



The role of B2B websites

Research Results

April 2005

**The Association of Online
Publishers (AOP)**

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**The UK Association of Online
Publishers (AOP)**

Who we are

The UK Association of Online Publishers (AOP) was formed in July 2002 with three aims:

- to present a unified voice to industry and Government
- to drive standards and revenue across all sectors of online publishing
- to raise the credibility and profile of the industry



What we wanted to know

- How do strategic planning agencies view business-to-business (B2B) websites and what are the barriers to including it on the schedule?
- What kind of **relationship** do business decision makers have with B2B websites?
- What **role** do B2B websites play in the decision making (especially purchasing) process?
- How do these users **respond** to advertising on B2B websites, and what can this tell us about its effectiveness?

- Independent market research company
IPSOS RSL undertook survey work
- Two phases:
 1. In-depth interviews with strategic planning agencies
 - 12 telephone depth interviews with execs in 9 agencies, involved in:
 - media strategy/selection
 - b2b planning
 - Interviews completed 1 Nov – 22 Nov 2004
 2. 366 telephone interviews with business decision makers
 - Using Dun & Bradstreet sample
 - Representative of UK business industry
 - Interviews completed 11 Jan – 28 Jan 2005

- B2B media websites, carrying: news, editorial features, analysis
- Respondents given list of 4-5 websites dependent on sector, e.g.
 - IT:
 - *ComputerWeekly.com*
 - *VNUnet.com*
 - *Techworld.com*
 - *Silicon.com*
 - Catering:
 - *Caterer-Online.com*
 - *HotelandRestaurant.co.uk*
 - *ThePublican.com*
 - *RestaurantMagazine.co.uk*

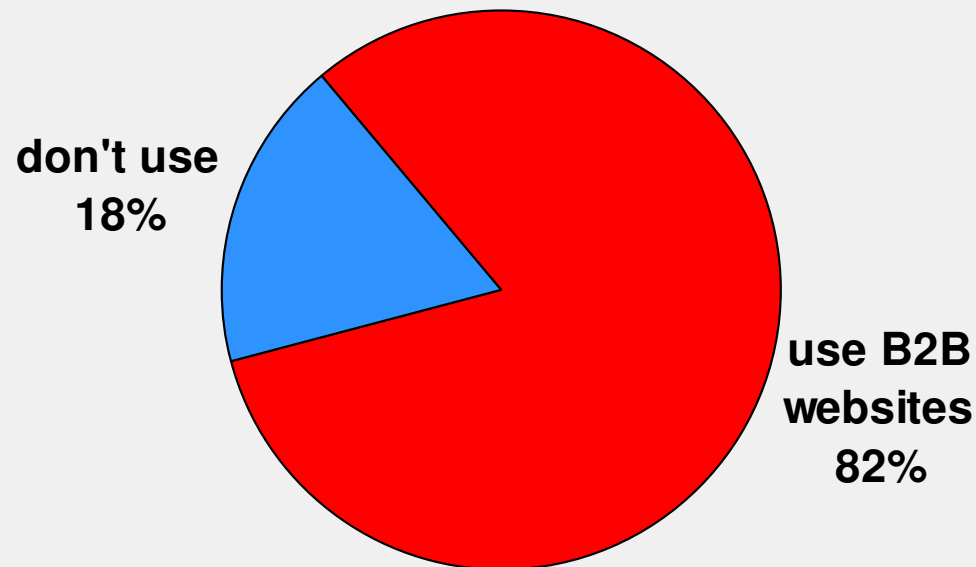
Agency views on B2B websites:
attitudes and barriers

- Individual agency structures are key
- Main selling point of online is direct response, though not exclusively
- Key strengths are accountability and audience targeting capabilities
- Key weakness is its potential to be intrusive
- Main barrier: lack of knowledge and misconceptions among agency decision makers
- B2b online will grow and usage will become more sophisticated and integrated (with site content and other media in the campaign mix)

Use of B2B websites by business
decision makers

High penetration

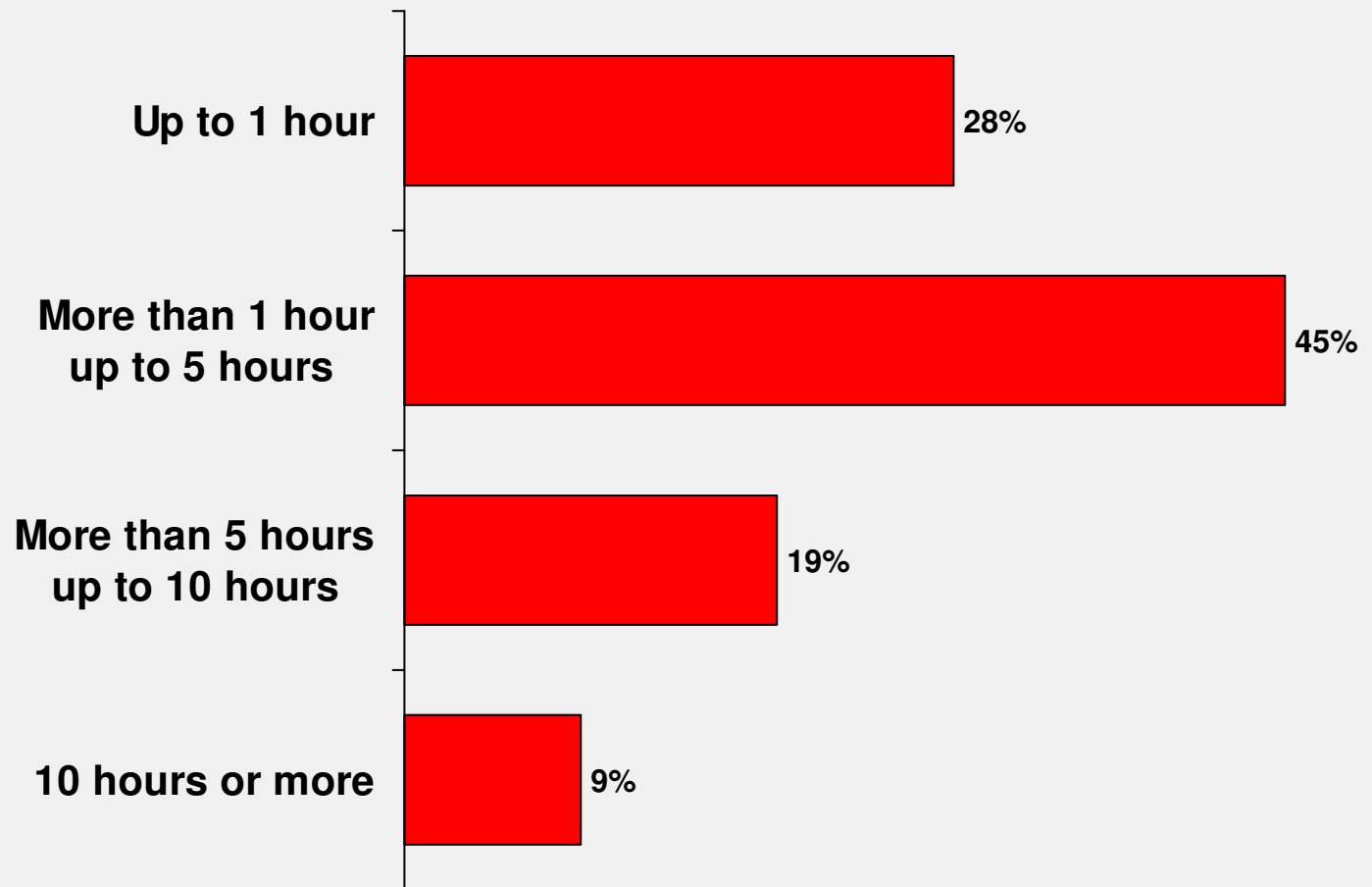
- B2B websites have achieved a high penetration among target decision makers
- 4 out of 5 using these sites



Base: All respondents (366)

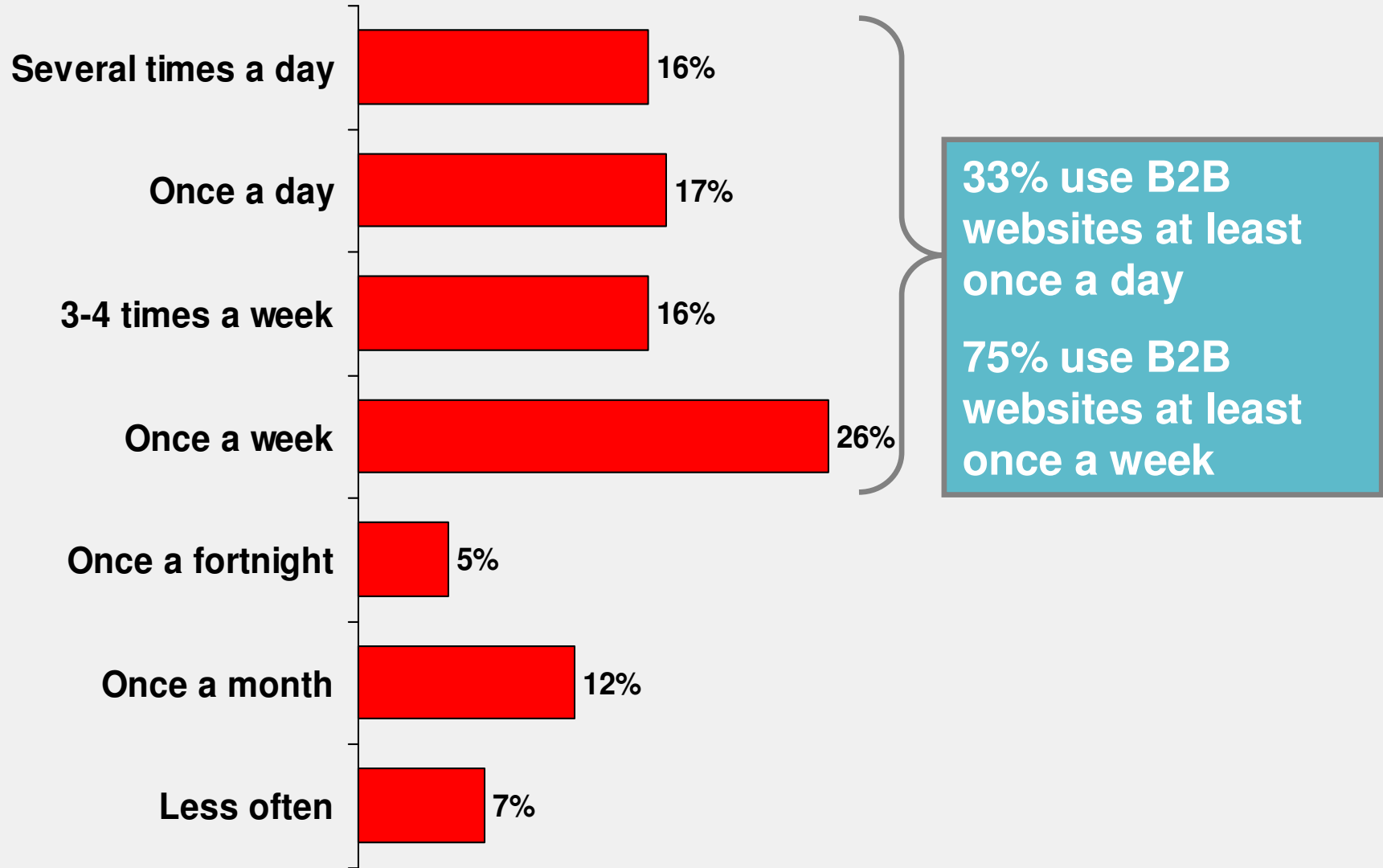
They are heavy users

- BDMs spend an average of almost **an hour per day** online, for work purposes, or **4.8 hours per week**



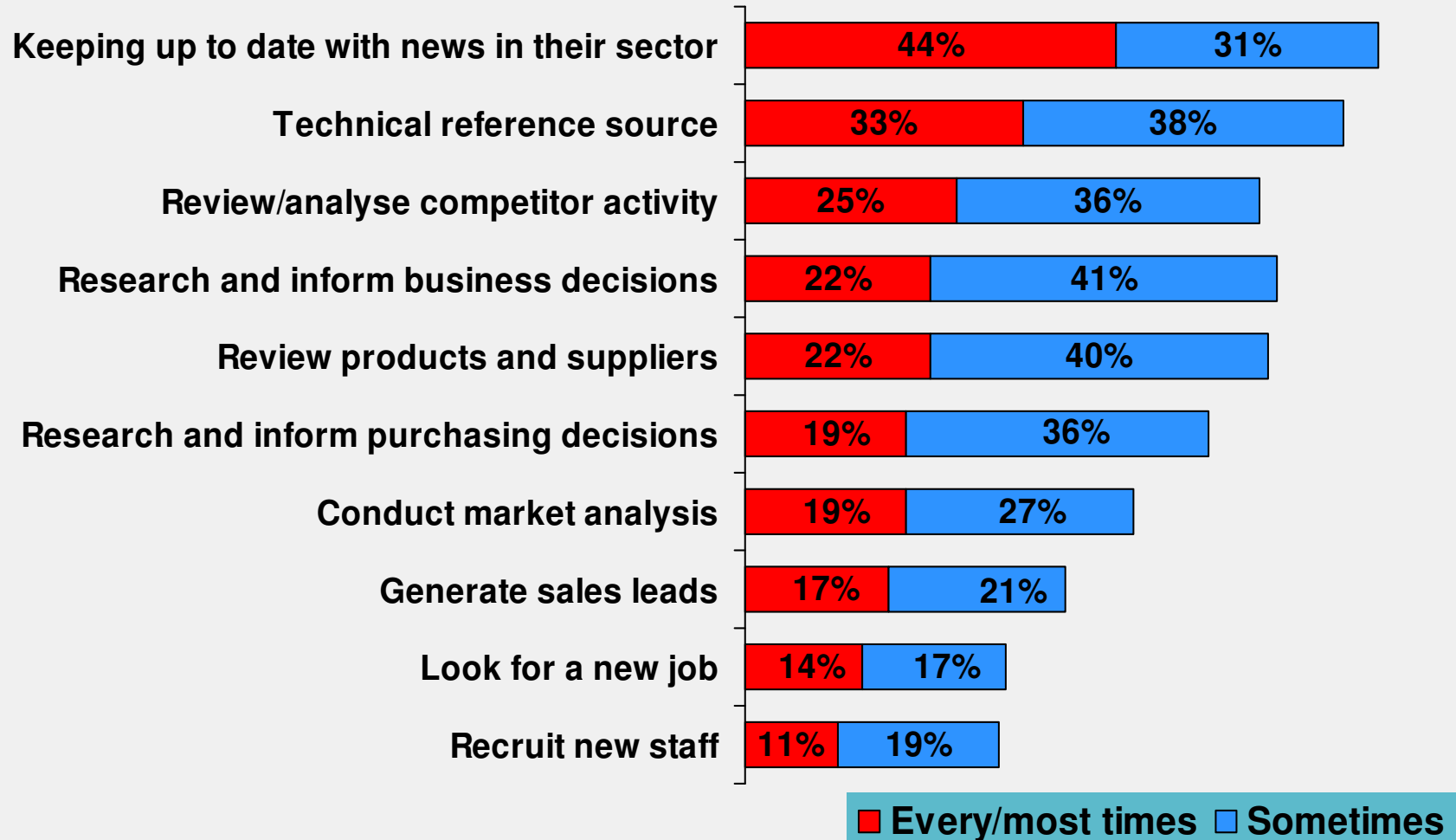
Base: All respondents who use web for work (300)

And visit these sites frequently



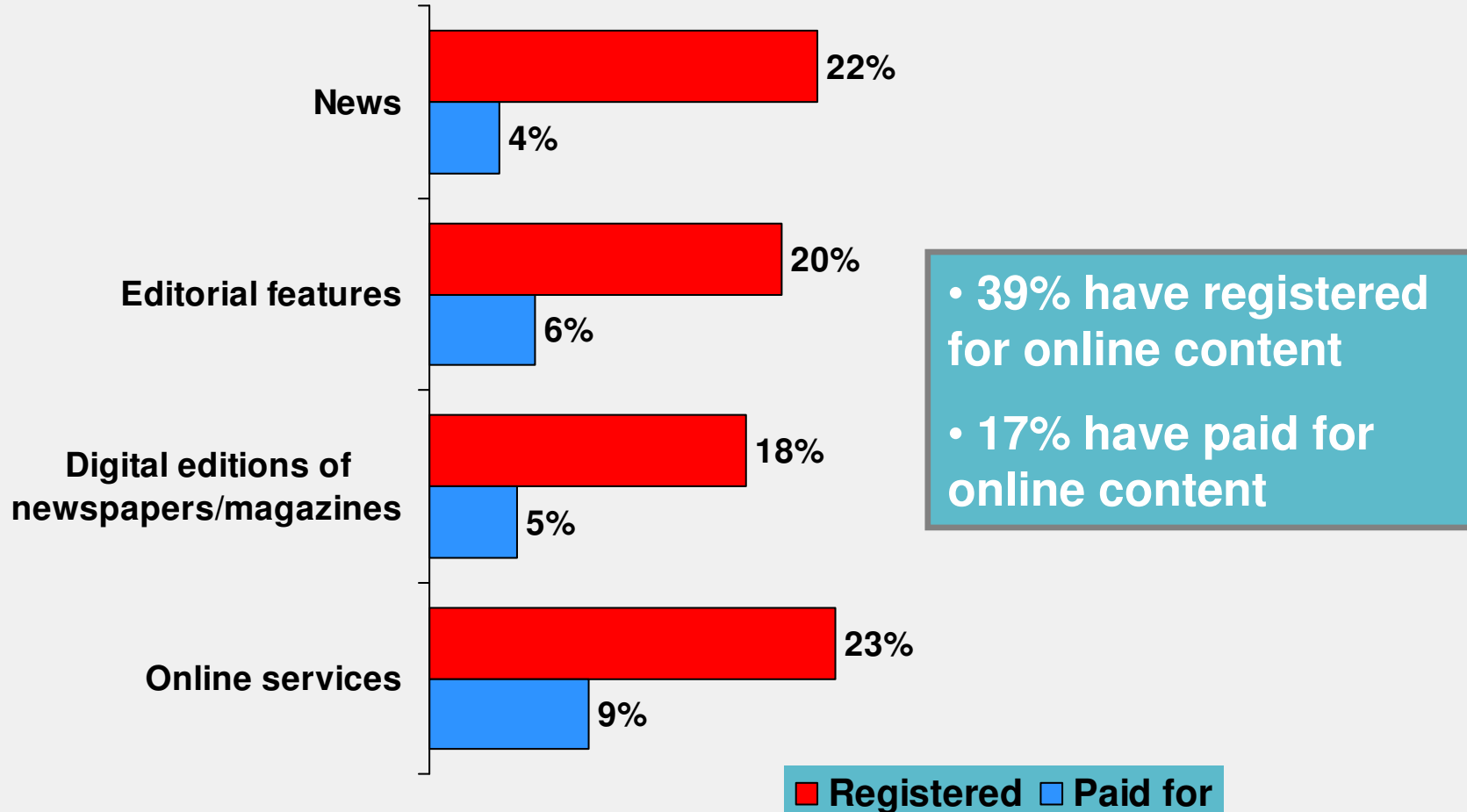
Base: All respondents who use web for work (300)

An integral part of the workflow



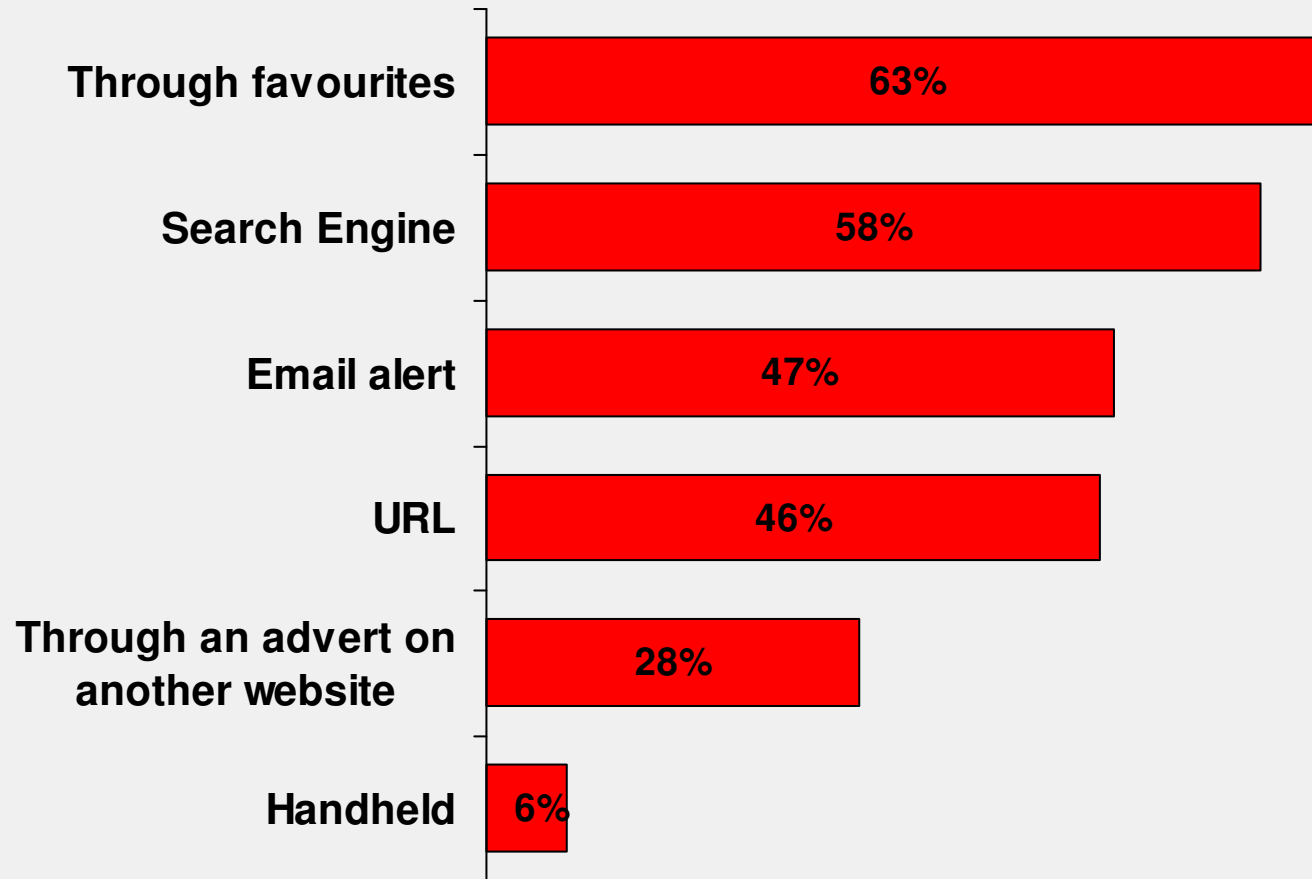
Base: All respondents who use web for work (300)

Registration and paid-for content



Base: All respondents who use web for work (300)

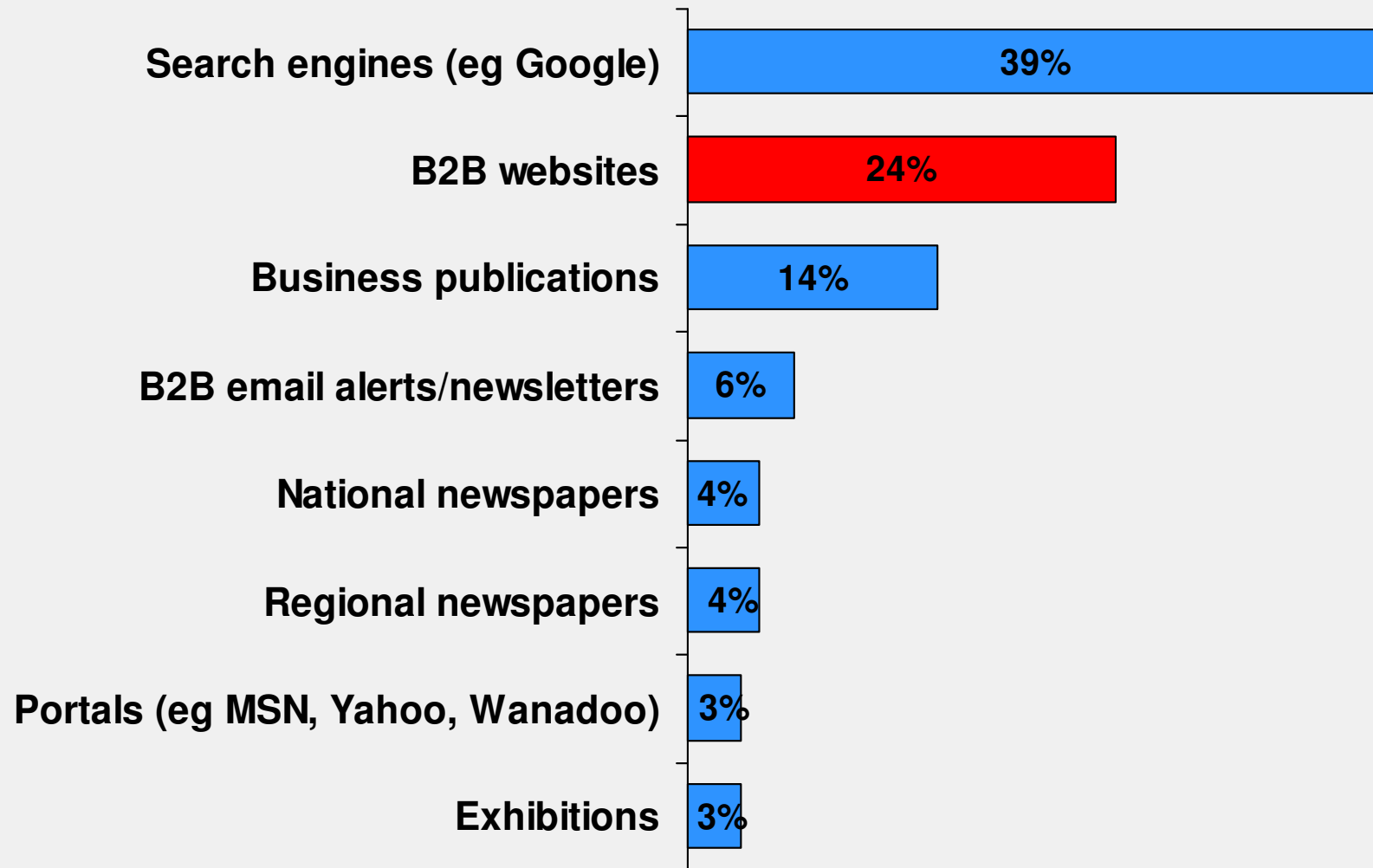
Most often accessed via Favourites



Base: All those who use B2B websites (300)

Perceptions and attitudes
towards B2B websites

Most useful media source for finding work-related information



Base: All those who use B2B websites (300)

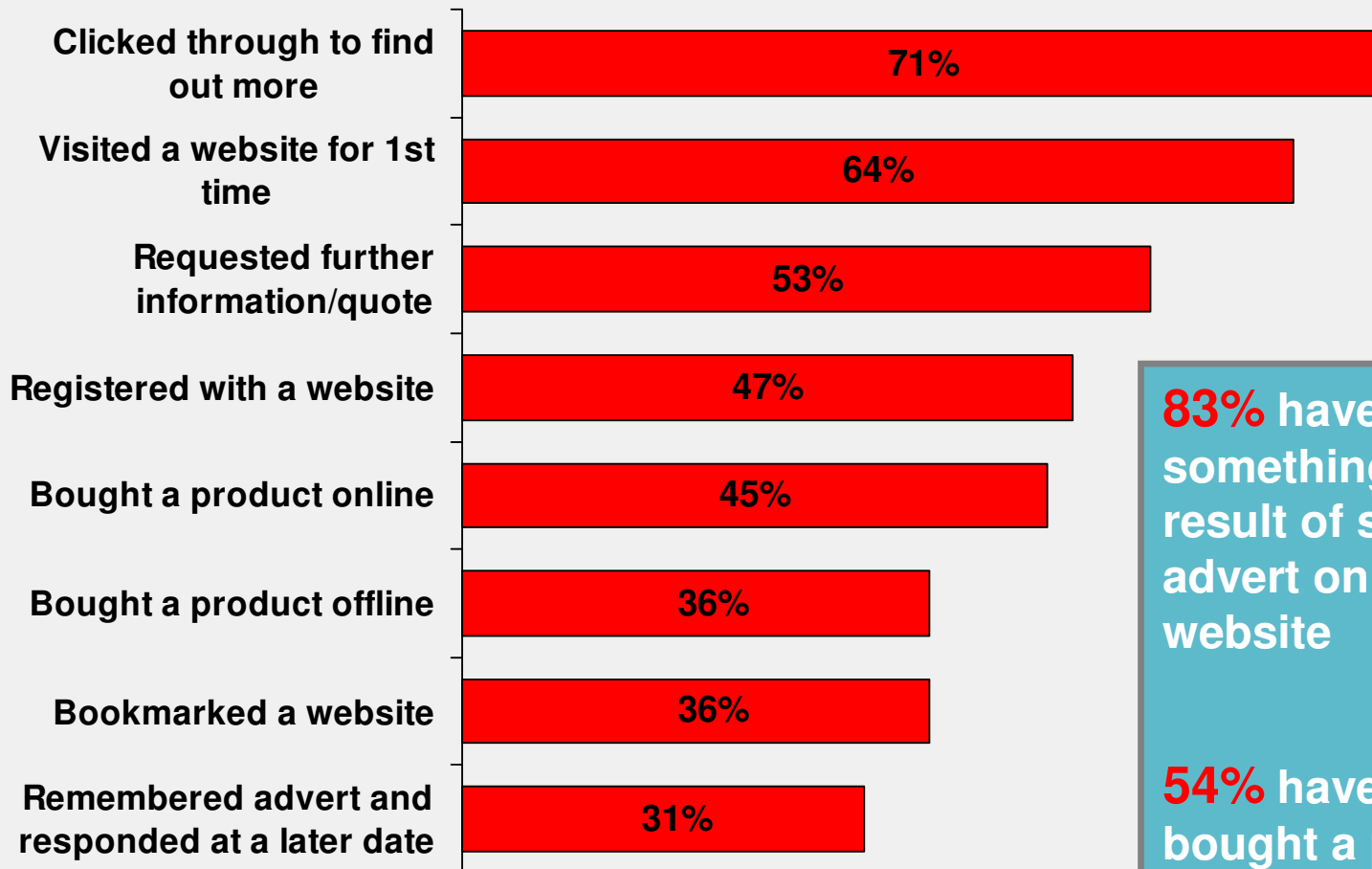
Perceptions on B2B websites

- 73% agree B2B websites provide useful information on products and services
- 70% expect their usage of B2B websites to increase over the next two years
- 64% agree B2B websites are a trustworthy source of information in their industry
- 63% would recommend b2b websites to a colleague
- 58% agree there are a good range of B2B websites relevant to them in their line of work
- 53% agree B2B websites are an essential source of information in their work

Advertising on B2B websites

They actively respond to advertising on B2B websites

- Actions taken as a result of seeing an ad on a B2B website



83% have done something as a result of seeing an advert on a B2B website

54% have either bought a product on or offline.

Base: All those who use B2B websites (300)

- 83% have done something as a result of seeing an advert on a B2B website
- 63% see B2B websites as a modern environment for a company to advertise
- 54% have purchased a product as a result of seeing an advert on a B2B website
- 45% agree that B2B websites contain advertising and links that are useful to them in their job
- 40% agree that B2B ads less intrusive than those on other websites (compared to 22% who disagree and 37% who don't know)

Conclusions

Outcomes against objectives

1. How do strategic planning agencies view business-to-business (B2B) websites and what are the barriers to including it on the schedule?
2. What kind of **relationship** do business decision makers have with B2B websites?
3. What **role** do B2B websites play in the decision making (especially purchasing) process?
4. How do these users **respond** to advertising on B2B websites, and what can this tell us about its effectiveness?

- 82% of Business Decision Makers use B2B websites
- Among those using B2B websites:
 - 75% use B2B websites once a week or more often
 - 75% use to keep up to date with news in their sector
 - 39% have registered for online content and 17% have paid for online content
 - 70% expect their usage of B2B websites to increase over the next two years
 - 64% feel B2B websites are a trustworthy source of information
 - B2B websites are accessed via a number of different methods, most often through Favourites

Role in purchasing process

- Regarded as the primary media source of work-related information, more so than business publications, national newspapers, or portals
- Of the 82% of BDMs who use B2B websites:
 - 73% agree B2B websites provide useful information on products and services
 - 62% say they use B2B websites to review products and suppliers
 - 55% say they use B2B websites to research and inform purchasing decisions

Agency concerns about B2B websites from Stage 1:

1. Better for direct response than brand building

- 64% find that B2B sites are a trustworthy source of information
- 63% believe that B2B sites provide a modern environment for a company to advertise
- >50% visit to research and inform business decisions
- 31% remembered ad and responded at later date

2. Potential to be intrusive

- 40% agree that advertising on B2B sites is less intrusive than other websites

3. Lack of understanding (agency decision makers)

- That's where this research comes in!

Agency view:

“B2B online will grow and usage will become more sophisticated and integrated”

- 70% of BDMs expect their usage of B2B websites to increase over the next two years
- 63% see B2B websites as a modern environment for a company to advertise

Any questions?

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