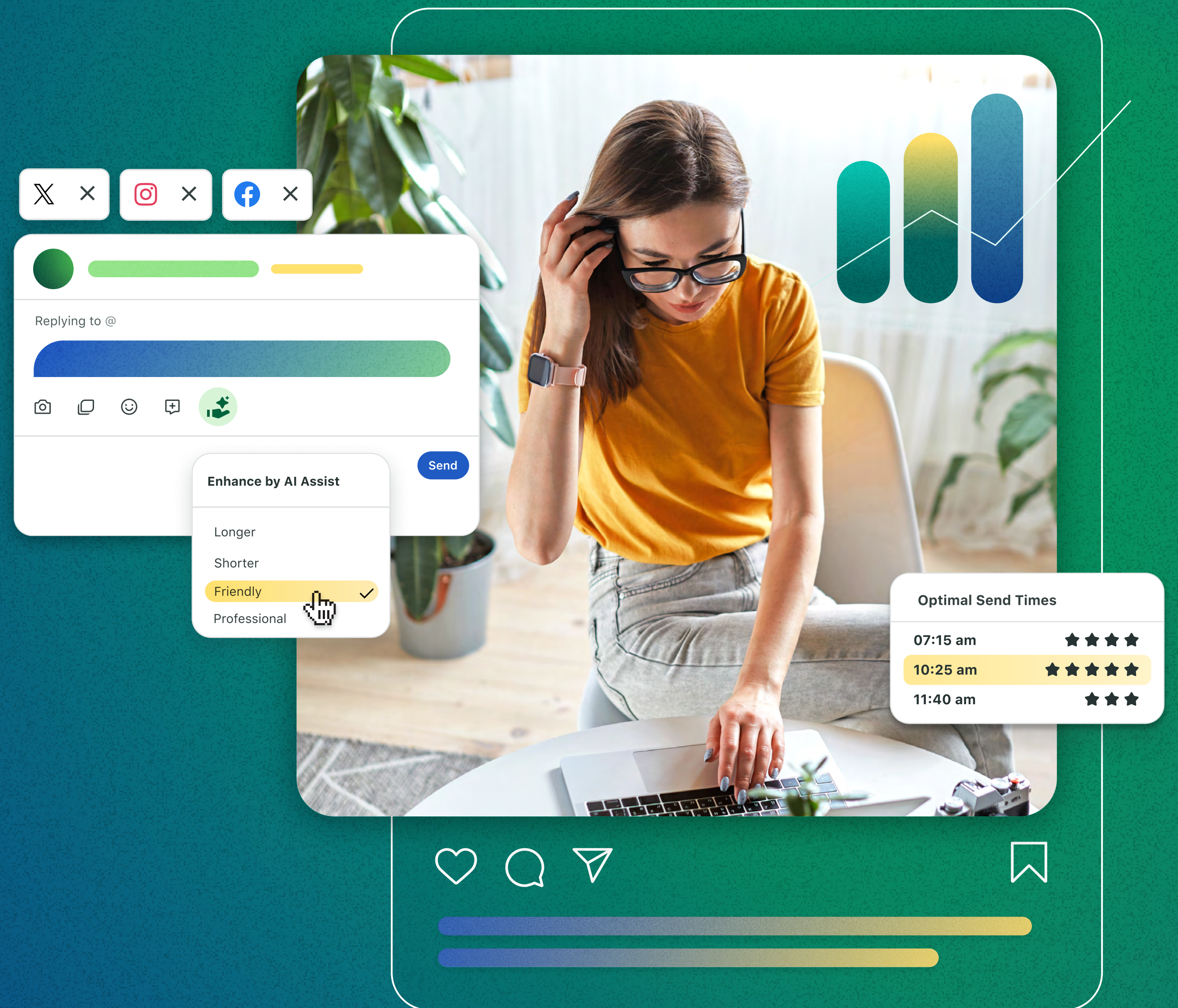




The Social Media Productivity Report

The Time and Technology it Takes to *Build a Brand*



Social media marketers are already at *max capacity*

As their roles and responsibilities expand, where do we go from here?

“I can’t do it all anymore. Research, planning, content creation, analytics and more. I am burnt out,” said one social media manager. These are likely familiar words to anyone working in social media. Full-time social marketers report working an average of 40 hours per week on social media management related responsibilities alone—with some reporting working more than 60 hours. That doesn’t include admin work, attending meetings and other tasks, which tack on another several hours each week.

How does this influence social media career tenure? According to a Q2 2023 Sprout Pulse Survey, 42% of marketers plan to stop working in social media within the next two years, and 20% want to change careers within the next 12 months. Another 63% report feeling burned out. Social media job longevity is on the decline, and continuing to over-burden social marketers will only make things worse—for social teams and brands alike.



The unpredictable economy compounds these challenges, as many teams face flat or shrinking social media budgets. Social media marketers are expected to handle a growing list of vital tasks—from content creation to competitive research to customer care—with less headcount and resources.

Social media marketers are up against unparalleled challenges. Brands get more business value from social than ever before, prompting leaders to raise their performance expectations higher. But without the resources they need, social marketers will continue to have limited time and impact. Teams need to be able to free up bandwidth for more meaningful work and tap into critical social insights.

For this report, we surveyed over 500 US and UK social media marketers to provide insight into social team productivity, how teams spend their time, what tools they use and the effect all of this has on their businesses.

Section 01

The anatomy of a social media marketer's day

Even as more specialized roles emerge, social media marketers are expected to do it all. When juggling a wide array of responsibilities, some tasks inevitably slip through the cracks.

“Me getting ready to start the day as a social media manager which means I’m expected to be a *content creator, copywriter, social strategist, SEO specialist, influencer manager* and *video editor* while my friends say how lucky I am for having an ‘easy’ job.”

“Agreed. Companies want **high quality socials**, but aren’t providing resources.”

“If you want great content, ask your social team what they need, **update your old-school process** and leave room for experimentation.”

“Three months ago I left my social media career after 11 years and do not miss it. *I was burned out*, overwhelmed and needed a fresh start.”

Social media marketers’ work days are full to the brim. But what does their day-to-day actually look like? Our data reveals social marketers dedicate the most time every week to creating content and securing approvals. Which takes time away from other critical functions like data analysis, strategic planning and responding to customers.

How full-time social media marketers spend their time each week



Nearly half (48%) of social media marketers feel they sometimes or rarely have enough time to get their work done. Most are grasping for more time to respond to their customers, a non-negotiable part of delivering a great customer experience. According to the latest Sprout Social Index™, audiences value brands who respond to their audience above all else, so missing DMs or mentions is a major opportunity cost.

Tasks social marketers wish they had more time for

1	Responding to customers	6	Competitive research
2	Strategic planning	7	Employee advocacy
3	Content creation & approvals / Data analysis & reporting	8	Meeting with other teams
4	Network trends	9	Influencer management
5	Audience research using social listening / People management	10	Meeting with leadership

Every task on a social media team’s growing to-do list feels urgent. With emerging technologies, influencer management and customer care becoming bigger priorities, how can teams balance it all?



- ⚠️ Respond to customers
- ⚠️ Strategic planning
- ⚠️ Content creation

Section 02

Making time for meaningful work

For social media marketers, manual tasks get in the way of prioritizing impactful work and fulfilling team responsibilities.

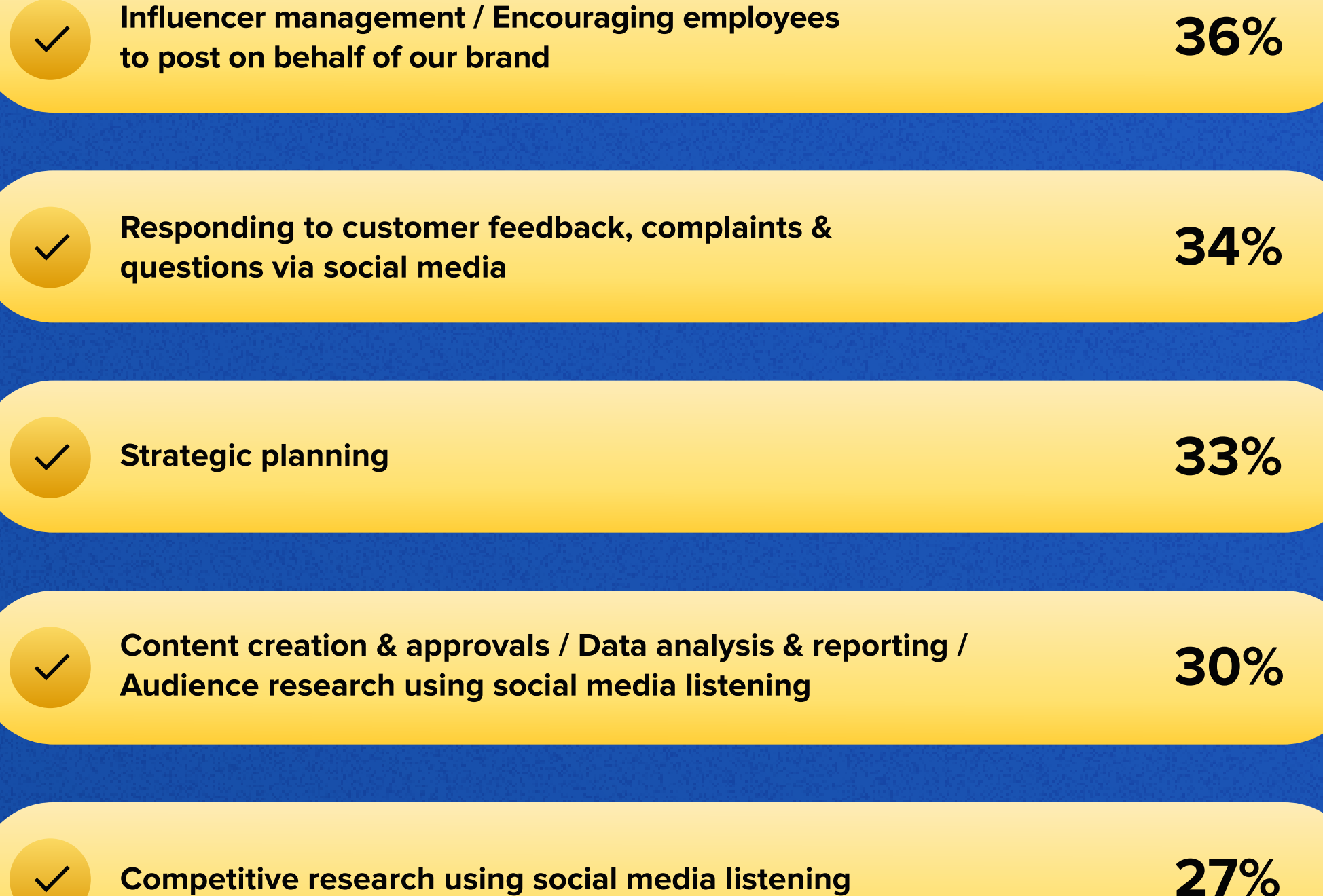
Almost all social media marketers we surveyed deal with some degree of inefficiency. Manual work is the most common barrier they identified to delivering truly innovative, high quality results.

63% of social media marketers agree manual tasks prevent them from doing high impact work

Social media marketers dedicate the most manual effort to influencer management and employee advocacy. These tasks are important, but they don't need to be so tedious or clunky. Being bogged down with work that could be handled by AI, a bot or an automated rule isn't the best use of your (or your company's) time.

These monotonous tasks eat away at the hours teams could spend interacting with their community, pouring over strategic plans and crafting scroll-stopping content.

Tasks social marketers handle manually



Overall, 29% of social media marketers attribute task and efficiency struggles to having a lack of tools—or the wrong tools. This rises to 40% among marketers who don't have a dedicated social media management platform. Insufficient resources aren't just preventing teams from delivering their best work, they leave many unable to manage their growing workload altogether.

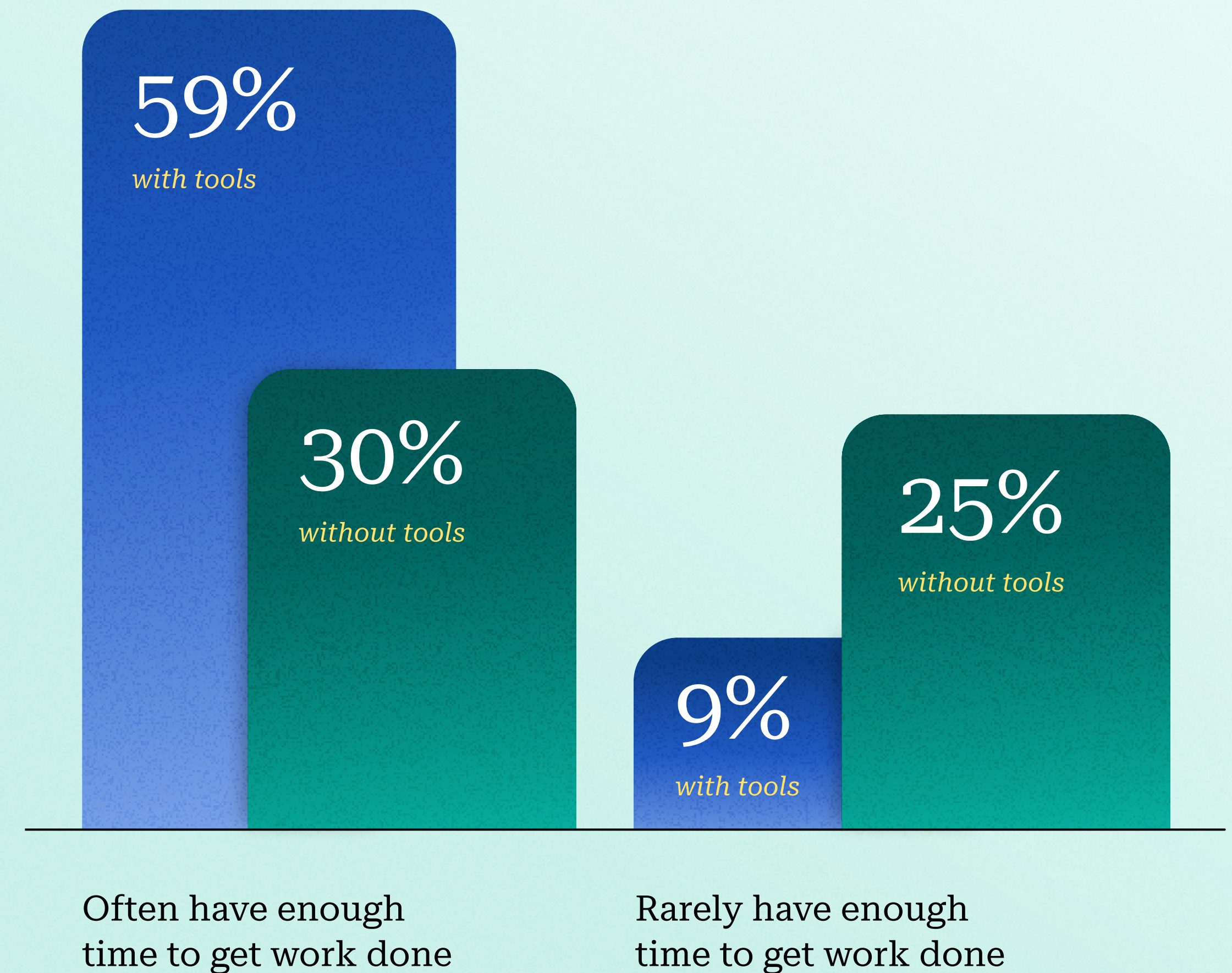
Section 03

Technology is the missing link

Social marketers need more time and resources to accomplish everything on their plate. Jumping between networks, spreadsheets and email approval chains isn't the answer.

Having a dedicated social media management platform has a significant impact on how social marketers perceive their bandwidth. Survey respondents with dedicated social media management tools are almost twice as likely to report they often have enough time to get their work done compared to those without a dedicated tool.

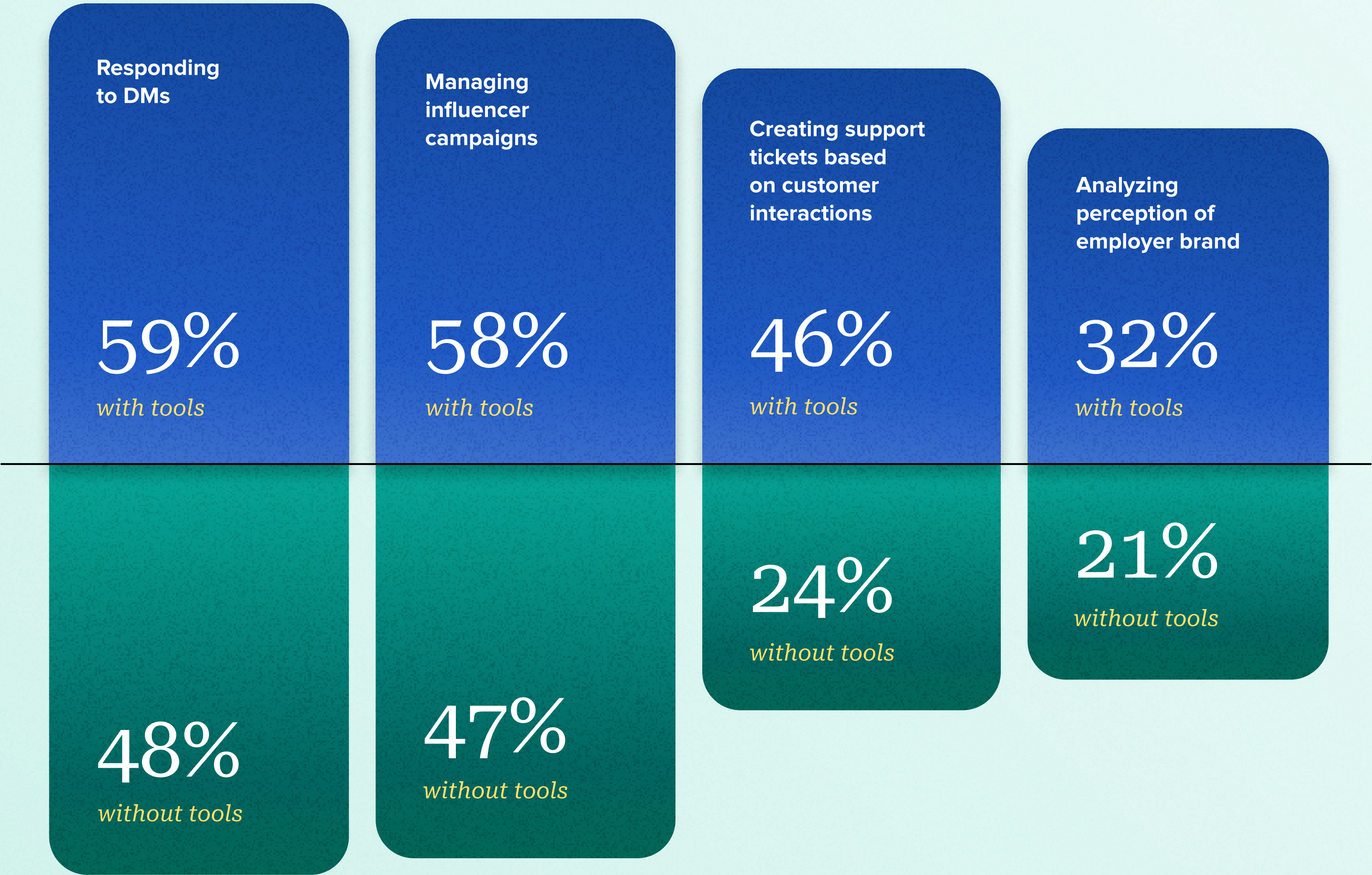
The right social media management tools give marketers time back



Marketers with social media management platforms are also able to accomplish more strategic work, including social listening for competitive analysis (47%) and audience research (43%). These teams report performing additional responsibilities compared to those who don't, like responding to customers and analyzing the health of their brand.

Social media management platforms can also make it easier to start integrating emerging tech into your workflows. Our survey finds those with dedicated tools are almost twice as likely to already use AI for specific tasks compared to those without dedicated tools. Having a social media management tool with embedded AI capabilities helps teams expedite the AI learning curve, while tackling unnecessary manual work.

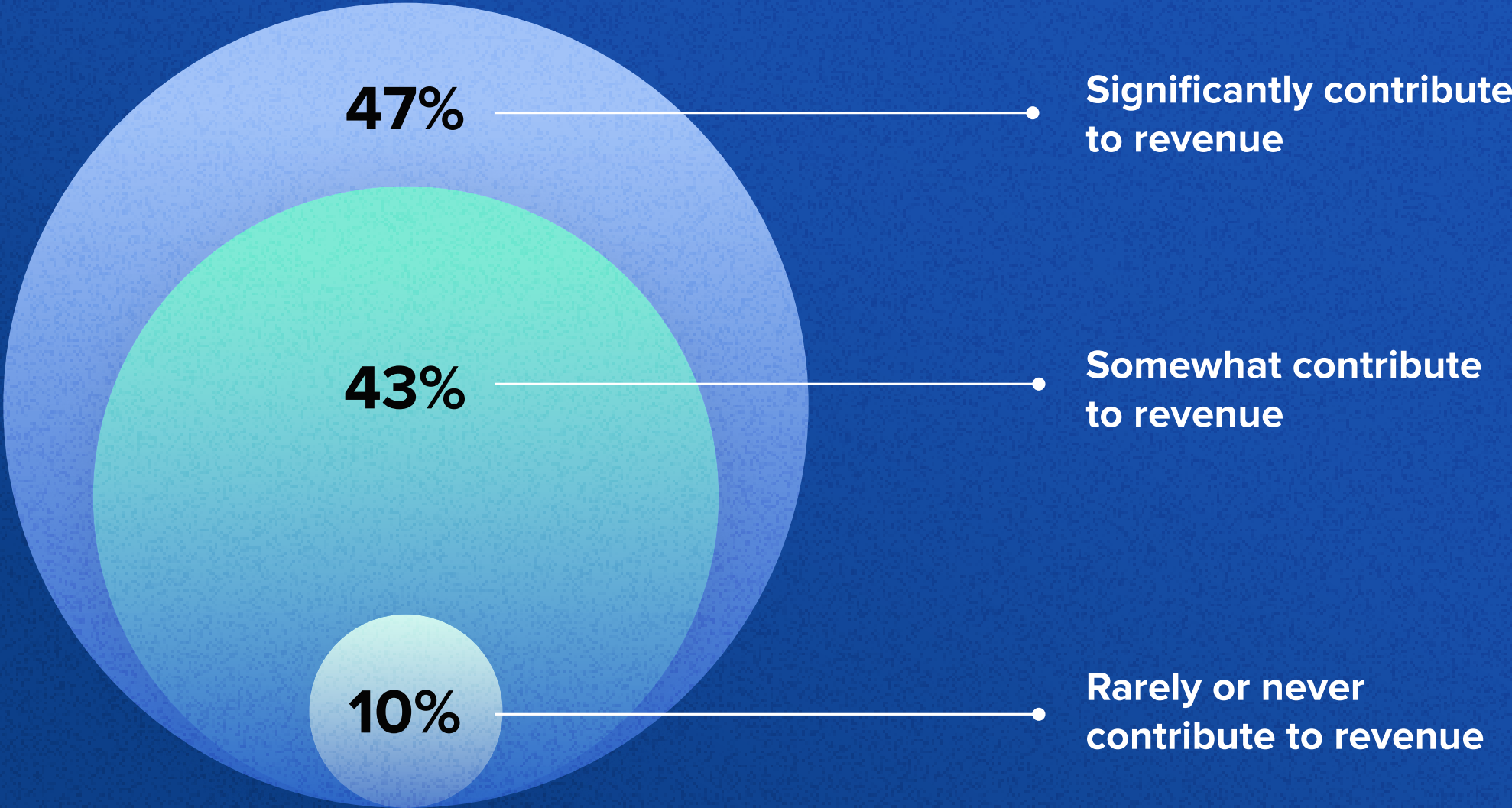
Tasks teams with social media management tools are able to accomplish compared to those without



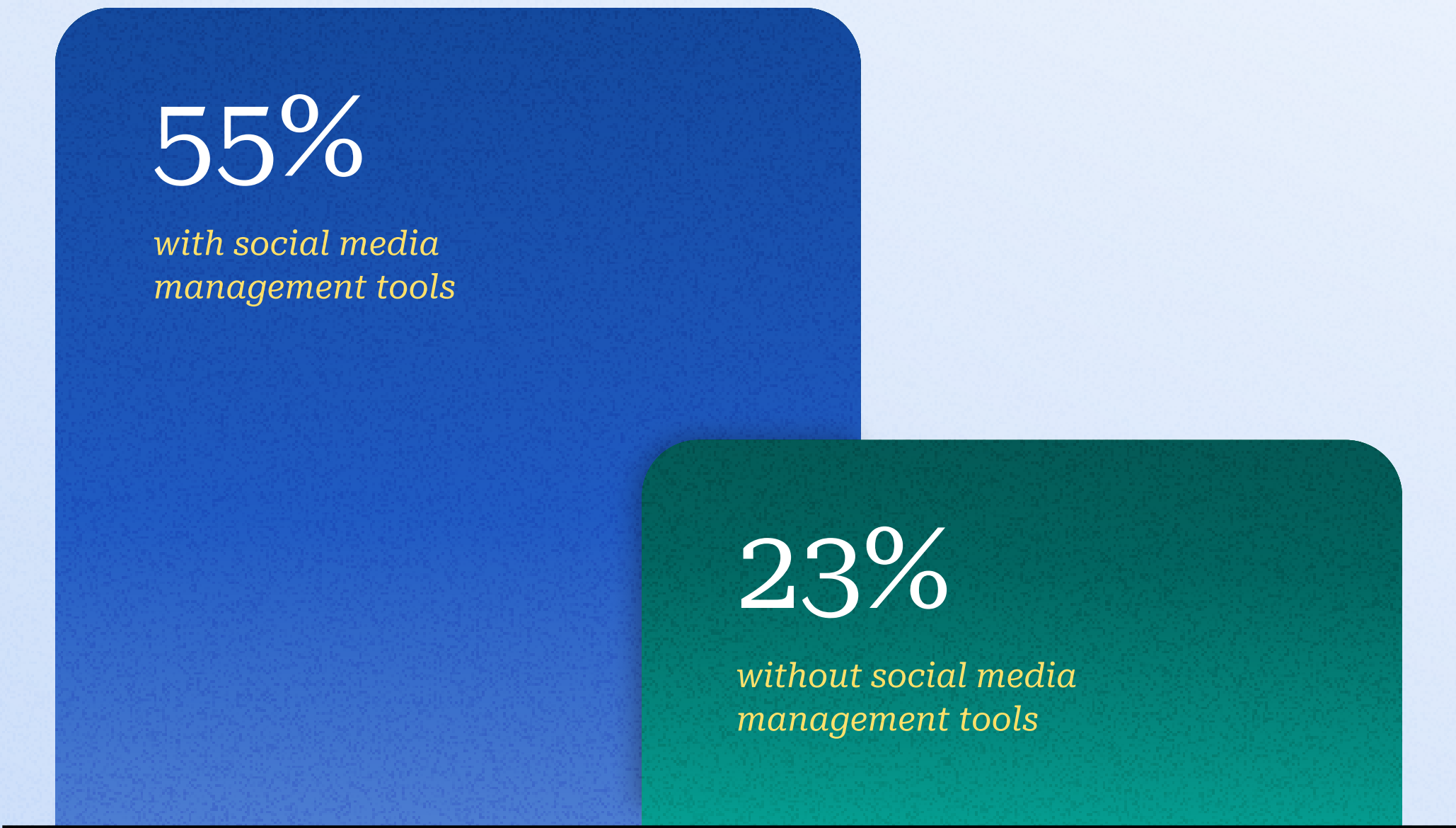
Amplifying the role social plays in driving revenue

In general, 90% of all social marketers we surveyed indicate that social media efforts significantly or somewhat contribute to revenue. But without a social media management tool, drawing a throughline from social to revenue is more challenging. Almost twice as many social media marketers who use a dedicated social media management platform say their brand’s social media efforts contribute significantly to revenue compared to those without.

How much social media marketers believe social media efforts impact revenue



Social media marketers who say their brand's social efforts contribute to revenue



When social teams are equipped with the right solutions, they can bring more value to not only the marketing organization, but their entire company. According to The 2023 State of Social Media Report, 95% of business leaders agree companies must rely more heavily on social media data to inform business decisions outside of marketing, but 69% admit social media data and insights are currently underutilized. Social media management platforms enable teams to scale and expand the scope of their work, offering quick access to information that can shape product development, sales and expansion decisions.

Not all platforms are created equal

Social media management software should simplify—not create more manual work or patchwork processes.

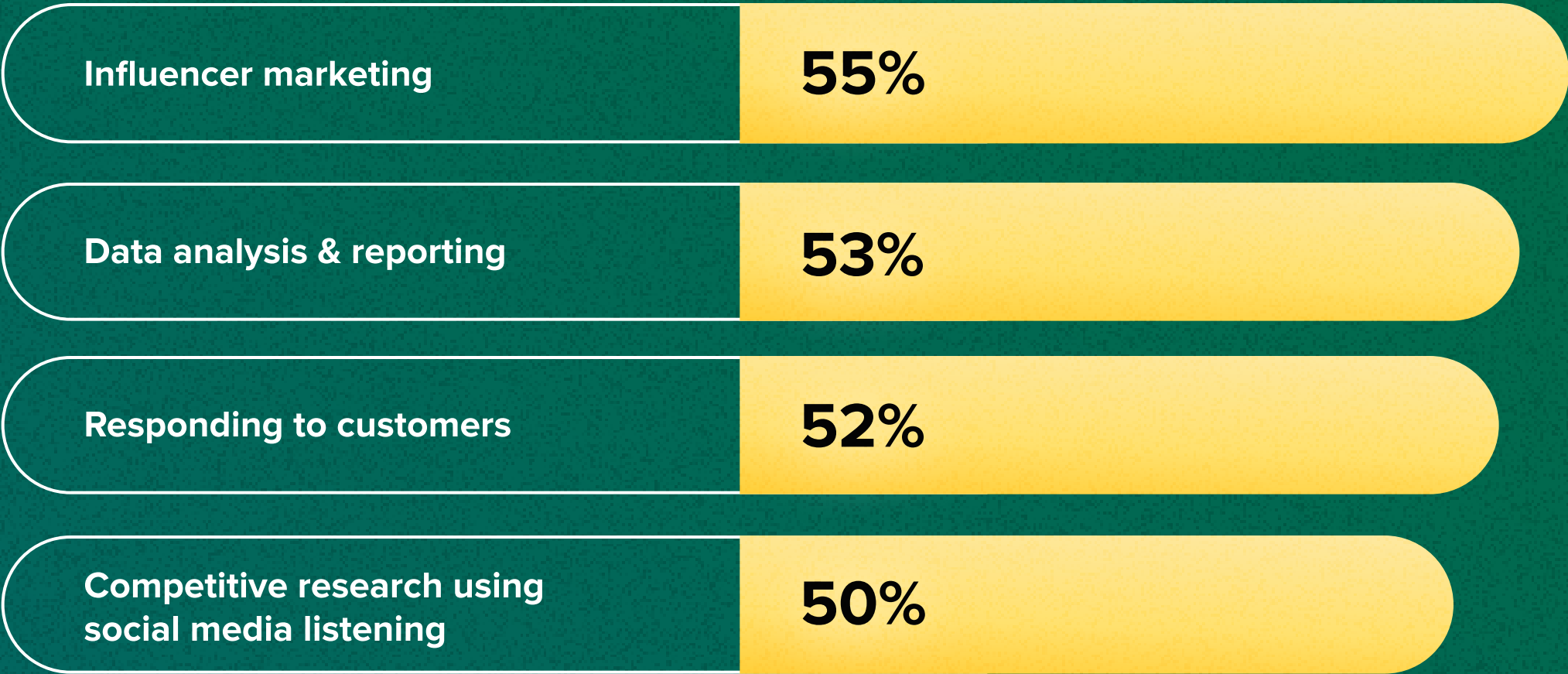
Despite 70% of social media marketers currently using a social media management platform today, there seems to be a disconnect between how much leaders think their teams use social media tools and how much they actually are. While 86% of directors say their team uses all or most of their social media management platform’s features, managers and individual contributors report using up to half.

If you use a social media management platform and wonder why your team has only scratched the surface of social’s potential, it’s because having a platform alone isn’t enough. It has to work with and for your team.

33%

of individual contributors feel they use all or most of the features their social media management platform offers

Tasks social media teams still perform manually or with a hybrid approach



Most social marketers with social media management platforms still end up performing core tasks manually or use a hybrid approach. Working so disjointedly can aggravate existing inefficiencies, causing teams to feel more stress and burnout than ever, and companies to miss out on social insights and opportunities for genuine audience engagement.

Business leaders know social media is a force multiplier. But without intuitive tools that integrate with the rest of your tech stack, you’re simply managing social—not maximizing its value. To address bandwidth constraints, tap into business-critical intel and provide unforgettable customer experiences, you need a robust solution.

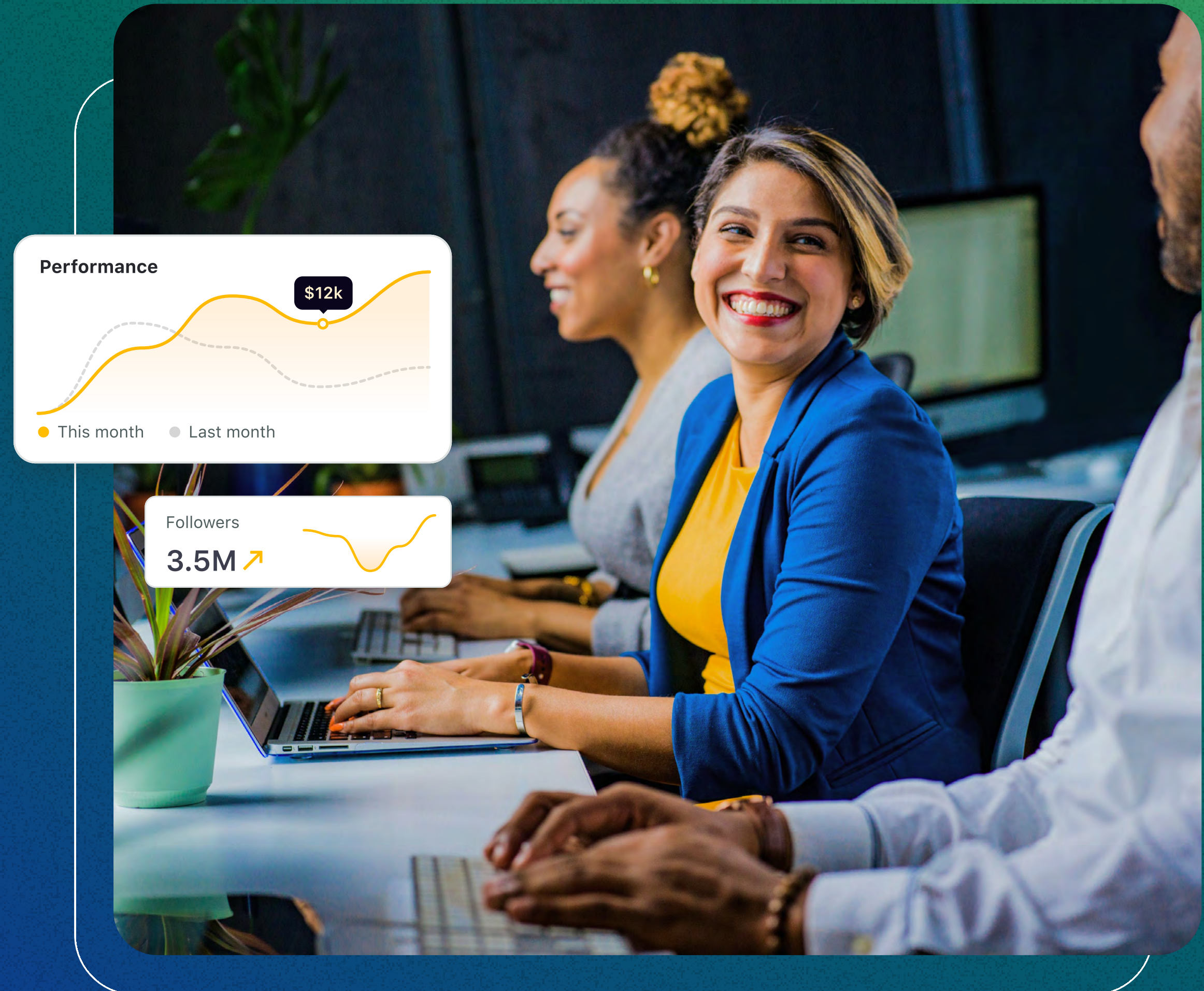
If your current resources don’t make it easier to respond to customers, aid your strategic planning or analyze data, something needs to change.

What technology will help you manage *social, smarter?*

As social media management becomes more demanding, social teams will be pushed to new limits. Now is when social marketers need tools and processes that help them have a significant—and sustainable—impact.

Teams with robust social tools get more done on their lengthy to-do lists, have ample time to focus on strategic projects, and are enabled to surface critical performance insights and business intelligence.

You want to build an industry-leading brand and offer your customers a world-class experience—without being “on” 24/7. What technology are you missing to get there?



About the data

This research was conducted online in the US and UK by Cint on behalf of Sprout Social. Participants included 500 full-time social marketers involved in managing their brand's social media strategy (i.e., performed the job themselves or managed someone who does) who were surveyed from a cross section of US and UK businesses with at least 500 employees. The survey was conducted from December 14 to December 28, 2023.

Relationships between variables collected were analyzed using parametric statistics for statistical significance.

For questions about the data, please contact [**content@sproutsocial.com**](mailto:content@sproutsocial.com)

Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a global leader in social media management and analytics software. Sprout's intuitive platform puts powerful social data into the hands of more than 30,000 brands so they can deliver smarter, faster business impact.

With a full suite of social media management solutions, Sprout offers comprehensive publishing and engagement functionality, customer care, influencer marketing, advocacy and AI-powered business intelligence. Sprout's award-winning software operates across all major social media networks and digital platform.

Learn more at [**sproutsocial.com**](https://sproutsocial.com)

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