The New Normal –
8 Workplace Changes That
Are Here to Stay

Bob Kelleher, AEC HR
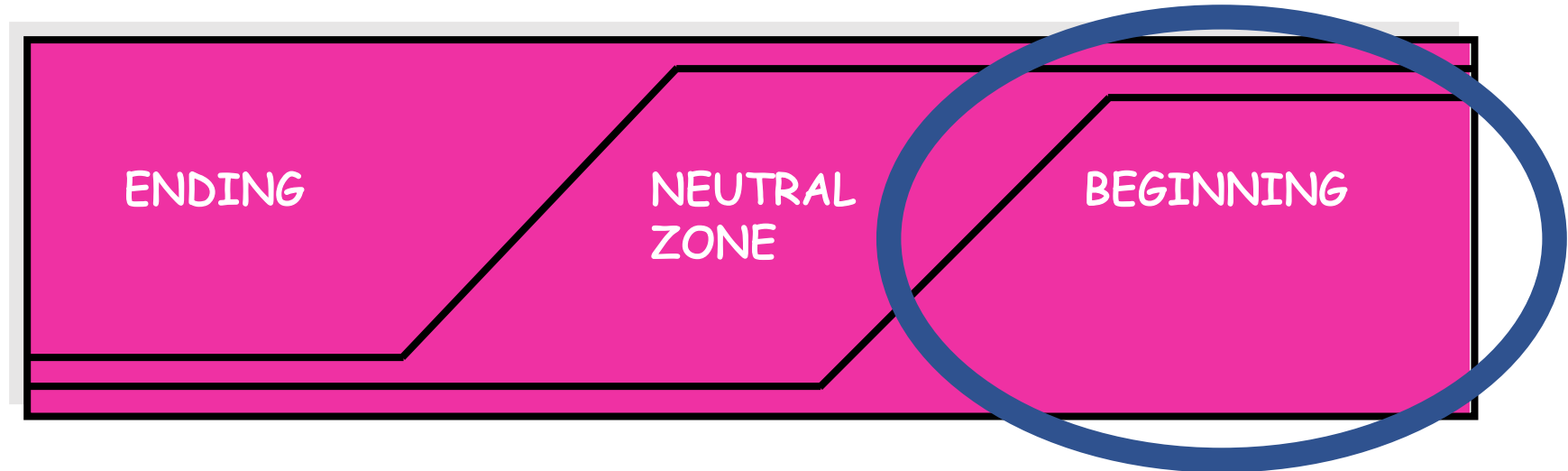**Summit Founder / Host**

First, some context

1. People will return anxious

Anxiety *– is near-universal right now — a natural reaction to unnatural circumstances and an uncertain future**

Predictable stages of change in transition

ENDING

NEUTRAL ZONE

BEGINNING

- Letting go of what has gone before

- Assess and then re-align with the new reality

- Start operating in the new world

William Bridges
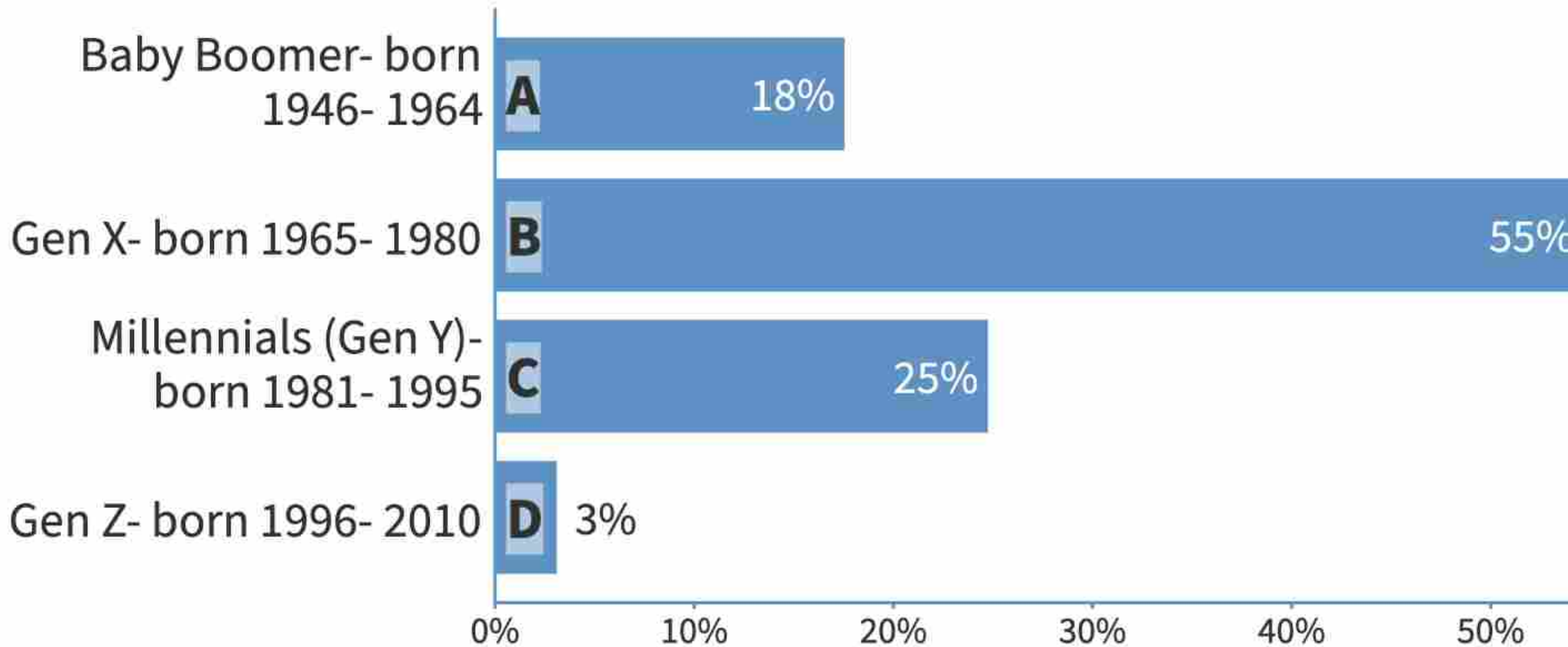*Managing Transitions; Making the Most of Change*

Back by popular demand –
A Data Selfie

Click on your home location

What's your generation?

Generation	Percentage
Baby Boomer- born 1946- 1964 (A)	18%
Gen X- born 1965- 1980 (B)	55%
Millennials (Gen Y)- born 1981- 1995 (C)	25%
Gen Z- born 1996- 2010 (D)	3%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

Where are you today?

Plot where you are heading 'back to a normal life'

Suggestions:

- After the euphoric 'high' of a vaccinated workforce, accept the 'letdown'

- Consider HR as the "Workplace First Respondents" (me[...] health professional?)

- Make it safe for employees to 'transition with understanding'

- **Engagement likely to drop (as will productivity)**

- This is a massive change management initiative - Consider change management training for ALL employees

- Wellness support with EAP

2. Renewed Focus on Purpose /Mission

Why Now?

- 2020 saw organizations put their employees and communities before shareholders

"Over two-thirds of all philanthropic dollars donated to the pandemic came from the corporate sector"

- A year which highlighted racial inequalities, economic inequalities, and unfair access to education and technology

60% of employees under age 30 want the post-pandemic recovery to prioritize *'restructuring our economy so it deals better with challenges like inequality and climate change'*

Fast Company 2021 – Six Trends that will Reshape Business

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Describe Your Organization

Suggestions:

- Revisit your firm's core values and mission/purpose
- Leverage the TIMES – They may never be more apt to focus on being a values-based organization
- Keep it genuine
- Make empathy a core competency when hiring or promoting managers

3. Expect a New Perspective

Definition:

Perspective is the way people see life, including the way they approach life and all there is in their personal experience.

Describe in ONE WORD your perspective today?

Suggestions:

- Acknowledge people will be different post pandemic
- Make it 'safe' to contemplate sabbaticals, reduced hours, and / or requests to move out of the fast track
- Consider offering work/life balance and wellness workshops

4. The Blended Workforce

Pre-pandemic

most businesses saw the office as a place where individuals could get work done within a culture.

Post-pandemic

the office will be more of a *culture space,* providing workers with a social anchor, facilitating connections, enabling learning, and fostering unscripted, innovative collaboration.

Create – Celebrate – Collaborate

Q:
How Often Does The Typical Employee Need to Be In the Office?

About 1-3 days per month — 6%

One day per week — 5%

Two days per week — 15%

Three days per week — 29%

Four days per week — 18%

Five days per week — 21%

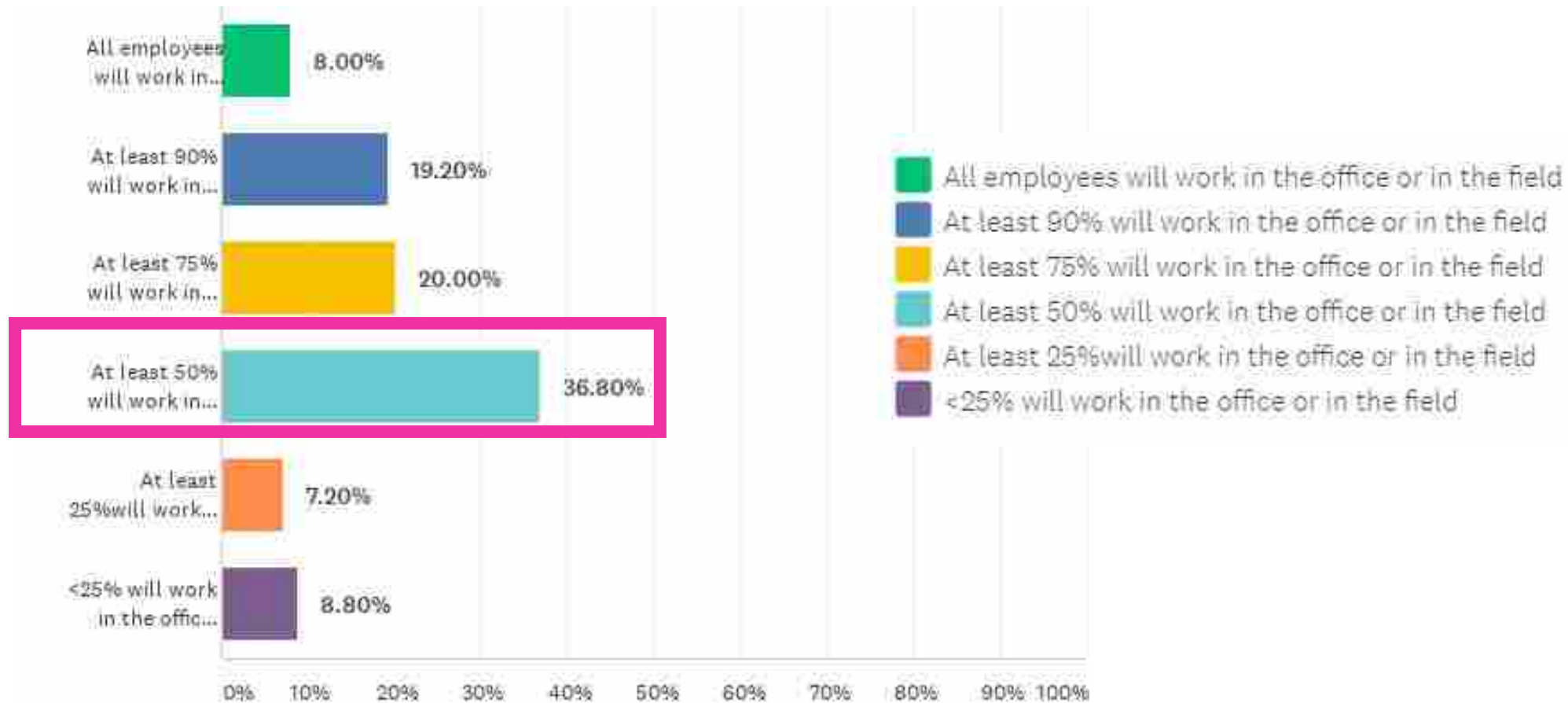Employees don't need to be in the office to maintain company culture — 5%

55% say 3 days or less

PWC January 2021 Poll of 133 Executives

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Q8: What do you anticipate will be your organization's 'new normal' regarding telecommuting and virtual employment?

When things are back to 'normal' my work week will be:

Suggestions:

- Don't assume
- Conduct polls / surveys / focus groups / pilots
- Create guidelines (not policies) as things will change
- Conduct manager training for this 'new normal'
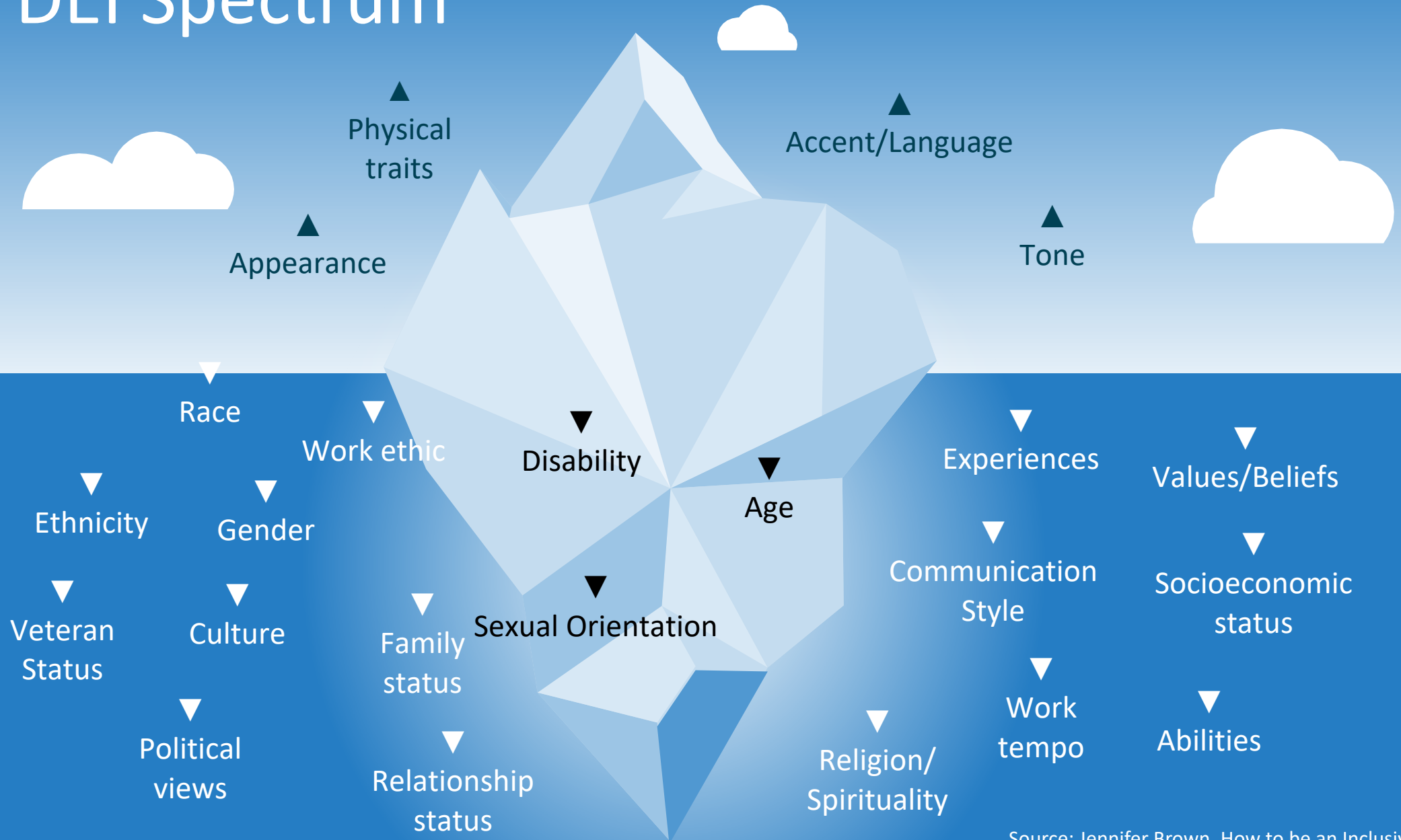- The good news? Your labor pool just got a heck of a lot bigger

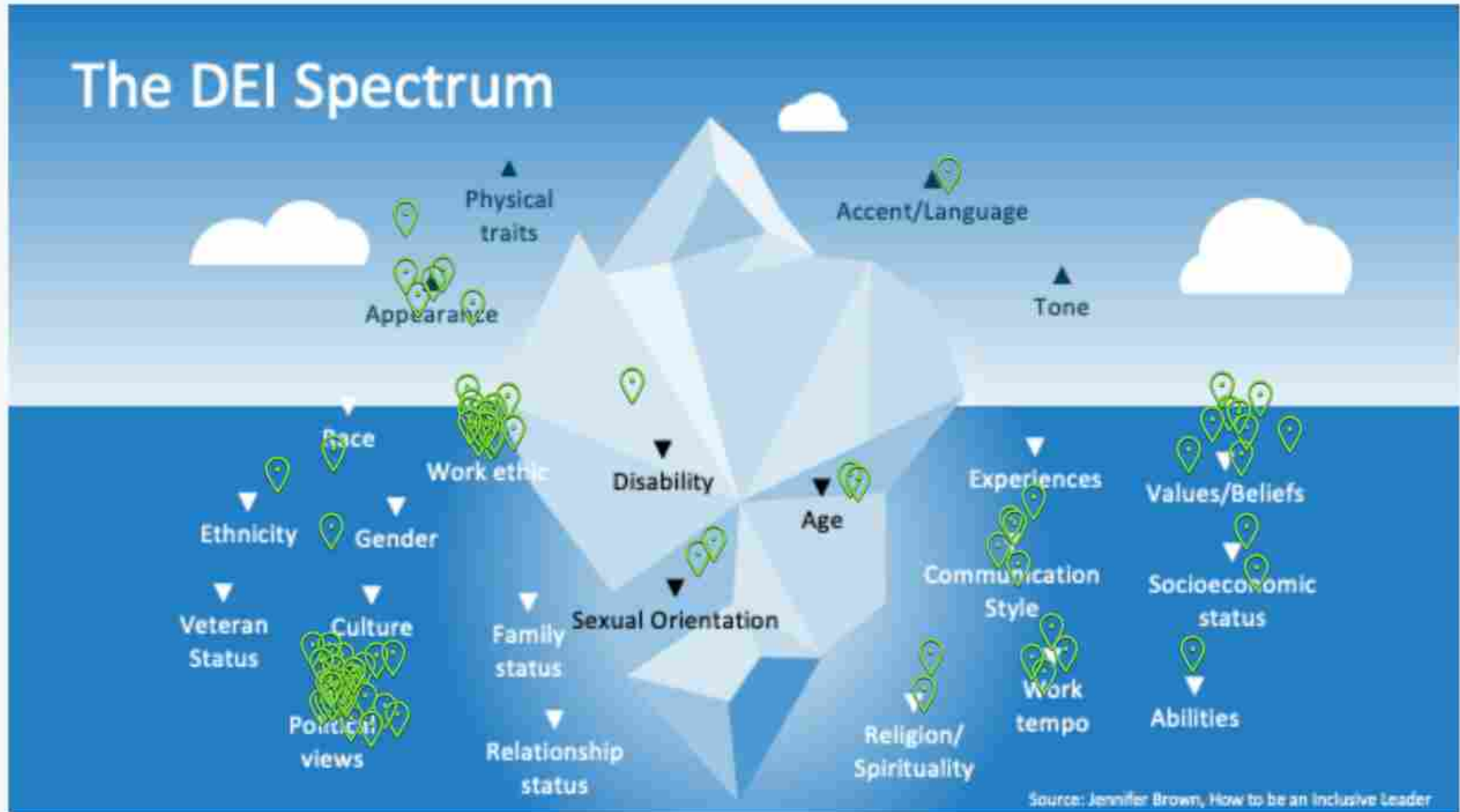# 5. A More Diverse / Equitable / Inclusive Workplace

Case Study

The DEI Spectrum

Physical traits
Accent/Language
Appearance
Tone

Race
Work ethic
Disability
Experiences
Values/Beliefs
Ethnicity
Gender
Age
Communication Style
Socioeconomic status
Veteran Status
Culture
Family status
Sexual Orientation
Work tempo
Abilities
Political views
Relationship status
Religion/ Spirituality

Source: Jennifer Brown, How to be an Inclusive Leader

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Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pollev.com/app

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Suggestions:

- Expand your definition of DEI

- Employees expect you to focus on DEI – make the commitment- educate and train staff

- Get your Millennials and Gen Z involved

- Over the past 12 months, DEI has gone from a differentiator to a requirement

- Don't be one of the 25.6% who aren't focusing on DEI

Q18: Diversity, Inclusion & Equity (DEI) is one of my organization's stated values and/or priority areas for the next 12 months.

Yes	74.40%
No	18.40%
Don't know	7.20%
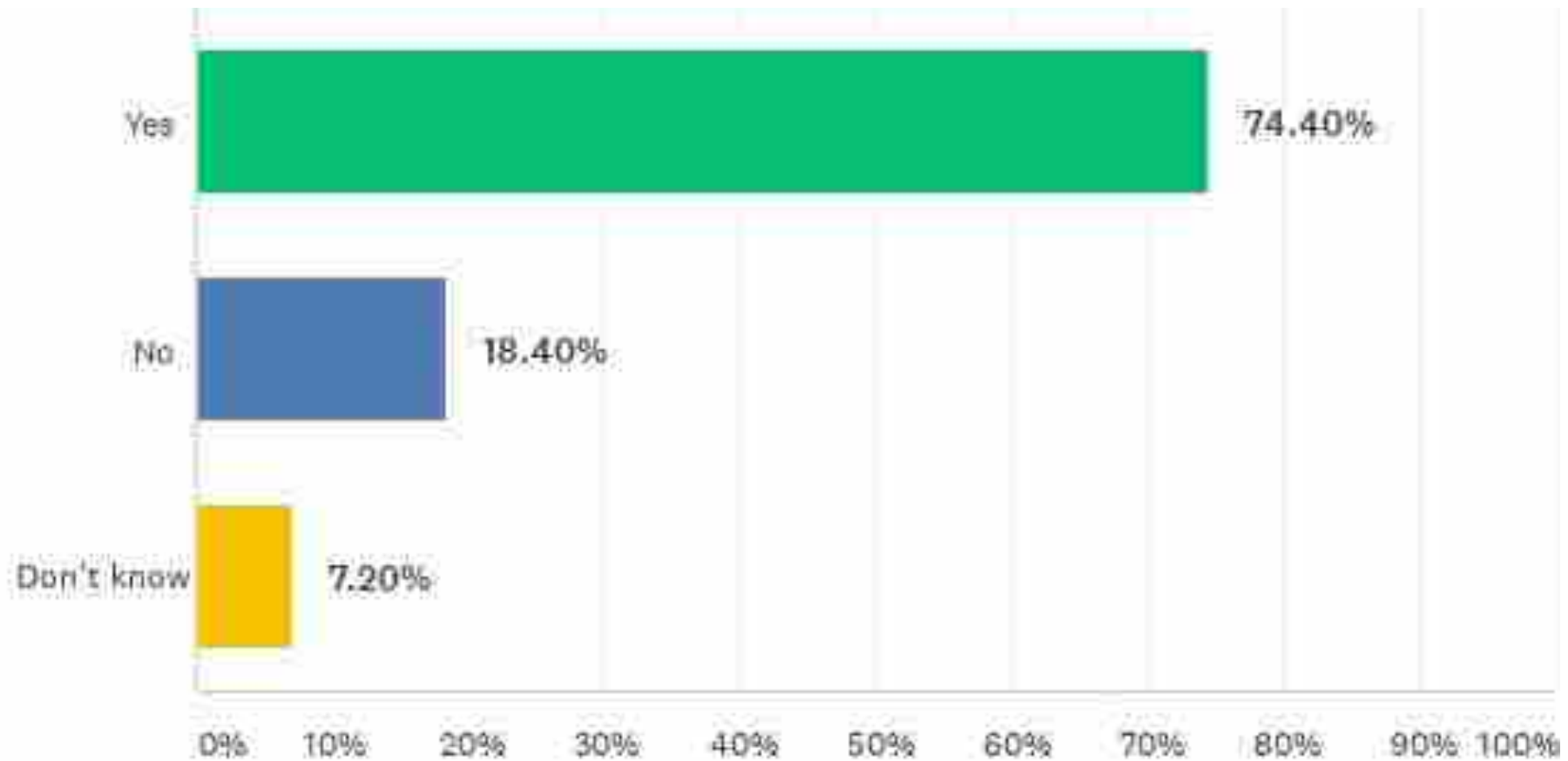
6. Your workforce is now GLOBAL

Talent Geographically Unleashed*

- The virus isn't confined by borders, and neither is talent in a virtual world (by state or country)

- Technology has now untethered talent from location

- Technology such as Zoom has humanized remote workplaces

-   Opening borders to free up talent would result in a $78 trillion increase in global GDP**

- Harvard Business Review – 2021's The post pandemic rules of Talent Management
**The Economist, If Borders Were Open

How has your talent acquisition strategy changed?

re all in

Have already expanded our geographic reach

Putting in some plans now

somewhat open minded

Close minded

Suggestions:

- Open your eyes that where you sit is less important than the work you can do

- If employees stay with you while moving to a lower cost of area, be CAREFUL about reducing pay

- Position your self more national (or global) on your website and with your recruiting campaigns
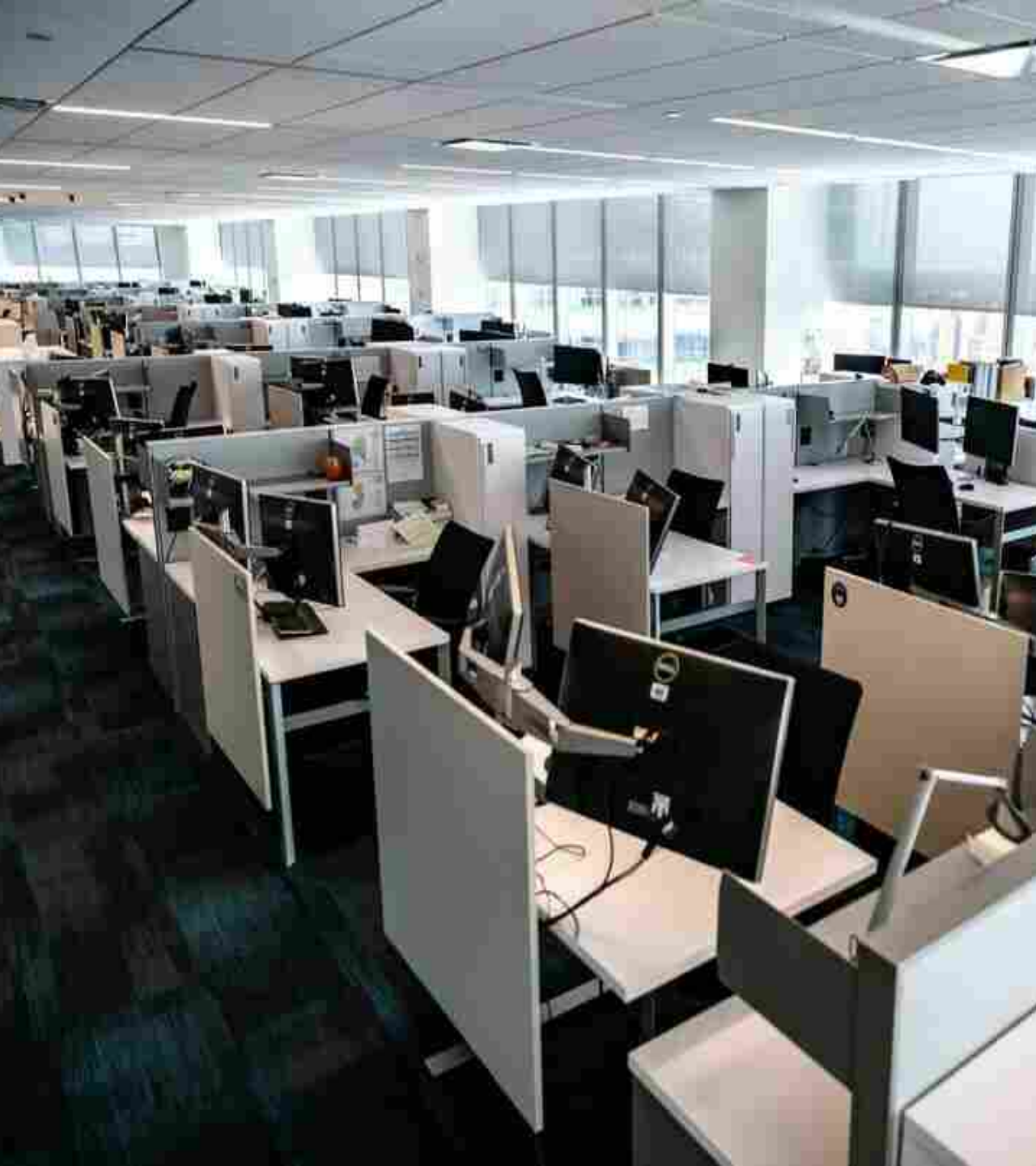
- As for labor laws, life WILL get more complicated

7. New Productivity Measures
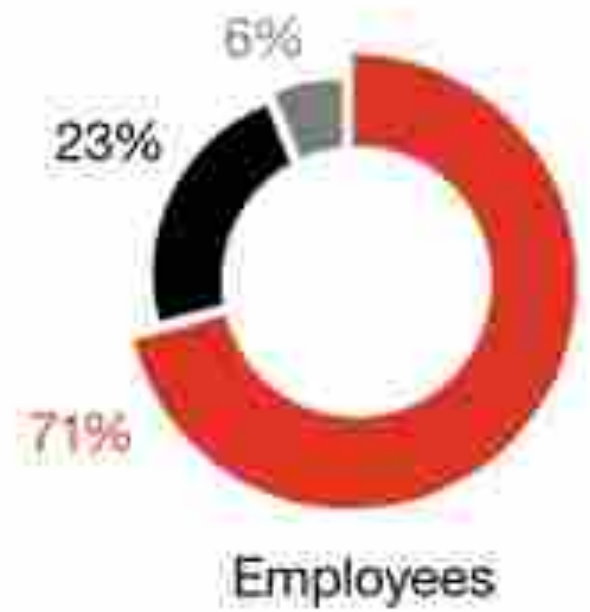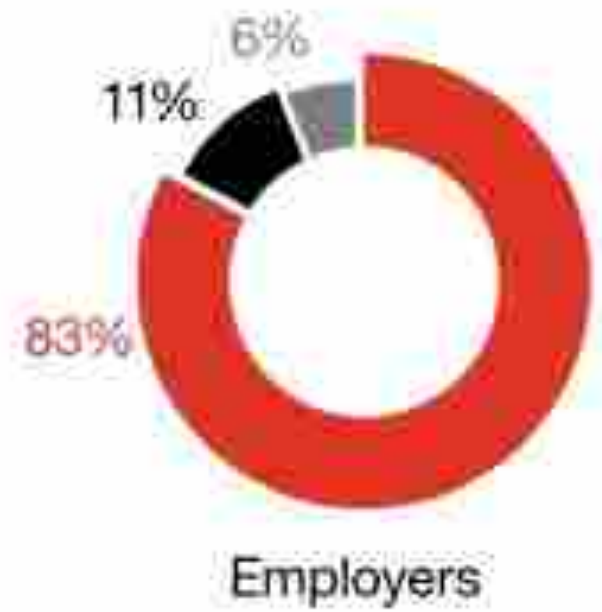
*PWC 2021, It's time to reimagine where and how work will get done

Rate your organization's TRUST of PRODUCTIVITY

The Statistics

- 86% of employees prefer to work by themselves when they are trying to be as productive as possible**

- Remote employees spend less time avoiding work (15% difference), spent 1.4 more days working each month*

- The savings are significant, as the estimate is that businesses can save $1,400,000 per 100 employees per year***

- On average, a worker saves 8.5 hours a week of free time by not commuting to work. For a year, this adds up to 408 hours*

- The Airtasker post pandemic survey
- ** Survey by Ask.com
- ***Global Analytics 2021 Study

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Suggestions:

- Time to remove the archaic "butts in seats" metric for productivity

- Shift the focus to output rather than input or hours being 'seen'
(projects completed on time, deliverables being met, new initiatives launched, etc.)

- Avoid new technology tools that measure emails read/sent clicks, mouse clicks, etc.

- Where you sit is less important than what you get done

- But you HAVE to set and review goals (weekly, monthly, quarterly)

8. New Appreciation for our Essential Employees

How has your respect / admiration changed for the following?
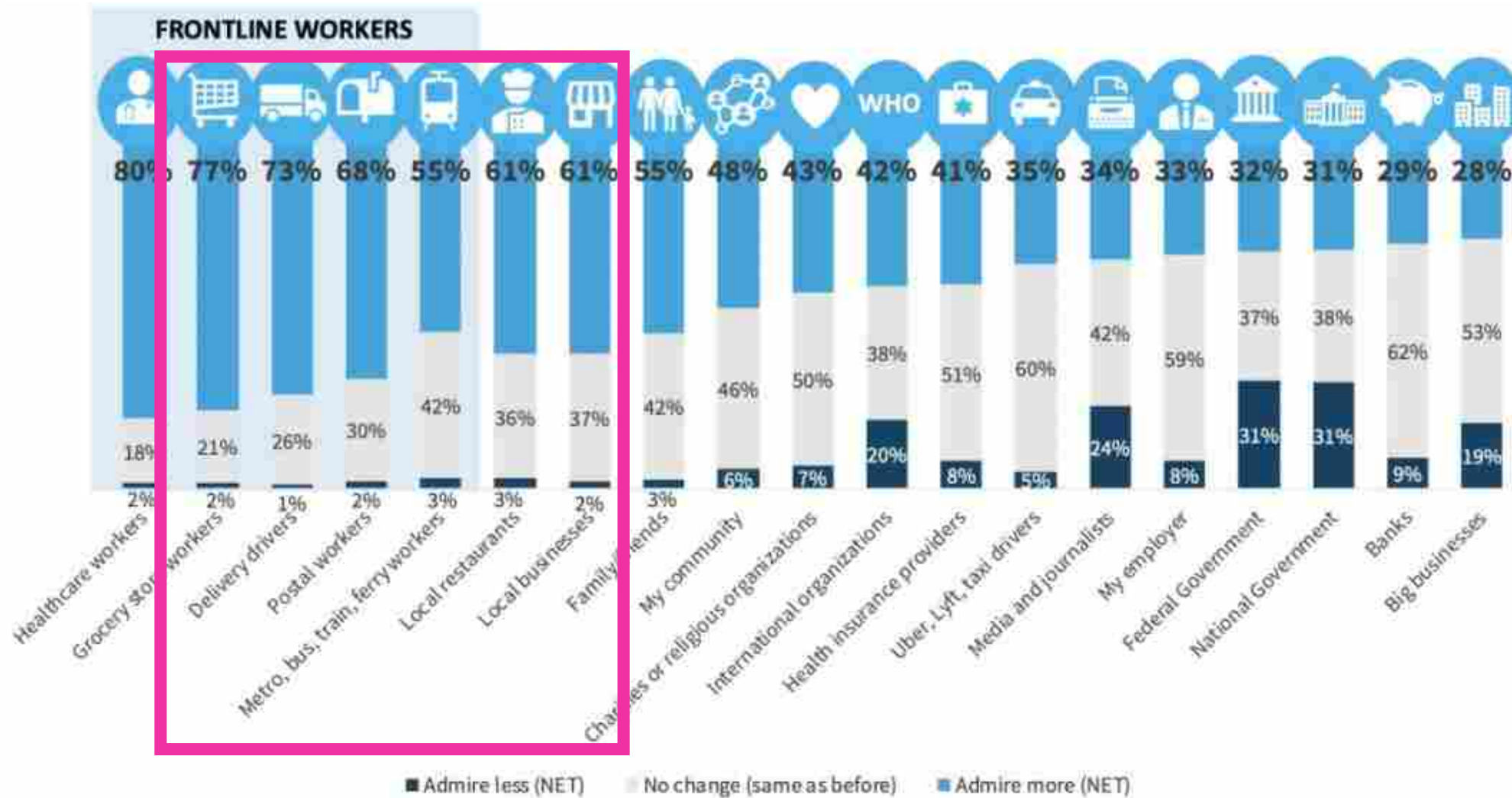
Suggestions:

- Hug your field staff, technicians, construction crews, surveyors, mail room personnel, etc.

- Recognize them and don't forget about them 'on the other side'

- Consider their 'essentialness' the next time someone mentions outsourcing 'non-essential functions'
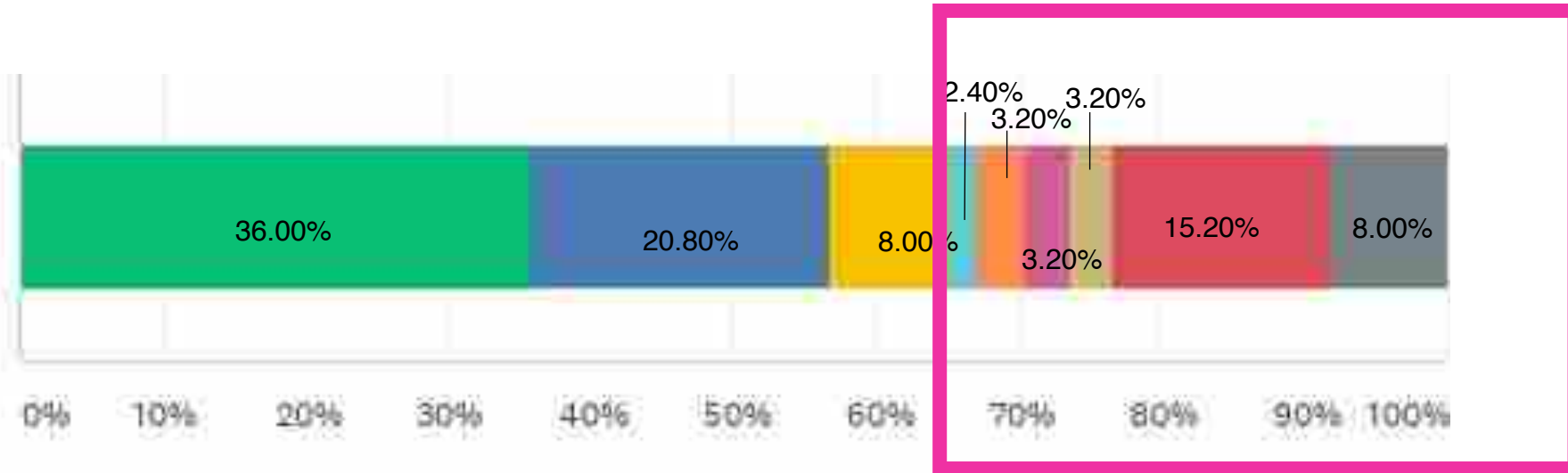
Thank You!

Poll Results

Q1: Select the title that best describes your position

35% non-HR

36.00%   20.80%   8.00%   2.40%   3.20%   3.20%   3.20%   15.20%   8.00%
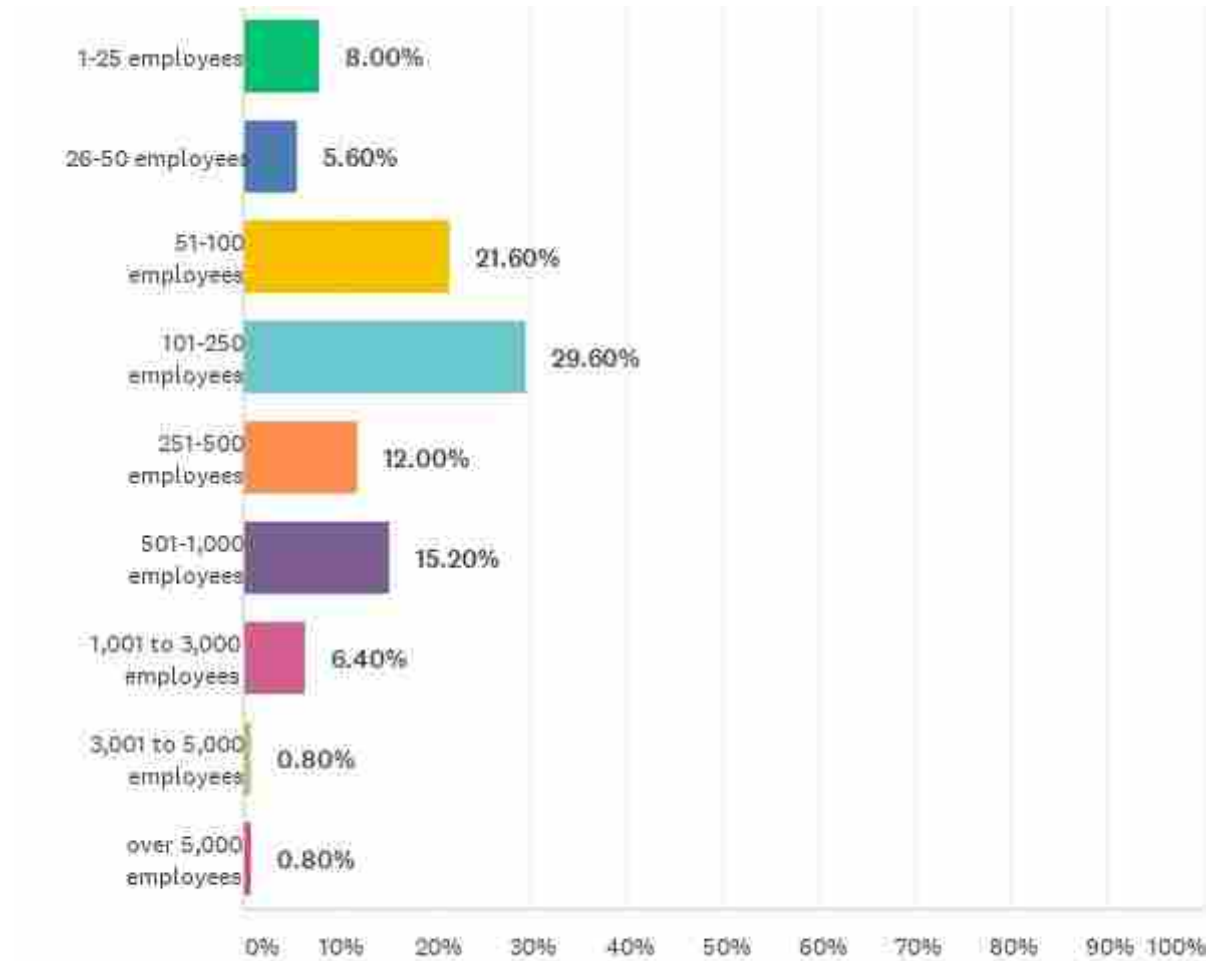
0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

- Human Resources Director, VP, CHRO
- Human Resources Manager (including all functional HR manager titles)
- Human Resources Non-Manager   Technical Non Principal
- Technical Principal   Chief Admin Officer (or other Admin non HR title)
- Chief Financial Officer   Operations Manager, Director or Vice President
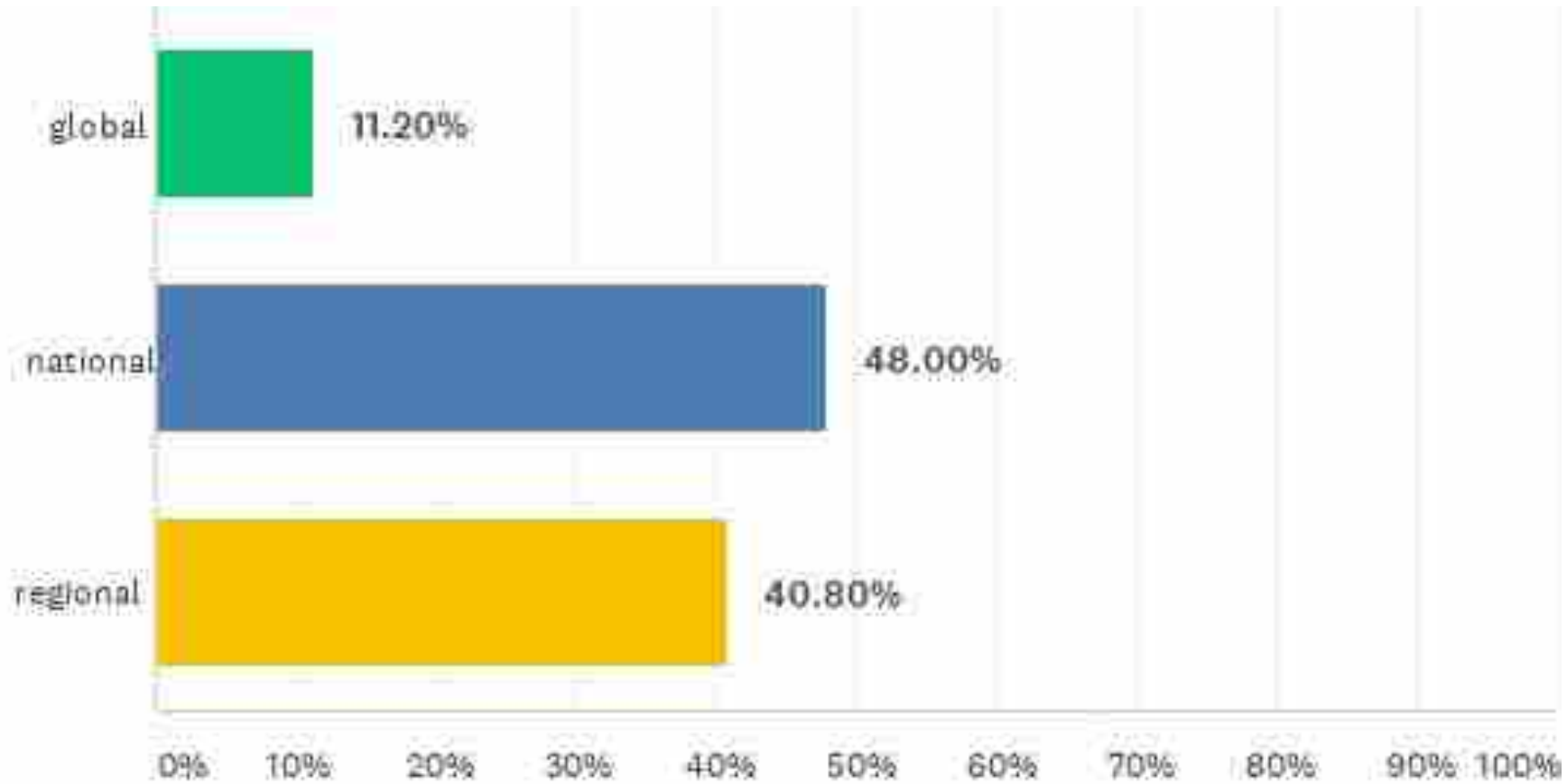- EVP, COO, President or CEO   Other (please specify)

Other
- Legal
- Communications
- Studio Leader

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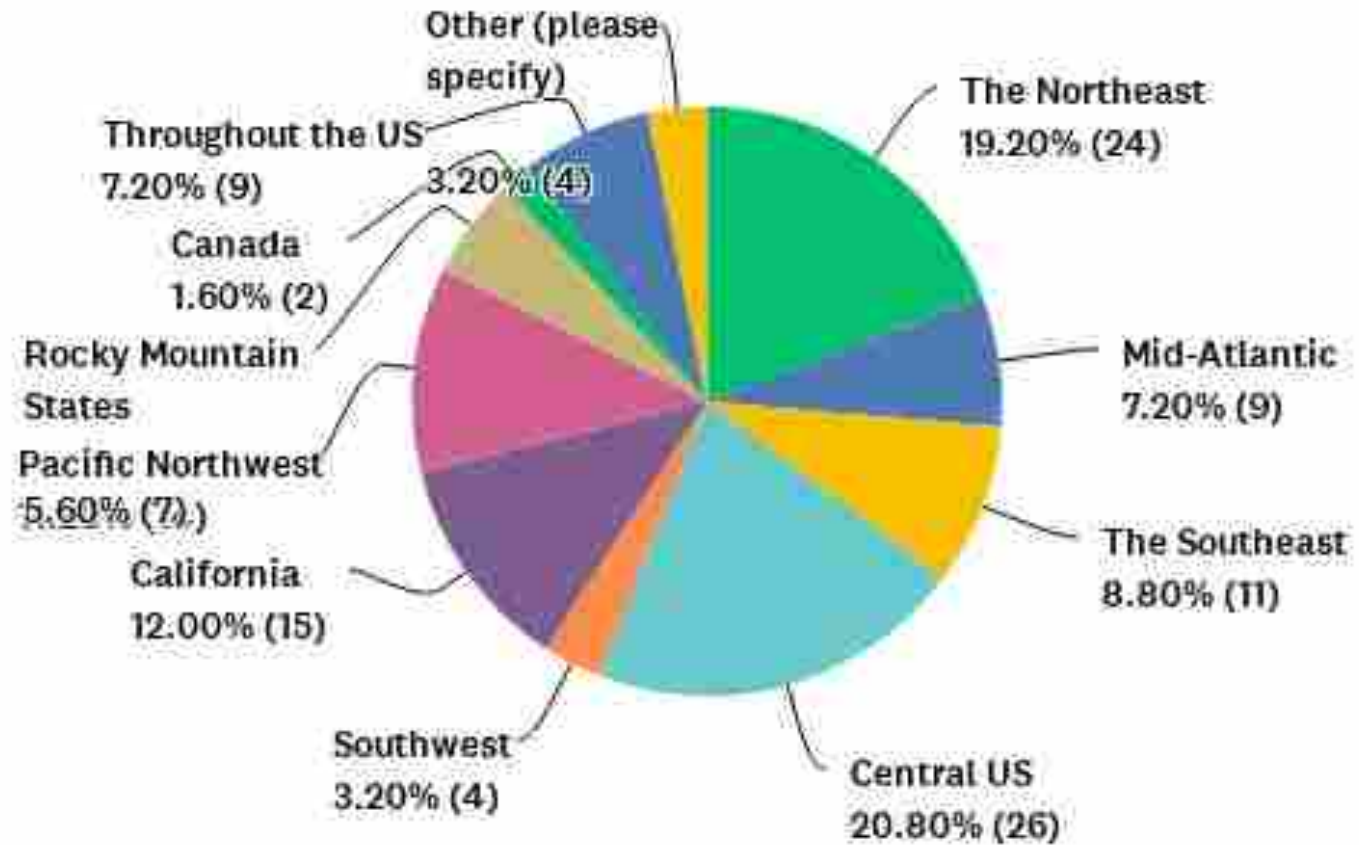
Q2: My organization is

Q3: My organization is

global	11.20%
national	48.00%
regional	40.80%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

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Q4: My organization is primarily located (or headquartered) in

Other (please specify)

The Northeast
19.20% (24)

Throughout the US
7.20% (9)

3.20% (4)

Canada
1.60% (2)

Mid-Atlantic
7.20% (9)

Rocky Mountain
States

Pacific Northwest
5.60% (7)

The Southeast
8.80% (11)

California
12.00% (15)

Southwest
3.20% (4)

Central US
20.80% (26)

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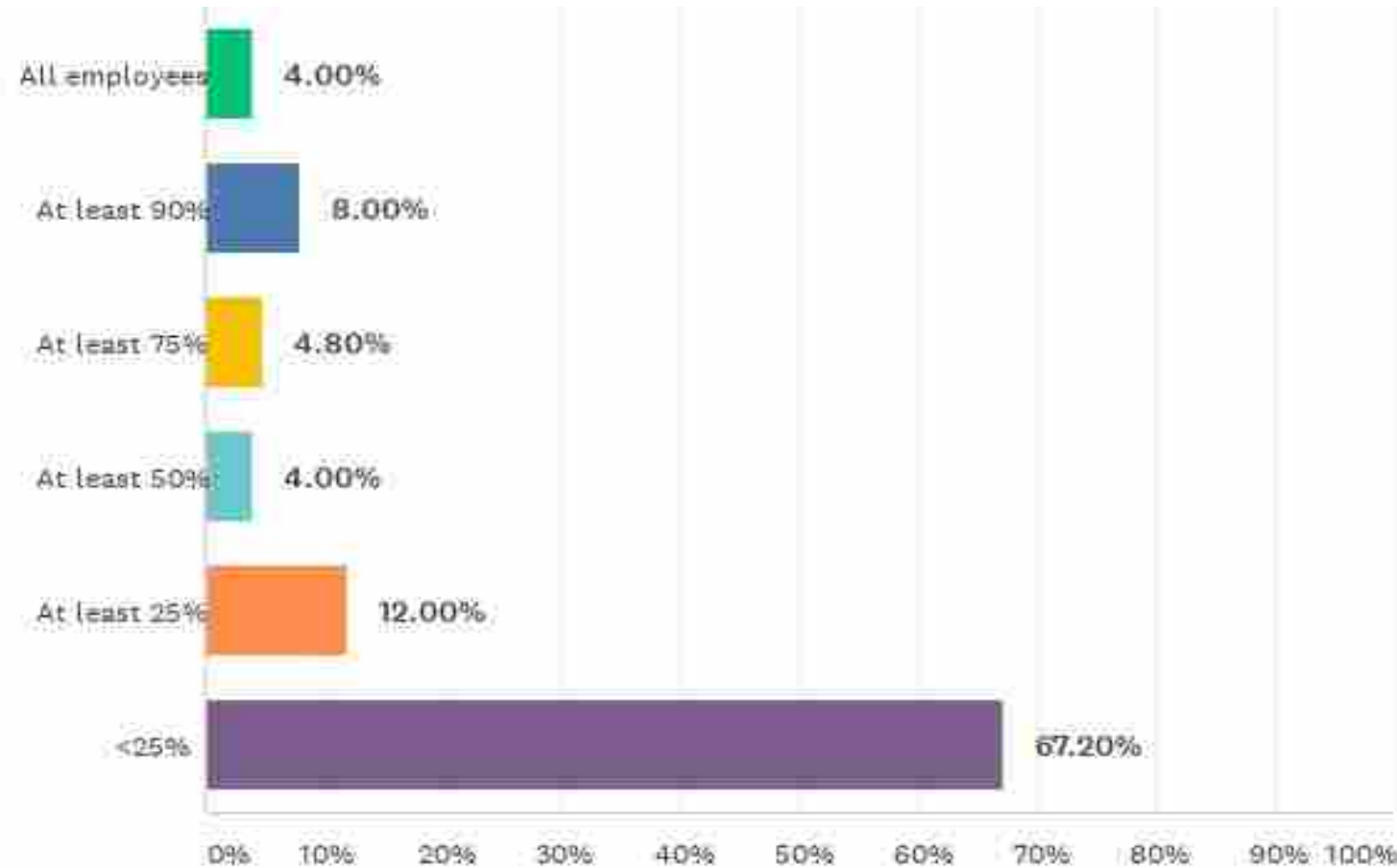# Q5: Select your organization's primary service line
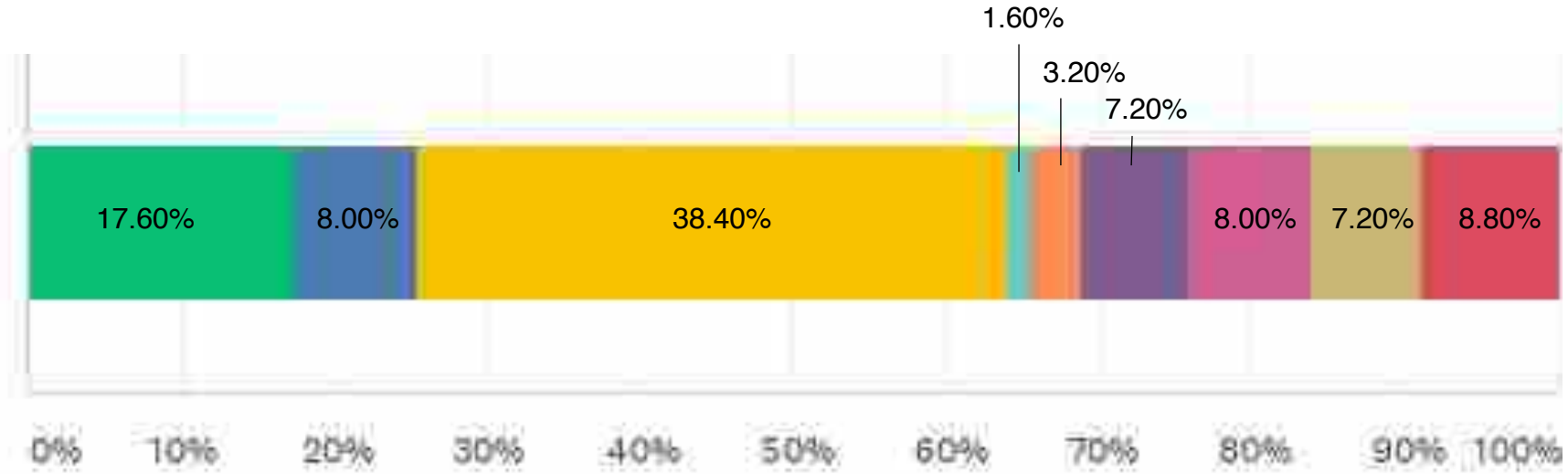
Other
- Engineering & Consulting
- Education
- Management Training
- Interior Design
- Project Management

# **Q6:** Aside from the health and well being of your employees, what is your organization's top current concern?

the impact Covid-19 wil... — 13.60%
the engagement of our... — 36.00%
how to effectively... — 50.40%
how to encourage... — 1.60%
finding talent — 38.40%
maintaining our... — 40.80%
the continued uncertainty — 11.20%
uptick in voluntary... — 8.00%
Other (please specify) — 2.40%

- the impact Covid-19 will have on our business long term
- the engagement of our employees
- how to effectively manage a blended workforce (i.e. in office/field, remote, virtual,...
- how to encourage employees to get vaccinated before returning to an office
- finding talent
- maintaining our organizational culture with so many people working remote
- the continued uncertainty
- uptick in voluntary turnover
- Other (please specify)

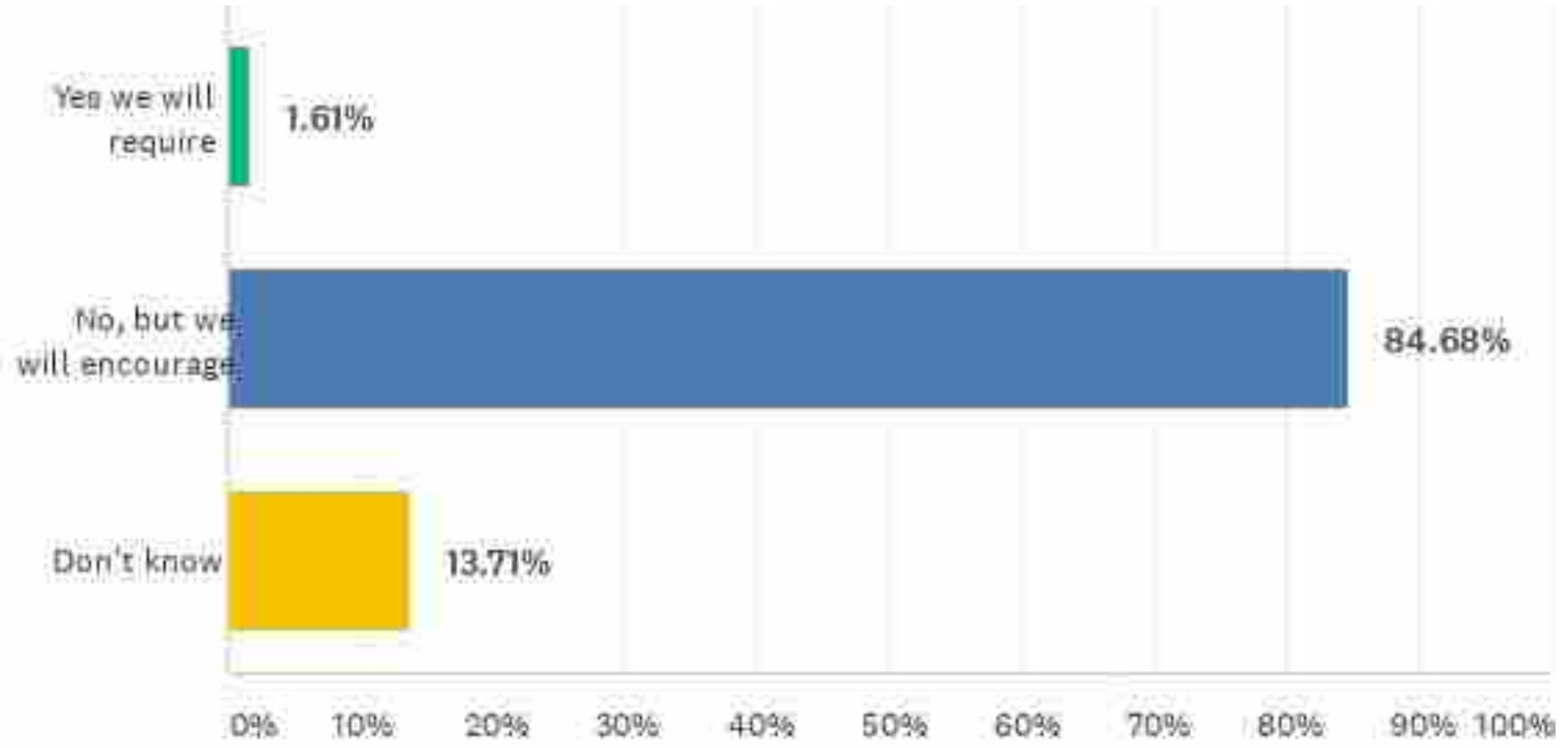0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

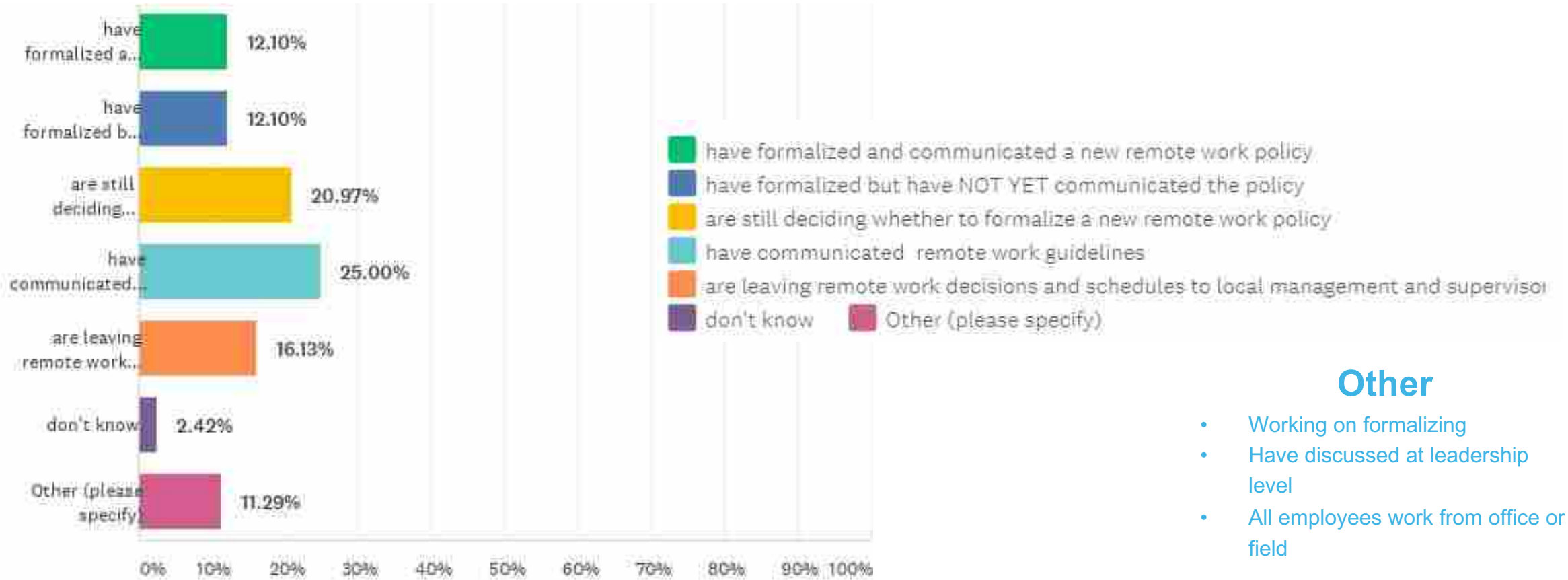# Q7: Before COVID-19 what % of your positions were eligible to work from home?

Q8: What do you anticipate will be your organization's 'new normal' regarding telecommuting and virtual employment?
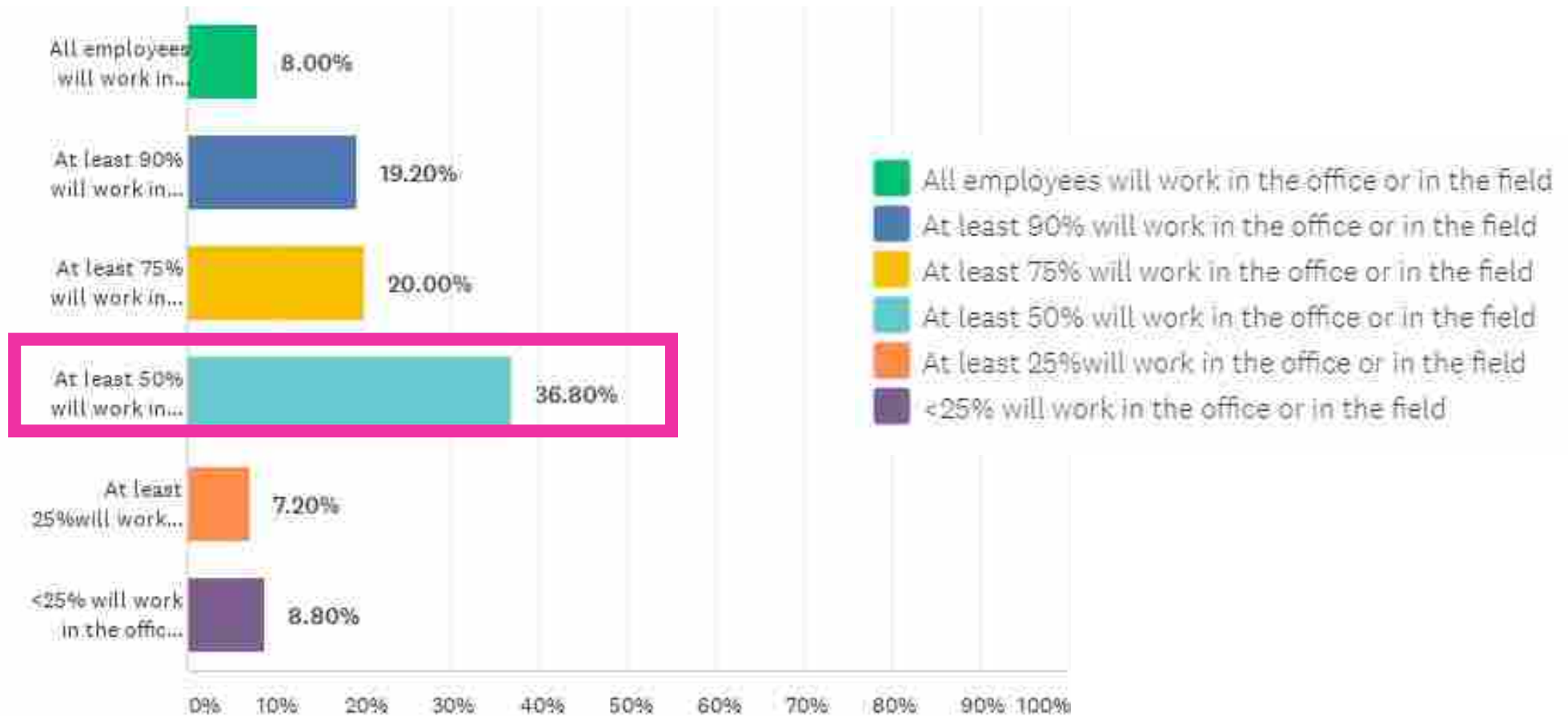
Q9: Will you require employees to be vaccinated before returning to work?

# **Q10:** Regarding employees working from home, at the current time, we:

have formalized and communicated a new remote work policy
have formalized but have NOT YET communicated the policy
are still deciding whether to formalize a new remote work policy
have communicated remote work guidelines
are leaving remote work decisions and schedules to local management and supervisor
don't know   Other (please specify)

Other
- Working on formalizing
- Have discussed at leadership level
- All employees work from office or field

Q11: At the current time, what % of your employees have returned full time to an 'in office' location or in the field?
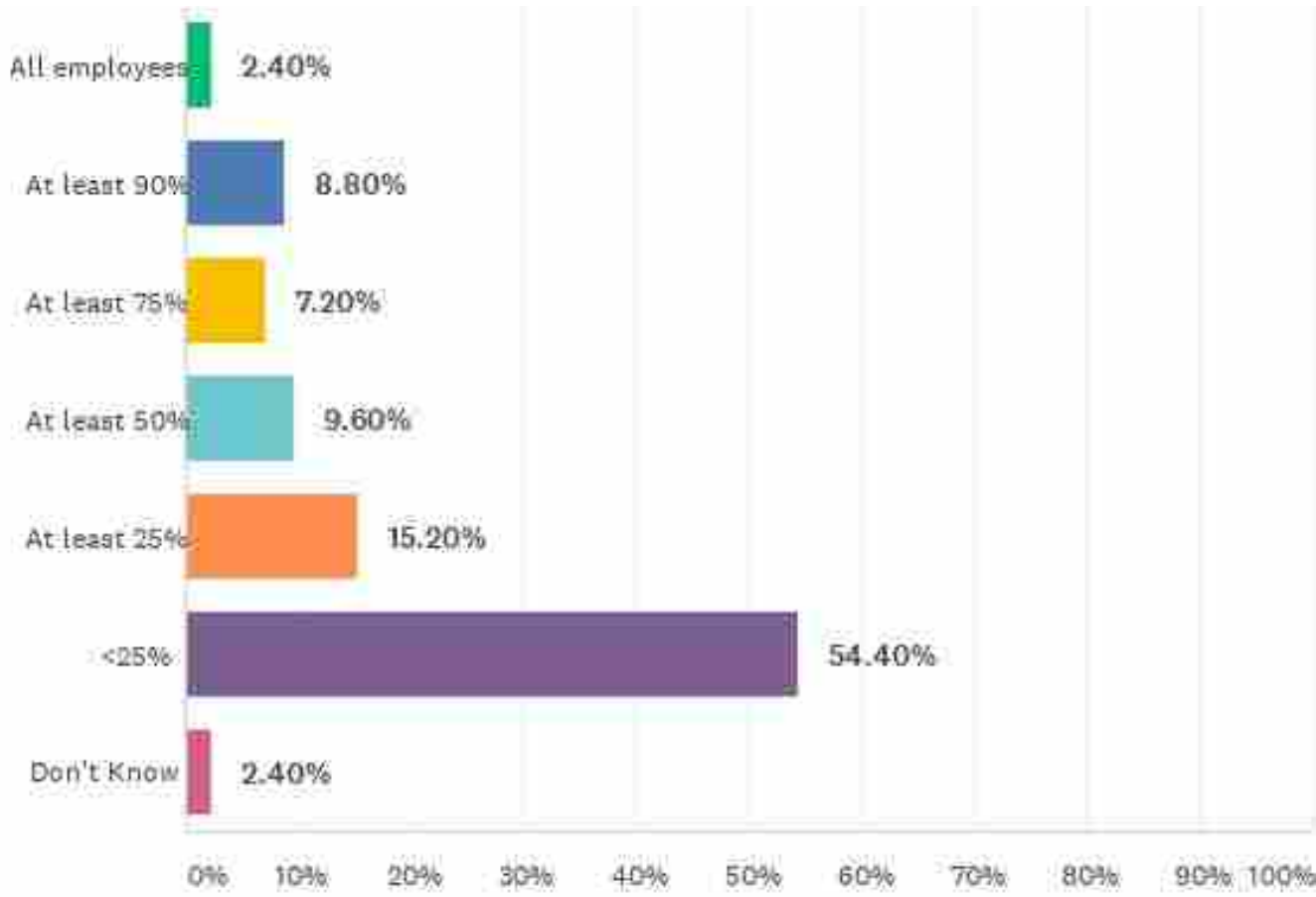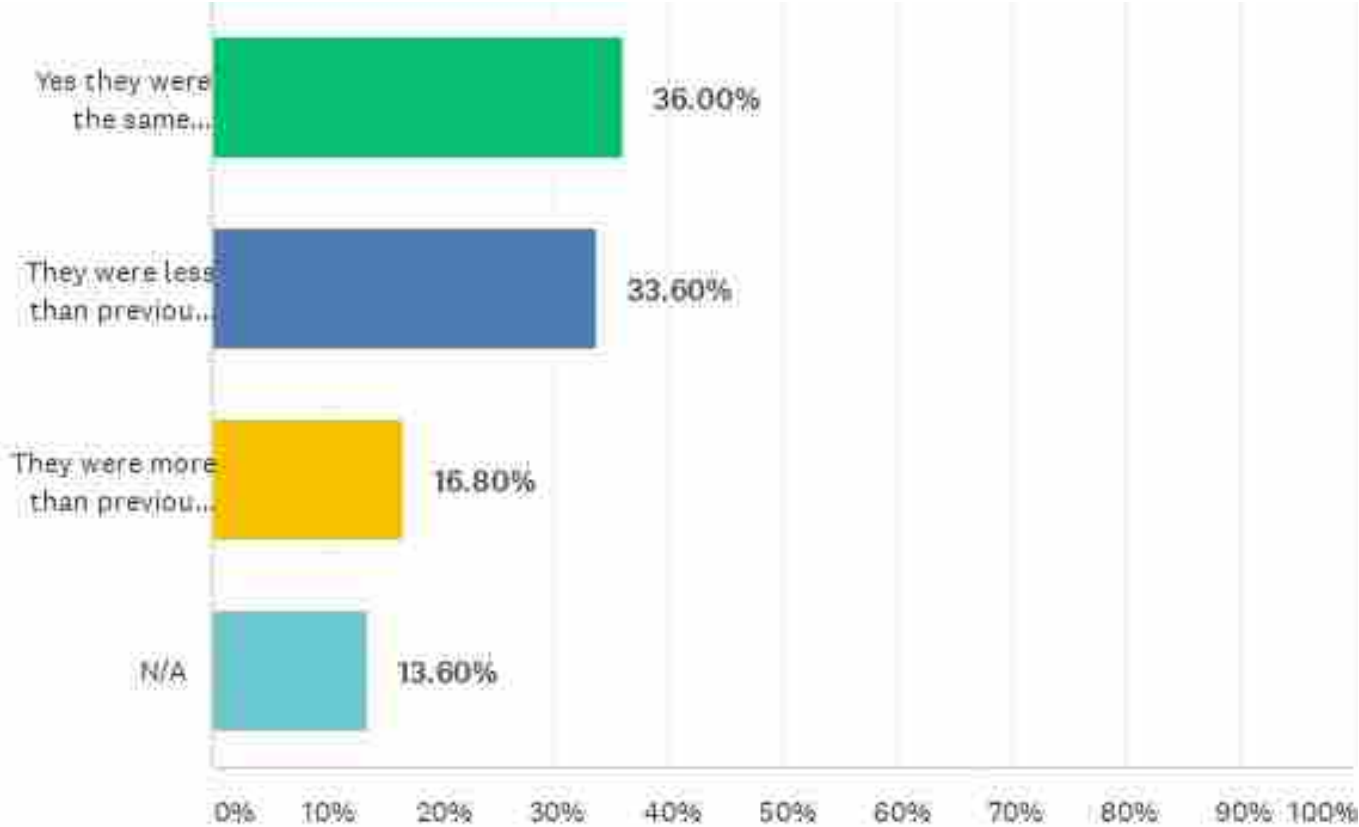
Q12: How was your firm's profits impacted in 2020?

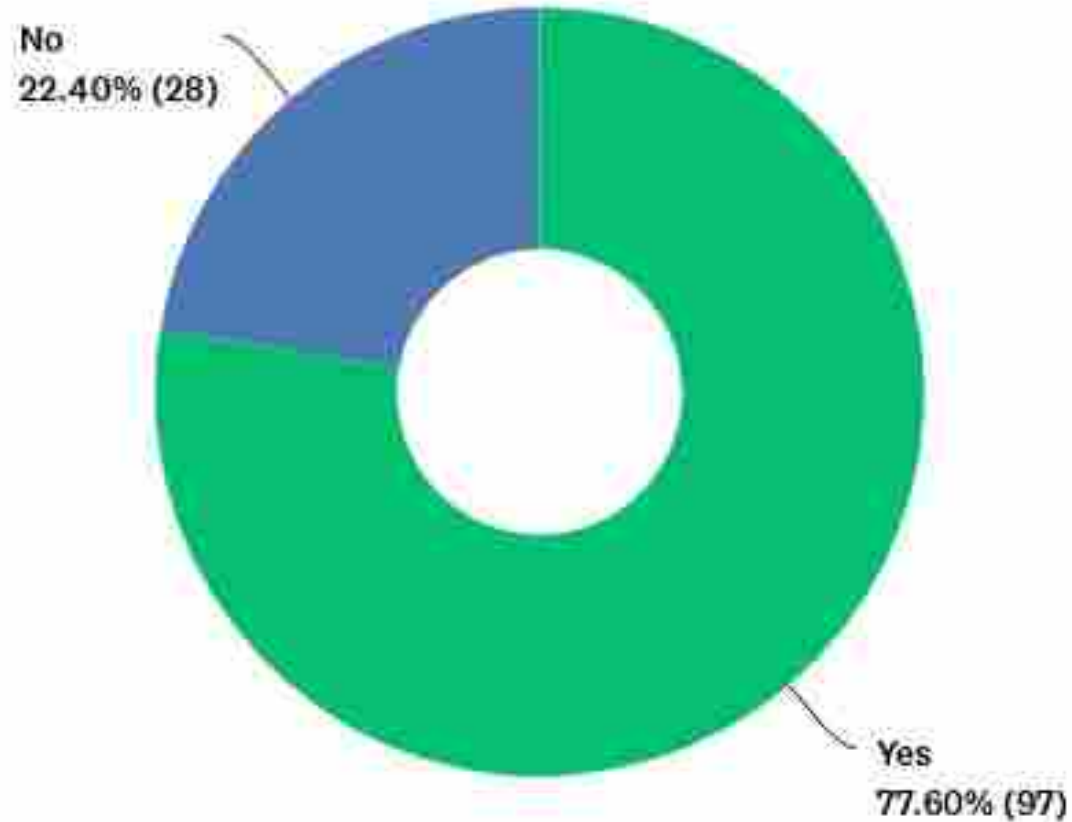# Q13: How was net revenue growth impacted in 2020?
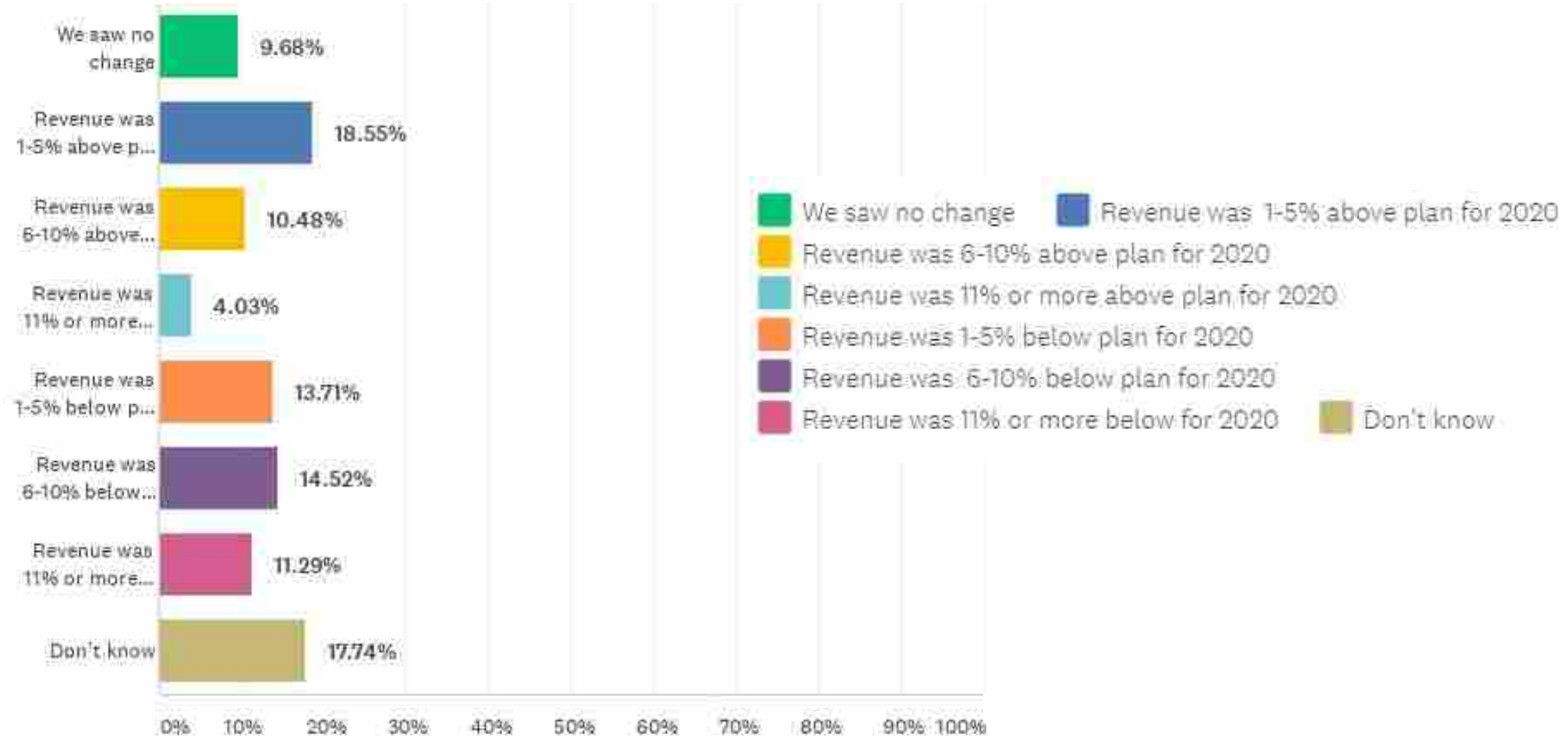
Q14: Did you pay bonuses in 2020?
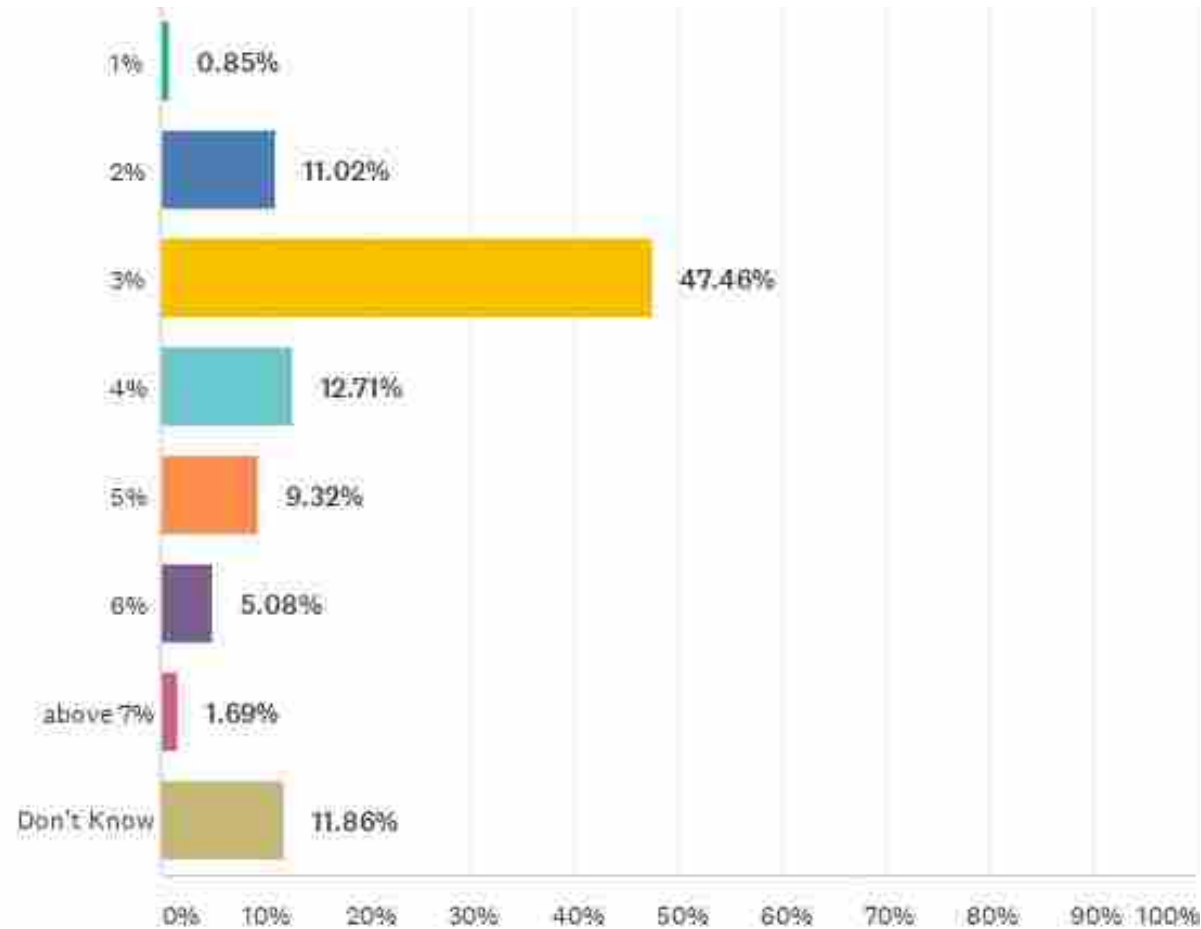

No
12.80% (16)

Yes
87.20% (109)

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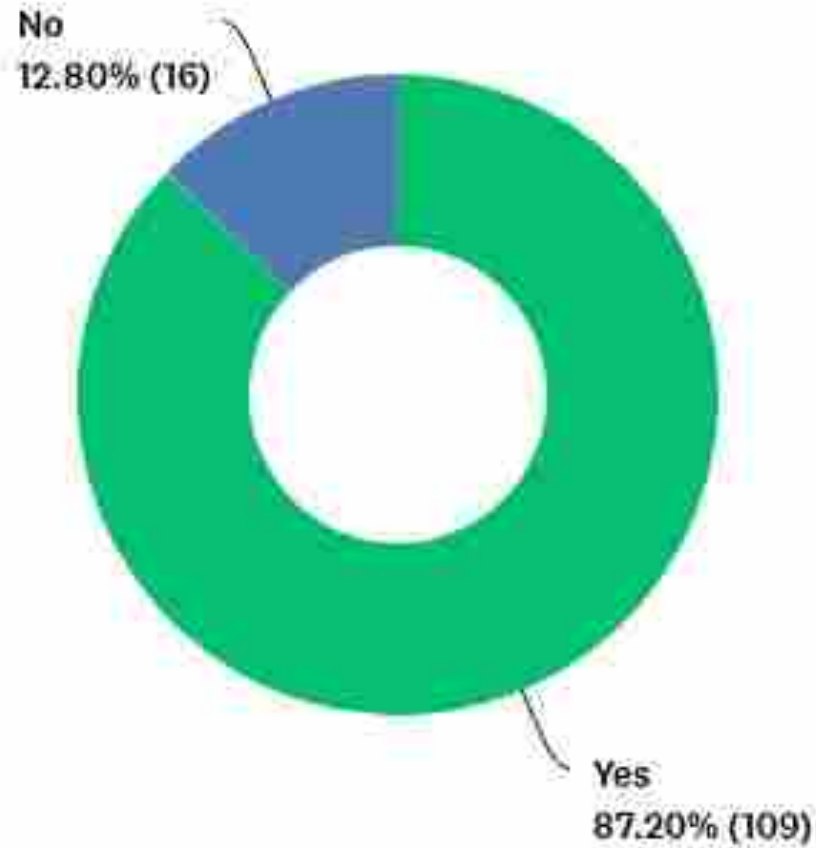
Q15: If yes, were you bonus amounts in line with previous years?

Q16: Did you give year end pay increases in 2020 (or planning to in Q1 2021)?
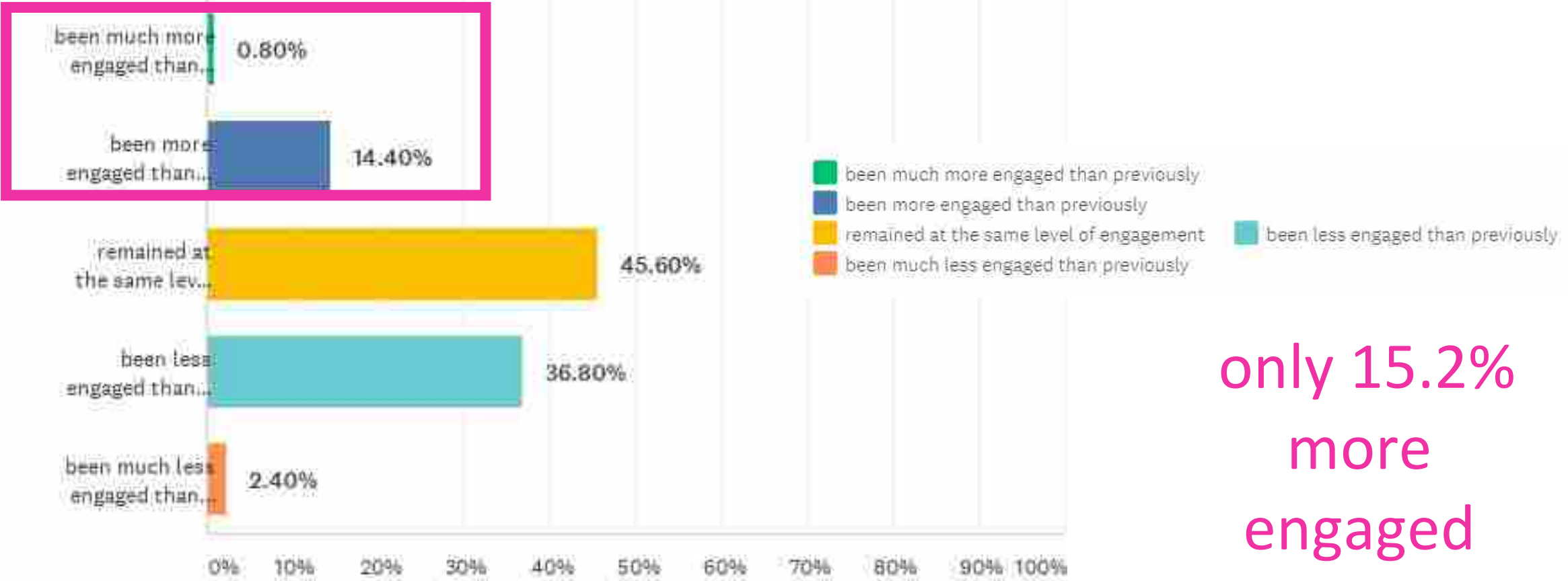

No
22.40% (28)

Yes
77.60% (97)

Q17: If so, what was (or will be) your annual pay increase budget?

Q18: Diversity, Inclusion & Equity (DEI) is one of my organization's stated values and/or priority areas for the next 12 months.