

Evolving Role of Comms in 2024

According to 1,000 in-house and agency comms professionals



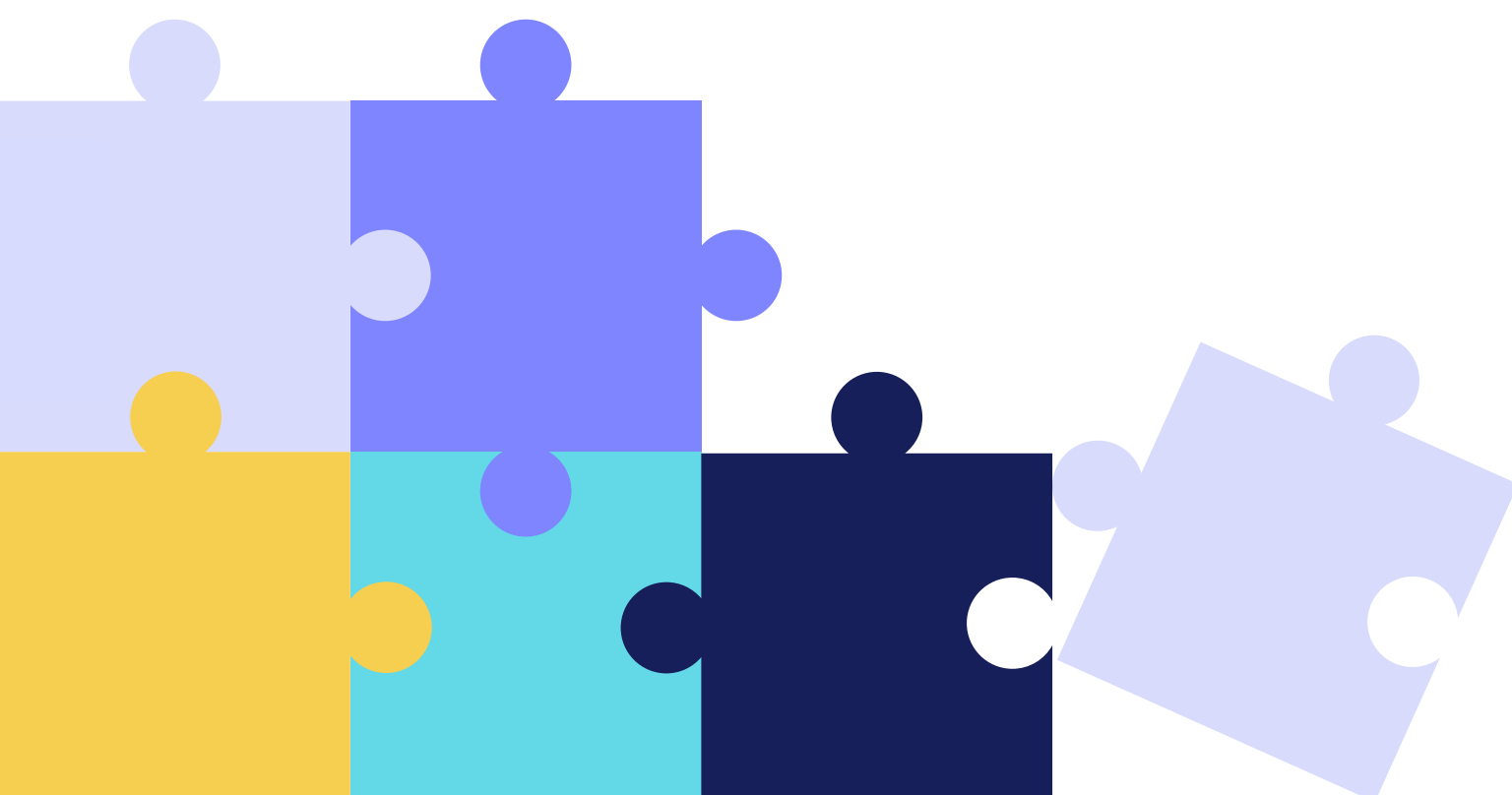
Introduction



While the media landscape continues to change ([particularly at the hands of AI](#)), so does the role of communications.

How so? We asked 1,000 communicators what their job entails, their priorities, and who they report to at the leadership level.

Memo's second annual Evolving Role of Communications report examines where comms leaders sit relative to the rest of their business, how their scope is changing year-over-year, priorities, and what it all signals for the future of the role.



Methodology

Memo partnered with research panel company Sago on an online survey conducted from February 28, 2024 to March 11, 2024 of 1,000 respondents working full time in communications at a company (either in-house or at an agency) with over 100 employees.

Key Takeaways

- 1 Comms teams now report directly to CEOs. There was a 34% increase in comms teams reporting to CEOs and a 26% *decrease* in reporting to marketing since 2023.
- 2 Comms continues to expand scope beyond media relations. Over 50% say they also own executive comms, internal comms, and marketing campaigns.
- 3 Pros are more focused on amplifying key messages than changing perceptions.
- 4 Agencies & in-house comms teams are closely aligned on priorities, but we're seeing more variations in top 3 priorities between the 2 groups compared to 2023.
- 5 Gen Z and Millennial comms pros have less confidence in the accuracy of traditional comms metrics than their older counterparts.

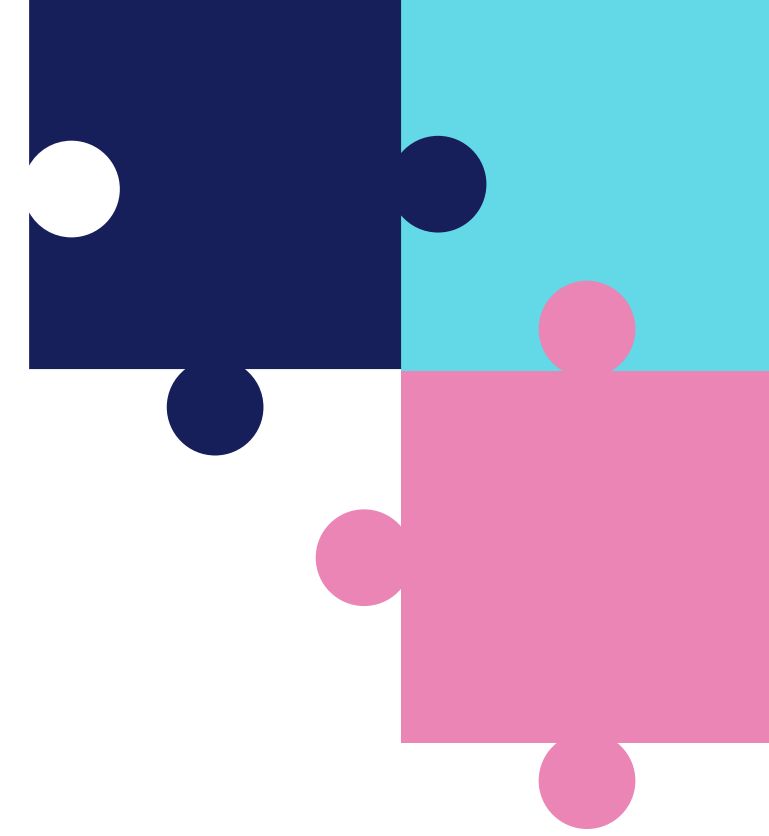


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Reporting Structure

Over 50% of communications leaders say comms now rolls directly up to the CEO.

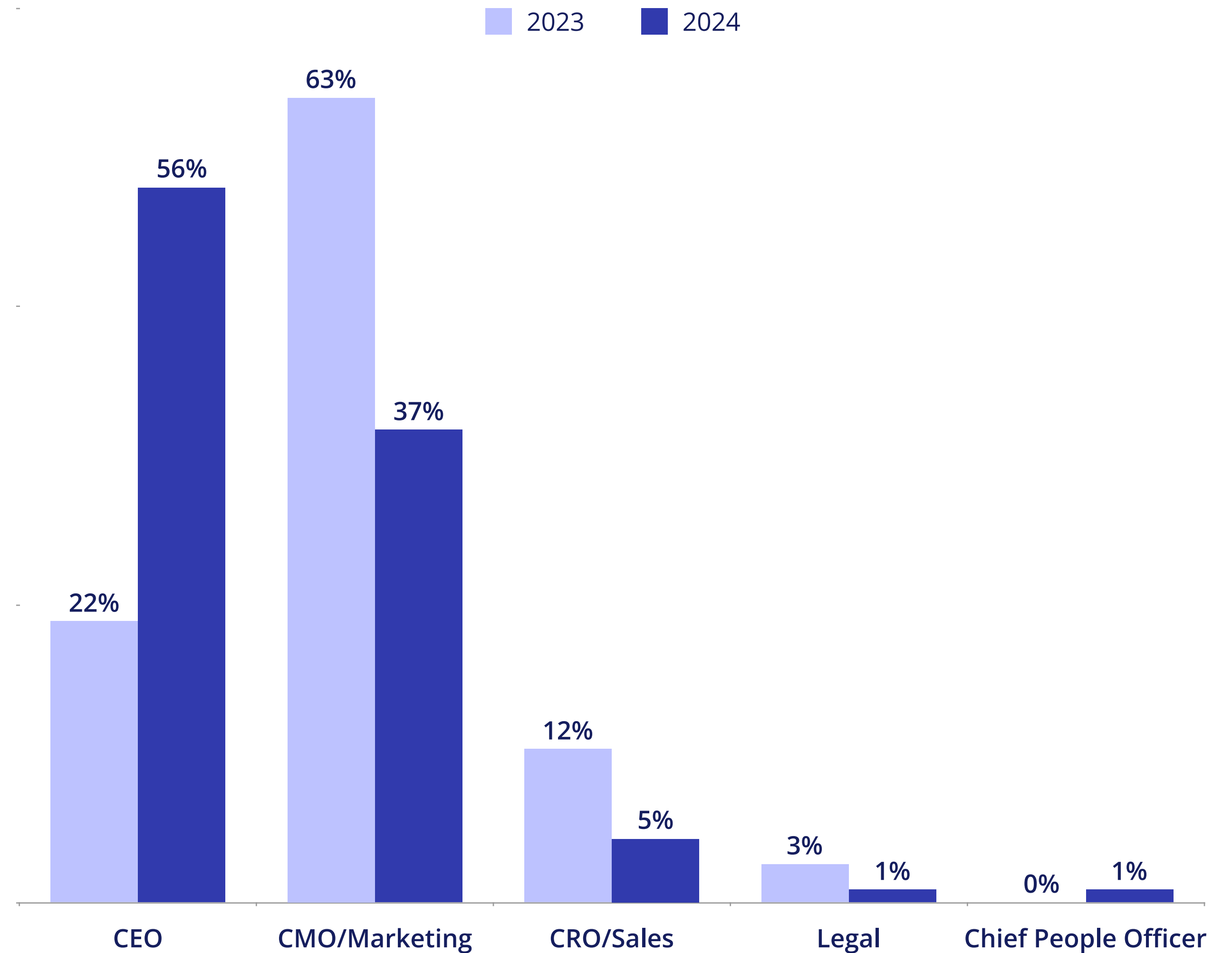
Momentum is pulling communications teams away from marketing and directly into the CEO's line of sight. [Fumbled comms strategies are impacting big brand bottom lines](#), bringing even more visibility to communications as a mission critical business function. Business leaders are paying attention.

Reporting structure for comms saw a major shift in the last year. In 2024, 56% of comms teams say they roll up to the CEO directly, up from 22% in 2023. Comms teams reporting to marketing leaders dropped to 37% in 2024 from 63% in 2023.

In 2023, respondents at the VP level and above said comms teams reporting to the CEO and to marketing was more or less an even split, with 85% reporting to one of the two. In 2024, 59% say comms reports directly to the CEO—a 15% increase from 2023.

Furthermore, there was little fluctuation (less than 4%) in responses between companies different sizes.

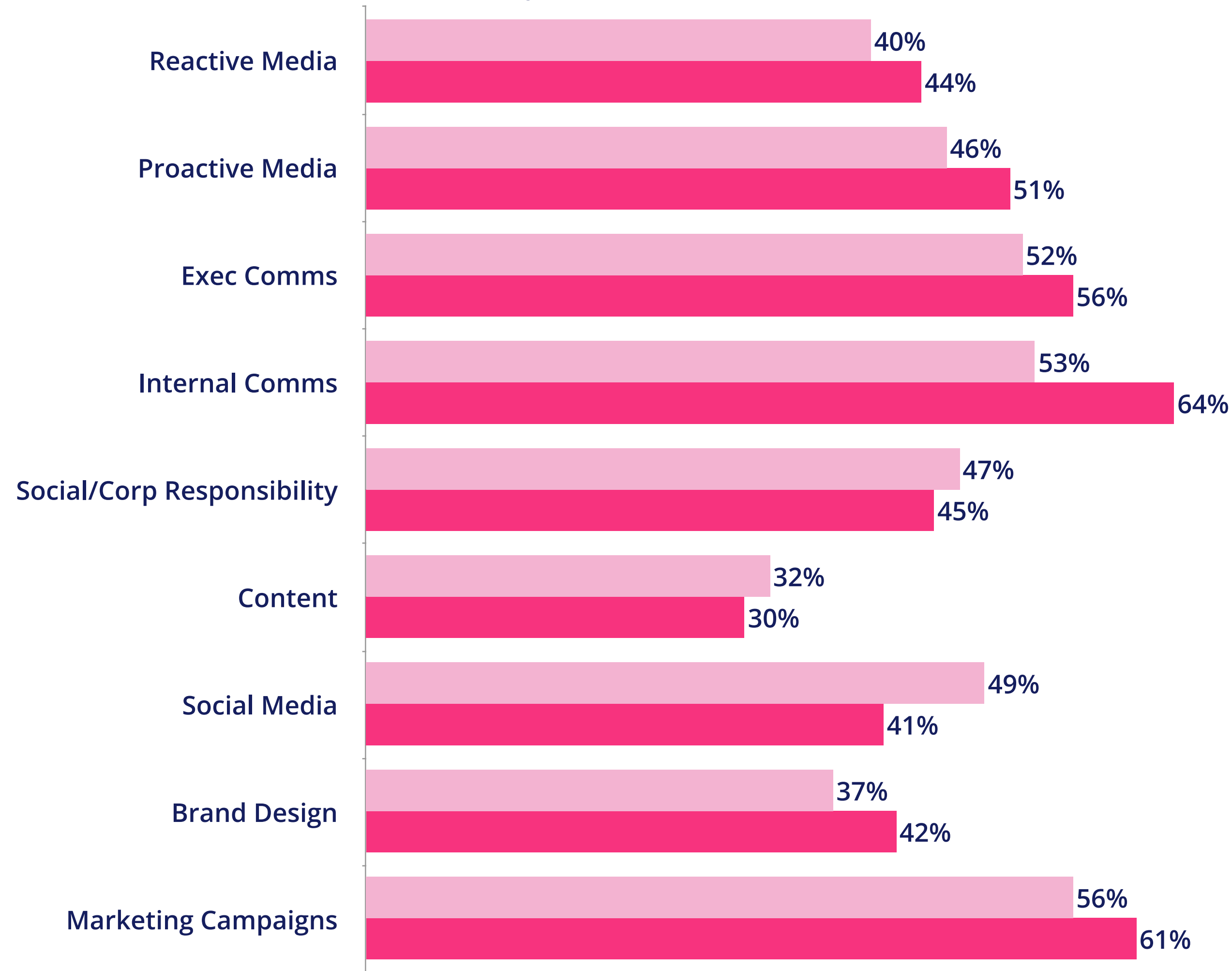
Who does the comms team report to?



Scope & Responsibilities

What are comms teams responsible for?

By team size



Scope of communications teams extends far beyond media relations.

For the second year in a row, external communications appears to be just the tip of the iceberg in terms of scope and responsibilities.

More than 50% of communications teams say they also own executive communications, internal comms, and marketing campaigns.

Larger communications teams almost always own more, except when it comes to social and corporate responsibility, content, and social media.

■ Teams of less than 50 ■ Teams of 50+

Priorities

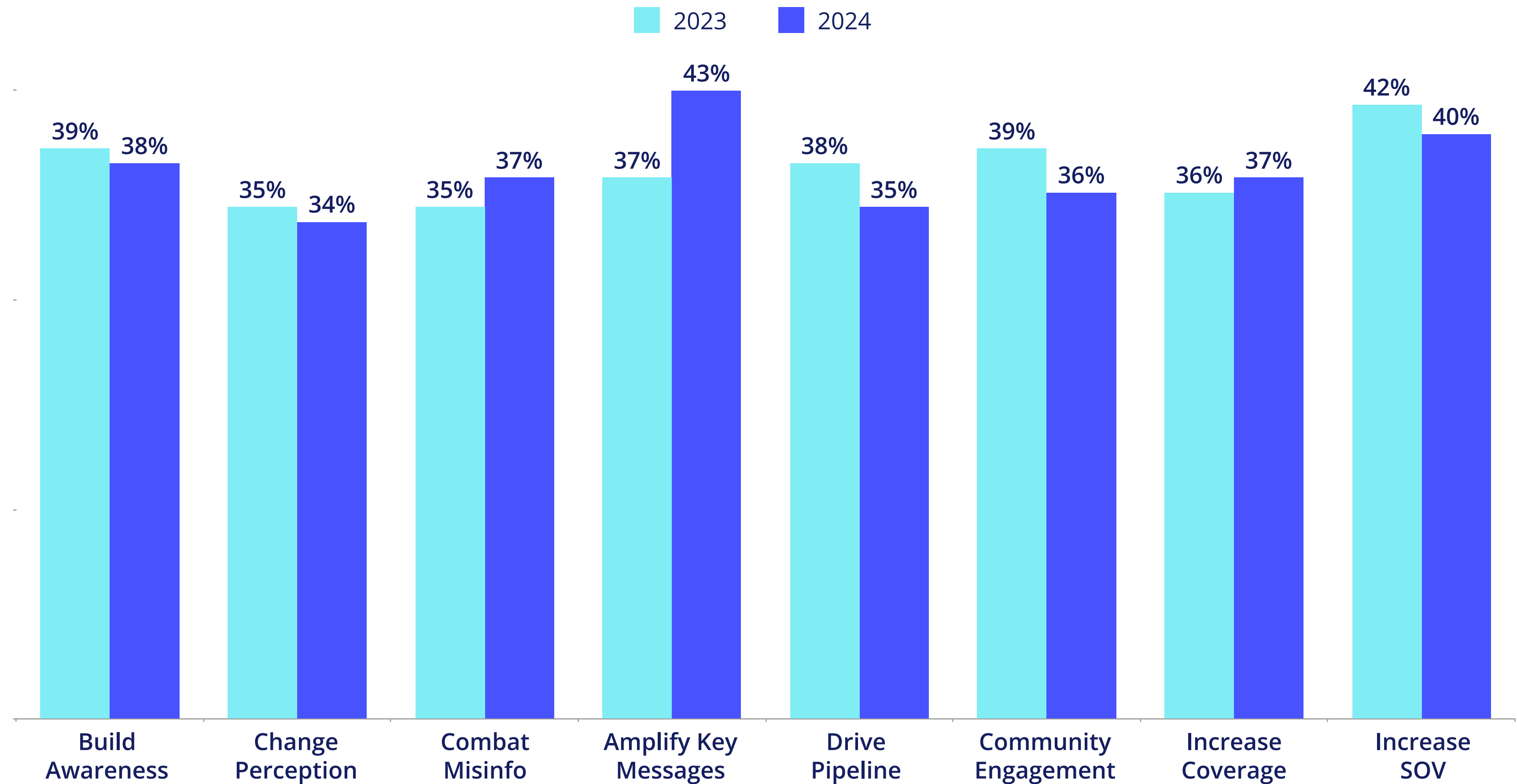
Comms teams are more focused on amplifying key messages than changing perceptions.

For the second year in a row, comms teams have a long list of priorities that all seem to carry the same weight.

That said, amplifying key messages, increasing share-of-voice (SOV) against the competition, and building awareness most frequently showed up within the top 3 priorities.

Changing perception showed up in respondents' bottom 3 priorities most frequently (39%), further validating that, in today's environment, **comms teams are more focused on owning their key messages than changing opinions.**

What falls within comms teams' top 3 priorities?

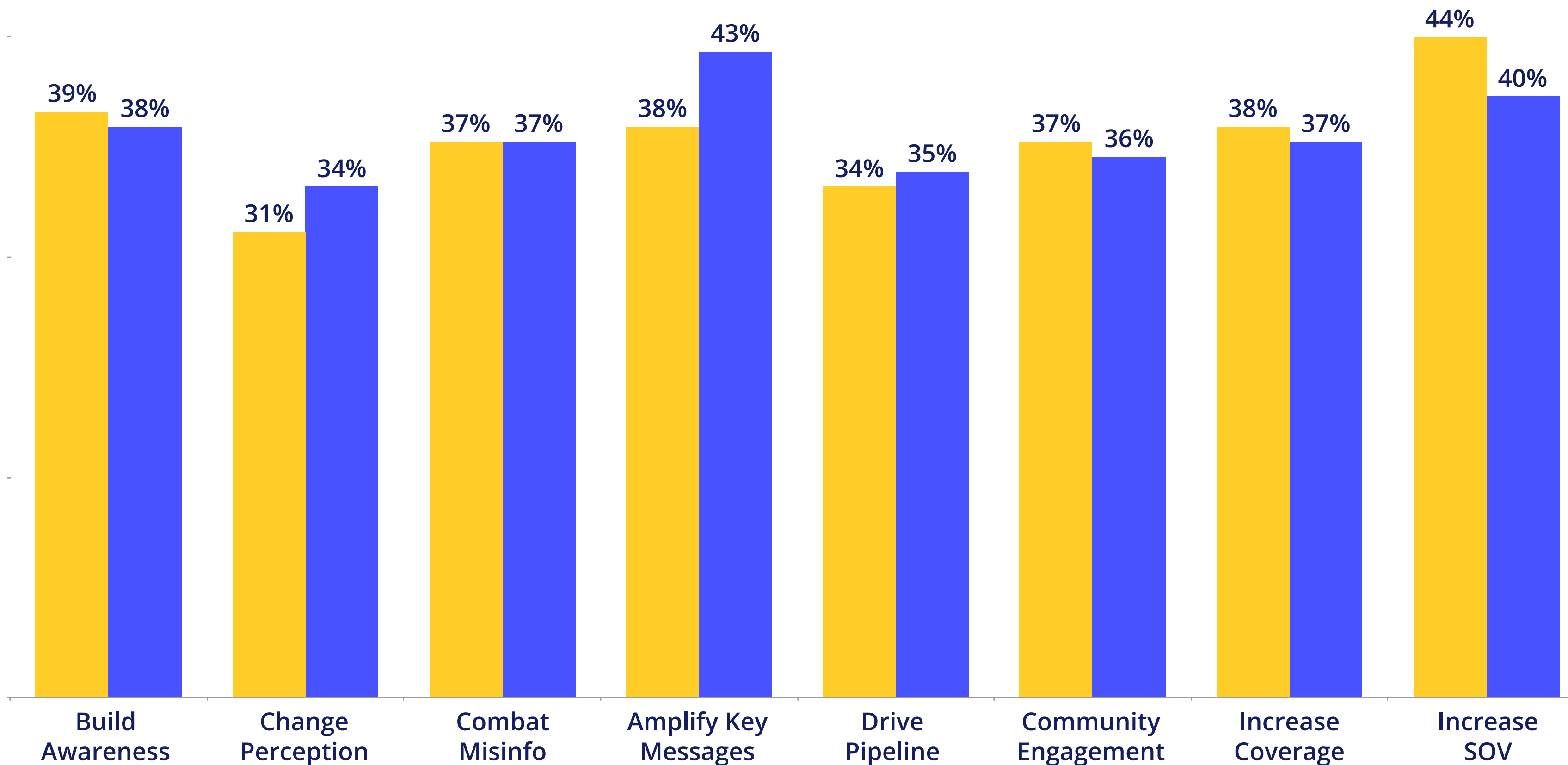


Agency Alignment

Perhaps every comms pro, whether working in-house or at an agency, will be relieved to hear that top 3 priorities are pretty closely aligned. This is what agencies perceive as their clients' top priorities and what in-house comms teams describe as their own team's top 3 priorities.

Are agency & client priorities aligned?

Agencies In-house



While most priorities match up, there's a 0-5% variance in top 3 priorities between in-house and agency comms pros. In 2023, there was only a 1-3% variance.

What stands out most this year is agencies' focus on increasing competitive SOV while general coverage volume appears to be less of a priority.

Perhaps pros are looking for more ways to contextualize success instead of simply securing hits.

Data Skepticism

Gen Z and Millennial comms pros have less confidence in the accuracy of traditional comms metrics than their older counterparts.

More Insights



Memo's annual analysis of news coverage with actionable, data-backed insights for comms pros based on what people read.

Memo's annual analysis of a year's worth of brand crises, including data-backed learnings and action items should you find yourself in the same boat.

Plus a survey of crisis preparedness.





Accurate data leads to better decisions.

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