Labour Market Barometer

20th Edition

April 2026

Gi Group HOLDING

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EDITION'S PARTNERS:

FEDERACJA PRZEDSIĘBIORCÓW POLSKICH

Polskie Forum HR

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Introduction

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Today's labour market remains an area of intense change and constant adaptation to ever-shifting circumstances. Companies now have to operate in conditions that require them to balance multiple goals at once: maintaining competitiveness, controlling costs, ensuring operational continuity, and building organizations resilient enough to withstand an increasingly volatile environment. In such circumstances, decisions regarding employment, remuneration, work organization, and skill development are increasingly difficult to plan out in the long term. More and more often, they require flexibility, responsiveness, and a readiness for continuous course correction.

The labour market continues to be strongly shaped by the trends that have dominated the recent years: cost pressure, staff and skills shortages, rising employee expectations, as well as ongoing digitization and the growing role of AI. These are challenging conditions, which is why companies are making decisions more deliberately, analysing more closely which actions genuinely support the stability of their business.

This approach is clearly visible in the area of recruitment. For yet another year in a row, our study shows that employers remain cautious when making staffing decisions. This doesn't signal a market slowdown as much as it reflects a shift in priorities. Increasingly, the focus is not on expanding teams but on making more considered and precise decisions that both safeguard operational continuity and help maintain the desired level of quality and efficiency. In this sense, recruitment is becoming not only a response to current staffing needs but also part of a broader operational strategy.

In this year's edition of the Labour Market Barometer, we place a strong emphasis on productivity. At a time of rising operational costs, heightened uncertainty, and limited predictability, productivity is becoming one of the key determinants of business competitiveness.

The most important question in this context is: how can it be improved in a reasonable manner? After all, the aim is not to simply do more at a lower cost, but to find an operating model that allows companies to grow in a sustainable way without weakening their operational and workforce potential.

With this in mind, we ask employers what currently limits productivity most in their organizations, what steps they are taking to improve it, and which employee skills are now the most critical from the perspective of efficiency. We also examine the role of automation and AI-based solutions in this process and how these technologies are reshaping the everyday work.

At the same time, we analyze the ways in which employees are navigating these circumstances. Productivity does not exist in a vacuum – the people, their skills, workloads, experience and ability to adapt to change are all crucial factors. As in each previous edition of our study, we compare the perspectives of employers and employees to better understand where their expectations and goals align and where tensions may emerge.

I believe that this year's 20th edition of our report offers valuable insight not only into the current moods and plans of employers and employees, but also into the broader direction of change that will shape the labour market in the near future.

I warmly encourage you to read on.

The report in numbers

Employees

53% of employees expect a pay raise in the coming months

42% of employees plans to change their job within the next two years

33% of employees are concerned about losing their jobs within the next two years

40% of employees considers reskilling

42% of employees feels overburdened by tasks at work

53% of employees thinks that AI made their job easier or quicker

21% of employees increased the pace of work or the pressure to achieve results

The report in numbers

Employers

14% of businesses plan to increase employment

10% of organizations plan to reduce employment

46% of companies have faced recruitment problems concerning at least one group of employees in recent months

41% of employers have faced turnover problems concerning at least one group of employees in recent months

27% of enterprises points to employee shortages as a key barrier to productivity

23% of businesses did not take any action to improve their productivity last year

37% of employers believe that AI has increased the pace of work or pressure to deliver results

Salaries

Salary changes over the last quarter

The data shows that the dynamics of wage growth is slowing down. The percentage of organizations that increased wages over the last quarter remained similar to last year's results (31% as compared to 31.8% a year ago). The same applies to employers who retained current salary levels (55.9% as compared to 56.3% a year ago). However, it bears mentioning employee perspective – according to their declarations, the share of people who actually felt an increase in their salary has fallen from 38.9% a year ago to 34.6% now. At the same time, the percentage of people whose salary didn't change over the last quarter has increased (from 47.6% to 52.8%), with the pay raises remaining largely limited, below or equal to 10% (for a total of 62.1%, as compared to 57.9% a year ago).

This suggests that despite businesses steadily increasing wages, they are doing so more cautiously than a year ago, with pay raises being less common and more limited in scope.

Salary change in the last quarter – company perspective

31%	of companies increased salary levels
55.9%	of companies retained their current salary levels
5.3%	of companies decreased salary levels
7.8%	of companies do not know

Salary change in the last quarter – employee perspective

34.6%	Salary increase
52.8%	No salary changes
12.6%	Salary decrease

By what percentage did your salary increase?

By less than **10**%	by **10**%	**11–20**%	**21–30**%	**31–40**%	**41–50**%	**51**% or more	I don't know
35.9%	26.2%	16.4%	7.2%	4.6%	2.1%	2.6%	5.1%

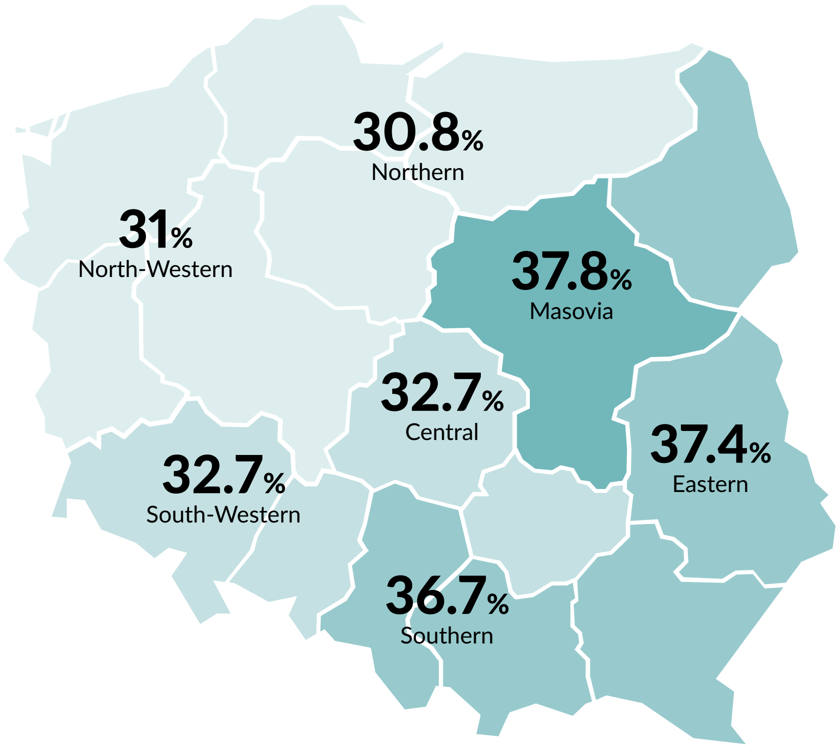
Employers N=510 • Employees N=564

Salary changes over the last quarter – employee perspective

Salary increases in the last quarter were declared primarily by the youngest workers, aged 18–24 (44%), and were least common for people aged 45–54 (23.6%) or 55–67 (25.6%). In terms of positions, the pay raises went primarily to the junior specialists (42.6%) and least often to lower-ranking employees (28.3%) and senior specialists (30.3%). On the other hand, a decrease in salary is most often reported by manual (15.1%) and lower-ranking workers (14.1%).

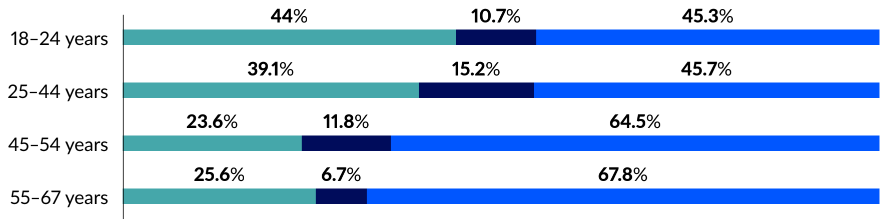
In terms of various industries, pay raises were most likely in the Transportation and Logistics (41.4%) and Commerce (39.3%) sectors, while being less likely for the Services (31.3%) and the Public sector (31.7%). Moreover, the latter two also have the highest share of people declaring no change to their salaries, at 56.4% and 57.3%, respectively.

Percentage of people receiving pay raises in each region

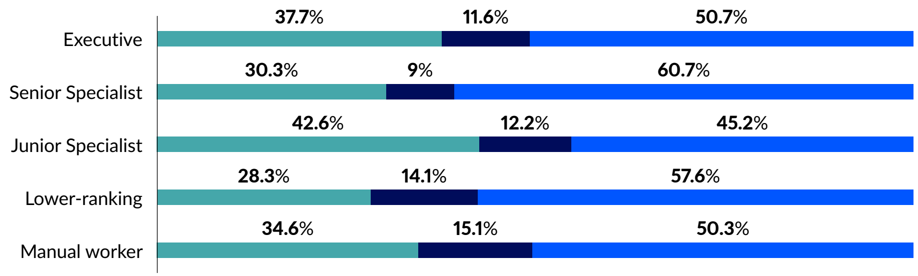


N=564

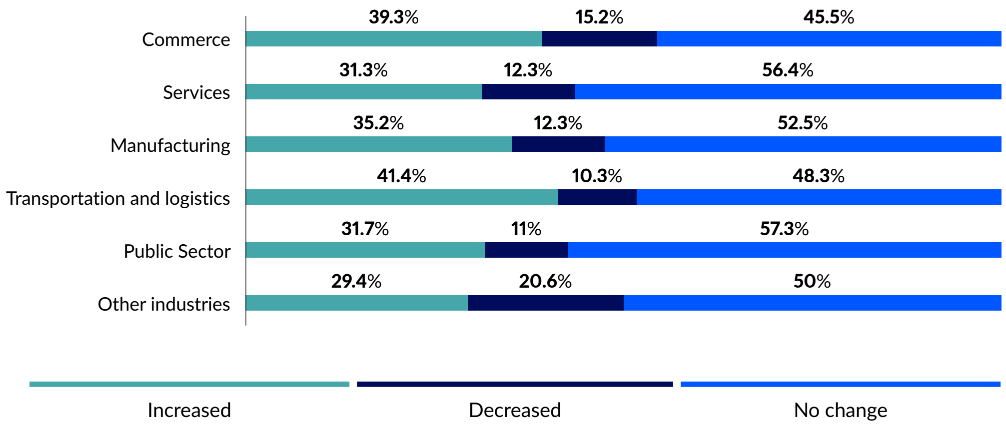
Salary change across age groups



Salary change across positions



Salary change across industries



Salary expectations of employees

Salary expectations of employees remain high, even though they've been decreasing noticeably for another consecutive year. 53.4% of respondents expect a pay raise within the coming months, marking a 2.6 p.p. decrease compared to a year ago, 6.2 p.p. compared to two years ago and 8.1 p.p. compared to three years ago. At the same time, the percentage of people expecting their salary to remain unchanged has grown from approx. 33% to 35%.

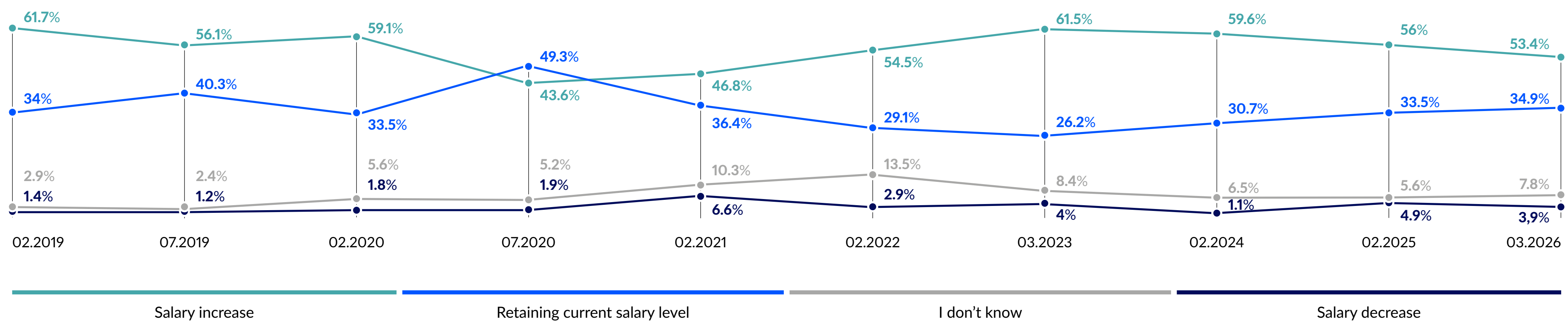
Pay raises are expected primarily by the 45–54 age group (60.9%), executives and senior specialists (59% each) and public sector employees (59.8%). Women are more likely to expect a pay raise than men – at 59.2% vs 47.5%. It also bears mentioning that people earning between PLN 5,000 and 9,999 (net) have the highest wage expectations, with 56–58% expecting a pay raise.

The scope of expected raises is changing as well. This year, 37.5% of respondents declared that they expect a raise of 11–20%, while last year it was true of 44% of them. At the same time, 30% of employees expect an increase of less than 10% of their current salary, while in 2025 this was true of 26% of them. Larger raises are expected primarily by the youngest workers (18–24 years), 43% of whom expect a pay raise exceeding 20%, as well as transportation and logistics workers (with 44% expecting a raise of at least 20%) and those earning over PLN 10,000 a month (net). Other groups of respondents have similar and more modest expectations. This means that despite wage pressure remaining strong, it is increasingly often accompanied by a more realistic appraisal of the market situation and the financial capabilities of the employers.

What salary changes are you expecting in the coming months?

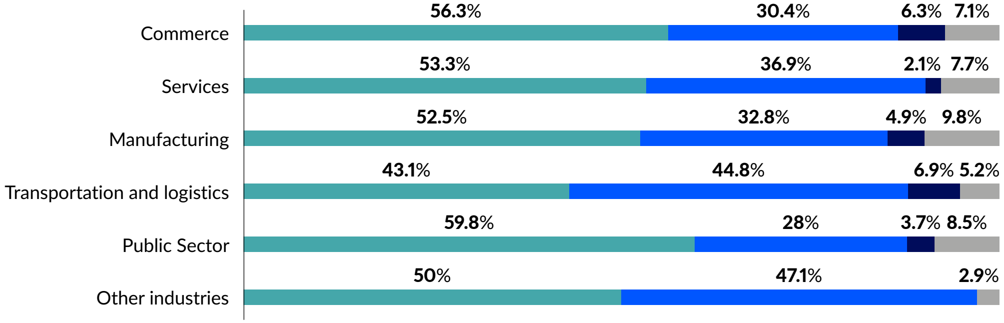
53.4%	34.9%	3.9%	7.8%
Salary increase	Retaining current salary level	Salary decrease	I don't know

Expected salary change – changes across years

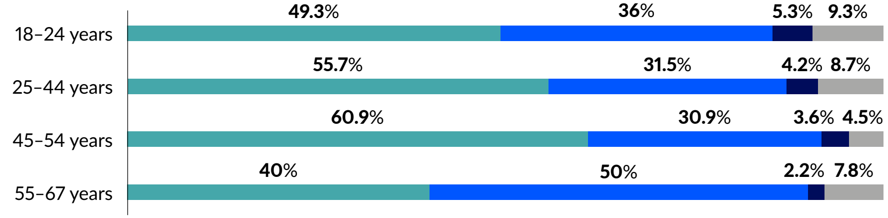


Who expects a pay raise?

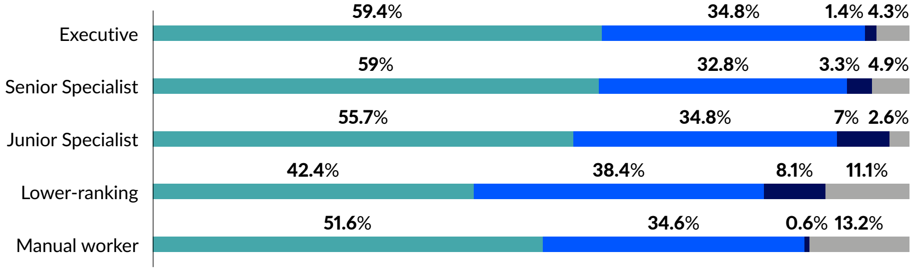
Salary change expectations across industries



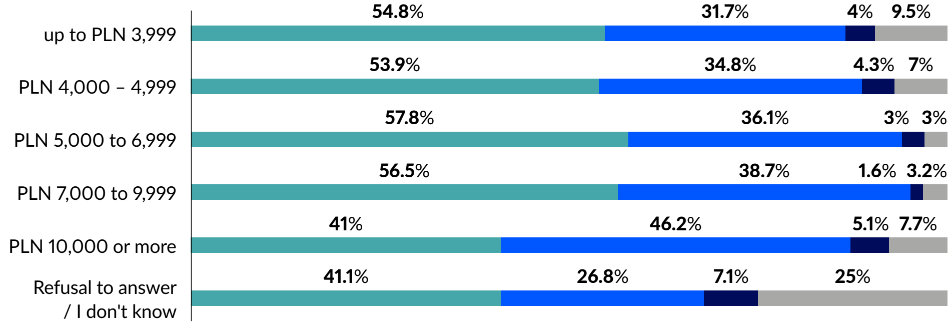
Salary change expectations across age groups



Salary change expectations across positions



Salary expectations across income levels



Salary increase | Retaining current salary level | I don't know | Salary decrease

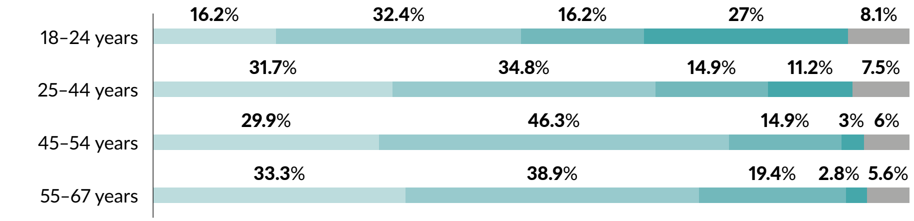
N=564

Expected pay raise

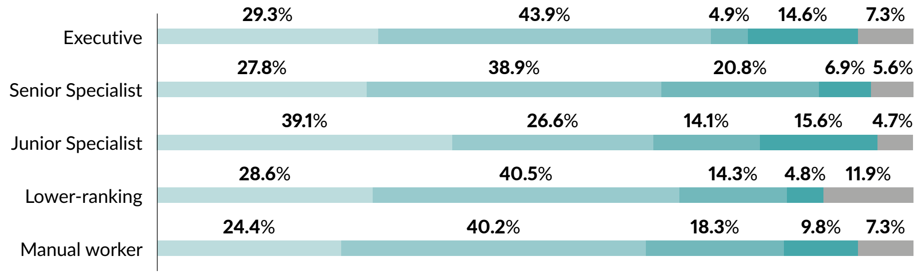
What percentage pay raise do you expect?

29.6%	37.5%	15.6%	6.6%	2.3%	1.3%	7%
Up to **10%**	**11–20%**	**21–30%**	**31–40%**	**41–50%**	**51%** or more	I don't know

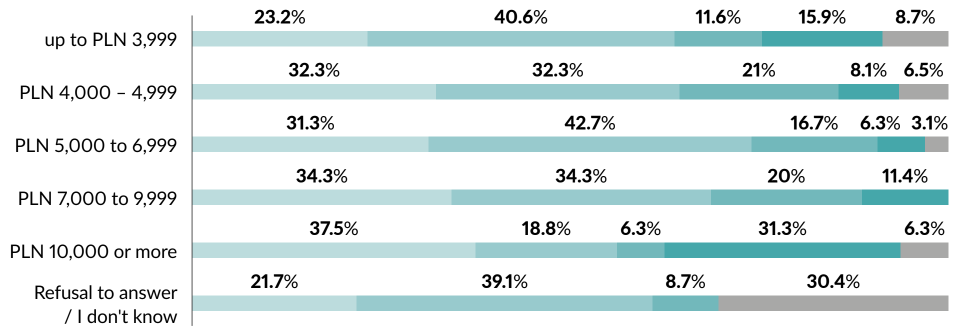
Expected pay raise across age groups



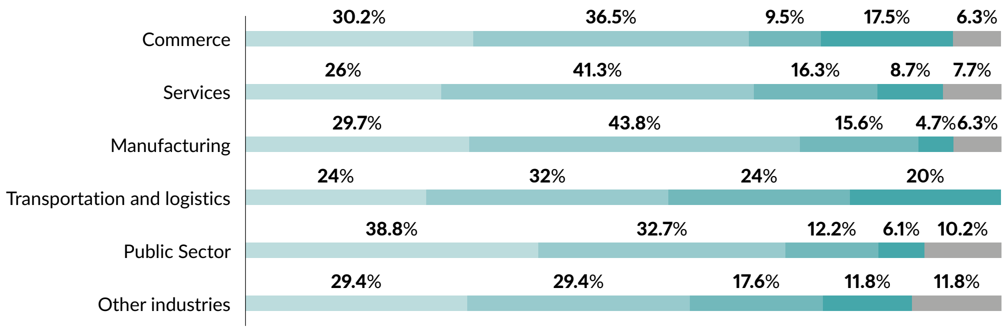
Expected pay raise across positions



Expected pay raise across income levels



Expected pay raise across industries



Up to 10% | 11–20% | 21–30% | Above 30% | I don't know

**N=301 • respondents expecting a pay raise*

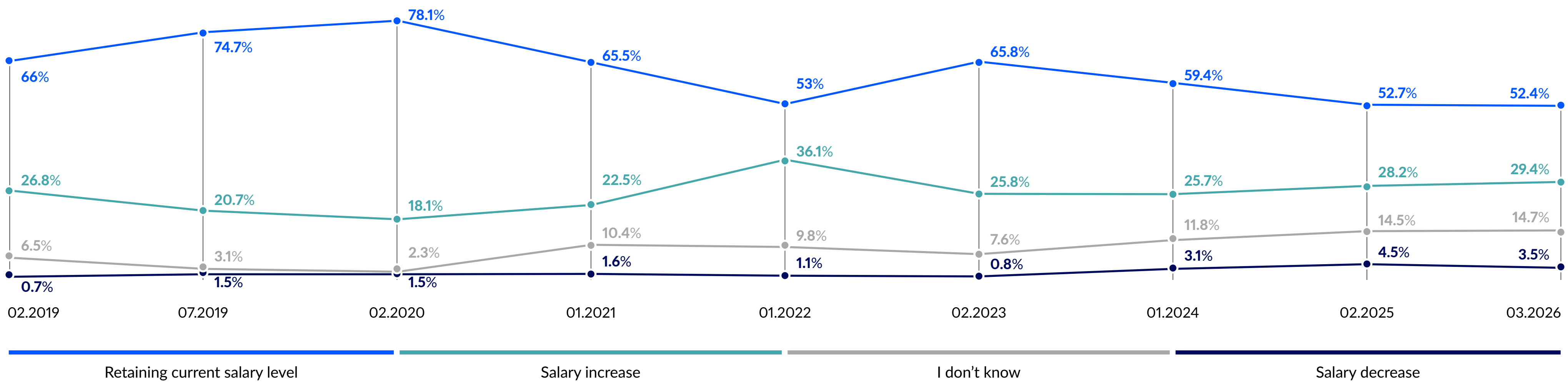
Salary plans of businesses

Employer declarations concerning their wage policies in the coming quarter don't differ meaningfully from last year's plans, although in 2026 we can see a slight increase in willingness to raise wages (from 28.2% to 29.4%). Furthermore, the number of businesses considering wage reductions has fallen (from 4.5% to 3.5%)

In the coming quarter, are you planning to:

29.4%	52.4%	3.5%	14.7%
Increase salaries	Retain current salary levels	Decrease salaries	I don't know

Planned salary changes across years



N=510

Salary plans of businesses

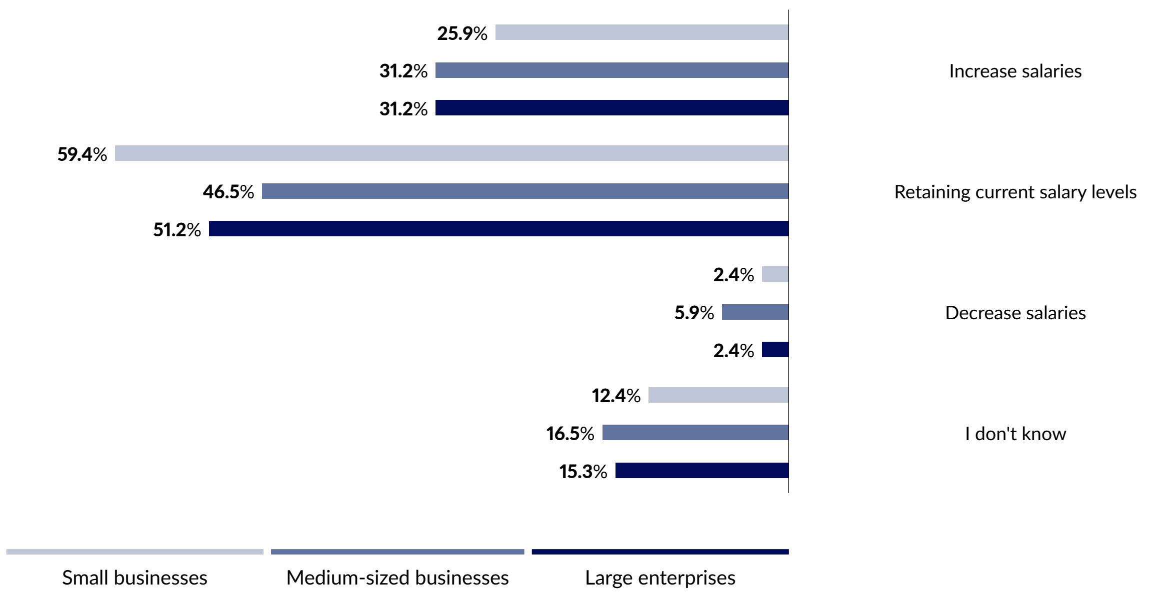
Salary increases are planned primarily by large and medium-sized enterprises (31.2%). In both of these cases we can see a notable increase in the share of such declarations compared to the previous year, when the same was true of only 25% of businesses of these sizes. The situation is different for smaller businesses, where the percentage of employers planning pay raises decreased by 7 p.p. within a year, from approx. 33% to 26%.

The shift is also visible across various industries. In 2026, public sector, transportation and logistics businesses were most likely to declare salary increase plans, at 31.8% each. This marks a notable difference compared to 2025 when these industries were among the most cautious, with only 24% planning pay raises. However, the greatest fall took place in the commerce sector – with only 20.5% of respondents declaring such plans, as compared to 33% a year ago.

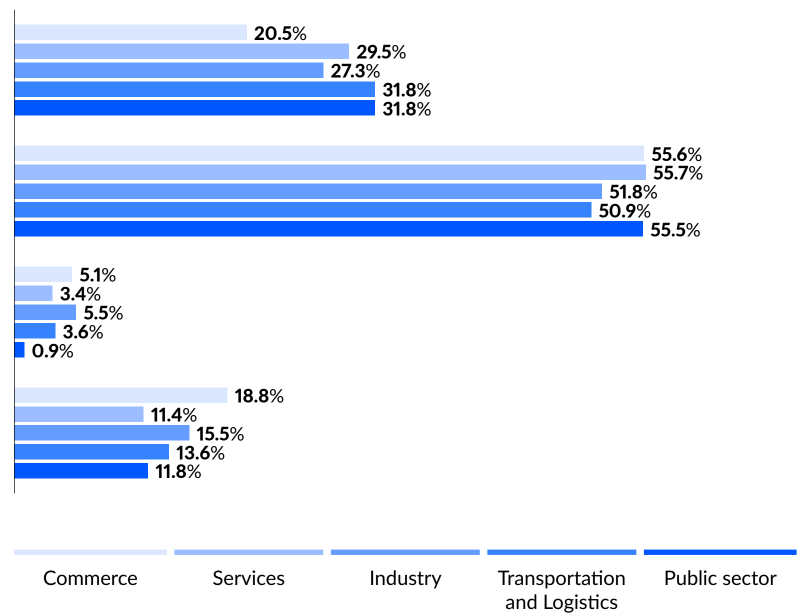
These results may suggest that nowadays it's primarily the larger organizations that have the financial capabilities to increase salaries while also being the most pressured to retain their current employees and align salaries to their growing expectations. For smaller businesses, budgetary limitations and caution toward raising fixed costs may prove the more important factors.

Similarly to the previous year, employers generally tend to retain their current salary level, with over half of the respondents declaring so across all analyzed industries. This means that even despite some organizations considering pay raises, the overall approach toward salary policies remains conservative. However, we've seen no signals of overall attitudes worsening despite the tensions and opportunities present in the domestic and international business environments.

Planned salary changes across company sizes



Planned salary changes across industries



Why do employers decide to raise salaries?

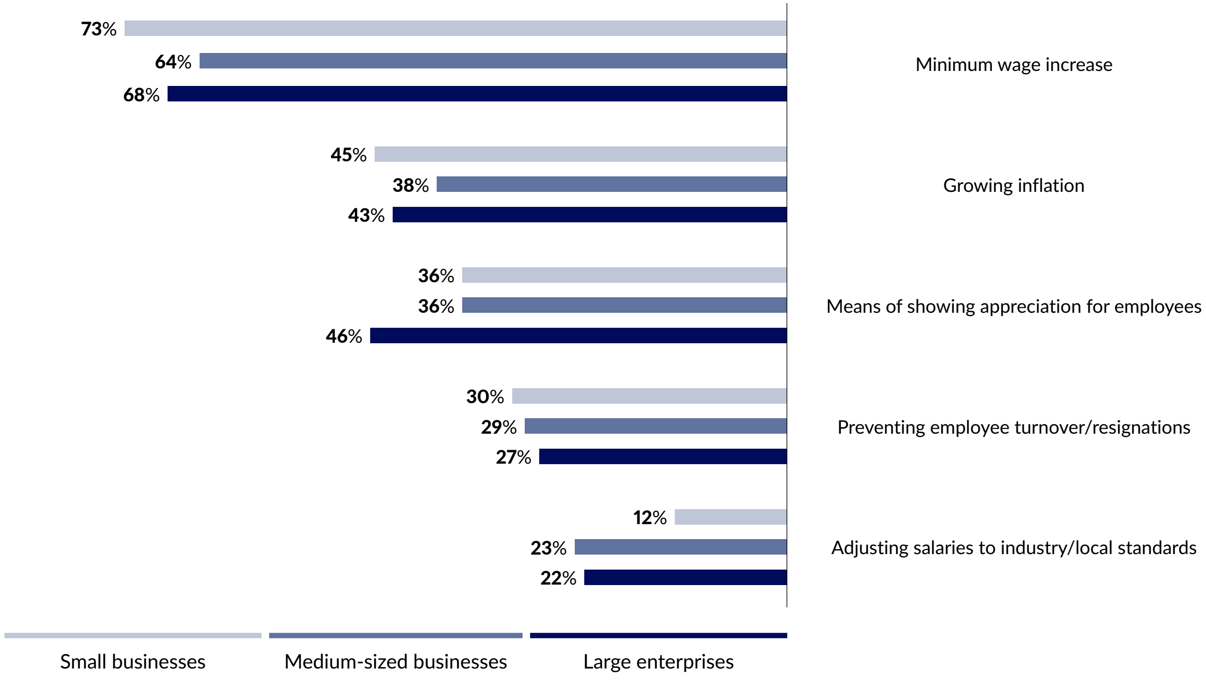
Similarly to a year ago, rising minimum wage remains the strongest impulse. This year, it has proven even more important than before – pointed out by 68.3% of employers, as compared to 64.5%. It's particularly noticeable among the smallest businesses for whom the share of such declarations increased by 16 p.p. y/y and the industrial sector, where it has reached 73% (+8 p.p. y/y). Inflation remains the second most important cause, pointed out by 42.3% of businesses (+4.2 p.p. y/y). It gained particular importance among smaller businesses, as well as the services and transportation and logistics sectors. For the services sector, this percentage rose from 37% to 50% year on year and for transportation and logistics – from 29% to 46%.

However, what drew our attention this year was that pay raises were more often motivated by a desire to show appreciation for employees. It was declared by 39.2% of surveyed businesses (as compared to 30.2% a year ago). This increase was particularly pronounced among large organizations, 46% of whom declared so this year, marking a 23 p.p. increase year on year. Commerce (55%, +20 p.p.) and industrial (43%, +14 p.p.) sectors are particularly eager to show appreciation for their employees through pay raises.

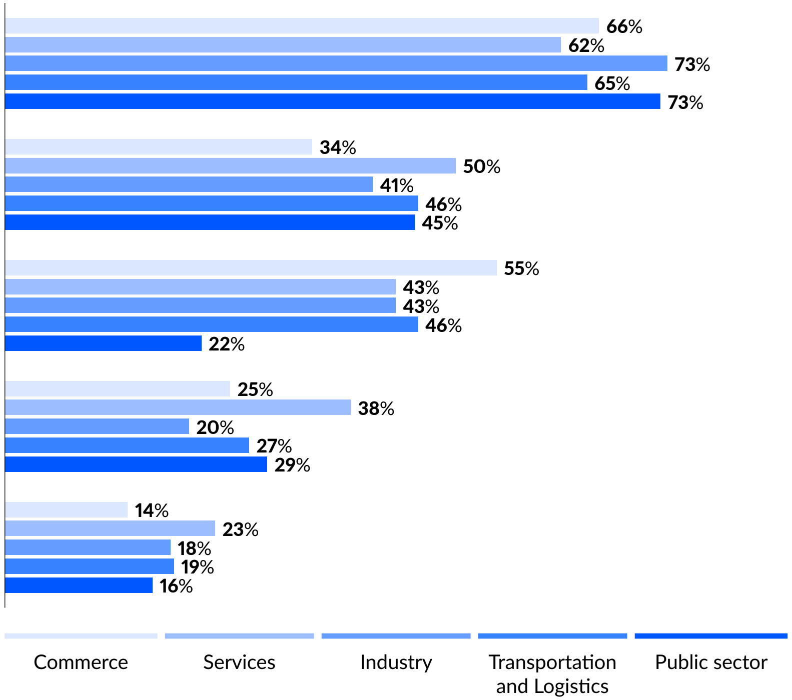
Over 28% of companies are raising salaries to prevent turnover. Such motivation was most typical for small businesses (30%), with a particular rise occurring in the services sector – increasing by 7 p.p. y/y to 38%. On the other hand, industrial businesses were less concerned about it (at 20%, as compared to 32% a year ago). A fifth of all companies have declared raising wages to adjust them to market levels (19.4%). It's most common among medium-sized and large enterprises, as well as – similarly to the last year – services sector.

Therefore, this year's results show that salary policies have several parallel motivations. While external factors such as the rising minimum wage or inflation are still the most influential, reasons related to retaining one's employees, showing appreciation for them and ensuring competitiveness of pay are all increasing in importance.

Reasons behind salary increases across company sizes



Reasons behind salary increases across company sizes across industries



Respondents could select multiple answers • Businesses which increased salaries in the last quarter or are planning to do so • N=227

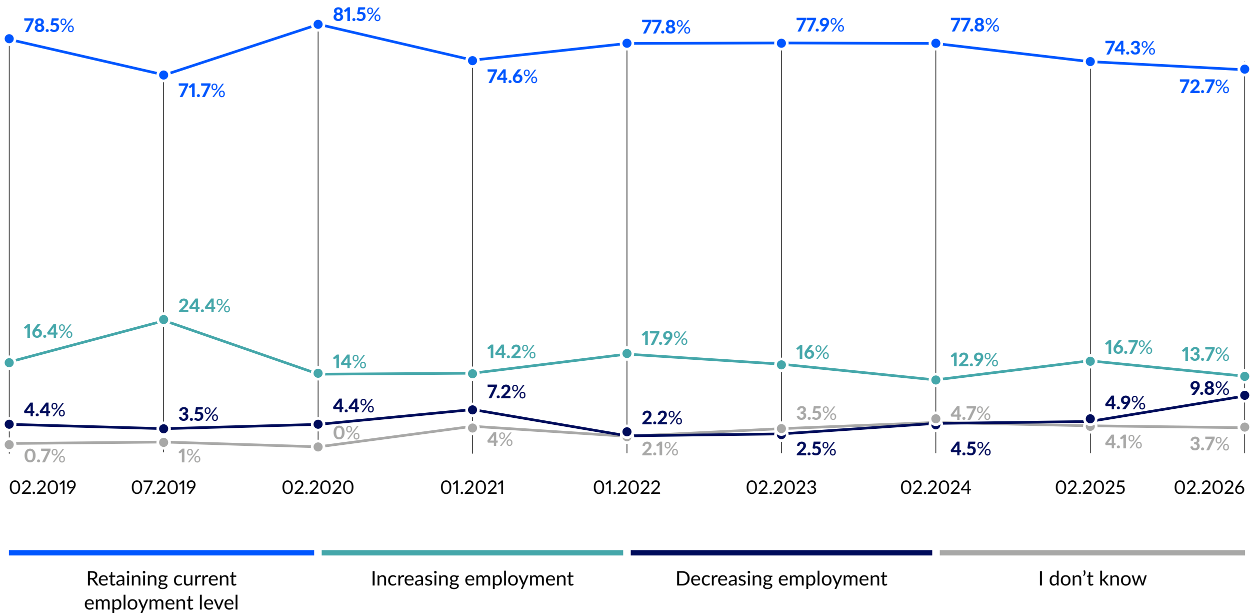
Recruitment trends and challenges

Employer recruitment plans

Employer declarations show that businesses are much more cautious in planning recruitment than a year ago. 13.7% of businesses are planning to Increase the employment, while a year ago this number amounted to 16.7%. At the same time, the percentage of organizations expecting layoffs has doubled, from 4.9% a year ago to 9.8%. This marks the highest result recorded our research since 2017. Nevertheless, maintaining the current employment levels remains the most common scenario – though even this saw a slight decrease year on year.

The results indicate that the businesses are growing more cautious toward recruitment decisions. They are less likely to plan team expansion, more likely to consider cuts and focus on retaining operational stability. In practical terms, this might be leading to greater caution concerning new workplaces and a stronger focus on securing the current operational needs.

Planned employment changes across years



Which of the following are you planning in the next quarter?

13.7% Increasing employment

72.7% Retaining

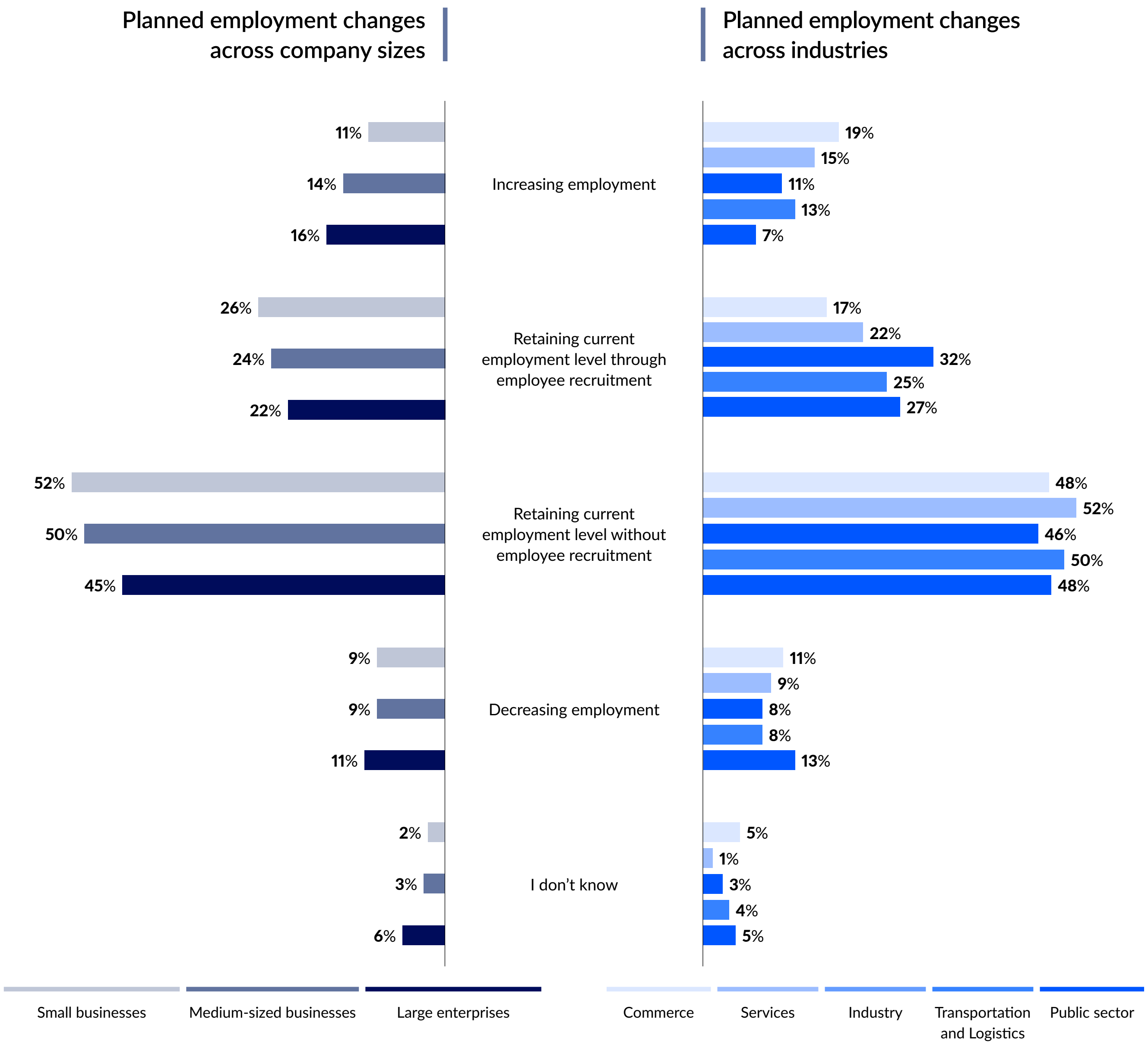
- **23.9%** Retaining current employment level through employee recruitment
- **48.8%** Retaining current employment level without employee recruitment

9.8% Decreasing employment

3.7% I don't know

N=510

Employer recruitment plans



N=510

Medium-sized and large businesses are declaring the most willingness to increase employment – at 14% and 16%, respectively. In both cases, this means a decrease compared to the previous year when the same declarations were made by 20% of medium-sized and 19% of large organizations. Smaller businesses are more visibly focused on maintaining the current employment and are more cautious toward new recruitment.

From an industry viewpoint, commerce (19%) and services (15%) sectors have been the most eager to increase employment. Industry is clearly dominated by stabilization – 78% of businesses want to retain the current employment levels, while only 11% plan growth. At the same time, it bears mentioning that many industrial businesses expect to retain their current employment levels through additional recruitment (32%). This might suggest higher employee turnover in this area and the need to keep plugging the employment gaps. Given this, the public sector appears to be the most conservative, with only 7% of businesses planning to increase employment and 13% expecting layoffs. This makes it the only sector in our research to plan more cuts than expansion.

Whom do employers plan to hire?

Businesses planning recruitment will focus primarily on acquiring mid-ranking employees (57.8%, as compared to 56.4% a year ago) and lower-ranking workers (44.8%, as compared to 43.6% in 2025). Management positions are seen in the job offers much less often, although it is still subject to increased employer interest compared to a year ago – rising from 11.8% to 16.1%.

Mid-ranking employees are being sought primarily by small (65%) and medium-sized enterprises (60%), as well as services, transportation and logistics sectors (64% each). Lower-ranking positions see recruitment primarily at large enterprises (58%), public sector (53%) and transportation and logistics sector (50%). Managers are being sought primarily by medium-sized (17%) and small (16%) businesses, the commerce sector (24%) as well as transportation and logistics (19%).

The results show that businesses are now focusing primarily on recruiting employees needed to maintain daily operations rather than thinking of broader expansion of their management staffs. At the same time, the growing interest in managers might suggest that some of the employers – despite a more cautious approach to employment – are seeing the need to strengthen skills related to team management and work organization.

What kind of employees are you planning to recruit?

16.1%	57.8%	44.8%	2.6%
Executive staff	Mid-ranking employees	Lower-ranking employees	I don't know

Businesses planning to recruit people • N=192

Whom do employers plan to hire?

Where is the demand for various types of positions highest?

Lower-ranking employees

Large enterprises	58%
Public sector	53%
Transportation and logistics	50%

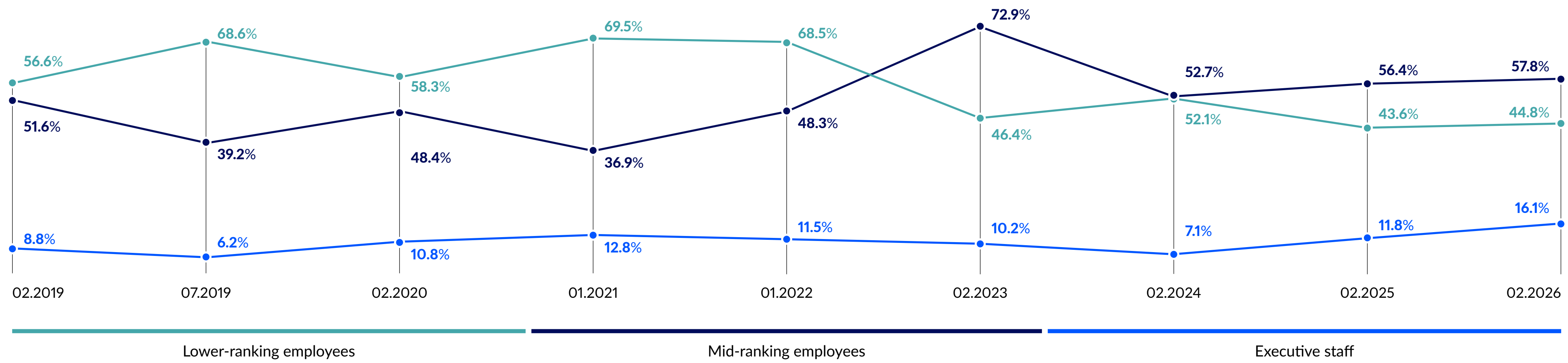
Mid-ranking employees

Small businesses	65%
Services	64%
Transportation and logistics	64%

Executive staff

Mid-sized businesses	17%
Commerce	24%
Transportation and logistics	19%

What kind of employees are businesses planning to hire – a comparison across years



Difficulties in employee recruitment

45.7% of surveyed businesses admit to having recruitment difficulties concerning at least one group of employees in recent months. This shows that the difficulties in acquiring candidates still concern a large part of the market, even though their scale is lower than a year ago, when almost half of all organizations made similar declarations.

The most commonly pointed out difficulties concerned the executive staff (14.3%). The problem was reported less often for lower-ranking employees (12.4%) and for recruitment across all job levels (12.2%). Almost a tenth of businesses had trouble finding mid-ranking employees. However, only the lower-ranking staff was more difficult to recruit than a year ago (with an increase of 1.8 p.p.).

Recruitment problems are most likely to concern mid-sized and commerce industry businesses. Small companies are relatively more challenged in recruiting executive staff while large enterprises struggle with filling lower-ranking vacancies.

In the recent months, did your company encounter problems in finding employees? If so, which groups of employees? *

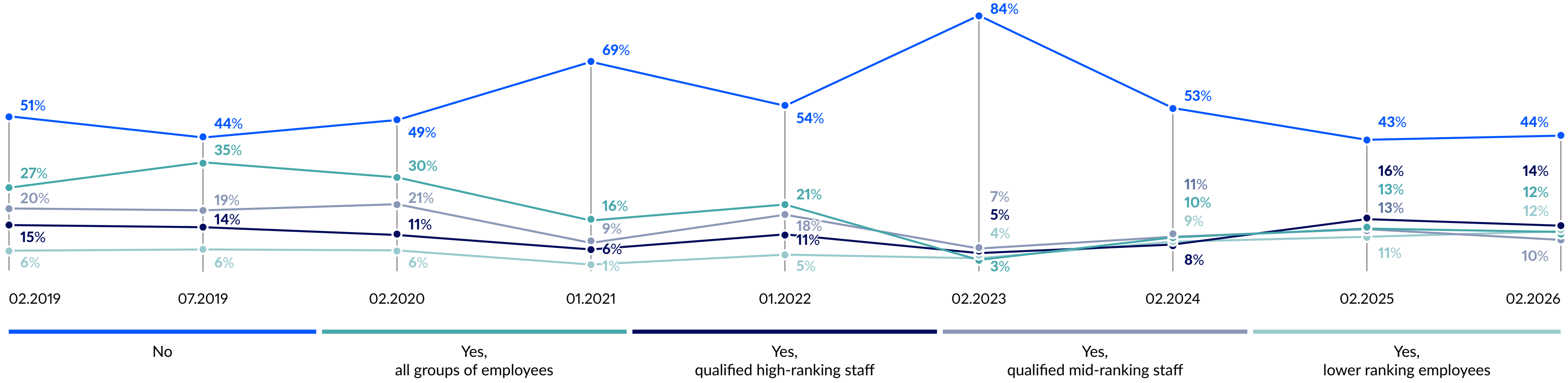
45.7% encountered recruitment problems with at least one group of employees

44.1%	12.2%	14.3%	9.6%	12.4%	10.2%
No	Yes, all groups of employees	Yes, qualified high-ranking staff	Yes, qualified mid-ranking staff	Yes, lower ranking employees	Hard to say

Respondents could select multiple answers • N=510

Difficulties in employee recruitment

In the recent months, did your company encounter problems in acquiring new employees? If so, which groups of employees? *



**Respondents could select multiple answers • N=510*

Where are the recruitment difficulties highest?

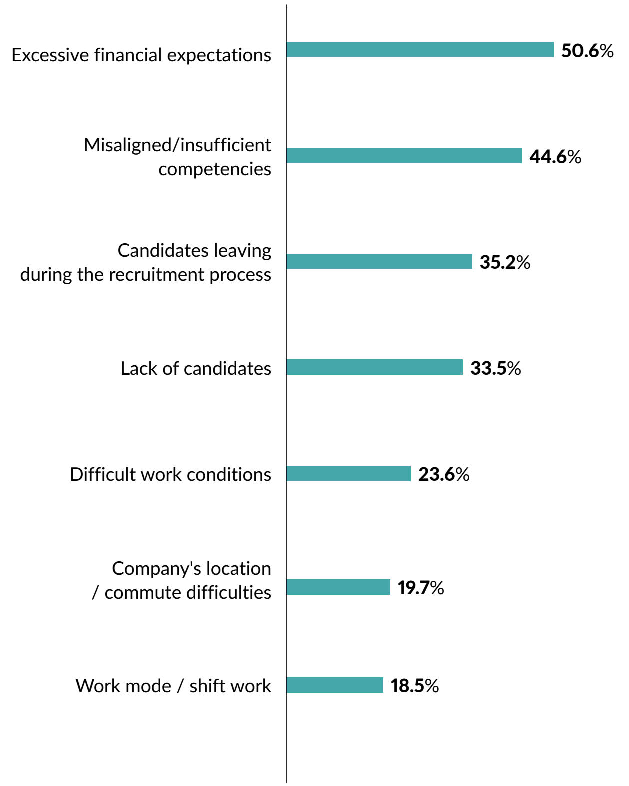
All groups of employees	Executive staff	Mid-ranking employeed	Lower ranking employees
medium-sized businesses	small businesses	medium-sized and large enterprises	large enterprises
commerce	services	public sector	commerce
industry			transportation and logistics

Reasons for recruitment difficulties

The most commonly highlighted recruitment difficulties concerned excessive financial expectations of the candidates, pointed out by over half of surveyed companies reporting recruitment difficulties. Other common issues included misaligned or insufficient employee competencies (44.6%), leaving the recruitment processes (35.2%) and the lack of candidates (33.5%). Compared to 2025, the scale of these three key problems has increased – a year ago 41% of businesses struggled with excessive financial expectations, 35% with misaligned competencies and 33% with candidates leaving during the recruitment process. Every single one of these indicators has increased in 2026. The starkest increases concerned the wage pressure (+9.3 p.p.) and insufficient competencies (+9.6 p.p.), showing that employers are now more likely to face both growing candidate expectations and difficulties in finding appropriate candidates.

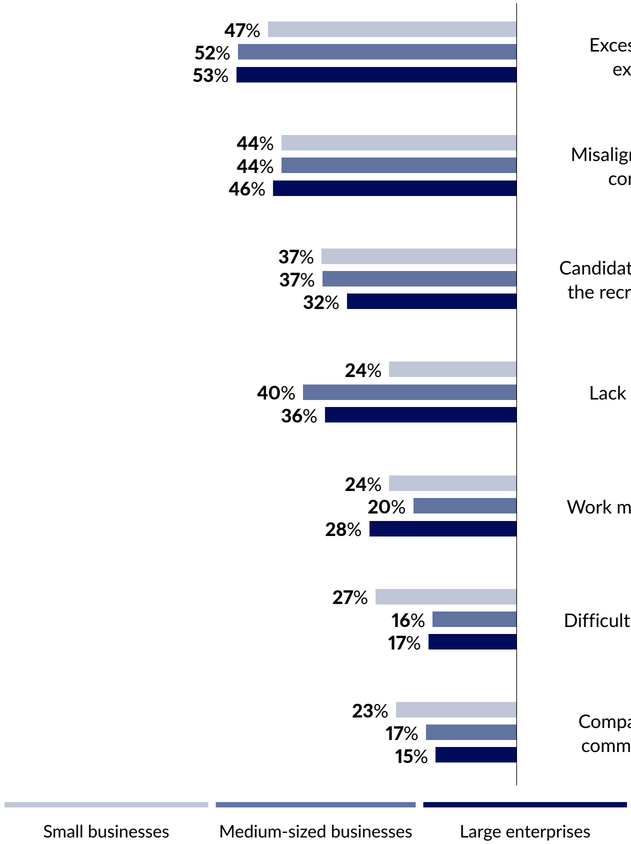
Excessive financial expectations of candidates are an issue affecting all businesses, though large and medium-sized enterprises and manufacturing companies are slightly more susceptible to them (58%). A similar case concerns misaligned competencies, affecting all company sizes and industries – with the exception of the public sector at merely 35%. Candidates leaving during the recruitment process are less of an issue for large enterprises but tend to affect services, transportation and logistics companies more. Candidate shortages are an issue primarily for medium-sized enterprises (40%) and the public sector (43%). Inconvenient location and difficult work conditions are problems for smaller businesses, primarily in the services and commerce sectors. Unsatisfactory work modes are an issue for the largest enterprises, as well as transportation and logistics companies.

What do you believe to be causing recruitment problems – select up to three answers

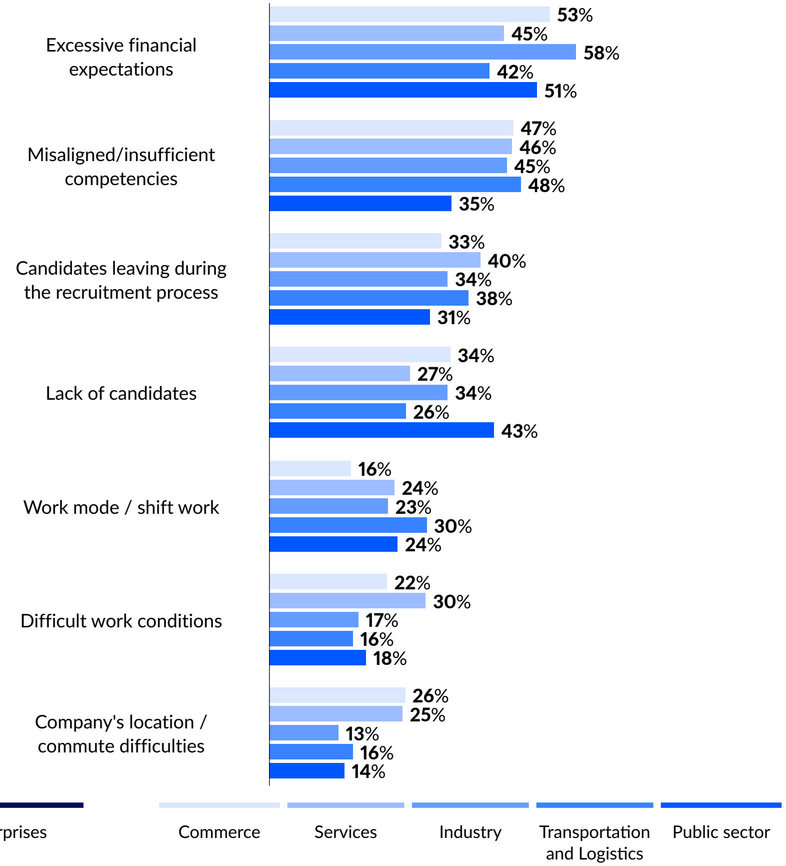


Respondents could select up to 3 answers • N=233
Businesses struggling to acquire new employees

Recruitment problems across company sizes



Recruitment problems across industrires

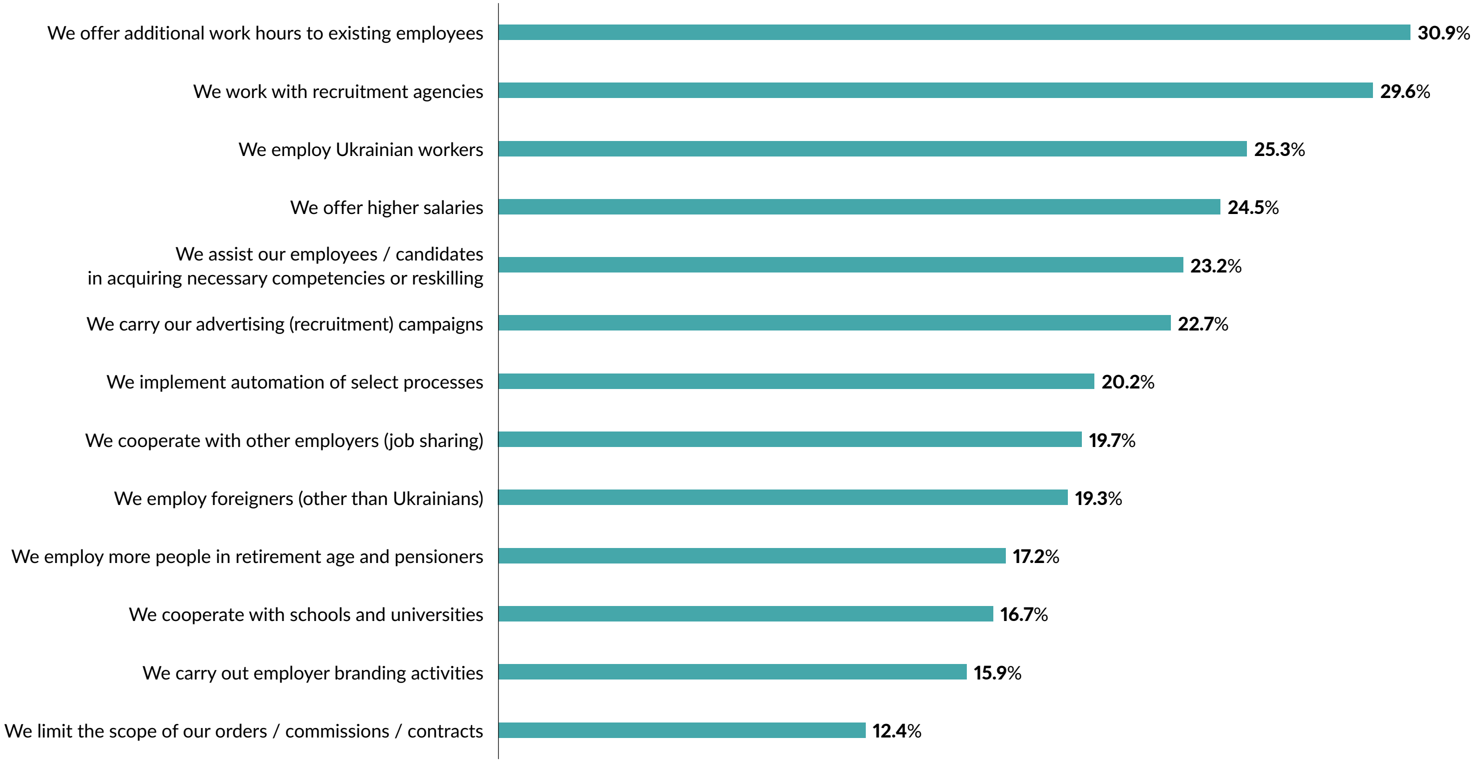


How are businesses handling the recruitment difficulties?

A third of all businesses are trying to deal with these difficulties by offering additional work hours to their existing employees (30.9%). This solution has definitely gained importance compared to the previous year, when it was pointed out by 22% of businesses. The employers are also more likely to utilize the support of recruitment agencies (29.6%, marking an increase of 5.6 p.p. y/y) and Ukrainian workers – now sought by a quarter of all businesses, as compared to under 18% a year ago. Proposing higher pay to attract candidates has also grown more popular than it was a year ago (24.5%, as compared to 17.7%). However, in a broader perspective of several past years it seems employers are less likely to utilize this method.

The remaining solutions remain less popular, though even they are seeing an increase year on year. Compared to 2025, businesses are more likely to automate processes (20.2% vs 16.1%), hire non-Ukrainian foreigners (19.3% vs 14.2%) and launch recruitment campaigns (22.7% vs 16.9%). Once more, we're seeing increased diversity of actions taken by employers to deal with recruitment difficulties, which might suggest greater complexity of problems relating to filling vacancies and that they require using several different methods simultaneously.

How are businesses handling the recruitment difficulties?



Respondents could select up to 3 answers • N=233 • Businesses struggling to acquire new employees

How are businesses handling the recruitment difficulties?

Different companies, different solutions

Small businesses

35%
additional work hours

33%
recruitment agencies

Mid-sized businesses

30%
additional work hours

29%
higher salaries

Large enterprises

39%
recruitment agencies

29%
recruitment campaigns

Commerce

34%
additional work hours

Services

36%
recruitment agencies

31%
additional work hours

Industry

28%
employing workers from Ukraine

30%
employing workers from other foreign countries

Transportation and Logistics

36%
recruitment agencies

34%
reskilling and upskilling

Public sector

33%
higher salaries

Employment reductions

Did your company reduce employment within the last 12 months?

28%	72%
Yes	No

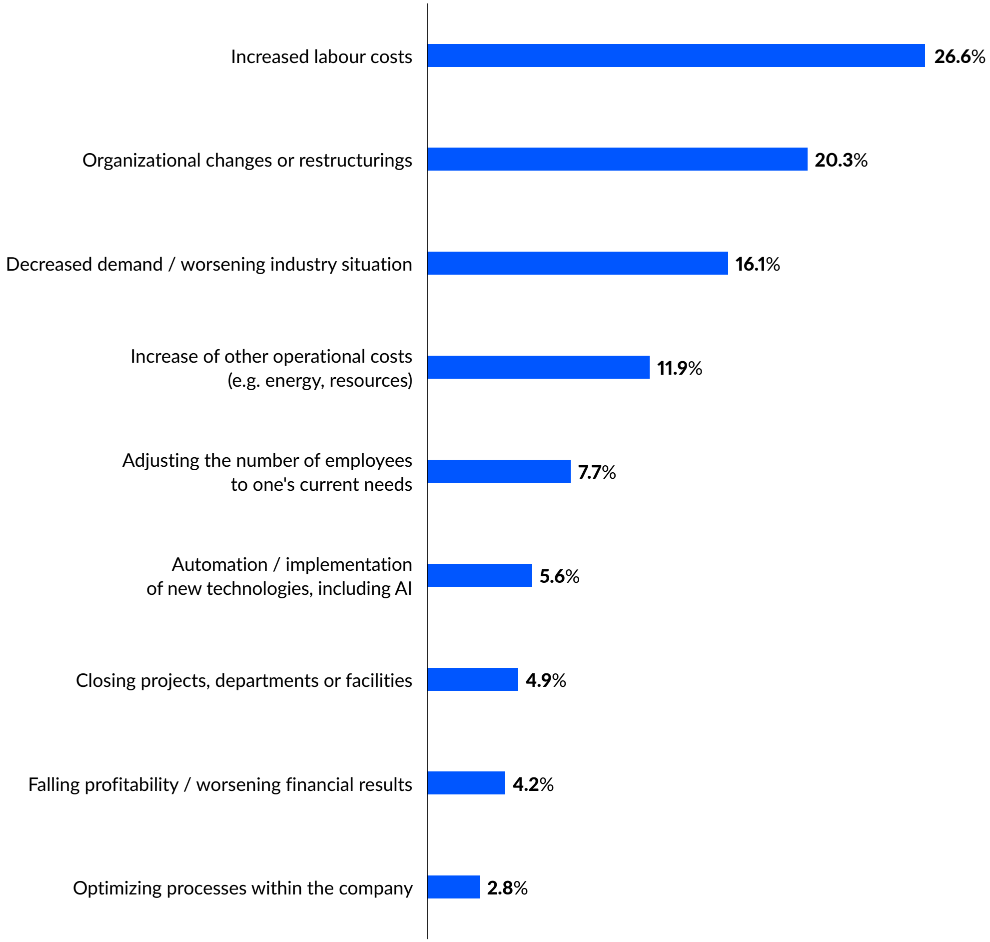
28% of surveyed businesses admit to having reduced employment in the past quarter. Large enterprises were slightly more likely to take such action (at 32.4%), as compared to the average of 25% of small and mid-sized companies. Most of the layoffs concerned commerce (37.6%), and industrial (32.7%) sectors while also affecting the public sector the least.

The primary reason for employment reductions was growing labor costs – as declared by over 26% of companies undergoing cuts. It was followed by organizational changes and restructurings (20.3%), lower demand and worse industry circumstances (16.1%) as well as growing operational costs (11.9%).

Increased labour costs were most commonly pointed out by small enterprises (30%), commerce (32%) and transportation and logistics (31%) sectors. Restructurings concerned primarily large enterprises (27%) and the public sector (33%). The falling demand affected small companies (23%), industry (25%) and commerce (20%) the most. Increase of other business costs was most commonly pointed out by mid-sized (18%) businesses and the transportation and logistics sector (17%).

Given these results, it bears mentioning that automation and the implementation of new technologies still aren't the leading causes of layoffs. They were only pointed out by 5.6% of surveyed businesses – primarily small companies (9%) and the commerce and services sectors.

What were the reasons for your decision to reduce employment?



Questions asked to businesses undergoing employment reductions • Respondents could select a single answer • N=143

Agnieszka Zielińska

Agnieszka Zielińska, Director, Polish HR Forum

Are the media reports of mass layoffs reflecting the actual scale of employment reduction in Poland?

A year ago we noted a notable increase in the number of reports on planned mass layoffs, encompassing approx. 100,000 people, primarily in the public sector. However, it bears keeping in mind that they also include notices of change that are often preventative, arising from employers' formal obligations. The actual scale of employment reduction was far lower – approximately 29,500 people lost their jobs. This is a similar result to a year before. It shows that while the announcements of layoffs themselves may be raising concerns, they don't fully reflect the situation on the job market.

The Polish job market remains relatively stable, with ongoing low unemployment and many people finding new jobs relatively quickly. One should also bear in mind that, according to BAEL data, the number of people employed in Q4 2025 increased by 99 thousand as compared to the same period a year earlier.

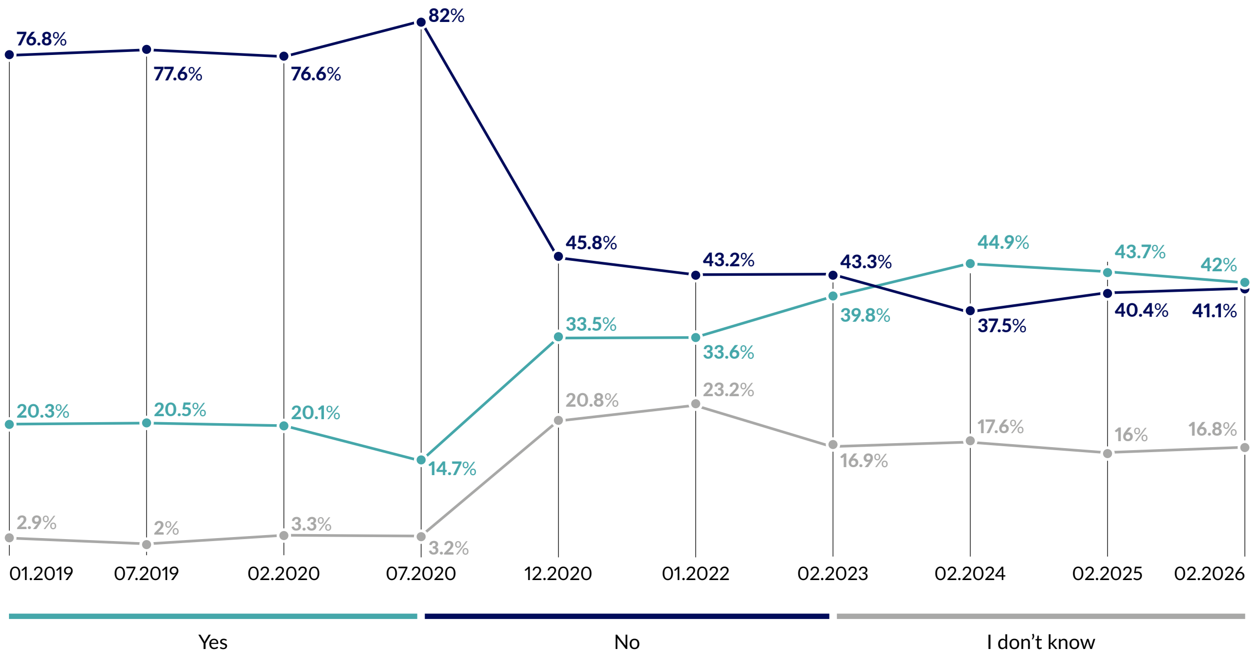
The current reductions are caused primarily by structural changes such as automation, digitization or cost pressure rather than an economic crisis. Furthermore, businesses are increasingly eager to use alternative solutions such as reducing work hours, transferring employees between departments or freezing recruitment, all of which limit the number of actual terminations.

As a result, the media reports of a "wave of layoffs" can appear more alarming than the actual reality – a full understanding of the current job market shows that employment reductions tend to be limited and largely a result of natural restructuring processes.

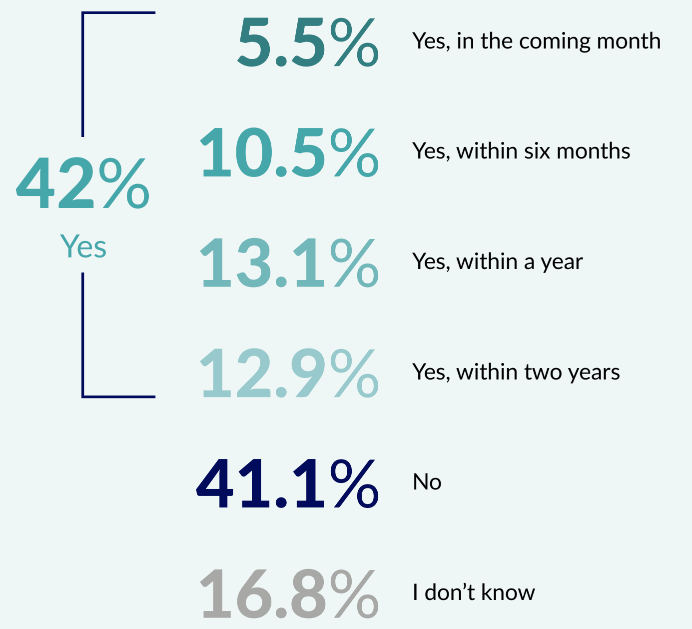
Employees' plans to change jobs

For the third year in a row in our research, the share of employees planning to change jobs remains higher than the share of those who do not declare such plans. This means that the readiness to change one's employment remains relatively high. This year, the willingness to change jobs within the next two years was declared by 42% of respondents, as compared to 43.6% a year ago. This is a slight decrease, although it may point to a gradual weakening of the dynamics of this trend and an increasingly cautious approach by employees to career decisions in an uncertain market.

Are you planning to change your current job?

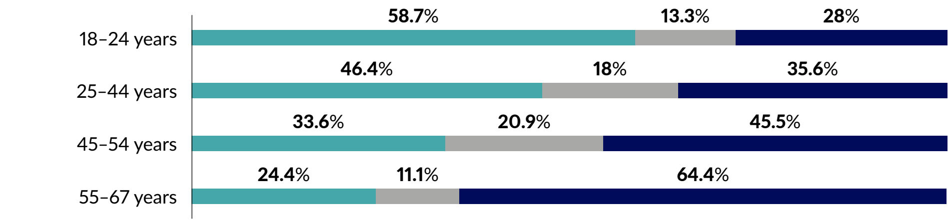


Are you planning to change your current job?

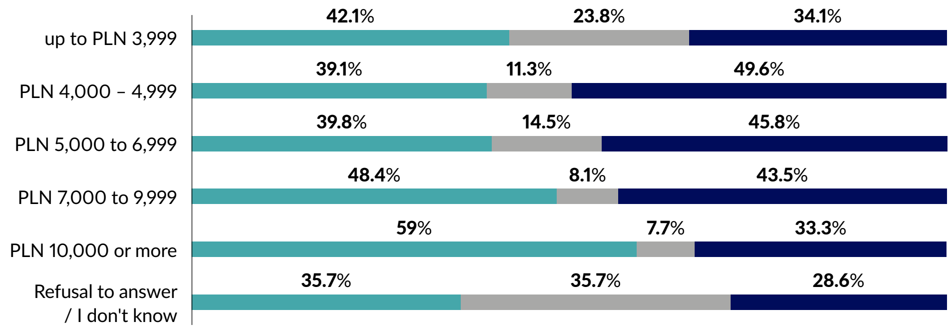


Who is considering a job change?

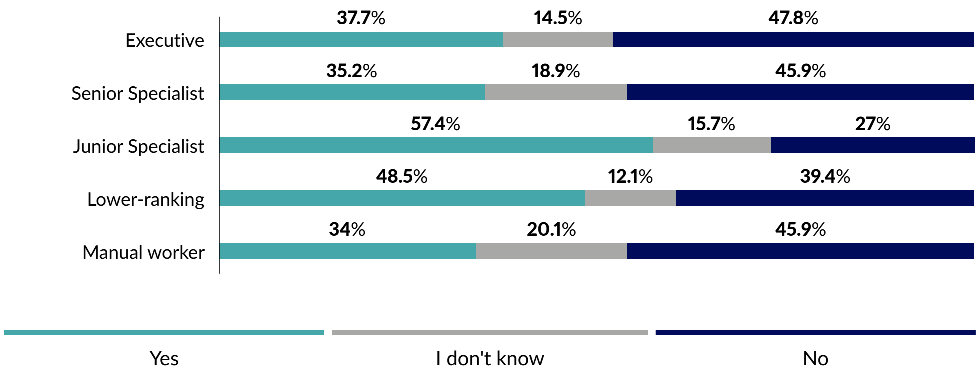
Job change plans across age groups



Job change plans across income levels



Job change plans across positions



Age is one of most impactful factors differentiating professional mobility. The youngest workers are the most eager to change their employment. In the 18–24 age group, 58.7% of respondents have declared so, similarly to last year. This is the highest result among all age groups. At the same time, the readiness to change employers decreases with age to a notable degree.

In this year's results one can also observe a correlation between income levels and the willingness to change one's employment. The higher one's pay, the more likely they are to seek new employment. People earning over PLN 10,000 have proven to be the most mobile – with 59% considering a change in employment. In contrast, people with lower incomes, who were more likely to declare plans to change employer a year ago, are now more cautious in this respect.

What hasn't changed is that junior specialists and lower-ranking employees are more eager to change their place of employment – and their willingness to do that has further increased. In other professional groups the willingness to change one's employer has generally decreased, particularly among manual workers where the decrease has reached 7.7 p.p., down to 34%.

The differences can also be seen on the industry level. Transportation and logistics workers are the most eager to change their workplace, at 56.9% of respondents – exceeding last year's result of 51%. The manufacturing sector is facing a similar situation, with 45.9% of respondents (+5.9 p.p. y/y) wanting to find a new employer. In other industries, the willingness to change jobs is lower than a year ago, with the lowest professional mobility seen in the public sector (26.8%).

Concerns about losing one's job

Concerns over losing one's job have increased slightly compared to a year ago. Currently, they are expressed by 33.3% of all respondents. A year ago this number amounted to 31.7% and a year before – 26%. This means that the share of employees feeling uncertain about their current job situation has been rising for a third year in a row. At the same time, the number of people without any such concerns has fallen as well – from 54.9% to 50.7% – while the number of those unable to make a clear appraisal has risen (from 13.5% to 16%).

It also bears mentioning the increase in the share of respondents bracing for the loss of their jobs within the next six months (from 6.7% to 10.3%). A year ago, such anxieties concerned more long-term perspectives. This could suggest that employees are seeing specific signals of impending risk – both in the broader market environment and within their organizations – and their concerns are more real.

Are you concerned about losing your job?

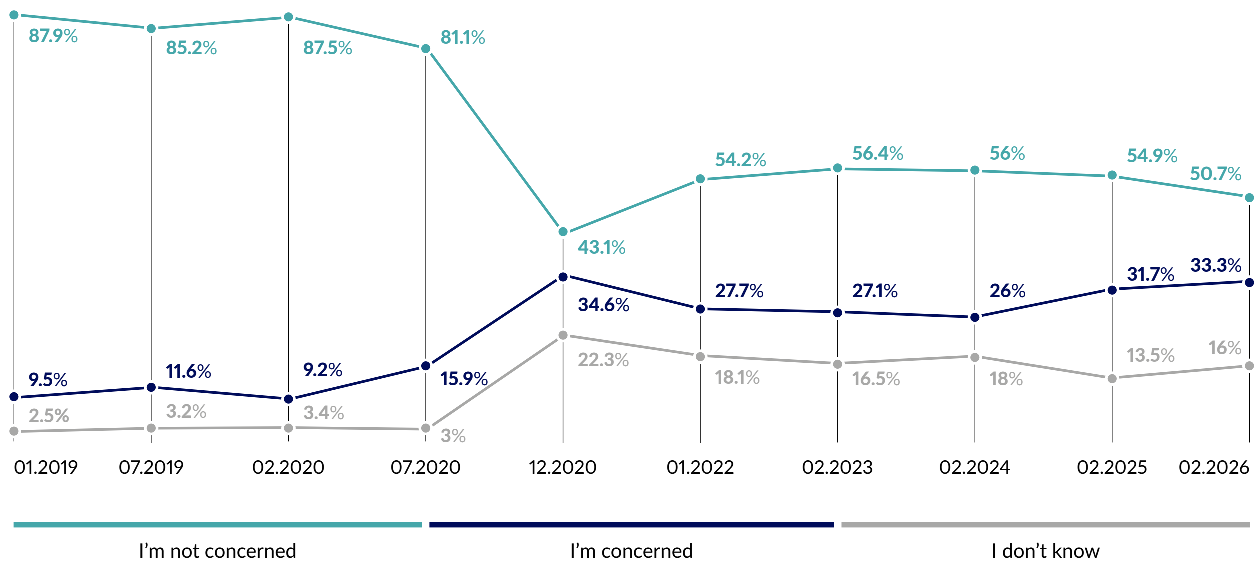
33.3% I am concerned

- **3.9%** Yes, in the coming month
- **10.3%** Yes, within six months
- **9.9%** Yes, within a year
- **9.2%** Yes, within two years

50.7% No

16% I don't know

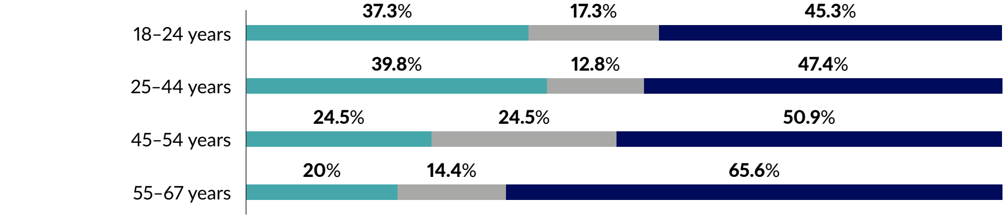
Are you concerned about losing your job?



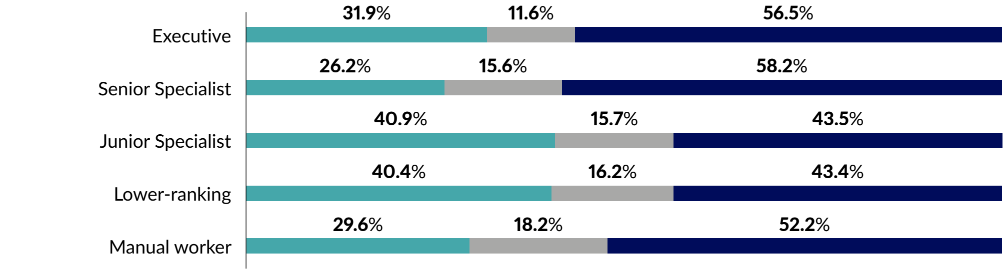
N=564

Who's most concerned about losing their job?

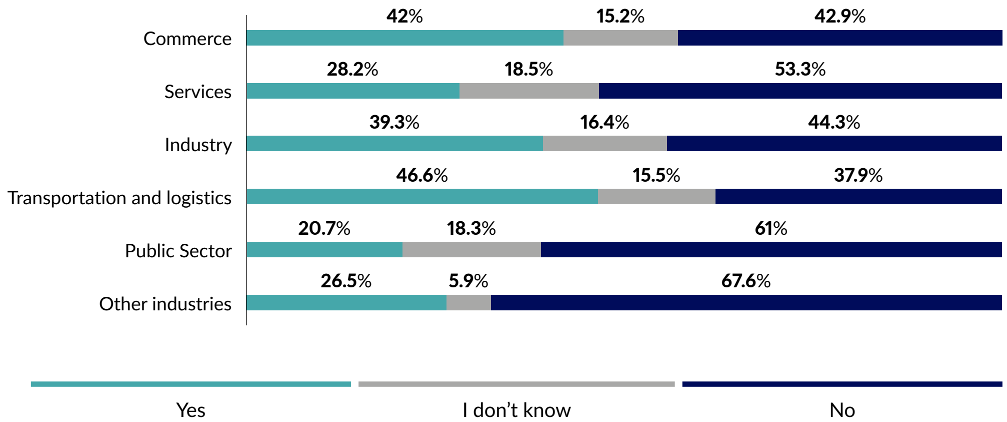
Concerns about job loss across age groups



Concerns about job loss across positions



Concerns about job loss across industries



Women are more likely than men to fear losing their jobs – 37.7% compared to **28.9%**. For women this means an increase of **6.9 p.p.** year on year, while among men it means a decrease of **3.6 p.p.**

Employees aged 18–44 have the greatest concerns. 37.3% of the **18–24 age group** expressed concerns (as compared to **39.7%** a year ago). For the **25–44 age group** this indicator increased from **30.8%** to **39.8%**. Among the older age groups, these concerns have weakened – by **6.6 p.p.** among those aged **45–54** and **8.6 p.p.** among those aged **55+**.

People earning over PLN 10,000 (net) rate their situation as the least stable, similarly to a year ago. Nevertheless, even this group saw their concerns intensify (to 48.7% this year). On the other hand, people earning between **PLN 7,000 – 9,999** are feeling the most confident **(22.6%).**

Transportation and Logistics workers are the most concerned about their ongoing employment (46.6%, marking a **15.8 p.p. increase y/y).** It's followed by **commerce (42%)** and **industry (39.3%)**. Those employed in the **public sector (20.7%)** and the **services industry (28.2%)** were the least anxious – furthermore, these were the only sectors that saw concerns decrease (by **8.6 and 6.4 p.p.**, respectively).

When it comes to internal hierarchies, the concerns over losing one's job have increased in all groups of positions, except for the **senior specialists,** for whom it has fallen by **3.7 p.p.**, to **26.2%**. The biggest increase took place among the **lower-ranking** employees, rising by **6.4 p.p. y/y**, reaching **40.4%**. In the case of **production workers**, the scale of concerns remained largely unchanged.

Residents of the **South-Western (42.9%), Central and Eastern regions (36.3% each)** were the most anxious. Moreover, their concerns grew since last year. The concerns were also rapidly growing in **Masovia** – rising from **21.1% to 33.3%**. Residents of the **Northern region** are the least concerned about losing their jobs. Such concerns have greatly eased for the **Southern region** – from **40% to 34.2%**.

Employee activity on the job market

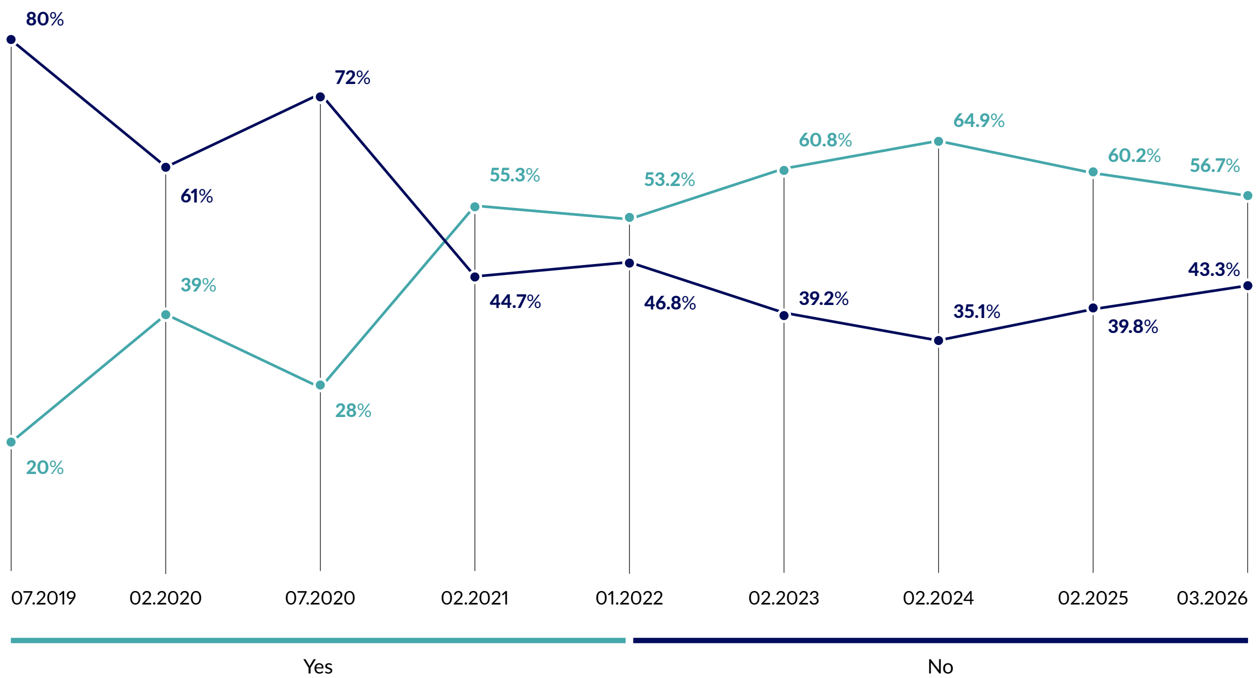
Are you currently looking for a job?

56.7%
Yes

43.4%
No

**Question asked to people concerned about losing their jobs and/or planning to change it • N=289*

Jobseeking – a comparison to the results of the previous research



We keep seeing high proactivity on the job market, primarily among people fearing a loss of employment or considering changing their workplaces. Ever since 2021, our research has seen the share of respondents actively seeking new jobs consistently exceed the share of those taking no action despite fearing layoffs or wanting to change their workplace. However, following an increase in 2024, this activity kept steadily weakening. As of writing, it amounts to 56.7%, making a decrease of 3.5 p.p. y/y. Presumably, by observing the current geopolitical situation and the market circumstances – including the numerous media reports on mass layoffs and growing unemployment – employees have become more cautious toward career decisions and more likely to stick with their current employer until they're ready to make a particular move.

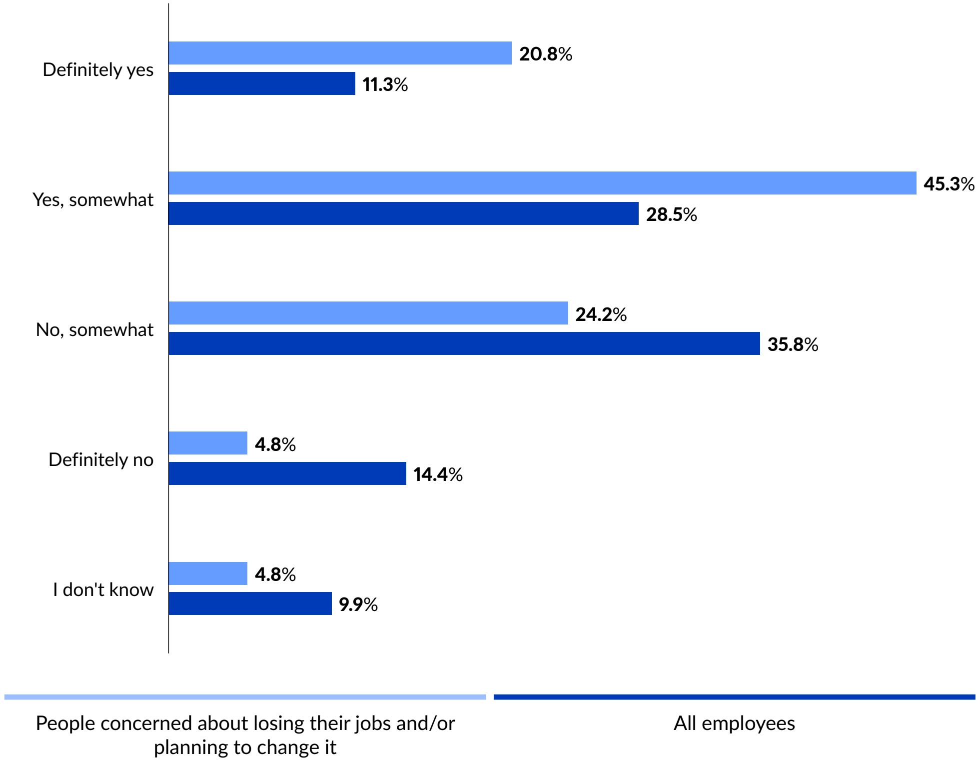
At the same time, a return to the pre-pandemic reality, when the majority of employees remained passive on the job market, doesn't seem particularly likely now. The employees have become more conscious, proactive and ready to react to the ever-changing circumstances. This is partially due to a generational change but also a growing adaptation to the job market, which over the past few years has been requiring significantly greater flexibility.

Are employees ready for reskilling?

Employee readiness for reskilling remains high, despite a slight weakening compared to a year ago. 39.8% of all respondents are considering changing their current profession – a year ago, this number amounted to 42.6%, meaning a decrease of 2.8 p.p.

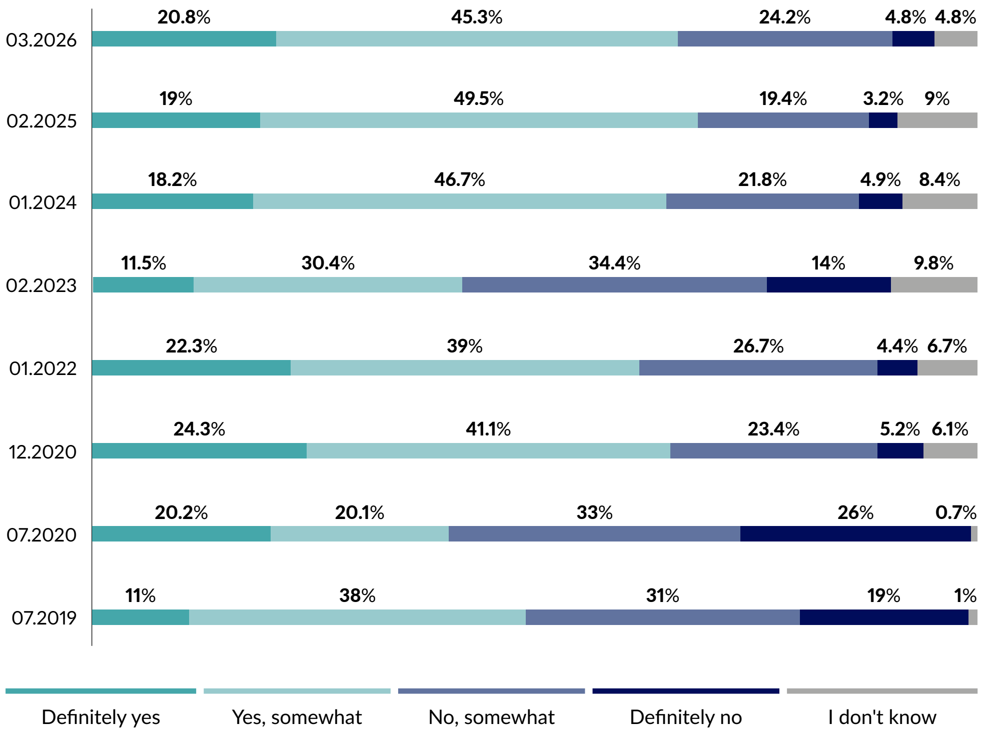
At the same time, the willingness to reskill is much higher among those concerned about losing their jobs and/or planning to change it. It was declared by 68.5% of them in 2025 and 66.1% in 2026. Despite meaning a decrease of 2.4 p.p. y/y, it nevertheless remains approximately two thirds of this group, indicating that many of the employees finding themselves in uncertain or "mobile" career circumstances are considering a change of not only their employer but also the broader direction of their careers.

Are you considering changing your current job/profession (reskilling)?



N=564

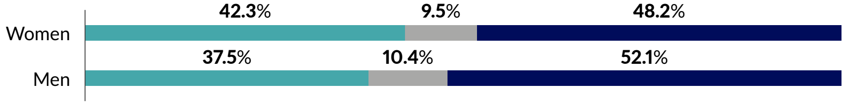
Plans to change jobs across years – among people concerned about losing their jobs and/or planning to change it*



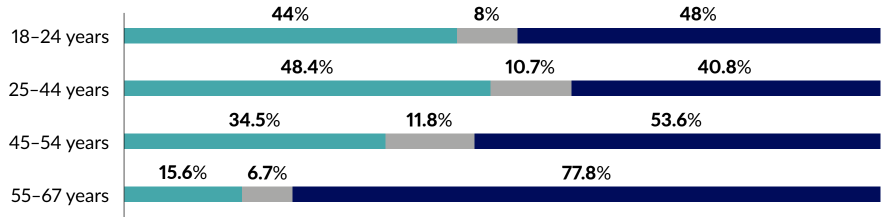
*Question asked to people concerned about losing their jobs and/or planning to change it • N=289

Who’s most interested in reskilling?

Reskilling plans across genders



Reskilling plans across age groups

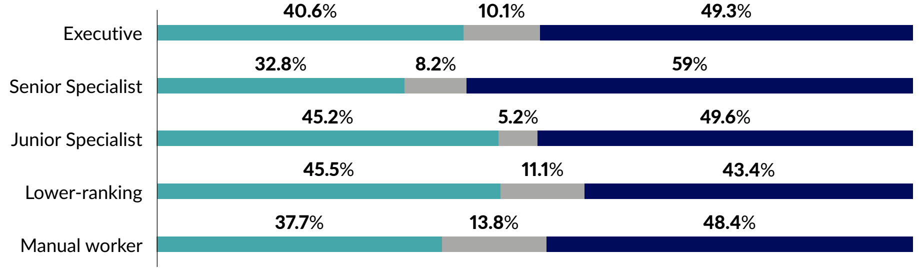


People in the 25–44 age group are the most open to reskilling (48.4%), as are transportation and logistics and commerce employees (51.7% and 47.3%, respectively). High readiness is also typical for lower-ranking employees (45.5%) and junior specialists (45.2%). This might suggest that it is those groups that have the strongest need to improve their work conditions, increase the sense of stability and find a job better suited to their expectations and growth opportunities.

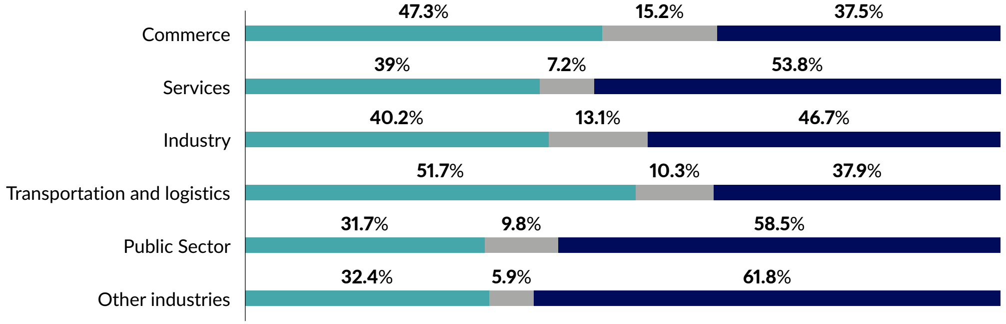
Older, more professionally experienced people working in more stable environments are the least eager to reskill. It is only considered by 15.6% of employees in the 55–67 age group, 31.7% of public sector workers and 32.8% of senior specialists. People aged 45–54 are relatively less likely to reskill (at 34.5%), as are those earning between PLN 7,000–9,900 (33.9%). Presumably, the better one’s professional position and sense of stability, the less open they are to reskilling.

However, it bears mentioning that the map of readiness for change has changed compared to the previous year – decreasing for many groups of respondents. The fall is particularly noticeable among men (from 44% to 37.5%), people aged 18–24 (from 54.4% to 44%), and those aged 55–67 (from 27.4% to 15.6%), as well as production workers (from 49.1% to 40.2%). At the same time, readiness increased among people aged 25–44 (from 46.6% to 48.4%), managers (from 38.2% to 40.6%), and especially in transportation and logistics, where the indicator rose from 44.6% to 51.7%. This may suggest that in a more uncertain labour market, employees are more cautious about making such a major change as reskilling into another profession.

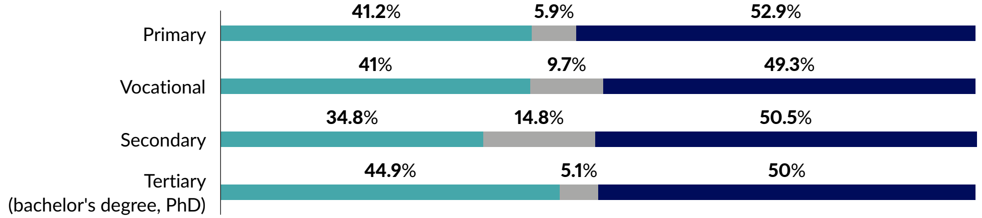
Reskilling plans across positions

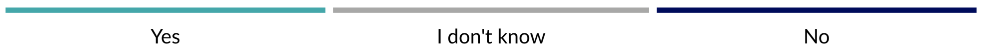


Reskilling plans across industries



Reskilling plans across education levels





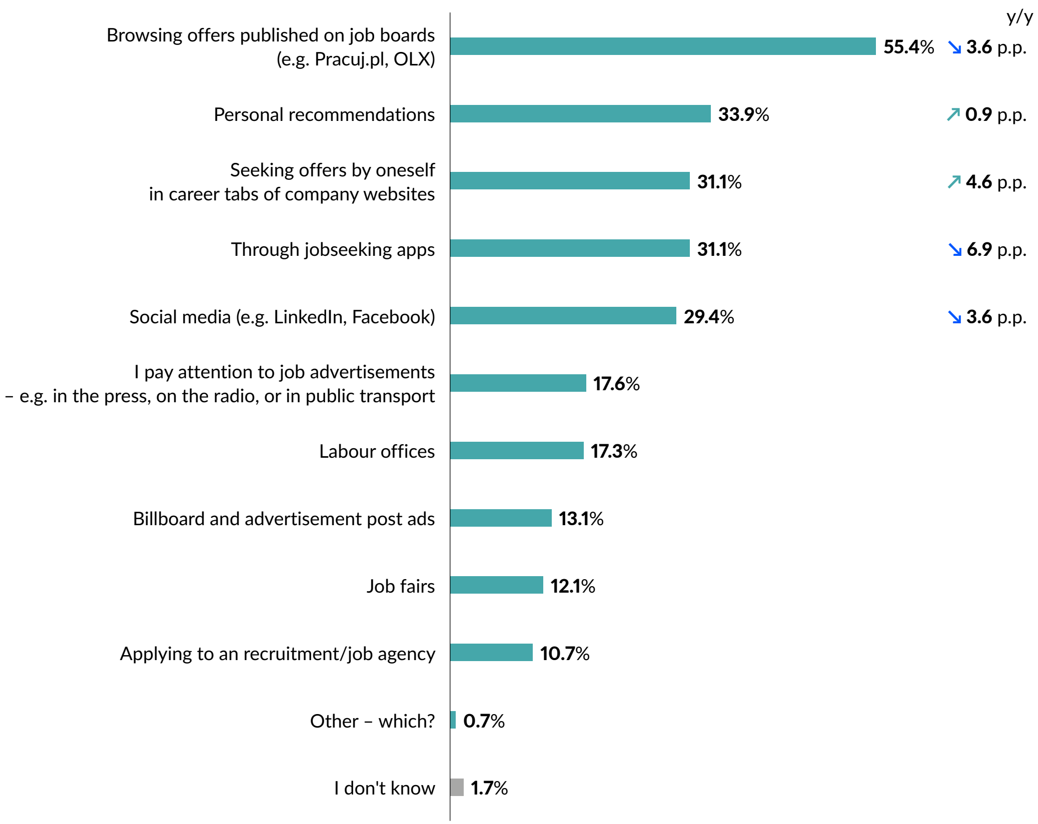
N=564

How are employees seeking jobs?

The means of seeking new jobs didn't notably change compared to a year ago. Job boards remain the single most important source of job offers, being utilized by 55.4% of respondents, even though their importance has fallen slightly since 2025. They were followed by personal recommendations (33.9%) and career tabs on company websites. The have gained significantly in importance, rising by 4.6 p.p. to 31.1%. The same percentage of respondents – 31.1% – uses jobseeking apps, meaning a notable drop of 6.9 p.p. compared to a year ago. Social media rank fifth, at 29.4%, marking another y/y fall. Other means of jobseeking, such as advertisements (17.6%), labor offices (17.3%), offline job offers, trade show presence or recruitment agencies (10.7%) are notably less important.

This could be an indication that employees are seeking employment in a very practical manner, utilizing the commonly available means. However, in comparison to a year ago they are less likely to utilize the "broader" solutions, such as social media or job search apps. Instead, the more direct channels are gaining in importance – such as personal recommendations or offers published on companies' own websites.

How are you planning to seek a new job? *



Job search methods – who uses them?

Job boards

The primary tool for all surveyed groups, especially the **55–67 age group (70%)**, people from cities with **over 500,000 residents (63%)** and **services sector** (65%). They are relatively less popular among those aged **18–24 (47%)** and **transportation and logistics workers (40%)**.

Personal recommendations

particularly important for the **55–67 age group (67%), managers (45%)** and **commerce employees (42%)**.

Career tabs on company websites

utilized primarily by the **55–67 age group (48%), senior specialists (46%)** and **public sector workers (47%)**.

Jobseeking apps

chosen primarily by the **45–54 age group (48%)** and **manufacturing workers (39%)**. Curiously, among the youngest **18–24 age group**, only **8%** use them.

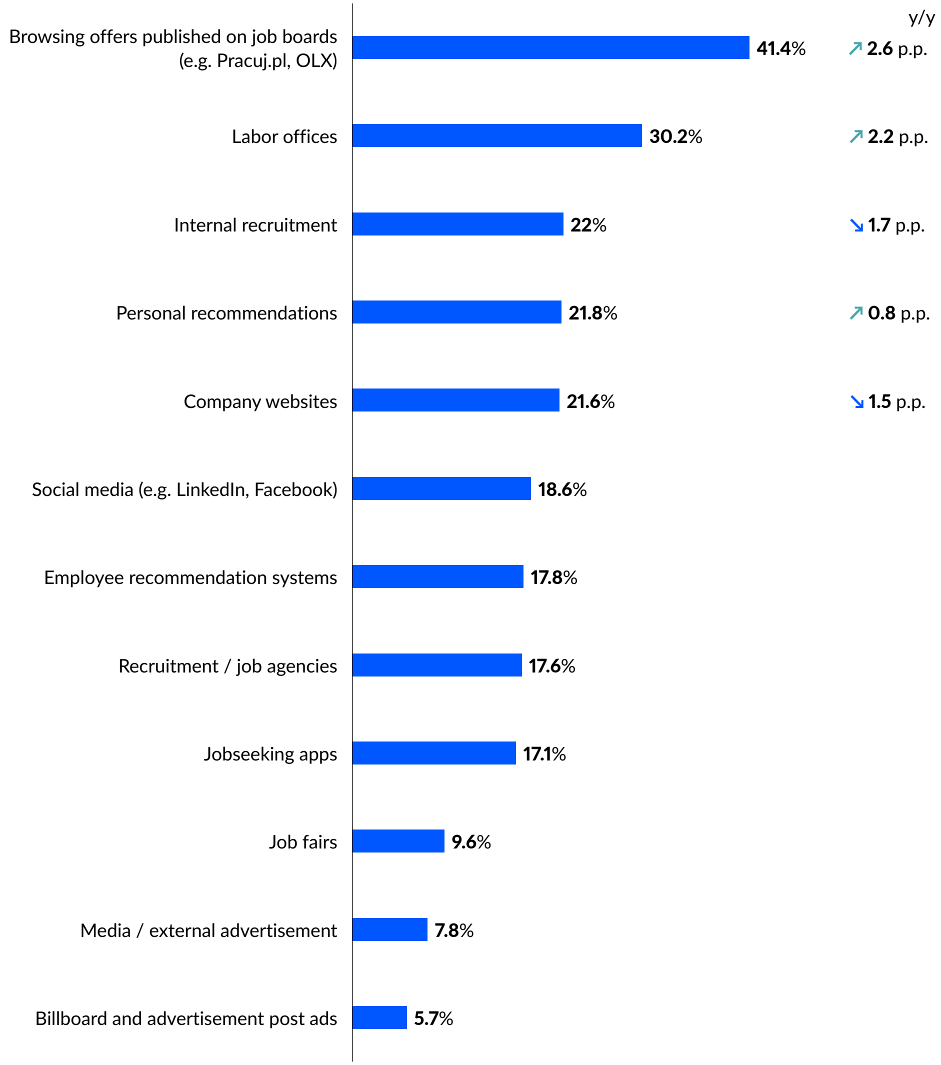
Social media

most important for residents of the **largest cities, 41%** of whom use them. They are preferred by **manual (35%)** and **services industry (38%)** workers.

Question asked to people concerned about losing their jobs and/or planning to change it • Respondents could select multiple answers • N=289

How are employers seeking employees?

How are you usually acquiring new employees?



Without a doubt, job boards are the most common way of sourcing employees, utilized by 41.4% of surveyed businesses. Employers are also eager to use the support of labour offices (30.2%), internal recruitment (22%) and personal recommendations (21.8%).

The selection of a source of candidates clearly correlates to both company size and industry. Smaller companies are more likely to utilize labour offices than their larger counterparts – at 36%, as compared to 28% of medium-sized and 26% of large enterprises. As the scale of operations grows, so does the importance of solutions such as internal recruitment (from 18% in small to 32% in large enterprises), recruitment agencies (from 14% to 23%) or a company website, used by a quarter of large enterprises. However, regardless of company size, job boards remain the most important way of reaching candidates – used by 39% of small, 43% of medium-sized and 42% of large enterprises.

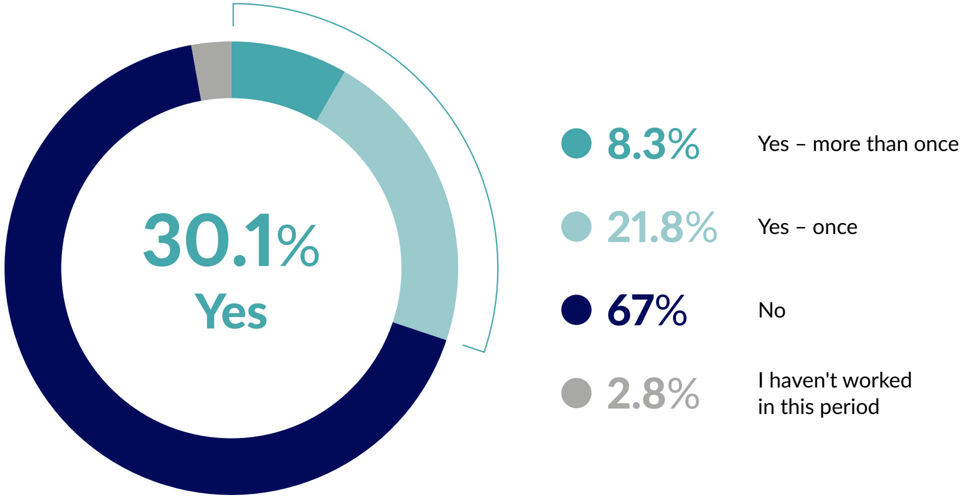
The differences are also visible across industries. Transportation and logistics (51%) and commerce (50%) businesses are generally reliant on job boards while the public sector is much less eager to use them (at 26%). The latter is focused on labour offices (39%), company websites (34%) and internal recruitment (29%). The service sector, moreso than other industries, leans on personal recommendations (26%). Industrial sector tends to put a bigger emphasis on labour offices (32%) and recruitment agencies (25%). On the other hand, social media are most eagerly utilized by businesses operating in the commerce sector (25%).

**Multiple choice question • Respondents could select up to 3 answers • N=510*

Counteracting employee turnover

Changing one's place of employment in the past 2 years

Have you changed your place of employment in the past 2 years?



N=564

The vast majority of respondents declared not having changed employers in the past 2 years (67%). At the same time, a fifth of all respondents claim to have changed their workplace once and a further 8.3% more than once.

However, it bears mentioning the differences between various groups of respondents. Age certainly has an impact on the frequency of job changes. Among the youngest respondents (aged 18–24) almost 55% declared having changed employer at least once in that period, with 20% doing so more than once. In the 25–44 age group, the same is true of 33.5% of respondents and among those aged 45–54 – only 20%. Such professional mobility of the younger workers is hardly a surprise – changes at the outset of one's professional career are more likely, as the first jobs are often treated as temporary and can often be unrelated to one's preferred professional path. The stabilization increases along with age. Employees tend to obtain increasingly high-ranking positions, choose their employment more consciously and intentionally and their general life situation pushes toward greater financial stability. This naturally lowers the willingness to change one's place of employment.

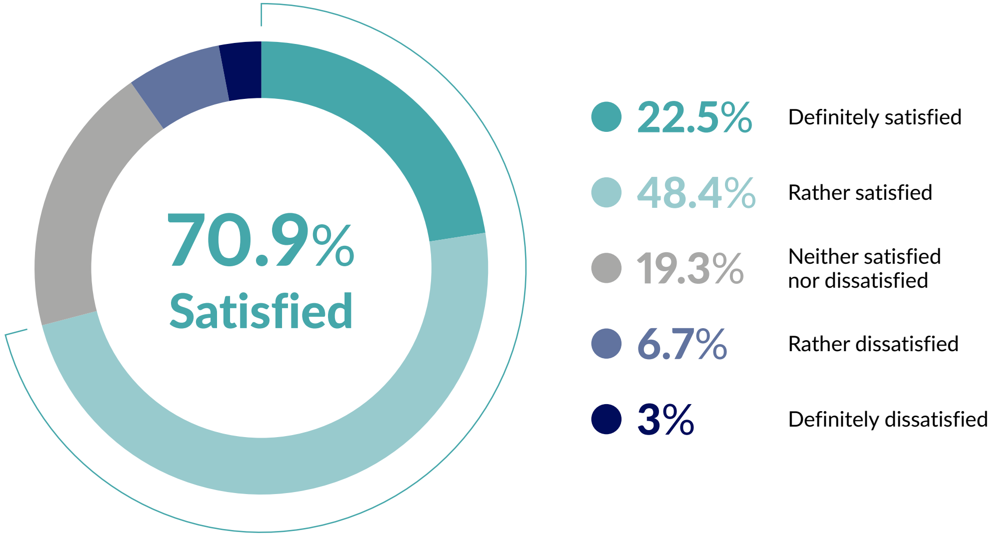
This is confirmed by the spread of answers across various positions. The mobility is clearly highest among junior specialists, 48.7% of whom changed their place of employment at least once over the past two years. 13.9% did so more than once. Senior specialists are the least mobile (at 21.4%), followed by lower-ranking employees (24.3%). One should also look at these results from the perspective of a broader generational change – younger people are more eager to change their place of employment when the terms don't reflect their expectations or when they seek better pay and growth opportunities.

There is also an interesting correlation across pay ranges. In groups earning under PLN 7,000 a month (net), the percentage of people that changed their workplace is similar, at approx. 30%. Those earning between PLN 7,000–9,999 are even less likely to change employment, suggesting that these sums provide them with a degree of financial security and that the positions are satisfying enough to prevent them from seeking new jobs. However, the situation is very different for those earning over PLN 10,000 – 51.3% of them have changed employers at least once in the past 2 years (with 28.2% doing so multiple times). This seems to align with the saying that it's easier to get a pay raise by finding a new job than getting one at one's current workplace.

The differences are also visible across various industries. Public sector employees have shown the least professional mobility, with only 13.5% of respondents from this group having changed their jobs. In the manufacturing sector, this number reached 24%. The greatest willingness to change workplaces was exhibited by transportation and logistics workers, 50% of whom had changed their place of employment in the analyzed period, with 19% doing so more than once.

Satisfaction with current job

How satisfied are you with your current job?



N=564

The results of the past three editions of the research are showing that the job satisfaction levels are not only remaining high but also steadily growing. In 2024 and 2025, 68% of employees declared satisfaction with their current workplace, and in 2026 this figure rose to 70.9%. At the same time, the percentage of rather unsatisfied employees has fallen, from 11.6% to 6.7%. However, it bears mentioning that despite overall improvement, the percentage of highly dissatisfied workers rose from 1.5% to 3%. Presumably, these results were influenced by improving salaries, growing employer consciousness and taking more HR measures such as ensuring employee wellbeing and growth, limiting turnover or employer branding activities.

At the same time, detailed data shows that workplace satisfaction isn't distributed evenly – it is clearly influenced by one's age, income level and position within the organizational structure.

Who is the most satisfied with their job?

Work satisfaction is highest on both ends of professional careers – among those aged **55–67 (77.8%)** and **18–24 (77.3%)**. The lowest results belong to the **45–54 age group (66.4%) –** it's often the stage of the greatest pressure in both professional and private lives, when people take on more demanding positions of high responsibility. At the same time, this group might feel that their opportunities for promotion or major career change are far lower than before.

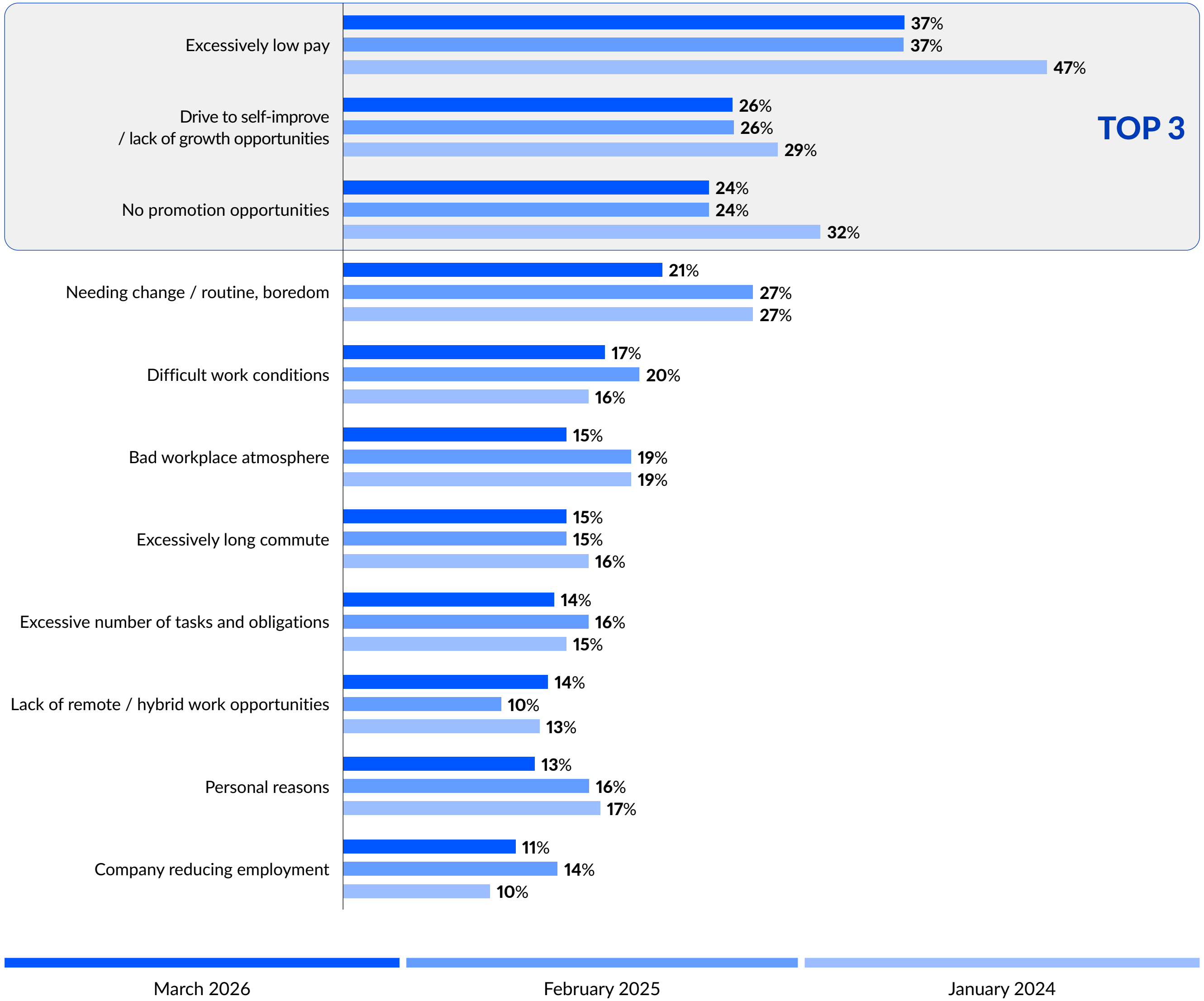
The executives proved to be most content (82.6%), followed by **senior and junior specialists (approx. 73%)**. **Manual workers (68.6%)** placed behind them, with the **lower-ranking employees** proving the least satisfied **(61.6%)**. The dissatisfaction of lower-ranking positions might arise from having less autonomy, impact on workplace conditions, limited promotion opportunities and more frequent feelings of underappreciation. These results don't differ meaningfully from last year's research.

Undoubtedly job satisfaction is strongly tied to a sense of financial appreciation. Work satisfaction increases along with the respondents' income. Those earning between **PLN 7,000–9,999** declared the highest satisfaction, at **80.7%** of content answers. Those earning **PLN 10,000 or more** also placed high, at **76.9%**, as did the **PLN 5,000–6,999** pay range at **77.1%**. The lowest work satisfaction was observed among those earning **up to PLN 3,999** at **61.9%**.

Industry as well as transportation and logistics are sectors struggling with the lowest reported work satisfaction. Nevertheless, the overall share of satisfied workers is still relatively high at **66.4%** and **67.3%**, respectively.

Reasons for changing one's job

Why are you planning to change your current job? *



**Question asked to people concerned about losing their jobs and/or planning to change it • Respondents could select multiple answers. • N=237*

Most common reasons for changing jobs

- **Low wages remain the primary reason for wanting to find a new job, pointed out by 37% of all employees**. This is the same result as last year but notably lower than in 2024 (47%) or 2023 (51%). The financial pressure didn't disappear but professional growth and quality-oriented expectations are catching up to it.
- **The drive to self-improve and a lack of growth opportunities placed second (26%)**, marking a similar result to the past two years. It shows that the need for professional and personal development is a very stable motivation for job changes – a permanent aspect of employee expectations rather than a temporary effect of the market situation.
- **Lack of promotion opportunities is the third most important reason for leaving a job – pointed out by a quarter of all respondents, like a year ago**. However, the importance of this factor is lower than 2-3 years ago. This could mean that promotions are no longer the only obvious way to improve one's professional situation – a better alignment with one's scope of obligations or work conditions without a formal change of one's position is also important.
- **Fewer people are willing to change their jobs due to boredom or routine. It has been mentioned by 21% of respondents**, as compared to 27% in 2024 and 2025. This could suggest greater caution caused by the job market getting less predictable – even if one's job is unsatisfying, the need for a change "for change's sake" is weaker when one requires more safety and stabilization.

What would convince employees to stay at their current company?

What could realistically help retain employees who are thinking about leaving the company? Financial factors are proving the most effective. 84.3% of respondents have pointed out salary increases as an important or very important factor, with the latter declared by 58.6% of people. Additional bonuses are a close second – at 80.6% and 51.1%, respectively. Employees are also placing a premium on greater opportunities for professional growth (76.4% claiming it to be important or very important), non-wage benefits (72.2%), flexible work hours (72.2%) and better workplace atmosphere (71.3%). This shows that while money is important, it doesn't fully exhaust the problem. For many employees, it's just as important whether the company is able to offer them future outlooks, convenience and better experience of everyday work. In order to truly increase the willingness to remain at a company, employers must combine financial aspects with growth opportunities, flexibility and improved comfort of work.

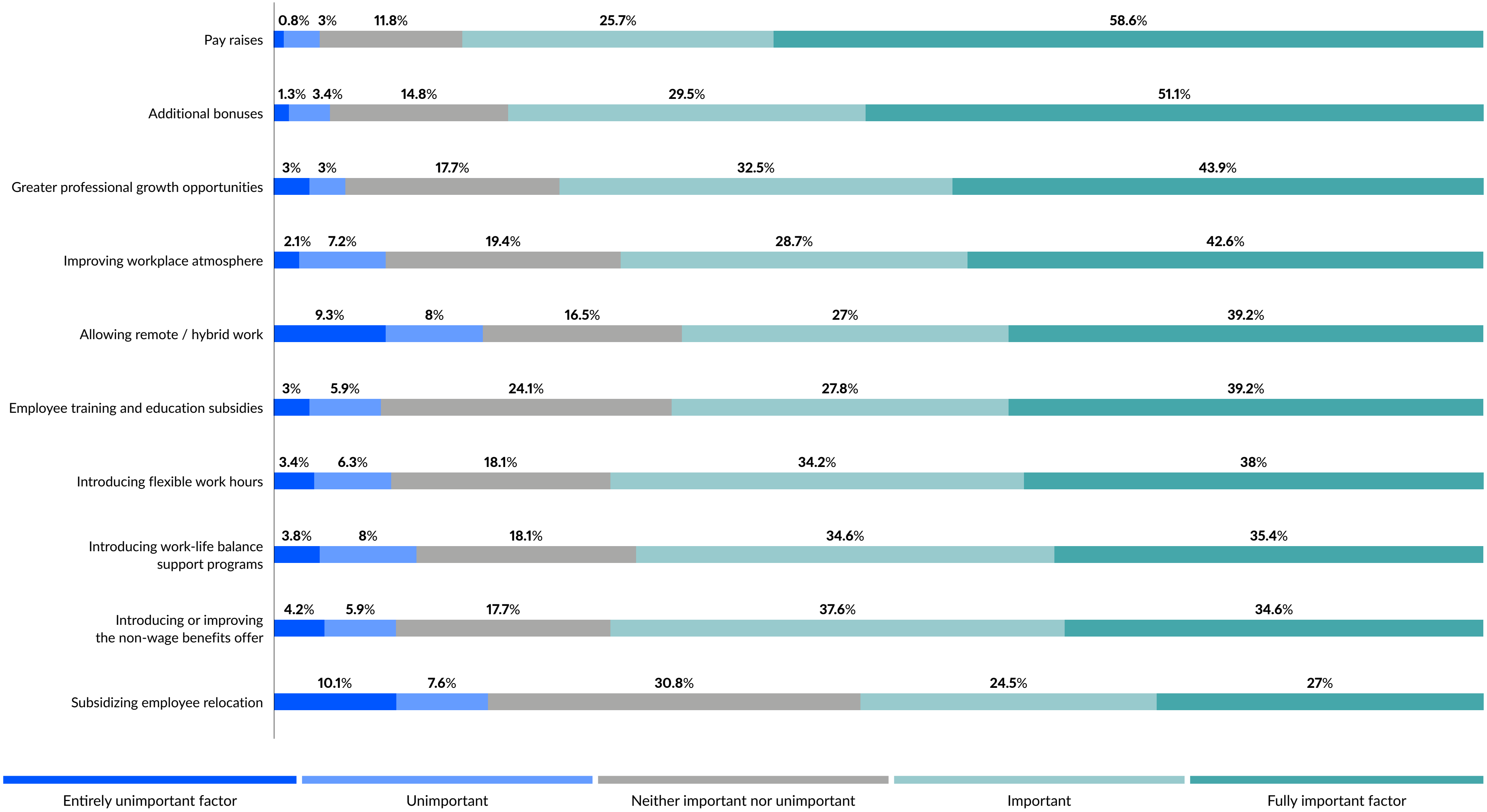
What, aside from pay raises, motivates employees to remain in a company?

Perspectives of various employee groups ("important" and "very important" answers, combined)

Position			
Executives	additional bonuses – **89%**	work-life balance support programs – **89%**	better workplace atmosphere – **89%**
Senior Specialists	additional bonuses – **86%**	non-wage benefits – **84%**	flexible work hours – **84%**
Junior Specialists	greater professional development opportunities – **82%**	additional bonuses – **79%**	flexible work hours – **79%**
Lower-ranking employees	additional bonuses – **75%**	greater professional development opportunities – **69%**	better workplace atmosphere – **65%**
Manual workers	additional bonuses – **80%**	better workplace atmosphere – **74%**	greater professional development opportunities – **72%**

What would convince employees to stay at their current company?

What action taken by your company would have a notable impact on your willingness to stay at your current company? *



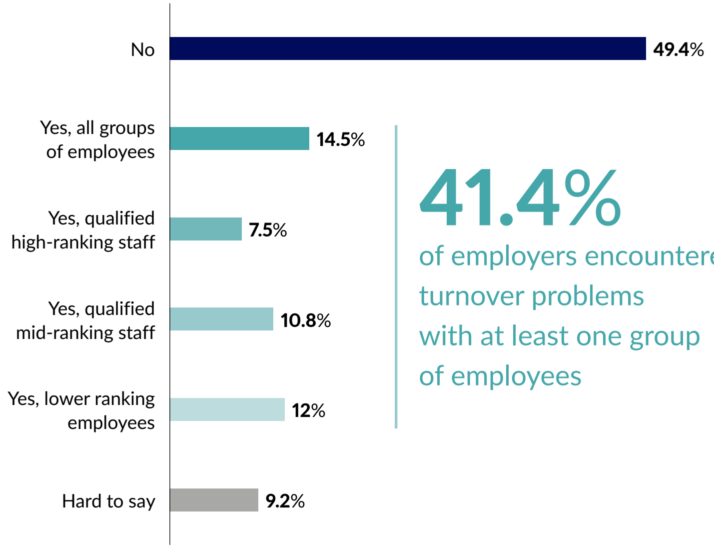
Question asked to people planning to change their job • N=237

Turnover – a growing challenge for the businesses

The issue of employees leaving remains one of the major challenges faced by employers, even though its scale shrank slightly in 2026. 41.4% of surveyed companies faced turnover problems with at least one group of employees, as compared to 47.1% a year ago. This means that the problem concerns almost half of all businesses.

Businesses were less likely to encounter issues related to losing lower-ranking employees (12%, as compared to 17% a year ago), qualified mid-ranking staff (11% vs 13%) or executive staff (8% as compared to 9%). At the same time, the percentage of businesses facing issues across all groups of employees has increased slightly, from 14% to 15%. Turnover tends to affect small and large businesses more – 44% and 41%, respectively, declared facing turnover issues concerning at least one group of employees. Across various industries, commerce is the most affected by employee turnover, especially among lower-ranking employees.

Have you experienced employee turnover in recent months? If so, which groups of employees?



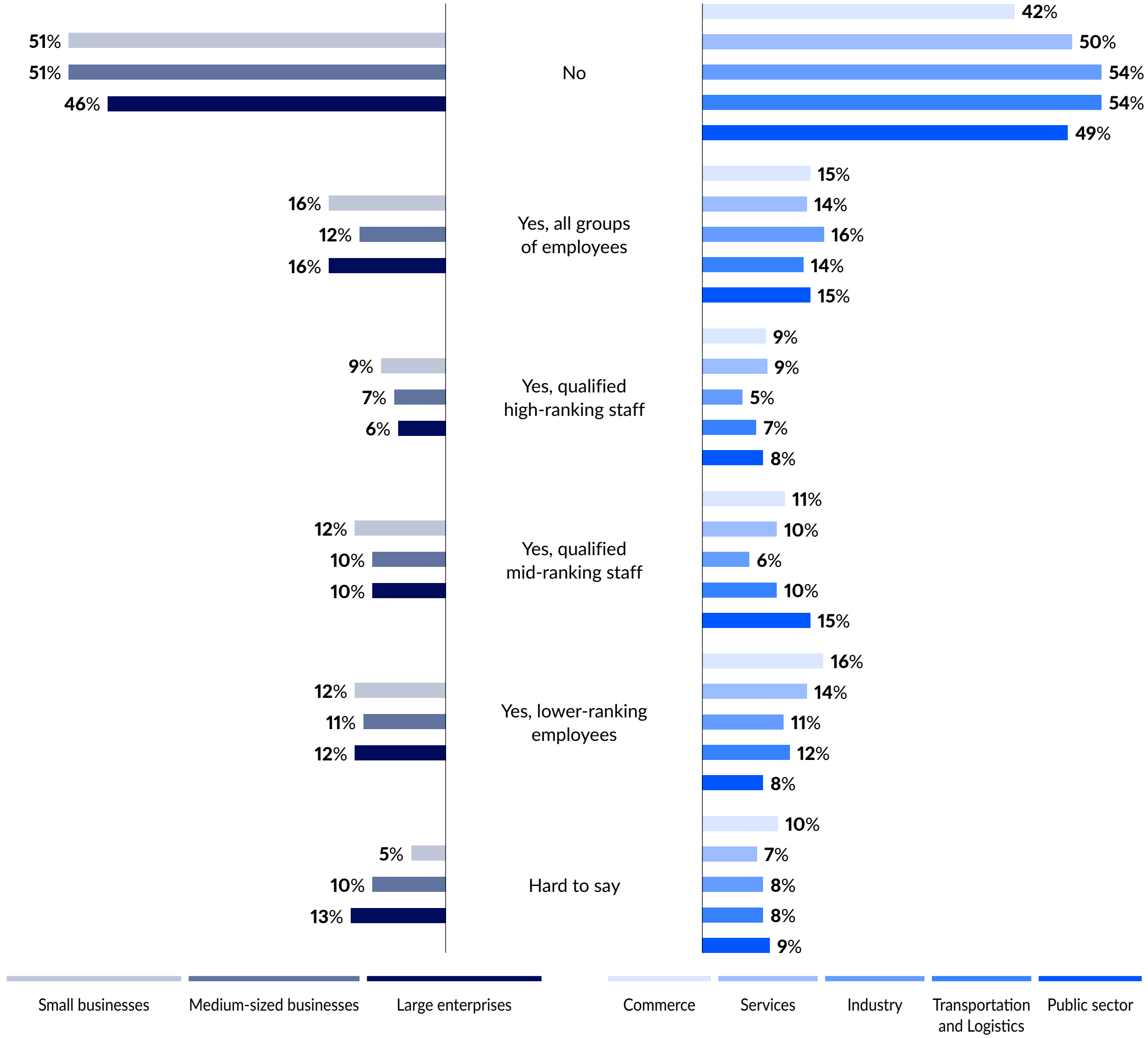
41.4%

of employers encountered turnover problems with at least one group of employees

Respondents could select multiple answers • N=510

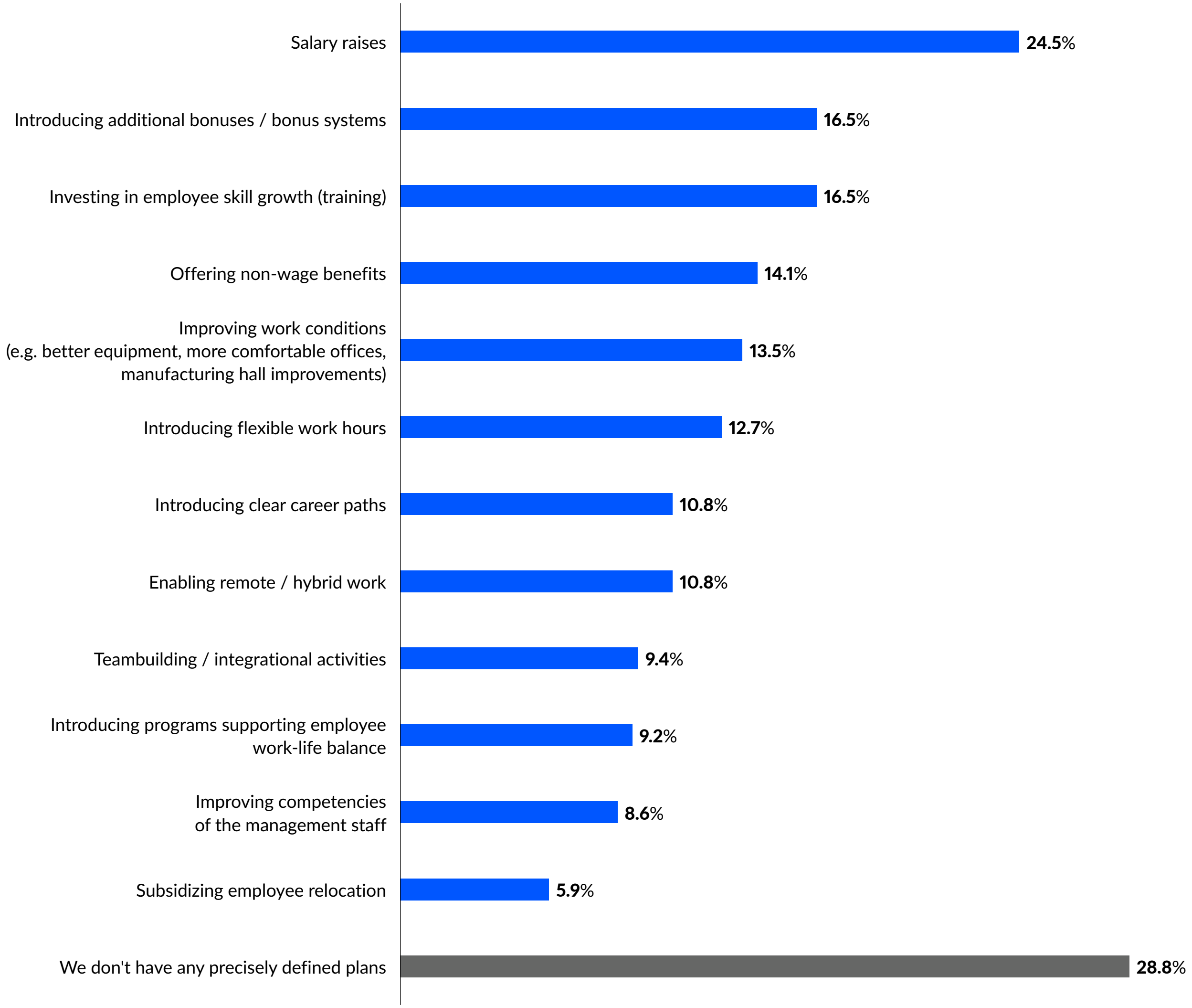
Employee turnover across company sizes

Employee turnover across industries



Counteracting employee turnover

What actions does your company plan to take this year to reduce employee turnover?



Respondents could select multiple answers • N=510

An increasing number of businesses strive to consciously decrease the risk of employees leaving. The most commonly chosen method of doing so is pay raises, utilized by a quarter of all businesses. It bears mentioning that it is the solution most expected by employees themselves.

Employers are also focusing on bonuses (16.5%) and developing employee skills and qualifications (16.5%). Some of the organizations are also attempting to improve employee retention through non-wage benefits (14.1%), improving work conditions (13.5%) and more flexible work hours (12.7%).

The selection of solutions depends on the specificity of each organization. Pay raises tend to be proposed by large enterprises (30%), as well as transportation and logistics (29%) and services (26%) sectors. The bonuses are utilized most commonly in the commerce, services and industry sectors (19–20%). Developing employee skills as a means of increasing retention is most typical for the public sector (21%), as well as transportation and logistics (19%). The latter also tends to rely more on non-wage benefits (23%). Measures focused on improving work conditions are favored by organizations operating in commerce, services and public sectors.

On one hand, we are seeing high readiness to invest in employee retention. On the other, more than a quarter of all businesses aren't taking any action in this regard, or are limiting themselves to reactive measures with no long-term plans. Yet, given the ongoing changes in the job market, shrinking working age population and difficulties in filling out emptied vacancies, even a small turnover could become a major challenge, impacting the continuity of operations, team effectiveness and generating additional costs.

Lucyna Sikorska

HR Business Partner, F-M Bimet S.A.

Employee turnover costs more than the budgets would say

Employee turnover is one of the largest and still underestimated operational costs. In many businesses, the analysis of its financial impact is limited to a simple summary of expenses related to filling the vacancy: publishing a job offer, HR department's workload or recruitment agency's commission. Yet in truth, this is merely the tip of the iceberg.

The real cost begins at the moment an employee leaves. This leads to falling productivity of the team and the need for overtime work, increasing the risk of mistakes, overburdening key employees and lowering motivation. In manufacturing and operational environments, missing even a single person can hamper the effectiveness of an entire production line. These are real losses, even though they rarely make their way to financial reports.

Further costs appear at the stage of onboarding the replacement employee. Depending on the exact position, reaching the expected effectiveness usually takes 3–6 months and in the case of specialist or management roles even up to 9–12 months. During this time, the company is not only bearing salary-related expenses but also commits the time of that employee's superior and coworkers to train them, correct their mistakes and oversee their work. This is accompanied by growing costs of training, vocational medicine examinations, equipment, work clothes or access to systems.

One should also bear in mind the non-financial costs: loss of organizational knowledge, customer relationships, process experience or cultural adjustment. This transitional period sees increased risk of mistakes arising from employee's insufficient experience or overburdening the team, possibly leading to more customer complaints. Such consequences may only become visible over time, causing additional financial and branding damage.

The issue lies in the fact many organizations are only accounting for the direct costs related to refilling the vacancy and ignoring the costs of lost productivity and full onboarding. As a result, the turnover appears to be "acceptable" as its true financial consequences aren't visible in a single budget entry. Only by adopting a more holistic outlook – taking into account the time needed to reach full effectiveness and the impact on teams and their results – can one understand that an investment in employee retention is oftentimes more profitable than having to constantly replace employees that leave.

Cezary Mączka

Group Chief People & Culture Officer, Wielton S.A.

How to shorten the onboarding of a new employee?

How can one ensure that a new employee quickly reaches independence and full effectiveness? The answer is usually "good onboarding". This is obviously true but doesn't tell the whole story. According to my observations, many organizations perceive the onboarding as a bit of a deus ex machina. In the ancient theater, the denouement of a play saw the appearance of a "God from the machine" who immediately solved all problems faced by the protagonists. Similarly, there is an expectation that going through onboarding will make a person automatically find their place in the organization and be able to work with full effectiveness.

However, the reality proves much more mundane. According to research, approximately 60% of businesses don't give their employees clearly defined goals. At the same time, a quarter of all employees wants the expectations toward them to be better defined and only 12% of them declare fully understanding their tasks and KPIs.

This data largely explains why the onboarding process is often so prolonged. If an employee doesn't know their destination, one shouldn't expect they'll reach it quickly.

In practical terms, reaching full efficiency usually takes between 3 and 9 months, depending on a given role's complexity. However, this time can be shortened. It is key to clearly define goals for the first 30, 60 and 90 days, provide regular feedback from the manager and provide access to knowledge and people able to help truly understand the organization.

The largest barriers to the onboarding process are surprisingly mundane. Using the 5 Whys method, a simple Lean tool, will allow us to quickly understand the source of the problem.

Why the onboarding isn't working? Because the employee lacks clearly defined goals. Why do they lack them? Because their manager is overburdened with daily tasks. Why did that happen? Because human resources are often managed "intuitively", without predefined standards. Why? Because organizations are siloed off.

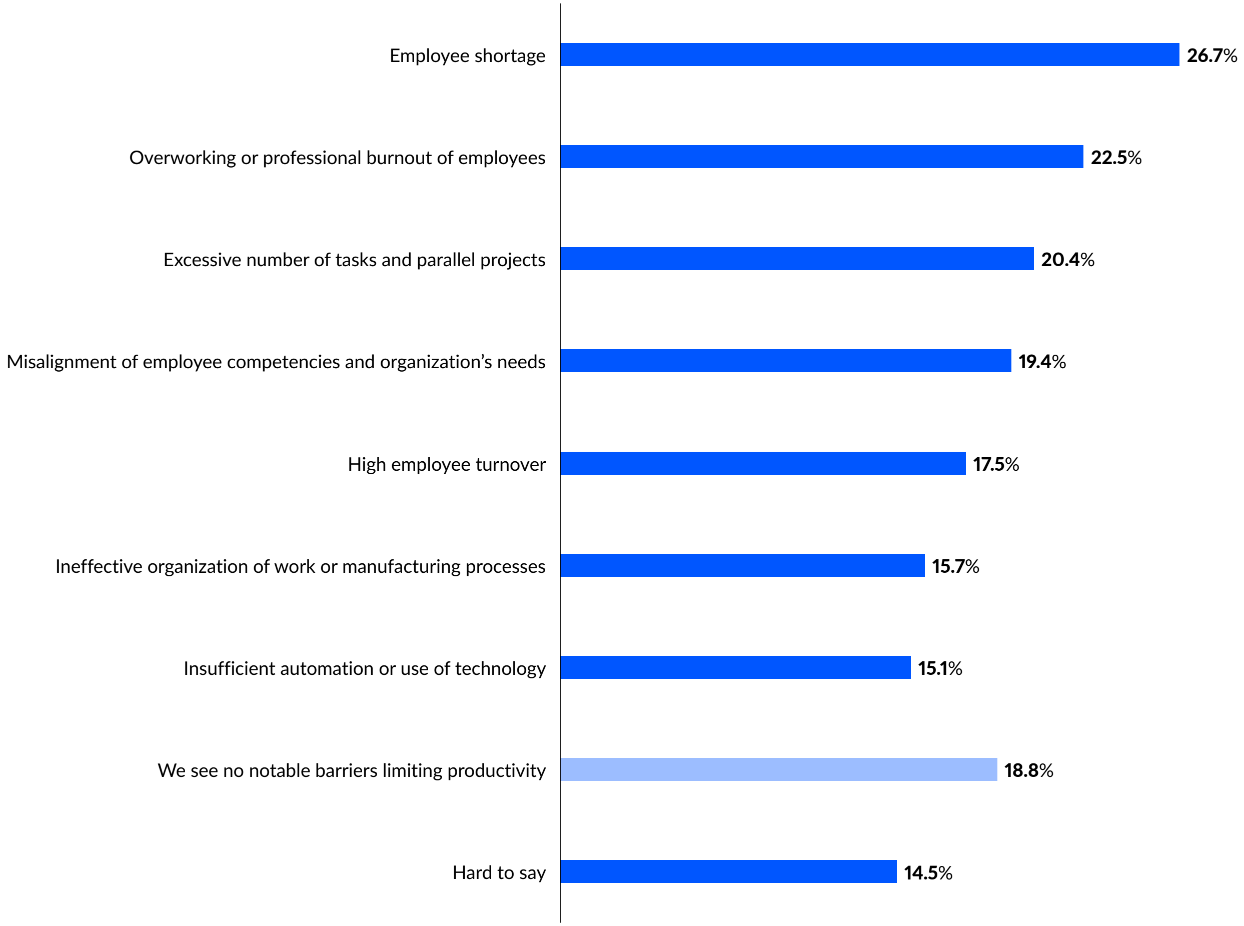
We are also facing a paradox: the costs of recruitment and onboarding usually fall under HR, rather than manager's budget. As a result, the latter's motivation to ensure the quality of the onboarding is often limited.

Therefore, effective onboarding begins not in the HR department but with the managers – starting with clearly defined business goals. Without them, even the best designed onboarding programs will remain no more than well-prepared background scenery.

Productivity in a cost-pressure environment

Key barriers to productivity – employer perspective

What is currently the largest barrier to productivity in your company?



Respondents could select up to 3 answers • N=510

When pointing out the most common barriers to productivity, employers tend to agree on employee shortages (26.7%). The most important limitations (of which the respondents could select up to 3) also included overworking and professional burnout (22.5%), excessive number of tasks and parallel projects (20.4%), as well as misalignment of employee competencies and organization's needs (19.4%) and high turnover (17.5%).

Such results suggest that employers tend to see barriers to productivity as a primarily "human resources" rather than a technological issue. This is signaled by the low placement of such factors as ineffective organization of work or manufacturing processes (15.7%) or insufficient automation or use of technology (15.1%).

However, this doesn't mean that technology plays a small role here. It's possible that many teams are focusing on the problems of "here and now": employee shortages, overworked teams, turnover and competence gaps. Given their presence, insufficient automation or use of technology can fall into the background, even if in practical terms they're also limiting the effectiveness.

It also bears mentioning that 18.8% of surveyed businesses don't see major barriers to productivity in their organizations and further 14.5% struggle to point out any. This could mean both a relatively good situation of some of the organizations or that some businesses don't properly measure and analyze their productivity in a way allowing them to precisely indicate the source of their problems.

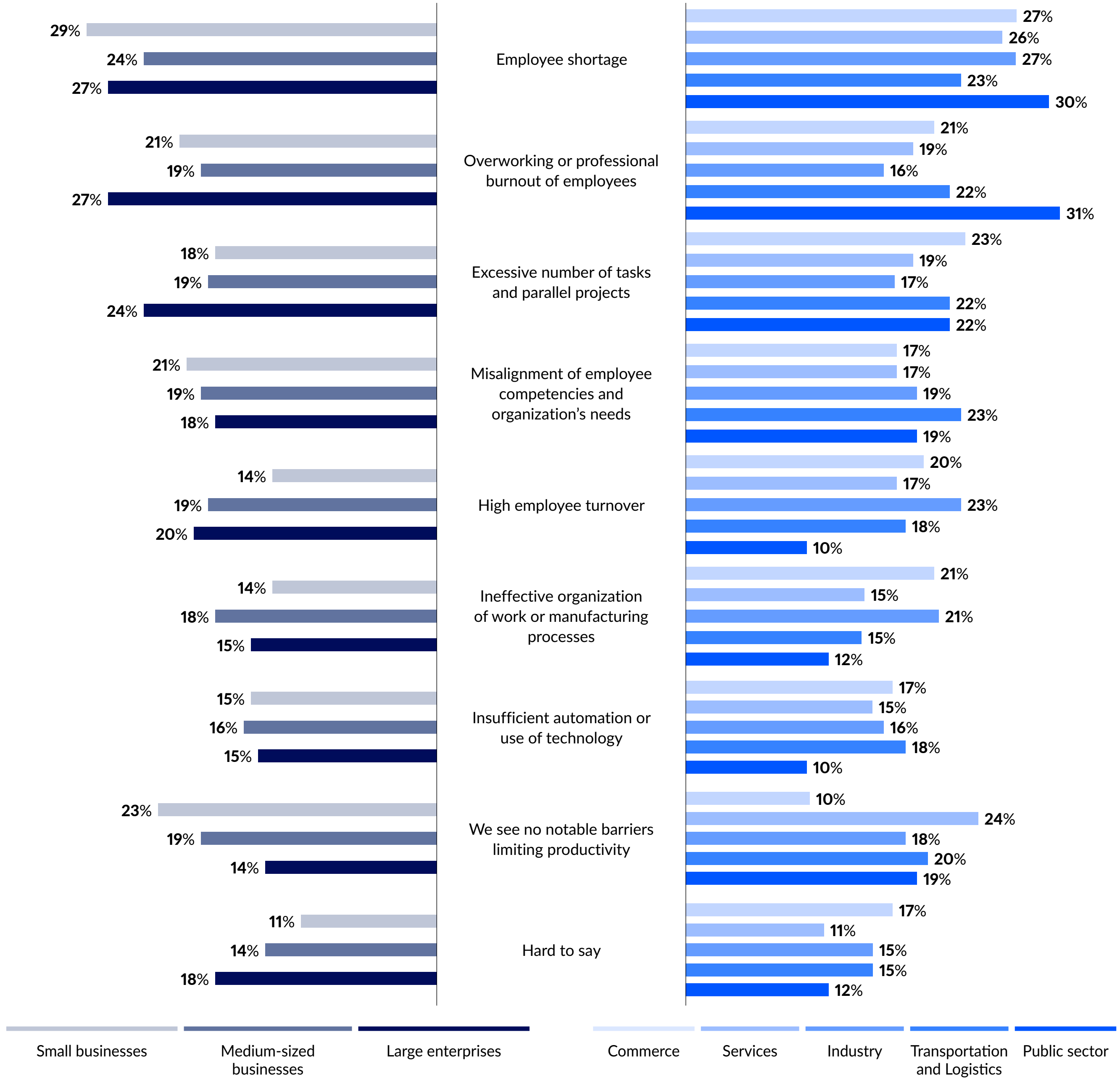
Key barriers to productivity – employer perspective

Among smaller businesses, the most common problem concerns employee shortages (29%), accompanied by misalignment of employee skills and organization's needs (21%) and employee overwork (21%). Medium-sized businesses are also struggling with employee shortages (24%), however their accompanying problems are much more dispersed – with about a fifth of them also pointing toward overworking and burnout, an excessive number of tasks, competence gaps and employee turnover. On the other hand, large enterprises are tackling employee shortages (27%), overworking (27%) and excess number of tasks and projects (24%) in equal measure. They're also more affected by employee turnover than other businesses (at 20%).

Employee shortages remain one of the most pressing barriers in nearly all sectors. As for other factors, commerce is struggling with excessive number of tasks (23%) and inefficient organization of processes (21%). In the services sector, businesses are troubled primarily by employee overworking and burnout, as well as the excessive number of tasks being implemented at the same time. In industry sector, aside from employee shortages (27%), the high turnover is also proving a major issue (23%), pointed out more frequently than in other sectors. When it comes to transportation and logistics, employee shortages are often paired with employee overwork, excessive number of tasks (at 22% each), and misalignment of employee skills and organizational needs (23%). At the same time, the comparably lower share of answers concerning turnover, ineffective process organization or automation could suggest that the sector is faring better in these aspects. On the other hand, the public sector is most affected by overworked employees (31%) and staff shortages (30%).

Reasons for limited productivity across company sizes

Reasons for limited productivity across company sizes



Respondents could select up to 3 answers • N=510

Jarosław Olender

Director, Strategic Employment Planning and Productivity Growth, ArcelorMittal Poland S.A.

How to identify barriers to productivity within an organization and which of them are hardest to overcome?

Along with the increased salaries in Poland, which are getting closer to Western European levels, the business are losing their cost advantage that hitherto arose from lower wages, despite relatively low work productivity. To retain competitiveness, businesses need to increase their productivity by implementing modern technologies, conscious resource management and developing a culture of innovation and cooperation.

Productivity means much more than the speed of work. It is primarily the ability to create value through optimal use of resources. To successfully identify barriers in this regard, especially the hidden ones, the organizations must analyze processes, technologies, work organization and culture, all in parallel.

At ArcelorMittal Poland S.A., we utilize a systemic combination of benchmarking and tool time analysis for analyzing processes and technologies, in order to gain a full perspective of process losses and highlight most effective avenues for improvement. Benchmarking is a key tool allowing for a comparison of one's results with those of other facilities, industry at large or broader market standards, allowing for unambiguous identification of whether the problems are local or systemic.

On the other hand, the tool time analysis, that is observing in the place of its performance, reveals barriers that remain invisible to reports such as prolonged setups, micro-breaks or non-ergonomic workplaces. These seemingly small disruptions can add up to notable losses.

To facilitate behavioral and organizational culture analysis, at ArcelorMittal Poland S.A., we utilize tools such as AVA (Added Value Analysis), which allows us to more precisely unveil barriers invisible to KPI systems and quantify potential improvements, showing what gains can be made and to what extent.

Such analyses help achieve higher productivity levels. At ArcelorMittal Poland S.A., our approach stresses consistently combining operational data and observation of actual work. This allows us to quickly and precisely identify the most important process barriers and understand which limitations arise not only from technological factors but also one's organizational culture and employee behavior.

Nevertheless, the greatest challenge is still adjusting one's attitude toward productivity. One of the largest barriers concerns the need to redefine the way we think of productivity on the executive level, especially in a situation when the growing labor costs and operational complexity force a change in perspective. Productivity is becoming a crucial KPI, alongside security or profitability. This transformation isn't easy, as it requires changing both one's habits, consistent data-driven decisionmaking and work analysis.

Olga Krzoska

HR Manager, Amhil Europa Sp. z o.o.

Organizational sources of falling team productivity that aren't discussed enough

When discussing team productivity, we often focus on the tools, processes and indicators. Yet, the practice clearly shows that a lingering productivity decrease hasn't been caused solely by technology or resource shortages. Oftentimes, it's a consequence of falling employee engagement caused by the organizational culture, quality of management and misalignment of skills and positions.

The organizational culture sets out factual, rather than declarative, rules for team operation. In pressure-based, low trust environments rife with micromanagement and perpetual crunch to meet urgent deadlines, employees are quick to learn means of self-preservation. They minimize their responsibility and initiative, instead focusing on fulfilling the minimum expectations allowing them too avoid criticism. The lack of psychological safety and a sense of work's purpose leads to a steady erosion of their engagement and thus a decline in decision-making quality, innovation and productivity, despite nominal presence and all positions being filled.

Another common mistake involves misalignment of skills and obligations of employees. This concerns both specialists and the managerial staff. Promoting the best experts to executive positions without appropriate leadership training or assigning tasks without taking into account a given employee's actual predispositions leads to overburdening, frustration and a loss of effectiveness.

Team productivity remains directly correlated to the quality of management. Unclear decisions, inconsistent communication, shifting priorities, decision-making chaos and excess of initiatives disorient and disperse the teams. Employees become focused on constant activity rather than achieving measurable results. The seeming productivity replaces genuine business value.

However, excess control and a lack of autonomy can prove just as destructive, greatly limiting employee independence and motivation. Mature management relies on having a clearly defined direction, trust, consequences and the ability to combine business requirements with a given team's actual capabilities. It also requires a regular dialog with employees. Lack of feedback, development talks and space to submit problems causes the difficulties to pile up in a way that isn't noticeable for the decision-makers.

The falling productivity of teams isn't a sudden nor coincidental occurrence. It's the effect of long-term negligence in the areas of organizational culture, management and work planning. Productivity isn't merely a result of individual attitudes or employee skills but rather of structural decisions – of how the roles are defined, how often a given organization changes its expectations and what value it assigns to short-term results instead of long-term stability. Businesses which consciously design their workplaces – by simplifying decision-making structures, limiting unnecessary initiatives, investing in the development of its leaders and ensuring alignment between declarations and practice – don't have to further "motivate" their teams to maintain productivity. They create conditions in which productivity becomes a natural result of a well-designed system.

Katarzyna Polonis

People&Culture Director, SPIE Central Europe

Resistance to change as a hidden obstacle to productivity

The obstacles to productivity in various organizations can have very different causes, from ineffective communication and silos to overworking employees or incorrect use of data. However, the resistance to change remains one of the hardest phenomena to grasp – and without an understanding of its psychological mechanisms further improvement of effectiveness remains uncertain, even if a degree of operational excellence has already been achieved.

The resistance to change may be coming from a fear of the unknown, attachment to one's routine or anxieties over losing one's authority or autonomy. New procedures and systems may unveil competence gaps of people hitherto perceived as experts, which can be seen as a threat to one's professional identity and may thus lead to blocking the change or even sabotaging its implementation. Importantly, this often happens unconsciously and therefore may prove difficult to overcome.

If a change challenges elements of one's "self-concept", that is the conviction about one's competencies, role or the value of one's work, it might be perceived as a threat to one's self-image. This leaves one but a step away from resistance – and perhaps even open resistance. While resistance expressed openly is easier to understand and overcome, its hidden forms may pose a serious challenge or perhaps even a risk for an organization implementing a key change.

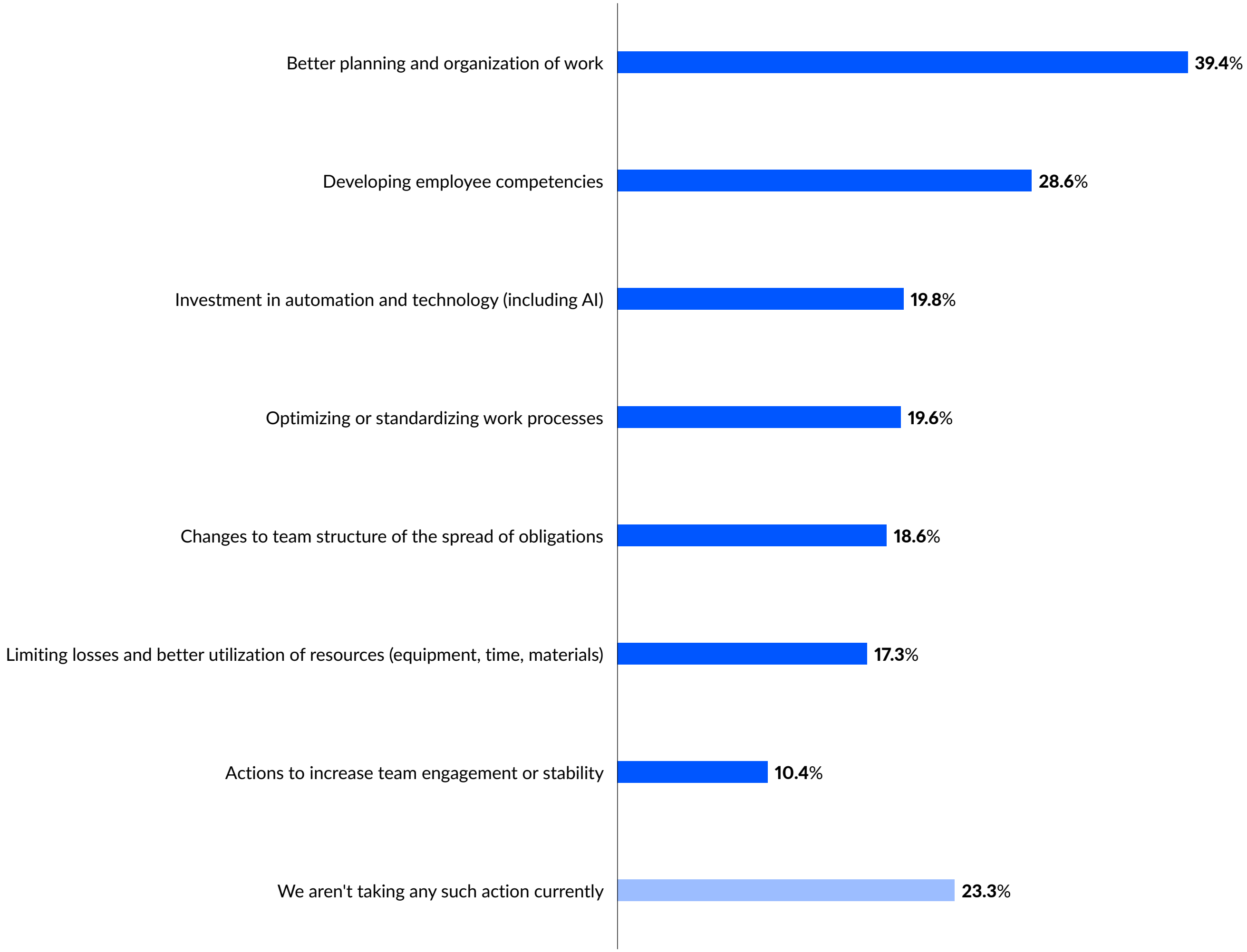
How can we recognize such attitudes? It's key to observe employee behavior – both of those subject to change and those involved in its implementation. The warning signals may involve non-verbal signs of distancing oneself (e.g. sighing, rolling eyes or ostentatiously using a mobile phone during the project meeting) despite no open criticism, questioning implementation dates or focusing on arguments for its postponement without providing objective reasons.

It's also worth bearing in mind the phenomenon of apparent obedience. Strict adherence to procedures, not reporting mistakes or possible improvements, performing tasks in a very literal manner. One may also be concerned about quiet quitting, with an employee ceasing to share their ideas and becoming "invisible". Criticism without providing solutions, intentionally extending deadlines or returning to earlier habits after the change was implemented may also be causes for concern. On a team level, the effectiveness may be hampered by antagonizing attitudes, chronic dissatisfaction or a focus on negative aspects.

This shows just how important diligence and leadership maturity can be, especially when the latter is based on communication and understanding the employee perspective that doesn't eliminate resistance but rather helps recognize it and turn it into a tool assisting the transformation process.

Most common measures taken to increase productivity

What actions have you taken over the past 12 months to increase work productivity?



The entrepreneurs tend to look toward better planning and organization of work as means of improving productivity, having been utilized by almost 40% of surveyed businesses over the past 12 months. It proved to be a particularly popular solution among medium-sized businesses (44%) and those operating in the transportation and logistics sector (50%, a notably higher percentage than seen in other sectors).

Developing employee skills was the second most commonly chosen solution, utilized by 28.6% of businesses. Such action is usually being taken by small and large enterprises (31% each), especially in the commerce and services sectors. The businesses were less likely to invest in automation and technology (19.8%) and process optimization (19.6%). The first case concerned primarily large enterprises, especially in services and industry sectors, ringing true for 24% of respondents. On the other hand, process optimization was chosen primarily by medium-sized enterprises, especially in the commerce and service industries.

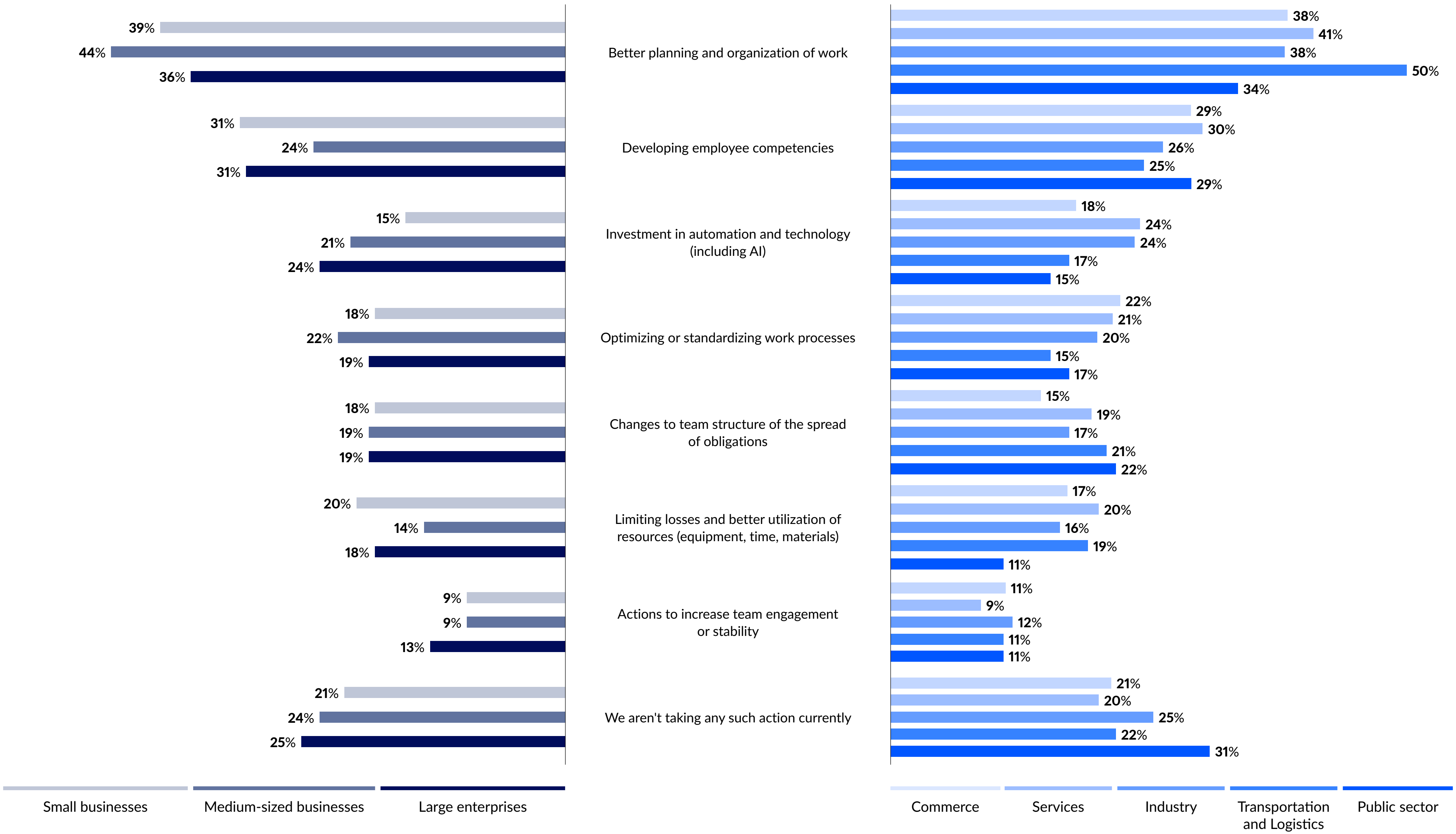
It also bears mentioning that almost a quarter of all organizations (23.3%) declared taking no action to increase productivity. This concerned primarily large (25%) and medium-sized (24%) businesses. Such a result might suggest either lack of strong pressure to implement changes or limited capabilities for further development. The public sector is particularly notable in this area, being most likely to declare no action intended to increase productivity (31%) – and if any action is taken, it generally concerns better work organization, developing employee skills and changes to the structure and scope of obligations.

Respondents could select up to 3 answers • N=510

Most common measures taken to increase productivity

Measures taken to increase productivity across company sizes

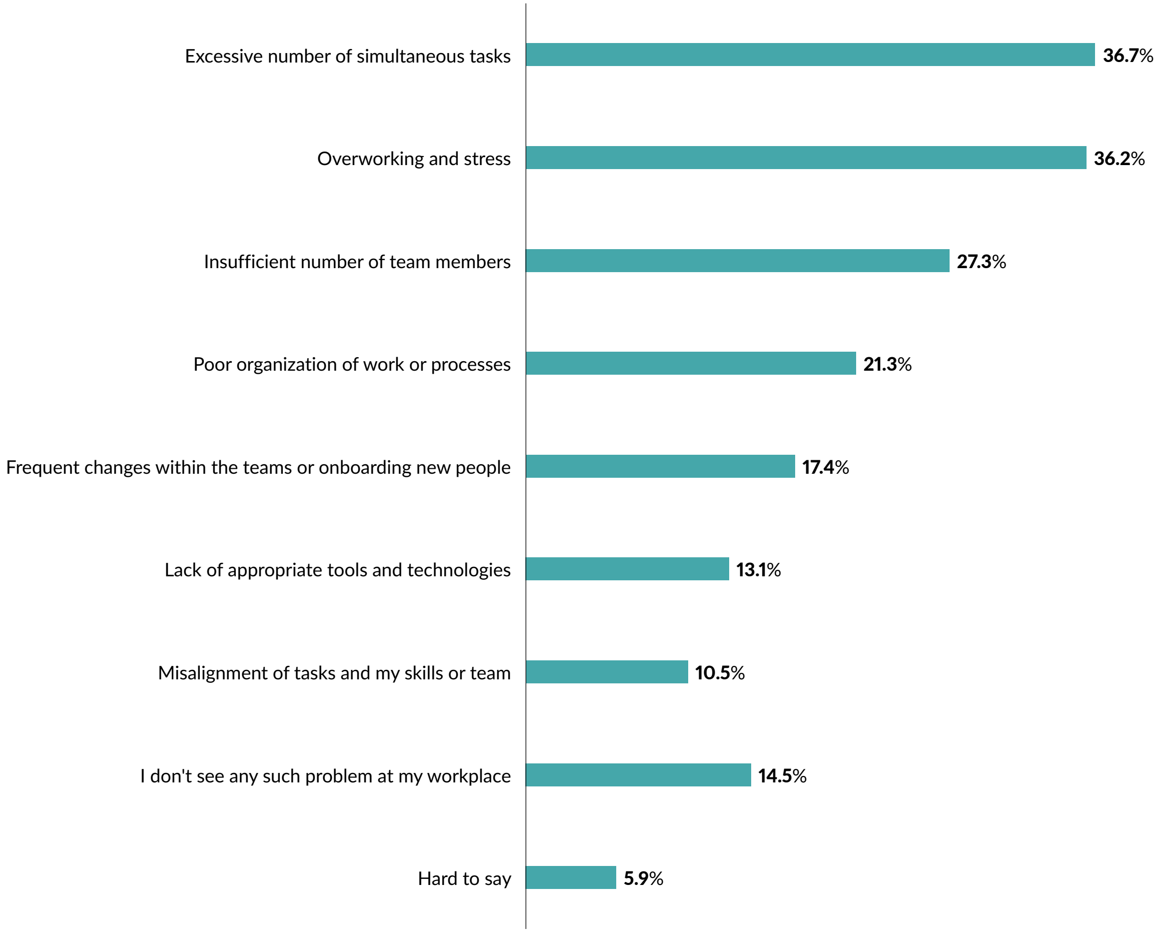
Measures taken to increase productivity across industries



Respondents could select up to 3 answers • N=510

Key barriers to productivity – employee perspective

Which of the folllowing factors has the most negative impact on the efficiency of your work?



Respondents could select multiple answers • N=564

From the employee perspective, the most important barriers to effectively performing one's work are of primarily organizational and HR nature. The workers point toward an excessive number of simultaneous tasks (36.7%), overworking and stress (36.2%), as well as insufficient number of team members (27.3%). This means that overworking, mental pressure and everyday organizational problems, rather than technological gaps, are the primary sources of falling effectiveness.

This largely fits with the declarations of their employers, who see staff shortages, overworking and burnout, as well as an excessive number of tasks and parallel projects as the key barriers to productivity. Both groups have similar diagnoses of the problem despite looking at it from slightly different perspectives. Employees are stressing the everyday overworking and poor work organization while employers are more cognizant of staff shortages, competence gaps and broader organizational challenges. Neither of these groups pays great attention to technological barriers, suggesting that the tools themselves are less of a challenge these days than work organization, workloads and staff availability.

Key barriers to productivity – employee perspective

The analysis of employee declarations unambiguously shows that neither the scale nor character of such barriers is the same for all groups of respondents. Specialists and executives focus on the excessive number of simultaneous tasks, overworking and stress. Meanwhile, lower-ranking and manual workers also struggle with overworking and stress but also point out insufficient number of people in their teams. The differences are also visible between various industries and age groups, showing that improved effectiveness necessitates not only broad initiatives but also solutions tailored to the specificity of various groups of employees.

Which of the following factors has the most negative impact on the efficiency of your work?

Age	18–24 years	25–44 years	45–54 years	55–67 years
Excessive number of simultaneous tasks	35	37	36	39
Overworking and stress	27	39	43	26
Insufficient number of team members	27	32	21	21
Poor organization of work or processes	20	25	23	10
Frequent changes within the teams or onboarding new people	20	20	14	12
Lack of appropriate tools and technologies	16	15	11	9
Misalignment of tasks and my skills or team	11	11	9	10
I don't see any such problem at my workplace	13	10	16	29
Hard to say	8	5	5	9

Position	Executive	Senior Specialist	Junior Specialist	Lower-ranking	Manual worker
Excessive number of simultaneous tasks	44	47	40	33	26
Overworking and stress	33	41	29	39	37
Insufficient number of team members	23	23	29	29	30
Poor organization of work or processes	15	26	24	20	20
Frequent changes within the teams or onboarding new people	22	21	15	16	16
Lack of appropriate tools and technologies	19	9	17	15	10
Misalignment of tasks and my skills or team	16	9	14	11	6
I don't see any such problem at my workplace	22	11	12	12	18
Hard to say	3	6	5	4	9

Industry	Commerce	Services	Manufacturing	Transportation and logistics	Public Sector	Other industries
Excessive number of simultaneous tasks	31	34	40	29	52	24
Overworking and stress	37	34	33	40	42	35
Insufficient number of team members	30	22	31	31	29	29
Poor organization of work or processes	25	17	25	26	23	18
Frequent changes within the teams or onboarding new people	13	17	23	19	13	9
Lack of appropriate tools and technologies	15	13	15	19	5	12
Misalignment of tasks and my skills or team	8	12	10	9	18	6
I don't see any such problem at my workplace	13	18	12	9	13	24
Hard to say	6	8	5	3	6	9

Respondents could select multiple answers • N=564

Paulina Bieniek

HR Office Manager, Fabryka Łożysk Tocznych – Kraśnik S.A.

How is the profile of a "productive worker" changing?

Over the past few years, the concept of a "productive employee" has evolved under the pressure of job market changes, technological development and changes to organizational cultures. Traditionally, productivity has been understood primarily as work efficiency, speed of work and achieving goals. However, the modern work environment requires a much broader perspective at on what truly defines an employee's value for an organization.

Nowadays, a productive employee is one that not only performs their tasks but also does so with an intelligent, adaptable and growth-focused attitude. There is a growing importance attributed to not only the achieved results but also the ability to solve problems independently, effective teamwork, flexibility in a changing environment and a readiness to learn. Formal knowledge or professional experience remain important, however there is an increasing need to combine them with well-developed soft skills.

Formal knowledge and professional experience may signal solid substantive foundations, however they don't guarantee success in a dynamic work environment. Employees with extensive theoretical knowledge often need to learn how to leverage it into practical results. On the other hand, professional experience shows that a person has operated in certain contexts but doesn't necessarily mean they'll handle new, unknown situations just as well.

Nowadays, increased attention is being paid to personality traits and adaptation potential. Competencies such as self-discipline, responsibility, ability to work under pressure, creativity and proactivity are becoming just as important as hard skills. In an age of remote and hybrid work, self-sufficiency and good work organization have become downright crucial.

How then should one identify a productive employee already at the recruitment stage? First, one must step outside the standard CVs and knowledge tests. It's worth utilizing practical tasks, simulations and case studies reflecting actual workplace challenges. Such exercises showcase one's mindset, creativity and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, a job interview should include situational and behavioral questions allowing for the appraisal of specific traits such as stress resilience, teamworking ability or the ability to learn from one's mistakes.

It's also worth analyzing mistakes and measuring recruitment effectiveness – observing which candidate sources and selection tools lead to high productivity after hiring. This makes the candidate appraisal process more precise and allows the organization to better adjust to the modern job market.

Paweł Prociak

Managing Director, Wyser

Between expectations and reality: why productivity has become the greatest test for the leaders

According to OECD and World Bank analyses, the the growth in work productivity in developed countries has slowed down to a level unseen since almost two decades. The pandemic has further bolstered this trend, highlighting the weaknesses of processes, lack of flexibility and overworking of employees. While in the recent quarters Europe saw a recovery, growth dynamics remain slow and the forecasts seem to indicate a gradual change rather than a quick return to the earlier dynamics.

At the same time, the operational pressure is growing. The businesses are operating in an environment in which the speed of technological, regulatory and market changes is often exceptionally quick. The complexity of processes is steadily growing and the amount of parallel processes often exceeds practical capabilities of the teams. In practice, productivity is less reliant on individual efforts and increasingly more on the quality of workplace.

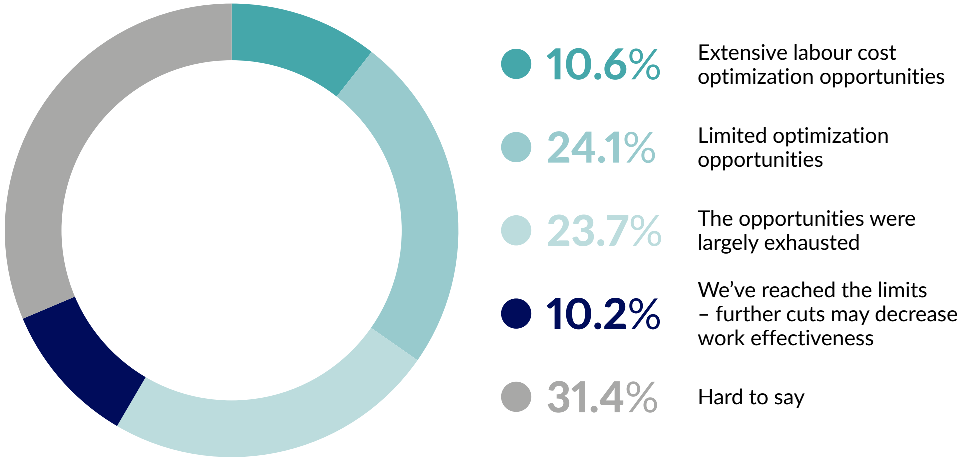
The clarity of priorities is key. The teams can work more rapidly and confidently when they're aware of expected priorities. Excessive amounts of tasks and parallel projects, as well as a lack of unambiguous decisions are major obstacles to efficiency. Skills and development are just as important – in the current circumstances, businesses investing in employee competencies are at an advantage. This doesn't merely mean training but also the opportunity to raise one's qualifications via effective access to knowledge and mentoring. Finally, there's also the leadership. Leaders able to eliminate obstacles, order processes, protect teams from overworking and skillfully motivate them have a tangible, positive impact on the productivity.

Let's talk about an important aspect of leadership in depth – partnership based on trust and openness aren't merely a bonus. A leader capable of acting transparently, consistently and authentically creates an environment where employees can feel safe, empowered to take initiative and share their ideas. To quote Satya Nadella, Microsoft's CEO: "Empathy makes you a better innovator". This attitude is also supported by the data – according to Deloitte research, 79% of employees trusting their employer declare having higher motivation, while the same is only true for 29% of people declaring low trust.

The organizations managed this way see more cooperation in teams and greater eagerness to take responsibility for the results. This is why businesses capable of combining the care for business requirements with concern for work culture and conditions are reaching better results and better adapting to change. Nowadays, this is a key competitive advantage – and one of the hardest challenges for the leaders to tackle.

Capabilities for further optimization of labour costs

What do you think about the current opportunities to optimize labour costs without lowering effectiveness?



N=510

The results of our research show that the room for further optimization of labour costs is slowly running out. Only 10.6% of employers sees potential for further major improvements, while 58% considers remaining opportunities either limited or already exhausted. This signals that a lot of organizations have already made all the "easy" savings with further cuts having an increasing impact on the effectiveness, quality and continuity of operations.

It also bears mentioning the high percentage – 31.4% – of respondents struggling to appraise the situation. This might suggest that some of the companies are still lacking precise enough indicators to appraise the correlation between labor costs and productivity, as well as actual results of the optimization attempts.

However, for many organizations, further attempts at cost-cutting require a broader outlook than simply looking at the nominal operational costs. Increasingly often, companies are seeking savings in improved work organization, better planning of resource utilization, more conscious management of team workloads and the development of employee competencies – operational staff, specialists and managers alike.

Did companies reach the limit of cost optimization?

Extensive labour cost optimizations were declared by only 10–11% of companies, regardless of their size.

Businesses tend to declare having limited or already exhausted opportunities – at 54.1% of small, 47.7% of medium-sized and 41.7% of large enterprises.

Small businesses are the most likely to point out limited (27.6%) or already exhausted (26.5%) opportunities for optimization.

Large organizations were especially struggling to appraise the situation (at 37.6% of respondents, as compared to 28.2% of small and medium-sized businesses), which might suggest a more complex cost structure and difficulties in unambiguously defining opportunities for further cuts.

Medium-sized companies are relatively the most likely to declare that further cost cuts may reduce the effectiveness of their operations (12.9%).

Prof. Grażyna Spytek-Bandurska

Expert, Federation of Polish Entrepreneurs

Is the competitiveness model based on relatively lower labour costs running out of steam?

The competitiveness model based on relatively low labour costs is losing its effectiveness, especially in economies aspiring to highly developed status. Demographic changes are a key factor, as the falling manpower reserves force wage increases regardless of efficiency. As a result, employers are competing with salaries on offer and the effective wage – that is, one exceeding the average market standard – is growing in importance, stabilizing employment and limiting turnover costs.

The strategy of building advantage based on low labour costs is leading to a feedback loop of low effectiveness. It limits the investment in new technologies, efficiency gains and perpetuates the economy's structural weaknesses. It's also often equated with lower quality, posing notable reputational risks and making it harder to build a competitive advantage. A model based on innovation and knowledge, requiring investment in automation, infrastructure and developing employee skills is becoming the new paradigm of competitiveness.

Poland is currently in a transitional stage: the low cost model is no longer working while at the same time we haven't yet reached the productivity level typical for highly developed economies. This creates structural tensions – costs of labour aren't compensated for by a matching increase in effectiveness, limiting price competitiveness while not allowing for a full transition toward an innovation-based model. The transformation requires an increasing role of automation, digitization and specialist competencies, as well as building an organizational culture supporting learning and adaptation. In the long-term perspective, it is those elements rather than low labour costs that will shape the competitive advantage of businesses and the economy at large.

Grzegorz Gojny

Operations Director, Gi Group

How the flexibility of employment supports an organization’s productivity?

The flexibility of employment and the ability to adjust the work model to variable demand are now playing a key role in increasing the organization’s productivity. In a market that shifts faster than ever before, businesses are operating in an increasingly seasonal manner, working short contracts and managing sudden surges and drops in demand.

Given such circumstances, flexibility is no longer an addition to one’s staff management policy but rather one of its foundations. Organizations relying solely on a rigid employment model are facing greater problems with retaining competitiveness. They find it harder to react to varying demand, leading to increased operational costs and overworked teams, decreasing both the effectiveness and quality of implemented processes.

Flexible work models allow for adjusting the number of employees to one’s real needs here and now. This means the ability to retain a stable level of productivity without overworking the permanent teams and without bearing excessive costs or losing orders due to staff shortages. Flexible solutions such as temporary work or project-based support for specialists are no longer means of “putting out fires” but rather tools for conscious resource management.

Businesses capable of creating a balanced mix of temporary teams and flexible solutions will be able to gain greater resilience to market volatility. They are capable of reacting to the changes more quickly, accepting additional contracts and processing larger volumes without the need for long-term development of their internal structures. Furthermore, this model also has an impact on quality. An organization well cognizant of its operational needs and demand for various competencies is able to plan more accurately, utilize resources more effectively and limit the need for ad hoc decision-making. As a result, it is easier to maintain high quality and effectively implement one’s business goals.

Karolina Molenda

HR Director, Silgan White Cap Polska

Is the automation the “last resort” of improving efficiency?

When observing the changes taking place within companies and global economies, one could come to the conclusion that further productivity improvement – and therefore also competitiveness improvement – is only possible through process automation, as all remaining avenues have already been exhausted.

Process optimization (e.g. based on lean methodology) has now become a standard even in smaller organizations and has become quite advanced in many companies. Globalization and outsourcing have brought great cost savings in the 90s and 00s. On the other hand, digitization (IT systems, including ERP) has greatly increased the efficiency of office work and supply chain processes.

Given this context, work automation might indeed be the next big step for increasing effectiveness – in terms of manufacturing robotization, automation of office processes or utilization of AI-based tools. However, claiming that automation is the “last resort” of efficiency improvement seems a little far-fetched. It’s an important source of productivity increase but certainly not the only one available.

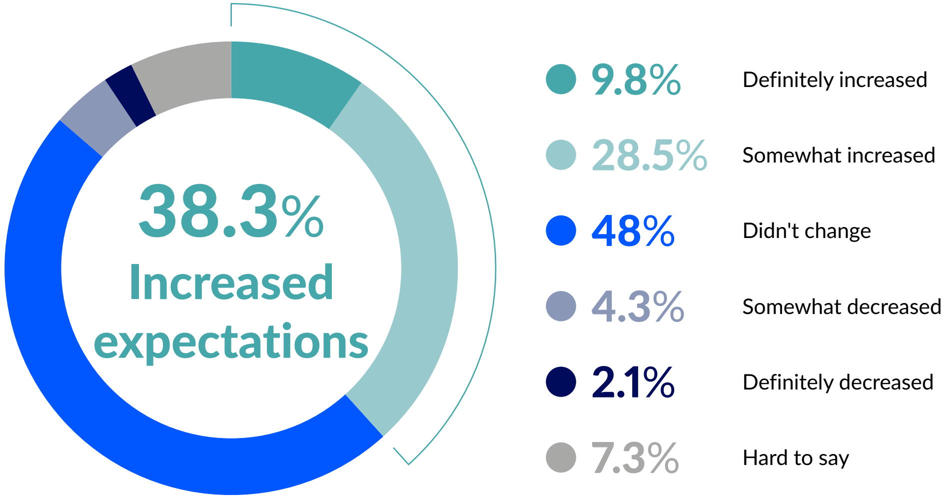
Economic history shows that new sources of productivity often appear unexpectedly. Oftentimes, the technology itself has less impact than the way it changes the organization of work. It’s important to invest in developing employee skills, which can improve productivity just as effectively as the new tools. People have an unlimited potential well worth discovering and developing. It is people who create innovations capable of changing the structure of the economy and increase the efficiency of entire sectors.

The key lies in transforming, rather than merely automating, the existing processes – and the latter is unfortunately what often happens in many organizations. Having less work or doing it quicker doesn’t necessarily mean a sudden increase in productivity. Technology brings the greatest benefits once the entire business model changes, rather than simply the tools used.

In summary, automation doesn’t guarantee increased productivity by itself. The greatest results come from parallel transformation of business models, work organization and employee skills. That is why even if automation can be perceived as a “last resort” for increasing effectiveness, in truth it is merely a single aspect of deeper change.

Increased expectations toward pace and effectiveness of work

Did the expectations toward pace and effectiveness of your work increase over the past year?



Almost 4 out of 10 respondents (38.3%) admit that over the last year the expectations toward the pace and effectiveness of their work have increased. 9.8% believes that the expectations toward them have definitely increased and further 28.5% consider them somewhat raised. 48% saw no changes in this regard.

The growing expectations are primarily noticed by those in the 25–54 age group (40%) and higher-ranking positions – that is people who bear the most responsibility for results, pace and coordination of work. Among manual workers, the increase in expectations was declared by a third of respondents. For comparison, the same was true of 44.3% senior specialists and 46.4% executives.

These results could be correlated with a growing productivity pressure from companies. High labour costs and limited optimization opportunities in this area – confirmed by surveyed employers – force the organizations to focus on improving effectiveness and better utilization of existing resources, including human resources. The productivity pressure is becoming a real experience of many employees. It doesn't have to mean a greater amount of obligations but may also include higher expectations toward the pace of work, better work organization or maintaining results despite a more difficult business environment.

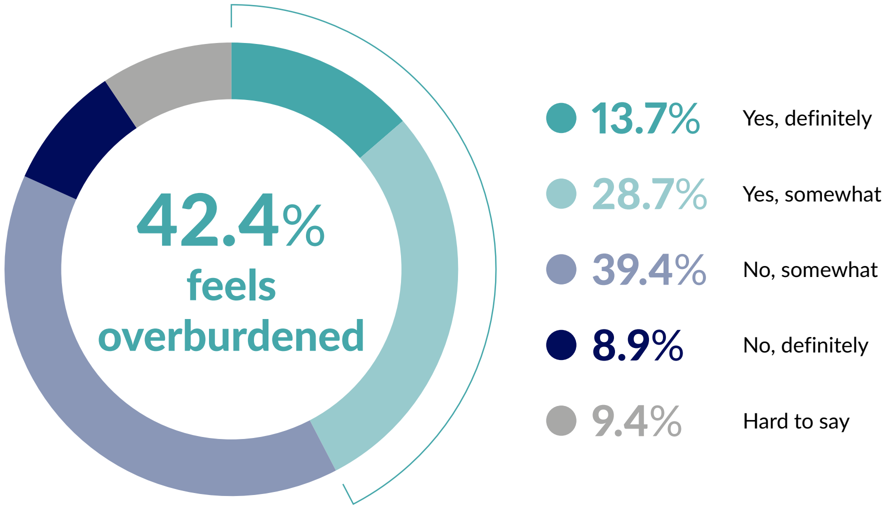
Overburdening with work – employee perspective

Over 42% of surveyed employees admit to being overburdened with professional obligations. Despite 48.3% of respondents not sharing this impression, the scale of this phenomenon remains high, showing that for a large swathe of employees an excess of tasks is a real challenge in their everyday work.

The sense of overburdening is correlated to one's standing in the company's hierarchy. Among the executives, 47.8% of respondents have felt overburdened with work expectations. Among senior specialists, the share is also high, with 45.9% of respondents declaring feeling overburdened. For comparison, the same is only true for a little over 38% of manual workers. A similar correlation concerns wage levels – the higher the pay, the stronger the perception of overworking.

This problem is most visible in the transportation and logistics sector, where almost 59% of employees feel overburdened. This clearly marks the highest result among all analyzed industries, followed by the public sector (at 46.3%) and commerce (at 45.5%). These results show that excessive workloads are especially noticeable for those whose everyday work is associated with intense operational pressure, fast pace of work and high responsibility.

Overburdening with work – employee perspective

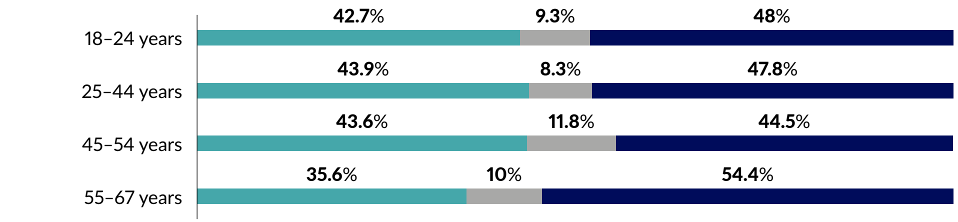


The feeling of being overburdened with work is notably more common among employees who have noted increased expectations toward them concerning the pace and effectiveness of their work. In this group, as many as 66.2% declare feeling overburdened. Meanwhile, among those seeing no notable change in expectations, the share of overburdened individuals is 23.6%. At the same time, those who felt no change in this regard are also the ones most often declare not feeling overburdened (67.5%).

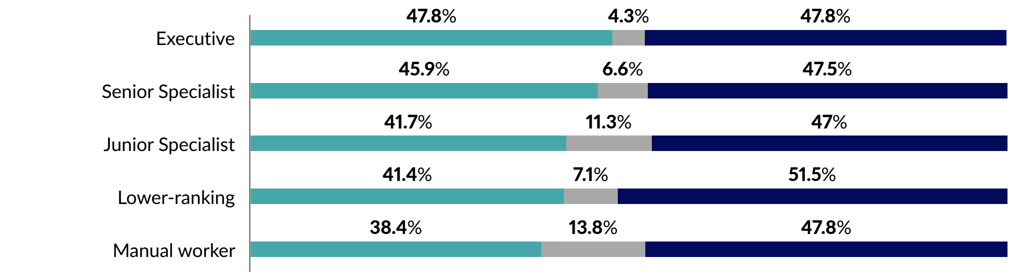
N=564

Overburdening with work – employee perspective

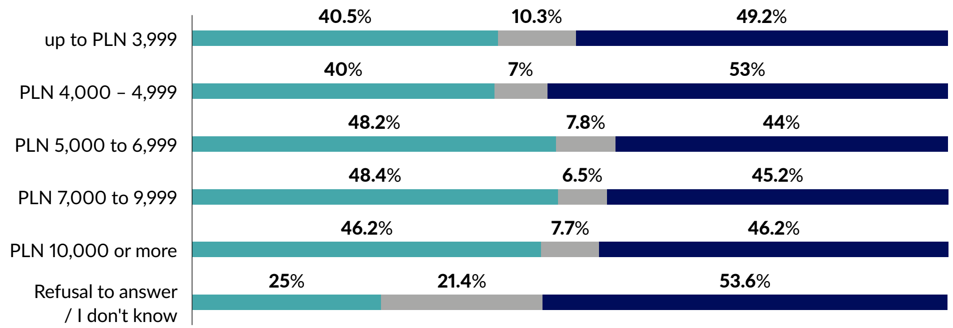
Overburdening with tasks across age groups



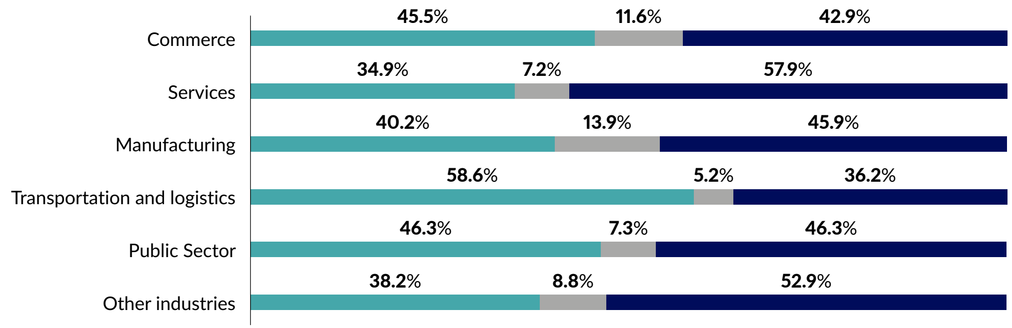
Overburdening with tasks across positions



Overburdening with tasks across pay ranges



Overburdening with tasks across industries

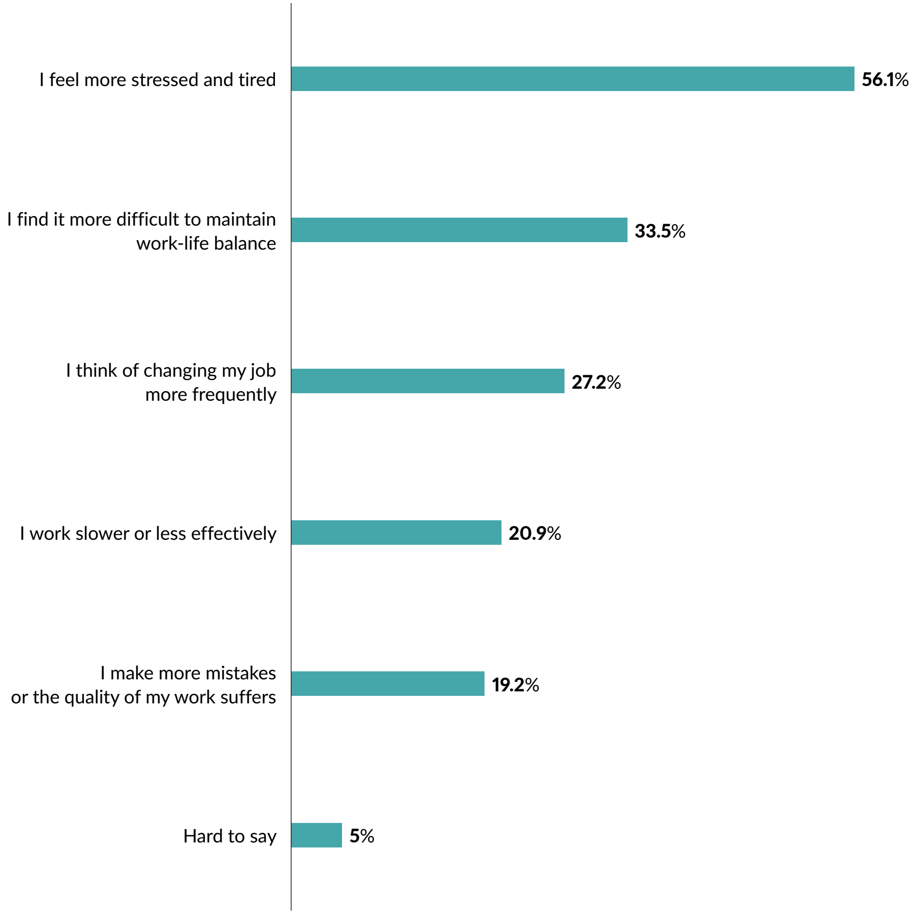


Feels overburdened | Hard to say | Doesn't feel overburdened

N=564

The effects of overburdening with work

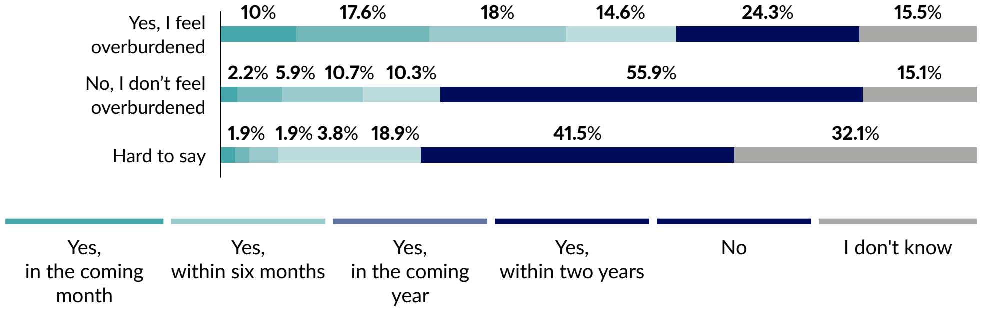
Which of the following effects of overburdening with work are the most perceivable for you? *



The consequences of overburdening employees with work mean more than temporary discomfort and have a notable impact on both their well-being and attitudes toward work. The most common effects of excessive workloads are increased stress and tiredness (56.1%) and difficulties in maintaining a healthy work-life balance (33.5%). At the same time, the overburdening can have consequences for the organization at large: 27.2% of respondents think of changing their job with increased frequency, 20.9% declare lower pace or effectiveness of work and 19.2% are noticing more mistakes or lowered quality of their work. This means that excessive workloads not only decrease the comfort of work but may also lead to decreased effectiveness, lower quality of work and increased risk of turnover.

This correlation is also confirmed by the comparison of the sense of being overburdened and plans to change employment among the respondents. Among people with excessive workloads, only 24.3% have no plans to change their employer. For comparison, among those who don't feel overburdened as many as 55.9% don't have such plans. Overworked employees are more likely to seek a new job in all analyzed timeframes, with 10% planning such a move within a month, 17.6% in six months, 18% within a year and 14.6% within two years. Such results show that a lack of excessive workloads is highly correlated to professional stability, while its presence leads to increased willingness to seek out a new employer.

Overburdening with tasks across job change plans



*Question asked to respondents feeling overburdened at work; respondents could select multiple answers • N=239

Ewa Lis

HR Manager, Sest-Luve-Polska Sp. z o.o.

When productivity pressure turns against the company

In a production environment, the pressure to increase speed of work, meet KPIs, OEE or reduce individual costs is a natural aspect of management. In the short term, raising the standards and intensifying work often brings palpable results – increased volumes and effectiveness indicators or shorter lead times. However, in the long-term perspective, excessive pressure might lead to systemic weakening of the organization.

First, it increases the risk of professional burnout and decreasing employee engagement. People who keep working at the edge of their mental and physical resilience for an extended time end up focusing primarily on the implementation of current tasks and retaining speed of work, taking less care of quality, safety and effectiveness of the processes. In the manufacturing practice, this might lead to a greater amount of operational mistakes, customer complaints, H&S incidents or unplanned stoppages.

Second, it leads to increased turnover and absences. Losing an experienced operator, technician or shift leader generates notable organizational costs. Recruitment, onboarding and achieving full independence require a commitment of time and resources to each new employee, which can often negate the short-time advantages of increasing productivity norms.

Yet another aspect concerns limiting space for a culture of continuous improvement. Manufacturing organizations building their competitive advantage based on Lean Management or Kaizen need their employees to be highly engaged in the analysis and optimization of processes. In an environment of permanent operational pressure, the energy of the teams is focused solely on achieving the production plan, weakening the drive to improve.

Therefore, from the HR perspective it is important to maintain balance between ambitious business goals and long-term organizational resilience. This means designing realistic work standards, investment in automation and skill development and monitoring such indicators as employee engagement, absences or turnover. Sustainable productivity doesn't come solely from the pressure to reach a result but from a well-designed work system and a stable, engaged team.

Alicja Walawska-Bomba

HR Director, Consolidated Precision Products Poland sp. z o.o.

Where's the boundary between optimizing and overworking?

In modern, rapidly shifting organizations, where the pace of work remains high and effectiveness indicators are set to grow each month and year, "optimization" has become one of the most commonly used terms in the business dictionary. The leaders are seeking everyday solutions that allow them to increase process effectiveness, reduce costs and increase efficiency. However, it bears mentioning that the boundary between a healthy desire to increase efficiency and overworking employees can be very thin. Crossing it can have a negative effect on employee wellbeing, motivation, engagement and actual productivity. Understanding where exactly this boundary lies can be a crucial prerequisite for building effective organizations.

Generally speaking, optimization means improving a system by means such as automating routine tasks, reducing unnecessary requirements or increasing resources such as autonomy or support tools. It involves creating an environment that enables people to work more effectively and with less effort. The goal of optimization, aside from its direct impact on a given organization's overall results, also includes improving engagement and motivation. True optimization involves increasing effects without increasing pressure on the employees. This approach can be seen in Toyota's philosophy of continuous improvement, which presumes that a perfect process should eliminate wastage, improve workflows and allow employees to introduce changes to the process while also protecting them from getting overburdened.

The problem arises when the continuous improvement turns into a constant acceleration. It can happen when the declarations of optimization are hiding increased requirements toward employees without providing them with support or additional resources. In such circumstances, the increased pace of work isn't caused by process improvements or greater employee efficiency but merely by increased expectations, which can oftentimes be paired with employment or resource reductions.

As a result, instead of process improvements, what we're seeing is growing burdens – the to-do list is growing, manufacturing times are shrinking and the pressure to achieve results is growing despite unchanged or even shrinking resources. Such overburdening can often remain unnoticed until the onset of tiredness, irritation, reduced attention spans and a sense of one's efforts not leading to expected results. This in turn can lead to emotional burnout, decreased engagement and motivation and thus an increased rate of mistakes, employee turnover, disruptions and accidents and – in the long term – even decreased profitability.

That's why it's so important for each planned change to answer the question of whether a given improvement is truly making the work easier and freeing up resources or merely leaving an impression of doing so. The point of optimization isn't to work harder but to do so smarter – otherwise, instead of improving the work it'll simply create additional burdens.

What should be done to avoid crossing this boundary? The most important action to take is active monitoring of the processes, verifying each task and actual workloads. It's also important for the leaders to learn how to recognize early warning signals, promote honest conversations about the capabilities of teams and motivate to seek out improvements without causing additional pressure. The best ideas for improvements are made by employees themselves, who are then able to participate in their implementation. This improves their determination and empowerment. It's incredibly important to understand that the highest effectiveness is reached by organizations relying on engaged and well-motivated teams, drawing their efficiency from a place of balance rather than perpetual hurry.

Izabela Krzeszewska-Rykowska

Izabela Krzeszewska-Rykowska, HR Director, ANWIS

How to build high operational efficiency without the risk of employee burnout and declining work quality?

Building high operational efficiency does not have to mean increasing pressure on employees. On the contrary – in the long term, work quality and organizational stability are primarily determined by the balance between business results and the well-being of the team.

From my perspective, the key lies in simplifying processes and eliminating redundant burdens. Often, the greatest gains in efficiency do not stem from increased employee effort, but from better work organization, clear division of responsibility, realistic planning, and the reduction of tasks that add no real value to the process. In many organizations, significant potential for efficiency improvement also lies in the automation of repetitive tasks and work standardization.

The quality of communication with the team plays a crucial role here. Regular dialogue with employees allows for faster identification of burnout points and areas where processes can be streamlined. Often, it is those directly involved in operational processes who are the first to notice imperfections and propose the most effective optimization ideas.

It is also vital to foster a culture of everyday appreciation. Constructive feedback from supervisors, as well as simple gestures like acknowledging someone's effort or saying „thank you" for a job well done, tangibly strengthen engagement. Employees who feel seen and find meaning in their work perform more effectively.

In the context of maintaining high quality of work, it is worth noting the importance of so-called „micro-breaks" throughout the day. Especially in computer-based roles, it is easy to forget about short breaks. Meanwhile, stepping away from the desk for even a few minutes allows for genuine mental regeneration, improves focus, and reduces the number of errors in subsequent tasks.

We should move away from thinking about efficiency solely through the lens of metrics. Organizations that consistently prioritize process transparency, a reasonable pace of work, space for short recovery, and a culture of appreciation achieve better results – not because their employees work more, but because they work smarter and with greater engagement.

The use of automation and AI in organizations

Although 42.2% of surveyed businesses declaring that they're utilizing automation and AI solutions, they are usually partial solutions rather than a broad implementation across the entire organization. Only 12.2% of employers claim to utilize them on a mass scale, while 30% use them only in select areas and still see room for growth. This could mean that for many businesses AI and automation are primarily tools to support specific processes rather than an element of an all-encompassing operational transformation.

Detailed results are showing that the scale of implementation of automation and AI solutions differs between various industries to a larger extent than between company sizes. The wide adoption of such solutions is declared by more large enterprises (14.1%) than medium-sized (11.8%) or small businesses (10.6%). This could be attributed to greater resources, maturity of processes and greater capability for technological investments. Medium-sized businesses are most likely to be in a transitional state, with 26.5% of them only planning the implementation of AI and automation. This could suggest that it's this segment of the market that will do the most catching up in terms of technology. At the same time, large enterprises are relatively more likely to declare having no implementation plans (37.1%), showing that the scale of operations isn't the sole determinant of one's readiness for transformation.

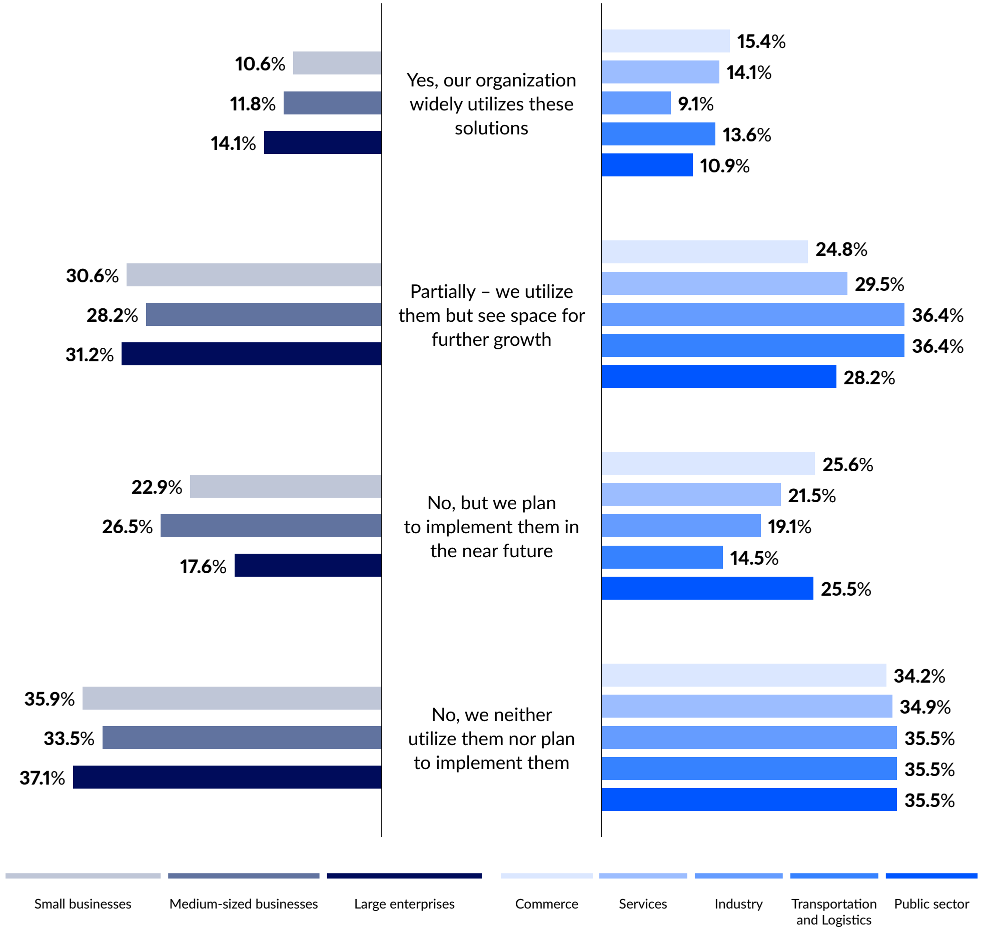
The differences are even more stark between various industries. The highest percentage of businesses widely utilizing AI and automation operate in the commerce (15.4%) and services (14.1%) sectors. For comparison, the same is true for only for 9.1% of industrial companies. At the same time, it's the industrial, transportation and logistics sectors that see most partial implementations – at 36.4% each. This could mean that these technologies are already present in these sectors but still limited to select areas of operation. It also bears pointing out the relatively high percentage of businesses considering implementations in the commerce (25.6%) and public (25.5%) sectors, suggesting that in the coming years it is them that may see the most dynamic growth.

Is your business utilizing automation and AI solutions?

12.2%	Yes, our organization widely utilizes these solutions
30%	Partially – we utilize them but see space for further growth
22.4%	No, but we plan to implement them in the near future
35.5%	No, we neither utilize them nor plan to implement them

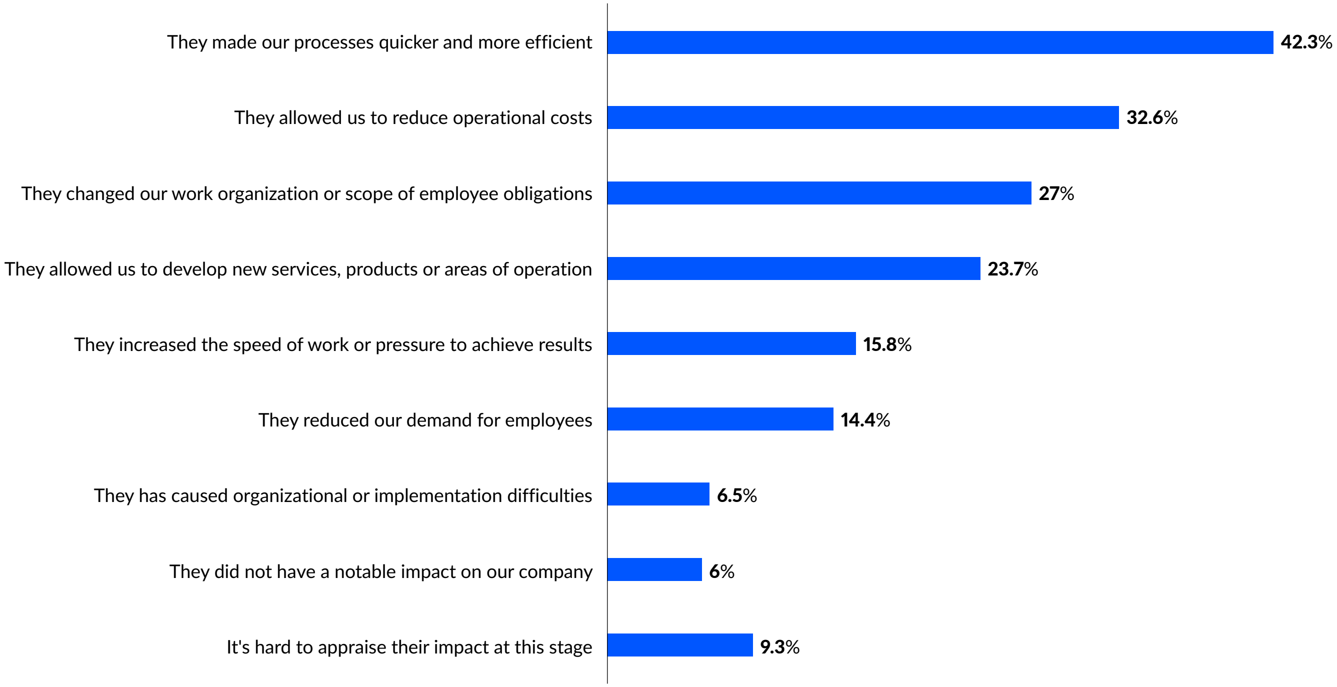
Use of automation and AI across company sizes

Use of automation and AI across industries



The effects of automation and AI implementation – employer perspective

How did the implementation of automation and/or AI tools impact your operations?



Question asked to businesses utilizing automation; respondents could select multiple answers • N=215

From the employer perspective, the most palpable effect of implementing automation and AI was making the company's processes quicker and more efficient (42.3%) and reducing operational costs (32.6%). This is a fairly natural outcome as these solutions tend to be first introduced in areas rife with repeatable, time-intensive and easily standardized processes that lend themselves to the greatest efficiency gains and thus also business benefits. The employers were less likely to mention increased ability to develop new services, products or areas of operation (23.7%), which might suggest that at the current stage, technology is used primarily for the optimization of pre-existing business advantages, rather than gaining new ones.

At the same time, it is clear that the impact of these solutions doesn't end with mere effectiveness. Over a quarter of all businesses (27%) admit that automation and AI have changed their work organization or the scope of employee obligations. It also bears mentioning that some of the businesses are also cognizant of other consequences of these implementations that aren't beneficial for their employees. 15.8% of respondents pointed out increased pace of work or pressure to achieve results while 14.4% mentioned limited demand for workers.

Which effects of implementation are particularly visible in particular industries?

- process optimization → **commerce (47%), services(46%)**
- cost reduction → **industry (48%)**
- updating work organization → **services (32%)**
- developing new areas → **public sector (30%)**
- increased pace and pressure → **transportation and logistics (22%)**
- lower demand for workers → **transportation and logistics (22%), commerce (19%)**
- implementation difficulties → **services (11%)**

Marta Bronisz

Director, HR and Payroll, Remondis Sp. z o.o.

What conditions must be fulfilled for technology to have a real impact on effectiveness?

Technology can be a powerful catalyst for growing one's effectiveness but only if it's being implemented consciously, with a full understanding of its role in the organization. Many businesses are investing in modern tools, yet aren't always achieving the expected results. It's crucial to combine technology with well-developed processes and the appropriate preparation of employees.

Most importantly, new solutions must be integrated with pre-existing processes to avoid creating new digital silos. Only by achieving cohesion between various tools can one ensure effective workflows and quick, data-driven decision-making. Technology cannot be merely an „addition" to the organization's operations – but rather it should be natural part of the entire business ecosystem. The implementation of new solutions should be an answer to the company's current needs and arise from prior analysis of the processes.

Another prerequisite for success is the appropriate preparation of employees. Even the best platforms will remain useless if one lacks the awareness of what they should be used for. It's the way new tools are being utilized in practice that'll truly define whether their implementation will bring real change. This is why training, communication and taking into account concerns arising from each transformation will all prove crucial. It's important to adjust the trainings and knowledge transfers to the position and responsibilities of each employee group, allowing them to effectively utilize the potential of implemented solutions.

Furthermore, one must bear in mind the importance of appropriate change management. The implementation of technology is a process requiring consistency, support of the leaders and clearly defining the changes to everyday work. Where this aspect tends to be neglected, we often see resistance to the new solutions and a fall in productivity.

The technology should be proving its value in numbers – this is why it is so necessary to measure the effects. Setting indicators such as shortening of process implementation, reducing the number of mistakes or increased customer satisfaction all allow for not only the appraisal of the success of implementation but also for adjusting it in real time.

Finally, each organization should be realistically appraising the possibilities offered by new technologies. It won't solve all their issues, especially when the processes are inconsistent and their goals unclear. This is why it's best to first analyze the various aspects of the company and only then decide where technology can have a real impact. A reliable audit prior to the selection of tools and suppliers is a key factor deciding whether the new solutions will truly be an improvement.

Technology increases effectiveness not when it is fashionable but when it's consciously embedded within the organization, well thought through and supported by prior preparation of employees and processes. Only such a combination can bring a sustainable, measurable change.

The use of automation and AI in everyday work

Does your workplace utilize AI-powered or automation tools?

23.2%	Yes – I use them in my work
19.9%	Yes – they're used in the company but not by me
45.7%	No – neither me nor company at large use them
11.2%	Hard to say / I don't know

From employee perspective, automation and AI still aren't a common part of everyday work. 23.2% of respondents declared using such tools directly and 19.9% have indicated they are used in the company, though not in their own work. At the same time, 45.7% of respondents work in organizations where such solutions are not used at all, either by the company or themselves. This shows that, from employee perspective, the proliferation of these technologies is still limited and uneven.

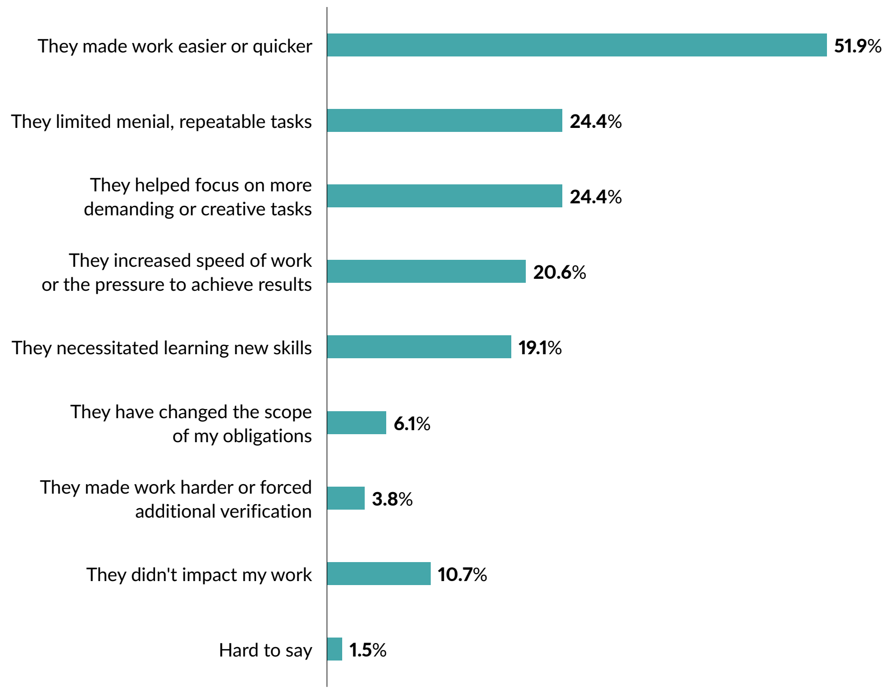
N=564

The impact of automation and AI on everyday work

Those who already use such solutions are primarily pointing out their positive and practical influence. The respondents tended to point out that these tools have made their work easier or quicker (51.9%) and limited routine tasks (24.4%), allowing them to focus on more demanding or creative tasks (24.4%). This could suggest that AI and automation are now usually seen as support tools for everyday tasks, especially when they're able to take over some of the simpler, more routine tasks.

The implementation of these tools also has an impact on work organization and requirements toward employees. 20.6% of respondents pointed out increased pace of work or pressure to achieve results, with further 19.1% taking note of the need to learn new skills. This means that along with making some tasks easier, these tools and their workflows also create the need for quick adaptation. However, the respondents were relatively unlikely to claim automation and AI have made their work harder, created the need for additional verification (3.8%) or changed their scope of work obligations (6.1%). Therefore, one could say that wherever these tools are already in use, they tend to be associated with helping, rather than destabilizing work.

How did the automation or AI tools influence your work?



Which effects of AI and automation were seen seen most often by employees?

- **Making work quicker and easier**
  → lower-ranking employees (70%); public sector (66.7%), services (60.4%).
- **Less routine tasks**
  → junior specialists (30.6%), executives (28.9%); transportation and logistics (40%), industry (33.3%).
- **More challenging / creative tasks**
  → manual workers (33.3%), executives (31.6%); transportation and logistics (40%), commerce (31%).
- **Greater pace and pressure**
  → lower-ranking employees (30%); services (24.5%).
- **Need to learn new skills**
  → manual workers (41.7%); industry (27.8%).
- **Change in the scope of responsibilities**
  → junior specialists (11.1%); transportation and logistics (20%) and industry (16.7%)

**Question asked to people utilizing automation or AI tools in their work' Respondents could select multiple answers • N=131*

Ewa Michalska

Operations Director, Grafton Recruitment

New competence profile in the age of productivity and technology

Nowadays, organizations implementing new technologies are not only changing the way work is performed but also the skill profile of their employees. This is not only due to businesses utilizing new tools but also – and primarily – due to the growing cost pressure and the need to increase productivity, which force companies to change their approach to work, process organization, and use of available resources.

It is best seen in areas where processes are relatively easy to organize, standardize, and partially automate, for example customer support or call centers. In such areas, the importance of quick and effective implementation of simple, routine tasks is decreasing in favor of effectively navigating the digital environment and a readiness to work with new tools. The ability to learn and adapt quickly to changing circumstances and soft skills – such as teamwork, effective communication, prioritizing the right tasks or independence – are all gaining importance.

The situation is different for more complex processes in which technology isn't able to replace humans in executing particular tasks but rather supports them in analyzing, decision-making, and work organization. For such roles, a different kinds of competencies are on the rise: critical thinking, the ability to interpret information, correlating data with the business context or finding the right way of using available tools to achieve specific results. This, in turn, increases the importance of flexibility, resilience to change and a readiness to keep improving one's qualifications. Businesses now need people who are able to not only utilize technology but also understand how to turn the opportunities it offers into actual operational effectiveness.

In practice, these changes mean a shift toward a profile linking technological, analytical and social skills. On one hand, the ability to utilize AI, analyze data or awareness of cybersecurity aspects is growing in importance. On the other hand, independence, adaptability, control over one's emotions, the ability to work in dispersed structures, and understanding the broader business perspective are also becoming crucial. It's this combination that makes an employee able to find their place in an organization striving productivity improvement not merely through cutting costs but also – and primarily – through better utilization of technology and better work organization.

One could say that in businesses investing in new technologies, the "technological humanist" profile is gaining the most importance. It means a person who understands their tools but is also able to work flexibly, think critically, and support the business in a changing environment. It is such employees who are the best at turning the potential offered by technology into productivity increases.

Jakub Kubiczek

Macroeconomic Team Leader, Polish Economic Institute

Human capital as a prerequisite for sustainable digital transformation

Modern technologies might lead to a notable increase in operational effectiveness, however their implementation requires caution. The algorithms are able to support employees and take over repeatable tasks, performing them quicker and with greater precision. However, it doesn't mean that they can act fully independently. Without appropriate oversight and quality control or given excessive trust, they may lead to mistakes and losses. Therefore, the role of humans in the processes of implementation and oversight of new technologies remains crucial.

This problem becomes particularly important given the growing pressure for digital transformation, including the increasing importance of AI. According to the data of Statistics Poland (GUS), 8.7% of Polish businesses declared using AI in 2025. At the same time, PIE analyses indicate that the actual adoption may be higher, reaching up over a dozen percent. It is also likely that the coming years will not only see a growing adoption of AI among enterprises but also expanded scope of its use within organizations that were already utilizing such solutions.

The growing pressure to implement AI may lead to overestimation of the technology's role and excessive investment at a time when the organization isn't yet fully ready for it, especially in the sphere of human capital.

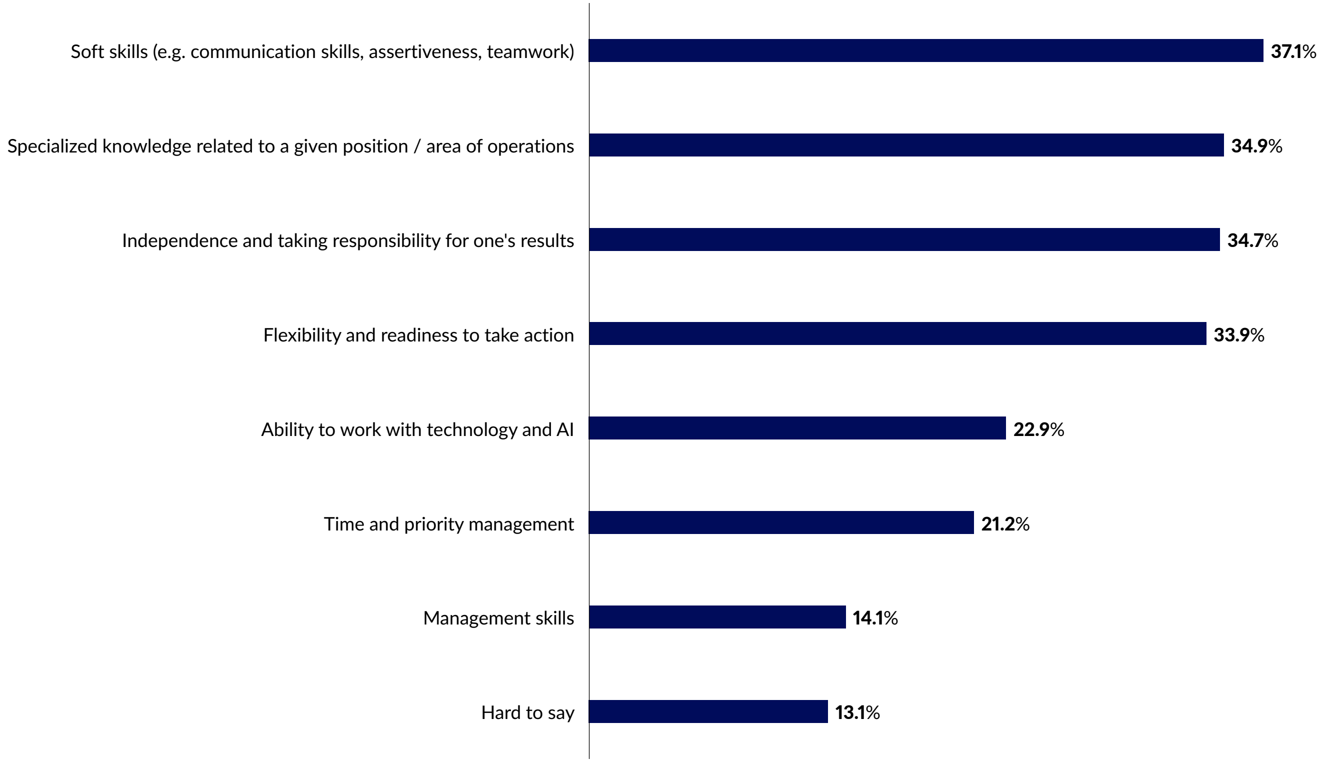
The capability to further expand the role of AI is confirmed by the 2025 NASK analysis, according to which 30.3% of all jobs in Poland are vulnerable to a certain level of interaction with GenAI. The scale of this phenomenon is especially notable in the case of office workers, 71.2% of whom perform work vulnerable to the impact of GenAI and 47.2% have jobs highly vulnerable to automation.

Given these circumstances, misalignment of employee skills is becoming one of the key dangers to a given organization's effective operation. A sudden digital transformation might lead to implementation of solutions that the employees are unable to utilize properly. Trying to use the new technologies without ensuring the necessary competencies or the ability to obtain them may lead to loss of effectiveness and demotivation of employees. This is why it's so important to ensure the alignment of their skills and development of one's staff. This is made even more crucial by the fact 58.4% of working Poles declare readiness for learning in the area of AI, indicating a notable adaptation potential of human resources.

Statistics Poland (GUS) (2025). Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce w 2025 r.
Lesiak, M., Święcicki, I., Witczak, J. (2025), AI w polskich przedsiębiorstwach, Point Paper, no. 5, Polish Economic Institute, Warsaw
Troszyński, M., Berg, J., Gmyrek, P., Kamiński, K., Konopczyński, F., Ładna, A., Nafradi, B., Rosłaniec, K. (2025). Generatywna sztuczna inteligencja a polski rynek pracy. Raport badawczy. Scientific and Acdeminc Computer Network – State Research Institute.
Troszyński, M., Berg, J., Gmyrek, P., Kamiński, K., Konopczyński, F., Ładna, A., Nafradi, B., Rosłaniec, K. (2025). Generatywna sztuczna inteligencja a polski rynek pracy. Raport badawczy. Naukowa i Akademicka Sieć Komputerowa – Państwowy Instytut Badawczy.

Which skills are crucial for improving productivity?

Which employee skills are now crucial for improving productivity?

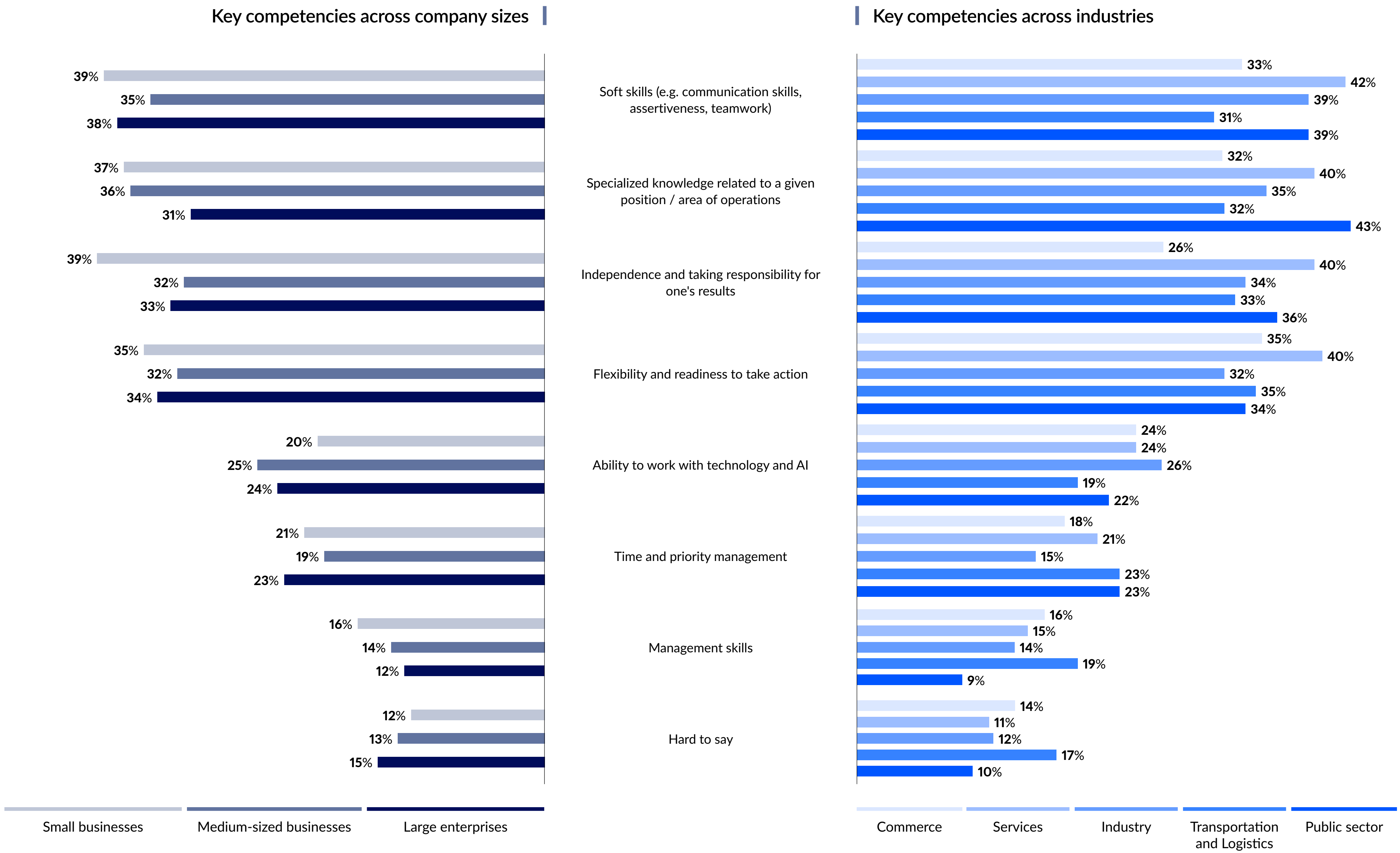


Respondents could select multiple answers • N=510

As shown by the results of our survey, employers believe that productivity increases aren't dependent on a single specific skill but rather an entire set of skills enabling effective everyday work. The businesses usually pointed to soft skills (37.1%), followed closely by specialized knowledge (34.9%), independence and taking responsibility for one's results (34.7%), as well as flexibility and readiness for change (33.9%). This shows that nowadays the businesses need employees who are not only skilled in their professional role but are also able to work with others, take initiative, act without constant oversight and quickly adapt to changes.

Given this context, the lower share of responses concerning the ability to work with technology and AI (22.9%) suggests that the technology itself isn't considered the primary factor in increasing productivity. To truly convert it into added efficiency, it needs to be supported by organizational, social and adaptation skills.

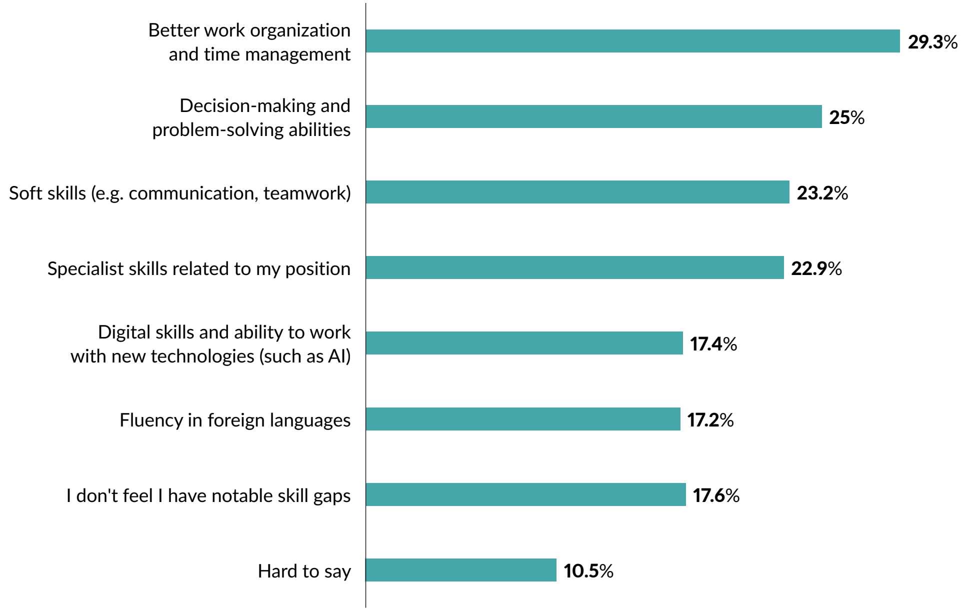
Which skills are crucial for improving productivity?



Respondents could select multiple answers • N=510

Skills increasing work effectiveness – employee perspective

Which skills are the necessary for you to work more effectively?



When asked about the skills necessary to work more effectively, respondents agreed on improved work organization and time management (29.3%), problem-solving and decision-making skills (25%), soft skills (23.2%) and specialist competencies related to one's position (22.9%). They were much less likely to mention digital skills or the ability to work with new technologies, including AI (17.4%). From the employee perspective, what matters for making everyday work more effective is the skills allowing one to better face day-to-day challenges rather than developing one's technical knowledge per se.

This spread of answers corresponds well to the factors mentioned by employees as barriers to their everyday work. Given that the starkest problems concern excessive workloads, overworking and stress, the most sought after competencies are those which help better organize work, define priorities, react quicker and work as a team. In other words, employees expect to not only develop their professional skills but also the competencies enabling them to better operate in a high pressure environment.

Different perspectives, one common direction

While employees and employers have differing perspectives on which skills are supporting productivity, their responses are complimentary rather than contradictory. Employers are quicker to highlight the business-related results such as **independence, flexibility, responsibility and cooperation**. On the other hand, employees are pointing out the skills necessary for the practical fulfillment of these expectations. Both of these groups are showing a common denominator: **soft skills, efficiency of work, independence and good work organization** are now more important than the raw technical knowledge of the technology itself.

**Respondents could select multiple answers • N=564*

Katarzyna Buła

Maspex Group, Senior HR Business Partner

Which missing competencies could help organizations increase productivity and build competitive advantage?

The answer to the question of which missing competencies are most needed by organizations requires understanding which skills have the most impact on the everyday operations of businesses. In an environment of high volatility, the ability to react quickly, make decisions effectively and retain high quality of work regardless of circumstances becomes crucial. The organizations primarily seek skills allowing one to work smarter, quicker and more consistently in a changing environment. This especially concerns the capabilities to adapt, learn, think critically and solve problems in a practical way.

The most visible competency gap now concerns the ability to adapt and keep learning. The organizations require employees able to flexibly adjust their style of work to new circumstances, draw conclusions from past experiences and implement them in practice. It is these competencies that allow the teams to not only follow the changes but also utilize the opportunities they offer, increasing the effectiveness and quality of performed tasks.

Another area that's increasingly decisive for one's competitive advantage is critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. In a highly interdependent work environment struggling with strong time pressures, the ability to correctly define a problem, appraise possible scenarios and point out the most rational solution is becoming a necessity. Teams able to work this way are operating more rapidly, make fewer mistakes and are more independent.

Developing these competencies is largely dependent on the quality of leadership. A modern leader should create a partnership-based work environment in which people can learn on the go, test new solutions and seek improvements. This means clearly defined goals, transparent communication and availability as a mentor not only improves employee engagement but also – and perhaps primarily – allows one to fully utilize the potential of their employees. And it is this factor that builds the sustainable operational effectiveness of an organization.

Robert Lisicki

Director, Labour Department, Konfederacja Lewiatan

Who should be responsible for upskilling and reskilling – the employer or the state?

In the circumstances of an ever-quicker technological transformation and demographic changes, continually acquiring, updating and increasing one's competencies is becoming a necessary prerequisite for retaining competitiveness. Initiatives supporting skill development and vocational activation of various groups – including the youth, women and people over 50 years of age – aren't coincidental. They are becoming one of the pillars of the EU policy, which highlights the necessity of adjusting the job market to the new circumstances. They are an important guarantee of economic resilience and ensuring appropriate quality of life for its citizens.

The state is playing a crucial role in this. It is the state that should be creating systemic frameworks supporting investment in human capital – from modern formal education to flexible training programs and financial instruments supporting skill development. At a time when, according to the European Commission, 90% of workplaces require at least basic digital skills, education and training programs must be flexible, practical and available to people at all stages of their careers. That is why openness of public institutions to working together with employers is so important, allowing creation of solutions effectively responding to actual needs of the market.

It's the employers who are the quickest to identify changes to the business processes and who have the best knowledge of current and future demand for various competencies. Therefore, aside from investment in modern tools, changes to operational models or building a culture conducive to learning, it is essential to consciously supporting the potential of teams through both incentivising growth and creating an environment making upskilling and reskilling a real and viable option.

In this approach, the ability to switch into new roles or develop one's skills in their current position is an important factor, strengthening the flexibility and adaptability of teams. However, support in professional development planning cannot replace individual responsibility of the workers, especially given that retaining one's employment will require an increased willingness to learn throughout one's entire life.

The scale and complexity of this transformation means that a model based on shared responsibility – of public institutions, employers and workers – will allow for effective response to technological and demographic challenges. Only such an approach can enable maintaining the economy's competitiveness and truly prepare the job market for future challenges.

Gi Group Holding – a global ecosystem of HR services

Gi Group Holding is one of the leading suppliers of HR services. In Poland, the business ecosystem is formed by three individua brands complementing each other – Gi Group, Wyser and Grafton Recruitment, the latter of which is also an authorized reseller of Thomas International tools in Poland. This allows the Group to offer a comprehensive selection of HR services, providing effective solutions tailored to each customer's current needs.

The overall goal of Gi Group Holding is to actively create and promote a balanced, enhanced and satisfying global job market reflecting the ever-changing needs of candidates and businesses.

Gi Group Holding is currently servicing over 25,000 customers across the whole world, generating an income of EUR 4.7 billion in 2024. We employ over 8,000 people and are active in 37 countries in Europe, the APAC region and both Americas.

Gi Group HOLDING

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Executive Search and Managerial Recruitment

grafton – Gi Group Holding
Professional Recruitment

thomas – Approved Distributor
Learning and Development

Gi BPO – FINANCE DIVISION
Financial Process Outsourcing

Gi BPO – ADVANCED OUTSOURCING
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Gi Group – YOUR JOB, OUR WORK
Specialised Technical Professionals

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WŚRÓD NAJWIĘKSZYCH FIRM HR

11th place GLOBALLY

6th place IN EUROPE

SIA 2025 Largest Staffing Firms Globally

DIRECT PRESENCE IN 37 countries

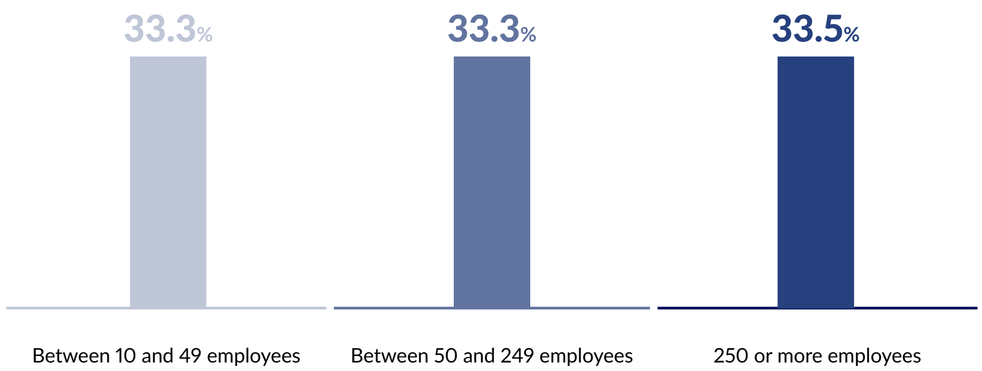
Argentina	China	Estonia	Ireland	Latvia	Norway	Slovakia	United Kingdom
Belgium	Colombia	France	Italy	Malaysia	Poland	Spain	United States
Brazil	Croatia	Germany	Lithuania	Mexico	Portugal	Switzerland	
Bulgaria	Czechia	Hungary	Liechtenstein	Montenegro	Romania	Turkey	
Chile	Denmark	India	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Serbia	Ukraine	

Research Methodology

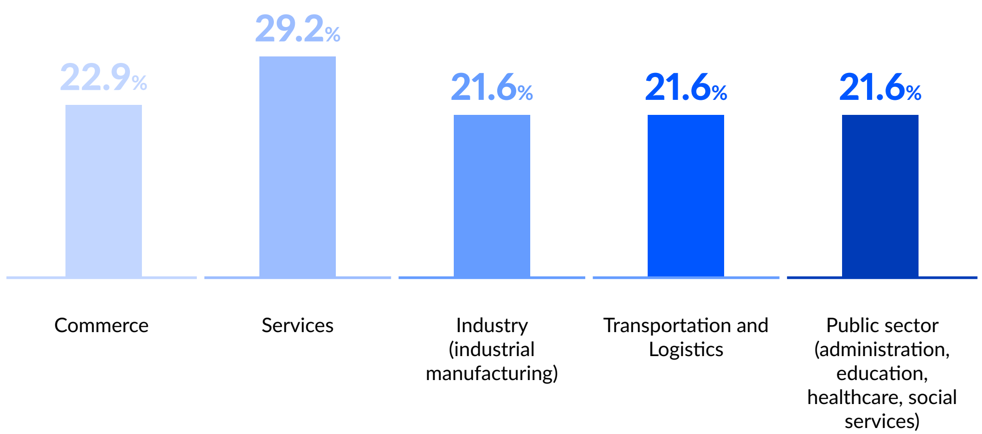
Research goal:	The primary goal of the research was to verify employee and employer perceptions of Poland's job market.
Research method:	• **Employers:** computer assisted phone interviews with representatives of small, medium-sized and large enterprises operating in various industries • **Employees:** on–line interviews (CAWI) through the SW Panel online panel
Research sample:	• **Employers:** the research involved carrying out 510 surveys with representatives of small, medium-sized and large enterprises operating in various industries • **Employees:** the research involved carrying out 564 surveys with a representative sample of Poles
Respondents:	▪ **Employers:** • Representatives of small enterprises (10 – 49 employees): N=170 • Representatives of medium-sized enterprises (50 – 249 employees): N=170 • Representatives of large enterprises (over 250 employees): N=170 • Representatives of businesses operating in the commerce sector: N= 117 • Representatives of businesses operating in the services sector: N=149 • Representatives of businesses operating in the industrial sector: N=110 • Representatives of businesses operating in the transportation and logistics sector: N=110 • Representatives of businesses operating in the public sector: N=110 ▪ **Employees:** • Polish workers, both male and female, in the 18–67 age group, according to the distribution of age, gender and size of the place of residence
Research period:	**Employers:** 25/02 – 09/03.2026 **Employees:** 23/02 – 03/03.2026

Demographic structure of the sample – employers

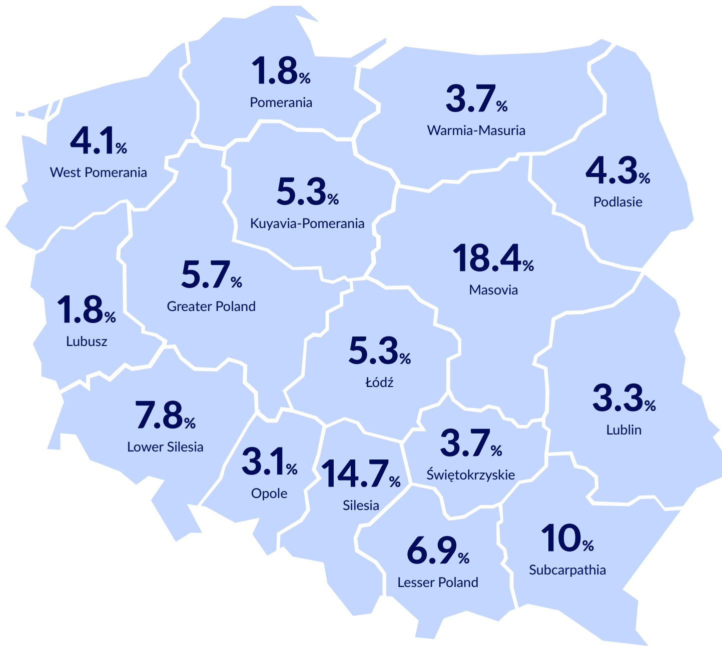
Company size



Industry

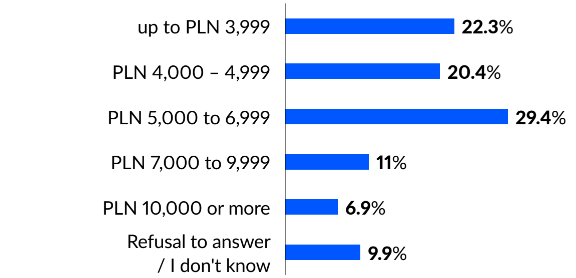


Province

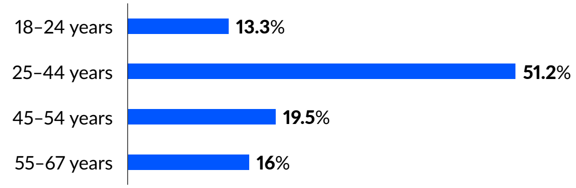


Demographic structure of the sample – employees

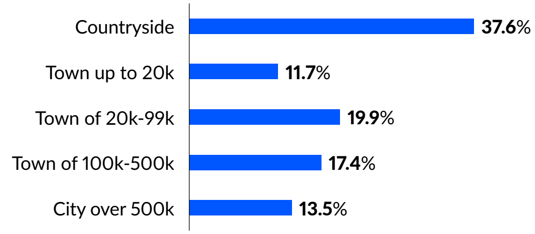
Income



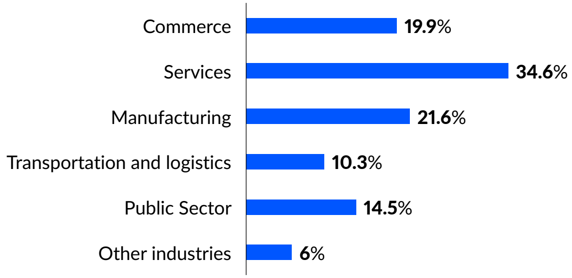
Age



Place of residence

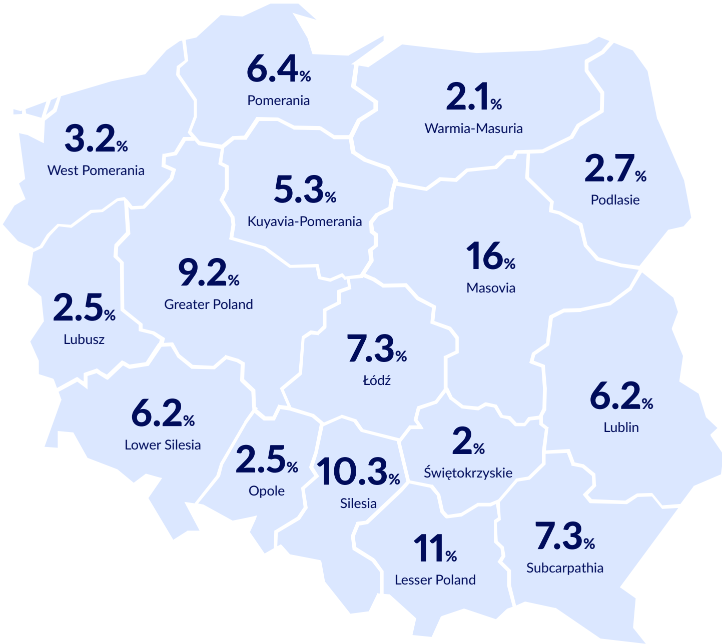


Industry

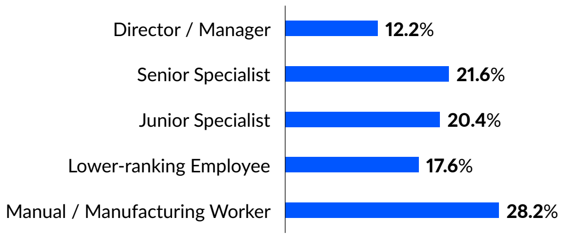


Gender

Province



Position



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YOUR JOB, OUR WORK

We **simplify recruitment processes by combining a global perspective with local expertise**. With scalable and tailored solutions, we effectively connect companies with the right employees.
We offer comprehensive services in temporary, permanent, and outsourcing services, building long-term relationships based on experience, trust, and responsibility.

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Direct Presence

8,000+
Employees

700+
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Clients

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Branches in Poland

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- Recruiting workers from abroad – International Mobility
- Site Managed Services (SMS/Onsite)
- Multi Site Management (MSM)
- RPO
- Outsourcing
- Employer Branding

Candidates' profile

- Warehouse operators
- Manufacturing workers
- Factory workers
- Drivers/Shipping operators
- Quality Assurance employees
- Specialised technicians
- Mantenance operators
- CNC/CAD/CAM operators
- Welders
- Forklift operators
- Electromechanical equipment assemblers
- PLC technicians
- Cabling/Lathe/Milling machine operators
- Electricians
- Maintenance employees
- Office workers
- Administrative workers
- Secretaries/Office assistants
- Sales/shop assistants
- Customer service/Call center operators

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Optimisation of Operations through Process Outsourcing in Banking

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- Back office
- Transaction Processing
- IT Services

What makes us unique?

- 15 years of experience in the finance sector
- Comprehensive Operational Support for Banks and Financial Institutions
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- Full compliance with financial supervision authorities
- Security and precision of finance management
- Modern technologies and data security
- Proven outsourcing solutions
- Comprehensive financial processing
- Scalability and flexibility of services
- We operate throughout entire Poland

Gi BPO Finance is a process outsourcing leader in the banking sector. We optimise processes and create added value by introducing new solutions utilising our years of diverse experience gained over various niche projects. During the last 15 years, numerous banks and insurance companies in Poland have chosen Gi BPO Finance as their strategic partner.

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BPO FINANCE DIVISION

Thomas International Analyses

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The right employee?

Make hiring decisions taking into account candidate's aptitude, skills and potential. Your new employee will prove the right person in the right place.

Effective onboarding?

Learn about candidate strengths, limitations and preferences as soon as during the job interview. Retain new employees in your company!

Building teams?

Build awareness and trust, increase diversity and integration within your company.

Hybrid work?

Give your managers the tools and tips necessary for **effective management of people regardless of their physical location.**

Where to obtain the best leaders from?

Find, develop and promote the most prospective employees. **Build individual career paths, increase involvement.**

Losing talent?

Personalize the challenge and motivation strategy, **reduce the attrition rate, retain talent** and increase productivity.

wyser
Gi Group Holding

Wyser is a retained search recruitment company specialising in Executive Search and Managerial Recruitment services. Our approach leverages the **Executive Search methodology** to drive business development through strategic C-Level relationship management and professional network expansion.

We offer **the quality and standards of Executive Search boutique**, combined with the swift efficiency and dynamic pace of tailored solutions.

Entrusting Wyser Executive Search with leadership recruitment ensures a professional approach, access to top talent, and process optimisation, ultimately leading to the selection of leaders capable of effectively managing and driving long-term organisational growth.

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- Human Resources
- Sales & Marketing
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- Information Technology
- Manufacturing & Supply Chain
- Real Estate
- Construction & Energy

Quarterly we recruit

1 CEO
1 GMs / MDs
10 Board Members / Directors
11 Managers

Positions we are recruiting for

- Supervisory Board Members
- C-Level Executives
- Directors & Senior Management
- Managers & Senior Experts

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