



Evolving Role of Communications

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



Overview

The role of communications has drastically changed over the last decade. While the role itself is growing in influence, perceptions of PR people spinning stories and throwing parties have gone to the wayside.

What does the role of communications look like in today's corporate landscape? We asked 1,000 communicators what their job entails, their priorities, and (perhaps the biggest signal of change in the industry) who they report to at the leadership level.

Memo's Evolving Role of Communications report examines where comms leaders sit relative to the rest of their business and what that signals for the future of the role.

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Key Takeaways

- 1 Even with the rise of the CCO, comms teams still report into marketing leadership.**
According to comms leaders at the VP level and above, it's a fairly even split between reporting to a marketing leader/CMO and CEO. An overwhelming 85% report to one of the two.
- 2 Internal communications and marketing campaigns top the list of responsibilities for comms leaders (VP+).**
Aside from external communications, most teams are also responsible for internal communications and social or corporate responsibility initiatives.
- 3 Internal comms pros are most focused on changing perception of the company they work for.**
43% of internal comms professionals ranked changing perception within their top 3 priorities right now.
- 4 Agencies & in-house comms teams are closely aligned on priorities.**
Outliers include comms teams caring more about competitive share-of-voice and marketing pipeline than their agencies.

Reporting Structure

Even with the rise of the CCO, comms teams still report into marketing leadership.

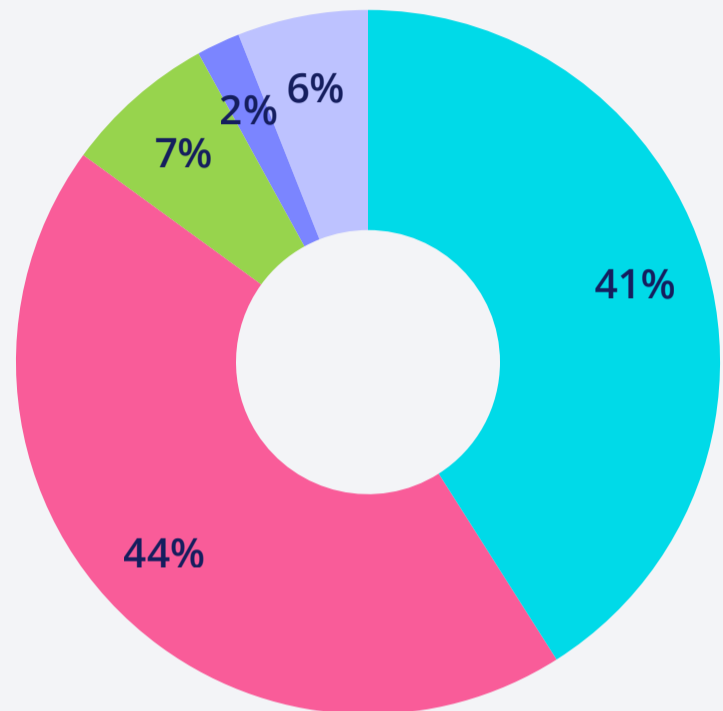
According to comms leaders at the VP level and above, it's a fairly even split between reporting to a marketing leader/CMO and CEO. An overwhelming 85% report to one of the two.

When comms leaders under the VP level were asked the same question, nearly 70% said they report into a marketing leader compared to just 14% reporting to a CEO.

For large comms teams (70+), 38% roll up to the CEO compared to 52% reporting to marketing.

Who the Comms Team Reports to

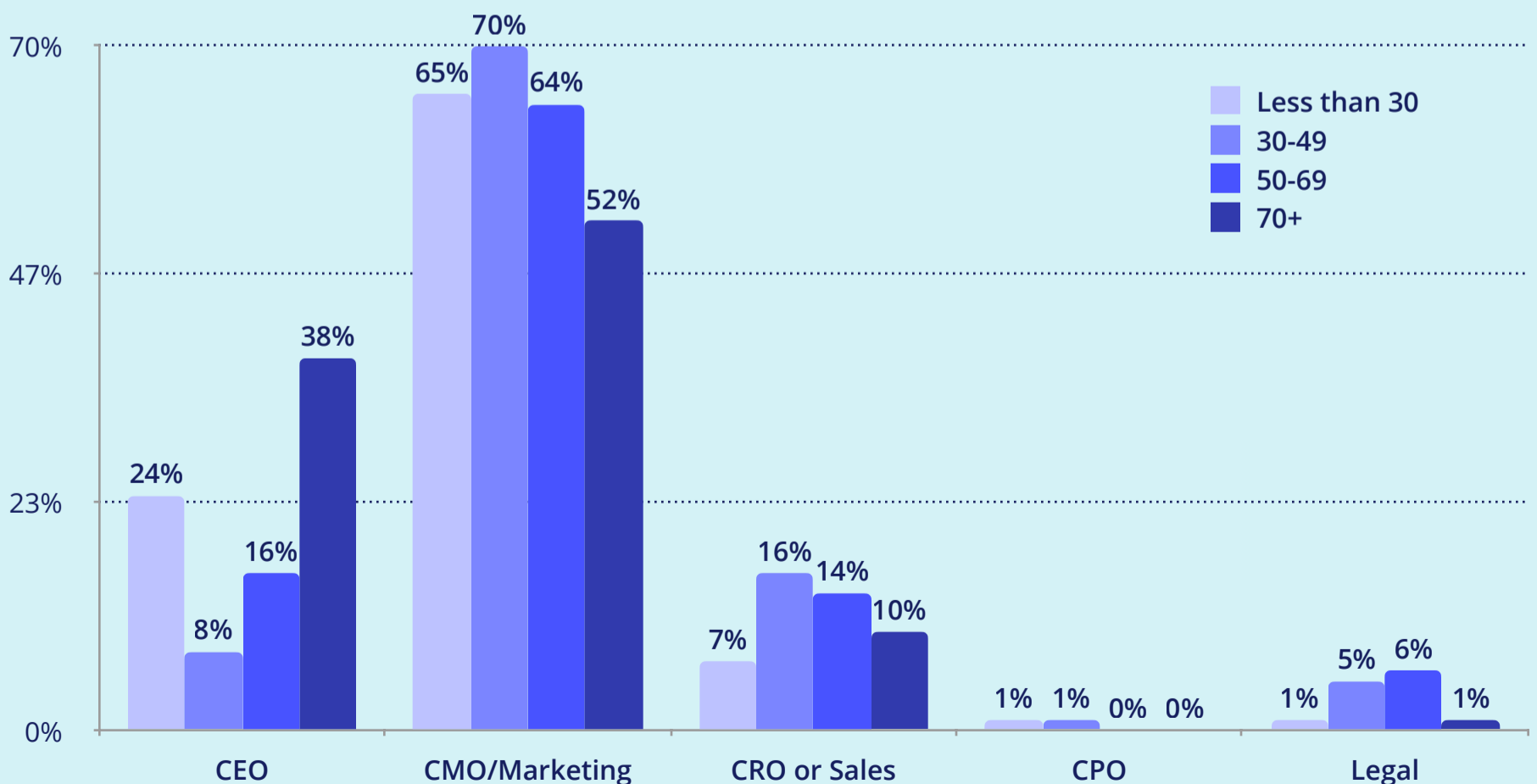
According to VP+



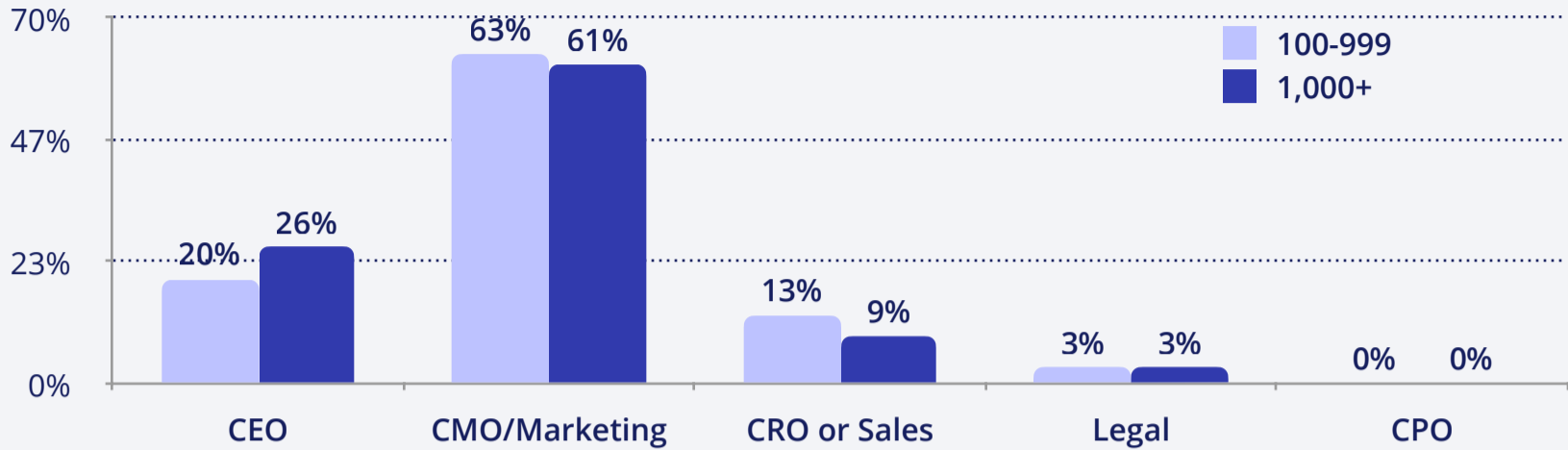
● CEO
 ● CMO/Marketing
 ● CRO or Sales
 ● CPO
 ● Legal
 ● Other

Who the Comms Team Reports to

By Size of Comms Team



Who the Comms Team Reports to By Company Size



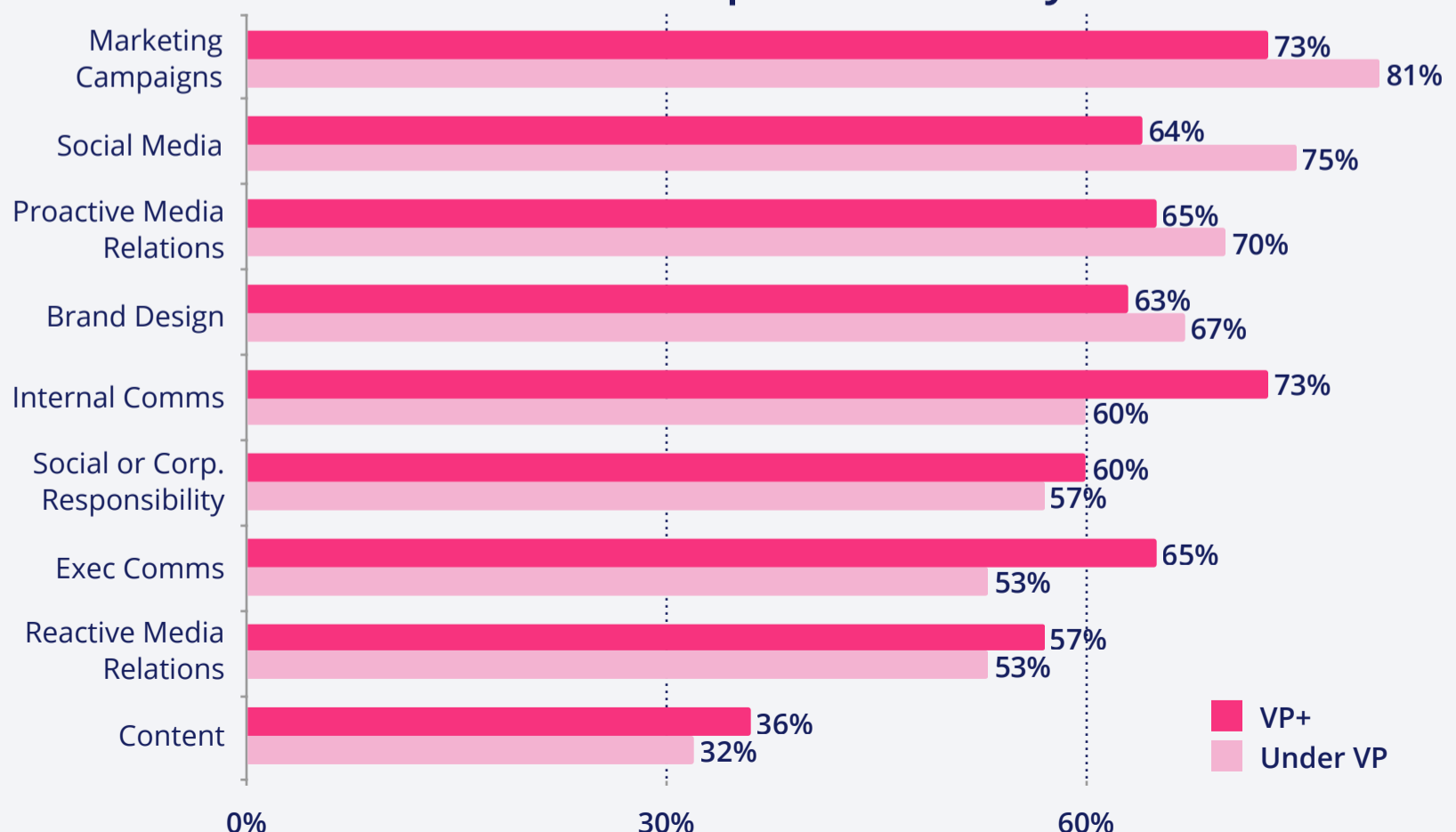
Comms teams at larger organizations are slightly more likely to roll up to the CEO. Still, even at large organizations, comms teams mostly roll up to marketing heads.

Scope & Responsibilities

Internal communications and marketing campaigns top the list of responsibilities for comms leaders (VP+).

Despite still reporting into marketing leadership, the role of comms continues to expand. Aside from external communications, most teams are also responsible for internal communications and social or corporate responsibility initiatives.

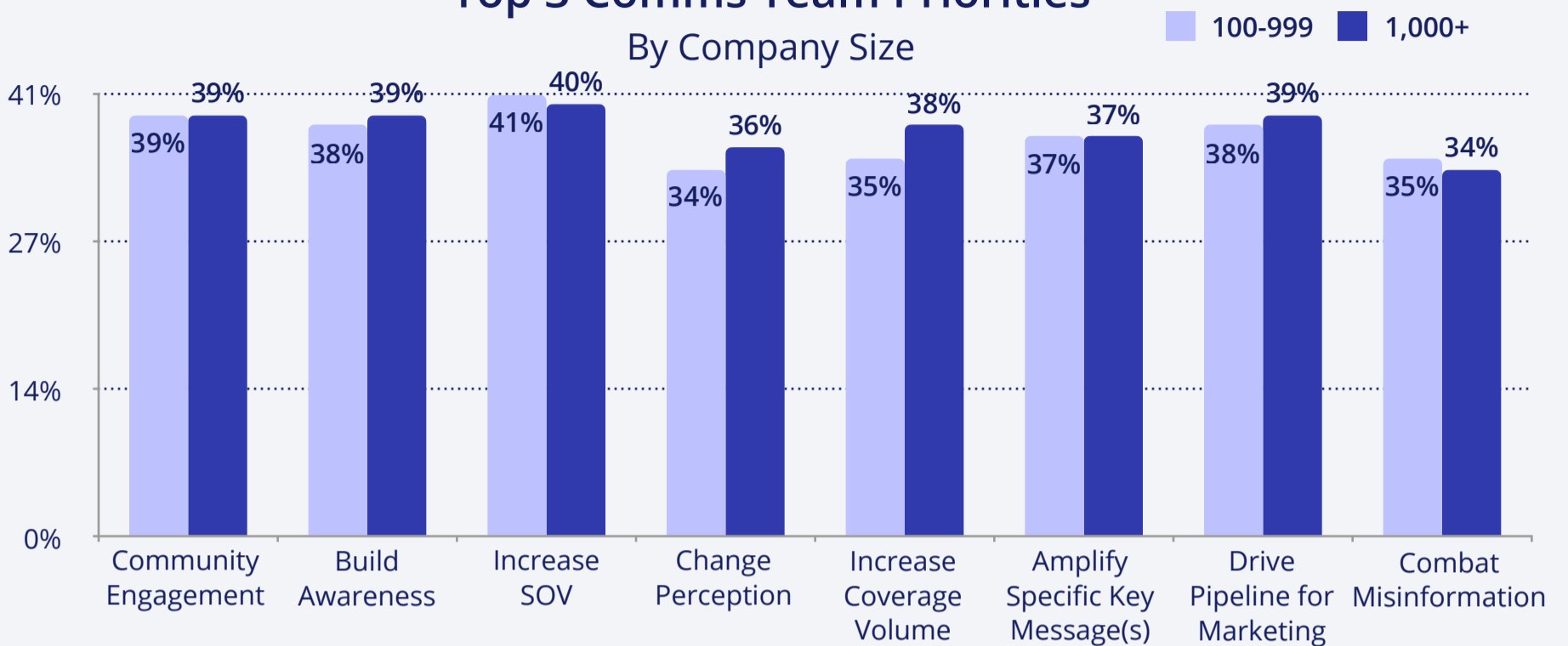
Comms Team Responsibilities by Title



Priorities

Top 3 Comms Team Priorities

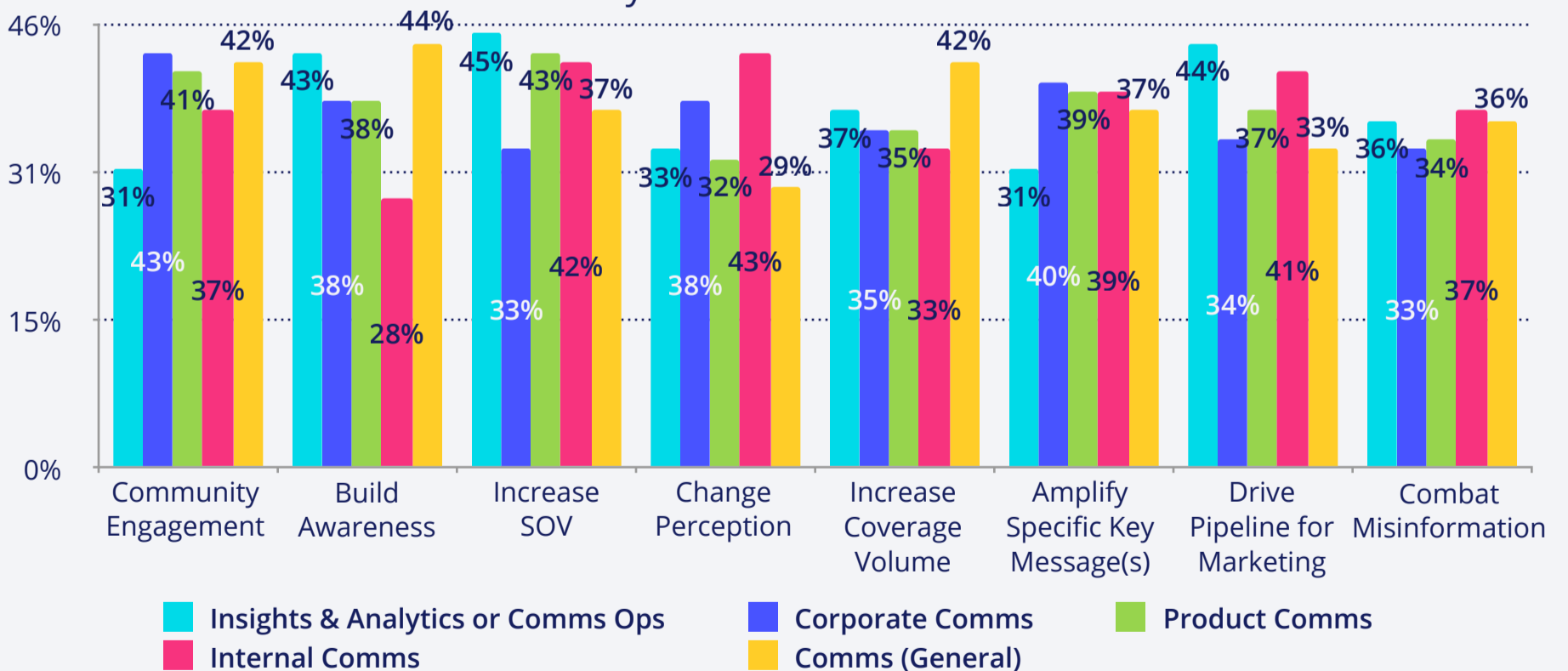
By Company Size



Comms teams have a long list of priorities and they all seem to carry the same weight. That said, increasing coverage compared to the competition took the top spot for all-sized orgs.

Top 3 Comms Team Priorities

By Immediate Team

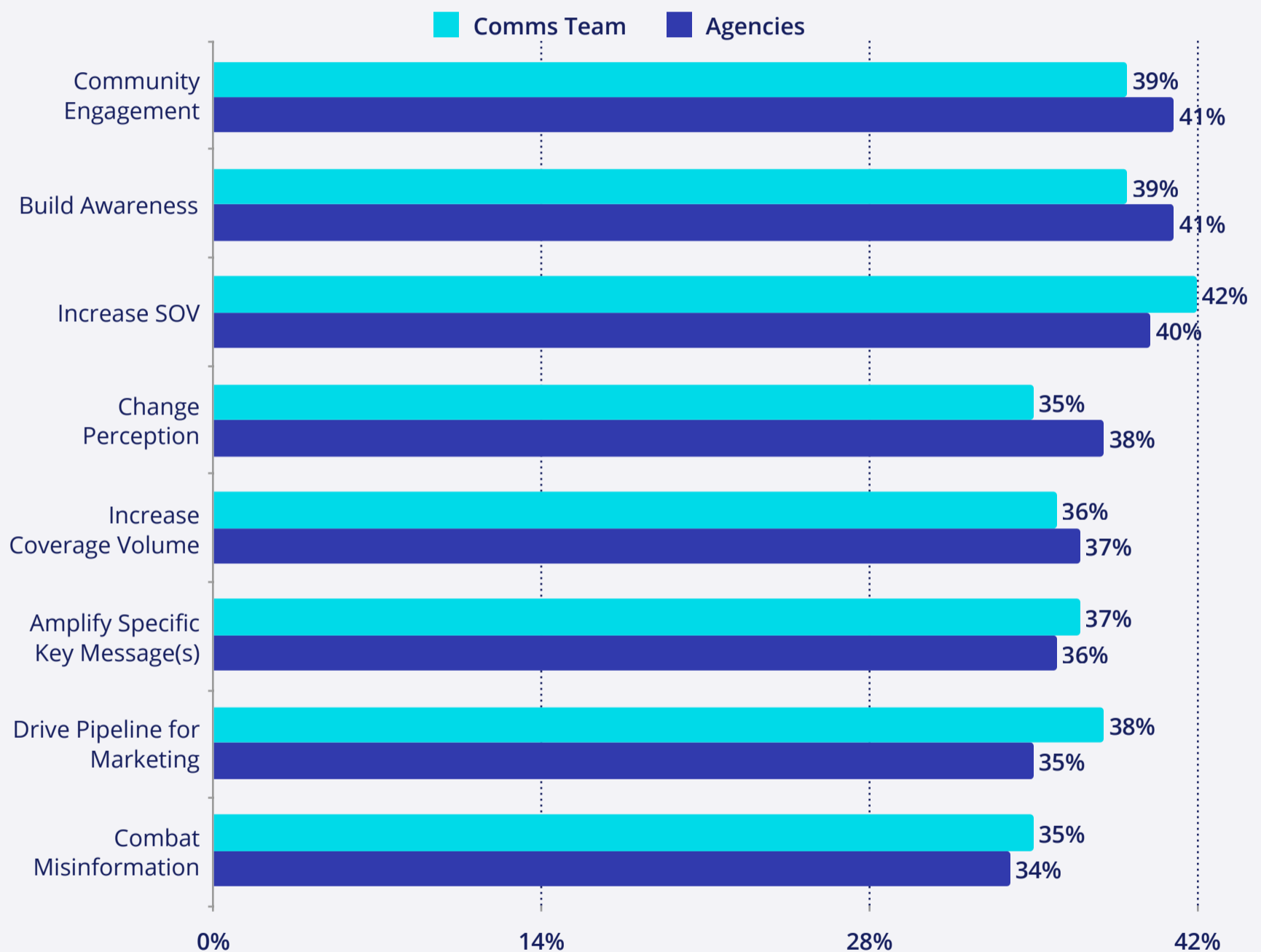


Changing perception tops the priorities for internal comms pros. General comms teams are most focused on building awareness, increasing coverage volume, and community engagement. Corp comms teams are also focused on community engagement but prioritize key message amplification at almost the same frequency.

Agency Alignment

Perhaps every comms pro, whether they work in-house or at an agency will be relieved to hear that top 3 priorities are 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. Outliers include comms teams caring more about marketing pipeline than their agencies. No big surprises there.

Top 3 Priorities for Agencies vs Comms Teams



Methodology

These are the results of an online survey conducted from June 15, 2023 to June 21, 2023 of 1,000 respondents over 18 years old working full time in communications at a company (either in-house or at an agency) with over 100 employees.

Accurate data leads to better decisions.

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