

Core iGaming Trends and Challenges in 2023

based on in-depth interviews
with industry professionals



Contents

CEO Foreword	2
Methodology	3
General trends in iGaming	5
Europe and Asia: different perspectives	7
Global trends mirrored in the iGaming industry	8
Main trends in the interviewed companies' focus	10
Most pressing issues for the respondents	12
Hottest regulation issues in 2023	14
CEOs' challenges	16
Operators and vendors: the same problems?	17
Most important marketing channels	18
What CEOs think about marketing	20
Europe & Asia — watch the differences	20
Acquisition or Retention?	21
Personal preferences in online entertainment consumption	23
Europeans and Asians: do they like the same?	25
Summary	26
2024: what to expect?	29

CEO Foreword

Conducting in-depth interviews with industry specialists was a strategic decision for EvenBet Gaming. Recognising the lack of such research in the iGaming sphere, we aimed to get into unexplored territories, seeking raw, authentic insights.

Our mission was clear — to collect unfiltered data that mirrors the market's pulse. Through nearly a few hundred interviews, we achieved a level of depth rarely reached before. Core iGaming Trends and Challenges in 2023 underscores our commitment to the comprehensive understanding of the industry.

Dmitry Starostenkov

CEO



Methodology

Focus on iGaming professional audience attending significant industry's events

1. Exhibitions

Casino Beats Malta
G2G India
SiGMA Asia
SiGMA Europe
SBC Summit Barcelona

3. Interviewed experts

The total number of interviews is 170. The report methodology involves conducting in-depth interviews with industry professionals.

5. Companies' market focus

Europe remains the most lucrative market. Latin America is the second most attractive region losing 11% to Europe. Asia and Africa seem to be promising equal economic potential.

Conclusion

The surveyed audience is highly representative, comprising individuals from major events, valuable verticals, and respondents actively engaged in the iGaming industry. This diverse selection ensures a comprehensive perspective on the subject matter.

2. Verticals participated

Vendors and operators amount to over 50% of the respondents. Other verticals represented include affiliates, service and technology providers, and regulators.

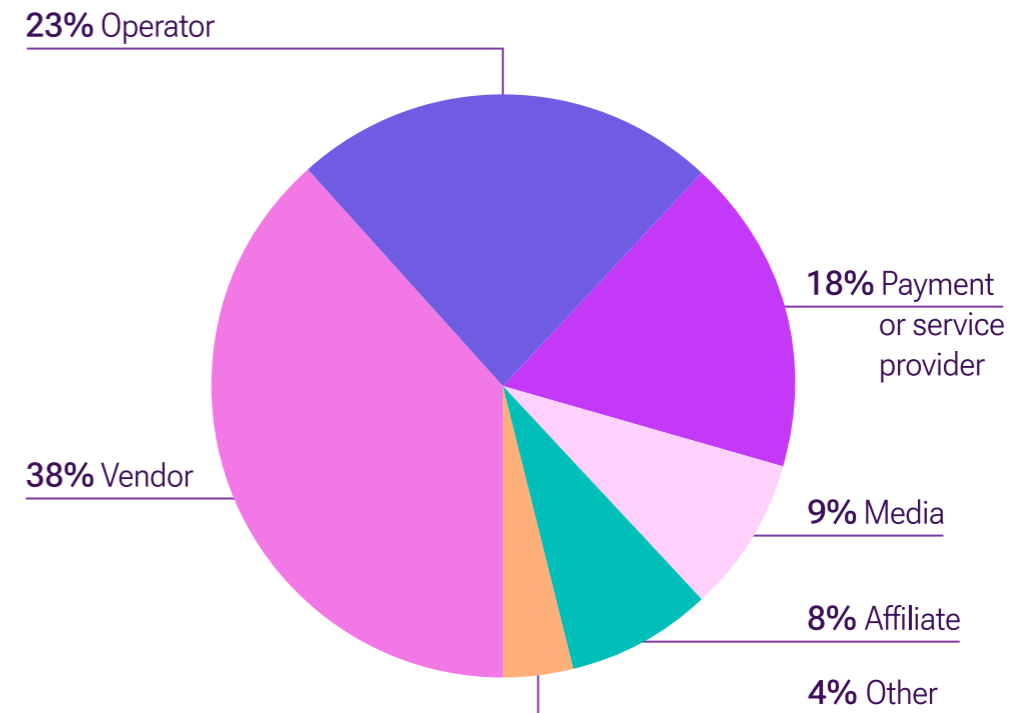
4. Research period

The research covers a 12-month period from November 2022 to November 2023.

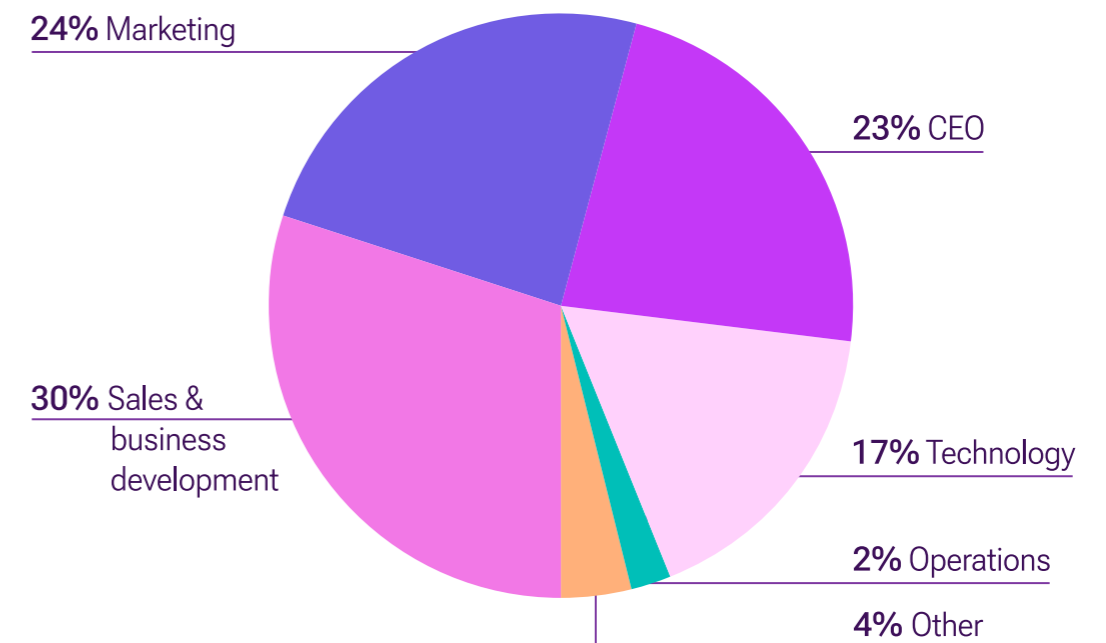
6. Respondents' professional sector

Sales & business development unsurprisingly occupy the leading position with 30% of the respondents. However, we have quite a substantial share of CEOs (23%).

Verticals Participated



Respondent Roles



Imprint

Published by

EvenBet Gaming
EvenBet Gaming Ltd.
64, Excalibur, B.Bontadini
Street, Birkirkara BKR 1737,
Malta



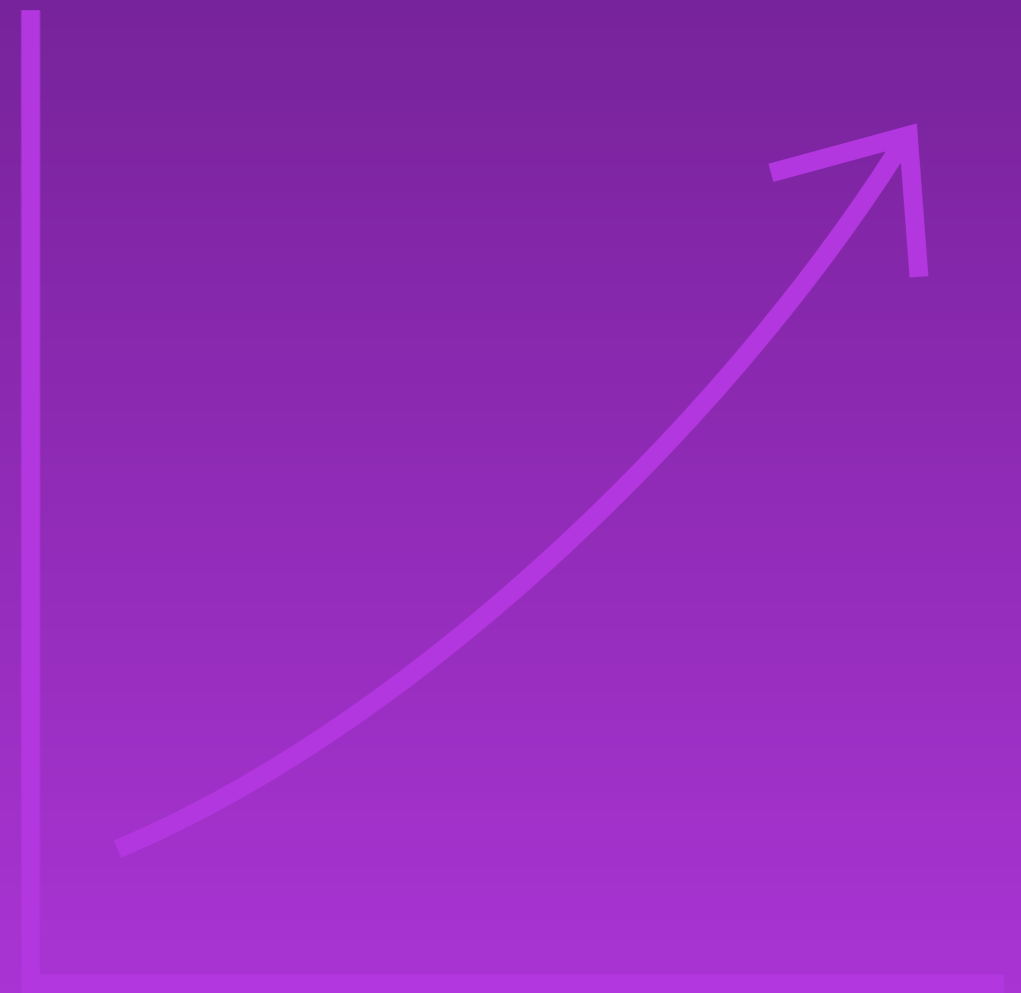
Copyrights

This text, including its content, structure, graphics, code, and design, is the intellectual property of EvenBet Gaming Ltd. All rights to this text, including but not limited to reproduction, distribution, display, and creation of derivative works, are reserved by EvenBet Gaming Ltd. This declaration does not waive any rights that may be afforded to EvenBet Gaming Ltd. under applicable intellectual property laws. Limited quoting of this text may be permissible under the principles of fair use, provided that it is intended for purposes such as criticism, commentary, or news reporting, and the authorship is clearly attributed to EvenBet Gaming Ltd. and/or its employee(s).

Disclaimer

While the information presented is deemed accurate at the time of publication, it cannot be assured. The data and findings are derived from in-depth interviews with industry professionals conducted at the time of publication and are susceptible to change over time. The content is compiled using information obtained at specified events and is considered reliable. However, the publisher does not warrant the truth, accuracy, or permanence of the information herein. The publisher is not liable for any incompleteness or inaccuracy in the information provided.

General Trends in iGaming



General trends in iGaming

Technology advancement comes first with 24% of responses. Half of the respondents speak of technology in general. The other half gives specific comments. Over 40% of the respondents by technology trend mean the necessity to constantly offer something new to the boosting gaming market: new game features, new gamification forms, new game mechanics, technology innovations, etc. About 10% mentioned the importance of UX improvement.

Marketing takes the 2nd place losing to the leader just a couple of percent. Most respondents prefer speaking of marketing in general terms and only a few mentioned the importance of building brand awareness, participating in events, and creating engaging content.

The rest of the list goes in the following order:

Regulation (16%)

Payment-related issues with crypto included (13%)

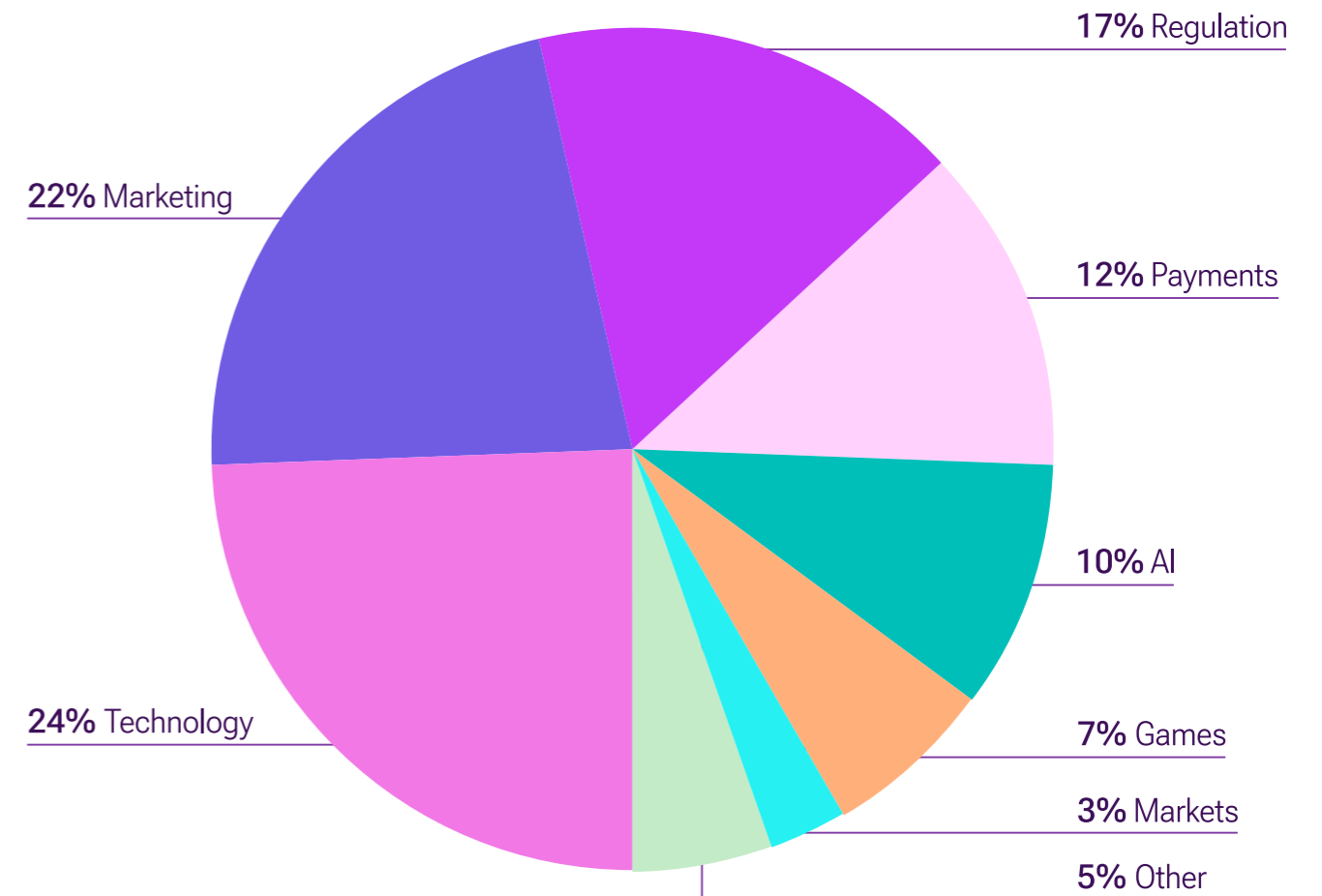
AI (10%)

Popularisation of different games (7%)

Different market-related issues (3%)

Various other (5%)

General Trends



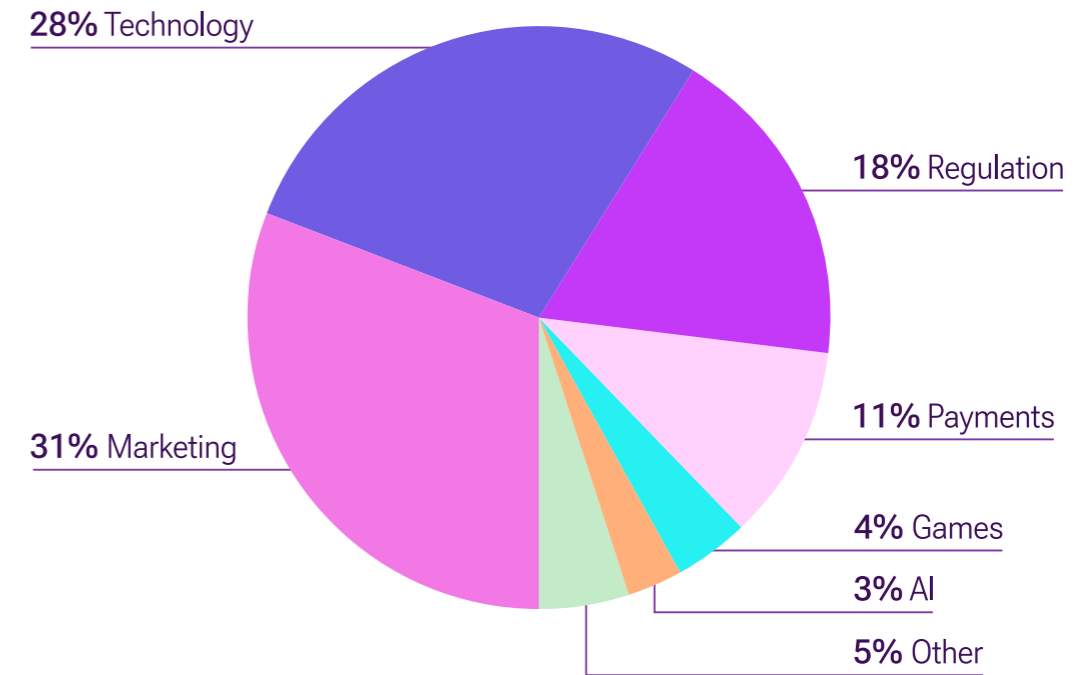
Europe and Asia: different perspectives

If we compare the responses in two different locations — Europe and Asia — we'll notice, that Asian companies look at **technology development** more seriously, giving it 28% of the votes, while in Europe the technology trend has only 21%.

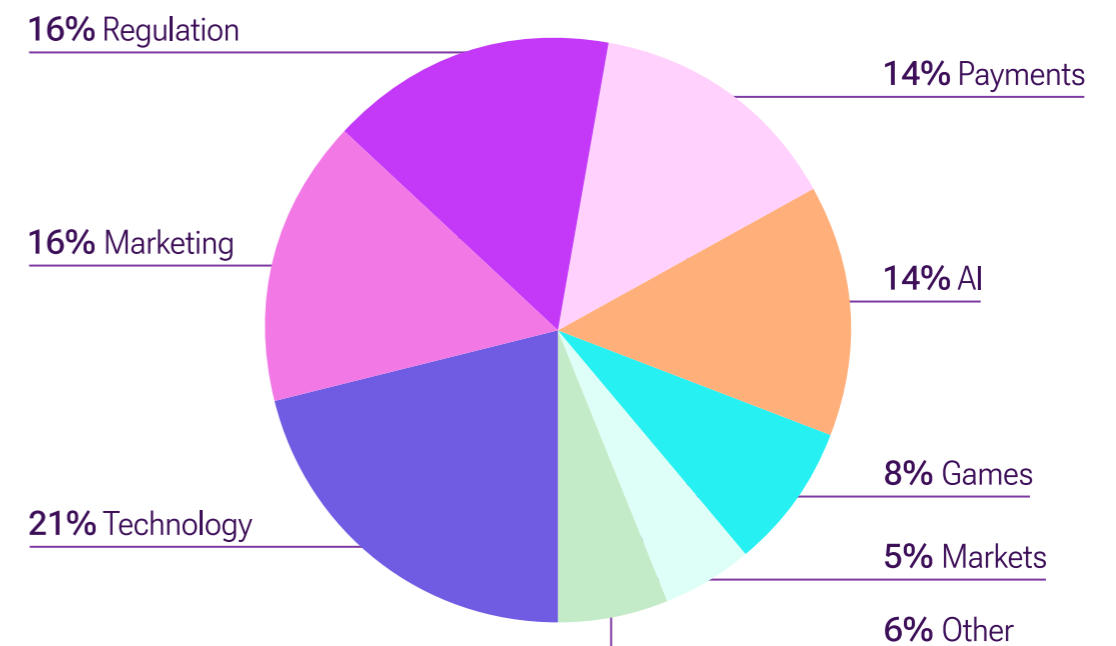
Almost the same story is with **marketing**. While in Asia marketing is the leader among general trends and takes 31% of the responses, Europe seems to be a little tired of marketing giving it just a 16% share. Presently Europe is more interested in **AI implementation**, closely watching the games becoming popular in different geos, and expanding their businesses to other locations.

The difference between the two is explainable. Asian companies have a potential right there, where they are located. European companies also comprehend the potential of the Asian market and are trying to grab a piece of the pie. That's why local companies need to stay constantly alert, especially when speaking of technology.

Asia General Trends



Europe General Trends



Global trends mirrored in the iGaming industry

Speeding up

The typical attention span of an adult internet user is 8.25 seconds. In the current online landscape individuals often struggle to keep focus for extended durations. Crash Games are fast-paced games, their popularity reflects the worldwide trend of speeding up things. However, all respondents identifying Crash Games as a trend exclusively in the European iGaming expos.

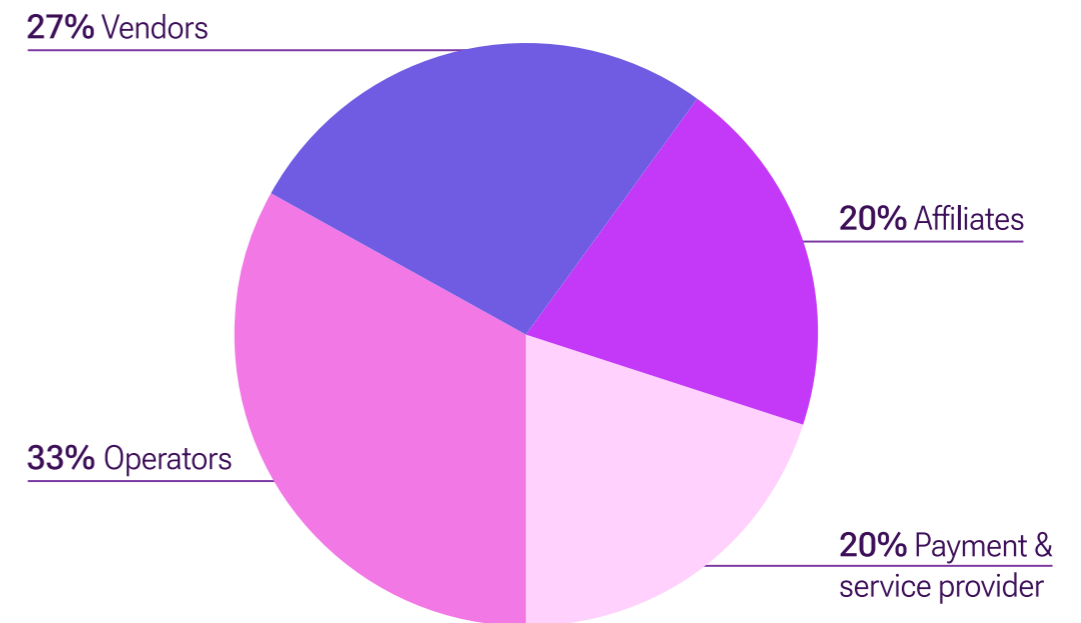
Artificial Intelligence

The current valuation of the global AI market exceeds \$136 billion, with projections indicating a 13-fold increase in industry value over the next seven years. Predominantly, iGaming marketers demonstrate a deep interest in AI, whereas respondents from the CEO and Technology spheres exhibit comparatively less enthusiasm. The data indicates a pronounced tendency towards AI adoption in Europe with 87%, with a visible contrast in enthusiasm when compared to the level of interest observed in Asia with 13%.

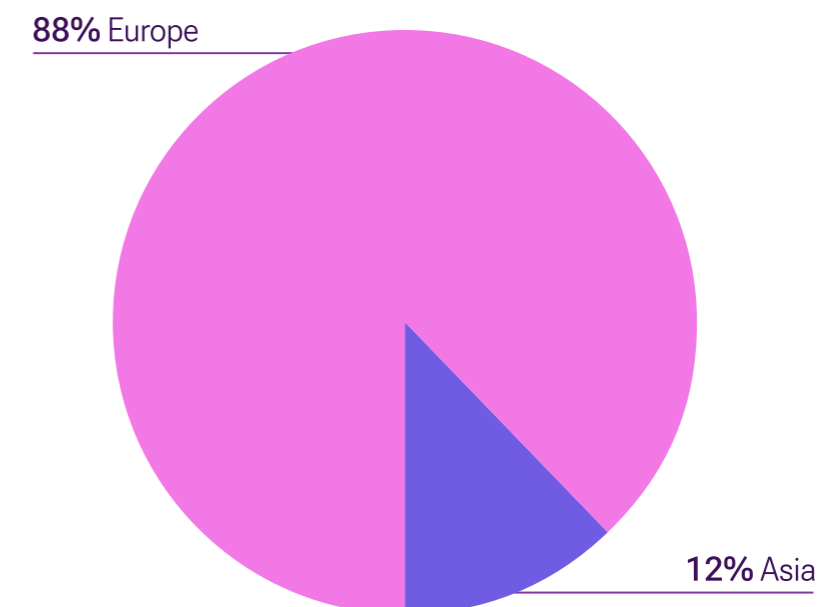
Online Video Streaming

The global video streaming market has seen remarkable growth, reaching an estimated \$154 billion in over-the-top (OTT) video revenue in 2022 fueled by widespread internet adoption, mobile device accessibility, and the surge in online video content popularity. Nevertheless, the data from iGaming respondents indicates a lesser alignment with this trend. Streaming is cited a trend by 5% of iGaming respondents in both Europe and Asia with the majority of respondents from the European iGaming sector.

AI by Verticals



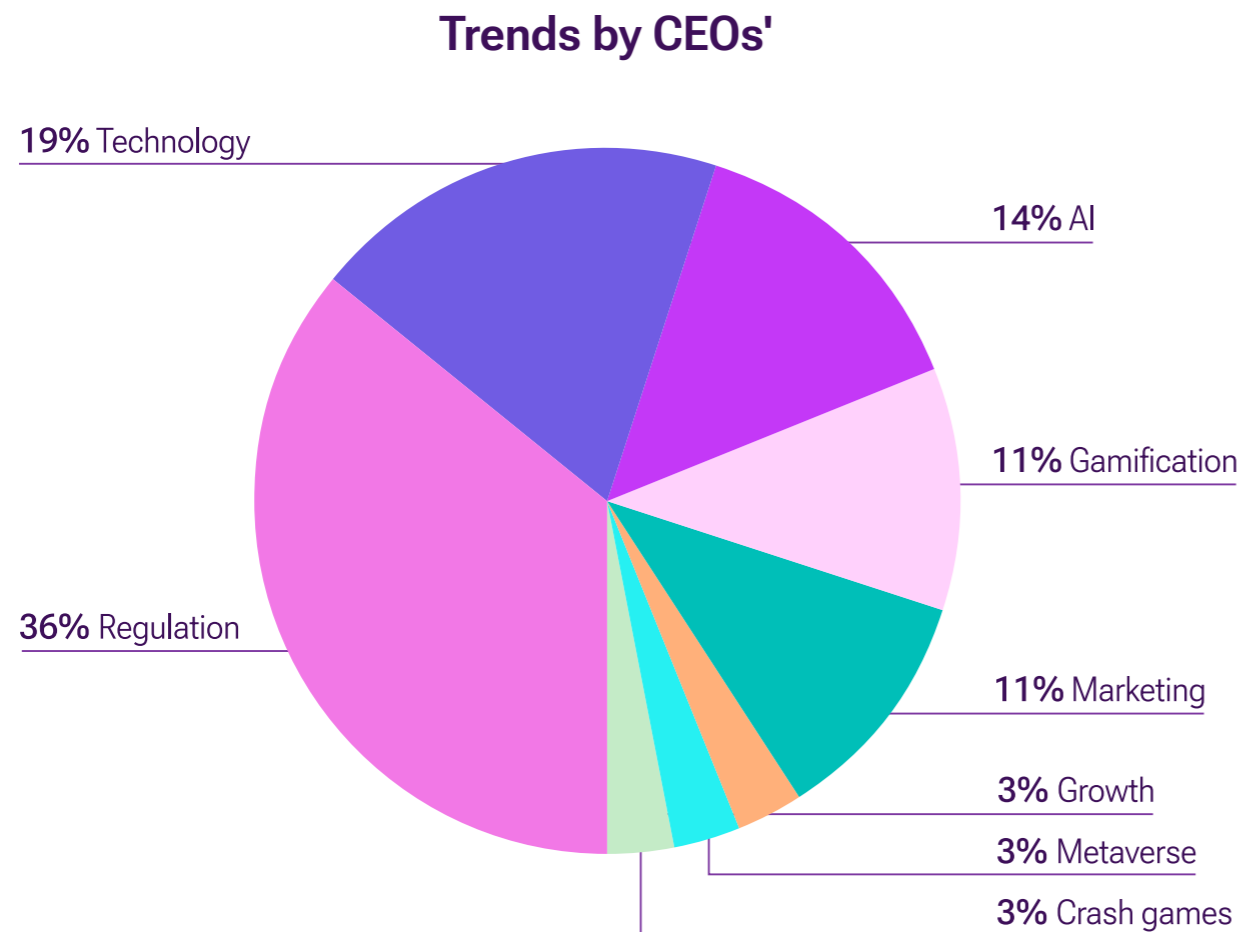
AI by Regions



Global trends mirrored in the iGaming industry

Gamification

In 2022, the global gamification market, valued at \$10 billion, is projected to exceed \$116 billion by 2032, experiencing a 28% CAGR (Compound annual growth rate) during the forecast period. A survey of iGaming respondents highlighted that 7% recognised the significance of gamification, exclusively reported by respondents based in Europe or active in European markets. Notably, no mention of this trend was observed among respondents from the Asian iGaming sector. CEOs seem to see much more perspective in gamification giving it 11% of votes.



Bloggers and Influencers

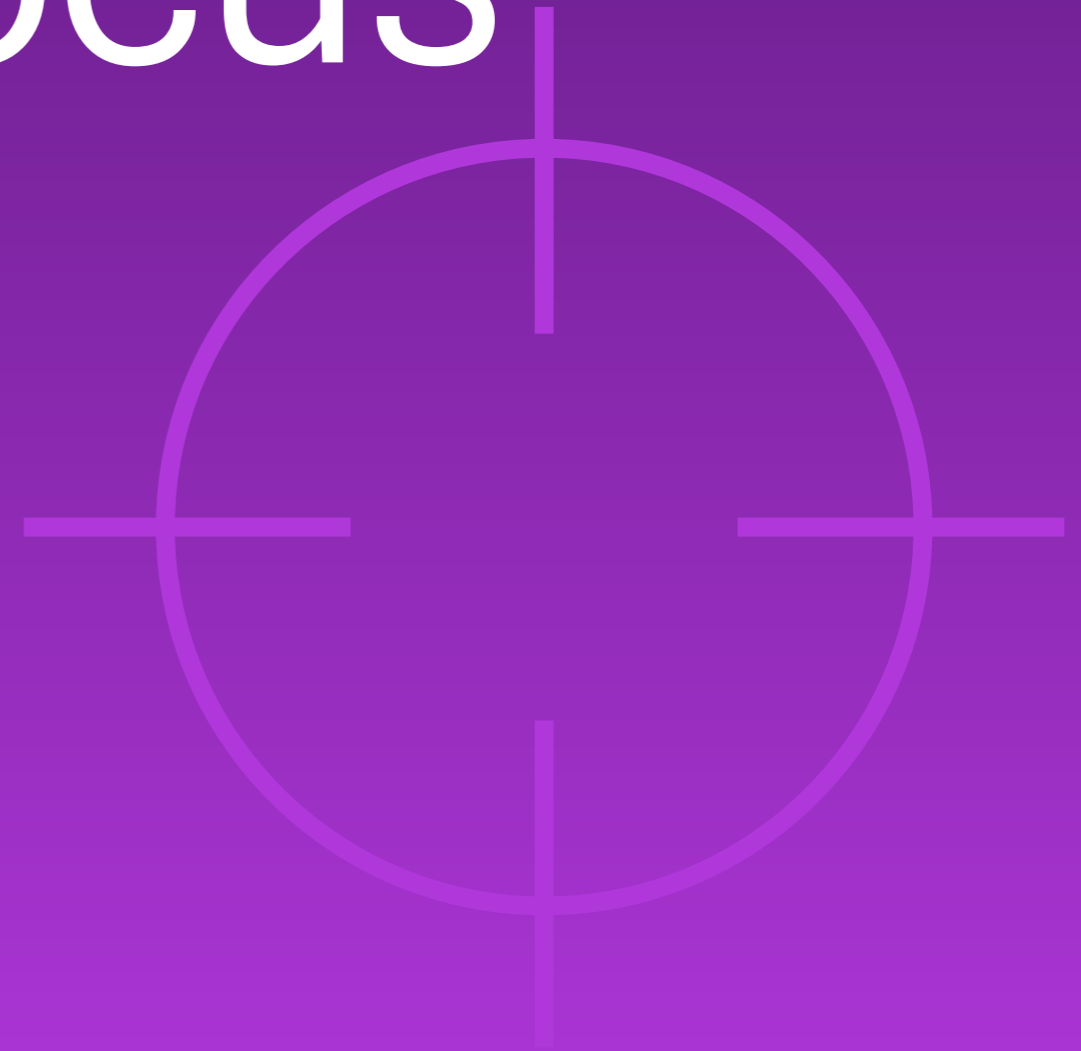
The global market size for influencer marketing has doubled since 2019, reaching a record estimate of \$21.1 billion in 2023. It is predicted that the global influencer marketing will reach \$85 billion by 2028. Only 4% of iGaming respondents identified advertising and SMM as a trend, which included bloggers serving as brand ambassadors.

While bloggers and influencers aren't seen as a trend in iGaming, respondents acknowledge the importance of social media as a key promotional channel (Most important marketing channels section). This apparent contradiction may stem from the industry's early and active adoption of social networks due to restrictions on traditional advertising channels, especially by operators and affiliates. For many, using social media is now a standard tool with established practices.

Conclusion

How much does global consumer behaviour influence the gaming industry, and is gaming keeping pace with major consumer trends? Trends like faster-paced gaming experiences and the adoption of AI are notable, with distinct regional preferences. While influencer marketing, gamification, and online video streaming have surged globally, the iGaming sector shows from moderate to low recognition.

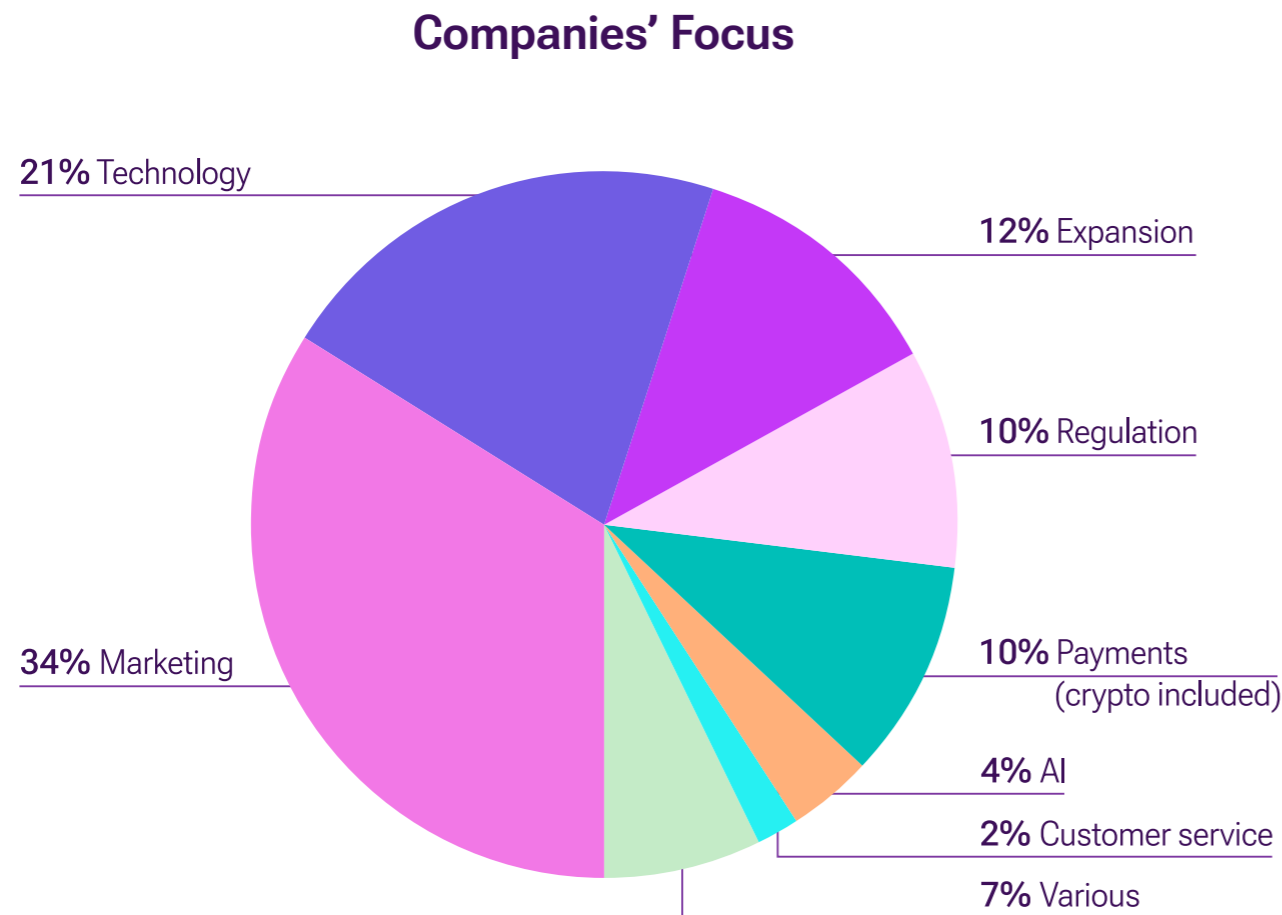
Main Trends in the Interviewed Companies' Focus



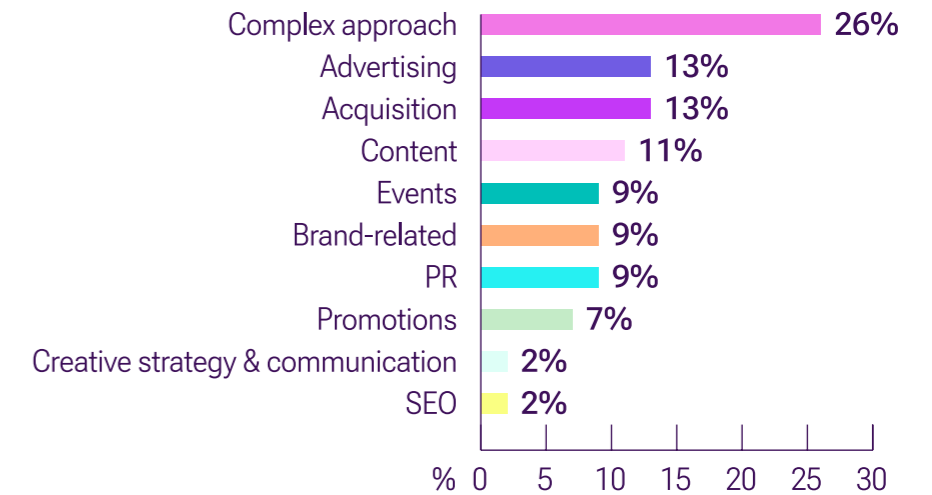
Main trends in the interviewed companies' focus

Surprisingly enough, technology goes to the sideline when dealing with the priorities of the respondents' own companies. **Marketing** takes the leading position with 34% of answers.

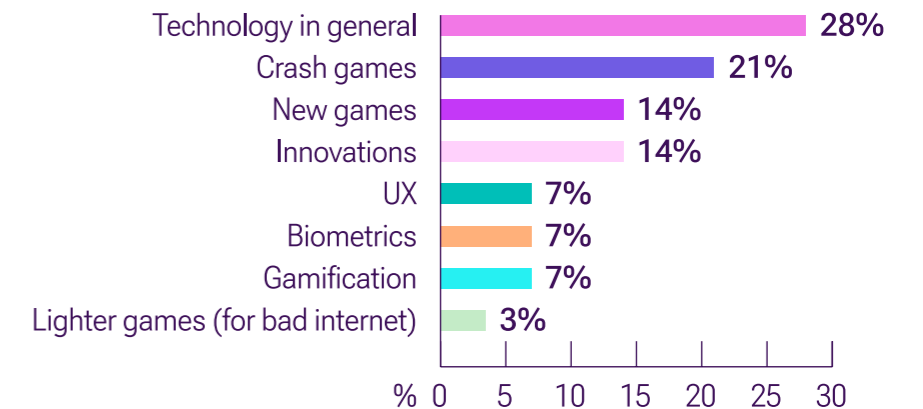
Another surprise comes with an answer about the **expansion**, taking the 3rd position after **technology**. While not seeing the expansion to other markets as a global trend, that's exactly what companies are presently struggling for. Marketing serves as an instrument while chasing the goal.



If we dive deeper into the marketing answers we'll find the following tools mentioned:



Speaking about technology, the respondents give more details of what plays a role in technology issues:



Emphasising the development of lighter games looks like a breath of fresh air. Those who provided this response are predominantly from the Asian region, where challenges with internet quality persist in countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Nepal.

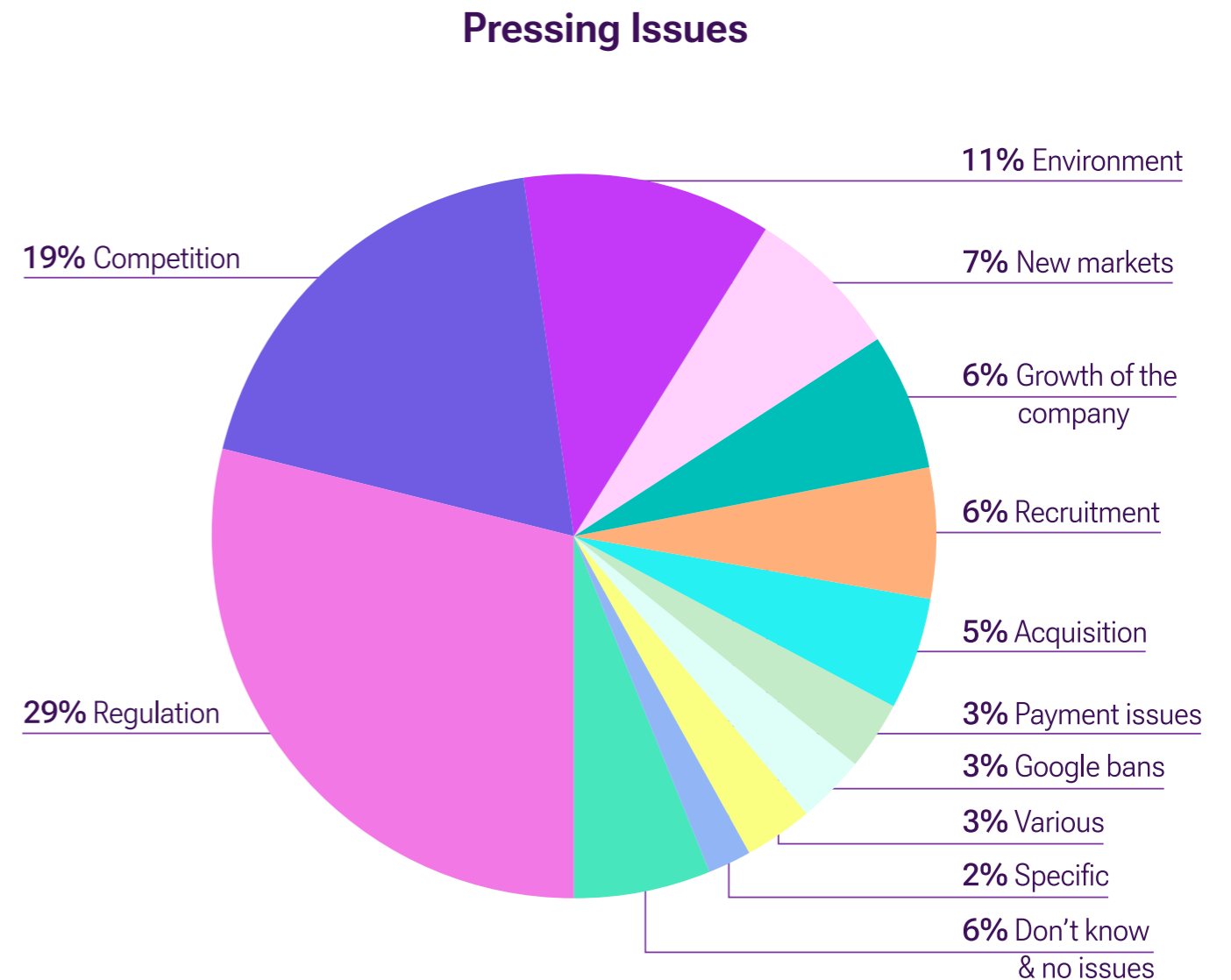
There is a significant difference in the focus of companies between B2B (vendors, service providers) and B2C (operators, affiliates) sectors. **Regulation** is a top concern for both, but the emphasis varies — 33% for B2C and 13% for B2B. For instance, **brand awareness** is crucial for B2B, while B2C companies don't mention it. **Competition** and **growth** are equally important, but B2B companies are particularly interested in entering new markets. **Recruitment** is a concern for nearly the same percentage of both B2C companies (8%) and B2B companies (11%).

Most Pressing Issues for the Respondents



Most pressing issues for the respondents

1 No wonder the biggest problem mentioned is **regulation** — with 29% of companies agreeing. Why regulation comes first is because it sets legal standards, compliance requirements, and guidelines that significantly influence their operations and market viability in the regulated gaming industry. In less regulated markets, lack of clarity poses a significant challenge, as ambiguous or absent regulations can lead to uncertainties in compliance, legal frameworks, and market entry strategies.



Hottest regulation issues in 2023



Brazil

Watching regulatory movements in Brazil during the last two years reminded watching a catching and constantly changing soccer match in the highest league: promises to legalise betting and then endless delays, promises to include iGaming, then scratching it out of the Bill, and a few days later returning it. Hopefully, with the last [update](#) that Brazil's chamber of deputies on the 21st of December finally voted to approve online gambling with iGaming included, the president will give the Bill 3626/2023 final approval.



India

India's Goods and Service Tax Council has imposed a [28% tax on online gaming](#), horseracing, and casinos, applying to the full value of bets or chips without distinguishing between skill and chance-based games. Critics, including Ankur Gupta of SW India, feared legal challenges and negative consequences for the gaming industry. Roland Landers, CEO of The All India Gaming Federation, deemed the decision unconstitutional and warned of job losses, benefiting offshore platforms. The imposed 28% tax on online gaming in India has already resulted in adverse consequences for iGaming operators.



Germany

A study commissioned by the German Online Casino Association (DOCV) and the German Sports Betting Association (DSWV) reveals that nearly half of Germany's online gambling still occurs with [unlicensed operators](#). The report criticises the State Treaty on Gambling, implemented in July 2021, for failing to ensure that online gaming takes place on licensed sites. The study estimates that 75% of online revenue comes from the black market. The DOCV and DSWV are calling for urgent measures, including a regulatory review, increased collaboration, improved taxation, and more flexible regulations to enhance the competitiveness of licensed operators.



United Kingdom

The Gambling Commission is actively focused on implementing the recommendations outlined in the recent Gambling Act Review White Paper. This White Paper [sets out](#) the government's plan for reform of gambling regulation following the review of the Gambling Act 2005. The UK Gambling Commission (UKGC) has initiated the second round of consultations to gather feedback on proposals outlined in the Gambling Review's White Paper. The 12-week consultation, running until February 21, 2024, [seeks input](#) from various stakeholders, including consumers and gambling businesses, on topics such as socially responsible incentives, customer-led tools, transparency of customer funds protection, removal of obsolete Commission requirements, and harmonising the frequency of regulatory data reporting across operators.



Curaçao

Curaçao's gambling landscape underwent a [major shift](#) on September 1, 2023, with the government implementing stricter licensing rules to address concerns about unfair practices. The new regulations by the Curaçao Gaming Authority prohibit licence sharing, introduce strict criteria for financial stability, and prioritise transparency and responsible gaming. Curaçao's reforms impact both current and prospective operators. While the reforms signify a move towards a more regulated and secure gambling environment, the success of these changes depends on how well industry stakeholders implement them.

Most pressing issues for the respondents

2 The second issue is **competition** — 19%. Here the respondents mention many newcomers entering the market, lots of new games appearing each year, unfair competition, and competition for staff.

3 The 3rd place with 11 % of the answers goes to **environmental issues**. Among them are such concerns as fraud, gaps in communication with technology providers, bad internet connection in some regions, political issues, and uncertainty resulting in the impossibility of making forecasts.

4 The next big issue seems to be **expansion to new markets** — 7%. Adaptation to the peculiarities of unfamiliar markets becomes crucial in companies' strategies.

5 The two more problems gained an equal percentage of votes — 6. They are the **questions of recruitment** and **companies' fast growth**. These two are tightly connected. The interviewees stress that the fast growth of their companies takes place right when the iGaming market is also expanding with more and more newcomers entering the scene. The growth that seems positive outside the company has negative effects inside it. The companies face serious issues opening new offices and hiring qualified staff (IT, content creators, etc.).

CEOs' challenges

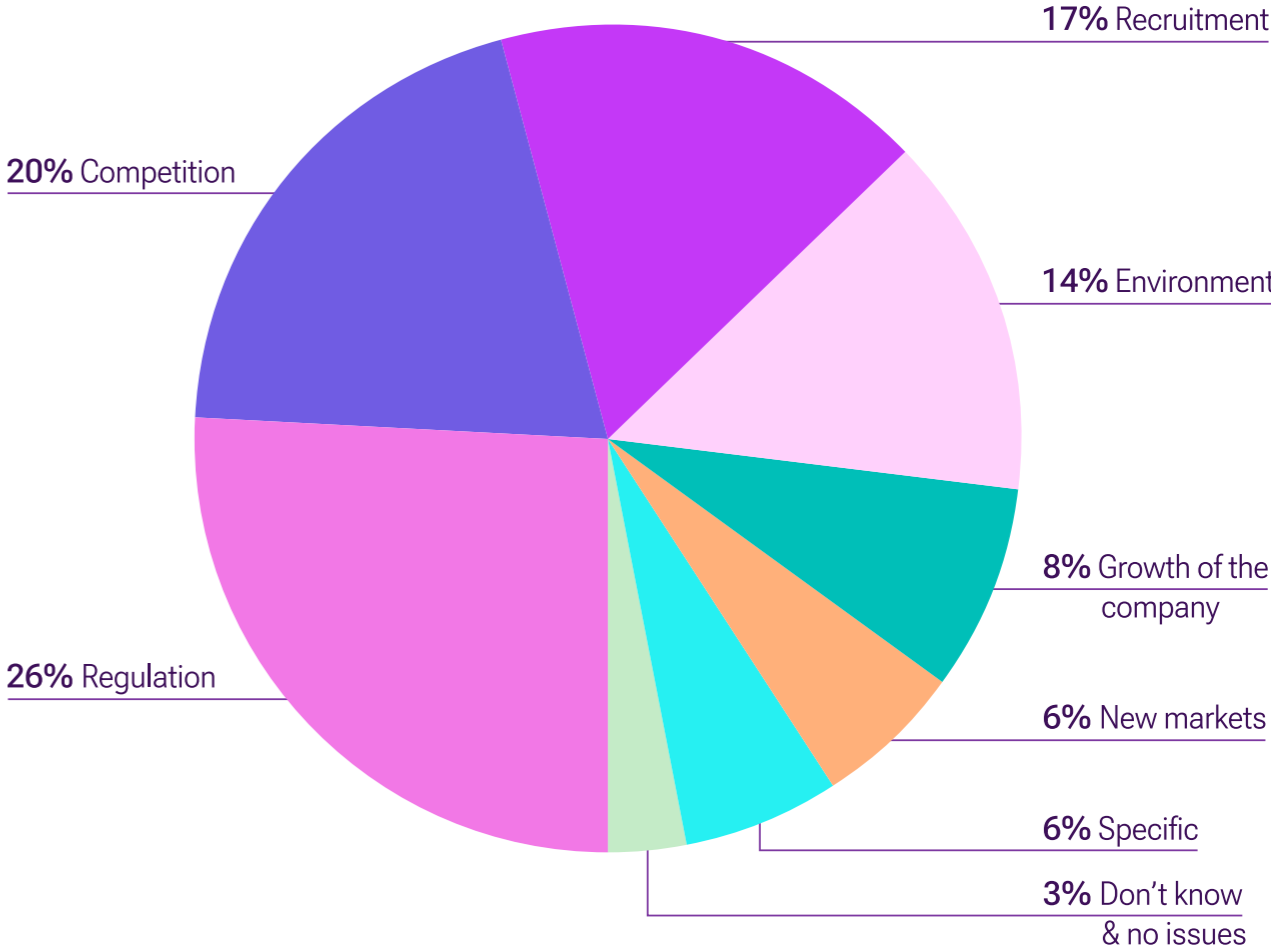
Let's see how the picture changes if we take the CEOs and founders only.

The first two concerns of this new group — **regulation** and **competition** — remain the same.

However, the third issue changes dramatically. **Recruitment** with 17% of votes appears to be a serious problem for the companies' leaders. The concern is three times bigger than among the whole interviewed audience. We seem to have entered an era when marketing for hiring new staff means as much as marketing for finding new clients. Even the **environmental concerns** bring less pain, though rising to 14%.

The issues that miss the leaders' focus are payments, Google bans, acquisition, and other topics.

Pressing Issues for CEOs



Operators and vendors: the same problems?

While operators mostly complain about **regulation**, with 35% audience seeing it as the main enemy, vendors seem to be trudging the ocean full of threatening sharks — almost 27% mentioned **competition and growing competition**.

The rising regulatory pressure is prompting operators to withdraw from regulated markets (such as the UK), explore growth opportunities in alternative markets, and cut costs by discontinuing less lucrative products. These strategic manoeuvres are being adopted by all operators primarily engaged in business within Western Europe.

Moreover, regulatory challenges are pushing a substantial segment of the gambling industry into the shadow economy. Germany serves as a notable example, and in India, there is an expected rise in “black” operators in verticals like rummy, poker, and fantasy sports.

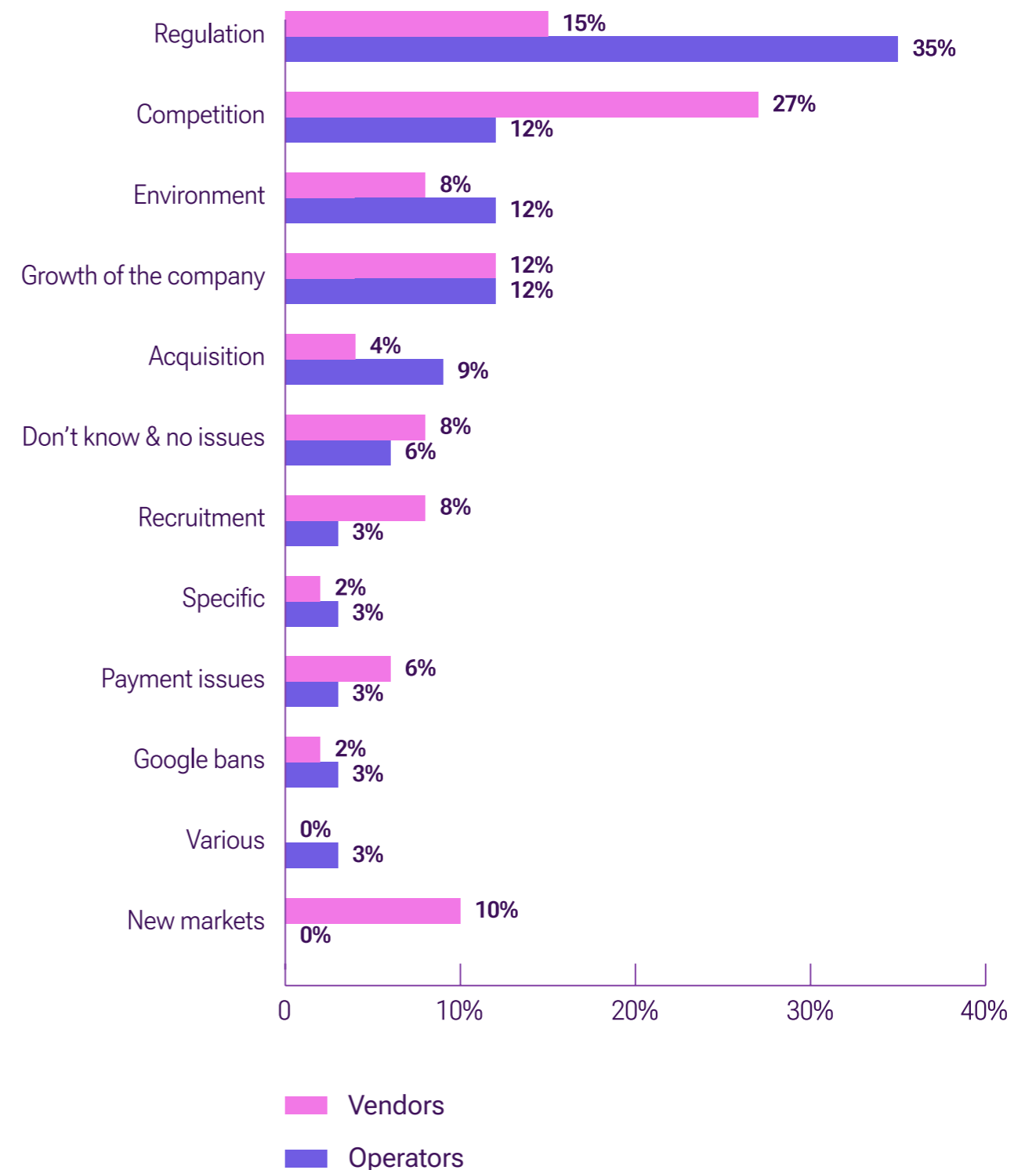
If we look at the next thing that concerns operators, we’ll notice that they have chosen three issues giving 12% of their votes to each. The issues are **competition**, the **environment**, and the **growth of the company**.

After competition, the second concern of vendors is **regulation** with a 15% share of votes.

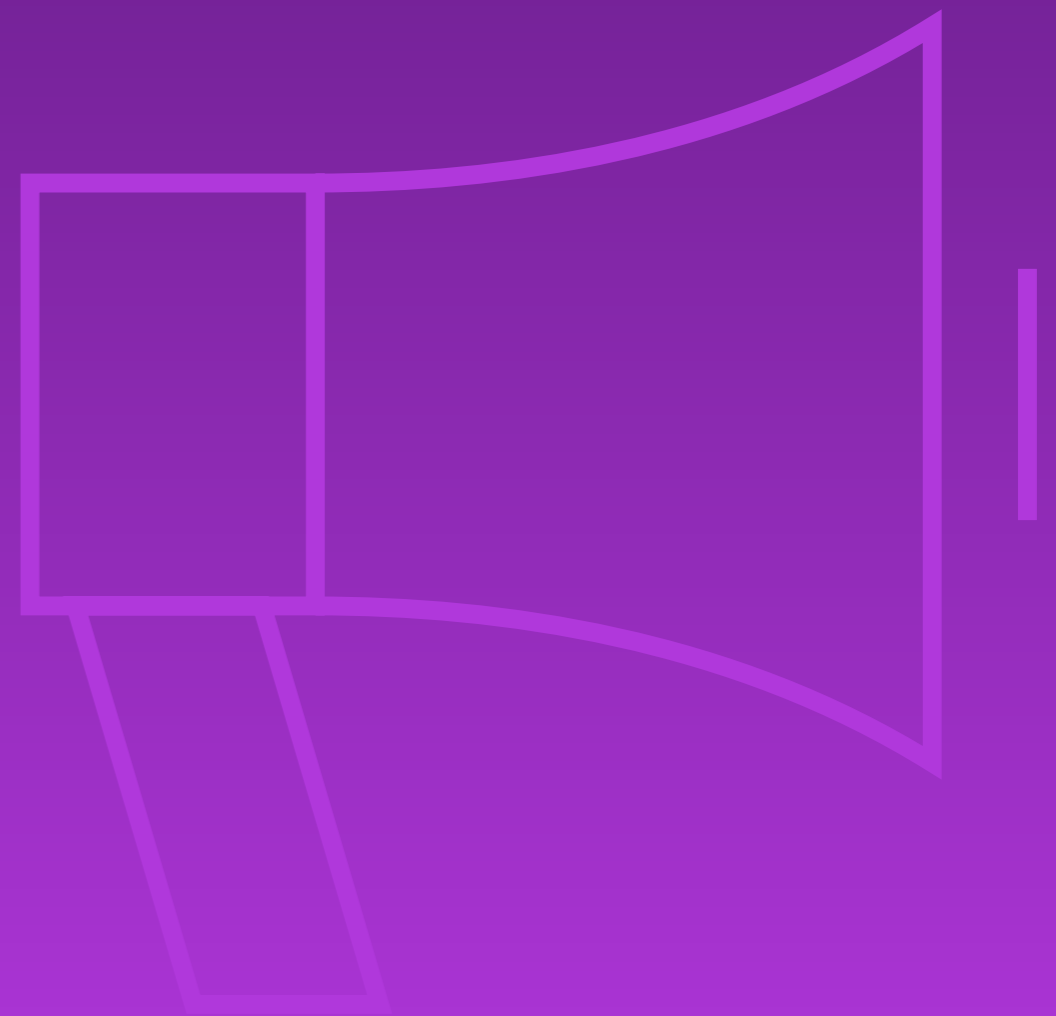
Besides regulation vendors also struggle with **fast growth of their companies** (12%) and **expanding to new markets** (10%). The following **recruitment issue** (8%) seems to enter the stage logically — with tense competition and ambitious goals to grow on new territories more qualified personnel is required.

It’s interesting how the two audiences describe the pressing environment. While both groups speak of uncertainty and the impossibility of making forecasts, vendors complain about operators mentioning cheating, and not making payments on time, in turn, operators speak of the unstable work of technology providers. A gap in communication between the two iGaming segments is evident.

Pressing Issues Vendors/Operators



Most Important Marketing Channels

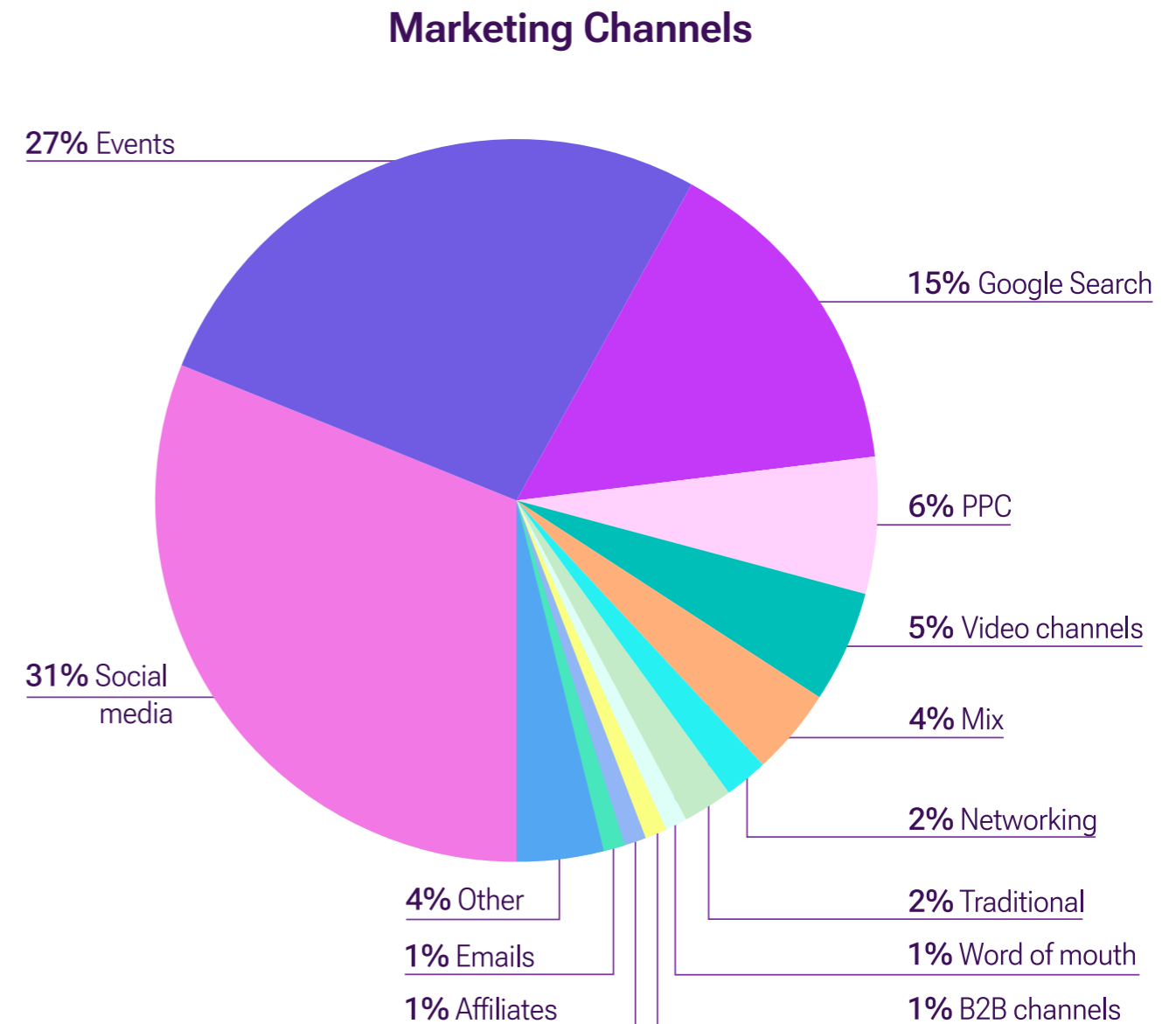


Most important marketing channels

While we sincerely expected Events to be mentioned as the most valuable marketing channel since we took our interviews at the events, we were surprised that the leader with 31 % of the votes became the **Social media channel**. **Events** came second with a 27% share. **SEO** or **Google search** closed the top three with 15% of responses.

Obviously, in the current regulation restriction, SMM remains one of the most accessible channels to build brand awareness. Strangely enough, the PR channel was mentioned so few times that we placed it in the category Other.

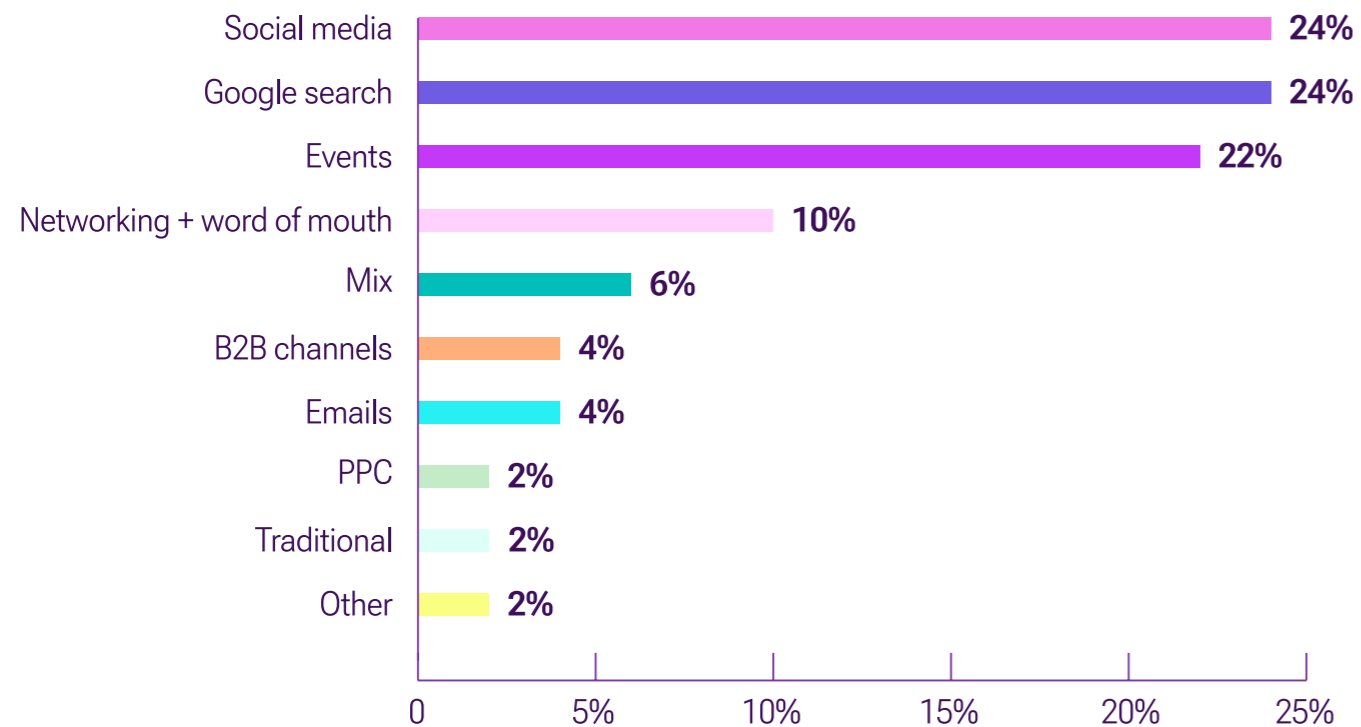
However, the answer to this paradox lies on the surface. iGaming companies often prefer social media over traditional PR channels due to its targeted reach, real-time communication, cost-effectiveness, more detailed data analytics, potential for content virality, community building, adaptability to trends, global reach, and visual appeal. SMM allows for precise audience targeting, quick communication, cost efficiency, live analytics, and the ability to adapt to trends, making it a favoured strategy in the dynamic and global iGaming industry.



What CEOs think about marketing

The flagmen spread their attention on the same channels but almost equally: **Social media** (24%), **Google Search** (24%), and **Events** (22%). The next channel they consider valuable is **Networking** together with the **Word of mouth** (10%). That answer means the leaders understand their own responsibility in building brand awareness. Gaming is one of the industries where personal contacts play a priceless role. Moreover, a strong personal brand of an iGaming CEO can instil trust, credibility, and industry expertise, attracting and influencing potential customers.

CEOs' Vision

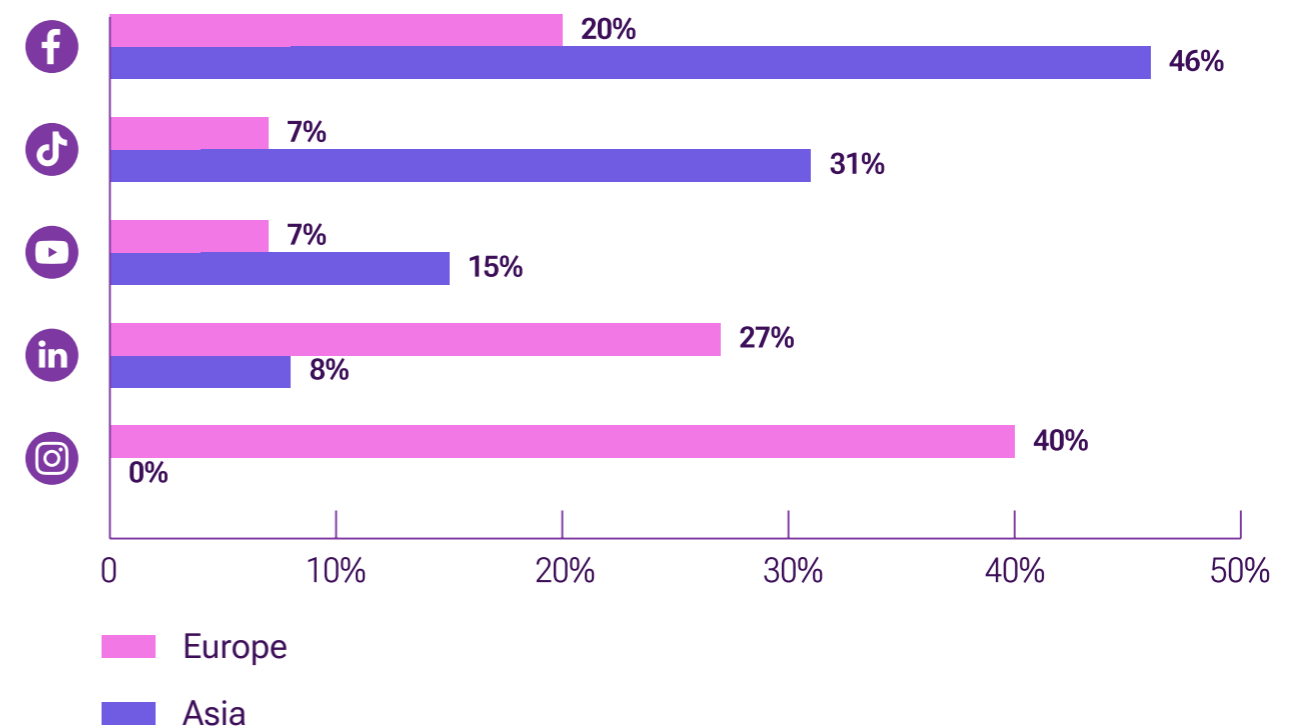


Europe & Asia — watch the differences

Often companies spreading their networks worldwide treat their social media channels equally, which seems to be wrong. According to our research Asian and European companies have different visions for SMM.

Asian companies prefer using Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. What ties together Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube is the commonality of featuring short-format videos in their content offerings. While European companies mention Instagram, and LinkedIn, and only in the third place is Facebook.

Europe vs. Asia: Channel Comparison



Acquisition or Retention?



Acquisition or retention?

Both positions gathered an almost equal number of votes with a slight difference — 38% favoured Acquisition and 34% favoured Retention. However, even those who chose one option acknowledged the importance of the opposite focus for their companies.

14% of the audience refused to choose only one option arguing that both focuses are necessary for their businesses. The rest 14% found it hard to choose between the two.

On our question 'why' a specific focus was preferable, the respondents mentioned the following aspects:

Acquisition

- Important due to expansion;
- Because of growing competition;
- For the current moment;
- Without acquiring, no operator will survive.

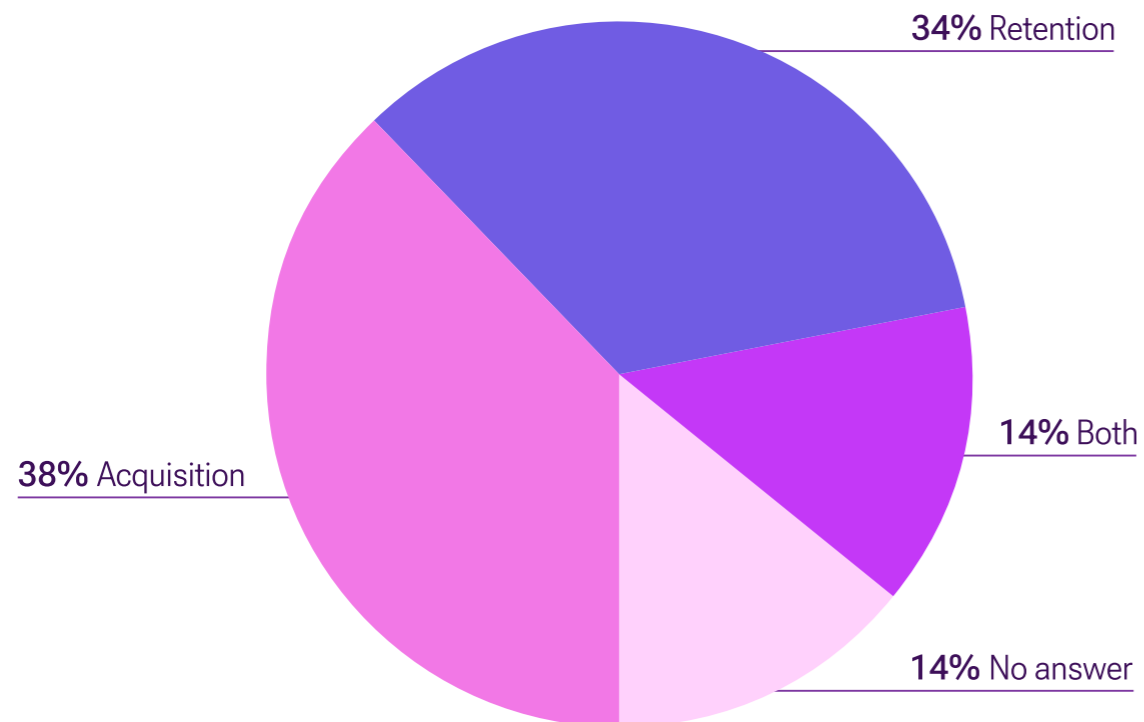
Retention

- Means good service to a client;
- About building relationships;
- Impossible to grow with ongoing customer churn;
- Loyal players bring in their friends;
- Requires less time.

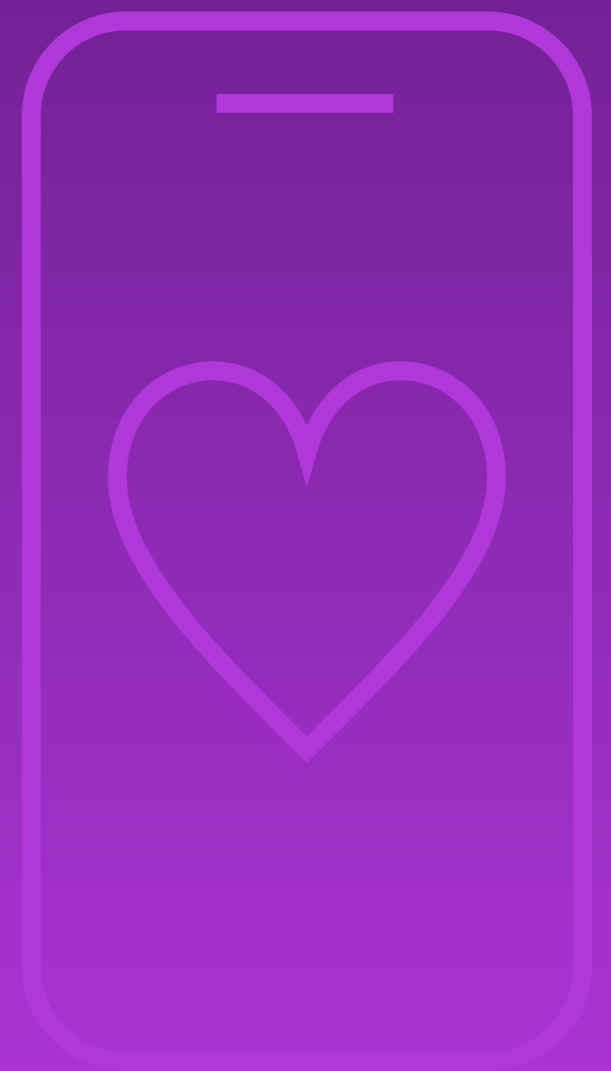
In other words, both acquisition and retention play a crucial role in the path to success.

The financial focus of enterprises often leans towards acquisition, with comparatively fewer investments in retention. The loyalty of existing customers also plays a role in indirect acquisition, as they bring in friends and recommend a product or service within their network.

Acquisition or Retention?



Personal Preferences in Online Entertainment Consumption



Personal preferences in online entertainment consumption

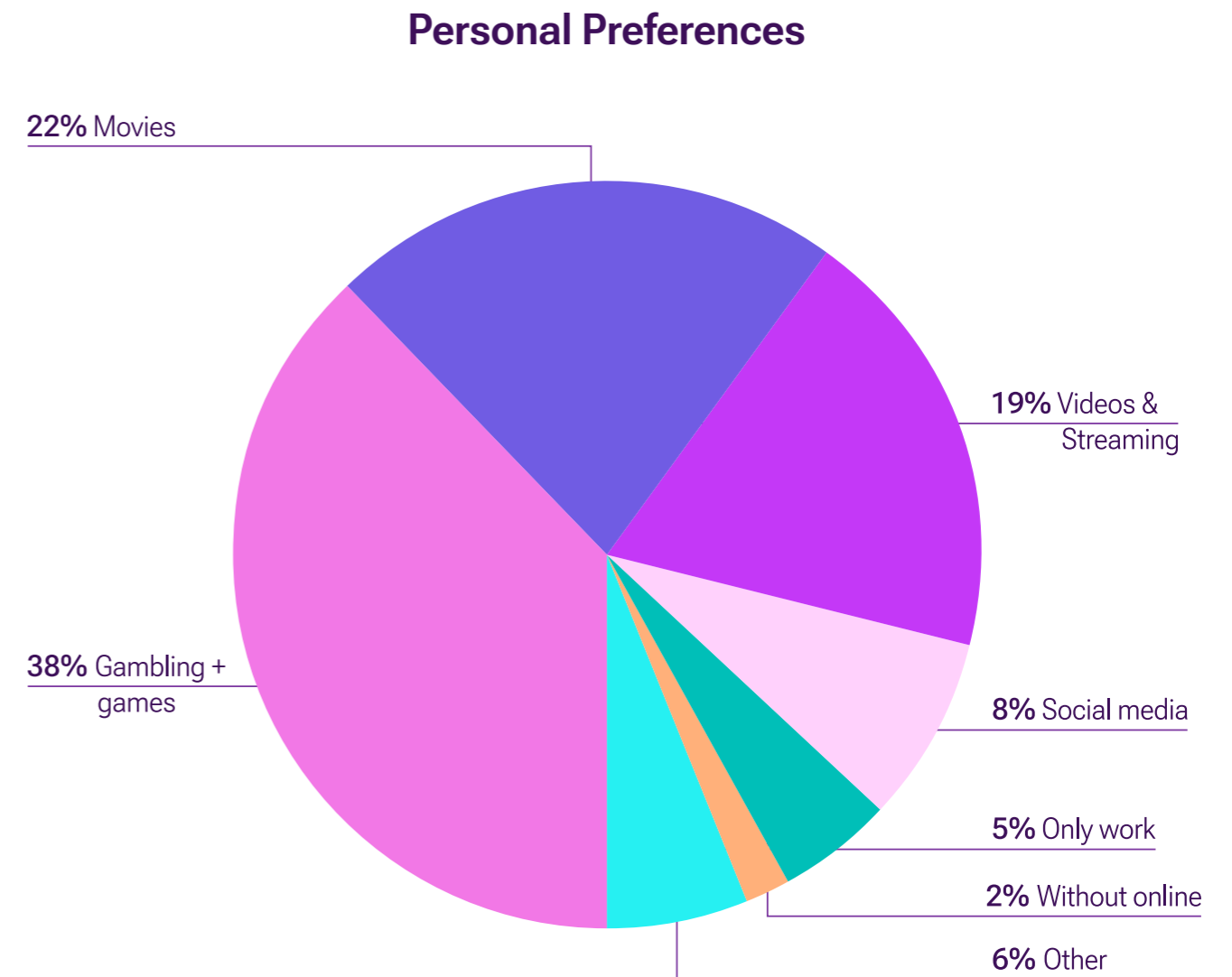
It was interesting to discover whether the iGaming industry participants like gambling and playing games. Surprisingly enough, 26% of respondents confirmed their passion for **gambling**. Poker, slots, casino games, and betting are mentioned almost in equal proportions. Together with 12% of video and other game lovers, **online gaming** is favoured by about 38% of the audience. It looks like the industry is built by those who understand the gaming essence from the inside.

The second place goes to **online movies** — 22%. Netflix is mentioned in more than half of the cases.

The third place is won by **videos & streaming** — 19%. The answers were divided almost in half: half of the respondents mentioned watching videos mainly on YouTube, while the other half spoke of streaming services without specifying particular platforms.

8% of the audience voted for **social networks**.

5% of the professionals admitted having **no time for entertainment online** and leveraging the Internet only for work purposes.



Europeans and Asians: do they like the same?

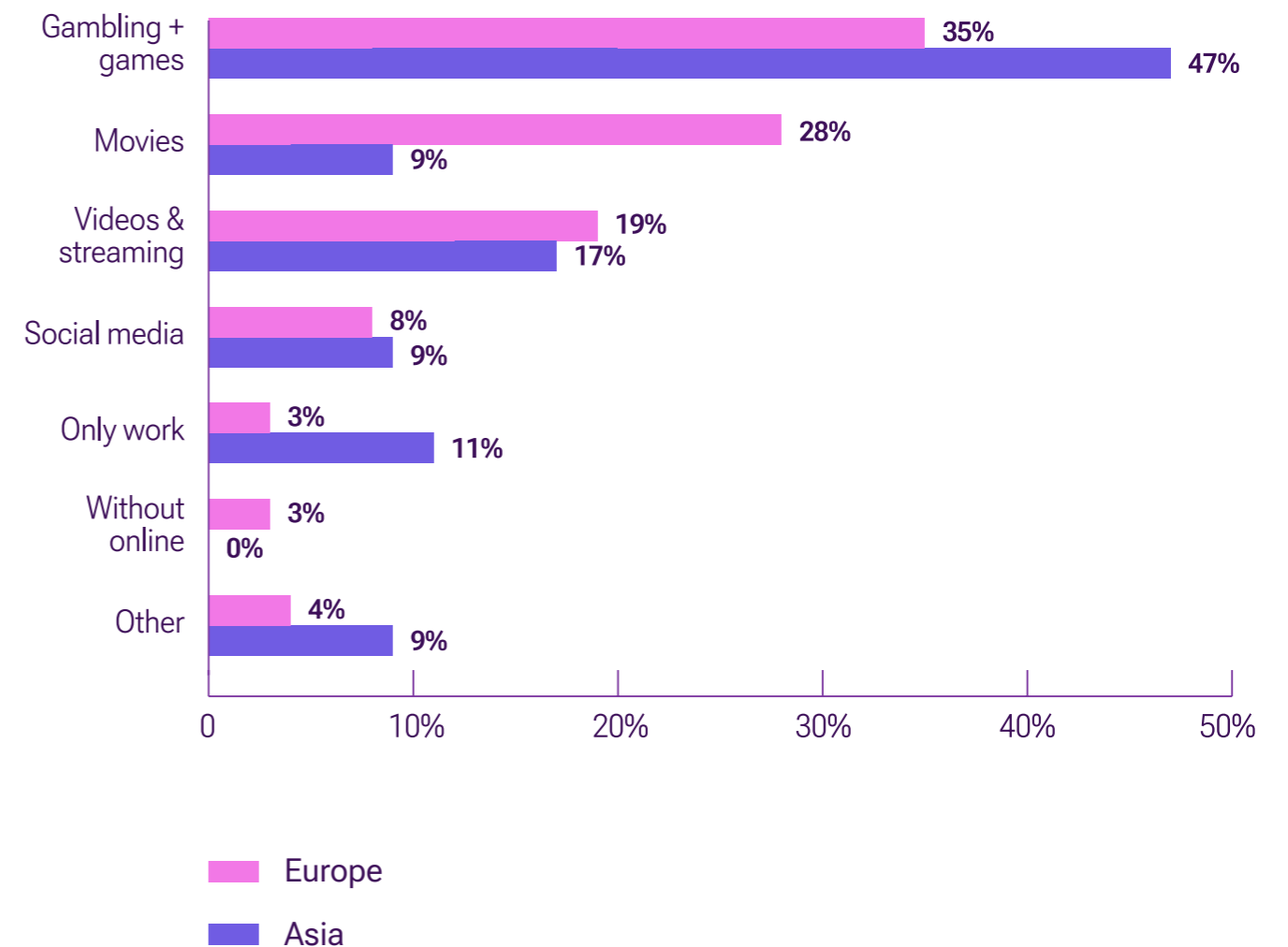
It turns out that in Asia iGaming professionals are more into **gambling and gaming** — 47% of the respondents have chosen this option. In Europe, the percentage is significantly lower — only 35%. However, both audiences have more passion for gambling rather than just for some **online video games**. In each of the two groups, the share of online gambling responses amounts to two-thirds.

Europeans give 28% of the votes to watching **online movies**, while Asians seem not to be interested much in this type of entertainment. The share of their responses is only 9%.

Videos & streaming are popular in both regions: Europe — 19%, Asia — 17%.

What is also compelling: about 11% of Asian respondents state having **no time for entertainment online**, while the same answer gathers fewer votes in Europe — just 3%.

Comparison — Europe vs. Asia



Summary









Summary

After considering all the issues, it is possible to make a summary of specific trends in the industry.



SMM

Strict regulations limit traditional advertising for gambling activities. SMM becomes a crucial tool for brand awareness. Companies focus on community-building through engaging content, interaction, and partnerships with influencers. Nearly half of the surveyed individuals who identified the SMM trend emphasised the importance of promoting their brand through CEO. Therefore, they personify the brand and construct all their SMM promotion efforts around it. SMM remains a vital strategy for navigating advertising limitations and connecting with the gaming community.



Fast Growth

The trend reflects active market expansion with companies venturing into new countries. Challenges arise in opening offices, hiring local staff, and building relationships. Product localisation becomes important. Internally, companies navigate complexities in processes to align with the evolving demands of a rapidly expanding industry.



AI

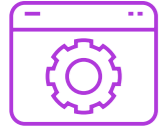
AI emerges as a prominent trend in iGaming, particularly emphasised in Europe. Does it mean that the companies there drive progress? CEOs rank AI third among all trends, signifying its strategic importance (14%). The integration of artificial intelligence in iGaming operations enhances efficiency, personalisation, and user experience.



Crash Games

In iGaming, the trend of Crash Games among the European respondents mirrors the global shift towards faster, more dynamic experiences. These games cater to shorter attention spans, providing players with instant excitement and gratification, aligning with the broader trend of accelerating entertainment.

Summary



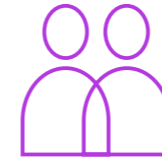
Technology

Technology encompasses innovations such as the integration of new features, mechanics, improved user experience (UX), content enrichment, game weight reduction, and solutions to challenges like poor internet connectivity in regions like Africa or certain parts of Asia. Additionally, a significant trend involves the incorporation of gamification elements especially in Asia.



Regulation

Regulation is a paramount concern in iGaming, with 31% of companies citing it as the most significant challenge. It sets legal standards, compliance requirements, and guidelines that profoundly impact operations. In less regulated markets, ambiguity poses challenges, leading to uncertainties. Notable regulation issues in 2023 include approaching the final stage of approval in the Brazilian iGaming market, India imposing a 28% tax on online gaming, concerns about unlicensed operators dominating nearly half of Germany's online gambling, changes initiated by the UKGC, and a shift in Curaçao's gambling landscape.



Recruiting

Recruiting is a notable trend in iGaming, focusing on attracting talent globally. How to attract employees on a different continent? An emerging approach involves leveraging HR marketing strategies to showcase workplace culture, career opportunities, and unique perks.



Crypto & Payments

Despite the slightly declining interest in payment methods, including cryptocurrencies, the topic continues to hold significance within iGaming. As regulatory measures intensify, companies within the industry are actively exploring additional business opportunities.

2024: What to Expect?



2024: what to expect?

When 11% of the audience **refused to predict** anything in the fast-paced iGaming environment, it wasn't striking. A complete surprise was to discover the number two prediction for 2024 — **Metaverse & VR** gathered 19% of the votes.

Respondents see prospects in VR & XR, precisely because of this, they associate the growing popularity of the Metaverse. However, some experts argue that discussing the Metaverse at this point is open to debate. Notably, at European iGaming exhibitions, startups have emerged, presenting integration solutions for poker and casino experiences through virtual reality tools.

AI remains a significant and impactful component. However, opinions on AI's future development vary, with 18% predicting growth and 3% anticipating a decline.

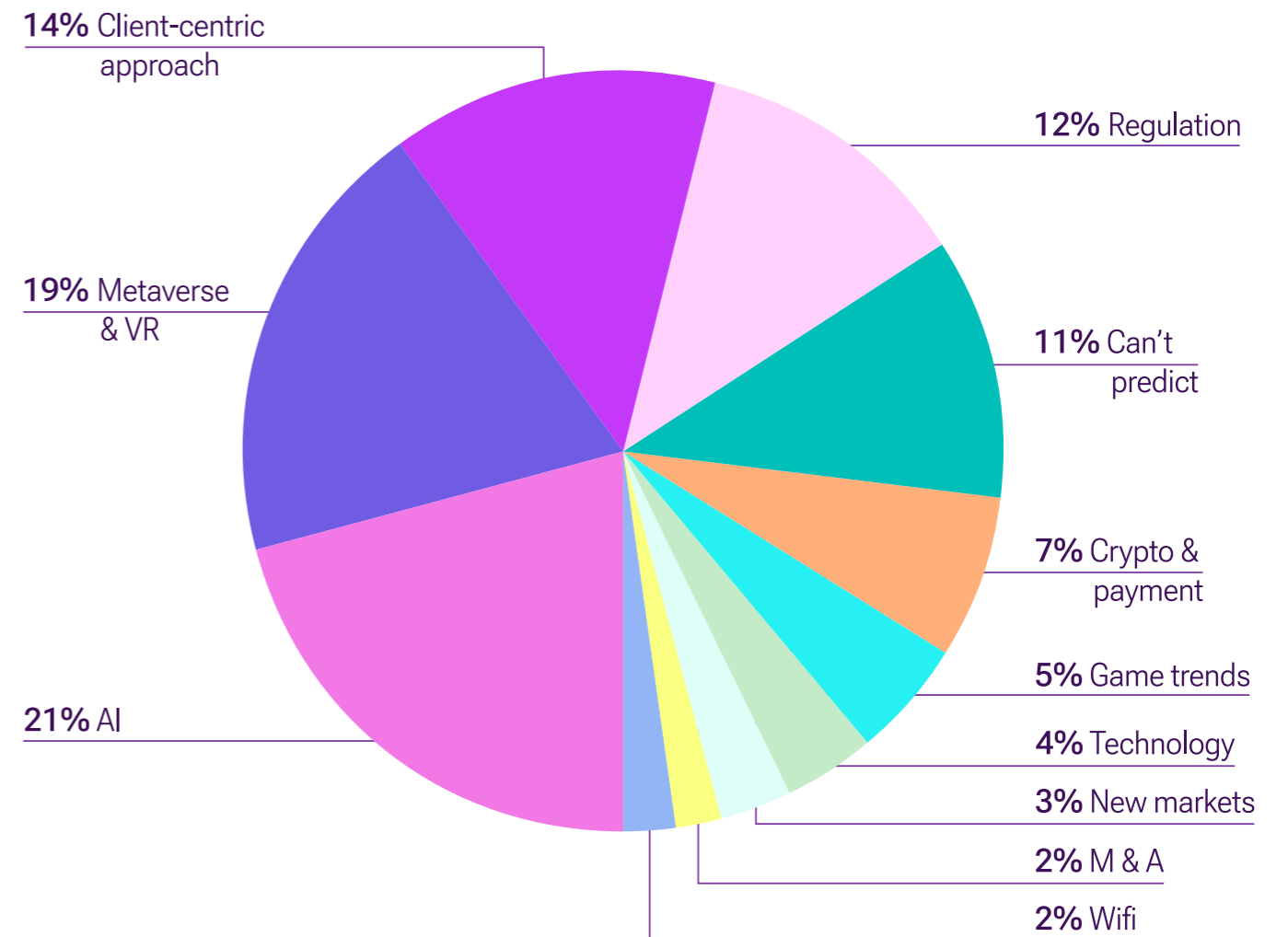
14% of respondents see a **client-centric approach** as an emerging trend for 2024. Of these, 12% associate it with user tracking, personalisation, and a focus on user experience (UX). Additionally, 2% specifically highlight the hosting of client events as part of this client-centric approach.

12% of the audience speak of unpredictable and tightening **restrictions** in the coming year. As a response to that, **crypto** will again have a rise — 7%.

As for the **games**, there are more newcomers to expect. Live casino's popularity will decrease, while online poker, on the contrary, is expected to become more popular.

While only a small number of respondents mentioned **M&A**, the trend of consolidation is expected to persist in the upcoming year without a doubt. For numerous iGaming companies, this serves as a rapid means to broaden their presence in both established and emerging markets. In essence, M&A functions as a mechanism for rapid expansion, standing out as the third key focus among the interviewed companies (Main trends in the interviewed companies' focus).

2024 Predictions



Thank You!





Biggest Choice of Poker & Card Games



EvenBet in Numbers

EvenBet Gaming is a leading high-tech poker platform provider, with a feature-rich, fully customisable, and scalable product supported 24/7.

19 years of non-stop software development

50 thousand transactions per second

38 poker type games available

30 million players using EvenBet software

38 countries with active projects

120 TB traffic per month

Contact Us

PR & Marketing
pr@evenbetgaming.com

Sales & General Inquires
sales@evenbetgaming.com

evenbetgaming.com

