Your Security Analysts are leaving? Here's Why!

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How are security analysts doing in 2022?

We started our company because we care deeply about security teams and the people on them.

We often felt tools weren't good enough, and it made work hard for folks on the team – especially analysts.

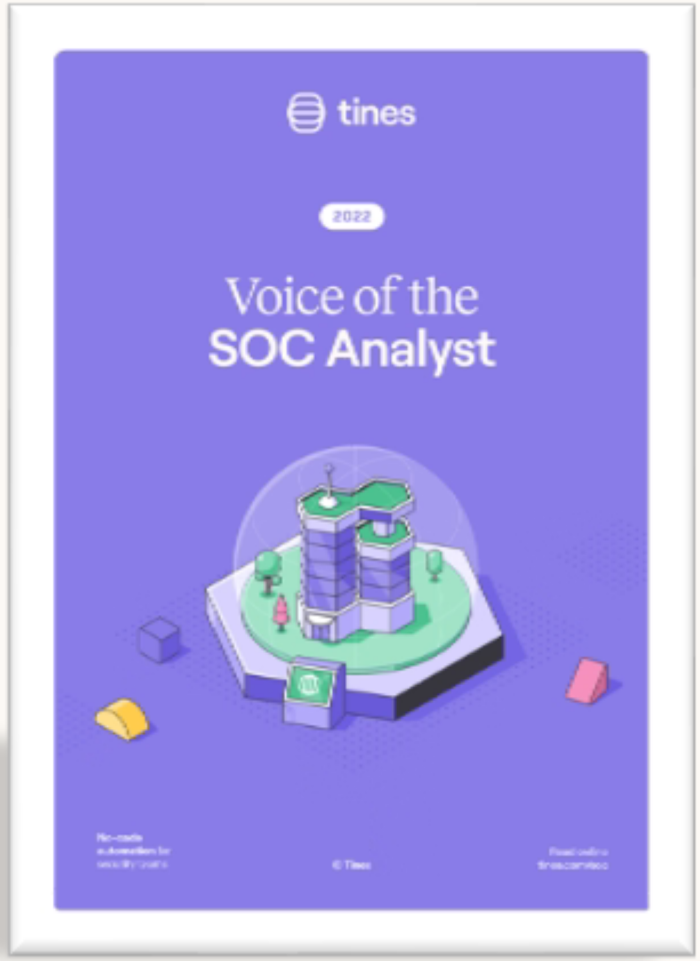
But it's been a few years since we led teams! We wanted **fresh, objective data on the lives of real analysts today.**

Let's talk to as many analysts as possible

2022 - Voice of the SOC Analyst

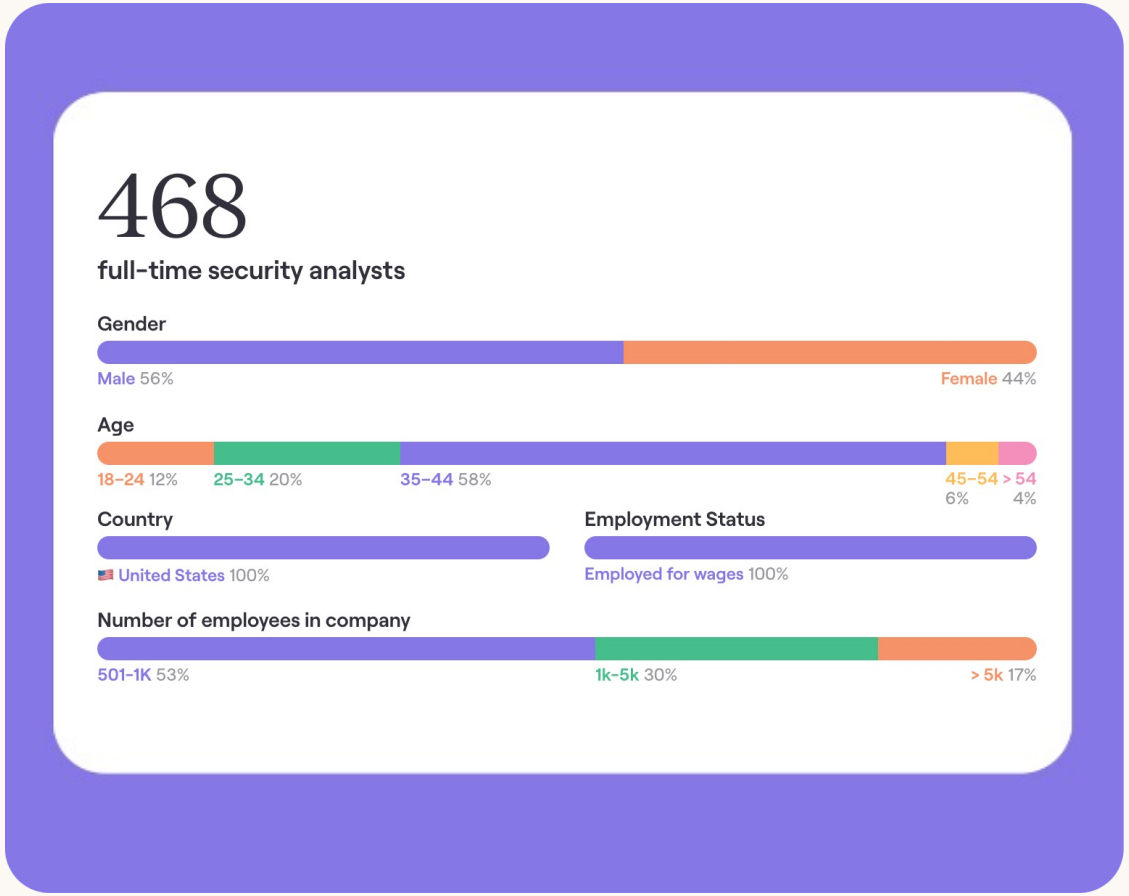
We surveyed ~500 security analysts in the last few months.

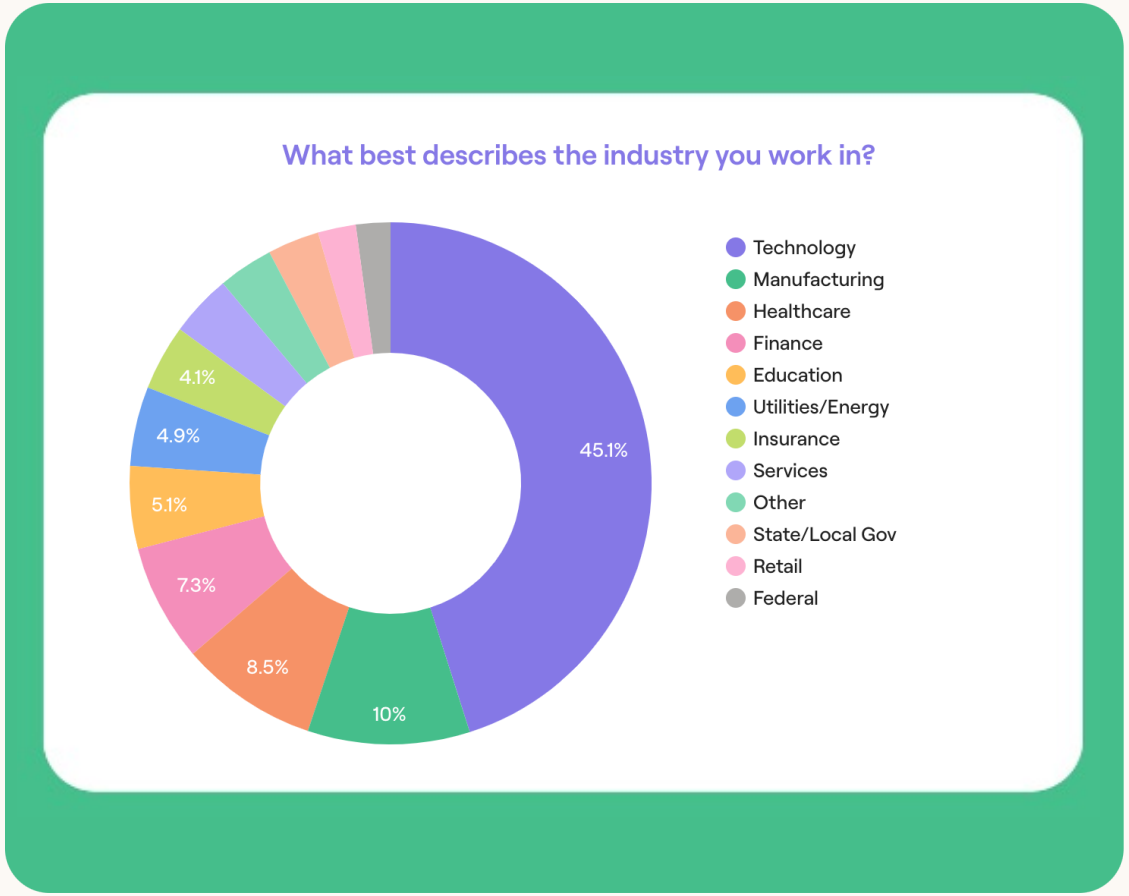
The plan was to uncover insights that we could use to perfect our own product, and to produce an original – but unbiased – research report.



Who did we speak to?

Analysts based in the US. A good distribution of folks from different sized companies and in different industry verticals, but with a core focus on technology.





Today, let's focus on two things

1

Three choice cuts of the data

2

Actionable takeaways for security leaders

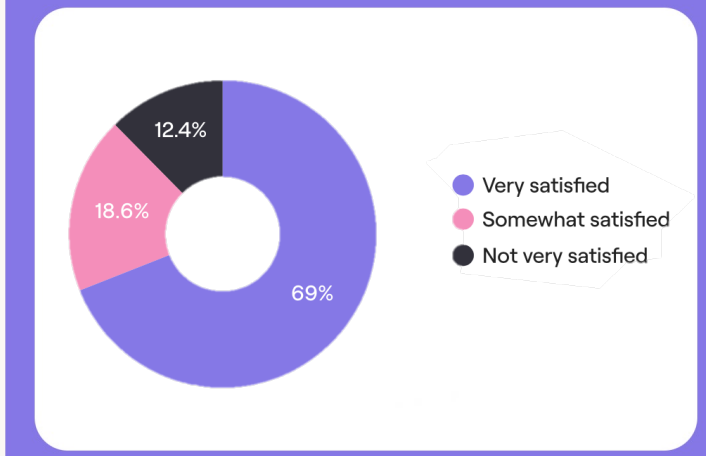
If you want to go even deeper, check out the entire report at tines.com/soc

Analysts LOVE their jobs...

The vast majority are very satisfied with their jobs, very engaged with their work, and feel respected by their peers.

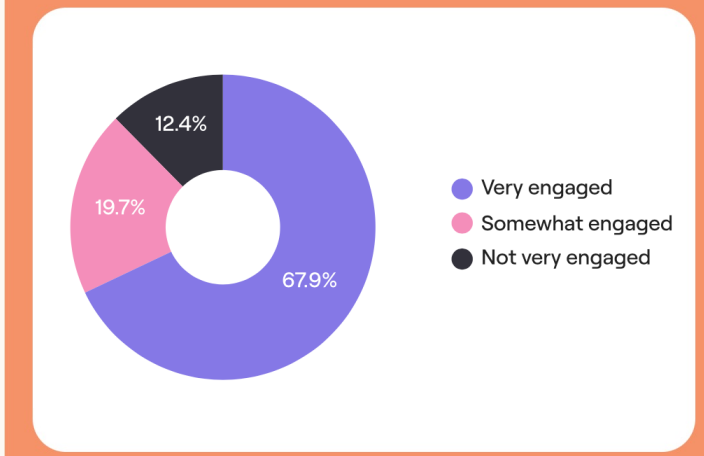
1

How satisfied are you with your job?



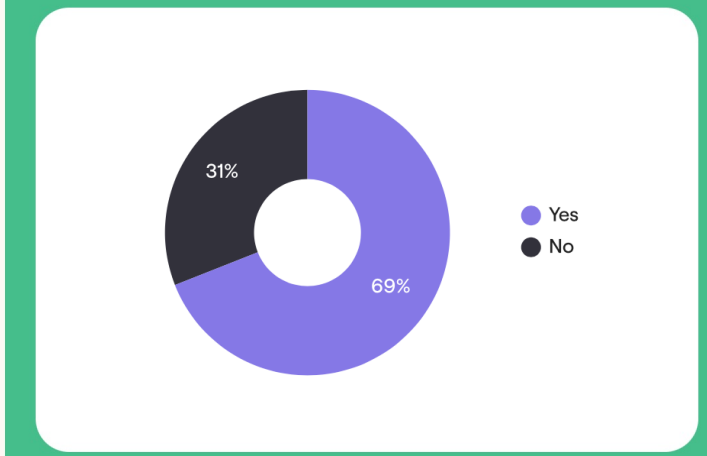
2

How engaged are you with your work?



3

Do you feel respected by peers outside the SOC?

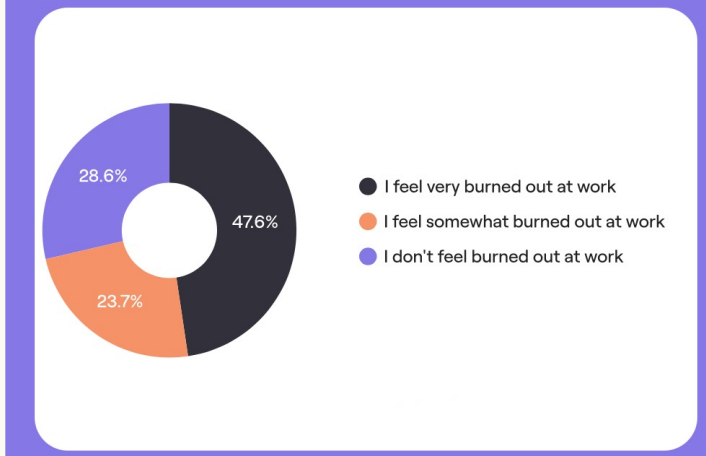


...but they're burning out

- About half feel "very burned out"
- Most report more work than ever
- Almost all feel like the team is understaffed

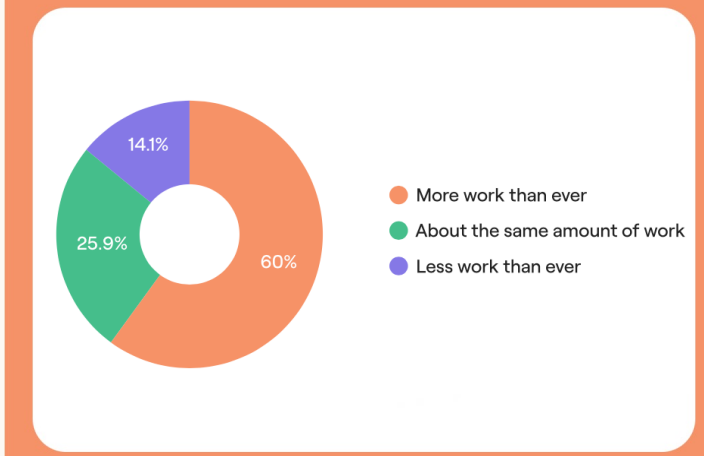
1

Do you feel burned out at work?



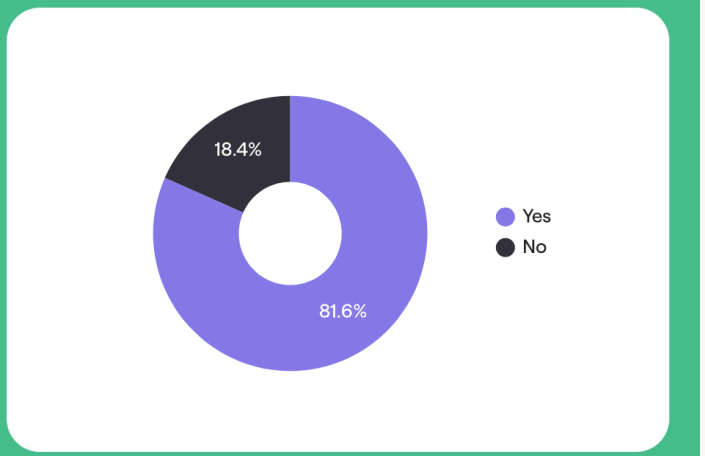
2

How is your workload, currently?



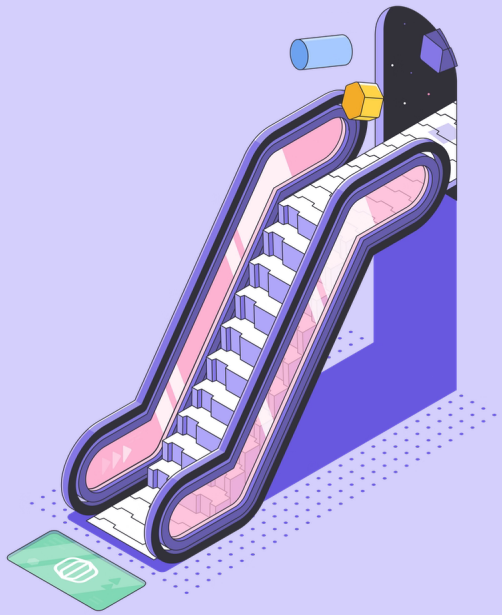
3

In your opinion, is the team understaffed?

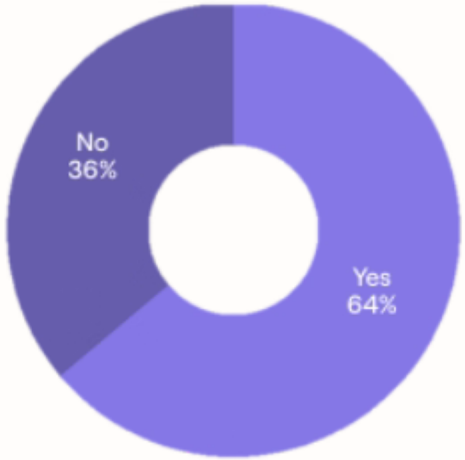


POLL

What percentage of security analysts plan to change jobs in the next 12 months?



Almost ***two thirds*** of analysts expect to leave their job in the next 12 months

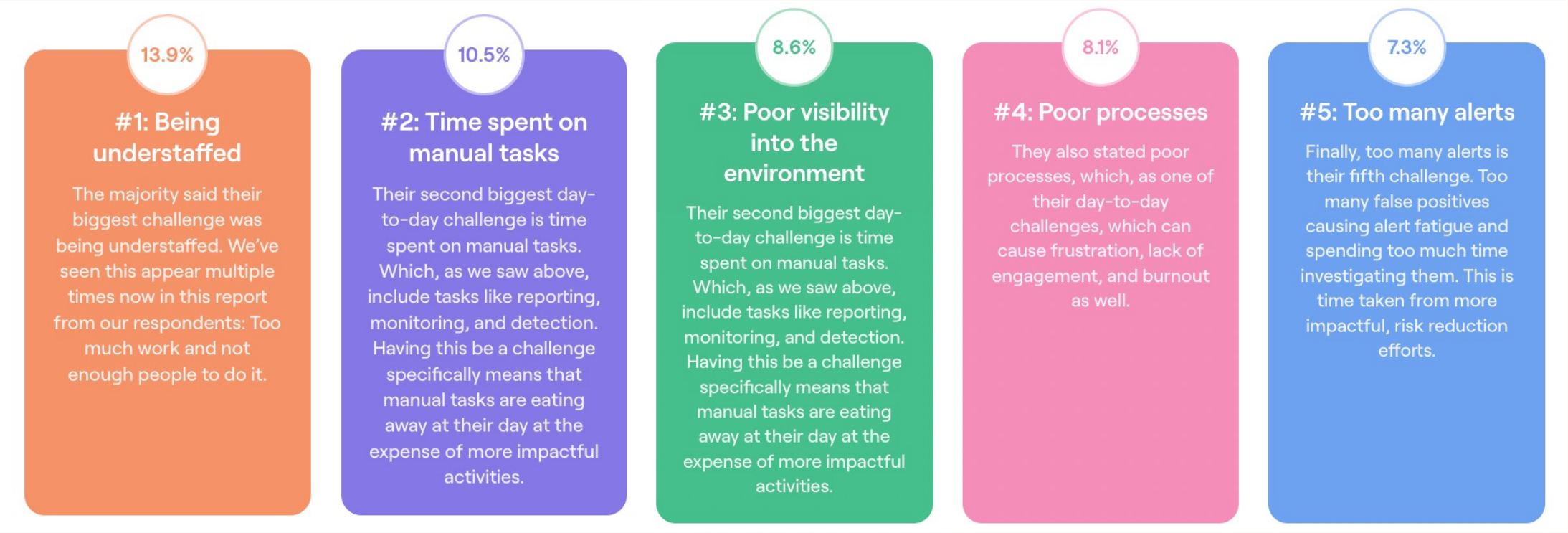


Average rate for all jobs ≈ 25% (Prudential, 2022)

Being an analyst is a daily challenge...

Before we think about solutions, let's try and understand the pain points that analysts feel.

Q: "What is your biggest challenge day-to-day?"



...and it can be frustrating

Q: "What are the most frustrating aspects of your work?" (multiple choice)

50.6%

#1: Spending time on manual work

For our respondents, the most frustrating aspect of their day is spending time on manual work, like reporting, monitoring, and detection, as we saw above.

36.8%

#2: High false positive rates

The second most frustrating aspect is high false positive rates, which take time to investigate, and can divert energy from true positives.

34.4%

#3: Too many different consoles and tools to investigate incidents

Another frustrating aspect of their job is having too many different consoles and tools to investigate incidents, which could lead to gaps in response or inefficient processes.

33.8%

#4: Inaccurate or incomplete attribution

They also stated that inaccurate or incomplete attribution is another frustration they face, forcing them to take time and energy to seek out more context for alerts.

29.7%

#5: Slow or delayed log file ingestion and processing

Finally, they're frustrated with slow or delayed log file ingestion and processing creating lags on real time response.

Too few people

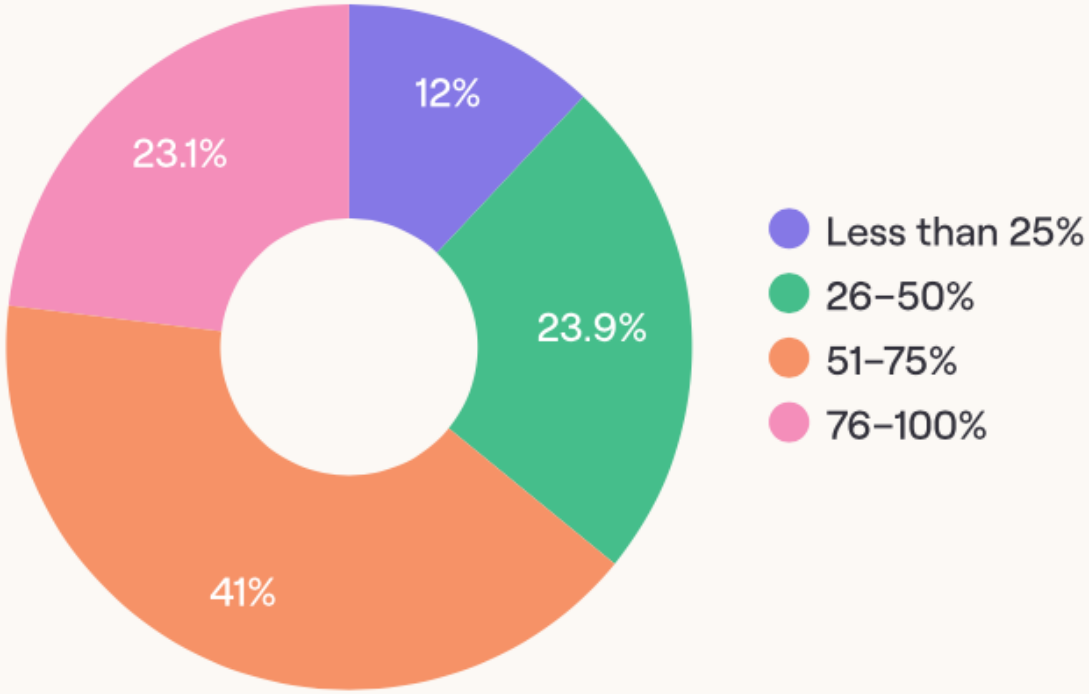
Too much repetitive manual work

Too many false positives

Zoom in on manual work...

It's clear that repetitive, manual work is the biggest challenge/frustration

But just how much time are analysts spending on this tedious work?

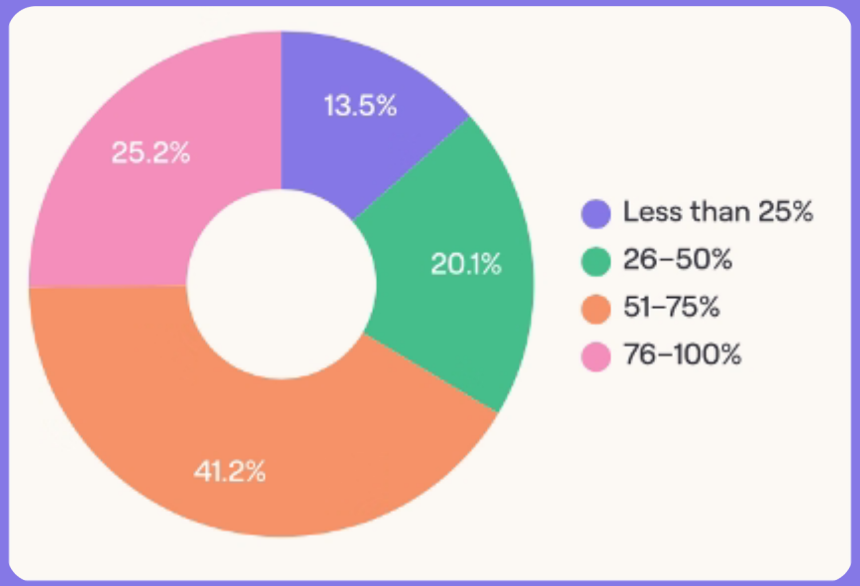


...and what about automation?

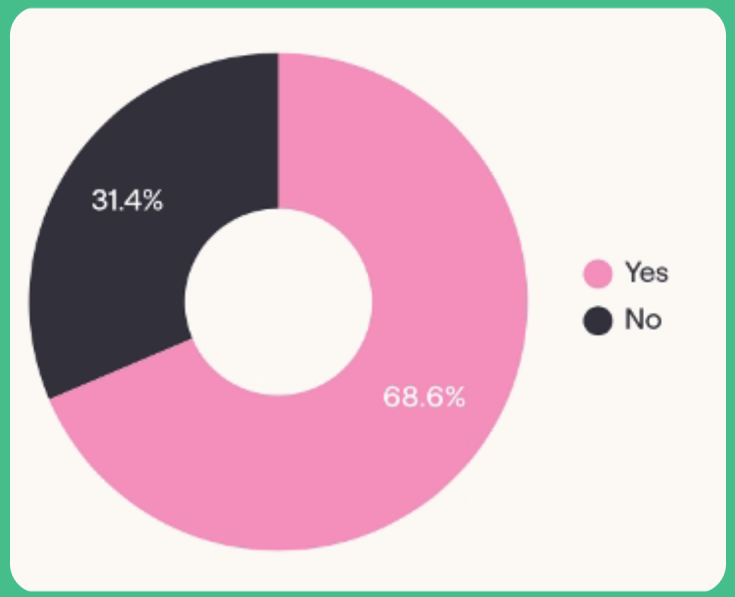
Analysts view of automation is mixed

They believe it could be a solution – but perhaps too much of one?

What percentage of your work do you believe could be done/automated by software that's available today?



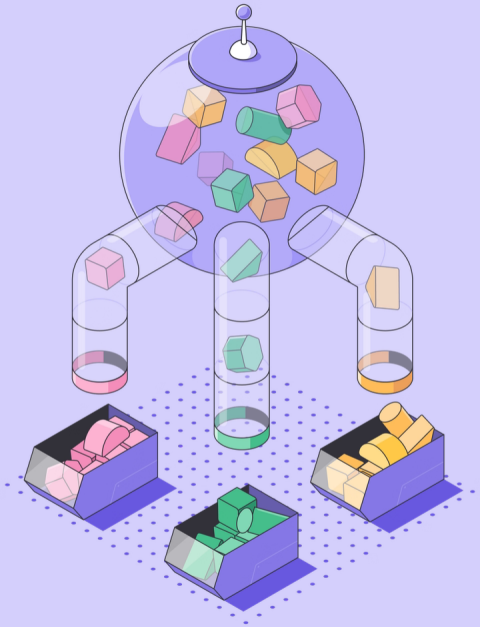
Do you worry that automation will eliminate your job/your co- workers jobs in the near future?



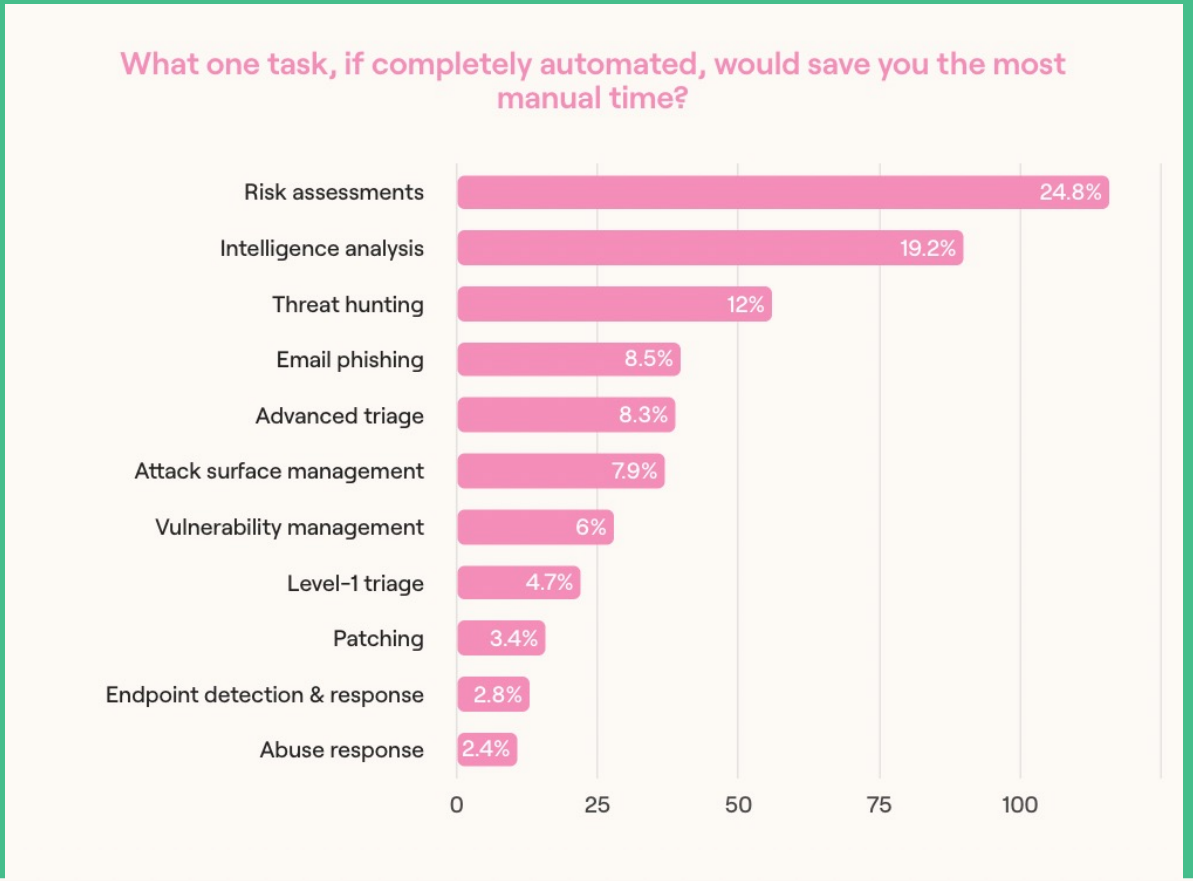
POLL

In the next 12 months will your security team?

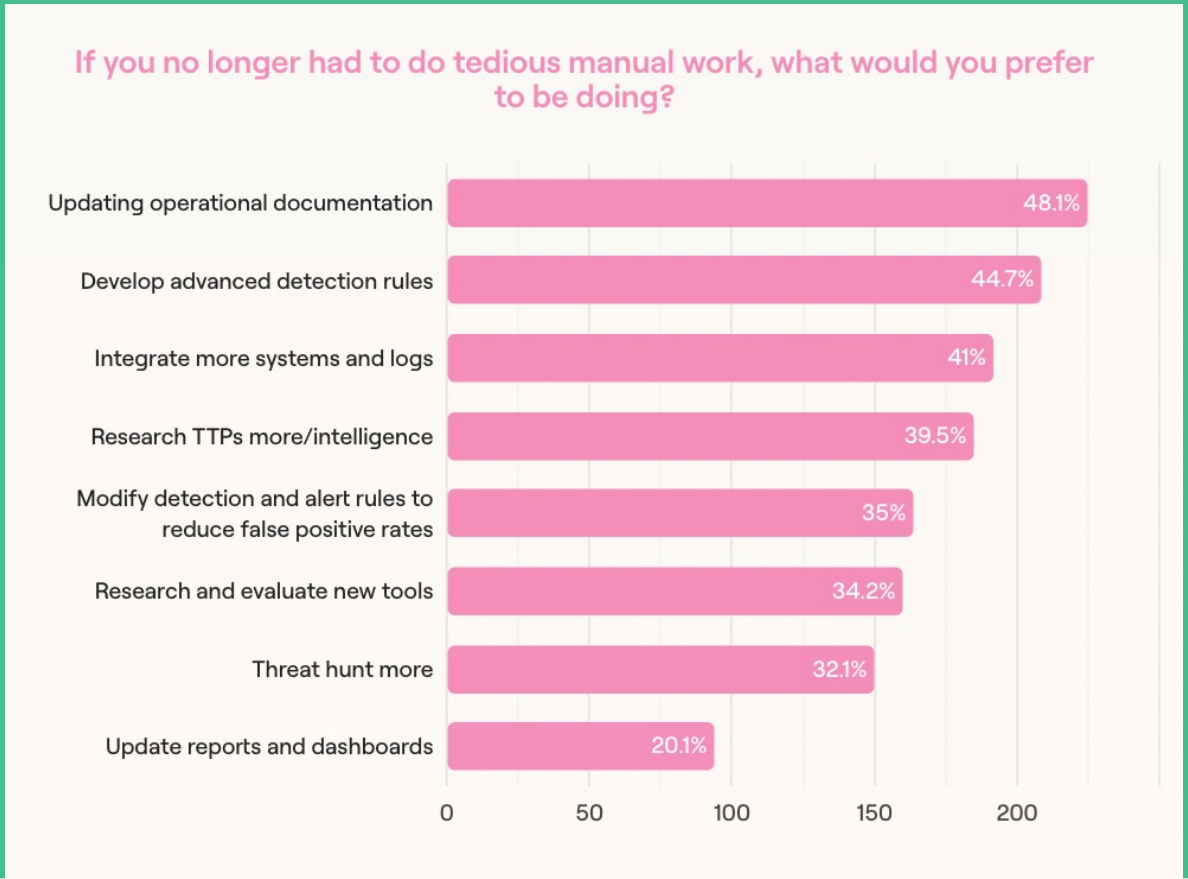
A) Shrink
B) Stay the same size
C) Grow by less than 10%
D) Grow by more than 10%



Instead of manual work



Instead of manual work



What's going to be the most valuable skill a security analyst can have to help them succeed in the future?

30.1%

#1: Learning to code

The number one skill identified is learning to code, according to nearly one-third of respondents. While it may seem unrelated to the day-to-day tasks, analysts see that knowing how to code will help with task automation.

13.5%

#2: Learning computer forensics techniques

The second most valuable skill will be learning computer forensics techniques, as knowing the process of recovering data from crashed servers and drives after a failure or attack is a critical skill to helping analysts uncover what went wrong.

10%

#3: Knowing how to operationalize Mitre ATT&CK

The third most valuable skill will be knowing how to operationalize Mitre ATT&CK , or knowing how to do threat intelligence and modeling in order to be more proactive against attacks.

These results should be humbling for security leaders

1

Most analysts are burned out

So much so that 64% will leave their job this year.

2

Too much manual work

Security teams are overwhelmed by manual work and lack of staff.

3

Automation's a solution

But security teams feel threatened by it.

THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

What can we do about it?

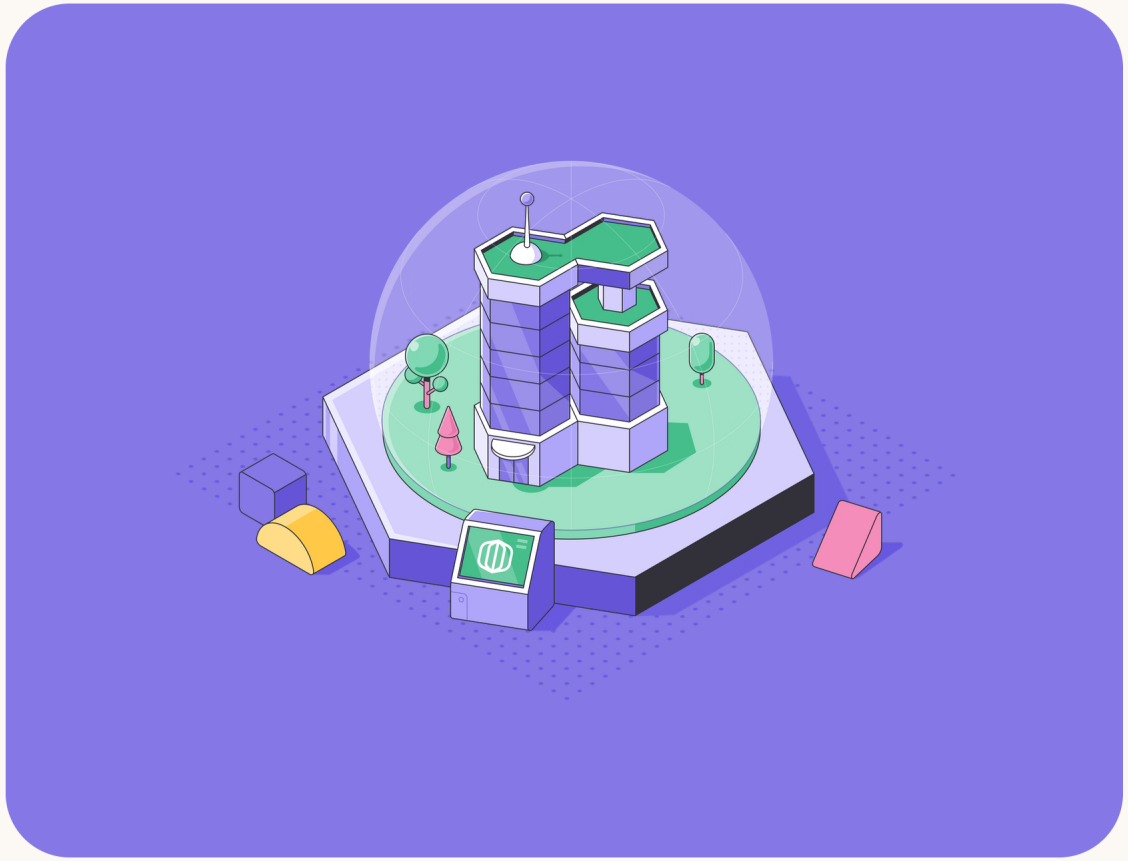
Actionable takeaways for security team leaders

As we've seen in this report, SOC teams are passionate yet challenged. They're satisfied and engaged with their work, yet endless manual tasks, understaffed teams, inefficient processes, and too many alerts are stifling their ability to do more high-quality, creative work. They're stuck doing repetitive tasks today, unable to proactively work on preparing their organization's security posture for tomorrow.

What can SOC leaders do to improve their teams in 2022? Here are three ways forward.

Make triage fun

- Bad triage = repetitive, duplicate alerts, following the same script over and over, noise, easy & mundane
- Great triage = being a detective, creative, high-impact, fun, hard & worthwhile
- You need to design your team, and its tools and processes, around minimizing the bad, and maximizing the great.



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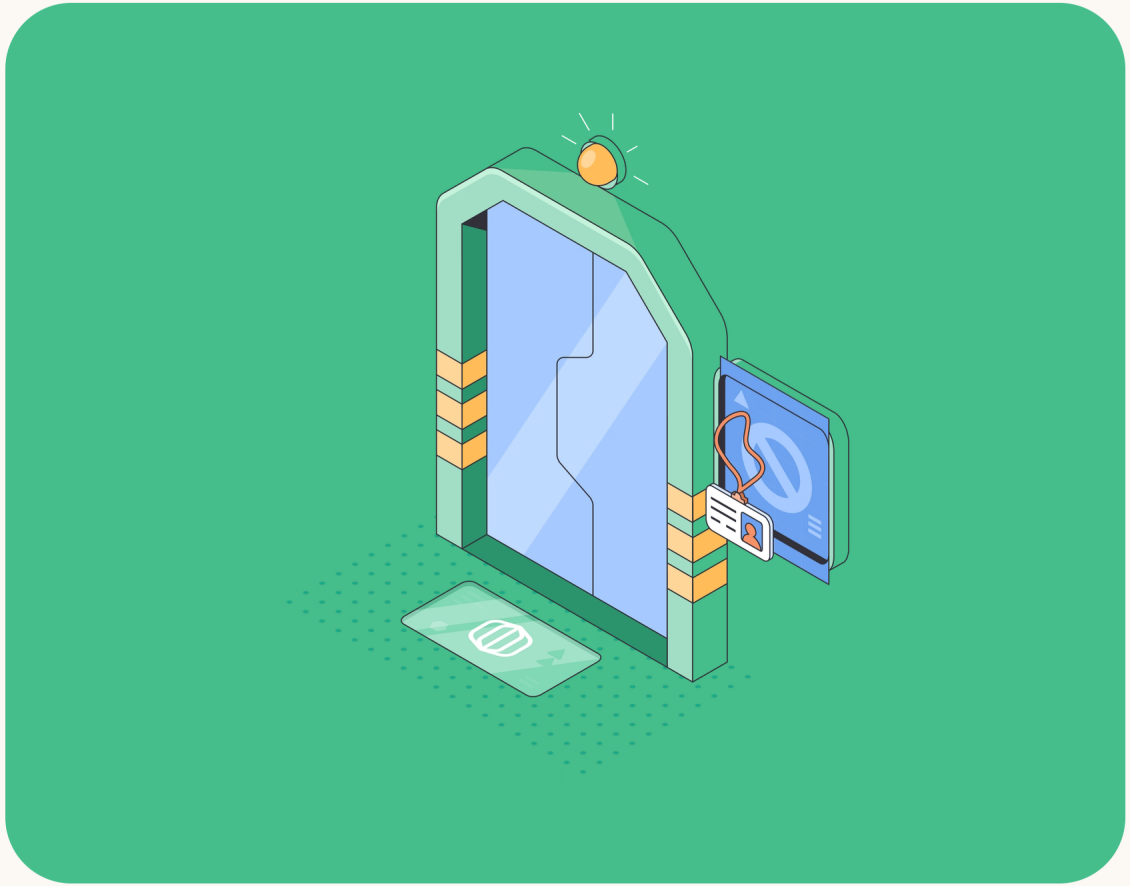
To increase retention, measure burnout

- You already measure MTTR, MTTI, etc – burnout is as important a measure of team performance as any of these.
- Additionally, it's a leading indicator – of team churn.
- The first problem to solve is how to measure. Consider recurring employee surveys, management 1/1 rituals, etc.
- Establish a baseline, then improve it



Automation for security teams is imperative

- Despite decades of automation hype, teams are still suffering with manual work.
  - #1 most frustrating aspect of being an analyst = "manual work"
  - 1 in 4 analysts spend >75% of their time on "tedious manual work"
- Analysts believe they need to become engineers to be productive
  - #1 skill analysts identify for future success = "learning to code"
  - And engineers are perceived to displace analysts by building automation
- There is another answer! One that **elevates** the analyst.

IN CONCLUSION

Analysts are burning out, leading to retention issues.

There are solutions! Treat burnout as a KPI, invest in no-code automation.

Read the entire interactive report at tines.com/soc