

The State of Safety

March 30, 2026



x



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Five Top Takeaways for Threads of Life

1

Employers are less complacent about risk, but safety is still not fully embedded

Across the last three years, today fewer employers say accident risk is so rare no one thinks about it (48% in 2024, 48% in 2025, 42% in 2026), which suggests awareness of risk is improving. In addition, the decrease of workers' compensation board reports represents a new challenge to communicate and overcome.



2

2026 highlights a capacity challenge as much as a safety challenge

Understaffing has become one of the biggest barriers to improving workplace health and safety, rising to 46% in 2026 from 40% in 2025 and matching lack of time for training (45%) as a top challenge. At the same time, fewer understaffed employers now say the issue is mainly driven by labour shortages (64%, down from 77% in 2025), suggesting the pressure extends beyond hiring.



3

No improvement of accidents and fatalities from previous year

No improvement from previous year in incident and fatalities noted by survey respondents. Overall incident levels reported by participants at their workplaces were stable in 2026.



4

Employers broadly believe in safety, but many are still managing it as compliance rather than culture

The encouraging news is that the baseline attitude toward safety remains positive. The weaker point is day-to-day reinforcement. Only 44% hold monthly health and safety meetings. In addition, overstaffing impacts in diminishing training time for health & safety were more common this year.



5

Mental health remains a prominent challenge

Employer responses to rising mental health challenges increased slightly in 2026. Especially, in professional-intensive sectors, as they were more likely to report mental-health challenges in their organization compared to labour-intensive sectors (52% vs. 36%).



Methodology and Legend

Field Window

February 26, 2026 – March 11, 2026

Field Sample

Wave 1 (2024) n=1024
Wave 2 (2025) n=1059
Wave 3 (2026) n=1013

Canadian business owners, hiring managers, and decision makers



Blue represents 2024 results.



Navy represents 2025 results.



Orange represents 2026 results.

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 year over year across multiple topics, including workplace incident rates and attitudes toward safety protocols. This year's study includes a look at artificial intelligence integration for health and safety 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.

1

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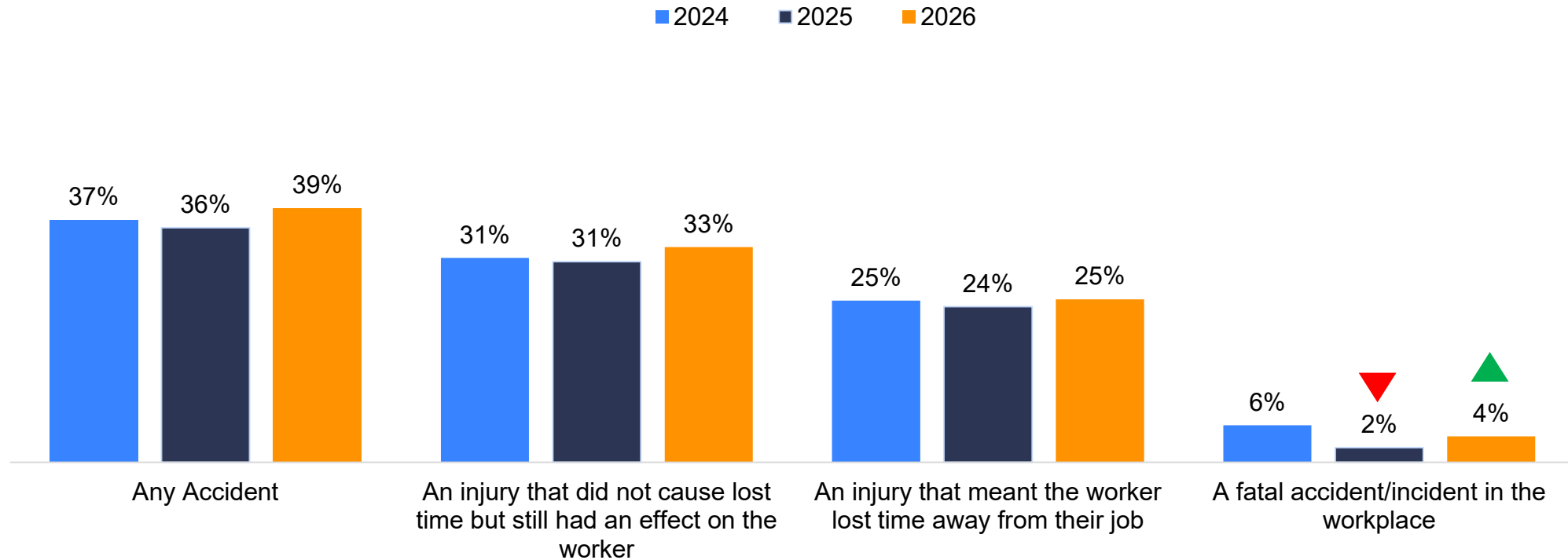
The Landscape



Workplace Accidents

The overall accident picture as reported by the respondents, held steady in 2026. There were no improvements regarding overall accidents and fatal accidents from last year.

Reported a Past Year Workplace Accident (Among Decision Makers / Influencers)



Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2024 (n=1024); 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013)
B7. In the past 12 months has your workplace/business experienced...

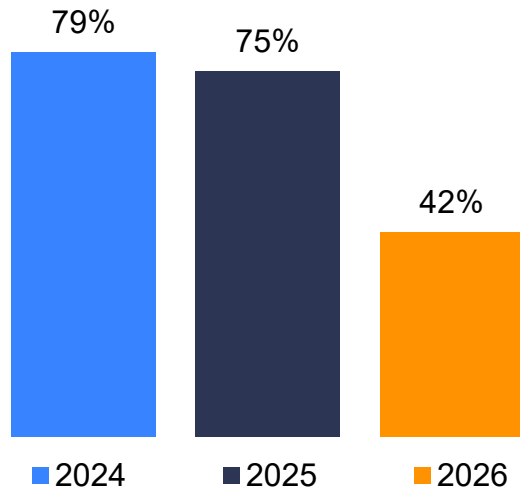
▲ Significantly higher year over year
▼ Significantly lower year over year

Preparedness and Action Taken after Workplace Accidents

Fatal-accident preparedness dropped considerably in 2026, with preparedness falling to 42%; reviewing and updating protocols remained one of the most common responses at 74%. Reports to a workers' compensation board has also directionally decreased year over year, suggesting a lack of awareness or communication surrounding this safety measure.

Preparedness for Fatal Workplace Accident

*Prepared / Moderately Prepared
Reported a Fatal Accident in the Workplace**



*Small Base sizes (<50)

Base: Reported a fatal accident/incident in the workplace: 2024 (n=58); 2025 (n=24); 2026 (n=38)

B8. At the moment of the fatal accident/incident that happened in your workplace, to what extent do you think your business was prepared to deal with it appropriately?

B9. Regarding the fatal accident/incident that occurred in your workplace, which of the following actions did your business take to address it?

Base: Reported an injury in the workplace: 2024 (n=254); 2025 (n=253); 2026 (n=257)

B11. Regarding the injury a worker experienced in your workplace, resulting in lost time away from their job, which of the following actions did your business take to address it?

Actions Taken After Fatality or Injury

Reported a Fatal Accident or Injury in the Workplace (Yes Summary)*

	Fatality			Injury		
	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026
Reviewed and updated safety protocols and procedures	78%	75%	74%	65%	68%	65%
Reported to the workers' compensation board or commission (e.g. WSIB, WCB, WorkSafe, etc.)	88%	71%	68%	83%	84%	73%▼
Provided support to affected co-workers	76%	75%	68%	67%	72%	65%
Conducted a thorough internal investigation	76%	71%	68%	73%	74%	68%
Held extra safety training or awareness sessions for all employees	79%	63%	66%	52%	47%	48%
Collaborated with external safety experts or consultants	74%	50%▼	66%	44%	38%	36%
Implemented additional safety measures or equipment	79%	58%	61%	55%	50%	52%
Compensated family members	64%	58%	55%	25%	12%▼	15%

▲▼ Significantly lower / higher year over year

Safety Protocols

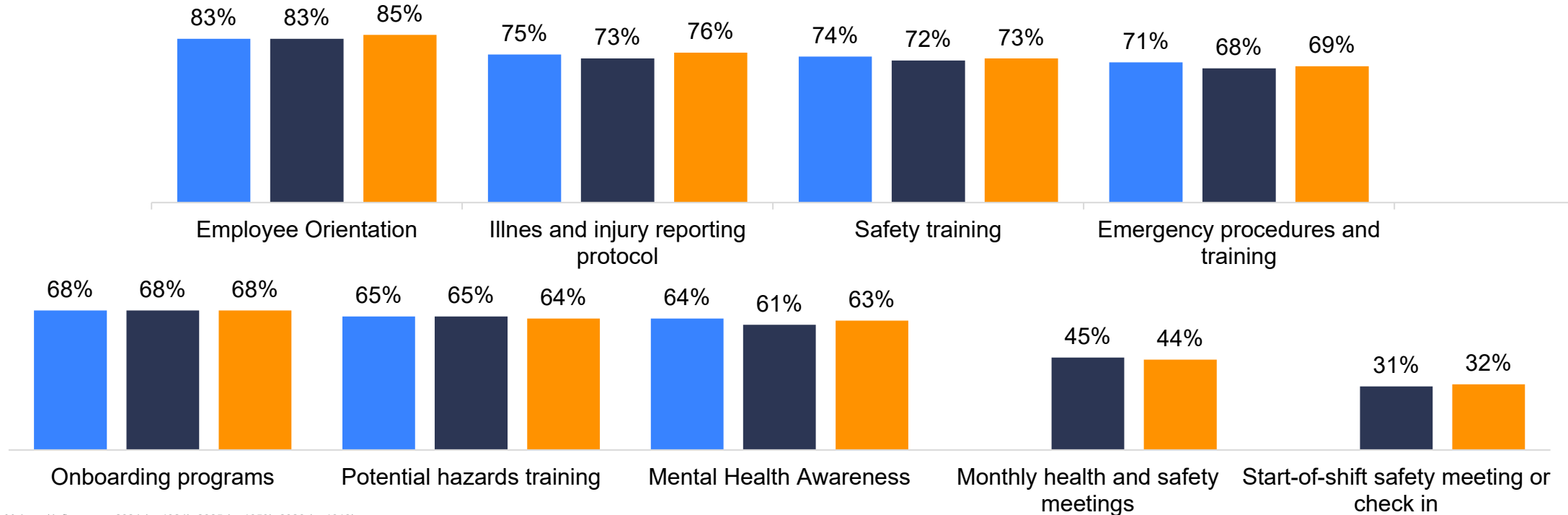


Workplace Protocols

Workplace safety protocols were largely unchanged in 2026. Formal safeguards such as employee orientation (85%) and injury-reporting protocols (76%) are common, but regular reinforcement through monthly safety meetings (44%) and start-of-shift check-ins (32%) is less widespread.

Workplace Safety Protocols in Place (Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)

■ 2024 ■ 2025 ■ 2026



Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2024 (n=1024); 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013)

B1. Out of the following programs and to the best of your knowledge, please indicate which does your company or organization have in place?

▲▲ Significantly lower / higher year over year

Workplace Protocols (Cont'd)

Safety protocols are far more embedded in unionized and larger workplaces. Unionized organizations outpace non-unionized ones across every measure, while micro businesses lag well behind 100+ employee firms on reporting protocols (57% vs 91%) and monthly safety meetings (24% vs 60%).

Workplace Safety Protocols in Place

(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)

		Union Status		Size of Business by Number of Employees			
		Unionized	Non-Unionized	2-9	10-29	30-99	100+
		(n = 234)	(n = 779)	(n = 295)	(n = 245)	(n = 167)	(n = 306)
	Employee orientation	94%	82%	72%	85%	91%	95%
	Illness and injury reporting protocol	90%	71%	57%	78%	78%	91% ▲
	Safety training	86%	70%	61%	69%	78%	86%
	Emergency procedures training	86%	63%	52%	64%	75%	85%
	Onboarding programs	81%	64%	45%	67%	72%	90%
	Potential hazards training	78%	60%	52% ▲	62%	68%	77%
	Mental Health Awareness	85%	56%	47%	52%	63%	86%
	Monthly health and safety meetings	60%	39%	24%	42%	53%	60%
	Start-of-shift safety meeting or check in	41%	30%	25%	33%	31%	40%

B1. Out of the following programs and to the best of your knowledge, please indicate which does your company or organization have in place?

▲ Significantly lower / higher year over year

Challenges to Safety

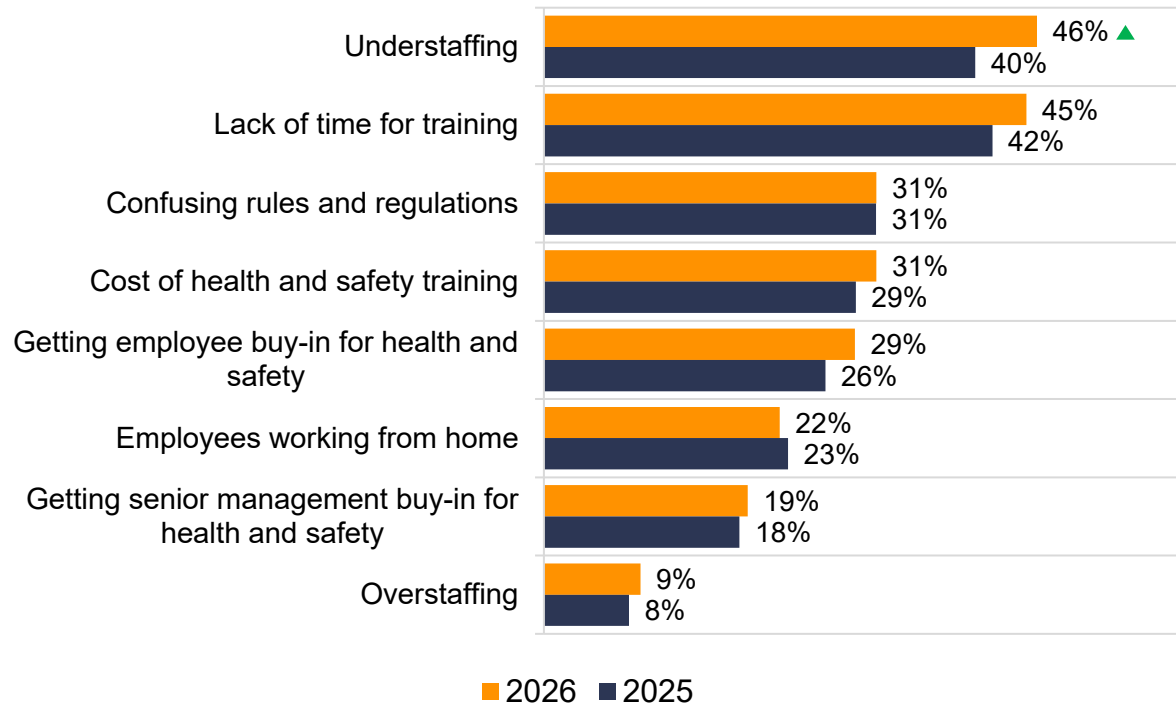


Factors Impacting Safety Protocols

Understaffing has become the leading barrier to improving safety standards in 2026 (46%, up from 40% in 2025), with a third attributing understaffing to labour shortages.

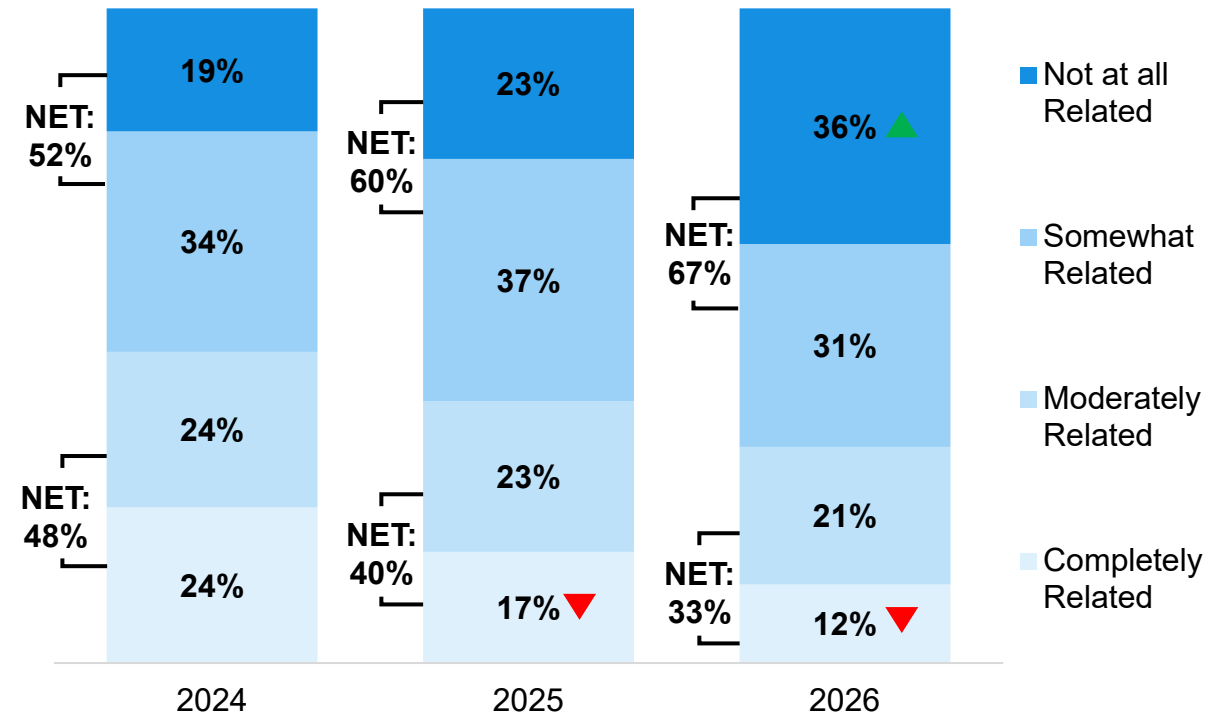
Significant Challenges that Prevent Improving Health and Safety Standards

(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



Relation of Understaffing & Labour Shortages

(Among Understaffed Decision Makers / Influencers)



Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2024 (n=1024); 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013). Base: Understaffed: 2024 (n=484); 2025 (n=426); 2026 (n=463)
 B2: [Yes, it is a significant challenge] Out of the following, please indicate which ones are significant challenges that prevent your company or organization from improving health and safety standards.
 Base: B3: You mentioned that your business is currently understaffed. To what extent is this related to labour shortages?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower year over year

Under and Overstaffing Impacts

Understaffing remains the bigger strain on workforce wellbeing and hiring, but overstaffing also creates meaningful safety challenges, especially around health and safety training time which is up 10% from the previous year.

Diminishing the Ability to Achieve Safety Protocols (Among Understaffed and Overstaffed Decision Makers / Influencers)

	Understaffed			Overstaffed		
	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026
Reducing employee stress levels	68%	74% ▲	70%	41%	30% ▼	46% ▲
Hiring qualified workers	65%	68%	54% ▼	43%	45%	48%
Training time for Health & Safety	46%	41%	41%	37%	35%	45%
Standards for Health & Safety	34%	29%	29%	30%	33%	33%
Preventing accidents/incidents	24%	25%	25%	34%	32%	32%

Base: Understaffed: 2024 (n=484); 2025 (n=426); 2026 (n=463) / Base: Overstaffed in B2: 2024 (n=132); 2025 (n=84); 2026 (n=93)
 B4a. You mentioned that your business is currently understaffed. Please indicate how staffing levels have affected the following areas in your organization.
 B4b. You mentioned that your business is currently overstaffed. Please indicate how staffing levels have affected the following areas in your organization.

▲ ▼ Significantly lower / higher year over year

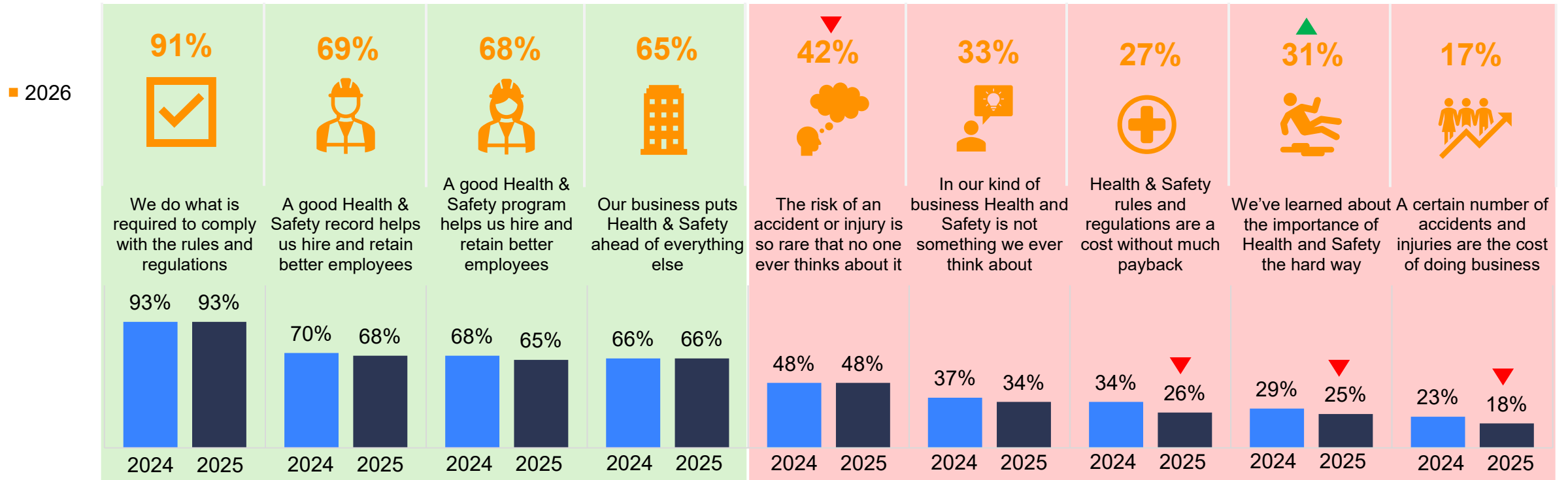
Views on Safety



Views on Safety - Agreement

The 2026 mindset is still pro-safety, but increasingly shaped by experience rather than complacency. Fewer say accident risk is so rare nobody thinks about it, while more say they've learned the importance of safety the hard way (31% vs. 25% in 2025).

Agreement on Health and Safety in the Workplace Agree Strongly / Agree Moderately (Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2024 (n=1024); 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013)
B6. Agreement with statements.

▲ Significantly higher year over year
▼ Significantly lower year over year

Views on Safety – Agreement (Cont'd)

Compliance is equally high in unionized and non-unionized workplaces, but unionized employers remain more likely to see health and safety as a talent advantage and less likely to dismiss accident risk as too rare to think about. This year, fewer unionized business' put health and safety ahead of everything else (62% vs. 77% in 2025).

Agreement on Health and Safety in the Workplace Agree Strongly / Agree Moderately (Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)

	Union Status					
	Unionized			Non-Unionized		
	2024 <i>n</i> = 262	2025 <i>n</i> = 247	2026 <i>n</i> = 234	2024 <i>n</i> = 762	2025 <i>n</i> = 812	2026 <i>n</i> = 779
We do what is required to comply with the rules and regulations	93%	94%	91%	94%	92%	91%
A good Health & Safety record helps us hire and retain better employees	81%	79%	73%	66%	65%	67%
A good Health & Safety program helps us hire and retain better employees	76%	77%	77%	65%	63%	65%
Our business puts Health & Safety ahead of everything else	75%	77%	62% ▼	63%	61%	66%
The risk of an accident or injury is so rare that no one ever thinks about it	47%	37% ▼	29%	49%	51%	46%
In our kind of business Health and Safety is not something we ever think about	45%	35% ▼	43%	23%	22%	27% ▲
Health & Safety rules and regulations are a cost without much payback	42%	22% ▼	21%	31%	27% ▼	28%
We've learned about the importance of Health and Safety the hard way	36%	23% ▼	24%	38%	38%	36%
A certain number of accidents and injuries are the cost of doing business	35%	22% ▼	20%	19%	17%	16%

Views on Safety – Agreement (Cont'd)

Larger employers show a more embedded safety culture and are more likely to view health and safety as a hiring and retention asset and less likely to dismiss accident risk, while micro businesses express strong safety intent but still show the highest signs of complacency.

Agreement on Health and Safety in the Workplace

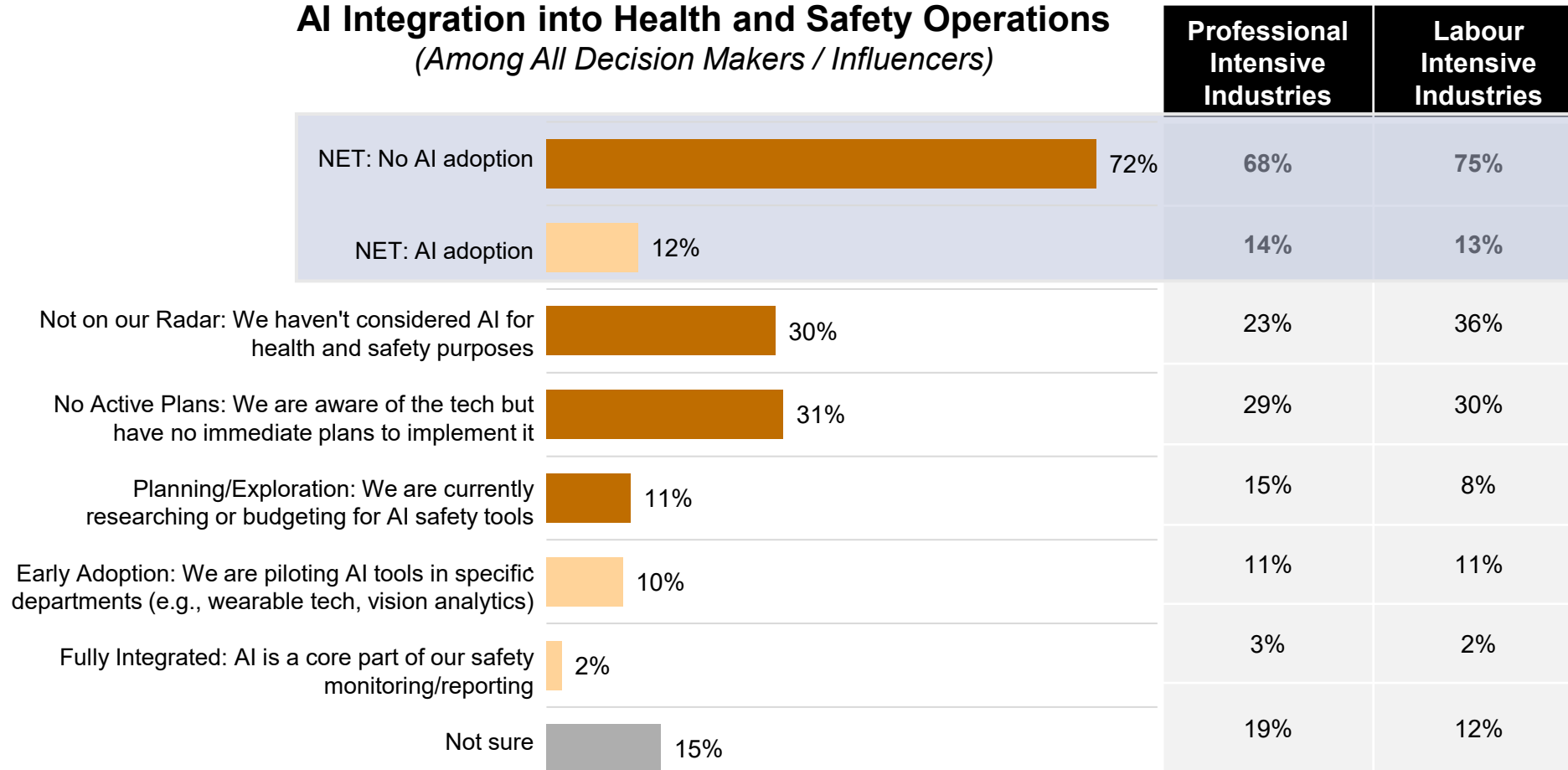
*Agree Strongly / Agree Moderately
(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)*

	Size of Business by Number of Employees											
	2-9			10-29			30-99			100+		
	2024 <i>n = 245</i>	2025 <i>n = 261</i>	2026 <i>n = 295</i>	2024 <i>n = 243</i>	2025 <i>n = 235</i>	2026 <i>n = 245</i>	2024 <i>n = 224</i>	2025 <i>n = 218</i>	2026 <i>n = 167</i>	2024 <i>n = 312</i>	2025 <i>n = 345</i>	2026 <i>n = 306</i>
We do what is required to comply with the rules and regulations	93%	89%	94% ▲	91%	91%	89%	97%	96%	88% ▼	93%	95%	92%
A good Health & Safety record helps us hire and retain better employees	61%	59%	68% ▲	65%	66%	64%	73%	67%	68%	79%	77%	73%
A good Health & Safety program helps us hire and retain better employees	56%	52%	63% ▲	62%	64%	62%	75%	65%	65%	76%	76%	77%
Our business puts Health & Safety ahead of everything else	60%	63%	70%	61%	61%	62%	70%	67%	65%	71%	70% ▲	63%
The risk of an accident or injury is so rare that no one ever thinks about it	50%	61% ▲	49% ▼	53%	52%	45%	46%	38%	38%	46%	40%	35%
In our kind of business Health and Safety is not something we ever think about	42%	46%	40%	39%	37%	33%	34%	24%	32%	35%	30%	27%
Health & Safety rules and regulations are a cost without much payback	28%	34%	33%	37%	28%	29%	37%	21%	25%	35%	21%	20%
We've learned about the importance of Health and Safety the hard way	16%	17%	25% ▲	28%	21%	27%	31%	24%	34% ▲	39%	34%	38%
A certain number of accidents and injuries are the cost of doing business	15%	14%	16%	23%	18%	15%	24%	22%	16%	29%	19%	19%

Artificial Intelligence Integration

Health and safety adoption of AI is widely unutilized. Over two-thirds of Canadian decision-makers and influencers have either no plans or is not on their radar and/or at a stage of exploration to implement the technology in the future.

AI Integration into Health and Safety Operations (Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2026 (n=1013)

B14. Which of the following best describes your organization's current stage of integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Health and Safety operations?

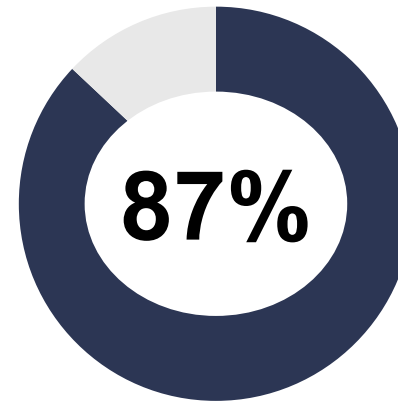
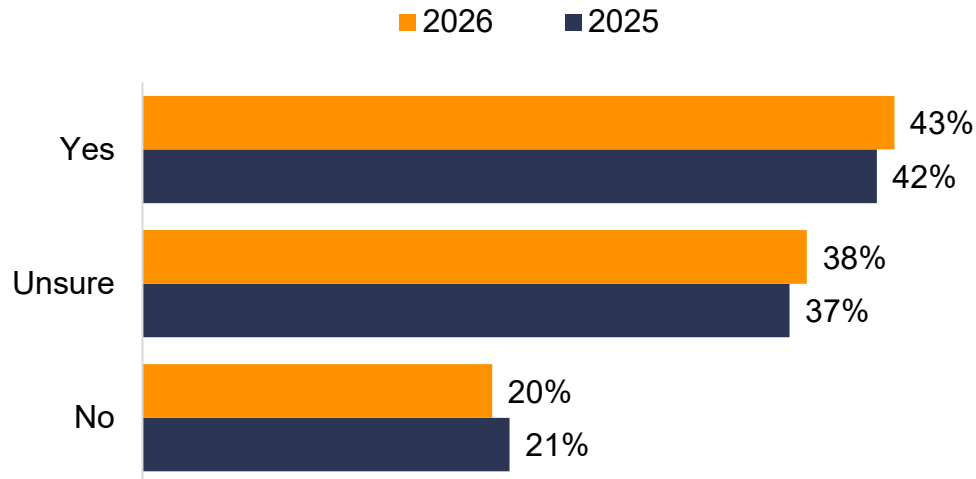
Mental Health



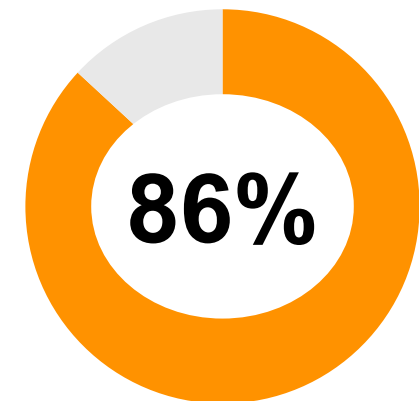
Challenges to Mental Health

Mental health challenges and actions taken to address them are relatively stable, with 43% of decision makers and influencers reporting an increase in mental health challenges compared to last year. Promisingly, the majority has taken action to address it.

Increases in Mental Health Challenges 2025 / 2026 (Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



2025



2026

Of Decision Makers / Influencers who have seen an increase in mental health challenges have taken action to address them

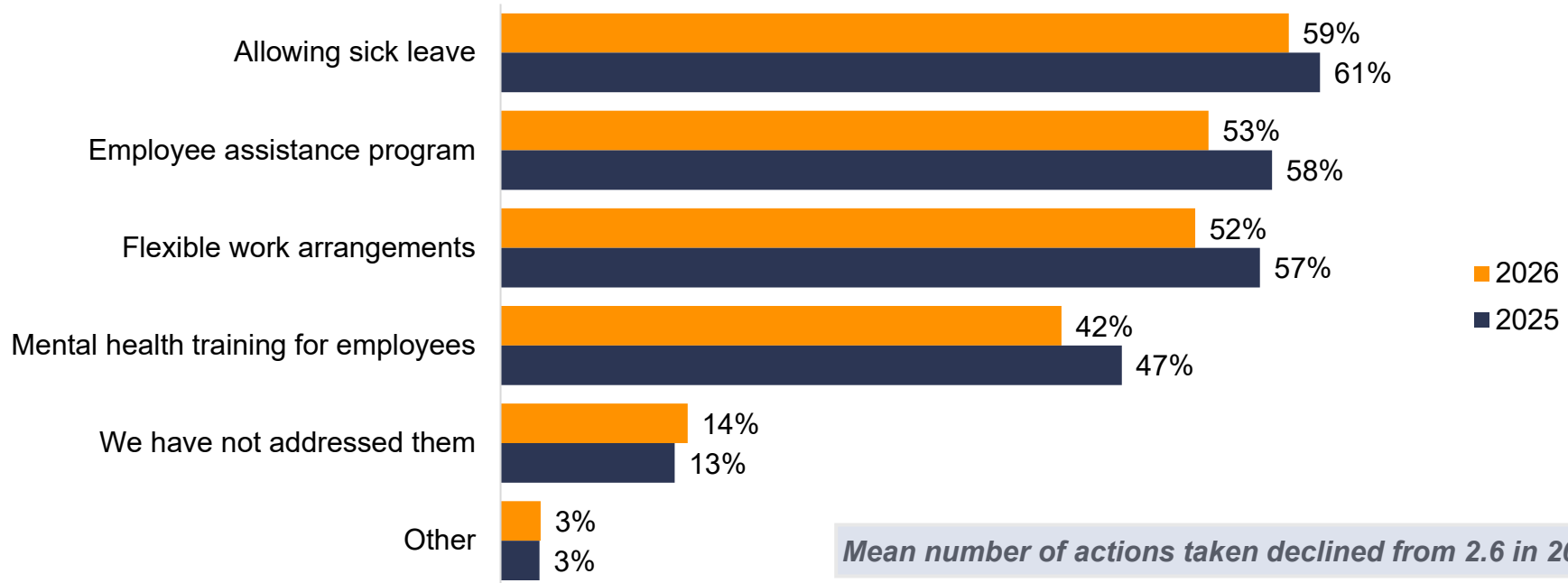
Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013) | Base: Reported Mental Health Challenges among Workers: 2025 (n=445); 2026 (n=432)
 B12. In the past year, has your organization experienced an increase in mental health challenges (e.g., stress, anxiety) among employees?
 B13. How have you addressed the increase in mental health challenges (e.g., stress, anxiety) among employees?

▲ ▼ Significantly lower / higher year over year

Actions Taken Toward Mental Health

Among organizations facing increased mental health challenges, action remained common in 2026. No single solution emerged; instead, organizations adopted a combination of approaches to address the issue. On average, 2.4 actions were implemented per organization, slightly lower than in 2025 (2.6).

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



Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013) | Base: Reported Mental Health Challenges among Workers: 2025 (n=445); 2026 (n=432)
 B12. In the past year, has your organization experienced an increase in mental health challenges (e.g., stress, anxiety) among employees?
 B13. How have you addressed the increase in mental health challenges (e.g., stress, anxiety) among employees?

▲ ▼ Significantly lower / higher year over year

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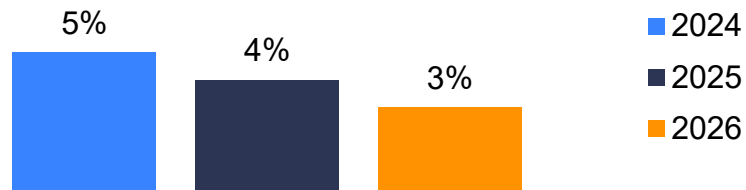
Brand Awareness



Threads of Life Brand Awareness

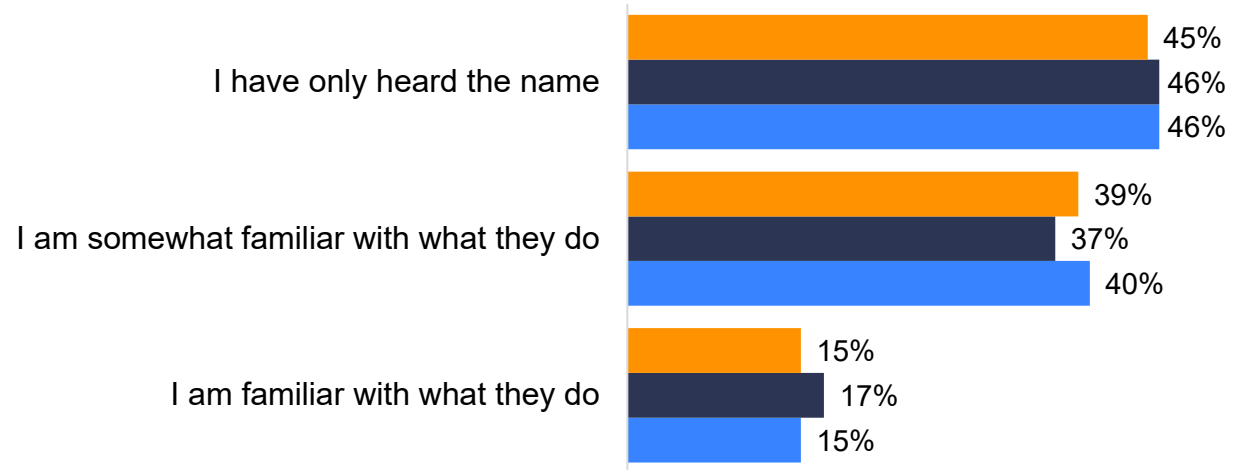
Threads of Life awareness remains limited and sits at 3% in 2026, while familiarity among those aware stayed broadly stable, most decision makers and influencers have only heard the name or are only somewhat familiar.

Brand Awareness for 2024 - 2026
(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



Level of Familiarity to Threads of Life in 2024 - 2026

(Among Decision Makers / Influencers Who Have Heard of Threads of Life)*



*Small Base sizes (<50)

Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2024 (n=1024); 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013)

A1. Which of the following organizations you have heard of before.

Base: Selected aware of Threads of Life in A1: 2024 (n=48); 2025 (n=46); 2026 (n=33)

A2. [Threads of Life] Please rate your familiarity with the following organizations

▲ ▼ Significantly lower / higher year over year

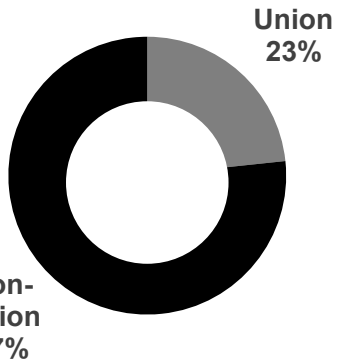
Appendix



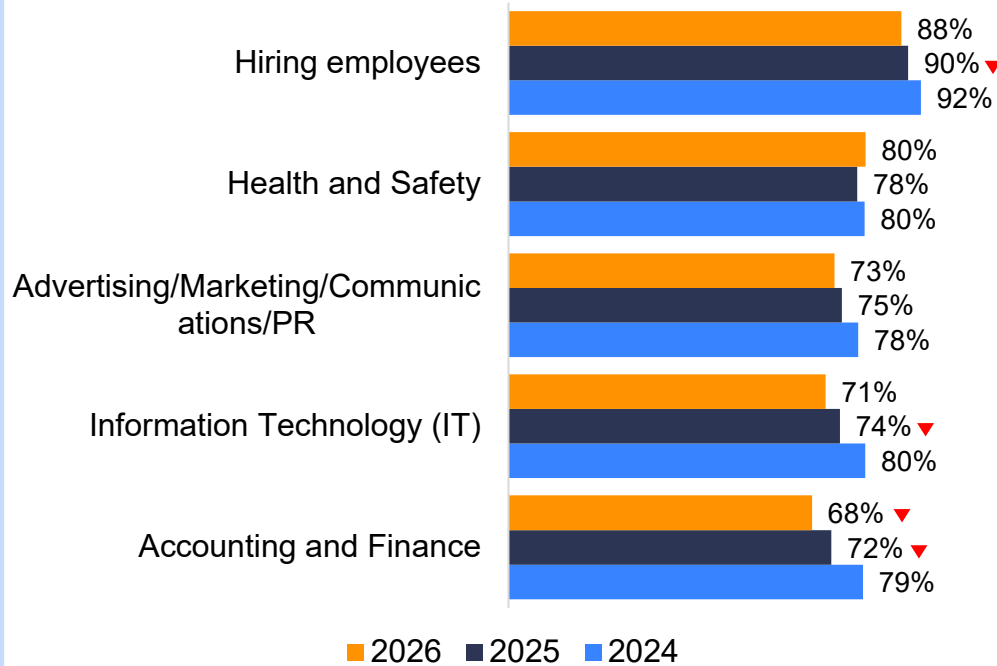
Demographics

71%
Employee

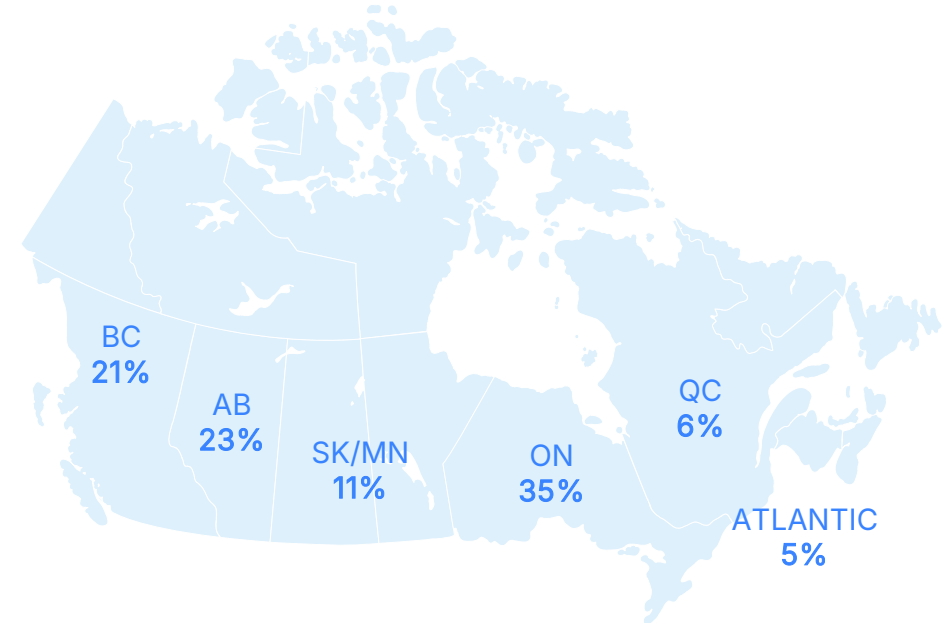
29%
Owners / Self-Employed



Level of Influence on Decisions



Location 2026



Base: All Decision Makers / Influencers: 2024 (n=1024); 2025 (n=1059); 2026 (n=1013)

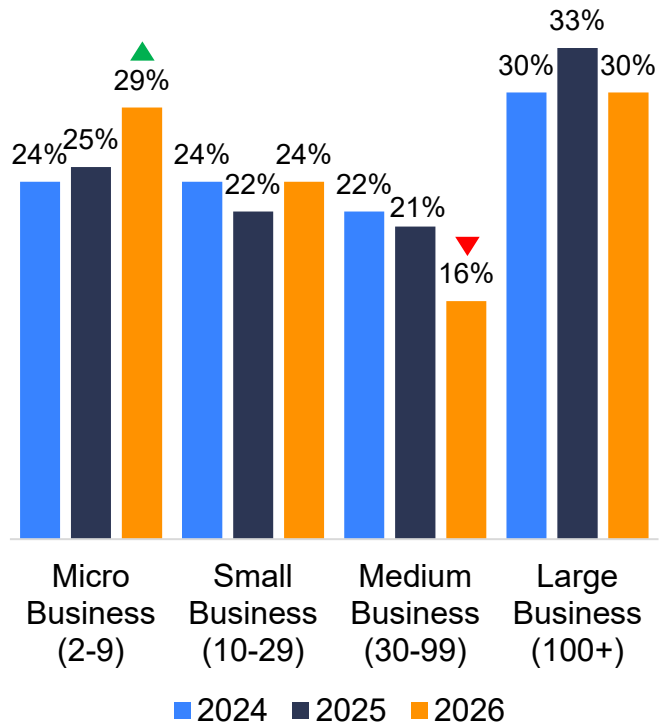
SC1. First, we would like to ask a few questions about your main job. Are you...? | C2. Where is your business's primary province/territory of operation?

SC2. [NET DM/Influencer] Thinking about your role, how much influence do you have on making the following types of decisions at your company/organization? | C3. Is your business or organization currently unionized?

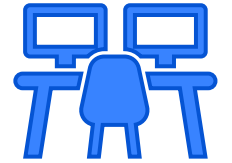
Demographics

Business Size in 2024 - 2026

(Among All Decision Makers / Influencers)



Industries / Sectors	2024	2025	2026
	(n = 1024)	(n = 1059)	(n = 1013)
Business/Professional Services (e.g., Legal, Accounting, Engineering, Architecture, Financial Services, IT)	13%	13%	9%
Manufacturing	9%	7%	5%
Construction & Trades	9%	9%	10%
Not For Profit – Charity	8%	8%	8%
Retail	7%	8%	8%
Health Care	7%	7%	10%
Government	7%	9%	10%
Education	6%	6%	10%
Technology and Telecommunications	6%	6%	6%
Financial Services, Pension & Insurance	5%	4%	3%
Transportation, Wholesale & Logistics	5%	4%	5%
Creative Industries (Arts & Culture, Entertainment, Digital Media)	5%	6%	5%
Agriculture, Agribusiness and Natural Resources	4%	6%	5%
Energy Sector	4%	4%	4%
Real Estate	4%	3%	4%
Advertising, Marketing, Communications and Public Relations	3%	2%	3%
Hotels & Tourism	3%	2%	3%
Restaurant & Quick Service Restaurant	3%	2%	3%
Food & Beverage Manufacturers	2%	2%	2%
Science & Innovation	2%	1%	1%
Life Sciences & Research	2%	2%	1%
Other	6%	5%	6%



49%

Professional-Intensive Industries



53%

Labour-Intensive Industries