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 +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%

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

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

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?"

Very Significant Role	9%
Moderate Role	43%
A Minimal Role	43%
No Role at All	1%
Don't Know	5%
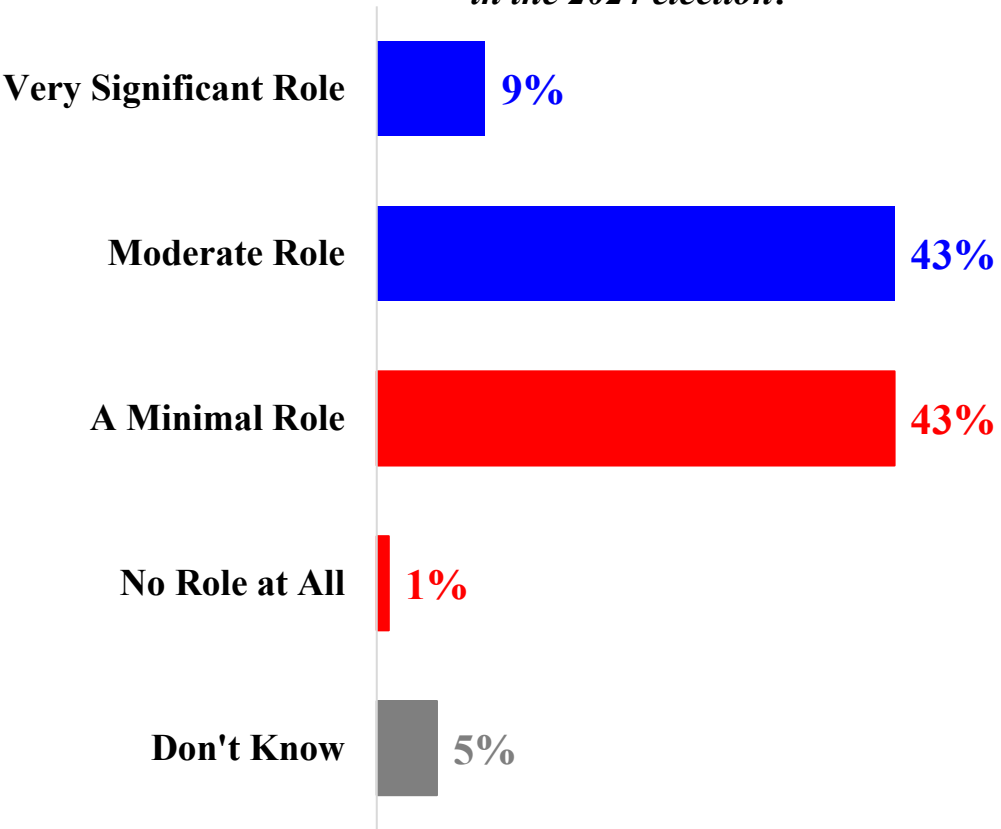
"Which statement best describes your view of AI's FUTURE impact on political campaigns and consulting?"

Fundamentally Transform	41%
Useful Tool, Not Fundamentally Change	54%
Limited Impact	2%
No Impact	0%
Don't Know	3%
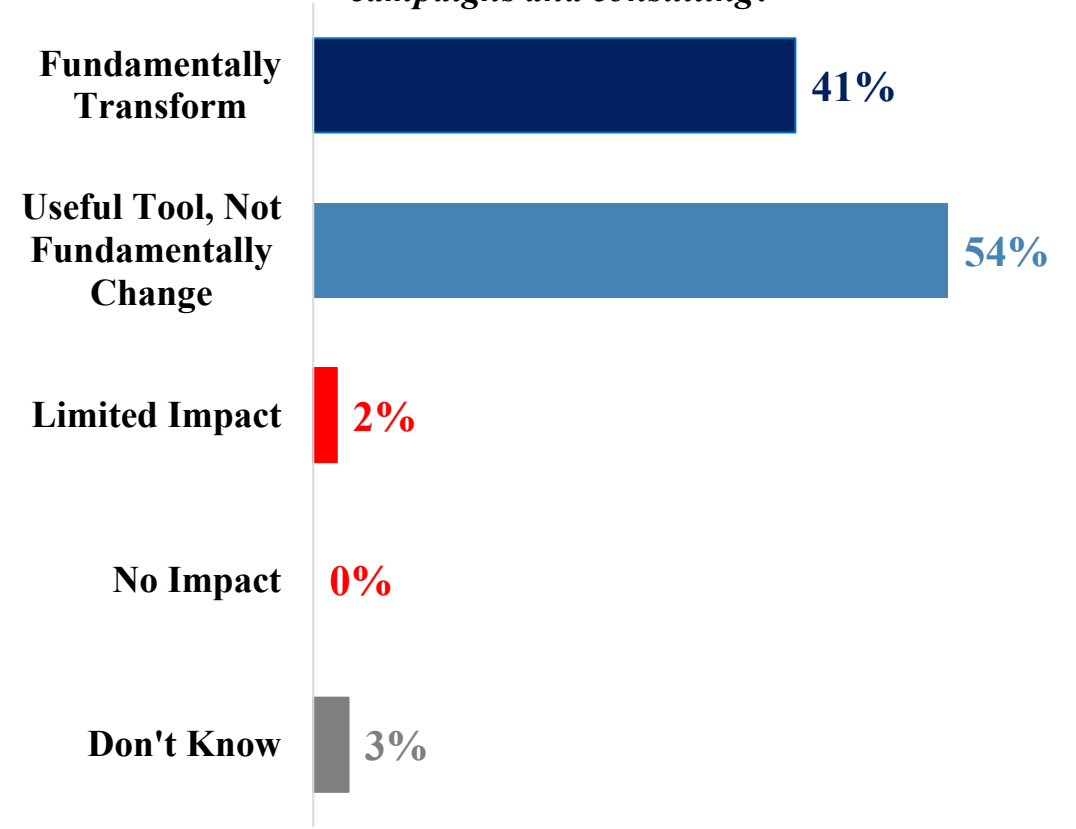
GOPers more likely to say AI had impact in 2024

AI's Role in 2024 by Party

AI's Future Impact by Party

Dem (44%) — Significant/Moderate Role: 45%, Minimal/No Role: 48%
Ind/Non-Partisan (16%) — Significant/Moderate Role: 53%, Minimal/No Role: 41%
GOP (40%) — Significant/Moderate Role: 58%, Minimal/No Role: 40%

■ **Significant/Moderate Role**　■ **Minimal/No Role**

Dem (44%) — Transformational: 42%, Useful: 52%, Limited/None: 1%
Ind/Non-Partisan (16%) — Transformational: 38%, Useful: 56%, Limited/None: 6%
GOP (40%) — Transformational: 41%, Useful: 55%, Limited/None: 1%

■ **Transformational**　■ **Useful**　■ **Limited/None**

Those using AI more frequently also more likely to say AI had and will play a role in campaigns
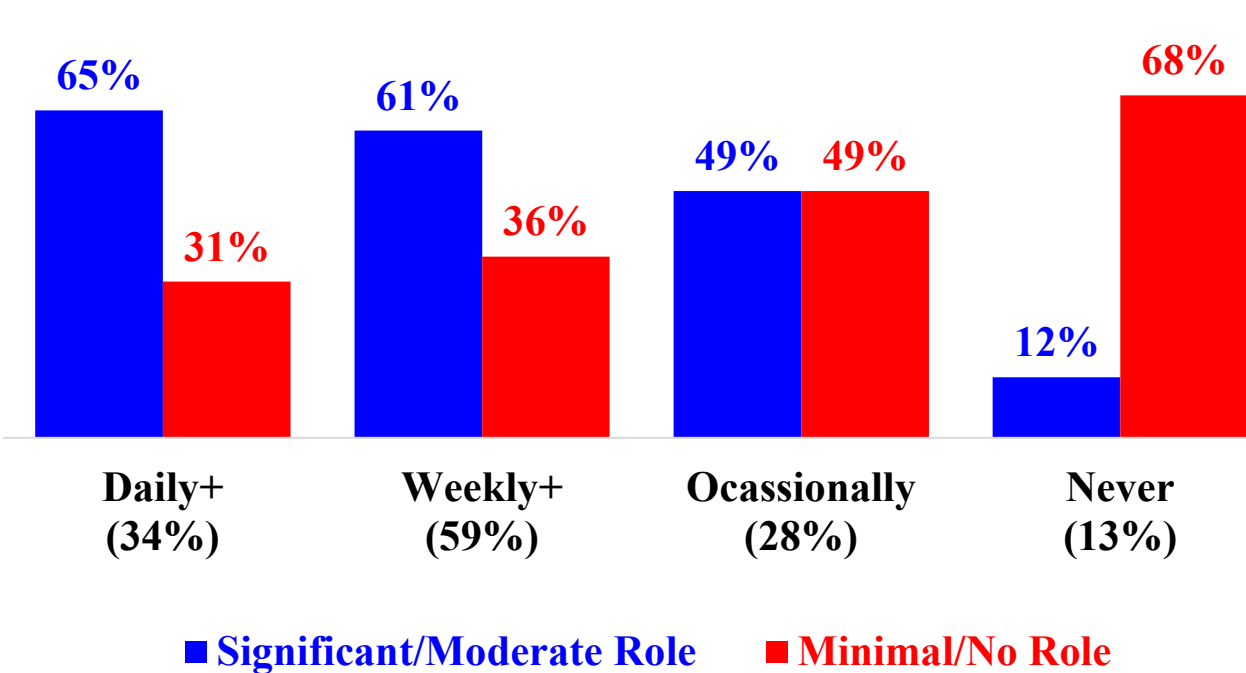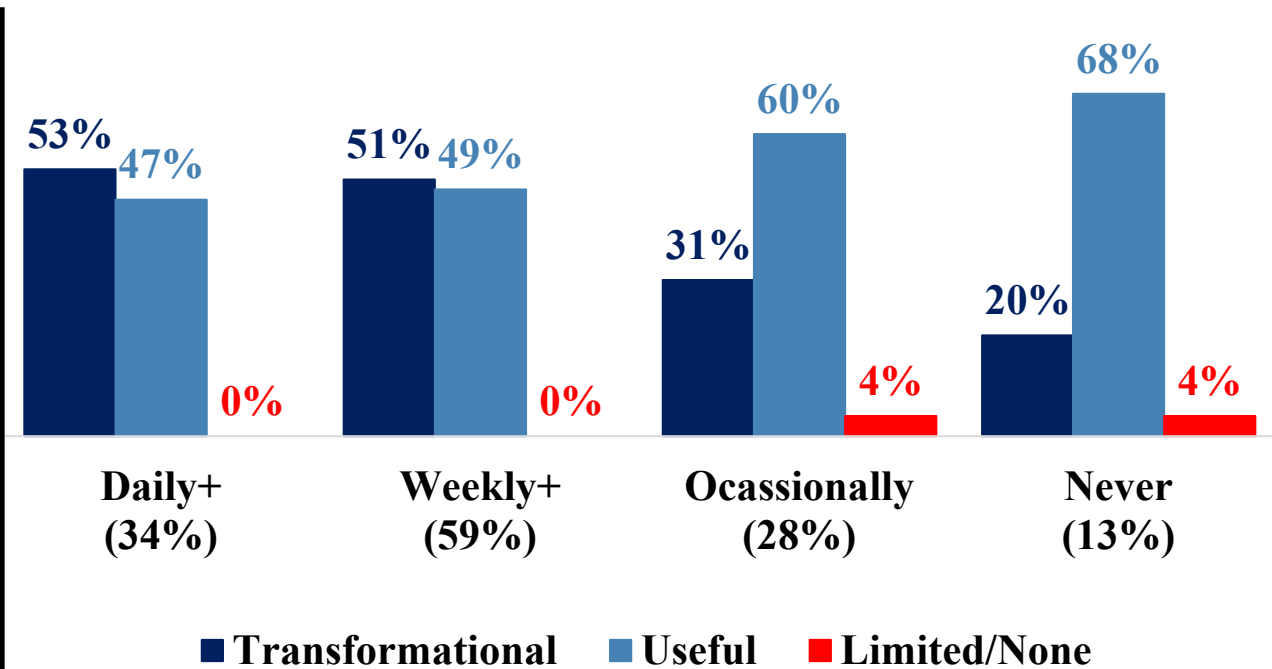
AI's Role in 2024 by Personal AI Usage for Work

- Daily+ (34%): Significant/Moderate Role 65%, Minimal/No Role 31%
- Weekly+ (59%): Significant/Moderate Role 61%, Minimal/No Role 36%
- Ocassionally (28%): Significant/Moderate Role 49%, Minimal/No Role 49%
- Never (13%): Significant/Moderate Role 12%, Minimal/No Role 68%

Legend: ■ Significant/Moderate Role ■ Minimal/No Role

AI's Future Impact by Personal AI Usage for Work

- Daily+ (34%): Transformational 53%, Useful 47%, Limited/None 0%
- Weekly+ (59%): Transformational 51%, Useful 49%, Limited/None 0%
- Ocassionally (28%): Transformational 31%, Useful 60%, Limited/None 4%
- Never (13%): Transformational 20%, Useful 68%, Limited/None 4%

Legend: ■ Transformational ■ Useful ■ Limited/None

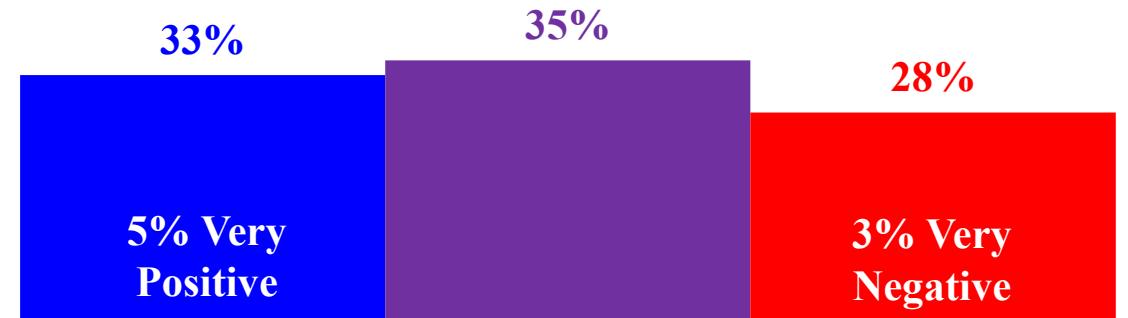# AI's role was mixed in 2024 and expected to be the same in the future

"Was AI's role in the 2024 election mostly:"
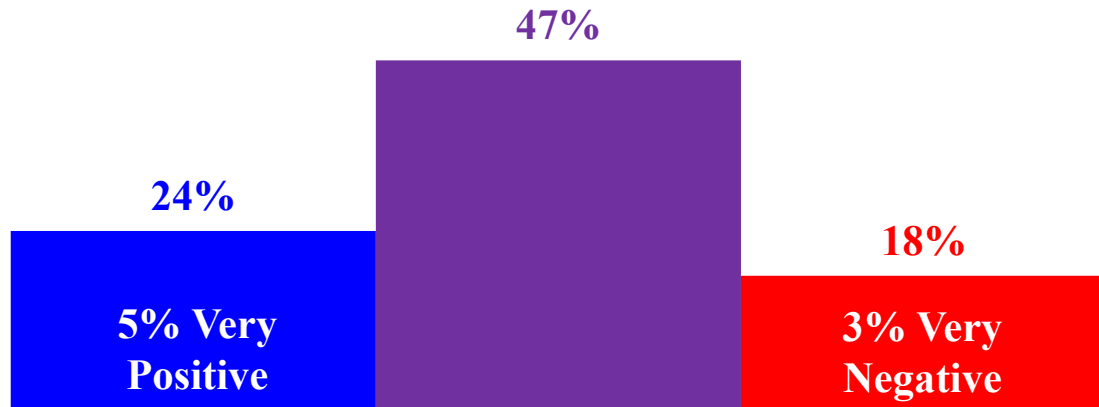
"Do you expect AI's __FUTURE__ impact on political consulting and campaigns to be:"

Role in 2024

- 24%
- 47%
- 18%
- 5% Very Positive
- 3% Very Negative

Future Impact

- 33%
- 35%
- 28%
- 5% Very Positive
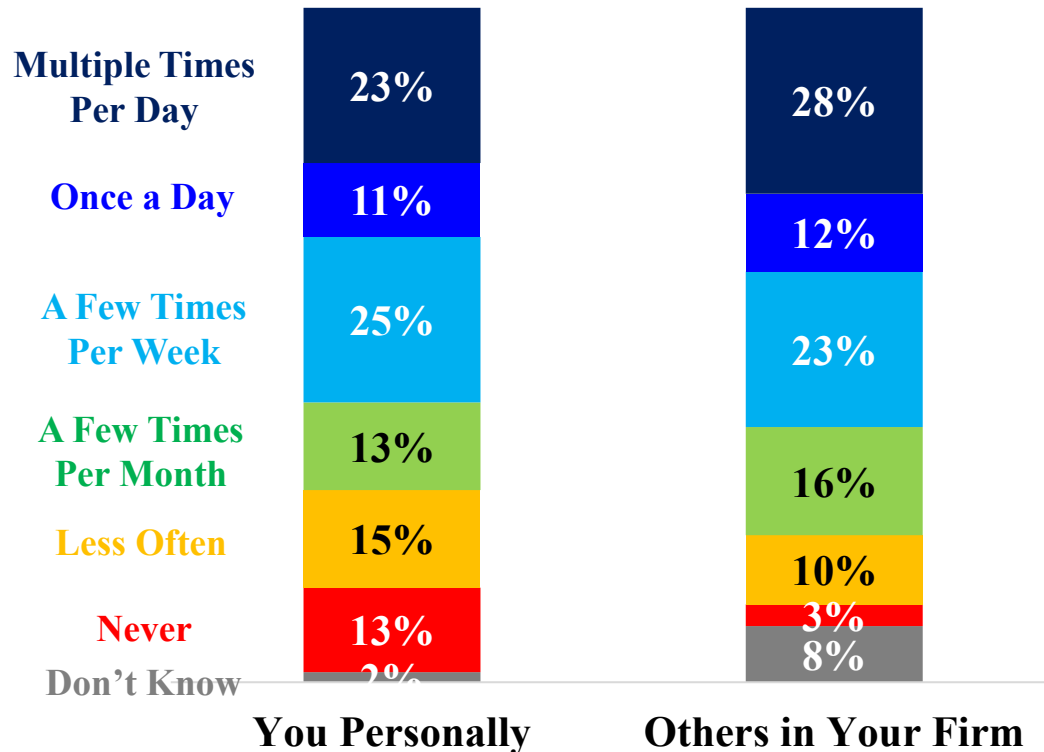- 3% Very Negative

■ **Positive**   ■ **Neutral/Mixed**   ■ **Negative**

More positive views of AI among GOPers, those at larger companies, with more experience, and use AI more often

		AI Role in 2024				AI's Future Impact			
		Positive	**Mixed**	**Negative**	*Net*	**Positive**	**Mixed**	**Negative**	*Net*
By Party	Dem (44%)	13%	48%	25%	*-12%*	17%	41%	35%	*-18%*
	Ind/Non-Partisan (16%)	6%	50%	16%	*-10%*	28%	31%	38%	*-10%*
	GOP (40%)	43%	44%	10%	*+33%*	51%	30%	16%	*+35%*
By Company	Small / 1-5 Employees (38%)	21%	42%	26%	*-5%*	29%	33%	33%	*-4%*
	Medium / 6-25 Employees (29%)	26%	45%	16%	*+10%*	31%	33%	29%	*2%*
	Large / 26+ Employees (29%)	22%	53%	10%	*+12%*	38%	36%	24%	*+14%*
Years Experience	0-19 Years Experience (55%)	24%	44%	22%	*+2%*	29%	32%	35%	*-6%*
	20+ Years Experience (46%)	23%	49%	12%	*+11%*	36%	38%	20%	*+16%*
By Individual AI Usage for Work	Daily+ (34%)	35%	47%	12%	*+23%*	43%	38%	16%	*+27%*
	Weekly+ (59%)	32%	48%	12%	*+20%*	43%	38%	17%	*+26%*
	Occasionally (28%)	13%	51%	24%	*-11%*	24%	33%	36%	*-12%*
	Never (13%)	8%	28%	28%	*-20%*	8%	28%	56%	*-48%*

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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?"

	You Personally	Others in Your Firm
Multiple Times Per Day	23%	28%
Once a Day	11%	12%
A Few Times Per Week	25%	23%
A Few Times Per Month	13%	16%
Less Often	15%	10%
Never	13%	3%
Don't Know	2%	8%

You Personally   **Others in Your Firm**

"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%

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GOPers, younger consultants, and owners use AI more often

Individual AI Usage for Work		Daily+	Weekly+	Ever
By Party	Dem (44%)	28%	53%	81%
	Ind/Non-Partisan (16%)	25%	44%	84%
	GOP (40%)	44%	70%	93%
By Age	Under Age 45 (49%)	44%	67%	90%
	Age 45+ (44%)	24%	51%	85%
By Seniority	Owner / Partner (61%)	37%	59%	83%
	Other (40%)	29%	58%	90%

Most consultants who use AI find it effective - but few see it as _very_ effective.

"How effective have artificial intelligence tools been in improving your work as a political consultant?"

Total Effective 69%

Total Not Effective 14%

Pie chart:
- Very 24%
- Somewhat 46%
- Don't Know 3%
- Don't Use 14%
- Not Very 11%
- Not At All 3%
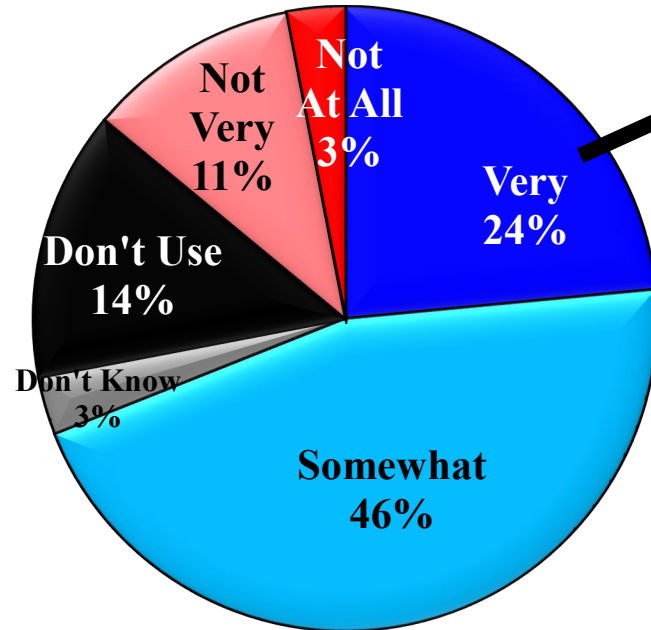
Top Groups: AI Very Effective

Use AI Daily+	46%
Under age 40	39%
Women	33%
GOP	31%
Small Firms / 1-5 Employees	30%
0-19 Years Experience	30%
Polling/Data Consultants	30%
Issue Advocacy / General Consultants	30%
Digital/Tech Consultants	29%

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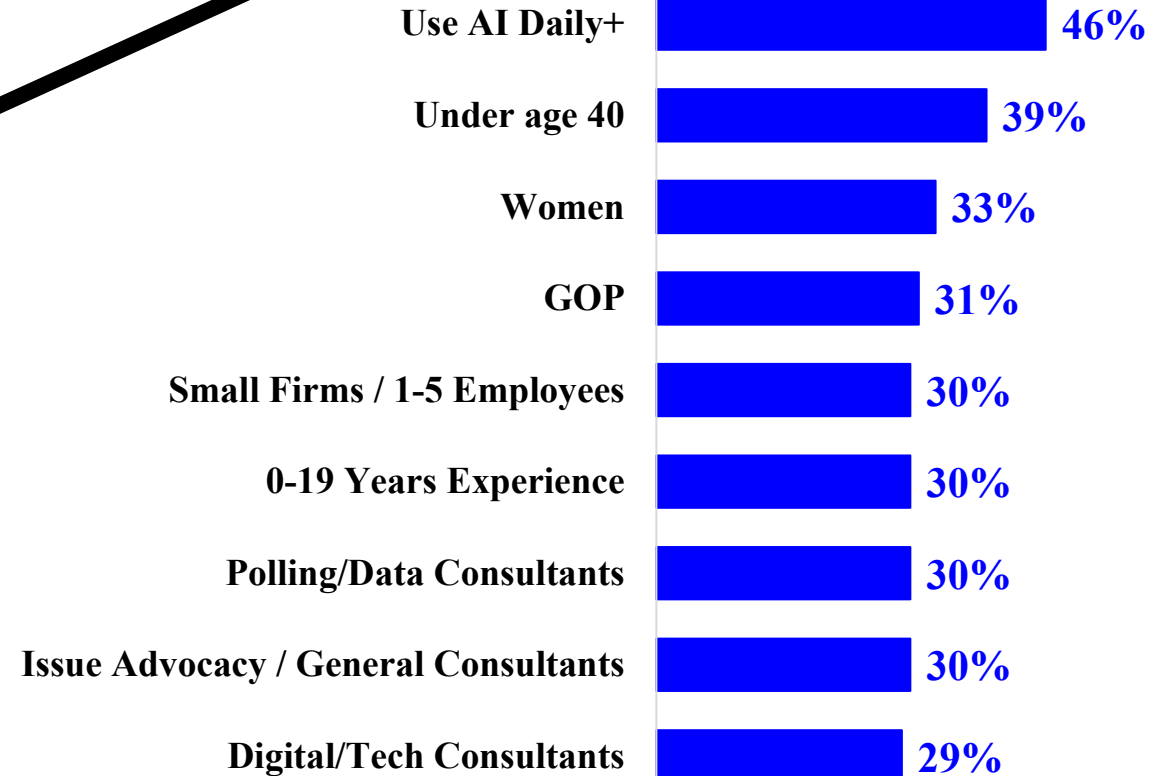
Most use AI for internal material or brainstorming but see opportunity to summarize large sets of text

"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?"
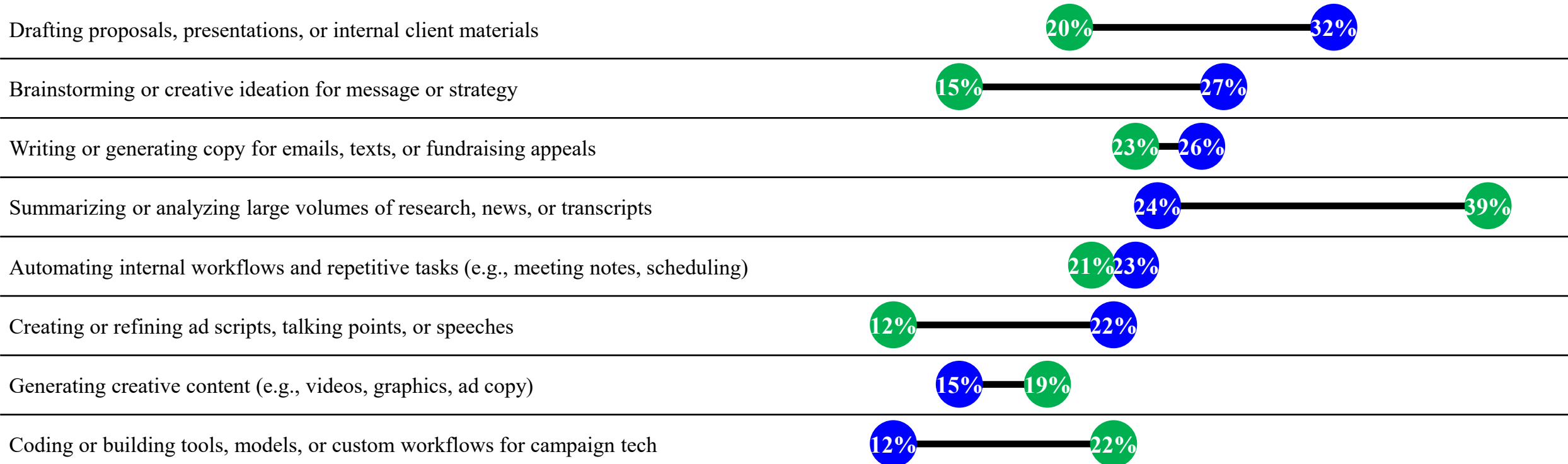
Drafting proposals, presentations, or internal client materials — 20% / 32%

Brainstorming or creative ideation for message or strategy — 15% / 27%

Writing or generating copy for emails, texts, or fundraising appeals — 23% / 26%

Summarizing or analyzing large volumes of research, news, or transcripts — 24% / 39%

Automating internal workflows and repetitive tasks (e.g., meeting notes, scheduling) — 21% / 23%

Creating or refining ad scripts, talking points, or speeches — 12% / 22%

Generating creative content (e.g., videos, graphics, ad copy) — 15% / 19%

Coding or building tools, models, or custom workflows for campaign tech — 12% / 22%

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

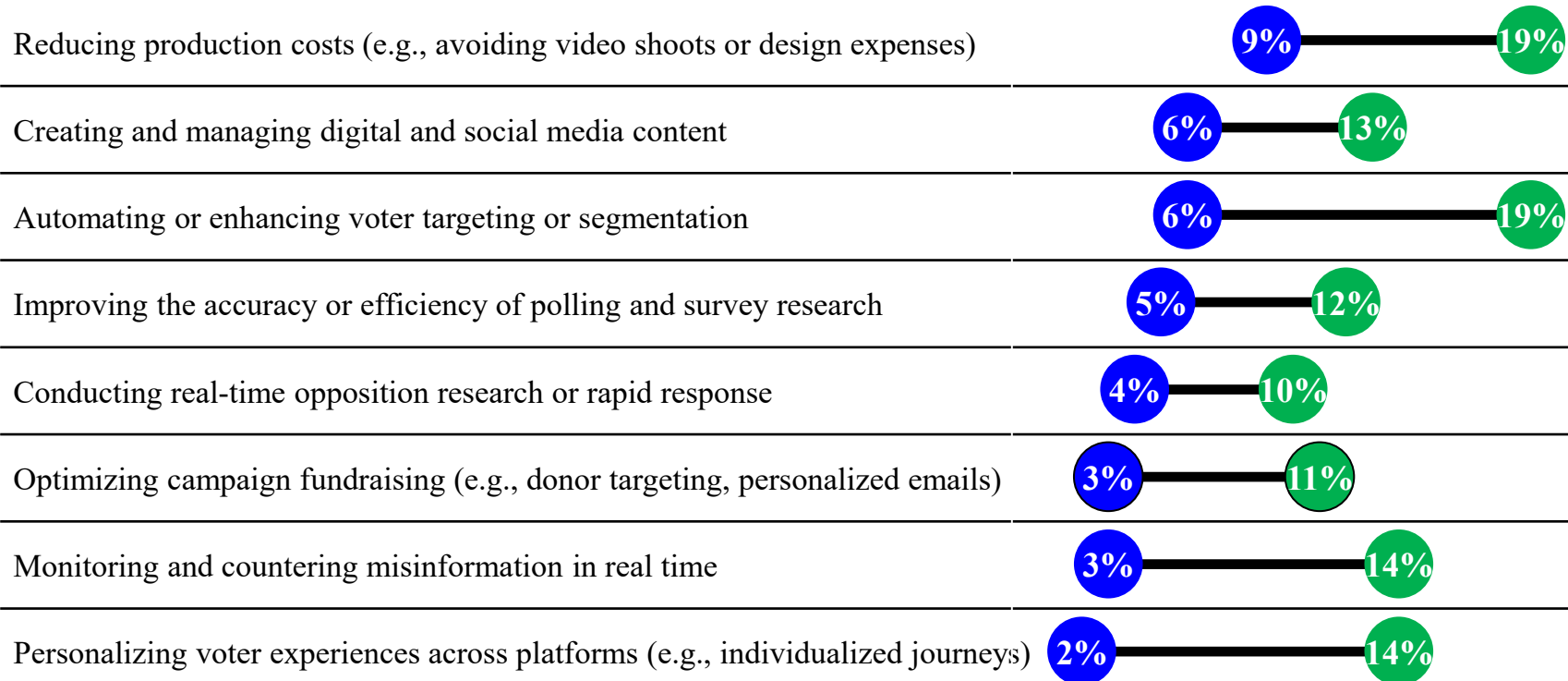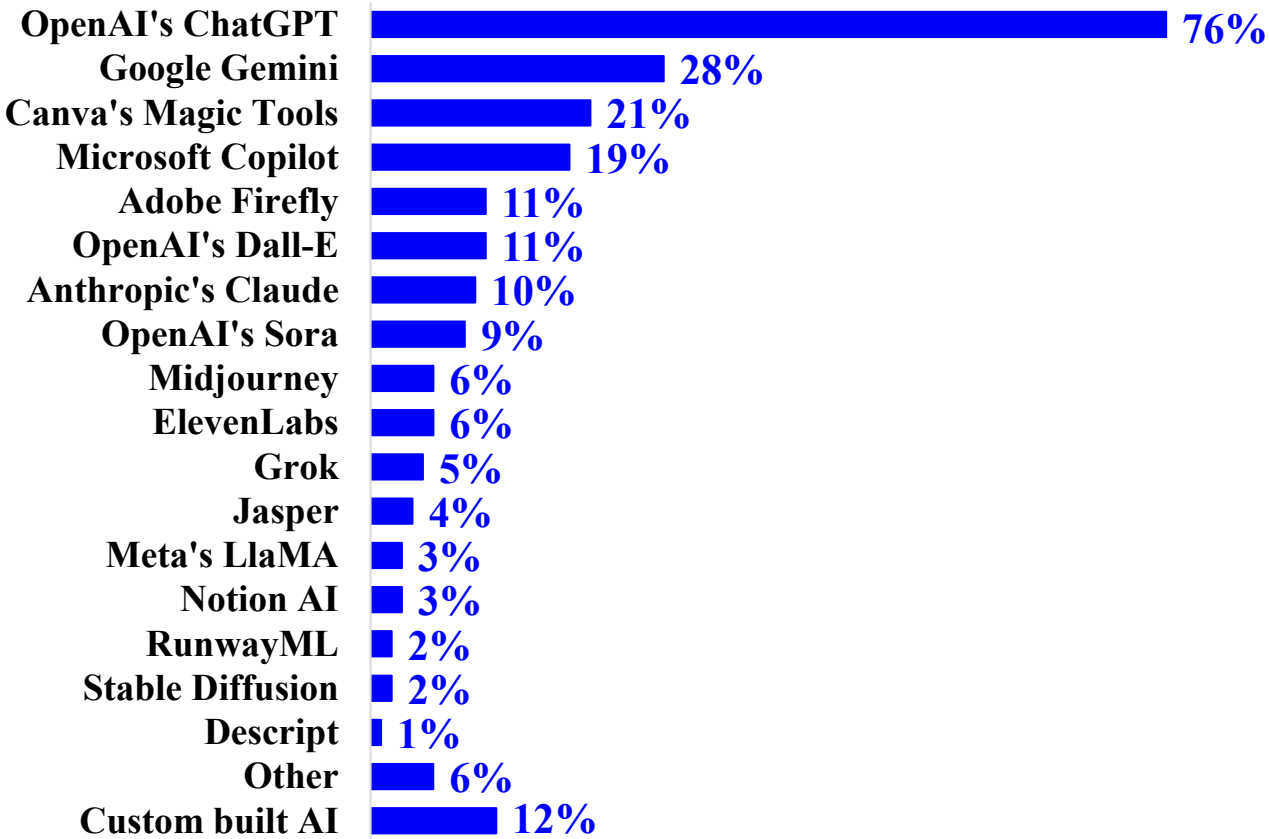*"What are the most valuable ways AI has helped your work as a political consultant?"*

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

	Used	Opportunity
Reducing production costs (e.g., avoiding video shoots or design expenses)	9%	19%
Creating and managing digital and social media content	6%	13%
Automating or enhancing voter targeting or segmentation	6%	19%
Improving the accuracy or efficiency of polling and survey research	5%	12%
Conducting real-time opposition research or rapid response	4%	10%
Optimizing campaign fundraising (e.g., donor targeting, personalized emails)	3%	11%
Monitoring and countering misinformation in real time	3%	14%
Personalizing voter experiences across platforms (e.g., individualized journeys)	2%	14%

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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?"

AI Tool	Percentage
OpenAI's ChatGPT	76%
Google Gemini	28%
Canva's Magic Tools	21%
Microsoft Copilot	19%
Adobe Firefly	11%
OpenAI's Dall-E	11%
Anthropic's Claude	10%
OpenAI's Sora	9%
Midjourney	6%
ElevenLabs	6%
Grok	5%
Jasper	4%
Meta's LlaMA	3%
Notion AI	3%
RunwayML	2%
Stable Diffusion	2%
Descript	1%
Other	6%
Custom built AI	12%

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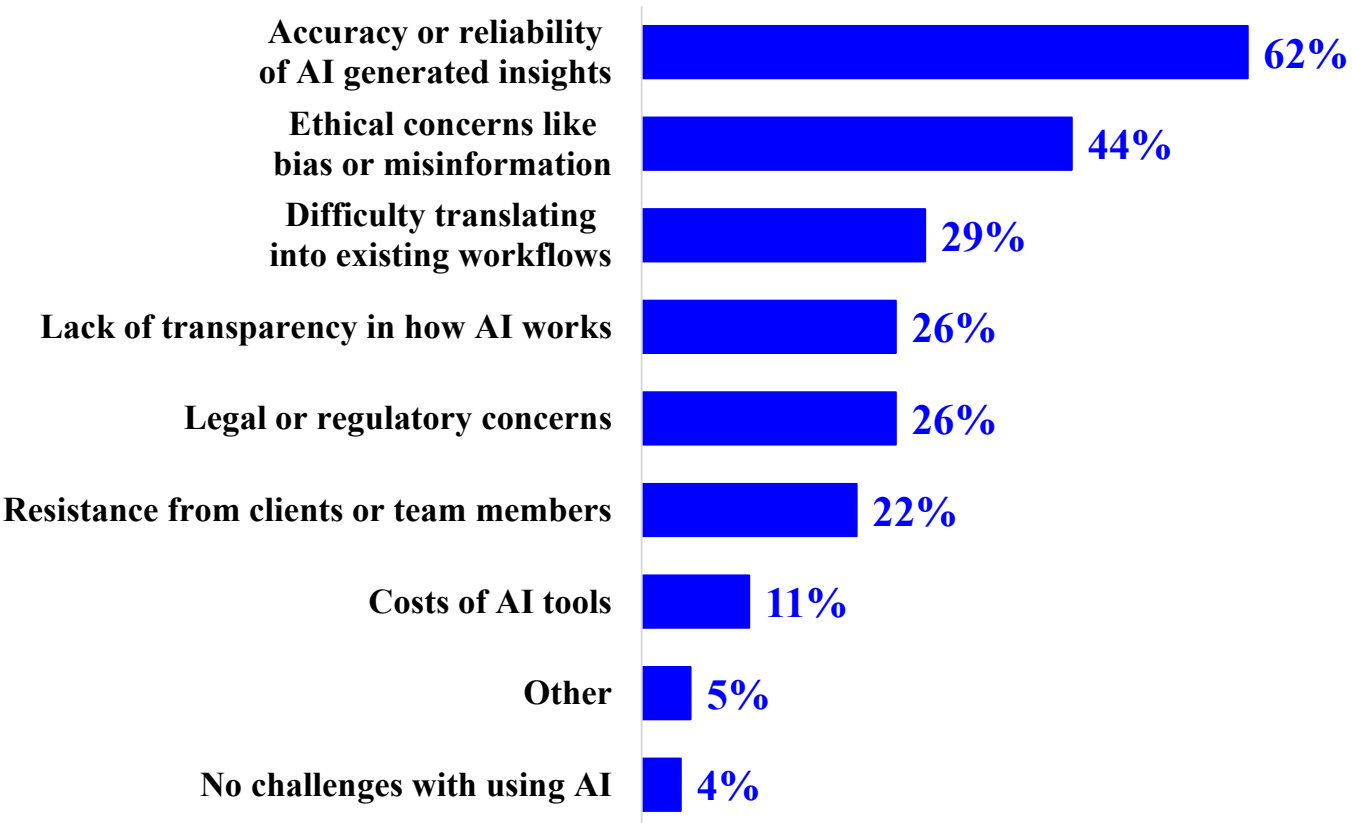
"I've saved a lot of time and eliminated a lot of error by working with Claude AI to build code for me. I know enough about it to spot check it or identify where errors are and that really speeds up the process."

"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?"

Challenge	Percentage
Accuracy or reliability of AI generated insights	62%
Ethical concerns like bias or misinformation	44%
Difficulty translating into existing workflows	29%
Lack of transparency in how AI works	26%
Legal or regulatory concerns	26%
Resistance from clients or team members	22%
Costs of AI tools	11%
Other	5%
No challenges with using AI	4%

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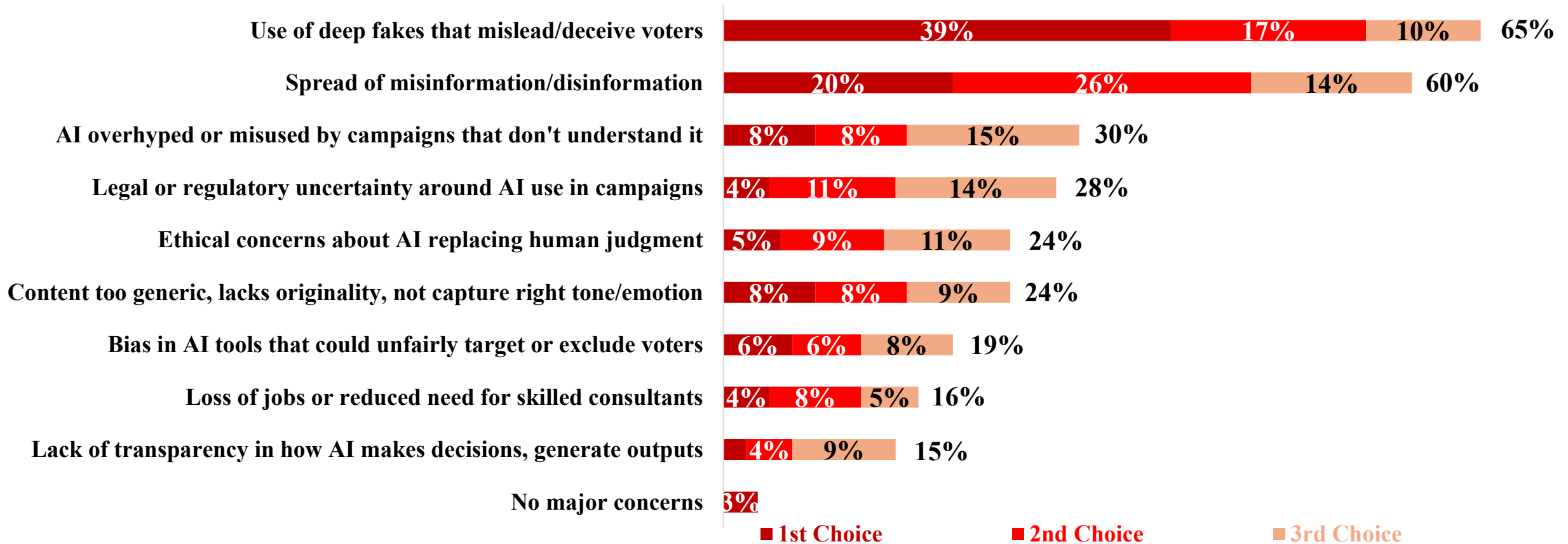
"If you're using AI to either, you know, generate content, or speed up your ability to analyze and gain insights from data, those are kind of the places where you'll see that you'll have that risk of like ChatGPT hallucinating and making up facts or making up news articles and information."

Ethics and Regulation 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?"

Concern	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Total
Use of deep fakes that mislead/deceive voters	39%	17%	10%	65%
Spread of misinformation/disinformation	20%	26%	14%	60%
AI overhyped or misused by campaigns that don't understand it	8%	8%	15%	30%
Legal or regulatory uncertainty around AI use in campaigns	4%	11%	14%	28%
Ethical concerns about AI replacing human judgment	5%	9%	11%	24%
Content too generic, lacks originality, not capture right tone/emotion	8%	8%	9%	24%
Bias in AI tools that could unfairly target or exclude voters	6%	6%	8%	19%
Loss of jobs or reduced need for skilled consultants	4%	8%	5%	16%
Lack of transparency in how AI makes decisions, generate outputs		4%	9%	15%
No major concerns	3%			

■ 1st Choice   ■ 2nd Choice   ■ 3rd Choice

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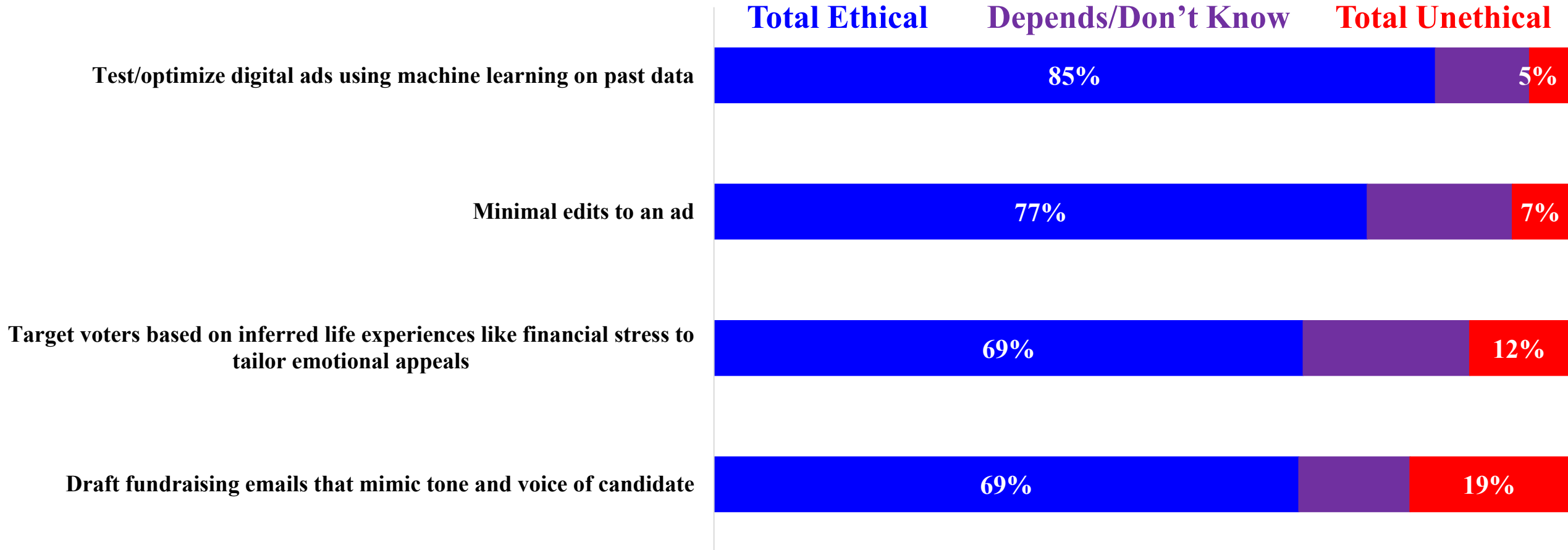
A campaign uses A.I. to generate an ad from beginning to end, including drafting and creating the ad's visuals and audio, **and it (is / is NOT) disclosed in the ad.**

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

	Total Ethical	Depends/Don't Know	Total Unethical
Test/optimize digital ads using machine learning on past data	85%		5%
Minimal edits to an ad	77%		7%
Target voters based on inferred life experiences like financial stress to tailor emotional appeals	69%		12%
Draft fundraising emails that mimic tone and voice of candidate	69%		19%

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

	Total Ethical	Depends/Don't Know	Total Unethical
Beginning to End, including visuals / Disclosed	58%		17%
Beginning to End, including visuals / NOT Disclosed	14%		55%
Realistic audio of candidate's printed quote / Disclosed	42%		46%
Realistic audio of candidate's printed quote / NOT Disclosed	10%		84%
Fictional voter testimonials as "typical supporters" / Disclosed	21%		73%
Fictional voter testimonials as "typical supporters" / NOT Disclosed	3%		96%
Substantial edits that change context / Disclosed	20%		63%
Substantial edits that change context / NOT Disclosed	4%		90%

GOPers say AI usages are ethical, especially with disclosure

AI Hypotheticals by Party	Dem (44%)			Ind/Non-Partisan (16%)			GOP (40%)		
	Ethical	Un-ethical	Net	Ethical	Un-ethical	Net	Ethical	Un-ethical	Net
Test/optimize digital ads using machine learning on past data	85%	6%	+79%	75%	9%	+66%	88%	1%	+87%
Minimal edits to an ad	69%	11%	+58%	69%	3%	+66%	88%	3%	+85%
Target voters based on inferred life experience	65%	15%	+50%	50%	13%	+37%	81%	8%	+73%
Draft fundraising emails that mimic tone of candidate	67%	19%	+48%	50%	25%	+25%	78%	15%	+63%
Beginning to End / Disclosed	56%	17%	+39%	41%	28%	+13%	68%	13%	+55%
Beginning to End / NOT Disclosed	11%	51%	-40%	6%	66%	-60%	20%	54%	-34%
Realistic audio of candidate's printed quote / Disclosed	39%	48%	-9%	34%	50%	-16%	49%	41%	+8%
Realistic audio of candidate's printed quote / NOT Disclosed	10%	85%	-75%	0%	88%	-88%	13%	80%	-67%
Fictional voter testimonials as "typical supporters" / Disclosed	19%	72%	-53%	22%	78%	-56%	23%	71%	-48%
Fictional voter testimonials as "typical supporters" / NOT Disclosed	5%	92%	-87%	0%	100%	-100%	3%	98%	-95%
Substantial edits that change context / Disclosed	16%	67%	-51%	9%	66%	-57%	28%	58%	-30%
Substantial edits that change context / NOT Disclosed	2%	91%	-89%	3%	94%	-91%	6%	86%	-80%

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