



# Trends in Consumer Decision Making

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June 2025



A photograph of a crowd of people silhouetted against a bright, golden sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong backlight effect. The people are standing in a field, looking towards the horizon. The overall mood is warm and contemplative.

# Overview



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# Consumer Behaviour is Human Behaviour

**The world has changed, and people are changing with it at a rapid pace**

Now, more than ever, we need to question the path to purchase or the reasons behind purchase intent. The introduction of mass-technological access, ecommerce products, or AI paired with larger world issues like economics, civil unrest, the pandemic, and globalization have caused human behaviour to shift.





# The Funnel



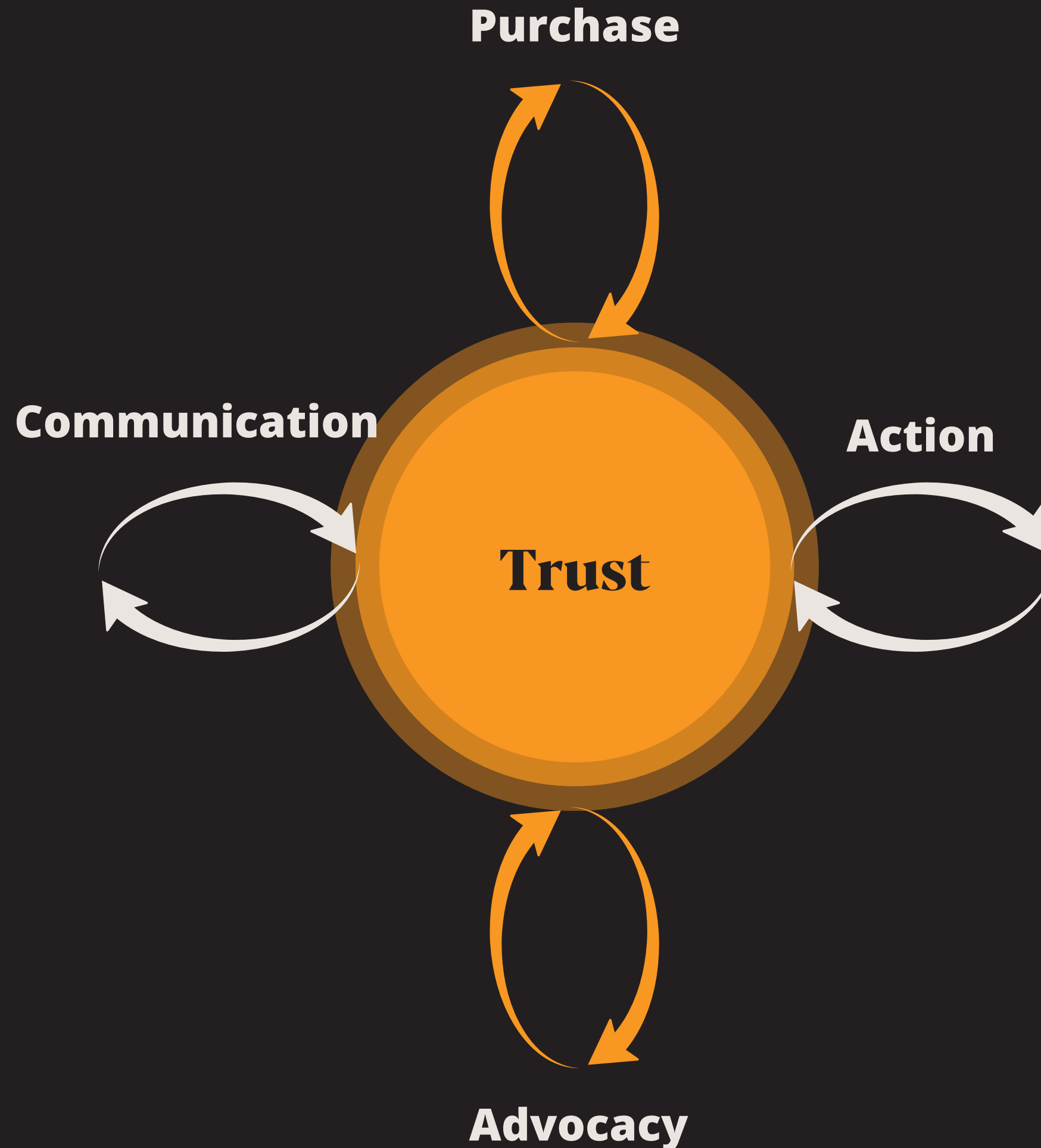
**The traditional marketing funnel is a model for the customer journey**

Marketing campaigns often focus on attribution to a part of the funnel - though each funnel may look different, but consumer behaviour is not as linear as this model would like us to believe.





# A New Goal



**If the goal is not “purchase” but “loyalty” or “trust”, then the framework needs to shift**

Edelman suggests a trust loop for the ongoing relationship with the way consumers behave with brands and products. It addresses the need consumers now have for brands to personalize and communicate better with their audiences.





# The Framework in Practice



## Long and short purchase cycle categories differ

Longer purchase cycles like automotive focused on deliberation and information while shorter ones like CPG focused on action and routine behaviours.



## Understand Category Entry Points (CEPs)

Rather than just through awareness, marketers need to understand the unique cues that may set a buyer off on a decision for their category like an emotion, motive (internal) or location, time of day (external).



## Lean on values that align with your audience

Purchase intent rises with shared values, and this can be both prior and after purchase is made to create impact and loyalty with an individual.





# Consumer Behaviour is Also About Human Desire

**Rather than just about the product and the path to purchase, marketers need to understand why someone would convert in the first place**

Rather than understanding how to make someone “aware”, how do you meet them where they are in a need they already have? By aligning your marketing to consumer desire rather than a purchase journey, you make the decision that much easier for your audience.





A pyramid diagram representing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The pyramid is divided into five horizontal layers of different colors. From top to bottom, the layers are: light gray, blue, orange, red, and brown. Each layer contains a text label. The pyramid is positioned on the left side of the slide.

**Self-actualization**

**Esteem**

**Love and Belonging**

**Safety needs**

**Physiological needs**

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

**The idea is that each person needs the layer below it first to move to the next**

For marketers trying to sell a product or service as one of the higher levels, its important that they know their audience is already covered for the bottom layers or the message won't resonate. However, messages that speak to higher layers are more likely to make a bigger impact.







# The KR&I Human Needs Model

**This model emphasizes the interrelated, non-hierarchical nature of the human experience**

Rather than focusing on needs as sequential, this model shows that the path to any desire can be shaped by subconscious feelings. The daily discomfort, longings, and vulnerabilities can be met by eating, drinking, planning, resting, playing, connecting, etc.

By knowing what your audience is going through in their daily lives, you can better understand how your product or service can help to meet their needs.





# The Components



## Self-Care

This involves everything a person needs to feel safe and well from emotional to physical to mental. Not just “relaxation”, this element can be about learning new things, watching a fun show, going to a concert, or dreaming about what comes next.



## Social Connection

This is all about feeling connection and belonging with others. Whether with friends and family or everyone who supports the same sports team as you, share interests, experiences, and values help to feel a part of something.



## Identity

Everything about what we do, buy, think helps create pieces of the “Self”. Certain actions can cause someone to think “I am *this* or *that* kind of person” which then creates navigation for how they might then interact with the world.





# What do we know now?



## **Human nature is more complicated than ever**

Rather than a linear consumer journey or set of behaviours, consumers do not act in sequence but look for connection and belonging.



## **Marketers need to invest in knowing their audiences**

Without proper audience identification, marketers may end up making assumptions, something that is increasingly putting their brands at risk as consumers are more informed and desire personalization more than ever.



## **Measurement will only get more complex**

If consumers are not acting through a traditional funnel, tracking and understanding the attribution of “awareness” or “conversion” based marketing campaigns will no longer be enough to tell you the health of your brand.







# The Science of It All





# The Brain at Work

## **Decision-making involves many different cognitive functions**

Perception, memory, attention, reasoning, and emotions are some of the functions moving when making a decision. The brain relies on networks spanning many areas of the brain to create signals and evaluate all options.

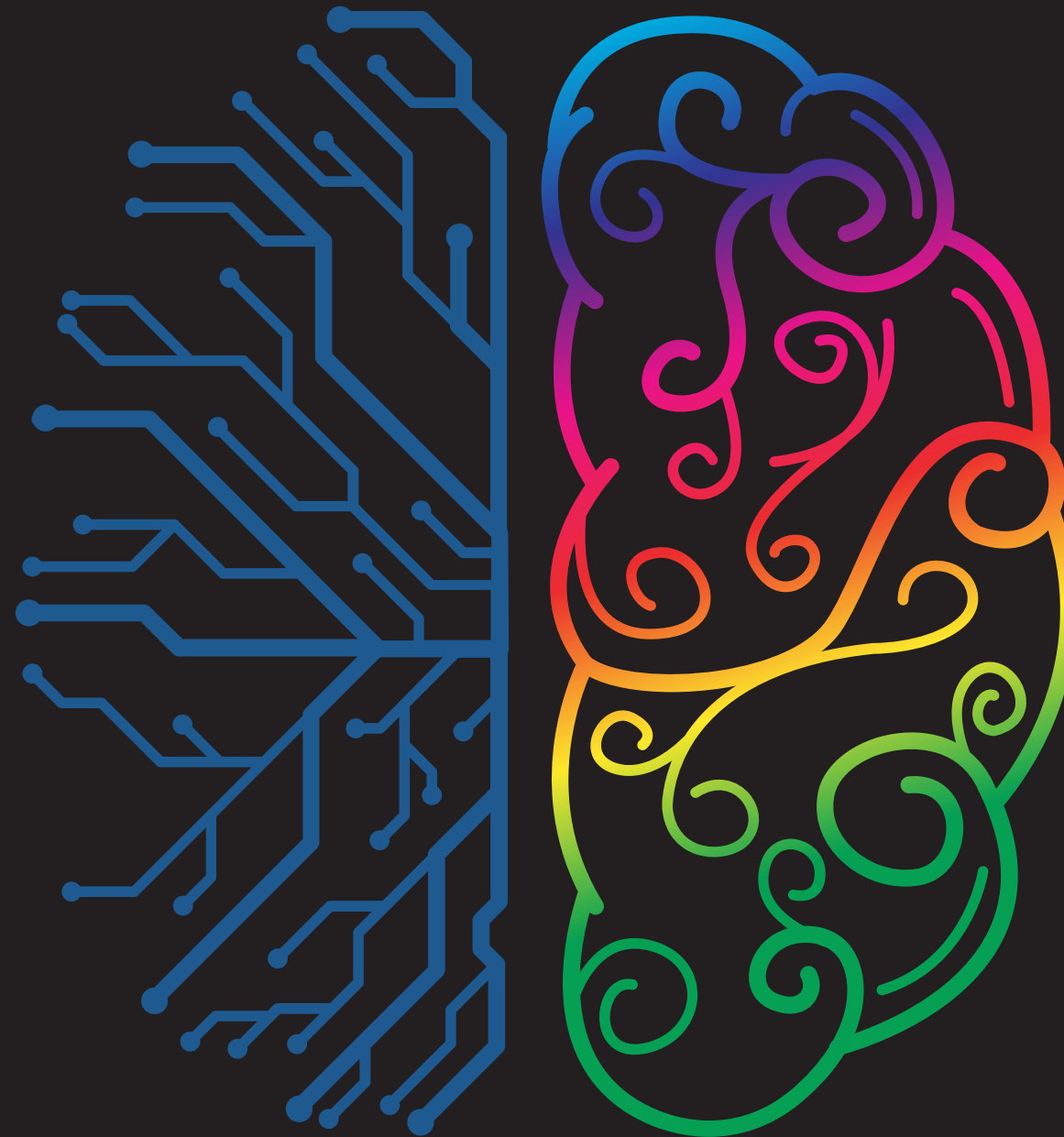
Some neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, and noradrenaline help to modulate those processes and some marketers will create ads that attempt to entice those transmissions of the brain.



# Signals Activate Differently

## Left

Narrow  
Goal-oriented  
Abstraction (parts)  
Categorizes  
Explicit  
Cause and Effect  
Repeatability  
Literal, Factual  
Self-absorbed and dogmatic  
Language, signs, and symbols  
Rhythm



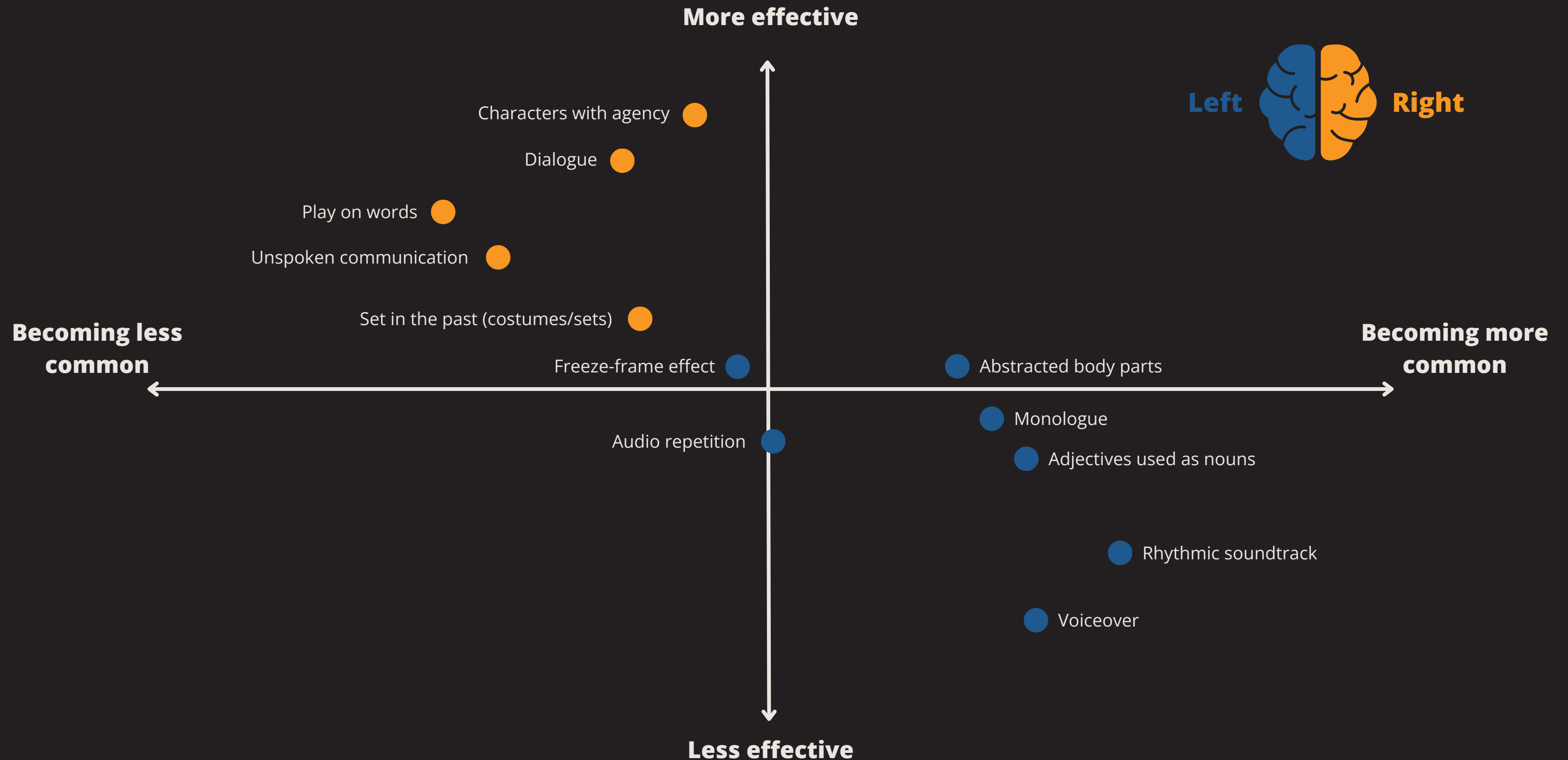
## Right

Broad  
Vigilant  
Context (whole)  
Empathizes  
Implicit  
Connections and relationships  
Novelty  
Metaphorical  
Self-aware & questioning  
Time, Space, & Depth  
Music





# These Signals Can Shift Effectiveness



# Trends Shaping Decision Making

- **Influencers**
- **Artificial Intelligence**
- **B2B Collaboration**





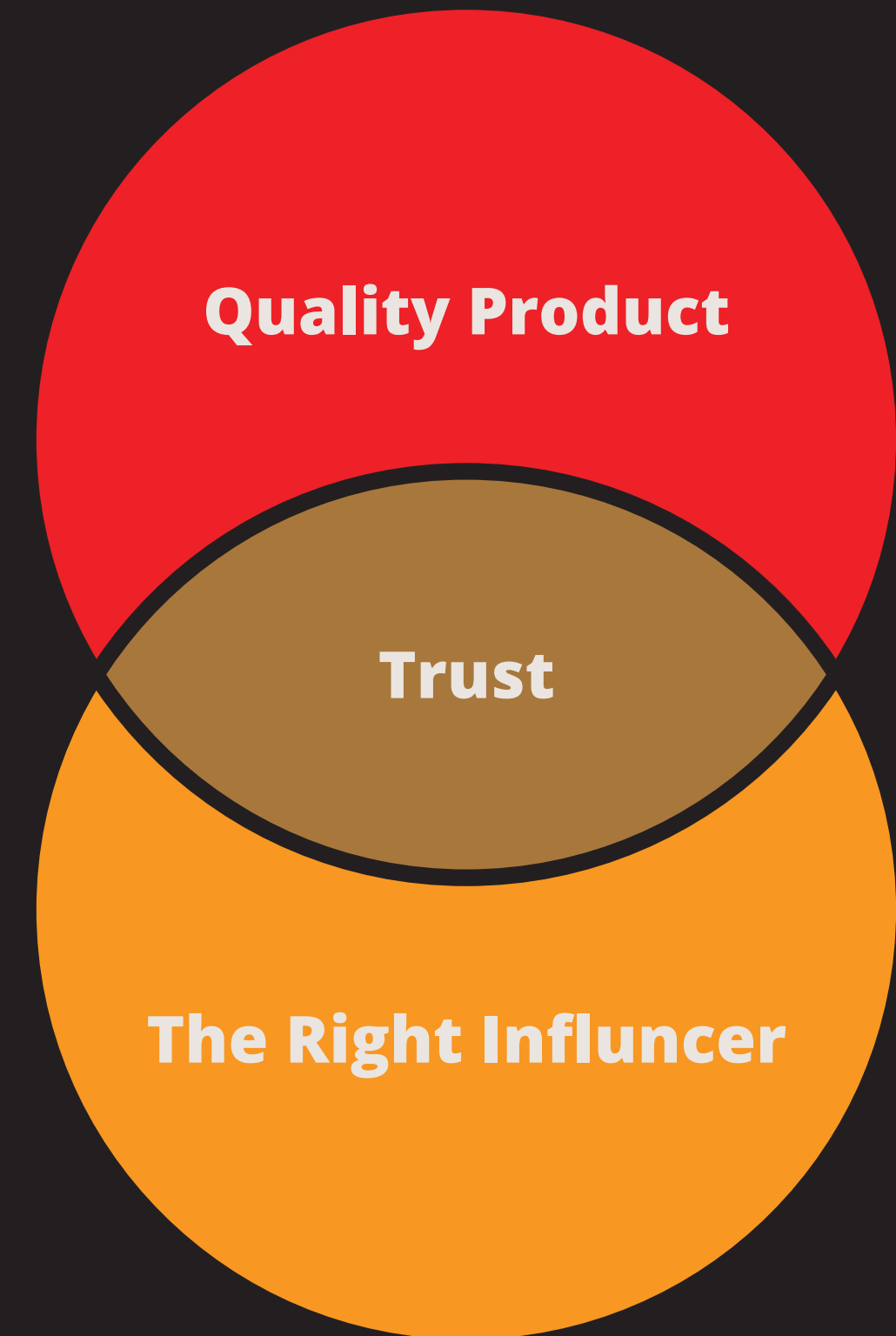
# Decision Making in Practice: Influencers



# Influence $\neq$ Product Trust

**For a successful marketing campaign, a combination of two factors is important: a quality product and a trusted influencer**

The companies should also remember that engaging an influencer in the promotion process does not automatically mean people's trust in the quality of the product. Research has shown that a large proportion of consumers think that influencers agree to promote a product simply because they get paid for it. People in the survey expressed the view that only an attractive or successful personality is not enough, and the success of the product is primarily up to them.





# Choosing an Influencer

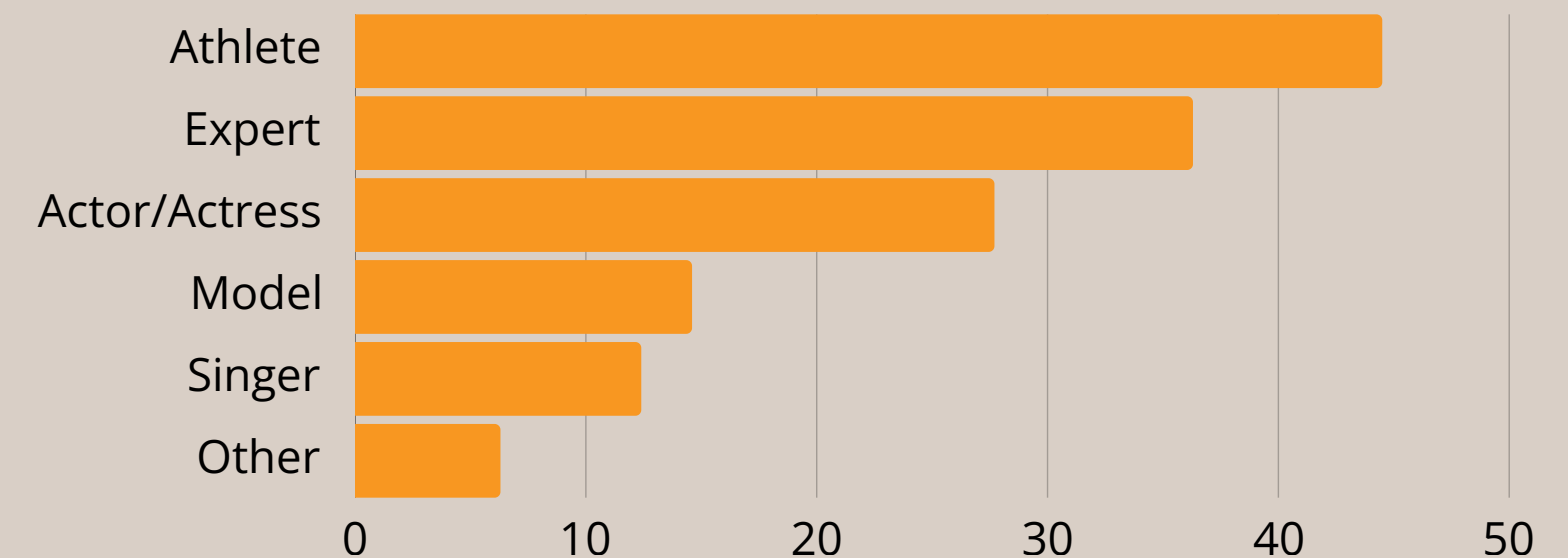
**Those who are perceived as “Experts” and “Intelligent” can have more sway than those who are “attractive” or “popular”**

Though it may seem that influencers lean into a visual stereotype, those who are perceived experts in a certain field are actually more desirable to audiences.

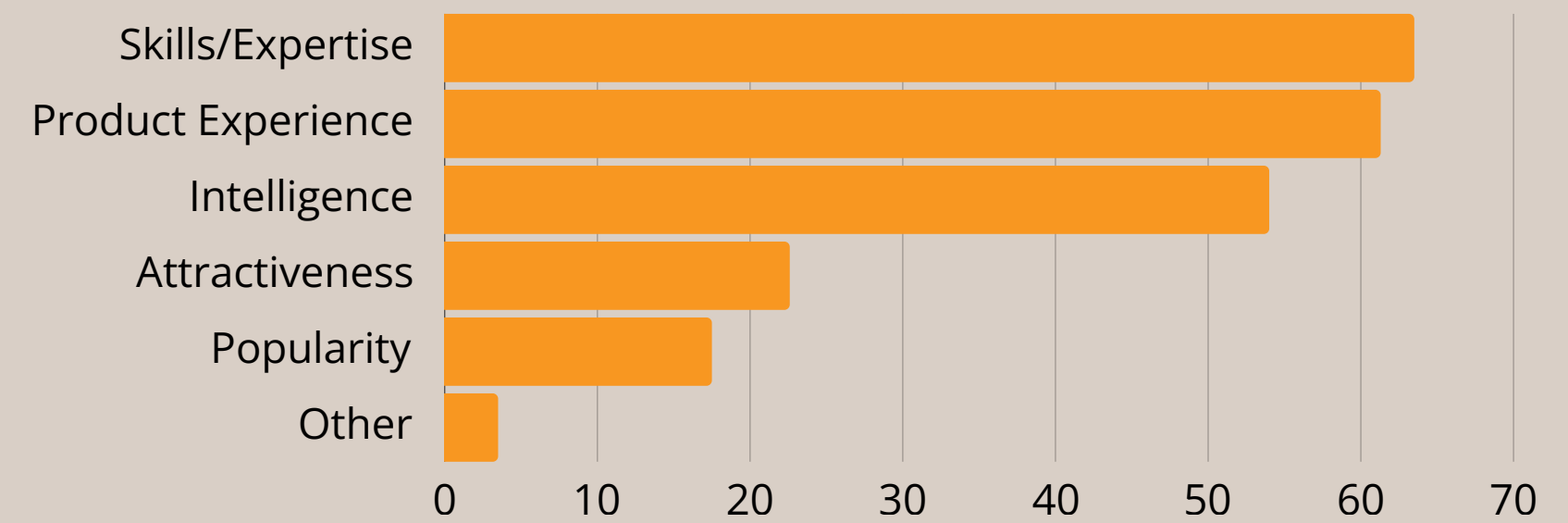
This idea of an “attractive” or “popular” influencers may come from the fact that influencers began as celebrities and within fashion and beauty spaces.

Štefko, R., Fedorko, R., Bacik, R., & Olearova, M. (2020). The Role of Influencers in the Consumer Decision-Making Process. SHS Web of Conferences, 74, 03014

## The Most Trusted Influencer Types



## Desired Influencer Characteristics



# The Actions that Matter

## Influence

When looking at how influencers affect consumers without focusing on direct sales, the influencer's match with the brand, their openness, and follower count were more influential on consumer attitudes and intent to buy than just their engagement stats.

## Purchase Intent

However, for engagement and purchase intention, how well an influencer communicates made a bigger difference. When it comes to actual sales, strong communication from influencers had the biggest impact.





# The Platform Effects Perception

## Content-based

For platforms that focus on content rather than profiles, a positive alignment creates a positive feedback loop to both influencer and brand. It also lessens the negative effect of followers feeling like they're being sold to, improving attitudes, engagement, and buying interest.

## Profile-based

For more “traditional” and “practical” social media informative content and strong influencer alignment as well as high follower count and influence make the most difference on purchase intent.

### Content-based



### Profile-based



# The Industry & Product Matters

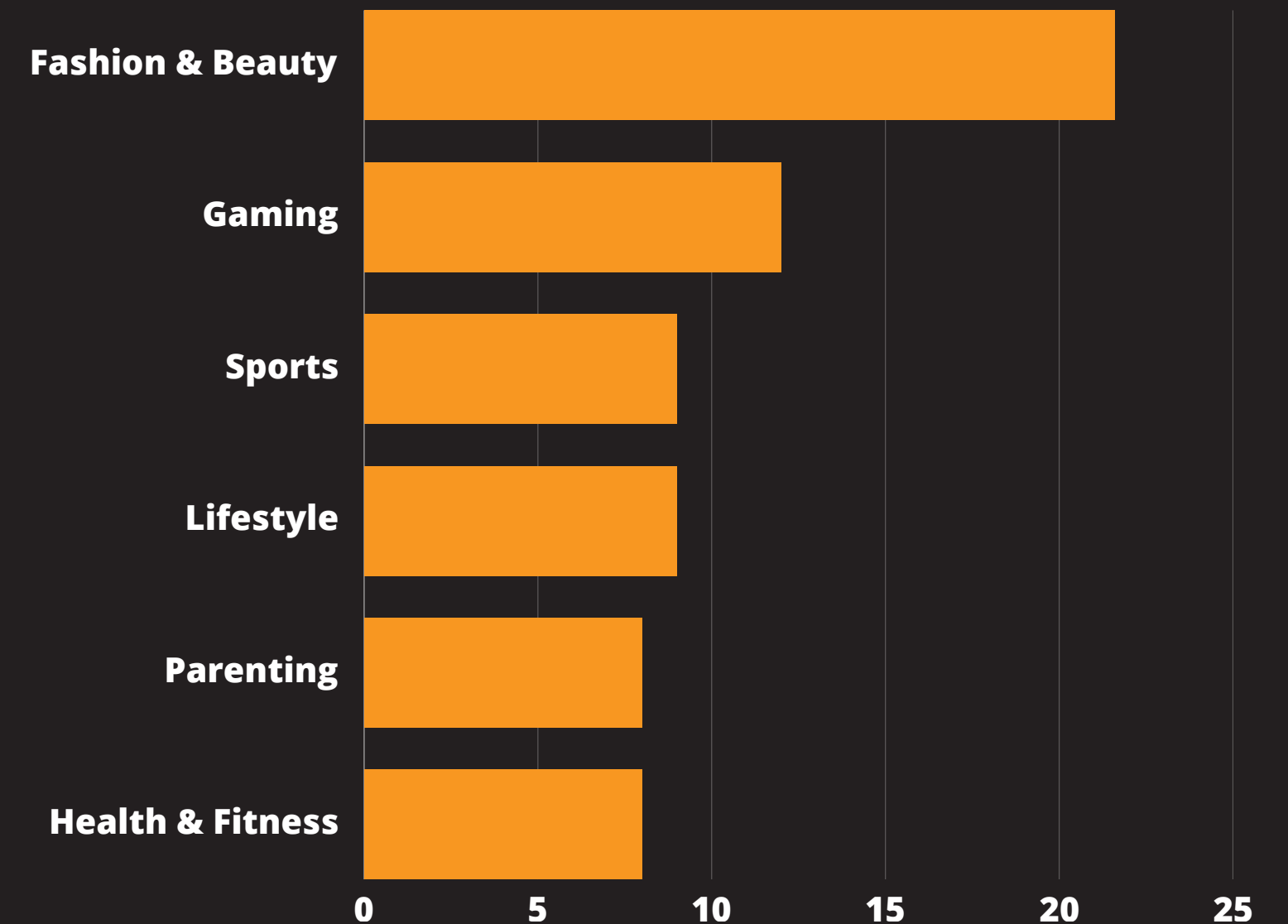
**The promotion of some products through influencers may be more advantageous than others**

Influencers will have the greatest impact when buying clothes, shoes, cosmetics, gaming, and services.

Štefko, R., Fedorko, R., Bacik, R., & Olearova, M. (2020). The Role of Influencers in the Consumer Decision-Making Process. SHS Web of Conferences, 74, 03014

[Influencer Marketing Hub 2024 Stats](#)

**2024 Influencer Industry Share %**





# The Impacts on Decision Making



## Influencer Alignment

Across the research it prevails that aligning the right influencer to the right brand and campaign is the most important choice you can make to sway consumer decision.



## Platform Choice

Ensuring your media mix includes platforms that align to your overall goal will help boost the effectiveness of your influencers.



## Communication

Making sure the communication is clear and makes sense for the platform can help to sway decision making, even when a call-to-action isn't present.







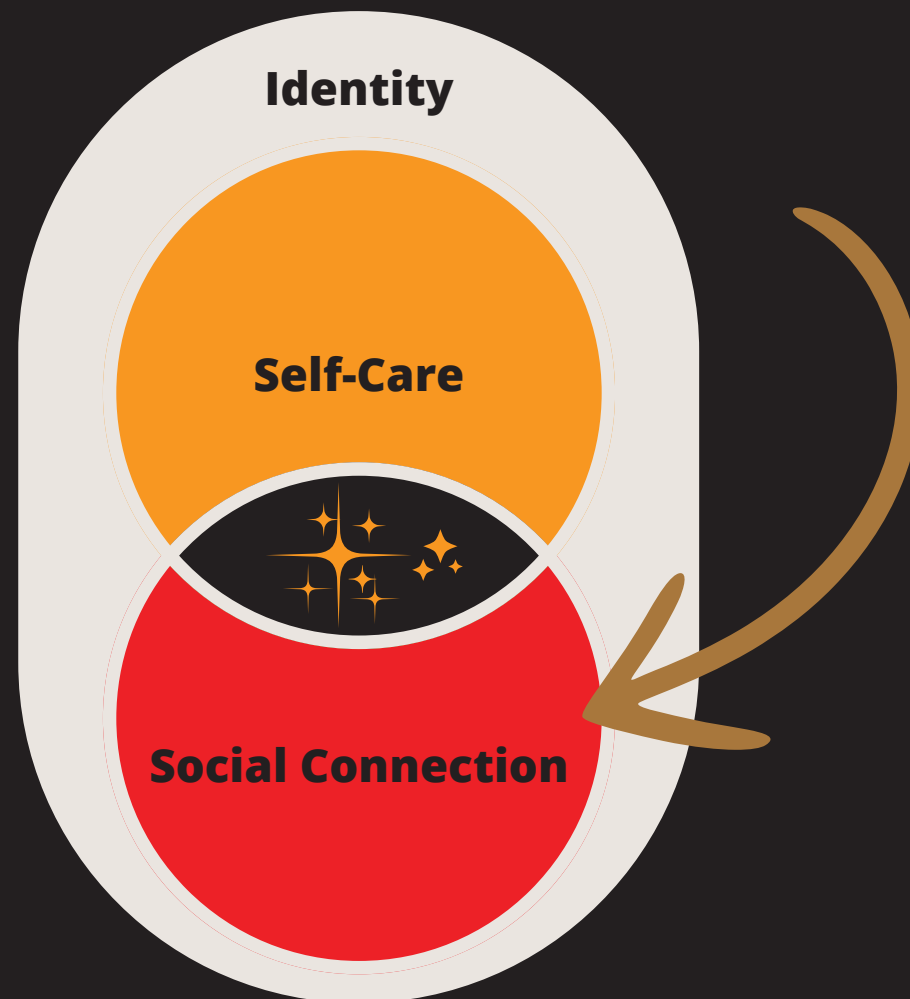
# **Example CPG Case Study: Dove**



# Dove: Toxic Influence



Dove recognized that with trust in influencers, there also came an element of toxic influence where young people were creating “para-social relationships” with influencers. This led to 39% of young girls trusting influencers more than their parents



## Through a decision-making lens

These young girls were leaning on influencers for their “social-connection”, but without an actual 1:1 relationship, some influence was making them feel worse about themselves rather than better as they had let that inform their identity.

“I can’t afford the skin-care or lifestyle of my friend (the influencer) and therefore I am not as virtuous/worthy as they are.”

Dove wanted to play on real life social connection to offset the effects of toxic connection. Therefore pulling real people to be the influencers of their campaign.



## The Idea

Dove wanted to see how advice from influencers sounded from the mouths of mothers - pushing enhanced relationship-building with existing social-connections. The idea was to call out the trust young girls had in influencers and push their main brand message of self-love.

They saw impressive results and conversations over the course of the campaign.







# How Will AI Change the Way we Make Decisions?

# AI Today vs. Tomorrow

**As speed and capacity increase along with available data sets, AI has the potential to support more complex decision-making in a few different ways**

**1.**

Full human to AI delegation e.g. recommender systems, digital advertising, online fraud detection, dynamic pricing.

**2.**

Hybrid 1: AI to human sequential decision-making e.g. idea evaluation, hiring.

**3.**

Hybrid 2: Human to AI sequential decision-making e.g. sports analytics, health monitoring.

**4.**

Aggregated human-AI decision-making e.g. top management teams, boards.



# The Possible Benefits

**The benefits of applying AI to strategic marketing decision-making are expected to include these:**

- 1.** Increased speed of decision-making, especially in response to new data being available or competitive threats emerging, allowing companies to capture the benefits of stronger market positions earlier
- 2.** Identification of missing data
- 3.** Increased rationality, particularly via removal or reduction of cognitive bias by decision-makers
- 4.** Creation of a common basis for decision-making
- 5.** Incorporation of learning from experience
- 6.** Higher quality management of marketing projects



**84%**

**of C-suite executives believe  
they need to use Artificial  
Intelligence (AI) to achieve  
their growth objectives**

**Companies that successfully scale  
AI achieve much better financial  
returns from their investment in it**

Nearly all C-suite executives view AI as an enabler of their strategic priorities and that achieving a positive return on AI investments requires scaling across the organization 76% acknowledge that they struggle in scaling AI across the business and that if they do not scale AI in the next five years, they risk going out of business.



# Leaning on AI

**AI's influence may lead users to an overconfidence in the technological capabilities, skewing personal judgement**

Human judgement will continue to be a valuable filter for these tools, but we may see an increase in AI-led or driven choices as individuals see automation as a foundation for research or truth. Fallacy may be in AI not having up to date or unclear information.



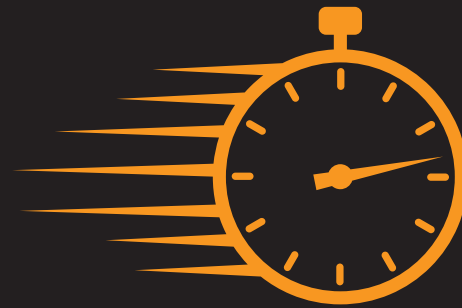


# The Impacts on Decision Making



## AI Decision Making Will Change

We will move from a search-and-find type of AI usage into a complex decision making framework as more data becomes available



## Businesses are Scrambling

With AI integration happening at a large scale, businesses that don't include it will become inefficient, lacking the personalization and timing their consumers crave



## Overconfidence

An overconfidence in AI may lead consumers to a conclusion about your brand depending on where the information is being pulled from







# B2B Collaborative Decision Making



# Impress the Masses

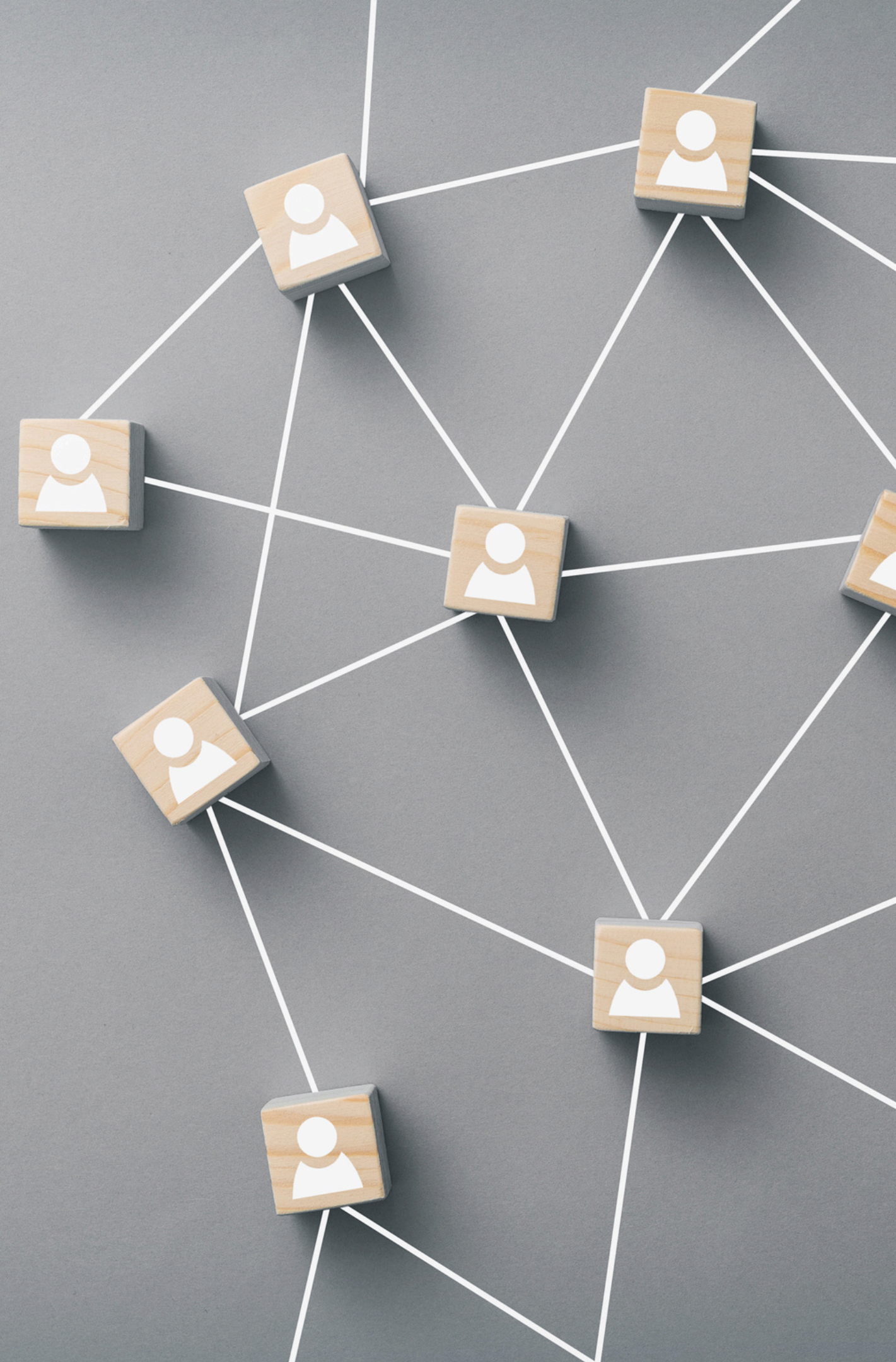
## **The people included in a business decision is trending upward**

In 2014, research by CEB found that on average five people were involved in a B2B purchase decision.

In 2022, a survey by Raconteur of 1,100 UK senior business leaders found that, in 94% of cases, more than six people are involved in the decision-making process, with one in five (21%) business leaders reporting that more than 16 people are involved in business investment decisions.

Interdepartmental influence is also increasing, with departments such as finance, HR, IT, operations, marketing and sales influencing areas outside their assumed expertise.

[The new landscape of collaborative purchasing decision-making](#) | WARC

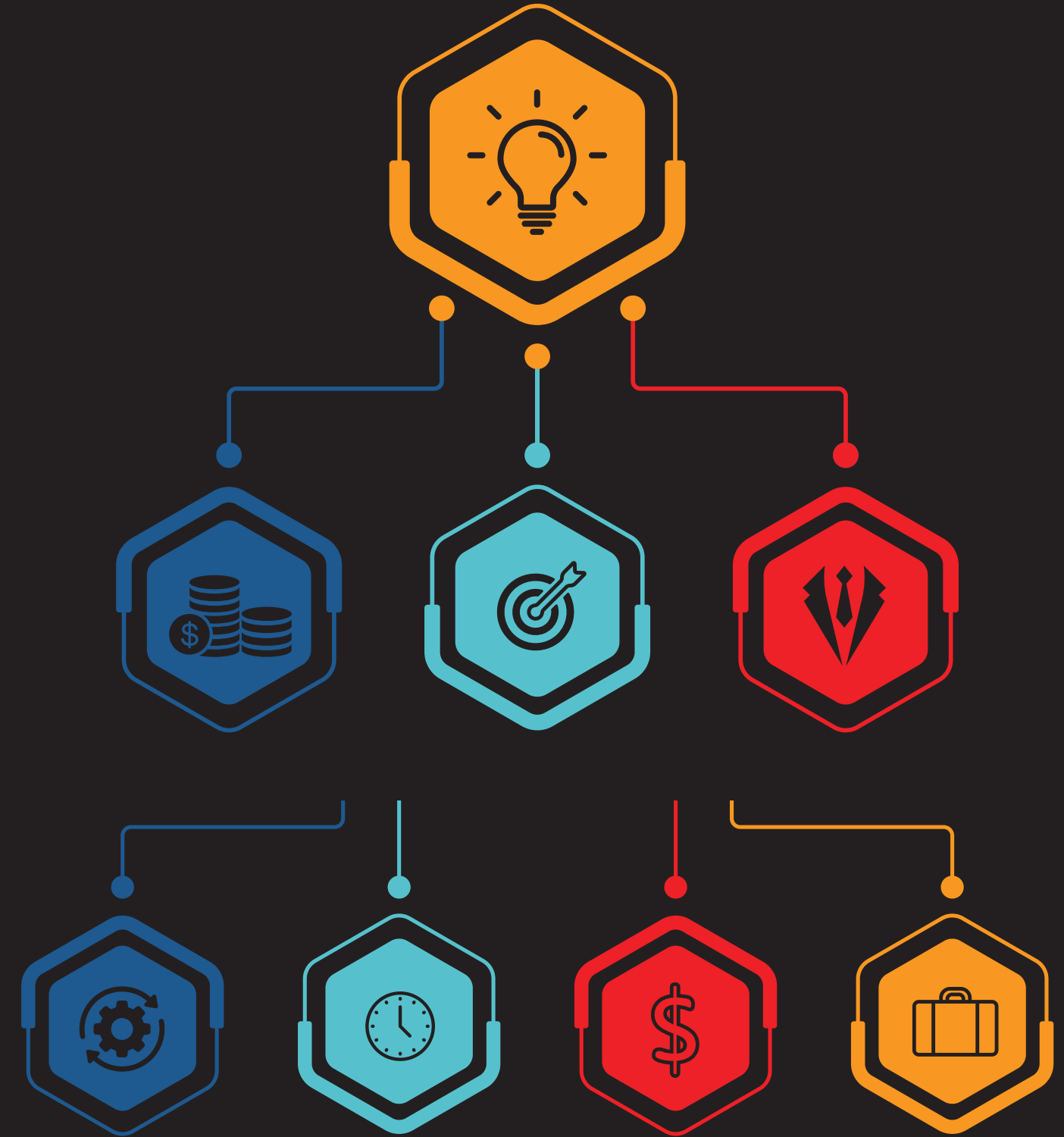




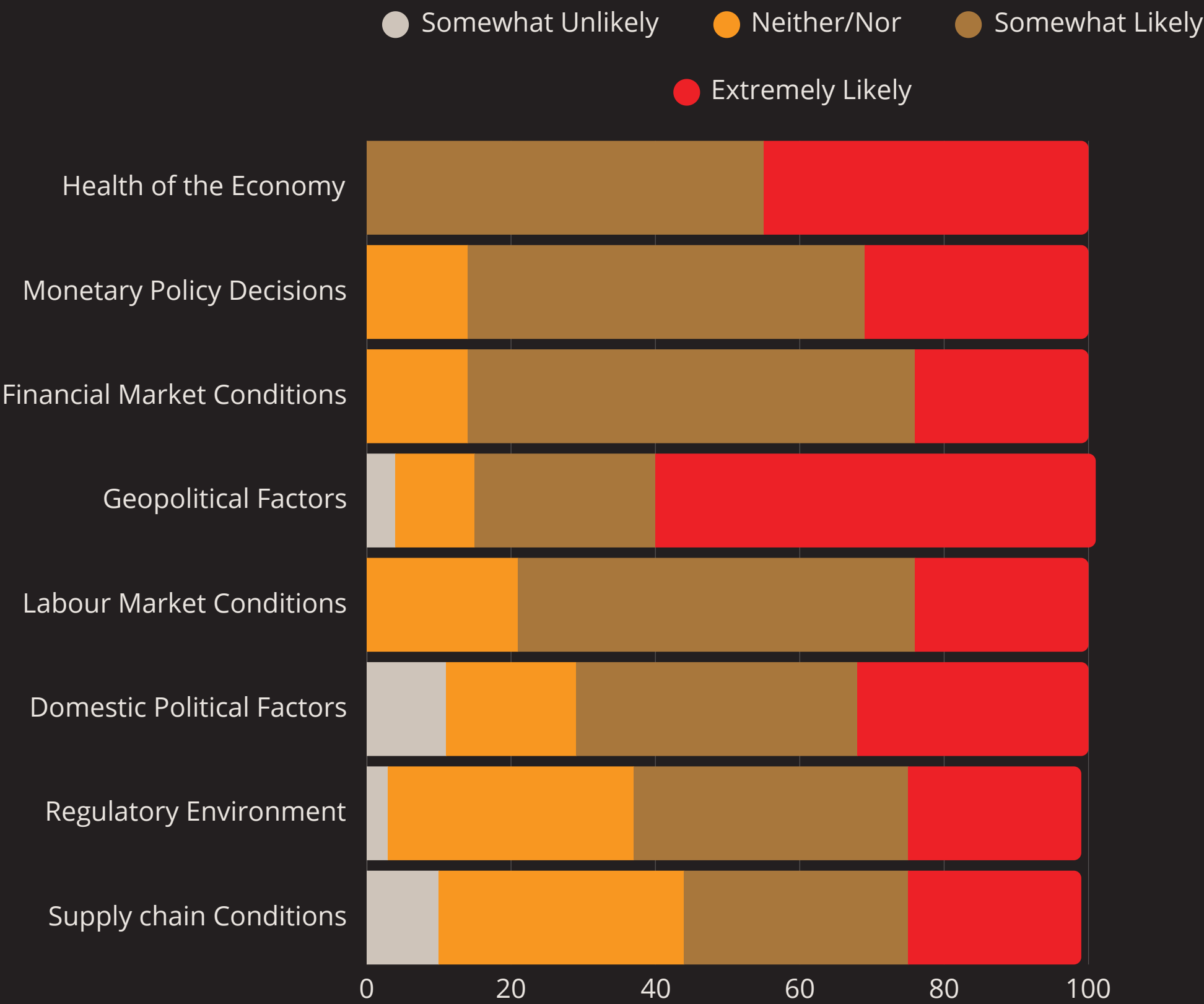
# The More the Merrier

**76% of business leaders agree that they rarely make decisions without consulting stakeholders and departments in their organization**

And 86% of business leaders agree that they value regular communication, insights and/or updates from different functions for decision-making.



# Which of the following are likely to drive corporate decision making in 2024



# What Influences These Decisions?

General world trends are the greatest influence on corporate decision making. 86% of Chief Economists cite “monetary policy decisions” and “geopolitical factors” as core impacts likely to drive their decision making.



# The Impacts on Decision Making



## More People

With more people involved, timing needs to be considered early on to ensure you are able to keep up with client expectations



## More Departments

With more departments consulted, ensuring that your documents and information is relevant to all will help sell ideas faster



## Outside Factors

Keeping an eye on economic and outside conditions that will effect your audience will help ensure you can speak to their needs more effectively





# Key Takeaways







## Time & Space

2570 Agricola St.  
Halifax, NS

[timespacemedia.com](https://timespacemedia.com)

