



Threads of Life 2025 Report

The State of Safety

April 1st, 2025

angus reid group[®]



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Methodology

Field Window

Wave 1: Feb 27 – Mar 9, 2025
Wave 2: Feb 27 - Mar 11, 2024

Field Sample

Wave 1 (2024) n=1024
Wave 2 (2025) n=1059

Canadian business owners, hiring managers, and decision makers

About this Report

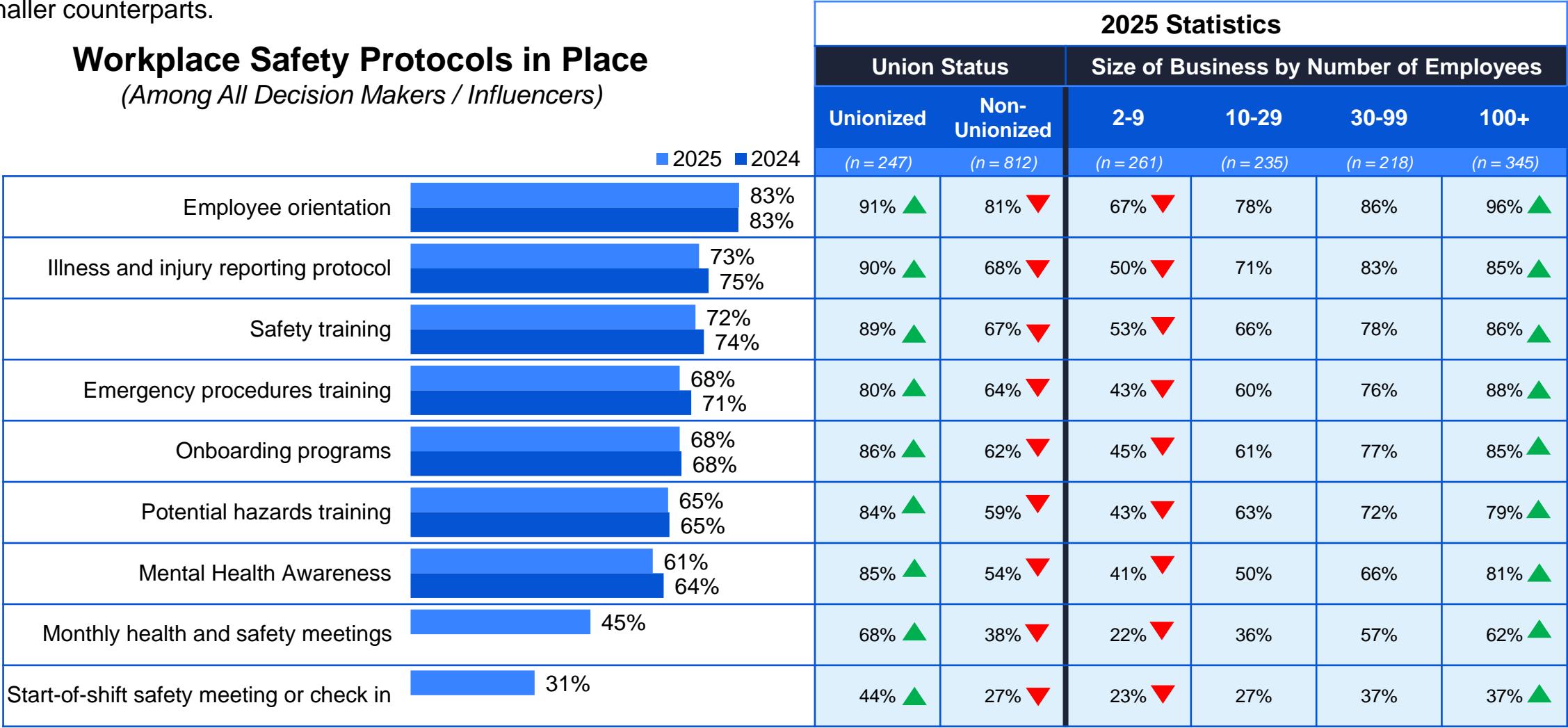
This report explores the work experiences and perspectives on workplace safety among Canadian business owners, hiring managers, and decision-makers. It examines changes between 2024 and 2025 across multiple topics, including workplace incident rates and attitudes toward safety protocols. This year's study also takes a closer look at mental health challenges in the workplace.

About this Study

These findings are from a survey conducted by Threads of Life among a representative sample of online Canadians who are members of the Angus Reid Forum. The survey was conducted in English and French. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/-3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

WORKPLACE PROTOCOLS

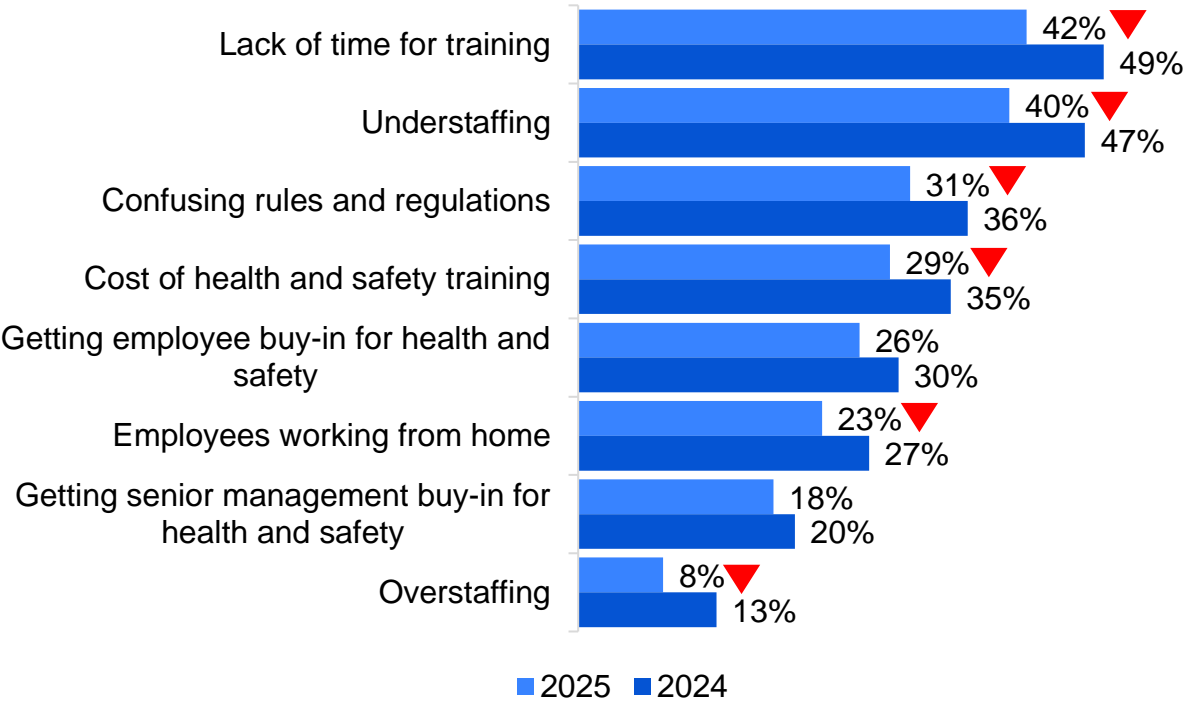
The rate at which Canadian companies implement safety protocols remains high. However, significant differences exist based on union status and business size: unionized workplaces tend to outperform non-unionized ones, and larger businesses tend to outperform smaller ones. This is likely because unions and large corporations typically have more established policies in place than their non-unionized and smaller counterparts.



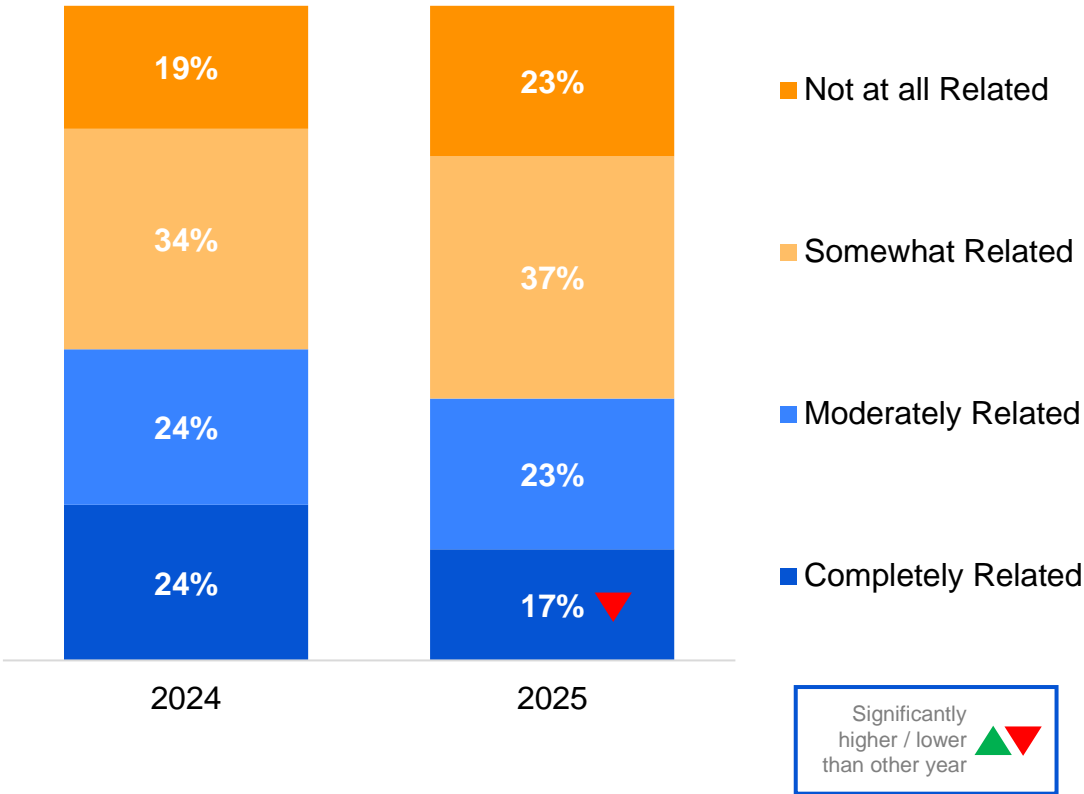
FACTORS IMPACTING SAFETY PROTOCOLS

On a positive note, 2025 saw notable decreases in the challenges that hinder workplaces from improving health and safety compared to 2024. Issues such as limited time for training and the cost of health and safety programs were reported less frequently over the past year. Additionally, the negative impact of labour shortages on understaffing appears to be easing.

Significant Challenges that Prevent Improving Health and Safety Standards (Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)

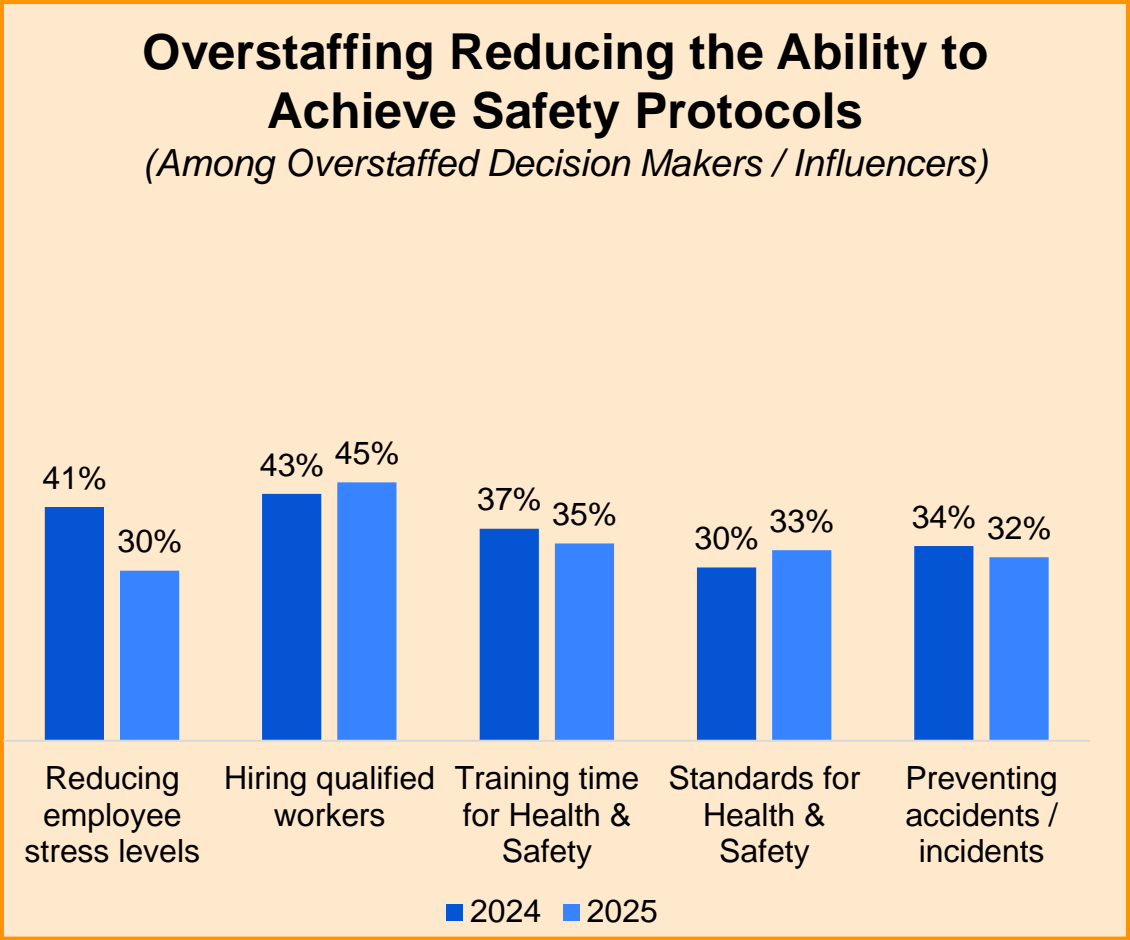
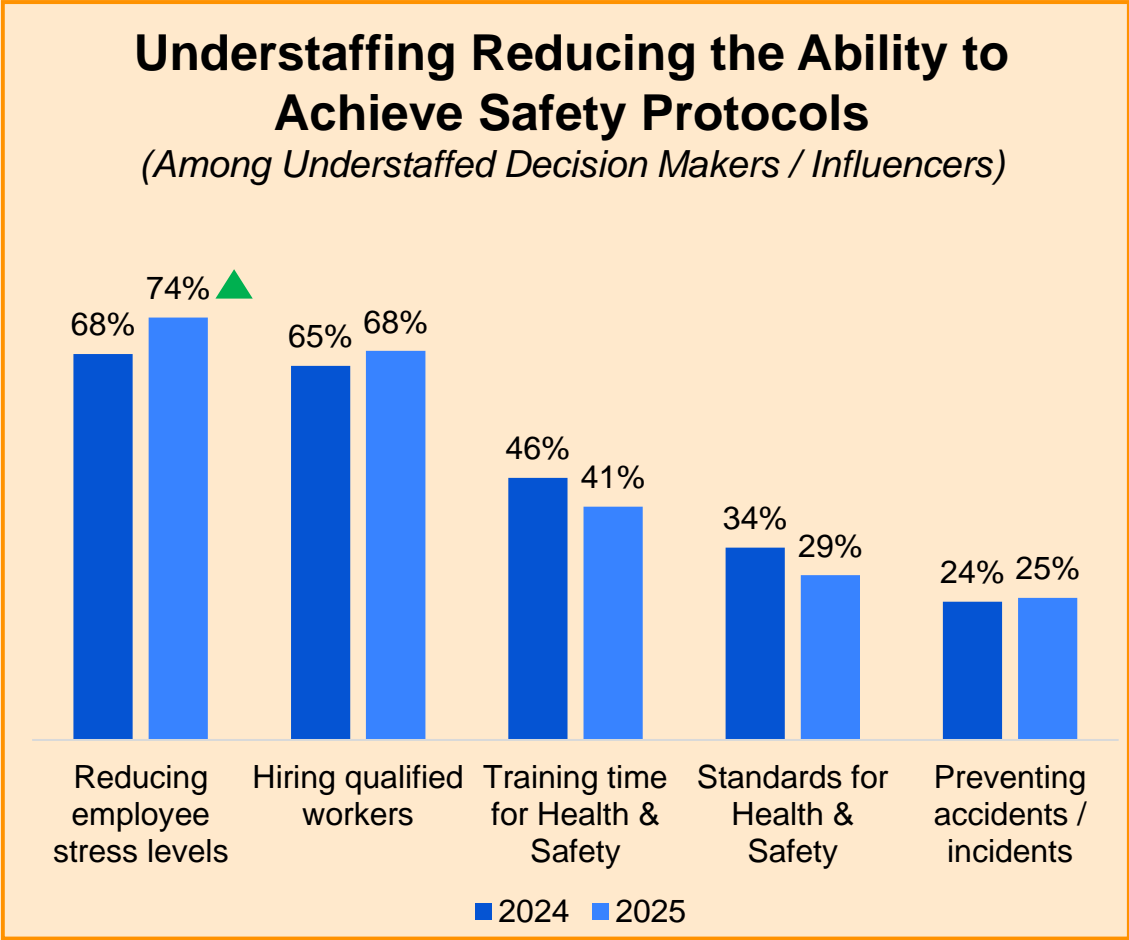


Relation of Understaffing & Labour Shortages (Among Understaffed Decision Makers / Influencers)



UNDER AND OVERSTAFFING IMPACTS

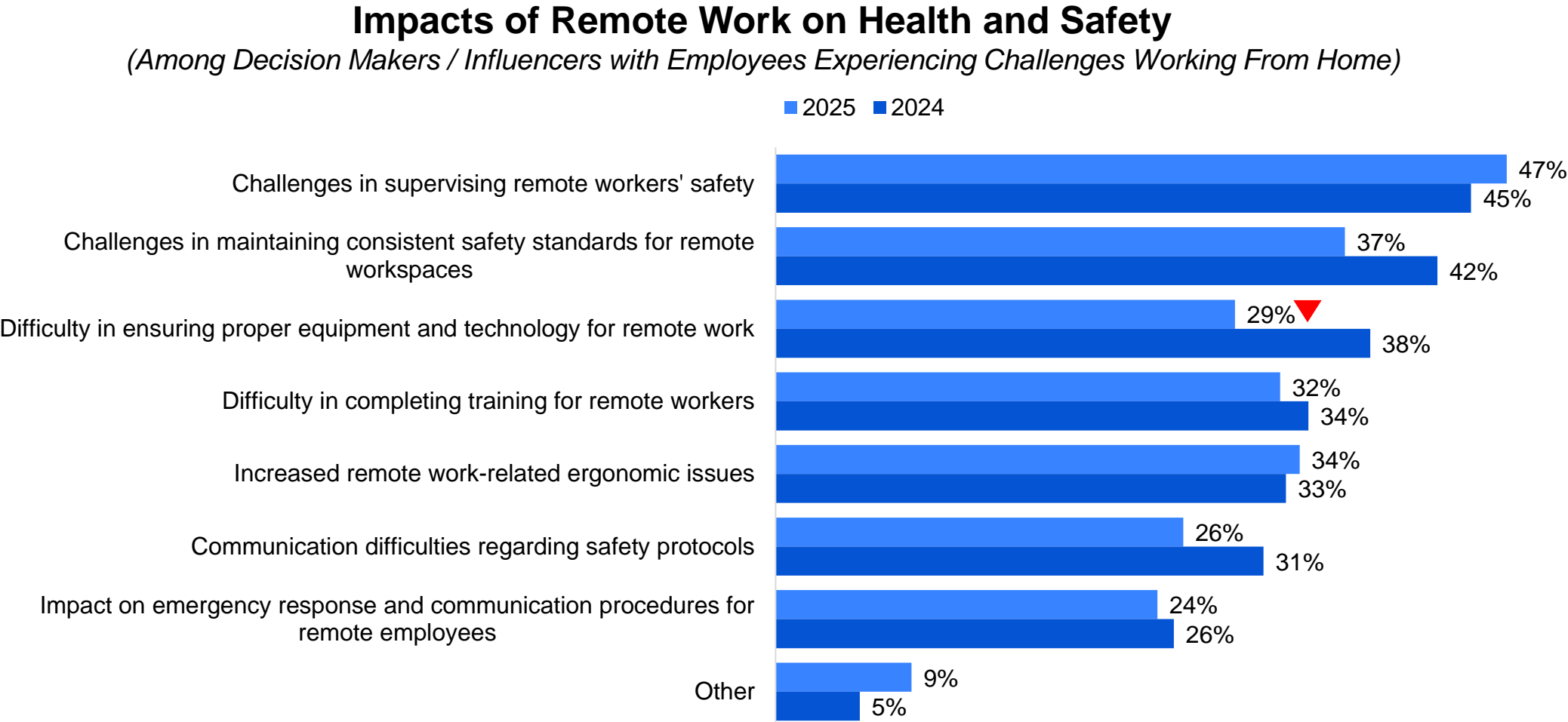
Across 2024 and 2025, understaffing had a consistent impact on workplaces' ability to implement safety protocols. However, in 2025, 74% of understaffed workplaces reported difficulty reducing employee stress, up from 68% in 2024. Overall, understaffing remains a significant concern: nearly three-in-four Canadian workplaces struggle to reduce employee stress, and two-in-three report that it negatively affects their ability to hire qualified workers.



CHALLENGES TO SAFETY

THE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ON SAFETY PROTOCOLS

One positive shift observed relates to challenges associated with remote work: only 29% of Canadian workplaces with remote employees reported difficulty providing proper equipment and technology, down from 38% in 2024. The rates of other remote work challenges remained consistent between the two years, with remote work being new territory companies are still learning to navigate.

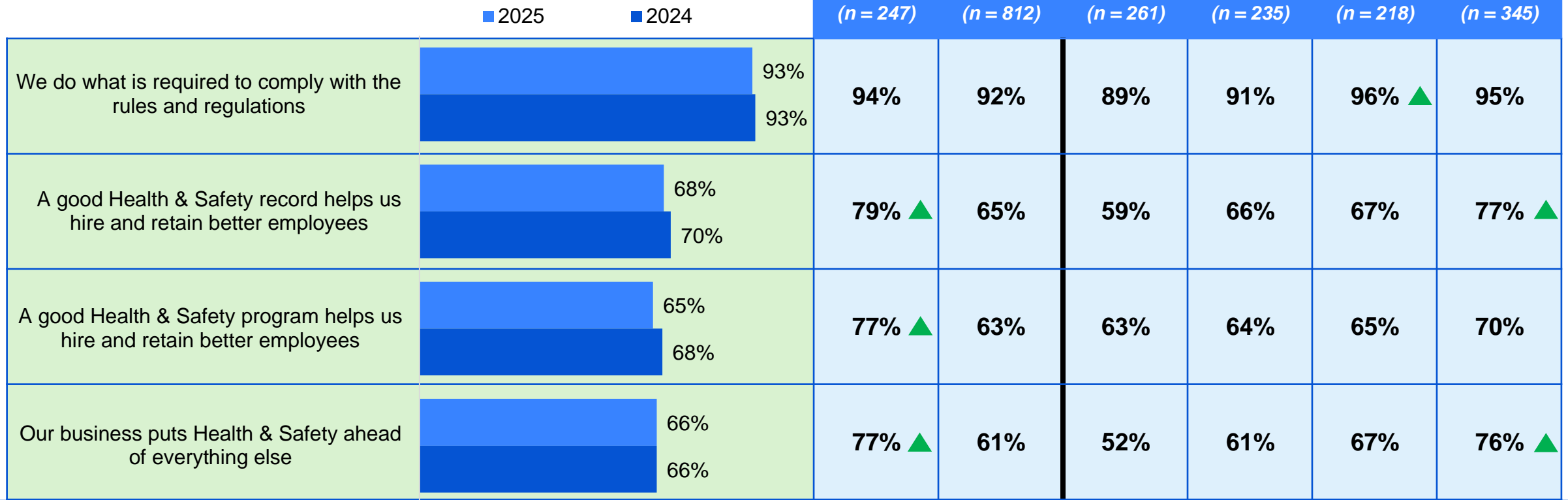


POSITIVE VIEWS ON SAFETY

As in 2024, 93% of Canadian workplaces in 2025 reported compliance with safety rules and regulations. There was little change between 2024 and 2025 in the overall positive attitudes toward workplace safety. Generally, unionized workplaces and larger companies show higher levels of agreement with positive views on safety. These differences are likely due to the greater structure and more comprehensive policies typically found in unionized and larger organizations.

Agreement on Health and Safety in the Workplace

Agree Strongly / Agree Moderately
(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



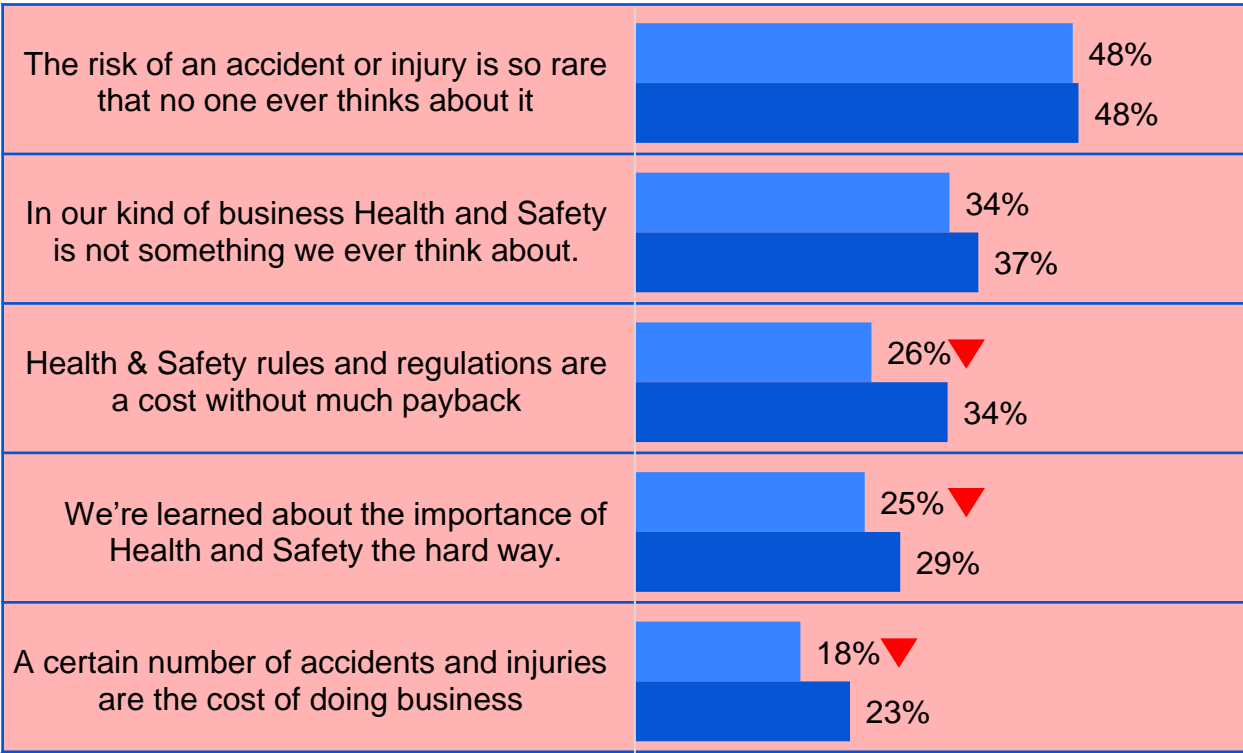
NEGATIVE VIEWS ON SAFETY

In 2025, several negative views on workplace safety declined. Only 18% agreed accidents are just a cost of doing business, down from 23% in 2024. Similarly, 25% reported learning the importance of health and safety "the hard way," compared to 29% the year before. Belief that regulations are a cost without much payback also dropped—from 34% in 2024 to 26% in 2025. Unionized and larger workplaces were more likely than others to report learning safety lessons the hard way.

Agreement on Health and Safety in the Workplace

Agree Strongly / Agree Moderately
(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)

■ 2025 ■ 2024

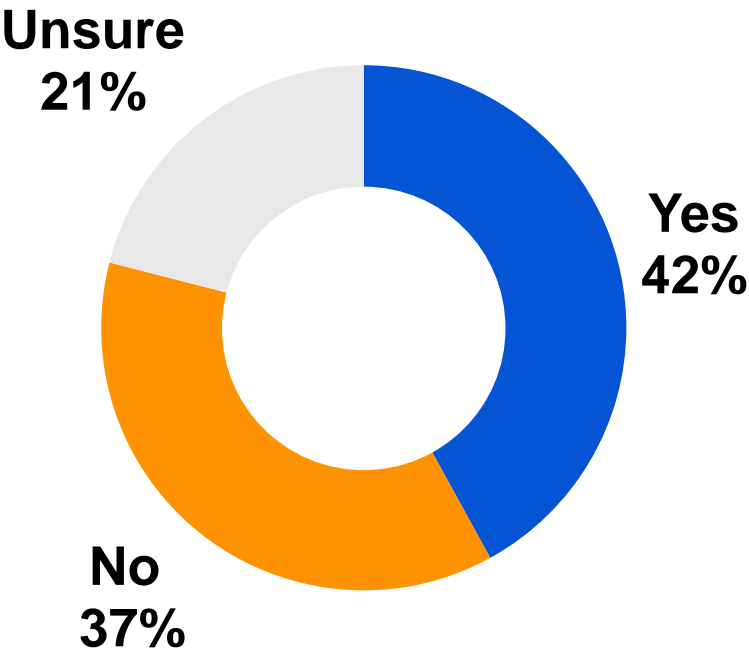


2025 Statistics					
Union Status		Size of Business by Number of Employees			
Unionized	Non-Unionized	2-9	10-29	30-99	100+
(n = 247)	(n = 812)	(n = 261)	(n = 235)	(n = 218)	(n = 345)
37%	51%	61% ▲	52% ▲	38%	40%
23%	38%	46% ▲	37%	24%	30%
22%	27%	34% ▲	28%	21%	21%
35% ▲	22%	17%	21%	24%	34% ▲
22%	17%	14%	18%	22%	19%

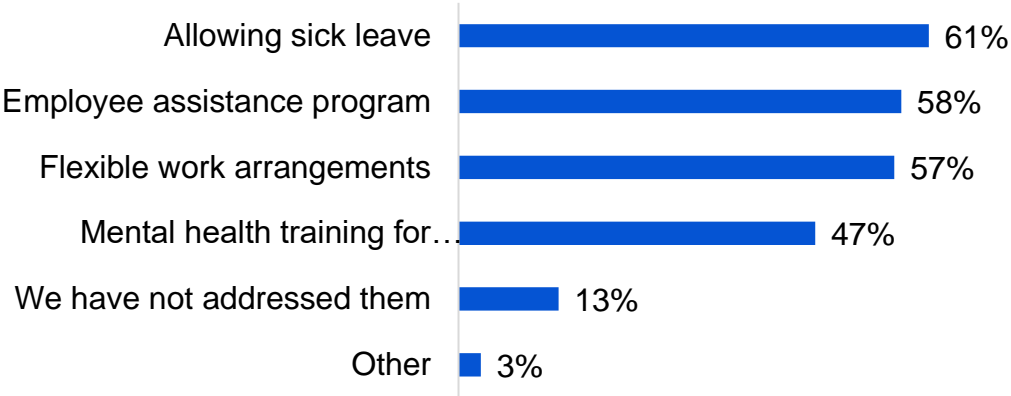
CHALLENGES TO MENTAL HEALTH

Two-in-five Decision Makers / Influencers reported an increase in employee mental health challenges, while another 21% are unsure—highlighting a potential need to improve mental health awareness. Encouragingly, 87% of Decision Makers and Influencers who observed increased challenges have taken action, most commonly by allowing sick leave (61%).

Increases in Mental Health Challenges 2025
(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



Actions Taken to Address Mental Health Challenges
(Among Decision Makers / Influencers Facing Increased Mental Health Challenges)



Key Insights

Fewer Challenges to Safety Protocols

Canadian Decision Makers and Influencers faced fewer challenges in implementing safety protocols in 2025 compared to 2024, with most barriers showing significant decreases. These results suggest a general reduction in obstacles to adopting key safety measures. However, this progress did not translate into higher implementation rates of safety protocols, which remained unchanged in 2025.

Less Negative Views on Safety in 2025

Fewer Canadian Decision Makers and Influencers hold negative views on workplace safety in 2025 compared to 2024, suggesting growing recognition of the importance of health and safety. While this is a positive development, agreement with positive views on safety did not increase over the same period—indicating there is still room for improvement.

Unionization & Business Size

Unionized and larger businesses report higher rates of safety protocols and more proactiveness on workplace safety than non-unionized and smaller ones. Similarly, larger businesses tend to have more comprehensive protocols. It's worth exploring which practices could transfer to smaller or non-unionized organizations, and what incentives might encourage early adoption.

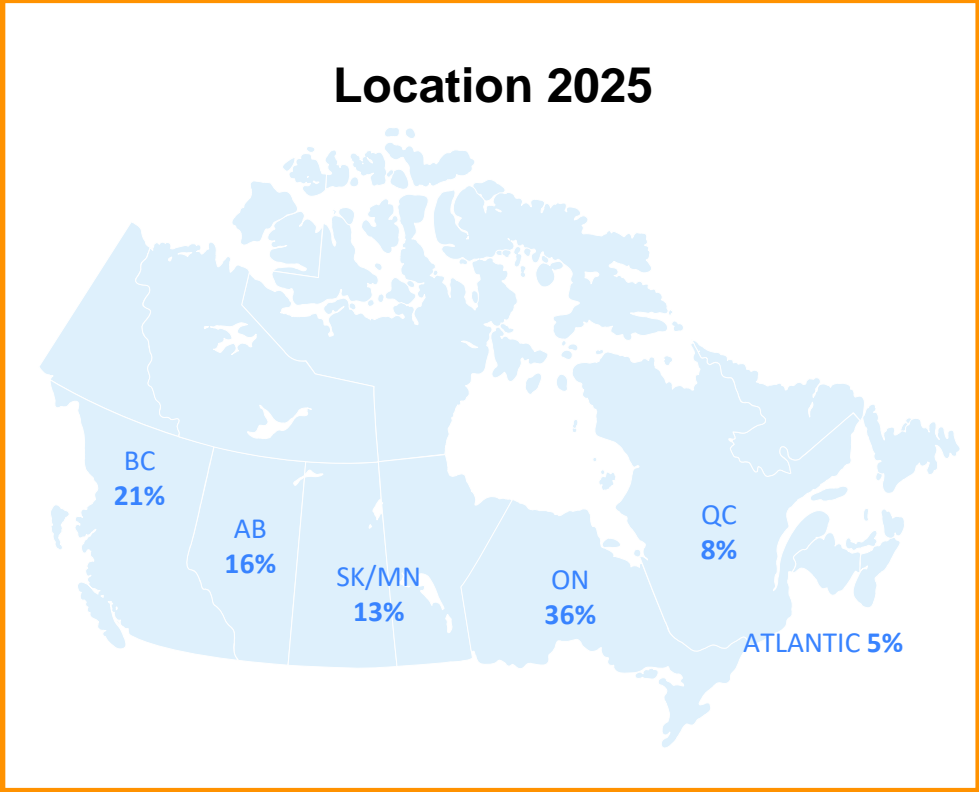
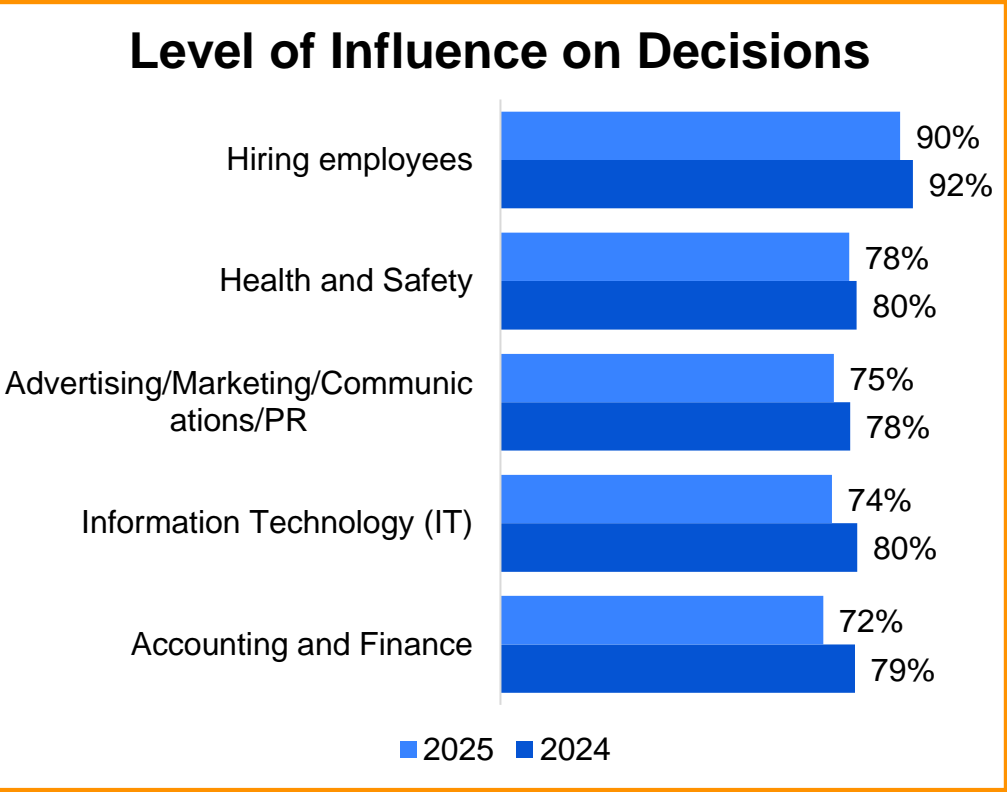
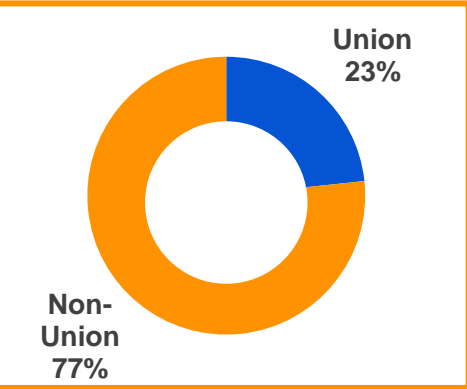
Mental Health Should be Monitored

Forty-two percent of Decision Makers / Influencers have seen an increase in mental health challenges in their workplace over the past year, highlighting a significant issue that warrants further attention. Encouragingly, 87% of those who observed an increase took action to help. Moving forward, work-related mental health should be closely monitored, as challenges appear widespread.

DEMOGRAPHICS

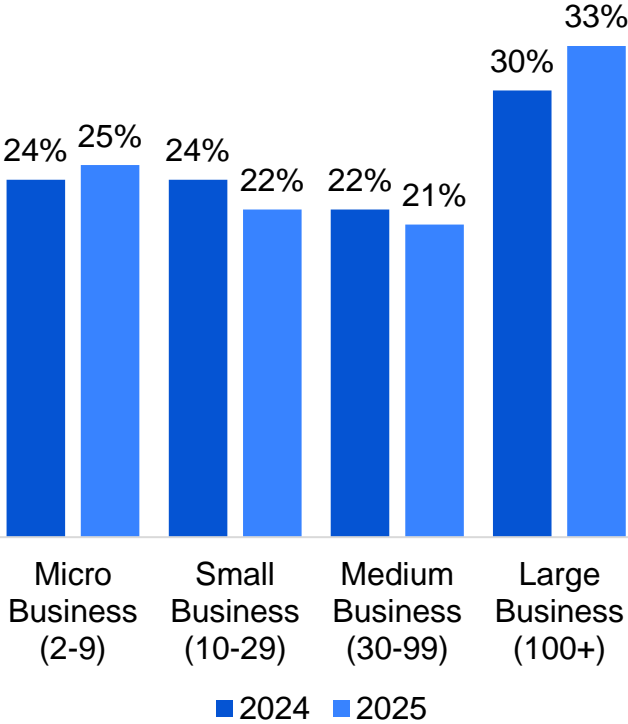
28%
Employed

72%
Owners / Self-Employed

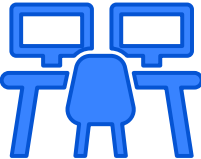


DEMOGRAPHICS


Business Size in 2024 / 2025
(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



Industries / Sectors	2024	2025
	(n = 1024)	(n = 1059)
Business/Professional Services (e.g., Legal, Accounting, Engineering, Architecture, Financial Services, IT)	13%	13%
Manufacturing	9%	7%
Construction & Trades	9%	9%
Not For Profit – Charity	8%	8%
Retail	7%	8%
Health Care	7%	7%
Government	7%	9%
Education	6%	6%
Technology and Telecommunications	6%	6%
Financial Services, Pension & Insurance	5%	4%
Transportation, Wholesale & Logistics	5%	4%
Creative Industries (Arts & Culture, Entertainment, Digital Media)	5%	6%
Agriculture, Agribusiness and Natural Resources	4%	6%
Energy Sector	4%	4%
Real Estate	4%	3%
Advertising, Marketing, Communications and Public Relations	3%	2%
Hotels & Tourism	3%	2%
Restaurant & Quick Service Restaurant	3%	2%
Food & Beverage Manufacturers	2%	2%
Science & Innovation	2%	1%
Life Sciences & Research	2%	2%
Other	6%	5%



51%*
Professional-Intensive Industries



52%*
Labour-Intensive Industries

* 6% of Decision Makers / Influencers reported working in more than 1 industry