



# The state of workplace search 2025 report

What we learned from asking 100+ employees about their daily information quest, and the better experience opportunity with enterprise search

**slite**

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# The real cost of bad Search

Information is everywhere and nowhere.

Teams use many tools - Confluence or Linear, Slack, Google Drive, Zendesk or Intercom, making the bigger picture fragmented. This issue intensifies with more team members.

We needed to understand both the productivity and human cost of this problem.

So we surveyed over 100 knowledge workers across industries. We wanted to uncover:

- **Daily time spent searching for information**
- **The cumulative impact on team productivity**
- **Common friction points in finding information**
- **How search frustration affects employee satisfaction**
- **The hidden cost to team morale and retention**

Between looking for or providing someone information, workers lose an entire month each year searching for information.

That's 33 days vanishing into searches, repeated questions, and waiting for answers from colleagues. Not minutes. Not hours. A full month.

In a 100-person company, that's over 300 days of productivity evaporating each year. And worse, only 10% of people find what they need on their first try.

The findings paint a clear picture: the way we manage and find information at work is fundamentally broken. But they also show us something else - a path forward.

[Let's break down what we found.](#)

# The real cost of bad Search

1

## Workers lose 33 days per year searching for information.

A staggering 2.5 hours every week is spent searching, wasted looking for information that they know they've previously seen.

2

## 9 out of 10 searches fail on the first try.

The vast majority of workers need multiple attempts to find what they're looking for, creating a frustrating cycle of repeated searches and lost productivity.

3

## 61% struggle with outdated information.

Workers frequently encounter and use obsolete data because search results don't prioritize the most current versions, leading to misaligned decisions.

4

## 81% need someone's help to find information.

What should be documented and searchable ends up becoming a chain of interruptions, with each search disrupting multiple team members.

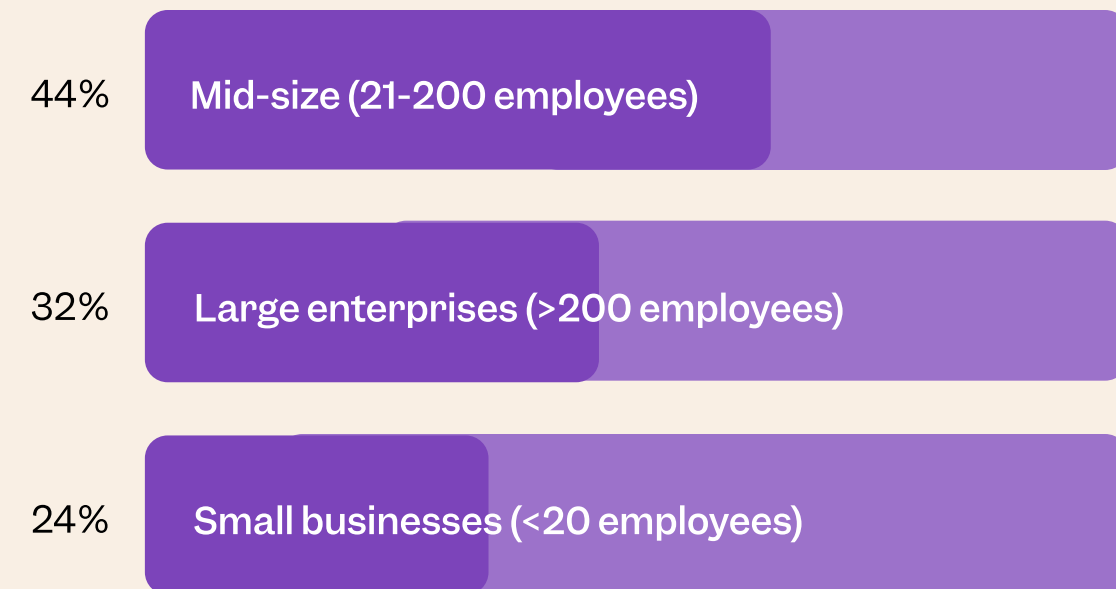
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## 73% don't have an Enterprise Search solution

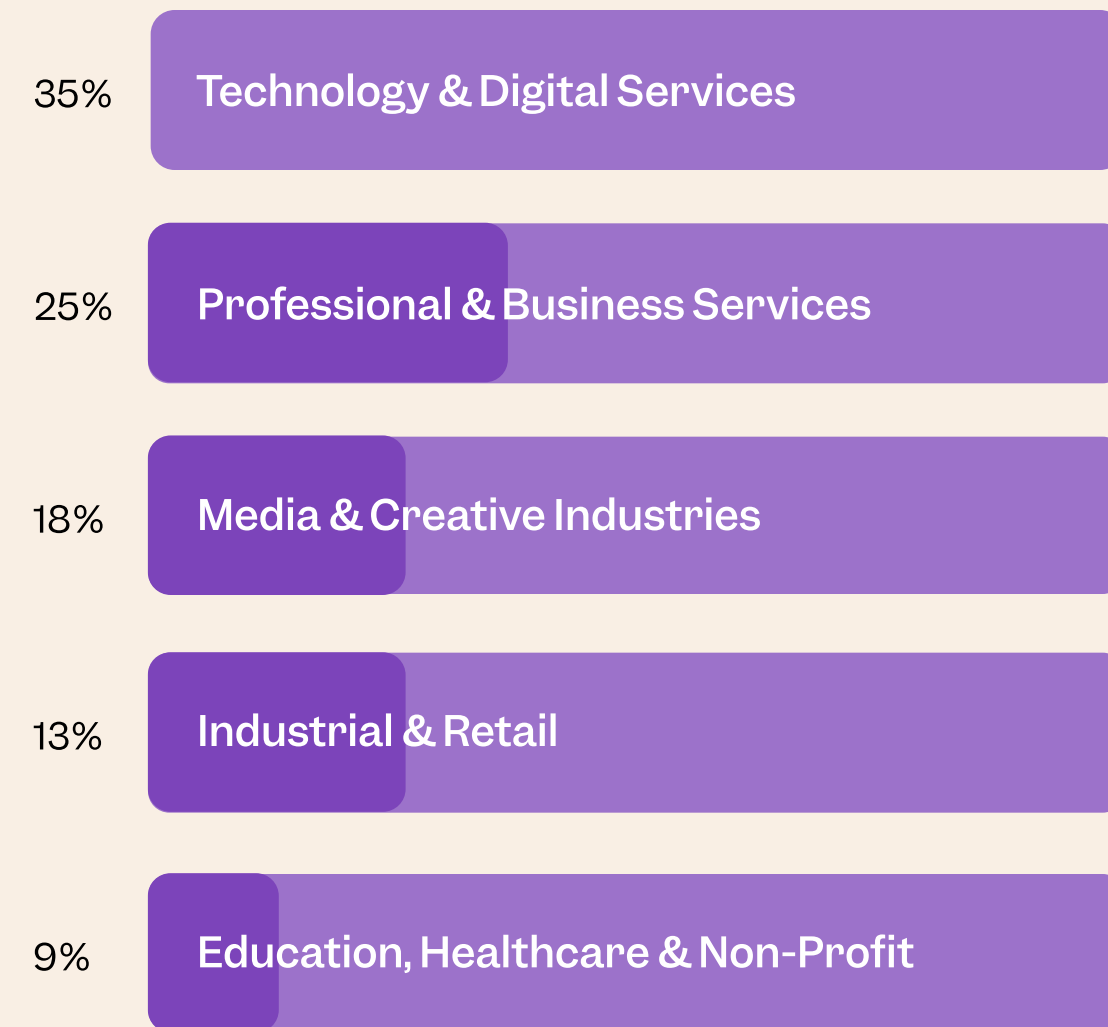
Most teams are still working without proper search tools, relying on fragmented solutions that leave valuable information scattered and hard to find.

# Who we surveyed

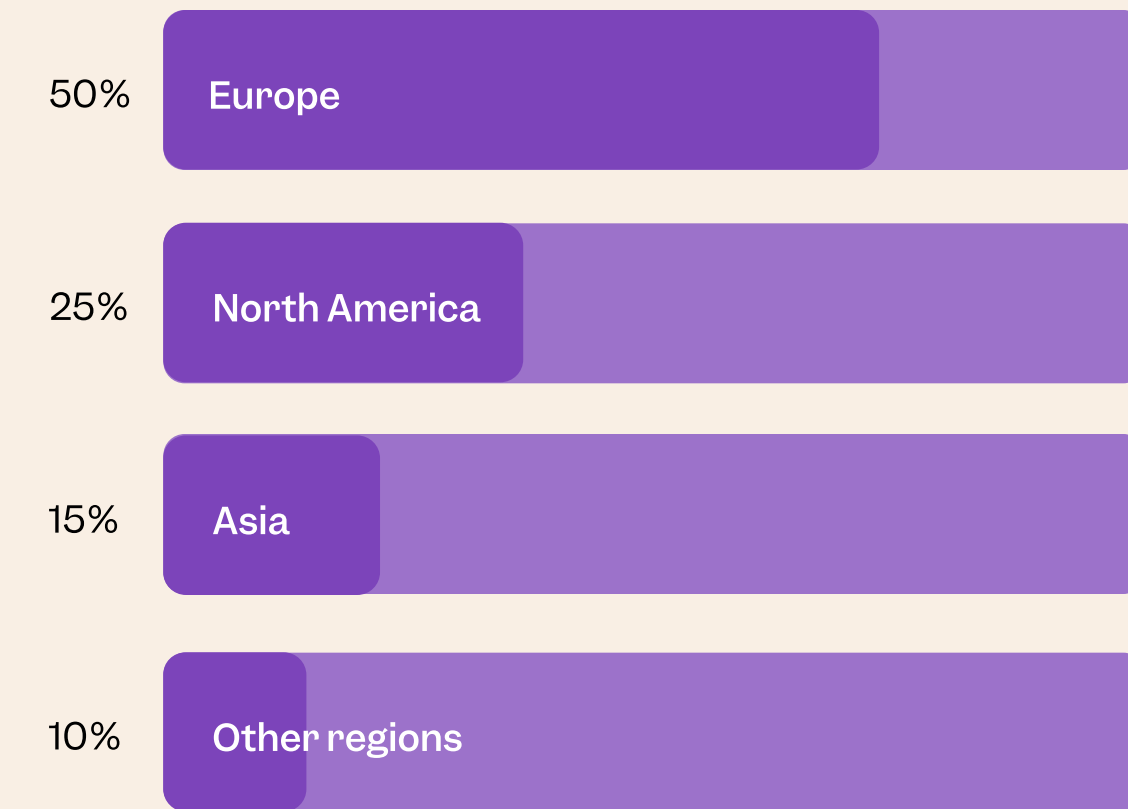
## Company Size



## Industry Distribution



## Geographic Distribution





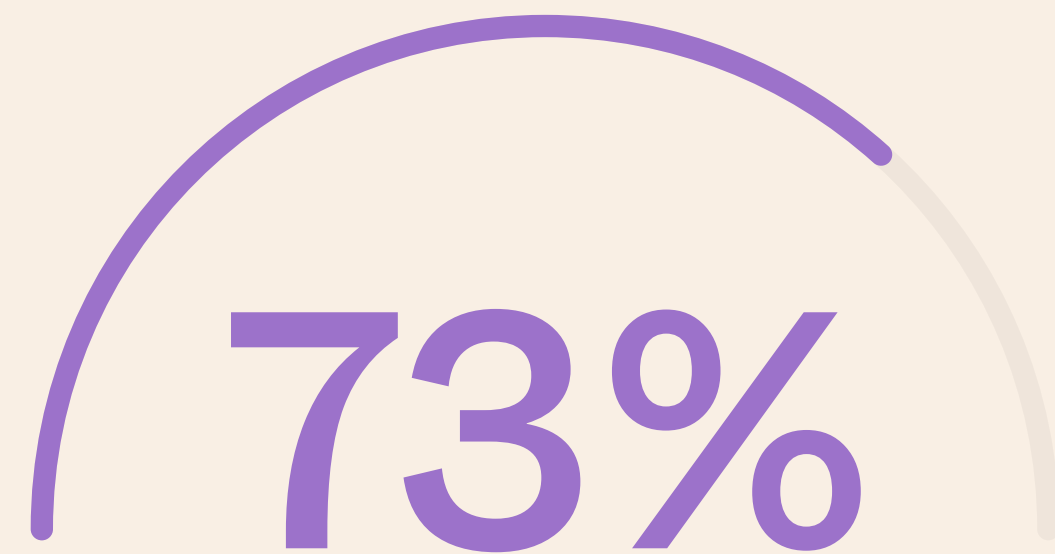
## Takeaway #1

# The overlooked Search opportunity

73% of people don't have an Enterprise Search tool.

Most don't know they need it. So they search through their digital file cabinets the old-fashioned way.

**We're witnessing the beginning of something big.**



teams haven't adopted  
an enterprise search  
solution yet

**Only 27% of organizations have  
already adopted enterprise search.**

There's an upward trend as more companies plan to adopt it, but there's still many organisations who don't know the full potential of a better search experience - and therefore haven't gotten to investing in a solution yet.

Work spans continents. Knowledge spans tools.

Tokyo can't wait for Toronto to wake up.

"Being in a digital workspace where people are all over the globe in different time zones, it makes it much more challenging to connect the seekers... People who have information with people who need information together."

Elizabeth Vaggelato, Head of Knowledge Management at Upside

When knowledge workers need to work, they cannot afford burning time waiting for answers when that time can be zero if they had a better search tool. Enterprise search stands where cloud storage did in 2010, where workplace chat lived in 2015. A category taking its first steps. Teams need it but are yet to discover what it means, and what's the best solution. The revolution in how we find and share knowledge hasn't hit mainstream - but it's coming.

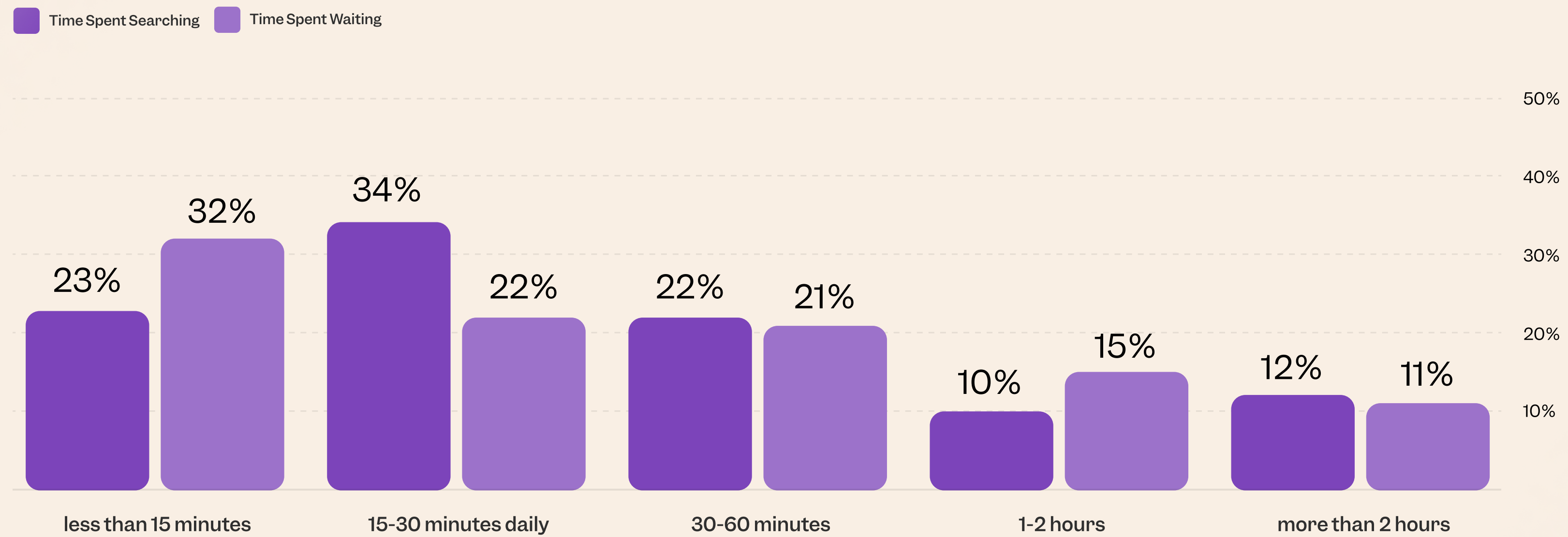


## Takeaway #2

# "Quick questions" have 2 casualties

The person searching, and the person answering.  
Be it waiting to hear back or running against the clock  
to find the answer, it's time wasted nonetheless.

## If you're not wasting time searching, you're wasting time in waiting to hear back



"As a product manager, I've observed that when teams spend significant time searching for information or waiting for responses, it creates a cascade effect. Not only does it slow down decision-making, but it also fragments team focus and disrupts the flow of innovation."

MJ Marques, Group Product Manager at Zendesk

The search burden peaks during onboarding, but never truly ends. From "What's the latest on the Miller account?" to "Where's that pricing approval from last quarter?" - the onboarding haze evolves but doesn't disappear. Teams just get better at hiding the cost.



## Takeaway #3

# Search fails more often than not

33% of users find what they need on the first attempt. The remaining 67% bounce between tools, docs, and chat threads, creating ripple effects across projects and deadlines.



10%

A 10% first-attempt success rate for internal searches stands in stark contrast to Google's 95% first-page accuracy.

Modern workplaces deserve better than a 9.5x gap between consumer and enterprise search experiences. Think about it - you'd never use Google if it failed 9/10 times.

## How often do you find what you're looking for on the first attempt?



# Distance only amplifies this discord

Time zones compound this challenge:

- **A New York City team member waiting on Seoul's documentation: 13-hour delay**
- **A London developer needing San Francisco's approval: 8-hour wait**
- **A Singapore analyst seeking Toronto's input: 12-hour gap**

When information moves slow, teams guess. They get scrappy, assume information, try to search themselves, and amplify this dissonance even more. Not only does it cost them time, their answer's a guess at best.



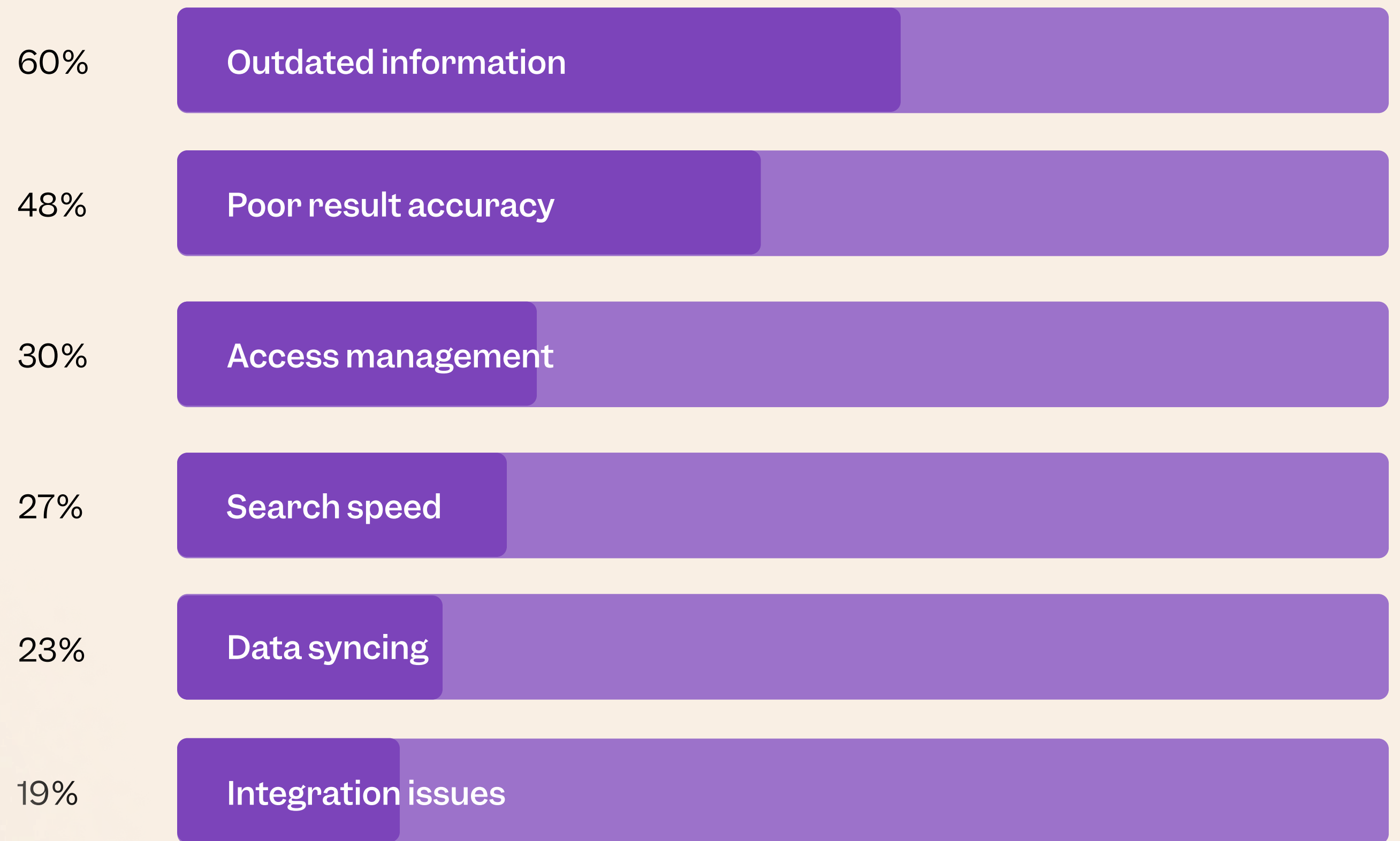
## Takeaway #4

# The big challenges of Search

Why does search take so long? We found 6 common challenges for all knowledge workers, regardless of company size or industry.

# The many, many challenges of Searching

\*Participants in this survey could chose more then one response to this question



## Knowledge Managers are Search's missing piece.

There's an assignee for handling sales, for managing your next offsite, but not your company's search experience.

Especially if you have 6 big challenges, you can't just solve it with a single tool. You need an owner.

1

### Context

Knowledge managers act as information architects, helping teams understand where knowledge fits in the bigger picture. They provide crucial perspective on how different pieces of information connect and relate across the organization's ecosystem.

2

### Control

Knowledge managers filter and curate the constant flow of organizational information. By establishing standards, validating content, and ensuring accuracy, they transform scattered information into reliable, actionable knowledge assets.

3

### Chemistry

Knowledge managers build bridges between information silos by creating shared vocabularies and understanding. They facilitate better collaboration by ensuring teams speak the same language and access knowledge in consistent, intuitive ways.

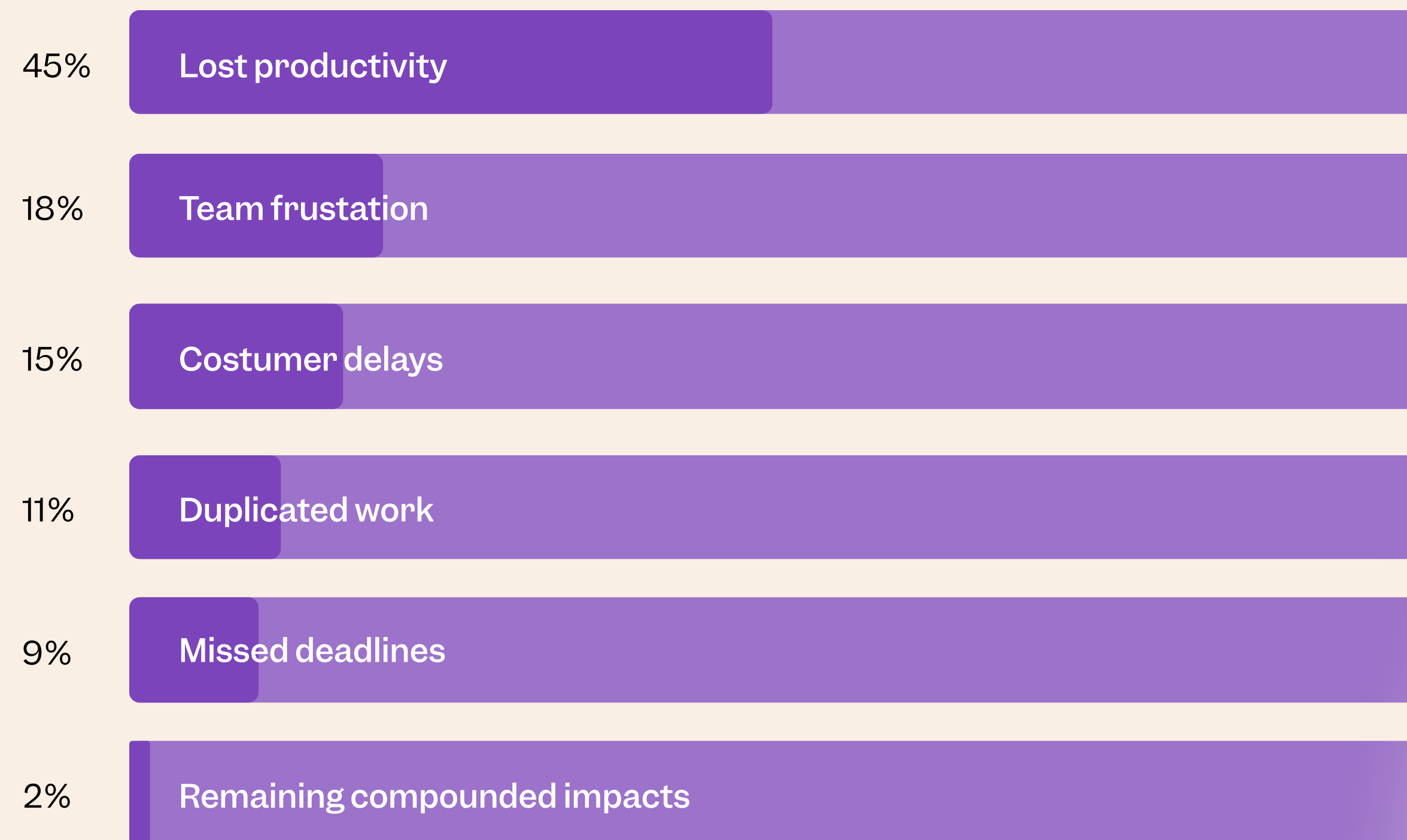


## Takeaway #5

# Bad Search is bad for business

Knowledge workers miss deadlines, lose productivity, and feel frustrated due to a poor search experience.

## Breaking down the business toll



"When a company decides to invest in an enterprise search tool, people automatically have more time available for work. Instead of scheduling a 30-minute call to explain a technical aspect, I can simply ask my question directly in the platform."

Carolina Liriz Camargo Gonçalves, Customer Success & AdOps Manager at Displayce

Every minute spent searching is a minute lost twice. First in the search itself, then in the recovery. When 45% of business impact is productivity drain and another 18% is frustration, we're looking at a 63% impact on your workforce's potential - two-thirds of your search problems directly hitting your bottom line.

But the revenue impact cuts deeper. With 15% customer delays and 9% missed deadlines, that's nearly a quarter of all search failures reaching beyond your walls. Factor in the 11% spent on duplicate work, and you're actively paying people to create problems you've already solved. So - would you call it a mere tooling issue or a real business emergency?



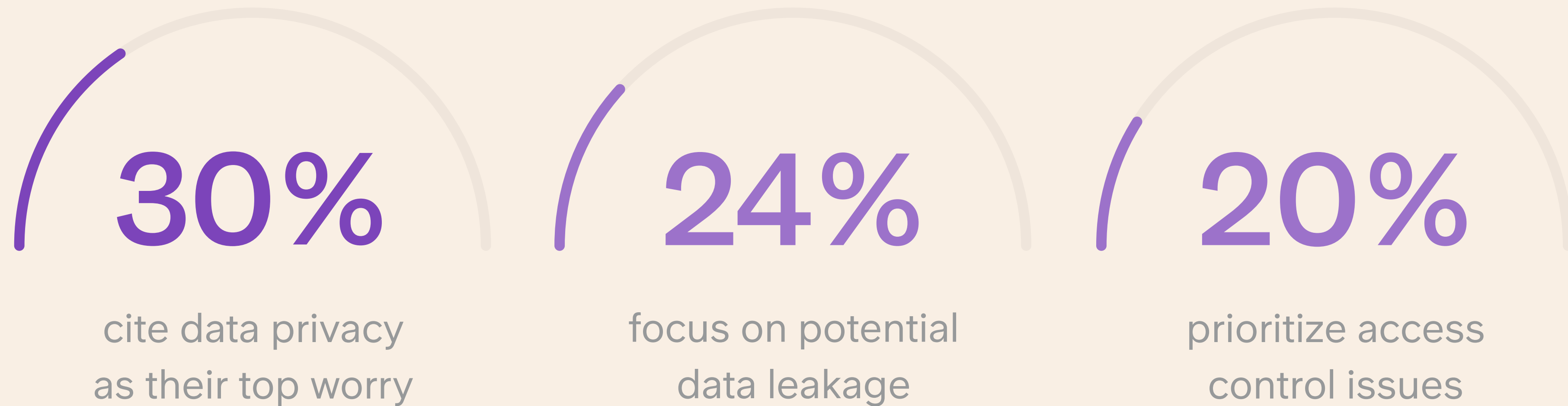
## Takeaway #6

# Last barrier to better Search? Security.

Data privacy concerns lead at 30% - and it's the last barrier in solving the search crisis.

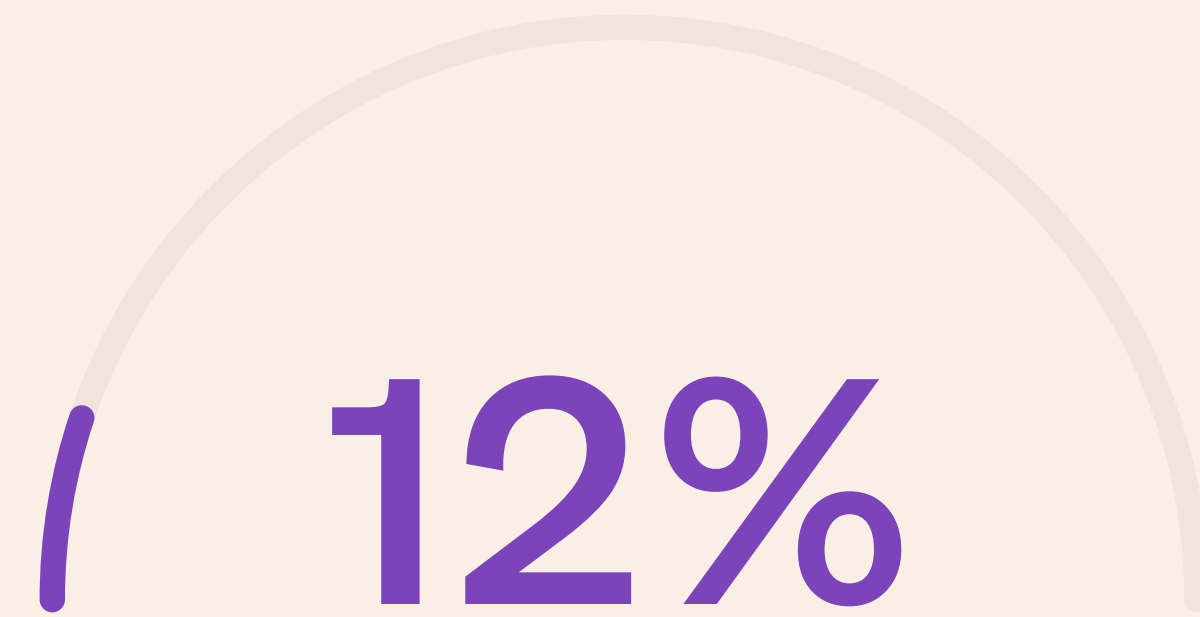
## The dealbreakers

The 3 biggest concerns are around data privacy and access:



## The niche requests

Some of the smaller reasons include compliance and 3rd party risks.



emphasize compliance requirements



watch third-party integration risks

## **People are willing to invest in search, just not at the cost of security**

Most enterprise search vendors skip straight to features and AI capabilities. Yet security remains the primary blocker for potential adopters. We spoke to companies still running on basic search tools - they're ready to upgrade, but not at the cost of data safety.

The requirements are clear but complex. Teams want unified search across every data source: cloud storage, local drives, third-party tools. But they need ironclad privacy controls, role-based access limits, and audit trails. Each document, each data point, each user interaction must fit existing security protocols. Current solutions either oversimplify these needs or bury their security features in technical documentation.

This gap creates real costs. Teams stick with outdated tools because the risk feels lower than change. Knowledge stays trapped in silos because no one trusts cross-department search. Vendors push AI features while basic security questions go unanswered.

**The market demands better - and the next wave of enterprise search must put security first, not last.**

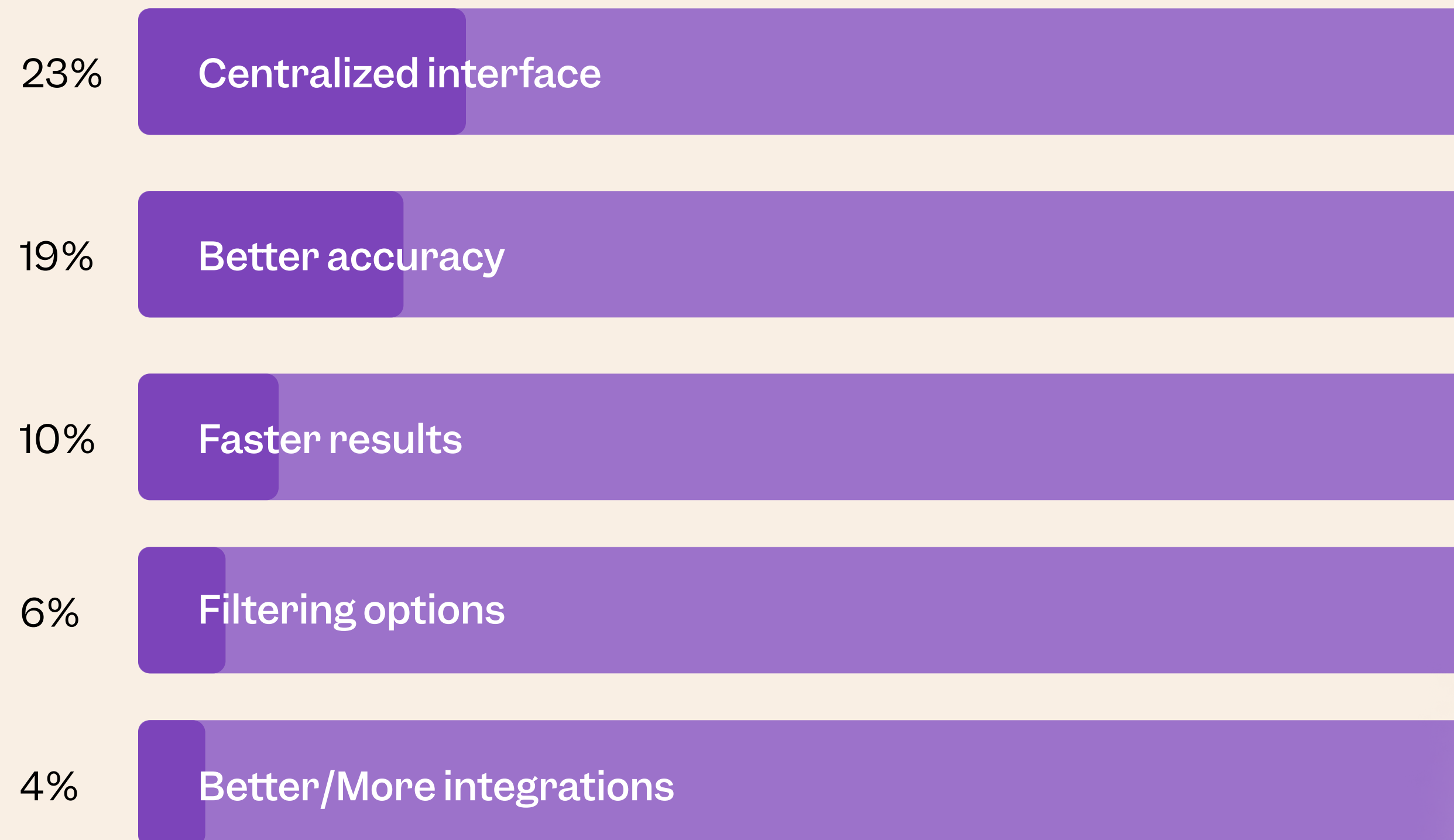


## Takeaway #7

# Teams know the kind of Search they want

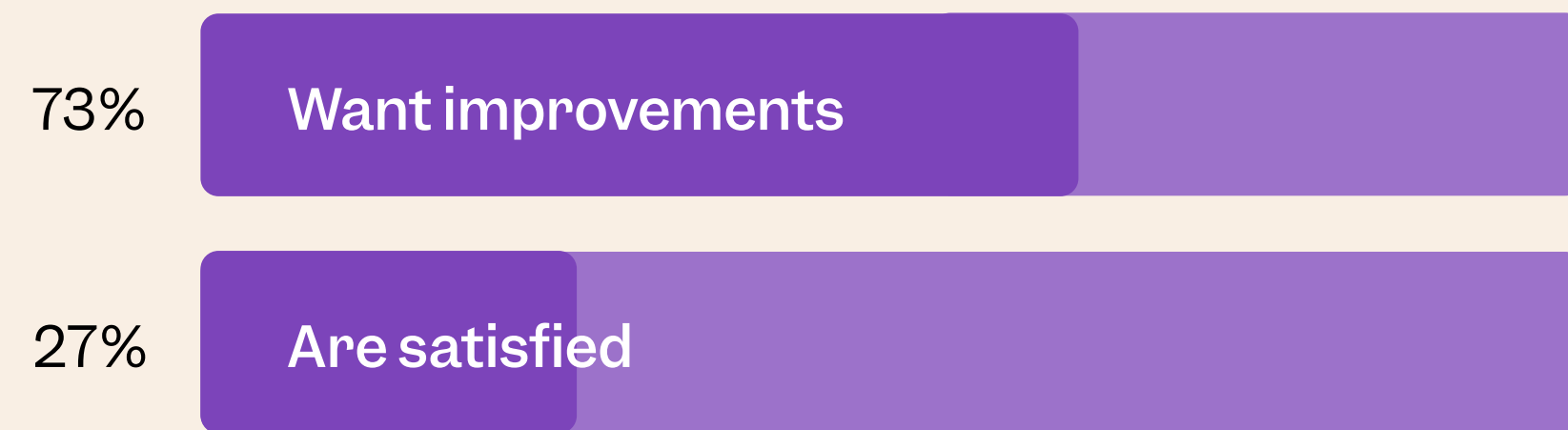
When it comes to how search experience can be improved, knowledge workers have their wishlist ready.

## The top 5 improvements needed by Knowledge Workers



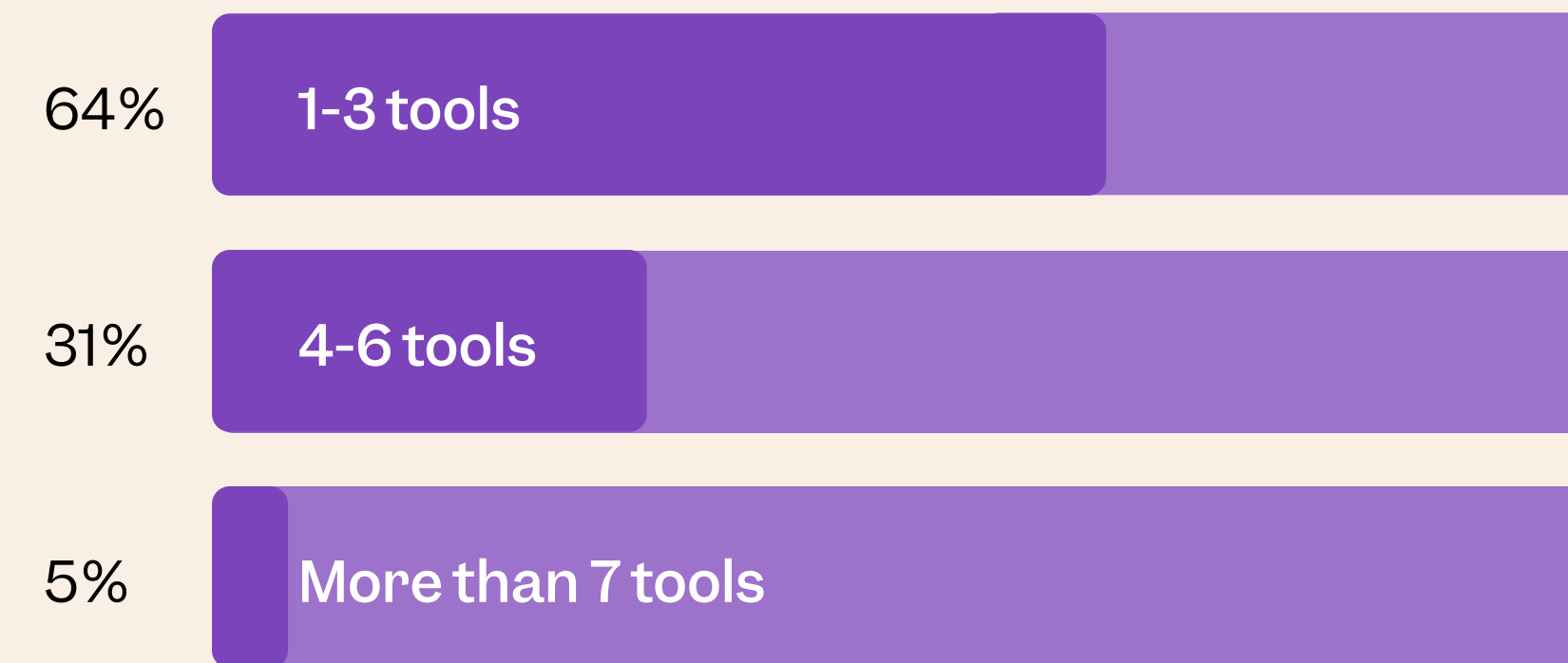
## More than 70% people aren't happy

Satisfaction level with current search experience



Almost three-quarters of workers without enterprise search struggle with their current setup. Teams waste hours hunting across multiple platforms, rewriting, and recreating work that's buried somewhere in their digital maze.

Amount of tools teams search information across on a daily basis



The future looks even more fragmented. As specialized tools multiply, the 31% currently juggling 4-6 tools will grow. Companies face an urgent choice: unite their digital workplace now, or watch productivity dissolve into chaos.



## Takeaway #8

# Search priorities for 2025

Organisations understand that a generic solution won't cut it.  
They want a tool that fits their priorities, namely 4.

## Users have embraced AI and now want more.

**The dream?  
One powerful interface to  
query everything, anywhere.**

**But can the market fulfil it?  
About half of it, definitely.**

AI integration and accuracy will improve naturally as vendors rush to embed LLMs and refine RAG.

But the real challenge lies in cross-platform reach and interface design. Search makers must solve both the backend complexity of endless integrations and the frontend art of radical simplicity.

Search priorities for 2025

29%

AI integration

26%

User experience

25%

Cross-platform search

20%

Improved accuracy



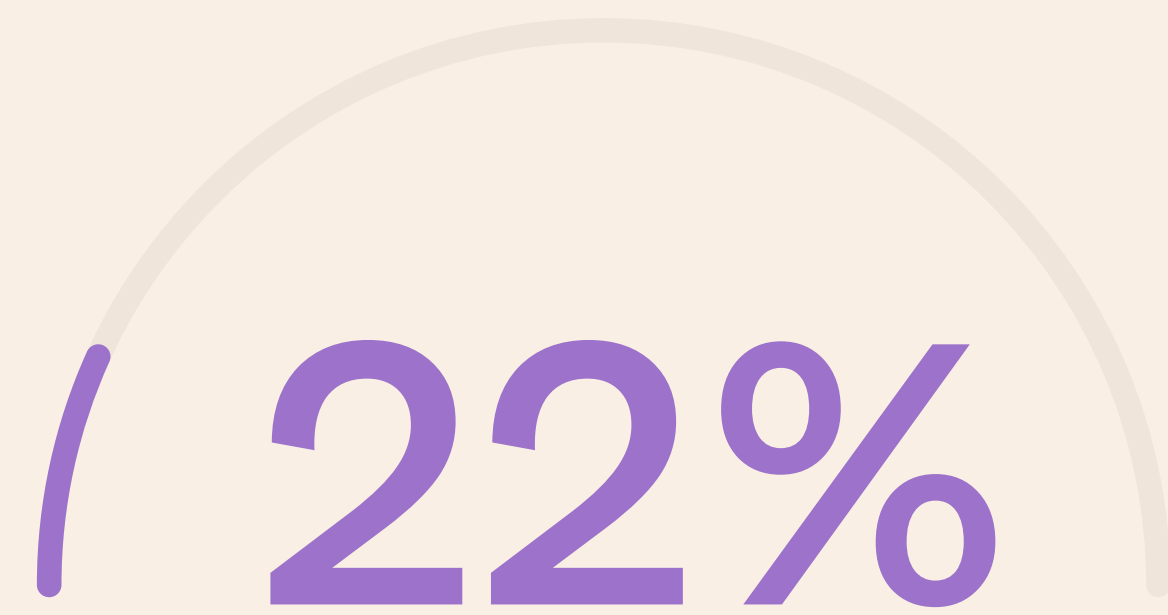
## Takeaway #9

# Teams are in the market for Enterprise Search

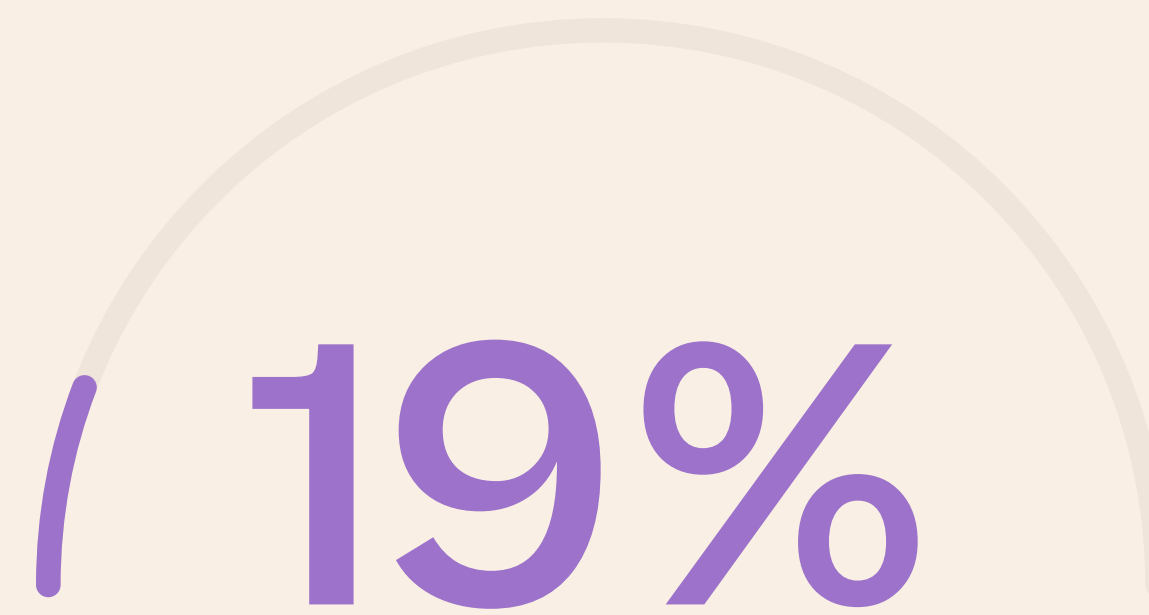
Many teams intuitively know search is a productivity leak.

Will 2025 be the year of mass adoption for Enterprise Search?

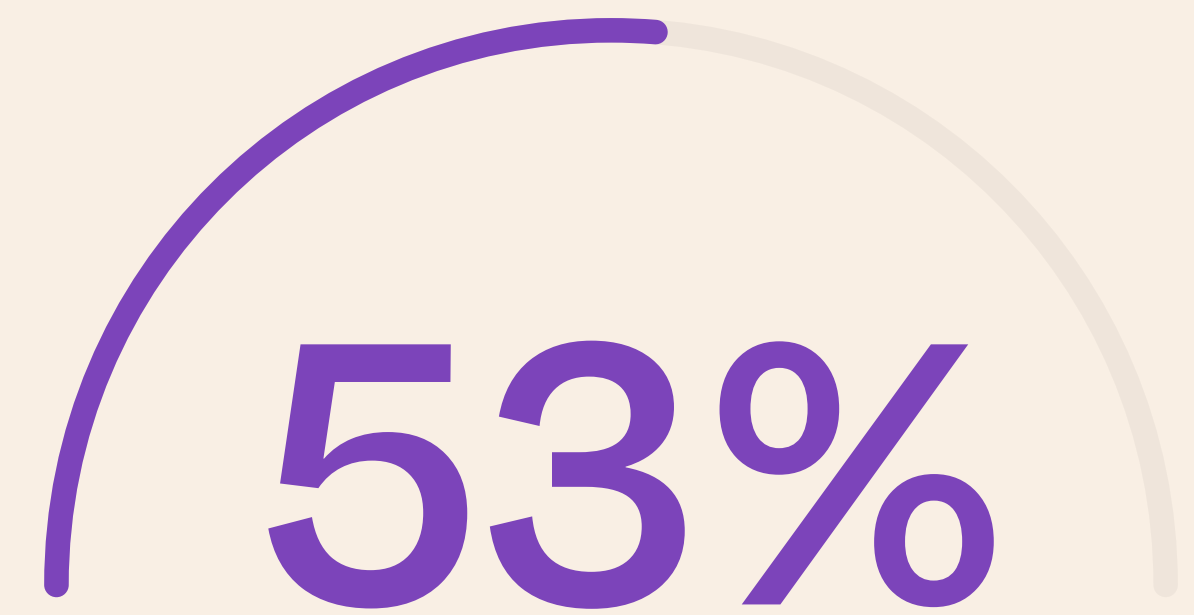
72% organizations are already gearing up for modern search tools in 2025.



staying with current tools for now



actively evaluating vendors or in implementation phase



serious considering to find and implement a solution within 2025

“Through my work transforming digital workplaces, I've observed that organisations often approach search as a technical problem to solve, when it's fundamentally about enhancing the employee experience and removing the daily friction that prevents people from doing their best work.

What I've discovered repeatedly is that success lies at the intersection of technology and human-led adoption. **Combining search with AI is just the foundation - real transformation happens when you build a community of adoption evangelists who understand both the technical capabilities and human elements of change.**

**For organisations starting this journey, success depends on more than selecting the right tool - it requires investing in the human infrastructure that drives adoption.** Map your knowledge ecosystem, establish clear ownership, but most importantly, identify and empower those influential employees who can drive change from within. “



**Gary Walker**

Future of Work Architect

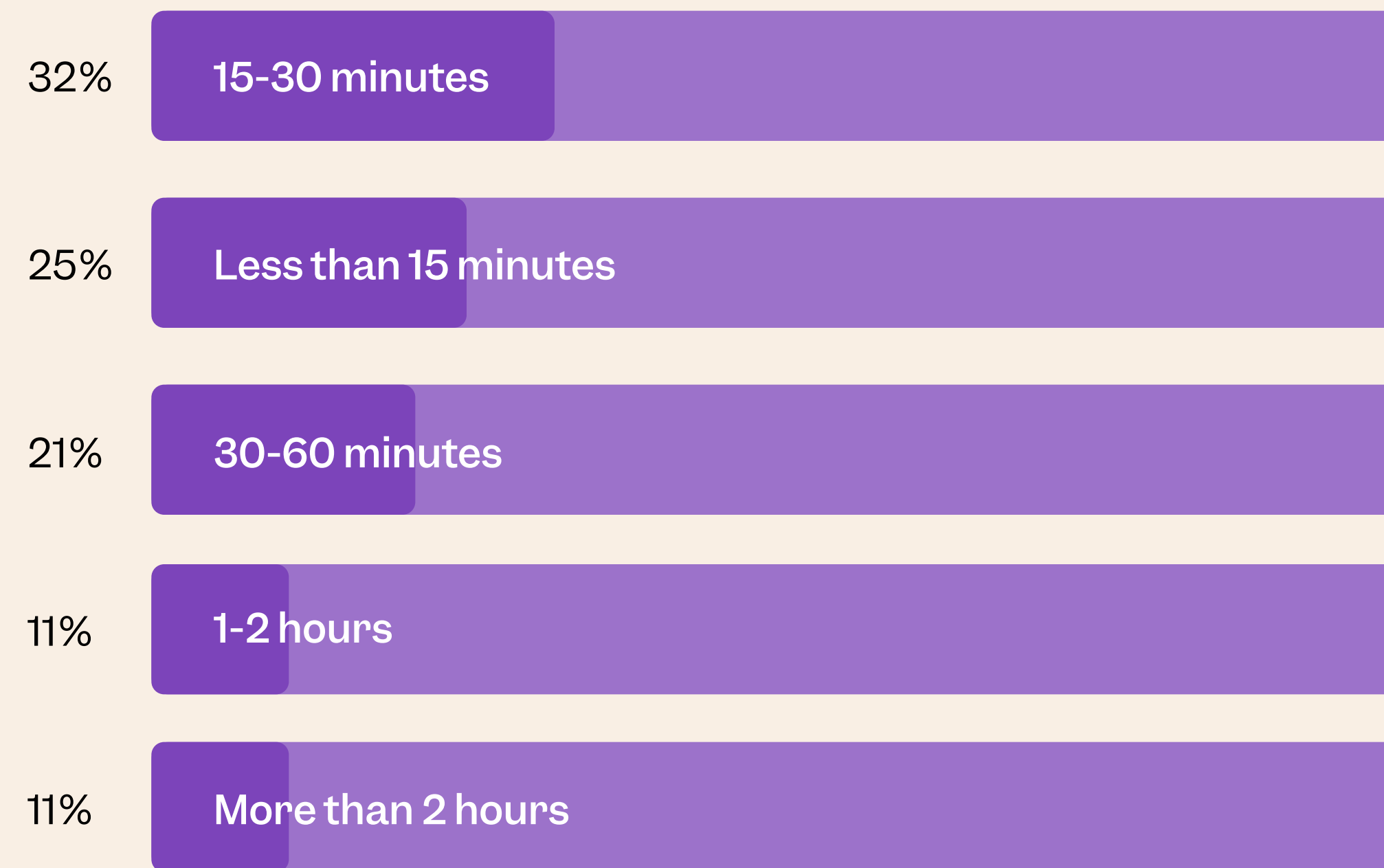


## Takeaway #10

# Quick questions add up to months

Companies lose 33 working days to searching. The everyday search frustration is not an employee's personal issue - it's an issue of wasting company resources.

## The reality: 1 in 5 employees lose more than an hour daily to searching



Companies pay for bad search... in salaries.

Based on our 2024 survey respondents, here's the annual impact per employee:

- **60 minutes searching daily = 33 working days lost annually**
- **30 minutes searching daily = 16.5 working days lost annually**
- **Even just 15 minutes daily = 8 working days lost annually**

In effect, that's a lot of valuable company money wasted on searching – and these figures compound across your entire workforce year after year.

In effect, that's a lot of valuable company money wasted on searching.

“Over the years, we have come to realize the importance of writing things down, at the same time we never found a solution for the information overload that was the consequence of growth.

**AskX seems to be successful in reducing the amount of questions / meetings that need to happen.** We are just at the beginning though, we still need to bring adoption up, it's so engrained in people to just ask someone, before looking it up. **But, the shift is coming.**

Onboarding new developers and setting up their work machine, this has always been (and still is) a pain, but **now the chances of new people finding the right answer on AskX is much greater.**”



**André Foeken**

CTO @NEDAP

“We are using Slack as a communication channel for all teams, and **before Ask X, we had like maybe thousands of questions in all the Slack channels** from sales, from marketing, from customer success. Like 'Hey, I have a customer who has this problem, is looking for this solution or this specific feature.

Are you working on it? Is it available?' **Since we implemented Ask X, that amount of questions has been divided by 10, and it's really amazing because everyone is able to get the information they need.**

As a fully distributed team, we have some people on the West Coast of the US. Those people have for years been complaining to feel left alone or having no one to answer their questions. They ask questions during their day of work, but they know they would have to wait until the next day to get an answer. Now they feel much more connected and they can do their job much more easily.”



**Alexis Dupont**

Product Principal @Agorapulse



## Conclusion

# What we've learned

The true cost of a poor search experience is high.  
And the data is clear: this isn't sustainable.

# 5 signs you need better Search

1

## Questions on repeat

Your team asks the same questions multiple times because answers are buried in different tools.

2

## Shadow documents

Multiple versions of the same document exist because people can't find the original.

3

## Constant interruptions

Work stops frequently as people ping others for document locations.

4

## Tool sprawl

Information is scattered across Slack, email, drives, and wikis with no single source of truth.

5

## Search anxiety

Team members save everything locally because they don't trust they'll find it again.

# 3 steps to Search success

1

## Calculate your wasted time

Track and analyze the hidden costs of inefficient search across your organization. By measuring time spent searching, salary impact, and downstream effects of delayed decisions, you'll reveal the true price of poor findability.

2

## Invest in knowledge management

Knowledge management transforms scattered information into organized insights. By appointing dedicated managers, creating clear architecture, and establishing governance, you build the foundation for effective enterprise search.

3

## Choose the right enterprise search tool

The right search tool acts as an enabler, not a barrier. Focus on cross-platform reach, intuitive user experience, and proven search accuracy to ensure your technology investment delivers real value.



# Introducing **super**

Slite helps teams create, organize, and share knowledge through the simplest Knowledge Base in the industry. Our collaborative platform has already transformed how thousands of companies document and access their critical information.

Now, Slite is proud to present **Super - our answer to enterprise search chaos.**

We built Super based on real feedback from thousands of teams struggling with scattered information.

What makes Super different:

- **Cross-platform search that actually works**
- **Interface so simple your mother could use it**
- **Industry-leading accuracy that finds what you need, not just what you typed**

**Ready to transform your search experience?**

Book a demo with us by [clicking here.](#)