

# IPRS SURVEY ON ESG COMMUNICATIONS

25 AUGUST 2021

AN INITIATIVE BY:



SUPPORTING PARTNERS:



# ABOUT INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS OF SINGAPORE

IPRS, established in **1970** as a non-profit organisation, is the only **accrediting** body for Public Relations (PR) practitioners in Singapore.

The Institute promotes excellence in the industry through **knowledge exchange platforms** and **training programmes** that are aligned with the many changes and developments in the practice of Public Relations and Communications today.

IPRS has a growing membership consisting of professionals from **diverse backgrounds** in public relations, journalism, advertising, marketing, education and management – a factor that has contributed to the Institute’s strength and dynamism.

There are nine **Student Chapters** with various tertiary institutions to create opportunities for communications students and IPRS members to share expertise and experiences.

The IPRS introduced the **Biennial PRISM Awards** (Public Relations In the Service of Mankind) in 1987 to recognise and reward excellence in Public Relations and Communications in Singapore and the region.

# SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The IPRS Survey on ESG Communications 2021 seeks to understand the needs of Public Relations professionals in their daily encounters and overall practice experience and knowledge of ESG communications.

## **Questions we had:**

1. What is the prevailing understanding of ESG communications?
2. How is it currently being used?
3. How much experience do practitioners have in ESG communications?
4. What are the challenges that practitioners face in ESG communications?
5. Where are the knowledge gaps?

## **Why did we do it:**

To add to our collective understanding of ESG and its influence on our communications practice.

# WHAT IS ESG?

These are non-financial indicators used to measure and evaluate the performance of and impact on a company.



## ENVIRONMENTAL

- Climate impact
- Carbon emissions
- Clean air and water
- Water scarcity
- Energy efficiency
- Natural resources



## SOCIAL

- Human rights
- Mental wellbeing
- Modern slavery
- Working conditions
- Employee relations
- Local communities



## GOVERNANCE

- Board composition
- Corporate culture
- Ethics and compliance
- Data security and privacy
- Diversity and inclusion
- Bribery and corruption

# KEY DEFINITIONS

## **ESG Communications:**

The process through which a company engages with stakeholders to tell its sustainability story.

## **ESG Reporting:**

The process through which a company communicates and discloses their sustainability strategy and performance with a view towards demonstrating compliance.

# PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

**A total of 118 responses were received.**

The respondents come from



a wide range of sectors (in-house communications practitioners, agencies, consultancies, NGOs, government, those exploring new opportunities, etc.)



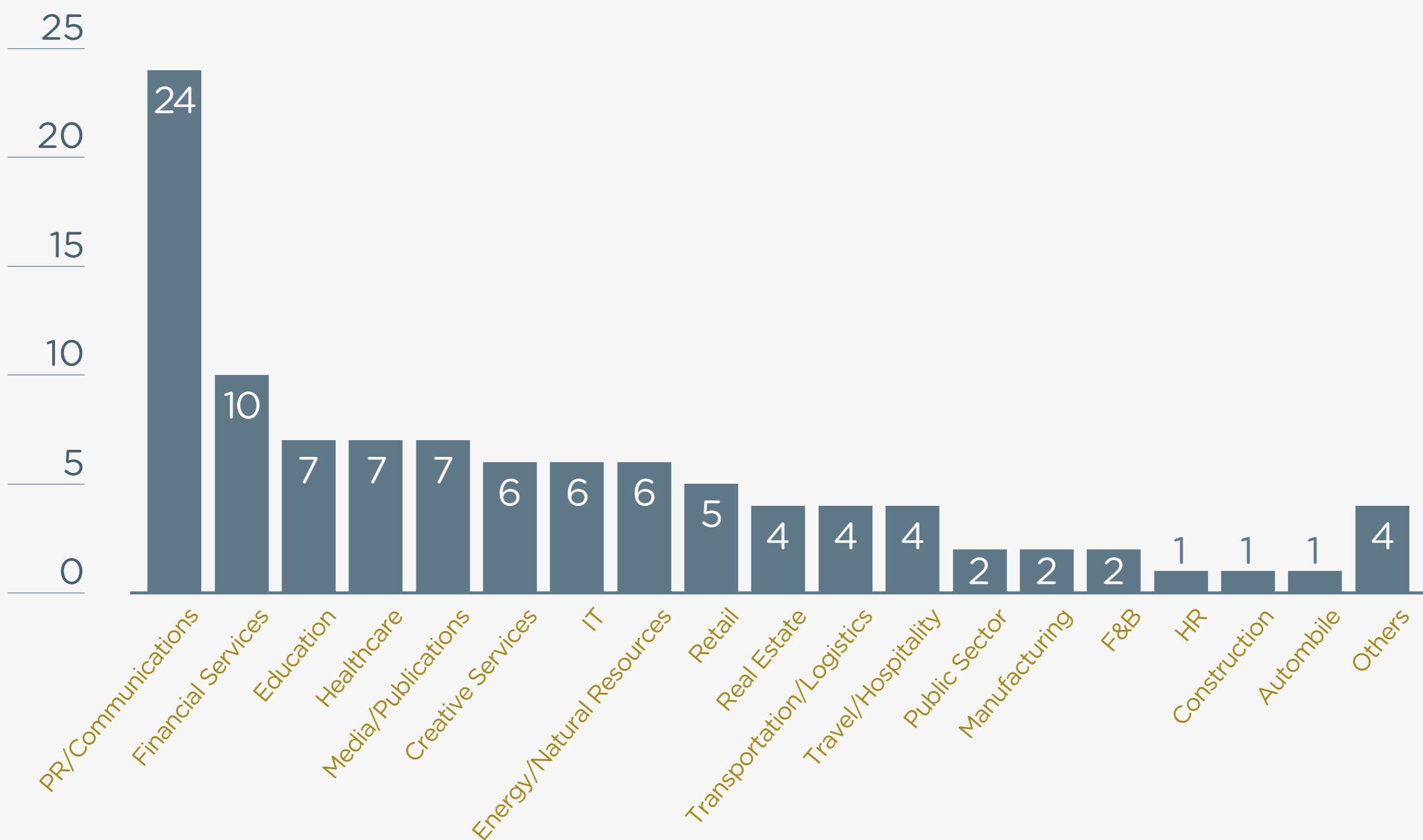
a wide range of industries (Financial Services, IT, Retail, Education, Healthcare, to name a few)

# PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



Total number of respondents = 118

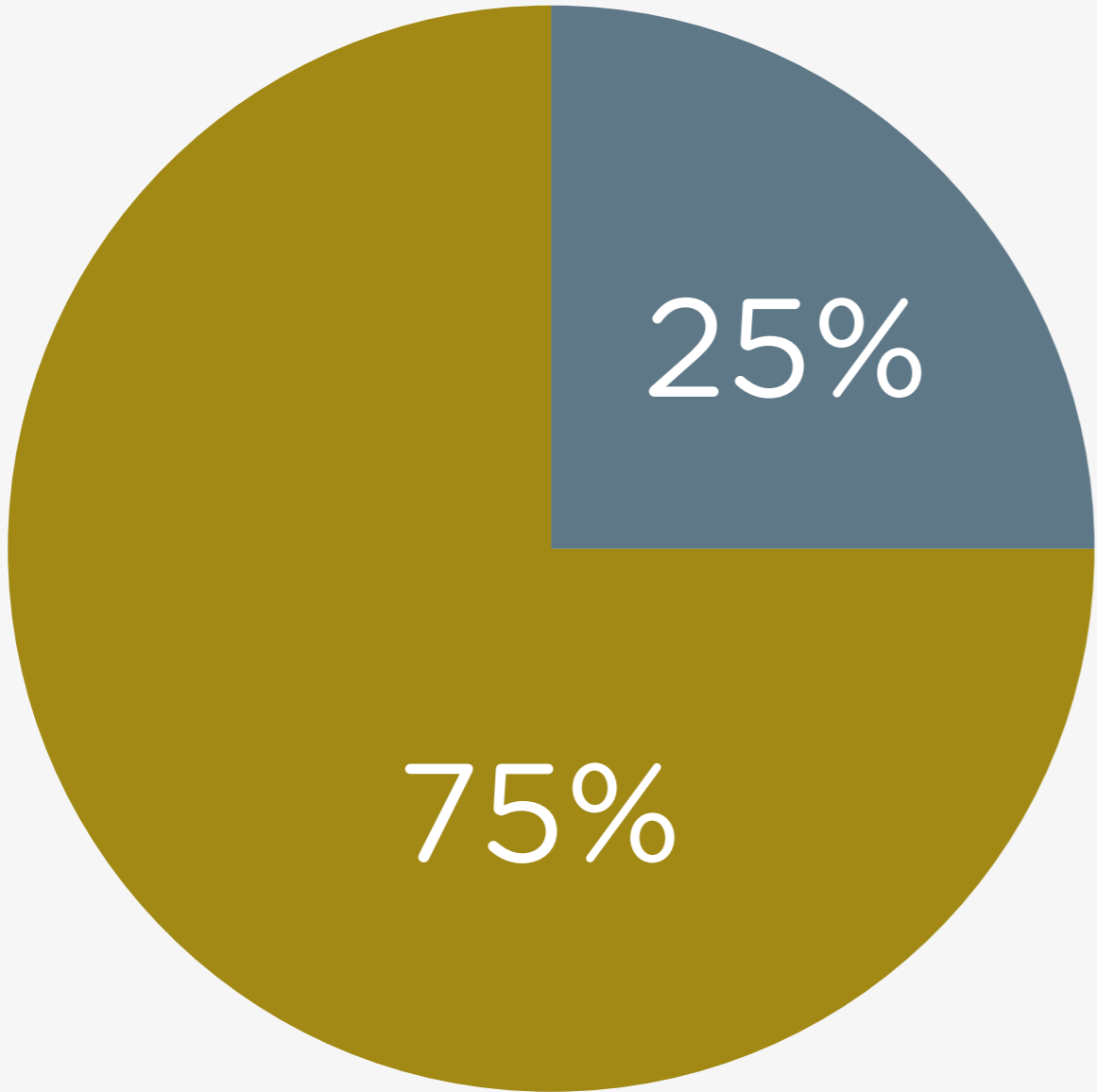
# PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



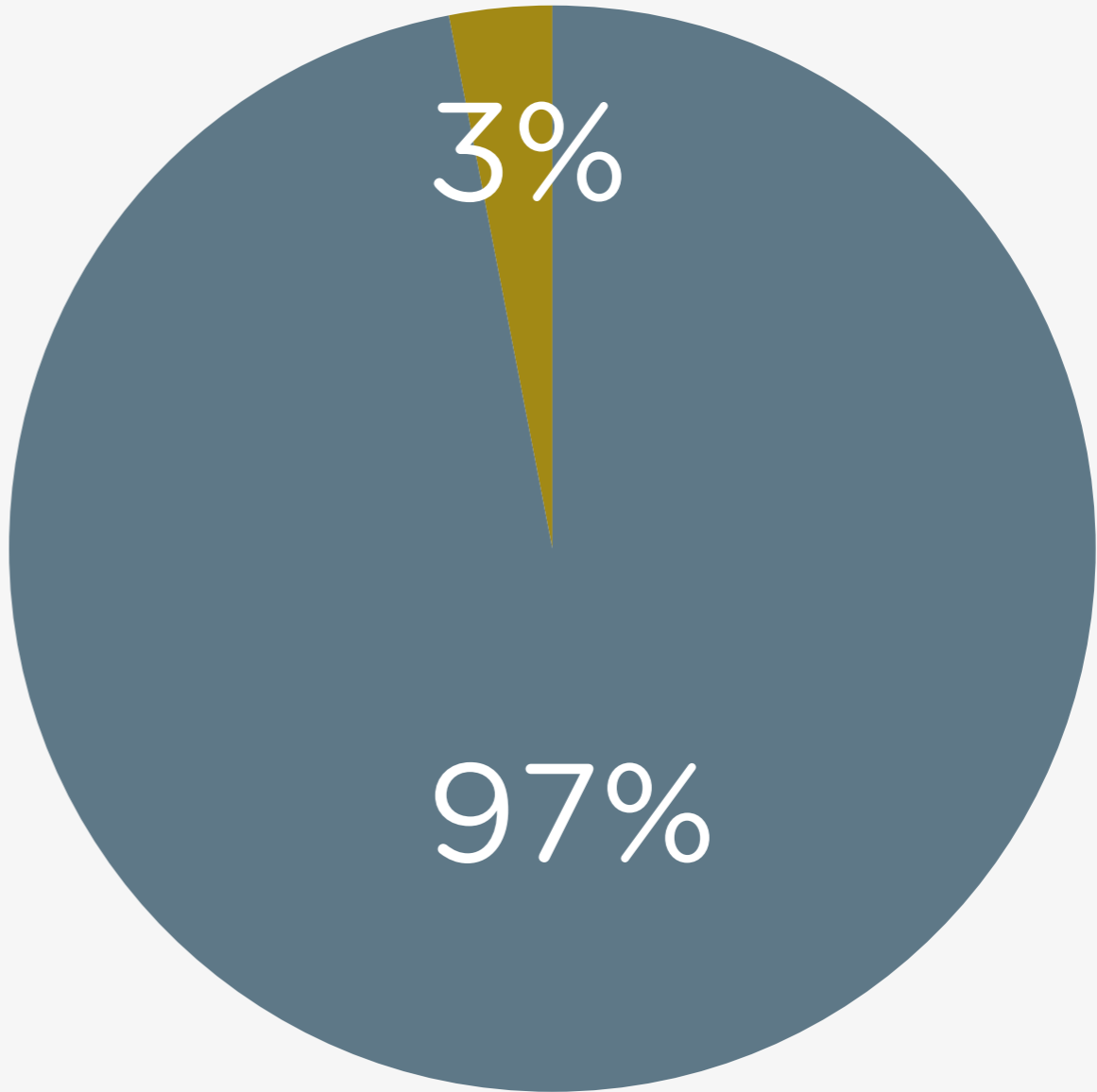
Total number of respondents = 118



# PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS




■ IPRS member    ■ Non-member



■ Asia    ■ North America

# OVERVIEW OF REPORT

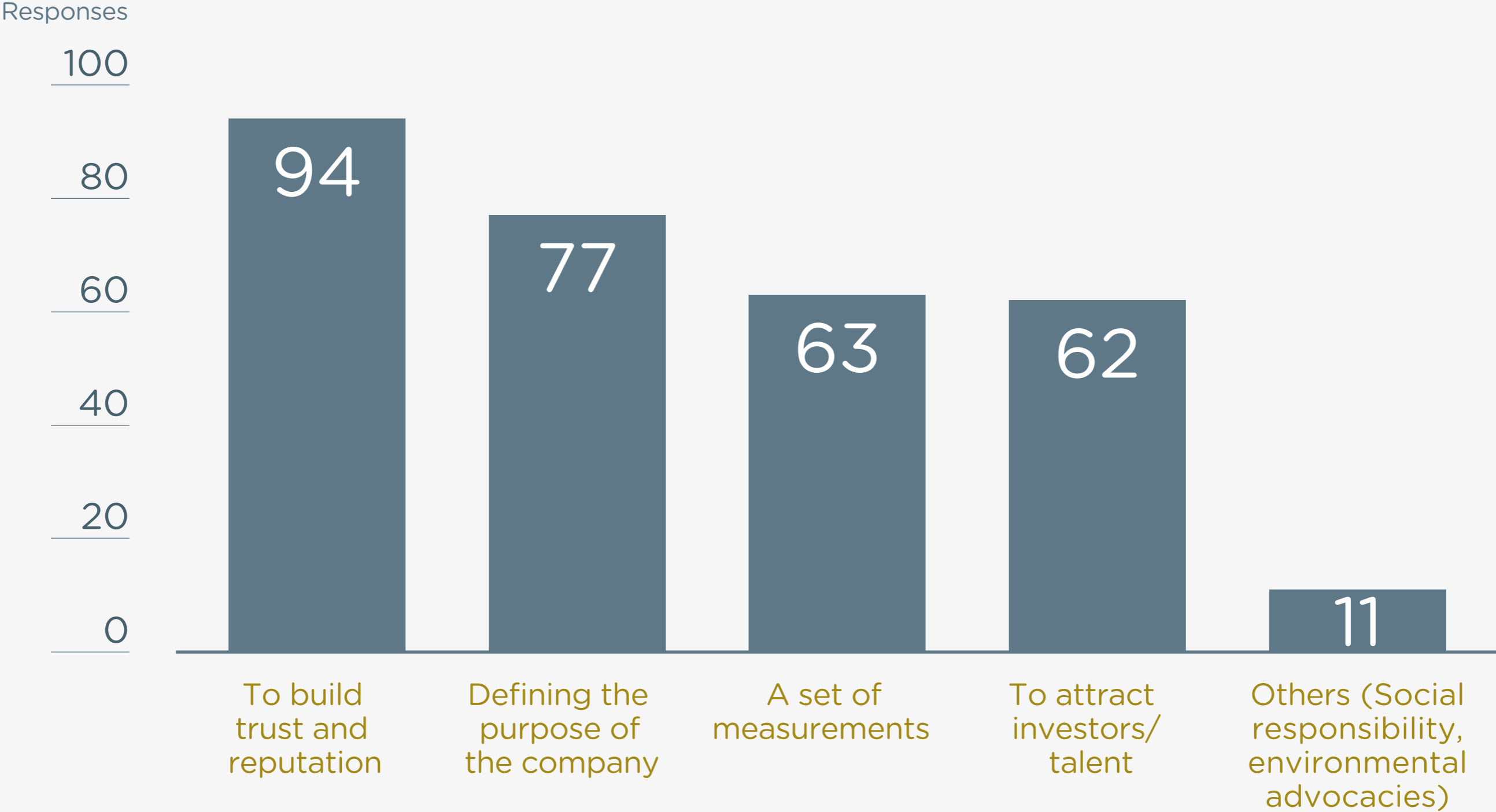
- ▶ Current Understanding and Implementation/Usage of ESG Communications
- ▶ Experience and Challenges
- ▶ What Do Communications Professionals Want To Know
- ▶ Key Takeaways
- ▶ What's Next



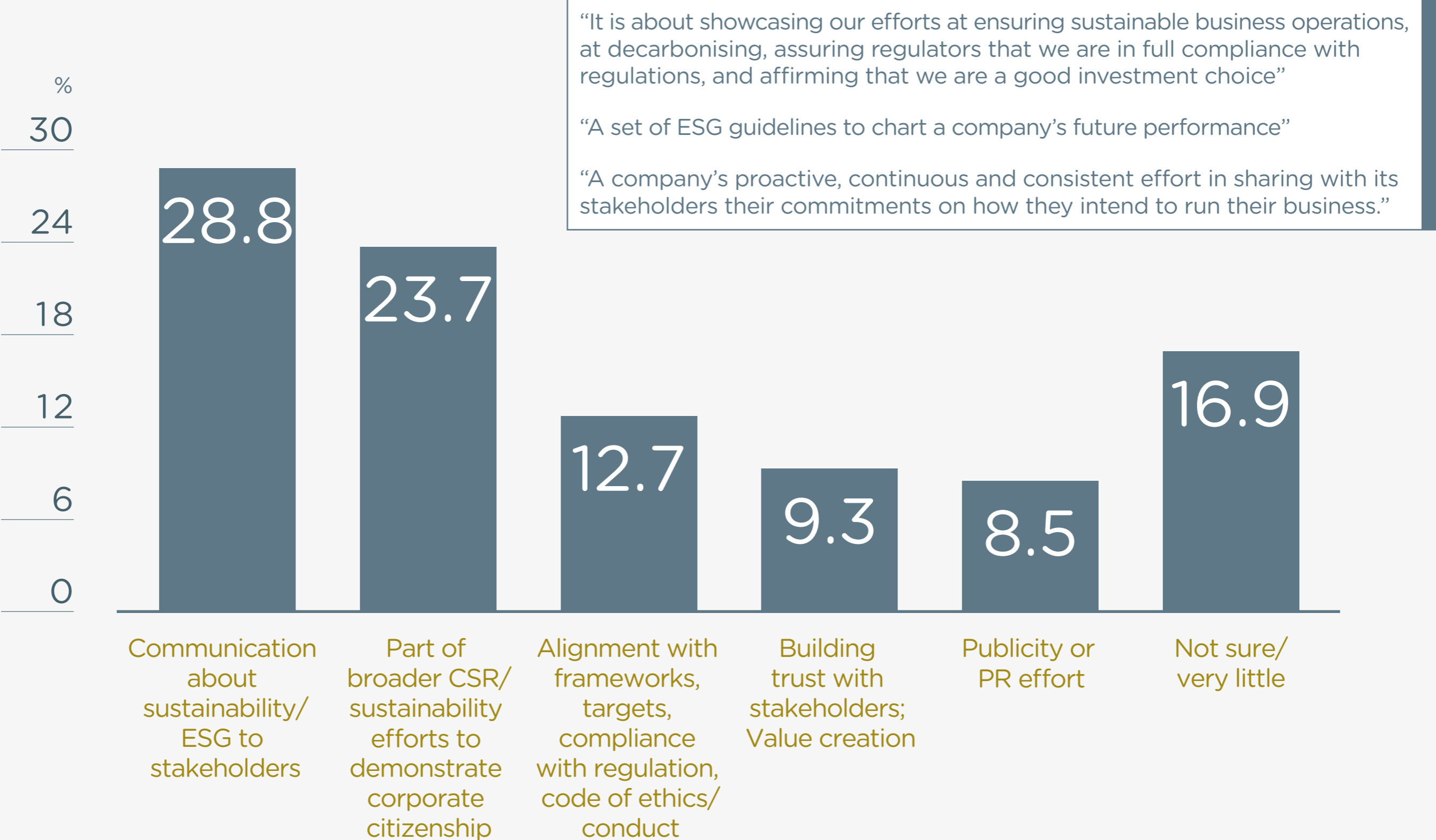
CURRENT  
UNDERSTANDING AND  
IMPLEMENTATION/  
USAGE OF ESG  
COMMUNICATIONS

# WHAT DOES ESG MEAN TO YOU?

ESG is viewed differently. Most agree that ESG builds trust and reputation.

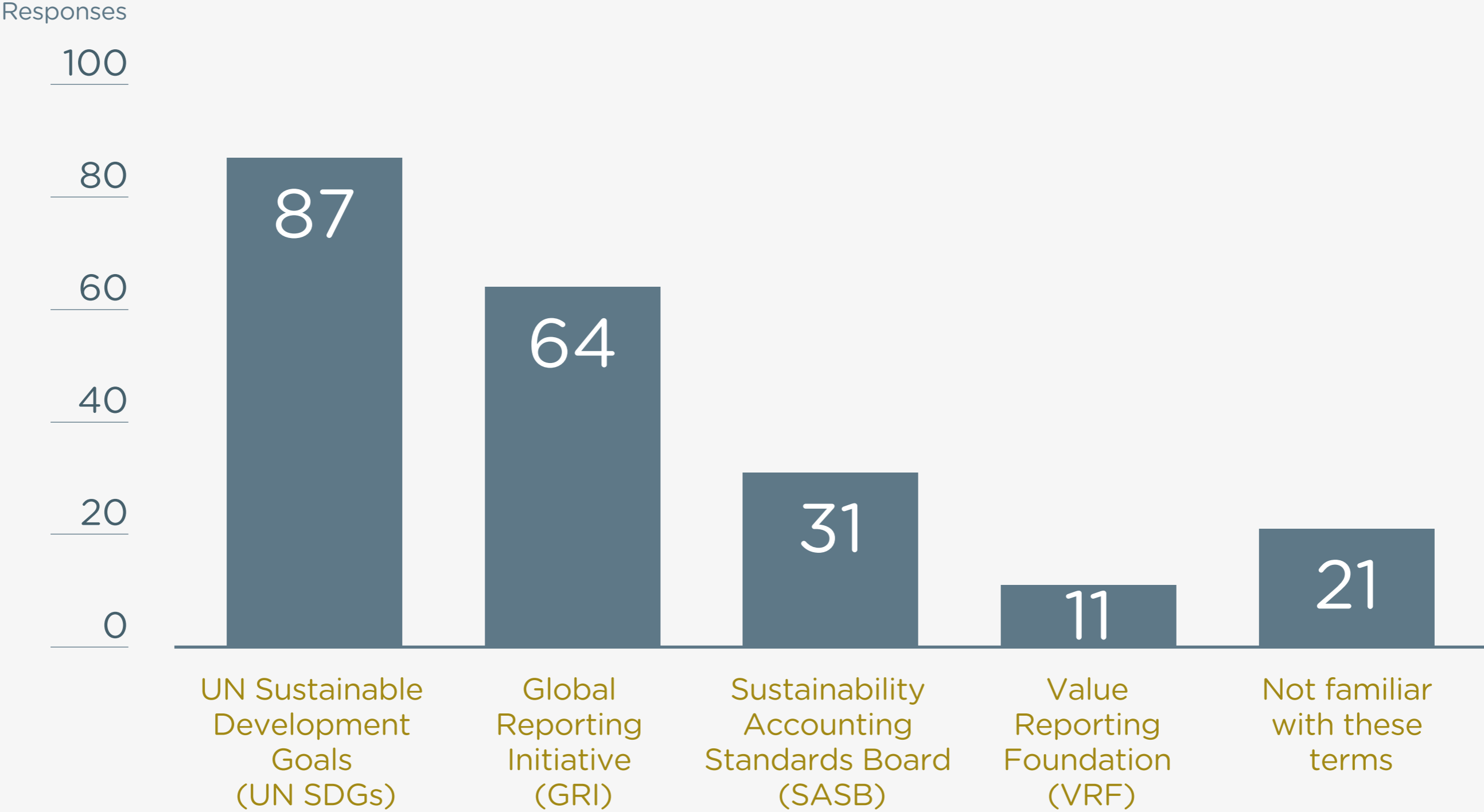


# BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT ESG COMMUNICATIONS?

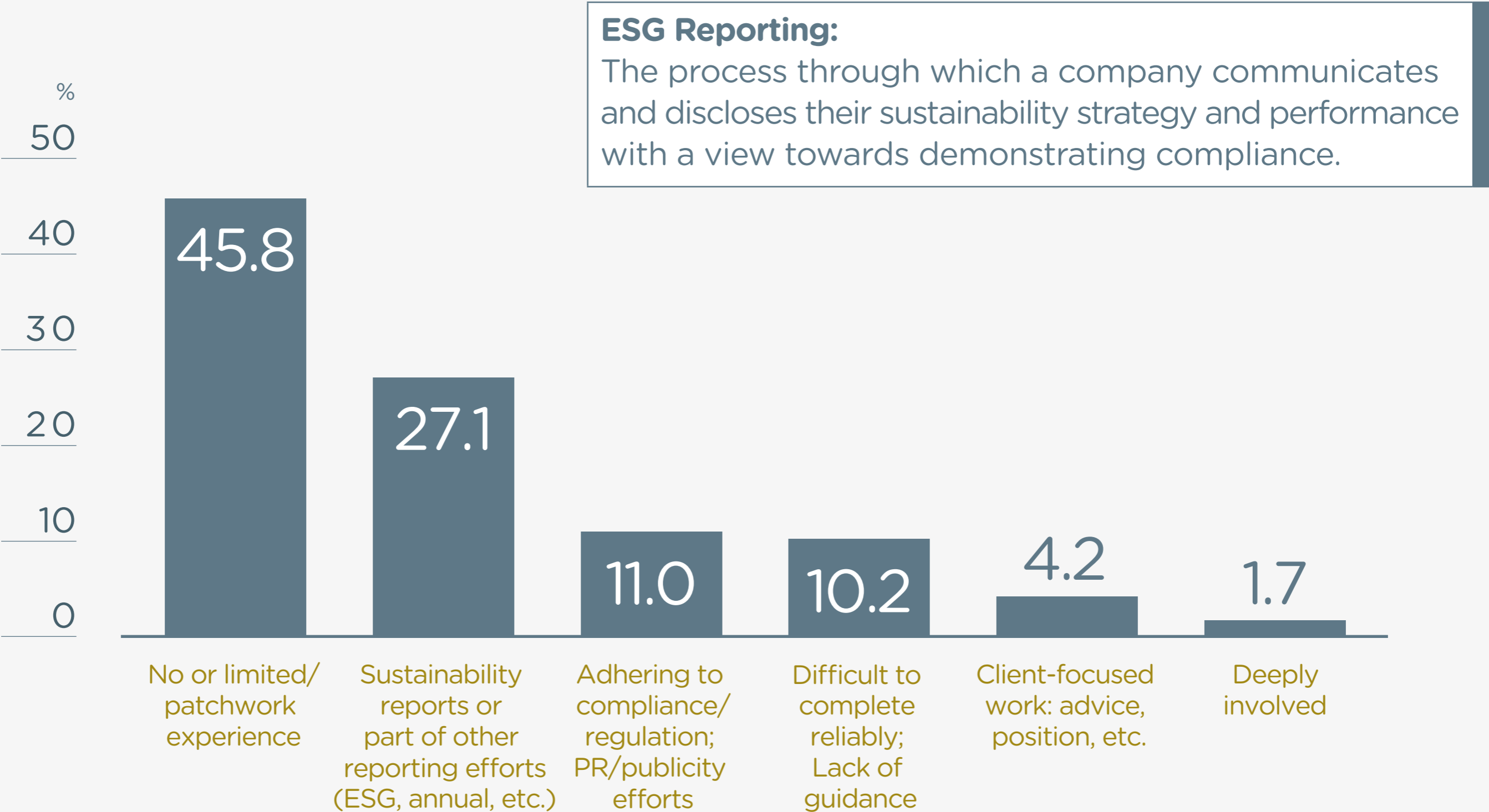


# ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING ESG TERMINOLOGIES?

Most people have heard of UN SDGs, but not SASB or VRF.

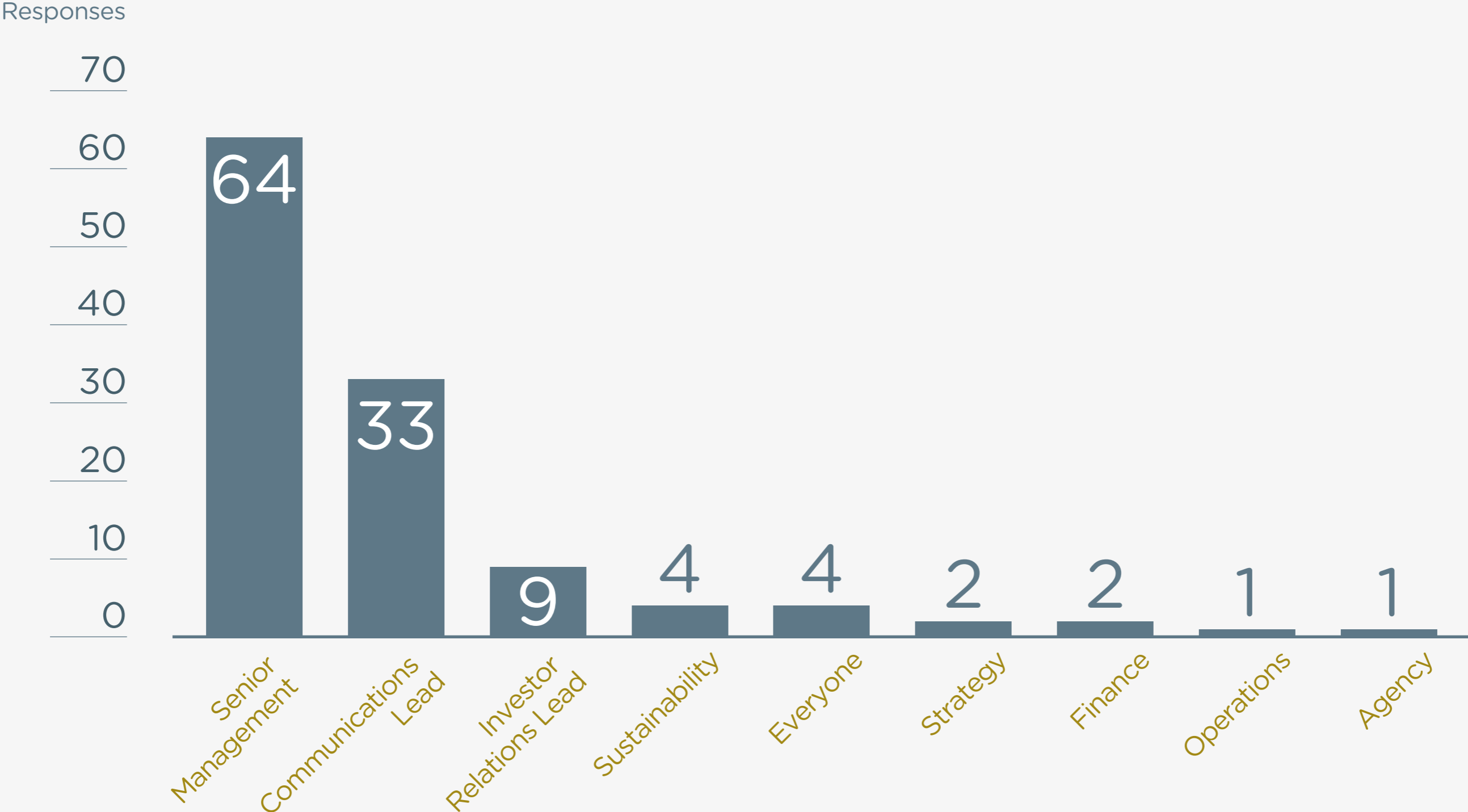


# BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH ESG REPORTING



# WHO DO YOU THINK TAKES OWNERSHIP OF ESG COMMUNICATIONS IN ORGANISATIONS?

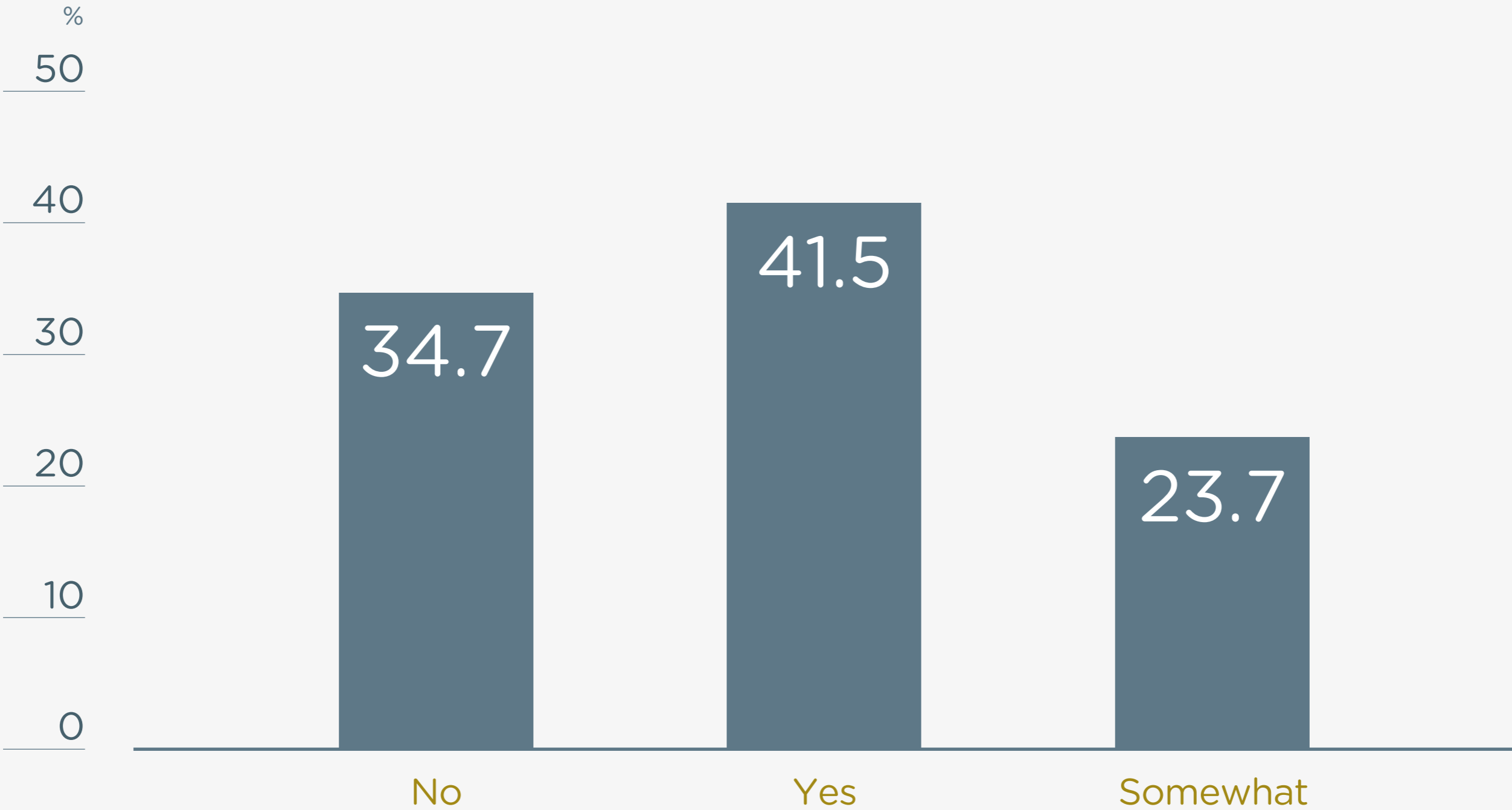
Senior management and communications leads seen to own ESG communications.



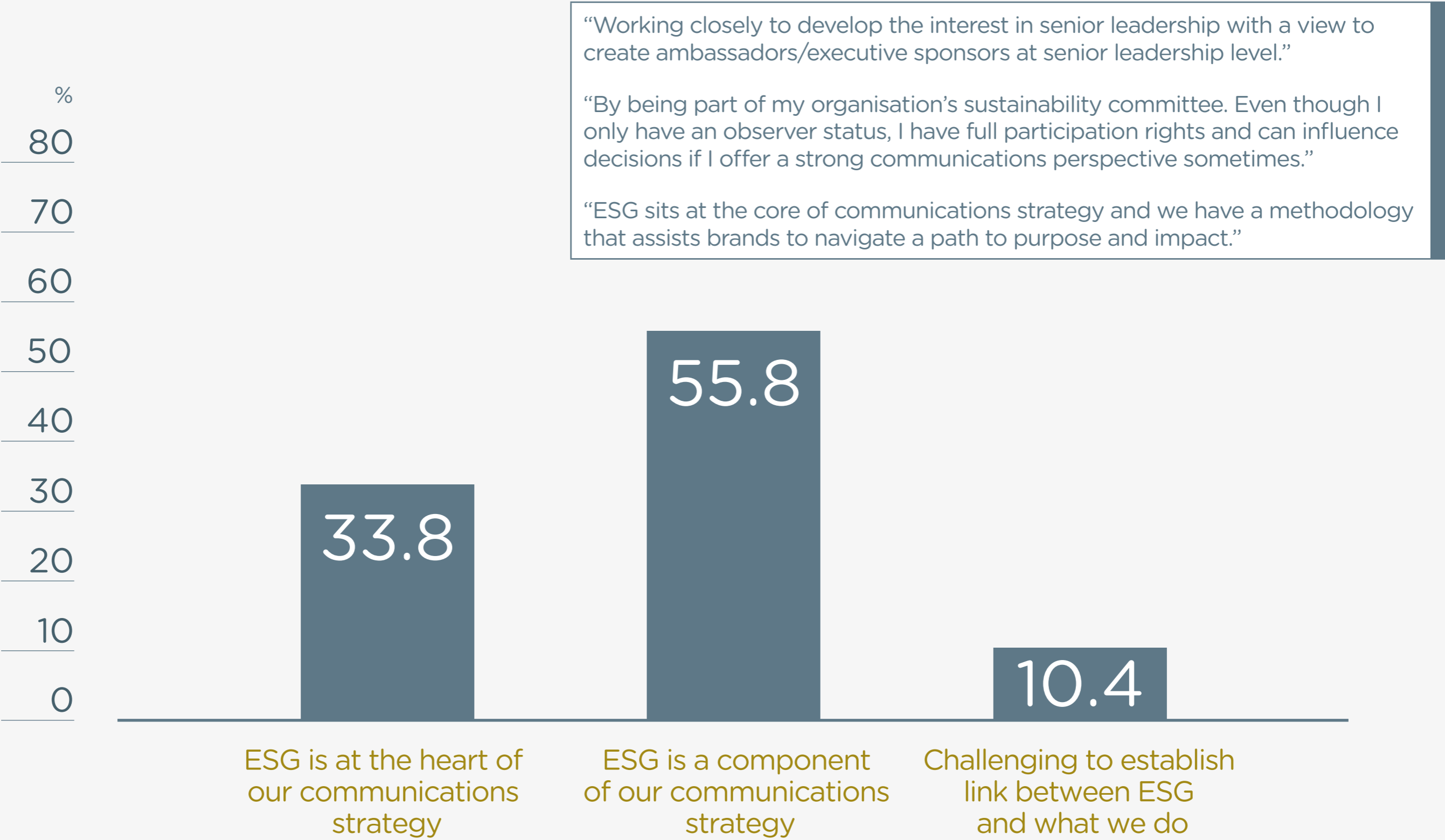


# HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO INCORPORATE ESG COMMUNICATIONS IN YOUR CORE PR STRATEGY?

Almost two thirds have incorporated ESG communications in their core PR strategy.



# HOW IS ESG INCORPORATED IN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY?

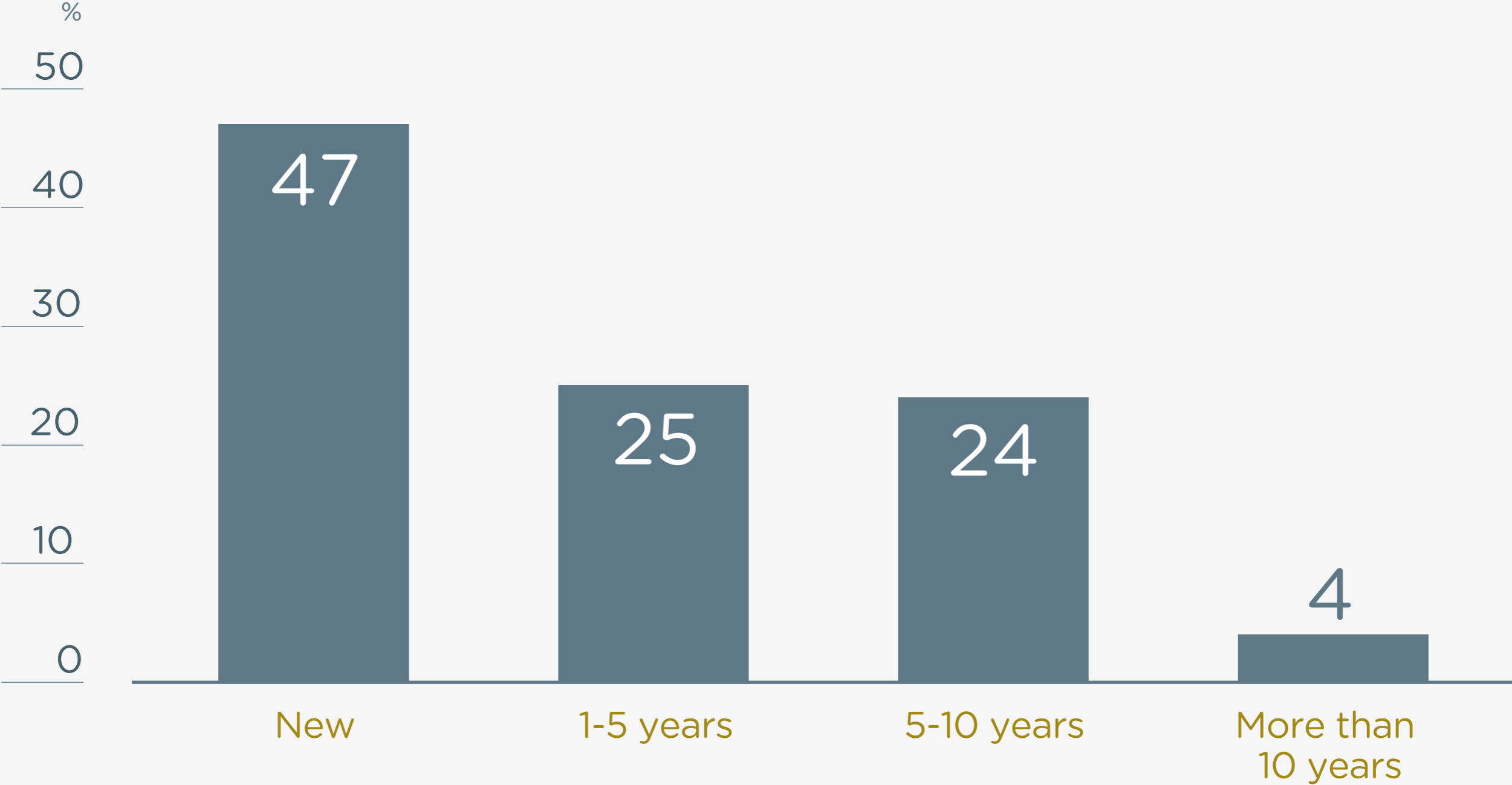




# EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

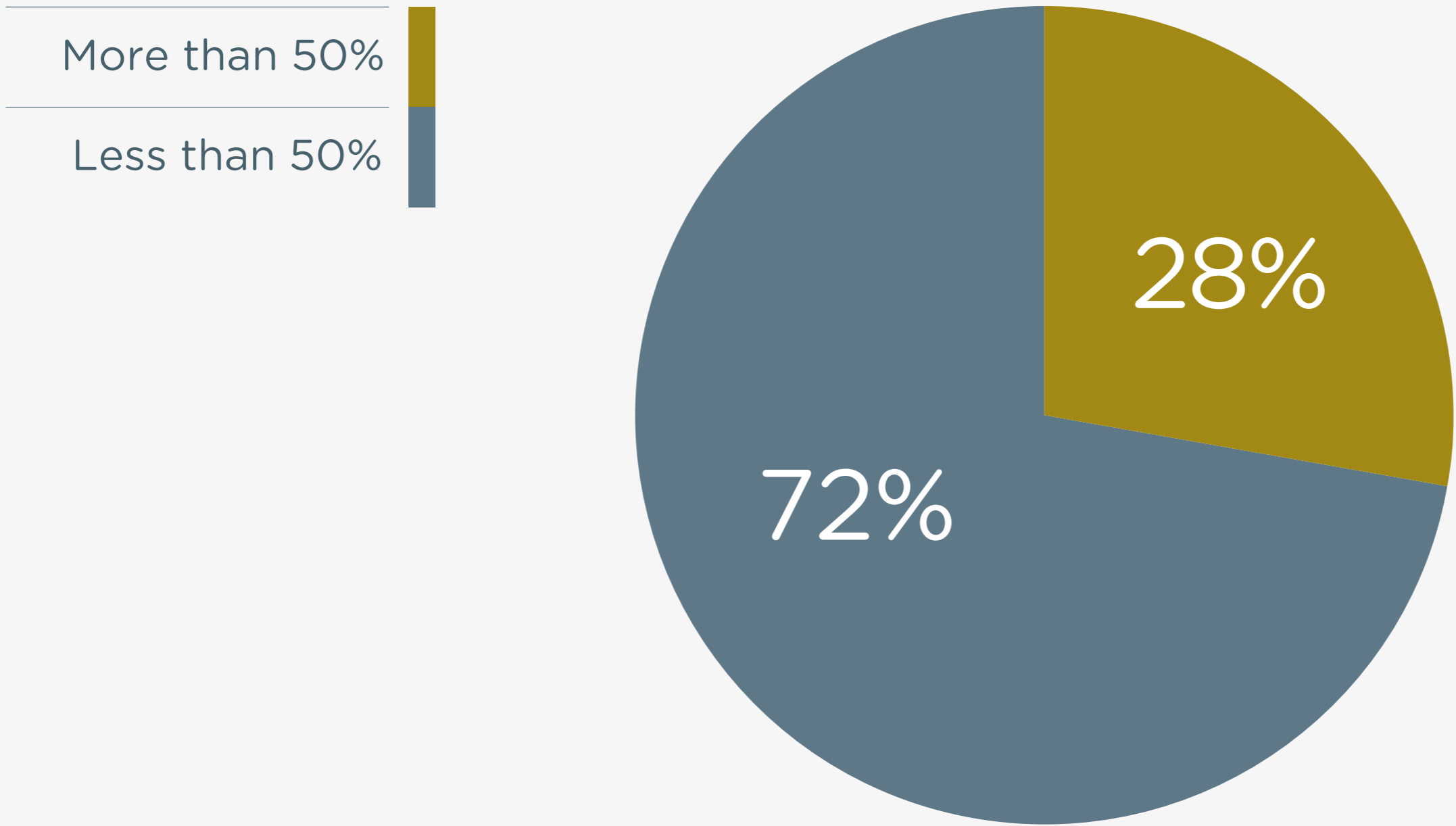
# HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN ESG COMMUNICATIONS?

More than 50% of respondents have some experience with ESG communications.



# HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON ESG COMMUNICATIONS?

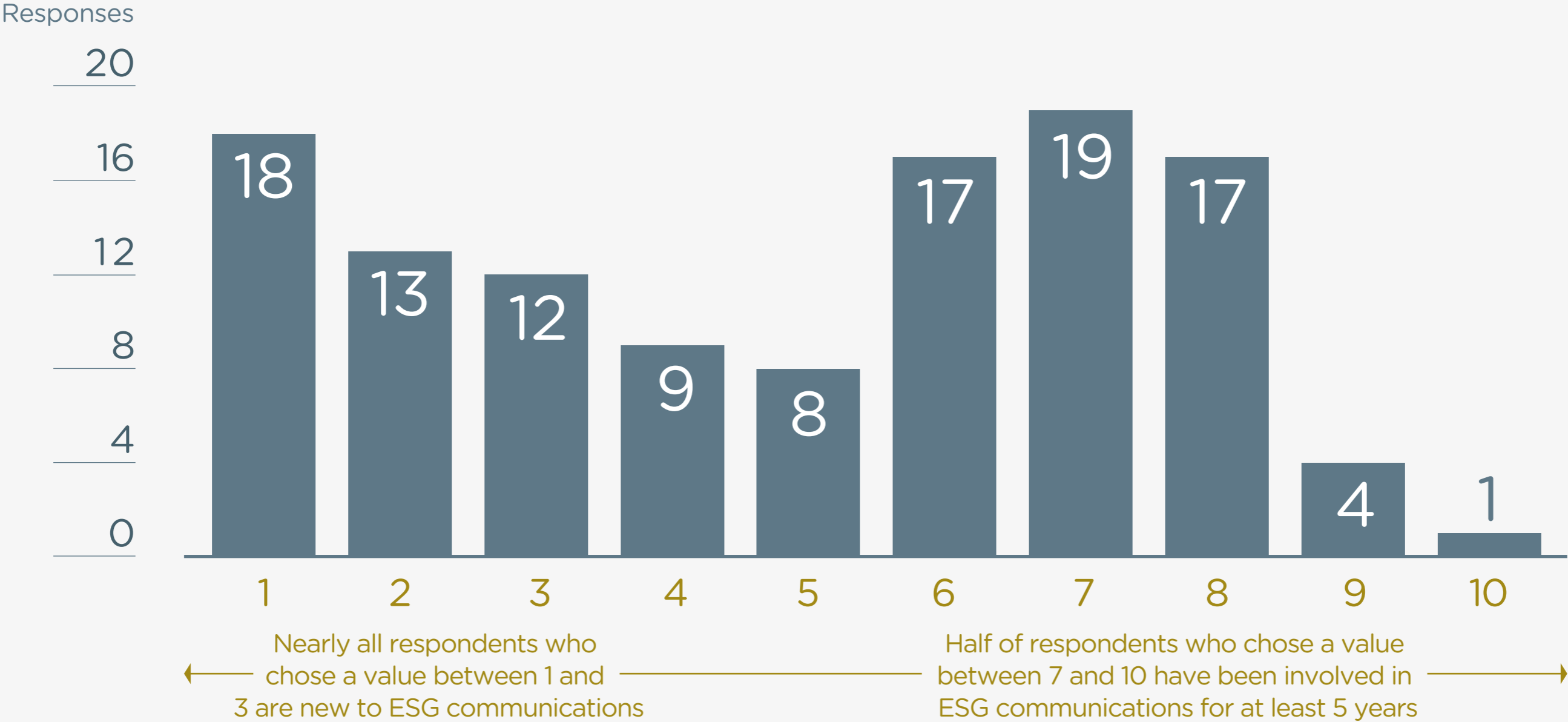
28% of respondents spend more than 50% of their time, while 72% spend less than 50% of their time.



# HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR SKILLS IN ESG COMMUNICATIONS?

Overall, respondents felt a need to build up their knowledge on ESG and ESG communications.

“Just curating top-line beliefs and the broad key messages has been challenging enough and taken me two years. Now the harder part is to understand how each asset class in my organisation is integrating material ESG factors into their investment decision-making and translate the various bottom-up approaches into communications strategies, which I believe will take another two years.”

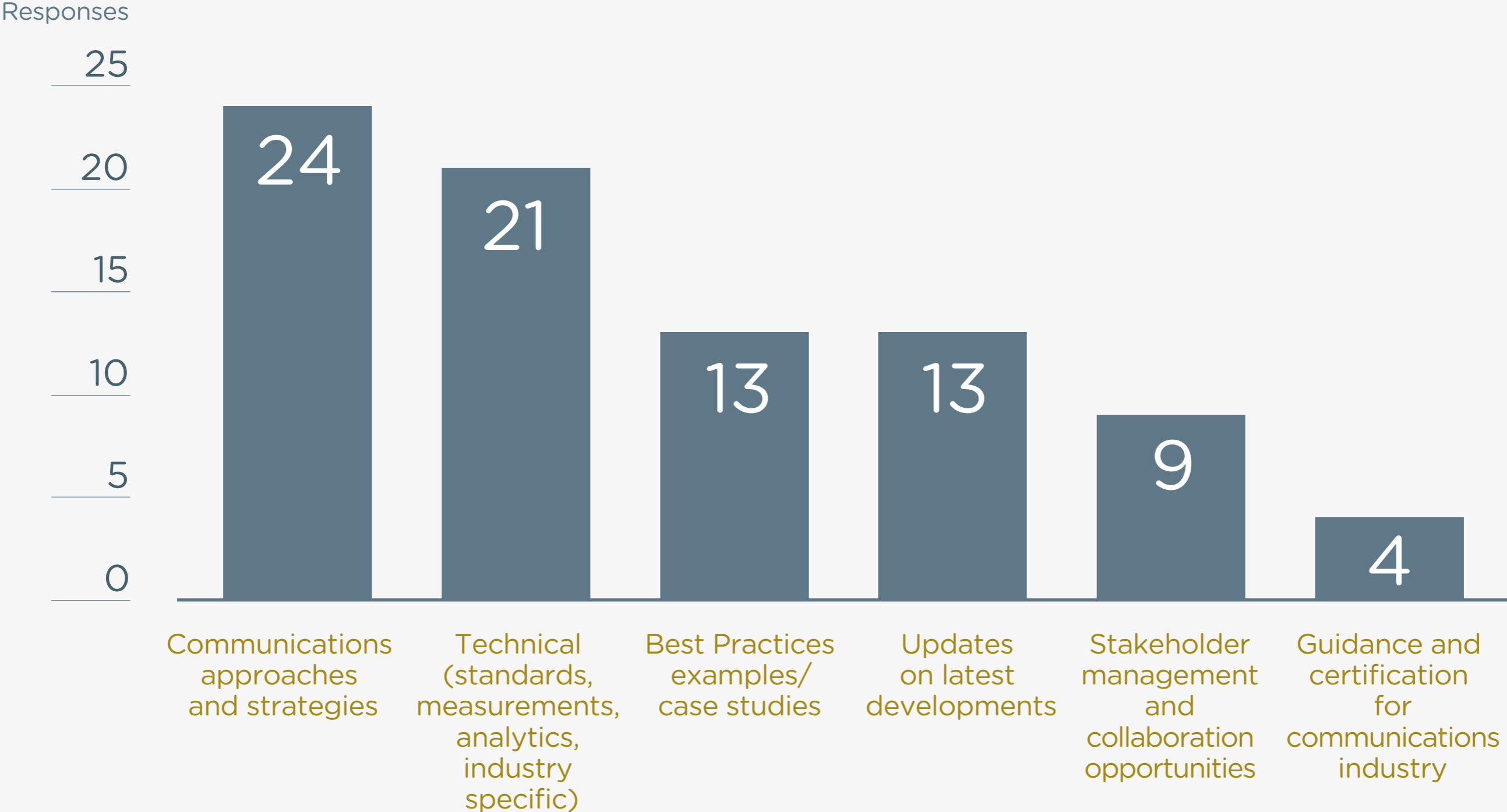




WHAT DO COMMUNICATIONS  
PROFESSIONALS WANT  
TO KNOW

# WHAT FURTHER KNOWLEDGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACQUIRE ON ESG COMMUNICATIONS?

The 'Hows' and 'Whats' are top of mind.

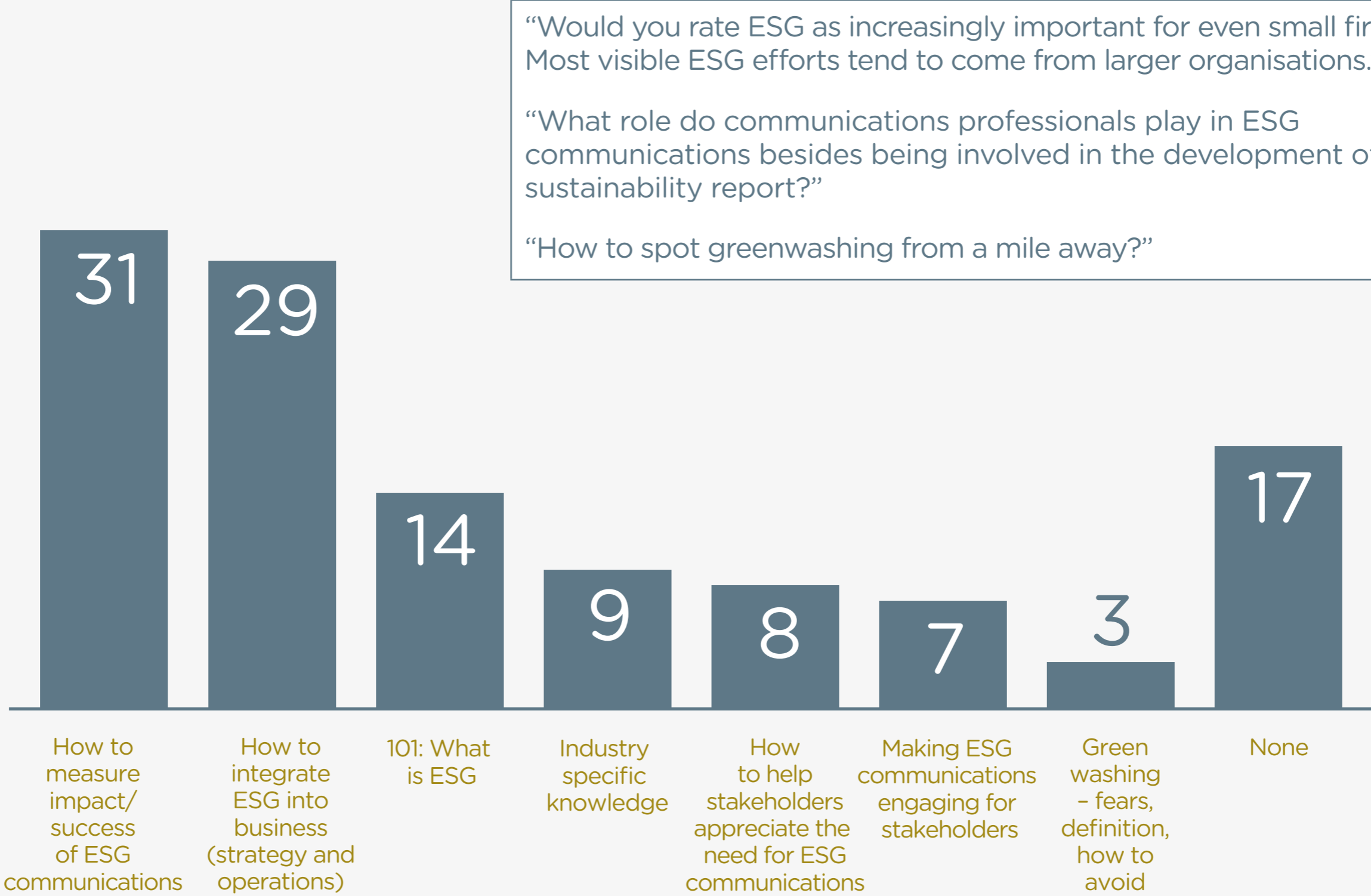




# WHAT ARE YOUR TOP QUESTIONS ON ESG COMMUNICATIONS?

Responses

35  
30  
25  
20  
15  
10  
5  
0



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

# TAKEAWAYS

Recognition that ESG is becoming increasingly important and that the role of the communications profession is key in driving the ESG agenda.

ESG is seen to be important to building trust and creating value. Yet, the objective of communications seem to be aligned with the broader purpose of complying with regulatory requirements and stakeholder needs – building trust and creating value is a by-product rather than a goal of communications.

Many communications professionals are new to ESG and there is a perceived gap in knowledge and capability not just within the profession but also across other organisational functions.

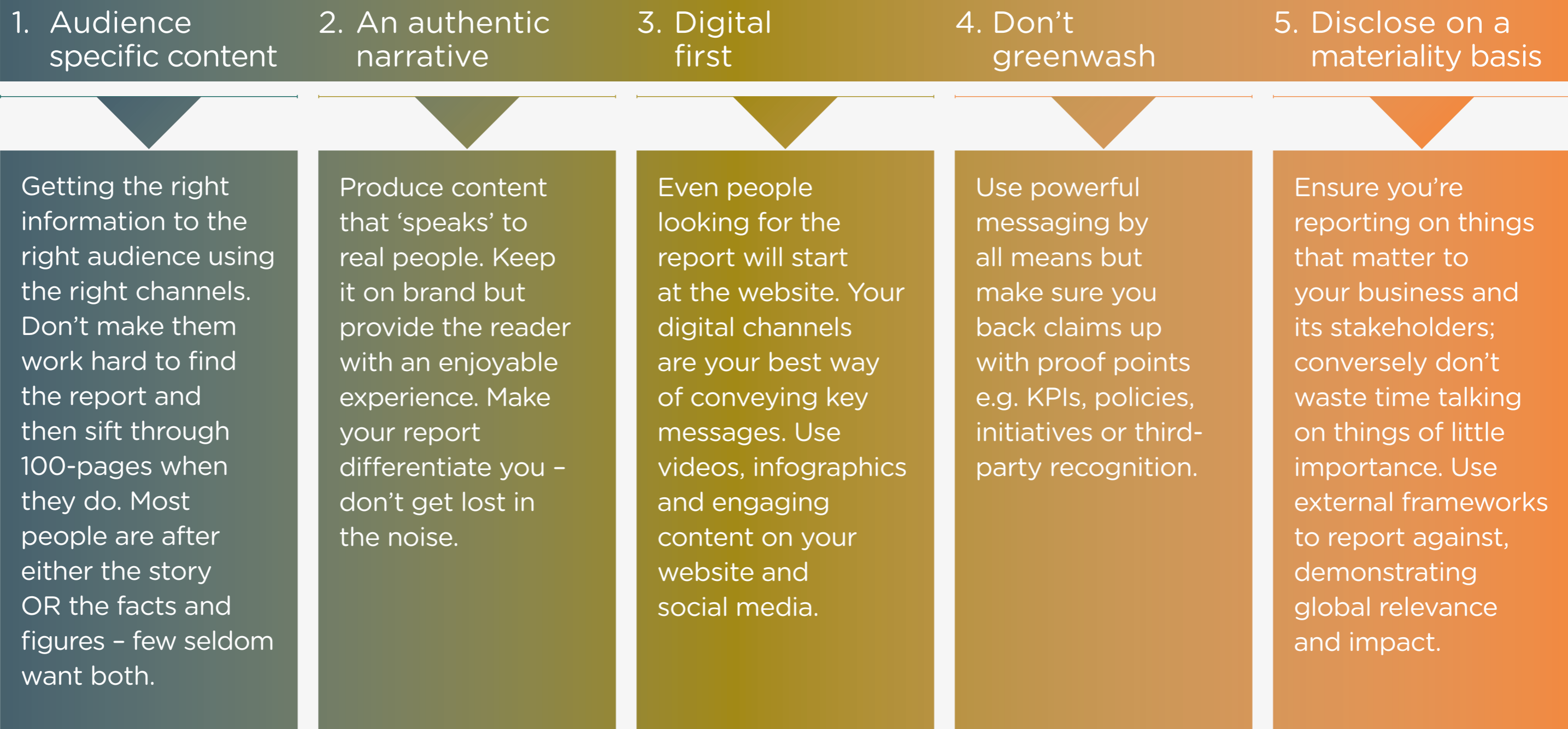
The challenge is compounded by the various and differing ESG standards and frameworks and the fast-evolving nature of ESG topics.

Communications professionals seek to learn more about ESG – from understanding what ESG is in the first place, to learning about how to deliver the messages in a compelling way.



WHAT'S NEXT

# HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?



# WHAT DO WE COMMUNICATE?

## 1 Leadership Commitment

An insight into the tone from the top

## 2 Sustainability Governance

A focus on oversight and responsibility for sustainability

## 3 Strategy

An explanation of the strategic approach to sustainability

## 4 Value Creation Model

An explanation of how value is created over time

## 5 Policies and Practices

A look at the systems, controls and processes in place to manage material issues

## 6 Targets and Performance

An elaboration of specific and measurable targets and KPIs

## 7 Partnerships and Collaborations

A focus on relationships that advance the sustainability agenda

## 8 Risks and Opportunities

A discussion of sustainability risks and opportunities that impact strategy and performance

## 9 Stakeholder Engagement

An account of the engagement process with key stakeholders

# THANK YOU

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