



Artificial Intelligence in Political Consulting

Key Findings from a Survey and In-Depth Interviews with AAPC Members

5.20.25



Research Methodology

- The AAPC commissioned 3D Strategic Research and Normington Petts to conduct a study of AAPC members.
- A survey was conducted among current and lapsed AAPC members. The survey was fielded online from April 22nd to May 4th, 2025 with emails and text messages inviting members to take the survey via a unique, secure web link. A total of n=200 interviews were completed with current (n=131) or lapsed (n=61) AAPC members based in the United States. The margin of error for the survey is $\pm 6.8\%$.
- In-depth interviews were conducted among 15 current AAPC members via Zoom. Half were conducted prior to the launch of the survey and the remainder after the survey closed. Respondents were a representative mix of partisanship, industry specialty, and company size with varied years of industry experience. All IDI respondent data in this deck is redacted to ensure anonymity.

Usage Overview

- Majority of political consultants use AI weekly, including one third who use it daily and find it effective in their own work.
- Reluctance to using AI is largely due to not knowing how or general discomfort with the technology.
- ChatGPT is by far the most widely used AI tool, distantly followed by Gemini, Canva, and Copilot. AI usage is heavily geared toward internal workflows, brainstorming/creative workshopping, and research.
- Reducing costs and increasing efficiency are the most sought-after benefits of AI.
- While the majority think AI played a role in 2024 and almost all think it will play a role in the future, consultants are mixed on whether AI will have a positive or negative impact.
- GOP consultants and those who already use it daily are more likely to say AI's impact is positive, both in 2024 and in the future.

AAPC Member Profile



Male 72%
Female 27%

Age 18-34 18%
Age 35-44 31%
Age 45-54 19%
Age 55-64 19%
Age 65+ 7%

Democrats 44%
Ind/Non-Partisans 16%
Republicans 40%

Years of Experience

20+ Years 46%
10-19 Years 30%
0-9 Years 25%

Type of Work

Digital	44%	Fundraising	18%
General Consulting	42%	Field/Grassroots	17%
Issue Advocacy	38%	Technology	17%
Ballot Measures	34%	Telephone Contact	13%
Survey Research	33%	File Management	13%
Data/Analytics	32%	Oppo Research	9%
Media Buying	32%	Corporate Affairs	8%
Media Consulting	31%	Legal/Compliance	4%
Direct Mail/Print	30%	Academia	3%
Press/PR	19%	Other	4%

White 86%
People of Color 14%

Northeast 14%
Midwest 13%
DMV 30%
South 18%
West 25%

Seniority

Owner/Partner 61%
Executive 13%
Management 8%
Senior-level 13%
Mid-level 6%
Entry-level 1%

Organization Size

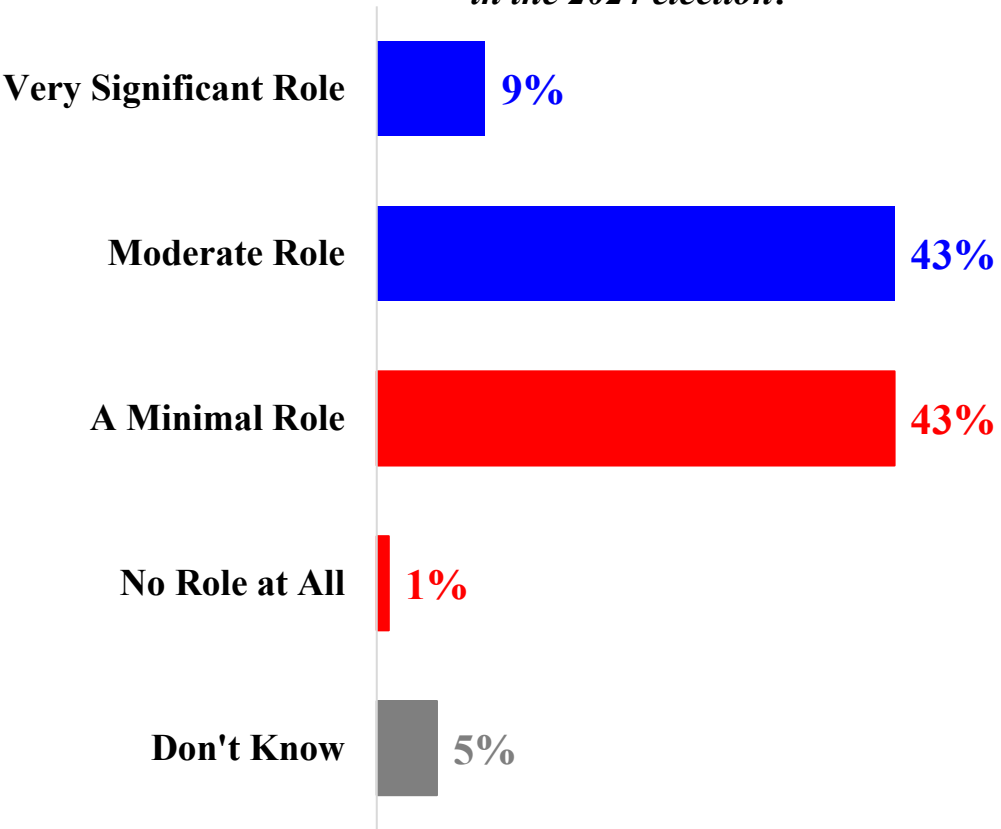
1 Employee 18%
2 to 5 Employees 20%
6 to 10 Employees 12%
11 to 25 Employees 17%
26+ Employees 29%

2024 Campaigns

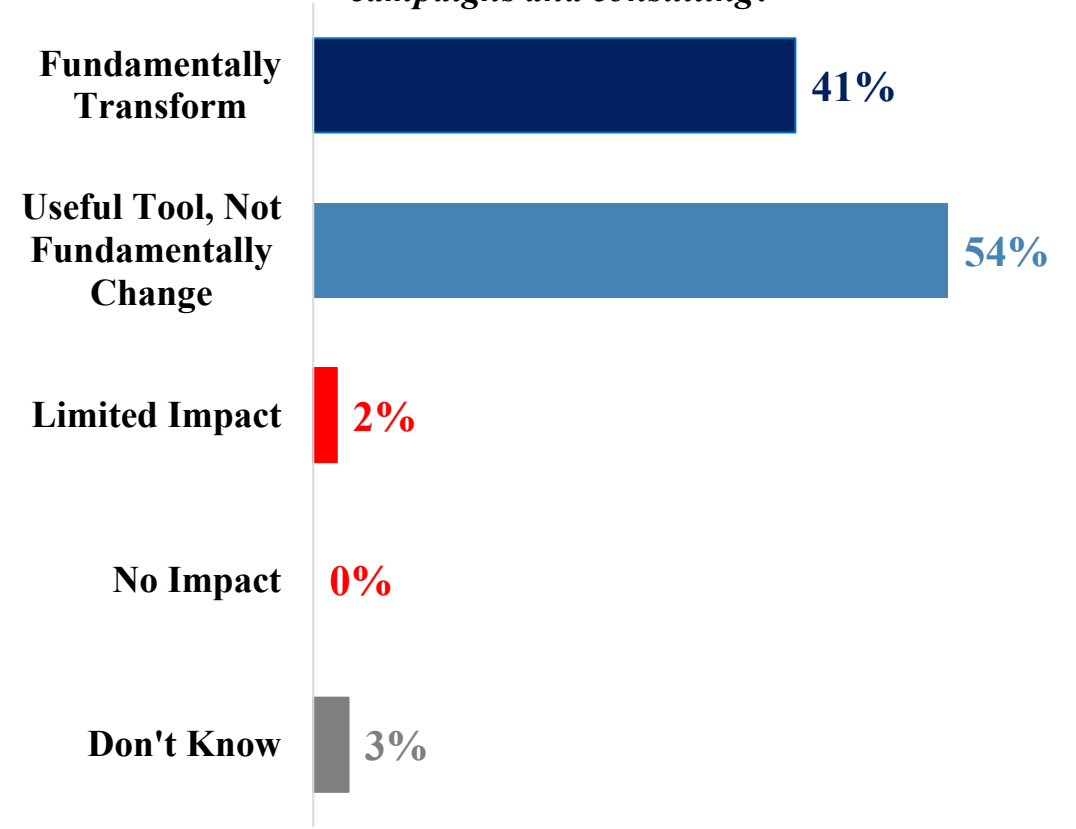
President 40%
U.S. Senate 51%
U.S. House 67%
Governor 35%
Other Statewide 48%
State Legislature 75%
Local/Municipal 64%
Statewide Ballot Measures 48%
Local Ballot Measures 40%

Majority say AI played role in 2024 and will only grow in the future

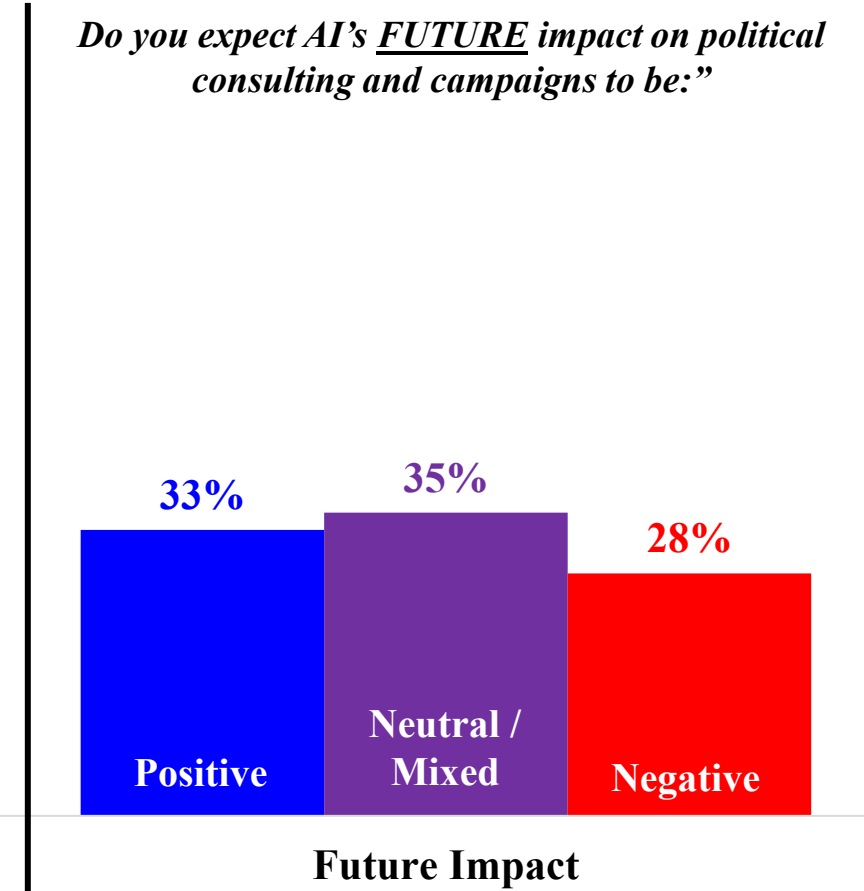
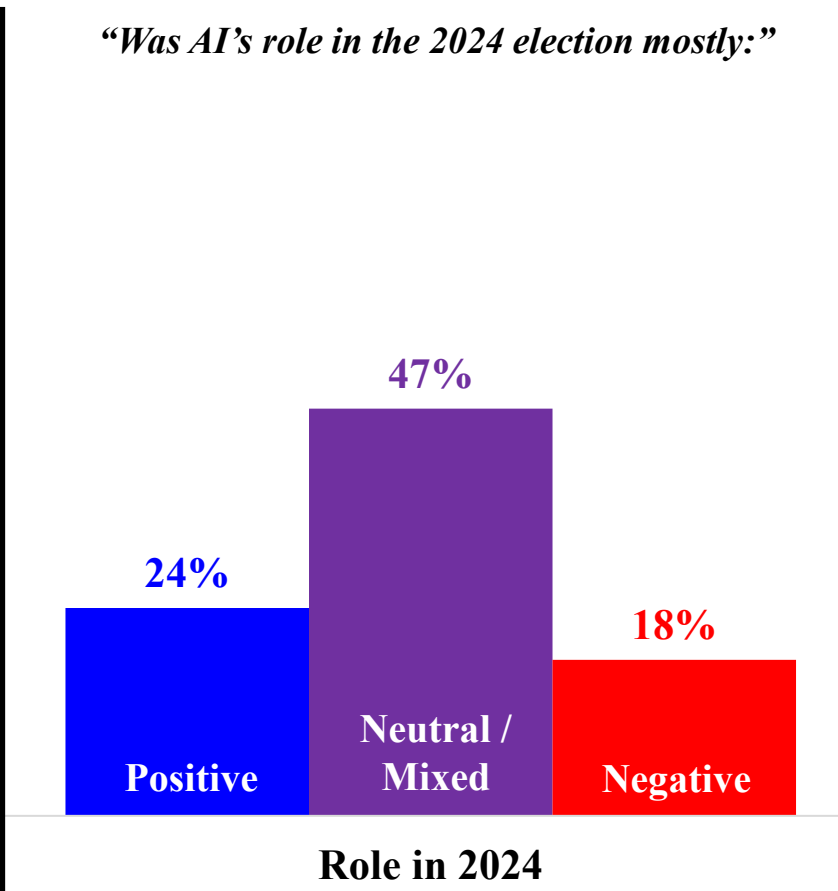
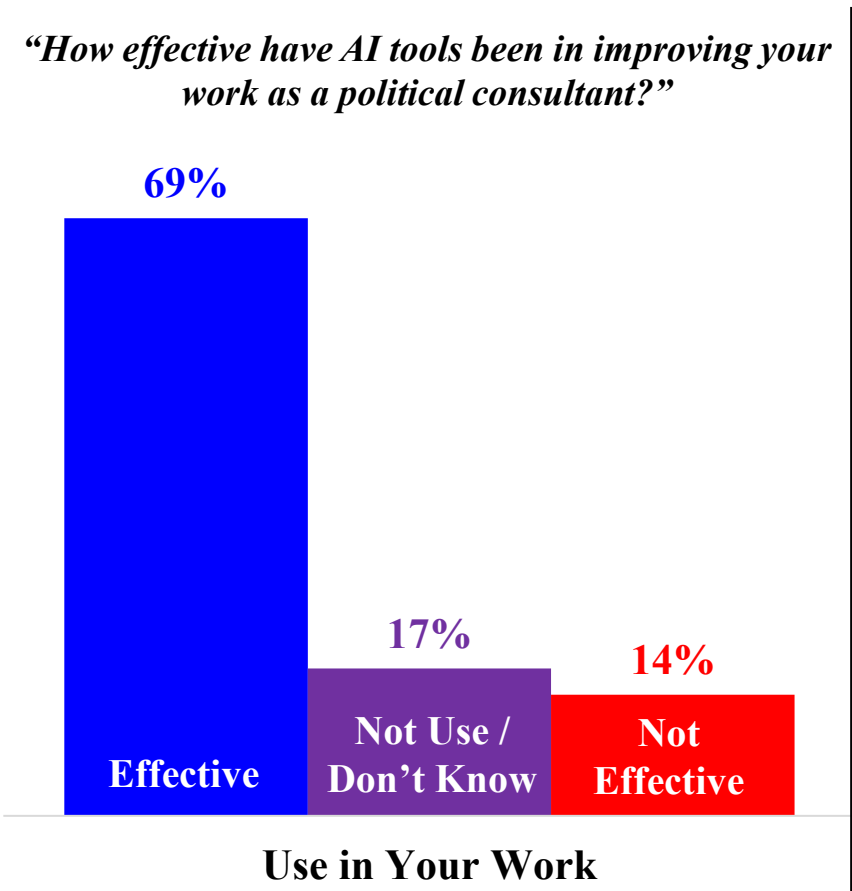
“How much of a role do you think AI technologies played in the 2024 election?”



“Which statement best describes your view of AI’s FUTURE impact on political campaigns and consulting?”

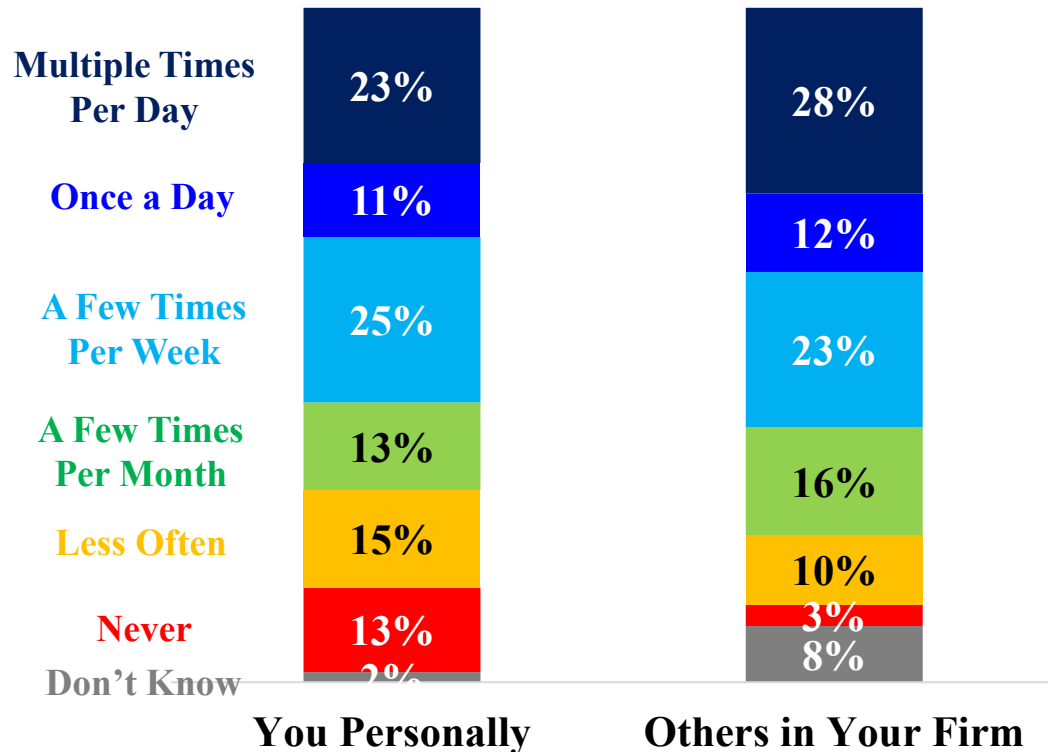


AI seen as effective in consultants' own work, but mixed impact on 2024 and future campaigns



Over one third use AI daily, majority at least once a week

“How frequently do you personally / others in your firm use artificial intelligence tools for work?”



“I use ChatGPT for little things all the time. As little as I’m typing an email to someone that I think is important and I’m like let me throw this in there and make it sound a little better. And then I have used the generative AI and some of the other AI shortcuts like in Photoshop.”

“So personally, I use generative AI tools. We have Gemini Pro for our company, so that’s the main one that I go to. But also ChatGPT and Claude. So basically I’ve been training and learning on those after the election cycle in 2024 and so I’m relatively new to using those consistently in my work. I use them as kind a thought brainstorming partner, to help, develop, and write, content. I use it for project planning and figuring out timelines for things, and then quick data searches.”

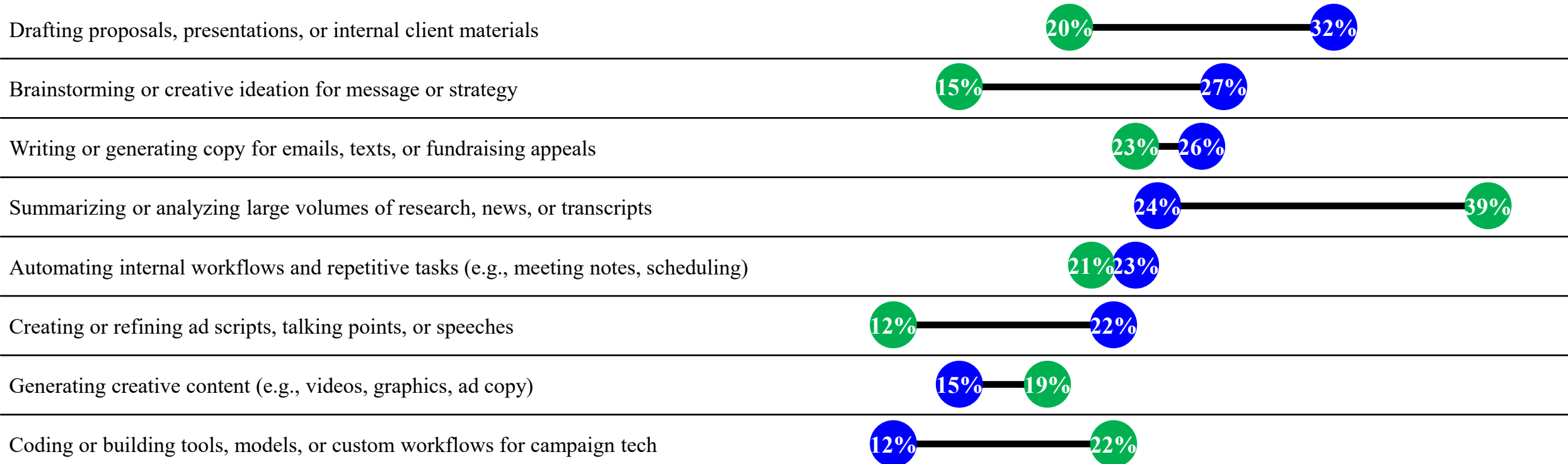
“I would say primarily for getting started on a writing project. Using it as a start, like a launch pad for longer writing and then definitely as well for social media, different versions of captions, and copy and things like that.”

	You Personally	Others in Your Firm
Daily+	34%	39%
Weekly+	59%	62%
Ever	86%	88%

Most use AI for internal material or brainstorming but see opportunity to summarize large sets of text

“What are the most valuable ways AI has helped your work as a political consultant?”

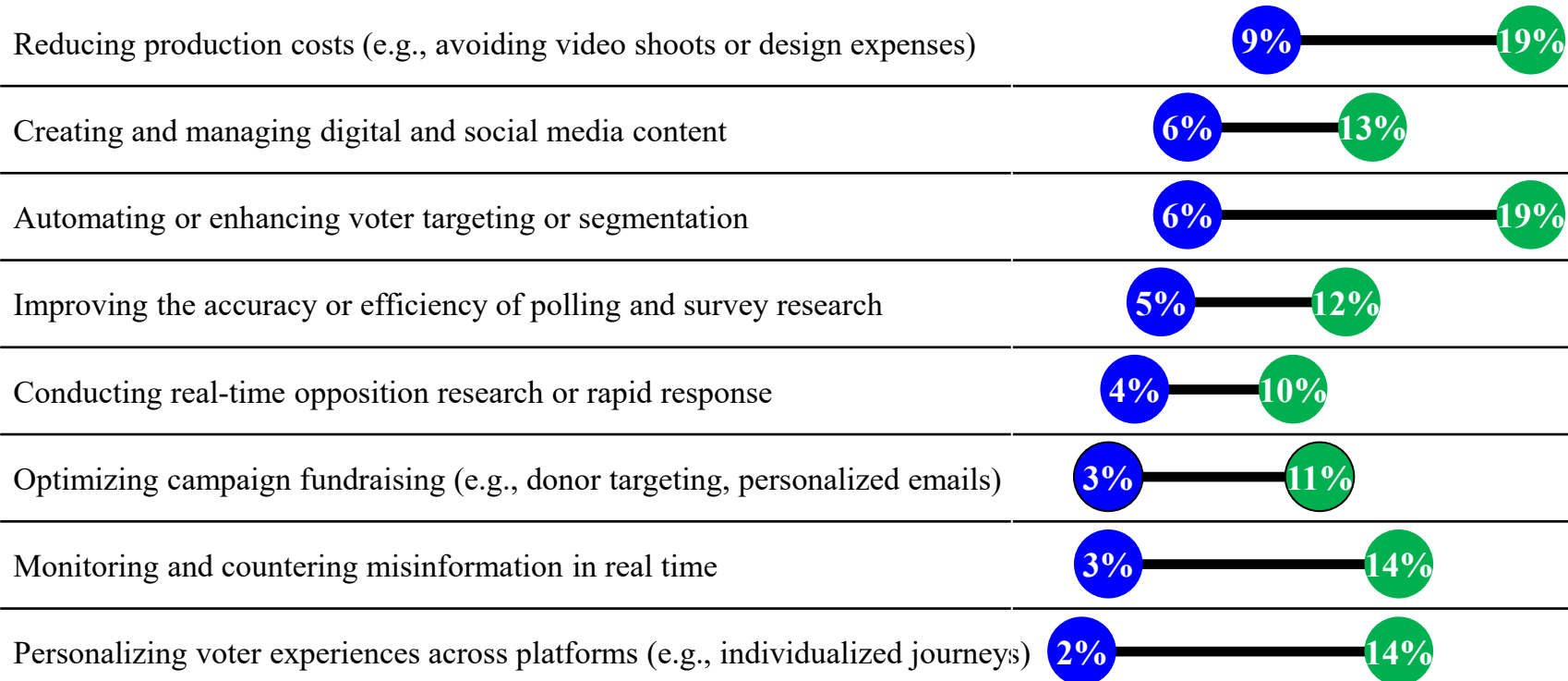
“Looking ahead, which of the following areas, do you think present the greatest opportunity for AI to improve how political campaigns operate?”



Not many use AI in production or voter targeting, but see opportunities for growth in those fields

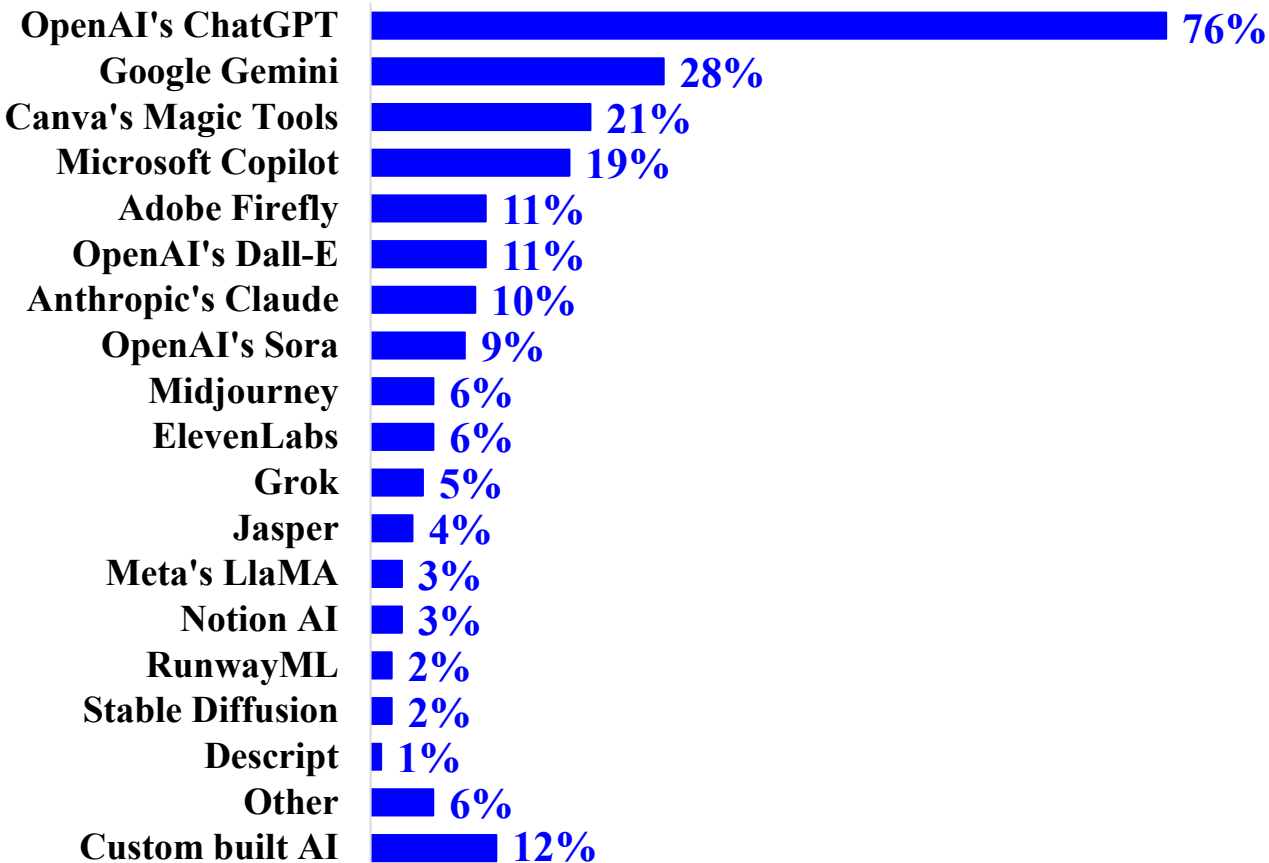
“What are the most valuable ways AI has helped your work as a political consultant?”

“Looking ahead, which of the following areas, do you think present the greatest opportunity for AI to improve how political campaigns operate?”



ChatGPT dominates AI use. Gemini, Canva and Copilot are distant followers

“Which type of AI tools do you or your firm use for your work as a political consultant?”



“In the context of a cycle, I would say it's changed dramatically from like if you thought about it a year ago probably wouldn't say I used it at all. To like, I use ChatGPT Pro almost every day. I use it for research, heightening the process of writing out things, doing additional research to kind of just like the message points I might normally give if I were going on TV, or offering things that we might suggest to put in polls. That sort of stuff.”

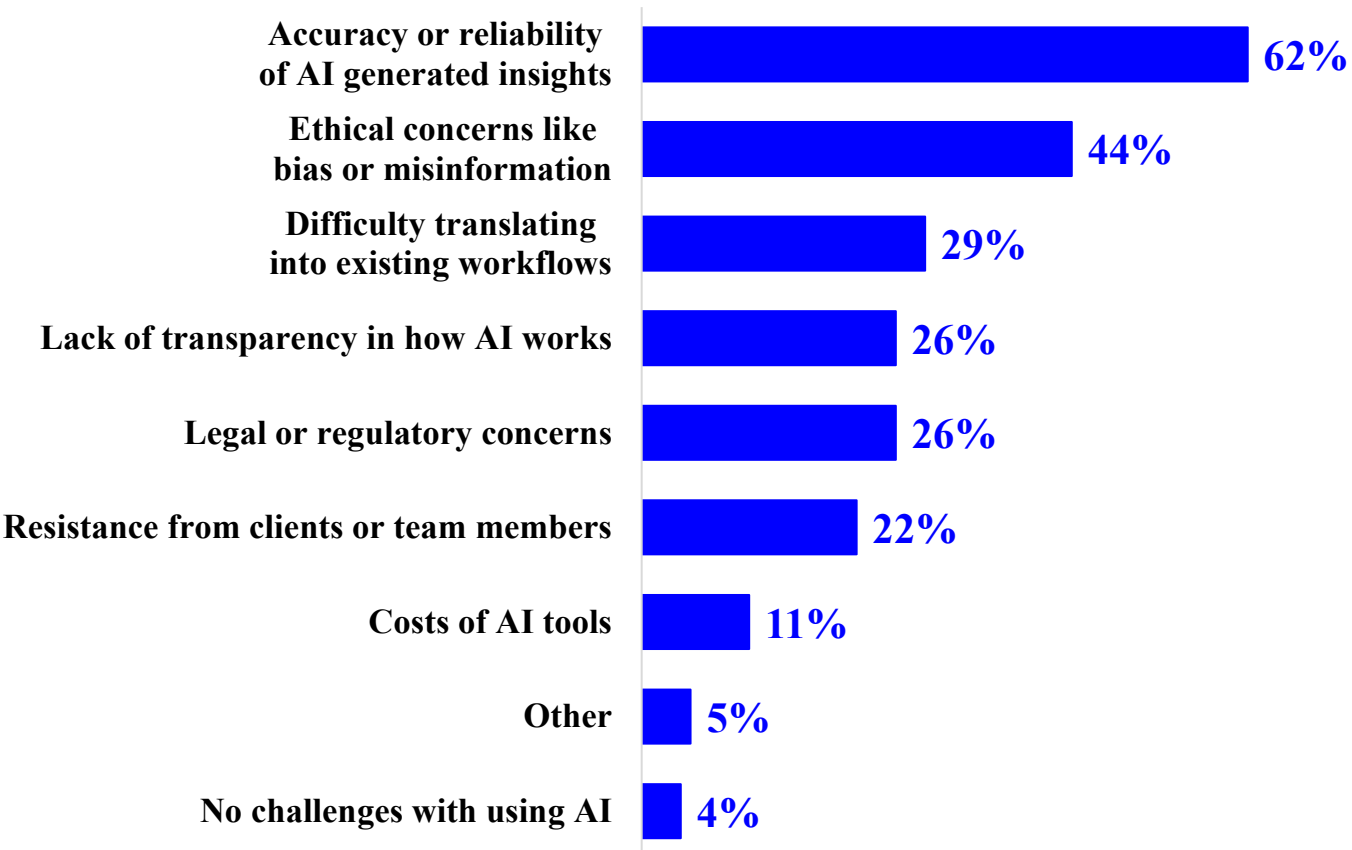
“I've saved a lot of time and eliminated a lot of error by working with Claude AI to build code for me. I know enough about it to spot check it or identify where errors are and that really speeds up the process.”

“I don't feel like I get to the good idea that I want to really do until I've trundled through 10, 20, 30 bad ideas. And that takes time to generate those bad ideas. ChatGPT is genius at that. It will crank out 30 bad ideas in 5 minutes, and that helps me get to the idea I want to get to.”

“I've played around with Meta's and Google's. And then for creative I've used Midjourney. Then I think it's called Aura where you prompt once and it'll give you 2 options from different large language models, and then you can kind of like pick the one you like the best. It still like tends to be ChatGPT for me. My team will use different ones because they have different needs. There's some good AI options that our designers use pretty regularly to speed up their processes, even just within Adobe.”

Accuracy and misinformation are the biggest challenges consultants have encountered

“What challenges, if any, have you encountered when using AI tools?”



“A **very powerful weapon put in the hands of people who may not handle it responsibly**. So, yeah, I mean, I'm really afraid of that. When somebody takes, you know, a [supporter] makes an AI version of my opponent and thinks they're doing a very helpful thing for the campaign, and then winds up, you know, screwing us in the end.”

“The biggest concern that I have is with **deep fakes, or like actual things that are going to voters that look real, but there's no basis in reality**. Those are the most concerning things to me, and even with like disclosure. There's already a lot of misinformation in our world, to begin with, and it's really just like mucking things up. And I feel like this has the potential to just exponentially grow, that. I think that's probably what I what keeps me up at night the most.”

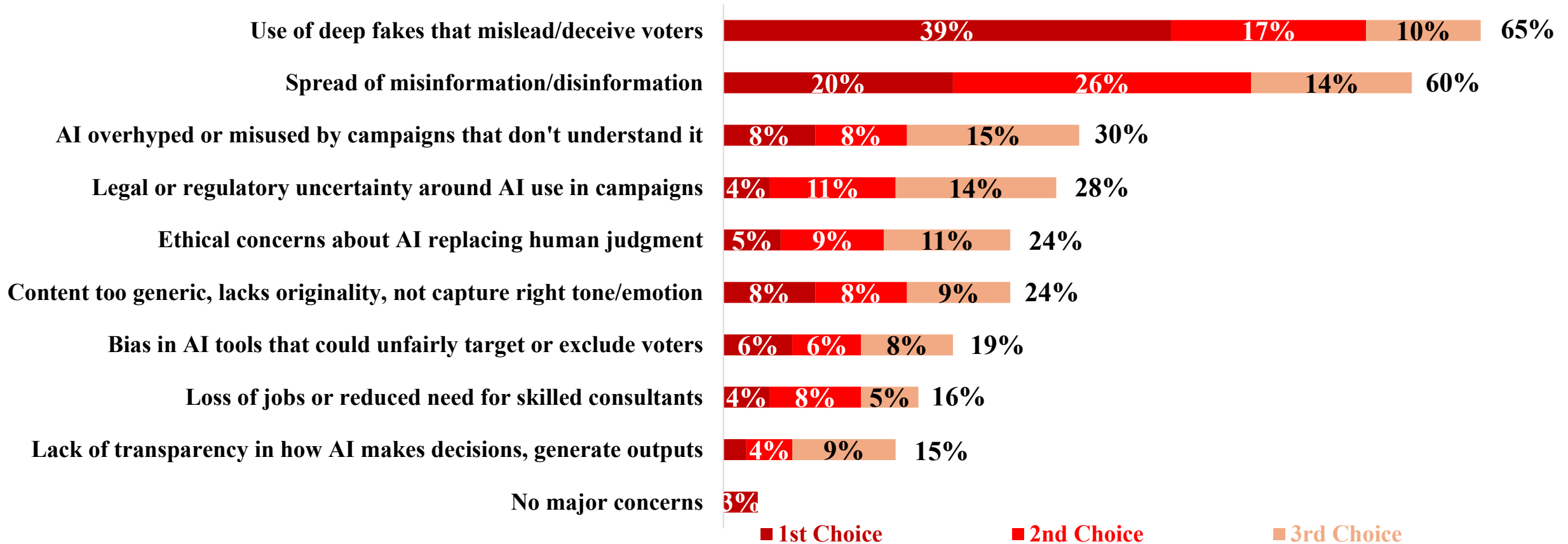
“If you're using AI to either, you know, generate content, or speed up your ability to analyze and gain insights from data, those are kind of the places where you'll see that you'll have **that risk of like ChatGPT hallucinating and making up facts or making up news articles and information**.”

Ethics Overview

- Biggest concerns around AI are around deep fakes and misinformation.
- Consultants generally agree on what is ethical and unethical, but the conversation around disclosure makes it much murkier.
- Non-advertising uses of AI, like targeting and minimal edits to ads, that can be done with existing tools are broadly considered ethical.

Biggest concerns around AI focus on deep fakes and misinformation

“Please rank your TOP THREE concerns about how AI might be used in political campaigns?”



Hypothetical Uses of AI Language

*Now you will see a few hypothetical examples of how A.I. might be used in political campaigns. Some examples may be common practices today, others are more speculative. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is a **very ethical**, **somewhat ethical**, **somewhat unethical**, or **very unethical** use of A.I. in political campaigns, or if you think it **depends on how it is used or the specific context**.*

A campaign uses A.I. to **test and optimize digital ads** based on which messages are most persuasive for voters or most effective at raising money, **using machine learning trained on past campaign data**.

A campaign uses A.I. to **make minimal edits to an ad**, such as adding an American flag in the background.

A.I. is used to identify and **target voters based on inferred life experiences, such as job loss**, caregiving responsibilities, or financial stress, in order to tailor emotional appeals and fundraising messages.

An A.I. tool is used to **draft fundraising emails that mimic the tone, language, and personal voice of a candidate**.

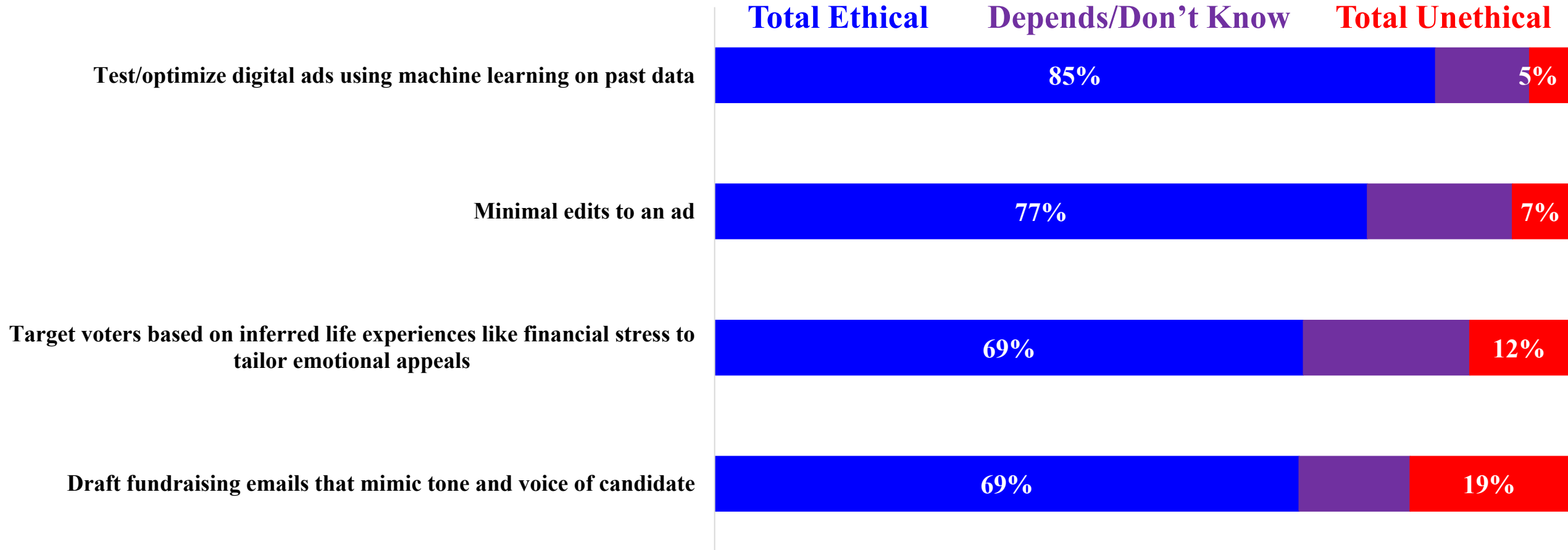
A campaign uses A.I. to **generate an ad from beginning to end**, including drafting and creating the ad's visuals and audio, **and it (is / is NOT) disclosed in the ad.**

An A.I. tool is used to **generate a realistic audio recording of a candidate reading a quote that they originally said in a printed article**, even though the candidate was never recorded saying it out loud, **and it (is / is NOT) disclosed in the ad.**

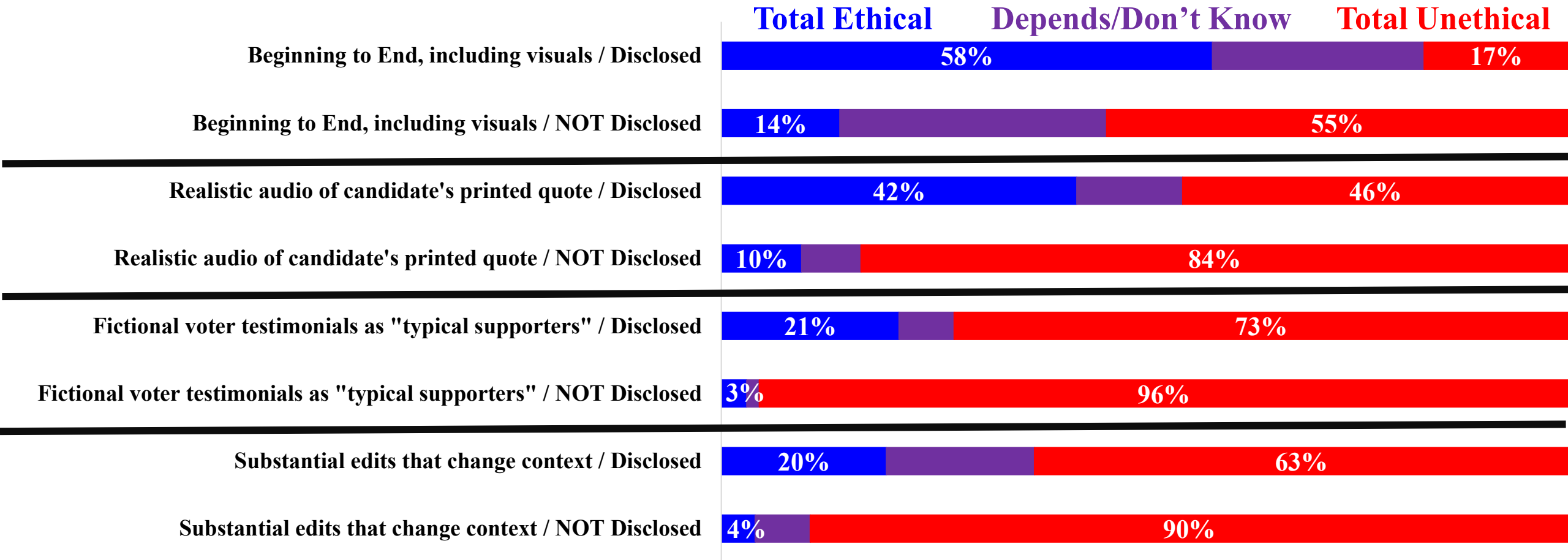
A campaign **creates fictional voter testimonials using A.I.-generated text and faces**, presenting them as “typical supporters” **and it (is / is NOT) disclosed in the ad.**

A campaign uses A.I. to **make substantial edits to the background of a photo or video in a campaign ad that changes the context of the ad**, such as removing protest signs or inserting a crowd to make an event appear more well-attended, **and it (is / is NOT) disclosed in the ad.**

Targeting, non-advertising uses, and minimal edits considered ethical uses of AI



Disclosure does not make AI usage ethical, but can make it less unethical



Artificial Intelligence in Political Consulting

For more information, please feel free to contact:

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