8th DevRel Survey

STATE OF
DEVELOPER RELATIONS

2021

This report is based on the 2021 Developer Relations Survey. It's a tool for DevRel practitioners to benchmark their activities and provide some scope to the emerging practice of DevRel.

WHAT IS DEVELOPER RELATIONS AND WHY YOU SHOULD CARE.

Developer Relations is Three Things:

1. It's a **profession**.

2. It's a **program** (typically called a Developer Program, or DevRel Program) within a company and,

3. it's a range of **activities** from Developer Marketing and Advocacy, to Content and Education creation, Product marketing and so much more.

It's all focused on <u>interacting with Developers</u> as a route to market.

- **It's as old as the world wide web**
  - Apple was first over 20 years ago!
- **The Developer-Led Economy is over $49B USD and growing***
  - That number doesn't include revenue generated from developers for companies like Apple and others
- **Developers are Decision Makers & Buyers of products****
  - Ignore this at your peril!
- **Over 700+ companies practice DevRel**
  - Check out the DevRel Directory
- **It's a great, rewarding profession**
  - Full of interesting technology, creativity, and nice people that drive business value for their companies.

*   https://tylerjewell.substack.com/p/developer-led-landscape-2021-edition
** https://developermedia.com/developers-influence-tool-purchase/

On the flip side, these characteristics, along with the data found in this report, have often made Developer Relations complicated. It's complicated for DevRel practitioners who usually function without a defined career path, have confusion around roles and responsibilities, and lack recognition for their work. It can also be complicated for those outside DevRel who don't understand its functions, the value created, or what could be created for their companies.

Is it time for a professional association for Developer Relations?

The good news is Developer Relations continues to grow in scope and influence, mature in its practices, and have heightened recognition as a growth strategy. Indeed it might be time for a DevRel professional association to continue to strengthen and grow this practice.

64% of respondents said **YES!**

Q. *To help recognize Developer Relations as a distinct profession, do you think it's time for a professional body or association?*

NO
36.0%

YES
64.0%
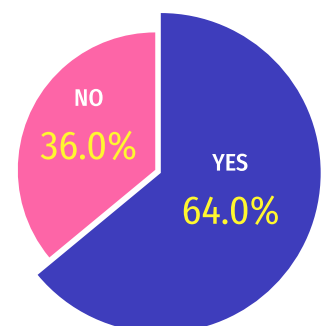
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KEY FINDINGS

While DevRel Spans the Globe

61.5% of companies are **USA centric,**

78.6% of the people will **work remotely post COVID.**

DevRel leans Tech

44.6% of industries are **IT**

44.1% of teams report to Technical departments of Product, Engineering or CTO
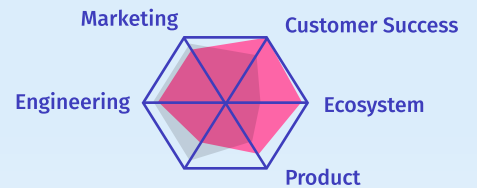
66.0% of DevRel people have a technical degree.

DevRel is more varied than Tech in terms of:

Marketing
Customer Success
Engineering
Ecosystem
Product

Larger percentage of females (compared to Stack OverFlow survey).

Industries include **financial services, education**, **retail**, **marketing,** etc.

Reporting structures and influences vary from **marketing & engineering** to **product, ecosystem & customer success.**

Jobs roles from **content creation to advocacy, event management to product management** & **marketing.**

Previous jobs as **engineers**, **analysts**, **office managers**, **chemists** and more.

Team sizes are growing as solo teams shrink.

Only 34% **have a defined DevRel career path.**

x2

Online Channels used to reach developer communities sees YouTube **double to 32.1%** & **enter the Top 5.**

Getting internal support from senior leadership is the top Challenge.

slack

Content became the **dominant channel for developer awareness & outreach**, accompanied by a noticeable decline in Events and Workshops during a year of COVID. **Slack became the top choice of on-the-job Tools.**
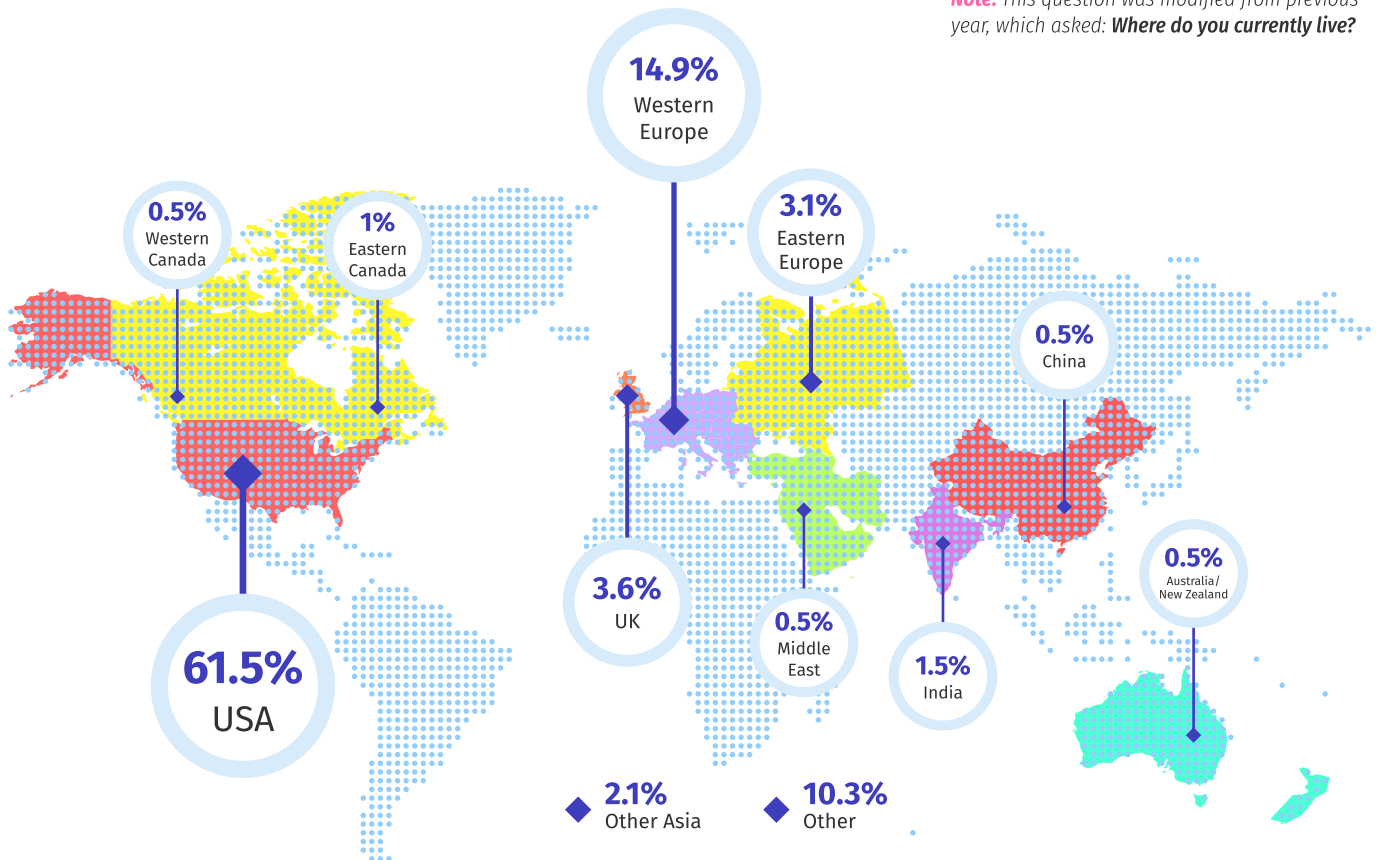
COMPANIES THAT
PRACTICE DEVREL

DEVELOPER RELATIONS SPANS THE GLOBE

14.9%
Western
Europe

0.5%
Western
Canada

1%
Eastern
Canada

3.1%
Eastern
Europe

0.5%
China

3.6%
UK

0.5%
Middle
East

1.5%
India

0.5%
Australia/
New Zealand

61.5%
USA

2.1%
Other Asia

10.3%
Other

The majority of companies who practice DevRel are based in the **USA** (61.5%), and indeed the majority of companies are based in **Silicon Valley** (33.3%). Total **Europe** reports a strong 21.6%, comprised of **Western** (14.9%) & **Eastern** (3.1%) **Europe**, and the **UK** (3.6%).

Other countries/regions reporting include: India, Canada, Middle East, Australia/New Zealand, China, Israel, and Russia.

Several in the Other category reported as Global or Worldwide (5%), likely reflecting where teams are physically located.

6.2%
Seattle/
Pacific NW

61.5% in **USA**

5.6%
Other USA

33.3%
Silicon Valley/
Bay Area/SF

0.5%
Other
California

15.9%
New York/
Eastern US
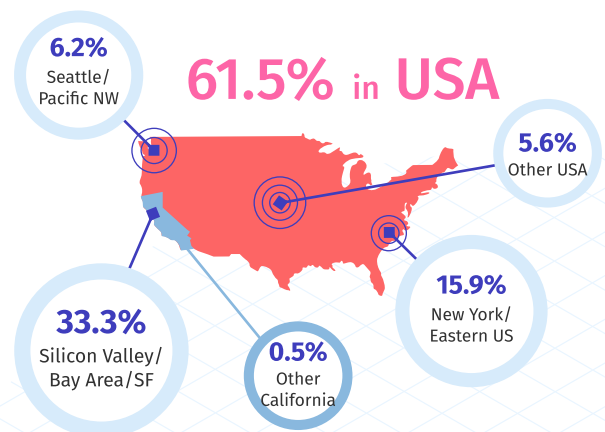
INDUSTRIES

Developer Relations Reach Continues to Expand Beyond Traditional Tech

IT/IS (44.6%) still dominates, but decreased by 19% from 2020 as other industries grew, including **SaaS** (20.5%) which grew 21% and **Financial Services** (7.7%) that showed 40% Y/Y growth.

Other industries mentioned include:

- Social Media/Marketing
- Entertainment
- Security
- Auto/Connected Car
- Consumer Electronics
- Retail
- IoT
- Blockchain

- Education
- Government
- Industrial
- Not for Profit
- Publishing
- Reporting
- Video

OTHERS 20.0%

FINANCIAL SERVICES 7.7%

TELECOM 6.2%

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/SERVICES 44.6%

SAAS 20.5%
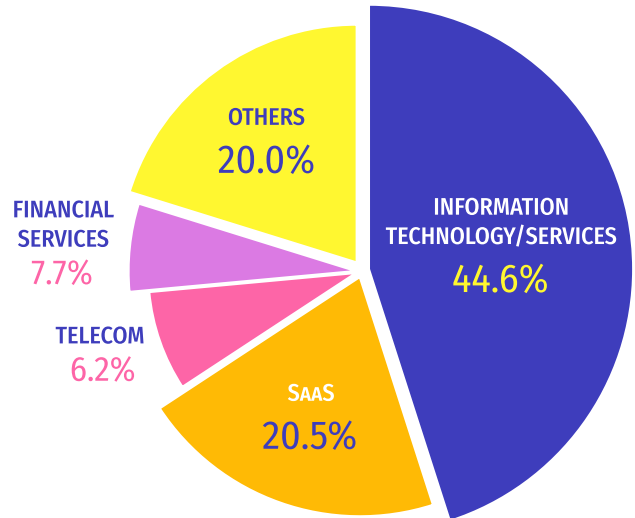
COMPANY SIZE

Companies of All Sizes Practice DevRel

1 - 10 employees	2.6%
11 - 100 employees	20.0%
101 - 1000 employees	26.7%
1001 - 10,000 employees	30.3%
10,001 - 50,000 employees	2.6%
50,001 - 100,000 employees	3.6%
Over 100,000 employees	14.4%

SMALL (100 & UNDER) 22.6%

MEDIUM (BETWEEN 101-1000) 26.7%

LARGE (MORE THAN 1001) 50.9%
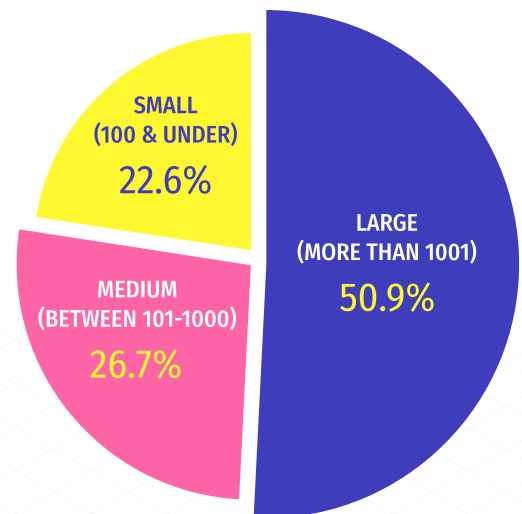
Note: The definition of company size was slightly modified modified from previous year in keeping with some industry standards.

BUSINESS MODELS AND ORGANIZATIONS OF DEVREL

Developers as a route to market is a strategy many organizations use, some as the primary business models (Developer First), others as a secondary strategy (Developer Plus). In this survey, and consistent with last years' findings, **Developer Plus** companies are the largest group at 63.6%, compared to **Developer First** at 36.4%. However, comparing these numbers to those in the DevRel Directory (Dev 1st 11% and Dev+ 89%) shows a significant discrepancy, which may reflect a number of large companies with simple API programs but lacking in teams with greater reach.

DEVELOPER FIRST
36.4%

DEVELOPER PLUS
63.6%

Developer First (Dev 1st) Companies

The **primary business model** of the company is **B2D** (Business to Developer). For example, Stripe, Camunda, PerceptiLabs, Unity and Twilio.

Developer Plus (Dev +) Companies

The **primary business model** of the company is **B2B** or **B2C** (business to business, or business to consumer), but a developer play extends or supports the primary business model. For example, Slack, Spotify, Apple, Qualcomm, and Santander
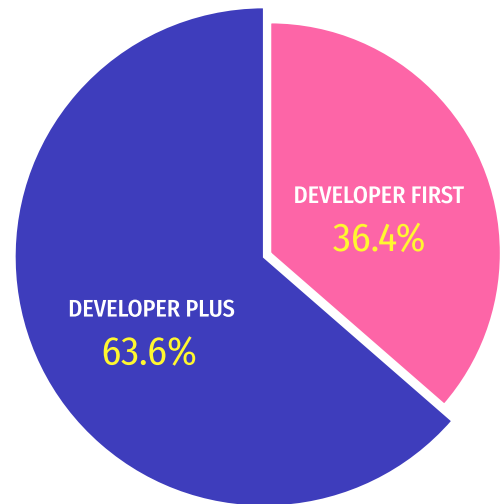
See next page for a more detailed comparison between the two models →

Business Model Detailed Comparisons

	Developer First Companies	Developer Plus Companies
Company Size	• Majority are small <100 employees (45.1%), 90% are 10,000 or less	• Majority are large companies >1500 employees (61.3%), of those, 17.7% are over 100K employees
Location	• Majority are based in the USA (54.9%), followed by Europe (24%)	• Majority are based in the USA (65.3%), followed by Europe (20.2%)
Industries	• Majority are based in IT (59.2%), followed by SaaS (19.7%)	• Majority are based in IT (36.3%), followed by SaaS (21%), but we see a large range of other industries, including Financial Services (9.7%), Telecom (8.1%), Consumer Electronics (4%) and Entertainment, Security, Relations and Social media/marketing all at 3.2%
Reporting	• The majority report to Marketing (33.8%), followed by the CEO (26.8%) • Combined technical departments - Product, CTO and Engineering are 37.9%	• Majority report to Product (22.6%%), followed by the Marketing (21.8%) • Technical reporting dominates as Combined technical departments – Product, CTO and Engineering are 54%, compared to combined non-tech departments - Marketing, Sales, BD are only 27.4% • We do see 3.2% reporting directly to the CTO which is encouraging
Age of Program	• Dev 1st companies range from new companies to those over 20 years old. However the majority are 2 years or less (47.9%)	• Dev + company's programs range from new programs less than one year old (14.9%) to those over 20 years (6.8%)
Size of DevRel Team	• 15.2% report having just one team member, the largest range was 2-5 members (29.1%), but several report over 100 team members (8.7%)	• The majority team size is 2-5 members (31.1%), and most are 10 or under (54.1%), but several have over 100 team members (9.5%)
Budgets	• Budgets range from under $10K to up to $25M, however 43.5% are $100K or less. 30.4% don't know or don't have a budget	• Budgets range from under $10K to over $25M, however 43.5% are $100K or less. 41.9% don't know or don't have a budget
Effective Outreach Channels	• Content created on own channels is tops at 53.5%, followed by Events (34.9%), and Content for other channels and Online Tech communities (18.6% each)	• Content created on own channels is tops at 45.5%, followed by Events (39.4%), and Partnerships (16.7%)
Staffing	• 62.5% have a Senior Level role in their organization • 40% have a defined DevRel career ladder	• 60.3% have a Senior Level role in their organization • Only 30.2% have a defined DevRel career ladder in their organization
Time Spend	• Content Development takes up 77.5% of their time, followed by Advocacy (45%) and Events (35%)	• Strategy & Planning takes up 44.5% of their time, followed by Content Development (41.3%), Advocacy (39.7%) and Managing Teams (34.9%)

WHERE DOES DEVREL FIT?

Reporting by Type

Department	Percentage
We report to Marketing	26.2%
We report to Product	17.4%
We report to Engineering	15.9%
We report to CEO	11.8%
We report to CTO	10.8%
We report to Sales	3.1%
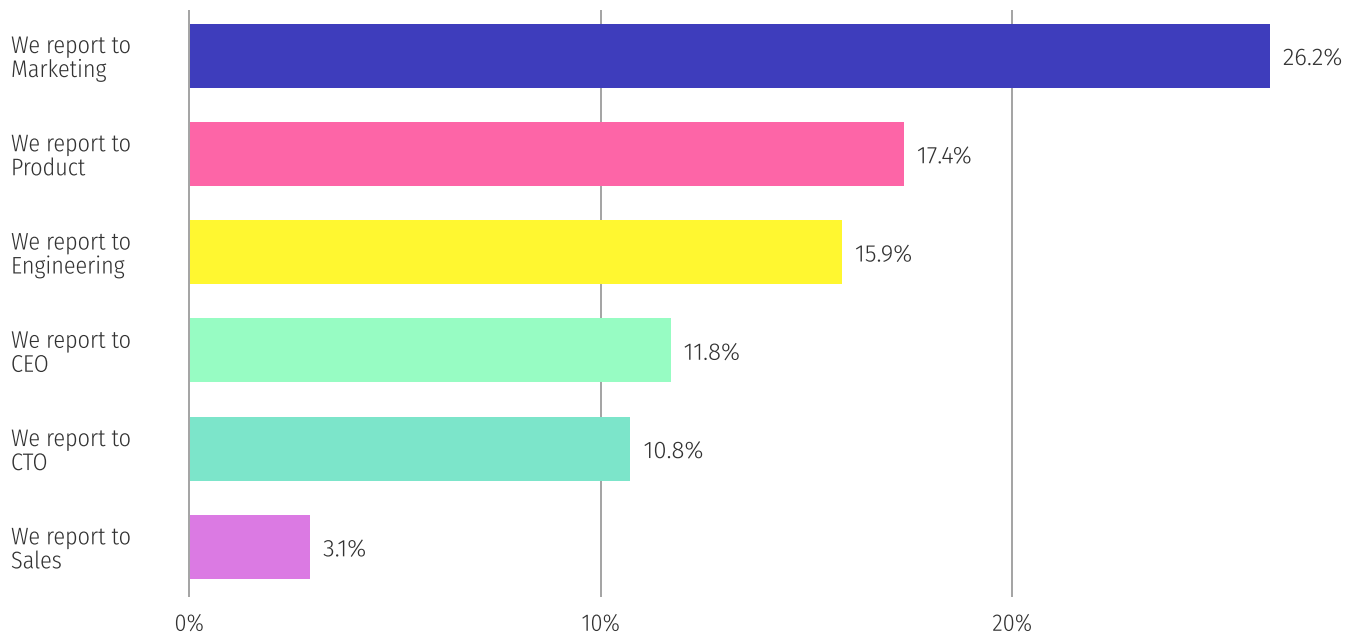
DevRel leans Technical but still no Dominant Reporting Structure

Developer Relations reports many options for reporting structures. This highlights the challenges DevRel practitioners face and the confusion around roles and responsibilities.

We continue to see a variety of departments indicated including, **Business Development, Training and Learning, Innovation, Ecosystem, Growth, Developer Experience, and Customer Success**. Several also reported their DevRel roles are split between several departments.

Highlights

No Dominant Reporting Structure Continues.
- ***Marketing*** *as a stand-alone department leads at 26.2%*

However:
- *Combined non-technical departments of* ***Marketing, Sales*** *and* ***Business Development*** *= 30.7%.*
- *Combine technical departments of* ***Product, Engineering, and CTO*** *= 44.1%*

VALUE OF DEVELOPER PROGRAMS

Legend: Purpose (bar), Value (line)

- To educate & support developers: Purpose 16.9%, Value 26.7%
- To drive awreness: Purpose 16.2%, Value 18.0%
- To drive engagement: Purpose 14.2%, Value 17.3%
- To get feedback for our product(s): Purpose 12.6%, Value 11.4%
- Build brand: Purpose 11.5%, Value 5.1%
- Drive innovation: Purpose 7.9%, Value 4.7%
- To drive sales: Purpose 4.9%, Value 3.1%
- Simplify support/ reduce cost of support: Purpose 4.9%, Value 3.5%
- Enhance other products: Purpose 4.9%, Value 3.1%
- To get code contributions: Purpose 4.7%, Value 3.5%

The value of DevRel is not delivering on all of its intended purpose.

When it comes to **Educating and supporting developers** – DevRel is more than living up to its purpose. It's also exceeding in **Driving awareness** and **Engagement**. However, there is still work to be done for those leading DevRel teams, and even for individual contributors, to focus on how we can create additional value for our companies.

*Note: this year, **Educate and Support Developers**, dominated both the purpose and value, whereas last year's survey reported that **Driving Awareness** was most important.*

Q. *Why was your DevRel program created?*

**Q.** *What is the primary value of your developer program today?*

THE **PROGRAMS**

PRODUCT SCOPE

DevRel's product scope and a DevRel team's responsibilities are wide and varied. There are many types of products, as noted below⭐, and many products within companies. Most teams manage 10 products or less, but a significant number manage more than 100 products (14.2%), a great responsibility, no matter the size of the team.
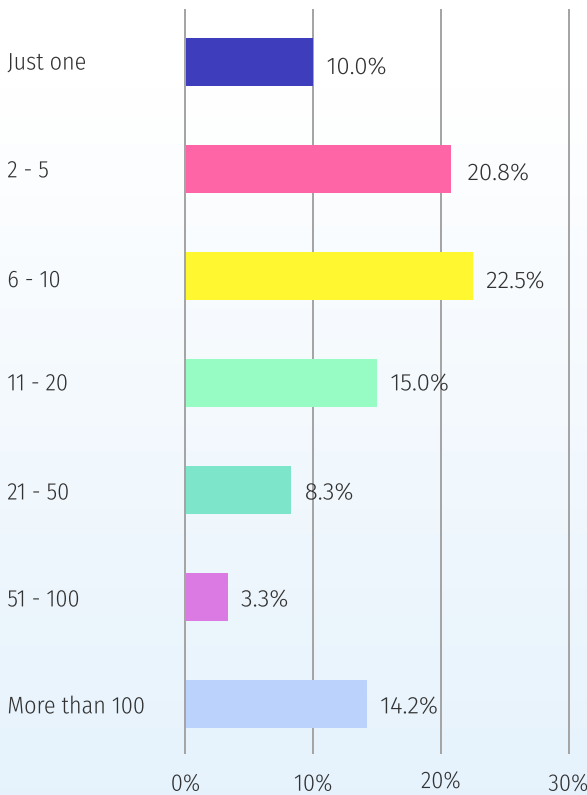
53.3% of teams manage **10 products or less**

Of those:
- 100% of companies are 10,000 employees or less
- 48% are Dev 1st companies
- 22% report to the CEO
- 42.2% have a team size of 2-5 persons, all have a team size of 50 or less
- 31% don't have or are unaware of budgets
- 81.3% of programs were created to drive awareness
- 75% are male

Category	Percentage
Just one	10.0%
2 - 5	20.8%
6 - 10	22.5%
11 - 20	15.0%
21 - 50	8.3%
51 - 100	3.3%
More than 100	14.2%

17.5% of teams manage **more than 50 products**

Of those:
- 42.9% have a team size of over 100
- 57% report having over 1M community members
- 62% report not having or knowing their budget
- Events at 68.4% are most effective for outreach
- 35.3% have over 15 years of DevRel experience, 45% are female

⭐ *For the purposes of this report, we consider a product to be a distinct entity that requires its own identity, resourcing, documentation, support, and maintenance needs. Developer tools, APIs, SDKs, HDKs, platforms and marketplaces can all be products in their own right.*

Developer Services

This year we asked about Developer Services, such as **Developer training, Repositories, Event or hackathon organization, Job listings, Community management tools**, etc. Services, at 2.5%, are a growing area in DevRel, which speaks well to the growing size and maturity of this practice.

PROGRAM AGE

Developer Programs date back to the mid 80s, and indeed some of our respondents have programs **At least 20 years old**, a 2% jump from last year. 20.9% are **Over 10 years old**. But we continue to see **New entrants** too (16.7%).

The majority of programs (57.5%) are **5 years old or less**, a tough time for anyone growing a program or business, so there is much to learn, build, and experiment.

Program Age	Percentage
< 1 year old	16.7%
1 - 2 years old	20.8%
3 - 5 years old	20.0%
6 - 10 years old	17.5%
11 - 15 years old	10.0%
16 - 20 years old	4.2%
> 20 years old	6.7%
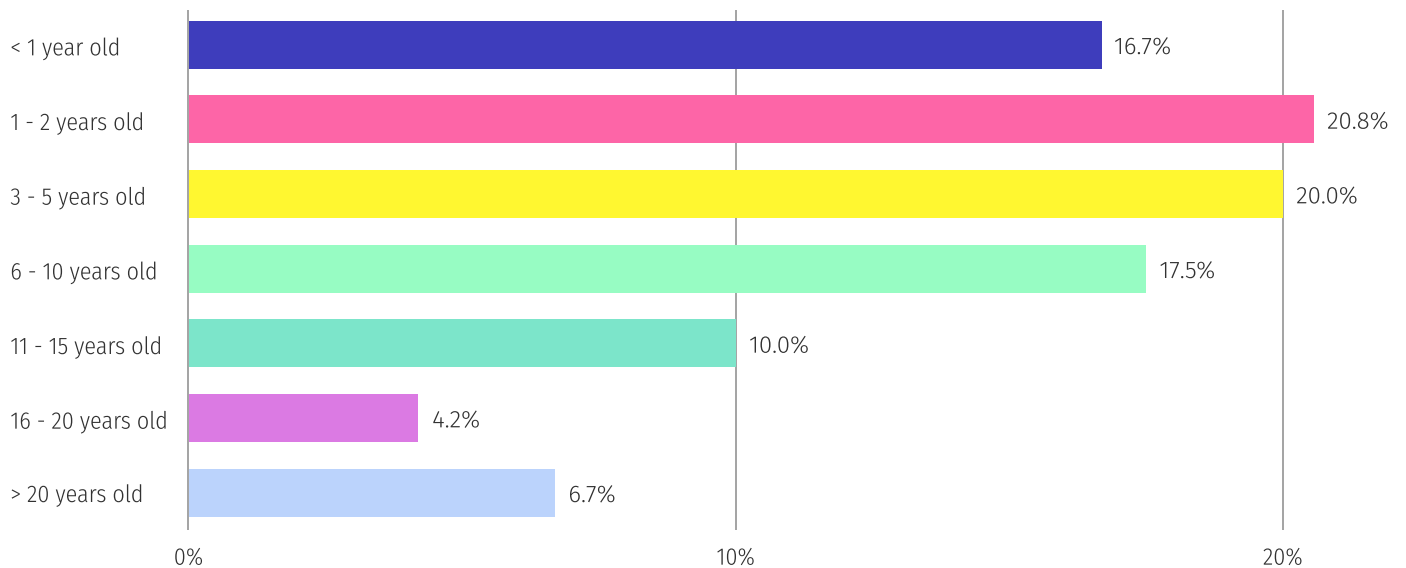
TEAM

Team Size

**Teams continue to grow** as new developer programs emerge and others expand their teams. We have noticed a huge uptick over the past year in the number of DevRel job listings as well.

The **'Just me!'** or sole team member **continues to shrink**, now at 11.7%, whereas it was as high as 28.8% in 2017. Great news, as DevRel is too broad to be tackled as a solo practitioner.

|	
1 - just me!	11.7%
2 - 5	34.2%
6 - 10	12.5%
11 - 25	20.0%
26 - 50	9.2%
51 - 75	<0%
76 - 100	1.7%
Over 100	9.2%
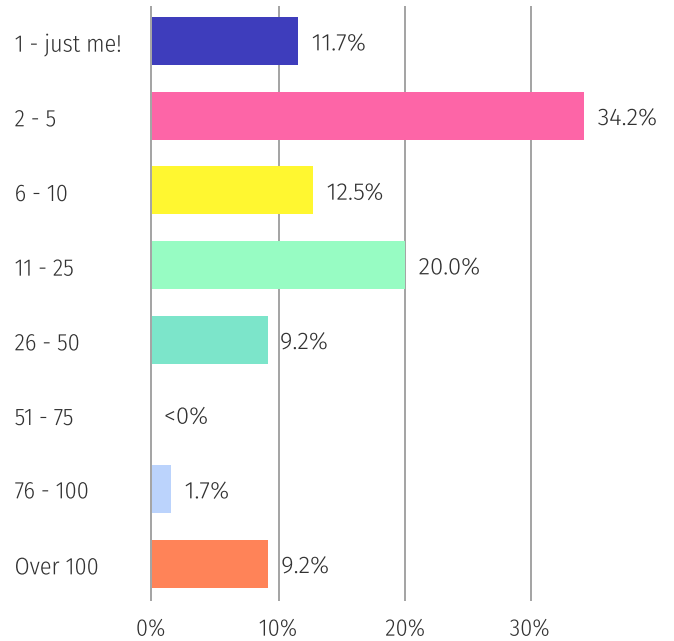
Career Path

A new question this year and one of interest to most professionals in DevRel. 34% indicated they have a career path, which is **higher than we anticipated**, but there is obvious **room for growth** here. We have seen several paths published online, giving great examples for others to follow.

DON'T KNOW
2.9%

YES
34.0%

NO
63.1%
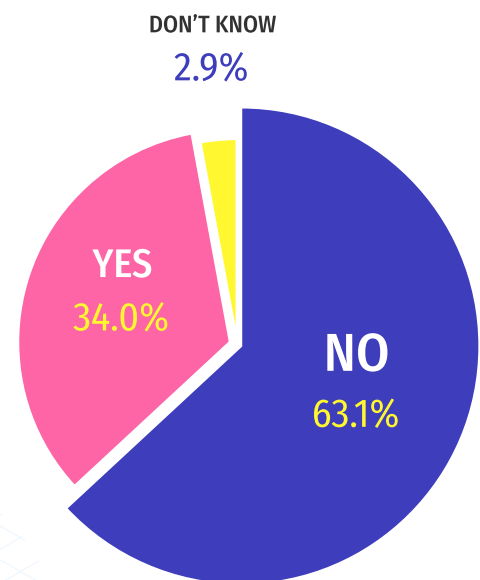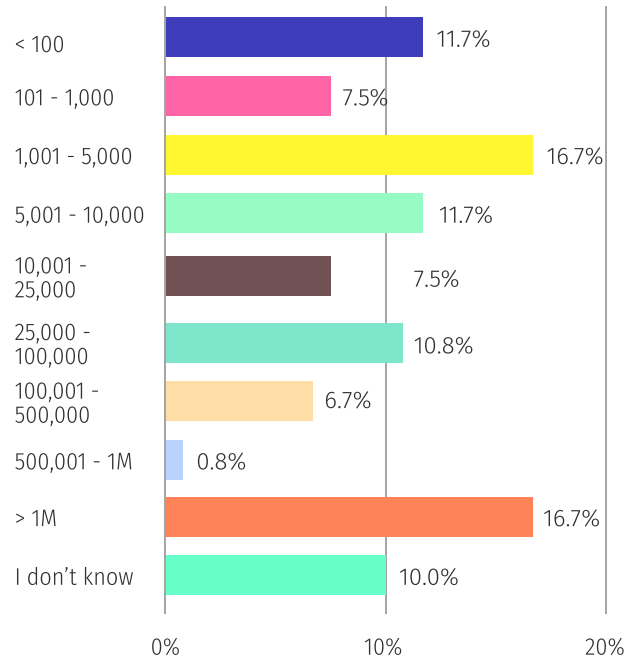
COMMUNITIES

What is Community?

The word community, especially within DevRel, can mean different things to different people. For some, it only means **users of a product**; others see it as only those who are **directly contributing** in some way (writing blogs, code samples). Others define community as anyone who has **had a touchpoint** with the Developer Program, most often represented by signups or mailing lists. We purposely left the definition of Community open ended for Q10.

Community Size

The range of sizes this year is similar to last year - from those having a very small community of **less that 100** (11.7%), to those with **over 1M members** (16.7%).

< 100	11.7%
101 - 1,000	7.5%
1,001 - 5,000	16.7%
5,001 - 10,000	11.7%
10,001 - 25,000	7.5%
25,000 - 100,000	10.8%
100,001 - 500,000	6.7%
500,001 - 1M	0.8%
> 1M	16.7%
I don't know	10.0%

Active Product Users

Q. *What percentage of your community are active product users (whatever your definition of active is i.e.: downloaded once, active monthly etc).*

Answers here **ranged from 1 to 100**, with the **mean** at 50% and a **standard deviation** of 29.3.

Probability Distribution
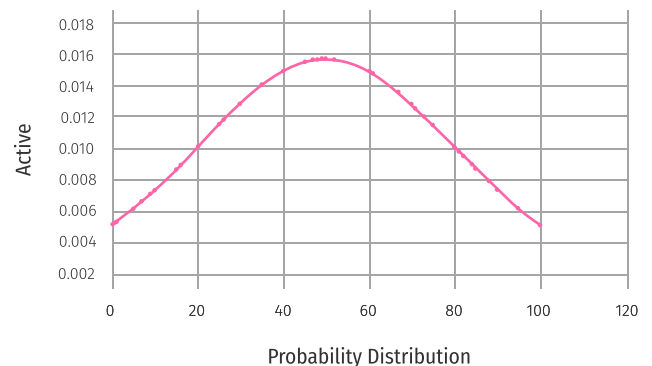
Active Community Contributors

Q. *What percentage of your community are active contributors (based on your definition).*

Answered here **ranged from 0 to 85**, with the **mean** at 14.9% and a **standard deviation** of 16.8.

Probability Distribution
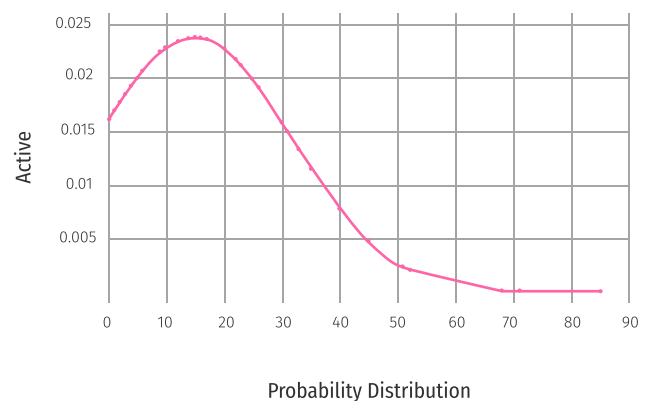
Community Size Detailed Comparison

Communities less than 5K	Communities greater than 1M
• 58% are Dev+ companies.	• 75% are Dev+ companies.
• 20.9% report to the CEO (top answer).	• 45% report to Marketing.
• 72% have programs under 2 years old.	• All programs are at least 3 years old. • 80% are 6 years or older.
• 4.6% have more than 100 products. • 44% look after 5 products or less.	• 55% look after over 100 products.
• 44% have a budget of $50K or less.	• 10% each report budgets of $101K-$500K, $501K to $1M and $1M to $5m. • 65% don't know their budget.
• 30% have just one member of the team. • 46.5% have between 2 to 5 team members. • 59% have a senior level role.	• Dev Rel experience ranges from less than one year to over 15 years.
	• 27.8% report salaries from $200-$250K and 11% report over $250K.

"Too many products, not enough headcount."

"Handling the sheer size of our user base."

PROGRAM BUDGETS

The Size of Budgets Vary Across Programs

Program budgets are still **Elusive to many** (37.5%) in terms of **Not having one** (7.5%) or they **Don't know what it is** (30%). In comparison, last year, 48% either didn't know or didn't have a budget.

Interestingly, "**Increasing the budget and headcount allocation**", or more generally **'Getting sufficient budget'**, were identified as in the top three challenges facing DevRel (see page 22).

Category	Percentage
Under $10k	8.3%
$10K to $50K	13.3%
$51K to $100K	9.2%
$101K to $500K	11.7%
$501K to $1M	9.2%
$1M to $5M	5.8%
$5M to $10M	1.7%
$10M to $25M	0.8%
Over $25M	0.8%
We don't have a budget	7.5%
I don't know	30.0%
Other	1.7%
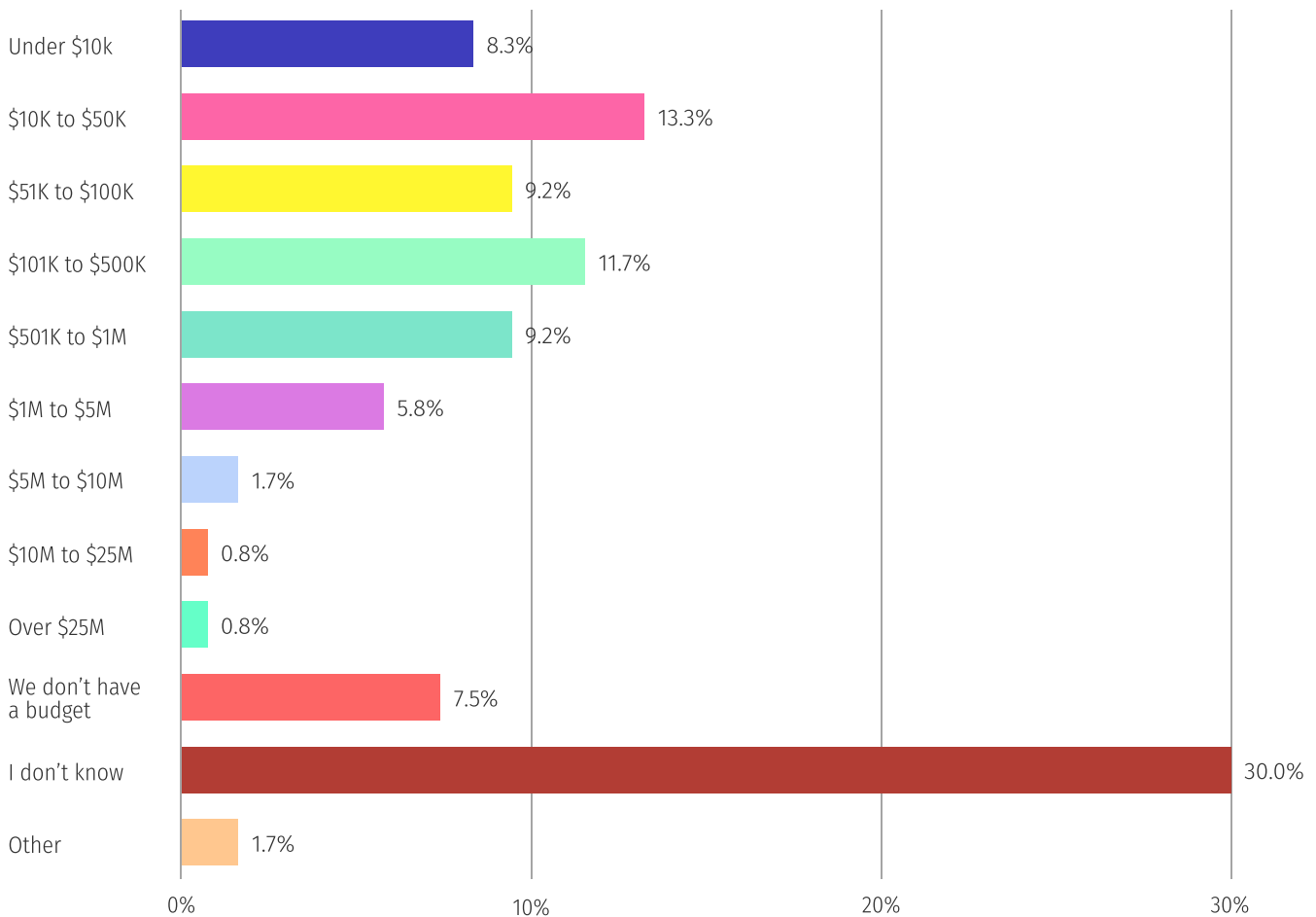
STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES, & CHALLENGES

TARGETING DEVELOPERS

Attribute	Percentage
Technical requirements	58.3%
Hobbyist v.s. professional	32.5%
Industries & vertical	28.3%
Size of company	26.7%
Type of company	26.7%
Developer decision making	23.3%
Developer education	22.5%
Geography	20.0%
We don't	18.3%
Developer demographics	17.5%
Other	7.5%
Developer psychographics	6.7%
Diversity	4.2%
I don't know	<0%
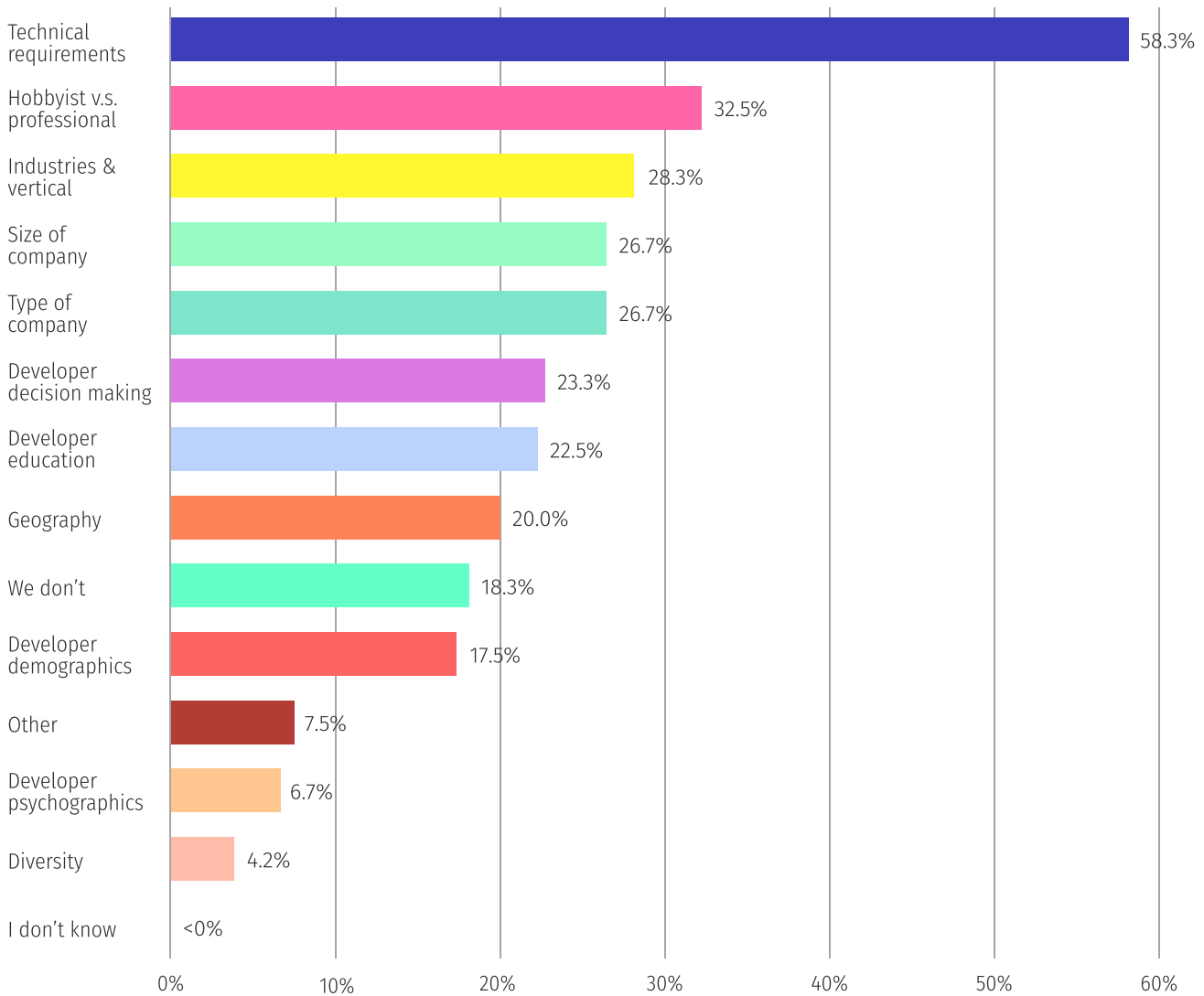
"Identify the correct target audience"

"Understanding developer personas regardless of how many times we educate"

Last year, this question was skipped, but we didn't see any notable differences from the 6th Report. In the 6th Report, 15% admitted to **Not segmenting developers**, and this Report sees 18.3%. There are many examples, research, and frameworks available, so we hope those programs will make use of them to manage their programs. Given there are **over 24M software developers alone**⭐, just targeting developers is not meaningful or helpful.

⭐ *page 42, Developer Relations: How to Build and Grow a Successful Developer Program.*

AWARENESS CHANNELS

Content, Content, Content

Content is the big story in effective outreach for year-over-year (YOY) change for DevRel, be it **Content you create on your own channels** (48.6%), **Content you create for other channels** (14.7%) or **Content your community creates on yours or other channels** (11.9%).

Dropping this year, likely due to COVID, were **Events** by 36%, **Meetups** by 118% and **Workshops** by 154%. It will be interesting to see if these change next year as things open up again.

Surprisingly, **Social Media** took a steep fall of 124% often a favorite of DevRel.

	2020	2021	Change (YOY)
Content you create on your own channels	33.0%	48.6%	32.0%
Events - conferences	51.0%	37.6%	-36.0%
Social media	35.0%	15.6%	-124.0%
Online workshops/ webinars	15.0%	15.6%	4.0%
Content you create & syndicate on other channels		14.7%	100.0%
Partnerships	16.0%	13.8%	-16.0%
Online events	8.0%	12.8%	38.0%
Online tech communities	13.0%	11.9%	-9.0%
Content your community creates		11.9%	100.0%
Content your community creates on other channels		11.9%	100.0%
Meetups	24.0%	11.0%	-118.0%
Email/ nuture	17.0%	10.1%	-68.0%
Newsletters	5.0%	10.1%	50.0%
Workshops	21.0%	8.3%	-154.0%
Working with our sales or business development team	12.0%	7.3%	-63.0%
Online hackathons	3.0%	6.4%	53.0%
Advertising	1.0%	5.5%	82.0%
Hackathons	10.0%	5.5%	-82.0%
Accelerators/ Incubators	2.0%	3.7%	46.0%
Podcasts	7.0%	3.7%	-91.0%
Streaming services	4.0%	3.7%	-9.0%
Contests	3.0%	0.9%	-226.0%
Media relations	4.0%	0.0%	-4.0%
Purchased lists	1.0%	0.0%	-1.0%

ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

> **Q.** *Which of these online sites has been the most effective in reaching and communicating with your community? (Choose your Top 5)*

Top 10 Effective Channels

The top 3 channels remain unchanged, with **Twitter** at the top with 52.3%, **GitHub** 2nd at 46.8% (was 37% last year), and **Company Website** remains 3rd (38.5%).

YouTube has doubled to 32.1% and now takes 4th place. This echoes other research we have seen and shows the importance of a video content strategy.

The other significant rise was **Discord**, which rose to 13.8%, up from 2% last year. **Medium** also increased to 12.8%, up from 7% last year, continuing with the content theme.

Others mentioned in order of effectiveness: dev.to, Reddit, Discourse, Intercom, Hacker News, Code Project, Facebook, WhatsApp. Hacker Noon, Google Developer Groups, XDA developer, SlideShare, GitLab, SD Times, Gitter, IRC, TikTok, AnswerHub, and Dzone

Twitter	52.3%
GitHub	46.8%
Company Website	38.5%
YouTube	32.1%
Slack	31.2%
LinkedIn	27.5%
Stack Overflow	18.4%
Twitch	16.5%
Discord	13.8%
Medium	12.8%

METRICS

Program Success Metrics

Metric	Value
Web-portal activity	15.5%
Community size or growth	13.1%
Usage of our product (e.g: API calls)	11.1%
Signups or registrations	8.7%
Impact on our customer's success	7.8%
Monthly Active Users (MAU)	7.4%
Social media or publicity numbers	5.3%
Code contributions (e.g: GitHub)	4.9%
Apps developed with out product	3.7%
Event metrics/ trends gathered	3.7%
Net Promotor Score (NPS)	3.7%
Qualified leads or sales	3.3%
SDK, HDK, or tool downloads	2.9%
Content created (blogs, docs, samples)	2.1%
Other	2.1%
Our bosses were happy	1.3%
Survey of our community	0.8%
StackOverflow Activity	0.5%
Our budgets were increased	0.5%
We don't	0.5%

DevRel Programs Shifting to More Strategic Program Metrics.
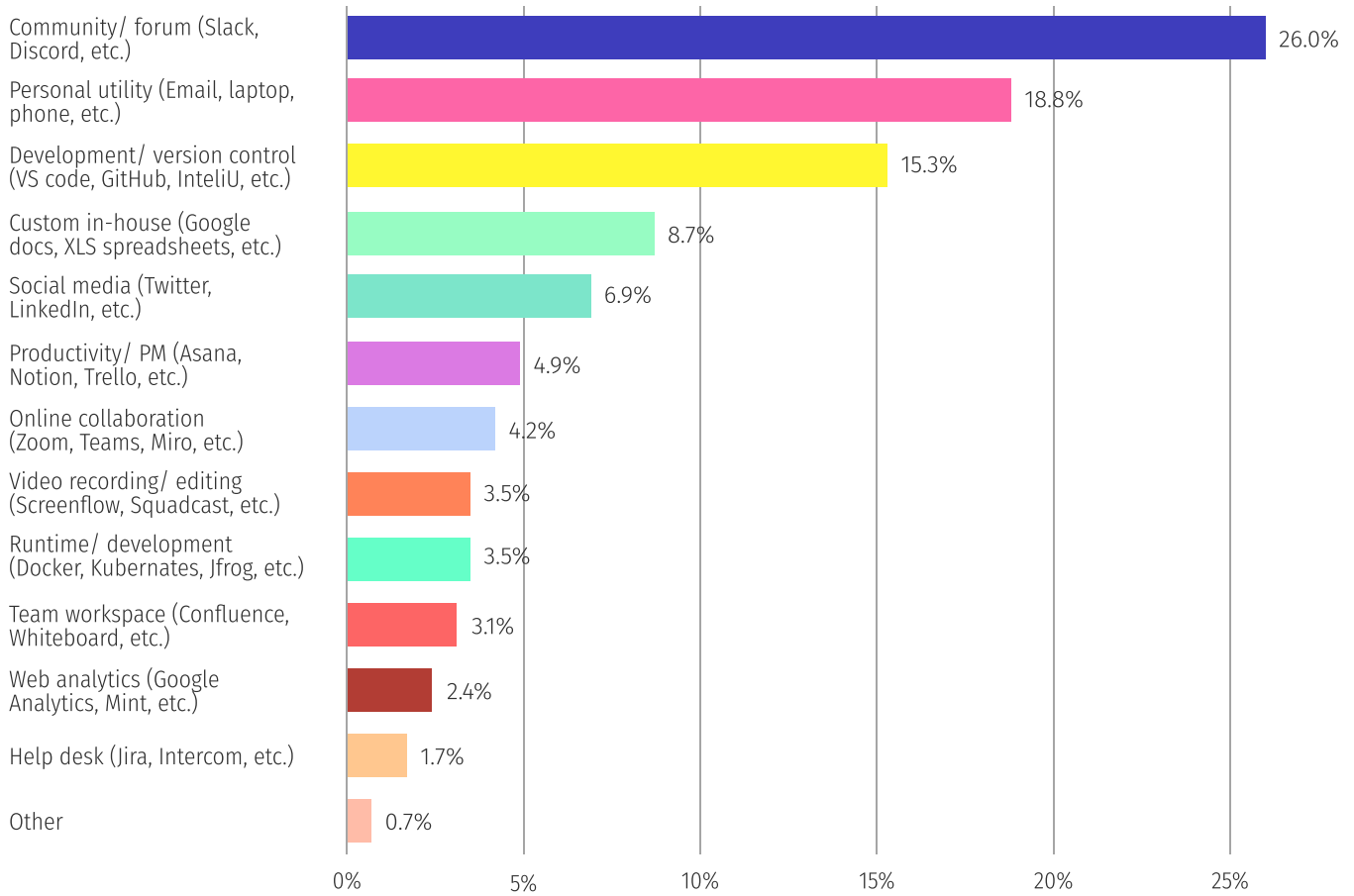
This year's top results of **Portal activity**, **Community Size or Growth**, **Product Usage**, and **Signups** can be considered strategic program metrics. This is a positive shift in metrics that better identify a program's progress towards impacting company goals, as opposed to tactical activity metrics like **Content created**, which was the top metric last year.

TOOLS

Top DevRel Tools by Category

Category	%
Community/ forum (Slack, Discord, etc.)	26.0%
Personal utility (Email, laptop, phone, etc.)	18.8%
Development/ version control (VS code, GitHub, InteliU, etc.)	15.3%
Custom in-house (Google docs, XLS spreadsheets, etc.)	8.7%
Social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)	6.9%
Productivity/ PM (Asana, Notion, Trello, etc.)	4.9%
Online collaboration (Zoom, Teams, Miro, etc.)	4.2%
Video recording/ editing (Screenflow, Squadcast, etc.)	3.5%
Runtime/ development (Docker, Kubernates, Jfrog, etc.)	3.5%
Team workspace (Confluence, Whiteboard, etc.)	3.1%
Web analytics (Google Analytics, Mint, etc.)	2.4%
Help desk (Jira, Intercom, etc.)	1.7%
Other	0.7%

Developer Relations Utilize a Wide Variety of Tools for Their Job

DevRel practitioners identified over 100 tools as essential to their work. The top tools category was **Community/forum** based (26.0%), followed by **Personal utility** tools (18.8%)—a change from last year's survey, which reported **Custom in-house and web analytics** tools and top choices.

Digging deeper into the individual tool choices per respondent, **Slack** (46.0%) is the clear top choice of tools needed for DevRel practitioners to do their job. Honorable mentions go to **Coffee** and **Popcorn**.

Top 5 DevRel Tools	
Slack	46.0%
GitHub	27.0%
G Suite	15.0%
Twitter	15.0%
Email	12.0%

CHALLENGES

There are a Range of Challenges for DevRel People

Getting internal support, especially from senior leadership, has taken the new #1 position in 2021. **Scaling outreach and getting enough developers** remains in the #2 position from last year.

Not a new challenge for DevRel, **Getting sufficient budget** has taken the #3 spot this year. **Keeping content fresh and current** has dropped significantly this year from #3 to #8.

This year, new on the challenges list, is **Gathering/defining metrics**, a murky area for many developer program teams. We take heart from the responses (see page 20), which show programs shifting to collect more strategic metrics.

Top DevRel Program Challenges	
Getting internal support for our program	19.2%
Scaling our outreach & getting enough developers	15.3%
Getting sufficient budget	12.0%
Increasing engagement with our developers	8.8%
Technology/ Product limitations	8.1%
Personal & team training in dev relations	6.5%
Gathering defining metrics	5.8%
Keeping content fresh & current	5.5%
Finding qualified staff - technical	4.5%

"Metrics / showing the worth of our work"

"Understanding who our developers are and how to reach them"

"Uphill battle to convince Exec level to invest"

"Scale - far too few DevRels for the size of our community"

COVID CHANGES/ CHALLENGES

Covid 19 Continues to Affect DevRel, but They Have Adapted!

Just last year, **Cancelled events/conferences** (44%) was identified as the biggest impact of the pandemic, but 2021 seems to see DevRel adapting! This year they report either **Going fully virtual** (30.0%), taking the time to (re)focus on **Creating external content** (18.8%), or revisiting **Internal processes** (6.3%). While many continue to **Reduce event travel/attendance** (17.5%), for some (12.5%), **Nothing has changed** at all.

Q. *How has your work or DevRel program changed as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic?*

Went fully virtual	30.0%
Refocused on externals (content)	18.8%
Reduced Travel/ Attendance	17.5%
Other	15.0%
Nothing changed	12.5%
Refocused on internals (processes)	6.3%

"More focus on content creation and multi channel approach to drive experiential engagement"

"I am now also a video producer in addition to everything else I was doing!"

"Moved everything online (Hackathons, events, meetups, ...)"

The End of Covid 19 Means One Thing to Most DevRel Practitioners – Getting Back to In-Person Events!

It's not surprising that DevRel practitioners, known for travelling at least once per month (64%) prior to Covid 19 as a routine part of the job, are looking forward to getting together again at **In-person events** (68.3%) and **Travelling again** (6.1%) once the pandemic allows!

Q. *What will you and your DevRel program go back to doing as soon as the pandemic allows?*

In-person events	68.3%
Other	12.2%
Staying virtual	8.5%
Travelling again	6.1%
Back to the office	4.9%

"Probably blended conferences (part online, part in person)"

"Our on-site workshops with real developers in the room!"

"TRAVEL!!!!!!!"

DEVELOPER
RELATIONS PEOPLE

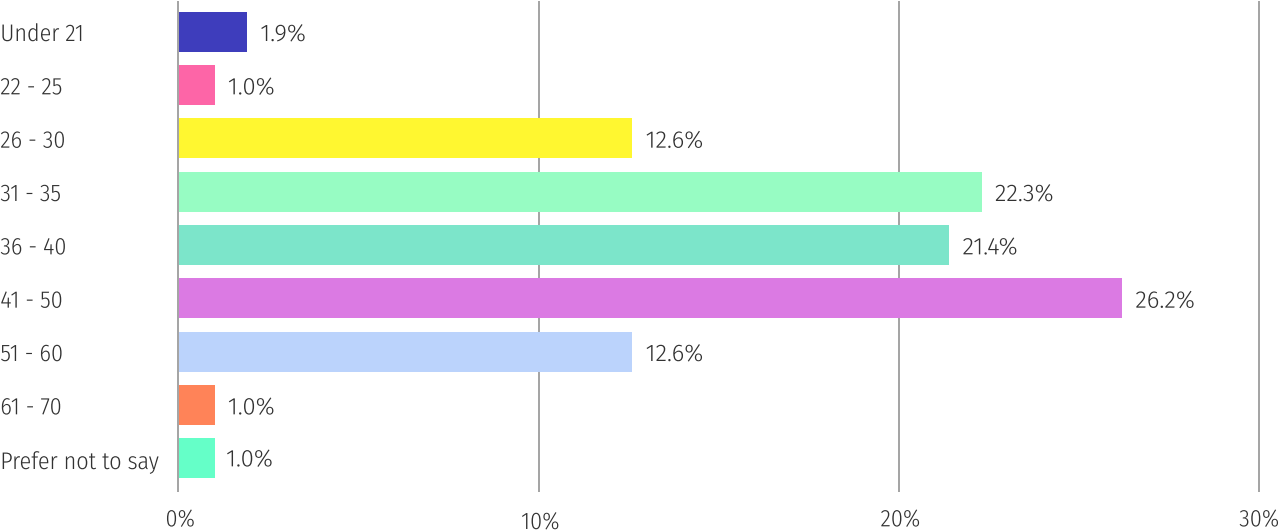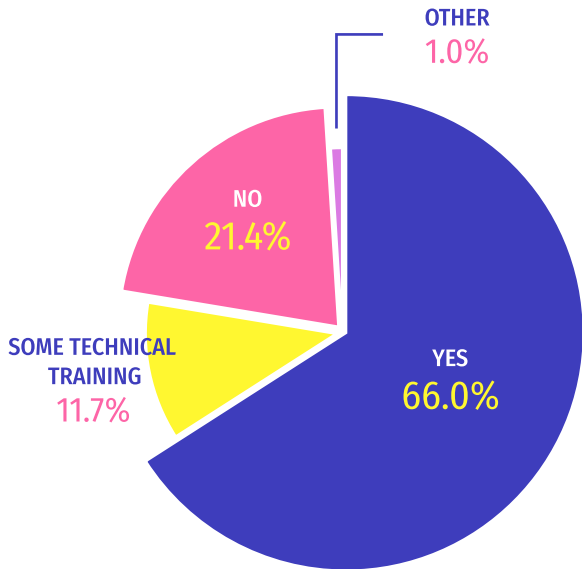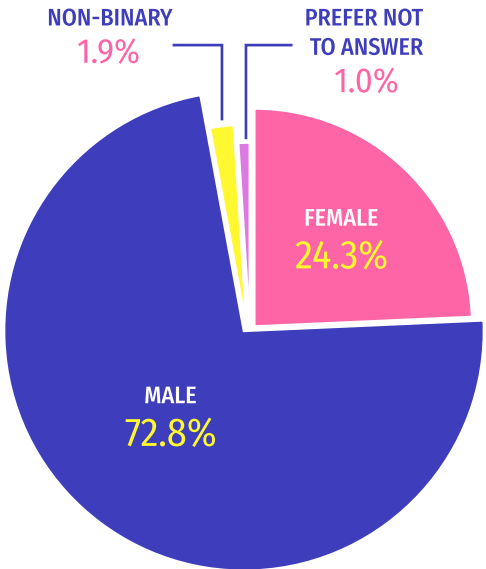# DEMOGRAPHICS

The **Ages** of DevRel practitioners range from under 21 to over 60, with approximately 70% **Clustered in the 31-50 range**.

This cohort is **Predominantly male** (73%), with 66% report having a **Technical degree**.

Age	Percentage
Under 21	1.9%
22 - 25	1.0%
26 - 30	12.6%
31 - 35	22.3%
36 - 40	21.4%
41 - 50	26.2%
51 - 60	12.6%
61 - 70	1.0%
Prefer not to say	1.0%

Q. *To which gender identity do you most identify?*

NON-BINARY 1.9%
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER 1.0%
FEMALE 24.3%
MALE 72.8%

Q. *Do you have a technical degree?*

OTHER 1.0%
NO 21.4%
SOME TECHNICAL TRAINING 11.7%
YES 66.0%

EXPERIENCE

There is a range of experience with DevRel practitioners, with new people joining the field all the time.

As in previous years, informal **Learning on the job** is the primary way practitioners gain DevRel knowledge. However, as more DevRel education becomes available, we see a rise in **Learning from conferences and books**.

Experience	Percentage
< 1 year	5.8%
1 - 2 years	12.6%
3 - 4 years	17.5%
5 - 7 years	30.1%
8 - 10 years	11.7%
11 - 15 years	8.7%
> 15 years	13.6%
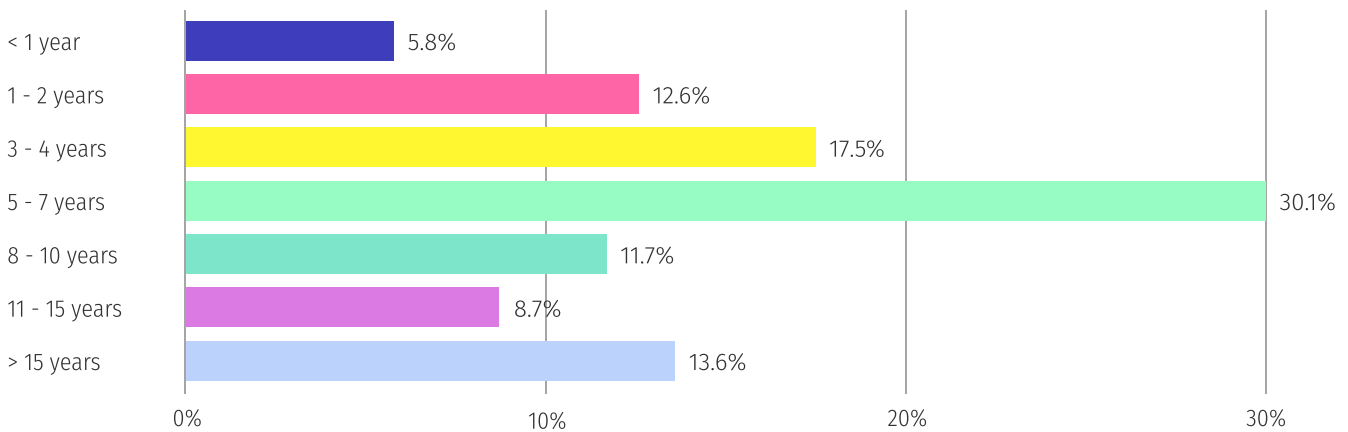
How did you learn to be a developer relations professional? How do you keep learning? (Check all that Apply)

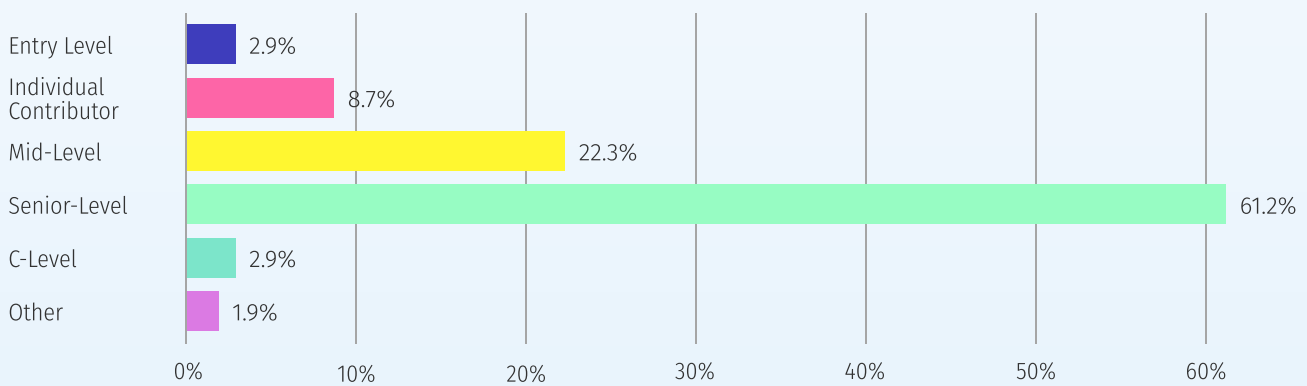|	
Seat of my pants...learned on the job	88.4%
Peers in DevRel	72.8%
Reading online	61.2%
DevRel Conferences	43.7%
Learning from & listening to colleagues	39.8%
DevRel social media channels - FB, Slack, etc.	38.8%
Reading books	35.9%
Mentors	28.2%
DevRel meetups	24.3%
Reading industry reports	22.3%
University/ post secondary school	11.7%
In house company workshop	4.9%
Other	1.0%

SENIORITY

The **majority** of respondents report being at a **Senior Level**, which is somewhat at odds with only 34% having a defined career path (see page 12). We don't have insight if this is reflected in their titles or responsibilities, but DevRel is known for having a few people carrying a large amount of responsibility. **Developer Advocates**, in particular, are often referred to as **"Swiss Army Knives"** or **"Jack/Jill's of all trades."**
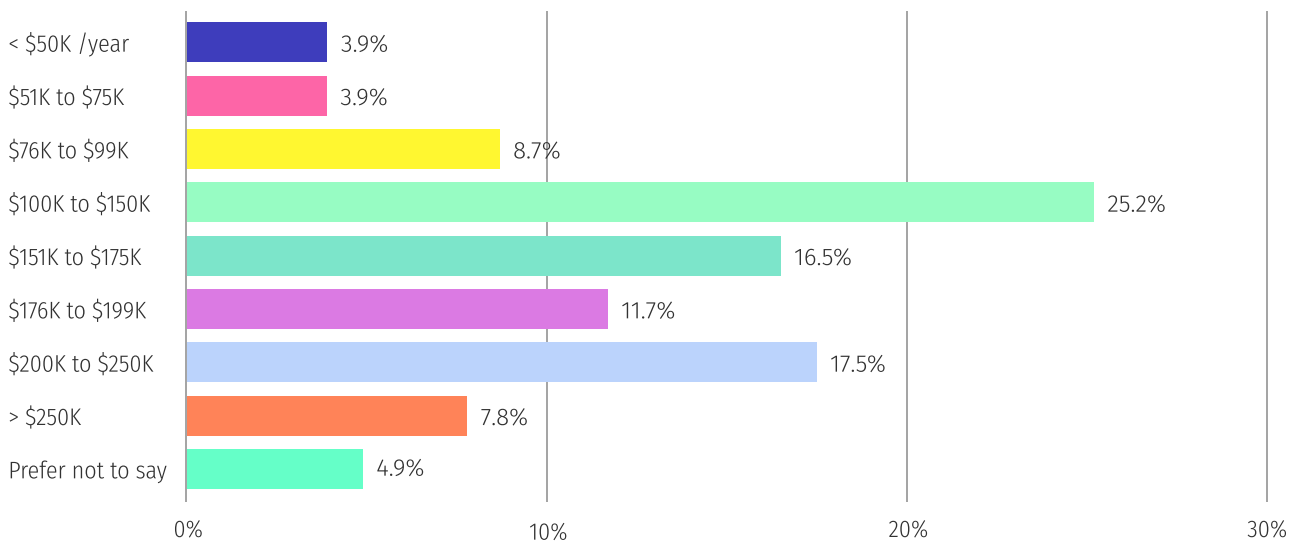
Level	Percentage
Entry Level	2.9%
Individual Contributor	8.7%
Mid-Level	22.3%
Senior-Level	61.2%
C-Level	2.9%
Other	1.9%

SALARIES

Salaries Are Rising

The **largest segment** of salaries remains between **$100K to $150K** USD at 25.2%, however this category was 34% last year. We saw a **significant jump** in salaries over **$151K** to 52.5%, up 29% from salaries in 2020.

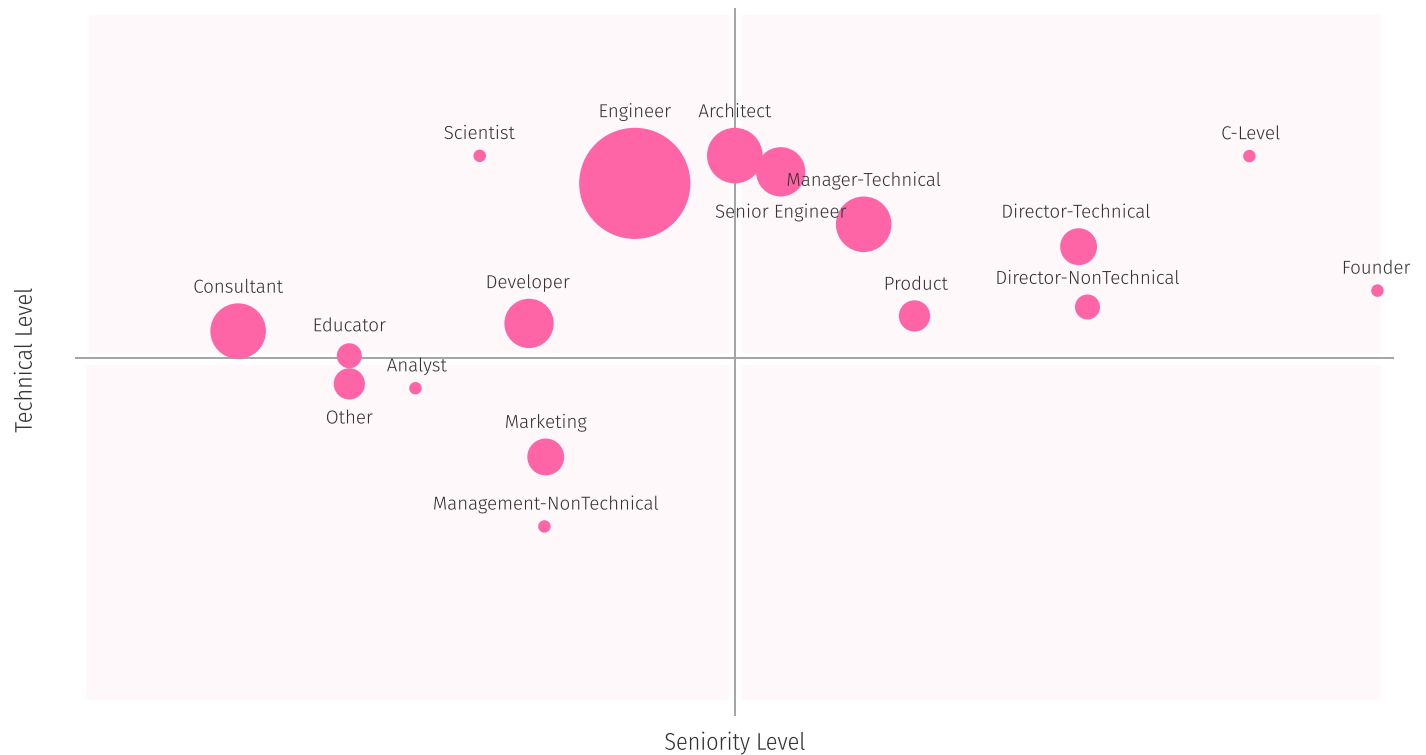The **median range** of salaries is **$151K to $175K** and the **mean** is approximately **$160K**.

	< $50K /year	3.9%

< $50K /year — 3.9%
$51K to $75K — 3.9%
$76K to $99K — 8.7%
$100K to $150K — 25.2%
$151K to $175K — 16.5%
$176K to $199K — 11.7%
$200K to $250K — 17.5%
> $250K — 7.8%
Prefer not to say — 4.9%

	Lowest Reported	Highest reported	Median	Mean	Years in DevRel (Mean)
Entry Level	<$50K (66.7%)	$100K - $150K (33.3%)	<$50K	$51K - $75K	~3.5 years
IC	$51K - $75K (11.1%)	$200K - $250K (11.1%)	$100K - $150K	$150K	~4.5 years
Mid-Level	<$50K (4.3%)	$200K - $250K (8.7%)	$100K - $150K	~$160K	~4 years
Senior	<$50K (1.6%)	>$250K (12.7%)	$176K - $199K	~$180K	~8 years
C-Level	$76K - $99K (33.3%)	$151K - $175K (33.3%)	$100K - $150K	$100K - $150K	5 - 7 years

THE PEOPLE

Previous Jobs Held Prior to DevRel

Technical Level

Seniority Level

- Scientist
- Engineer
- Architect
- Manager-Technical
- Senior Engineer
- C-Level
- Director-Technical
- Product
- Director-NonTechnical
- Founder
- Consultant
- Developer
- Educator
- Analyst
- Other
- Marketing
- Management-NonTechnical

Developer Relations People Come From Tech

People join DevRel from a wide variety of backgrounds; however, the **majority** (77.2%) come to it directly from **"high-tech"** jobs. The largest group were **Engineers** (17.8%). Many came from **Senior levels** (21.8%), including **Director, C-level**, and even company **Founder** positions.
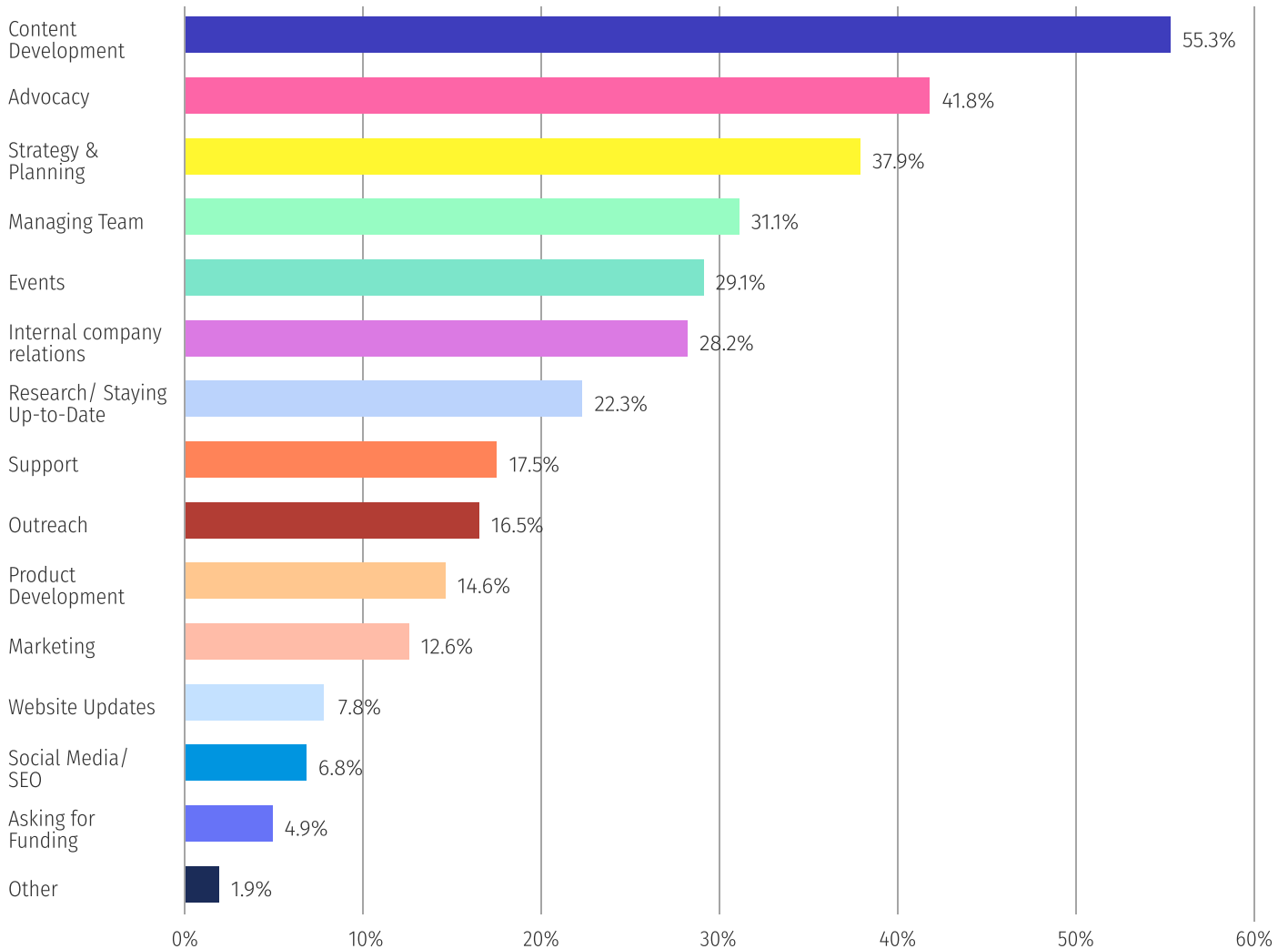
At the same time, DevRel attracts an exciting mix of **Others** (5.0%), including **Publicists, Chemists, Students,** and even **Reporters**.
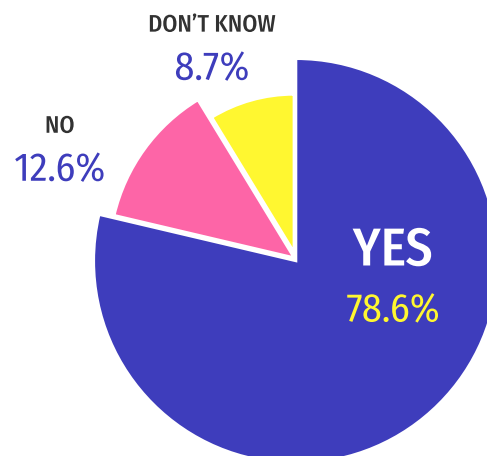
WHAT DO PEOPLE IN DEVREL DO?

Content Continues to be the Dominant Theme for DevRel

Activity	%
Content Development	55.3%
Advocacy	41.8%
Strategy & Planning	37.9%
Managing Team	31.1%
Events	29.1%
Internal company relations	28.2%
Research/ Staying Up-to-Date	22.3%
Support	17.5%
Outreach	16.5%
Product Development	14.6%
Marketing	12.6%
Website Updates	7.8%
Social Media/ SEO	6.8%
Asking for Funding	4.9%
Other	1.9%

Q. *Will you work **remotely** once it is safe to move back into offices?*

DON'T KNOW
8.7%

NO
12.6%

YES
78.6%

BACKGROUND

We have been surveying the Developer Relations community since 2013. This **State of Developer Report 2021 is the 8th report** to highlight the growing practice of Developer Relations. The survey ran from September 17 to October 11, 2021 of which 247 responses were analyzed. This is our largest survey to date.

Thanks to those who participated in the creation, promotion and analysis of the survey including:

- Caroline Lewko
- Judy Hamilton
- Matthew Revell
- Dana Fujikawa
- James Parton
- Rod Burns
- Stacey Kruczek
- Michael Lee Designs

Thank you as well to those of you who took the time to complete the survey, giving us the opportunity to track progress and diversity, your peers a deeper awareness into what others in the community do and experience, and those outside DevRel insight into this growing practice called Developer Relations.

SPONSORS

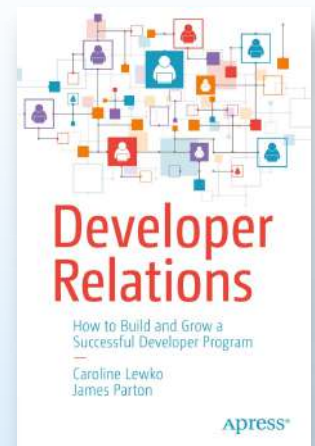**This year's survey and report was managed by:**

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Developer Relations
How to Build and Grow a Successful Developer Program
—
Caroline Lewko
James Parton

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8th DevRel Survey

STATE OF
DEVELOPER RELATIONS

2021