

Turning Listeners / Viewers
Into
Superfans

strategicsolutions
R E S E A R C H



Special Thanks To:

CROOKED



About this analysis

- **1,205** podcast respondents, unweighted
- Two groups: Superfans and Prime Prospects
- The Superfan definition is strict and built on behavior as well as attitudes
- Prime Prospects are the next Superfans: close to Superfans on attitudes, short on listening volume

Two groups: how we define them

Superfans

Meets all four tests

- 1 Daily listener**
Listens to full episodes every day
- 2 5+ hours a week**
Spends 5 or more hours a week on podcasts
- 3 Host is a big reason**
The host is the only or a big reason they listen
- 4 Takes action**
Patreon, merch or event, or podcast email

Prime Prospects

Not a Superfan, and meets all three tests

- 1 Not a Superfan**
Falls short of at least one Superfan test
- 2 Host is a big reason**
The host is the only or a big reason they listen
- 3 Listening is growing**
Rising now and/or expected to rise
- 4 Pays or participates**
Patreon (or likely to pay), or contacted a host or attended an event

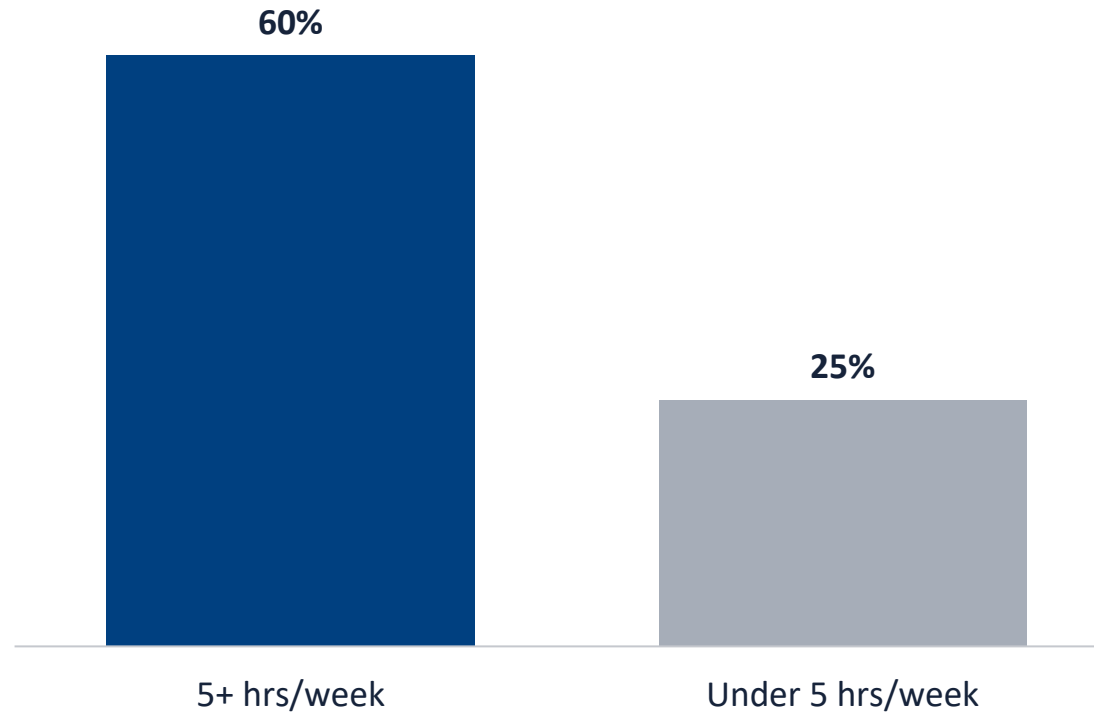
Preview of Key Findings

- 1 Two groups, one opportunity to supercharge growth.** Superfans are your best customers. Prime Prospects are also a big, engaged group. Who is each cohort?
- 2 The host is the engine.** We'll discuss how to keep Superfans engaged and move Prime Prospects down the funnel.
- 3 Superfans will pay.** More than **half** would spend even if they don't currently do so.
- 4 Prime Prospects look like Superfans on attitudes.** What holds them back is usage.
- 5 Closing the gap may be simpler than expected.**

Heavy users = daily consumption

Heavy podcast users are twice as likely to consume podcasts daily. Build your podcast into a daily habit.

% DAILY USERS AMONG HEAVY AND LIGHTER CONSUMERS



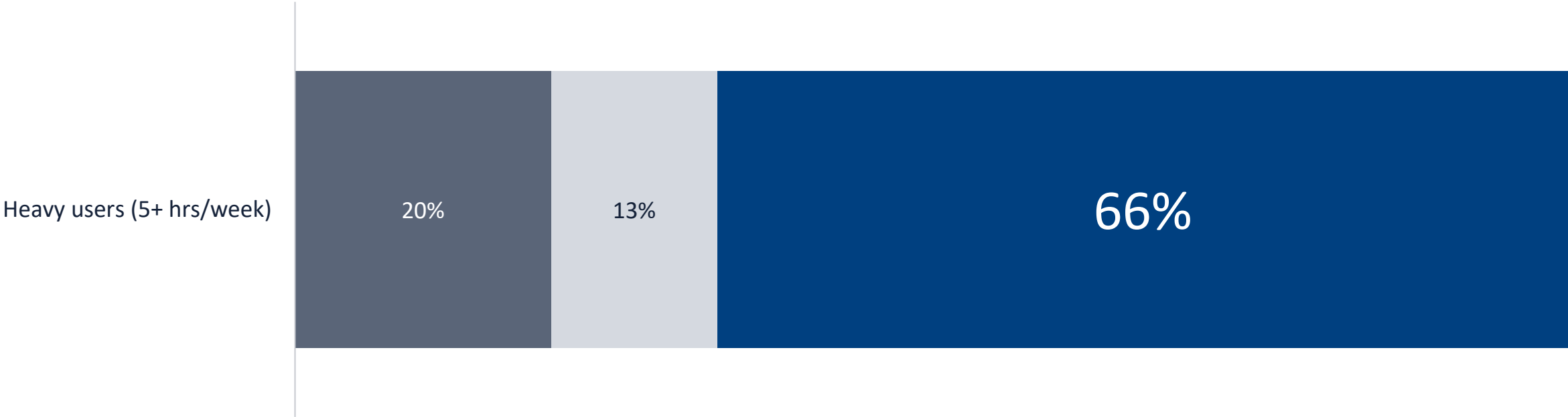
Source: The Podcast Study 2026, Q11 (weekly podcast hours) and Q8/9 (daily full-episode listening), n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. 10 hours/week comparison: 10+ hrs n=216, under 10 hrs n=989.

Work Status

Heavy users (66%) are somewhat more likely than non-heavy users (59%) to work full time.

WORK STATUS BY WEEKLY PODCAST HOURS (Q16)

■ Not currently employed ■ Part time ■ Full time

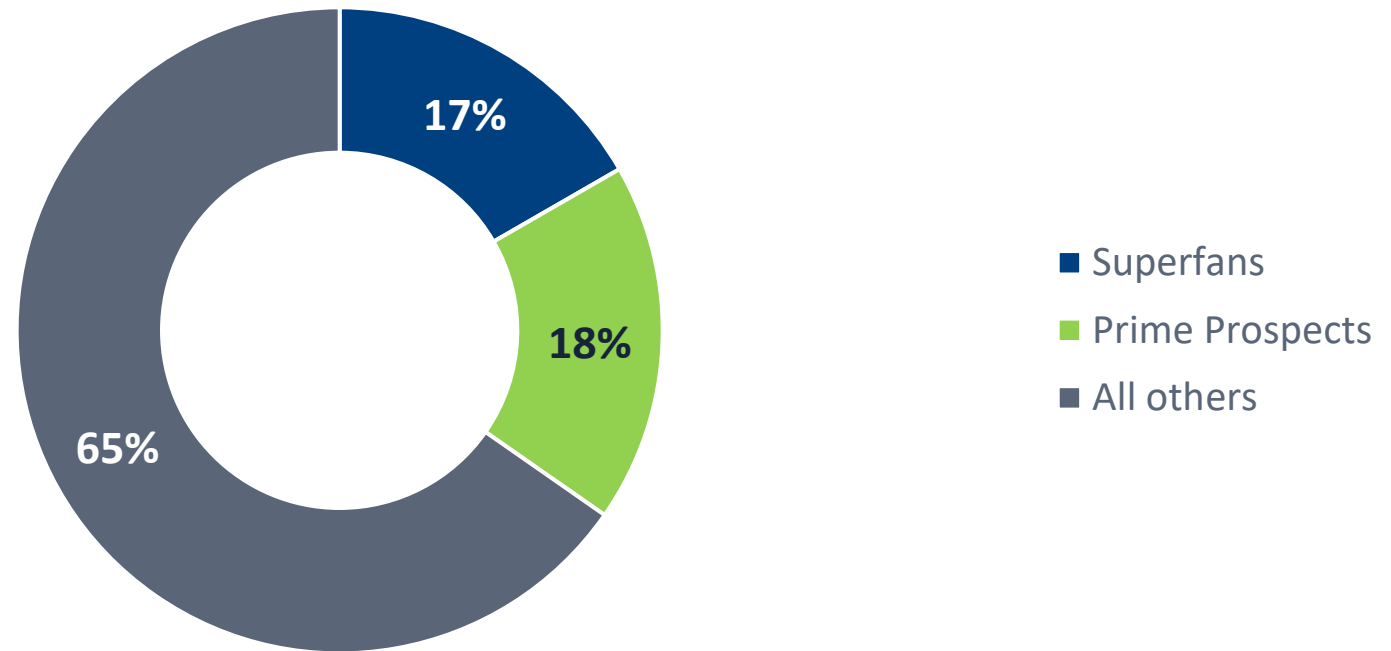


Source: The Podcast Study 2026, Q16 and Q11, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Heavy users 5+ hrs/week (n=524); non-heavy users under 5 hrs/week (n=681). 'Unwilling to say' (under 1%) not shown.

Size of each group

Key Point: Superfans make up 17% of the total podcast consumer universe; Prime Prospects are another 18%. (What an opportunity to double the most important portion of your audience!)

SHARE OF PODCAST CONSUMERS BY GROUP



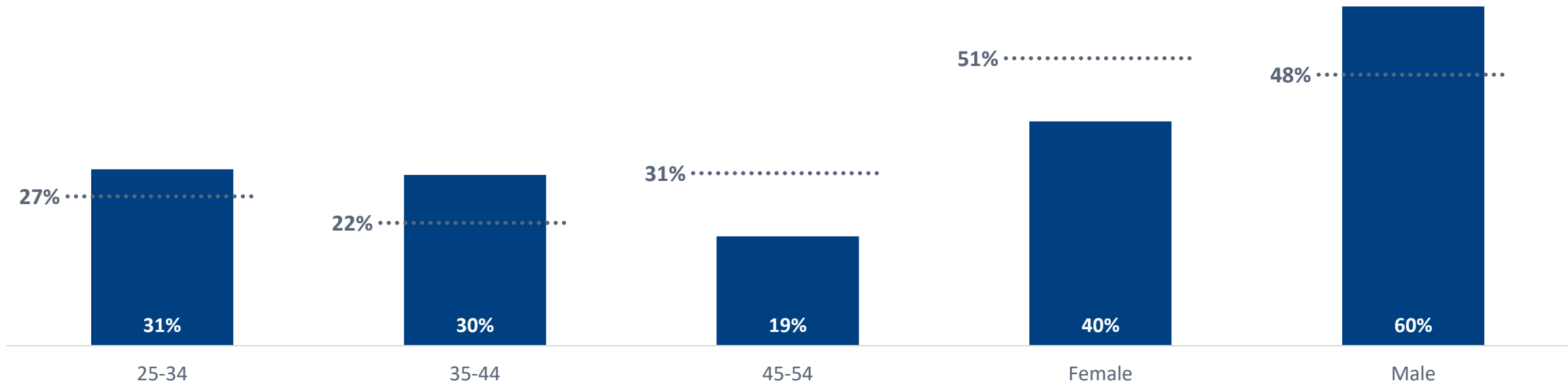
Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted.

Who Superfans & Prime Prospects are: age, gender

Superfans skew Male (60%) and 25-44.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES BY GROUP

■ Superfans Total sample



Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Segments: Superfans (n=201), Total sample (n=1,205).

Superfans: who they are,
what drives them, how
to keep and grow them

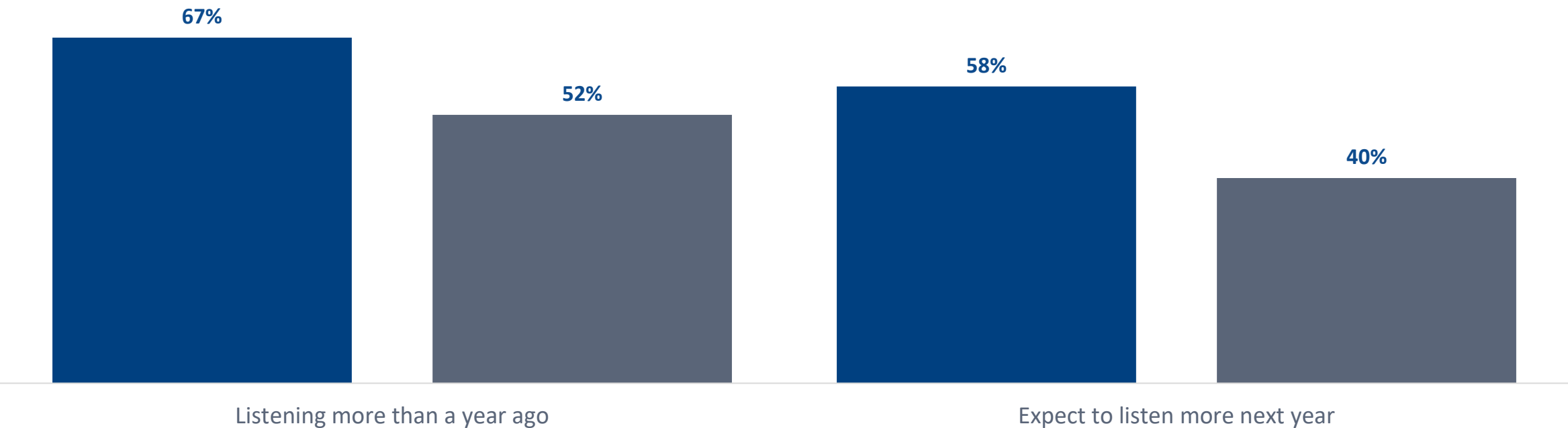


Momentum: Superfans are still growing

Superfans are driving podcast usage + they are more likely than other podcast consumers to expect to consume more next year.

LISTENING MOMENTUM: SUPERFANS VS. TOTAL SAMPLE

■ Superfans ■ Total Sample



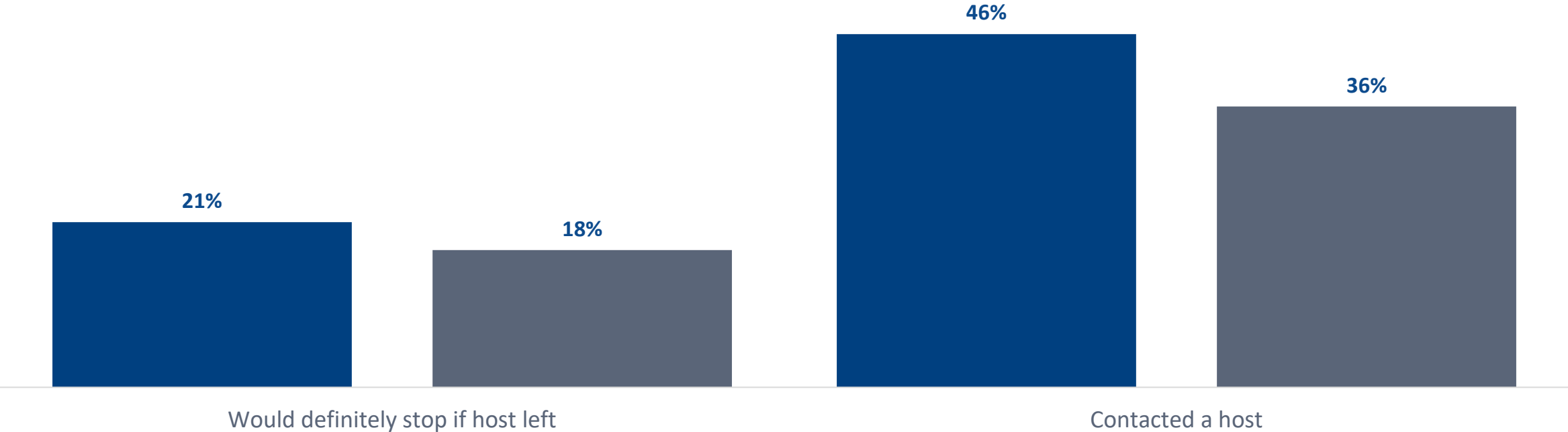
Source: The Podcast Study 2026, unweighted. Superfans n=201; Total Sample n=1,205.

The host is the engine for Superfans

Nearly HALF of all Superfans have contacted a host...and if the host left the show, one in five would “definitely stop” consuming.

HOST MEASURES: SUPERFANS VS. TOTAL SAMPLE

■ Superfans ■ Total Sample

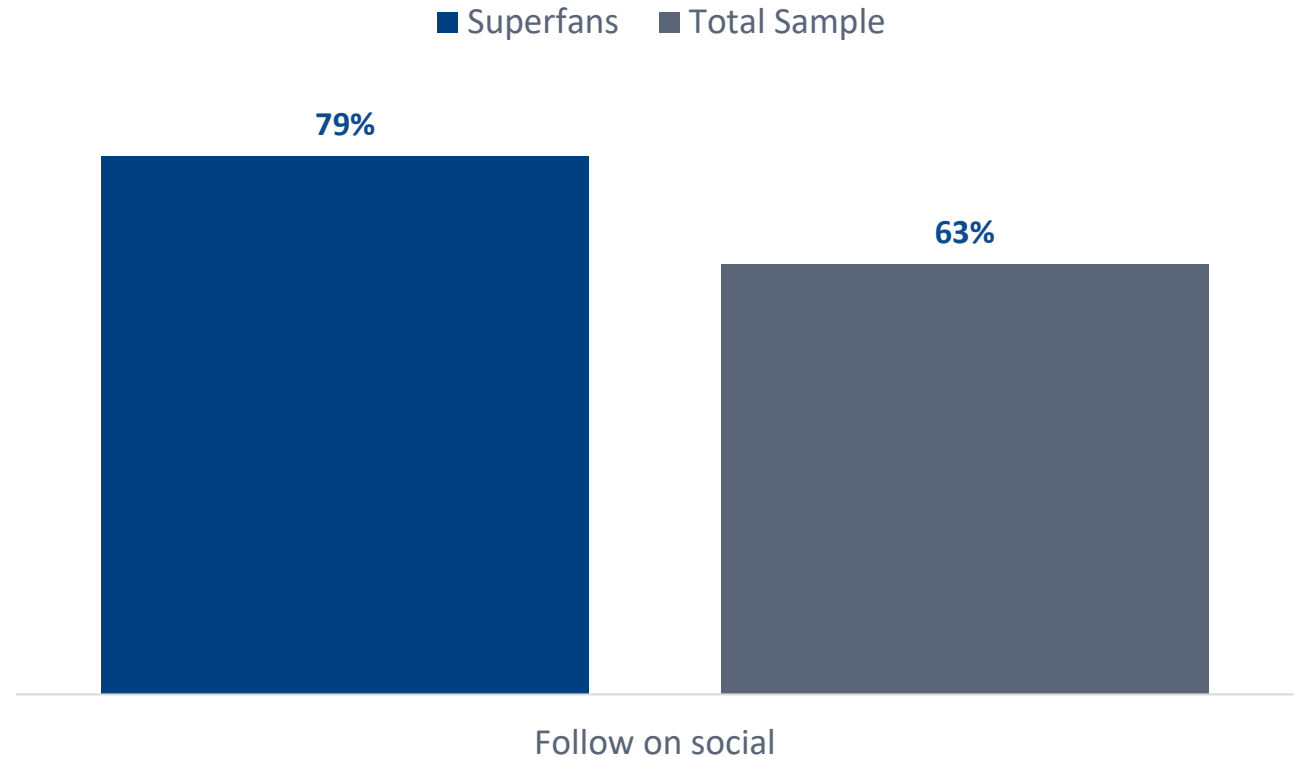


Source: The Podcast Study 2026, unweighted. Superfans n=201; Total Sample n=1,205.

Superfans are more likely to follow on social

Social media is a key part of the engagement funnel.

FOLLOW : SUPERFANS VS. TOTAL SAMPLE



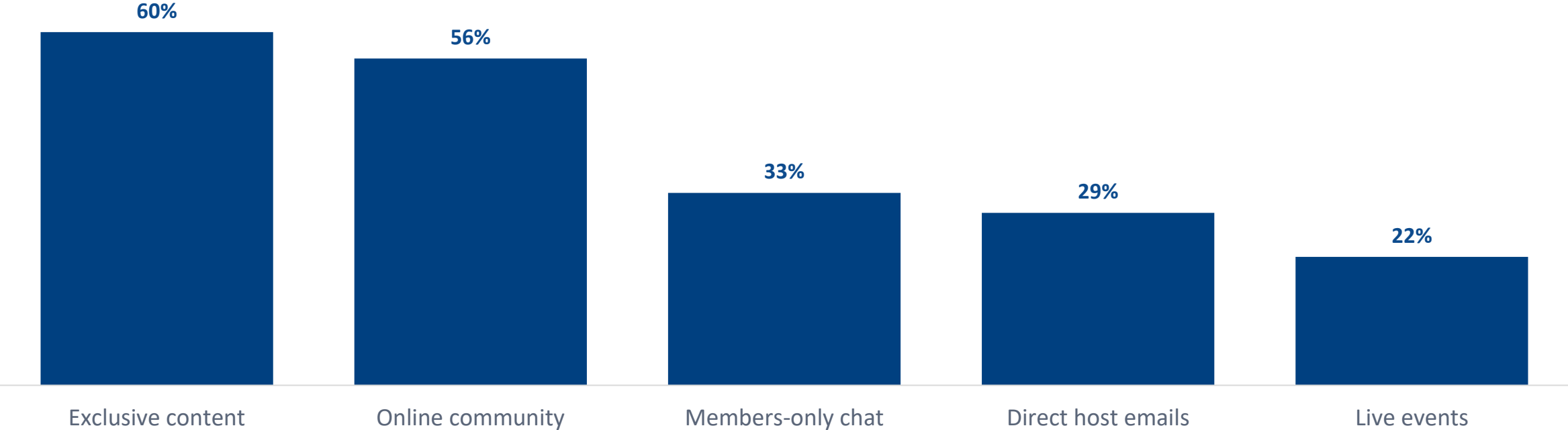
Source: The Podcast Study 2026, unweighted.

What would make Superfans feel more connected

Superfans are more likely than others to value Exclusive Content and online community.

WHAT BUILDS CONNECTION: SUPERFANS VS. TOTAL SAMPLE

■ Superfans

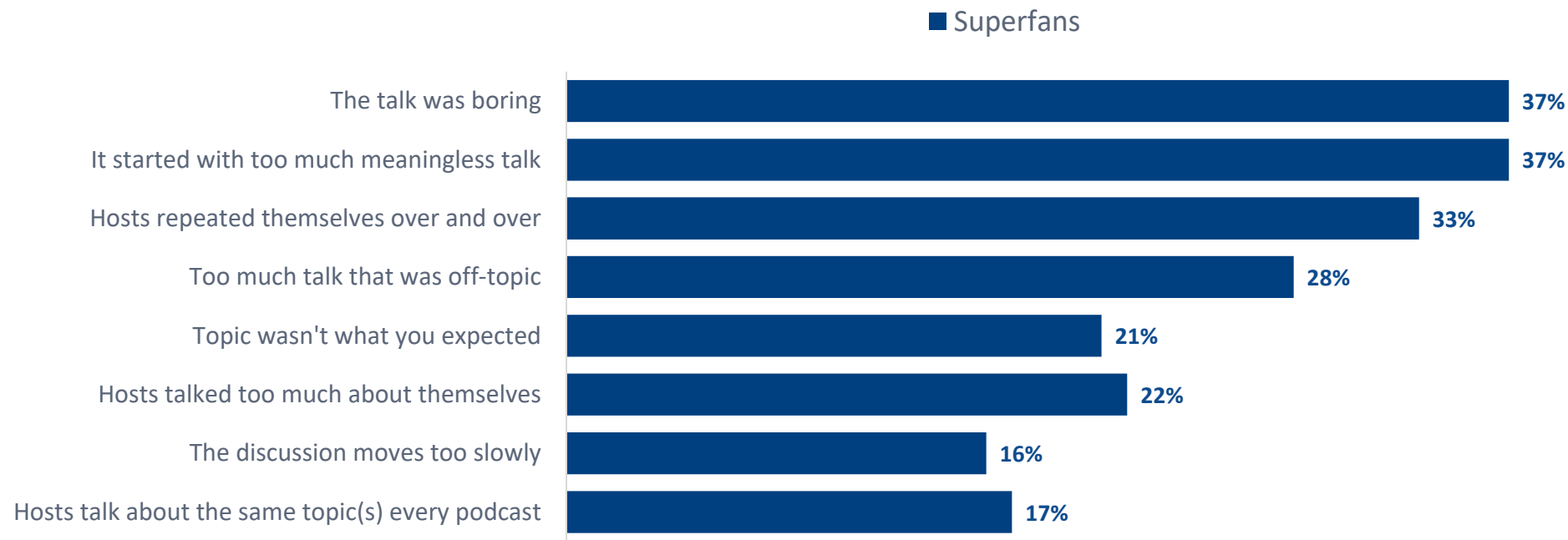


Source: The Podcast Study 2026, unweighted. Superfans n=201; Total Sample n=1,205.

Why Superfans quit new podcasts

Why Superfans gave up on a new podcast (Q80)

REASONS FOR GIVING UP ON A PODCAST (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

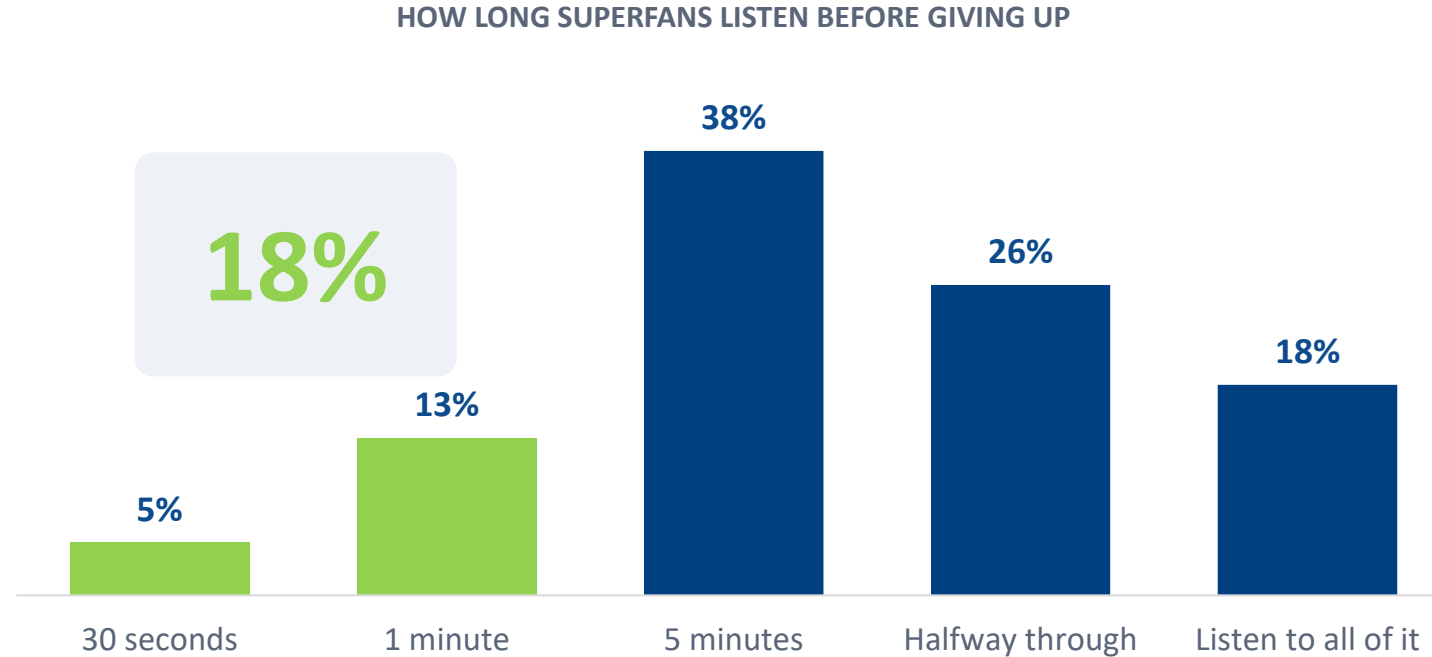


Content execution is critical for avoiding audience loss. These percentages closely track with our 2025 study revealing behaviors when consuming all podcasts in general.

Source: The Podcast Study 2026, Q80; Unweighted. Q80 is select-all, so shares sum to more than 100%; 'Other' not shown.

The first minute is critical for audience retainment

How long Superfans give a new podcast before giving up (Q81)



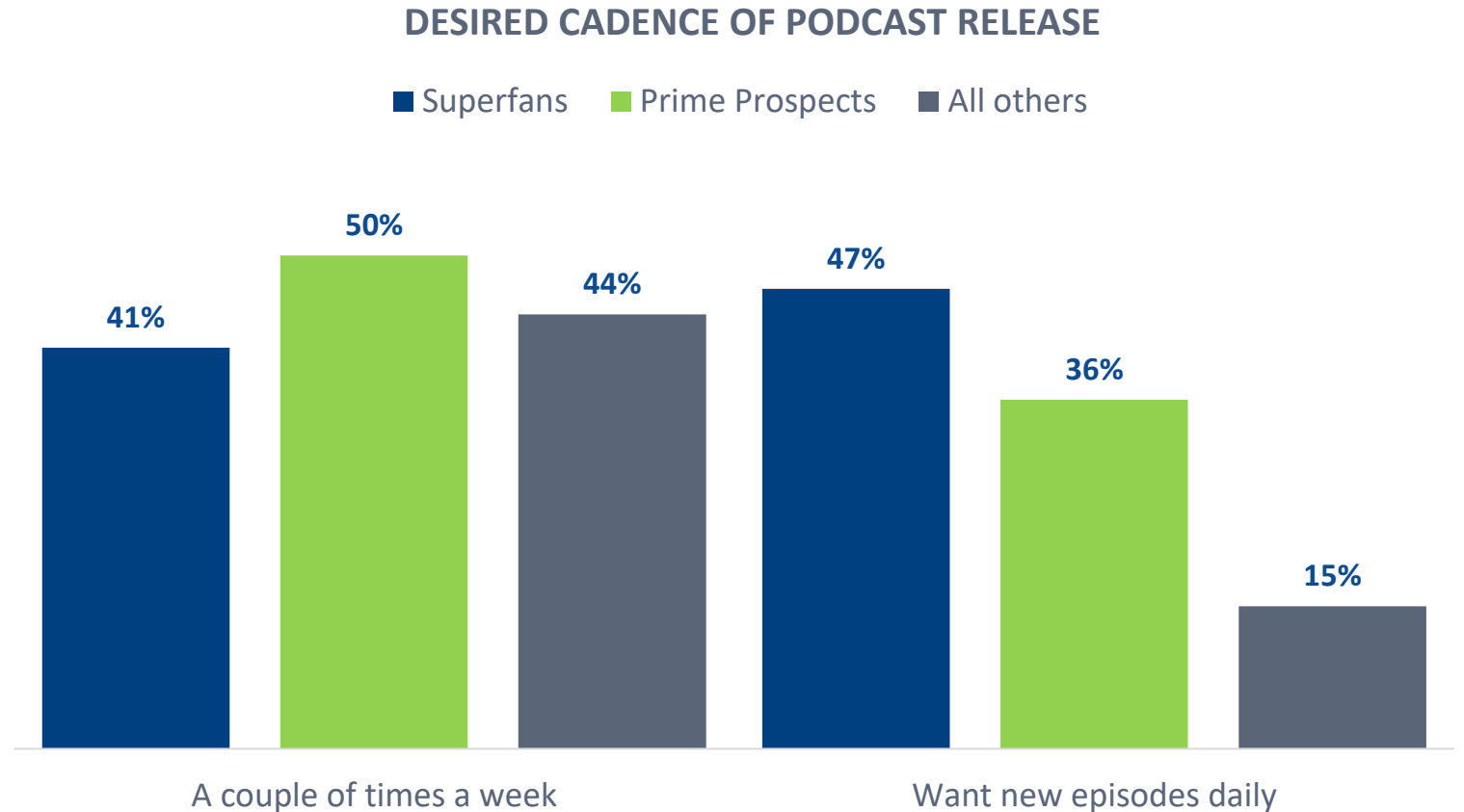
Win the first 60 seconds. The majority will give you five minutes, but if you don't execute well in the first minute, you're at risk of losing 18% of Superfans.

Source: The Podcast Study 2026, Q81. Superfans n=201. Unweighted.

Deliver content at the right cadence

Superfans are more likely to want daily episodes than the total podcast universe.

Prime Prospects are more apt to want new episodes a couple of times a week, although one out of three wants episodes daily.



Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted.

Prime Prospects

Who They Are
Where To Reach Them

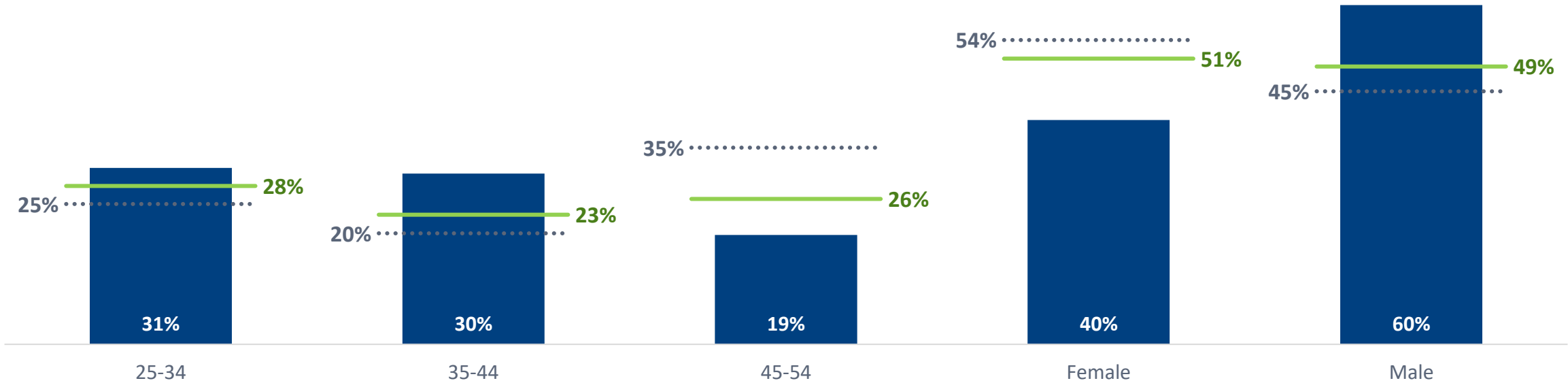


Who Superfans & Prime Prospects are: age + gender

Prime Prospects skew Female and 45-54, indicating intriguing growth potential.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES BY GROUP

■ Superfans — Prime Prospects All others



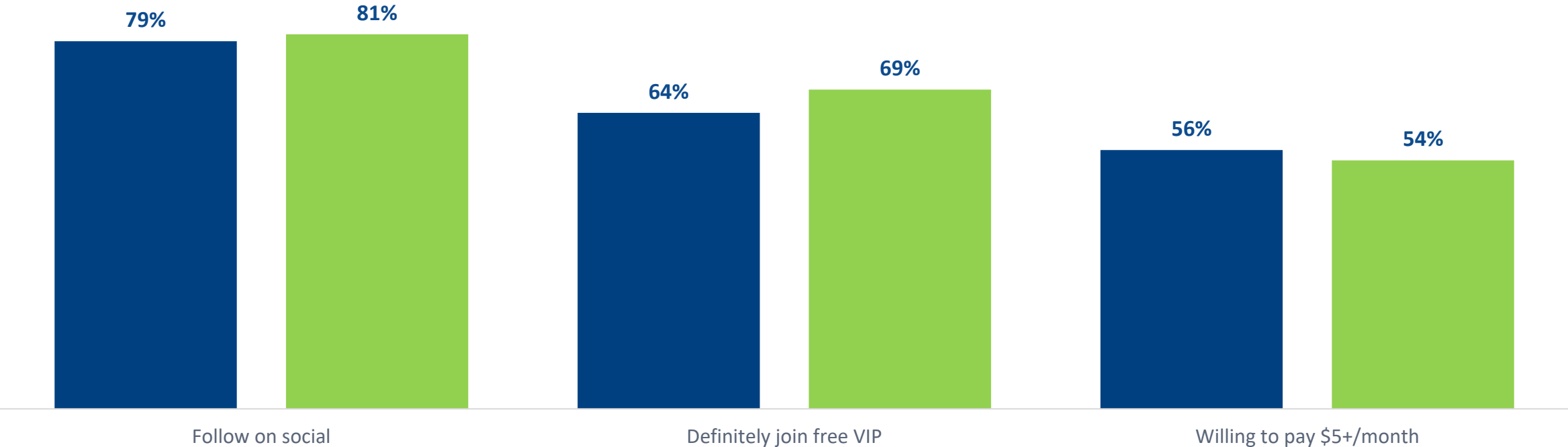
Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Segments: Superfans (n=201), Prime Prospects (n=217), All others (n=787).

Prime Prospects look like Superfans on independent measures

Prime prospects match Superfans on some key behaviors.

MEASURES NOT USED IN SCREENING: PRIME PROSPECTS VS. SUPERFANS

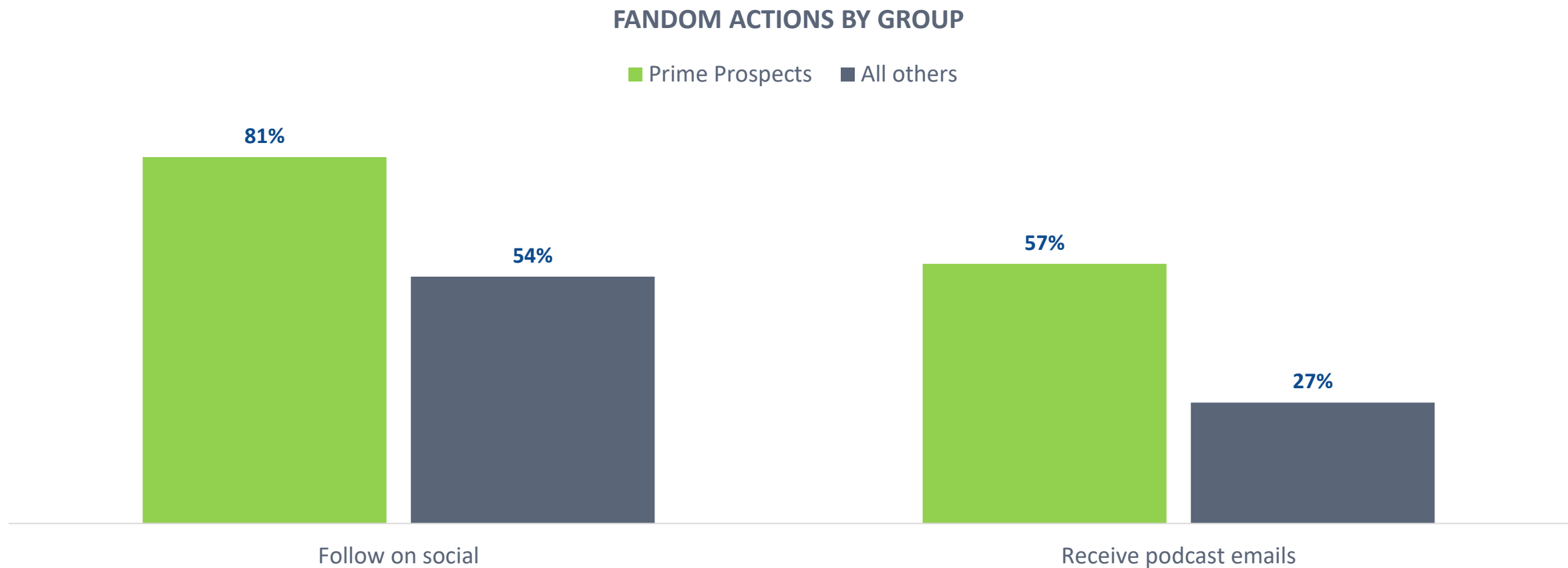
■ Superfans ■ Prime Prospects



Excludes measures used to define the groups (Patreon, contacted a host, likely to pay for premium). Source: The Podcast Study 2026, unweighted. Superfans n=201; Prime Prospects n=217.

Prime Prospects already engage well above all others

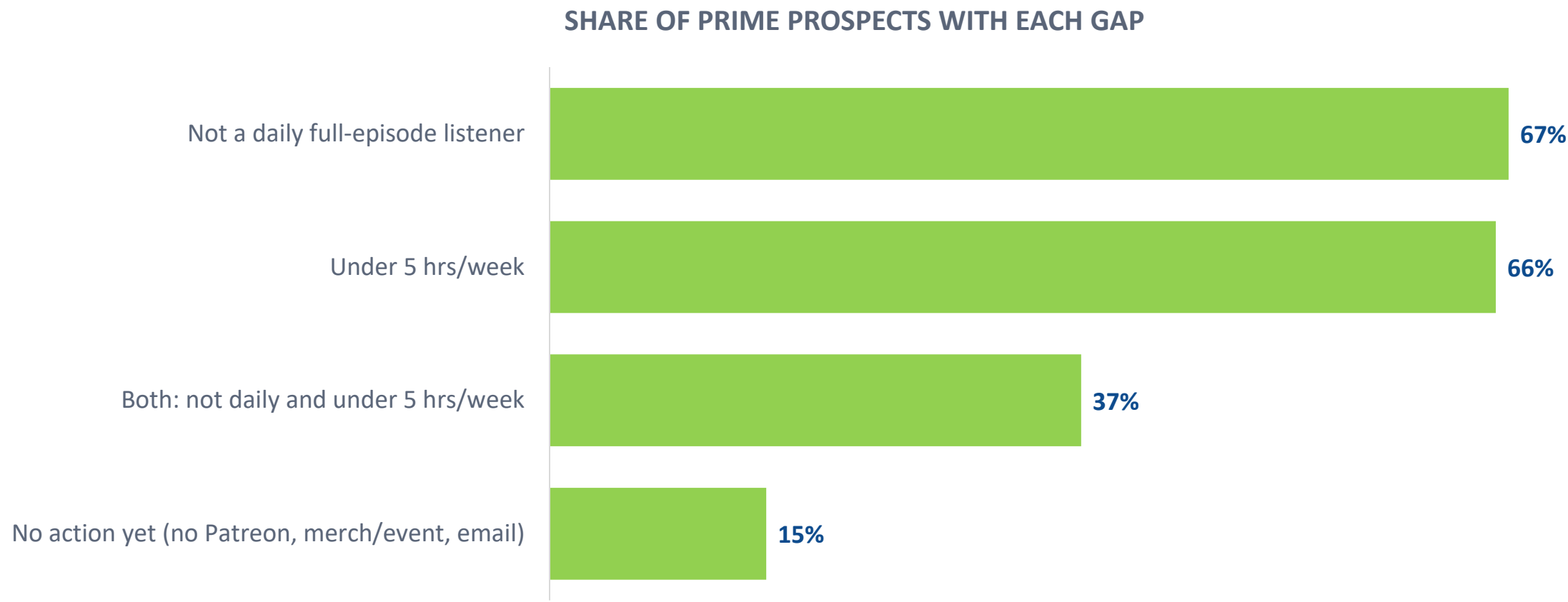
Prime Prospects are more likely than the general podcast audience to follow podcasts on social and to receive podcast emails.



Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Segments: Prime Prospects (n=217), All others (n=787).

The gap between Prime Prospects and Superfans

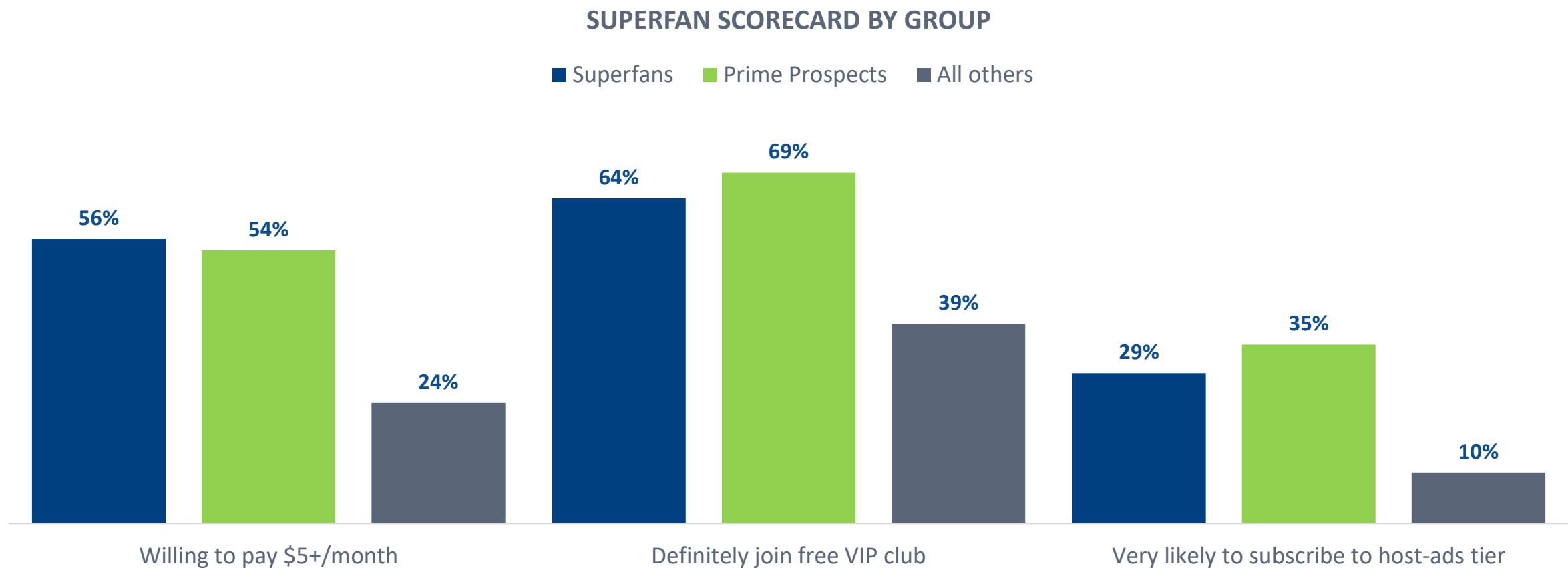
Most already have taken an action showing engagement. The next key step is converting that engagement to greater usage.



Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Segments: Superfans (n=201), Prime Prospects (n=217), All others (n=787).

Scorecard: Superfans vs Prime Prospects vs everyone else

Prime Prospects match or beat Superfans on interest in a VIP club and a host-ads tier, and are within 2 points on paying \$5+/month.

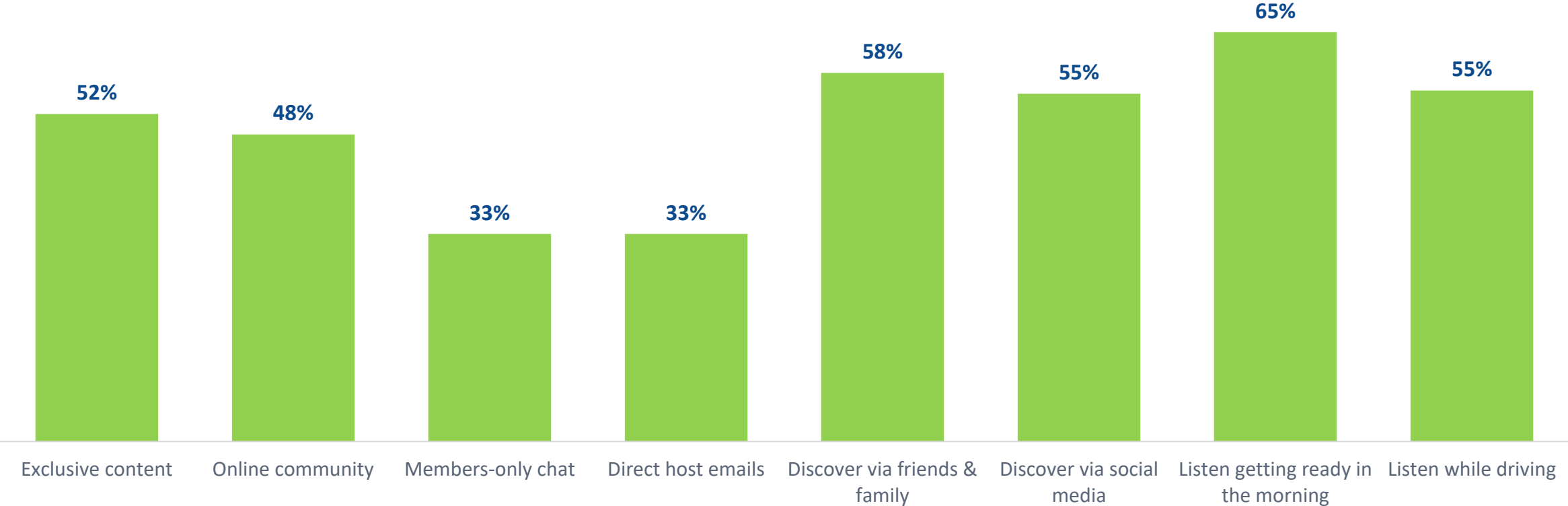


Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Segments: Superfans (n=201), Prime Prospects (n=217), All others (n=787).

What Prime Prospects respond to, and where to reach them

Reach them through friends, social and the morning routine; deepen with exclusive content and community.

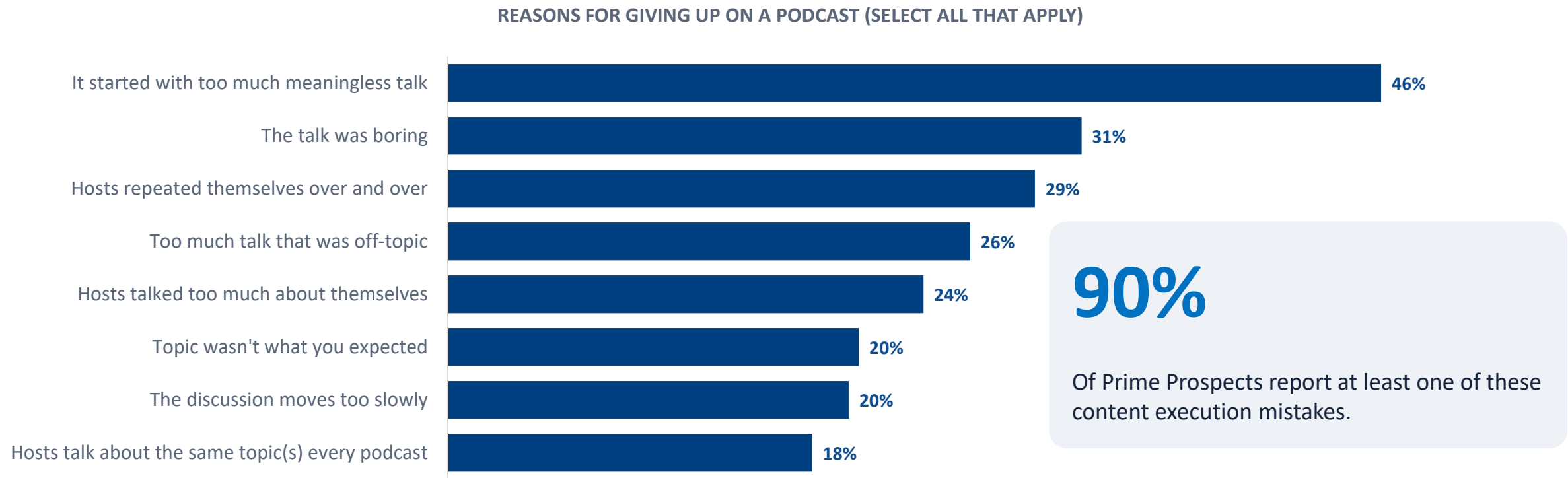
RESPONSE AND REACH: PRIME PROSPECTS



Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Prime Prospects n=217.

Why Prime Prospects quit new podcasts

Why Prime Prospects gave up on a new podcast (Q80)



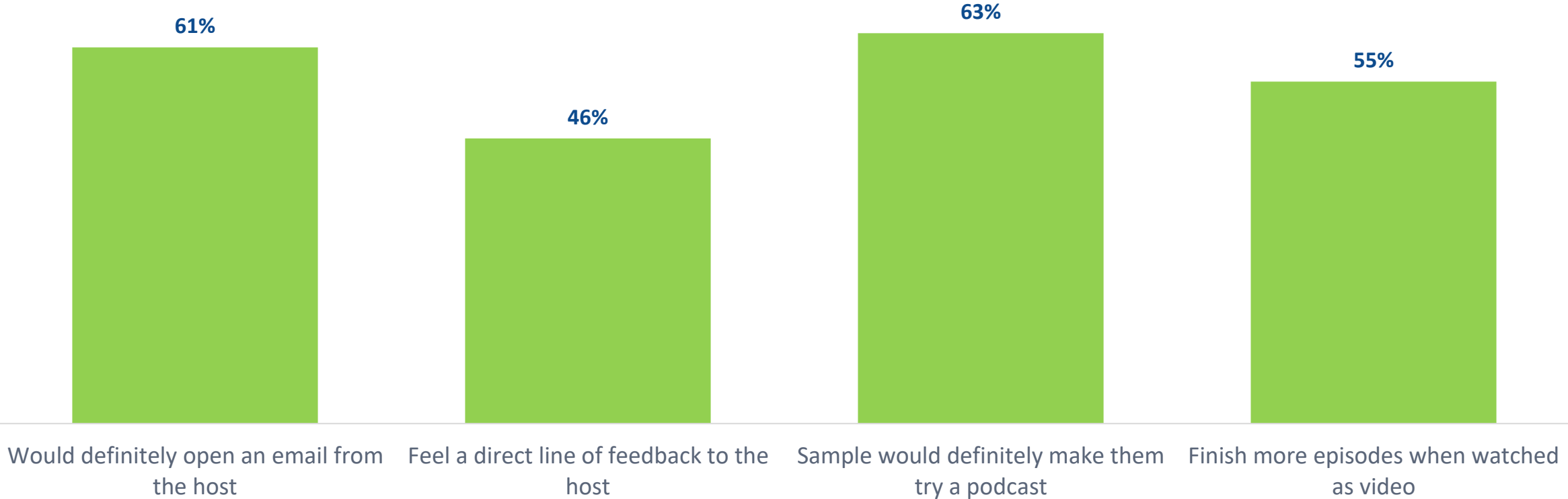
One golden opportunity for converting Prime Prospects into Superfans is tightening up execution errors.

Source: The Podcast Study 2026, Q80; Prime Prospects n=217. Unweighted.

Prime Prospects are the most receptive group

Prime Prospects are receptive to multiple engagement channels, giving you many ways to convert them to Superfans.

RECEPTIVITY TO HOST AND FORMAT FEATURES

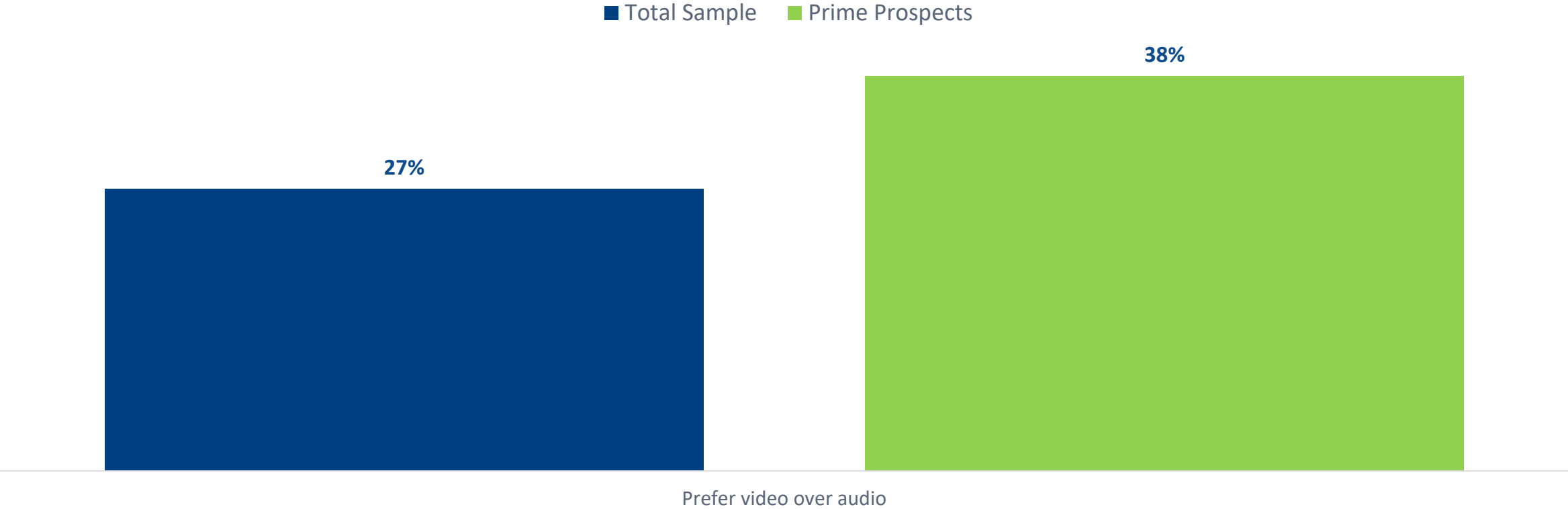


Source: The Podcast Study 2026, Q92, Q82, Q76, Q39; unweighted. Prime Prospects n=217.



Prime Prospects' preferred format

Prime Prospects are more likely to prefer a video format than the Total Sample.

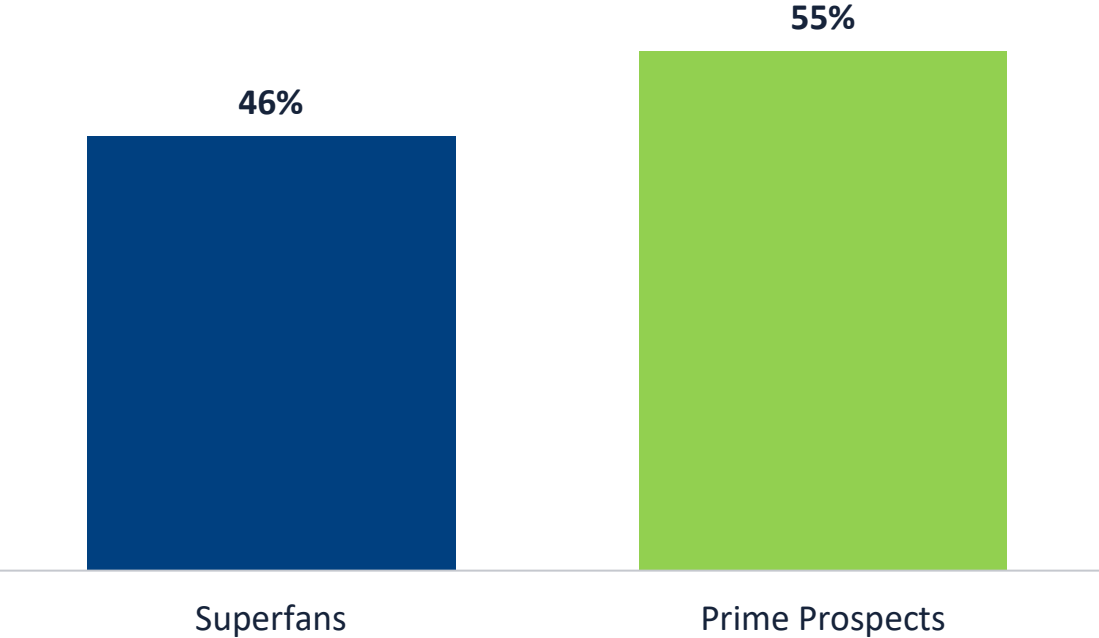


Source: The Podcast Study 2026, n=1,205 respondents, unweighted. Segments: Superfans (n=201), Prime Prospects (n=217), All others (n=787).

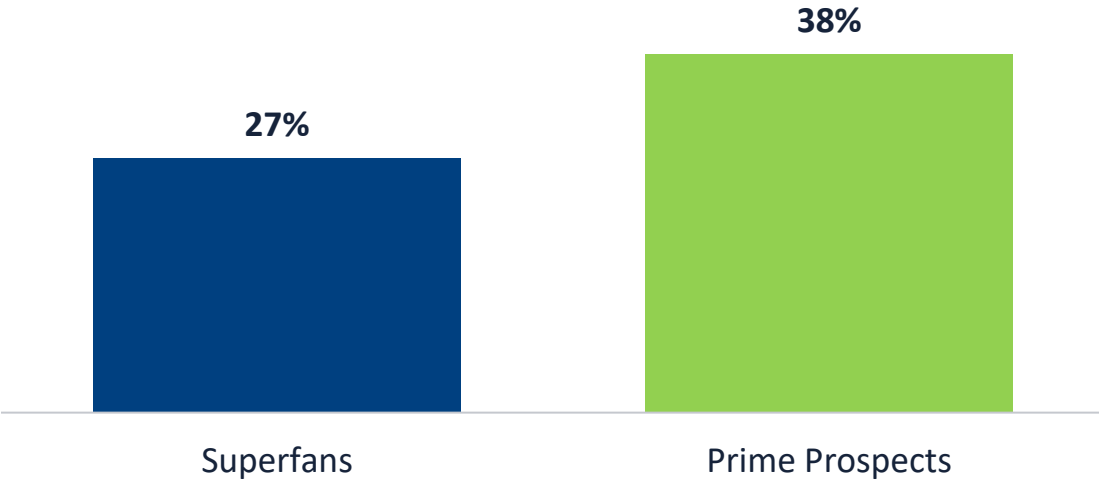
Video is a conversion lever for Prime Prospects

55% of Prime Prospects finish more episodes when they watch as video, and 38% would enjoy a host on camera during ads.

FINISHED MORE EPISODES OF PODCASTS WATCHED AS VIDEO



WOULD ENJOY AD BREAK MORE WITH HOST ON CAMERA



Source: The Podcast Study 2026, Q39 and Q54, unweighted. Superfans n=201; Prime Prospects n=217.

Action points: keep your Superfans

1

Protect the host relationship

21% of Superfans would definitely stop listening if the host left (15% of all others). Plan host succession and guest-host cover.

2

Launch a ~\$5/month membership

56% of Superfans would pay \$5+/month (24% of all others), and so would 53% of Superfans who are not Patreon patrons. Build it on exclusive content and community.

3

Give them direct access

46% of Superfans have contacted a host (29% of all others). Reply, run a members-only chat, send host emails.

4

Win the first minute of every new show

18% of Superfans give up within the first minute. Open with the strongest content.

Action points: turn Prime Prospects into Superfans

5

Open with a free VIP club

69% of Prime Prospects would definitely join (Superfans 64%). Make the club the first ask, then add paid tiers.

6

Build the daily habit

67% are not daily listeners and 66% listen under 5 hours a week. Add morning touchpoints (65%): clips, short episodes, a newsletter.

7

Tighten your content execution

Top reasons Prime Prospects quit: meaningless talk at the start (46%), boring talk (31%), repetition (29%). Open on the topic.

8

Lean on video

55% finish more episodes of podcasts they watch as video, and 38% would enjoy an ad break more with the host on camera.

9

Use email and social to stay in touch

81% follow podcasts on social and 57% receive podcast emails (54% and 27% of all others). 61% would definitely open an email from the host.

10

Let samples and word of mouth bring them in

63% say a short sample would definitely make them try a podcast, and 58% discover podcasts through friends and family.

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