4A's Website Strategy:

Interview Report

Purpose

To gain a firmer grasp on what needs to be achieved as part of the 4A's website redesign project, VML conducted a series of interviews with both internal stakeholders and individuals from member agencies. A web survey was also issued to gain additional insight into current user behavior around the 4A's website.

The intention of this report is to explore the results of the survey in greater depth than they might have been in a typical web strategy document. Unlike qualitative research findings, this report *has* been prepared with certain views around how the new 4A's website and digital properties should function.

What you will see:

- Common Themes

- Articulation of priorities & issues

- Audience Insights & implications

What you will not see:

- Commentary on every area of 4A's service

- List of required site features/functionality

- Translation of insights to site recommendations

Methodology: 4A's Stakeholders

- **Internal Stakeholder Interviews**

12 internal stakeholders from the 4A's were interviewed in person, on a 1-on-1 basis, over the course of two months. These interviews were largely guided by a set of questions that were prepared beforehand.

The stakeholders represented a broad mix of the 4A's teams and executive management, and included:

- Adam Prus, EVP 4A's Benefits
- Alison Fahey, CMO
- Bill Tucker, EVP Media
- Carl Desir, Manager, Diversity Programs
- Jules Shapiro, Digital Content Manager
- Laura Bartlett, CFO/COO

- Marsha Appel, SVP Research Services
- Mollie Rosen, EVP Agency Relations & Membership
- Nancy Hill, CEO
- Singleton Beato, SVP Diversity & Inclusion

- Tom Finneran, EVP Agency Management Services
- Troy Starwalt, Events & Programs Manager

Methodology: Agency Interviews

- **Agency/Member Interviews**

12 1-on-1 interviews were also conducted with individuals from across five 4A's member agencies. These were non-structured conversations that were loosely guided around the following topics:

- General perception of the 4A's and its offerings
- Overall experiences using 4A's information and resources
- Experience with the main or any other 4A's website and the functionality provided
- Exploration of digital tools & sources related to work

Members Interviewed:

- Brandon Cooke, Global Dir., New Business, McGarry Bowen
- Daniel Korn, Chief of Staff, McGarry Bowen
- Shoshanna Winter, Exec. Planning Dir., McGarry Bowen
- Tai Kuo, Assoc. Dir. Digital Production, BSSP

- Virginia Lu, Digital Strategist, BSSP
- Brian Brown, Creative Director, Sapient Nitro
- Bradley Weiss, Information Architect, Sapient Nitro,
- Kevin McGovern, Dir. Channel Marketing Strategy, Sapient Nitro

- Sam Meers, Founder & CEO, Meers Advertising
- David Atlis, Exec. Creative Director, Meers Advertising
- Aubrey Ammon, Channel Manager, Meers Advertising
- Kristi Veitch, Managing Director HR, VML

Methodology: Web Survey

- **Web Survey**

A web survey was designed using the conversation-based member interviews as a guide. The intent of the survey was to ascertain whether insights gained from the qualitative interviews could be applied towards a wider audience of 4A's members. It was sent to a 4A's listserv via email, consisted of 25 questions, and was live for 10 business days.

Ultimately the survey received 242 responses from members across a spectrum of disciplines, and was considered a successful exercise that not only helped support qualitative interview findings, but also highlighted behavior patterns that will be used to frame the 4A's digital strategy.

Contents

1.0 | Common Themes

Overview

Over the course of the interviews, there were several themes and ideas that surfaced repeatedly. These themes were not only shared between both internal stakeholders & members, but also reflected the current state of the 4A's and addresses the key issues that the organization must confront over the next few years in order to become a leading industry resource.

4A's: In need of a brand refresh

The 4A's is a known and established brand for most in the advertising industry. But what comes with being established is being considered outdated and out of touch with the industry today.

Over the years it's become...more of the digital stuff has been rolled into it, but I **still think of it as a traditional, 'been around since the beginning of advertising' kind of organization...more rooted in the David Ogilvys than the Joshua Davises"** *-Brian Brown, Creative Dir., Sapient Nitro*

"I talked to someone who said...'**The 4A's is a dated organization, you guys don't have anything to help me with what I do'.** ...And **because the agencies themselves are so advanced, they think that –it's cute- that 'we don't need it'"** *-Marsha Appel, Research, 4A's*

"Old. ...4A's, you know, **there's good stuff there**, ...but it's stuff that would be passed on to me, **it's not something I would seek out myself"** *-Virginia Lu, Digital Strategist, BSSP*

aaaa.org: Suffering from Trickle-Down perception

Because of its older look and feel, this perception of the 4A's as established but out-of-touch is perpetuated by the website itself. In particular, members were put off by the difficulty of use and lack of dynamism they experienced.

"If I didn't know who the 4A's are and wanted to get to know about them [through the site], I'd be totally turned off" *-Tai Kuo, Assoc., Dir., Digital Production, BSSP*

"There's no sense of community in that website." *—Mollie Rosen, EVP Agency Relations & Membership, 4A's*

Crucially, it does not feel like a website that reflects the new & engaging sites members are building in their own lines of work:

"It's not a community site at the moment — no way. It's an archive. ...It's a dry content site — it's an archive. Maybe that's what it wants to be — an archive — but **I think of our sites...that are a much more engaging way to engage with that content.**" *-David Atlis, Executive Creative Dir., Meers*

Content confusion abounds

Those that have dug deeper acknowledged there can be good content, though this too is often out of date. These opinions are understood internally within the 4A's as well.

"I think sometimes we say, 'ok, done,' and then we forget about it for six years. And it still says 2008 on it" *-Nancy Hill, CEO, 4A's*

"A lot of it was dated. I feel like a white paper from 5 years ago is already outdated. ...**To find the research I needed wasn't the easiest process."**
-Brandon Cook, Global Business Dev., McGarry Bowen

"There's a lot of information for a client to tap into...but there not good way to filter it, so I don't know if I'll go in and find what I'm looking for" *-David Atlis, Meers*

Beyond updating content more regularly, there is also a desire to repackage it based on audience and formats.

"There are some good assets – there are some good benchmark studies, some good white papers—**but you know, they're 52 pages and they don't need to be, and they're not scalable, shareable, findable** – none of that business" *-Alison Fahey, CMO, 4A's*

Who's the 4A's really for?

Some interviewees expressed that, despite their knowledge to the contrary, the 4A's organization & site feel as though it is focused on executive management. This is part of the perception problem the 4A's knows it faces.

"I knew of [4A's] from my time at VML but it wasn't something that I as a Creative Director knew how to take advantage of necessarily. So **I perceived it as an advertising CEO type organization – more of a Sam Meers-Jon Cook networking organization**" -David Atlis, Meers

"I had to get some information from the 4A's website, and I have to be honest with you, it's completely overwhelming. ...**It's like, if I'm not a C-Suite executive, it's completely foreign from the start"** -Tai Kuo, BSSP

The goal?

"First and foremost, being seen as a valuable resource to anybody in the agency business...and I mean anybody - at your level, at Matt [Anthony]'s level. It shouldn't just be focused CEOs and CFOs, it needs to be useful for a young account person who's trying to solves a problem" -Nancy Hill, CEO, 4A's

Packaging the 4A's is a hard business

The fact that the true value of the 4A's is not being adequately communicated is known throughout the organization. However, the emphasis was placed not on growing awareness of 4A's services, but on growing an *understanding* of how the 4A's impacts members.

"If I don't know what the 4A's does, and I'm with the AAF, I'm getting the networking that I think the 4A's is going to give me. **I don't necessarily understand that the 4A's has so much more beyond that**. ...Nobody understands the full depth of what we offer" *-Mollie Rosen, 4A's*

"In a lot of cases, what we've found is...senior management is moving out; the next group comes in and they can't justify it, or they don't see the value" *-Mollie Rosen, 4A's*

"There was a perception internally that it was just because these agencies didn't know what the benefits were that we could just talk to them more frequently and more loudly, but we've since realized that actually a lot of the memberships that end in resigning...i**t's not that they don't know what we do, it's that they don't care enough"** *-Alison Fahey, 4A's*

Invested members are in on it too

"As somebody who's going to find out how [4A's] is going to benefit me on my day-to-day, I need to get past the login"
-David Atlis, Meers

"The need to more clearly articulate the value they do bring. The number of webinars they bring - just that alone, 400 webinars or whatever that is - that's exhausting! ...Are there enough agencies in their membership or who would consider their membership who realize the value that these guys bring? I don't think there are." *-Sam Meers, CEO & Founder, Meers Advertising*

Combatting Membership Loss:

Membership loss has been a growing trend that is primarily the result of:

1. Mergers & Acquisitions
2. Perceived lack of value in 4A's membership

While the former is not directly in the 4A's control, there is a shared desire to increase engagement at the individual level in order to alleviate the perception problem. Encouragingly, members themselves expressed an appetite for content that is more personalized and tailored towards their specific needs.

In order to support any personalization efforts, internal stakeholders also identified a need for better member support and tracking.

Talk to people, not agencies

"I think this idea of my 4A's…I think it needs to offer this idea of understanding the individual"
-Mollie Rosen, 4A's

"It's essential that [members] get more out of it personally, in terms of promotions, visibility within the industry or inside their own organizations"*-Bill Tucker, EVP Media Relations, 4A's*

"It needs to be personalized and focused on who you are in your agency, what kind of of agency, and what you do in your day-to-day." *-Jules Shapiro, Digital Content Manager, 4A's*

"Pushing out more content for an individual, instead of just general content — that would be beneficial" *-Aubrey Ammon, Channel Manager, Meers*

"I love the idea of being able to subscribe to a type of content. Every time a piece of content is meta-tagged with 'advertising agency', 'talent', 'retention' — I want to be notified."
-David Atlis, Meers

Pain points & hot spots

In order to improve membership retention, the 4A's needs to be able to provide support at crucial stages, or 'hot spots' throughout the membership lifecycle:

- 4A's needs to continue to regularly engage with new members after joining, depending on their usage & engagement

  "I think the thing is, with new members we do a good initial engagement and then we leave them alone, and they only get a toe-ful—they never really get their foot in the door in terms of what they can get from membership. Maybe that's another thing the website can do...things that bring you deeper and deeper and deeper into the membership" - *Mollie Rosen, 4A's*

- Insight into individual members' role, history with the 4A's, and level of access will mean Management Services & Research can engage more appropriately & efficiently.

  "When a member calls about compensation related data, I have no clue whether that member has had access to that information or not. So you ask them of course. But having greater visibility on member calls, member visits, in terms of what they're accessing, who is accessing it, is a missed opportunity. Nowhere is it more pronounced than in Agency search"
  —*Tom Finneran, EVP Agency Management Services, 4A's*

Pain points & hot spots

- 4A's needs to be able to identify early indicators of potential membership loss in order to take preventative measures

"When people say 'oh it had nothing to do with you it was a financial situation' it absolutely does, because a financial situation doesn't happen in a vacuum – it's an exact correlation against value. ...the big thing is really finding these hot spots and getting on them before [agencies] leave." *-Alison Fahey, 4A's*

- Being able to follow up with individual members could lead to stronger long-term relationships for the 4A's

"When people leave a member agency to go to a non-member agency it would be great to have some sort of way of keeping track of them or following up with them, so we can say, 'hey, we missed you being able to join us for x, y, or z, let us know if you'd like to have a conversation with your agency about becoming a member'" *-Mollie Rosen, 4A's*

Does it ladder up?

Collectively, these common themes reflect the major issues already outlined in the 4A's marketing strategy, and translate to high-priority goals that the website strategy needs to address.

- 39% of members are clear on the range of services the 4A's offers

  - **Grow awareness & understanding of the full range of 4A's services**

- 63% of members agree the 4A's is a valuable partner for their organization

  - **Help members & non-members understand the impact of the 4A's on their business**

- 40% of members agree the 4A's is a valuable partner for personal development

  - **Address members as individuals and get them to view the 4A's as both a professional *and* personal resource**

- 42% of members frequently use the 4A's services

  - **Engage members more regularly and at a more personalized level in order to create useful and memorable experiences**

2.0 | Audience

Survey: Demographic Breakdown

What area of focus is your agency primarily known for?

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

- Creative: 49.6%
- Digital: 12.4%
- Media: 12.0%
- Social Media: 1.7%
- PR: 0.4%
- Experiential: 2.5%
- Production Services: 2.5%
- Other (please specify): 19.0%

How large is your agency's presence globally?

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

- Huge: More than 25 offices — 17.8% (43)
- Large: 11-25 offices — 9.9% (24)
- Small: Under 3 offices — 53.7% (130)
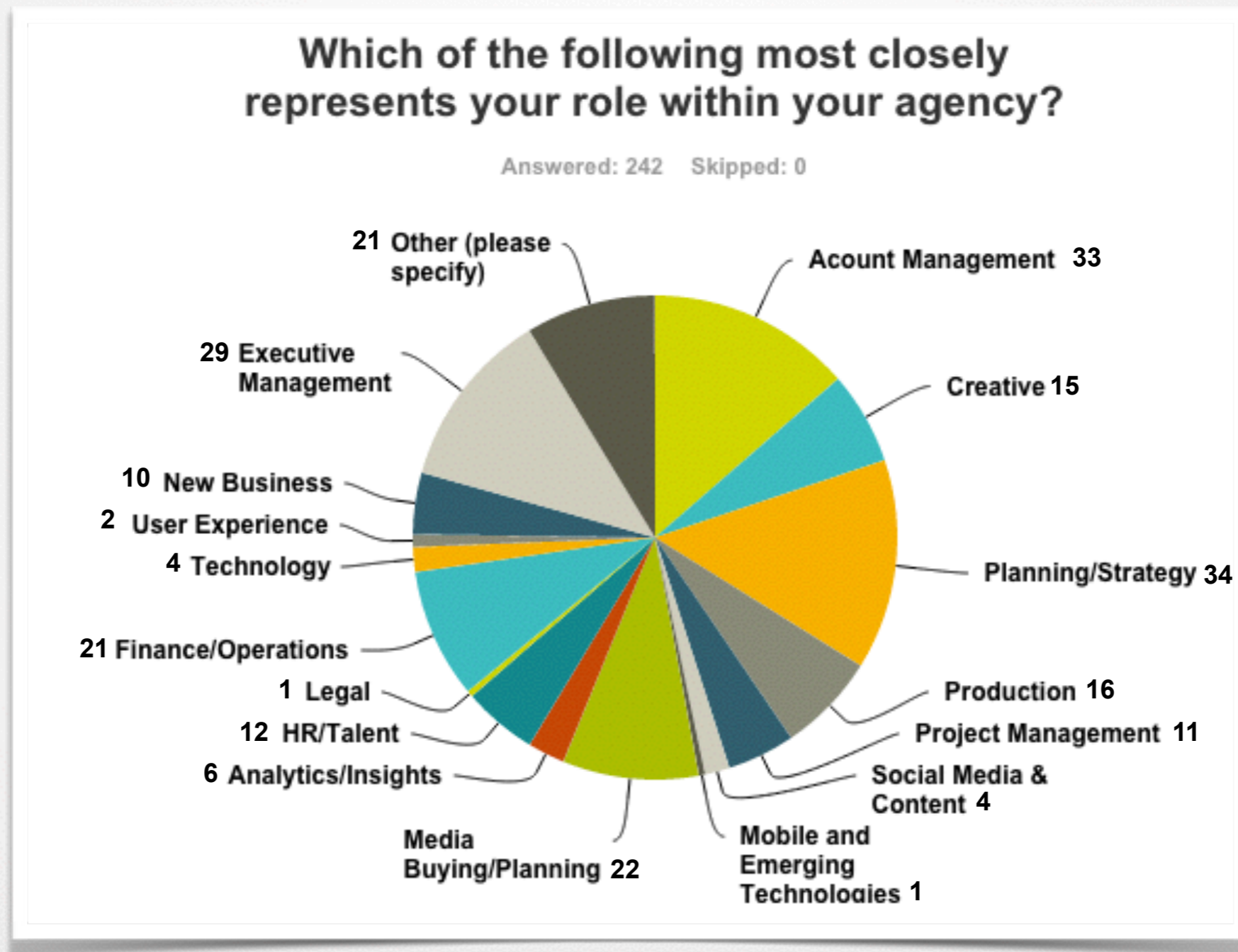- Mid-Size: 3-10 offices — 18.6% (45)

*19% of respondents, or 46 people chose "other" when categorizing their agency.

- Full Service: 23
- Integrated: 10
- Strategy: 2
- Marketing & Communications: 2
- HR: 2
- Pharma: 1
- Research: 1
- Operations & Production Services: 1
- Business Solutions: 1
- Project Management: 1
- "The HumanKind Experience": 1
- "Collaborative services across multiple offices": 1

Survey: Demographic Breakdown

Which of the following most closely represents your role within your agency?

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

- 21 Other (please specify)
- 29 Executive Management
- 10 New Business
- 2 User Experience
- 4 Technology
- 21 Finance/Operations
- 1 Legal
- 12 HR/Talent
- 6 Analytics/Insights
- Media Buying/Planning 22
- Mobile and Emerging Technologies 1
- Social Media & Content 4
- Project Management 11
- Production 16
- Planning/Strategy 34
- Creative 15
- Acount Management 33

Survey: Demographic Breakdown

How many years of work experience do you have?

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

1-3 years
9.50% (23)

4-6 years
7.02% (17)

7-10 years
11.57% (28)

10+ years
71.90% (174)

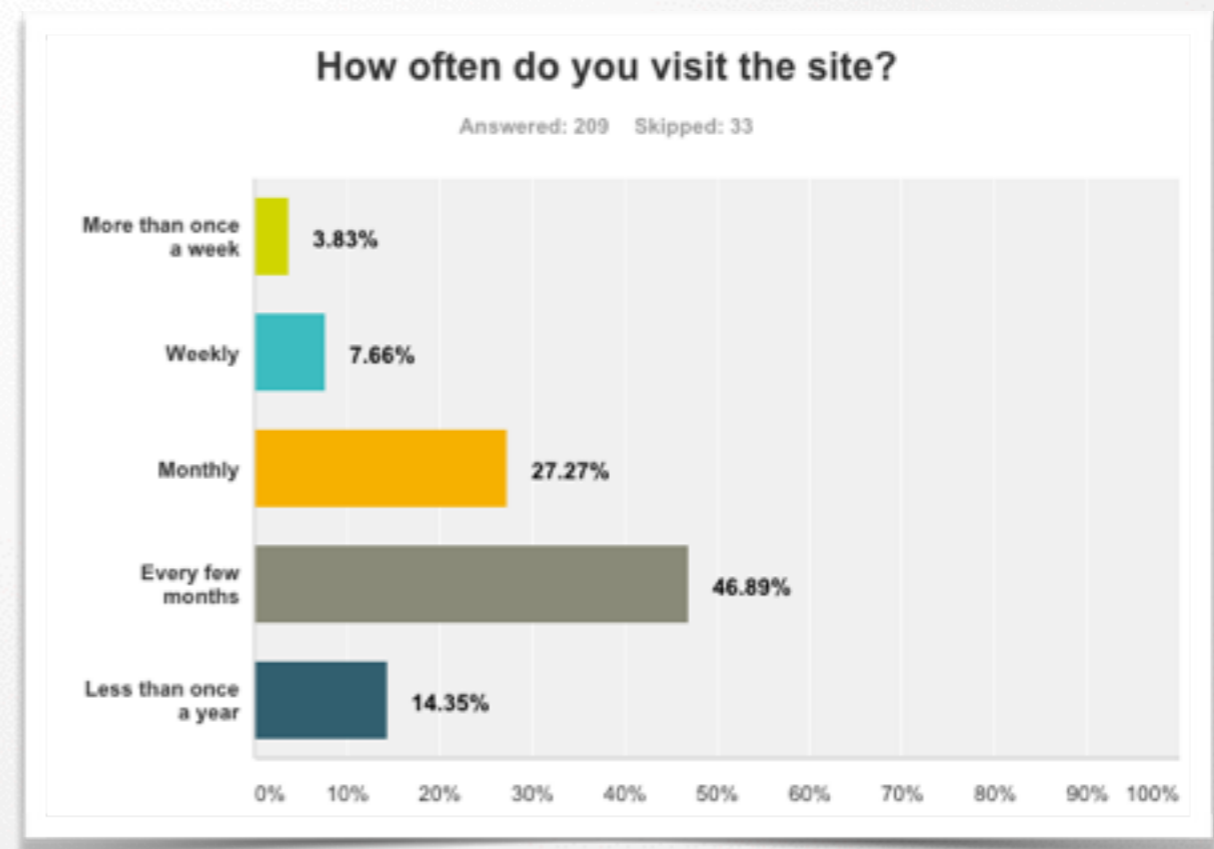- While the survey respondent skewed older than was ideal, age did not always impact digital behaviors and content preferences. Instead it was role and function had a bigger impact on these results.

- If further iterations of the survey are created, VML recommends further breaking down the '10+ years' so as to separate older executives (55+) with younger ones (35+).

Survey: Demographic Breakdown

The web survey was a successful exercise that provided significant insight into how current, active, members are engaging with the 4A's digital content.

However, it should be noted that the respondents are significantly more familiar with the 4A's & its site than most agency employees, and therefore represents only a subset of our audience.

Have you visited the 4A's website before?

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

Yes   92.15%

No   7.85%

How often do you visit the site?

Answered: 209   Skipped: 33

More than once a week   3.83%

Weekly   7.66%

Monthly   27.27%

Every few months   46.89%

Less than once a year   14.35%

2.1 | Audience Insights

Mixed Backgrounds are on the rise

The majority of survey respondents stated that most of their work experience had been in the advertising industry. However, interviewees had very mixed backgrounds indicating that many 4A's members may no longer be 'pure' advertising employees.

Mostly in the advertising industry?

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

Yes — 85.12%
No — 14.88%
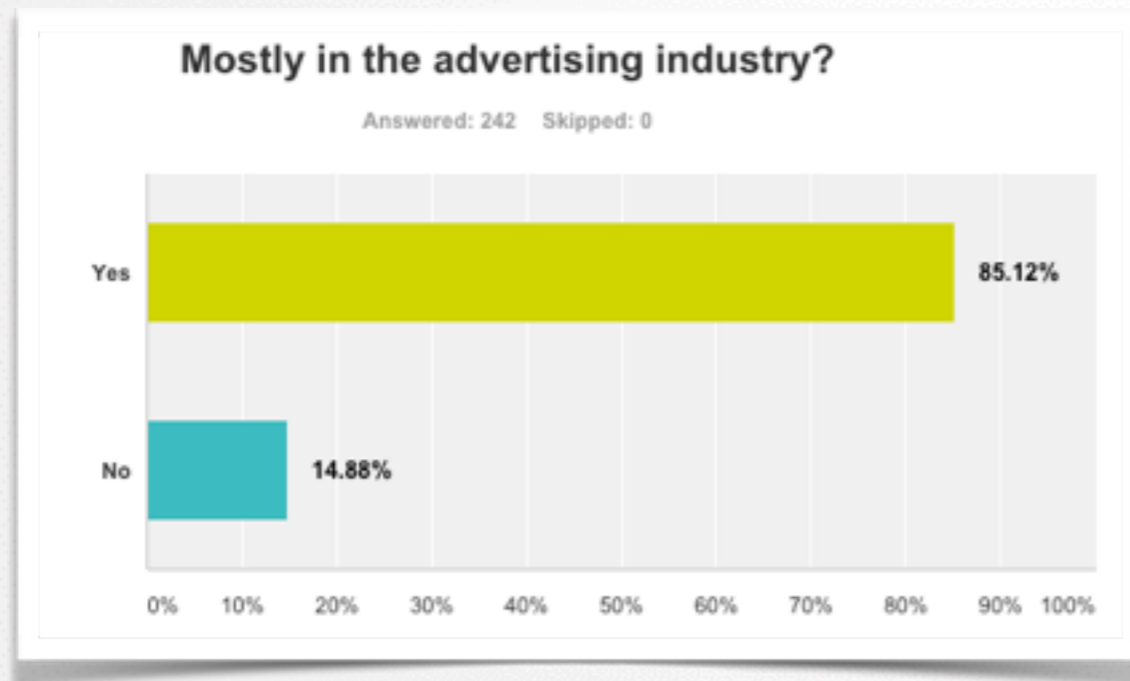
"I have a varied background...I have like, work ADD. ...**My background is in public healthcare!** So it's everywhere."
-*Tai Kuo, BSSP*

"I studied advertising for my masters - I decided on a career change. Originally I was planning looking into art direction ...but then I got into creative strategy" -*Virginia Lu, BSSP*

"I got into the industry from the tech side...and of course I was a designer too. So...**I had a lot of various talents, which kind of got me to start my own company**...ended up getting clients in New York, until I decided to move back to New York. And that's when I joined an agency here" - *Brian Brown, Sapient Nitro*

Give us content on the fringes

As a result their varied backgrounds, members have very different interests & tastes. With the introduction of niche blogs and publications, members often look at content in spaces *adjacent* to advertising, such as technology, design, and innovation.Sources cited by survey respondents included *FastCompany, NPR*, Adobe blogs, Iconoculture, and *The Verge.*

This also affects how they perceive 4A's content across webinars, conferences and events.

"There is a line between business acumen, stuff that's going to help you be sharper in conversation with your clients, which 4A's is really good at, and then **there are the things that inspire you, and point you in new directions...things that make you thing a little bit differently.** And as a planner I think we tend to gravitate towards the second bucket...but **all of these conferences and seminars...it's all often not a lot of stuff that's new or surprising"**
-Virginia Lu, BSSP

"No, [4A's conferences and events] aren't really on my radar. **Part of that is a product of where I came from. I grew into advertising.** ...And if I had a set budget to go to conferences, I don't know that the 4A's would be the first one I'd pick. ...My perception of it is great leaders there, great content...[but] I**'d lean towards either a tech innovation — more specifically about creative or technology, less about advertising"** *-Brian Brown, Sapient Nitro*

4A's: A Familiar Enigma

While most survey & interview respondents said they have known about the 4A's for the better part of their career, few knew what the organization offers - *even long time committee members.*

How many years have you known about the 4A's?

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0
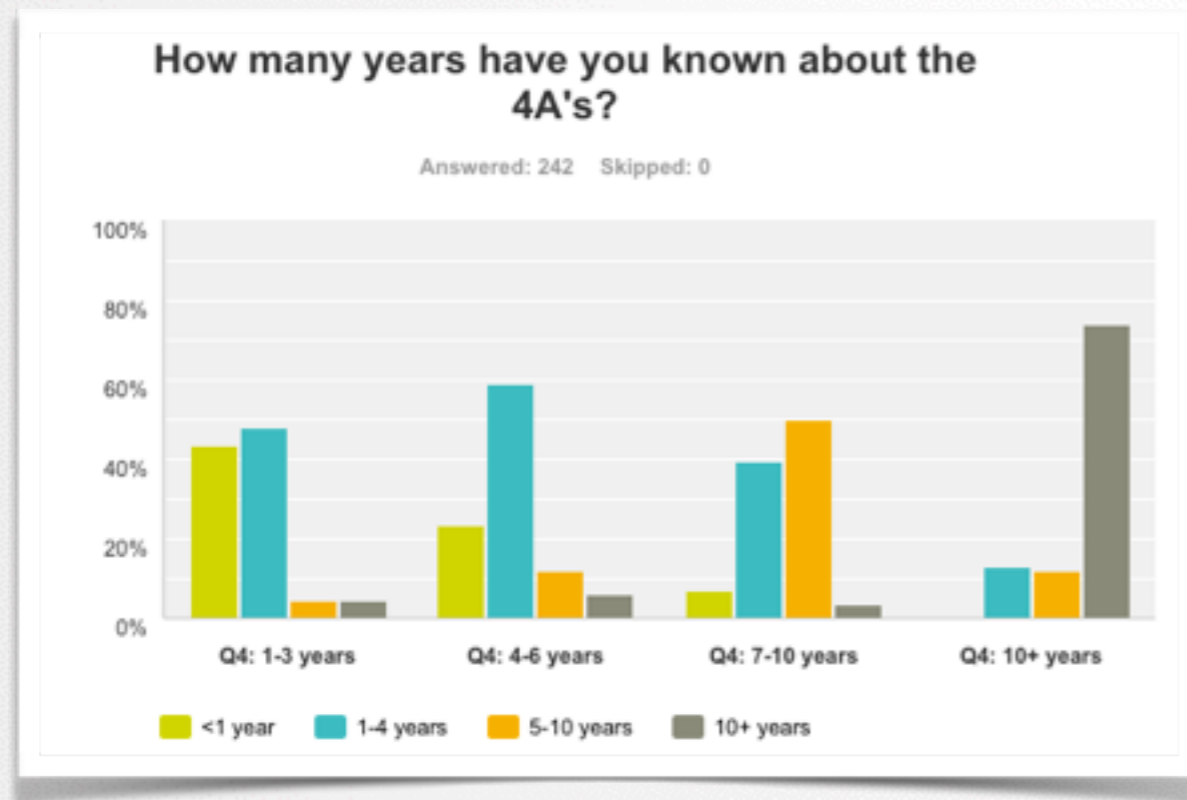
"I first heard of the 4A's when I was at Euro RSCG -I was an AAE, sort of starting out my advertising career. ...So, 4A's uh, they as I understand it provide resources for agencies. What resources exactly I can't tell you"
-Daniel Korn, Chief of Staff, McGarry Bowen

"I know enough to know they're an industry leader, I know they do a lot of training and everything, but I don't have as broad an awareness for what they do for other groups"
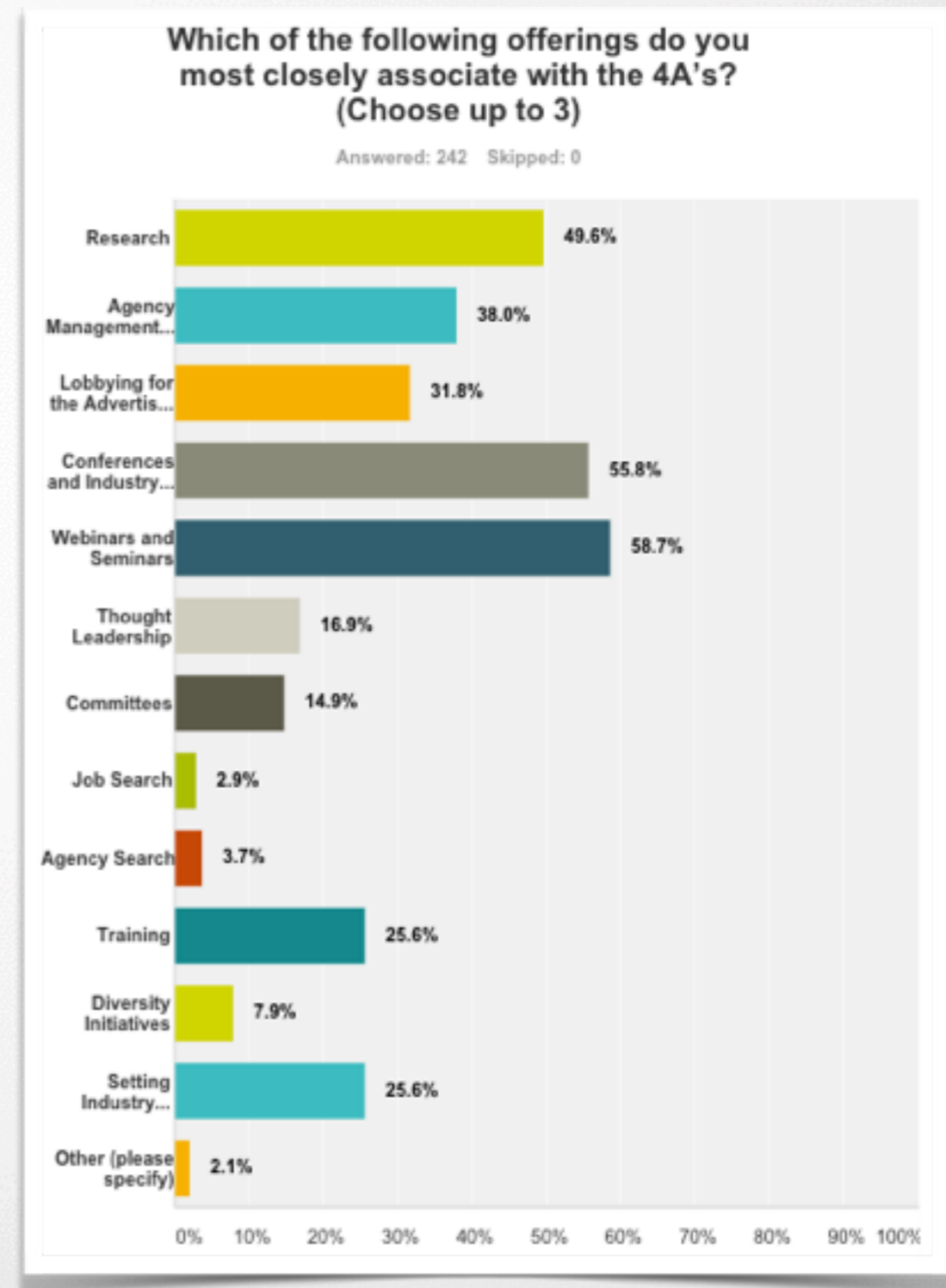- Kristi Veitch, Managing Dir. HR, VML

"My first job in advertising was in 1992...and I heard about [the 4A's] then; it was my first advertising agency. ...I have a sense that they are the established brand in the space...[but] I don't have a real understanding of the role that they play today"
-Shoshanna Winter, Executive Planning Dir., McGarry Bowen

But what do they *do*?

- Across function and work experience, the three services most closely associated with the 4A's are **Research, Conferences & Industry Events, and Webinars & Seminars.**

- Job Search & Agency Search were consistently the least familiar, suggesting there may be room to promote these services more prominently.

- However, beyond these six, associations with the 4A's varied by role within the agency. This is encouraging, as it gives the 4A's credence to tailor and filter digital content to specific job functions.

Which of the following offerings do you most closely associate with the 4A's? (Choose up to 3)

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

Offering	Percentage
Research	49.6%
Agency Management...	38.0%
Lobbying for the Advertis...	31.8%
Conferences and Industry...	55.8%
Webinars and Seminars	58.7%
Thought Leadership	16.9%
Committees	14.9%
Job Search	2.9%
Agency Search	3.7%
Training	25.6%
Diversity Initiatives	7.9%
Setting Industry...	25.6%
Other (please specify)	2.1%

Exploring Research

Across interviews and the web survey, members had a lot of feedback around one of the 4A's most popular services: research.

- Finding what they are looking for is cumbersome and not always guaranteed:

  "The search system is poor for finding the research. It is a cumbersome user experience and I have little understanding of how much content you actually offer. And it feels poorly organized."
  -Anonymous

- There is a need for a more sophisticated taxonomy and filtration system for research content:

  "I get into research and I might narrow it down to 'digital', and then once I get into 'digital' it's not really broken any further" *-David Atlis, Meers*

Exploring Research

- Expanded functionality within the research tool can help members & incentivize them to return

   "They have this feature called 'My Notebook', you know, I have no idea what 'My Notebook' is. I saved a few things to it and then I could never find my notebook! That was at least a way when I was browsing stuff, I could earmark it, but I couldn't find the earmarked stuff!" *-David Atlis, Meers*

- Although the Research team does not currently have the resources to provide opinions and abstracts on the data they pull, there is appetite for this from users:

   "Provide an executive summary for research/articles that are pulled. Or at least an overview so I can get through them more quickly." *-Anonymous*

   "Give an abstract – that's perfect. **I love abstracts – that would be great. That would be huge.** And if that notebook really worked, that's be great – I could save things based on abstracts, and then come back and – dive in" *-David Atlis, Meers*

Exploring Webinars

The jury is out when it comes to webinars. While interviewees admitted to liking the idea, or even the descriptions of webinars, few spoke positively of webinars they had attended - both 4A's and otherwise.

"Yeah I would absolutely do webinars...*if a topic was relevant*" -*David Atlis, Meers*

"I feel like **webinars are a shot in the dark sometimes.** I mean sometimes the content sounds amazing but when you get into it it's – not what you're really looking for. ...**It's a total mixed bag. But I think [4A's] do a good job of really focusing on who would benefit from the webinar"**
-Aubrey Ammon, Meers

"Honestly I get so many webinars and live stream requests from all these different conferences....**I don't have time to get my job done and also...watch webinars or seminars**"
-Brandon Cooke, McGarry Bowen

"I see those 4A's webinars and I see my clients in them. So I guess that's a good thing"
-Virginia Lu, BSSP

"I'll be honest with you, **I didn't find the webinars helpful, because the people who were presenting felt like professionals – professional speakers.** And it wasn't someone that had a lot of experience...in the industry. Then it becomes a little preachy." -*Tai Kuo, BSSP*

Exploring Conferences

Members are also very opinionated when it comes to conferences. While they differed in their reasoning, several interviewees expressed frustration with the state of advertising industry conferences today. For the rest, conferences were not memorable experiences, but blurred together.
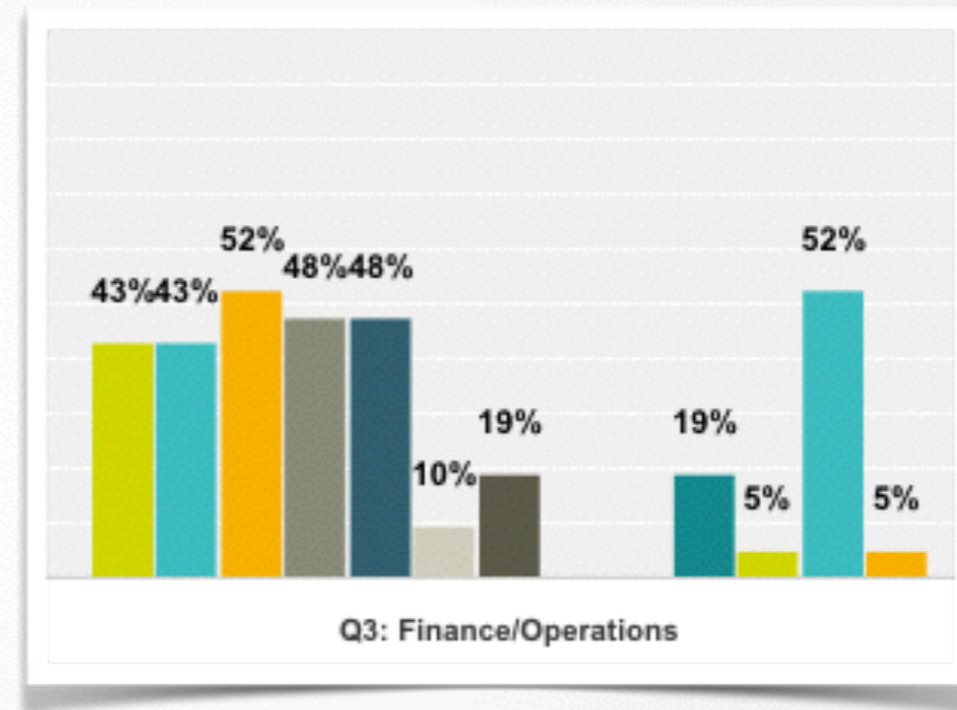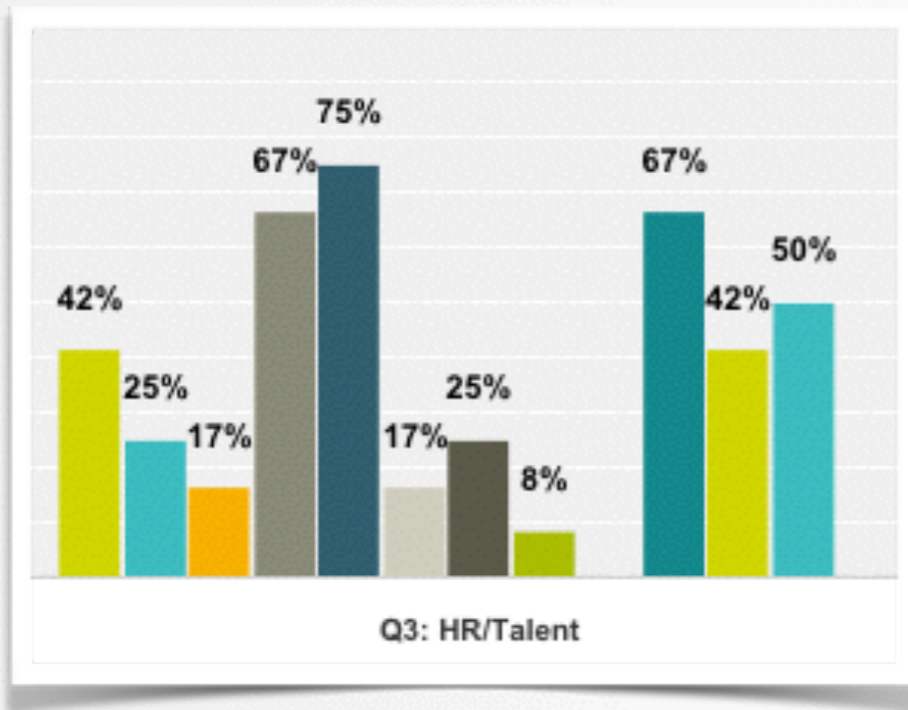
"If I think about Advertising Week, and I don't think the 4A's is associated with that, one of my criticisms is that i**t's...very industry centric and...insular.** ...I also think of the 4A's in a similar conference to Advertising Week" *-Daniel Korn, McGarry Bowen*

"We should put a difficulty level [on conferences]. So like, if you work at a traditional agency and don't know much about digital...come to this conference. And the other one would be, digital is all you do, we're not going to talk lowest common denominator, we're going to go into really difficult stuff. That would be interesting. **Because the conferences I've been to feel like they're for people who are just trying to figure out digital"** *-Tai Kuo, BSSP*
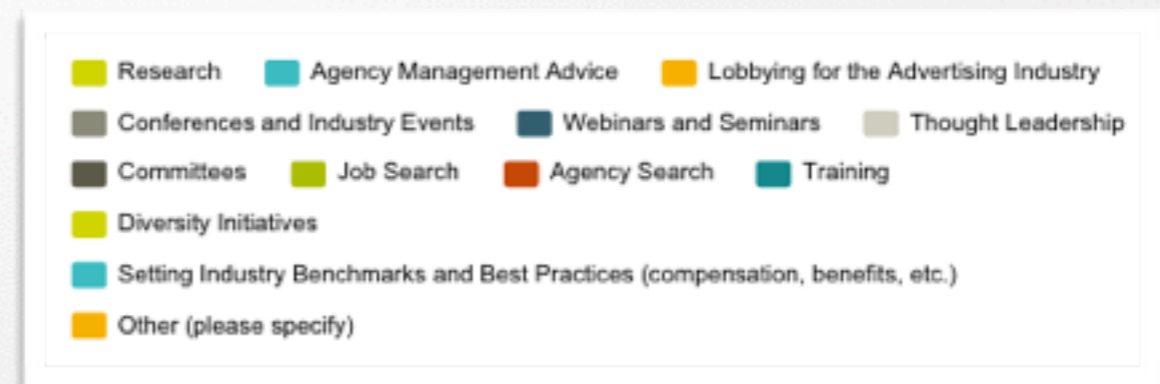
"I think the big events [are]: SXSW which used to be great but is now too overwrought and, a shit show; CES...Mobile World Congress, it's in Barcelona it's up and coming; Cannes...and the ANA—I think probably better than the content at Cannes—is the other one" *-Daniel Korn, McGarry Bowen*

Room for Role-based content

Q3: HR/Talent

75%
67%
67%
42%
50%
42%
25%
25%
17%
17%
8%

Q3: Finance/Operations

52%
48% 48%
52%
43% 43%
19%
19%
10%
5%
5%

- HR/Talent employees are more familiar with training & diversity initiatives, as well as operations-based content like benchmarks & best practices.

- Those who work in Finance were the most familiar with the 4A's lobbying work, as well as benchmarks and agency management.

Research   Agency Management Advice   Lobbying for the Advertising Industry
Conferences and Industry Events   Webinars and Seminars   Thought Leadership
Committees   Job Search   Agency Search   Training
Diversity Initiatives
Setting Industry Benchmarks and Best Practices (compensation, benefits, etc.)
Other (please specify)

Room for Role-based content

Q3: Executive Management

Q3: New Business

Research
Agency Management Advice
Lobbying for the Advertising Industry
Conferences and Industry Events
Webinars and Seminars
Thought Leadership
Committees
Job Search
Agency Search
Training
Diversity Initiatives
Setting Industry Benchmarks and Best Practices (compensation, benefits, etc.)
Other (please specify)

- New Business & Executive management were the two groups that had some knowledge of most 4A's function.

- At the same time, they most strongly relate the 4A's to what they use in their day-to-day:
  - Executive Management: Agency Management Advice, Industry Benchmarks
  - New Business: Research, Thought Leadership, Agency Search, Best Practices

Who's got the best news?

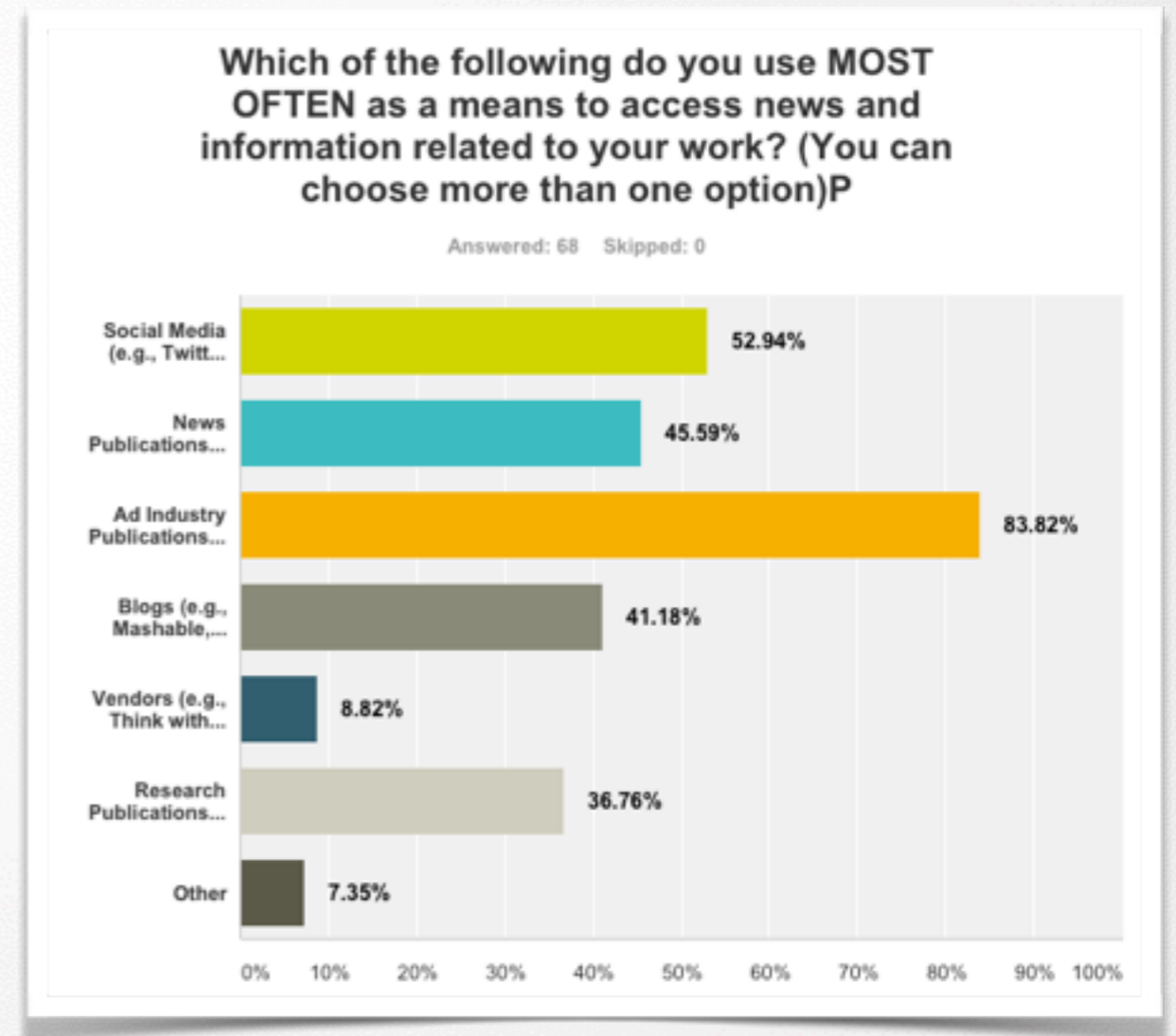- Despite many interviewees & respondents expressing an interest in topics outside of advertising, ad industry publications are still the go-to sources to catch up on news work related trends.

- Social media and news publications were also popular choices. This pattern did not vary significantly between age groups or roles.

- Predictably, blogs were more popular amongst the younger age groups, UX, and tech roles, while research publications were most popular amongst those that work in Analytics & Insights.

Which of the following do you use MOST OFTEN as a means to access news and information related to your work? (You can choose more than one option)P

Answered: 68   Skipped: 0

Source	%
Social Media (e.g., Twitt…	52.94%
News Publications…	45.59%
Ad Industry Publications…	83.82%
Blogs (e.g., Mashable,…	41.18%
Vendors (e.g., Think with…	8.82%
Research Publications…	36.76%
Other	7.35%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

Who's got the best news?

- Survey respondents were very clear about where they went to get their news.

- At the same time, interviewees claimed that for them, content trumped 'branding'. So much so, that the source of the content didn't really matter.

"**I don't pay attention to where the information's coming from** – if I see something I want to follow up on then I dig into it a little bit more." *-Kristi Veitch, VML*

"It's like whatever's good that day. So for Twitter...there are a lot of design blogs I end up on, like *Smashing Magazine, Computer Art*...i**t's almost as if the brands don't matter as much as the content. So I'll be telling someone about it later and be like, 'hey, I read this great article on... doesn't matter. Twitter.'**" *-Brian Brown, Sapient Nitro*

The Push-Pull of content

How do you prefer to receive updates or alerts related to your job, craft or industry? (You can choose more than one option)

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

Email	86.78%
Social Media Feeds (on desktop)	26.03%
Social Media Mobile Apps	14.88%
Dedicated/Specialized Mobile Apps (e.g., AdA...)	8.26%
Other (please specify)	4.13%

- Respondents overwhelmingly preferred email as a method of receiving content, and interviewees further emphasized a desire to have content pushed out to them.

- At the same time, our intention is to turn the 4A's website into a destination for information and resources.

- It's likely that we will have to strike a balance between pushing content out and incentivizing members to visit the website themselves.
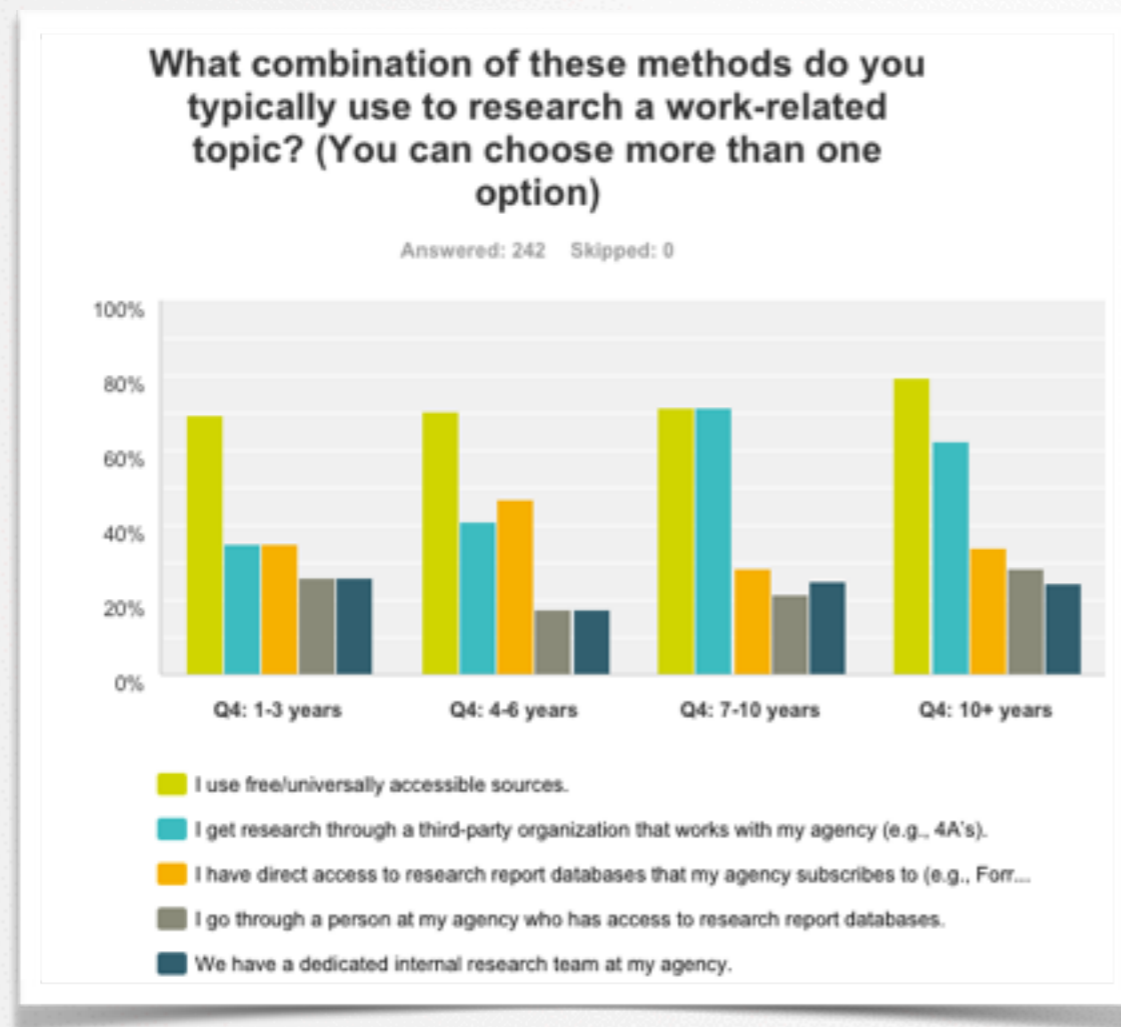
"I**t would be great if** they came to the website, **they came to us, so we don't have to pile promotions on them all day long** [via email]." *-Alison Fahey, 4A's*

"[Subscribing] is cool though, because then it makes the site easier to use - **it's content coming to me; [the site's] just a source."** *-David Atlis, Meers*

"I think you know, a social media forum, it's only as good as you're gonna use it, and **ultimately we're all so busy...I'm part of LinkedIn groups where I let the data come to me** and if something's interesting I might respond, but **[adding] one more thing I feel like I have to go to – I don't know if I'd use it**" *-Kristi Veitch, VML*
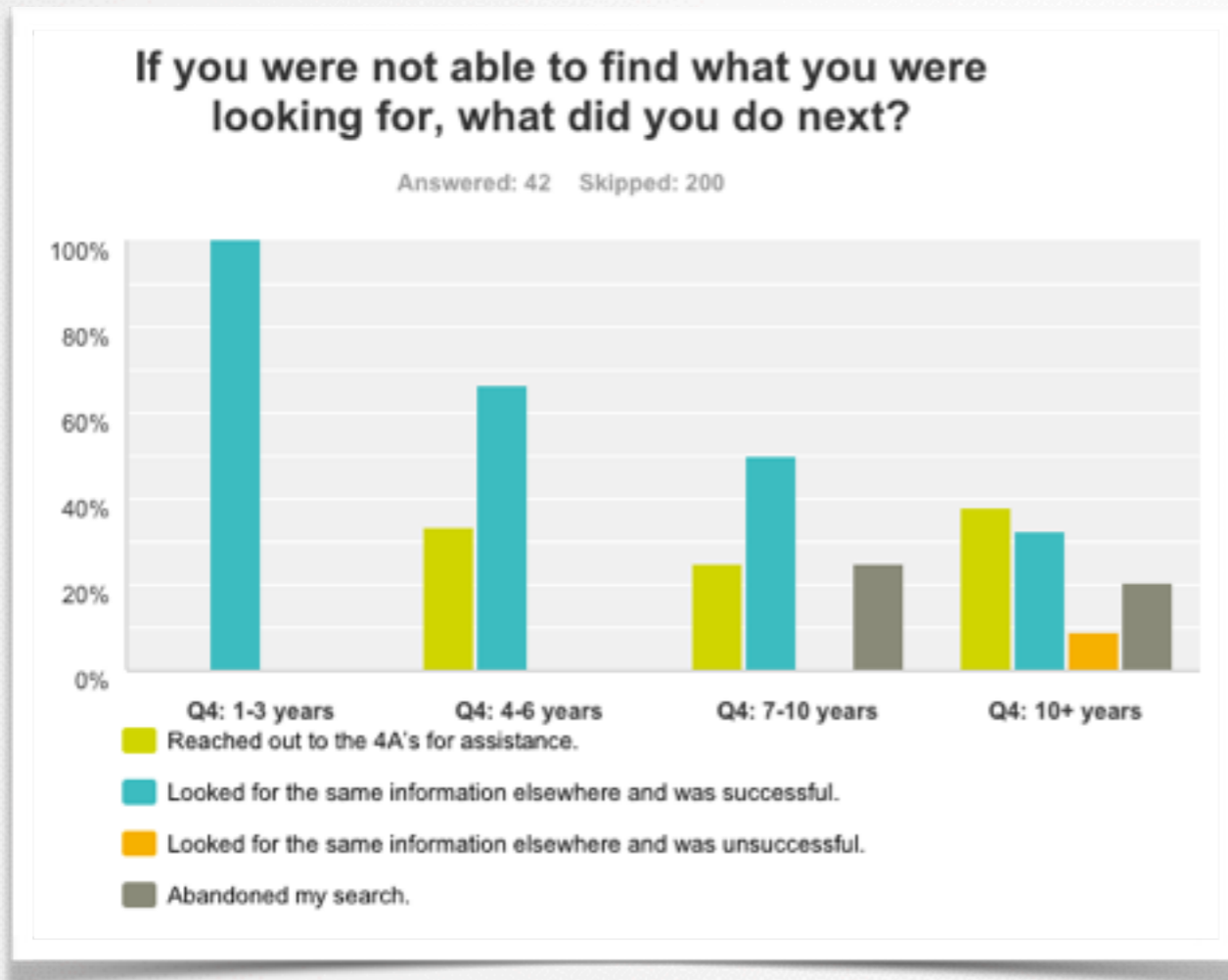
A self-sufficient audience

What combination of these methods do you typically use to research a work-related topic? (You can choose more than one option)

Answered: 242   Skipped: 0

- I use free/universally accessible sources.
- I get research through a third-party organization that works with my agency (e.g., 4A's).
- I have direct access to research report databases that my agency subscribes to (e.g., Forr...
- I go through a person at my agency who has access to research report databases.
- We have a dedicated internal research team at my agency.

- Everybody uses universally accessible research sources. But younger people lean towards them more heavily than their older counterparts.

- The younger they are, the less likely they are to reach out for help.

- Older and more senior people are more comfortable outsourcing this task to someone like the 4A's.

- This reflects the experiences some of the 4A's research team have already noticed.

"The call volume is down but the email volume is up. ...I'll say 'here's the short answer to your question but we really need to talk about this. Please give me a call or where can I call you. They don't even bother; **they'll take the short answer because people don't want the phone anymore."**
-Tom Finneran, 4A's

Millennials don't need help

If you were not able to find what you were looking for, what did you do next?

Answered: 42   Skipped: 200

Legend:
- Reached out to the 4A's for assistance.
- Looked for the same information elsewhere and was successful.
- Looked for the same information elsewhere and was unsuccessful.
- Abandoned my search.

X-axis labels: Q4: 1-3 years, Q4: 4-6 years, Q4: 7-10 years, Q4: 10+ years

- The self-sufficiency trend is even more pronounced when we asked respondents about their 4A's website experience.

- From subset of people* who could not find what they were looking for on the 4A's site, the younger respondents overwhelmingly were able to look elsewhere and find what they needed. Only the more senior people reached out for assistance.

- This means that when it comes to research, the 4A's has a high potential to lose its younger base of members, and discoverability is *absolutely crucial.*

*22.7%, or around 1 in 5 respondents, said they were not able to find what they were looking for on the 4A's website.
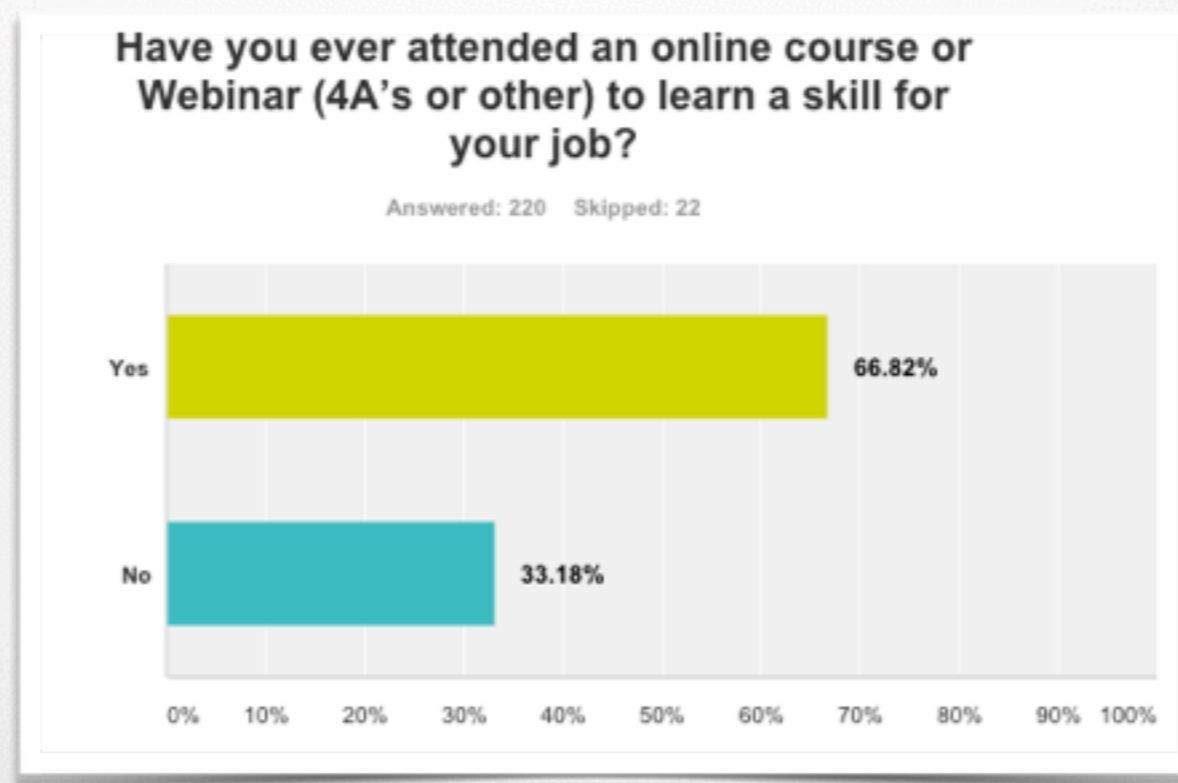
Webinars aren't for everyone

Despite the ubiquity of webinars both within and outside of the advertising industry, a third of respondents had never attended an online webinar or course before.

What's more, when those who *had* attended one were asked to name the most memorable ones, 37% **said that they either could not remember or that none had ever left a lasting impression.**

There is obviously a gap in understanding between those that organize webinars and the intended audience that is not only specific to the 4A's.

Have you ever attended an online course or Webinar (4A's or other) to learn a skill for your job?

Answered: 220   Skipped: 22
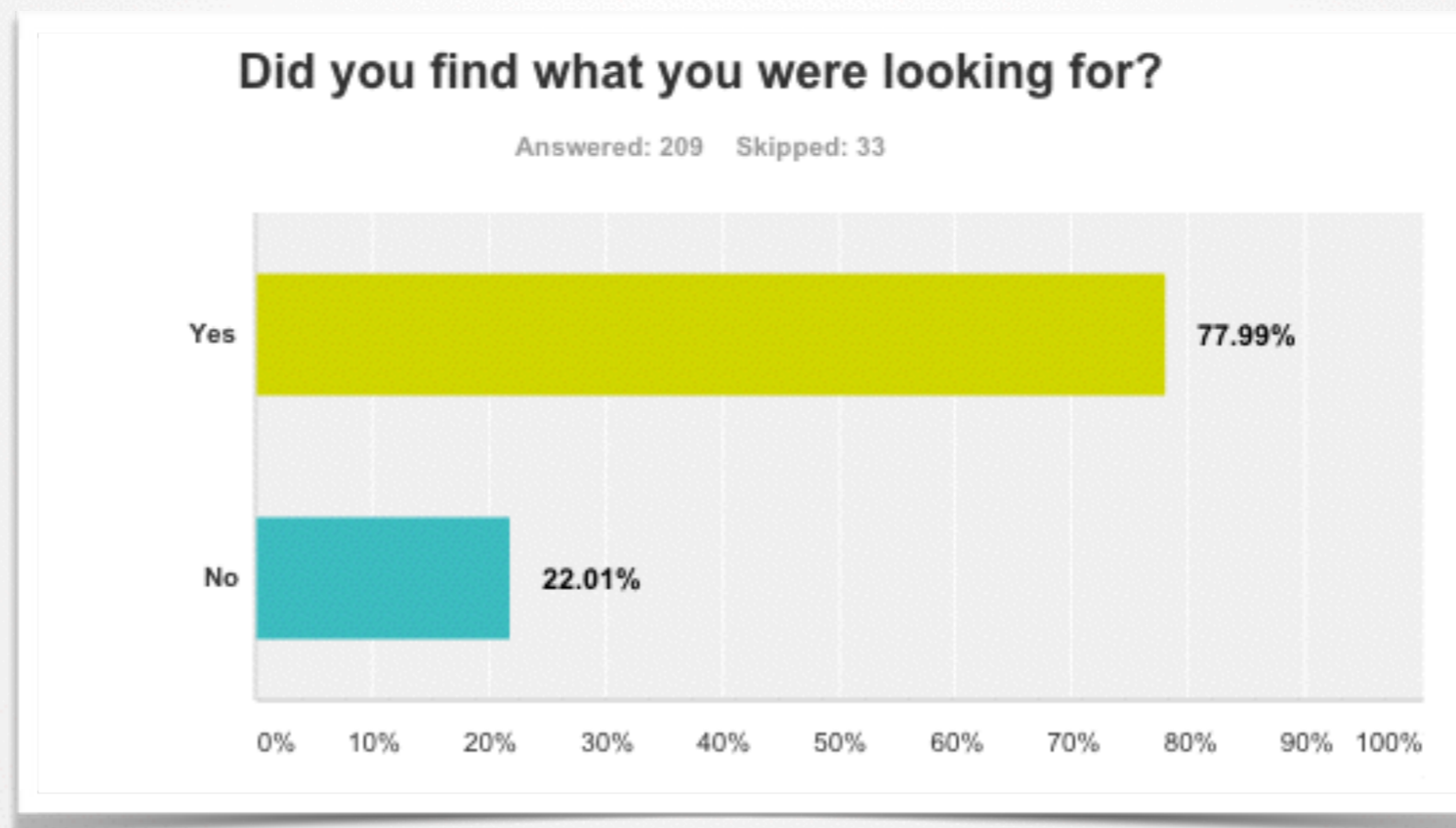
2.2 | Website & App

4A's.org: What's drawing attention?

Survey respondents were asked what sections of aaaa.org they visit most frequently (left) and which pages they visited last (right). Currently, most member activity is concentrated to the Research, Evens, and Seminars sections, correlating to what they associate most closely with the 4A's.
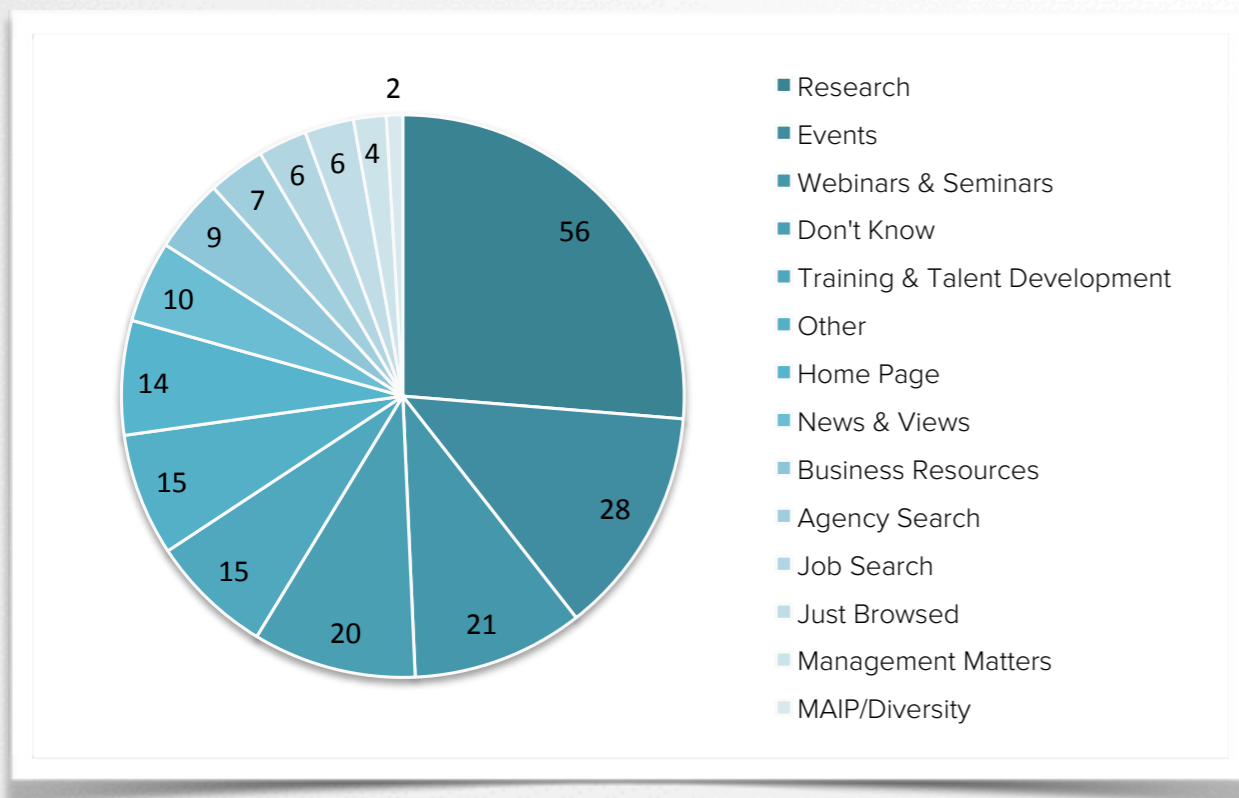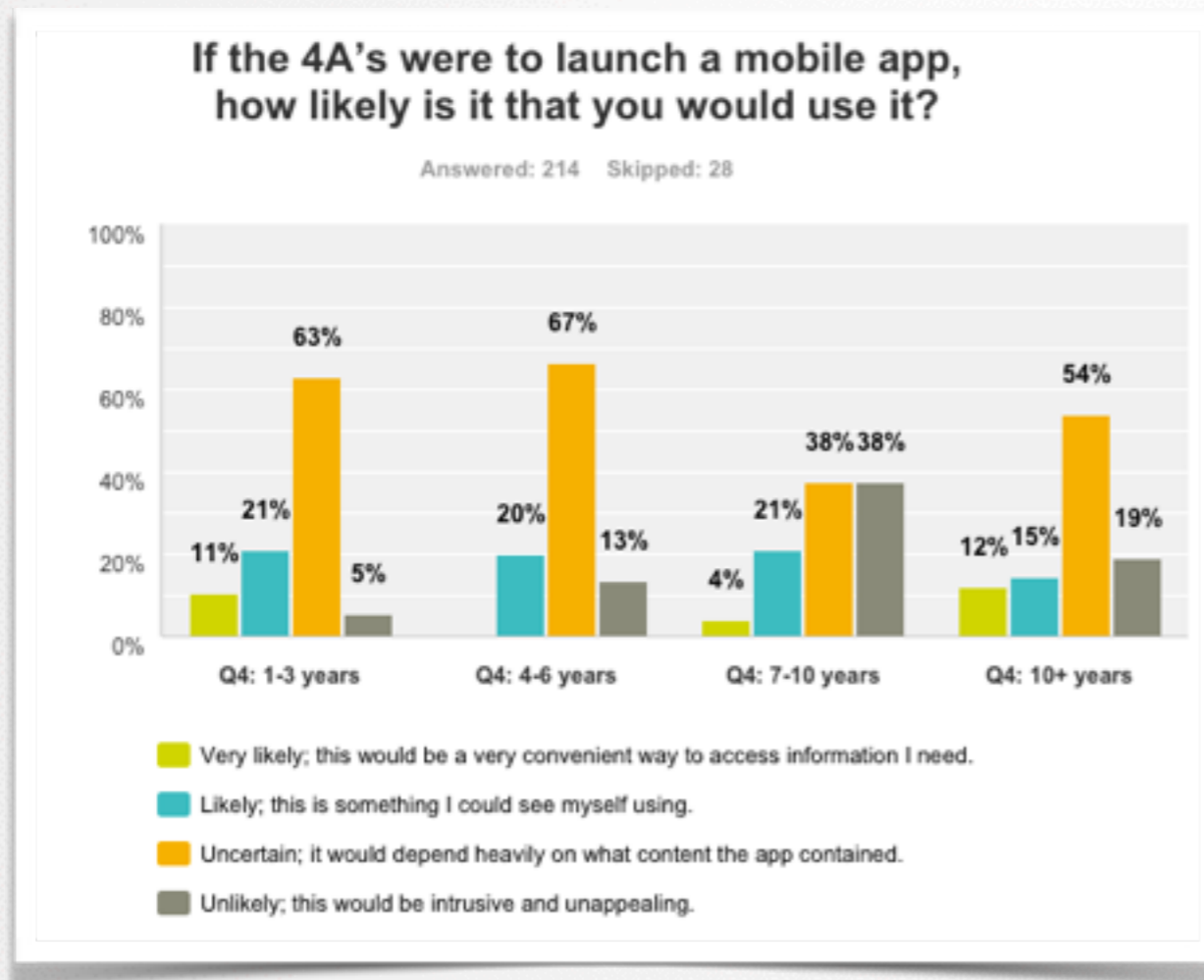
But they can't find what they need

- Of the 209 respondents who told use whether they were able to find what they were looking for on the 4A's website, over 1 in 5 said 'no'.
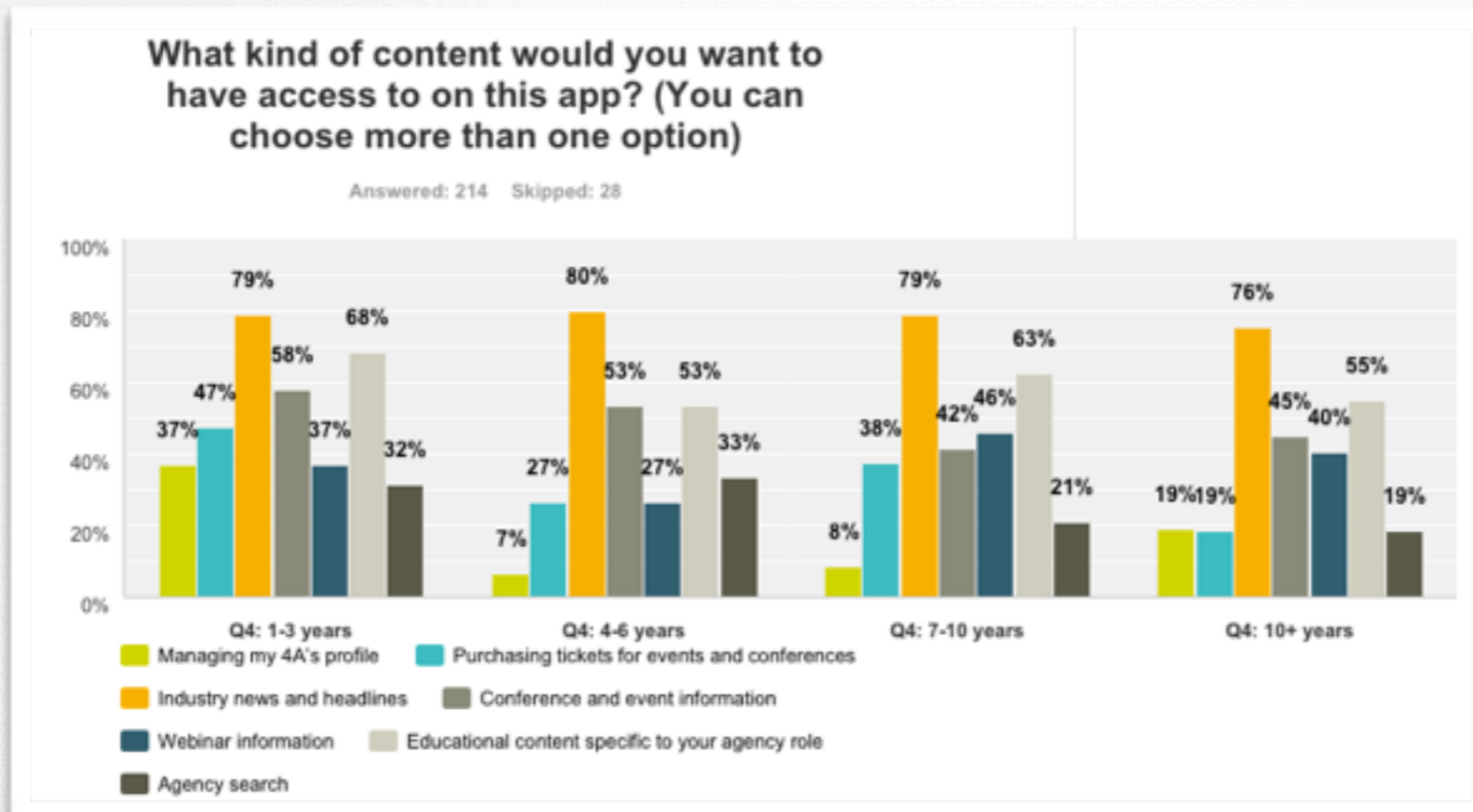
Did you find what you were looking for?

Answered: 209   Skipped: 33

Yes	77.99%
No	22.01%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

The younger, the appier

If the 4A's were to launch a mobile app, how likely is it that you would use it?

Answered: 214   Skipped: 28

- It was expected that when asked about a *hypothetical* app, most users would be skeptical and err on the side of caution. With that in mind, the response from survey respondents was encouraging.

- Overall, 16% said they were likely to use it with another 10% saying they were very likely to use it.

- Though there was no definitive trend that indicated that only millennials were interested in apps, the 'youngest' respondents showed themselves to be more amenable to the idea of an app than others.

Keep me updated, and keep it relevant

- There is a clear appetite for news & trend focused content, as well as more role-based content

- Younger respondents who are likely to be more comfortable with apps that use personal data also expressed an interest in being able to maintain their 4A's profile.

- The same group are also evidently comfortable with m-commerce and the idea of purchasing tickets to 4A's conferences, events, and webinars via mobile.

What kind of content would you want to have access to on this app? (You can choose more than one option)

Answered: 214   Skipped: 28

"[I'd want to see] what's trending at that time... almost like a news network, from a 4A's standpoint" -Aubrey Ammon, Meers

2.3 | Strengths & Opportunities

4A's Standouts

While there is a big opportunity to grow & evolve the 4A's web presence, there are areas where members know the 4A's already excels. These should also be kept in mind, praised, and leveraged on the future website.

- **Committees:**

  "The thing I like about the 4A's and the HR folks I meet though there is that they're are from a different holding company or are independent. And to find out that ultimately the same pain points still exist even though – so it's not just a WPP thing, it's an industry thing" *-Kristi Veitch, VML*

  "If you're problem solving vs. a pissing content – once it's problem solving, you have an agenda... people were so candid. ...It becomes a safe place to [vent]. ...And that's what makes it different from attending a 4A's strategy conference or a showcase" *-Tai Kuo, BSSP*

- **Benchmarks & Best Practices:**

  "I was brought into rebuild the Creative Dept. that was in turmoil. There was no structure...it was basically you're hired, and then based on your experience we'll give you this arbitrary title. ...So what I did was came in...and put salary ranges against those titles. And when I was presenting this to Sam [Meers] I said, 'these are the salary ranges based on the network; I don't know if they're competitive'. ...And he said 'well, here's this 4A's research...and I used it to validate our salary ranges and made adjustments to it. And that was pretty cool." *- David Atlis, Meers*

4A's Standouts

- **Training:**

    "All of our account folks and junior staff have to participate in a 4A's workshop. ...This is where I find the 4A's super helpful, and where I think they can excel: a lot of agencies I find do not really provide training, it's literally just 'do this'. And with the 4A's [training] you participate in a *pitch;* many juniors don't get that chance until you reach a certain level. So I think they get a dry run, and understand what's involved."
    -Tai Kuo, BSSP

    "That would be the biggest value – the training. ...Probably the research first because it's self-help, and then the training. ...Every agency craves training." *-David Atlis, Meers*

- **A Network:**

    "They introduce us to professionals who can solve our problem. So they're an intermediary, and interlocutor between the Tim Williams...of the world, and us. And that's great because I want professionals who know what they're doing."- *Sam Meers, Meers Advertising*

    "That's the beautiful thing – because we have these relationships [through the 4A'sI network], I can reach out to somebody and say, 'hey, you're not part of the WPP family, can you tell me your position on 'this'' so it doesn't have to stay within the committee" *-Kristi Veitch, VML*

Opportunities

- **Let members be the voice of the industry:**

  "There is an opportunity to build a branded platform and really drive awareness of it in a way of having some of the luminaries….getting more of the motivational, inspirational luminaries get up there and tell us what they think of the industry, l**et them be the voices of the industry.** Because unless you go to Cannes, unless you go to Advertising Week, which very few can afford passes to go anymore, there's no…**4A's should be that central campfire for the industry."** *-Brandon Cooke, McGarry Bowen*

- **Always provide an opinion, as the industry leader:**

  With Research: "Give an abstract – that's perfect. **I love abstracts – that would be great. That would be huge.**" *-David Atlis, Meers*

  In Job Search: "I don't think that there's any place to go for employees in this industry to go 'what is the best agency for 'x'?' or 'where should I go for best work-life balance?' …**There's research you can do to come to that conclusion yourself, but you'd have to go to all the right places. It'd be *very* interesting if there was a known place to go for that."** *-Virginia Lu, BSSP*

Opportunities

- **Make members smarter in the boardroom:**

  "One of the things I'm mostly worried about is not being able to nod when a client says something... we're getting to a point where clients are really smart; they grew up in digital, most of them. ...[they're] not playing catch up at all! I have this one client who's 26, and he's a director already...and he's never intimidated by new technologies, he just dives in." *-Kevin McGovern, Sapient Nitro*

- **Champion the little guys - *publicly:***

  "I was surprised when I saw the 'About 4A's' when it said that 80% of all advertising is from a 4A's agency... and then it said that 60% of that 80 were small agencies with under 10 million in revenue? So **that was really interesting, that the 4A's wasn't a big network tool, it was really used by agencies this sized. ...I think [the 4A's as] an equalizer is kinda cool.** The problem is, I don't think I ever got that until I logged in." *-David Atlis, Meers*

3.0 | Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways for the website

- **There's a lot riding on content.**
  - The perception that the 4A's is outdated is real, and members largely base this on the content - and its presentation- they have been exposed to
  - Research is the most heavily used tool, but the right content isn't always updated or findable.
  - There is a lot of appetite amongst members for news & trend focused content, both in *and* around the advertising industry.
  - Webinars are a contentious issue: members like the idea of them, but they often miss the mark in terms of content and presentation.

- **To improve the value perception and membership retention in the long-term, we will have to engage members on an individual level.**
  - Members are itching for personalized content that helps them stay smart and up-to-date—and they don't care where it comes from.
  - Tracking & being able to view members & agencies' "movements" within the industry will enable the 4A's to be more efficient.

- **There's a good amount of enthusiasm for a 4A's mobile app.**

- **Millennials want to be as autonomous as they can be; 4A's needs to enable and empower them to do so.**
  - Whether in the context of research or managing their own profile, preferences, and calendar on an app, Millennials prefer to do things on their own. Their ideal scenario is one where they don't have to interact with anyone over the phone. While this is likely to change as they take senior leadership roles, 4A's should look to hand over the controls as much as possible to retain a younger audience.