The new era of HCP engagement

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HCP engagement has changed forever. Whether you work in marketing, commercial, sales or medical affairs, the digital revolution since COVID-19 has touched every interaction and channel, sparking industry transformation faster than ever previously thought possible.

In our latest industry trends research, we want to understand what trends sparked, at the start of the pandemic, have continued, which were only temporary, and what new content and channel developments are now taking place. You will learn:

- How spend on digital vs print is changing in global marketing and medical education budgets

- Where pharma marketeers and medical affairs professionals are shifting their content and engagement strategies

- How increased digital engagement is impacting approaches to content authenticity

About the survey

The Covid 19 pandemic has disrupted pharma customer engagement, in a way no one could have predicted. The ripple effects on the investments in customer engagement, will be seen for years to come. Through this report, Reuters Events, in partnership with
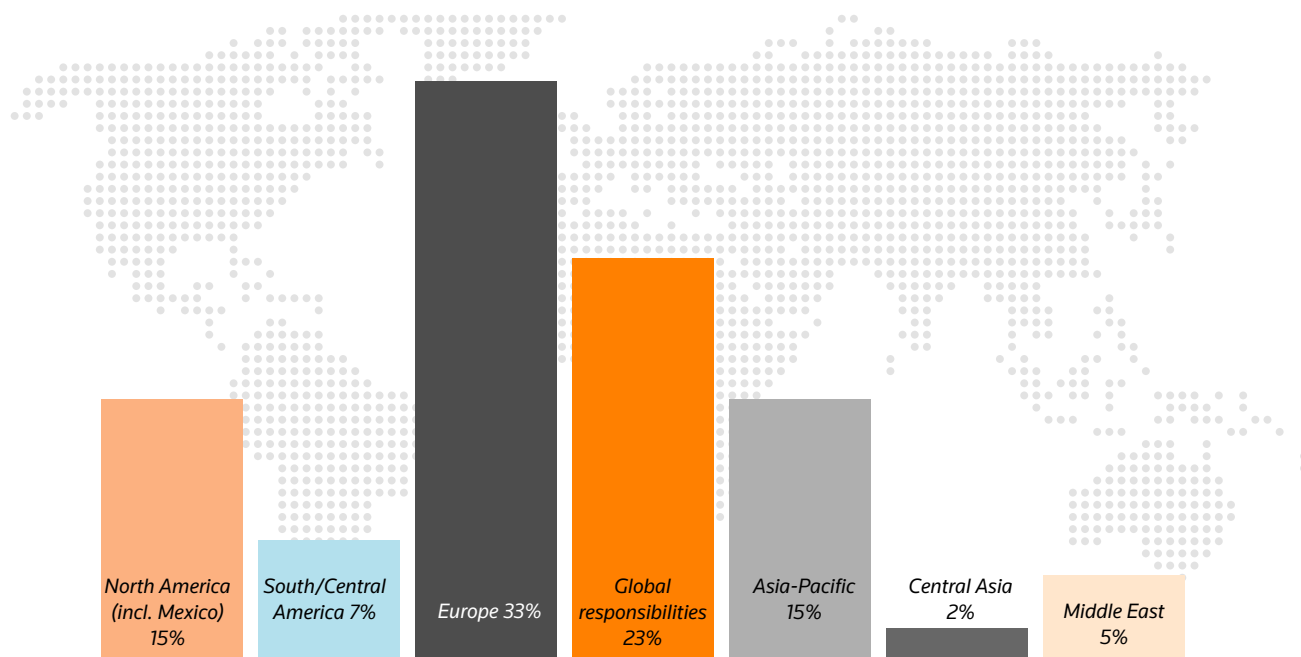
Elsevier looks to provide some insight into how this disruption is impacting customer engagement investments now, and in the future.

The research was carried about between June and September 2021.
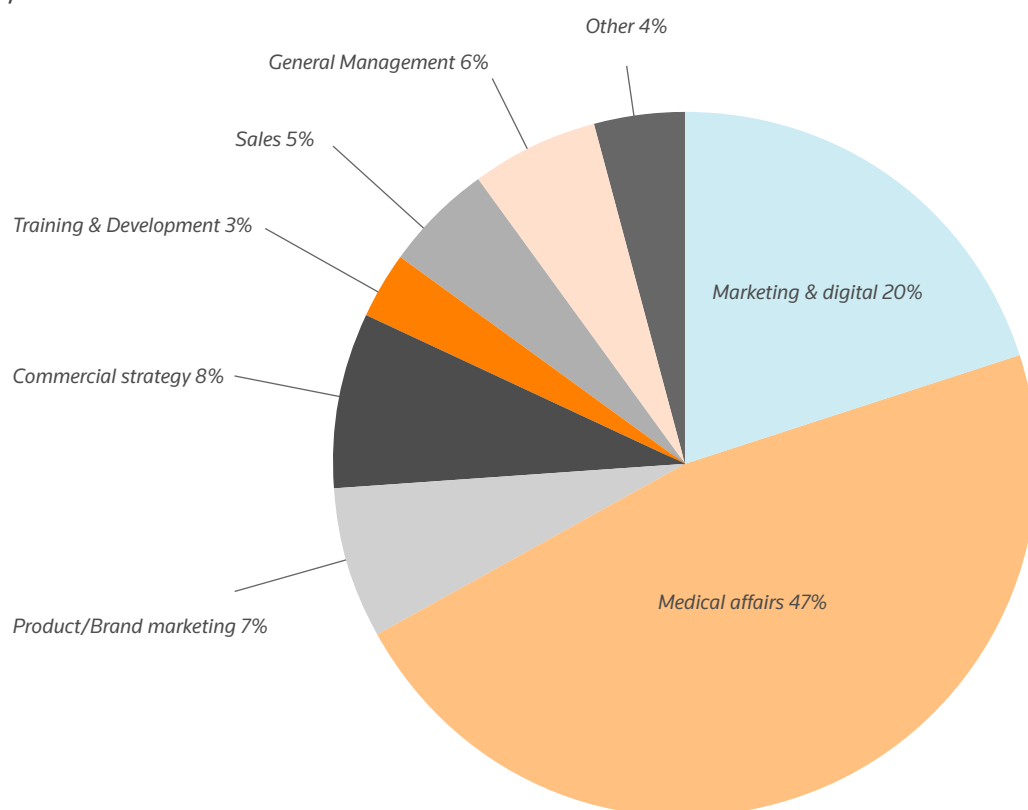
245 total respondents, 90% from pharma and biotech companies, 10% from medtech.

Geographical responsibility and functional area of respondents is below:

Geographical responsibility (select all that apply)

North America (incl. Mexico) 15% | South/Central America 7% | Europe 33% | Global responsibilities 23% | Asia-Pacific 15% | Central Asia 2% | Middle East 5%

Functional responsibility
(select one only)

Other 4%

General Management 6%

Sales 5%

Training & Development 3%

Commercial strategy 8%

Product/Brand marketing 7%

Marketing & digital 20%

Medical affairs 47%

For the remainder of this whitepaper, all responses will be focused on the executives that indicated they were responsible for Marketing & digital, Medical affairs, Product/Brand marketing and Commercial strategy – 194 of the 245 respondents.

These are the respondents who influence and shape customer engagement strategy and investment, and so will give a good indication of the future of customer engagement.

Geographical comparisons were not made for the purpose of data analysis, since the data was not statistically significant to provide conclusions.
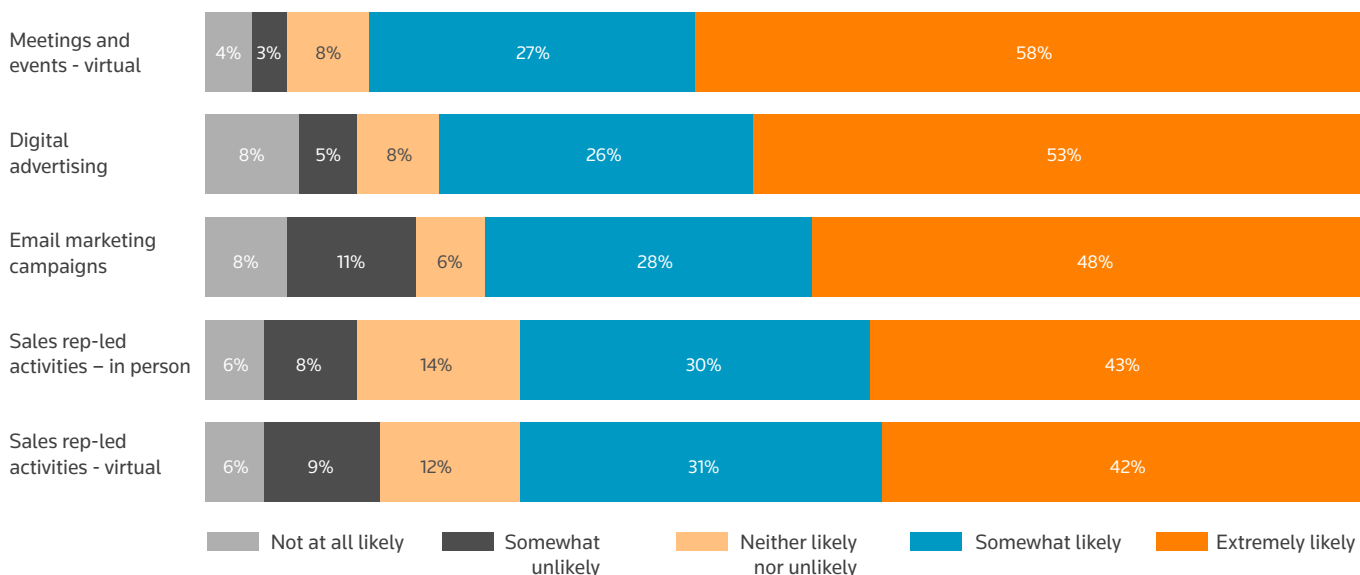
Promotional spending: Digital wins

In the promotional space, in 2022, digital channels will lead the way, with sales rep activities following close behind.
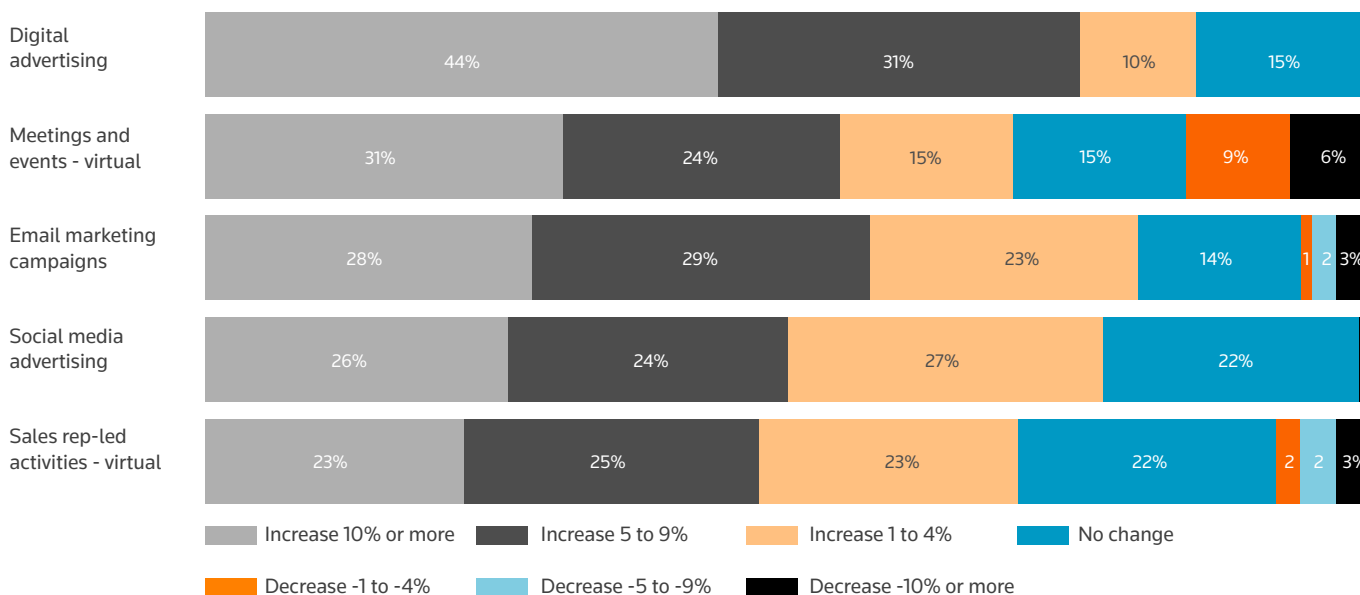
When we look beyond to 2024-2025, the majority of executives expect an increase in budget of more than 5%.

NOTE: These questions were only asked to those in marketing, commercial and product/branding, and not medical affairs.

In 2021-2022, marketing, commercial and product/branding executives will spend in the following areas:

	Not at all likely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
Meetings and events - virtual	4%	3%	8%	27%	58%
Digital advertising	8%	5%	8%	26%	53%
Email marketing campaigns	8%	11%	6%	28%	48%
Sales rep-led activities – in person	6%	8%	14%	30%	43%
Sales rep-led activities - virtual	6%	9%	12%	31%	42%

An **increase** in budget is expected in the following areas in the **next 3-4 years:**

	Increase 10% or more	Increase 5 to 9%	Increase 1 to 4%	No change	Decrease -1 to -4%	Decrease -5 to -9%	Decrease -10% or more
Digital advertising	44%	31%	10%	15%			
Meetings and events - virtual	31%	24%	15%	15%	9%		6%
Email marketing campaigns	28%	29%	23%	14%	1	2	3%
Social media advertising	26%	24%	27%	22%			1
Sales rep-led activities - virtual	23%	25%	23%	22%	2	2	3%

Promotional spending: Print vs Digital

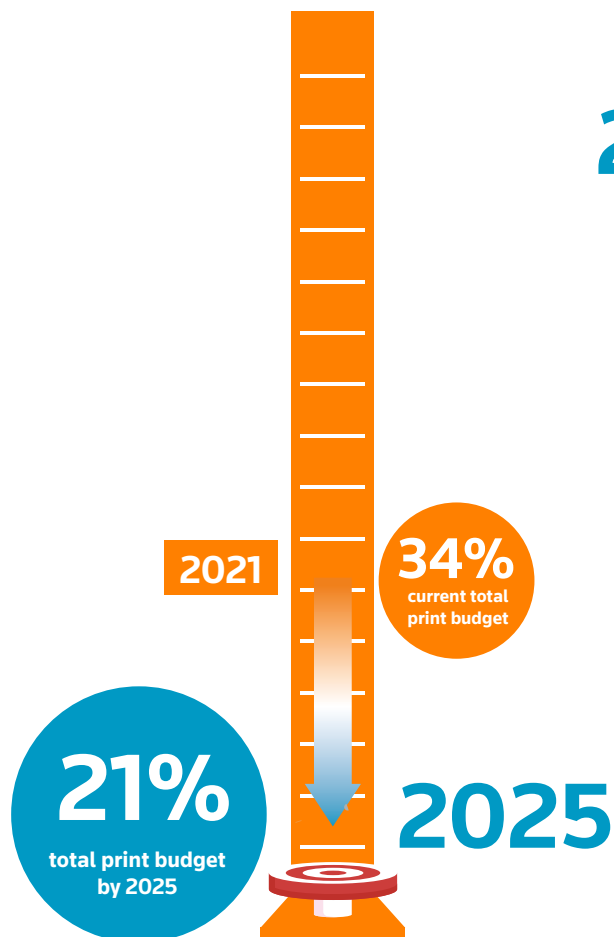There was a clear consensus amongst respondents that print advertising will see a decrease in spending in the next 3-4 years, with the majority expecting a decrease of 10% or more.

A **decrease i**n spending is expected across the board in **print advertising** in the next 3-4 years.

3%	5%	5%	20%	8%	21%	39%

Increase 10% or more	Increase 5 to 9%	Increase 1 to 4%	No change	Decrease -1 to -4%	Decrease -5 to -9%	Decrease -10% or more
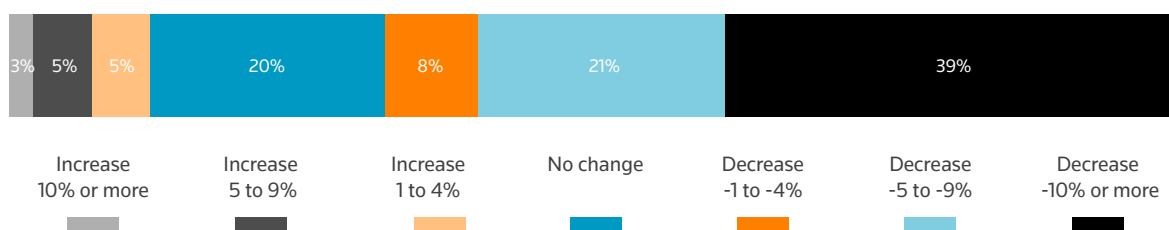
Print

Total promotional budget for print will **decrease**

2021

34%
current total print budget

21%
total print budget by 2025

2025

Digital

Total promotional budget for digital will **increase**

2025

78%
total digital budget by 2025

63%
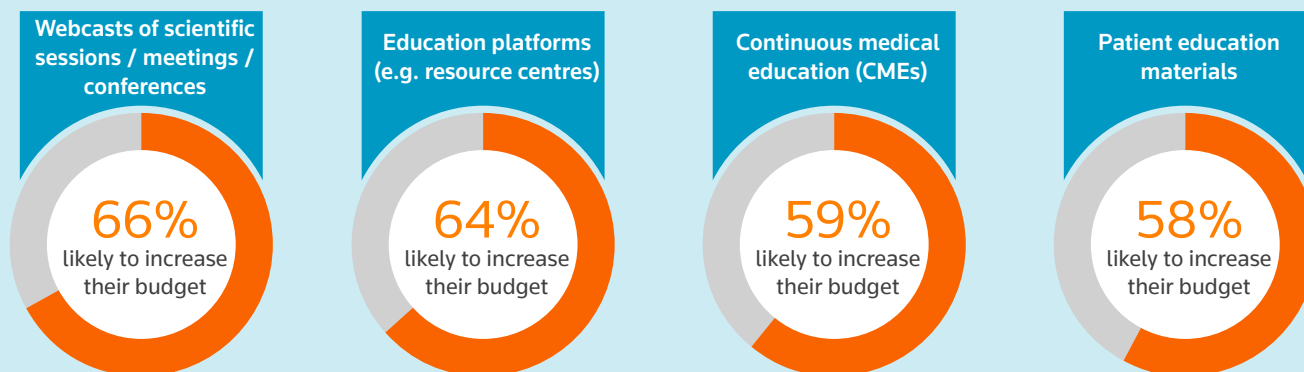current total digital budget
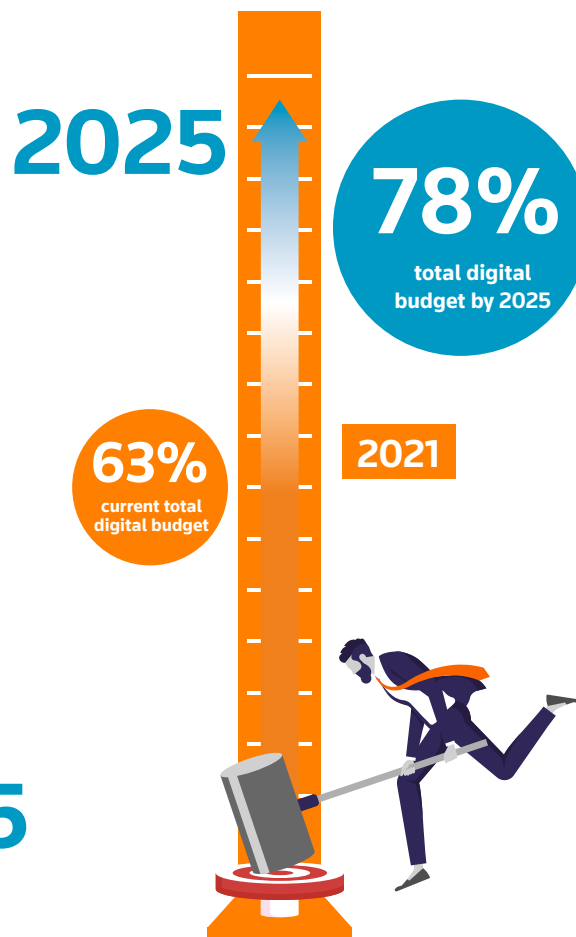
2021

Educational spending: Marketing and medical affairs

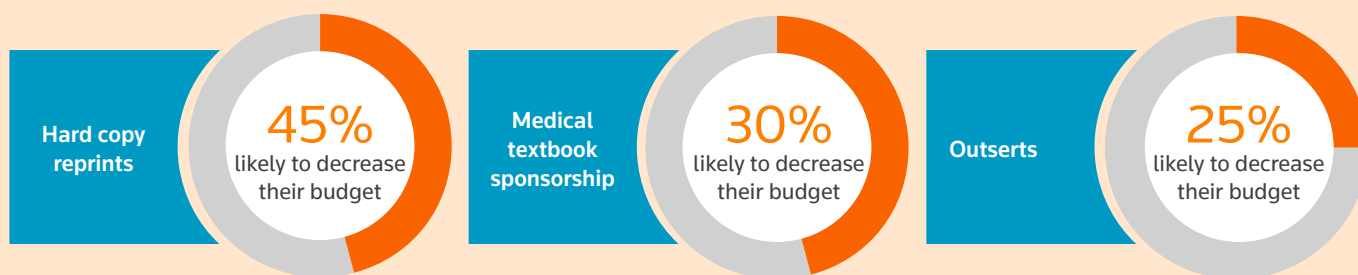The analysis below reflects the results for both marketing and medical affairs functions.

In 2021-2022 marketing and medical affairs professionals are most likely to invest in:

Webcasts of scientific sessions / meetings / conferences

74%
likely to invest

Continuous medical education (CMEs)

73%
likely to invest

Education platforms (e.g. resource centres)

61%
likely to invest

Research/data/ analytics

59%
likely to increase their budget

An **increase in budget** expected in the following areas in the next 3-4 years:

Webcasts of scientific sessions / meetings / conferences

66%
likely to increase their budget

Education platforms (e.g. resource centres)

64%
likely to increase their budget

Continuous medical education (CMEs)

59%
likely to increase their budget

Patient education materials

58%
likely to increase their budget

A **decrease in budget** expected in the following areas in the next 3-4 years:

Hard copy reprints

45%
likely to decrease their budget

Medical textbook sponsorship

30%
likely to decrease their budget
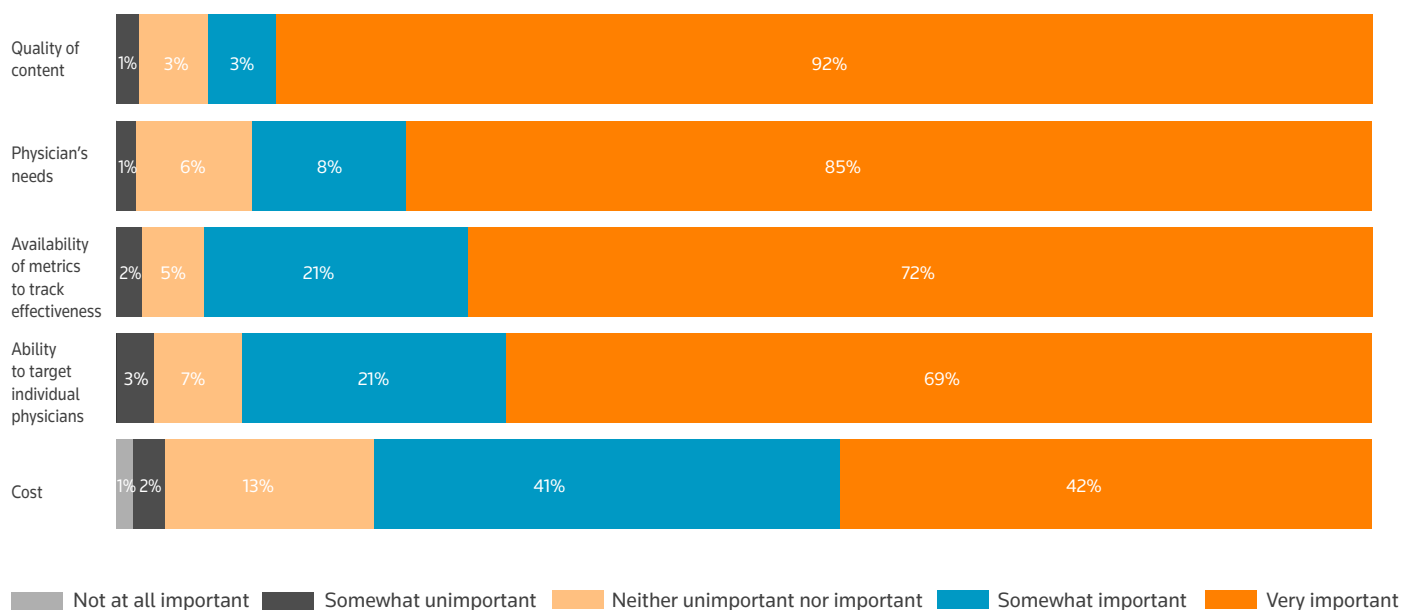
Outserts

25%
likely to decrease their budget
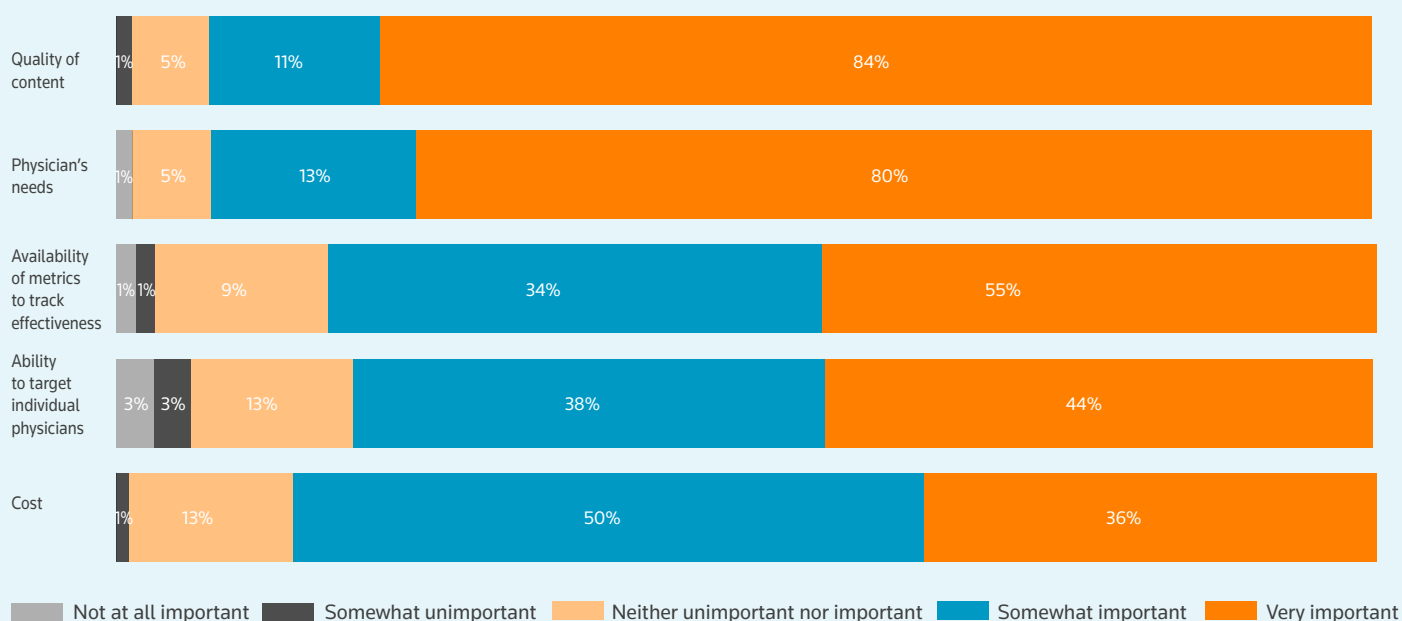
Influences on decision-making

The analysis below reflects the results for both marketing and medical affairs functions.
"Quality of content" and "Physician's needs" rank as the most important factors which influence decision-making process of promotional AND educational activities.

How important are the following factors in your decision-making process about **promotional activities?**
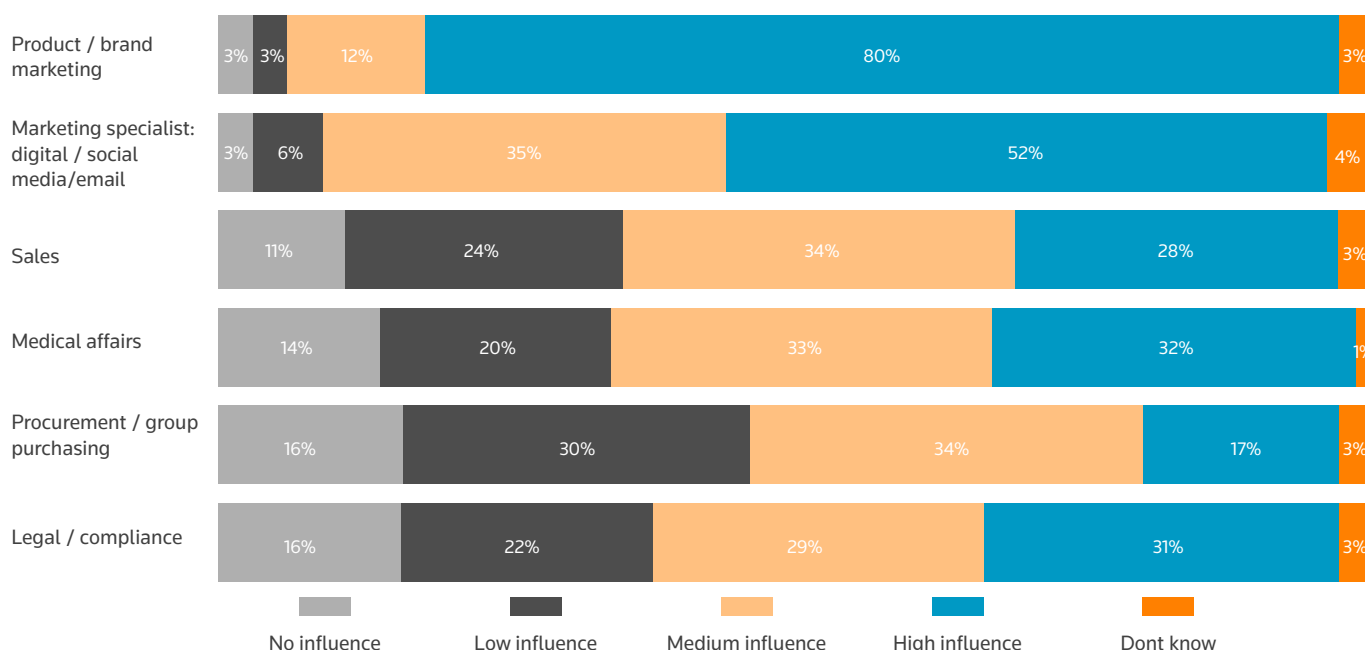
Factor	Not at all important	Somewhat unimportant	Neither unimportant nor important	Somewhat important	Very important
Quality of content		1%	3%	3%	92%
Physician's needs		1%	6%	8%	85%
Availability of metrics to track effectiveness		2%	5%	21%	72%
Ability to target individual physicians		3%	7%	21%	69%
Cost	1%	2%	13%	41%	42%

■ Not at all important ■ Somewhat unimportant ■ Neither unimportant nor important ■ Somewhat important ■ Very important

How important are the following factors in your decision-making process about **educational activities?**

Factor	Not at all important	Somewhat unimportant	Neither unimportant nor important	Somewhat important	Very important
Quality of content		1%	5%	11%	84%
Physician's needs	1%		5%	13%	80%
Availability of metrics to track effectiveness	1%	1%	9%	34%	55%
Ability to target individual physicians	3%	3%	13%	38%	44%
Cost	1%		13%	50%	36%

■ Not at all important ■ Somewhat unimportant ■ Neither unimportant nor important ■ Somewhat important ■ Very important
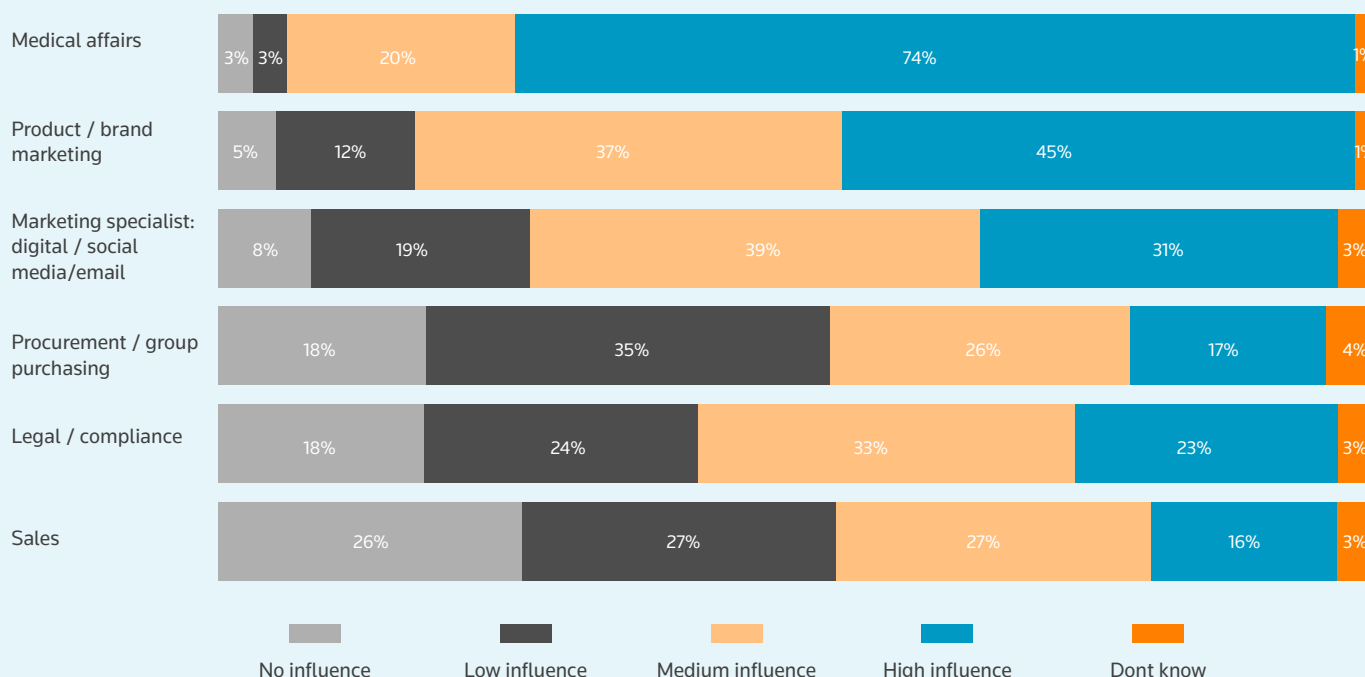
Who has the influence?

As expected, the results show that product, brand and marketing teams have a high influence on promotional spending. What's more, medical affairs has the largest influence on educational spending.

The level of influence that the following departments have in budget-related decisions for **promotional** activities:

Department	No influence	Low influence	Medium influence	High influence	Dont know
Product / brand marketing	3%	3%	12%	80%	3%
Marketing specialist: digital / social media/email	3%	6%	35%	52%	4%
Sales	11%	24%	34%	28%	3%
Medical affairs	14%	20%	33%	32%	1%
Procurement / group purchasing	16%	30%	34%	17%	3%
Legal / compliance	16%	22%	29%	31%	3%

- No influence
- Low influence
- Medium influence
- High influence
- Dont know

The level of influence that the following departments have in budget-related decisions for **educational** activities:

Department	No influence	Low influence	Medium influence	High influence	Dont know
Medical affairs	3%	3%	20%	74%	1%
Product / brand marketing	5%	12%	37%	45%	1%
Marketing specialist: digital / social media/email	8%	19%	39%	31%	3%
Procurement / group purchasing	18%	35%	26%	17%	4%
Legal / compliance	18%	24%	33%	23%	3%
Sales	26%	27%	27%	16%	3%

- No influence
- Low influence
- Medium influence
- High influence
- Dont know
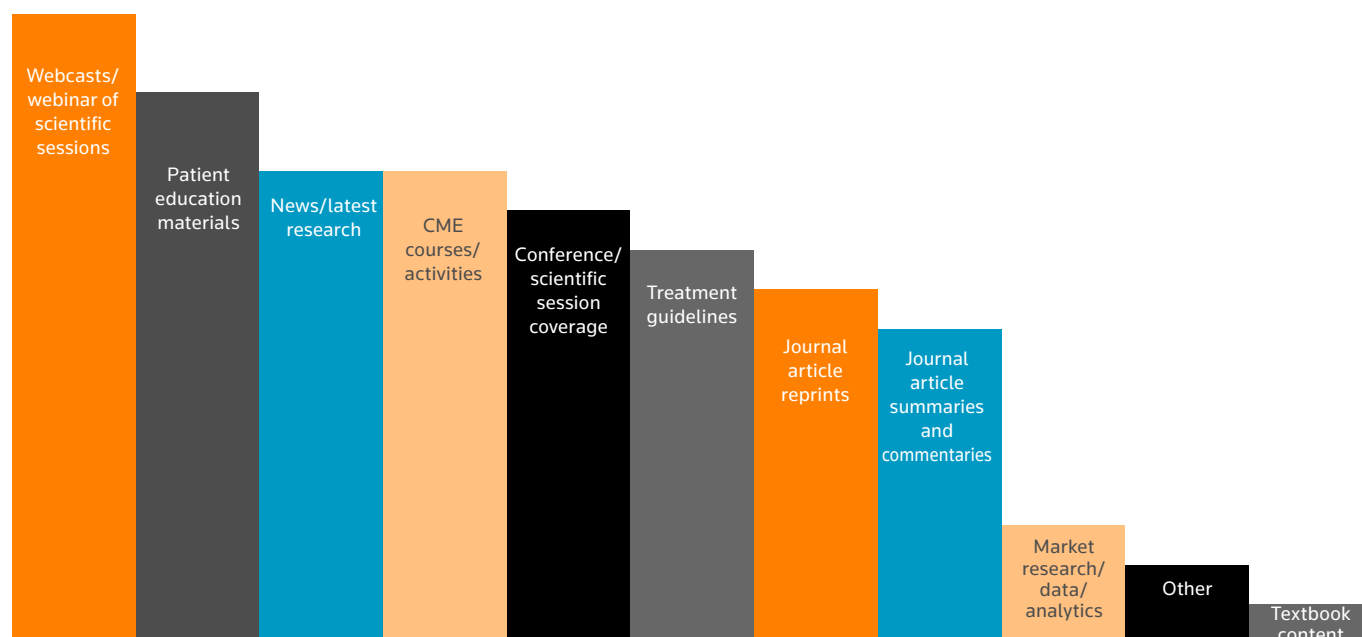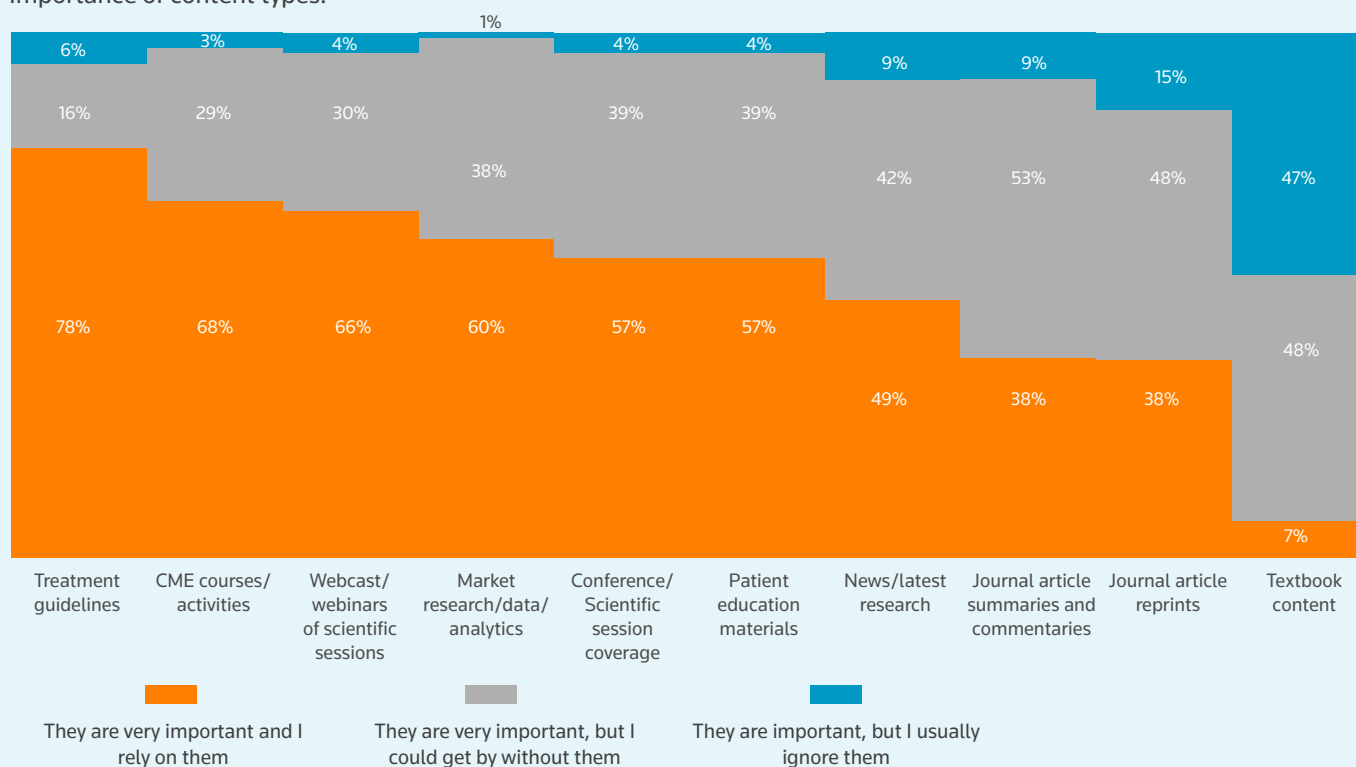
Online platforms

78% of executives have a website or online platform or portal dedicated to providing healthcare professionals with product-specific or disease-related content.

The following is a list of content that respondents include on a portal/online platform/website dedicated to providing healthcare professionals with product-specific or disease-related content.

Importance of content types:

	Treatment guidelines	CME courses/ activities	Webcast/ webinars of scientific sessions	Market research/data/ analytics	Conference/ Scientific session coverage	Patient education materials	News/latest research	Journal article summaries and commentaries	Journal article reprints	Textbook content
They are important, but I usually ignore them	6%	3%	4%	1%	4%	4%	9%	9%	15%	47%
They are very important, but I could get by without them	16%	29%	30%	38%	39%	39%	42%	53%	48%	48%
They are very important and I rely on them	78%	68%	66%	60%	57%	57%	49%	38%	38%	7%

- They are very important and I rely on them
- They are very important, but I could get by without them
- They are important, but I usually ignore them

About Reuters Events

The aim of the healthcare division at Reuters Events is to make healthcare more open and valued. More open so that the strongest ideas and insights are brought to the fore in a transparent, trustworthy manner. More valued by having an authentic approach to building products and services that matter to patients. To do this, Reuters Events provides a hub for senior-level healthcare executives, patient groups and other health stakeholders to exchange ideas and observe shifting trends and practices. We actively respond to the aims and interests of our audience, so please get in touch.