

the **evolution** of **w****ork** | **REPORT** 2023

Methodology

Study

In partnership with Angus Reid Group, Staples Professional conducted a survey among Canadian hybrid-working employees and senior decision makers to understand the experiences and perceptions of splitting workdays between the home and office.

Sample

The survey sample consisted of hybrid working employees and senior decision makers (employers) at companies/organizations with 5 employees or more, who have their workforce working hybrid:

Employer sample: n=311

Employee sample: n=1,006

Field Window

August 4th to 15th, 2023.



Current State of Hybrid Working

KEY FINDINGS

Current State of Hybrid Working

While most hybrid workers are required to come into the office each week, they are nevertheless highly satisfied with the arrangement – four-in-five are satisfied with the balance of home vs. office days they currently have.

Given the choice, most (62%) would continue working hybrid and only one quarter would opt to go back to a fully remote model.

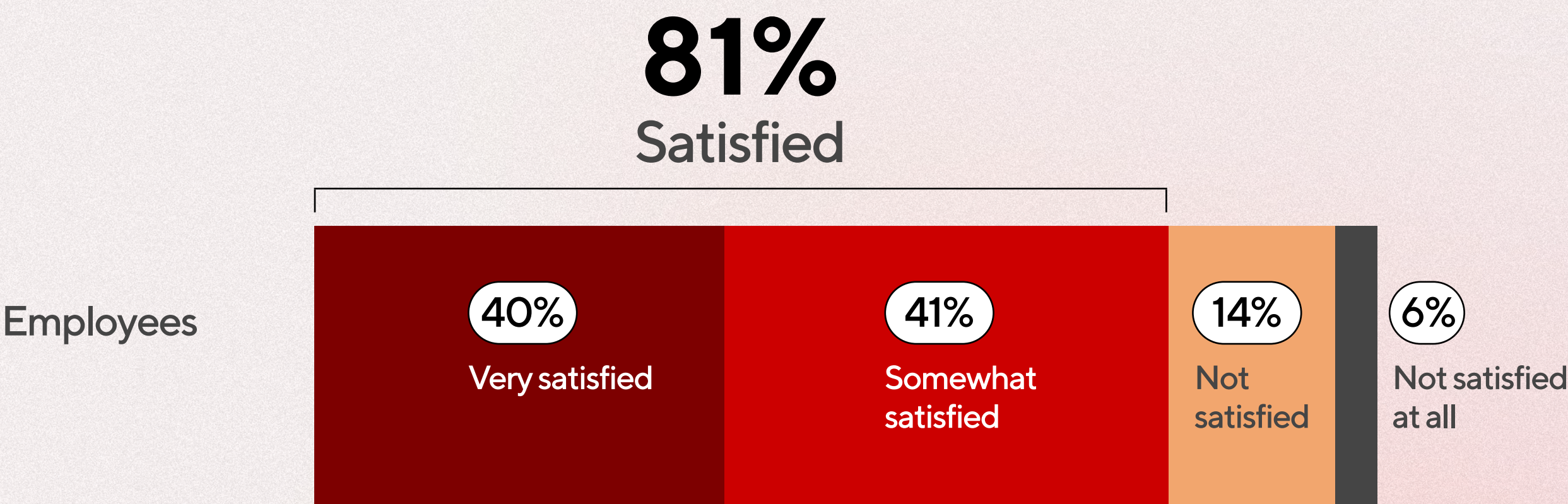
However, many hybrid workers see an opportunity to fine tune hybrid work to better fit them – while three-in-ten are currently working their ideal number of home vs. office days, an equal proportion want to shift the balance towards more days spent working from home.



Current State of Hybrid Working

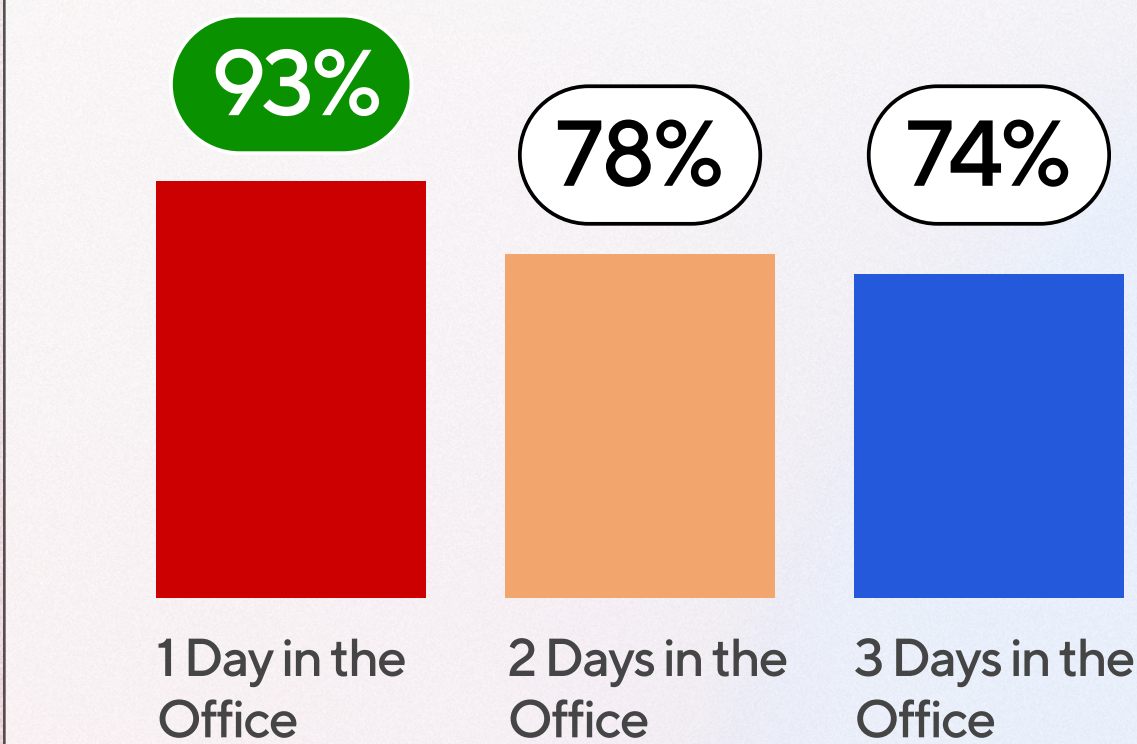
Hybrid working employees are highly satisfied with working a mix of days in the office and at home.

Satisfaction with Current Balance of Home & Office Days



Satisfaction x Number of Office Days

Employees coming into the office 1 day per week are more satisfied with the balance of home vs. office days they work.

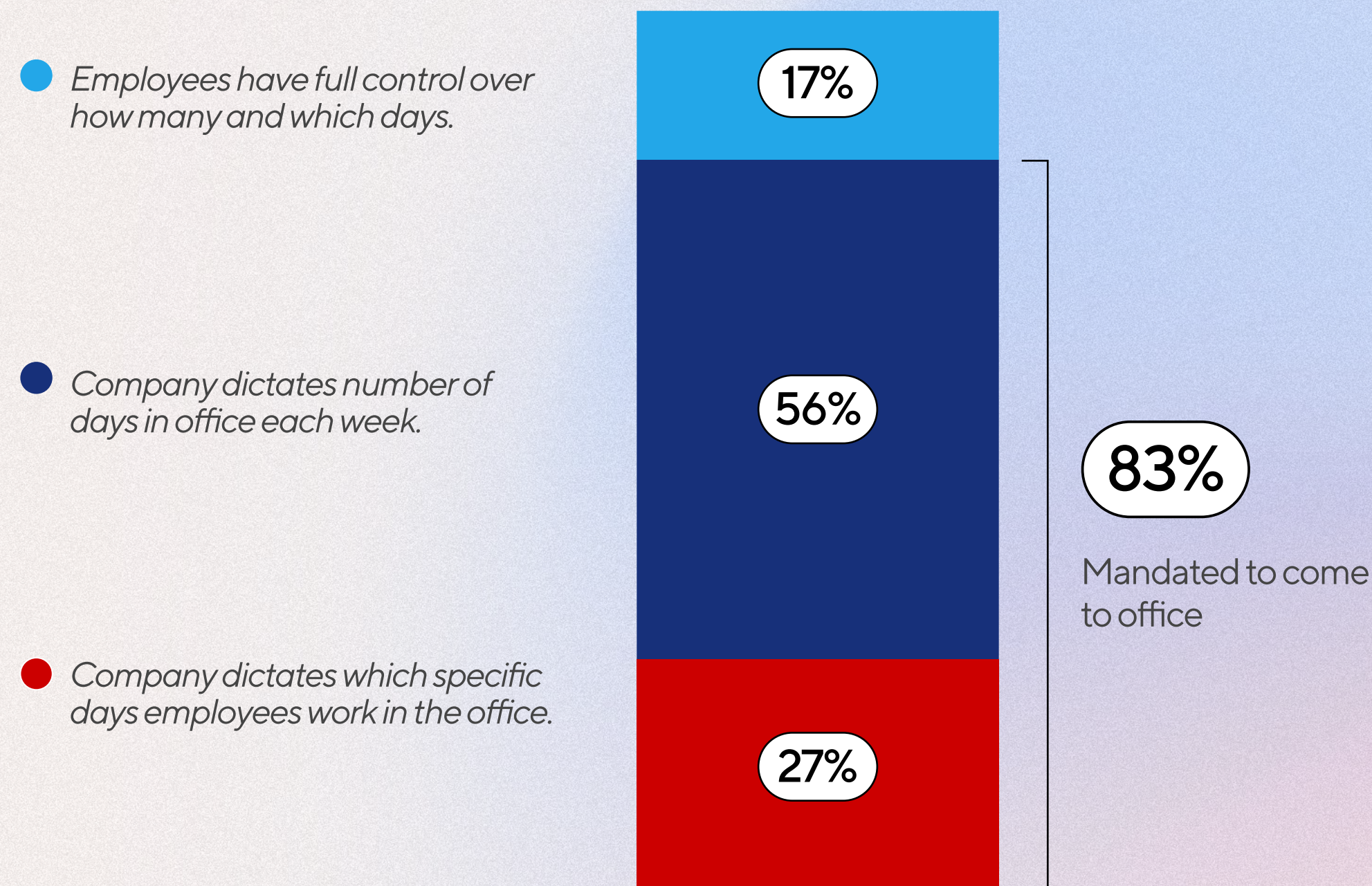


● Significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence.

Current State of Hybrid Working

Most hybrid workers are currently mandated to come into the office for at least a specific number of days. Just under one-in-five have full control over when they come in.

Control Employees Have in Choosing in-Office Days



What Happens When Employees Can Choose?

Employees who have full control over how many and which days they come into the office are both happier while at work and report stronger team spirit among employees at their company.

68%

Describe the team spirit of employees at their company as good (vs. 51% required to come in on specific days).

70%

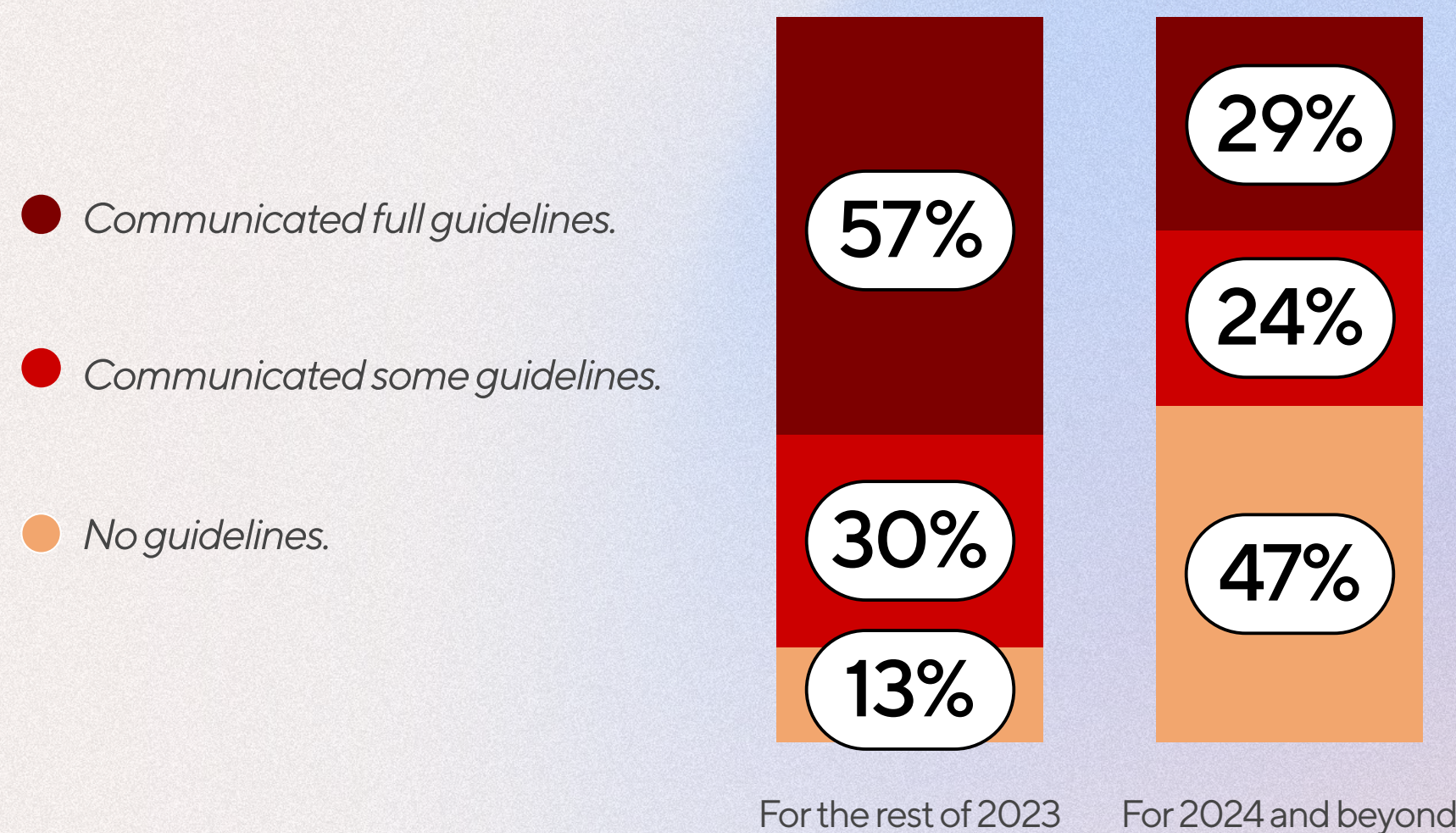
Say they are happy/very happy on most workdays (vs. 60% required to come in on specific days).

Employees who can choose when they come in are also **less likely to say they are happiest when working from home** (45% vs. 58% of those required to come in), and more likely to say working at home vs. in the office has no impact (30% vs. 20%).

Current State of Hybrid Working

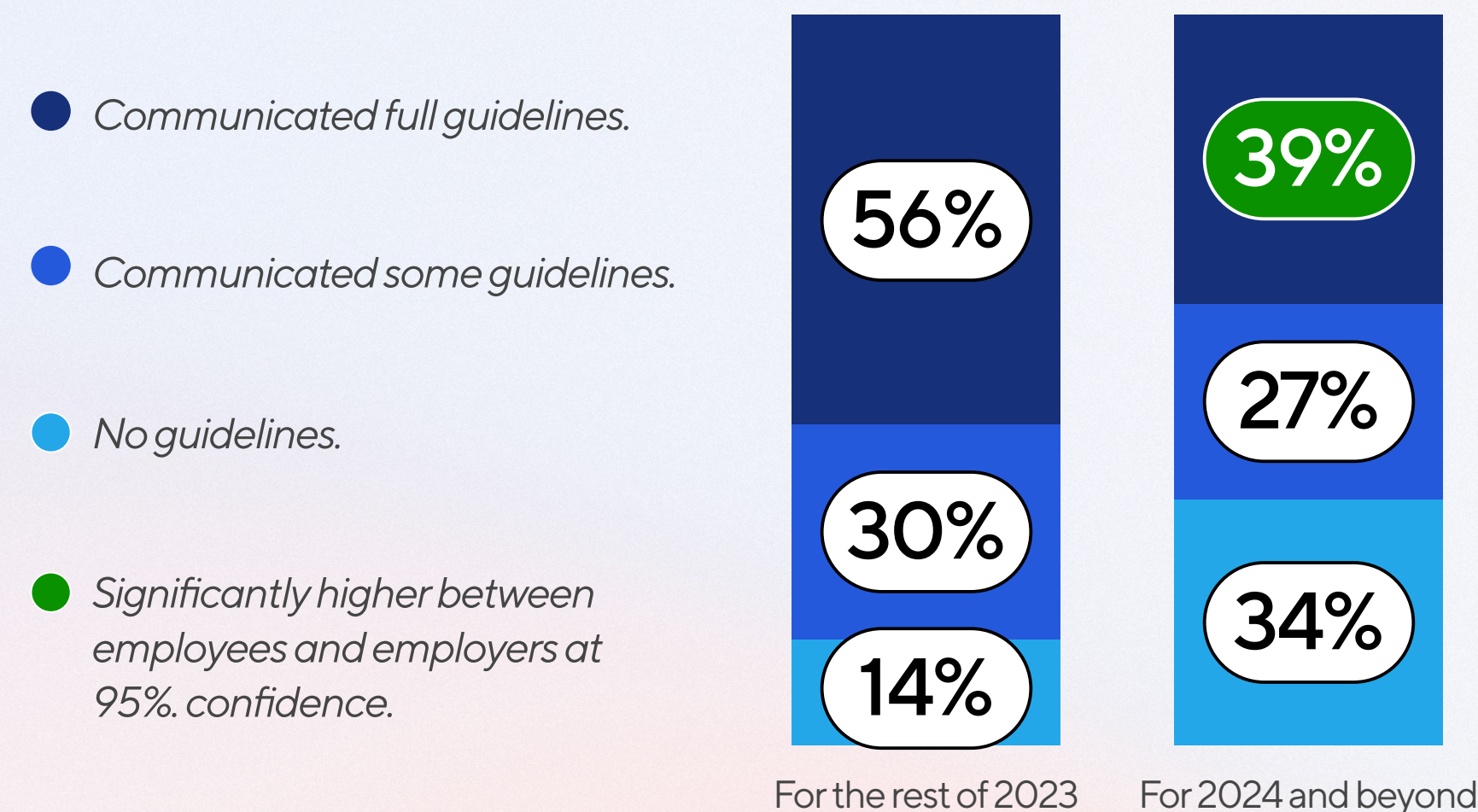
Hybrid employees are mostly informed about when and how often they will be coming into the office through the end of 2023, although there is uncertainty for 2024.

Communication about Hybrid Work Guidelines from Employer Among Employees



Employers' Perspective

Employers and employees are fully aligned on clarity of guidelines for when and how often employees will come into the office for 2023, but beyond that some employees are missing the memo – employers are more likely than employees to state their company has communicated full hybrid working guidelines for 2024 and later.



Current State of Hybrid Working

Most (62%) employees currently working hybrid prefer that arrangement over being fully remote or primarily in the office. Only a minority of one quarter would rather switch (back) to fully remote working.

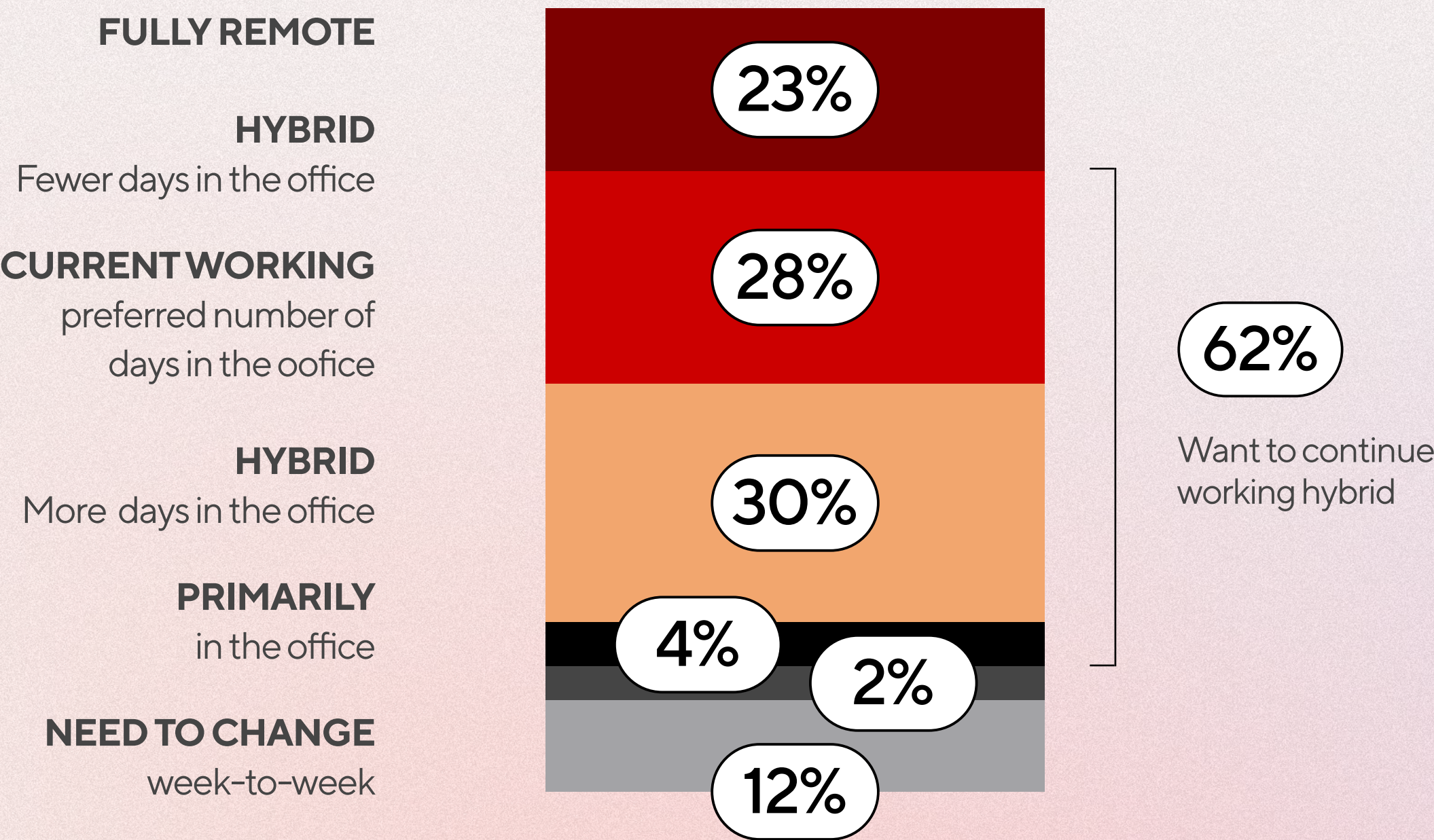
Preferred Balance of At Home vs. In-Office Workdays



Current State of Hybrid Working

While most hybrid workers want both at-home and in-office days each week, only three-in-ten are currently working a balance of home vs. office days that’s ideal for them. An additional three-in-ten want to continue working hybrid, but with fewer days at the office.

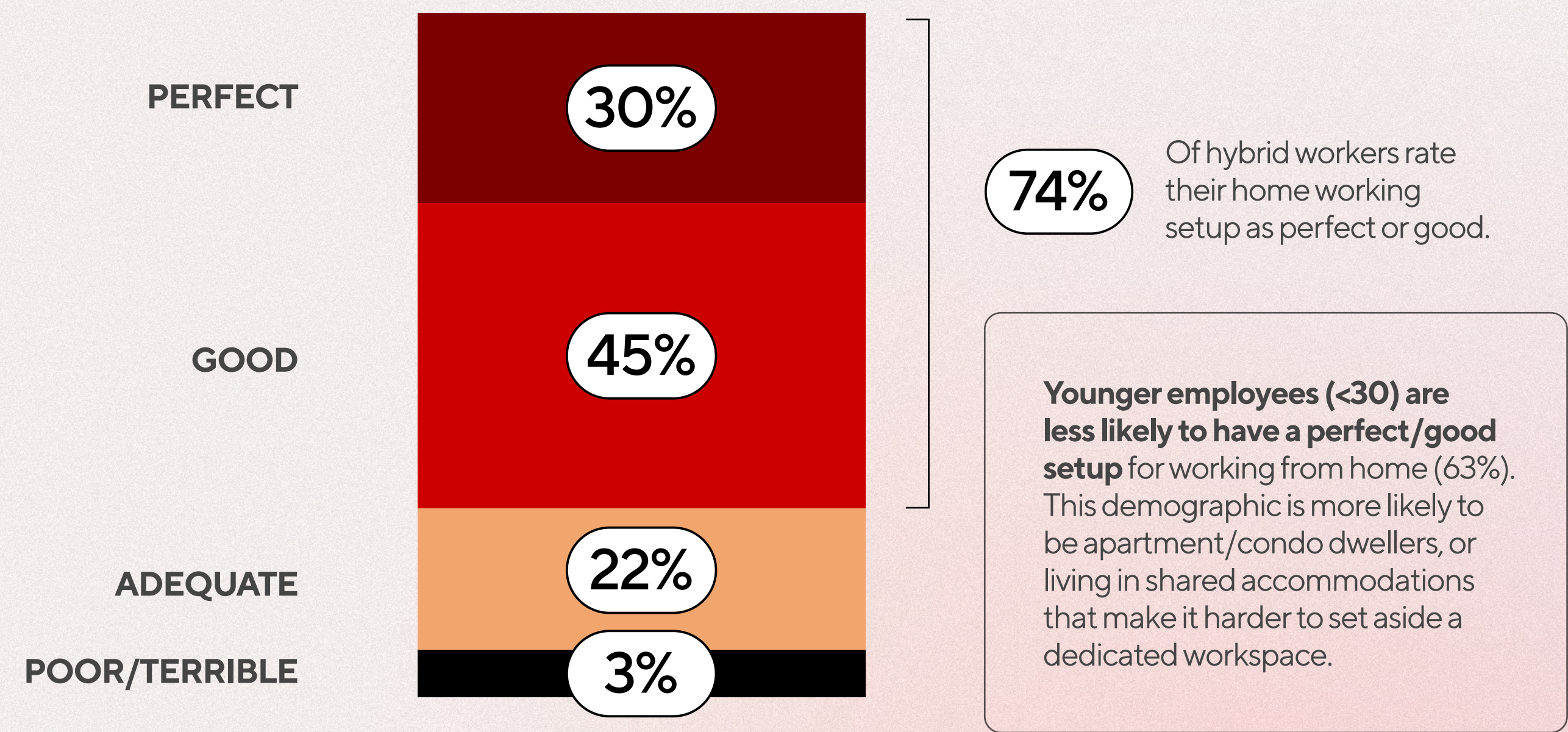
Preferred Arrangement vs. Current Number of Home vs. Office Days



Current State of Hybrid Working

Hybrid workers are well-equipped to work from home – three quarters say their setup for home is good or perfect.

Rating of Current Work-from-Home Setup



Comparison with hybrid work in 2022:

Hybrid workers in 2023 have better setups for working from home now – 66% rated their setup as perfect/good in 2022 vs. 74% today.

This increase may be attributable to some previously fully remote workers with comprehensive work-at-home setups now returning to the office in hybrid form.

Hybrid Work & Happiness

KEY FINDINGS

Hybrid Work & Happiness

Hybrid workers see clear advantages to being able to work from home, experiencing better productivity and even higher levels of happiness on their working-at-home days.

However most hybrid workers would not choose to work at home all the time as they have found both working from home and in the office have their own unique advantages to leverage. Having the ability to work from home or in the office enables employees to optimally manage their work-life balance while also feeling connected and building relationships with their colleagues.

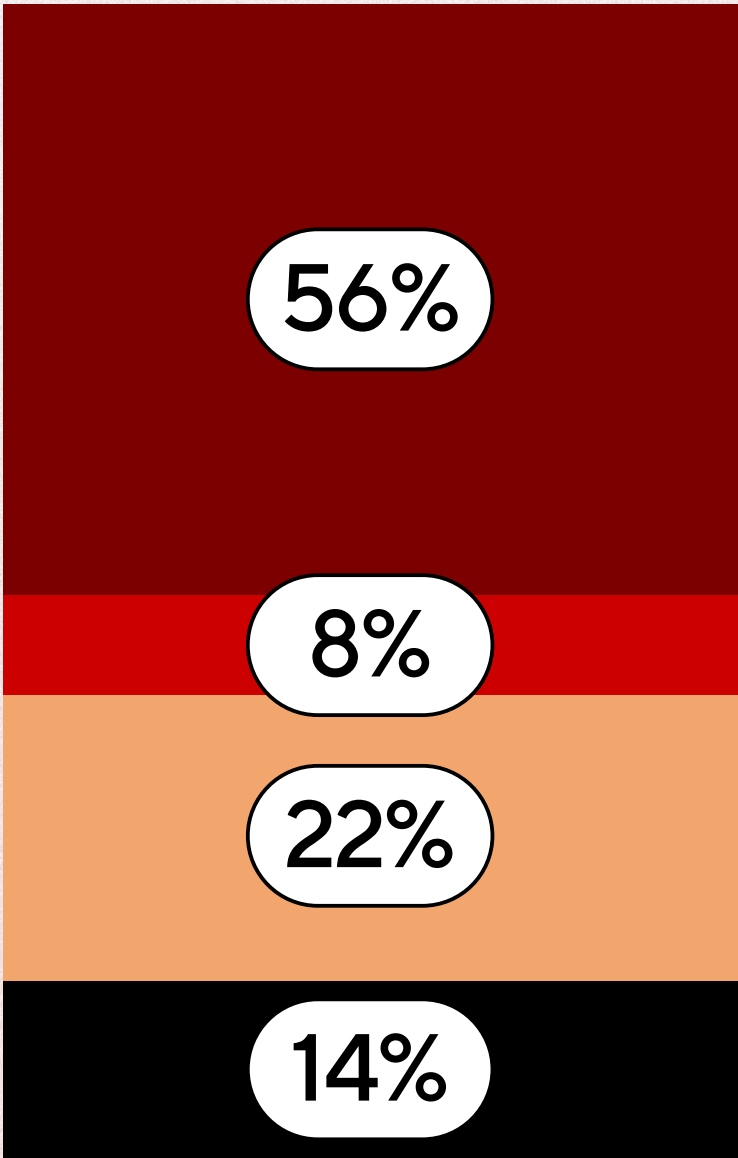
Having seen productivity gains working from home, employees see the value of the office as less about working productively and more of an opportunity to connect with colleagues. This social draw for employees to come into the office is not fully appreciated by employers who are nearly twice as likely to say better learning / mentoring are primary benefits to having employees in the office, and underappreciate the value of a change of atmosphere for employees.

Hybrid Work & Happiness

Employees say they are happier on days when they work from home – over half say they are happier on work-at-home days vs. 8% happier when they work in the office.

Happiness During the Workday Depending on Work Location

DO YOU FEEL
HAPPIER ON DAYS
WHEN YOU...



WORK AT HOME

WORK IN THE OFFICE

NO IMPACT
of being at home or in the
office on how happy I feel

TOO VARIED
or difficult to say

Employers are seeing this – 52% of employers say their employees are happier when they work from home; only 12% say they are happier when they work in the office.

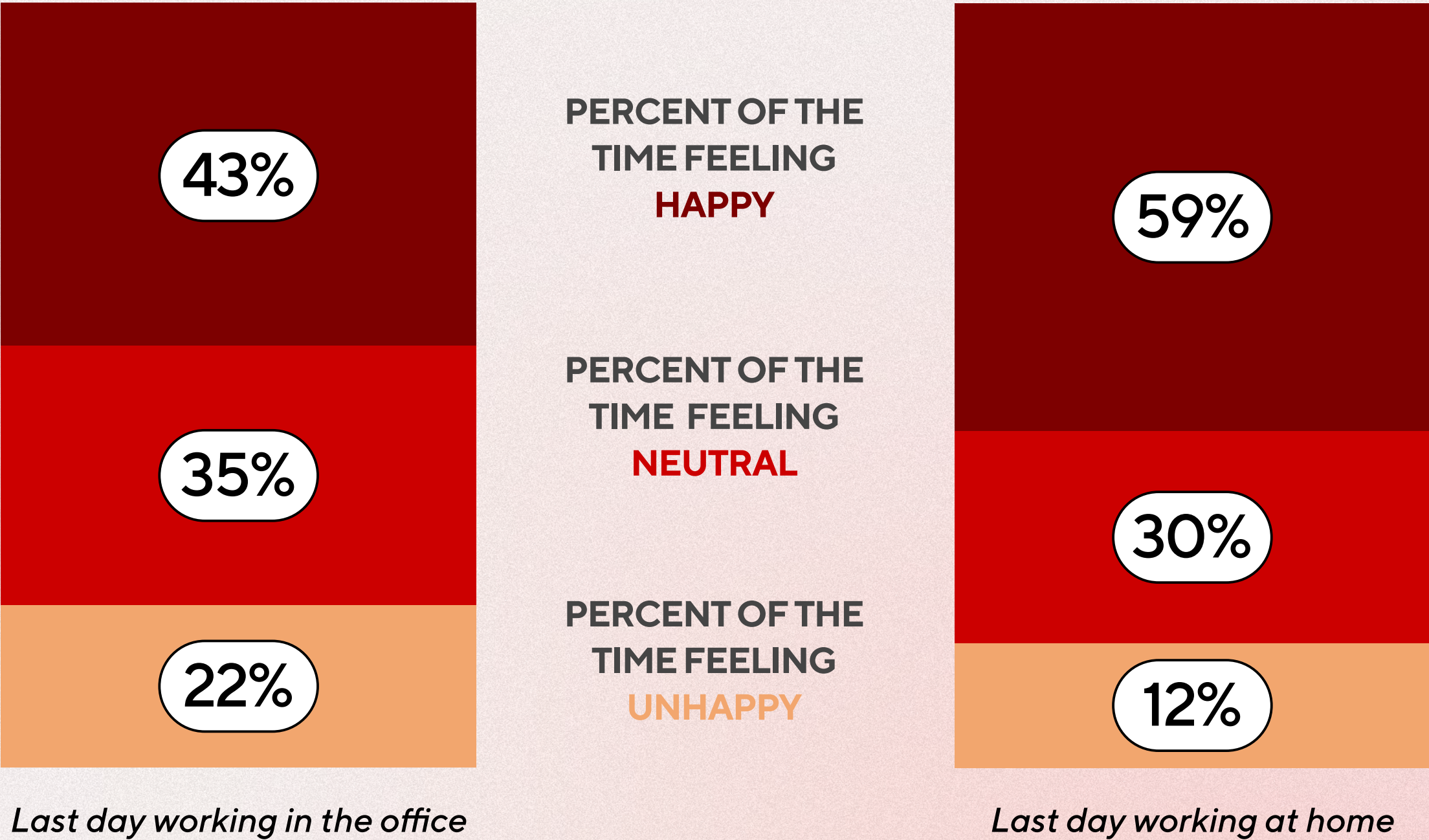
Employees

Hybrid Work & Happiness

Employees report feeling happy for a larger proportion of the day when working from home vs. in the office.

Feelings when Working At Home vs. When in the Office

Average among Employees



Who’s Happiest in the Office?

Employees are happier more of the time in the office if they are:

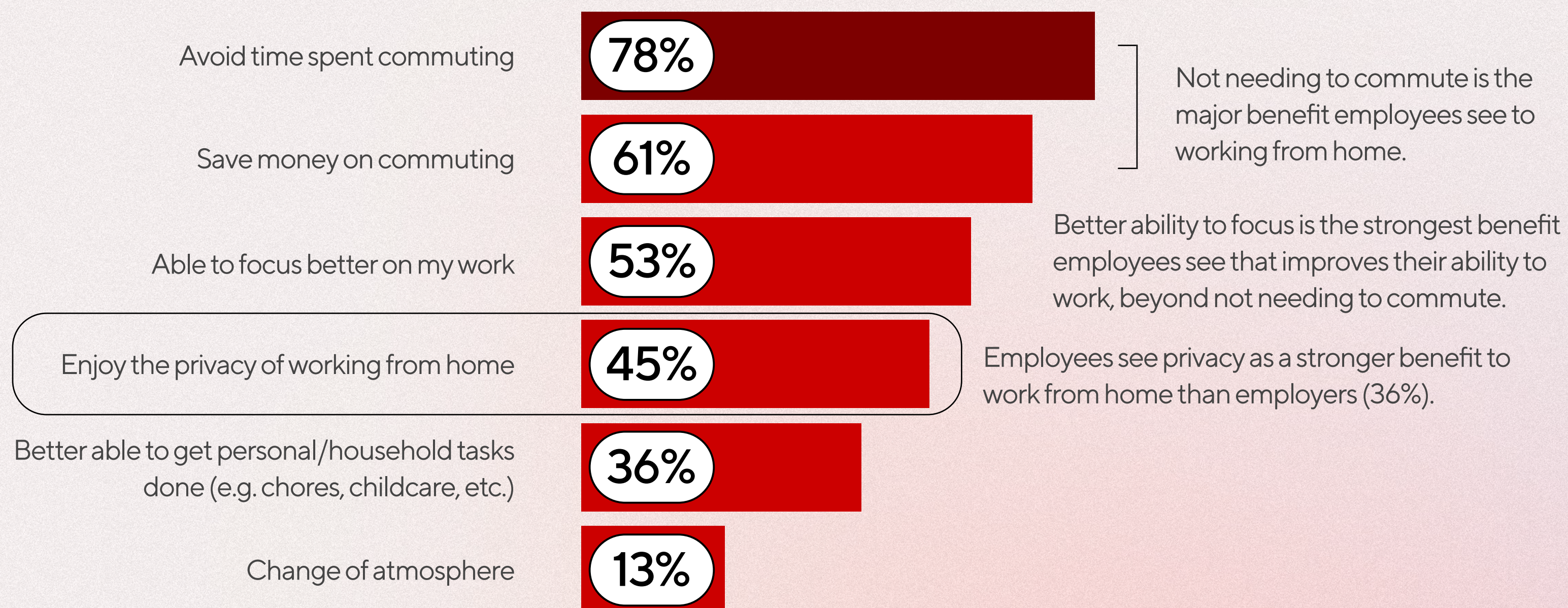
- In Quebec (58%)
- Newer employees with the company less than 1 year (51%)
- Experiencing low / no burnout (47%)
- Able to choose how many / which days they come into the office (50%)

Hybrid Work & Happiness

Commuting is a major hurdle for employees and avoiding it is the strongest benefit hybrid workers see in working from home. Beyond this, hybrid employees are finding improved ability to focus working from home.

Main Benefits of Working from Home

Ranked Top 3



Employees that work from home more often (4 or 3 days per week) are more likely to note their better ability to focus at home (57%) than employees coming into the office 3 days per week (46%).

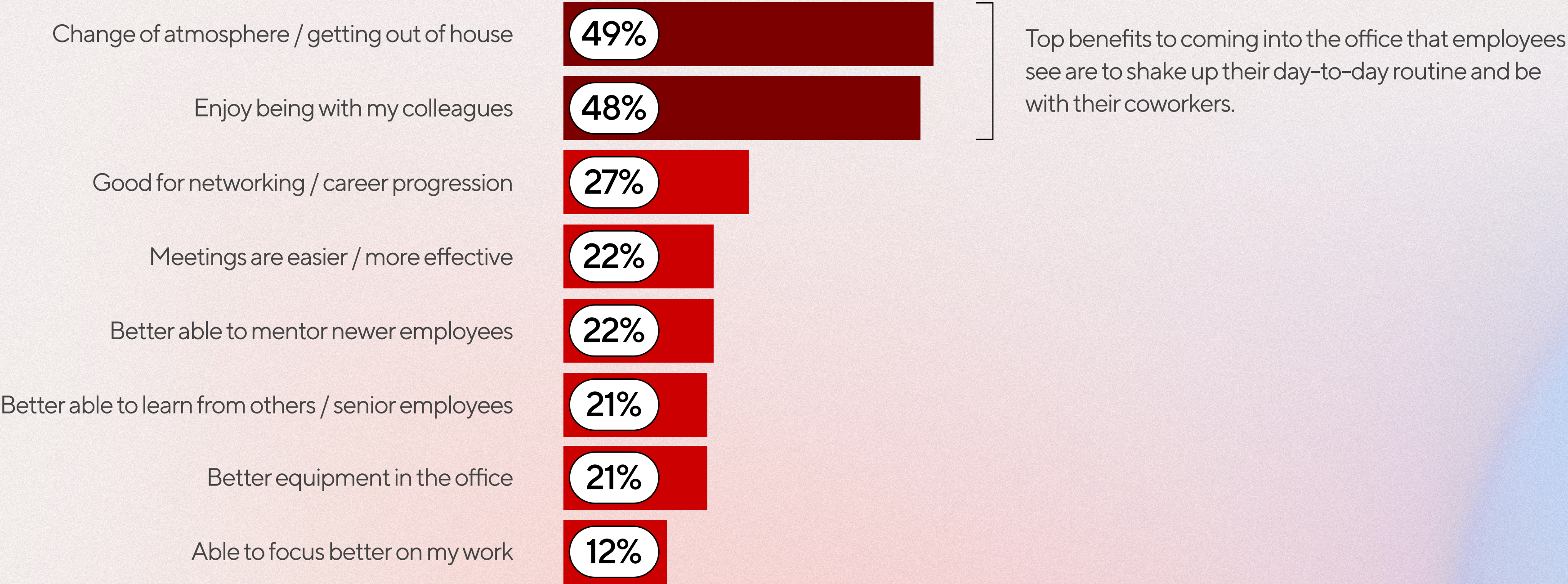
Employees that come in 3 days per week are more likely to say working from home gives them a change of atmosphere vs. the office (18%).

Hybrid Work & Happiness

The top benefits employees see for coming into the office are not directly work related – employees value the change of pace and ability to work in-person with their coworkers.

Main Benefits of Coming Into the Office

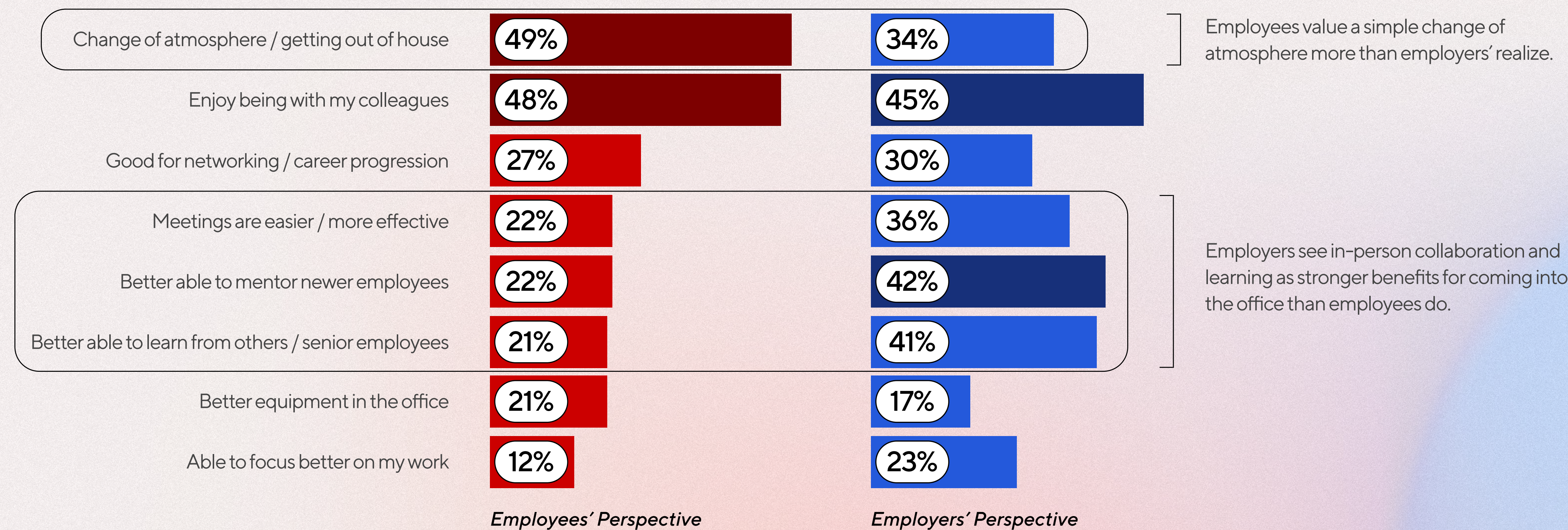
Ranked Top 3



Hybrid Work & Happiness

The top benefits employees see for coming into the office are not directly work related – employees value the change of pace and ability to work in-person with their coworkers.

Main Benefits for Employees Coming Into the Office? *Ranked Top 3*

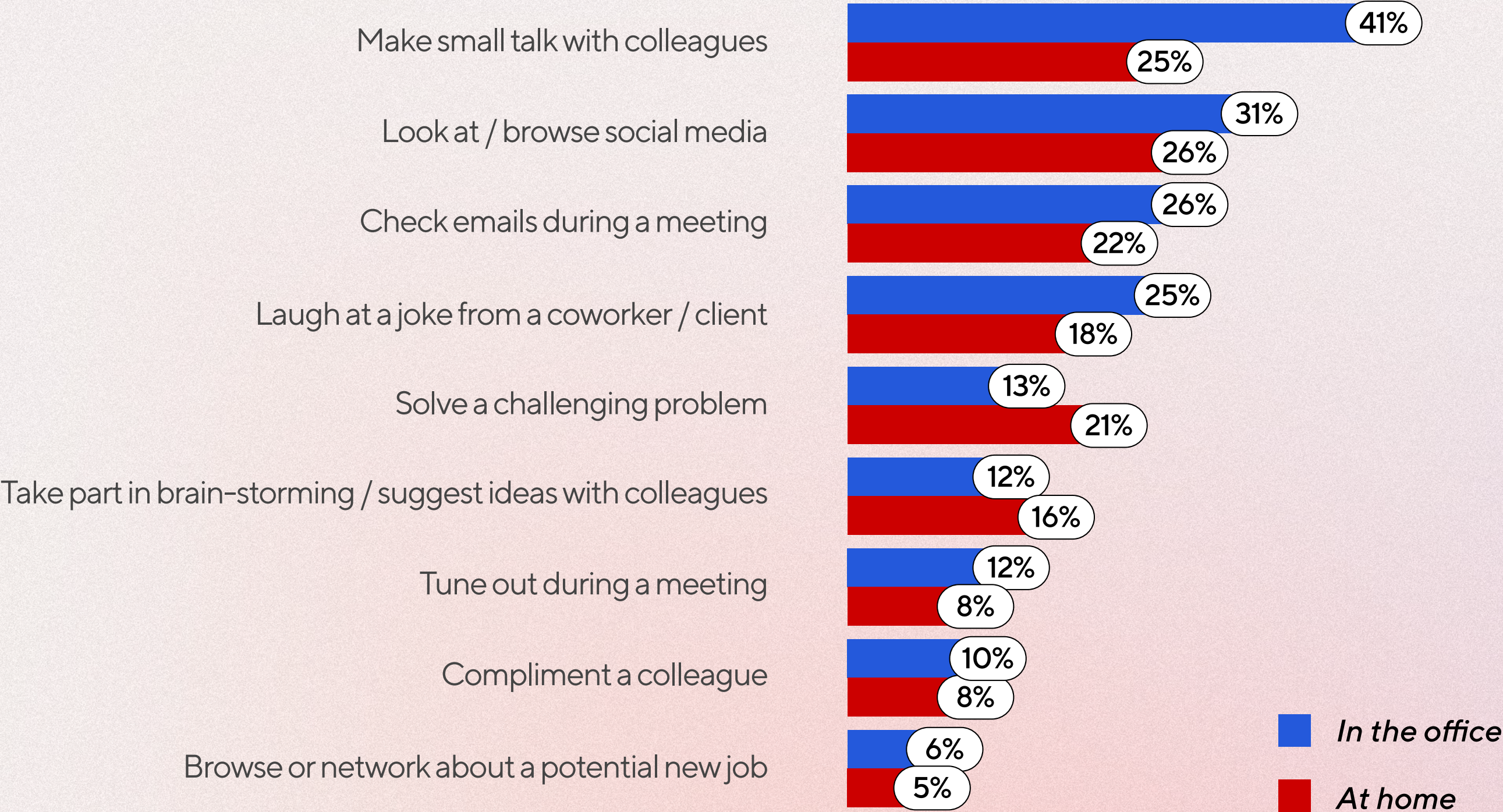


Hybrid Work & Happiness

Social interactions happen more in the office – employees are making more small talk with colleagues and more likely to laugh at jokes. Meanwhile in-depth problem solving is happening more often on work-at-home days.

Frequent Interactions and Behaviours when Working At Home vs. When in the Office

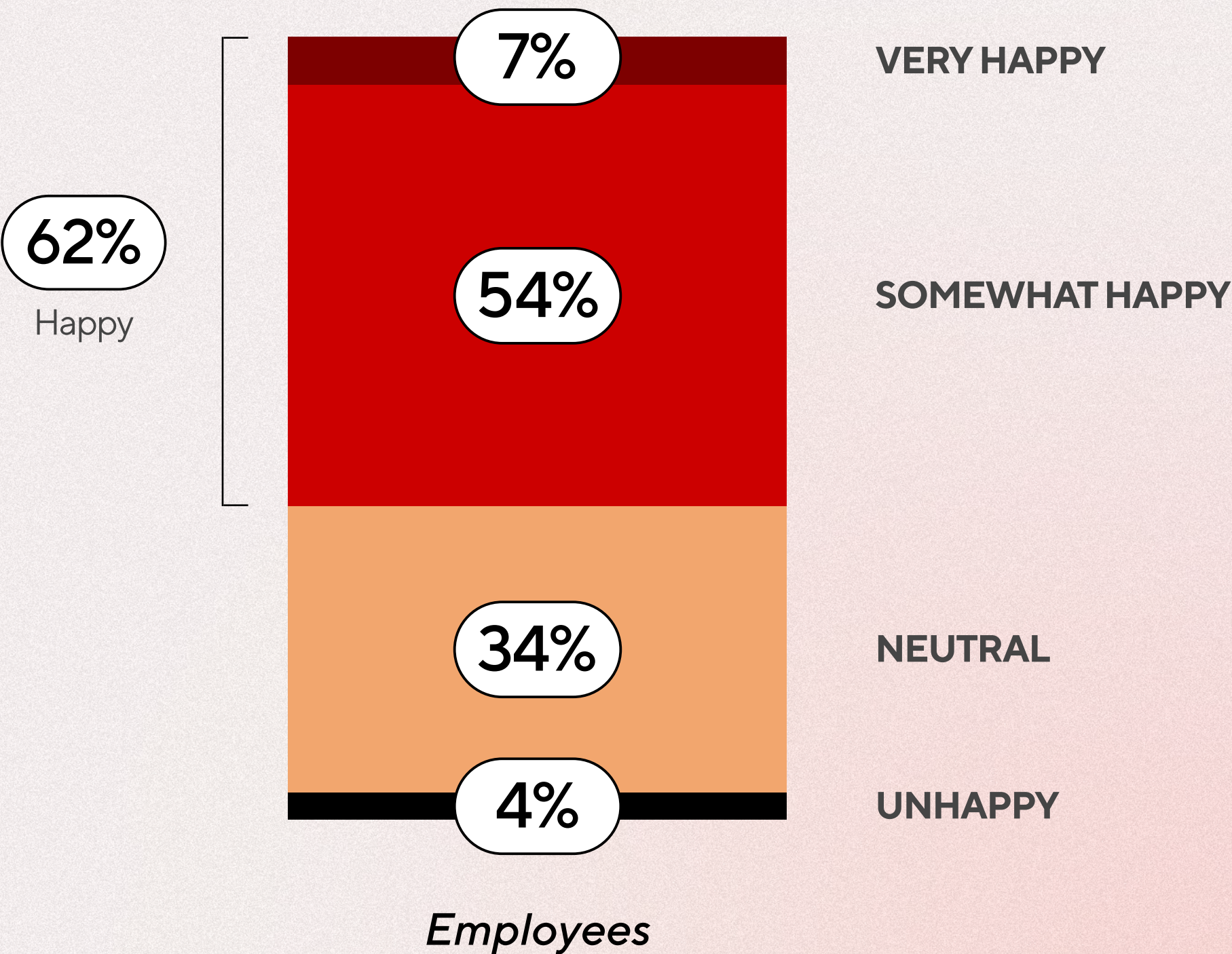
Have Done at Least Three Times a Day Among Employees



Hybrid Work & Happiness

Most employees describe themselves as happy on most workdays, regardless of whether they are in the office or at home.

Happiness During the Workday Regardless of Work Location



Happiness x Number of Office Days

Although employees coming into the office only 1 day each week say they are more satisfied with the arrangement than those coming in more often, impact on day-to-day happiness is not severe.

While employees working more days from home are more satisfied with the arrangement, they are not necessarily happier.



Hybrid Work & Happiness

Majorities of employees note work-life balance and flexibility as having large impacts on their long-term happiness – more so than earning more money and finding purpose in their work.

Impact on Long-term Happiness (% saying Large Impact on happiness)



While employers and employees are generally aligned on the impacts of these factors for long-term happiness, **employers somewhat discount the importance of work-life balance and flexibility**, and overestimate the impact of being a part of a good team and finding purpose in one’s work.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

KEY FINDINGS

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

While hybrid workers and their employees are on the same page for the types of challenges faced when splitting work weeks between home and office, their views diverge on how these challenges are best managed. Employers lean heavily towards believing bringing employees together in the office as the best way to manage work-related difficulties, while employees have learned that both working from home and in the office have unique advantages.

Employees see importance of being in the office to grow relationships and better coordinate with colleagues, but also find themselves better able to manage their time and stay on top of things when they can work from home.

In addition to removing their commute, employees are finding enhanced productivity doing focused work at home, and plan and allocate their week's tasks between the home and the office to be most productive.

Understanding that working at home and in the office both have advantages for different parts of their jobs has created a strong appreciation for flexibility among hybrid working employees. Nearly all hybrid working employees say it's reasonable for them to choose when they get their work done, either at home or in the office, and also note this flexibility for when they work as one of the top things that would improve their experience coming into the office.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Staying motivated and managing their work-life balance are core challenges for hybrid workers.

Top 10 Challenges Employees Face Among Employees



Comparison with hybrid work in 2022:

Primary challenges for hybrid workers in 2023 have not changed substantially over the past year. While concerns about motivation and managing the demands of one’s job have not improved; they have also not worsened.

While commuting is a larger challenge now in 2023, more time spent working in a hybrid model is leading to better relationships, with fewer hybrid workers struggling to develop social relationships at work as a challenge.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Employers strongly appreciate work-life balance struggles for their hybrid employees – six-in-ten say employees are facing this challenge.

Top 10 Challenges Employees Face

Employers' Perspective



What do Employers See Differently?

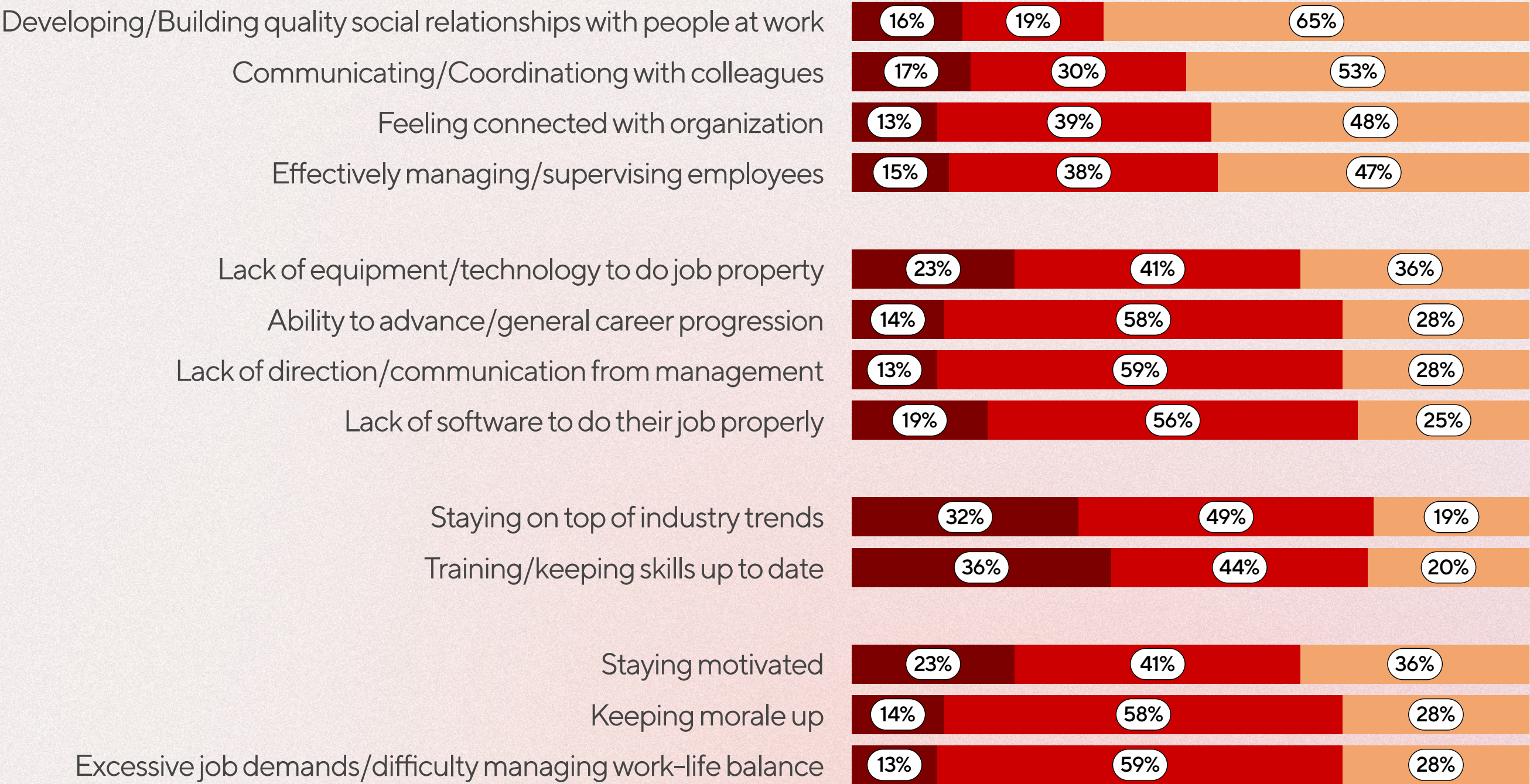
While challenges employers see their staff facing are generally in line with employees' own perspectives, employers overestimate the prevalence of some challenges.

Employers are more likely to think their employees are facing challenges connecting with the organization and other colleagues.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Employees see clear benefits to days worked at home in keeping up with job demands and improving their morale, and this has an added benefit of helping find time to upskill and keep up with industry trends.

Are Challenges Best Managed Working at Home vs. the Office? *Among Employees*



Challenges related to connection, relationship building and communication are consistently seen to be easier to manage in the office.

Work at home days provide employees with the flexibility they need to meet the demands of their job and improve morale.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Employers are more likely to see virtually all challenges better managed in the office – particularly those involving relationships and communication.

Work Challenges Most Easily Managed Working in the Office

% Easier to Manage in the Office



Employers are more likely to say all challenges are better managed in the office.

What do Employers See Differently?

Employers lean heavily towards believing the office is a better venue for employees to manage problems they face at their work, and are notably more than twice as likely as employees to say working at the office is best to manage morale.

Employers may confuse cohesiveness and personal connections between employees with morale – employees recognize that the office is better for improving relationships, but rely on the flexibility to work from home as needed to keep their morale up.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

While majorities of employers and employees see days worked at home as being optimal for managing work-life balance, employers significantly underestimate how much at-home days can improve employee morale.

Work Challenges Most Easily Managed Working in the Office

% Easier to Manage in the Office



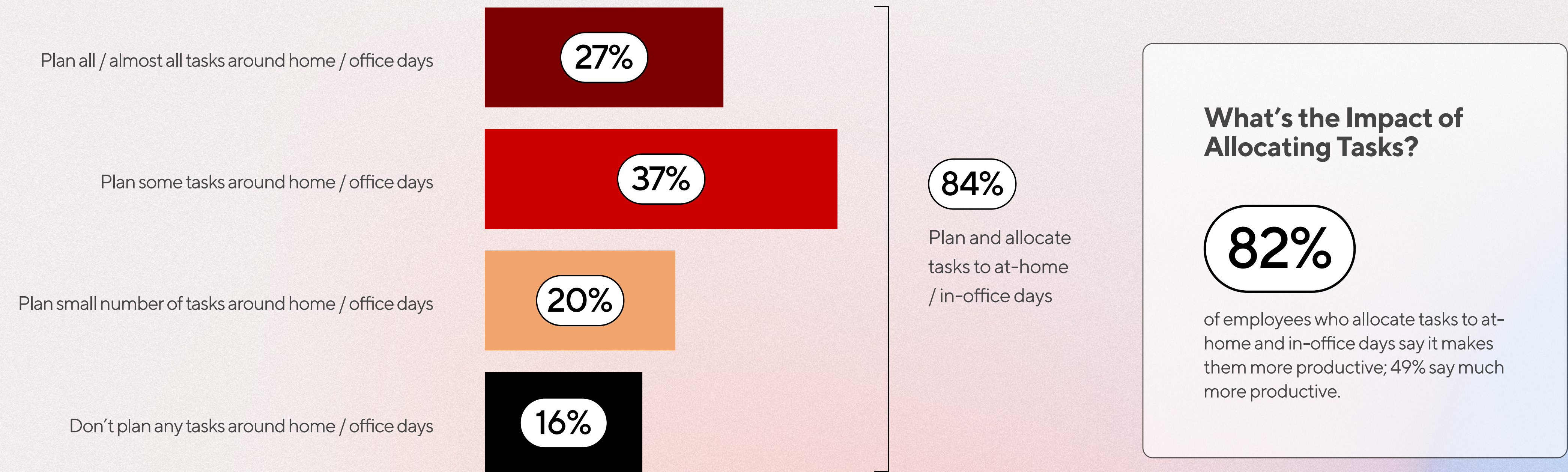
Employees are **more than twice as likely** to say it's easier to keep their morale up on days when they can work from home.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Most employees are allocating tasks between their at-home and in-office days, and are more productive for it.

Task Planning When Working At Home vs. In-office

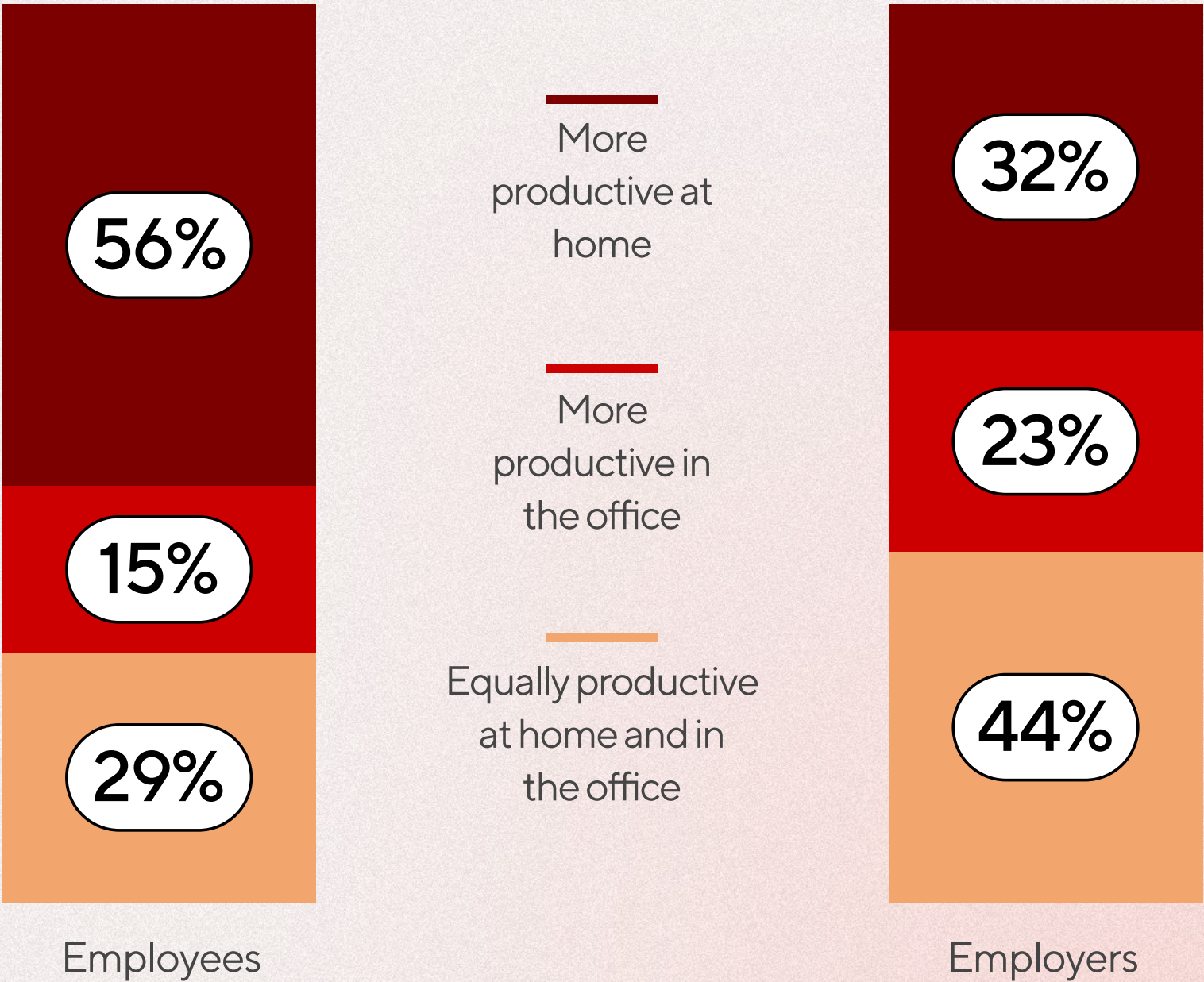
Among Employees



Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Over half of employees say they are more productive at home than in the office, but employers aren't of the same mind.

More Productive at Home or in the Office?



Will in-Office Productivity Increase over Time?

Most employees and employers say no – 82% of employees that find they are more productive at home say their in-office productivity will not increase as they get used to working there more often.

Employers, however, are more optimistic – they are more likely to think employees' productivity at the office will improve as they work there more often.

Will Productivity at the Office Improve?

Among those saying they/employees are more productive at home



Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Hybrid employees strongly appreciate special perks on days they are in the office. Meanwhile the need for flexibility remains and employees will have a better experience if they will be at the office at a time that suits them and have a space for focused work, free of distractions.

Improvements to In-Office Experience

Ranked Top 3 Among Employees



Comparison with hybrid work in 2022:

Hybrid workers continue to strongly value simple perks like free lunch or a social hour as a show of appreciation when they are in the office.

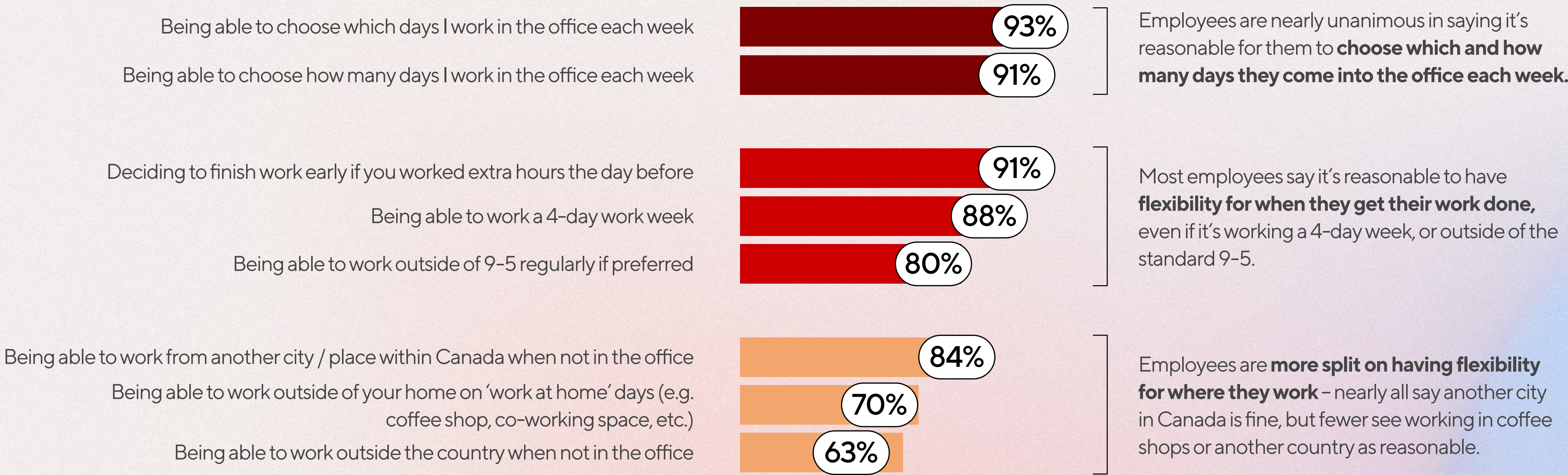
What's changed vs. 2022 as more employees are working hybrid models is employees have more of a desire to choose what days they come in the office, and to have a dedicated workspace free of distractions.

Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Employees resoundingly feel that having flexibility for when they come into the office and when they get their work done are reasonable expectations.

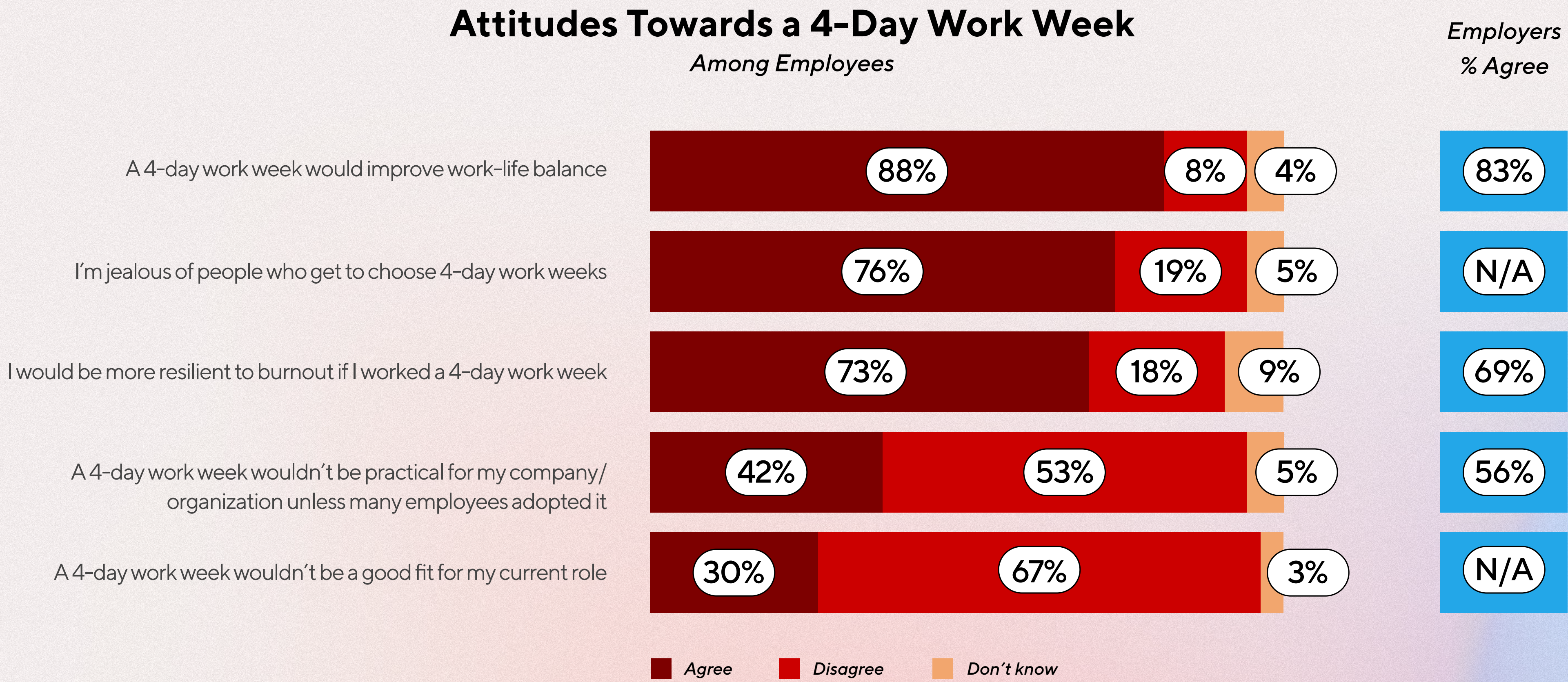
Reasonableness of Work-Related Expectations

% Yes Among Employees



Managing Challenges While Working Hybrid

Employees widely agree that a 4-day work week would improve work-life balance; three quarters say it would make them more resilient to burnout.



Burn●out: Experiences & Impacts

Burnout: Experiences & Impacts

As employees note excessive job demands and managing work-life balance as a top challenge for them, it is having significant consequences on both their outputs and attitude towards work. Nearly half of employees (47%) report experiencing at least some burn out and these employees are twice as likely to feel drained, work out, and to talk about their jobs negatively. Companies having employees persistently burnout will have employees with less energy and engagement in their work, and who are more likely to churn.

Many employers and employees understand the need for collaboration to tackle burnout with just over half in each camp noting it's both

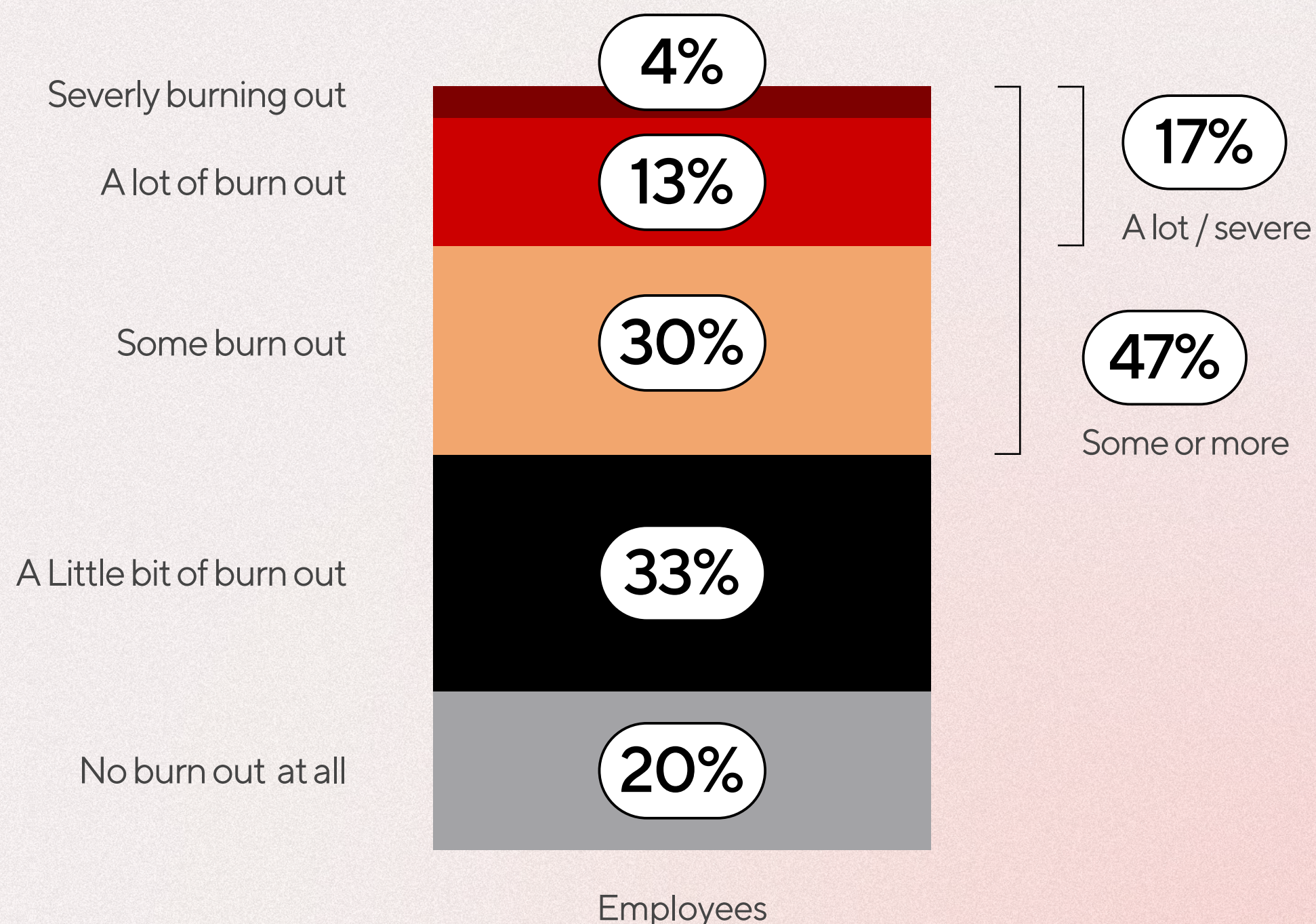
leadership's and employees' responsibility to manage burnout, however both groups also tend to shoulder more responsibility than they need to. Employees are more likely to say it's their responsibility to manage burnout, and employers are more likely to say its managements' responsibility to manage burnout.

These expectations for who's responsible for burnout show a willingness to tackle the issue among both employees and employers that may be missed if both groups are trying to manage it on their own.

Burnout: Experiences & Impacts

Nearly half of employees are noting at least some levels of burnout; 17% say it is high or severe. Meanwhile employers estimate that three-in-ten employees at their company are experiencing significant levels of burnout.

Experiences with Burnout Among Employees



36%
Mean

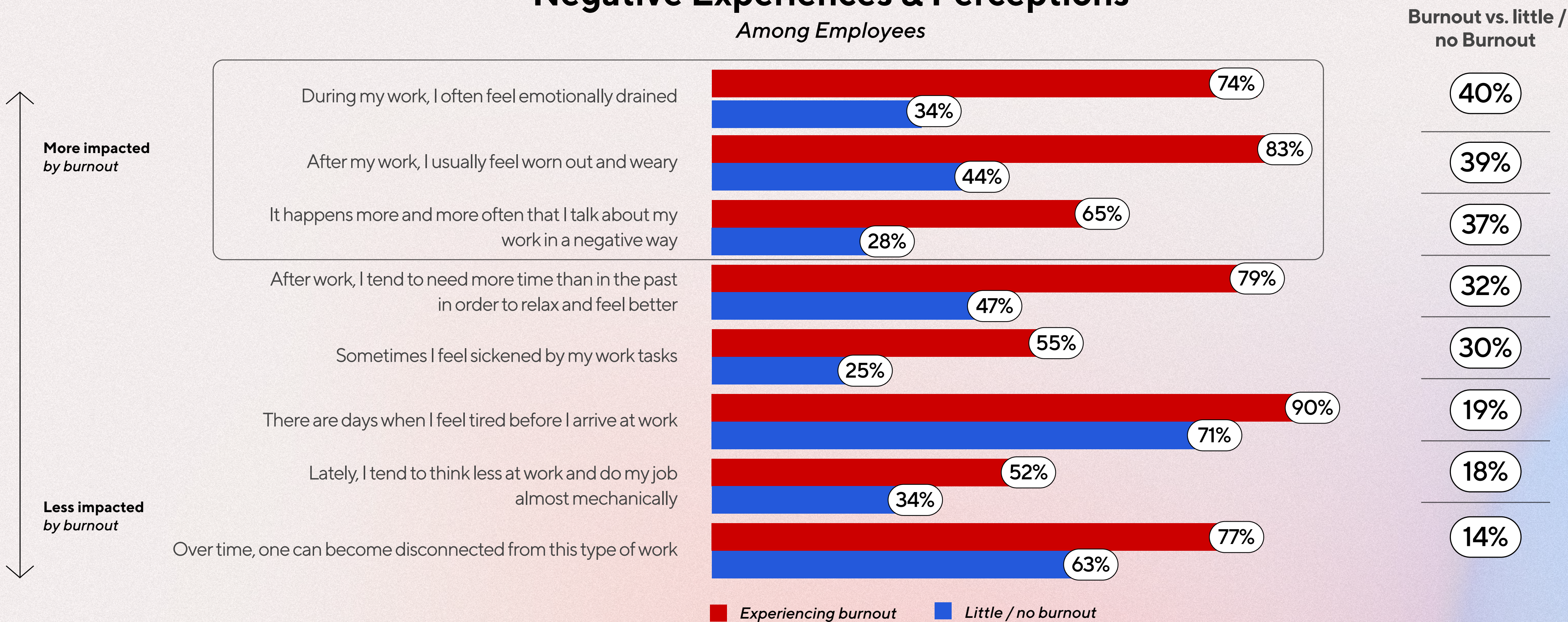
Employers estimate that approximately 30% of the employees at their company are currently experiencing significant levels of burnout

Longer-tenured employees are reporting higher levels of burnout, with the 3-year mark being where burnout levels increase (52% of employees with 3+ years at their current companies are experiencing burn out vs. 34% of newer employees).

Burnout: Experiences & Impacts

The 47% of employees noting burnout in their jobs are twice as likely to feel emotionally drained, worn out or talk about their work in a negative way.

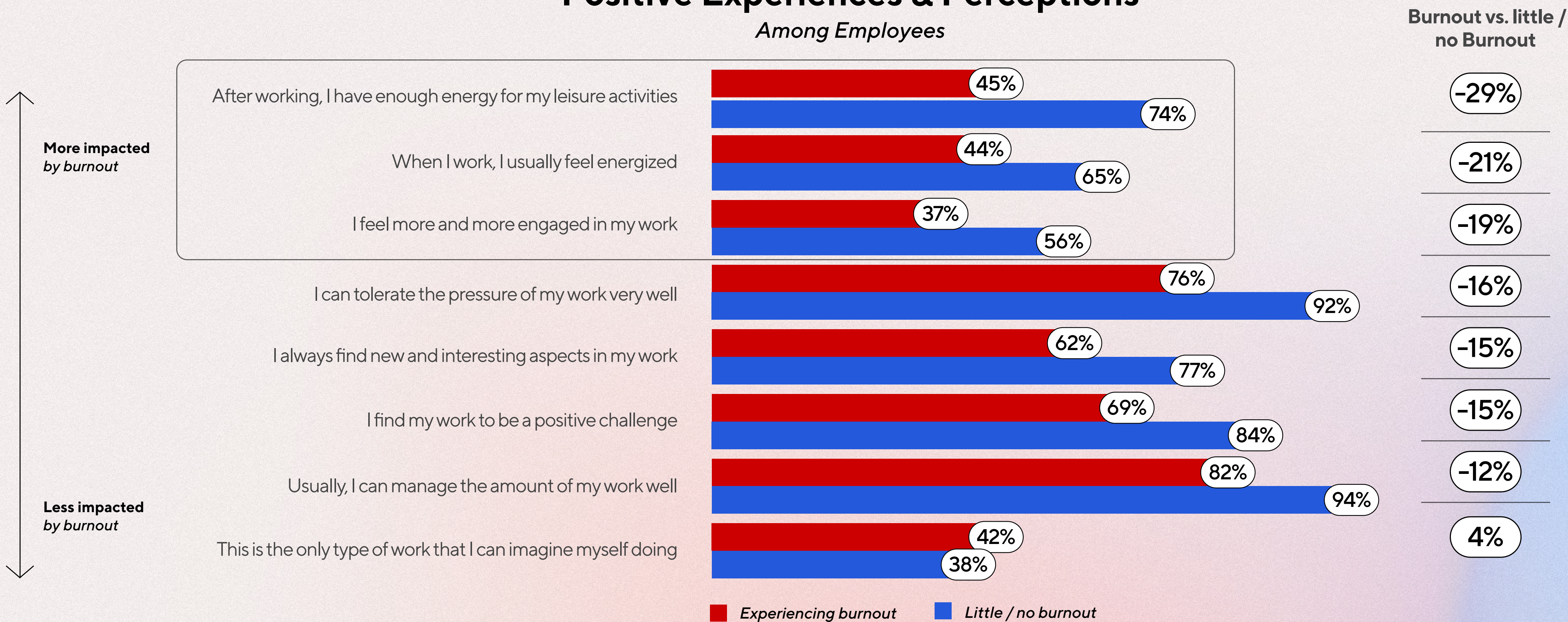
Negative Experiences & Perceptions Among Employees



Burnout: Experiences & Impacts

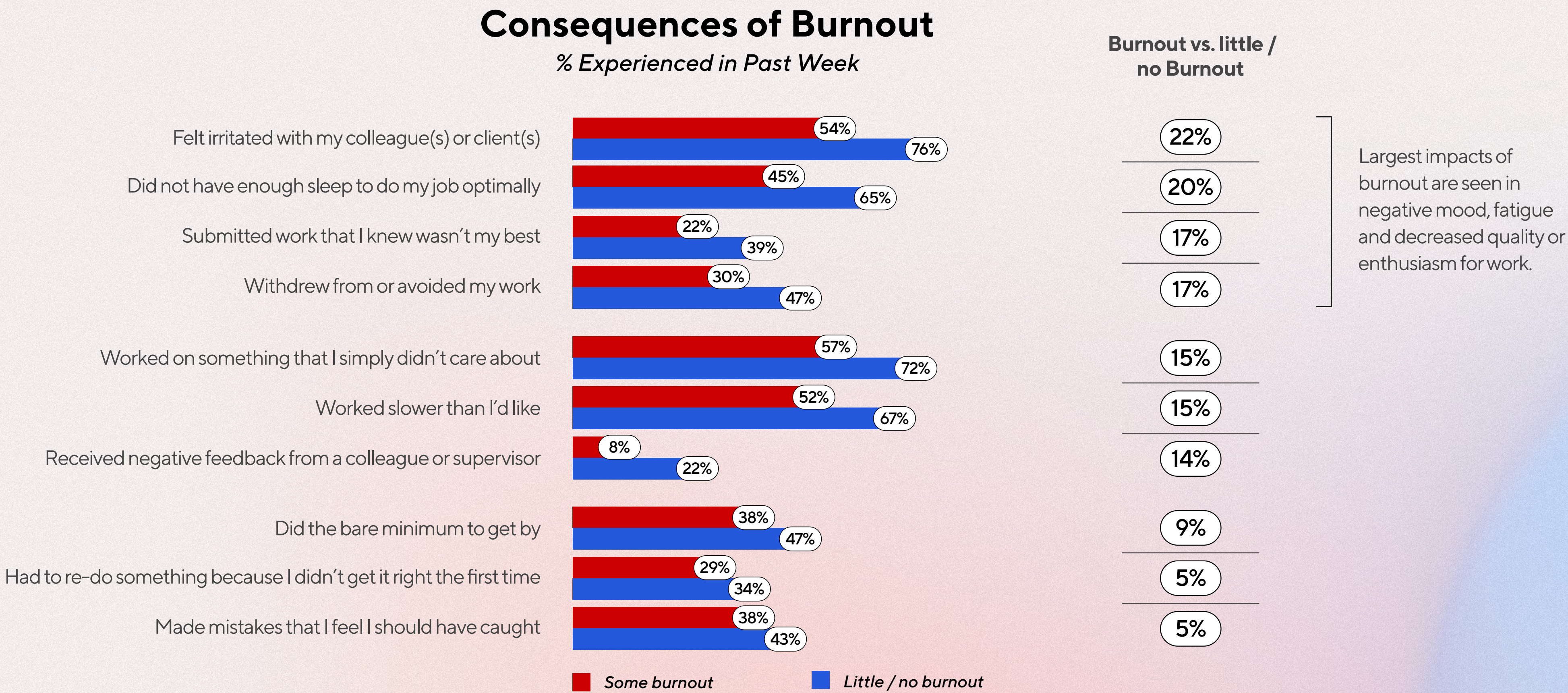
Employees experiencing little to no burnout are more energized for both their personal hobbies and job. They are also more engaged with their work.

Positive Experiences & Perceptions Among Employees



Burnout: Experiences & Impacts

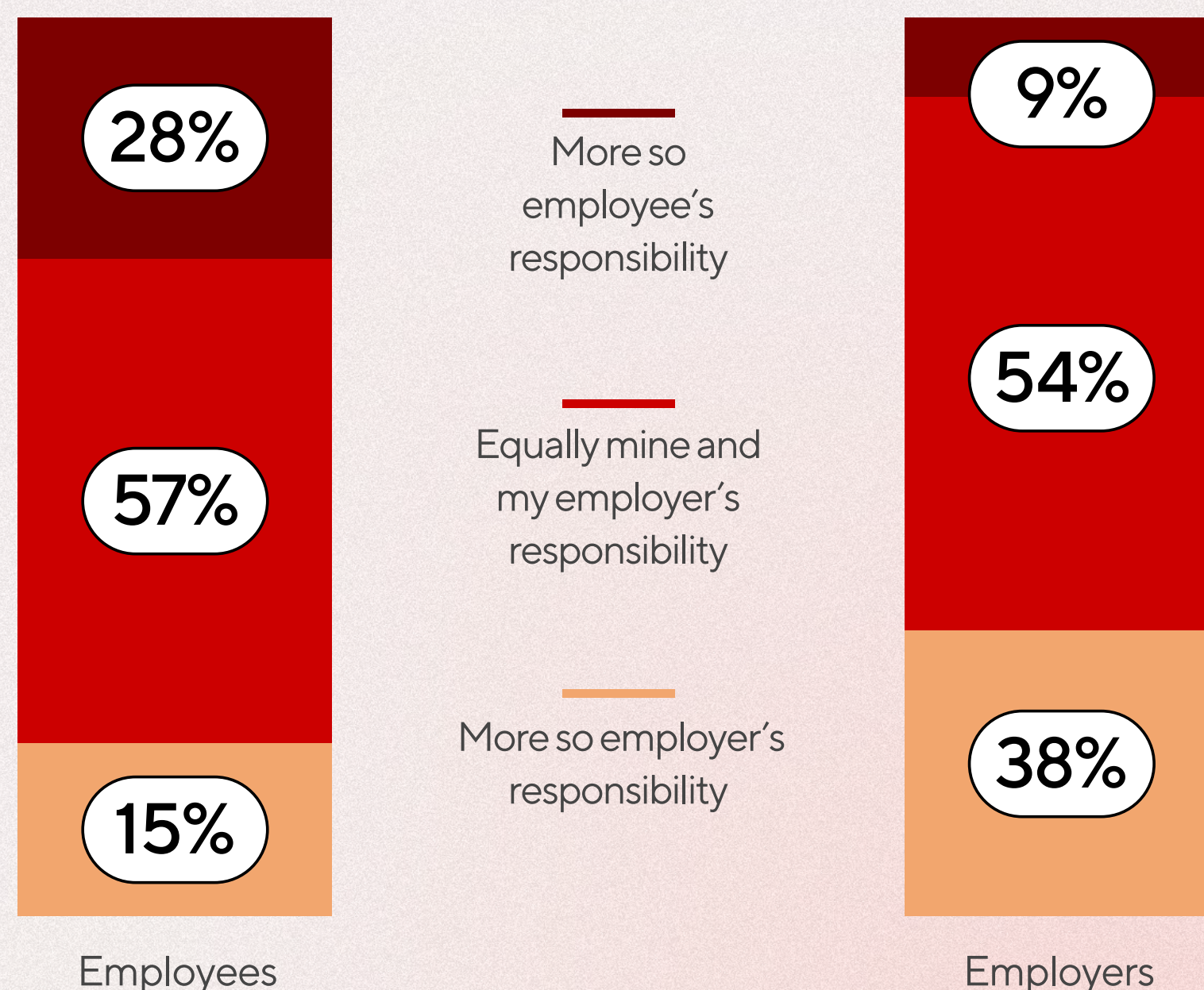
While all employees report some negative experiences or disengagement with their work, those experiencing burnout struggle at significantly higher rates. Having employees burning out harms company culture and productivity as employees become more irritable and less invested in their work.



Burnout: Experiences & Impacts

Many employees and employers alike see shared responsibility for employees and employers in managing burnout. However, while employees are more likely to emphasize their own responsibility, employers likewise are more likely to point to themselves (management) as responsible.

Primary Responsibility for Managing Burnout



Whose Responsibility Is It?

Employees and employers alike tend to shoulder the burden of addressing burnout on themselves.

Despite potentially reducing conversations about burnout, this dynamic shows that both employers and employees are willing to address the problem. Solutions to mitigating burnout are likely best managed collaboratively, and both employees and employers are willing to chip in.

Burnout: Experiences & Impacts

Employees burning out are nearly twice as likely to be considering other jobs; three times as likely to be actively looking.

Seeking New Job Opportunities



Is Burnout Causing Churn?

50%

Half of employees experiencing burnout and considering new opportunities say burnout is a major or the largest factor behind this, and nearly all (89%) say it is at least somewhat of a factor.

the **evolution** of **w****ork** | **REPORT** 2023