How does our organization cope with the Corona experience?

Survey Results – **Spring 2021**

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01 Preface

Preface

New normal – the pandemic has hit us hard, but now it is time to look forward and start playing the new game. This year has both accelerated existing trends and brought new ones to light.

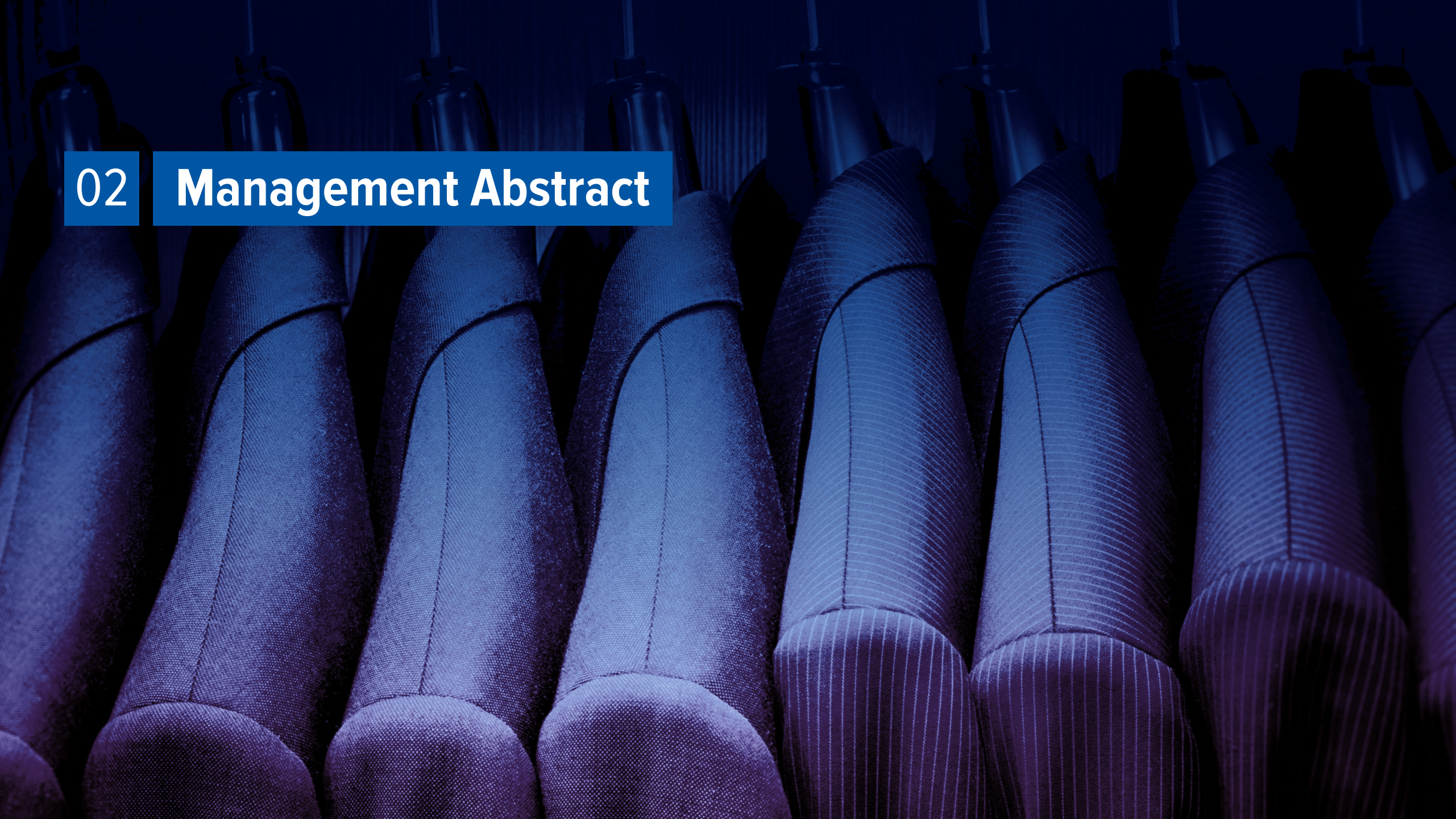
This report is about what **more than 300 companies** have experienced and learned during the pandemic, and how those insights will help us reframe the future for 2021 and beyond.

A big thank you to all the respondents, that contributed to **this second pro bono survey** conducted at the end of 2020, in order to identify how “the new normal” is shaping the future of Learning & Development.

The results give insight on how organizations are re-defining new ways of collaboration, remote working, mastering new tools, rethinking methods.

The findings enable companies to benchmark with others to get inspirations for planning the next steps.

Continuous exchange is more important than ever in the current situation. In case you want to check out the results from our first survey as of Summer 2020, please download the report from the following link:
https://ci-l.com/covid



02 Management Abstract

Management Abstract

Don`t just aim to return to the old normal – reframe what the new normal will be. Organizations have discovered that running a company can be different from how we were used to do it. These learnings will not be unlearned after COVID has disappeared – leaders and HR functions have to focus on how to create business value by building and educating the workforce needed to compete in a more digital future.

The pandemic has **accelerated the need to digitalize. More than 86%** of the companies shared, that significant trans-formation appeared throughout the corporate environment using digital collaboration and communication tools.

For

81%

corporate productivity even improved through remote work

62%

of the companies deal with the challenges of Corona better than initially expected

Accelerated training and development programs **increased** in one third of the organizations

Almost all organizations switched instructor led train-ings to online sessions

In

57%

of organizations, employees are more focused on tasks, and the collaboration has improved though the use of IT tools

88%

of the companies think that he future way of leading is **blended leading** – a mix of live/face-to-face & digital/ hybrid working

2021 is not going to bring an end to remote working.

86%

of organizations intend to work remotely 2- even 4 days per week in the future

For more than

50%

of the organizations **reskilling** and **upskilling** are crucial to reinvigorate employee growth

63%

of the companies are facing managing of employees remotely as a serious challenge

57%

of the organizations will implement agile methodologies

Employees will demand **greater flexibility for remote working**

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03 The findings in details

Most see COVID as a sustainable game changer

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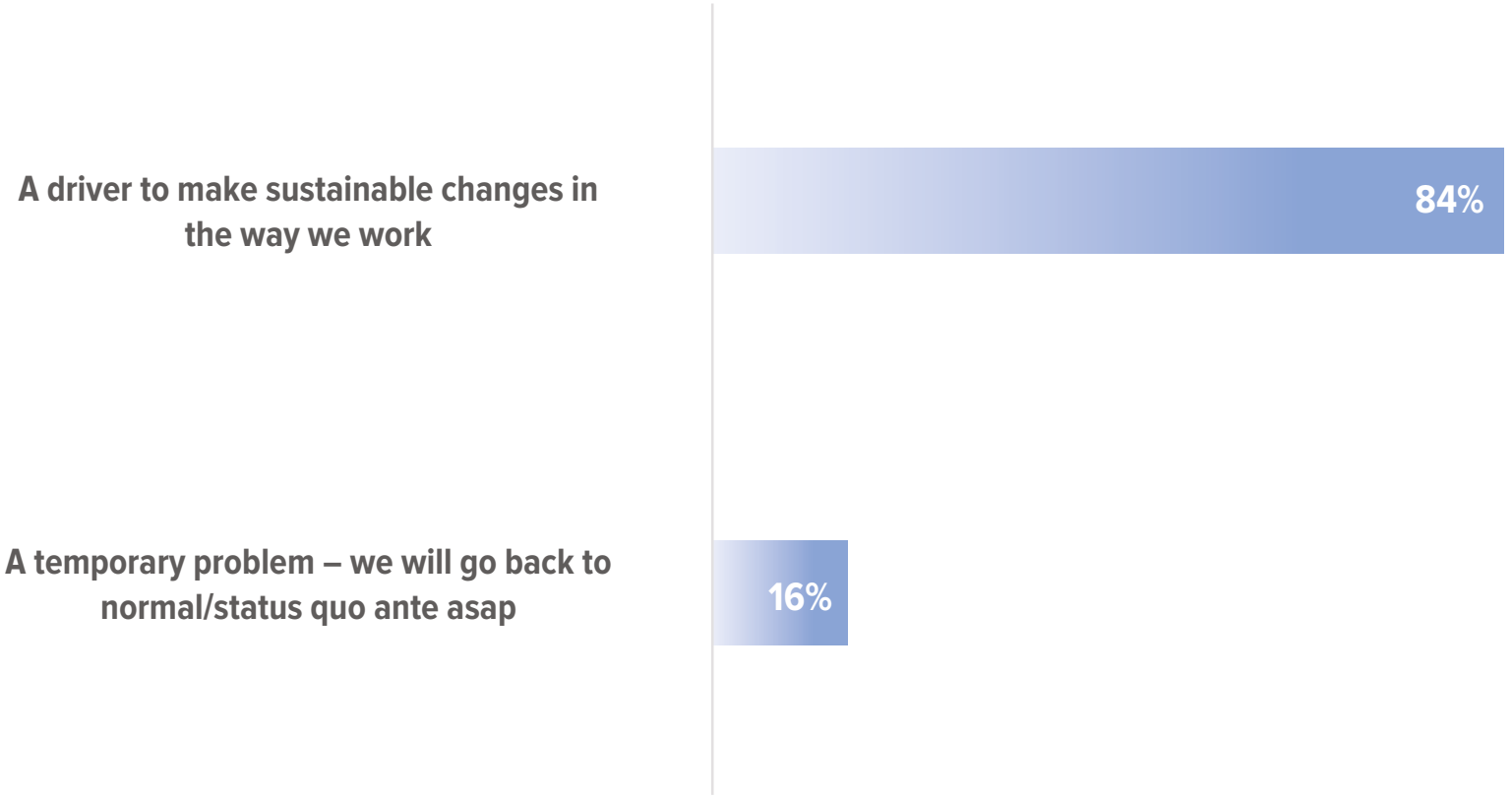

Q1 Our organization considers the COVID situation more as*?

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It was scary – but the majority did better than expected

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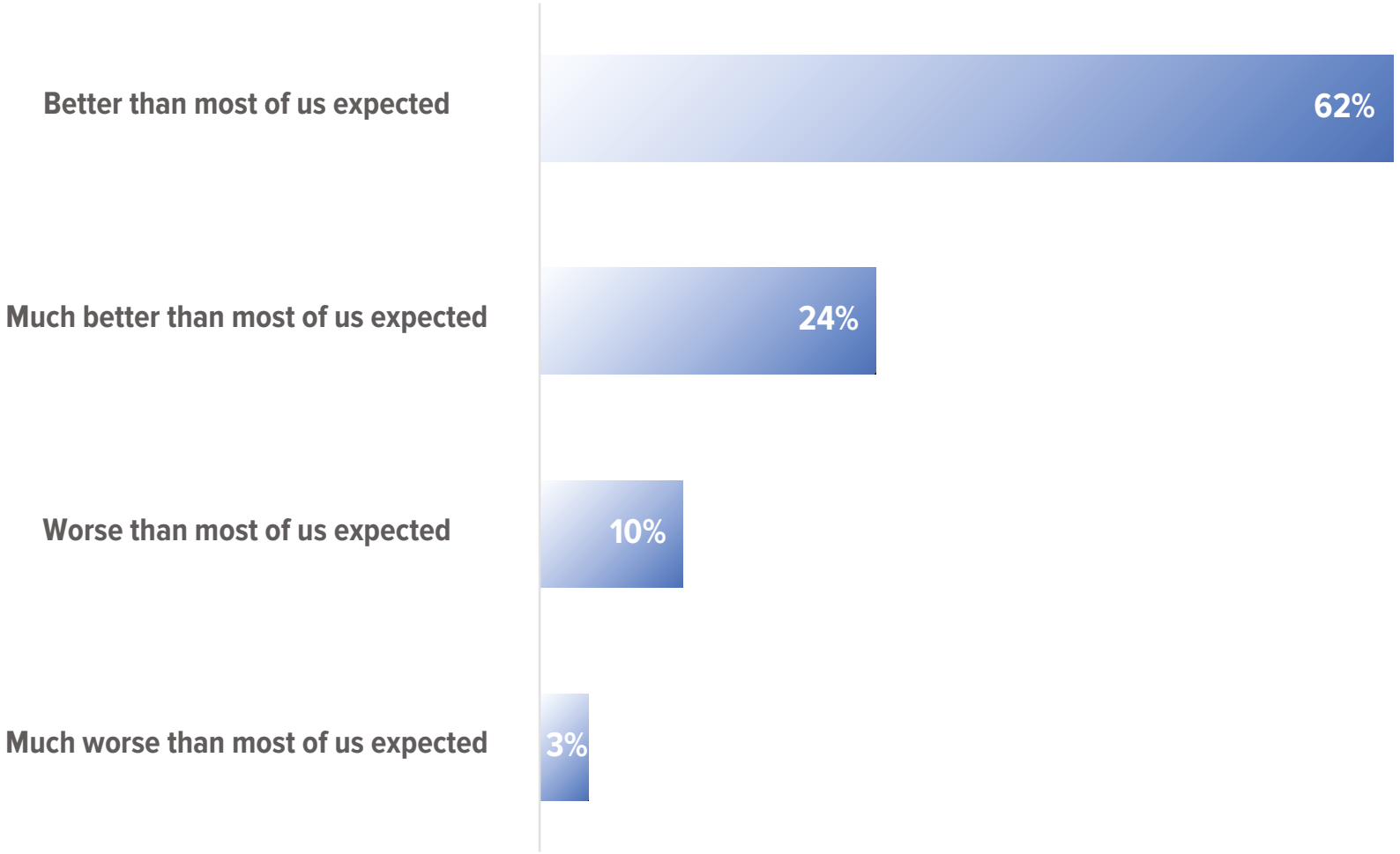

Q2 As an organization, we are dealing with the COVID challenge*

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You only learn when you reflect the experiences – which the majority does

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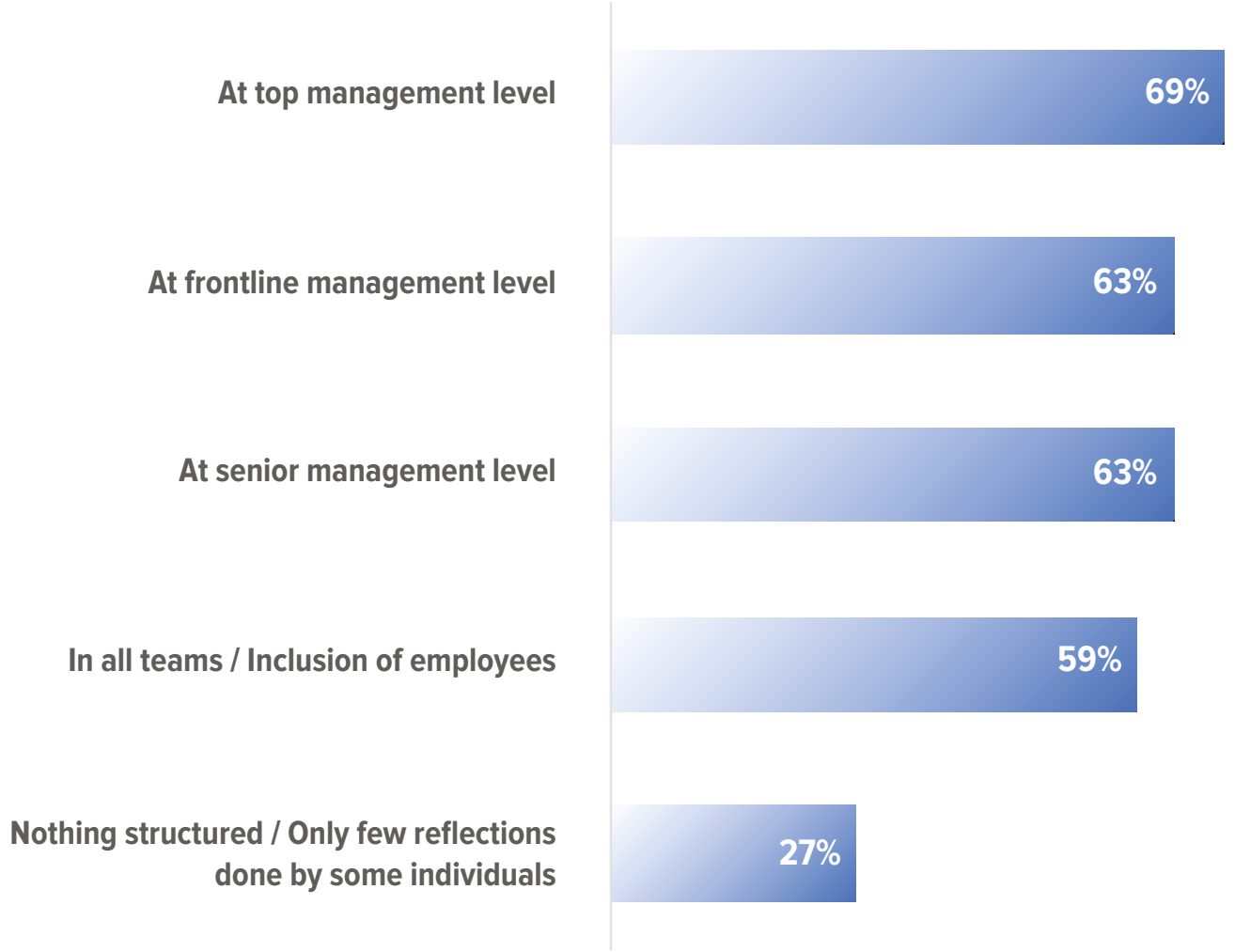

Q3 Our organization reflects on the COVID experiences it had so far

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More digital – less travel:
All in all, the pandemic had a lot of positive effects in many areas

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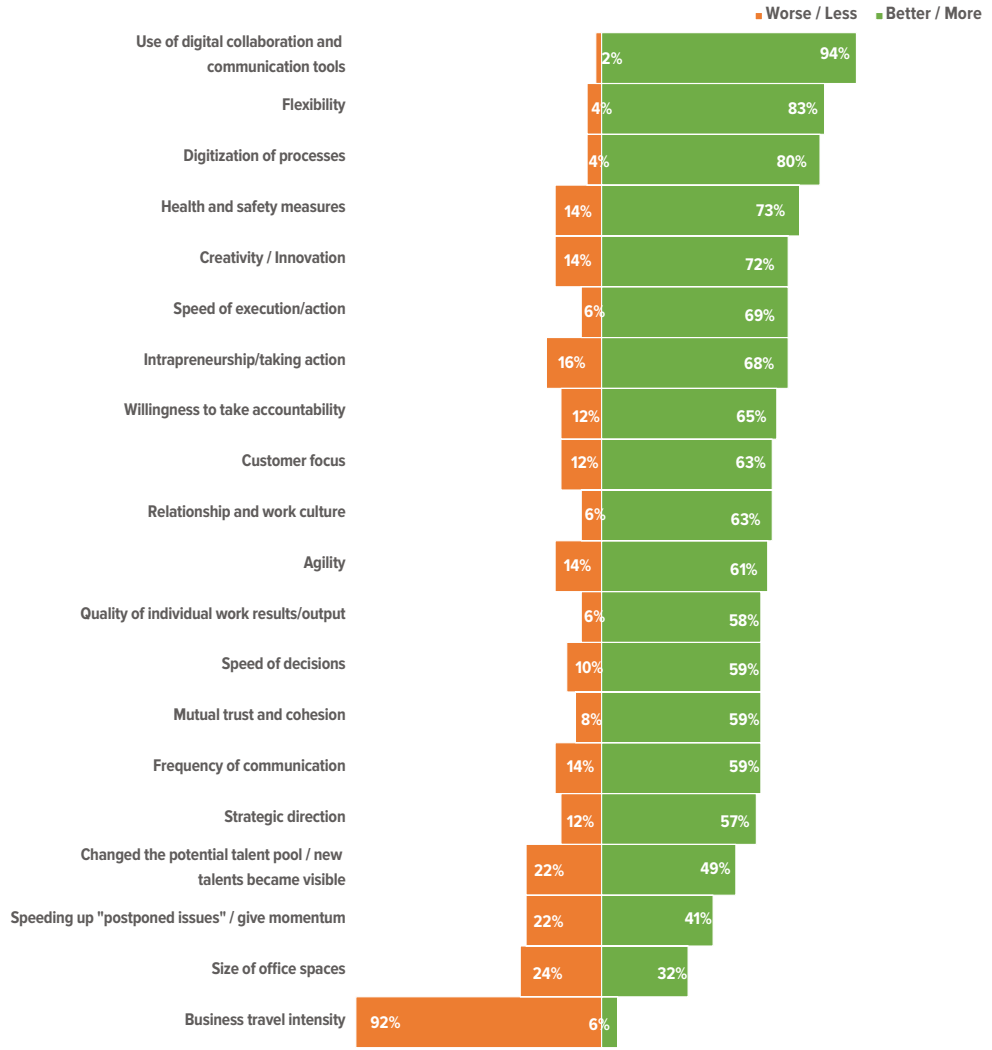

Q4 How did the pandemic transform the corporate environment?

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More digital – less travel: All in all, the pandemic had a lot of positive effects in many areas

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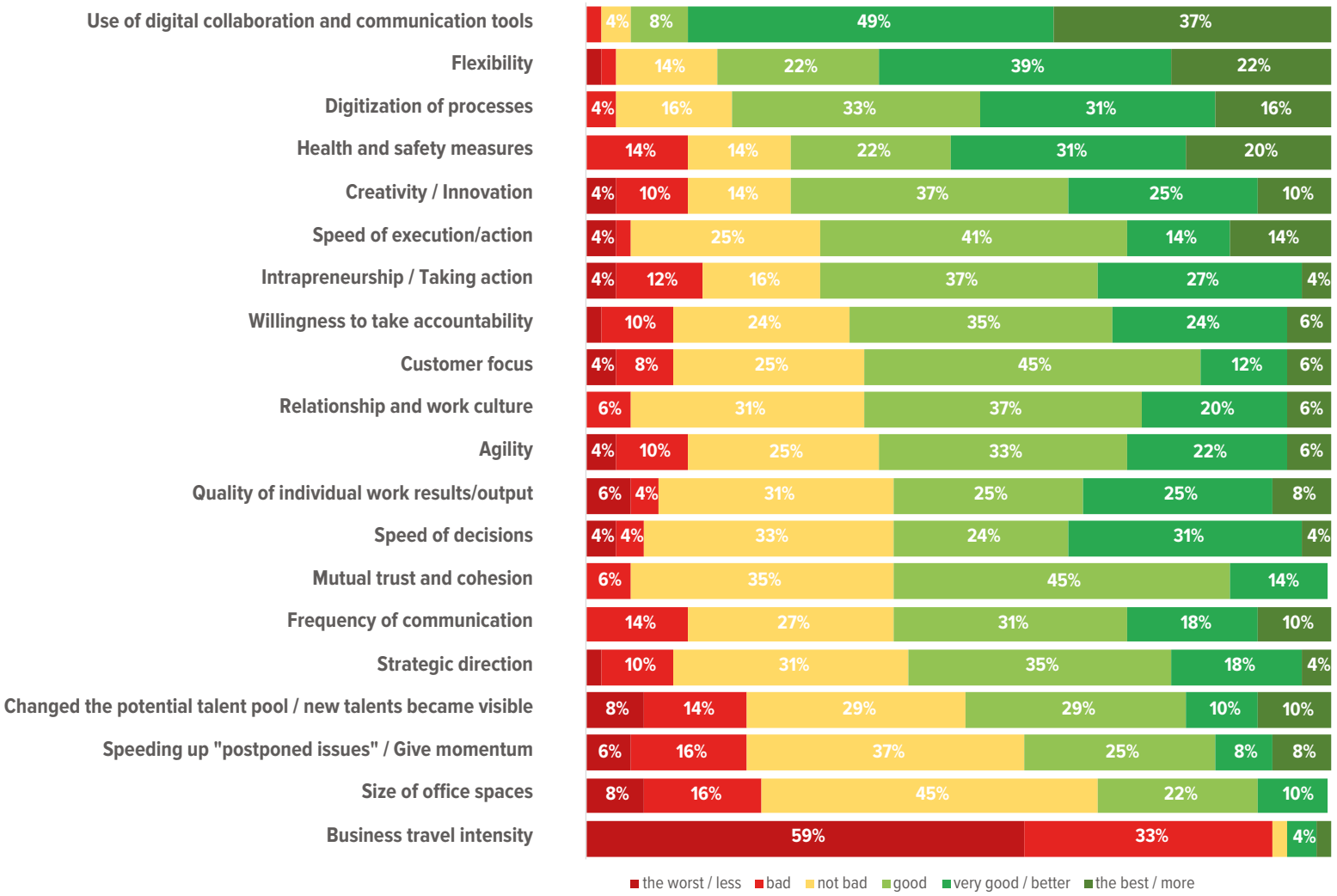

Q4 How did the pandemic transform the corporate environment?

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For two thirds, remote work (in home offices) would be possible

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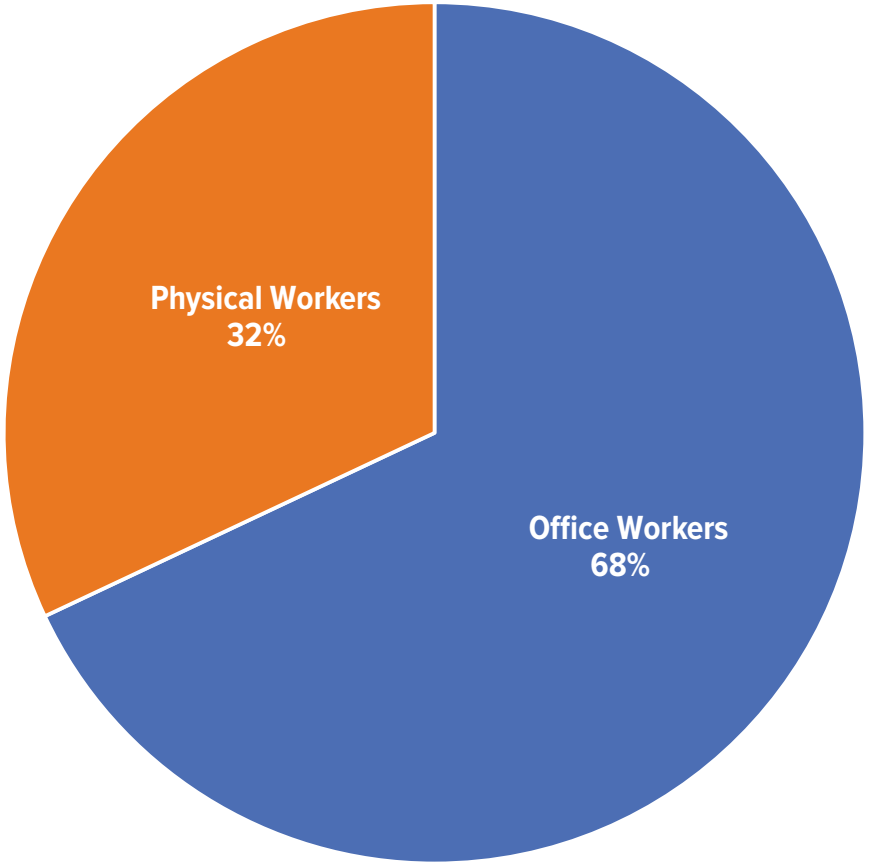

Q5 The workforce of the company: What % of your workforce are office workers? What % of your workforce are physical workers (no remote work possible)?

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Working in remote offices was the exception – but the pandemic forced a change...

...which will continue in the future

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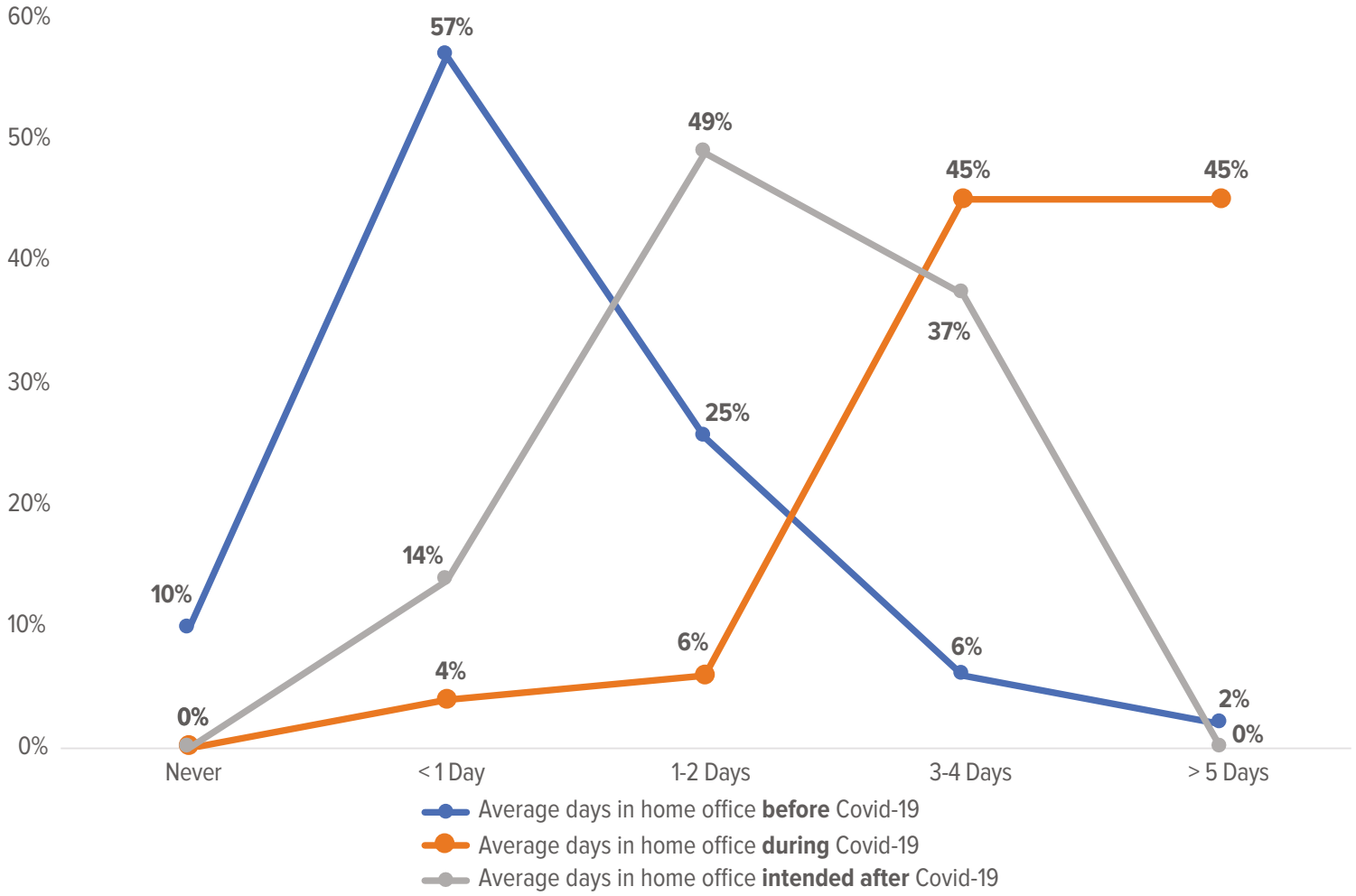

Q6 How did and will the Remote Work Trend change before, during and after COVID-19?

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Working remote definitely also has it‘s challenges for leadership

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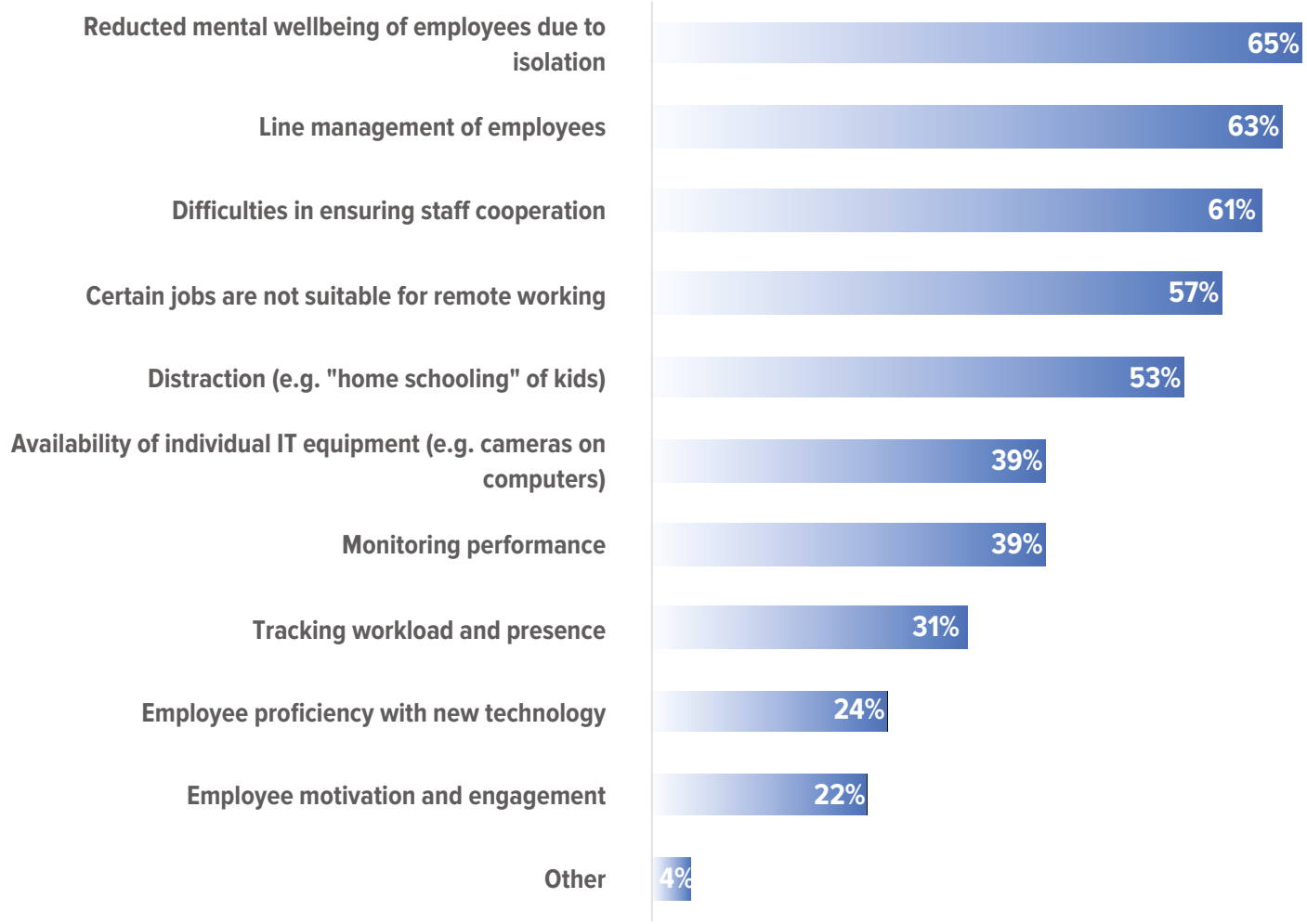

Q7 What challenges of working from home does the organization face?

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Working remote also showed some positive effects

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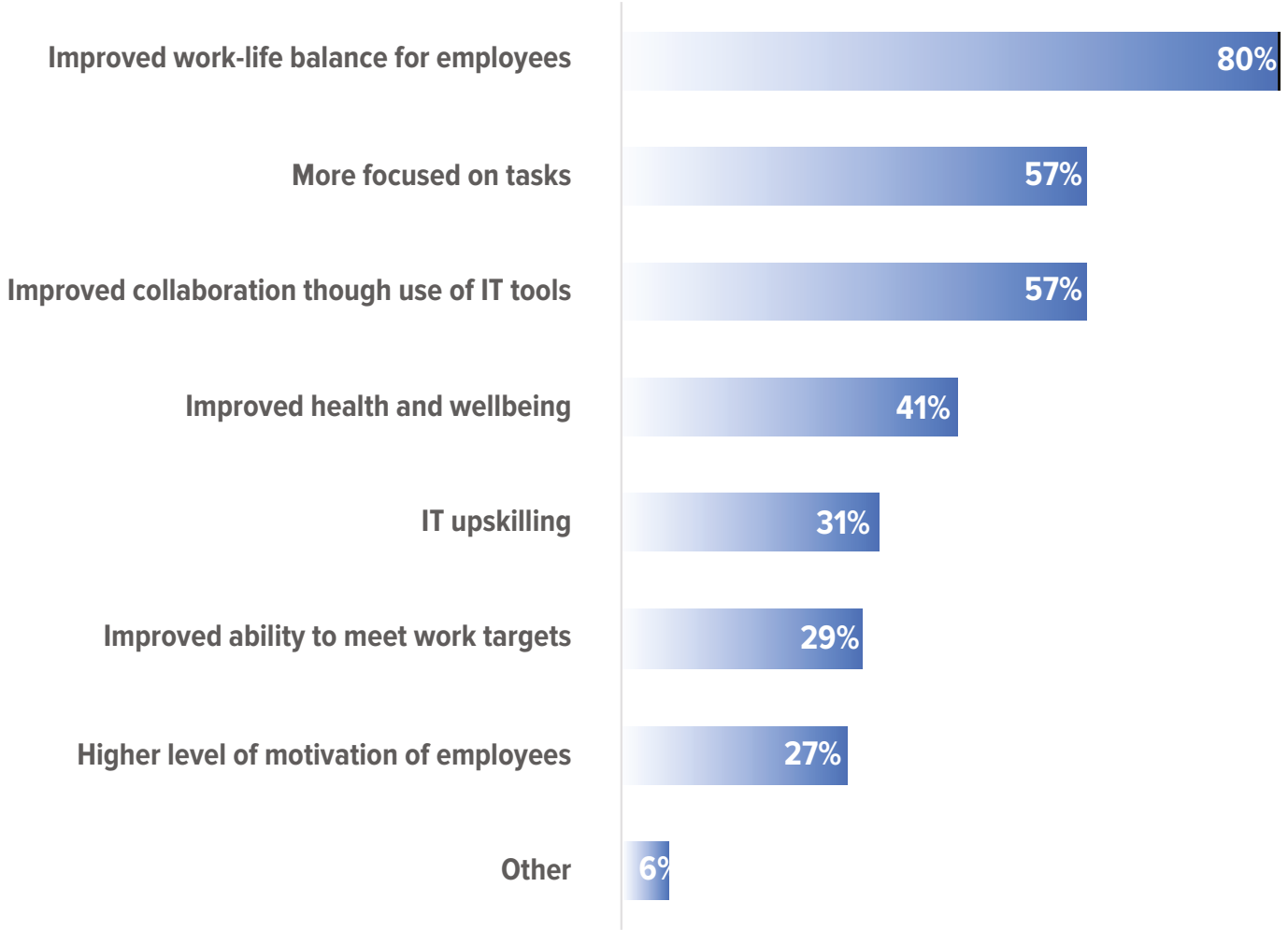

Q8 What are the benefits of working from home for the organization?

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Positive effects of a negative experience: Improved productivity in 81% of the companies conditions

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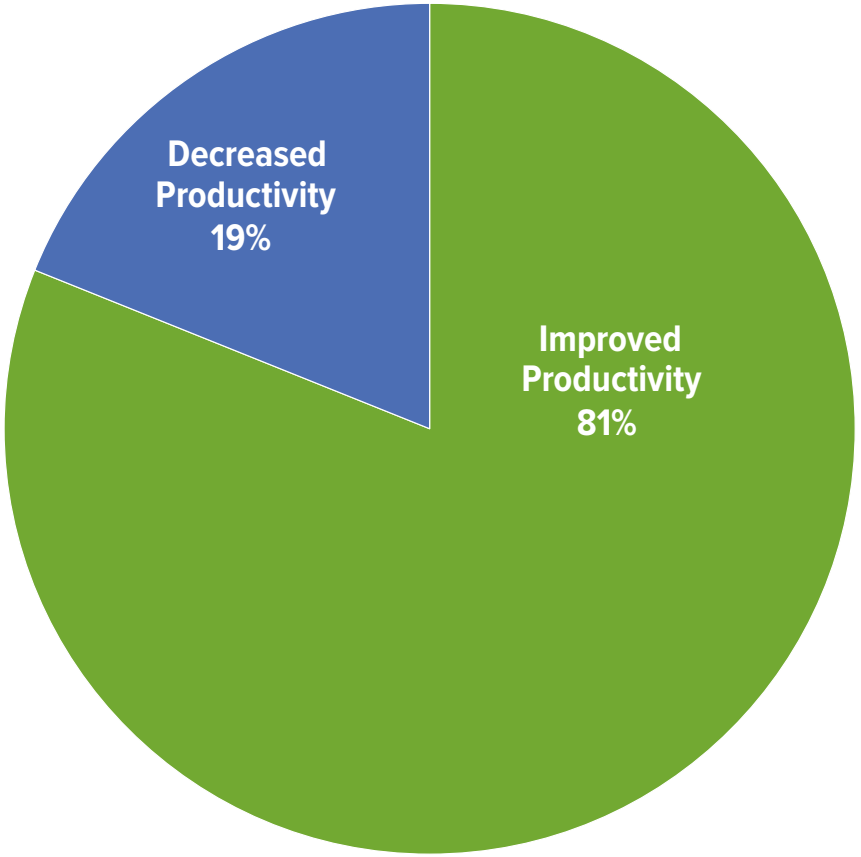

Q9 What is your perception about the company's overall productivity in terms of remote work?

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Accelarated digitalization, creation of more virtual/digital processes and change of working policy

...on focus while adapting to new normal

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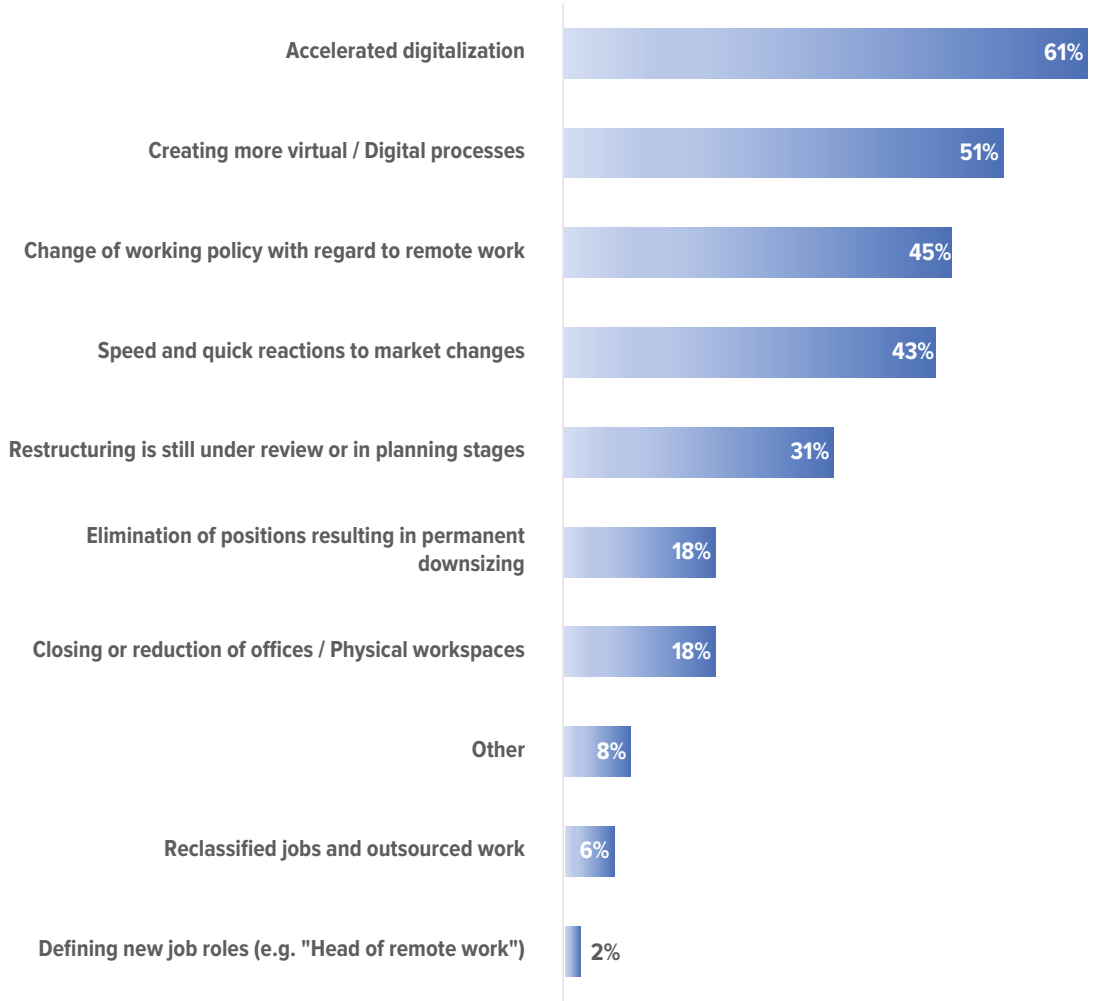

Q10 What is the current focus of the organization with regard to adaptation to the new normal?

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Virtual co-operation tools implemented

Half of the companies use MS Teams and e-mails as a primary communication tool

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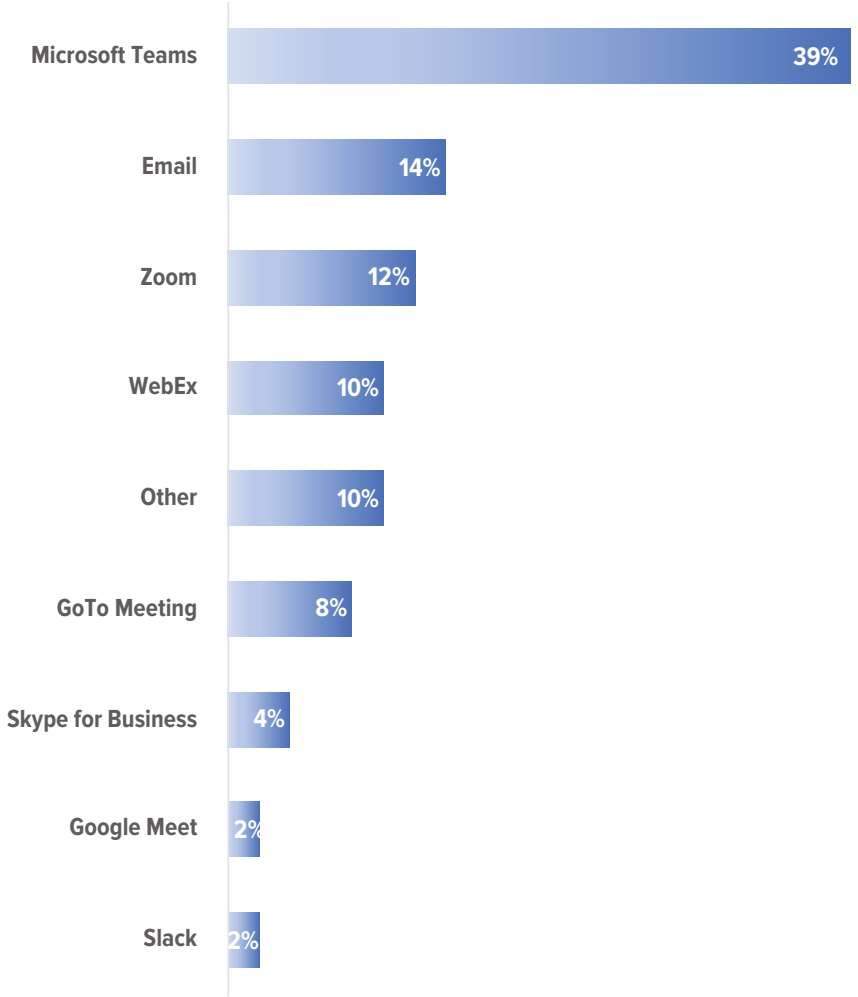

Q11 What internal communication platform is used as a primary tool?

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Only half of the leaders have advanced skills to lead virtually

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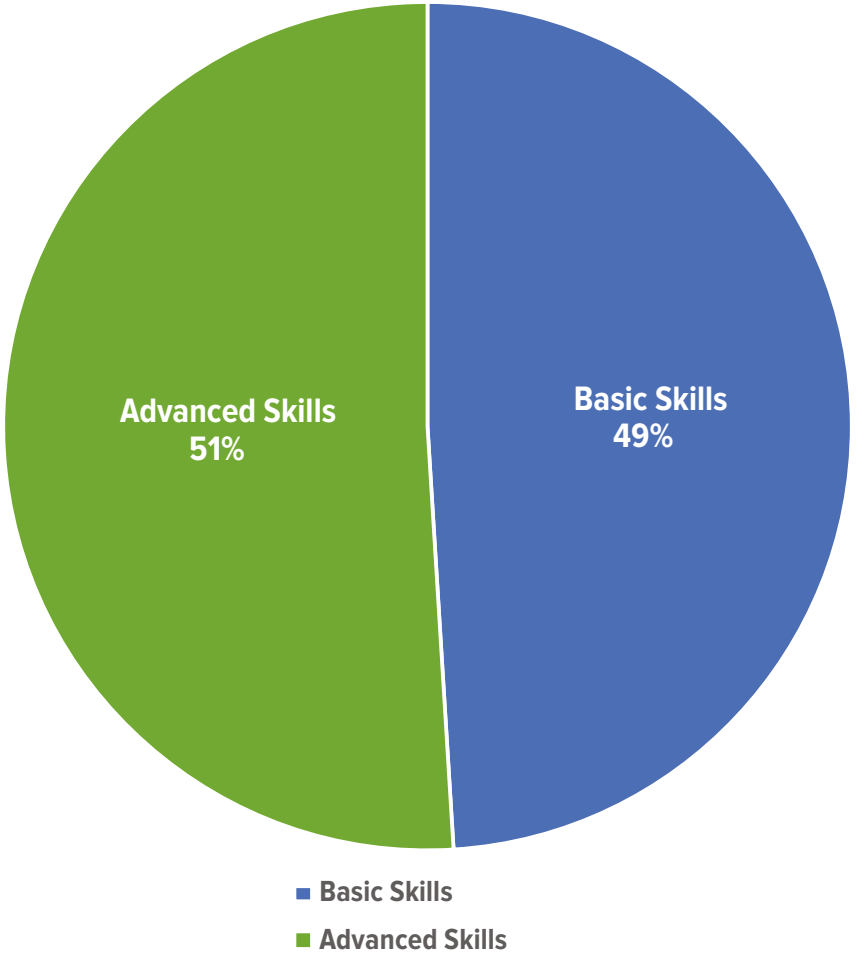

Q12 Besides just doing video conferences: how skilled is the majority of the leaders in using the full features of these communication platforms (like document sharing, chats, group work etc.) to really lead virtually?

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Not stopping training – but going digital

Online training sessions for employees and accelerated training programs

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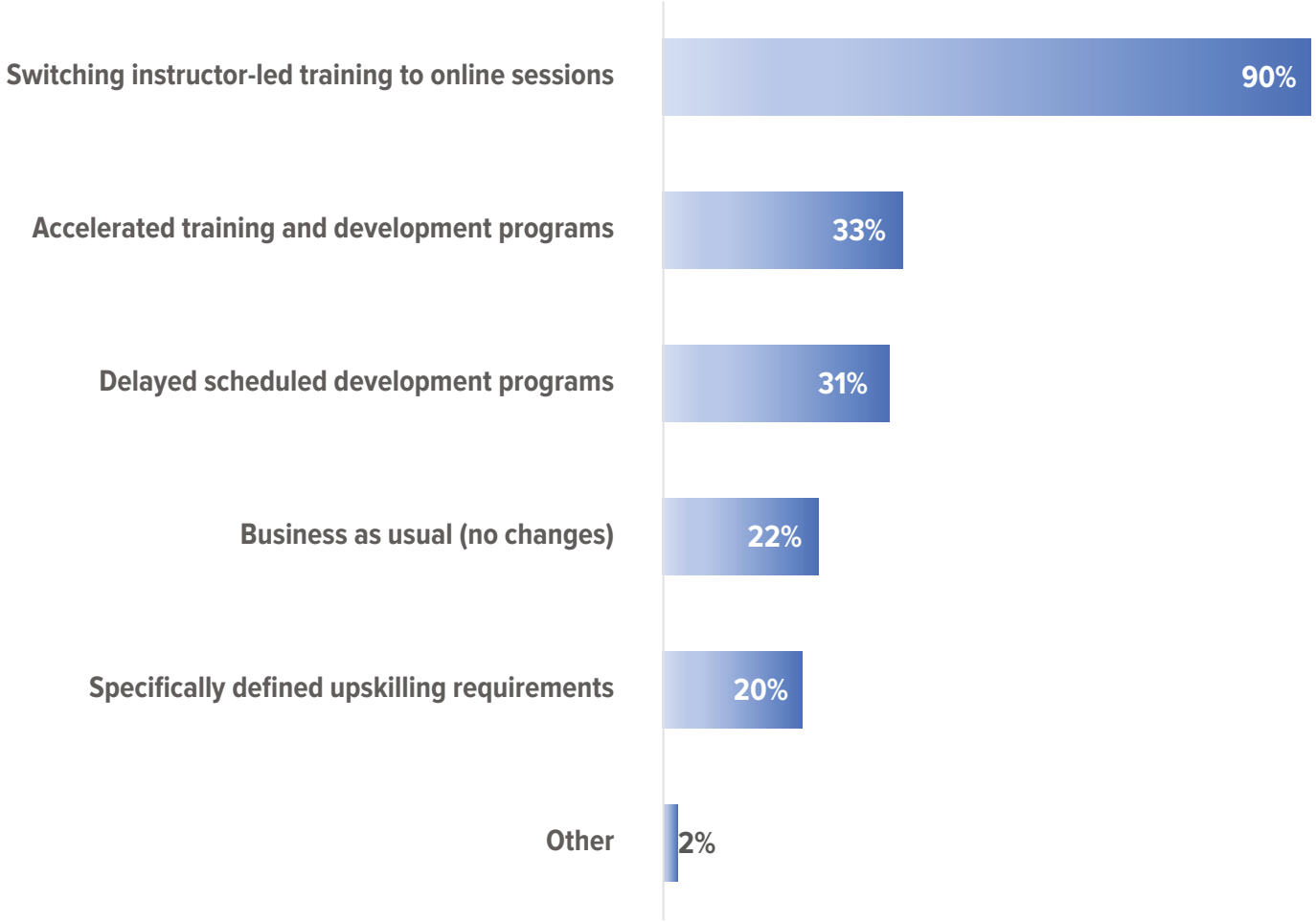

Q13 What is the organization doing in terms of employee learning and development in the new normal?

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Going digital in training has it‘s challenges

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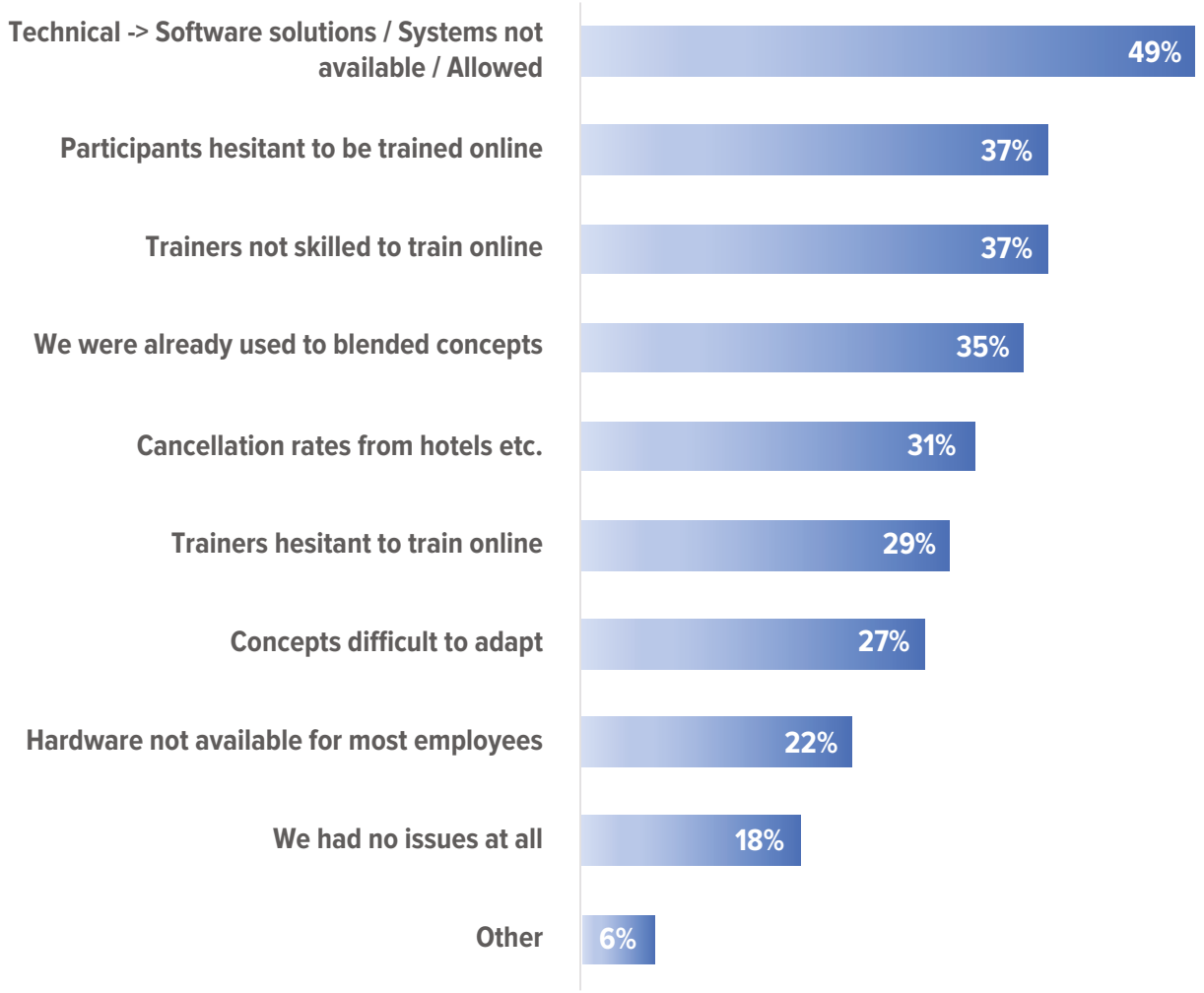

Q14 What were the initial challenges in moving from face-to-face trainings to virtual online solutions?

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The future of Leadership – Blendend leading: live & digital

Focus on agile methodologies and flexible structures, reskilling and upskilling of employees

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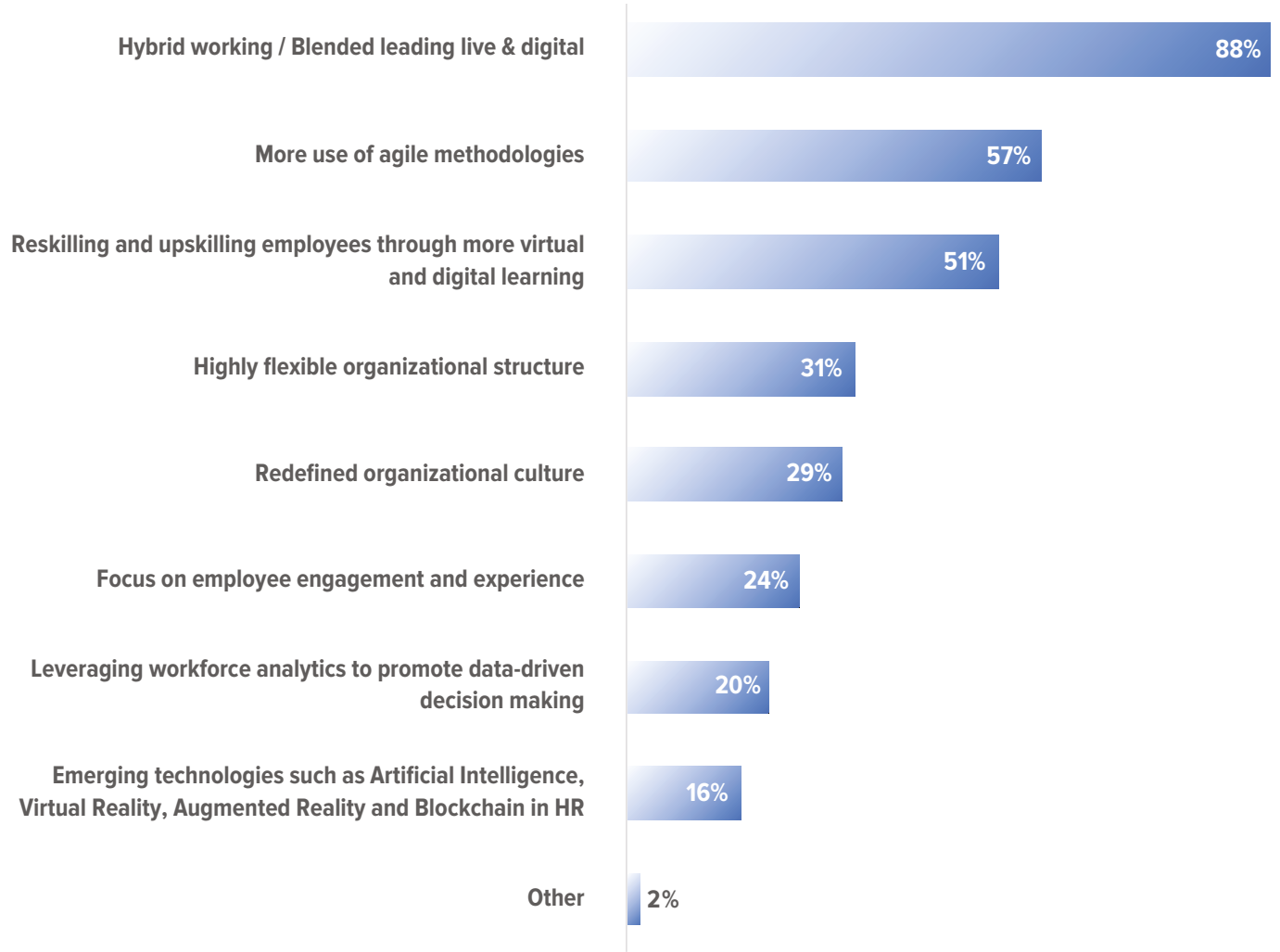

Q15 What are the expectations for the future ways of leading?

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Most organizations are still vigiliant after being under restrictions for over a year

...but the „forced experience" triggered more creativity

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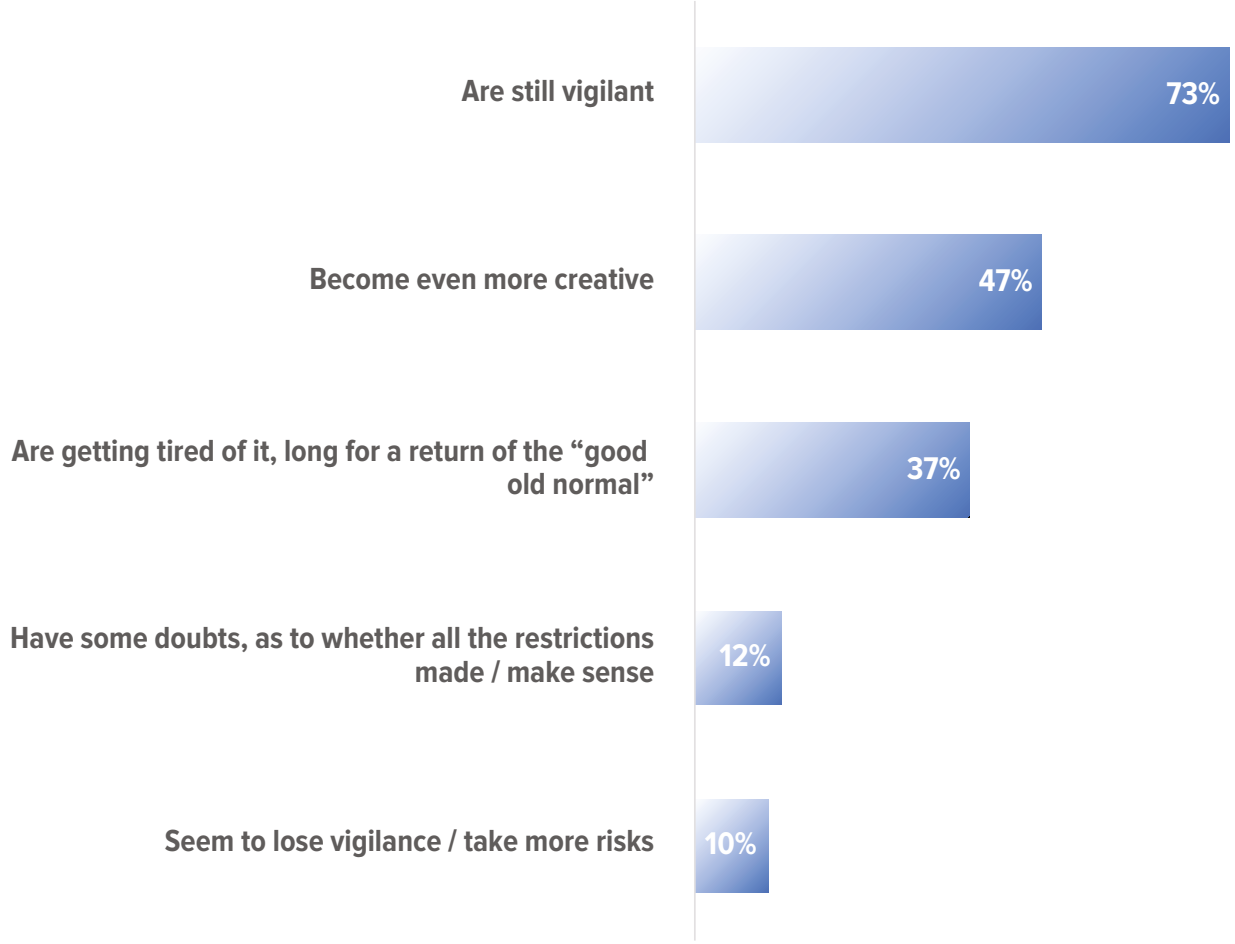

Q16 After being under COVID restrictions for quite some time, we...

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Some best practices how companies coped with the Pandemia

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Best practices shared:

„**Virtual** employee meeting“

„High flexibility, (partially) **organization-specific solutions**, early consideration of home office“

„Focus on **employee health and wellbeing**“

„Fast and uncomplicated relocation of workplaces to home, increased communication between management and employees, **individual approach to problems** of individuals (e.g. health problems etc.) regular information and **communication** in all areas of the company“

„Give **confidence** – mobile working wherever possible“

„Put everything to the test and **change** consistently“

„Good **team cohesion**.“

„Weekly **virtual** team meetings“

„Regular flow of information through **internal communication tools**“

„**Cultural ambassadors** as contact persons for all employees“

„High **flexibility**, employees move to other positions without grumbling where there is a need for capacity. Many teams are trying out more **digital formats** (eagerness to experiment)“

„**Team meetings not only for work purposes** – even after work drinks taste better together online“

„**Culture** and attitude to the **new normal** should be clarified.“

Q17 What type of “best practice” in your company would you like to share with other colleagues (anonymized!) – what makes your company stand out?

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Competencies and skills leaders need to focus on in the future... digital mindset, flexibility, self-management and empathy in the virtual environment

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New leadership competencies and skills needed:

„Flexibility, ability to really engage with new things, ability to let go and trust, managing by tasks, not by attendance time, digital skills, etc.“

„Self-management, manager as (learning) coach for employees.“

„Leadership, taking responsibility, **delegating**, working together at eye level“

„Tolerance of ambiguity“

„Digital knowledge and readiness (mindset)“

„Flexibility, trust, clarity“

„Dealing with **collaboration tools**, moderation skills in online meetings, **empathy in virtual space**“

„Openness to change, self-management, communication skills, digital affinity, decision-making skills, follow-up awareness“

„Virtual Leadership“

„Motivation / Empathy, Scrum / Kanban (agile methods), good language skills (in online sessions the factor body language is missing)“

Q18 What type of new competencies and skills are needed for leaders to work in the new normal?

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Changes in the learning culture towards the new normal

More openness to digital and blended practice

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Leaning culture in the “New Normal”:

„More **digitization**“

„Continuous learning“

„More self-direction, more **virtual learning**, more direct knowledge exchange“

„Managers are **developing employees** and see themselves as **learning coaches for employees**“

„More **self-initiative** and self-direction“

„Better able to cope with uncertainties and to **get involved with new things**“

„Openness to **digital formats**, more **blended solutions**“

„More **self-directed learning** also within the context of the work and no longer “isolated“

„**E-learning tools** are convincing when **interaction** takes place, i.e., exclusively consuming knowledge is not enough – activity and **personal responsibility** must be strengthened.“

Q19 How will the “new normal” influence the learning culture of the organization?

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04 Annex: The Questionnaire

1. Our organization considers the COVID situation more as*
- a temporary problem – we will go back to normal/status quo ante asap
- a driver to make sustainable changes in the way we work

2. As an organization, we are dealing with the COVID challenge*
- much worse than most of us expected
- worse than most of us expected
- better than most of us expected
- much better than most of us expected

3. Our organization reflects on the COVID experiences it had so far*
- at top management level
- at senior management level
- at frontline management level
- in all teams / inclusion of employees
- nothing structured / only few reflections done by some individuals
- almost no one reflects on the experiences

4. How did the pandemic transform the corporate environment?
- Use of digital collaboration and communication tools
- Relationship and work culture
- Mutual trust and cohesion
- Intrapreneurship/taking action
- Willingness to take accountability
- Speed of decisions
- Speed of execution/action
- Agility
- Creativity / Innovation
- Flexibility
- Worse/lessBetter/more
- Speeding up “postponed issues” / give momentum
- Size of office spaces
- Frequency of communication
- Quality of individual work results/output
- Digitization of processes
- Business travel intensity
- Customer focus
- Health and safety measures
- Strategic direction
- Changed the potential talent pool / new talents became visible
- Other

5. The workforce of the company:
- What % of your workforce are office workers?

- What % of your workforce are physical workers (no remote work possible)?

6. How did and will the Remote Work Trend change before, during and after COVID-19?
Average days in home office before Covid-19
- 0 days
- < 1 day
- 1-2 days
- 3-4 days
- ≥ 5 days

Average days in home office during Covid-19
- 0 days
- < 1 day
- 1-2 days
- 3-4 days
- ≥ 5 days

Average days in home office intended after Covid-19
- 0 days
- < 1 day
- 1-2 days
- 3-4 days
- ≥ 5 days

7. What challenges of working from home does the organization face?*
- Reducted mental wellbeing of employees due to isolation
- Difficulties in ensuring staff cooperation
- Availability of individual IT equipment (e.g. cameras on computers)
- Line management of employees
- Monitoring performance
- Tracking workload and presence
- Employee motivation and engagement
- Employee proficiency with new technology
- Certain jobs are not suitable for remote working
- Distraction (e.g. “home schooling” of kids)
- Other

8. What are the benefits of working from home for the organization?*
- Improved work-life balance for employees
- Improved collaboration though use of IT tools
- More focused on tasks
- IT upskilling
- Higher level of motivation of employees
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved ability to meet work targets
- Other

9. What is your perception about the company’s overall productivity in terms of remote work?
- Decreased
- Improved

10. What is the current focus of the organization with regard to adaptation to the new normal?*
Select top 3 only
- Change of working policy with regard to remote work
- Accelerated digitalization
- Speed and quick reactions to market changes
- Creating more virtual/ digital processes
- Closing or reduction of offices/physical workspaces
- Reclassified jobs and outsourced work
- Elimination of positions resulting in permanent downsizing
- Restructuring is still under review or in planning stages
- Defining new job roles (e.g. “Head of remote work”)
- Other

11. What internal communication platform is used as a primary tool?*
- Microsoft Teams
- Skype
- Skype for Business
- WebEx
- Zoom
- Slack
- Google Meet
- GoTo Meeting
- Adobe Connect
- Facetime
- WhatsApp
- Viber
- Email
- We do not use such platforms at all
- Other

12. Besides just doing video conferences: how skilled is the majority of the leaders in using the full features of these communication platforms (like document sharing, chats, group work etc.) to really lead virtually?
- Basic skills
- Expert skills

13. What is the organization doing in terms of employee learning and development in the new normal?*
- Business as usual (no changes)
- Accelerated training and development programs
- Specifically defined upskilling requirements
- Delayed scheduled development programs
- Switching instructor-led training to online sessions
- Other

14. What were the initial challenges in moving from face-to-face trainings to virtual online solutions?*

- Concepts difficult to adapt
- Technical -> Software solutions/systems not available/ allowed
- Hardware not available for most employees
- Trainers hesitant to train online
- Trainers not skilled to train online
- Participants hesitant to be trained online
- Cancellation rates from hotels etc.
- We were already used to blended concepts
- We had no issues at all
- Other

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15. What are the expectations for the future ways of leading?*
- Hybrid working / blended leading live & digital
- Highly flexible organizational structure
- Leveraging workforce analytics to promote data-driven decision making
- Emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Blockchain in HR
- More use of agile methodologies
- Reskilling and upskilling employees through more virtual and digital learning
- Redefined organizational culture
- Focus on employee engagement and experience
- Other

16. After being under COVID restrictions for quite some time, we*
Tick all that apply
- are getting tired of it, long for a return of the “good old normal”
- seem to lose vigilance / take more risks
- have some doubts, as to whether all the restrictions made/ make sense
- are still vigilant
- become even more creative

17. What type of “best practice” in your company would you like to share with other colleagues (anonymized!) - what makes your company stand out?

18. What type of new competencies and skills are needed for leaders to work in the new normal?

19. How will the “new normal” influence the learning culture of the organization?

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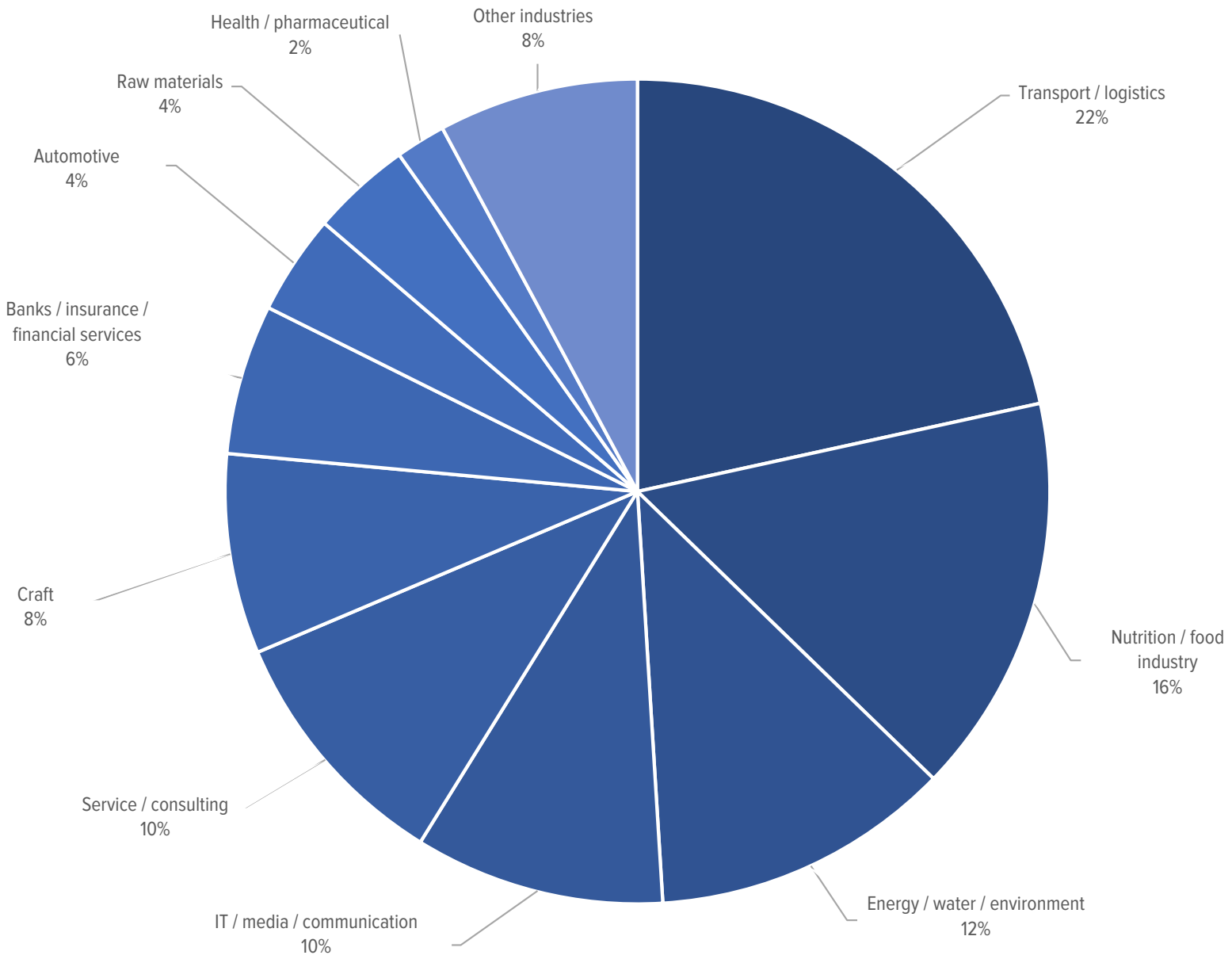
05 About this survey



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More than

300 companies

from

11 industries

contributed

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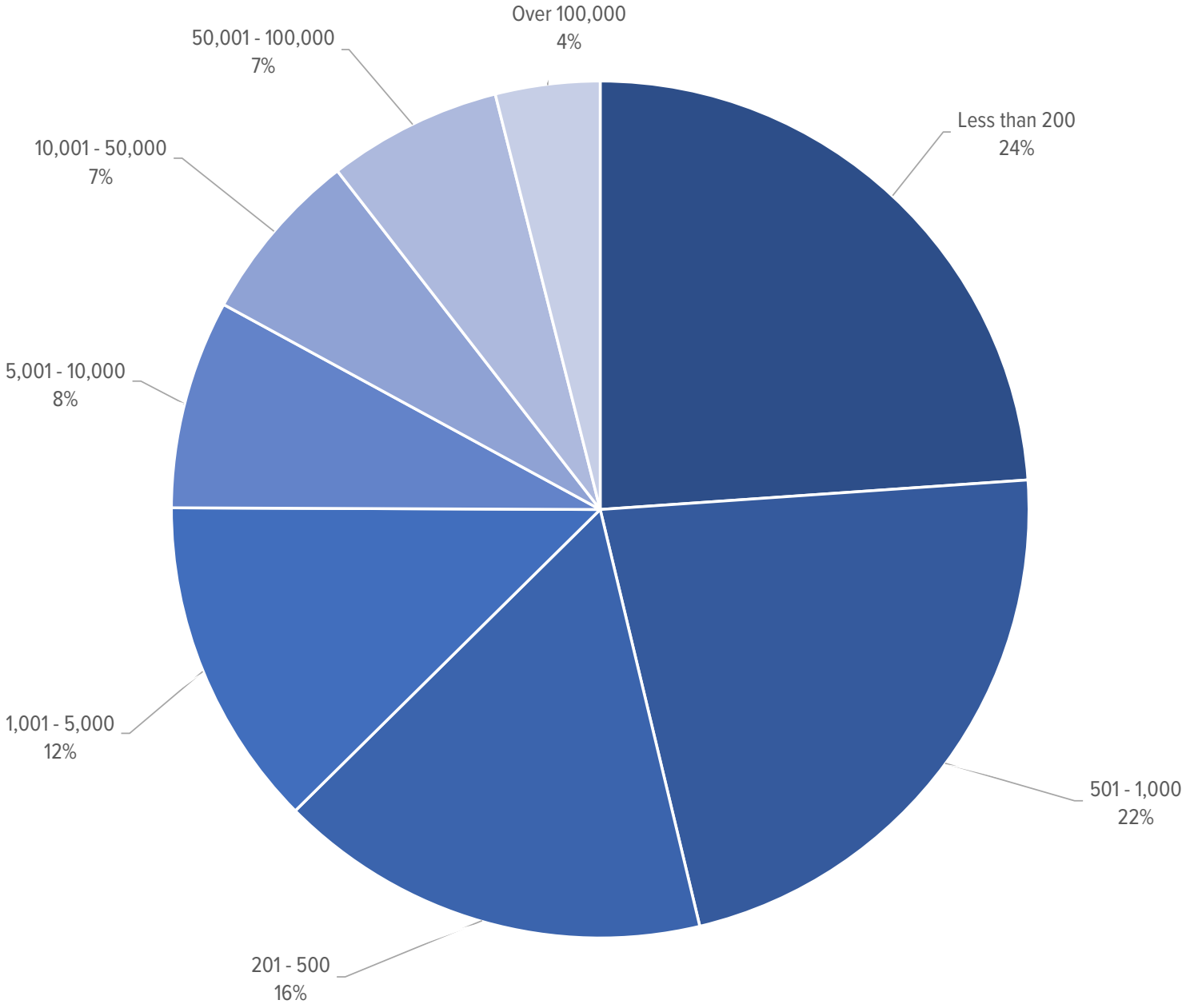

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Medium sized companies contributed most to this survey

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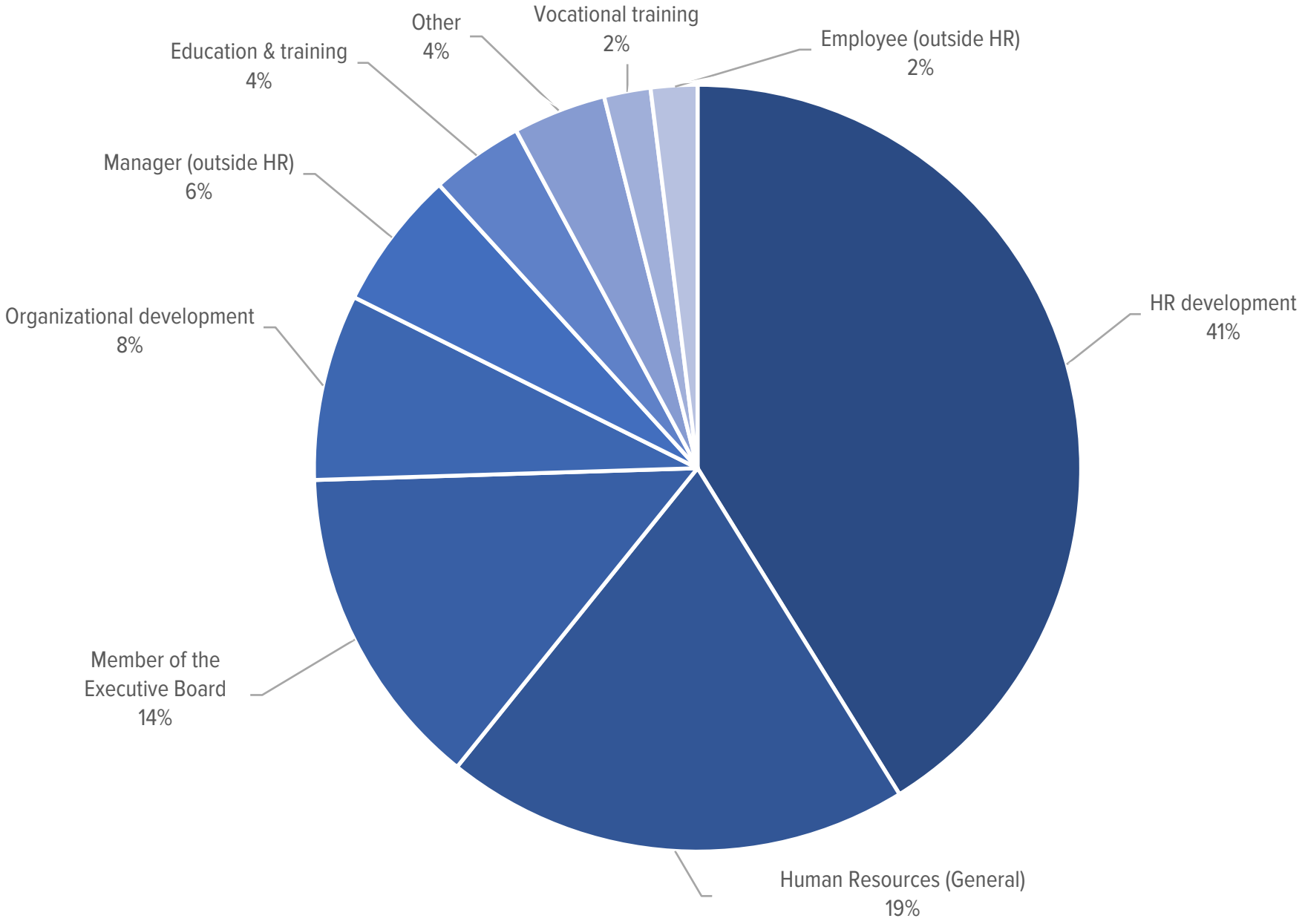

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Most respondents are from various **HR functions**

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06 About Us

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Need more Innovation?

Allow space for a genuine ‘better done than perfect’ mentality

Who we are

You hate consultants? Great! Because we don’t see ourselves as a consultancy either. We won’t tell you what strategy you should go for and we don’t move in with your company. Our expertise comes in when you are clear about your strategy and when you could use some minimally invasive support in aligning and mobilizing the people in your organization.

We are change experts with a track record of more than 30 years of market expertise. We are a trusted partner of mostly mid-sized, often family-owned businesses who are dealing with designing internal communication processes in times of change that lead to results.

Our philosophy

Helping you to achieve your goals.

Leadership attuned to every new norm?

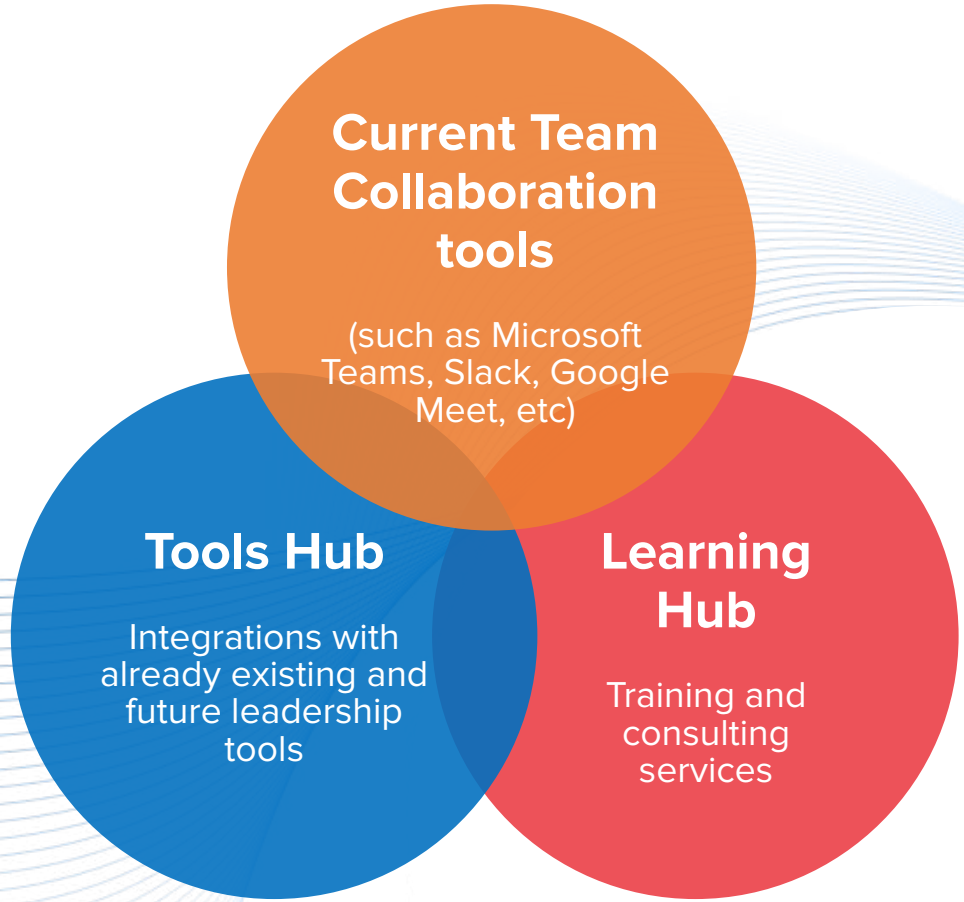
Now possible with Blended Leading.

2020 transformed the way leaders, teams and individuals function and collaborate. The need for distant leadership skills and remote work are growing tremendously.

Blended Leading offers a **new leadership environment**

The goal: Improved distant leadership and team engagement for virtual teams working home offices and decentralized.

Blended Leading offers a complete process for HRs and leaders: a combination of **Leadership training modules** and **an IT ecosystem** to augment leadership.



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Our Services

We cover the key topics that help your organization innovate

Our vision is to bring more authenticity and connectedness to the workplace. Our basic belief is that people want to contribute. The question is what's holding them back in bringing in their full potential. When we're more authentic and connected to ourselves, it's easier to connect with others and to co-create a culture of mutual trust and performance.

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Digital Solutions for Corporate Success

Digital tools that enhance HR/OD and leadership processes

„Digitization“ and „agility“ are not just contemporary buzzwords but imperatives for a successful corporate future.

Feedback tools – we provide a wide range of digital feedback solutions to help corporations to grow and improve

Engagement surveys and **soft indicators** – our indicator solutions help to keep business and projects run smoothly, especially in terms of KPI`s for HR and Change Management

We help leaders with digitizing workflows with our innovative digital tools and apps: Specific 360° Feedbacks, Employee Opinion Surveys, Talent Portfolio App, Values indicator.

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