



U.S. 2025



# SOUNDS PROFITABLE

THE BUSINESS OF PODCASTING

## The Creators: Understanding the Modern Podcast Creator Landscape

Format Evolution, Creator Diversity, and Sustainability Challenges

December 10, 2025

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# Methodology



In 2025, Sounds Profitable partnered with **Signal Hill Insights** to field an online study of 5,034 Americans aged 18+ - the largest public study of podcast creators in the United States



The sample was weighted to the most recent census data to be representative of the US population. This research expands on the original **2022 “The Creators” study** with deeper demographic analysis



Respondents were asked about their podcast creation experience, including **format choices** (audio-only, video-only, or multi-format), **consumption patterns**, and reasons for **starting or stopping**



All Creator questions were asked to respondents who had **ever** consumed a podcast, representing 75% of the US population 18+

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# Executive Summary



The first comprehensive look at who creates podcasts and why they stop

71%

of creators now include **video**



**Multicultural** creators lead engagement

1 in 6

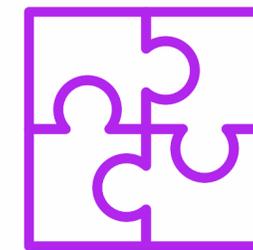
Podcast consumers have **tried** creating



**Women** less likely to start, more likely to stick

1 in 3

creators have **stopped**



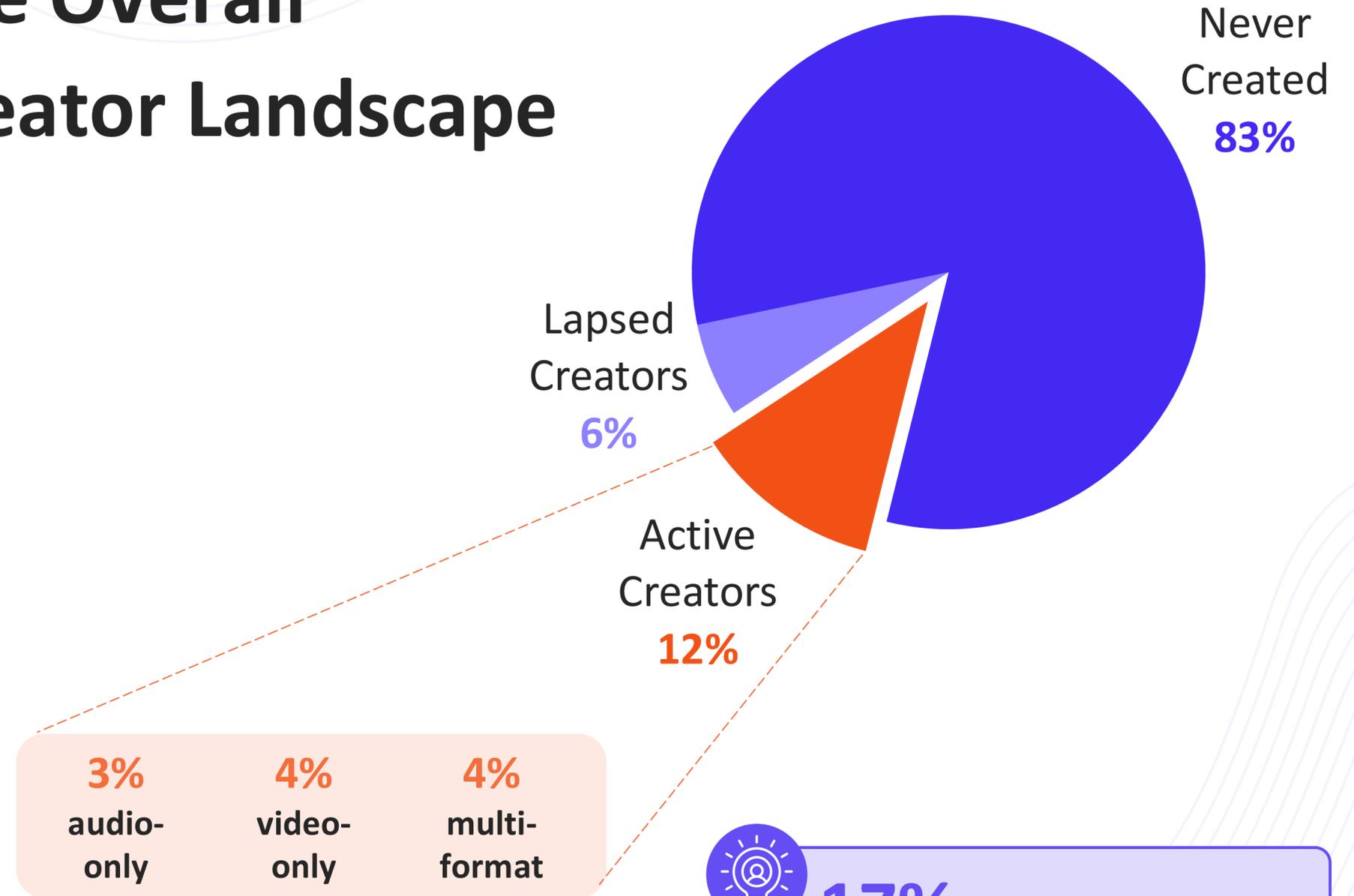
Format-consumption **alignment** predicts retention

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Podcast creation has achieved mainstream adoption with nearly **1 in 6** podcast consumers having tried it

# The Overall Creator Landscape



Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding  
Base: Have ever consumed a podcast (75% 18+)

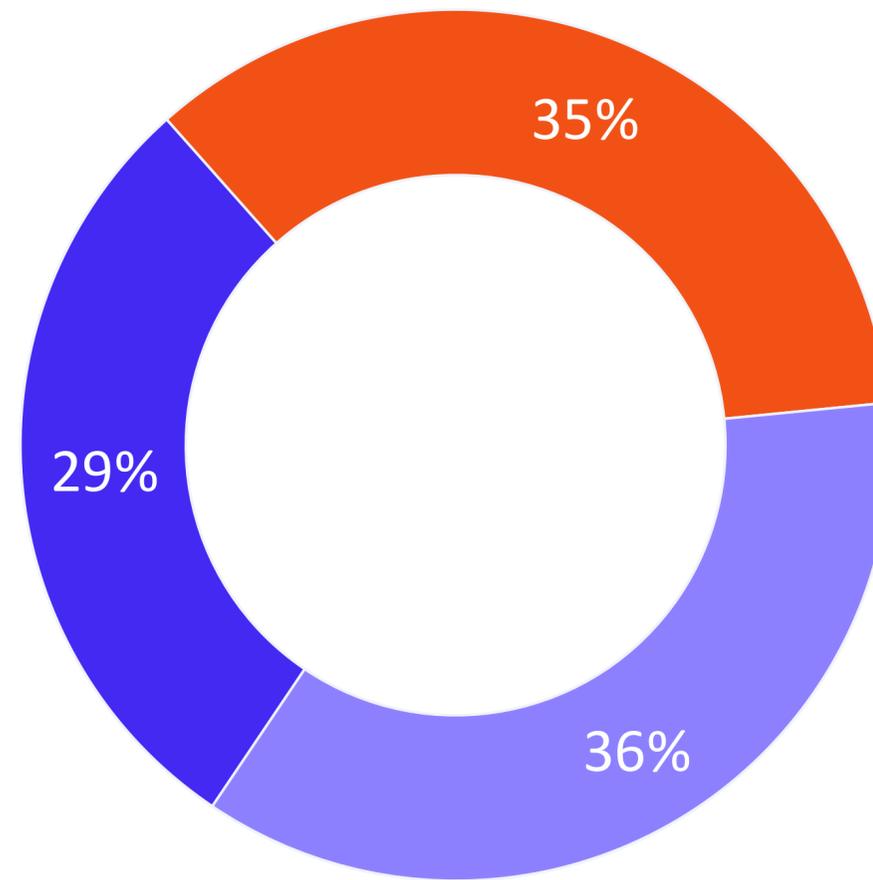
**17%** of respondents have **podcast creation** experience

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Format strategies have **diversified**—no single approach dominates the creator landscape

## Format Distribution Among Active Creators



■ Audio-Only ■ Video-Only ■ Multi-Format



**71%**

incorporate **video** in their workflow



**65%**

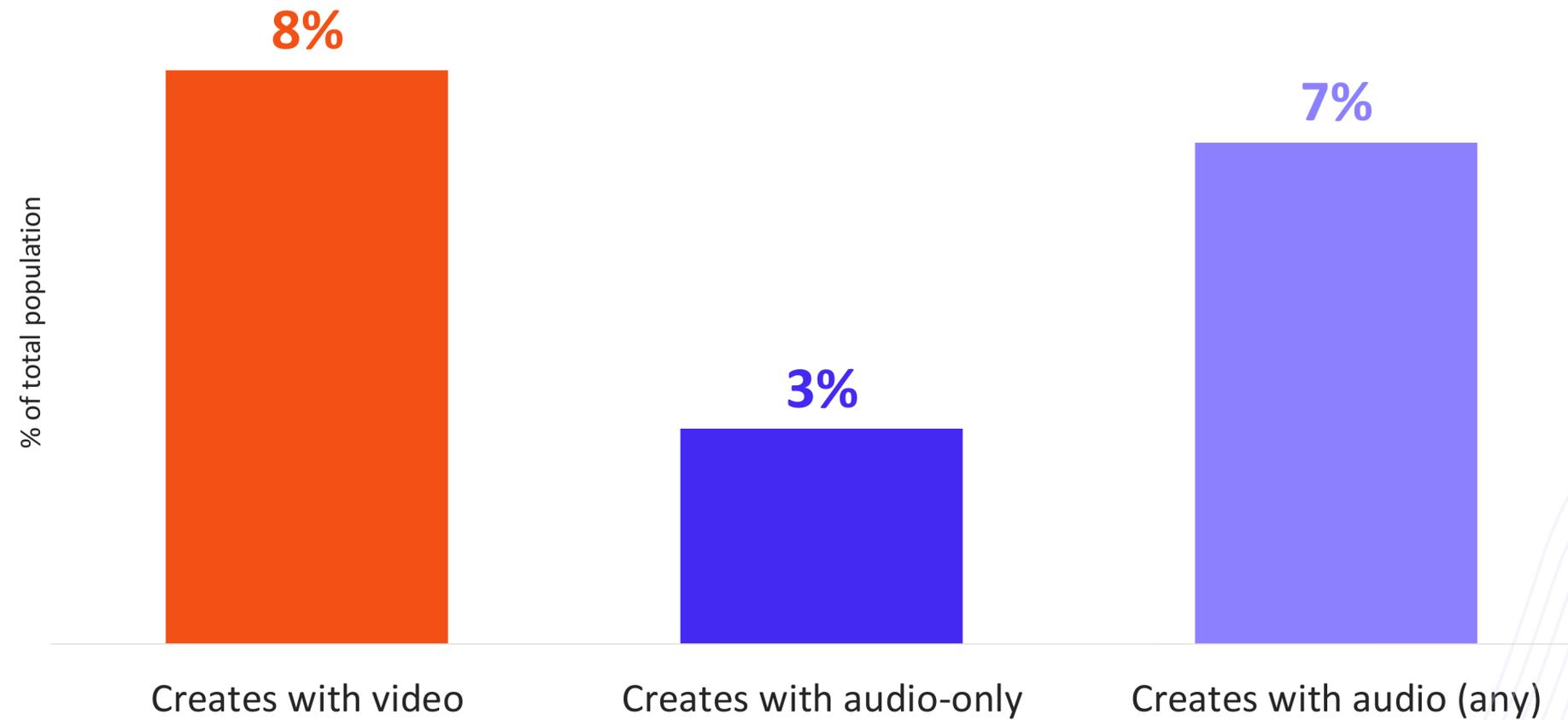
incorporate **audio** in their workflow

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Format adoption patterns show significant variation in how creators approach content production

## Format Adoption Across Population



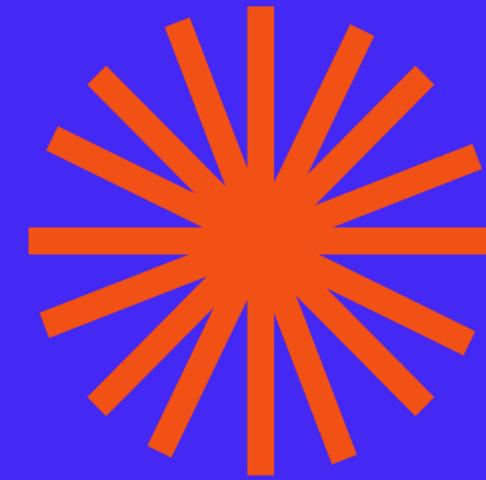
2.4 to 1

Creators who use **video** vs. **audio-only** creators

Base: Have ever consumed a podcast (75% 18+)

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The Creators

# Who Creates: Demographic Patterns in Podcast Creation

Creator engagement varies from **4% to 18%** across demographics

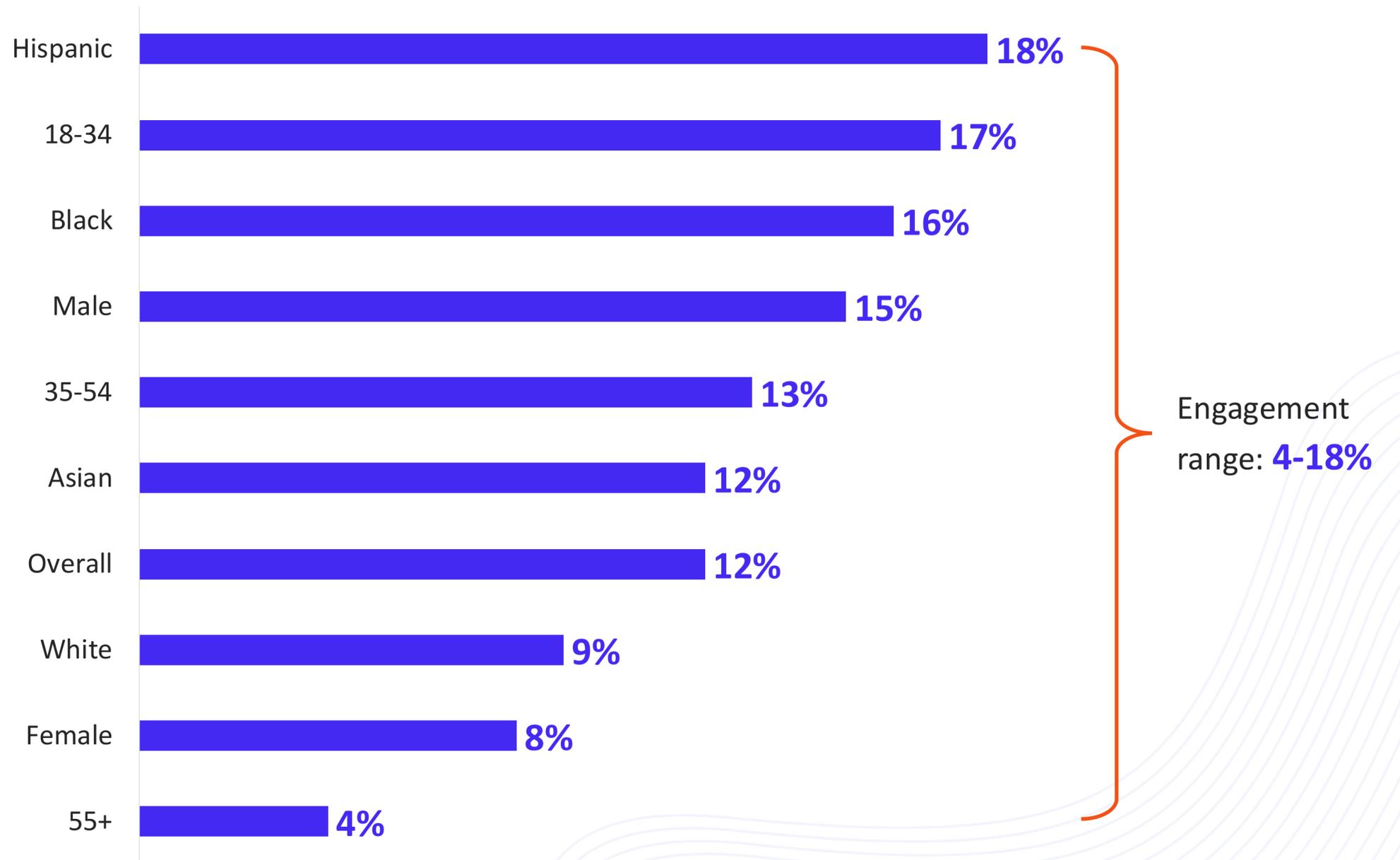


Multicultural communities show higher creator engagement—White creators participate at below-average rates

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## Creator Percentages by Demographic



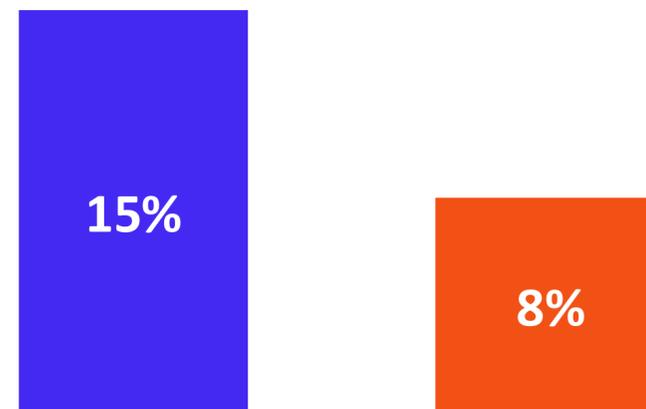
Base: Have ever consumed a podcast (75% 18+)

Women face barriers to starting but show comparable or better retention once active

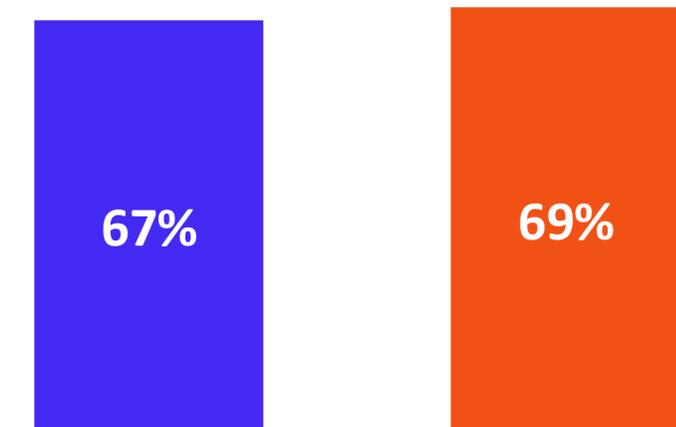
# The Gender Gap

Gender dynamics **differ** between entry and retention stages

Currently creating podcasts



Retention Rates



Male

Female

Male

Female

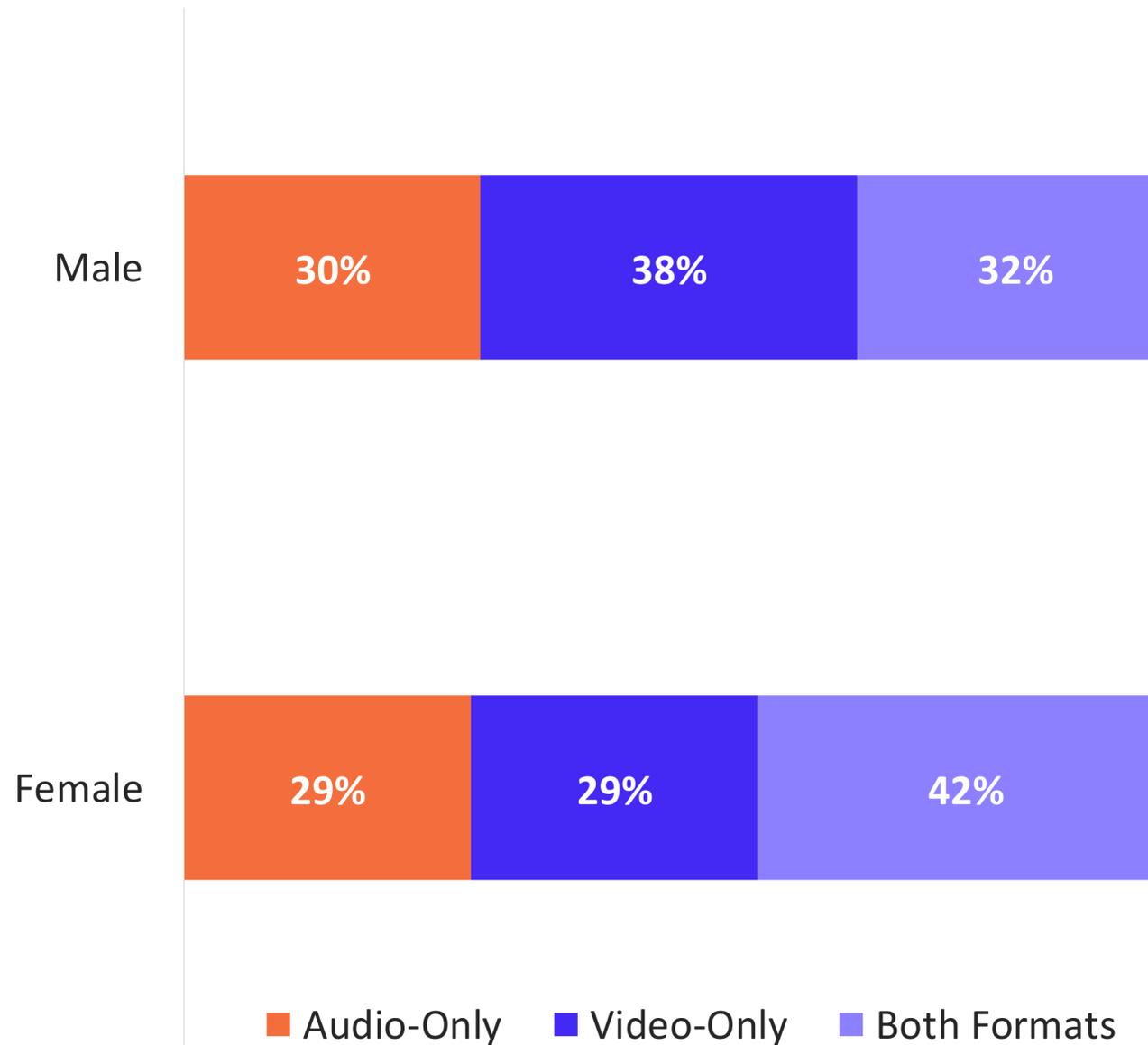
Base: Have ever consumed a podcast (75% 18+)

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Female creators adopt **multi-format approaches** at higher rates—potentially a risk management strategy

## Gender Format Patterns



**42% vs 32%**  
female vs. male  
**video creators**  
who also produce  
**audio content**

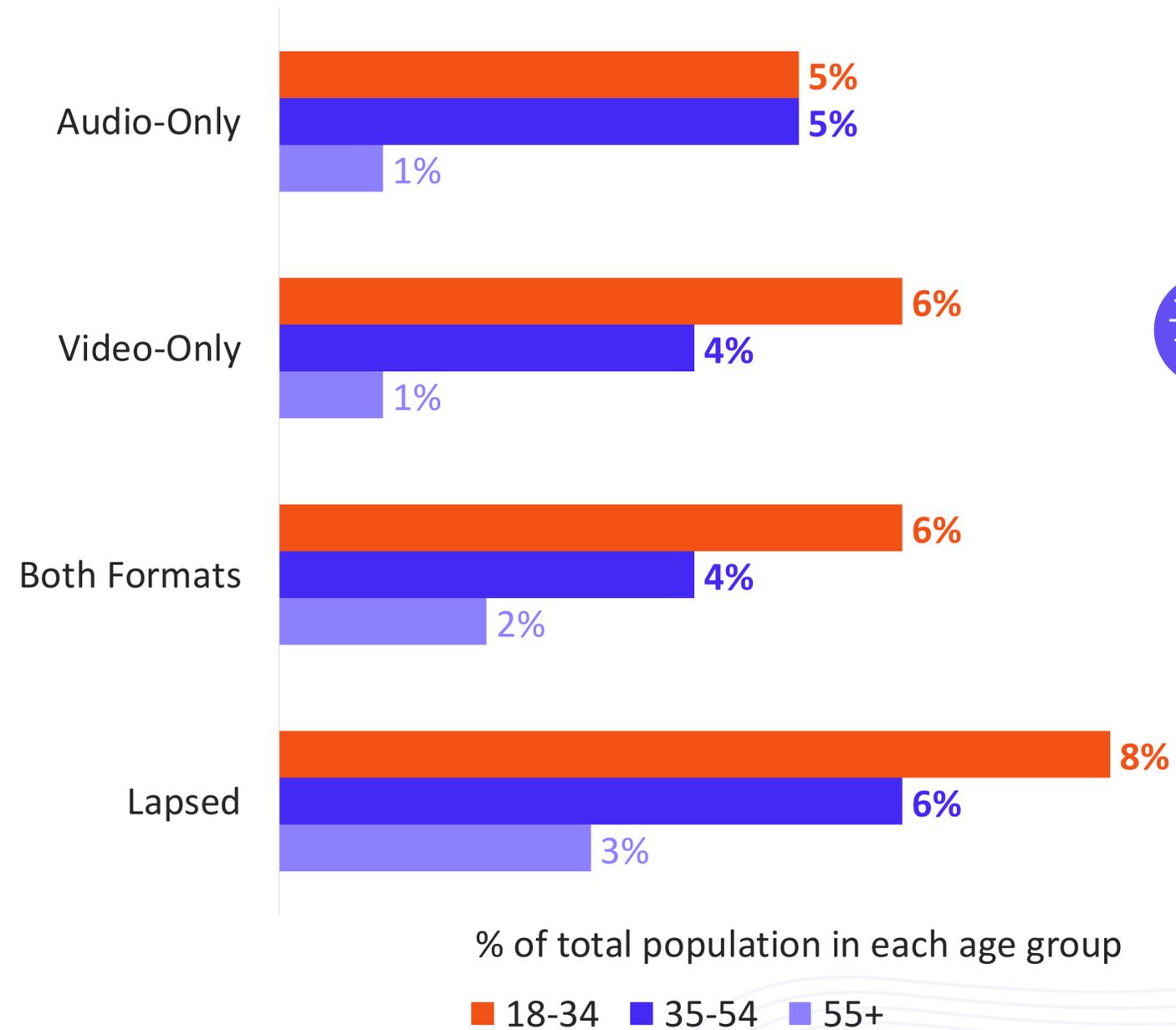
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Base: Currently creating podcasts

Age groups show distinct format preferences and adoption patterns

## Creators - Age Stratification



**52%**  
of all **video**  
creators are aged  
**18-34**

Base: Have ever consumed a podcast (75% 18+)

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Format preferences vary significantly **by demographic**—Asian creators show **96%** video inclusion, while White creators show **66%**

## Creators - Race/Ethnicity Format Patterns

Race/Ethnicity	Audio-Only	Video-Only	Multi-Format	Lapsed	Total Engagement
Hispanic	5%	7%	6%	10%	18%
Black	4%	5%	6%	6%	16%
Asian	0.5%	4%	8%	4%	12%
White	3%	3%	3%	4%	9%

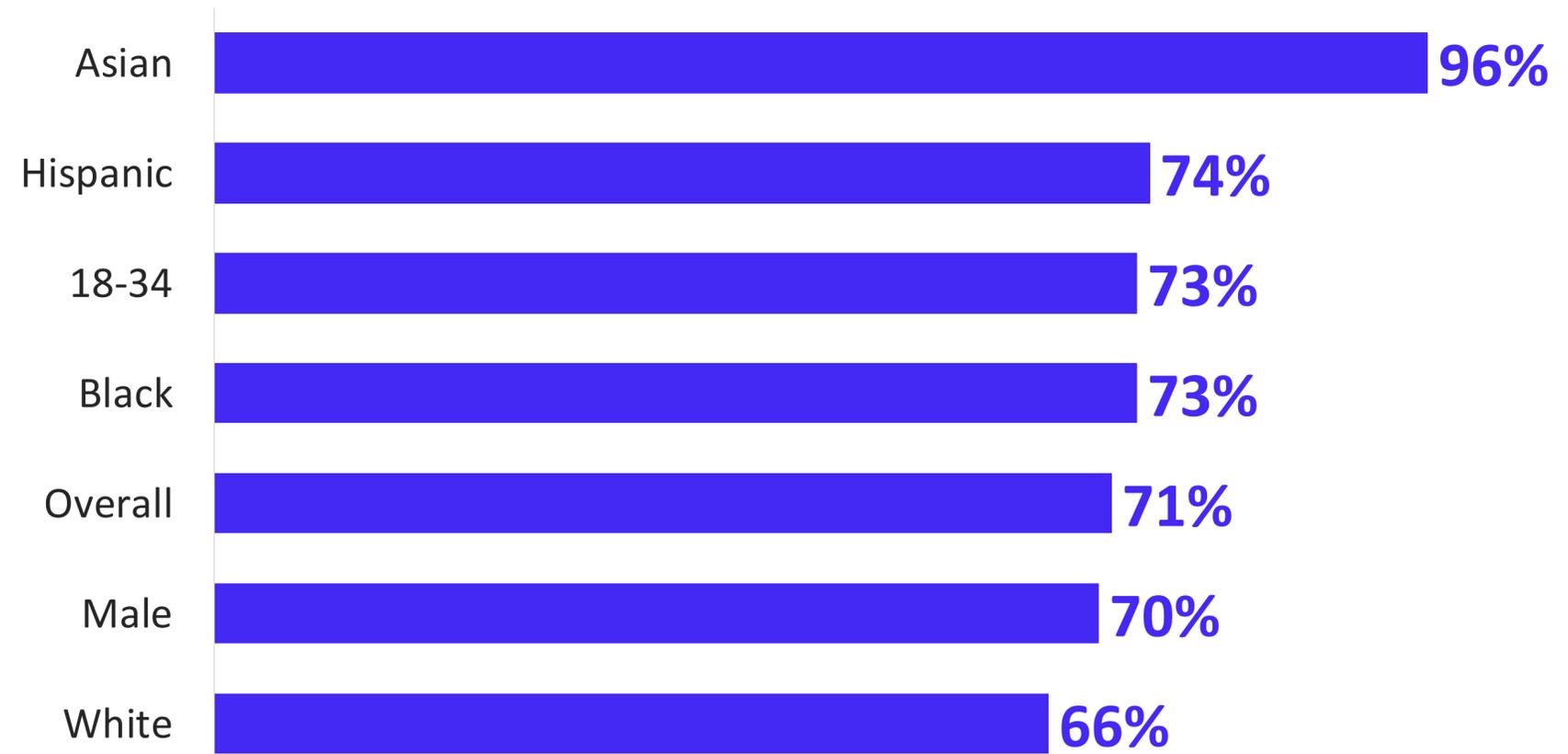
Base: Have ever consumed a podcast (75% 18+)

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Video inclusion varies from **66% to 96%** depending on **creator demographic**

## Video Inclusion Rates by Demographic



Base: Currently creating podcasts

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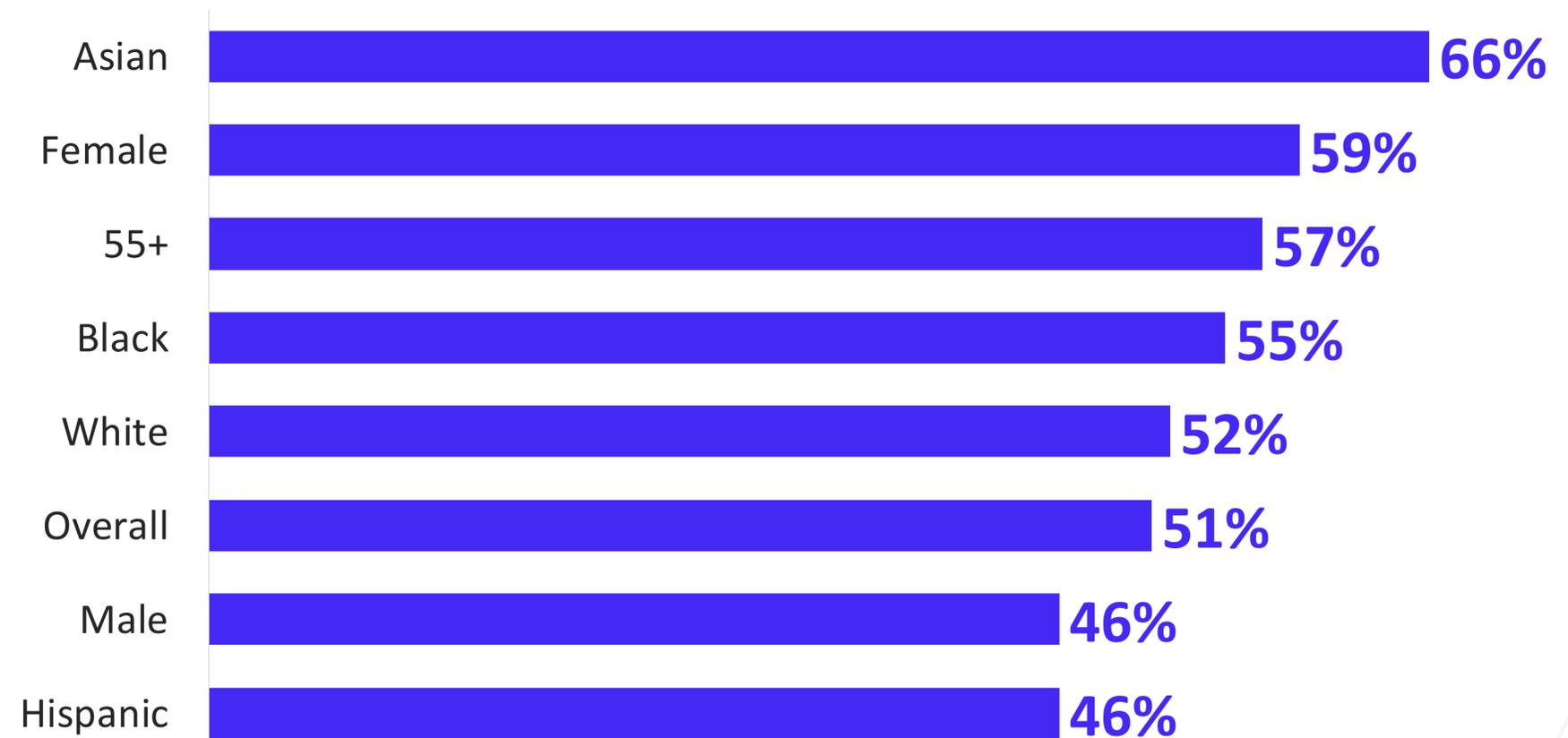
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Half of video creators **also produce audio**—  
multi-format  
strategies are  
common but **not**  
**universal**

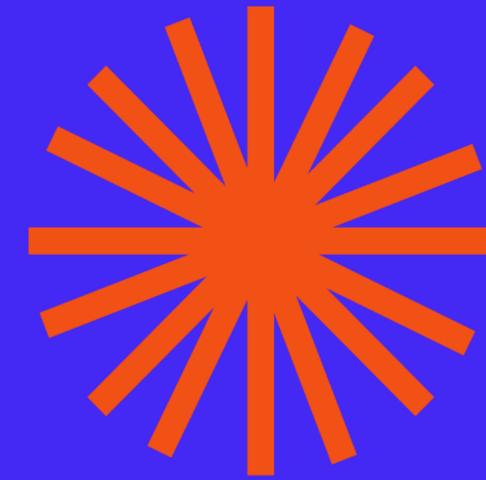
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## Multi-Format Strategies



Base: Currently creating podcasts



The Creators

# The Sustainability Challenge: Understanding Creator Churn

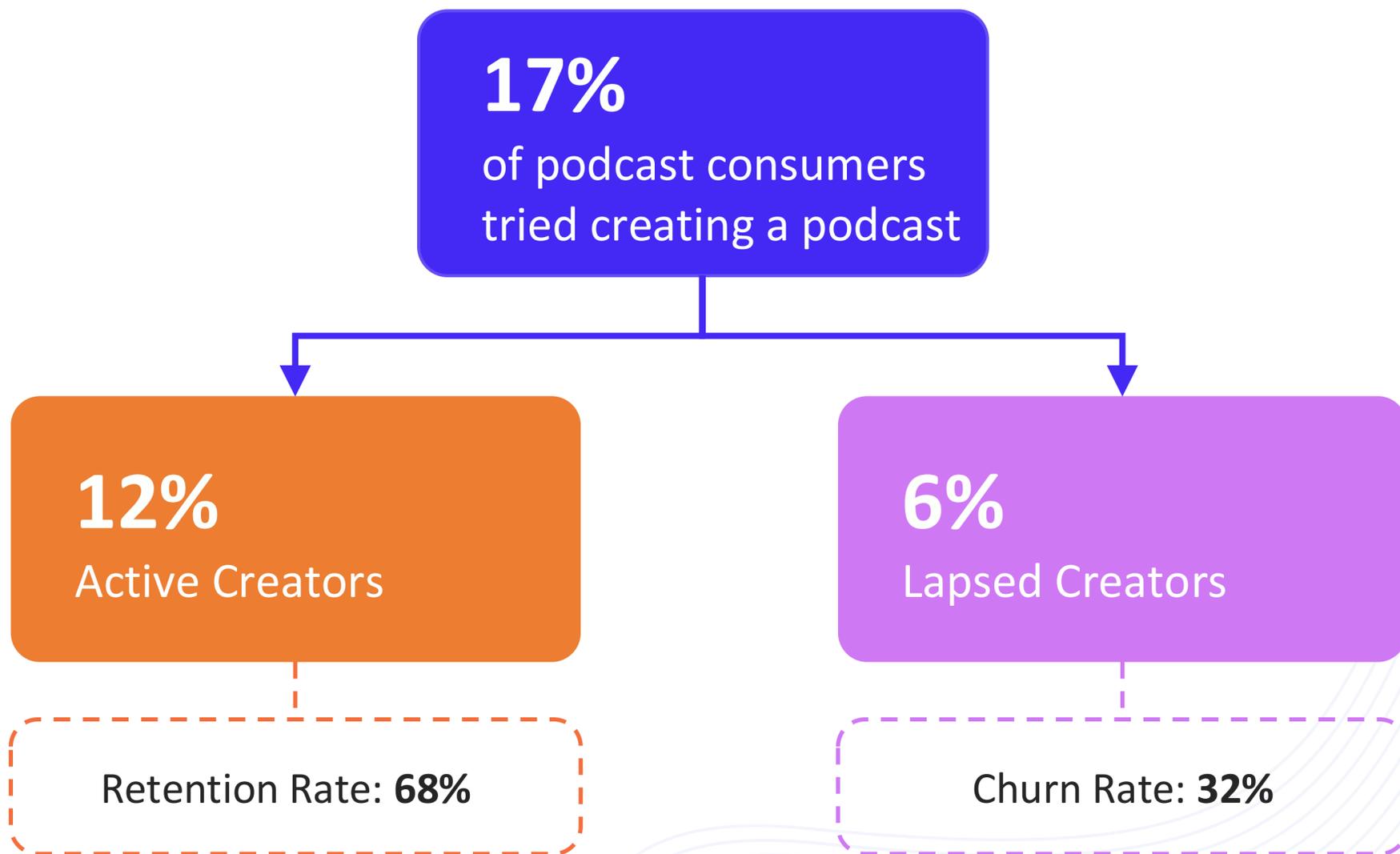
32% of people who started creating podcasts have stopped



While entry barriers are lowering, sustainability barriers remain high

# The Scale of Abandonment

1 in 3 creators who started have stopped



Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

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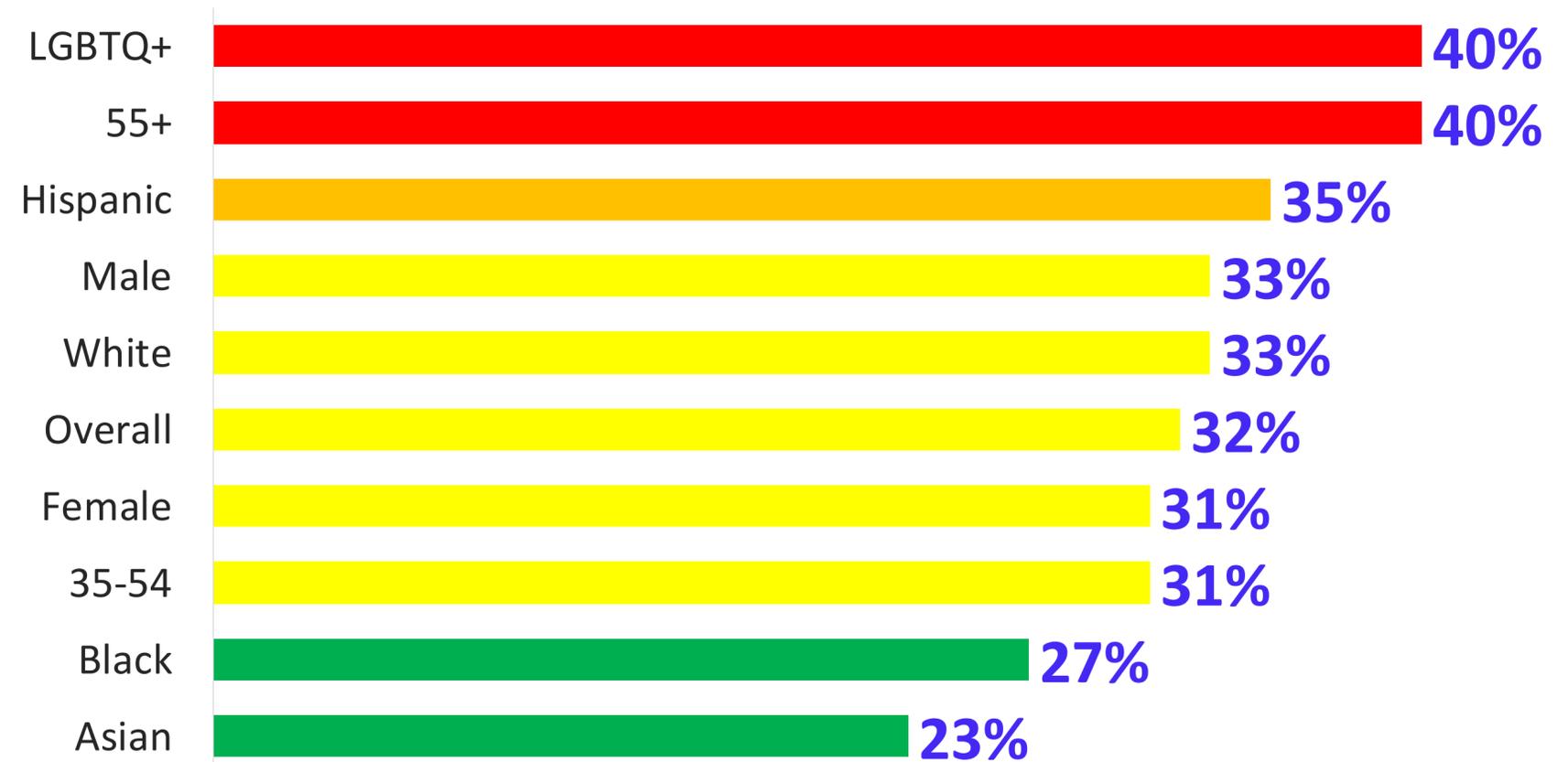


Churn rates vary from **23% to 40%**—different demographics face different sustainability challenges

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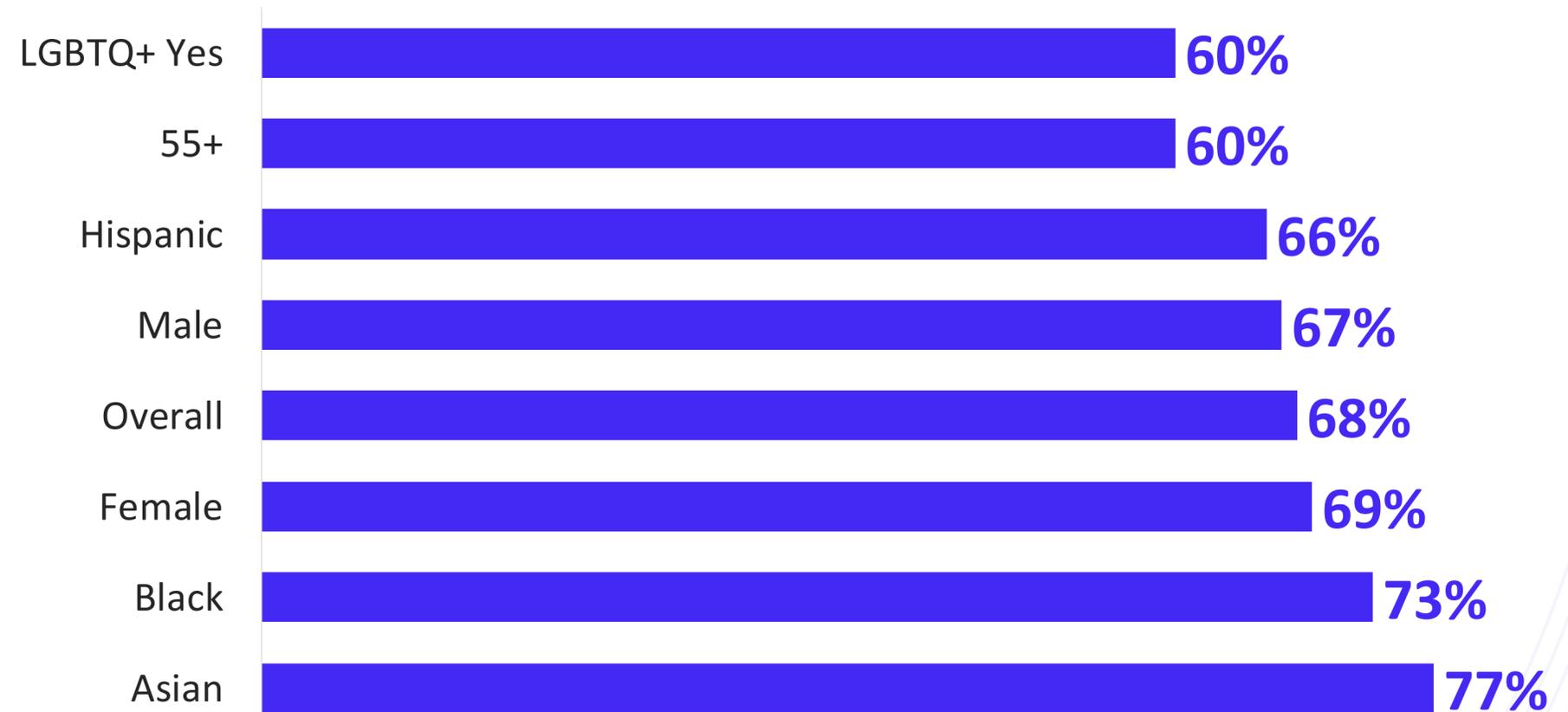
## Churn Rates by Demographic



Base: Have created a podcast – percentages show lapsed creators

Retention patterns suggest some creator communities have found **more sustainable approaches**

## Retention Rates (Inverse View)



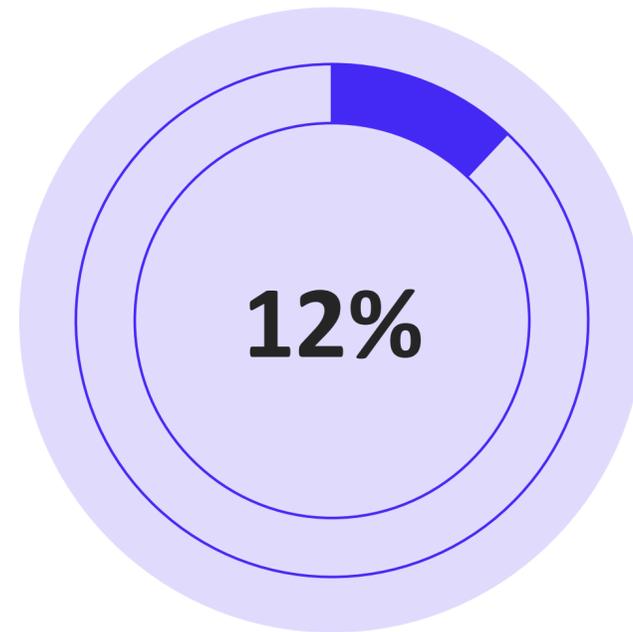
Base: Have ever created a podcast – percentages show current creators

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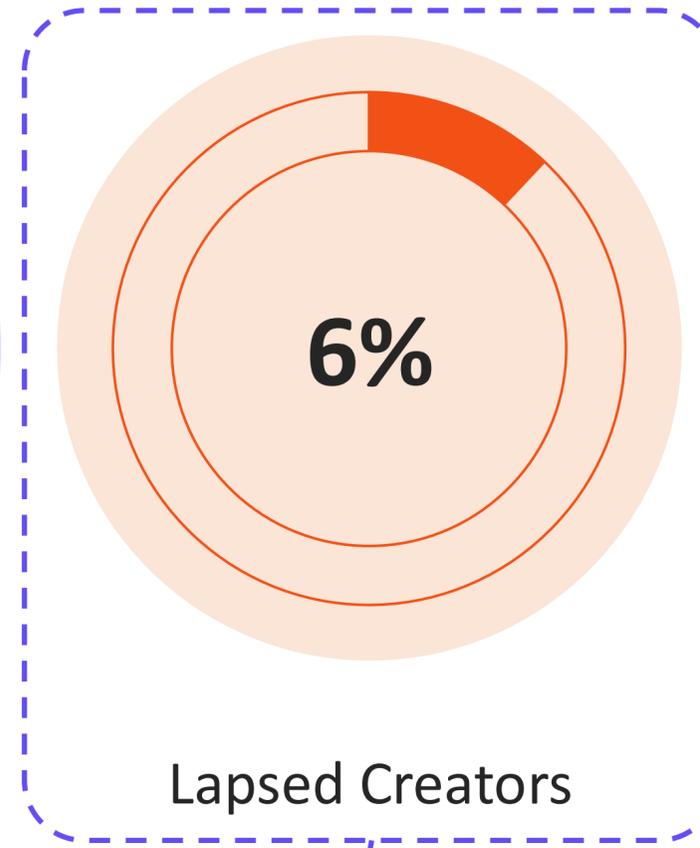


6% of podcast consumers have podcast creation experience but are currently **inactive**

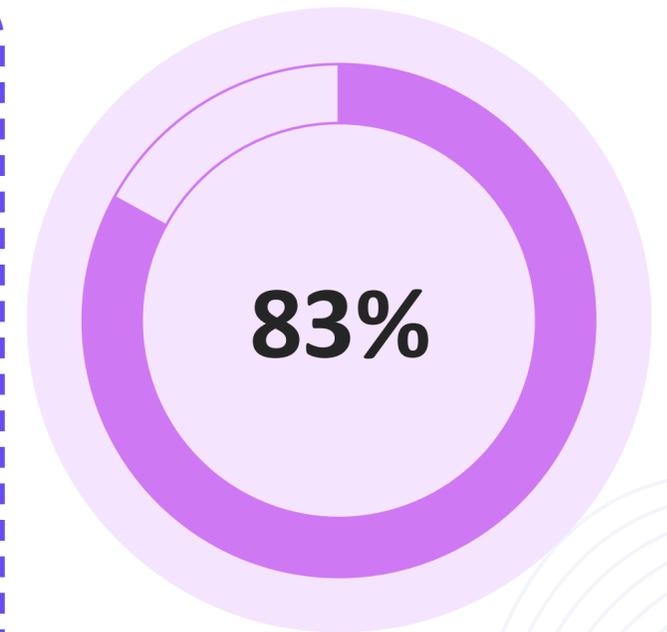
## The Lapsed Creator Population



Active Creators



Lapsed Creators



Never Created



Lapsed creators constitute **50%** of the active creator base

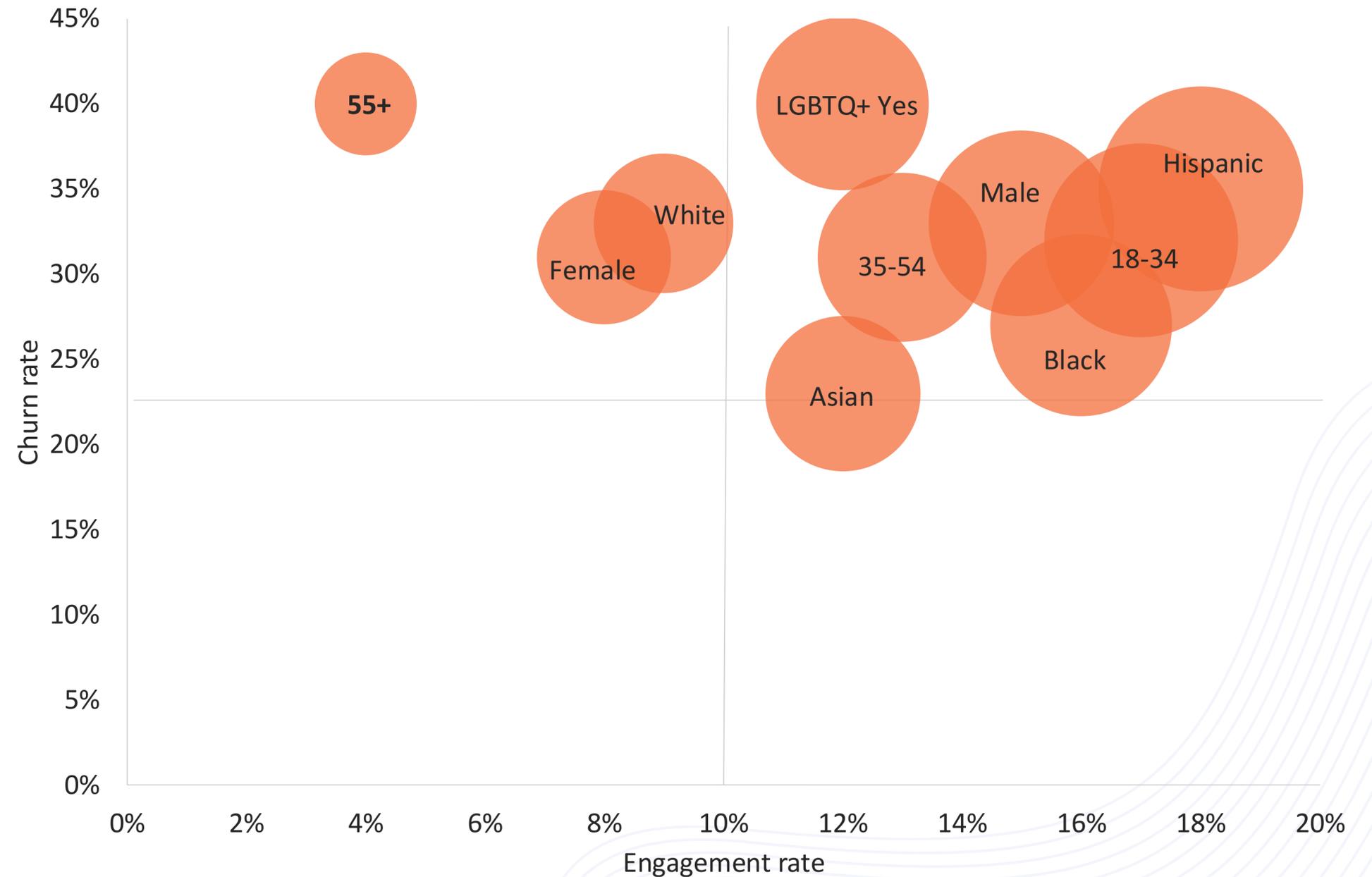
Base: Have ever consumed a podcast (75% 18+)

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High engagement  
**doesn't guarantee** high  
retention—Hispanic  
creators show **18%**  
engagement but **35%**  
**churn**

## Engagement vs. Sustainability



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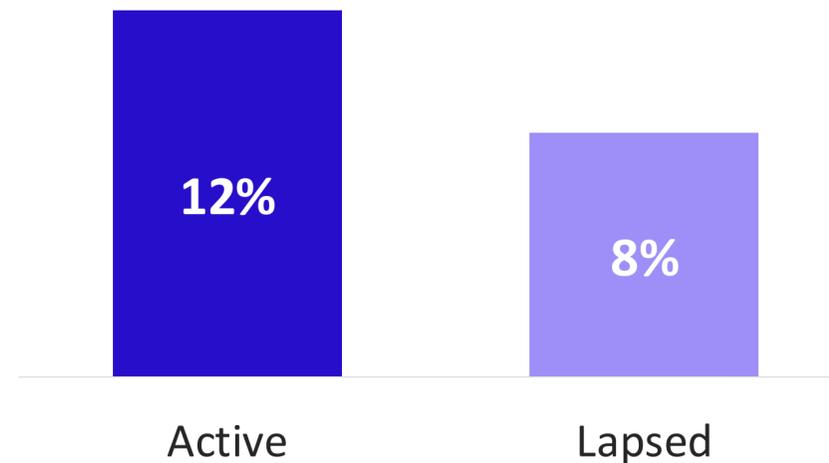
These segments show particularly **high abandonment rates**—understanding why could improve overall **creator sustainability**

## High-Churn Segments

### LGBTQ+ CREATORS

**40%**  
Churn rate

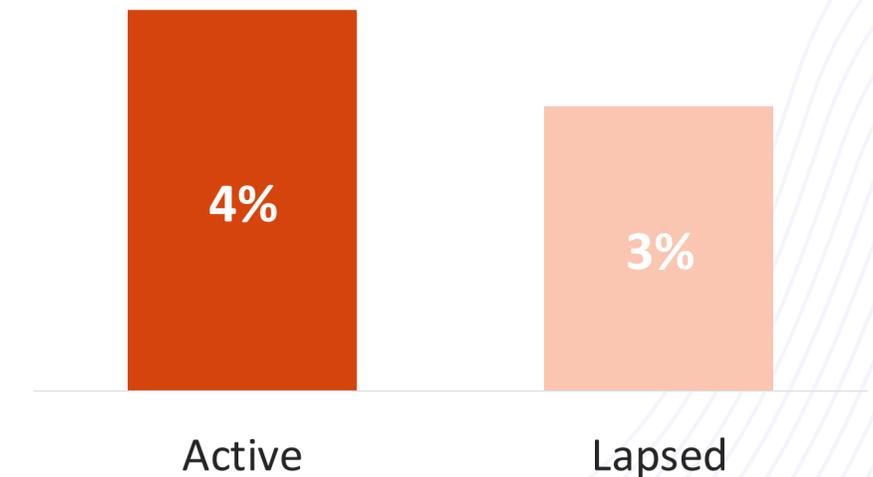
**12%**  
Engagement rate



### 55+ CREATORS

**40%**  
Churn rate

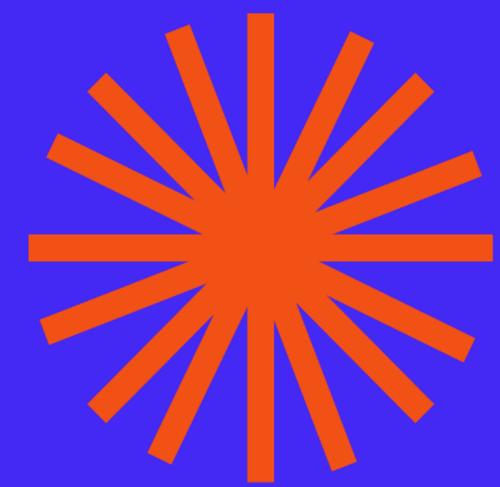
**4%**  
Engagement rate



Base: Have ever created a podcast

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The Creators

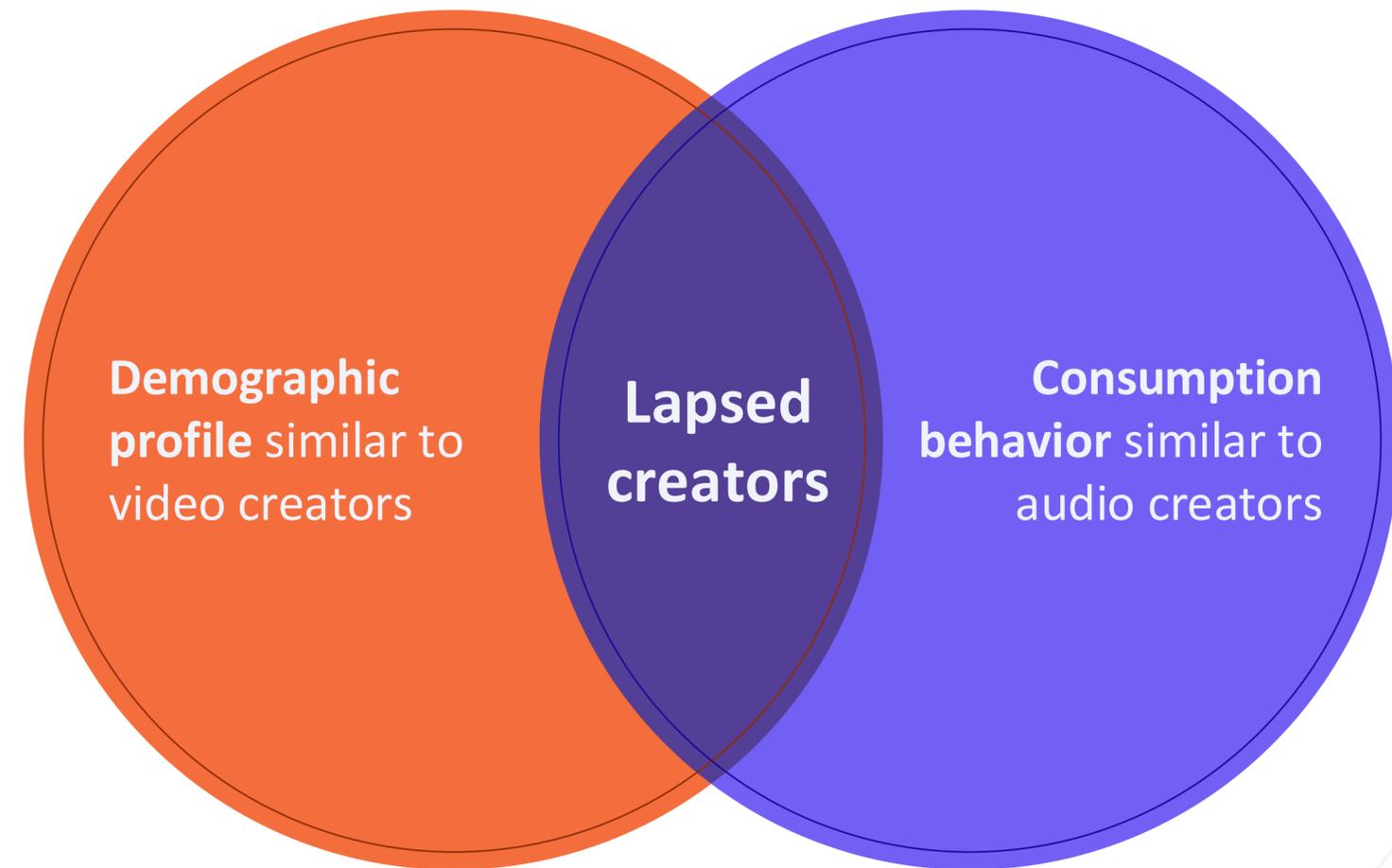
# The Format-Consumption Disconnect

What creators make **doesn't always match** what they prefer to consume



Lapsed creators show a **disconnect** between format created and format consumed

## The Format Mismatch Hypothesis



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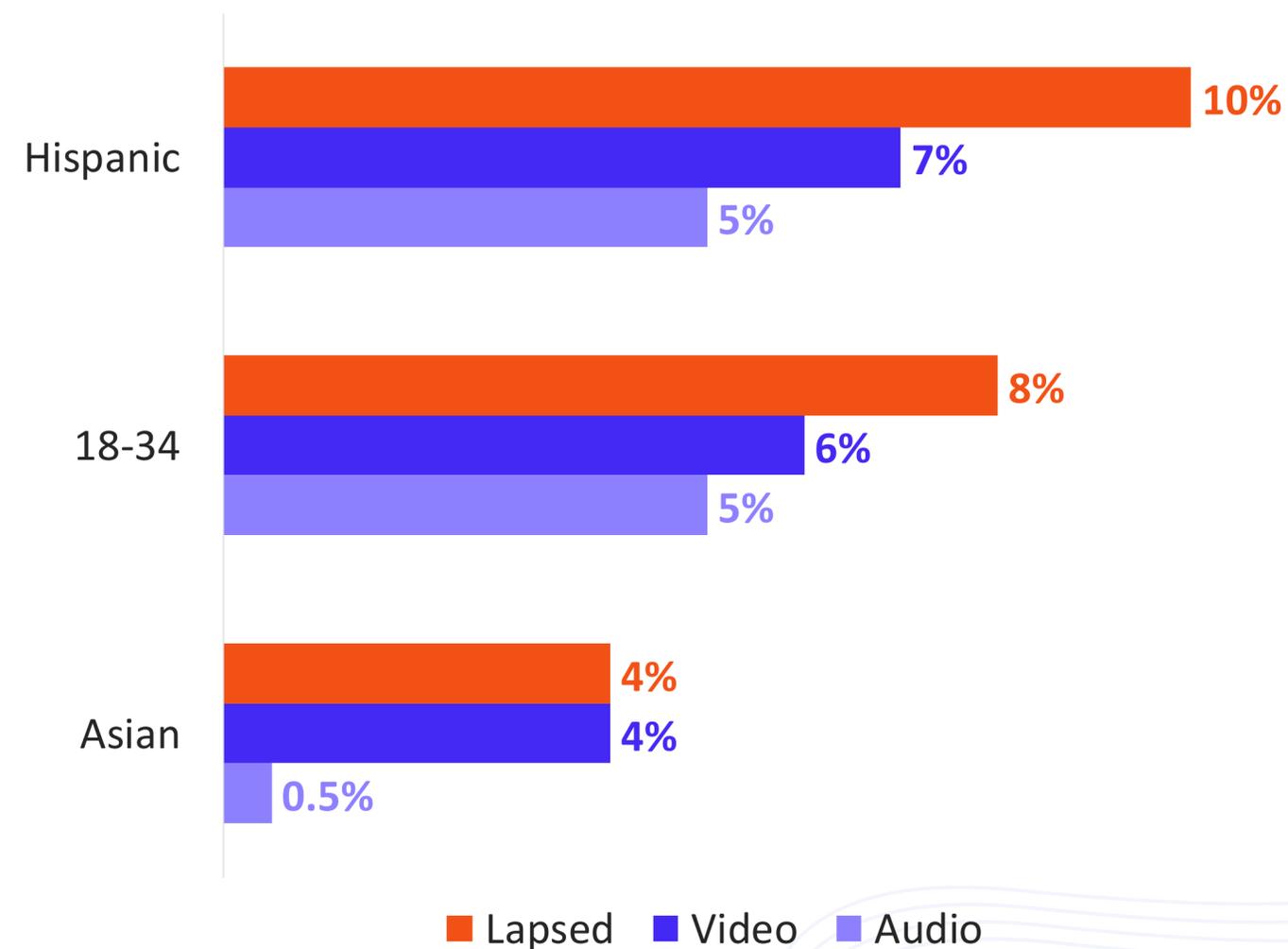
Lapsed creators' demographics closely match **video creators** across most segments—suggesting likely video production

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## Creator Engagement Rate by Demographic

Lapsed creators match **video** demographics



**9 of 12** demographic segments where lapsed creators are closer to **video creator** profiles

Base: Have ever consumed a podcast

Lapsed creators over-index as **audio media consumers**—revealing **audio-first listening habits**

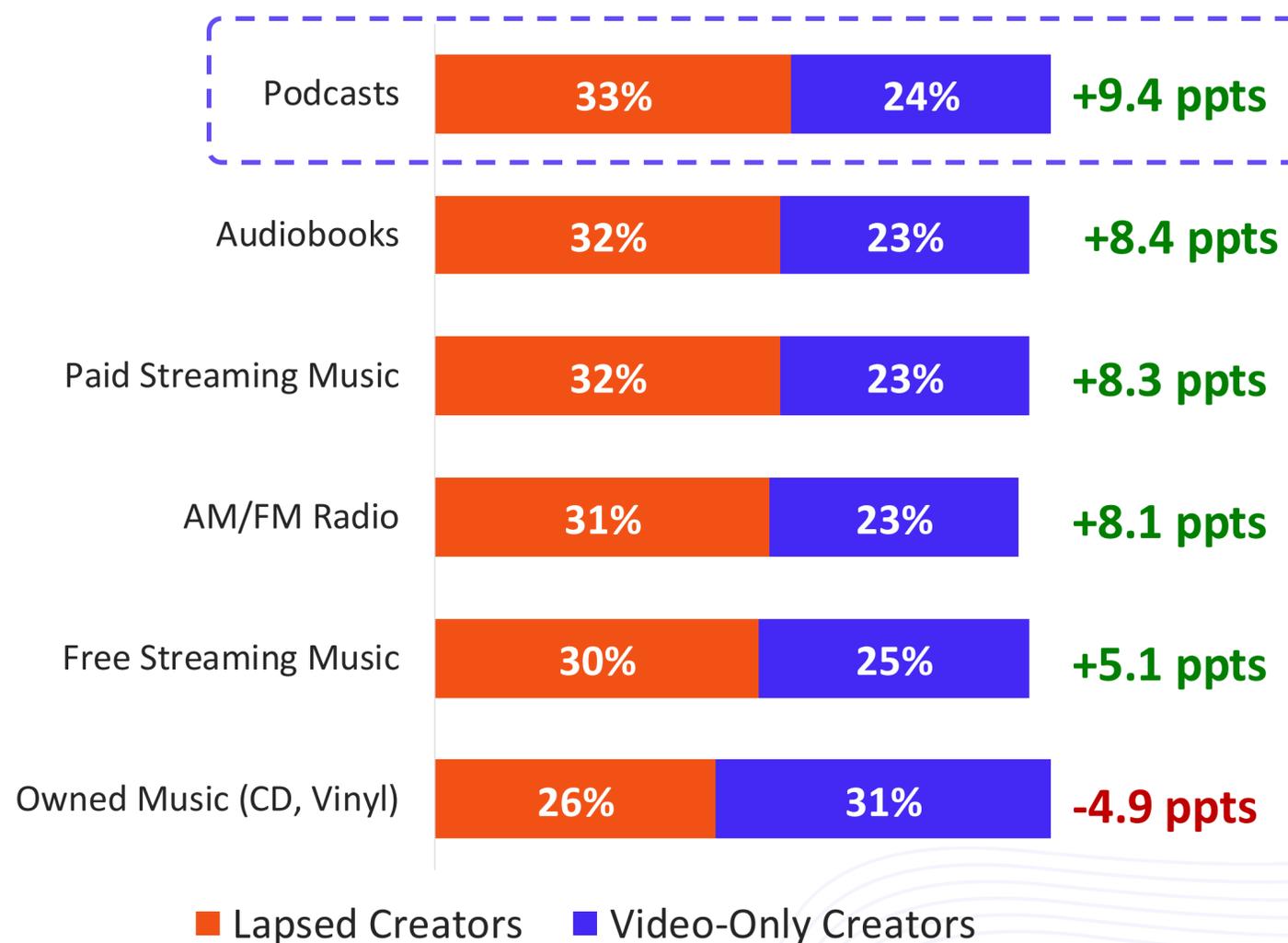
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# Audio Media Consumption, Lapsed Creators vs. Video Creators

But **lapsed** creators show stronger audio preferences

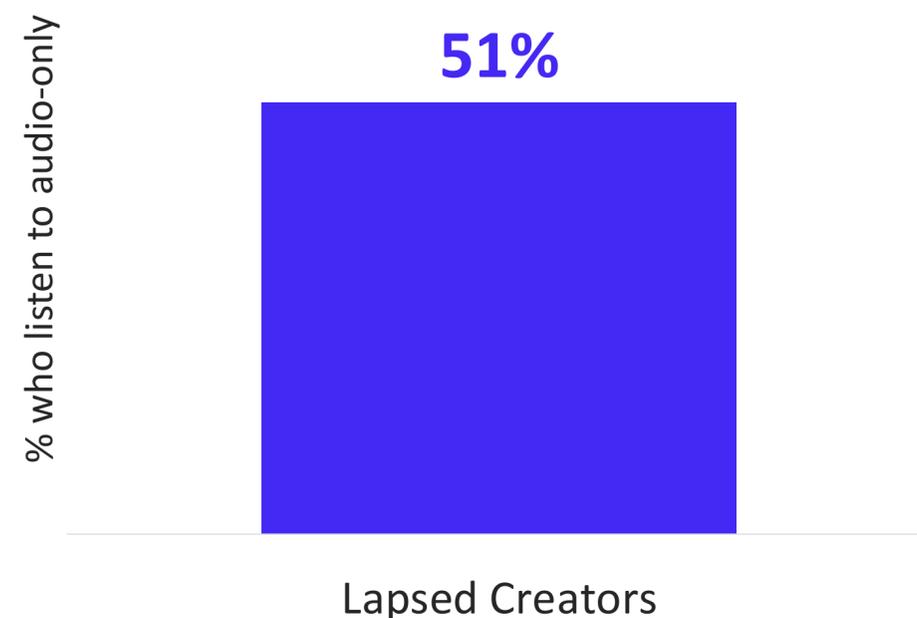


**7 of 8** audio formats where **lapsed creators** index higher than **video creators**

Lapsed creators listen to YouTube podcasts as audio and rarely expect podcasts to be video-only formats

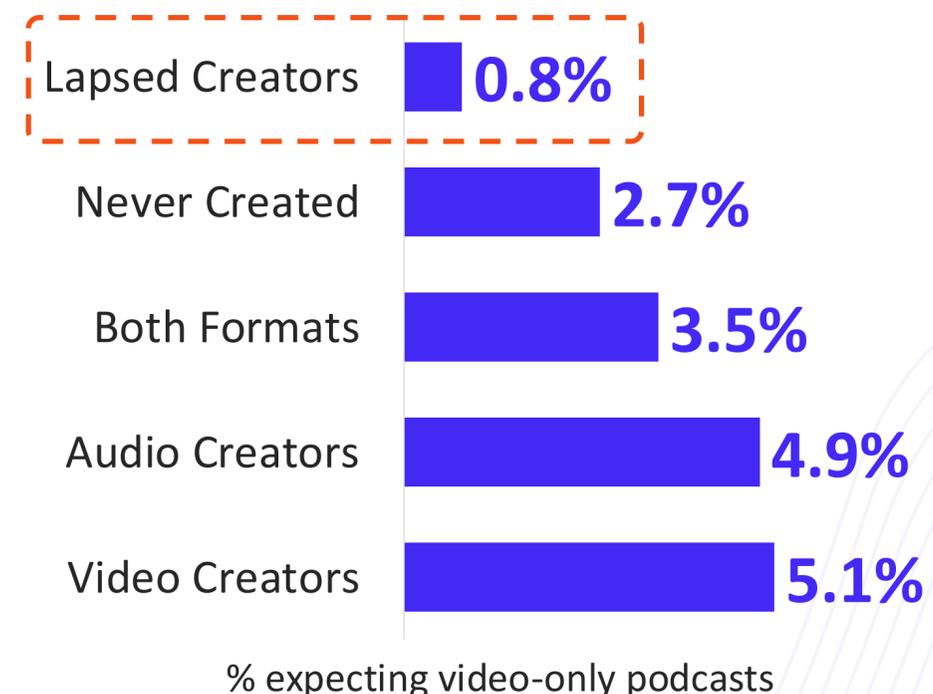
# YouTube Usage and Format Expectations

### YouTube Audio Consumption by Creator Type



*Question: When you use YouTube for podcasts, do you primarily watch the video or just listen to the audio?*

### Video-Only Podcast Expectations by Respondent Group



*Question: When you think of a podcast, do you expect it to be audio or video?*



**0.8%**

of lapsed creators expect a podcast to be video-only

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# Lapsed Creators: Connecting the Signals



## WHAT THEY LIKELY MADE

### Video podcasts\*

- Demographics match **video creators** in **9 of 12** segments
- **36%** weighted similarity to video vs **26%** to audio



## HOW THEY CONSUME

### Audio-first

- Over-index on **7 of 8 audio media types**
- **51%** use YouTube as **audio-only**
- Only **0.8%** expect **video-only** podcasts



## POSSIBLE RESULT

### Format friction

- Higher **production demands** of video
- Creating content that they **would not consume**
- Disconnect between **effort and reward**

Creating **video content** while preferring **audio consumption** may contribute to creator **burnout and abandonment**

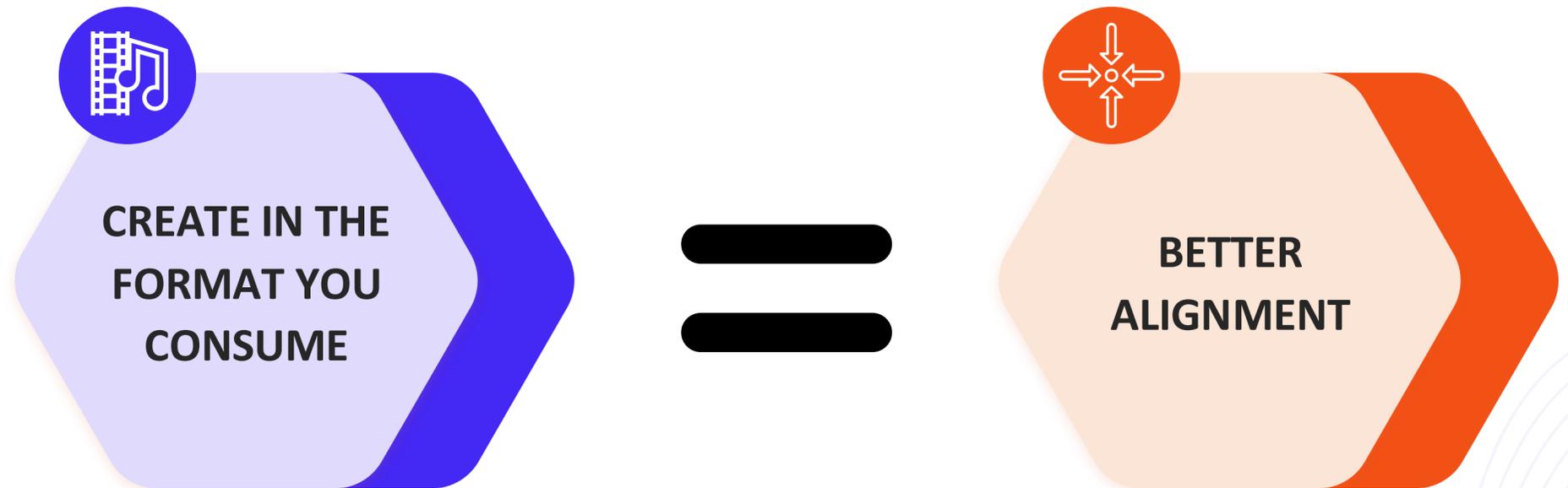
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\***Note:** Format data for lapsed creators was not captured directly; this analysis infers likely production format from demographic patterns.

Format alignment between creation and consumption may be a factor in creator sustainability

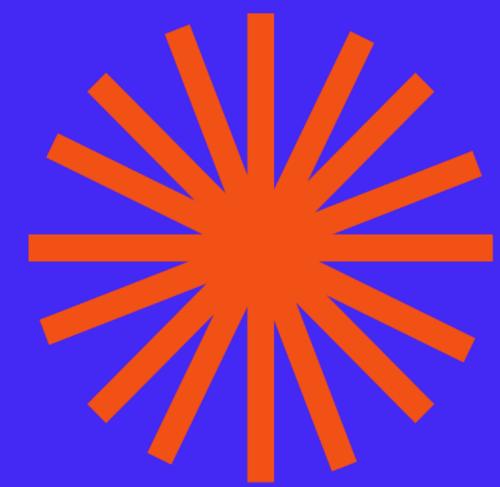
# Format Alignment and Retention



Creators whose production format matches their consumption patterns show different retention characteristics.

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# Implications: What the Data Tells Us

Understanding patterns to support **creator sustainability**



The creator landscape includes **multiple format strategies**—measurement and support systems should reflect this reality

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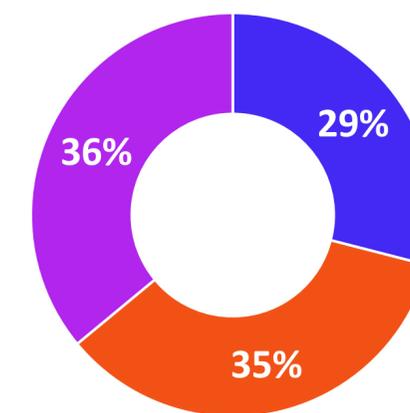
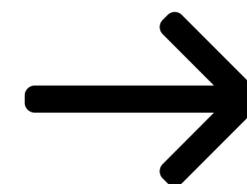
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ESPN Podcasts  
Signal Hill Insights

# The Format Landscape Has Changed

HISTORICAL VIEW

CURRENT REALITY

AUDIO-CENTRIC



- Audio-only
- Video-only
- Multi-format



**Format diversity** is the new normal

Different creator segments face **different challenges**—solutions likely need to be **tailored**

## Platform Considerations



**Format flexibility**  
(support multiple workflows)

1



**Production burden reduction**  
(tools and templates)

2



**Demographic-specific needs**  
(varied barriers)

3



**Gender gap at entry**  
(access and confidence)

4



**High-churn segment support**  
(targeted resources)

5



**Lapsed creator re-engagement**  
(6% opportunity)

6

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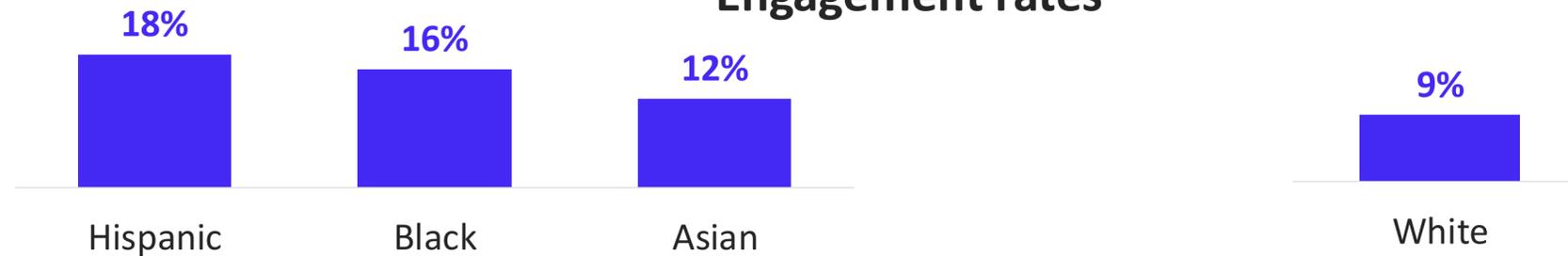
Multicultural communities show **higher engagement rates**—their approaches and needs warrant **attention**

# The Multicultural Creator Opportunity

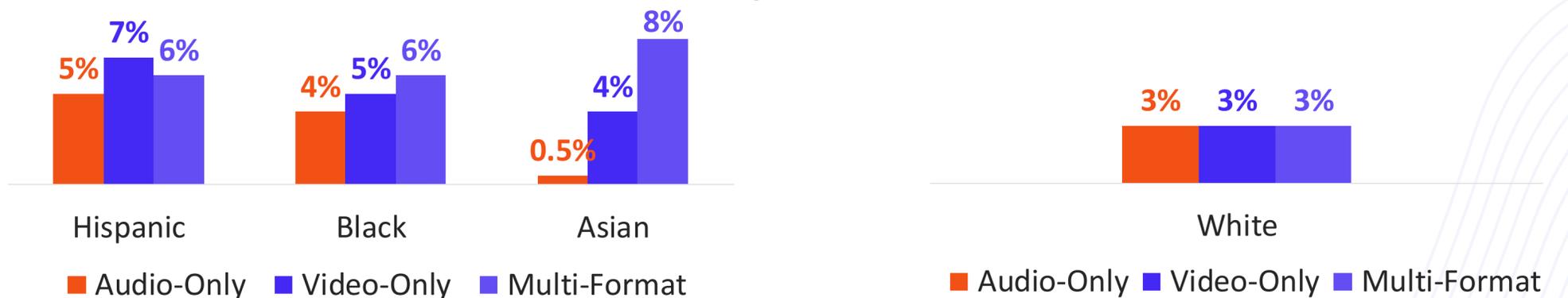
MULTICULTURAL CREATORS

WHITE CREATORS

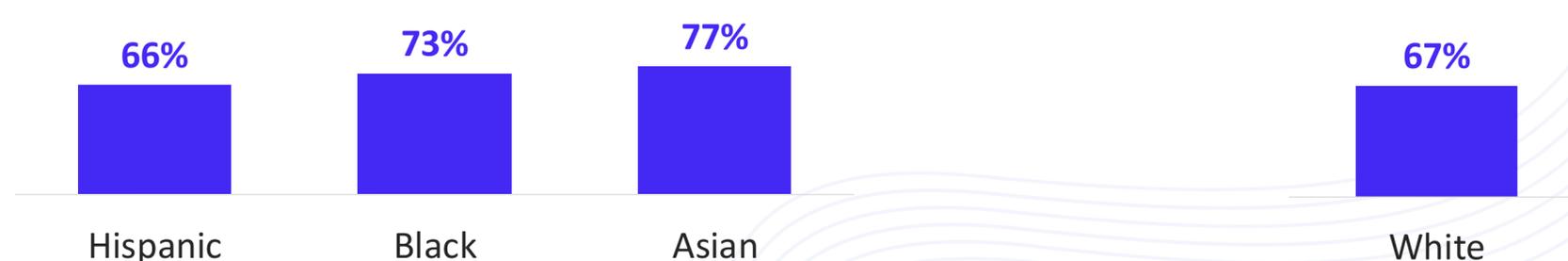
Engagement rates



Format preferences



Retention rates

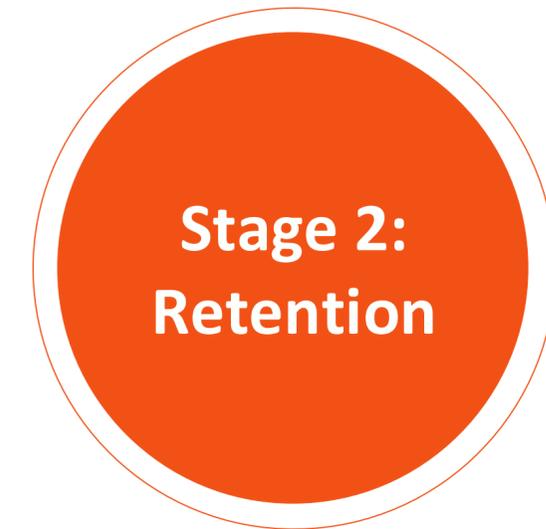
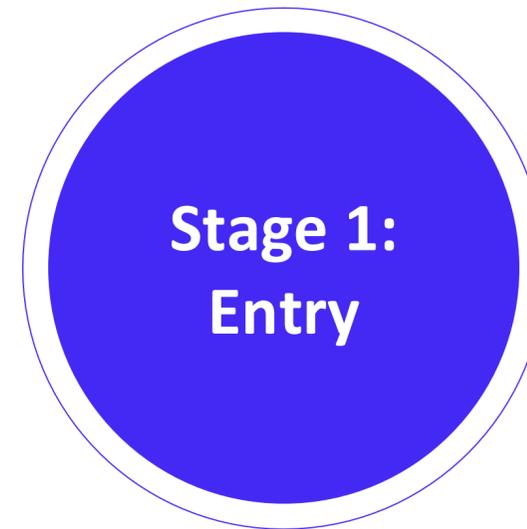


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Different **interventions** may be needed for entry barriers vs. retention challenges

# Gender Patterns at Entry vs. Retention



15% Male vs 8% Female



**GAP**

67% Male vs 69% Female



**COMPARABLE**



The gender gap appears **concentrated at entry**, not sustainability

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This research identifies **patterns**—  
understanding  
mechanisms requires  
**deeper investigation**

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## Questions for Further Research



What specific factors drive **creator abandonment**?



What would bring **lapsed creators** back?



What practices distinguish **sustained creators**?



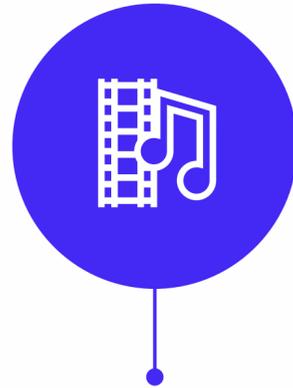
How does **monetization** affect sustainability?



What role does **community** play in retention?

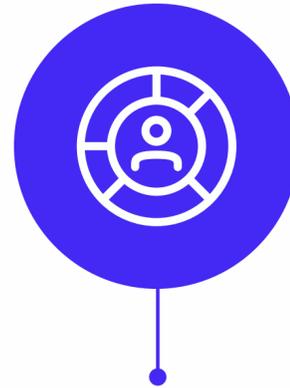


# Conclusion - The Complex Creator Landscape



**Format strategies  
are diverse**

*71% include video,  
65% include audio*



**Demographics  
matter**

*engagement varies  
from 4% to 18%*



**Sustainability is  
challenging**

*32% churn rate*

Supporting creators requires understanding that **different segments** face **different challenges** and adopt **different strategies**

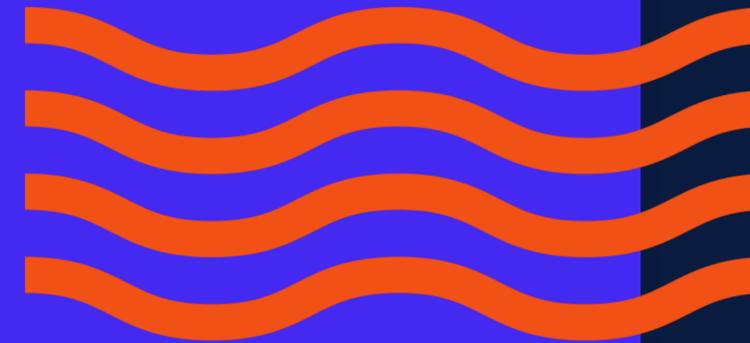
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# Appendices





# Thank you!

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## Full Data Table - Creator Engagement (Podcast Consumers)

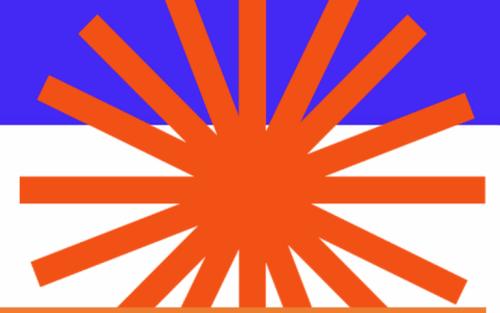
Demographic	Active Creators	Lapsed Creators	Total with Experience	Never Created
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	15%	8%	23%	77%
Female	8%	4%	12%	88%
<b>Age</b>				
18-34	17%	8%	25%	75%
35-54	13%	6%	19%	81%
55+	4%	3%	7%	93%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic	18%	10%	28%	72%
Black	16%	6%	22%	78%
Asian	12%	4%	16%	84%
White	9%	4%	13%	87%
<b>LGBTQ+</b>				
Yes	12%	8%	20%	80%
No	11%	5%	16%	84%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>83%</b>



## Full Data Table - Format Preferences (Podcast Consumers)

Demographic	Audio-Only	Video-Only	Both Formats	Total Active	% Using Video*
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	5%	6%	5%	15%	70%
Female	2%	2%	3%	8%	71%
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	5%	6%	6%	17%	73%
35-54	5%	4%	4%	13%	66%
55+	1%	1%	2%	4%	76%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	5%	7%	6%	18%	74%
Black	4%	5%	6%	16%	73%
Asian	0.5%	4%	8%	12%	96%
White	3%	3%	3%	9%	66%
<b>LGBTQ+</b>					
Yes	4%	4%	4%	12%	64%
No	3%	4%	4%	11%	72%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>71%</b>

\*Note: The "% Using Video" column shows the percentage of active creators who use video (either video-only or both formats).



## Full Data Table - Churn & Retention (Podcast Consumers)

Demographic	Active	Lapsed	Total Ever Created	Churn Rate	Retention Rate
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	15%	8%	23%	33%	67%
Female	8%	4%	12%	31%	69%
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	17%	8%	25%	32%	68%
35-54	13%	6%	19%	31%	69%
55+	4%	3%	7%	40%	60%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	18%	10%	28%	35%	66%
Black	16%	6%	22%	27%	73%
Asian	12%	4%	16%	23%	77%
White	9%	4%	13%	33%	67%
<b>LGBTQ+</b>					
Yes	12%	8%	20%	40%	60%
No	11%	5%	16%	32%	68%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>68%</b>



## Full Data Table - Multi-Format Cross-Tab Data (Podcast Consumers)

Demographic	Creates Video (Total)	Also Creates Audio	Audio Cross-Format %*
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	11%	5%	46%
Female	5%	3%	59%
<b>Age</b>			
18-34	13%	6%	49%
35-54	9%	4%	50%
55+	3%	2%	57%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Hispanic	14%	6%	46%
Black	12%	6%	55%
Asian	12%	8%	66%
White	6%	3%	52%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>51%</b>

\*Note: The "Audio Cross-Format %" column shows the percentage of video creators who also create audio content.