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In association with



Data Salaries &
Job Sentiment

Analysis 2026



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Introduction



The data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) landscape continues to evolve, with significant implications for organisations and the workforce. As we move through 2026, businesses remain heavily reliant on data-driven insight, while AI

continues to attract strong interest as a potential driver of efficiency, innovation, and competitive advantage.

Demand for data and AI skills remains high, yet this year's findings highlight a clear and growing skills gap in AI. While organisations recognise its potential, many remain cautious about investing too heavily until a clearer return on investment has been demonstrated across the market. As a result, adoption is often selective, with businesses prioritising proven use cases and practical applications over large-scale transformation. This places increasing value on professionals who can bridge technical capability with commercial understanding.

AI technologies are beginning to reshape roles within the data profession, but their impact is more evolutionary than disruptive. Rather than replacing expertise, AI is augmenting it, increasing the need for strong governance, critical thinking, and the ability to translate outputs into meaningful business outcomes. This makes continuous learning, adaptability, and targeted upskilling more important than ever.

Alongside recruitment, retention has become a defining theme. Job mobility has slowed, tenure is increasing, and professionals are placing greater emphasis on meaningful work, career progression, and strong leadership. Creating environments that support long-term development and engagement is now central to sustaining high-performing data teams.

This year's report captures these dynamics, providing insight into salaries, job sentiment, skills demand, and the evolving role of data and AI within organisations. By understanding these trends, businesses can better position themselves to build resilient teams and realise sustainable value from their investment in data and analytics.

Lorcan Malone,
Chief Executive
The Analytics Institute



Demand for data and AI talent remains strong, but a growing skills gap in AI is emerging as companies seek professionals who can blend technical expertise with commercial understanding. This was a theme highlighted in last year's report

and is an ongoing challenge.

AI is reshaping roles gradually - augmenting, not replacing, human expertise - and driving the need for governance, critical thinking, and continuous upskilling. This was spoken about at the 2026 World Economic Forum in Davos by Bryan Harris, Chief Technology Officer at SAS, where he set out the role humans will continue to play in successful AI adoption especially in important areas like verification and validation frameworks.

He outlined how the technology allows employees to allocate less time to data collection and refinement, thereby dedicating more attention to critical analysis and identifying key insights derived from data. He said investment in people is "the most important" thing businesses can do, as to create new value through AI they still need to invest in people to make this happen.

Workplace dynamics are also shifting. Job mobility has slowed, with more emphasis on the nature of work being undertaken and support for longterm development. Organisations are responding by focusing more on retention, hybrid working structures, and targeted career progression.

At organisational level, data is becoming more strategic, with more companies treating it as central to decisionmaking. Visualisation, AI/ML, and project delivery remain the most in-demand skills, supported by strong soft skills such as communication and stakeholder management.

Overall, the report shows a sector that is stabilising, maturing, and preparing for deeper AI integration - placing high value on adaptable, business-savvy professionals who can turn data into organisational impact.

Alan McGlenn
Director Financial Service UK&I
and Ireland Country Lead
SAS



As we look across the analytics profession in 2026, one truth is clearer than ever: organisations that harness data intelligently continue to outperform those that do not.

Data-driven decision-making remains at the heart

of competitiveness, shaping everything from long-term strategy to day-to-day operational choices. The foundations that underpin analytics - data governance, data quality, and data literacy - have become decisive differentiators in business. Many organisations are now realising that, without trusted, well-managed data, even the most sophisticated AI initiatives by analytics teams will struggle to scale.

This challenge is compounded by a growing talent gap. Despite advances in automation, the demand for Data Engineering, Architecture, and Governance expertise continues to rise, and shortages of these critical skills are slowing progress. At the same time, analytics teams are increasingly required to bridge the communication divide between technical specialists and business leaders. In many cases, AI programmes falter not because of flawed models but because of misalignment between objectives, expectations, and organisational understanding. Too often, there are AI solutions in search of a problem, rather than problems in search of an AI solution.

Analytics talent will remain in high demand in 2026. 9% of professionals in Ireland moved companies in the past 12 months, while 14% or more analytics professionals moved companies in that time. This points directly to the high level of demand for analytics talent in the Irish market, and it is expected to continue, unabated, in 2026 and beyond.

As analytics professionals continue to fill the gap between technology and people, communication skills, commercial acumen, and the ability to bring people on the data journey will, inevitably, become the skill sets that separate the good from the great in the profession.

Ed Heffernan,
Managing Partner,
Barden

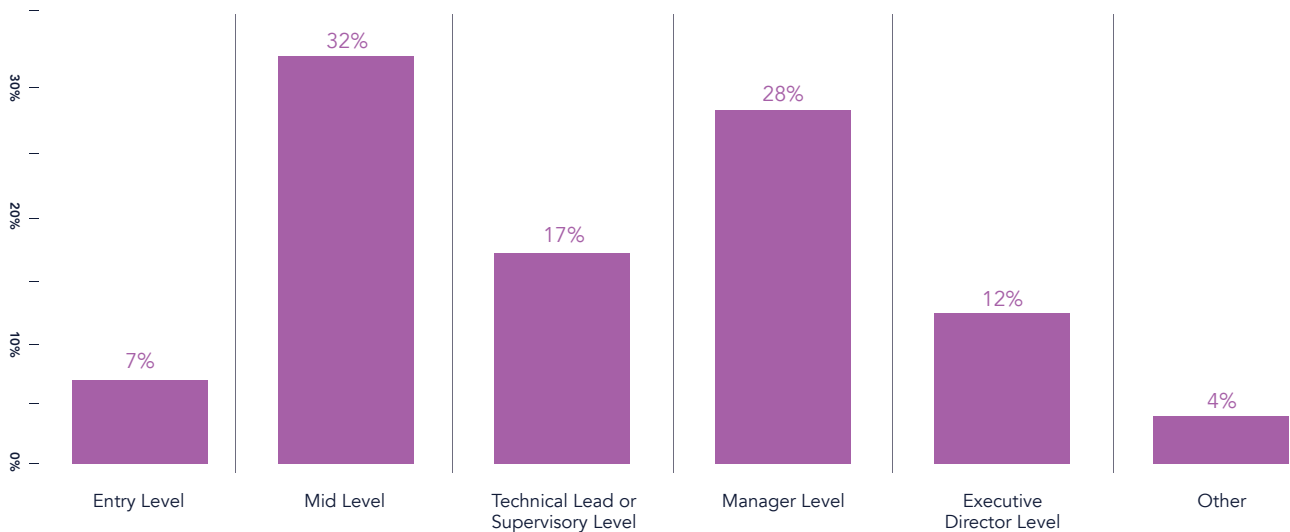


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Demographics

CAREER LEVEL



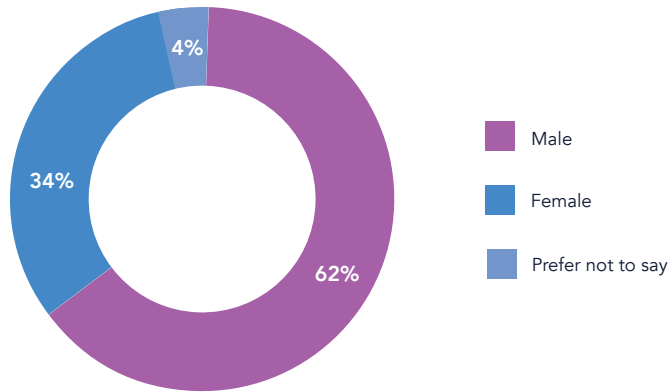
Participants in the survey were exclusively Analytic Institute members. The sample group of Analytics Institute members tends to be somewhat more senior than the general population. This is reflected in the 'current job level' response where over 60% of those surveyed are either Managers, Technical Leads, Director or Executive Level.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

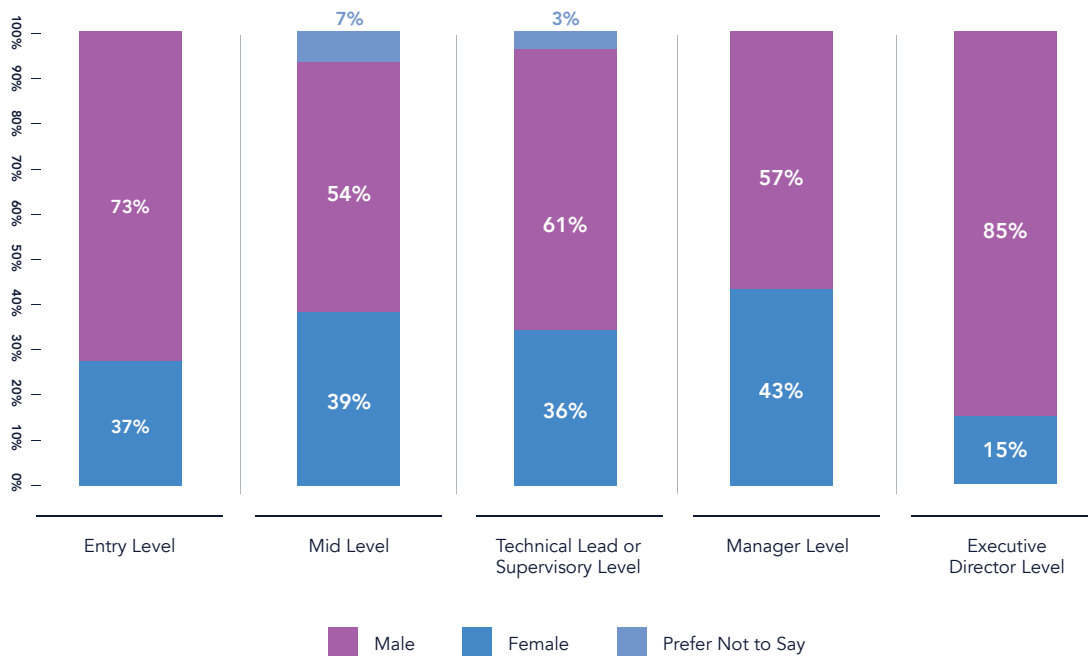
Areas of Practice	
Data Analytics	40%
Business Intelligence	10%
Data Science	8%
AI	7%
Consulting	4%
Business Development	4%
Data Architecture	4%
Data Governance	4%
Data Product Management	4%
Data Eng. & Big Data	3%
Customer Insight Analytics	2%
Software Engineering	2%
Risk Analytics	2%
Geographical Analytics	1%
Monitoring	1%
Crime Analysis	1%
Cross functional	1%
Everything above	1%
Fraud Analytics	1%
Investigations/crime analytics	1%
None	1%
Renewable Energy Policy for Enterprise	1%
Research	1%

GENDER & EQUALITY

GENDER DISTRIBUTION



GENDER DISTRIBUTION ACROSS JOB LEVELS

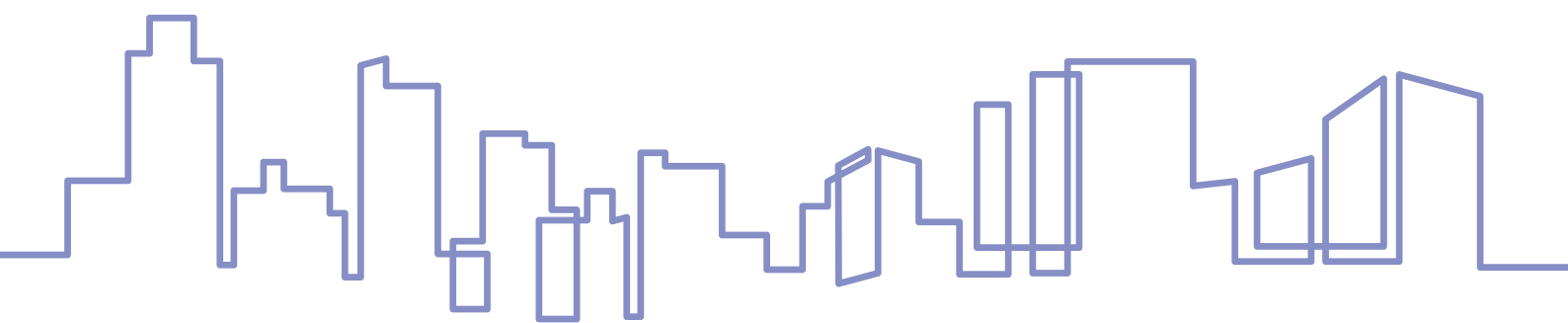
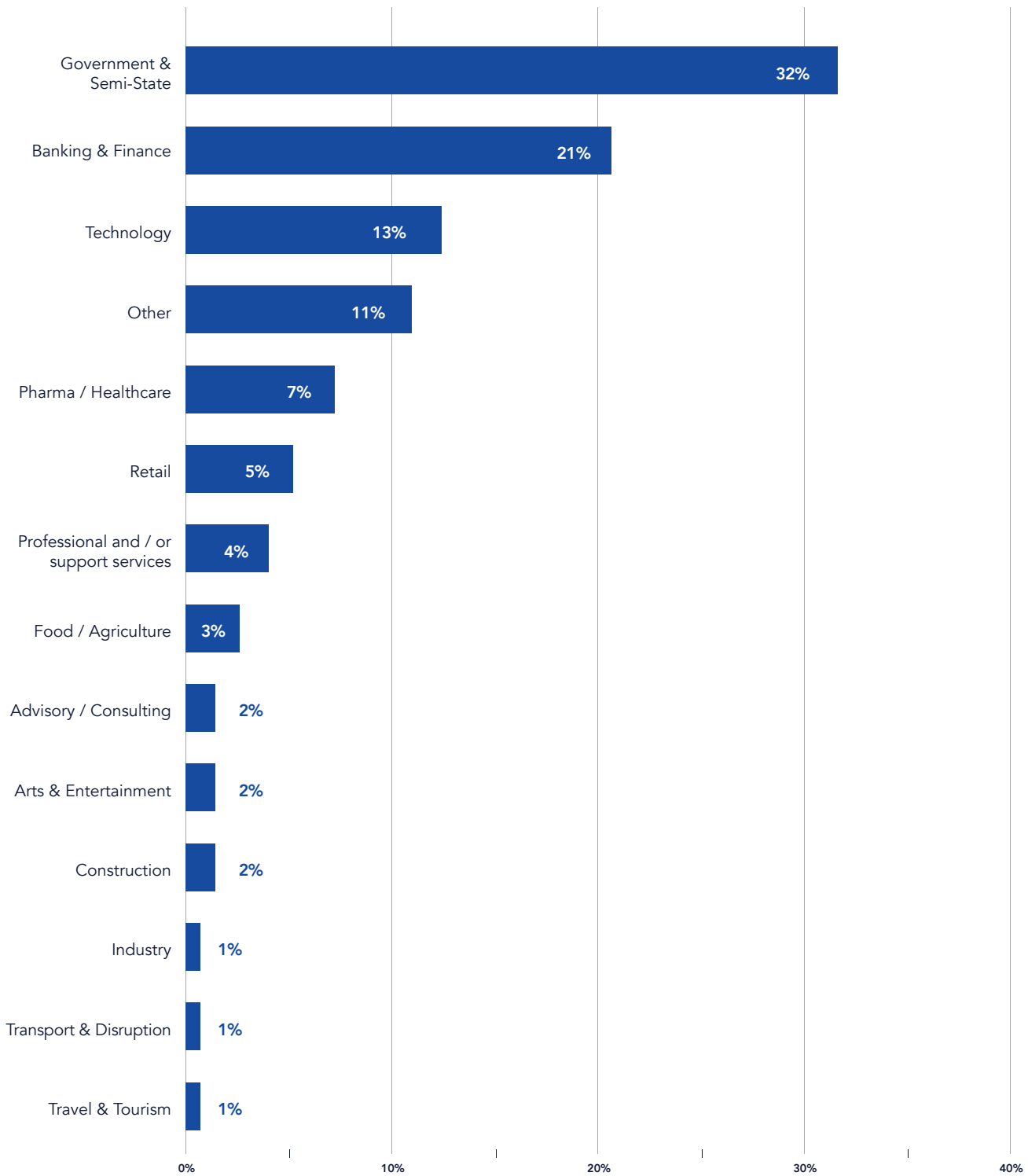


Gender & Equality

In recent years, Ireland has made notable progress toward achieving gender balance in the tech and data sectors, particularly at entry, mid, and managerial levels. This advancement is largely driven by improved educational opportunities and initiatives encouraging women and girls to pursue careers in these traditionally male-dominated fields.

However, insights from this salary survey indicate that while significant progress has been achieved at the foundational levels, a substantial gender gap persists at the Executive level within the industry.

SECTORS



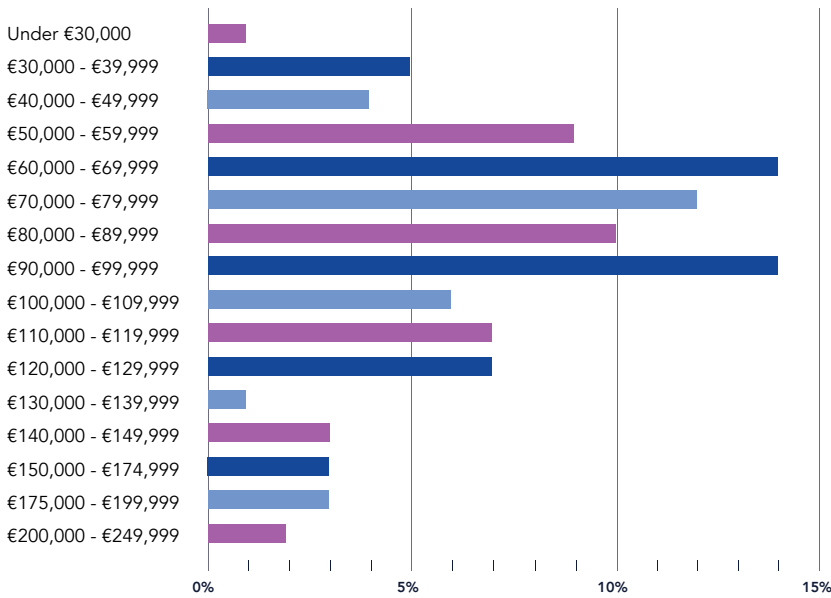


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Salaries & Benefits

AVERAGE SALARY



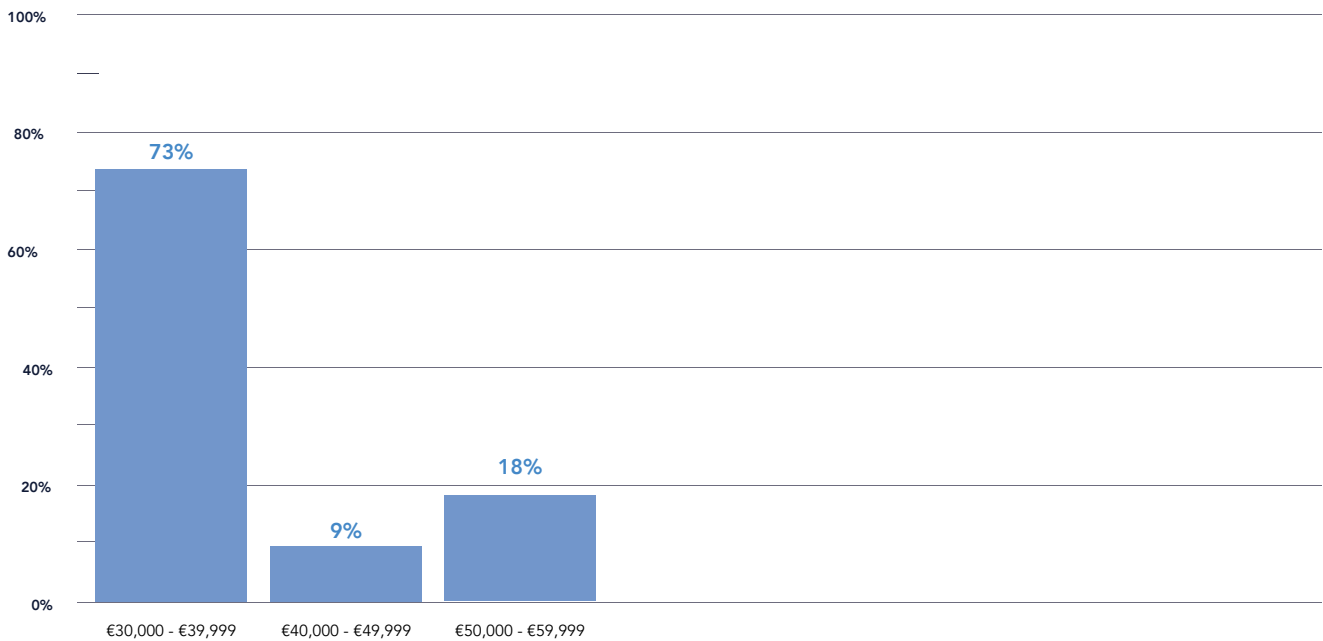
Annual Industry Salaries (excluding bonus, commissions, extras)

Under €30,000	1%
Between €30,000 - €39,999	5%
Between €40,000 - €49,999	4%
Between €50,000 - €59,999	9%
Between €60,000 - €69,999	14%
Between €70,000 - €79,999	12%
Between €80,000 - €89,999	10%
Between €90,000 - €99,999	14%
Between €100,000 - €109,999	6%
Between €110,000 - €119,999	7%
Between €120,000 - €129,999	7%
Between €130,000 - €139,999	1%
Between €140,000 - €149,999	3%
Between €150,000 - €174,999	3%
Between €175,000 - €199,999	3%
Between €200,000 - €249,999	2%

DISTRIBUTION OF SALARY BY CAREER LEVEL

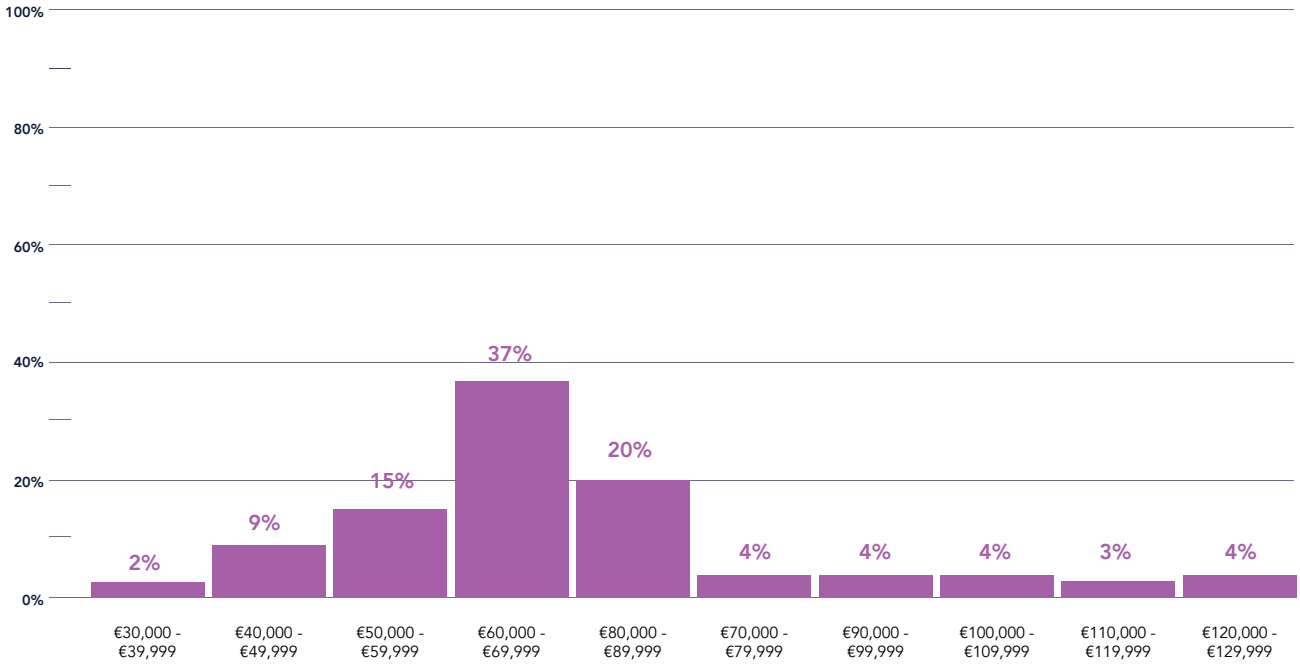
ENTRY LEVEL

(Starting out your Data & Analytics career in an entry-level role, perhaps having achieved your first promotion).



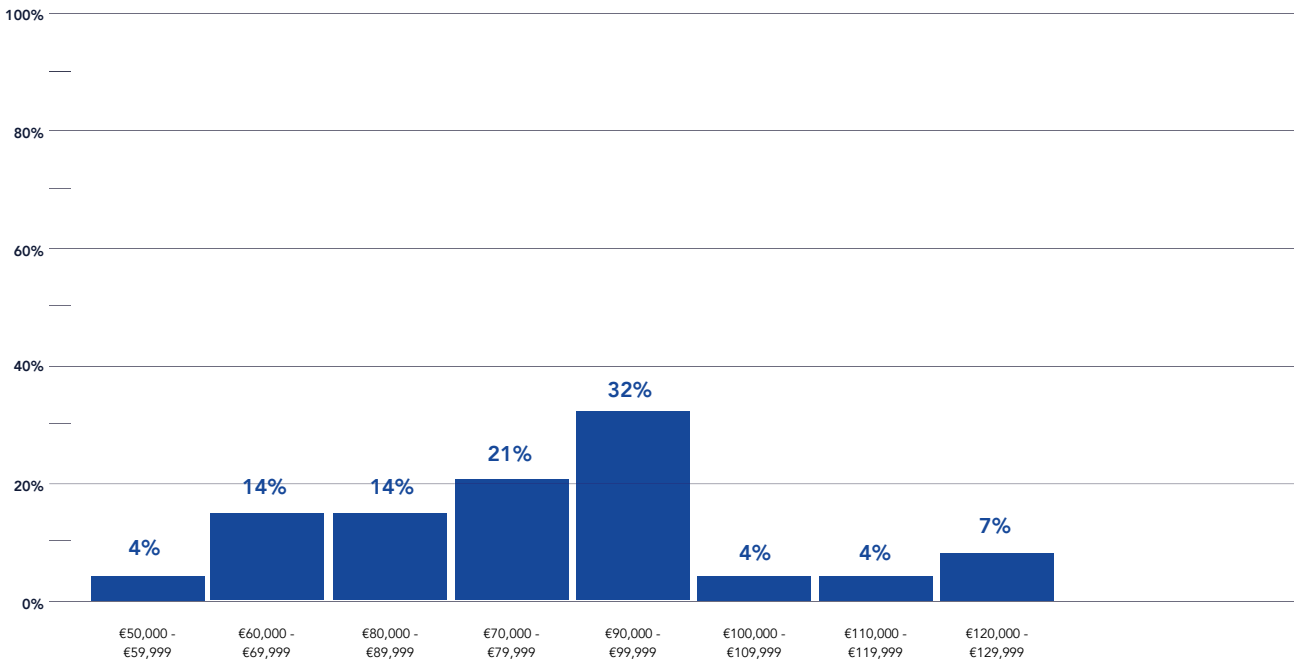
MID-LEVEL

(Experienced hands-on position, remaining in a technical capacity and possibly leading projects).



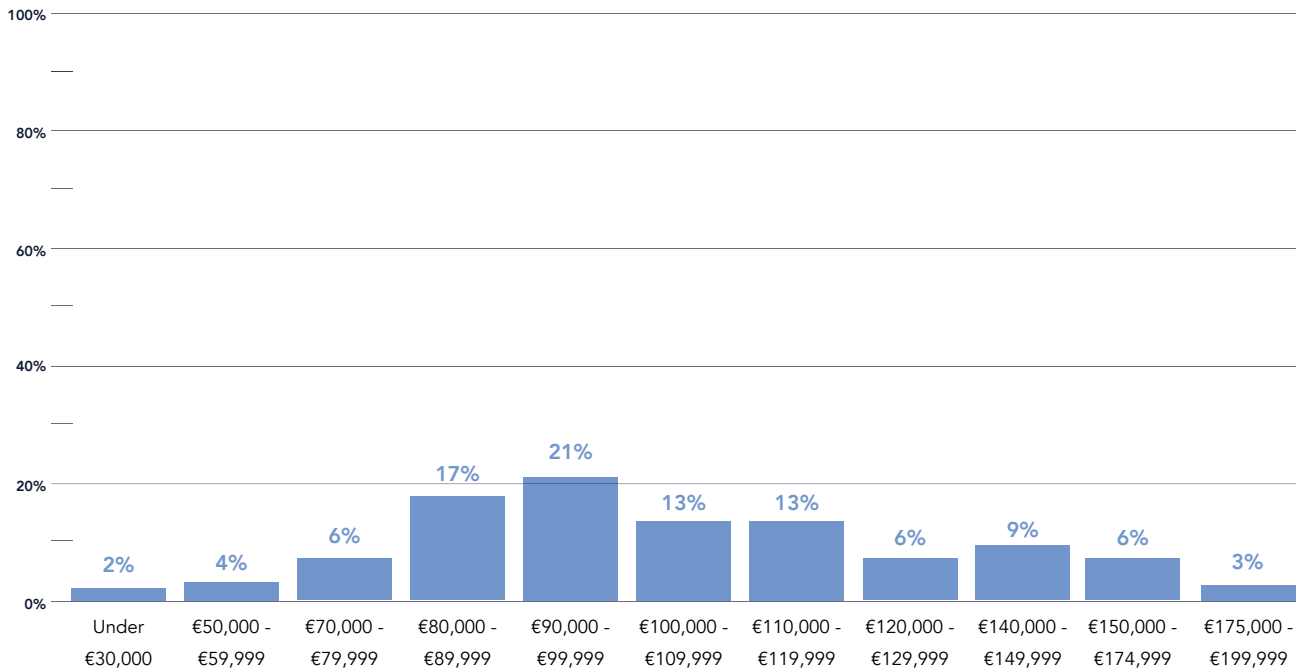
TECHNICAL LEAD / SUPERVISOR LEVEL

(Within a role that has moved from technical work and into a supervisory position, or having a senior technical hands-on position).



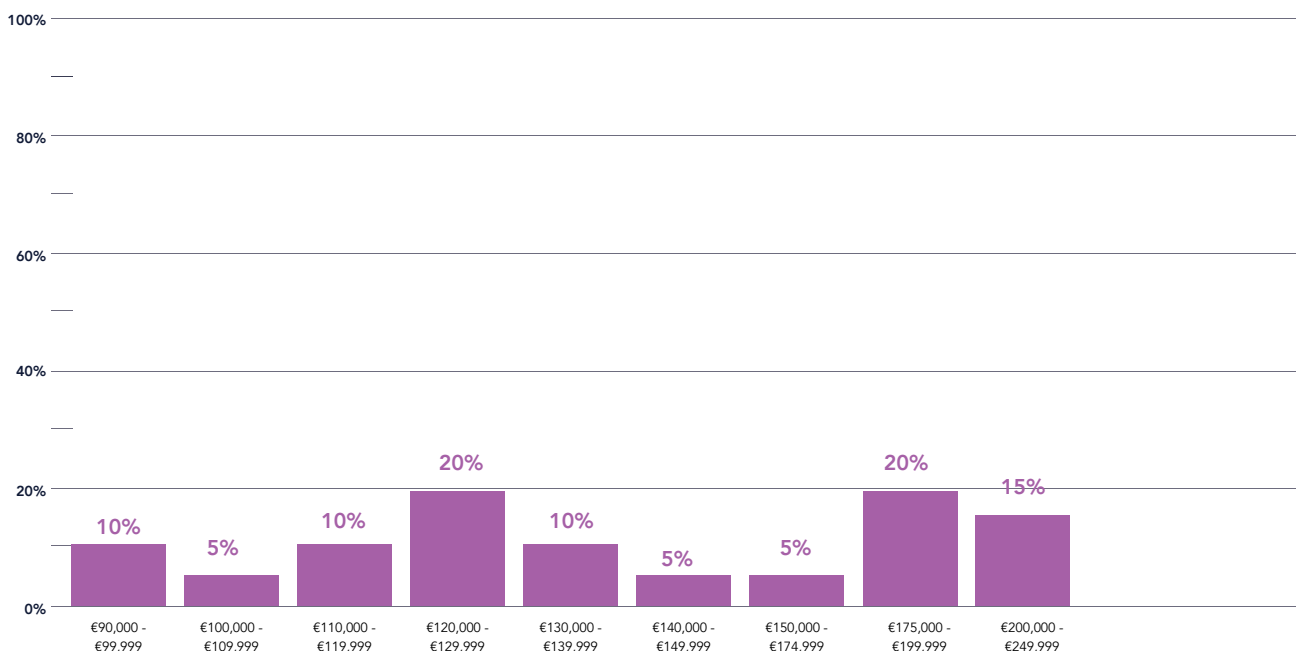
MANAGER LEVEL

(Leading business units comprising of one or more technical teams within one vertical/ specialism).

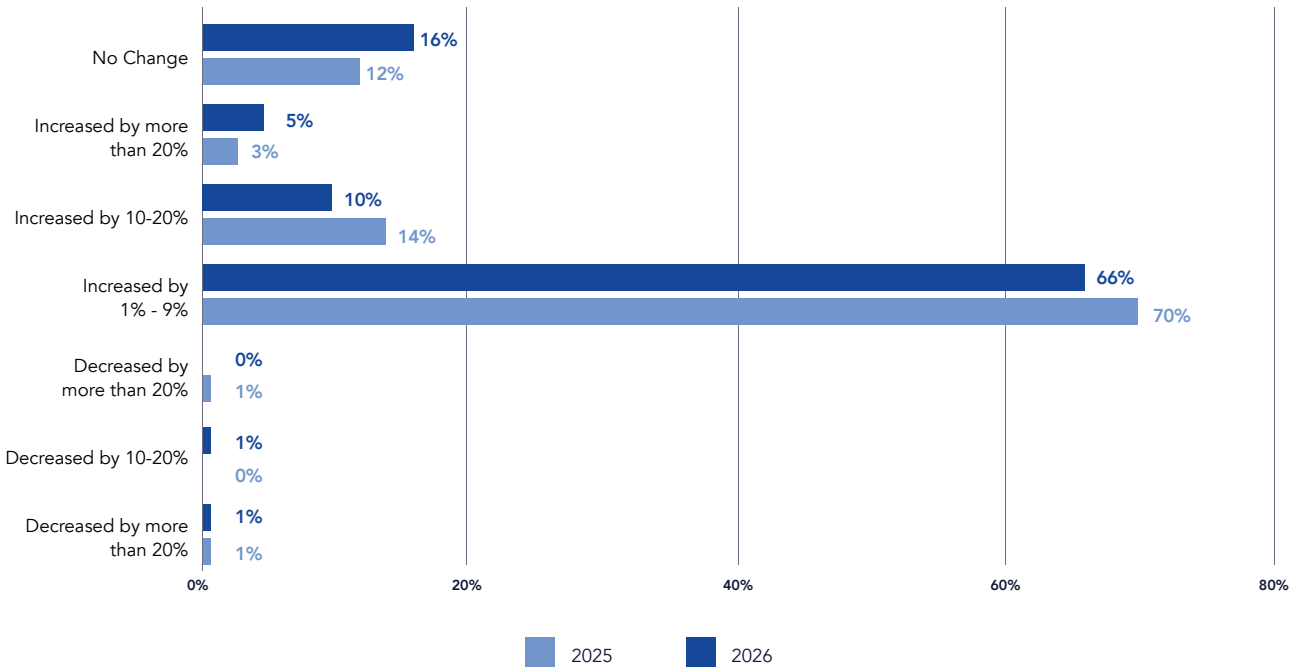


EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR LEVEL

(Managing teams across different verticals and specialisms, potentially in a board position).



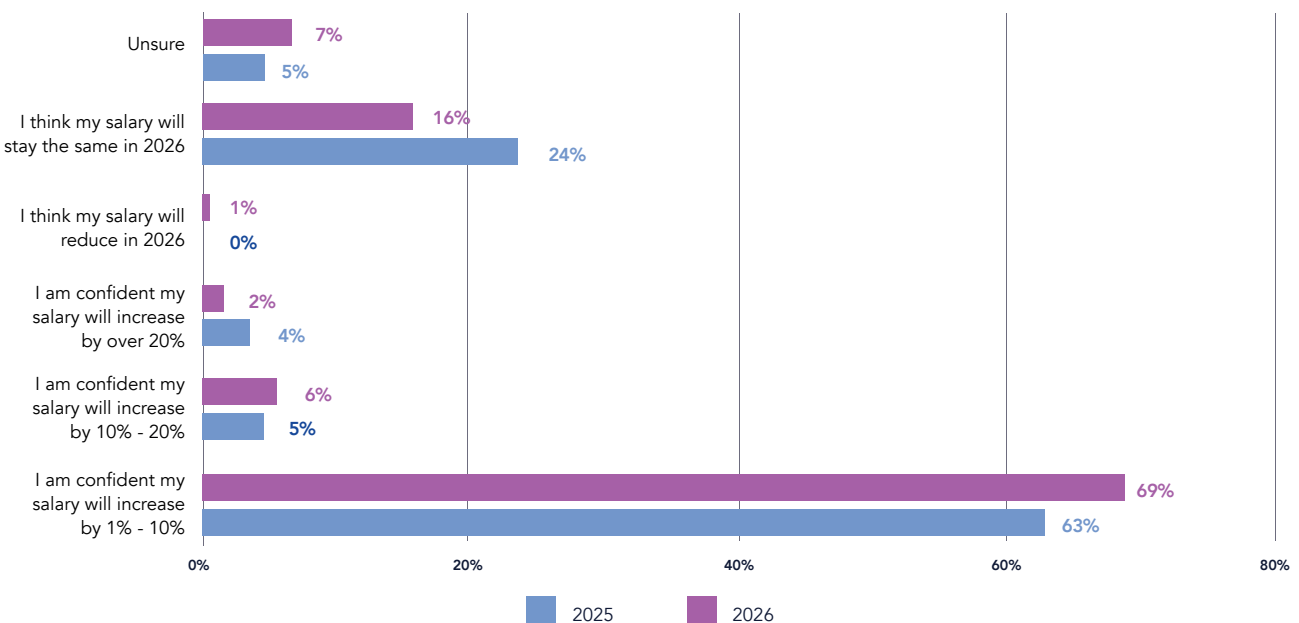
SALARY CHANGES COMPARED TO 2025



The survey reveals a positive trend in salary adjustments for 2026, with moderate salary increases (1%–9%) remain the most common adjustment in both years, though slightly lower in 2026 compared to 2025. Higher salary increases (10%–20% and above 20%) continue to decline, reinforcing the trend toward smaller, widespread adjustments rather than significant pay jumps.

The proportion of respondents reporting no salary change has risen in 2026, suggesting some stabilisation after prior improvements. Salary decreases remain minimal across both years, with all categories combined accounting for approximately 2% in both years.

HOW CONFIDENT RESPONDENTS ARE ABOUT SALARY INCREASING IN 2026?



The survey reveals increasing optimism about salary growth in 2026, with 69% of respondents expecting a salary increase between 1% and 10%. Confidence in larger salary increases (10%-20% or over 20%) remains steady or slightly reduced, suggesting cautious optimism. 16% respondents think their salary will stay the same, whereas few expect salary reductions.

GENDER PAY GAP

Job Level	Average Female Salary	Average Male Salary	Female vs Male Salary Difference
Entry Level	€35k	€41k	-18%
Mid-Level	€62k	€74k	-20%
Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€86k	€87k	-2%
Manager Level	€92k	€114k	-24%
Executive/Director Level	€148k	€151k	-2%

AVERAGE SALARY BY AREA OF PRACTICE AND LEVEL

The survey highlights gender-based salary differences across job levels:

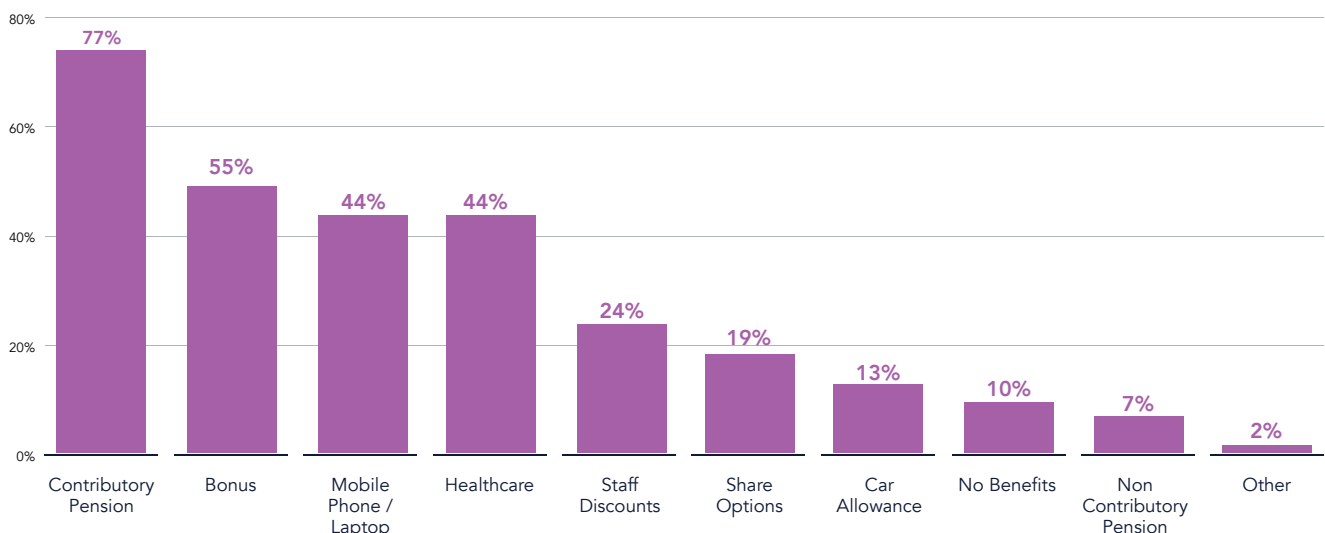
- **Entry Level:** Women earn 18% less than men, indicating a favourable salary difference at the start of careers.
- **Mid-Level:** Men outpace women with a 20% higher average salary.
- **Technical Lead/Supervisory Level:** No significant(2%) difference in average salary at this job level.
- **Manager Level:** The disparity persists, with male salaries being 24% higher.
- **Executive/Director Level:** The gap narrows significantly, with men's salaries only 2% higher than women's

These trends suggest gender salary disparities become more pronounced at mid- to senior-level positions, emphasizing potential barriers to pay equity in career progression.

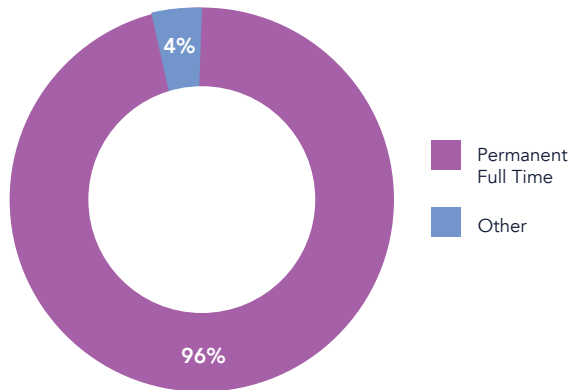
Area of Practice	Level	Average Salary
Crime Analysis	Entry Level	€35,000
Data Analytics	Entry Level	€35,000
	Mid-Level	€64,565
	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€80,000
	Manager Level	€99,861
	Executive/Director Level	€145,000
Data Eng. & Big Data	Entry Level	€35,000
	Mid Level	€81,667
Investigations / Crime Analytics	Entry Level	€35,000
Business Intelligence	Entry Level	€45,000
	Mid-Level	€71,666
	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€91,666
	Manager Level	€107,000
	Executive/Director Level	€135,000
Renewable Energy Policy for Enterprise	Mid Level	€45,000
Data Governance	Mid Level	€55,000
	Manager Level	€85,000
	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€110,000
	Executive/Director Level	€115,000

Data Science	Entry Level	€55,000
	Mid-Level	€65,000
	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€91,667
	Manager Level	€109,375
	Executive/Director Level	€170,000
Risk Analytics	Manager Level	€55,000
	Executive/Director Level	€110,000
Business Development	Mid Level	€65,000
	Manager Level	€110,000
	Executive/Director Level	€120,000
Monitoring	Mid Level	€65,000
Software Engineering	Mid Level	€65,000
	Manager Level	€85,000
	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€125,000
	Executive/Director Level	€125,000
Research	Mid Level	€75,000
Geographical Analytics	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€80,000
Consulting	Mid Level	€85,000
	Manager Level	€95,000
	Executive/Director Level	€187,500
Cross functional	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€85,000
Data Architecture	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€85,000
	Manager Level	€104,500
Data Product Management	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€90,000
	Mid Level	€105,000
	Manager Level	€128,750
	Executive/Director Level	€135,000
AI	Technical Lead or Supervisory Level	€95,000
	Manager Level	€100,000
	Executive/Director Level	€179,167
Customer Insight Analytics	Mid Level	€95,000
	Manager Level	€145,000
Everything above	Executive/Director Level	€95,000

CAREER BENEFITS

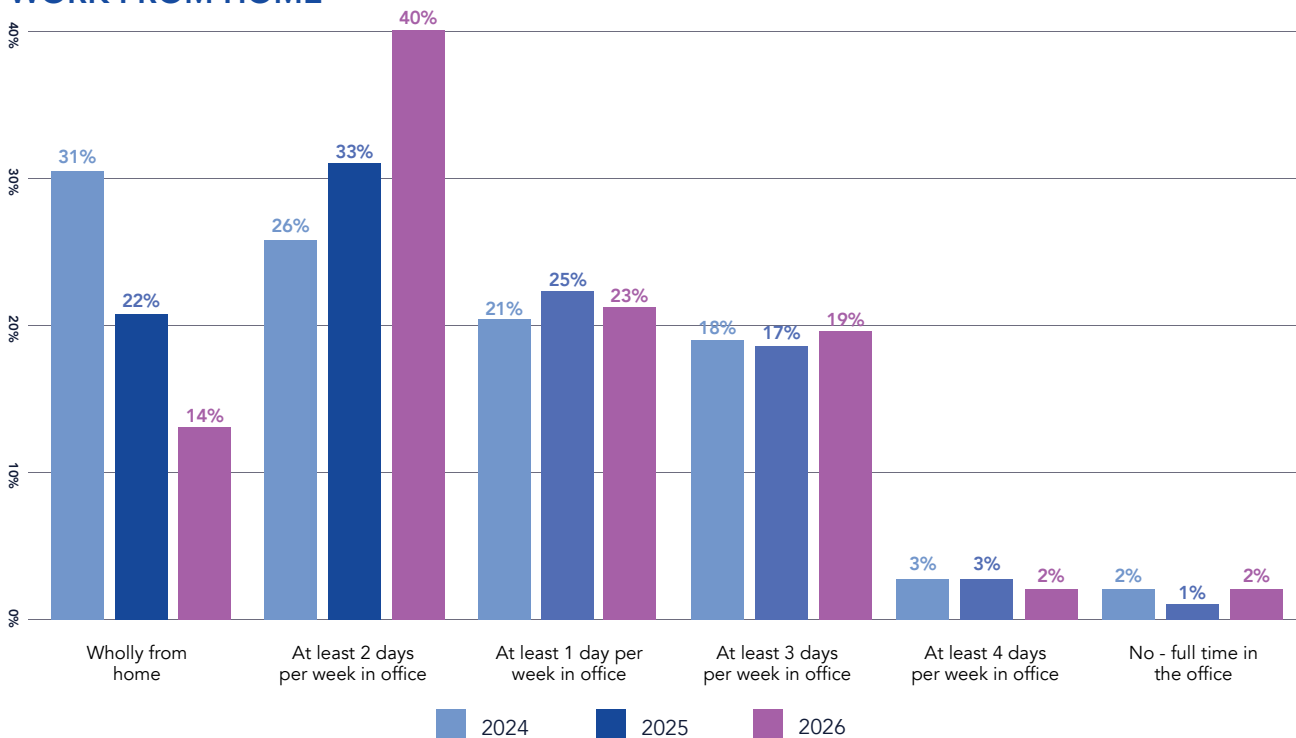


EMPLOYMENT STATUS



The survey reveals that the vast majority of respondents (96%) are employed in permanent, full-time roles, indicating strong job stability in the data industry. Contracting positions account for a modest share, with fixed-term contracts at 2% and open-ended contracts at 1%. Similarly, permanent part-time roles, other employment types, and unemployment each represent below 1%, underscoring a predominantly full-time, permanent workforce.

WORK FROM HOME



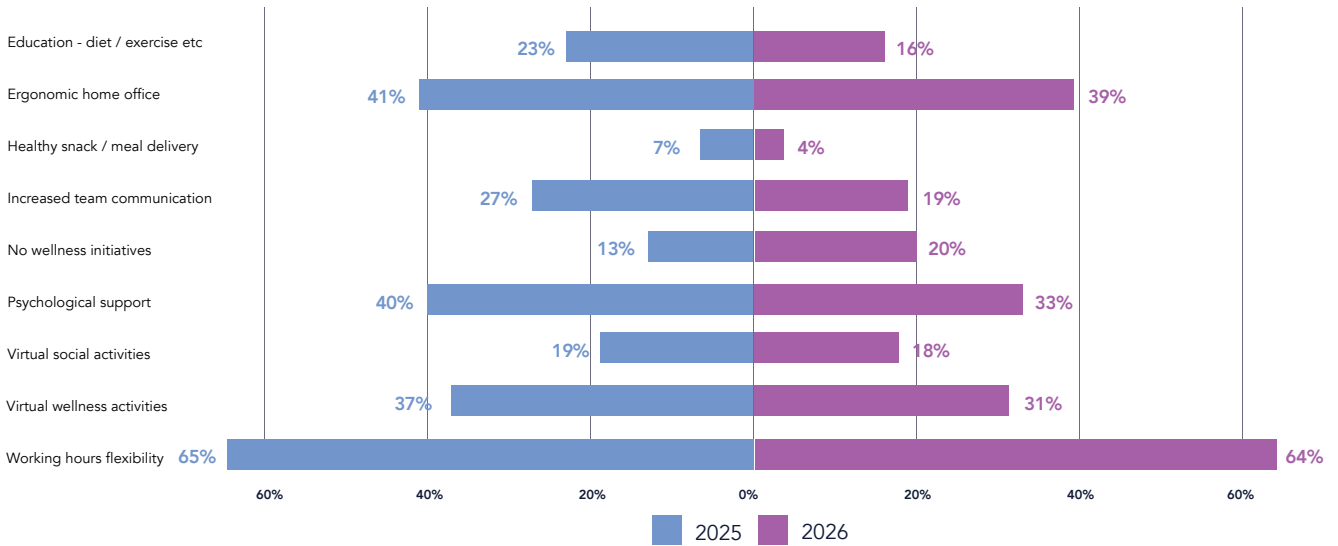
WORK FROM HOME

The data highlights a noticeable shift towards more in-office work between 2024 and 2026:

- **Fully Remote Decline:** The percentage of employees working wholly from home decreases significantly from 31% in 2024 to 14% in 2026.
- **Hybrid Work Adjustments:** Preferences for hybrid models (e.g., 1-3 days per week in the office) are evolving, with a growing trend towards spending more days in the office, particularly 2 days per week (rising from 26% in 2024 to 40% in 2026).
- **Minimal Change in Full-Time Office Work:** Those working full-time in the office remain a very small minority, consistently around 1-2% across the years

These insights suggest a gradual return to in-office work, particularly with an emphasis on hybrid arrangements, as wholly remote setups decline.

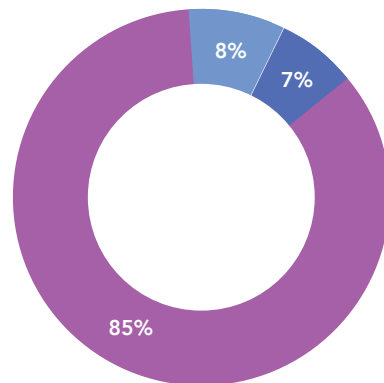
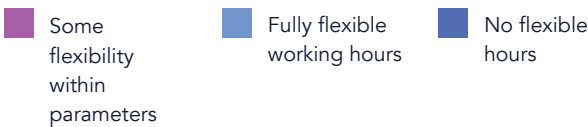
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS INITIATIVES RELATED TO WORKING REMOTELY



The report reveals shifts in wellness initiatives for remote employees, with working hours flexibility remaining the most common support but dipping slightly from 65% in 2025 to 64% in 2026. Virtual wellness activities decrease from 37% to 31%, and psychological support drops from 40% to 33%, indicating reduced focus on structured wellbeing programmes. Team communication initiatives also decline from 27% to 19%, while ergonomic home office support remains relatively stable (41% to 39%). Smaller initiatives such as virtual social activities (19% to 18%), healthy snack or meal delivery (7% to 3.6%), and education on diet and exercise (23% to 16%) show minor shifts. Notably, those reporting no wellness initiatives increase from 13% to 20%, suggesting some organisations may be scaling back formal support for remote workers.

ARE YOUR WORKING HOURS FLEXIBLE?

The survey reveals that 85% of respondents experience some flexibility within set parameters, indicating a preference for structured yet adaptable schedules.



ANNUAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE

Annual Leave allowance	
0-9 days	0%
10-14 days	0%
15-19 days	2%
20-24 days	29%
25-29 days	55%
30-34 days	14%
35+ days	0%
Unlimited	1%

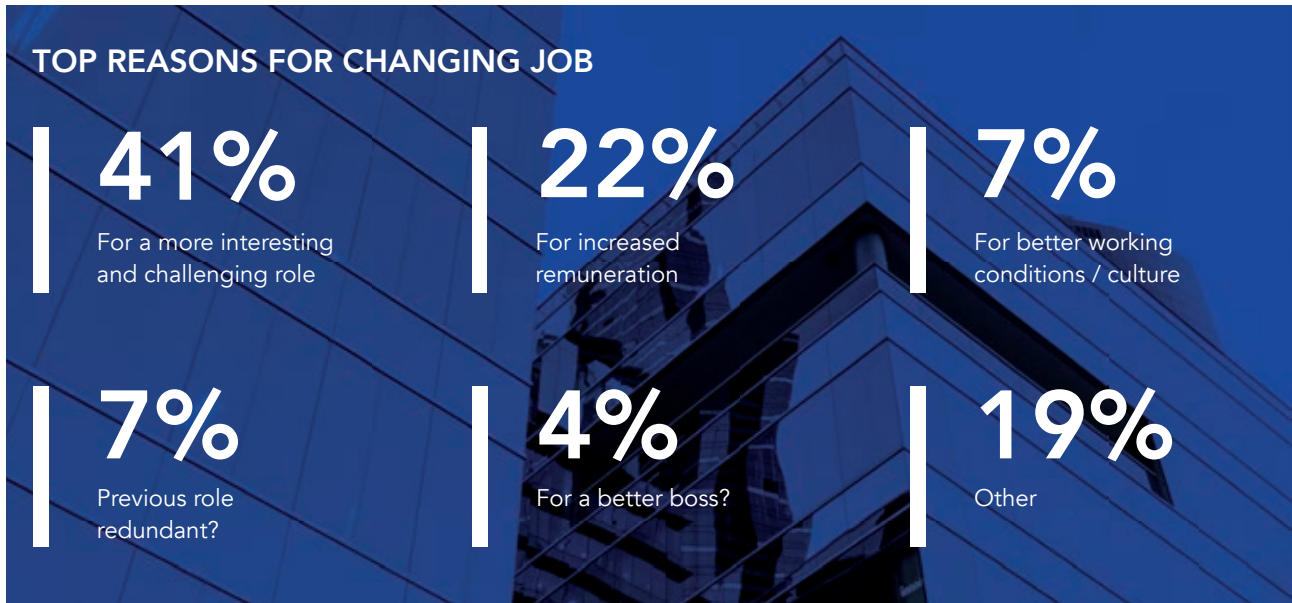
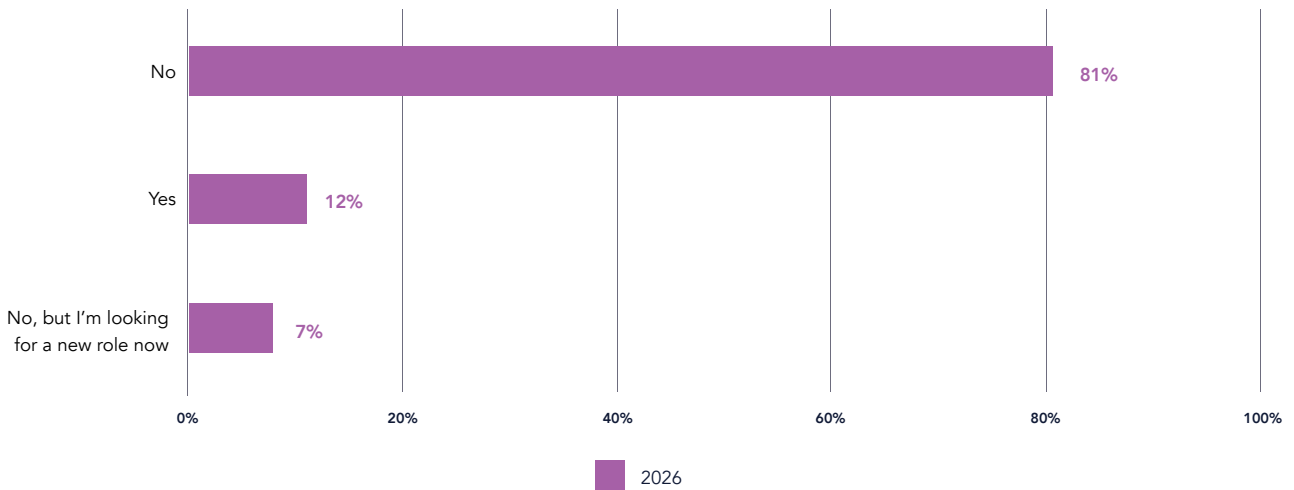


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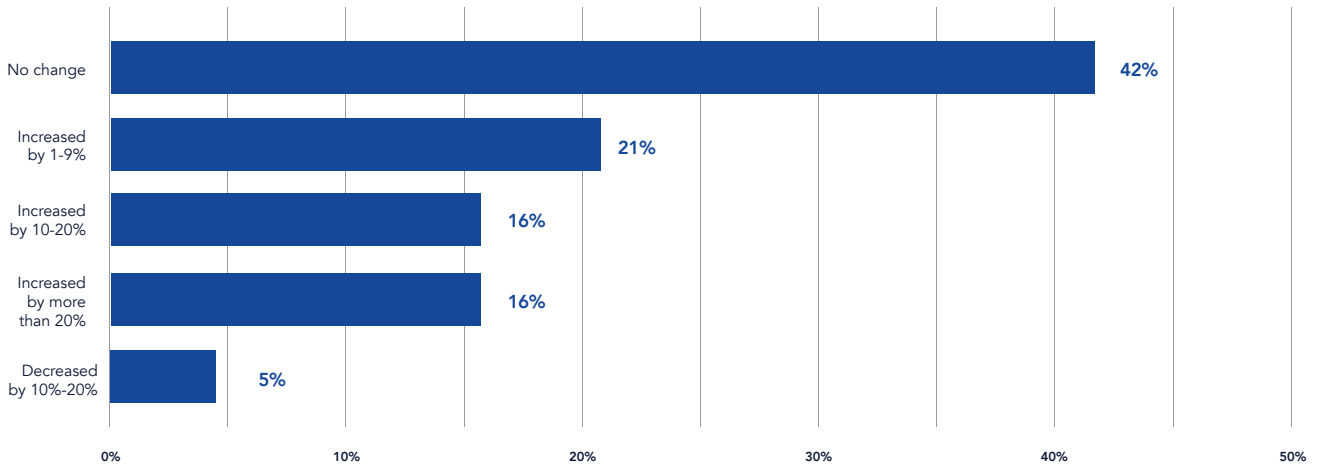
Job Market

HAVE YOU CHANGED EMPLOYERS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?



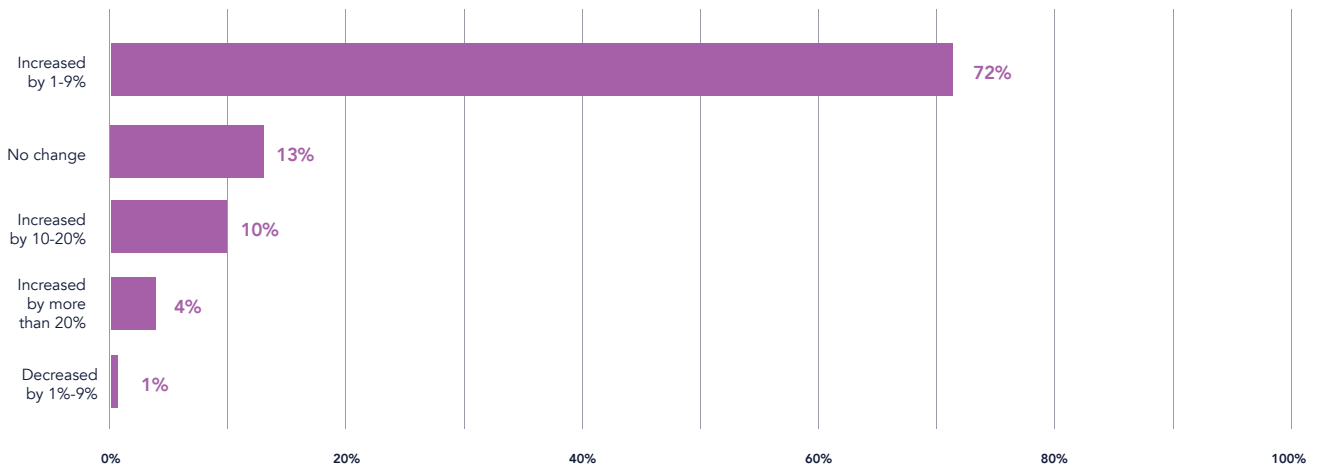
OF THOSE WHO HAVE CHANGED EMPLOYER IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS...

Change in salary in the last 12 months, who changed job in the last 12 months...

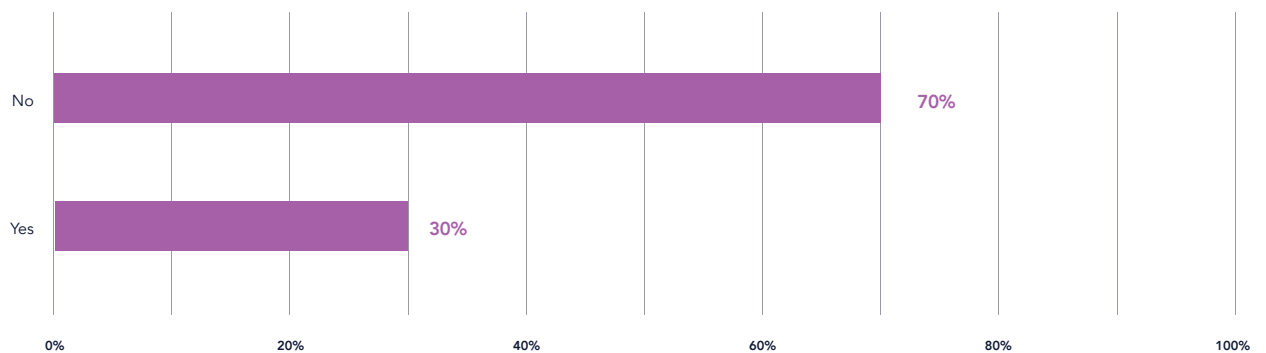


OF THOSE WHO HAVE NOT CHANGED EMPLOYER IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS...

Change in salary in the last 12 months, who did not change job in the last 12 months...



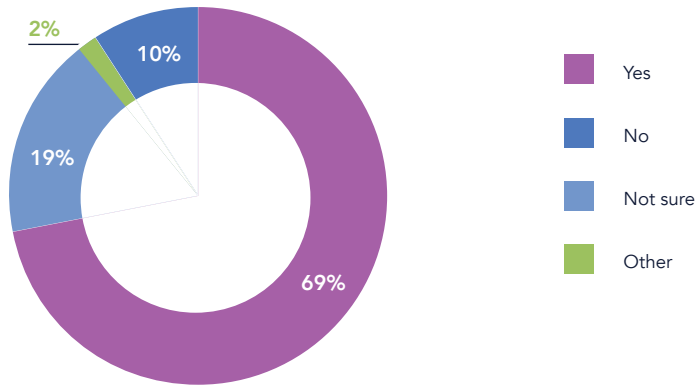
ARE YOU LIKELY TO CHANGE EMPLOYER IN THE COMING YEAR?



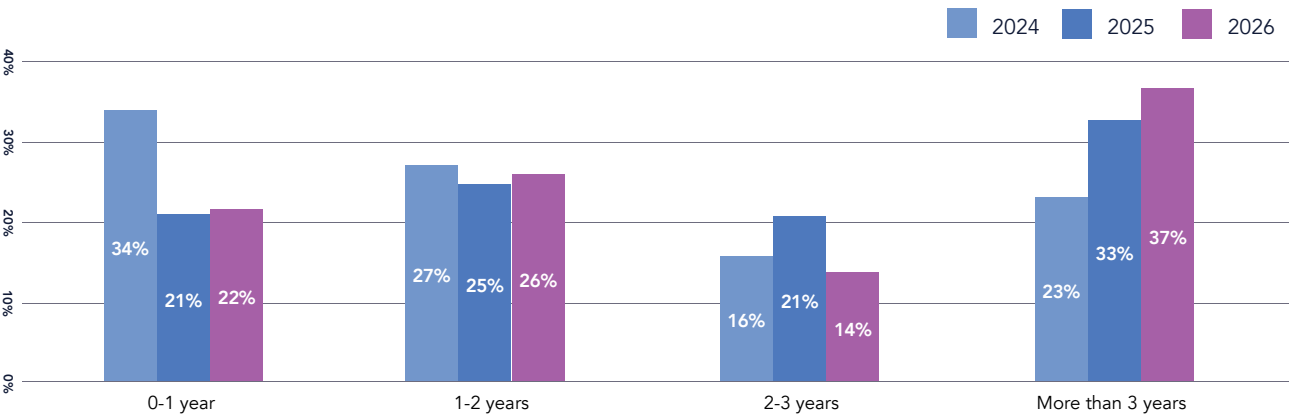


WOULD YOU RECOMMEND YOUR EMPLOYER TO A FRIEND?

Percentage



HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO REMAIN IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE

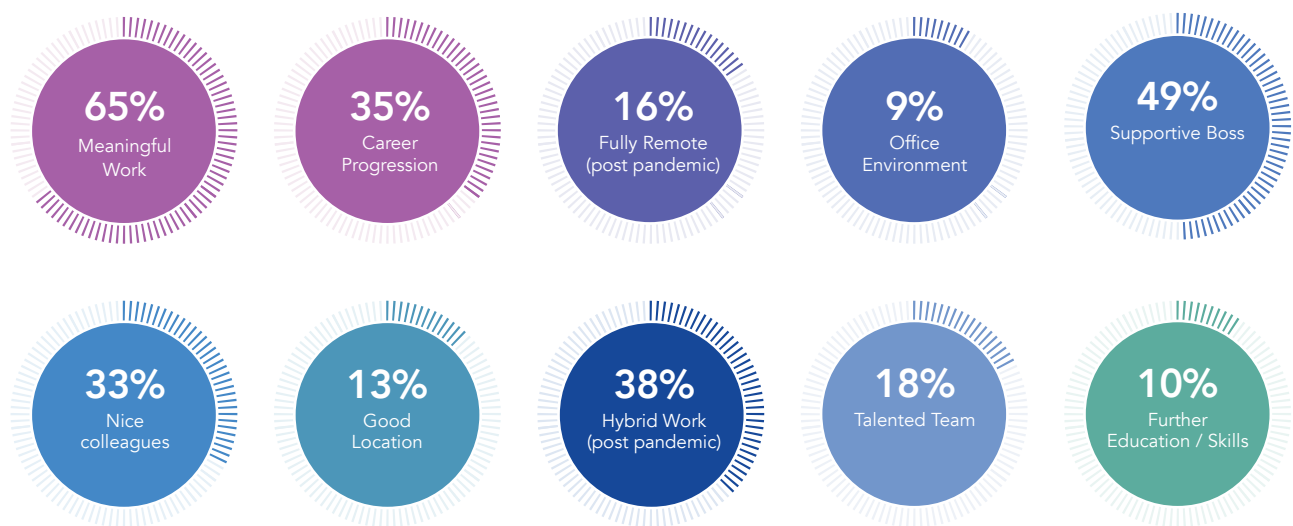


The survey reveals evolving employee sentiment regarding job tenure:

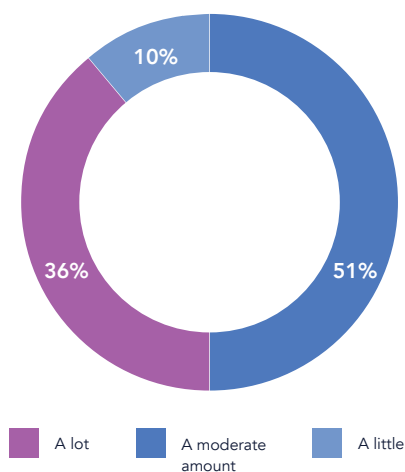
- **Short-term commitments (0–1 year)** show a peak in 2024, with 34% planning to leave within a year, followed by a sharp decline to 21% in 2025 and stabilizing at 22% in 2026, indicating reduced short-term turnover after 2024.
- **Mid-term plans (1–2 years)** remain relatively steady across the years, fluctuating slightly between 27% in 2024, 25% in 2025, and 26% in 2026, suggesting consistent interest in medium-term engagement.
- **Medium-term intentions (2–3 years)** decline overall, starting at 16% in 2024, rising briefly to 21% in 2025, then dropping to 14% in 2026, reflecting uncertainty in this tenure range.
- **Long-term commitments (more than 3 years)** increase significantly over time, from 23% in 2024 to 33% in 2025, and reaching 37% in 2026, signaling a strong shift toward stability and retention.

These trends highlight a transition from short-term uncertainty in 2024 toward longer-term engagement by 2026, suggesting improving confidence and organizational commitment.

WHAT 3 FACTORS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU BEYOND SALARY?



DO YOU ENJOY YOUR JOB?



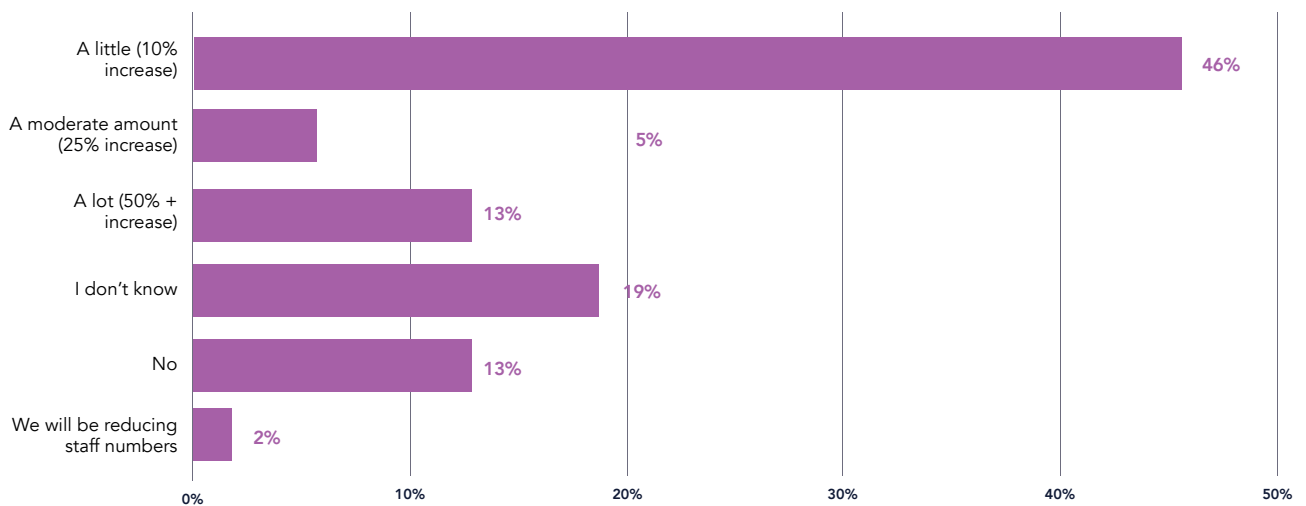


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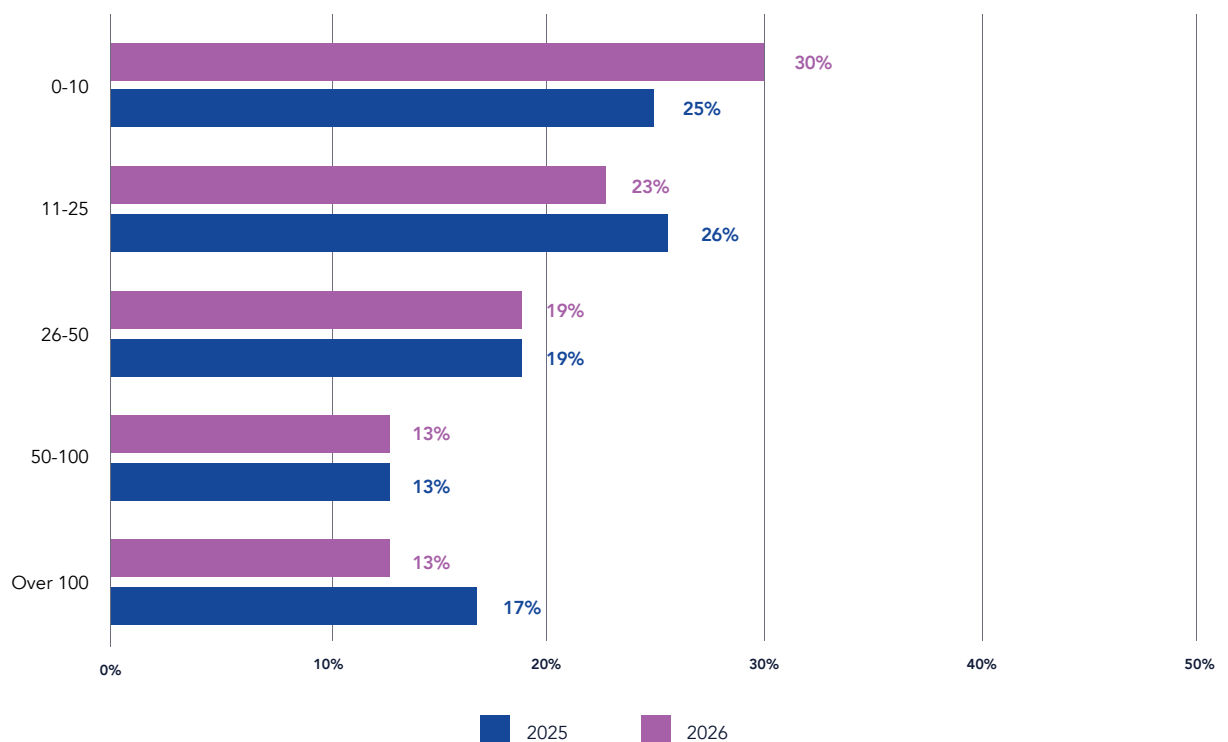
The Role of Data within Organisations

WILL YOUR ORGANISATION BE HIRING FOR DATA ROLES IN 2026?



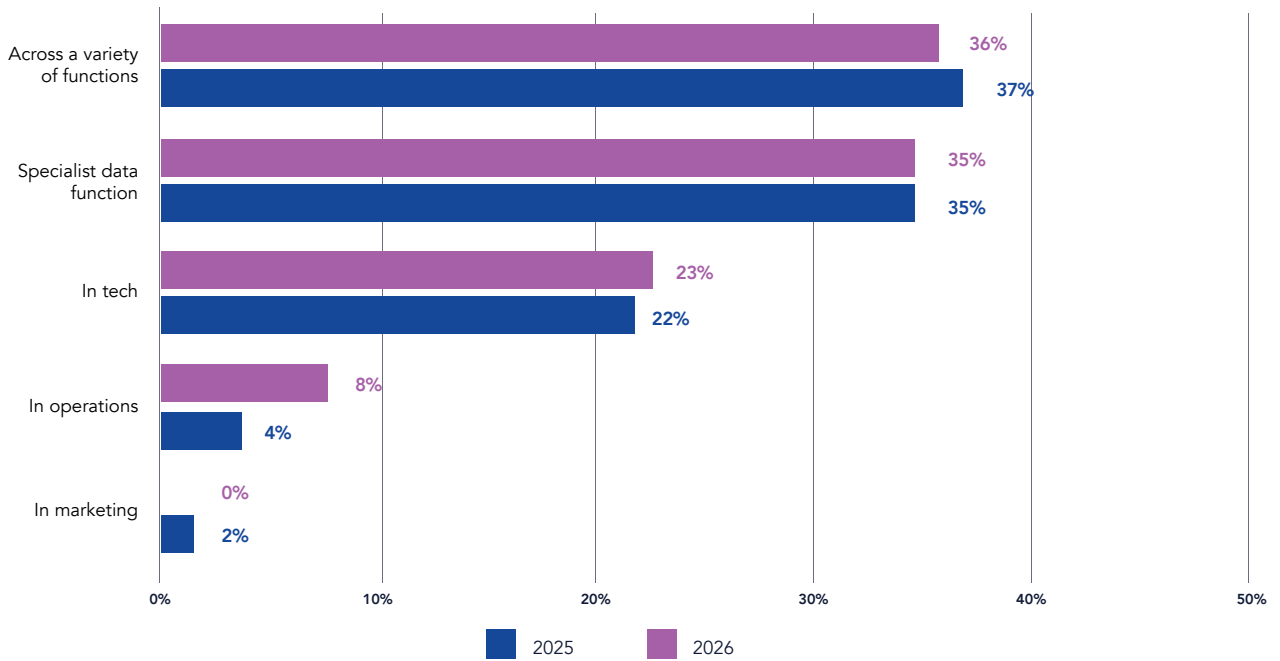
The survey indicates a positive hiring outlook for 2026, with 46% of organisations planning a small (10%) increase in data roles and 13% expecting a moderate (25%+) increase. A smaller 5.5% anticipate significant expansion (50%+). Meanwhile, 13% do not plan to hire, 2.4% expect reductions, and 19% remain uncertain about their workforce plans.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK IN THE DATA TEAM IN YOUR ORGANISATION?



These trends highlight a shift toward more balanced or mid-sized team structures in 2026

WHERE DOES DATA SIT WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION?



The survey indicates shifting patterns in where data is housed within organisations:

Specialist Data Functions remain consistently strong at **35% in both 2025 and 2026**, highlighting the continued move toward dedicated, centralised data teams.

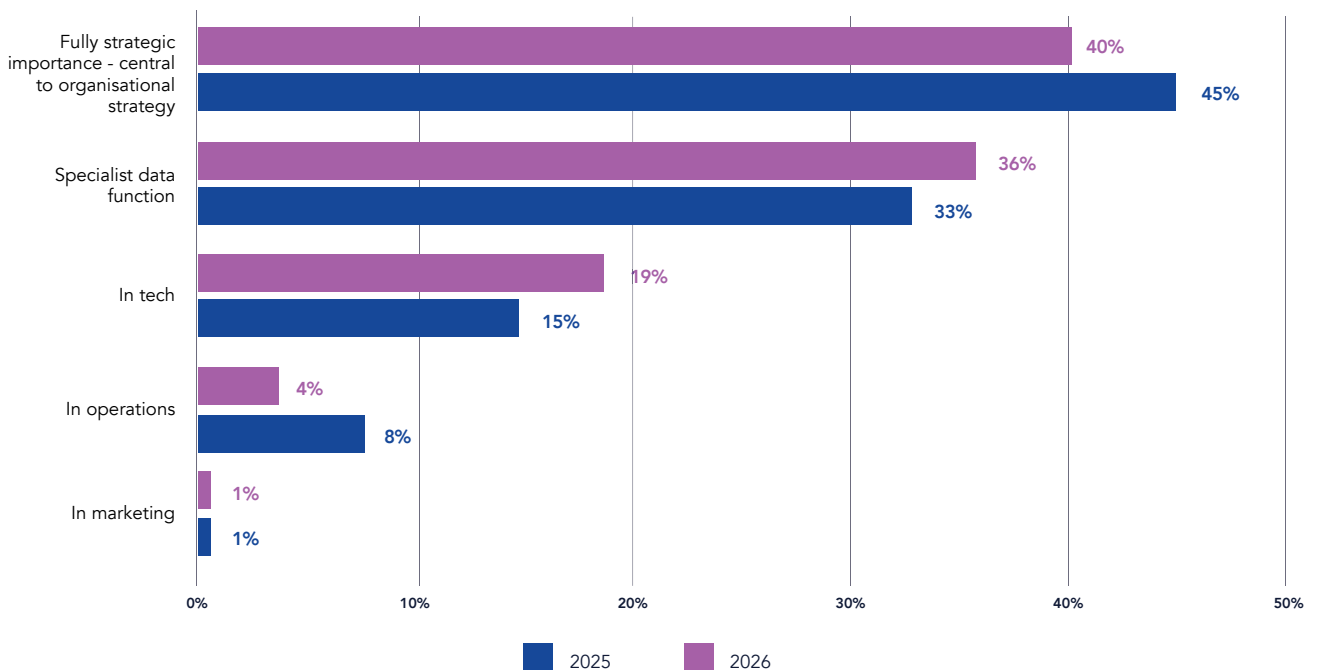
Data spread across multiple functions shows a slight decline from **37% in 2025 to 36% in 2026**, suggesting organisations are gradually reducing fragmented data ownership.

Tech teams’ involvement decreases slightly (**23% → 22%**), indicating that data ownership is increasingly shifting away from traditional IT toward specialised analytics or cross-functional teams.

Operations also sees a drop (**7.8% in 2025 to 4.3% in 2026**), reflecting reduced operational ownership of core data assets.

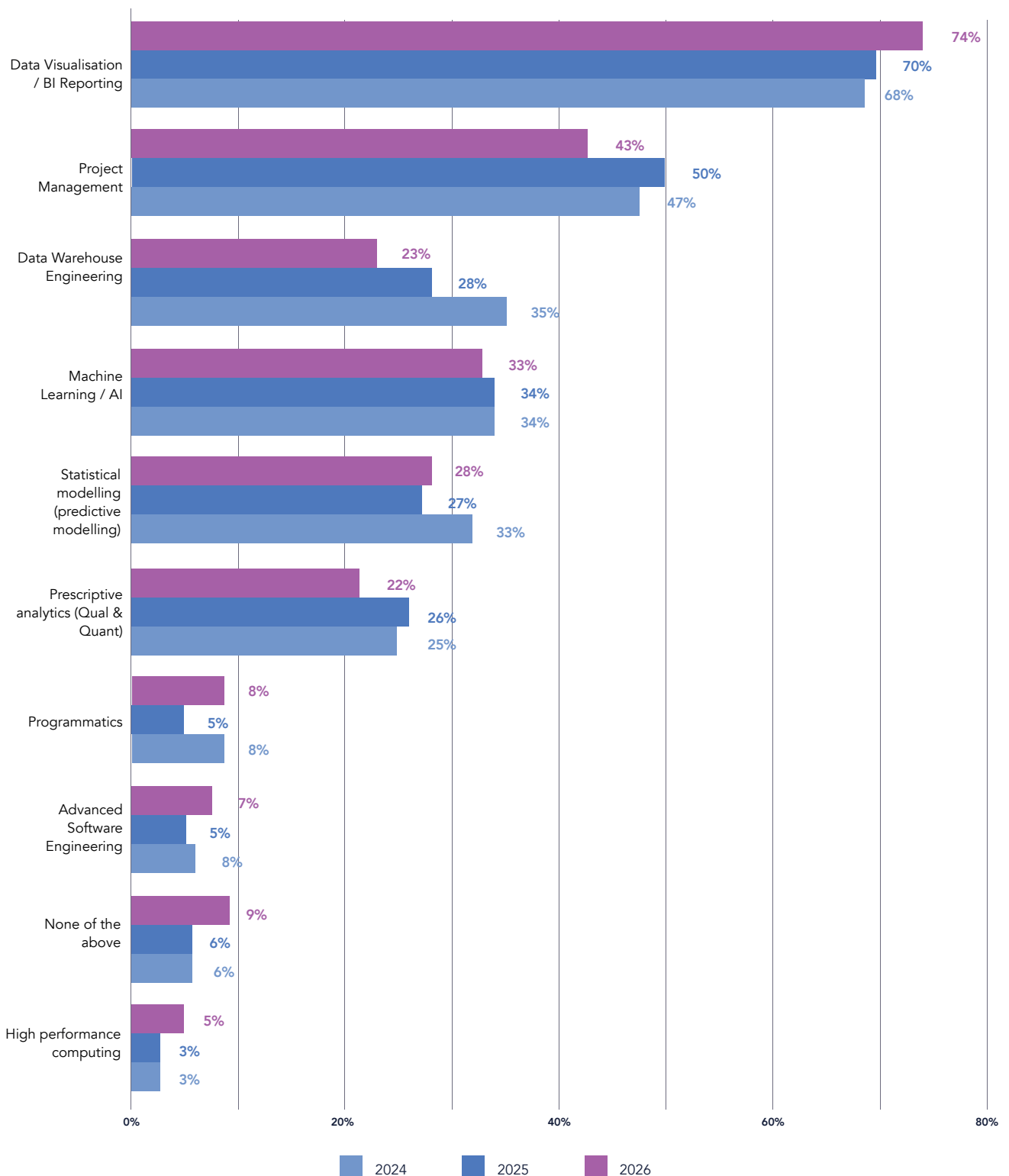
Marketing continues to have minimal responsibility for housing data, rising only marginally from **0% to 1.9%**, confirming its limited role in data stewardship.

HOW IMPORTANT IS DATA IN YOUR ORGANISATION?



The survey shows that data remains highly important in organisations, with the proportion viewing it as central to strategy rising from **45% in 2025** to **49% in 2026**. Meanwhile, those who see data as important but not yet central decline slightly (**36% to 33%**), suggesting more organisations are elevating data into strategic decision-making. Supportive-role perceptions also decrease (**19% to 15%**), indicating a shift away from treating data as peripheral. Only **0.66%** report that data is not important, highlighting its near-universal value.

WHAT ARE THE KEY TECHNICAL SKILLS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN YOUR ROLE?



The survey highlights shifting priorities in the technical skills considered essential for success from 2024 to 2026:

1. Top Skill Areas

Data Visualisation/BI Reporting remains the most critical capability, with consistently high importance across all three years (74% in 2026, 70% in 2025, 68% in 2024) despite a slight downward fluctuation. **Project Management** continues to rank strongly, though it shows a gradual decline from 50% in 2025 to 47% in 2026, following 43% in 2024, indicating a softening emphasis on traditional management competencies.

2. Emerging and Strengthening Technologies

Machine Learning/AI demonstrates steady growth, increasing from 33% in 2024 to 34% in both 2025 and 2026, reflecting sustained interest in advanced analytics and automation. **Data Warehouse Engineering** shows variable importance—rising from 23% in 2024 to 35% in 2025, then dipping to 28% in 2026 - suggesting shifting organisational needs around data infrastructure.

3. Declining or Deprioritised Skills

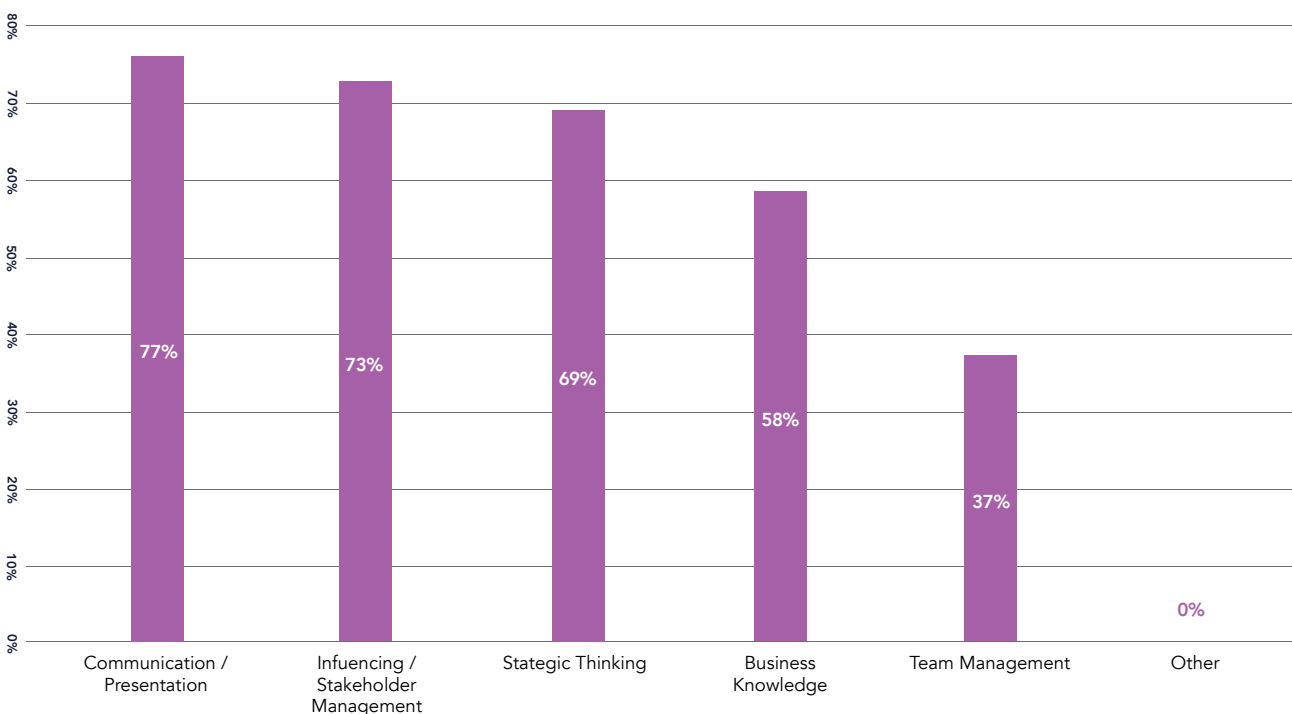
Statistical Modelling sees a mild decline (28% → 27% → 33%), indicating fluctuating but overall softening emphasis on traditional predictive techniques. **Prescriptive Analytics** shows a downward trend from 26% in 2025 to 25% in 2026, following 22% in 2024, suggesting reduced focus on optimisation-driven analytics. **Programmatics** and **Advanced Software Engineering** maintain low relevance, with values under 9%, reinforcing their niche usage within data focused roles.

4. Stable or Niche Skill Areas

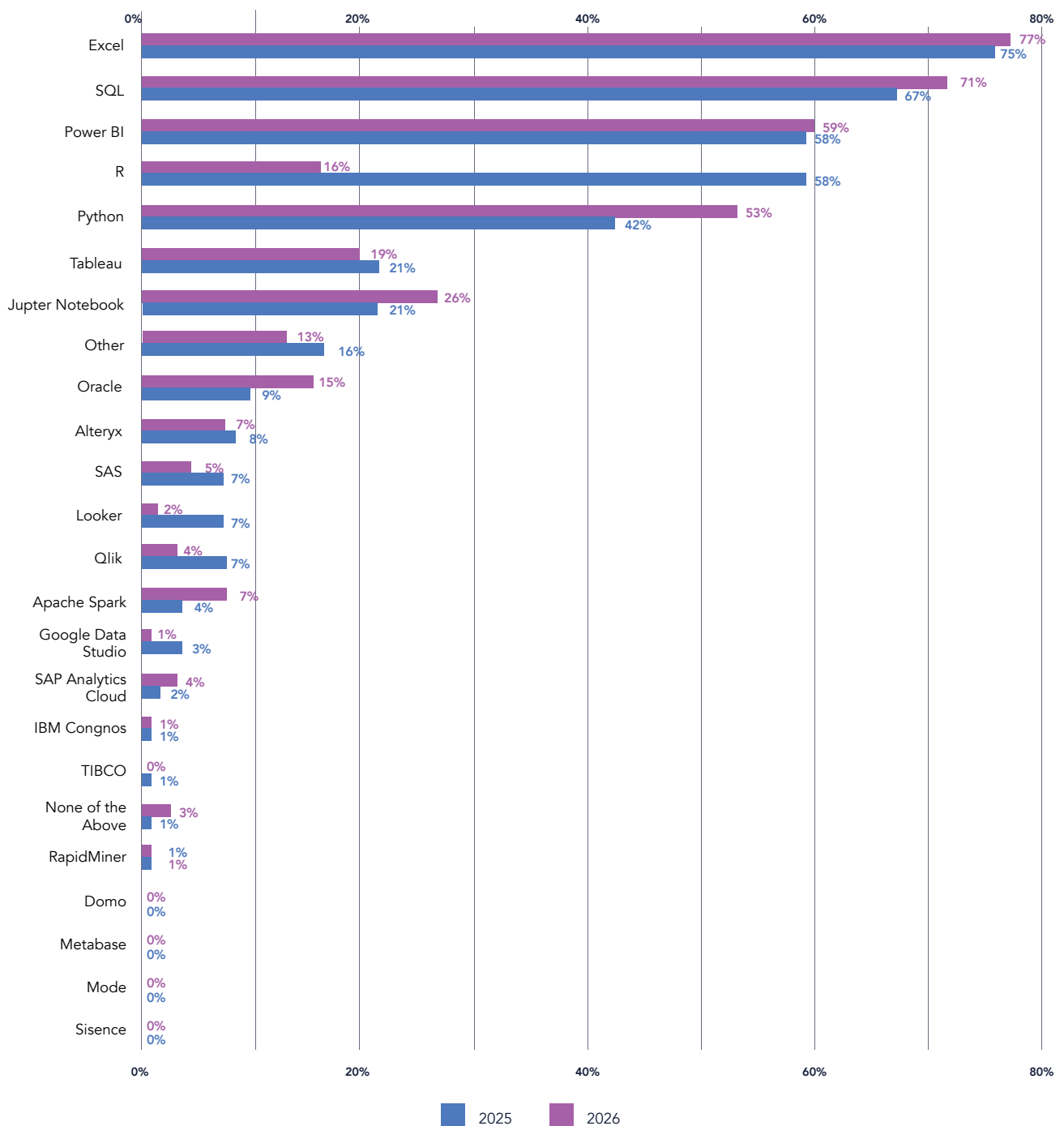
High Performance Computing remains relatively static at low levels (~2–3% across years), signalling limited demand for specialised computational capabilities. **“None of the above”** responses stay consistent (5–6%), indicating that only a small portion of respondents perceive success in their role as nontechnical or skillagnostic.

These trends reflect a strong and continuing emphasis on **data communication (BI/visualisation)** and **project execution**, alongside growing interest in **AI driven capabilities**. Traditional modelling approaches show signs of decline, while niche, highly technical skills remain stable but limited in adoption. Overall, the results point toward a shift toward **modern, scalable, and automation driven competencies** as organisations evolve their data strategies

WHAT ARE THE KEY SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN YOUR ROLE?



WHAT ARE THE MAIN SOFTWARE TOOLS YOU USE IN YOUR JOB?



The survey highlights the continued prominence of SQL (71%) and Excel (77%) as the most widely used tools, with Excel seeing an increase in usage to 77% in 2026.

Adoption of Python has grown significantly, rising from 42% to 53%, suggesting a shift towards open-source tools. Conversely, usage of R (42%) shows a significant decline, falling from 58% to 16% in 2026.

Looker (7%), Tableau(19%) and Alteryx (8%) have seen slight decline. Tools like Google Data Studio, SAP Analytics Cloud, and niche platforms remain at low adoption rates (<5%), with limited change year-over-year. Power BI(59%) and Oracle(15%) have seen slight growth compared to last year.

This data underscores the growing preference for cloud-based and open-source in modern workplaces.



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