

2022

The Identity of HR Survey

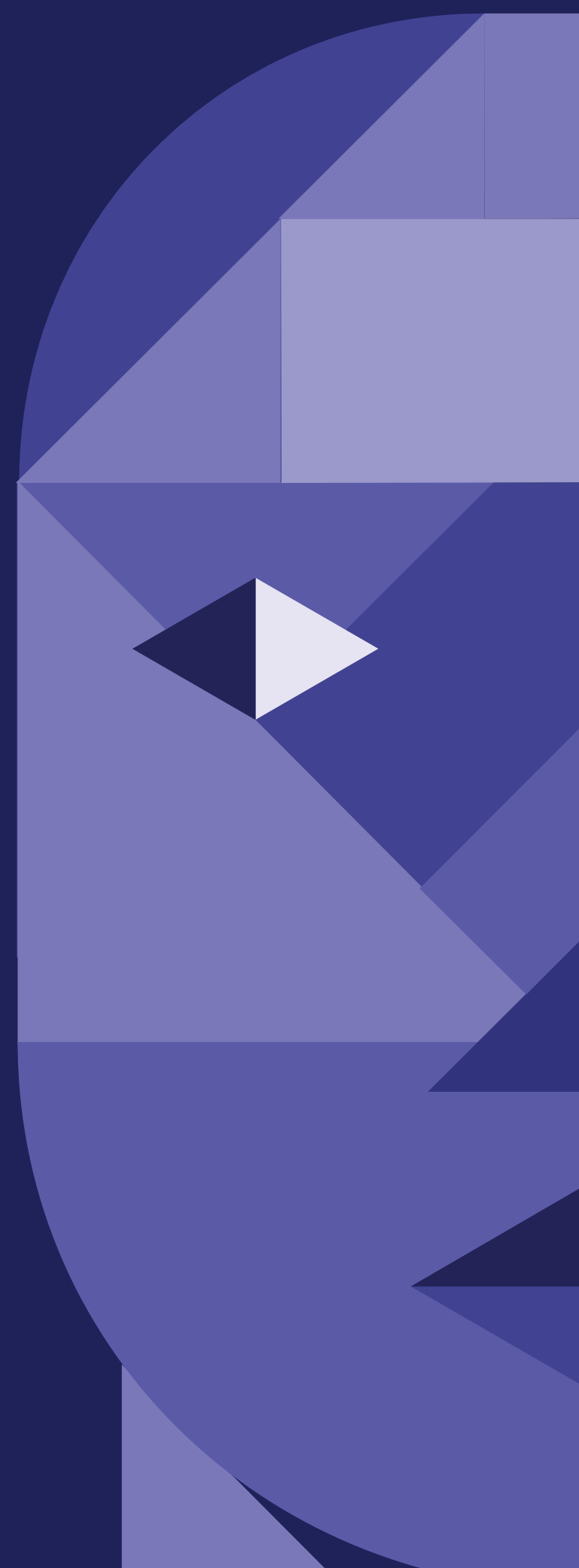




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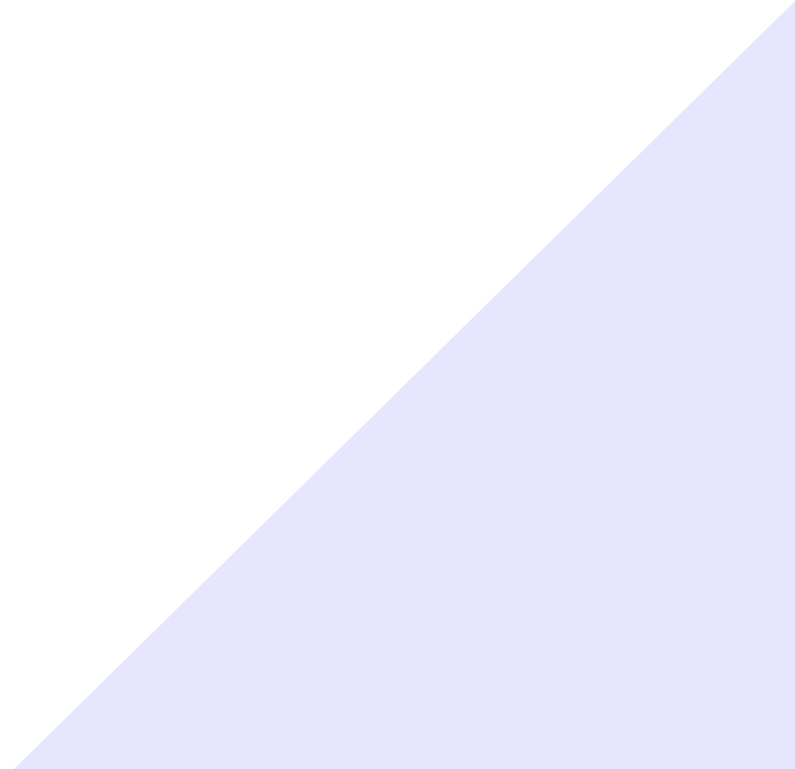
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About the survey

The 2022 Identity of HR Survey is based on an online questionnaire administered by HR Dive in spring 2022. The survey comprises responses from 388 self-identified HR professionals from the U.S. and around the world.

This second-annual survey was designed to gauge the opinions and outlook of HR practitioners. It should not be considered a scientific study.



Executive summary

The demands of the last two years made HR more complex. Yet it was never a simple profession: HR departments have long balanced hefty administrative workloads against people management needs and strategic goals.

Then, the pandemic added a focus on safety. It became HR's job to monitor the changing legal landscape around symptom checks, COVID-19 testing and vaccination requirements. With those concerns still playing out, a talent crisis arose. Workers quit at a record pace, leaving talent professionals scrambling to fill vacancies and stop others from following suit.

As the last two years unfolded, how did these issues affect the HR professionals facing them? HR Dive asked practitioners about the work they did, how they got it done and what impact it created. The results, captured in the second-annual Identity of HR Survey, were enlightening.



Key findings

1

COVID-19 CHECK-IN

Most respondents said their organizations are choosing to require neither vaccinations nor testing, though large employers were the most divided on their pandemic strategy.

2

HIRING HEADACHES

Hiring took over as the main challenge and priority, but no single talent acquisition method won out as the go-to strategy.

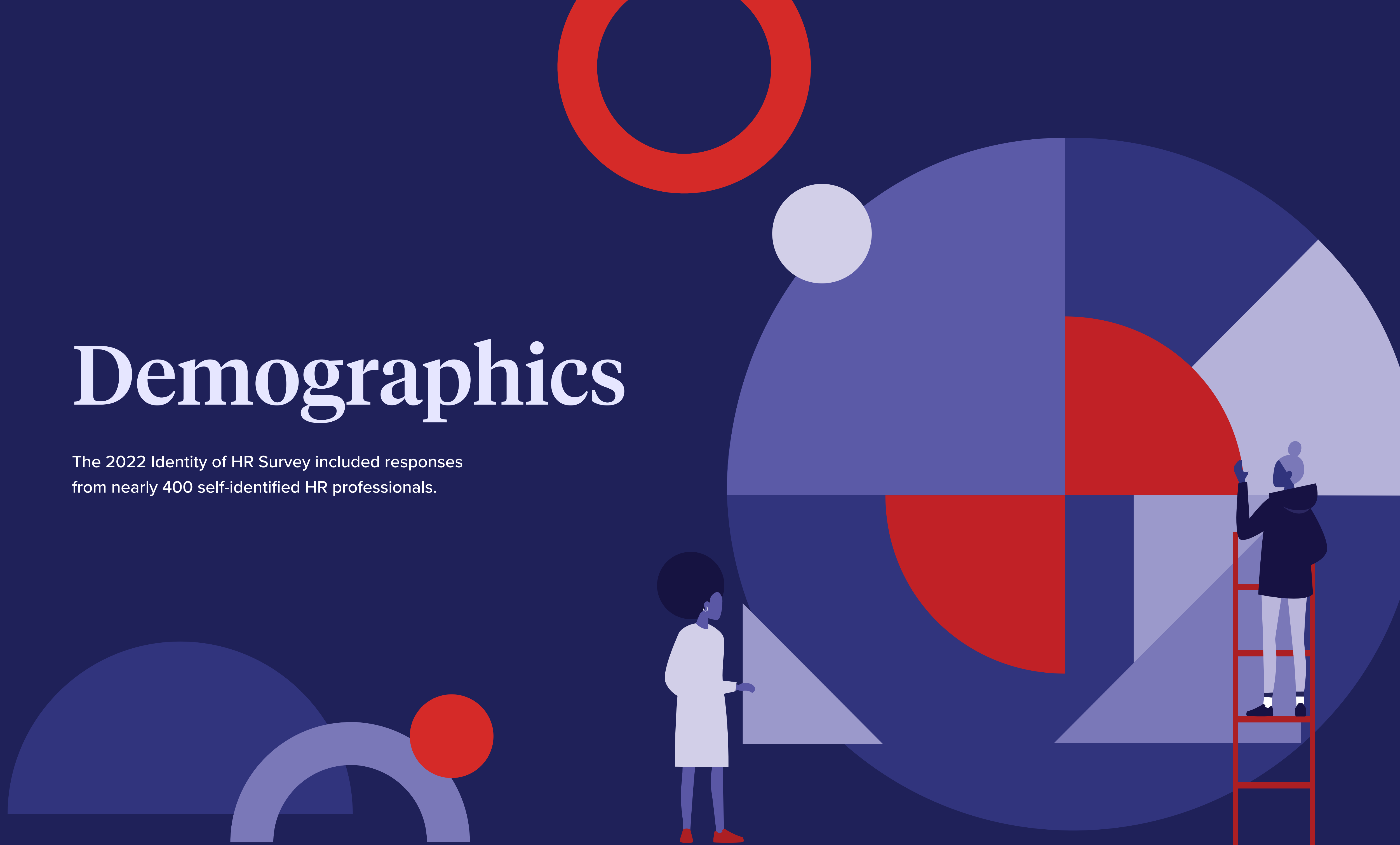
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CULTURE QUESTIONS

Workplace culture remains a top area of concern, especially for CEOs.

Demographics

The 2022 Identity of HR Survey included responses from nearly 400 self-identified HR professionals.



Tenure

Respondents skewed toward having spent less time in the industry. Most respondents (25%) said they have worked in HR for 10-19 years. Nineteen percent said they have spent fewer than 5 years in the industry, and the same amount said they have spent 5-9 years working in HR. Twenty-five percent worked in HR for 20-29 years, while 9% and 2% have been there for 30-39 years or 40 or more years, respectively.

Level

The largest group of respondents, 28%, said their level in their organization can be described as manager. Fractionally fewer said they were directors. Nearly a quarter of respondents identified as nonmanagers. Nine percent said they were in the C-suite, and 6% said they were vice presidents.

Department size

Thirty-eight percent of respondents work in HR departments with 2-5 individuals. More than a quarter, 26%, said they alone comprise the organization's HR department. Fourteen percent said they work in a department of 6-10 individuals. Six percent and 9% work in departments with 11-20 and 21-50 people, respectively. Seven percent of respondents work in departments staffed by more than 50 people.

Employer size

Respondents were fairly evenly divided among small, medium and large employers, with size being defined by number of employees. Ten percent worked at employers with 1-25 employees; 10% at employers with 26-50

employees; 12% at employers with 51-100 employees; 19% at employers with 101-250 employees; 13% at employers with 251-500 employees; 13% at employers with 501-1,000 employees; 12% at employers with 1,001-5,000 employees; and 11% at employers with more than 5,000 employees.

Age

The largest portion of respondents (26%) were between the ages of 46 and 55. Three percent were younger than 25; 24% were between 26 and 35; 23% were between 36 and 45; 20% were between 56 and 65; and 4% were older than 66.

Gender

More than three-quarters (79%) of respondents said they were female. Twenty-one percent said they were male. No respondents identified otherwise.

Race and ethnicity

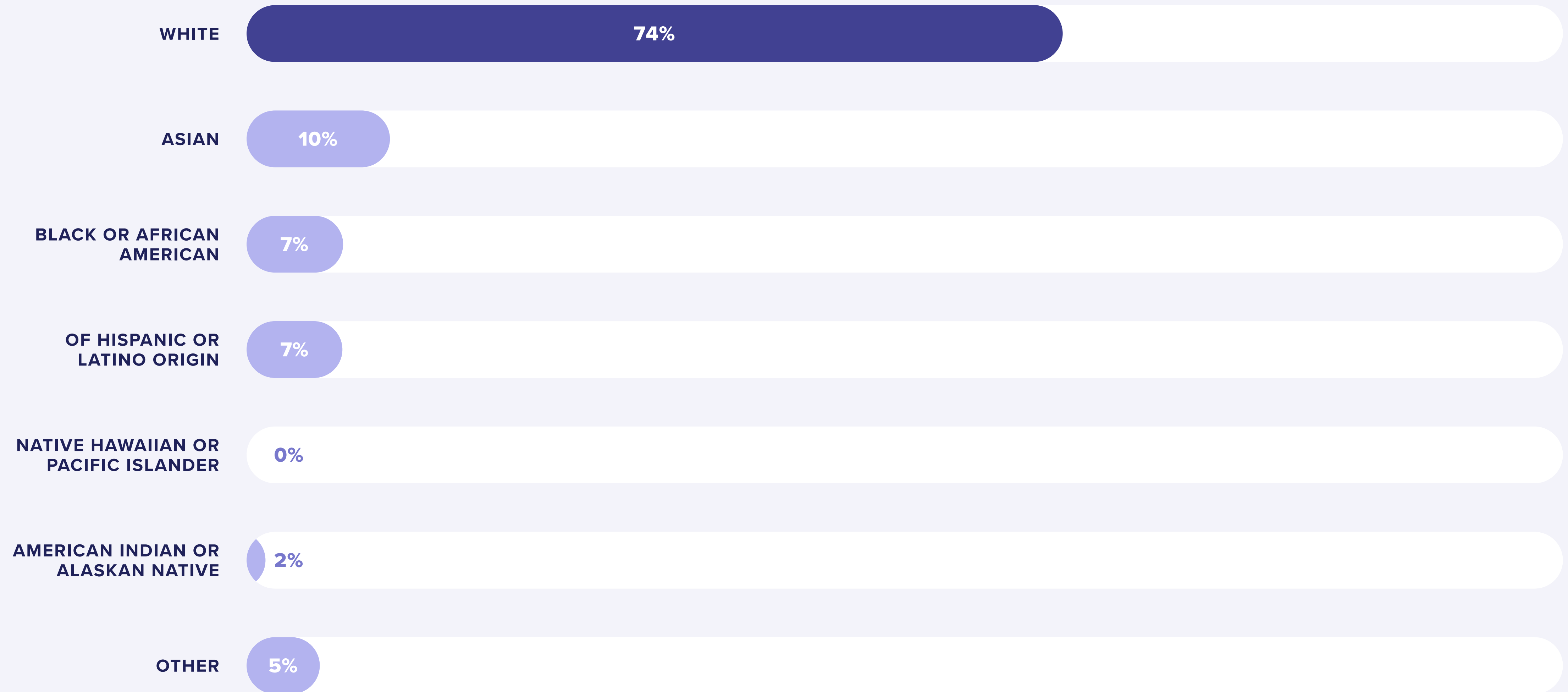
The majority of respondents (74%) described themselves as White. Ten percent said they were Asian and 7% said they were Black or African American. Seven percent described themselves as of Hispanic or Latino origin. A very small percentage of participants said they were American Indian or Alaskan Native (2%) or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.3%). Five percent of respondents selected "other."

Location

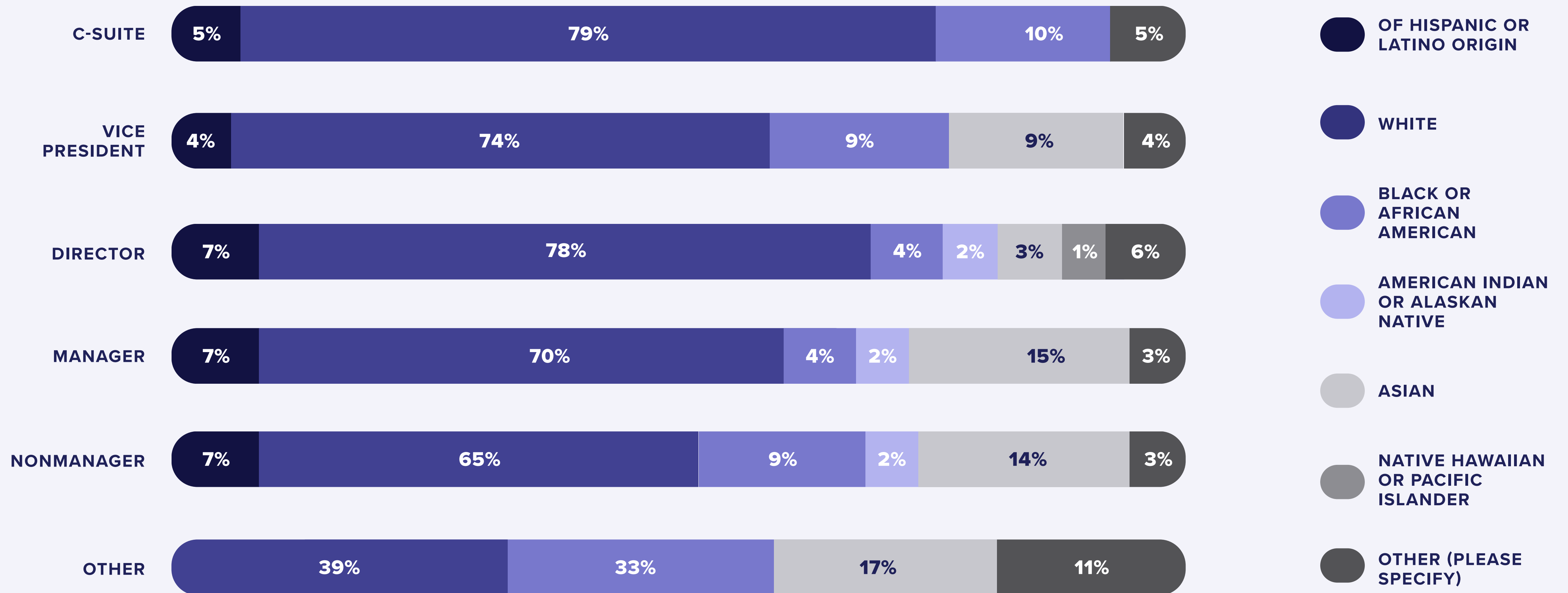
The state that drew the most respondents was California, with 9% of participants hailing from the Golden State. Sixteen percent of respondents came from outside the U.S.

*Numbers do not add up to 100% due to rounding, write-in options and because for some questions (such as questions about race), respondents were encouraged to select all answers that applied.

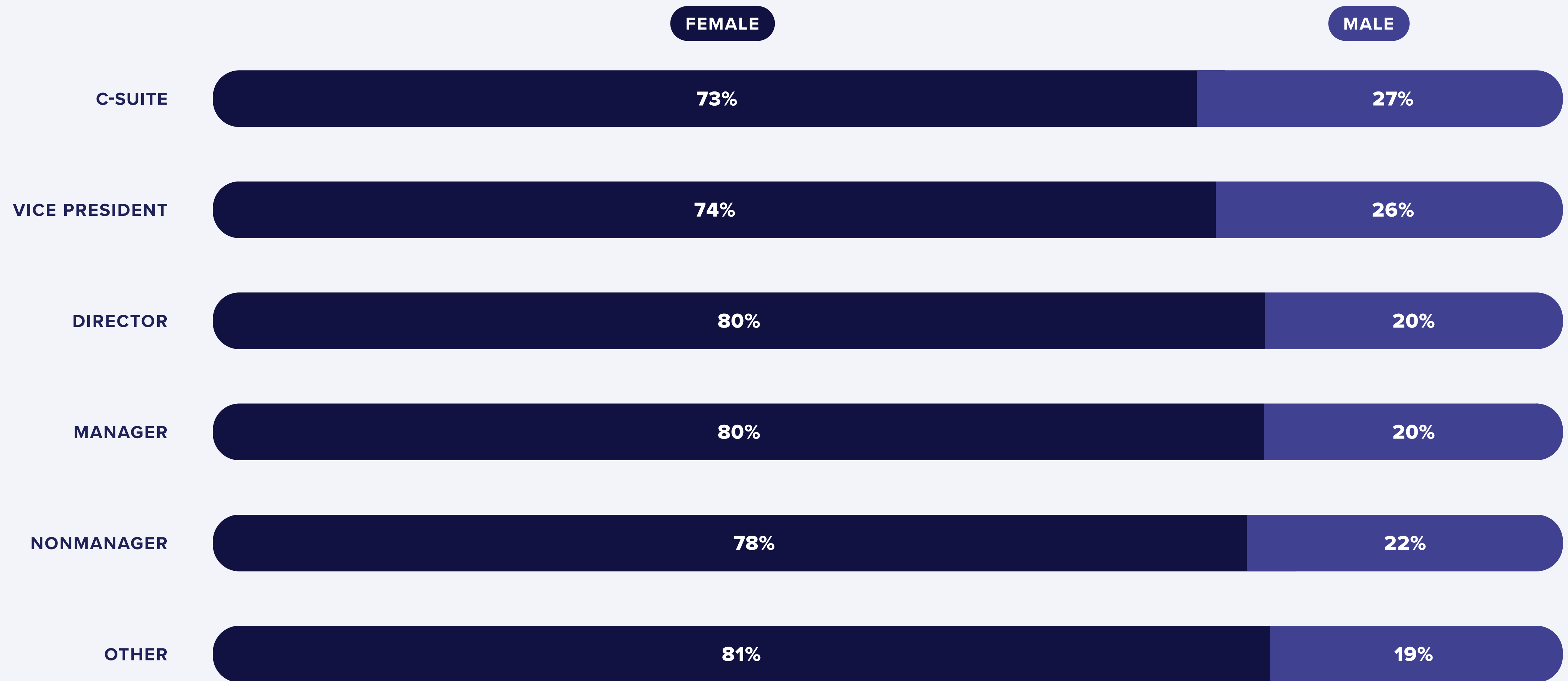
1 Breakdown of all respondents' race



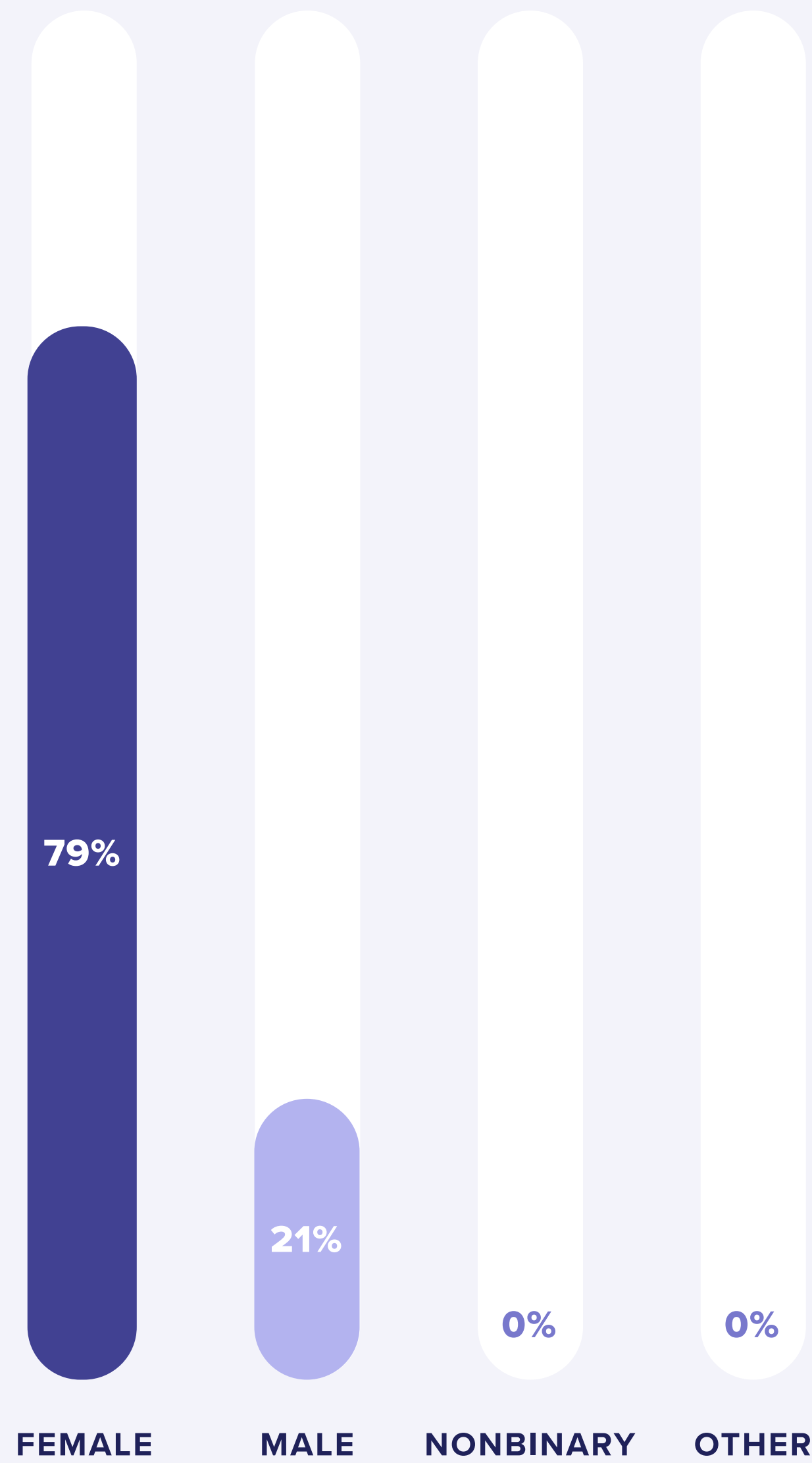
2 Breakdown of level of profession by race



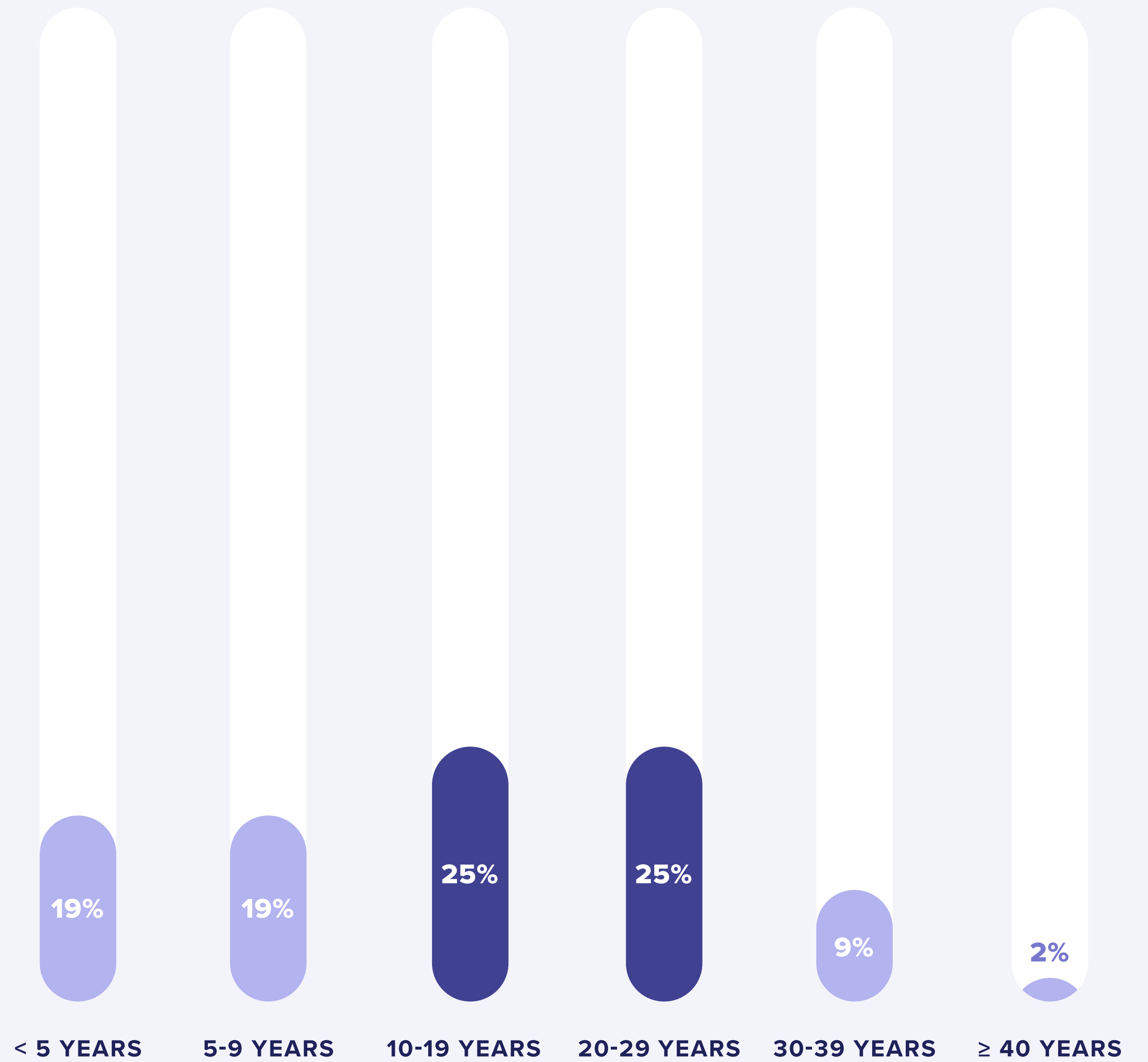
3 Breakdown of level of profession by gender



4 Gender



5 Years in the HR field



Hiring and culture challenge HR departments



HOW HR'S PRIORITIES FALL

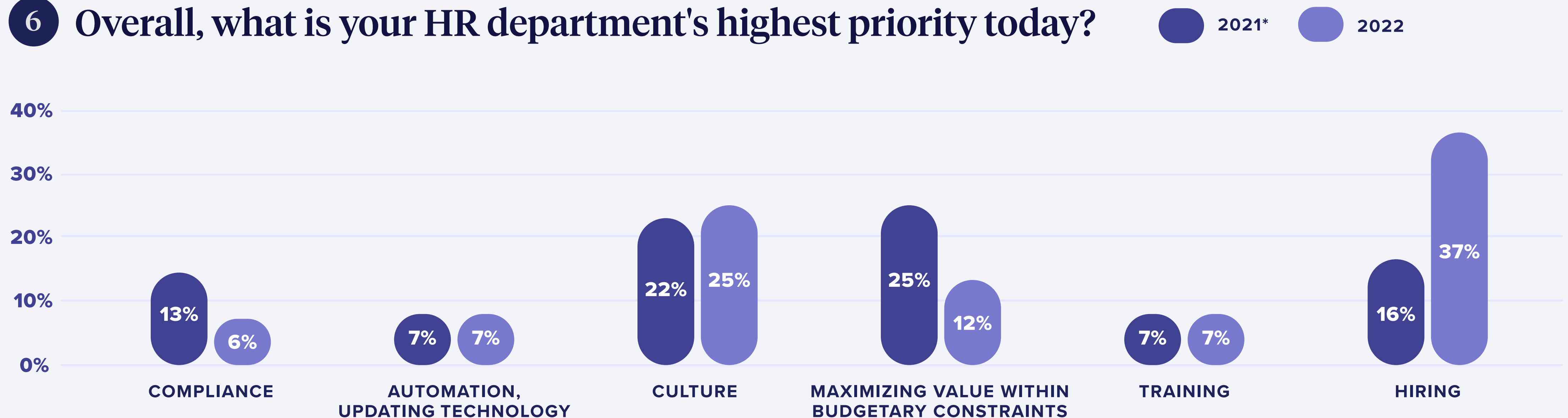
Hiring took center stage in HR's priorities and challenges this year. When asked about their highest priority, respondents pointed to talent acquisition. The topic not only commanded the most responses, but it also garnered a stronger majority than last year's winning response. In the 2021 report (for which data was collected in late 2020), a quarter of respondents — the largest group — chose “maximizing value within budgetary constraints” as their highest priority. This year, 37% selected hiring, which solicited only 16% of votes last year.

The second most popular response was culture, with 25% of votes. Culture was also the runner-up last year, when it commanded 22% of respondents.

Hiring and culture proved to be the most popular priorities regardless of respondents' employer size, department size or level of profession. Culture occasionally commanded more votes than hiring: Respondents from the very smallest (32%) and very largest organizations (30%) selected it as their highest priority. It was also the most popular response among those working in HR departments staffed by more than 50 employees (32%).

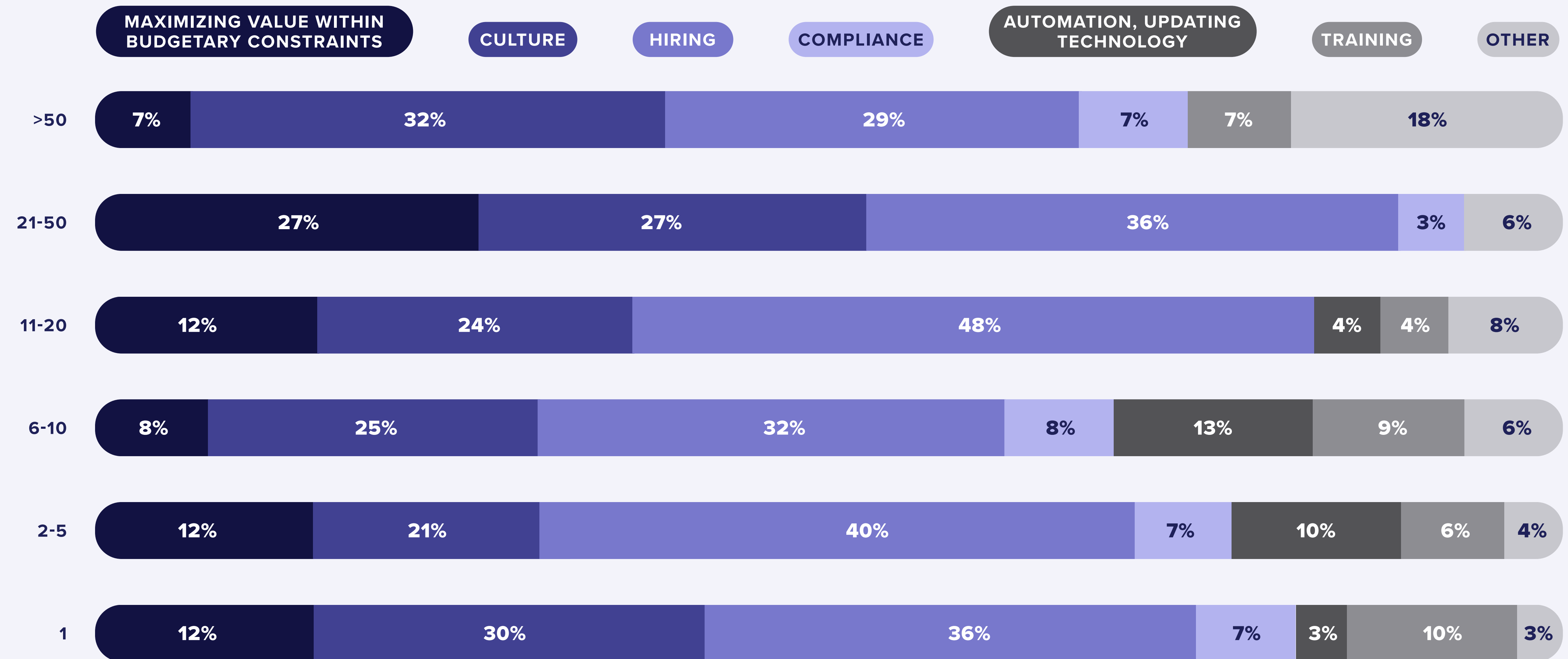
Hiring emerged as the most frequently picked top priority among respondents of all levels, except for those in the C-suite. Thirty-five percent of those respondents chose culture as their top priority. Thirty percent chose hiring.

6 Overall, what is your HR department's highest priority today?



*Data for the 2021 report was collected in late 2020.

7 HR departments' highest priority by department size



WHERE HR IS CHALLENGED

HR's pandemic-related challenges changed alongside its priorities.

While budgetary constraints and culture ranked at the top of respondents' pandemic frustrations last year, culture (58%) and hiring (47%) appeared at the forefront this year.

Practitioners' challenges shifted slightly when asked to discount the pandemic. Hiring took the most votes, at 55%. Culture and employee training were the next most popular, with 36% and 32% of responses, respectively.

When breaking down respondents' challenges by level of profession, the data revealed some interesting patterns. More directors than any other group, for example, chose hiring as a challenge. Only one segment of respondents chose something other than hiring as their top challenge: Participants in the "other" category — often self-described HR business partners and consultants — said culture was their greatest frustration.

HOW DOES HR COPE WITH HIRING HEADACHES?

The prevalence of hiring in respondents' choices comes as little surprise. After all, employers saw the Great Resignation come to fruition in late 2021 and early 2022. As [resignation rates soared](#) to historic heights, employers boosted their creativity to quell quits and fill openings.

Headlines cataloged the flashier efforts of high-profile companies. UPS [claimed](#) it hired many of its seasonal workers within 30 minutes of their applying. Southwest Airlines paired on-the-spot interviews with immediate job offers to fill out a crew of ramp workers in what [Bloomberg called](#) a "hiring blitz."

To find out how organizations across the board approached the hiring crisis, **HR Dive asked respondents to select the offerings their organizations used to attract talent in 2021.** The three most popular strategies were:

[64%] Offered remote or hybrid work arrangements

Increased hourly wages or salaries **[59%]**

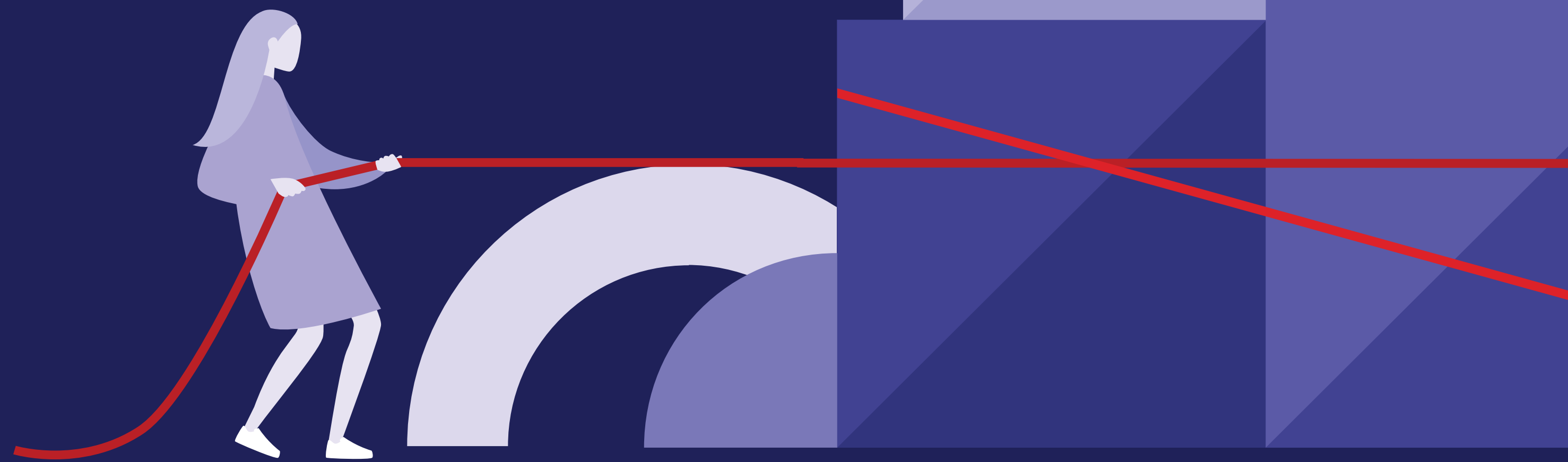
[48%] Provided referral bonuses

Remote or hybrid work arrangements was the most popular option for most respondents, regardless of organization size. Apprenticeships and student loan repayment were tied for last place overall, but had some pockets of significant adoption. Nearly a quarter of employers with 500-1,000 employees, for example, said they offered student loan repayment.

8 Which of these offerings were part of your organization's talent acquisition strategy in 2021?



Moving forward, pandemic in tow



In the last two years, HR witnessed U.S. regulatory groups attempt to keep pace with a pandemic. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission — the agency responsible for enforcing workers’ civil rights — has been busy weighing in on whether emerging COVID-19 policies play nice with existing employee protections.

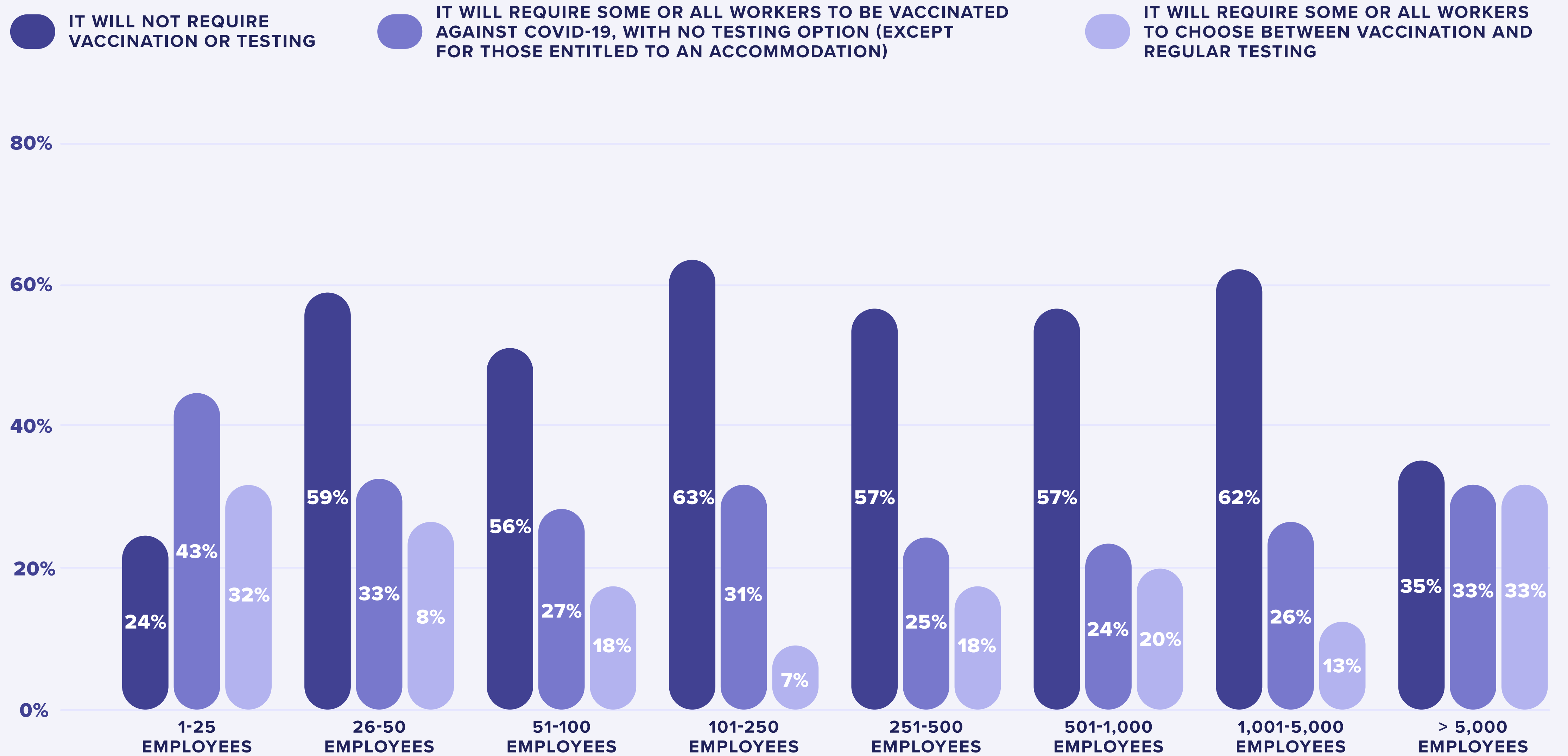
EEOC began its foray into pandemic policy in April 2020, when it [OK’d testing for the virus](#) at work. Just as the first COVID-19 vaccines became available in the U.S., EEOC [published guidance](#) saying employers could require employees to provide proof of vaccination. The agency came out with a technical assistance document months later that gave employers the green light to require and incentivize vaccines. And more recently, [it held that](#) employers must now justify mandatory corona virus testing for workers.

These continuously unfolding policy decisions, coupled with an incessant pandemic, forced employers to carefully consider their own procedures moving forward. HR Dive asked respondents to divulge what their organizations required in terms of pandemic procedures. Most respondents (53%) said they will require nothing — neither vaccination nor testing. Thirty percent said they would require some or all workers to be vaccinated, with no testing option. And 17% they would require some or all workers to choose between vaccination and regular testing.

Organization size appeared to have an effect on responses. The smallest organizations (10% of the sample), leaned toward requiring some or all workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19, with no testing option. Very large organizations (those with 5,000 or more employees, 11% of the sample) were split nearly even between the three options. The majority of the rest of the organizations were not requiring vaccinations or testing.

These continuously unfolding policy decisions,
coupled with an incessant pandemic, forced employers to carefully consider their own procedures moving forward.

9 COVID responses by employer size



How the work gets done



ON EXTRA DUTIES AND VENDOR USE

HR Dive asked respondents to report how their duties took shape in 2021. Did they work on tasks outside of the traditional HR scope? Did their department call in any vendors to take on certain workloads?

Most respondents' duties included performing tasks outside of their department on an ad hoc basis. But more people reported doing duties exclusively in HR as compared to last year.

Respondents working in very small departments (departments of 1 or of 2-5) had a greater representation of people saying they sometimes or permanently did work outside of HR.

- Department of 1: 85%
- Department of 2-5: 72%
- Department of 6-10: 50%
- Department of 11-20: 56%
- Department of 21-50: 51%
- Department of 50+: 53%

HR departments often enlist vendors or service providers to take on certain tasks, from payroll to DEI. Respondents' use of outsourcing rose year over year.

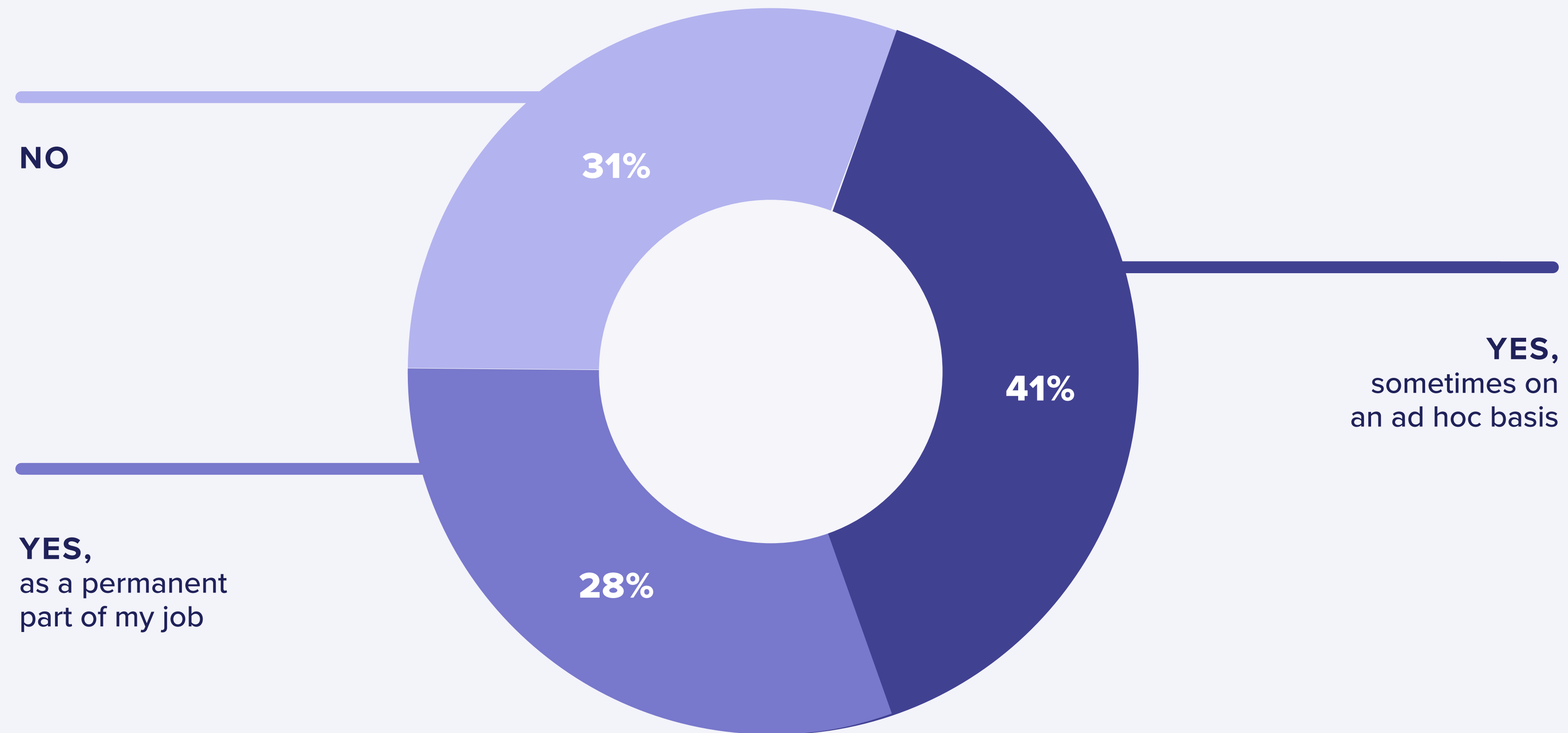
When asked to report the types of vendors in regular use, respondents overwhelmingly selected payroll processing (61%) and benefits outsourcing or consultants (56%). The third-most popular vendor was staffing companies (43%).

The rise in vendor use could indicate a few industry changes, HR Dive reported. One HR consultant confirmed to HR Dive in an interview that he observed the uptick in vendor use among his clients. He speculated the growth could stem from an attempt to recover from cutbacks or a move to take on more strategic work.

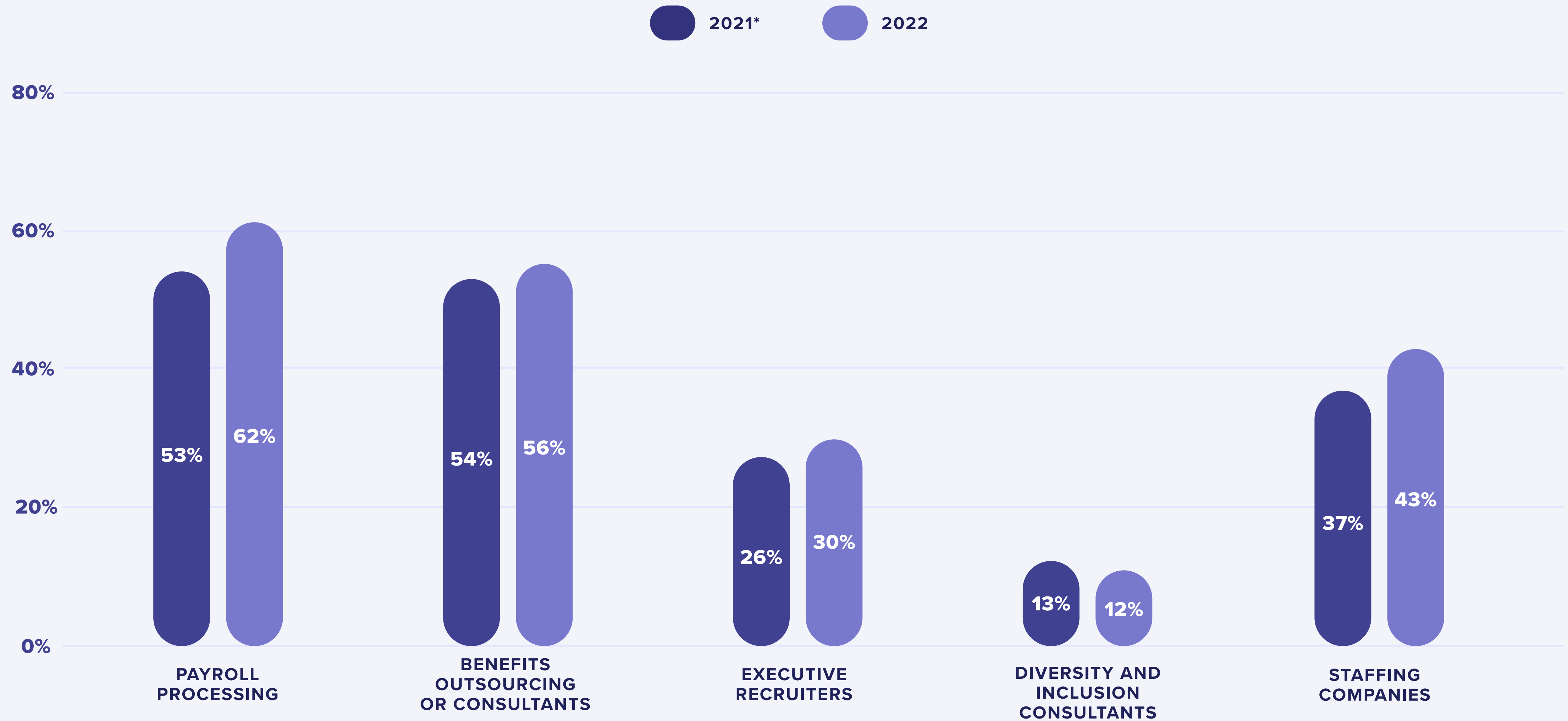
Respondents working in very small departments

had a greater representation of people saying they sometimes or permanently did work outside of HR.

10 Do you perform duties outside of the HR department?



11 What types of service providers or vendors does your HR department use on a regular basis?



*Data for the 2021 report was collected in late 2020.

Certifications —
how much do
they matter?



When asked to rate the importance of HR certifications, respondents were divided. A quarter said they found certifications not at all important. Thirty-nine percent said they think certifications are somewhat important. Thirty-six percent said they are very or extremely important.

Year over year, the more dramatic responses — not at all important and extremely important — experienced more dramatic changes. The “not at all” response increased by seven percentage points, while the “extremely” response decreased by eight.

Despite that downward trend in perception, slightly more respondents reported being certified in this year’s survey compared to last year’s. Forty-six percent reported they were not certified this year, compared to 52% of respondents last year.

The breakdown of respondents’ certifications remained consistent. Of those certified, most obtained their credentials through the Society for Human Resource Management (36%), followed by the HR Certification Institute (24%). Ten percent of respondents said they were certified through an entity not listed. When asked to specify, a handful of respondents reported they earned a certification through the higher education system.

Level of profession didn’t have much of an effect on where people tended to get certified. The majority of those certified in any level were certified through SHRM. Nonmanagers had the highest level of uncertified workers — 63%. Next highest: Managers, at 49%.

[25%]

Said they found certifications **not at all** important

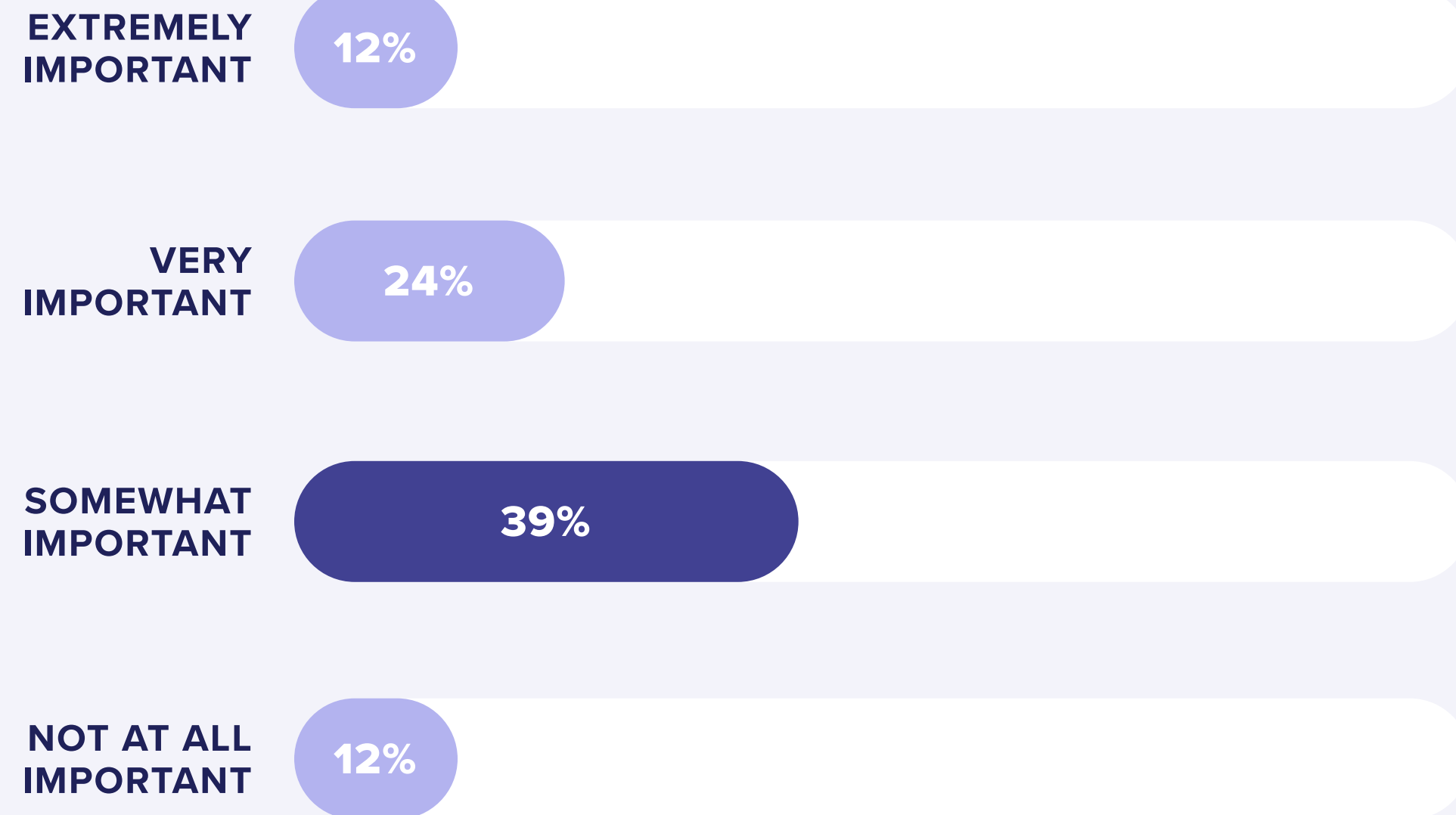
Said they think certifications are **somewhat** important

[39%]

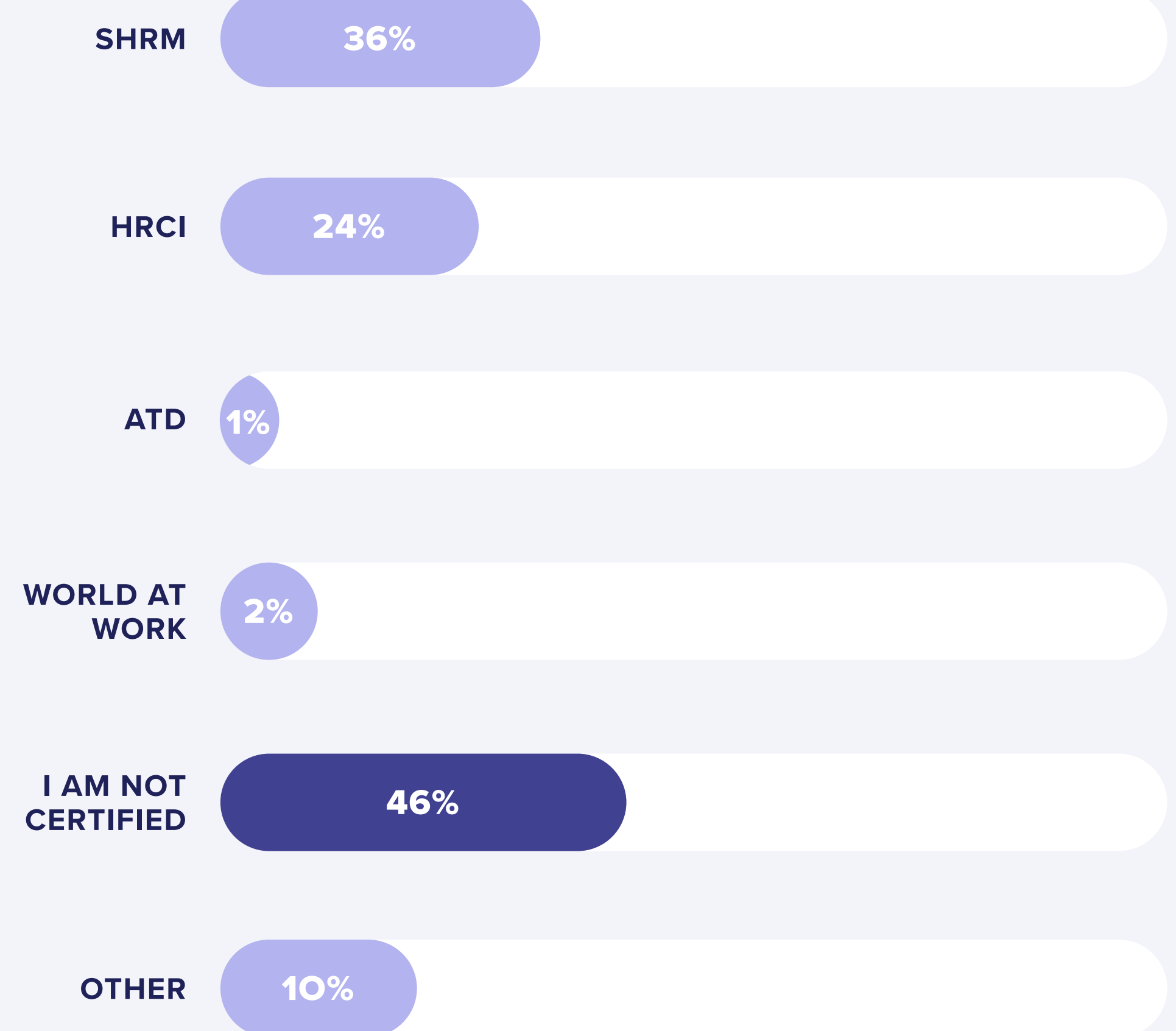
[36%]

Said they are **very or extremely** important

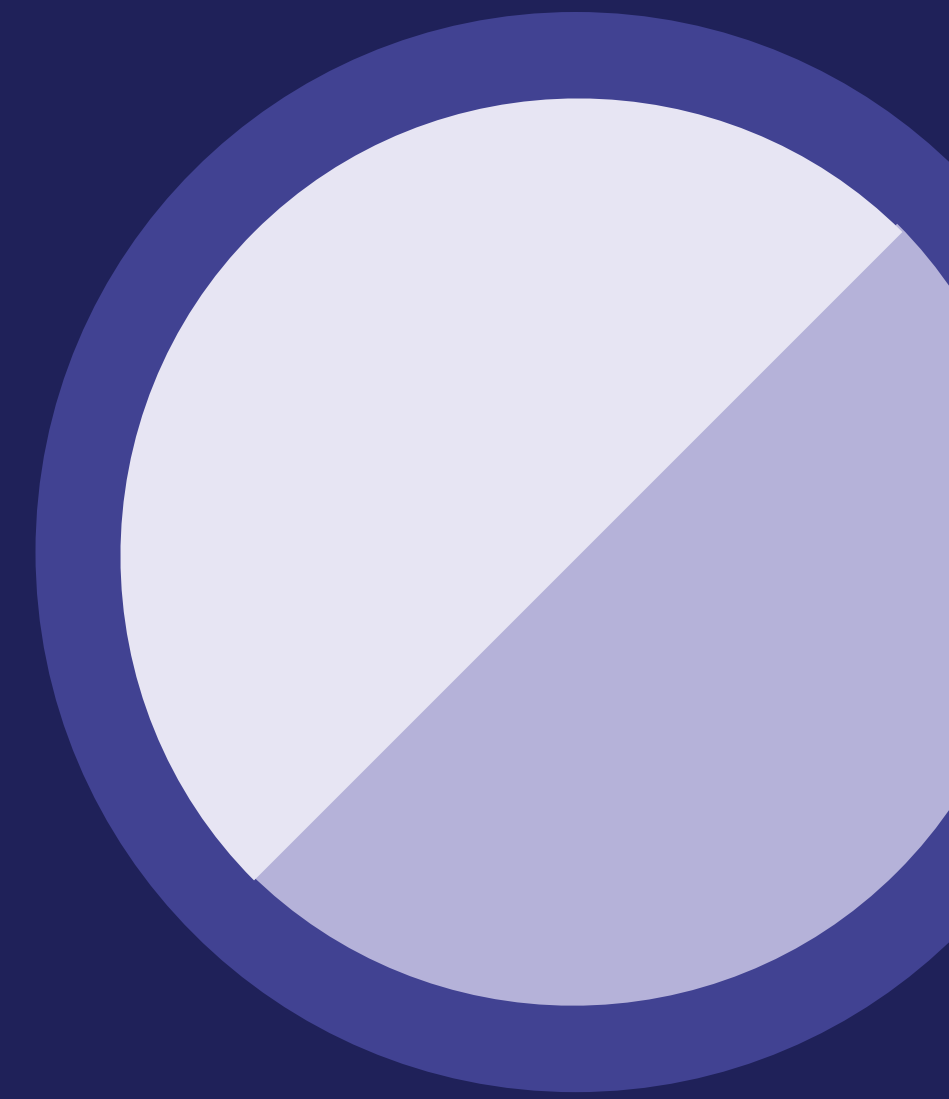
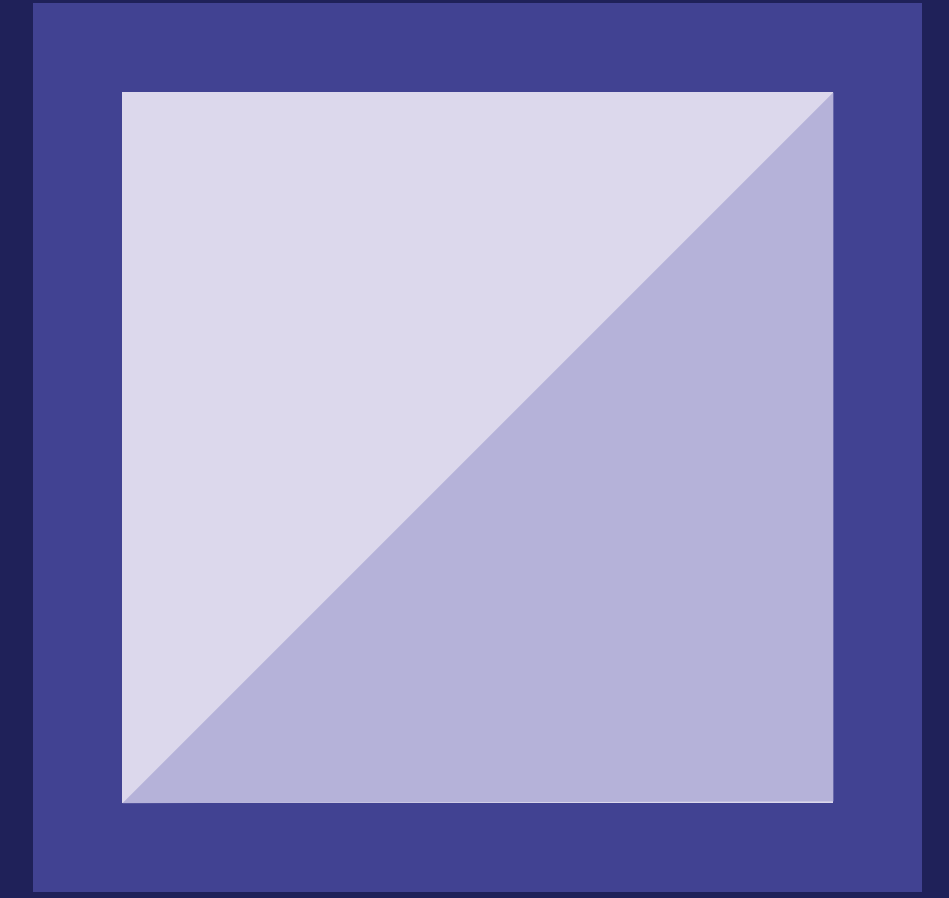
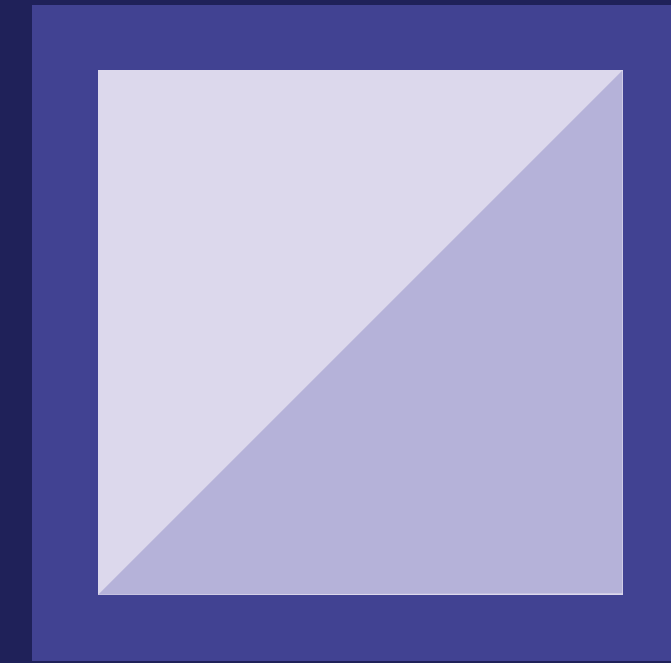
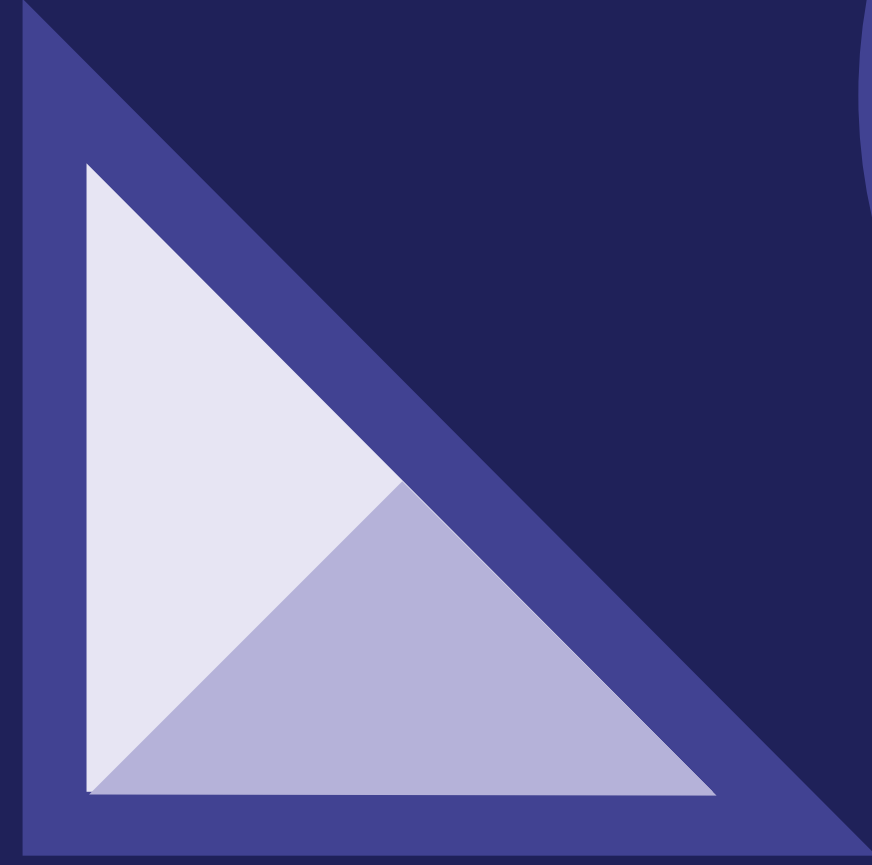
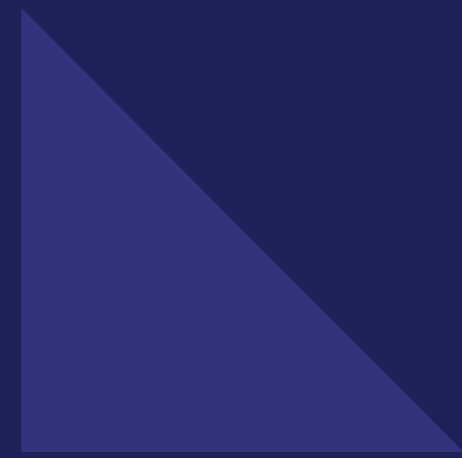
12 Importance of certification



13 Through which organizations are you certified?



How HR thinks it's perceived



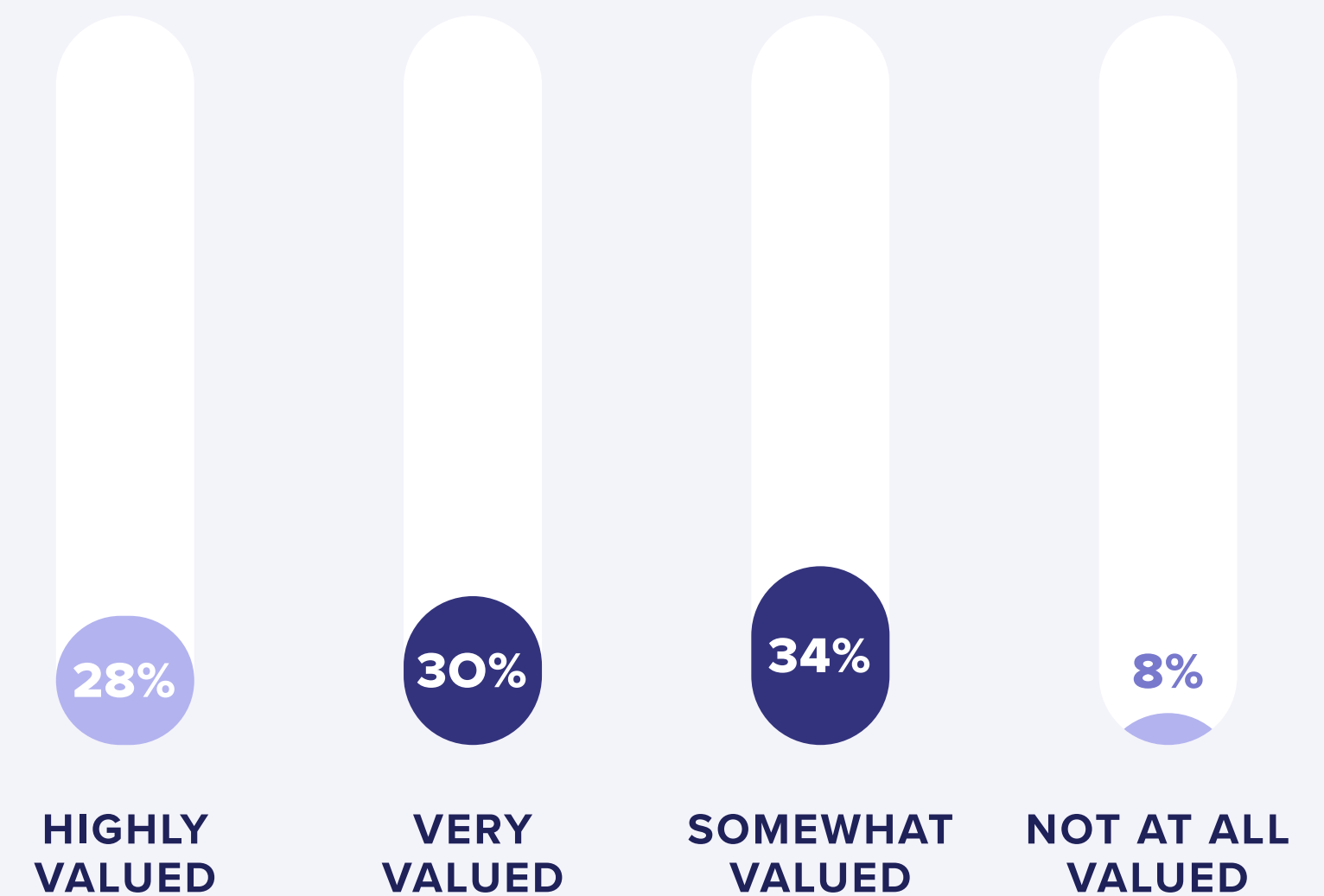
Respondents were likely to say their departments are seen somewhat favorably by employees at their organizations — a conclusion that remained consistent between two years of data. Eighty-six percent of respondents said employees view their department very or somewhat favorably.

Like last year, HR pros were more divided in how their departments are valued by leaders. Fifty-eight percent said they were very or highly valued by leaders. A third said they were “somewhat valued,” and 8% said they were not valued at all.

HR pros at smaller organizations tended to feel highly valued by leadership. Respondents at mid-size organizations had the largest proportion of those saying they were not at all valued by leadership.

[86%] of respondents said employees view their department **very or somewhat** favorably

14 How valued is your HR department by organization leadership?





HR forecasts its future

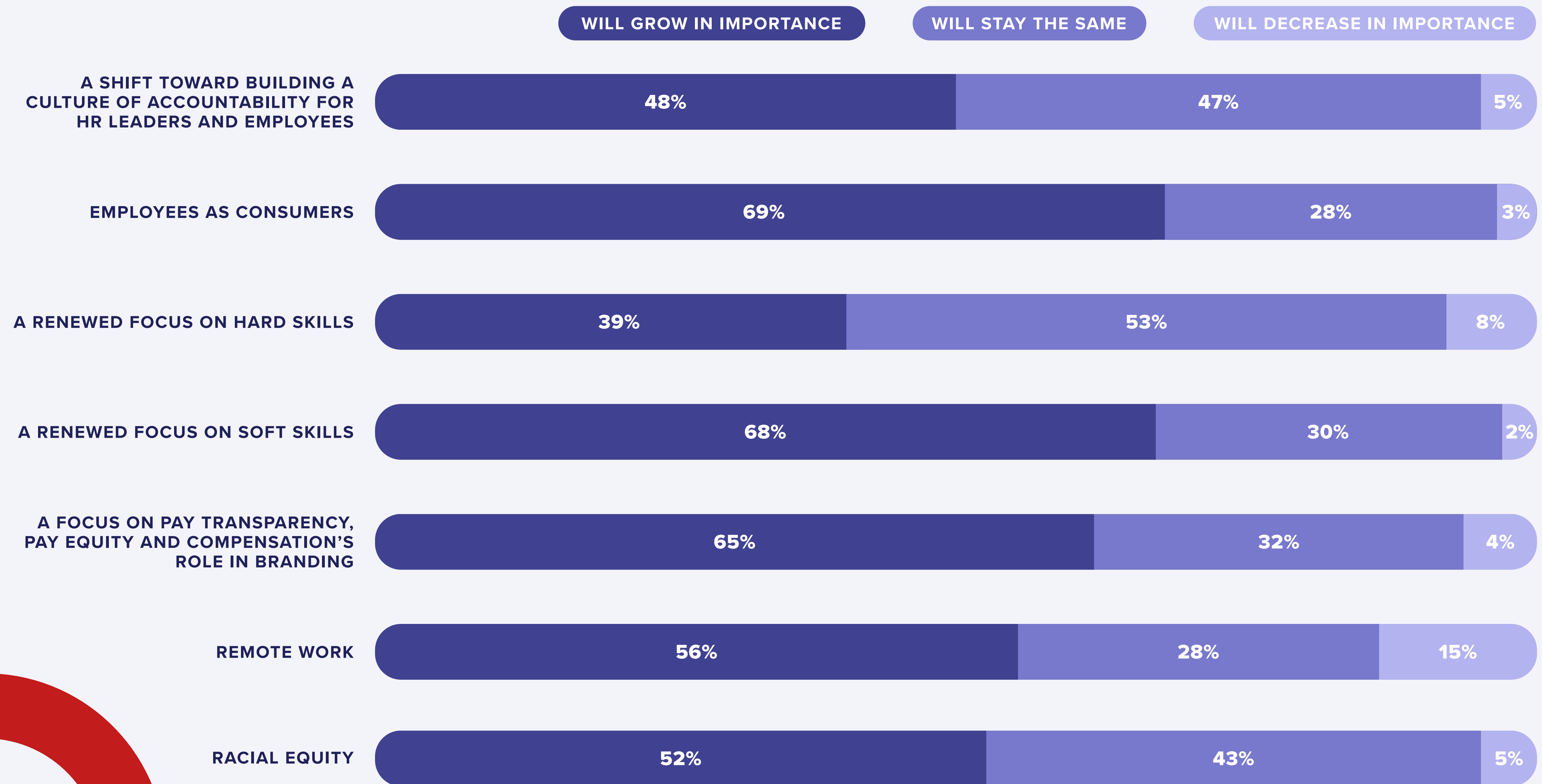
Respondents were asked to evaluate the future of seven industry trends:

- A shift toward building a culture of accountability for HR leaders and employees
- Employees as consumers
- A renewed focus on hard skills
- A renewed focus on soft skills
- A focus on pay transparency, pay equity and compensation's role in branding
- Remote work
- Racial equity

Like last year, the majority of respondents said each trend will grow in importance, with the same exception: The majority of respondents thought the “renewed focus on hard skills” trend would simply stay the same.

Respondents displayed the strongest consensus surrounding the “employees as consumers” trend. Nearly 70% said they thought the trend would grow. Respondents were most divided on the “renewed focus on hard skills” and “racial equity” trends.

15 During the next 3-5 years, how do you expect each of the trends below to fare?



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