



Web Hosting Trends Report

2026



Table of Contents

	Executive Summary	3		
1	The Hosting Landscape Today	4	5	Security and Compliance Under Pressure 24
2	Business Priorities and Growth Opportunities	9	6	The Tech Stack 30
3	Hosting Customers: Choice, Churn, and Support	16	7	Looking Ahead to 2026 40
4	VPS Positioning and Challenges	21		Methodology & Sample 45

Executive Summary

Data from our global survey of 446 hosting providers reveals that while 65% reported revenue growth in 2025, the path to profitability is getting more challenging. Caught between the downward pressure of price wars and the upward pressure of operational costs, the industry is moving decisively upmarket. The 2026 Web Hosting Trends Report confirms that sustainable growth now depends less on just raw volume and more on deepening customer value.

The Move Upmarket

While shared hosting remains a staple, providers identify VPS and dedicated hosting as their single biggest growth opportunity for the next year. To compete in these tiers, hosts are focusing on the fundamentals that drive customer choice: website speed (55%), price (47%), and support quality (45%). Most providers prioritize differentiating via fully managed services rather than engaging in a race to the bottom on price.

The Retention Battle and the SaaS Threat

Growth is just as well about defending the base as acquiring new customers. Churn remains a persistent challenge, driven primarily by price sensitivity (56%) but also by a structural shift in the market. 41% of providers report customers leaving for SaaS platforms like Wix or Shopify. To counter this trend, providers are increasingly focused on educating customers about the value of open platforms and offering additional tools and services to rival SaaS website builders.

Overall

The industry outlook is confident. With 71% of providers reporting they feel prepared for the year ahead, the focus for 2026 is on consolidation: unifying toolstacks, automating the mundane, and delivering a high-touch, high-performance experience to retain customers in a crowded market.

Services as the New Growth Engine

Facing a margin squeeze from competitors and rising operational costs, hosters are looking to increase Average Revenue Per User (ARPU). The data shows a decisive pivot toward a service-led model: 50% of providers plan to expand professional services to drive revenue, outpacing all other tactics. Whether through site builds, maintenance, or security remediation, the modern host is evolving from an infrastructure landlord into a technical partner.

Operational Friction and Security Risks

Growth is being checked by operational challenges. Email issues, CMS application problems, and security incidents remain the top three consumers of support time. Security, in particular, creates significant overhead, with outdated software (53%) and malware (51%) cited as the top risks. Consequently, investment priorities for 2026 are pragmatic: providers are doubling down on performance, security, and automation to reduce manual load.

The Growing Role of AI

AI is viewed as the trend likely to have the biggest impact in 2026, and its adoption so far is clearly focused on practical utility. Providers are primarily leveraging AI to solve immediate pain points in customer support and looking forward to future capabilities centered on automated security and predictive performance monitoring.

1 The Hosting Landscape Today

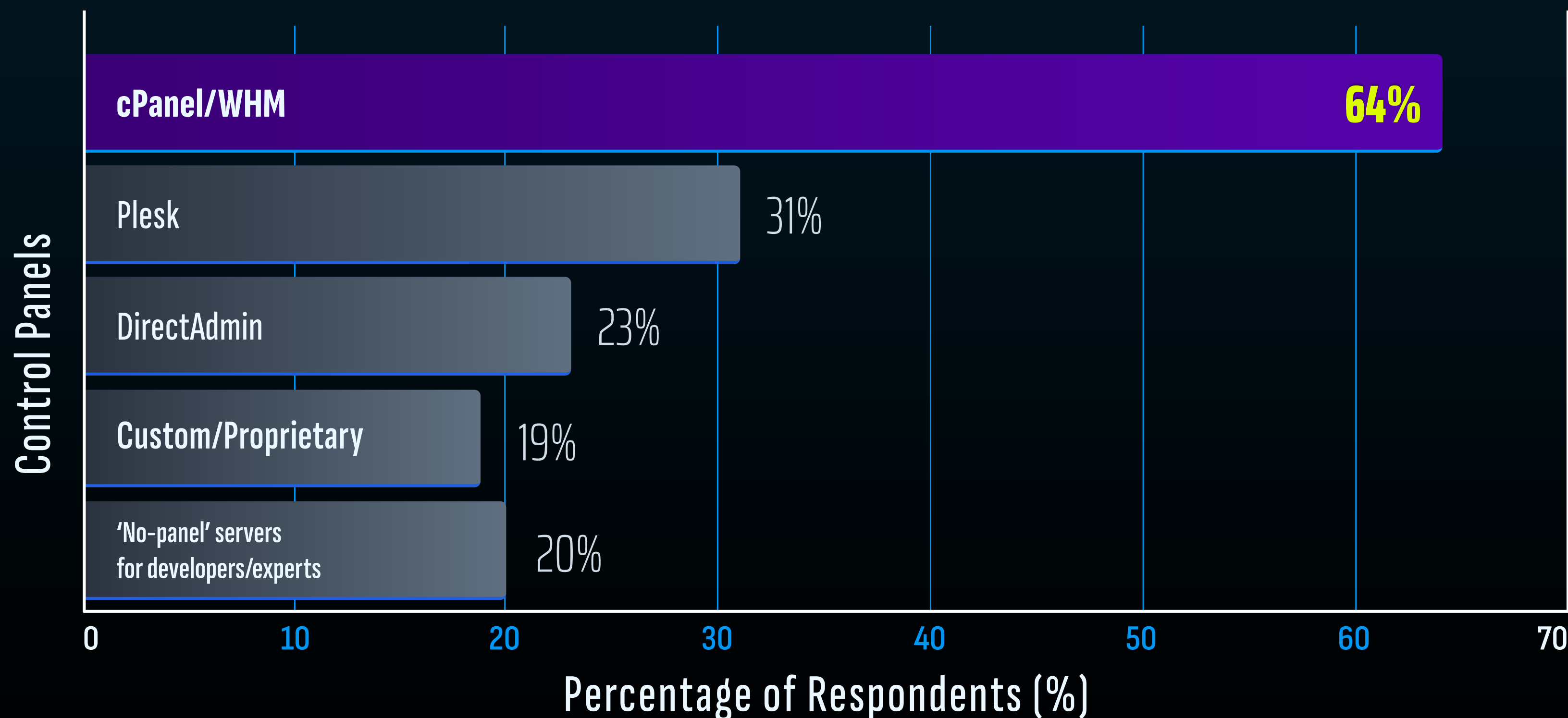
Control panels and hosting service portfolios remain core strategic decisions for providers, shaping costs, operational complexity, and long-term scalability. The latest survey results show how hosts balance standardization with flexibility across their environments.

The market remains dominated by a small set of well-known control panels. **cPanel/WHM** remains the clear leader, with 64% of respondents using it.

At the same time, a large number of providers also rely on other panels:

- 31% use Plesk
- 23% use DirectAdmin

Which control panel(s) do you offer on your servers?



It is common to run **more than one control panel**. For example, a mix of cPanel and Plesk servers, or a mainstream panel alongside a more niche environment.

Beyond the major commercial panels, there is also a meaningful presence of:

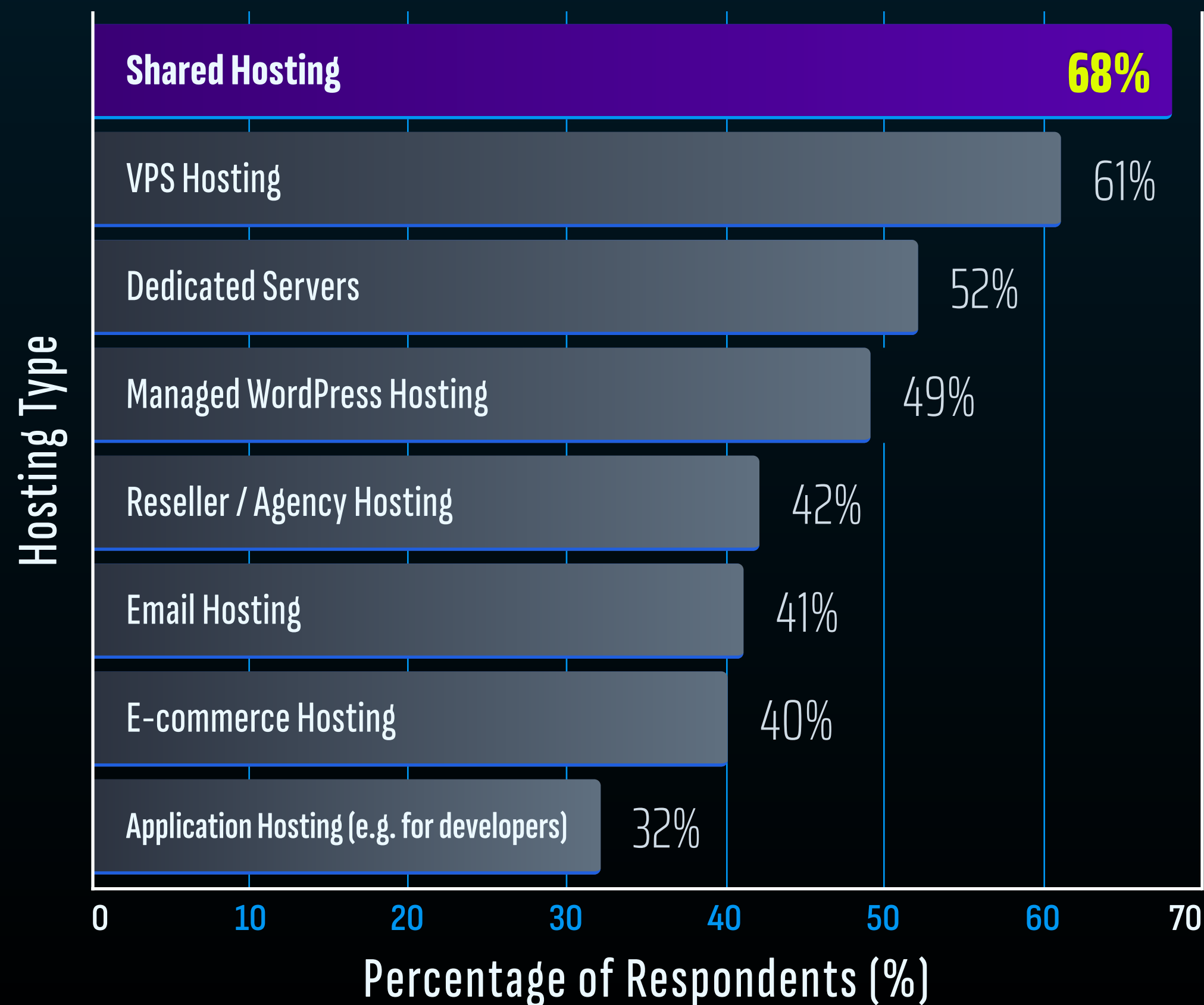
- **Custom or proprietary control panels**, used by **19%** of respondents
- **"No-panel" servers**, offered by **20%**, typically for developers or more advanced customers who prefer direct OS access

The data paints a picture of a **heterogeneous reality**. Most providers operate a mixed environment rather than standardizing on a single panel. Any tooling or platform targeting this ecosystem must account for this diversity.

Most hosters run a **broad portfolio** rather than specializing in only one kind of product. Traditional shared hosting remains central:

68% of respondents offer **shared hosting**

What types of hosting services does your company offer?



But shared hosting is far from the only pillar. A similarly large share also provides:

- **VPS hosting**, offered by **61%**
- **Dedicated servers**, offered by **52%**

On top of these core infrastructure products, many providers have built offerings around:

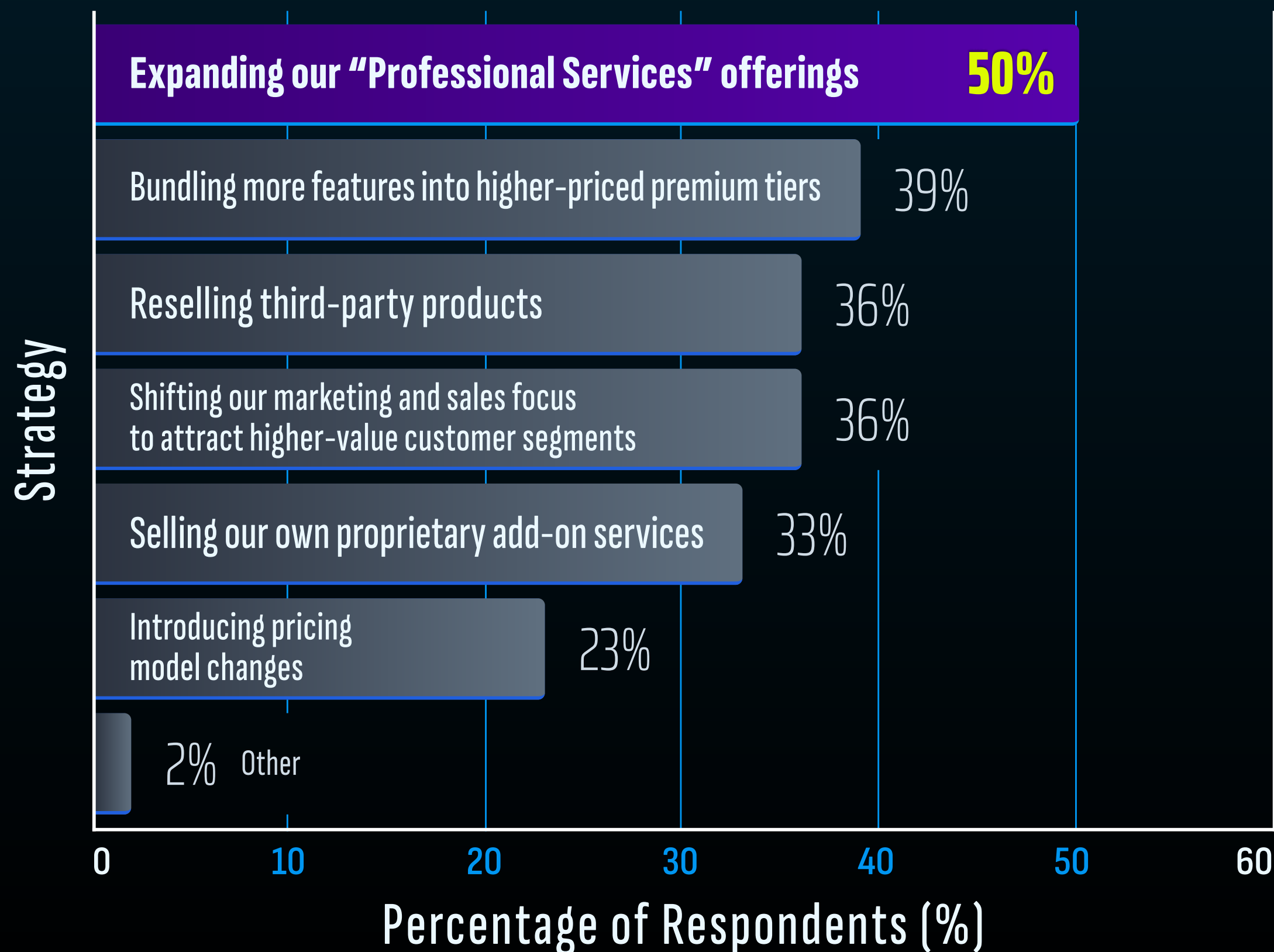
- **Managed WordPress hosting (49%)**, reflecting the central role WordPress plays in the hosting ecosystem
- **Agency or reseller hosting (42%)**, designed for web agencies and resellers managing multiple client sites
- **Email hosting (41%)**, either as a bundled feature or as a separately-branded product
- **E-commerce hosting (40%)**, targeting online stores and transactional sites

At 32%, a smaller but notable portion offers various forms of **application hosting** services.

The main takeaway is that typical hosting companies today are **multi-product providers**. They juggle shared hosting, VPS, dedicated servers, WordPress, email, and e-commerce — often all at once.

Overall, the dominant approach is to **include value-added services** within hosting plans, rather than treating everything as separate à la carte upsells:

For value-added services, which business model does your company generally prefer?



- 40% include value-added services in all plans and effectively absorb the costs into base pricing
- 24% prefer a mix of bundled services and optional upsells
- 17% primarily bundle these services into higher-tier plans
- 15% sell most value-added services as optional paid add-ons

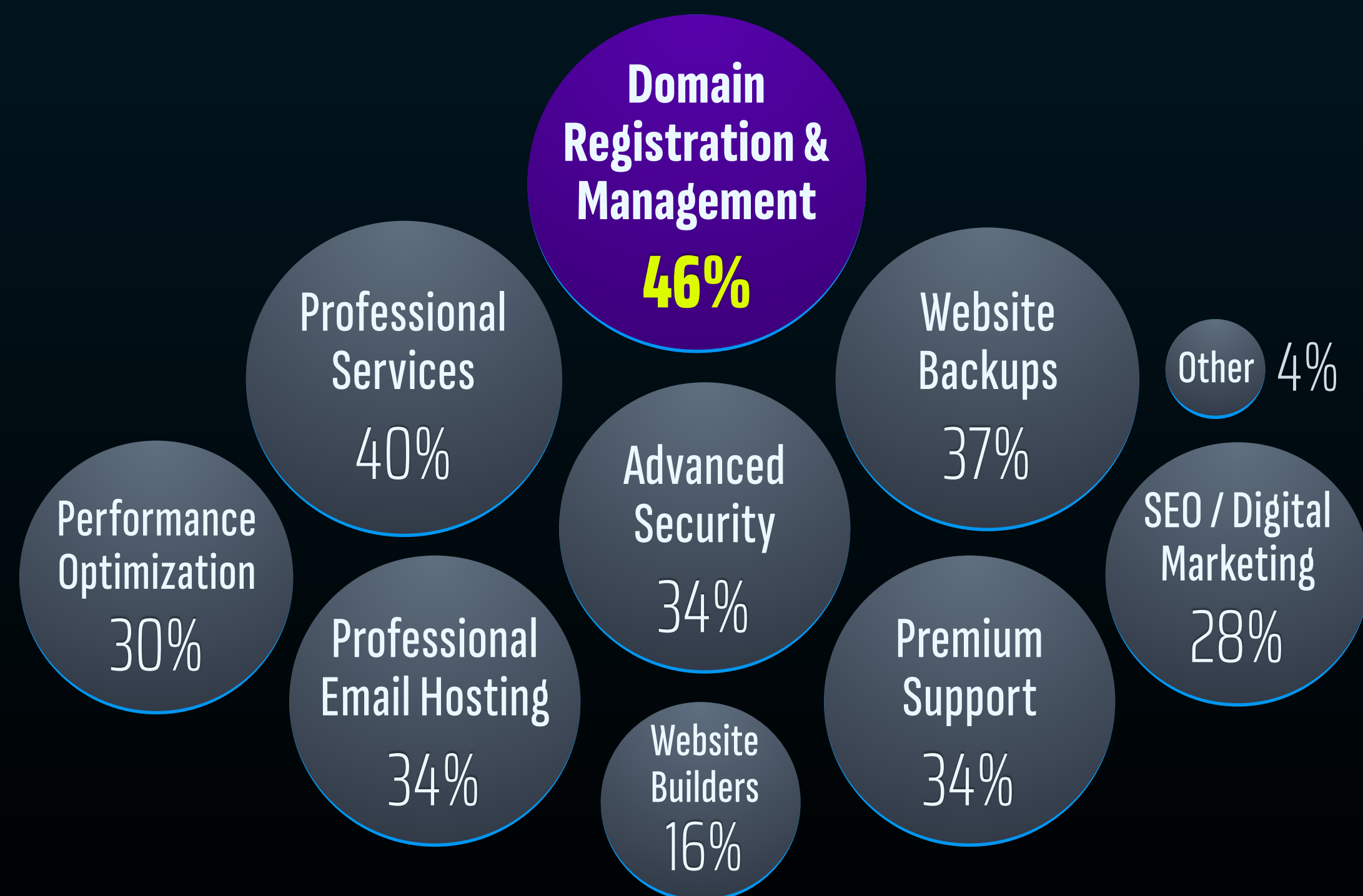
These results indicate that many providers see bundled value, rather than bare-bones base plans, as an important part of their competitive positioning.

At the same time, almost as many use hybrid models to combine bundled features with upsells, giving them flexibility to serve different customer segments.

Beyond core hosting plans, many providers generate revenue from **paid value-added services**.

Survey responses indicate that hosting companies are already successfully selling a wide range of such services. Among the most common are:

Which of the following types of PAID services have you had the most success selling to your customers?



- **Domain registration and management**, which sits at the top at **46%**, a natural complement to hosting
- **Professional services (40%)**, such as migrations, troubleshooting, or consulting work
- **Website backups (37%)**, often positioned as essential protection rather than a “nice-to-have”
- **Security-related services (34%)**, including advanced security features or remediation offerings
- **Performance and optimization services (30%)**, such as caching, CDN integration, or tuning

A variety of other services, such as professional email, SEO, or marketing tools, and other add-ons are also present at meaningful levels.

One notable outlier in the other direction is **website builders**, which rank low in terms of successful sales, at **16%**. While many hosting companies have some kind of builder, it appears less central as a standalone revenue driver compared to domains or backups. Site builders are more likely to be included for free, as part of the base plan.

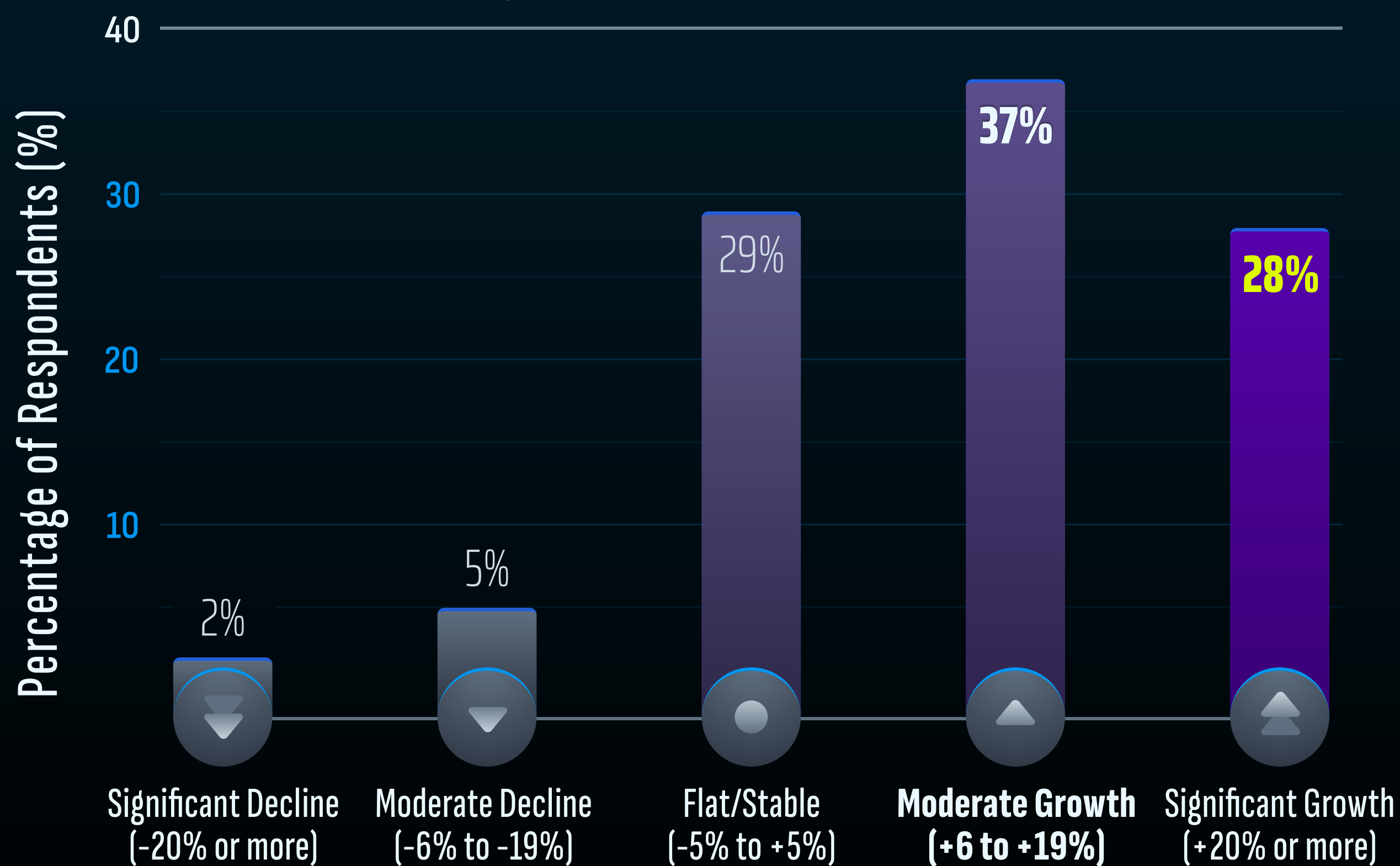
Overall, the data suggests that **customers are willing to pay for genuine added value**, and that hosting providers are already used to packaging and selling such services alongside core plans.

2 Business Priorities and Growth Opportunities

The revenue statistics of the past year inform the main business priorities of 2026. VPS plans and WordPress hosting promise a lot of growth, but shared hosting remains a traditionally strong base as well.

Overall, most respondents report that 2025 was a positive year:

What was your company's approximate year-over-year (YoY) revenue growth in 2025 compared to 2024?

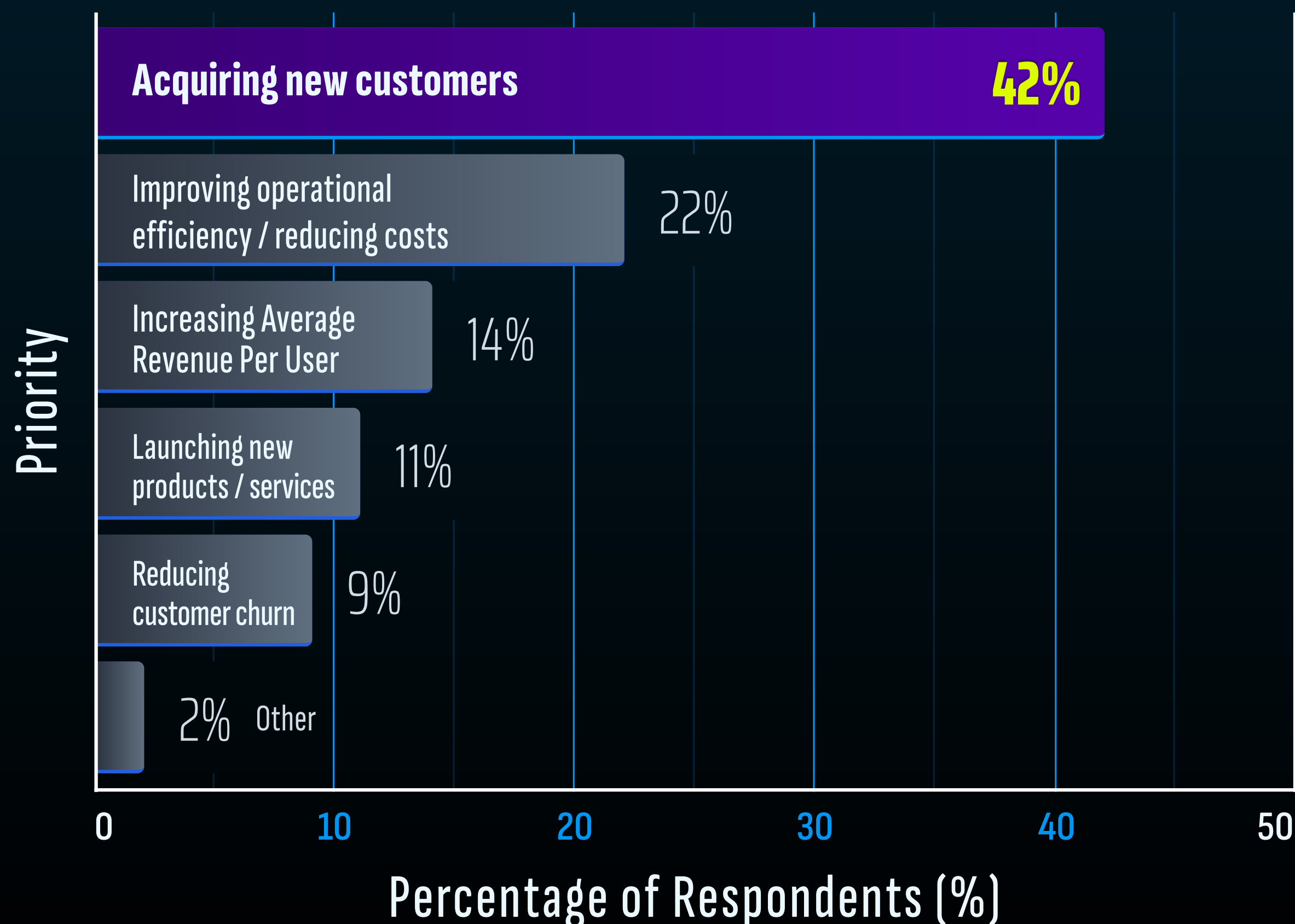


- 37% saw moderate growth in the range of 6%–19%
- 28% reported significant growth above 20%
- 29% described their revenue as flat or stable (between –5% and +5%)
- Only 5% saw a moderate decline, and 2% a significant decline

Taken together, around two-thirds of respondents are growing, while roughly one-third are flat or shrinking.

As the **single top business priority** for 2026, **acquiring new customers** comes out clearly on top across the survey:

What is your company's single TOP business priority for 2026?



- 42% selected **acquiring new customers**
- 22% chose **improving operational efficiency and reducing costs**
- 14% prioritized **increasing average revenue per user (ARPU)**
- 11% said **launching new products and services**
- 9% highlighted **reducing customer churn** as their top priority

The overall picture shows a strong growth mindset, as almost half of providers say bringing in new customers remains their number one focus.

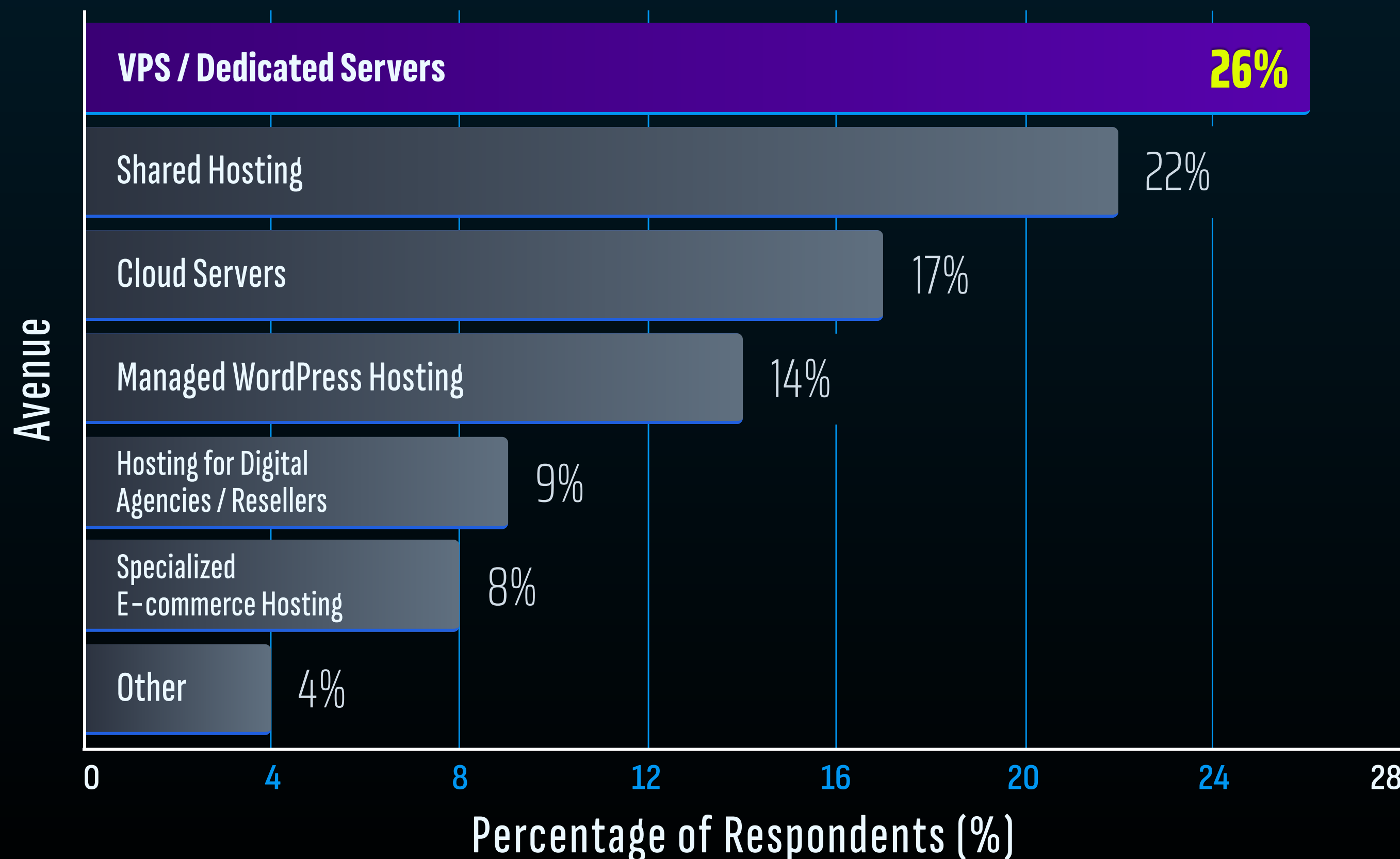
When we look at responses **by server fleet size**, however, a more nuanced pattern emerges:

- Among companies with **up to 10 servers**, **nearly 60%** choose **acquiring new customers** as their single top priority.
- As fleets grow, this share **steadily declines**. Larger providers still care about acquisition, but it becomes less dominant.
- In the **largest fleet-size band (more than 200 servers)**, the picture becomes more **balanced**: acquisition remains important, but **efficiency** is chosen almost as often, and **ARPU** and **churn** reduction both gain meaningful weight.

This pattern suggests that some priorities are universal (acquisition matters at every size), while others shift with scale. Smaller providers are more likely to focus on pure growth, while larger providers increasingly emphasize optimizing and defending the business they already have through efficiency gains, higher ARPU, and lower churn.

As the **biggest growth opportunity** in the next 2-3 years, **VPS and dedicated hosting** is the clear leader among respondents.

Which market segment do you see as your biggest GROWTH opportunity in the next 2-3 years?



- 26% chose VPS/dedicated hosting as the biggest opportunity
- 22% selected shared hosting
- 17% opted for cloud servers
- 14% pointed to managed WordPress hosting

While shared hosting remains central in 2026's product mix, many providers see the future of growth in VPS, dedicated, and cloud, with managed WordPress and specialized offerings also playing important roles.



CONTINUED**»»» VPS and dedicated hosting is considered the biggest growth opportunity in the next 2-3 years.**

Segmenting the answers by server fleet size reveals some clear differences:

- **VPS/dedicated hosting** is the **top growth bet across all fleet-size bands**. It is the single area that consistently appears near the top regardless of scale.
- Providers with **smaller fleets** are more likely to point to **classic shared hosting** as their biggest growth opportunity, reflecting its importance as a core product for many smaller businesses.
- Providers with **larger fleets** are **significantly more bullish on cloud servers** as a growth area, suggesting that as infrastructure expands, providers are more likely to move or extend their portfolios into cloud-style offerings.
- The **mid-size segment** is more evenly spread across multiple product bets. This is also where interest in **niche and vertical hosting**, such as managed WordPress and specialized e-commerce hosting, peaks.

While VPS is a common thread, each size group of hosting providers sees their growth story slightly differently, depending on what they already run and who they serve.

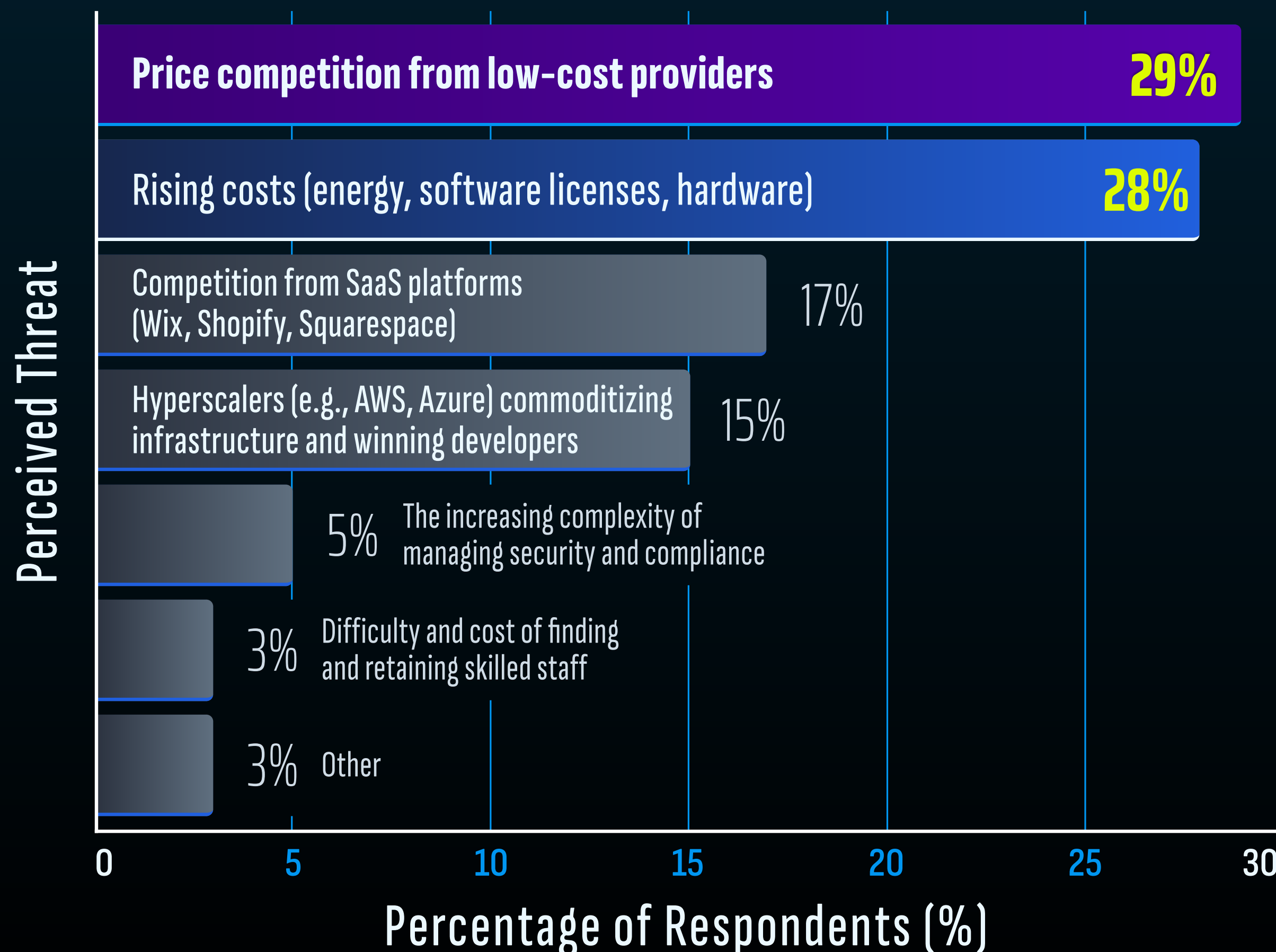
SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT**SolusVM**

SolusVM delivers trusted virtualization management for hosting providers, enterprises, and service companies. With proven reliability, performance, and business results, SolusVM is the VPS control panel built to scale with your growth.

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Two factors clearly emerge as the biggest threat to profitability in 2026:

Looking at the hosting market, what do you see as the single **BIGGEST** threat to your company's profitability for 2026?



- 29% of companies selected price competition from low-cost providers
- 28% chose rising costs (such as energy, software licenses, and hardware)

Below the top two, several other concerns appear:

- 17% see competition from SaaS site-building platforms (like Wix or Shopify) as the main threat
- 15% point to competition from hyperscale cloud providers

In other words, many hosting providers feel a margin squeeze from both directions: downward pressure on prices from budget competitors, and upwards pressure on costs from energy and software.

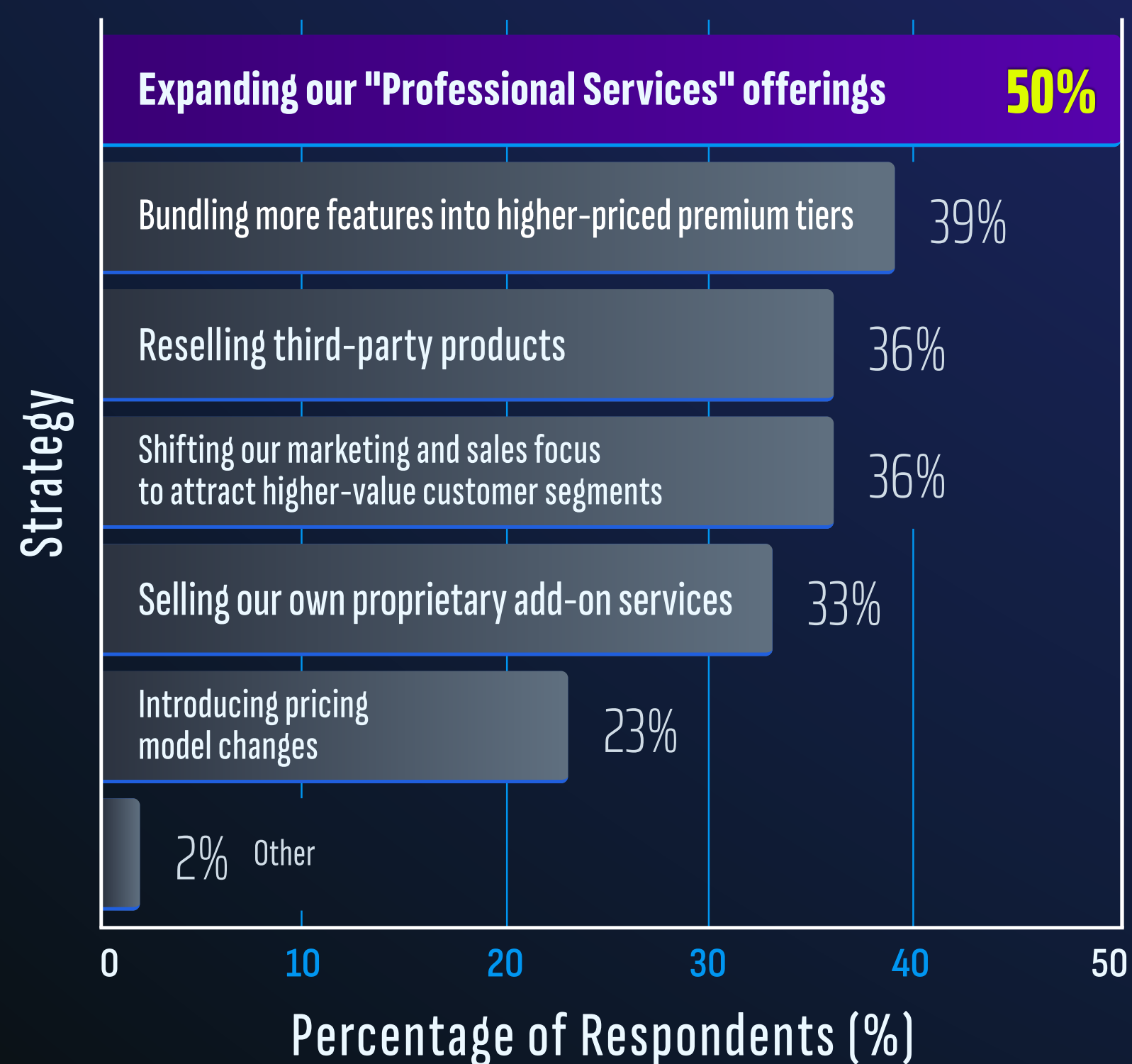
When we analyze the answers by server fleet size, we see that:

- Price competition is more commonly cited as the primary threat among smaller providers.
- Hyperscaler pressure grows with fleet size. The larger the fleet, the more likely providers are to name competition from hyperscale cloud providers as their main profitability concern.
- Concerns about rising costs and SaaS platforms are present across all segments.

This pattern suggests that while all providers are exposed to cost and price pressures, smaller hosters feel the impact of low-cost competitors more acutely, while larger companies are more exposed to competitive pressure from hyperscale clouds.

The leading approach in plans to **increase average revenue per user (ARPU)** in 2026 is to expand professional services:

Which of the following strategies will your company pursue in 2026 to increase the Average Revenue Per User (ARPU)?



The fact that **professional services** lead so strongly suggests that many hosting providers see a growing role for themselves as **service partners or agencies**, not just infrastructure providers. Offering hands-on help, whether that's performance work, security hardening, or application-level support, appears to be a key lever for revenue growth.

At the same time, the popularity of bundled features, third-party reselling, and proprietary add-ons indicates that providers are actively looking for ways to add more value to their plans.

Taken together, these responses point to a landscape where hosts are increasingly combining infrastructure, software, and services into broader solution offerings.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT



You don't need to hire a full internal team to offer professional services. With **CloudLinux** and **Seahawk**, you can launch white-label WordPress maintenance, site building, and repair services effortlessly, and with zero upfront cost.

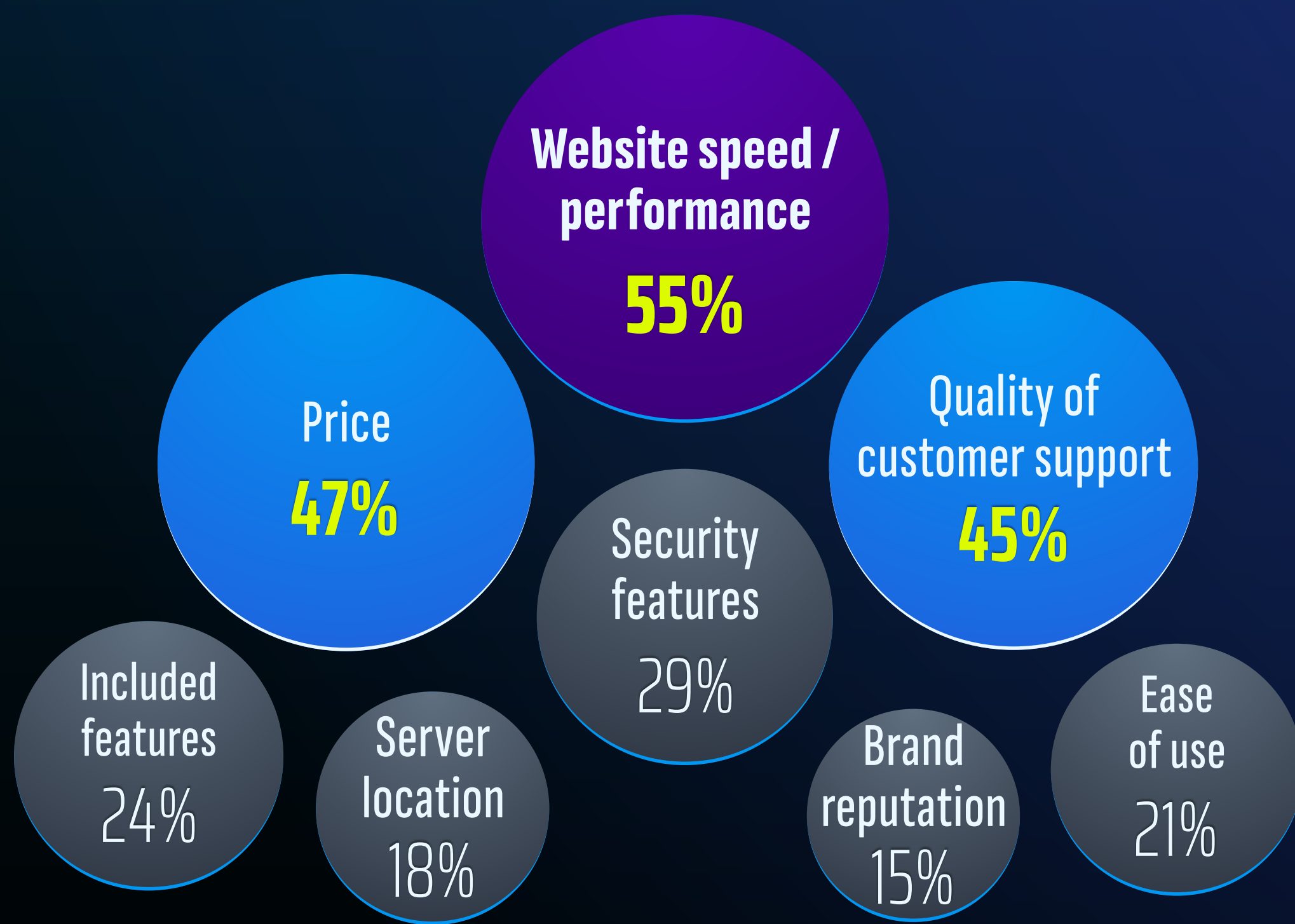
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3 Hosting Customers: Choice, Churn, and Support

Client-facing operations determine whether a customer comes, stays, or goes. Price and support are crucial for customer retention as well as for business operations.

Three factors stand out clearly at the top of reasons **why hosting companies think their customers choose them** over competitors:

From your perspective, what are the top reasons your WordPress customers choose a hosting provider?



- **Website speed and performance**, cited by 55% of respondents
- **Price**, cited by 47%
- **Quality of support**, cited by 45%

These three together form a familiar **decision triangle** for WordPress hosting customers: they want sites that are fast, plans that feel affordable, and support they can rely on when something goes wrong.

While **performance, price, and support** are often the main reasons customers sign up for WordPress hosting, **security, included tools, and ease of use** can play an important tie-breaker role, particularly when multiple providers look similar on other benefits.

Speed, security, and support in particular are the areas where **WordPress-specific tooling, automation, and infrastructure** determine whether providers can differentiate and deliver these promises at scale.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

Managed WordPress on **webpros.cloud**

A modern WordPress hosting offering that delivers premium performance and automated protection, enabling providers to expand into new markets faster, grow revenue, acquire new customers and improve margins without investing in infrastructure or increasing operational overhead.

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Among reasons why respondents believe their customers leave their hosting service, price is mentioned the most.

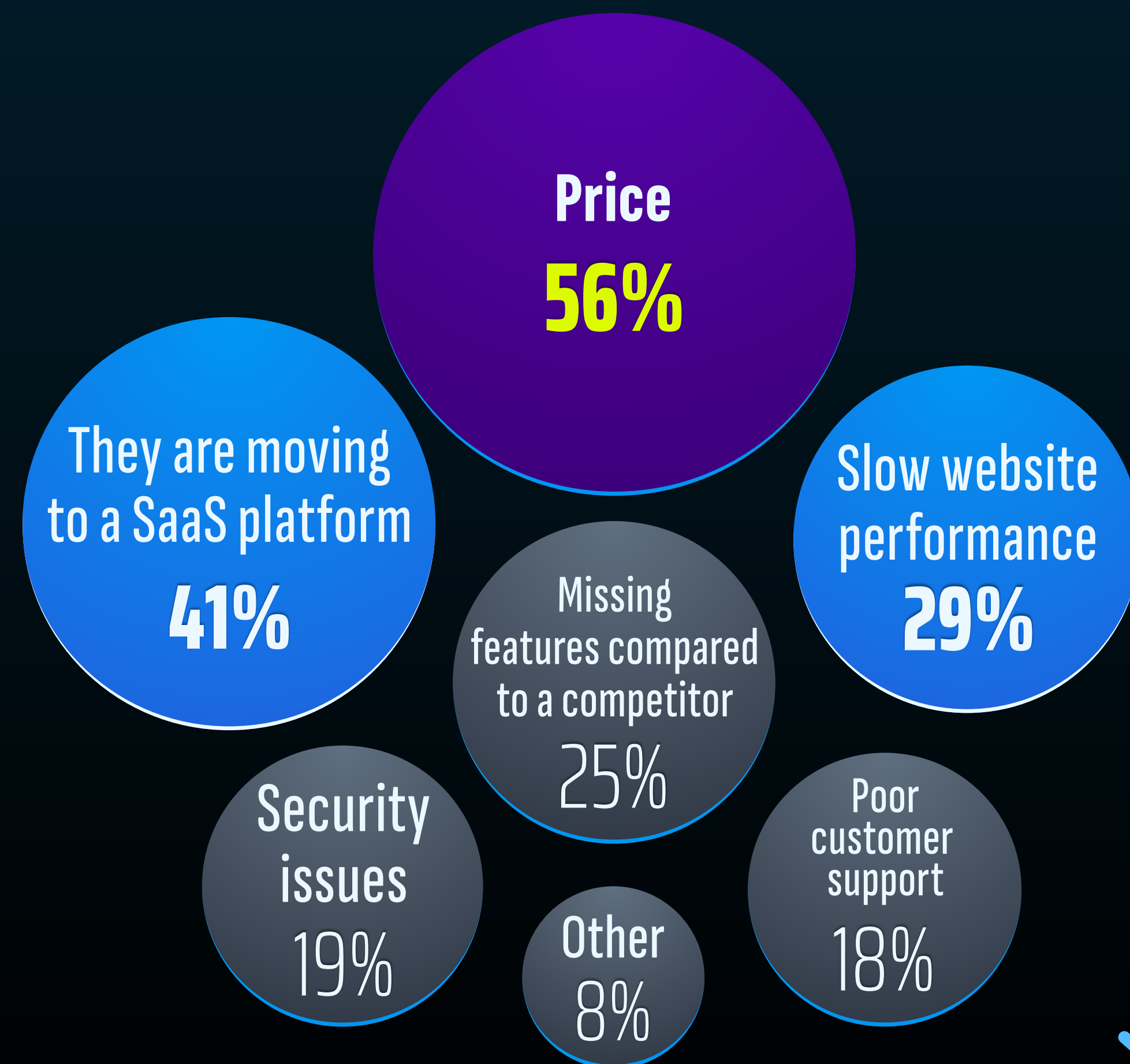
56% cite price as a key reason for churn.

The second most common reason reflects a structural shift in the market. 41% say customers leave because they move to SaaS platforms such as Wix, Shopify, Squarespace, or similar solutions.

Other frequently cited reasons include:

- Performance issues/slow websites: 29%
- Missing features compared to competitors: 25%
- Security incidents (such as hacked sites or malware): 19%
- Poor support experiences: 18%

When your hosting customers churn, what are the top 3 reasons they typically give?



CONTINUED**»»» Price is the most commonly given reason for customer churn.**

Taken together, the responses show that churn is often driven by a **mix of economic and experience-related** factors:

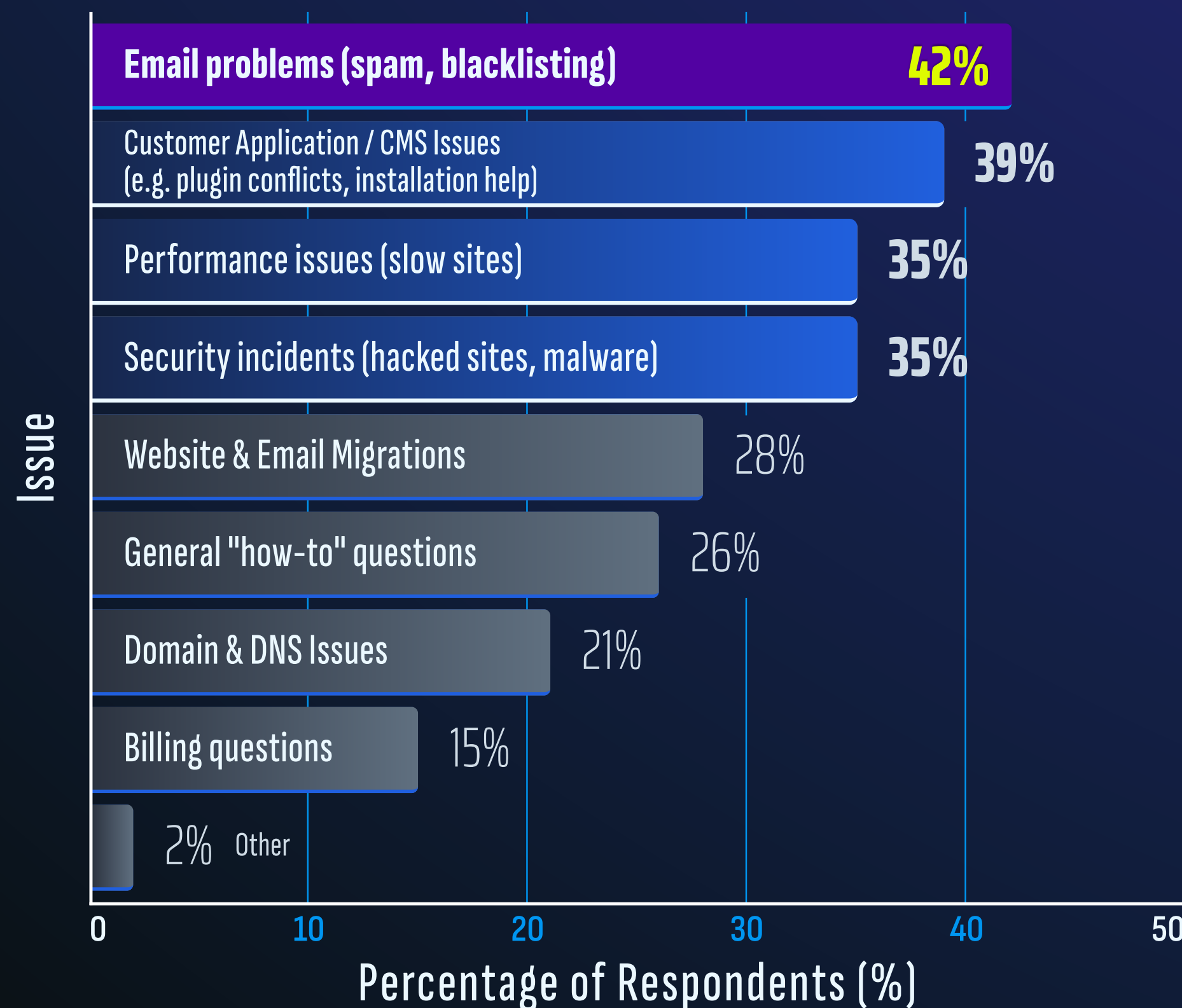
- The prominence of price may indicate that, in some cases, customers either cannot afford it or **do not see enough value** to justify what they are paying.
- The strong pull of SaaS platforms suggests that many customers are **attracted by convenience and simplicity**, even if it means giving up some flexibility.
- At the same time, issues that providers can influence directly, such as **performance, security, and support**, also appear frequently among the churn reasons.

What can providers do in response?

- It may be beneficial to place more emphasis on **communicating and demonstrating value**, not just listing features and prices.
- Educating customers about the **trade-offs between SaaS platforms and traditional hosting** can help them make more informed choices, and potentially reduce regretted churn where customers later discover limitations in their new platforms.
- Investing in **site performance, security, and support quality** can help reduce churn in areas where providers have the most control.

When looking at where hosting providers are spending their support team's time, four categories stand out as major support drains:

Which of the following topics consumes the most support time on a regular basis?



- Email problems (spam, blacklisting, deliverability issues): 42%
- Customer CMS / application issues (eg. WordPress or plugin problems): 39%
- Performance issues (slow websites): 35%
- Security incidents (hacked sites, malware infections): 35%

These are areas where better tooling, automation, and robust protection could reduce ticket volume and time-to-resolution.

When we discuss security, automation, and investment priorities in a later section, these support patterns provide useful context for why providers are looking for more efficient ways to manage performance, security, and application-level complexity at scale.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT



Drowning in email spam tickets? **Imunify Email** integrates outbound and inbound protection directly into the familiar **Imunify360** interface, stopping spam outbreaks and protecting your IP reputation without adding complexity.

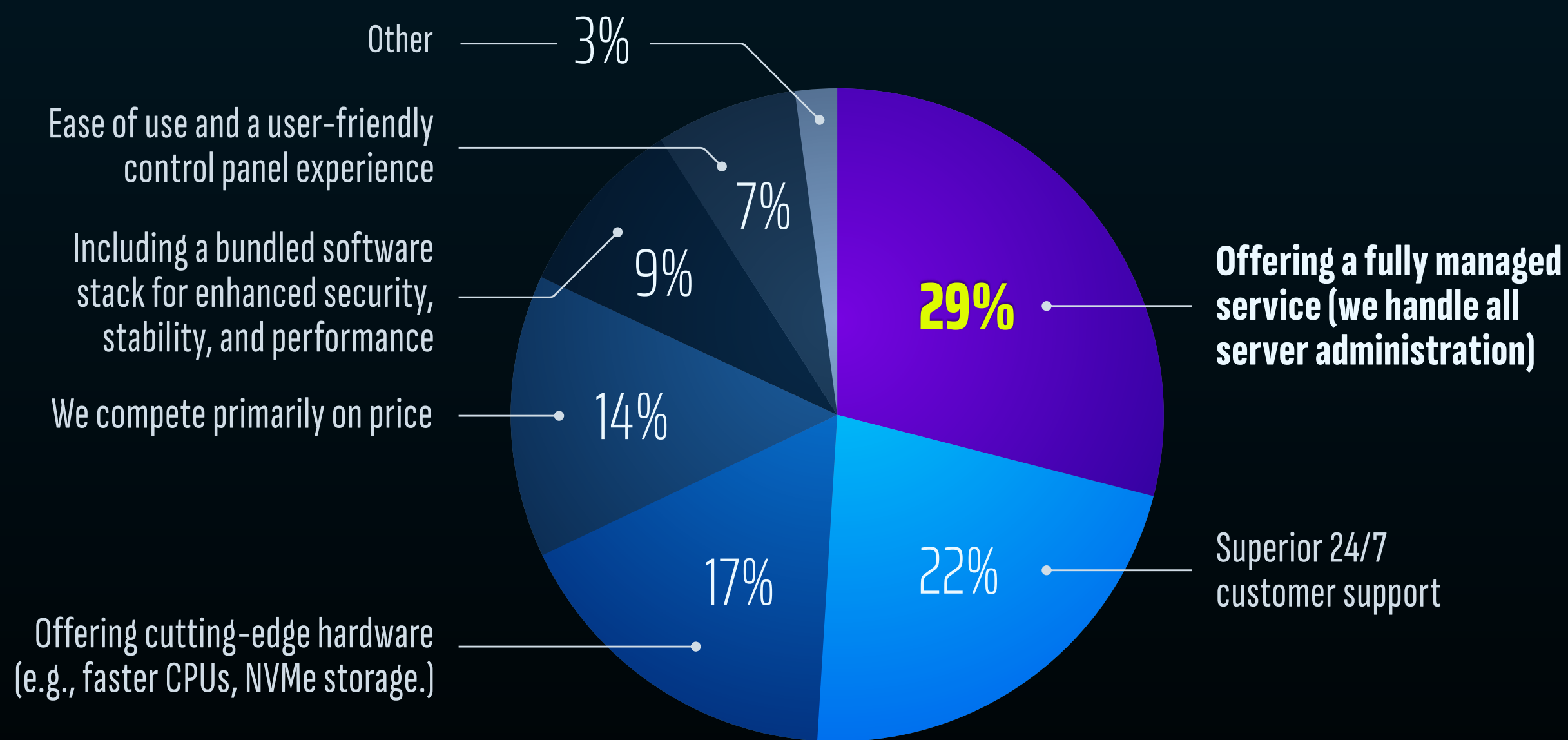
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4 VPS Positioning and Challenges

Many hosting providers consider VPS to be the main market for growth in 2026. Here's how they go about providing the most value to their customers.

Most providers prefer to compete on **service quality** to differentiate their VPS offerings, rather than price:

How does your company primarily differentiate its VPS offerings to win new customers?



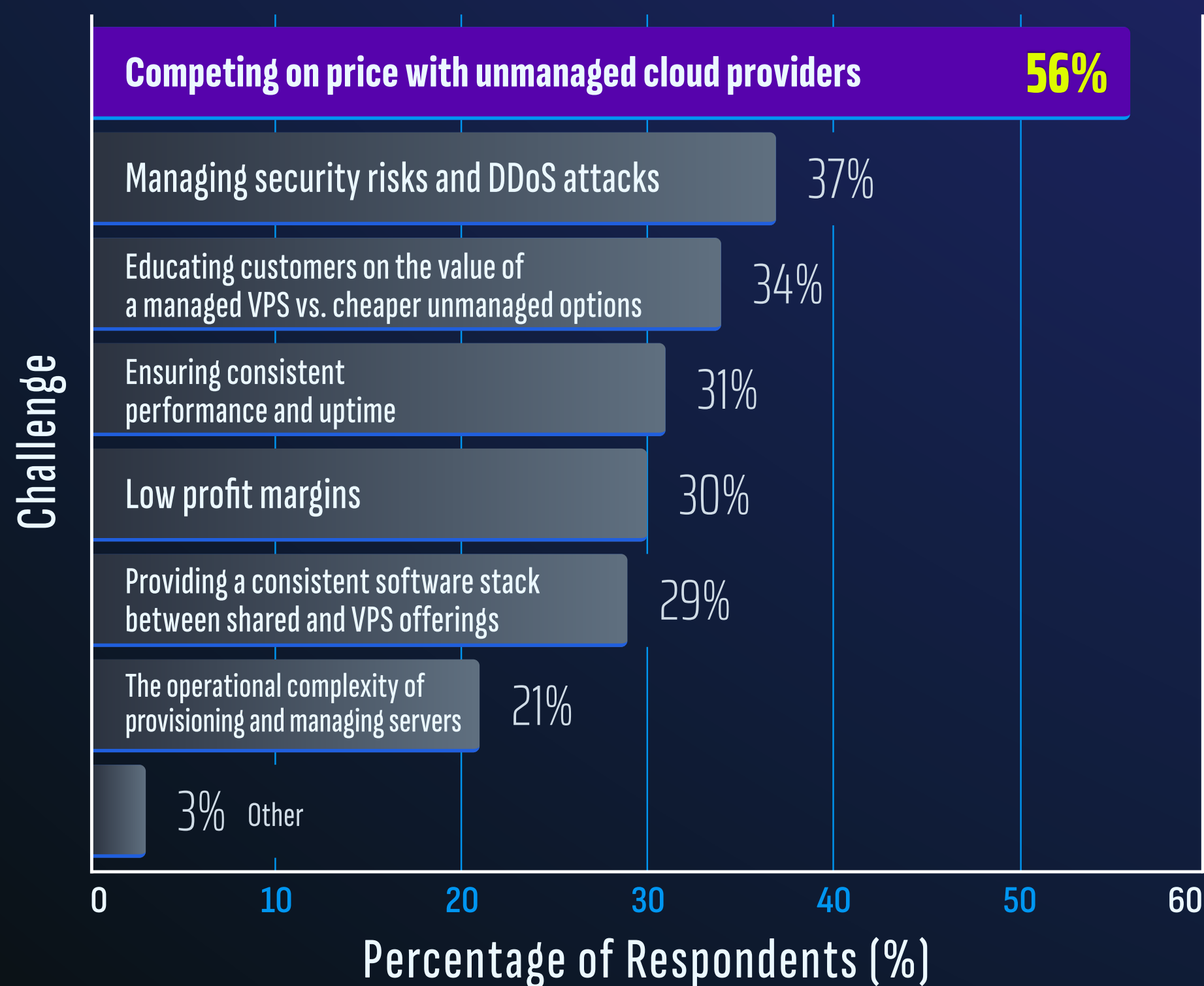
- 29% say they primarily differentiate through a **fully managed service**
- 22% emphasize **superior 24/7 support** as their main differentiator
- 17% focus on **cutting-edge hardware**
- 14% say they **compete primarily on price**
- 9% differentiate by offering a **bundled enhanced software stack**
- 7% focus on **ease of use and a user-friendly control panel experience**

This distribution suggests that while some providers do choose to play the **lowest price game**, many more are trying to stand out through **management level, support quality, and technical excellence**. A smaller but significant portion also leans into **bundled software stacks** to offer a more complete, out-of-the-box solution.

Differentiation matters regardless of whether a provider offers **managed or unmanaged plans**. Even in scenarios where customers get root access and are expected to manage much of their stack themselves, hosters still need to think about how to differentiate on reliability, performance, tools, and safety nets.

One challenge stands out clearly at the top for hosters managing VPS and dedicated servers: **competing on price with unmanaged cloud providers**

What are the biggest challenges you face in managing and growing your VPS / Dedicated server business?



This confirms a theme that appears in other questions as well: many providers feel constant price pressure from low-cost options that customers perceive as a good deal.

Taken together with other challenges that also appear frequently, the responses show that VPS and dedicated offerings require providers to **balance pricing, security, performance, and operational complexity**, often while trying to explain to customers why a managed solution is worth more than an unmanaged alternative.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

CloudLinux VPS Bundle

Struggling to compete on price? **The CloudLinux VPS Bundle** offers real differentiators, plus up to 55% off standard pricing for **CloudLinux OS** and **Imunify360**. Secure your margins while securing your servers.

[LEARN MORE >](#)

5 Security and Compliance Under Pressure

Security has always been paramount, but in the age of increased bot traffic, AI social engineering, and cheaper brute force attacks, the vectors multiply.

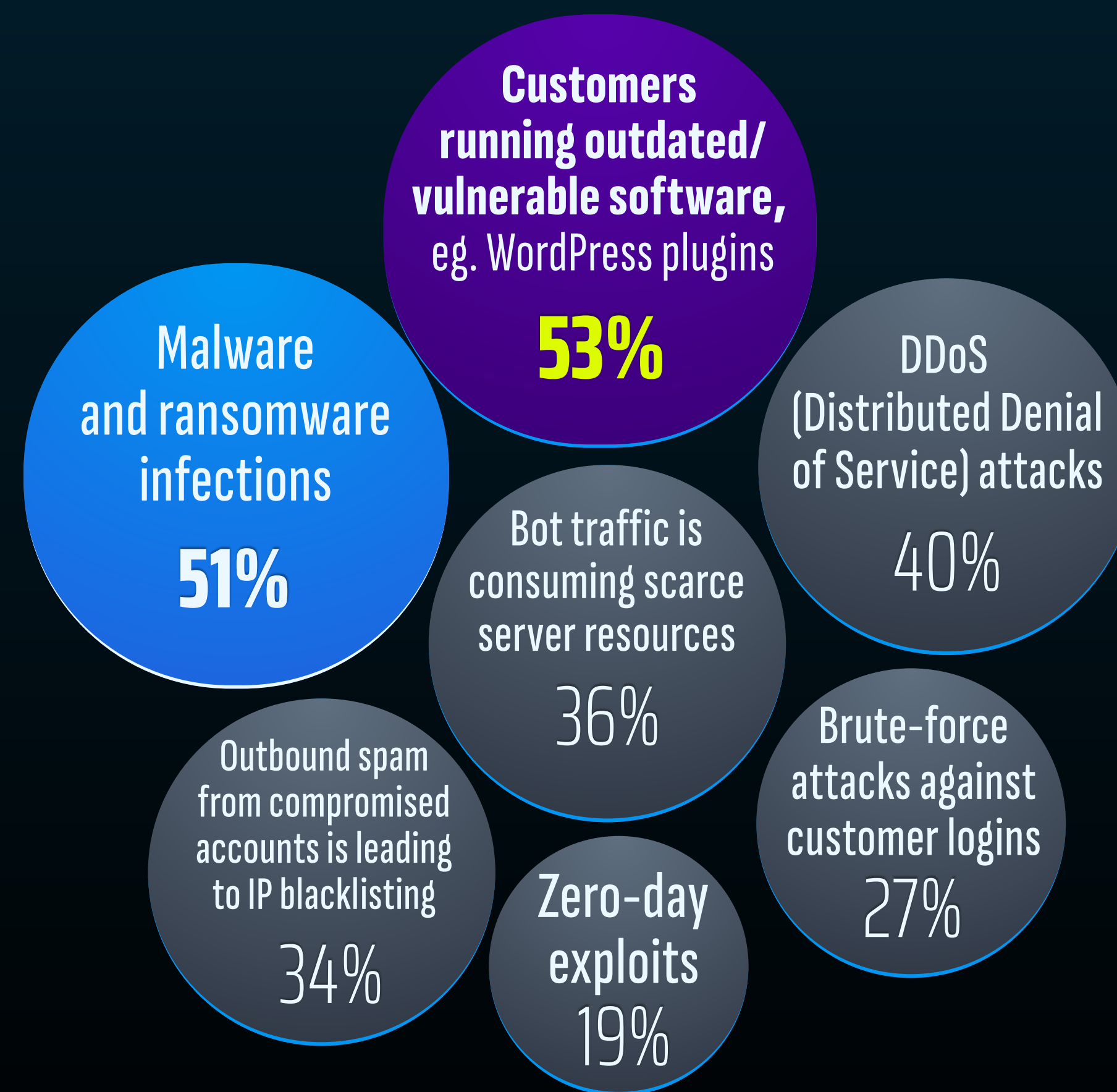
Two issues stand out at the top of security-related challenges that create the most overhead and risk in business.

- Outdated or vulnerable software, especially WordPress plugins and themes, was cited by **53%** of respondents
- Malware and ransomware infections were cited by **51%**

Together, these highlight the ongoing challenge of running application-heavy, CMS-driven environments where customers control much of the code and update cadence.

Several other security challenges are also widely felt as shown by the distribution of responses.

Which of the following security challenges creates the most operational overhead or risk for your business?



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»»» Security-related challenges that create the most overhead and risk in business

The diversity of attack vectors shows that security is not just about protection at the network edge. Providers are dealing with a **multi-layer problem** that spans:

- Customer-controlled application code (plugins, themes, CMS updates)
- Infrastructure-level threats (DDoS, abusive bots)
- Email abuse and reputation issues
- Emerging or hard-to-patch threats (zero-days)

These findings align with the already cited security incidents as a source of support load and a contributor to churn.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

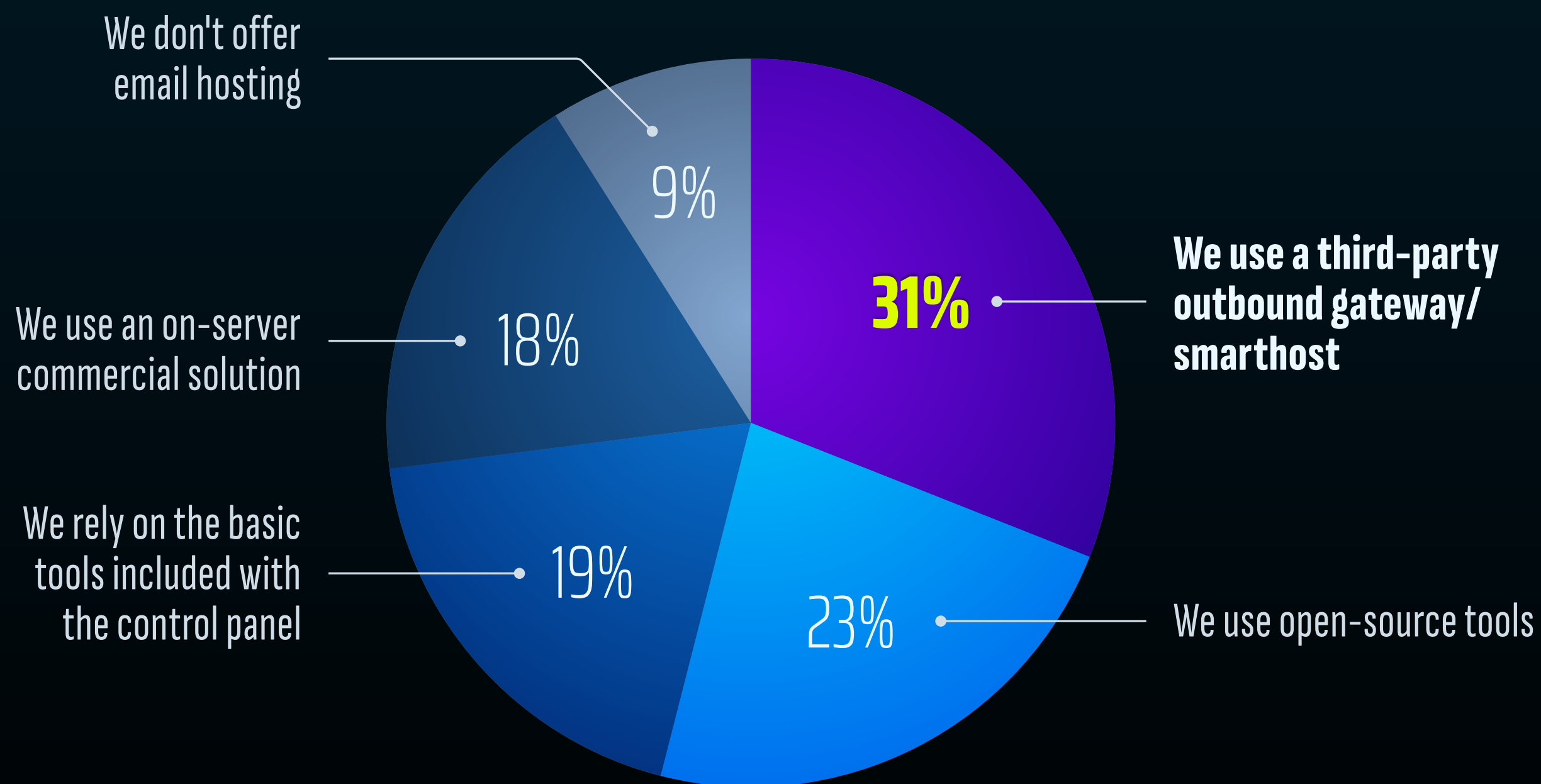


Don't let vulnerable plugins ruin your support queue. **Imunify Patch** automatically fixes vulnerabilities in outdated CMS versions without breaking sites. It's turning a security risk into a new revenue stream for hosting providers.

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There is a fragmented landscape on tools to address email spam and security.

For your servers that handle email, which of the following best describes your primary spam and security solution?



- 31% use a **third-party outbound gateway or smarthost** service for email filtering and reputation management
- 23% rely primarily on **open-source tools** (such as SpamAssassin, Rspamd, or similar solutions)
- 19% depend on the **basic spam and security tools included in their control panel**
- 18% have an **on-server commercial email security solution** in place

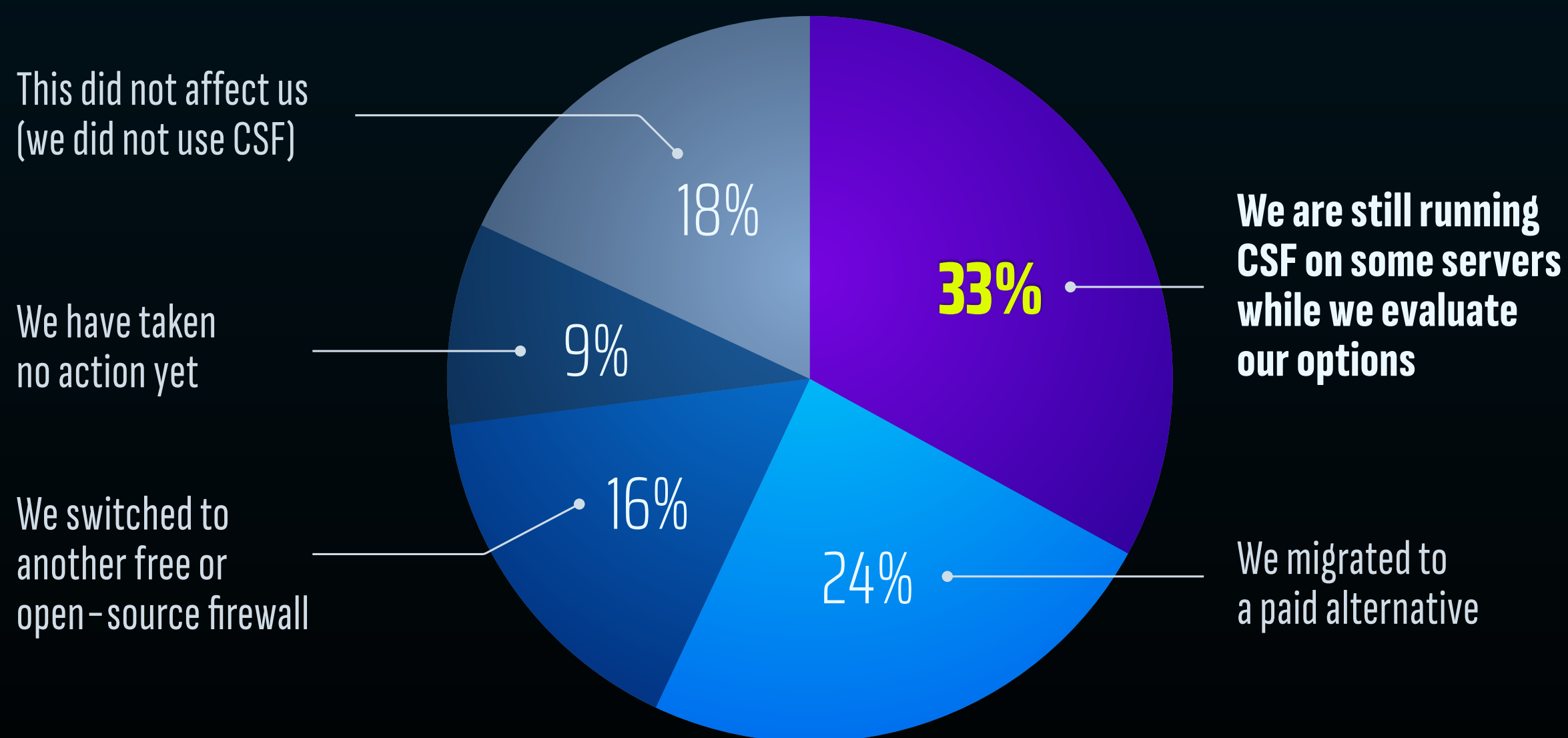
No single solution type dominates the market. Instead, providers use a mix of gateways, open-source components, and commercial tools to keep spam and abuse under control.

When we view this alongside the support data, where 42% of respondents say spam, blacklisting, and deliverability consume a large share of support time, it suggests that **email hosting remains both an essential offering and operationally challenging.**

The combination of high support load and a diverse set of tools indicates that there is room for more **integrated, easier-to-manage email security and spam filtering.**

For many years, the ConfigServer Security & Firewall (CSF) tool has been widely used in the hosting world. Here is how providers reacted when CSF reached end-of-life:

ConfigServer's popular firewall (CSF) reached its end-of-life in August 2025. How has your company responded to this change?



The answers show that a significant portion of the market is still in transition:

- **33%** say they are **still running CSF while evaluating alternatives**
- **24%** report that they have **migrated to a paid alternative**
- **18%** say they are **not affected** because they did not use CSF
- **16%** have **switched to another free or open-source firewall**
- **9%** say they have **taken no action yet**

This distribution shows that even after an end-of-life announcement, many providers continue to rely on tools that are no longer maintained, whether temporarily while they evaluate options or, in some cases, with no clear plan yet.



CONTINUED

»»» ConfigServer Security & Firewall end-of-life: What's behind the slow transition?

With over **40% of affected providers** still running CSF, the delayed response is not simply a case of inaction. It points to real operational barriers that slow down even well-intentioned migration plans:

- A **lack of time and resources** to properly evaluate and test replacement solutions
- The operational **risk and effort** involved in changing core security components on production servers
- A tendency for security changes to **lag behind awareness**, especially when short-term stability feels more urgent than long-term risk

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT



If you are still running CSF, your servers are at risk. Explore the automated, multi-layered defenses of **Imunify360** as a worthy alternative. It even has a dedicated tool for easy migration from CSF.

[LEARN MORE >](#)

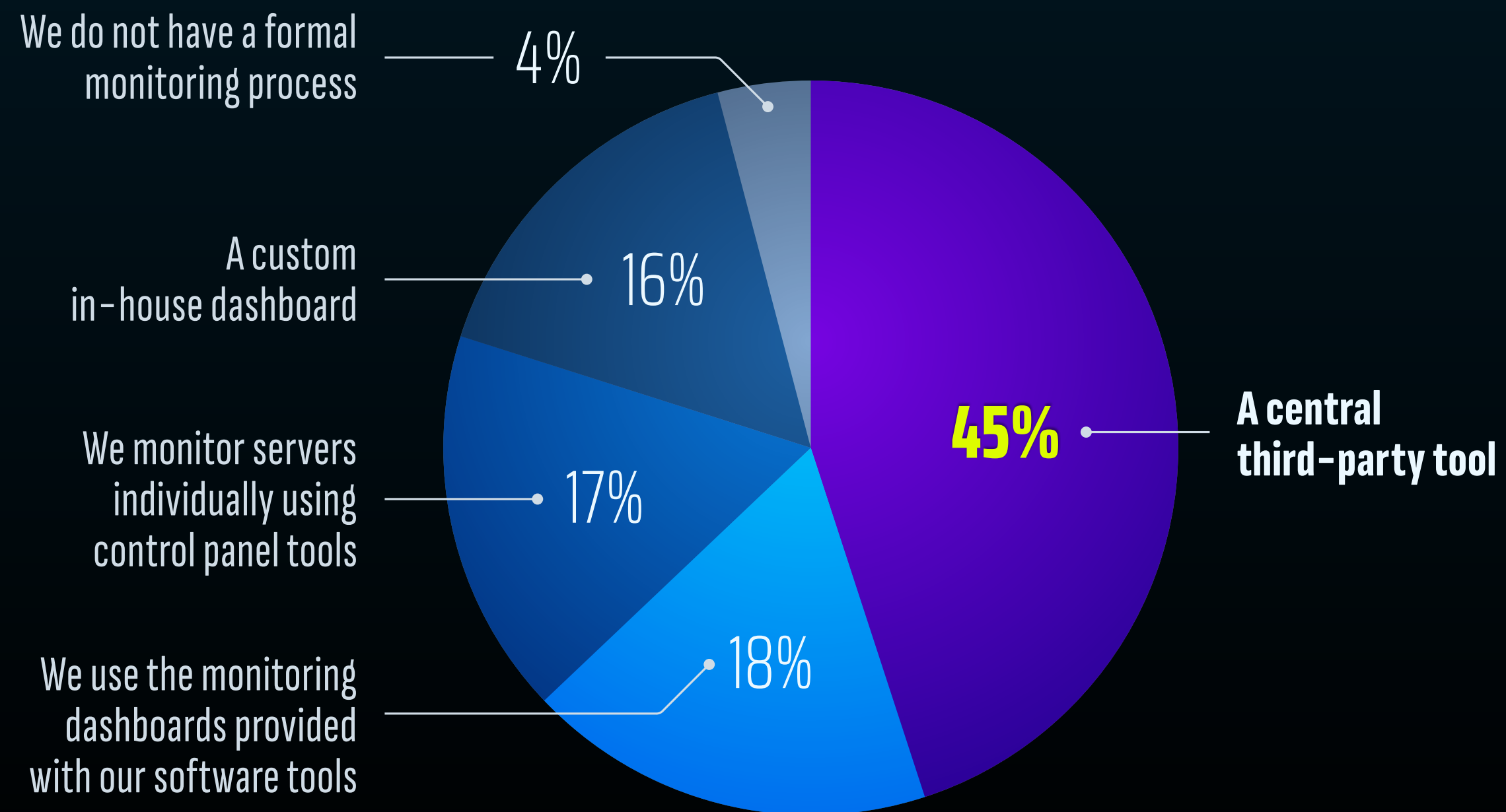
6 The Tech Stack

Beyond the services they sell, hosting providers must also make critical decisions about the tools, platforms, and technologies that power their own operations. This section examines how providers run, monitor, and modernize their infrastructure.

When asked how hosting providers monitor their server fleets today, **centralized monitoring tools** come out on top:

45% use a central, third-party monitoring solution, such as Zabbix, Prometheus, Datadog, or similar platforms with central dashboards and alerts.

How do you currently monitor the health, performance, and security of your entire server fleet?



Beyond that, monitoring is handled through a mix of other approaches:

- 18% rely primarily on the **dashboards that come built into their existing tools**
- 17% monitor servers **individually via control panels**, rather than through a single aggregated view
- 16% use a **custom, in-house monitoring dashboard**

While centralized monitoring is clearly the most common, a substantial share of providers rely on **per-panel views** or a combination of built-in and custom tools.

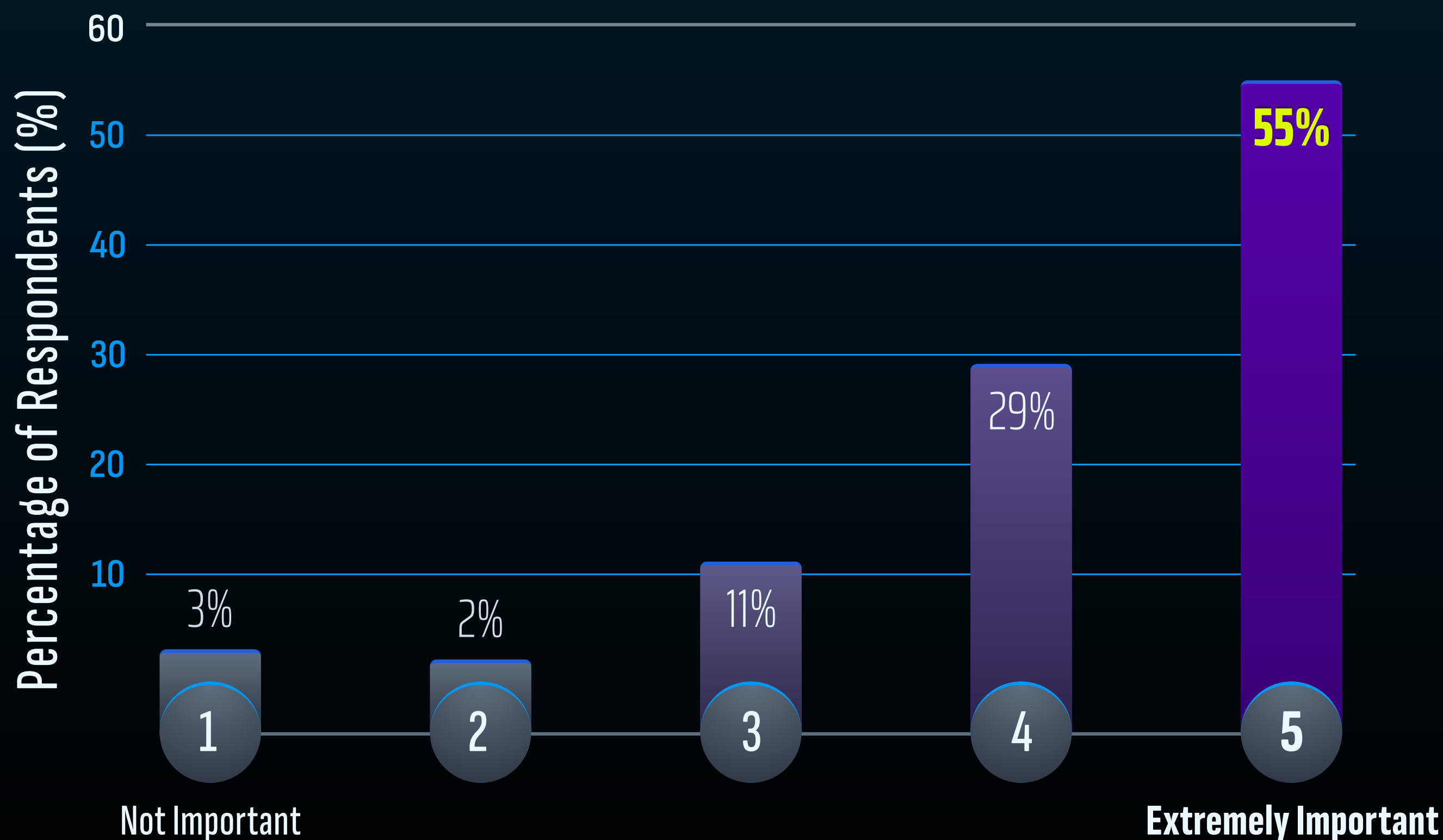
When we look at this by **server fleet size**, a clear shift appears:

- Smaller fleets prefer **individual control-panel-level monitoring**.
- As fleet size grows, providers increasingly move toward **central monitoring solutions** and, in the largest segment, **custom in-house dashboards**.
- In the largest fleets, monitoring is dominated by **centralized and custom views**, with panel-by-panel monitoring disappearing entirely.

This suggests a natural progression: as the number of servers increases, providers tend to invest more in aggregated, fleet-wide visibility in an effort to increase management efficiency.

The importance of automation and "set-it-and-forget-it" capability skews heavily toward the high end of the scale among respondents:

When choosing new software for your servers, how important is the level of automation and "set-it-and-forget-it" capability of the solution?



On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not important at all" and 5 means "extremely important",

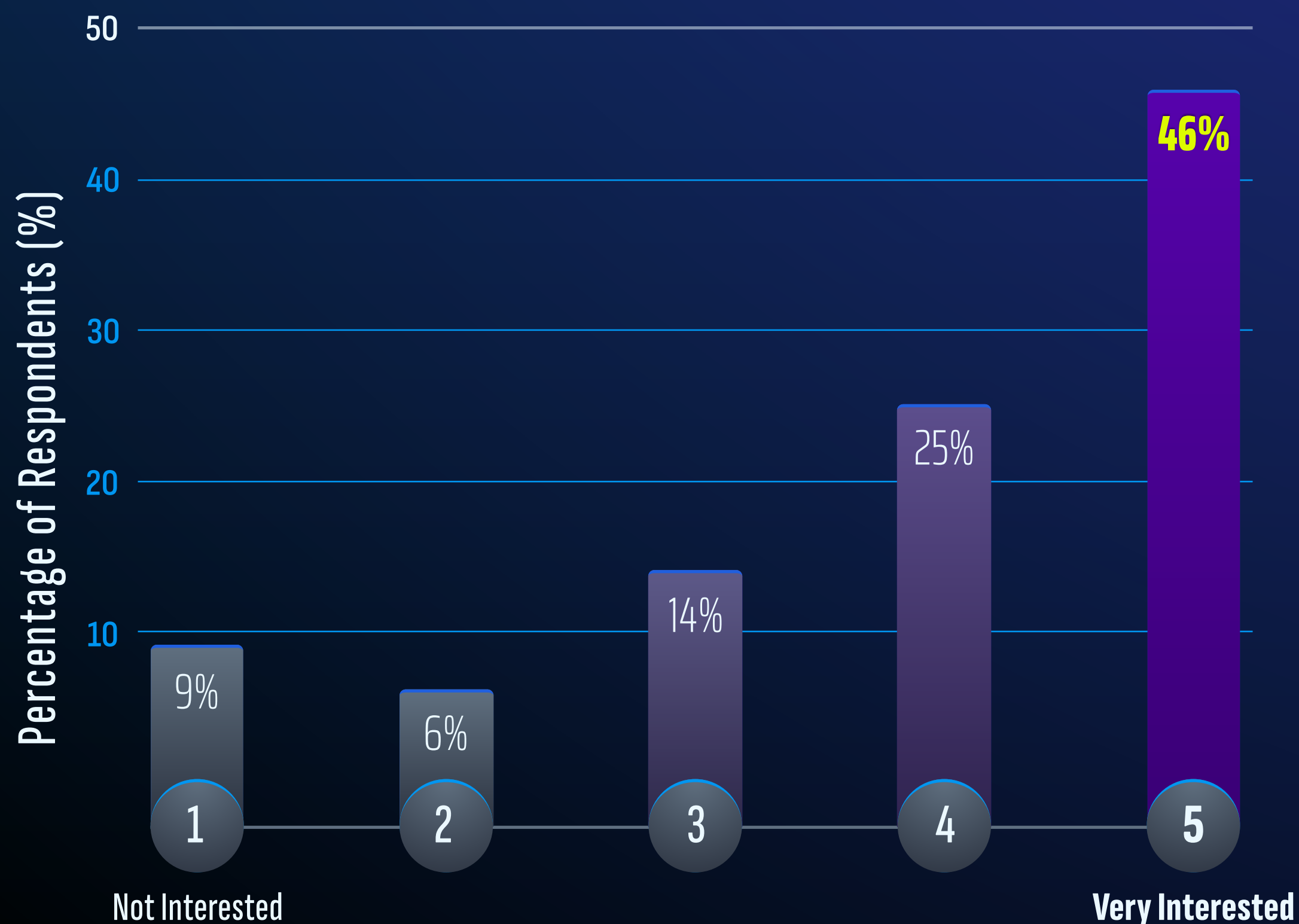
- 55% selected 5 – extremely important
- 29% selected 4
- 11% selected 3
- 2% selected 2
- 3% selected 1 – not important at all

In other words, more than four out of five respondents place automation in the top two importance levels when evaluating new server software. Only a very small minority rates it as unimportant.

This reinforces an apparent theme throughout the survey: hosters are actively looking for ways to reduce repetitive and manual work, standardize operations, and minimize the need for constant attention once a solution is deployed.

There is a strong overall appetite for a “single pane of glass”, a unified dashboard that consolidates management, billing, and analytics:

How likely would you be to adopt a unified dashboard that consolidates management, billing, and analytics across your servers and services?



On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not interested” and 5 means “very interested”,

- 46% selected 5 – very interested
- 25% selected 4
- 14% selected 3
- 6% selected 2
- 9% selected 1 – not interested

When looking at this alongside the monitoring and automation questions, we see that hosters are not only investing in **central monitoring tools**, but are also open to **further consolidation** that brings more metrics, alerts, and controls into a single, coherent interface. For many, the goal is to reduce **tool sprawl and context switching**, making it easier for teams to see the overall status, usage statistics, and health of their environment in one place.

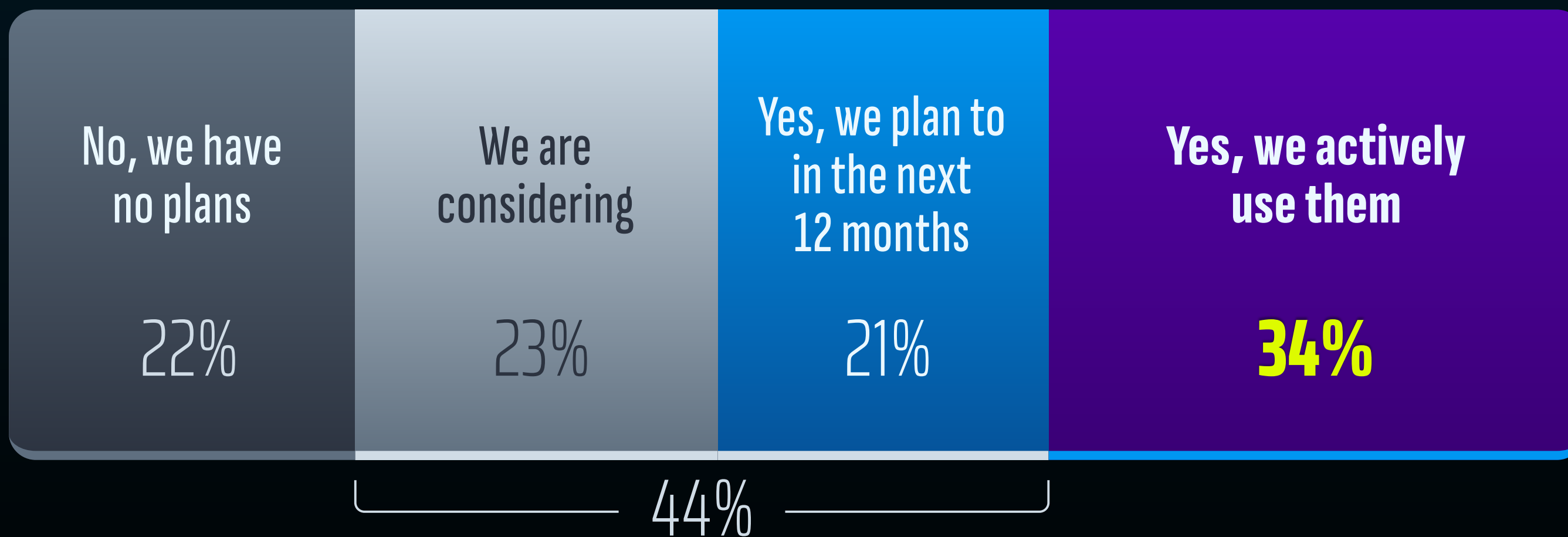
SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT **webpros® Centralized Dashboard**

Manage your entire fleet, servers, licenses, and websites, from one interface. Move accounts between cPanel servers effortlessly, apply bulk settings for automation, and monitor all site assets in one place.

[LEARN ABOUT THIS UPCOMING FEATURE >](#)

There is a split among hosting companies between current users, planners, and those with no immediate plans on **container orchestration tools**.

Do you use or plan to adopt application containers and orchestration systems for your hosting services?



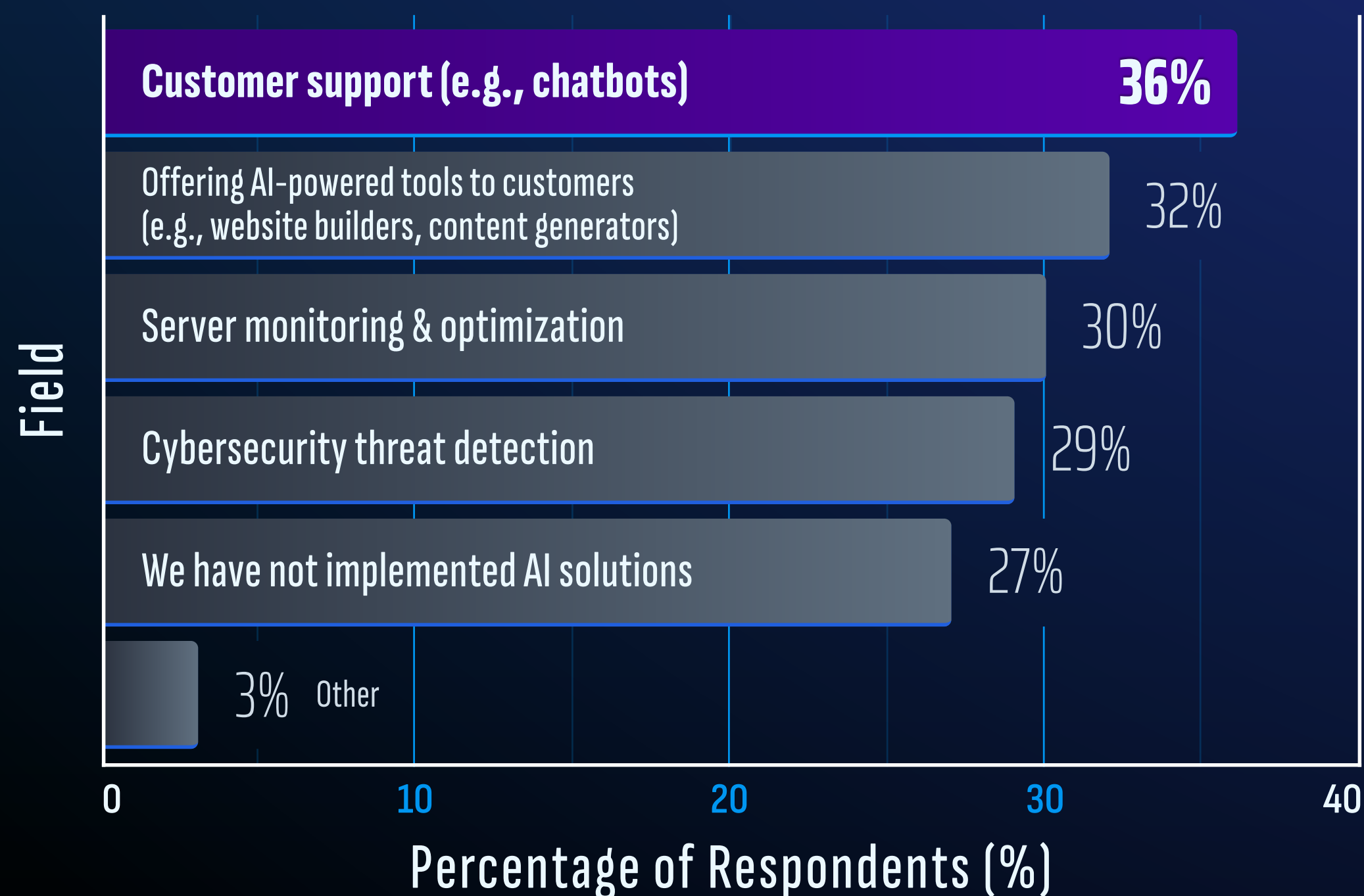
- 34% already use containers in their hosting operations
- 23% are considering using containers
- 22% have no plans to use containers
- 21% plan to adopt containers within the next 12 months

In other words, about one-third of respondents have already deployed containers, while around 44% are either considering or planning adoption. Another notable segment, just over one in five, still has no plans to use containers.

This suggests that containers are clearly on the radar for a majority of hosting providers, but adoption patterns vary. Some companies will likely continue running more traditional hosting models, while others are experimenting with or transitioning to container-based approaches for some of their offerings.

The most common current use case of AI in the operations or offerings of hosting providers is in **customer support**.

In which areas have you already implemented AI solutions successfully in your operations?



36% use AI in **customer support**, mostly for chatbots, reply suggestions, or tools that assist support agents.

Several other areas also see significant levels of AI usage:

- 32% offer **AI tools directly to their customers**, for services like content generation, image tools, or other AI-supported features
- 30% utilize AI for **server monitoring and optimization**, such as anomaly detection or smart alerting
- 29% deploy AI for **cybersecurity threat detection**

In contrast, a sizable segment of hosts (27%) **has not implemented any AI solutions** yet.

The data shows that **AI is no longer purely experimental** for many hosting providers. It has found early traction, especially in support (where language models and chatbots immediately save time) and in customer-facing tools that can be marketed as added value.

At the same time, over a quarter of respondents have not implemented AI at all, underscoring that we are still in a **relatively early stage of AI adoption** across the web hosting industry.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

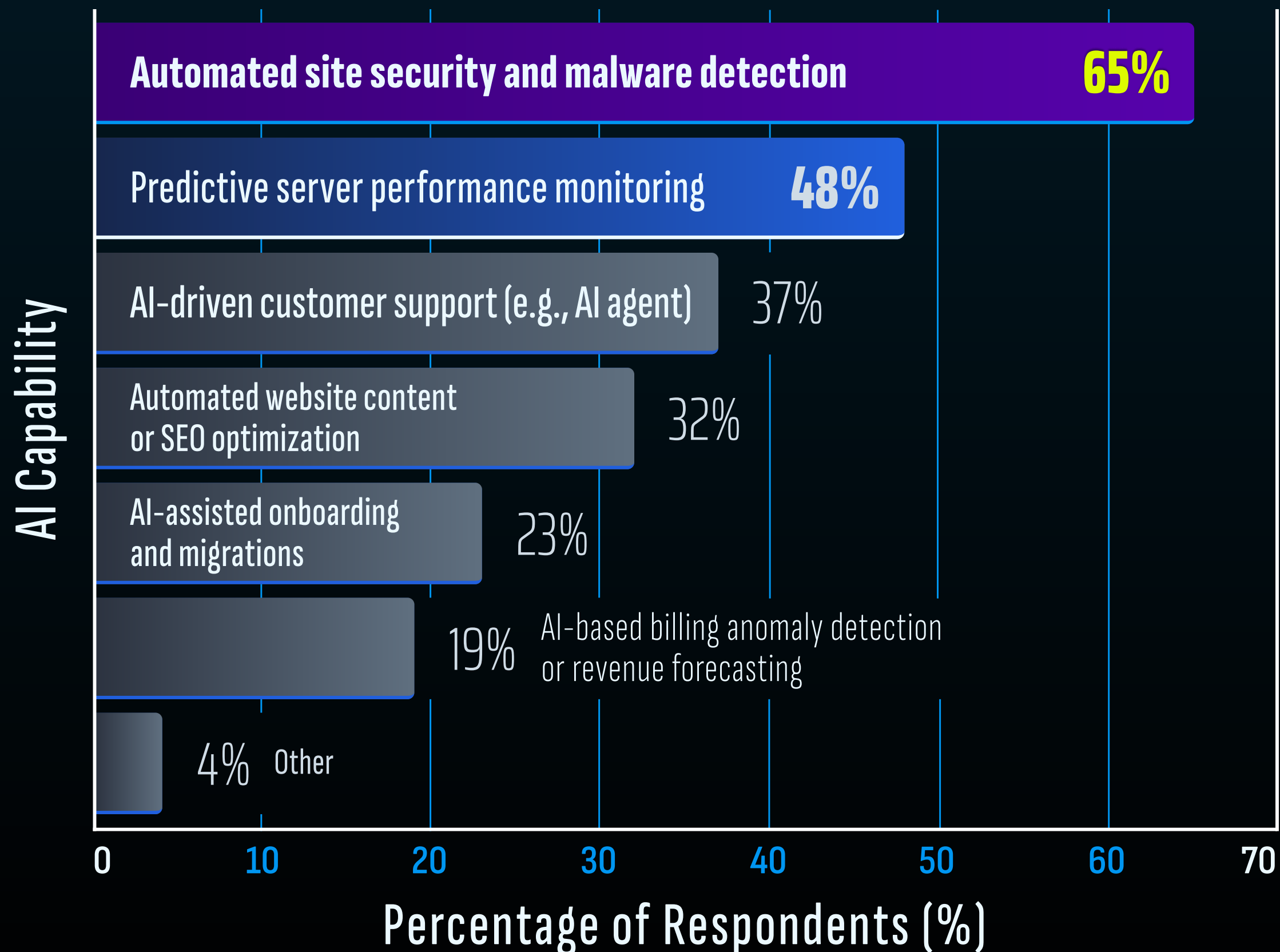
AI Support Agent

A natural language interface designed to streamline WHM and cPanel management. Expect to resolve technical issues, get instant answers to cPanel-related questions, and perform complex management tasks effortlessly.

[LEARN ABOUT THIS UPCOMING FEATURE >](#)

Two areas stand out clearly at the top of the hosting provider wishlist of AI capabilities they would find most valuable in the future:

Which of the following AI-enabled capabilities would create the most value for your business?



- Automated site security and malware detection, chosen by 65% of respondents
- Predictive server performance monitoring, chosen by 48%

So when hosters hear about AI, they think first about security and performance, areas where early detection and faster response could materially reduce risk and improve customer experience.

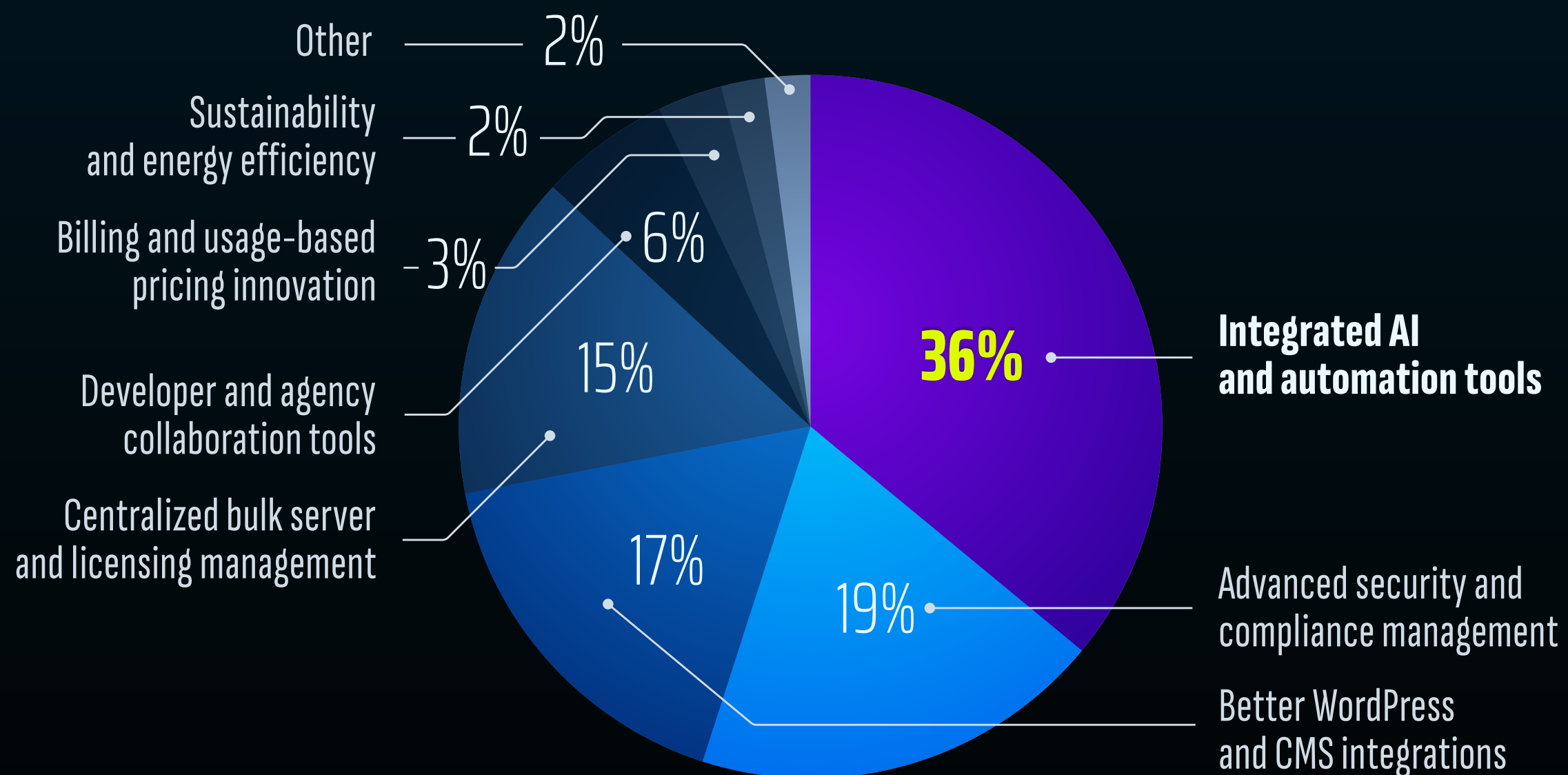
Beyond those two, several other potential AI applications also appear:

- AI-driven customer support: 37%
- Automated website content and SEO assistance: 32%
- AI-assisted onboarding and migrations: 23%
- Billing anomaly detection and revenue forecasting: 19%

Taken together, this shows that providers see a broad range of possible uses for AI, but the strongest interest is in reducing security risk and keeping performance issues under control.

Automation is the top answer for where hosting providers see the biggest innovation opportunities for control panels and web infrastructure software:

In the next 2–3 years, where do you see the BIGGEST innovation opportunities for control panels and web infrastructure software?



- 36% selected **integrated AI and automation tools** as the biggest innovation opportunity

A second tier of priorities covers several related areas:

- 19% chose **advanced security and compliance management**
- 17% pointed to **better WordPress/CMS integrations**
- 15% want a **central bulk server and licensing management**

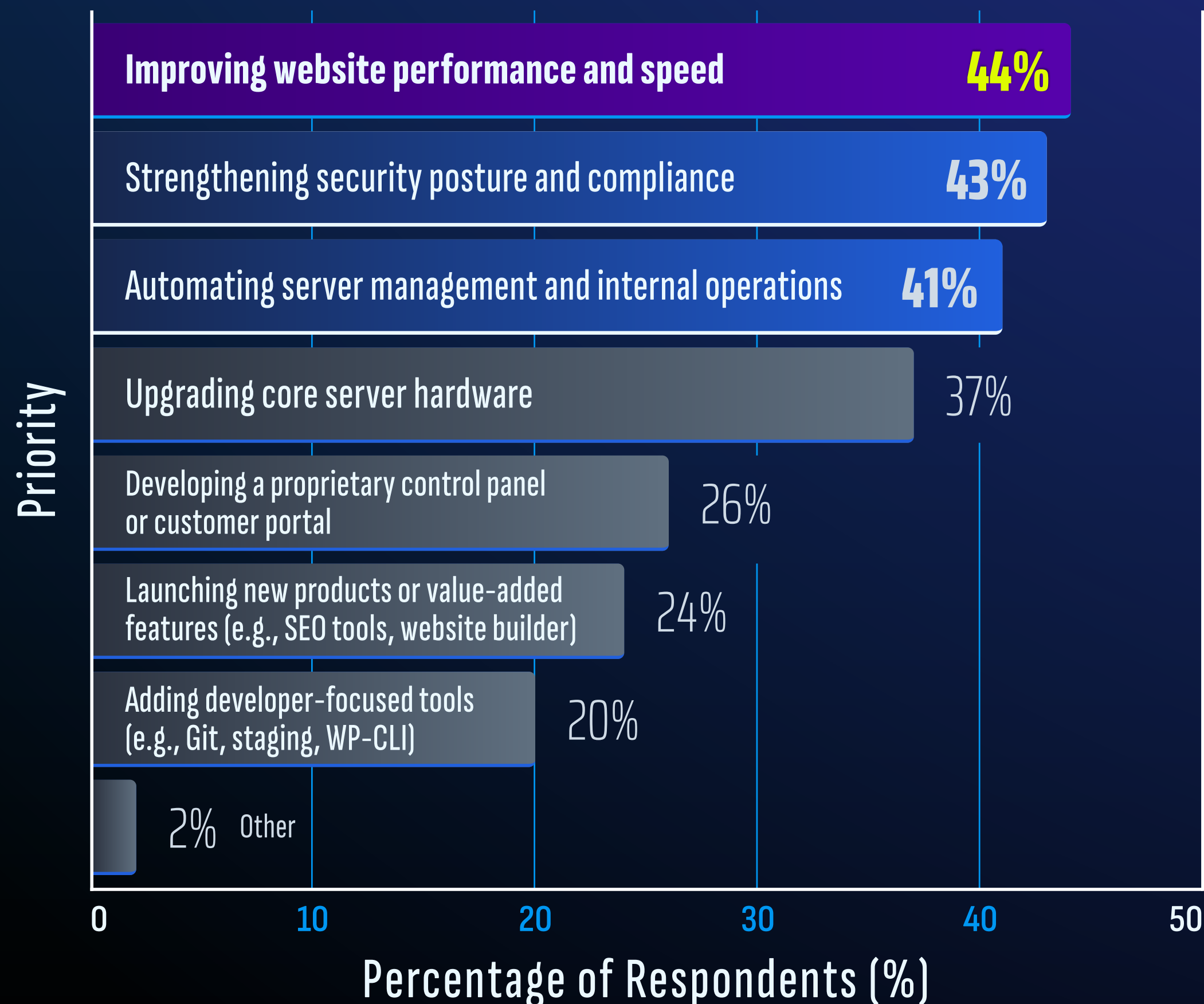
The remaining responses highlight more specialized areas:

- 6% see the biggest opportunity in **developer and agency collaboration tools**
- 3% in **billing and usage-based pricing**
- 2% in **sustainability and energy efficiency**

Overall, providers want tools that **handle more tasks automatically**, make it easier to stay secure and compliant, integrate deeply with the platforms their customers use (especially WordPress), and reduce the overhead of managing large fleets and licensing.

When asked about **technology investments for 2026**, three priorities stand out very clearly at the top:

Where do you plan to make technology investments in 2026?



- 44% prioritize **improving website performance and speed**
- 43% chose **strengthening security and compliance**
- 41% highlighted **automating server management and internal operations**

These three themes are consistently important across the sample and align closely with many of the challenges and priorities seen throughout the survey.

Beyond the top tier, a significant share of respondents also plan to invest in:

- Upgrading core hardware: **37%**
- Developing a proprietary control panel or customer portal: **26%**
- New value-added features (such as SEO tools, builders, or analytics): **24%**
- Developer-focused tools (for example, Git integration, staging environments, WP-CLI, or CI/CD workflows): **20%**.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT



An AI visibility platform that shows how AI systems understand a business and what to improve to increase visibility in AI-powered search. It identifies missing or incomplete information, tracks when competitors appear instead, and provides clear improvement suggestions without manual checks or guesswork.

[EXPLORE XOVI AI >](#)



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»»» Three priorities stand out at the top of technology investments for 2026

When we look at these priorities **by server fleet size**, we see that:

- **Performance, security, and automation** are important across all fleet sizes.
- As fleets grow, **developer-focused tools** and **proprietary control panels or customer portals** become comparatively more important. Larger hosting providers are more likely to invest in customized portals and developer workflows as part of their differentiation and internal efficiency goals.

The answers show that providers are planning to **invest heavily in making their platforms faster, more secure, and more automated**, while also building better experiences for both end customers and developers as their infrastructure scales.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT



Meeting the demand for speed just got easier. AccelerateWP is now complemented by MMax Cache, an Apache module that serves cached pages without calling PHP, resulting in an immediate boost in page load times.

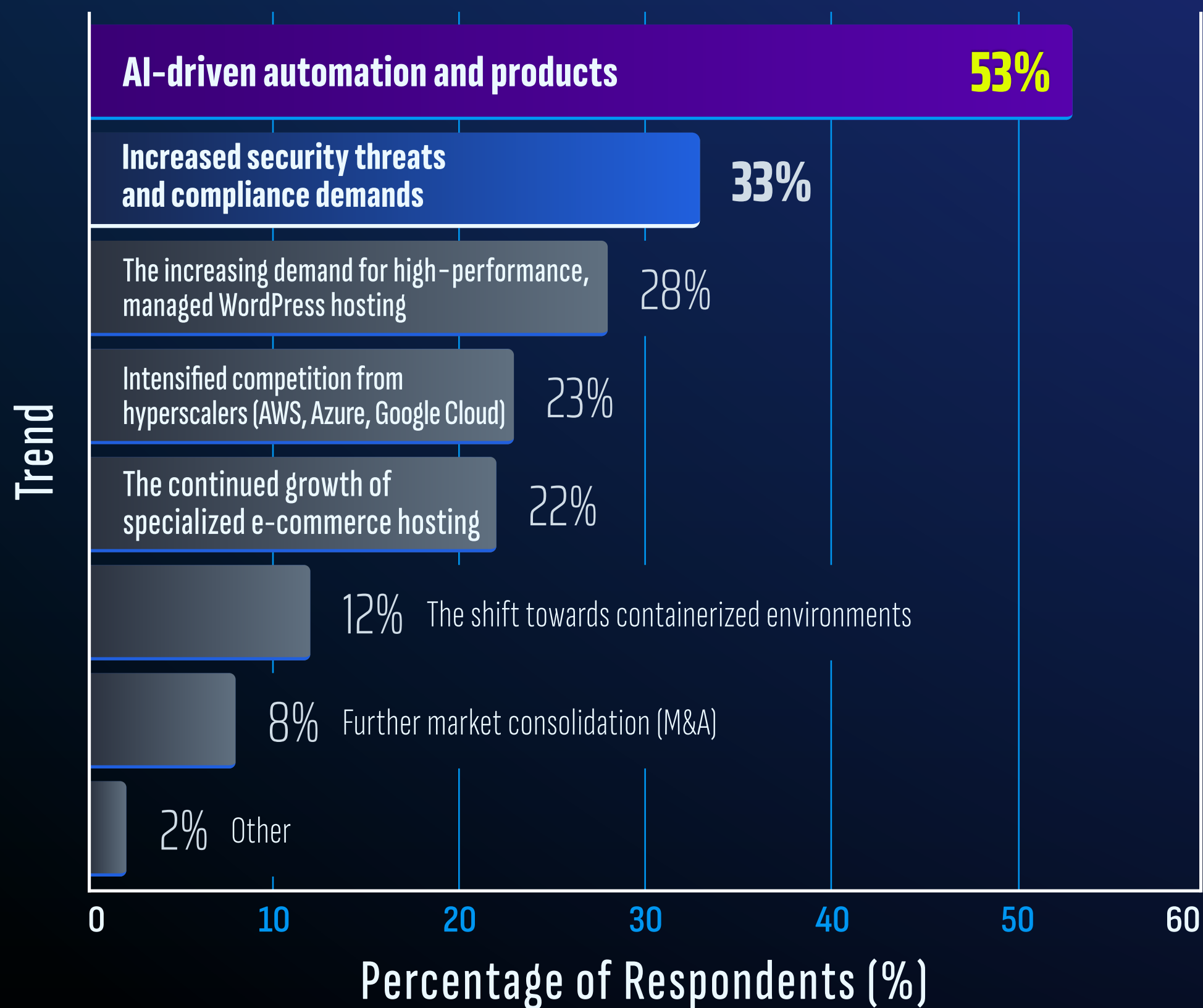
[LEARN MORE >](#)

7 Looking Ahead to 2026

2026 is shaping up to be a dynamic year in the hosting industry. New AI possibilities drive more intense competition, while security remains as important as ever.

AI and security bets stand out at the top of the list of trends expected to have the biggest impact on the hosting industry in 2026:

Which of these trends do you anticipate having the BIGGEST impact on the hosting industry in 2026?



- 53% selected AI-driven automation and new AI-based products
- 33% chose increased security threats and growing compliance demands

Below these two, several other trends also appear with notable frequency:

- 28% expect high-performance, managed WordPress hosting to have the biggest impact
- 23% point to competition from hyperscale cloud providers
- 22% highlight the growth of specialized e-commerce hosting

Respondents see AI, security/compliance, and performance-focused managed offerings as the themes most likely to shape 2026.

Competition from hyperscalers and the growth of specialized hosting segments are also high on many providers' radar.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT



An AI-powered website and app builder that transforms simple prompts into live projects. This no-code solution allows your customers to create and publish professional websites and applications instantly.

[EXPLORE NOVA >](#)



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»» AI and security bets are expected to have the biggest impact on the industry in 2026

Segmenting the same question by [server fleet size](#) reveals some differences in emphasis, even though many of the same themes emerge.

A few patterns stand out:

- [Smaller providers](#) are more likely to select [AI-driven automation and products](#) as the trend that will likely have the biggest impact. For these companies, AI-powered tooling may be seen as a potential force multiplier, helping them do more with smaller teams.
- [Larger providers](#) tend to be more evenly distributed across several options. While AI and security remain important, respondents in the higher fleet-size bands are relatively more likely to choose trends such as [high-performance managed WordPress hosting](#) and the [growth of specialized e-commerce hosting](#) as the most impactful.
- Across [all fleet-size segments](#), respondents consistently agree that [security threats and compliance demands](#) will be a major factor in 2026, even when they are not selected as the single top trend.

In other words, the broad shape of expectations is similar across the board. AI, security, performance-focused managed offerings, and hyperscalers matter to everyone, but the relative weight of these themes shifts slightly depending on the scale at which a provider operates.

Connecting the trends to today's hosting reality

The forward-looking expectations sit alongside several concrete realities when we look at the full survey results:

- Hosting companies report that **outdated software, malware, DDoS, and bot traffic** are already major sources of security risk and overhead.
- Many are still in the process of **replacing end-of-life components** like CSF.
- **AI is already in use**, most commonly in support and customer-facing tools, but more than a quarter of respondents have not yet implemented any AI solutions.
- Investment plans for 2026 are heavily focused on **performance, security, and automation**, and providers see substantial innovation opportunities in integrated automation, better WordPress integration, security/compliance tooling, and central management.

Against this backdrop, the trends hosting providers expect for 2026 can be read less as predictions of a completely new landscape, and more as an indication of where they anticipate the most change and pressure:

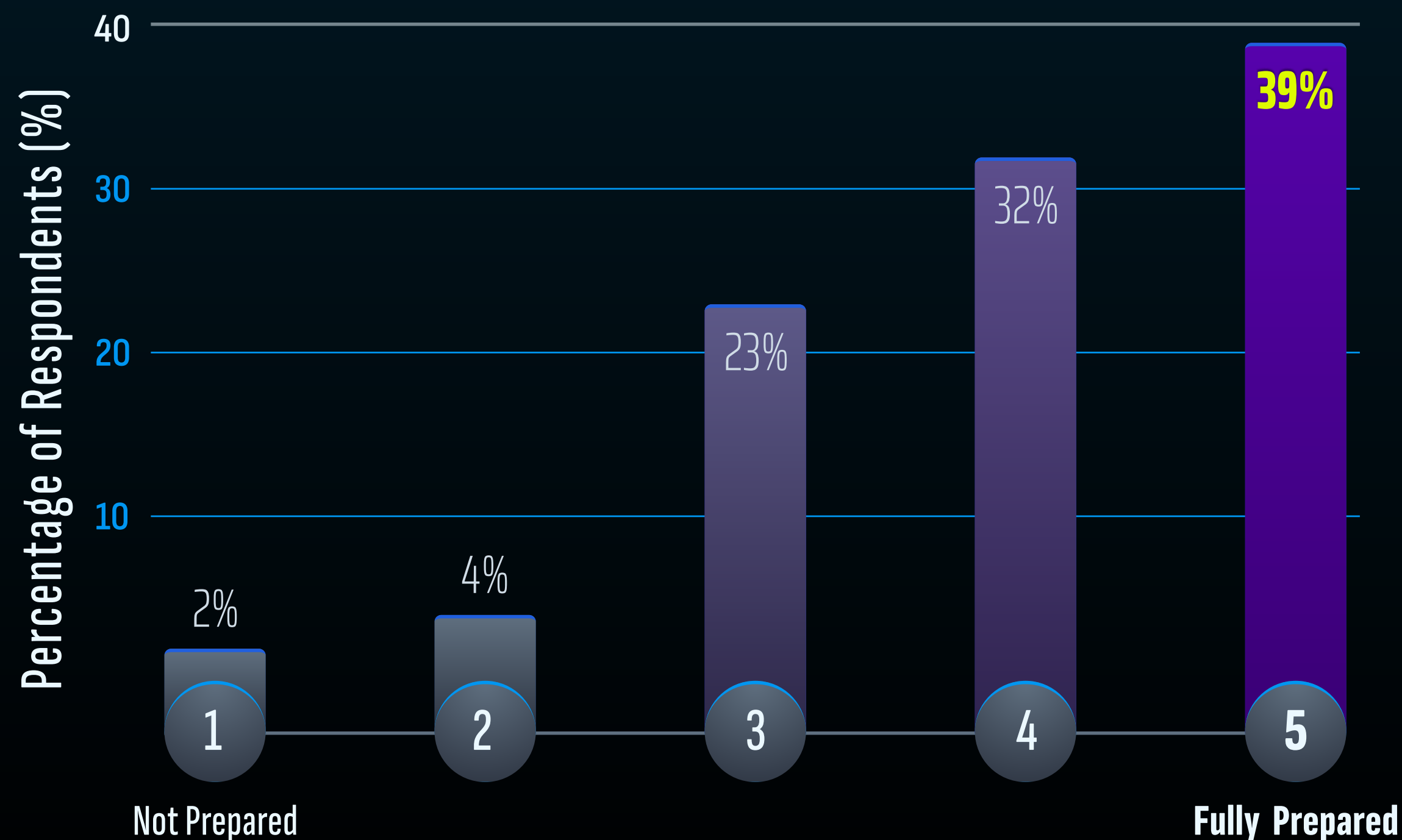
- **AI-driven automation and products** are seen as an extension of current moves toward automation and efficiency, rather than an entirely separate track.
- **Security threats and compliance** are expected to keep intensifying, building on challenges providers already face.
- **Managed WordPress and specialized e-commerce hosting** are considered a natural evolution of how many providers already package and differentiate their services.

While a survey cannot say which of these trends will ultimately prove most impactful, it does show clearly where hosting providers are directing their attention as they plan for 2026.

How Ready Are Hosts for 2026?

To close the survey, we asked respondents how prepared they were to meet the challenges of 2026 on a scale of 1 ("not prepared at all") to 5 ("very well prepared"). The distribution shows a **generally confident but not complacent** outlook:

How prepared is your company to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of 2026?



In other words, more than **70%** of respondents rate themselves in the top two categories (4 or 5), and only a very small minority feel outright unprepared. A sizeable group, just under a quarter, places themselves in the middle, suggesting they see both strengths and gaps in their current setup.

This distribution paints a picture of an industry that is **largely confident** about its ability to navigate the year ahead. Most providers believe they have the right foundations in place, or are at least close to where they want to be, while the data from previous sections highlights where **continued investment and improvement** are likely to matter most.

Strengthening **security and compliance**, reducing operational complexity through **automation**, delivering consistently **strong performance**, and clearly **communicating value** in an increasingly competitive landscape will be crucial in 2026.

Methodology & Sample

The Web Hosting Trends Report 2026 is based on a global online survey of 446 hosting providers. Survey responses were collected between October 20, 2025 and December 2, 2025, using online forms published by CloudLinux and WebPros.

Who responded

The survey primarily reached people who are directly responsible for hosting strategy, operations, and product decisions. 58% of respondents identified themselves as business owners or presidents and C-level executives. They represent a substantial portion of the respondents, demonstrating strong participation from decision-makers with overall responsibility for the hosting business.

Alongside them, there is a significant representation of system administrators and engineers (18%), who are closest to the day-to-day operational realities of running hosting infrastructure. They were joined by technical leaders, engineering managers, and product/operations managers (21%), who sit at the intersection of technology and business strategy.

This mix means the survey reflects both strategic viewpoints (owners, C-levels) and hands-on operational perspectives (sysadmins, engineers, technical leads).

Methodology & Sample

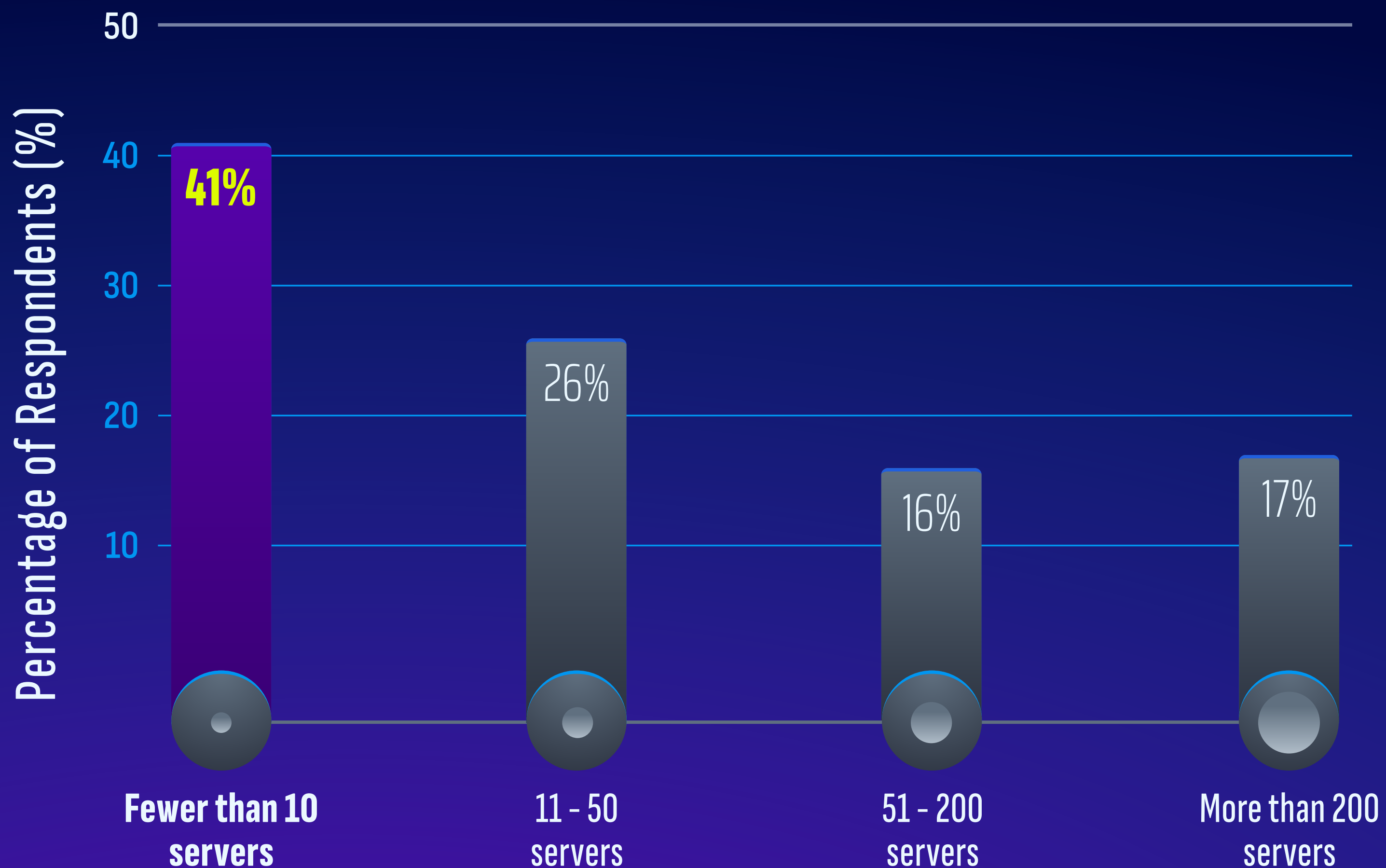
Company profiles by server fleet size

To better understand how certain answers vary with scale, respondents were asked how many servers they manage. For analysis purposes, responses are grouped into **four fleet-size bands** based on the number of servers managed. These bands range from companies with only a handful of servers to providers managing hundreds or more.

The distribution shows a healthy mix across all size ranges.

This spread allows us to compare how priorities, challenges, and technology choices differ between smaller and larger fleets.

What is the approximate size of your server fleet?



Methodology & Sample

Geographic distribution

Respondents from **all around the world** participated, giving the survey a broad international perspective.

Most responses came from **Europe** and **North America**. Together, these regions account for roughly two-thirds of the sample. In addition, there was solid representation from **Asia-Pacific, Africa & the Middle East**, and **Latin America** as well.

This mix reflects the global nature of the hosting industry. The results provide a unique insight into how hosting providers in all parts of the world think about growth, security, automation, customer expectations, and the global web hosting trends of 2026.

Built for the challenges ahead

The tools hosting providers trust to deliver performance, security, and control at scale.

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360° Monitoring

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AccelerateWP

MAX Cache

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IMUNIFY PATCH

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