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# Back2Better

## Global 1000 CHRO Survey Summary & Report 2021



By



Executive Networks



Global Research Partners **evive** **bts**



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# Introduction

Executive Networks has gathered the top Human Resources leaders from some of the world's largest companies to build the foundation for a better tomorrow. Under the banner of Back2Better, a term coined by Roche's Chief People Officer and steering committee member Cris Wilbur, Executive Networks began conducting research in the spring of 2020 to examine how large global organizations can thrive post-COVID. The first phase consisted of a series of Delphi technique conversations and feedback with leading global CHROs, led by Dr. John Boudreau. This research produced the [September 2020 Back2Better White Paper: "How the Chief HR Officers of the World's Largest Companies are Preparing for the Post-COVID Era."](#)

In January and February of 2021, Executive Networks invited the Chief Human Resources Officers of the world's largest companies to participate in Phase 2 of the Back2Better Initiative: A comprehensive survey on how global HR leaders are thinking about the future of organizations, leadership, work, the workplace and workers.

The survey's questions were authored by the Back2Better steering committee of leading global HR executives, with additional input from a research advisory board consisting of Dr. John Boudreau, Dr. Anna Tavis, Dr. Theresa Welbourne, Dr. Diane Hamilton, Dr. Michael Arena and Navi Radjou.

## Back2Better

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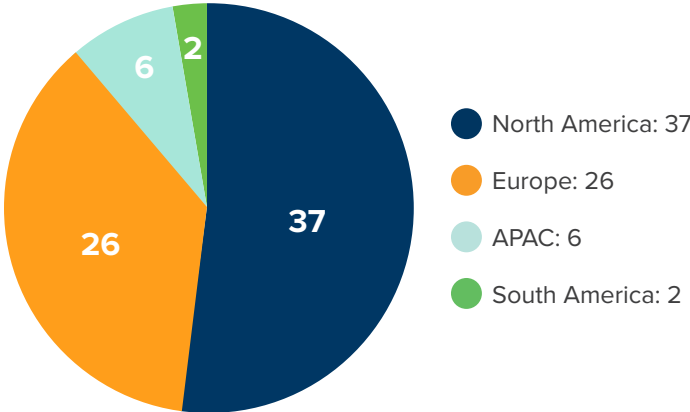
**Hein Knaapen**  
Executive Director, EN; former CHRO, ING

**Mauricio Machado**  
VP, Total Rewards, Cargill

The 71 CHROs who participated in the Back2Better 2021 Global 1000 Survey represent some of the largest and most complex companies in the world. The mean size of a contributing CHROs' company is 69,000 employees and \$19.5 billion in annual revenue.

Thirty-seven of the responding CHROs are based in North America, 26 are in Europe, six are in the APAC region and two are based in South America. They generally self-identify as representing high-performing companies, with 31% labeling their company's performance as "much above average" and another 44% choosing "somewhat above average," with the caveat that the company performance question was among the survey's least-answered. [The complete survey results are included in the appendix of this report, beginning on page 27.](#) Those results are the primary source for the analysis in this report.

**CHRO participants, by geography:**



## SECTION 1

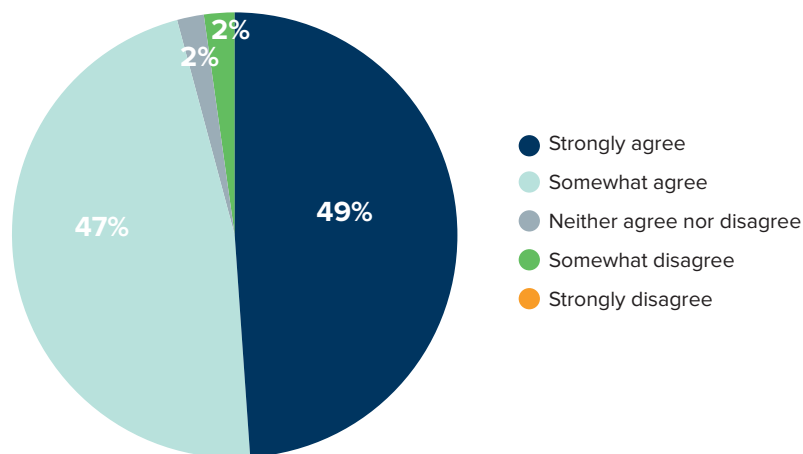
# The Pandemic and the Economy

A full year removed from the beginnings of the unprecedentedly disruptive COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Human Resources Officers of the world's largest companies are overwhelmingly optimistic about the post-pandemic future. An astounding 95% of the HR heads of large, global organizations who participated in the Back2Better CHRO Survey stated that their organizations are now "well positioned to grow in a post-pandemic recovery."

Those leading newly empowered HR teams almost uniformly believe that their global organizations are returning to offices "Back2Better," even as pandemic mitigation efforts continue to cripple wide swaths of the global economy.

Nearly all of the 27% of CHROs who reported that the pandemic "very negatively impacted our business results" still said their companies are well-positioned to grow.

### We are well-positioned to grow in a post-pandemic recovery:



# Optimism springs from better-than-expected execution

CHROs' confidence in future growth appears to be rooted in their organizations' ability to quickly adapt to the challenges of 2020.

In answering the open-ended question: "What has surprised you most about your organization's response to the pandemic?" nearly 60% of CHROs referenced the speed and effectiveness in which their companies were able to adapt.

"The agility, quick pivots and resilience in our businesses have been far better than I expected they would be," said one Europe-based CHRO. A North American CHRO reported that, "Things that we would previously have insisted on being in-person were creatively retooled to be virtual. And they were engaging and productive."

## What has surprised you most about your organization's response to the pandemic from an economic/financial perspective?



**"We made a decision to prioritize taking care of our people and retaining jobs over financial results. This is consistent with our values and we believe this is the best long-term decision."**  
– North American Global 1000 CHRO

More than a dozen respondents cited the high levels of productivity from newly remote workers as something they had not anticipated. Others were surprised by their organizations' firm commitment to long espoused values in the heat of a crisis. "We made the decision to prioritize taking care of our people and retaining jobs over financial results," said a North America-based CHRO. "This is consistent with our values, and what I personally believed to be the best long-term decision, although I was not confident that it was the direction we would ultimately take."

One in seven CHROs said they were pleasantly surprised by the high levels of commitment and engagement from their employees, with several noting that this was despite mandatory furloughs and pay reductions.

Only a handful of CHROs cited unpleasant surprises in their answers. One from North America was taken aback by the speed in which labor and transportation costs increased. Another was surprised by how quickly headcount was reduced in her organization.

# Changes in operating models and how companies engage governments and competitors

Unsurprisingly, 9 in 10 CHROs reported that “the new reality of working through a pandemic has significantly impacted our operating model.” Those who indicated “no significant changes” represented three specific industries: Pharmaceuticals, Software and Food Processing—and some of their industry peers did, in fact, report significant impacts.

Nearly 6 in 10 said their relationships within their industries have become more collaborative as a result of the pandemic, with only 1 in 10 reporting the converse. Organizations’ relationships with governments and regulators improved in 2020 for about 45% of respondents, with just 1 in 10 reporting that they had deteriorated. All eight participating CHROs based outside of North America and Europe indicated that their relationships with governments and regulators had improved (six in APAC; 2 in S. America). For European and North American CHROs, praise for regulators was much more tempered and varied widely across and within industries.

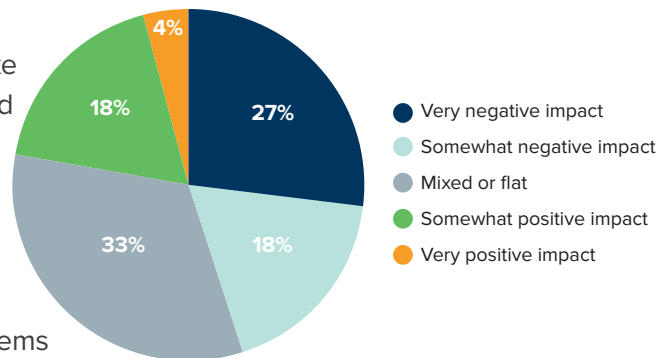
**100% of APAC-based CHROs said their relationships with regulators improved in 2020. Just 37% of their N. American & European colleagues agreed.**

## Different industries, different outcomes

As discussed in Chapter 1 of the [September 2020 Back2Better white paper](#), some fortunate industries experienced a windfall in 2020, while others were decimated. But for many, revenues increased in some business units and contracted in others. Six months later, that remains the case.

The Back2Better CHRO survey shows that less than half of respondents—all representing very large global organizations—were significantly negatively impacted by COVID in terms of business results. Outside surveys focusing on small businesses, like the [2021 EUROCHAMBERS Economic Survey](#) and the U.S.-focused [CBIZ Mainstreet Index](#) show more widespread negative impacts and far less post-pandemic optimism on both sides of the Atlantic.

### How has COVID-19 impacted your organization’s business results?



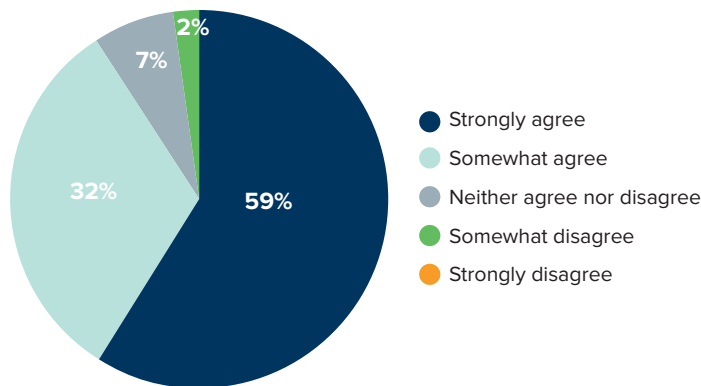
In the face of a global calamity, size and reach seems to have helped. After years of being told that they were not as nimble as their smaller competitors, it was the large global companies that were more likely to have the resources to quickly adapt when the pandemic and its control measures arrived.

## SECTION 2

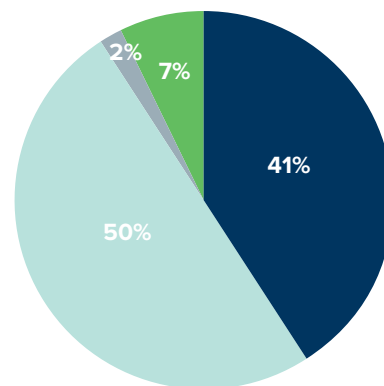
# The Organization of the Future

While nearly 6 in 10 of the survey's CHROs were surprised by their organization's resilience and agility during the pandemic, more than 9 in 10 agreed that their companies "fully embraced agility and flexibility." An identical number of CHROs said their organizations "accelerated pre-existing change programs" last year.

**During the pandemic, we have fully embraced agility and flexibility:**



**During the pandemic, we have accelerated pre-existing change programs:**



In response to an open-ended question about the future of work, a North America-based CHRO said, "The pandemic has accelerated thinking which we had embarked upon before it began, particularly as it relates to reimagining our workforce to be location agnostic, outcome-measured and significantly more flexible in the ways in which individuals engage with us as an employer.

"Covid-19 has demonstrated that substantially more flexible ways of working are not only possible, but desirable."

According to an APAC-based CHRO, the pandemic redefined agile. "Companies have

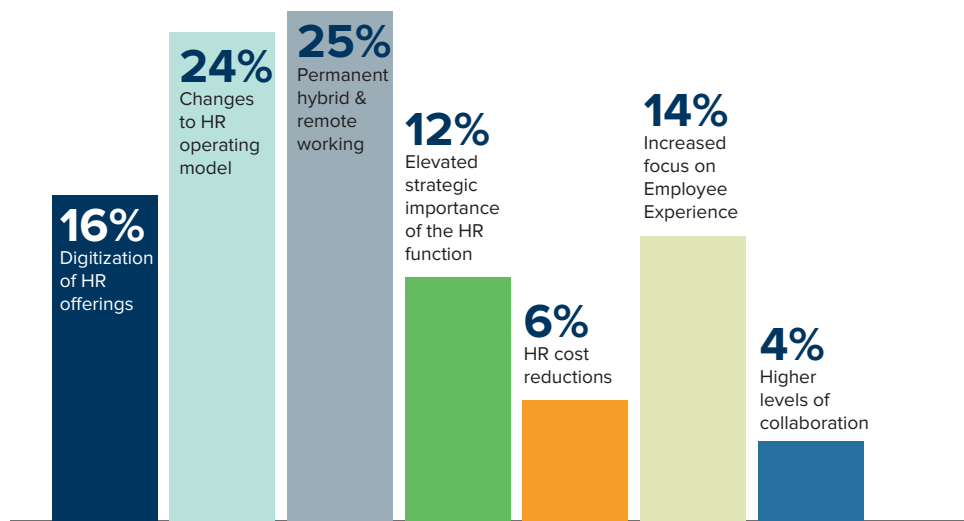
been talking about agile for years, but all they really meant was trying to take the old ways of working and make them go faster," he explained. "True agile is a gamechanger. It has radical implications for HR and changes our remit. It has profound impacts on transparency, accountability, layers and speed of organizations. And we're starting to see it."

A new, more agile normal is beginning to come into focus across large global organizations. While just 16% of CHROs "strongly agreed" with the statement "I have a clear understanding of what the 'new normal' looks like in my company," some 61% said they "somewhat agree."



# Unprecedented changes in Human Resources

**What do you consider the most significant permanent change to your organization’s HR function due to the pandemic?**



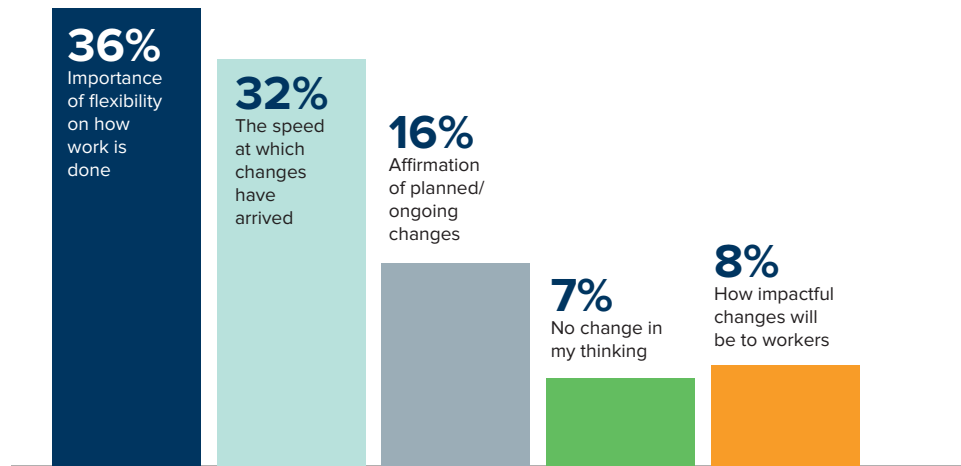
The above question was perhaps the most difficult for the CHROs who participated in the Back2Better survey. Few were able to narrow their answer down to a single “most significant permanent change.” While “Permanent hybrid & remote working” leads the chart above, that answer itself implies that the fourth most popular comment is at least as important: “The elevated strategic importance of the HR function.”

Here is how one North American CHRO explained HR’s rapid pandemic-driven evolution: “An unwavering focus on cultivating the employee experience is clearly the ‘new normal.’ We’re also building agility in talent strategy, working with an increasingly dispersed workforce, focusing on progressive benefits and well-being programs, and designing more competitive compensation plans in light of a redefined talent landscape. It’s hard to say which is the most significant change.”

A European CHRO’s answer perhaps best addresses the themes echoed by her peers: “The most significant changes I’ve seen are organizational acceptance of flexible new ways of working, the adoption of new technology on a global scale and HR’s role at the core of strategy and decision making. HR has changed and there is no going back.”

The pandemic drastically affected how CHROs think about how work will be done in their organizations, with obvious HR implications.

## How has the pandemic changed the way you think about the future of work?



Productivity's resilience in forced flexible working environments likely factored into the two most popular answers above, but many CHROs also elaborated on how the pandemic helped them re-imagine the purpose of offices and physical working environments.

In the words of a Europe-based CHRO, "[The pandemic] has reinforced the social dimension of work. It has called into question the role of administrative sites. Offices should be more strategic, focused on co-creation activities and innovation, with less administration. It has highlighted the importance of culture, and how worksites are the essential glue among employees, which also needs to be shared by new employees."

**"The pandemic has accelerated thinking which we had embarked upon before it began, particularly as it relates to reimagining our workforce to be location- agnostic, outcome-measured and significantly more flexible in the ways in which individuals engage with us as an employer. Covid-19 has demonstrated that substantially more flexible ways of working are not only possible but desirable."**

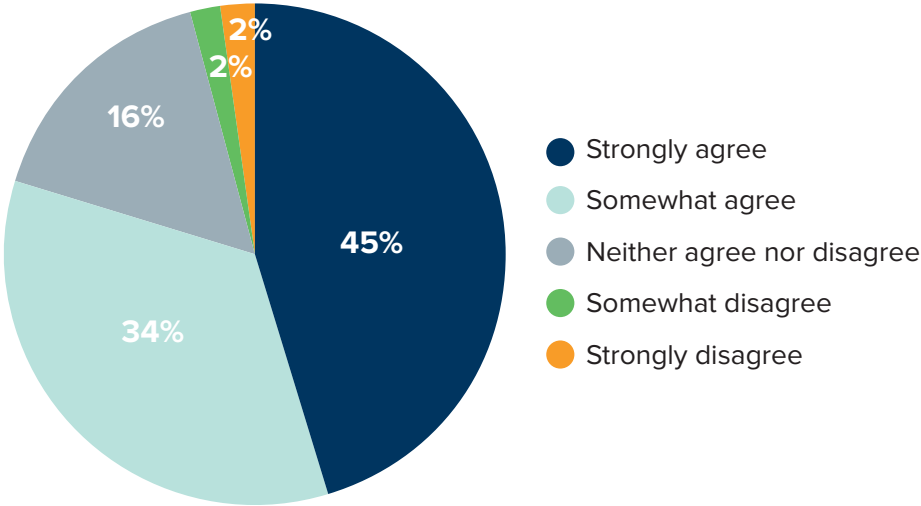
**– North American Global 1000 CHRO**

# More diverse, equitable and inclusive organizations

The summer of 2020 represented a turning point for companies' approach to DE&I. Some global organizations' swift and decisive responses to the Black Lives Matter protests following the videotaped murder of African-American George Floyd by a white police officer in Minnesota seemed to indicate a major shift. Corporate actions in 2020 went significantly further than the more measured responses following similar U.S. protests in 2014.

More than six months later, CHROs have not forgotten the summer's lessons. Nearly 4 in 5 agree, regardless of geography, that 2020 marked a turning point in their organizations' approach to diversity, equity and inclusion.

### This year has marked a turning point in our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion:

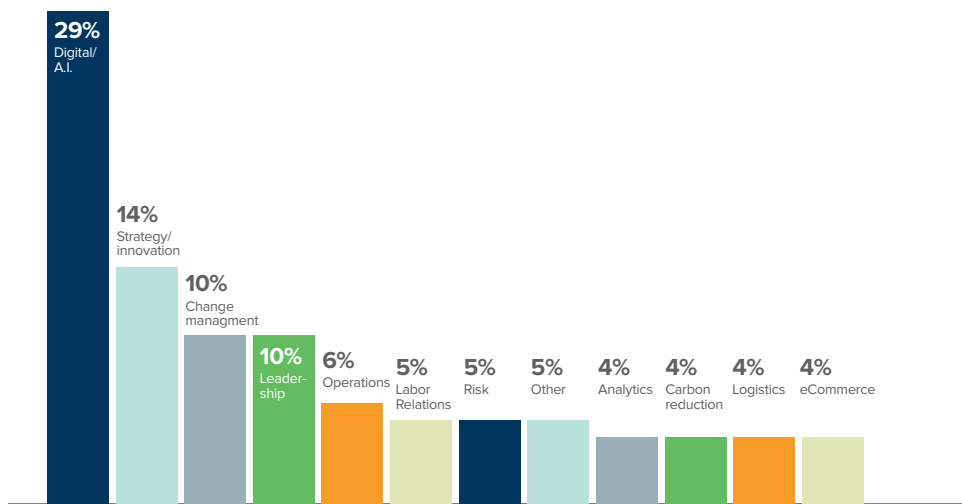


# The skills organizations need to drive growth

After a year of rapid adoption of new digital ways of both working and executing commerce, it is not surprising to see CHROs cite “digital and A.I.” skills as the most in-demand in their industries over the next 2-3 years. As some noted, a pre-pandemic survey would have likely yielded a similar leading result.

“Our workforce analysis suggests that digital skills will continue to be in highest demand within our business and our industry,” said a North America-based CHRO. “This trend pre-dates COVID-19, but was accelerated by it.”

## Which skills do you believe will be in highest demand in your industry over the next 24 to 36 months?



Yet, CHROs are clearly anticipating that digital and A.I. skills will not be the only ones in high demand. The strategy/innovation, change management, leadership and risk bars above can be read collectively as “highly capable executive leadership,” which taken together outpaces demand for digital skills.

**“Our workforce planning analysis suggests that digital skills will continue to be in highest demand within our business and this is a trend we believe will be reflected in the industry. This trend pre-dates Covid-19 but was accelerated by it.”**

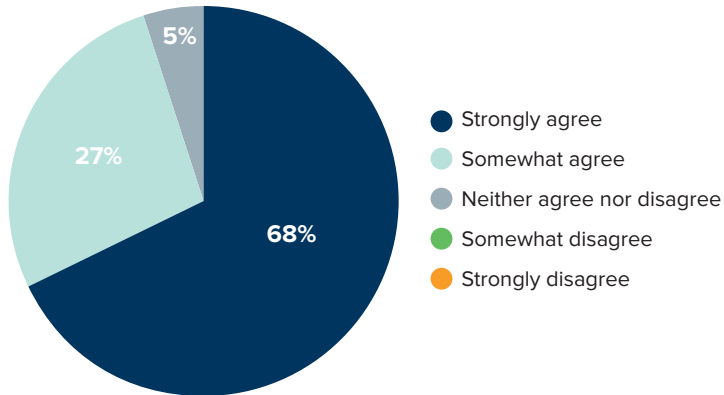
– European Global 1000 CHRO

## SECTION 3

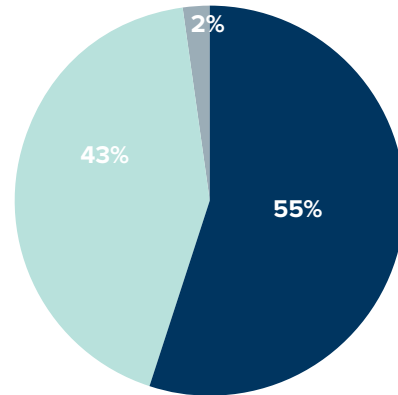
# Leadership of the Future

The CHROs of large global organizations gave high marks to their leaders' ability to navigate 2020. Nearly all respondents said their senior leaders "effectively modeled their company's purpose and culture during the pandemic" and "communicated with clarity and stability." CHROs believe they are not alone in these favorable assessments. More than 9 in 10 agreed that if they pulse-surveyed their workforces today, the majority of employees would say that senior leaders are committed to their health and wellness.

**If I pulse-surveyed my workforce today, the majority of our employees would say our leaders are committed to supporting their health and wellness:**



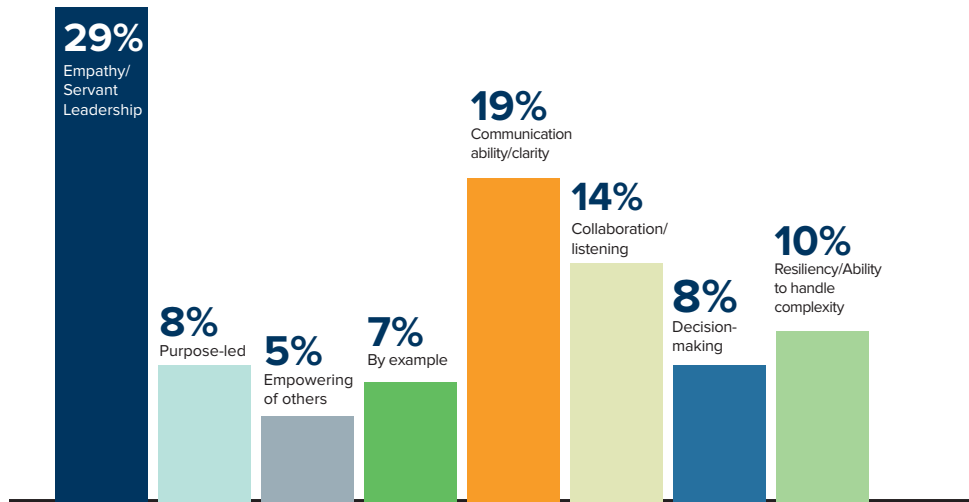
**If I pulse-surveyed my workforce today, the majority of our employees would say that they feel supported and valued by their manager or supervisor:**



When asked to describe what made leaders so effective in 2020, a North America-based CHRO said, "Empathetic leadership has been the key; showing care and respect, balancing personal life and work, clarifying priorities, driving focus and resilience, and focusing on thankfulness and recognition."

Words like "inspiring," "calm," "communicative," "purpose-led," and "decisive," were repeated in many of the open-ended answers, with some CHROs noting that these were not necessarily near the top of their most desired leadership traits in 2019. The pandemic seems to have helped CHROs redefine what they mean by "effective executive leadership."

**How would you describe the most effective form of leadership in your organization during the pandemic?**



Back2Better CHROs were slightly less praiseworthy of their succession candidates and future leadership capabilities. While 77% of respondents “strongly agreed” that their senior leaders modeled their company’s purpose and culture during the pandemic, just 22% “strongly agreed” that their organizations have the leadership capabilities needed to deal with new realities.

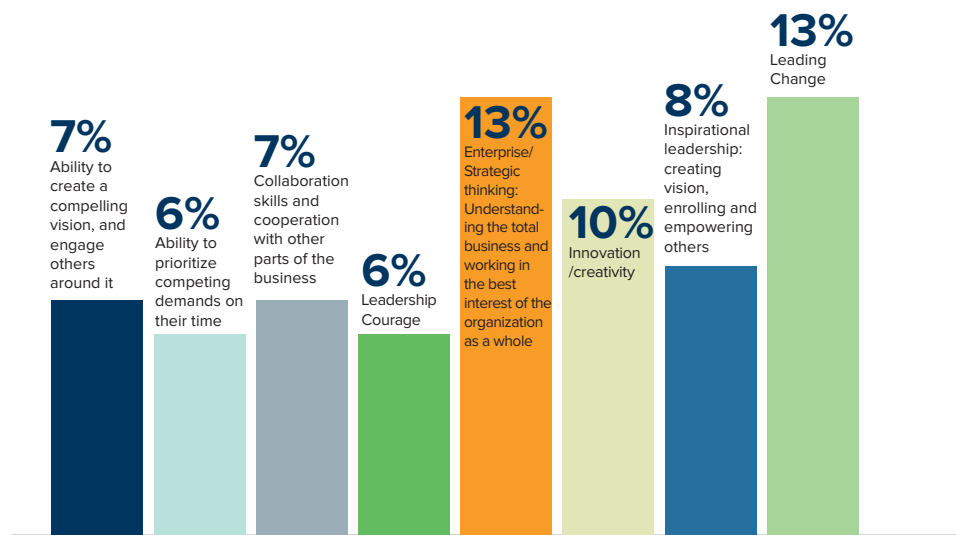
“Empathetic Leadership has been the key; showing care and respect, balancing personal life and work, clarifying priorities, driving focus and resilience, and focusing on thankfulness and recognition.”

– North America-based CHRO

## Developing the leaders of the future

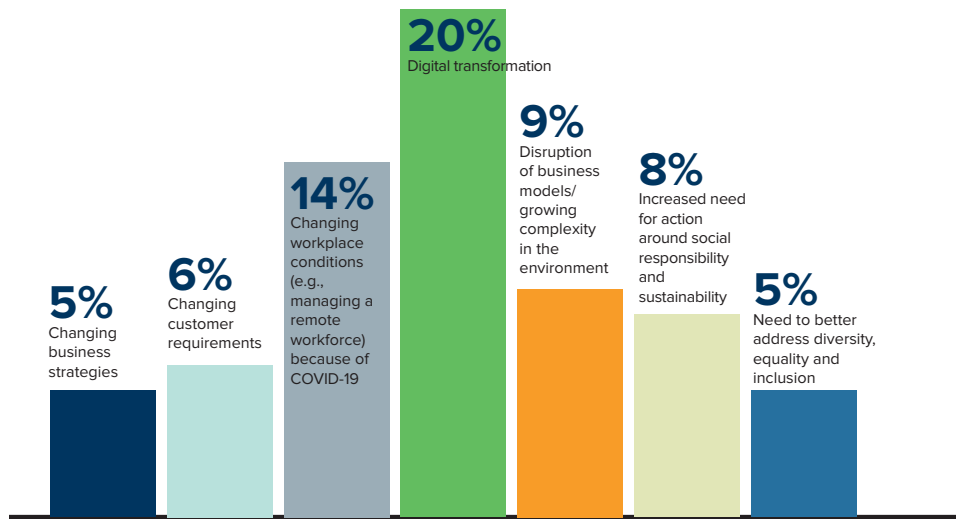
While just over 1 in 5 CHROs firmly believe their companies now have the leadership capabilities they will need for the future, another 1 in 5 said that they surely do not. The majority of respondents landed somewhere between the two. When asked to identify the skill gaps in their leadership pipelines, Global CHROs homed in on Enterprise/Strategic Thinking, Change Management and Innovation/Creativity—certainly tangible skills, but not the easiest to develop.

**As you examine your organization’s high potential pool and your succession plans for executive roles in the next three to five years, what capabilities, skills, knowledge, attitudes, competencies, etc. are most lacking?**



CHROs building leadership capabilities within their organizations are being asked to do more from afar, citing “changing workplace conditions” and “digital transformation” as the two most prominent factors impacting their executive development efforts. Nearly all CHROs who participated in the survey agreed that “our training and development programs have changed during the pandemic and many of those changes will be continued once offices are fully re-opened.” Only 5% disagreed.

**Which one to three factors below do you anticipate will most impact your executive development efforts over the next 2-3 years?**

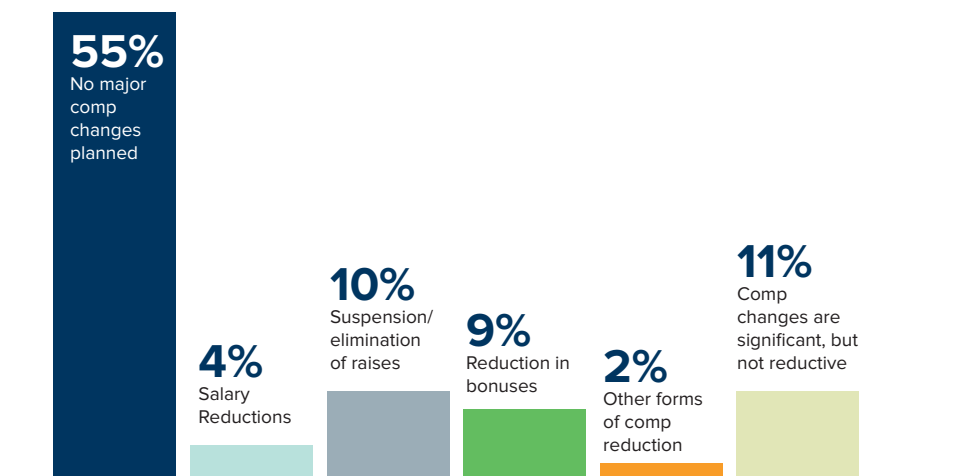


**Less than half are changing how leaders are incentivized**

Media reports highlighted cost-reducing cuts to executive compensation during the early days of the pandemic, but those examples were more the exception than the norm for the CHROs of large, global companies.

Slightly more than half of Back2Better CHRO respondents reported no significant leadership compensation changes in 2021. Another 1 in 10 reported that executive incentives are significantly increasing this year. These findings potentially spell problems for the 35% of large global organizations that did reduce compensation for their leaders in 2021, especially as talent recruiting efforts expand beyond traditional geographic and industry boundaries.

**The global pandemic is disrupting business worldwide and has broad implications for rewards programs. Is your company considering making significant changes to your executive compensation programs in 2021?**



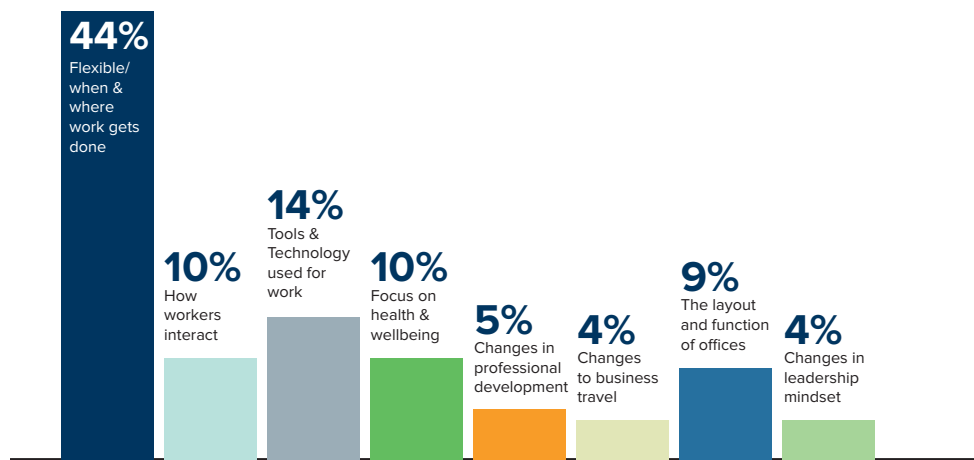


## SECTION 4

# Work & Workplace of the Future

The pandemic's most obvious and enduring work & workplace change is the shift to flexible working arrangements. As discussed in the [September 2020 Back2Better White Paper](#), some companies were headed in a flexible/hybrid working direction before the pandemic arrived. Such journeys have since rapidly accelerated and show few signs of abating.

**What do you believe will be the longest lasting impact of the pandemic on the ways of working in your organization?**



“The crisis has taught us that making the workplace the place where work gets done is no longer essential,” said a Europe-based CHRO. “We can make decisions at pace and accelerate the adoption of new ways of working.”

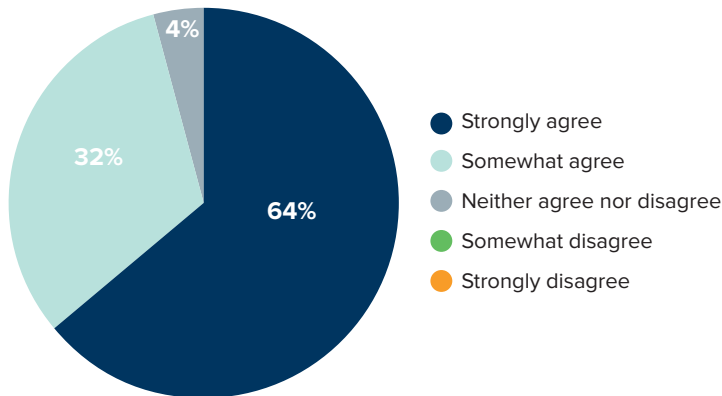
While productivity has mostly stayed the course or even increased in flexible working environments, CHROs recognize that new leadership abilities will be required to maintain the pace. As an APAC-based CHRO put it, “Increased flexibility on how and where work gets done places a premium on leaders who can connect and inspire in this newly complex working environment.”

# Flexibility is here, but trust lags behind

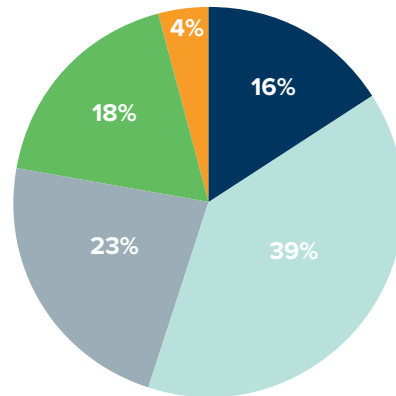
Nearly all CHROs surveyed believe their organizations will continue to offer more remote location positions over the next two to three years, suggesting that flexible working remains on the agendas of even the CHROs who are returning/have returned most of their workers to offices.

A flexible working arrangement implies a certain level of autonomy for the individual working from home. Leary of burnout and cognizant of the increased family demands of remote working, HR leaders invested heavily in wellness and wellbeing programs in 2020. While frontline workers also benefited from such programs, they have not been as empowered as their remote-working colleagues.

**I believe we will support more remote location positions over the next two to three years:**



**During the pandemic, our frontline workers have been given more autonomy in deciding how they perform their jobs:**

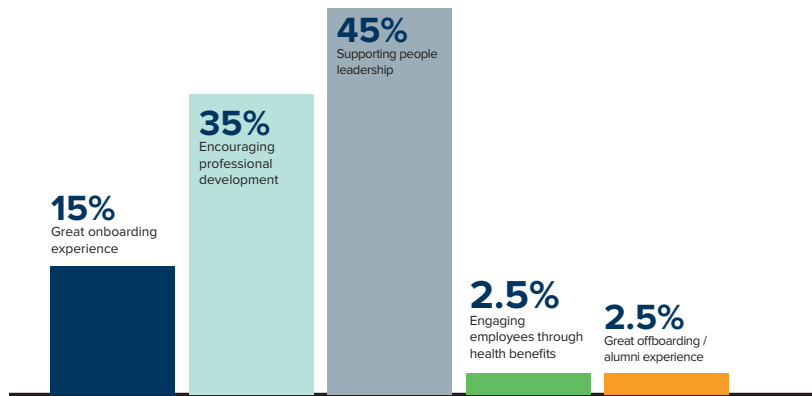


According to a North America-based CHRO, “Flexible and remote working has a direct correlation to increased trust that must extend throughout the entire organization.”

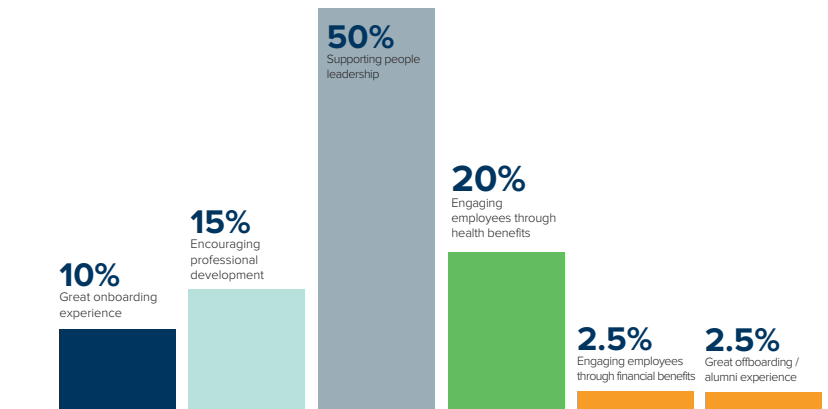
## Shifting HR priorities to meet workplace needs

Several questions in the survey asked Back2Better CHROs to compare how they have re-prioritized HR resources since the pandemic began. “Supportive People Leadership” remains the most important element of the employee journey, even as its definition has morphed because of the demands of flexible working and worksite safety.

**Think about your organization’s employee journey in the six discrete categories below. Thinking about 2019, which was of the highest level of importance to your organization?**



**Think about your organization’s employee journey in the six discrete categories below. Thinking about the present (early 2021), which is of the highest level of importance to your organization?**



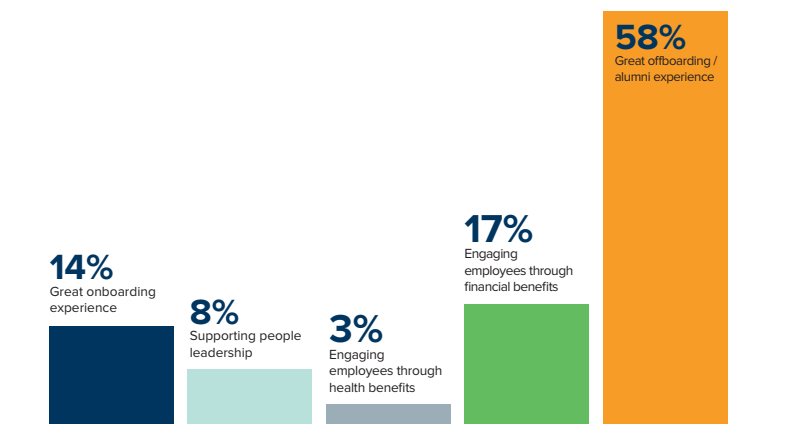
As the graphs above indicate, “engaging employees through health benefits” has transformed from an afterthought into a key workplace priority. In the opening graph in this section, 1 in 10 responding CHROs cited a “new focus on health & wellbeing” as the single longest-lasting impact of the pandemic on the ways of working within their organizations. “The enhanced focus on wellness, mental health and the willingness of leaders to discuss these topics openly and from a place of vulnerability has had a tremendous impact,” said a North American CHRO. “This is something we will carry forward.”

# Offboarding remains a challenge and lacks resources

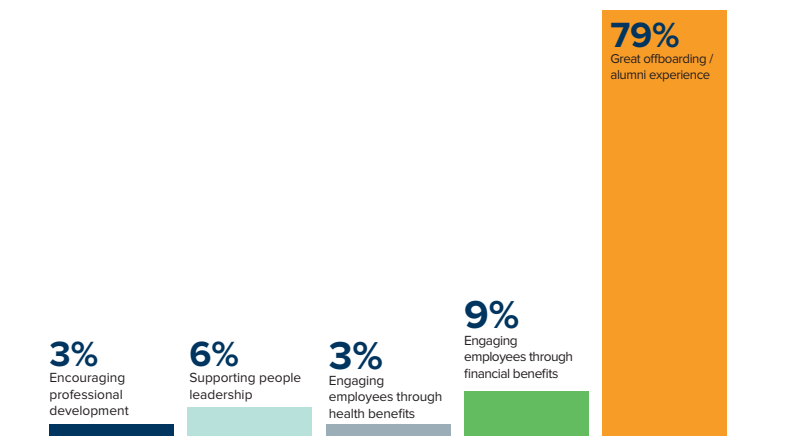
Large company CHROs have little confidence in their organizations' ability to effectively offboard employees and nurture alumni networks. The ROI for alumni groups remain challenging to assess and in the competition for resources it is difficult to prioritize programs whose benefits are best measured years into the future.

However, the acceleration of flexible working trends, internal skills marketplaces, shared workers and non-traditional employer/employee relationships suggest that offboarding programs and alumni networks will gain in importance and relevancy in the coming years.

**Consider how effectively your organization delivers on these discrete employee journey categories below. Which is the most difficult for your organization to execute?**



**For the categories of the employee journey below, which is the most difficult to measure ROI?**



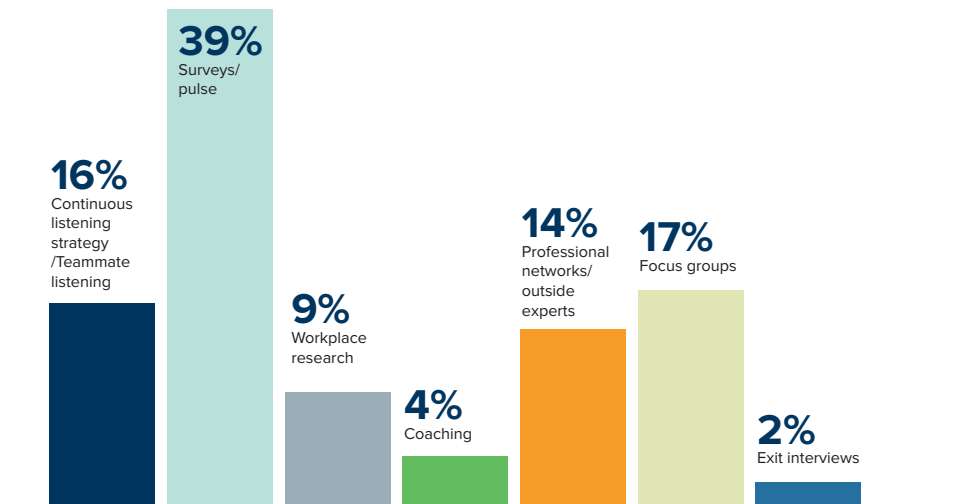
## SECTION 5

# Worker of the Future

Pulse surveys and productivity analysis shows that the majority of workers in large complex global organizations navigated the stressors of the pandemic better than could be expected. Slightly more than half of surveyed CHROs report that their “key employee engagement metric improved significantly in 2020.” Four in 10 noted no significant changes, and just 1 in 10 reported that engagement had plummeted during the pandemic.

Some 85% of CHROs agree that their organization is “doing a good job of responding to employees’ complex and varied individual needs and preferences.” They are achieving this most commonly through pulses and other surveys, but companies are broadening their employee listening capabilities to meet future needs.

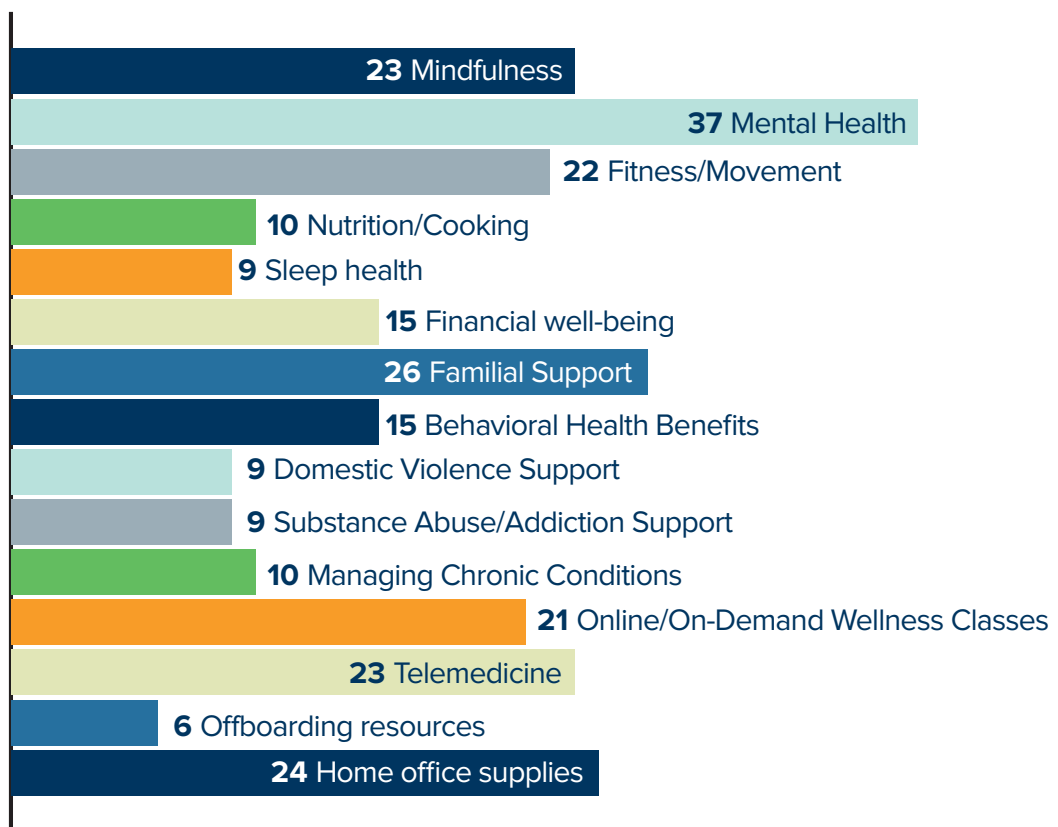
**Briefly describe the approaches you are taking to understand current and future employee needs:**



# Improvements made in wellbeing, but more are needed

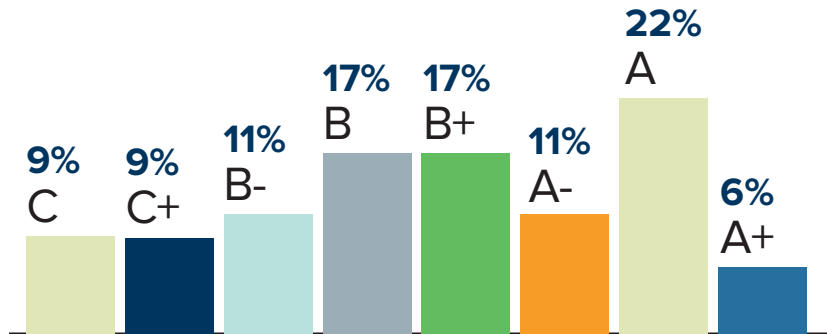
With workers bifurcated (i.e. essential v. non-essential; on-site v. remote), worried about their health and anxious about keeping their jobs, large company CHROs made substantial investments in wellness and wellbeing programs in 2020. Mental health received the most attention.

## Since the onset of the pandemic, my organization has invested additional financial and people resources in:

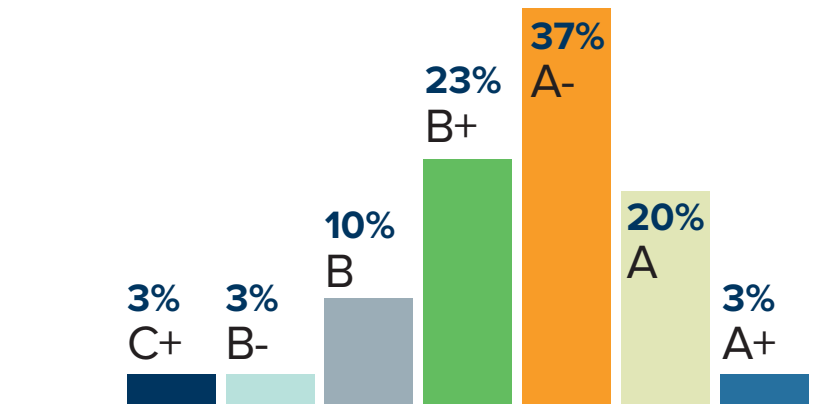


In one of the more surprising findings from the Back2Better survey, fewer CHROs grade their current wellness and wellbeing offerings as an “A+” or an “A” than they did prior to the pandemic. It is likely that the heightened importance of wellness and wellbeing offerings have CHROs more closely scrutinizing their companies’ benefits. Others remain unconvinced that their organizations are effectively communicating new and increased benefits. Slightly less than half of CHROs agreed that “the communications my organization sends to employees about health and wellness benefits are affecting measurable health outcomes.”

**Before the pandemic, I would grade my company's wellness and wellbeing offerings to be:**



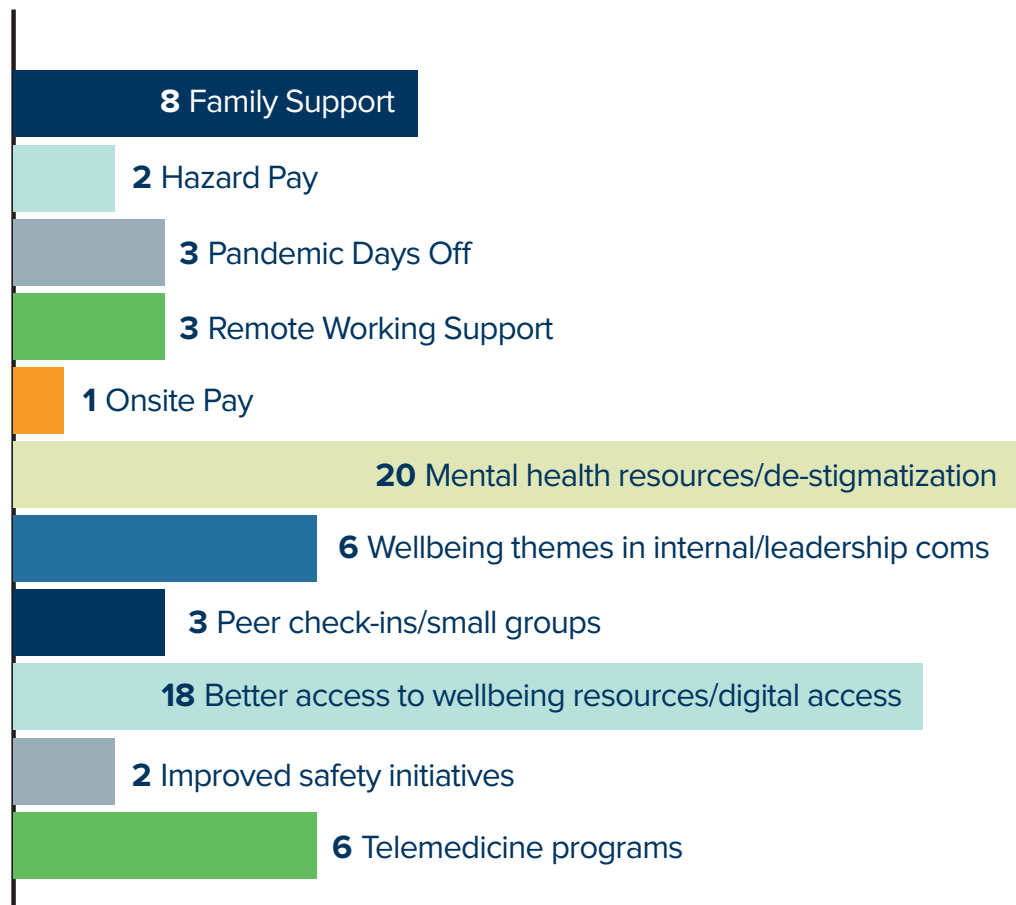
**As of today (early 2021), I would grade my company's wellness and wellbeing offerings to be:**



CHROs do, however, cite investments in mental health and improvements in access to resources as the most impactful. “We’ve completely changed our cultural attitude on the topic of wellbeing, especially in removing the stigma around mental health,” explained a North America-based CHRO. “We’ve fully integrated wellbeing themes and messages into our corporate internal communications.”

As a Europe-based CHRO noted, “We’ve been explicit in messaging that ‘it’s ok to not be ok’ and we’ve been very proactive in destigmatizing mental health challenges.”

**The most impactful change my organization has made to our employee wellness and wellbeing offerings since the onset of the pandemic is:**



“We changed our cultural attitude on the topic of wellbeing, especially in terms of removing stigma around mental health. The integration of wellbeing themes into corporate internal communications has also had a major impact.”

– North American-based CHRO



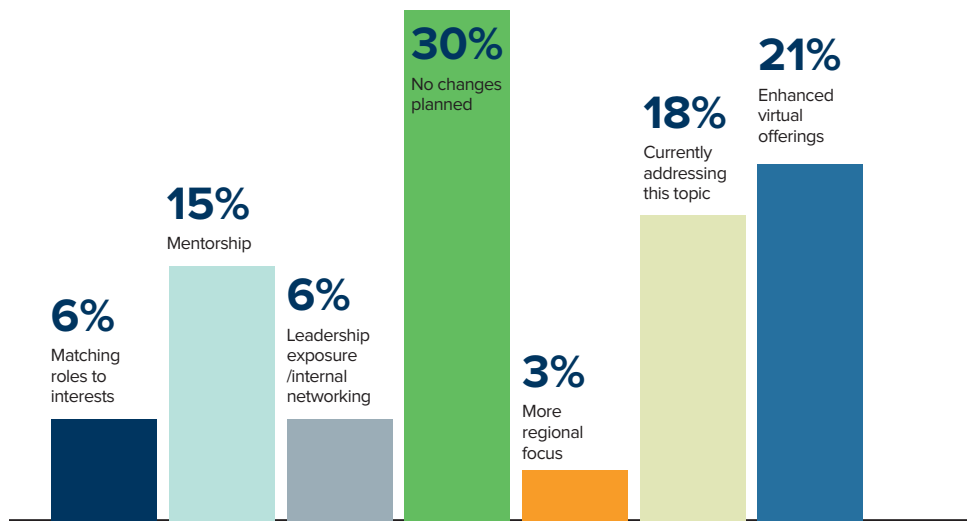
# Hiring and developing the workers of tomorrow

Global pandemic mitigation efforts completely disrupted companies' graduate programs, internships and early-career hires. As reported in the [September 2020 Back2Better White Paper](#), such programs remain among the most difficult to effectively replicate in a virtual environment. Some companies canceled internships and graduate programs outright. Others delayed them.

As offices re-open in some regions, CHROs are eager to get critical early-career programs back on track. One in 5 reported that they are still addressing how to “ensure new entrants are gaining valuable experiences” and another 20% said they are doubling down on the virtual offerings they established last year.

As an APAC-based CHRO explained, “We are trying to do the same things we did in the past, which was quite robust. But we’re now doing it mostly digitally, which unfortunately is negatively impacting effectiveness.”

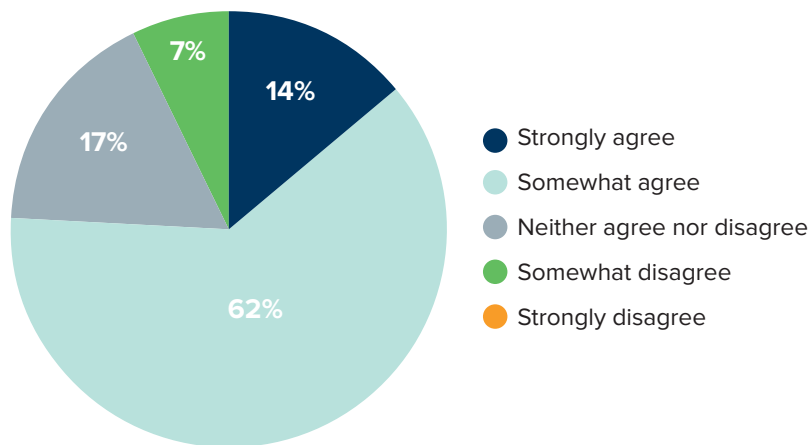
## What changes are you considering to your graduate programs to ensure new entrants are gaining valuable experiences and building connections/networks?



Some companies are prioritizing new hires in office re-opening plans. “We are encouraging new hires to meet in the office face-to-face with their mentors, if at all possible,” said a Europe-based CHRO. Where not possible, some companies are turning to creative alternatives. Another Europe-based CHRO reported her company had developed a new virtual reality headset-based “cultural immersion” program for interns and early-career hires.

Learning and development programs are also difficult to execute virtually at peak effectiveness. CHROs mostly agree that “their employees believe that they have clear opportunities for professional growth,” but only 15% “strongly agreed” that to be the case.

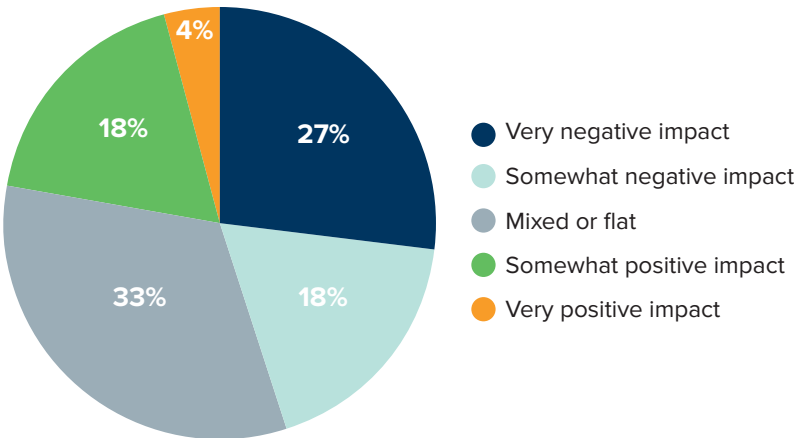
**If I pulse-surveyed my workforce today, the majority of our employees would say that they have clear opportunities for professional growth within our organization:**



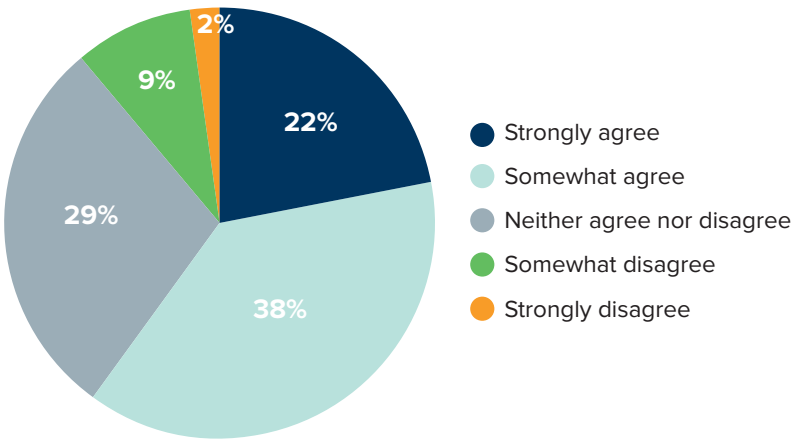
# APPENDIX: FULL SURVEY RESULTS

## The Pandemic & the Economy

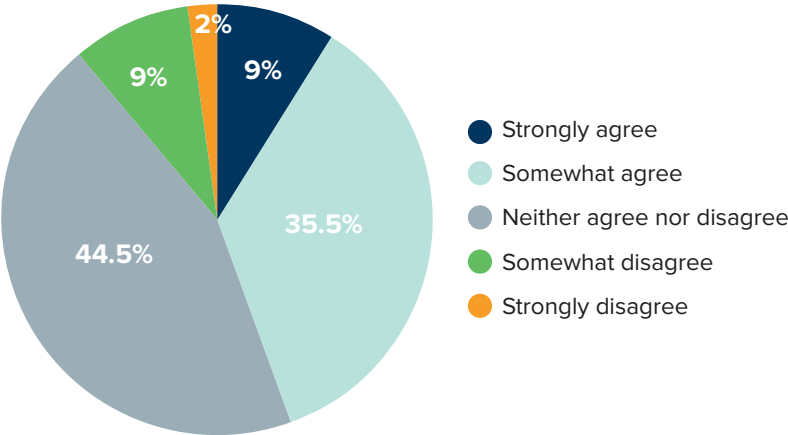
How has COVID-19 impacted your organization's business results?



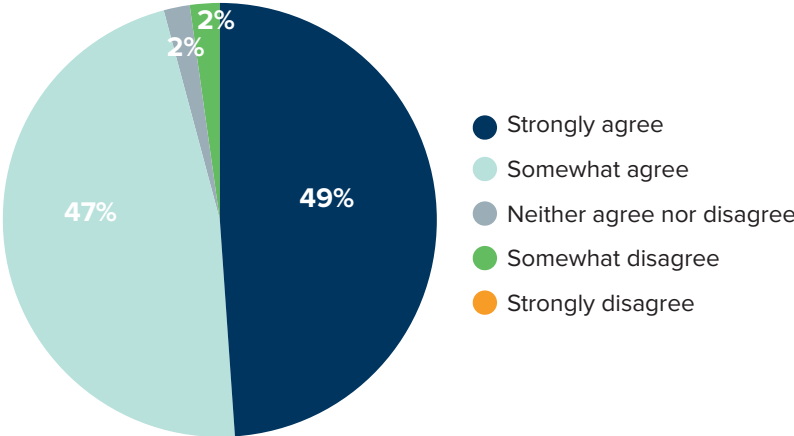
Relationships within our industry have become more collaborative as a result of the pandemic:



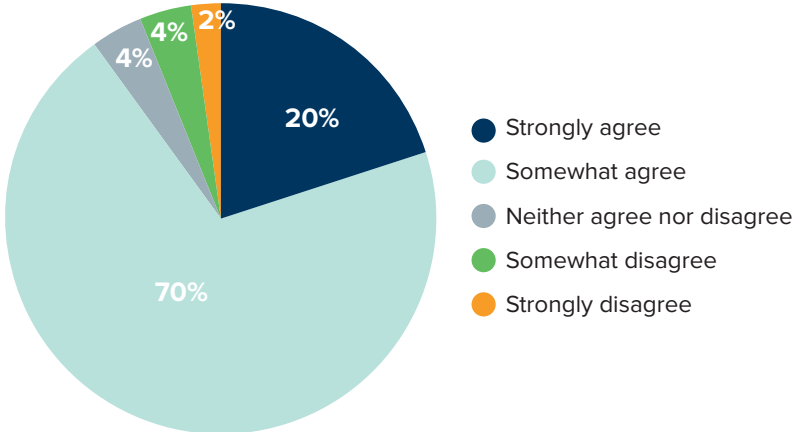
**Relationships with governments and regulators have improved as a result of the pandemic:**



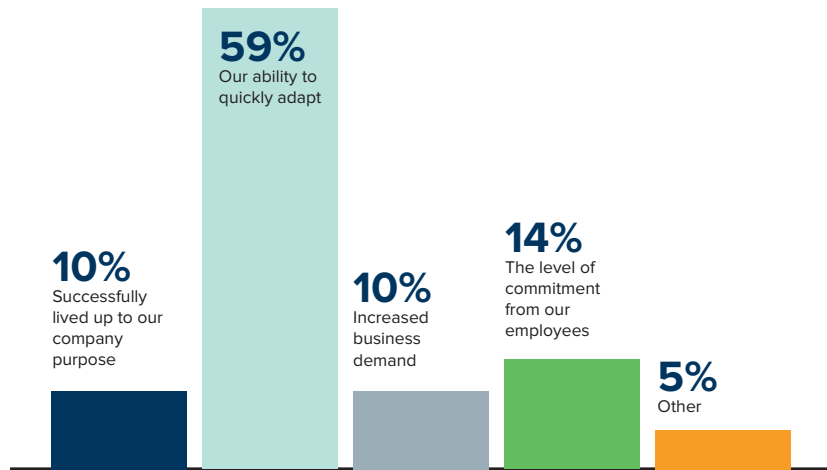
**We are well-positioned to grow in a post-pandemic recovery:**



**The new reality of working through a pandemic has significantly impacted our operating model:**



**What has surprised you most about your organization’s response to the pandemic from an economic/financial perspective?**

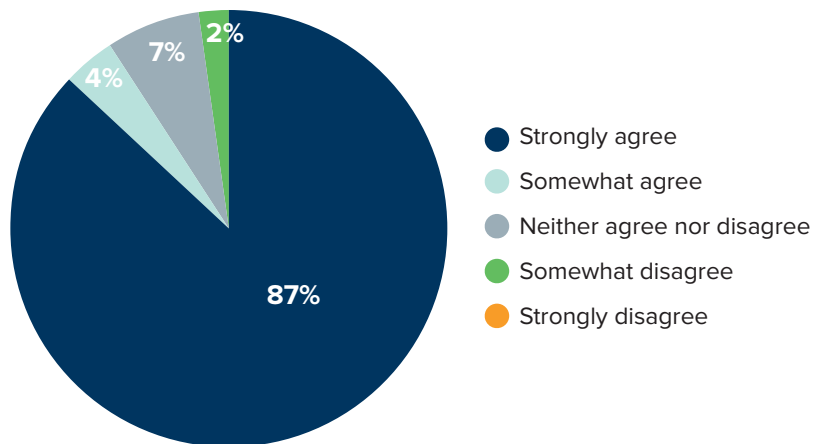


**“We made a decision to prioritize taking care of our people and retaining jobs over financial results. This is consistent with our values and we believe this is the best long-term decision.”**

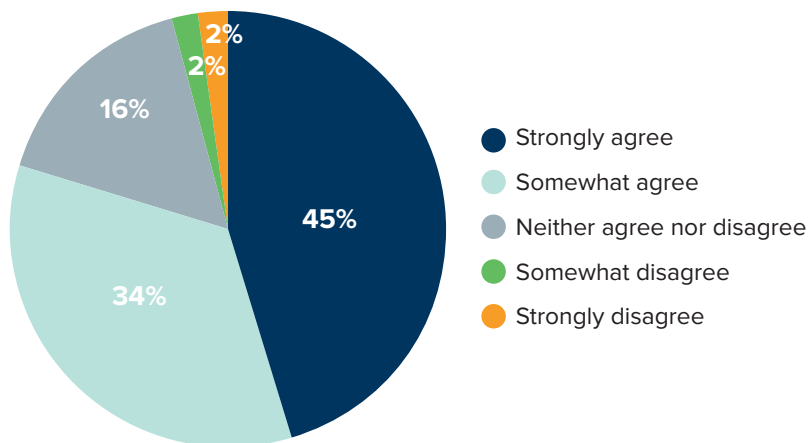
– North American Global 1000 CHRO

# The Organization of the Future

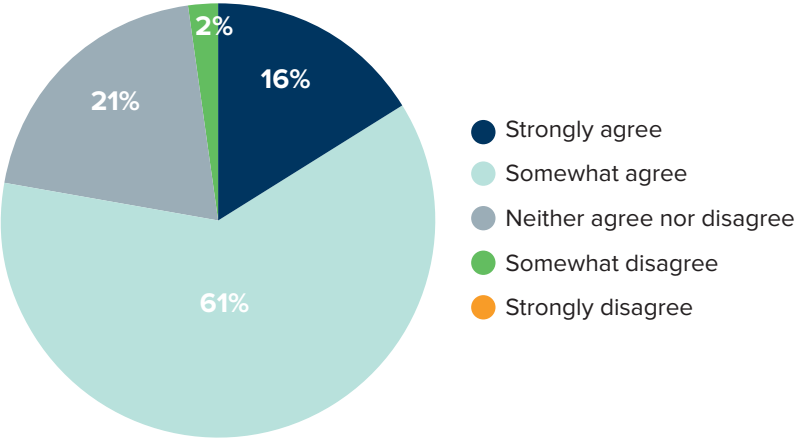
**Our company purpose is an asset that has been valuable during the pandemic:**



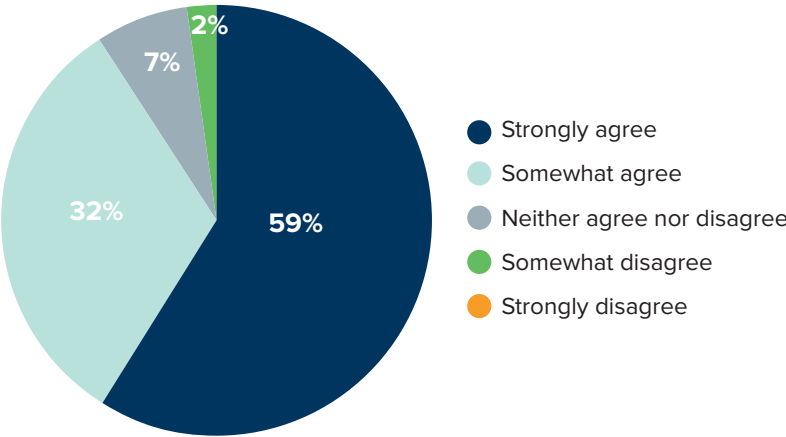
**This year has marked a turning point in our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion:**



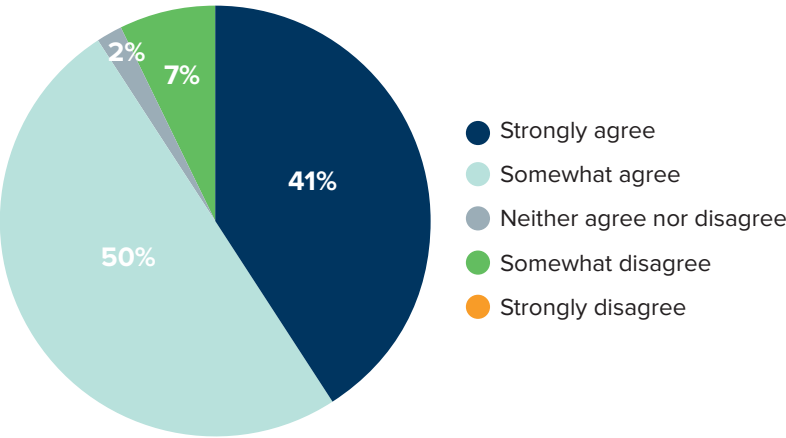
**I have a clear understanding of what “the new normal” looks like in my company:**



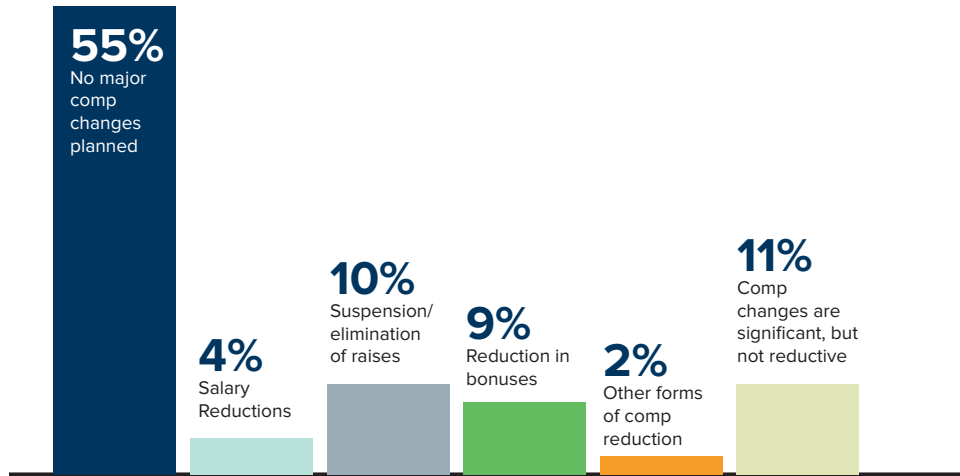
**During the pandemic, we have fully embraced agility and flexibility:**



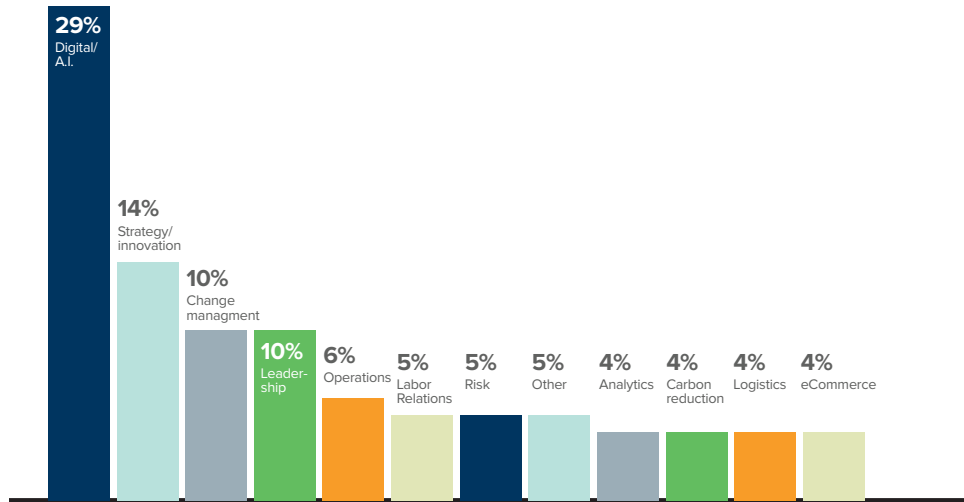
**During the pandemic, we have accelerated pre-existing change programs:**



The global pandemic is disrupting business worldwide and has broad implications for rewards programs. Is your company considering making significant changes to your executive compensation programs in 2021?



Which skills do you believe will be in highest demand in your industry over the next 24 to 36 months?

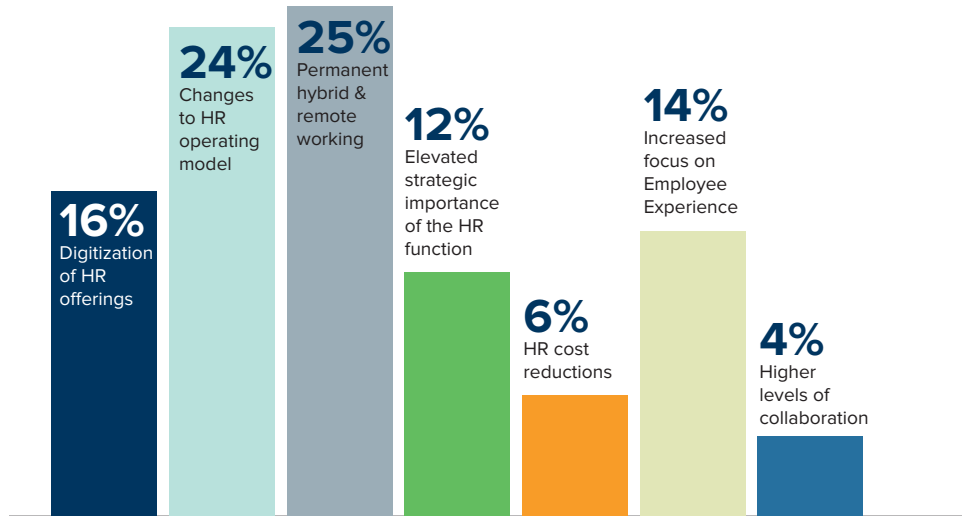


“Our workforce planning analysis suggests that digital skills will continue to be in highest demand within our business and this is a trend we believe will be reflected in the industry. This trend pre-dates Covid-19 but was accelerated by it.”

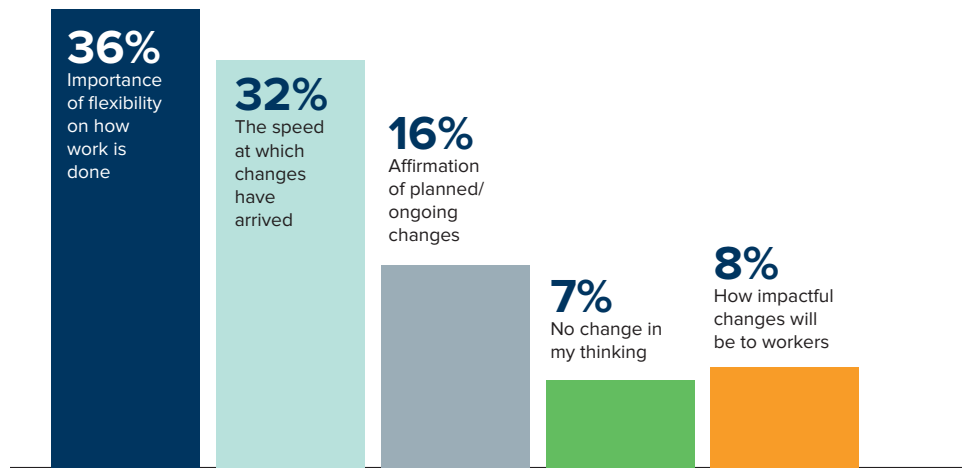
– European Global 1000 CHRO



**What do you consider the most significant permanent change to your organization’s HR function due to the pandemic?**



**How has the pandemic changed the way you think about the future of work?**

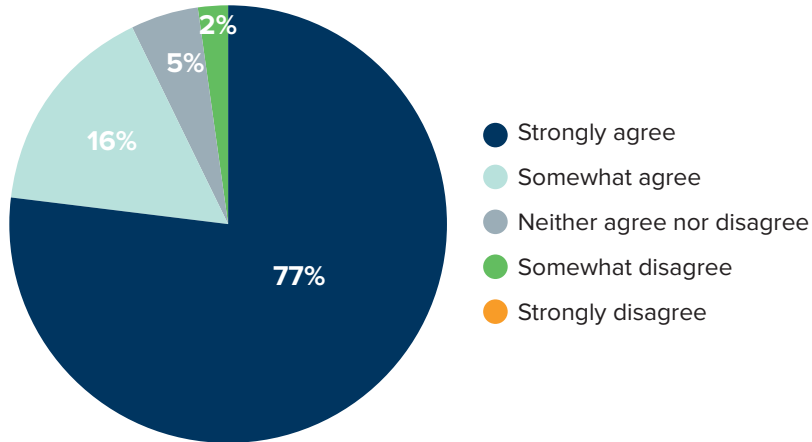


“The pandemic has accelerated thinking which we had embarked upon before it began, particularly as it relates to reimagining our workforce to be location- agnostic, outcome-measured and significantly more flexible in the ways in which individuals engage with us as an employer. Covid-19 has demonstrated that substantially more flexible ways of working are not only possible but desirable.”

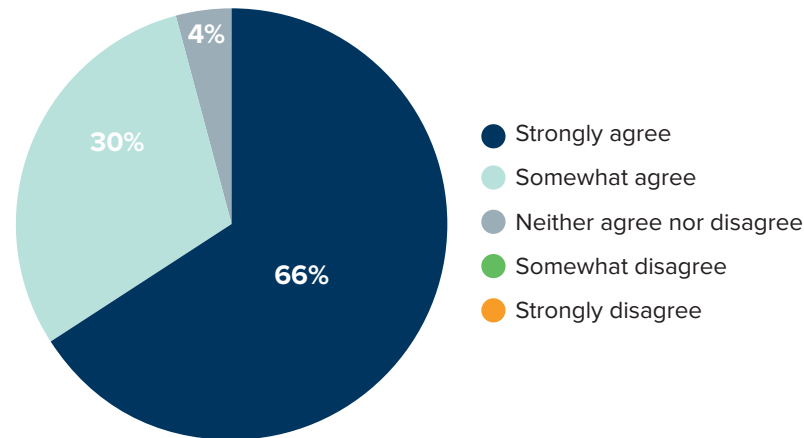
– North American Global 1000 CHRO

# Leadership of the Future

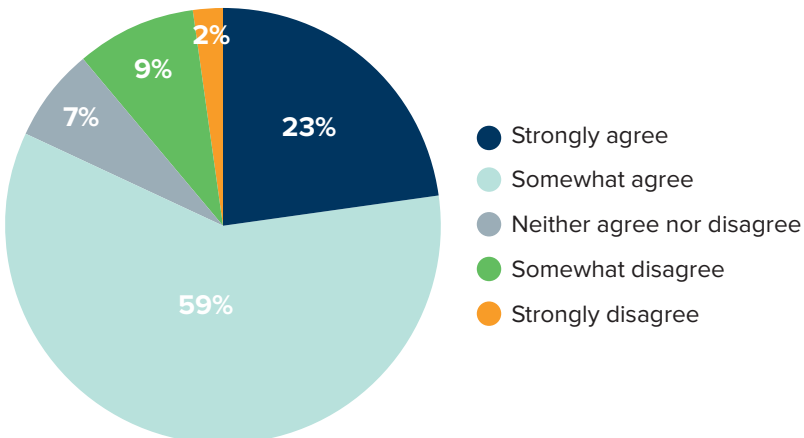
**Our senior leaders have effectively modeled the company's purpose and culture during the pandemic:**



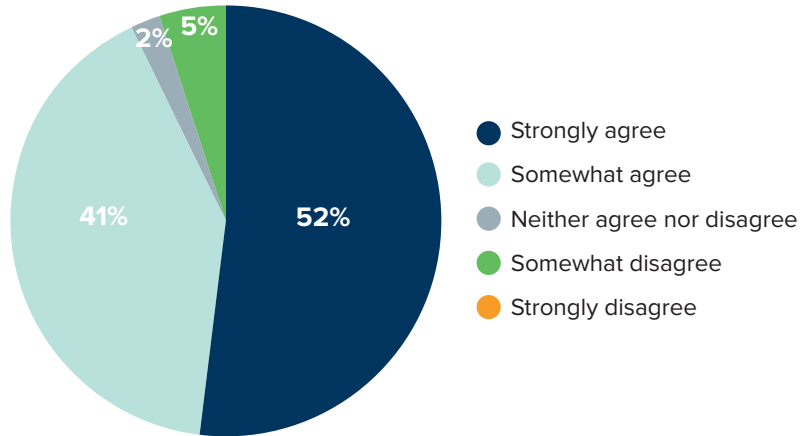
**Our senior leaders are communicating with clarity and stability in the face of uncertainty:**



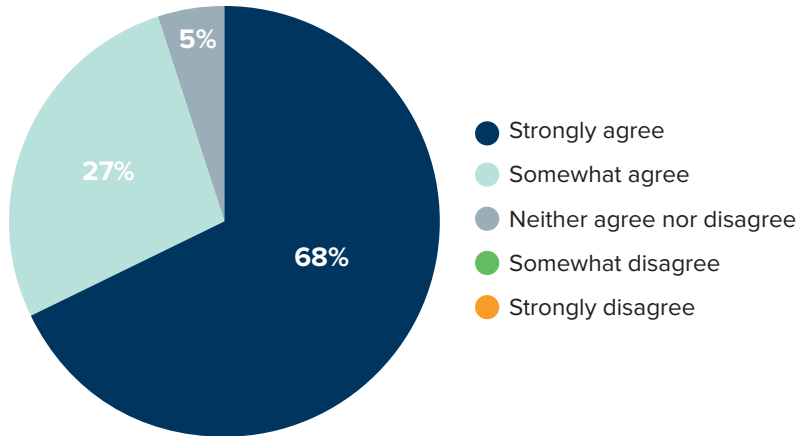
**We have the leadership capabilities we need to deal with the new realities:**



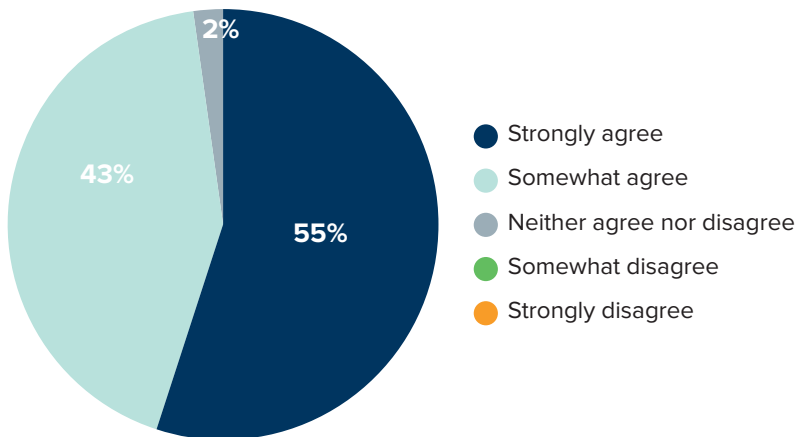
**If I pulse-surveyed my workforce today, the majority of our employees would say our company's leaders are committed to their long-term financial success:**



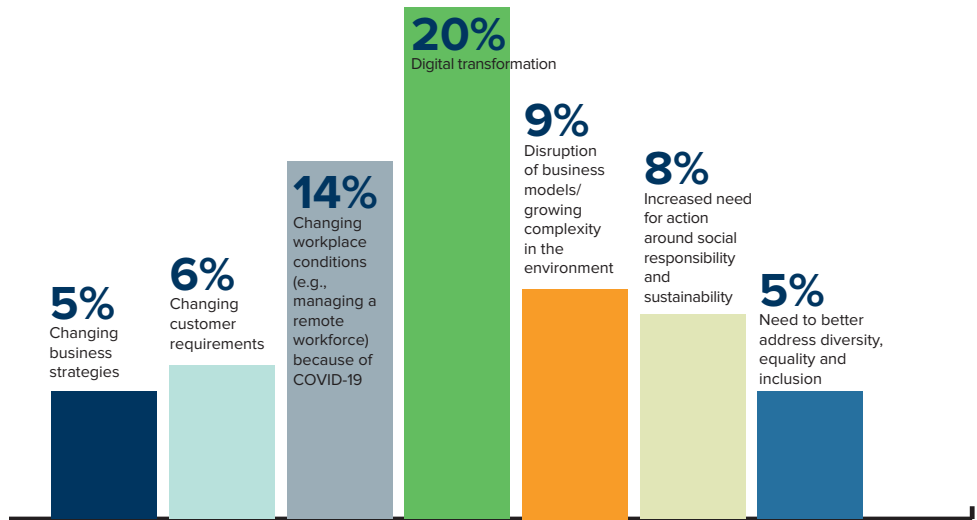
**If I pulse-surveyed my workforce today, the majority of our employees would say our leaders are committed to supporting their health and wellness:**



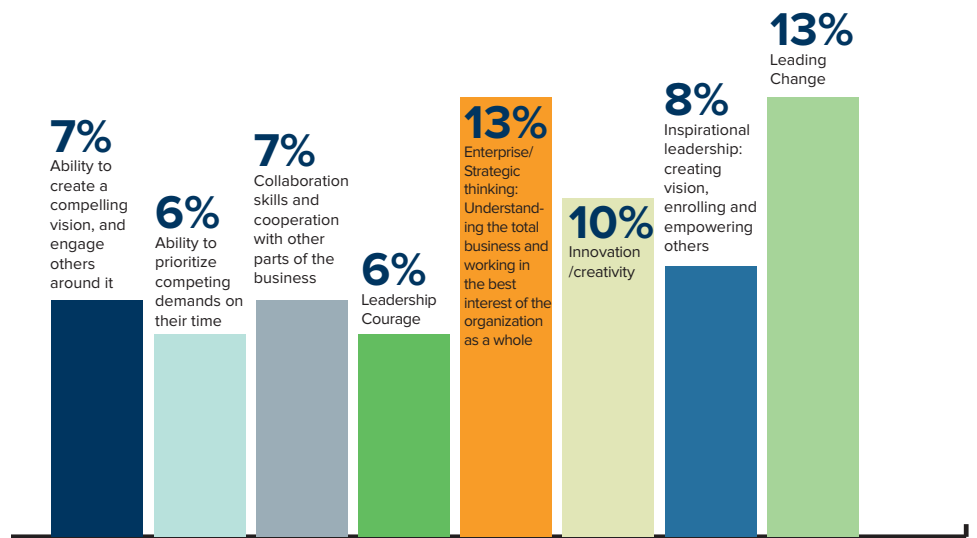
**If I pulse-surveyed my workforce today, the majority of our employees would say that they feel supported and valued by their manager or supervisor:**



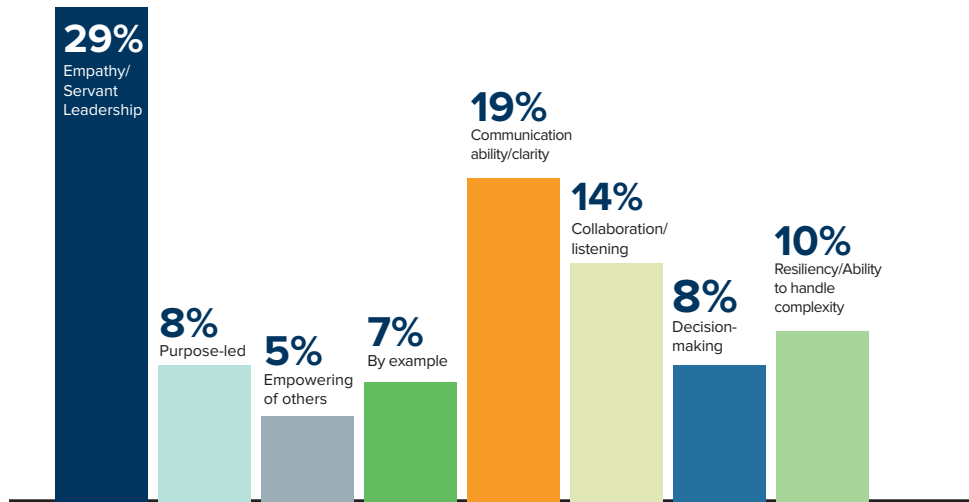
**Which one to three factors below do you anticipate will most impact your executive development efforts over the next 2-3 years?**



**As you examine your organization’s high potential pool and your succession plans for executive roles in the next three to five years, what capabilities, skills, knowledge, attitudes, competencies, etc. are most lacking?**



**How would you describe the most effective form of leadership in your organization during the pandemic?**

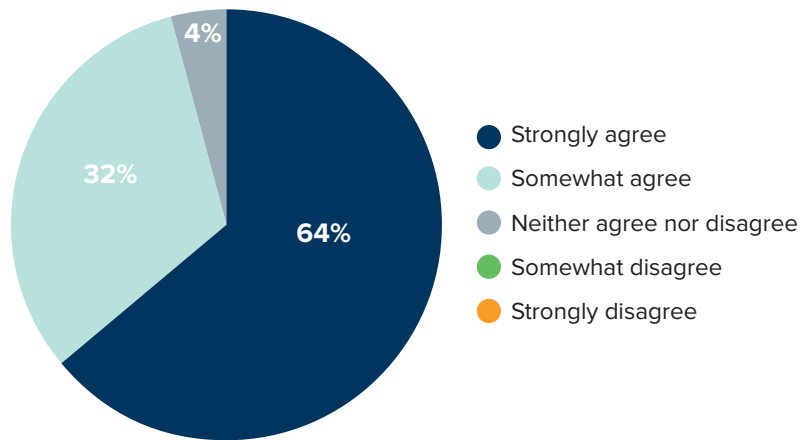


“Empathetic Leadership has been the key; showing care and respect, balancing personal life and work, clarifying priorities, driving focus and resilience, and focusing on thankfulness and recognition.”

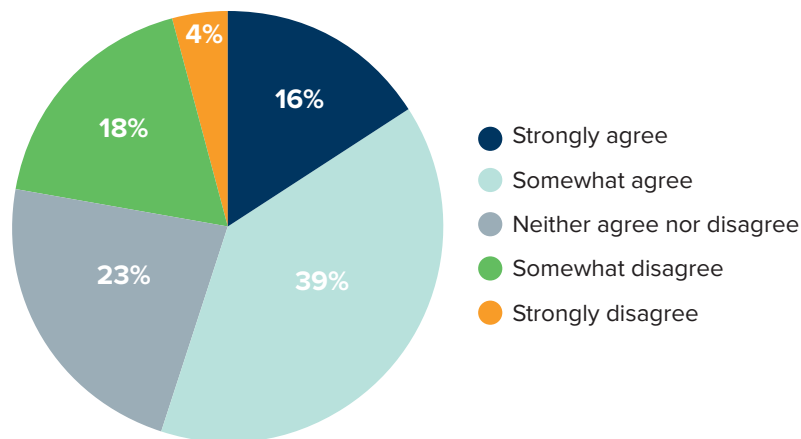
– *North America-based CHRO*

# Work & Workplace of the Future

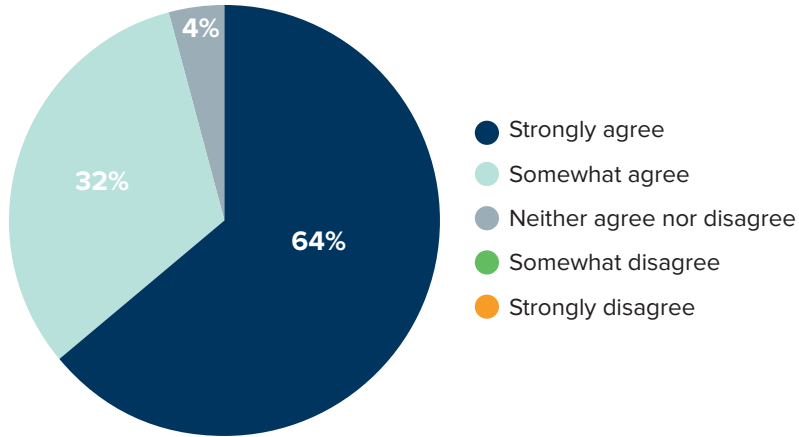
**I believe we will support more remote location positions over the next two to three years:**



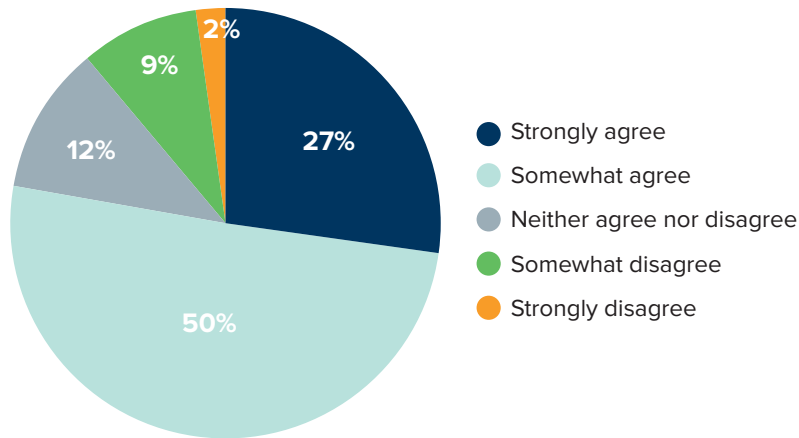
**During the pandemic, our frontline workers have been given more autonomy in deciding how they perform their jobs:**



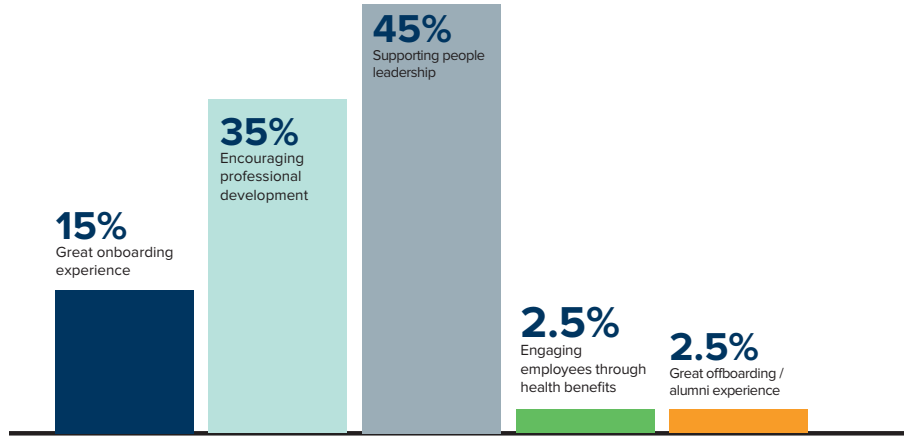
**Our training and development programs have changed during the pandemic and many of those changes will be continued once offices are fully re-opened:**



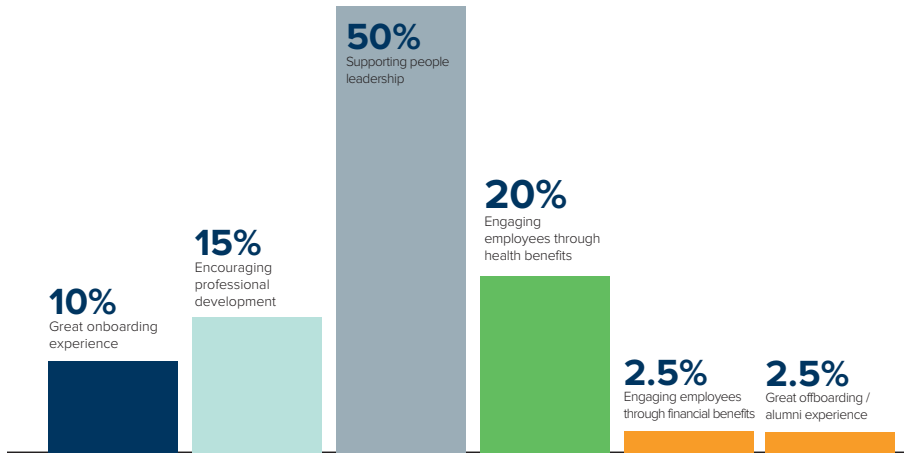
**We have a good method for determining that we have the right benefits in place to attract and retain top talent:**



Think about your organization's employee journey in the six discrete categories below. Thinking about 2019, which was of the highest level of importance to your organization?

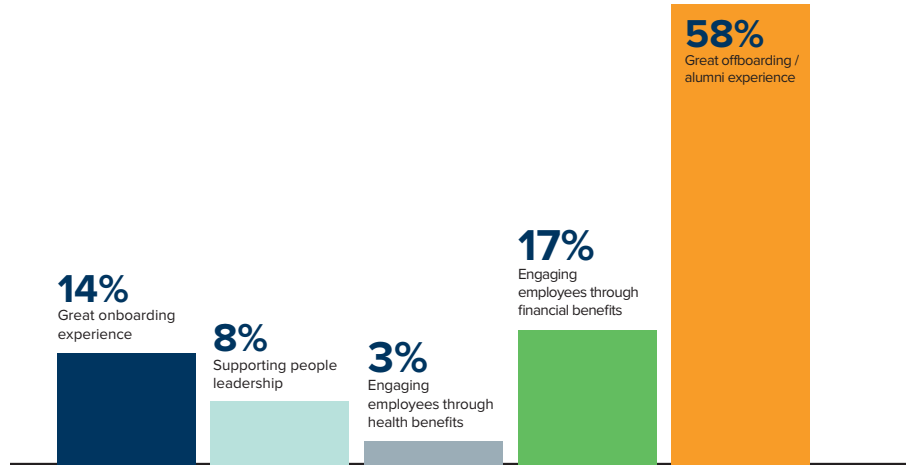


Think about your organization's employee journey in the six discrete categories below. Thinking about the present (early 2021), which is of the highest level of importance to your organization?

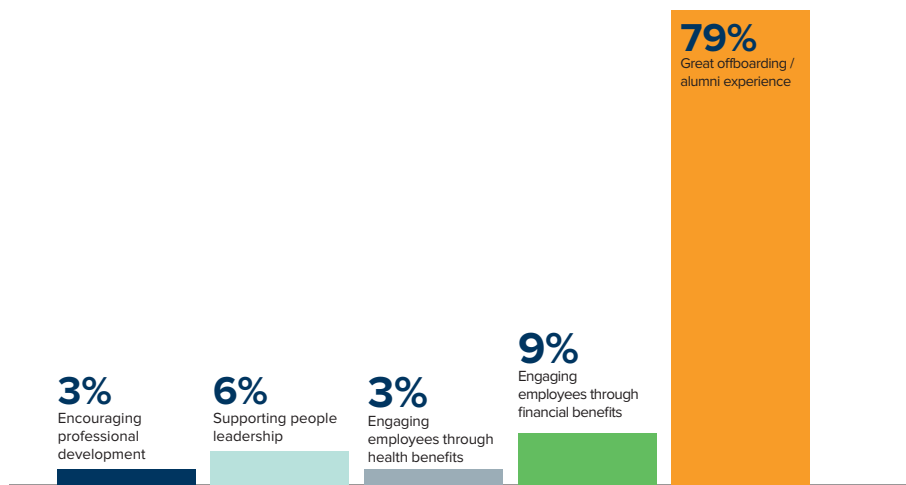




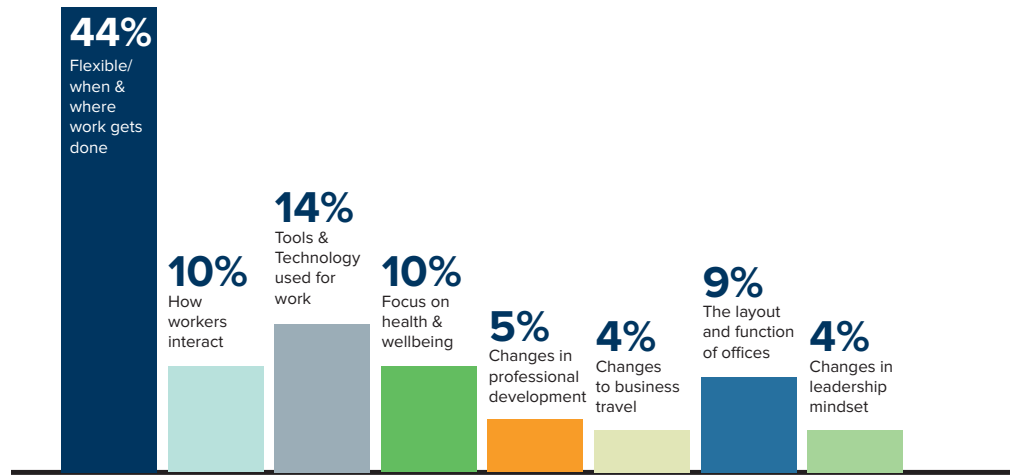
Now consider how effectively your organization delivers on these discrete employee journey categories below. Which is the most difficult for your organization to execute?



For the six discreet categories of the employee journey below, which is the most difficult to measure ROI?

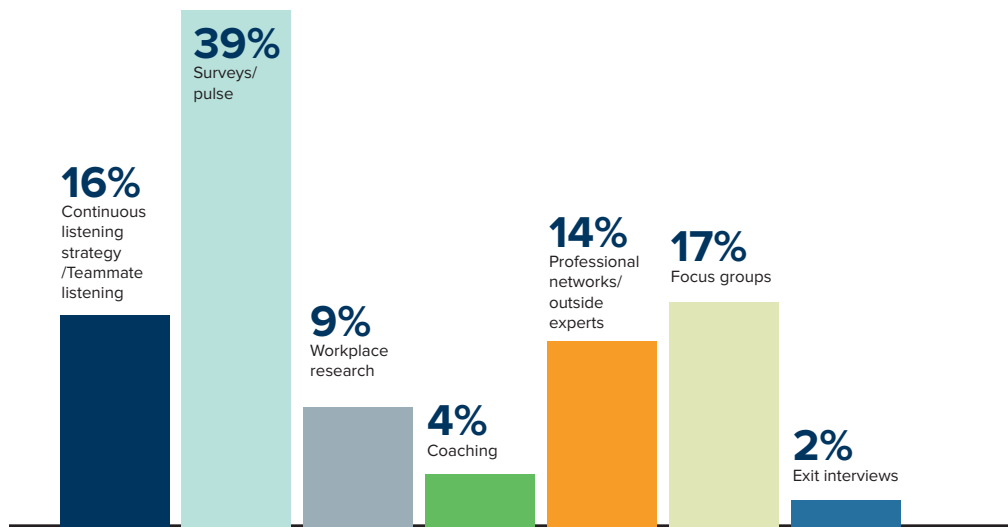


**What do you believe will be the longest lasting impact of the pandemic on the ways of working in your organization?**

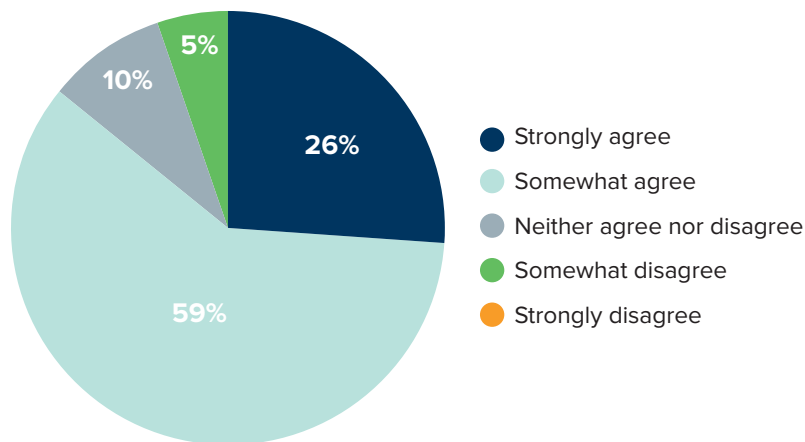


# Worker of the Future

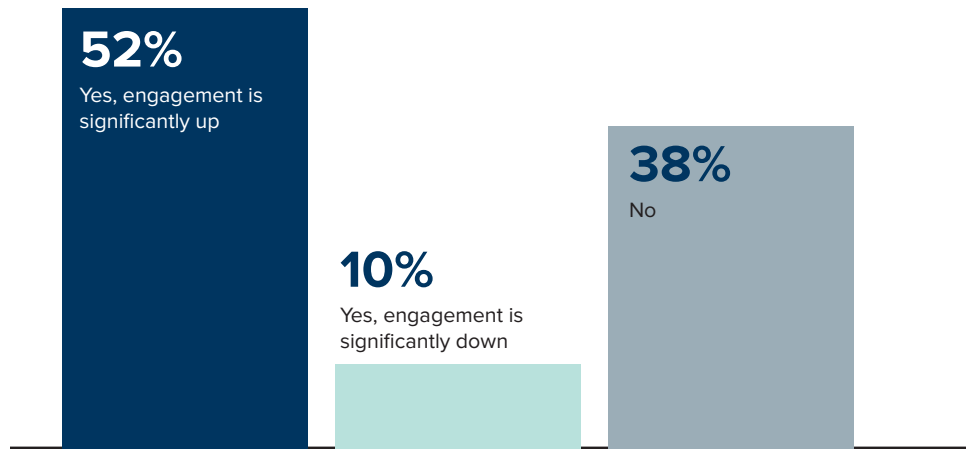
Briefly describe the approaches are you taking to understanding current and future employee needs?



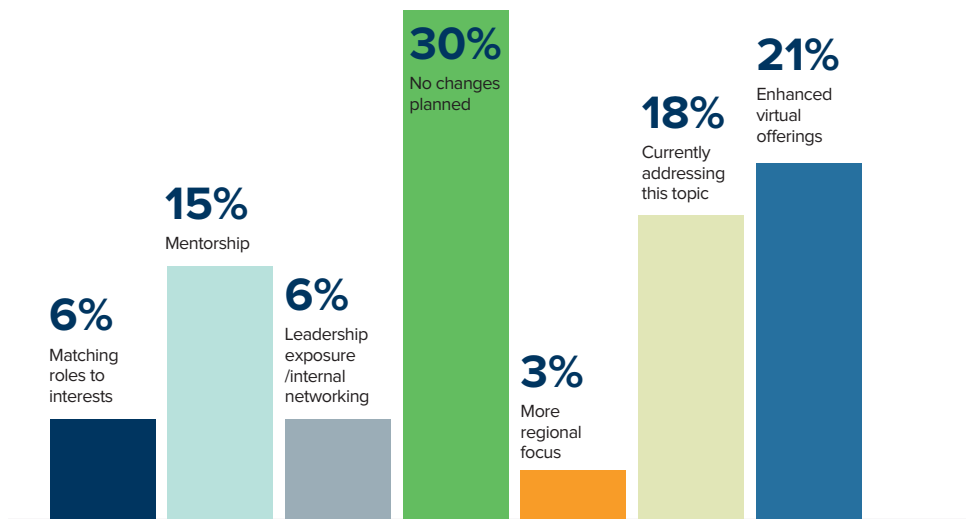
My organization is doing a good job of responding to employees' complex and varied individual needs and preferences:



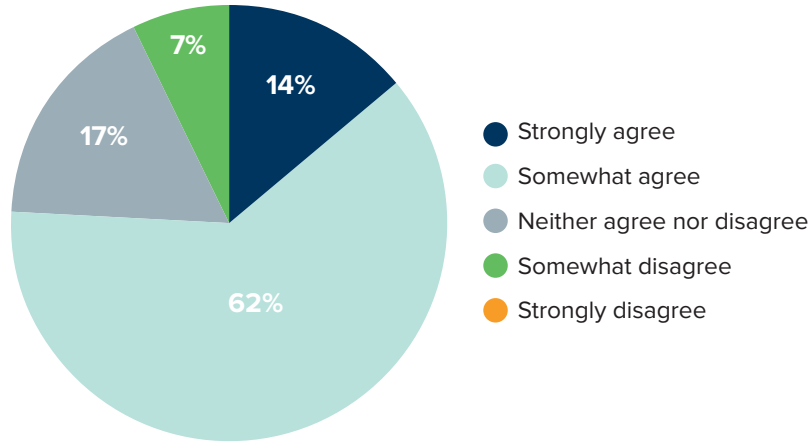
**Looking at your organization as a whole, have you seen significant changes to your key employee engagement metric in 2020?**



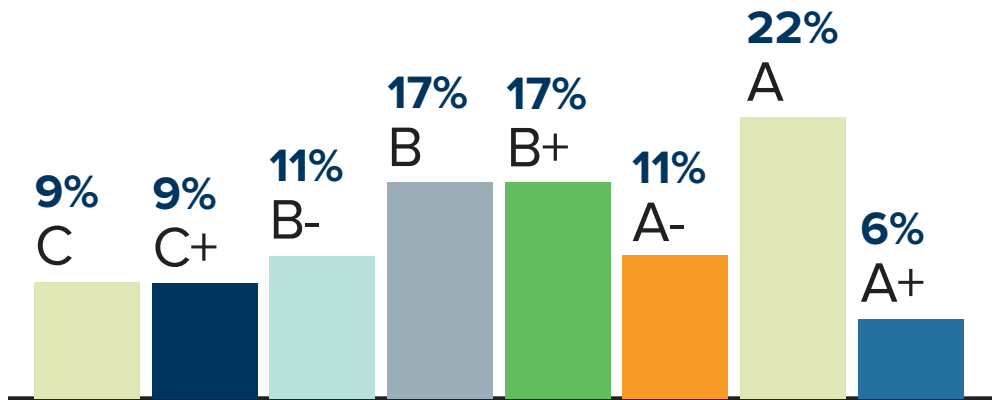
**What changes are you considering to your graduate programs to ensure new entrants are gaining valuable experiences and building connections/networks?**



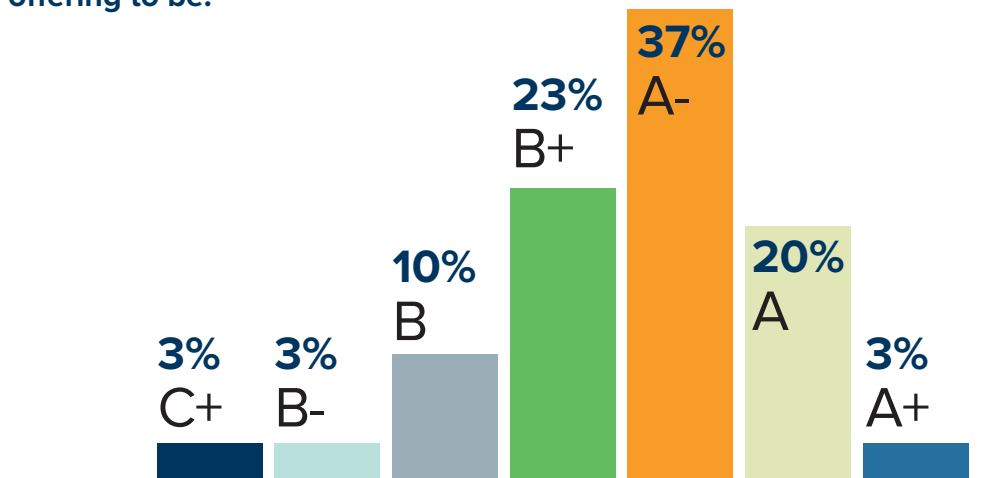
If I pulse-surveyed my workforce today, the majority of our employees would say that they have clear opportunities for professional growth within our organization:



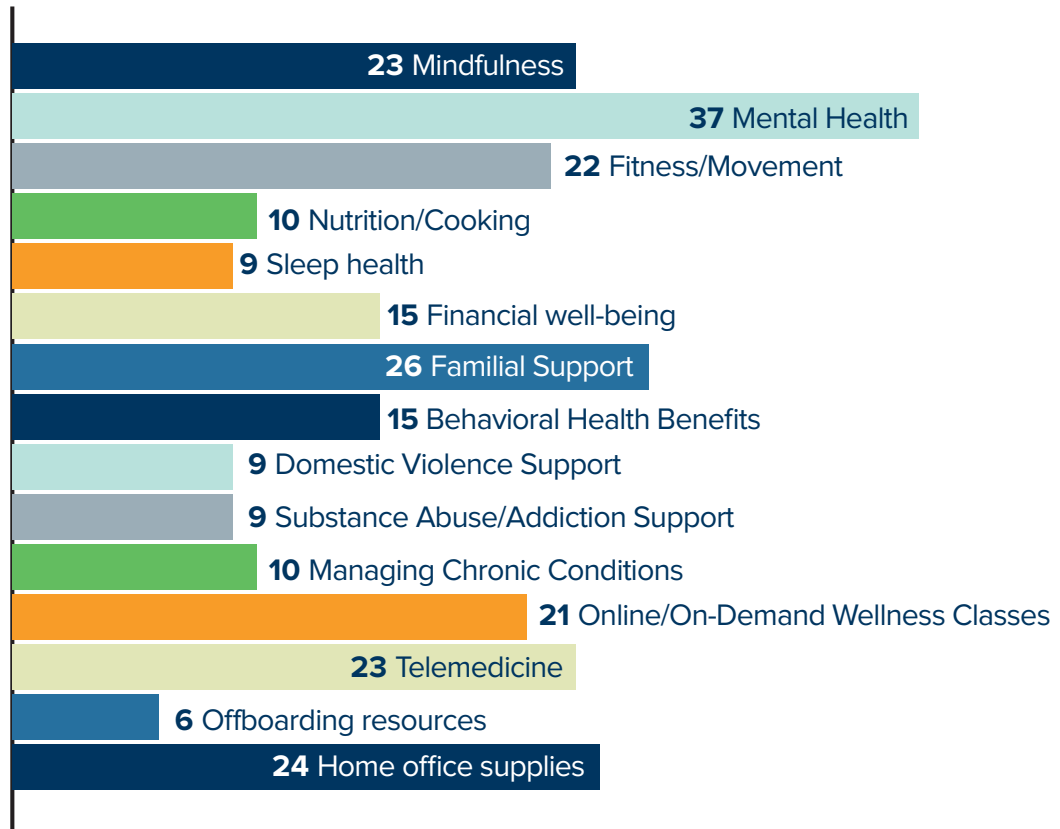
Before the pandemic, I would grade my company's wellness and wellbeing offerings to be:



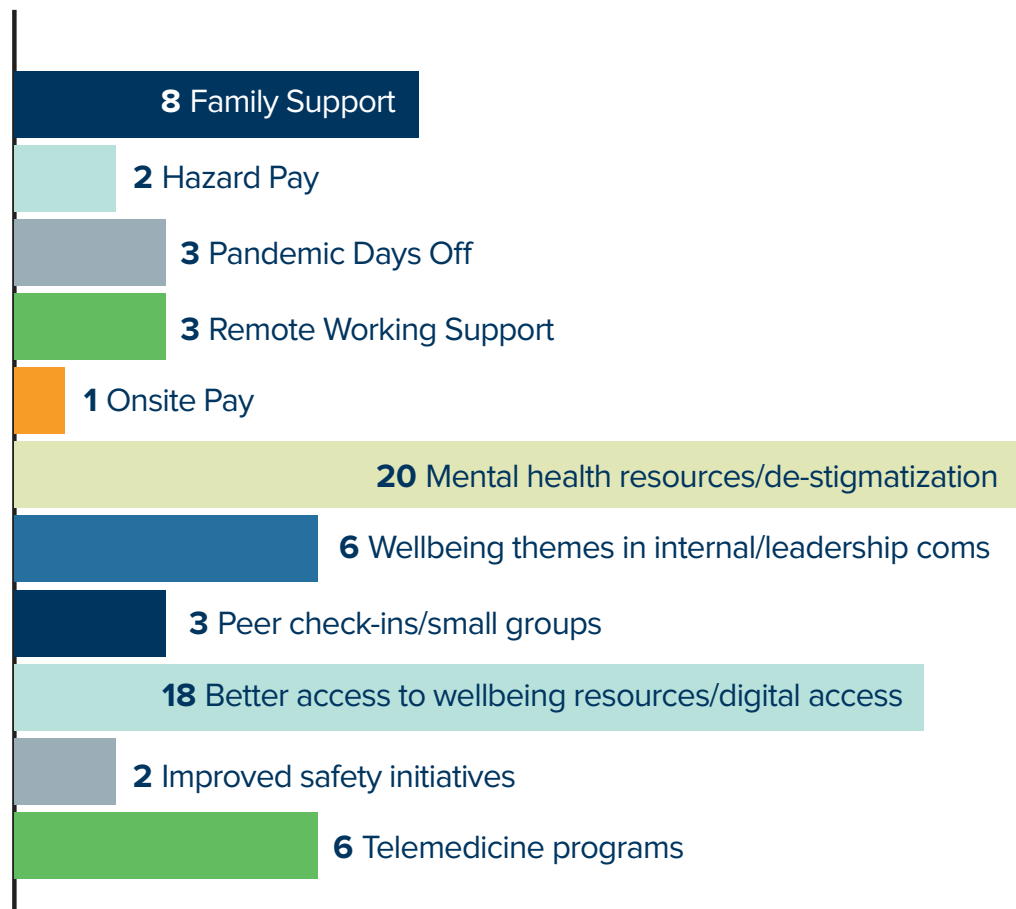
As of today, I would grade my company's wellness and wellbeing offering to be:



**Since the onset of the pandemic, my organization has invested additional financial and people resources in:**



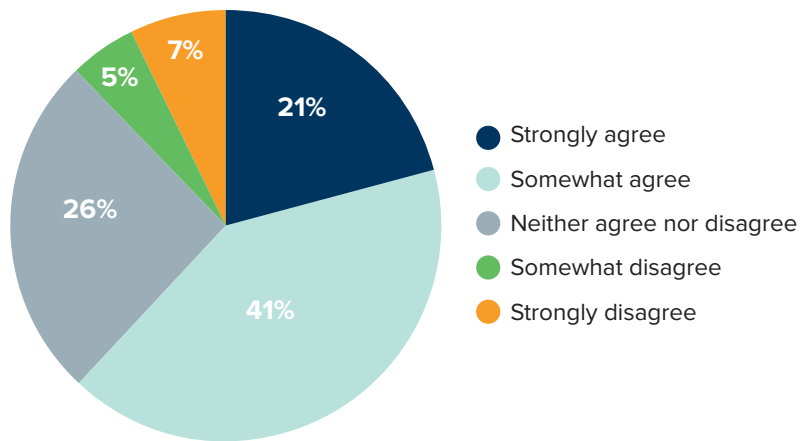
**The most impactful change my organization has made to our employee wellness and wellbeing offerings since the onset of the pandemic is:**



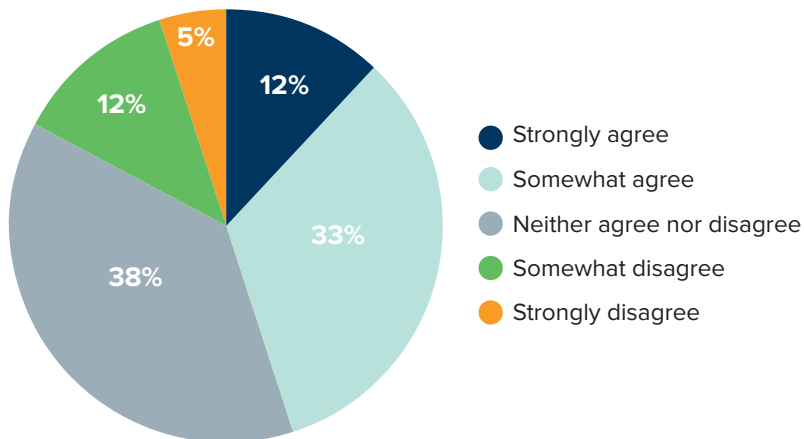
**“We changed our cultural attitude on the topic of wellbeing, especially in terms of removing stigma around mental health. The integration of wellbeing themes into corporate internal communications has also had a major impact.”**

**– North American-based CHRO**

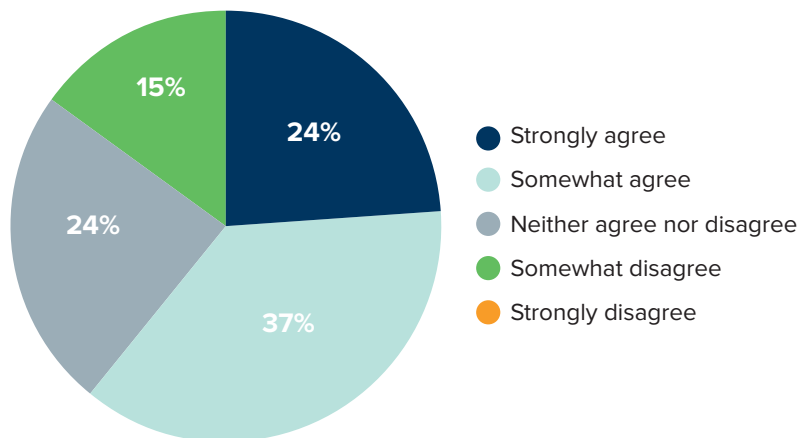
**The communications my organization sends to employees about health and wellness benefits are data driven:**



**The communications my organization sends to employees about health and wellness benefits are affecting measurable health outcomes/ROI:**

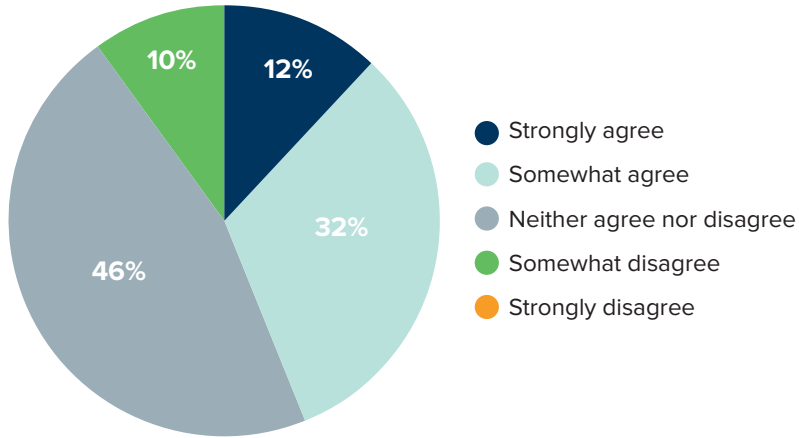


**The communications my organization sends to employees about financial benefits are data-driven:**

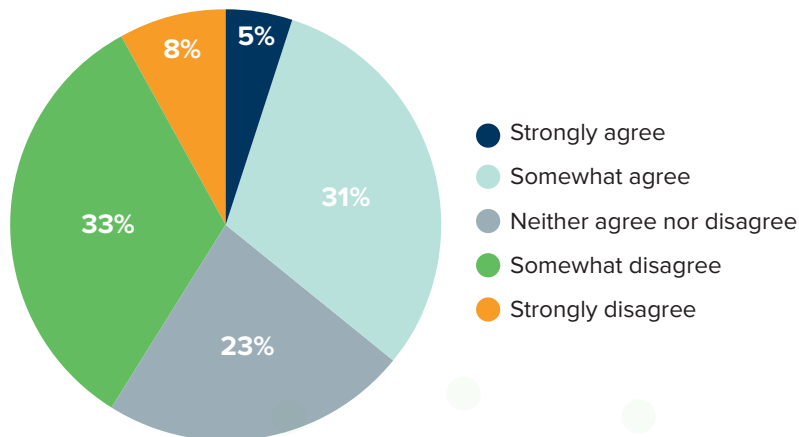




**The communications my organization sends to employees about financial benefits are affecting measurable financial change for employees:**



**The communications my organization sends to employees about benefits are micro-segmented—meaning that they are tailored and personalized to small subsets of the employee population:**



# References & Acknowledgments

Thank you to the 71 global CHROs who took the time to answer this survey and to the Steering Committee CHROs who helped author its questions.

The **2021 Back2Better Global CHRO Survey** was administered via email links from early January through mid-February of 2021, using Qualtrics software.

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