



The Podcast Landscape 2026

Part One: Core Podcast Metrics • September 2026
From Sounds Profitable

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How the study was conducted



The Podcast Landscape is Sounds Profitable's annual study of how Americans consume podcasts.



This wave surveyed **5,473 US adults 18 and older** in August 2026, weighted to US Census targets.



Year-over-year comparisons use the 2025 wave (n=5,034), fielded with the same methodology.



This report covers core usage. Discovery, advertising, content, and AI are covered in separate reports.

BASES

Named by population, not sample size

FIGURES

All figures are population-weighted; percentages are rounded to whole numbers.

WORDING

"Consumers", never "listeners"

The Podcast Landscape 2026, Sounds Profitable with Signal Hill Insights.

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Key findings

- 1** 74% of US adults have consumed a podcast; 55% did so in the past month, 39% in the past week. Reach has changed very little since 2024.
- 2** Netflix became the third most-named podcast platform in its first year carrying podcasts, behind YouTube and Spotify and ahead of Apple Podcasts.
- 3** Podcast-native apps continued to lose share: 15% of consumers now call one their most-used platform, down from 19% in 2025. Apple Podcasts fell from 11% to 8%.

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Key findings

- 4** Video continued to grow inside a stable audience: 44% of consumers watched a video podcast in the past week, up from 40%.
- 5** The typical weekly consumer spent an unchanged 4 hours a week with podcasts; the average slipped from 6.3 to 5.7 hours as very long listening weeks became rarer with the shift to video.
- 6** Co-consumption is rising: 40% of consumers at least occasionally consume podcasts with other people, up from 37% in 2025.

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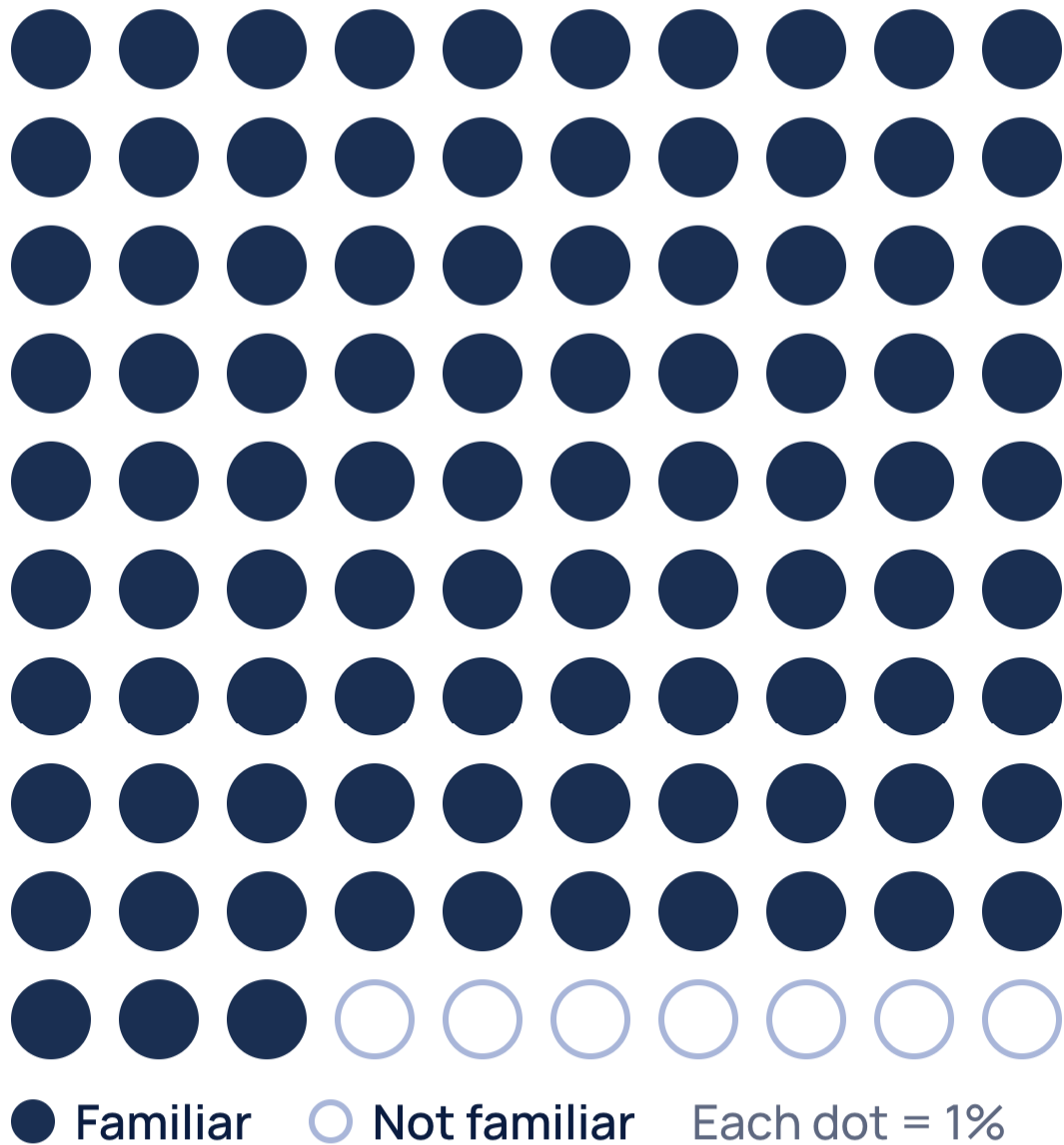


93% of US adults know the term “podcast”

Familiarity with the term “podcast”, % of US adults

93%

of US adults are familiar with the term “podcast”



Year over year



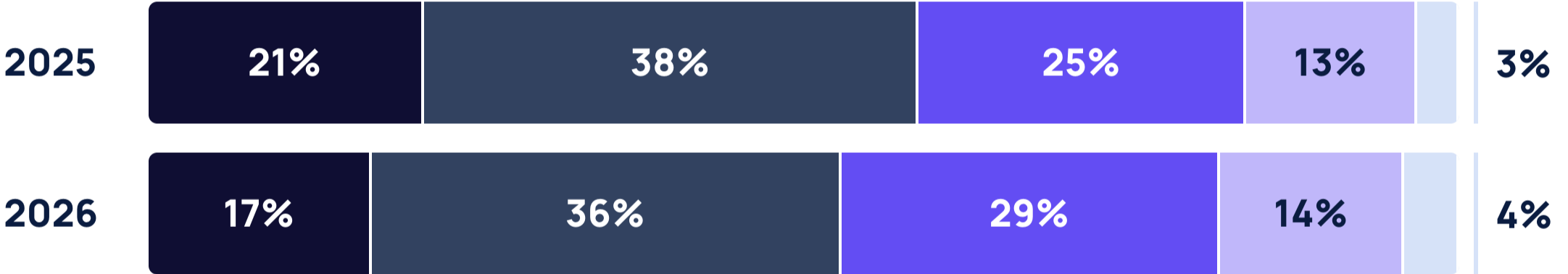
Base: all US adults. Population-weighted.

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Most Americans
no longer expect
a podcast to be
audio-only

What people expect a podcast to be



- Audio-only
- Usually audio-only, but may be video
- May be audio-only or video
- Usually video, but may be audio-only
- Video-only

2025	2026
21%	17%
38%	36%
25%	29%
13%	14%
3%	4%

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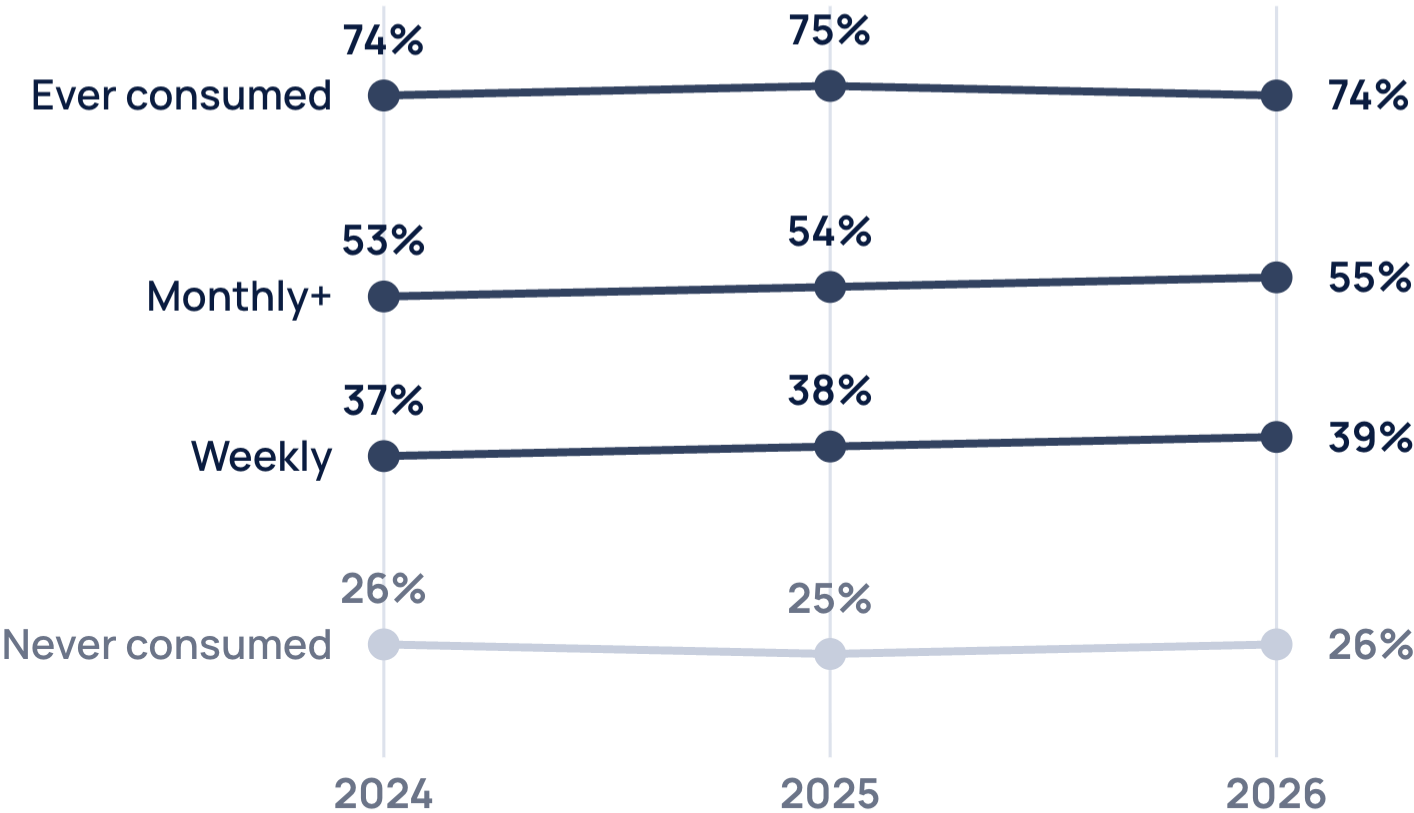
Base: US adults familiar with the term “podcast”. Population-weighted.

Reach has changed
very little since 2024

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Recency of podcast consumption, % of US adults, 2024-2026



Most recent podcast consumption, 2025 and 2026

	Past week	Past 30 days	Past 12 months	12+ months ago	Never
2025	38%	17%	13%	8%	25%
2026	39%	16%	10%	8%	26%

Base: all US adults; 2024 figures from Podcast Landscape 2024. Population-weighted.

Weekly consumers
average 5.7 hours of
podcasts a week

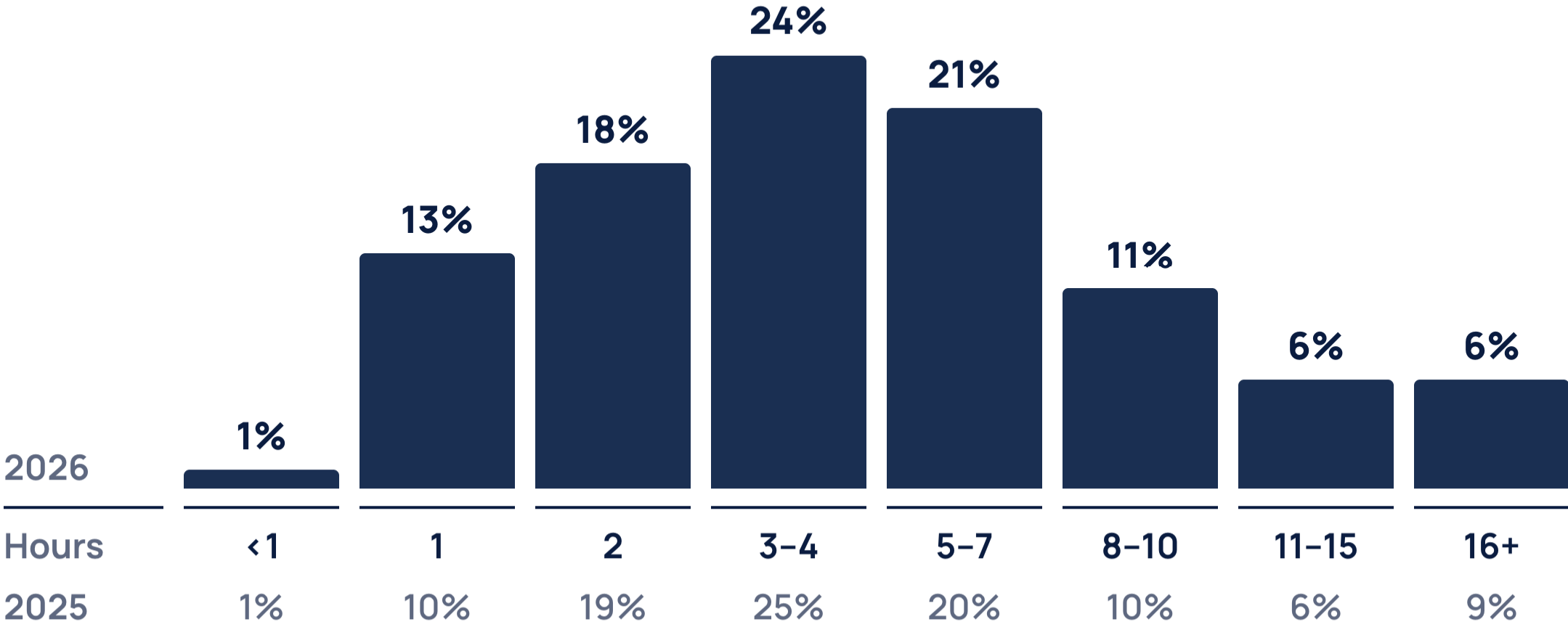
Hours of podcasts in the past week

5.7

mean hours in 2026
2025: 6.3

4.0

median hours in 2026
2025: 4.0



Base: weekly podcast consumers. Population-weighted.

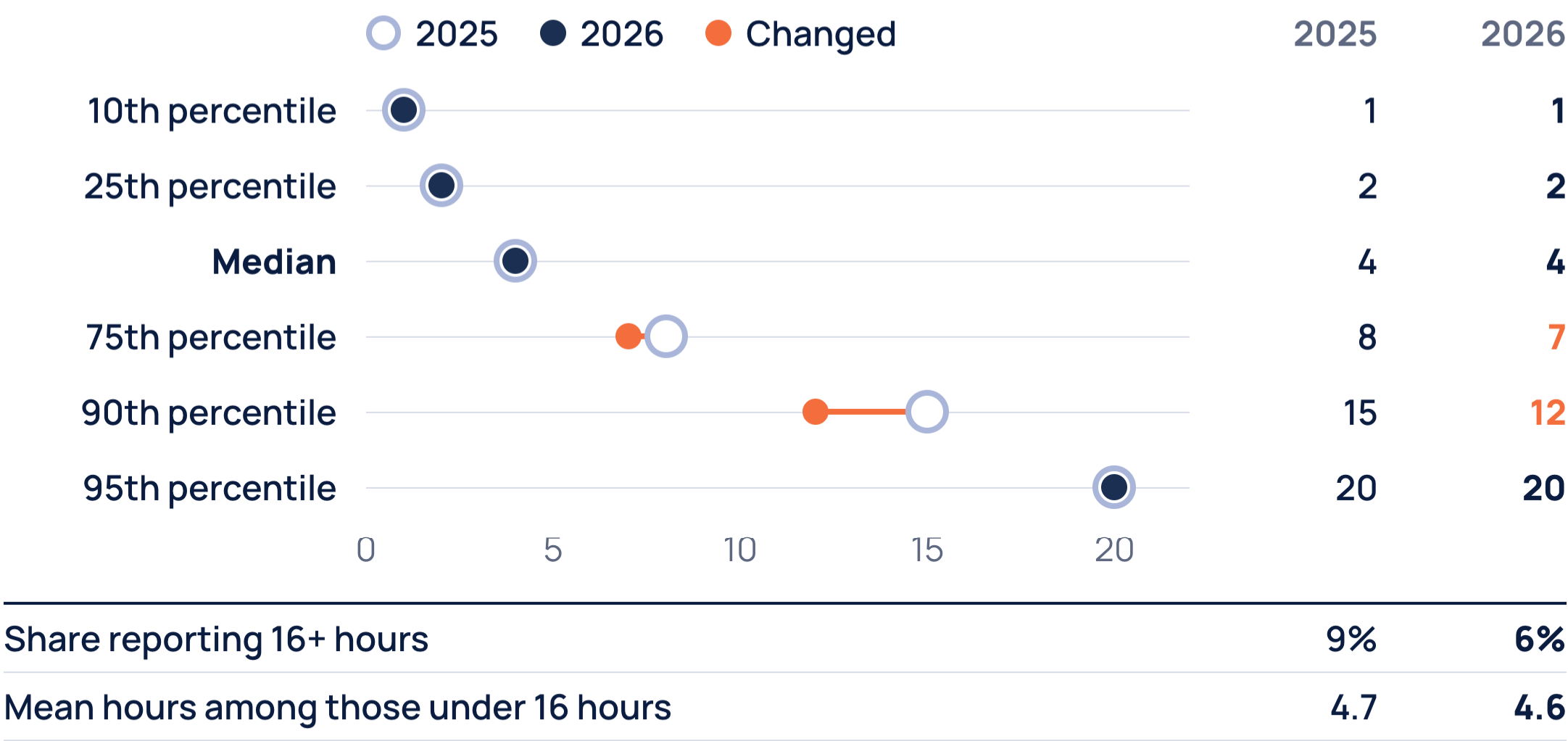
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The typical consumer's hours did not change

- The median weekly consumer: 4 hours in 2025, 4 hours in 2026.
- Most of the decline in the average comes from a smaller share reporting 16 or more hours.

Weekly hours by percentile, weekly podcast consumers



The decline appears within every tenure group, so it is not explained by the influx of newer consumers.

Base: weekly podcast consumers. Population-weighted.

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Audio-focused consumers' hours held steady; the decline is on the video side

Mean weekly hours, weekly podcast consumers



	2025	2026
Share of weekly consumers in the video group	72%	77%

Very long listening weeks are a background-audio behavior. Watching is a foreground activity, and as more consumption moves to video and the television, extreme weekly hours become rarer — while the typical consumer's time is unchanged.

Self-reported hours; some of the change at the high end may reflect how people estimate ambient listening versus on-screen sessions.

Base: weekly podcast consumers, split by whether they watched a video podcast in the past week. Population-weighted.

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44% of podcast consumers watched a video podcast in the past week, up from 40%

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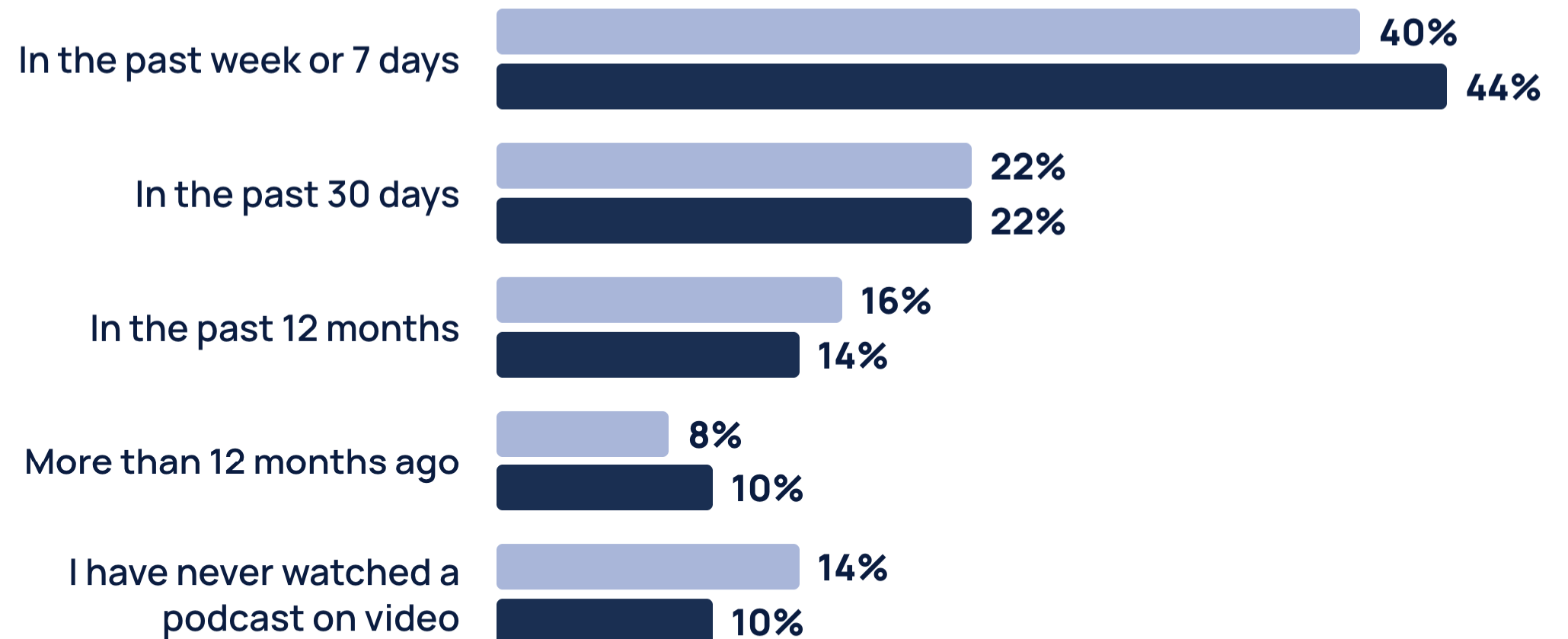


ESPN Podcasts



Most recent video podcast consumption

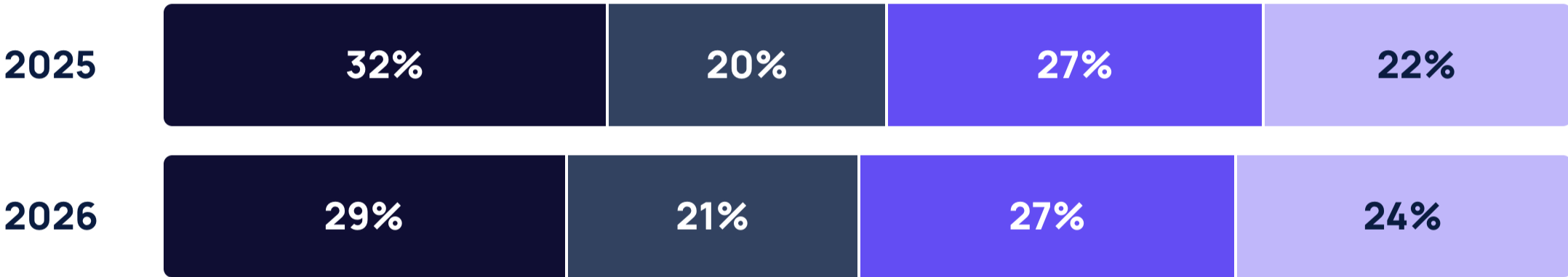
2025 2026



Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted.

Among past-week video podcast viewers, video is roughly half of all podcast time and largely flat year over year

Share of podcast time spent on video



← Mostly video

Mostly audio →

Share of podcast time on video		2025	2026
76-100%		32%	29%
51-75%		20%	21%
25-50%		27%	27%
0-24%		22%	24%

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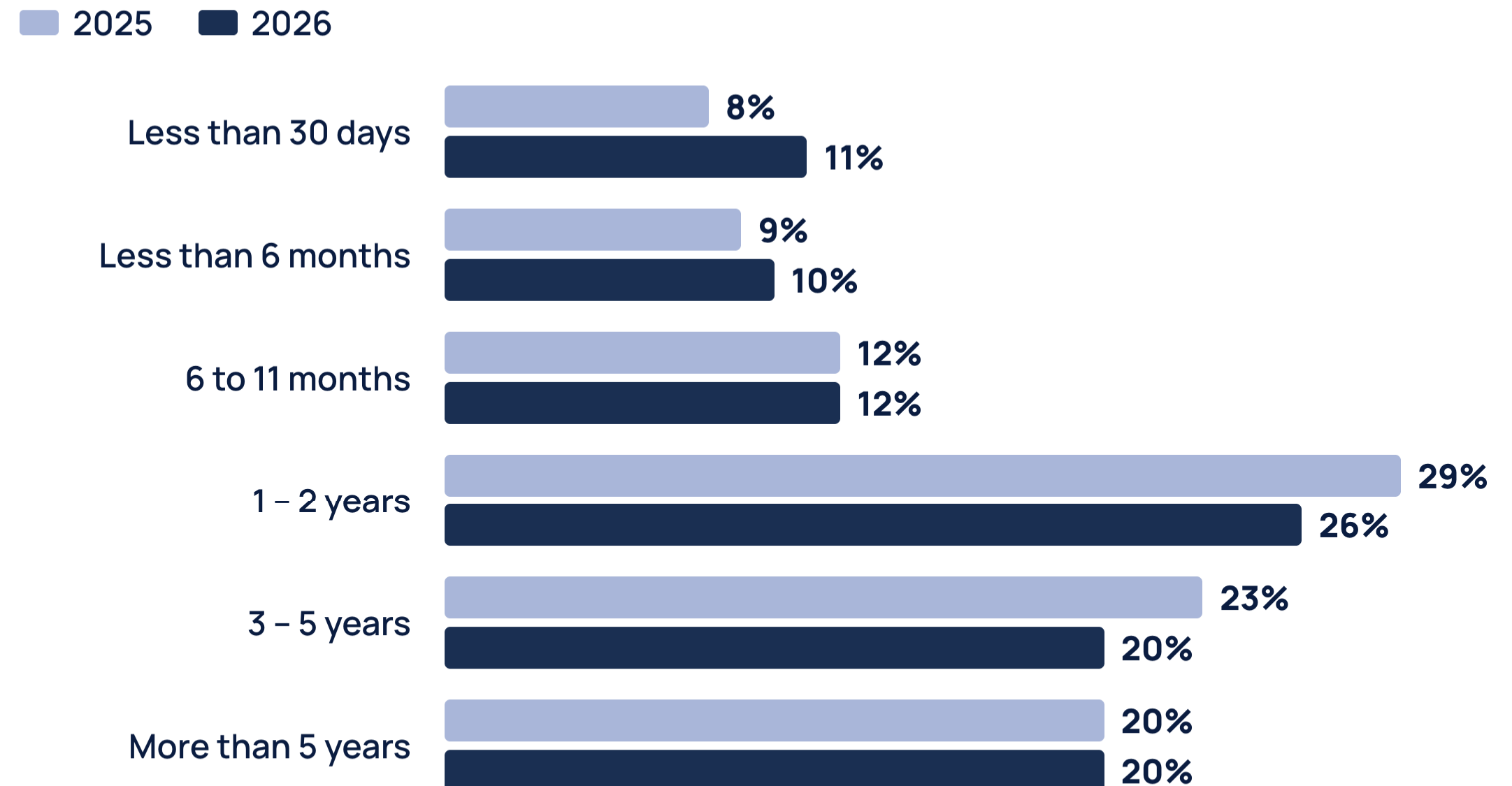
2025 collected banded responses; 2026 collected a 0-100 slider, banded here to match.
Base: consumers who watched video podcasts in the past week. Population-weighted.

34% of podcast consumers started within the past year

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How long have you been consuming podcasts?



34%

started less than one year ago in 2026
2025: 28%

Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted.

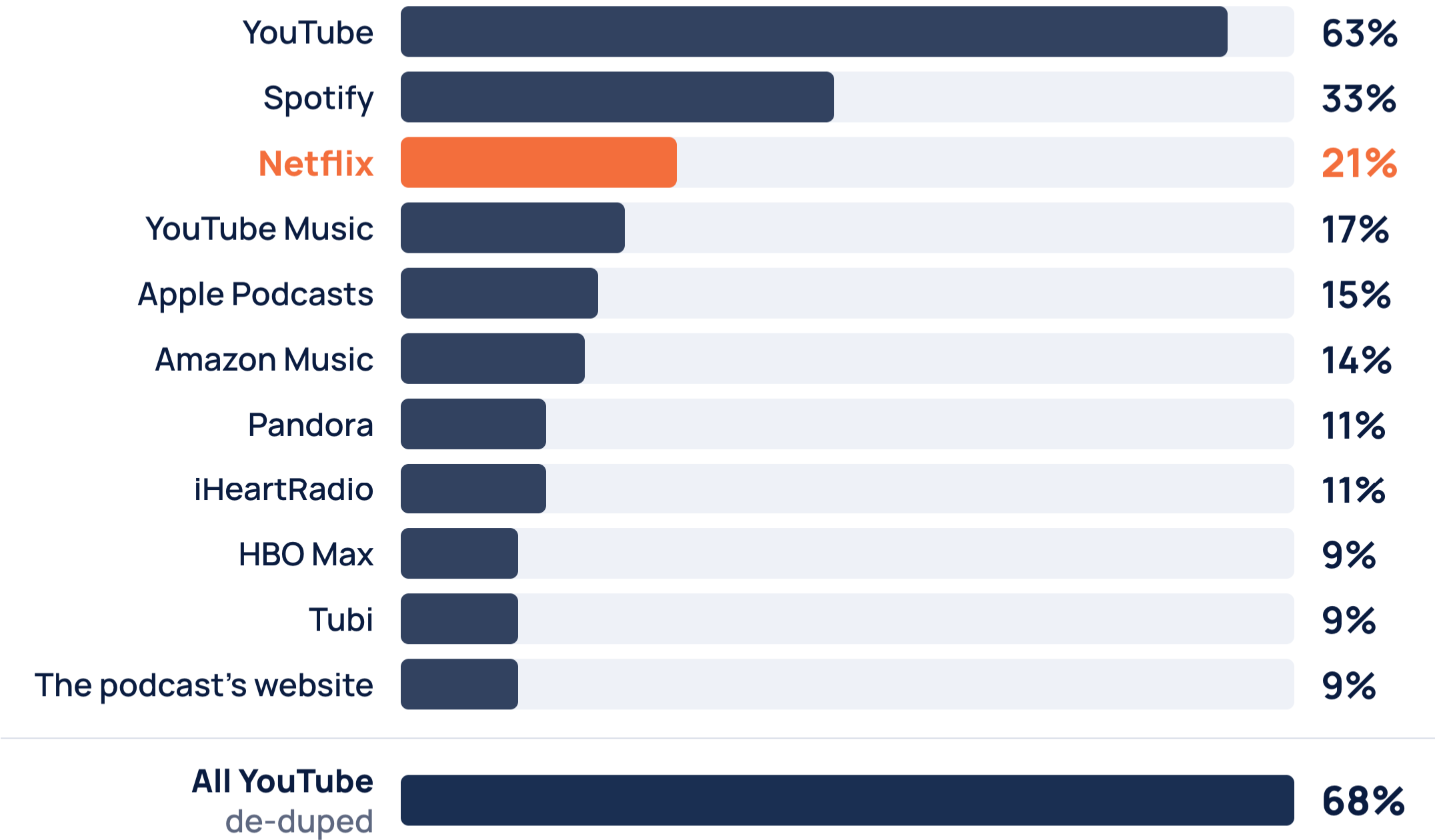
Netflix is the third most-named podcast platform

“Which apps or services have you used to consume podcasts in the last 12 months?”
Multi-select.

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Platforms named for podcast consumption, last 12 months



This question is new in 2026, so no year-over-year comparison is shown.
Netflix introduced podcasts in 2026; this is its first year in the category.

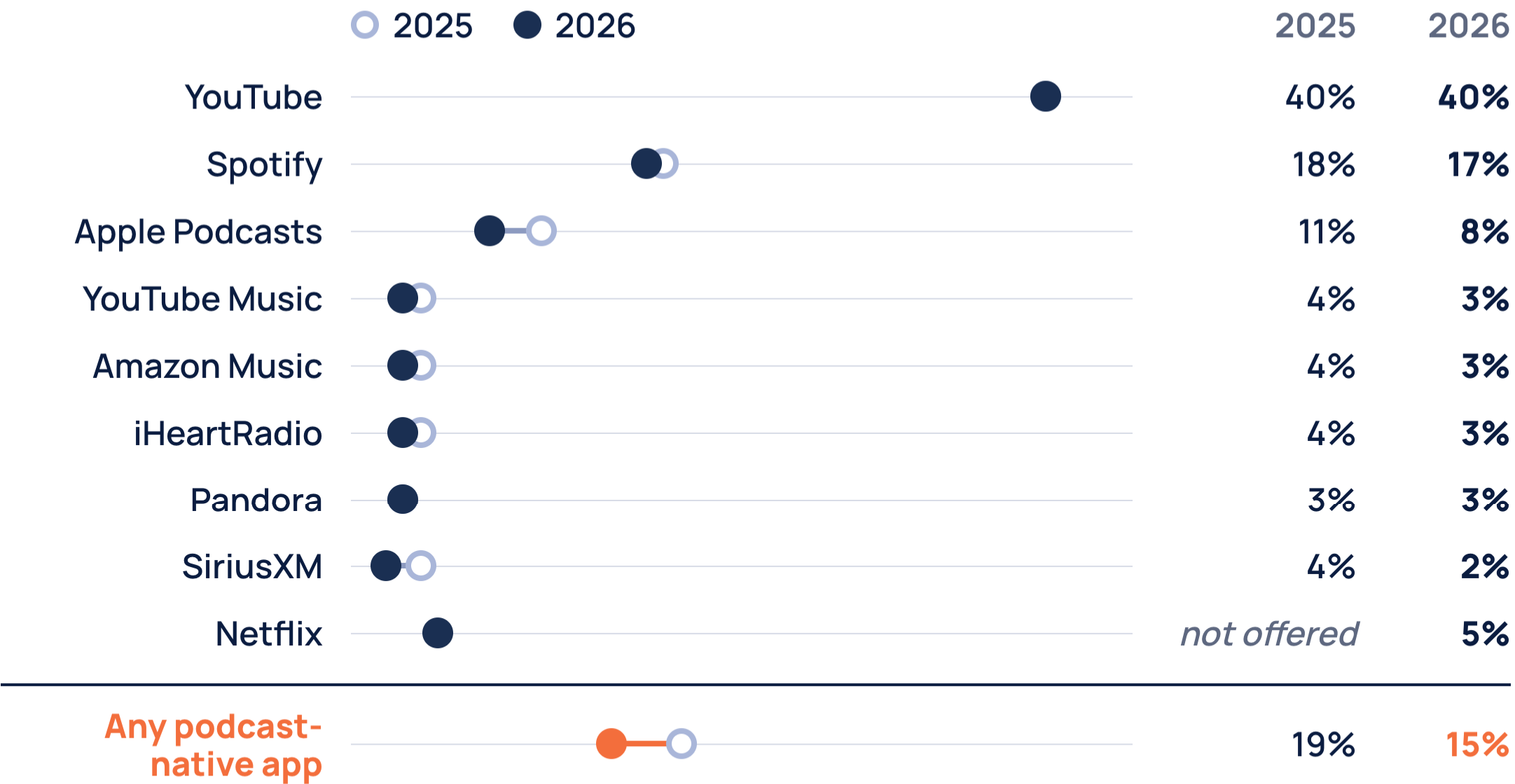
Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted. Multiple responses allowed.

Podcast-native apps continue to lose share as the main platform

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Most-used platform for podcasts



The 2026 response list added Netflix, Tubi, Apple TV, and HBO Max, which mechanically dilutes other options slightly. “Podcast-native” = Apple Podcasts, Pocket Casts, Overcast, Podcast Addict, Spreaker, TuneIn, NPR, SoundCloud, or the podcast’s own website.

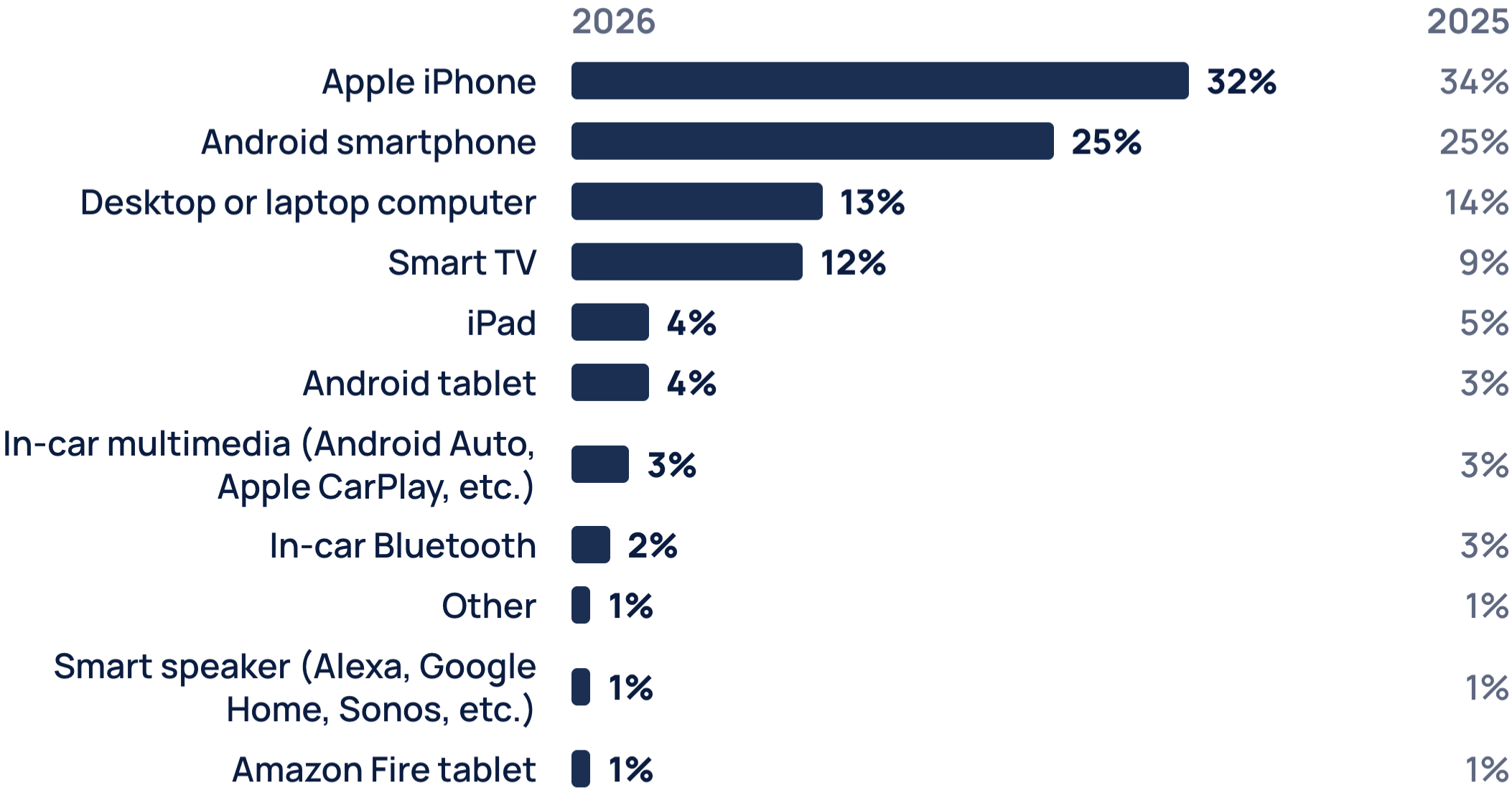
Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted.

The smartphone remains the primary podcast consumption device

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Device used most often for podcasts



Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted.

Smart TV is the only device gaining share

Smartphones remain the majority device at 57%. Smart TV rose from 8% to 12% across the three waves; every other device is flat or slightly down.

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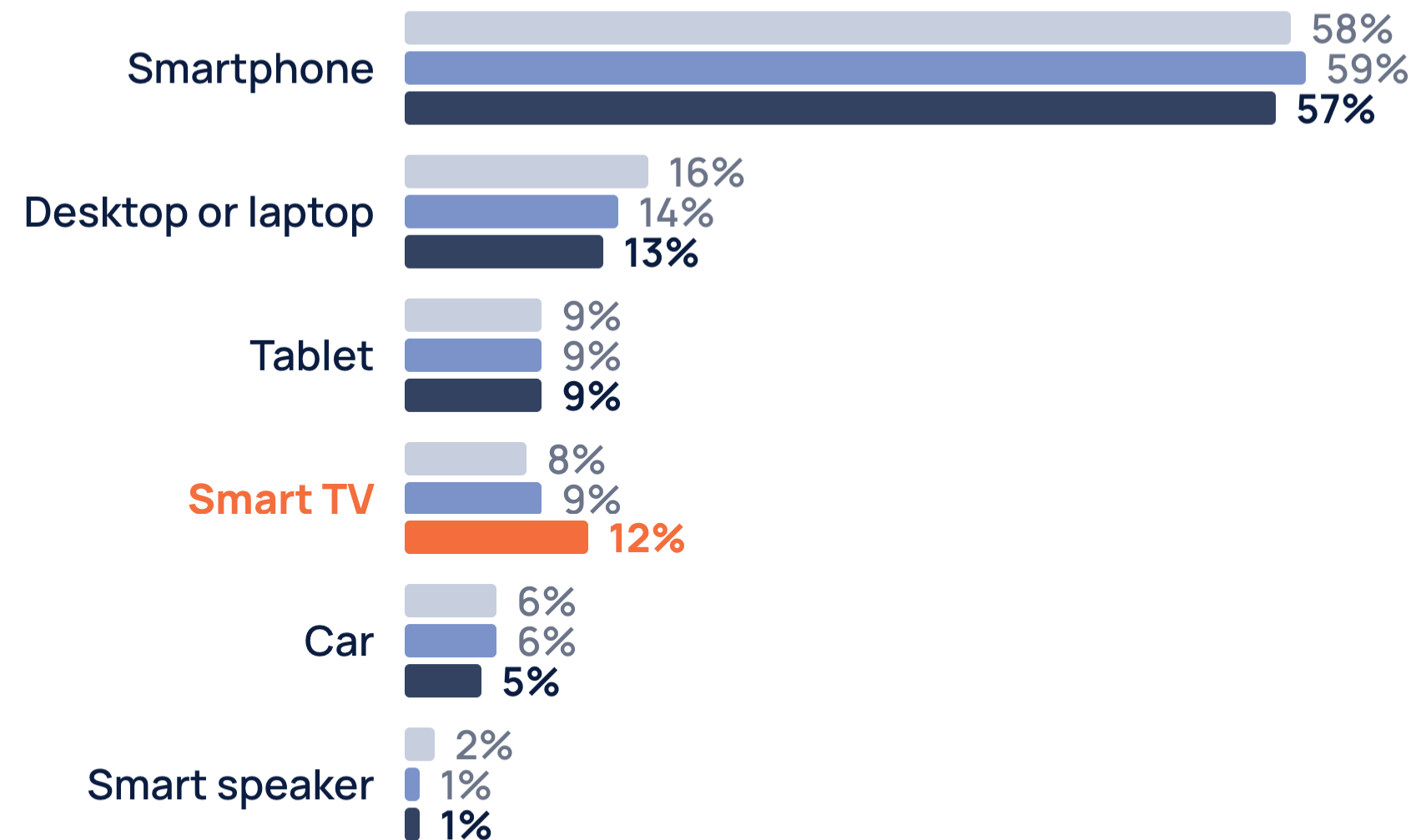


SiriusXM PODCAST NETWORK

SignalHill
Insights

Most-used device, share of ever-consumers

2024 2025 2026

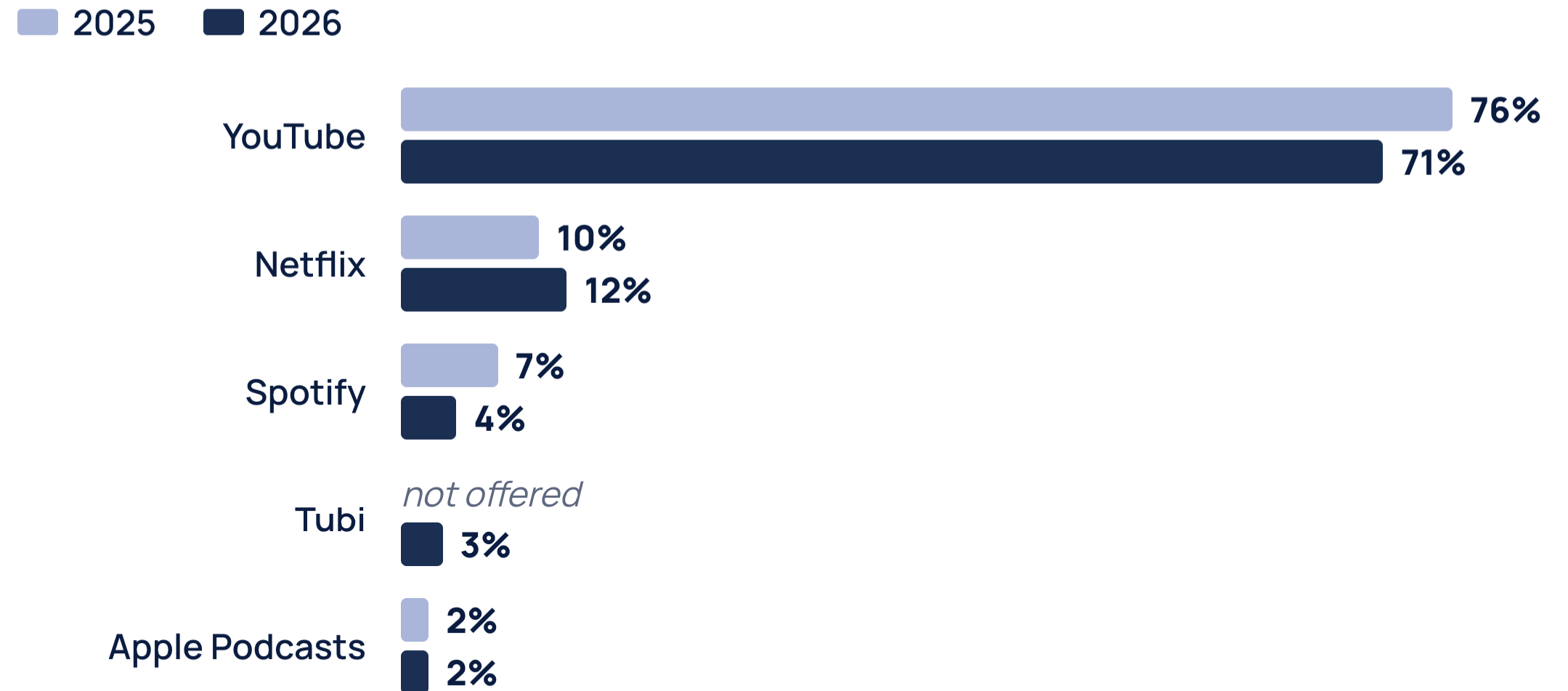


Smart TV as most-used device: 8% → 9% → 12%. It has closed on desktop or laptop, which fell from 16% to 13% over the same period.

Base: ever-consumers of podcasts, 2024–2026. Population-weighted.

YouTube leads podcast use on smart TVs by a wide margin

Most-used smart-TV app for podcasts



Base: consumers who use more than one app for podcasts on a smart TV. Population-weighted.

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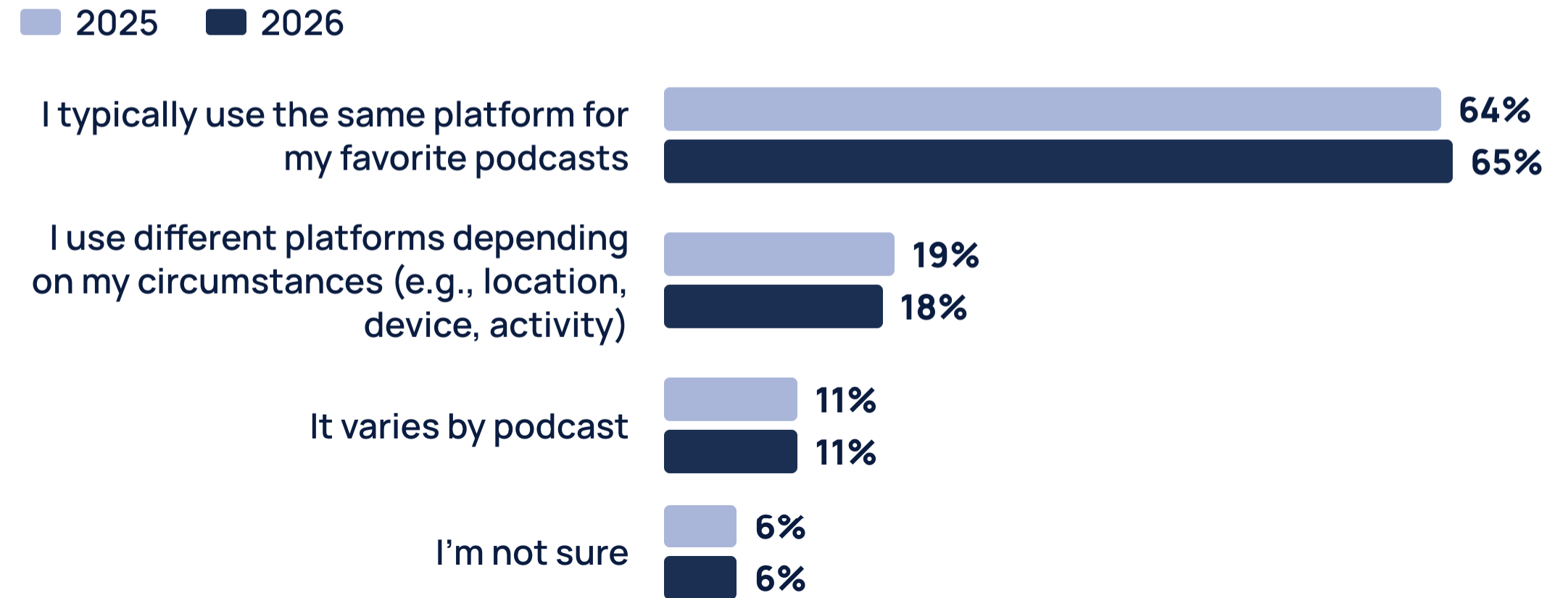


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Most consumers stick to one platform for their favorite shows

Platform use for favorite podcasts



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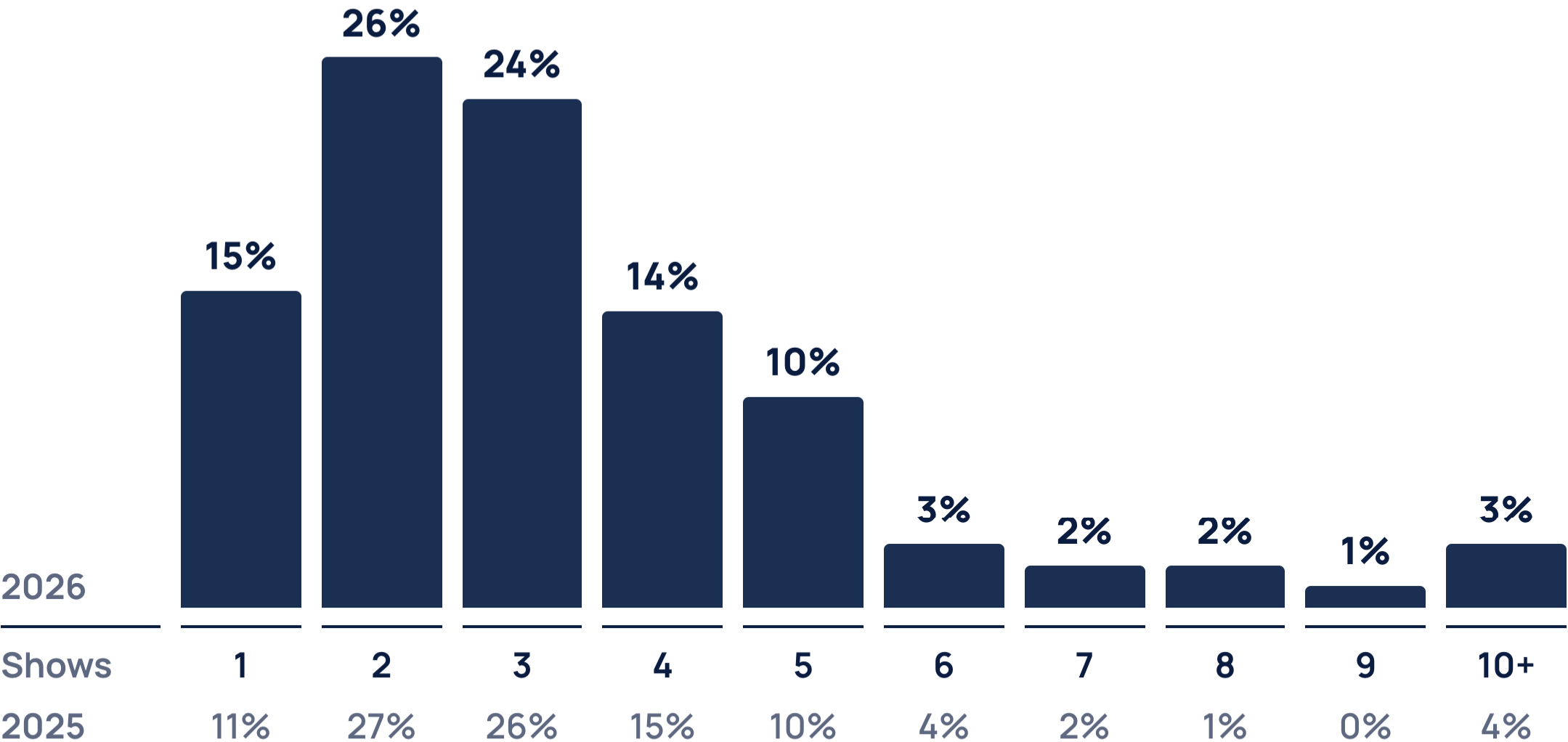
Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted.

The typical monthly consumer regularly follows two or three shows

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Number of podcasts followed regularly



Base: monthly+ podcast consumers. Population-weighted.

Limited-series podcasts are consumed by a large minority

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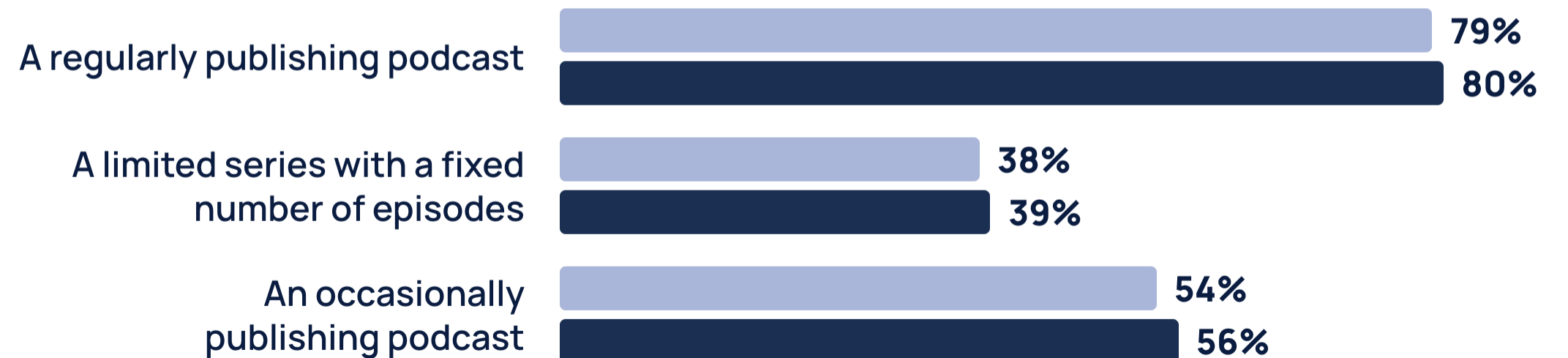


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Currently watch or listen to... (% yes)

2025 2026



71%

of limited-series consumers look for another podcast to replace a finished series (2026)
2025: 75%

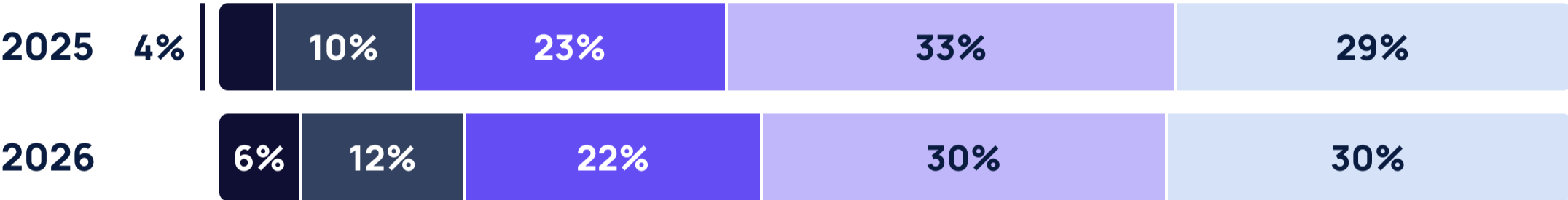
Base: consumers who consumed a podcast in the past 12 months; replacement figure among limited-series consumers. Population-weighted.

Co-consumption is rising: 40% of consumers at least occasionally consume podcasts with others

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How often consumers consume podcasts with other people



- Always
- Most of the time
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

	2025	2026
Always	4%	6%
Most of the time	10%	12%
Occasionally	23%	22%
Rarely	33%	30%
Never	29%	30%

40%

at least occasionally in 2026
2025: 37%

Number of other people present

Others present	2025	2026
1	73%	70%
2	19%	20%
3	6%	6%
4	1%	2%
5 or more	1%	1%

Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Number of others present: consumers who ever consume podcasts with others. Population-weighted.

Motivations for consuming podcasts remain largely unchanged from 2025

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% rating each benefit very or somewhat important

	2026	2025
Listen to discussions on topics of interest	79%	83%
Something to listen to in the car or while traveling	64%	66%
Something to listen to while walking or exercising	62%	62%
Audio to keep me company	59%	60%
Have audio to accompany household chores	58%	58%
Get news or political analysis	56%	58%
Learn about new hobbies	55%	52%
Voices and conversation to keep me company when I'm alone	54%	52%
Get business news and information	51%	52%
Hear programs that accompany TV series or movies	43%	40%
Hear radio programs on demand	42%	41%
Listen to audio dramas	37%	35%
Hear from celebrities	34%	32%

Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted.

Monthly podcast consumers are younger and more diverse than US adults overall; 55+ remains a growth opportunity

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	All US adults	Monthly+ consumers	Index	vs. 100
Age				
18-24	11%	12%	109	
25-34	18%	23%	128	
35-44	15%	18%	120	
45-54	17%	18%	106	
55-64	19%	17%	89	
65+	20%	12%	60	
Gender				
Men	49%	54%	110	
Women	51%	46%	90	
Race and ethnicity				
Hispanic/Latino	18%	21%	117	
Black	14%	15%	107	
White	82%	80%	98	
Education, income, household				
Bachelor's degree or higher	34%	39%	115	
Household income \$100k+	21%	24%	114	
Children under 18 at home	31%	38%	123	

Index = monthly+ consumers ÷ all adults × 100. Index 100 matches the adult population.

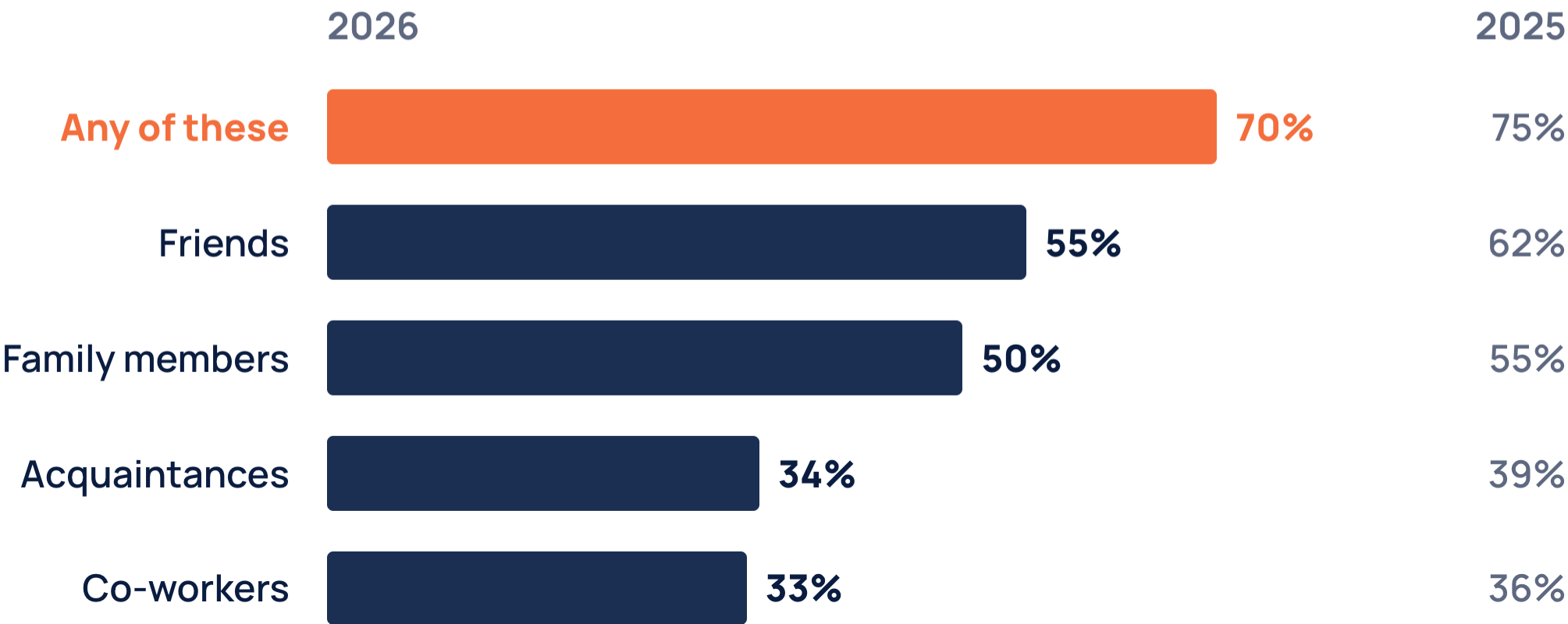
Base: all US adults; monthly+ consumers. 2026 only. Population-weighted.

70% of Americans know someone who consumes podcasts

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People in your social circle who consume podcasts (% yes)



Base: all US adults. Population-weighted.

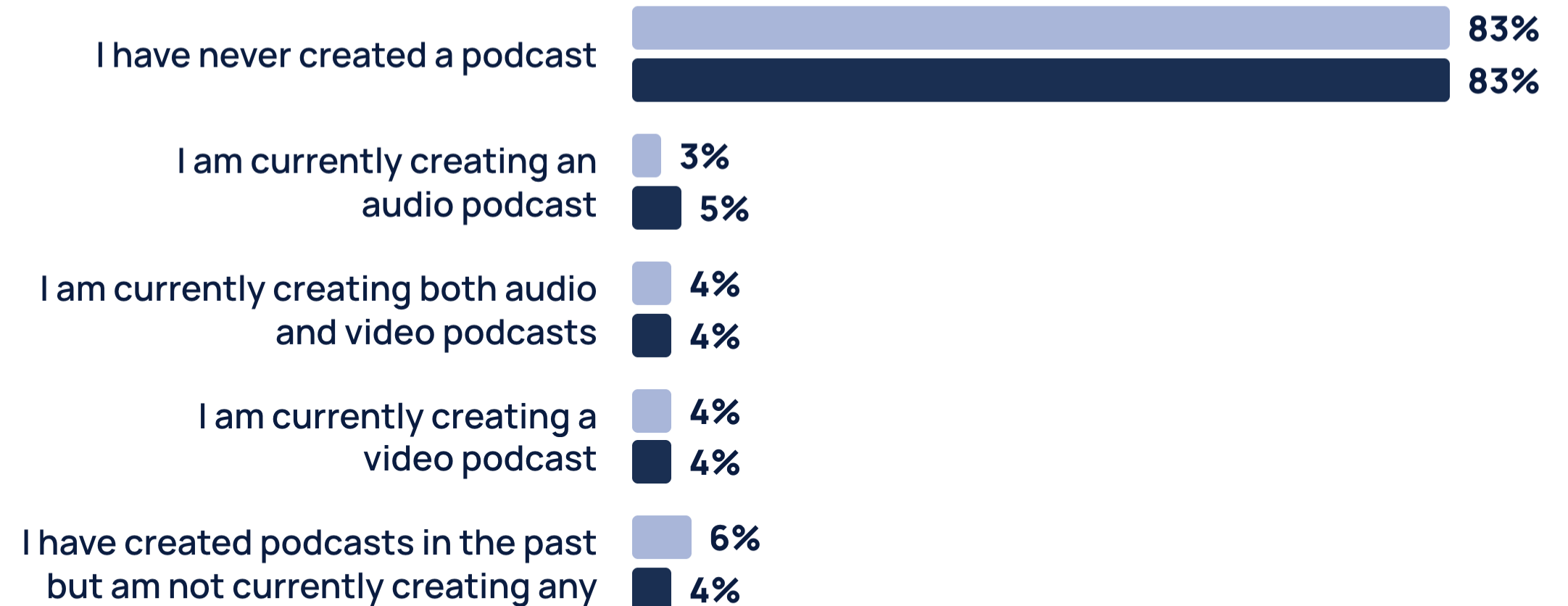
17% of podcast consumers say they have created a podcast

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Podcast creation

2025 2026



Self-reported; treat as an upper bound on active creators.

Base: ever-consumers of podcasts. Population-weighted.

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- Podcasting and AI
- The Role of Clips
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