

brand builders X cgk THE CENTER FOR GenerationalKinetics

Trends in Personal Branding

NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY



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NEXT STEPS...

Sharing Guidelines:

WE HAVE INTENTIONALLY DECIDED TO MAKE THIS DATA AVAILABLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN HOPES OF BENEFITING OUR COMMUNITY AND ADVANCING OUR OVERALL SPACE.

Thus, you are welcome and invited to share any singular data point (or small groups of data points) in presentations, podcasts, radio shows, reports, articles, blog posts, etc with your own audience.

Please do not forward, send, or share this study in full document form. Anyone will be able to access it for free at the URL brandbuildersgroup.com/study.

We also have infographics available for you to display with the download of each study. If you are interested in getting an affiliate link for these promotions, please email us at info@brandbuildersgroup.com

Our only request is that if you reference any of these data points from this study that you cite us in both of the following ways:

1. Mention "A national research study conducted by **BRAND BUILDERS GROUP** reveals..."

Mention "Download a full version of the study for free at **BRANDBUILDERSGROUP.COM/STUDY**" **2.**

We hope these findings benefit you and your audience greatly! Enjoy!

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Want to Build & Monetize your Personal Brand?

IF SO, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT OUR TEAM OF STRATEGISTS SPECIALIZE IN AT BRAND BUILDERS GROUP.

We are a personal brand strategy firm for influencers, thought leaders, entrepreneurs and executives. Our 1-on-1 strategy services are designed to help mission-driven messengers clarify positioning, expand reach, and increase revenue.

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Research Method

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**Trends in:
Personal Branding**

NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY





The “Trends in Personal Branding National Research Study” was conducted by Brand Builders Group in partnership with and fielded by independent research firm, The Center for Generational Kinetics (genhq.com).

Brand Builders Group is a personal brand strategy firm that helps **speakers, authors, influencers, entrepreneurs and executives** to clarify their positioning, expand their reach and grow their revenue.

Our methodologies, frameworks and teachings are based on our personal track record of releasing **New York Times bestselling books**, giving viral TEDx talks, **building 8-figure businesses**, amassing millions of online followers, hosting top-ranked podcasts, and creating Hall of Fame Keynote Speakers.

Our insights have been featured in the Wall St Journal, CNN, Fox News, **Good Morning America, Forbes, Fortune, Fast Company, Inc, SUCCESS**, and **Entrepreneur Magazine**.

Learn more about us at www.brandbuildersgroup.com



Goals of this Study

THROUGH THIS STUDY,
OUR MISSION WAS TO:

1. Understand

Understand the role personal branding has on the development and success of an individual. Test the impact and influence that it has on emotional, psychological, and behavioral drivers.

2. Uncover

Uncover the key differences and perceptions between personal branding and traditional marketing strategies.

3. Explore

Explore the influence a personal brand has on the perceptions and success of a company or organization.

4. Test

Test the impact and significance of brand building strategies and how they shape personal credibility, trust and success.

Reading This Report:

THROUGHOUT THIS REPORT, WE REFERENCE THE FOLLOWING GENERATION CATEGORIES. HERE'S A QUICK REMINDER OF THE AGE RANGES FOR EACH.

Ages 18-25

GEN Z

Ages 26-34

YOUNGER MILLENNIALS

Ages 35-44

OLDER MILLENNIALS

Ages 45-56

GEN X

Ages 57-65

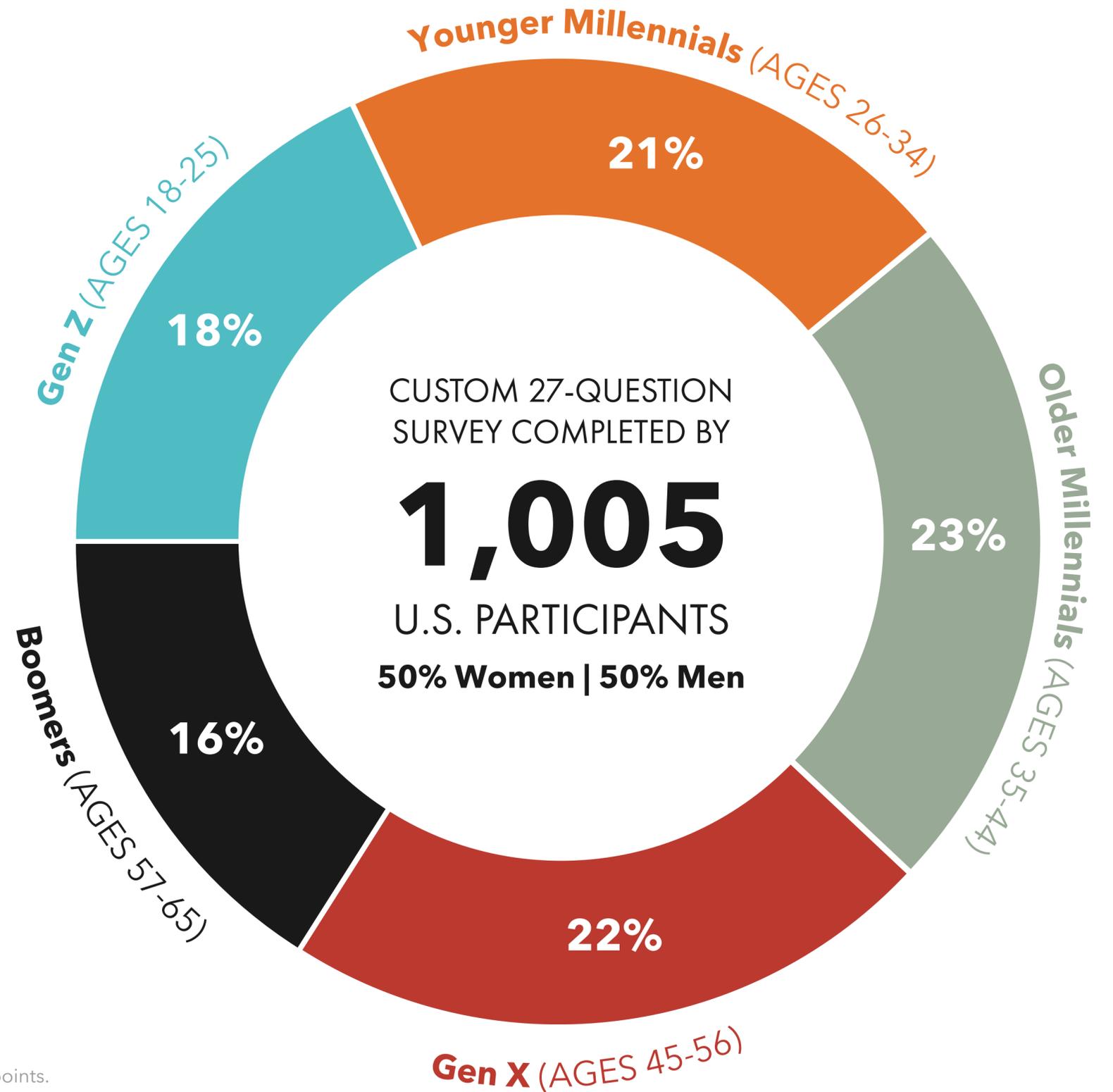
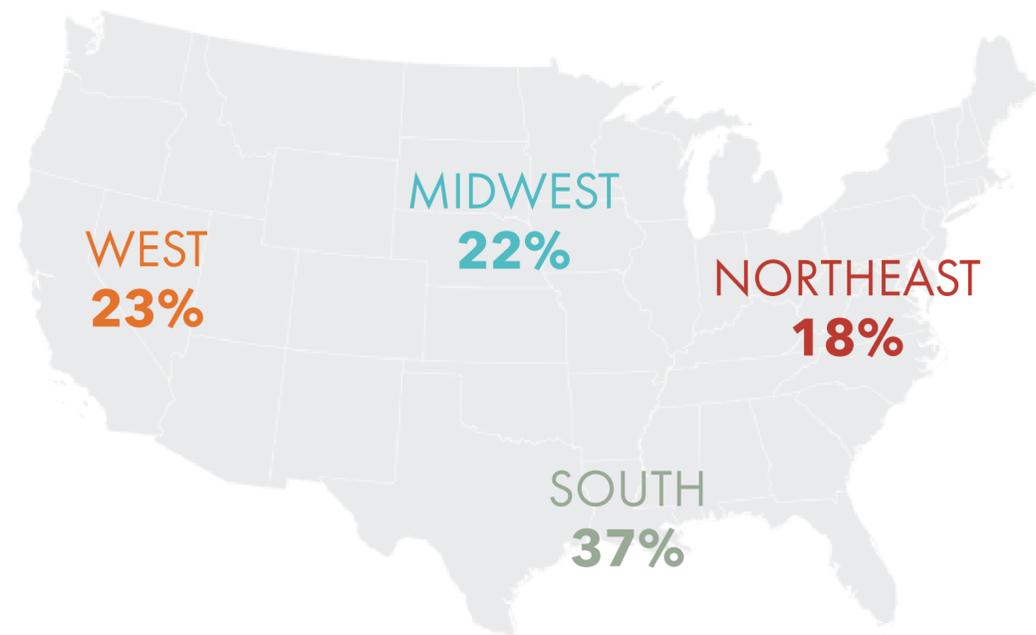
BOOMERS

Methodology

Our research methodology consists of a custom 27-question survey with 1,005 completes weighted to the U.S. Census for age, region, gender, and ethnicity.

Figures are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points.

The survey was conducted online between the dates of February 4, 2021 and February 15, 2021.



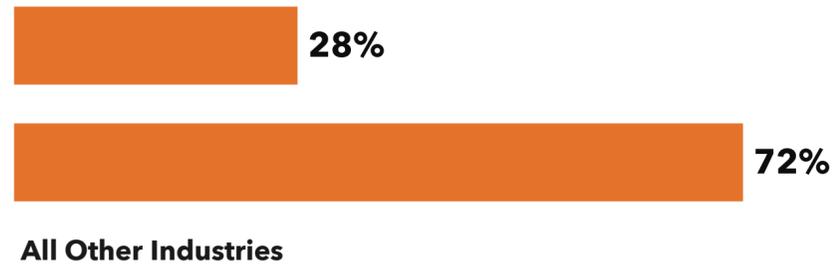
*The sample was weighted to the U.S. Census for age, region, gender, and ethnicity.
 *Figures are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Margin of error is +/-3.1 percentage points.
 *Survey was conducted online from February 4, 2021, to February 15, 2021.

Industry

(ONLY INCLUDES THOSE THAT ARE EMPLOYED; N=667)

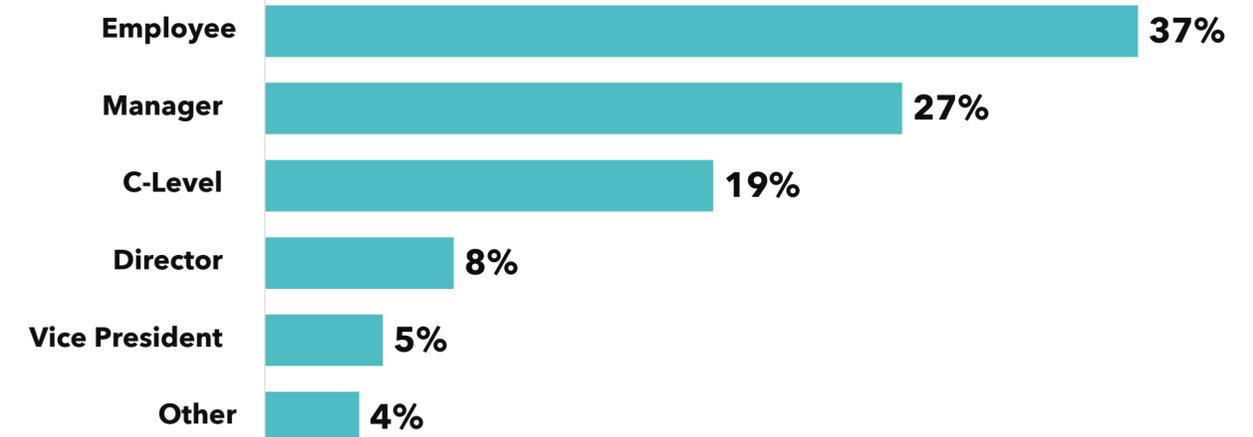
Industries of Interest

(Financial, Consulting, Insurance, Legal, Marketing, Personal Services, Real Estate, Etc.)



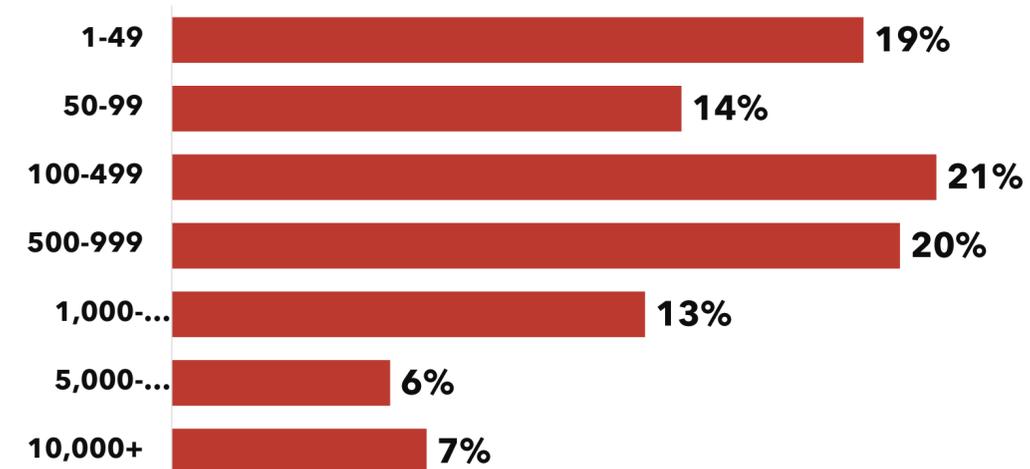
Job Title

(ONLY INCLUDES THOSE THAT ARE EMPLOYED; N=667)

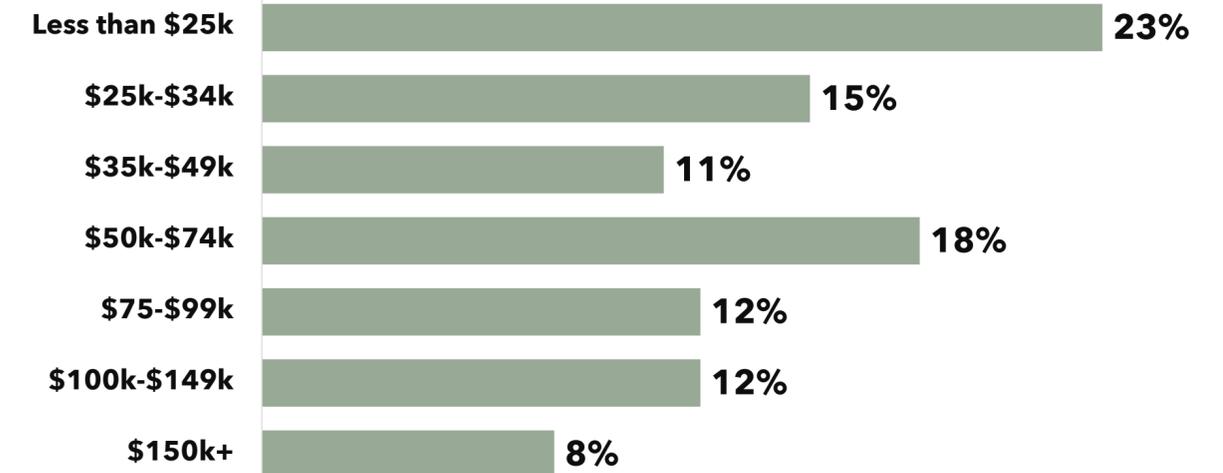


Company Size

(ONLY INCLUDES THOSE THAT ARE EMPLOYED; N=667)



Annual Household Income

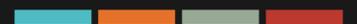


Key Findings

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**Trends in:
Personal Branding**

NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY



Personal Branding is...



THE FUTURE

Significant generational differences exist when it comes to trust and engagement with individuals who have established personal brands.



HIGHLY PROFITABLE

Americans are willing to spend more on products and services from individuals with established personal brands.



A TRUST ACCELERATOR

More than anything else, endorsements from others are the most powerful factor when it comes to trusting, hiring, and paying more for products and services.

1. Personal Branding is The Future



SIGNIFICANT
GENERATIONAL
DIFFERENCES

Consistently, every question in the study points to a sharp and dramatic distinction that Millennials (born 1977-1995) and Gen Z (born 1996 - 2015) place a resounding level of emphasis on engaging with individuals who have established personal brands. For example, 76% of Older Millennials (born 1977-1986) say they “are more likely to buy from someone who has an established personal brand” while only 33% of Boomers responded the same way.

As you scroll through these findings you will see for yourself how consistently Boomers (born 1946 - 1964) - and to lesser extent Gen X (born 1965 - 1976) - do not place as high a value on the importance of personal branding as younger generations (ages 18-44).

Millennials and Gen Z place an unexpectedly high emphasis on personal branding in determining what they buy, where they work, who they listen to, who they recommend, who they hire, who they vote for and even who they date.

It supports an underlying narrative that has existed in the marketplace for the last ten years, where we often see older generations make slight of personal branding as “immature” or “vain.” But even this is changing to a dramatic degree in the current digital landscape.

The data points to a stark realization that the forthcoming generation of leaders and trendsetters with the largest spending power for the next 30 years, do not consider personal branding a game of vanity or popularity, but a much more “critical” and “essential” component of work, learning and trust that influences their everyday life.

Personal Branding is a foundational element in how they live and make decisions, which should inform a new way business leaders think about personal branding and include it as part of their marketing mix—at least if they want to be successful with Millennials and Gen Z!

The forthcoming generation of leaders and trendsetters with the largest spending power for the next 30 years, **do not consider personal branding a game of vanity or popularity**, but a much more “critical” and “essential” component of work, learning, and trust that influences their everyday life.



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Trends in: Personal Branding

NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY

2. Personal Branding is Highly Profitable



AMERICANS ARE WILLING TO SPEND MORE

Historically, it's been easy to disregard certain metrics of Personal Branding like "number of followers, likes, views and shares" as vanity metrics.

The data in this study, however, presents a different story that reveals an established personal brand clearly connects to a higher likelihood of profits.

Given our focus on understanding the impact (or not) of personal branding, we asked several pointed questions about the connection of personal branding to spending.

We found that 67% of ALL Americans (or 80% of Older Millennials by themselves) - regardless of their age, gender, geographic location, job title or income - "would be willing to spend more money on products and services from the companies of founders whose personal brand aligns with their own personal values."

And nearly 60% of all Americans said they "would be willing to pay more money to receive services from a professional who doesn't work for a large company but has an established personal brand."

What we didn't predict is that these impacts extend far beyond that of just "coaches and consultants" or "online influencers."

It turns out that most Americans believe it's important for their doctor, their lawyer, their financial advisor, their banker, their insurance agent, their real estate agent and several other key professional service providers, to have an established Personal Brand.

They also believe their employer should have one.

In fact, Personal Branding is so important to rising employees that 70% of Older Millennials think companies should teach all employees how to build their personal brand!



67% of ALL Americans would be willing to **spend more money** on products and services from the companies of founders whose **personal brand aligns with their own personal values.**

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**Trends in:
Personal Branding**

NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY

3. Personal Branding is a Trust Accelerator



ENDORSEMENTS
ARE THE MOST
POWERFUL FACTOR

Given our deep-rooted belief that long-term reputation and legitimate expertise are what really matter (and not success hacks nor fads), we wanted to specifically measure the effects Personal Branding has on trust.

It was this single area that was the most compelling of all.

A striking 74% of all Americans (85% of Older Millennials) reveal they “are more likely to trust someone who has an established personal brand.”

It’s hard to overestimate how important this impact is on business since trust guides, influences, and even determines virtually every single decision we make in our personal and professional lives.

Going even further, we measured how connecting a personal brand to trust might translate into impact on large corporations by asking a series of

questions specifically about executives.

In perhaps the most powerful statistic of our entire study, it turns out that 82% of all Americans (88% of Older Millennials) agree that “companies are more influential if their executives have a personal brand that they know and follow.”

We invite and welcome you to review the data provided and allow it to help and guide you in driving both new and greater results.

The data is compelling and clear that Personal Branding is not a vanity project for a younger generation or a “check the box” for brands to do, but rather an integral part of the overall human experience and in turn, a part of the very fabric that makes up the future of influence.

82% of all Americans agree that
**"companies are more influential if
their executives have a personal
brand they know and follow."**



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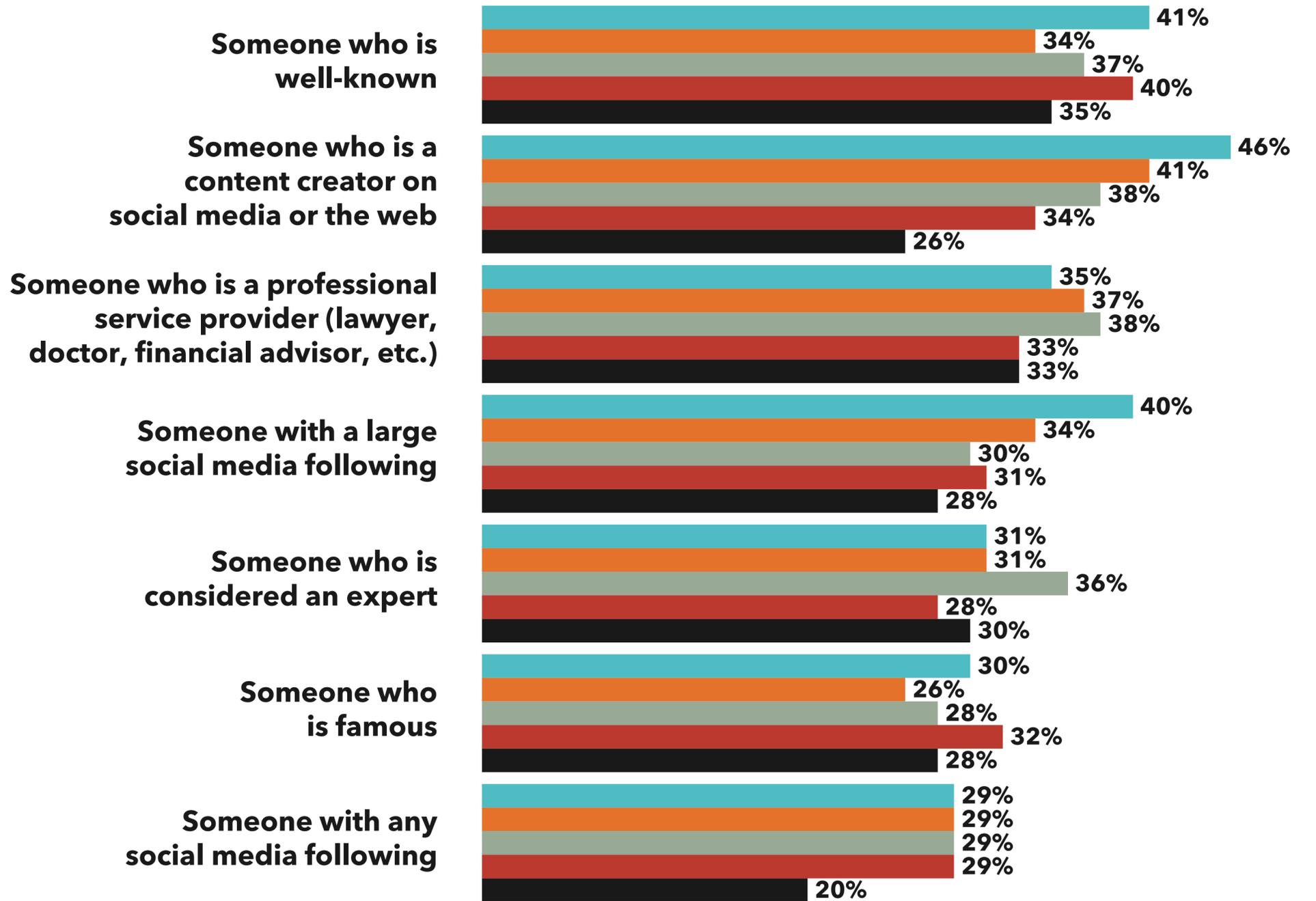


PART ONE:

The Role and Impact of Personal Brands

*For the purposes of this study, the term **“personal branding”** refers to deliberately using various forms of media (such as social media, podcasts, websites, books, public speaking, etc.) to communicate messages (such as philosophies, ideas, education, inspiration, entertainment, etc.) to the general public for an intentional purpose and as a means of generating interest for one’s own business or income generating objectives.

Americans most consider a personal brand as an individual who is well-known, a content creator, or a professional service provider.



Q: What do you consider a personal brand?
Select all that apply.



A-HA MOMENT

Ultimately, the majority of Americans consider a personal brand as **someone who is simply recognizable. That's it.**

74%

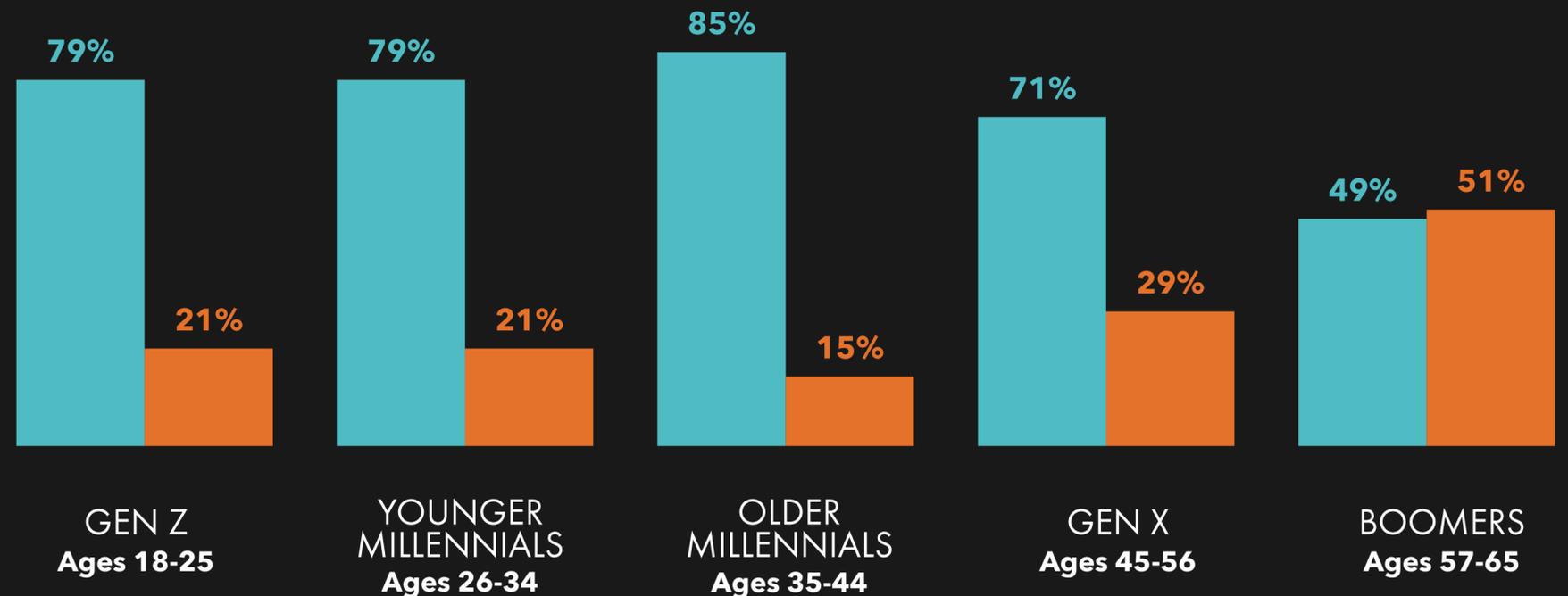
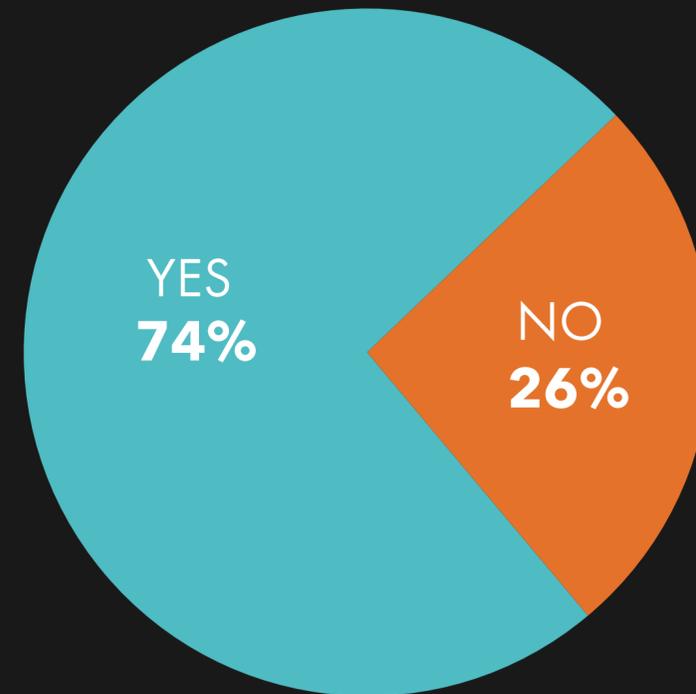
of **ALL Americans** say they are more likely to **trust** someone who has an **established personal brand.**

Almost 3/4 of Americans are more likely to TRUST someone who has an established personal brand.

Millennials are the most likely generation to **trust** someone who has an established personal brand.

Q: Are you more likely to trust someone who has an established personal brand? Select one.

ARE YOU MORE LIKELY TO TRUST SOMEONE WHO HAS AN ESTABLISHED PERSONAL BRAND?

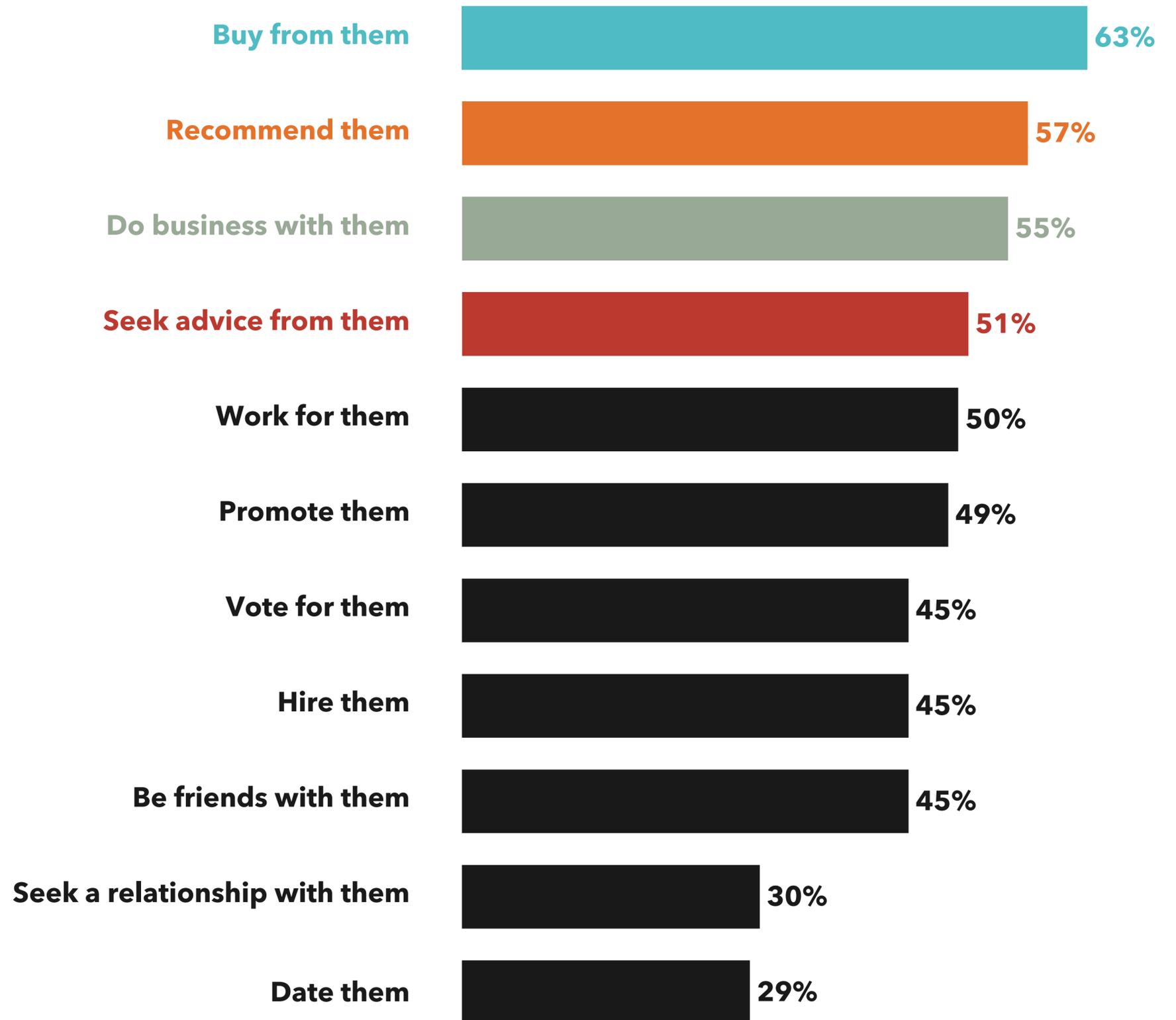


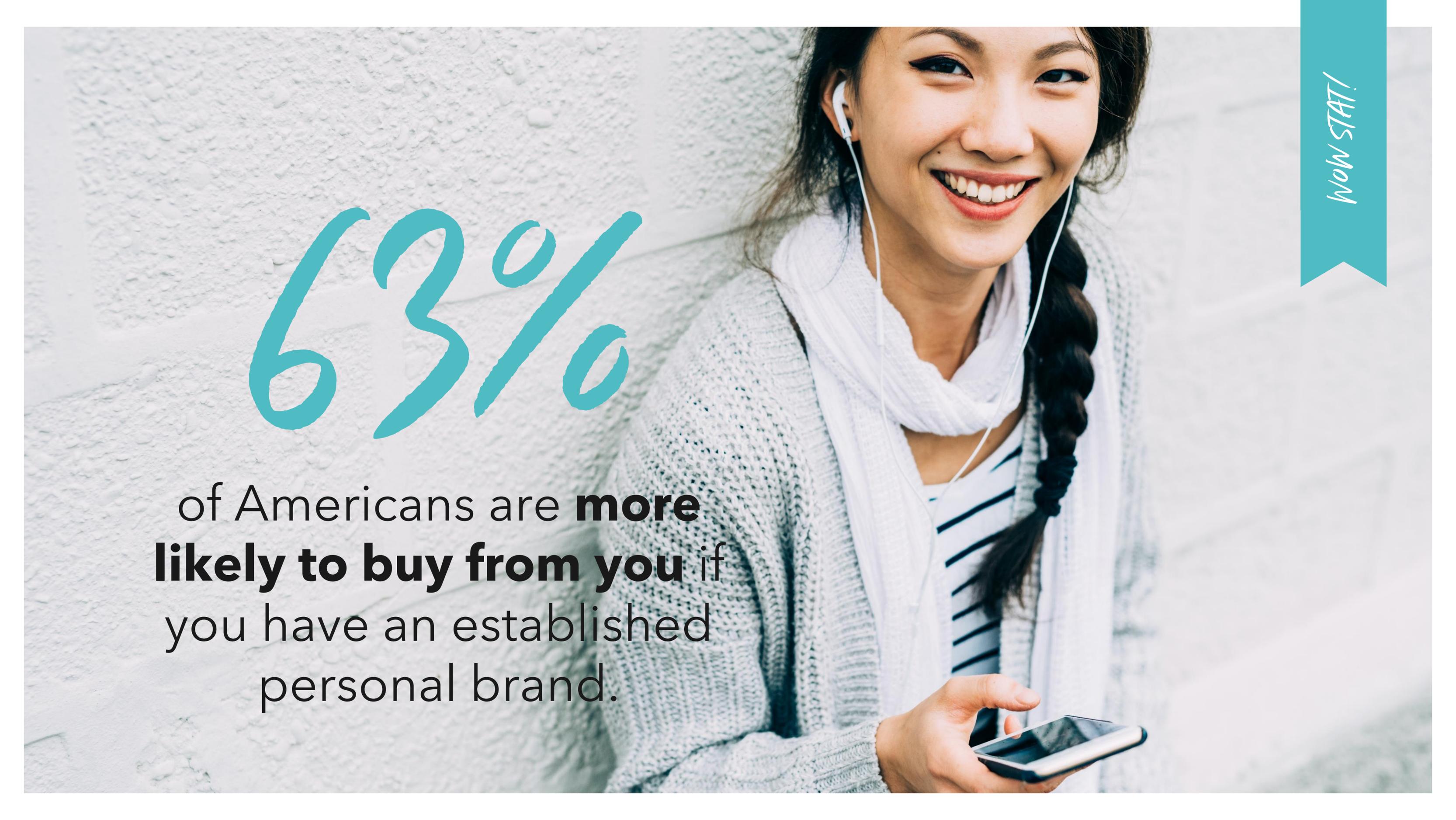
67%

of Gen Z think that having a great **personal brand** will be **extremely important in the future.**

Americans are most likely to buy from, recommend, and do business with an individual who has an established personal brand

Q: Are you more likely to do each of these with an individual who has an established personal brand? Select one for each row.





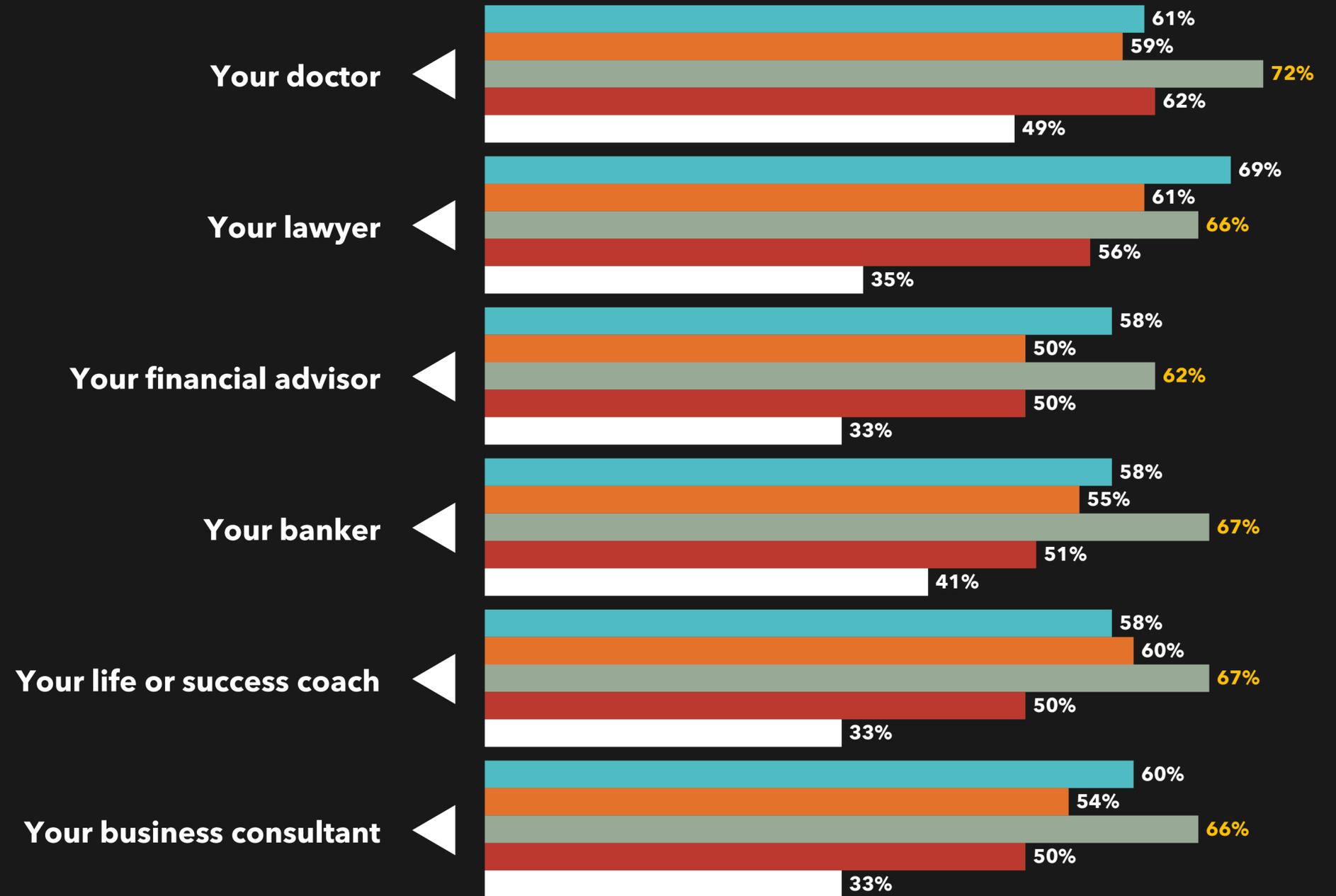
63%

of Americans are **more likely to buy from you** if you have an established personal brand.

WOW STAT!

Americans see the most value in service professionals having an established personal brand.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PROFESSIONS TO HAVE AN ESTABLISHED PERSONAL BRAND.?



Q: Are you more likely to trust someone who has an established personal brand? Select one.

67%

of older Millennials would check out the **online personal brand** of a personal coach or business consultant of any kind **before hiring them.**



A-HA MOMENT

**72% of older Millennials (age 35-44)
believe it's **most important for their
doctor to have an established personal
brand.****

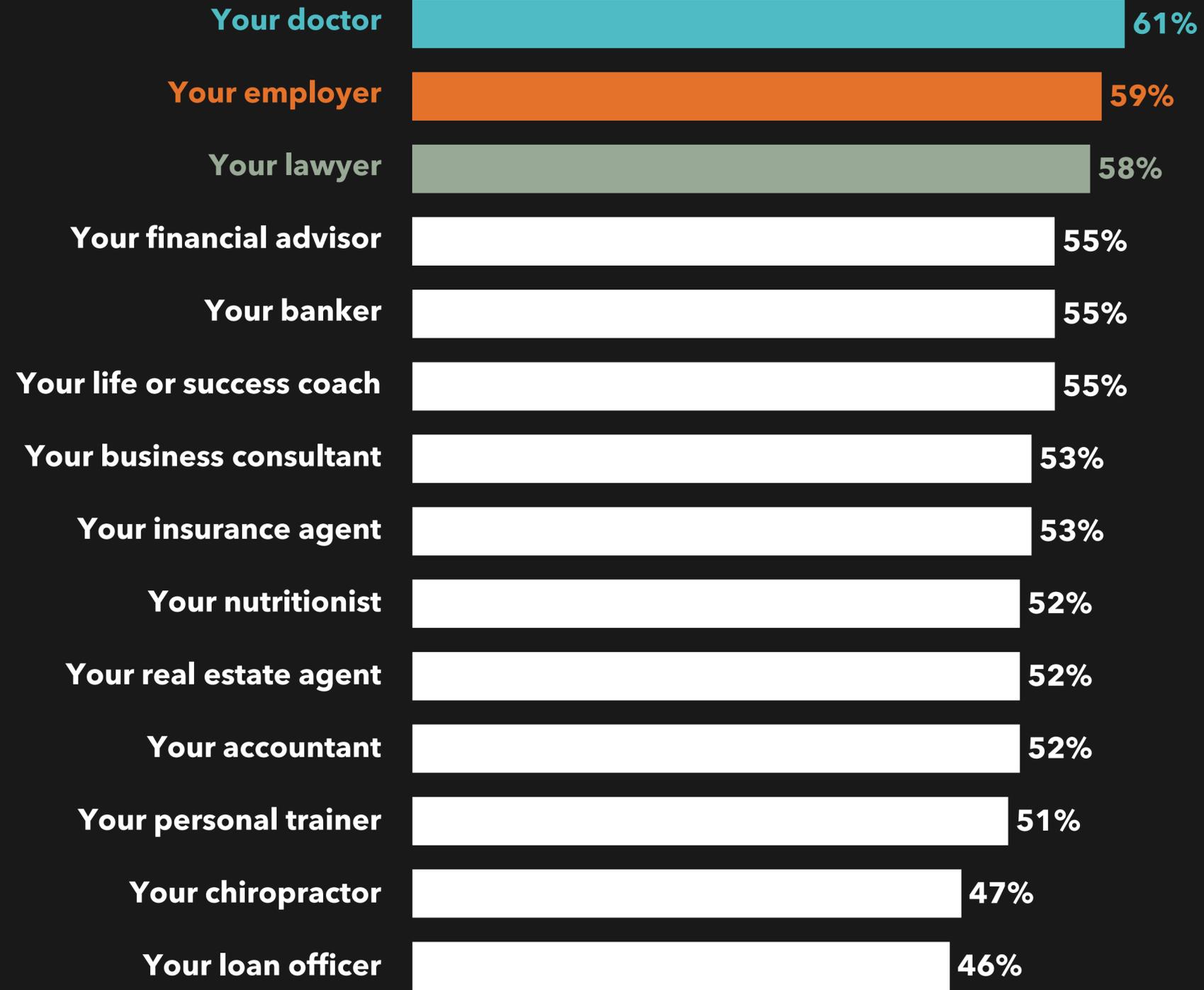
TRENDS IN PERSONAL BRANDING BY brand builders

Americans believe it's most important for doctors, employers, and lawyers to have an established personal brand.

Overall, younger generations (ages 18-44) are significantly more likely than older generations to see the importance of professionals having an established personal brand.

Q: How important is it to you that each of the following people have an established personal brand? Select one for each row.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU THAT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE HAVE AN ESTABLISHED PERSONAL BRAND?





A-HA MOMENT

The higher the requirement for **trust, the more important having an established **personal brand** becomes.**

SHAREABLE NUGGETS

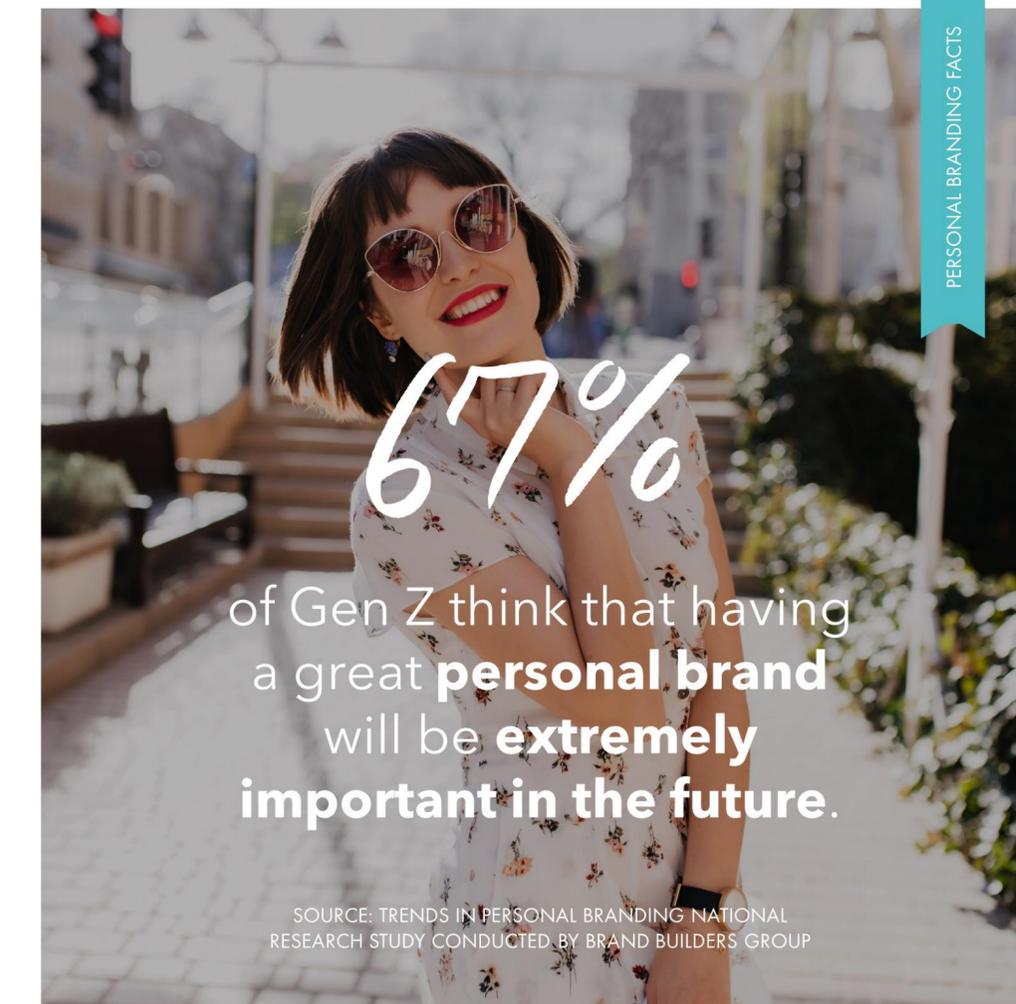
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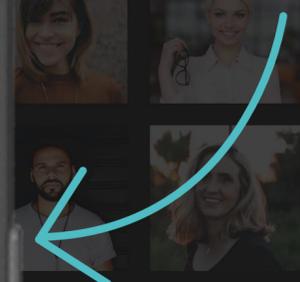
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SPREAD THE KNOWLEDGE!



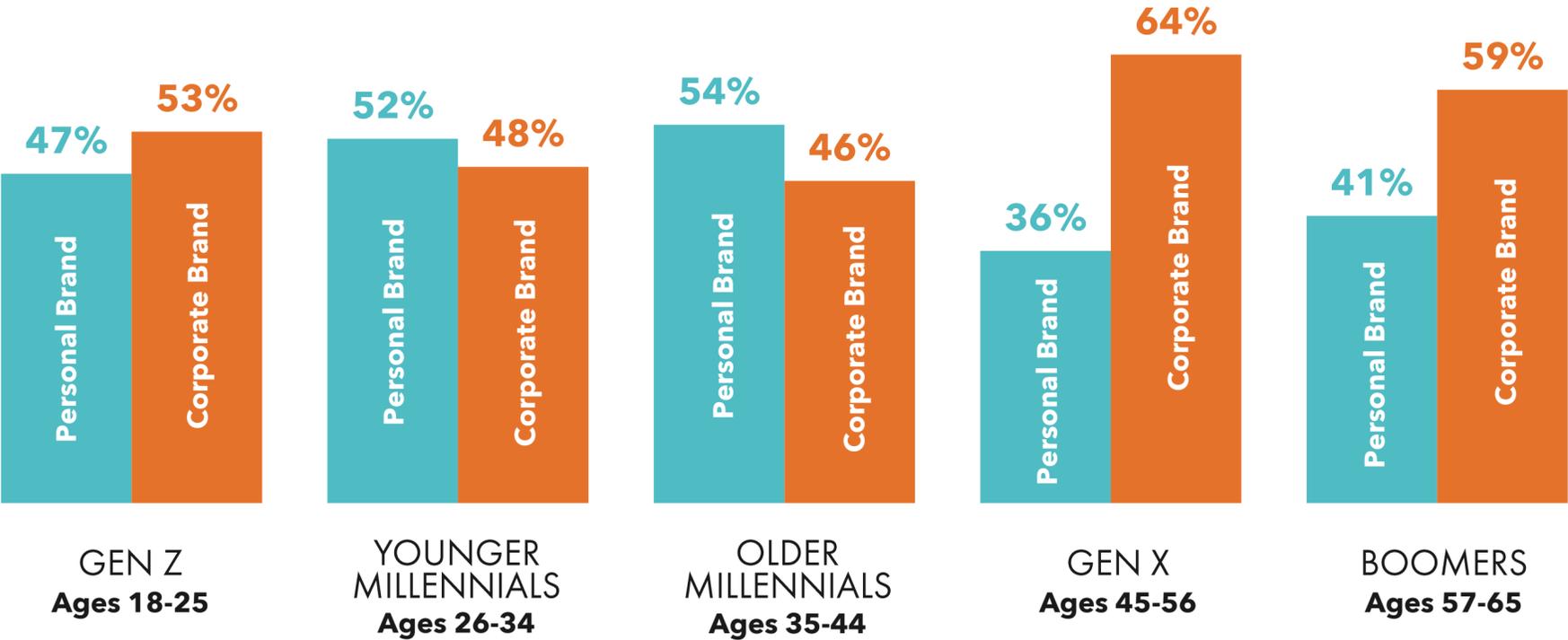
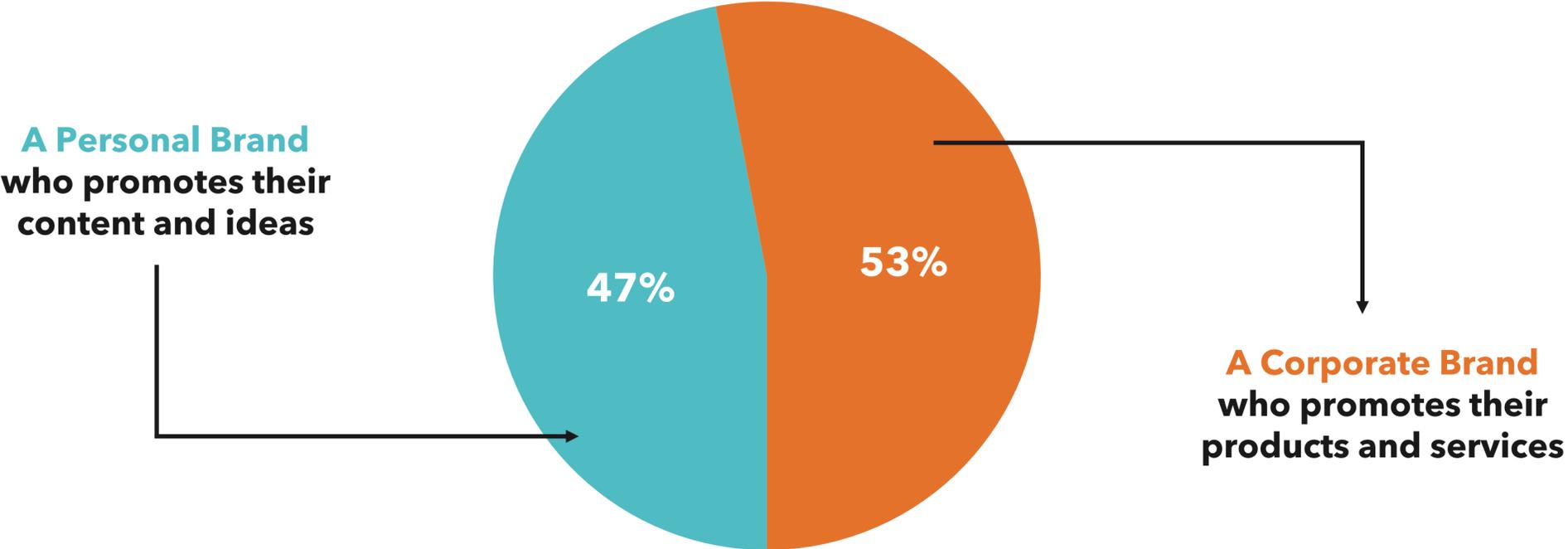
PART TWO:

Personal Brands vs. Corporate Brands

* For the purposes of this study, the term "corporate brand" refers to company names and logos versus an individual's name, face, and personality. As an example, Tesla is a company and Elon Musk is a personal brand.

WHO IS MORE INFLUENTIAL IN YOUR PURCHASING DECISIONS?

Almost half (47%) of Americans say a personal brand is more influential in their purchasing decisions than a corporate brand



Q: Who would you consider to be more influential in your purchasing decisions? Select one.



A-HA MOMENT

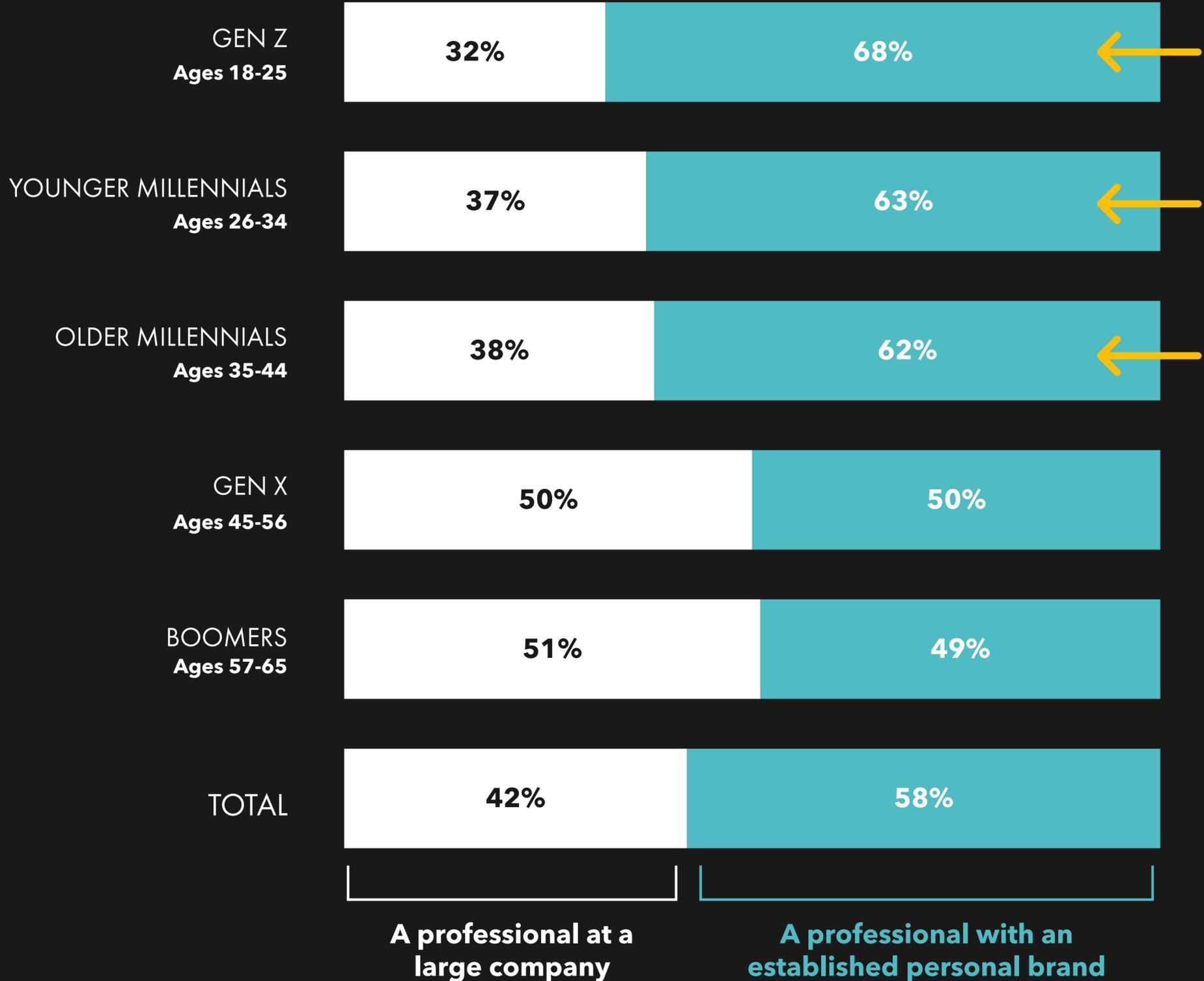
The majority of Millennials say individuals who promote content and ideas are more influential in purchase decisions than companies who promote products and services.

58% of Americans would be willing to pay more to receive their services from a professional who does NOT work at a large company but has an established personal brand.

Younger generations (age 18-44) are more likely than older generations (age 45+) to pay more to receive services from a professional who doesn't work at a large company but has an established personal brand compared to a professional at a company or firm.

Q: Who would you be willing to pay more to receive their services? Select one.

WHO WOULD YOU SPEND MORE MONEY WITH?



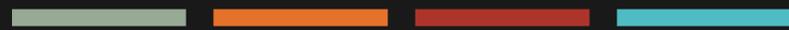
WOW STAT!

58%

of Americans would be willing to **PAY MORE** to receive their services from a professional who does **NOT** work at a large company but **has an established personal brand.**

SOURCE: TRENDS IN PERSONAL BRANDING NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED BY BRAND BUILDERS GROUP

What does this look like in real life?



PERSONAL BRANDS



VS.

VICTORIA'S
SECRET

CORPORATE BRAND

2021 marks one of the largest corporate rebrands in recent history with Victoria's Secret discontinuing their famous "Angels" and replacing them with 7 women famous for their achievements not their proportions.

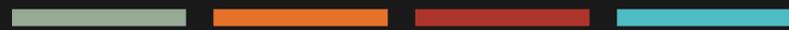
Instead of the traditional model, the brand has chosen to leverage established personal brands including a professional athlete, an Olympian, an inclusivity advocate, a tech investor, a photographic journalist and an international actor.

In an effort to turn around sales and regain market share they are engaging in a long overdue brand image overhaul and partnering with a variety of unique and strategically different women (personal brands) who each have a well-established, trusted and dedicated audience.

Priyanka Chopra alone has more online followers than the entire Victoria's Secret online brand.

Click [here](#) for more details on this story.





PERSONAL BRAND



PRIYANKA CHOPRA

VS.

VICTORIA'S
SECRET

CORPORATE BRAND

113.9M

Total Followers

 Instagram: 73.4M

 Twitter: 10.5M

 Facebook: 30M

165.3M

Total Followers

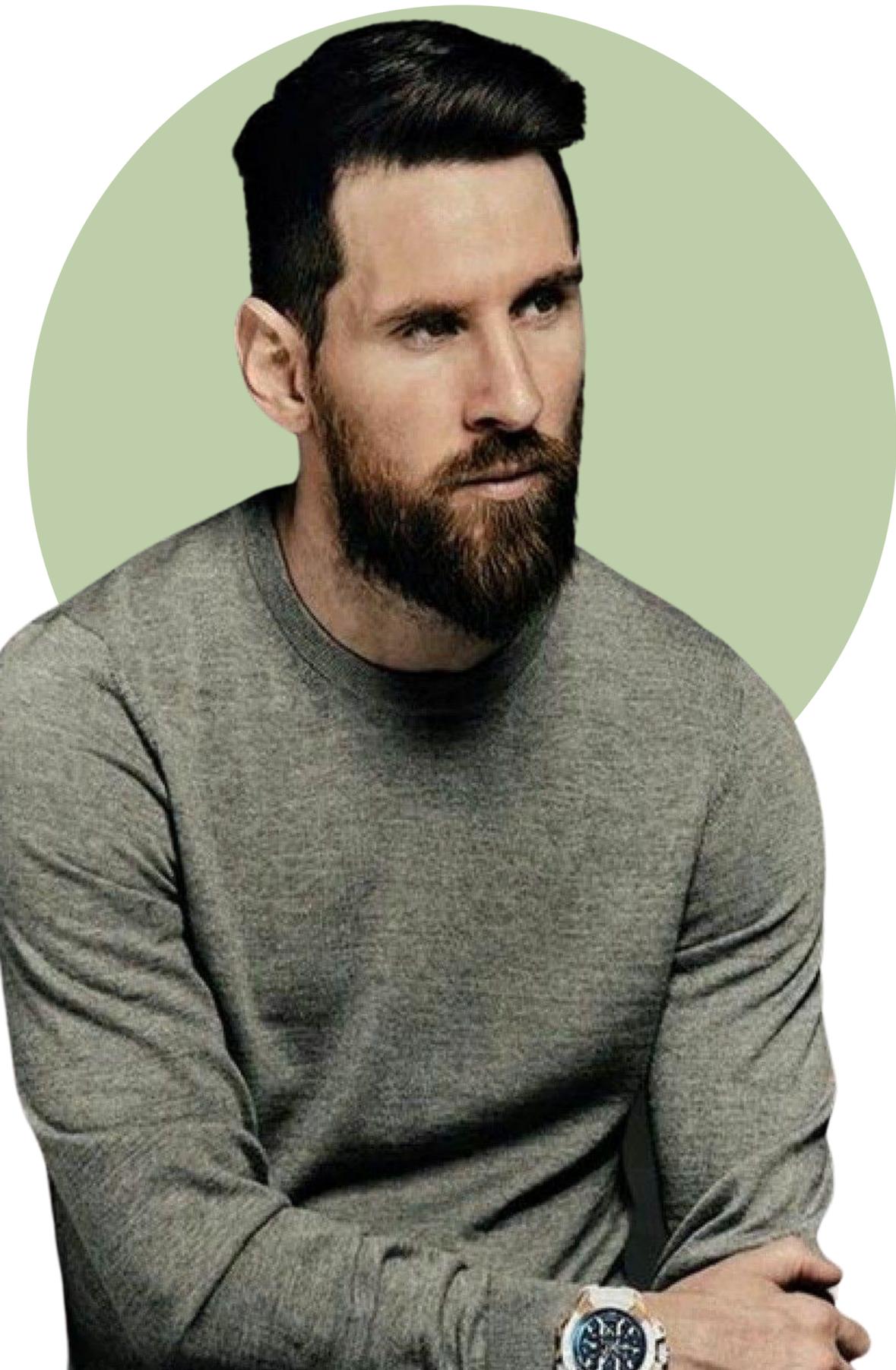
 Instagram: 82.5M

 Twitter: 27.8M

 Facebook: 55M

FOLLOWER COUNT CITED ON 09-21

FOLLOWER COUNT AS OF 09/2022



Leo Messi

In August 2021, Global soccer superstar Lionel Messi signed a two-year unprecedented deal with PSG (Paris St Germain) that will net him an annual salary of \$41M plus bonuses and a reported \$30M signing fee.

So, the question is why would PSG put so much money on the line for only 1 player? Because they know fans follow players as much, if not more than, teams. Messi's online fanbase is 6x that of of the PSG club.

Will it pay off for PSG? All signs point to yes. The French team is already getting a solid return on their investment.

According to MARCA, PSG sold a mind-boggling 832,000 Messi jerseys in the first 24 hours of his arrival in Paris. Those sales equal \$105M in revenue and an insane \$10.5M in profits for the club!





PERSONAL BRAND



LEO MESSI

362M
Instagram Followers



CORPORATE BRAND

BEFORE MESSI JOINED

38.8M

Instagram Followers



AFTER MESSI JOINED

62.9M

Instagram Followers

+24.1M

Instagram Followers

SHAREABLE NUGGETS

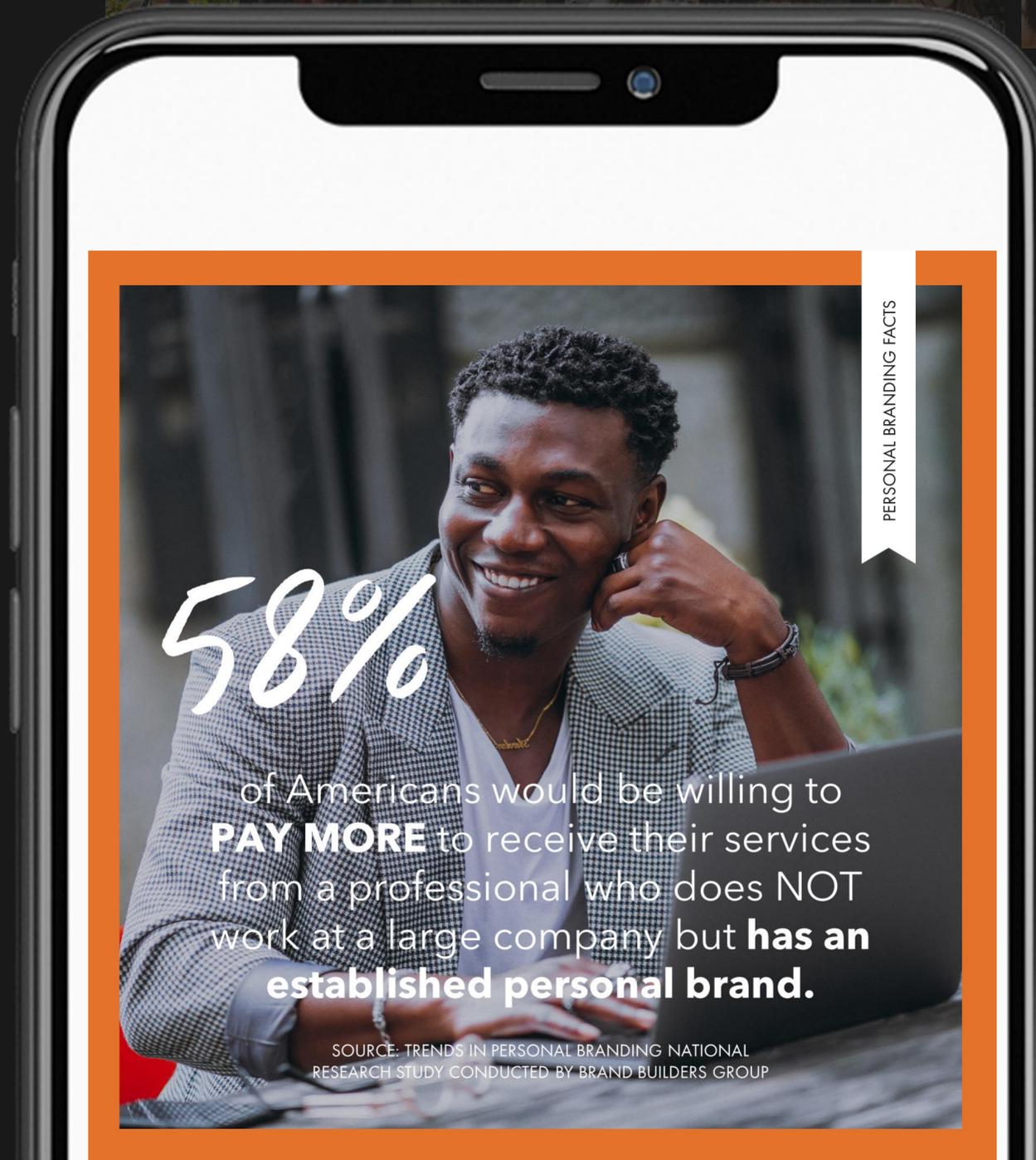
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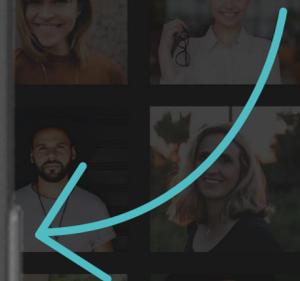
Be sure to tag us [\[@brandbuildersgroup\]](#)!



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SPREAD THE KNOWLEDGE!

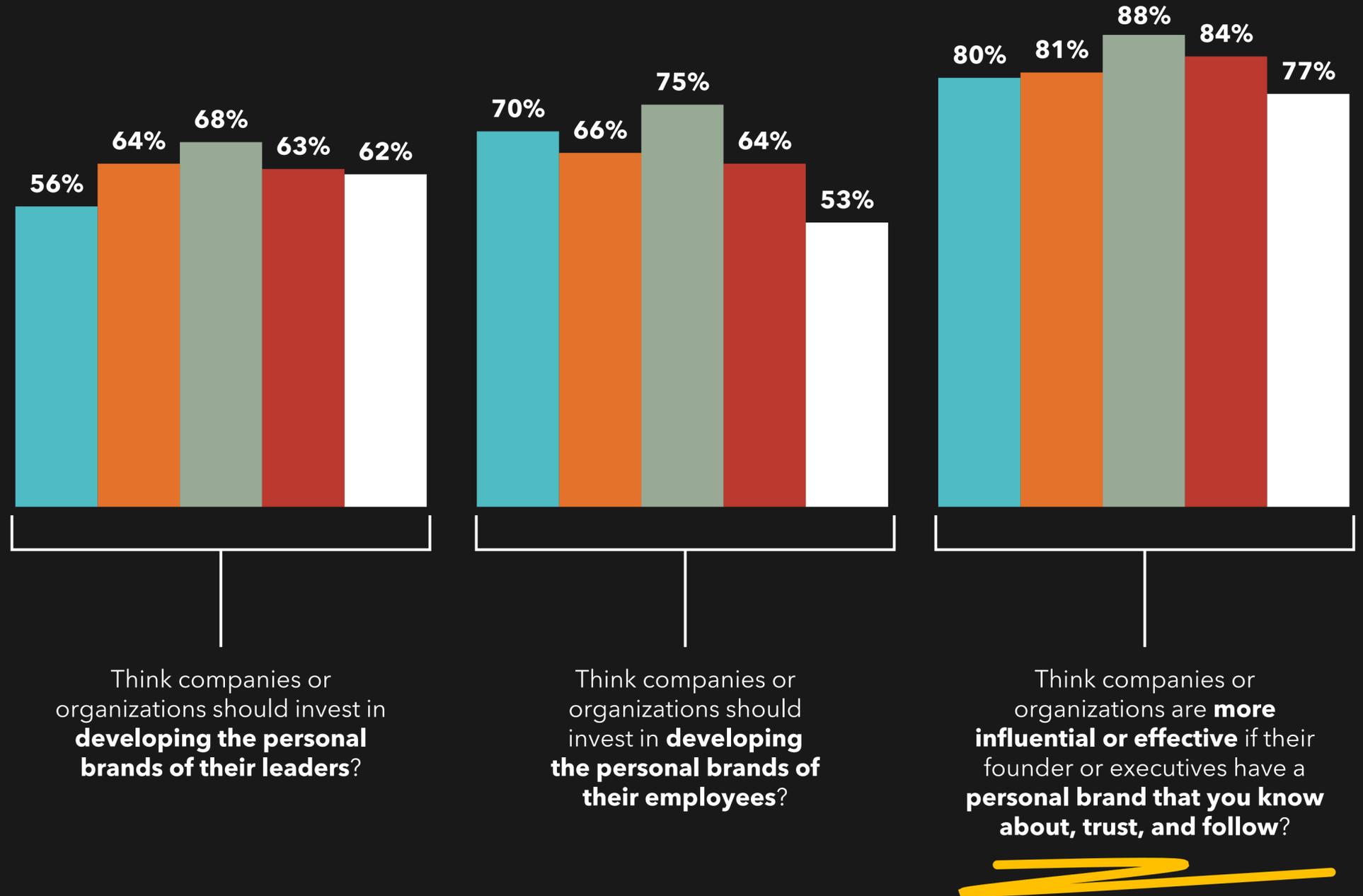


PART THREE:

The Impact of Personal Brand on a Company

*For the purpose of this study, examples of founders or executives who have an **established personal brand** would be Elon Musk at Tesla, Sara Blakely at Spanx, Bill Gates at Microsoft, Jeff Bezos at Amazon, Barbara Corcoran at The Corcoran Group, and Richard Branson at Virgin Group.

82% of Americans agree that companies are more influential if their founder or executives have a personal brand they know about, trust and follow.



Q: Select Yes or No for each of the following questions. Select one for each row.

GEN Z
Ages 18-25

YOUNGER MILLENNIALS
Ages 26-34

OLDER MILLENNIALS
Ages 35-44

GEN X
Ages 45-56

BOOMERS
Ages 57-65



A-HA MOMENT

88% of older Millennials believe companies are more influential and effective if the founder or executives have an established personal brand.

Now STAT!

2/3

of working Americans think
companies should teach all
**employees how to build
their personal brand.**

SOURCE: TRENDS IN PERSONAL BRANDING NATIONAL
RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED BY BRAND BUILDERS GROUP

Americans are most likely to trust, buy from and recommend a company whose founder or executives have an established personal brand.

If you're a founder or an executive, having a personal brand means:



Q: If a company or organization's founder or executives have an established personal brand, how would that affect your likeliness to do each of the following? Select one for each row.



Wow STAT!

72%

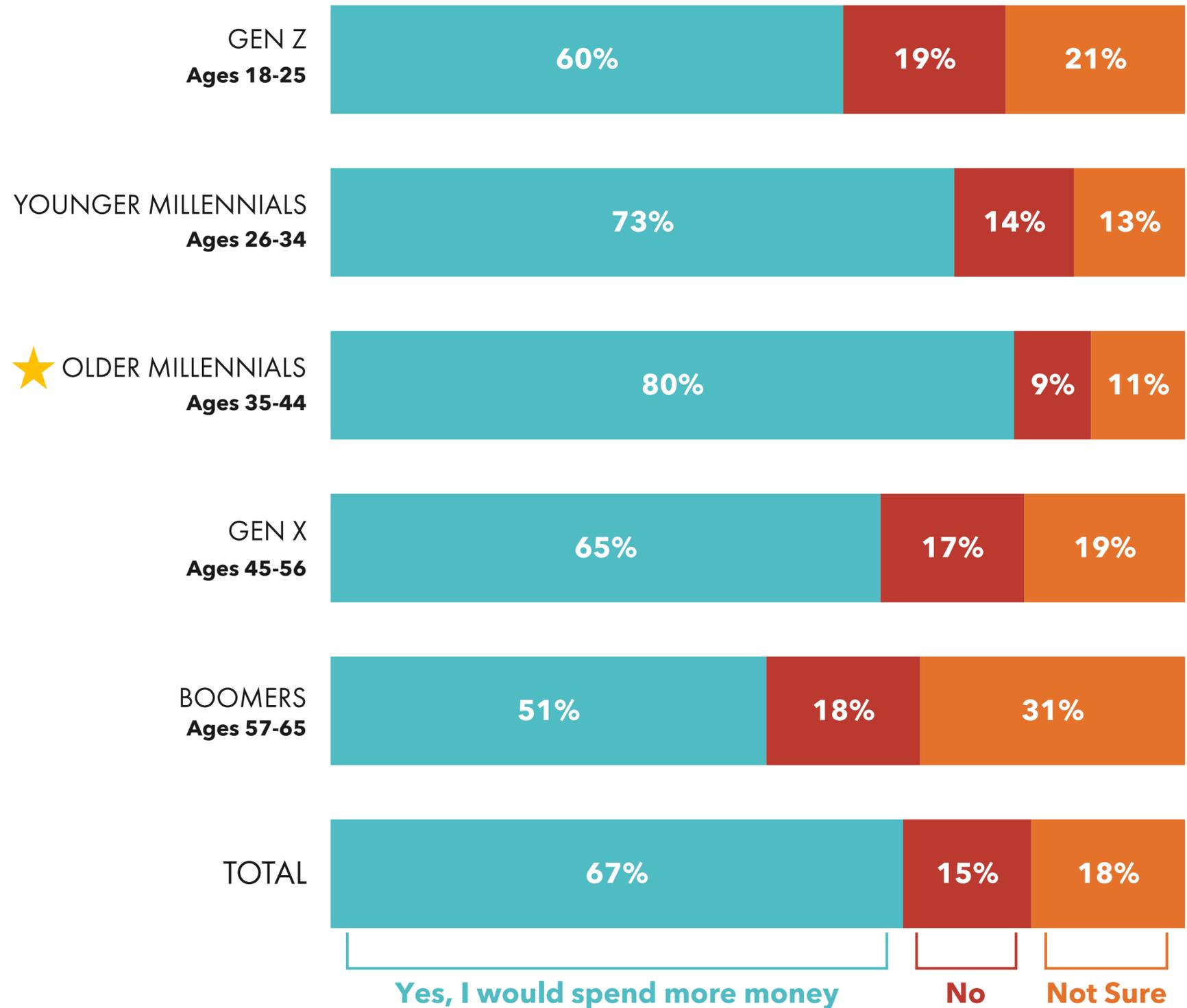
of older Millennials (35-44) **TRUST**
a company or brand more if they
feel like they know or recognize
its executives.

SOURCE: TRENDS IN PERSONAL BRANDING NATIONAL
RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED BY BRAND BUILDERS GROUP

2/3 of Americans would be willing to spend more money on products and services from the companies of founders whose personal brand aligns with their personal values.

Older Millennials are the generation most willing to spend more money on products and services from companies of founders whose personal brand aligns with their personal values.

Q: Would you be willing to spend more money on products or services from the companies of founders whose personal brand aligns with your personal values? Select one.



WOW STAT!

67%

of Americans would be willing to spend more money on products and services from the **companies of founders whose personal brand aligns with their personal values.**

SOURCE: TRENDS IN PERSONAL BRANDING NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED BY BRAND BUILDERS GROUP

When knowing that a company's founder has an established personal brand, potential employees are more likely to accept a job with that company, recommend the company and apply for a job with that company.



Q: If a company or organization's founder or executives have an established personal brand, how would that affect your likeliness as a potential employee of that organization to do each? Select one for each row.

What does this look like in real life?



Elon Musk X bitcoin

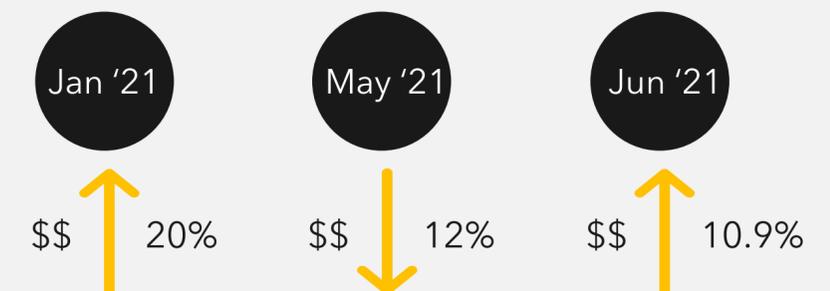
With almost 60 million followers on Twitter, Elon Musk's tweets get a substantial amount of attention. So much attention they can impact financial markets. In January 2021 he changed his Twitter bio to #bitcoin while simultaneously increasing the price of Bitcoin approximately 20% in just a few hours.

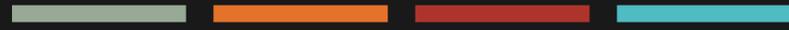
Not only do personal brands carry more trust with their audience, influence purchase and investment decisions as well as impact consumer loyalty, they also have the power to fluctuate currency values. What?!

Why? It's simple. The more people get to see you, know you and learn from you the more likely they are to trust you.

And the more someone trusts you the more influence you carry in their decisions. Personal branding allows you to accelerate your trustworthiness with your audience. And in the case of Elon Musk as goes his tweet, so goes your money.

The following timeline shows a sequence of tweets and the corresponding highs and lows of Bitcoin prices thru June 2021.





PERSONAL BRAND



ELON MUSK

107M

Total Followers



Twitter: 107M

VS.



CORPORATE BRAND

5.5M

Total Followers



Twitter: 5.5M

Cristiano Ronaldo

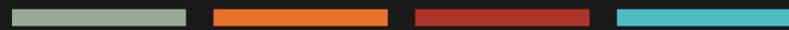
With more than 344M followers, Cristiano Ronaldo is Instagram's most followed user worldwide. And with that kind of audience what he says and does carries a lot of weight. But how much?

In June 2021, at the Euro 2020 news conference, Ronaldo was visibly concerned when he saw two bottles of Coca-Cola sitting in front of him as he sat down to speak. He simply moved the two bottles out of frame and instead held up a bottle of water and said "Agua!"

By the end of the press conference, Coca-Cola saw its share price drop by 1.6%. That was a \$4 billion dollar drop as the market value went from \$242bn to \$238bn.

The simple gesture had a swift and dramatic impact highlighting the power and impact celebrities and influencers (personal brands) have on the market.





PERSONAL BRAND



VS.



CORPORATE BRAND

739M

Total Followers

 Instagram: 483M

 Twitter: 103.7M

 Facebook: 153M

CRISTIANO RONALDO

117M

Total Followers

 Instagram: 2.8M

 Twitter: 3.3M

 Facebook: 109M

SHAREABLE NUGGETS

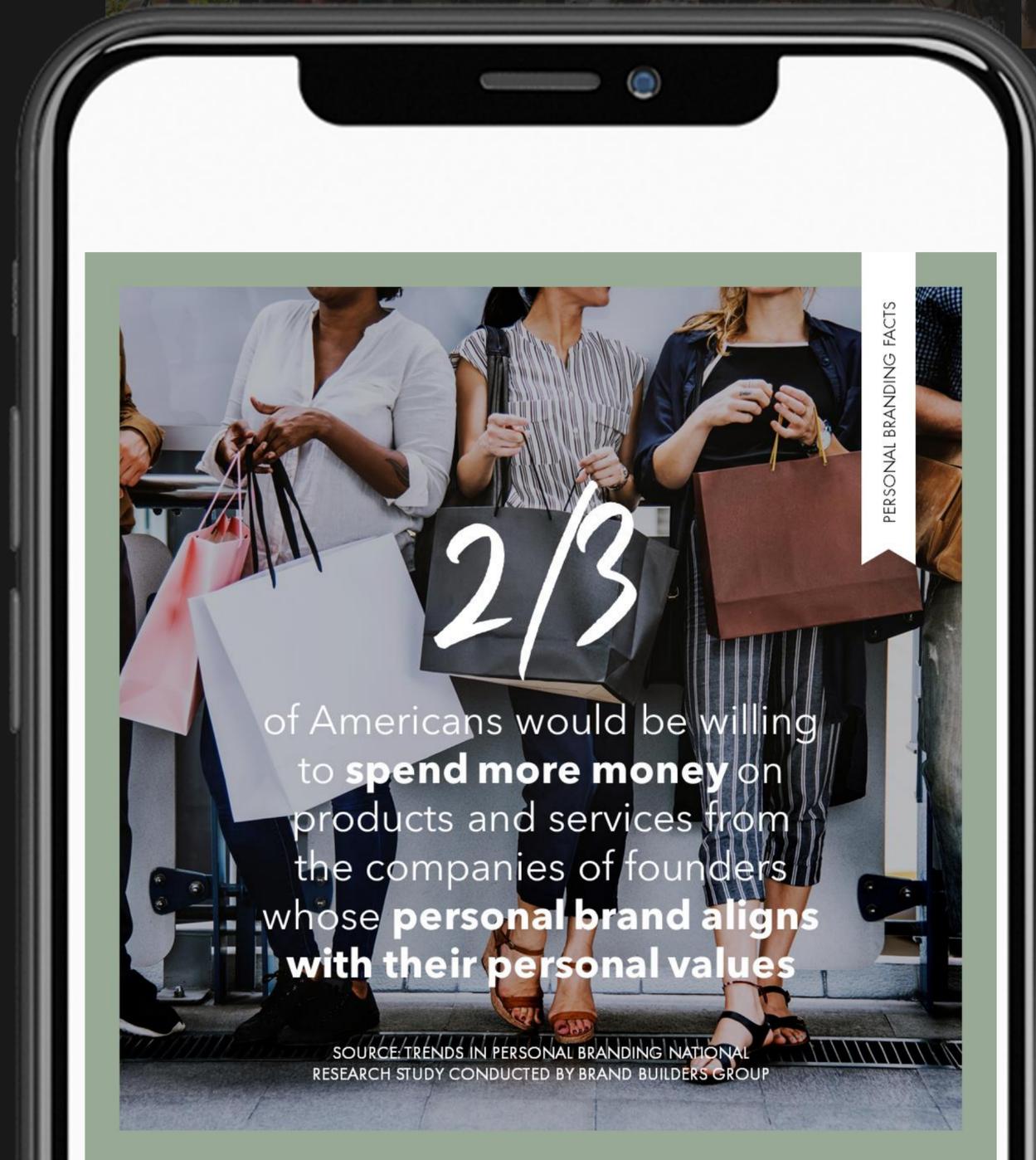
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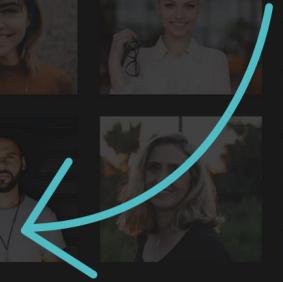
Be sure to tag us [\[@brandbuildersgroup\]](#)!



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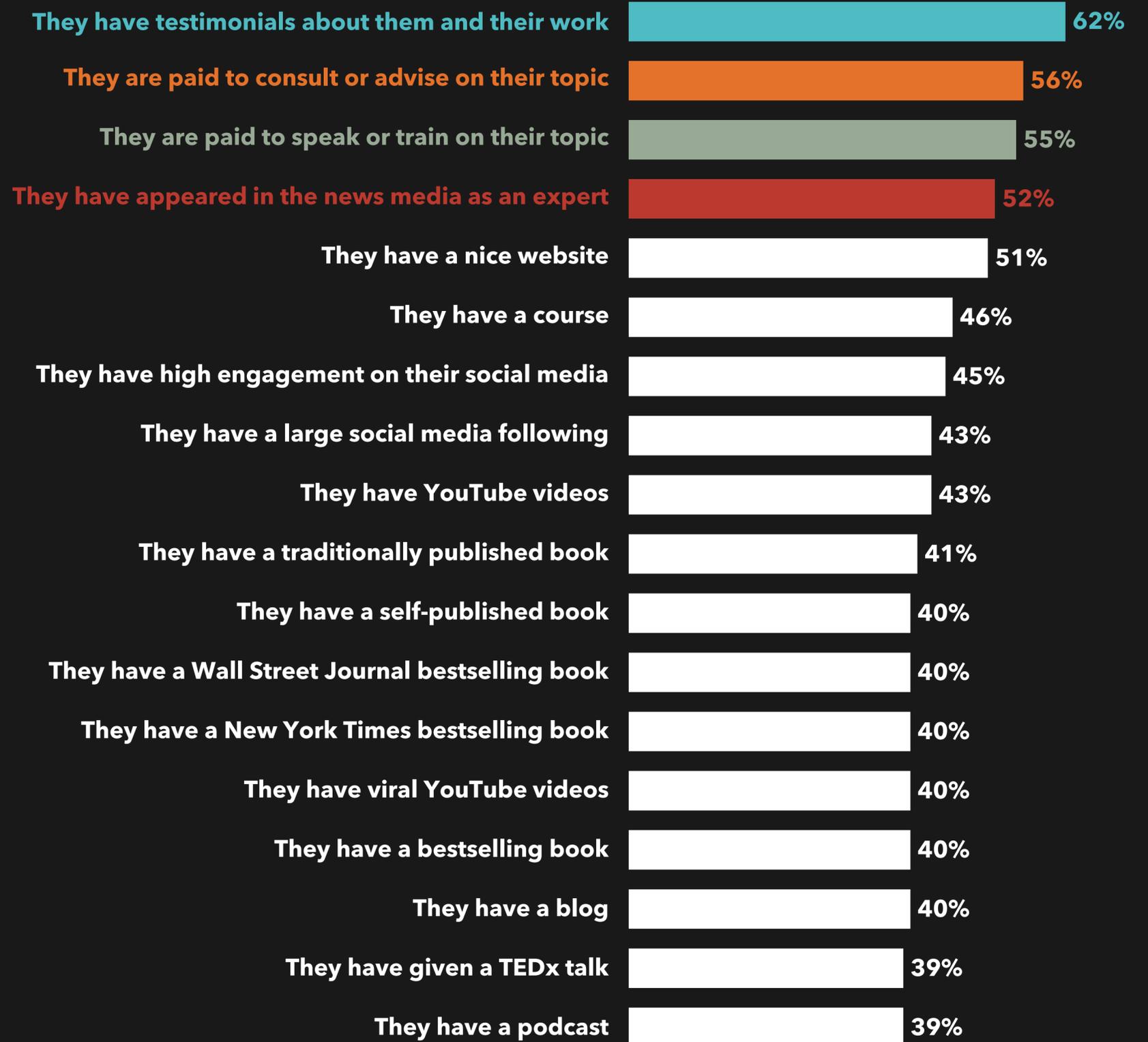
SPREAD THE KNOWLEDGE!



PART FOUR:

Building an Influential Personal Brand

Having **testimonials** about themselves and their work is also **the most important factor** for Americans when it comes to paying someone for a product or service.



Q: How important are each of the following when it comes to paying someone more for a product or a service?

62% of Americans say having **TESTIMONIALS** is the most important factor when deciding who to purchase from!

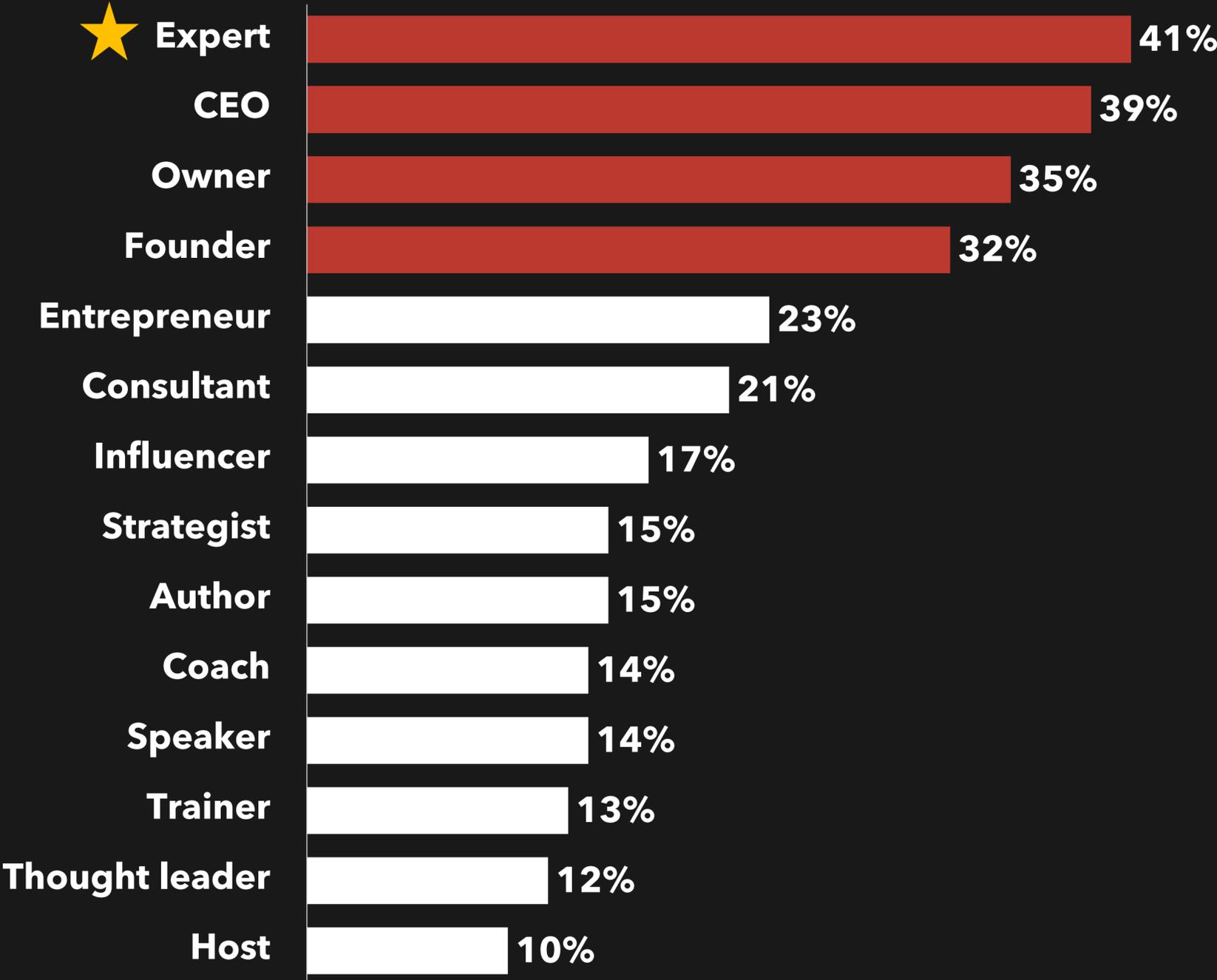


AHA MOMENT

On average, having a blog, self published book, bestselling book or New York Times bestselling book all hold **the SAME level of importance when deciding whom to hire!**

Americans report the titles they think have the most credibility are **Expert, CEO, Owner and Founder**

WHICH TITLE HAS THE MOST CREDIBILITY?



Q: Which of the following titles do you think has the most credibility?



A-HA MOMENT

Using the title Host, Thought Leader or Trainer have the least amount of credibility in the marketplace. Position yourself in a way that allows you to leverage personal experience and expertise.

Generations value different attributes when selecting who they follow and engage with online



Q: What matters most to you in selecting who you follow online?



A-HA MOMENT

For Gen X and Boomers, **content relevancy and **educational value** matter most when selecting who they follow online.**



A-HA MOMENT

**Millennials and Gen Z value *personality* and
the *entertainment value* of content.**

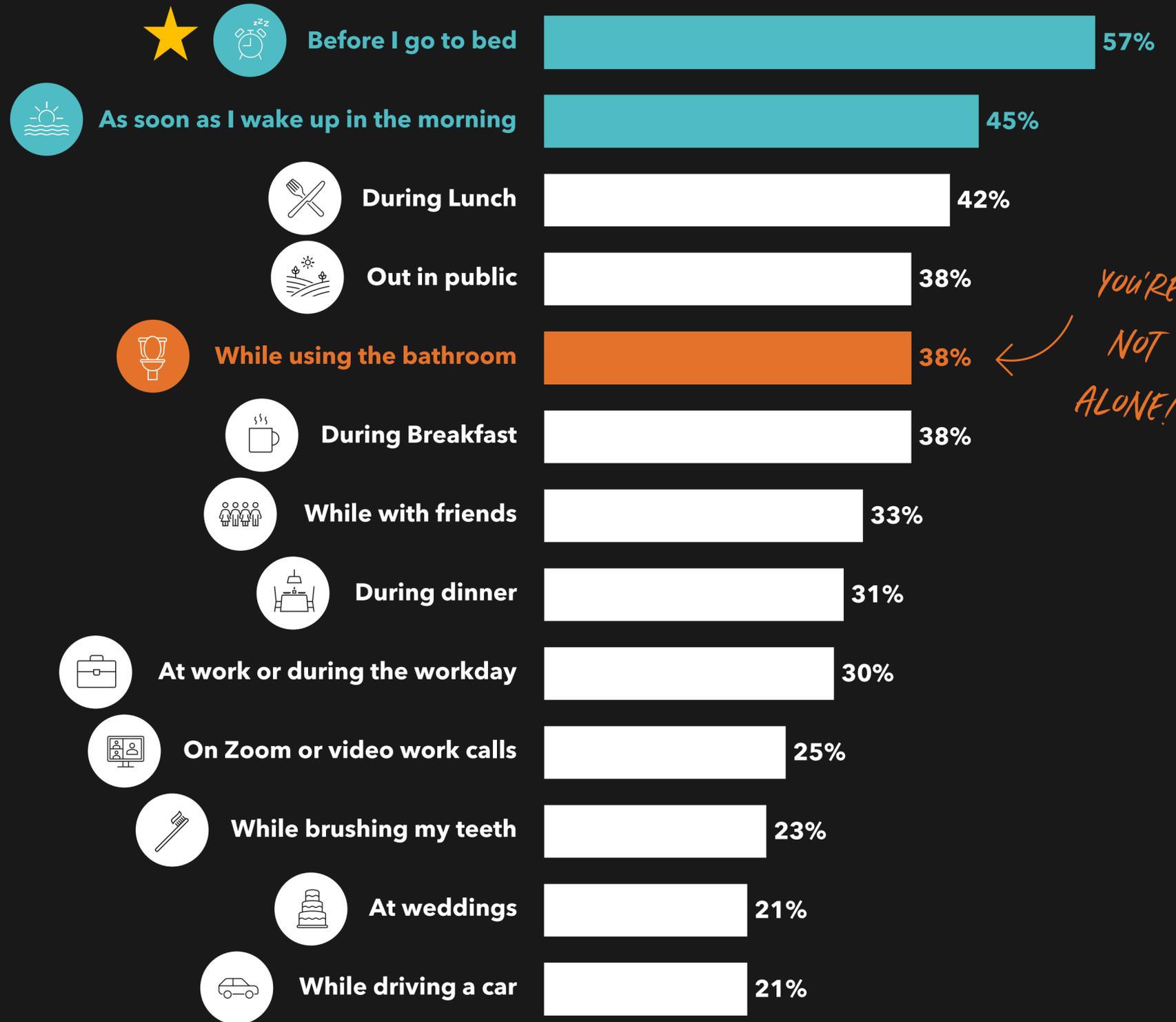
TRENDS IN PERSONAL BRANDING BY brand builders



A-HA MOMENT

Across all generations, **number of followers is the LEAST** important factor when deciding who to follow, like, engage with or recommend online.

Americans are most often looking at social media before they go to bed and as soon as they wake up in the morning.



Q: How Often Do You Look at Social Media in Each of These Situations?

57%

of Americans are most often looking at social media **before they go to bed.**



A-HA MOMENT

**If you want online engagement,
when you post matters.**

TRENDS IN PERSONAL BRANDING BY brand builders

SHAREABLE NUGGETS

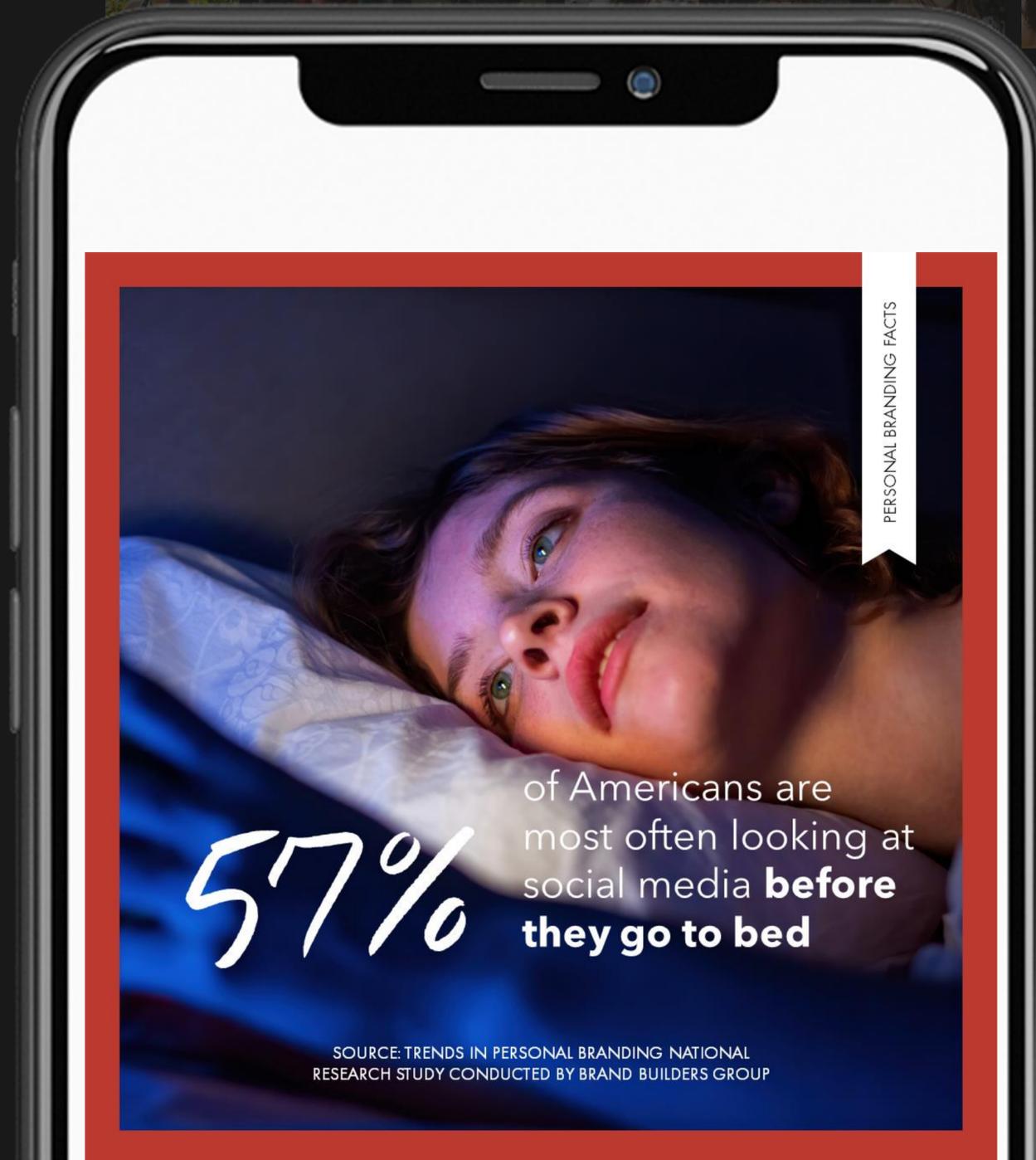
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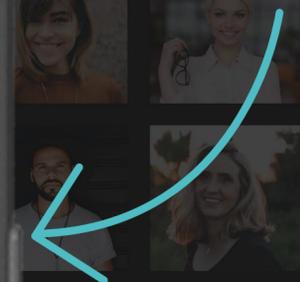
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Trends in: Personal Branding

NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY 

Next Steps...

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Trends in Personal Branding

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