

# REBRANDING ADVERTISING

# REPORT BY IMPERO.

*Keeping Adland Future-Fit.*

*Advertising was Britian's least trusted profession last year.\* This year, the Advertising Association found that consumers feel increasingly bombarded by advertising – reporting a feeling advertising is “absolutely everywhere” and that the volume is being ratcheted up.*

# DOES ADLAND NEED A REBRAND?

Add to that a string of negative headlines about a sexist, toxic, long-hours culture and slow progress on diversity – not to mention ad fraud, brand safety and a 55% “ad-tech tax” – and the past few years don’t look too pretty for the advertising sector.

Agencies talk a good game when it comes to future-proofing their clients’ brands – but has the time come to turn the lens inwards? Does adland itself need a rebrand?

# IMPERO SURVEYED 1,500 CONSUMERS, 100 MARKETERS AND 100 ADVERTISING PRACTITIONERS

to identify the things adland needs to change – from business models, to culture, to the work it makes – to stay future-fit.

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# CONSUMERS

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# TALENT

# KEY TAKEOUTS

## Page 6-10 **CONSUMERS**

*Advertising gets a bad rap, but overall consumers think we're not so bad.*

We still add to their lives – and **we're getting better**. Making great (and funny) work will continue to be the thing that makes us a valuable contributor to their lives.

## Page 12-16 **MARKETERS**

## Page 18-21 **TALENT**

## Good, bad or ugly?

When asked if advertising is a **force for good**, the majority of consumers think the industry is a **mixed bag of good and bad**.

BUT SIGNIFICANTLY MORE PEOPLE, **40%**, SEE **ADVERTISING AS A FORCE FOR GOOD** THAN BAD.

**16%**   
See advertising as **bad**.

**40%**   
See advertising as a **force for good**.

When asked about whether advertising **adds to or detracts** from their lives:

THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE, **36%**, THINK ADVERTISING **ADDS “CREATIVITY, COLOUR, FLAVOUR AND INFORMATION TO THEIR LIVES.”**

*Overwhelmed?*

**19%** UNWELCOME  
**DISTRACTION**

19% of people think advertising feels like an unwelcome distraction

**15%** OVERWHELMED  
**ONLINE**

15% of people feel overwhelmed by the advertising they see online.

**10%** OVERWHELMED  
**OFFLINE**

10% who feel overwhelmed by advertising even offline.

*Has advertising changed for the better?*



Feel advertising has **changed for the better.**



Feel it has changed for the **worse.**

**MAKING FUNNY WORK WAS  
A KEY FACTOR IN PEOPLE'S  
OPINIONS OF US.**

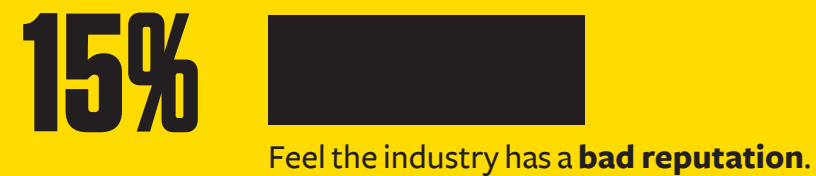
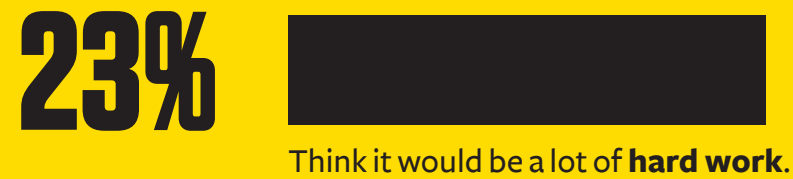
Of those who **feel the industry is improving**, **42%** said it was because advertising is **more fun than it used to be.**

Of those who **feel it's getting worse**, **67%** blamed a **decline in the industry's sense of humour.**

*Great place to work?*

*Favourite medium?*

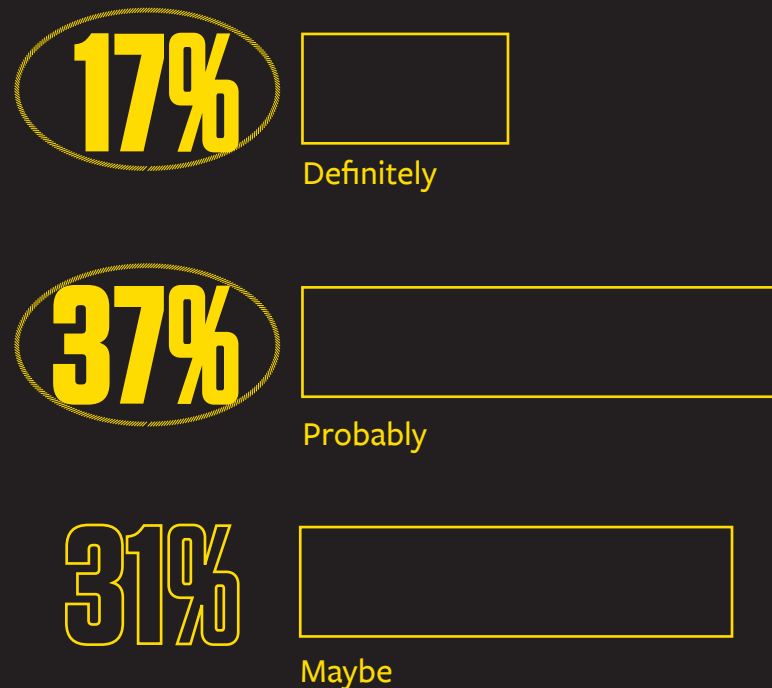
ALMOST A QUARTER OF CONSUMERS **WOULD LIKE A JOB IN ADVERTISING.**





*Elitist?*

THE MAJORITY OF CONSUMERS, **54%**, SEE **ADVERTISING AS AN ELITIST INDUSTRY:**



THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS, **36%**, SAID PEOPLE **NEED TO BE MUCH MORE CAUTIOUS** WITH WHAT **THEY SHARE ONLINE.**

*Has social media advertising damaged democracy?*



**“OVERALL THESE FINDINGS ARE ENCOURAGING. PERHAPS THE KEY TAKE-OUTS FROM THESE FINDINGS ARE THAT WE NEED TO KEEP MAKING GREAT WORK, MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH, AND COMING UP WITH IDEAS THAT STICK OUT IN PEOPLE’S MEMORY IN ORDER TO STAY FUTURE-FIT.”**

**Michael Scantlebury, Creative Director & Founder, Impero**

“In spite of recent headlines surrounding a lack of trust in advertising, it’s encouraging to see consumers still see us as an overall force for good. Continuing to make work that pushes boundaries, challenges stereotypes and forges progress will be central to keeping adland future-fit, as well as embracing the best that smart data and progressive tech have to offer.”

**Sarah Golding, former IPA President and UK CEO at The&Partnership**

“It’s good to see the recognition in this latest research of the public’s overall view that advertising is a good thing. Public trust in advertising is an issue that affects everyone working in our industry. Our industry is world-class in many ways and we believe that a collective effort from advertisers, agencies, media owners and tech companies can ensure a strong, healthy future for UK advertising and its relationship with the public.”

**The Advertising Association**

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## TALENT

*It's good news for independent creative agencies with original ideas.*

Agencies are failing to adapt fast enough to the pressures on marketers. Most marketers see a consultancy with great data & tech resources as more valuable to them than an agency. But otherwise it's good news for independent creative agencies with original ideas – these are still in second place for marketers' hearts and budgets. Collaboration with consultancies and in-house agencies will be key to the industry's success.

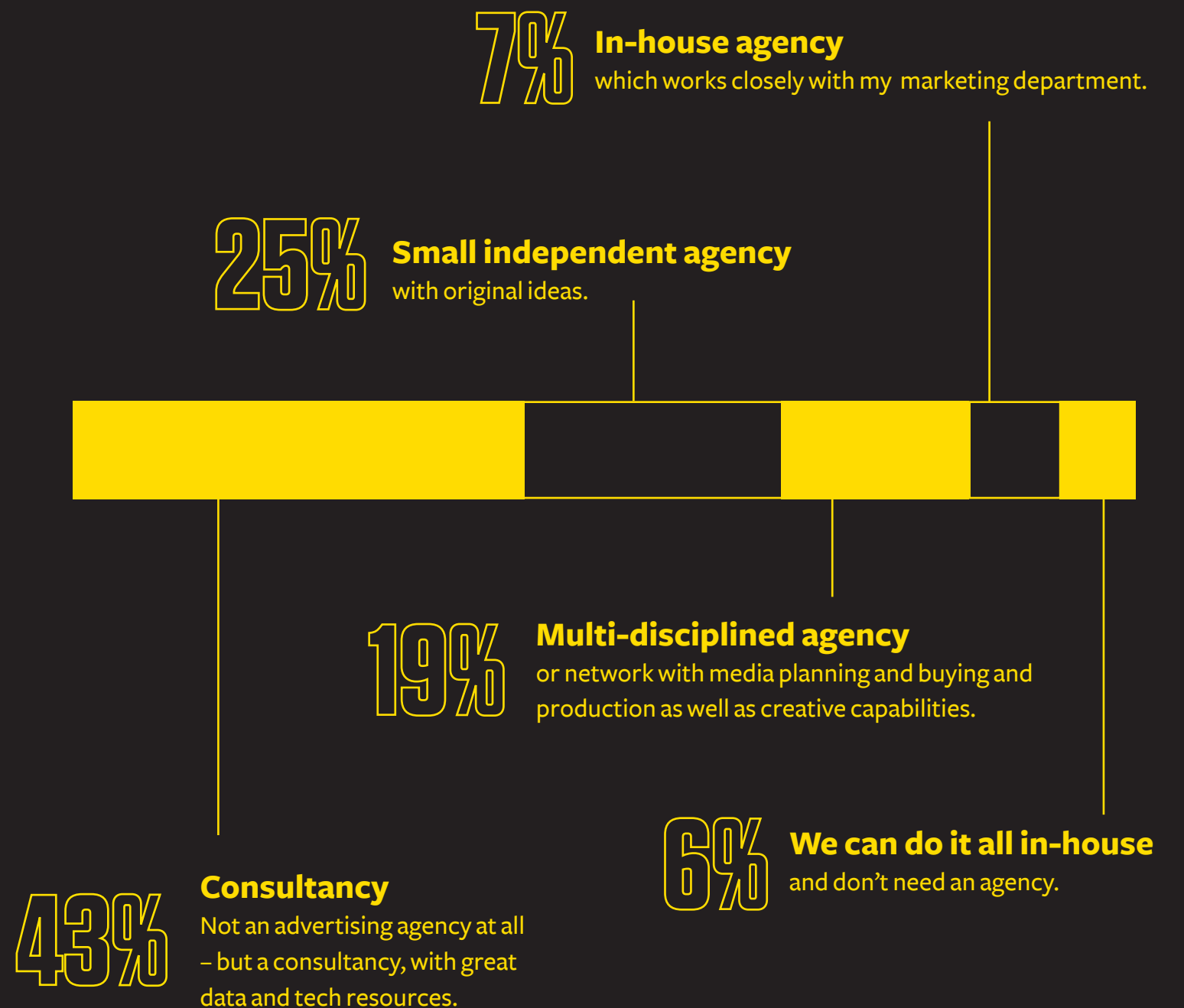
*Is adland adapting fast enough?*

**64% OF MARKETERS SAY THE INDUSTRY IS FAILING TO ADAPT FAST ENOUGH TO THE PRESSURES ON MARKETERS.**

**ONLY A QUARTER SAID IT WAS DOING A GOOD JOB OF KEEPING UP.**

*The agency model of the future?*

When asked what type of agency is best placed to meet their brands needs, marketers said:



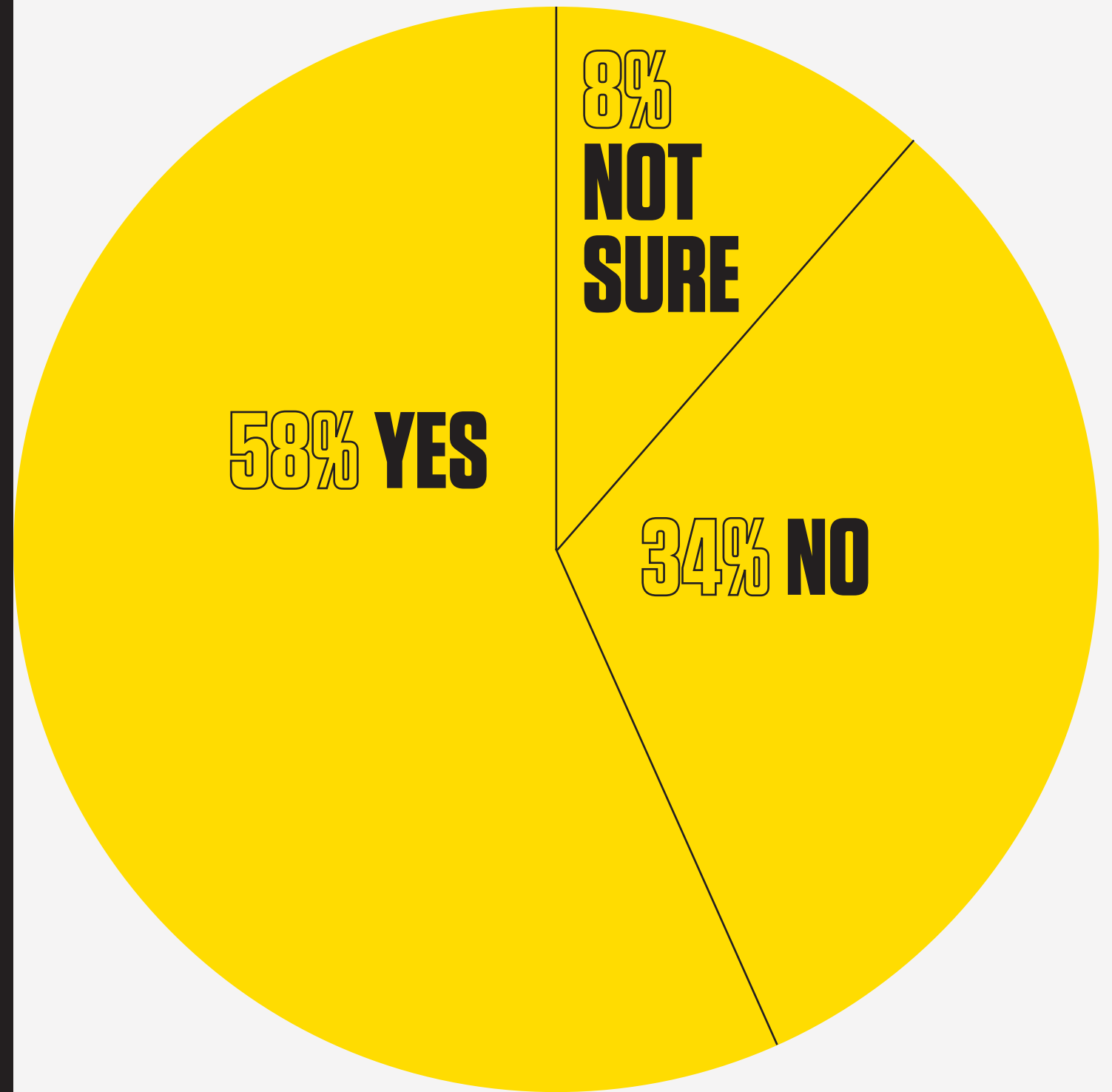
*In-housing:*

NEARLY HALF, **46%**, OF MARKETERS HAD **BROUGHT** **ELEMENTS** OF THEIR **CREATIVE** **OUTPUT INHOUSE** OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.

**26%**   
Had in-housed elements of their **creative production.**

**23%**   
Had in-housed elements of their **media buying.**

*Are agency rates fair?*



*Is your agency model built with your business's needs in mind?*

**42% YES** 

**42% NO** 

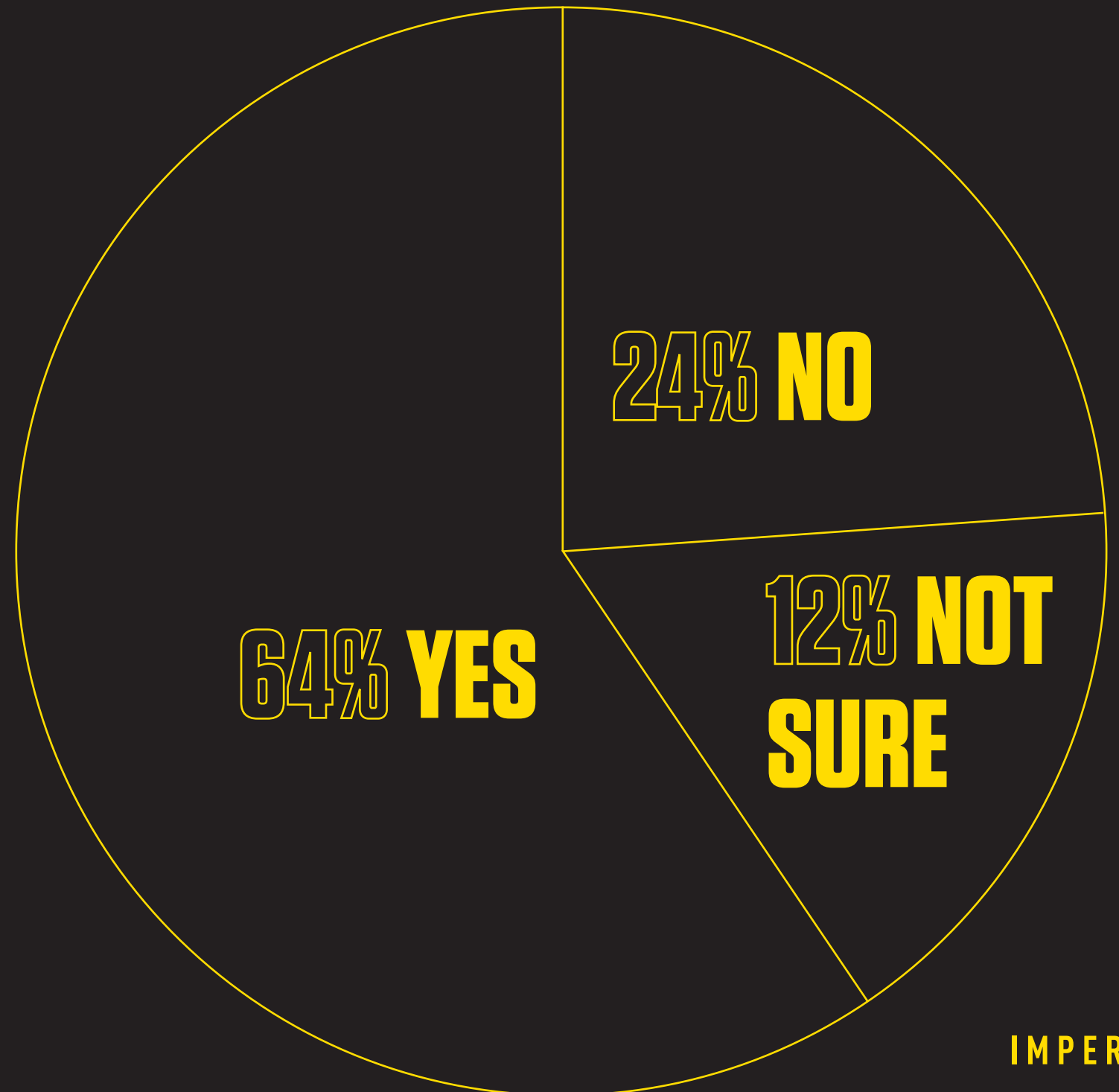
**16% NOT SURE** 

*Do you trust your agency to deliver brand strategy that drives meaningful results for your business?*

**70% SAID YES.** 15% said no, and 15% were not sure.

*Tangible results?*

When asked if their **primary focus** was **driving tangible results** that would **benefit bottom-line sales**:



# Performance marketing or brand building?

## 56% PERFORMANCE MARKETING

The majority of marketers said they were briefing their agency to focus more on performance marketing.



## 44% BRAND BUILDING

Briefing their agency to focus more on brand-building rather than performance marketing.

Those whose **focus** was on **performance marketing** were **more confident** that their approach **would deliver long-term success** for their brand.

### If they could change one thing:

The majority of marketers, **29%**, said the changes they would make to their agency relationship would be: **time-based**, and that they need their agency to be **more agile** and **deliver work faster**.

29%



Need their agency to be more **agile** and **deliver work faster**.

20%



Need **more healthy friction** in their agency - they need to be in a position to push back.

18%



Would change the agency's **structure and the distribution of talent** across different disciplines and teams.

14%



**More focus on creativity** and less on delivering lots of assets for lots of different channels.

**“THE CONSULTANCIES HAVE BEEN HOVERING OVER THE AGENCY SPACE FOR SOME TIME, BUT THIS IS ANOTHER TIMELY REMINDER THAT YOUR COMPETITORS OFTEN AREN’T WHO YOU THINK THEY ARE: IT COULD BE THE INNOVATORS FROM OUTSIDE YOUR INDUSTRY THAT WILL BE THE ONES TO EAT YOUR LUNCH.”**

“All that said, it’s great to see small independents with original ideas coming in in second place as the favourites to shape the future of the industry.

I’ve long been saying small, nimble, agile independents are better placed to meet marketers’ changing needs than bigger shops – or the holding companies, which look increasingly outdated.”

**Michael Scantlebury,  
Creative Director & Founder,  
Impero**



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## TALENT

*Is the industry facing a brain drain?*

62% of talent have interviewed outside adland over the past 12 months, but it's not because of burnout, sexism or mental health concerns – it's because creativity needs saving.

*Is advertising facing a brain*

**62%** OF INDUSTRY TALENT  
**HAS INTERVIEWED**  
**OUTSIDE ADLAND** OVER THE  
**PAST 12 MONTHS.**

*What attracted them to advertising?*

**58%**

*First Place*



“Working with **creative people** on **creative projects.**”

**51%**

*Second Place*



**Lifestyle** and **money.**

**17%**

*Third Place*



**Crunching numbers.**

*If they could change one thing?*

**24% THE WORK**

The majority of respondents would change the work and say “**creativity needs saving.**”

**23% THE CULTURE**

They would change the culture, saying “we need a **fairer** culture that is **more reflective of the outside world.**”

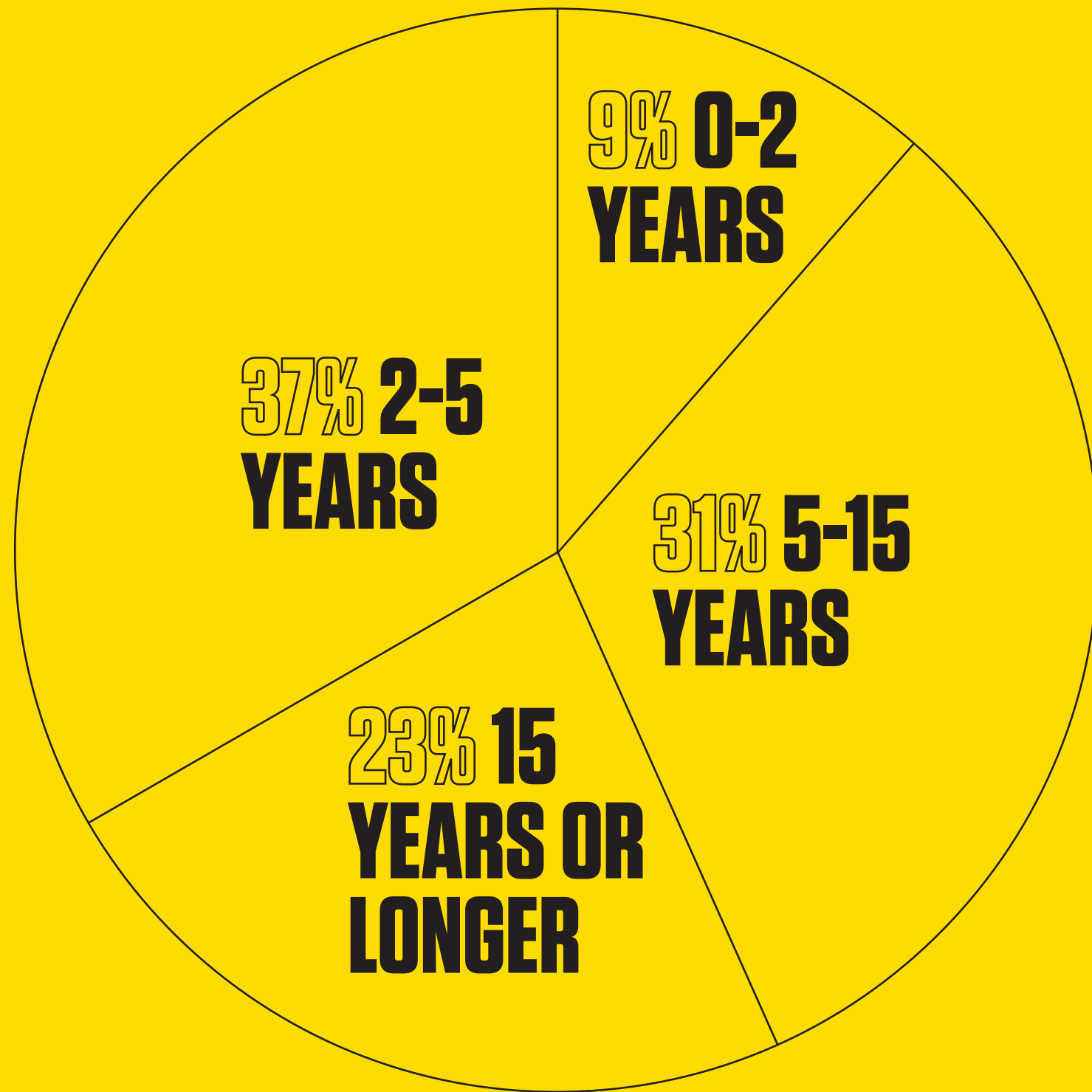
**21% THE HOURS**

They would change the hours, saying “we are **trying to squeeze more and more work** in for the **same amount of money.**”

**18% BUSINESS MODELS**

They would change the business models, saying “in an **increasingly tech-led world,** we need to **up our game to stay relevant.**”

### Career trajectory?



### Burnout:

**25%** OF RESPONDENTS CITED **BURNOUT AS A PROBLEM.**

Saying advertising **burns people out faster than most industries.**

HOWEVER **26%**, SAID IT WAS **NO WORSE THAN MOST FAST-PACED, HIGH-OCTANE INDUSTRIES.**

Although they admitted the industry **does have a burnout problem.**

*Mental Health:*

38% of respondents have **known someone** who has faced mental health problems as a **result of working in the industry.**

**35% HAVE EXPERIENCED MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS THEMSELVES.**

*Sexism:*

**36%**  said they **know someone** who has been **on the receiving end of sexist behaviour.**

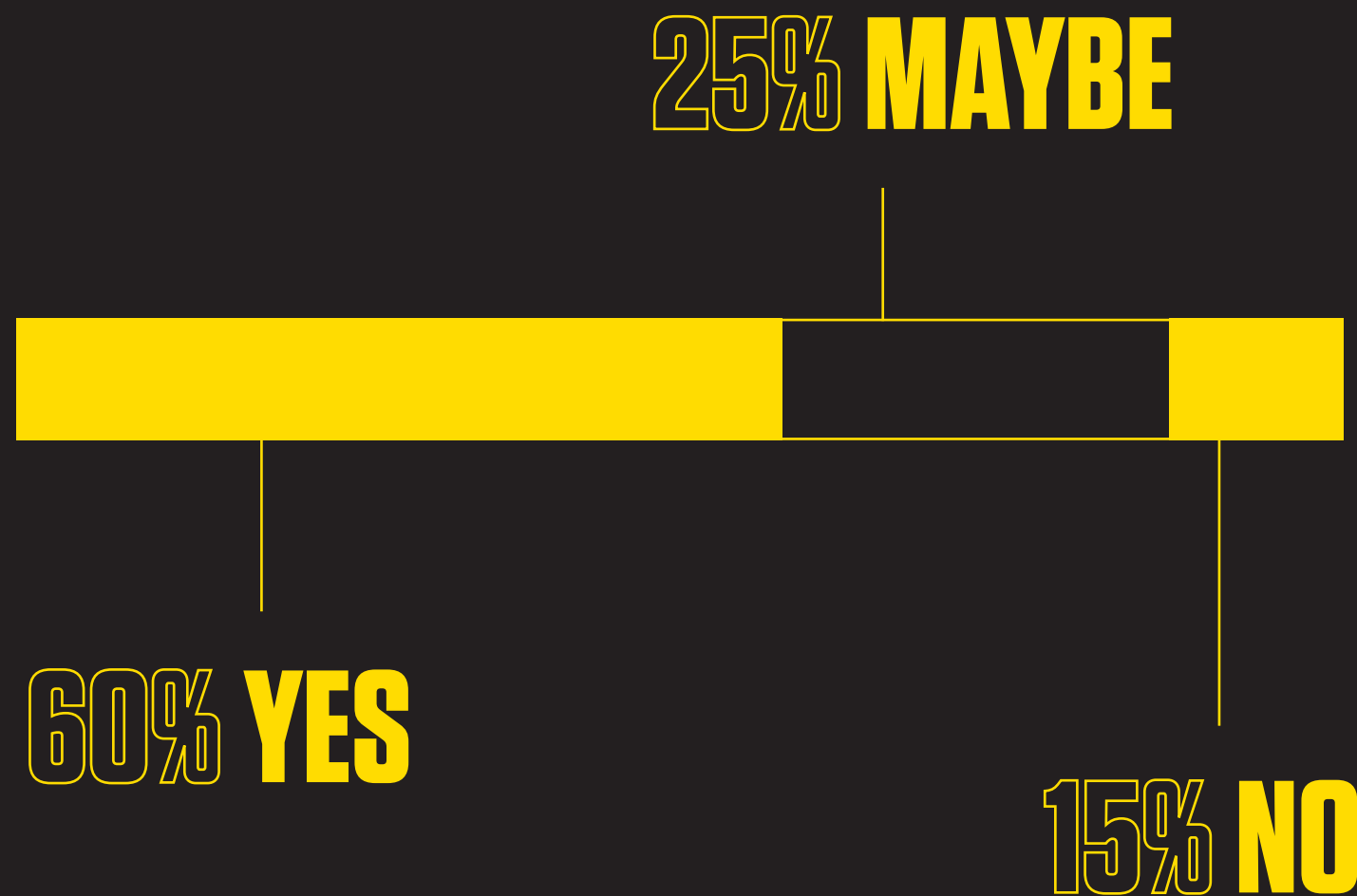
**25%**  said **sexism in advertising** has **changed for the better** since they started working in advertising.

**21%**  said they **have heard about sexism** in the industry, **“but never in my agency.”**

**19%**  said **“I have been on the receiving end of sexist behaviour.”**

*Would they do it all again?*

When asked: **“If you were starting out in your career now, would you **choose a career in advertising again?**”**



**“I THINK IT’S FRANKLY  
EMBARRASSING THAT ISSUES  
LIKE SEXISM STILL EXIST  
IN SUCH A SUPPOSEDLY  
PROGRESSIVE INDUSTRY,  
BUT IT’S GOOD TO SEE THESE  
ISSUES ARE ON THE DECLINE.”**

**Michael Scantlebury, Creative Director & Founder, Impero**

“In order to avoid a brain drain of the best talent to other, sexier industries like tech, we need to drastically increase our focus on making great work people care about. We need to make funny work, effective work, work that really reaches people.”

“Alongside making great work, protecting employees from developing mental health problems should be top of the agenda. Reduce stress, improve the quality of the work we’re giving people – and hopefully the future of the industry looks brighter.”

**Michael Scantlebury, Creative Director & Founder, Impero**

“As an industry, our single most important asset is the quality of our creative talent – our very survival depends on it. Building an environment which flexes around the diverse needs of those very different individuals – where people feel there’s something in it for them as well as us – will be central to keeping us future-fit.”

**Chris Hirst, Global CEO of Havas Creative Network**

“We must address the mental health challenge in our industry. As exciting as the media is, there is a high-pressure ‘sink or swim’ mentality often celebrated which is damaging to our people and our industry. If we’re going to attract and retain talent, we need to fix that.”

**Josh Kricheski, UK CEO at MediaCom**

# METHODOLOGY

“RESPONDENTS COMPLETED THE SHORT SURVEY ONLINE AND WERE SCREENED BASED ON THEIR JOB TITLE TO ENSURE QUALIFICATION FOR THE SURVEY.”

The Marketing Director fieldwork took place between the 2nd and 7th of April 2019. Respondents completed the **short survey online** and were screened based on their job title to ensure qualification for the survey.

The advertising talent fieldwork took place between **2nd and 16th of April 2019**. Respondents were **recruited through an online panel** where people opt-in to receive invites to surveys.

The surveys were hosted by **Ginger Research Ltd**, an independent market research company, and interviews were conducted within the code of conduct of the Market Research Society of GB.

# THANK YOU.

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