



2024 STATE OF MARKETING TO ENGINEERS

THE QUEST FOR TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS
AND THE INFLUENCE OF AI

TREW MARKETING

GlobalSpec





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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2024 State of Marketing to Engineers Report. This marks the seventh consecutive year GlobalSpec and TREW Marketing have partnered to better understand the buying behaviors and communication preferences of engineers and technical buyers.

Our survey contains a mix of popular topics we've asked about consistently to monitor trends, along with fresh questions that take a deeper dive into buying behaviors. This year's research touches on attitudes toward artificial intelligence (AI), content preferences (and how they vary) between hardware and software purchases, and popular social media channels for work needs versus personal use.

The State of Marketing to Engineers Report is designed to:

Help you better understand the information needs of technical buyers

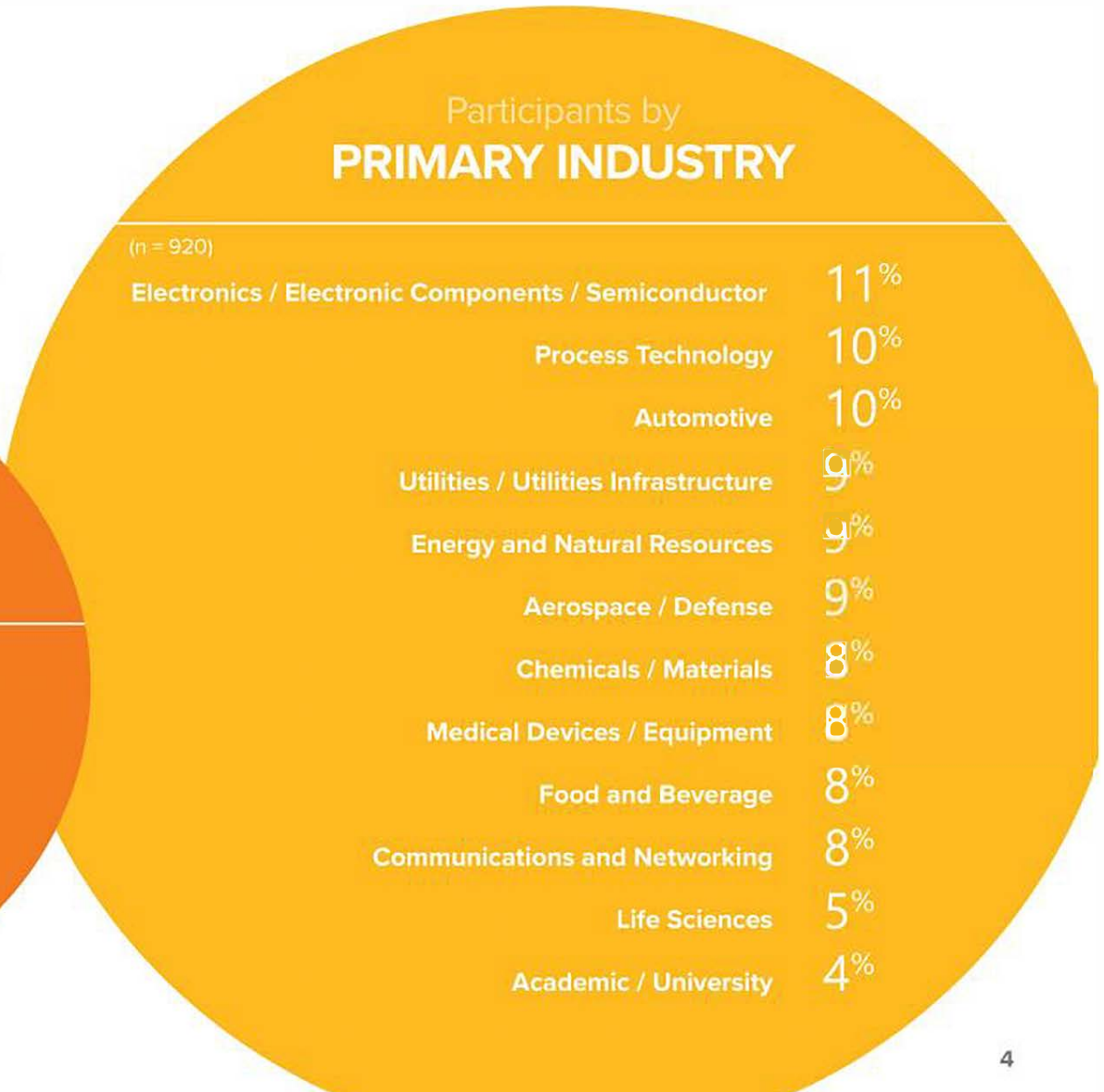
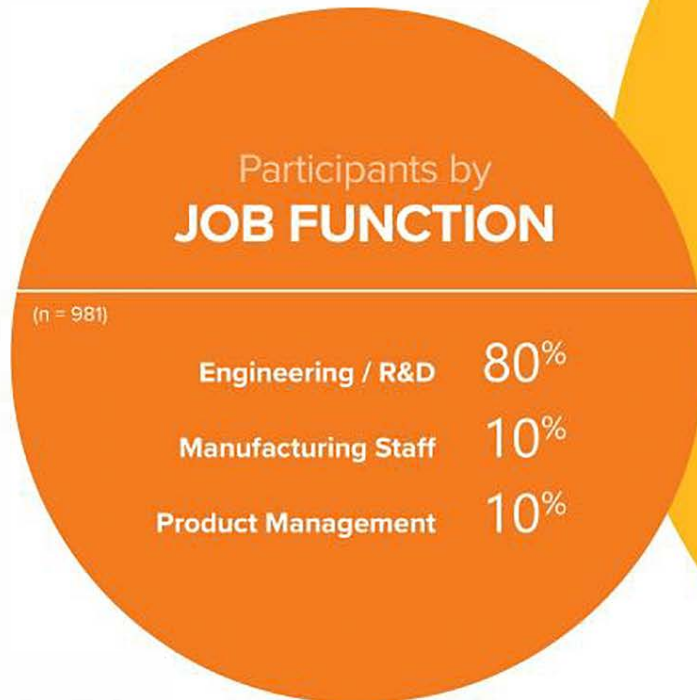
Provide critical insights to guide your marketing plans

Educate and forge alignment with your leadership and sales organizations

ABOUT THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Over 900 qualified engineers and technical professionals across the globe responded to our most recent survey.

Participants were not required to answer each and every question, so sample sizes vary slightly question-to-question and are noted throughout for clarity. In some cases, we make comparisons to data from previous year(s) when the question was asked.



ABOUT THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS, CONTINUED

Participants by AGE

(n = 973)

35 and under	35%
36 – 45	33%
46 – 55	10%
56 – 65	14%
66+	8%

Participants by REGION

(n = 977)

Americas (North, Central, South)	49%
Asia	17%
Europe	14%
Africa	10%
Oceania	10%

Participants by COMPANY SIZE (# of EMPLOYEES)

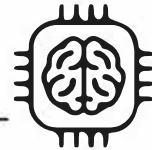
(n = 976)

1 – 250	29%
251 – 500	21%
501 – 750	15%
751 – 1,000	15%
over 1,000	20%

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR INDUSTRIAL MARKETERS



On average, technical buyers spend **66%** of the buying process online.



63% of technical buyers use AI tools for work

Technical buyers continue to find



to be the most valuable social media platforms for work



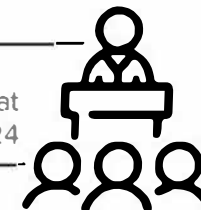
41% of technical buyers turn to vendor websites for information on a regular basis, followed by **37%** for online technical publications

51% of technical buyers use YouTube in their personal lives.



90% of technical buyers listen to work-related podcasts, **73%** in 2023

89% of technical buyers plan to attend at least one in-person industry event in 2024



98% of technical buyers subscribe to newsletters, and **81%** subscribe to LinkedIn newsletters



SURVEY FINDINGS

- ▶ **Artificial Intelligence**
- ▶ **Information Sources**
- ▶ **Social Media**
- ▶ **Events**
- ▶ **Newsletters**
- ▶ **Content Preferences**
- ▶ **Podcasts and Video**
- ▶ **Interacting with Sales**

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Sixty-three percent of technical buyers regularly use AI-based tools for work. Technical buyers use AI-based tools for a variety of purposes including content creation and distribution, sales enablement, programming, and data analysis, among others.

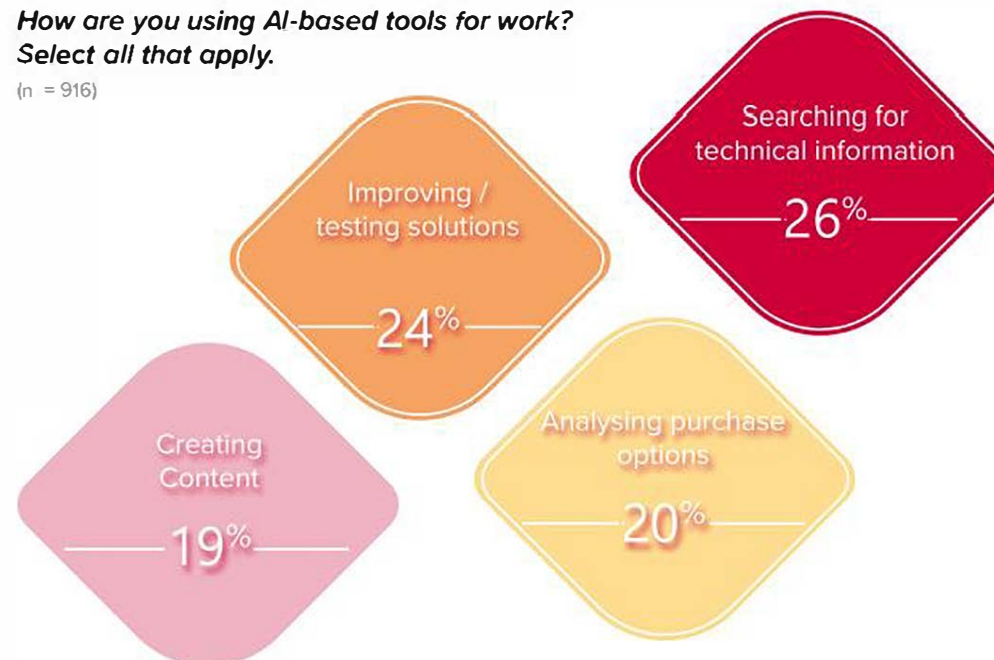
Are you regularly using AI-based tools for work?

(n = 926)

Yes **63%** | No **31%** | Unsure **6%**

How are you using AI-based tools for work?
Select all that apply.

(n = 916)



“Technical buyers experimenting with LLMs to research a topic are increasingly frustrated by the need to validate or refute the information presented. As more search tools move to a generative search experience (looking at you, Google), it will be key to provide links to credible sources which supported the provided answer.”

-- Wendy Covey
CEO and Co-Founder, TREW Marketing

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Overall, the jury's still out on AI-based tools. Most technical buyers don't consider themselves particularly trusting or distrusting of them, but they're somewhere in the middle. While **thirty-five percent** of respondents are curious about AI-based tools, they're feelings are mixed.

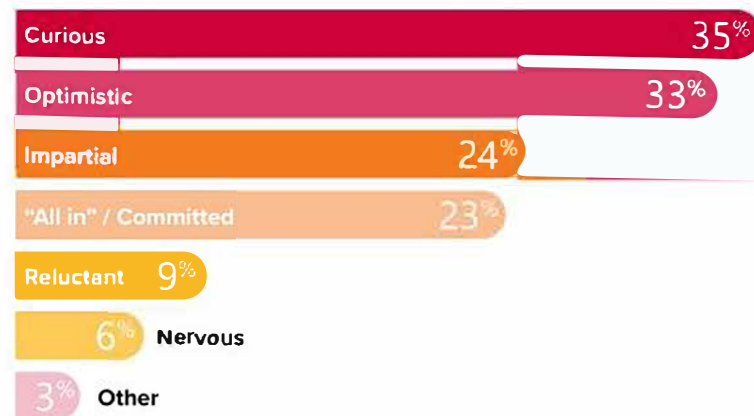
On a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is complete trust, and 1 is a complete lack of trust, to what extent do you trust answers from AI-based tools?

(n = 883)



Which adjective(s) best describe how you feel about the future of AI-based tools?

(n = 890)



Perspectives shared by respondents...

"In chemical engineering, AI tools expedite simulations and assist in designing novel processes. They optimize reaction pathways and improve product development."

- **"All in" / Committed, Curious**

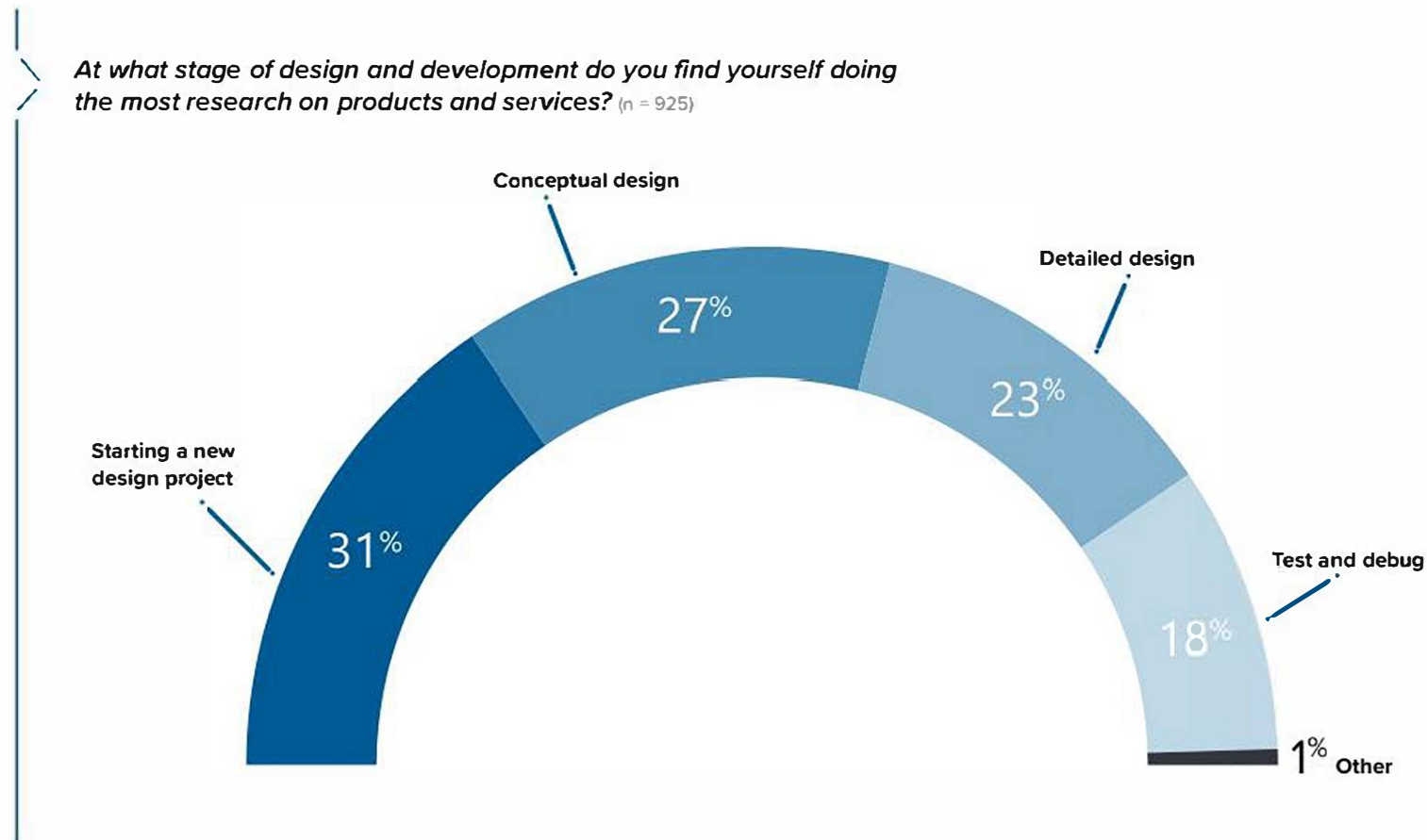
"AI-based tools are likely to play a key role in healthcare, contributing to diagnostics, drug discovery, personalized medicine, and overall healthcare management. The potential for AI to improve patient outcomes and streamline healthcare processes is enormous." - **Optimistic**

"I don't trust the output of the AI very much. It's only as good as its programmer and adaptive learning algorithm. Some are better than others." - **Reluctant**

"As a licensed [Professional Engineer (PE)] I have an ethical responsibility to my clients. Any information presented by AI-based tools should be verified and checked for accuracy. The additional time involved in verifying the accuracy of AI-generated information greatly reduces the benefit (time saving) of using AI-based tools for technical material. AI-based tools make much more sense when liability is less of an issue or where generalities can be applied." - **Curious, Impartial, Reluctant**

INFORMATION SOURCES

While more research happens at the beginning stages of design and development, it continues throughout the process. Nearly **twenty percent** of technical buyers say they do the most research on products and services in the test and debug stage.



INFORMATION SOURCES

Consistent with years past, most technical buyers turn to supplier / vendor websites when looking for information about products and services. Trade publications, both online and print, are also popular information resources. New this year, respondents were given the option to select “Sales / Application Engineers” and “Large Language Model (ChatGPT, Bard, etc.)” **Twenty-nine percent** selected Sales / Applications Engineers as a resource in their most recent purchasing process.

“Trade publications are a valuable resource because they offer educational content and product information from many companies in one place. They can cut through the clutter and marketing noise to offer more unbiased information than company websites, and our editors and technical review board are industry experts who understand the technology and the best way to present it to engineers.”

— Patrick Hindle
Editor, Microwave Journal

Supplier / vendor websites

Technical publications (online)

Technical publications (print)

Sales / application engineers

Industry directory websites

YouTube

Vendor emails / newsletters

Publication emails / newsletters

Industry / association groups

Webinars

Conference / trade shows

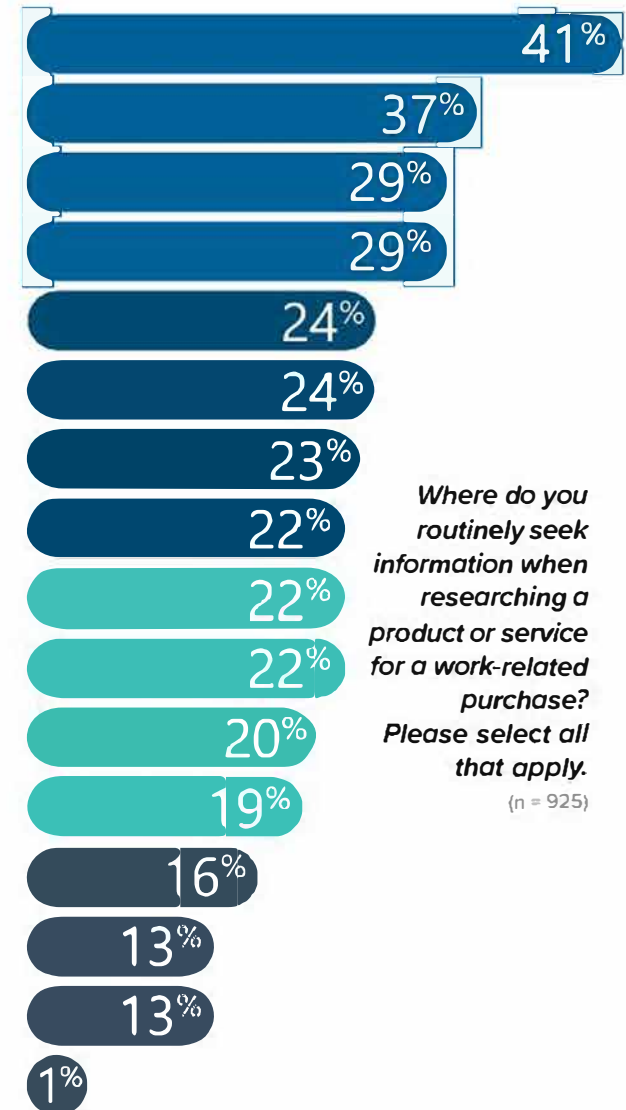
Vendor seminars

LinkedIn

Large Language Model (ChatGPT, Bard, etc.)

Podcasts

Other (please specify)

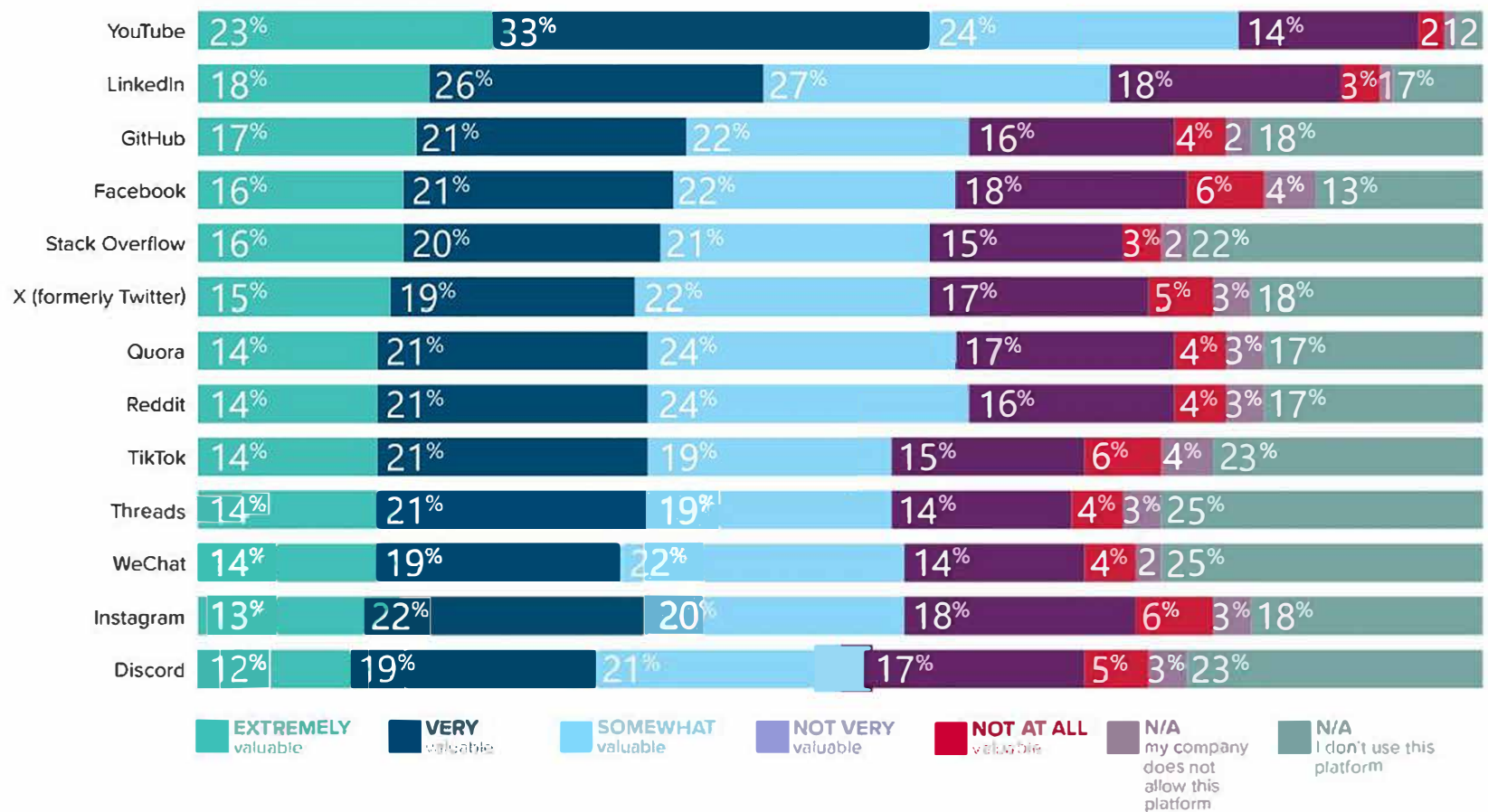


SOCIAL MEDIA

Similar to years past, YouTube, LinkedIn, and GitHub are most helpful for technical buyers looking for work-related information. “Threads,” “WeChat,” and “Discord” were new additions to our research in 2024.

How valuable are each of the following social media platforms when seeking information for work?

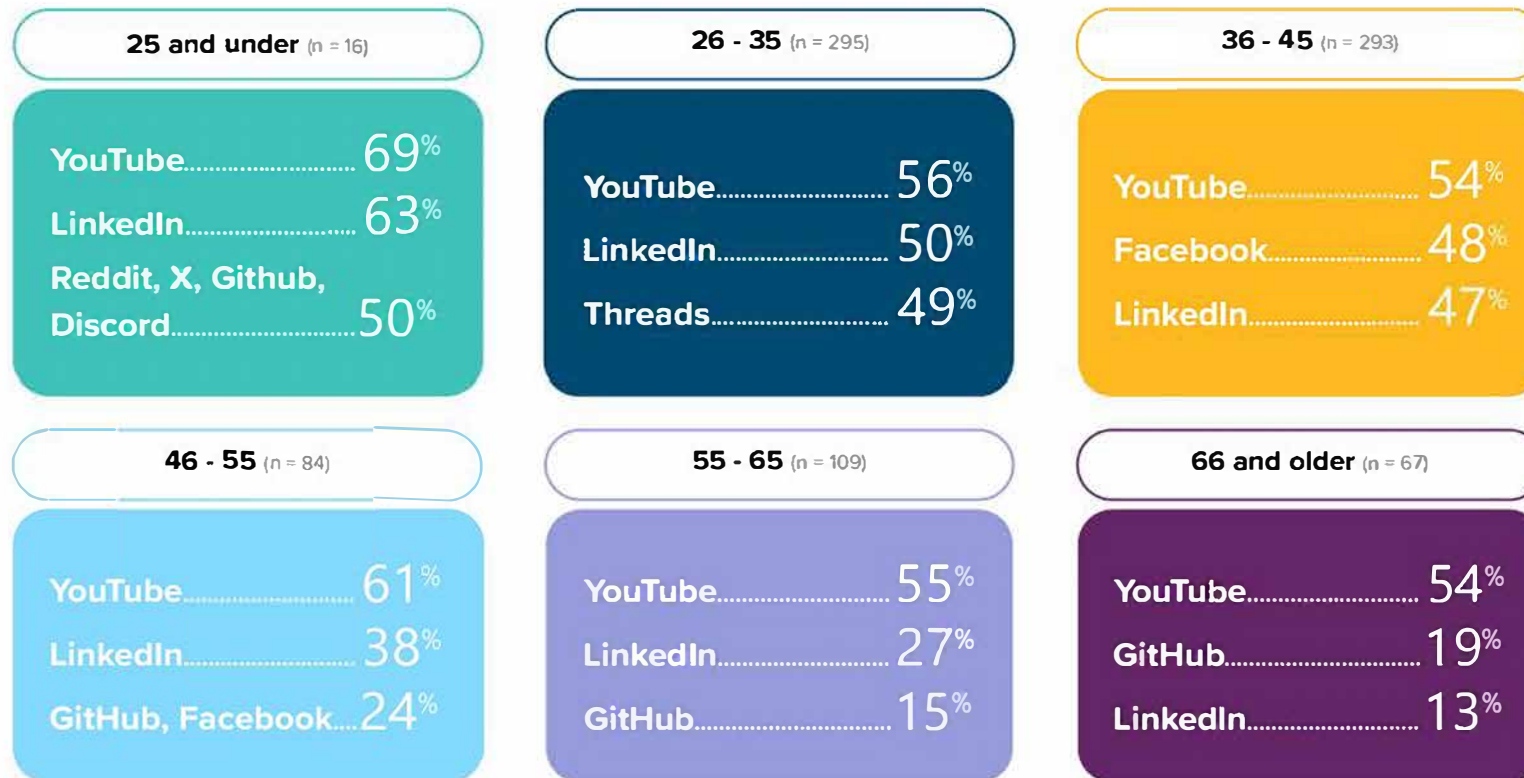
(n = 866)



SOCIAL MEDIA

When isolating the top two social media platforms that were cited as “extremely” and “very valuable” by age, YouTube and LinkedIn hold most of the top spots. With Facebook and GitHub holding more value by the 36-45 and the 66 and older age groups.

Most Valuable Social Media Platforms For Work (T2B*)



*Top 2 Box (T2B) = “Extremely” and “Very” valuable

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