

# Behind the Logo

Linking Personal Branding to  
Business Success

*In today's crowded, digital-first landscape, authenticity isn't just a buzzword – it's a business strategy.* And who better to lead the charge than company executives themselves? A staggering 98% of tech executives agree that maintaining a strong personal presence on platforms like LinkedIn (82%), YouTube (61%), Twitter/X (58%), and TikTok (42%) could significantly improve business outcomes, but the reality of making this happen is somewhat more complicated.

## The Executive Struggle: A Snapshot

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Executives are in a unique position to humanize their brands, share insights, and attract top talent – all through social media. Many executives feel that posting more frequently (47%) or more thoughtfully (62%) from their personal profile would be impactful. An even greater number believe they could make a difference through increased engagement, with 81% of tech executives saying it's impactful to engage with their company's content and another 54% believing they should personally engage with other relevant profiles.

Getting it right is table stakes, and execs widely believe that doing so could lead to: greater partnership opportunities (66%); thought leadership opportunities like podcast features and speaking engagements (60%); easier recruitment of top candidates (48%); improved sales pipeline (46%); increased revenue (44%); and even improved engagement (41%) and retention (28%) of current employees.

*Tech executives in the United States were 214% more likely than those in the United Kingdom to say keeping a personal presence on TikTok would improve business outcomes.*

Clearly, today's executives readily acknowledge the value of social media to their business goals. However, acknowledging the value of social media and actualizing it are two very different things. Sixty-two percent of tech executives find it difficult to prioritize social media amidst their many responsibilities, with fewer than half (**46%**) saying they post at their desired cadence.

But while bandwidth certainly lies at the center of the issue, lack of time is far from being the only challenge executives must overcome when they sit down to post:



Execs' pain points are as diverse as they are daunting. For instance, female executives were **73%** more likely than their male counterparts to worry about being judged negatively when posting on social media. They were also **63%** more likely to worry about alienating segments of their audience when navigating sensitive topics, and **60%** more likely to struggle with impostor syndrome.

So after uncovering the myriad difficulties busy executives face in trying to launch and maintain a personal brand on social media, perhaps the question becomes: why should they bother? The answer lies in understanding the expectations and behaviors of key stakeholders such as buyers, investors, and potential recruits.

## In the Eyes of the Buyer

*In the B2B buying process, transactions aren't just transactions but partnerships. Trust is therefore paramount.*

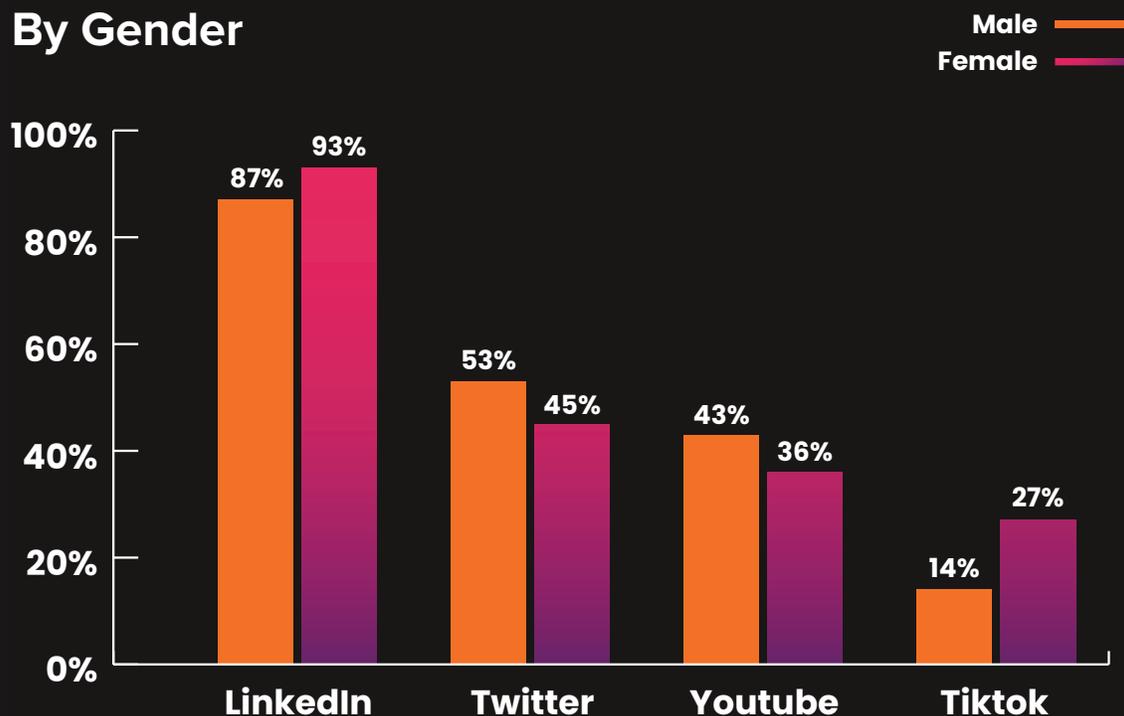
Eighty-eight percent of B2B buyers say they occasionally (**35%**), usually (**35%**), or always (**18%**) examine the social media profiles of brands they're evaluating before making a final purchase decision. For over half (**53%**), this includes the profiles of top ranking executives.

This goes beyond mere curiosity. Seventy-one percent say that checking social media is an integral part of their vetting process as B2B buyers, during which they seek assurance in the form of thought leadership, authenticity, and company values as reflected through the company's leaders.

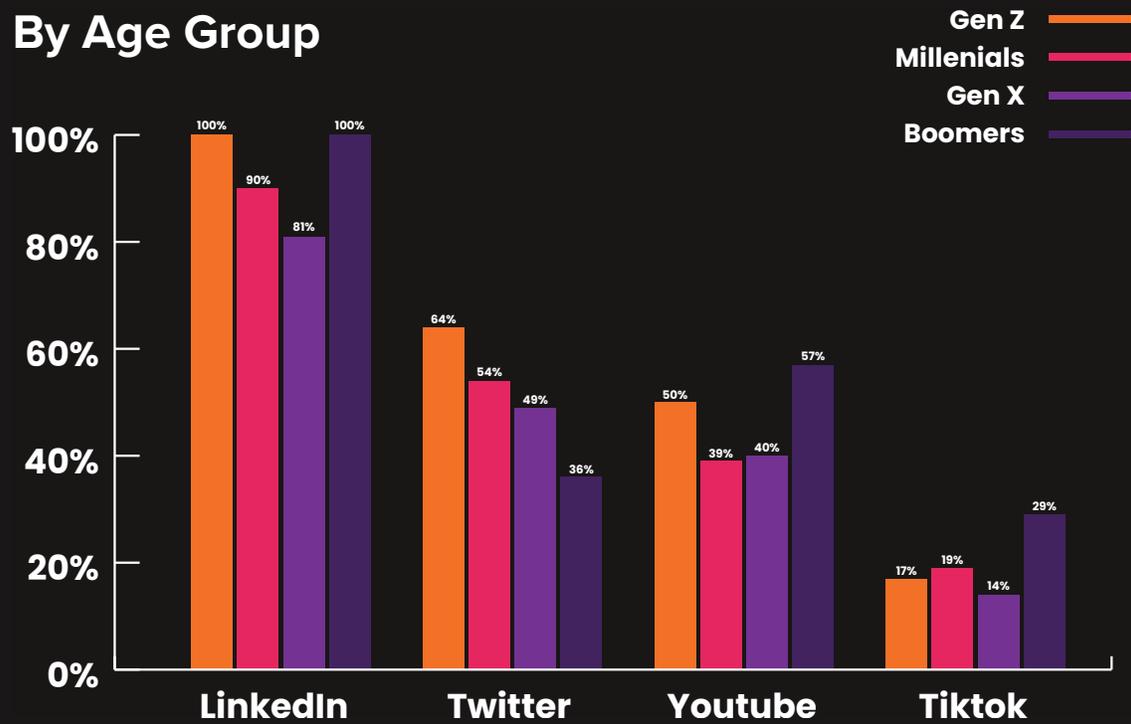
Where they do this research varies along a number of demographic and firmographic lines, but overall, **88%** go to LinkedIn to gather information, **52%** Twitter/X, **41%** YouTube, and **17%** TikTok, while another **14%** prefer various other platforms.

## Buyer Research Platforms

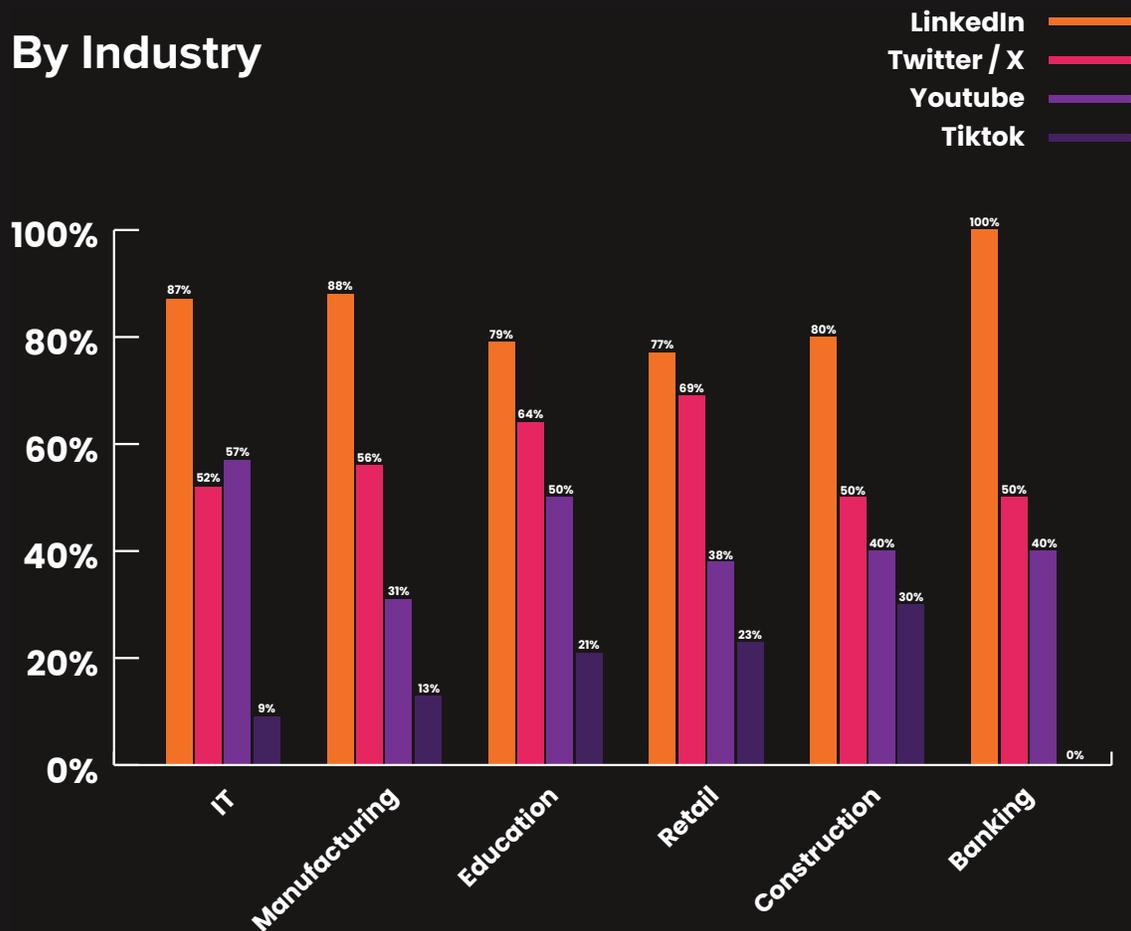
### By Gender



## By Age Group



## By Industry



**They're looking for signs of concrete alignment between their needs and a company's offerings** – both practical and philosophical. B2B buyers prioritize transparency into business challenges and how they're addressed (**52%**), awards and recognitions (**51%**), and thoughtful engagement with others (**48%**) when evaluating a brand's leadership on social media. Approximately half of all B2B buyers say these elements are crucial indicators that can sway a purchasing decision, highlighting the direct link between executive personal branding and business success.

Behind-the-scenes glimpses into company culture (**45%**), engagement in industry events and conferences (**42%**), and interactions with other industry leaders (**42%**) also rank highly on the list of desirable findings, allowing buyers to gauge the authenticity, proactivity, and differentiating factors of companies with which they're considering doing business.

At the very least, buyers are looking for something to help inform their decision-making – and amidst an often dizzying array of choices, a blank space can tank a deal almost as quickly as a negative impression. Sixty-nine percent of B2B buyers agree that a lack of information about a company's leadership team on social media makes it more difficult to evaluate the company as a vendor, and nearly two-thirds (**65%**) say that when they're evaluating partnerships or vendors, a brand with a visible executive team presence on social media will win over an otherwise equivalent brand without.

However, this demand for executive visibility isn't felt quite as keenly in the UK, with B2B buyers in the US expressing a **22%** higher likelihood of checking leadership teams' profiles by comparison.

Ultimately, every B2B buyer is a flesh-and-blood person behind the computer screen – and people typically want to buy from other people over faceless entities. Some brands solve for this by attempting to personify their brands with varying degrees of success; much less difficult to achieve is the act of simply letting buyers see the actual people behind the brand.

***Brands that fail to do so are leaving money on the table.***

Almost half (**45%**) of buyers can attribute at least one business purchase to the online presence of a specific employee within a vendor organization, with these buyers citing an estimated average of six such purchases over the past year, to an estimated median tune of **\$18,500**.

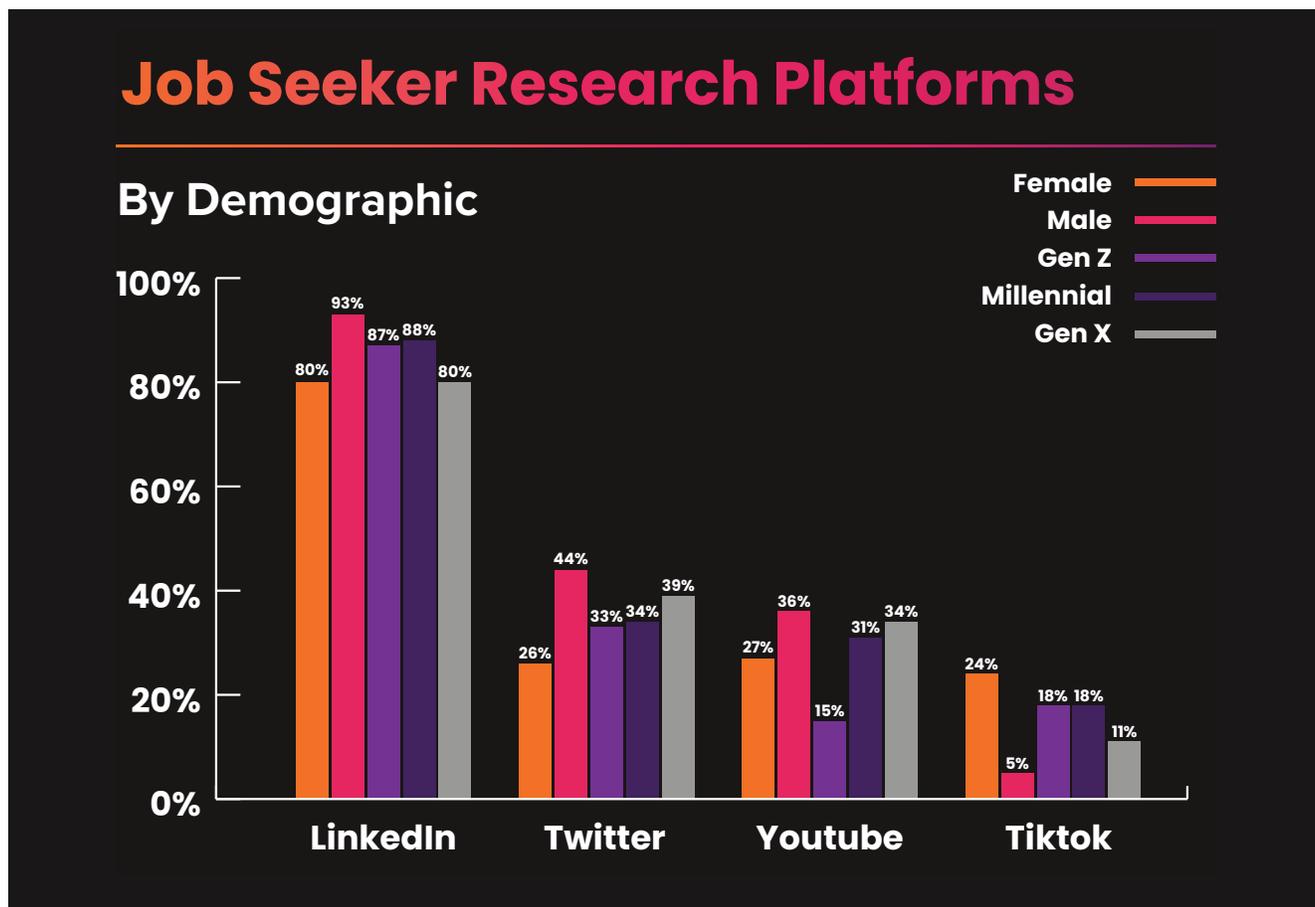
# Competing for Talent

Buyers aren't the only critical stakeholders keeping a close eye on what executives are up to online. In the competitive job market, where top talent has the luxury of choice, job seekers are increasingly turning to social media to vet potential employers. And they're not just looking at company pages; they're scrutinizing the profiles of executives and other employees to gauge company culture, leadership style, and values. This social media deep dive is a pivotal step in the job search process, influencing where they want to invest their skills and grow their careers.

Sixty percent of job seekers confirm that they routinely investigate the social media activities of a company before accepting a job offer (24%) or even submitting a resumé (76%). About half (47%) of those prospects will include the leadership team in this deep dive.

Nearly all (94%) those who browse leadership team social media profiles agree that doing so offers insights into internal company dynamics not always apparent in job descriptions or interviews, making this a critical part of the job hunt process for 74% of these job seekers.

Prospects might seek positive indicators of compatibility with organizations across a variety of platforms – once again, variable by demographic – but overall, they are still 153% more likely to look to LinkedIn than the next most popular choice, Twitter/X.



TikTok clocked in as the least likely place for potential recruits to go looking, but with an extreme variance along gender lines: female job seekers were **380%** more likely than their male counterparts to say they use TikTok to evaluate companies with which they're considering employment.

Job seekers comb executive profiles on their platform(s) of choice looking for indicators of good work/life balance (**76%**); behind-the-scenes glimpses into company culture (**69%**); thoughtful interactions with others (**58%**); transparency into how business challenges are addressed (**57%**); and evidence of a vibrant (**53%**) and inclusive (**48%**) company culture.

## Other factors that can influence their likelihood of applying for a role:

Evidence of alignment on social issues:	46%
Evidence of community involvement and/or social responsibility:	41%
Awards, recognitions, and/or achievements:	41%
Advocacy for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace:	38%
Original research/data:	32%
Original thought leadership:	31%
Personal/relatable content (personal anecdotes, family/pet photos, etc):	28%
Endorsements or recommendations:	23%
Engagement in industry events or conferences:	22%
Interactions with other industry leaders:	21%

And when the time comes, job seekers also use social media as a tool to gain confidence before an interview: 6 in 10 say they usually (**31%**) or always (**29%**) review the LinkedIn profile of an interviewer whose identity is known, and of these, **98%** say that the more information is available on social media in advance of their interview, the more comfortable they feel.

# Investment Trust Metrics

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Investors – encompassing venture capitalists, private equity firms, wealth managers, angel investors, and more – serve as the lifeblood for many companies, providing the essential capital needed to fuel growth. Beyond mere funding, they also bring a wealth of experience, industry connections, and strategic guidance to the table, helping businesses navigate the choppy waters of market competition and any operational hurdles. Attracting the right investors is thus key to long-term success.

The relationship between a business and its investors is built on trust and the shared belief in the company’s potential for success. As such, investors are constantly on the lookout for promising opportunities, in which they can not only recoup their investment but ideally achieve substantial returns. The search for the “next big thing” pushes investors to employ a variety of methods to assess the viability and potential of a venture, ranging from financial audits to market trend analyses.

The growing ubiquity of social media has changed the way investors gather insights to make these assessments. No longer confined to financial statements and business plans, investors now have at their fingertips a wealth of qualitative data about a company’s leadership, culture, and industry engagement – all critical factors in the decision-making process. Seventy-five percent of tech investors say they’ve discovered promising investment opportunities through social media.

Seventy-three percent of tech investors say that when considering an investment, they usually **(29%)** or always **(44%)** review the social media profiles of company executives as part of their due diligence process. Checking LinkedIn is once again the standard, with 9 out of 10 investors using this platform to evaluate the leadership teams of potential investments. But they might also check Twitter/X **(63%)**, YouTube **(43%)**, TikTok **(27%)**, or various other platforms **(8%)** as well.

Investors aren’t just reviewing these profiles for signs of risk, but also for depth of thought leadership and quality of network connections, considered critical indicators of potential for long-term success. Eighty-one percent of tech investors agree that interactions between company executives and their audience on social media can indicate strong leadership, which means that ***examining the profiles of top company executives is an integral part of the due diligence process for 71% of investors.***

The finding(s) that would make them feel more confident are diverse, but taken altogether, reflect a comprehensive evaluation criteria that extends beyond the traditional metrics of financial health and market potential. Investors today seek a more holistic view of potential investments, hoping to find assurance through the eyes of its leaders that a company is well-managed, ethically grounded, and culturally vibrant.

## What Investors Want

Lack of potential “red flags” or risks:	47%
Transparency into business challenges and how they’re addressed:	47%
Original thought leadership:	37%
Thoughtful engagement with others:	37%
Original research/data:	37%
Evidence of vibrant company culture:	35%
Interactions with other industry leaders:	33%
Awards, recognitions, and/or achievements:	33%
Advocacy for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace:	33%
Behind-the-scenes glimpses into company culture:	31%
Evidence of community involvement and/or social responsibility:	31%
Engagement in industry events or conferences:	31%
Indicators of good work/life balance:	27%
Evidence of inclusive company culture:	25%

Companies and executives who attempt to play it safe by keeping quiet aren’t doing themselves any favors: **nearly two-thirds (65%) of tech investors feel that a lack of social media presence, including top executives, is a red flag when evaluating tech companies for investment.**



## The Case for Executive Social Presence

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Comparing these various perspectives, a clear picture emerges: the digital presence of a company's leadership is more than a mere extension of the brand, but in fact a critical pillar of brand strategy in a world increasingly swayed by visible hallmarks of authenticity. For busy executives, the effort it takes to build out a personal brand on social media is no small feat; however, it's clear that those who don't engage run the risk of falling behind competitors.

Buyers look to the social profiles of executives to gauge trustworthiness and alignment with their own values; investors scrutinize these digital footprints for signs of vision and stability; and job seekers seek out clues to company culture and leadership ethos. In each case, the social media presence — or absence — of company leaders plays a pivotal role in shaping decisions that directly impact the company's bottom line and future growth.

# The conclusion is inescapable

Investing time and resources into building a strong, authentic social media presence is not just worthwhile but essential for today's executives. It's a strategic investment that pays dividends in enhanced trust, deeper engagement, and ultimately, a stronger, more resilient brand. In a world where digital narratives can define a company's success or failure, the question is no longer if executives should engage on social media, but how they can do so most effectively, authentically, and strategically – and how their companies can best support them along the way.



## About Kickstand

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Kickstand is a global marketing agency specializing in support of high growth technology brands. Offering a data-first approach to PR and services that include media and analyst relations, research, content, crisis communications, and influencer marketing, Kickstand helps build well-defended market leaders in some of today's most innovative industries including mobility, robotics, AI, cybersecurity, fintech, insurtech, supply chain and logistics, sales and marketing tech, and ecommerce. For more information about our approach and how we help brands scale and successfully exit, visit [www.meetkickstand.com](http://www.meetkickstand.com)



## About Pavilion

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Pavilion was founded in 2016 as a support network for revenue leaders. Since then, it has grown into a 10,000+ member international community of go-to-market leaders. Through structured training in Pavilion University; private, moderated peer groups; and in-person events, Pavilion delivers on its mission to help revenue leaders unlock and achieve their full professional potential. For more information about Pavilion or to become a member, please visit [www.joinpavilion.com](http://www.joinpavilion.com)

## Survey Methodology

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Kickstand surveyed an audience of 596 tech executives, B2B buyers, job seekers, and tech investors. The survey was conducted online between February 26 - March 26, 2024 with a 95% confidence level, +/- 4% margin of error. The respondent split was 42% job seekers, 36% buyers, 14% tech executives, and 9% investors.

