

Optimum Blending of Panels and Social Media Respondents

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Industry challenges

The demand for online research continues to grow, and as an industry we need to meet the challenges of

1. Providing a larger sampling universe
2. Meeting the growing demand for increasingly specific segments of the consumer population
3. Involving people in research who do not participate in online panels and are not easily found by “internet intercept” methods

We seek alternative channels to increase our sampling population and to avoid over-sampling our existing respondent base

Opportunity – Social Media

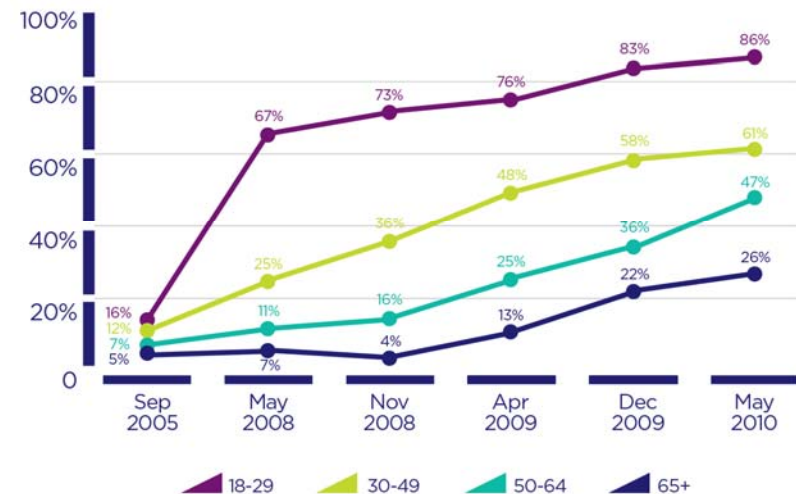
Engage **social media**

Extend our sampling universe

Include respondents who would not participate in online panels

Provide a **richer**, more **comprehensive** and **inclusive** sample

US Internet Users Who Use Social Network Sites, by Age, 2005-2010
% of each group



*Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project, "Older Adults and Social Media," Aug 27, 2010

Research Now objectives

The acquisition of Peanut Labs has enabled Research Now to access social media respondents

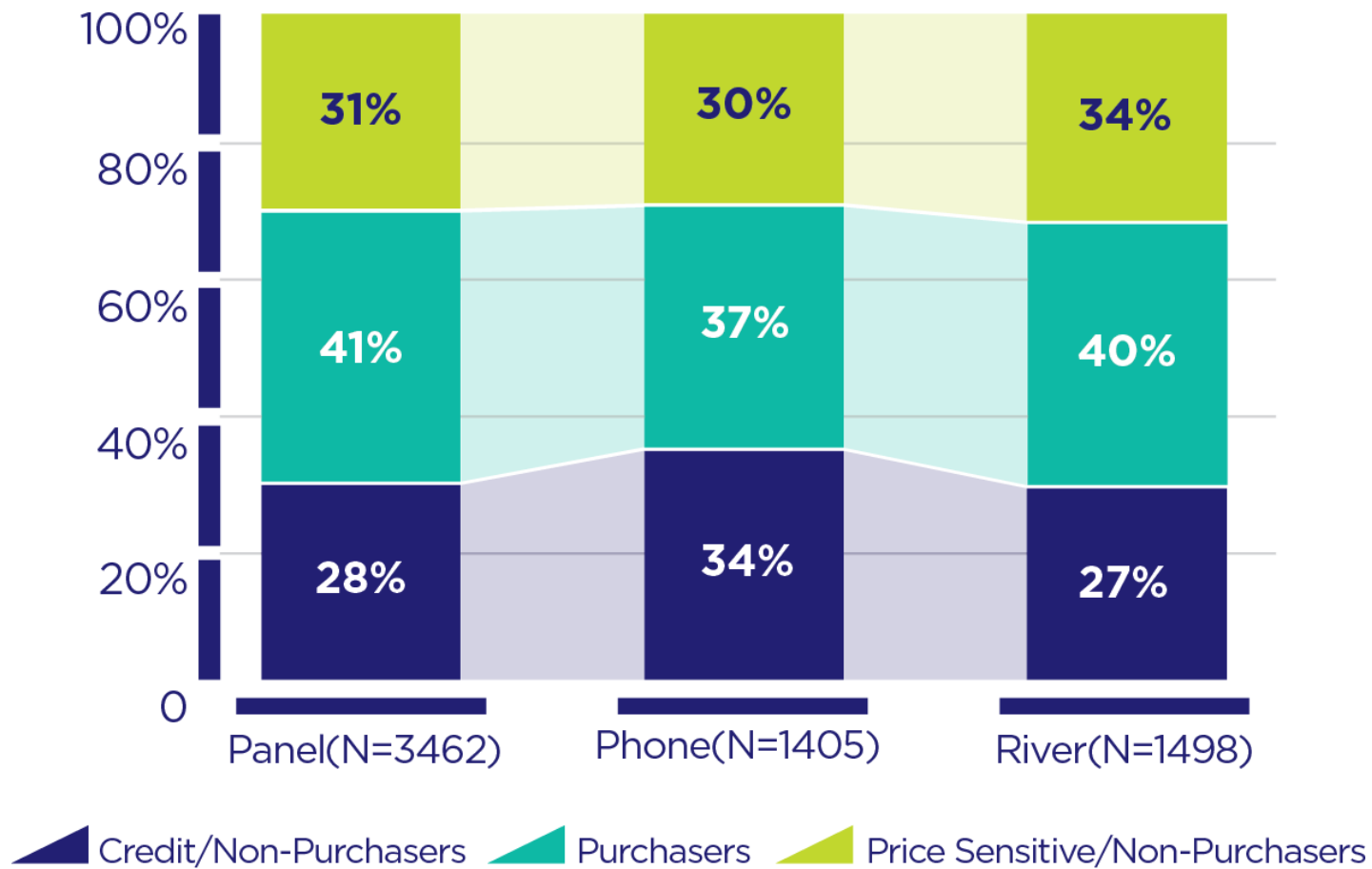
Social media sample can be used as a single source OR blended with our panel respondents

To determine the blend our research objectives were;

- To understand the differences between social media respondents and Research Now panel respondents
- Establish a methodology that would enable us to blend sample sources to deliver consistent data to our clients

All sources are different!

Modal differences in buying behaviour segmentations



What are the differences?

Social Media Respondents



Communicate with friends, share media, be entertained...

Panel Respondents



Online shopping, banking, book travel...

VS

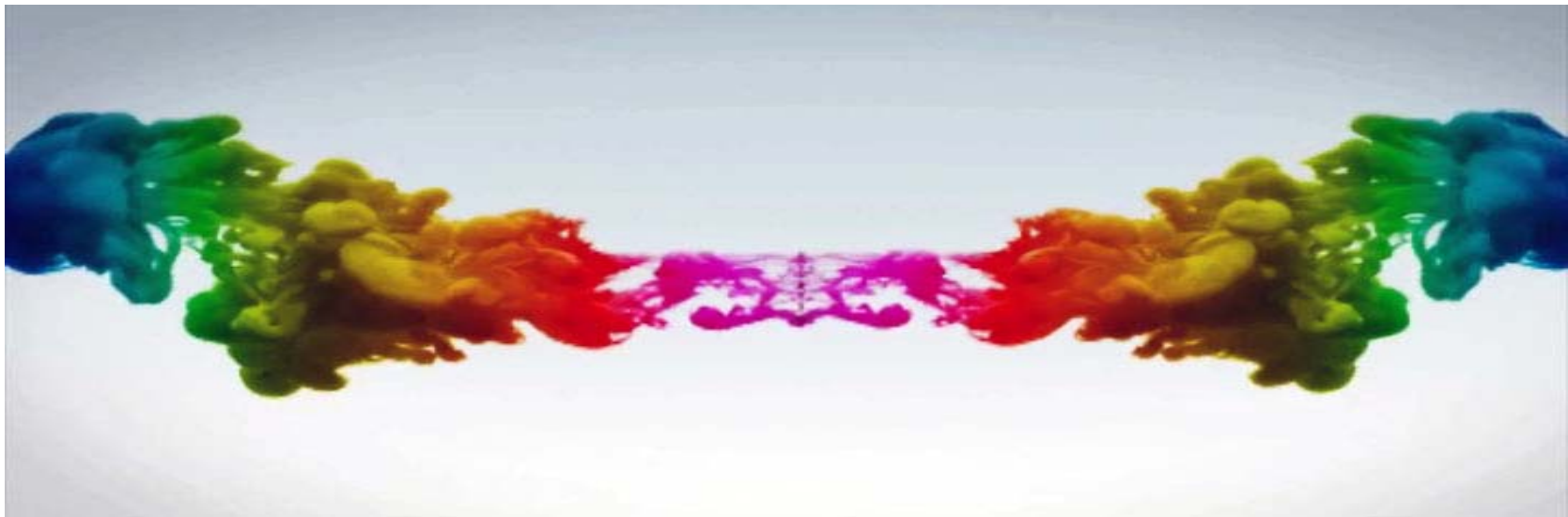
Social Media respondents are less likely to belong to a panel and participate in fewer surveys

Blending social media sample

Different sample sources possess **different** characteristics

Researchers and their clients desire sample frame **consistency**
– results must be **repeatable**

To avoid sample frame **variability**, social media respondents must be **blended by design** with panel sample



A scientific blend

A **scientific blend** seeks to achieve a standard

It must be transparent, documented and repeatable



Blending is different from “mixing” which lacks precision

Blending is a **robust process**

Methodology

Sample sources: Valued Opinions Panel and social media in the United States

Sample size: Valued Opinions Panel - 4009 respondents
Social media - 3887 respondents
TOTAL of 7896 Respondents

Fieldwork: 9/14/2010-12/19/2010

Survey length: 17 minutes

Quotas: Gender, age, household income & ethnicity

Generates ten segmentations:

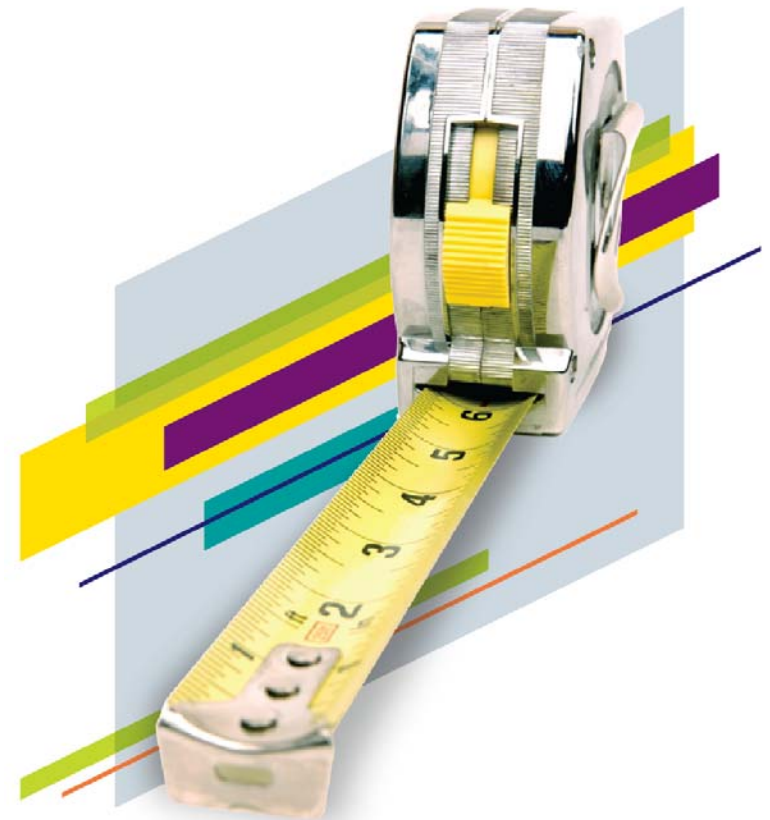
- Buying behaviour, 37 variables
- Socio-graphics, 31 variables
- Media, 31 variables
- Plus seven other market segmentations

Structural segmentations

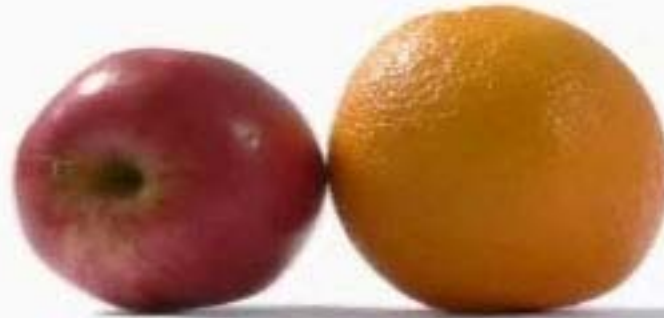
We divide respondents into “segments” by their behaviours

The segments form a language which helps us compare different sample sources

We call it a behavioural fingerprint; it is an important measurement tool



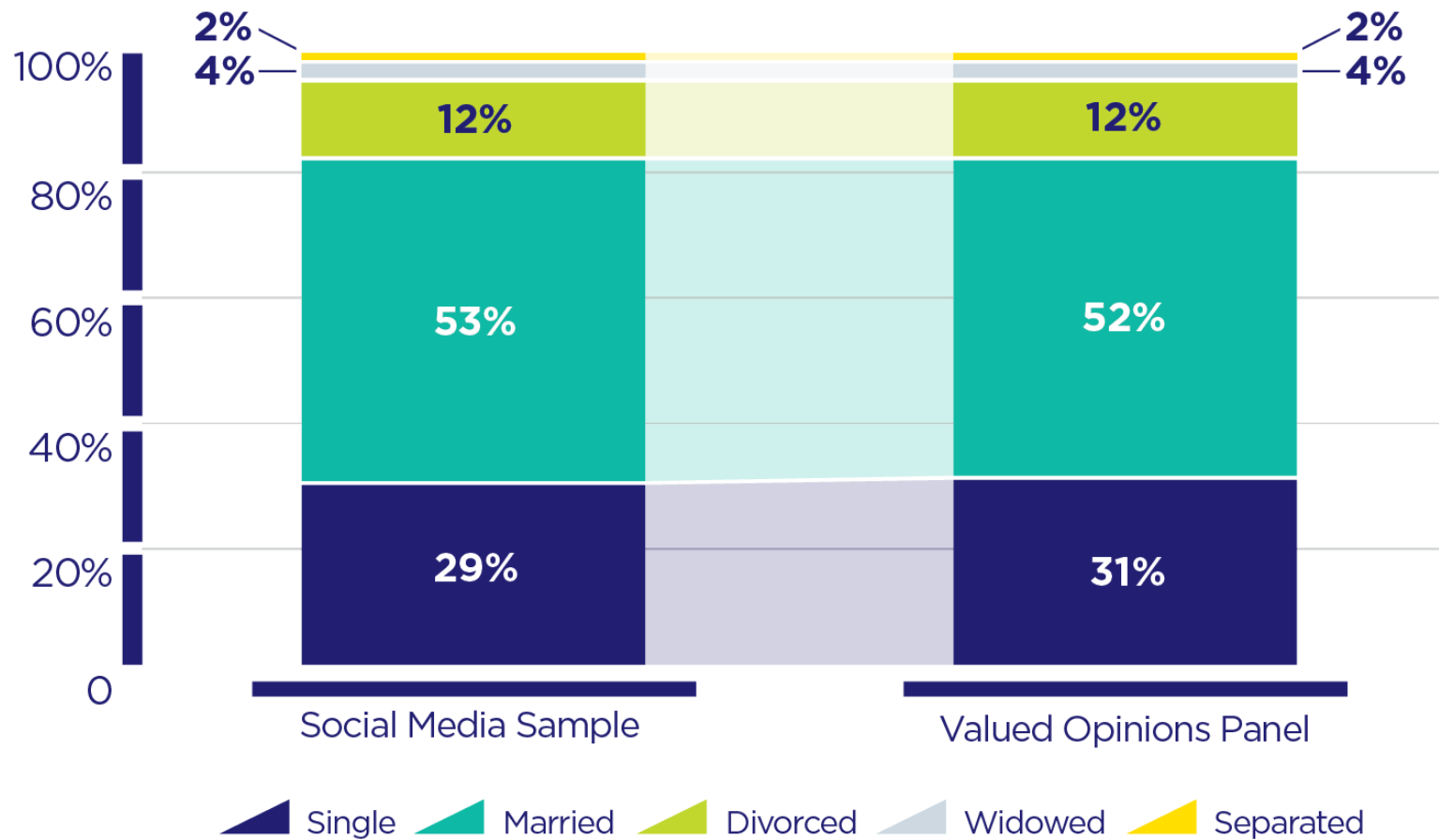
Challenge:



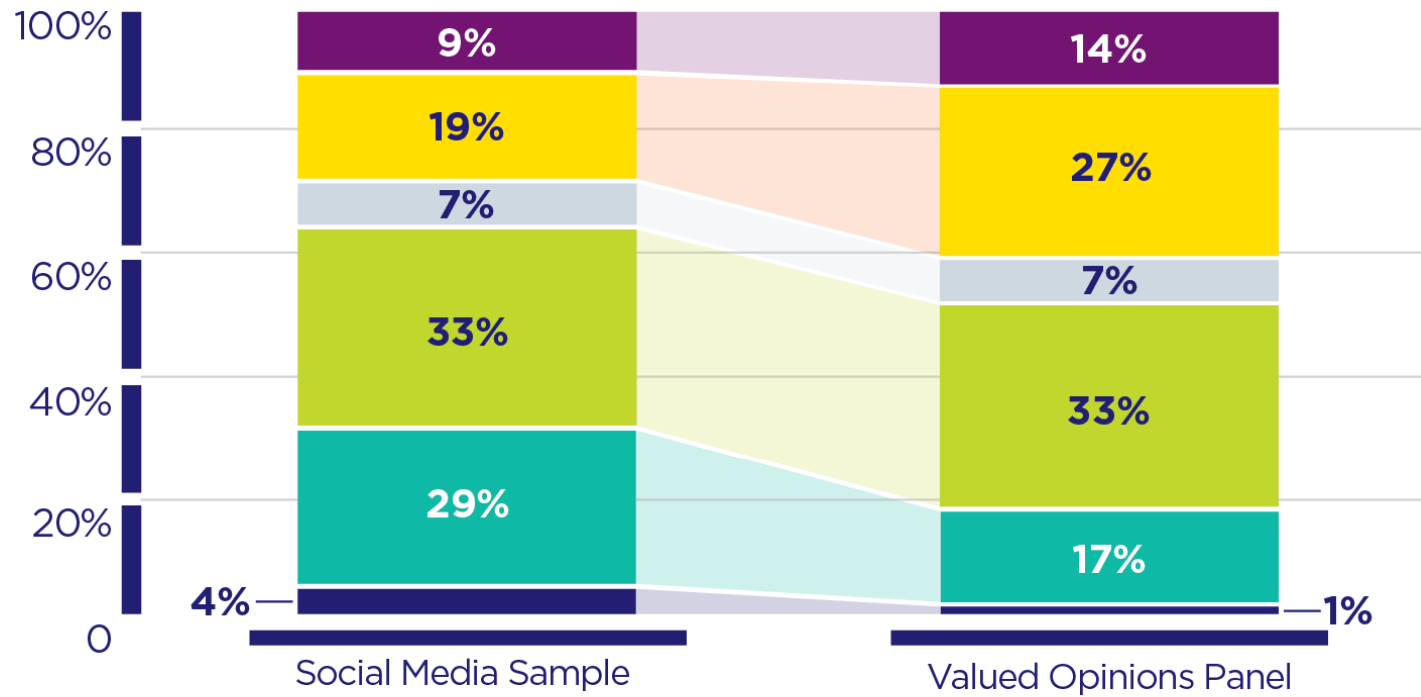
Are they different?

**Are there differences between social media
and panel respondents?**

Marital status was similar across sources



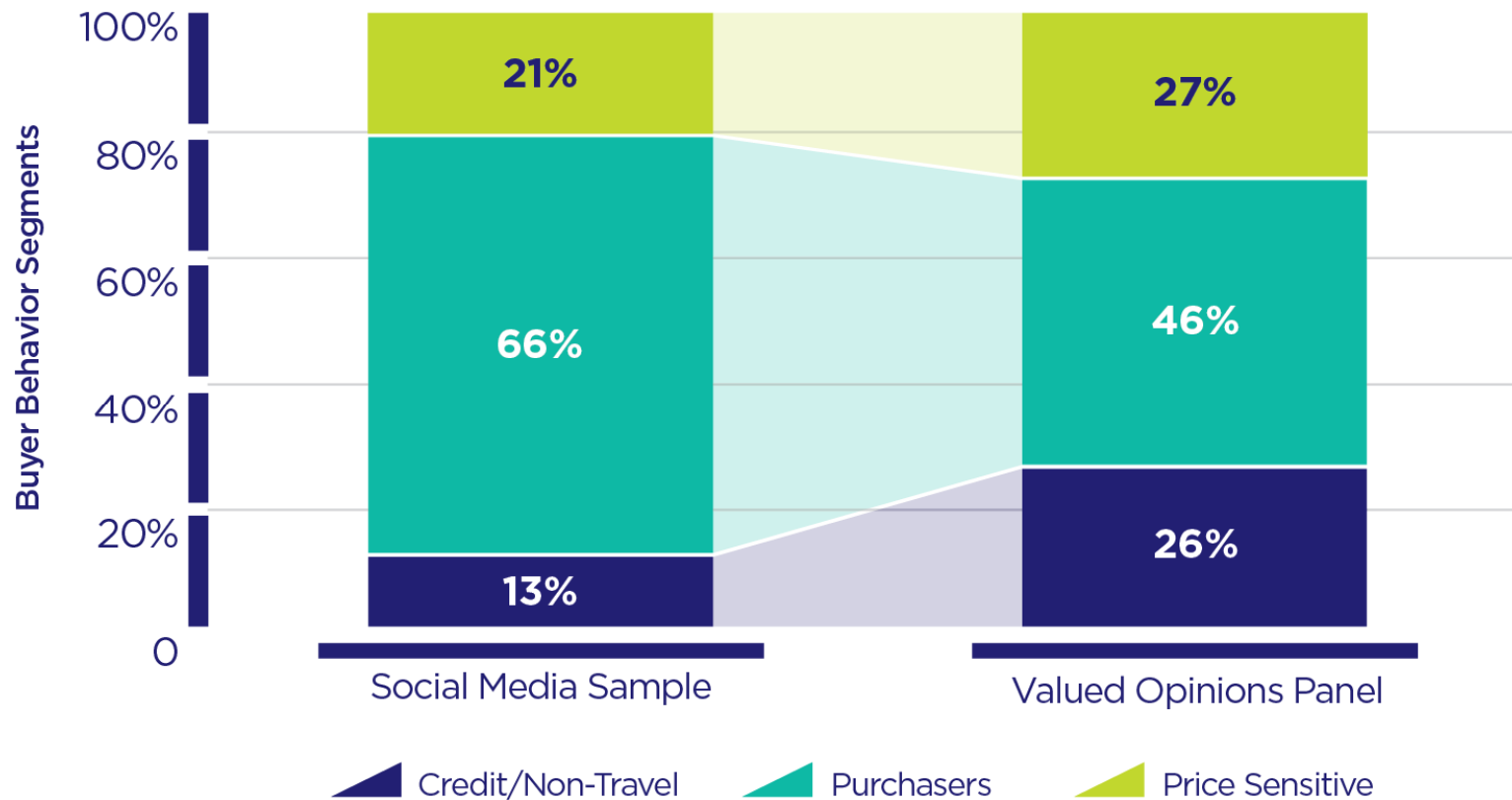
Panel respondents are better educated



- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Technical or vocational school
- College graduate
- Post-graduate work or degree

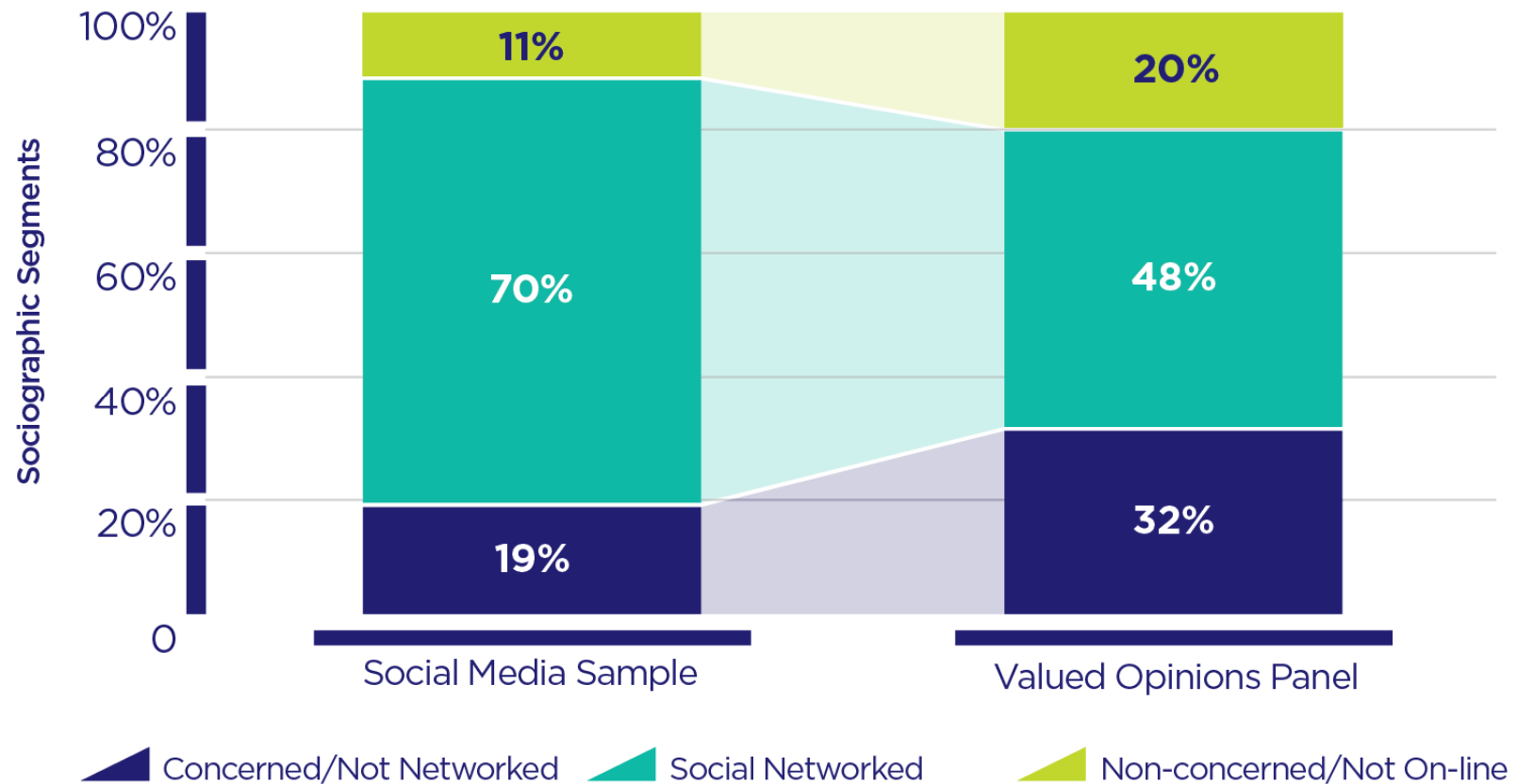
Buyer Behaviour

Social media respondents are early adopters of technology and tend to purchase more hi-tech devices



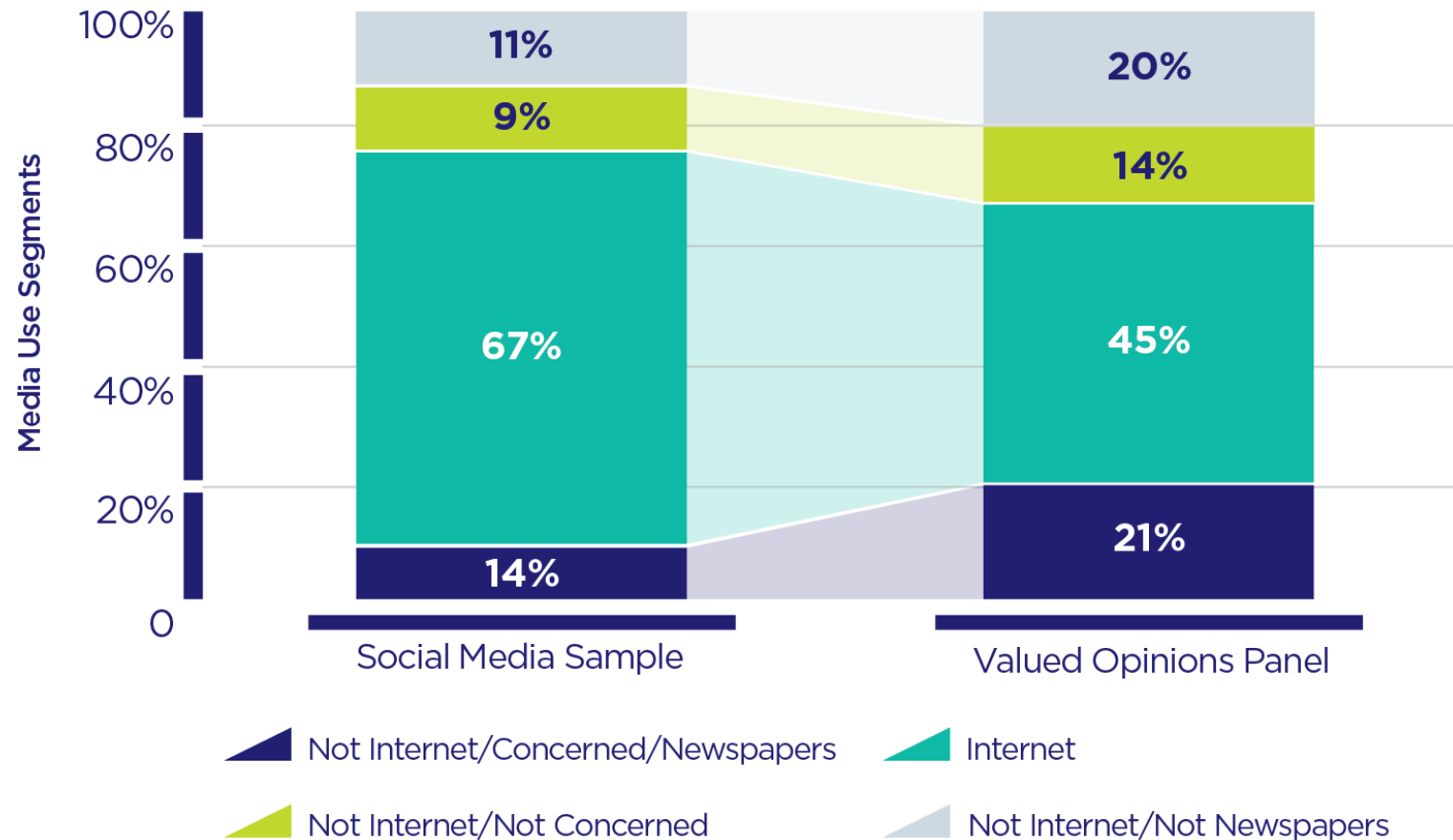
Socio-graphics

Social media respondents use the internet more often for connecting with others




Media

Social media respondents use the internet for entertainment and news gathering more often



Yes, they are different...




Social network respondents have the potential to **change** the behaviour of the sample, even when demographics are held **constant**



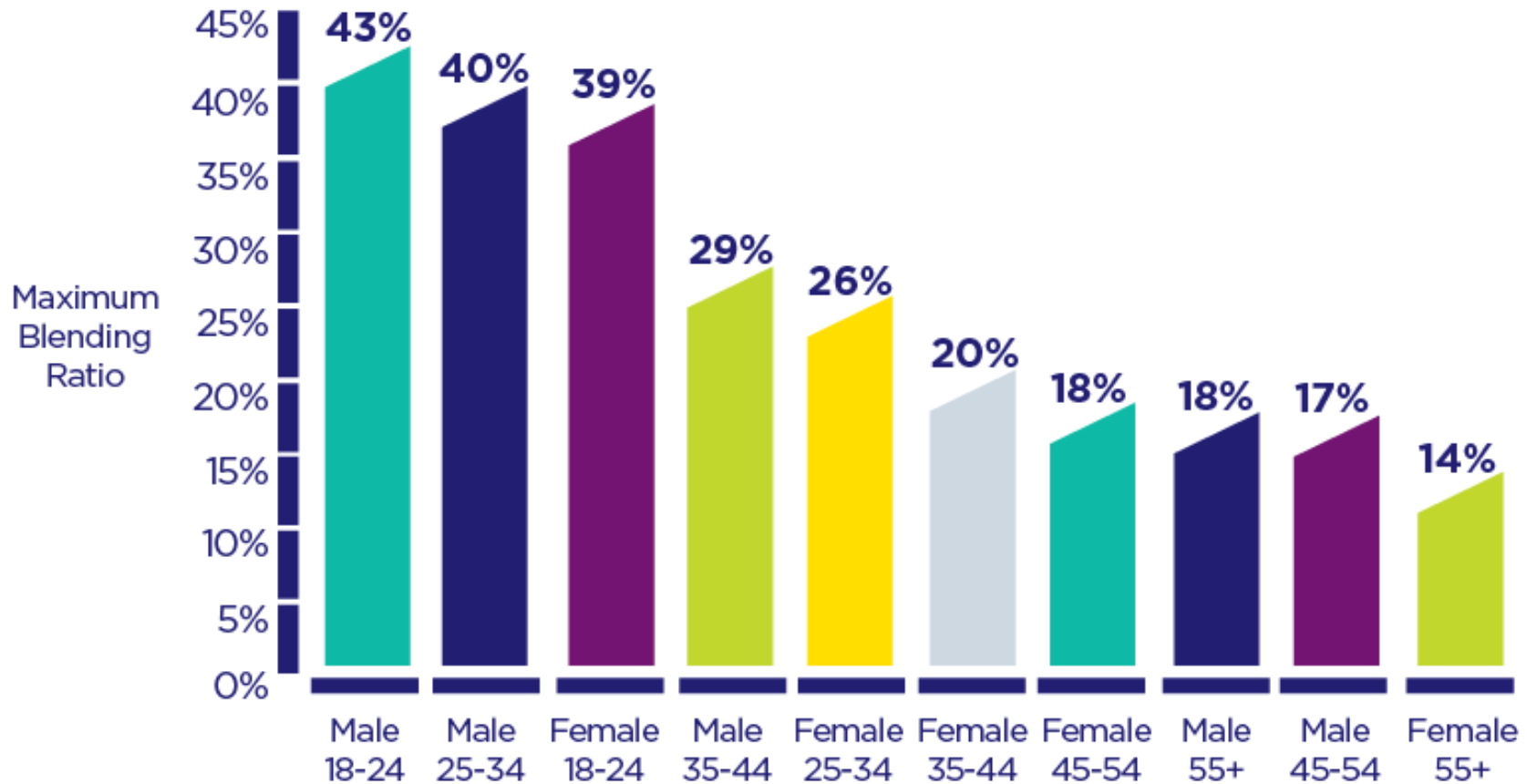
An absence of detectable difference implies similarity

Establishing a threshold



A conservative threshold for establishing an absence of difference, is a statistical probability of **32%**, assuming a sample size of 1500 (i.e. there is **less than one standard error** of difference)

The greater the similarity found within demographic groups the more liberally we can blend them



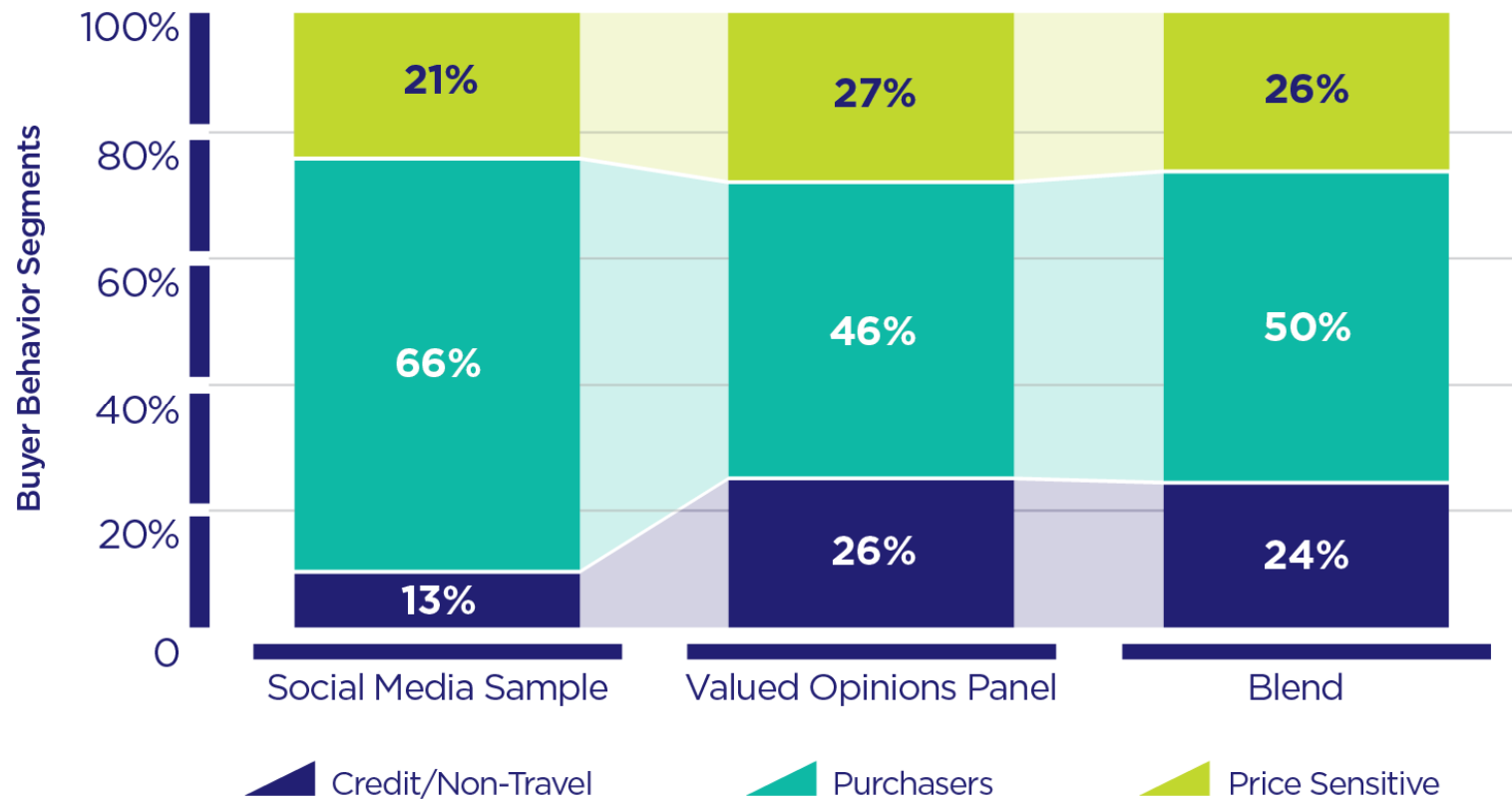
Maximum blending ratio

After making conservative assumptions on income and segments these are the final blending ratios for each sex by age group

Age Gender Group	Max. Blending Ratio
Male 18-24	35%
Male 25-34	22%
Male 35-44	18%
Male 45-54	15%
Male 55+	13%
Female 18-24	37%
Female 25-34	23%
Female 35-44	19%
Female 45-54	19%
Female 55+	11%

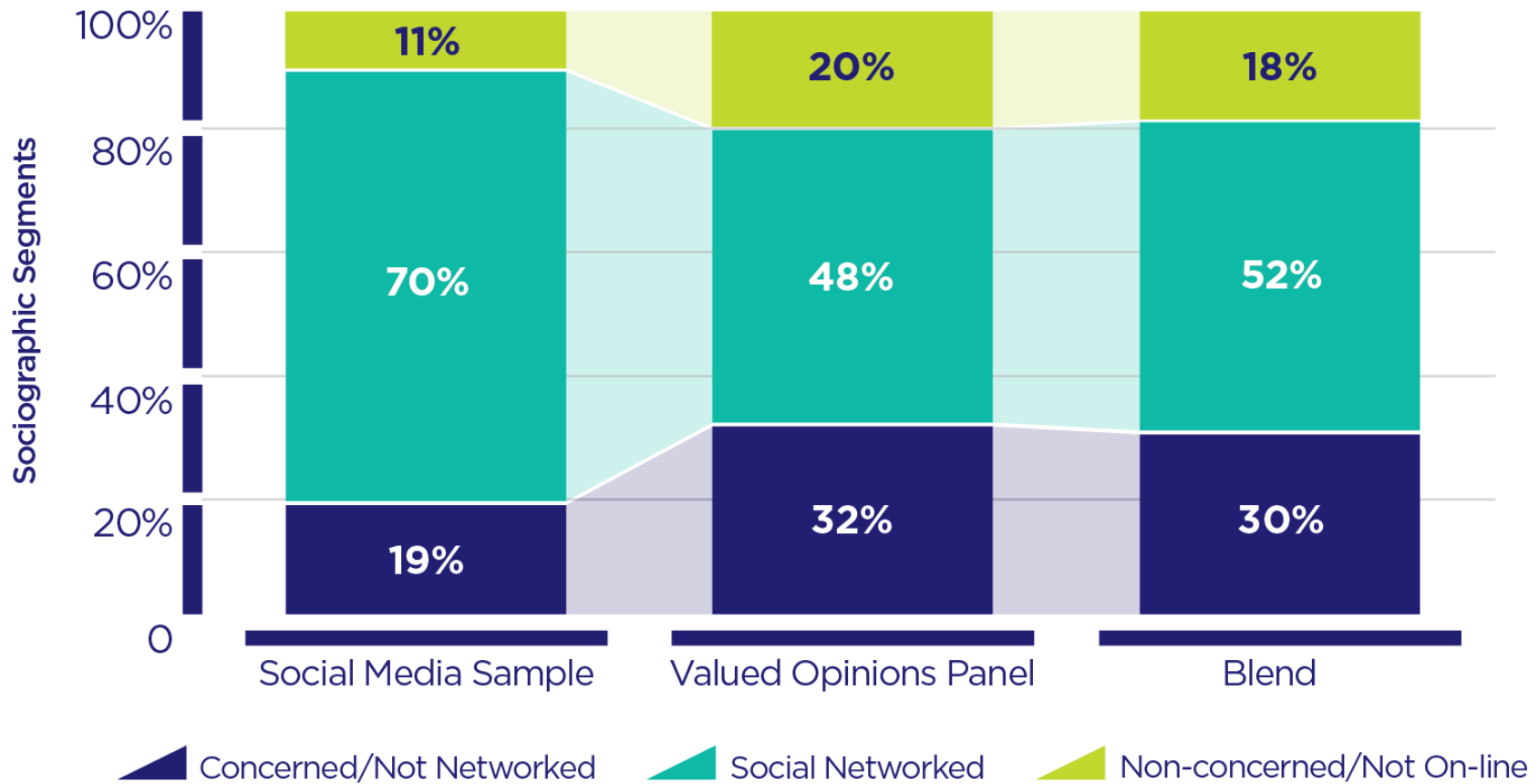
Buyer Behaviour

The final blend has barely changed the observed behaviour of the Valued Opinions Panel sample



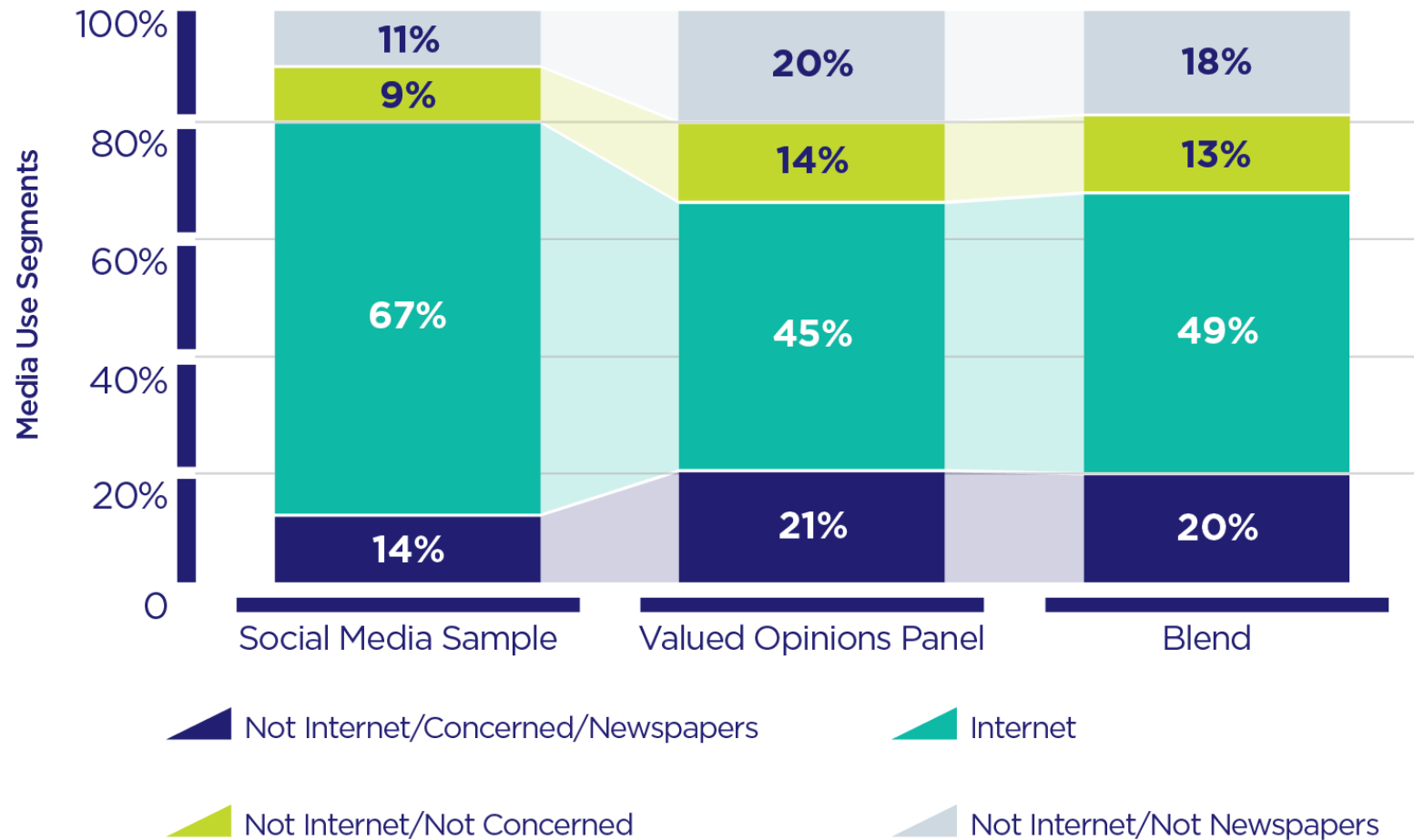
Socio-graphics

The blend and Valued Opinions Panel are also similar



Media

Media preferences are similar at the maximum blending percentage



Re-cap

Social media respondents represent a **considerable** and **growing** proportion of the global population

Social media respondents are **different** to panel respondents – opportunity to be more **inclusive** but must be able to deliver **consistent** data

Through comparative research we established the **minimum measurable difference**, in order to determine the **maximum blending ratio**

Transparency is essential – researchers must be confident that changes are real, not due to sample source

Blending analysis will be an **ongoing** process, blending ratios are not static and will change as sources **evolve**

Benefits for researchers

- ✓ Significantly expanded supply of sample
- ✓ More inclusive sample
- ✓ A scientific blend ensures reliable and consistent sample frames
- ✓ We can't ignore social media, it's here to stay!

Thank you!

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