

Smart Marketing for Engineers®



IEEE GlobalSpec
Media Solutions

TREW
MARKETING





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Research Overview

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Marketers in charge of targeting technical audiences are grappling with the industry's shift toward online and content marketing and how to apply this approach effectively for an engineering audience. They need to understand what content engineers consume, why they look for it, and how they find it. While research exists in the consumer and broad B2B online and content marketing space, there is a gap in taking a deeper dive into this area to educate and inform marketers the most effective ways to target highly technical audiences.

Therefore, TREW Marketing and IEEE GlobalSpec partnered to conduct a survey in major regions of the world to learn critical marketing information from technical professionals such as:

- Where and when they seek information for products, services, and technologies.
- The type of content they prefer.
- If vendors' "generosity" with content correlates to their consideration of the vendor in a purchase process.
- How many pages deep they will go in an online search to find what they need.
- If their perception of vendors' websites correlates to their consideration of them in a purchase process.
- What portion of their buying process happens online.
- Their willingness to complete lead forms online, and which fields they're most likely to complete.
- How they use content throughout the buying process.
- When they prefer to speak to a salesperson, and how many interactions they have with vendor companies before they engage directly with someone.

Methodology & Sample

The survey recipients were chosen from IEEE GlobalSpec and TREW Marketing databases. Respondents were sent an email from the respective companies asking to participate in an 8-9 minute survey, with a link to the online survey questionnaire. The survey was further promoted via company publications, social media, partners, and websites.

- Data was collected in July 2017.
- The survey was targeted to technical professionals only. A total of 893 respondents completed the survey.





Top 10 Findings

1. Worldwide, engineers prefer case studies, longer length e-books, books, and white papers over other types of content.
2. Engineers value online content sources most, primarily vendor websites and search engines. However, engineers in Latin America value trade publications more than other content sources, while engineers in the UK/Ireland value online sources more than in any other region.
3. Nearly 50 percent of engineers subscribe to four or more e-newsletters. Engineers in the UK/Ireland subscribe to more e-newsletters than any other region.
4. Over 90 percent of engineers surveyed are more likely to do business with companies that regularly produce new and current content.
5. For the majority of engineers, a company's website has considerable impact on their brand perception.
6. The four fields engineers are most likely to complete on a web form are work email address, company, first name, and last name.
7. Over 40 percent of engineers expect to be contacted within 24 hours after completing a form on a vendor's website. Younger engineers have even higher expectations, with 50 percent expecting to be contacted within 24 hours.
8. Nearly 60 percent of the buying process happens online for the majority of engineers.
9. Engineers prefer to search online and read available content before talking to sales.
10. Most engineers have three or four interactions with a vendor before communicating with them directly.





Recommendations for Industrial Marketers

1. Catch engineers in their inboxes.

Engineers and technical professionals are reading email. They overwhelmingly find value in work-related emails and e-newsletters from both publications and vendors. They subscribe to multiple e-newsletters. Moreover, they are likely to give your email some level of attention before they delete it. Consider connecting with these professionals and building your audience base by including your message in emails to your own list, as well as through third-party emails and e-newsletters that are relevant to your industry. To cut through the clutter, ensure that your message offers value for the recipient, and includes a compelling subject line and introduction.

2. Your online presence matters.

Your potential clients will base their perception of your company, in part, on your website. Are you putting your best foot forward? Ensure that a buyer's first impression of your website is a positive one. It should be professional, easy to navigate, clearly explain your company's unique position and offerings, and include helpful content and information that allows these professionals to make informed decisions.

3. Diversify your marketing spend.

Although your website is a critical component of your marketing strategy, make sure that you aren't putting all of your marketing efforts – and dollars – into one basket. Engineers rely on multiple content types and sources when performing work-related tasks. Make sure you can reach them by putting together comprehensive marketing programs across a variety of media channels that your audience relies on.

4. Make content a priority of the media channels.

Engineers and technical professionals heavily rely on content to make informed purchasing decisions. They read published articles from vendors and third parties. They subscribe to e-newsletters and watch webinars. And nearly all of them are more likely to do business with companies that regularly produce new and current content. Show your potential clients that you can meet their needs by producing and disseminating fresh, relevant content on a regular basis.

5. Don't wait to make a connection.

Your audience is conducting more than half of their buying process online. When the time comes to speak to you, they are educated and well informed. Not only that, but they expect you to respond quickly. Nearly half of all respondents expect to be contacted by you within 24 hours. Don't miss this opportunity to engage with potential buyers. Have a process in place to ensure that they hear from you within a day, if not sooner.

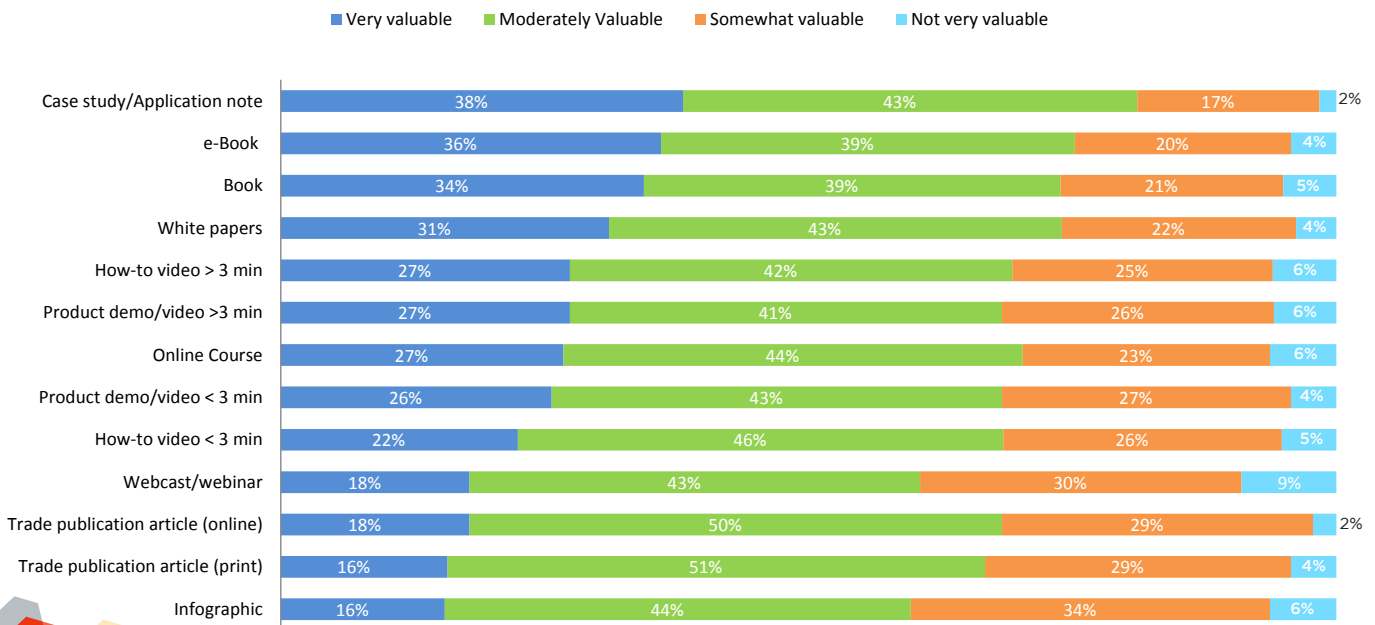




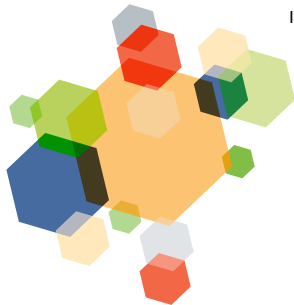
Survey Findings: Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF CONTENT WHEN RESEARCHING THE LATEST ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES, INDUSTRY TRENDS, AND PRODUCTS OR SERVICES?

Engineers find significant value in case studies/application notes, with 81 percent of respondents ranking them as either very very or moderately valuable. This is followed by longer-copy content such as e-books (75 percent), white papers (74 percent) and books (73 percent). Videos also have a strong showing, regardless of length, with both how-to and product demos performing well. Webinars are an established content type among this audience as well, with nearly all respondents (91 percent) ranking them at least “somewhat valuable.” Very few engineers rated any content type as “not very valuable”, which demonstrates that there is no silver bullet with what type of content to produce. To do content marketing effectively requires producing high quality content on a consistent basis in diverse formats.



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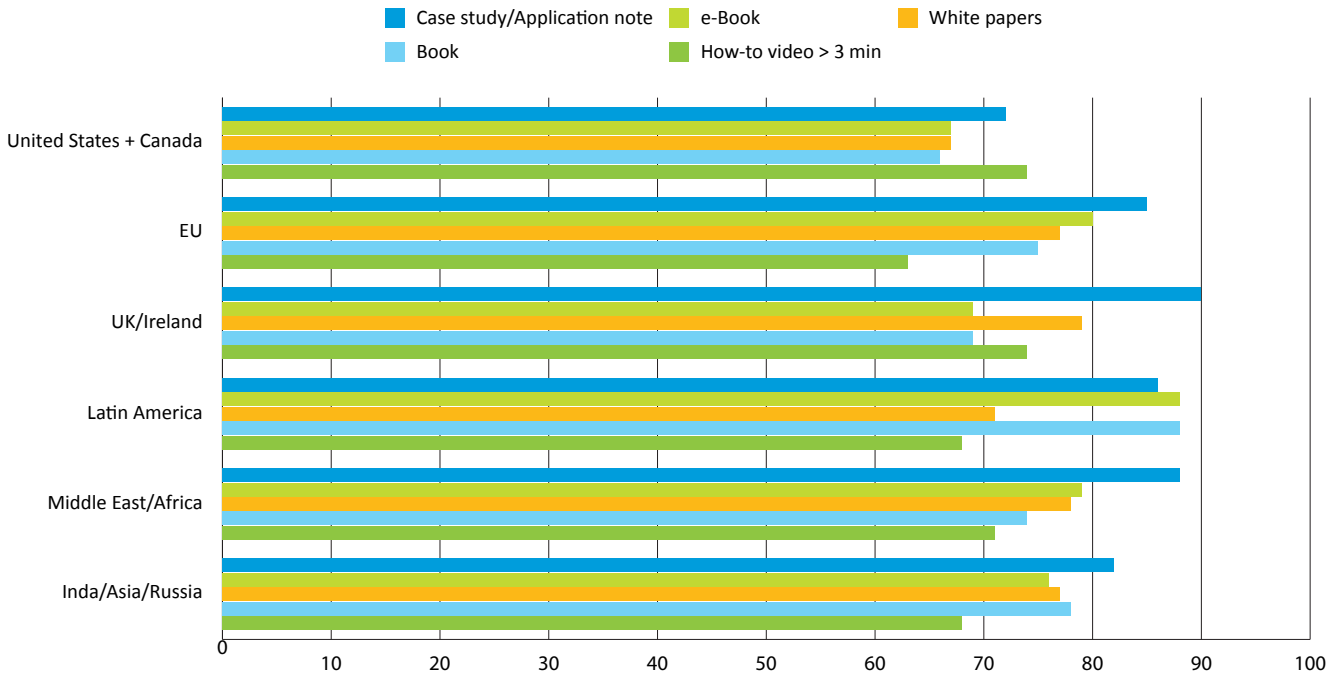




Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF CONTENT WHEN RESEARCHING THE LATEST ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES, INDUSTRY TRENDS, AND PRODUCTS OR SERVICES? (CONTENT TYPE BY REGION)

Research also shows some differences in content preferences based on region. The biggest differences are in Latin America, where engineers value e-books (88 percent) and books (88 percent) more than any other content type, and in the United States/Canada, where the most valued content type is how-to videos over three minutes long (74 percent).



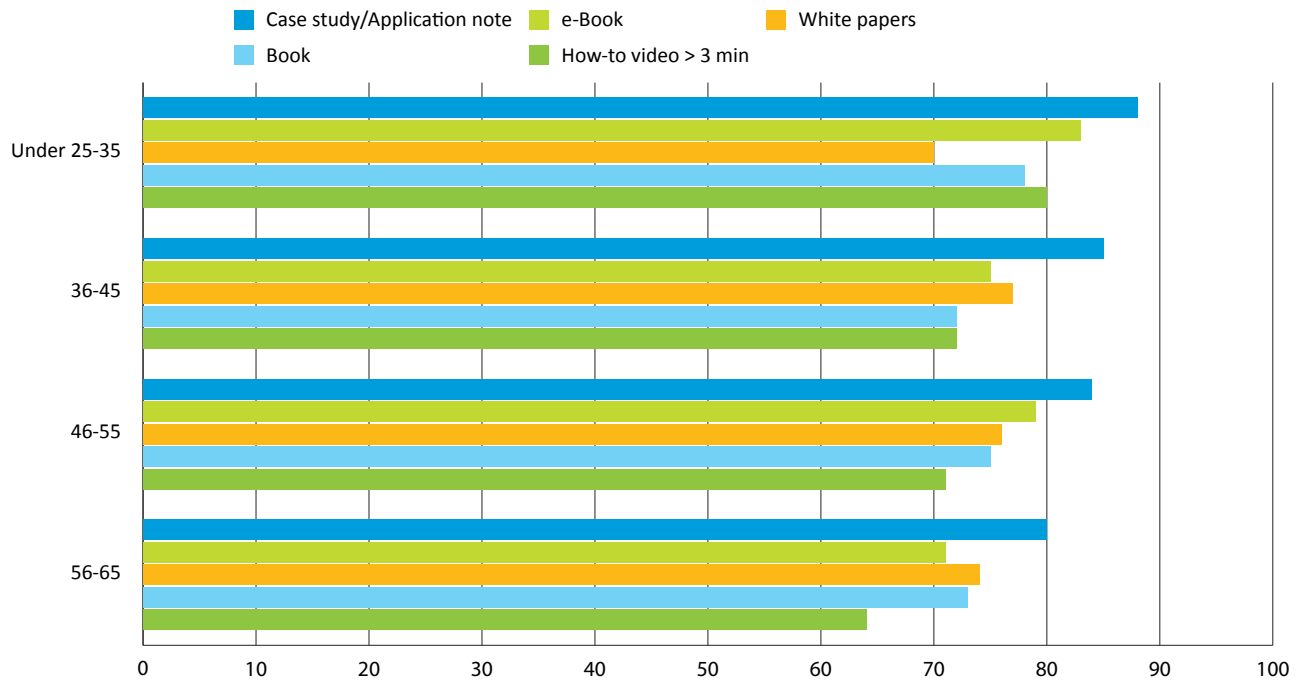
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Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF CONTENT WHEN RESEARCHING THE LATEST ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES, INDUSTRY TRENDS, AND PRODUCTS OR SERVICES? (TOP 5 BY AGE)

Across all age groups, respondents find case studies/application notes most valuable. However, the youngest group of engineers value how-to videos over three minutes long more than any other age group, with 80 percent finding them either very or moderately valuable. And this same age group of young engineers value white papers the least compared to all other age groups.



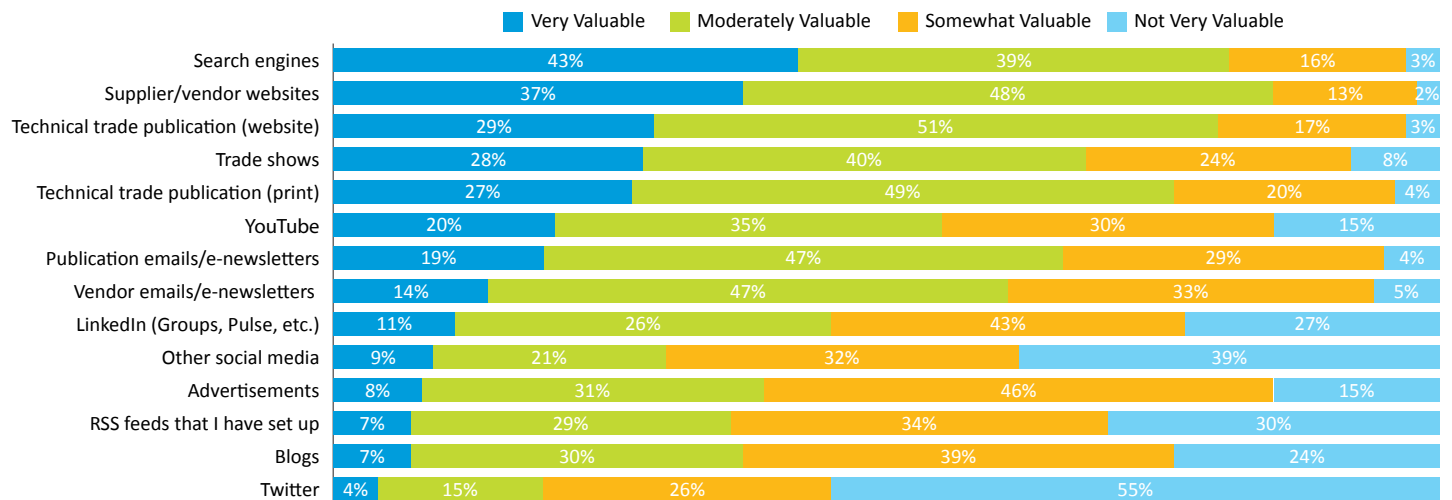
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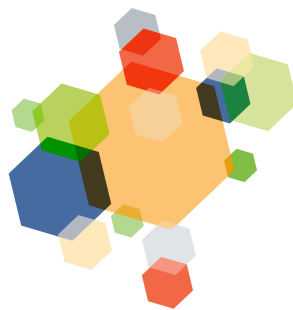
Engineers' Content Preferences

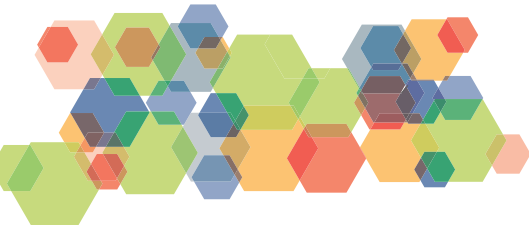
HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES WHEN SEEKING INFORMATION ON THE LATEST ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES, INDUSTRY TRENDS, AND PRODUCTS?

As previous research has shown, the top three content sources engineers find most valuable are all online: search engines (43 percent), supplier/vendor websites (37 percent), and trade publication websites (29 percent). Among offline/traditional media, engineers and technical professionals value trade shows and trade print publications, with about a third of respondents finding each source very valuable. Although they are no longer considered “new media,” social media channels – including Facebook, Google+, Instagram, and Twitter – are not viewed by respondents as exceptionally valuable sources for work-related information.



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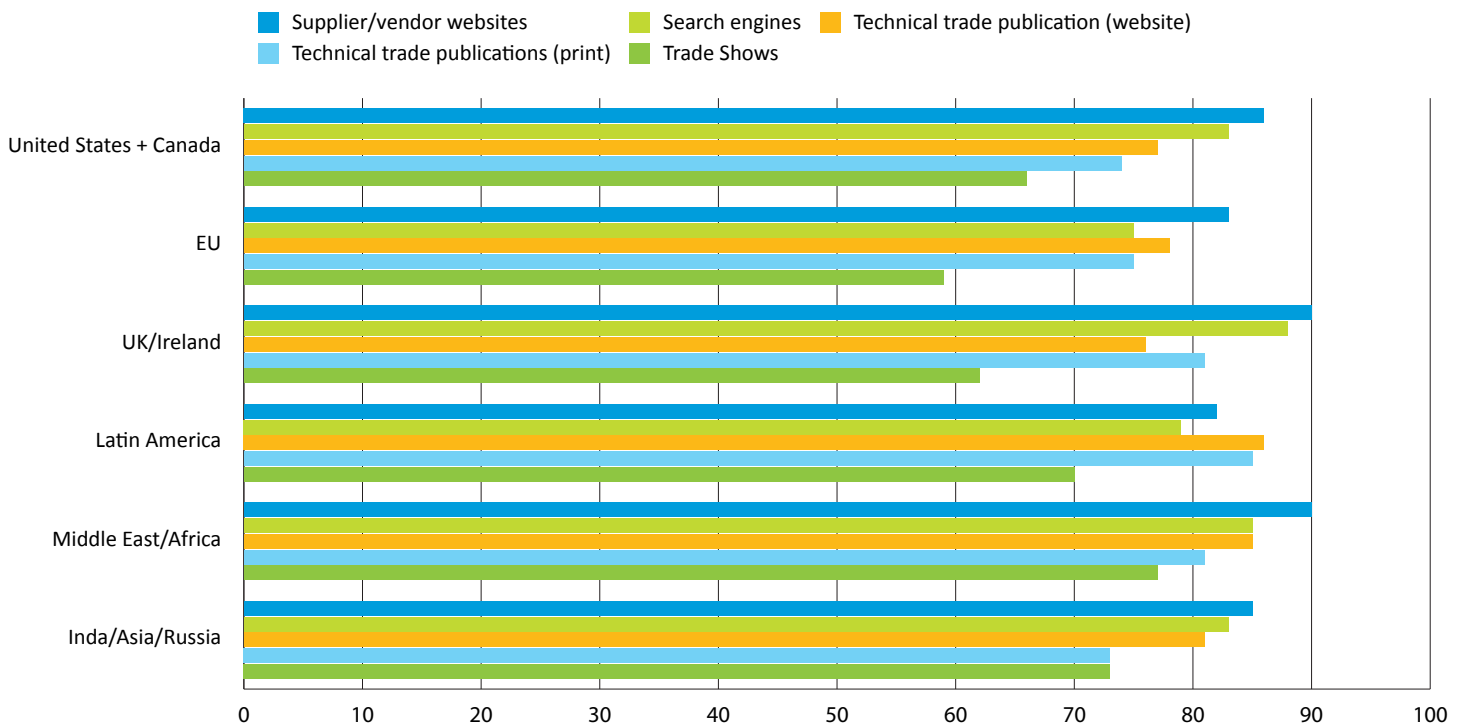




Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES WHEN SEEKING INFORMATION ON THE LATEST ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES, INDUSTRY TRENDS, AND PRODUCTS? (BY REGION)

While most regions followed the macro trends of content sources, Latin America again showed differences, as well as the EU and UK/Ireland. Engineers in Latin America value trade publications – both websites (86 percent) and print (85 percent) – more than other content sources. In contrast, engineers in the UK/Ireland value online sources – supplier/vendor websites (90 percent) and search engines (88 percent) – more than engineers in any other region. Engineers in the EU were the least likely to value trade shows.



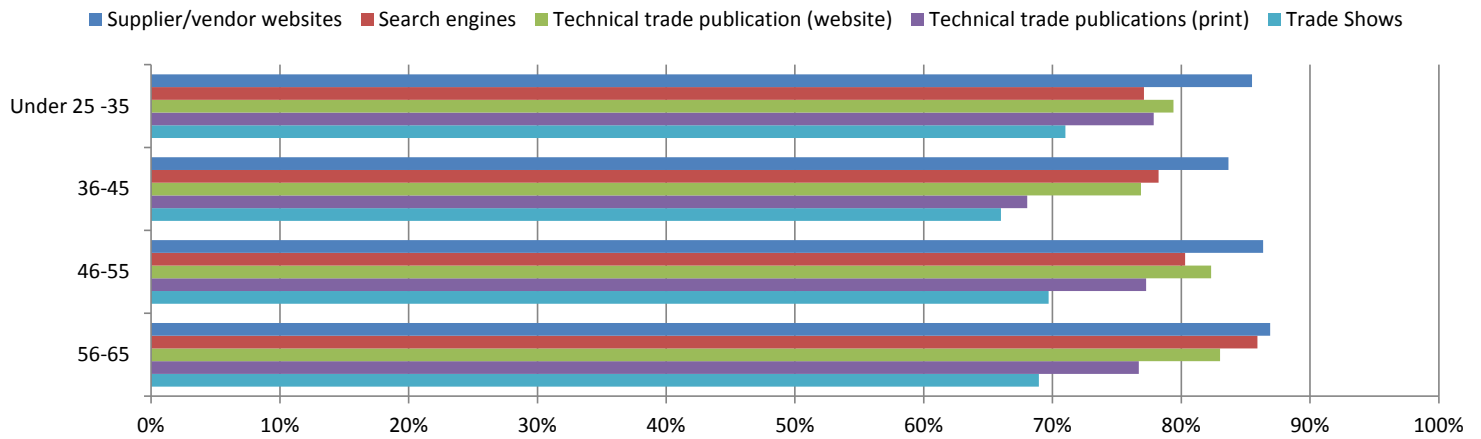
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Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES WHEN SEEKING INFORMATION ON THE LATEST ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES, INDUSTRY TRENDS, AND PRODUCTS? (BY AGE)

Across all age groups, supplier/vendor websites were the most valued content source. Additionally, technical trade publication websites were valued more than print magazines by all age groups, and trade shows were valued least by all age groups compared to the other top content sources.



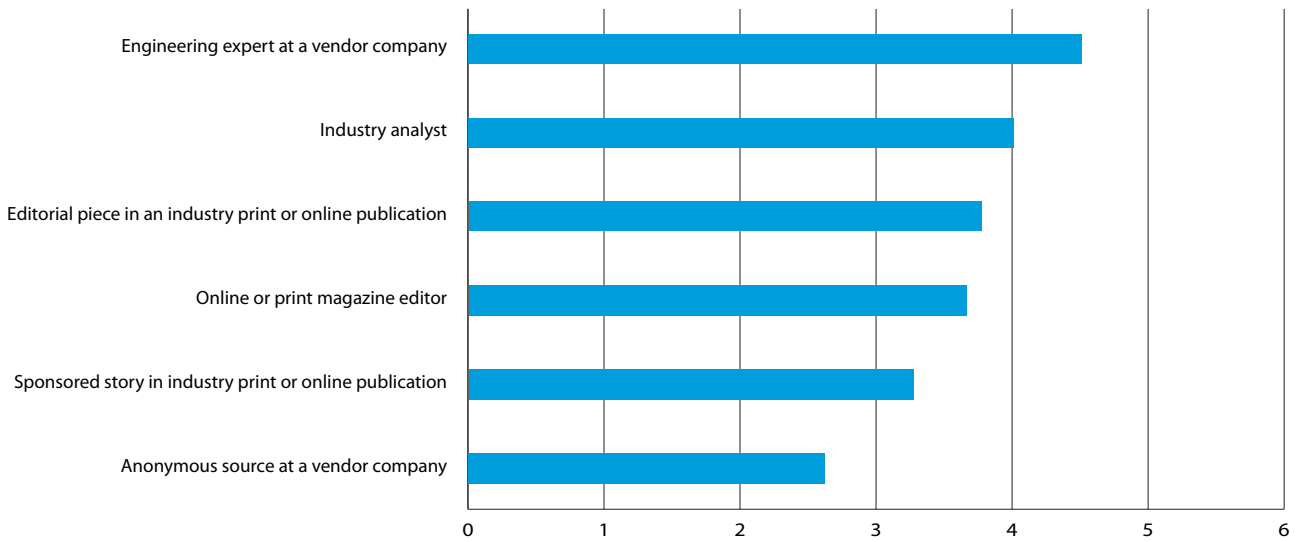
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Engineers' Content Preferences

RANK YOUR LEVEL OF TRUST IN CONTENT THAT IS WRITTEN OR PUBLISHED BY THE FOLLOWING, WHERE A RANK OF 6 IS YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL OF TRUST, AND A RANK OF 1 IS YOUR LOWEST.

Engineers and technical professionals are thirsty for content. However, level of trust in content types vary. Content written by an engineering expert at a vendor company is regarded as most trusted by respondents (4.5/6). Other types of both third party and vendor content also received healthy scores.



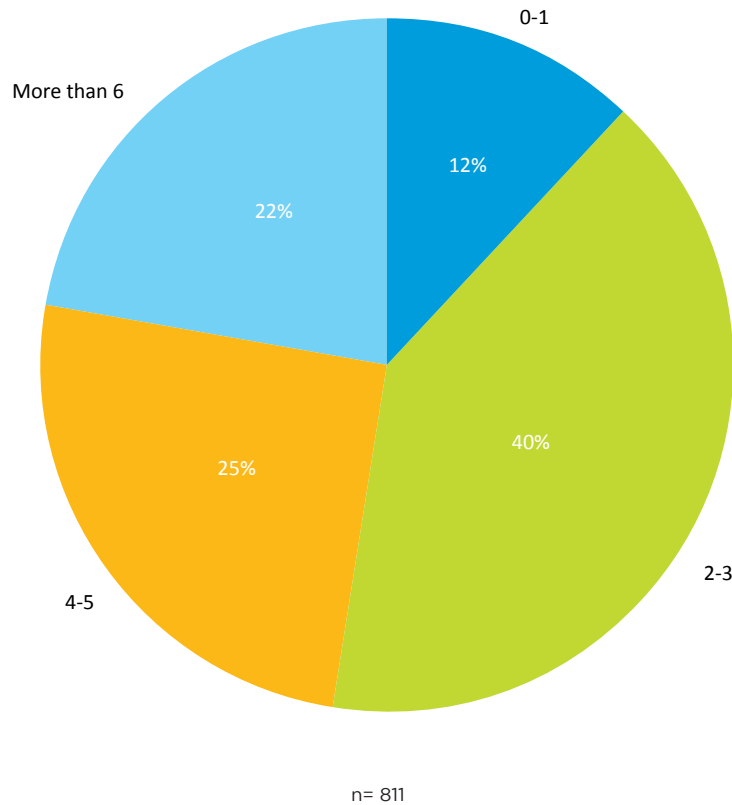
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Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW MANY E-NEWSLETTERS DO YOU SUBSCRIBE TO?

Eighty-seven percent of engineers subscribe to at least two e-newsletters. Nearly 50 percent subscribe to four or more.

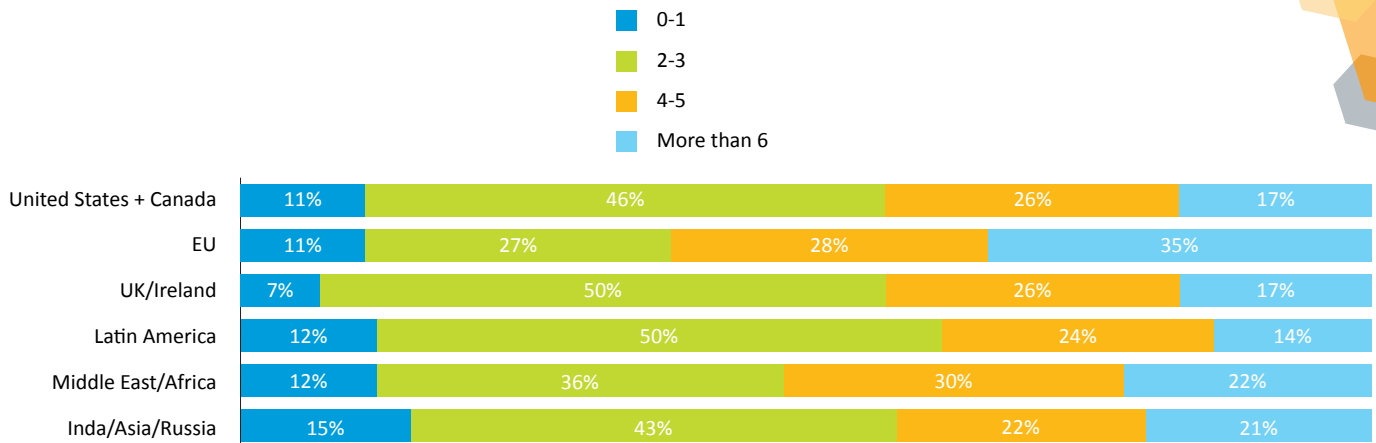




Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW MANY E-NEWSLETTERS DO YOU SUBSCRIBE TO? (BY REGION)

Regions where the most engineers subscribe to 2-5 e-newsletters are the UK/Ireland (76 percent), the EU (74 percent) and the United States/Canada (72 percent). Engineers in the EU subscribe to more e-newsletters than any other region, with 35 percent subscribing to six or more publications.



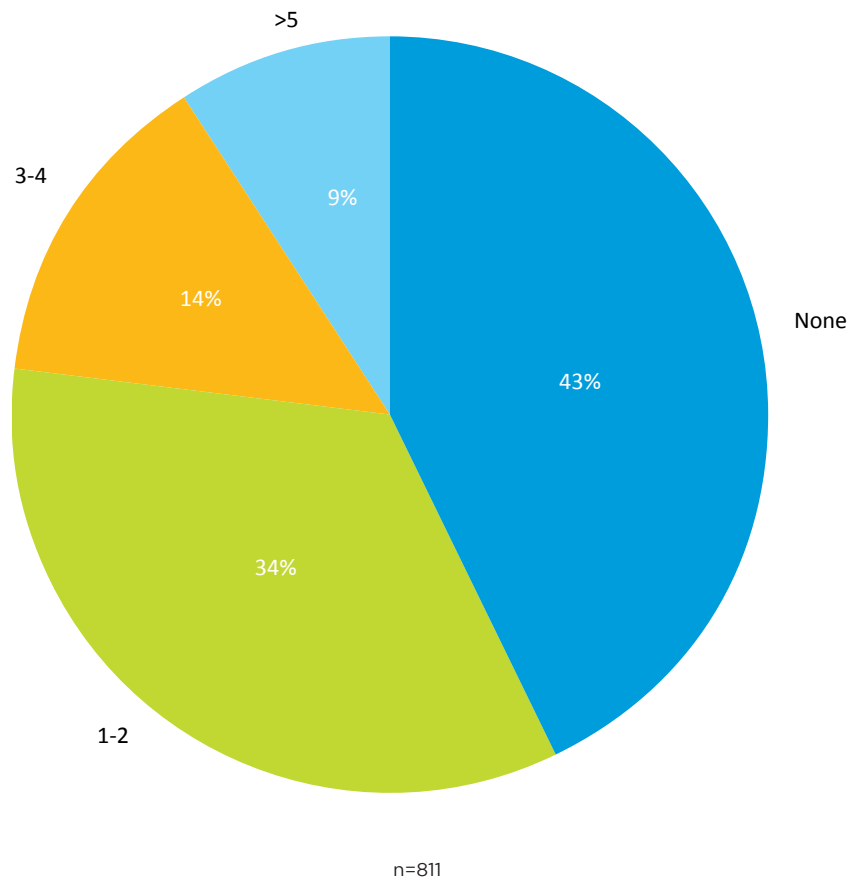
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Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW MANY WEBCASTS/WEBINARS HAVE YOU ATTENDED WITHIN THE LAST THREE MONTHS?

While 43% of engineers did not attend a webinar in the last three months, a third attended 1-2 and nearly 20% attended 3 or more.

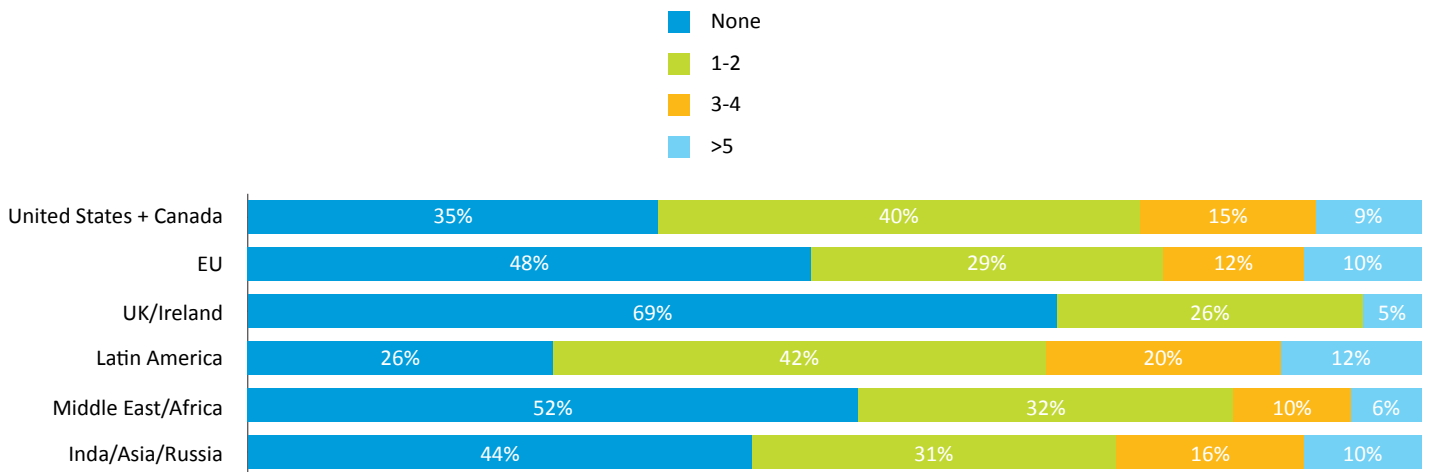




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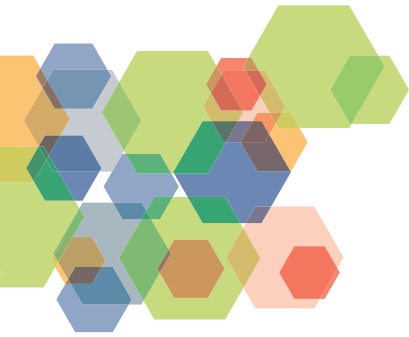
HOW MANY WEBCASTS/WEBINARS HAVE YOU ATTENDED WITHIN THE LAST THREE MONTHS? (BY REGION)

Engineers in Latin America and the United States/Canada attended the most webinars in the last three months. Engineers in the UK/Ireland attended the least, with 69 percent attending no webinars in the past 90 days.



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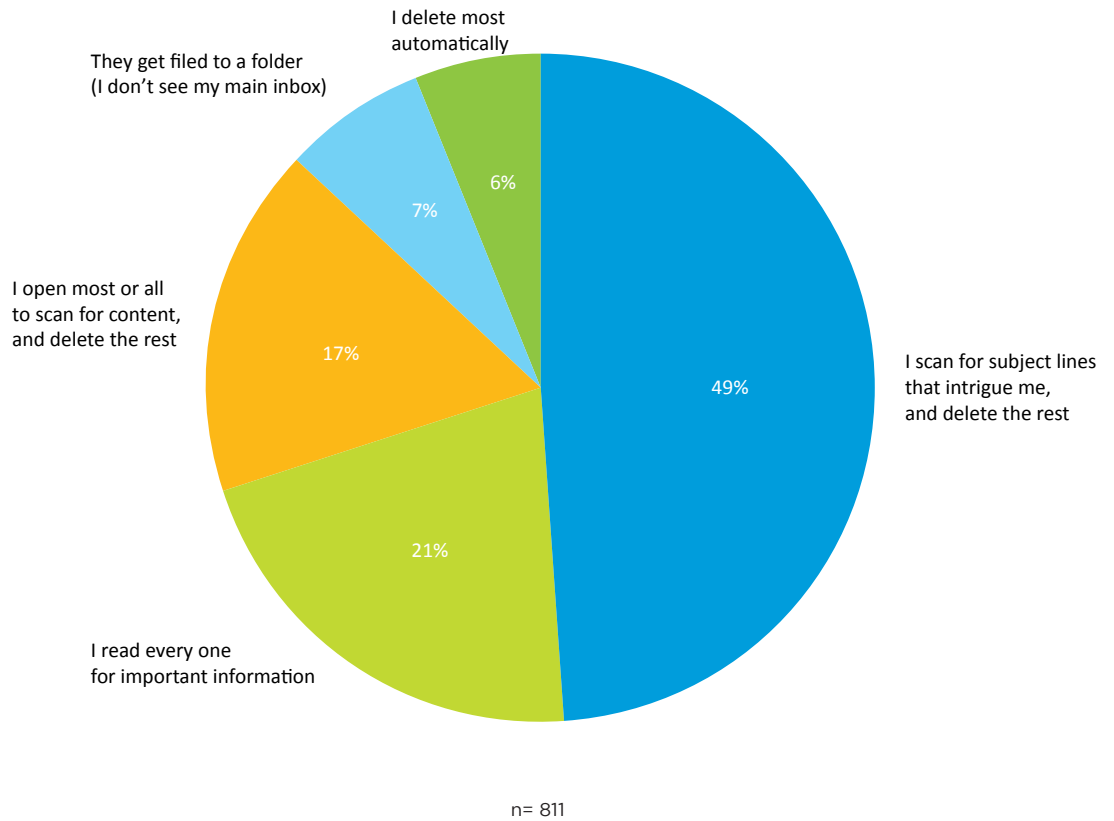




Engineers' Content Preferences

**HOW DO E-NEWSLETTERS BEHAVE IN YOUR INBOX?
CONSIDER THE ONES YOU SUBSCRIBE TO AND TRUST
AND CHECK THE OPTION THAT BEST FITS.**

When they receive e-newsletters in their inbox, nearly 50 percent of engineers scan subject lines that intrigue them and delete the rest. Thirty-eight percent of engineers open most or all to scan for content or read every one.



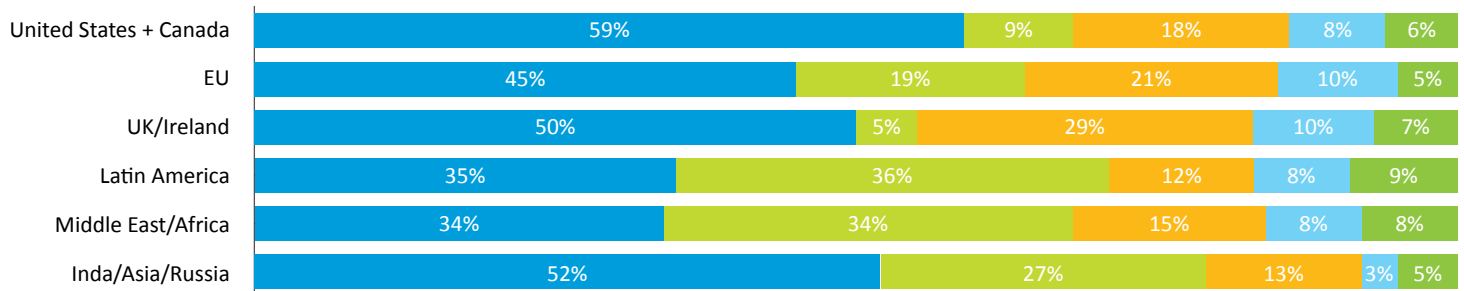


Engineers' Content Preferences

HOW DO E-NEWSLETTERS BEHAVE IN YOUR INBOX? CONSIDER THE ONES YOU SUBSCRIBE TO AND TRUST AND CHECK THE OPTION THAT BEST FITS. (BY REGION)

Engineers in the United States/Canada (59 percent) and India/Asia/Russia (52 percent) are more likely than engineers in other regions to scan subject lines of e-newsletters that intrigue them and delete the rest. Across all regions, very few engineers delete most e-newsletters automatically or filter them.

- I scan for subject lines that intrigue me, and delete the rest
- I read every one for important information
- I open most or all to scan for content, and delete the rest
- They get filed to a folder (I don't see my main inbox)
- I delete most automatically



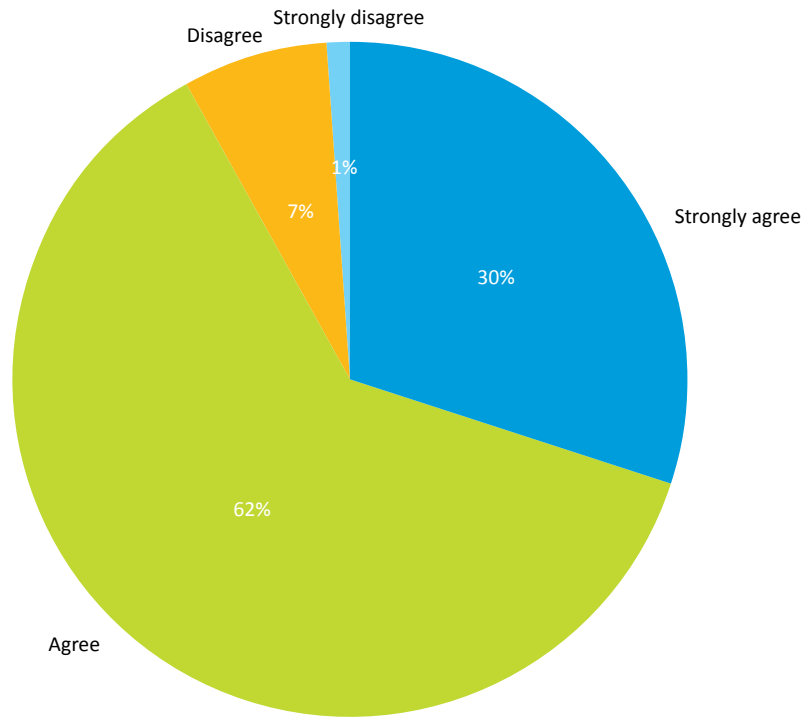
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Engineers' Content Preferences

AGREE OR DISAGREE: YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO DO BUSINESS WITH A COMPANY THAT REGULARLY PRODUCES NEW AND CURRENT CONTENT.

Ninety-two percent of engineers are more likely to do business with companies that regularly produce new and current content.



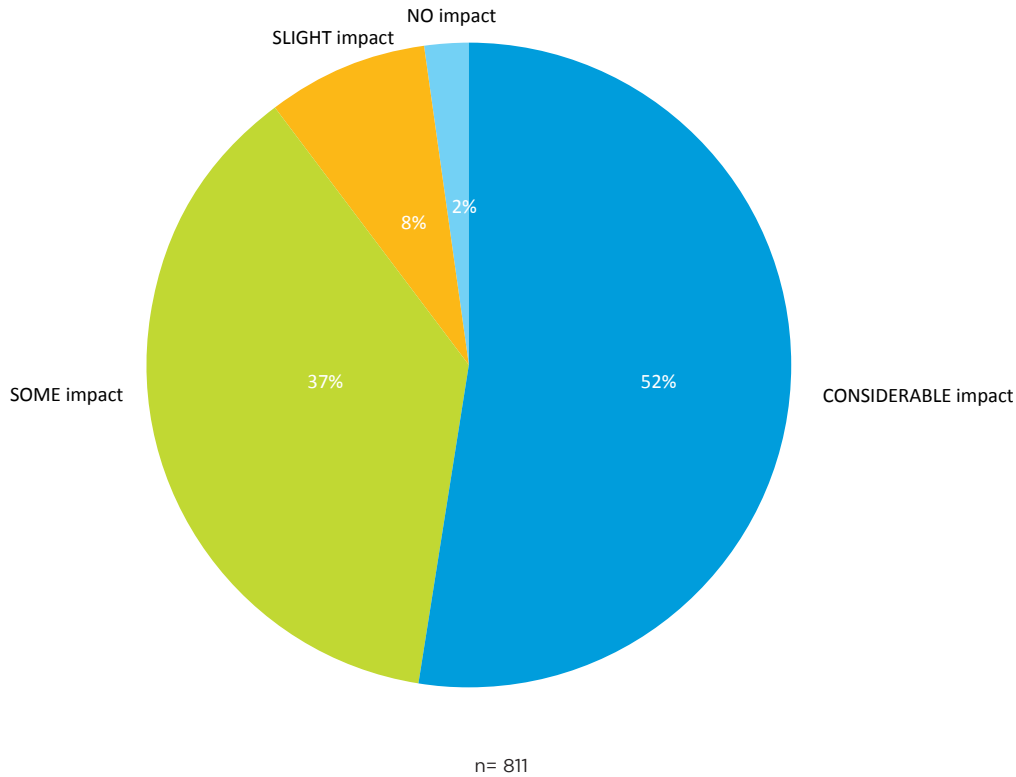
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Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

WHAT IMPACT DOES A COMPANY'S WEBSITE HAVE ON YOUR PERCEPTION OF THEM AS A CREDIBLE, TECHNICALLY COMPETENT VENDOR?

For the majority of engineers (52 percent), a company's website has considerable impact on their perceptions of them as a credible, technically competent vendor. Thirty-seven percent said the website has some impact. The data was not significantly different when looking by age or geography - engineers of all ages and regions of the world want to do business with companies that regularly produce new and current

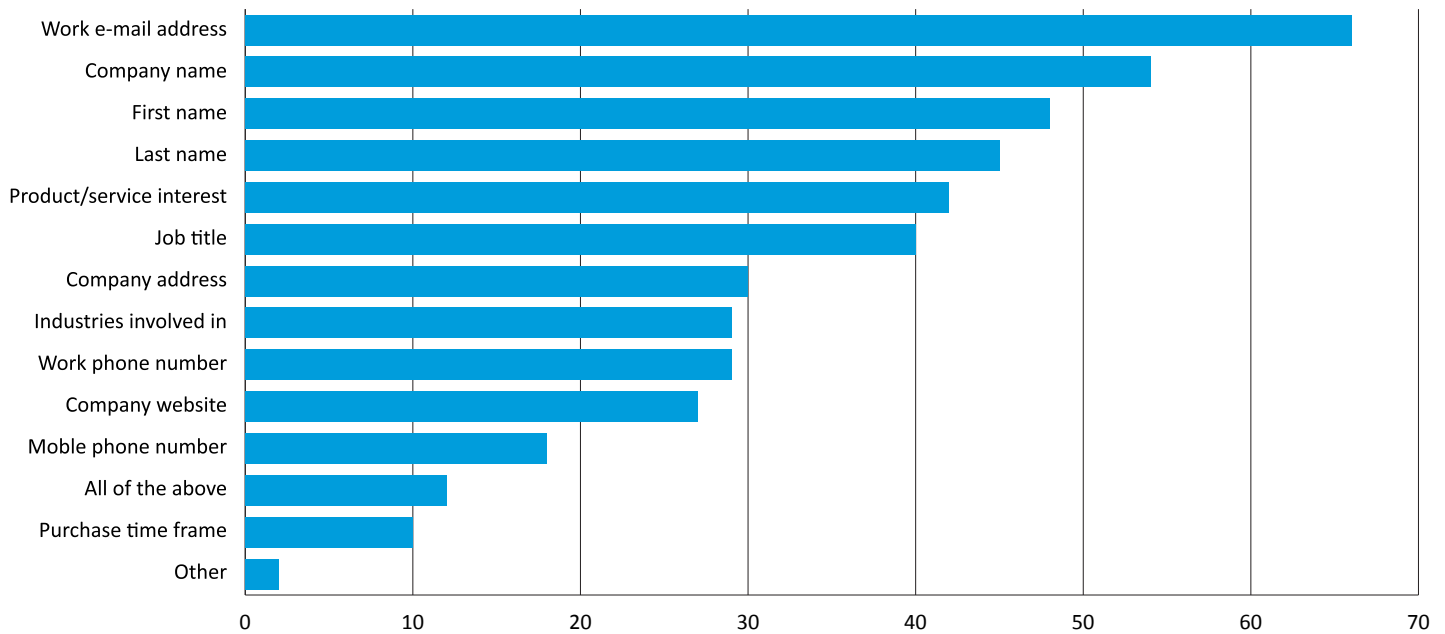




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

WHEN COMPLETING A FORM ON A WEBSITE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO COMPLETE IN ORDER TO ACCESS ONLINE CONTENT? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Engineers and technical professionals are willing to share information about themselves in exchange for content. The four fields engineers are most likely to complete in a form on a company's website are work email address (66 percent), company name (54 percent) and first and last names (48 percent and 45 percent, respectively). The fields they are least likely to complete are purchase time frame (10 percent) and mobile phone number (18 percent).



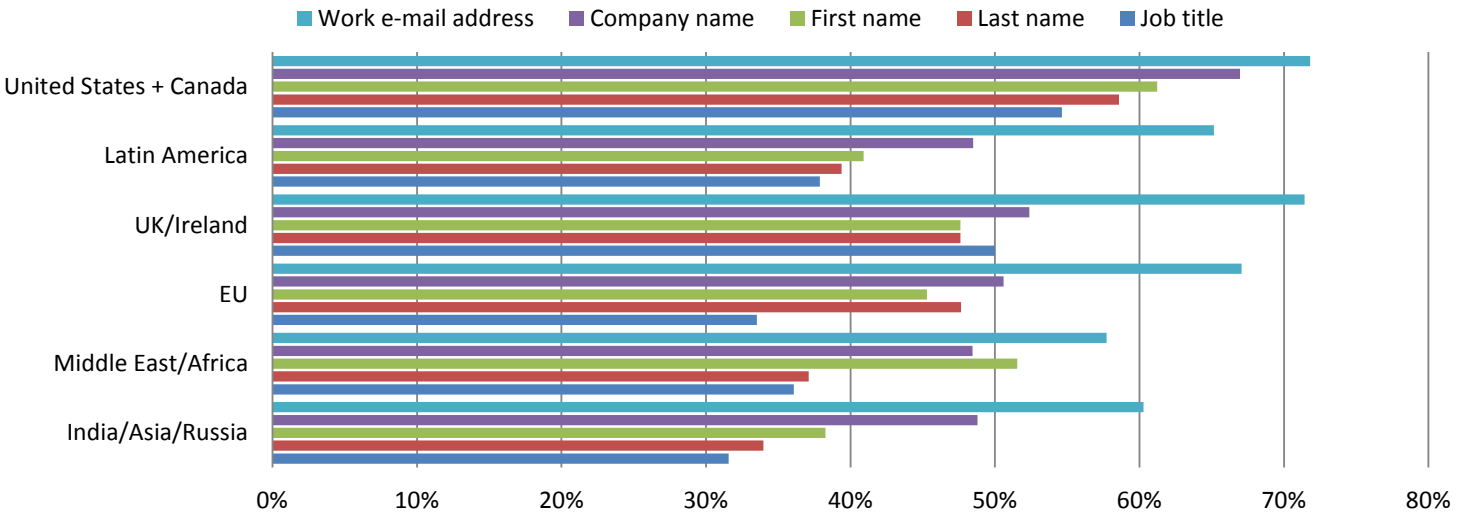
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Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

WHEN COMPLETING A FORM ON A WEBSITE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO COMPLETE IN ORDER TO ACCESS ONLINE CONTENT? (BY REGION)

Overall, engineers in the United States/Canada are more likely to complete these five fields than engineers in any other region. Engineers in India/Russia/Asia and Middle East/Africa are least likely to complete lead form fields (other than work email address).



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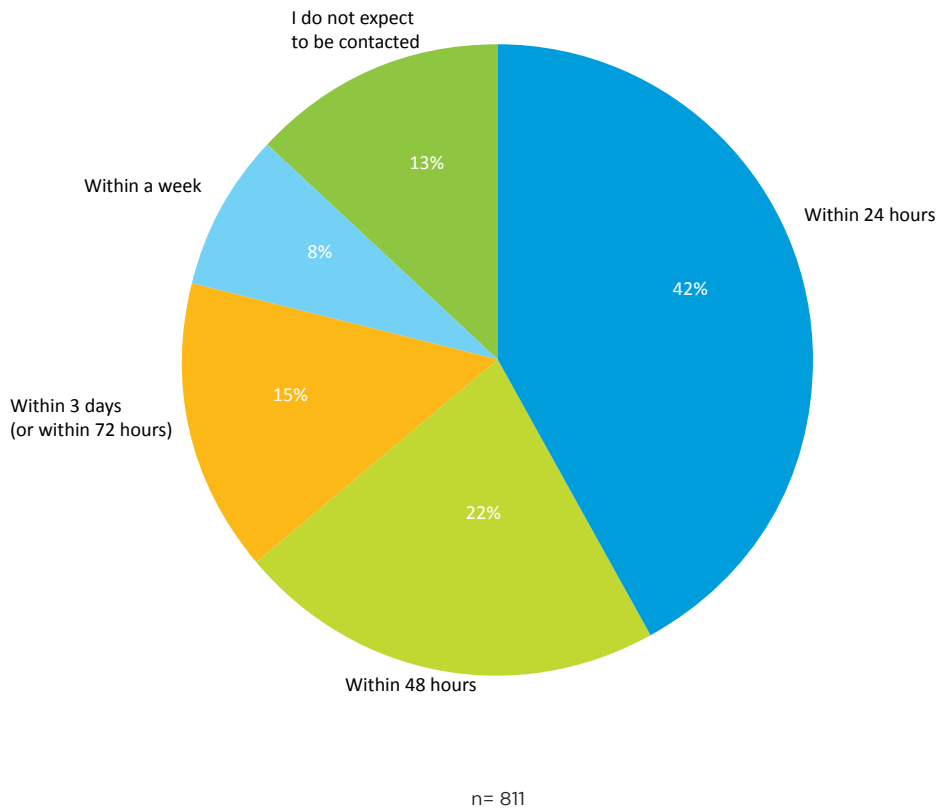




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

AFTER COMPLETING A FORM ON A VENDOR'S WEBSITE, HOW SOON DO YOU EXPECT TO BE CONTACTED BY THE COMPANY TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND OFFER FURTHER, RELATED RESOURCES?

Forty-two percent of engineers expect to be contacted by a vendor within 24 hours after completing a form on their website, and 22 percent expect to be contacted within 48 hours.

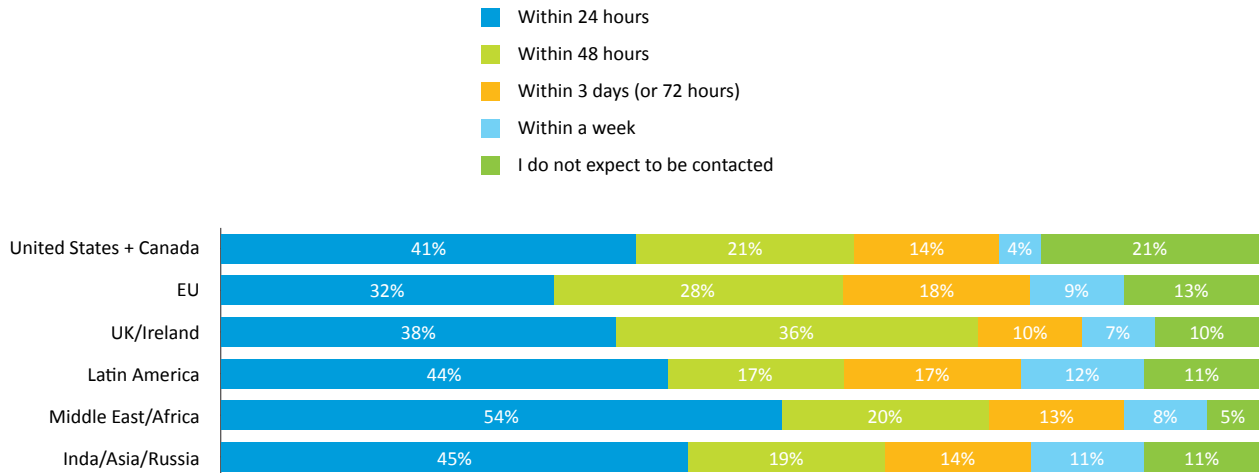




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

AFTER COMPLETING A FORM ON A VENDOR'S WEBSITE, HOW SOON DO YOU EXPECT TO BE CONTACTED BY THE COMPANY TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND OFFER FURTHER, RELATED RESOURCES? (BY REGION)

Engineers in the Middle East/Africa have the highest expectations for when a vendor should contact them after completing a lead form, with 54 percent expecting to hear within 24 hours, compared to 42 percent on average. Across all regions, the majority of engineers expect to be contacted within 48 hours after completing a web form.



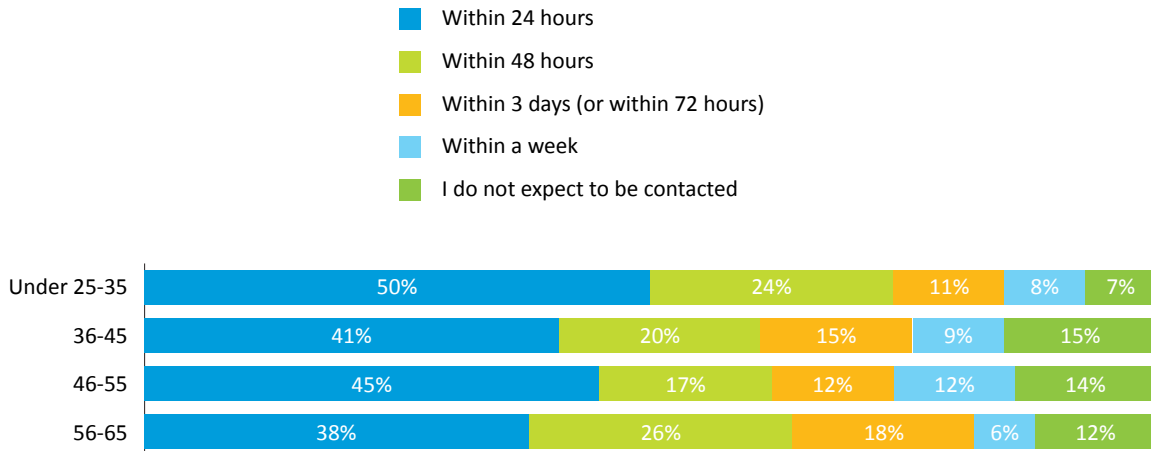
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Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

AFTER COMPLETING A FORM ON A VENDOR'S WEBSITE, HOW SOON DO YOU EXPECT TO BE CONTACTED BY THE COMPANY TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND OFFER FURTHER, RELATED RESOURCES? (BY AGE)

Younger engineers have the highest expectations for when a vendor should contact them after completing a web form, with 74 percent expecting to hear within 48 hours, compared to 64 percent on average.



Under 25-35 = 131; 36-45 = 147; 46-55 = 198; 56-65 = 206

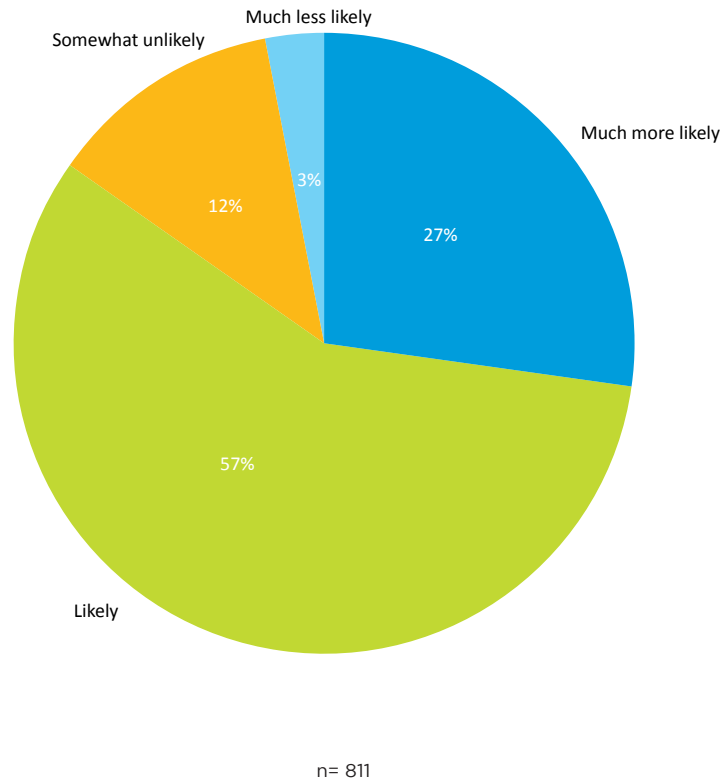




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

AFTER COMPLETING A FORM ON A VENDOR'S WEBSITE, HOW SOON DO YOU EXPECT TO BE CONTACTED BY THE COMPANY TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND OFFER FURTHER, RELATED RESOURCES?

Eighty-four percent of engineers and technical professionals are more likely to do business with companies that engage with them after indicating interest.

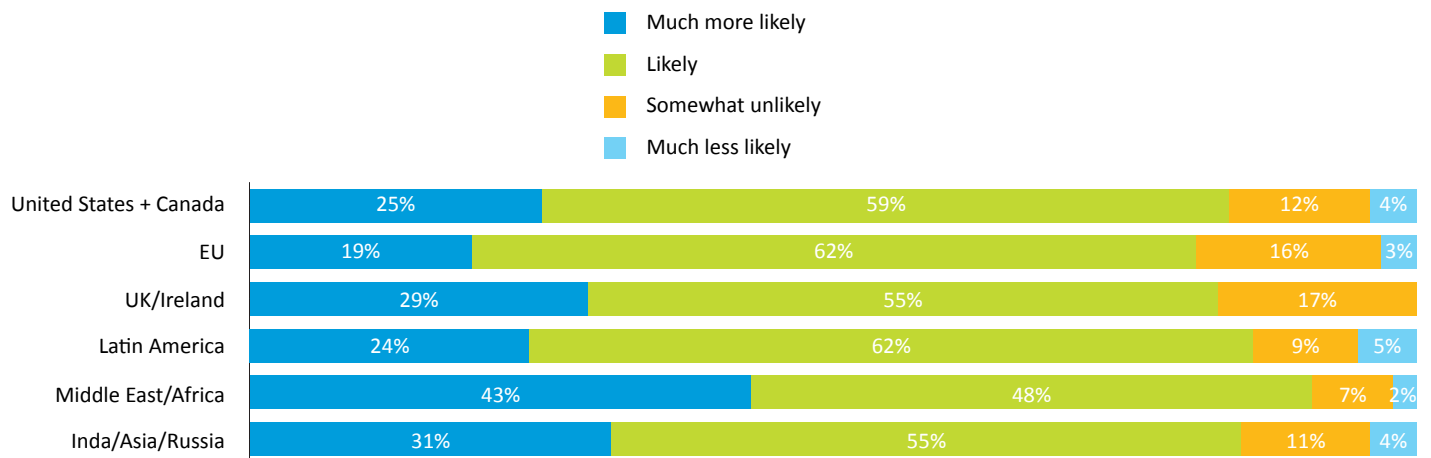




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

AFTER YOU'VE COMPLETED A FORM ON A VENDOR'S WEBSITE, HOW MUCH MORE LIKELY ARE YOU TO DO BUSINESS WITH THEM IF THEY THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND OFFER FURTHER RELATED RESOURCES? (BY REGION)

Engineers in the Middle East/Africa are much more likely to do business with companies that follow up with related resources after a form is completed.



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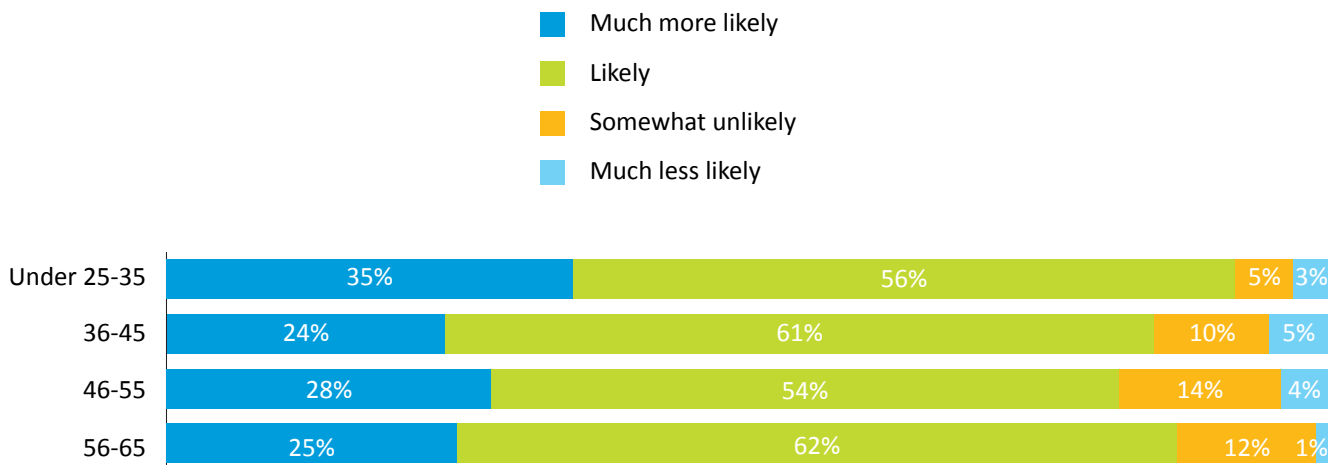




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

AFTER YOU'VE COMPLETED A FORM ON A VENDOR'S WEBSITE, HOW MUCH MORE LIKELY ARE YOU TO DO BUSINESS WITH THEM IF THEY THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND OFFER FURTHER RELATED RESOURCES? (BY AGE)

Younger engineers are more likely to do business with companies that thank them for their interest and offer further related resources.



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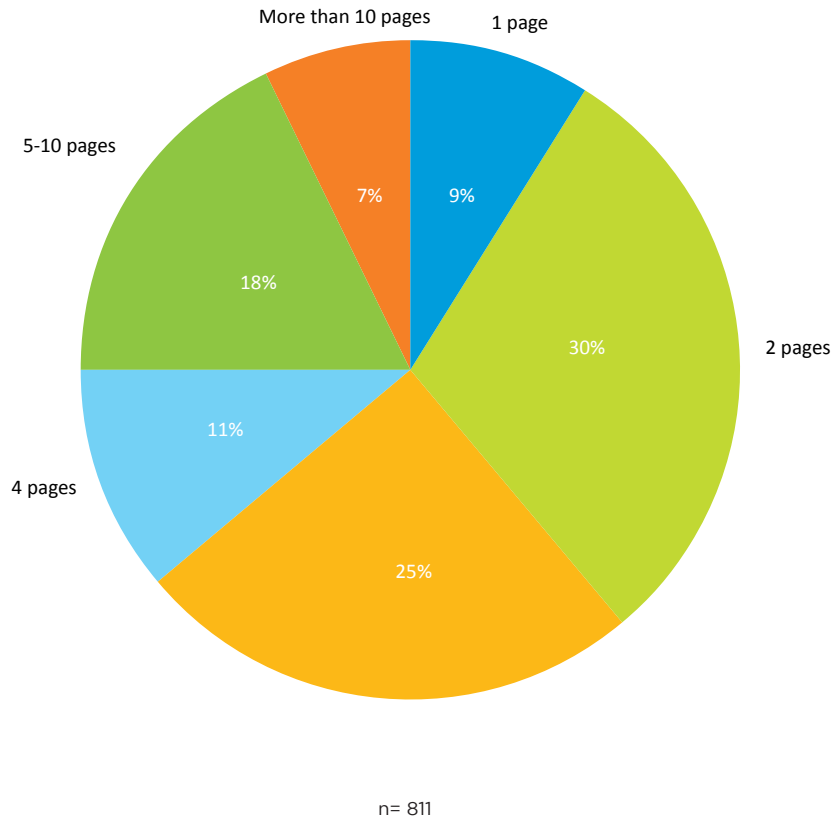




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

WHEN SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION ON A TOPIC USING A SEARCH ENGINE, HOW MANY PAGES OF RESULTS ARE YOU WILLING TO VIEW BEFORE YOU SELECT ONE OR START YOUR SEARCH OVER?

Engineers are deep researchers, going much further in search than the average user. Only nine percent of engineers and technical professionals stop on page one, while 61 percent go three pages or deeper in their search, and 25 percent go five or more pages deep.

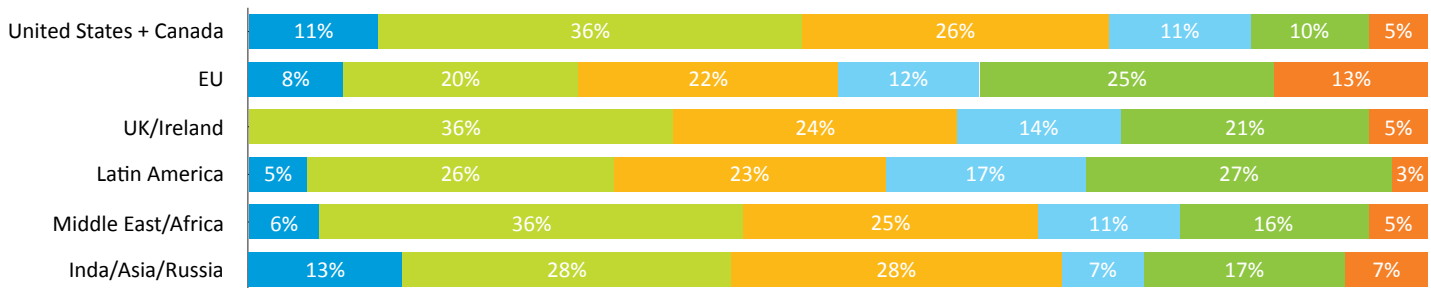
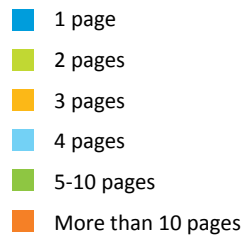




Engineers' Search and Online Preferences

WHEN SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION ON A TOPIC USING A SEARCH ENGINE, HOW MANY PAGES OF RESULTS ARE YOU WILLING TO VIEW BEFORE YOU SELECT ONE OR START YOUR SEARCH OVER? (BY REGION)

Looking regionally, there are some interesting differences. First, not one engineer respondent in the UK/Ireland stops on page one of search results. Second, the EU had the most engineer respondents indicate they go more than 10 pages (13 percent), nearly double the average. Finally, engineers in the United States/Canada don't go as deep relative to their peers in other regions, with over 60 percent who go 2-3 pages deep in search.



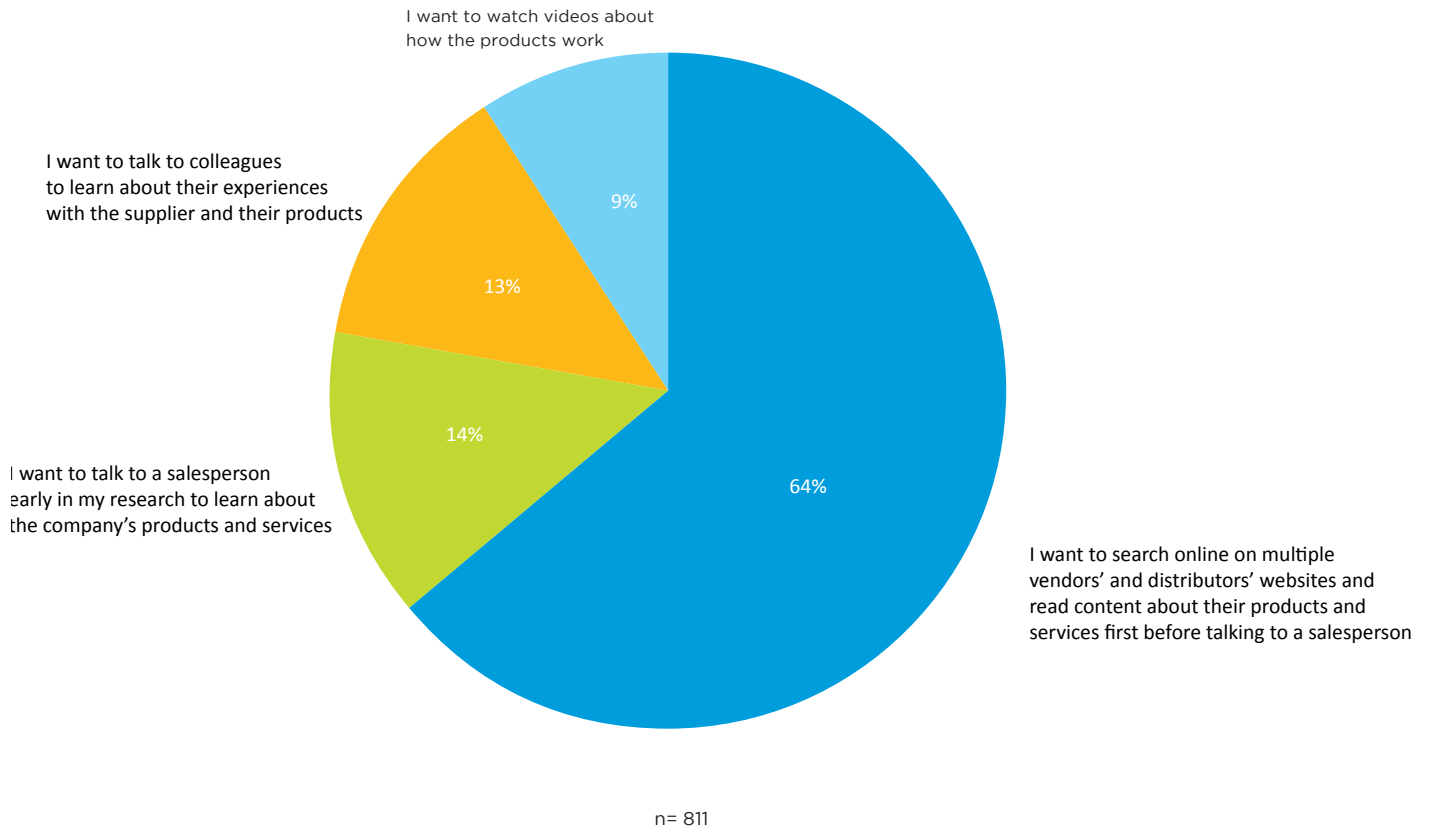
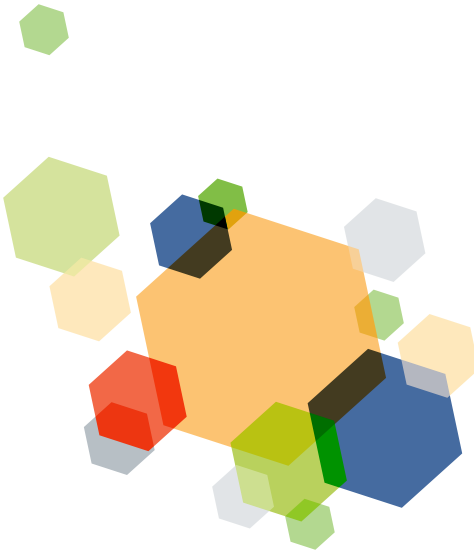
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The Engineer's Buyer Journey

WHEN YOU ARE IN THE BUYING PROCESS FOR A NEW PRODUCT OR SERVICE FOR WORK, WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PREFERENCE?

When engineers are in the buying process for a new product or service for work, they rely on online search (64 percent), talking to colleagues (14 percent), and watching product videos (nine percent). Only 14 percent prefer to talk to a salesperson early in their research.

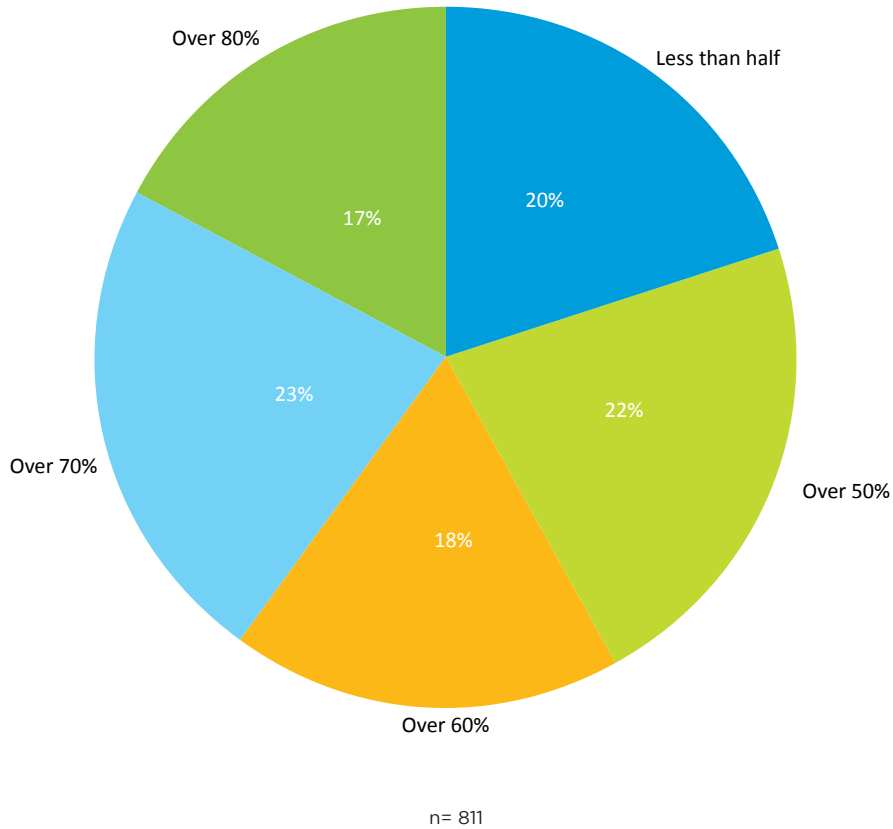




The Engineer's Buyer Journey

IN THINKING ABOUT THE ENTIRE BUYING PROCESS FOR SIGNIFICANT PURCHASES YOU MAKE FOR WORK, FROM EARLY RESEARCH TO THE FINAL PURCHASE DECISION, WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE PROCESS HAPPENS ONLINE BEFORE YOU FINALLY SPEAK TO SOMEONE AT THE COMPANY?

For the majority of respondents, nearly 60 percent of the engineers' buying process happens online – from early research to the final purchase decision – before they speak to the company.

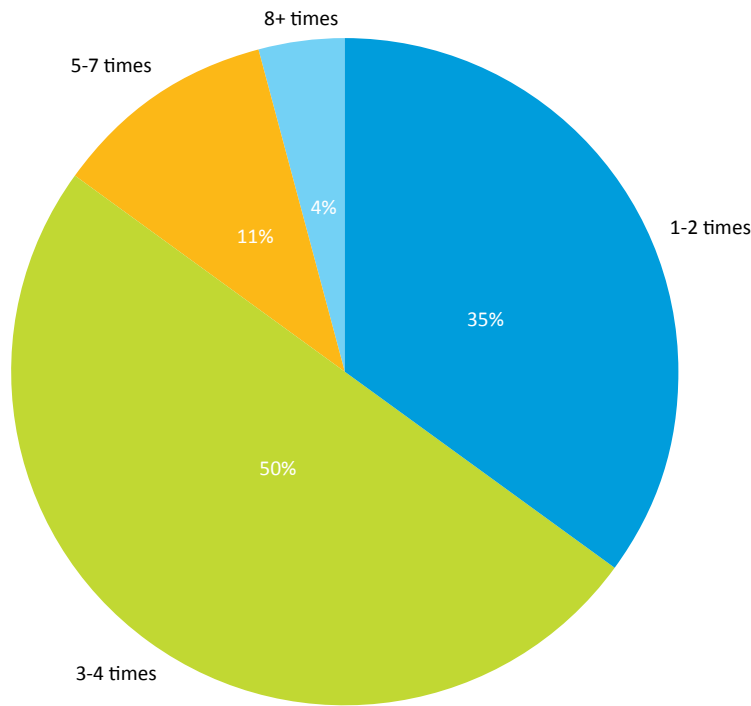




The Engineer's Buyer Journey

IN THINKING ABOUT YOUR PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS FOR A SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT OR SERVICE FOR WORK, HOW MANY INTERACTIONS DO YOU TYPICALLY HAVE WITH THE VENDOR BEFORE COMMUNICATING DIRECTLY WITH THE COMPANY (E.G., VISITS TO THEIR WEBSITE, EMAIL COMMUNICATION, VISITING THEIR TRADE SHOW BOOTH, ATTENDING A WEBINAR, ETC.)?

Fifty percent of engineers have an average of three to four interactions with a vendor before communicating with them directly, while 15 percent have five interactions or more. About a third have one or two interactions.

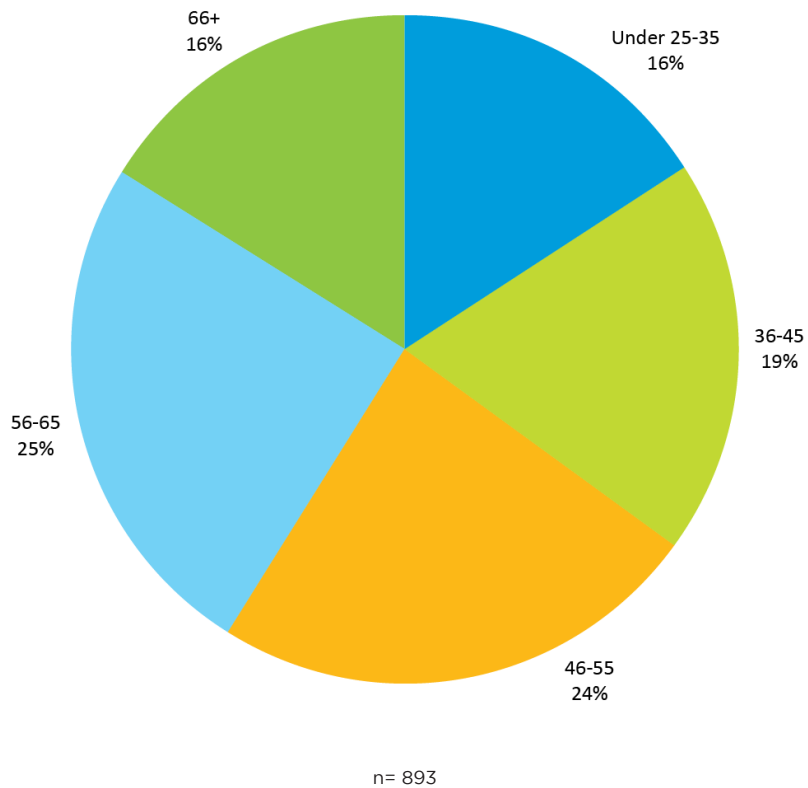


n= 811



Appendix: Respondent Profile

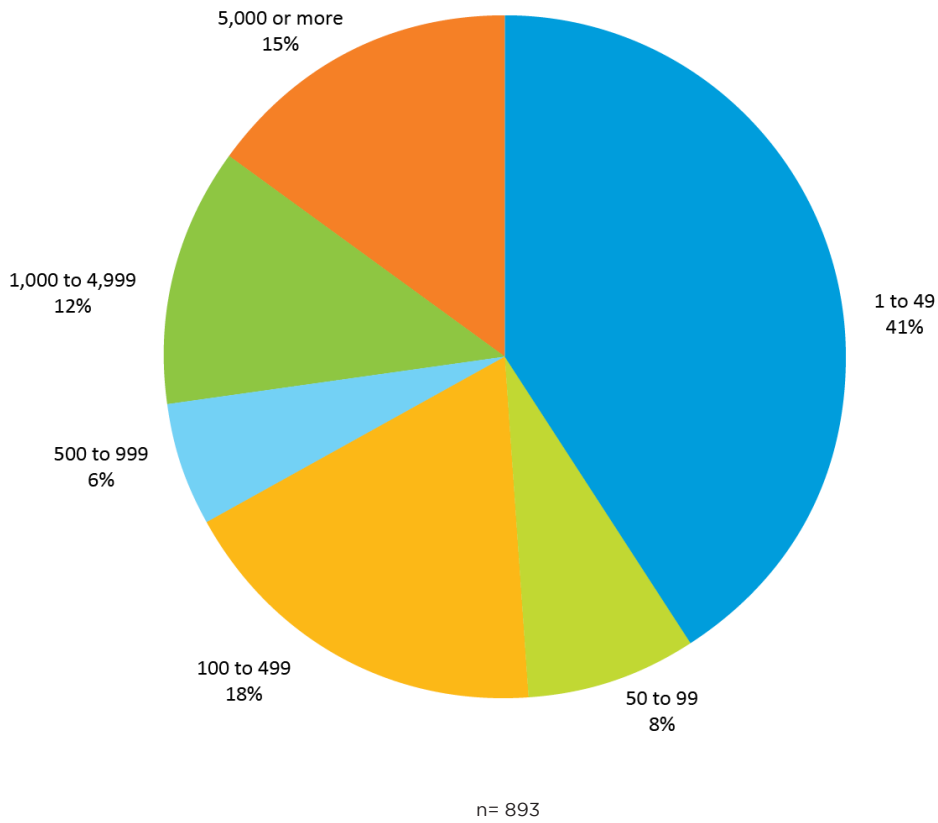
AGE





Appendix: Respondent Profile

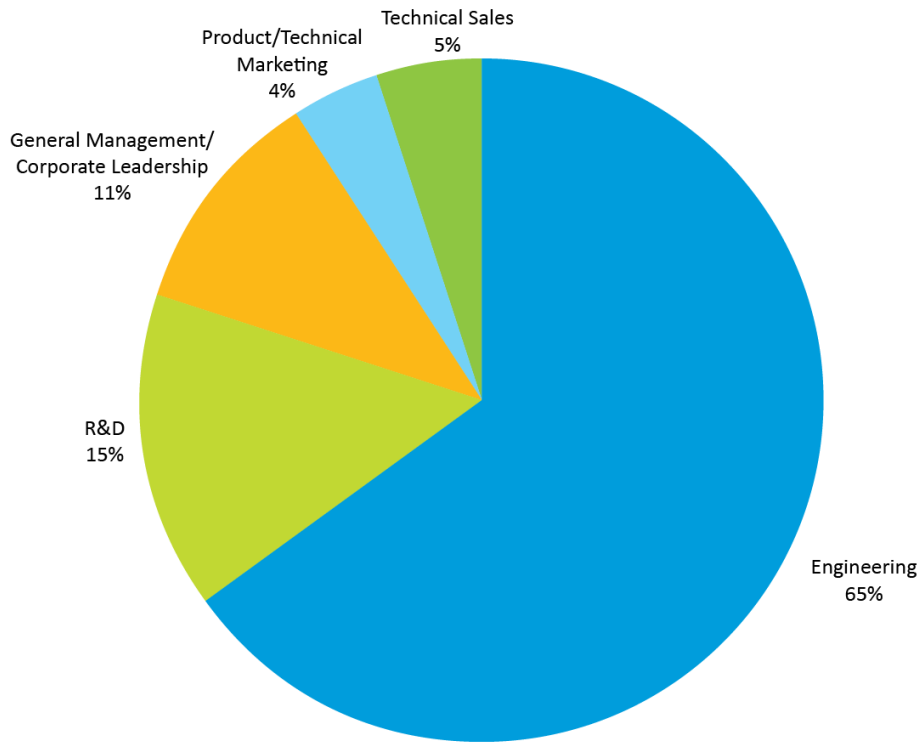
COMPANY SIZE (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)





Appendix: Respondent Profile

PRIMARY JOB FUNCTION

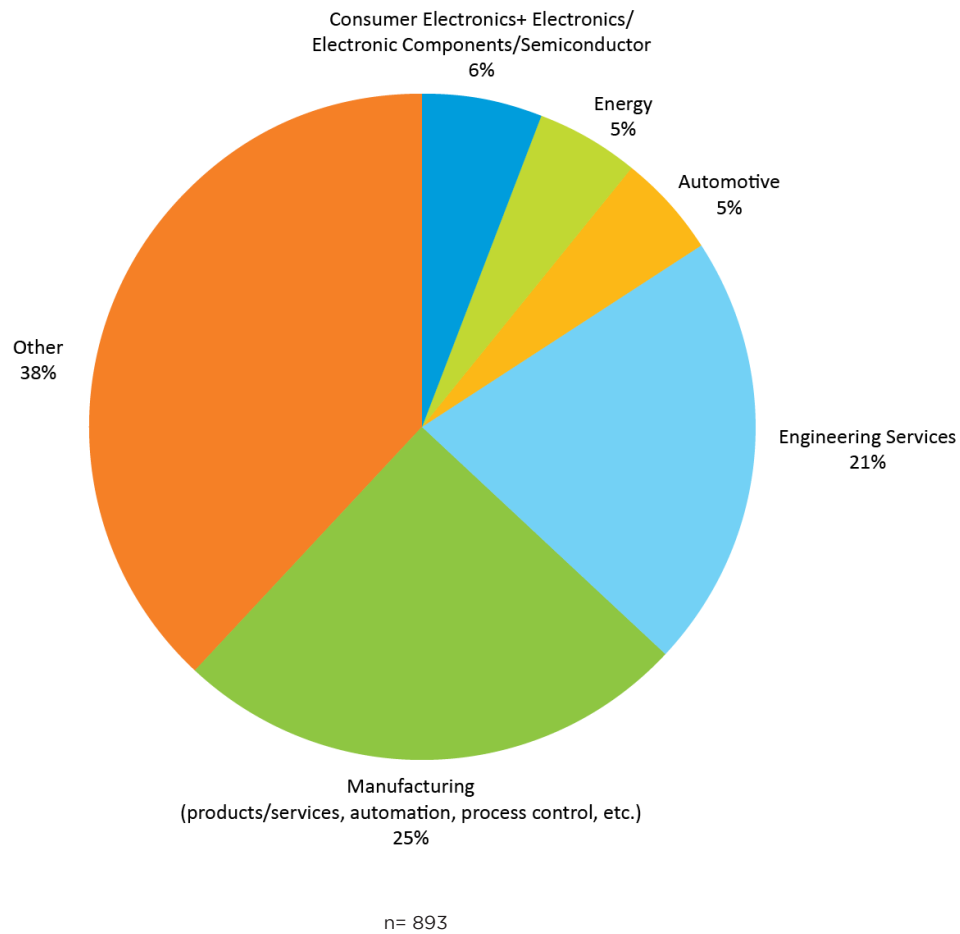


n= 893



Appendix: Respondent Profile

PRIMARY INDUSTRY

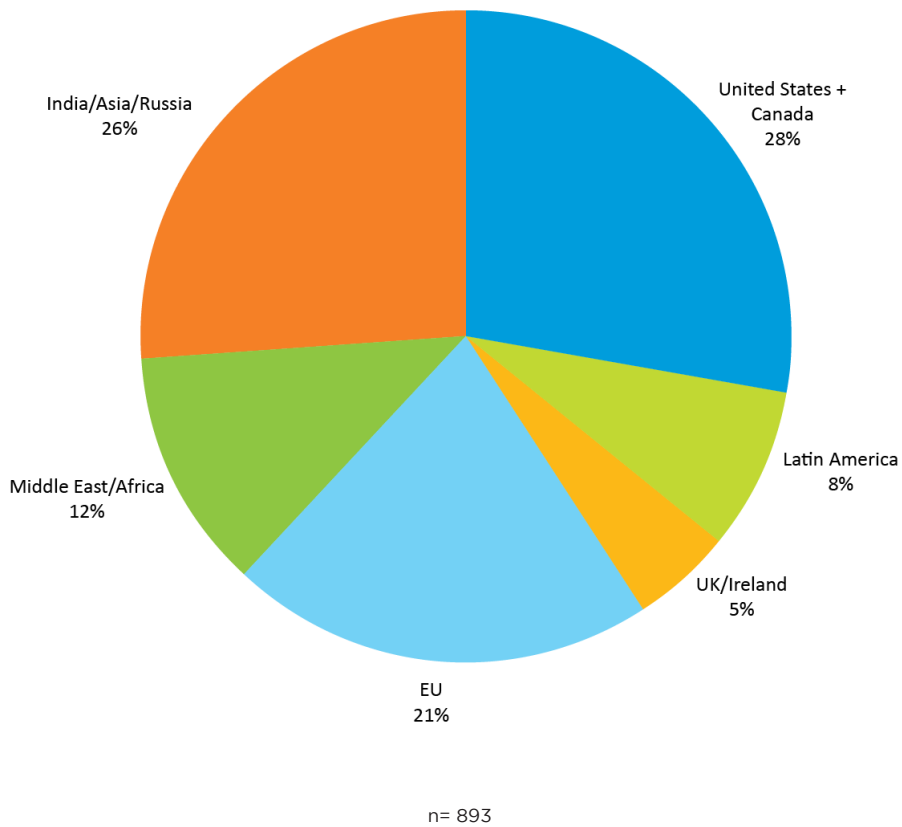


Other includes: Aerospace/Defense; Academic/University; Government; Communications and Networking Products; Food and Beverage; Chemicals; Scientific and Measuring Equipment; Pharmaceutical; Materials; Medical Devices/Equipment/Software; and Software



Appendix: Respondent Profile

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

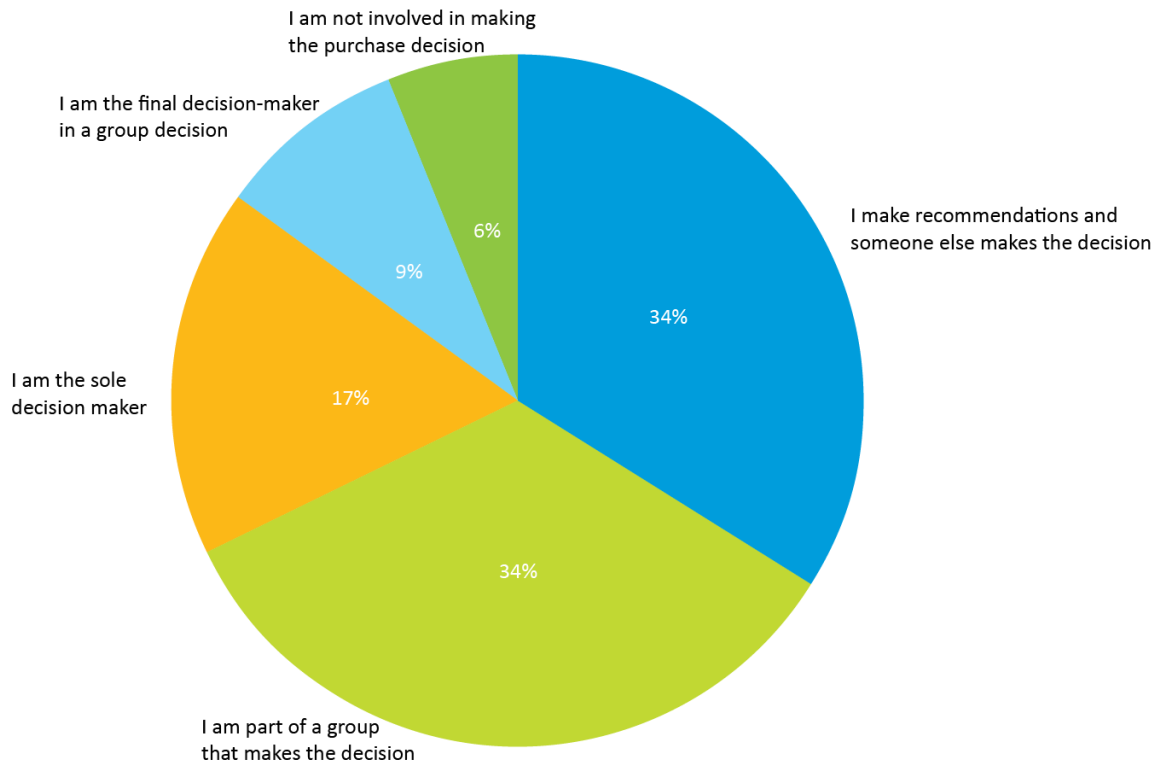




Appendix: Respondent Profile

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ROLE IN MAKING A SIGNIFICANT PURCHASE (HARDWARE, SOFTWARE, SERVICES) FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT OR ORGANIZATION?

Ninety-four percent of respondents are involved in making a purchase decision. This holds true across all age groups, with the exception of respondents aged 56-65, where 21 percent are the sole decision maker.



n= 893



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