



CallRail

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# **2025 marketing outlook for law firms: Translating rising optimism into greater revenue**



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After gritting their way through the past few years, many law firms are looking to 2025 with renewed optimism and growing confidence in their marketing efforts.

Freed from the economic pressures that restrained past initiatives, law firms are expanding their marketing strategies during a period of rapid change driven by advances in AI and machine learning. To capitalize on this optimism, firms must adjust their strategies and budgets thoughtfully — which will require them to overcome what past surveys show to be a persistent industry challenge: a lack of reporting confidence.

With smaller budgets, limited resources, and multitasking attorneys, legal marketing has always had to work harder. AI-powered tools now offer unprecedented opportunities to enhance efficiency and impact. At the same time, firms must continue focusing on fundamentals like ROI measurement and campaign optimization to remain competitive and fully leverage emerging technologies.

This report captures insights from dozens of professionals at U.S. law firms, offering a snapshot of the industry's marketing priorities and strategies for 2025. It highlights how marketing analytics tools will be key to overcoming challenges, achieving client acquisition goals, and maximizing ROI.



**Growing economic optimism in the legal industry for 2025.**

**71%** of firms expect increases in revenue and the number of clients in 2025

**Optimism doesn't mean things will be easy, as around half expect client acquisition and retention to be more challenging in 2025.**

**55%** believe that client acquisition will be more challenging in 2025 than it was in 2024

**49%** believe that client retention will be more challenging in 2025 than it was in 2024

# Key findings



**Law firms struggle with marketing metrics for a variety of reasons, but budgetary restrictions are not the challenge.**

**41%** of law firms believe their metrics are incomplete

**22%** of law firms believe their metrics are unreliable

**20%** of law firms believe they lack the right tools

**10%** of law firms believe they lack the budget for reporting tools

**Law firms are more confident in executing marketing strategies and understand the role marketing plays in attracting new clients.**



**84%**

of law firms are confident that their firm's current marketing strategies will drive new clients

**Marketing budgets are still restrained for many law firms, but most expect increased budgets in 2025.**

**24%**

of law firms spend 10% or less of their total budget on marketing expenses



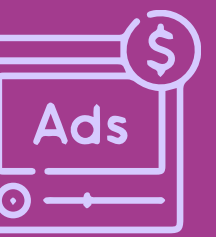
**67%**

of law firms are confident that they can efficiently understand the impact of marketing campaigns



**86%**

of law firms expect more money to be spent on marketing in 2025 than in 2024



**Calls remain the leading choice for prospective clients to contact law firms, while channels that may be viewed as slower or more impersonal are less popular.**

**90%**

of law firms have prospective clients who first reach out via phone

**57%**

of law firms have prospective clients who first reach out via web form

**35%**

of law firms have prospective clients who first reach out via email

**20%**

of law firms have prospective clients who first reach out via live chat or chatbot

Regardless of which channels clients use, slow responses (and no response) risk losing clients. Research consistently shows the importance of a “speed-to-lead” mentality, with other surveys finding that 78% of customers go with the first responder. Yet most law firms don’t have the data to measure the impact of their response times.

**50%**

Only 50% of law firms respond to prospects within an hour, yet 98% believe clients are satisfied with their response times.

**50%**

of law firms cannot estimate the number of clients lost annually due to slow responses, and nearly 9/10 law firms cannot quantify the associated revenue loss.



# The state of marketing at law firms

Law firms are bringing economic optimism and rising confidence in marketing strategies into 2025, but challenges remain across the board. From measuring and optimizing low ROI campaigns to finding the right mix of channels for their audience, law firms will be putting their relatively slim (but growing!) budgets to the test.

## What does the marketing team look like at law firms?

Most law firms are working with outside resources on their marketing strategies and execution. Still, despite busy caseloads and the need to bill every possible hour, 42% of law firms acknowledge that attorneys are primarily responsible for their own marketing. Thus, a large incentive exists to accelerate marketing efforts with new technology like AI and to get better insights into the impact of marketing activities. That way, attorneys can get back to billable hours — instead of building ROI reports for hours.



**59%**

work with a marketing agency



**24%**

work with marketing consultants



**16%**

work with freelancers



**16%**

do not outsource marketing work

## What challenges will law firms face in their marketing strategies?



Despite more than four out of every five law firms being confident in their marketing strategy, there are still many hurdles to overcome before they see the full return on their investments. Whether it's budget and time-strapped firms wasting precious hours and dollars yet still struggling to keep up with the competition — law firms recognize room for improvement over last year's marketing strategy and tactics.

**53%**

of law firms believe they wasted money on low ROI marketing campaigns last year

**47%**

believe that client retention will be more challenging in 2025 than it was in 2024

**39%**

of law firms believe their metrics are not complete

**55%**

believe that client acquisition will be more challenging in 2025 than it was in 2024

**50%**

of law firms believe they wasted time on low ROI marketing campaigns last year

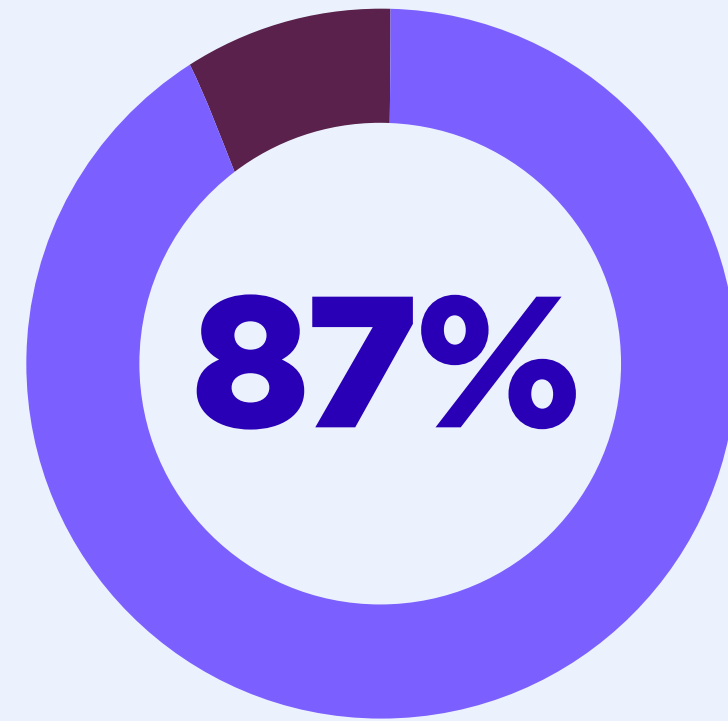
**41%**

of law firms believe their competitors do a better job of marketing than their firm

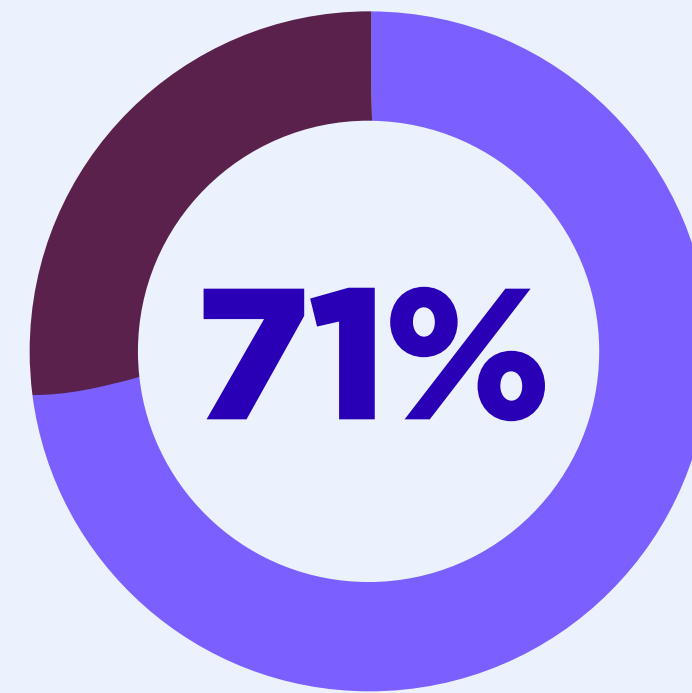


## What areas are law firms confident in or improving in their marketing strategies?

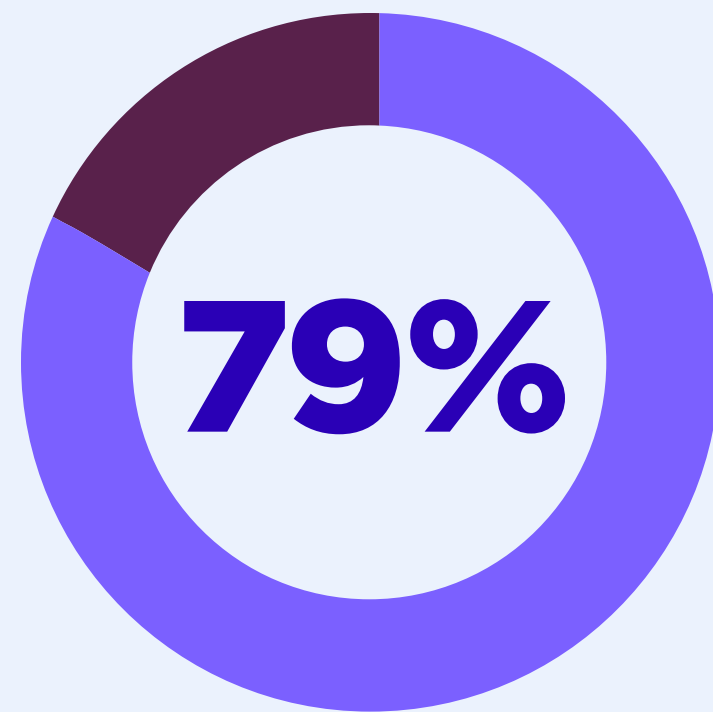
Despite some tactical, campaign-level misfires last year, most marketers believe they are on the right track with their current strategy and have taken steps to formalize it.



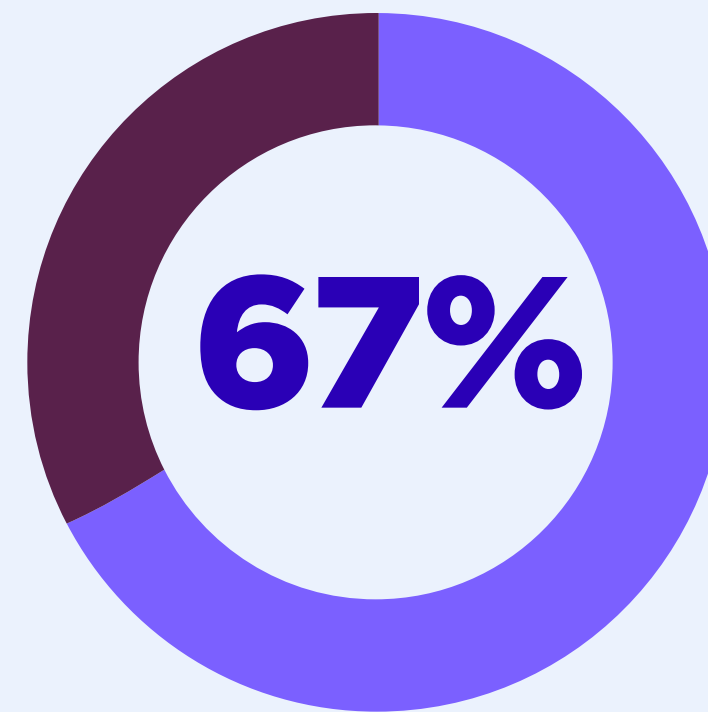
of law firms know which marketing activities generate their clients



of law firms have an approval process in place for marketing and business development, and the same number believe it is efficient



of law firms are confident that their current marketing strategies will drive new clients



of law firms believe their process to understand the impact of marketing campaigns is efficient

Most law firms recognize the importance of — and remain confident in — their marketing strategy, but the changes they make this year to address their challenges in execution and reporting could reveal whether the confidence is misplaced. Finding and fixing low ROI campaigns, in particular, will be crucial for firms that want to maximize their budget and capitalize on the opportunities in front of them.

Bringing in the right marketing analytics tools will also be a top priority in 2025 to continuously improve their marketing and boost ROI. With tools like Call Tracking and Form Tracking, marketers can uncover the insights they need to optimize spend and understand campaign performance, helping them staunch wasteful spending that threatens client acquisition and retention efforts.

# Lead generation remains a key focus

With the majority of law firms acknowledging that client acquisition will remain a challenge in 2025, firms will need to be laser-focused on cost-efficient lead generation. That challenge is magnified by the legal industry's unique nature and its need to constantly generate new leads. In that spirit, many law firms are doubling down on the marketing channels that they've found success in recently while pulling back from poor-performing ones.

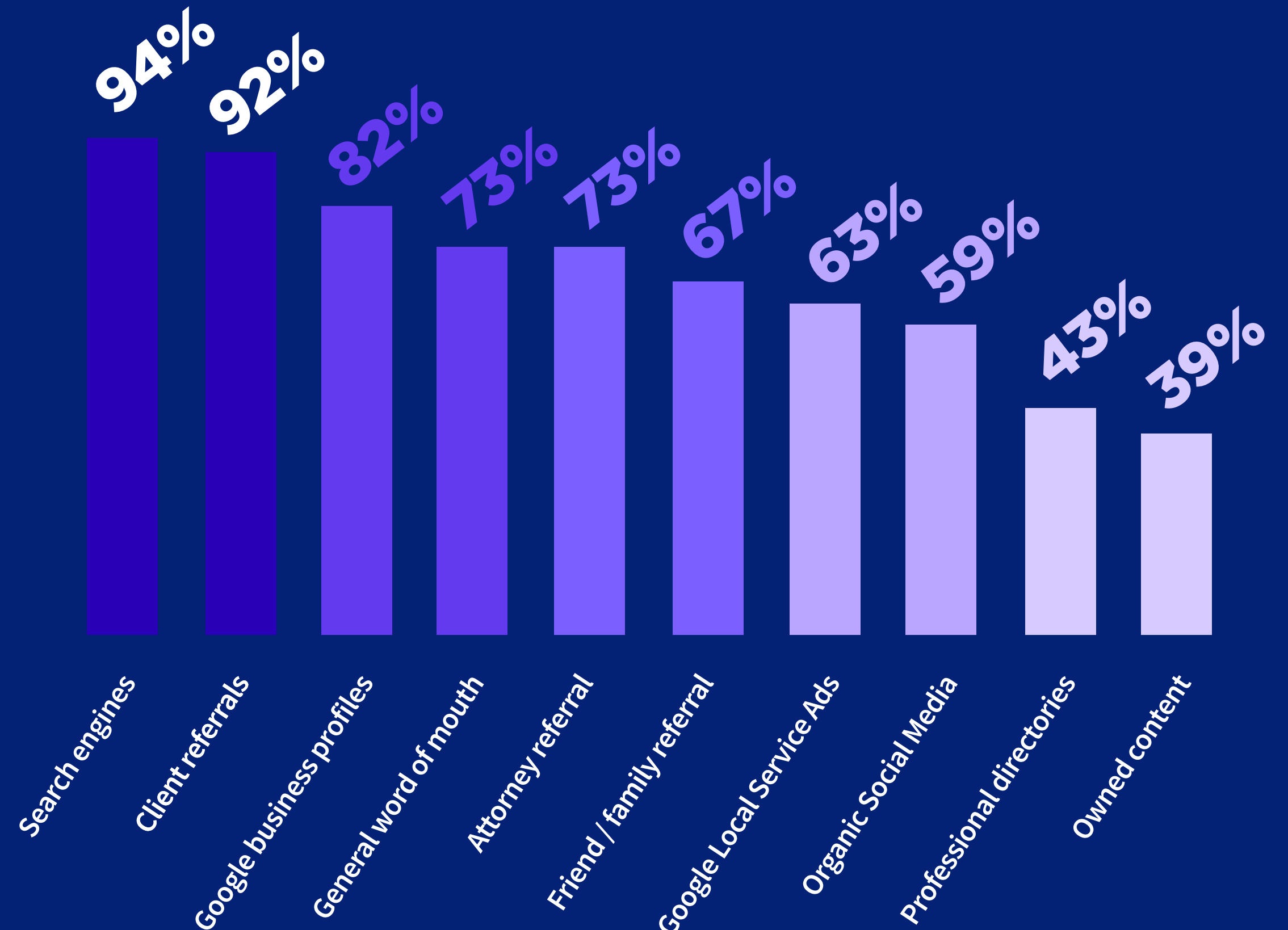


## 90%

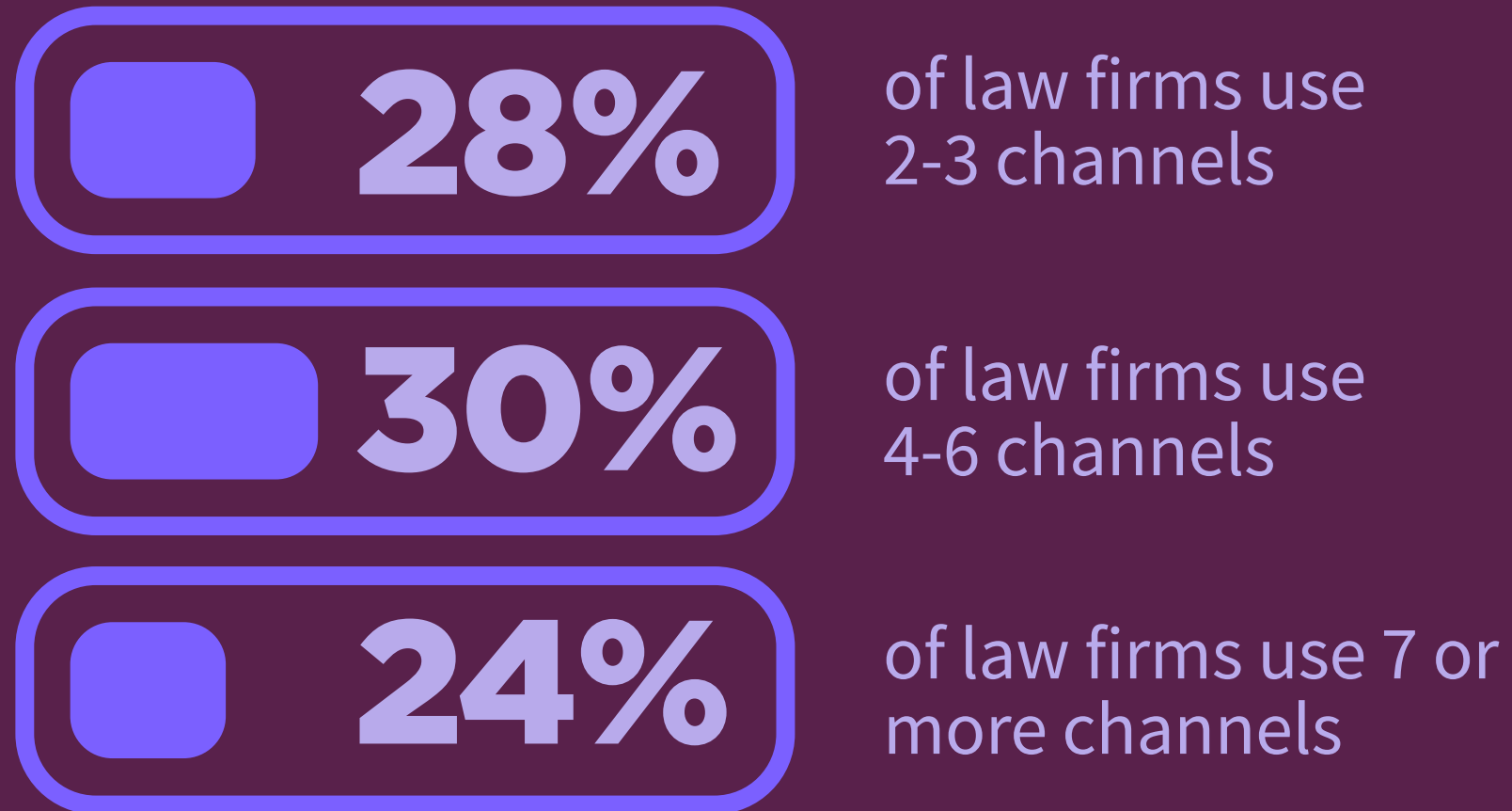
of law firms have prospective clients who first reach out via phone, which is 33 points higher than the next highest channel

Finding the right mix might depend on the size of the firm, as larger firms have the budget and tools to compete in more channels — especially paid digital channels — while smaller firms seek to capitalize on local and organic strategies. When it comes to the first contact with a client, however, the phone remains the most important channel for law firms, with 90% of law firms reporting they've had prospective clients who choose to call first. This highlights the importance of [Call Tracking](#) to understand what channels and messaging are driving prospects to reach out.

### Top brand awareness channels for law firms



## The average law firm uses 4.9 channels in their marketing efforts



## Which channels are law firms not investing any dollars in for lead generation in 2025?

Many law firms are opting out of certain marketing channels, likely due to the lack of ROI in those channels for their firm. Traditional channels like radio, print, and TV are more likely than digital channels to fall by the wayside, which raises the question of whether the channel is truly underperforming or whether marketers are struggling to connect the dots between offline activity and prospects calling or filling out a form.

## Most popular marketing channels



## Pay-per-click advertising is a prized channel for marketing, but law firms are skeptical of its value

With 90% of law firms spending on PPC advertising, it is recognized as a vital lead gen channel in the legal industry. But, despite (or perhaps because of) its efficacy, PPC has become a really expensive and hyper-competitive channel for law firms.

According to [WordStream's 2024 Search Advertising Benchmarks](#), attorneys and legal services have below average click-through rates (5.30% vs. 6.42% overall), lower conversion rates (5.64% vs. 6.96% overall) and a markedly higher cost per lead (\$144.03 vs. \$66.69 overall).

As a result, many smaller firms in particular, are acutely aware that, if they're not careful, PPC can quickly turn into a low-ROI channel. For now, only 1 in 4 firms share the view that PPC is too expensive for the ROI, but as larger firms shift more of their budgets to paid search, that number might grow in the future.

50%

of law firms believe they do not have the marketing budget to compete with larger firms for priority

42%

of law firms would like to spend more money on paid search

25%

of law firms believe paid search marketing is too expensive to get a good return on investment

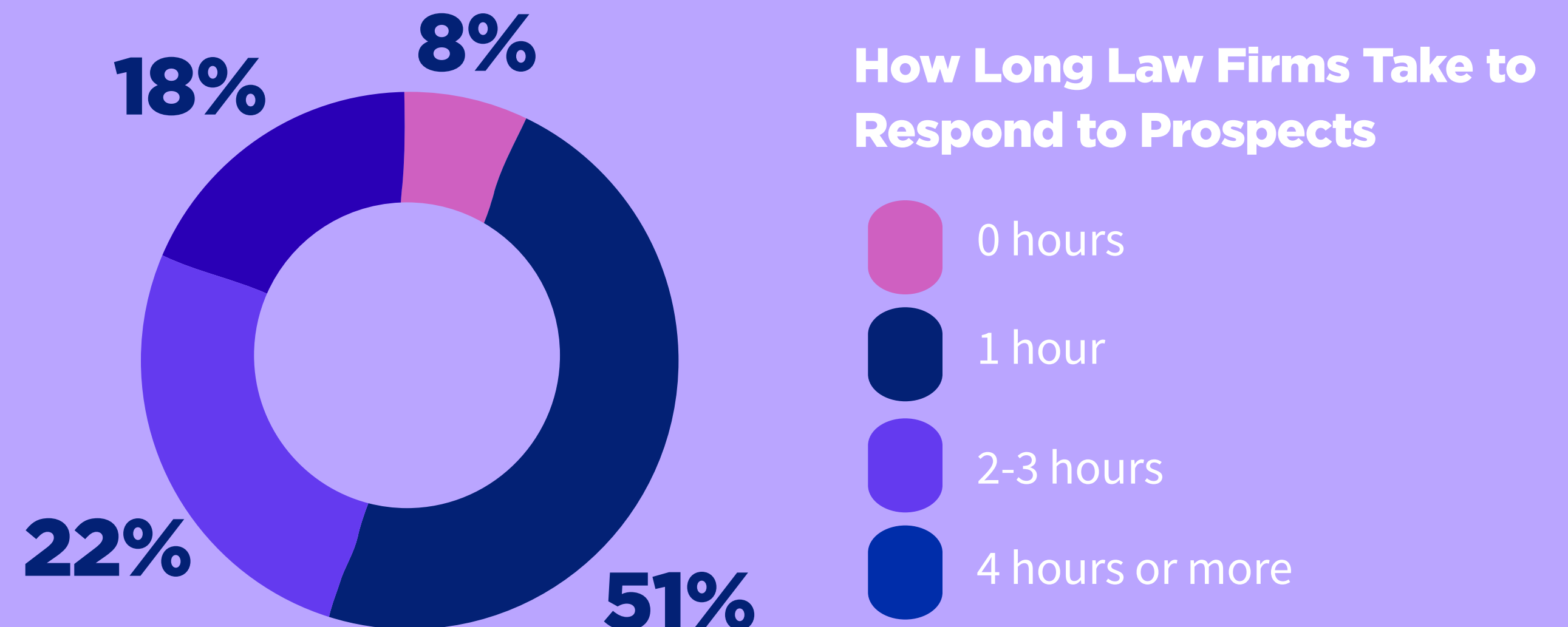
## Response times are a vital metric for lead-gen-focused firms

With phone and form fills taking top billing for anonymous consumers to convert into known prospects, response times are critical. Almost every law firm surveyed (96%) says that a slow response time or no response can lead to lost cases. Research consistently shows the importance of a “speed-to-lead” mentality, with other surveys finding that 78% of customers go with the first responder.

Yet, there is a disparity between what law firms believe and what they are able to measure when it comes to the impact of response times. Despite 40% of surveyed law firms saying that they take 2 or more hours to respond to prospects after being contacted, 98% believe that their clients are satisfied with their response times. In our analysis of CallRail’s proprietary legal industry data, we found that 28% of calls are missed at law firms, which means over one in four clients are at risk of being lost before first contact.

Another dividing line for response times comes from law firm size, with smaller law firms excelling (nearly nine out of every ten responding in less than four hours), while 42% of large law firms take four or more hours to respond.

Without an airtight way to measure the impact of missed calls and slow response times and then remediate the issue, law firms can’t be certain whether they need to bring in more leads or fix their intake process.



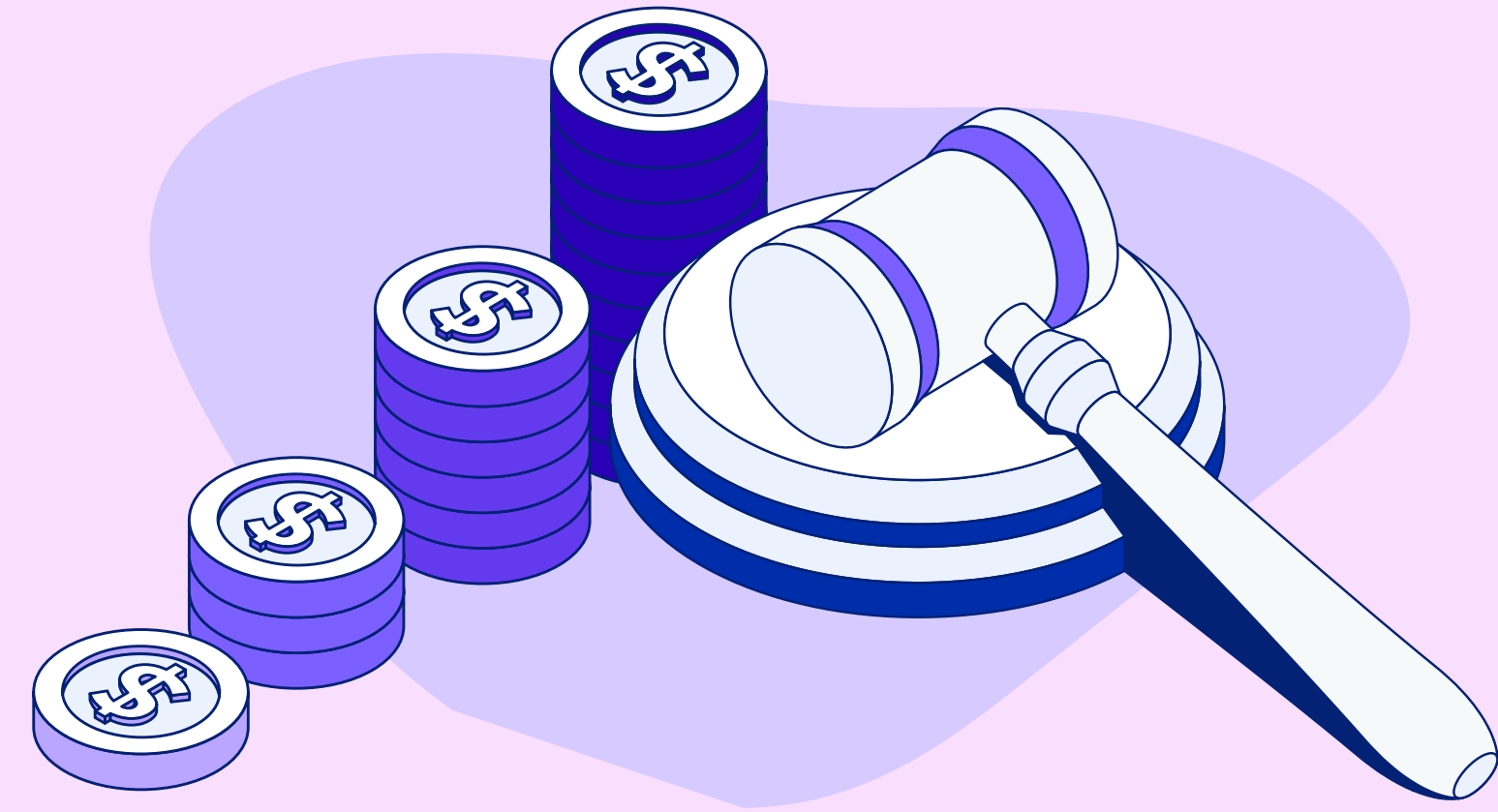
Though law firms expressed confidence in their ability to measure response times and the customer experience, most law firms lack the reporting capabilities to truly measure the fiscal impact of their current response times.

**50%**

of law firms cannot estimate the number of clients lost annually due to slow responses

**9/10**

Nearly 9/10 law firms cannot quantify the associated revenue loss for a client lost due to slow response times



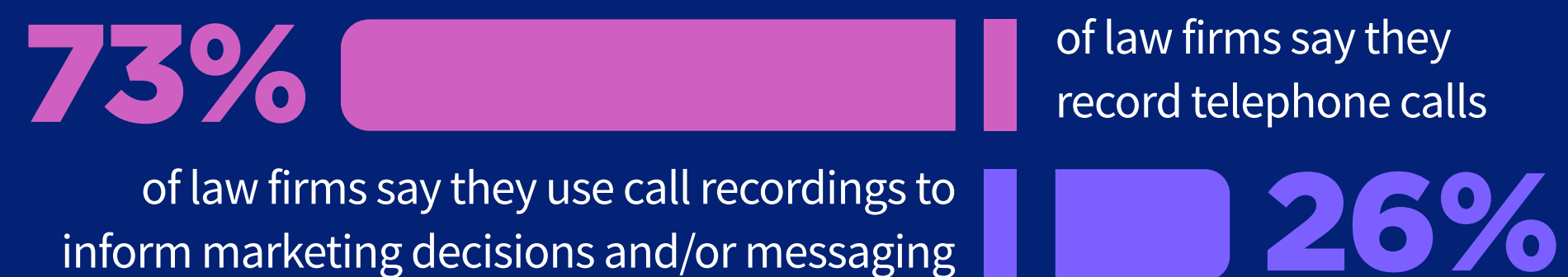
Whether it's finding the right mix of channels or maximizing ROI, law firms need to focus on tracking the success of their lead gen efforts. Law firms will need good channel-specific reporting and the ability to connect online and offline marketing activity to key conversion points like phone calls and form fills.

To take it to the next level, law firms should seek out insights into what actual clients and prospects are saying with tools like CallRail's Premium Conversation Intelligence™ that can analyze every client call to uncover insights that help marketers create higher-converting campaigns.



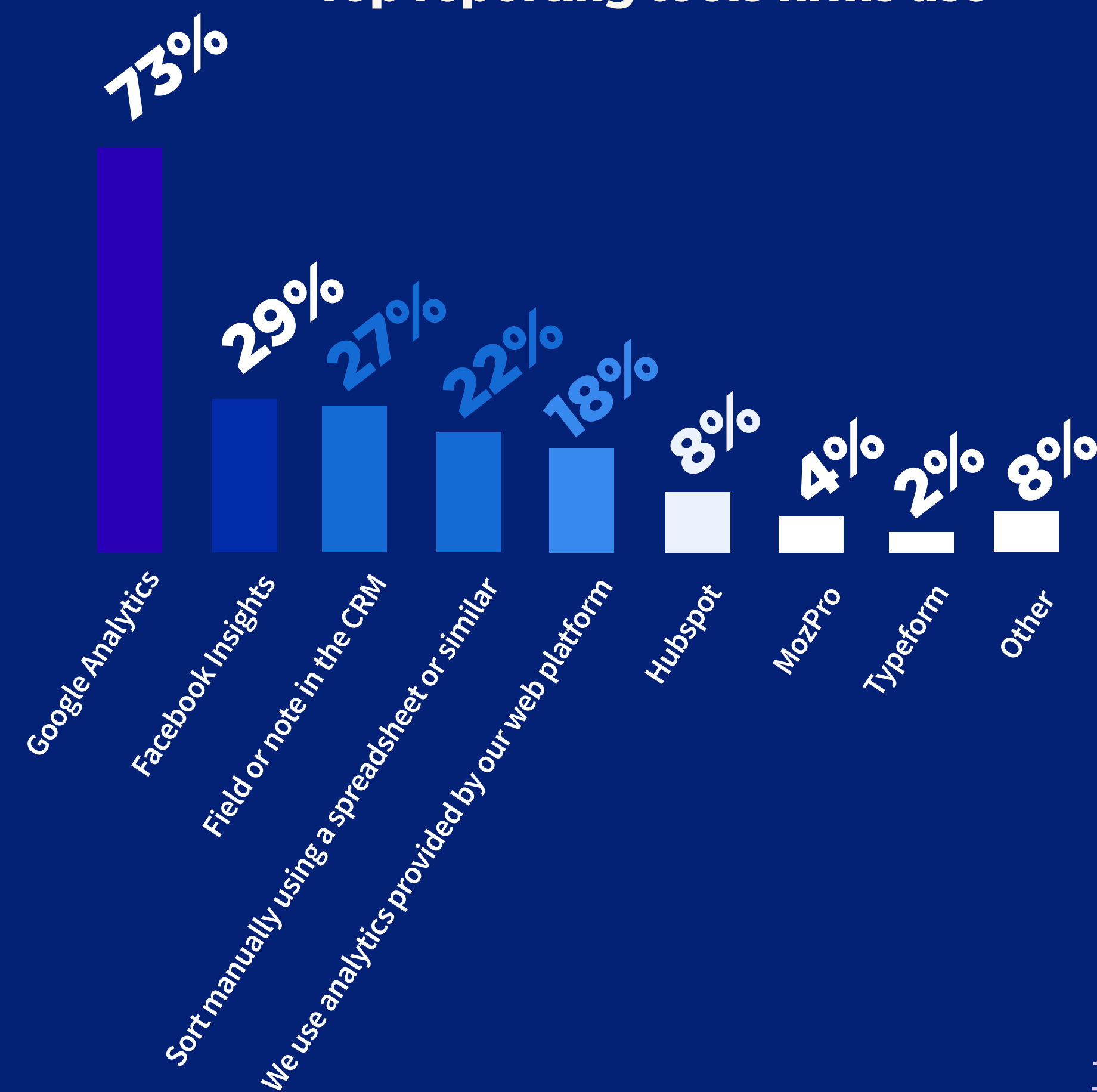
# Marketing technology will play a key role in helping firms grow

Whether firms are looking to add new tech or get the most out of the tech they already have, they'll be leaning on the technology to better understand their marketing efforts. With calls remaining a focal point of the client journey, call tracking technology is a ubiquitous and critical component of most law firms' tech stacks — and a source of opportunity in 2025.

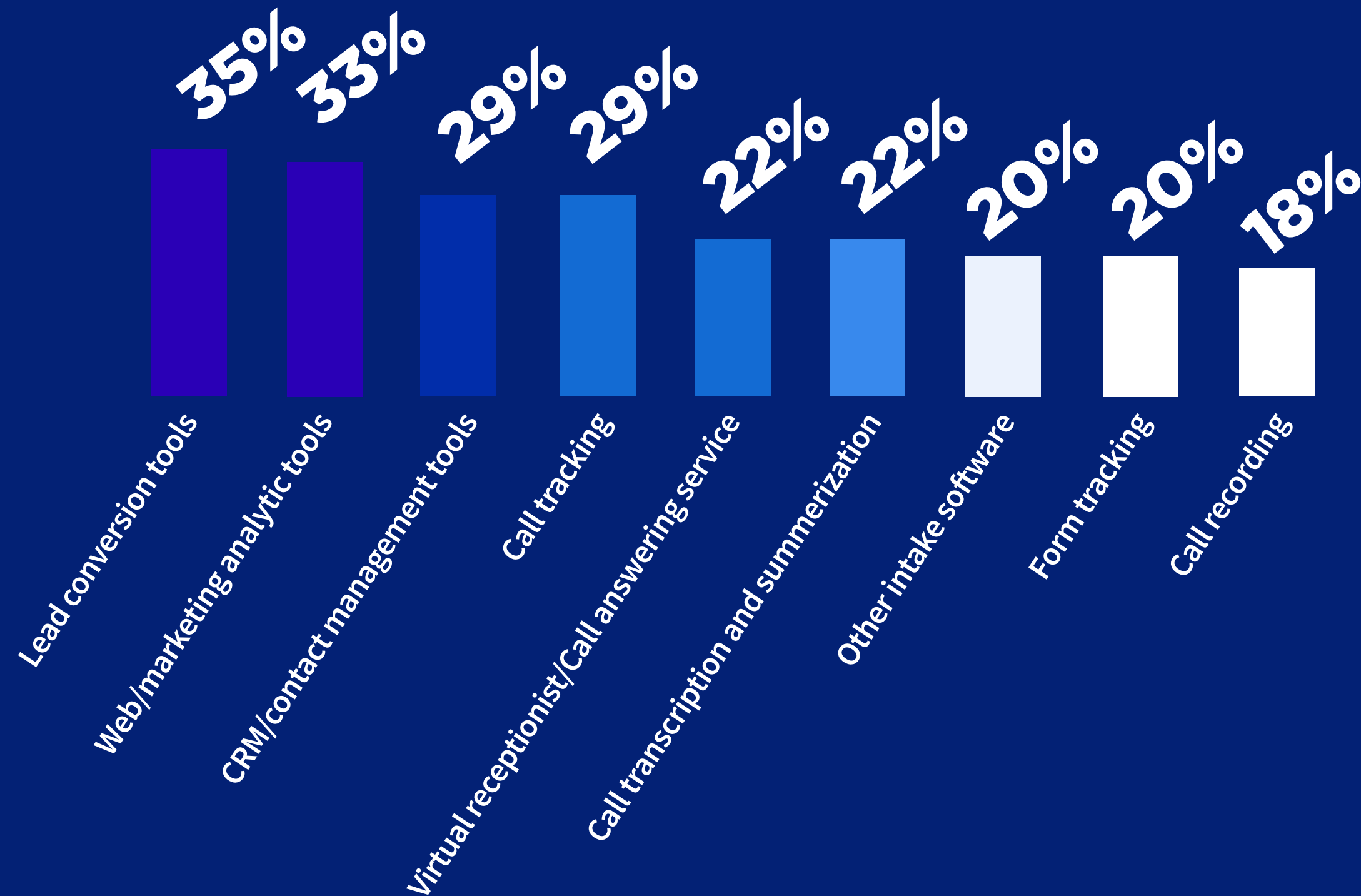


Law firms recognize the big opportunity to gain better insights and streamline their marketing efforts with automation, like instant lead scoring based on a conversation and call analysis that automatically highlights key terms from your clients. Adding automation will bring efficiency and, crucially, consistency to important conversion points and metrics, which will help marketers maximize the ROI of their spending. To that end, it's not surprising that the most popular additions to the tech stack are tools that improve intake, reporting, and lead conversion.

Top reporting tools firms use



## Top technologies law firms will add to their MarTech stacks in 2025



### The benefits of intake software for law firms

Intake software plays a crucial role in the client journey — both for prospective clients and current clients. Besides helping to streamline the process and keep teams organized for follow-up, most marketers can use the data from intake software to improve their marketing decisions.

Without a repeatable process, however, measuring potential points of optimization becomes nearly impossible — which is why choosing the right solution and leveraging automation is critical.

**91%** Improved communication with existing clients

**88%** Wasted less time on administrative tasks

**88%** Closed more clients

**84%** Made better marketing decisions

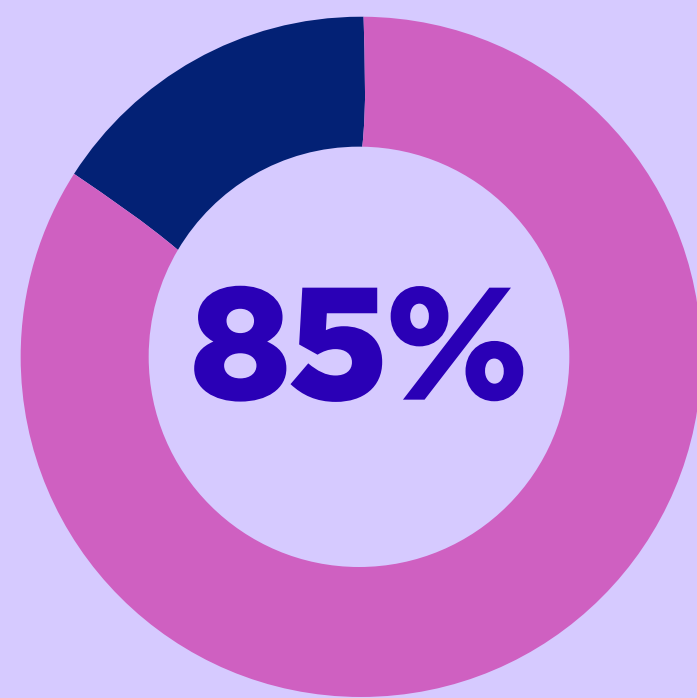
**60%** Achieved more accurate billing



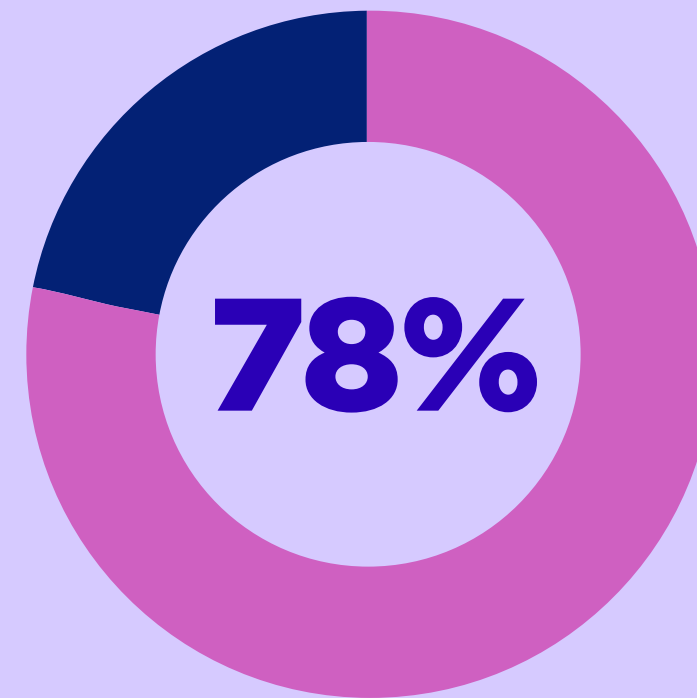


## Call recordings present myriad opportunities for marketing improvement

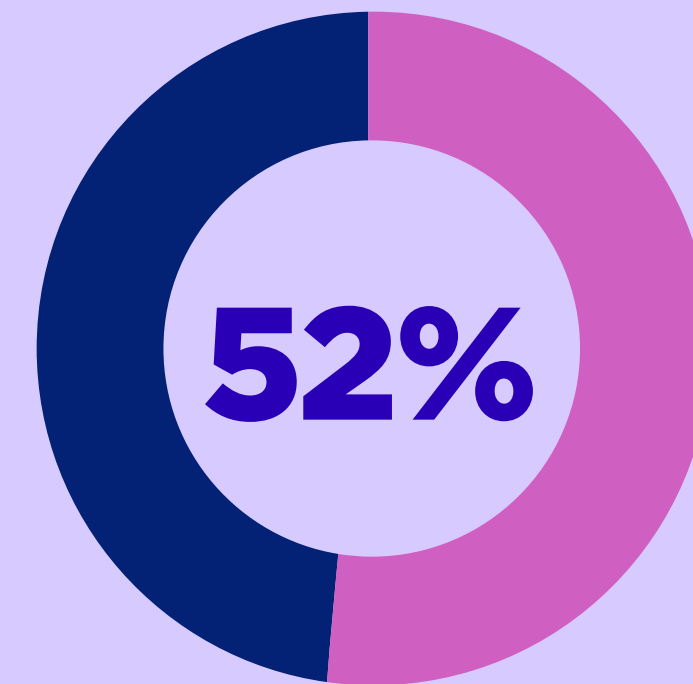
Law firms understand the value of their calls with clients — but the way that law firms are using call recordings suggests there is substantially more value to be found there.



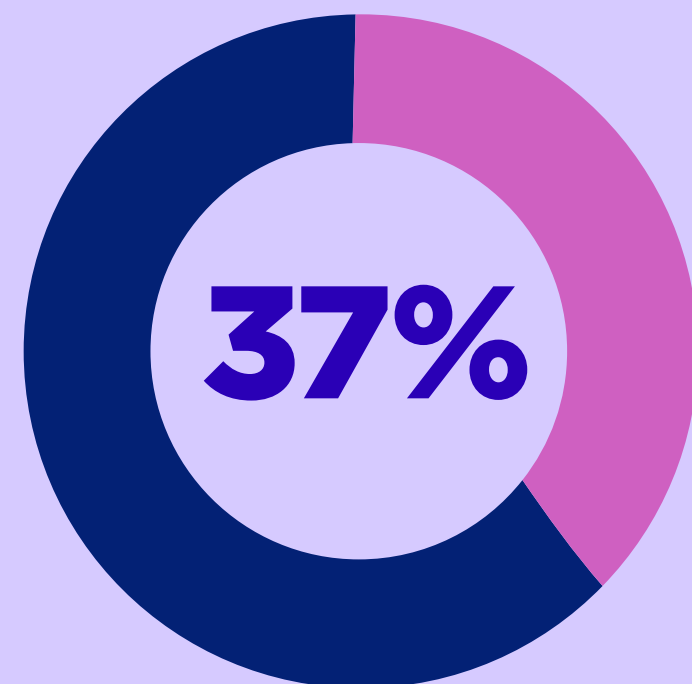
Improving client experience



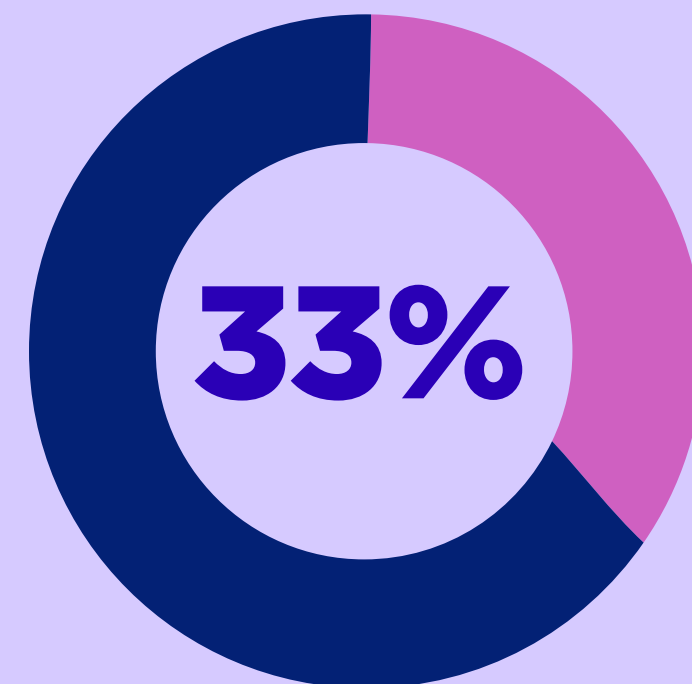
Training customer service personnel



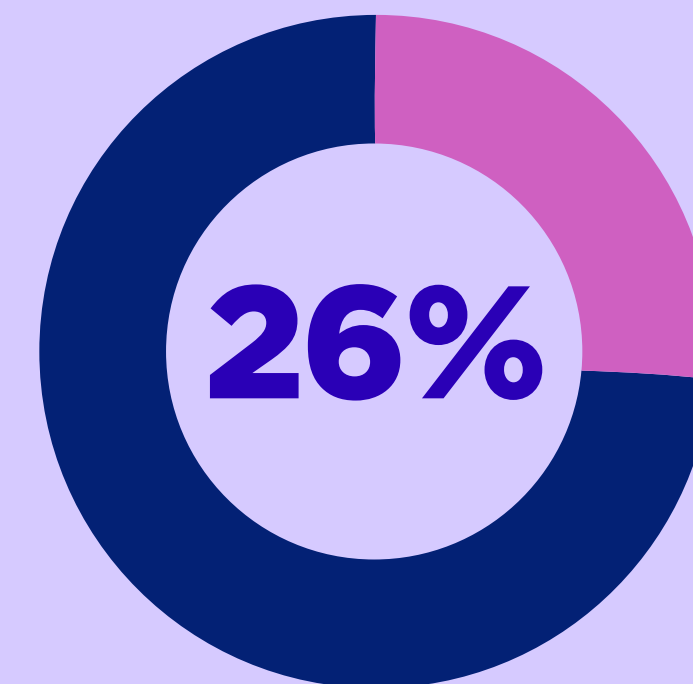
Vetting cases



Following up on requested information



Populating intake info



Informing marketing decisions and/or messaging

While most law firms use call recordings to improve client experience and client service training, AI-powered tools like [Premium Conversation Intelligence](#) and [Convert Assist](#) are helping law firms extract more value and insights from their calls.

With Premium Conversation Intelligence, law firms can analyze every call to uncover valuable keyword trends from actual clients. These trends inform keyword bidding strategies and help improve campaign messaging. For an industry with below average click-through rates, conversion rates, and astronomical costs per lead for [search advertising](#), optimization is more important than ever. That's part of the reason why, according to an [independent study of CallRail customers](#), users spend 60% less time qualifying leads and see a 10% increase in leads from improved marketing.

Convert Assist, an AI-powered solution developed by [CallRail Labs](#), includes features like action plan, which analyzes calls and provides actionable next steps based on the conversation, and smart follow-up, which can automatically draft a personalized email or text after a call. Both features can help improve client acquisition and retention.





# Marketing budgets are increasing for many firms, but not all

Budgets are always a source of anxiety for marketers — especially in the legal industry, where, compared to other industries, budgets can be small, and the cost of competing in channels like paid search can be astronomically expensive. It's notable, however, that nearly half (45%) of those surveyed were unsure how their marketing spend compared to the firm's revenue. While the anxiety won't disappear in 2025, there is more to be optimistic about after years of marketing budget cuts.

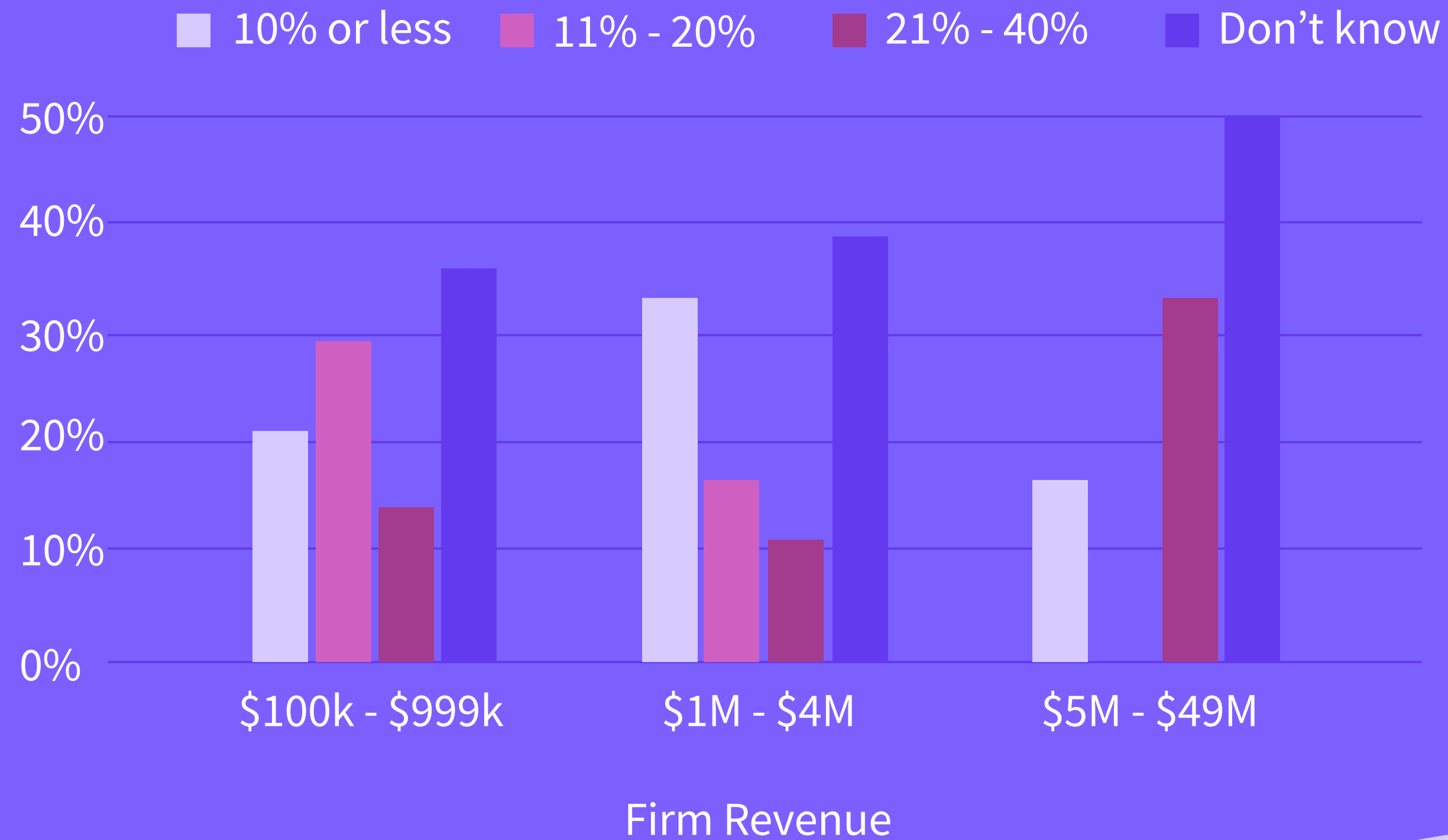
One trend we found emerging is the disparity and diverging paths of smaller firms and larger firms. Larger firms (revenue between \$5M and \$49M) are more likely to be shifting away from traditional marketing channels to focus on search and social advertising, while smaller firms (revenue between \$100k and \$4M) are feeling financially squeezed out of those same channels.

It all points to the importance of a personalized client experience, more tailored marketing campaigns, and the reporting tools that provide deep insights into marketing's ROI in every channel — for those firms choosing to compete in digital paid advertising, optimizing their keywords and campaigns will be more important than ever. For those firms looking to focus on new channels, they'll need to be able to confidently connect the dots between that activity and the calls and form fills from their prospects, while also being confident in the targeting, positioning, and messaging remaining dialed in to their ideal prospective clients.

With 84% of law firms responding that they have the budget to spend on reporting tools, 2025 is shaping up to be a year fueled by new insights.



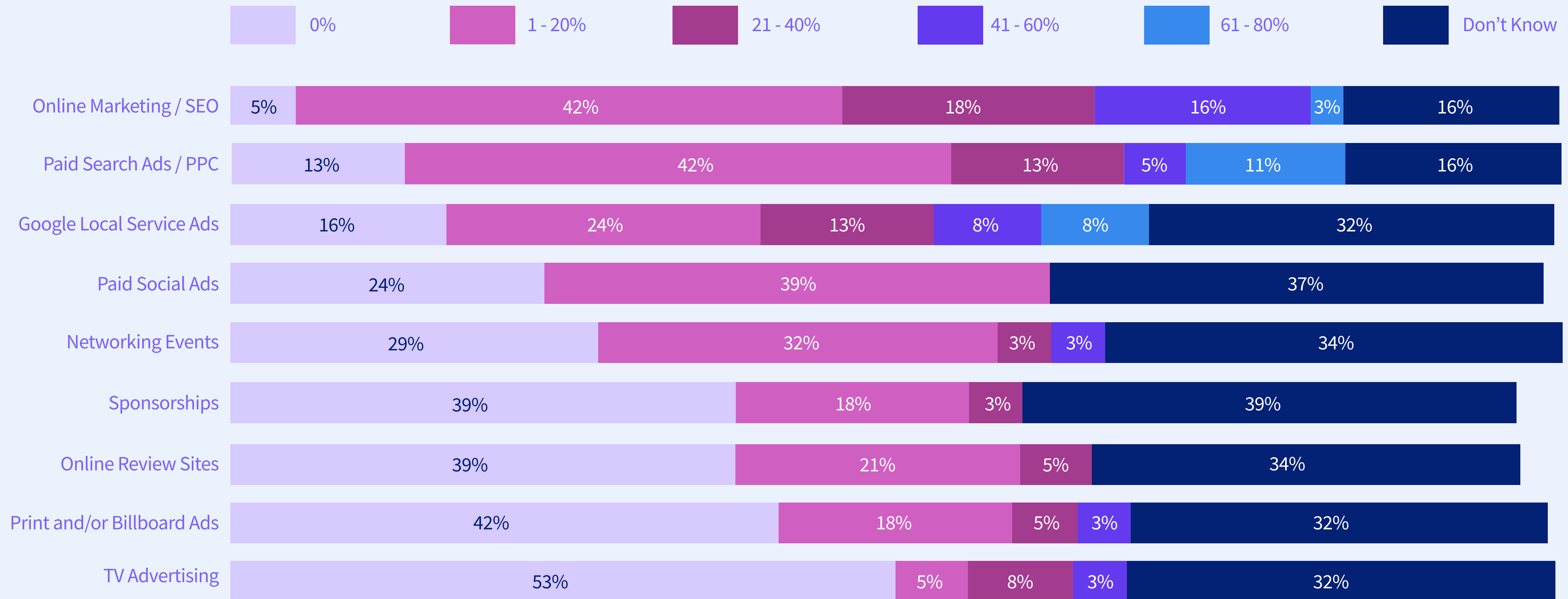
## Law firm's marketing budget breakdown



### Where are law firms allocating their marketing budgets?

While law firms are likely to market in many channels, the bulk of the budget is going to paid digital channels like PPC and Google Local Service ads.

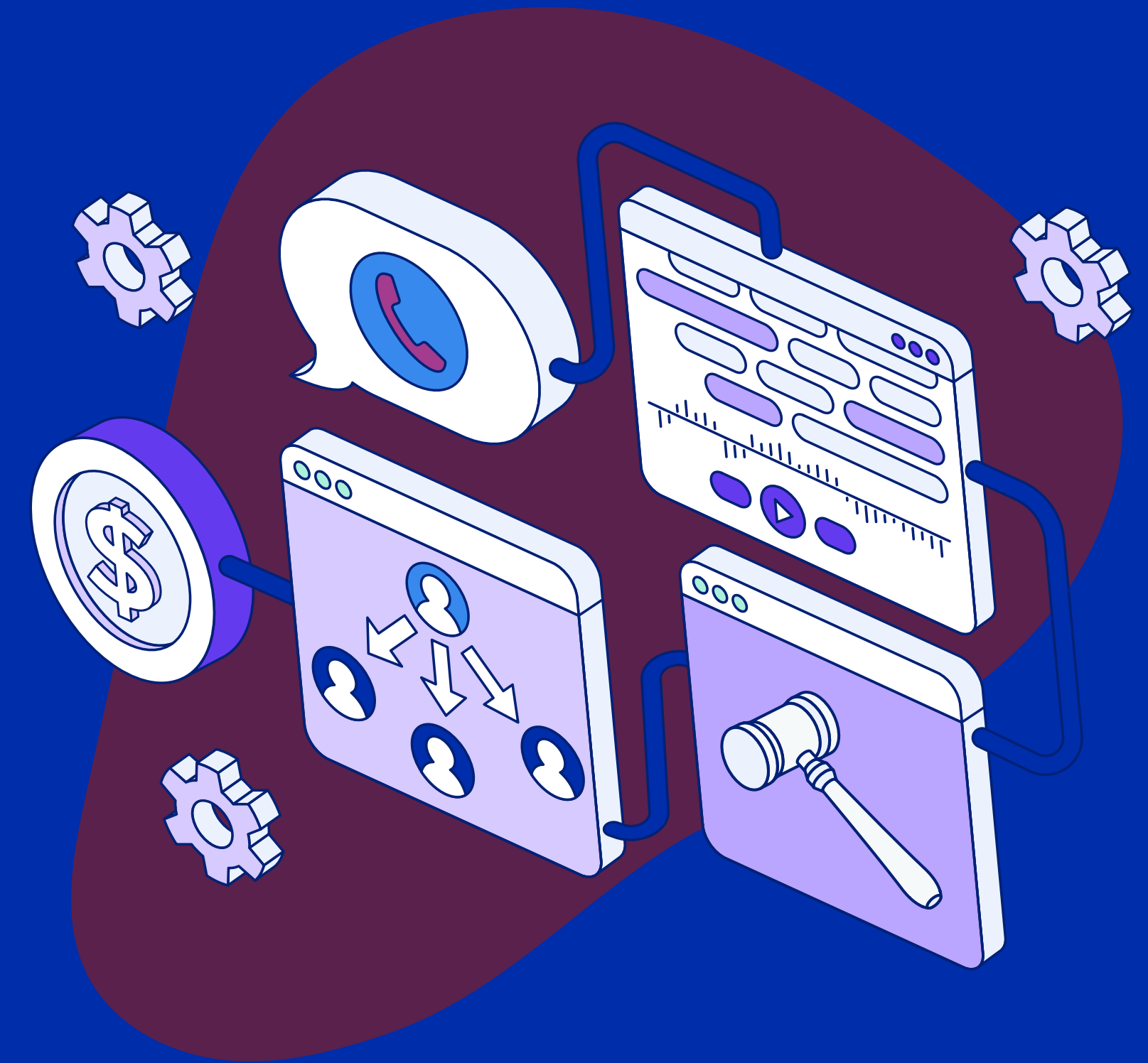
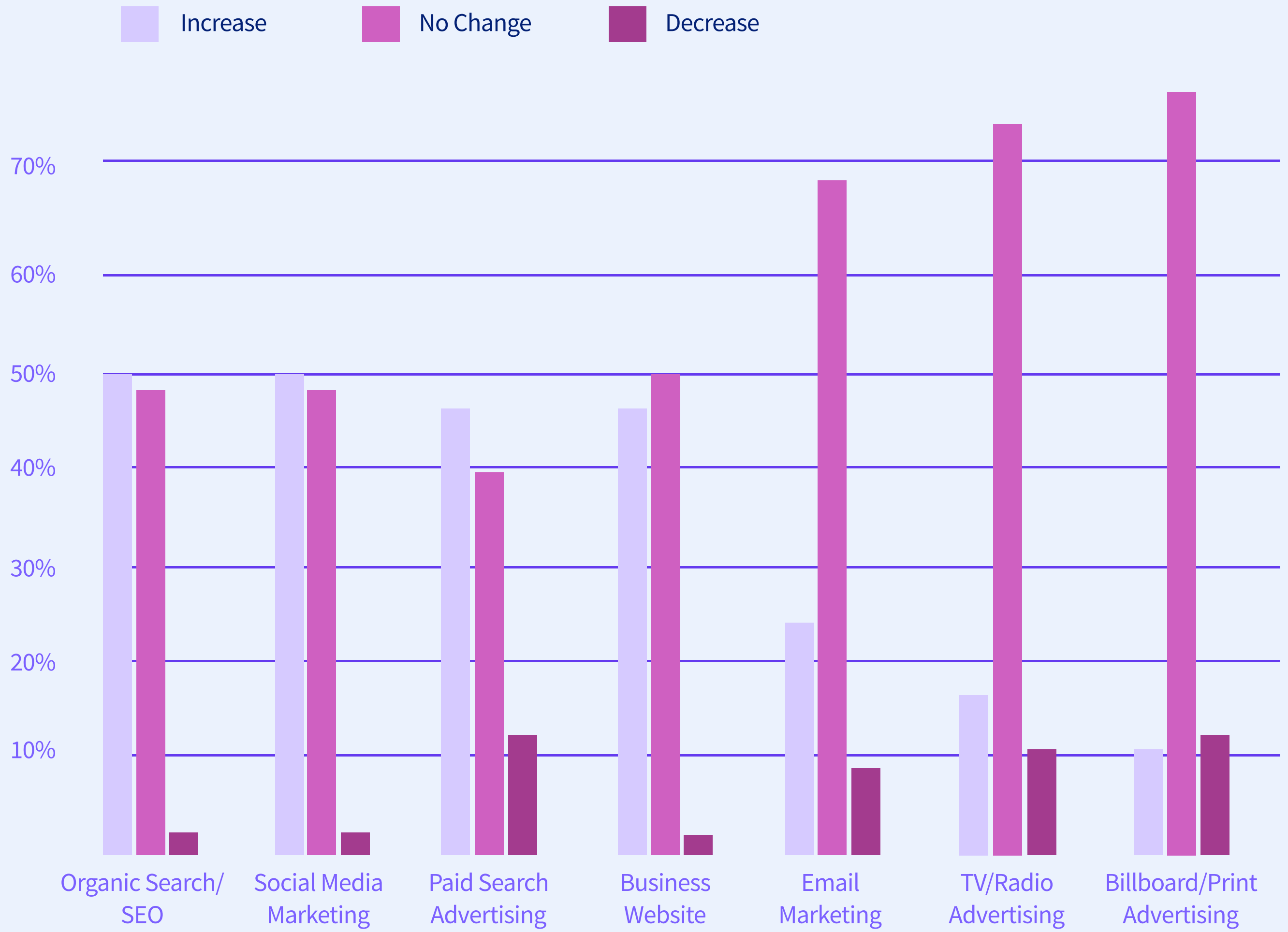
## Percentage of law firm budgets spent on marketing channels



### Which channels are law firms planning to increase or decrease their budgets?

Law firms are investing more of their marketing budgets in competitive digital channels, while traditional marketing channels are being neglected.

# Planned budget changes by marketing channel



## How do law firms decide which channels to spend their budget on?

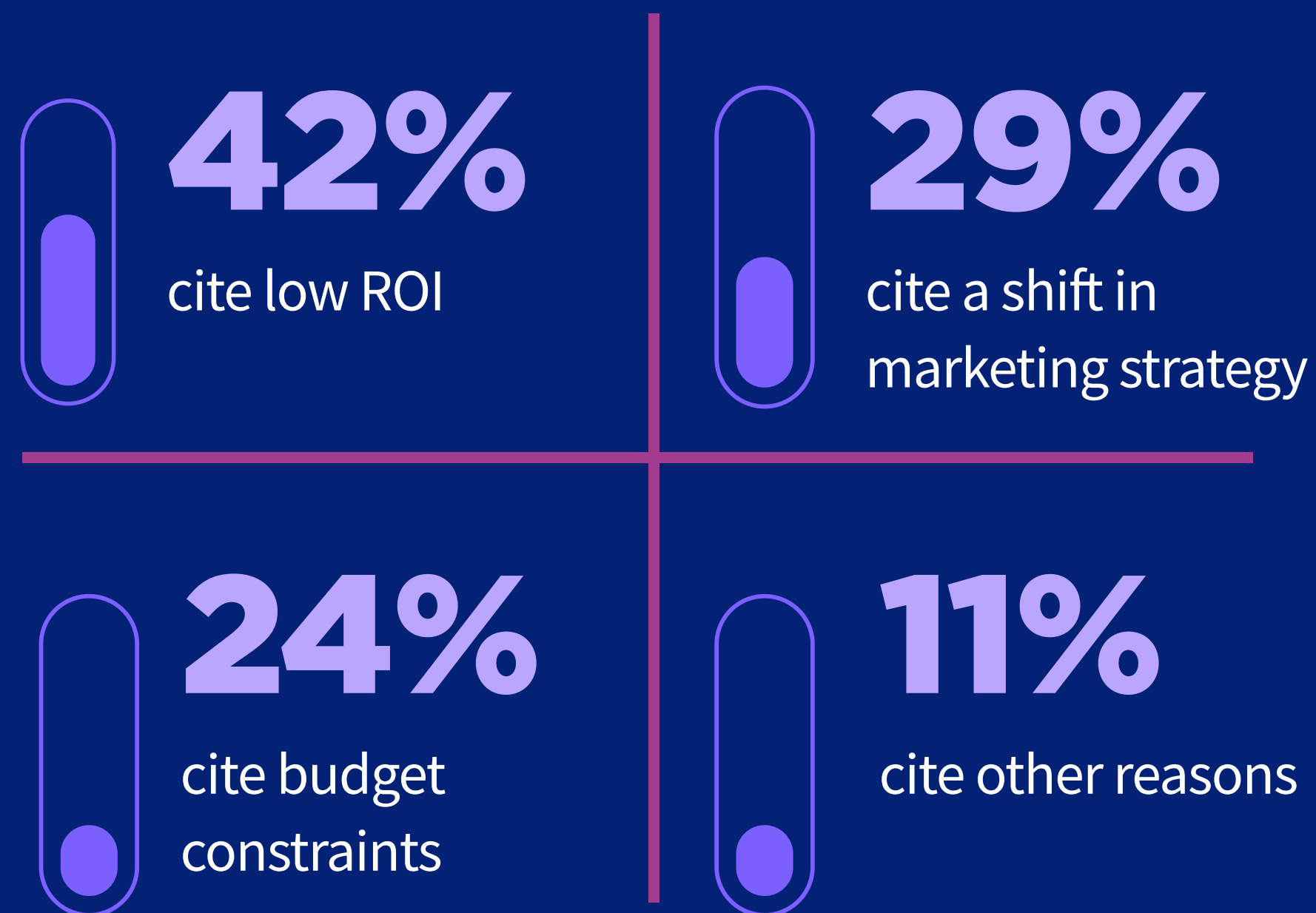


When it comes to budgetary bumps and cuts, law firms appear to be relying more on performance data and attribution metrics than outside advice. Whether they're measuring the right outcomes remains an open question; for example, prioritizing a channel that provides more leads may sound good, but without connecting the dots to understand which campaigns and channels are generating the leads turning into high-value clients, law firms may be led by the data to spend more for less.



## Why are law firms cutting the budget in certain channels?

While budget concerns may be forcing law firms to scale back in some channels, they are more likely to make budget cuts that align with their strategy or performance data.



# A path to capitalize on 2025's potential

With rosy news regarding their marketing budgets and the broader economic forecast, law firms are poised to compete more in the market than ever before. But in a year filled with opportunities, growth will come to those willing to swiftly address the challenges and shortcomings in their marketing efforts.

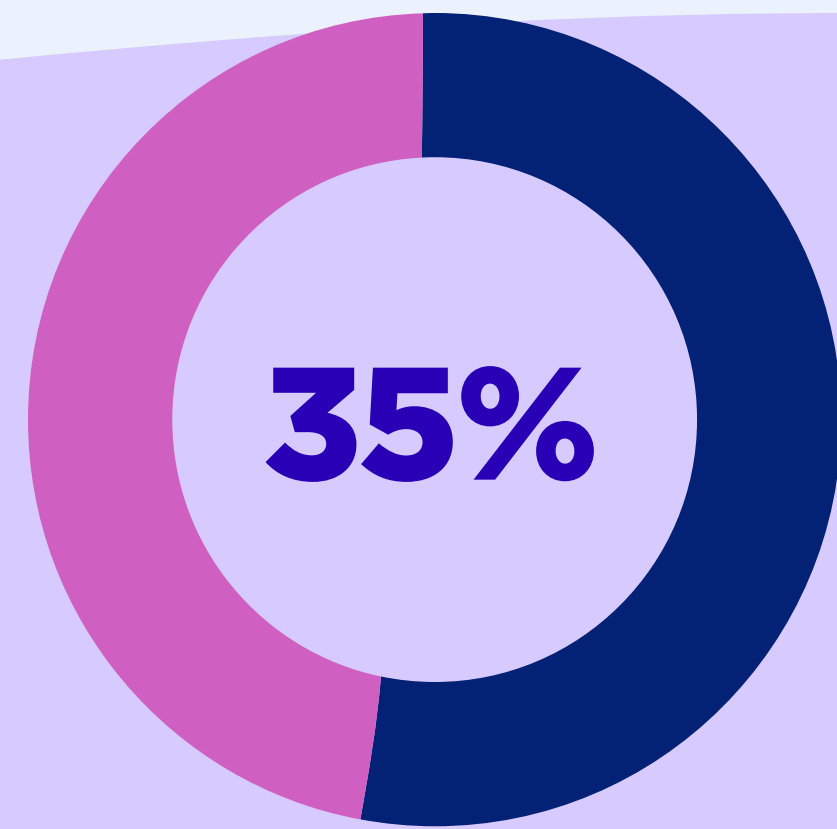
So, what's on the docket for growth-minded law firms in 2025?

## Build a MarTech stack to match the moment

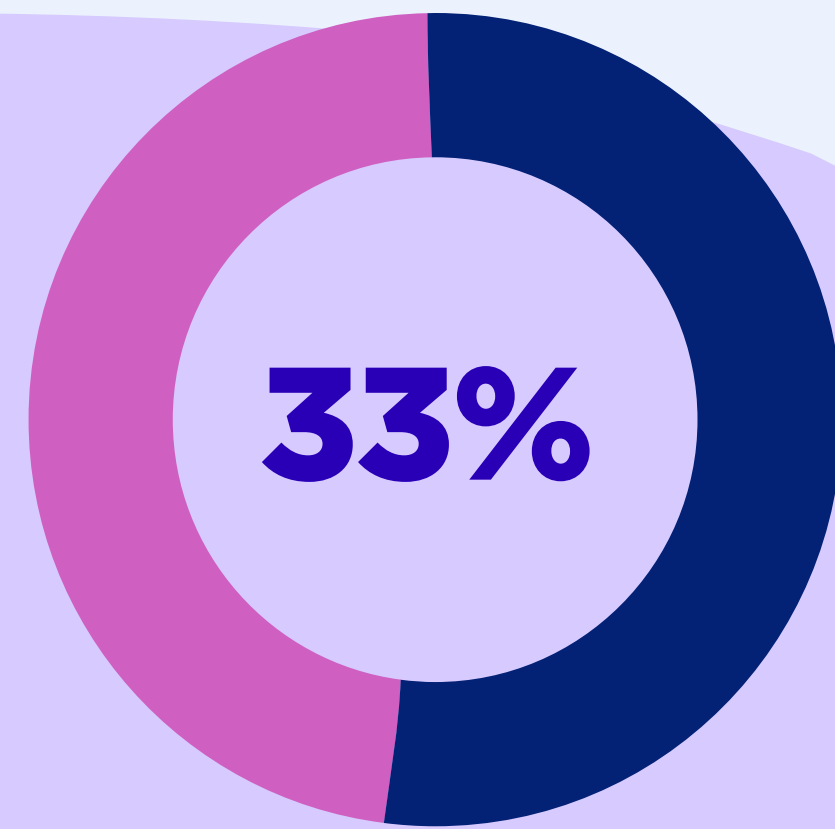
Over the past few years, many law firms have had to do more with less when it comes to marketing; however, this year, many are going to do more with more. Law firms will need to fill crucial gaps in their MarTech stacks to keep pace with their competition. Furthermore, the law firms that can successfully bring together automation and AI tools in their MarTech stack will have a quantum leap in efficiency and capabilities over their peers, making it a top priority for law firms of any size. The combination of automation and AI can help address skill gaps and reduce the time-to-insights across the marketing funnel.



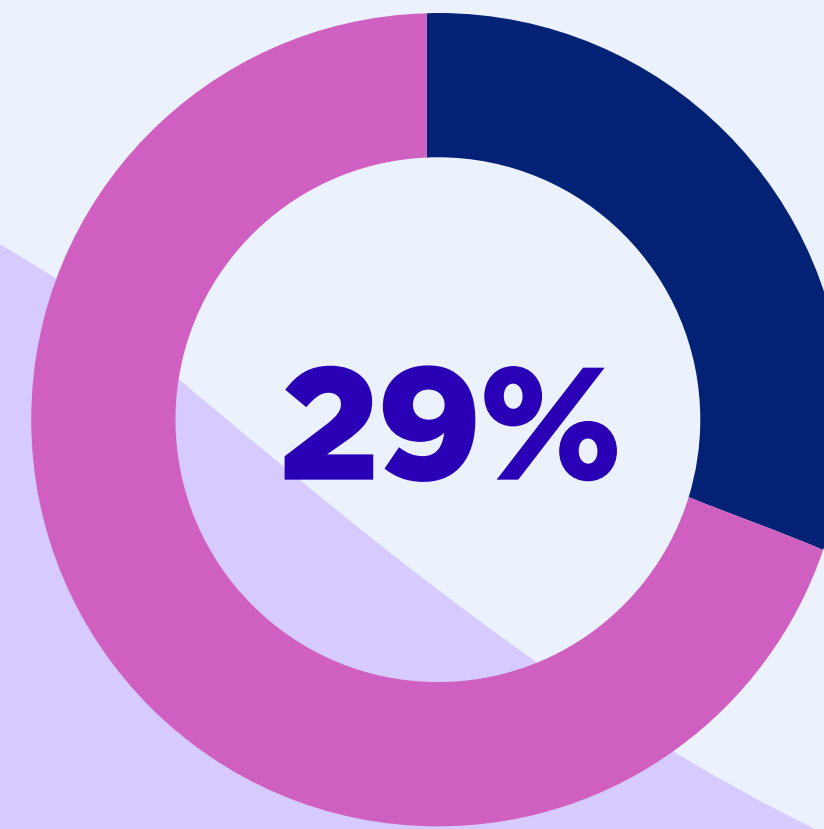
## The key tools law firms plan to adopt in 2025



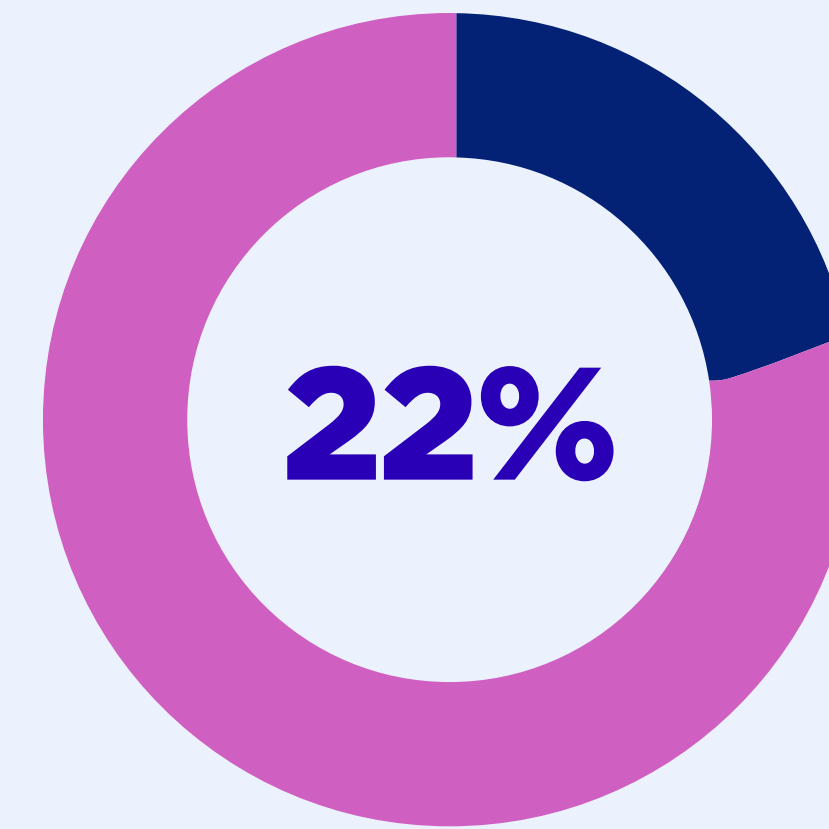
Lead conversion tools



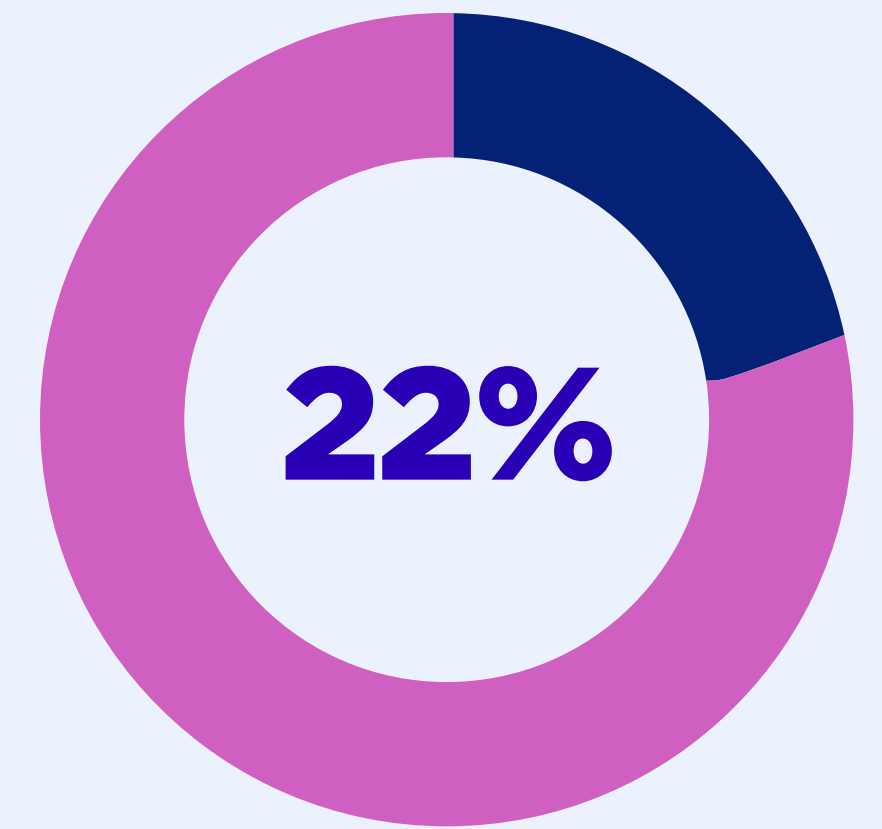
Web/marketing analytics



CRM/contact management



Virtual receptionist/call answering



Call transcription and summarization

### Close reporting gaps

Whether it's adopting a new reporting technology or finding gaps in their current understanding, law firms will need fast access to marketing performance insights. However, they will need more than data. They will need deep insights into the client experience to understand what's working and what isn't, allowing firms to optimize poorly performing campaigns or channels and capitalize on unforeseen opportunities.

**50%** of law firms can't estimate the number of clients lost annually due to slow response times

**90%** of law firms can't quantify the revenue loss from slow response times

### Key reporting gaps to address

As law firms grow more confident in their marketing strategies, they will need to be wary of the blind spots in their performance. With better data and insights, law firms can find new opportunities, streamline processes, or fix bad client experiences.

### Maximize the value of every call

Calls remain the most important channel for client acquisition and retention. Due to the sensitive nature of many client's concerns, it is unsurprising that many clients prefer to talk over the phone to a real person. While Call Tracking is ubiquitous in the MarTech stack at law firms, call transcription and summarization are less common despite the valuable insights for marketing, business development, and client service.

With advances in AI and machine learning, it is easier and faster than ever to catch trends and insights from every conversation while still maintaining privacy.

Furthermore, automation is making it simpler for small marketing teams to stay on top of the data and take advantage of more tools like intake software and virtual receptionists.

**50%** of law firms believe they do not have the marketing budget to compete with larger firms for priority

**40%** of law firms would like to spend more on pay-per-click (PPC) advertising in 2025

### Firms of all sizes will need to adapt to remain competitive

The disparity between large law firms and smaller law firms — from the ability to gather insights quickly to the amount they can spend to compete in key channels — will shine a light on the multitude of paths forward to compete and succeed in the market.

For many, it will also highlight the need to adopt automation and AI. With dreams of doing more in areas like digital advertising being deflated by budgetary restraints, automation and AI can be equalizers by helping stretch budgets further and delivering insights faster than ever.

**94%** of law firms say they are contacted by their clients first by phone

**70%** of law firms record their calls

**78%** of law firms use call recordings to train customer service personnel

**28%** of legal industry calls are missed ([CallRail Proprietary Data Report](#))

**26%** of law firms use call recordings for informing marketing decisions and/or messaging

## Making the case for optimism in 2025

Law firms know that clients won't be handed to them on silver platters in 2025. But after building sound strategies and investing in critical technologies, they know that they have more control over their destinies than they have had in years.

For many law firms, budgetary restrictions won't be the guiding principle behind their marketing strategy. Instead, decisions can be made by following the data. In an industry where marketing is often a secondary role for attorneys or outsourced to a multitude of agencies and consultants, making data-driven, strategic marketing decisions has not always been feasible. With new reporting and analytics technology that uses AI to find deeper insights, it will be easier than ever this year for law firms to identify which campaigns are performing better, uncover messaging trends, or generate a follow-up email for every prospect call.

They say luck is when preparation meets opportunity. The client opportunities are out there; for the law firms that can prepare an efficient and data-driven marketing approach, 2025 might just be their lucky year.

**It's your turn to be the judge —  
see how CallRail can elevate your  
marketing in 2025.**

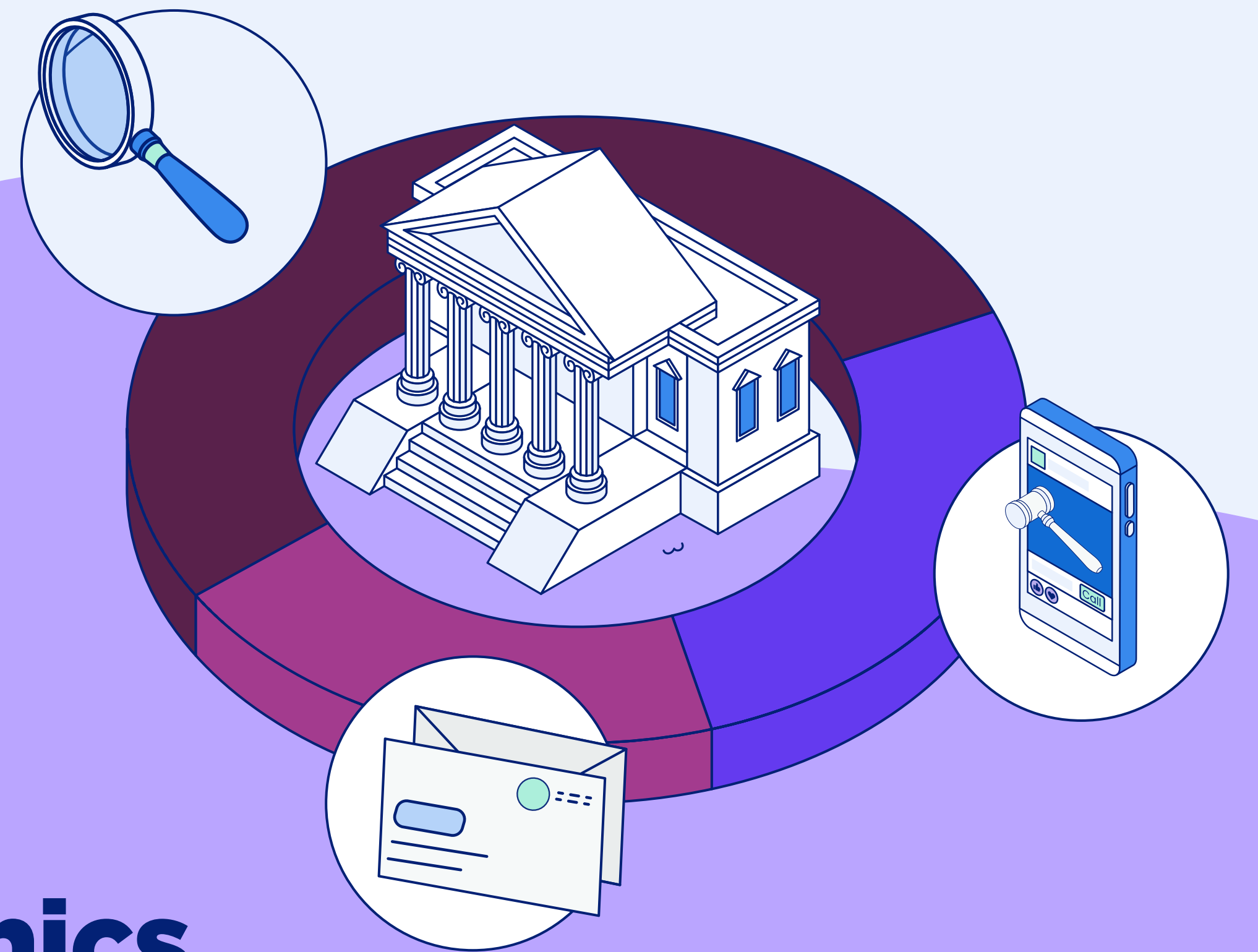


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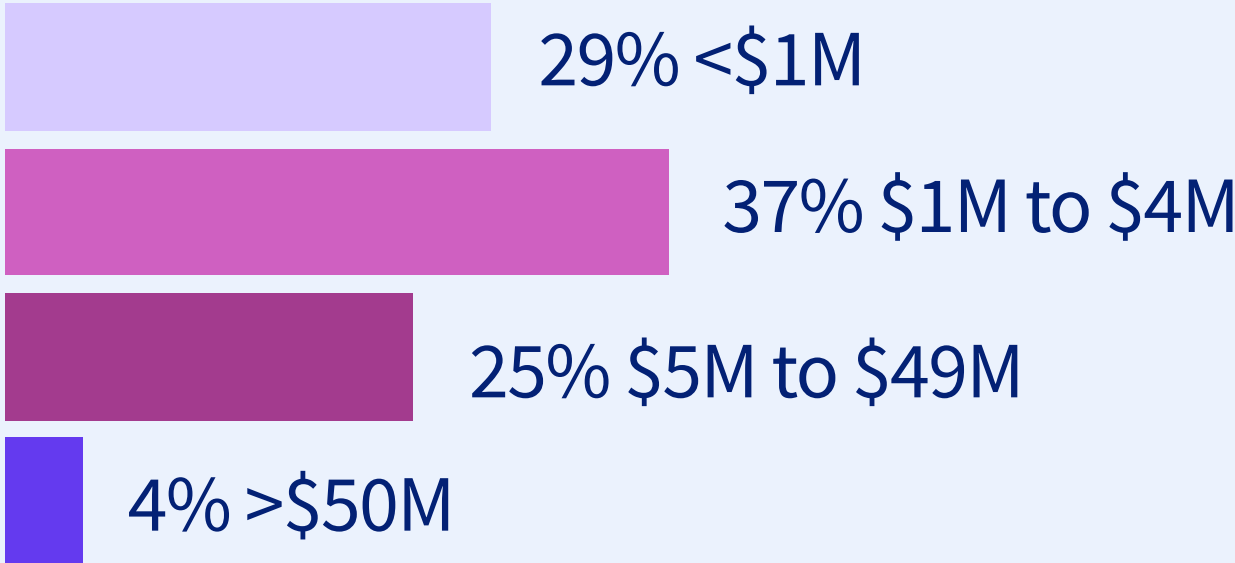
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# Methodology and Demographics



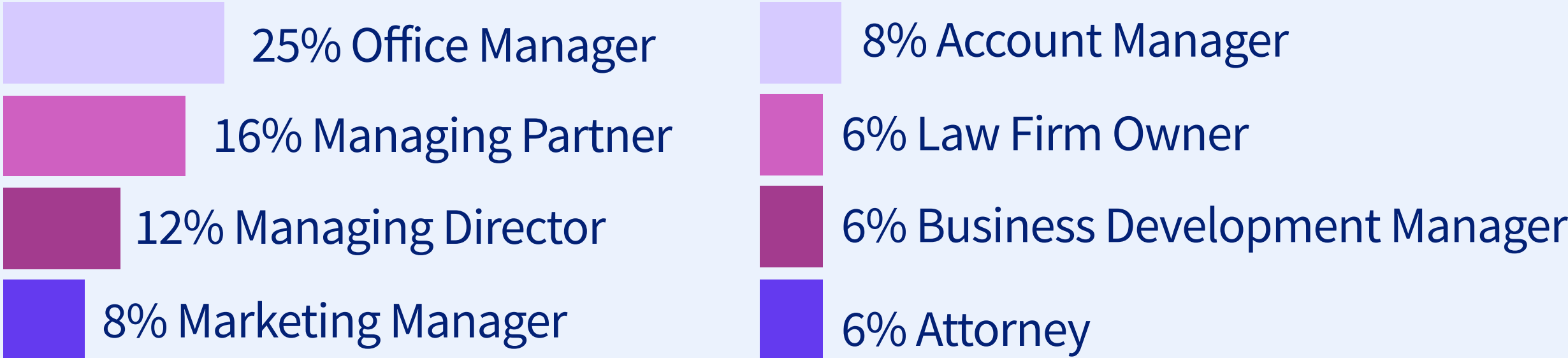
This survey was conducted in December 2024. The data comes from 49 total respondents aged 18 years or older and living in the United States. All respondents were employed full-time at a law firm (79%) or at a marketing agency (21%) that works with law firms as clients.

### Company size by revenue



### Job titles

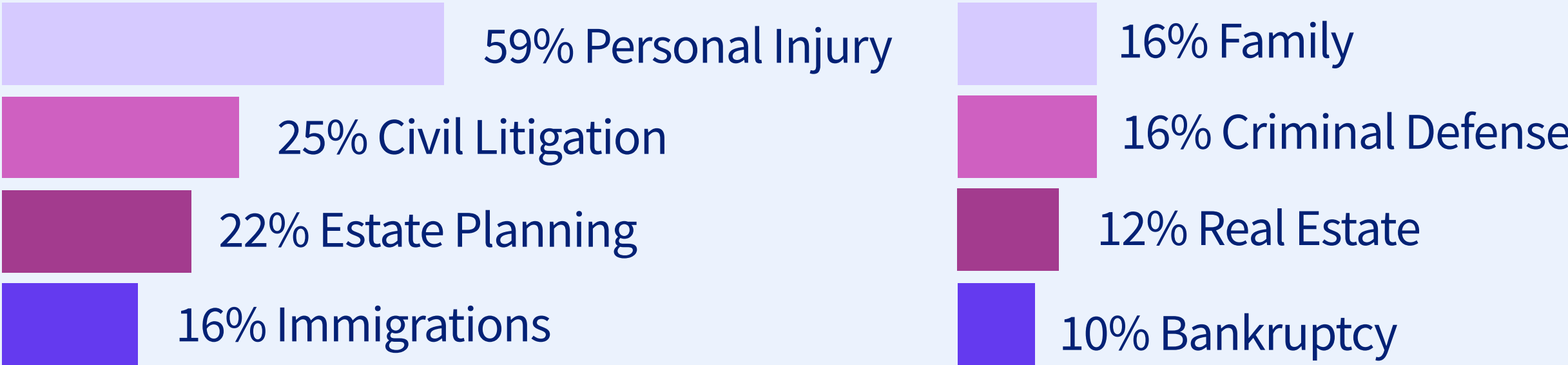
The survey sampled a diverse set of job titles that reflected those who play a role in marketing at law firms.



\*Other titles with less than 6% are omitted

### Areas of practice

This survey included law firms with multiple areas of practice. The most common areas of practice included Personal Injury (59%), Civil Litigation (25%), and Estate Planning (22%).



\*Other titles with less than 10% are omitted