NetLine

2026

STATE OF B2B CONTENT CONSUMPTION & DEMAND REPORT

10th Annual Edition

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7.2M
REGISTRATIONS
Demand for gated content remained strong in 2025, generating 7.2M first-party registrations.

46%
PURCHASE INTENT
45.9% of B2B professionals expect to make a purchase decision within 12 months.

48
HOURS
The Consumption Gap widened to 47.7 hours — a 23.9% YoY increase in time between registration and content engagement.

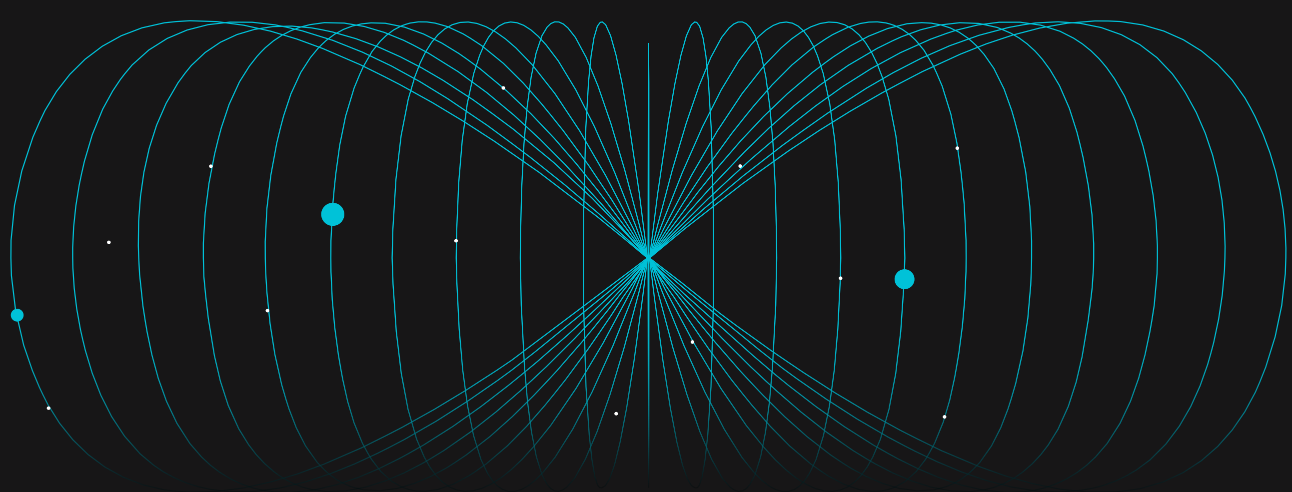
+4%
C-SUITE ENGAGEMENT
C-level content consumption grew 3.8% YoY, accounting for 14.5% of total demand.

+29%
AI DEMAND
Registrations for AI-related content increased 28.5% YoY.

49%
EBOOKS
eBooks remained the most requested format, representing 48.8% of total registrations.

12 mo
BUYING SIGNALS
Trend Reports, Playbooks, Case Studies, Newsletters, and Infographics were most associated with near-term purchase decisions.

Trend Reports, Playbooks, Case Studies, Newsletters, and Infographics were the formats more strongly associated with a purchase decision within the next 12 months.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our **10th annual State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report.**

A reminder that **this report is not a summary of survey findings.**

These are insights into what B2B professionals *actually* want. We know this because their first-party data indicates as much.

This year, we're sharing real user insights from **7.2 million first-party content registrations.**

Beyond revealing the behaviors and intentions of B2B buyers, you'll discover:

- The shifting sands of demand and the market's recalibration
- Why decision-makers are saying "not yet" and not "no"
- How data can help you structure content progression
- Why the Consumption Gap keeps widening
- How in-demand AI-related content really is

We are eager to learn which stats and insights you find most impactful.

Share your favorites by tagging @NetLine on LinkedIn.

Cheers,
David Fortino
General Manager, NetLine

APPLYING THE LEARNINGS FROM THIS REPORT

To build your pipeline and accelerate sales outcomes in 2026, here are the key takeaways from this year's report

The recent market correction is not cause for alarm.

An 8.6% decline following 27% growth still leaves total demand 58% higher than in 2021. As website traffic declines, gated content remains a critical source of intent signals.

The Consumption Gap has expanded to 47.7 hours.

This nearly two-day delay between registration and consumption suggests that lead scoring models and SDR follow-up cadences require adjustment. Registrations should be treated as research signals rather than immediate buying signals.

The 78.6% increase in 6-12 month purchase intent indicates a growing mid-term opportunity.

Buyers aren't saying "no"—they're saying "not yet." The average sales cycle now spans 211 days from first touch to closed-won, reinforcing the need for sustained nurture programs.

Signal quality now plays a greater role in revenue efficiency.

Lead volume is no longer predictive; timing and intent are stronger indicators of conversion. Person-level insights help distinguish inefficient outreach from precise, high-impact engagement.

AI-related content accounted for 21% of total demand.

As AI adoption has matured, it has shifted from an emerging topic to a foundational consideration across B2B technology. Content strategies should reflect the growing expectation that AI implications are addressed across formats.

Shifts in format preferences reflect changing buyer expectations.

Book Summary registrations declined 64.5%, while On-Demand Webinar registrations increased 46.2%. Declines in Tips & Tricks content (-21.7%) alongside growth in Reports (+15.9%) suggest a preference for strategic depth over tactical quick wins.

Looking for specifics on your industry? Audience Explorer offers real-time, first-party insights into your ideal audience's content preferences and consumption behaviors.

CONSUMPTION IS CHANGING. AND THAT'S OK.

2025 content registrations fell 8.6%.

While the quantity of registrations dipped, registration quality increased. Our clients tend to agree. The evolution of the Internet has led to the loss of many traditional user signals. Effectively, we are losing valuable intent signals in exchange for speed.

Humans still drive demand, however.

We remain curious and continue searching for the most suitable answers. But platforms (search engines, social networks, AI tools) are answering more queries directly and passing along fewer clicks to the actual sites that created the content.

So, what does this mean for the future?

We cannot continue chasing clicks. Instead, we must chase *what* clicks.

Because of this, modern programmatic lead generation can no longer be measured by volume alone. This new reality means that gated content offers greater value today than ever before. It provides your business an opportunity to recapture the intent signals that have otherwise vanished.

At the heart of this opportunity lies a basic question, one that isn't new: Does your content provide enough perceived value for a user to continue?

Those whose ICP says "yes" will reap the rewards.

May the data in this report bring you closer to more "yeses" in 2026.

REGISTRATIONS IN REVIEW

7.2M

NetLine delivered 7.2 million fully-permitted, first-party leads in 2025,

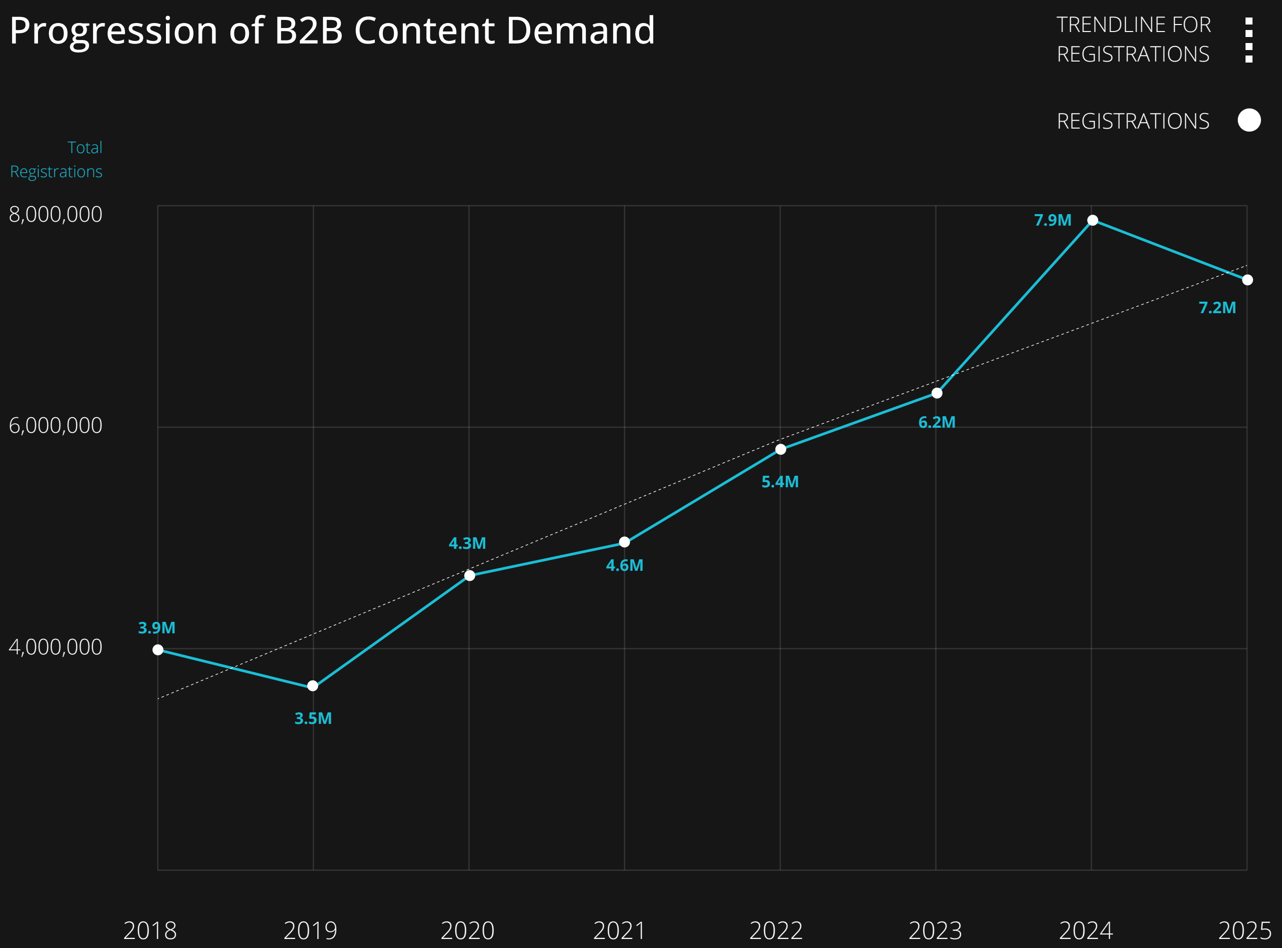
-8.6%

an 8.6% decrease from NetLine's record 2024 (7.9M registrations and +26.9% YOY).

+57.6%

Since 2021, NetLine has observed a 57.6% increase in demand for gated content.

Progression of B2B Content Demand



THE CONSUMPTION GAP

The Consumption Gap is the time between when content is requested and the moment it's opened for consumption. The Consumption Gap widened again between 2024 and 2025, with the time to consume increasing from 38.5 hours to 47.7 hours.

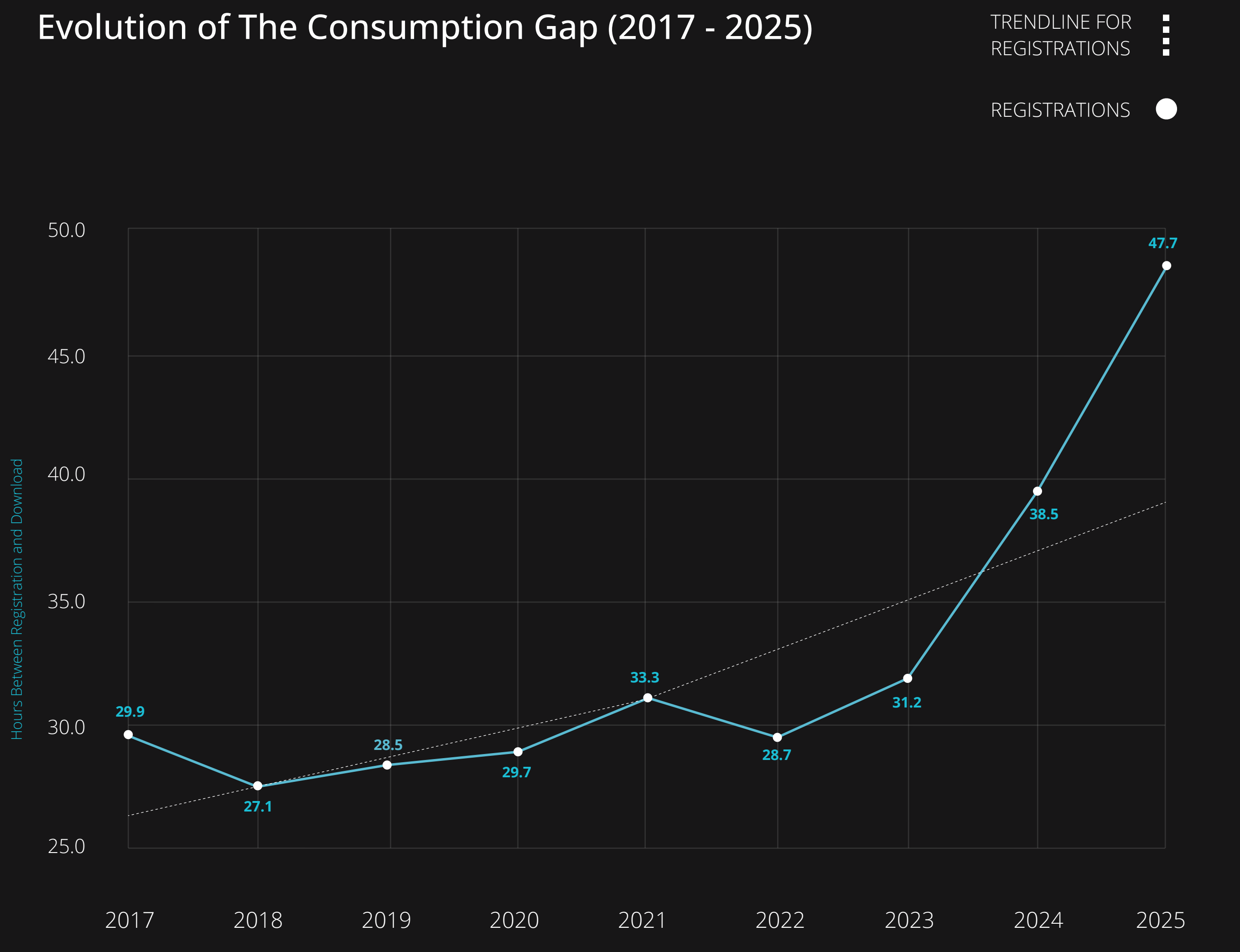
+9.2

That's a 9.2-hour increase

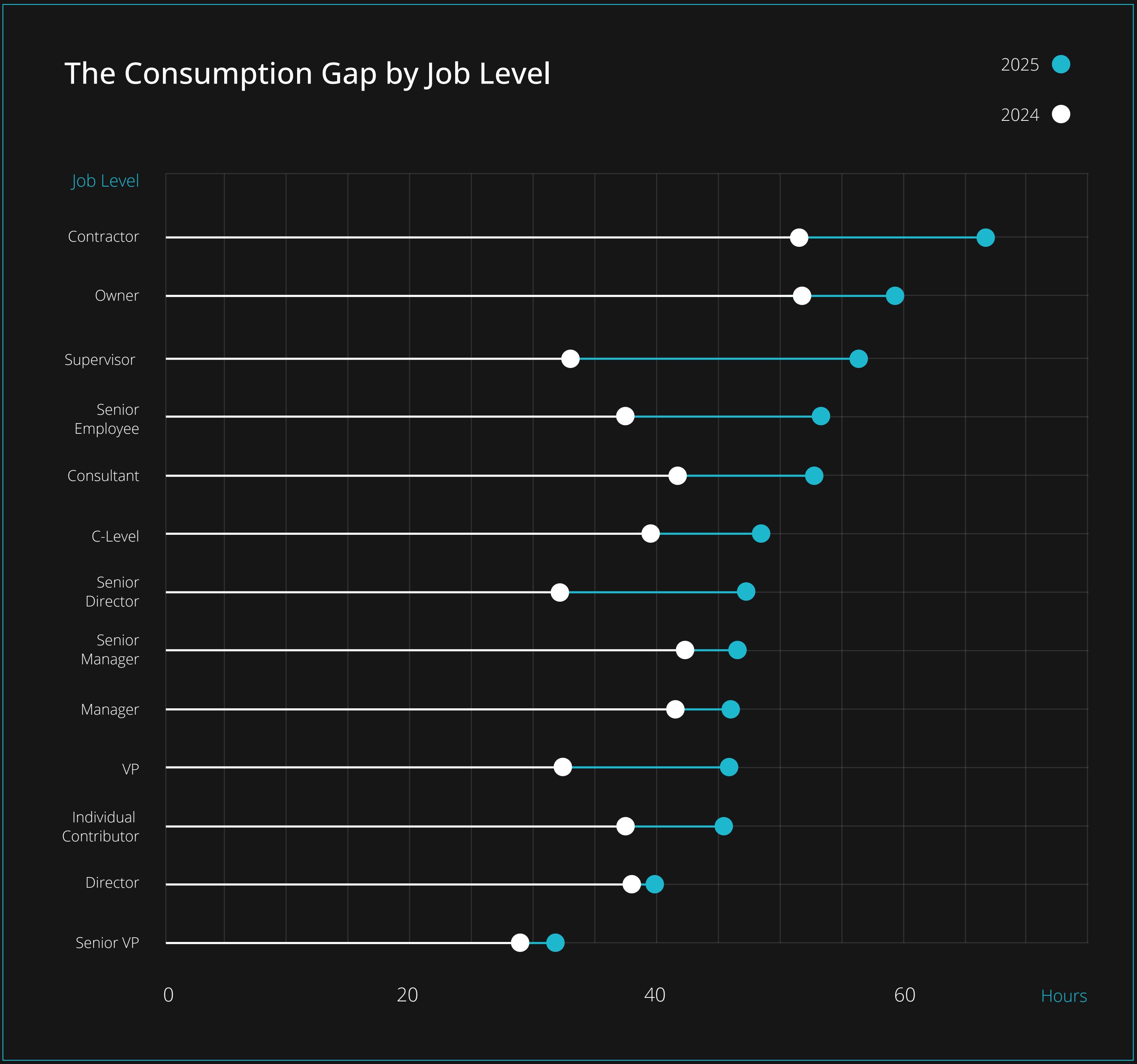
23.9%

and a 23.9% change YOY.

Evolution of The Consumption Gap (2017 - 2025)



THE CONSUMPTION GAP



THE CONVERGENCE OF CURIOSITY AND ACTION

B2B registrations increased annually from 2020 to 2024.

+57.6%

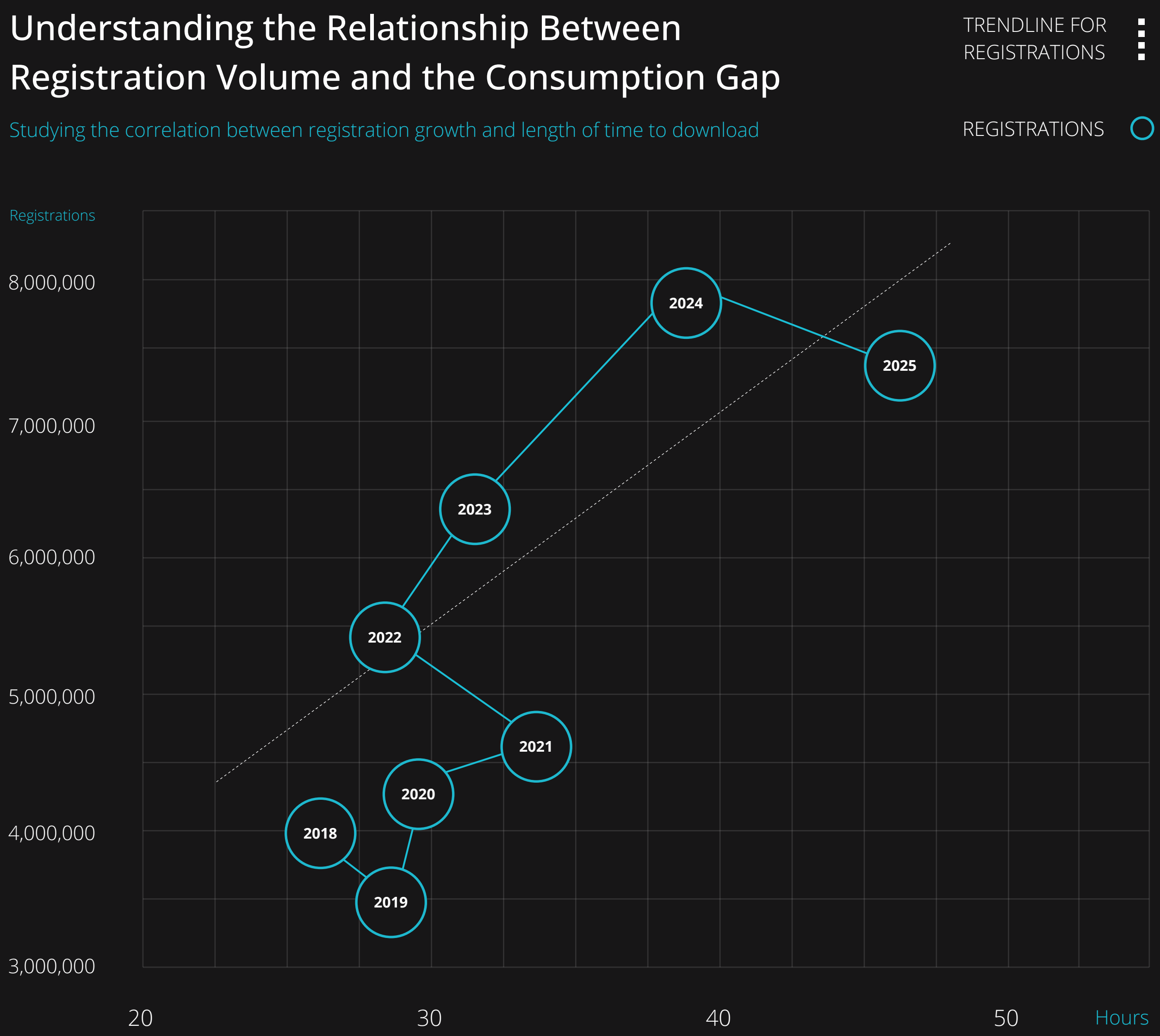
Despite 2025's dip, 57.6% growth since 2021 reflects strong, sustained interest.

43.2%

At the same time, the Consumption Gap has widened by 43.2% since 2021.

Understanding the Relationship Between Registration Volume and the Consumption Gap

Studying the correlation between registration growth and length of time to download



THE CONVERGENCE OF CURIOSITY AND ACTION

Understanding the factors influencing user behavior can help identify barriers to engagement and improve outcomes.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

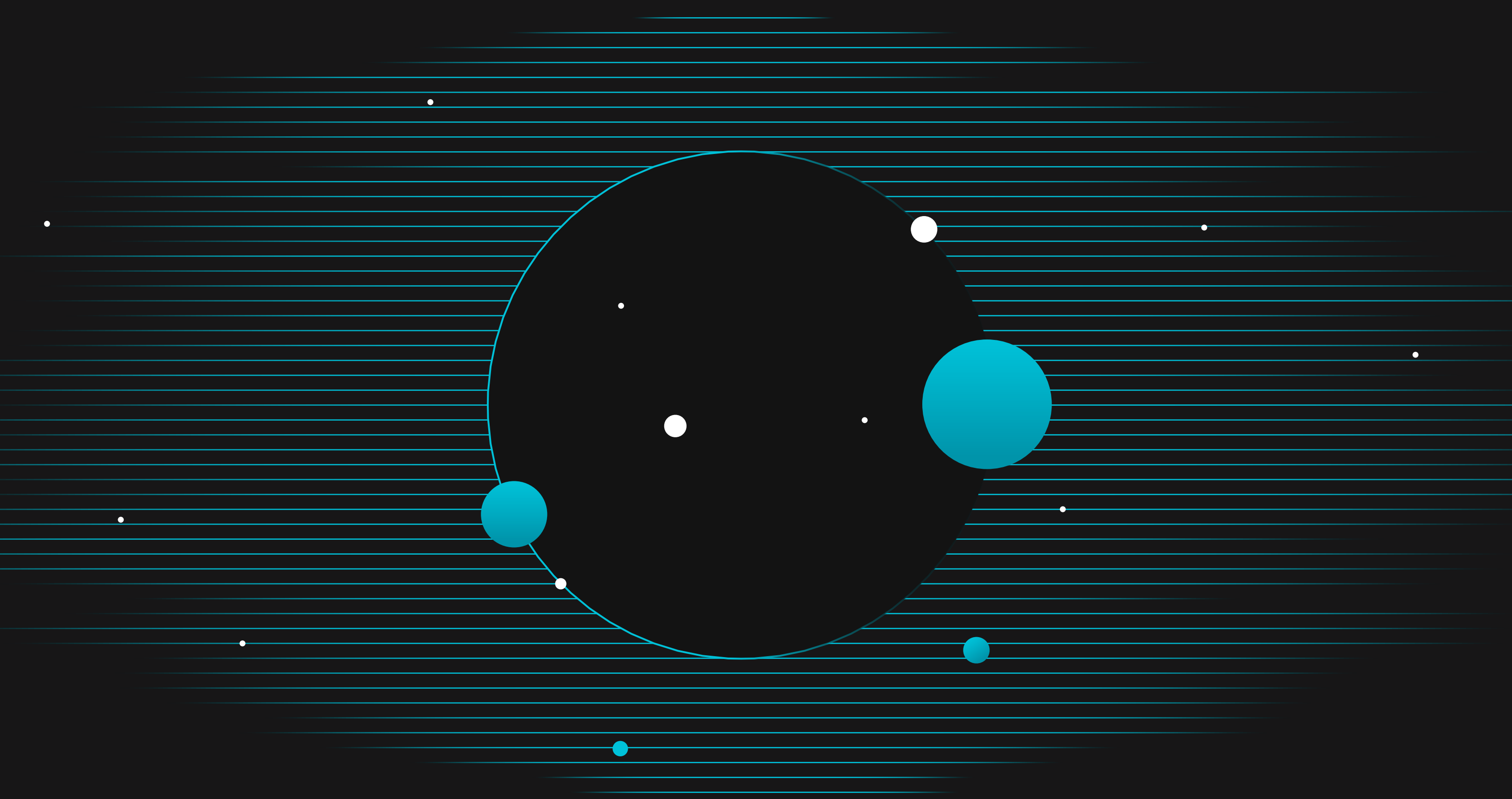
- Busier work environments
- Decision-maker bottlenecks

INTERNAL FACTORS

- Unclear CTAs
- Insufficient content previews

CHALLENGES

- Content overload
- Poor timing
- Mismatch between user urgency and:
    - Budget availability
    - Organizational priorities



AI: ABSOLUTELY INTERESTED

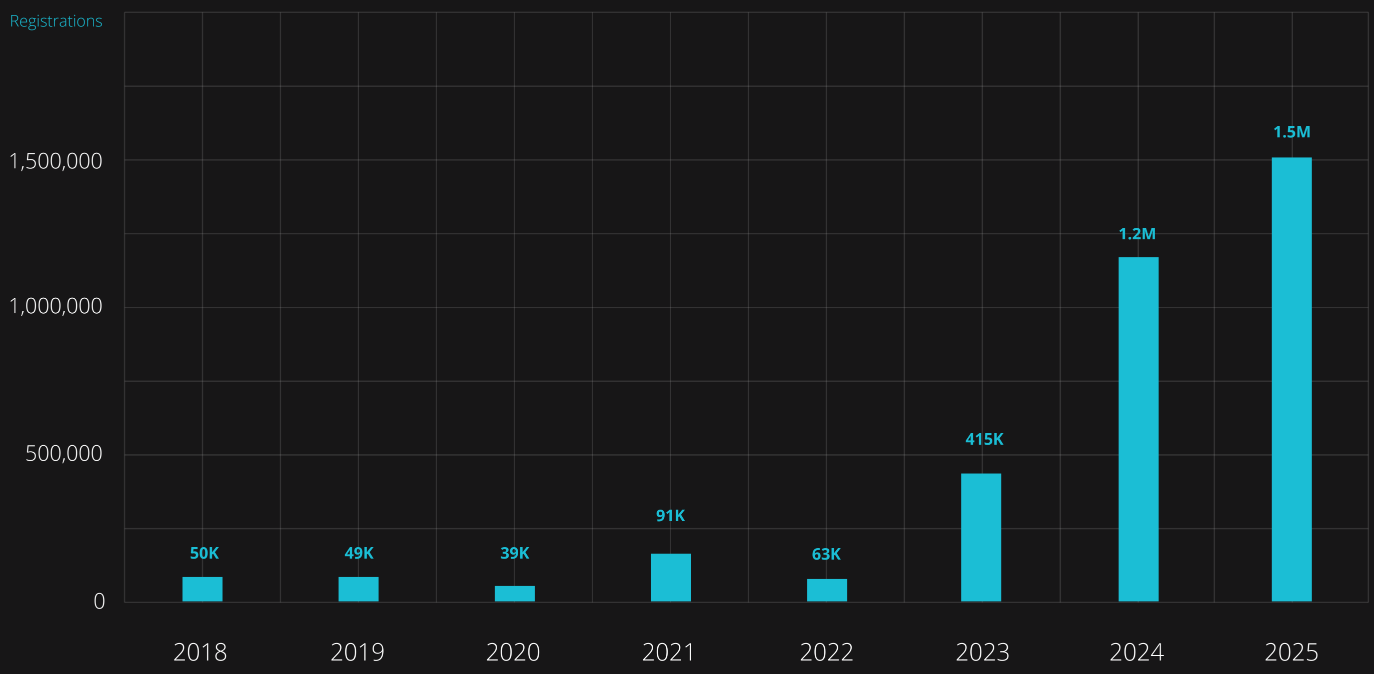
21.1%

In 2025, AI-related content registrations accounted for 21.1% of all demand,

+28.5%

increasing 28.5% YOY. We moved from this content being "innovative" to being part of the "infrastructure".

Total AI-related Content Demand



AI: ABSOLUTELY INTERESTED

Job Areas Most Likely to Request “Generative AI”-related Content

- IT / Computers / Electronics
- Engineering
- Manufacturing / Production / Operations
- Logistics / Transportation
- Security Services

Job Areas Most Likely to Request “Chatbot”-related Content

- Agriculture
- Creative / Design
- Banking / Mortgage
- Biotech
- Building Construction

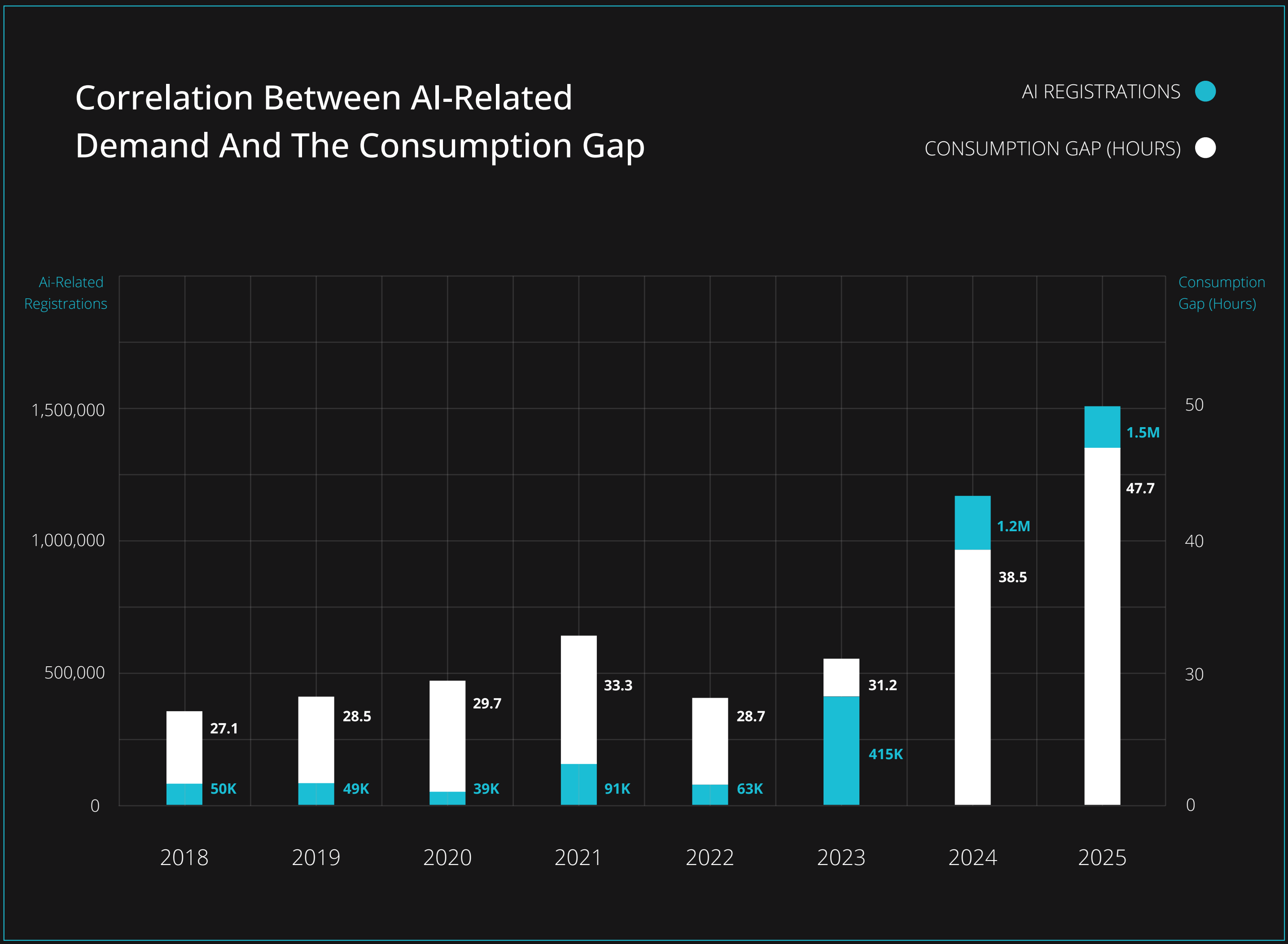
Job Areas Most Likely to Request “Robotics”-related Content

- Retail
- Logistics / Transportation
- Engineering
- IT / Computers / Electronics
- Manufacturing / Production / Operations

Job Areas Most Likely to Request “ChatGPT”-related Content

- Education
- Journalism / Media / Entertainment
- Creative / Design
- Agriculture
- Real Estate

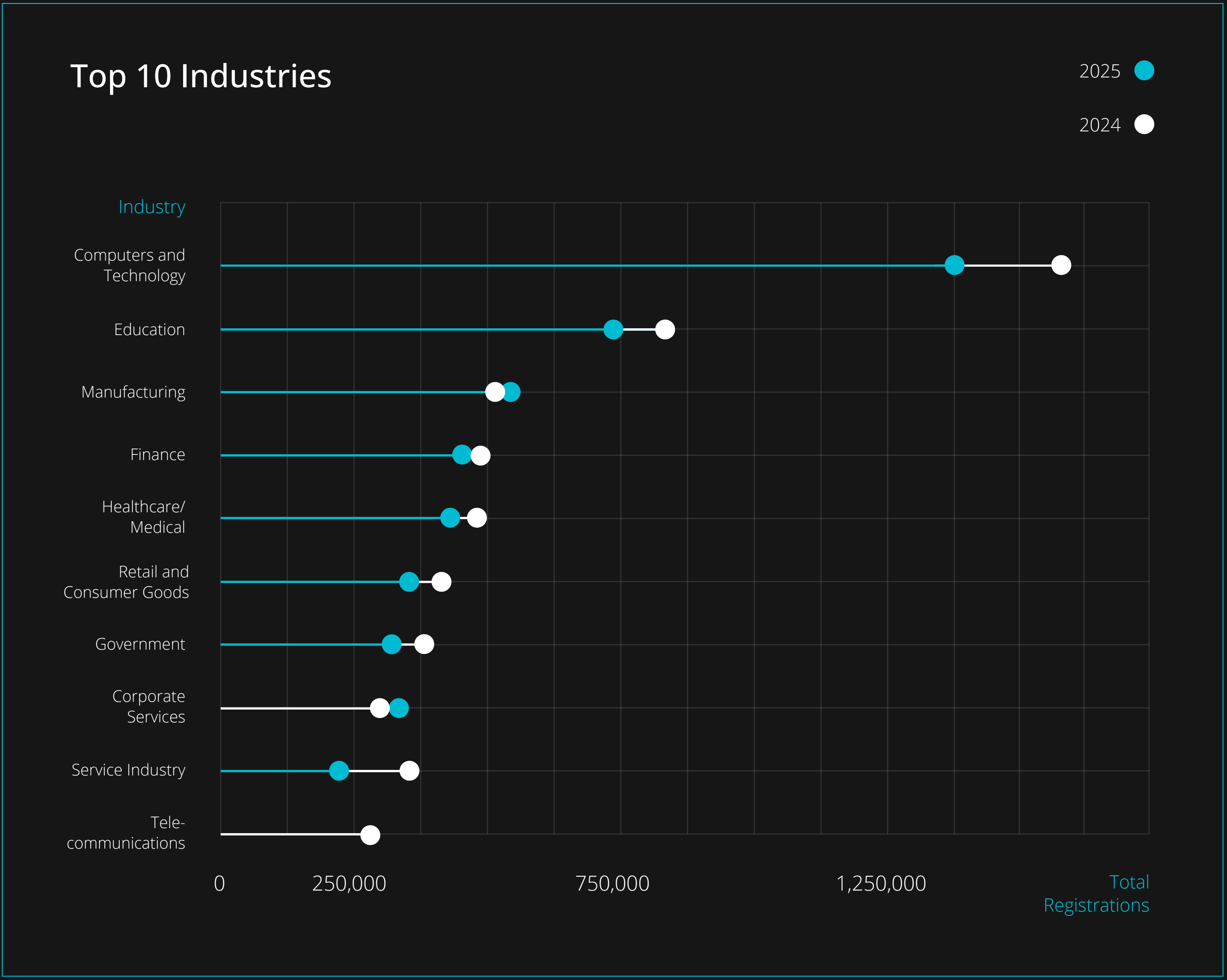
DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS



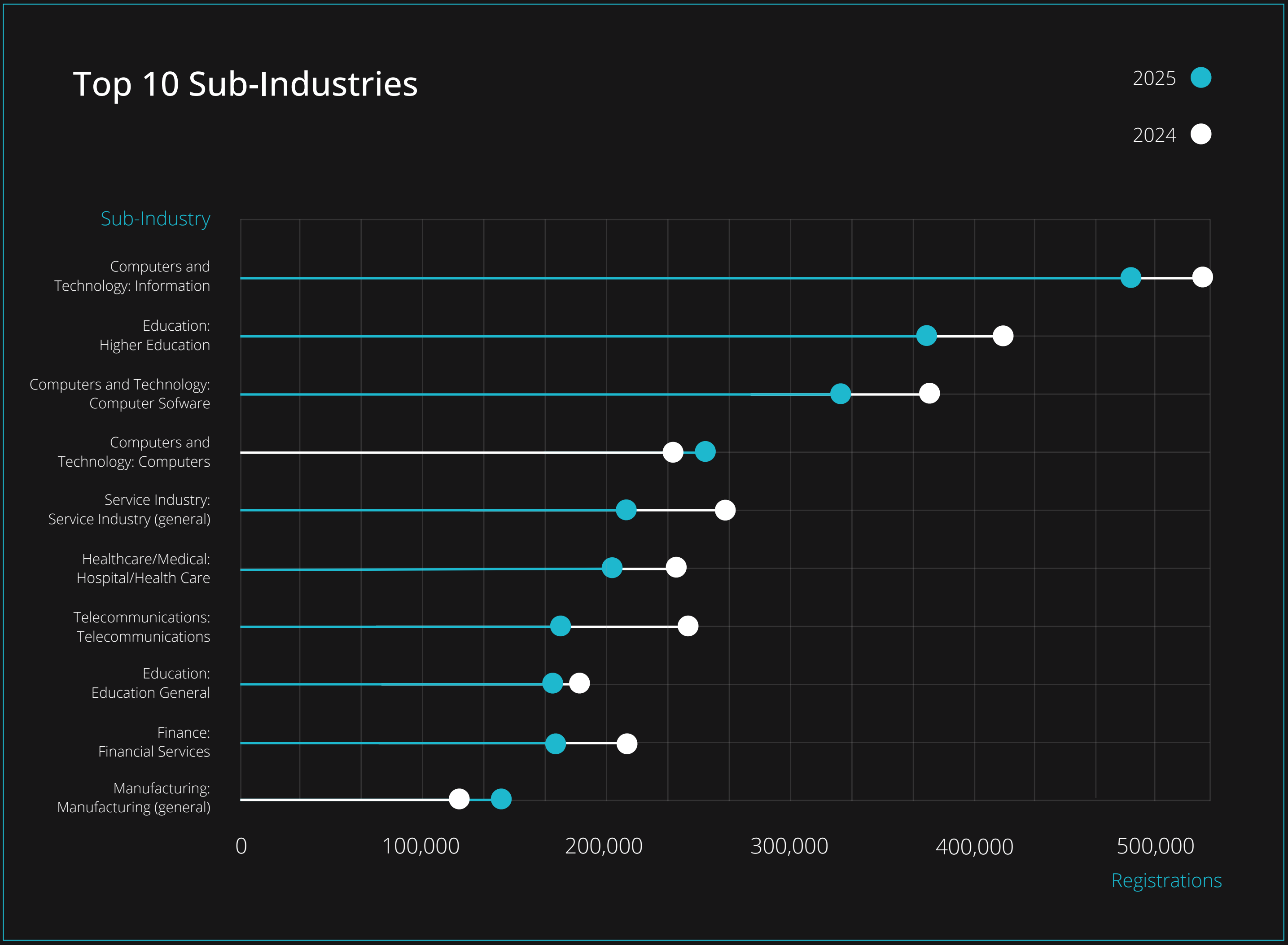
The widening of the Consumption Gap and AI-related registrations feature complementary progression patterns. The evolution of each trendline is quite similar, with each climbing up and to the right beginning in 2022.

THE TITANS OF TECH

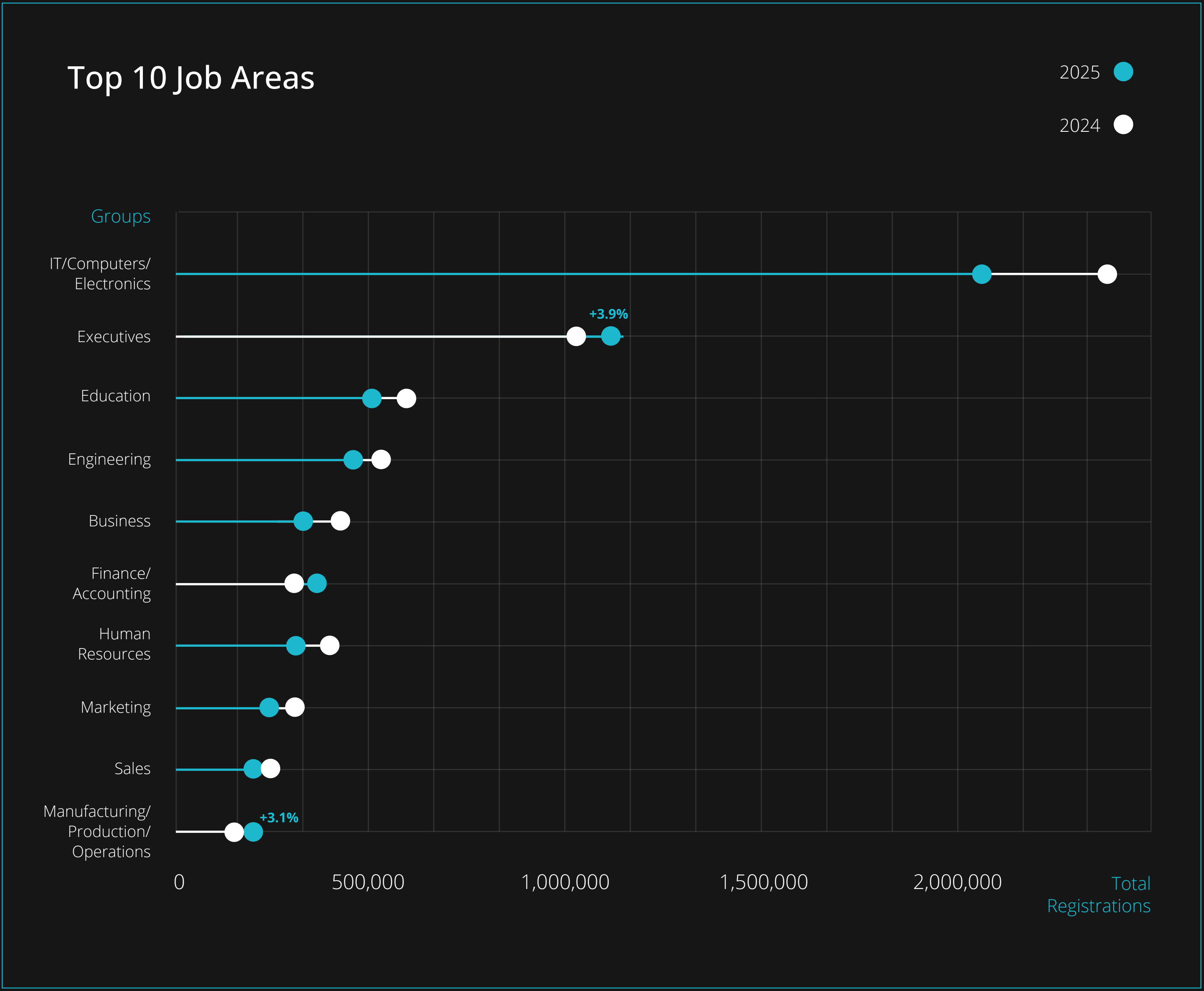
IT-related fields accounted for the largest share of audience registration across each Job and Industry category. Even these professionals were not immune to the decline in overall demand in 2025, however.



THE TITANS OF TECH



THE TITANS OF TECH



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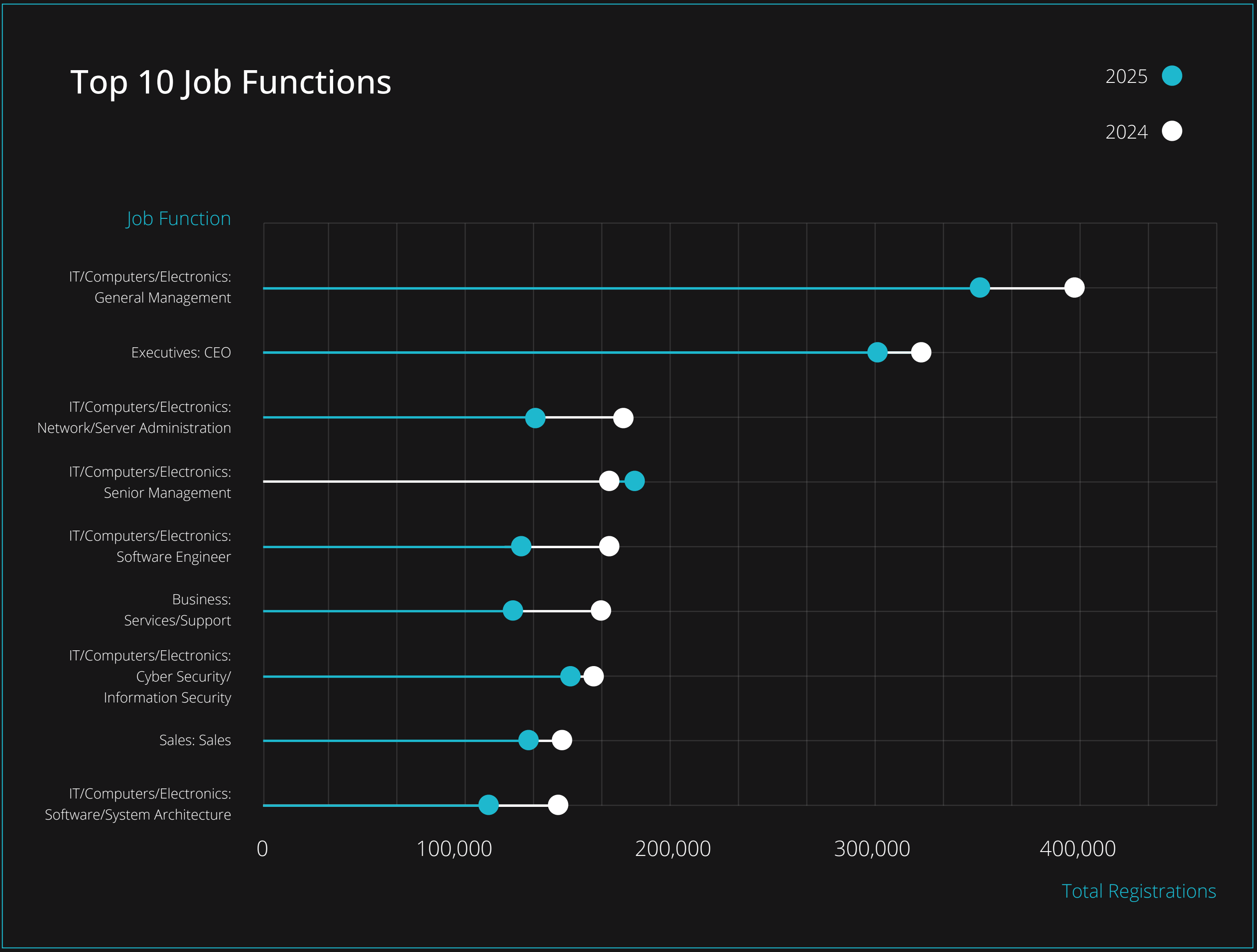
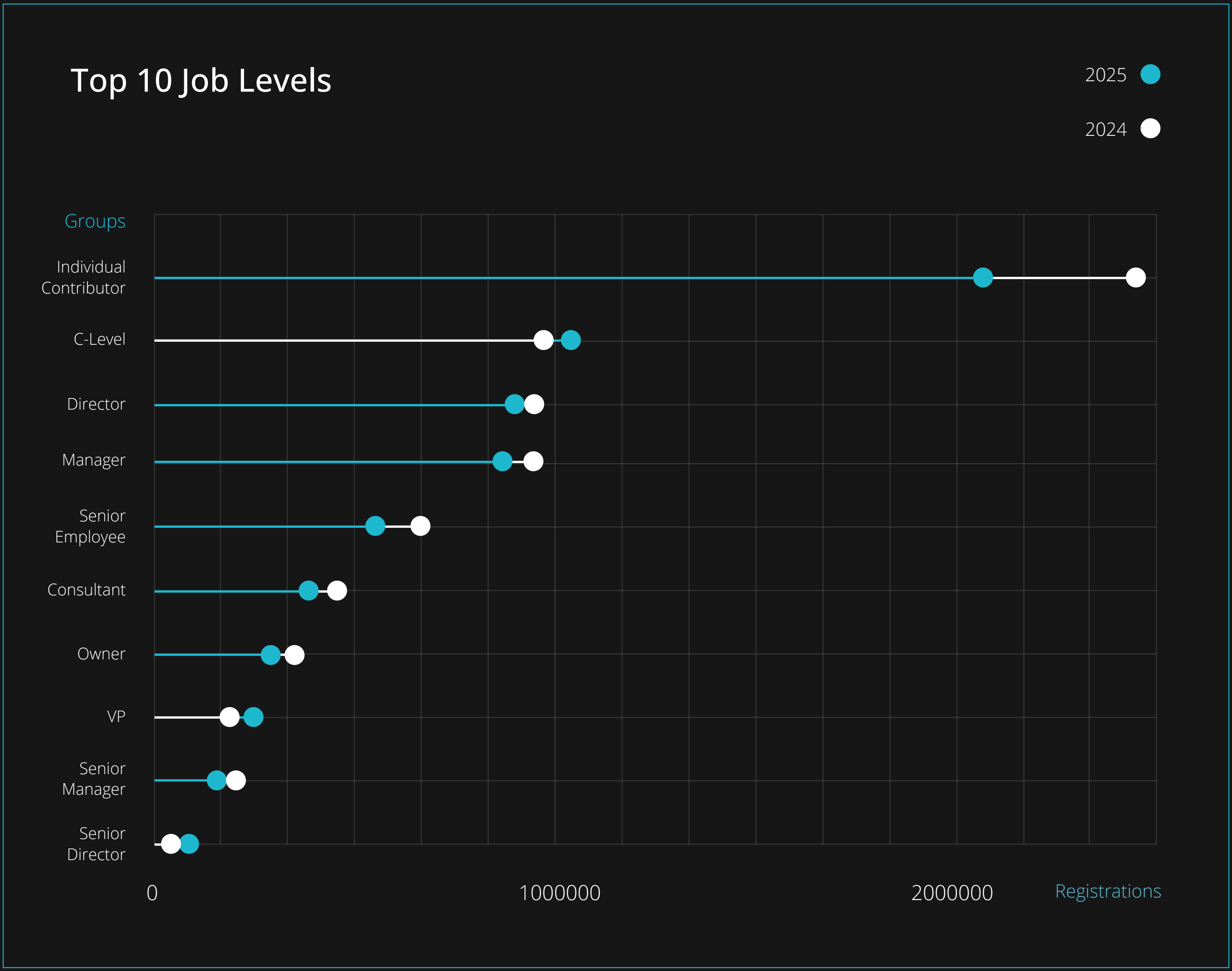
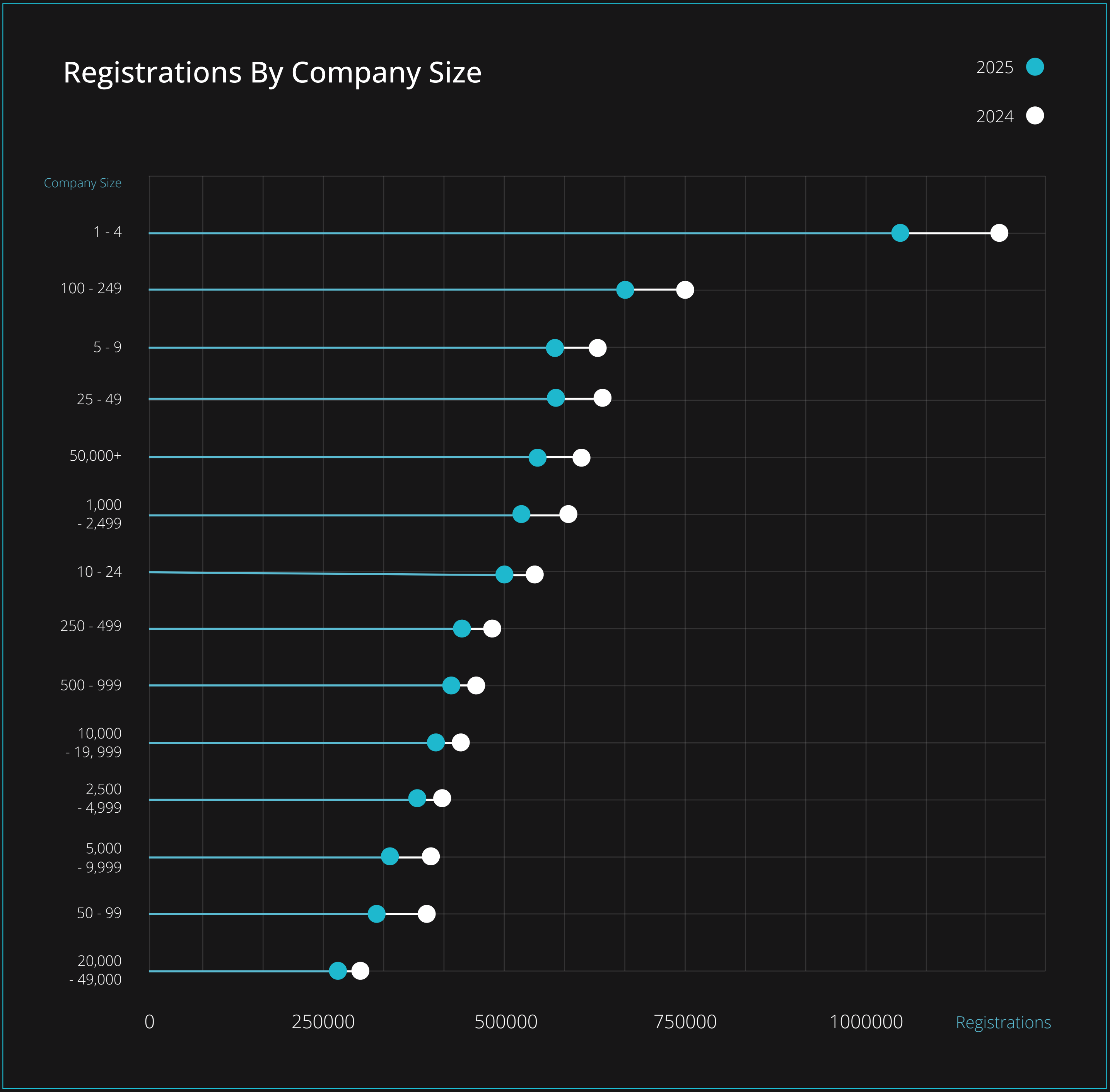


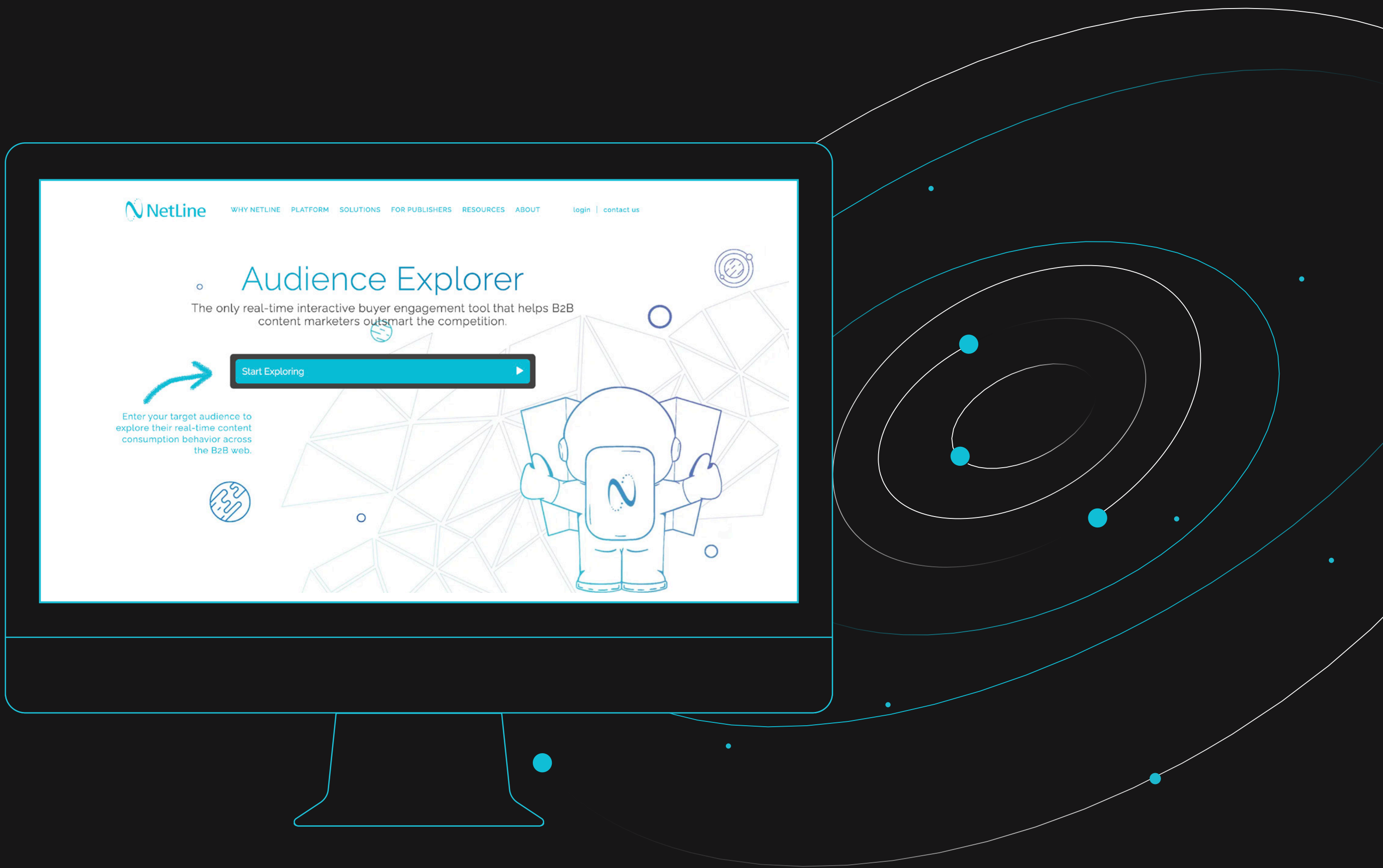
THE TITANS OF TECH



THE TITANS OF TECH



ANALYZING YOUR TARGET BUYERS



As much as we would love to cover each and every audience, we simply can't do it.

Fortunately, you can uncover exactly what your prospects are consuming (right now) with Audience Explorer.

Audience Explorer allows you to break down audience content consumption by Job Area and Industry with real-time data from the past 180 days.

[Explore your ICP's behaviors with Audience Explorer.]

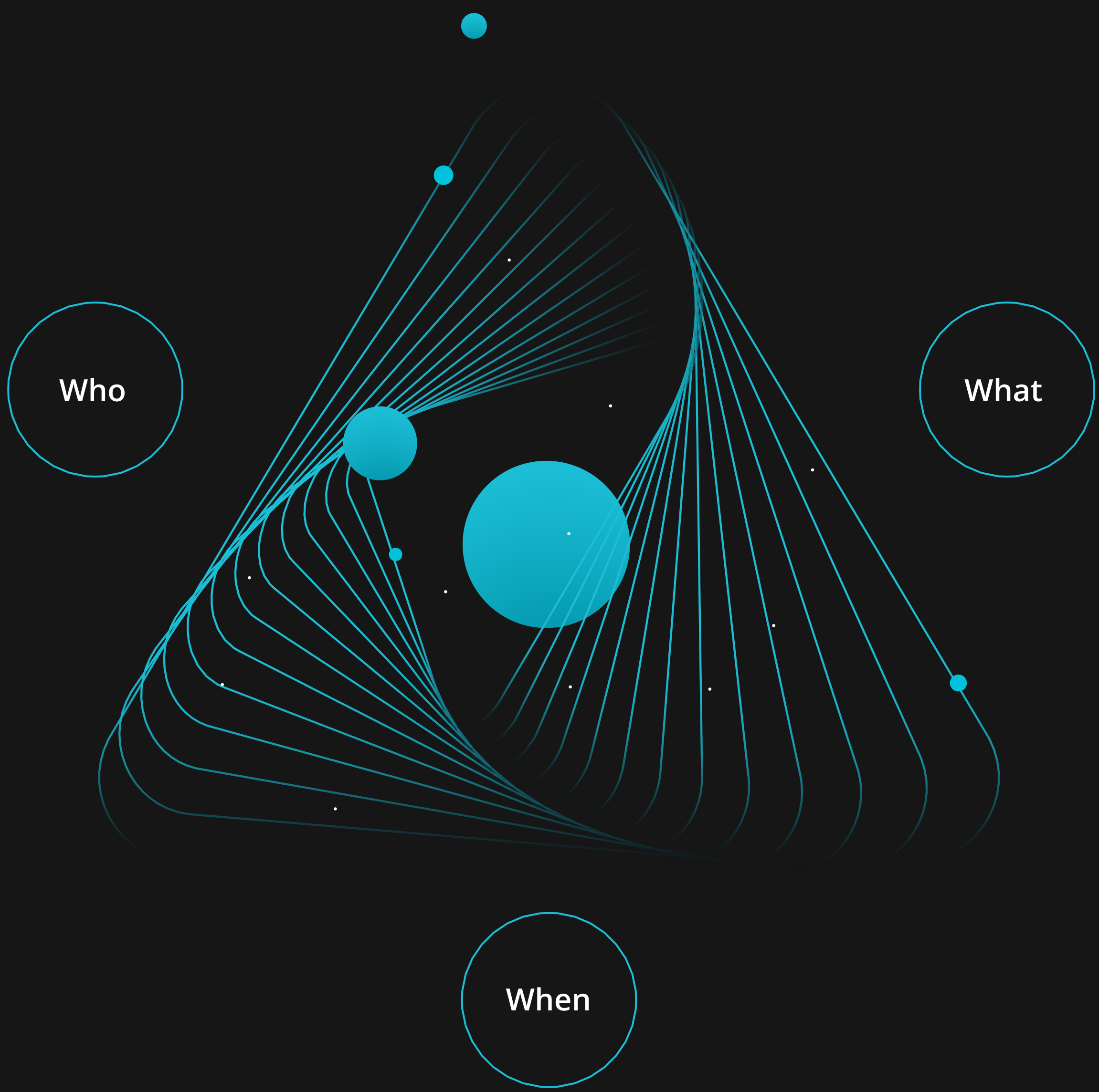
[Action your ICP knowledge using the Content Trends and Planning Guide.]

INTENT FINDINGS

Buyer-level intent data offers a tangible way to understand *who* your prospects are, *what* they want, and *when* they want it.

NetLine's HQL products tap into buyer-level intent, delivering real-time insights into *who* is showing intent (along with *what, when,* and *where*). NetLine studies billions of data points to analyze B2B buyer behavior.

Here's what HQL Access and HQL Precision revealed in 2025.



PURCHASE READINESS ROSE

B2B buyers aren't disappearing; they're just delaying.

NetLine's readiness data reveals a striking shift in purchase timing that aligns with Dreamdata's 211-day average B2B sales cycle.

-15.7%

While near-term intent (under 3 months) dropped 15.7%,

+78.6%

mid-range intent (6–12 months) surged 78.6%.

Purchase Readiness Rose

	-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	+1 year
2022	8.8%	10.0%	14.5%	66.7%
2023	9.4%	8.8%	17.0%	64.8%
2024	8.3%	10.1%	15.9%	65.7%
2025	7.0%	10.5%	28.4%	54.1%
Delta	-15.7%	4.0%	78.6%	-17.7%

PURCHASE READINESS ROSE

In total, B2B professionals were 17.7% more likely to make investments within the next 12 months compared to 2024.

Compared to 2024, respondents were:

-15.7%
less likely to make investments within the next 3 months

+4.0%
more likely to make investments within the next 3-6 months

+78.6%
more likely to make investments within the next 6-12 months

-17.7%
less likely to make investments beyond the next 12 months

WHO IS READY TO BUY?

Percentages are nice, but they don't tell us the story about the people.
Who across the B2B landscape is most likely to make an immediate buying decision?

Job Levels More Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- C-Level
- Owner
- VP
- Director
- Senior VP

Job Levels Less Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- Senior Manager
- Senior Employee
- Supervisor
- Senior Director
- Executive VP

Job Levels More Likely to Make a Buying Decision Within 3 Months

- Owner
- Individual Contributor
- Senior Employee
- Executive VP
- Senior Director

Job Levels More Likely to Make a Buying Decision Within 3 - 6 Months

- Senior VP
- C-Level
- Owner
- Individual Contributor
- Senior Director

WHO IS READY TO BUY?

Percentages are nice, but they don't tell us the story about the people.
Who across the B2B landscape is most likely to make an immediate buying decision?

Job Areas More Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- Executives
- Manufacturing/Production/Operations
- Quality Assurance/Safety
- Marketing
- Customer Support/Client Services

Job Areas Less Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- Human Resources
- Medical and Health
- IT/Computers/Electronics
- Engineering
- Sales

Industries More Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- Real Estate
- Insurance
- Finance
- Retail and Consumer Goods
- Travel/Hospitality/Entertainment

Industries Less Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- Government
- Non-Profit/Organizations
- Media
- Education
- Computers and Technology

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUYER'S JOURNEY AND CONTENT FORMAT

There is a clear connection between a user's choice of format and their readiness to buy. Based on our first-party buyer-level intent data, we have grouped content formats into two Immediate Buying Decision Association distinctions: More Likely and Less Likely.

Content Formats More Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- Trend Report
- Playbook
- Case Study
- Newsletter
- Infographic

Content Formats Less Likely to Make a Buying Decision

- Template
- Tips and Tricks Guide
- Book Summary
- Checklist
- Cheat Sheet

As was the case in 2023 and 2024, **Playbooks** and **Case Studies** remain two of the top three formats **most likely to be associated with a buying decision over the course of the next 12 months.**

Infographics continue to be associated with greater purchase intent, as registrants are now **79.8% more likely to be associated with a buying decision over the next 12 months compared to 2024.**

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUYER'S JOURNEY AND CONTENT FORMAT

Content Formats More Likely to Make a Buying Decision Within 3 Months

- Live Webinar
- Kit
- On-Demand Webinar
- Best Practices
- Case Study

Content Formats More Likely to Make a Buying Decision Within 3 - 6 Months

- Playbook
- Trend Report
- Newsletter
- Case Study
- Analyst Report

- Users registering for **White Papers** were **48.8% more likely to be associated with a buying decision within the next 12 months** compared to 2024.
- Users registering for **Guides** were **31.5% more likely to be associated with buying decision within the next 12 months** compared to 2024.
- **Playbook** registrations were **101.7% more likely to be associated with a buying decision in the next 3-6 months.**
- **Trend Report** registrants were **177% more likely to be associated with a buying decision in the next 6-12 months** and **120% more likely to be within the next 12 months.**

FORMAT FINDINGS

We've learned how content formats can signal different levels of purchase intent. What else can format trends teach us about B2B buyers?

6

Six of the Top 10 Formats by Registrations saw YOY declines in volume.

-26.9%

Playbooks fell 26.9%, the largest fall within the Top 10

+46.2%

On-Demand Webinars had the greatest gains within the Top 10, rising 46.2%

Format Findings

Rank	Format	Percentage of 2025 Registrations	YOY Delta
1	eBook	48.8%	-16.7%
2	Cheat Sheet	9.3%	35.8%
3	Guide	7.5%	-13.9%
4	White Paper	4.8%	2.9%
5	Report	3.7%	15.9%
6	Article	3.5%	-7.7%
7	Tips and Tricks Guide	2.4%	-21.7%
8	On-Demand Webinar	1.7%	46.2%
9	Webinar	1.4%	-7.3%
10	Playbook	1.4%	-26.9%

WEBINAR WATCHING

+5.3%

Combined, Webinars saw a 5.3% YOY increase in demand.

-23%

On-Demand Webinar registrations rose significantly, while interest in Live Webinars dipped nearly 23%

+15%

On-Demand Webinar registrants were 15% more likely to purchase within 3 months but 15.4% less likely within 12 months.

+20%

Live Webinar registrants were 20% more likely to purchase within 3 months—81.3% more likely than any other format in this timeframe—but only 2.3% less likely within 12 months.

Format	YOY Delta
Webinar (ALL)	5.3%
Live Webinars	-22.9%
On-Demand Webinars	54.3%

THE CONSUMPTION GAP BY FORMAT

Part of the intent signals that each registration provides comes from how long it takes, on average, for each content format to be consumed. As the Consumption Gap reveals, B2B professionals are taking longer to consume the content they request.

Of the top five formats to be More and Less Associated with a Buying Decision, all but one format (Newsletters) on the More Likely side exceeds the updated Consumption Gap average of 47.7. At the same time, only one (Templates) bests it.

Other notable Consumption Gap figures by Format:

- eBooks: 46.4 Hours
- White Papers: 26.4 Hours
- On-Demand Webinars: 21.4

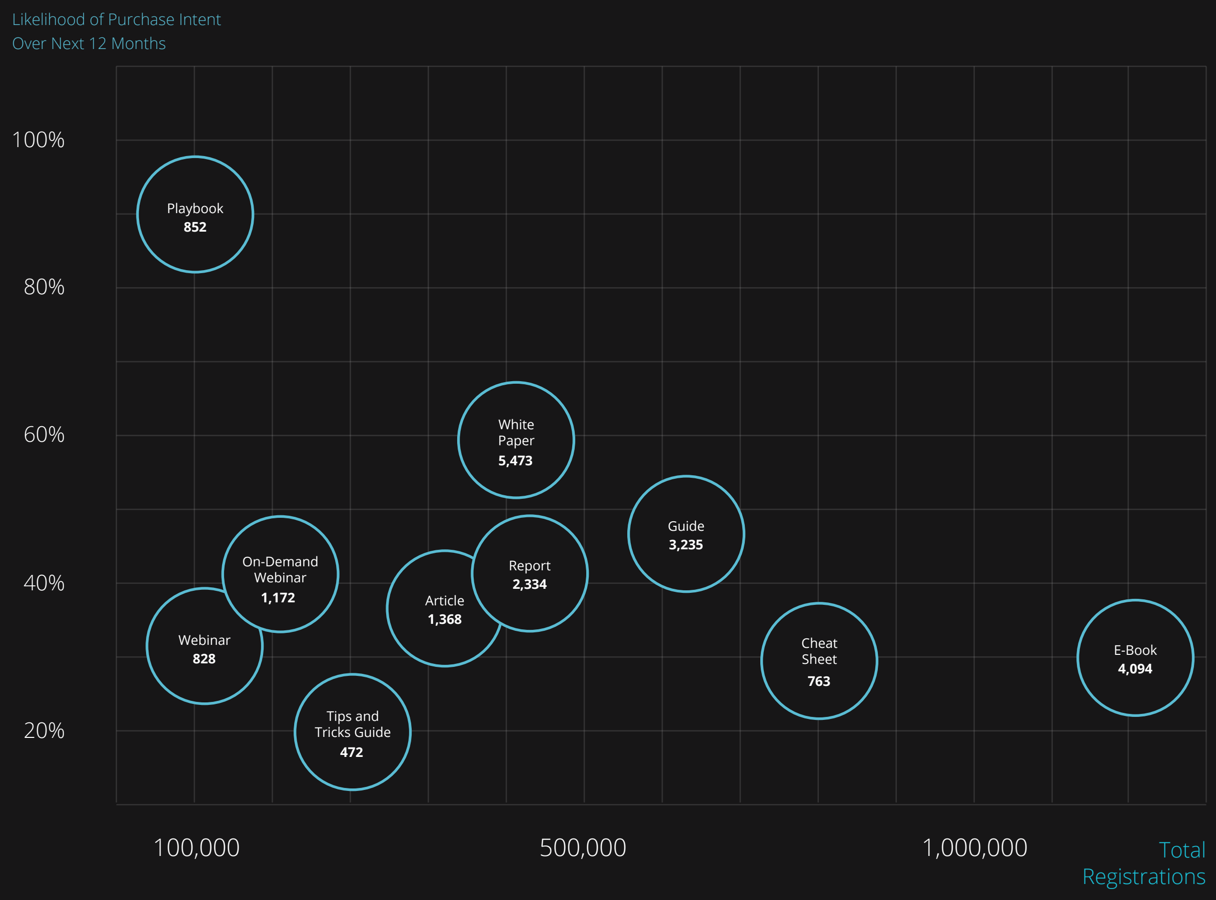
Content Formats **More** Likely to Make a Buying Decision | Content Formats **Less** Likely to Make a Buying Decision

Format	Hours Before Consumption	Format	Hours Before Consumption
Trend Report	22.0	Template	37.6
Playbook	20.6	Tips and Tricks Guide	51.2
Case Study	28.7	Book Summary	69.5
Newsletter	54.4	Checklist	53.8
Infographic	30.0	Cheat Sheet	64.0

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

For every eBook asset uploaded to NetLine, 859.1 registrations are generated. Comparatively, White Papers, the most uploaded format, generate only 63.5 registrations per asset. Successful content marketing programs require both.

Total Registrations, Likelihood of Purchase Intent, and Offers Available



FORMAT EFFICIENCY SCORE

Marketers must balance between the formats prospects prefer to consume and the content marketers use to engage prospects. **The Format Efficiency Matrix** identifies formats balancing demand, speed, and intent. We normalized performance across four pillars, weighted by strategic value. The table highlights the ten best scores of 2025.

Rank	Format	Efficiency Score
1	Trend Report	60.1
2	Playbook	58.9
3	eBook	55.0
4	Case Study	51.1
5	Infographic	43.5
6	White Paper	41.1
7	Analyst Report	40.8
8	Guide	33.3
9	Software	33.3
10	Research Report	32.5

Using a grading scale of 0-100, this Content Efficiency Matrix focuses on four quadrants:

- Offers Available to reveal significant performance insights.
- Purchase Readiness (Within Next 12 Months)
- Consumption Gap by Format
- Total Volume

Each category is weighted differently, with greater emphasis placed on Purchase Readiness.

ABOUT NETLINE

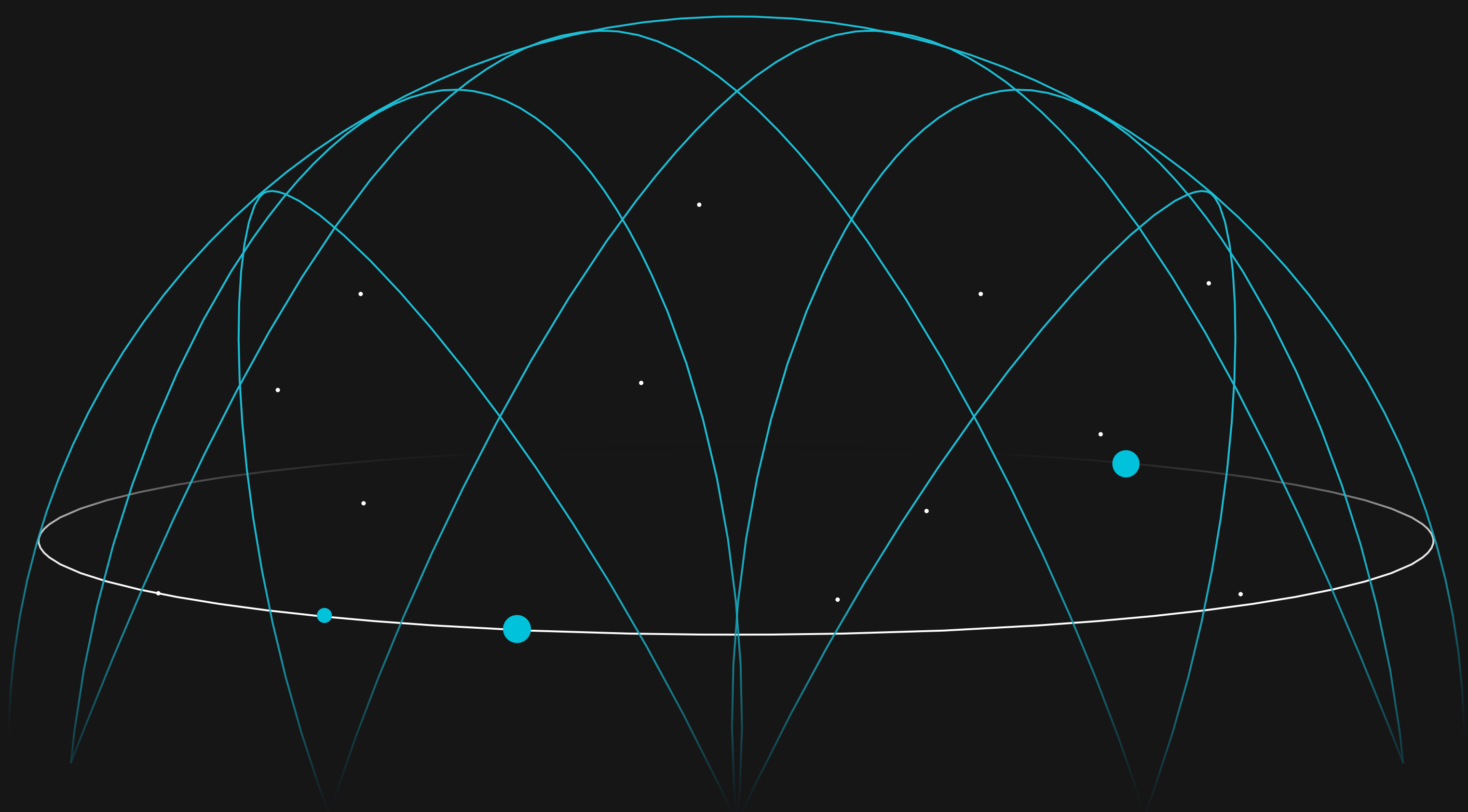
NetLine is the #1 Programmatic B2B Lead Generation Platform, empowering marketers to engage in-market buyers with targeted content and accelerate revenue growth. With unmatched access to thousands of Tier 1 media sites, NetLine connects brands with decision-makers actively researching solutions—delivering content where and when it matters most.

Trusted by over 17,000 customers to turn content into pipeline, NetLine is the leader in demand generation. Always-on content across the digital publications your target audiences trust fosters true organic engagement. First-party data, advanced targeting, and real-time lead delivery generate only high-quality prospects for immediate activation and faster conversions.

Founded in 1994 now part of Informa TechTarget, NetLine provides unparalleled access and transparency, helping marketers cut through the noise and connect with the buyers who matter most.

Your buyers are everywhere. Now you can be, too—all in one platform.

Successful B2B Marketers Start with NetLine. Visit www.netline.com.



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