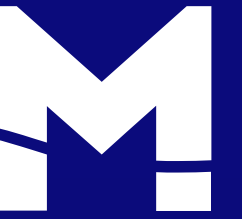# MAGELLAN AI

Q1 2025

Podcast advertising benchmark report

What is Magellan AI?

Advertisers increase RoAS with Magellan AI's media planning and optimization tools.

Agencies prove advertiser performance and find new clients through Magellan AI.

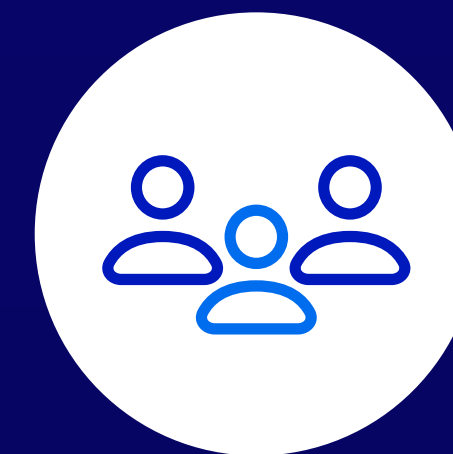**Publishers** maximize revenue by prospecting qualified advertisers with Magellan AI.

Intelligence
Competitive intel • Media planning

Verification
Airchecks • Audits • Brand safety

Attribution
Pixel-based • Pod-to-pod

What's the AI in Magellan AI?

Ad detection

- AI scans podcast episodes
- Identify ad placements

Rescan for Dynamic Insertion

Placement analysis

- Host-read vs produced
- Dynamic Insertion vs embedded (baked-in)

Spend modeling

- Position
- Length
- Download volume
- Run-of-network & programmatic

00:00:29

Pre-roll

uncommon goods

Produced

Dynamic insertion

Run-of-network

Ad   Ad   Ad   Ad

International coverage

Sampling 50,000+ podcasts across:

US, Canada, UK, Ireland, Germany, France, and Australia

Four languages:

English, Spanish, German, French

4

Our methodology

Magellan AI analyzes podcast advertising data from thousands of popular podcasts in the U.S. To prepare this report, we analyzed 92,888 episodes of popular podcasts. To account for dynamic insertion, we sampled multiple copies of certain episodes.

For parts of this analysis, we relied on Magellan AI's proprietary model to estimate advertising spend. Our model incorporates factors including:

- The number of ads and variation in ad load detected for a given episode

- Our estimates for the number of downloads for each episode

- CPM as reported on select media kits and estimated based on popularity

- The type of ads analyzed, including whether they are presented by the host or produced

- Whether ads were delivered programmatically, via a run-of-network (RON) buy, or purchased directly

Campaign objective is determined to be direct response if the ads for that brand include a unique promo code or vanity URL. Other brands are classified as either brand awareness or tune-in.

Podcasts advertising on other podcasts were excluded from our analysis, except where noted.

For more information about our methodology, please email research@magellan.ai.

Key findings

Y/Y spend

+21%

Podcast ad spending continued to climb in Q1, increasing 21% Y/Y.[1]

Repeat top-10 spenders

8 of 10

Eight of the top 10 spenders in Q1 were also top spenders in Q4 '24, with 2 appearing for the first time this quarter.[2]

New brands

$42k

Bigger campaigns for brands testing podcasts – average spend for the 1,025 new brands detected on podcasts in Q1 doubled Y/Y.

Ad load

8.01%

Ad load decreased from 8.22% in Q4 '24, to 8.01% in Q1.[3]

Recruiting

+72%

Spend in the Recruiting industry increased 72%, with brands like Indeed, ZipRecruiter and LinkedIn topping the list.

Sports podcasts

1 of 5

About 1 out of every 5 new brands included Sports podcasts in their media plan.

1 Magellan AI's spend model was recently updated for Jan 2024–Feb 2025, resulting in updated spend estimates for previous quarters
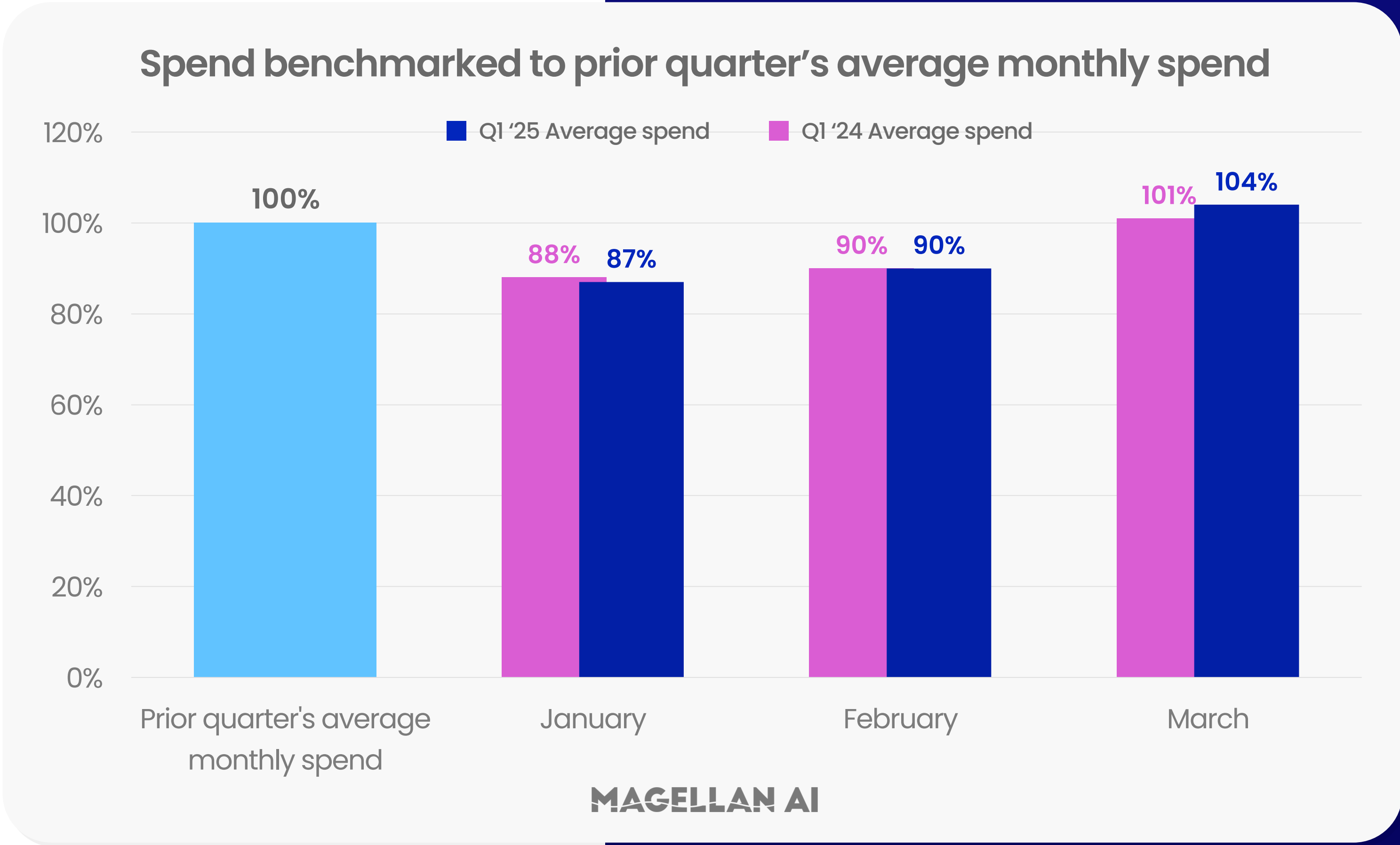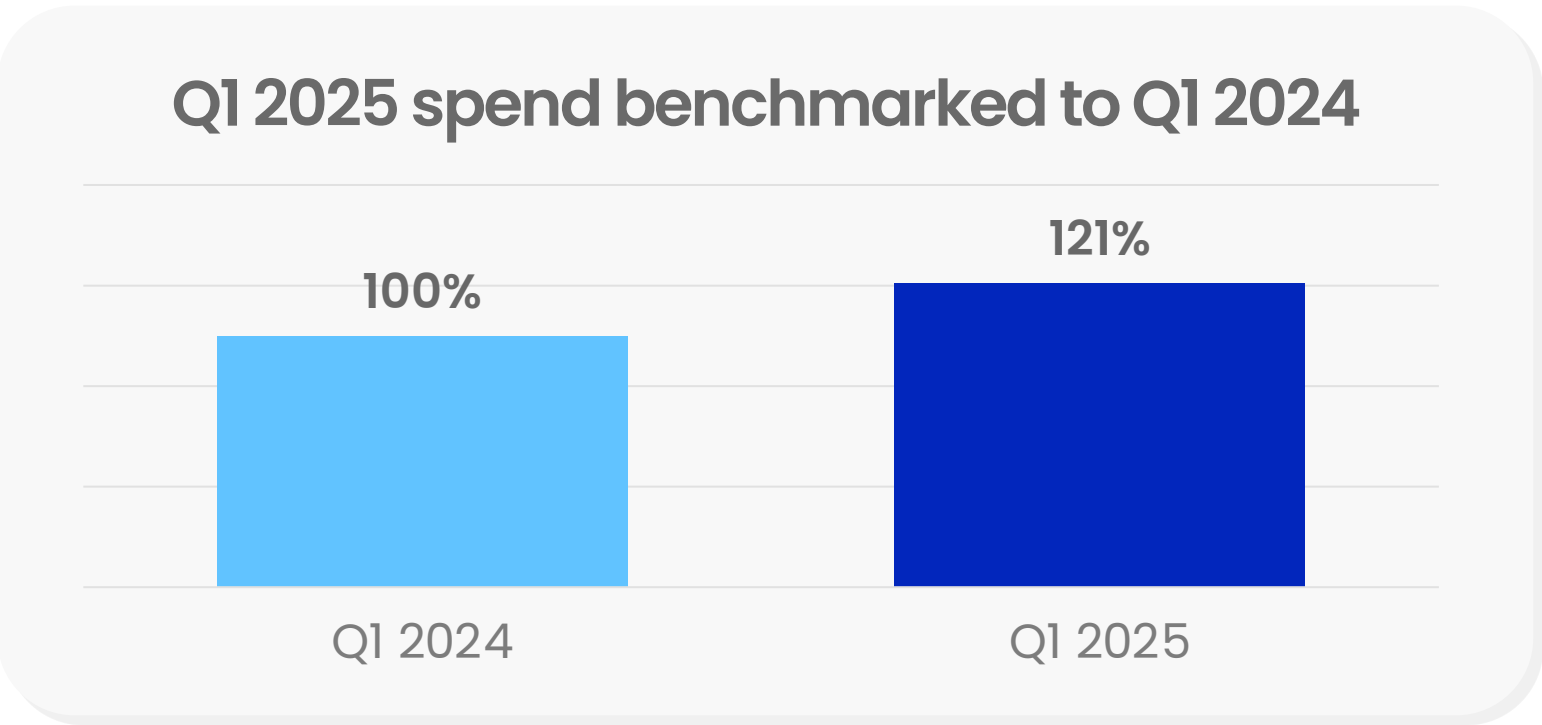2 New brands are those that have not made the top-10 list in the past year
3 Ad load figures include ads that promote other podcasts

Podcast ad spend growth in Q1 '25
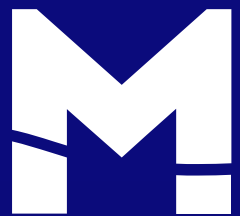
The quarter followed seasonal trends, with monthly spend below Q4 levels, but steadily increasing throughout Q1.

Overall Q1 spend lagged Q4 '25 by **6%**, with **Q1 year-over-year spend topping Q1 '24 by 21%.**

Q1 2025 spend benchmarked to Q1 2024

100%	121%
Q1 2024	Q1 2025

Spend benchmarked to prior quarter's average monthly spend

- ■ Q1 '25 Average spend
- ■ Q1 '24 Average spend

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Who are the top spenders?

The top 10 advertisers in Q1 spent an estimated **$107mm**, down 15% since Q4 '24.

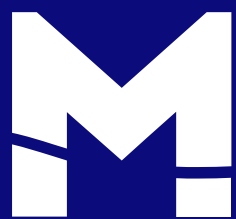8 out of the top 10 advertisers in Q1 were top spenders last quarter.

HelloFresh & **LinkedIn** are new to the list this quarter.[1]

Rank	Advertiser	Q/Q rank change	Q1 Spend
1	BetterHelp	▲	$14,900,000
2	T-Mobile	▲	$12,800,000
3	DraftKings	▲	$11,700,000
4	Toyota	▲	$11,000,000
5	Amazon	▼	$10,900,000
6	Shopify	▲	$10,500,000
7	Quince	–	$10,400,000
8	FanDuel	▼	$10,200,000
9	HelloFresh	▲	$7,300,000
10	Linkedin	▲	$7,100,000

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1 New brands are those that have not made the top-10 list in the past year

Which industries are growing the most?
## Industries with largest budget increases in Q1

Recruiting

Fastest growing industry in Q1

Fast-growing industry	Spend in Q4 '24	Spend in Q1	% Change Q/Q
Recruiting	$8,400,000	$14,400,000	+72%
Quick-Service Restaurants	$4,700,000	$7,300,000	+53%
VPN	$2,500,000	$3,600,000	+42%
Web Hosting	$15,600,000	$18,400,000	+18%
Nutritional Supplements	$32,400,000	$37,700,000	+16%

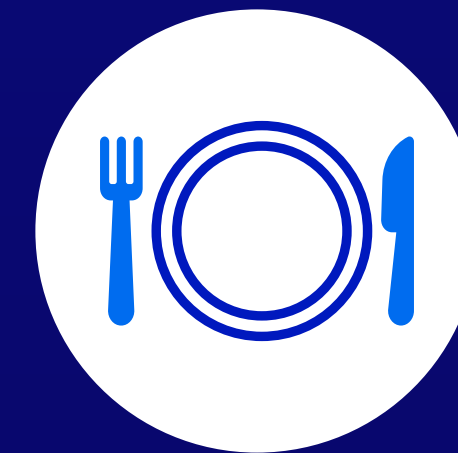# Which industries are advertising the most on podcasts?
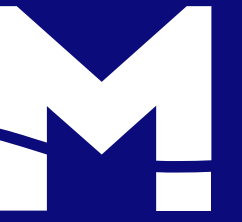
Business Software & Services

744 Brands
+70 new brands

Financial Services

651 Brands
+58 new brands

Food

596 Brands
+46 new brands

Television & Film

585 Brands
+110 new brands

* New brands are those that have appeared in podcast advertising for the first time in Q1

Our Q2 '25 watchlist

We identified 6 brands with the largest jump in spend year-over-year *and* between Q1 '24 and Q2 '24.

These charts feature Q2 spend from the last two years.

bet365
$114k — Q2 '23
$2.6M — Q2 '24

Thumbtack
$124k — Q2 '23
1.2M — Q2 '24

Clorox
$27k — Q2 '23
$876k — Q2 '24

Mack Weldon
$3k — Q2 '23
$347k — Q2 '24

Delta Airlines
$18k — Q2 '23
$333k — Q2 '24

Ethos Life
$13k — Q2 '23
$274k — Q2 '24
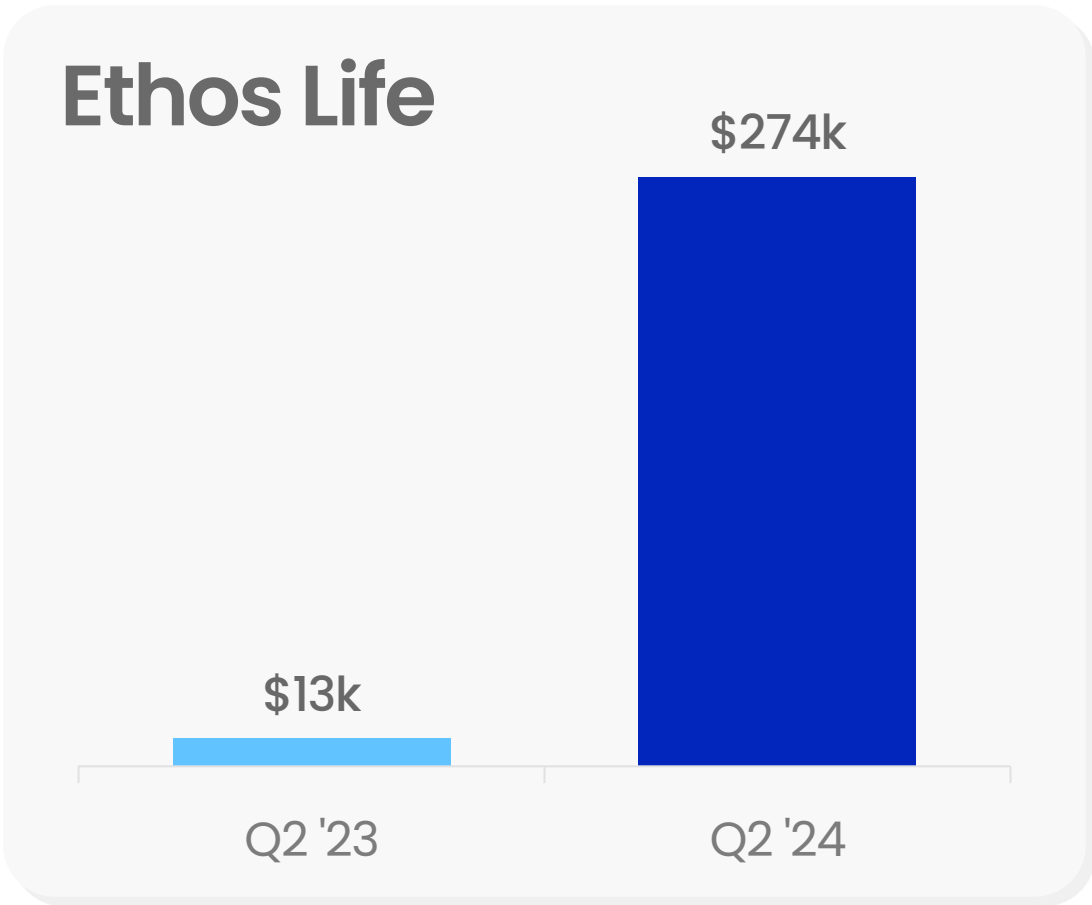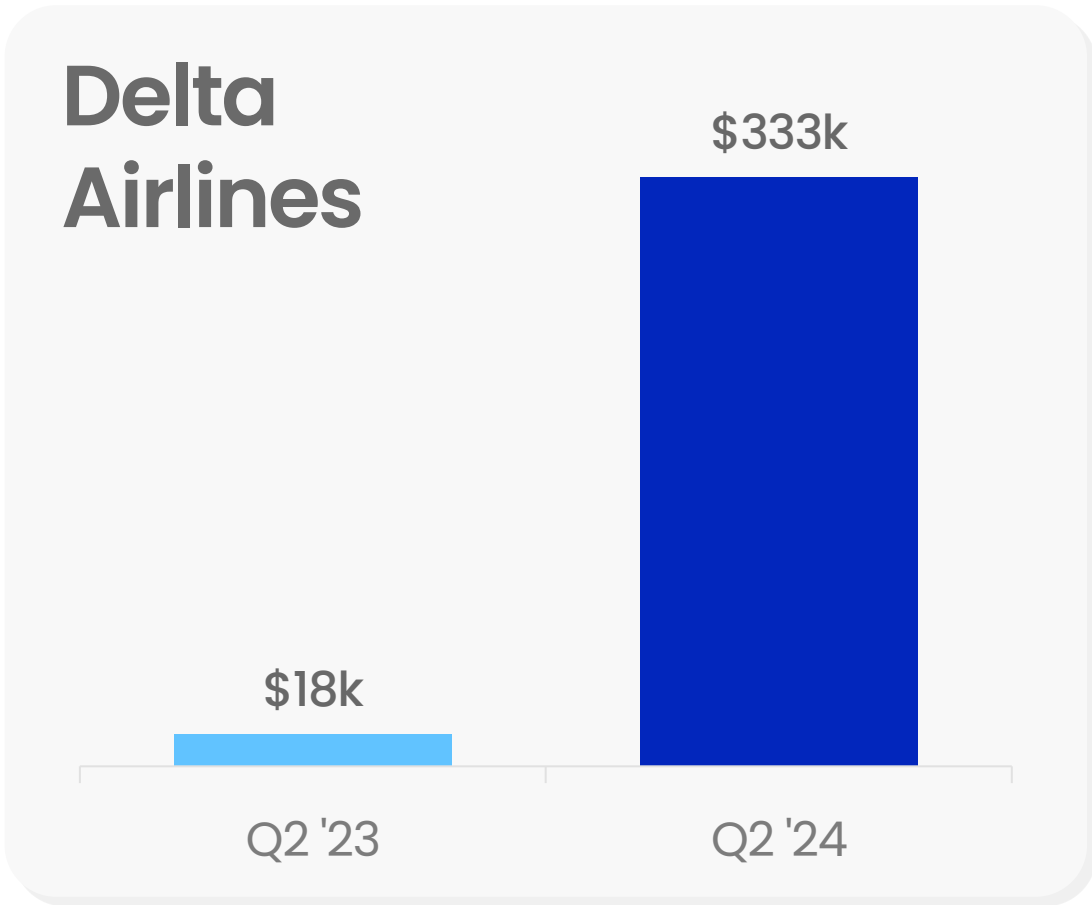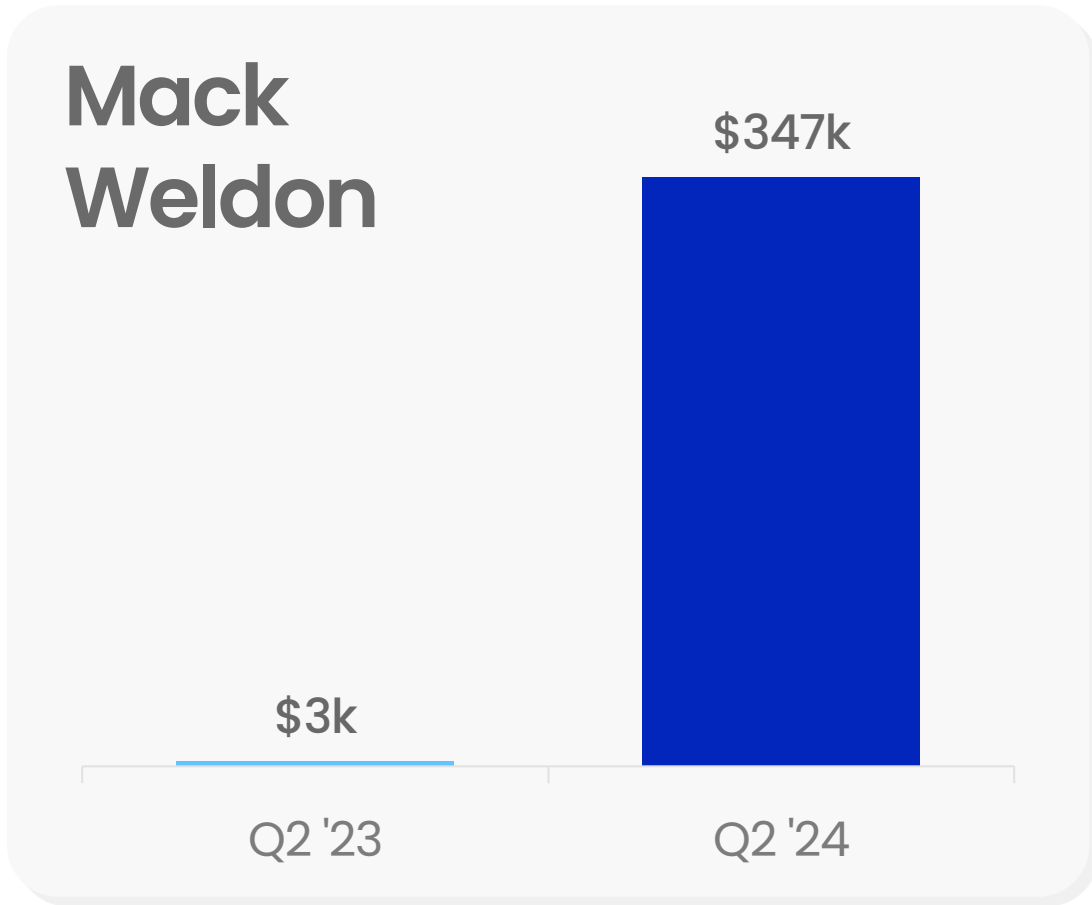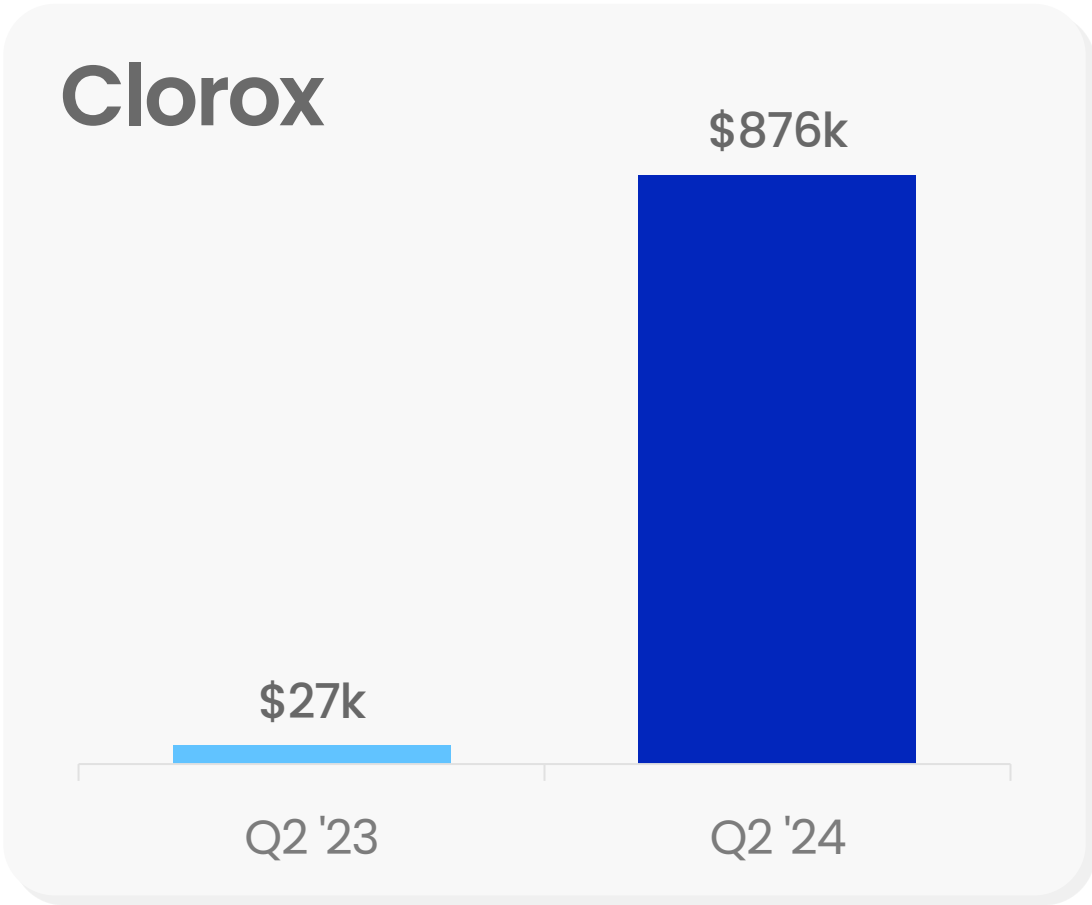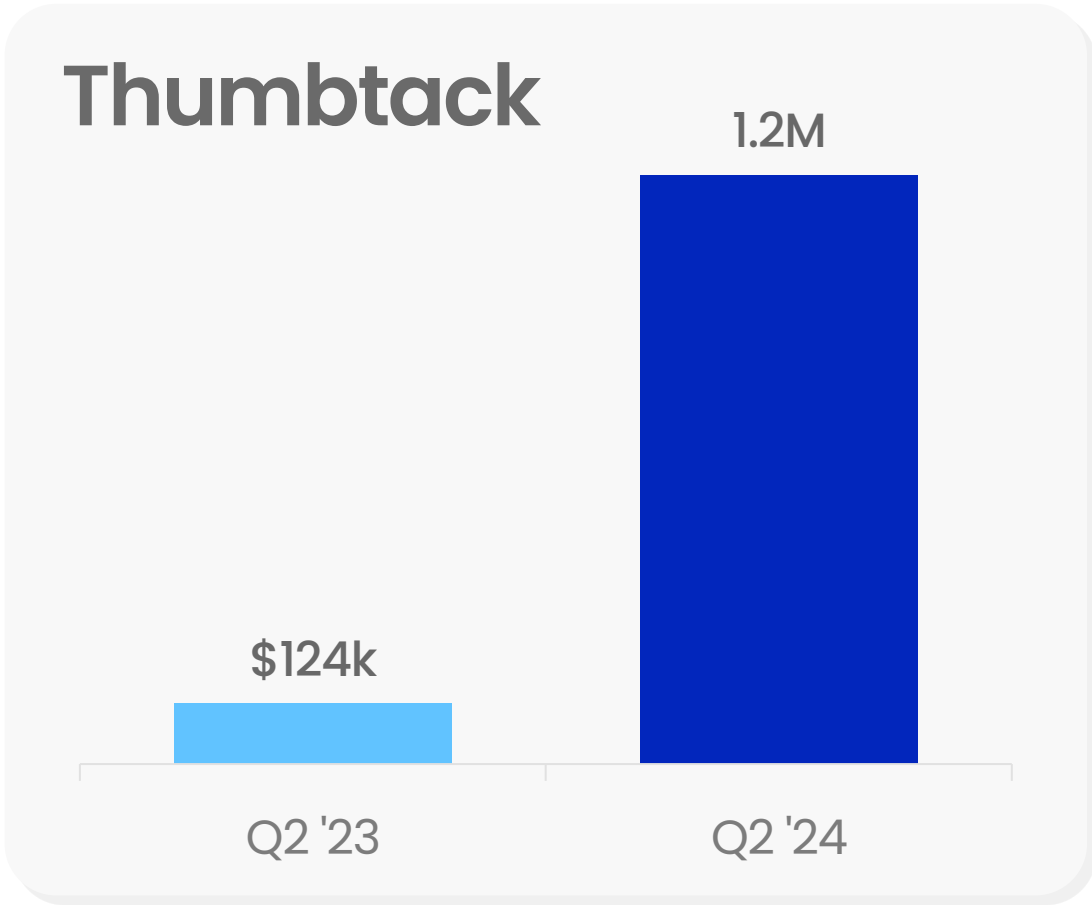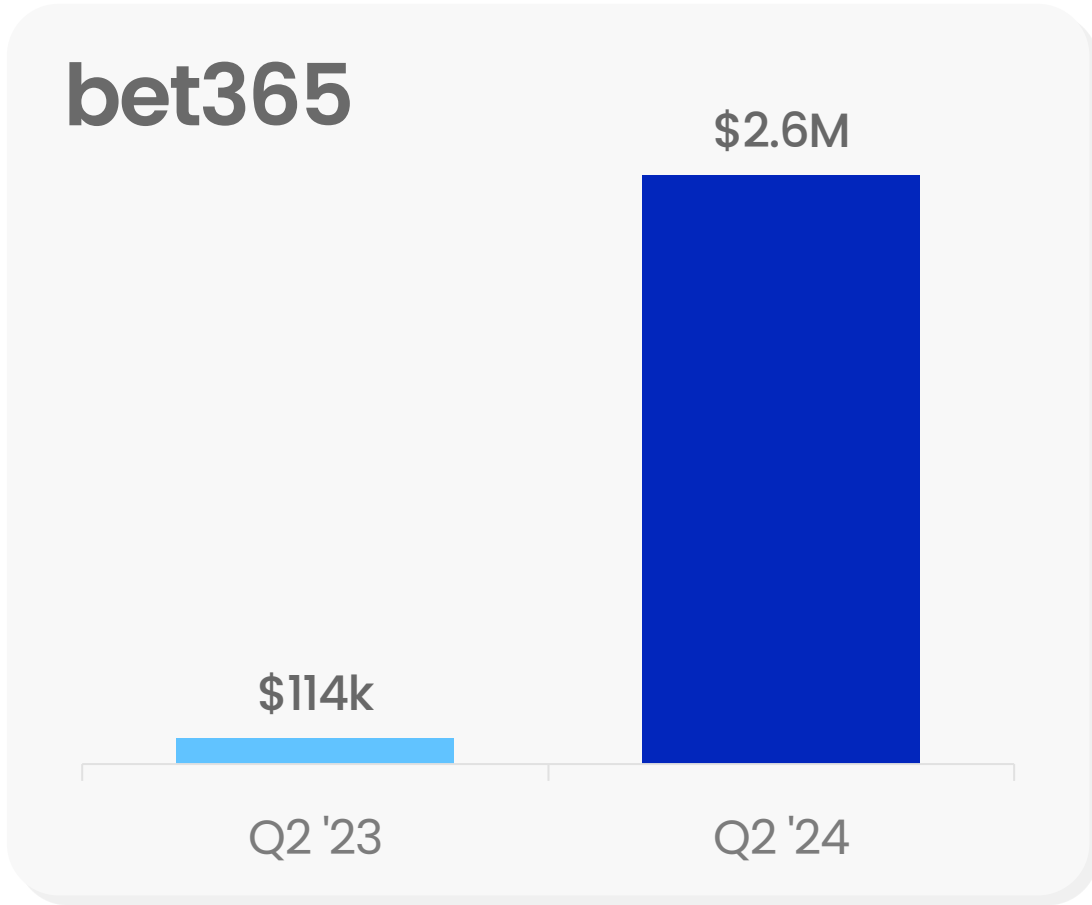
How much are advertisers spending on big shows?

In Q1, about $4.80 out of every $10 in podcast ad spend went to the top 500 shows[1], compared to $5.10 in Q4 '24.

Advertisers spent an average of **$300k per month** on podcasts ranking in the top 500 in Q1.

Podcasts ranking 501 – 3000 generated an average of **$33k per month** in revenue in Q1.

Spend by rank, benchmarked against Q4 average monthly spend

	1 – 500	500 – 3000	3000+
Q4 '24 Average Monthly Spend	47%	32%	21%
January	44%	27%	16%
February	44%	29%	17%
March	51%	33%	20%

1 *Top 500 shows* includes podcasts with an average quarterly ranking among the 500 most popular
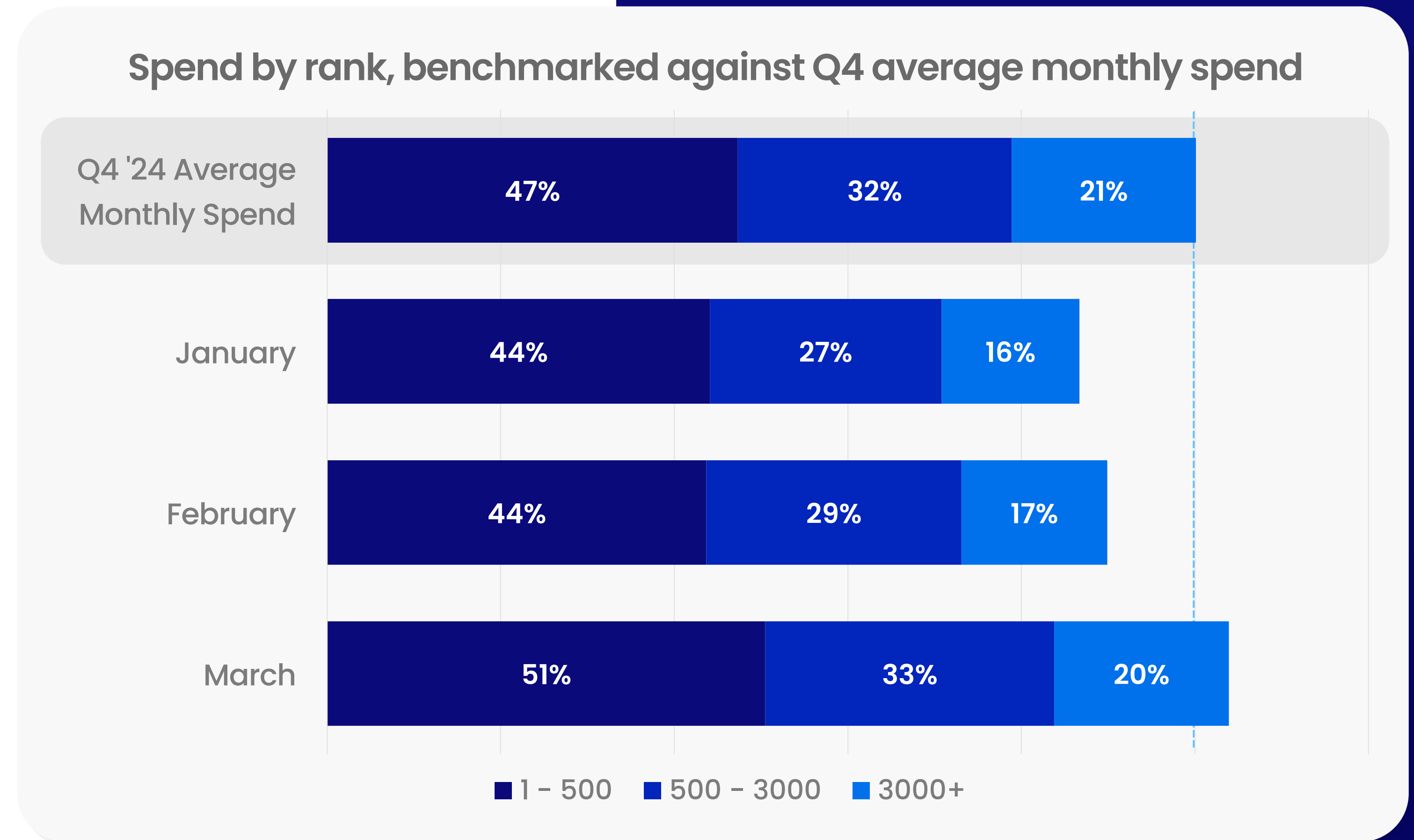
How did new brands test out the channel in Q1?
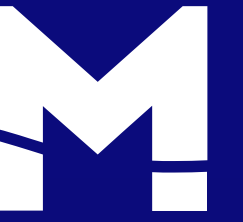
1,025
New brands this quarter

$42.1k
Average spend per new brand

00:49
Average ad length (mm:ss)

Mid-roll
Most frequent ad placement by brands new to podcasting

Which genres had the highest ad load?

In Q1, 5 of the 13 genres featured here *increased* Y/Y ad loads[1].

Kids & Family Q1 ad loads climbed from 7.54% in 2024 to 8.33% in 2025.

True Crime pod-on-pod[2] ad loads increased from 1.16% in Q4 '24 to 4.70% this quarter.
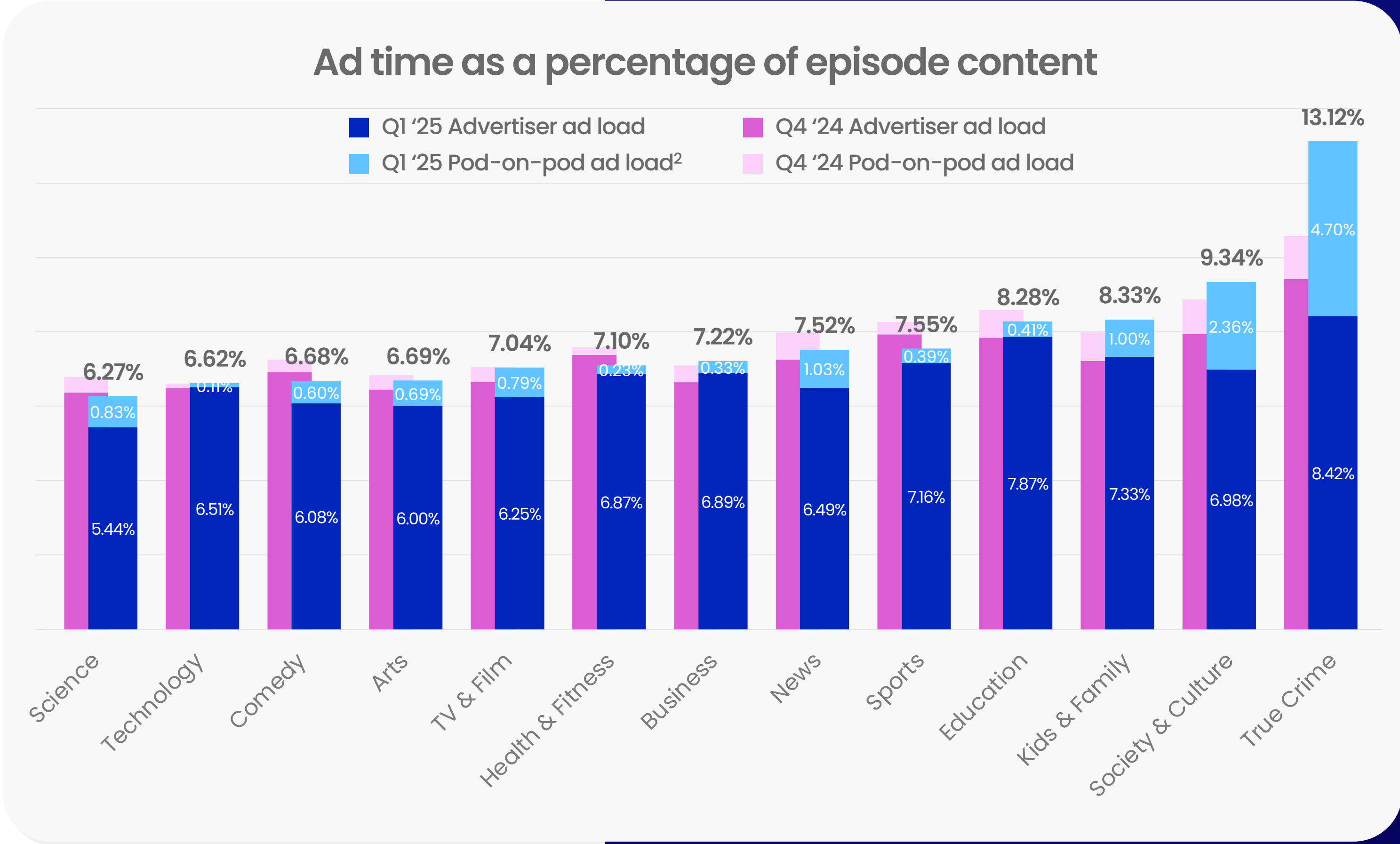
1 The chart features top genres by ad load; other genres are not shown
2 Pod-on-pod are ads that promote other podcasts

Ad time as a percentage of episode content

- ■ Q1 '25 Advertiser ad load
- ■ Q1 '25 Pod-on-pod ad load[2]
- ■ Q4 '24 Advertiser ad load
- ■ Q4 '24 Pod-on-pod ad load

Genre	Q1 '25 Advertiser ad load	Q1 '25 Pod-on-pod ad load	Total Q1 '25	Q4 '24 total
Science	5.44%	0.83%		6.27%
Technology	6.51%	0.11%		6.62%
Comedy	6.08%	0.60%		6.68%
Arts	6.00%	0.69%		6.69%
TV & Film	6.25%	0.79%		7.04%
Health & Fitness	6.87%	0.23%		7.10%
Business	6.89%	0.33%		7.22%
News	6.49%	1.03%		7.52%
Sports	7.16%	0.39%		7.55%
Education	7.87%	0.41%		8.28%
Kids & Family	7.33%	1.00%		8.33%
Society & Culture	6.98%	2.36%		9.34%
True Crime	8.42%	4.70%		13.12%

How have ad loads changed in 2025?

Ad load across episodes sampled fell to **8.01%** in Q1 compared to **8.22%** in Q4.

Ad load decreased a relative 8.2% Y/Y, from 8.73% in Q1 '24.

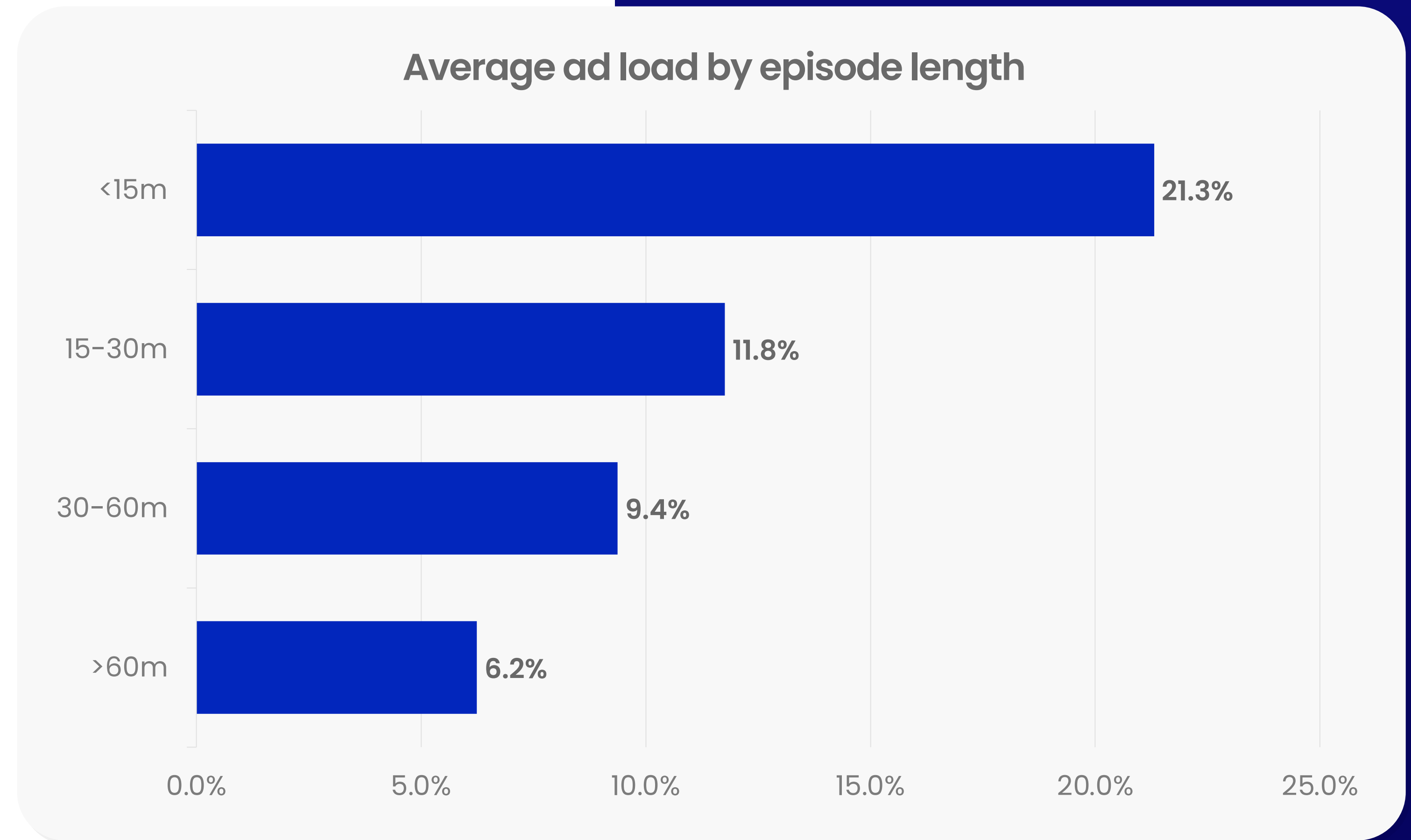- That's 0.72% in absolute terms, or about 26 seconds

Share of episodes dedicated to ads

- ■ Advertiser ad load
- ■ Pod-on-pod ad load

	Q1 '24	Q2 '24	Q3 '24	Q4 '24	Q1 '25
Total	8.73%	9.19%	8.28%	8.22%	8.01%
Pod-on-pod ad load	2.39%	2.07%	1.20%	0.89%	1.43%
Advertiser ad load	6.34%	7.12%	7.08%	7.33%	6.58%
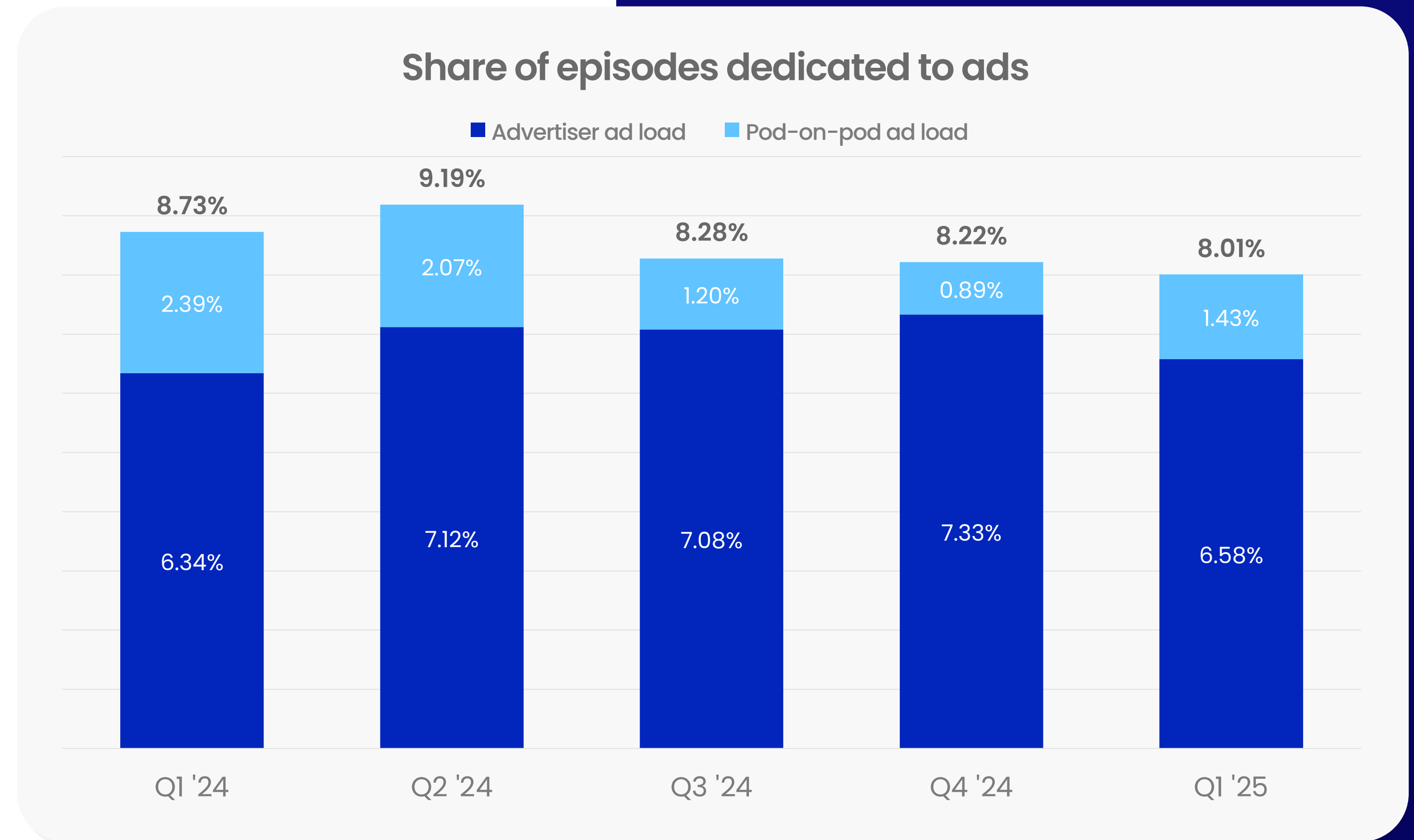
How ad load differs by episode length

The most common episode length is **30-60 min**, making up 39.8% of the episodes analyzed.

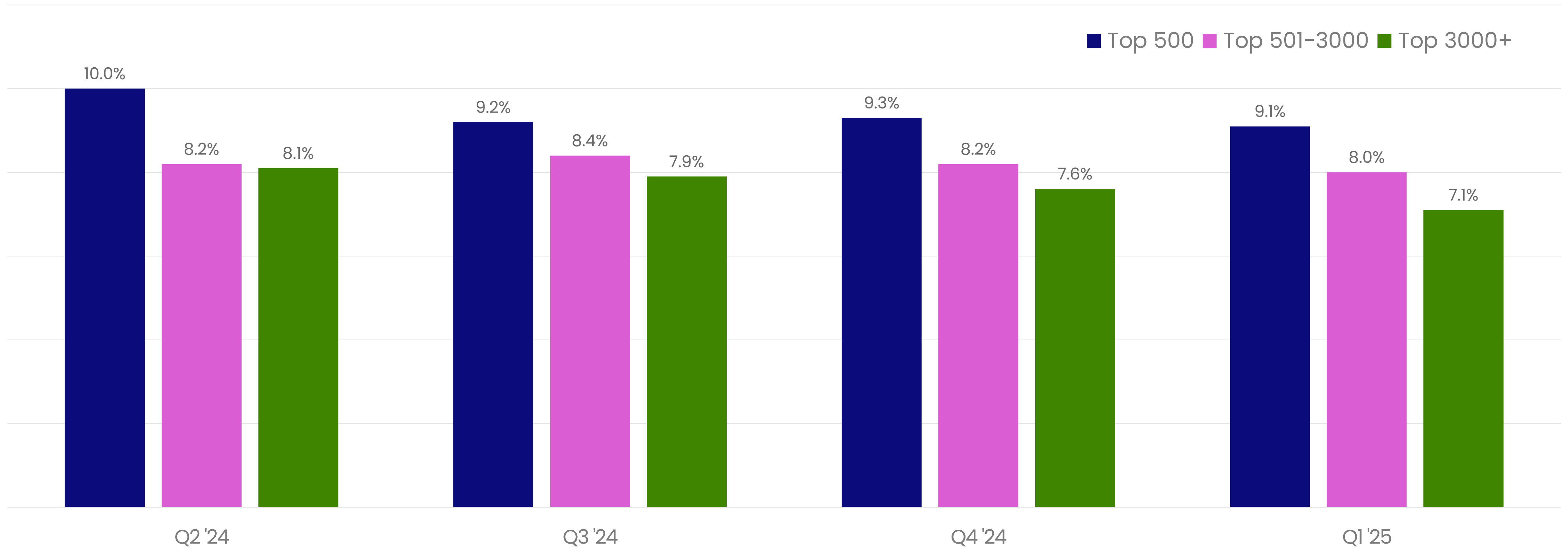**True Crime** shows <15m in length had average ad load of 42% in Q1.

Society & Culture shows >60m in length had avg. ad load of 9% in Q1.

Average ad load by episode length

Episode length	Ad load
<15m	21.3%
15-30m	11.8%
30-60m	9.4%
>60m	6.2%

0.0% 5.0% 10.0% 15.0% 20.0% 25.0%

How do ad loads differ by show popularity?

Ad time as a percentage of episode content by average show rank[1]

■ Top 500   ■ Top 501–3000   ■ Top 3000+

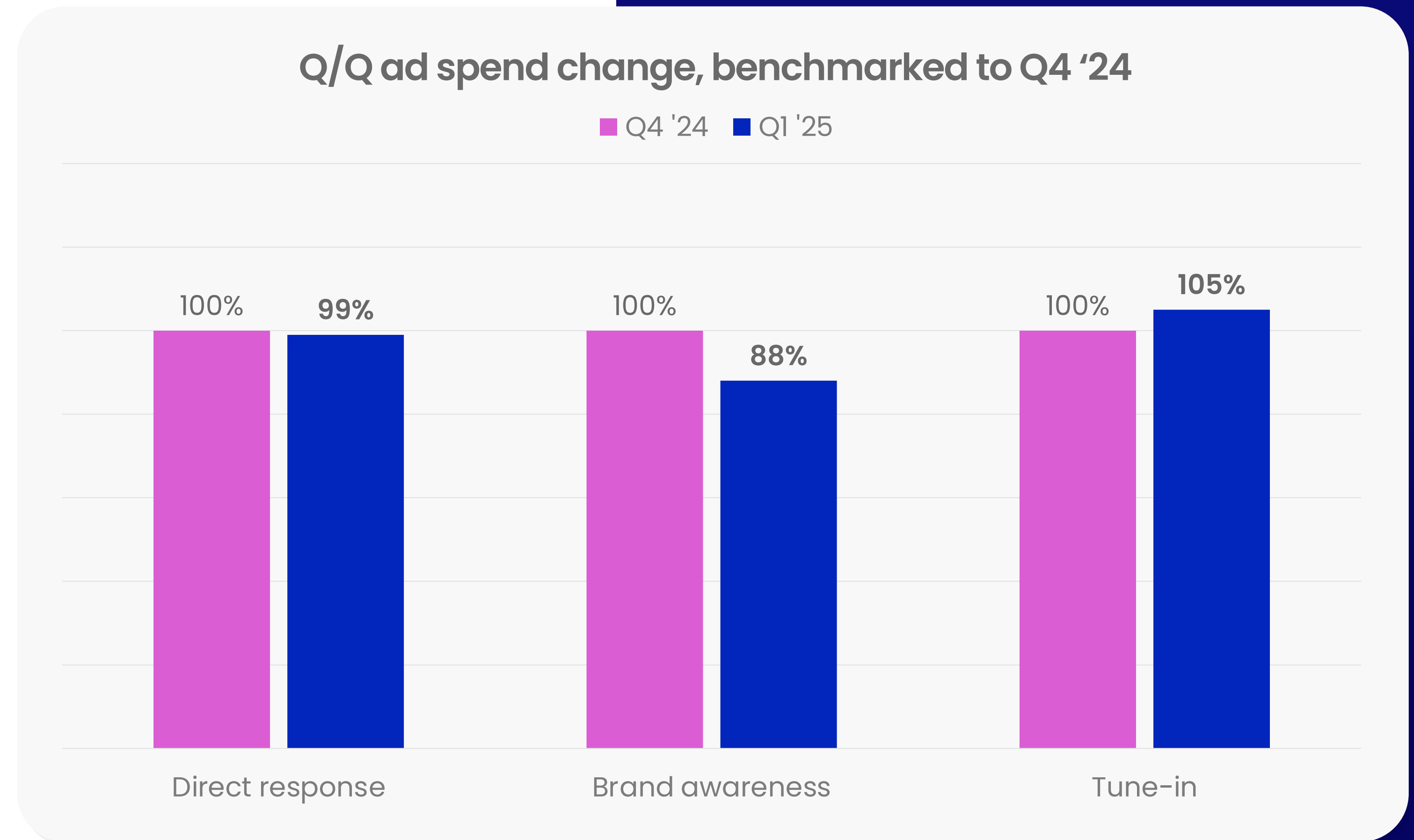|	Q2 '24	Q3 '24	Q4 '24	Q1 '25
Top 500	10.0%	9.2%	9.3%	9.1%
Top 501–3000	8.2%	8.4%	8.2%	8.0%
Top 3000+	8.1%	7.9%	7.6%	7.1%

1 Ad load data reflects show rankings as they were at the end of each respective quarter and includes ads that promote other podcasts

Changes in ad spend by campaign approach

Average monthly spend in Q1 decreased **1%** Q/Q for direct response, **12%** for brand awareness, and increased **5%** for tune-in advertisers.

This quarter, direct response made up **46%** of overall market spend, with brand awareness at **51%** and tune-in at **3%**.

Q/Q ad spend change, benchmarked to Q4 '24

■ Q4 '24   ■ Q1 '25

Direct response	Brand awareness	Tune-in
100% / 99%	100% / 88%	100% / 105%

How do shows simulcast on YouTube stack up to other podcasts?

	Share of ads that are host-read	Share of airtime dedicated to ads in Q1[1]	Share of direct response brands in Q1[2]	Avg renewal rate among direct response brands[3]
Podcasts (RSS)	37%	6.58%	26%	36%
Simulcasts	49%	7.29%	37%	45%

1 Share of airtime dedicated to ads does not include ads that promote other podcasts
2 Share of direct response advertisers is computed by show, and averaged across each grouping
3 Renewal rate is the percentage of direct response advertisers that advertised on a podcast for at least 3 months

Which genres had the most new brands?
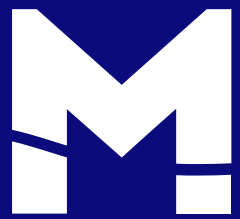
Sports continued to be the most popular genre for new brands to run on in Q1.

About **1 out of every 5** new brands included Sports podcasts in their media plan.

Genre	New brands sampled for the first time in Q1	% of new shows
Sports	229	13%
News	220	13%
Comedy	190	11%
Society & Culture	157	9%
Business	112	6%

Most common ad lengths and positions

Breakout by ad lengths[1]

- 15s: 11%
- 30s: 40%
- 60s: 16%
- 90s: 6%
- 120s: 2%
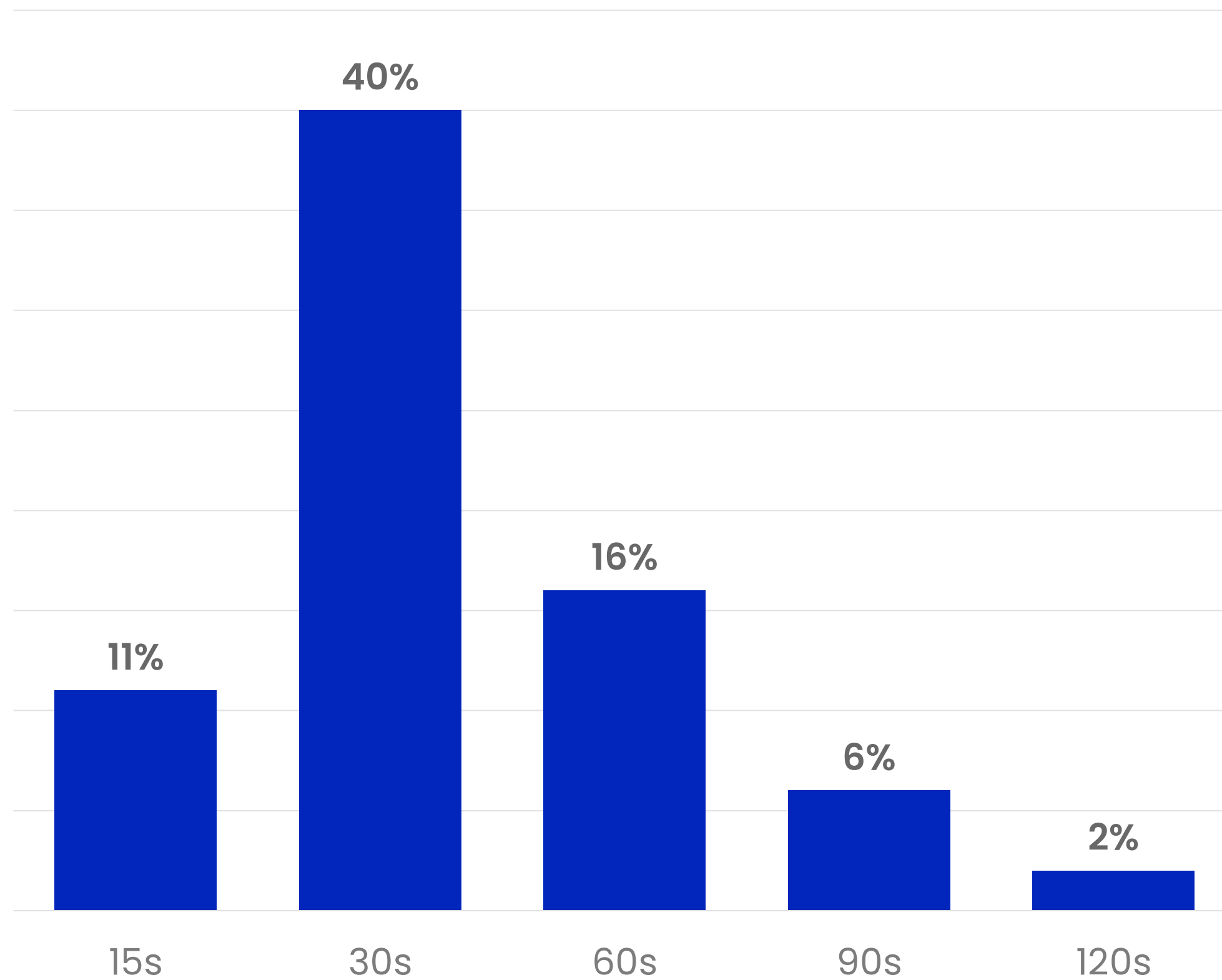
Breakout by ad position

- Pre: 30%
- Mid: 56%
- Post: 13%
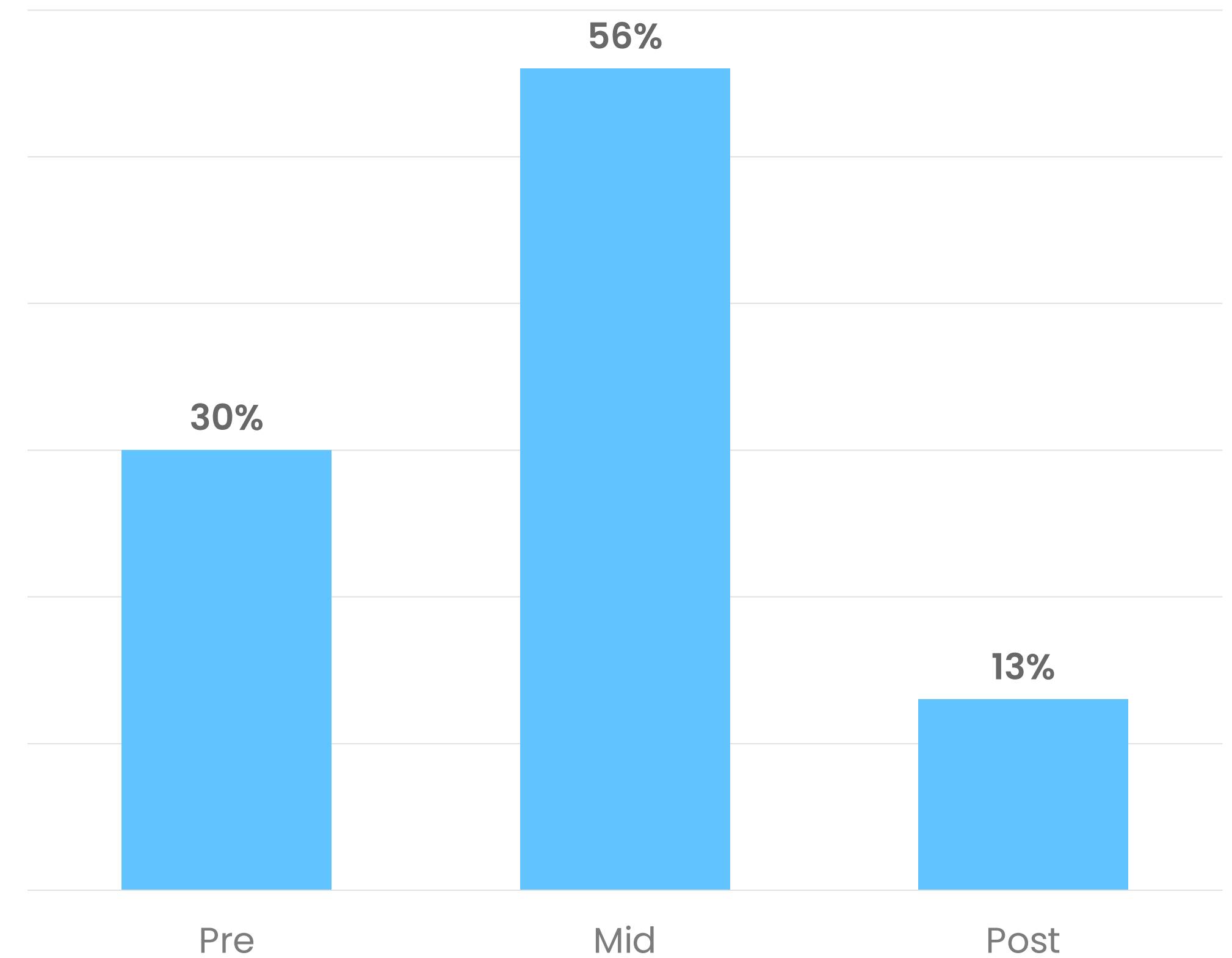
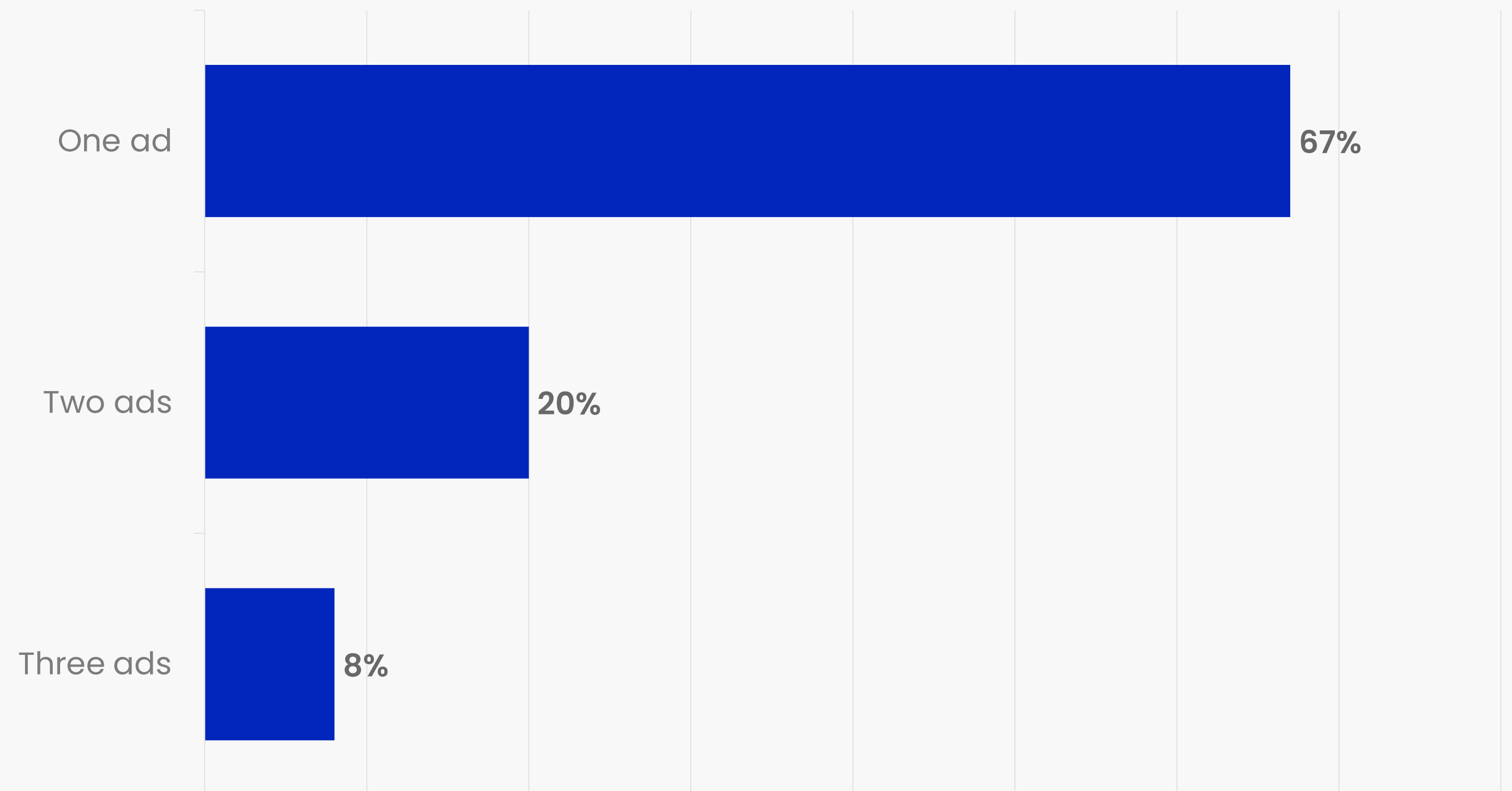* All percentages are based on total number of ads detected in the US
1 To account for minor variations in ad length, ad lengths are grouped based +/- 5s for 15s and 30s, and +/- 10s for 60s

How many ads ran on episodes with a single advertiser?

For **5%** of Q1 episodes, one advertiser filled all typically available slots.

Top genres for single advertiser episodes include **Business** (10%), **Technology** (10%) and **Education** (9%).

1 Ad counts broken out for episodes, where all spots typically available were filled by one advertiser

Ad counts for episodes with a single advertiser[1]

One ad	67%
Two ads	20%
Three ads	8%

MAGELLAN AI

To learn more, book a demo at magellan.ai