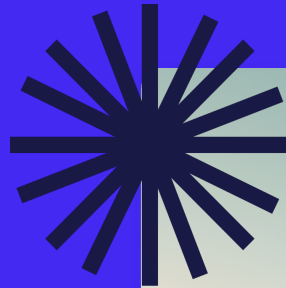


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The Podcast Landscape

United States - 2023

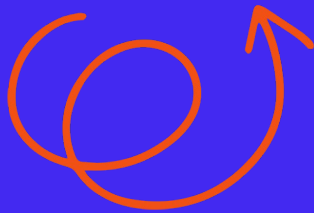


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Churn, Barriers to Adoption, and Opportunities for Growth

AUGUST 2023



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The Podcast Landscape - Highlights

- Americans are positive about podcasting – and podcasters
- To grow the next generation of listeners, focus on screen-free entertainment and companionship
- Podcasters need to be more strategic about “word of mouth”
- Word of mouth remains the top source of discovery, but YouTube and paid ads are vital for growth
- Brands leverage listener passion for podcasts, but podcasts can leverage listener passion for brands
- The leading cause for listener churn is perceived time constraints – which podcasting can turn into a strength
- Listeners also leave podcasts when they sense a decline in quality – loyalty is rarely unconditional
- The next new audience for podcasting is a group called The Persuadables – and they are ready to listen

Methodology:

- In May/June 2023, Sounds Profitable partnered with **Signal Hill Insights** to field an online study of 2400 Americans ages 18+
- The sample was weighted to the most recent census data to be representative of the US population
- Respondents were asked a variety of questions about podcasting, including whether they listen, how often, and why they do or do not listen to podcasts
- Topics also included churn, what leads to decreases in listening over time, and general perceptions of the medium and its creators

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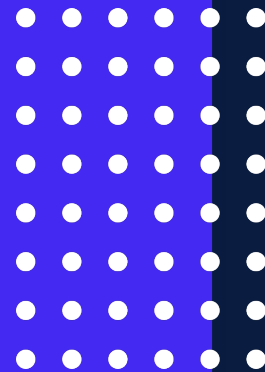
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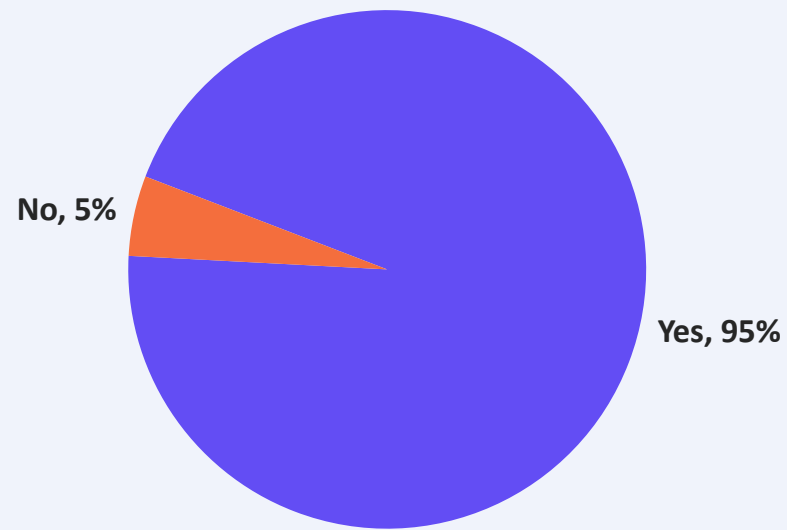
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The Podcast Landscape

Perceptions of Podcasting



Are you familiar with the term, 'podcast'?



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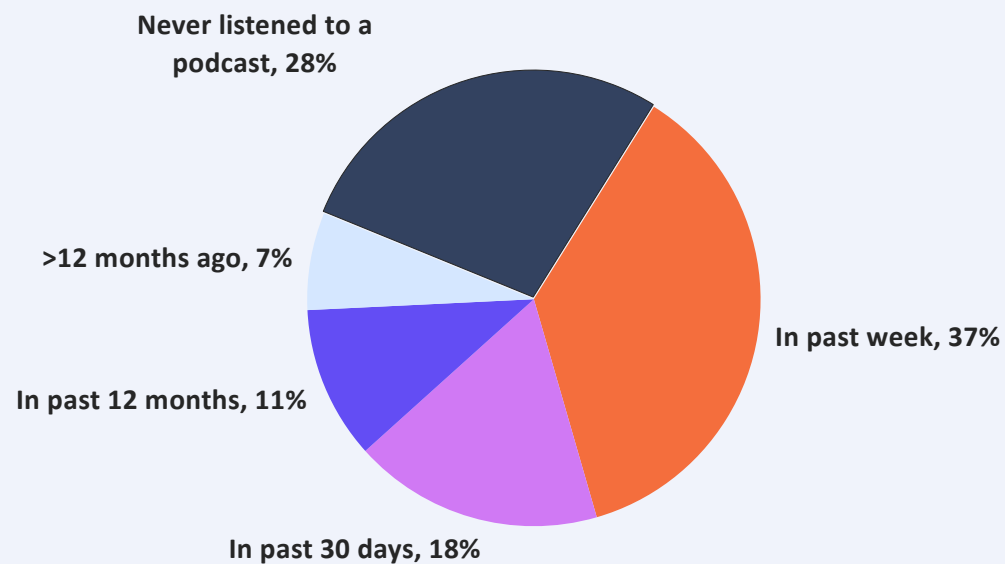
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When was the last time, if ever, you listened to a podcast?



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Podcasting is positively perceived

Americans 18+ are generally quite

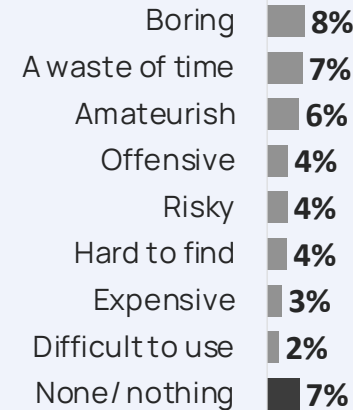
- positive about podcasts – positives significantly outweigh negatives



Think about podcasts as a medium. Which words or phrases below would you use to describe podcasts, in general?



(cont'd)... less than 10%:



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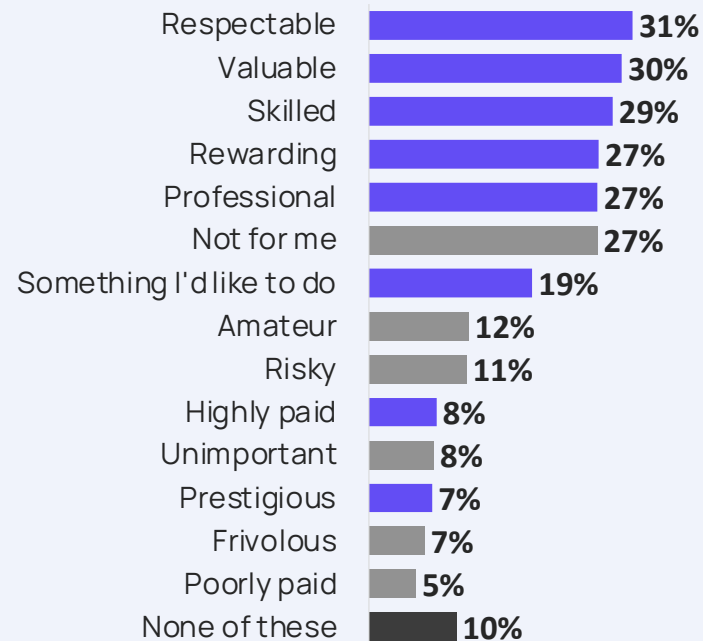
Podcasting is positively perceived

Americans 18+ are generally quite positive about podcasts – positives significantly outweigh negatives

Podcasters are also regarded positively. In fact, 19% of Americans 18+ say they'd like to do a podcast



Think about podcasters and podcasting as a job. Which words or phrases below would you use to describe the work of podcasting, in general?



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Podcasting is positively perceived

Americans 18+ are generally quite positive about podcasts – positives significantly outweigh negatives

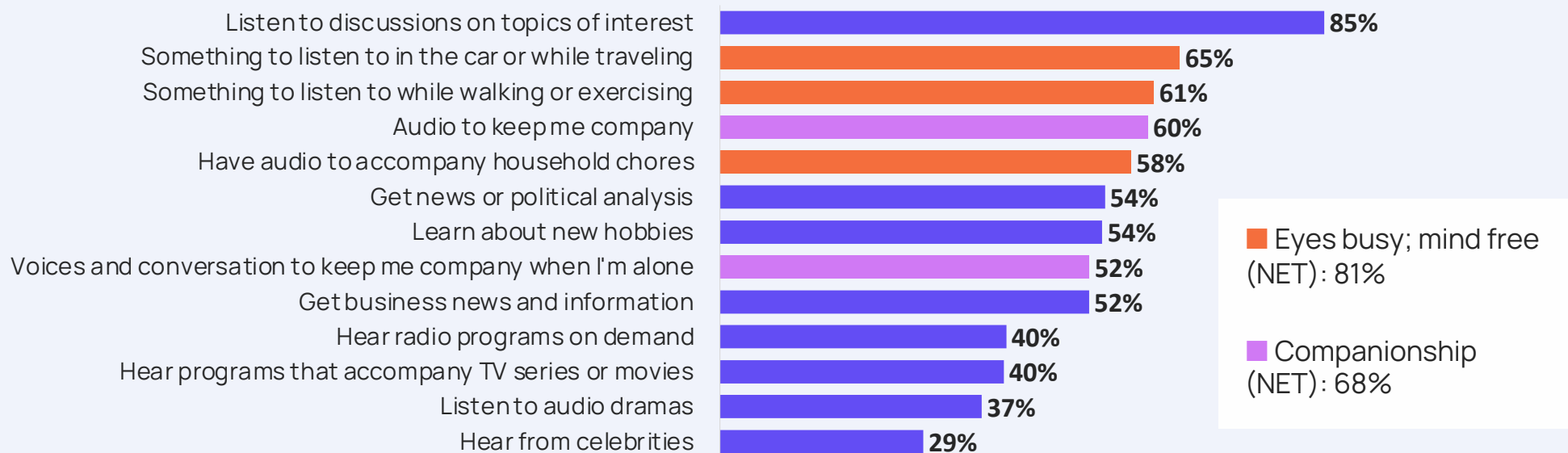
Podcasters are also regarded positively. In fact, 19% of Americans 18+ say they'd like to do a podcast

Listeners come to podcasts for interesting topics, companionship, and screen-free entertainment



Looking at the following benefits associated with podcasts, how important is each benefit to you?

% "Very" or "Somewhat" important



Base: ever listened to a podcast

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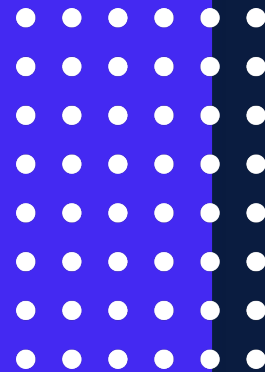
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The Podcast Landscape

Discovery



Personal recommendations continue to drive **podcast discovery**

55% of podcast listeners say that

- people in their social circle make podcast recommendations to them



Do people in your social circle ever recommend podcasts to you?

People in social circle listen to podcasts



Do you ever recommend podcasts to people in your social circle?

Ever listened to podcasts



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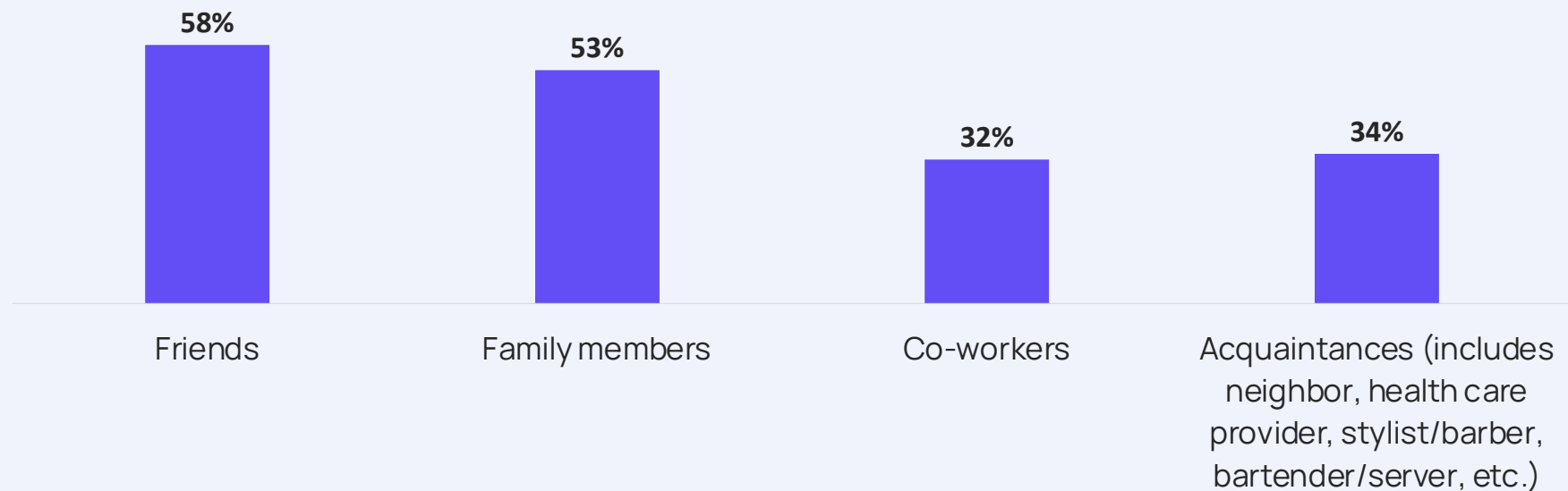
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Do any of the following people in your social circle listen to podcasts?



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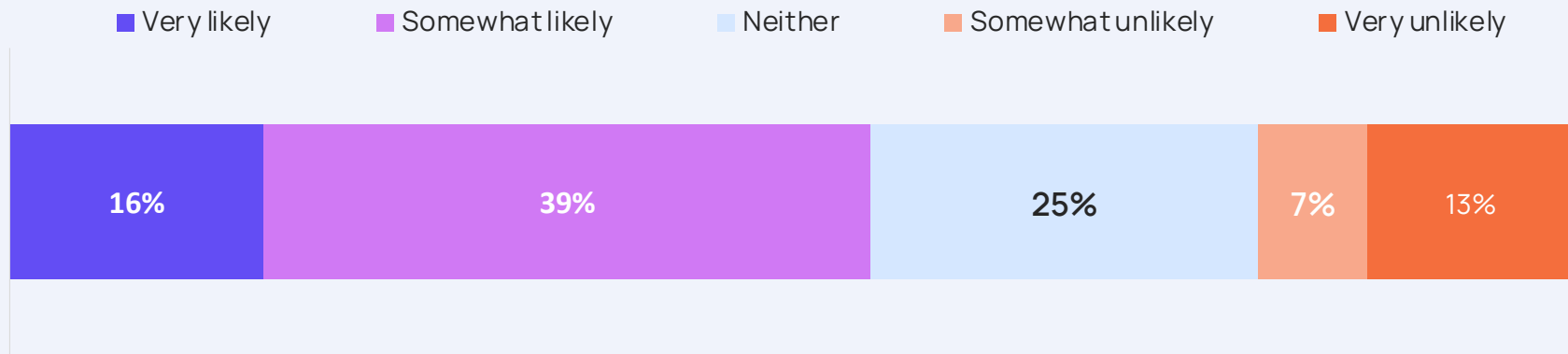
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How likely are you to listen to a podcast recommended by someone in your social circle?



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Why would you listen to a podcast recommended by someone in your social circle?



Base: Likely to listen to a podcast recommended by social circle

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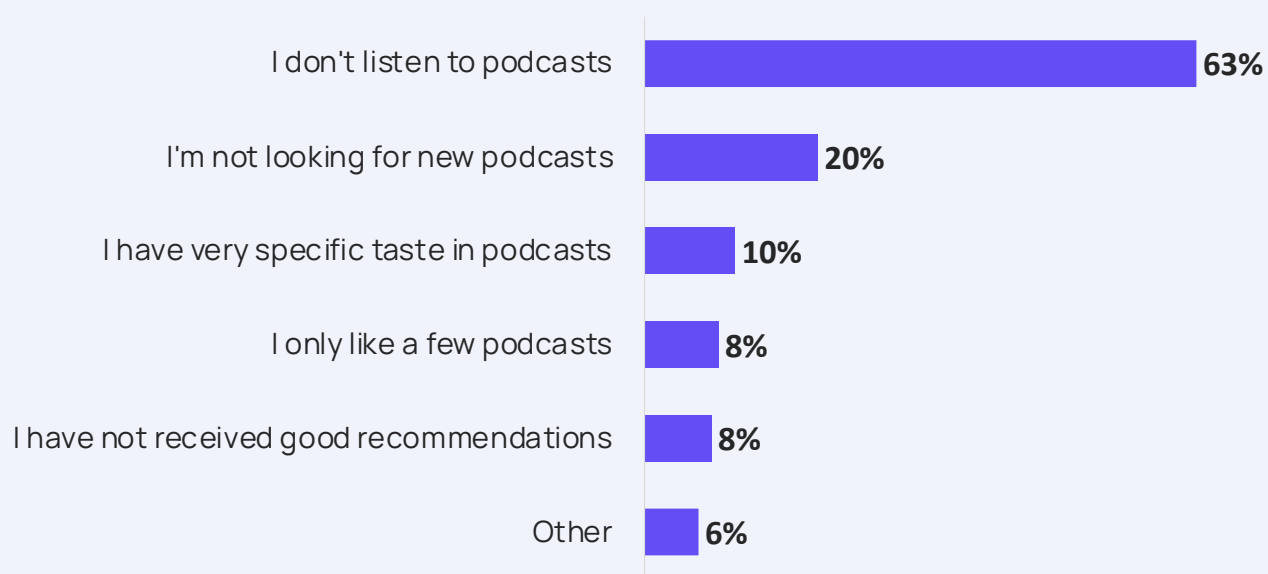
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Why are you unlikely to listen to a podcast recommended by someone in your social circle?



Base: Unlikely to listen to a podcast recommended by social circle

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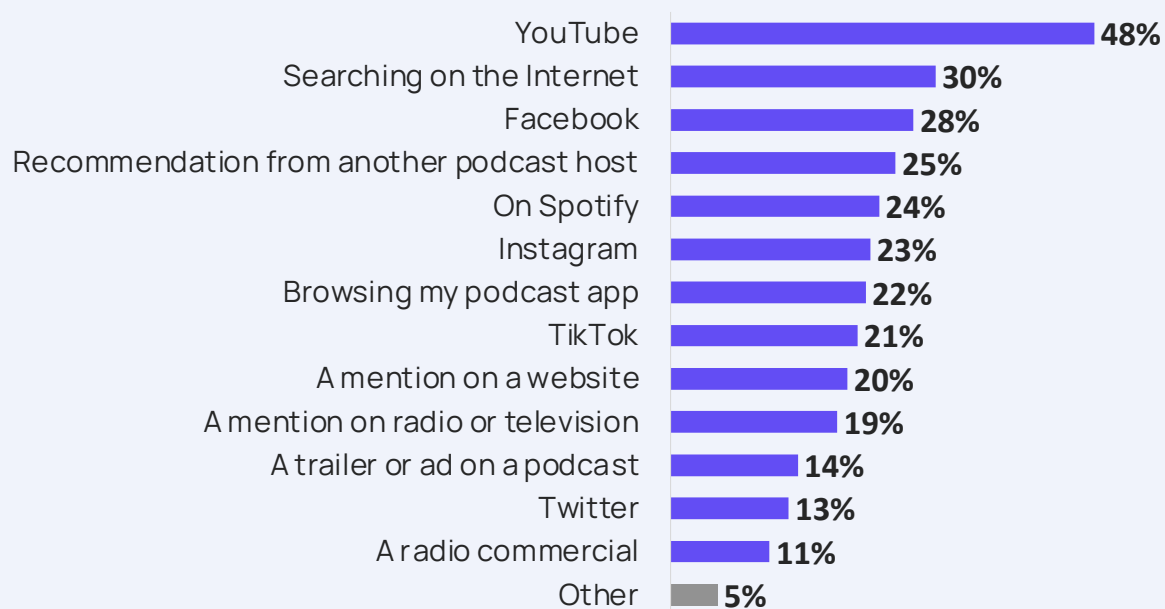
Personal recommendations continue to drive **podcast discovery**

55% of podcast listeners say that people in their social circle make podcast recommendations to them

Whether your podcast is on YouTube or not, podcasters cannot ignore the channel for discovery



Aside from personal recommendations, which of the following are ways you find your podcasts?



Base: Ever listened to a podcast

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Personal recommendations continue to drive **podcast discovery**

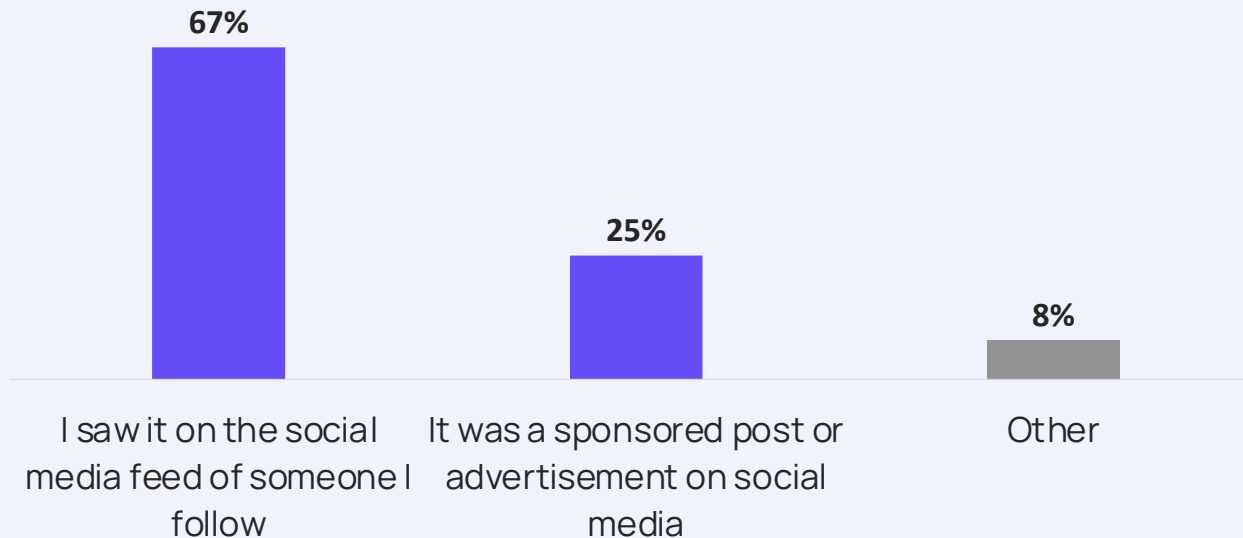
55% of podcast listeners say that people in their social circle make podcast recommendations to them

Whether your podcast is on YouTube or not, podcasters cannot ignore the channel for discovery

While most social discovery is earned/organic, the power of paid advertising remains apparent



Types of social media posts that drive discovery



Base: Learned about favorite podcast from Tiktok, Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook

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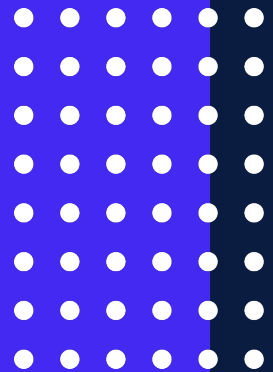
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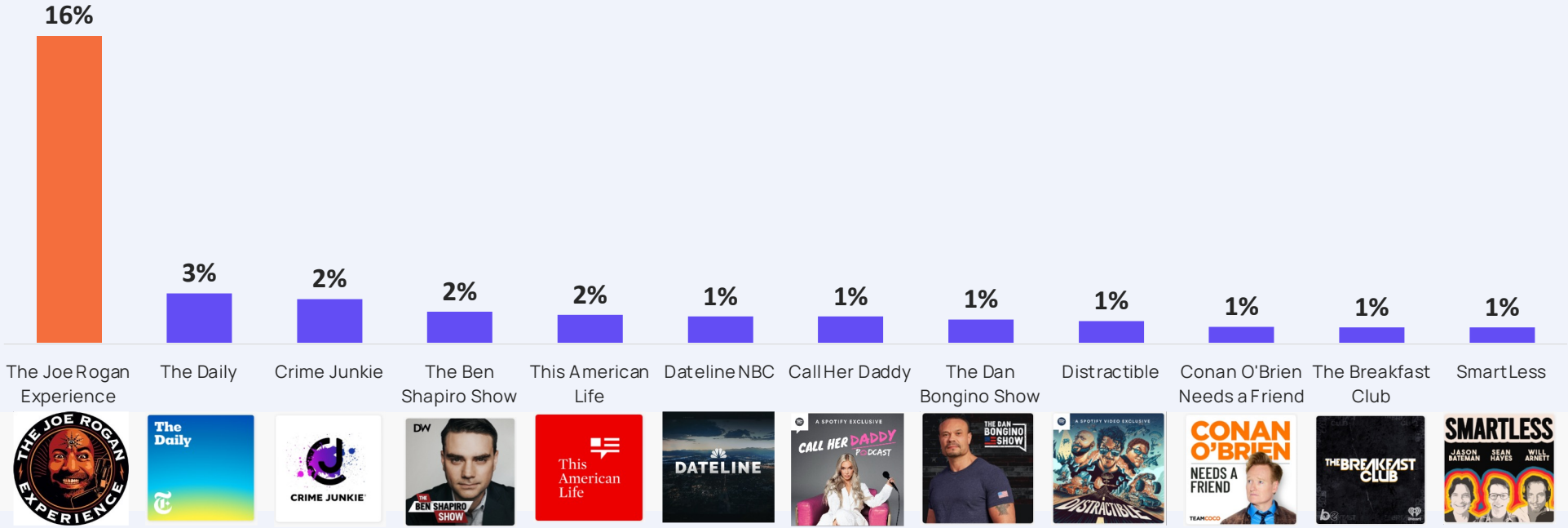
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The Podcast Landscape

Content



Top 12 'Favorite' Podcasts



Base: Ever listened to a podcast

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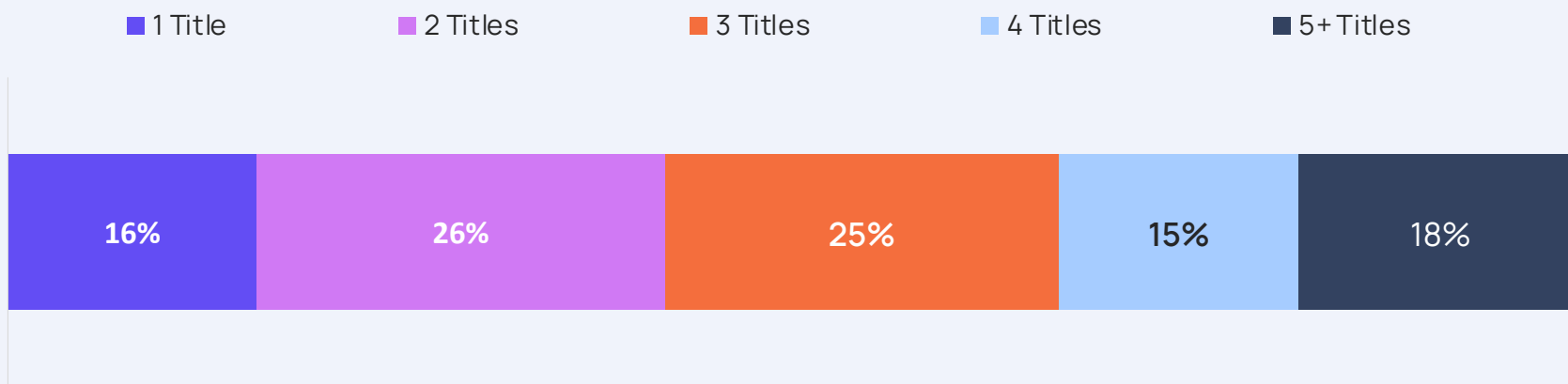
Consistency is key, though limited series listeners are **loyal**

Most listeners consume over three

- different titles per week, favoring ongoing podcasts, published regularly



Thinking about the podcasts that you follow, how many different titles do you listen to regularly?



Base: Listened to a podcast in the last month

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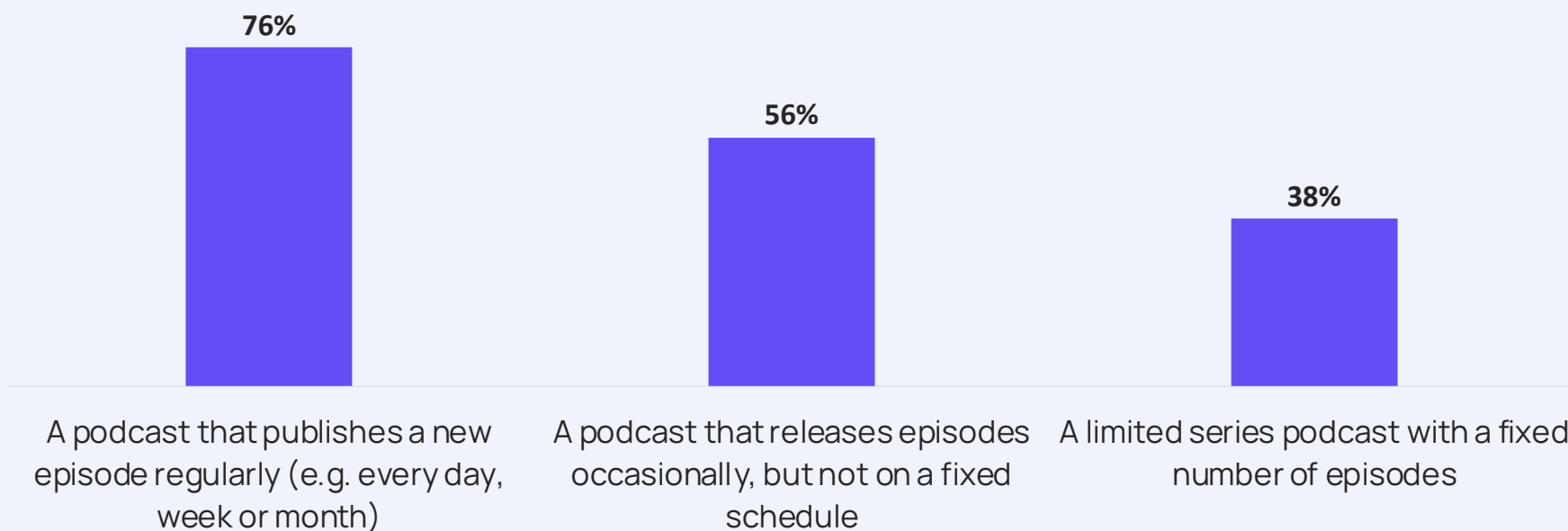
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Do you currently listen to any of the following podcast types?



Base: Listened to a podcast in the last year

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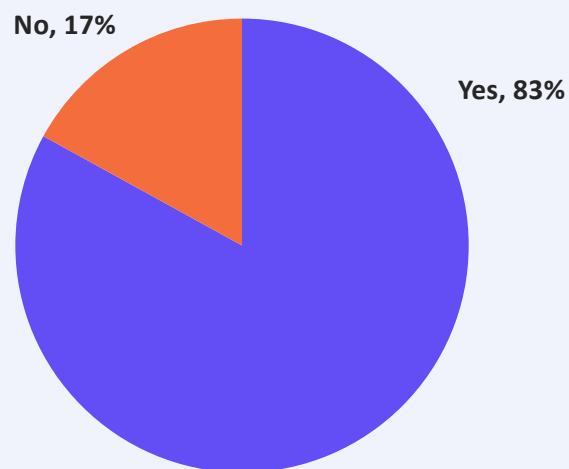
Consistency is key, though limited series listeners are **loyal**

Most listeners consume over three different titles per week, favoring ongoing podcasts, published regularly

32% of podcast listeners identify as "serial" limited series fans – seeking a new one when the last is done



When you finish a limited series, do you look for another podcast to listen to?



Base: Listened to a limited series podcast in the last year

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Most listeners consume over three different titles per week, favoring ongoing podcasts, published regularly

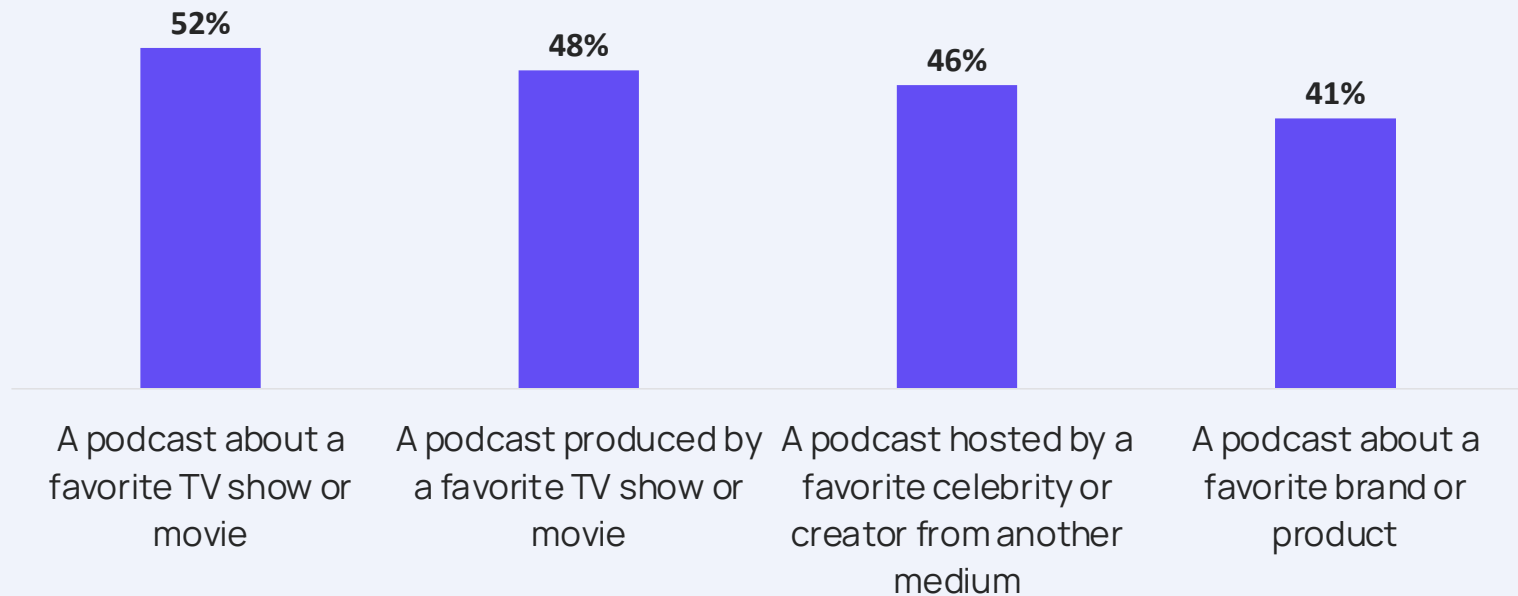
32% of podcast listeners identify as "serial" limited series fans – seeking a new one when the last is done

Podcast listeners are almost as likely to consider listening to branded content as a celebrity show



For each type of podcast, how likely would you be to listen?

% "Very" or "Somewhat" likely



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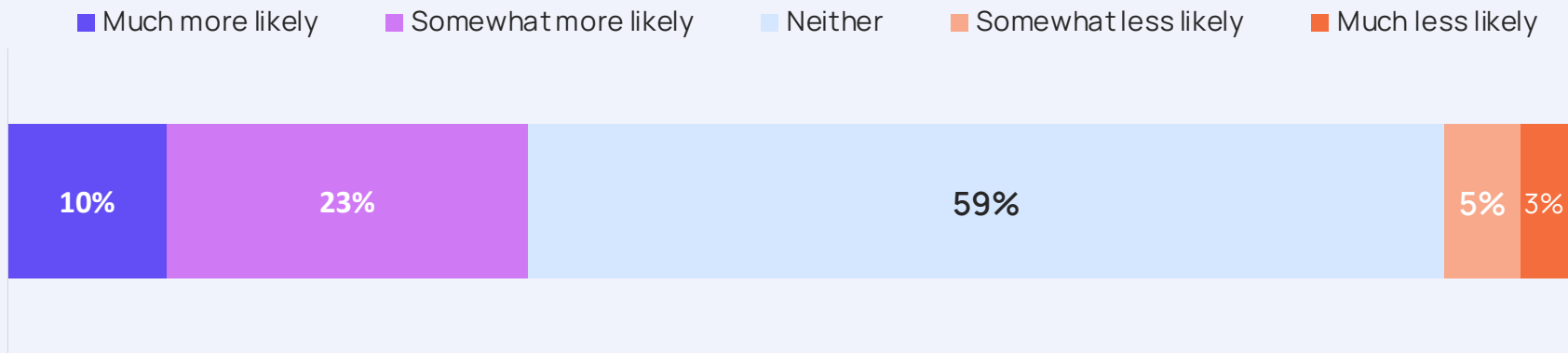
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Imagine you are interested in a podcast and you learn it is produced by a company that offers products/services to consumers or businesses. In general, does a company's involvement make you more or less likely to listen to it?



Base: Ever listened to a podcast

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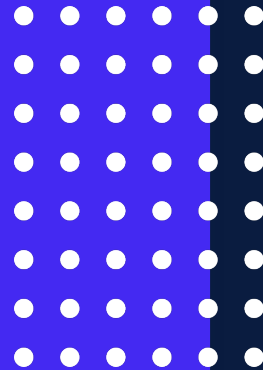
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The Podcast Landscape

Churn

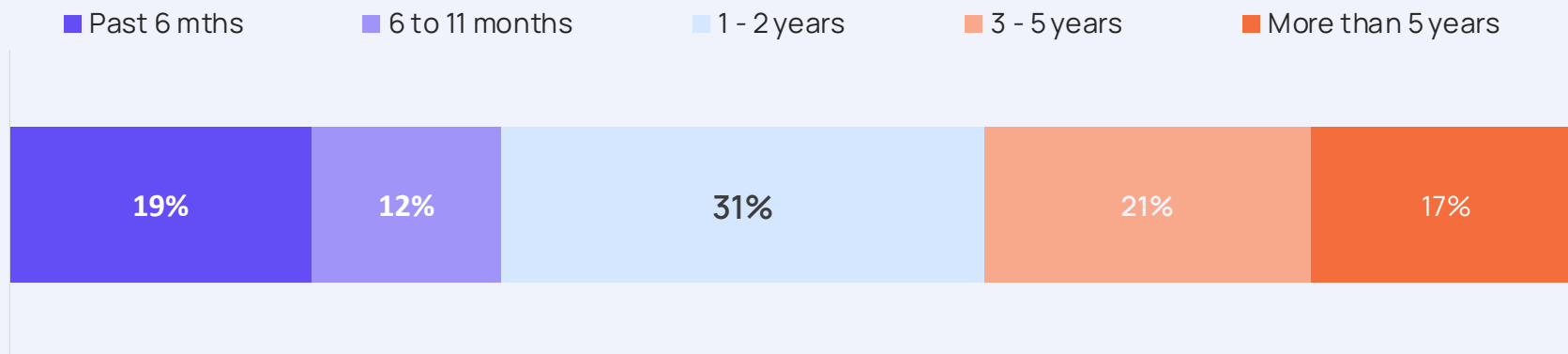


Leading cause for **podcast** listener churn is a **huge** opportunity

The % of new listeners is high every year
relative to overall audience growth –
which implies listener churn



How long have you been listening to podcasts, in general?



Base: Ever listened to a podcast

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Thinking of the past week, how much time would you say you spent listening to podcasts?



Base: Listened to a podcast in the last week

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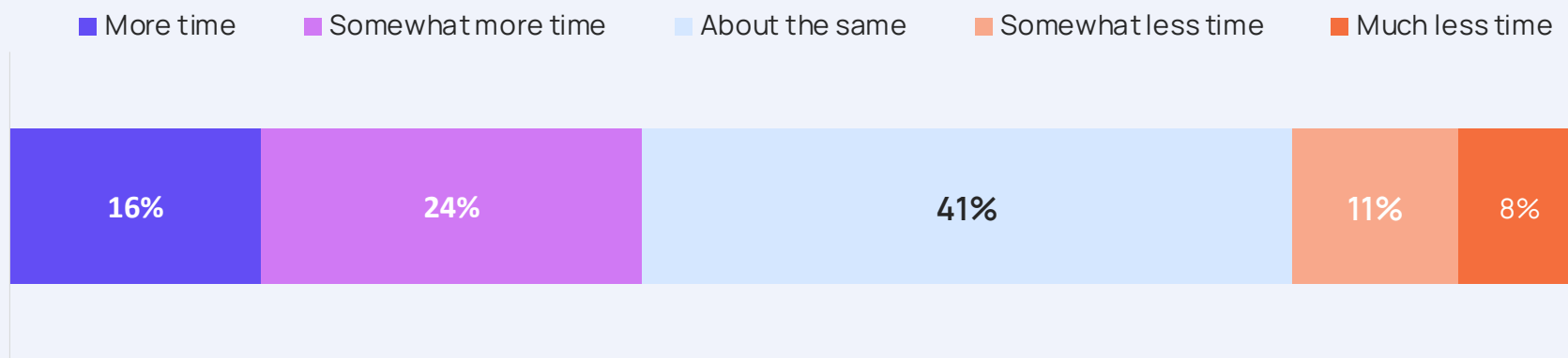
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Thinking back to one year ago, do you spend more or less time listening to podcasts today than you did then?



Base: Listened to a podcast in the last year

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Leading cause for **podcast** listener churn is a **huge** opportunity

The % of new listeners is high every year relative to overall audience growth – which implies listener churn

“I don’t have enough time” may be the reason *voiced*, but podcasts are a way to “find time” for the busy



Why haven't you listened to podcasts recently?



Base: Last listened to podcasts more than a month ago

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Reasons for not listening recently – Time Constraints

Quotes from lapsed listeners

- I am currently on vacation and don't have the opportunity to listen.
- I have less free time to listen to podcasts.
- I'm working more, which leaves me with less time to listen to podcasts.
- More busy now compared to a year ago.
- I have more things going on in my life. Less time for things.

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Reasons for not listening recently – Work and Commuting

Quotes from lapsed listeners

- Commute time changed, so less time in the car, which is primarily where I would listen.
- The main time I listen to them was on my commute to work, which was about an hour. Now, it has turned into a 15-minute drive.
- I began working, so I don't have as much time to sit down and listen
- Now I have a job that requires me to answer phone calls and speak to others on a regular basis

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Reasons for not listening recently – Life Changes

Quotes from lapsed listeners

- My life has been busier than last year during the pandemic.
- I can get out and do more things now than I could a year ago, mostly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- I started college and got busy with schoolwork, and had to focus.
- I recently relocated to a state where I have family
- Got married. Lol

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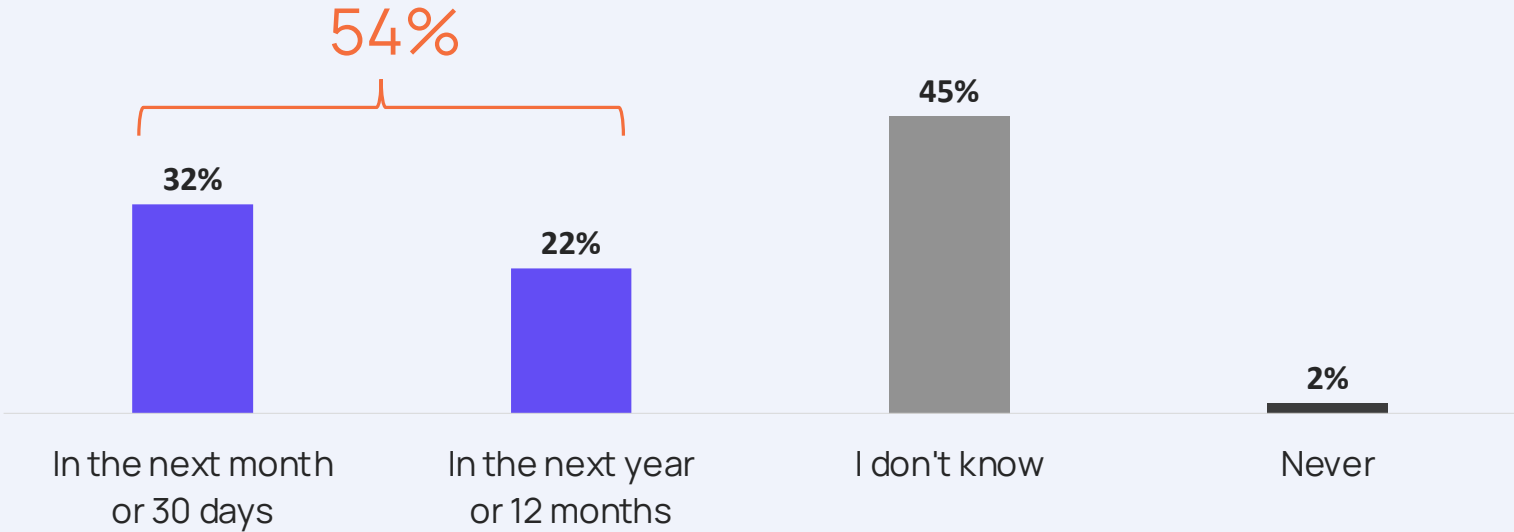
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When do you think you will listen to podcasts again?



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Base: Last listened to podcasts more than a month ago

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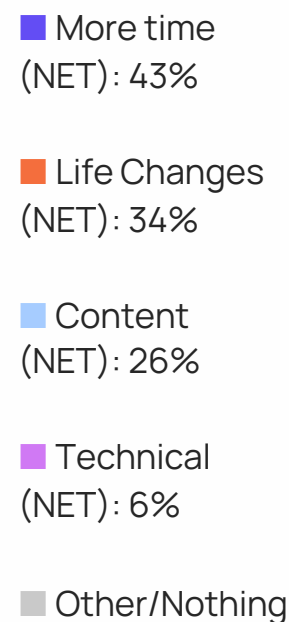
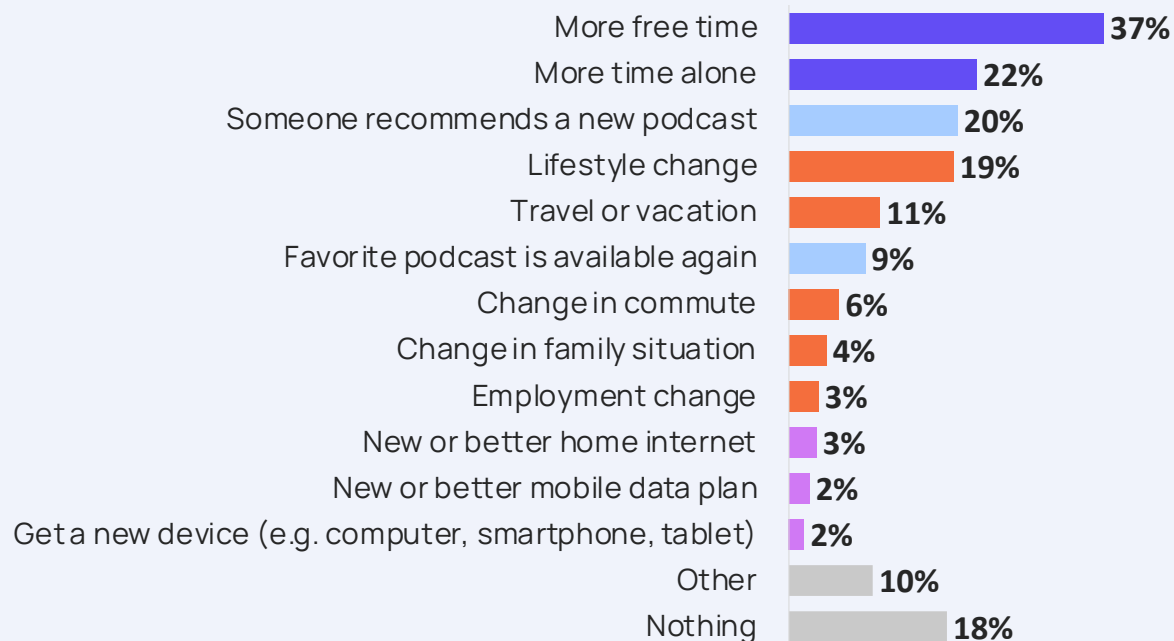
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What reasons would cause you to listen to podcasts again?



Base: Ever listened to podcasts and don't know or will never listen again

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Leading cause for **podcast** listener churn is a **huge** opportunity

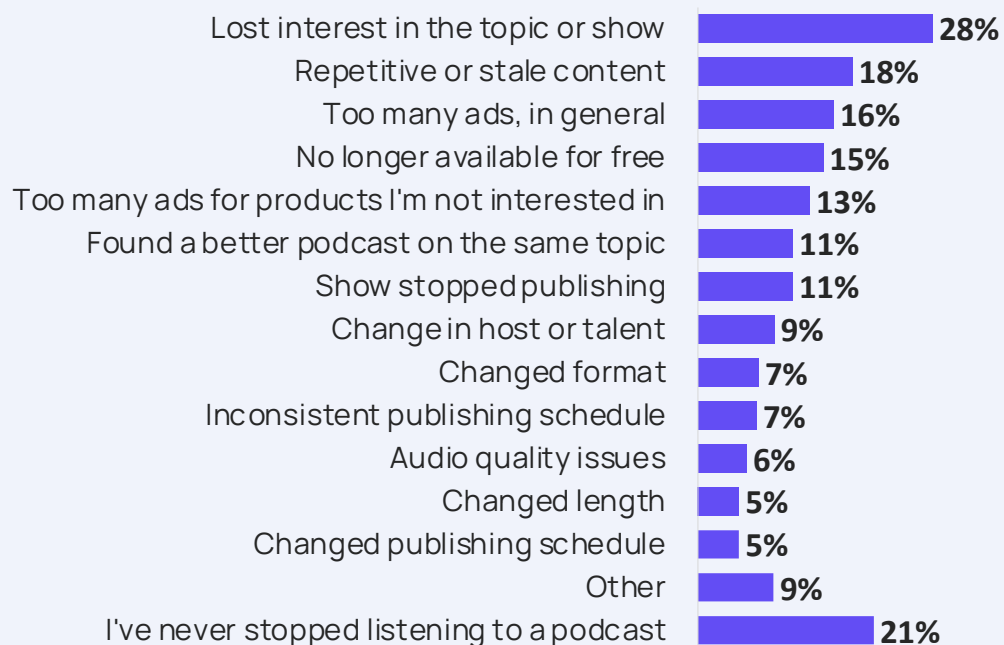
The % of new listeners is high every year relative to overall audience growth – which implies listener churn

“I don’t have enough time” may be the reason *voiced*, but podcasts are a way to “find time” for the busy

Podcasters also need to focus on maintaining a consistent level of quality as listeners do notice declines



Think of a podcast that used to be part of your regular listening routine, but you stopped listening. Why did you stop listening?



Base: Ever listened to a podcast

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Reasons for not listening recently – Quality

Quotes from lapsed listeners

- They started having bad shows that didn't make any sense.
- I used to listen to a single series of podcasts about health and nutrition, but the episodes all started to sound the same. I didn't feel like I was getting the same value from them anymore, so I stopped listening.
- Some things they talk about just don't interest me anymore.
- They became less relevant to me.
- The podcast was very interesting at first when it first came out...

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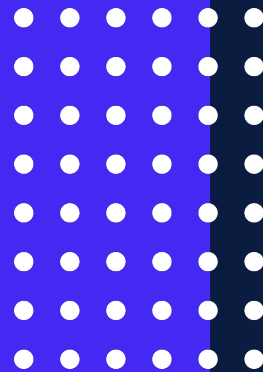
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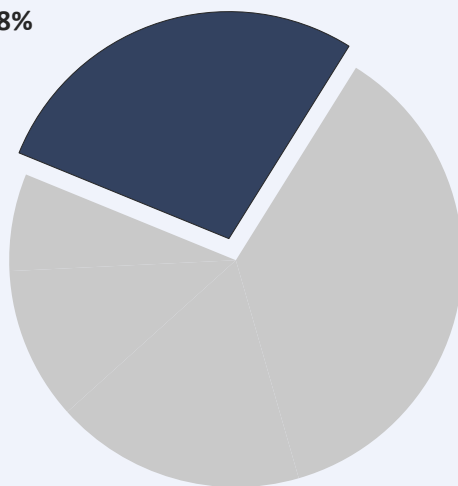
The Podcast Landscape

The Non-Listener



When was the last time, if ever, you listened to a podcast?

Never listened to a
podcast, 28%



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Why haven't you listened to a podcast?



Base: Have never listened to a podcast

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The following are benefits often associated with podcasts. How interesting is each benefit?

% "Very" or "Somewhat" Interesting



■ Eyes busy; mind free
 (NET): 36%

■ Companionship
 (NET): 23%

Base: Have never listened to a podcast

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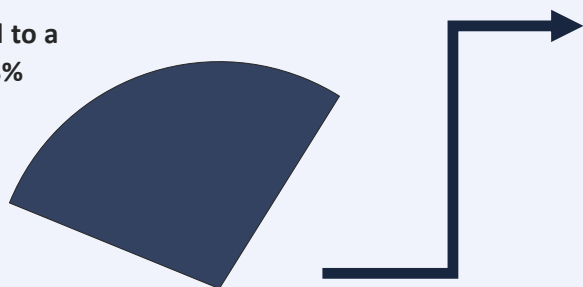
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When was the last time, if ever, you listened to a podcast?

Never listened to a
podcast, 28%



“The Unreachables”
(10% of non-listeners)

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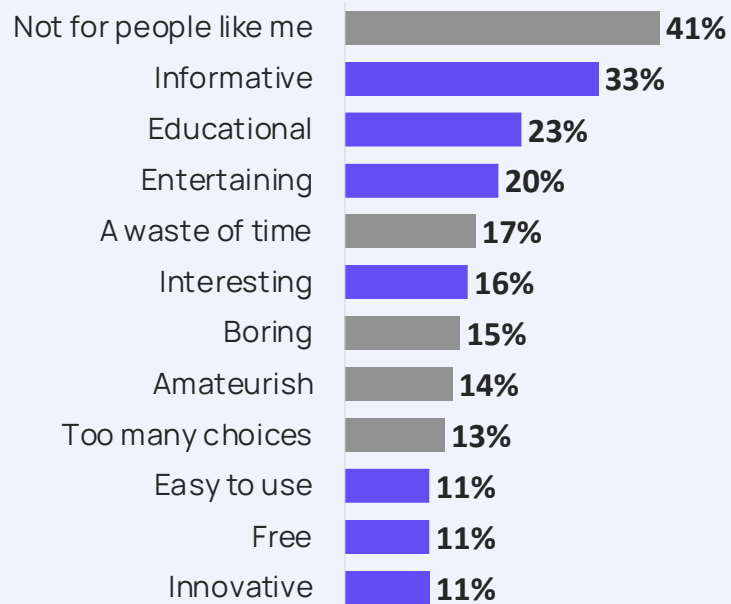
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Think about podcasts as a medium. Which words or phrases below would you use to describe podcasts, in general?

“The Unreachables” = 10% of non-listeners



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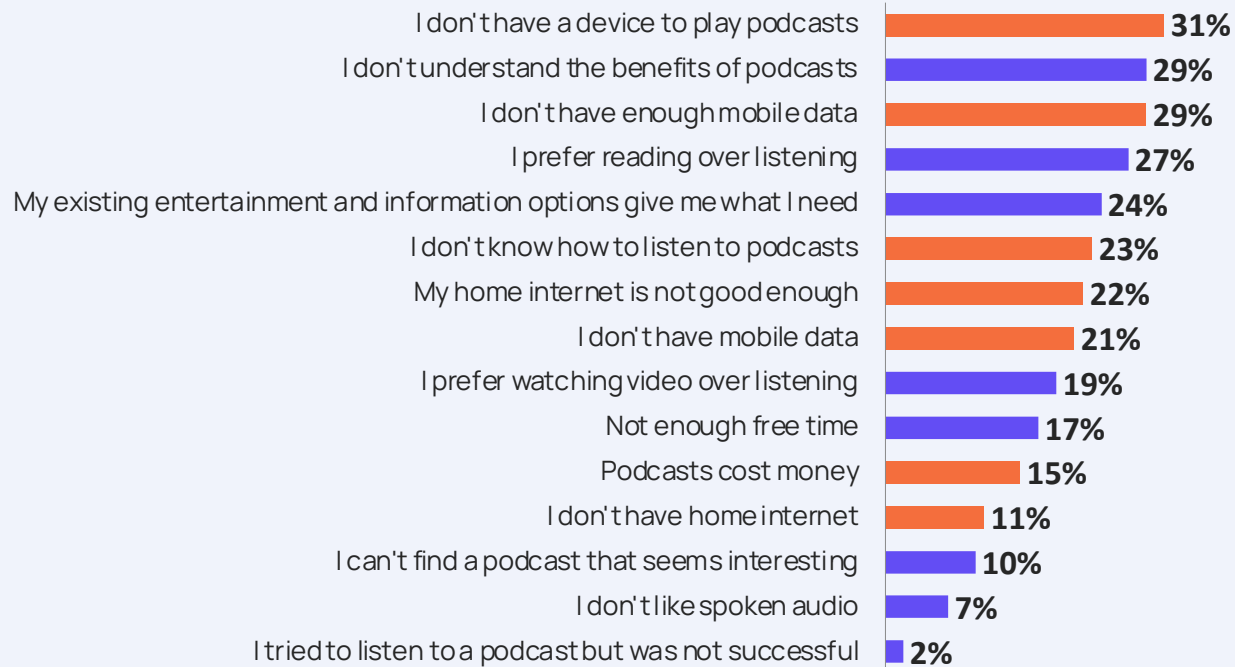
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Why haven't you listened to a podcast?

"The Unreachables" – 10% of non-listeners



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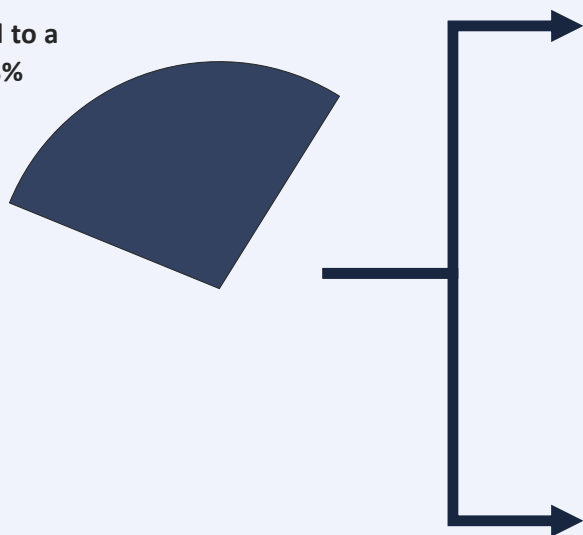
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When was the last time, if ever, you listened to a podcast?

Never listened to a podcast, 28%



“The Unreachables”
(10% of non-listeners)

“The Resisters”
(56% of non-listeners)

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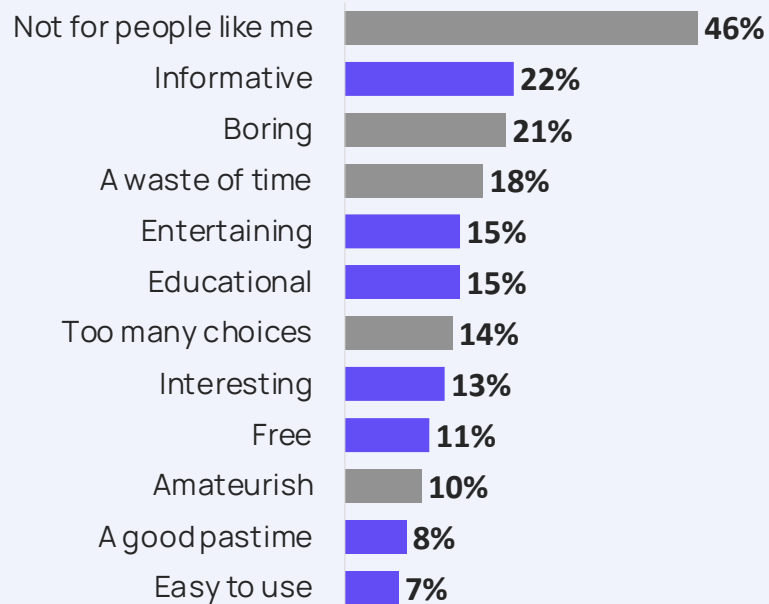
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Think about podcasts as a medium. Which words or phrases below would you use to describe podcasts, in general?

“The Resisters” – 56% of non-listeners



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Why haven't you listened to a podcast?

"The Resisters" – 56% of non-listeners



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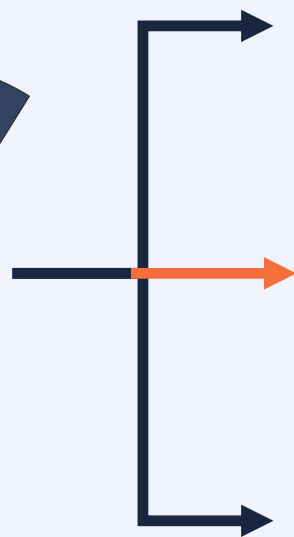
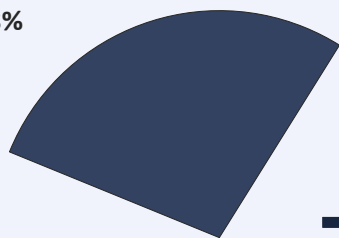
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When was the last time, if ever, you listened to a podcast?

Never listened to a podcast, 28%



“The Unreachables”
(10% of non-listeners)

“The Persuadables”
(34% of non-listeners)

“The Resisters”
(56% of non-listeners)

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Meet “The Persuadables” – the next new audience for podcasts

The Persuadables are not resistant to spoken word audio – in fact, they are interested but lack info

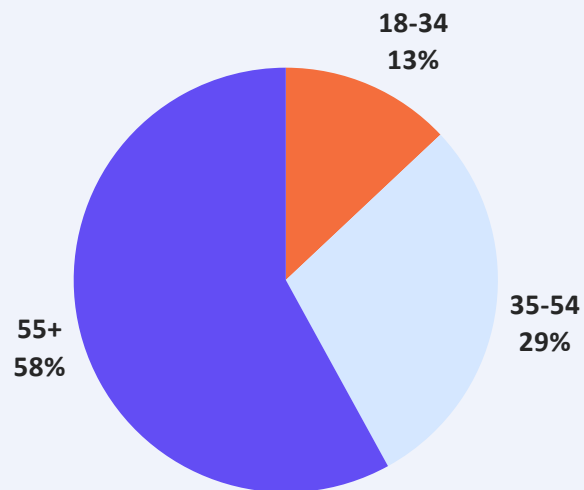
Persuadables want passive listening and companionship while they do other things

Like podcast listeners in general, “Persuadables” are receptive to branded content for favorite products

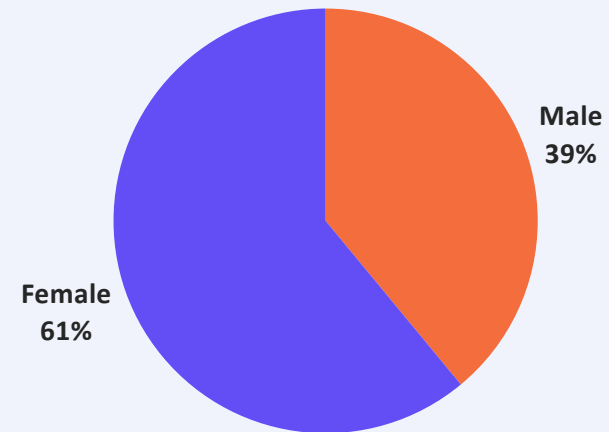


“The Persuadables”

Age



Gender



“The Persuadables” is a segment comprising 34% of non-listeners to podcasts or nearly 10% of US Adults 18+

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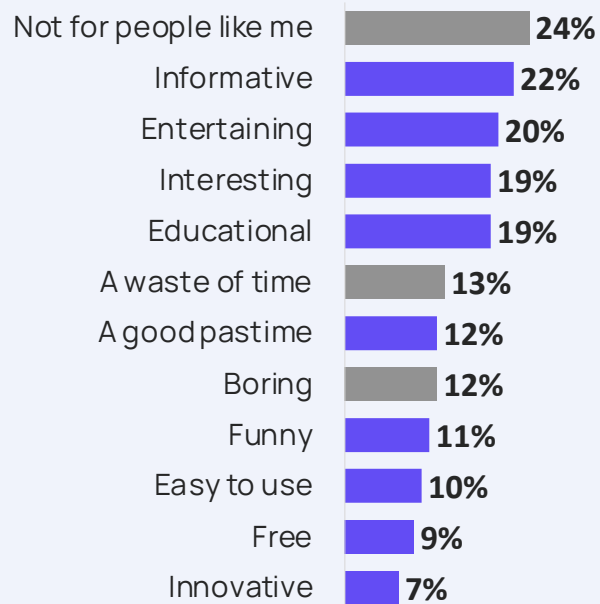
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Think about podcasts as a medium. Which words or phrases below would you use to describe podcasts, in general?

“The Persuadables” – 34% of non-listeners



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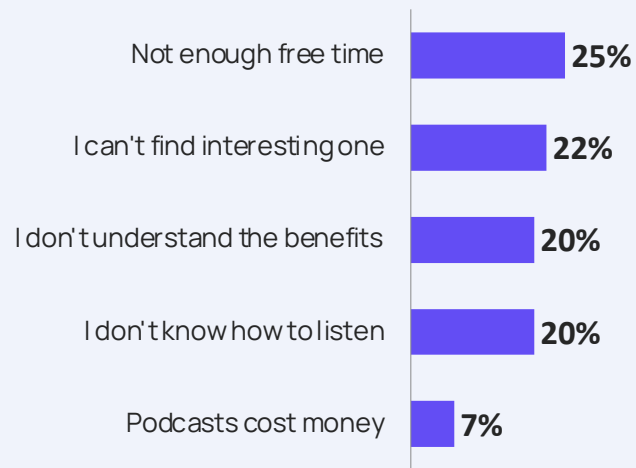
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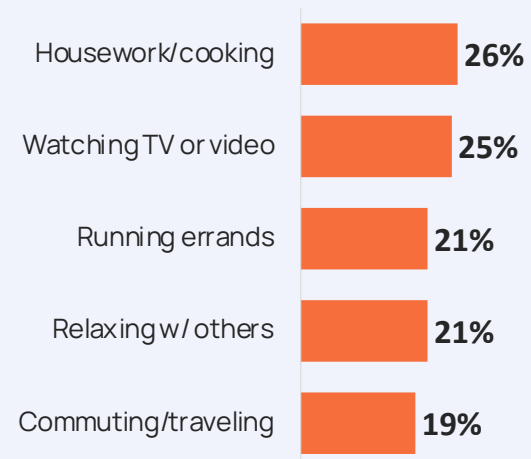
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“The Persuadables”

Top reasons for not listening



Favorite Activities for Spoken Word Listening



“The Persuadables” is a segment comprising 34% of non-listeners to podcasts or nearly 10% of US Adults 18+

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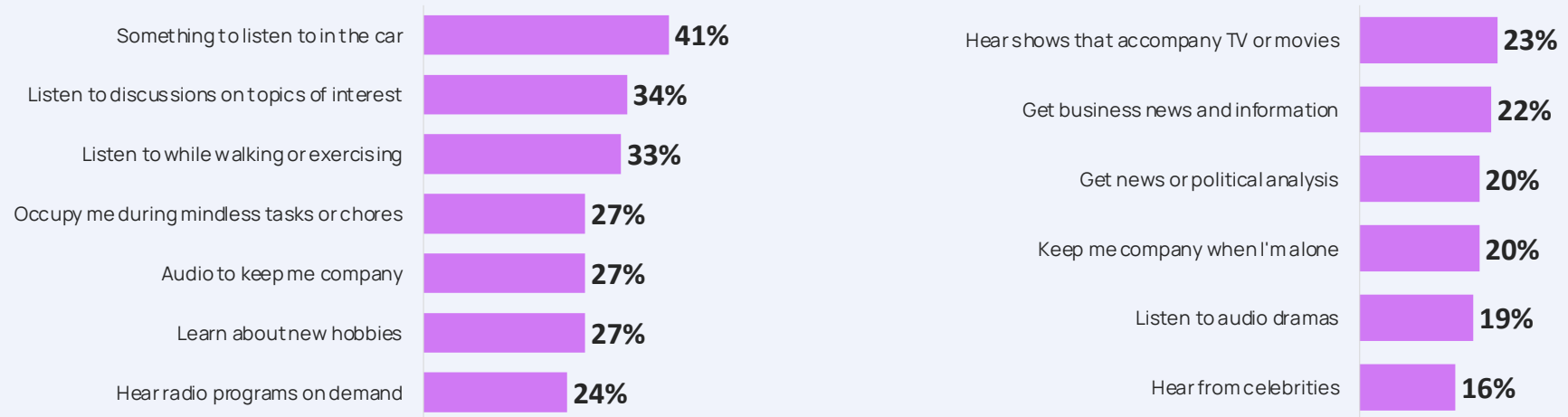
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“The Persuadables”

Perceived benefits of listening to podcasts



“The Persuadables” is a segment comprising 34% of non-listeners to podcasts or nearly 10% of US Adults 18+

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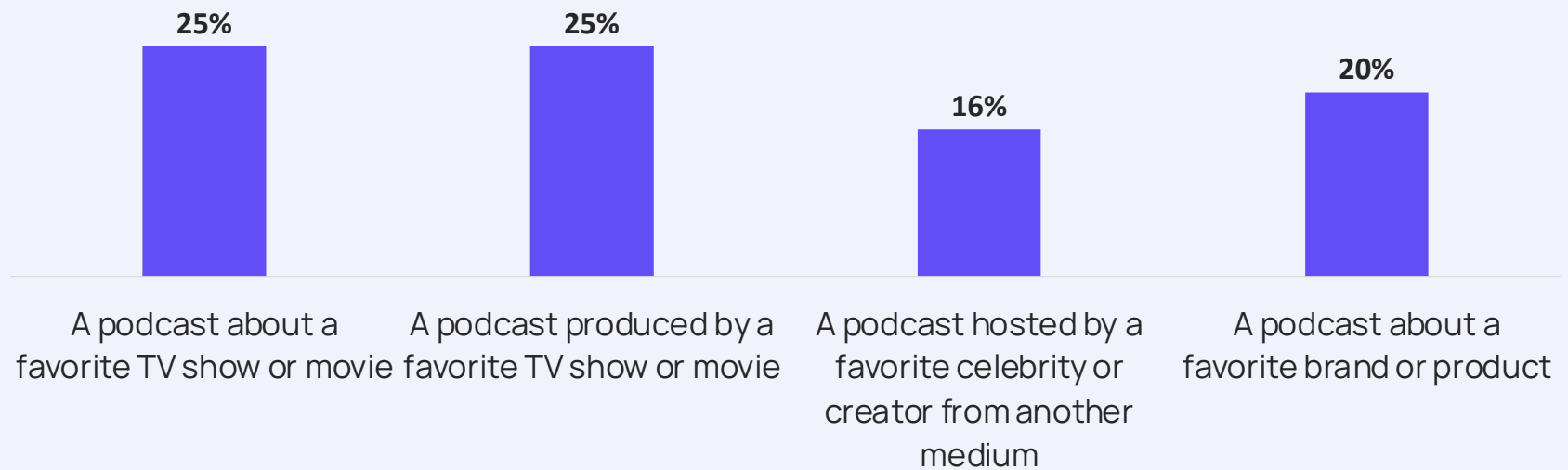
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“The Persuadables”

% “Very” or “Somewhat” likely to type of show



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“The Persuadables” is a segment comprising 34% of non-listeners to podcasts or nearly 10% of US Adults 18+

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THE BUSINESS OF PODCASTING

Findings and Action Steps

Despite the less flattering portrayal of podcasting (and podcasters) that we occasionally see in the press, **Americans are overwhelmingly positive about the medium** and its creators - so let's all push back on this one!

Findings and Action Steps

Listeners come to podcasting for interesting topics, yes - but **companionship and screen-free entertainment are vital benefits** we need to lean into for growth.

Findings and Action Steps

Podcasters need to get serious about "word of mouth" - what exactly is the message that would-be ambassadors should be spreading about your show - what it's about, what they get from it, how it makes them feel, etc.

We need to give influencers of all types a specific, positive vocabulary about our shows.

Findings and Action Steps

Podcasting can't grow by word of mouth alone - **YouTube promotion and paid ads must be part of your plans** to reach the full potential of podcasting.

Findings and Action Steps

We talk about brands leveraging the relationship that existing listeners have with podcast hosts, but many people are equally passionate about specific products and services.

What if we thought more about how **podcasting can leverage the passion potential listeners have about their favorite brands?**

Findings and Action Steps

The leading perceived cause of churn is time constraints - we are all seemingly busier now than during the pandemic. Yet time-shifted listening is one of podcasting's top benefits!

We need to leverage this weakness into a strength - **podcasting is your way to stay connected** with the things you care about in an increasingly busy world.

Findings and Action Steps

Continually take the temperature of your audience. If they perceive the quality of your show is dipping, they are always right.
We are all ambassadors for the medium as a whole.

Findings and Action Steps

The most significant source for completely new audience growth are a group called "**The Persuadables**," who over-index as older women who are open to our content and looking for more passive, lean-back content they can multi-task with.

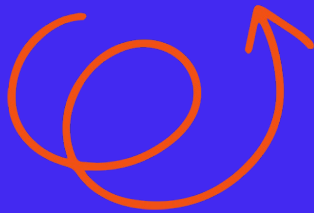
To make that content, **you need those voices in the room** and a **consistent audience research plan** to understand them better.

The Podcast Landscape

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Churn, Barriers to Adoption, and Opportunities for Growth

AUGUST 2023



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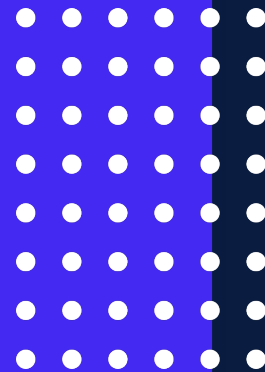
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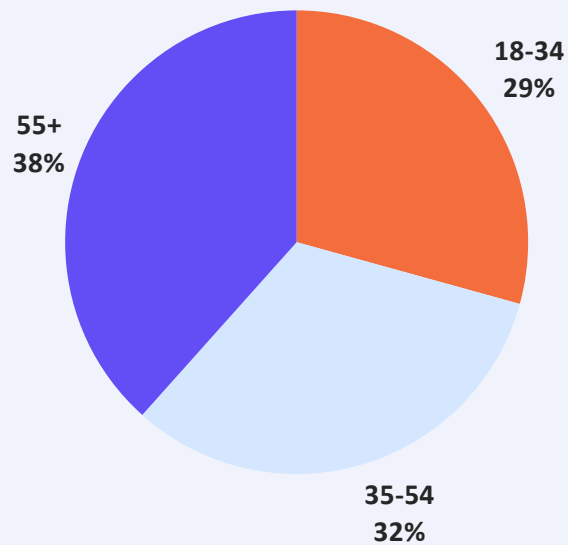
The Podcast Landscape

Appendix – Demographics

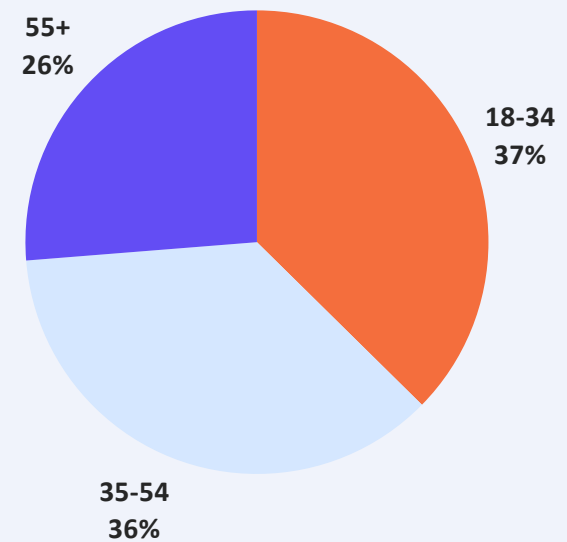


Age Profile: Past Month Listeners

US Population



Past Month Podcast Listeners



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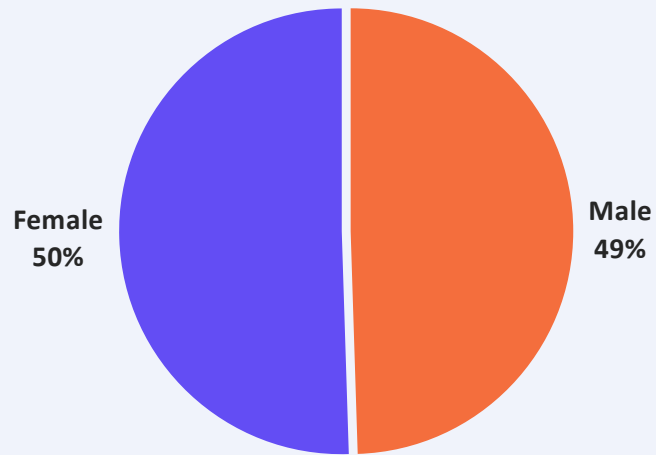
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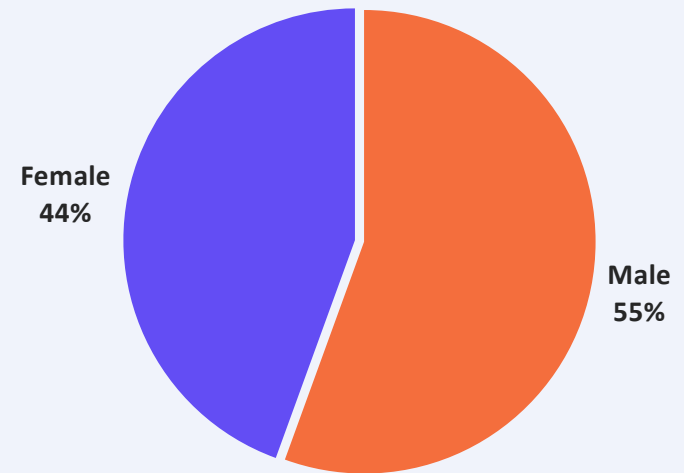
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Gender Profile: Past Month Listeners

US Population



Past Month Podcast Listeners



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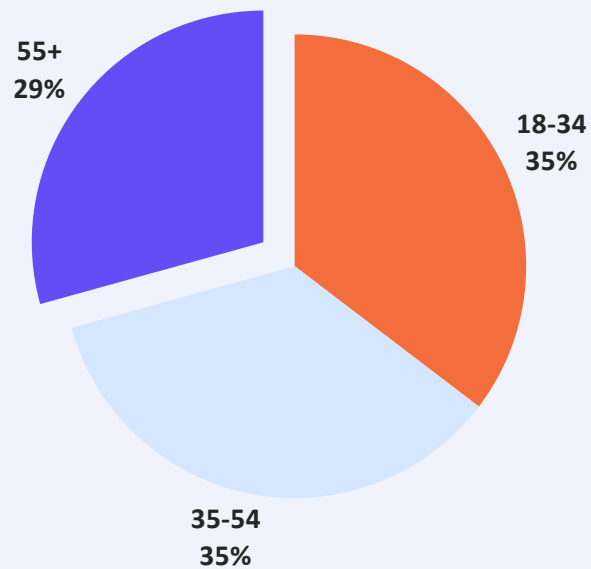
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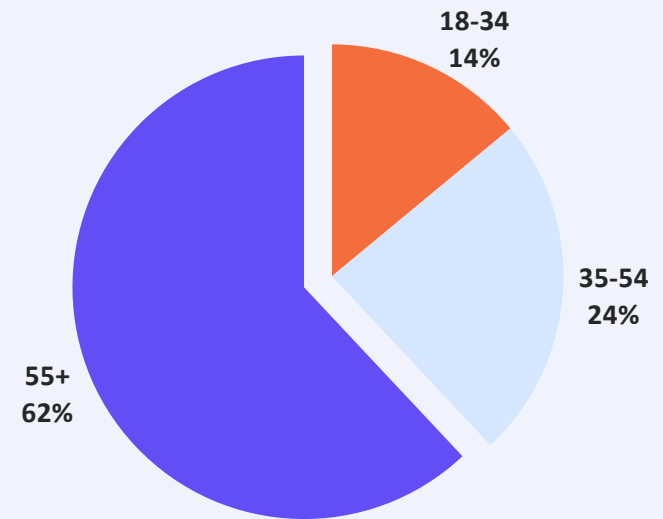
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Age Profile: Ever vs. Never Listened

Ever listened to podcasts



Never listened to podcasts



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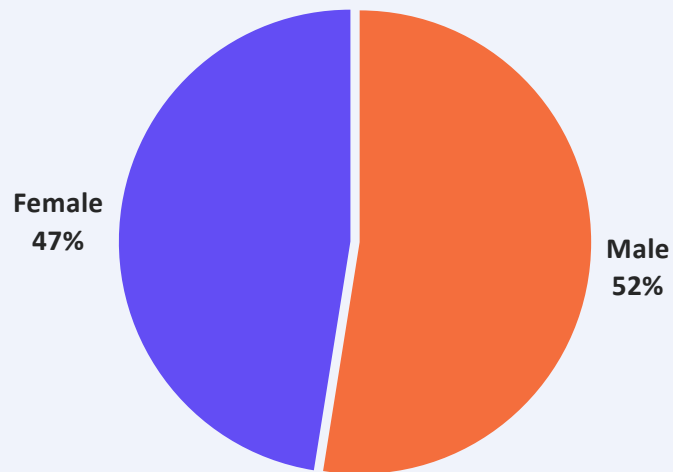
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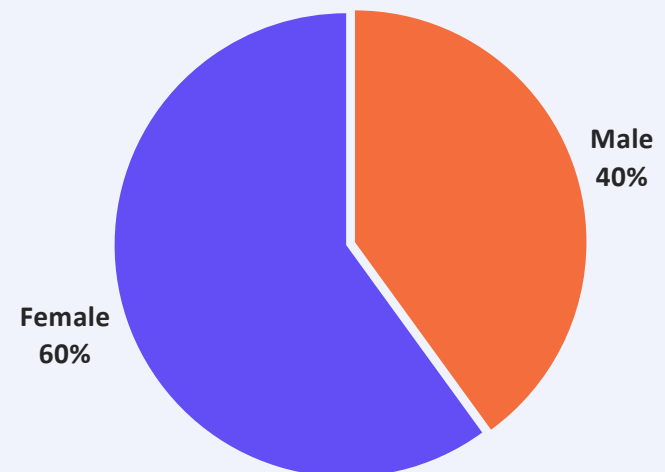
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Gender Profile: Ever vs. Never Listened

Ever listened to podcasts



Never listened to podcasts



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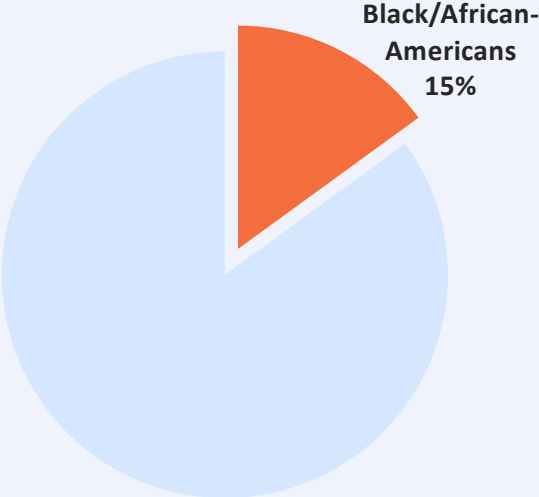
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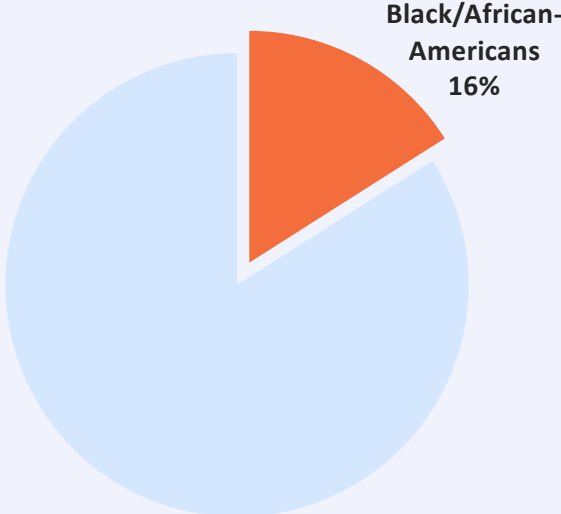
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Black Listeners Proportionate to US Population

US Population



Past Month Podcast Listeners



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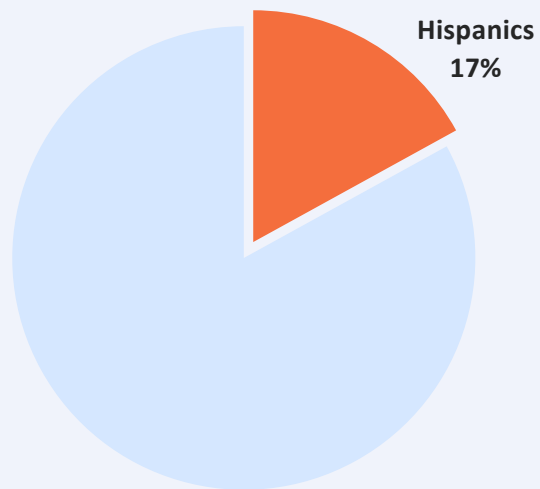
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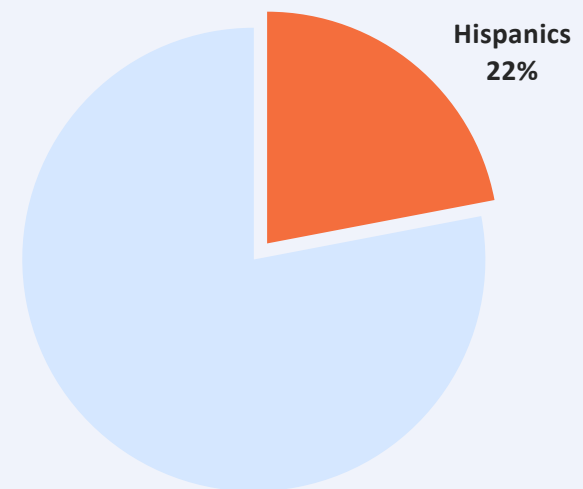
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Hispanics Over-Index as Podcast Listeners

US Population



Past Month Podcast Listeners



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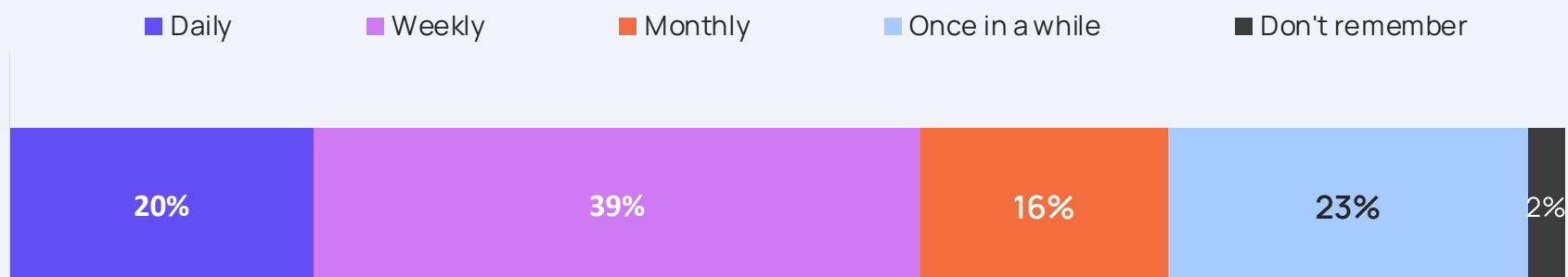
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Thinking back to one year ago, how often did you listen to podcasts, on average?

Listened to podcasts 1-2 years or more



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