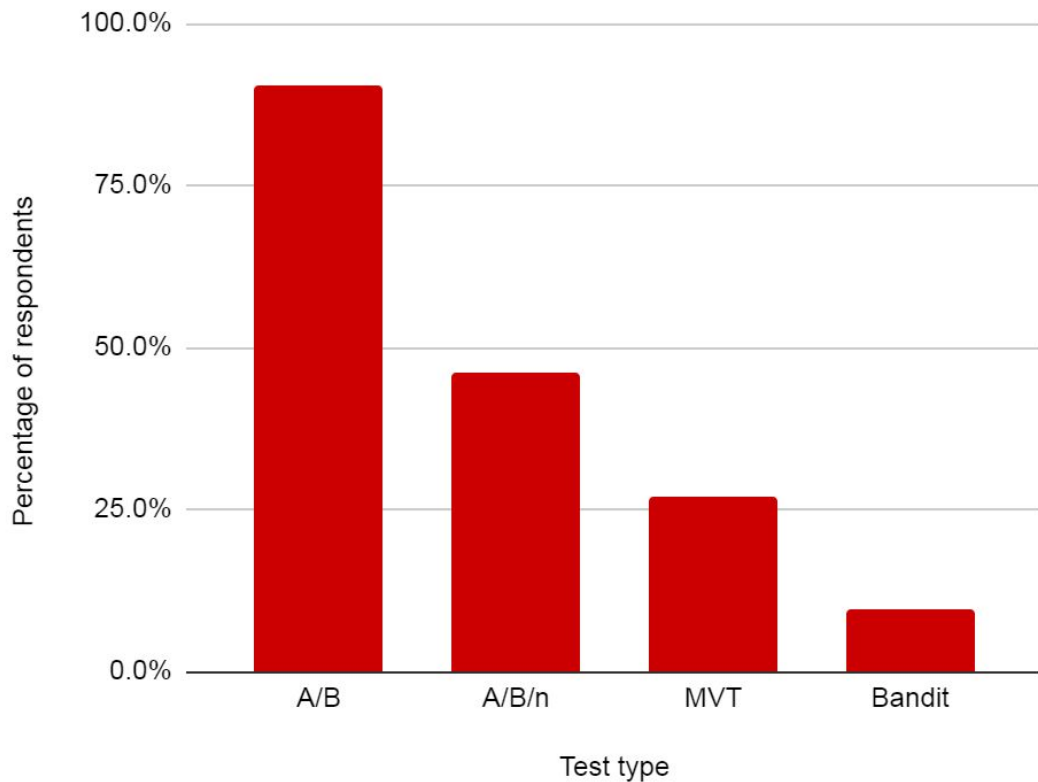
# Test types

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Almost everyone runs A/B tests. Nearly half (46.2%) also test more than one variation.

A minority run multivariate and bandit tests.

Select the types of tests that your optimization team runs...



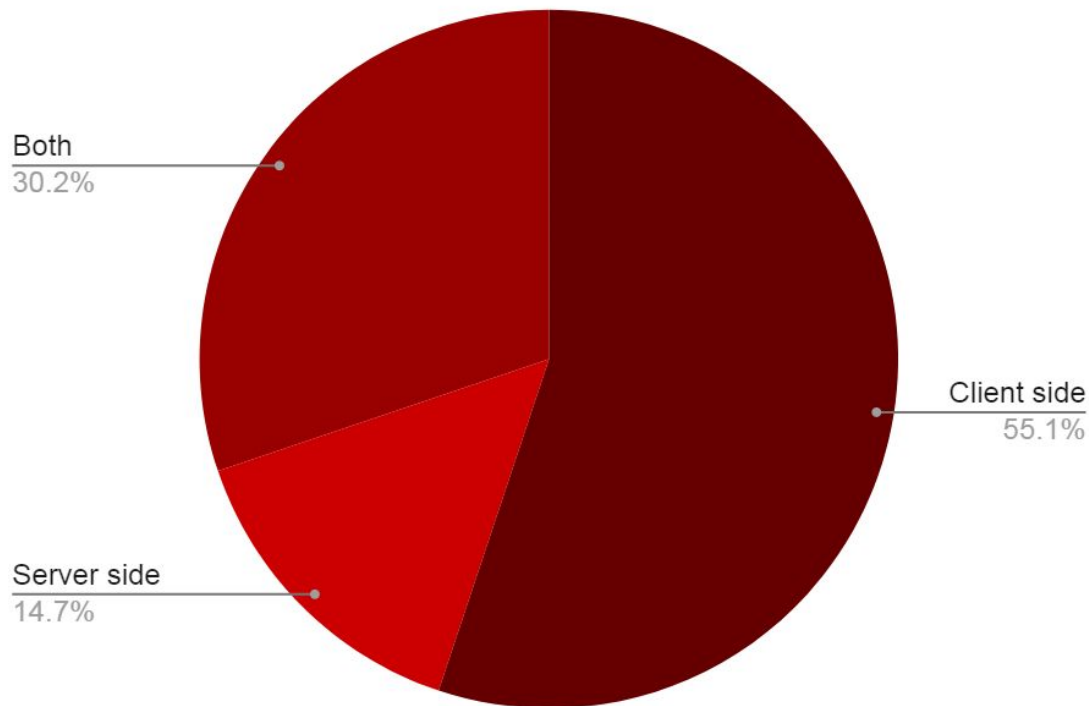
# Test setup

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Most optimizers run only client-side tests. Still, nearly 45% run server-side tests.

Some 53.8% of respondents who run only client-side tests were “not sure” whether server-side testing would be helpful.

Do you run server-side or client-side tests?



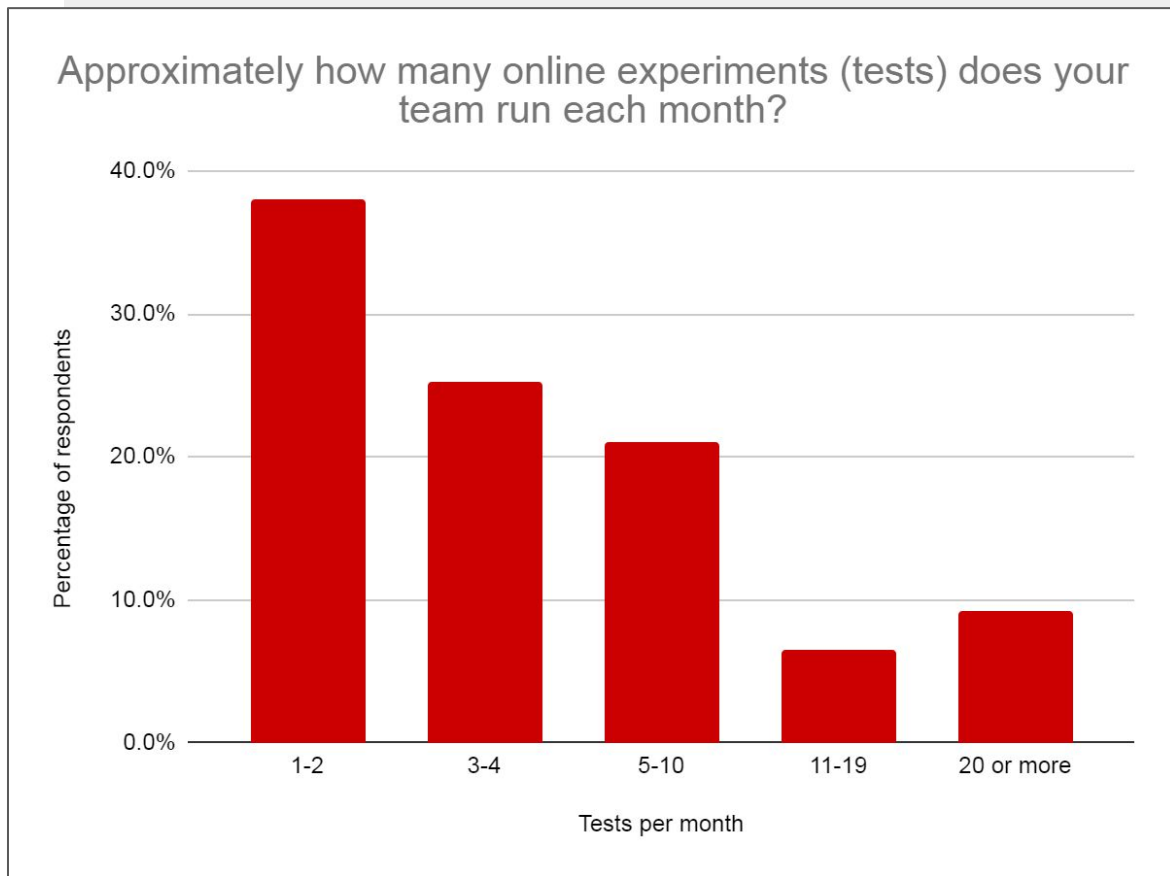
# Test velocity

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Nearly two-thirds of respondents run no more than one test per week.

Some 15.8% of organizations are plowing through an impressive 11+ tests per month.

As several respondents noted in their open-ended answers, limited traffic sometimes slows the rate of testing.

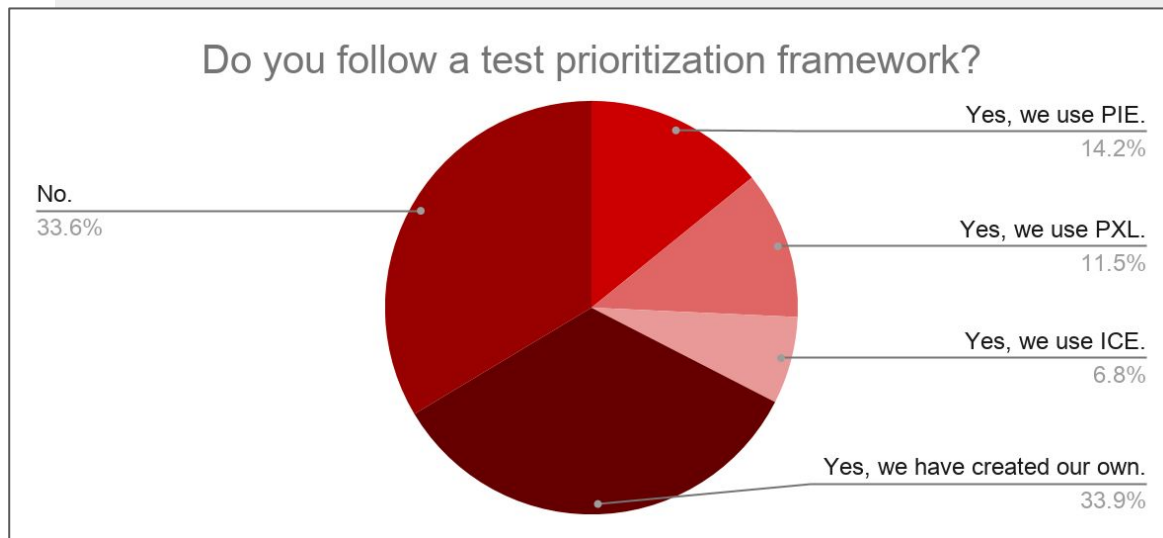


# Test prioritization

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Two-thirds of analysts aren't using a prioritization framework.

Of those who are, most use their own framework. A slim plurality using existing frameworks favor PIE over PXL or ICE.



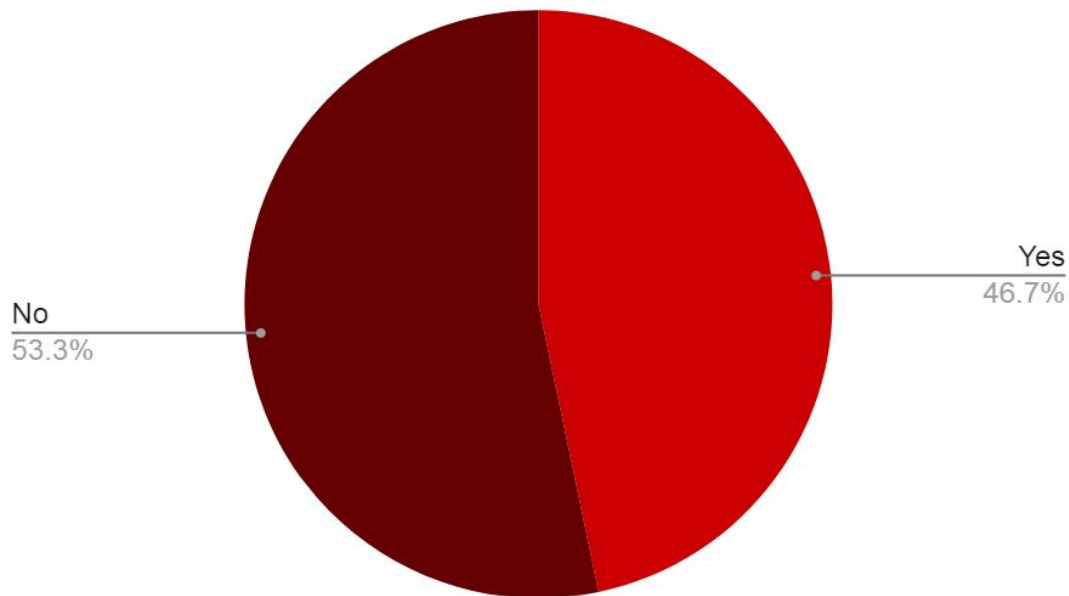
# Stopping points for A/B tests

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As in years past, less than half of all optimizers have a standardized stopping point for A/B tests.

Several respondents noted difficulties with testing statistics and, in particular, identifying whether results are statistically valid.

Does your optimization team have a standardized stopping point for A/B tests?



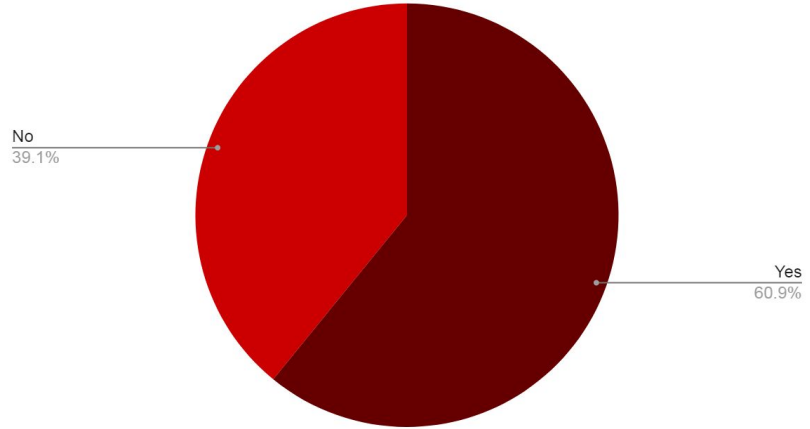
# Tracking results

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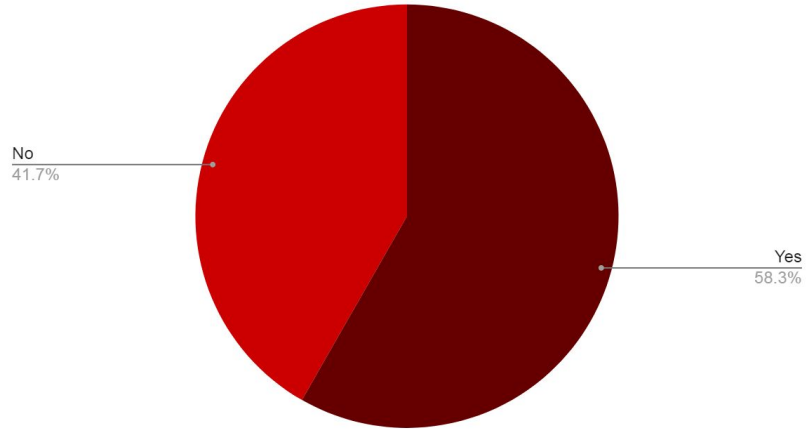
Most optimizers keep track of their win percentage when it comes to tests.

The average lift-per-test was also tracked by a majority of analysts.

Is the percentage of winning tests tracked?



Is the average lift per test tracked?

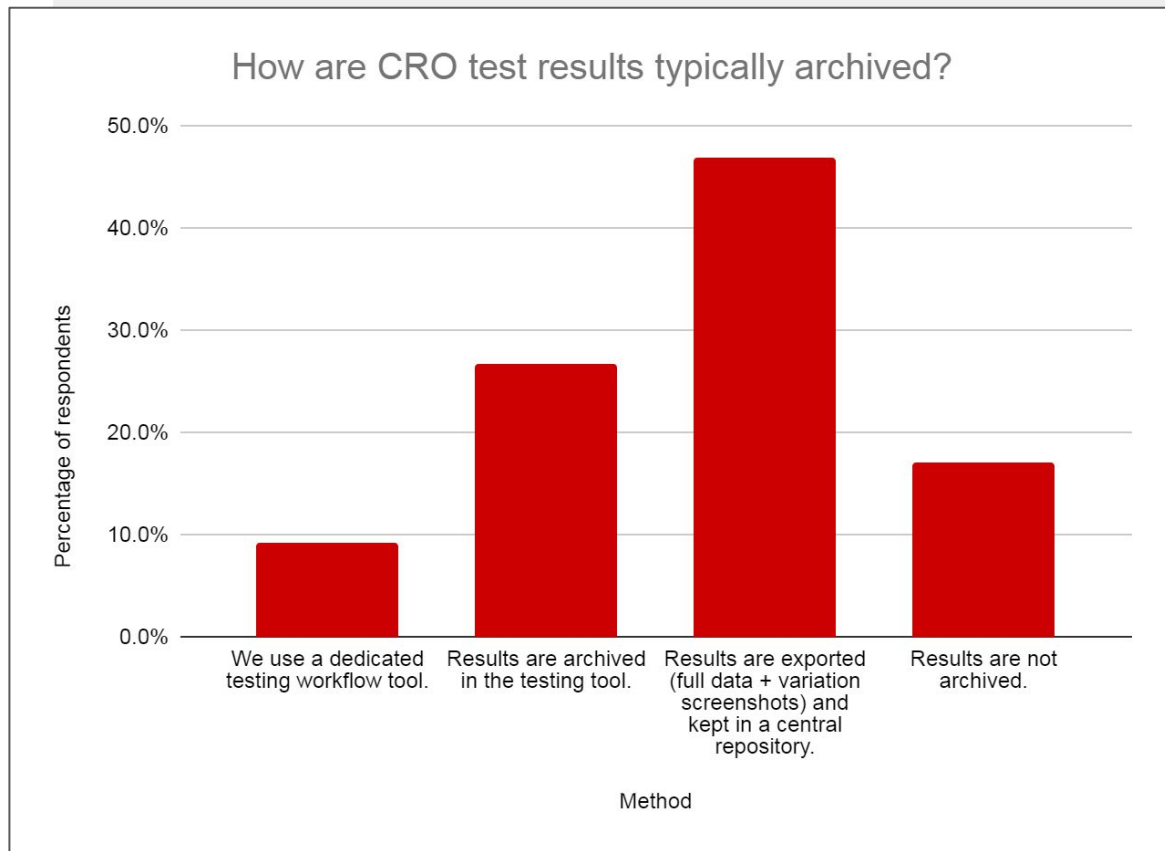


# Archiving tests

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More than 90% of optimizers archive their results.

How they're choosing to archive them varies, although nearly half (47%) do so by storing screenshots and data in a central repository.



# Sharing results

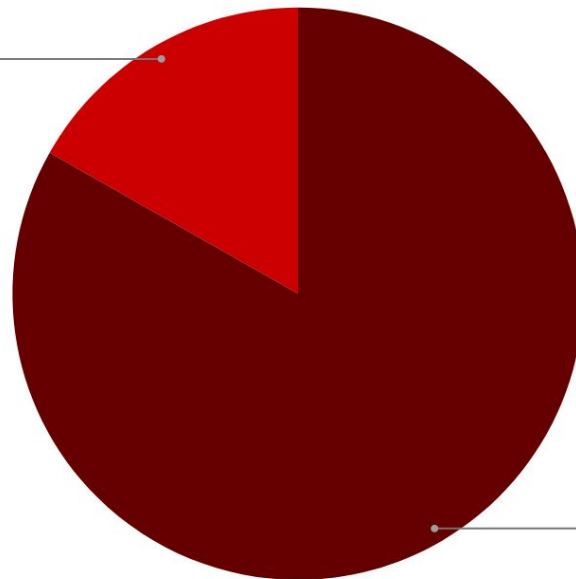
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Few can complain that conversion optimization isn't transparent.

More than 83% of optimizers share results throughout their team.

Are CRO test results shared across your team?

No  
16.8%



Yes  
83.2%

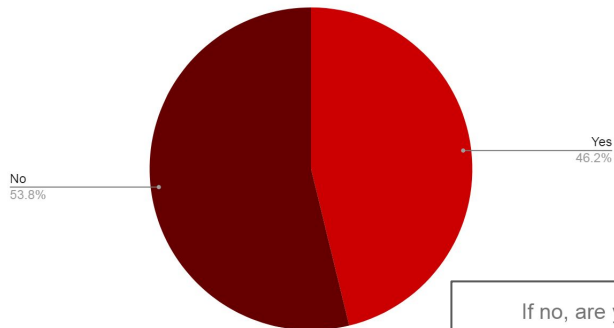
# Personalization

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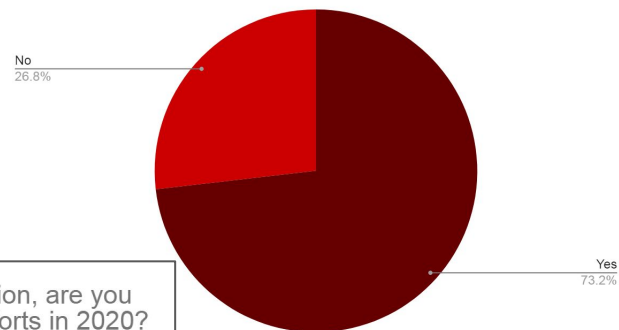
Less than half of optimizers use personalization.

But most who *don't* plan to do so in 2020. And those who do are overwhelming planning to expand efforts.

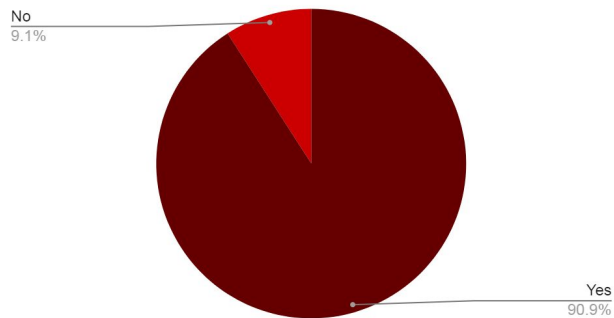
Do you use any kind of website personalization?



If no, are you planning to try personalization in 2020?



For those already using personalization, are you planning to expand personalization efforts in 2020?



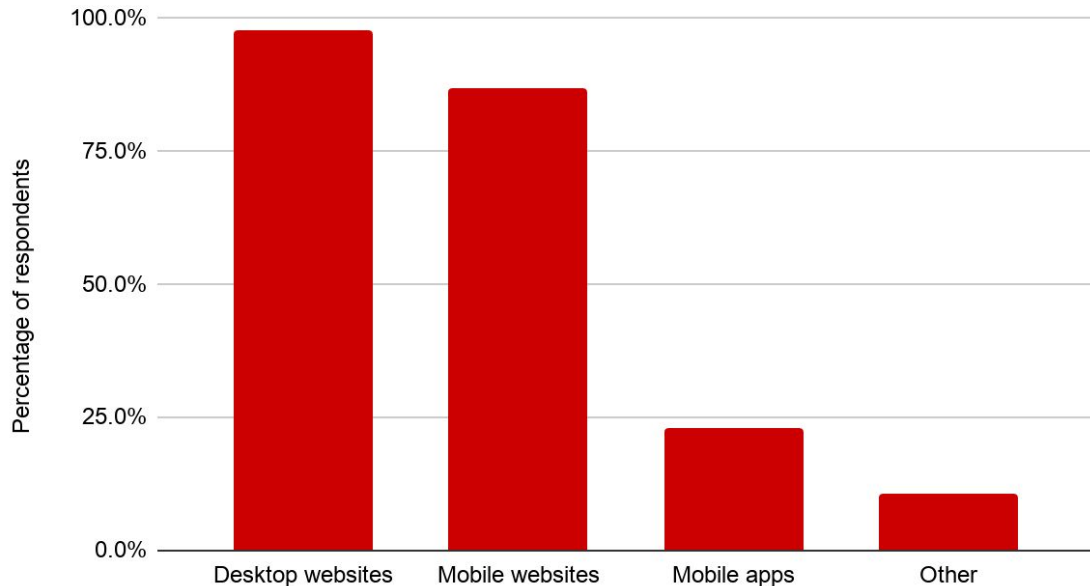
# Platforms

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Most optimizers are still working on websites. (Desktop still outpaces mobile by a bit.)

Mobile app optimization remains a niche field.

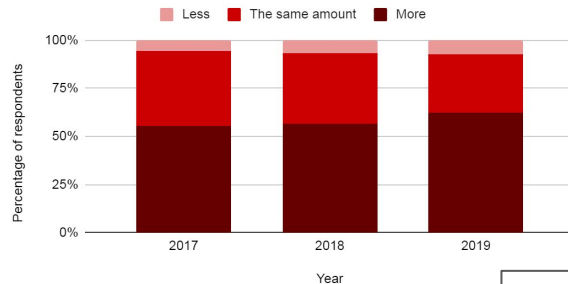
Which of the following platforms does your team optimize?



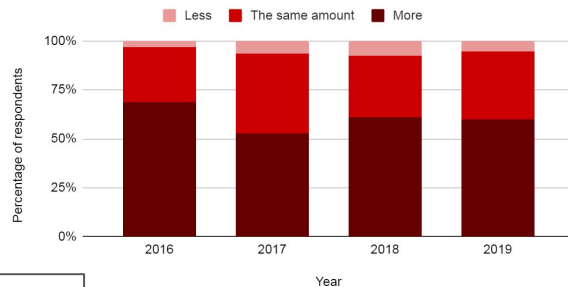
# Year-over-year comparisons

Good news: For several years running, analysts perceive CRO programs as more effective, a higher priority, and deserving of a bigger budget.

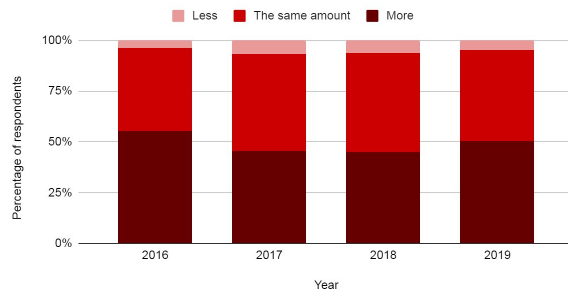
Compared to last year, how effective has conversion optimization been in your organization?



Compared to last year, how is conversion optimization prioritized in your organization?



Compared to last year, how much budget will your team allocate to conversion optimization?



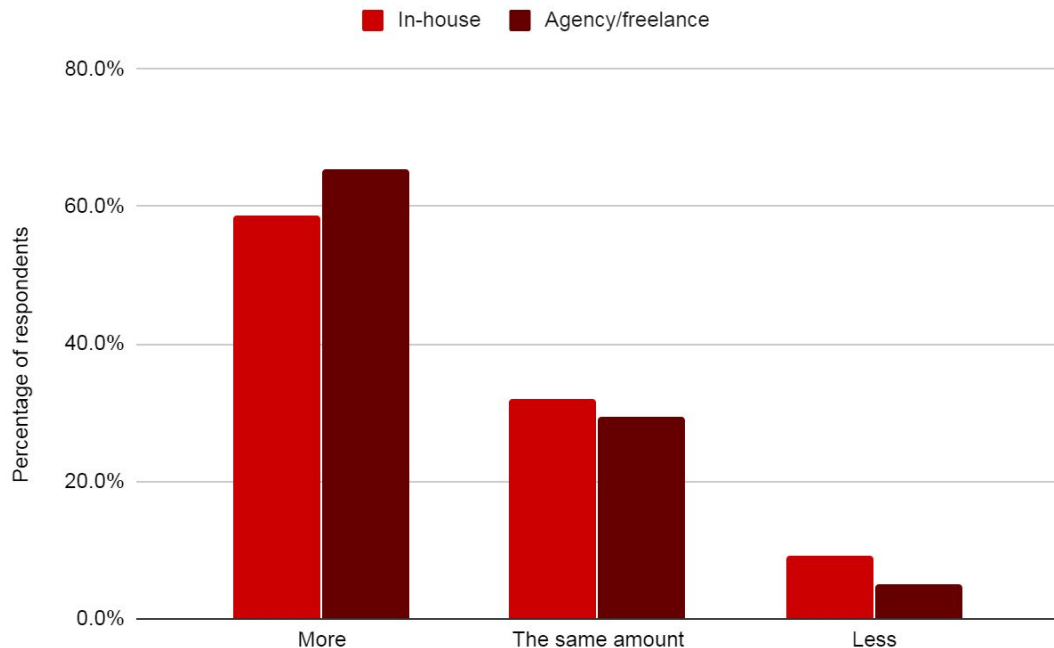
# Effectiveness by job type

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Agency/freelance CROs were more optimistic about the effectiveness of their work over the past year, although more than half of respondents in both job types cited progress.

Nearly twice as many in-house respondents felt they had been *less* effective compared to their agency peers.

Compared with 2018, how effective has conversion optimization been in your organization in 2019?

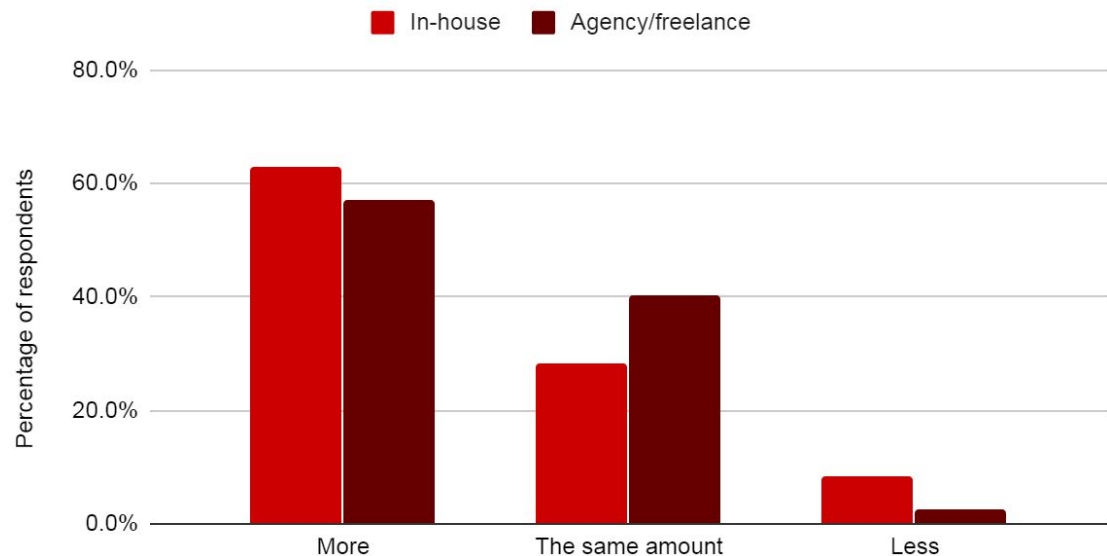


# Prioritization by job type

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Once again, most optimizers—agency and in-house—felt that CRO had become a higher priority in their company or with clients.

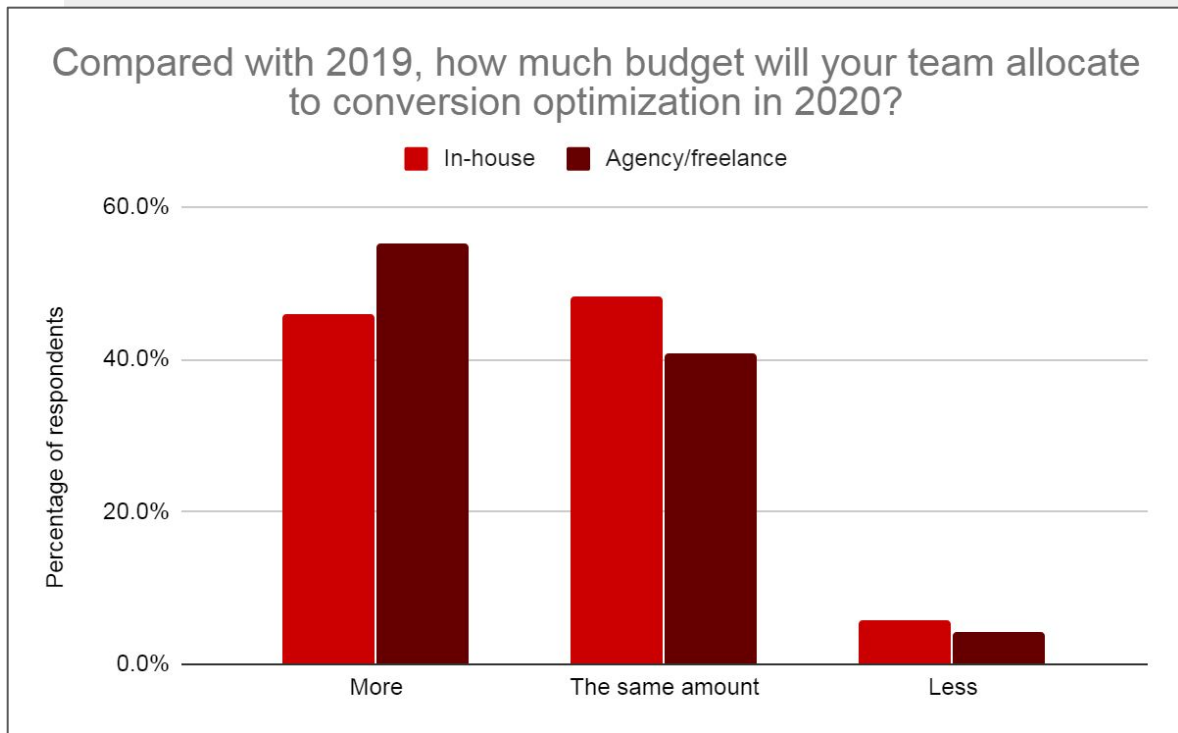
Compared with 2018, how is conversion optimization prioritized in your organization in 2019?



# Budget by job type

Agencies are succeeding more often than in-house CROs when it comes to winning a bigger budget from those who hold the purse strings.

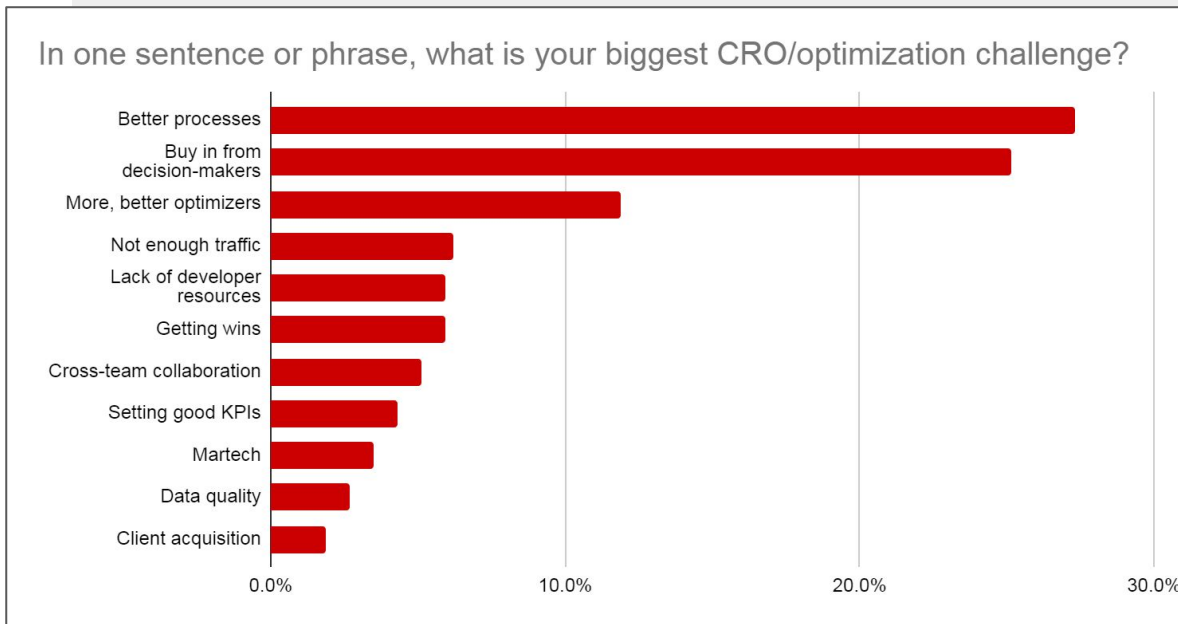
More than 55% of CROs who work with clients expect to see a budget increase in 2020.



# CRO challenges

Two challenges outpaced all others: creating processes and winning buy-in from key stakeholders.

Other challenges were related: building the right martech stack and validating data; and cross-team collaboration.



# About **CXL**

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CXL has two parts: Institute and Agency.

[CXL Institute](#) teaches digital marketers the skills they need to become the best—in digital analytics, conversion optimization, digital psychology, growth marketing, and customer acquisition—from the top 1% of practitioners.

[CXL Agency](#) is a data-driven growth and conversion optimization agency that helps some of the world's most successful businesses increase their online profits.