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Agency investment in marketing & new business

2025/2026

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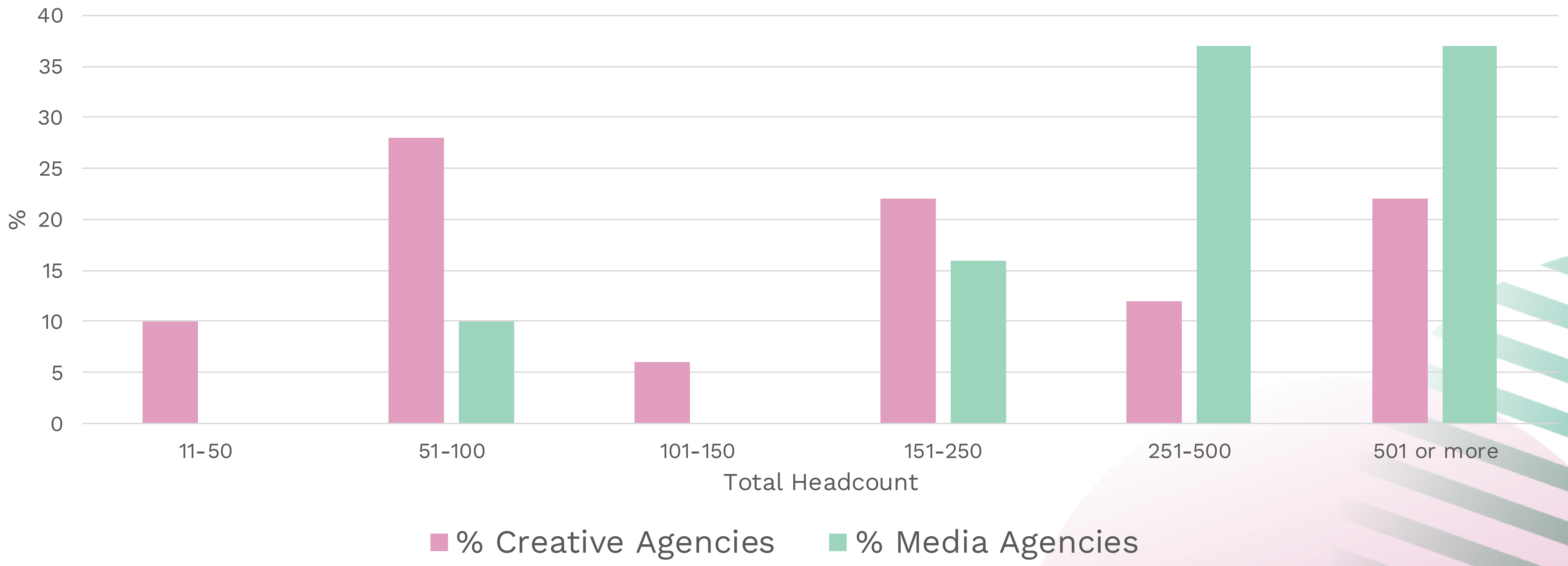
Summary findings

Please note that the data included in this document was sourced from 26 creative and 19 media agencies

- Just under half of all creative agencies have a team of three or four people in the new business department, whereas 60% of media agencies have a team of seven or more, reflective of the more centralised approach to growth that the media networks have adopted
- In eight out of 10 agencies, the new business department is represented on the agency board
- Just under half of the creative agencies have new business budgets of between £100k – £250k- the comparable figure for media agencies is 70%
- One in four creative agencies expected their 2026 budgets to have increased year on year
- One third of media agencies spend on average £75k or more on pitches
- Just over half of creative agencies invest £40k-£100k on domestic pitches and one quarter spend on average more than £100k per pitch
- The biggest source of new business opportunities came directly from clients (42% for creative and 53% for media) followed by intermediaries and pitch consultants (30% for creative and 37% for media)
- There are far more pitches for project-based commercial opportunities for creative agencies than there are for media agencies
- Most pitches require a full response requiring a strategic and executional response
- The payment of pitch fees is more prevalent for creative agency reviews than for media reviews in which they are offered in less than 5% of pitches
- There are indications that while there is general adherence to the sentiments of the Pitch Positive Pledge which must be good news, in nearly three quarter of cases there's been no significantly change to agencies previous experiences

Total agency headcount

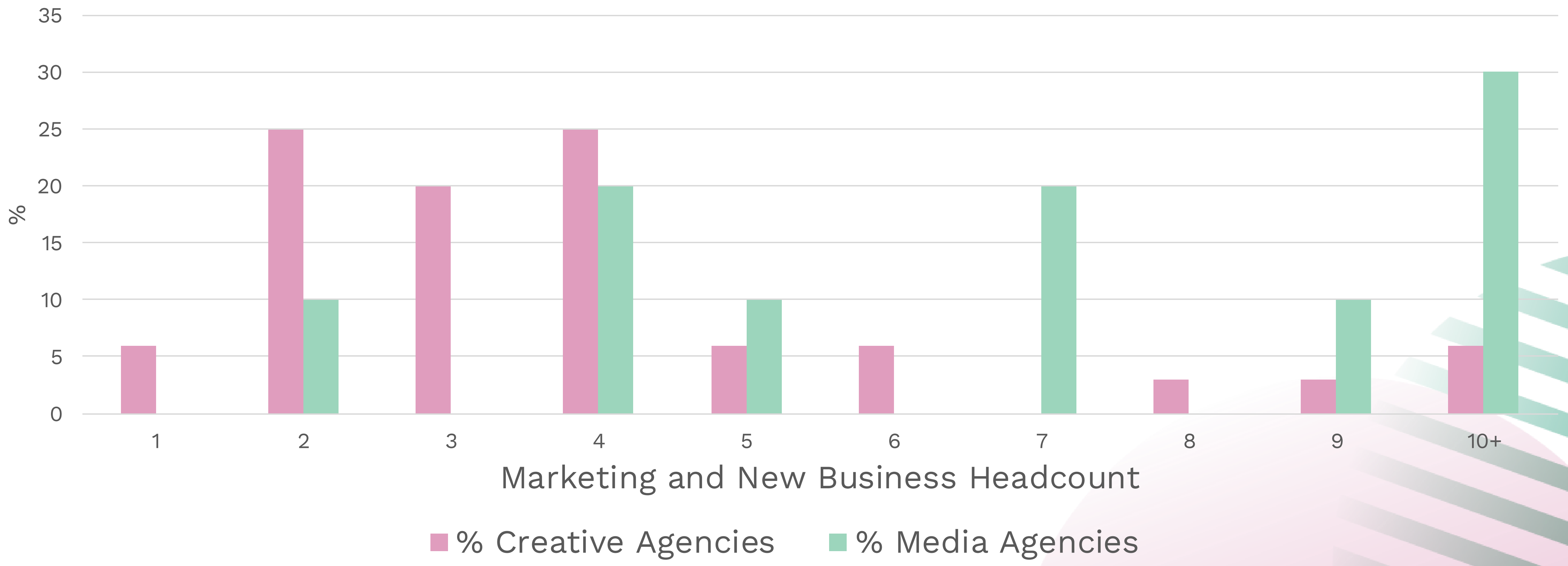
Full time, part time or flexible (excludes freelancers)



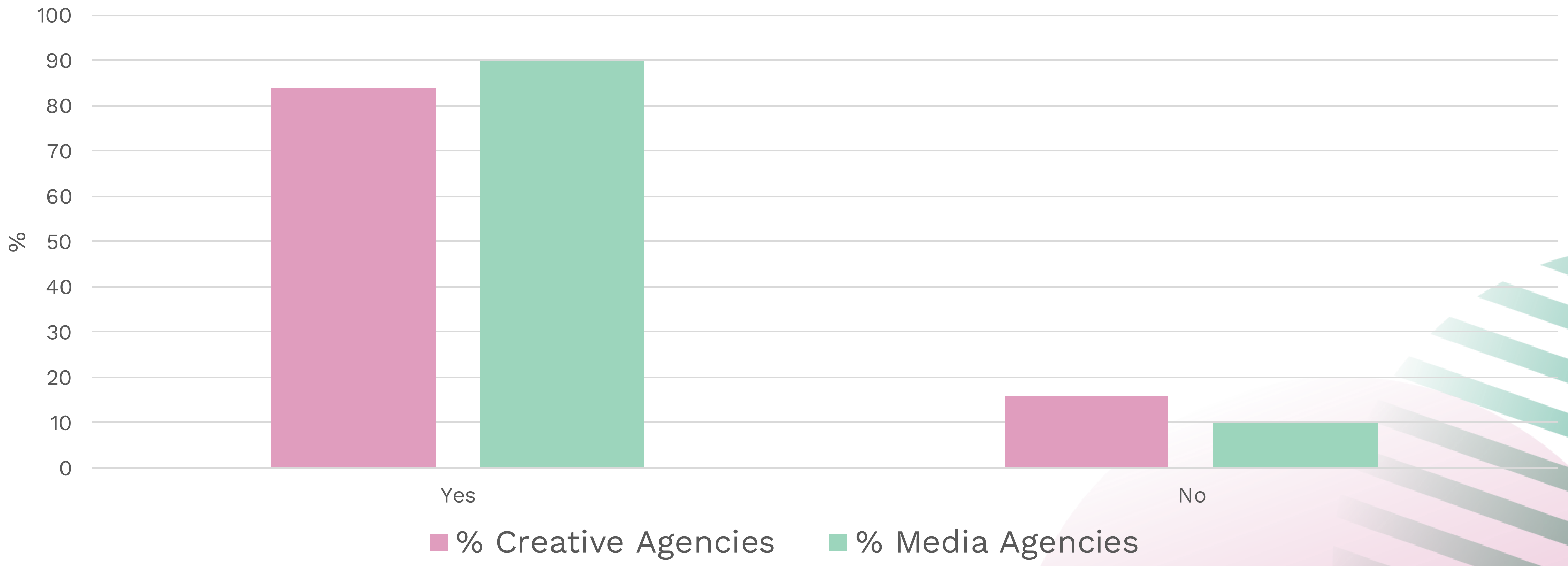
Sample size 26 creative and 19 media agencies

Marketing & new business headcount

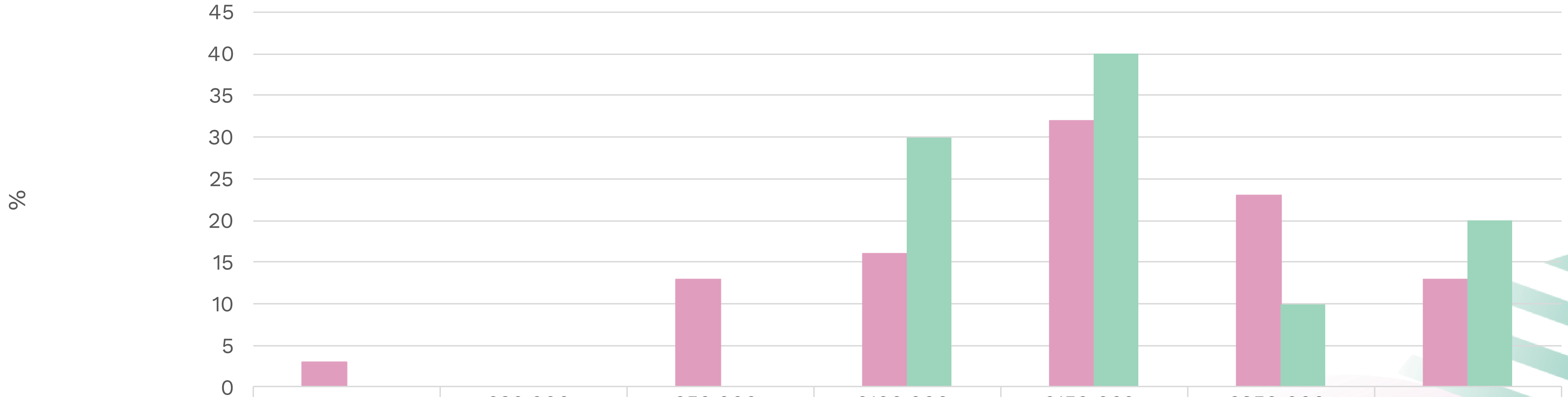
Full time and part time



Marketing & new business: Board level representation



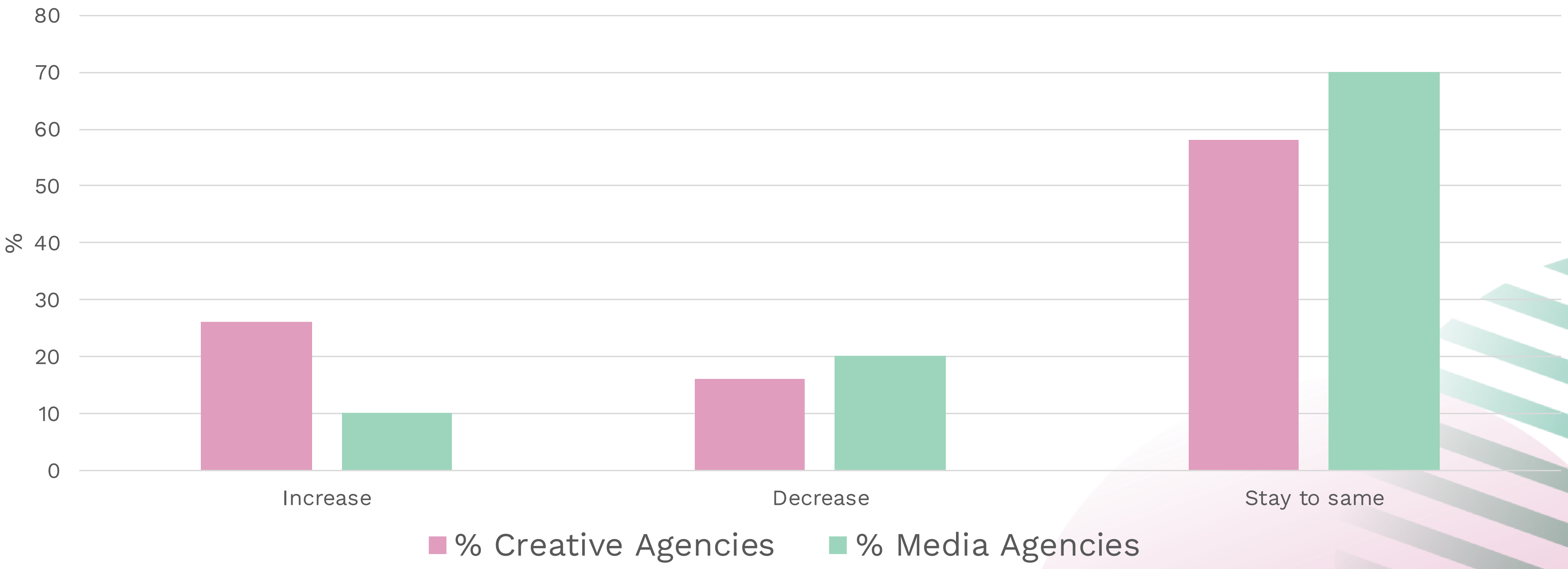
Total Marketing & New Business Annual Budget



	<£20k	£20,000-£49,999	£50,000-£99,999	£100,000-£149,999	£150,000-£249,999	£250,000-£499,999	>£500k
% Creative Agencies	3	0	13	16	32	23	13
% Media Agencies	0	0	0	30	40	10	20

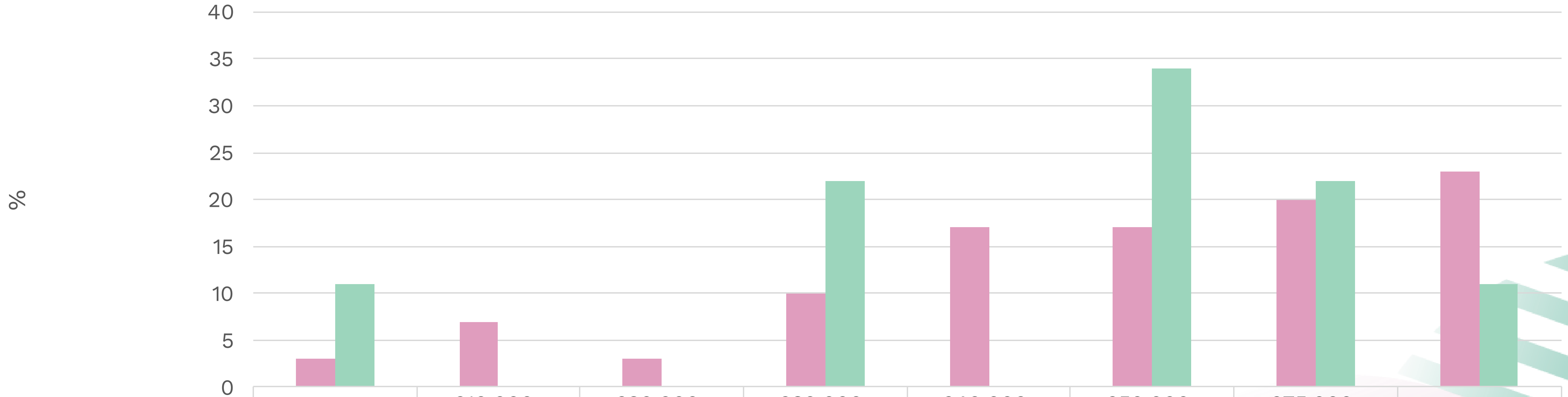
% Creative Agencies % Media Agencies

2026 vs 2025 year on year change in Marketing & New Business Budget



Average investment for a domestic pitch

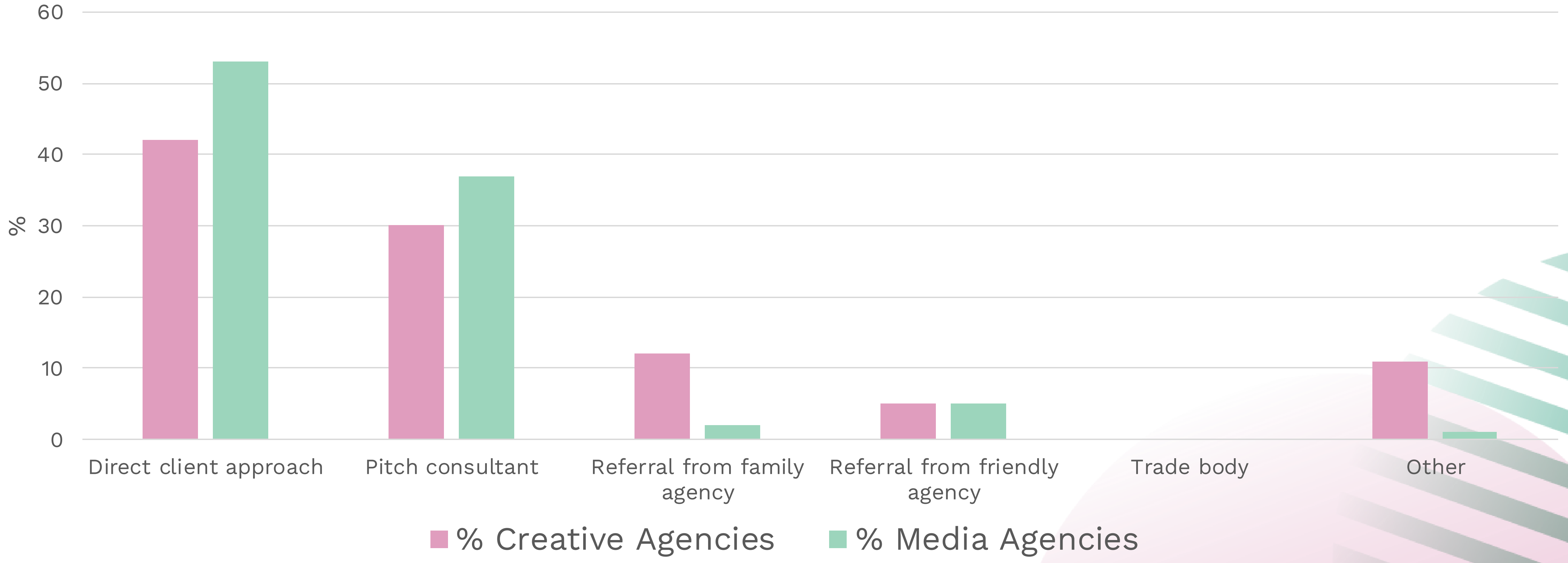
Inclusive of hard costs & time



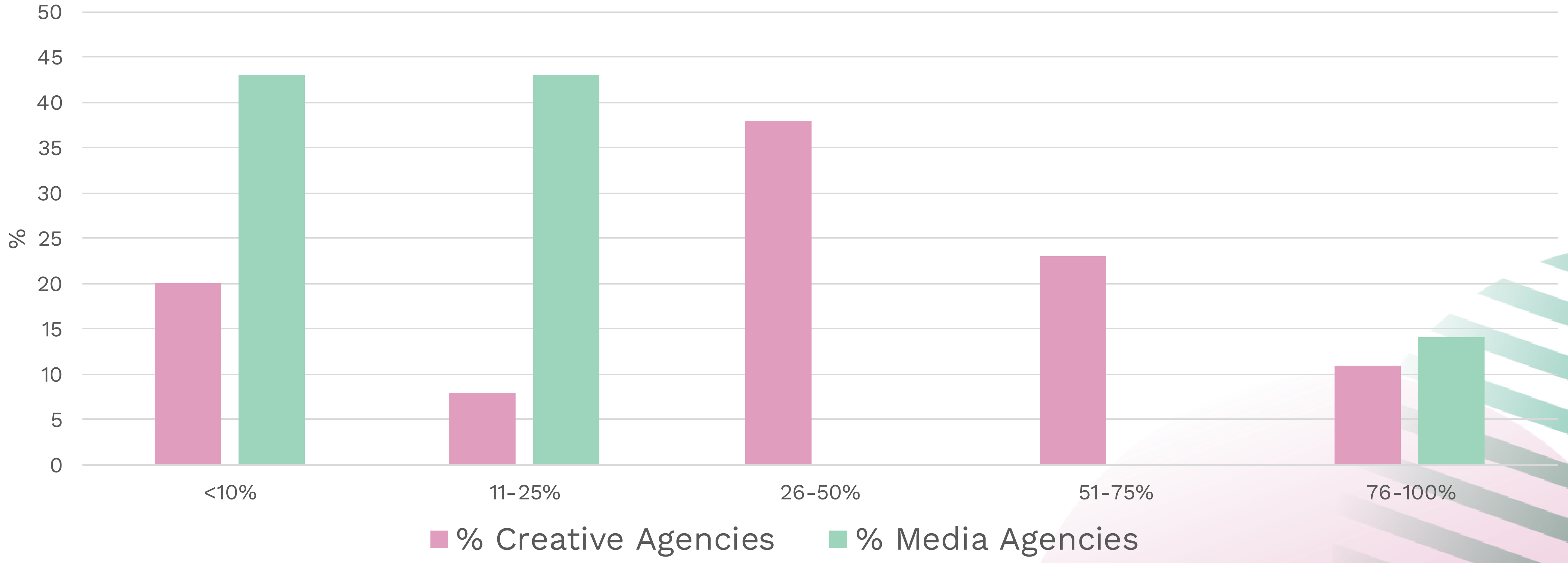
	>£9,999	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£29,999	£30,000-£39,999	£40,000-£49,999	£50,000-£74,999	£75,000-_£99,999	<£100,000
% Creative Agencies	3	7	3	10	17	17	20	23
% Media Agencies	11	0	0	22	0	34	22	11

% Creative Agencies % Media Agencies

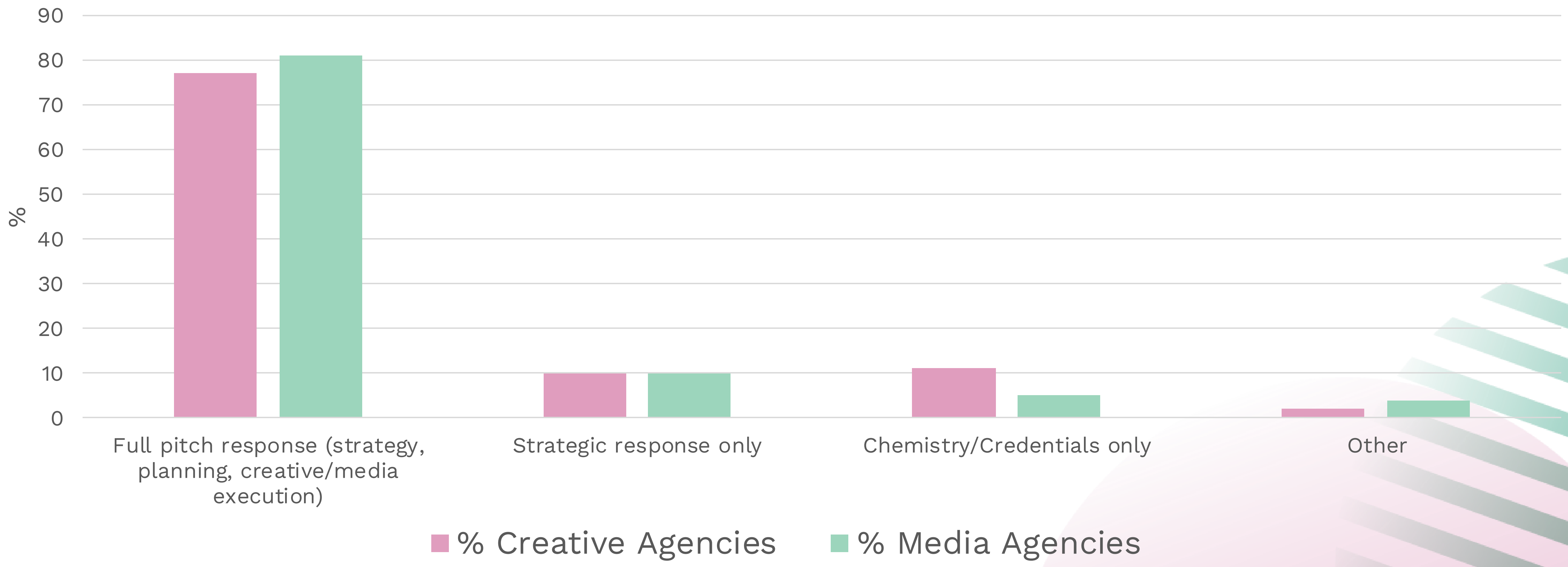
Source of competitive new business pitches



% of pitches that were project based not retainer based

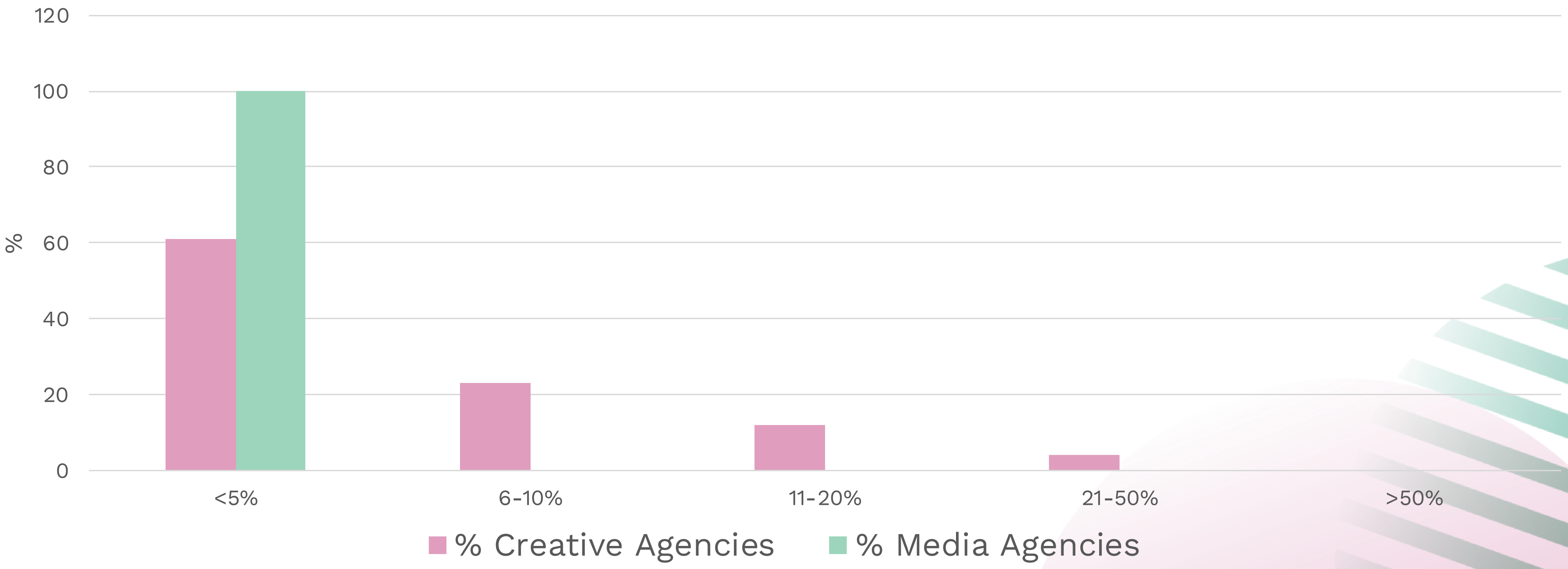


Type of selection programme

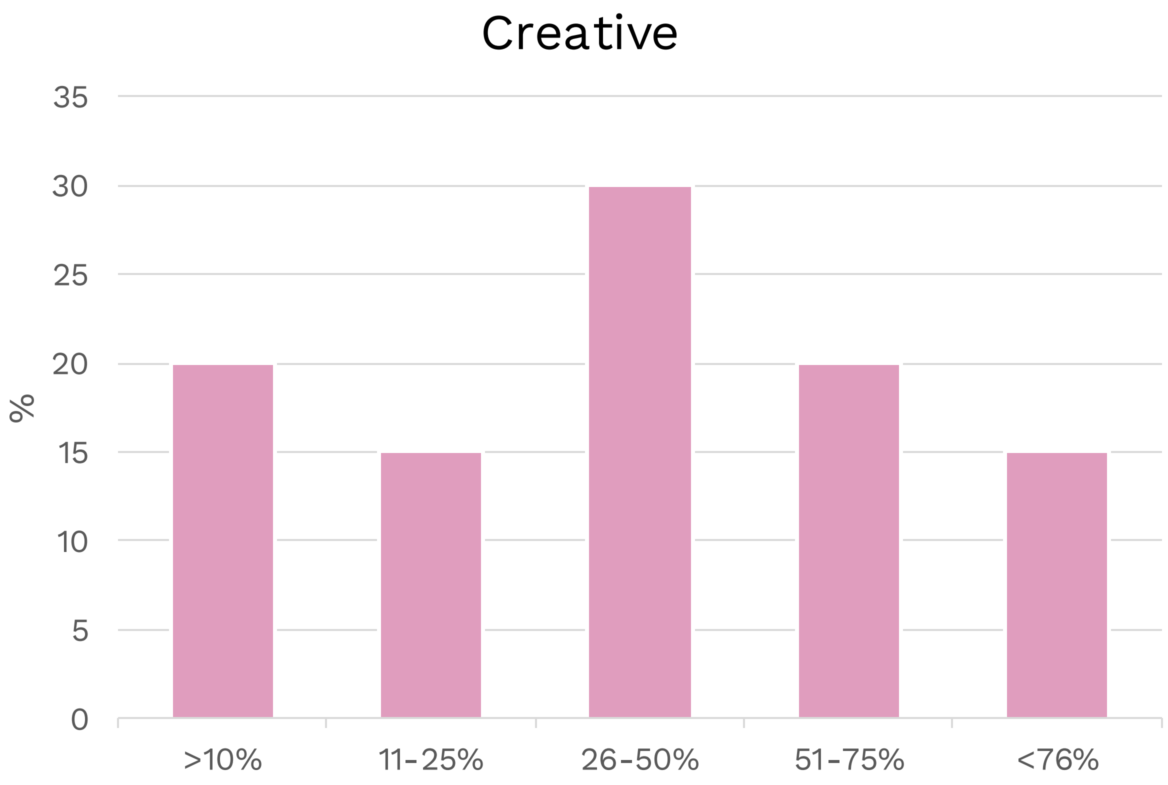


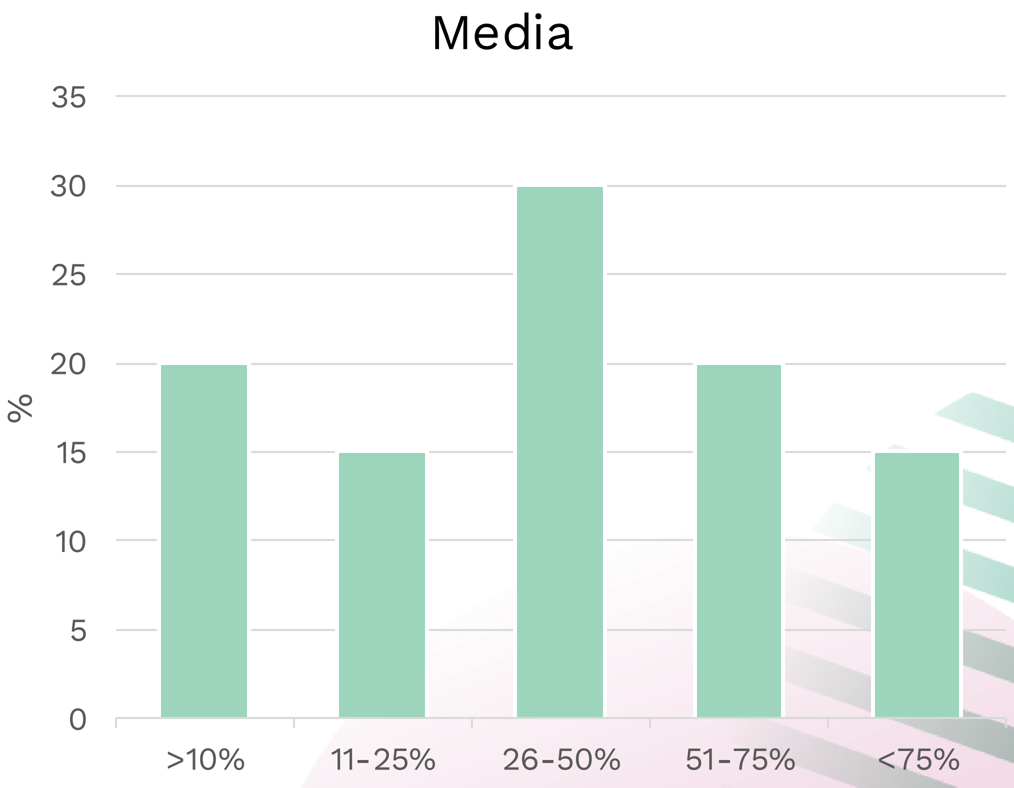
Other includes workshops, tec demonstration, written only submission

% of pitches for which a pitch fee contribution was made to the agency

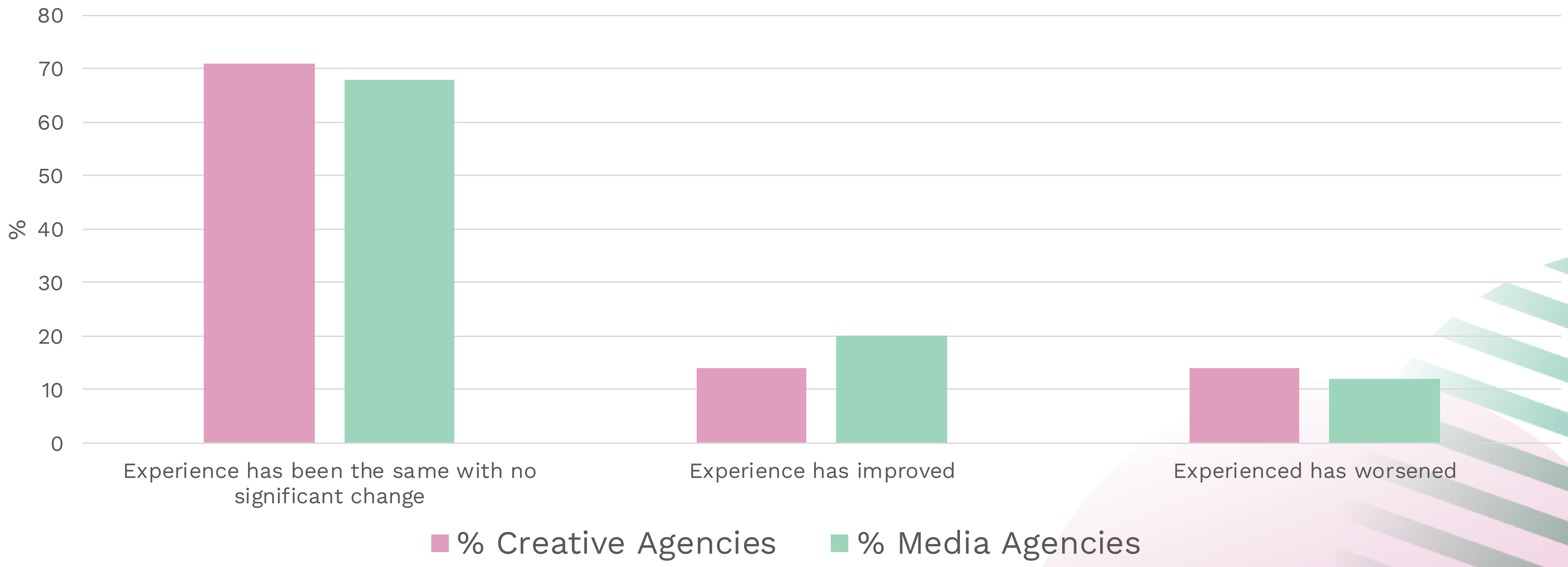


% business pitched that adhered to the sentiment of the Pitch Positive Pledge





Shifts in PPP-Related Pitching



Hearing from others

The uncertain market has fuelled more indecision and some less than idea client behaviour. We have seen stop-start processes, late goal post shifts and a few frantic turnaround requests.

Agencies have been given permission to question process and timings.
This is very helpful for non intermediary run pitches.

Overall client behaviour has worsened in terms of quality of the brief, unrealistic timings and the amount of effort required for project pitches

Those who don’t comply, frankly never will. They’re either too big (so behave how they like) or their attitude to agencies is renowned for being buyer/supplier

Less pitching agencies in the final round, improved quality of feedback post pitch on some major pitches. More respectful of key holiday weeks

There are a good number of pitches that adhere to the principles of the PPP without directly referencing them

Thank you for reading

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