

# COVID-19: State of the creative industry report

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# INTRODUCTION

We hope this report and exercise is going to be useful for anyone working in, or writing about the creative industry during the course of the pandemic.

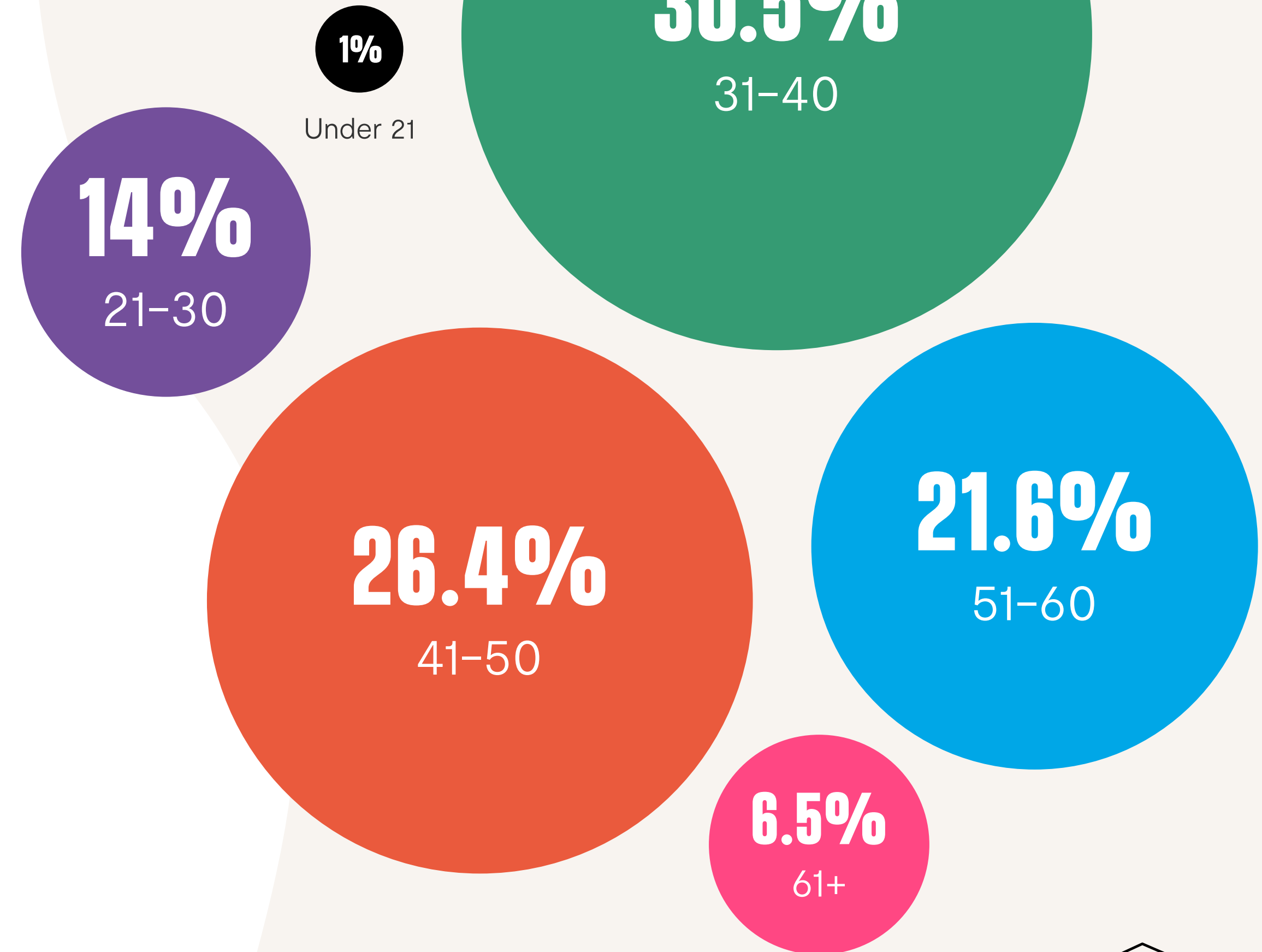
The pandemic will undoubtedly change the way we all work. The faster we can adapt, the better we can limit the damage. Based on government statistics the UK creative industry was worth in excess of £100bn in 2018 so this is vital to the economic health of the nation.

It is important to gain a deeper knowledge of the situation that the industry is facing, as it gives us a picture of the scale of the crisis and how people are adjusting. We think this survey will contribute to that understanding.

We also think there are lots of tips in here for creative people who are suffering greatly as a result of the economic contraction. It is important to understand the best practices for working remotely, acquiring and communicating with new clients or art buyers, and online marketing strategies. Sharing best practices will give everyone the best possible chance to recover financially when the economy frees up again.

Survey respondents:  
600

Age ranges



Percentage of professionals,  
semi professionals, amateurs and students:

**86.2%**  
Professional



**10.3%**  
Semi-pro



**1.9%**  
Amateur



**1.5%**  
Student

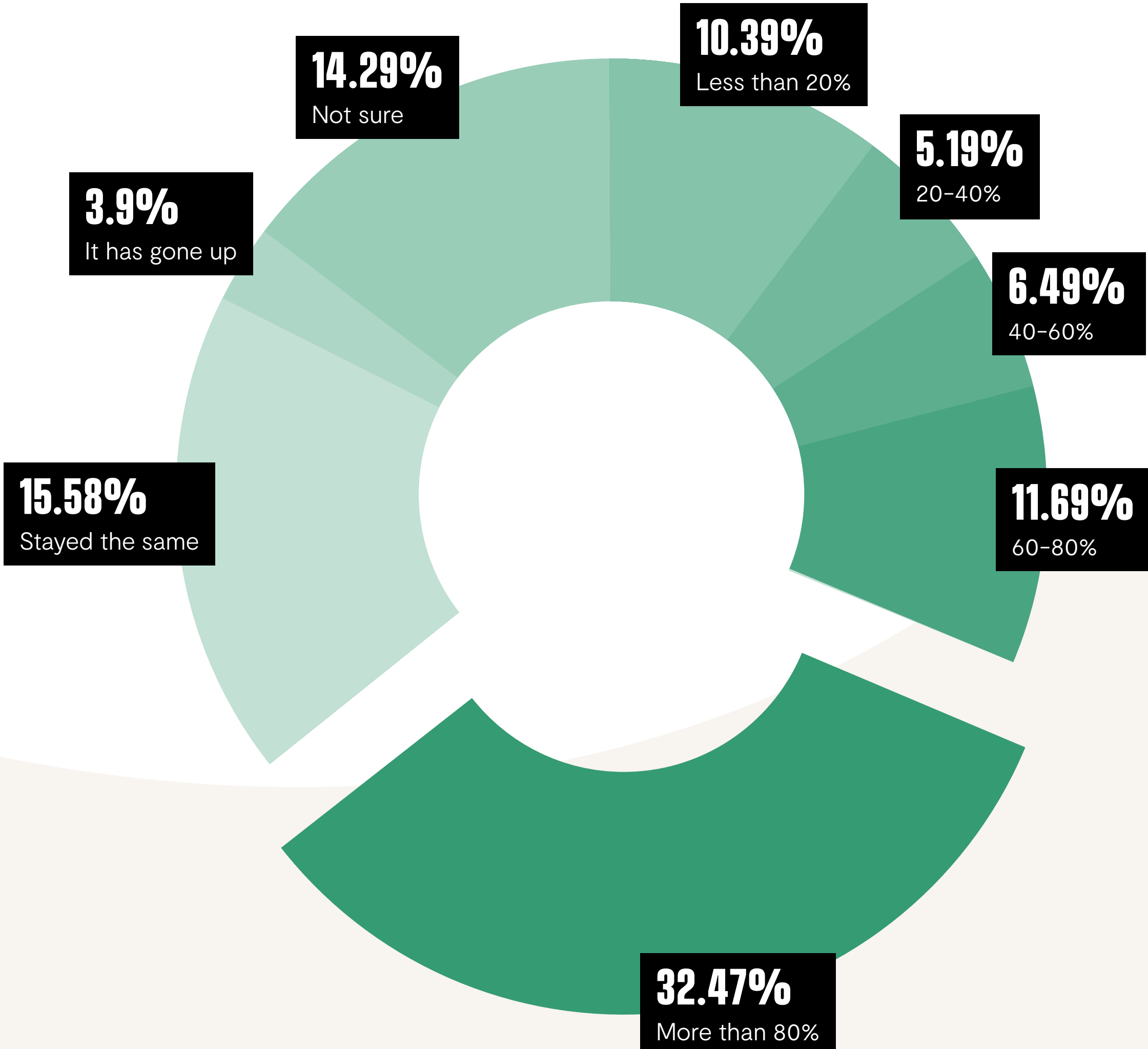


“It’s challenged me to think critically about my professional and personal behaviour, and think about what habits I want to change after the lockdown ends.”  
– Survey Respondent

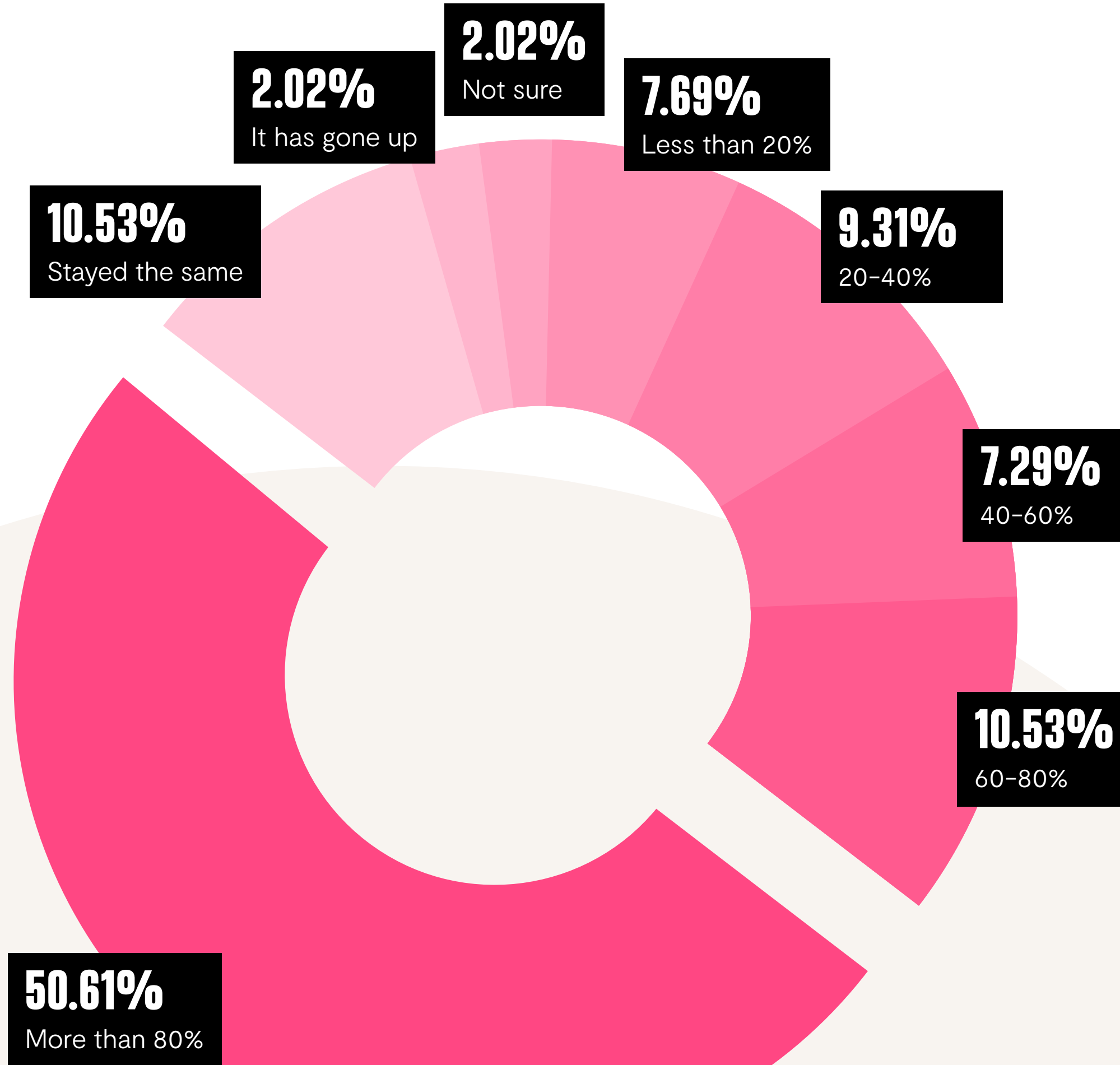
# KEY FINDINGS

- These are clearly tough times. 73% of people in the creative industry have seen falls in income. For 46% of those, that fall is 80% or more.
- As their work is often with teams or outside, photographers have been hit the hardest. A jaw dropping 67% of photographers have seen their income drop by more than 80%.
- All areas of the industry are suffering. On a relative basis the commercial creative industry has suffered the most, compared to the art industry. 32% of creatives working in art have seen falls in income of more than 80%, compared to 50% of creatives working in the commercial creative industry.

Drop in income: Art Industry



Drop in income: Commercial industry



# COMMERCIAL CREATIVE INDUSTRY

56% of professional creatives have no work booked in right now. 36% have a job booked in prior to the expected end of lockdown in June.

## Jobs booked now

**35.6%**

At least one starting before June

**8.59%**

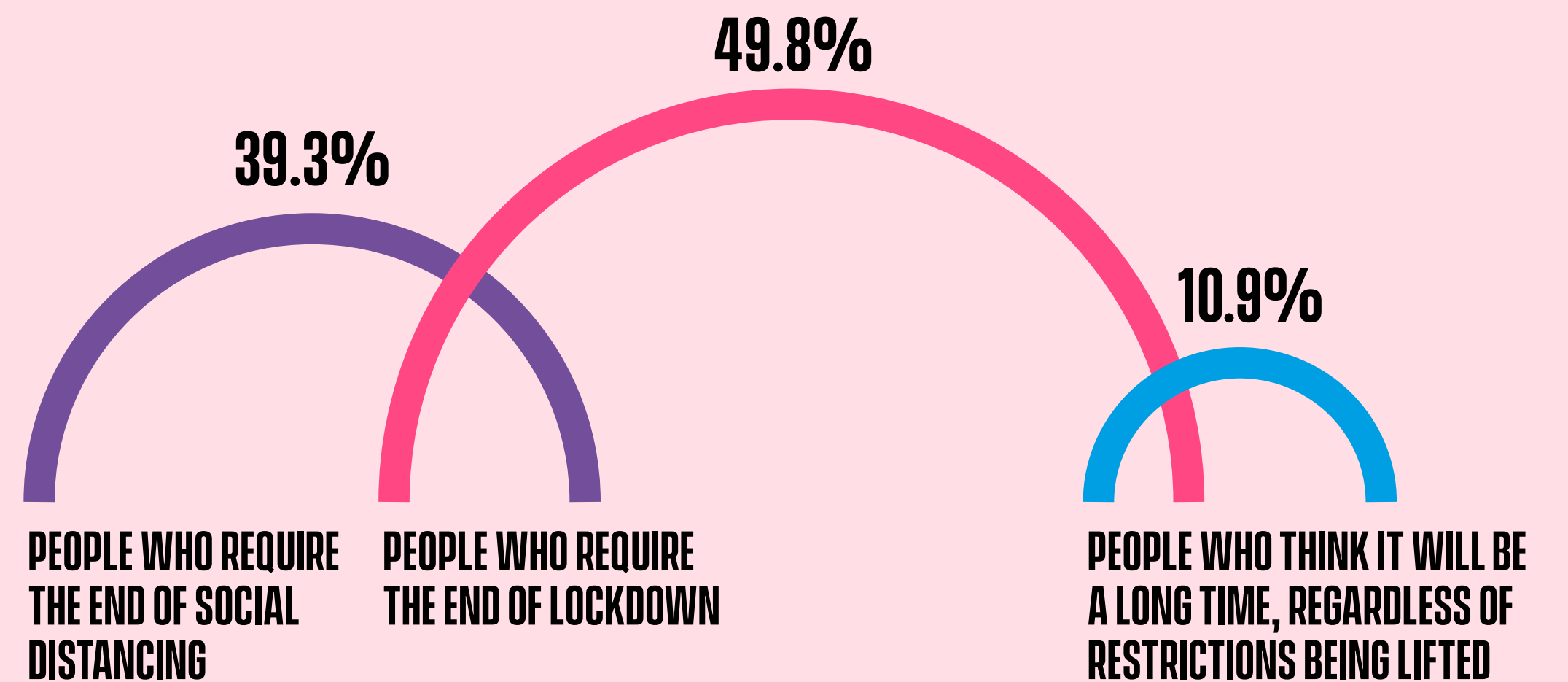
Starting from June or later

**55.8%**

None at all

In terms of when income will recover, some people require the end of lockdown, i.e. when people can move freely again without restrictions which is currently forecast to be June. Some people require the end of social distancing, i.e. the end of restrictions of larger gatherings of people.

## Timescale for income to recover

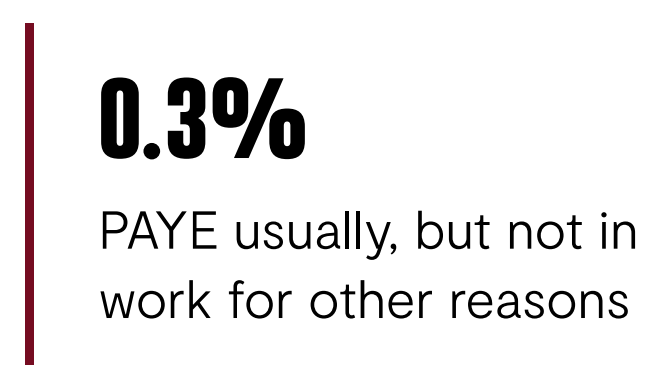
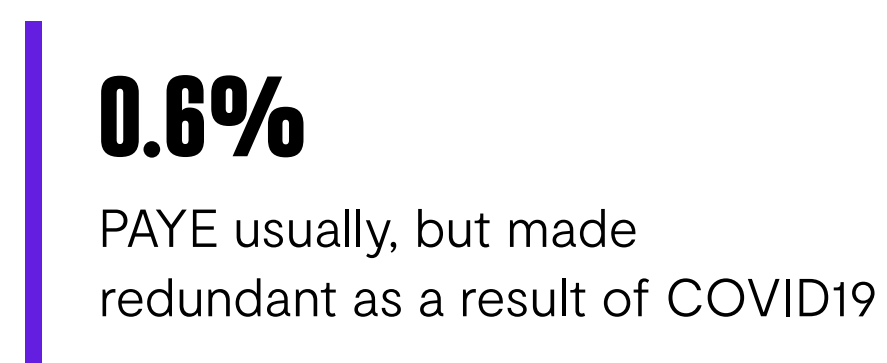
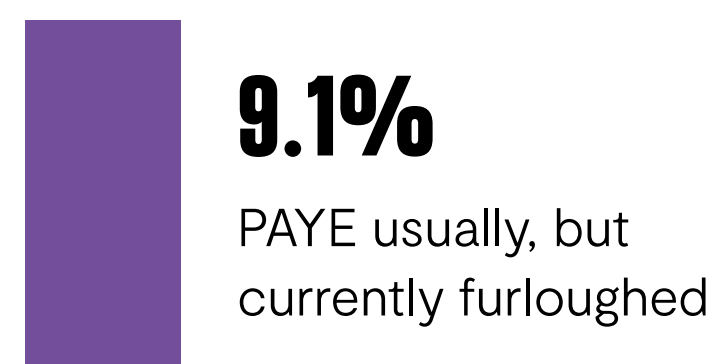


However, once restrictions are lifted, 64% expect to start to recover their income within 3 months.

“It’s made me very aware not to rely too much on only a few clients.”  
- Survey Respondent

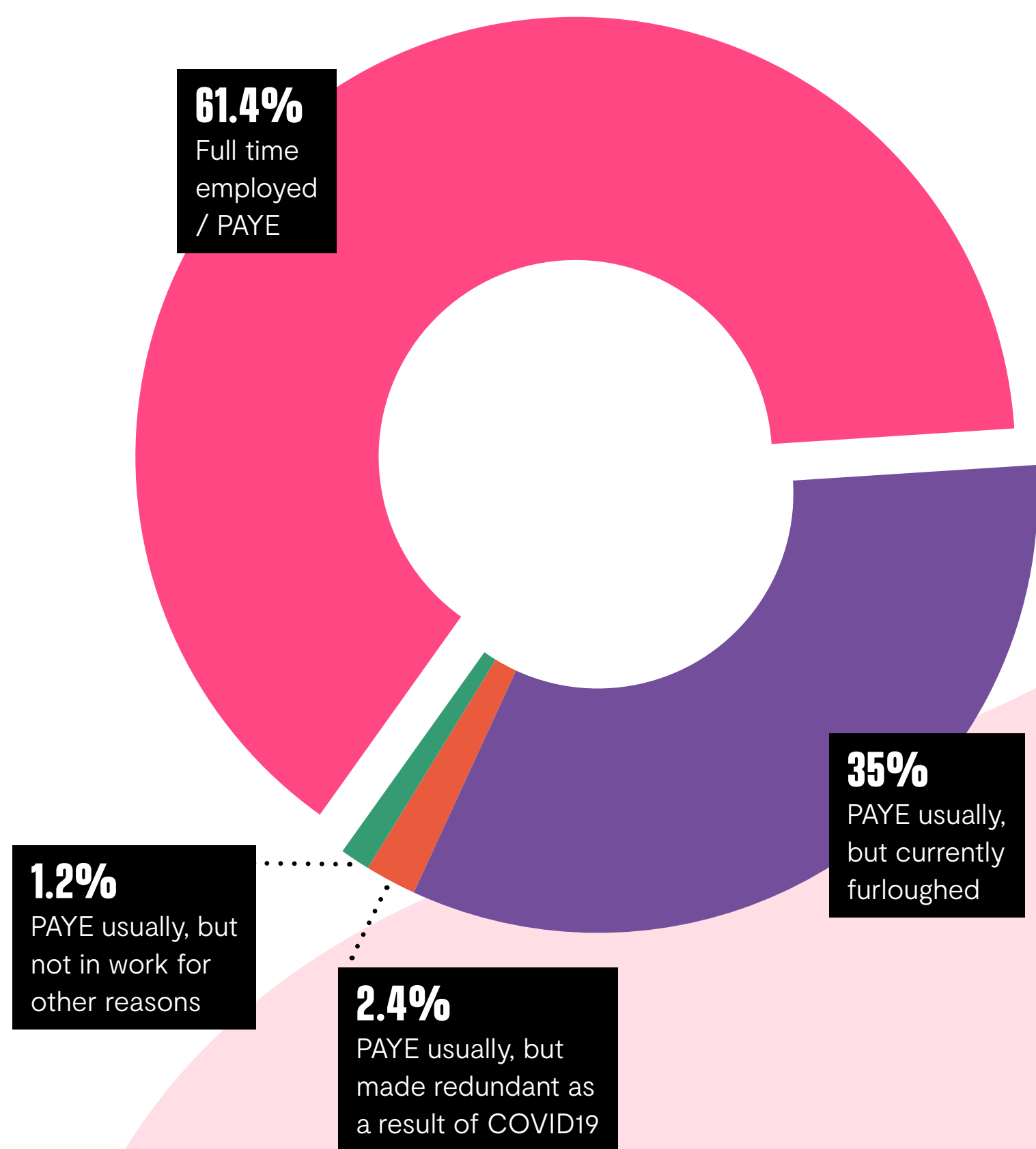
Our findings show that 74% of the industry are freelance, and 76% can work remotely.

### How people work

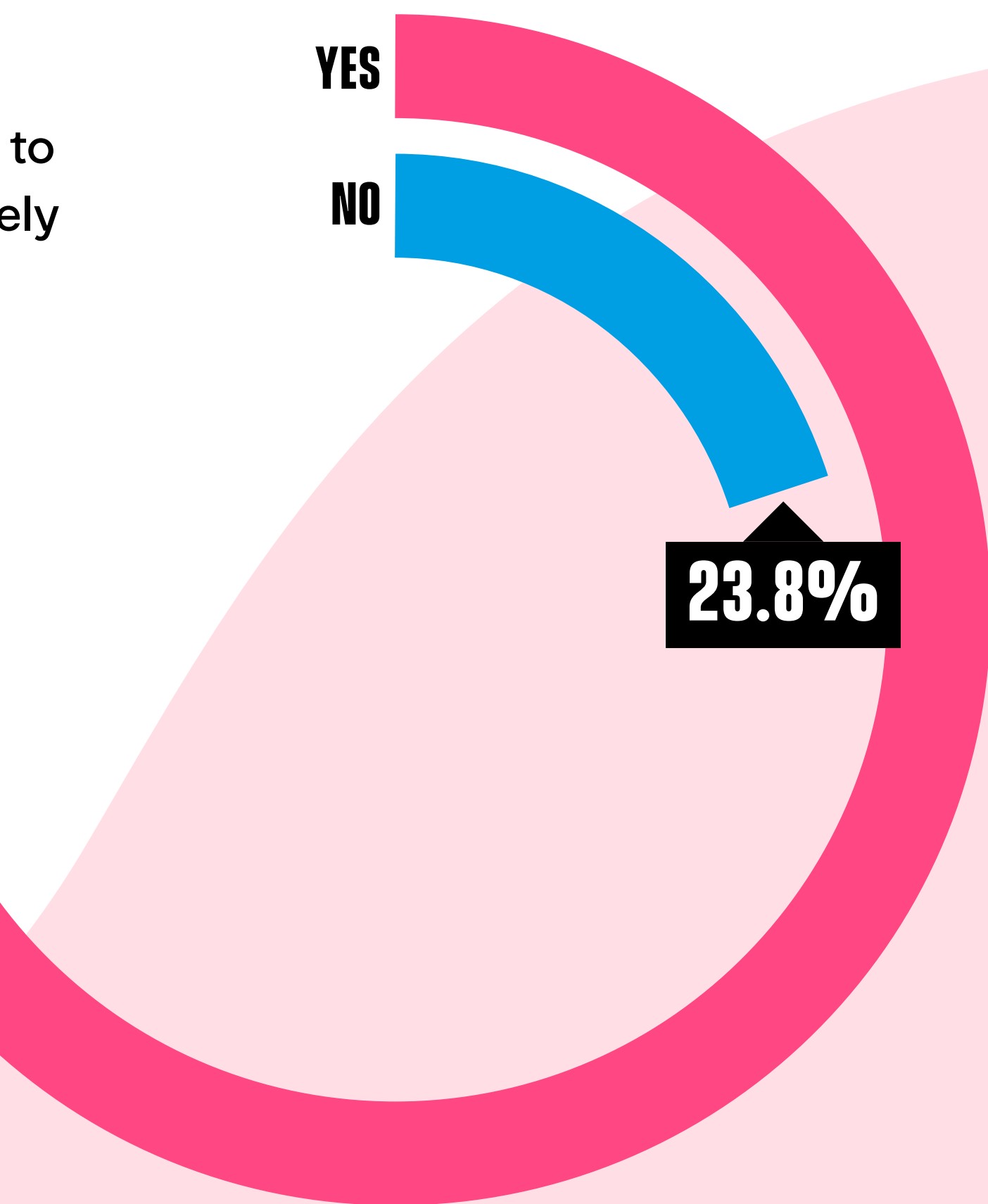


This leaves 26% as PAYE, of whom 35% have been furloughed and 2.5% have been made redundant.

### PAYE breakdown



### People able to work remotely

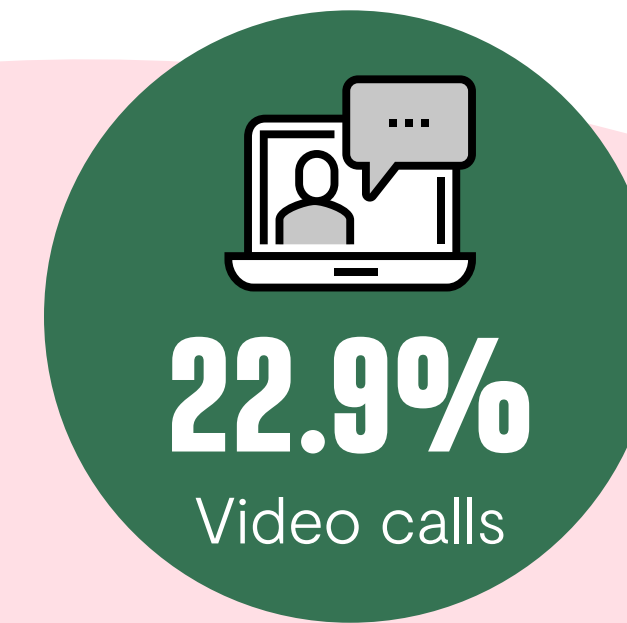
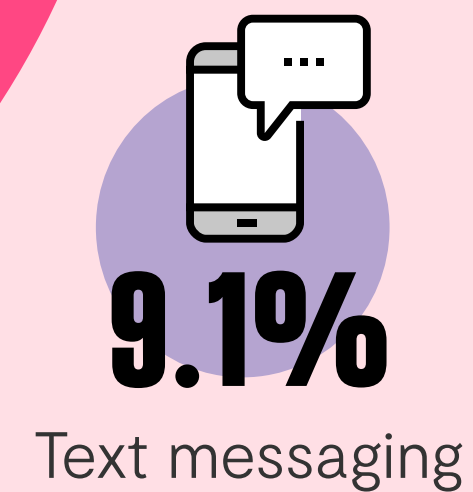
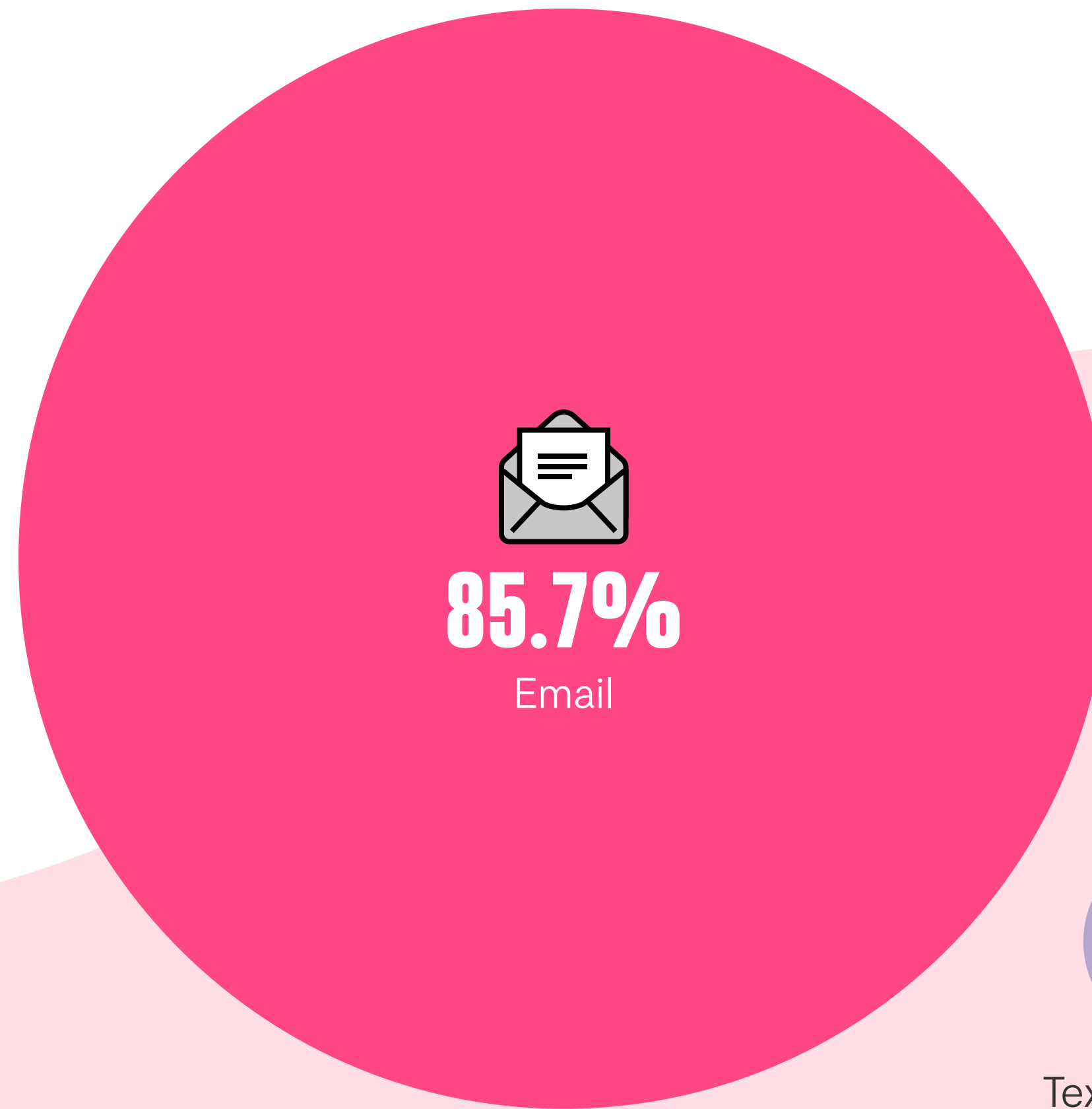
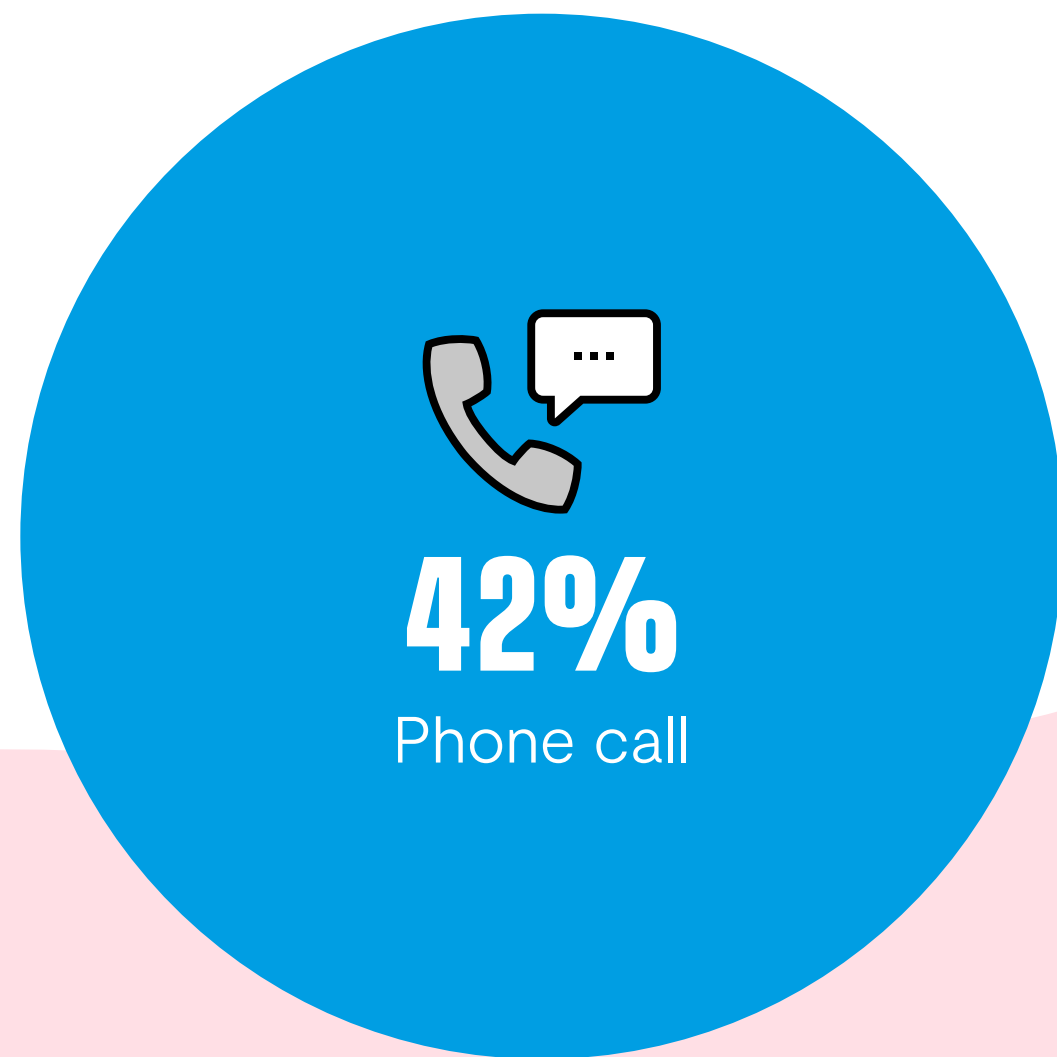
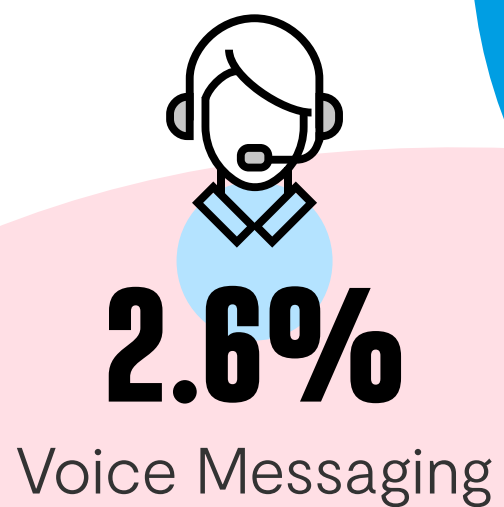
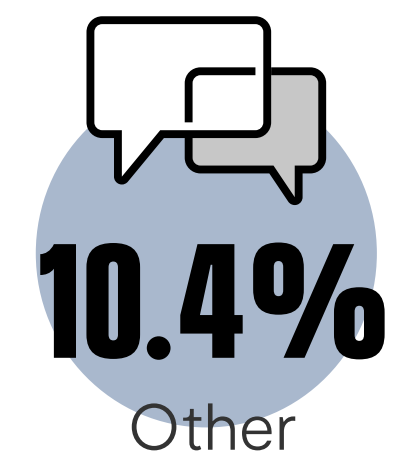




At creativehub, we feel that the creative industry needs better tools for remote working. The proliferation of video calling options is a start towards this, but the lack of effective purpose built tools means people still communicate by email both before and during a project.

### Preferred method for pitching projects

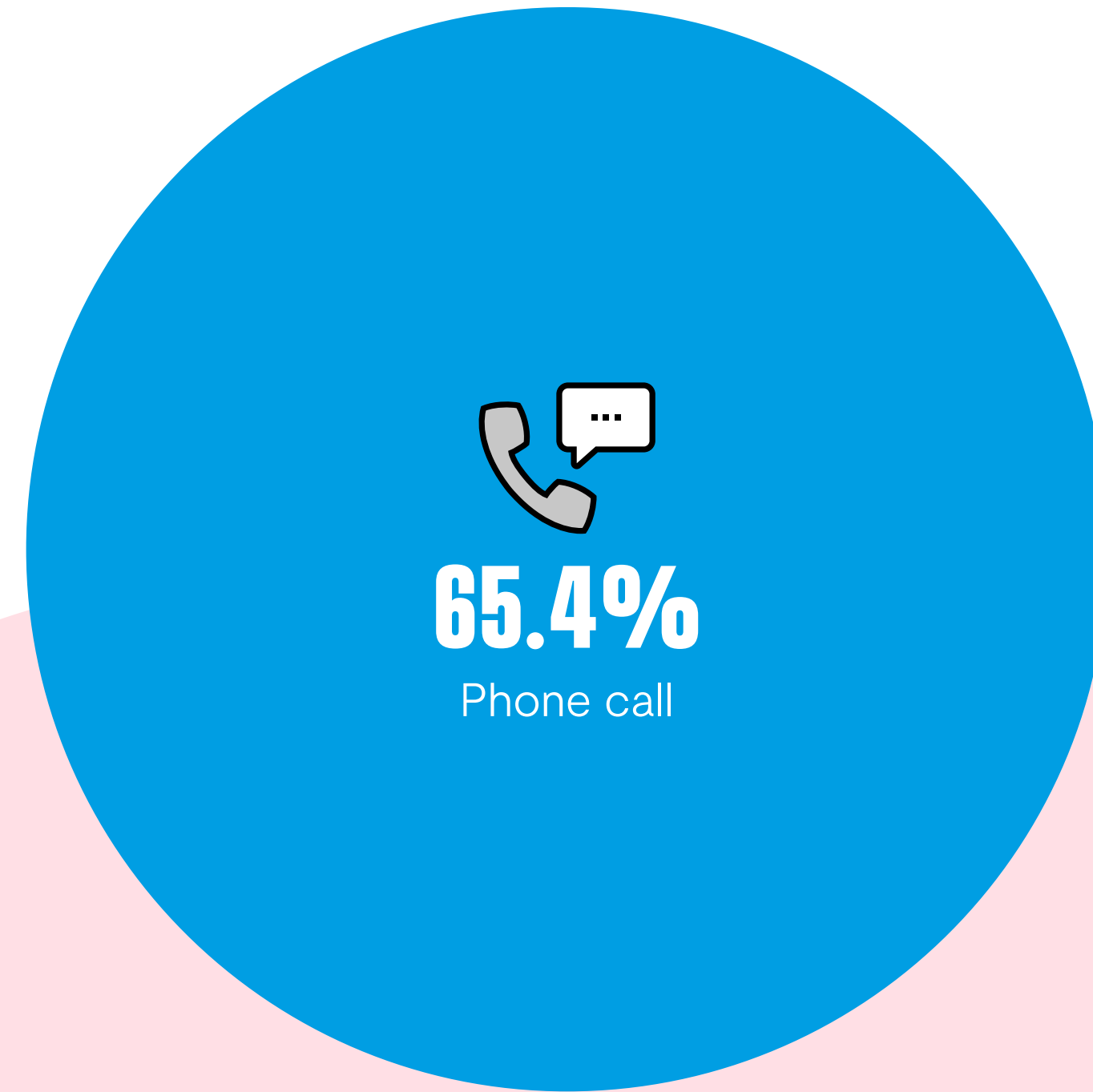
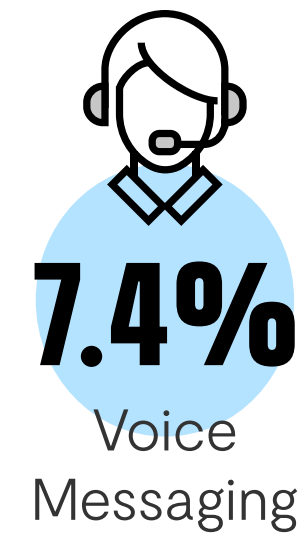
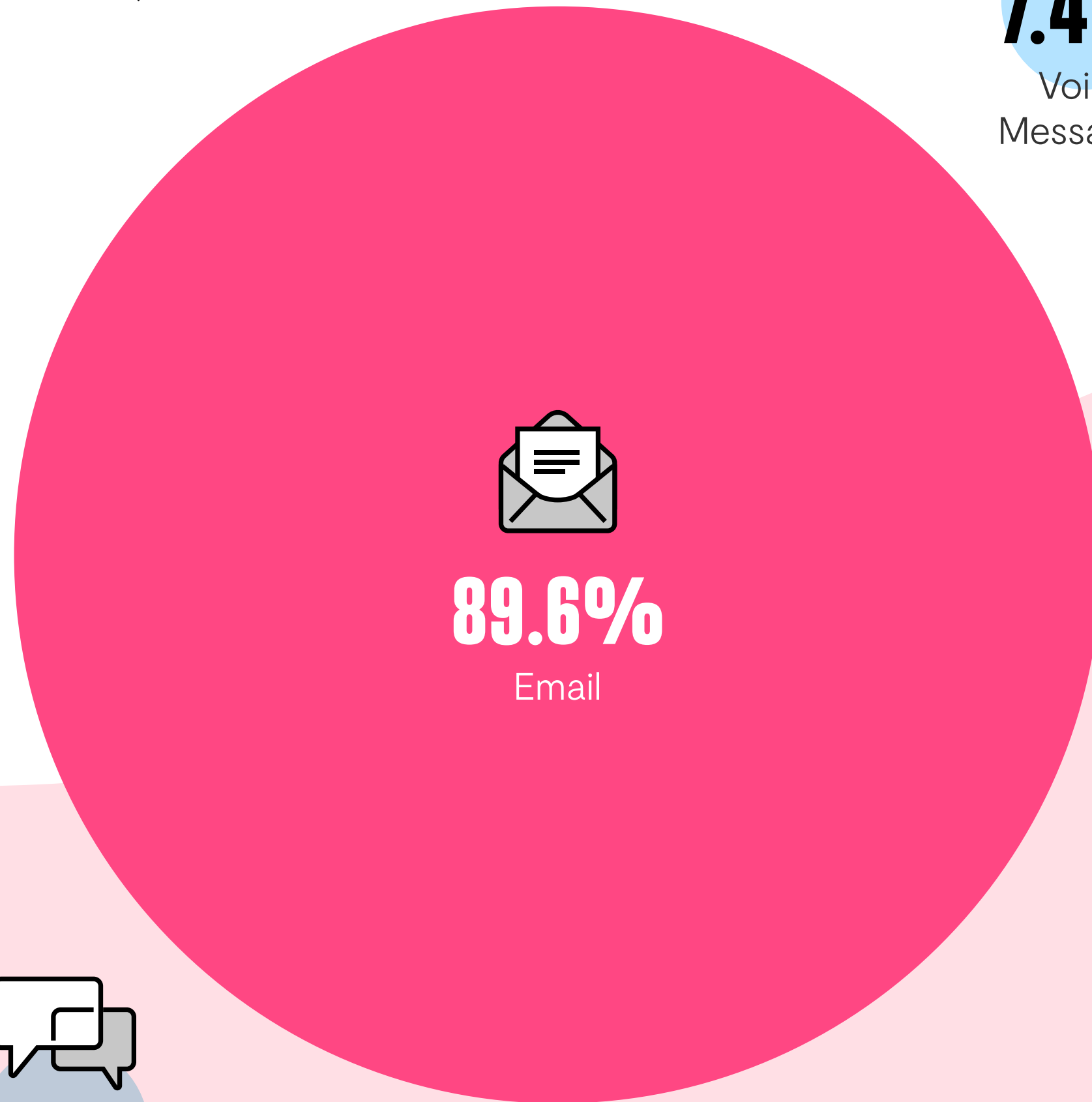
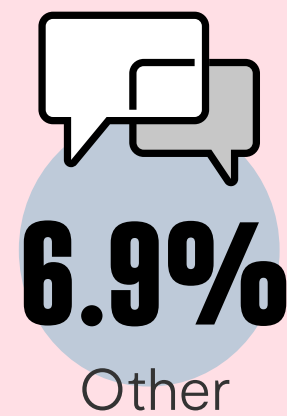
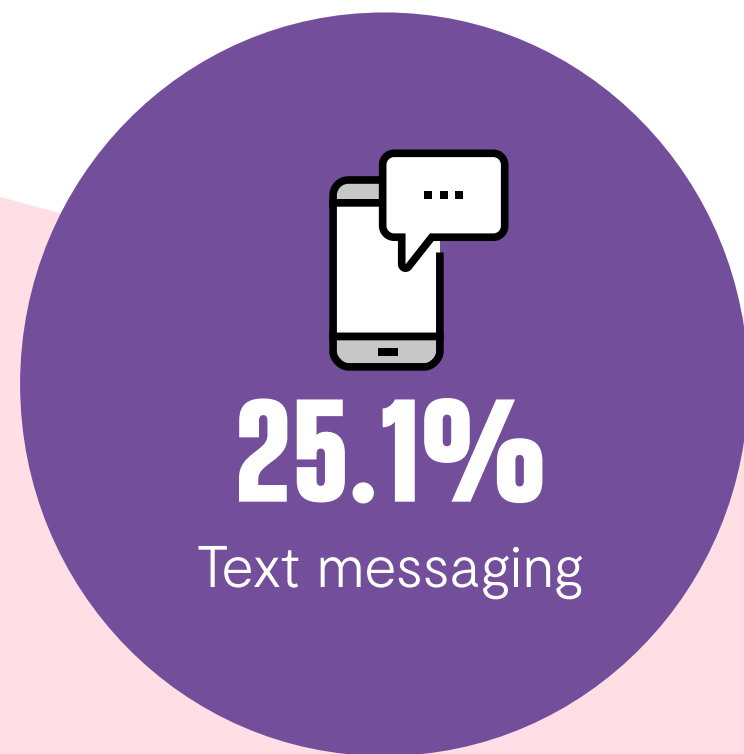
(Respondents were able to select multiple answers)



“I hope for less commuting in the future to reduce my carbon footprint alongside the broader welcoming and general encouragement of remote working.”  
- Survey Respondent

## Preferred means of in-project communication

(Respondents were able to select multiple answers)

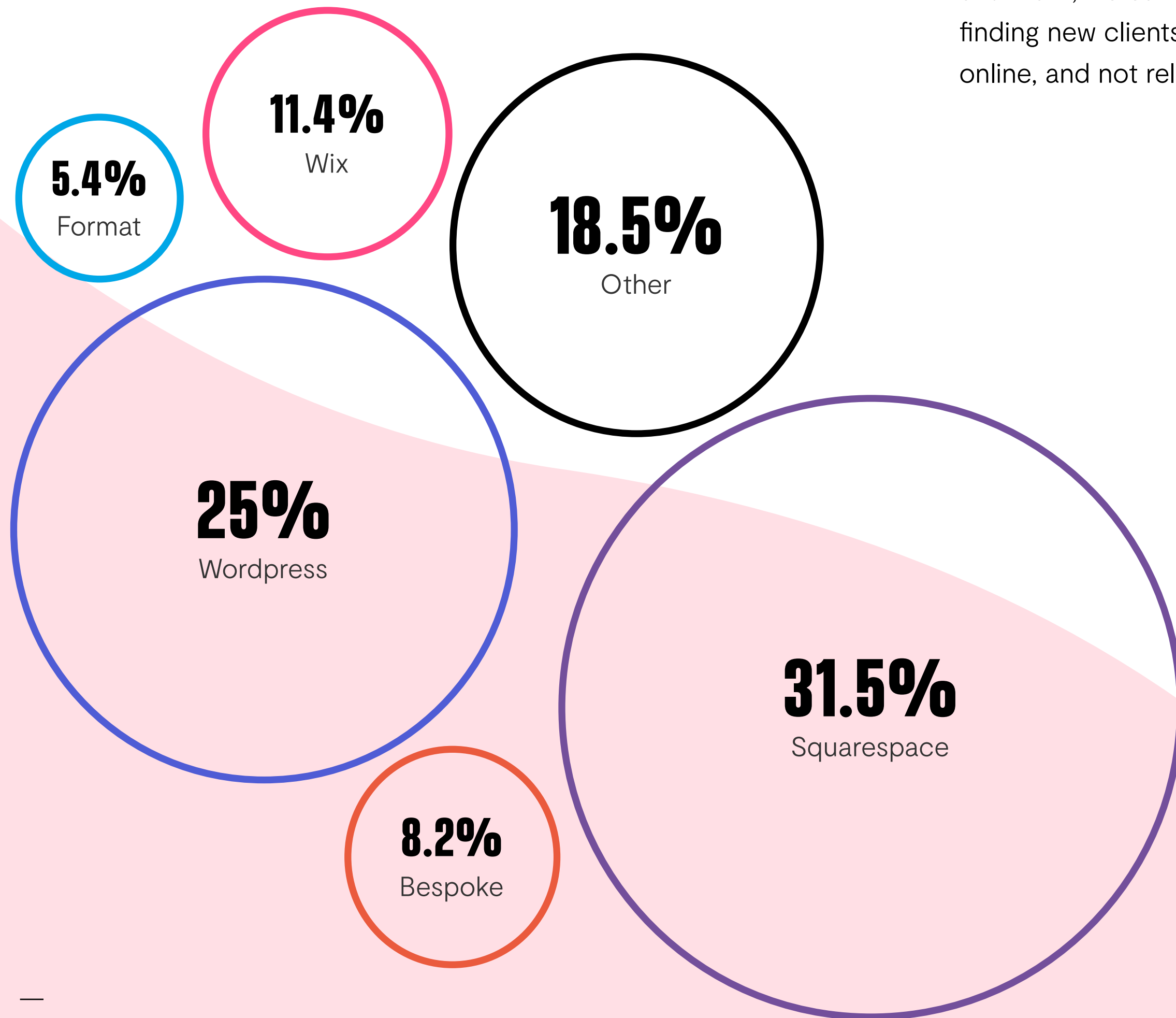


“Professionally, I have no work, but I do believe that when there’s nothing left, the only thing to do is start rebuilding. Personally, I feel like the rest of the world is a little more on my level of what it feels like to be a freelancer/solopreneur, and I find that comforting.”  
- Survey Respondent



90% of creative industry people have websites of which three platforms; Wordpress, Squarespace and WIX, account for 60% of the total.

### Website platforms used

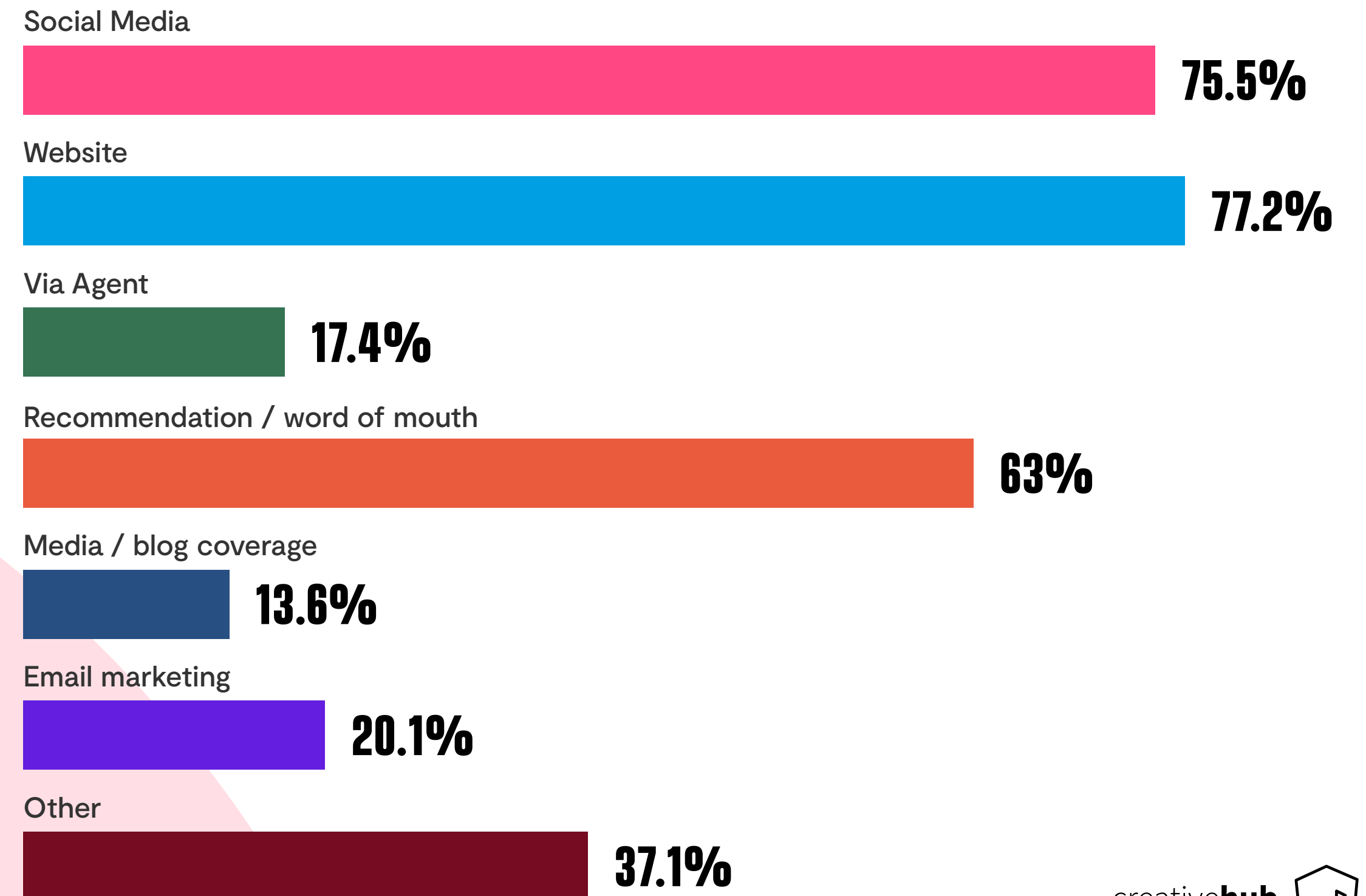


The key ways commercial creatives get clients are through Instagram and websites. With some degree of social distancing expected to be in place until 2021, we can take comfort from the fact that finding new clients is already predominantly done online, and not reliant on in-person meetings.

“It has made me more determined to succeed and less worried about what people think of me. I have worked in photography for 27 years, I don’t have any other skills or qualifications, I have no choice but to make it work.”  
- Survey Respondent

### How people acquire clients

(Respondents were able to select multiple answers)

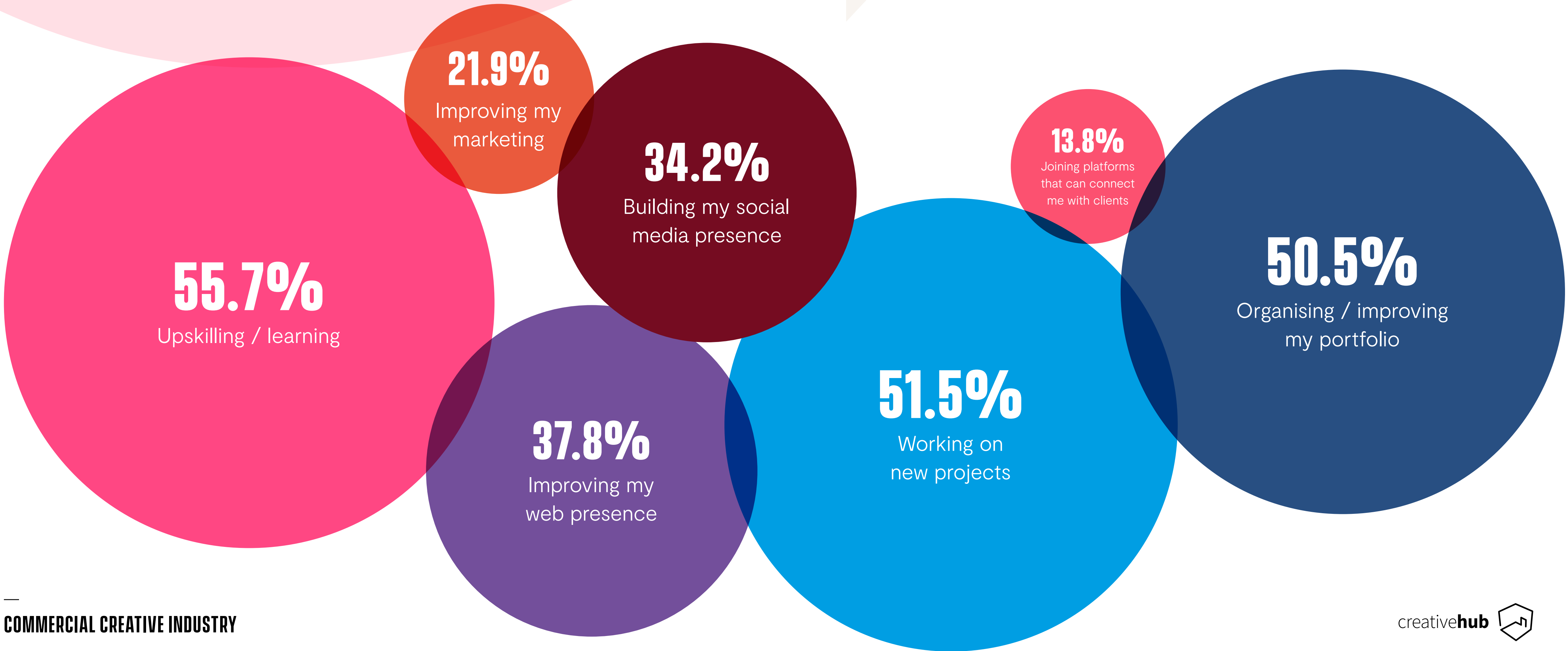


It's been amazing to hear the touching stories of how people are keeping busy during the recent lockdown. Here are some general ideas from the creative industry respondents about what to do whilst paid work might not be possible.

### Ways to keep productive during lockdown

(Respondents were able to select multiple answers)

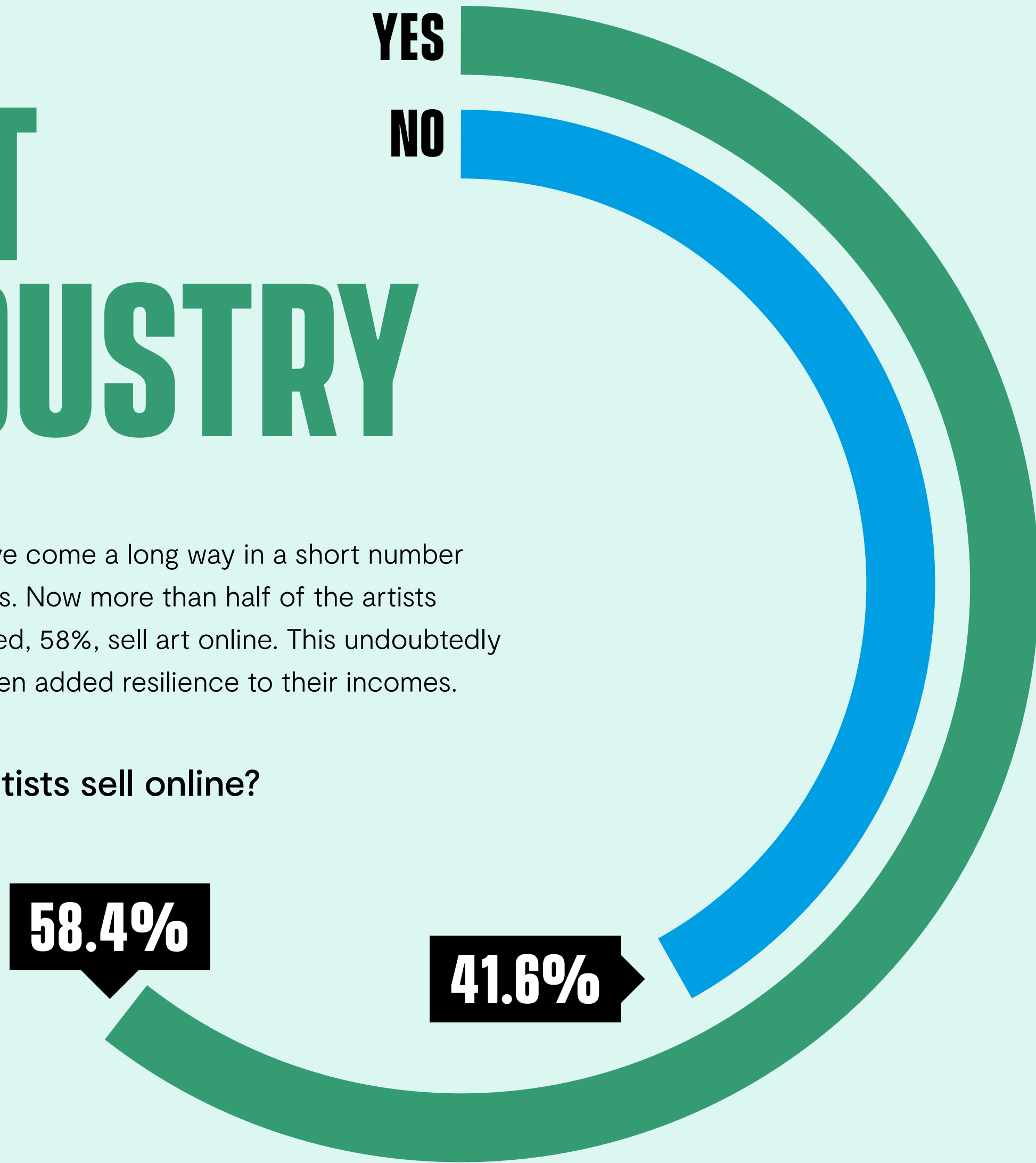
**"I lost a dream job and great revenue so I am humbled and worried, but it's given me the kick to finally sit down and draw a kids book I've been talking about for...22 years!"**  
- Survey Respondent



# ART INDUSTRY

We have come a long way in a short number of years. Now more than half of the artists surveyed, 58%, sell art online. This undoubtedly has given added resilience to their incomes.

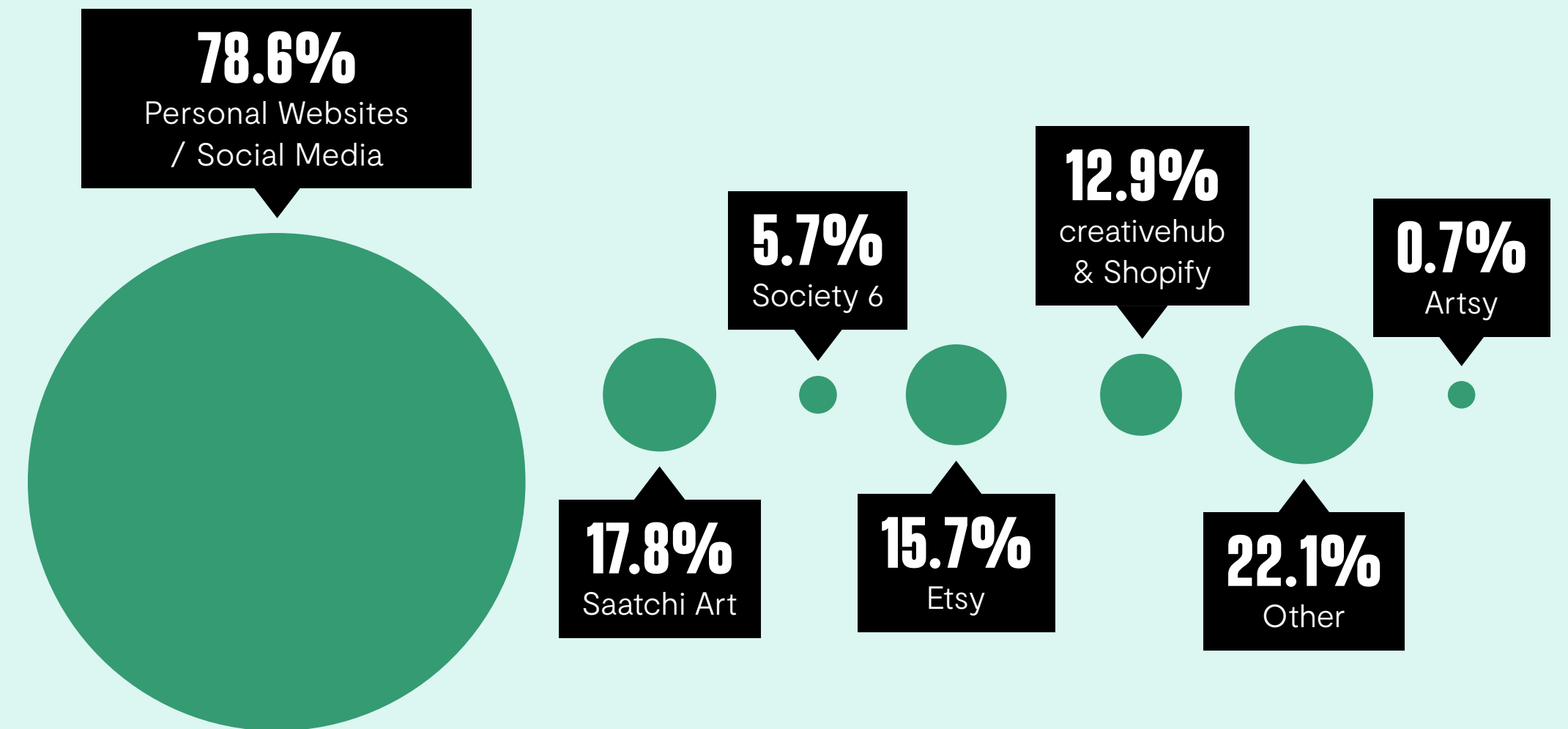
Do artists sell online?



There are lots of platforms that allow you to sell art online, but what is clear from our findings is that the most effective way to do this is through personal websites and social media channels. This not only allows artists to reach the right audience but it gives them complete control over their brand presence.

## Platforms used to sell art online

(Respondents were able to select multiple answers)



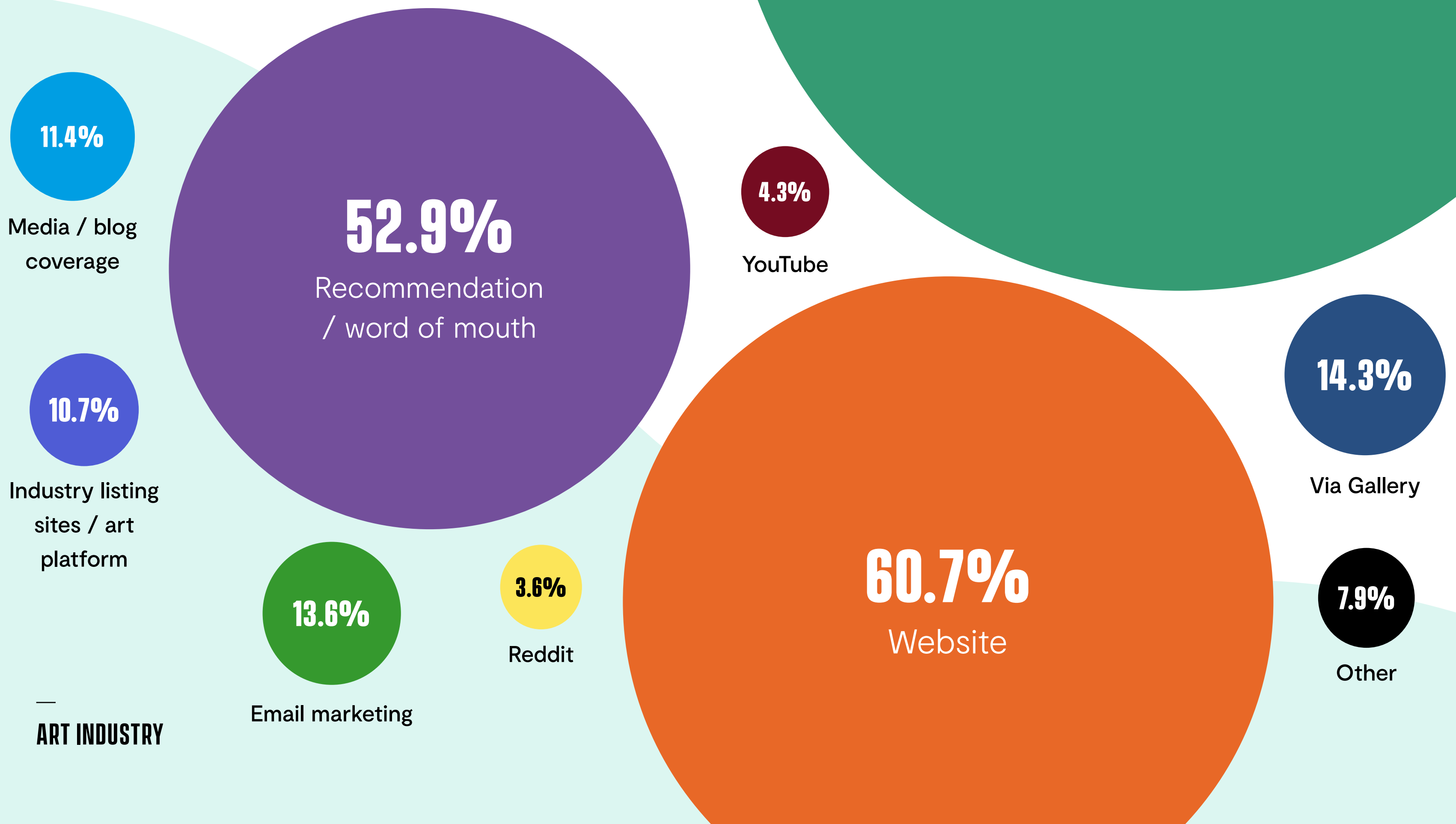
“It has given me the space to understand what I wanted to achieve artistically. There isn’t time now to do certain projects for the sake of it so I’ve become more savvy financially but more in tune to what I want for myself, my art and my family.”

- Survey Respondent

The hardest part of selling art online is finding art buyers. Our survey found the three biggest ways to do this were social media (of which Instagram will of course be the lion's share here), website (i.e. via Google searches, so SEO is important here) and good old fashioned recommendation/ word of mouth.

### How artists find buyers

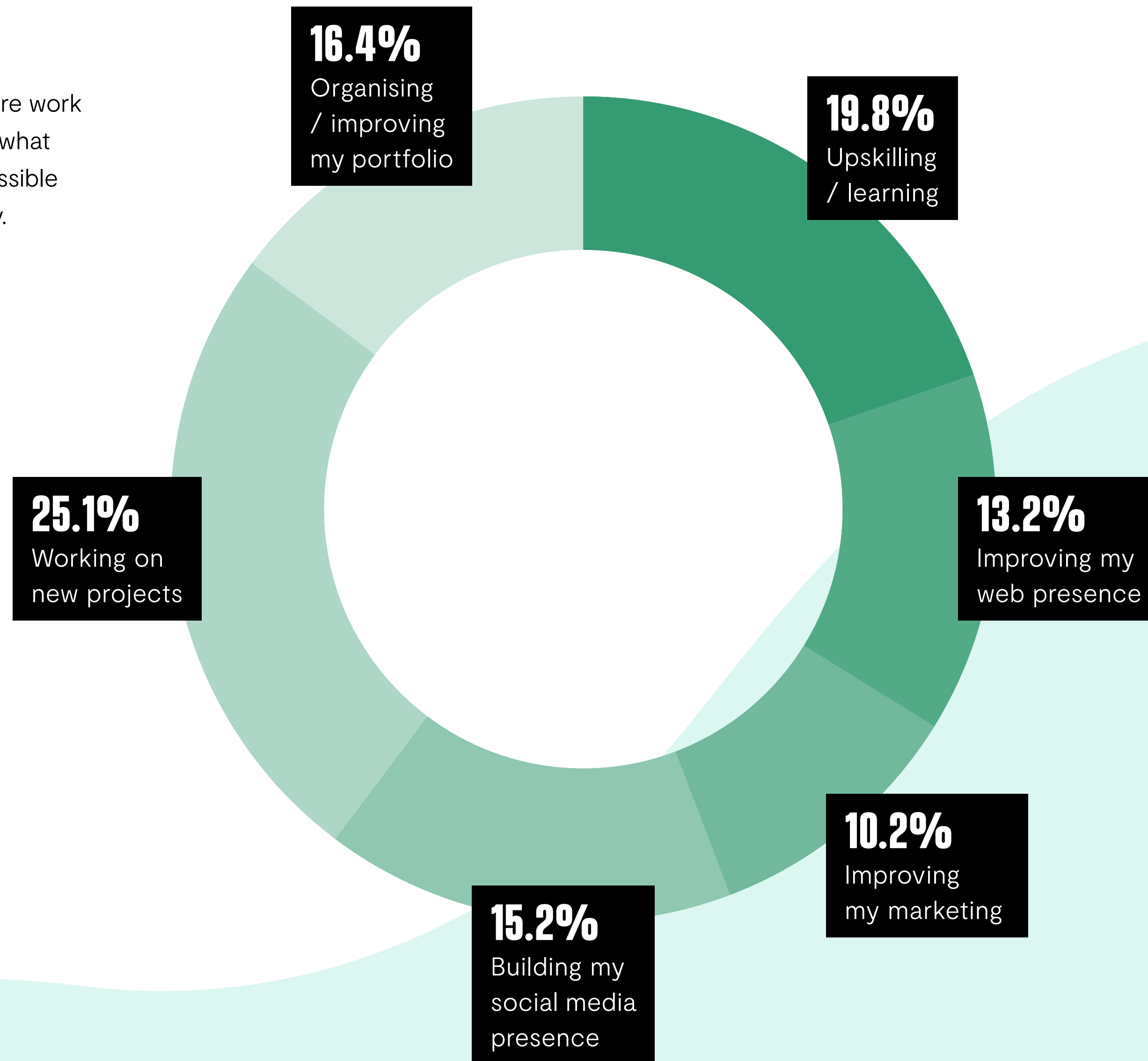
(Respondents were able to select multiple answers)



“It has expanded my horizons on how to generate passive income through online sales, not just of prints, but of education, actions, presets, stock photography... which are things that I wouldn't have considered to spend time on before.”  
- Survey Respondent

Artists are also using this down time to creatively invest in their skill set or future work prospects. Here are some ideas about what to do whilst paid work might not be possible from the artist responses to this survey.

### Ways to keep productive during lockdown



“It has made me want to work MORE than ever.”  
- Survey Respondent

“Personally, I’m enjoying the time off to self educate on things I wanted to learn but never had time. Professionally, I’ve realised I need to have my eggs in even more baskets!”  
- Survey Respondent

# THANKS FOR YOUR TIME

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# Want to sell your art online?

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