



REWARD STRATEGY TRENDS

Global Total Rewards Pulse Survey

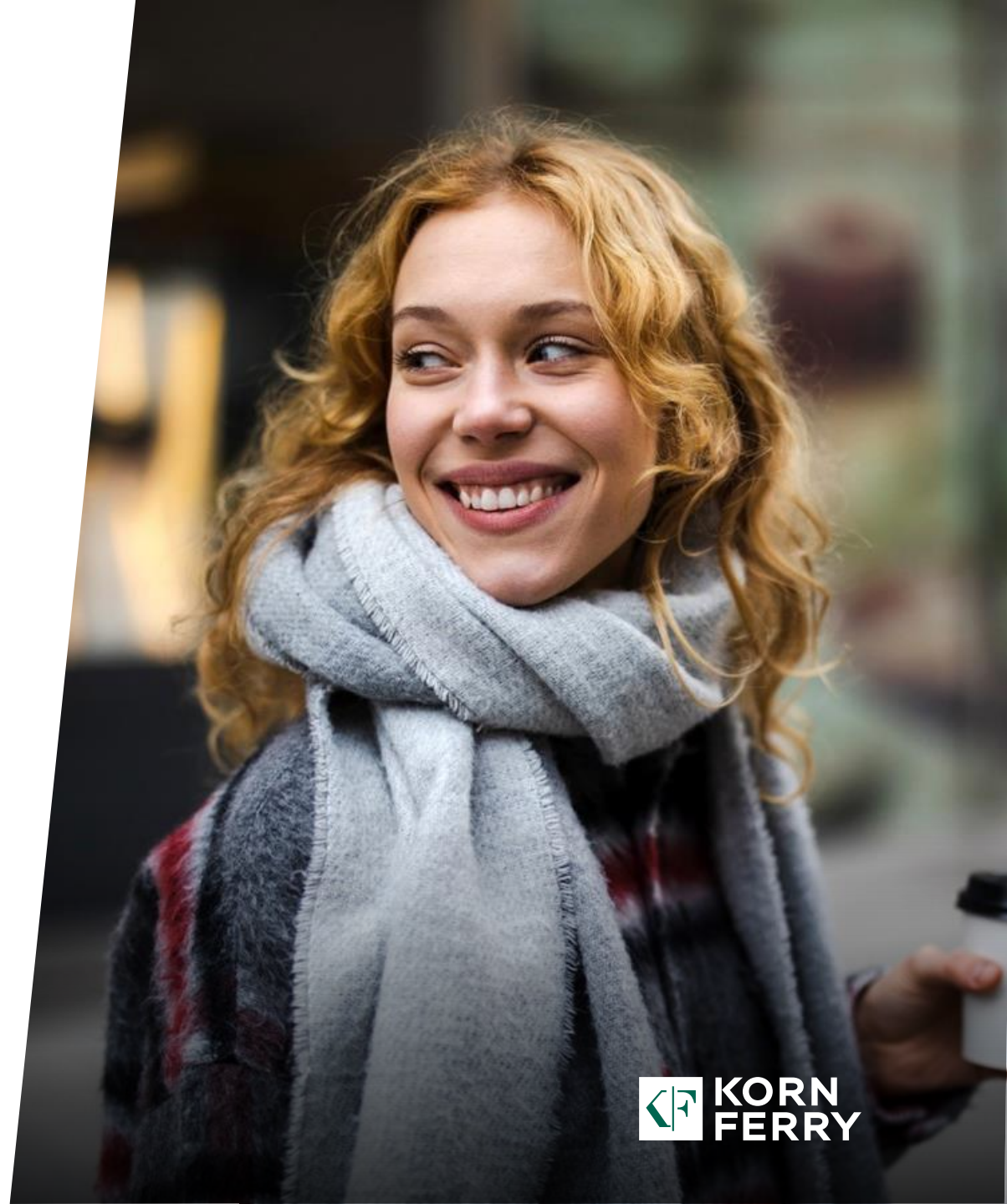
DECEMBER 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

This survey focuses on reward strategy trends as well as the business outlook. Areas covered in this survey include:

- Reward Strategy
- Business Outlook
- Employee Turnover
- Bonus Forecasts
- Salary Increase Forecasts

This is the latest in a series of Global Total Rewards Pulse Surveys by Korn Ferry, designed to gather insights into how organizations are adapting their reward programs in an evolving business climate.

This survey explores how organizations are shaping and updating their reward strategies to stay aligned with changing business and talent needs. It highlights key trends such as the impact of AI, pay transparency, skills-based models, and other evolving approaches to total rewards. This survey also examines organizations' business outlooks, projected base salary increases, and bonus payouts for 2025 and 2026.

The survey was conducted in October 2025 and reflects responses from a large sample of 7,936 organizations across 144 countries. Respondents are primarily HR and total rewards professionals, representing organizations of varying sizes, geographies, and ownership structures.

Market practices will continue to evolve, and Korn Ferry will continue to monitor and report on future trends. If you have additional questions on this information, please contact us here: KornFerryPayServices@kornferry.com.

REWARD STRATEGY FINDINGS

REWARD STRATEGY DEFINITION

- Most reward strategies are reported to be high-level philosophies or highly consistent with common/best market practices. A small subset of strategies are tailored to the unique needs of the organization. Very few are seen as tailored to business strategy AND differentiated from competitors.
- A majority of organizations do not differentiate the total amount of pay or pay mix relative to their peers. Non-monetary rewards, pay transparency/communications, and a focus on skills are the most common areas of reported differentiation from peers.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Employees are usually considered to be the most important stakeholder of the reward program, however, only 50% of organizations involve employee input into directly shaping the reward strategy. Of those who do, the most common practice is via engagement surveys followed by informal input from managers.
- The majority of organizations (76%) report that they either do not communicate their reward strategy or only communicate high level/general philosophy statements. This leaves only 24% of organizations who provide meaningful detail behind the what, why, and how of reward program strategy.

FUTURE IMPACTS

- The primary disruptive external factor impacting reward strategies over the next 2 years is pay transparency. While largely driven from the emerging regulatory landscape in both NA and EU, this disruption is causing organizations to revisit many facets of its reward programs—including reward strategy, design, governance, and communications.
- Labor cost pressures and achieving a better ROI in reward investments is the second major short-term focus area reported.
- Skills-based pay and performance-based pay are seen as the most likely emerging future pay models in the next 3-5 years.
- Future performance-based models are balanced between organization and individual performance. Pay-mix segmentation could increase based on personas driven by organization and employee needs and preferences.

IMPACT OF AI

- There are a range of focus areas identified where organizations see AI impacting reward processes. Reward benchmarking, reward communications, and integrating data across platforms are the primary focus areas identified.
- AI is seen to be an enabler in more transparent reward communication processes as well as in improving pay equity. However, there is work to be done on equipping HR with the skills to be effective in using AI to support reward management.

REWARD STRATEGY FINDINGS

IMPLICATIONS ON REWARD STRATEGY

- As the intensity of competition for talent increases, a differentiated reward strategy takes on greater importance. It also elevates the importance of the total rewards function. However, today, with a focus on predictable taglines and commonplace market views, it is reducing the impact of rewards and the rewards function.
- Differentiation in rewards is becoming a competitive necessity, not a luxury. Most organizations remain rooted in generic, market-norm reward philosophies, creating a significant opportunity for leaders to build reward strategies explicitly aligned to business strategy, talent priorities, and competitive differentiation.
- Reward transparency will force greater rigor, narrative clarity, and design discipline. With pay transparency regulations accelerating globally, organizations must be prepared to articulate the *why* behind their reward structures, career frameworks, and pay decisions—something only a quarter of companies do well today.
- Employee trust and engagement risk erosion without meaningful involvement and communication. Limited employee input and under-developed communication practices leave employees unaware of the strategy and managers ill-equipped to reinforce it, creating misalignment and potential reputational risk.
- Future reward models will demand new capabilities—particularly in skills-based pay, segmentation, and ROI measurement. As organizations shift toward skills-based and performance-based models, HR will need advanced analytics, governance, and more dynamic pay architectures to support differentiated, persona-driven total rewards.
- AI presents both acceleration and exposure. AI can strengthen benchmarking, equity monitoring, and communication, but HR functions must address capability gaps and employee skepticism to ensure AI-driven insights are credible, explainable, and responsibly deployed.
- These findings present a wake-up call for organizations and HR leaders relative to fit-for-purpose reward strategies. Today's reported common practices in reward strategy are not necessarily best practice for tomorrow's challenges.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

2025 BUSINESS OUTLOOK

- A majority of rewards professionals are reporting moderate growth for 2025. This view of growth is consistent with our findings from mid-2025.
- Technology investment, particularly AI, automation, and digital infrastructure, remains a growth engine, boosting productivity and capital spending. Moderate growth in emerging markets continues despite geopolitical uncertainties.

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

- A majority of organizations anticipate 2026 employee headcounts to be within +/- 5% of 2025 levels. This is consistent with our findings last year.
- There is a slight skew in organizations reporting increases in headcount vs. those decreasing headcounts.

BONUS/INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

- Most organizations paid bonuses/incentives comparable to or above the target in the previous fiscal year. A majority also anticipate paying bonuses/incentives comparable to or above the target this fiscal year.
- These results indicate a slight decrease in optimism about expected payments for this fiscal year versus our July 2025 survey.

2025 AND 2026 BASE SALARY FORECASTS

- There is little differentiation between 2025 and 2026 salary increase forecasts in major markets. Median increases are typically within 0.1% of last year with a slight downward trend from 2025 to 2026.
- There is also little variation in median increases across employee groups (i.e., clerical to executive).
- Globally, annual salary increases are received by most employees in a majority of organizations. In 2025 and 2026, respectively, 49% (and 51% in 2026) of organizations provide increases to at least 95% of its employees. 76% (and 78% in 2026) of organizations will provide increases to at least 80% of its employees.

IMPLICATIONS

- While an environment of political and economic uncertainty continues business, employment, and reward prospects are somewhat stable for a majority of global participants.
- However, this uncertainty presents challenges in organizations' planning and allocating of financial resources. As such, planning and budgeting processes are likely to become more dynamic than typical.

SUMMARY OF 2025 BASE SALARY INCREASES

MAJOR MARKETS (TOTAL SALARY INCREASE)

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Australia	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Brazil	5.3	6.3	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.3
Canada	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.5
China	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
France	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0
Germany	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4
Italy	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.1
Japan	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Netherlands	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
Saudi Arabia	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1
Spain	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
United Arab Emirates	4.0	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
United Kingdom	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
United States of America	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5

Note that in many markets, there are statutorily required minimum increases that must be provided, and these are reflected in the above forecasts where appropriate.

SUMMARY OF 2026 BASE SALARY INCREASES

MAJOR MARKETS (TOTAL SALARY INCREASE)

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Australia	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Brazil	5.2	5.6	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.0
Canada	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.4
China	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
France	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Germany	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2
Italy	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1
Japan	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2
Netherlands	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8
Saudi Arabia	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Spain	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0
United Arab Emirates	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
United Kingdom	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
United States of America	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5

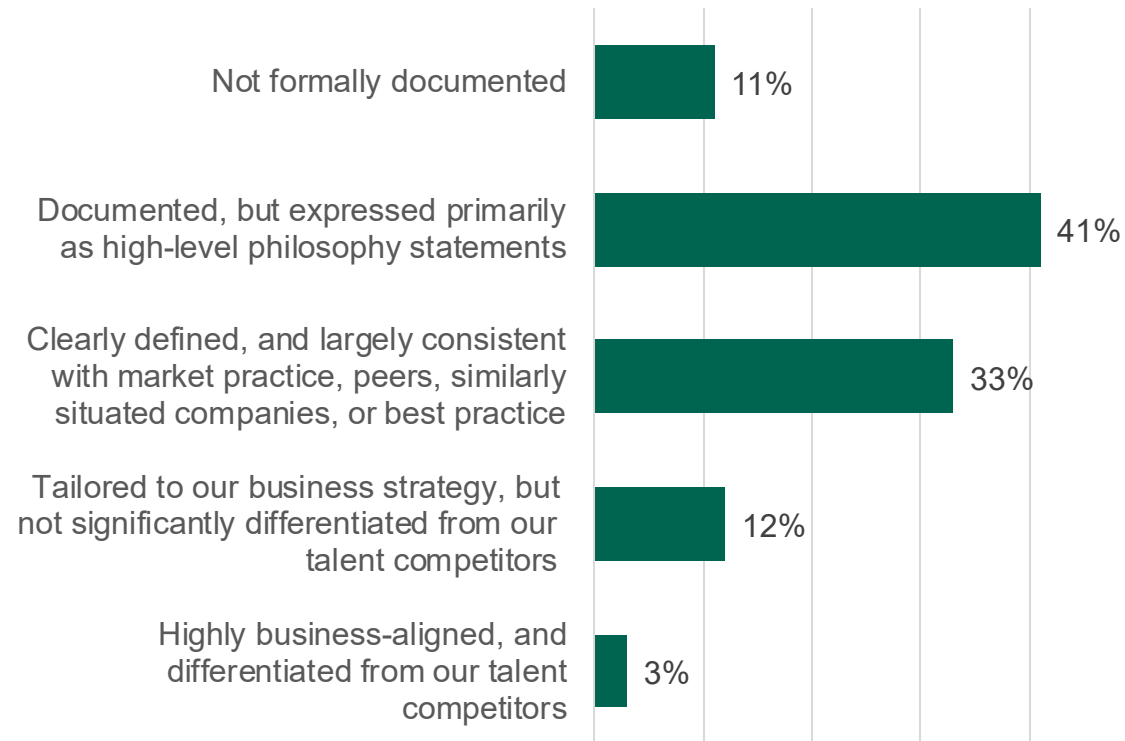
Note that in many markets, there are statutorily required minimum increases that must be provided, and these are reflected in the above forecasts where appropriate.



REWARD STRATEGY

REWARD STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

OUR OVERALL REWARD STRATEGY IS:



FINDINGS

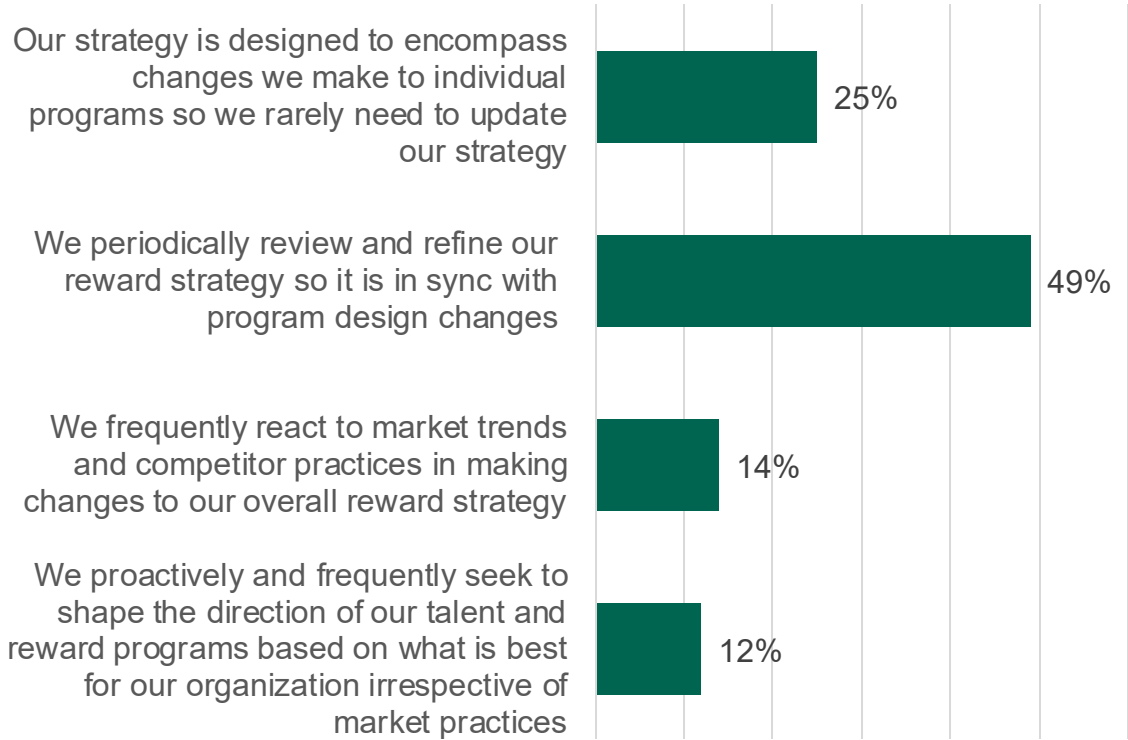
A strong majority of reward strategies **(74%)** are seen as statements of high-level philosophies or as highly consistent with common/best market practices.

Only **15%** of reward strategies are seen as tailored to the unique needs of the organization.

And a meager **3%** are seen as tailored to business strategy and differentiated from competitors.

REWARD STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PROACTIVITY IN UPDATING ITS REWARD STRATEGY:



FINDINGS

A strong majority (**75%**) of organizations revisit their reward strategies periodically in response to external market trends or internally driven needs.

Only **12%** of organizations take a proactive, internally-driven approach to changing reward strategy.

REWARD STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

WHAT IS THE EXTERNAL PERCEPTION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S REWARDS STRATEGY?



FINDINGS

The vast majority of organizations (**86%**) either do not actively share their reward strategy externally or the strategy is not well known externally.

Only **6%** of organizations report that their reward strategy is well known externally and well differentiated in the market.

REWARD STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES HOW PEOPLE MANAGERS PERCEIVE OUR REWARDS STRATEGY?



FINDINGS

Only **17%** of organizations report that people managers believe that the reward strategy is tailored to business and talent priorities.

Relatively few organizations (**8%**) say that people managers agree that the reward strategy is effectively communicated and understood.

REWARD STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR MOST RECENT ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S REWARD STRATEGY?



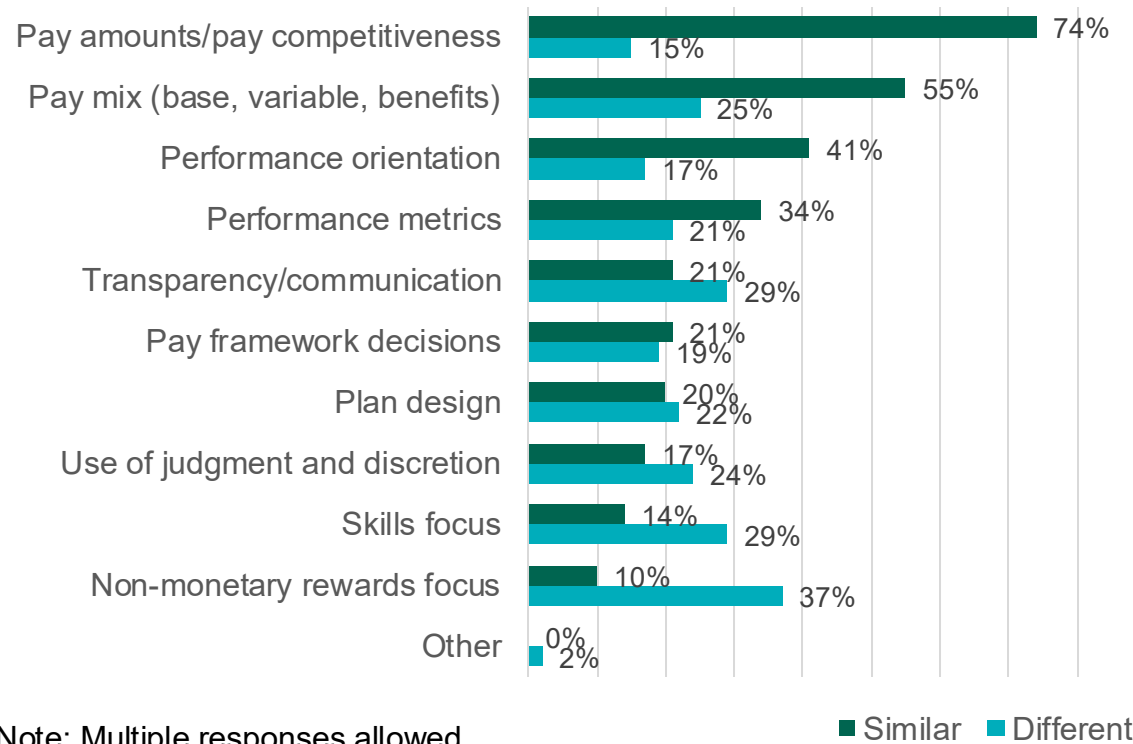
FINDINGS

A majority of organizations (**56%**) do not assess the effectiveness of its reward strategy.

Of those who do, there is a focus on assessing the reward strategy across the enterprise versus select critical areas of the organization.

REWARD STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

WHICH AREAS DO YOU BELIEVE ARE MOST SIMILAR AND MOST DIFFERENT FROM YOUR PEERS IN TERMS OF YOUR REWARDS STRATEGY? (SELECT UP TO 4)



Note: Multiple responses allowed

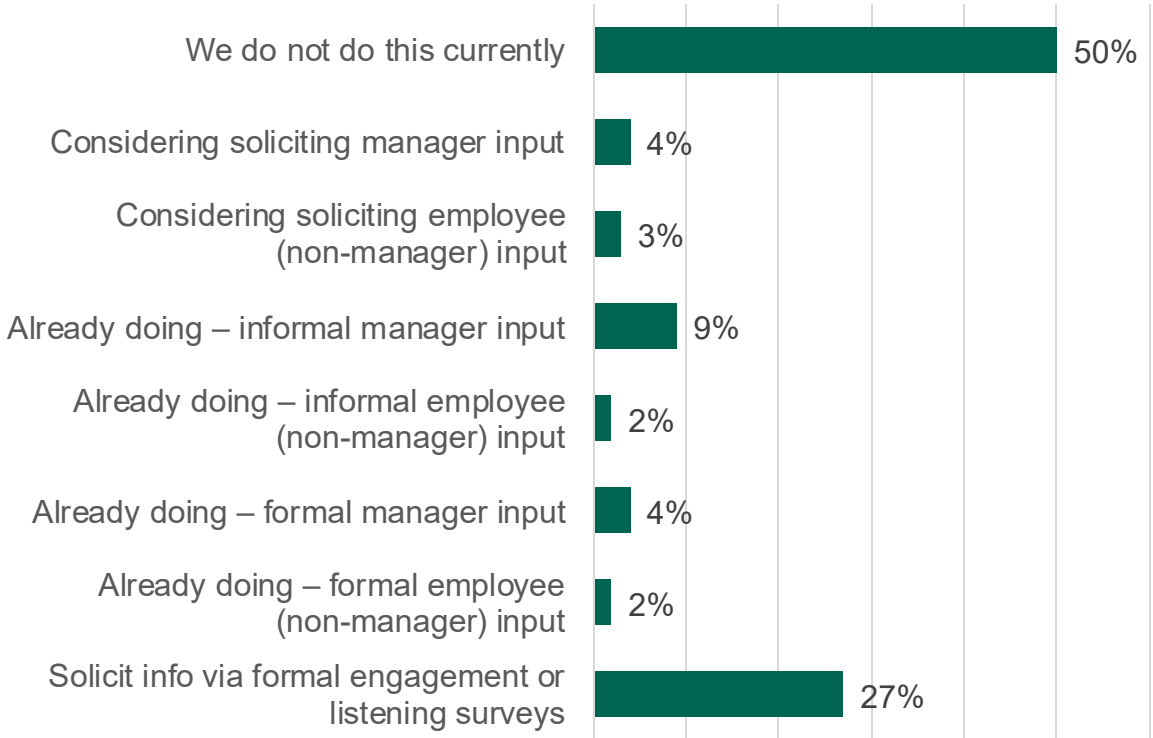
FINDINGS

A majority of organizations do not appreciably differentiate the total amount of pay or pay mix relative to their peers.

There is much more variability in where organizations say they do differentiate rewards from peers—with non-monetary rewards, pay transparency/communications, and a focus on skills being the most common areas identified.

REWARD STRATEGY COMMUNICATION

HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION INVOLVE EMPLOYEES BELOW THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL IN PROVIDING INPUT INTO DIRECTLY SHAPING THE REWARDS STRATEGY?



FINDINGS

In most organizations, employees are considered to be the most important stakeholder of the reward program.

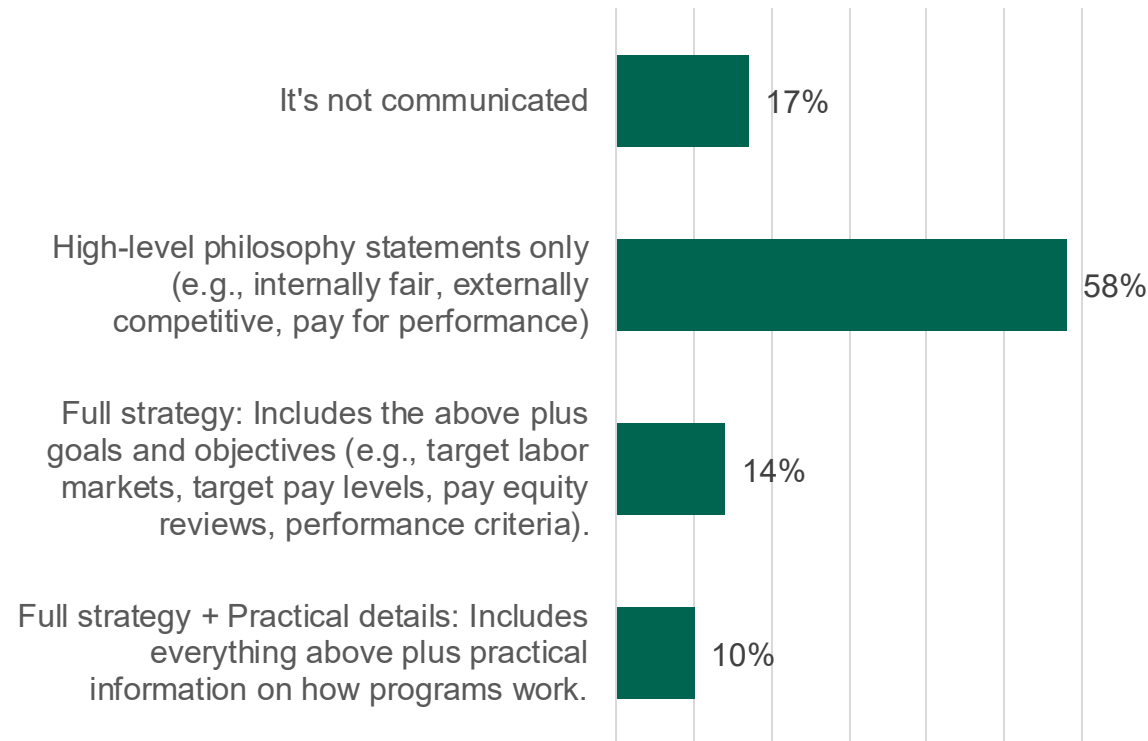
However, only **50%** of organizations involve employee input into directly shaping the reward strategy.

Of those who do, the most common practice is via employee engagement surveys at **27%** followed by informal input from managers.



REWARD STRATEGY COMMUNICATION

WHAT INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION'S REWARD STRATEGY IS COMMUNICATED TO EMPLOYEES?



FINDINGS

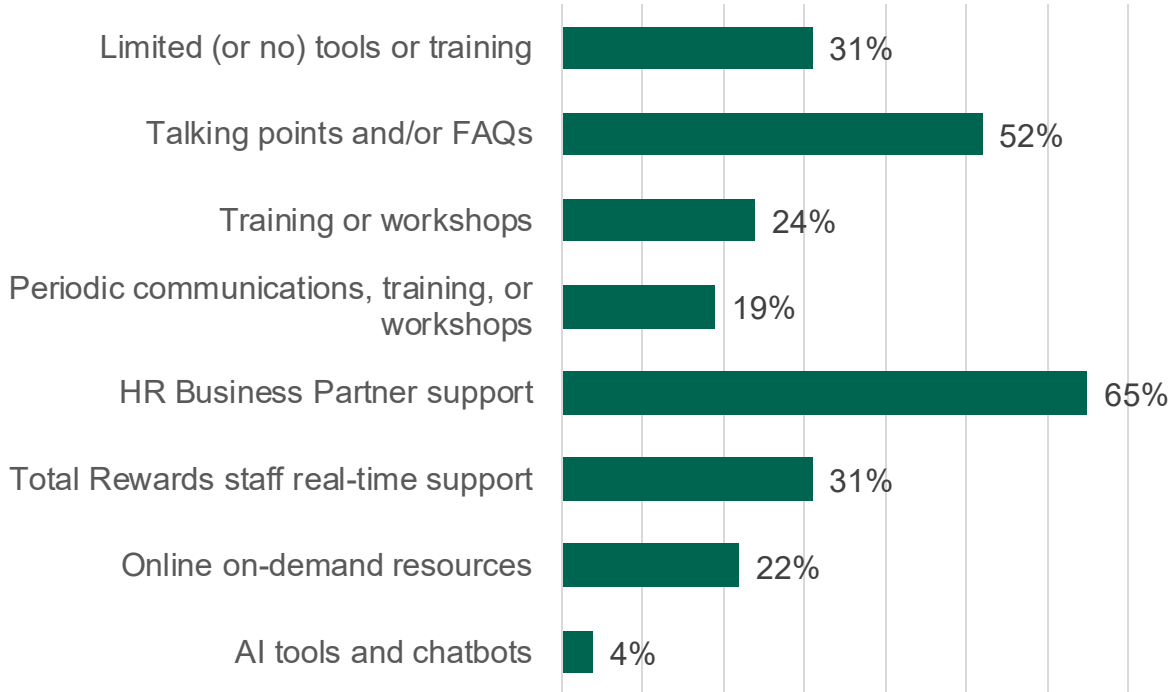
A strong majority of organizations (**76%**) report that they either do not communicate their reward strategy or only communicate high level/general philosophy statements.

Only **24%** of organizations provide meaningful detail behind the what, why, and how of their reward program strategy to employees.

This begs a question as to the effectiveness of the content being communicated to employees.

REWARD STRATEGY COMMUNICATION

WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE FOR MANAGERS TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT REWARDS?



Note: Multiple responses allowed

FINDINGS

The most common forms of support provided to managers to communicate about the organization’s reward programs include support from HRBPs and talking points/FAQs followed by total rewards staff support.

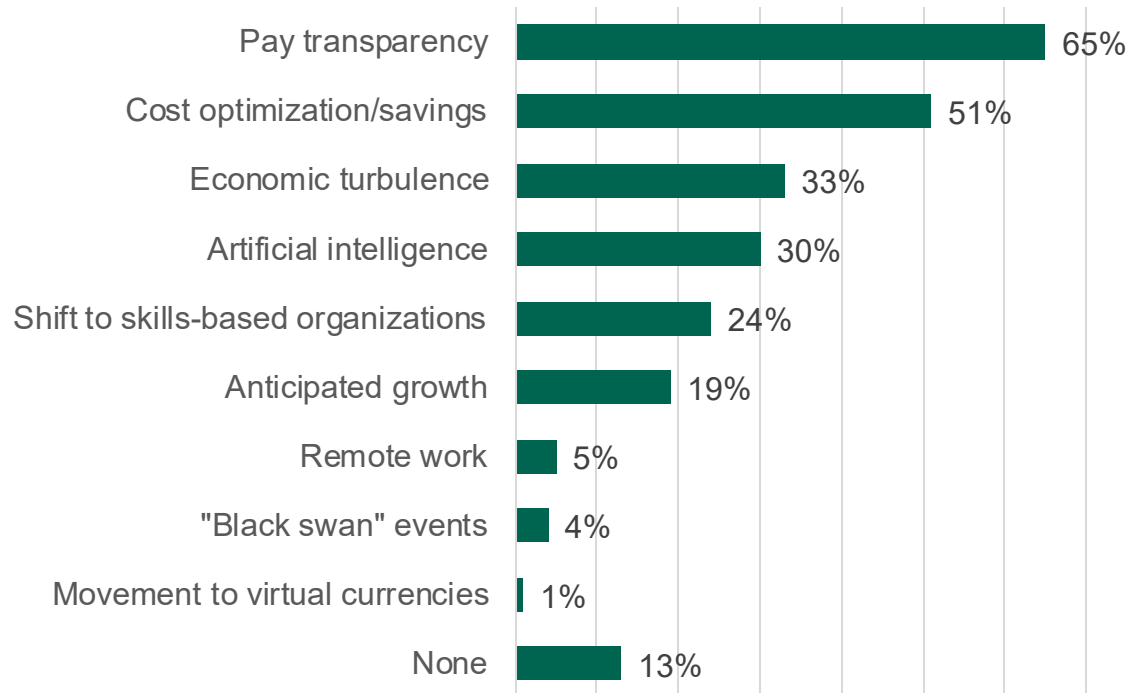
A high percentage of organizations (**31%**) provide limited or no communications tools or training to managers related to the reward strategy.

AI tools and chatbots are in their infancy in most organizations.



REWARD STRATEGY FUTURE IMPACTS

WHAT MAJOR AREAS OF CHANGE WILL CAUSE SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS IN YOUR REWARDS STRATEGY IN THE NEXT 12-24 MONTHS? (SELECT UP TO 4)



Note: Multiple responses allowed

FINDINGS

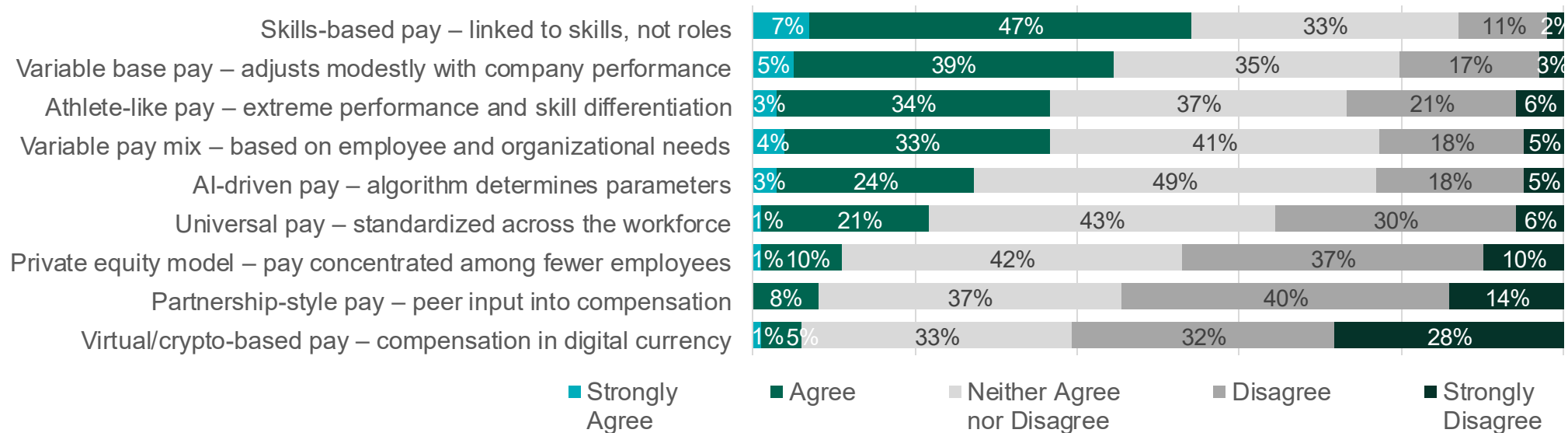
The primary external factor causing disruption in reward strategies over the next 2 years is pay transparency. This is largely driven from the emerging regulatory landscape in both NA and EU, which is impacting organizations operating globally. This disruption is causing organizations to revisit many facets of their reward programs—including reward strategy, design, governance, and communications.

Labor cost pressures and achieving a better ROI in reward investments is the second major focus area reported.



REWARD STRATEGY FUTURE IMPACTS

WHICH FUTURE MODELS COULD IMPACT REWARDS STRATEGIES IN THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS?

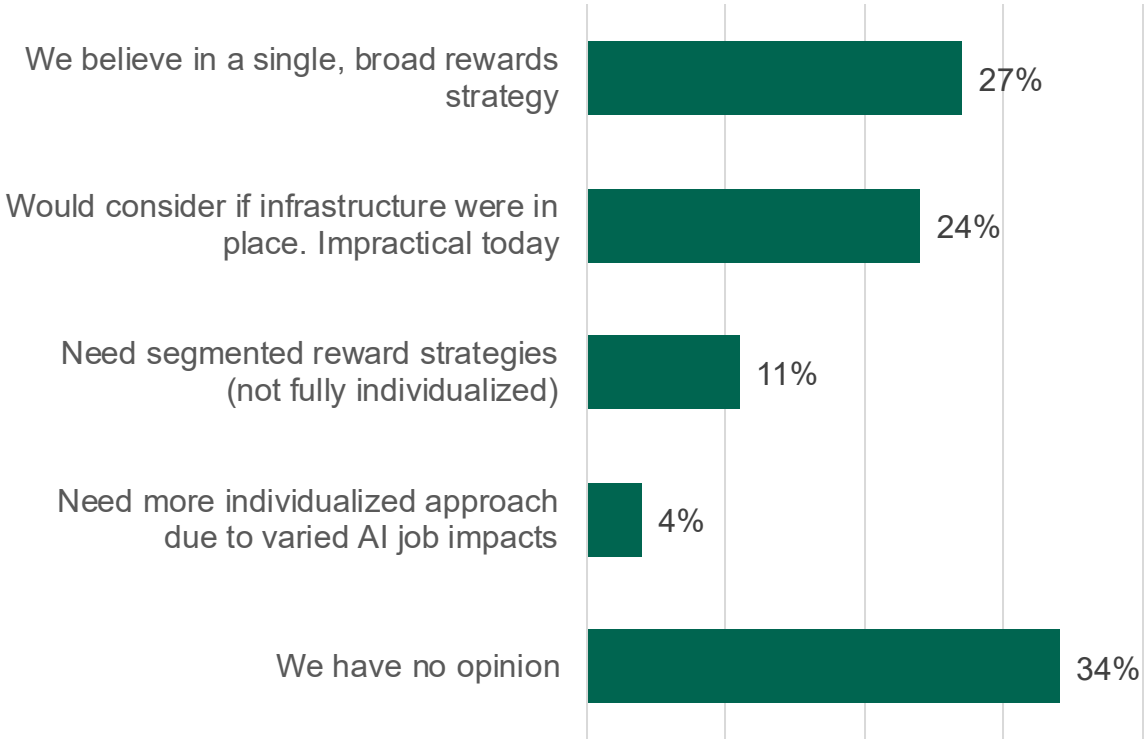


FINDINGS

- Skills-based pay and performance-based pay are the most likely emerging future pay models.
- Fixed pay may well become a smaller share of total compensation given focus on skills and individual performance.
- Future performance-based models are balanced between organization and individual performance
- Pay-mix segmentation could increase based on personas driven by organization and employee needs and preferences.

REWARD STRATEGY FUTURE IMPACTS

WOULD YOU CONSIDER MORE INDIVIDUALIZED REWARDS FOR EMPLOYEES VIA A MORE FLEXIBLE REWARDS STRATEGY?



FINDINGS

The vast majority of organizations **(85%)** either have no opinion or desire for reward programs tailored to the individuals or segments of employees.

This indicates the lack of perceived business benefit relative to the resource investment in managing this.

REWARD STRATEGY IMPACT OF AI

REGARDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI), IN WHICH AREAS WILL IT HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION SHAPE ITS FUTURE TOTAL REWARDS STRATEGY?



Note: Multiple responses allowed

FINDINGS

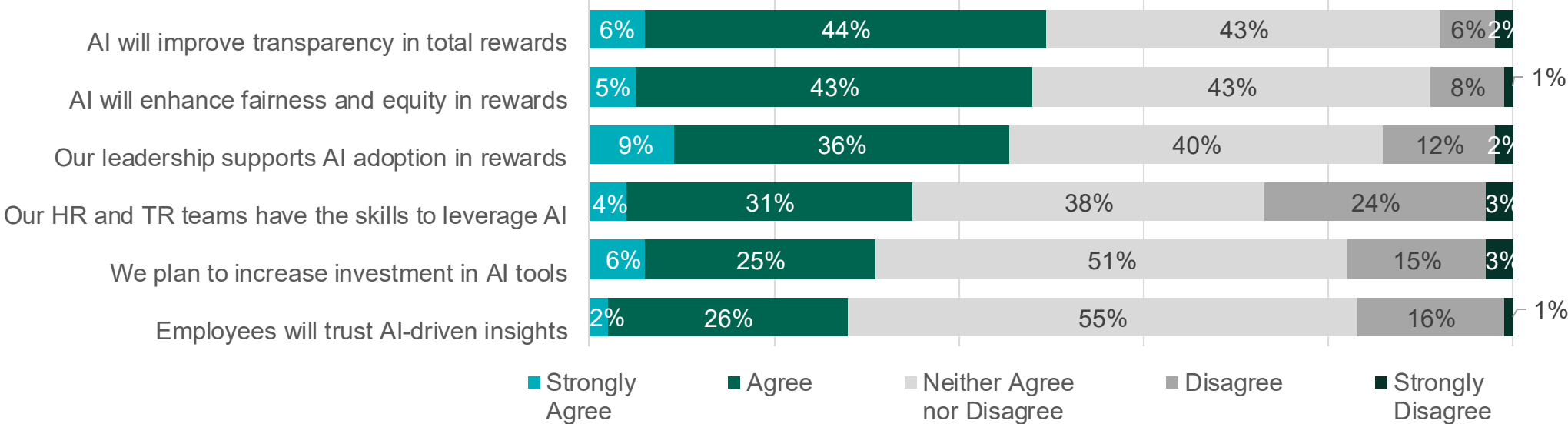
There are a range of focus areas identified where organizations see AI impacting reward processes.

Reward benchmarking, reward communications, and integrating data across platforms are the 3 primary focus areas identified.

Personalized/customized reward strategies based on employee segmentation are not current priorities.

REWARD STRATEGY IMPACT OF AI

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS RELATED TO AI AND YOUR TOTAL REWARDS STRATEGY?



FINDINGS

- AI is seen to be an enabler in more transparent reward communication processes as well as in improving pay equity.
- However, there is work to be done on equipping HR with the skills to be effective in using AI to support reward management.
- Future increases in AI investment may have plateaued—as organizations seek to achieve an ROI on investments to date.
- There is skepticism on the credibility of AI-driven insights from the employee’s perspective.

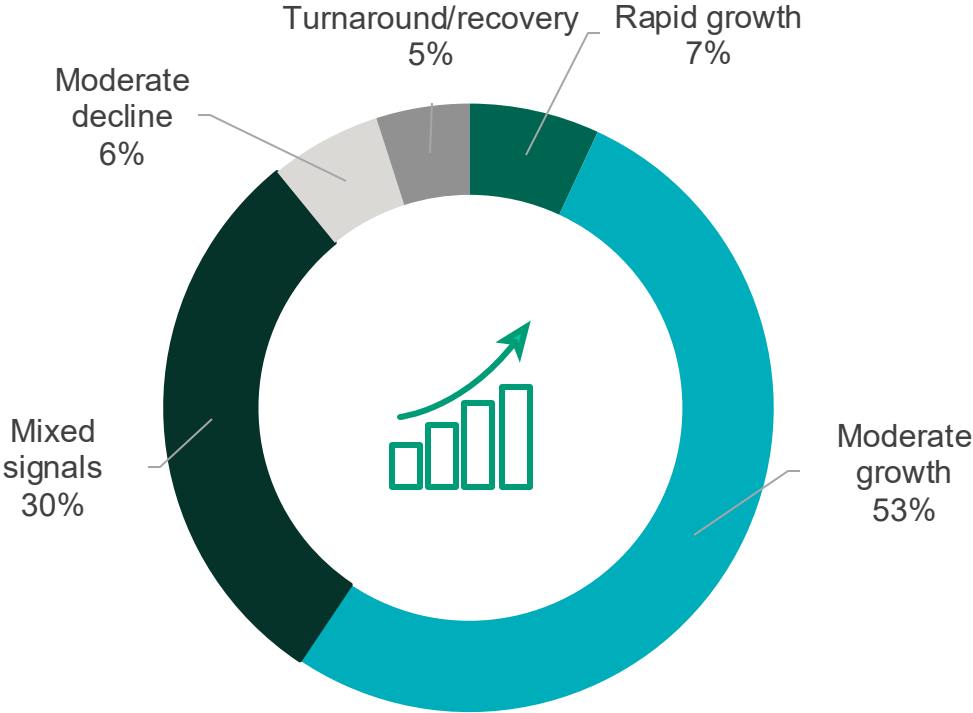


BUSINESS OUTLOOK



BUSINESS OUTLOOK GROWTH PROSPECTS

CURRENT BUSINESS PROSPECTS FOR THE ORGANIZATION



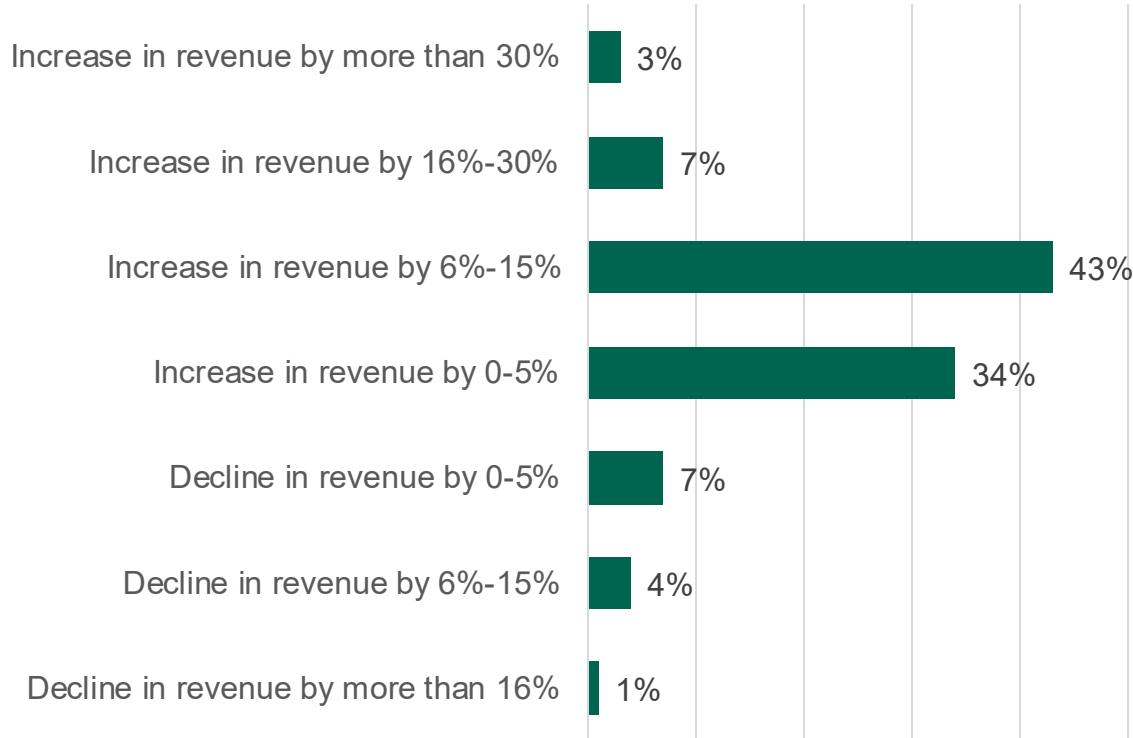
FINDINGS

60% of organizations report that they anticipate moderate-to-rapid growth in 2025.

The global business outlook is expected to be moderate but improving, driven by easing inflation, gradual interest-rate normalization, and more stable macroeconomic conditions.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK REVENUE FORECAST

EXPECTED BUSINESS OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS



FINDINGS

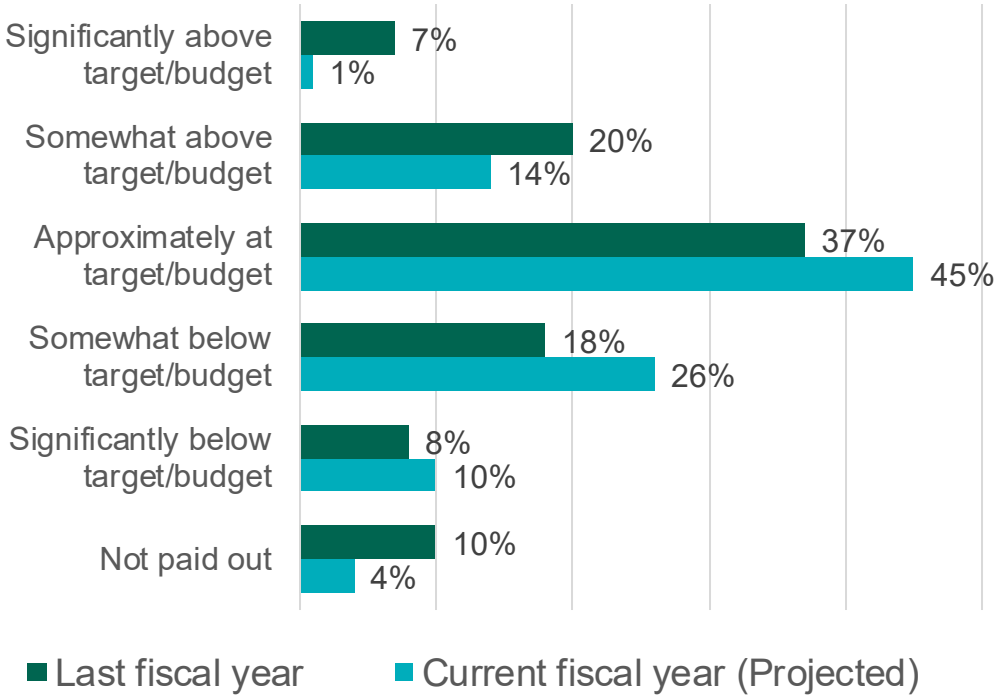
87% of organizations report that they anticipate revenue growth in the next year.

53% of organizations report anticipated revenue growth of 6% or more in the next year.

Technology investment, particularly AI, automation, and digital infrastructure, remains a major growth engine, boosting productivity and capital spending. Regional growth in emerging markets also support growth despite lingering geopolitical and trade uncertainties.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK INCENTIVE PAYOUTS

BONUS PAYMENT RELATIVE TO THE TARGET BONUS



Respondents unsure about this year's payment were not included in the above chart.

FINDINGS

64% of organizations paid bonuses/incentives comparable to or above the target in the previous fiscal year, while **60%** anticipate paying bonuses/incentives comparable to or above the target this fiscal year.

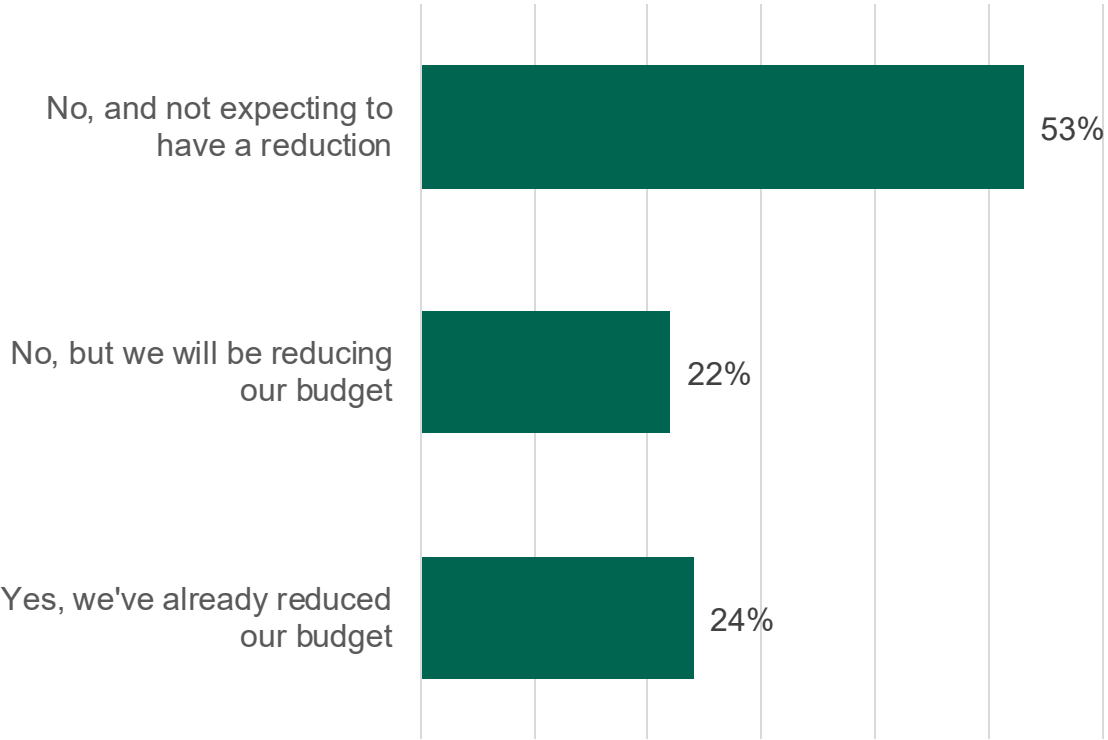
These results indicate a slight decrease in optimism about expected payments for this fiscal year, compared to 70% in the July 2025 survey.



BUSINESS OUTLOOK

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY IMPACT

HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION REDUCED ITS TOTAL REWARDS BUDGET DUE TO THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT?



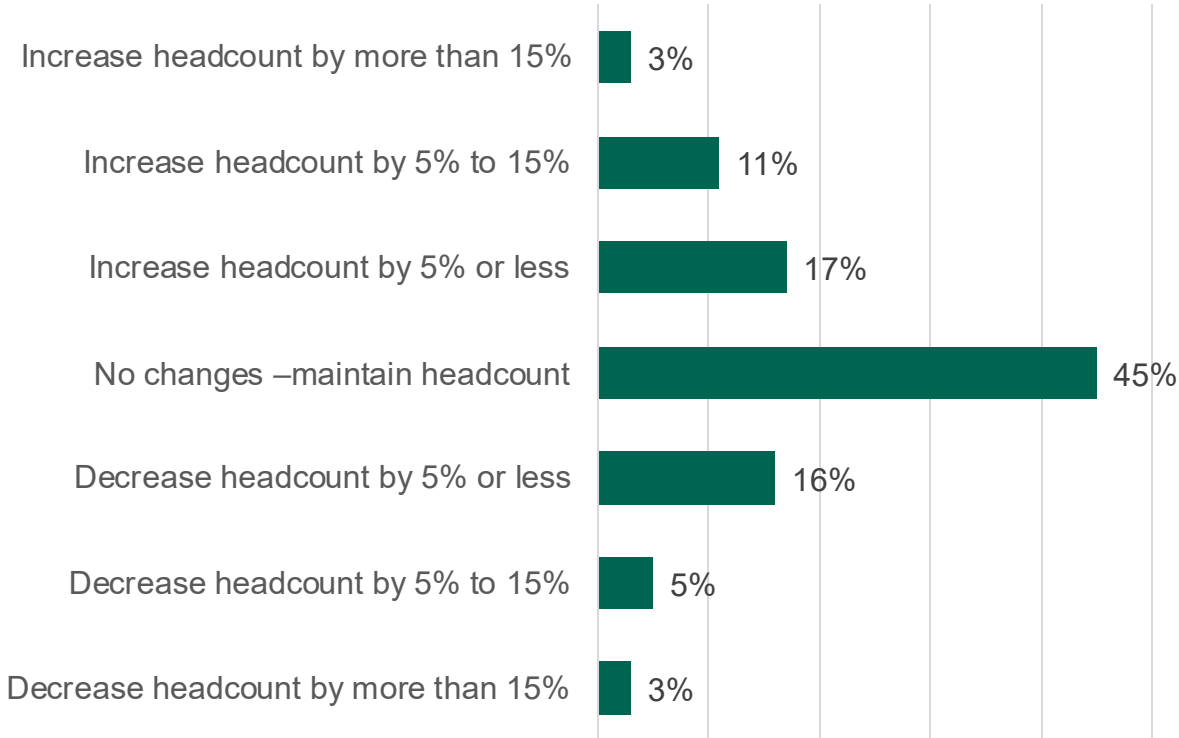
FINDINGS

Organizations are generally split between those expecting a decrease in their total rewards budget versus those maintaining or increasing their budget.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

PLANNED CHANGES TO EMPLOYEE HEADCOUNT IN 2026



FINDINGS

A strong majority of organizations (**78%**) anticipate 2026 employee headcounts to be within +/- 5% of 2025 levels.

There is a slight skew in organizations reporting increases in headcount versus those decreasing headcounts.

This also correlates with a positive skew as previously noted in topline revenue growth.

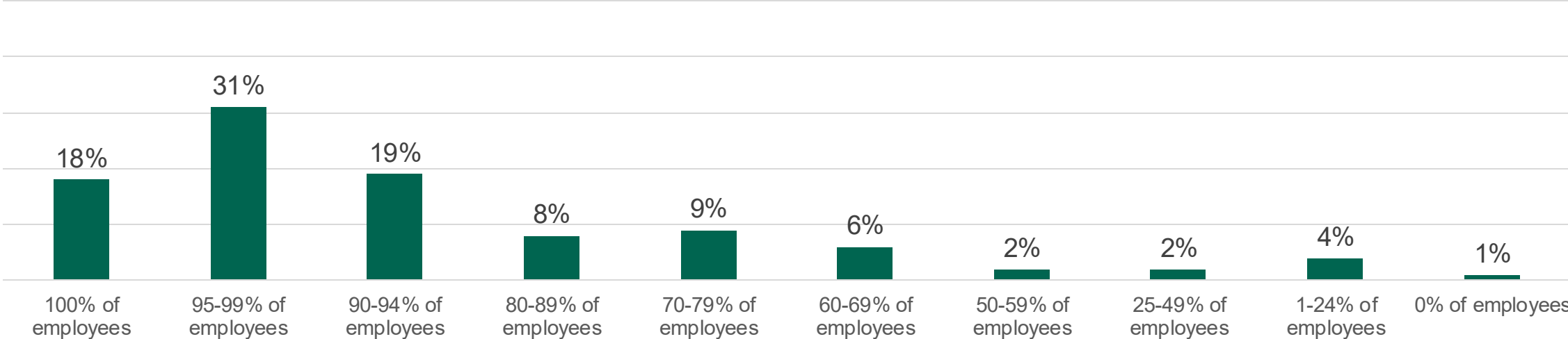
TOTAL SALARY INCREASES 2025



SALARY INCREASE

2025 BASE SALARY INCREASE

% OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING SALARY INCREASES IN 2025



Globally, annual salary increases are received by most employees in a majority of organizations. **49%** of organizations will provide increases to at least 95% of its employees. **76%** of organizations will provide increases to at least 80% of its employees. These participation rates are in line with our previous forecast (July 25), when **79%** of organizations reported providing increases to 80% of employees.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Algeria	6.4	5.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	6.5
Argentina	24.0	24.3	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0
Australia	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Austria	3.5	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.6
Bangladesh	7.2	5.8	7.2	7.1	7.6	7.6
Belgium	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.5
Brazil	5.3	6.3	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.3
Bulgaria	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.5	5.3
Canada	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.5
Chile	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
China	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Colombia	6.0	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.2
Costa Rica	3.9	3.6	4.5	3.7	3.7	3.7
Croatia	4.3	4.6	4.4	4.0	4.4	4.4
Czech Republic	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Denmark	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.3
Dominican Republic	4.9	4.4	-	4.9	4.9	-
Ecuador	3.0	3.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Egypt	17.5	18.3	17.3	17.5	18.0	17.0
El Salvador	3.5	3.8	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.3
Finland	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
France	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0
Germany	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4
Greece	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4
Guatemala	5.0	4.4	5.0	4.8	4.8	4.5
Hong Kong, China	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.5
Hungary	7.0	6.6	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.0
India	9.0	8.7	8.7	9.0	9.0	9.0
Indonesia	6.0	5.7	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Ireland	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Israel	3.7	3.5	-	3.6	-	-
Italy	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.1
Japan	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Jordan	4.4	6.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3
Kazakhstan	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.3
Kenya	5.7	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.4	6.5
Latvia	4.0	3.8	-	4.0	-	-
Lithuania	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Luxembourg	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Macau, China	3.0	2.7	-	-	3.3	3.3
Malaysia	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Mexico	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5
Morocco	4.2	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1
Netherlands	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
New Zealand	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Nigeria	13.2	18.9	-	14.1	-	-
Norway	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9
Pakistan	12.0	11.3	11.0	12.0	12.0	12.0
Panama	3.5	3.4	-	3.5	3.5	3.5
Peru	4.7	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7
Philippines	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Poland	6.0	5.7	5.8	6.0	6.0	6.0
Portugal	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.4
Qatar	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.6	4.0	4.0
Romania	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.0	6.0	7.0
Saudi Arabia	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1
Serbia	5.6	6.3	-	5.3	5.8	5.3
Singapore	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Slovakia	5.0	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
South Africa	5.6	5.3	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.7

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
South Korea	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
Spain	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Sweden	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.3
Switzerland	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.0
Taiwan, China	3.9	4.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
Thailand	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.8
Ukraine	10.5	11.2	10.0	10.2	11.0	12.0
United Arab Emirates	4.0	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
United Kingdom	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
United States of America	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Vietnam	6.8	7.4	6.7	6.5	7.0	7.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.



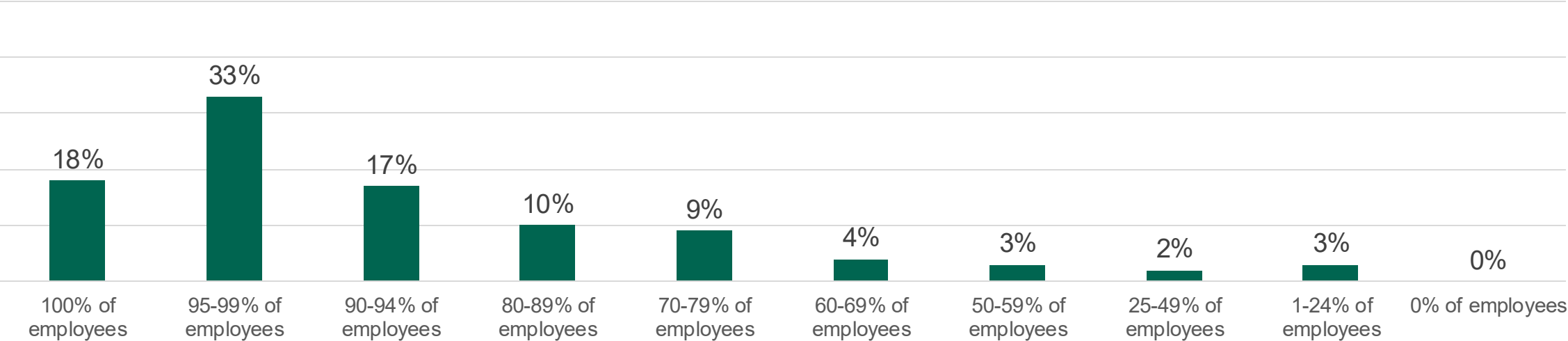
TOTAL SALARY INCREASES 2026



SALARY INCREASE

2026 BASE SALARY INCREASE FORECASTS

% OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING SALARY INCREASES IN 2026



Globally, annual salary increases will be received by most employees in a majority of organizations. **51%** of organizations will provide increases to at least 95% of its employees. **78%** of organizations will provide increases to at least 80% of its employees. This is also generally aligned with the distribution of employees receiving salary increases in 2025.

SALARY INCREASE 2026

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Australia	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Argentina	20.0	20.8	20.5	20.0	20.0	20.0
Austria	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Bangladesh	7.9	7.0	8.0	7.9	7.9	-
Belgium	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.2
Brazil	5.2	5.6	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.0
Bulgaria	5.8	5.4	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.6
Canada	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.4
Chile	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.8	5.0	4.8
China	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Colombia	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	6.0
Costa Rica	4.2	3.5	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.1
Croatia	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.5
Czech Republic	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Denmark	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2026

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Ecuador	3.0	3.0	-	3.0	3.0	2.9
Egypt	17.0	16.6	17.5	17.0	17.0	17.0
Finland	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
France	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Germany	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2
Greece	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Guatemala	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0
Hong Kong, China	4.0	3.6	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Hungary	6.3	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.3	7.0
India	9.0	8.6	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
Indonesia	6.1	5.8	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Ireland	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Italy	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1
Japan	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2
Jordan	4.5	4.8	-	4.6	-	-

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.



SALARY INCREASE 2026

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Kazakhstan	9.0	8.4	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
Kenya	6.3	5.8	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.3
Latvia	4.5	4.3	-	4.5	-	-
Lithuania	5.0	5.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.1
Luxembourg	2.8	2.7	-	2.8	2.8	2.8
Malaysia	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Mexico	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.3
Morocco	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Netherlands	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8
New Zealand	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Norway	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Pakistan	12.0	12.7	-	12.0	12.0	-
Panama	3.0	3.2	-	3.3	3.3	3.3
Peru	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4
Philippines	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.



SALARY INCREASE 2026

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Poland	5.5	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Portugal	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Romania	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Saudi Arabia	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Serbia	5.5	5.5	-	5.6	5.5	5.5
Singapore	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Slovakia	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
South Africa	5.7	5.4	6.0	5.7	5.7	5.7
South Korea	4.3	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
Spain	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0
Sweden	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.1
Switzerland	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Taiwan, China	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Thailand	4.9	5.3	4.7	4.8	5.0	5.0
Ukraine	10.0	11.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	11.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2026

TOTAL SALARY INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
United Arab Emirates	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
United Kingdom	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
United States of America	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Vietnam	7.0	6.7	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.



PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

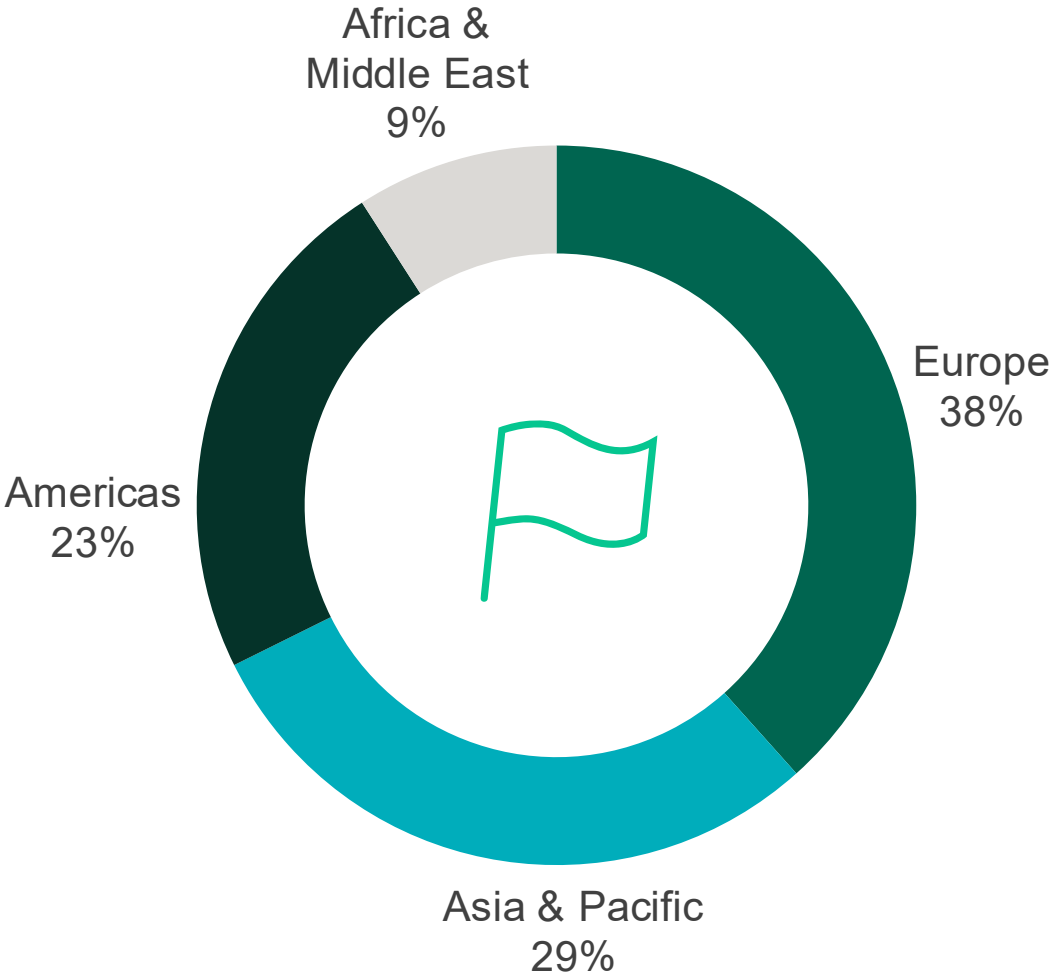


PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW GEOGRAPHY

This report reflects responses from 7,936 participants in 144 countries.

Organizations span a broad range of geographies, industries, size, and ownership structures.

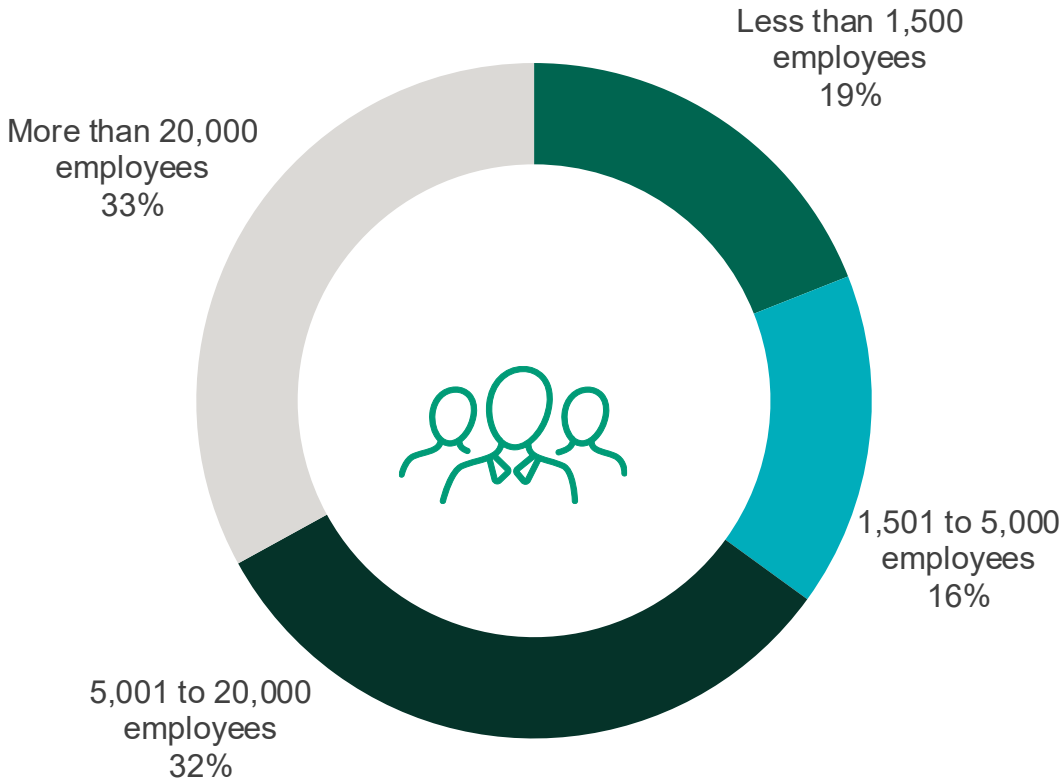
Respondents are primarily from the human resources function with most respondents being total rewards practitioners, HR business partners, and HR leaders.



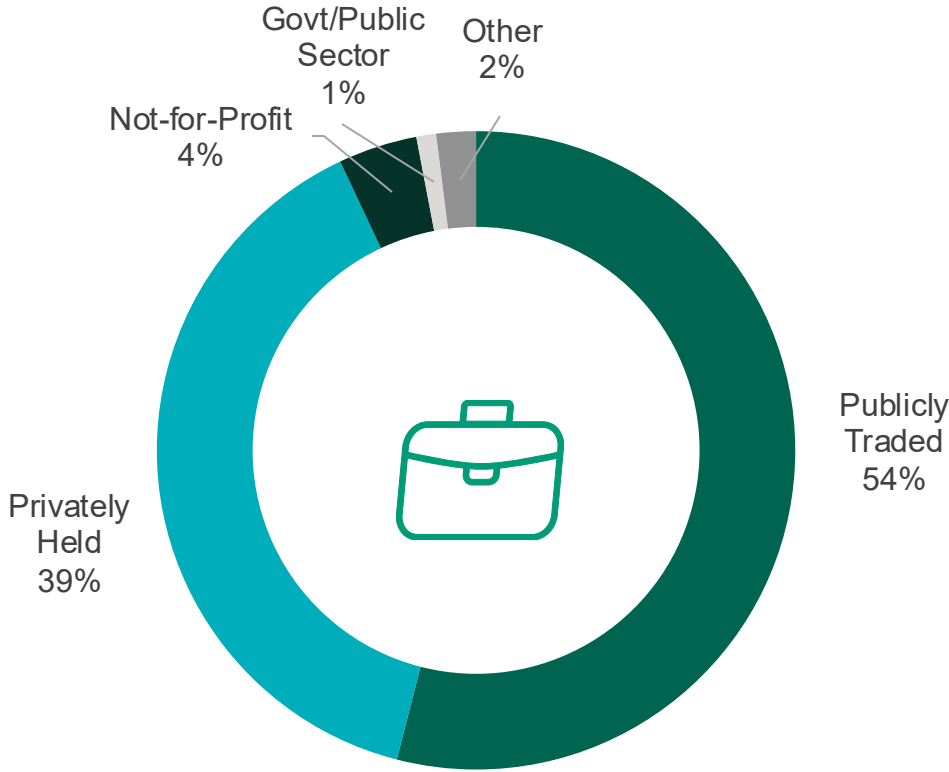
PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

SIZE OF ORGANIZATION

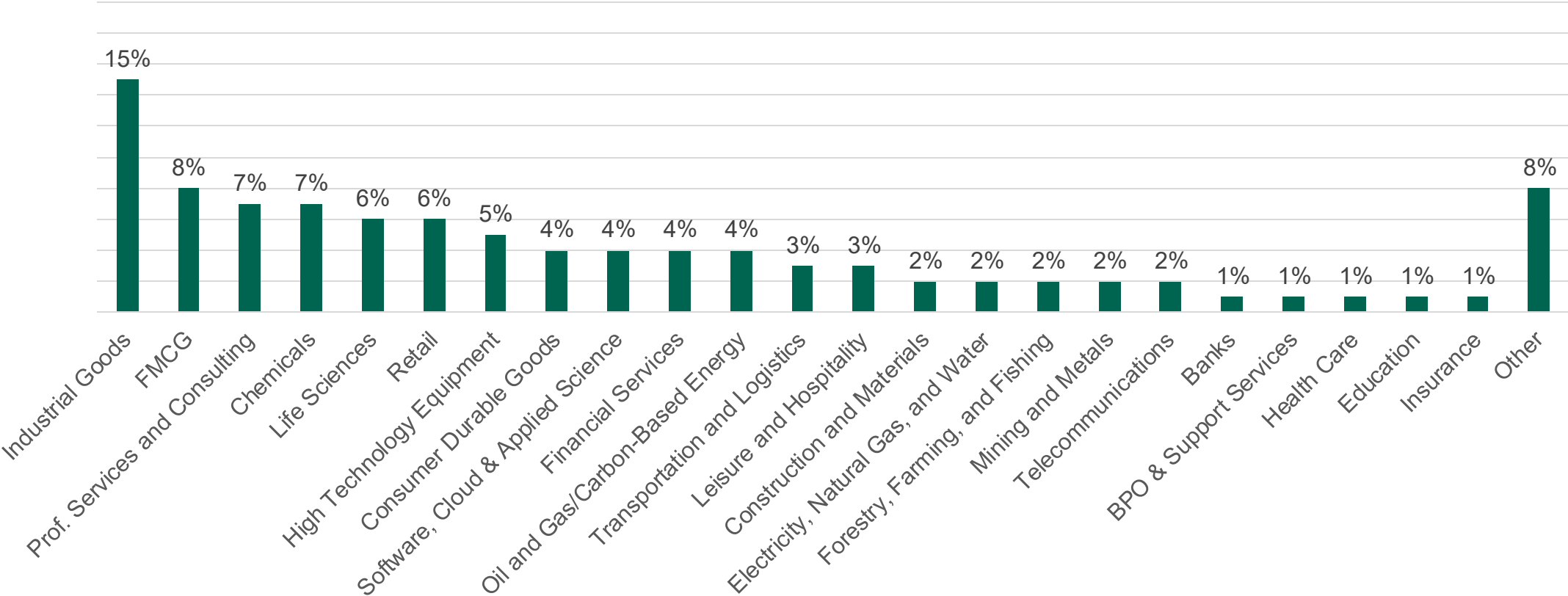
BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (GLOBALLY)



BY OWNERSHIP TYPE



PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW BY INDUSTRY



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LET US BE PART OF YOUR SUCCESS STORY

At Korn Ferry, we help you design total rewards programs that attract, engage, and retain the talent you need—backed by data, deep expertise, and a global lens. Our approach aligns your rewards strategy with business goals and employee expectations, so you can deliver lasting impact. With practical solutions and human-centered insights, we support smarter decisions every step of the way.

KORN FERRY PAY

An all-in-one platform to help you benchmark, design, and manage competitive pay strategies backed by real-time market insights and analytics.

PAY TRANSPARENCY IN THE WORKPLACE

A practical guide to help you navigate increasing pay transparency expectations while strengthening trust, compliance, and organizational clarity.

KORN FERRY PAY EQUITY

A data-driven solution to help you identify, understand, and close pay gaps—supporting fair, equitable compensation decisions across your organization.

PREVIOUS PULSE SURVEY ON EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Released in August 2025, a timely snapshot to help you understand trends and challenges in executive compensation.

READY FOR MORE?

Let's connect. Speak with a Korn Ferry expert.

APPENDIX

COST OF LIVING / LEGALLY REQUIRED INCREASES 2025

SALARY INCREASE 2025

COST OF LIVING / LEGALLY REQUIRED INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Australia	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Belgium	2.0	3.5	-	3.0	2.8	-
Brazil	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Canada	3.0	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0
Chile	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
China	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.0
Hungary	5.0	5.7	4.5	4.9	5.0	6.8
India	9.0	7.7	8.0	9.0	9.0	8.5
Mexico	4.0	4.4	-	-	4.2	-
New Zealand	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.5	3.0
United Kingdom	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
United States of America	3.0	2.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.



MERIT INCREASES 2025

SALARY INCREASE 2025

MERIT INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Argentina	3.0	8.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
Australia	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.3
Austria	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Belgium	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5
Brazil	3.8	4.6	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.0
Canada	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Chile	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
China	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5
Colombia	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.2	4.3
Czech Republic	5.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	4.8	5.0
Denmark	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3
Egypt	18.3	15.6	19.5	17.1	18.4	17.7
Finland	3.0	2.4	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0
France	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.6
Germany	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.3

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

MERIT INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Hong Kong, China	3.3	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.2
Hungary	6.0	5.1	5.3	5.8	6.0	6.2
India	9.0	8.4	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.0
Indonesia	5.7	5.5	6.0	6.2	5.9	5.7
Ireland	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6
Italy	2.6	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.4
Japan	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Malaysia	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.5
Mexico	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.0	5.1
Netherlands	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.3
New Zealand	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Norway	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8
Peru	4.0	5.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	-
Philippines	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.5
Poland	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

MERIT INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Portugal	3.4	3.4	-	3.4	3.4	3.4
Romania	6.8	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.8	7.2
Saudi Arabia	3.8	3.0	3.0	3.8	3.8	3.9
Singapore	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7
South Africa	5.3	5.2	-	5.2	5.2	-
South Korea	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Spain	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Sweden	3.3	2.9	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Switzerland	2.5	2.1	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.1
Taiwan, China	3.3	7.2	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.3
Thailand	4.5	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.5	4.7
United Arab Emirates	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9
United Kingdom	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
United States of America	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0
Vietnam	6.5	6.0	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

PROMOTION INCREASES 2025

SALARY INCREASE 2025

PROMOTION INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Argentina	5.0	11.2	-	5.0	10.0	-
Australia	1.0	3.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Belgium	0.9	1.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.7
Brazil	3.0	6.8	1.4	2.5	4.3	4.0
Canada	1.0	2.5	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.8
China	1.0	4.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
Colombia	1.9	11.1	-	3.5	-	-
Egypt	5.0	8.4	6.5	5.0	5.0	5.0
France	0.9	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8
Germany	1.0	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hong Kong, China	1.0	4.7	1.0	1.5	1.8	1.8
Hungary	1.5	4.8	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.3
India	5.0	6.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Italy	1.0	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	-
Japan	1.0	2.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2025

PROMOTION INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Mexico	1.0	6.5	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.0
Netherlands	1.0	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
New Zealand	1.0	1.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	-
Philippines	2.0	4.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	-
Singapore	1.0	4.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0
South Korea	1.0	1.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Spain	1.0	2.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	-
Thailand	1.0	4.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
United Arab Emirates	1.0	2.7	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0
United Kingdom	1.0	2.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
United States of America	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.





**COST OF LIVING /
LEGALLY REQUIRED
INCREASES
2026**

SALARY INCREASE 2026

COST OF LIVING / LEGALLY REQUIRED INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Australia	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5
Belgium	2.0	2.1	-	2.0	-	-
Brazil	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Chile	3.4	3.7	-	3.4	3.4	-
China	2.0	1.8	2.0	-	-	-
Hungary	5.0	4.6	5.0	4.7	4.3	5.0
India	8.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	8.0	-
United States of America	3.0	2.1	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.





**MERIT
INCREASES
2026**

SALARY INCREASE 2026

MERIT INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Argentina	3.5	6.8	3.0	5.0	3.0	4.0
Australia	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Austria	3.5	3.1	3.5	3.5	3.5	-
Belgium	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Brazil	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Canada	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Chile	2.5	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0
China	4.5	4.4	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5
Colombia	5.0	5.0	-	-	5.0	5.0
Czech Republic	5.0	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Denmark	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2
Egypt	17.0	16.4	17.0	17.0	17.0	17.0
Finland	3.0	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.0	-
France	3.0	2.6	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.7
Germany	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.0

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.



SALARY INCREASE 2026

MERIT INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Hong Kong, China	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5
Hungary	6.0	5.3	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.7
India	9.0	8.5	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.1
Indonesia	6.0	5.3	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Ireland	3.0	3.1	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0
Italy	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.7
Japan	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Malaysia	5.0	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Mexico	5.0	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.2
Netherlands	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
New Zealand	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.0
Norway	3.5	3.4	-	3.5	3.5	-
Peru	4.0	4.0	-	-	4.0	-
Philippines	5.0	5.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Poland	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.5

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2026

MERIT INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Portugal	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	-
Romania	6.0	5.6	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Saudi Arabia	4.0	4.1	-	4.0	4.0	-
Singapore	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.8
South Korea	4.0	3.3	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.0
Spain	3.0	2.5	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.5
Sweden	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Switzerland	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0
Taiwan, China	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
Thailand	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.7
United Arab Emirates	3.9	3.4	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
United Kingdom	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.3
United States of America	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Vietnam	6.9	6.1	6.9	6.7	6.9	6.9

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

PROMOTION INCREASES 2026

SALARY INCREASE 2026

PROMOTION INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Australia	1.0	3.3	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.8
Belgium	0.8	1.2	-	0.8	0.6	-
Brazil	2.0	4.8	1.3	1.3	2.0	2.0
Canada	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.5
China	1.0	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Egypt	5.0	6.0	-	5.0	5.0	-
France	0.5	1.6	-	0.5	0.5	-
Hong Kong, China	1.0	4.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hungary	1.0	4.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
India	8.5	8.0	8.5	8.5	8.7	6.8
Japan	0.9	3.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	-
Mexico	1.0	5.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5
Netherlands	0.8	2.1	-	0.8	0.8	0.8
Singapore	1.4	3.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3
South Korea	0.8	2.1	-	0.8	0.8	-

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.

SALARY INCREASE 2026

PROMOTION INCREASES

Country	All Employees		Median Increase (%) by Employee Group			
	Med. (%)	Avg. (%)	Executive/ Senior Management	Middle Management/ Seasoned Professional	Supervisory/ Junior Professional	Clerical/ Operations
Thailand	1.0	3.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
United Kingdom	0.8	1.6	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8
United States of America	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.8
Vietnam	1.0	2.6	-	0.9	0.9	-

Data reported for countries with a minimum of 12 participants.



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RESEARCH REPORT

