

Art Buyers Survey

on Stock Image Licensing

2014
Results



2014 Art Buyers Survey, on stock image licensing

Visual Steam brings together art buyers and image licensors — photographers, videographers, and stock agencies with advertising agencies, design firms, publishers and corporate marketing teams. Each year we ask art buyers to tell us what's important to them when licensing *ready-to-use* visual content, known as stock. These are the results of the 2014 survey.

The survey confirms the use of stock imagery is ubiquitous. This is our second annual Survey of Art Buyers on Stock Image Licensing. And, *what a difference a year makes*. The power continues to shift to buyers. The money continues to move online. There continues to be significant price pressure although budgets are opening up... a bit.

100% of the respondents use stock imagery in their work.

■ Do you use Stock Visuals ?





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Highlights

- Stock is an important tool for buyers
- It is not easy to search for content
- Quality still drives buyers. However, 77% admit that they will sacrifice quality for price.
- RF and Microstock dominate
- 89% of respondents said they use stock in 50 - 100% of their projects.
- 99% said they use stock in at least 25% of their projects
- 67% license at least 50 images per year

What percent of your projects use stock?	100% of projects	75% of projects	50% of projects	25% of projects	<25%
% of Respondents	10%	40%	39%	10%	1%

How many images do you license per year?	
100 images or more	47%
50 - 100 images	20%
25 - 50 images	20%
10 - 25 images	7%
less than 10 images	6%

Use of Stock Rising

Do you expect your use of stock photography to increase in the coming year?

Yes	60%
No	40%

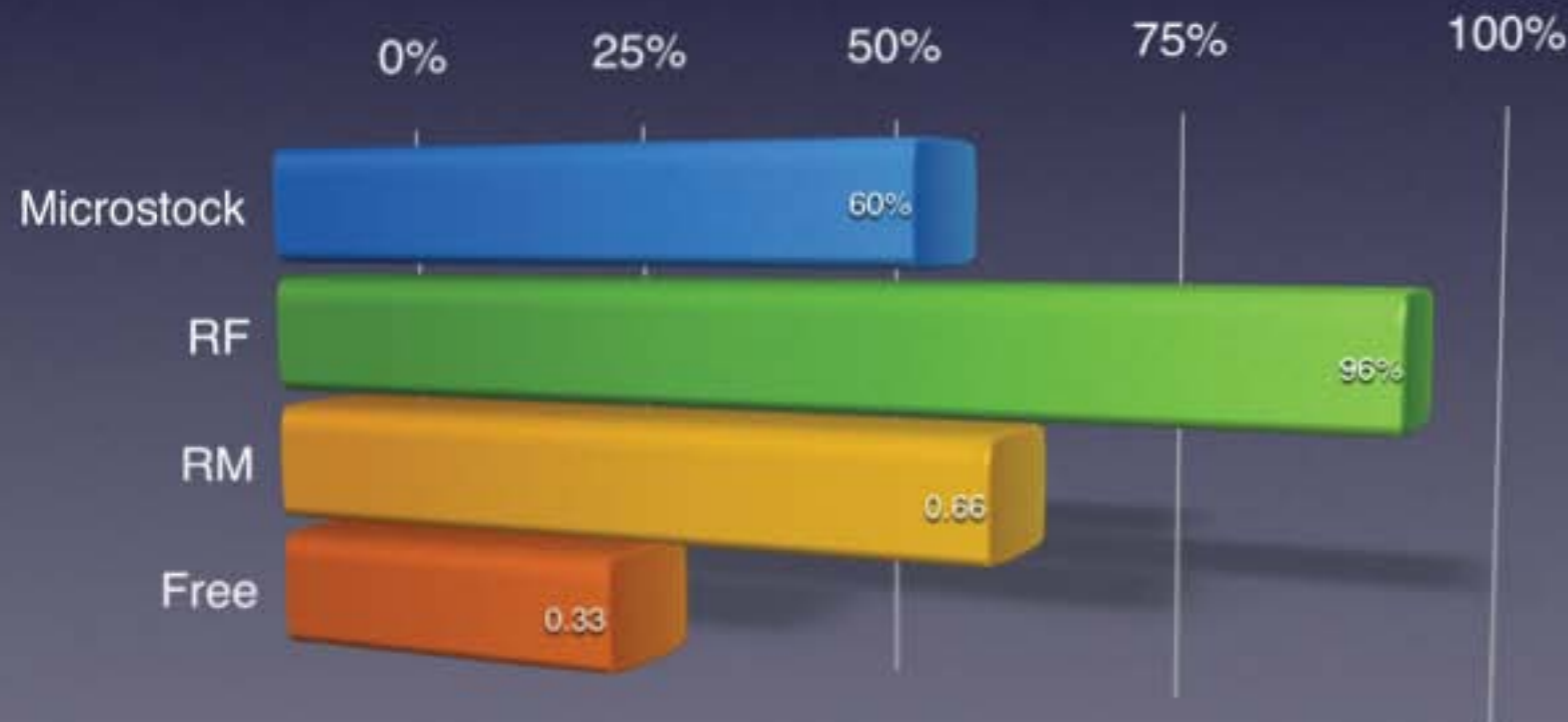
Do you expect your use of stock motion to increase in the coming year?

Yes	33%
No	67%

- Use of stock continues to rise. 60% of buyers say they expect their use of stock photography to rise in the next year, up from 57% in 2013.
- 33% say their use of motion will rise, which is slightly down from the previous year at 35%.

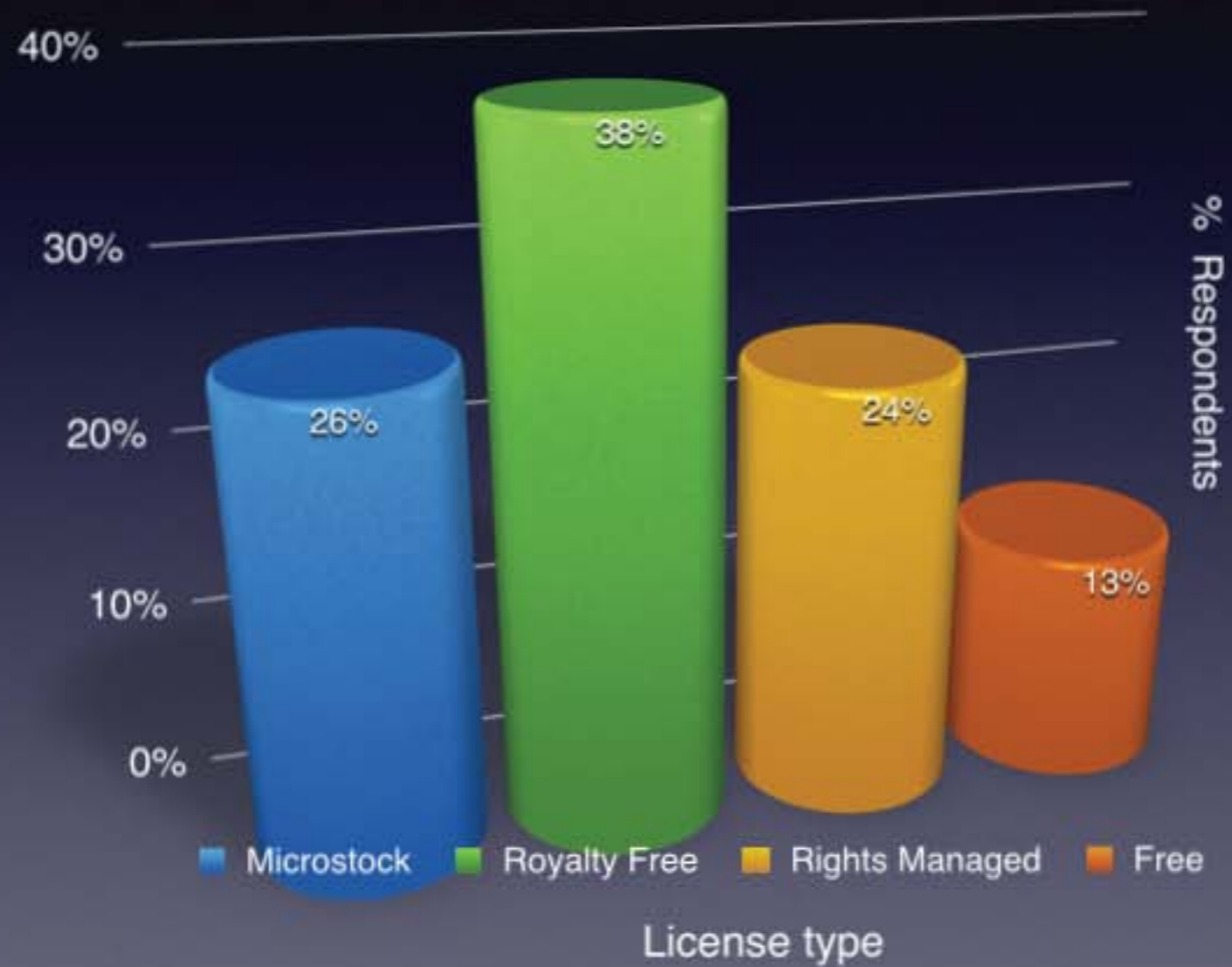
License Preferences

Which license types do you license?



- Royalty Free continues to dominate. 96% of buyers license traditional RF. This is up from 83% a year ago.
- Rights Managed has improved. 66% of buyers license RM, up from 55% a year ago. This may be an indication of budgets improving.
- 60% of buyers license Microstock. This is down from 65% a year ago.
- 33% say they use "free" images, up from 28% a year ago

Which license types do you purchase most?



Use by License Type

For which projects do you mainly use MICROSTOCK?

Internet	42%
Print	37%
Mobile	12%
Display	10%
Packaging	5%

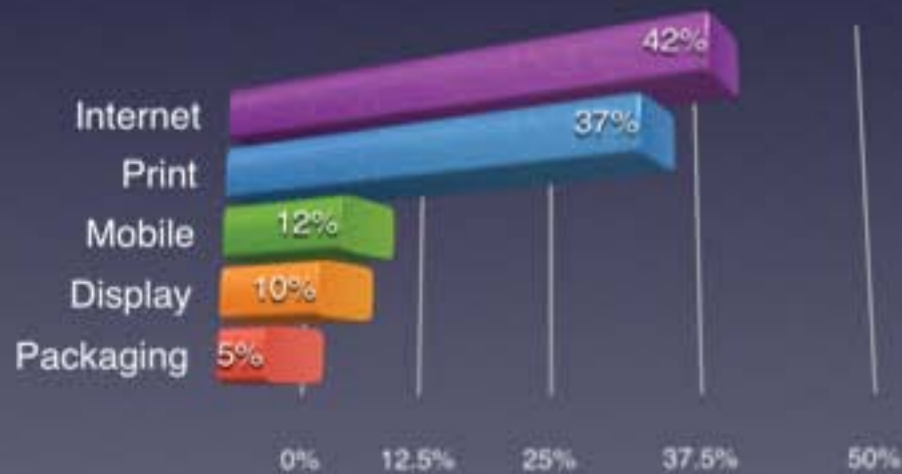
For which projects do you mainly use ROYALTY FREE?

Internet	40%
Print	72%
Mobile	12%
Display	10%
Packaging	8%

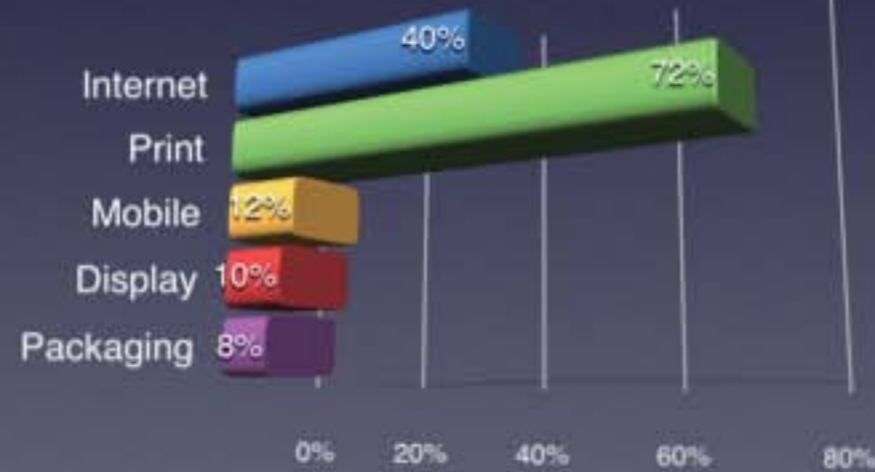
For which projects do you mainly use RIGHTS MANAGED?

Internet	17%
Print	47%
Mobile	5%
Display	3%
Packaging	3%

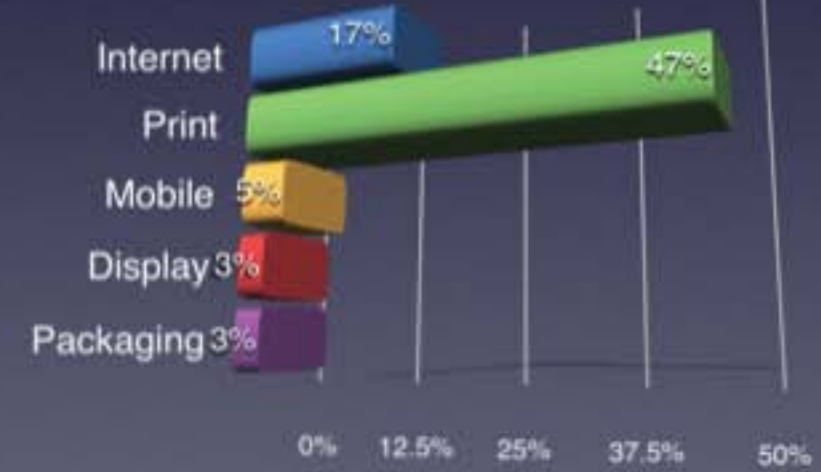
Microstock



RF



RM

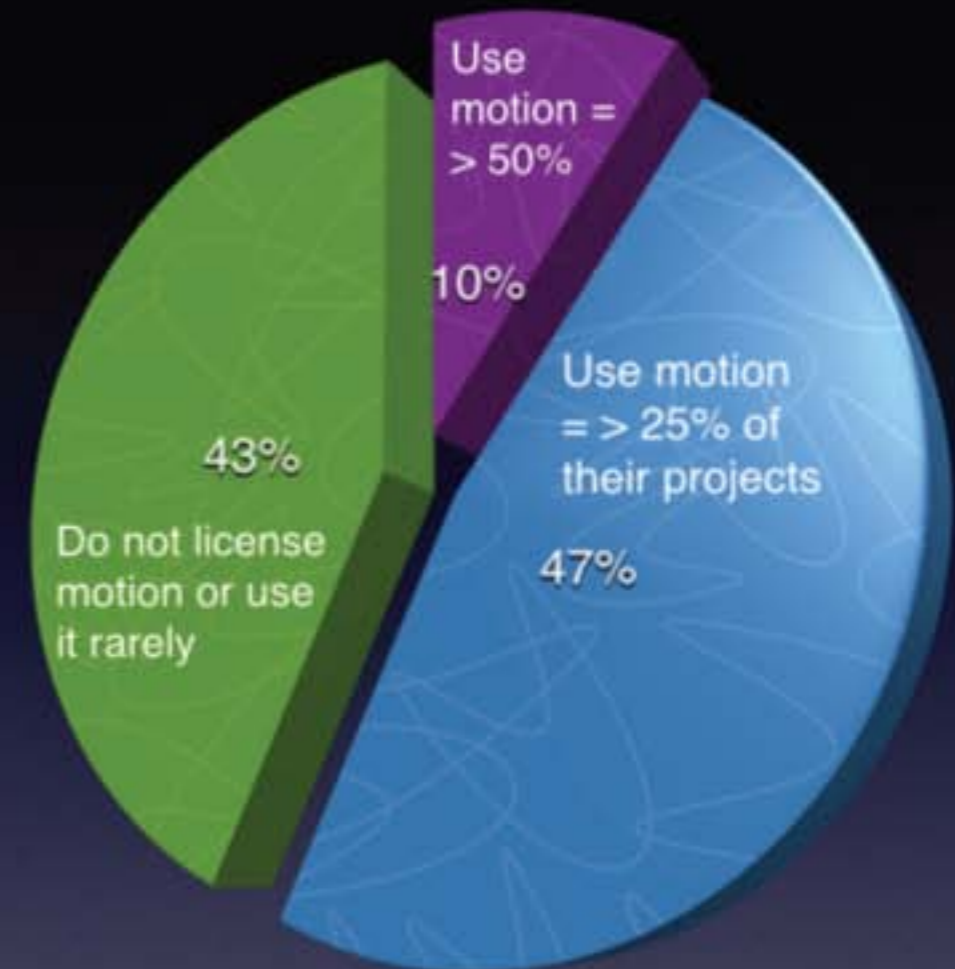


Media Type

All buyers said they use stock. We wanted to understand how many Photo buyers are using stills and motion. Mixed media licensing is on the rise.

- 73% said they license both stills and motion, although 43% said they use it rarely or not at all.
- 57% of respondents said they use motion in at least 25% of their projects. This is up from 46% a year ago.
- 47% use motion in 25% - 49%
- 10% use motion in 50% or more of their projects.

Art Buyers Using Motion



Are you using more mixed media today than in previous years?

Yes	60%
No	40%

Do you license Stills and Motion?

Yes	73%
No	27%

Most important factors affecting your image selection?	
Quality	1
In-perpetuity rights	2
Ease of access	3
Price	4
Exclusivity	5

Will you sacrifice quality for price?

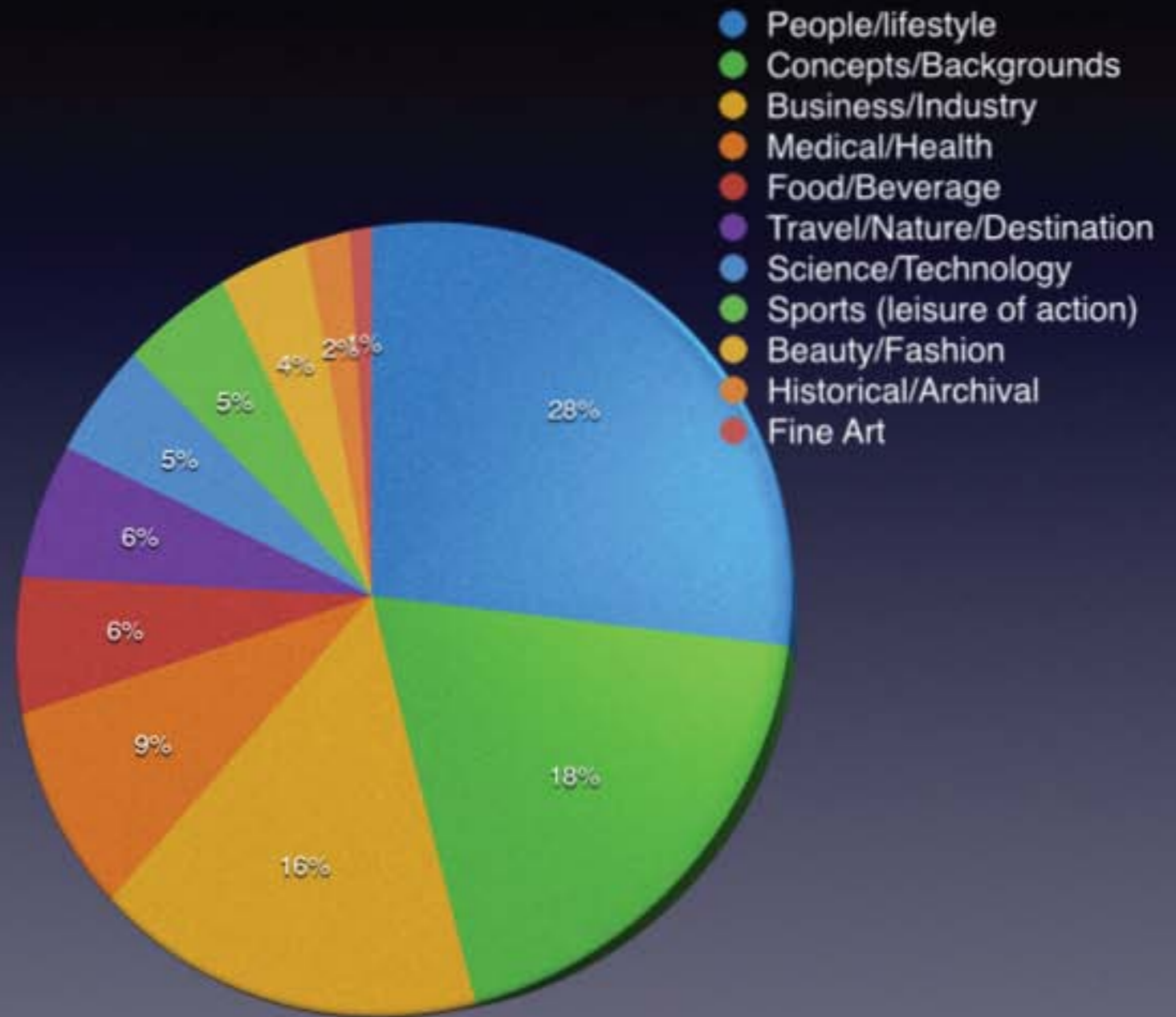


Quality remains the most important driver of the purchasing decision. However, this year, in-perpetuity rights shot up from 4th to 2nd, trading spots with price which went from 2nd to 4th.

This year, in addition to asking about the most important purchase drivers, we also ask if clients were willing to sacrifice quality for price. An overwhelming 77% said yes. 74% said “sometimes” and 3% said that the budget always wins. Given these seemingly opposed views, clients seem to be saying that quality does not mean “the best” and they must balance quality with price and rights. *Good enough, on budget wins.*

Most Needed Subjects

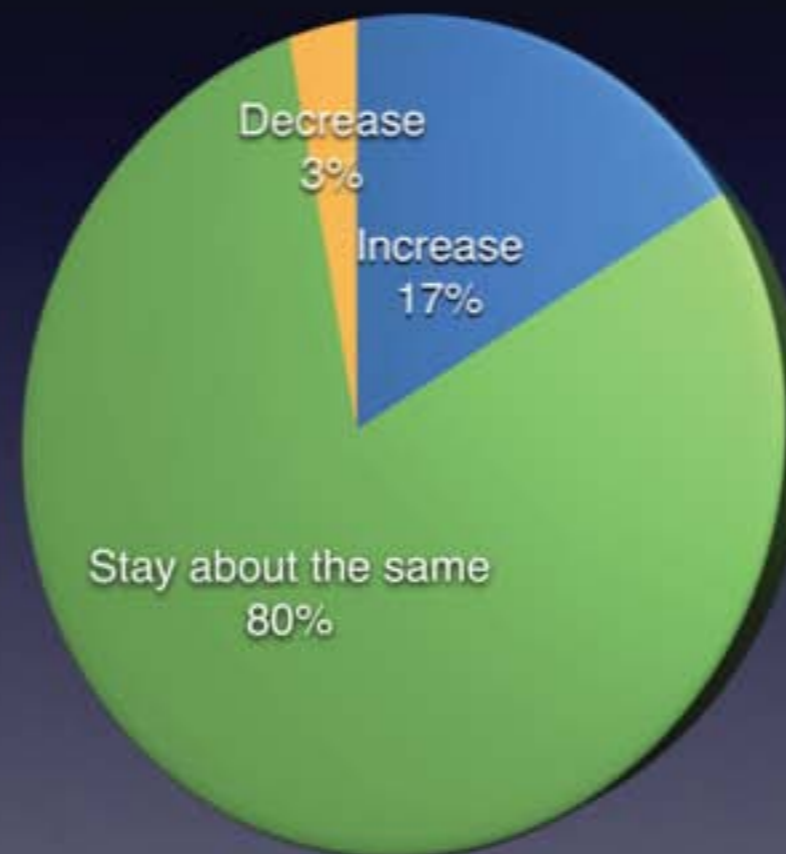
People/lifestyle	28%
Concepts/ Backgrounds	18%
Business/ Industry	16%
Medical/Health	9%
Food/Beverage	6%
Travel/Nature/ Destination	6%
Science/ Technology	5%
Sports (leisure of action)	5%
Beauty/Fashion	4%
Historical/ Archival	2%
Fine Art	1%



How important is sales support or personal service?

Extremely	20%
Important	17%
Somewhat	33%
Not so much	20%
Not at all	10%

Do you expect your budgets to increase in the next year?



What is your role in the final decision-making?

sole decision-maker	27%
Part of a team	67%
None - someone else makes the decision	7%

Wanting to get an idea of buyers' favorite tools/destinations and brand awareness, we asked about favorite destinations in two ways:

1) a general question, (open-ended), to see who is **top-of-mind**:

Getty, iStock, and Shutterstock remain the top-of-mind favorites. Getty jumped significantly to 77% or respondents mentioning them as compared to 54% in 2013. Corbis and Veer have good top of mind recognition.

Top of mind favorites:

77% named Getty

57% named iStock

53% named Shutterstock

40% named Corbis

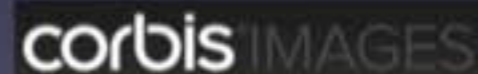
32% named Veer

28% named Thinkstock

20% named Masterfile

15% named Google Images

10% named each: Media Bakery, Pacasearch, and Stocksy

The logo for Getty Images, featuring the word "gettyimages" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol.The logo for iStock by Getty Images, with "iStock." in a large, bold, sans-serif font and "by Getty Images" in a smaller font below it.The logo for Shutterstock, featuring the word "shutterstock" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for Corbis Images, with "corbis" in a lowercase, sans-serif font and "IMAGES" in a smaller, all-caps font to its right.The logo for Veer, featuring the word "Veer" in a stylized, handwritten-style font.

Other agencies were mentioned but not enough to rank including: AGE, Imagesource, Big Stock, Alamy, Superstock, Offset, Pond5, Junkinvideo, stockxchange.

And, 2) a specific question (one answer only) to identify the **first stop, top destination or tool:**

Getty, iStock, and Thinkstock were the top three “first stop” destinations, with Thinkstock replacing Shutterstock which was number 3 in the 2013 survey and dropped this year to number 4.

First-Stop Destinations

40% named Getty

23% named iStock

17% named Thinkstock

8% named Shutterstock

5% named Google Images

2.5% named AGE and Veer

2% named PACASearch

The logo for Getty Images, featuring the word "gettyimages" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol.The logo for iStock, featuring the word "iStock." in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font, with "by Getty Images" in a smaller font below it.The logo for Thinkstock, featuring a blue circular icon with a white dot inside, followed by the word "Thinkstock." in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font, with "by Getty Images" in a smaller font below it.The logo for Shutterstock, featuring the word "shutterstock" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for Google Images, featuring the word "Google" in its multi-colored font, with "Images" in a smaller font below it.

Once again, Corbis had good top-of-mind recognition but drops off the list as a first-stop destination. This is true also for Masterfile which made the top-of-mind list for the first time this year.

What can agencies do better?

"[P]rovide more variety across all the sites. Sites generally include a lot of overlapping content."

"More genuine shots of people/lifestyle and more unique images. Better search engines to narrow down what I'm looking for."

"More 'real' people, people of color, less shiny, happy model look"

"More blogger style content."

"Ability to search for similar images; Ability to search for images with the same models; Ability to search for images with the same illustration style; Ability to easily filter out white backgrounds. PACAsearch should have a NON-Rights Managed filter in the top level search."

"Easier licensing for industry specific content."

"The quality of Royalty-free stock has gotten much worse in the last few years. It's often out of focus, and much of the same content is shared. I can only assume the better images are being shifted to RM, which clients are seldom willing to pay for. I used to photo direct A LOT. Now I have to search for stock. I rarely find images as good as what could have been shot. It's quite frustrating."

"[W]eeding out outdated material and poor quality images."

"High res for comps without watermarks."

"More natural business images that depict more natural business environments, less forced, art directed images. More images with people in them."

"Better pricing engines for rights managed imagery."

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