



# Smarter Conversations: Writing With Authority

Greentarget | 2020

# Today's Objectives

- Understand what your audience wants
- Understand what true authority looks like
- Understand how to convey your insights to the audiences that matter

*In the age of information overload, connecting with an audience requires knowing exactly what they want – and how to give it to them*

# About Me



## Brandon Copple

### Director of Content & Editorial Strategy

- A former reporter and editor
- The Wall Street Journal
- Forbes
- Crain's Chicago Business
- The Chicago Sun-Times

***A career telling stories for  
business leaders***



# What the C-Suite Wants: Greentarget's 2019 State of Content Marketing Survey

# Content Preferences – Overall Ranking (Weighted)

Please indicate your preference level for the following types of content (Weighted average ranking)

Articles

1



Conferences, Trade Shows, Webinars

2



Email Newsletters

3



Interactive Charts

4



Podcasts

5



Video

6



Website Content

7



Infographics

8



Research Reports

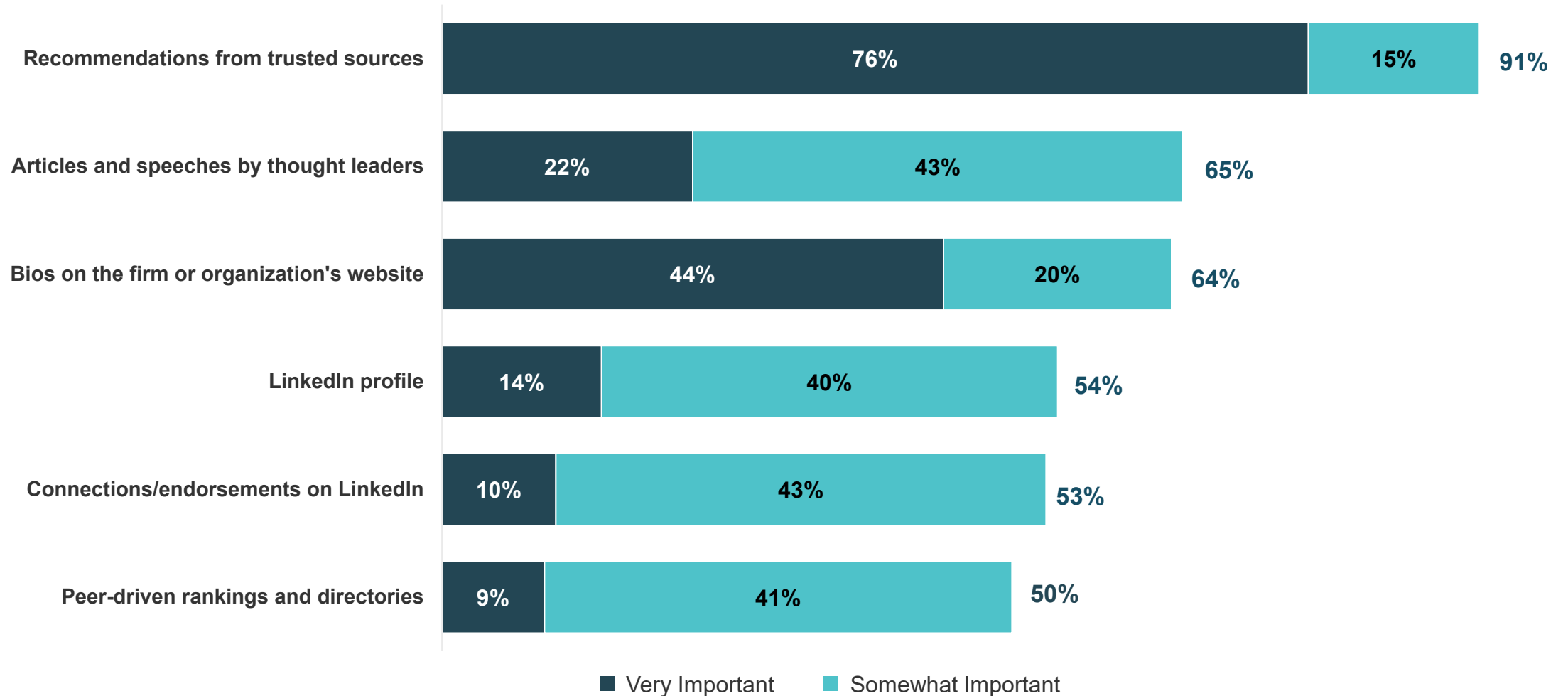
9





# Importance of Sources Used to Research Outside Firms

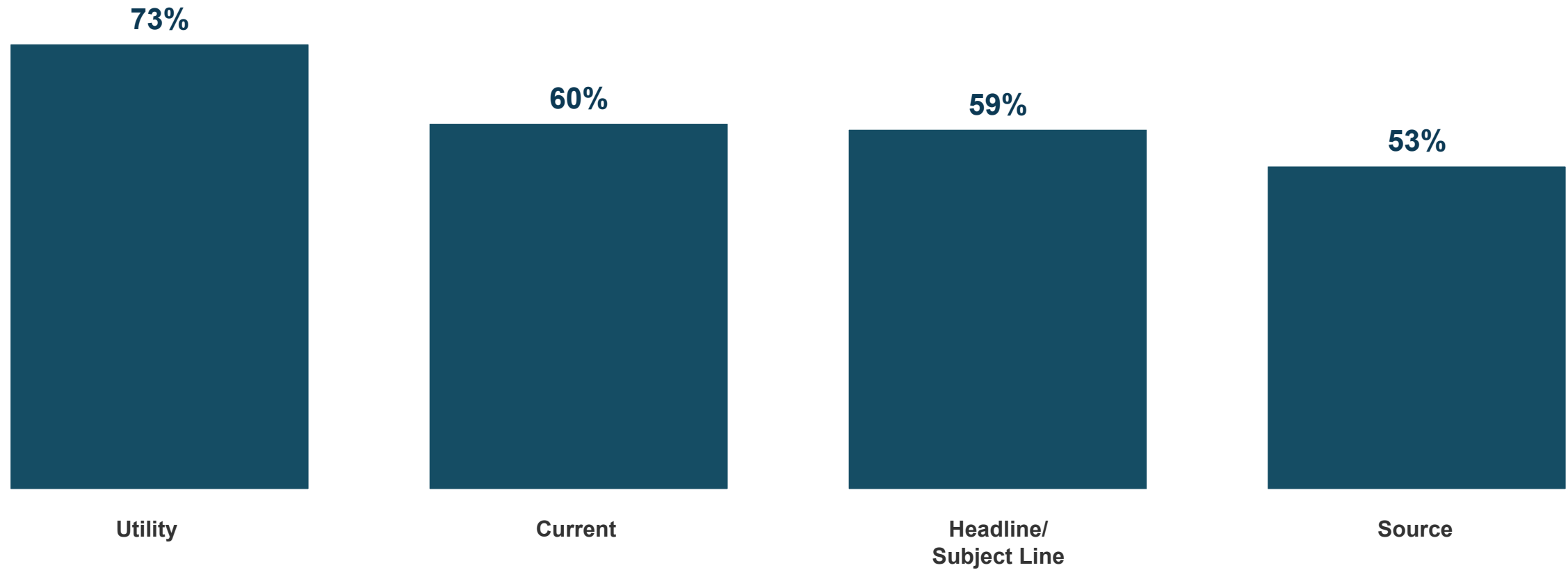
Please indicate the importance of the following in helping you to research outside firms/organizations for potential hire





# Most Attractive Content Attributes

What attracts you to the content that you consume most frequently?





Remember  
This

- Business and legal leaders read *articles*
- Articles influence *hiring decisions*
- They want those articles to be *useful*





# The Four Elements of Authority

## RELEVANCE

- Applicable
- Material

This has a direct impact on my business.



## UTILITY

- Useful
- Actionable

This helps me do my job.



## URGENCY

- Important Now
- Time-Sensitive

I can't afford to ignore this.



## NOVELTY

- New information
- Revelatory insights

I haven't heard anything like this before.





# Writing With Authority

# Writing With Authority: Three Steps

- Identify your idea
- Organize your thoughts
- Write it

*If you can recognize a viable idea, identify the important elements and write a clear, compelling story, you'll have thought leadership that has real business value – and that builds authority.*

# Step 1: Identify Your Idea

Your checklist:

- ☐ Relevance: Why does this matter?
- ☐ Novelty: Has anybody else said this?
- ☐ Urgency: Why should I read this now?
- ☐ Utility: How is this useful?

*Exercise: A client calls with a question about something she just read in the news. She wants to know what it means for her business – and what she should do about it.*

*She has 3 minutes.*

# Step 2: Get Organized

- Write a headline
- Write a nut graf



# Headlines

Four elements: What's not apparent?

Do:

*Be descriptive: What does your article say?*

*Be explicit:*

*"Here's Why...."*

*"How to..."*

*Make every word count*

Don't:

*Be cute*





# Headlines That Work

## How to Create a Safe Workplace For All in the Post-MeToo era

Why you should start treating health benefits like an actual benefit

## Are You Ready for LIBOR's Demise?

DISPUTES & INVESTIGATIONS

## Big rig carrying fruit crashes on 210 Freeway, creates jam

May 20, 2013 | By Joseph Serna

# Headline Technique

- Write at least 3 (the more the better)
- “You” for empathy
- Read aloud
- Strong verbs!

# Nut Grafts

One paragraph (1-4 sentences) that tells the reader:

- Why am I here?
- What am I going to learn?
- Why should I keep reading?

Be explicit: Hit them over the head with it.

# Nut Grafts

Here's the reality: An effective compliance program is just as vital under President Trump as it was under President Obama. Failure to implement and maintain an effective compliance program exposes executives to as much reputational, financial and personal risk under Attorney General Jeff Sessions as it did under Attorney General Eric Holder.

For all of those players—but especially for the executives and investors whose leadership will be essential in the coming years—the time is now to understand what must be done, what existing efforts are worth watching and what risks lie ahead, starting with the millions of American lives that hang in the balance.

# Step 3: Write It

- Write like you talk
- Minimize jargon, legalese – even for lawyers!
- Be explicit – never make the reader work to find relevance, utility, urgency or novelty
- Be efficient – assume you have 3 minutes to make your point
- Active voice: subject, verb, object



Remember  
This

- Authority influences hiring decisions
- Four elements
  - Relevance
  - Urgency
  - Novelty
  - Utility
- Headline + nut graf
- 3-minute rule



# Thank you!

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