



INSIGHT REPORT

The State of Customer Experience Management, 2018

**NINTH ANNUAL BENCHMARK OF CX ACTIVITIES,
COMPETENCIES, AND MATURITY LEVELS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Temkin Group has evaluated the state of Customer Experience (CX) management at large companies for nine years in a row. This year, the benchmark is based on a survey of 171 companies with at least \$500 million in annual revenues. Respondents not only answered questions about CX management, they also completed our *CX Competency and Maturity Assessment*. When we analyzed organizations' CX efforts and progress towards maturity, we found that:

- While only 7% of companies view themselves as industry leaders in CX today, 54% aspire to be leaders within three years.
- Only 13% of companies have reached the top two (out of six) levels of CX maturity.
- Of the four CX Core Competencies, *Compelling Brand Values* continues to be the most problematic for companies.
- Twenty-two percent of firms have at least 21 FTEs in their centralized CX groups.
- Companies rate themselves highest for *customer insights & analysis* and weakest for *ambassador programs*.
- Voice of the customer software and market research vendors are the most valuable CX tools and services.
- Two-thirds of companies think that their phone agents typically deliver a good experience, while only 11% feel that way about chat bots.
- The top obstacle that companies face is *other competing priorities*, which has been at the top of the list for several years.
- When we compared CX leaders with CX laggards, we discovered that the leaders enjoy stronger financial results, are more likely to have senior executives leading company-wide CX efforts, employ more full-time CX employees, use more experience design agencies, and feel more supported by senior leaders.
- CX leaders are more likely to describe their culture as being Customer- or Mission-Centric, while CX laggards are more likely to describe theirs as Sales- or Profit-Centric.
- This report also includes an assessment that companies can use to benchmark their CX efforts and capabilities.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN LARGE FIRMS

To understand how companies' customer experience (CX) management efforts are progressing, we surveyed 171 CX professionals from companies with at least \$500 million in annual revenues.¹ The results of this survey show that:

- **Companies have strong CX ambitions.** While only 7% of companies believe that they are leading their industries in CX today, 54% aim to be the best within three years (see Figure 1).
- **Most have centralized CX leadership.** We found that 70% of respondents have a senior executive in charge of their company's overall CX efforts, and that 78% have a centralized CX group (see Figure 2). More than half of the companies have had these corporate CX elements in place for 12 months or more.
- **Most CX teams have more than 10 FTEs.** Fifty-six percent of respondents report that their CX efforts are significantly coordinated across their organization (see Figure 3). Of the companies with centralized CX teams, the median firm has six to ten full-time CX employees. More than one-fifth of respondents have 21 or more CX employees.
- **Customer insights is the most successful area of focus.** When we asked respondents which activities have most positively impacted their company, 62% said that their *customer insights & analysis* efforts are "strong" or "very strong" (see Figure 4). The only other area where more than 50% of respondents consider themselves strong is *working with senior leaders*.
- **VoC software is the most valuable tool.** We asked respondents about which tools and services their company uses and found that VoC software delivers the most significant value, followed closely by market research vendors (see Figure 5). Over the previous three years, VoC vendors and speech analytics have been increasing in value, while CX consultants have been on declining (see Figure 6).
- **On the phone with an agent is the top channel.** Sixty-seven percent of respondents feel that their phone agents typically deliver either a "good" or "very good" experience, by far the highest level of any interaction channel (see Figure 7). Conversely, only 11% of respondents feel the same way about chat bots. Of the channels that companies use, the cross-channel experience remains on the bottom (see Figure 8).
- **Companies still struggle with competing priorities.** Sixty-four percent of respondents identified *other competing priorities* as a significant obstacle to their CX efforts, the highest item on the list again this year (see Figure 9). Between 2017 and 2018, *conflict across internal organizations* saw the sharpest increase in the percentage of companies encountering this obstacle.

¹ Temkin Group fielded an online survey during March 2018. The data was cleansed to eliminate partial, duplicate, and questionable responses. This report analyzes 171 responses from companies with annual revenues of at least \$500 million. These respondents come from a global set of companies.

ASSESSING THE FOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CORE COMPETENCIES

Temkin Group has identified four CX core competencies that companies must master to become customer-centric: *Purposeful Leadership*, *Compelling Brand Values*, *Employee Engagement*, and *Customer Connectedness* (see Figure 10).² As part of the survey, respondents completed our *CX Competency and Maturity Assessment*, which evaluates their company's proficiency levels across these four competencies (see Figure 11). The results show:

- **Few companies are truly customer-centric.** Only 13% of the companies that completed this assessment have made it to *Align* or *Embed*, the top two stages of CX maturity (see Figure 12). While companies have a lot of work to do across all four competencies, they received the lowest ratings for *Compelling Brand Values*.
- **Customer experience maturity remains about the same.** Temkin Group often refers to the bottom three levels of maturity as “fluff” because they can be reached without significantly disrupting the way than an organization operates, while we refer to the top three levels of maturity as “tough” because they require significant change across an organization. We looked at how the results of the *CX Maturity Assessment* have changed since 2010 and found that the percentage of companies in the three highest levels of CX maturity has increased a bit from last year (see Figure 13).
- **Senior leaders communicate the value of CX.** To identify where companies' CX efforts excel (and where they fall down), we asked respondents whether or not their company does 20 different CX activities from across the four competencies (see Figures 14 and 15). At the top of the list, 50% of respondents' companies have senior executives who communicate the importance of customer experience and regularly collect and act upon customer feedback. At the bottom of the list, only 16% of marketing organizations do as much brand marketing inside the company as they do outside.
- **Companies are increasingly reviewing CX metrics.** When we compared the percentage of companies that did each CX activity in 2017 versus the percentage currently doing it in 2018, the activity that increased the most was *my company reviews customer experience metrics and considers them as important as financial metrics* (see Figure 16).

COMPARING CX LEADERS AND LAGGARDS

What distinguishes CX leaders from CX laggards? We split the respondents into two groups based on their *CX Competency and Maturity Assessment* scores. We labeled companies with scores of 58 and above “CX leaders” and companies with scores below 58 “CX laggards.” When we compared the results of these two groups, we found that CX leaders:

² See the Temkin Group report, “The Four Customer Experience Core Competencies,” (April 2017).

- **Have better financial performances.** Seventy-one percent of CX leaders report better financial results than their competitors, while only 52% of CX laggards report the same (see Figure 17).
- **Have a more active CX efforts.** Seventy-two percent of CX leaders have a senior executive in charge of their CX efforts, compared with only 40% of CX laggards. The CX laggards fall even further behind when it comes to having significant, highly-coordinated CX efforts, trailing CX leaders by a full 34 percentage-points. CX leaders also have considerably more CX employees.
- **Are better at driving culture change.** CX leaders perform better across all CX activities we looked at (see Figure 18). These two groups differ the most when it comes to *driving culture change* as the percentage of CX leaders that excel in this area is 50 points higher than the percentage of CX laggards that excel.
- **Use more predictive analytics.** When we looked at the tools and services that companies use, CX leaders are much more likely to use all of the items (see Figure 19). These two groups differ most – by 23 percentage-points – when it comes to using predictive analytics. Predictive analytics is also responsible for the largest gap between CX leaders and laggards when it comes to what percentage say the tool provides them with “significant” value (see Figure 20).
- **Deliver better experiences, across the board.** CX leaders report delivering a higher percentage of good experiences across all of the interaction channels on our list (see Figure 21).
- **Have more senior executive support.** When asked about major obstacles to their CX efforts, both groups struggle equally with *competing priorities* (see Figure 22). CX laggards, however, were more likely than CX leaders to select all of the other obstacles on our list. These two groups differed the most on *lack of commitment from senior executives*, with only 15% of CX leaders saying they experience this issue compared with 55% of CX laggards.
- **Focus more on fixing customer problems, less on cutting costs.** We asked respondents to rate how important their executives consider different business goals (see Figure 23). CX leaders are much more likely than CX laggards to focus on *fixing customer experience problems*. CX laggards, on the other hand, are much more likely to focus on *cutting costs*.
- **Are more Customer- and Mission-Centric.** We asked respondents to classify their organization’s culture (see Figure 24). CX leaders are more frequently *Customer-Centric* and *Mission-Centric*, while CX laggards are most frequently *Profit-Centric* and *Sales-Centric*.

ASSESS AND IMPROVE YOUR CX COMPETENCIES

As some companies focus on the four core CX competencies more than others, we expect to see the gap between CX leaders and CX laggards continue to grow. To gauge your

organization's progress, use Temkin Group's *Customer Experience Competency and Maturity Assessment*.³ You can use this tool in a number of ways:

- **Self-assessments.** Take the test yourself to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your organization.
- **Group discussions.** Use the self-test in a group exercise and discuss the strengths and weaknesses you identify as well as the areas of agreement and disagreement in the results.
- **Benchmarking.** Compare your results to Temkin Group's data about other companies. We've provided a chart you can use to identify how your score compares to 180 large companies (see Figure 25).
- **Action planning.** Develop plans for making progress towards being a customer-centric organization.
- **Progress tracking.** Repeat the self-test every six months to track your progress.

³ You can access Temkin Group's CX Competency & Maturity Assessment online at AssessCX.com

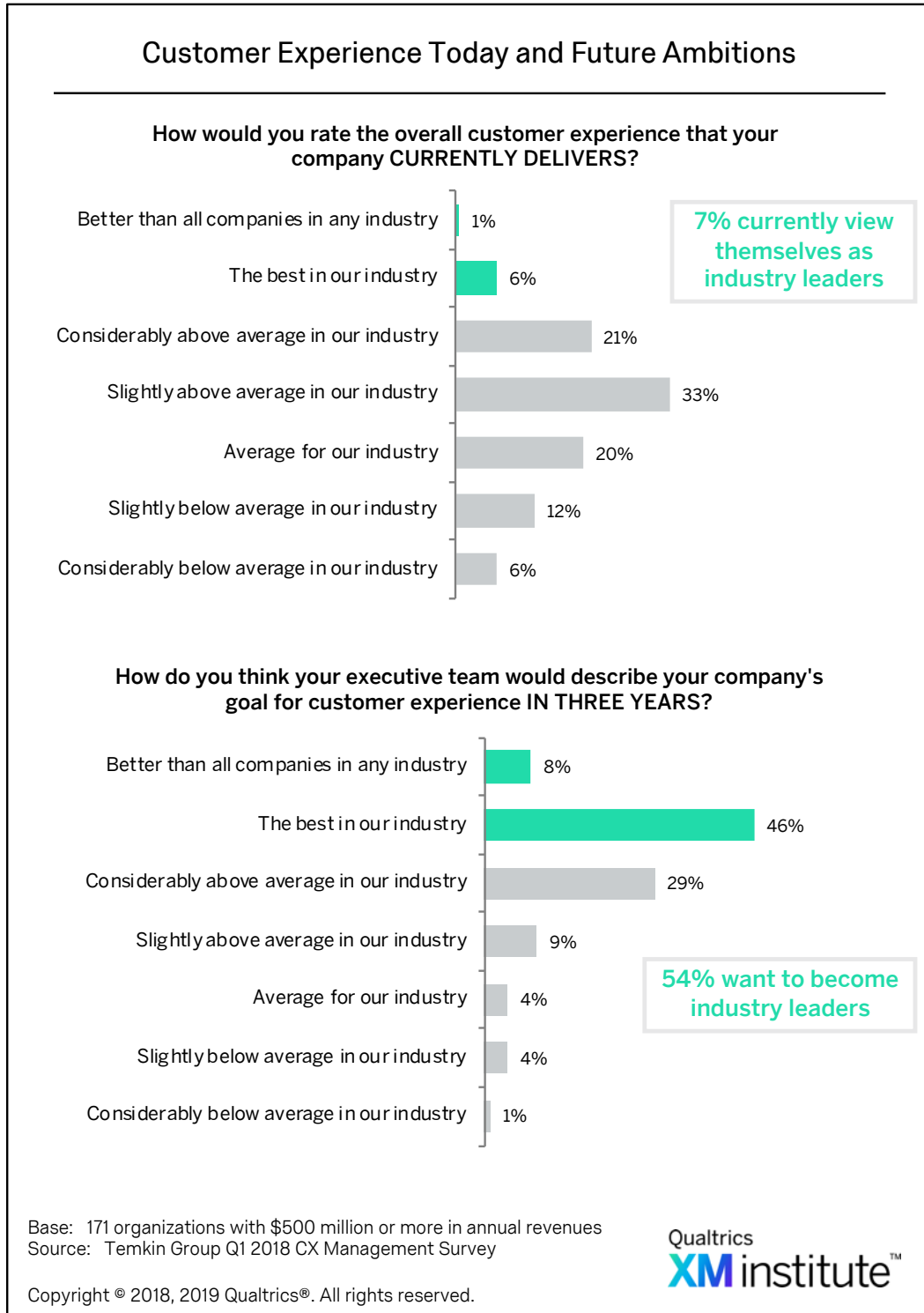
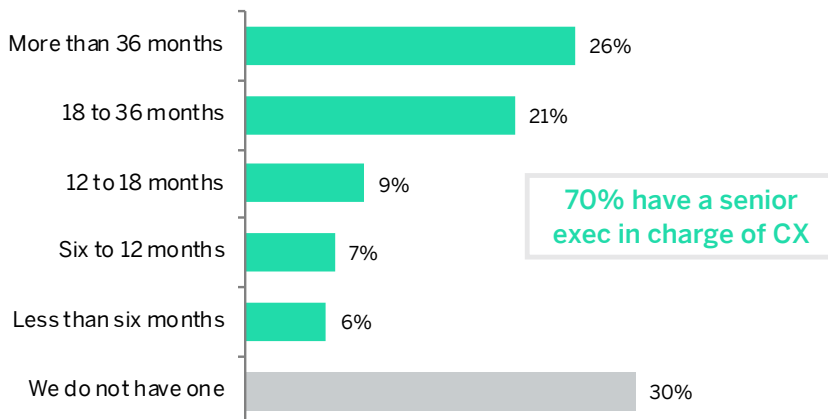


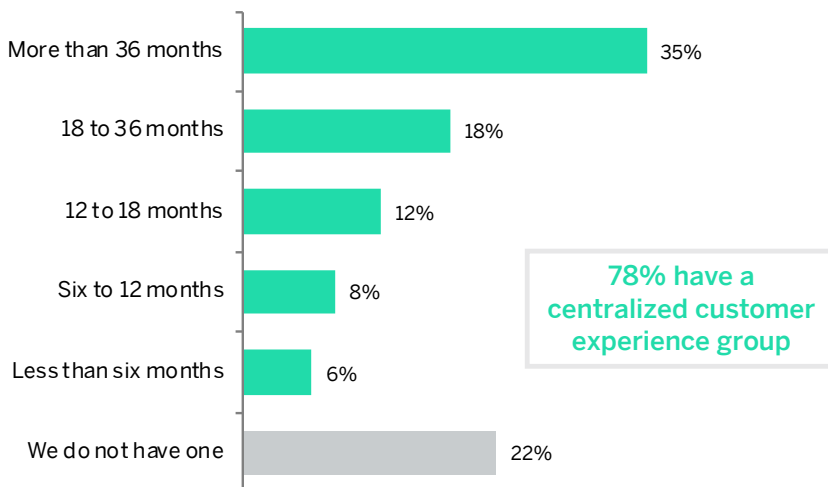
Figure 1

Customer Experience Leadership and Coordination

How long, if at all, has your organization had a senior executive in charge of customer experience across products and channels?



How long, if at all, has your organization had a centralized customer experience group?



Base: 171 organizations with \$500 million or more in annual revenues
Source: Temkin Group Q1 2018 CX Management Survey

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Figure 2

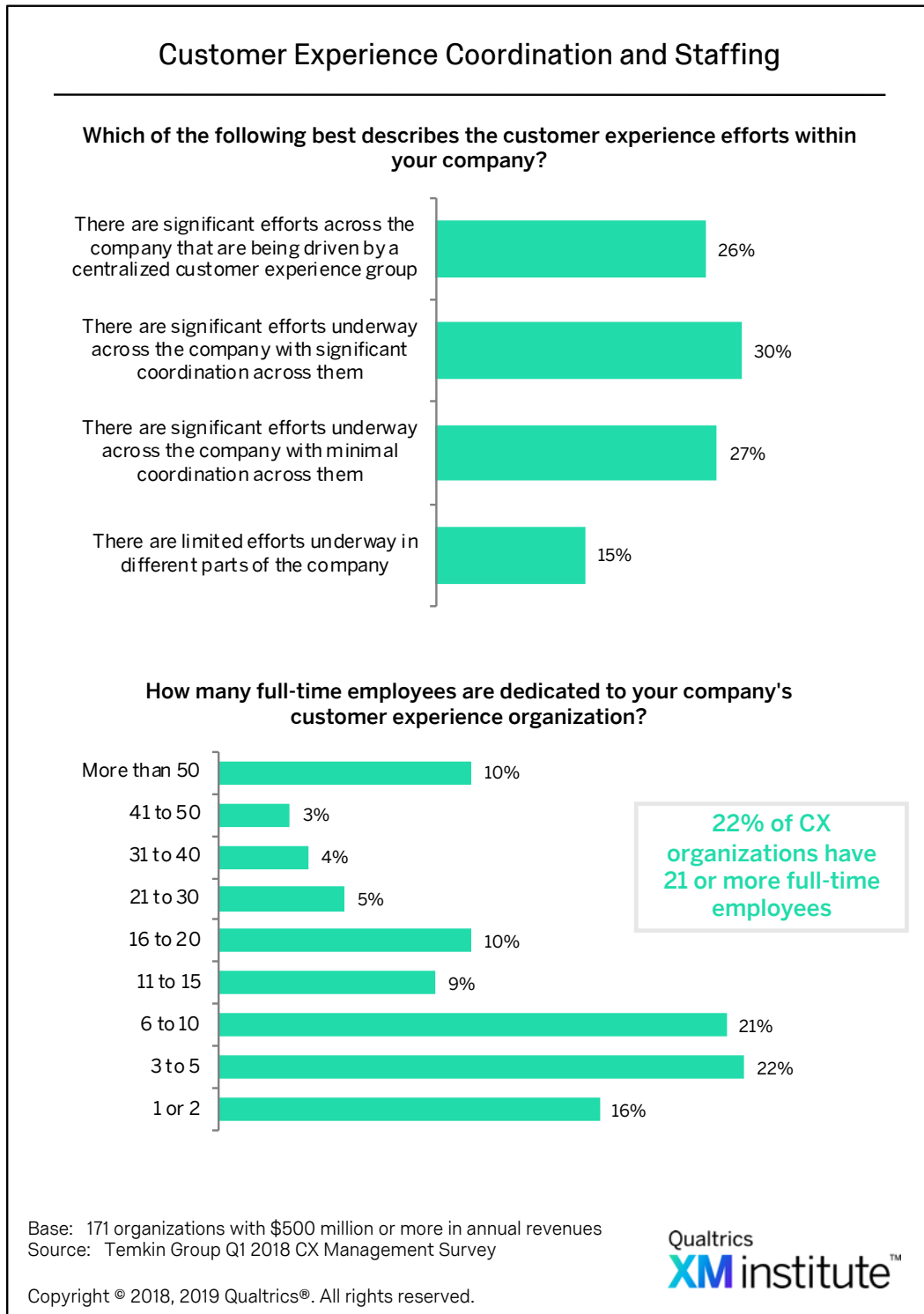


Figure 3

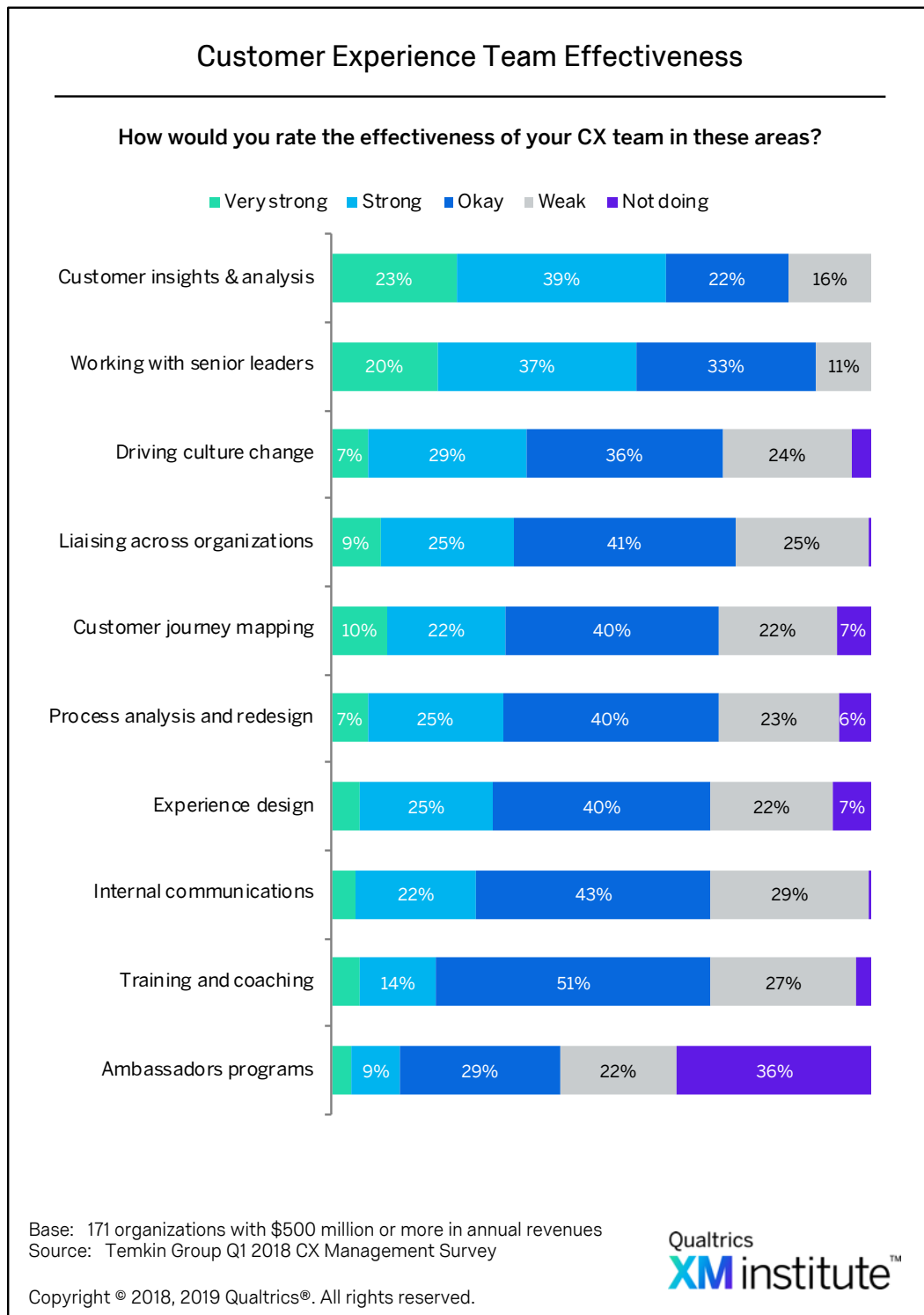


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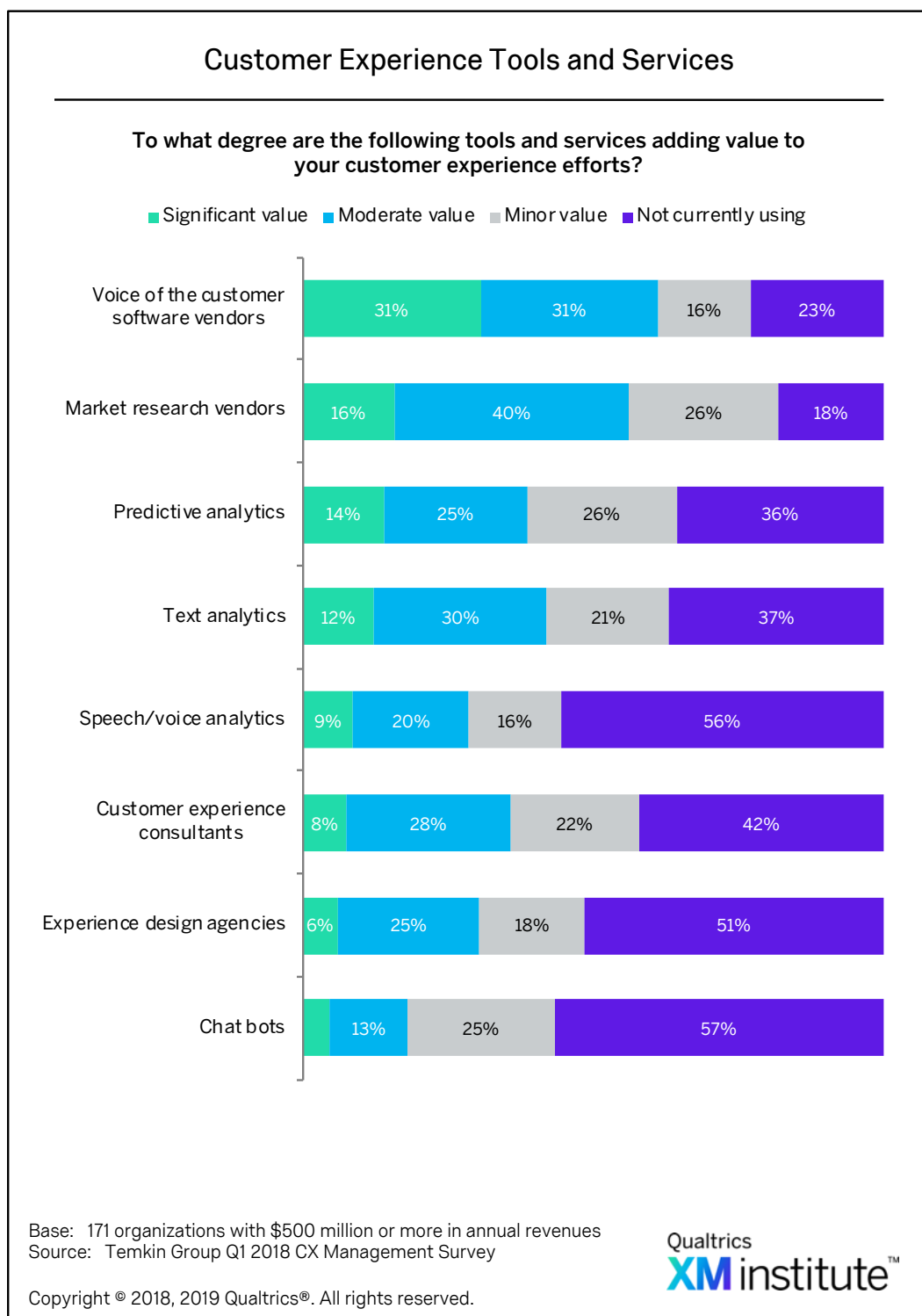


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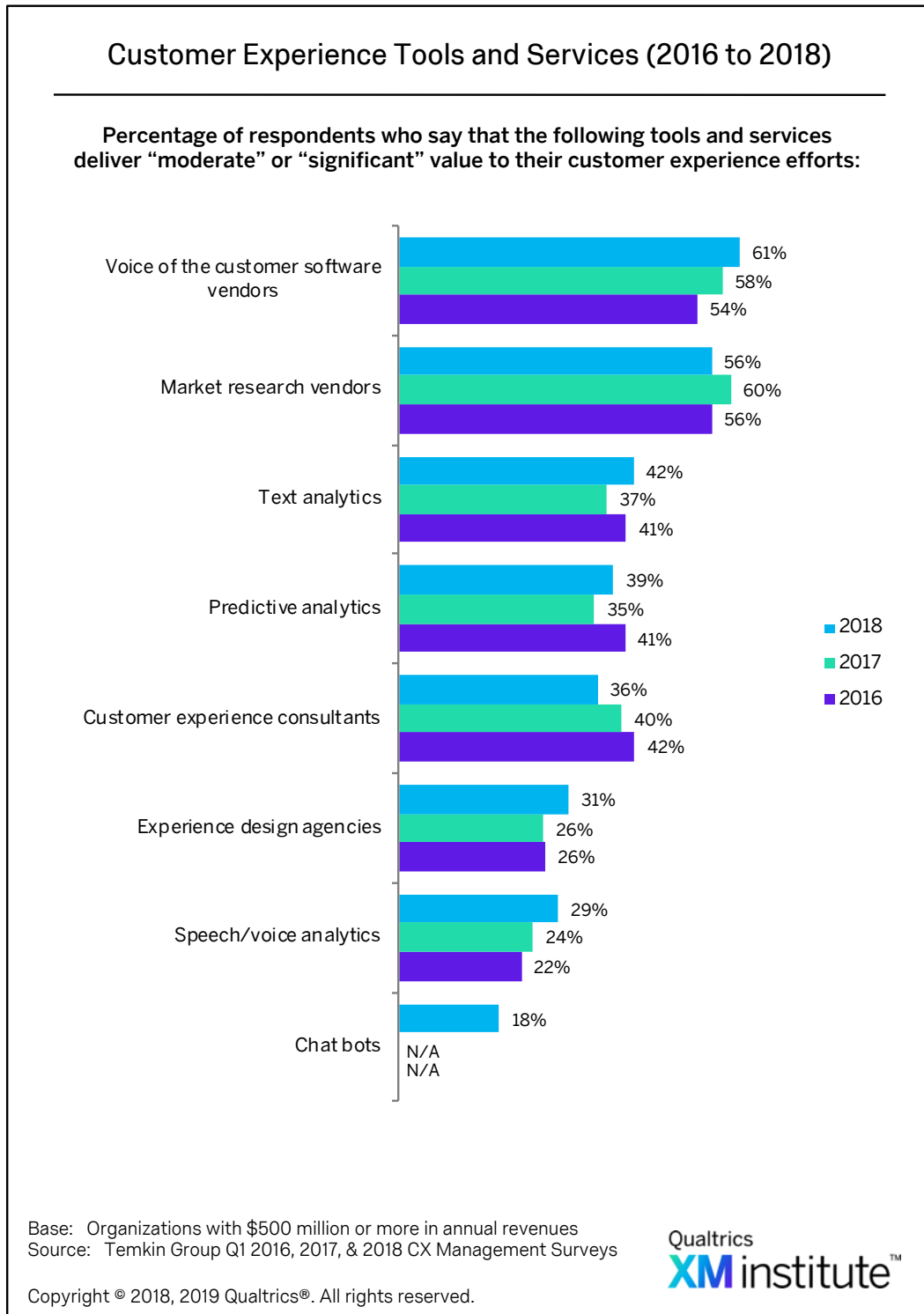


Figure 6

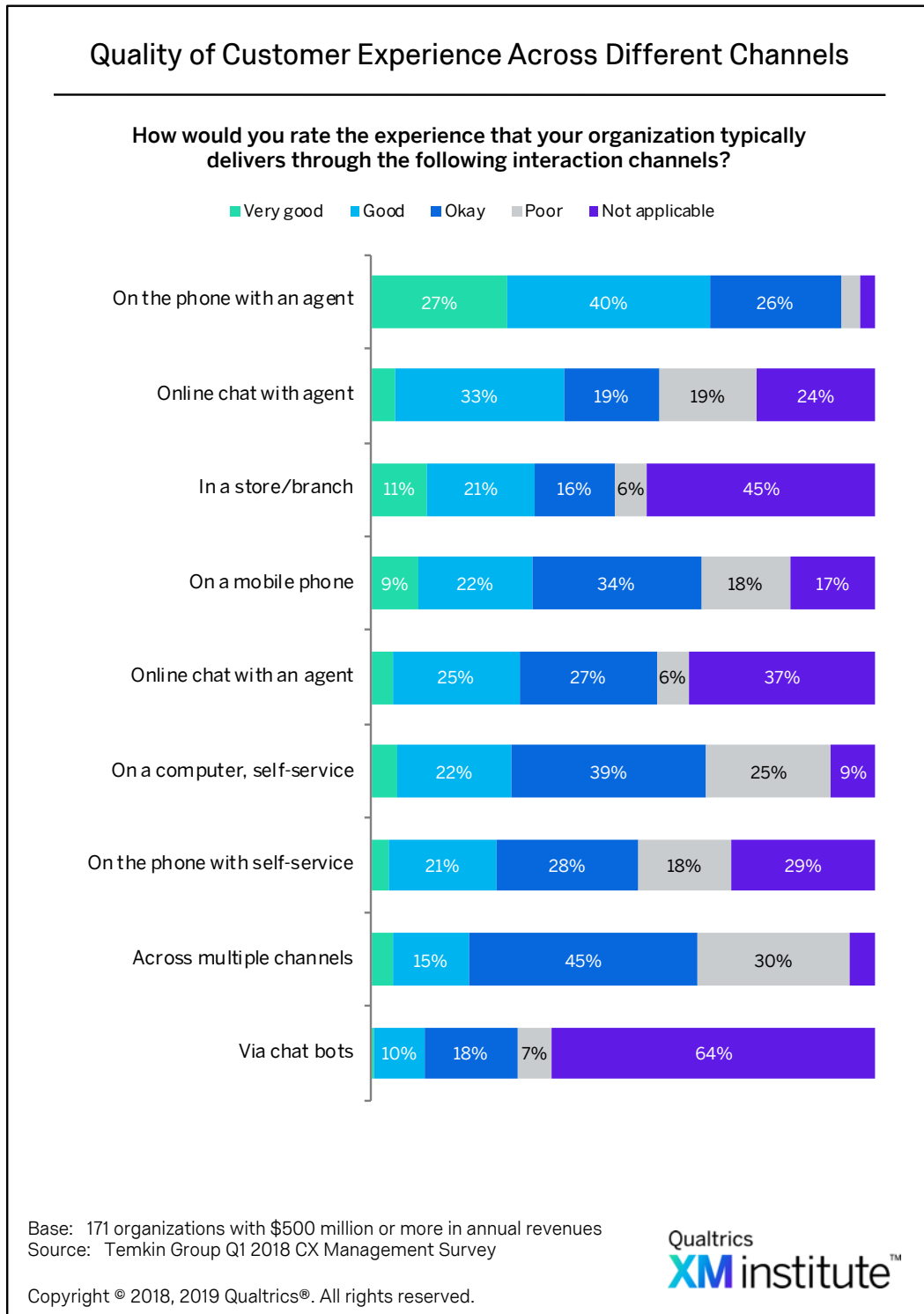


Figure 7

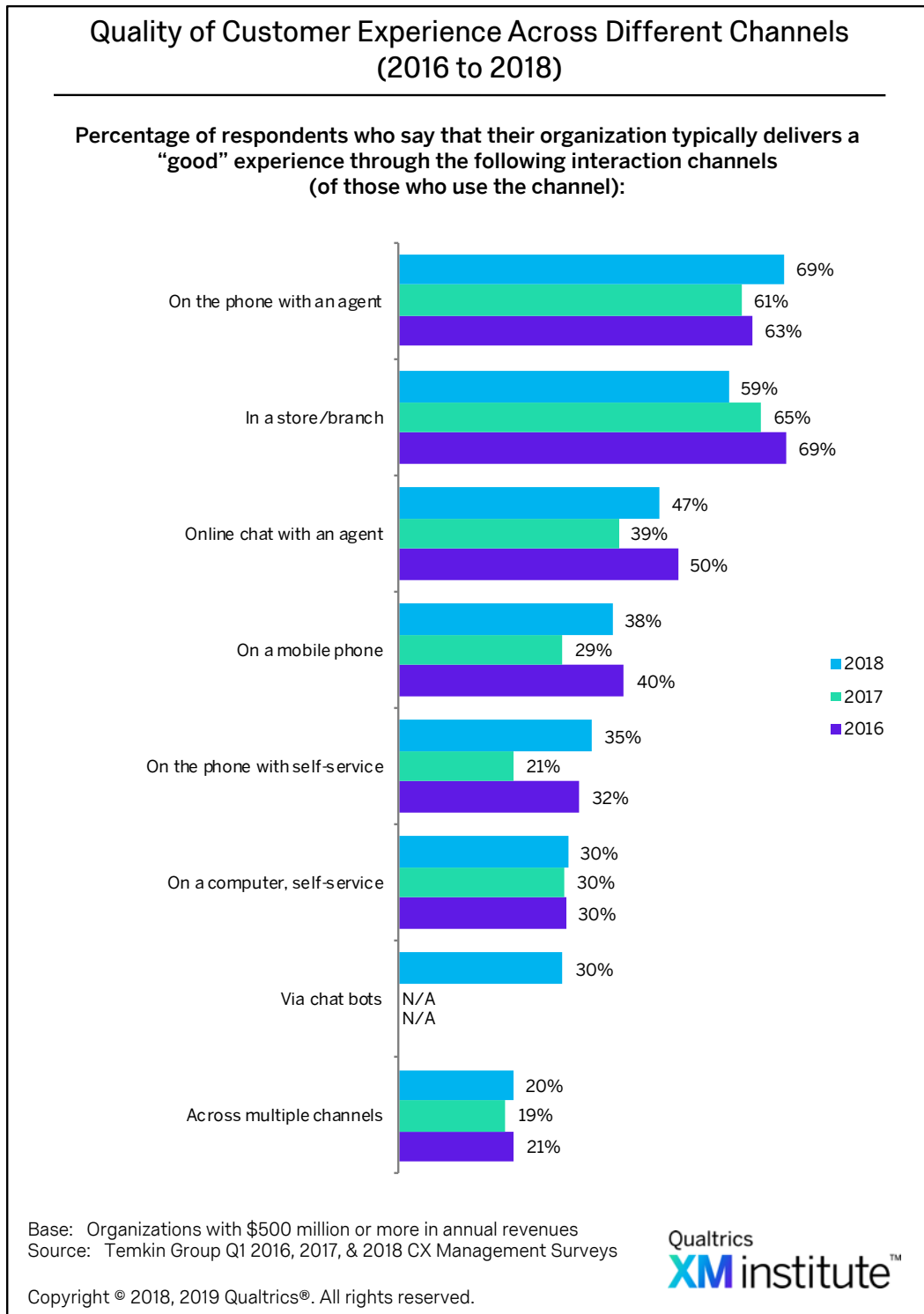


Figure 8

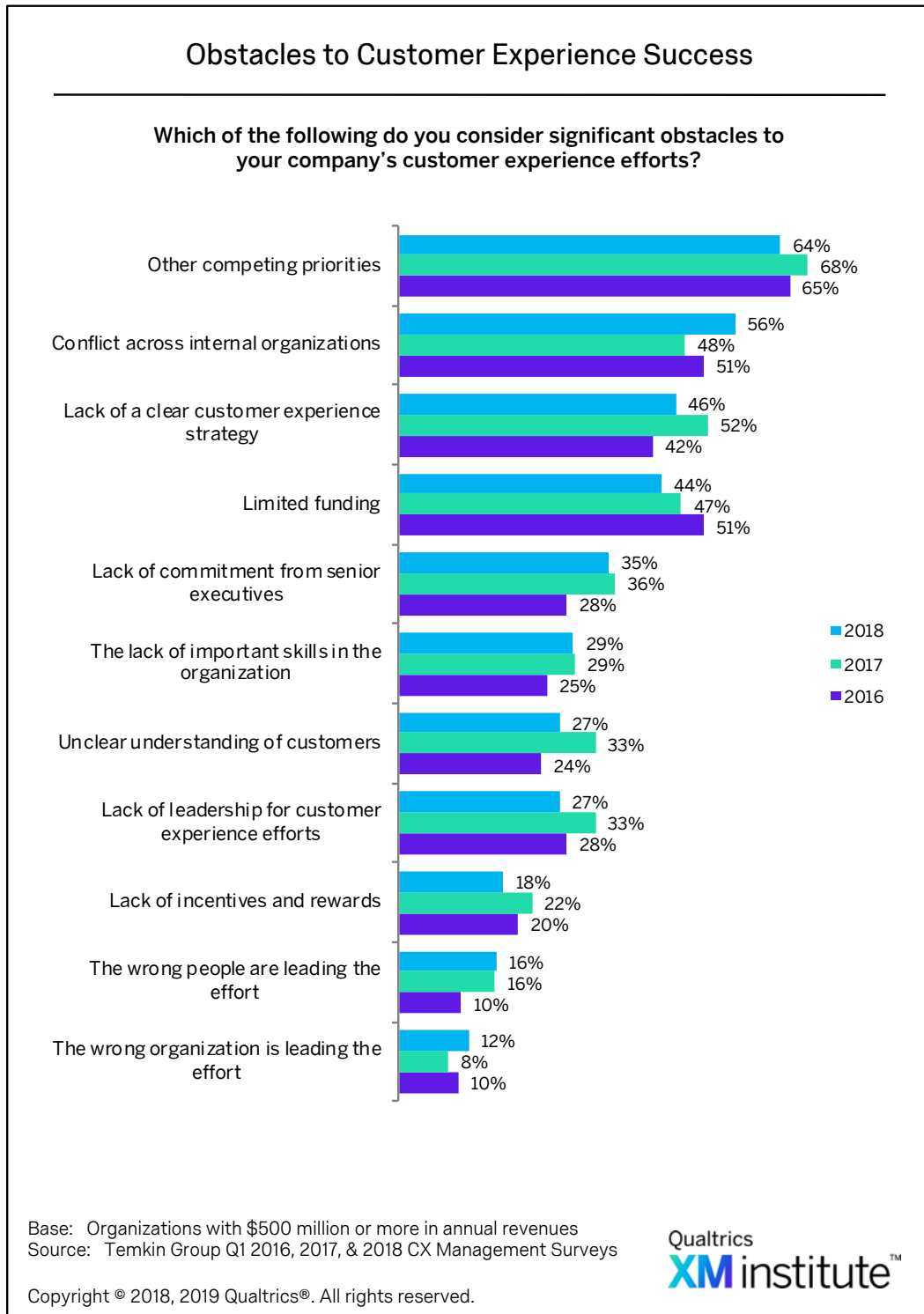


Figure 9

The Four Customer Experience Core Competencies



Purposeful Leadership

Do your leaders operate consistently with a clear, well-articulated set of values?

Compelling Brand Values

Are your brand attributes driving decisions about how you treat customers?

Employee Engagement

Are employees fully committed to the goals of your organization?

Customer Connectedness

Is customer feedback and insight integrated throughout your organization?

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Figure 10

Temkin Group Customer Experience Competency Assessment

To what degree do the following activities occur within your company?
1 = Never 2 = Periodically 3 = Usually 4 = Almost always 5 = Always

1) My company reviews customer experience metrics and considers them as important as financial metrics	
2) Senior executives regularly communicate that customer experience is one of the company's key strategies	
3) The executive team uses a clearly defined set of values to guide how it makes decisions	
4) Employees across my organization understand what the company's core values are and how those values relate specifically to their role	
5) Senior executives support decisions to trade-off short-term financial results for longer-term customer loyalty	
PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP total	
6) My company translates its brand into a clear set of promises to customers	
7) My company's brand guides decisions about how we treat customers and design interactions	
8) My company regularly examines whether customer interactions are living up to its brand values	
9) Our marketing organization does as much brand marketing inside the company as it does outside	
10) My company encourages employees to interpret how their work reinforces brand values	
COMPELLING BRAND VALUES total	
11) My company actively solicits and acts upon employee feedback	
12) Managers are evaluated based on the engagement level of their employees	
13) My company provides employees with industry-leading training	
14) My company celebrates and rewards the employees who exemplify its core values	
15) The human resources organization is actively involved in strategic initiatives	
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT total	
16) My company regularly collects and acts upon customer feedback	
17) My company uses human-centered design approaches to design interactions across all our touch points	
18) My company has a well-defined set of target customer segments that it uses to guide its priorities	
19) Executives regularly interact with customers in our target customer segments	
20) My company has integrated customer feedback throughout key processes, like product development and marketing rollout	
CUSTOMER CONNECTEDNESS total	
OVERALL TOTAL	

Competency Area Totals:		Overall Total:	
5 to 10	Very Poor	<50	Ignore
11 to 14	Poor	50 to 59	Explore
15 to 18	Okay	60 to 69	Mobilize
19 to 22	Good	70 to 79	Operationalize
23 to 25	Very Good	80 to 89	Align
		90 to 100	Embed



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Figure 11

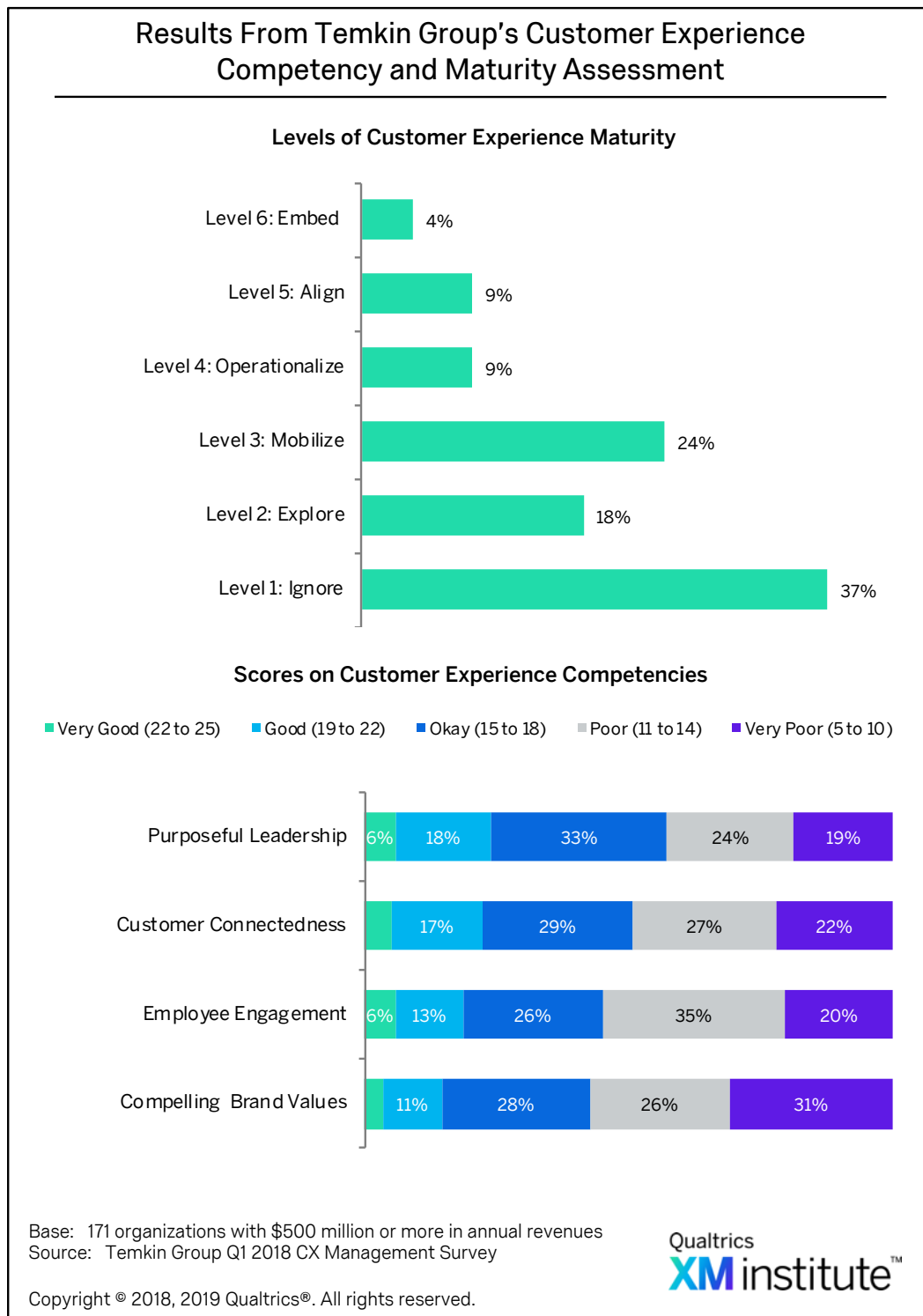


Figure 12

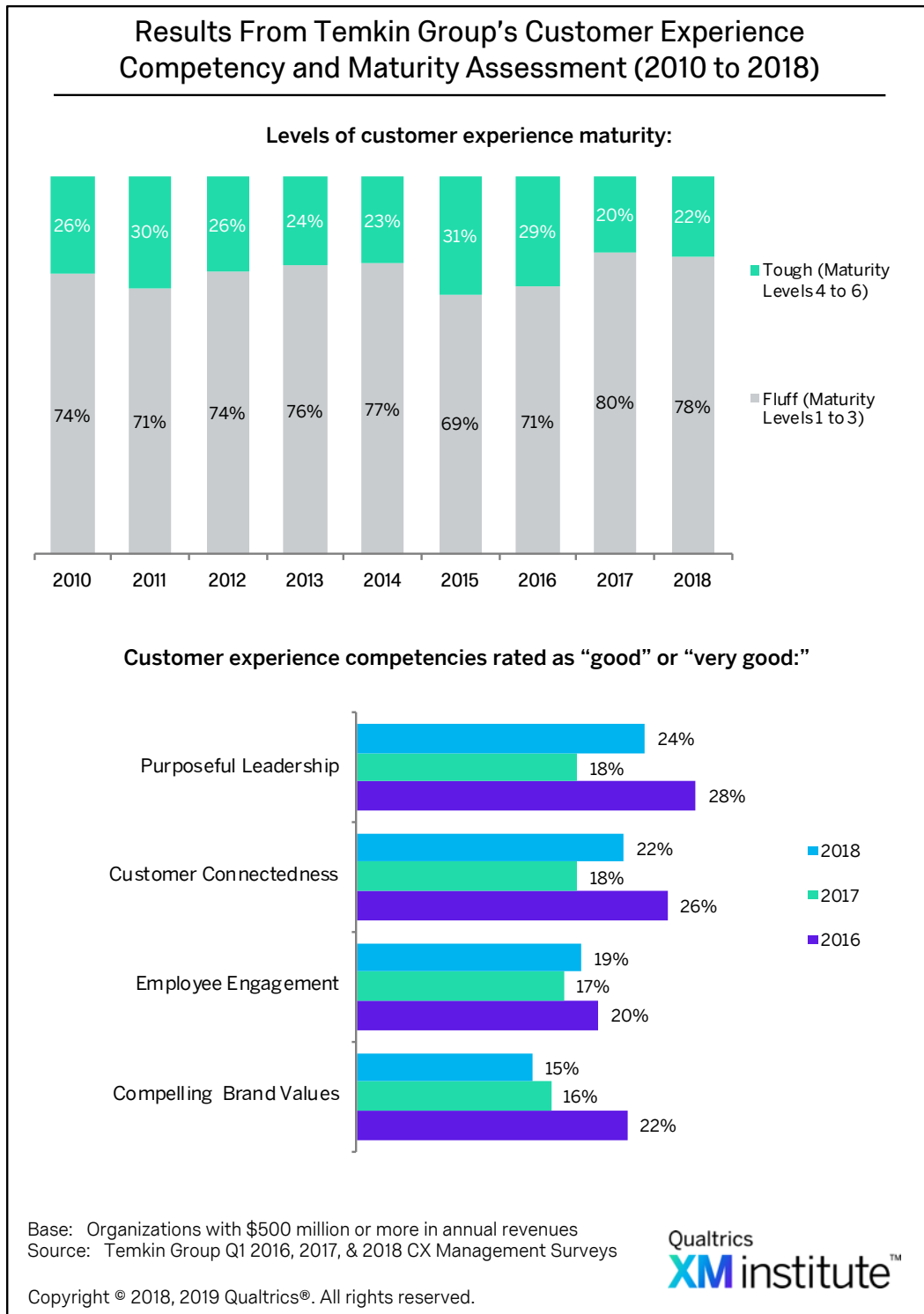


Figure 13

Most Frequently Practiced Customer Experience Competency Attributes		
CX Activity	CX Competency	"Always" or "Almost Always"
Senior executives regularly communicate that customer experience is one of the company's key strategies	Purposeful Leadership	50%
My company regularly collects and acts upon customer feedback	Customer Connectedness	46%
My company has a well-defined set of target customer segments that it uses to guide its priorities	Customer Connectedness	43%
The executive team uses a clearly defined set of values to guide how it makes decisions	Purposeful Leadership	42%
My company celebrates and rewards the employees who exemplify its core values	Employee Engagement	42%
Employees across my organization understand what the company's core values are and how those values relate specifically to their role	Purposeful Leadership	40%
My company translates its brand into a clear set of promises to customers	Compelling Brand Values	35%
My company actively solicits and acts upon employee feedback	Employee Engagement	33%
My company reviews customer experience metrics and considers them as important as financial metrics	Purposeful Leadership	31%
My company's brand guides decisions about how we treat customers and design interactions	Compelling Brand Values	30%

Base: 171 organizations with \$500 million or more in annual revenues
Source: Temkin Group Q1 2018 CX Management Survey

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Figure 14

Least Frequently Practiced Customer Experience Competency Attributes		
CX Activity	CX Competency	"Always" or "Almost Always"
Our marketing organization does as much brand marketing inside the company as it does outside	Compelling Brand Values	16%
Senior executives support decisions to trade-off short-term financial results for longer-term customer loyalty	Purposeful Leadership	18%
My company uses human-centered design approaches to design interactions across all our touch points	Customer Connectedness	20%
My company provides employees with industry-leading training	Employee Engagement	21%
My company encourages employees to interpret how their work reinforces brand values	Compelling Brand Values	21%
My company regularly examines whether customer interactions are living up to its brand values	Compelling Brand Values	23%
Managers are evaluated based on the engagement level of their employees	Employee Engagement	26%
My company has integrated customer feedback throughout key processes, like product development and marketing rollout	Customer Connectedness	26%
The human resources organization is actively involved in strategic initiatives	Employee Engagement	27%
Executives regularly interact with customers in our target customer segments	Customer Connectedness	30%

Base: 171 organizations with \$500 million or more in annual revenues
Source: Temkin Group Q1 2018 CX Management Survey

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Figure 15

Customer Experience Competency Attributes that Improved and Declined Between 2017 to 2018

Change in companies that “always” or “almost always” do these activities:

MOST IMPROVED CX Activities	CX Competency	Change between 2017 and 2018 (%-points)
My company reviews customer experience metrics and considers them as important as financial metrics	Purposeful Leadership	+9.3
Employees across my organization understand what the company’s core values are and how those values relate specifically to their role	Purposeful Leadership	+7.0
My company has integrated customer feedback throughout key processes, like product development and marketing rollout	Customer Connectedness	+5.8
My company provides employees with industry-leading training	Employee Engagement	+4.9
My company has a well-defined set of target customer segments that it uses to guide its priorities	Customer Connectedness	+4.9
MOST DECLINED CX Activities	CX Competency	Change between 2017 and 2018 (%-points)
My company encourages employees to interpret how their work reinforces brand values	Compelling Brand Values	-3.9
Our marketing organization does as much brand marketing inside the company as it does outside	Compelling Brand Values	-3.1
Senior executives support decisions to trade-off short-term financial results for longer-term customer loyalty	Purposeful Leadership	-1.9
My company uses human-centered design approaches to design interactions across all our touch points	Customer Connectedness	-0.7
Executives regularly interact with customers in our target customer segments	Customer Connectedness	-0.2

Base: 171 organizations with \$500 million or more in annual revenues
Source: Temkin Group Q1 2018 CX Management Survey

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Figure 16

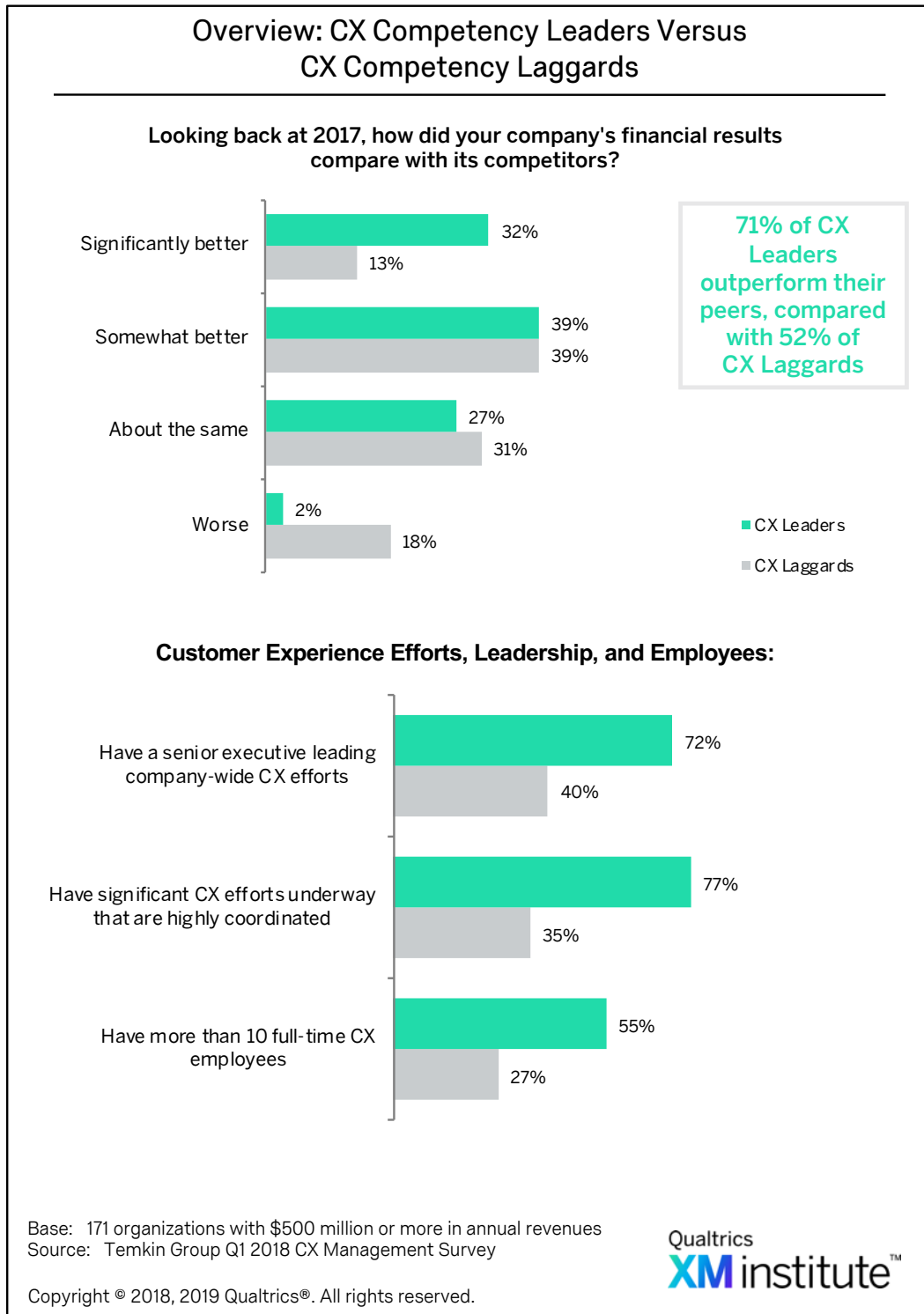


Figure 17

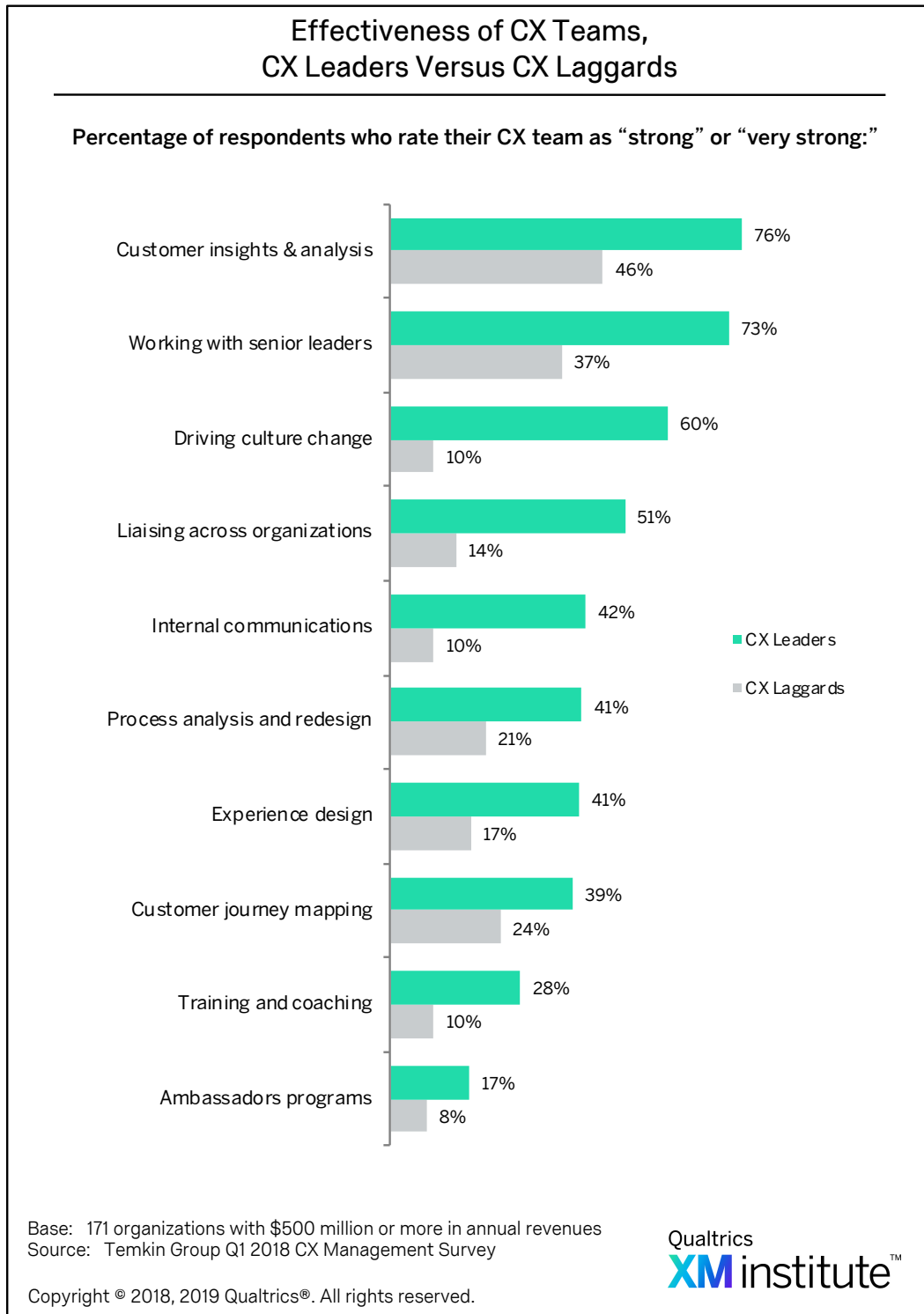


Figure 18

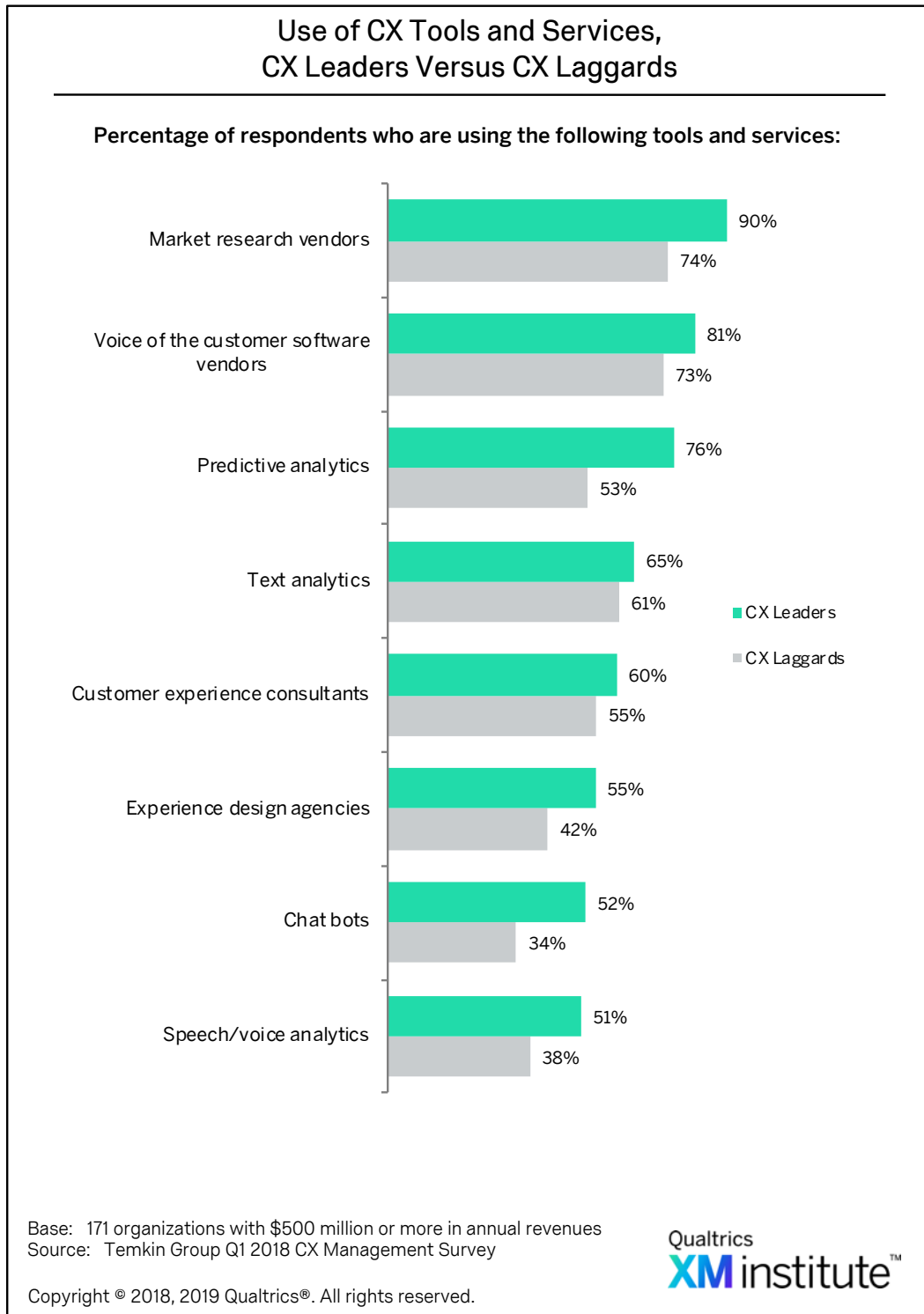


Figure 19

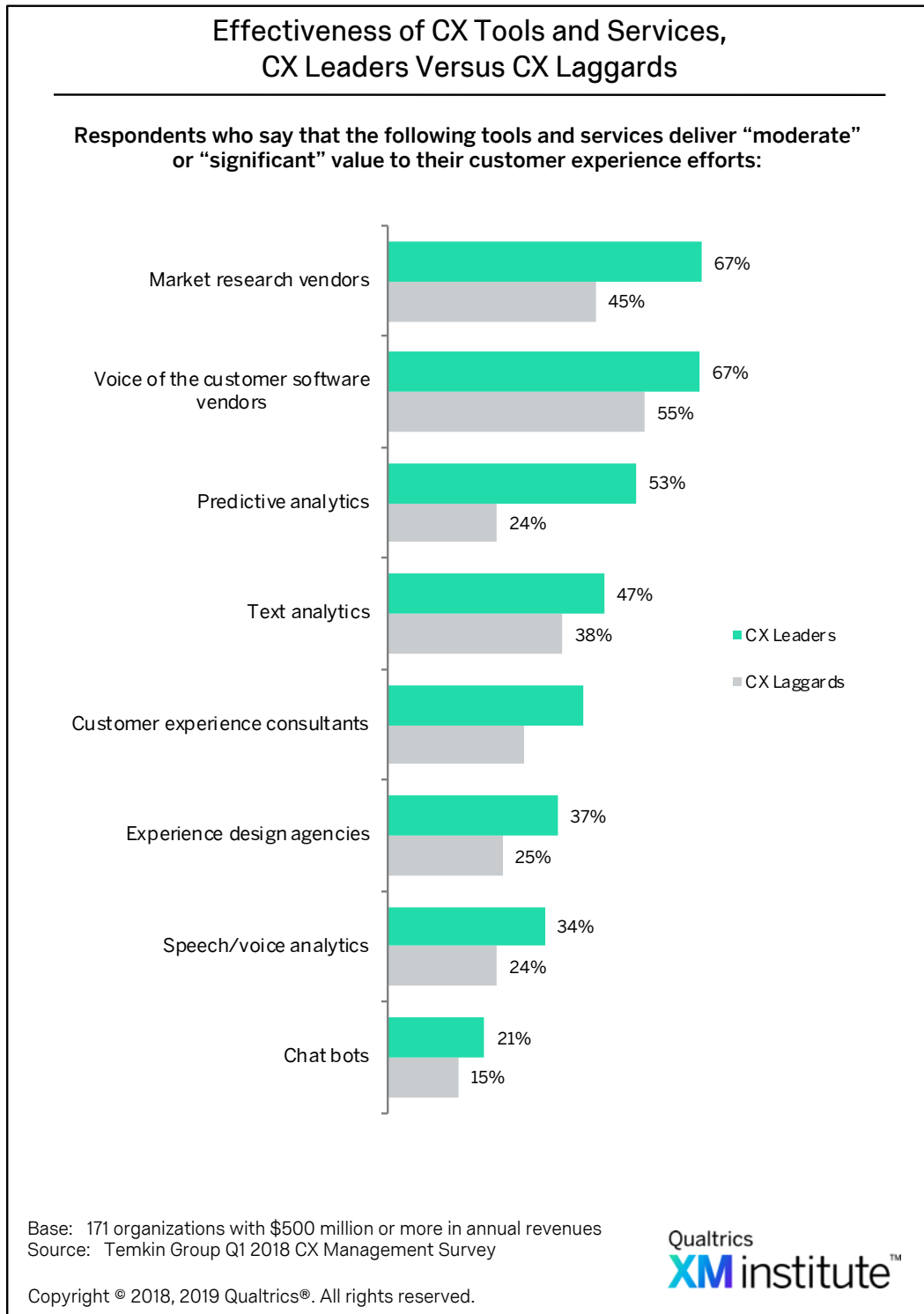


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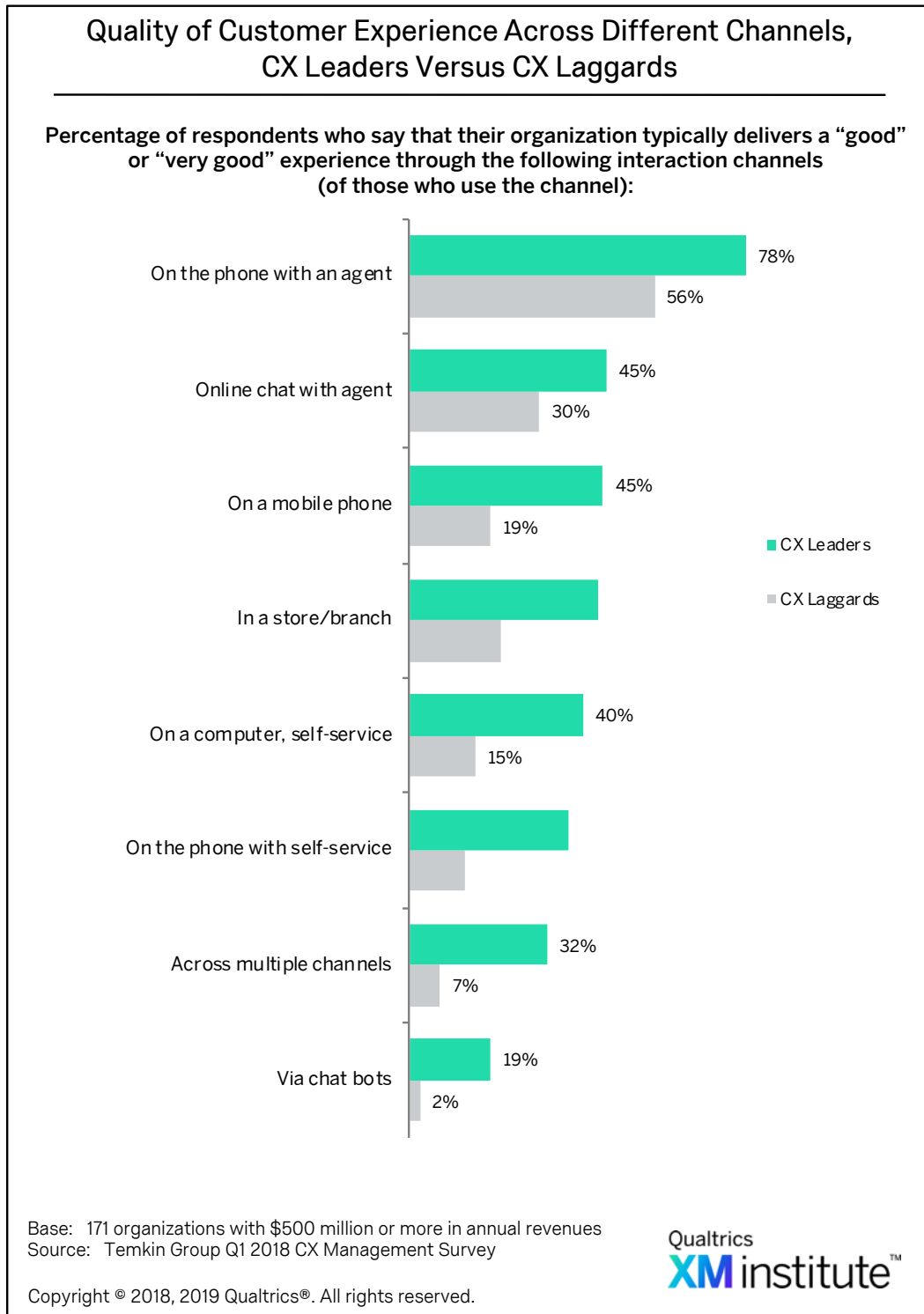


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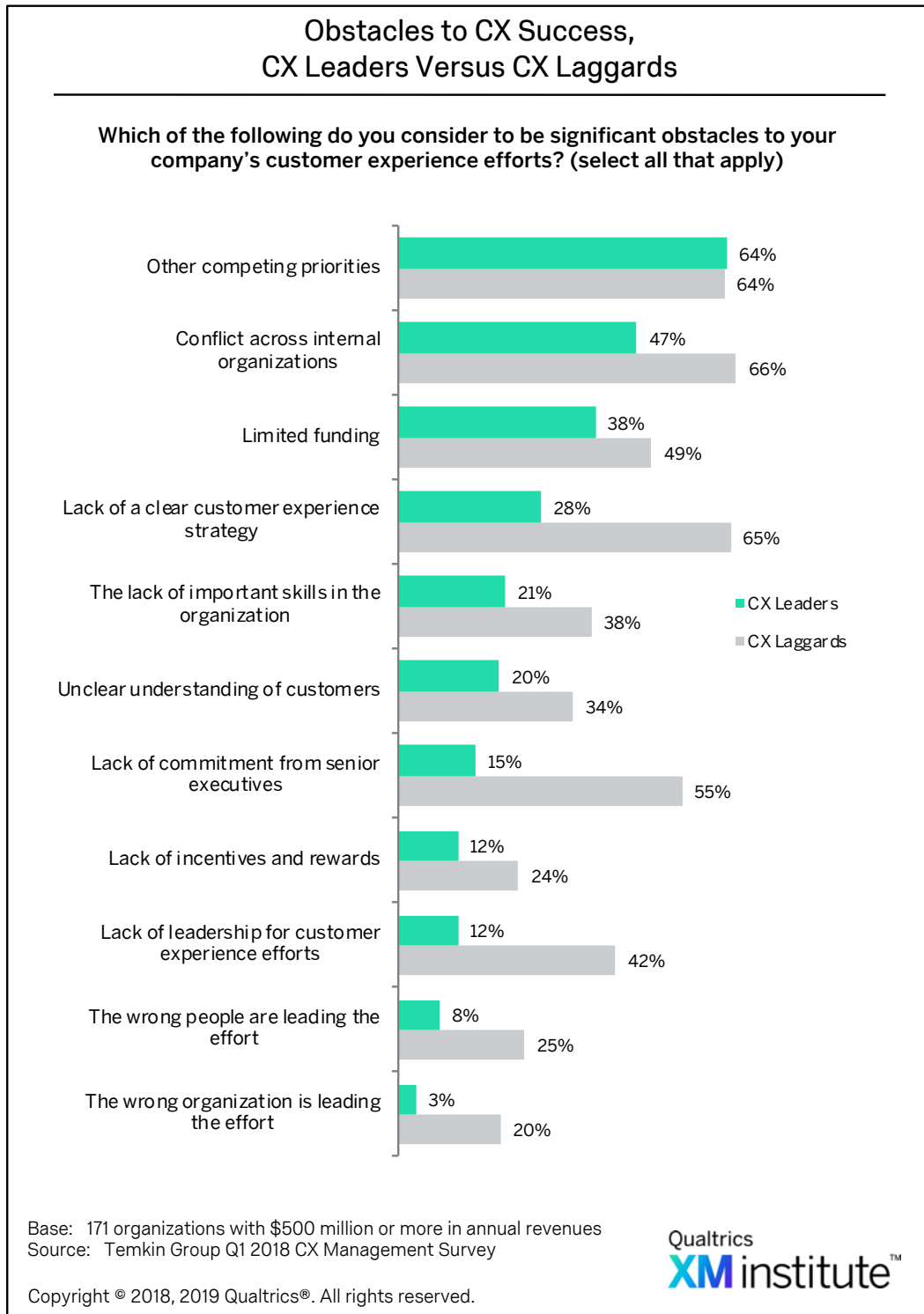


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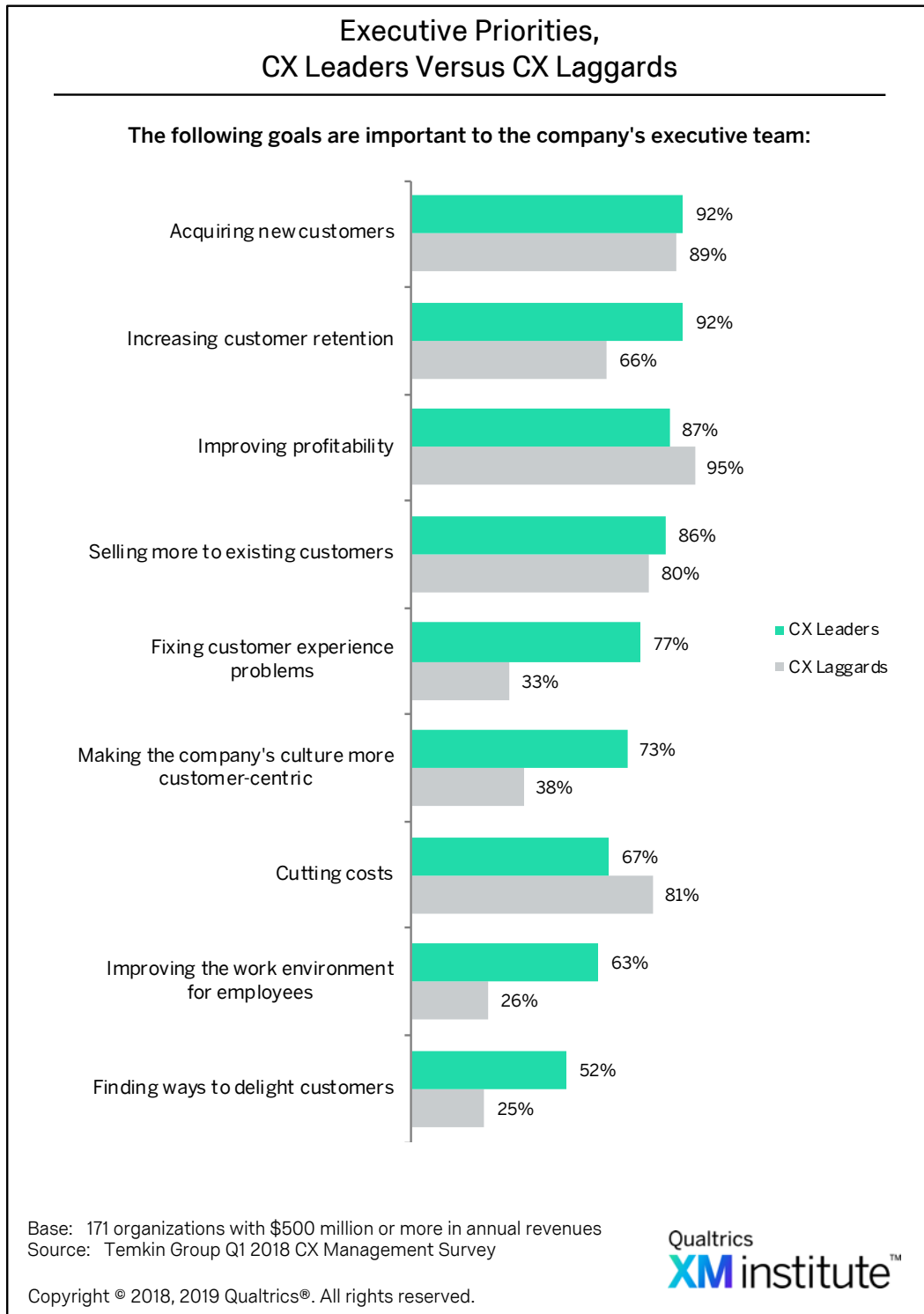


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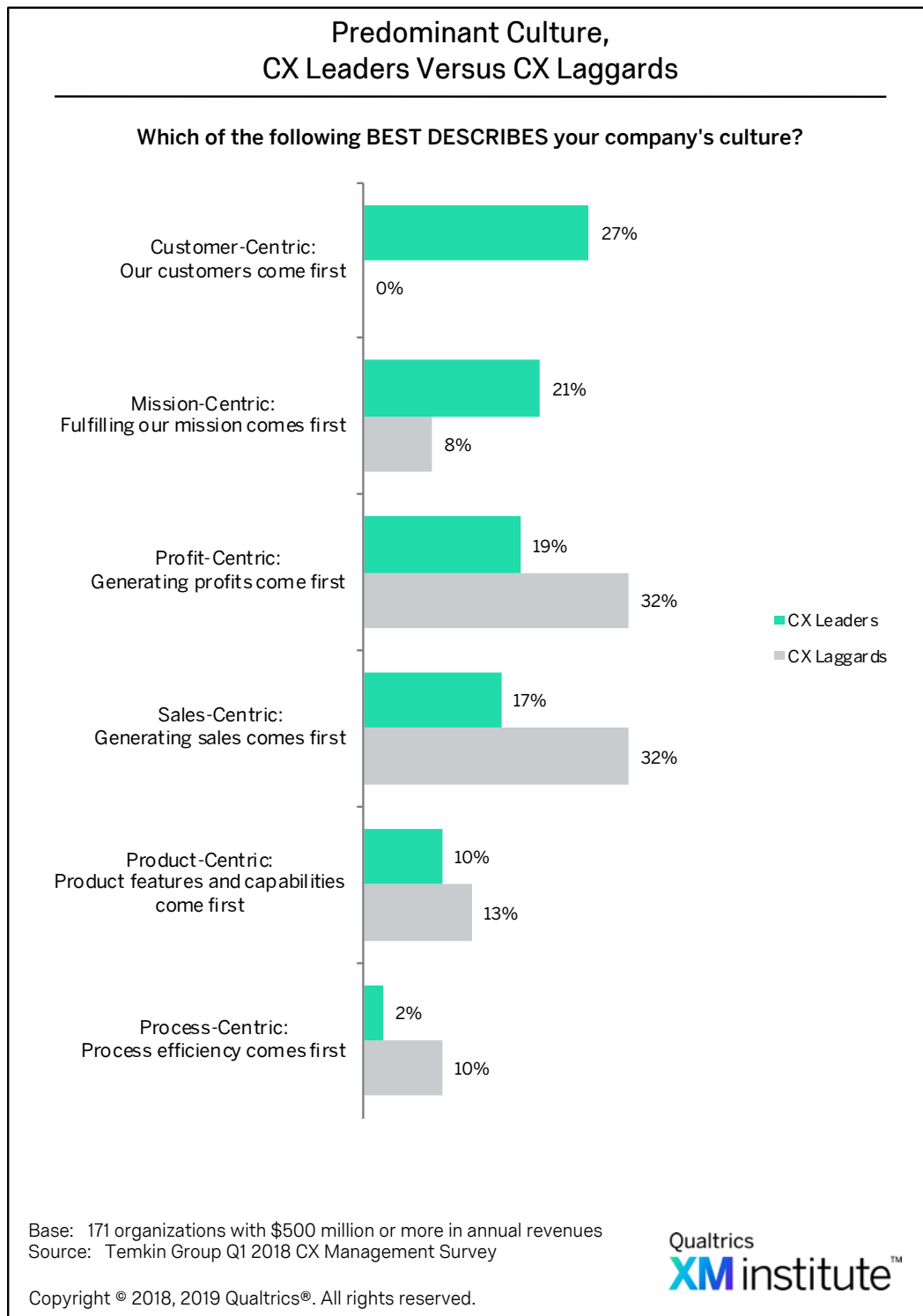


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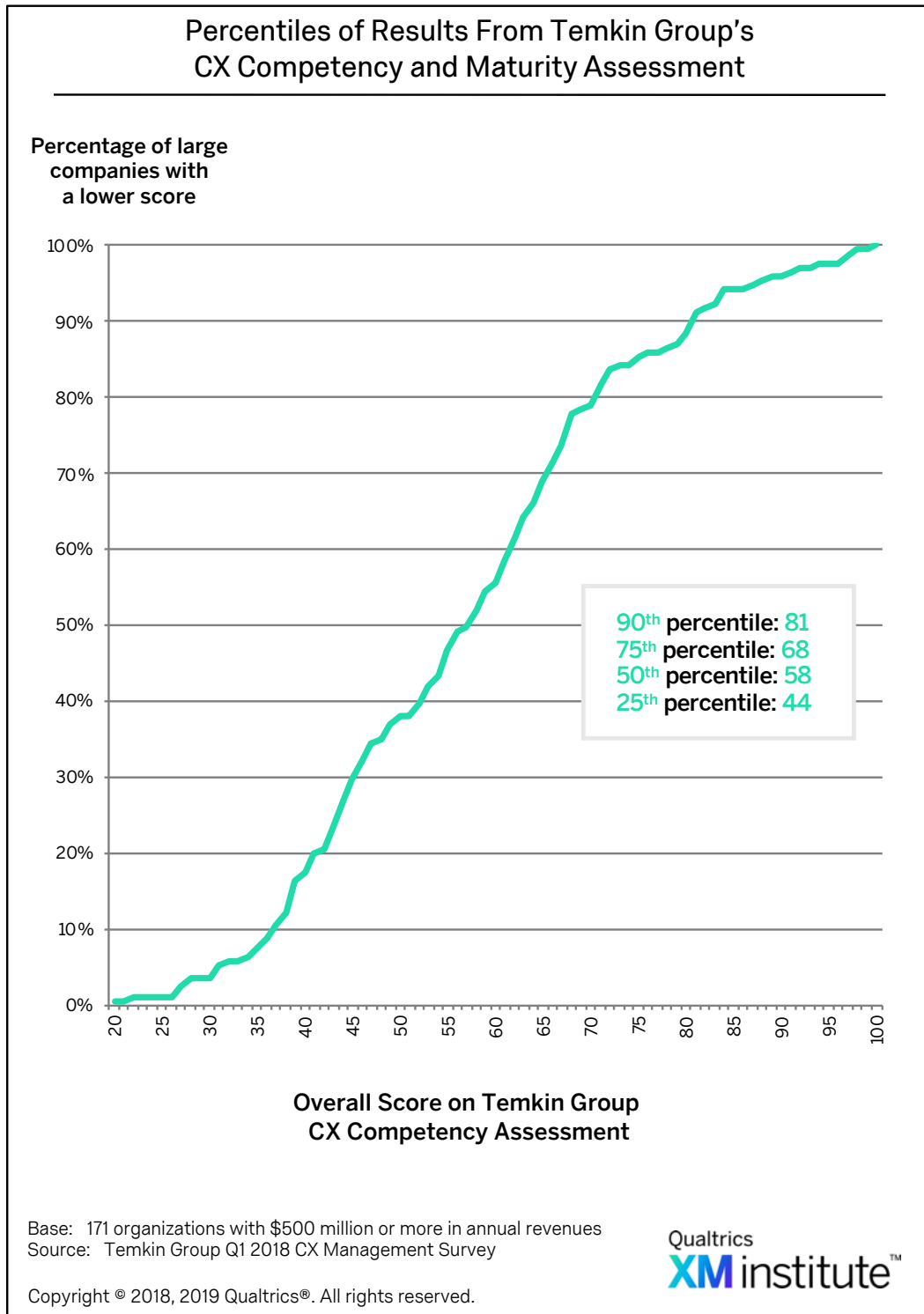


Figure 25