



# The 2026 FP&A Impact Report

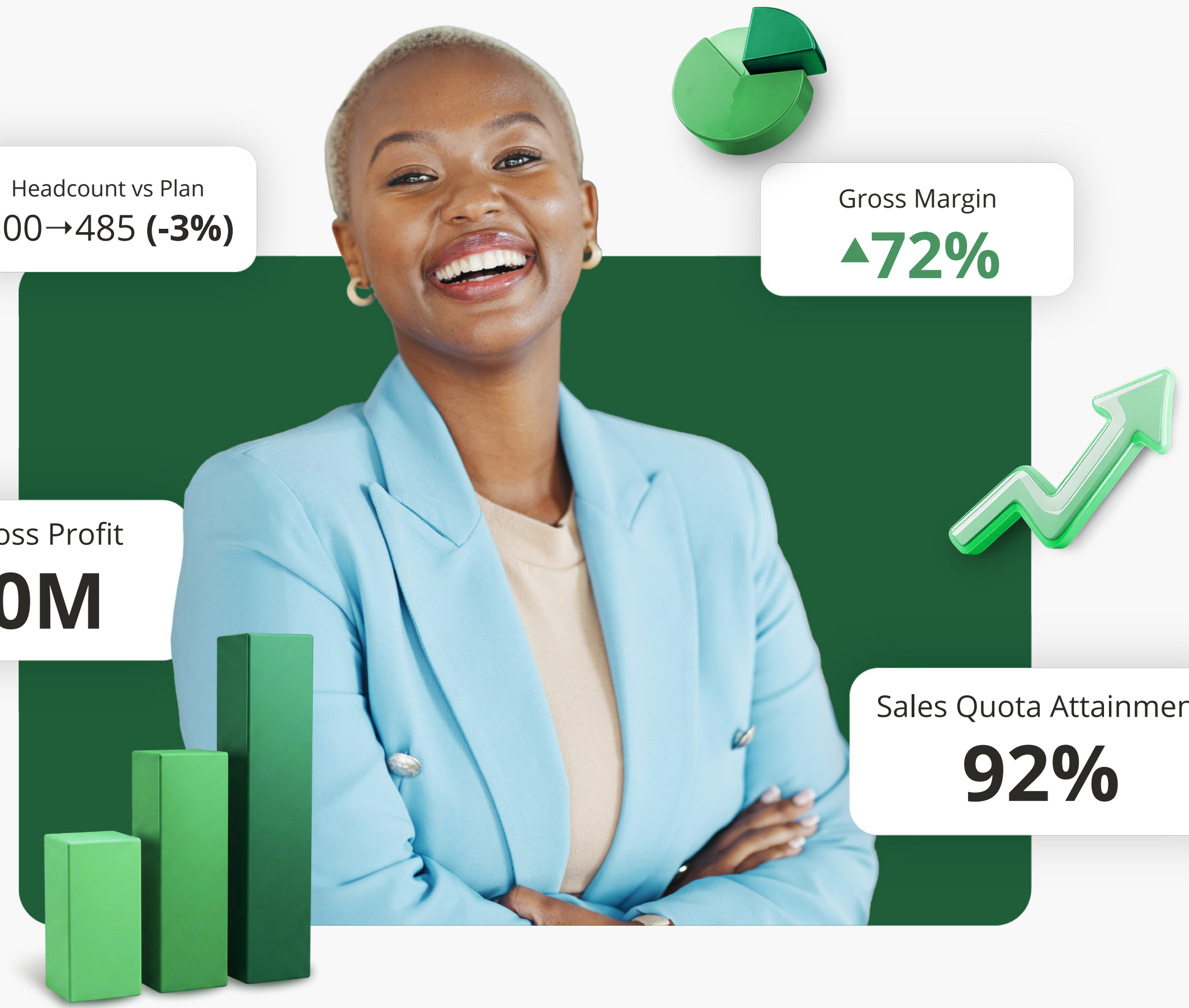
Where FP&A Stands Today, and the Data Behind Its Maturity Ceiling

Headcount vs Plan  
500→485 (-3%)

Gross Margin  
▲72%

Total Gross Profit  
**\$70M**

Sales Quota Attainment  
**92%**




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# About This Survey

Vena's 2026 FP&A Impact Report is based on a survey of 431 finance professionals. The survey was administered in October 2025 in partnership with research analyst firm Benchmarkit.

Survey participants work across a range of industries including financial services, technology, manufacturing and retail. They're at organizations with annual revenues ranging from less than \$50 million, up to \$1 billion or more, and 67% are part of a dedicated FP&A team, either within the office of finance or distributed across the business.

Located across the globe—including North America, Europe and the rest of the world—32% of respondents held the role of CFO or Head of Finance, 35% were in Financial Operations, 16% were in Accounting and 11% were in FP&A. Titles range from Director to C-Level Executive.

# 431

Finance Professionals

## <\$50 Million to \$1 Billion+

Organization Annual Revenues

## Financial Services Technology Manufacturing Retail

Industries Represented

6%  
Other

11%  
FP&A

16%  
Accounting

32%  
CFO or Head of Finance

35%  
Financial Operations

Title Level

# Introduction

**When FP&A teams see themselves as strategic orchestrators rather than financial gatekeepers, that's when they unlock their best work.**

"There is no such thing as 'Finance's numbers,'" says [Vena CFO Melissa Howatson](#). "This is *our* budget, *our* operating plan, and it needs to be collective."

Rather than connecting insights, decisions and action across their business, however, many FP&A teams are still stuck in the role of data reporters. And what it's costing them is the trust and confidence of the C-suite.

Sixty-one percent of finance teams say their executive leaders view their FP&A function as either a "transactional/reporting function" or "reliable advisors on financials." Only 31% said executives view FP&A as "strategic business partners," and 9% said "critical drivers of growth."

A big reason why many FP&A teams haven't been able to ascend to this higher level of impact is that producing the essential reporting they need is still too much of a slog. As we uncovered in our survey, data quality and availability were seen as the biggest bottlenecks to FP&A processes.

But fixing this problem involves more than just data delivery. It means bringing people and processes together to ensure financials are understood in the context of the operational realities of the business.

Many organizations have made strides towards this by embracing Integrated Business Planning, but what the data shows us is that true FP&A maturity—where the entire business has access to the data and insights they need to make the right decisions, right when they need them—requires more than just surface-level alignment.

And against a new normal of volatility and uncertainty amplified by higher-than-ever data volumes and AI disruption, the time for FP&A teams to step into the limelight as strategic partners to the rest of the business is most certainly *now*.

In our 2026 FP&A Impact Report, we'll provide a benchmark of where FP&A teams stack up in their collective maturity, unpack the trends and challenges on the horizon and share what can be learned from best-in-class FP&A teams.

**True FP&A maturity requires more than just surface-level alignment.**

What this data ultimately reveals is not just where FP&A stands today, but where it's going and how that impacts enterprise performance. As AI accelerates how quickly insight can be generated, the constraint for finance teams is no longer planning alone. It's how effectively they help their organizations turn insight into timely, unified action.



# Research Highlights



## Most executives perceive FP&A as "advisors" over "strategic business partners"

Sixty-one percent of respondents said their executives perceive the FP&A team as a "transactional/reporting function" or "reliable advisors on financials", whereas 31% said their executives perceive FP&A as "strategic business partners." Only 9% said their executives perceived FP&A as "critical drivers of growth."



## Data quality and availability are FP&A teams' number one challenge

Data quality and availability were the top reported bottleneck for FP&A teams, as cited by 58% of survey respondents. Finance leaders are prepared to put significant resources towards fixing this problem, with the top-cited FP&A investment priority for the next year (cited by 48% of respondents) being "improve data integration across systems."



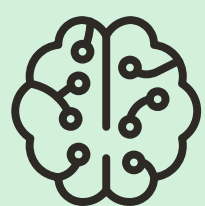
## More than half of FP&A teams are seeing high revenue forecast variances

Fifty-two percent of respondents say they're experiencing revenue forecast variances of greater than 6%. Economic factors may be at play, with industries such as retail reporting the highest variances. However, data quality issues and a disconnect between financial and operational data are other potential contributors that can't be ignored.



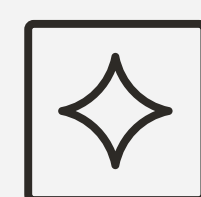
## Only 34% of respondents are fully integrating operational drivers into forecasts

While 52% of respondents say they have moderately integrated operational drivers (such as unit sales, SKUs, headcount, product lines and marketing spend) into their forecasting models, only 34% say they have fully integrated this level of real-time detail, signaling a potential gap in working context.



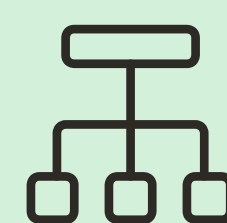
## Over a third of respondents believe AI agents will handle >50% of FP&A workflows

Finance teams see the value and productivity gains AI will bring to their workflows, with 37% of respondents saying they expect that within the next two years, more than 50% of their current FP&A workflows will be fully operated by AI agents.



## Most CFOs have introduced mandates for their teams to adopt AI

AI integration has become a top-level business priority, with 70% of respondents reporting they have mandates coming from their C-Suite to use AI in the finance organization. But with 51% of respondents reporting that they only have moderate or limited integration between their FP&A tools and source systems (e.g. ERP, CRM, HRIS, and BI systems), their data foundation may not be ready for large-scale AI adoption.



## Collaboration bottlenecks between FP&A and the business stall decisions

While 63% of survey respondents labelled their FP&A team's capacity for real-time collaboration with business units as Advanced or Leading, "Limited alignment/collaboration with other units" was still the second-most reported bottleneck for FP&A, cited by 43% of respondents. This disconnect means decisions ultimately move more slowly across the business.



## Spreadsheets reign supreme even in the largest enterprises

Ninety percent of respondents say they're using Excel for at least some modeling and reporting. Interestingly, large companies were among those reportedly depending on Excel the most: Nearly a quarter of respondents with over \$1B in annual revenue said they rely on Excel as their primary planning tool.

## Section 1

# FP&A Performance Benchmarks and Trends

In 2026, the mandate of FP&A is no longer just to distribute insights. It's to help the business turn those insights into confident decisions that result in timely action.

How they achieve this is a question of how effectively they coordinate their people, processes, technology—and now AI agents.

Here's how FP&A teams are measuring up when it comes to delivering on this core objective.



*"The largest obstacles to achieving Leading [FP&A maturity] is attrition where there is a barbell of tenure (tenured individuals and newbies, but no mid-level players) requiring all the tenured people to constantly pick up the slack (punch down) versus having the support to tackle high-level strategic priorities (punch up)."*

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

# People

## Many FP&A teams are still finding their footing and the right talent

Recruitment freezes, newly formed teams still formalizing roles and processes, team members covering FP&A alongside other accountabilities, and a gap in skill distribution across teams were all answers respondents gave us as to what was impeding their FP&A function.

This shows that many teams simply don't have enough hands on deck to manage the evolving expectations their business has for delivering insights and guidance.

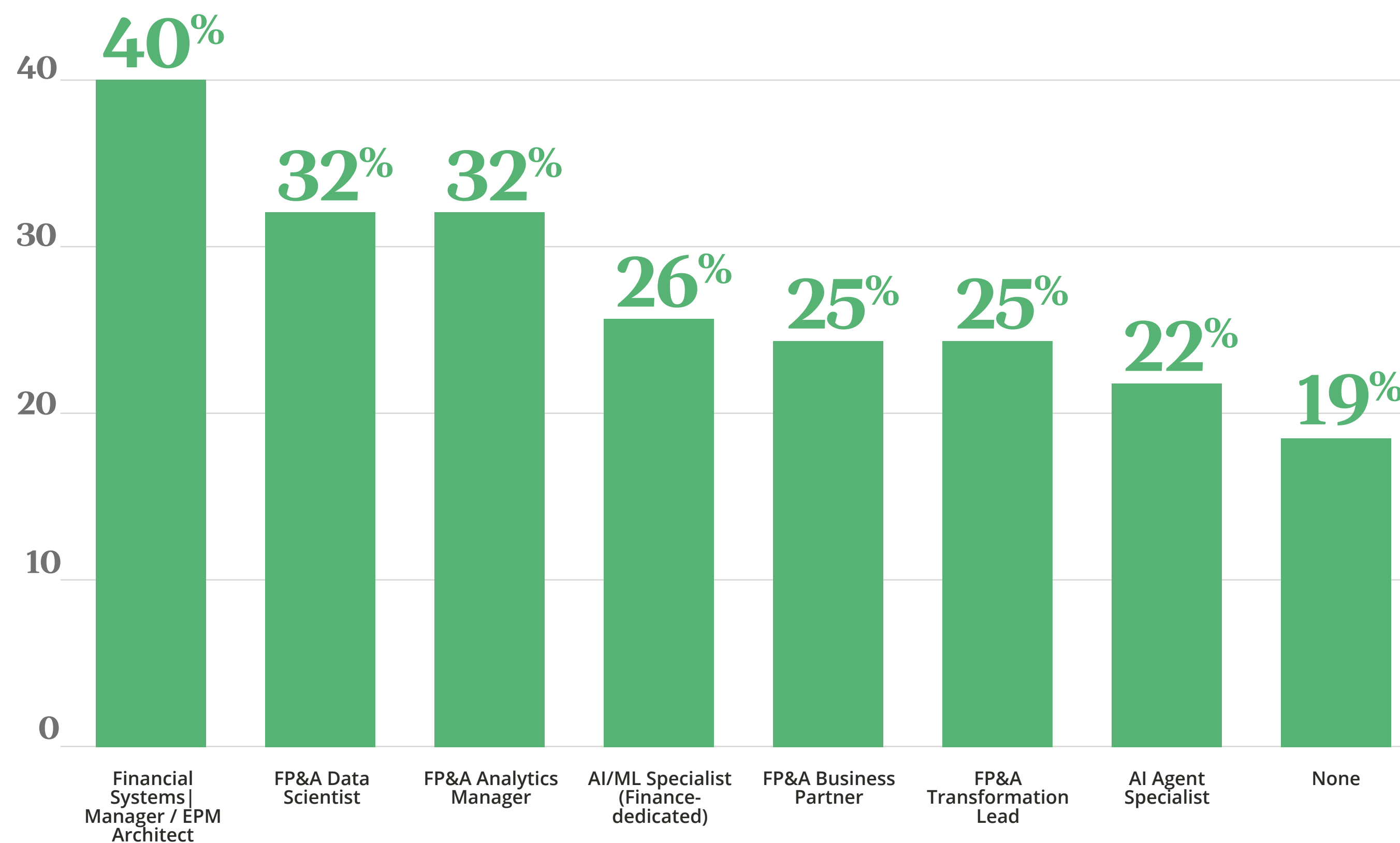
## Technical skills are in demand among FP&A hiring priorities

Many FP&A teams are adding to the skillsets they have available, especially to amp up technical proficiency.

The most popular roles being introduced within FP&A teams include Financial Systems Manager and EPM Architect (40%), FP&A Data Scientist (32%), and FP&A Analytics Manager (32%).

This shows a conscious focus from finance leaders on strong data management and business intelligence, especially as data volume and complexity increase.

Has your organization introduced (or is it planning to introduce) new FP&A-related roles in the last/next 12 months? If so, which roles?



N = 411

## Cross-functional collaboration increases alongside business complexity

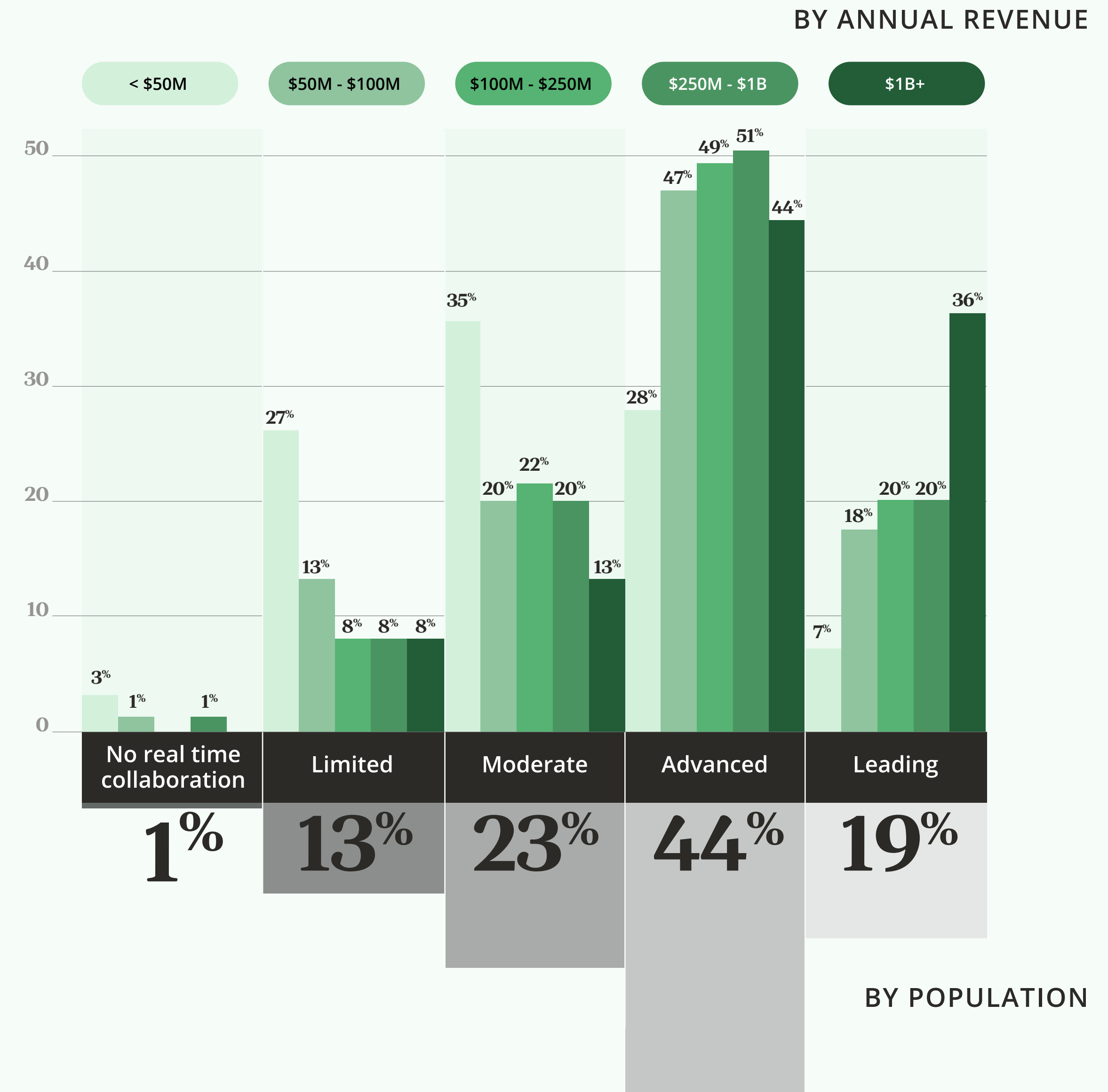
Nearly half (44%) of survey respondents rated the level of collaboration taking place between their FP&A function and other business units to support planning as “Advanced”. Nineteen percent went a step further and rated their level of collaboration as “Leading.”

Levels of cross-functional collaboration appear to grow as businesses scale, with respondents from companies with \$250M to over \$1B in annual revenue being the most represented among those with “Advanced” and “Leading” collaboration. Companies with less than \$50M in annual revenue were most likely, at 62%, to cite “Limited” or “Moderate” collaboration between FP&A and other business units.

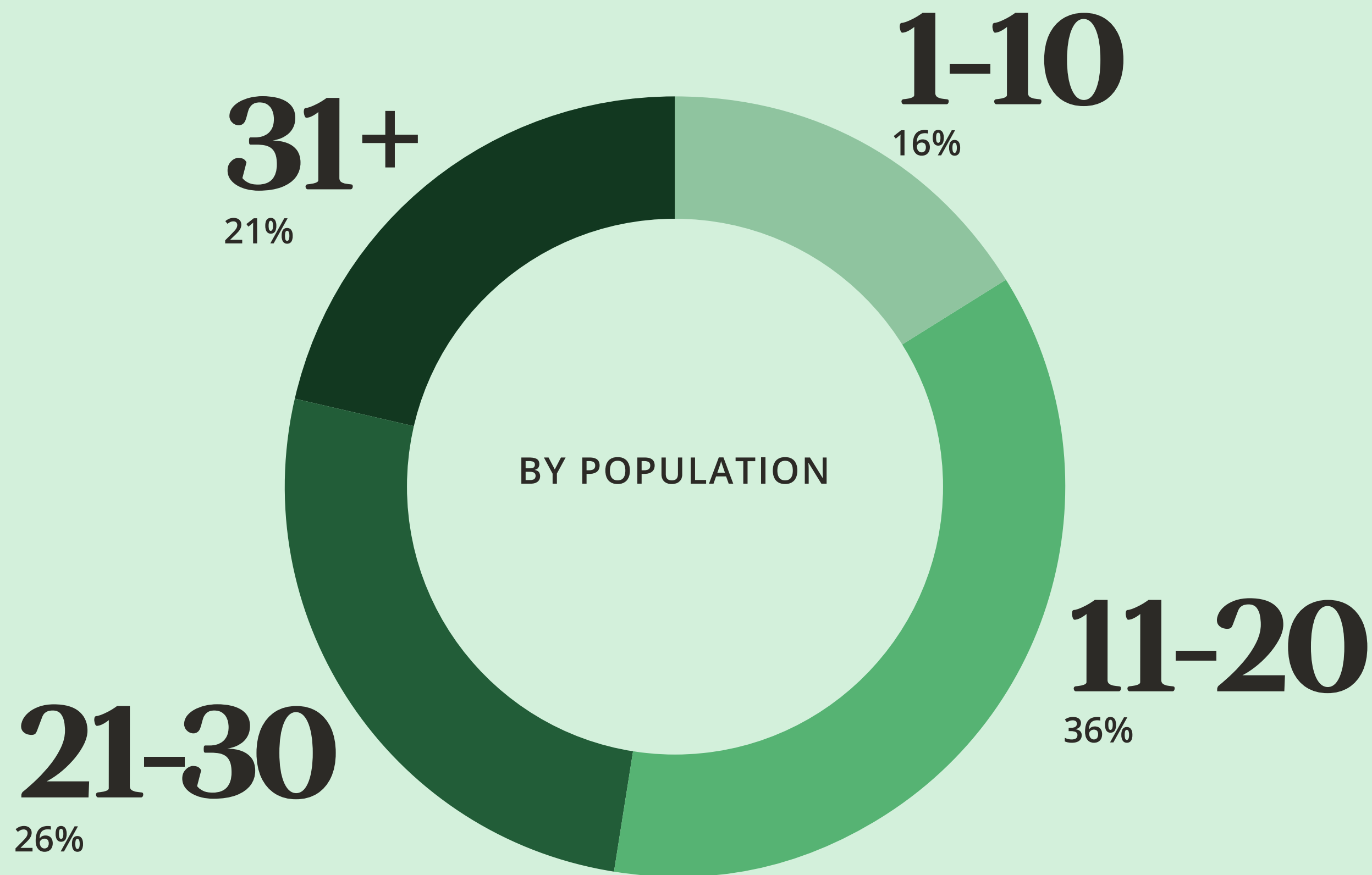
The level of collaboration between FP&A and the rest of the business required to scale operations also showed up in the number of people involved in annual budget planning.

The number of people (both within and outside of the finance department) participating in the budgeting process was most commonly between 11 and 20 (cited by 36% of respondents). But as company revenues scaled to \$1B and beyond, this number grew to 30+ people involved in the budgeting process.

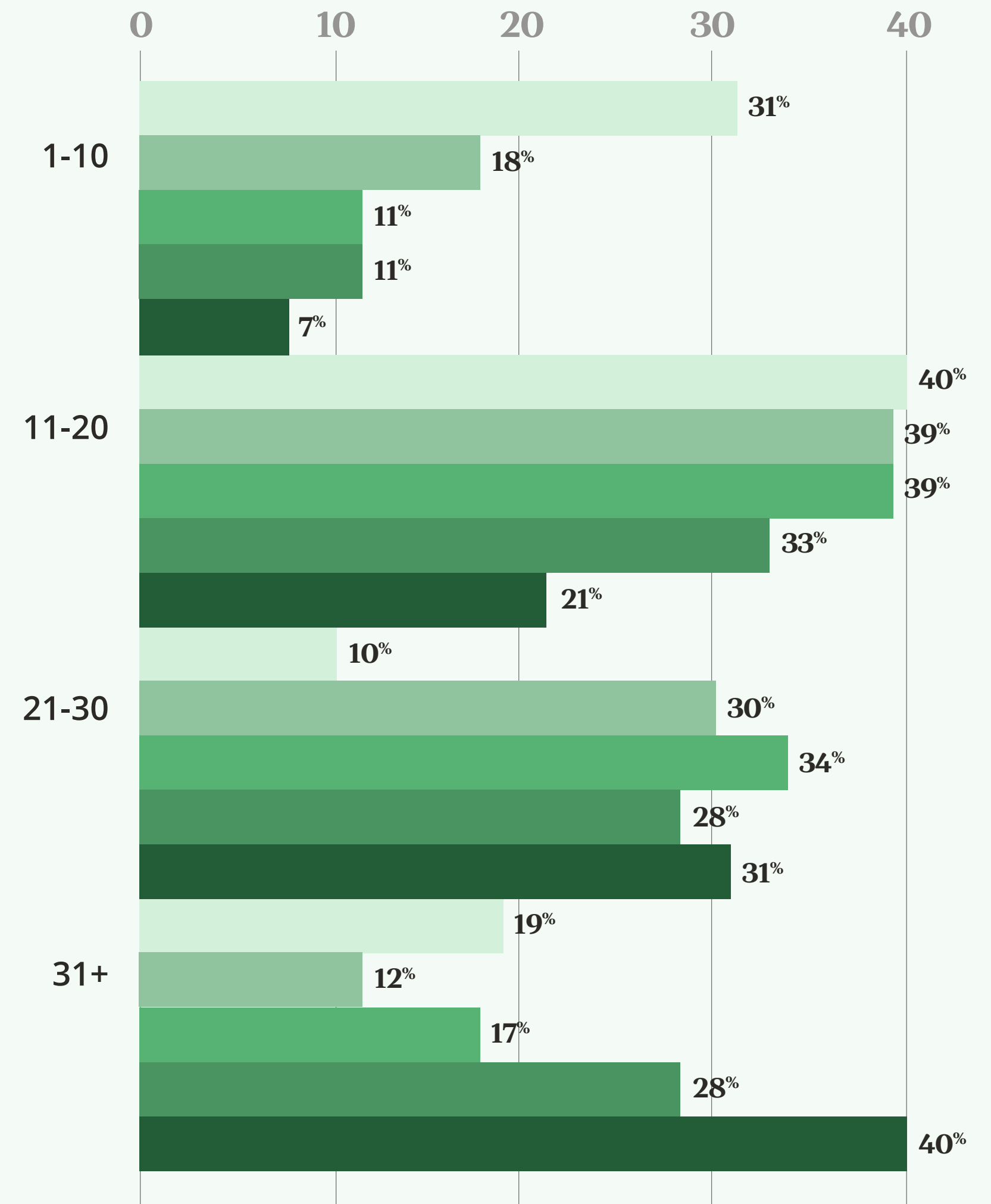
How would you describe your organization’s current capabilities for real-time collaborative planning between FP&A teams and business leaders?



How many people at your company  
(within and outside of Finance)  
participate in the budgeting process?



**BY ANNUAL REVENUE**



< \$50M
\$50M - \$100M
\$100M - \$250M
\$250M - \$1B
\$1B+
N = 397

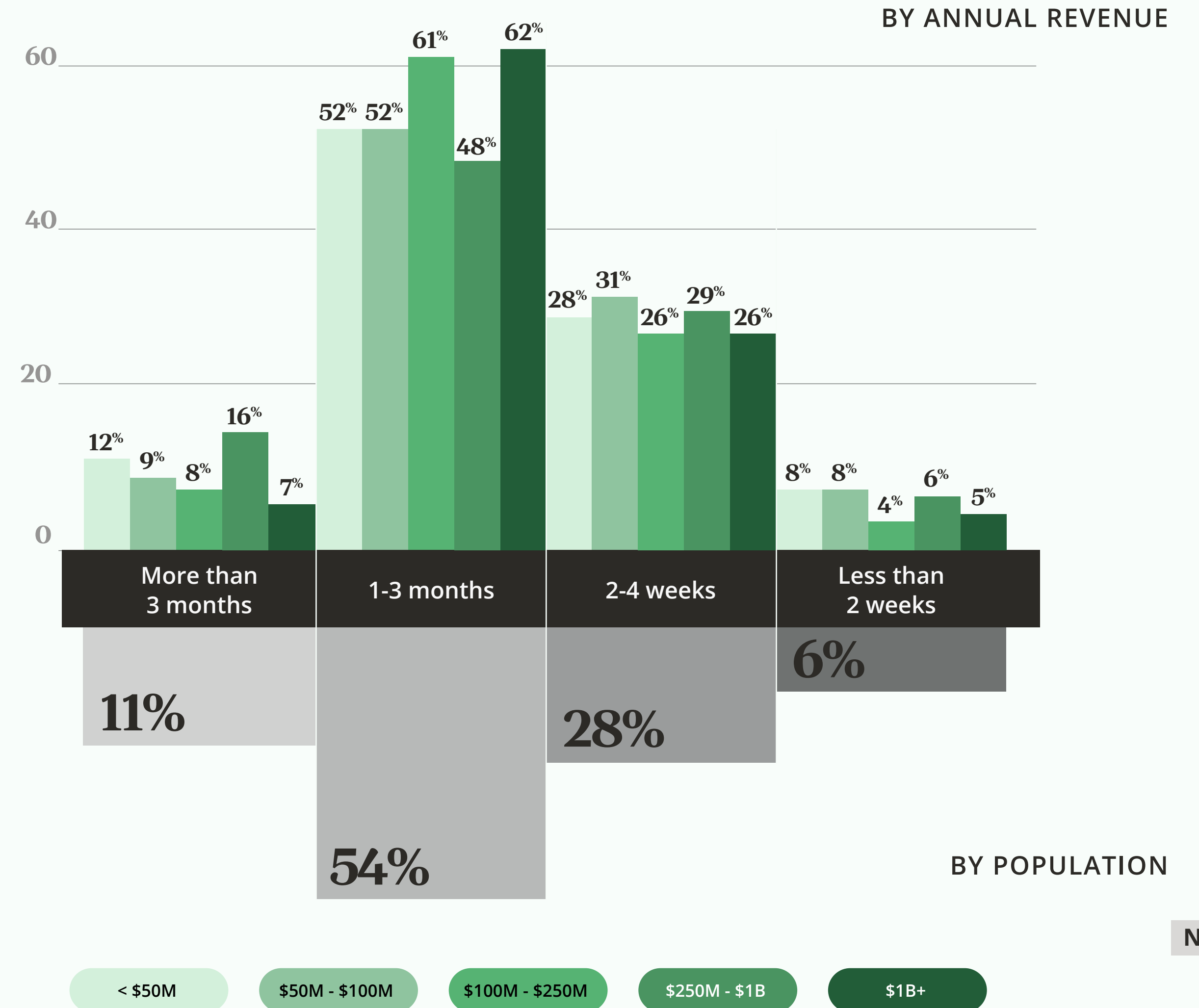
# Processes

## Most companies complete the annual budgeting cycle in 1–3 months

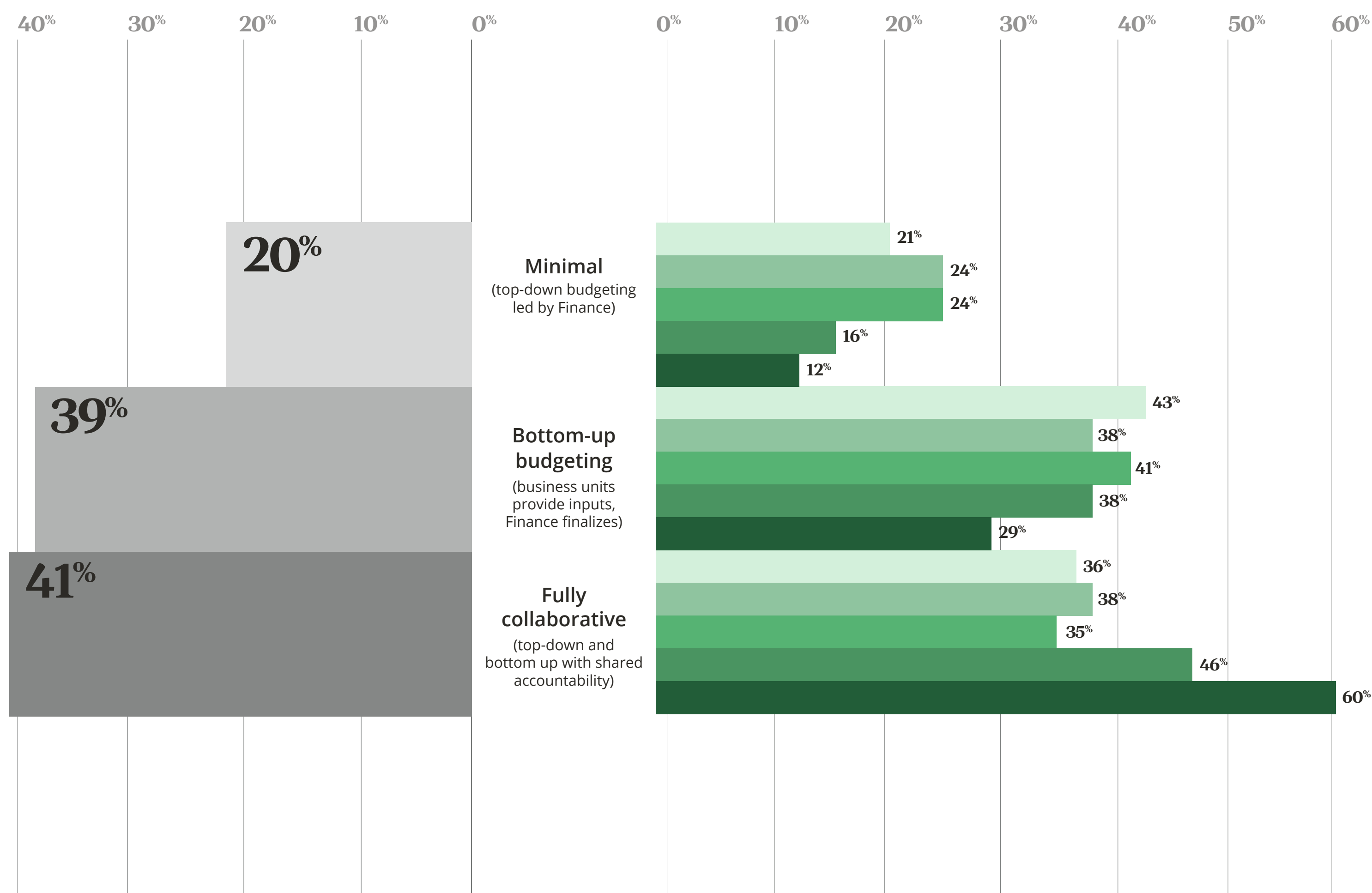
While many finance professionals have horror stories of drawn-out budgets, that's not the case for a majority of survey respondents this year. More than half (54%) are completing their annual budget in 1–3 months, with another 28% requiring even less time than that (2–4 weeks). In fact, only 11% are dragging budgeting out for more than three months.

What's also interesting to note is that it's not the largest companies that are taking the longest to complete their annual budget, but rather upper mid-size companies. While only 7% of companies with \$1B+ revenue take more than three months to complete annual planning, 16% of companies in the \$250M-\$1B range do. This may be evidence that until FP&A operational maturity is able to keep up, increased scale and business complexity leads to friction and bottlenecks.

How long does it typically take to complete your annual budget process?



## How involved are business units in the budgeting process?



## Finance teams favor a hybrid or bottom-up planning approach

Annual planning, for a large swathe of our respondents, is a collaborative affair, with 41% of respondents favoring a combined top-down/bottom-up approach, with accountability shared between the finance team and business units. Only 20% of respondents said they employ a top-down approach to annual planning with minimal input from other business units.

Shared ownership of the annual plan is a key feature of larger companies, with 46% of businesses with \$250-\$1B revenue and 60% of businesses with \$1B+ revenue favoring this hybrid top-down and bottom-up approach.

In contrast, companies with less than \$50 million in revenue are more likely to use a bottom-up approach, with 43% preferring this method.

These results may demonstrate that collaboration is especially imperative for bigger teams, where planning is more complex. But it may also be a reflection of how these teams are able to support this more complicated, time-consuming method of annual planning because they have more resources.

N = 397

< \$50M

\$50M - \$100M

\$100M - \$250M

\$250M - \$1B

\$1B+

## Continuous planning and rolling forecasts are still not the norm

Continuous planning provides Finance with constant real-time visibility into the company's budget and future goals, helping them remain resilient against market changes. But, it's still not the norm among the finance professionals we talked to.

Just under 20% of survey respondents are budgeting in an ongoing cycle—with 9% applying rolling budgeting and 10% taking a continuous planning approach. And only select respondents (6%) have introduced a rolling or continuous approach to forecasting. The most common cadence of updating forecasts we saw among respondents was quarterly (cited by 45%).

While this may have been sufficient in years past, with market conditions changing moment to moment, businesses may start to feel limited in their agility if relying on quarterly reforecasts alone.

But most businesses have at least moved away from an annual approach—only 13% of respondents are using a static once-a-year budget process, and only 11% are forecasting on an annual basis.

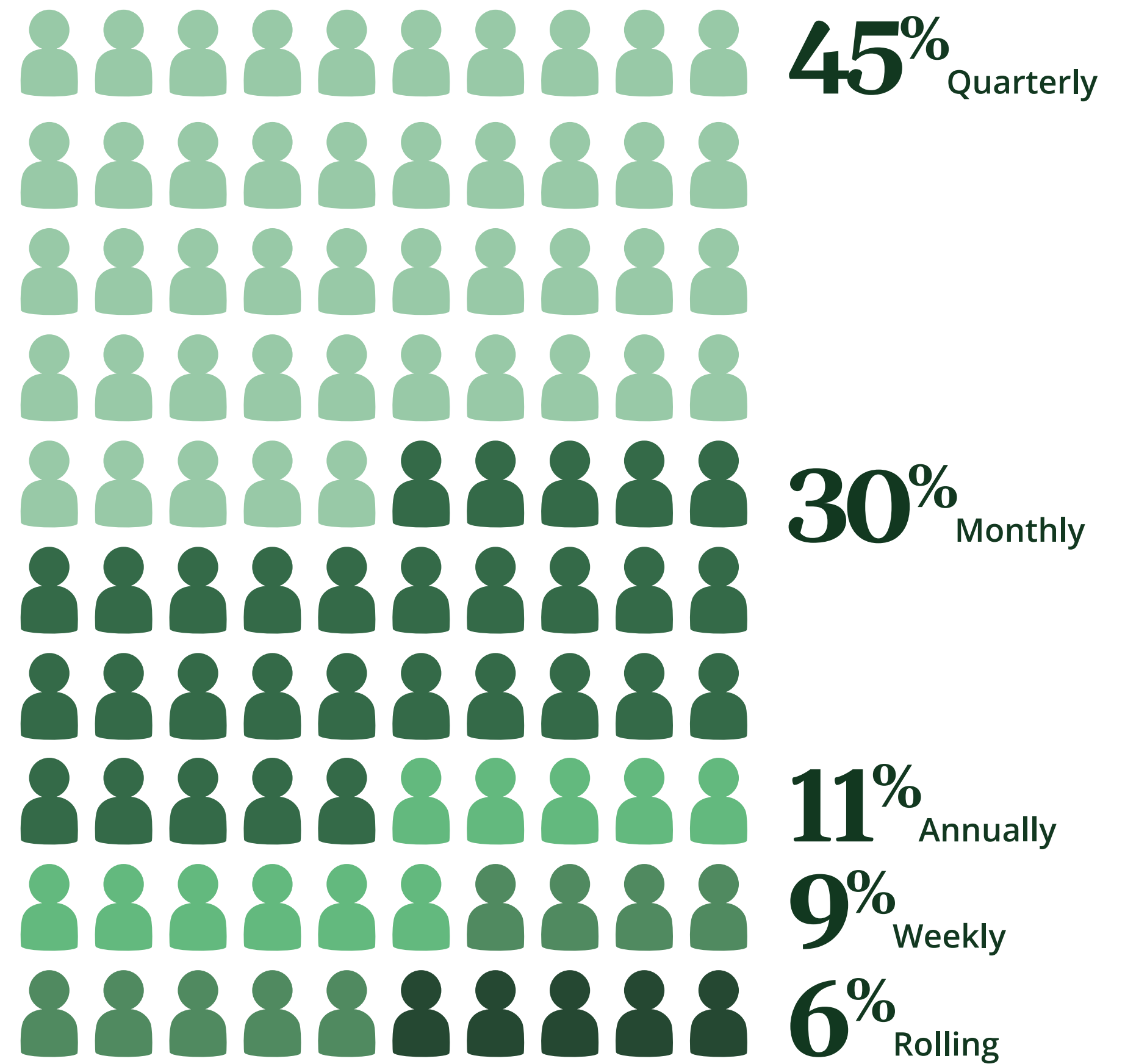
While increased forecasting frequency is an important step forward, adopting agile planning isn't just about how fast FP&A teams can generate forecasts, but how they're bringing other key departments along and ensuring those insights translate into aligned action.

*"[We] launched the FP&A function with its own identity only recently. [...] Moving from annual budget with no forecast to a rolling forecast continually updated is a significant culture shift."*

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

In many cases, technology could be what's holding back FP&A teams from a more agile mode of planning and forecasting, as this relies on clean, accessible data—which, as we'll see in the next section, is still a major challenge for many of the finance teams we surveyed.

How frequently does your organization update forecasts?



N = 394

# Technology & AI

## Finance teams are expanding their use of AI and automation—but are their data foundations ready?

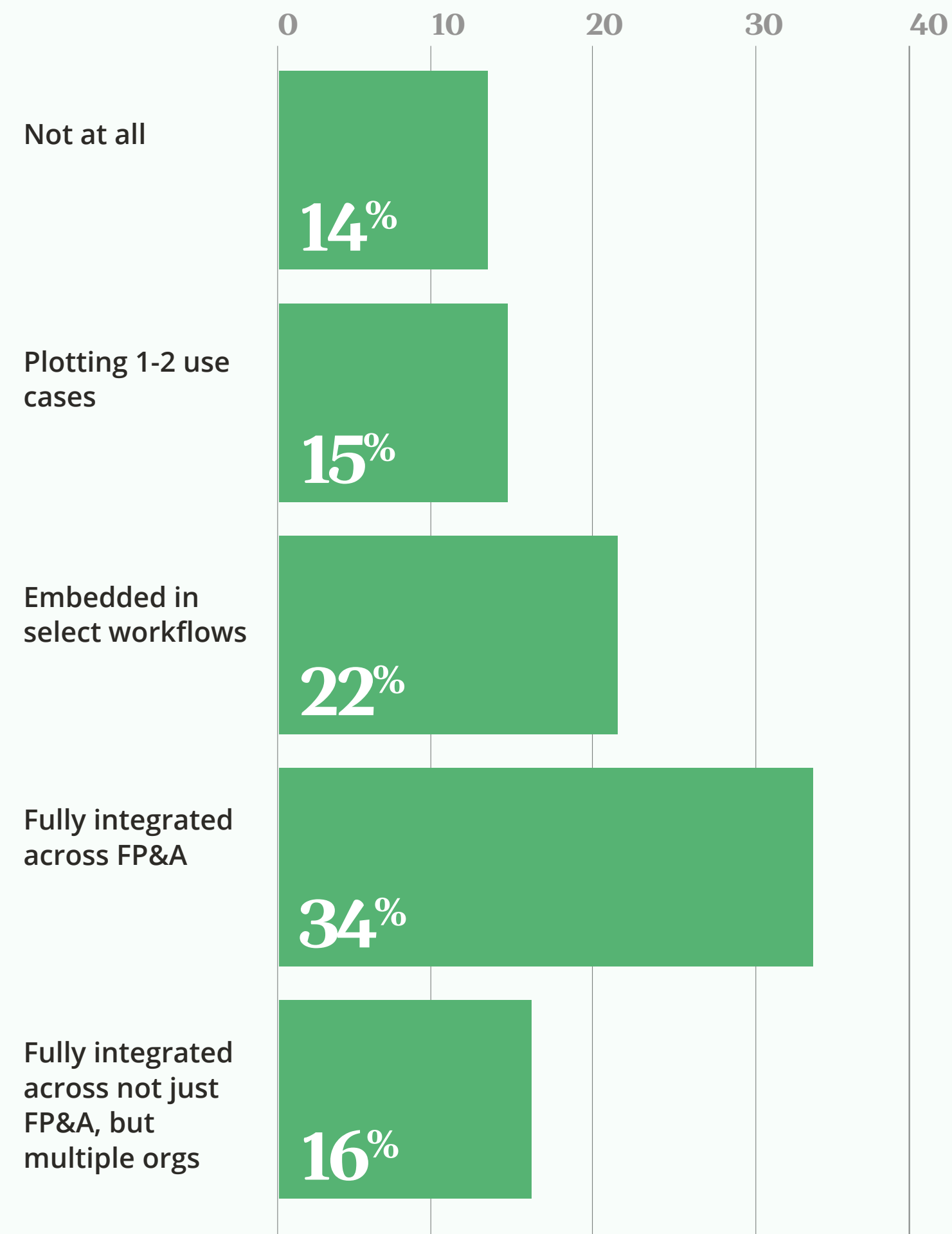
In the last year, the use of AI has skyrocketed across every facet of business operations, so it's no surprise that Finance has embraced it as well.

Executive-level sponsorship is contributing to growing AI adoption, with 70% of the companies we surveyed having a C-level mandate in place to use AI in the finance organization.

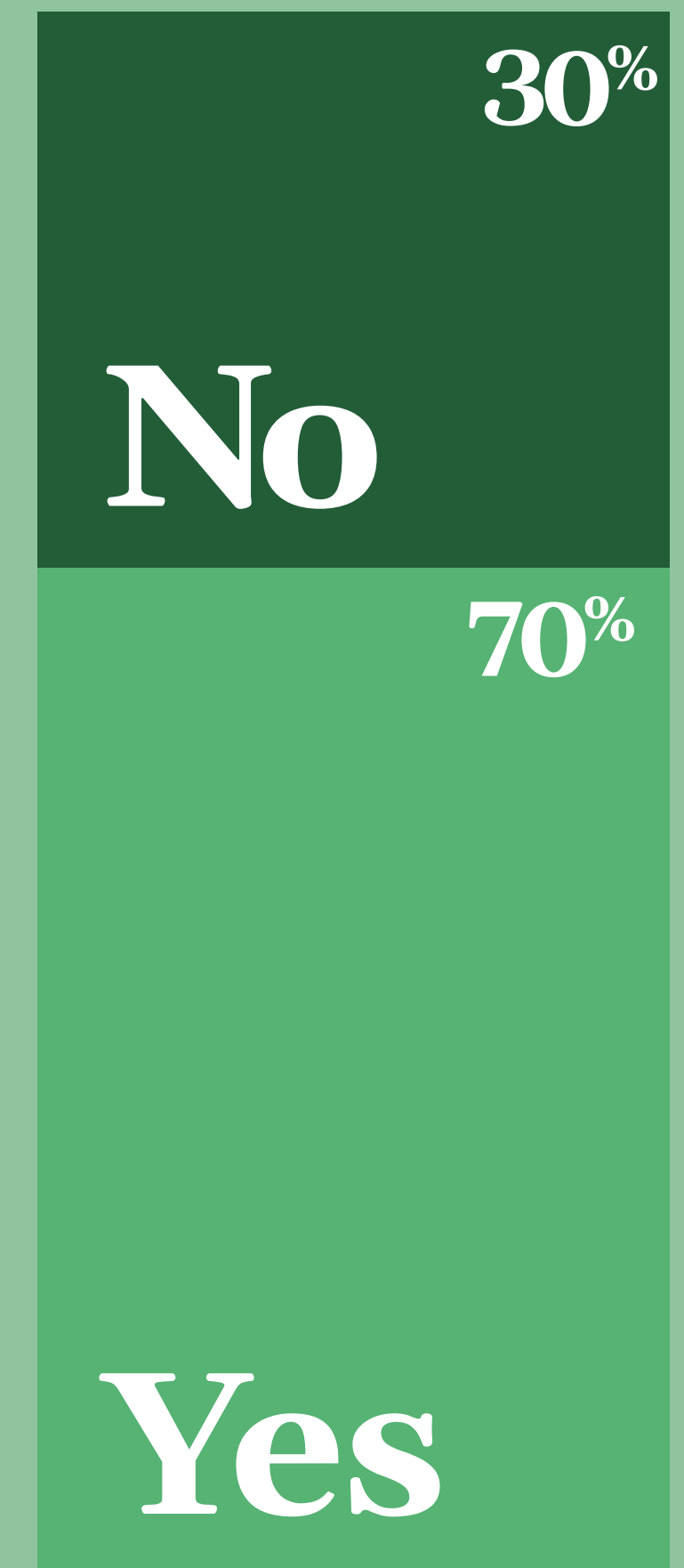
Our annual report from 2025 found that almost 57% of respondents were actively using AI for at least some of their financial operations. Today that number is 86%, with 34% of finance teams saying they've fully integrated AI agents across FP&A, and another 16% having done so across not just FP&A, but multiple areas of the business.

And respondents have no plans to stop growing their AI usage. Over the course of the next year, 36% of respondents say they're planning to invest in AI tools for forecasting and analysis. And in the next 24 months, 37% expect at least 50% of their workflow processes to be conducted by AI agents.

To what extent are AI agents embedded in your FP&A workflows (e.g. budgeting, forecasting, scenario modeling, trend analysis)?



Has your CFO or board of directors introduced mandated use of AI in your finance department as a corporate objective?



N = 387

This begs the question, if half of FP&A teams' current workload can be completed by AI, what will their role look like? With FP&A analysts no longer spending most of their time *producing* outputs, their focus shifts to *reviewing* them, acting as a critical judgment layer.

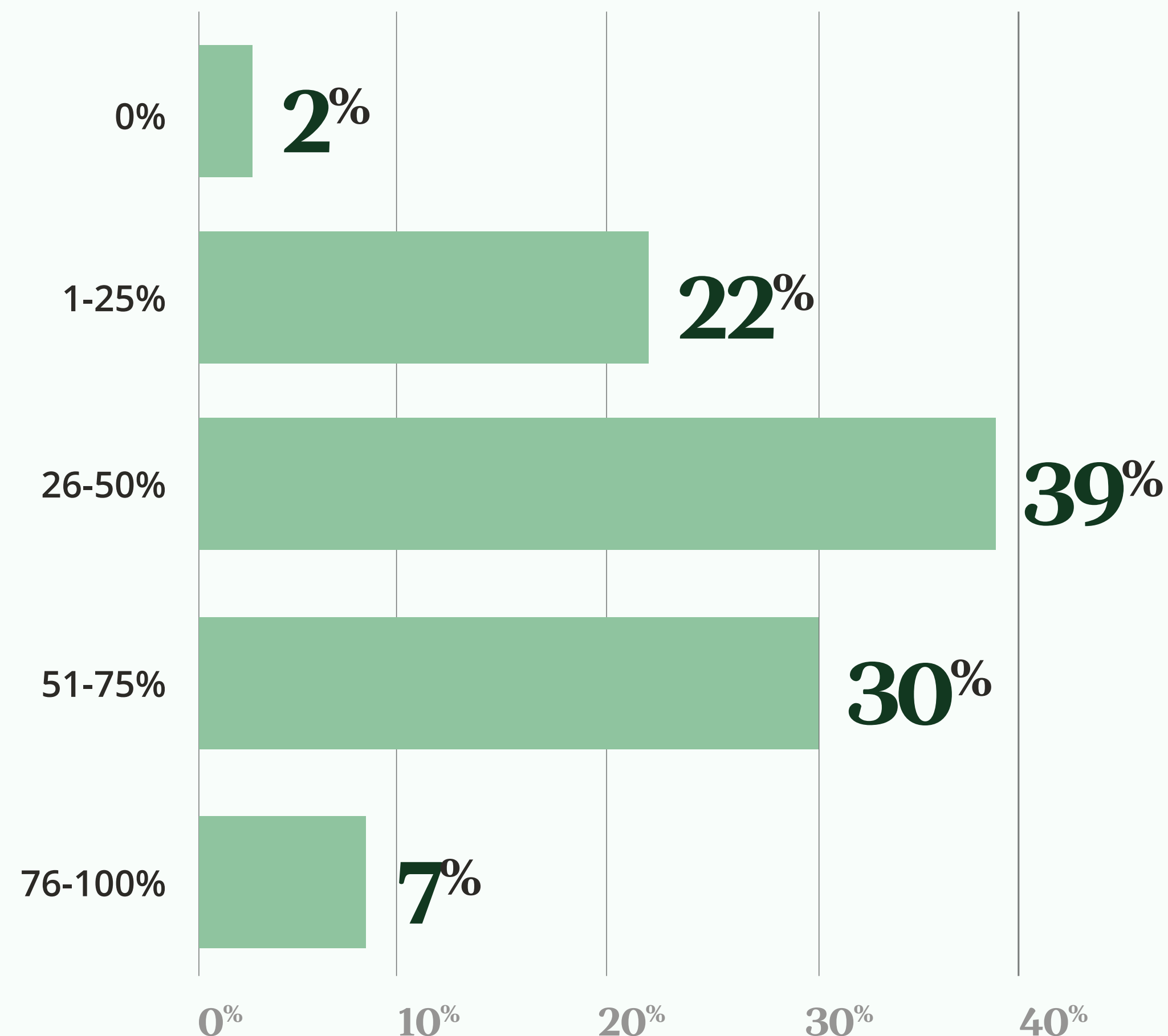
But, despite the optimism, finance teams' data foundations may not be ready for AI prime time just yet. From the survey, we learned that while 42% of respondents say they have fully integrated, real-time connectivity between their FP&A tools and source systems (such as ERP, CRM, HRIS, and BI systems), more than half (51%) only have moderate or limited levels of integration. What's more, 7% have no levels of integration at all, and depend on manual data uploads.

*My future vision is to leverage our advanced technology foundation to create a leading FP&A function that is proactive, prescriptive, and fully embedded in the strategic decision making of the entire organization.*

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE HEALTH INDUSTRY

For finance teams to deliver on the bold AI goals set by their executive leadership, they'll first need to unite their data foundation with real-time data feeds and sufficient governance to make AI-supported decisions trustworthy, auditable and actionable.

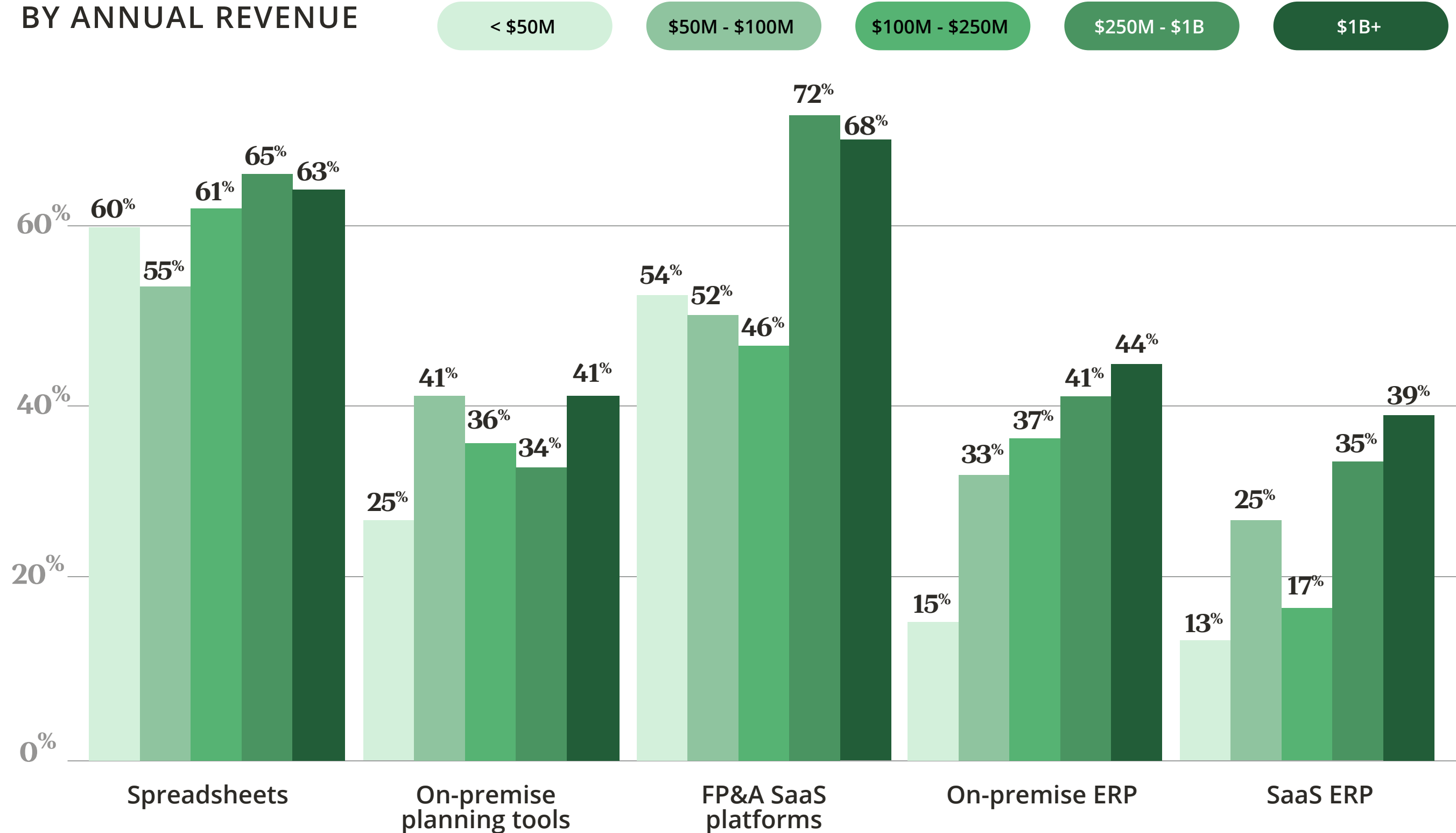
Over the next 24 months, what share of FP&A workflows do you expect AI agents will fully operate (with finance oversight only for high-stakes exceptions)?



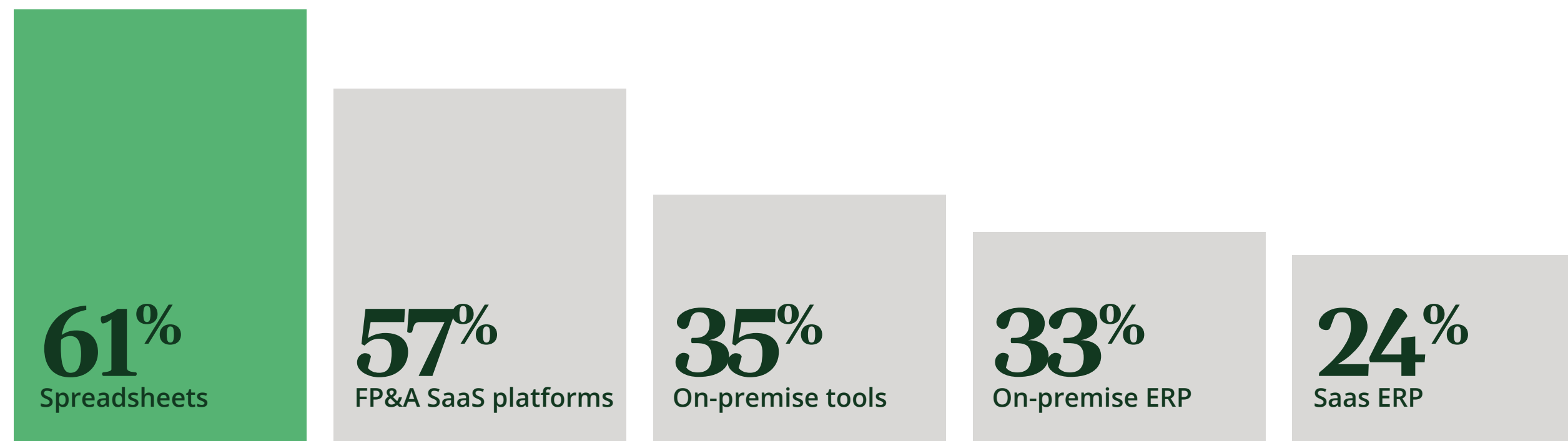
N = 335

## Which tools do you primarily use for budgeting and forecasting?

### BY ANNUAL REVENUE



### BY POPULATION



## Spreadsheets are still the primary tool for FP&A

Even as automation and AI become more prevalent, however, FP&A teams are still relying on tried-and-true tools as much as they always have.

Ninety percent of respondents say they still use Excel for at least some modeling and reporting, no doubt owing to its familiarity and flexibility. And while 57% of survey respondents use FP&A software as one of their primary tools for budgeting and forecasting, 61% also said they rely on spreadsheets for this purpose.

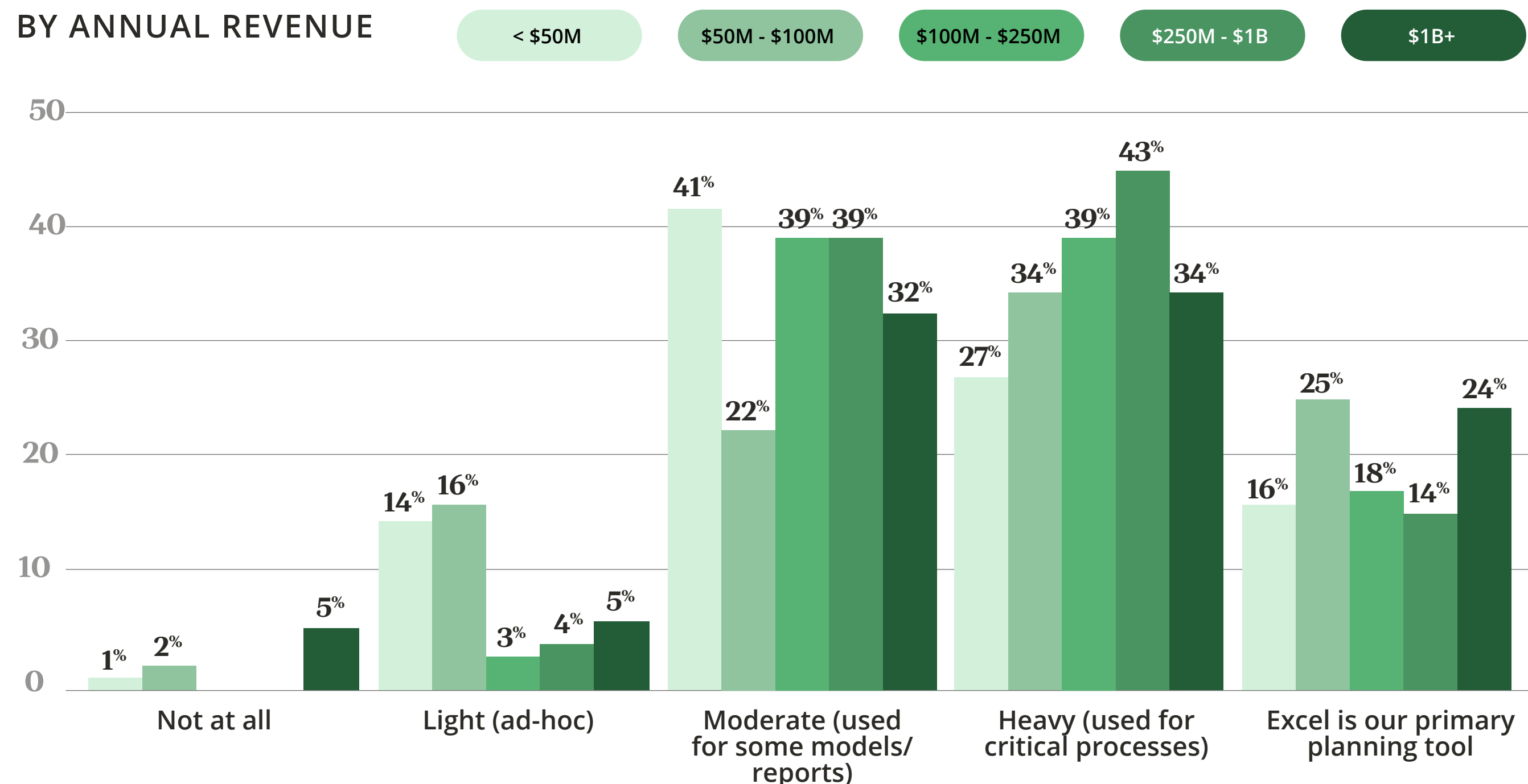
### 90% of respondents say they still use Excel for at least some modeling and reporting

What might come as a surprise to some is that the size of a company has little impact on a team's reliance on Excel. A full 63% of companies with \$1B+ in annual revenue and 65% of those with \$250M-\$1B in annual revenue still use spreadsheets as a primary budgeting and forecasting tool. And 90% of companies with \$1B+ in annual revenue report at least moderate reliance on Excel, with 24% citing it as their primary planning tool.

N = 388

## To what extent does your FP&A team rely on Excel alongside your primary planning platform today?

### BY ANNUAL REVENUE



Even as their financial requirements become more complex, enterprise FP&A teams find themselves returning to Excel. This may suggest that enterprise-grade planning software is not fitting the bill for FP&A teams, lacking the modeling flexibility and ease of use finance professionals get from Excel. And with AI models such as Claude now directly integrating with Excel, finance teams (and stakeholders) can accomplish even more in the platform—from cleaning data to building financial models in seconds—without deep Excel expertise.

But even with the added firepower of AI, relying on spreadsheets without proper data governance could prove detrimental, adding challenges around data integrity, system integration, workflow control and auditability.

This could make it harder for teams to scale FP&A processes effectively and maintain data accountability. Siloed data and manual data entry can also slow down collaboration and introduce the possibility of human error—especially at large businesses with extensive data to work with.

### BY POPULATION



N = 388

## Section 2

# Bottlenecks, Roadblocks & Challenges

A well-run FP&A department acts as the compass of the business, providing trusted data and insights to swiftly guide it to the best path forward.

But, from our research, we've found there are a few recurring obstacles preventing FP&A teams from operating at the level they're capable of.

These bottlenecks rarely exist in isolation. Data fragmentation, manual workflows, communication silos and forecast inaccuracy often compound one another, delaying important decision making.



# Data Quality & Availability Are FP&A Teams' Top Challenge

An integrated technology stack is crucial to modern finance teams, connecting data sources and removing silos to empower end-to-end visibility, enhance data accessibility, eliminate manual data entry and reduce errors. But integration is still a work in progress for many.

In our 2025 annual report, the top-reported challenge inhibiting finance teams' planning processes was "accessing data from multiple source systems," cited by 36% of respondents.

This year, unfortunately, not much has changed.

In fact, more than half (58%) of respondents pointed to data quality and availability as a current bottleneck impeding their FP&A function (making it the top-reported obstacle).

Which of the following best describes the current bottlenecks in your FP&A function?



N = 394

## Data is still the number one technology challenge

Data quality and availability were also ranked as the number one technology challenge by 28% of the financial professionals we surveyed. And for almost three-quarters of respondents (73%), it's in their top three.

While this may be a technical constraint—due to a lack of systems talking to one another—it may also be an operational constraint. If businesses aren't connecting their people and processes as well as systems, they may lack the level of shared operational context needed to form effective plans, make decisions quickly and move on them with confidence.

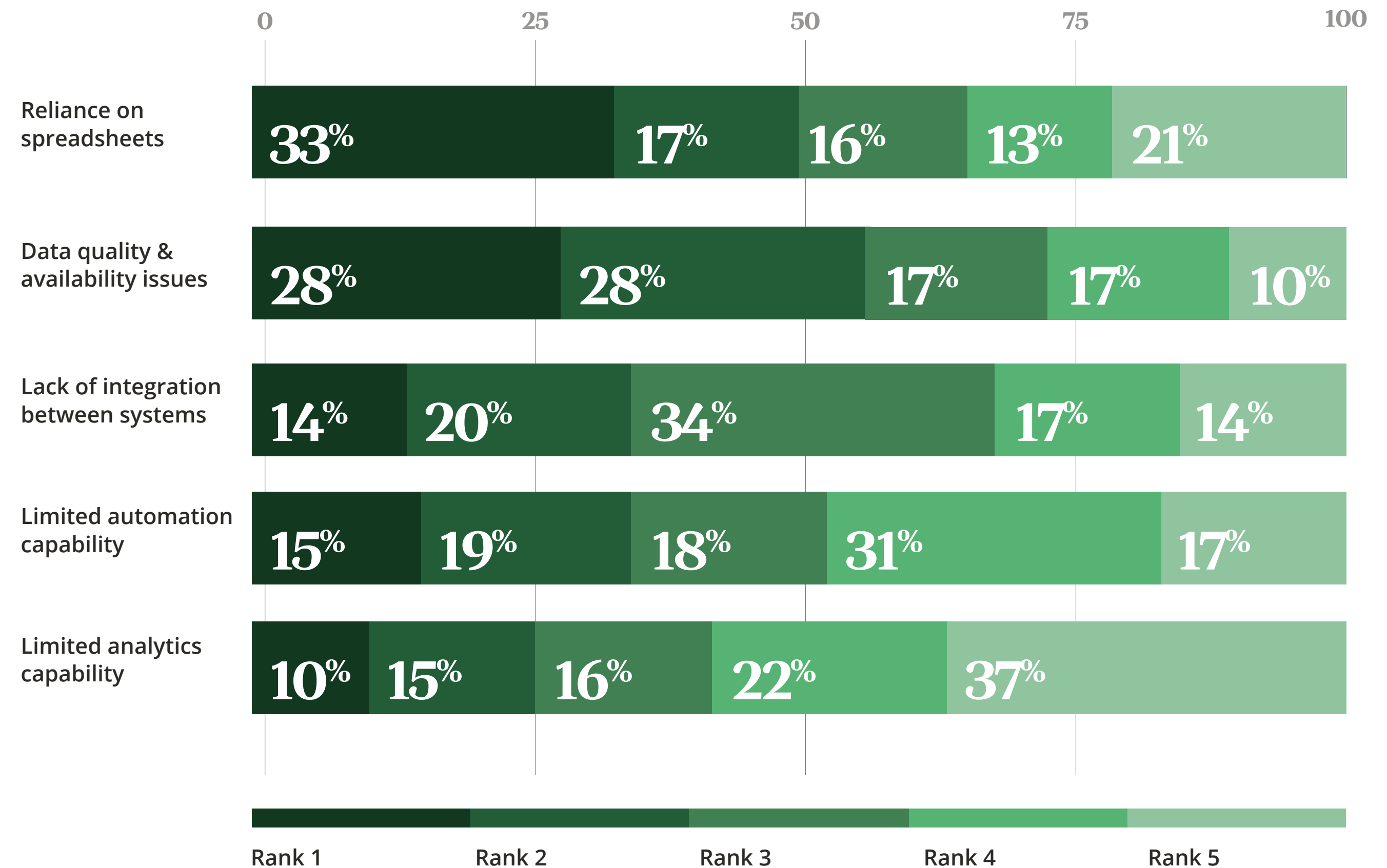
*[Our FP&A is] lacking sales forecasting models and not linking costing forecast to sales forecast.*

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

“Data quality matters. As they say: garbage in, garbage out,” says **Meredith Hobik, Director of Ecosystem Strategy and Operations at Vena**, who began her career in FP&A and strategic planning. “Where I’ve seen some of the biggest data quality issues is in Excel spreadsheets going back and forth between finance business partners and their broader teams. Where things can go wrong is the tagging, structure, or breakout of the data. Data cleanliness issues can come from missing data if, say, CRM fields are not being filled out, or not filled out properly.”

## What are the biggest technology challenges in your FP&A department?

RANK THE FOLLOWING FROM 1 TO 5.



(1 = This is a major challenge and 5 = This is a minor challenge)

N = 394

## End-to-end integration is still elusive

We learned through our survey that just over half (51%) of respondents report moderate or limited integration between their FP&A tools and source systems. And when asked to identify the biggest technology challenges in their FP&A department, 68% named a lack of integration between systems in their top three.

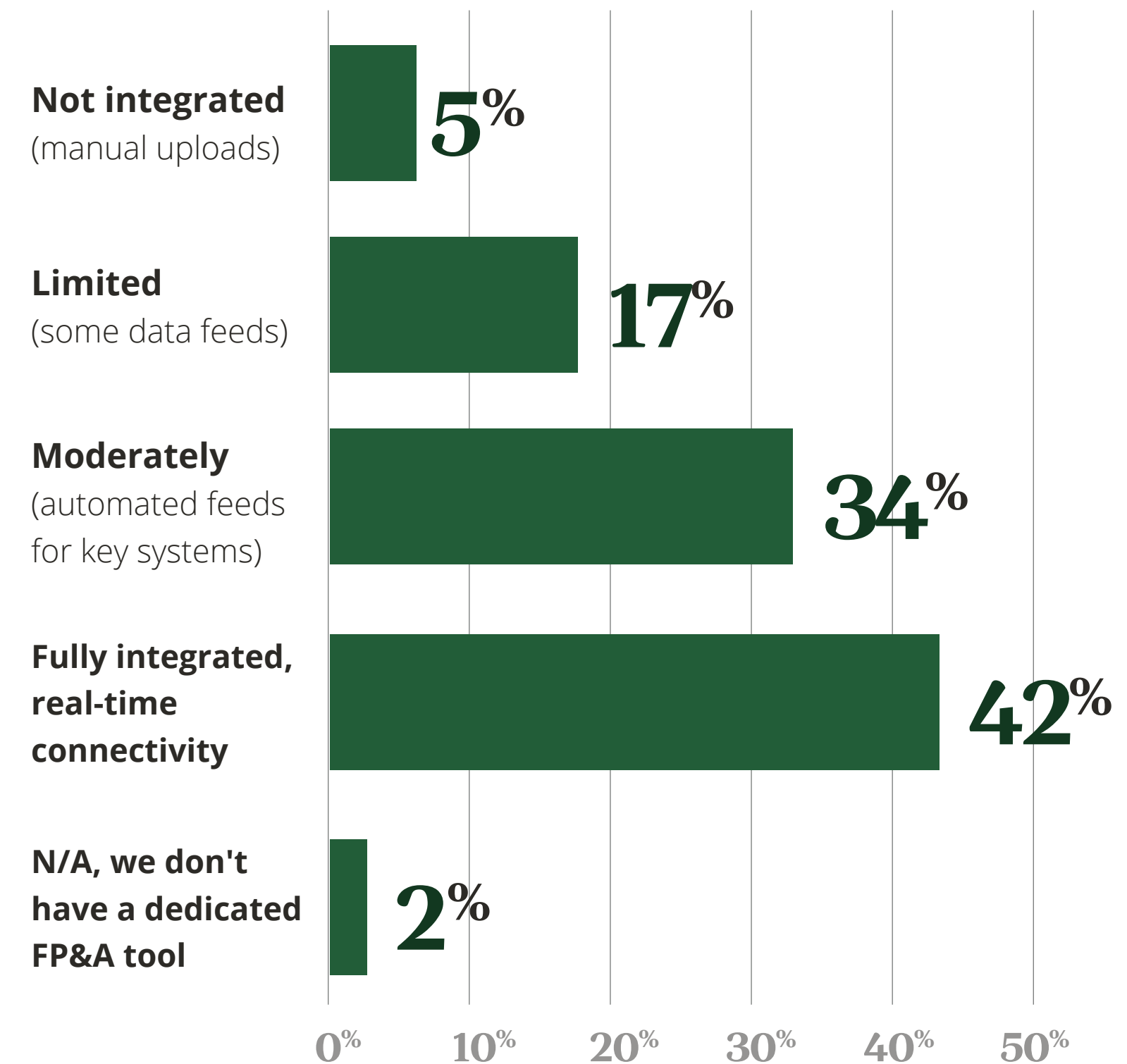
These integration issues create fragmented data environments, making processes more manual, insights slower to achieve, and businesses less agile. These gaps in data visibility can introduce delays in finance and leadership teams' ability to make important decisions, which is especially detrimental given the pace of change in today's economy.

**[We are] still limited by asynchronous data, lack of quality data, and siloed systems with either manual or no integration.**

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE HEALTH INDUSTRY

Moreover, without a well-structured, fulsome and trustworthy data source, FP&A teams are limited in their ability to further implement and gain value from AI workflows.

## How integrated are your FP&A tools with your ERP, CRM, HRIS, and BI systems?



N = 388



*A lot of what is done currently is manual through spreadsheets with multiple siloed systems. We are actively working through improving these processes and hopefully integrating FP&A software in the near future to help facilitate our transition to a more robust process.*

- SURVEY RESPONDENT (INDUSTRY "OTHER")

## Finance teams are actively investing resources towards solving their data problems

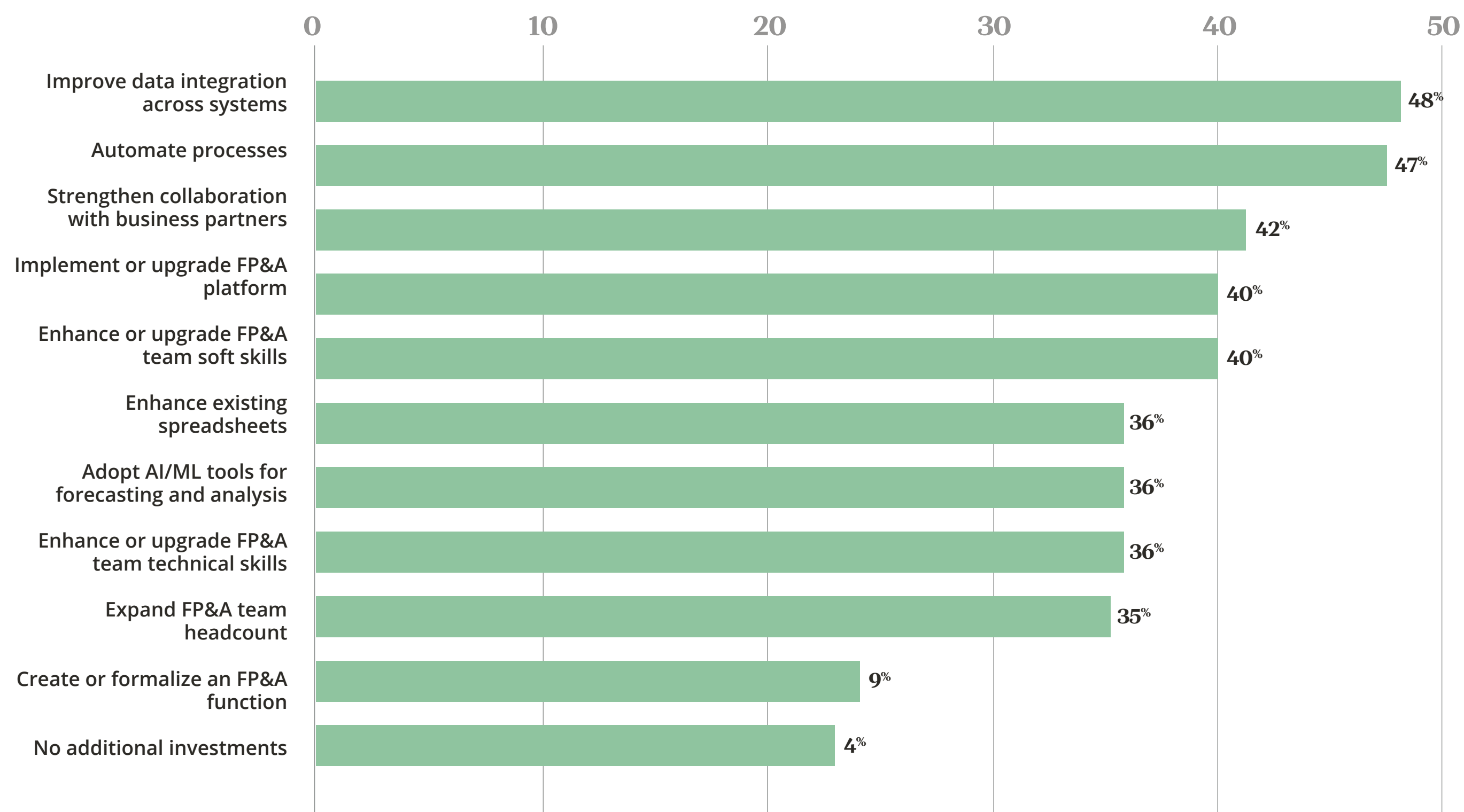
The good news is that the finance professionals we surveyed clearly understand that their data issues need to be dealt with once and for all.

That decision is manifesting in a greater emphasis on hiring for technical roles. These hiring plans—which focus on roles like Financial Systems Manager/EPM Architect, FP&A Data Scientist and FP&A Analytics Manager—show a desire to fill the data divide, and an understanding of the actions needed to do so.

What’s more, when respondents were asked what investments into FP&A they planned to make in the next 12 months, “improve data integration across systems” was answered by 48% of them. This offers hope that integration will become less of an issue and that Finance will build fully connected systems that empower FP&A from end to end.

### What additional investments in FP&A are planned for the next 12 months?

#### BY TOTAL POPULATION



N = 411

# High Variances in Revenue Forecasts Erode Confidence in the Numbers

Beyond slowing decision making at the highest levels of enterprise planning, data quality and integration challenges make it difficult for FP&A teams (and the business units they support) to fully trust their forecasts.

How accurate are your revenue forecasts versus actuals?



N = 393

## Forecasting accuracy is seen as a challenge

When asked what their top objectives were as an FP&A team, the largest share of respondents (35%) named “Improving forecasting accuracy” as their top priority. Seventy-two percent of respondents placed it in their top three objectives.

When respondents were asked how accurate their revenue forecasts are compared to actuals, 52% said they’re experiencing forecast variances greater than 6%.

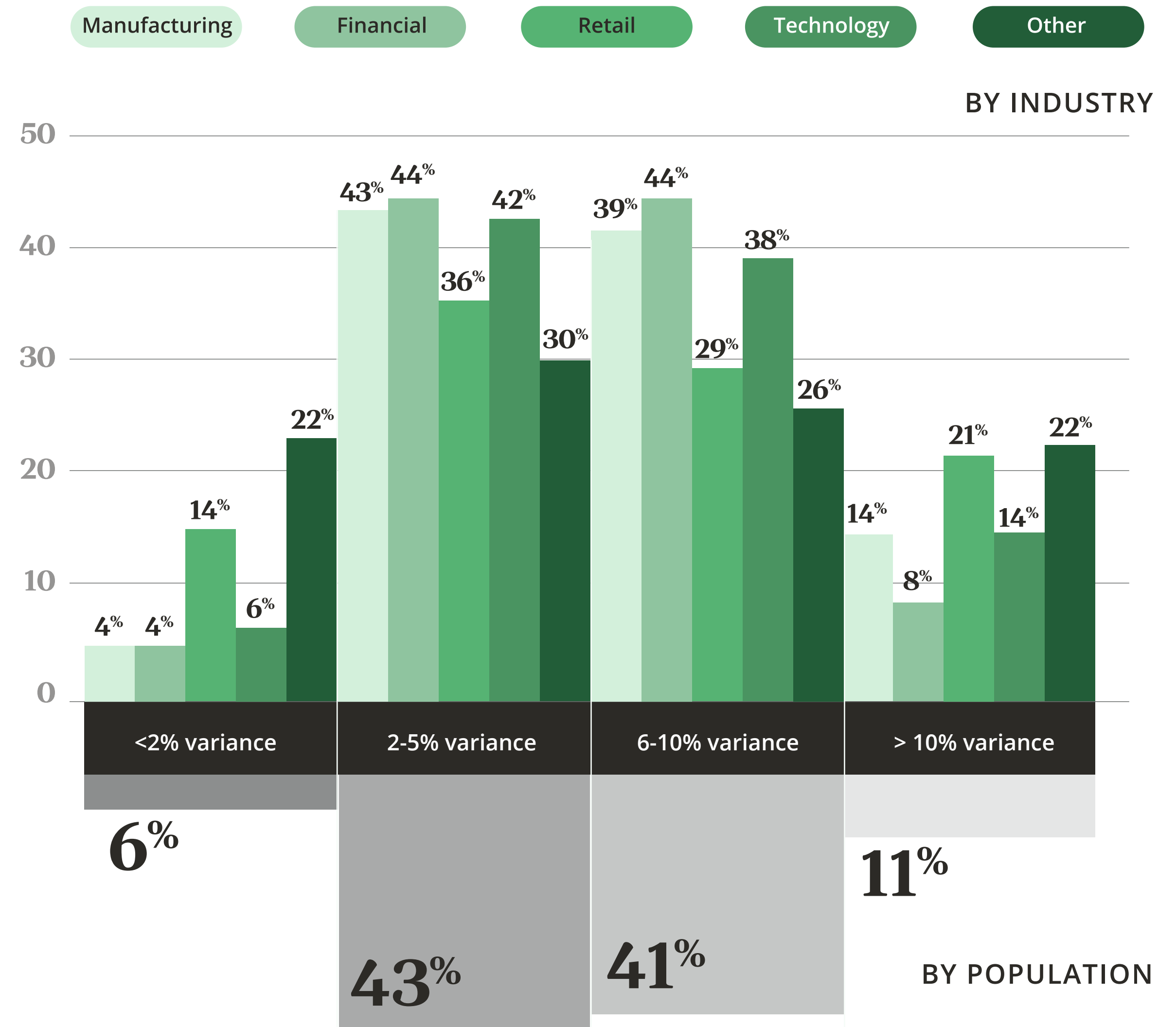
The degree of forecast variance that should be considered tolerable will vary based on your drivers and the context of what’s happening in your business. But the fact that more than half of finance teams are seeing variance in revenue forecasts—which many processes rely on being predictable—in excess of 6% (and 11% seeing variances in excess of 10%) is a potential red flag.

***Business units are not held accountable for the accuracy of their forecasts and there's only so much one person can do.***

- SURVEY RESPONDENT (INDUSTRY “OTHER”)

There are multiple factors that could be contributing to those accuracy issues—from poor data quality and data silos to the integration issues explored earlier. But other trends may also be at play, be they at the macro or micro level.

## How accurate are your revenue forecasts versus actuals?



## Market volatility could be a factor in some industries

A breakdown of forecast accuracy by industry shows issues in the retail sector, in particular. In that industry, 21% of respondents report variances of 10% or more (compared to just 11% of respondents across all industries).

This may be indicative of the volatility the retail market experienced in 2025, where larger macroeconomic conditions such as tariffs and price hikes impacted profitability and made it harder to predict what was ahead. Not to mention, the retail industry inherently faces greater variability due to seasonality, pricing pressure, and staffing complexity.

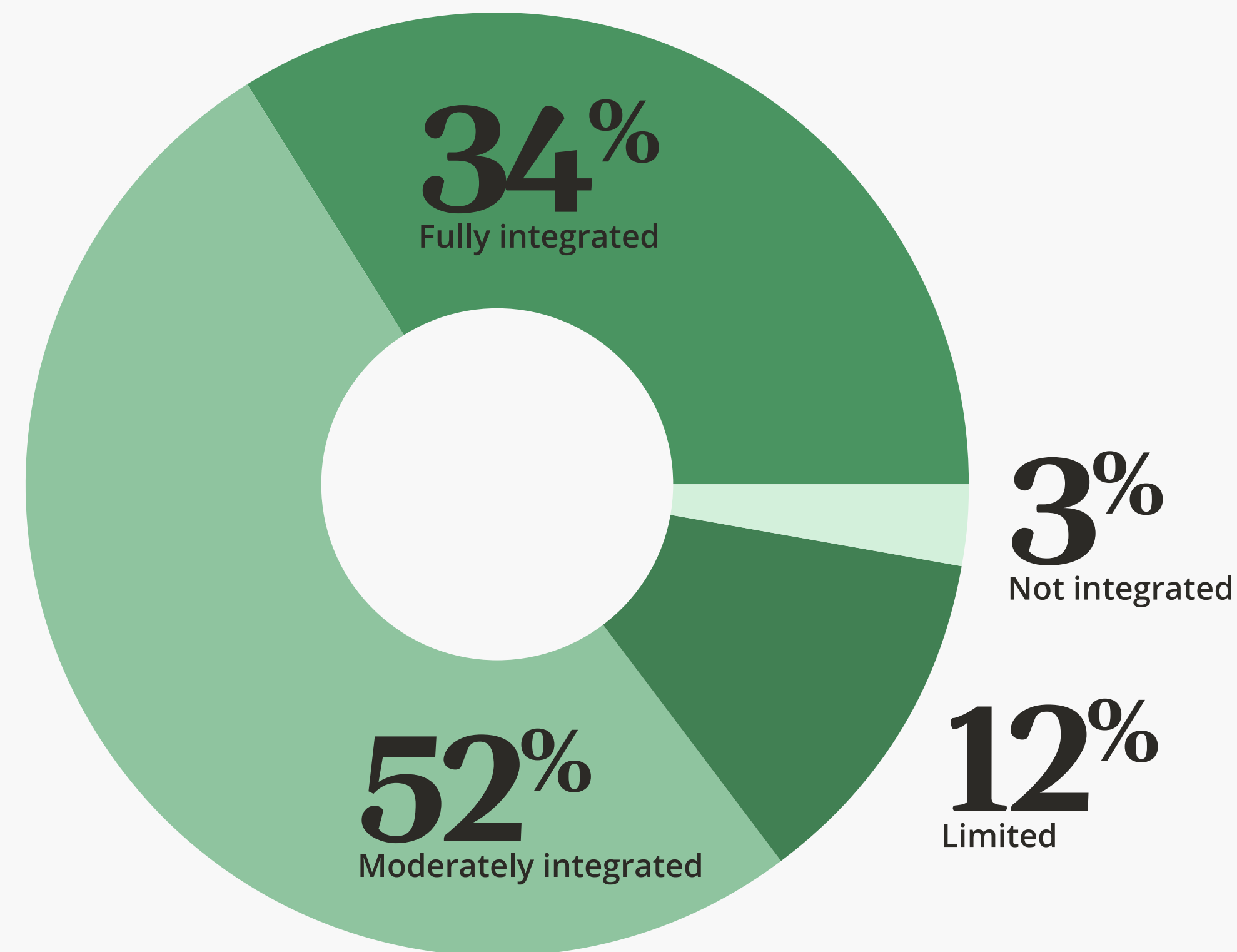
## Operational alignment could also be playing a role

Another reason as to why FP&A teams are seeing noticeable variances in their revenue forecasts could be due to insufficient detail or inputs connecting real-time business operations to overarching financial plans.

“The more information and data sets you bring in, the more Finance is going to be able to improve accuracy,” says **Meredith Hobik, Director of Ecosystem Strategy and Operations** at Vena.

“What’s the data signal that would have helped you forecast that spike in expenses? From a revenue perspective, maybe it’s intel in your CRM that your FP&A person doesn’t know about, like notes on the side. But that data signal isn’t coming in, it’s watercooler talk rather, and so forecasts weren’t adjusted and now they’re off.”

Through the survey, we learned that only 34% of organizations are fully integrating operational drivers—such as unit sales, SKUs, headcount and marketing spend, for instance—into their forecasting models. Without understanding and factoring in the near-time signals correlated to revenue forecasts that a boots-on-the-ground perspective provides, FP&A teams will continue to have blind spots that prevent them from catching potential risks and course-correcting the business early.



How integrated are operational drivers (e.g. unit sales, SKUs, headcount, product line, marketing spend) into your FP&A forecasting and scenario models today?

N = 297

# Manual Spreadsheet Work Prevents Teams from Focusing on Strategic Analysis

In 2026, there's one aspect of how FP&A teams operate that remains unchanged: their love of Excel.

While it's natural for finance professionals to gravitate towards this familiar and flexible tool, continually relying on offline spreadsheets signals that there's a gap in what FP&A teams are getting from their current tech stack.

*"Manually doing everything for 90 entities with an FP&A department of four swallows up all of the time when it could be spent on more value added tasks."*

- SURVEY RESPONDENT (INDUSTRY "OTHER")

Much of that manual spreadsheet work is likely a stopgap for the data integration challenges respondents reported, where FP&A teams are extracting and cleaning data to analyze or feed into other systems manually.

## Spreadsheet usage remains dominant

Ninety percent of our survey respondents said they rely on Excel alongside their primary planning platform for at least some models and reports. This means there has been no deviation compared to our annual report from 2025, in which we found that 89% of finance teams relied on Excel despite having planning software in place.

What's more, the tool most used by respondents to support budgeting and forecasting was spreadsheets, cited by 61% of respondents. And it's causing problems: 33% ranked this reliance on spreadsheets as their number one technology challenge (taking the top spot), with 66% placing it in their top three.

### Finance team reliance on Excel alongside primary planning software



## This reliance is slowing businesses down

Relying on offline, disconnected spreadsheets adds inefficiencies to FP&A, creating siloed data and expanding manual workloads.

Spreadsheets are also more likely to break when working with exceptionally large data sets and interlinking multiple sheets, making it difficult to support processes at the scale needed for enterprise.

# FP&A Teams Have Yet To Unlock Full Business Partnering

To reach their true value as strategic business partners, FP&A teams need to be able to break down silos and integrate perspectives from across the business into their analyses.

But this year's survey shows mixed results when it comes to collaboration and the perceived impact of FP&A.

To what extent does your FP&A function influence strategic business decisions?

5% minimal

28% moderate

45% high

22% very high

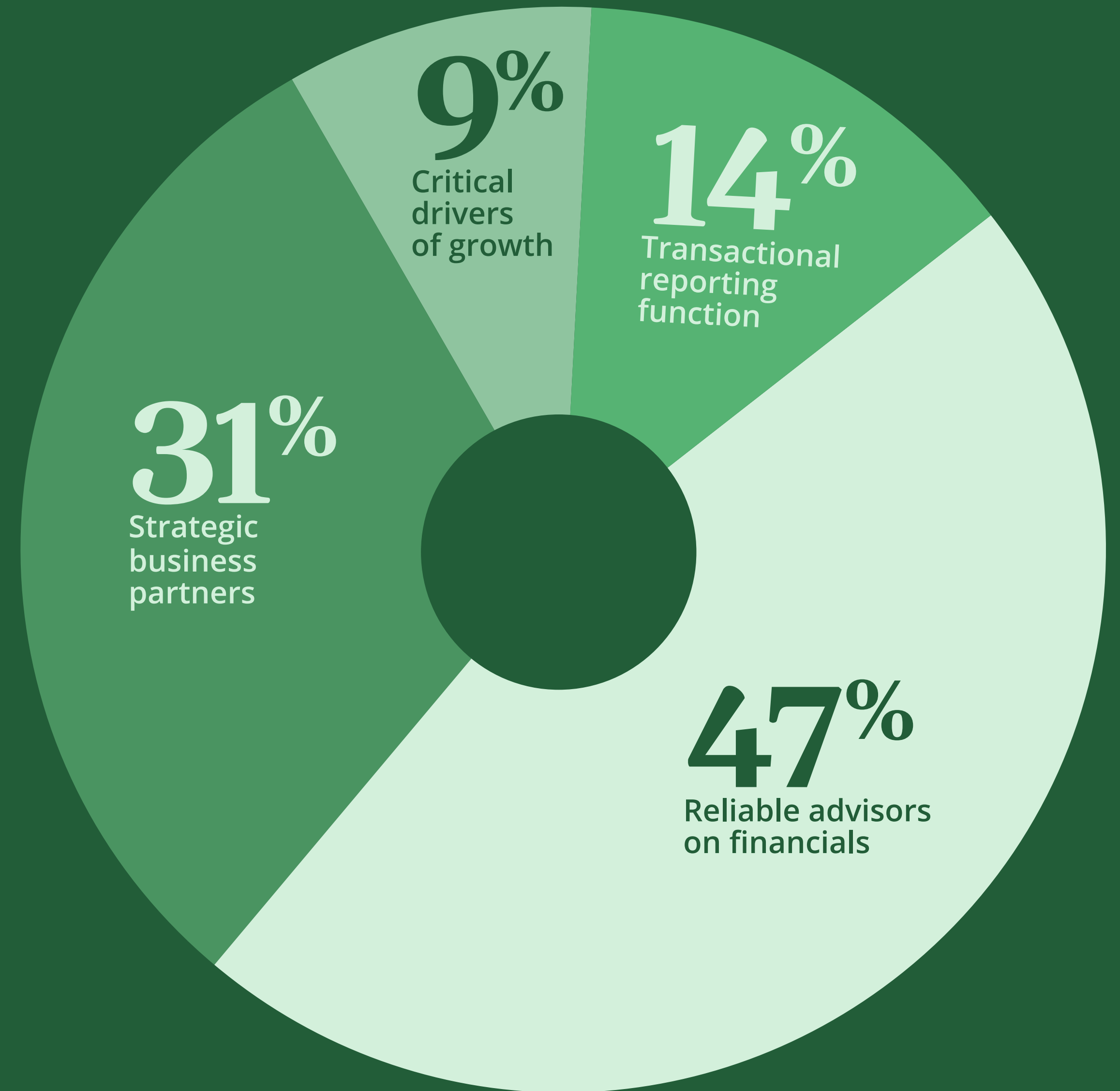
N = 384

## There's a disconnect between how Finance and executive leadership views the impact of FP&A

While 67% of the financial professionals we surveyed report their FP&A team's influence on the rest of the business as "high" or "very high," it's clear from the data that there's still a disconnect in how the rest of the business actually views their contributions.

When respondents were asked how their executive leadership perceives the FP&A team, only 40% said they saw them as "strategic business partners" or "critical drivers of growth". The remaining teams said leadership perceives FP&A as "reliable advisors on financials" (47%) or "providers of transactional/reporting functions" (14%).

Without a seat at the table and a clear mandate to influence next steps taken by the business, FP&A is limited in its ability to help the company make better, more timely decisions.



Which of the following descriptors best represents how your executive team perceives the FP&A team?

N = 384

## True finance business partnering is about more than meetings

What's more, while 63% of survey respondents labelled their FP&A team's capacity for real-time collaboration with business units as "Advanced" or "Leading", there's evidence that they haven't got it quite right yet.

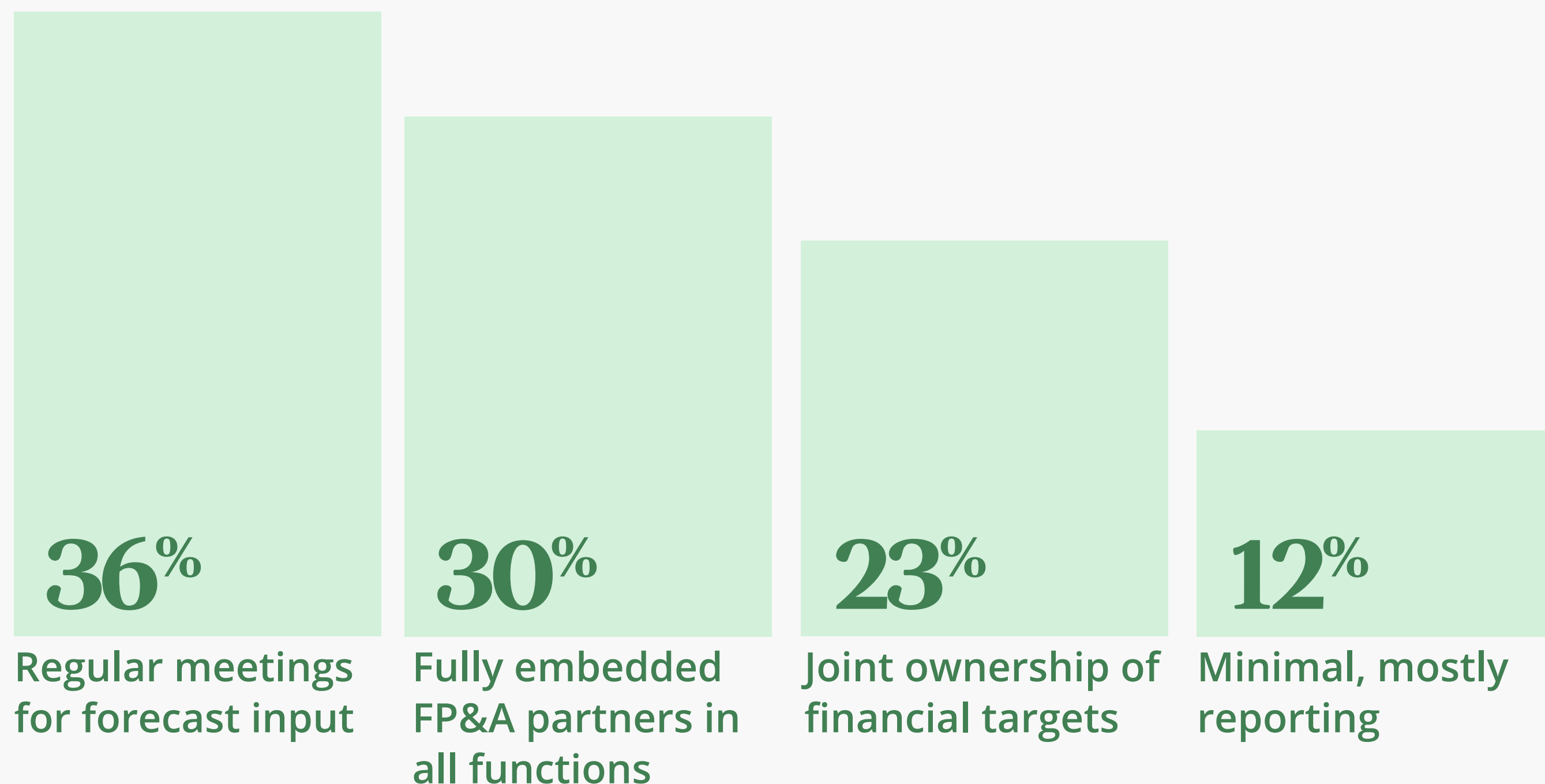
After all, almost half of respondents (43%) still report collaboration with business units as a bottleneck for FP&A processes (the second-most reported answer), showing it's a significant challenge they're grappling with.

Digging deeper into just how FP&A teams are collaborating with other business units can help illuminate why cross-functional alignment is still an obstacle for many.

When asked at what level their FP&A team was collaborating with the broader business, 12% of respondents said they had "minimal" collaboration, serving primarily as a reporting partner. The largest share of respondents (36%) said they have "regular meetings for forecast input." While FP&A teams engaging frequently with other business units is a positive thing, effective finance business partnering is about more than meetings.

Achieving true alignment between FP&A and the rest of the business, suggests **Meredith Hobik, Director of Ecosystem Strategy and Operations** at Vena, comes from the top to some degree. "We may all partner really well together, but it's where top-down meets bottom-up that makes a large difference.

### What level of collaboration exists between FP&A and business units?



N = 393

If we're changing our North Star as a business, if there's misalignment between what we collectively understand to be our focus and targets and why, how can we make the right decisions? And that's where data and guardrails can help keep everyone honest."

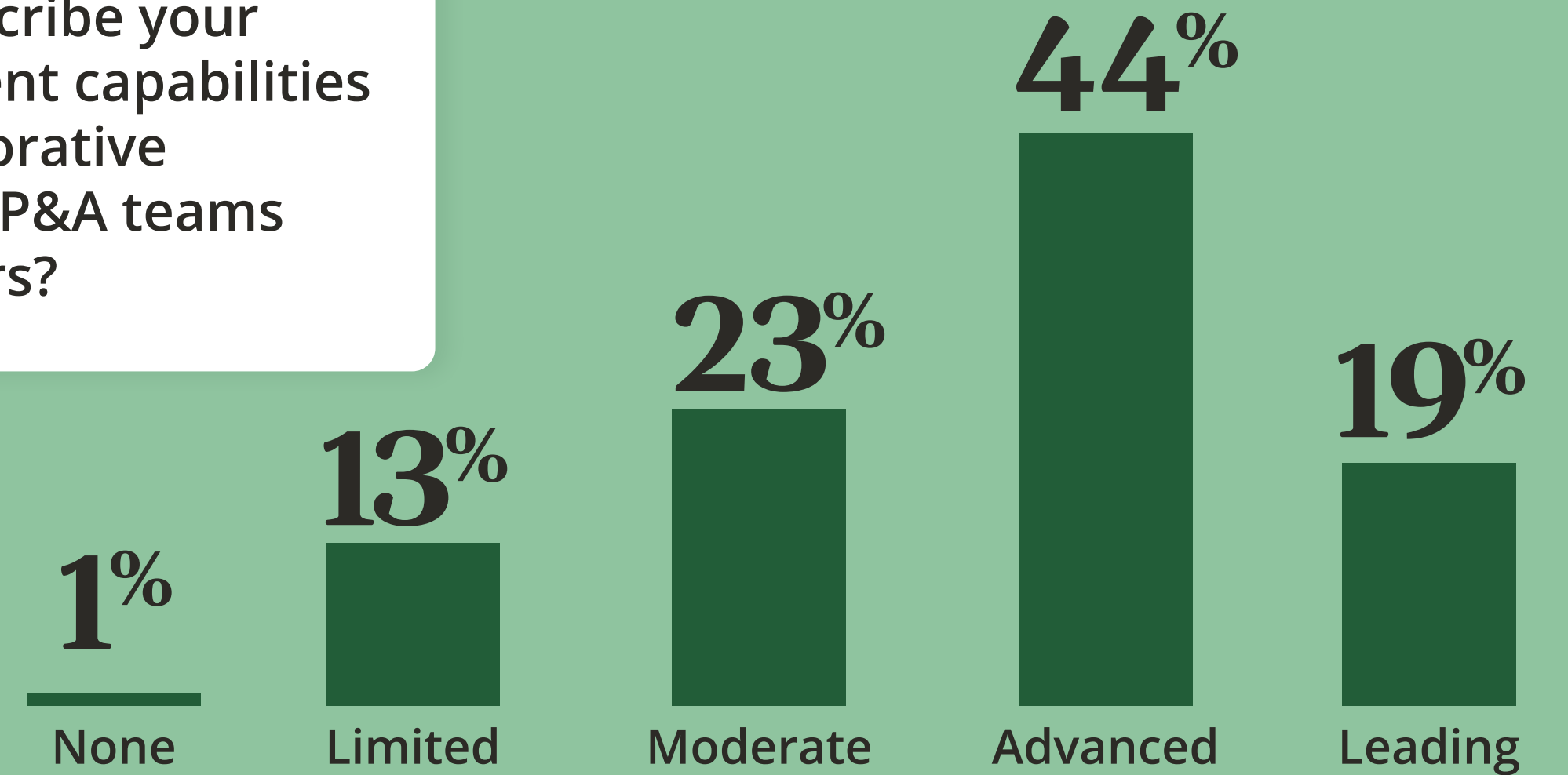
Encouragingly, 23% of respondents said their FP&A teams have "joint ownership of financial targets" with other business units. And, 30% said they have "fully embedded FP&A partners in all functions."

**[We] do a good job forecasting and reporting on the business, but more partnering/adding value to partners [would] take it to the next level.**

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

For FP&A teams to meet their full potential as strategic catalysts to their business, we'll want to see these two camps of respondents grow, with FP&A and other business units not just interacting in meetings, but becoming fully integrated within each other's workflows.

How would you describe your organization's current capabilities for real-time collaborative planning between FP&A teams and business leaders?



N = 346

Who currently owns and updates planning models in your organization?



N = 420

## Section 3

# The Current State of FP&A Maturity

But what does the data tell us about the big picture? How is the FP&A function evolving? Where is it gaining traction and where is there still work to do?

The following are some of the biggest revelations the survey uncovered about the state of FP&A maturity.



“

*[Our] FP&A function has standardized, repeatable processes, a consistent forecasting and reporting cadence, and strong cross-functional alignment. It leverages structured planning tools and analytics, supports leadership decision-making with credible insights, and is actively improving automation and efficiency. However, it's not yet fully predictive or real-time—hence not [being] best-in-class yet.*

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

# Only 12% of Finance Teams Consider Their FP&A Operations “Leading”

The survey results showed us that most FP&A teams fall somewhere in the middle in terms of their maturity, with 73% self-identifying as “Developing” or “Established.”

Only 12% of respondents placed themselves in the most advanced category of “Leading” FP&A maturity.

These results are in line with what we saw in our annual report last year, where only 11% of respondents rated their FP&A operations as “Leading,” and 63% of respondents rated themselves as “Advanced” or “Developing.”

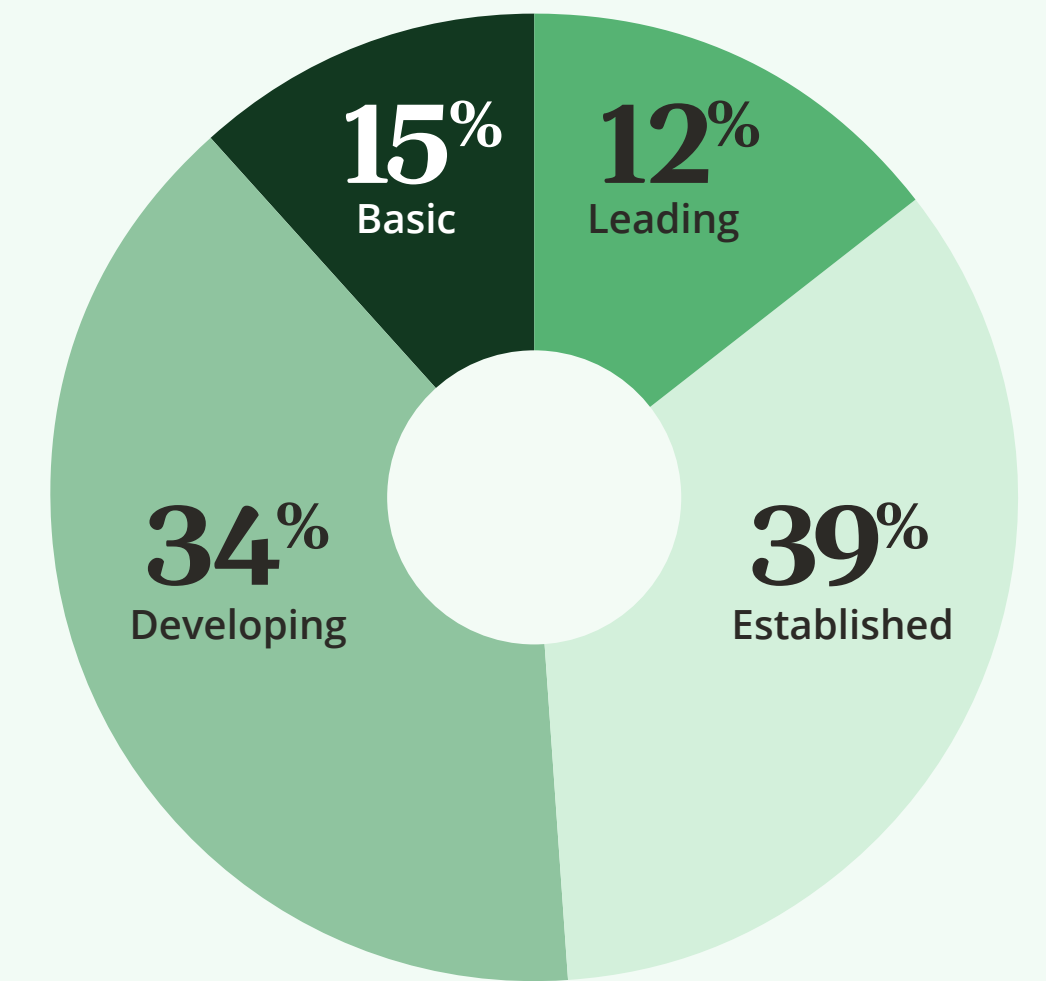
**We are excellent at the basics such as budgeting and reporting. We do not have advanced tools to move to proper periodic or rolling forecasts.**

- SURVEY RESPONDENT IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

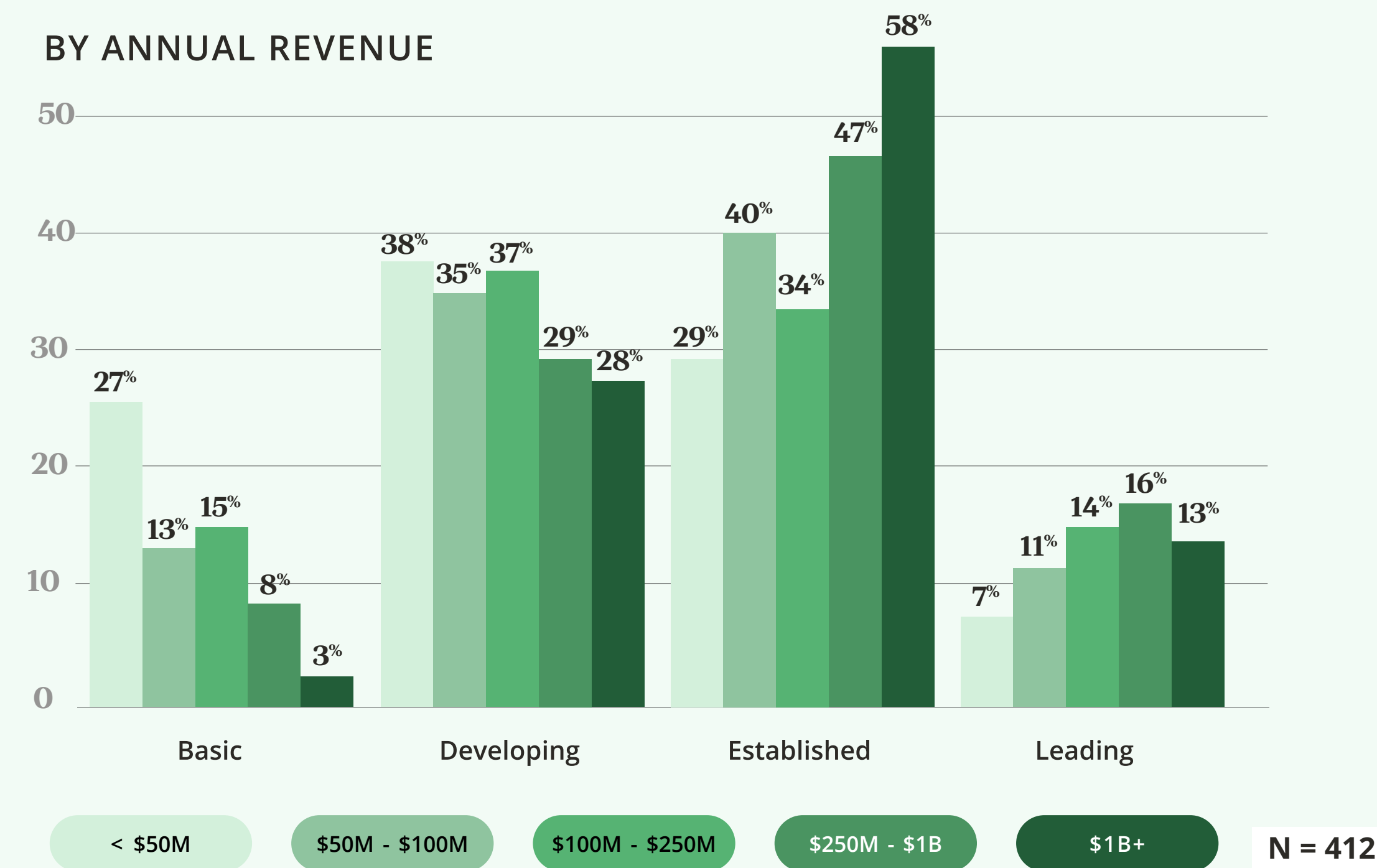
Finance teams that rated their FP&A operations as highly mature were more likely to come from larger companies. Companies with \$250M–\$1B and \$1B+ in annual revenue were the most represented among respondents who rated their operations as “Established” (47% and 58% respectively) or “Leading” (16% and 13% respectively). Meanwhile, companies with less than \$50M in annual revenue were the most represented among respondents who rated their operations as “Basic” (with 27%).

Overall, how would you rate the maturity of your FP&A process?

BY POPULATION



BY ANNUAL REVENUE



N = 412

# The 6 Key Traits of Mature FP&A Teams

The teams that do lead the pack this year in terms of FP&A maturity have a few things in common.

Turning Numbers Into Decisions

Embedded Within the Rest of the Business

Tapped Into Real-Time Operational Context

Embracing AI To Drive Value

Achieving Real-Time Feedback Loops and Fully Integrated Planning

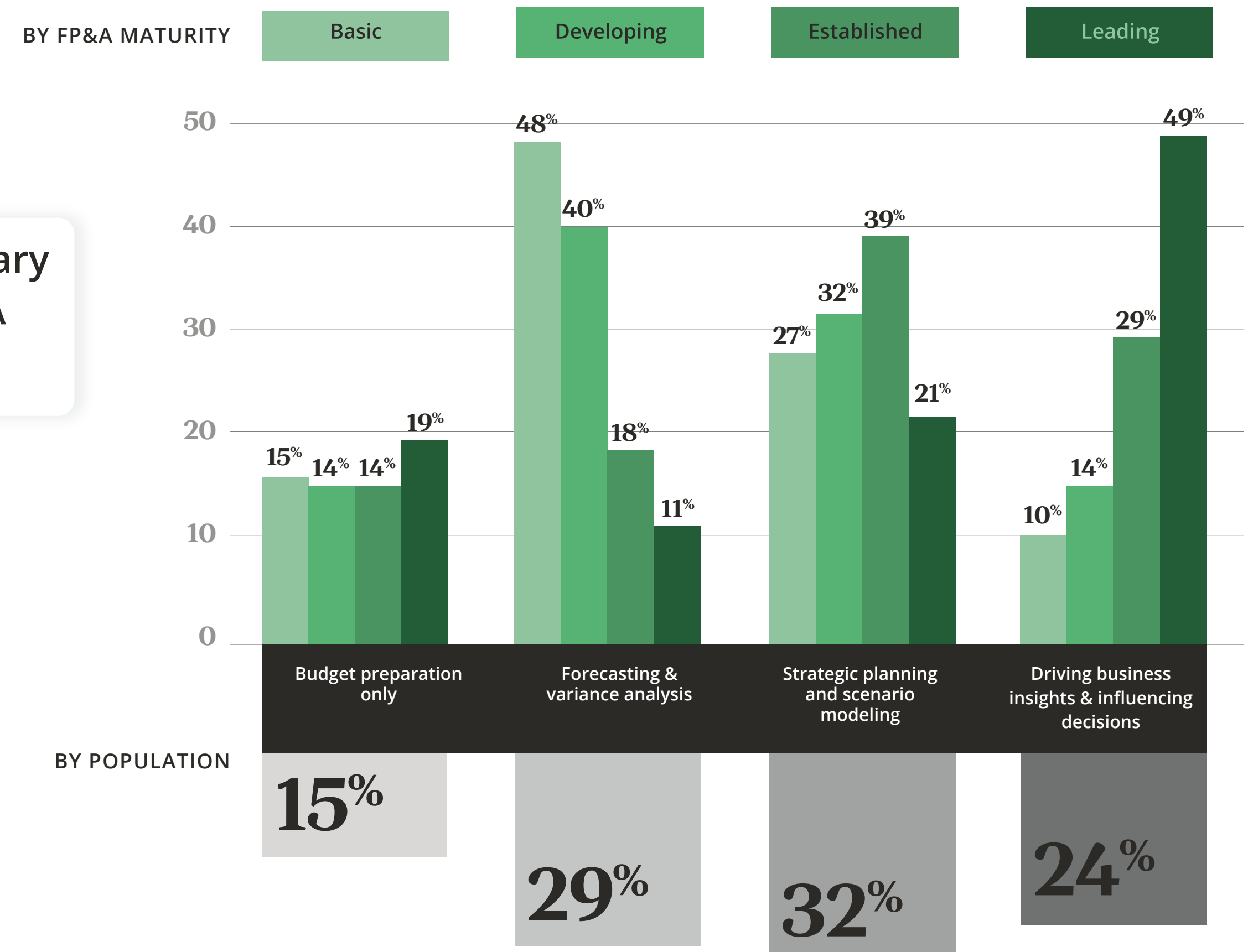
Empowering Business Units To Source Data and Insights Themselves

## 1. Turning Numbers Into Decisions

The most mature FP&A teams devote the biggest share of their time to connecting insights to business outcomes, rather than producing the data itself.

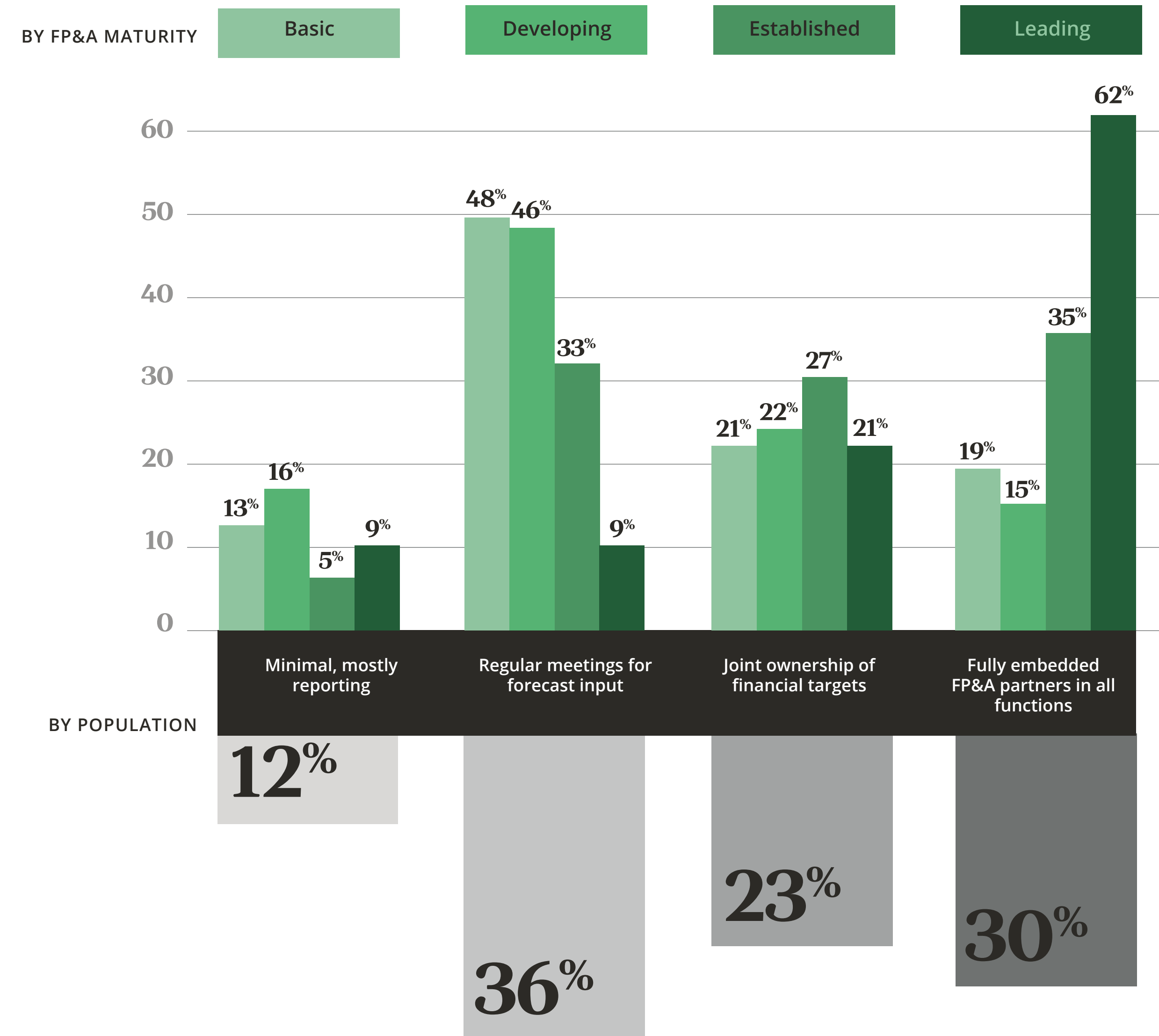
Forty-nine percent of respondents who rated their FP&A maturity as “Leading” stated the primary role of their FP&A team is “driving business insights and influencing decisions,” compared to 24% across all levels of maturity. Forty-eight percent of respondents who rated their FP&A maturity as “Basic” stated the primary role of their FP&A team is “forecasting and variance analysis.”

What is the primary role of your FP&A team today?



N = 395

## What level of collaboration exists between FP&A and business units?



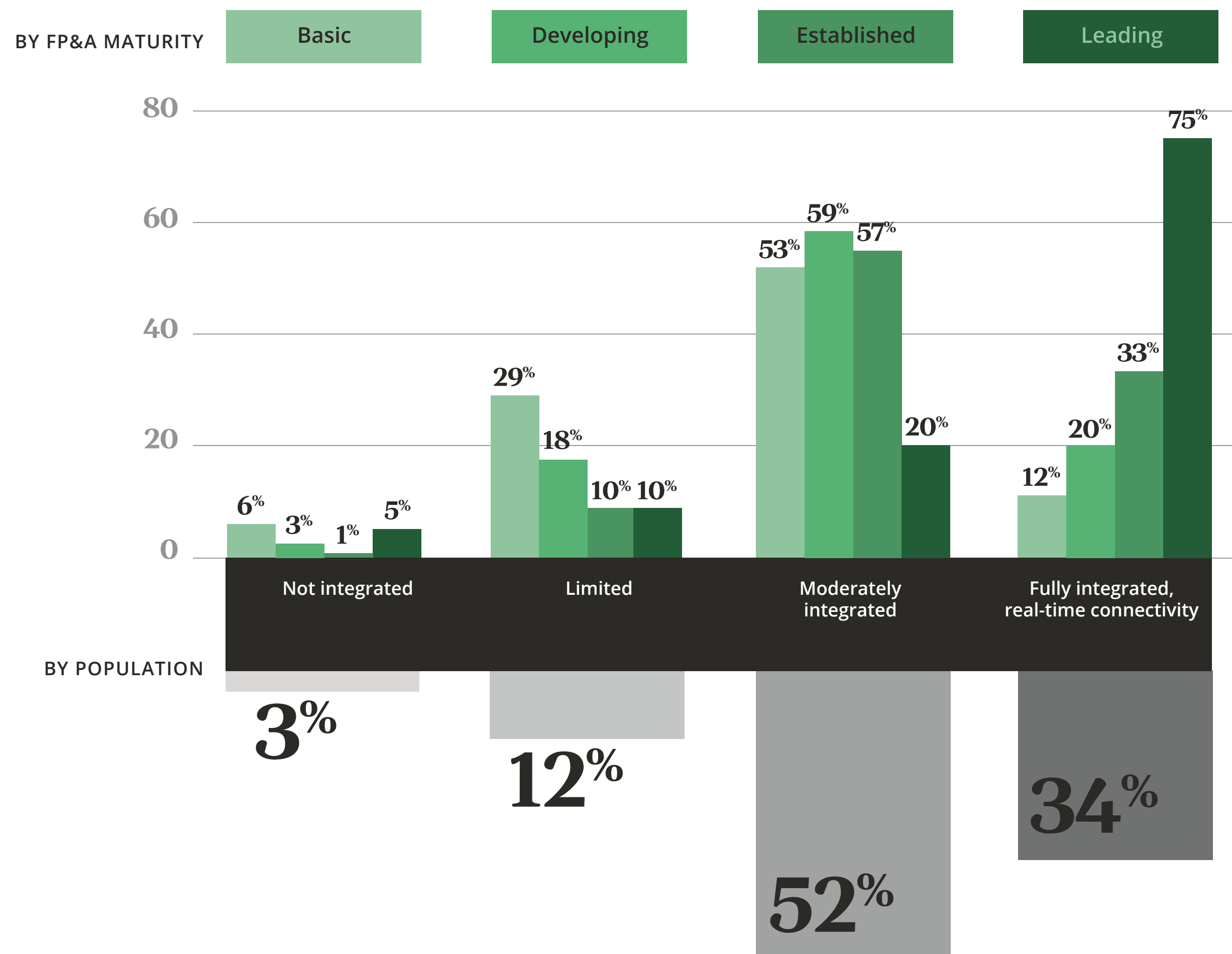
## 2. Embedded Within the Rest of the Business

Highly mature FP&A teams make business partnering part of their core operating model, with 62% of respondents who rated their FP&A maturity as “Leading” citing having “fully embedded FP&A partners in all functions” compared to 30% across all levels of maturity.

How integrated are operational drivers (e.g. unit sales, SKUs, headcount, product line, marketing spend) into your FP&A forecasting and scenario models today?

### 3. Tapped Into Real-Time Operational Context

Mature FP&A organizations are connecting financials to their operational context, with 75% of respondents who rated their FP&A maturity as “Leading” stating they have “fully integrated, real-time connectivity” of operational drivers into their FP&A forecasting and scenario models, compared to 34% across all levels of maturity

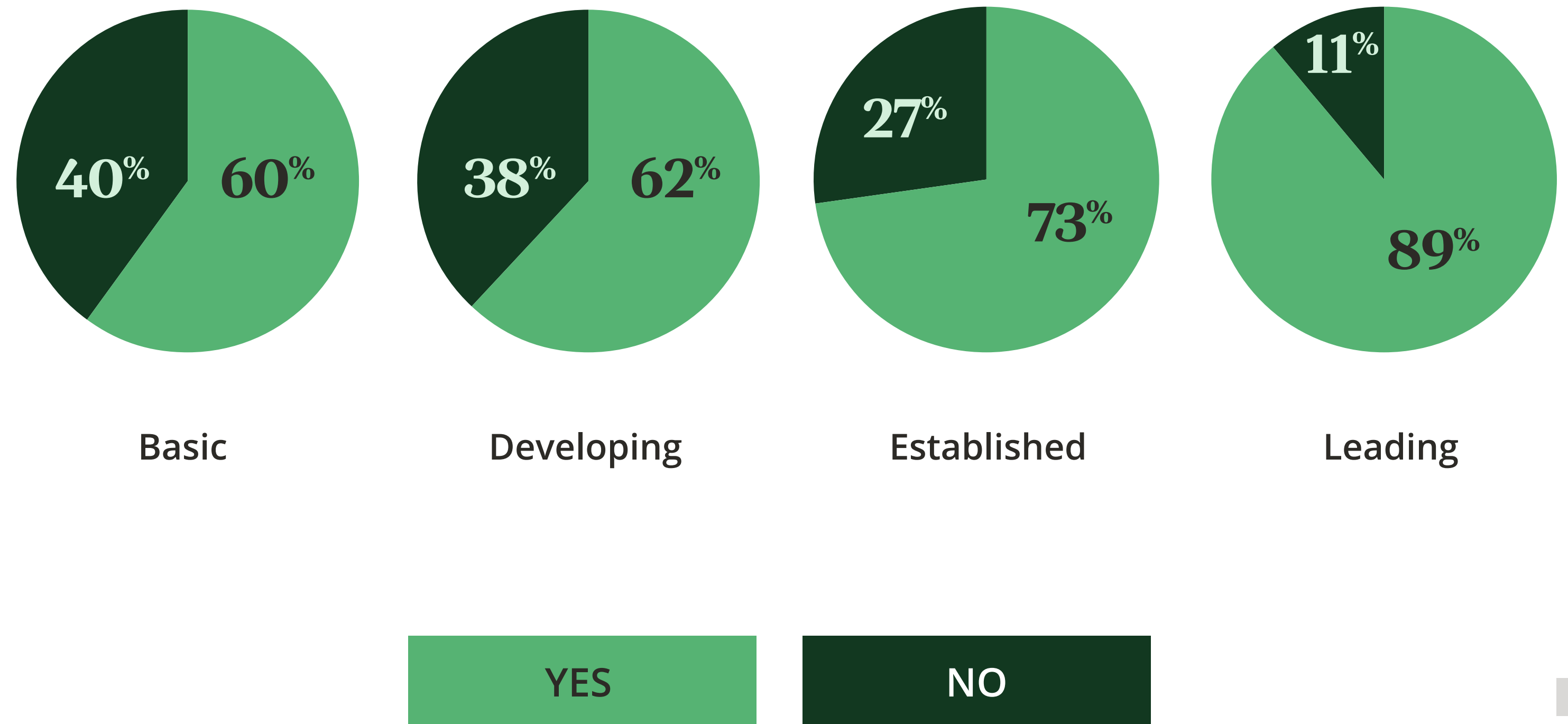


## 4. Embracing AI To Drive Value

AI is a critical lever for businesses with the most mature FP&A operations. Among them, 83% have fully integrated AI agents into workflows across FP&A and/or the broader business. Compare that against respondents who rated their FP&A maturity as "Basic", where only 17% have done so.

Teams with "Leading" FP&A maturity tend to be more bullish on AI adoption, with 89% of them stating they have C-Level mandates in place to use AI in the finance organization compared to just 60% of teams with "Basic" FP&A maturity.

Has your CFO or board of directors introduced mandated use of AI in your finance department as a corporate objective?

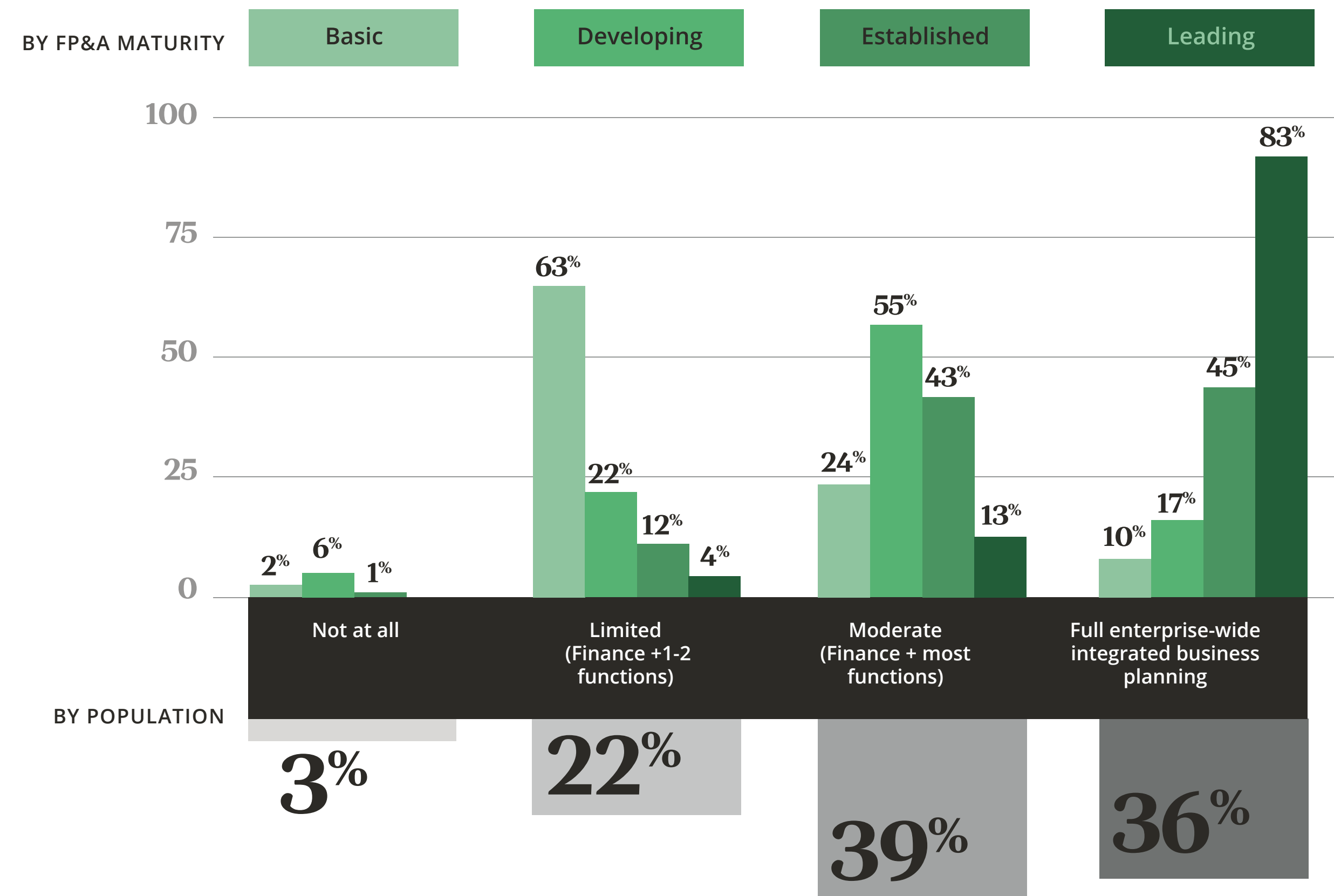


N = 387

To what extent is your FP&A process integrated with operational planning across other functions (sales, HR/workforce, supply chain, marketing, operations)?

## 5. Achieving Real-Time Feedback Loops and Fully Integrated Planning

Teams with the most sophisticated FP&A operations are maintaining real-time feedback loops with their business units, with 60% of them rating their capacity for real-time collaborative planning as "Leading" compared to the overall average of 19%. What's more, 83% of "Leading" teams said they have "full enterprise-wide integrated business planning" compared to 36% across all levels of maturity. The next step is ensuring those connected plans translate into timely, coordinated action across the business.

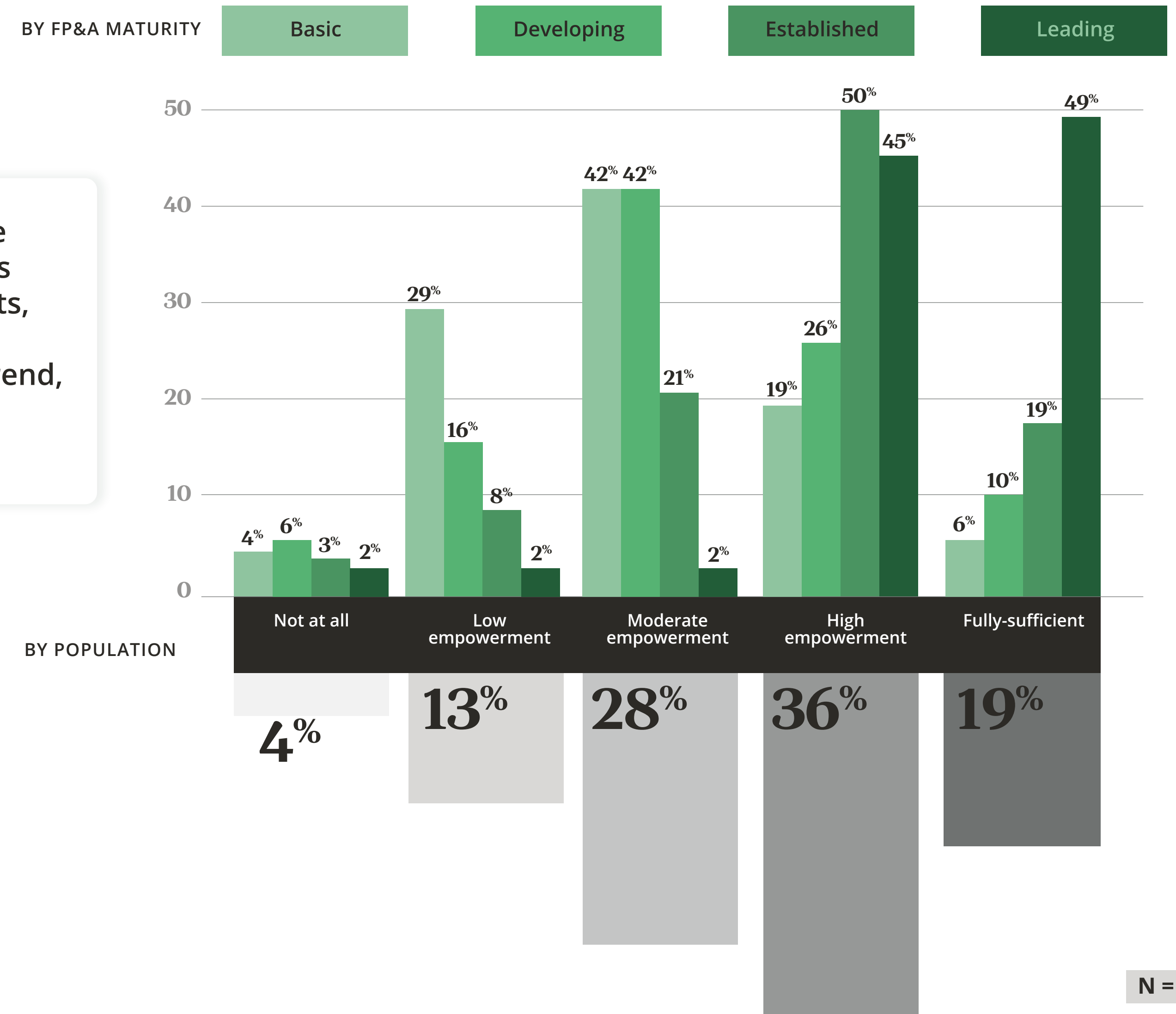


## 6. Empowering Business Units To Source Data and Insights Themselves

When the systems and processes you've built give business units the right data, guardrails and accountability to act with confidence, that's when FP&A begins to scale.

Mature FP&A teams have successfully scaled themselves by enabling budget owners to source data and insights on their own. Forty-nine percent of respondents who rated their FP&A maturity as "Leading" said their business unit leaders are "fully self-sufficient" when it comes to self-sourcing forecasts, reports, insights and analysis without FP&A intervention. Compare this against the 19% of respondents across all levels of maturity who said this.

**How empowered are business unit leaders to self-serve forecasts, reports, insights and analysis (scenario, trend, etc.) without FP&A intervention?**



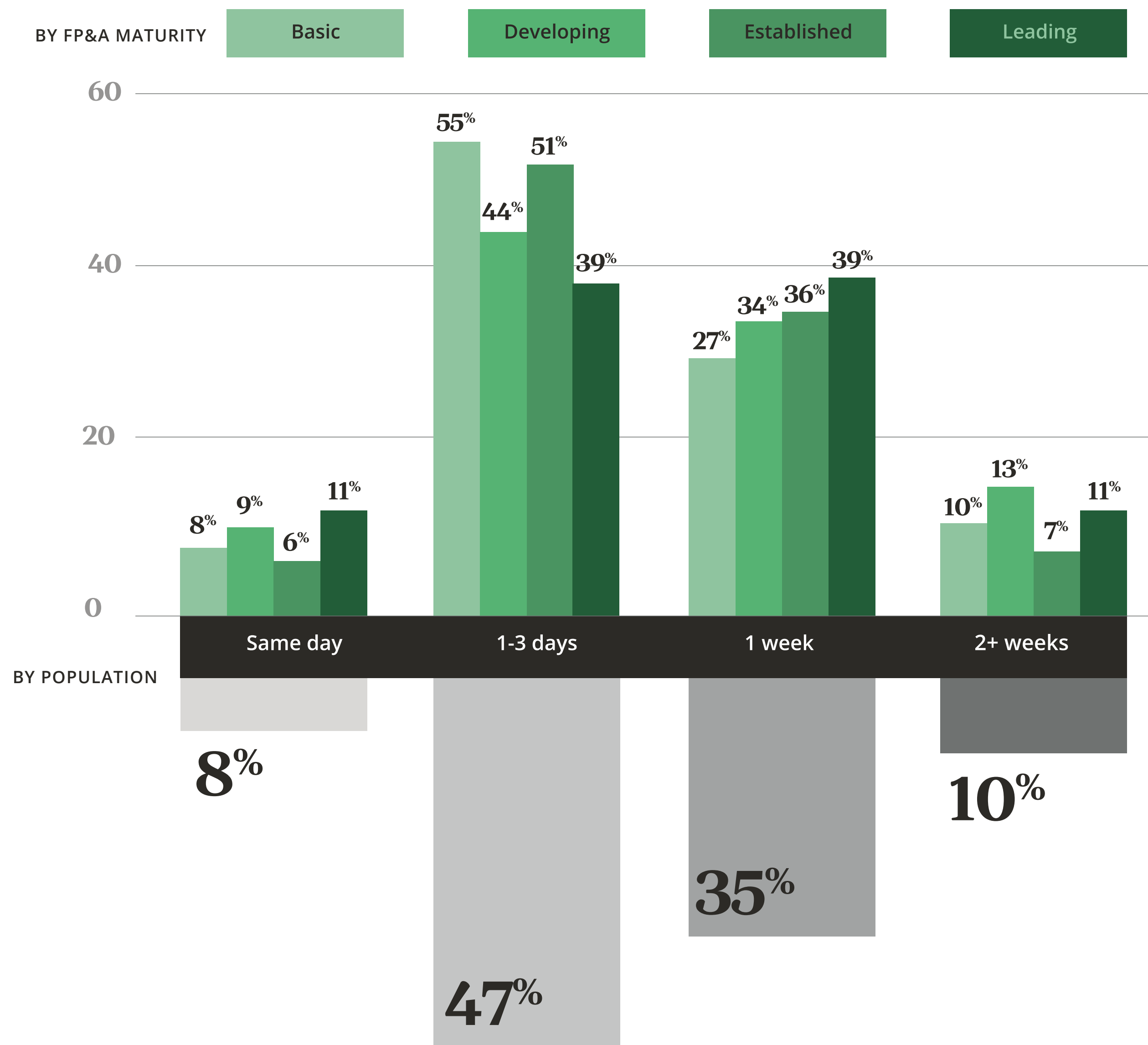
# The Decision Latency Problem: Where FP&A Teams Need To Evolve

But, where FP&A teams have yet to make strides, even among the most self-reported “mature” organizations, is in reducing decision latency (the gap between when an insight is available and when the business can act on it), especially in response to volatile market conditions.

Surprisingly, respondents that identified themselves as having “Leading” FP&A maturity were not necessarily the fastest when it comes to delivering decision-ready forecasts amid unexpected market shifts.

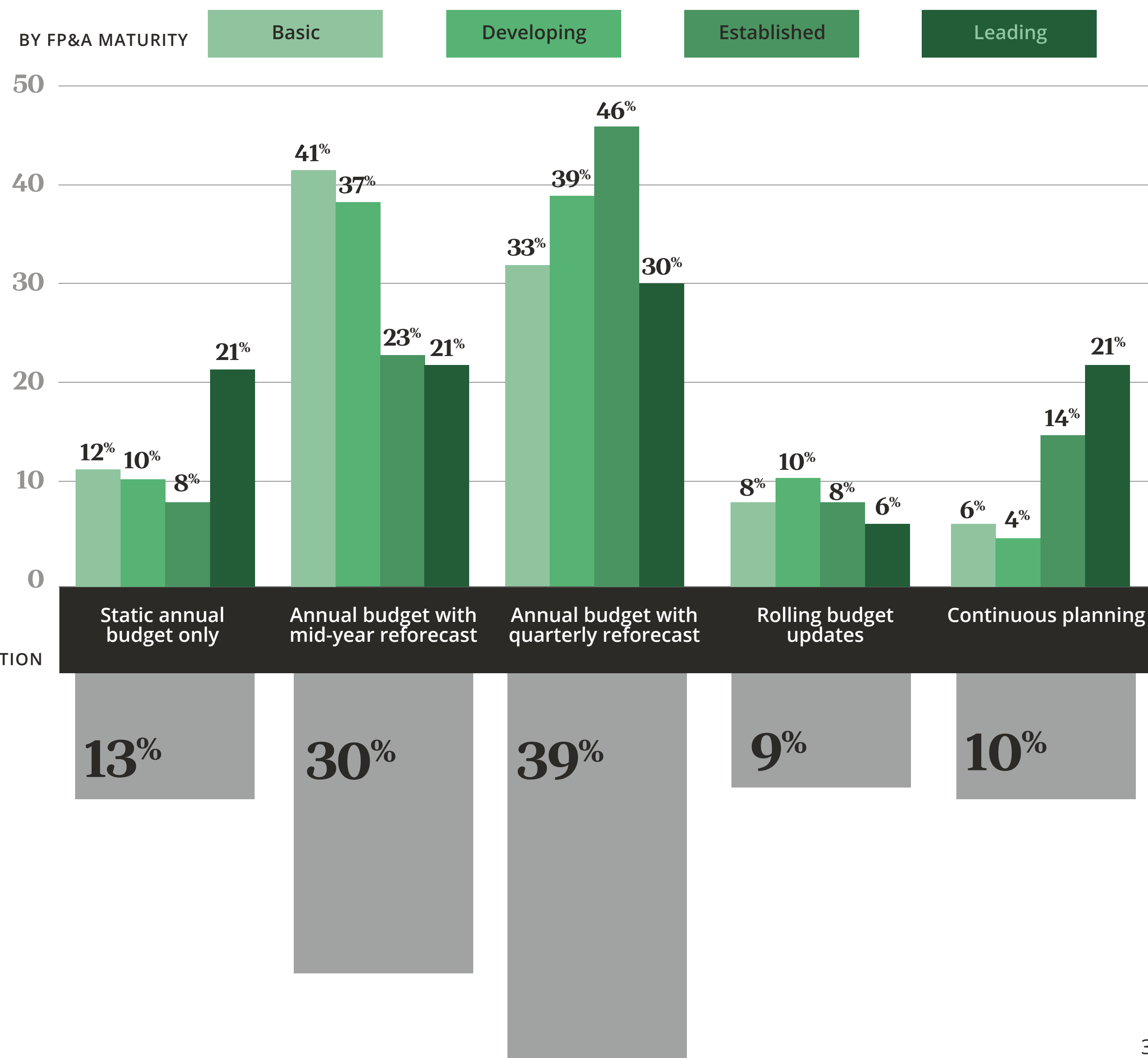
While 11% of teams with “Leading” maturity said they can deliver forecasts within the same day of a request, an even share of them said they can deliver in 1–3 days or 1 week (39% respectively), and 11% said it takes them more than two weeks. Contrast this with respondents that identified themselves as having “Basic” FP&A maturity, where the majority (63%) said they can deliver a forecast in 3 days or less.

How quickly can your FP&A team deliver a decision-ready forecast update when market conditions change unexpectedly?



N = 393

## Which best describes your budgeting approach?



While a lower level of business complexity could give teams with “Basic” maturity an edge when it comes to forecast speed, this potential deficiency in self-reported “Leading” teams’ ability to execute quickly is worth noting.

What’s more, although adoption of agile planning practices was a bit higher among respondents with “Leading” FP&A maturity, their numbers were still low, with 21% using continuous planning (compared to 10% across all levels of maturity) and 11% using rolling forecasts (compared to 6% across all levels of maturity).

When plans don’t update in real time based on what’s happening in the business, FP&A teams spend more time sourcing data and running scenarios than advising the business when critical market shifts arise. As a result, they delay their ability to influence important decisions happening across the business.

FP&A’s ability to deliver the insights the business needs to operate effectively depends heavily on the strength of its data foundation. We learned from the survey that even the most mature FP&A teams still struggle with data challenges: 64% of respondents who rated their FP&A maturity as “Leading” cited data quality or availability issues as a top bottleneck (the most cited response, as we saw among the rest of the group as well).

N = 393

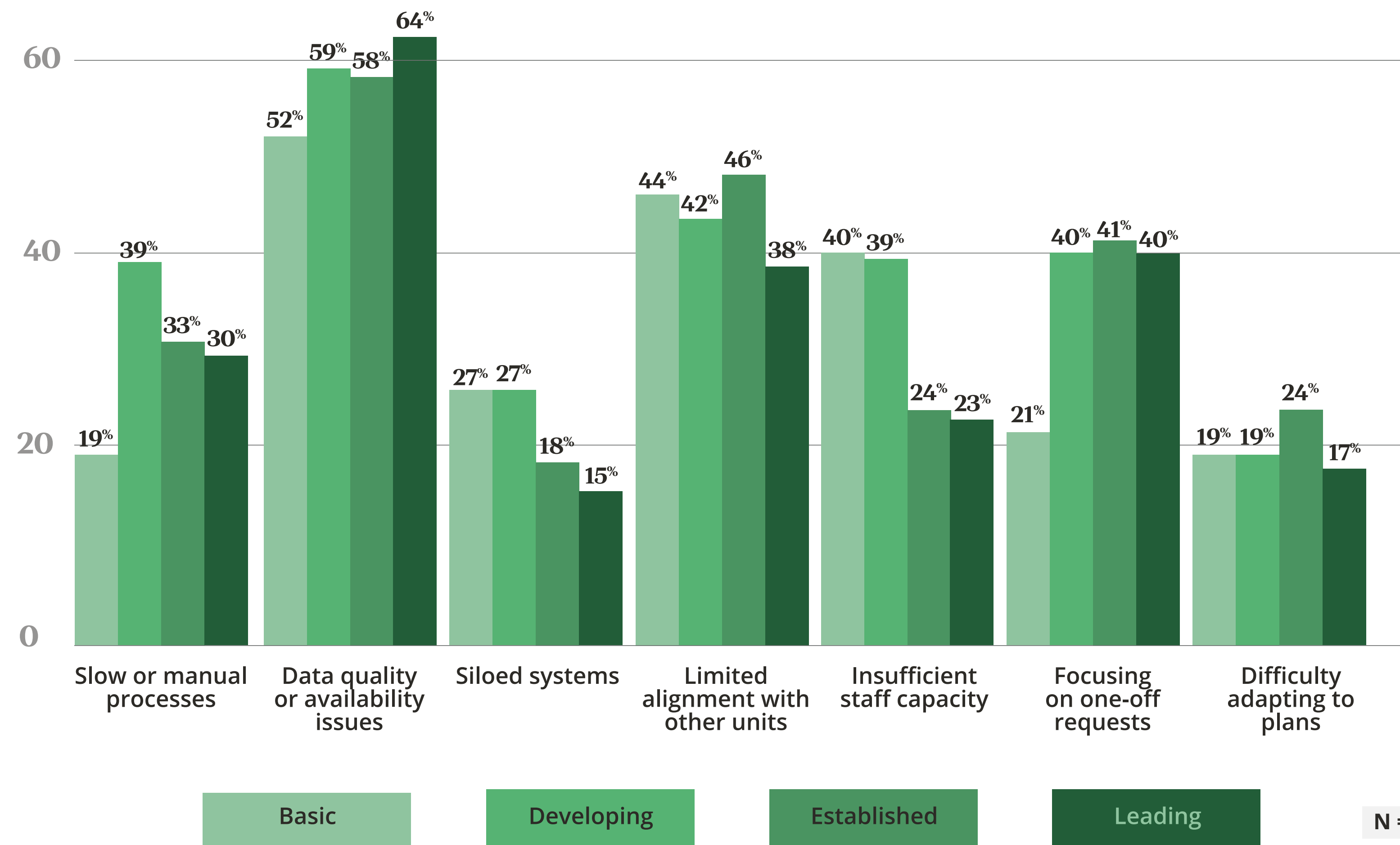
This is despite most mature FP&A teams reportedly having strong integration between their FP&A tools and ERP, CRM, HRIS and BI systems—83% of “Leading” teams stated they have “fully integrated, real-time connectivity” between systems.

What this tells us is that uncovering the insights needed to support FP&A may not be a data *connectivity* problem as much as it is a data *orchestration* problem: the data may exist, but it’s not reaching the right people, workflows, or decision points quickly enough.

AI complicates this fact even more, because the increased volume, speed and variability of insights at teams’ disposal make it harder to know what to act on and when. With more signals, scenarios and possibilities being generated in seconds, the business has yet more noise to make sense of.

Reducing decision latency requires more than faster analysis. It requires the successful orchestration of people, processes, data and AI so decisions can move into coordinated action across the enterprise. And this is a role the FP&A function is uniquely set up to do well.

### Which of the following best describes the current bottlenecks in your FP&A function?



# The Next Stage of FP&A

Facing volatile and ever-changing market conditions, FP&A teams are being called upon to help steer the business, ensuring decisions move through the enterprise with clarity, speed and accountability.

But this heightened challenge also comes with an opportunity: With its birds-eye view of the business, the FP&A function is well-positioned to help orchestrate planning, decisions and action across Finance and the broader business.



# To help the company move from data, to decision, to action faster, FP&A leaders must:

## Be curious and expand their reach across the business:

Leading FP&A teams understand the importance of cross-functional participation by all business units in the planning process. When teams across the organization get involved in FP&A processes and decision-making, the entire business is on the same page, and everyone understands what's necessary to excel.

## Become more strategic:

When FP&A teams aren't bogged down by manual workflows, they can move beyond producing the numbers and focus on higher-order thinking. This enables them to become better finance business partners for the rest of the organization. "We have a cadence of collaboration that moves beyond firefighting," one survey respondent writes, reflecting an ideal model in which FP&A teams get to focus more on the business's long-term plan, rather than ad-hoc requests.

## Put modern technology to work:

As we learned from the survey, data quality, availability and integration are the biggest challenges inhibiting FP&A teams right now. And to get value from AI, they'll need more than automation alone. They'll need governed data, connected workflows and enough control to trust the decisions AI helps accelerate. These are all objectives finance teams will need to address within their tech stack.

# About Vena

Vena is a Microsoft-native platform for orchestrated planning, decisioning and close across Microsoft Excel, Power BI, Azure and Fabric. With a governed, AI-ready data foundation and agentic AI embedded in planning workflows, Vena helps organizations make better decisions and execute on time with confidence. Thousands of organizations worldwide rely on Vena to perform better and achieve more.

For more information, visit [venasolutions.com](https://venasolutions.com).