



Canada School  
of Public Service

École de la fonction  
publique du Canada



# Shape Your Learning

## Highlights From the User Study

*May 2021*

*Prepared by the CSPA Digital Academy*



# Introduction

This presentation provides a summary of the general highlights from the Shape Your Learning user study.

- **Part 1** of the presentation looks at participants' digital mindset and level of digital literacy, along with information on their learning habits, preferences and interests.
- **Part 2** of the presentation looks at key findings associated with a typical learning journey to help understand the main drivers that influence public servants' decisions to take part in learning offerings.

View the full report with additional information and research findings from the study.

The data set from the research is also available on the Open Data Portal.

# Context

- The [Canada School of Public Service](#) (CSPS) [Digital Academy](#)'s mission is to help federal **public servants** gain the **knowledge**, **skills** and **mindsets** they need in the **digital age**.
- The DA **use quantitative and qualitative data** from course and event evaluation surveys to guide the development and review of our products.
- The DA had yet to conduct broader user research that could be used to establish a **benchmark** against which progress in achieving its mission could be measured.
- The DA also needed to **better define its user segments to increase uptake and reach** via more focused marketing and the development of products to meet the needs of the public servants not currently being reached.

# Research Goal

To gain insights on attitudes towards digital, knowledge and skills levels in areas related to digital, and learning habits and preferences to help benchmark progress in achieving mission, as well as inform strategic planning and engagement efforts through the validation of user segments.



# How We Did It

- **Research method:** Online questionnaire (32 questions) / Quantitative & qualitative (open-ended questions)
- **Target audience:** Public servants from across Canada (NRC and regions), with emphasis on DA partners.
- **Schedule:** December 16, 2020 and February 10, 2021.
- **Response target goals:** Minimum of 1,200 participants, with a broad representation of gender, experience, work environments, regions and roles.

## How it was communicated

- **Targeted emails:** CSPS DGs/LPB/business lines, partners, TBS-CIO Executive team, NMC, alumni, individual influencers, community leaders
- **Newsletters** (Digital Academy, CSPS, CCO)
- **Busrides site banner**
- **Slack communities**
- **GCTools** (GCwiki, GCcollab, GCconnex, GCmessage)
- **Twitter** (DA account)





# Participation

A total of 4,775 public servants completed the survey!

**53%**  
Regional  
participation

**69**  
Departments &  
Agencies

**551**  
Participants from  
partner departments

## Partner Departments

- DFO 114
- DND 109
- INFC 81
- PSPC 55
- SSC 55

- ISED 43
- CBSA 40
- AAFC 34
- TC 12
- NRC 8

We received great participation from other departments!

- CRA 2,083
- ESDC 1,178

\*Results from the study can be extrapolated to the GC population with a confidence level of 99% and a 1.85 confidence interval. However, further analysis of participants' demographics data demonstrates that caution should be taken when generalizing the results to the greater population.





## Part 1

# General Highlights from Research Findings

*A look at some highlights from the user study. View the full report to get additional information and research findings from the study.*



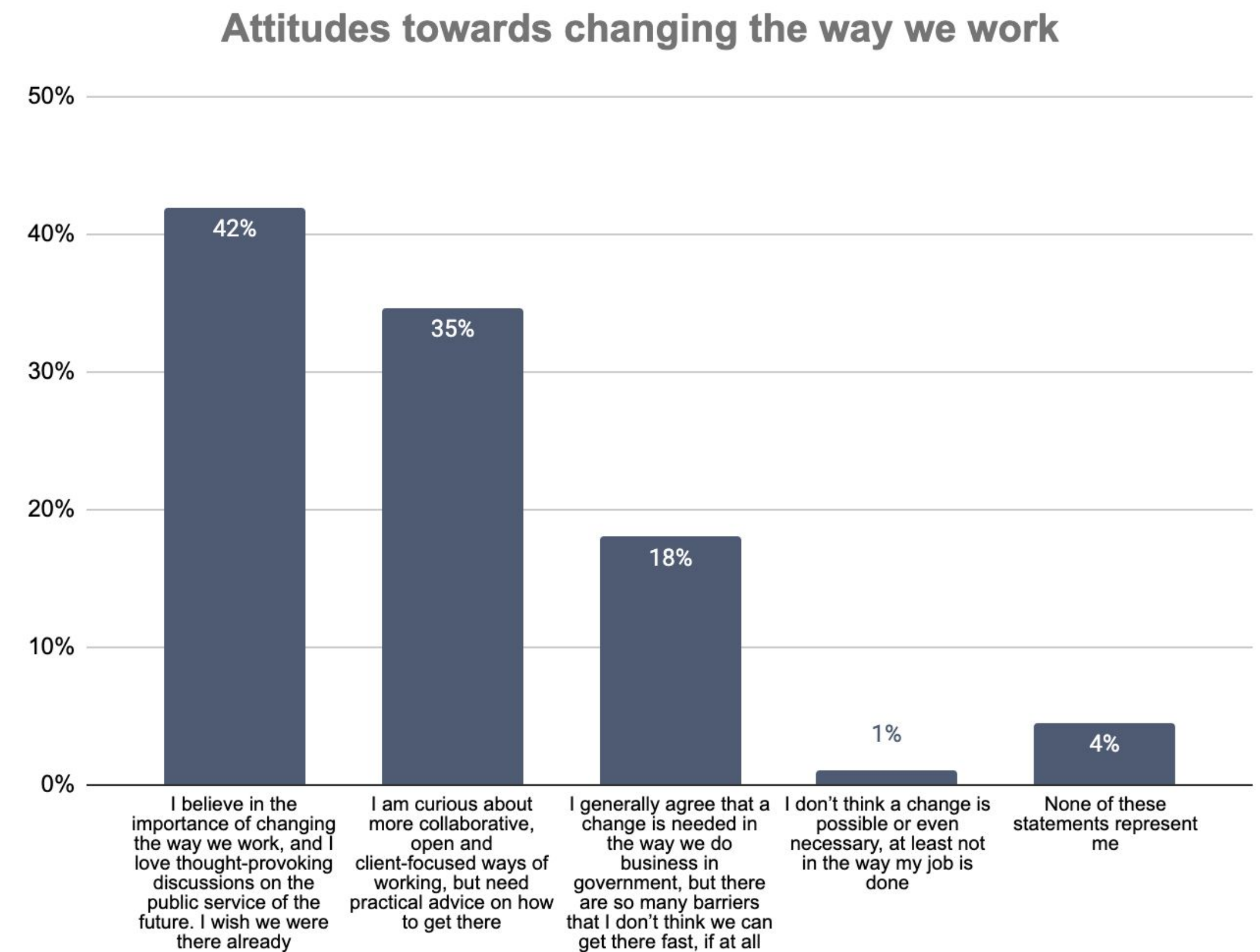
# Digital Mindset & Literacy Level

# General Positive Attitude to Changing How We Work

**Participants were asked about their knowledge and attitudes related to digital in government.**

When asked which statements best describe their **attitudes towards changing the way we work**, the vast majority (77%) of respondents showed to have a positive attitude.

- 42% believe in the importance of changing the way we work; and
- 35% are curious about more collaborative, open and client-focused ways of working, and need practical advice on how to get there.

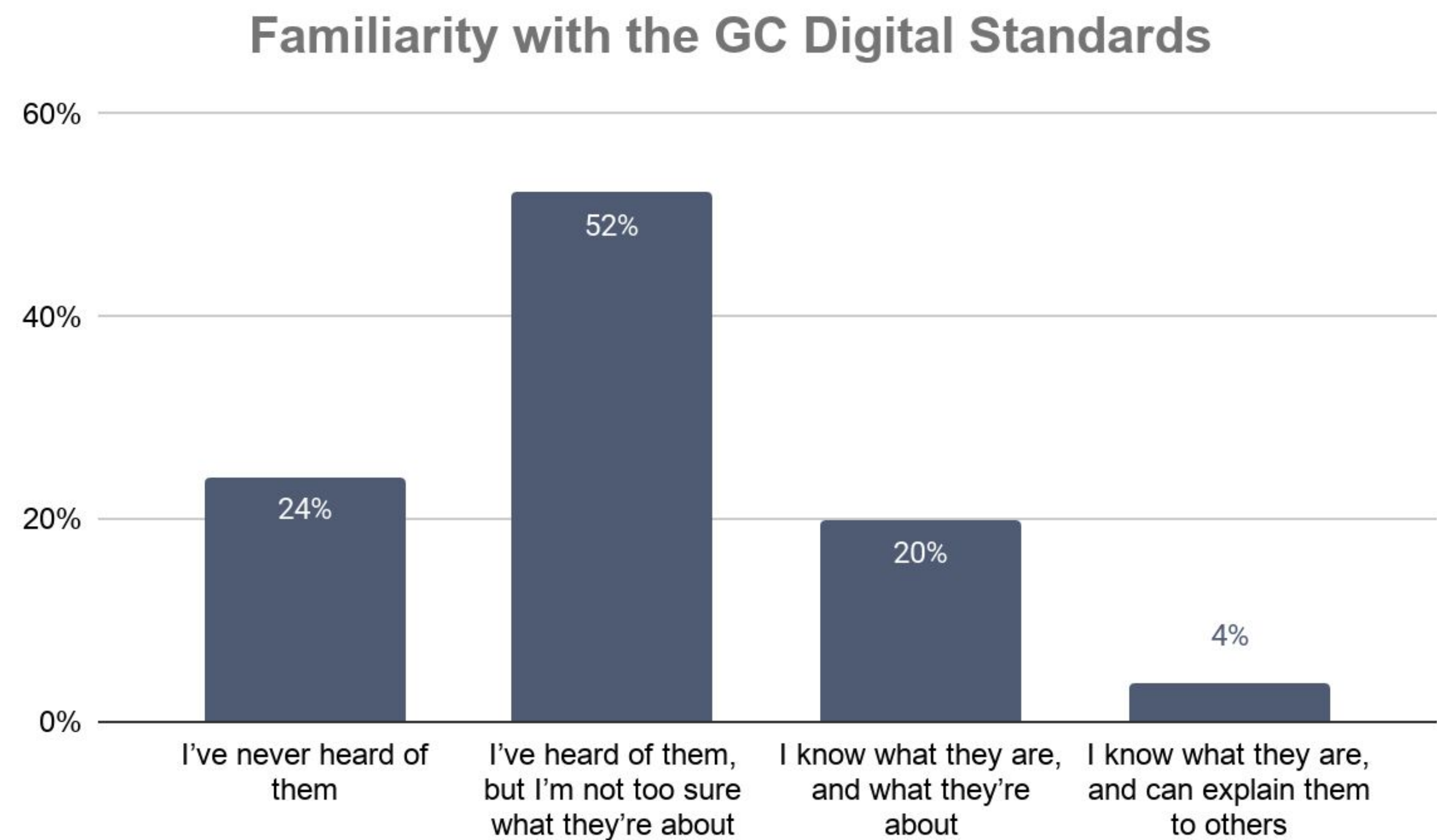




# Level of Awareness of GC Digital Standards

When asked about their level of awareness of the **Government of Canada’s Digital Standards**.

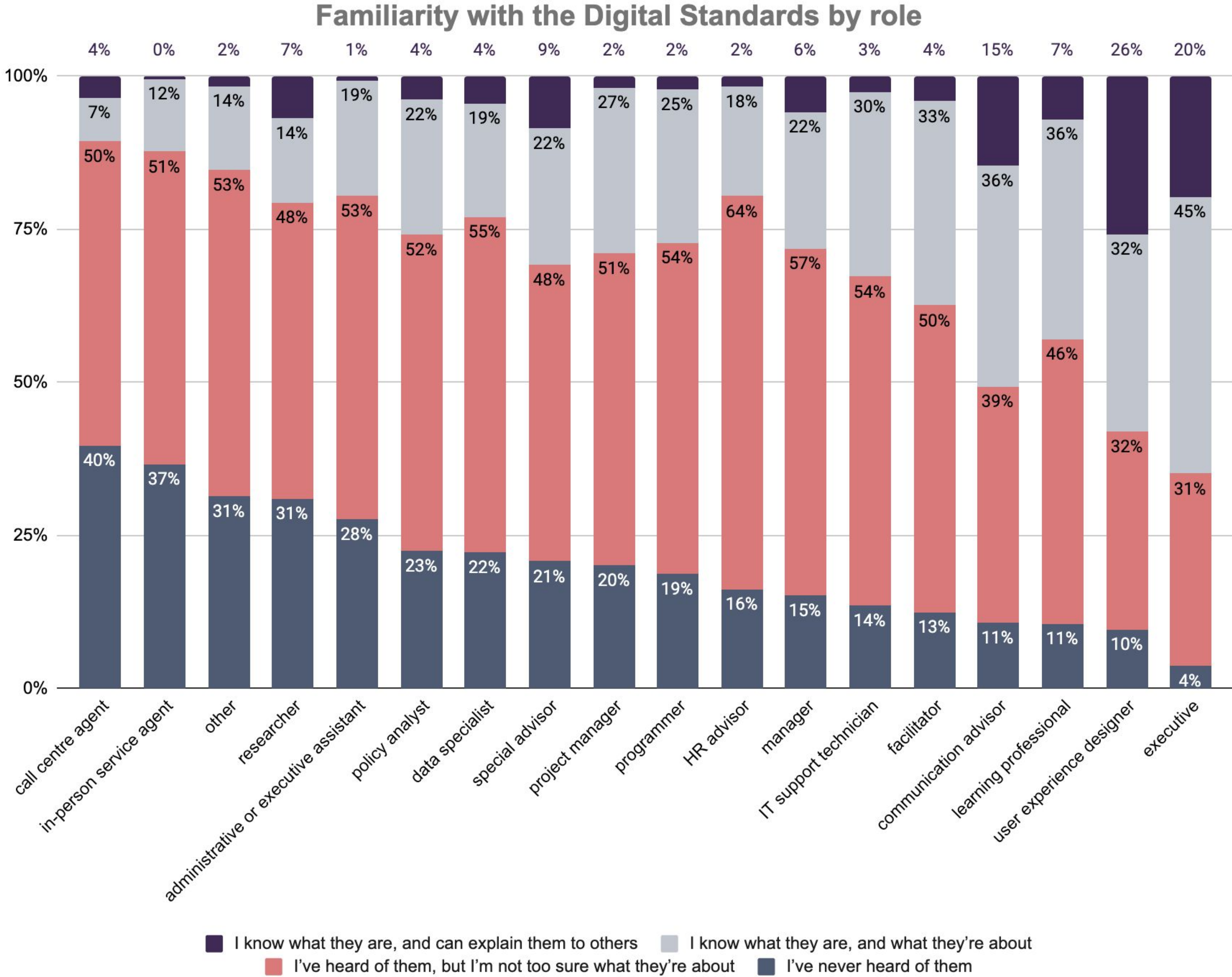
Three quarters of participants were either not aware of the GC Digital Standards (24%), or had heard of them but didn’t know what they were about (52%).





# Familiarity With the Digital Standards by Role

When looking at the level of familiarity with the Digital Standards by participants' role, those who identified as frontline employees, including **call centre agents** and **in-person service agents**, reported having the lowest familiarity level with the Standards.



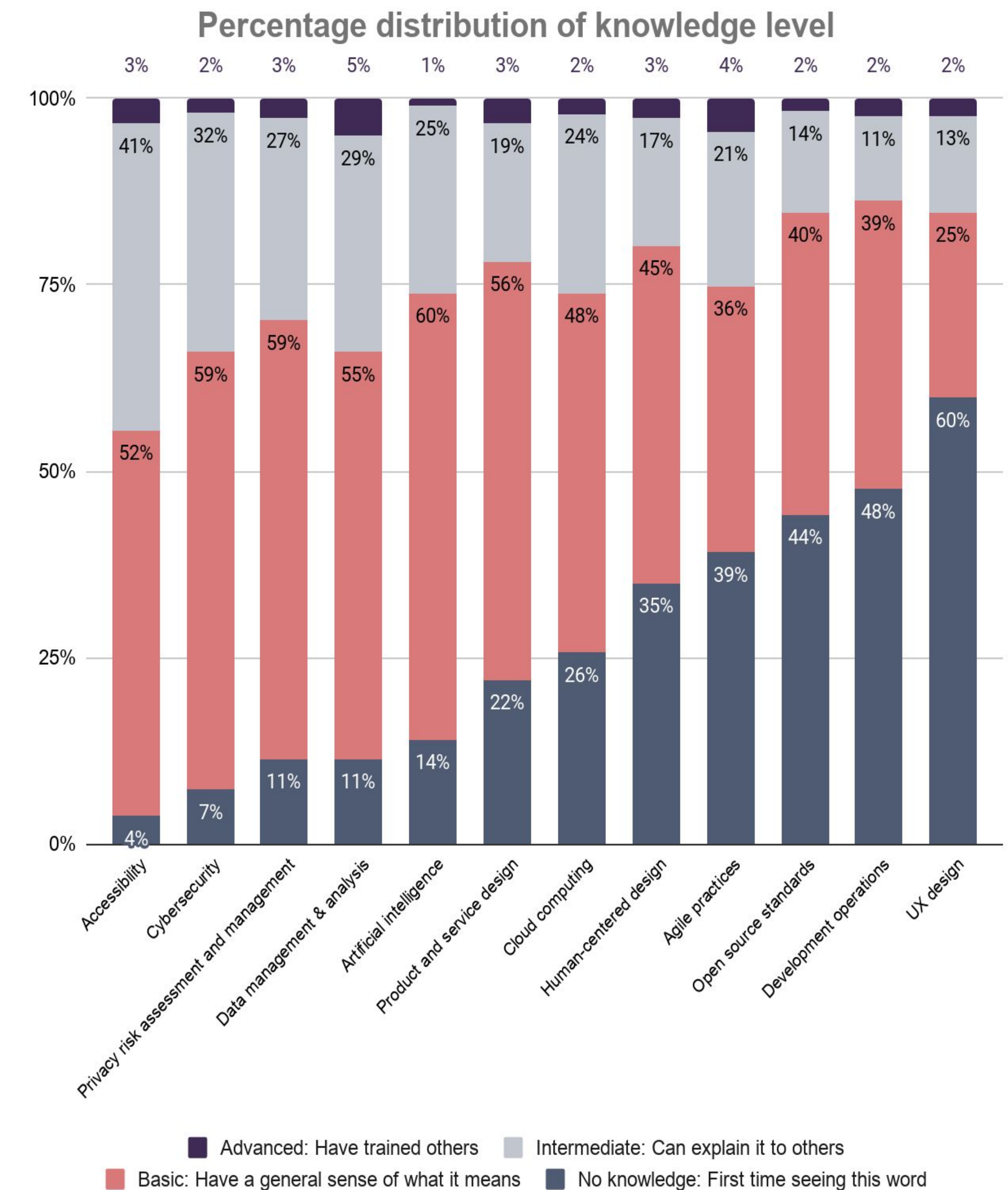


# Knowledge Level in Areas Related to Digital

Participants were asked to rate their level of knowledge in 12 digital areas.

The top 5 areas where participants reported having “no knowledge” were:

- User experience (UX) design (60%)
- Development operations (48%)
- Open source standards (44%)
- Agile practice (39%)
- Human centered design (35%)



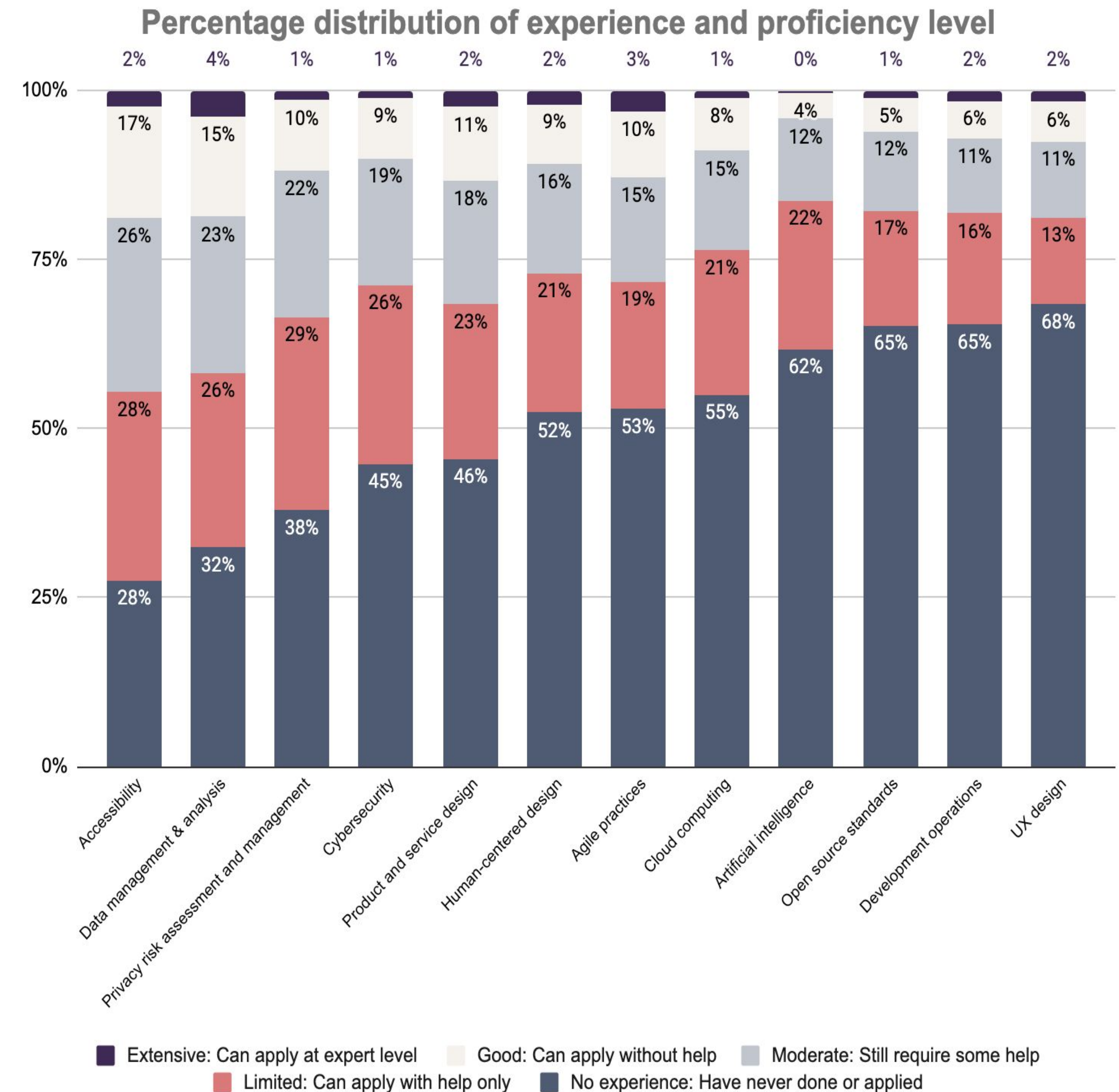


# Skill Level in Areas Related to Digital

Participants were asked to rate their level of experience and expertise in 12 digital areas.

More than 50% of participants reported having “**no experience**” in the 7 of the 12 areas, including:

- UX design (68%)
- Development operations (65%)
- Open source standards (65%)
- Artificial intelligence (62%)
- Cloud computing (55%)
- Agile practices (53%)
- Human-centered design (52%)





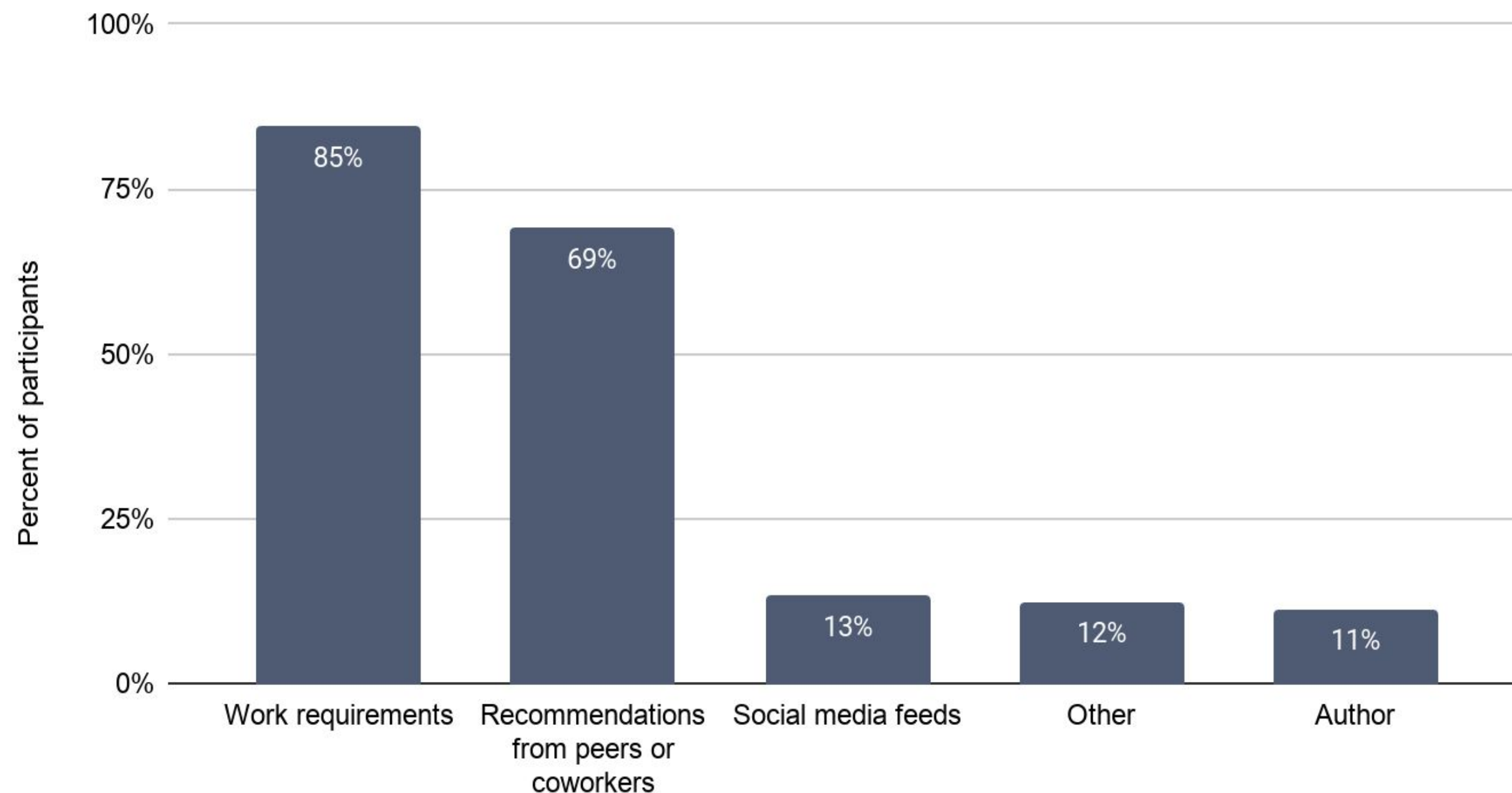
# Learning Habits, Preferences and Interests



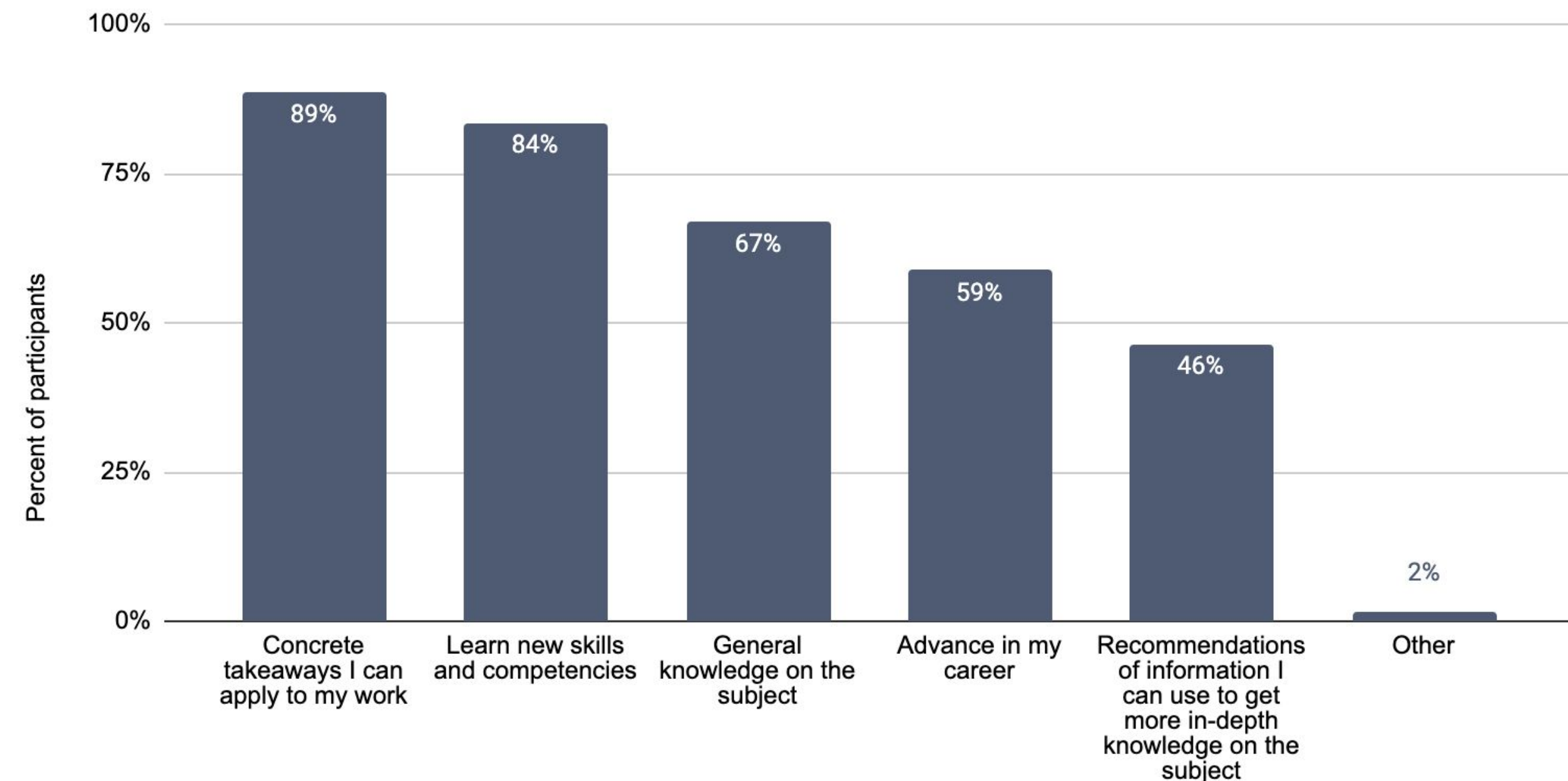
# Reasons for Participating in Learning Activities

- Participants are more likely to take on learning when they have a concrete goal to fulfill, like a work requirement (85%) or to advance their careers (59%).
- Participants showed a strong interest in skill-based learning compared to knowledge-based learning, with 89% of participants who reported wanting concrete takeaways as one of their main learning goals.

**External influences**



**Aspirational benefits**



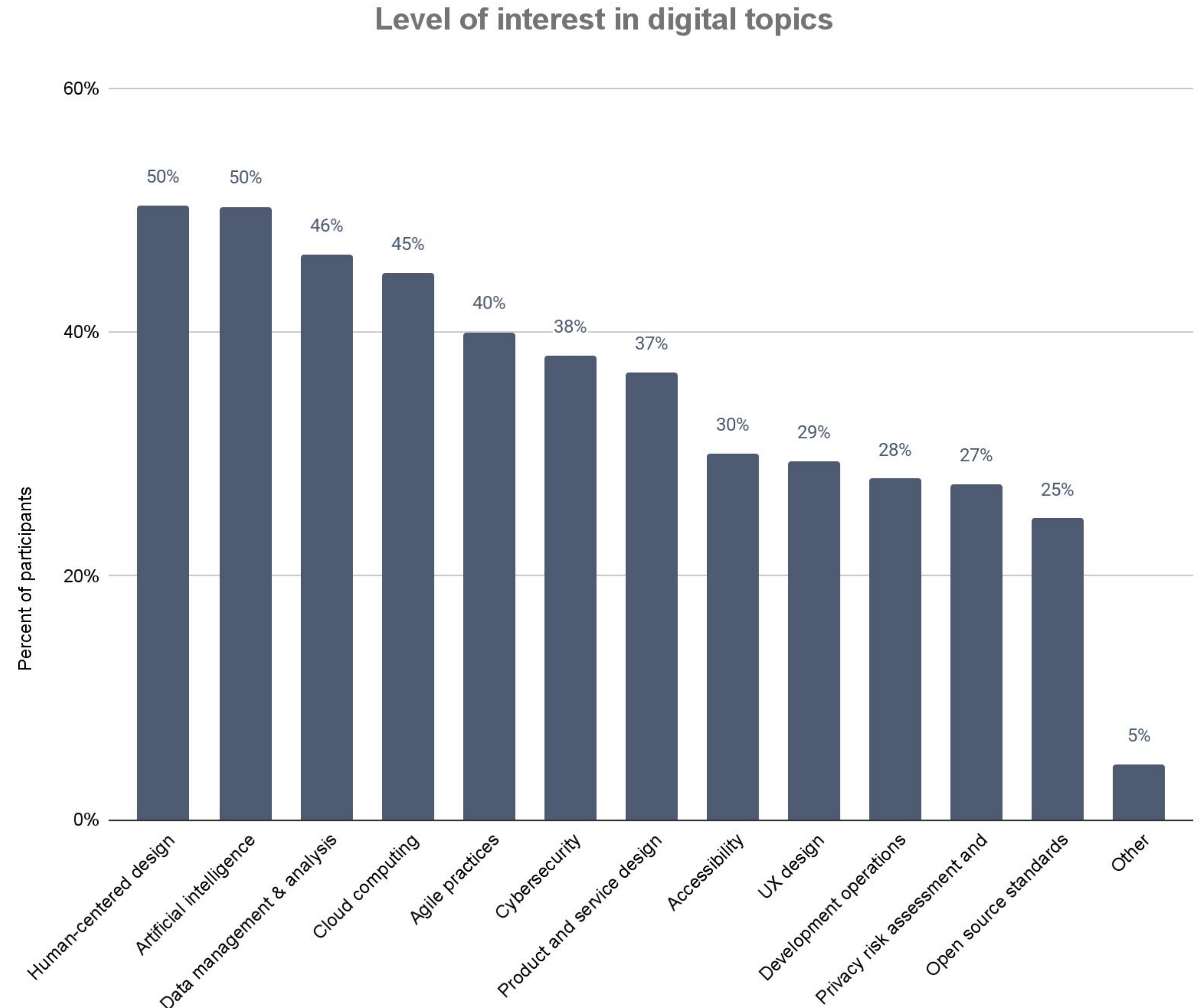


# Topics of Interest

Participants were asked what areas they would be the most curious to learn about.

## Top 5 topics of interest:

- Human-centered design (50%)
- Artificial intelligence (50%)
- Data Management and analysis (46%)
- Cloud Computing (45%)
- Agile practices (40%)

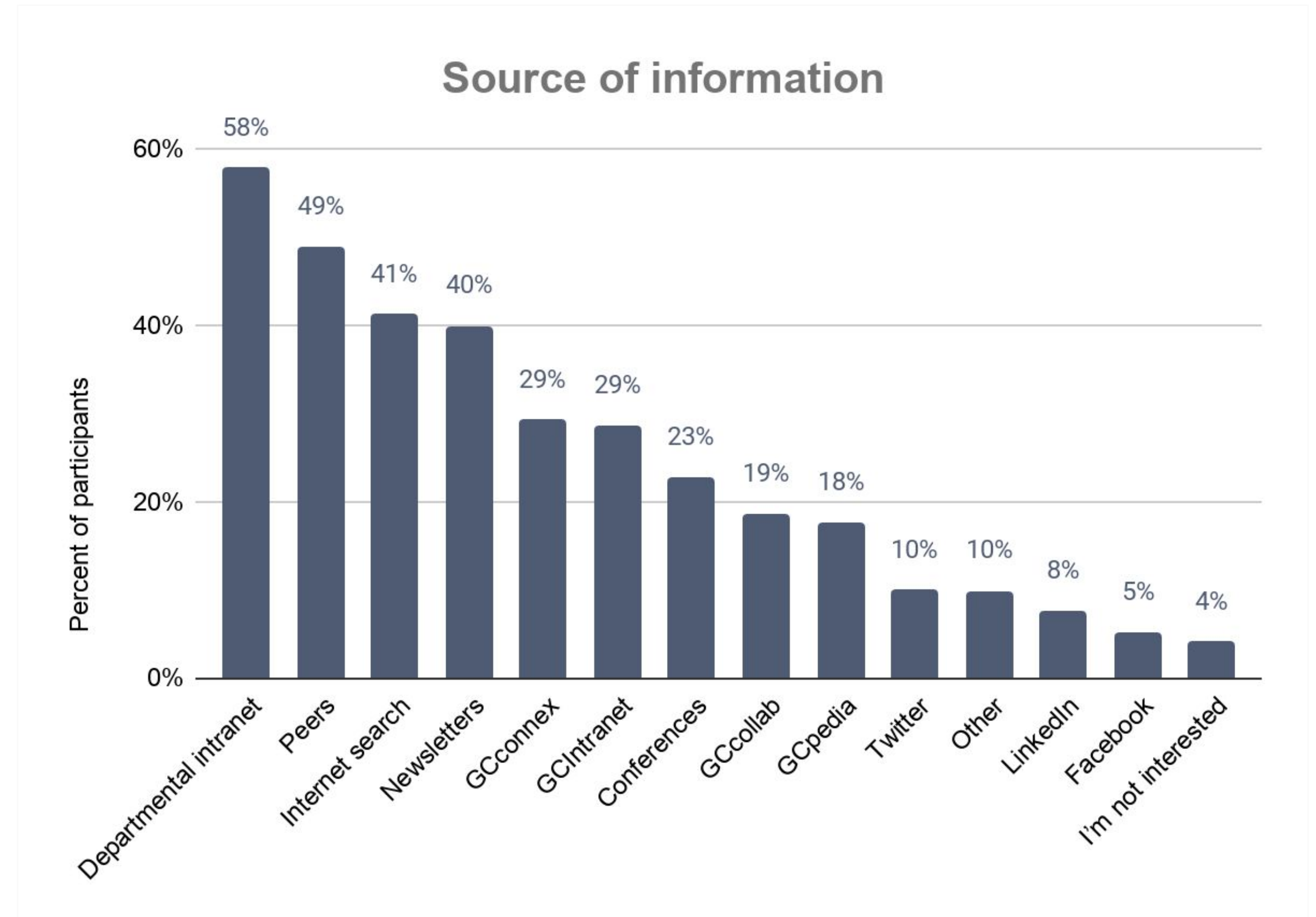




# Information sources

Participants showed the following preferences when wanting to learn about what's going on in the GC in relation to new ways of developing and delivering solutions.

- **Delivered to the doorstep**, such as from peers (49%) and newsletters (40%);
- **Low effort to access**, such as departmental intranet (58%) and internet search (41%);
- **Available on GC-owned platforms**, such as departmental intranet (58%) and GCintranet (29%).

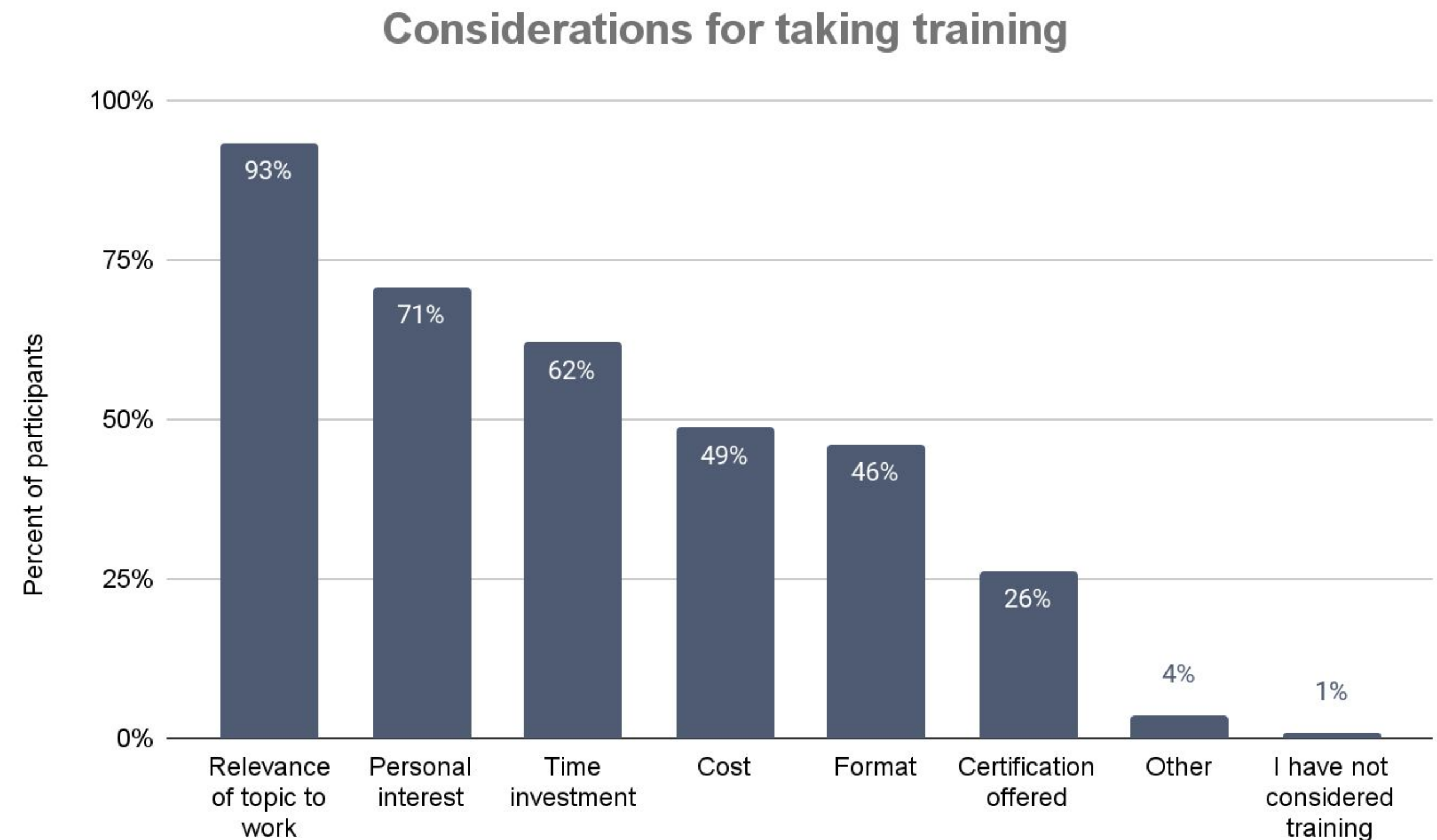




# Considerations for Taking Training

The study looked at the factors that affected participants' decisions when considering training in the past.

A large majority of participants (93%) reported that the main consideration was the relevance of the topic to work. Other considerations also included personal interest (71%), time investment (62%), cost (49%), format (46%) and certification (26%).

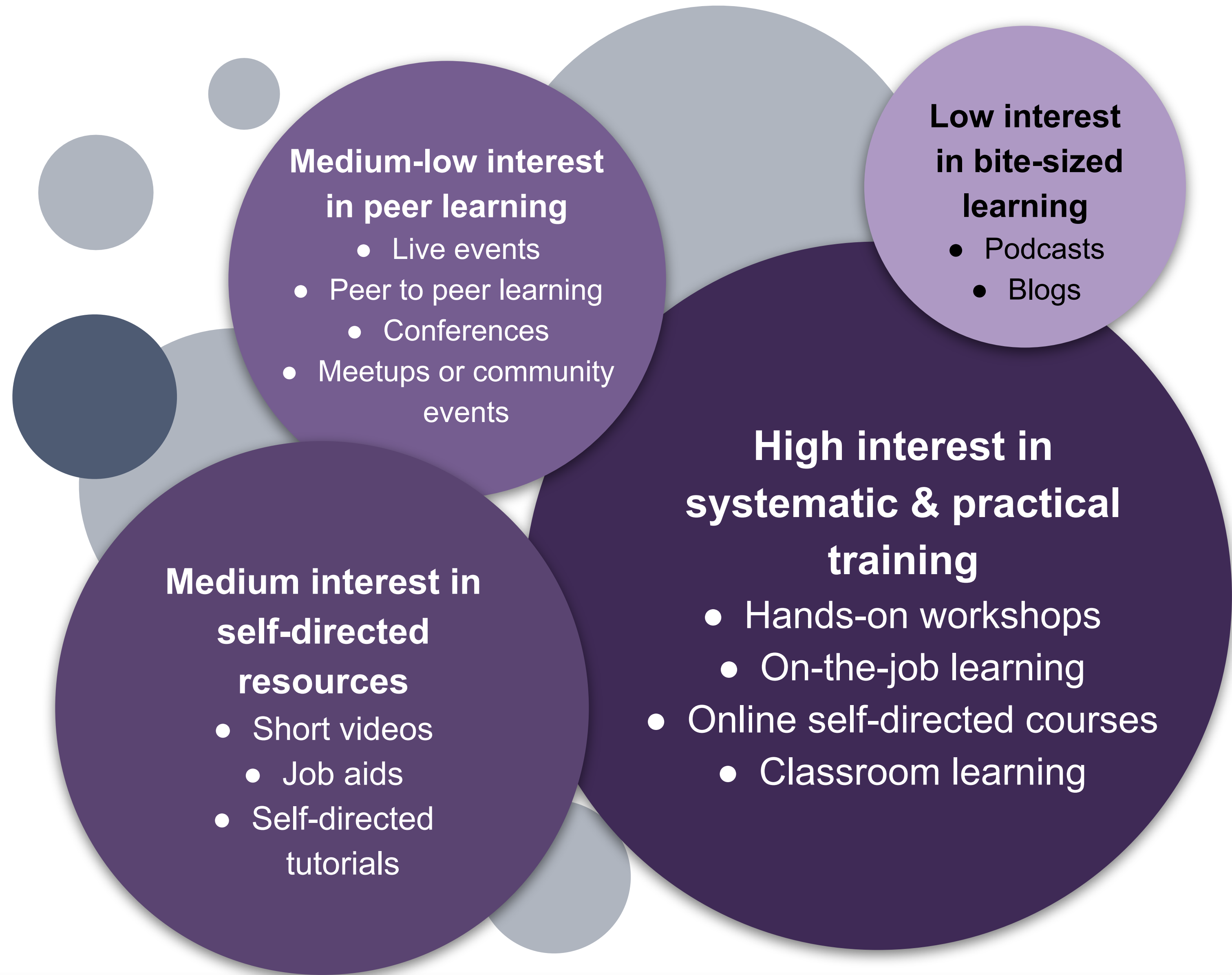




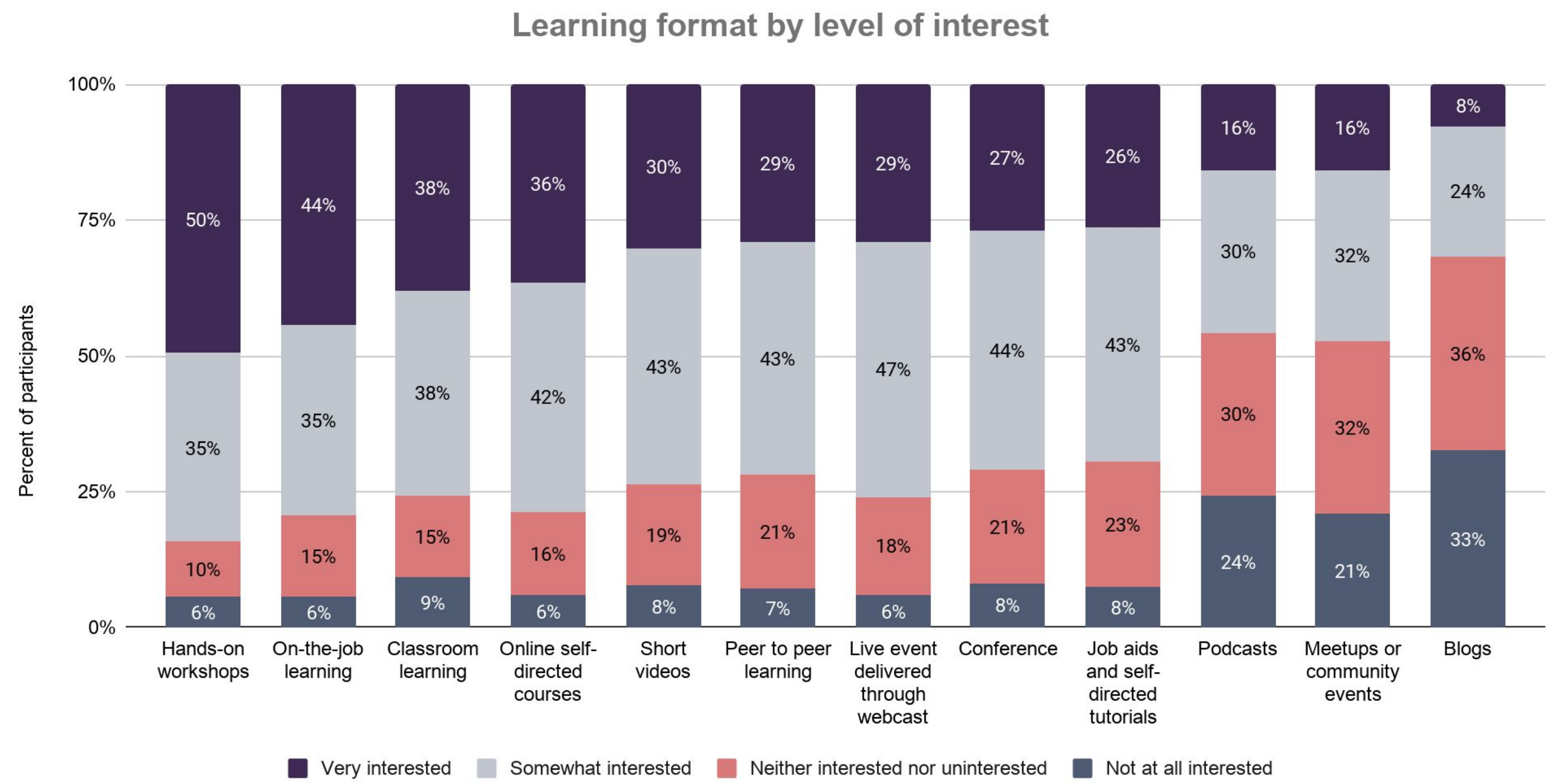
# Format Preferences

The **format** has a **minor impact** on deciding in which training opportunities they will participate. Individuals have varied preferences over format, considering topics and level of prior knowledge.

But overall, participants demonstrated the following interest in learning formats...



# Format Preferences





# Barriers to Learning

# Barriers to Learning

- In total, 65% of participants mentioned “lack of time” as being the most significant barrier to learning.
- Further analysis of open-ended questions revealed that participants need support to identify and prioritize the skills they need. Participants want access to tailored and structured learning guidance (i.e. learning paths).

## The top five reported obstacles

1. Lack of time



2. Course is not offered



3. Lack of local/ remote opportunities



4. Lack of funding



5. Course is full



*“ Having to actively research and seek out training and learning opportunities, not knowing they exist, or having to determine for yourself what might be beneficial to add to your skills are huge barriers when you're very busy as most of us are.*

*“The major things we are not given is time to learn. We can book time to take a course but still not really given the time to devote to it.*






## Part 2

# Key Findings From the Learner Journey

*A look at the main drivers that influence public servants' decisions to take part in learning offerings.*





Learners need to understand the need to learn new digital skills and what are the specific skills they need in the digital age.

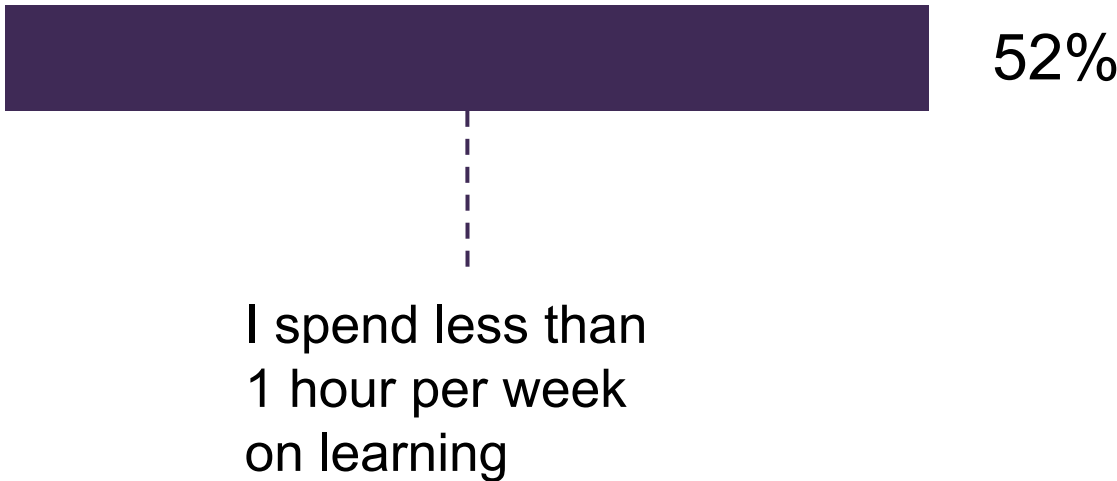


# When looking at quantitative responses...

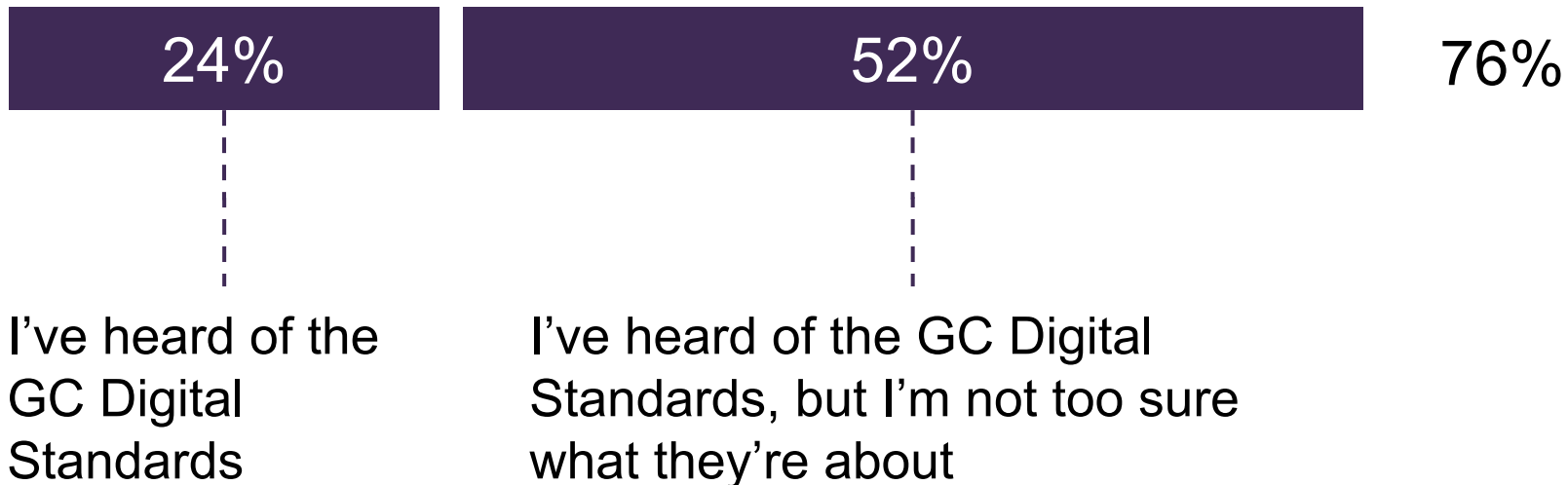
**a** Positive attitudes toward changing the way we work



**b** Low amount of time spent on learning



**c** Low level of familiarity with the GC Digital Standards



# When looking at qualitative responses...

**“**

***It is not clear what digital skills are required to provide value-add to my employer.***


***A career coach could help understand who needs what skills, based on their current employment and future aspirations.***



# This may indicate...

Findings from the study indicate that “unconsciously unskilled” participants need to be able to recognize the gap between their competency levels and the skills required to succeed in the digital age, as well as to understand the value of gaining these new skills.

“Consciously unskilled” participants understand the value of gaining new skills. Still, public servants need to know what specific knowledge, skills, and mindsets will help them in their day-to-day work, help them in their career path as they consider new roles, as well as how to prioritize and put these skills into practice.



Learners need to be aware that relevant learning opportunities exist and are available to them.

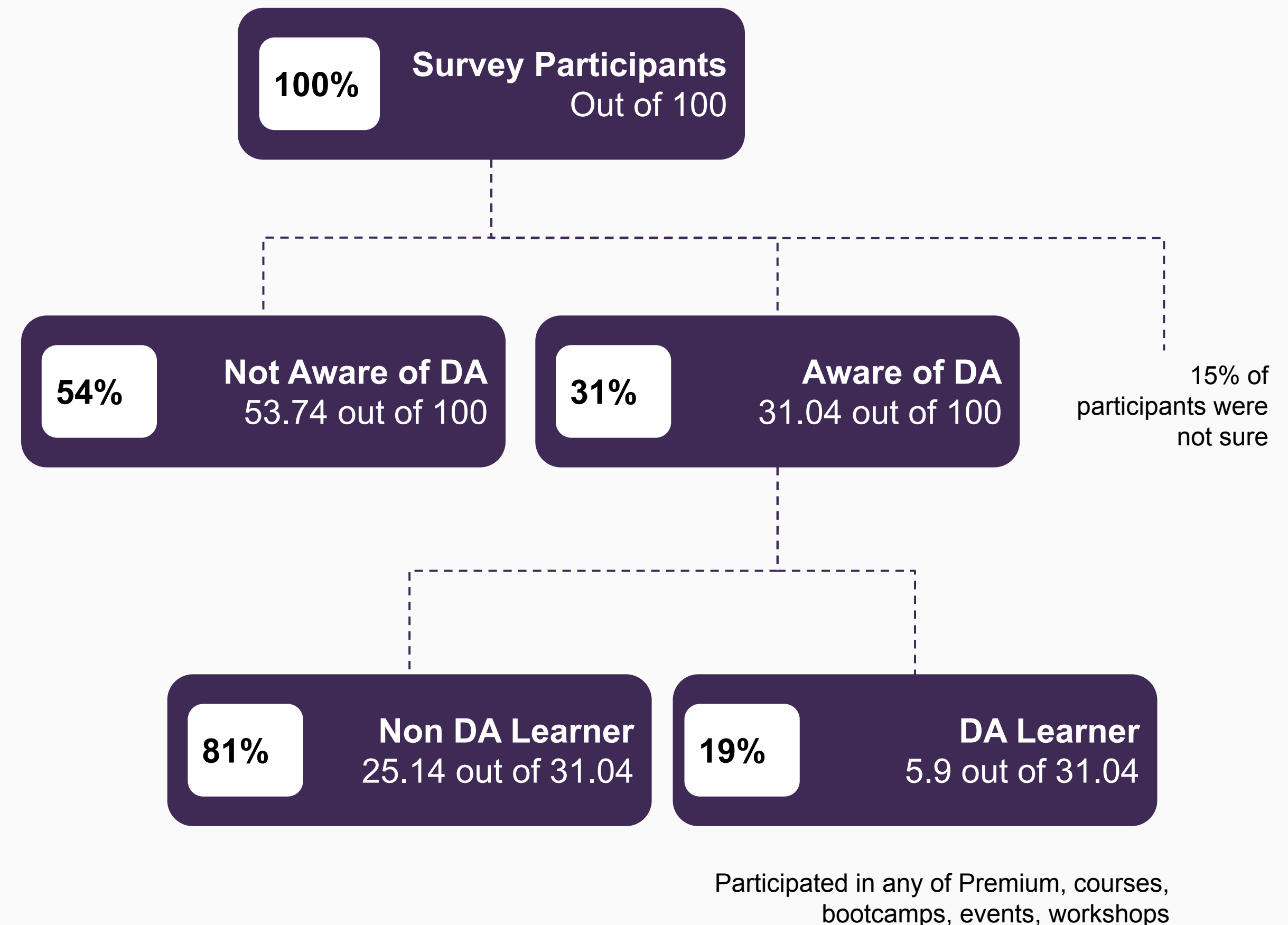



# Digital Academy Awareness Levels

**Participants were asked about their level of awareness of the CSPA Digital Academy. Here's what they said...**

- 31% percent of the respondents reported that they were aware of the CSPA Digital Academy.
- 81% of respondents who were aware of the CSPA Digital Academy had not taken or participated in any CSPA Digital Academy learning products.
- Respondents who were aware of the CSPA Digital Academy had a higher level of familiarity with the Digital Standards.

*"I would love to take courses from the Digital Academy... I have not been able to find the information I need about how to do so, though!"*

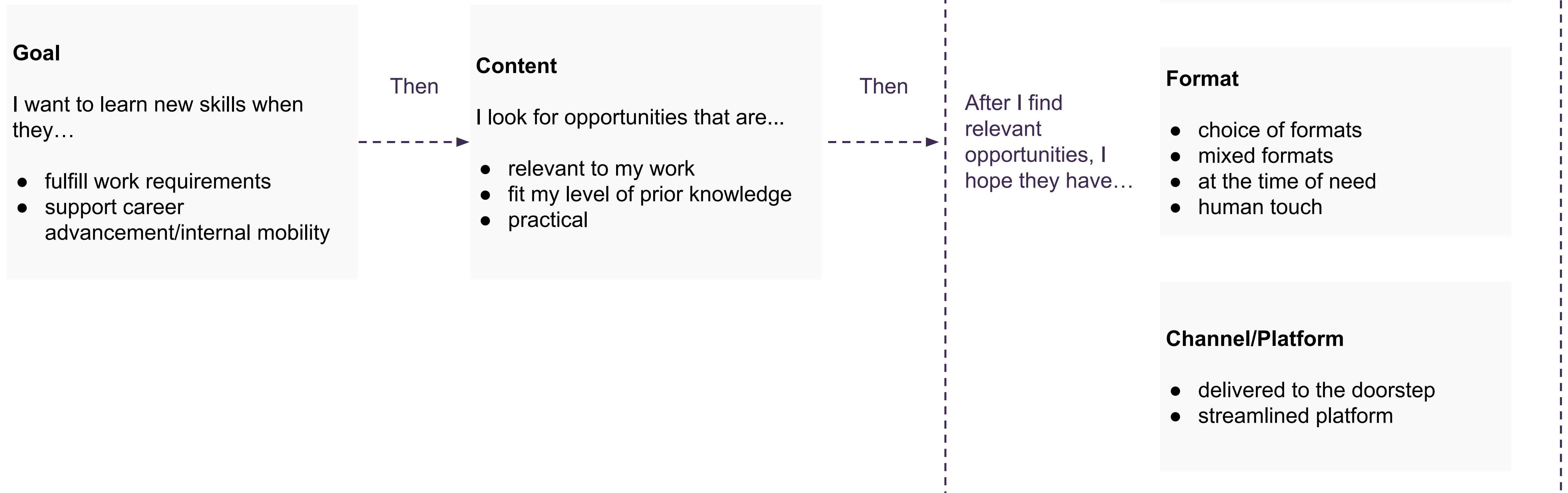




The multi-layered needs of learners  
directly impact their participation in  
courses and programs.



# Multi-layered needs of learners



# Stay tuned for more updates from us!

**Have questions?**

Contact us by email at:

[csps.digitalacademy-academiedunumerique.efpc@canada.ca](mailto:csps.digitalacademy-academiedunumerique.efpc@canada.ca)

**Learn more about the CSPS Digital Academy:**

[https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/about\\_us/business\\_lines/digitalacademy-eng.aspx](https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/about_us/business_lines/digitalacademy-eng.aspx)

**Twitter:**

[@School\\_GC](#); [@DigiAcademyCan](#)