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People Matter

STATE OF THE WORKPLACE

Full Data Report with Charts 2025
Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia—Mid-Atlantic

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01. INTRODUCTION

TriNet is proud to introduce the 2025 State of Work: Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia—Mid-Atlantic Report. In a year marked by rapid technological advancement, shifting employee expectations and continued evolution in how and where work gets done, Mid-Atlantic organizations remain at the forefront of change.

Across industries, employers are navigating increasing complexity—from balancing flexibility and performance to integrating artificial intelligence and investing in workforce development. At the same time, employees are redefining engagement, growth, and what meaningful work looks like in 2025.

This Mid-Atlantic edition examines how employers and employees are experiencing work today.

SURVEY APPROACH

The 2025 State of Work: Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia—Mid-Atlantic Report is based on survey responses collected in 2025 from full-time employers and employees working at Mid-Atlantic-based small and medium-size businesses. Two complementary surveys were conducted: one targeting employers and HR decision-makers, and one targeting employees across a range of roles and seniority levels.

This report includes data from the following states: Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

Industries represented include: Financial Services, Life Sciences, Main Street Industries, Nonprofit, Professional Services and Technology.

Generations represented include: Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980), Millennials (1981–1996) and Generation Z (1997–2012).

Results are reported as percentage distributions. Select-all-that-apply questions may total more than 100%. All findings reflect 2025 data only.

01.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. There is a persistent perception gap between employers and employees.

Across work hours, engagement, growth path clarity, AI use, and reasons for leaving, employers consistently view workplace conditions more positively than employees do. Leaders tend to underestimate workload strain and overestimate engagement, career clarity and benefit alignment.

2. Workload pressure is real—and underestimated.

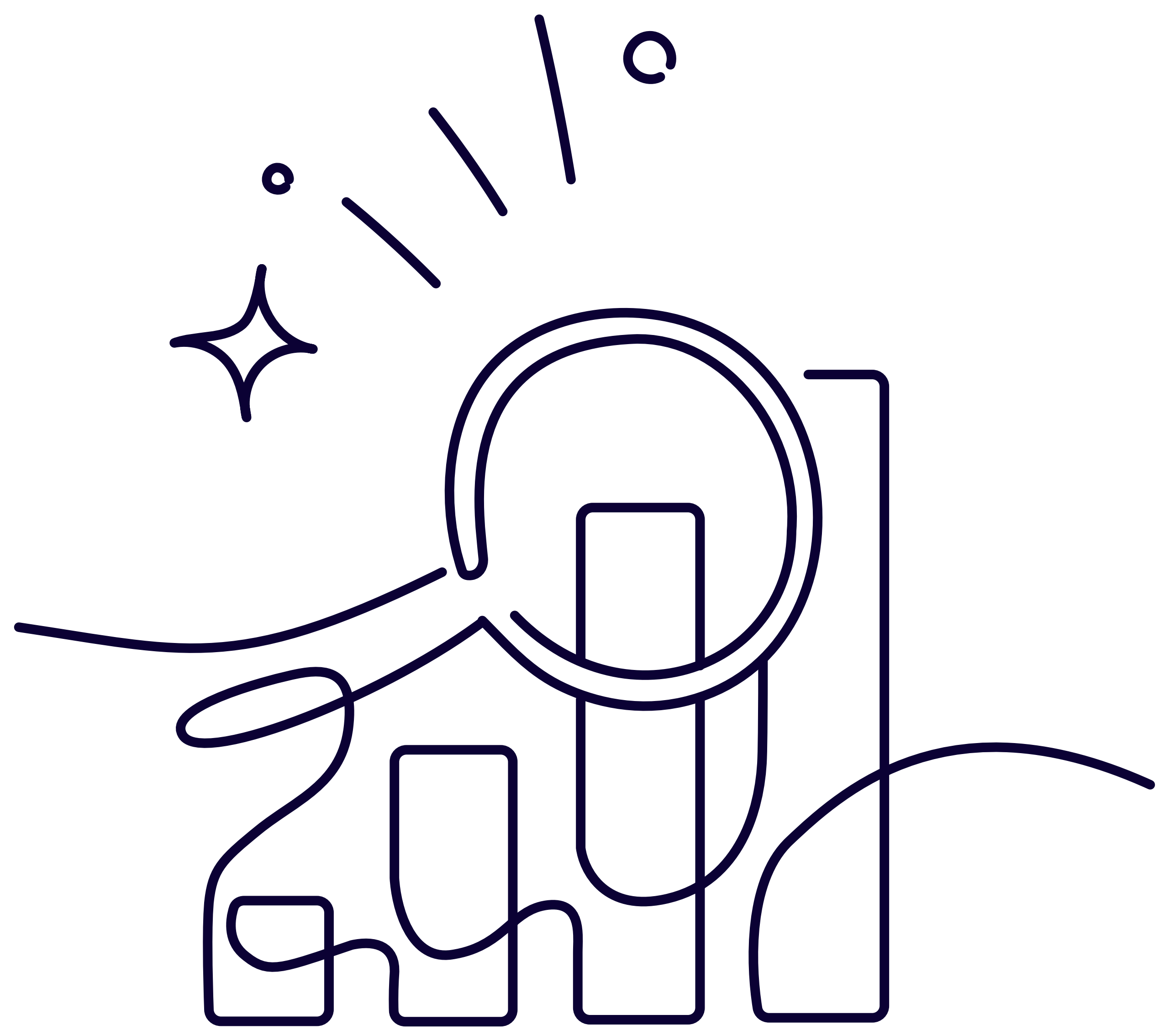
While 76% of employers believe employees work the "right number" of hours, 36% of employees say they work too many (combined slightly too many, too many and extremely too many hours). Employees also report substantially more work beyond 40 hours per week than employers estimate.

3. AI adoption is accelerating—but trust remains fragile.

Employers use AI more frequently than employees; however, employees express higher concern about AI accuracy, escalation, bias, and follow-through. AI is embedded in daily HR tasks, but human oversight remains critical.

02. METHODOLOGY

The 2025 State of Work: Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia—Mid-Atlantic Report is based on survey data collected June 30–July 2, 2025 from full-time employers and employees working in Mid-Atlantic states at organizations with five to 500 employees. Two separate but related surveys were administered: an employer survey completed by senior leaders and HR decision-makers, and an employee survey completed by full-time professionals across a range of industries and seniority levels.



Employer respondents → **N = 128**

Employee respondents → **N = 125**

Results are presented as percentage distributions. Select-all-that-apply questions may total more than 100%. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. All findings reflect 2025 data only.

The data and percentages cited are based on a sample population and may not represent the specific geographic regions, industries or generations. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, TriNet makes no guarantees regarding the completeness or applicability of the information to your specific organization or situation.

03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employers underestimate the number of hours employees work and the number who feel they work too many hours. Employers also have higher work/life satisfaction than employees. Younger employees especially seem to be taking care of personal matters during work hours. While managers believe flexible hours are critical to encouraging work/life balance, employees are more interested in generous paid time off. Employees and employers generally feel connected to their work and the company's mission, but employers feel more connected to direct managers than employees. Younger employees are disproportionately spending personal time during the workday, and the perception gap on work/life balance prioritization mirrors the pattern seen nationally.

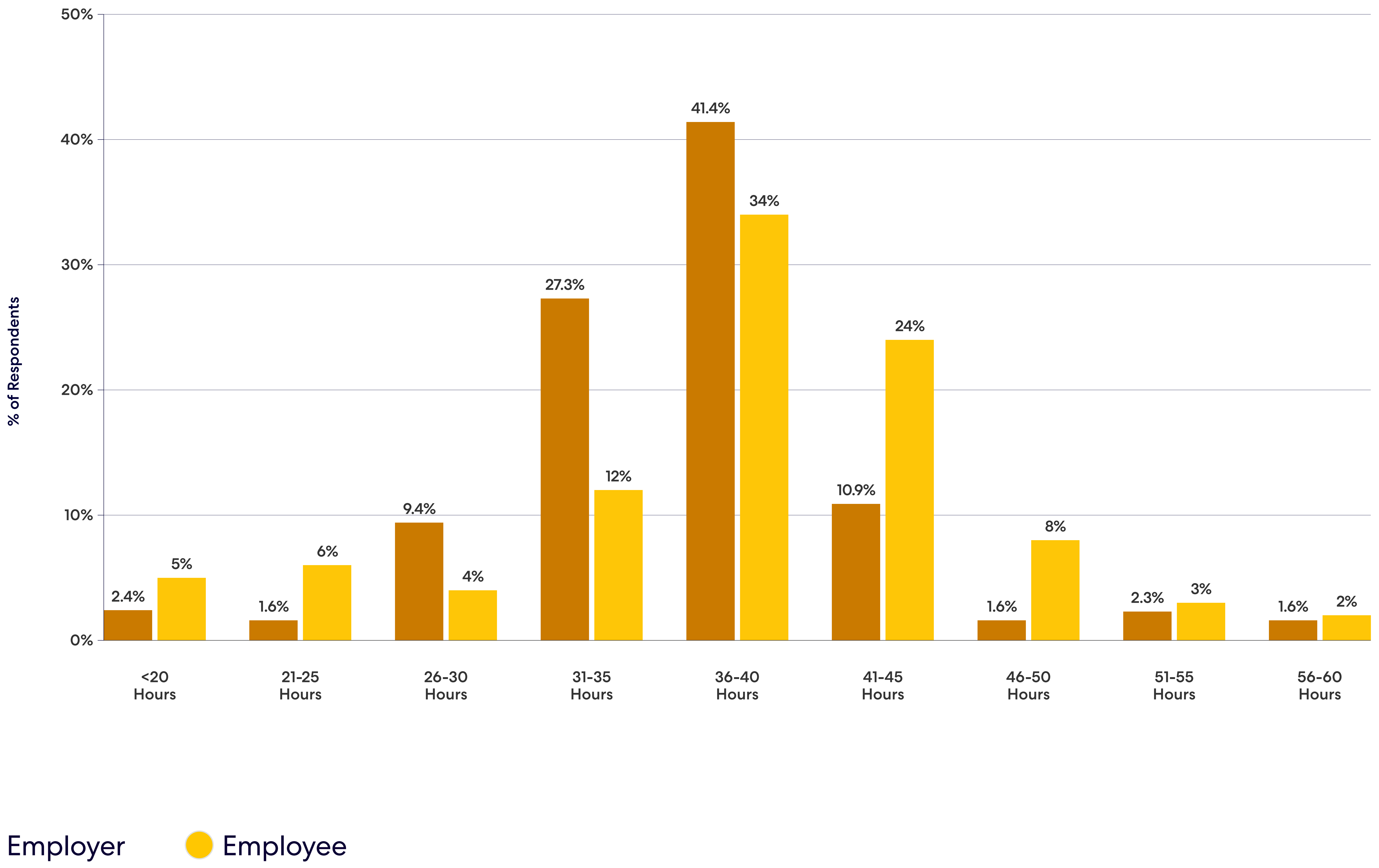
03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employers estimate that employees work an average of 36–40 hours per week (41.4% of responses), with most falling in the 31–45-hour range. However, employees themselves report working significantly more—37.0% say they work 41+ hours per week. This suggests employers may be underestimating actual employee work hours. Employers in this region estimate employees work slightly fewer hours per week compared to all employers surveyed.

Hours Worked Per Week

QUESTION (Employer):
How many hours per week do you think employees work?

QUESTION (Employee):
How many hours per week do you work?



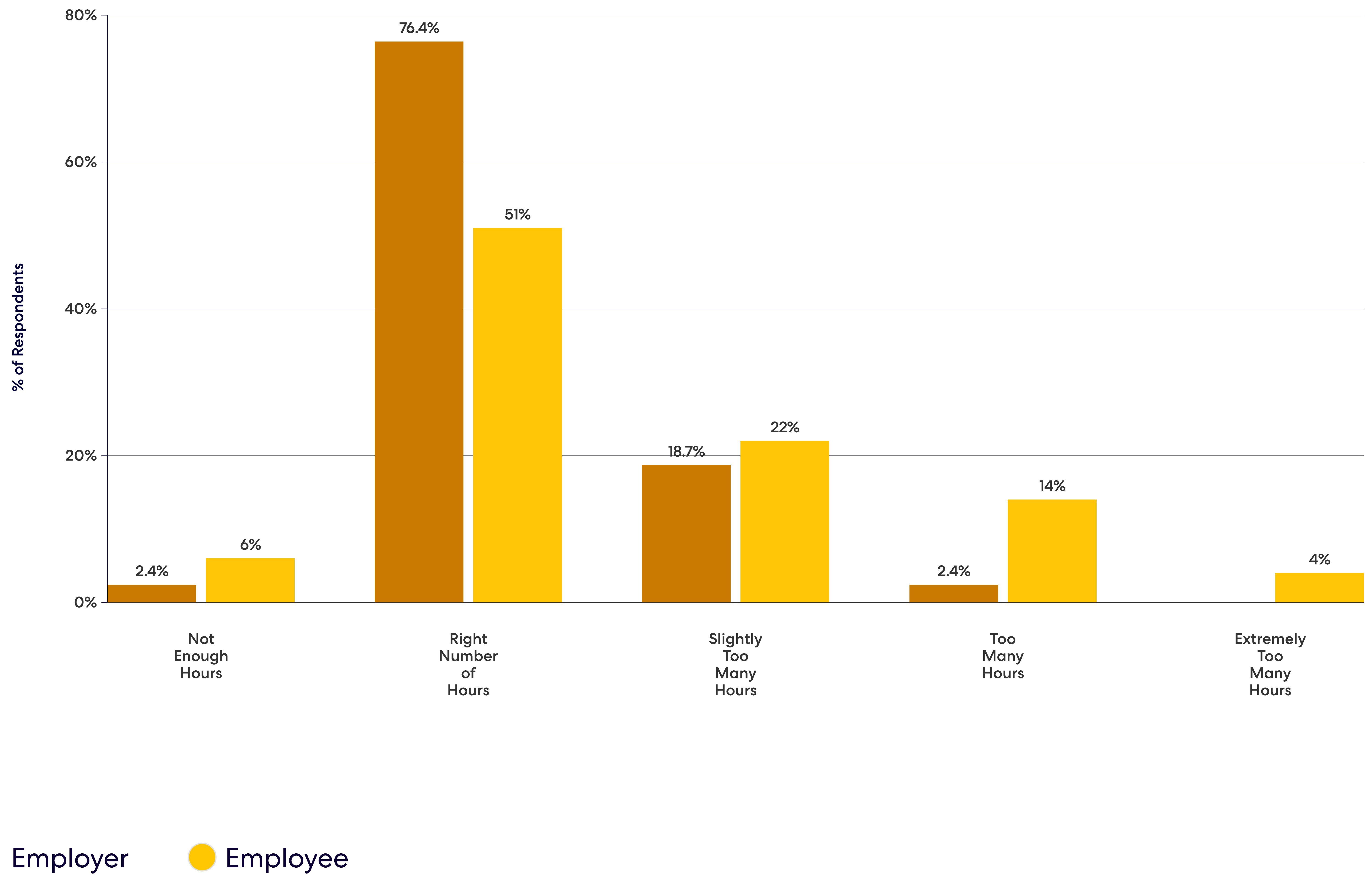
03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employers believe 76.4% of employees feel they work "the right number of hours," with only 21.1% thinking employees work too much (combined slightly too many, too many or extremely too many). In stark contrast, employees themselves are much more divided—while 51% feel they work the right amount, 36% say they work "slightly too many," "too many" or "extremely too many" hours, and only 6% feel they don't work enough. Employees in this region are slightly more inclined to say they work too many hours, compared to all employees surveyed.

How Employees Feel About Hours Worked

QUESTION (Employer):
How do you think your employees feel about the amount of hours they work each week?

QUESTION (Employee):
How do you feel about the amount of hours per week you work?



03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employers report exceptionally high satisfaction with their work-life balance, with 88.3% expressing some level of satisfaction (combining somewhat satisfied through very satisfied responses) and only 9.4% reporting dissatisfaction. Notably, 68% of employers are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied,” suggesting strong contentment with their current balance.

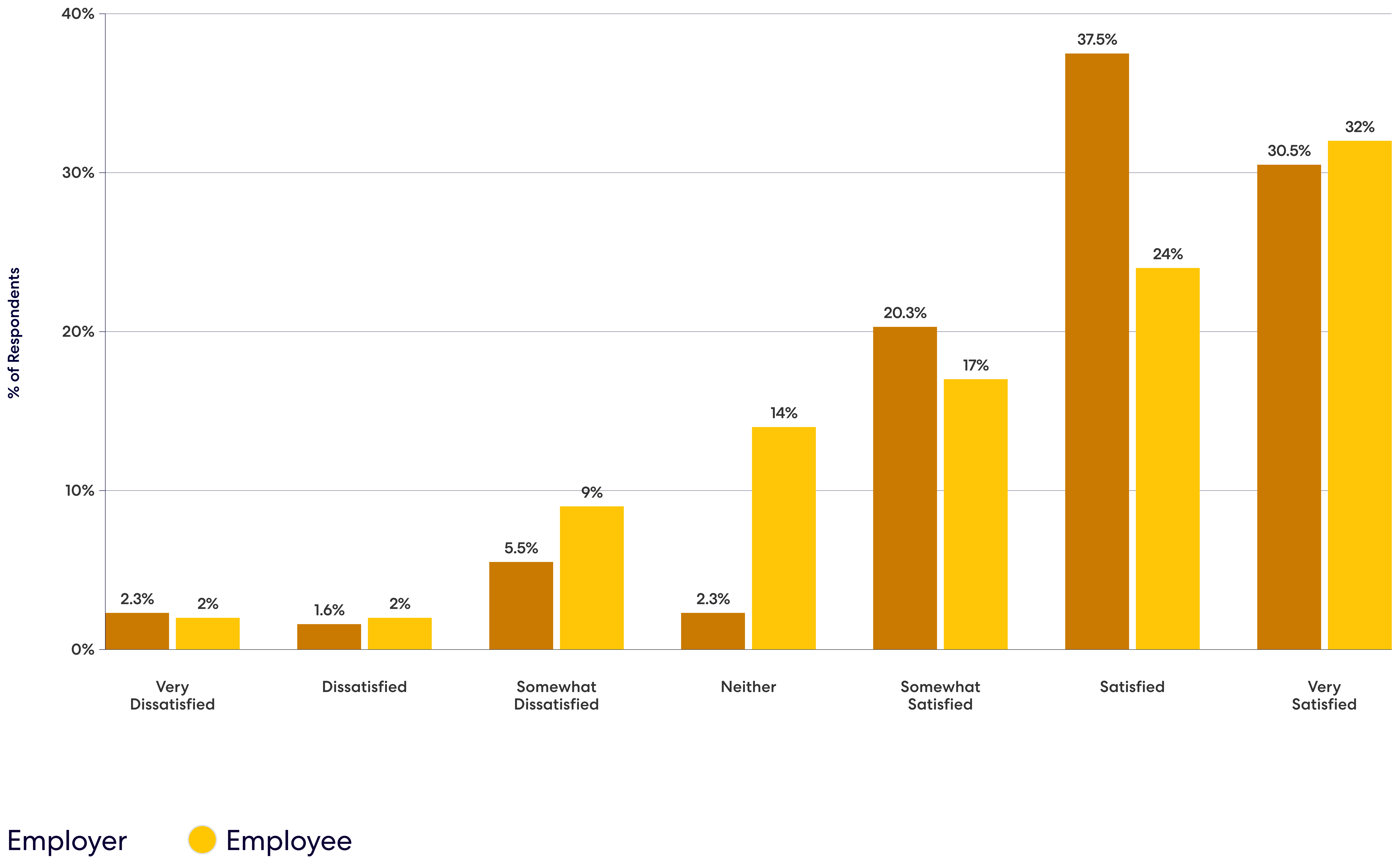
Employees show more moderate satisfaction levels, with 73% reporting satisfaction but a higher proportion (13%) expressing dissatisfaction compared to employers. More significantly, 14% of employees are neutral (“neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”), which is six times higher than employers (2.3%). This neutral response suggests a substantial portion of employees may be uncertain about or indifferent to their current work-life balance.

The data reveal that while both groups lean positive, employers appear more confident and satisfied with work-life balance than their employees, which could indicate that leadership roles offer more control and flexibility, or that employers may not fully recognize the work-life balance challenges their employees face. These results are similar to the national data.

Work/Life Balance Satisfaction

QUESTION (Employer):
How satisfied are you with your overall work/life balance?

QUESTION (Employee):
How satisfied are you with your overall work/life balance?



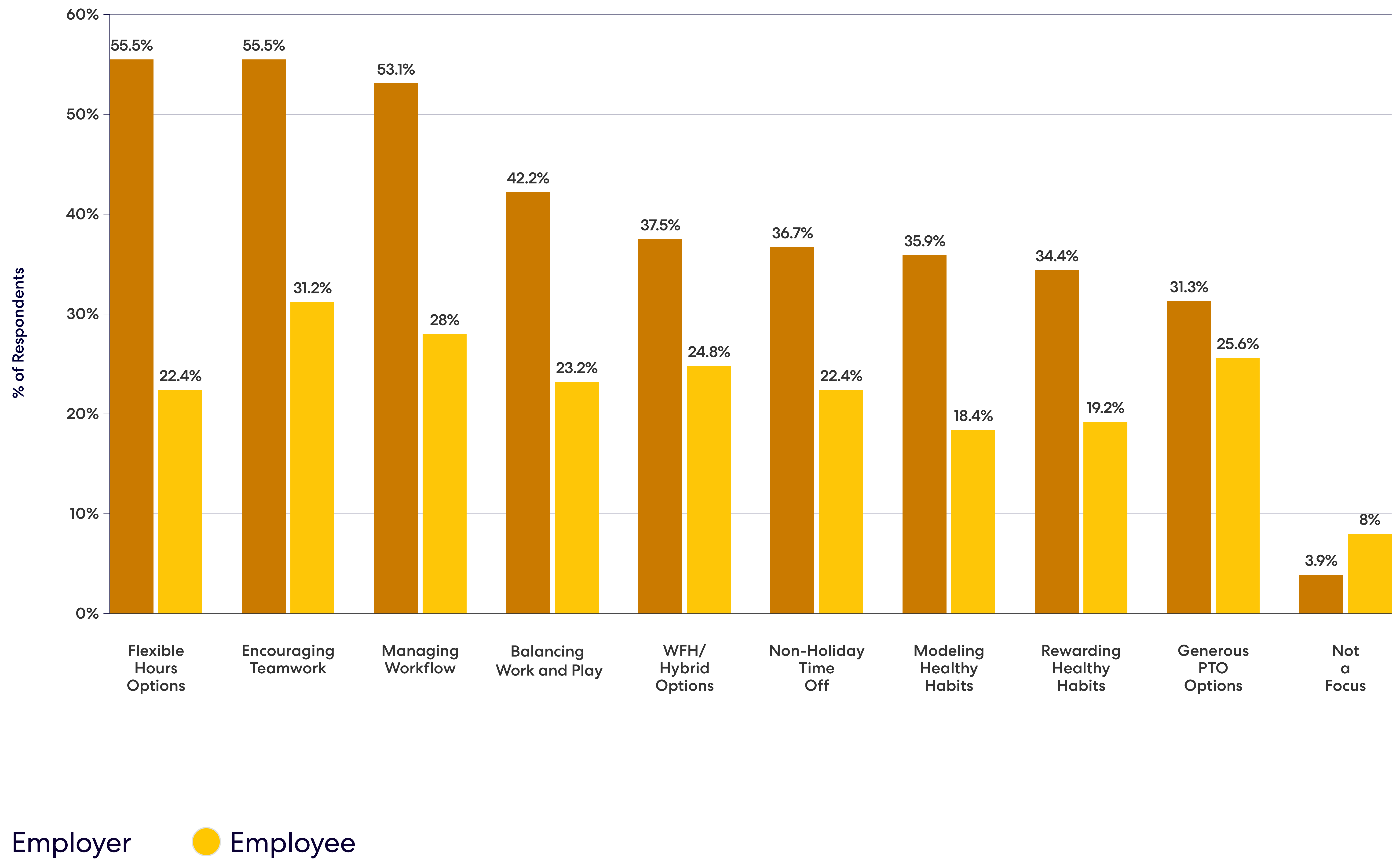
03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employers more often point to flexible hours, managing workflow, and encouraging teamwork as key strategies, suggesting a focus on operational policies and productivity management. Employees most frequently choose encouraging teamwork (31.2%) and managing workflow (28.0%) but also emphasize generous PTO options (25.6%), which is lower on the list of choices for managers. A higher percentage of employees choose 'not a focus of the company' (8%) compared to employers (4%). Employer selections are similar to national data.

How the Company Prioritizes Work/Life Balance

QUESTION (Employer):
How does your company prioritize work/life balance?

QUESTION (Employee):
How does your company prioritize work/life balance?



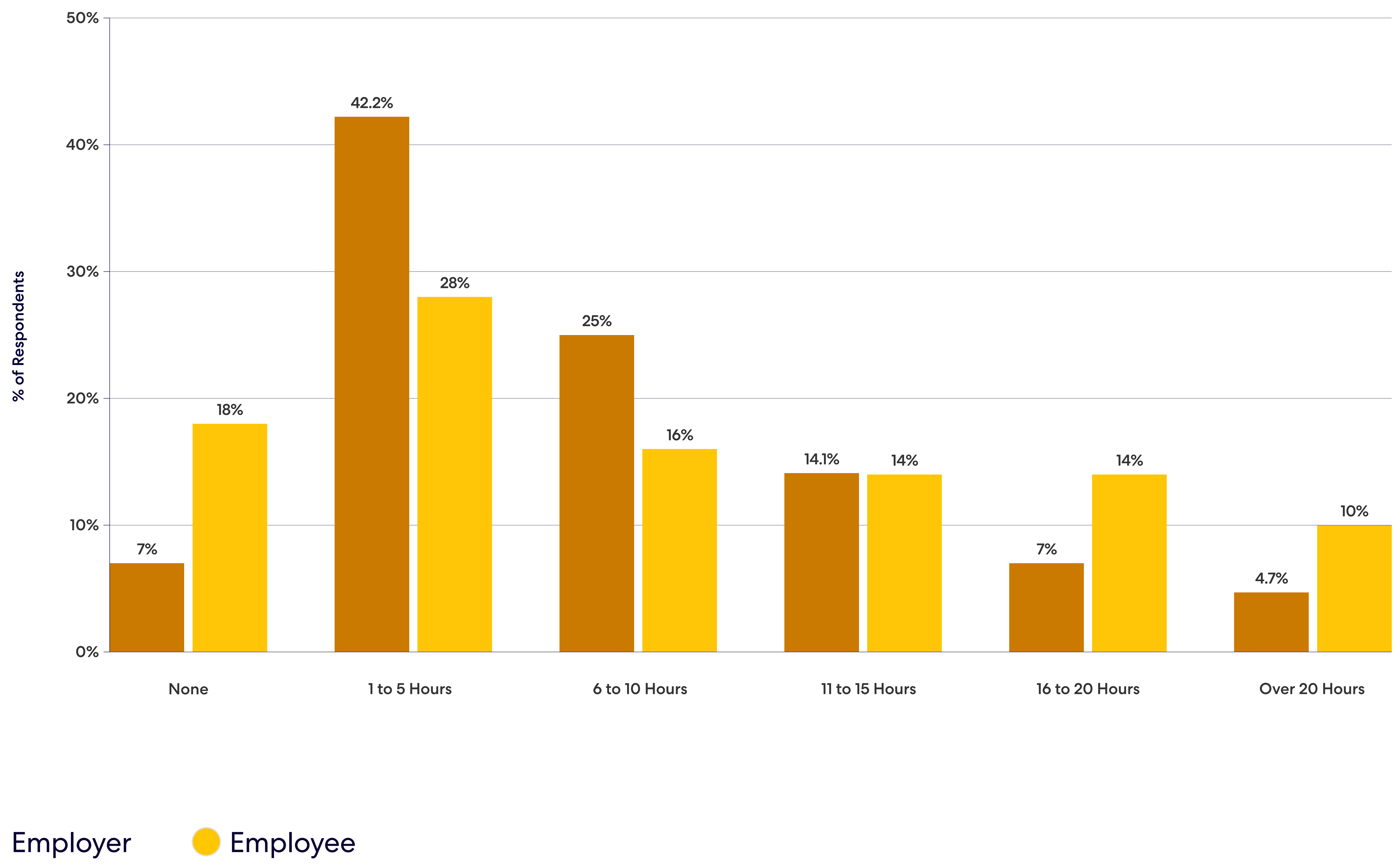
03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Overall, employers appear to underestimate the extent to which personal responsibilities are integrated into the workday. Employees are more likely to report extensive personal time—especially 16+ hours per week (24% employees versus 12% employers combined), suggesting employers underestimate the upper end of personal-time integration. These responses are similar to national data.

Personal Matters During Work Hours

QUESTION (Employer):
How many hours per week do you think employees spend on personal matters during work hours?

QUESTION (Employee):
How many hours per week on average do you spend on personal matters during work hours?



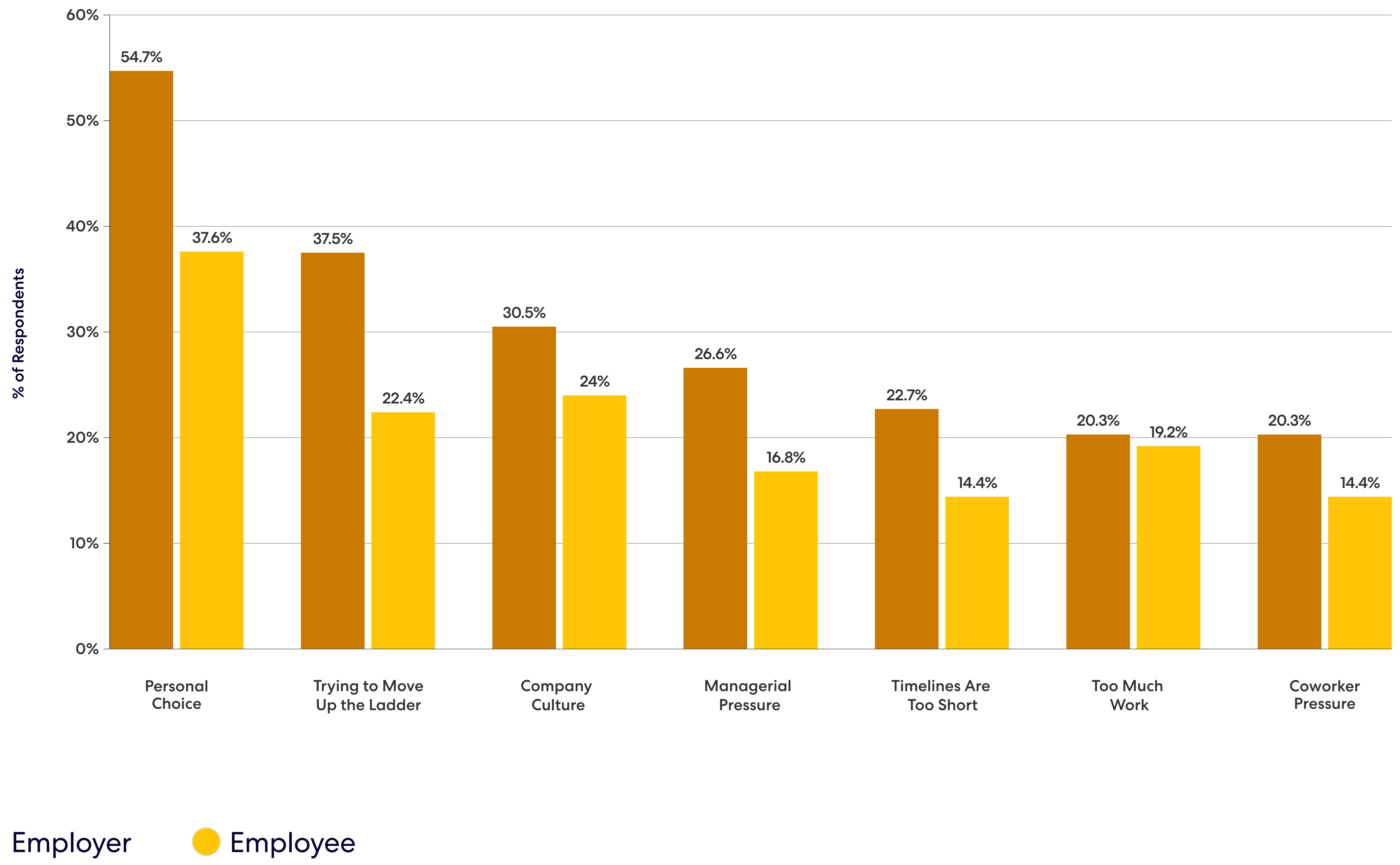
03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employers attribute after-hours work to personal choice at 54.7%—employees say 37.6%. Mid-Atlantic employees and employers are aligned on 'too much work' (~19–20%), unlike the national pattern. Employers choose 'too much work' at a much lower rate than nationally (20% versus 31%). Employees generally select all reasons at lower rates compared to nationally.

Reasons for Working Outside Company Hours

QUESTION (Employer):
What are the reasons you believe your employees work outside typical hours?

QUESTION (Employee):
What are the reasons you work outside typical hours?



03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employees report more full-time remote work (7% versus 2.4%). Employers cluster more heavily in hybrid mid-ranges. Employers are more likely than employees to report 2–4 in-office days (~51% versus ~37% combined). Employees and employers in this region prefer slightly more time in the office compared to nationally.

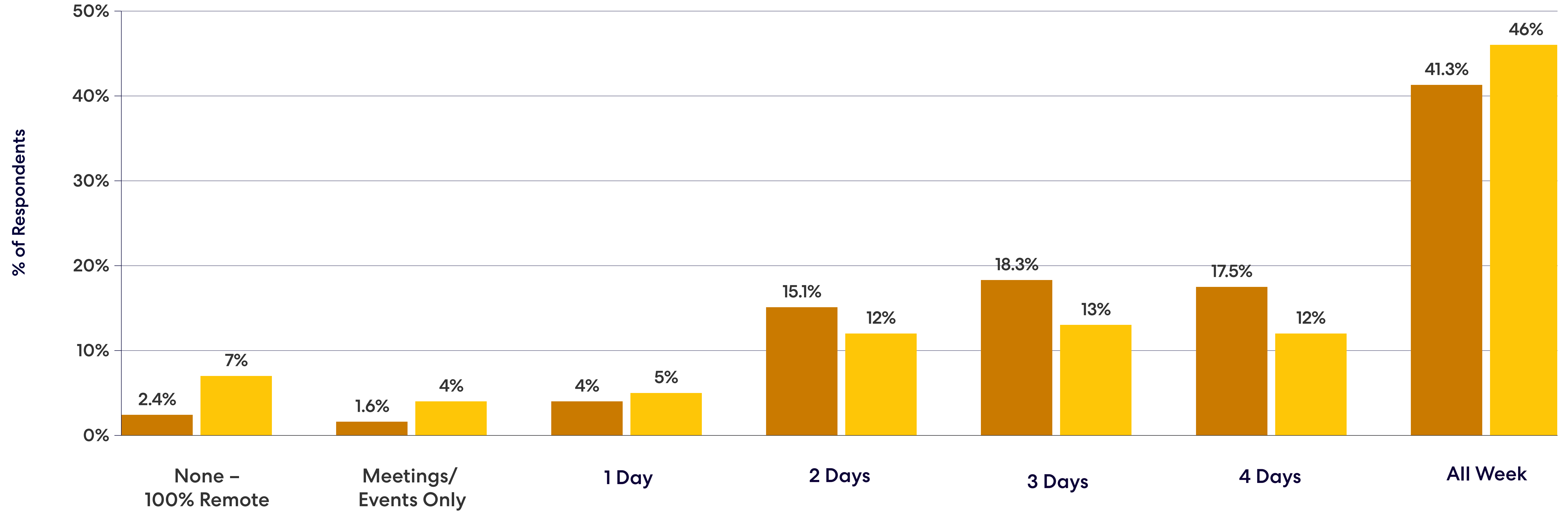
Employers cluster strongly around a 3–4 day hybrid model, with 51% identifying this range as optimal (28.6% for 3 days and 22.2% for 4 days). Employees, by contrast, are far less enthusiastic about this middle ground—only 21% select 3–4 days as optimal. Instead, employees gravitate toward the extremes. More than a third (36%) say working all week in the office is optimal, compared with 26% of employers, indicating that a sizable subset of employees prefers clear structure and full separation between work and home. At the same time, employees are nearly twice as likely as employers to favor mostly or fully remote arrangements (19% versus 5%), reflecting a parallel desire for maximum flexibility among another segment of the workforce.

Return to Office—Actual versus Optimal Days

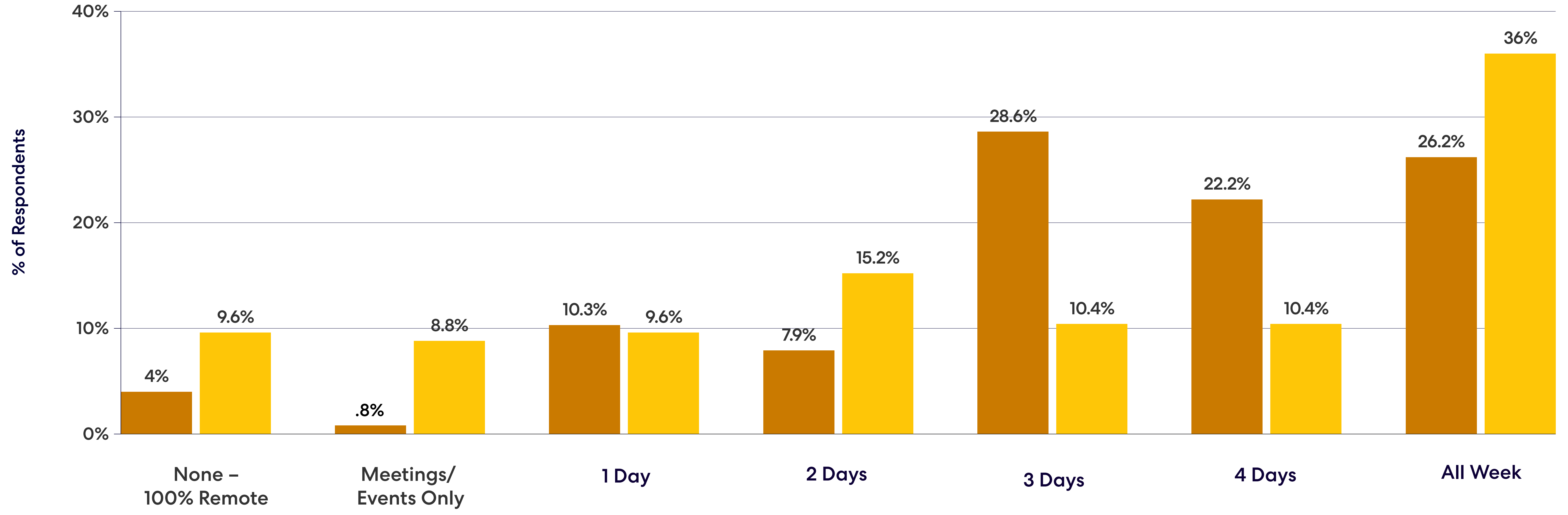
QUESTION (Employer):
How many days per week do you work from the office?

QUESTION (Employee):
How many days per week do you work from the office?

Days per Week in the Office (Actual)



Optimal Days Per Week in the Office (Preference)



Employer Employee

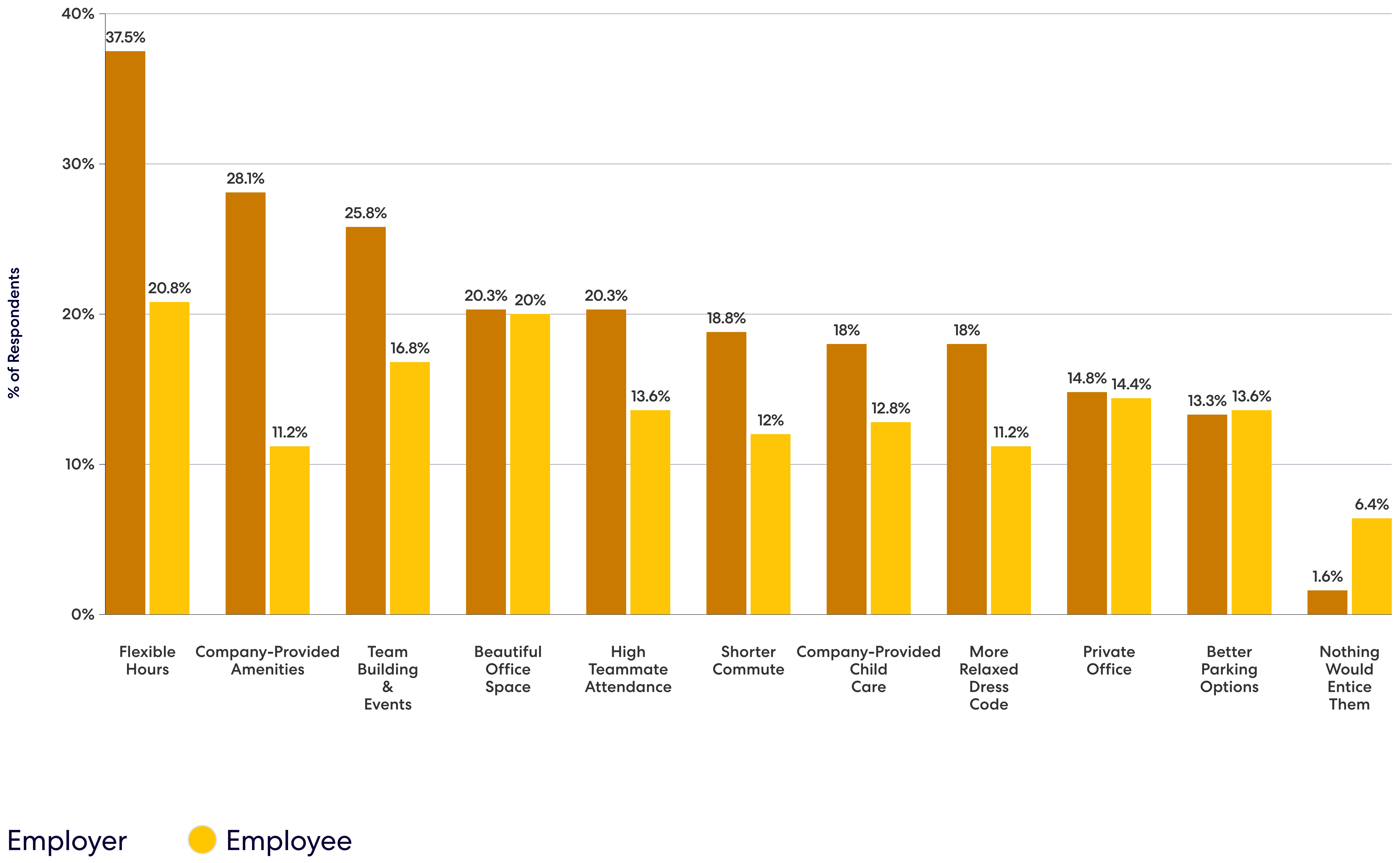
03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

While flexible hours are the top incentive for both employees and employers, employees are much less incentive driven. In fact, 6.4% of employees say nothing would entice them to come into the office more. Employers consistently overestimate the importance of workplace-based incentives. For example, while 28% of employers endorse company provided amenities, only 11% of employees do. Both groups are aligned on beautiful office space and private offices, with both groups selecting these incentives at 20% and 14%, respectively. A lower percentages of employees and employers choose flexible hours compared to nationally.

Return to Office Incentives

QUESTION (Employer):
What would entice employees to return to the office?

QUESTION (Employee):
What would entice you to return to the office?



03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

While connection to work and mission is relatively strong for both groups, employee connectedness appears less intense and less uniform than leadership assumes. Managers believe employees are more connected to their direct managers and leadership than employees are.

Connection to Company and Its Mission: Employer and employee “extremely connected” rates are nearly identical (42.5% versus 43.2%), but employees show more spread into the lower tiers, with 36% in the bottom three categories versus 23.6% of employers.

Connection to Company Leadership: Employers significantly overestimate the leadership bond, with 41.7% saying “extremely connected” compared to only 29.6% of employees, who skew more toward “moderately connected” (35.2%).

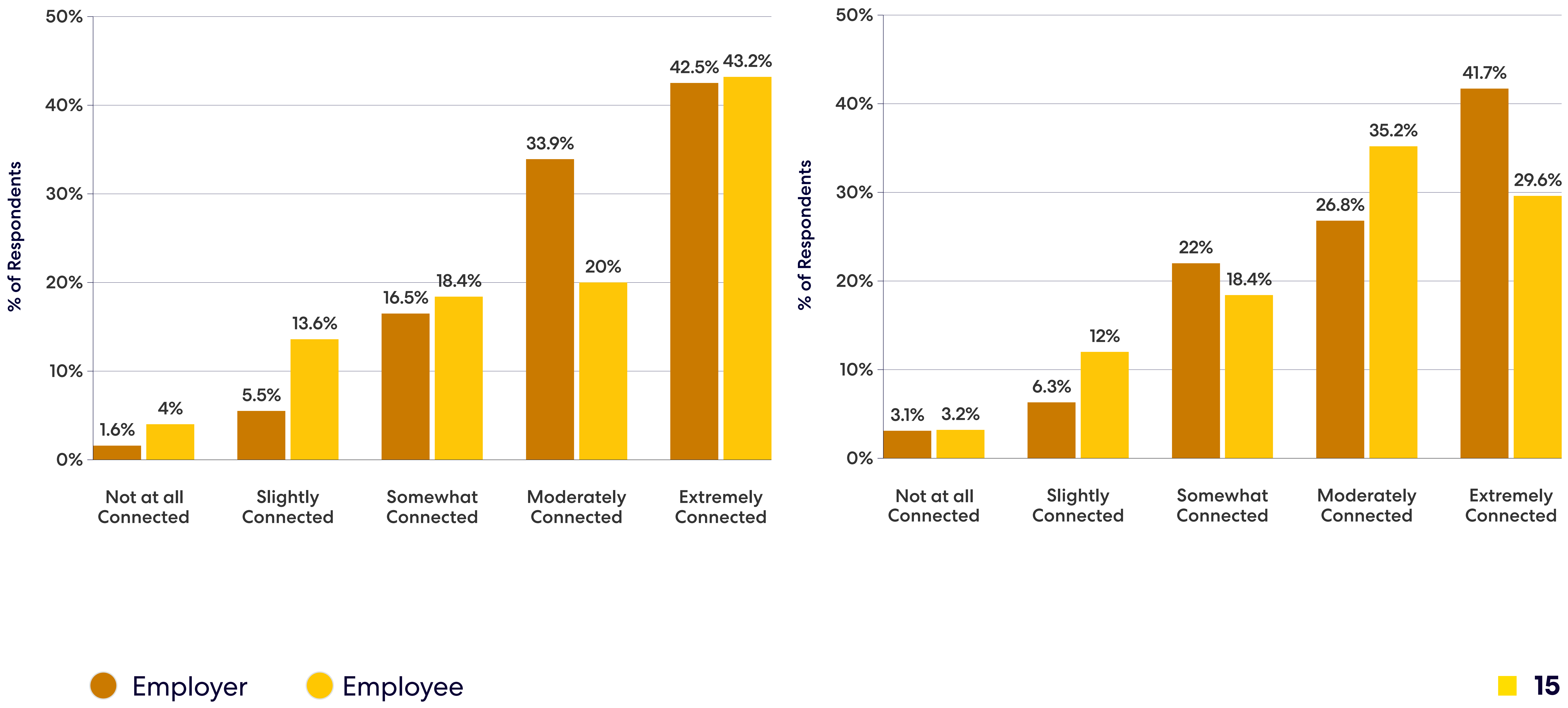
Connection Scores

QUESTION (Employer):
How connected do employees feel to the company/mission/leadership/manager/work?

QUESTION (Employee):
How connected do you feel to the company/ mission/leadership/manager/work?

Connection to Company and Its Mission

Connection to Leadership



03. WORK/LIFE BALANCE & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Connection to Direct Manager: Employers again overestimate connection strength—42.5% perceive "extremely connected" versus just 33.6% of employees, with employees more evenly distributed across the middle tiers.

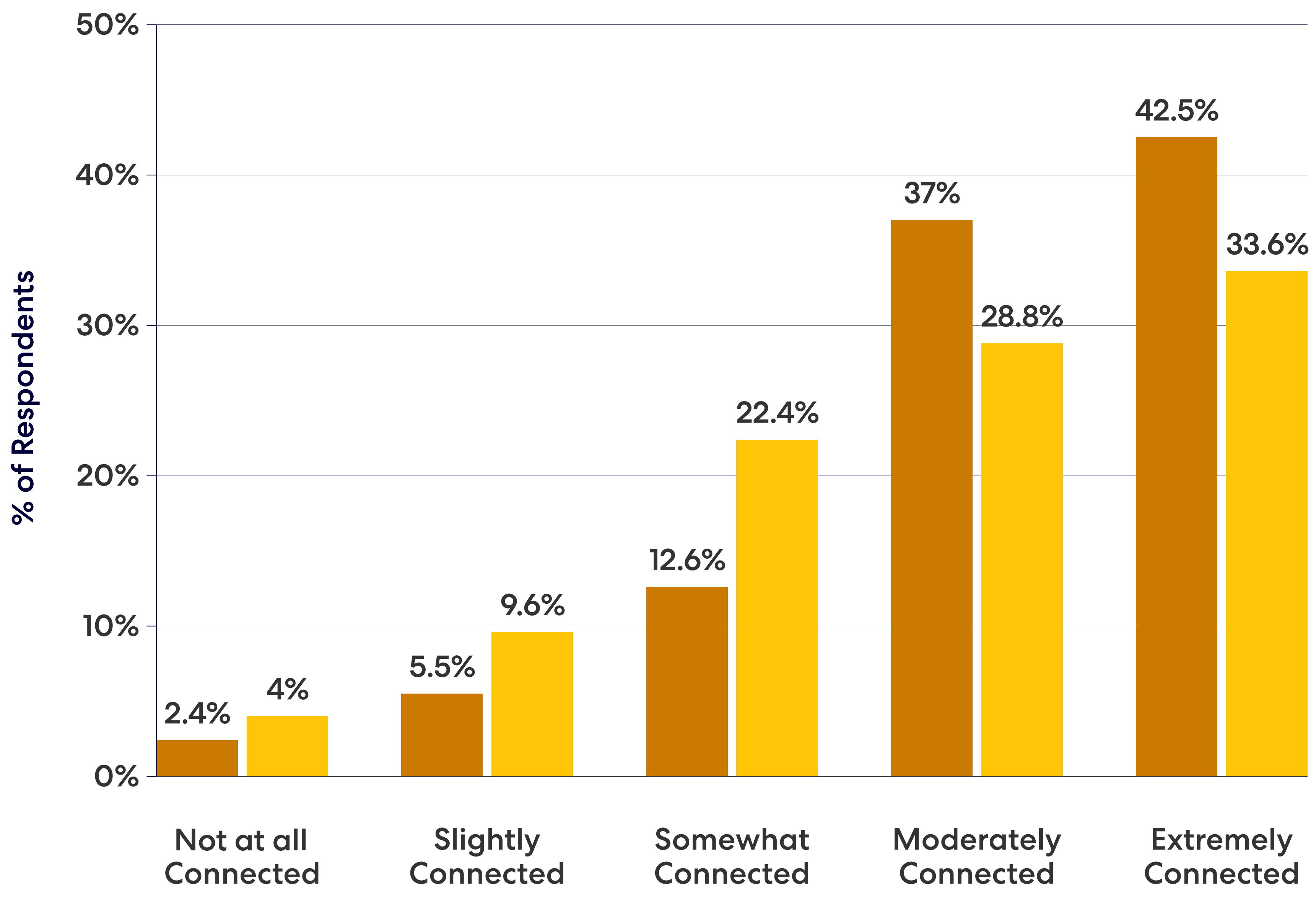
Connection to Their Work: The connection to work was the closest alignment of the four connection questions surveyed, with both groups heavily concentrated at "extremely connected" (49.6% employer versus 42.4% employee), suggesting work itself is a stronger unifying factor than organizational relationships.

Connection Scores

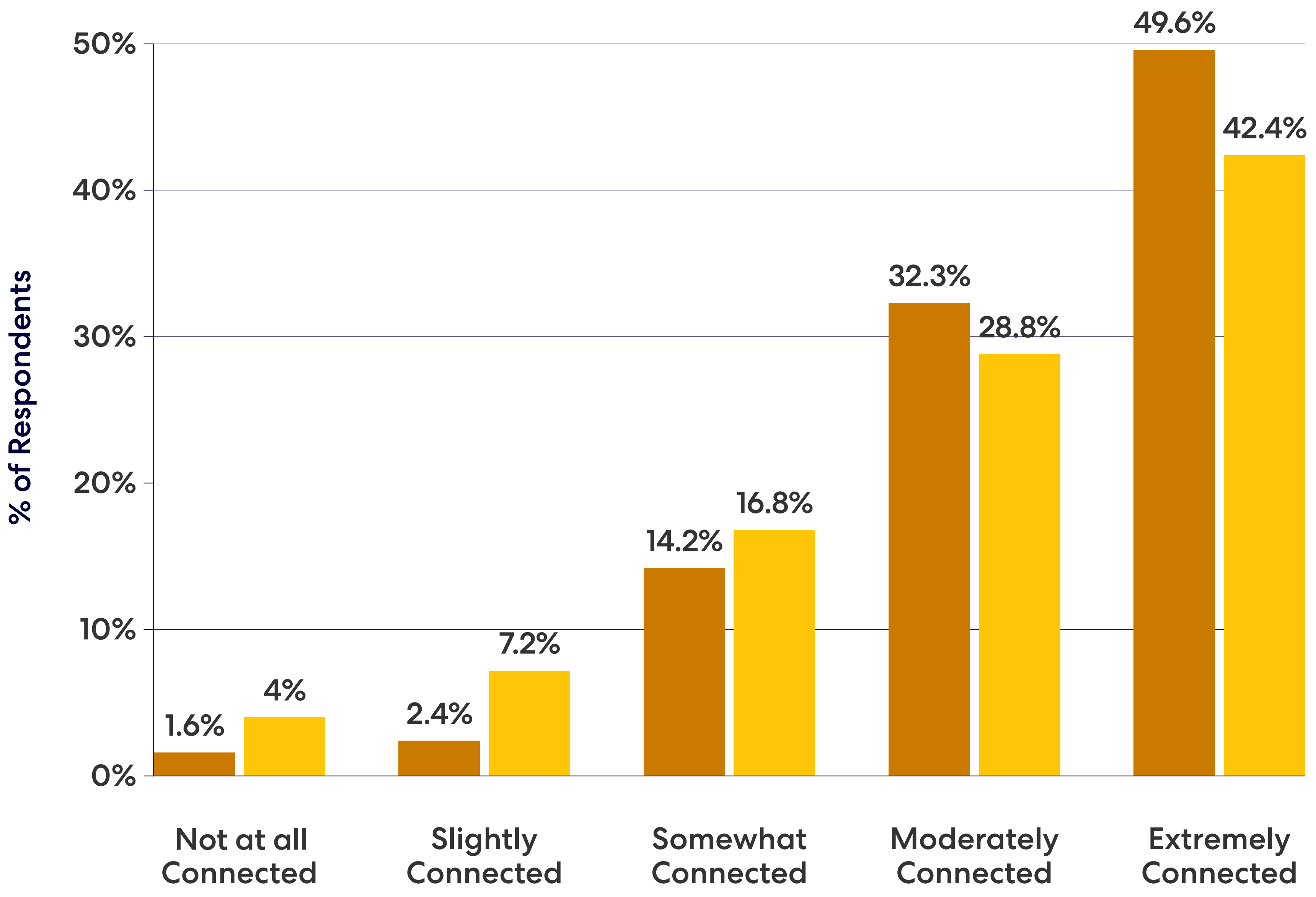
QUESTION (Employer):
How connected do employees feel to the company/mission/leadership/manager/work?

QUESTION
How connected do you feel to the company/mission/leadership/manager/work?

Connection to Direct Manager



Connection to Work



Employer Employee

04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

Employees generally are not as concerned as managers about developing skills needed to keep them in their current roles. Across nearly all skills, employers select them 15–30 points more often than employees, indicating employers anticipate broader and deeper skill shifts than employees perceive for themselves. Employers are more convinced than employees that workers will need new core skills (upskilling) to succeed in three years (62.5% employer versus 32% employees). Employees are engaged in their work but managers overestimate the role of compensation in engagement. Employees and employers both feel that employees have room to grow in their organization.

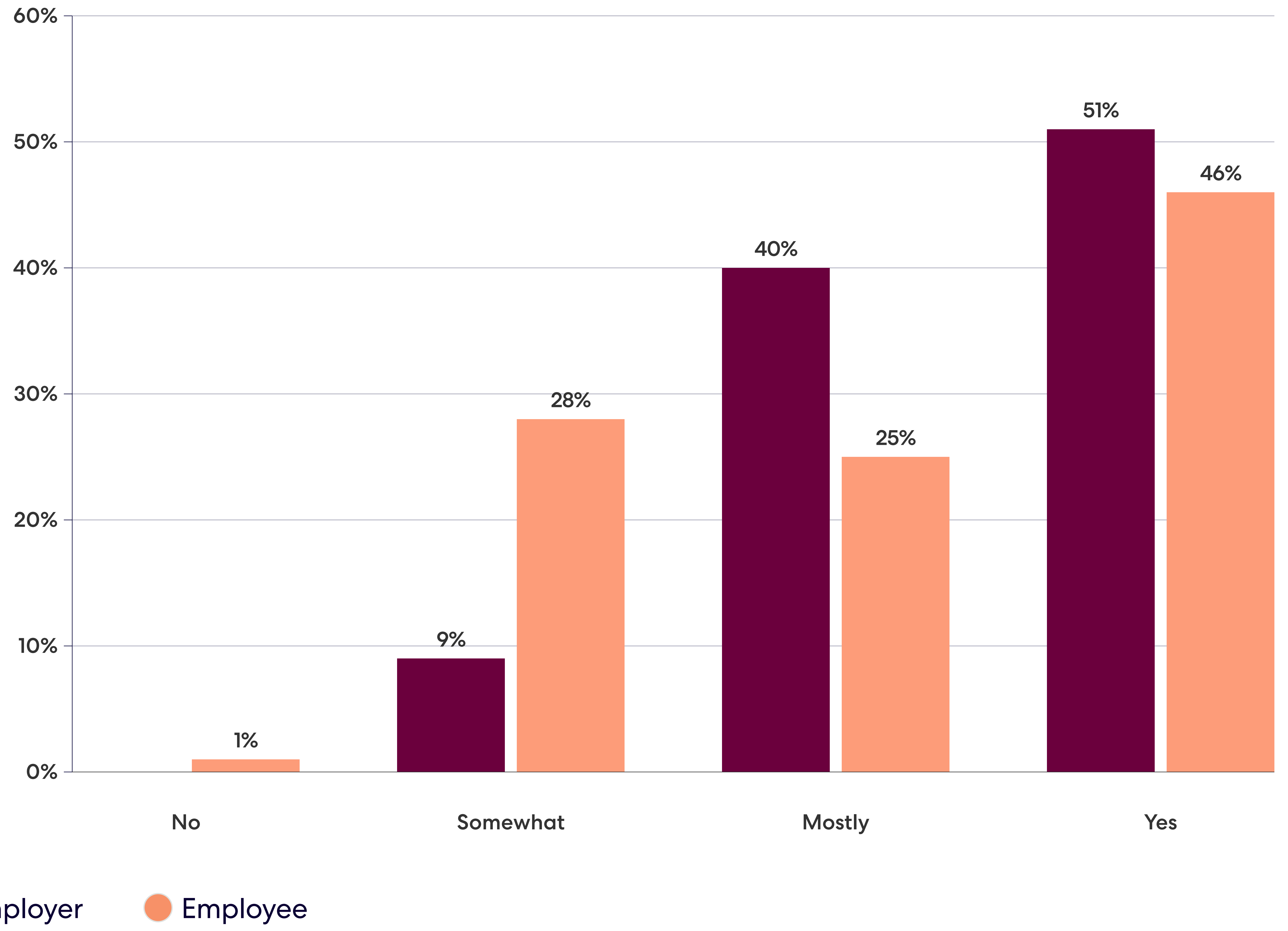
04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE— READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

Employers have more confidence in their employees' knowledge and skills than employees do. A higher percentage of employers choose 'yes' (51%) compared to employees (46%). A large percentage of employees choose 'somewhat' (28%) compared to only 9% of managers. Employees are slightly less secure in employees' knowledge and skills compared to nationally. Employers have similar responses to national data.

Knowledge & Skills to Succeed

QUESTION (Employer):
Do employees have the knowledge and skills to be successful in their roles?

QUESTION (Employee):
Do you have the knowledge and skills to be successful in your role?



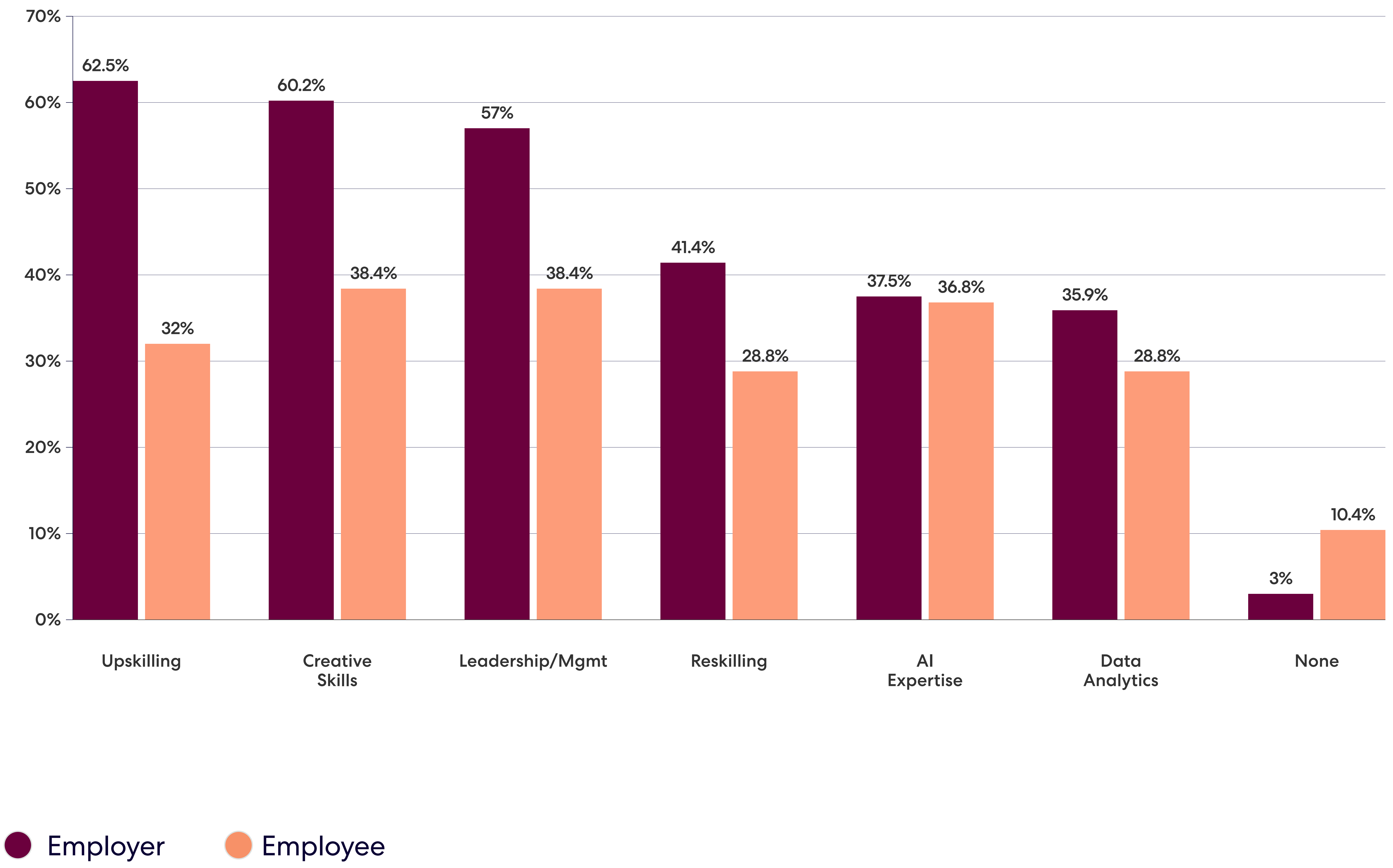
04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

Managers are clearly more concerned about employees developing new skills to stay in their roles than employees are. In fact, 10% of employees could not endorse any of the skills on the list as important to develop. Managers believe employees need to develop adaptive and people-centered skills, including adjusting skill sets to market changes (upskilling, 62.5% versus 32.0%), learning creative skills (60.2% versus 38.4%), and developing leadership/managerial skills (57.0% versus 38.4%). Both groups are in alignment about the importance of developing AI skills. Employers in this region, compared to nationally, are more interested in creative skills and upskilling. Employees are less concerned about developing leadership skills compared to nationally (38.4% versus 47%).

Skills Employees Need to Develop

QUESTION (Employer):
What skills do employees need to develop in the next 3+ years?

QUESTION (Employee):
What skills do you need to develop in the next 3+ years?

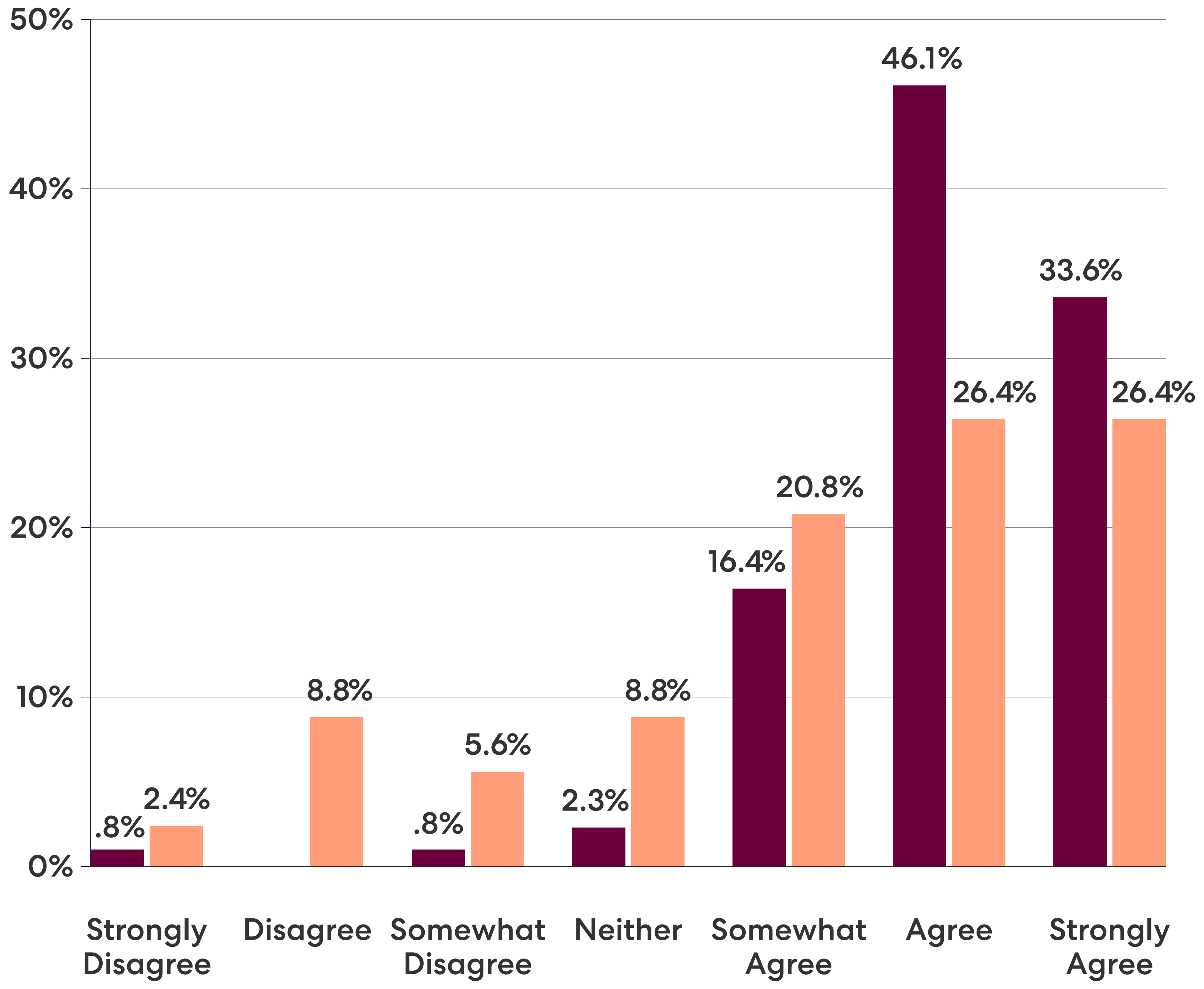


04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

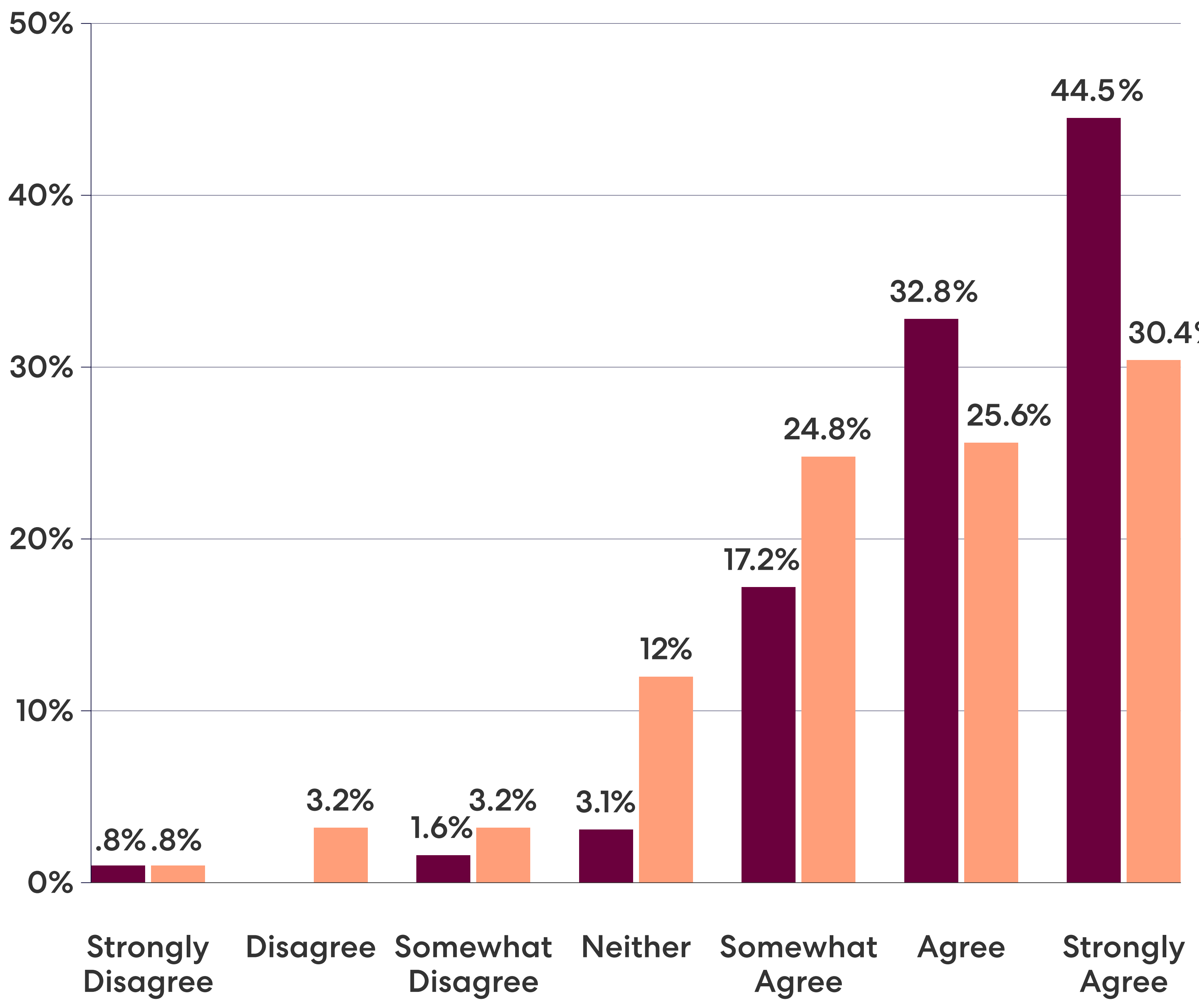
Employers are more confident in their employees' capacity to grow than employees are themselves. For example, 33.6% say they strongly agree employees have room to grow compared to 26.4% of employees. Eight percent of employees disagree that they have room to grow. In looking at a growth path, employers are even more optimistic for their employees. 30.4% are in strong agreement they have a path compared to 44.5% of employers. Data are in line with national results.

Growth Path Clarity

QUESTION (Employer):
Do employees have room to grow and clarity on their growth path?



QUESTION (Employee):
Do you have room to grow and clarity on your growth path?



Employer Employee

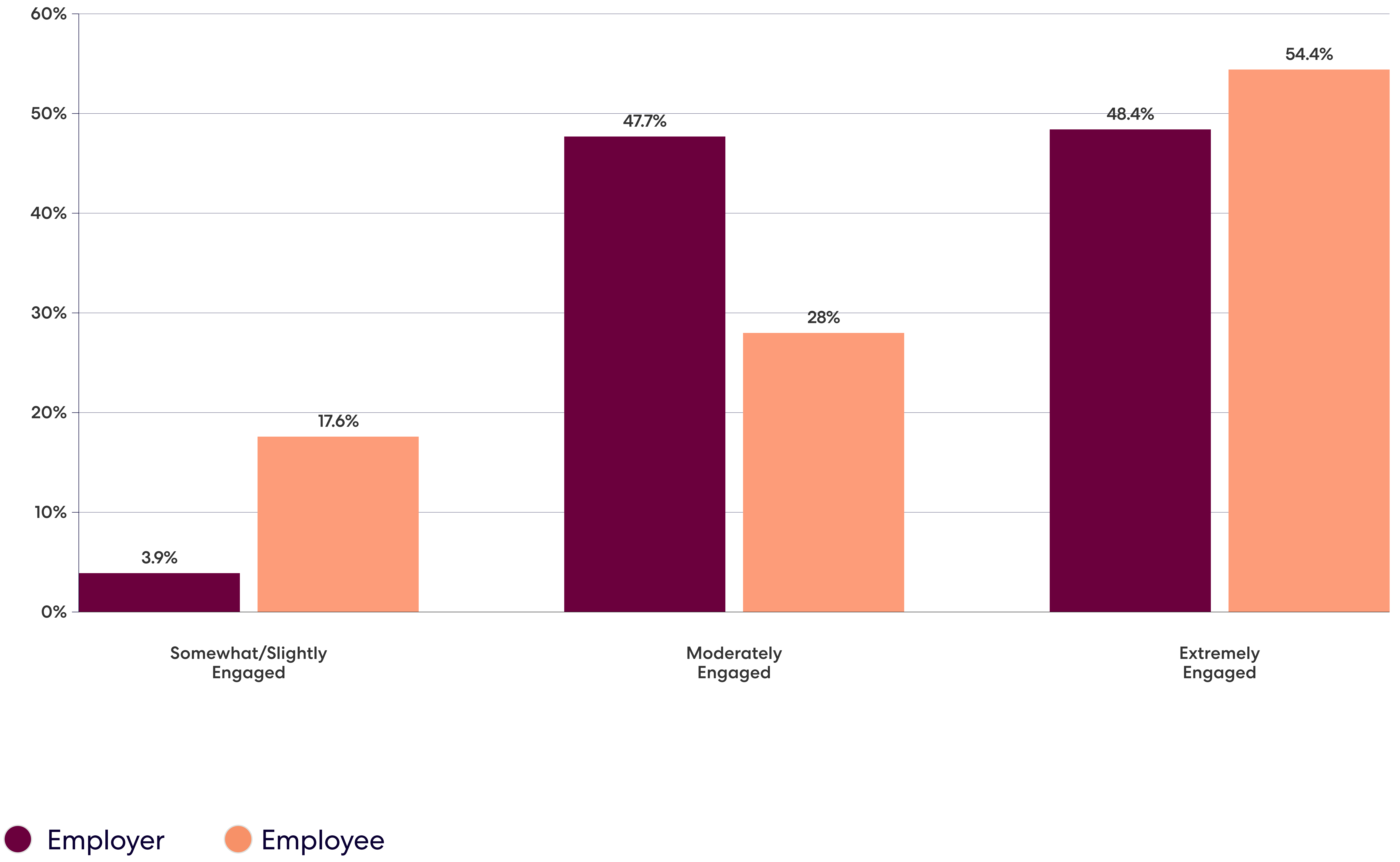
04.
BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

82.4% of employees report moderate to extreme engagement—a higher baseline than many other regions. However, employers overestimate this further. 17.6% of employees describe themselves as only somewhat or slightly engaged, which represents a meaningful disengagement risk that leadership may not fully recognize. Employees in this region are slightly more engaged compared to national results.

Engagement Levels

QUESTION (Employer):
How engaged do you think employees at your company are?

QUESTION (Employee):
How engaged do you feel at work?



04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

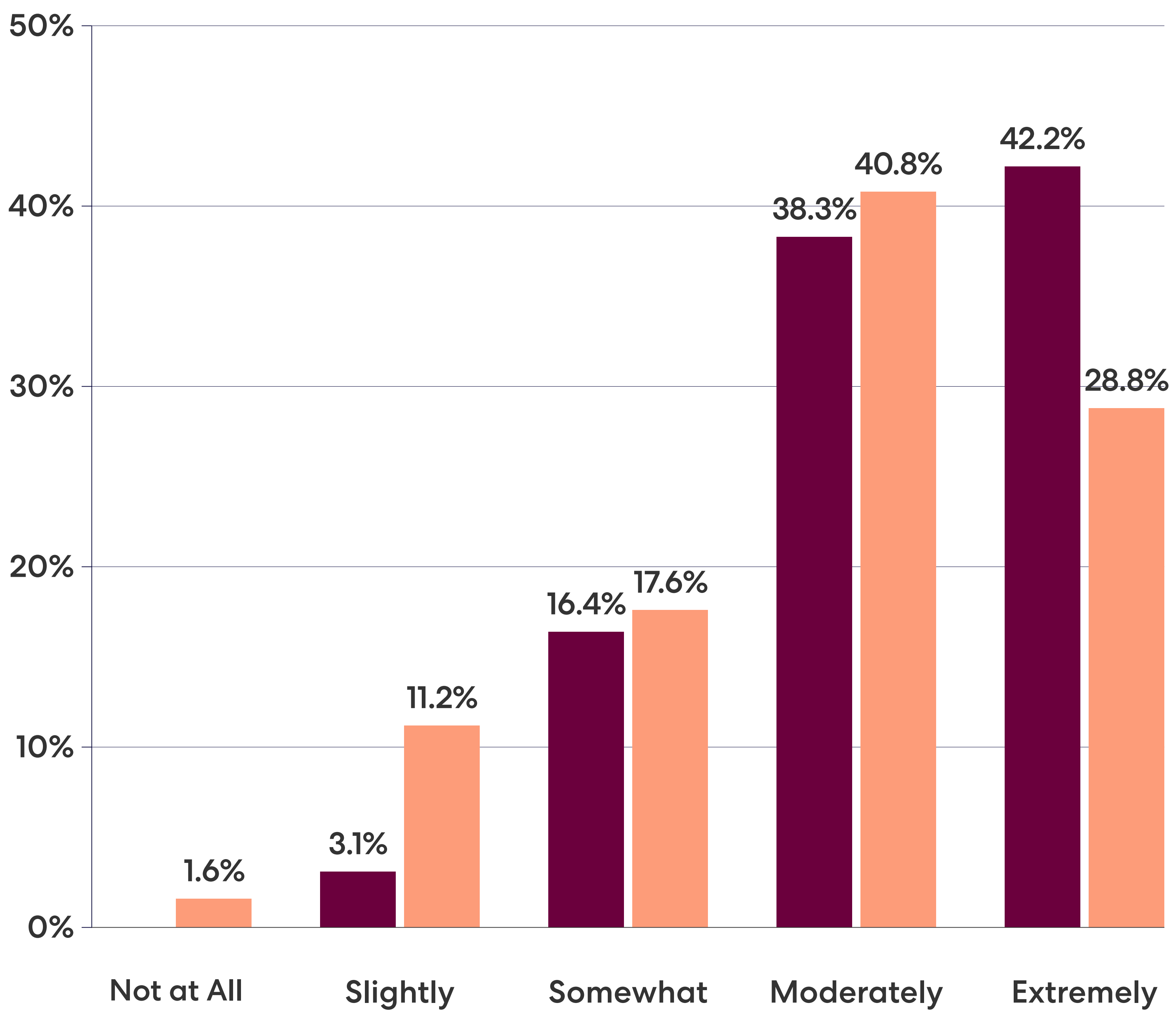
Work is central to what employers and employees say influences engagement. There is general agreement that a sense of productivity and interesting work drive employee engagement. Both groups are also in general agreement about the importance of confidence in leadership. The value of teammate interactions is also viewed as extremely influential. Employees' top two choices in terms of percentage choosing "extremely influential" are ability to make decisions (37.6%) and sense of productivity and accomplishment (36.8%). Employers vastly overestimate the role of compensation (extremely influential, 42.2% versus 28.8%). These results on compensation are similar to national data.

Influences on Engagement

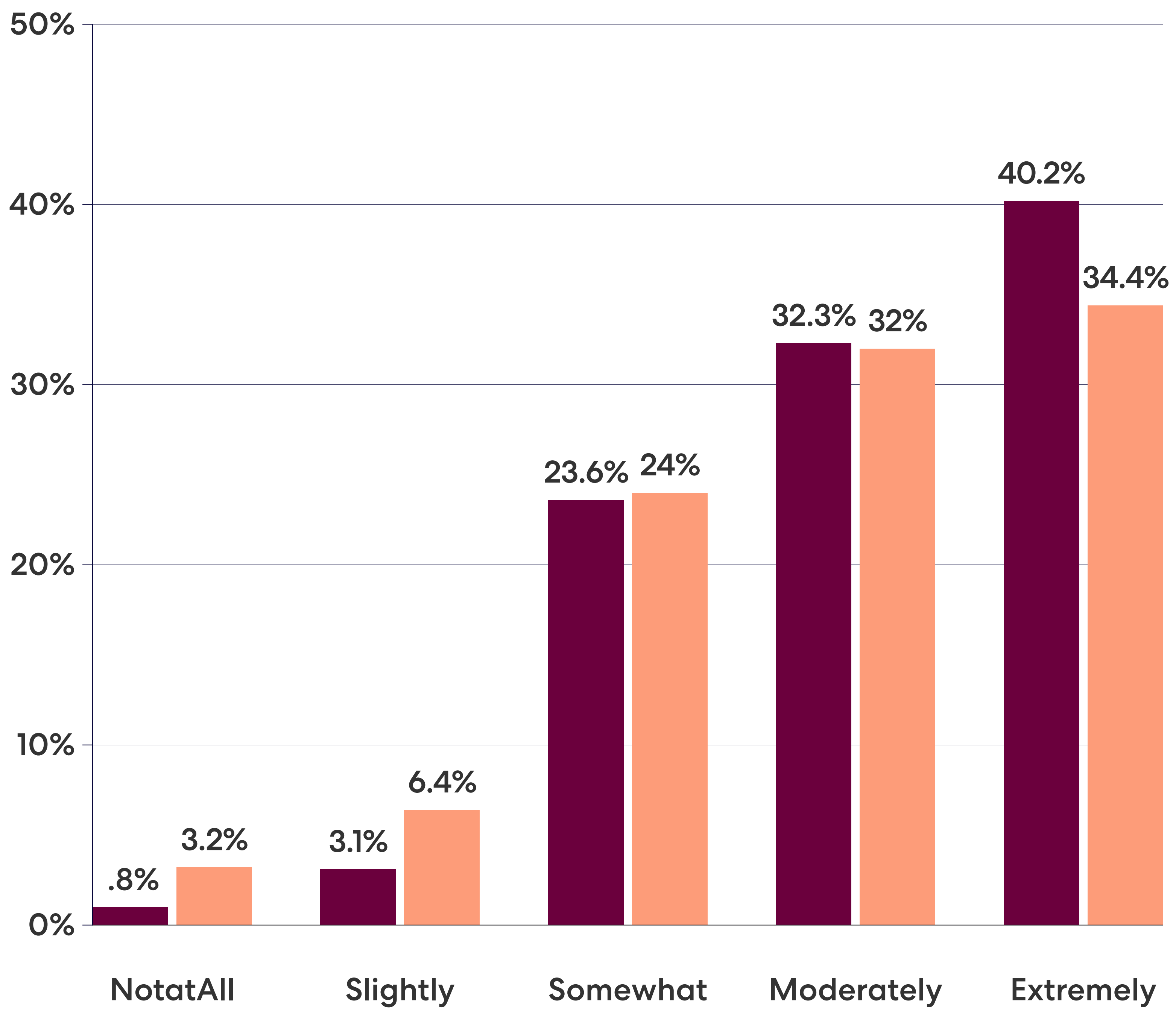
QUESTION (Employer):
What level of influence do the following have on employee engagement?

QUESTION (Employee):
What level of influence do the following have on your engagement at work?

Influence on Engagement—Compensation & Incentives



Influence on Engagement—Belief in Company Mission



Employer Employee

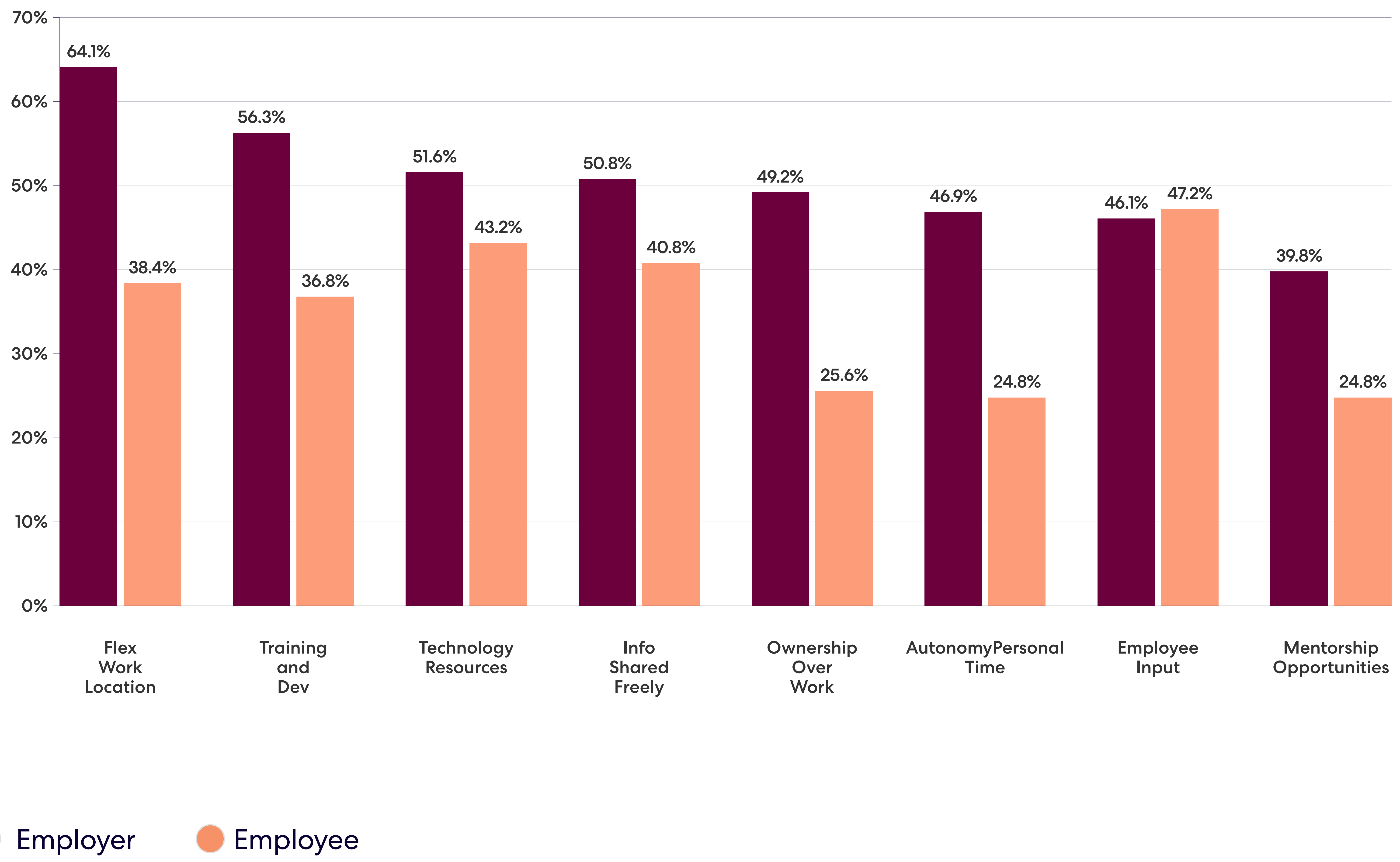
04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE— READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

Managers' most often choose flexibility (64%) in work location and training and development (56%). Employees are most excited about employee input sought/voices heard (47%) and technology resources (43%). Managers choose employee input sought at about the same rate (46%). Employers vastly overestimate employee enthusiasm about flexibility in work location and ownership over work. Ownership over work is selected at a higher rate by employees and employers in this region compared to national numbers.

What an Empowered Experience Looks Like

QUESTION (Employer):
What do you believe an empowered experience looks like for employees?

QUESTION (Employee):
What does an empowered experience look like to you?

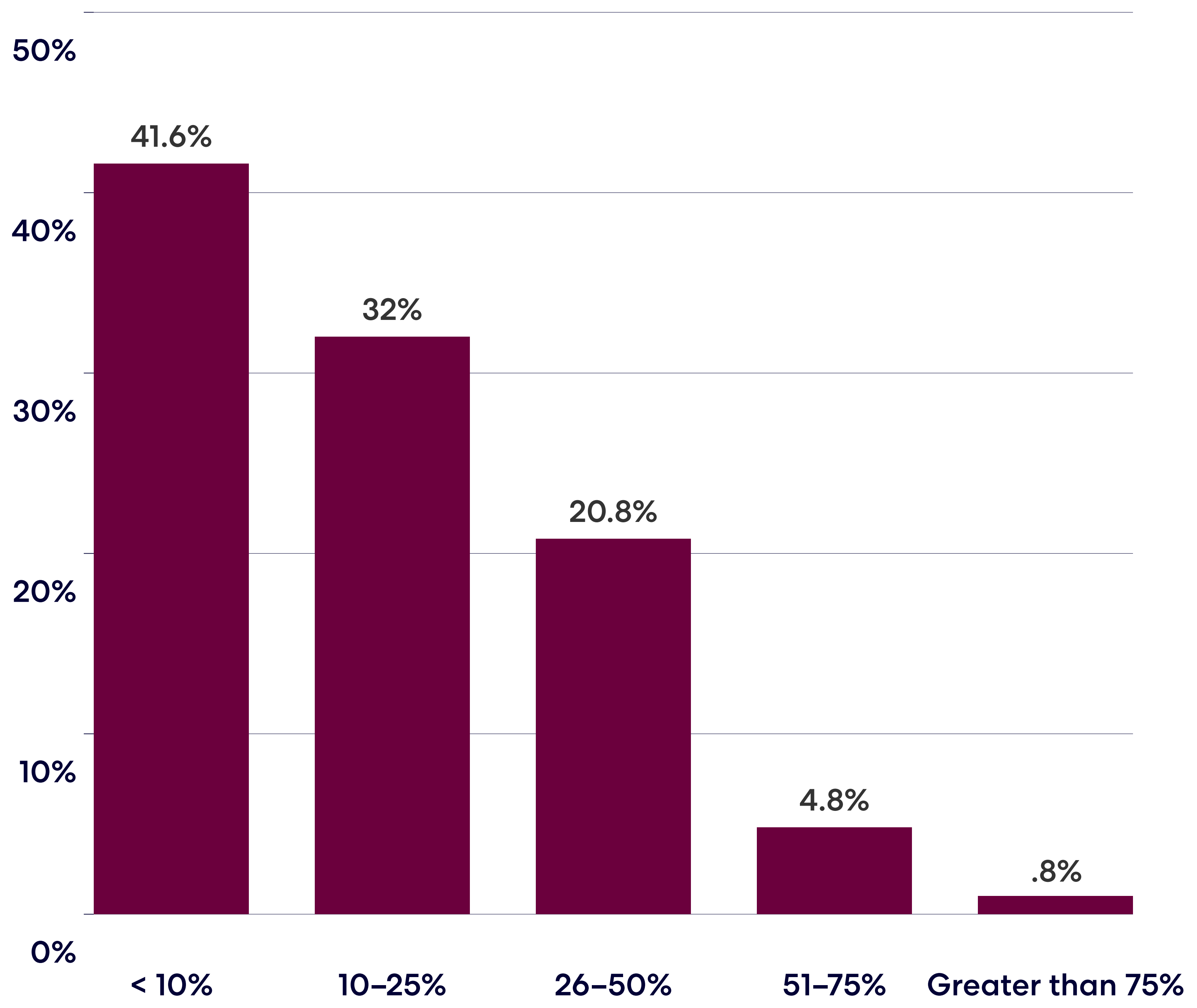


04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

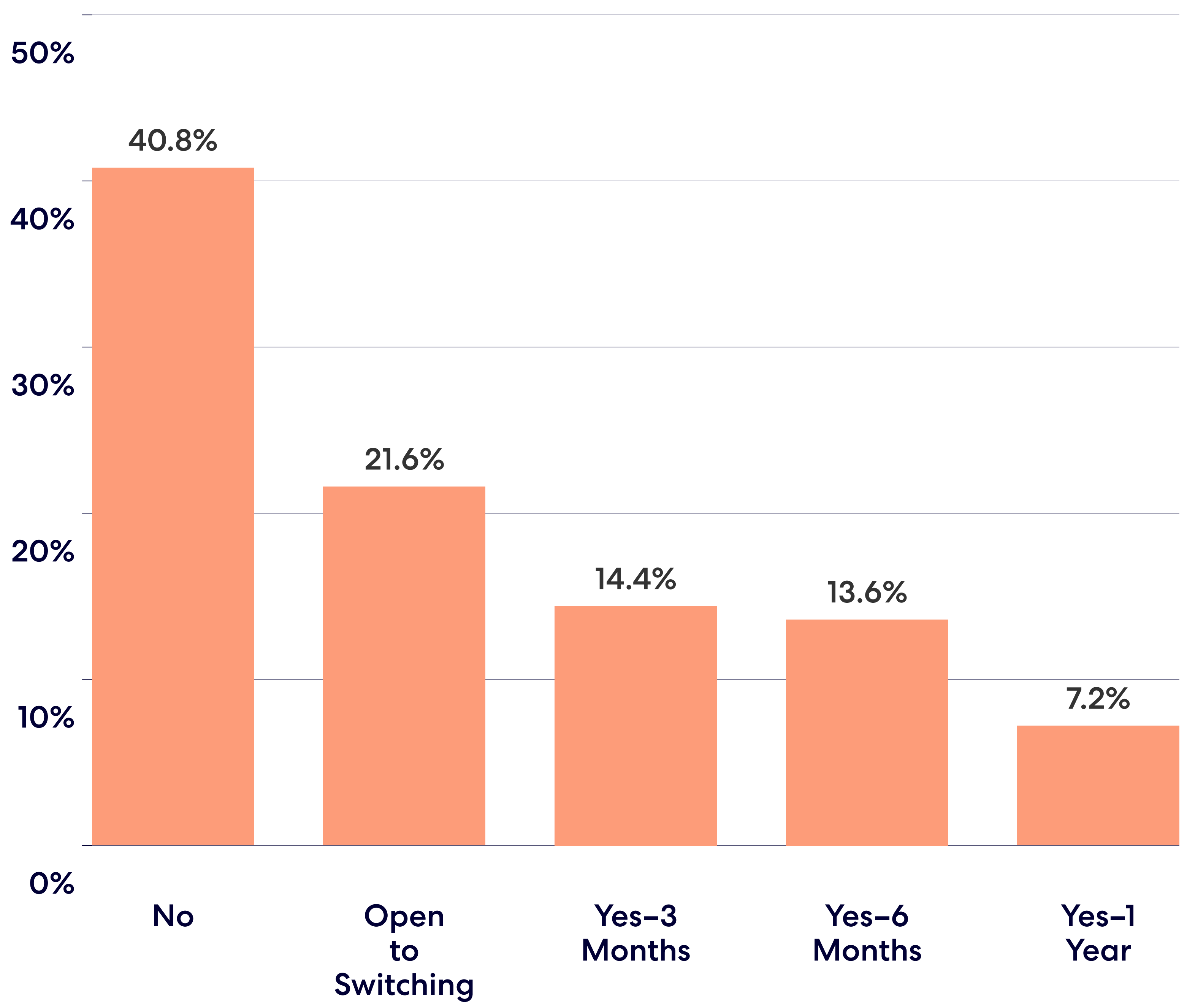
35.2% of employees plan to switch jobs within a year, and 56.8% are at least open to leaving. Yet 73.6% of employers believe 25% or fewer employees are looking. The actual retention risk is more than double what most employers estimate. Employees in the Mid-Atlantic region report looking for new work at similar rates to national data.

Job Search & Turnover Intent

QUESTION (Employer):
What percentage of your employees do you believe are looking for a new job?



QUESTION (Employee):
Are you currently looking for a new job?



Employer Employee

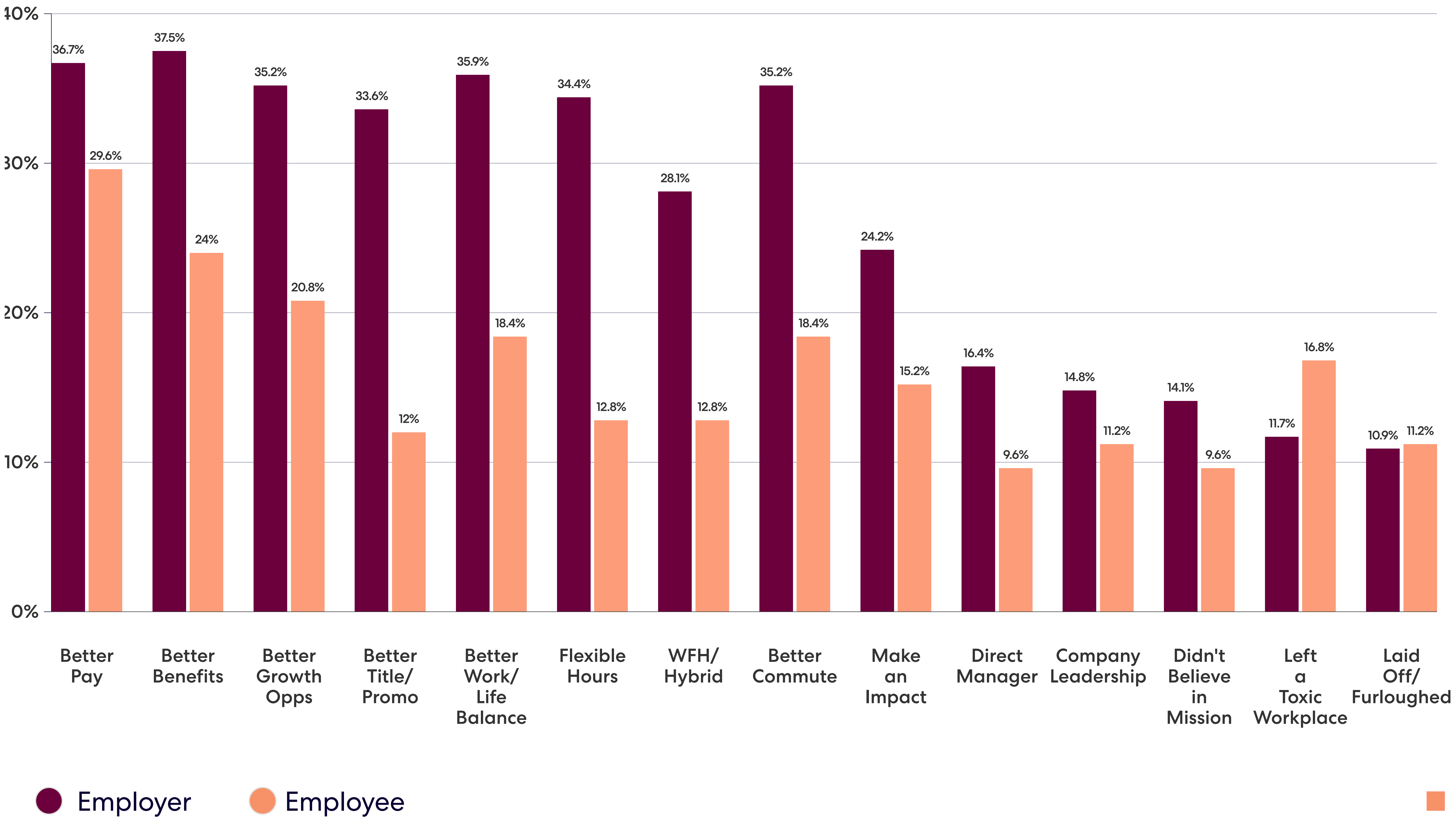
04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE— READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

Both groups agree pay and benefits are the top drivers of departure, but employers systematically overestimate nearly every reason. The largest gaps: better title/promotion (33.6% employers versus 12.0% employees, +21.6 pts), better flexible hours (34.4% versus 12.8%, +21.6 pts), and better work/life balance (35.9% versus 18.4%, +17.5 pts). The one category where employees exceed employers: left a toxic workplace (16.8% versus 11.7%). Better pay is selected at a slightly lower rate by employers in this region (36.7% versus 42%), while better work/life balance is selected at a lower rate by employees (18.4% versus 32%), compared to all national responses.

Reasons for Leaving a Job

QUESTION (Employer):
Why do you believe employees leave your company?

QUESTION (Employee):
Why did you leave your last job?



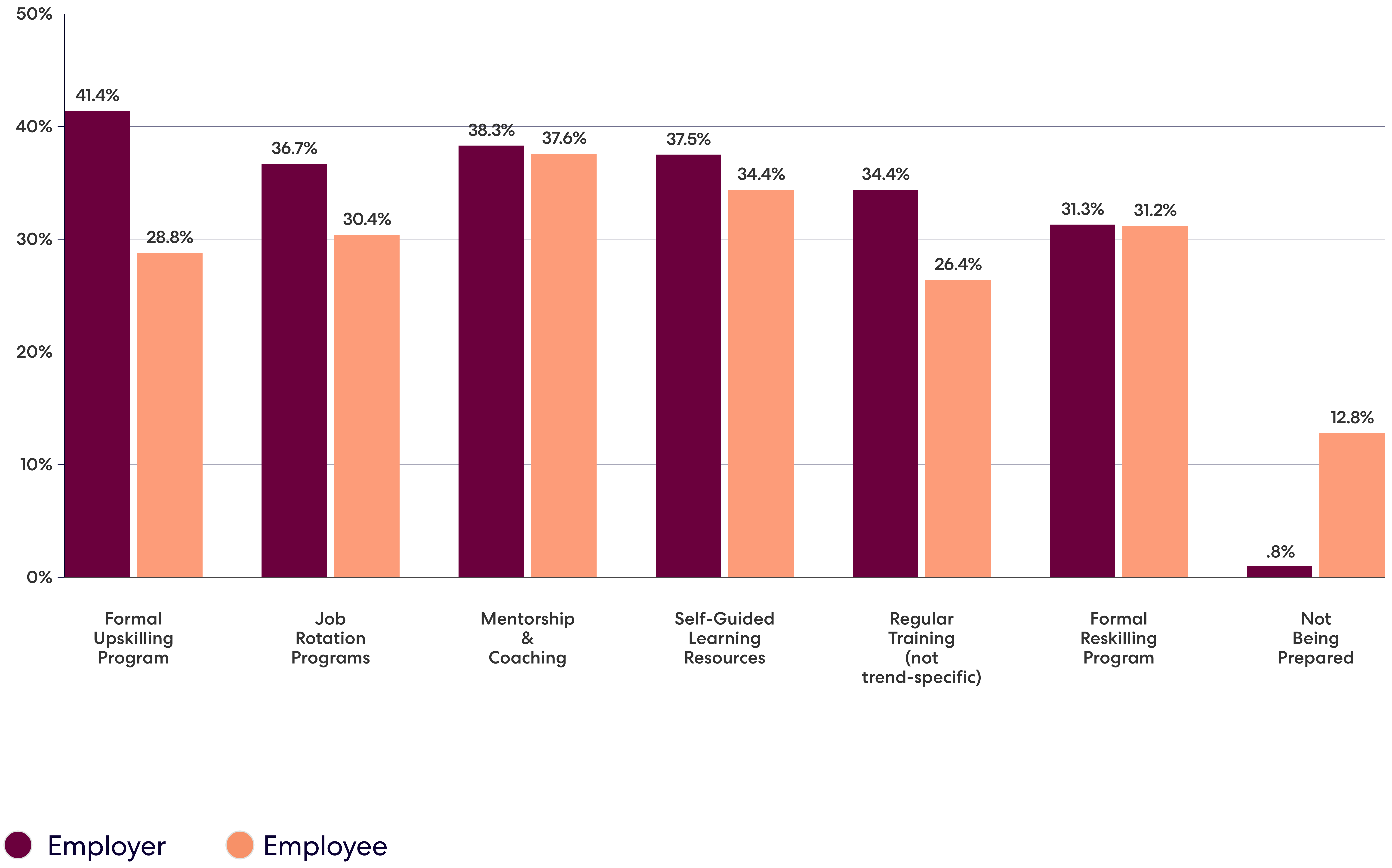
04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

This region shows stronger alignment on job preparation than others—mentorship and coaching are nearly equal (38.3% employers versus 37.6% employees). The largest gap: formal upskilling programs (41.4% employers versus 28.8% employees). One employer believes employees are not being prepared; 12.8% of employees say the same. Employers in this region report less mentoring compared to national results (38% versus 53%).

Job Preparation for the Future

QUESTION (Employer):
How are employees being prepared for jobs of the future?

QUESTION (Employee):
How are you being prepared for jobs of the future?



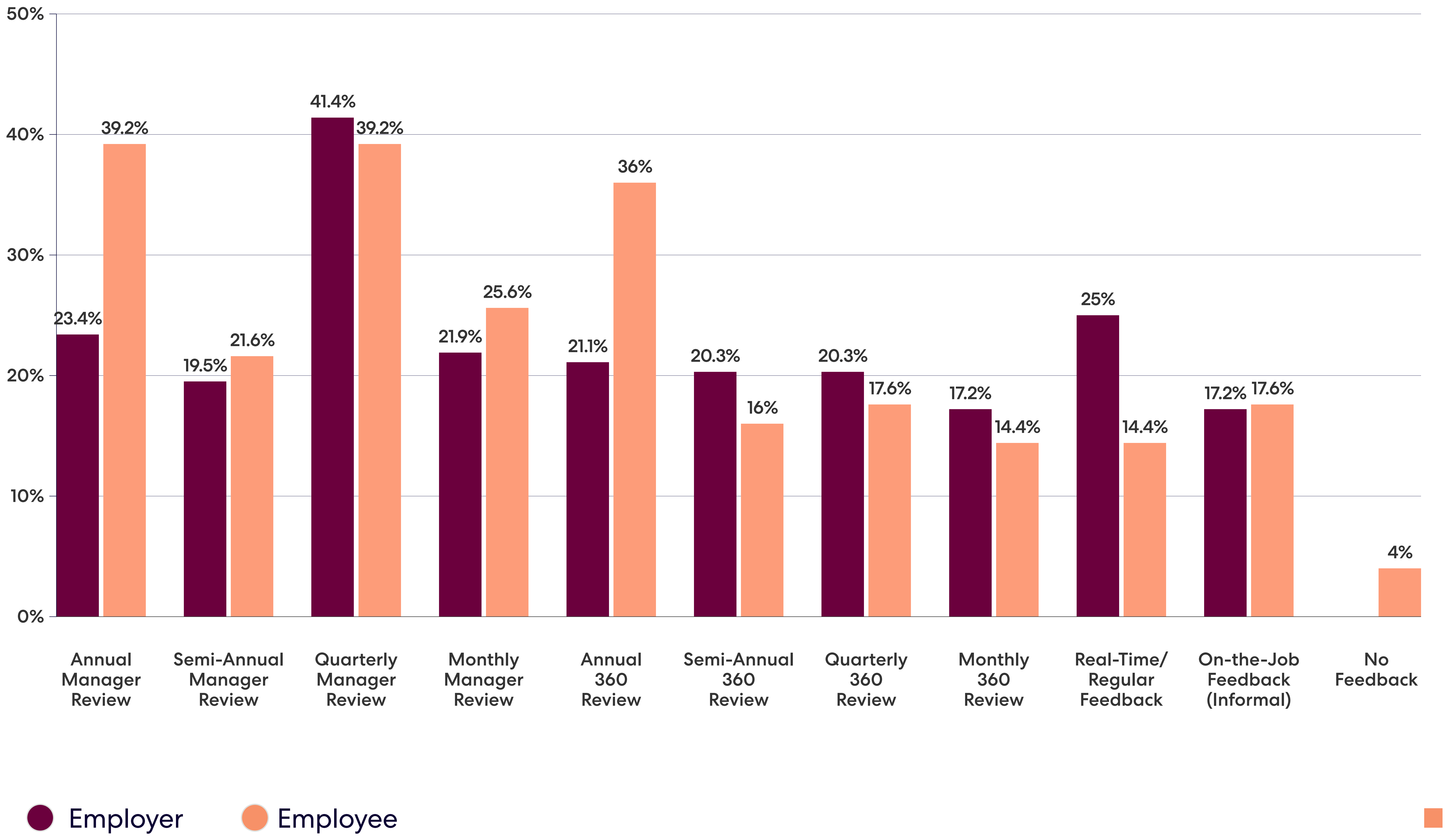
04. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE—READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

Quarterly manager reviews lead employer use (41.4%)—but employees most commonly receive both quarterly and annual manager reviews at equal rates (39.2% each). Real-time feedback is used notably more in this region compared to national rates (25.0% employers versus 14.4% employees). 4.0% of employees report receiving no feedback. In this region managers tend to choose annual manager review less often than national managers (23.4% versus 33%). Managers in this region are more favorable to quarterly manager reviews compared to nationally (41% versus 22%).

Feedback Formats

QUESTION (Employer):
How does your company provide feedback? What formats are most effective?

QUESTION (Employee):
How do you currently receive feedback? What formats do you prefer?

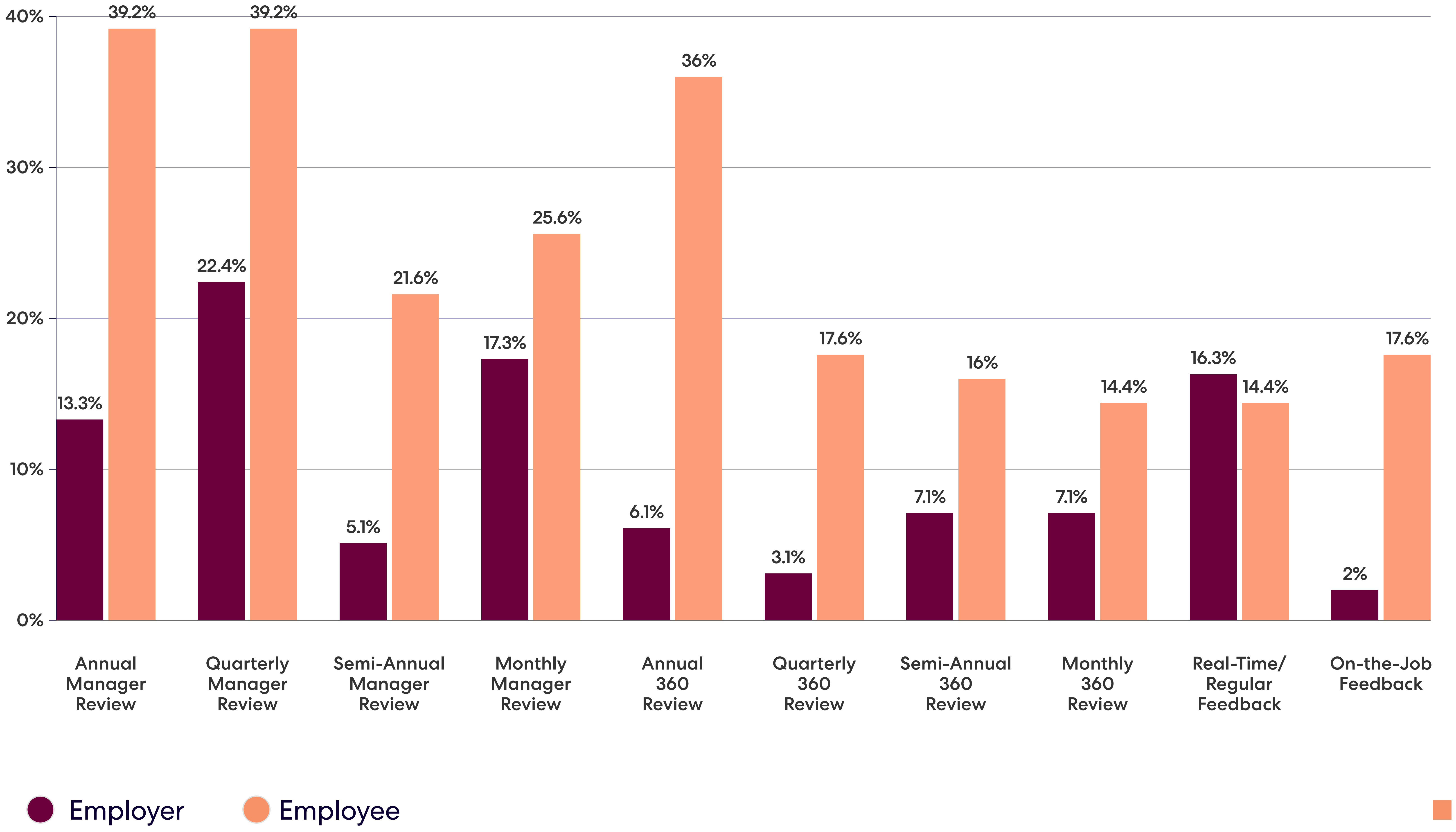


04.
BUILDING AN EMPOWERED WORKFORCE— READINESS, SKILLS & GROWTH

Most Effective/Preferred Format for Feedback

QUESTION (Employer):
How does your company provide feedback and reviews to employees?

QUESTION (Employee):
How do you receive feedback at your company?



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Overall, the findings show strong alignment between employers and employees on core benefits—particularly retirement plans, medical insurance, paid time off, and mental health coverage—all of which are widely rated as extremely important by both groups. However, meaningful gaps emerge around supplemental and family-oriented benefits. Employers tend to overestimate the universal importance of parental leave, childcare assistance, fertility coverage, flexible work location, and wellness perks, while employees view these as more situational or secondary. Conversely, employees place relatively stronger emphasis on foundational protections such as life insurance and traditional health coverage.

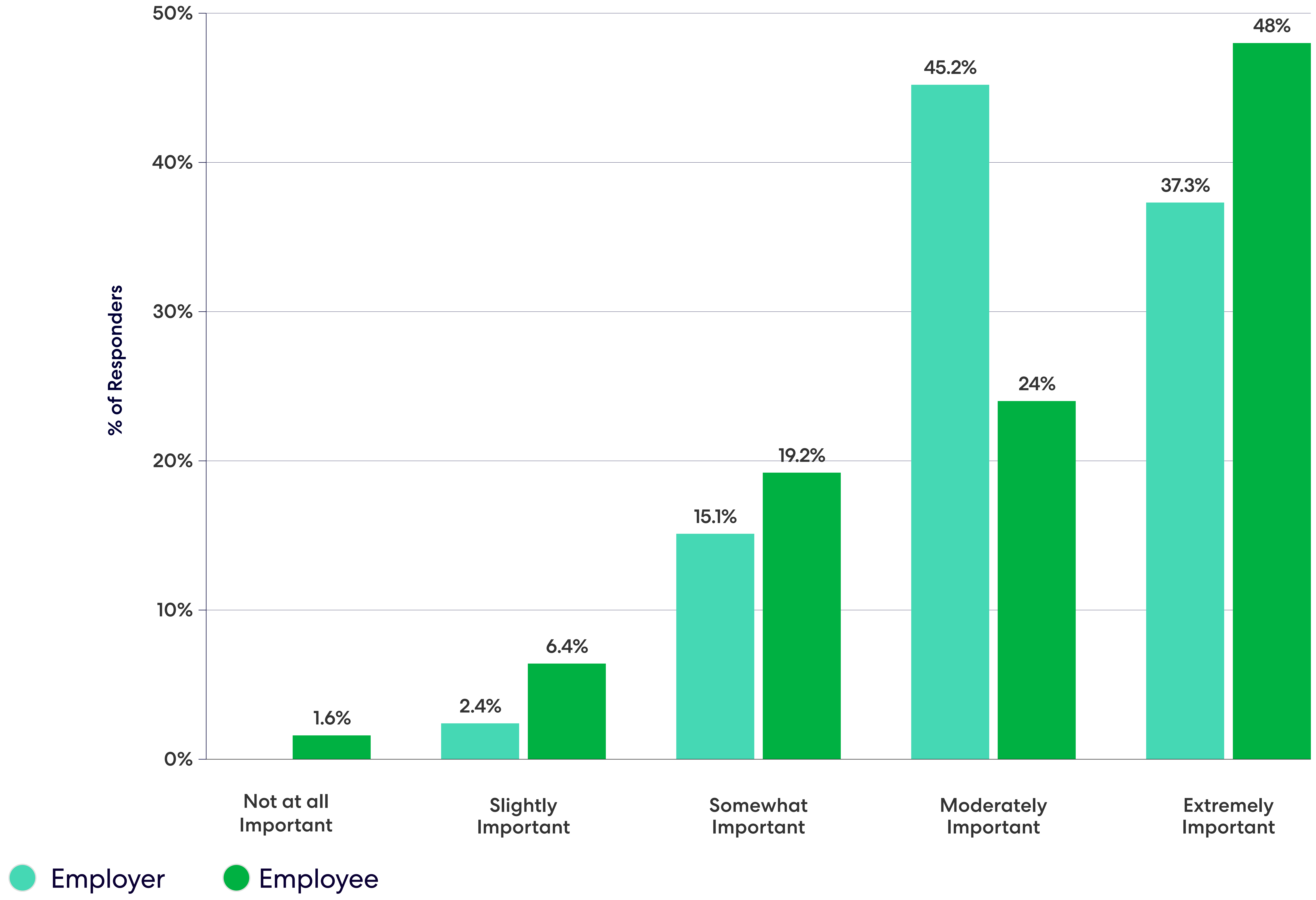
05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers and employees both rate pension and retirement plans as high priority, with employers at 82.5% moderately or extremely important and employees at 72.0%. Employees show slightly stronger intensity at the top tier—48.0% rate it extremely important compared to 37.3% of employers—suggesting retirement security carries more personal urgency for employees than employers may recognize.

Pension & Retirement Plans (401(k))

QUESTION (Employer):
What level of importance do employees consider each benefit when looking for a job?

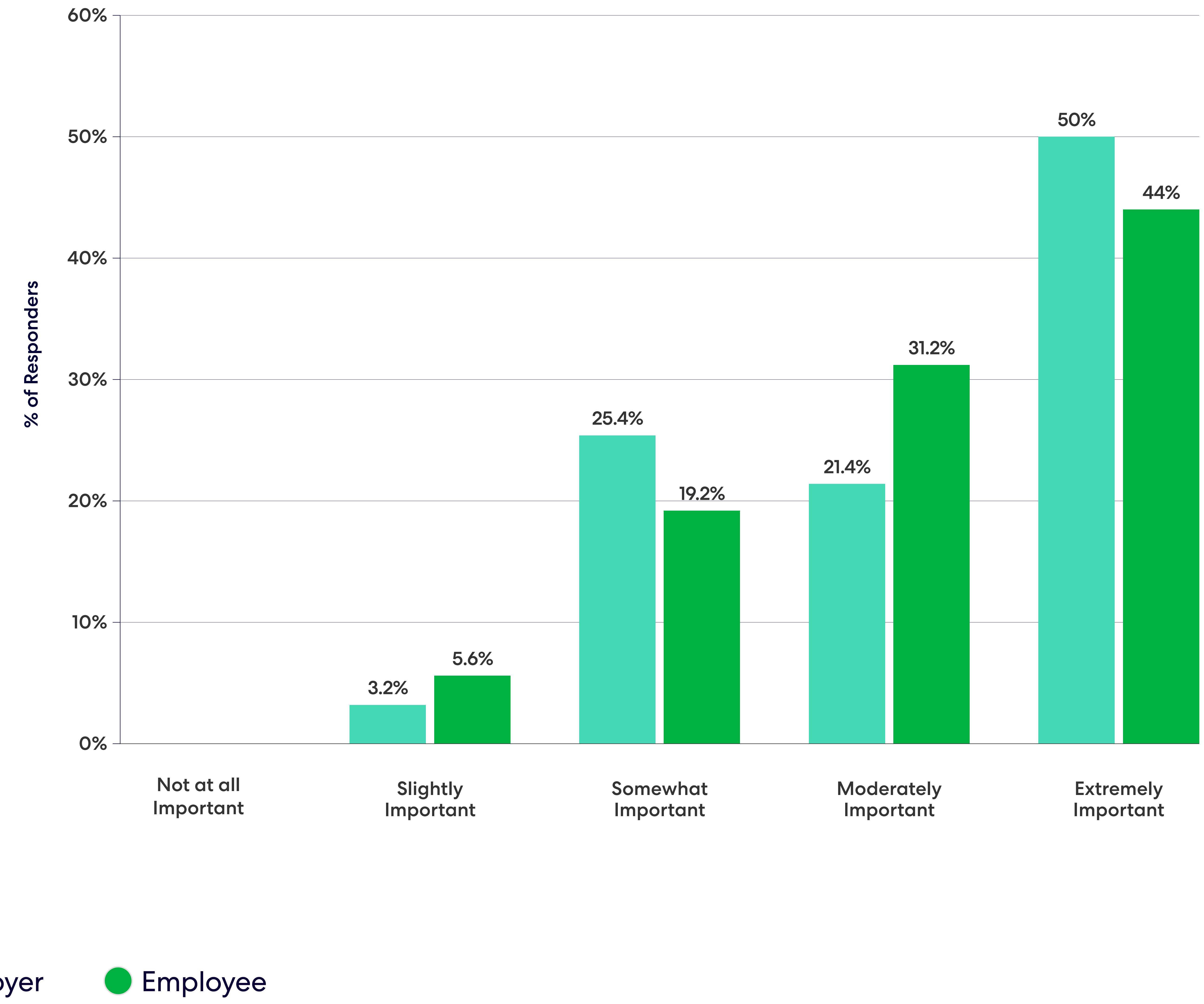
QUESTION (Employee):
What level of importance would you assign each benefit when looking for a job?



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers rate benefits that account for employee needs as extremely important at 50.0%, suggesting medical coverage is seen as core. Employees closely match this emphasis, with 44.0% rating medical insurance as extremely important, showing strong alignment. Medical insurance was viewed as less important to potential employees by managers in this region, compared to all managers (71.4% versus 80%, moderately or extremely important).

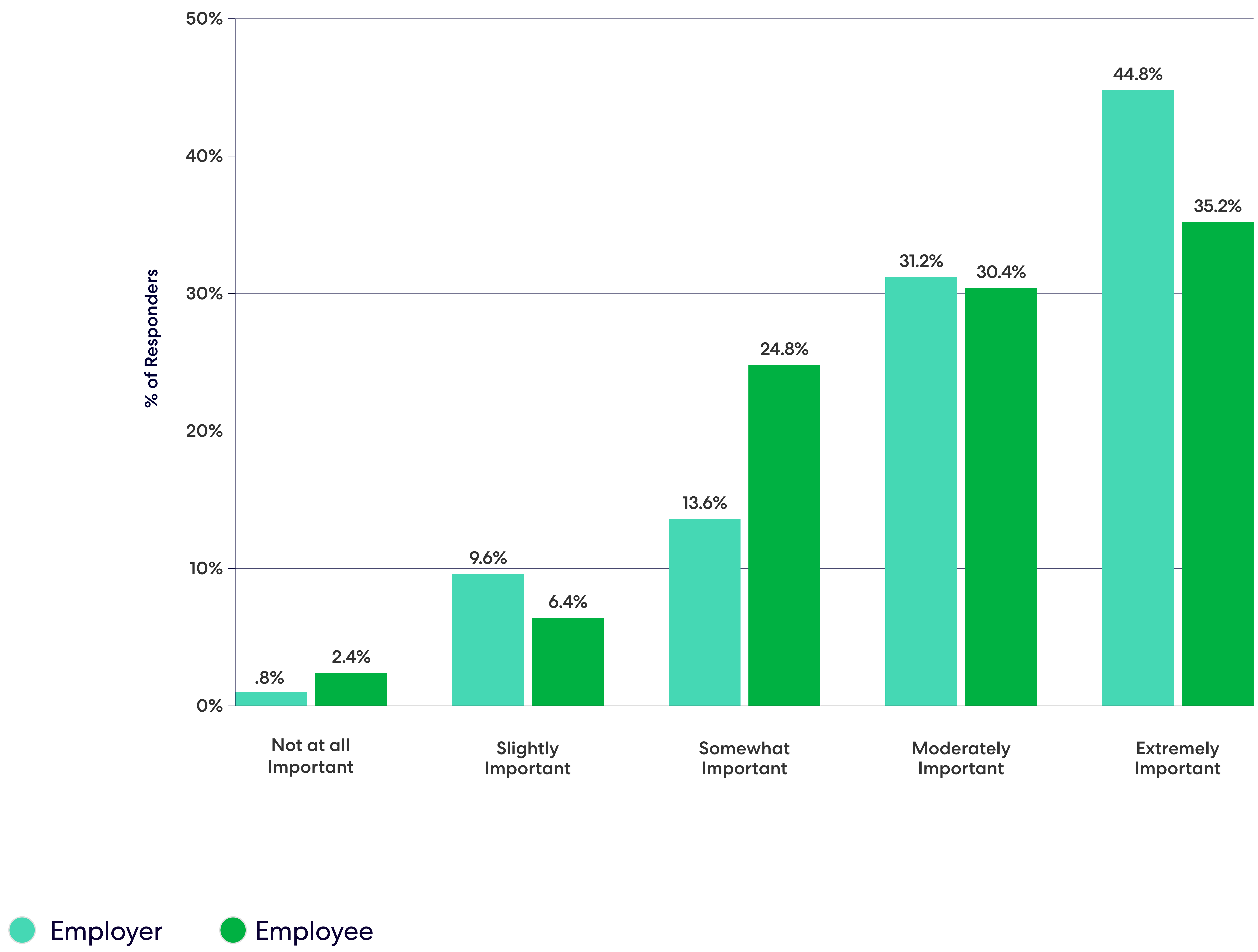
Medical Insurance



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Dental insurance ranks as a high-priority benefit for employers, with 44.8% rating it extremely important and 76.0% moderately or extremely important overall. Employees follow closely at 65.6% moderately or extremely important, with 35.2% selecting extremely important—a meaningful gap that suggests employers slightly overestimate the intensity of employee preference for dental coverage, even as both groups broadly value it.

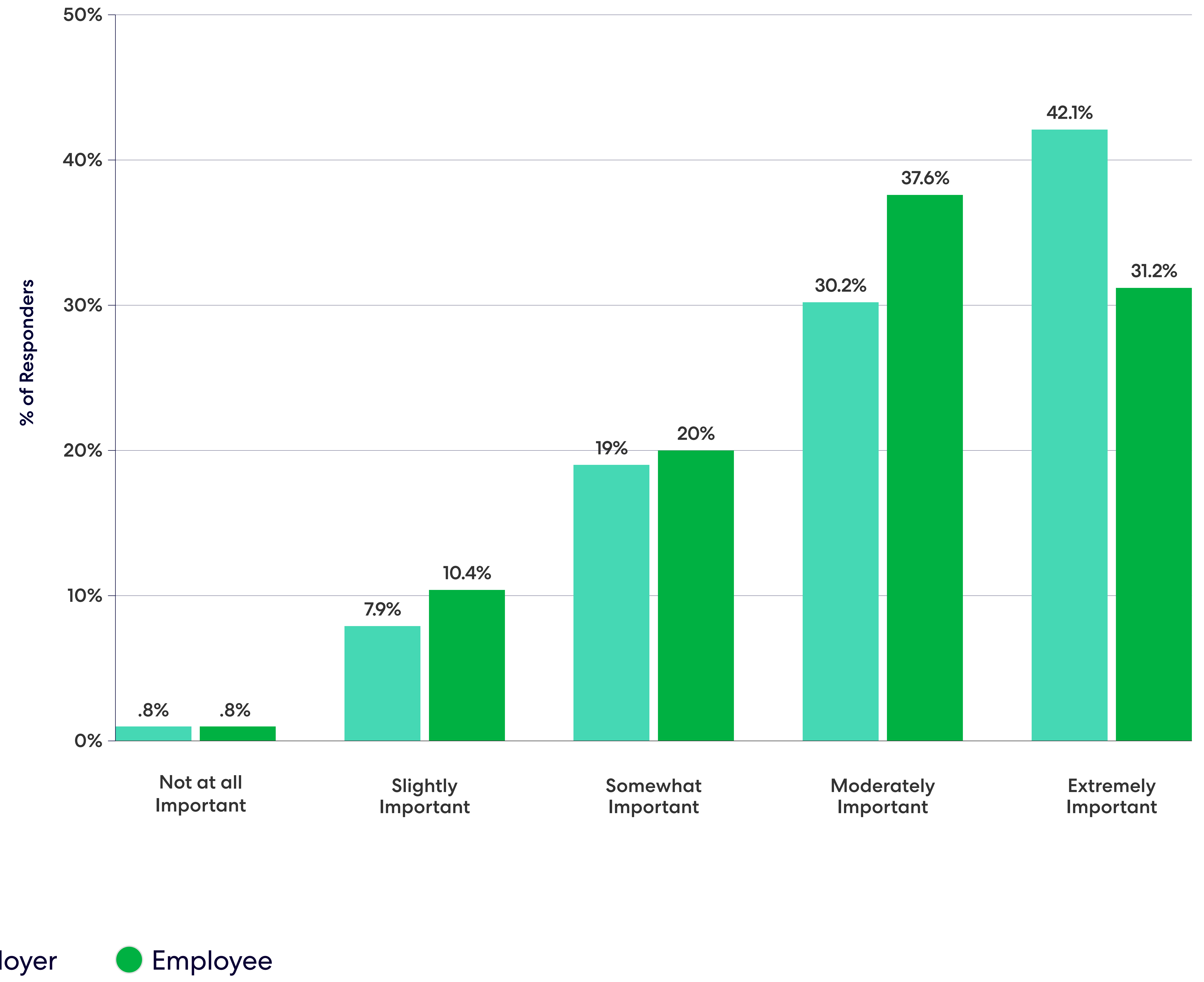
Dental Insurance



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Vision insurance registers as a high-priority benefit for employers, with 42.1% rating it extremely important. Employees value it as well but at a lower intensity—31.2% extremely important compared to 42.1%—with employees more concentrated in the moderately important category (37.6%). This suggests employers somewhat overestimate how critical vision coverage is relative to other health benefits in employees' decision-making.

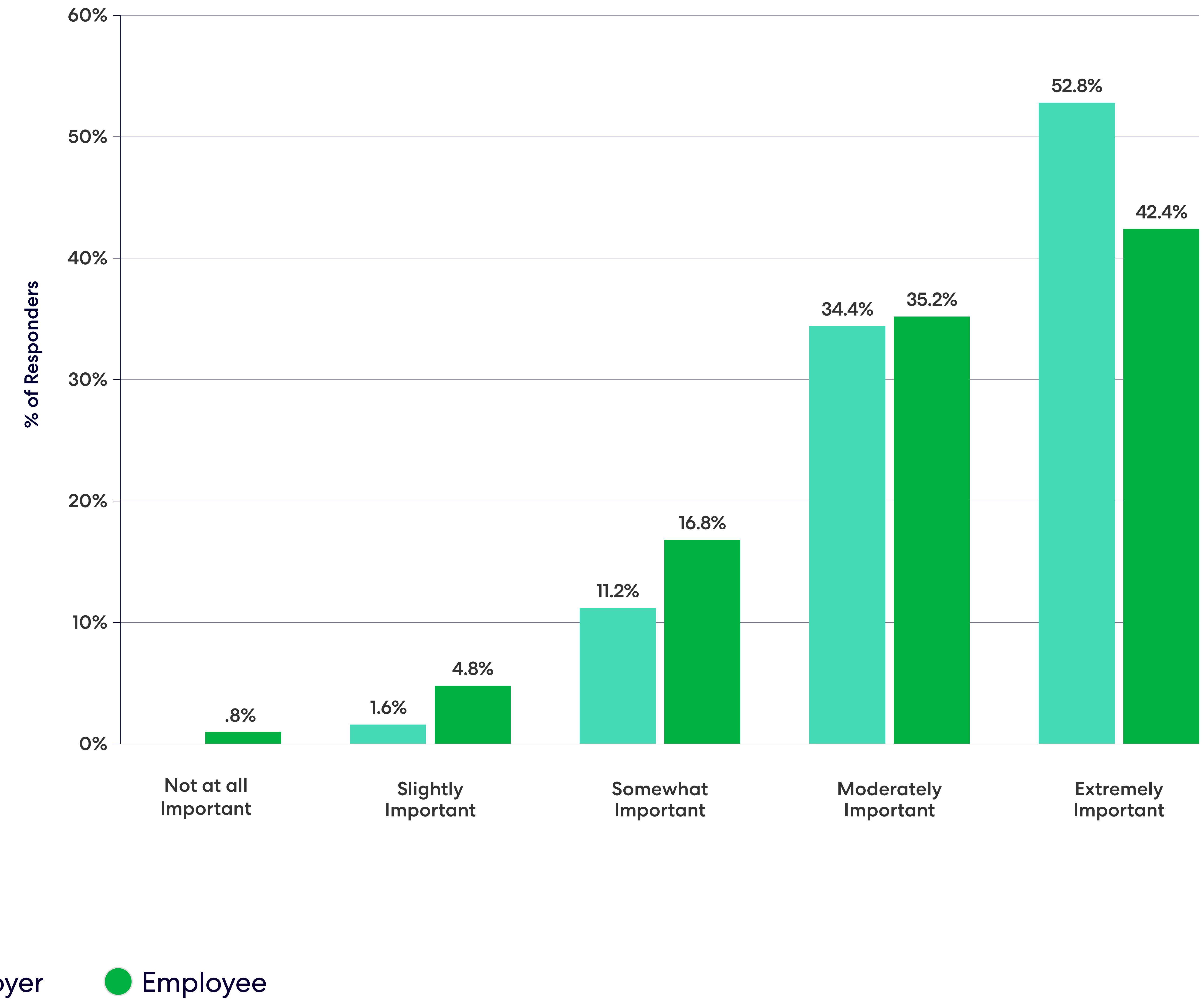
Vision Insurance



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Paid vacation and sick time is the most universally valued benefit, with 87.2% of employers and 77.6% of employees rating it Moderately or Extremely important. Employers skew slightly higher at the top end (52.8% vs. 42.4% Extremely), suggesting their perception is well-calibrated to employee priorities.

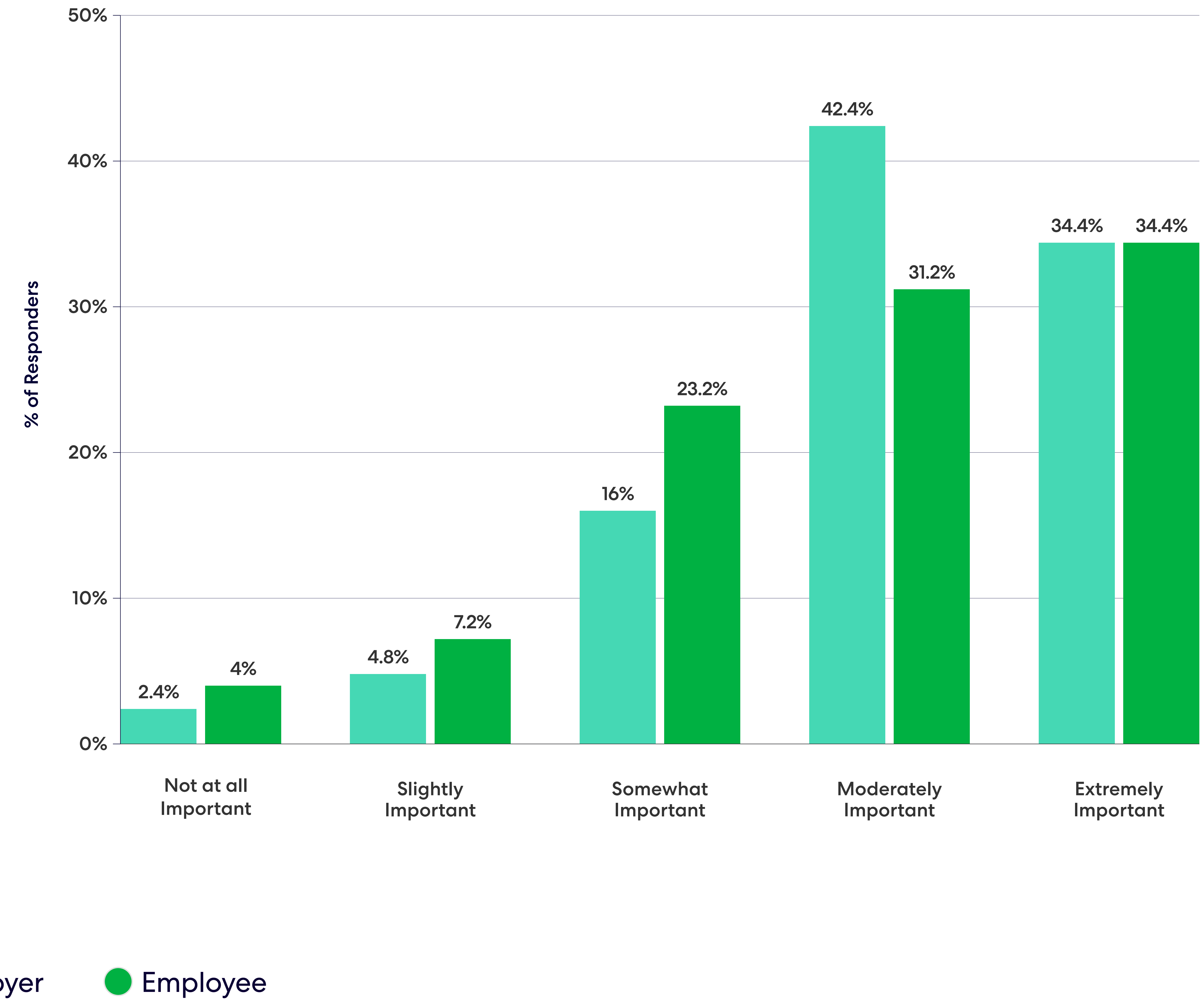
Paid Vacation & Sick Time



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers and employees are closely aligned, with 34.4% of employers and 34.4% of employees rating mental health coverage as extremely important. This suggests accurate employer understanding of employee mental health priorities.

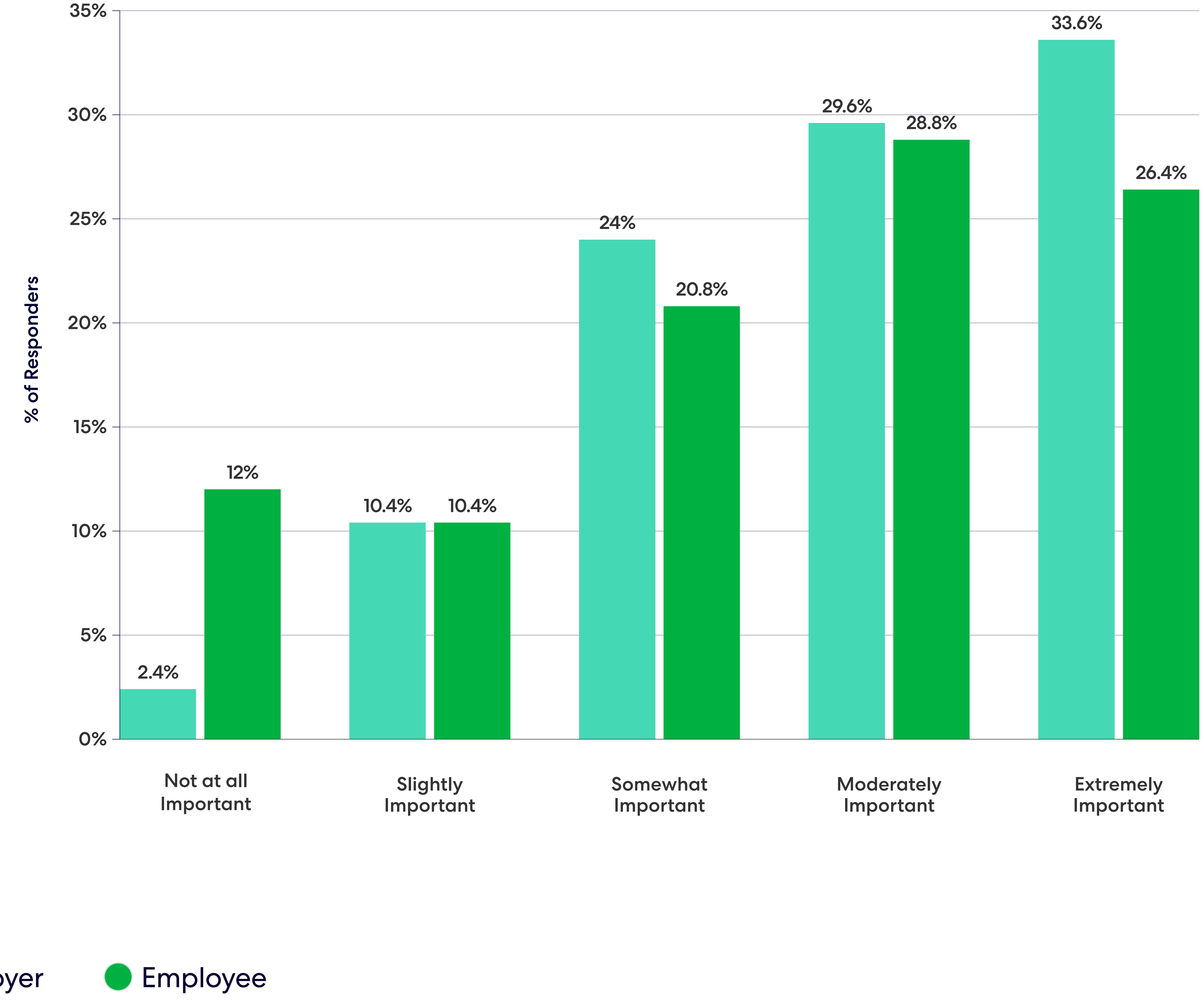
Mental Health Insurance Coverage



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers and employees are closely aligned, with 34.4% of employers and 34.4% of employees rating mental health coverage as extremely important. This suggests accurate employer understanding of employee mental health priorities.

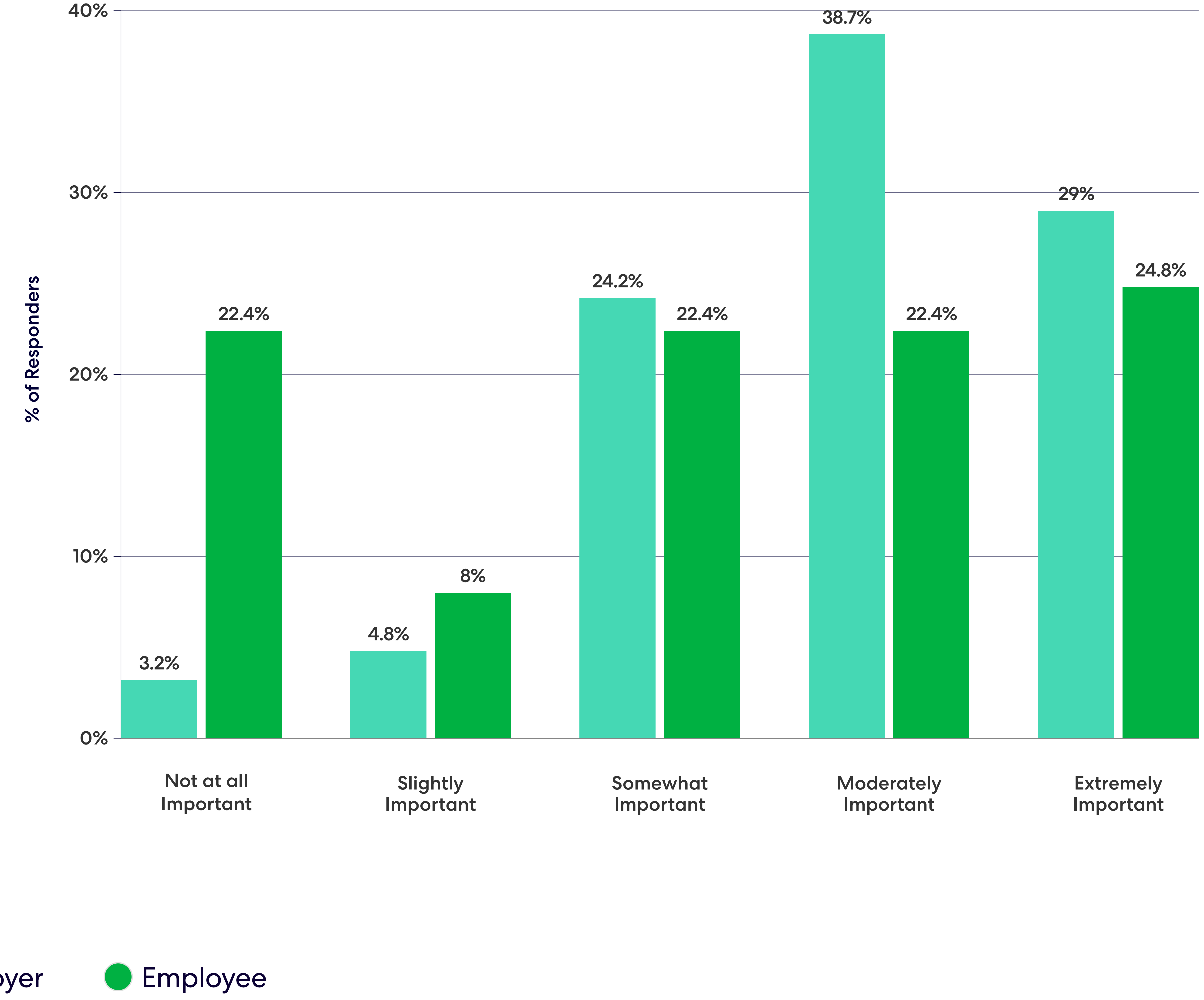
Mental Health Workshops/Apps



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers do not isolate fertility benefits but often include them within family-support offerings. Employees are polarized, with 24.8% extremely important and 22.4% not at all important, suggesting this benefit should be targeted rather than universal. Managers in this region placed more importance on fertility coverage, compared to all managers (67.7% versus 60% moderately to extremely important).

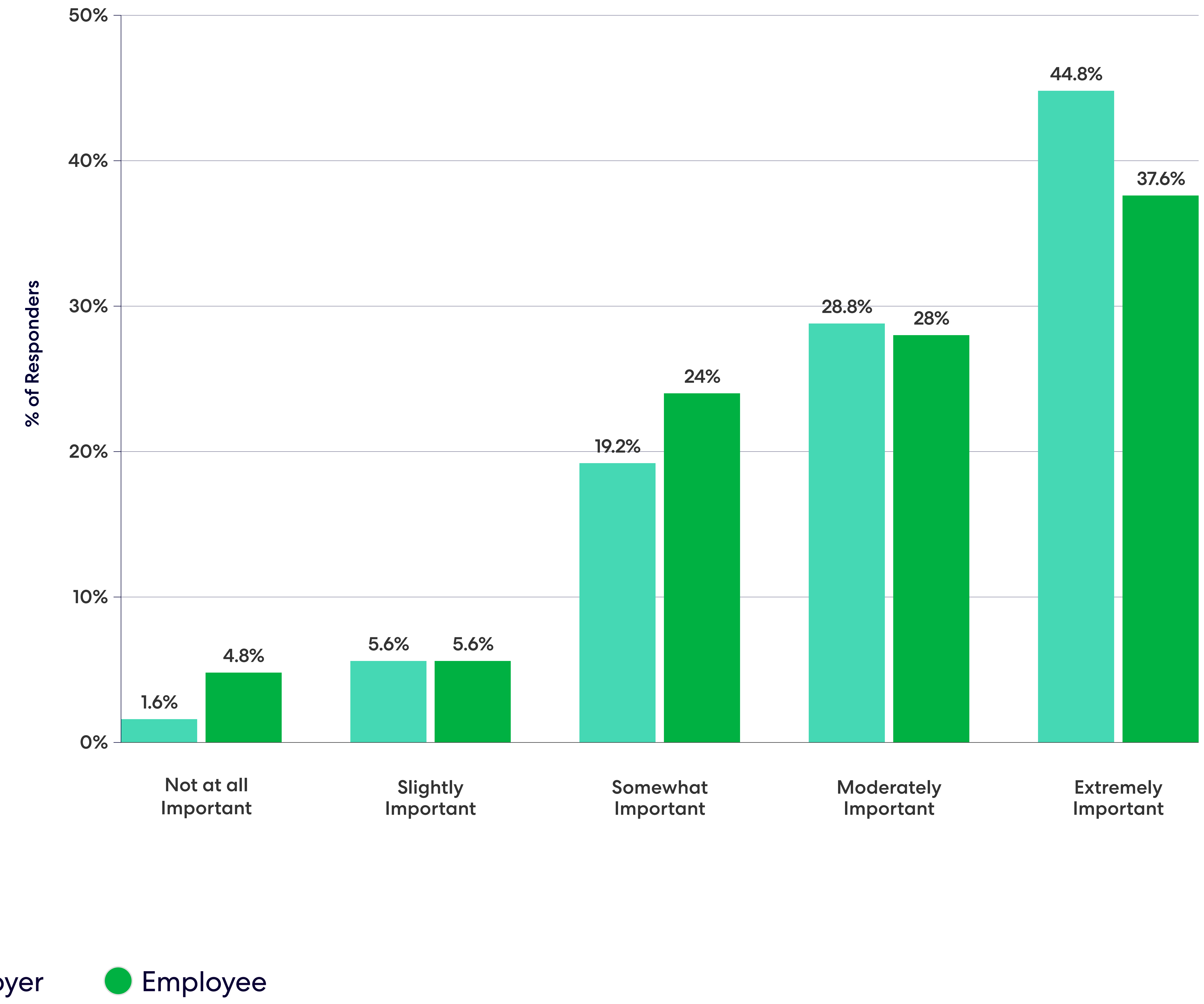
Fertility Coverage



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers treat life insurance as a standard benefit without emphasizing intensity. Employees rate it relatively high, with 37.6% extremely important and 28.0% moderately important, indicating modest employer underestimation. Life insurance was less important to employees in this region compared to all employees.

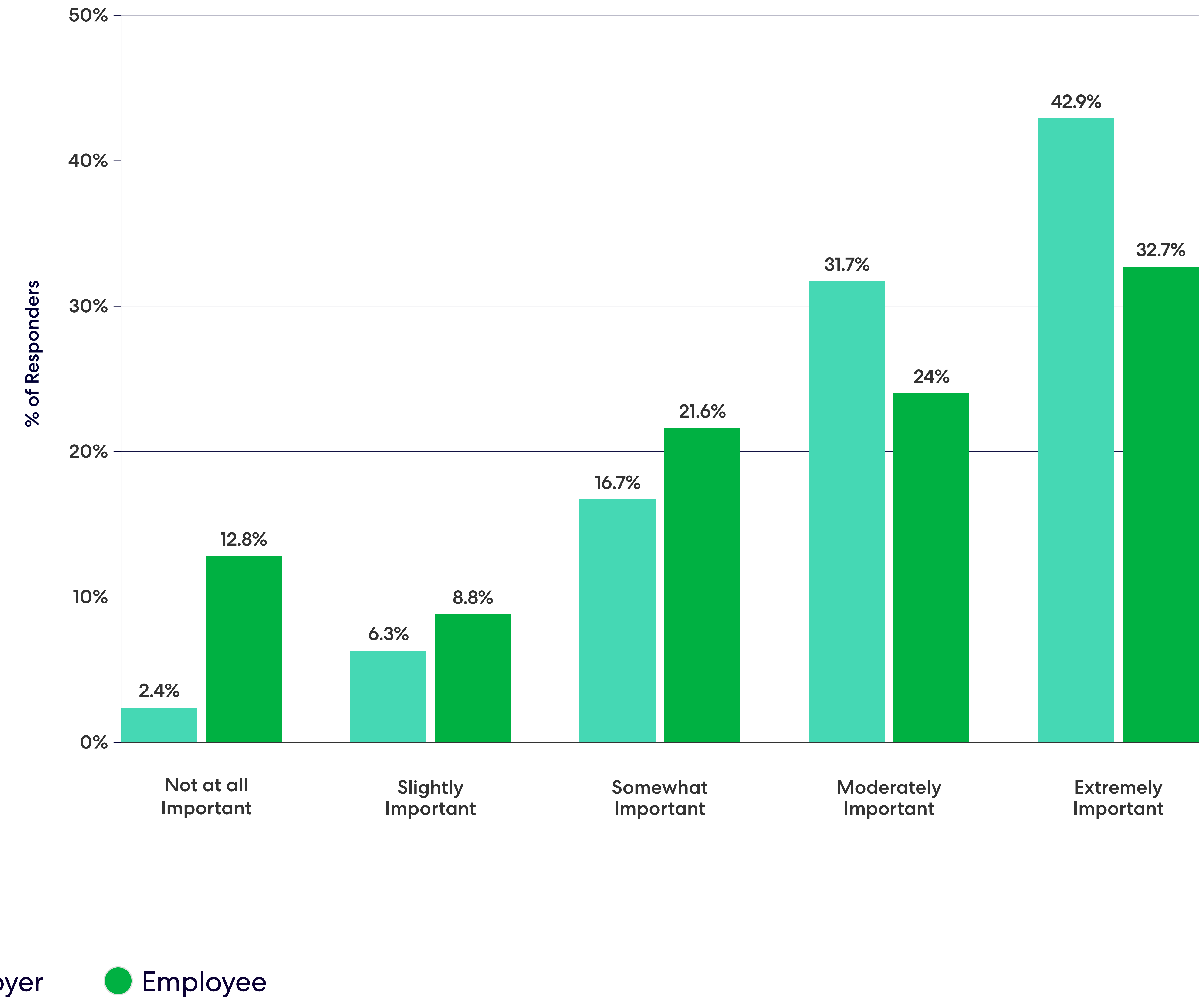
Life Insurance



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers include parental leave under benefits that meet employee needs, rating it highly at 42.9% extremely important. Employees show more situational importance, with 31.2% extremely important and 12.8% not at all important, indicating employer overestimation of universal relevance.

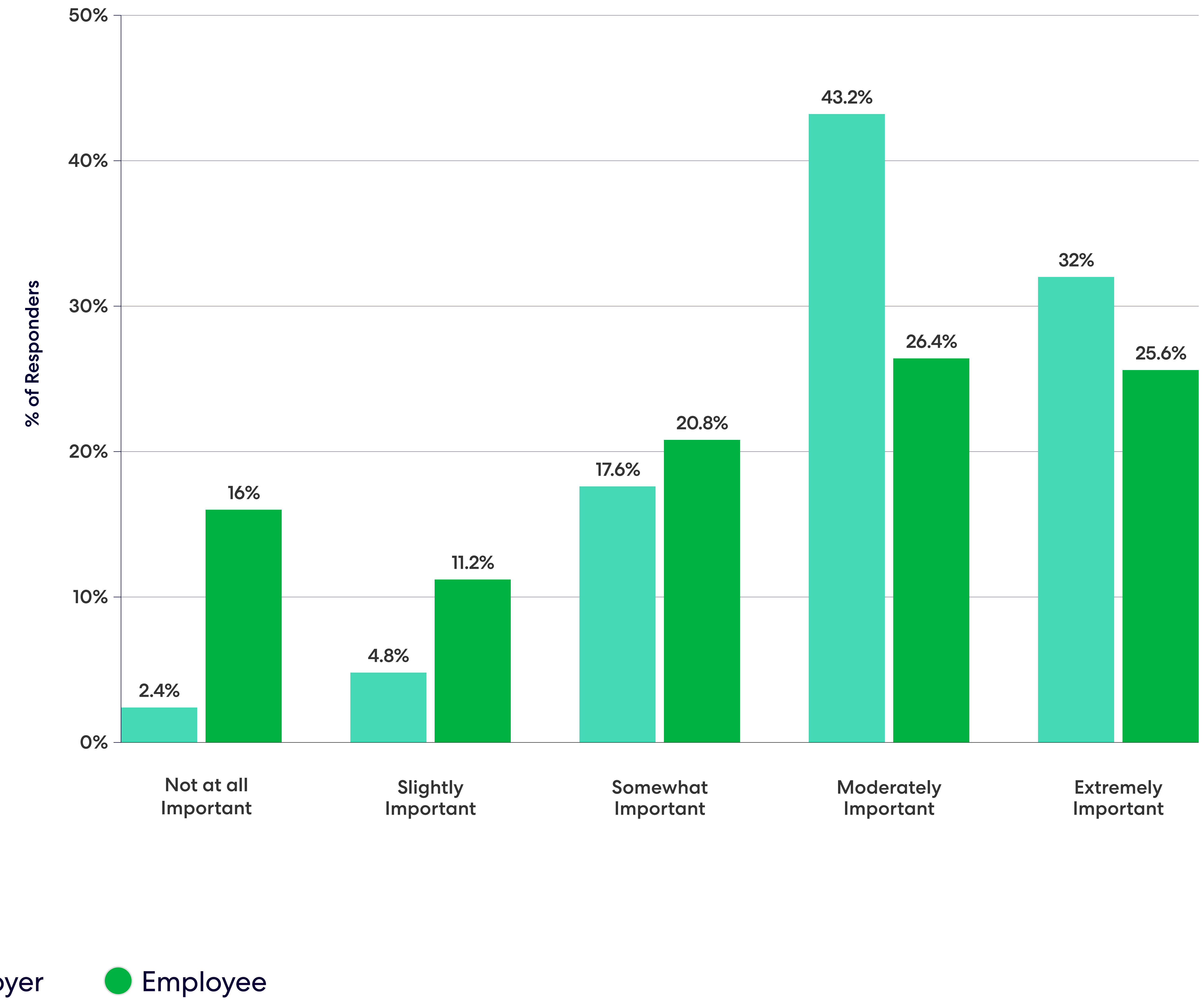
Parental Leave



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers appear to view childcare as a high-value benefit within needs-based offerings (32.0% extremely important). Employees are more divided, with only 25.6% extremely important and 16.0% not at all important, representing one of the largest employer–employee gaps. Employees in this region viewed this benefit as less important compared to all employees surveyed (52% versus 65%).

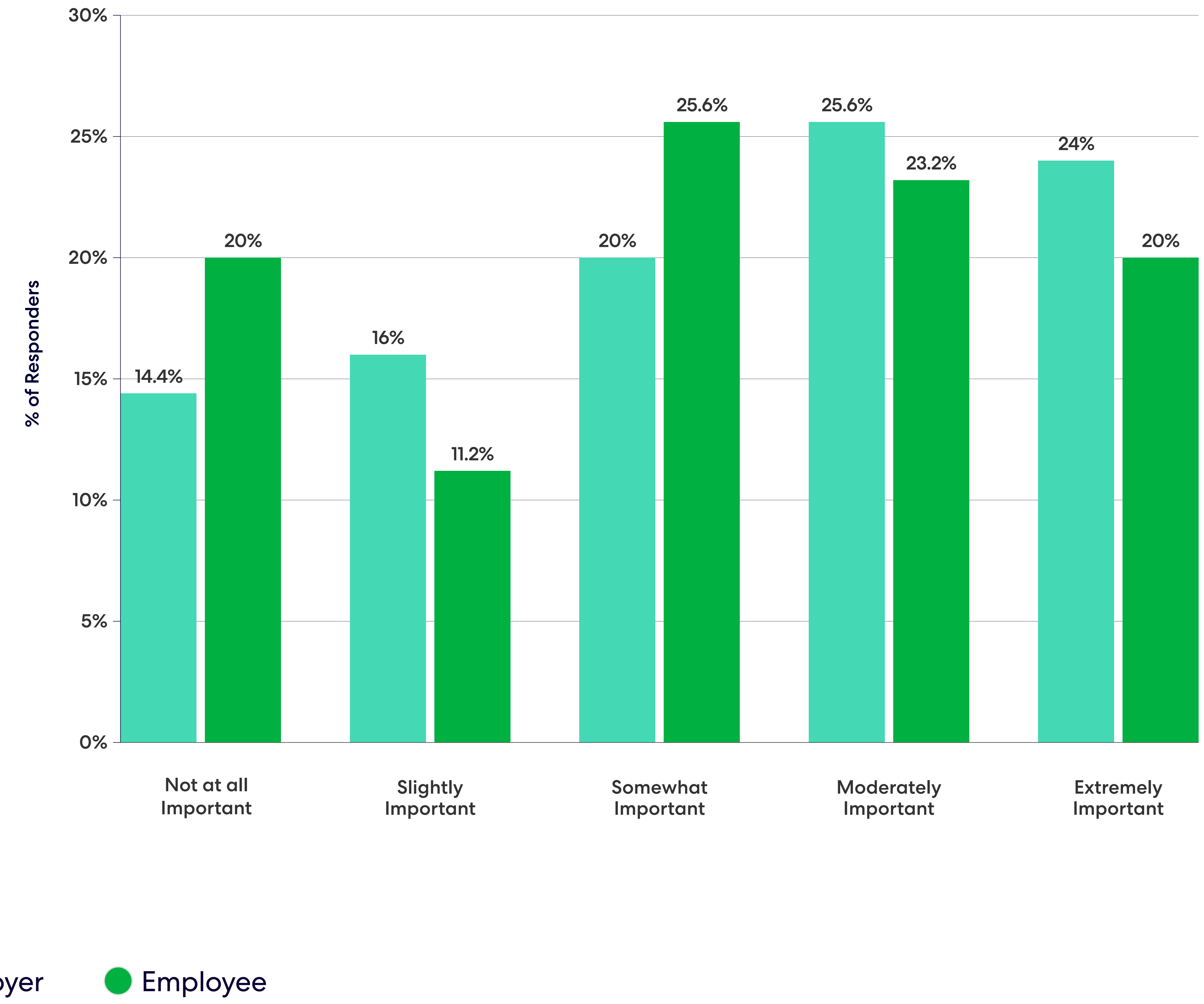
Childcare Assistance



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers rarely prioritize pet insurance but may include it in expanded benefits packages. Employees are evenly split, with 20.0% extremely important and 20.0% not at all important, confirming it as a niche benefit.

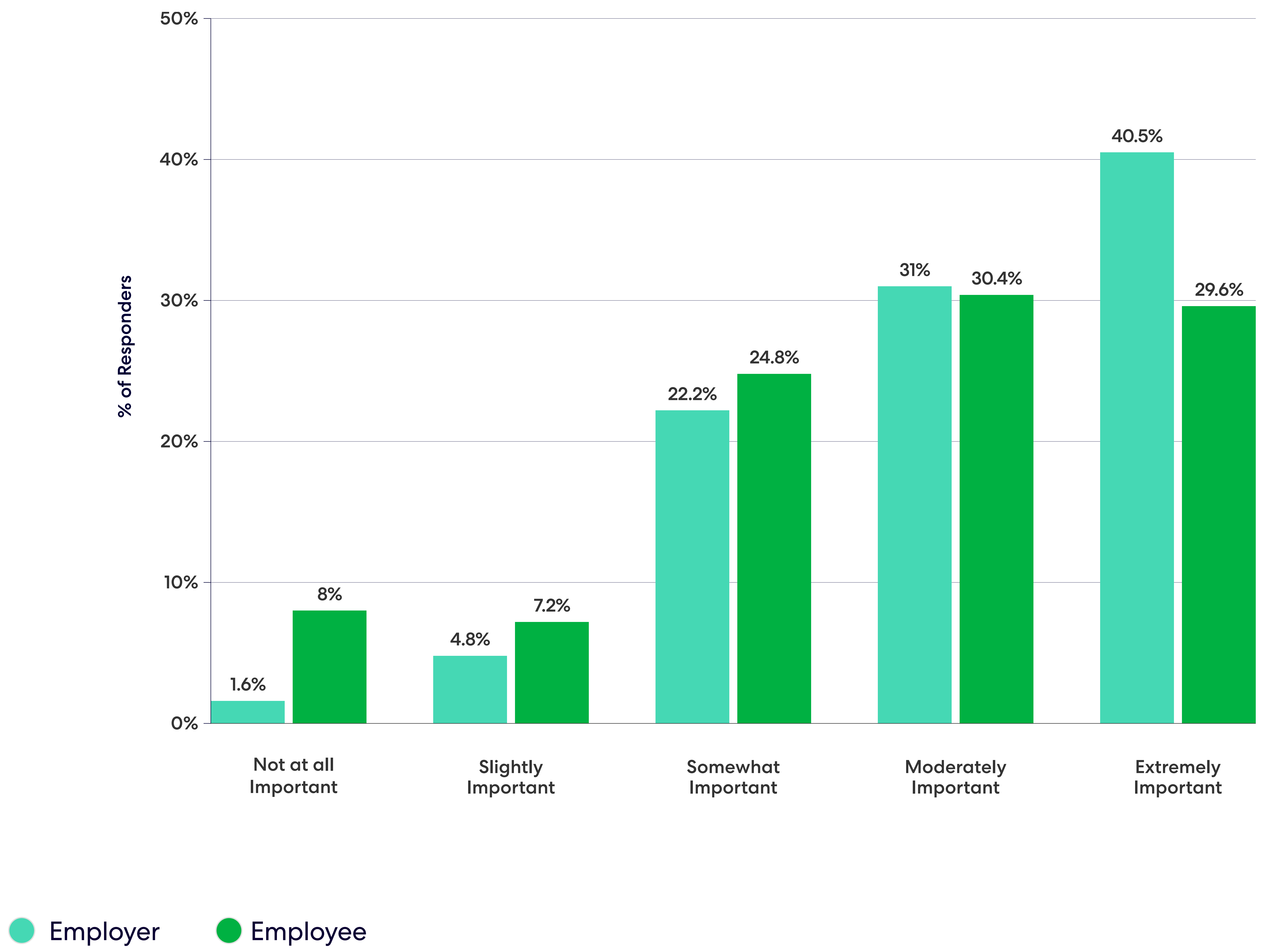
Pet Insurance



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers typically frame discounts as supplementary perks. Employees show moderate interest, with 29.6% extremely important and 30.4% moderately important, indicating appreciation but limited influence on job choice.

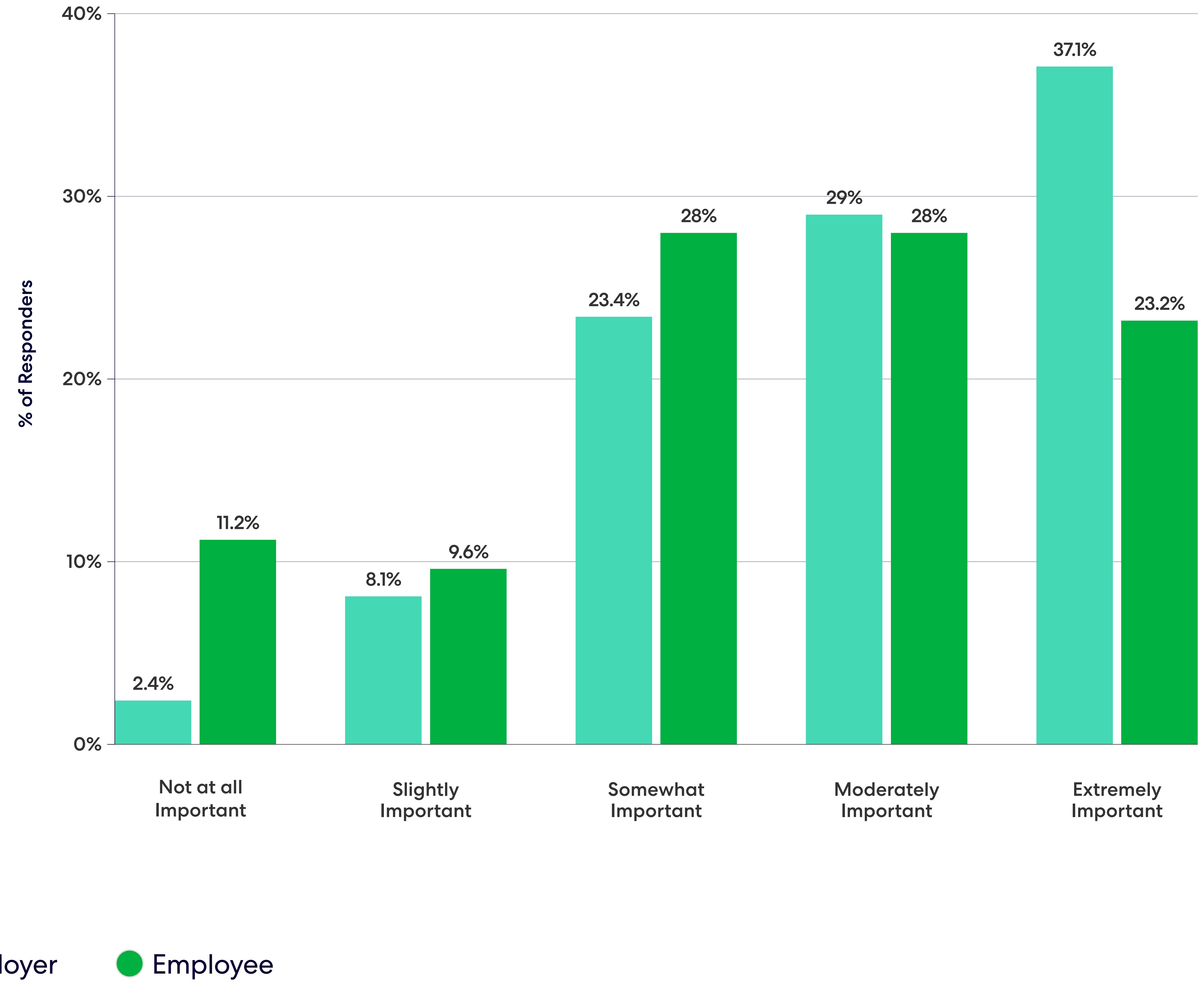
Employee Discounts



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers emphasize growth and development broadly (37.1% extremely important for growth). Employees value education reimbursement moderately, with 23.2% extremely important and 28.0% somewhat important, suggesting employers may overgeneralize development preferences. Less importance was placed on this benefit by Mid-Atlantic employees compared to all employees surveyed (51% versus 59%).

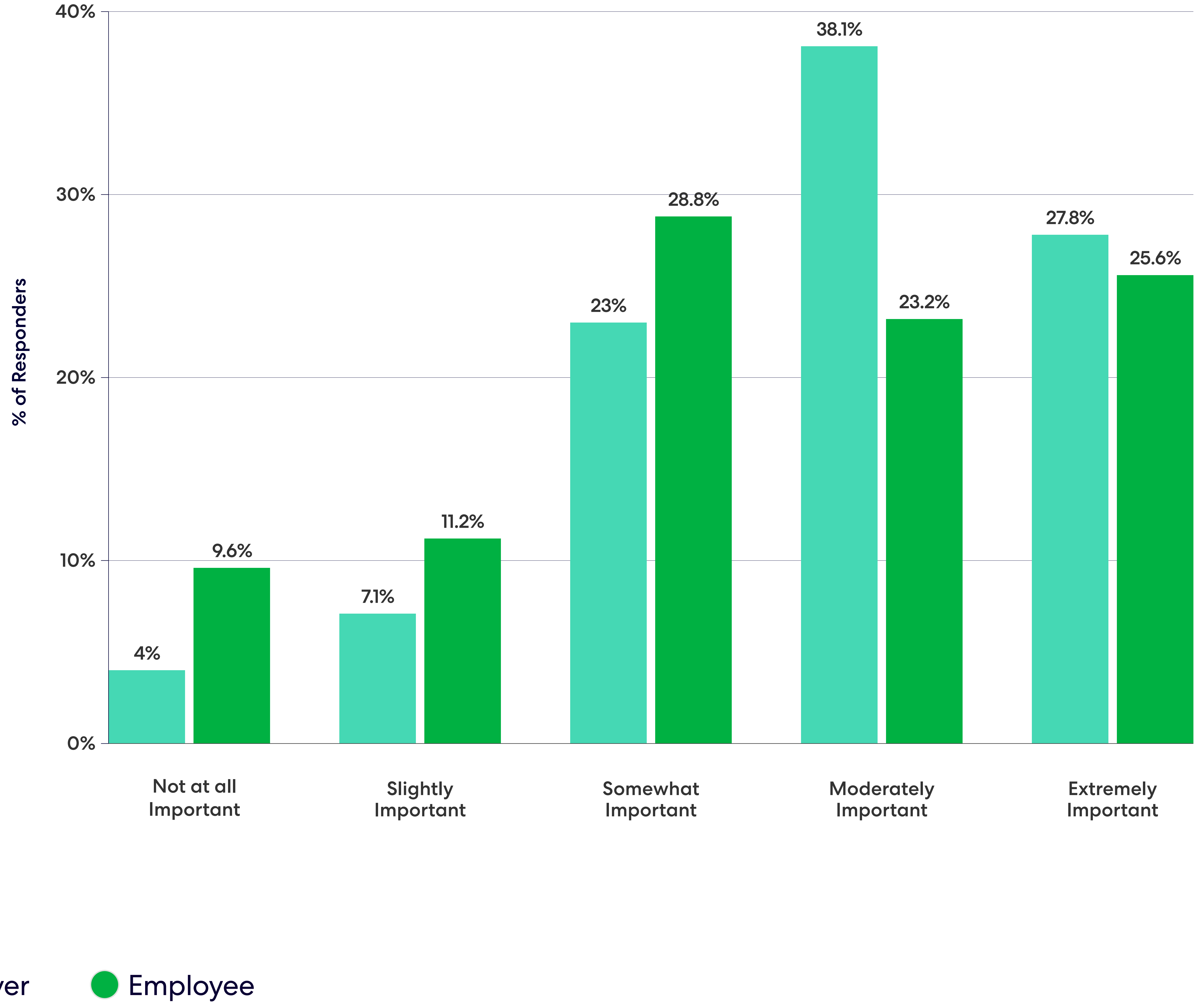
Education Reimbursement



05. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Employers often highlight fitness perks as engagement tools. Employees view them as lower priority, with 25.6% extremely important and 28.8% somewhat important, suggesting these should not substitute for core benefits.

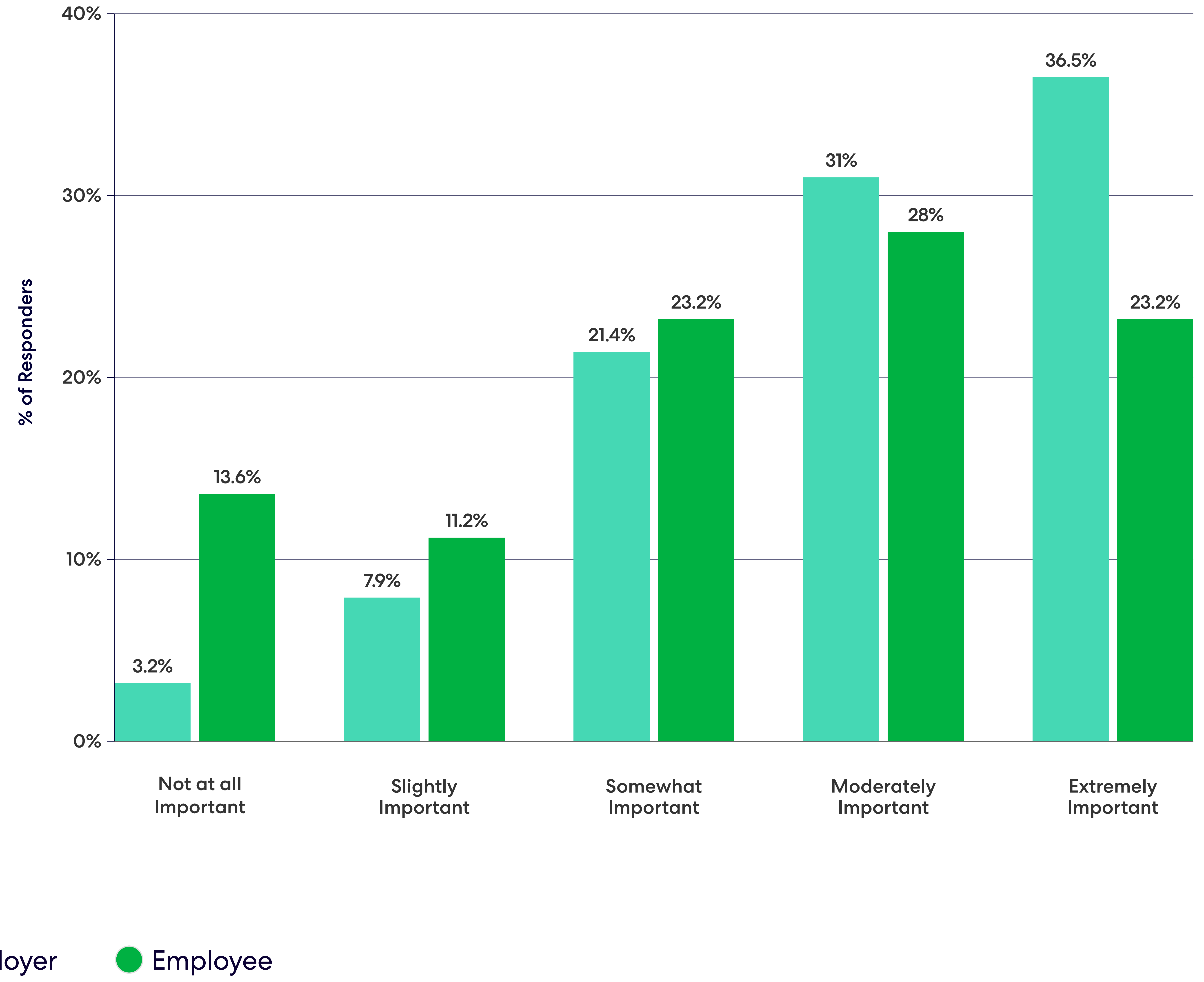
Fitness Perks



05.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENEFITS

Both groups view wellness activity discounts as a secondary benefit. Employers rate them moderately or extremely important at 67.5%, while only 51.2% of employees agree. Employees are more polarized on this benefit—23.2% rate it extremely important while 13.6% say not at all important—indicating wellness discounts appeal strongly to some employees but hold little value for others.

Wellness Activity Discounts



06. DEMAND FOR 24/7 HR

Both groups largely support 24/7 HR availability, but employers lead at 90.2% versus 72.8% of employees—suggesting a workforce that is comfortable with technology-enabled HR services. Still, 14.4% of employees are neutral and 11.2% disagree, reflecting meaningful ambivalence.

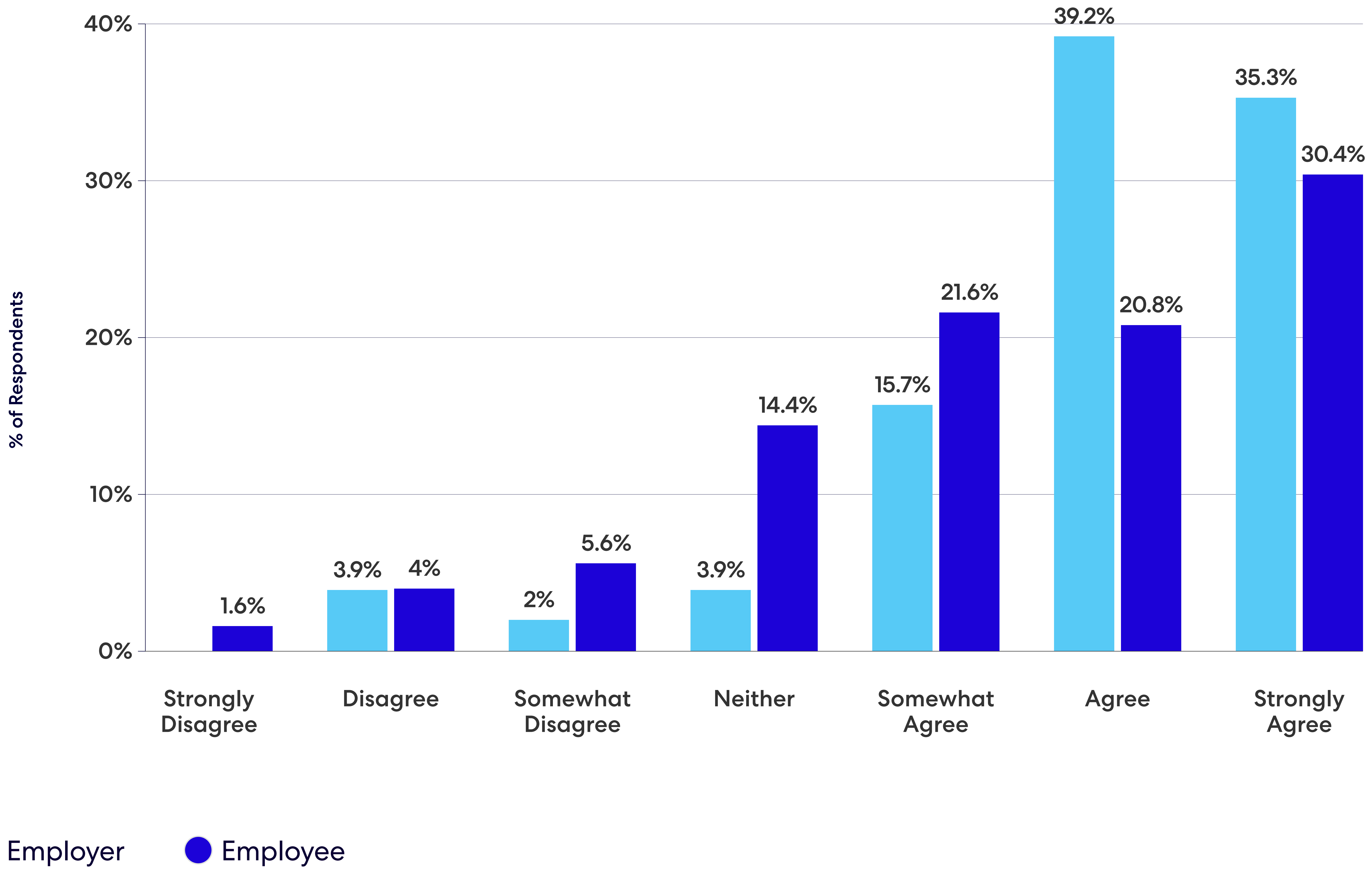
06. THE DEMAND FOR 24/7 HR

Both groups largely agree, but employers are substantially more supportive of a 24/7 HR model: 90.2% of employers agree, compared with 72.8% of employees. Employees show more ambivalence, with 14.4% neutral and 11.2% expressing disagreement, suggesting concerns about feasibility, boundaries, or expectations that are far less pronounced among employers. Employers in this region are slightly more enthusiastic compared to managers nationally.

The Demand for 24/7 HR

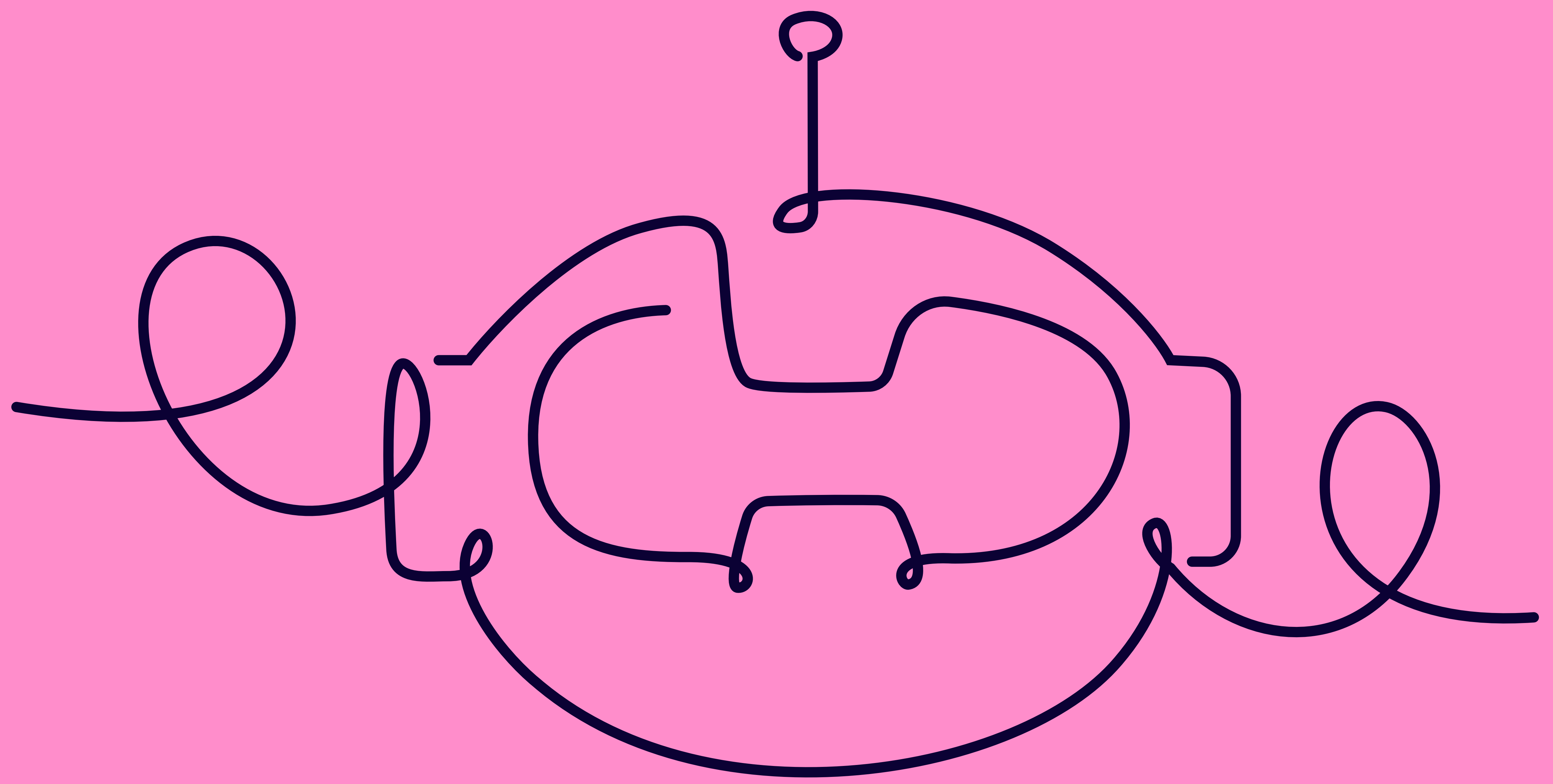
QUESTION (Employer):
Do you agree that HR should be available 24/7?

QUESTION (Employee):
Do you agree that HR should be available 24/7?



07. AI IN HR

Managers use AI at work more frequently than employees, and one third of employees report rarely or never using AI. For HR related information, employers reflect broader and more regular use of AI. Employers are most interested in delegating AI for performance management and benefits administration. Mid-Atlantic employers are more willing to delegate performance management to AI compared to national rates. Top employer concerns about using AI in HR include lack of data privacy and lack of emotion, while top employee concerns are lack of empathy and potential for bias.



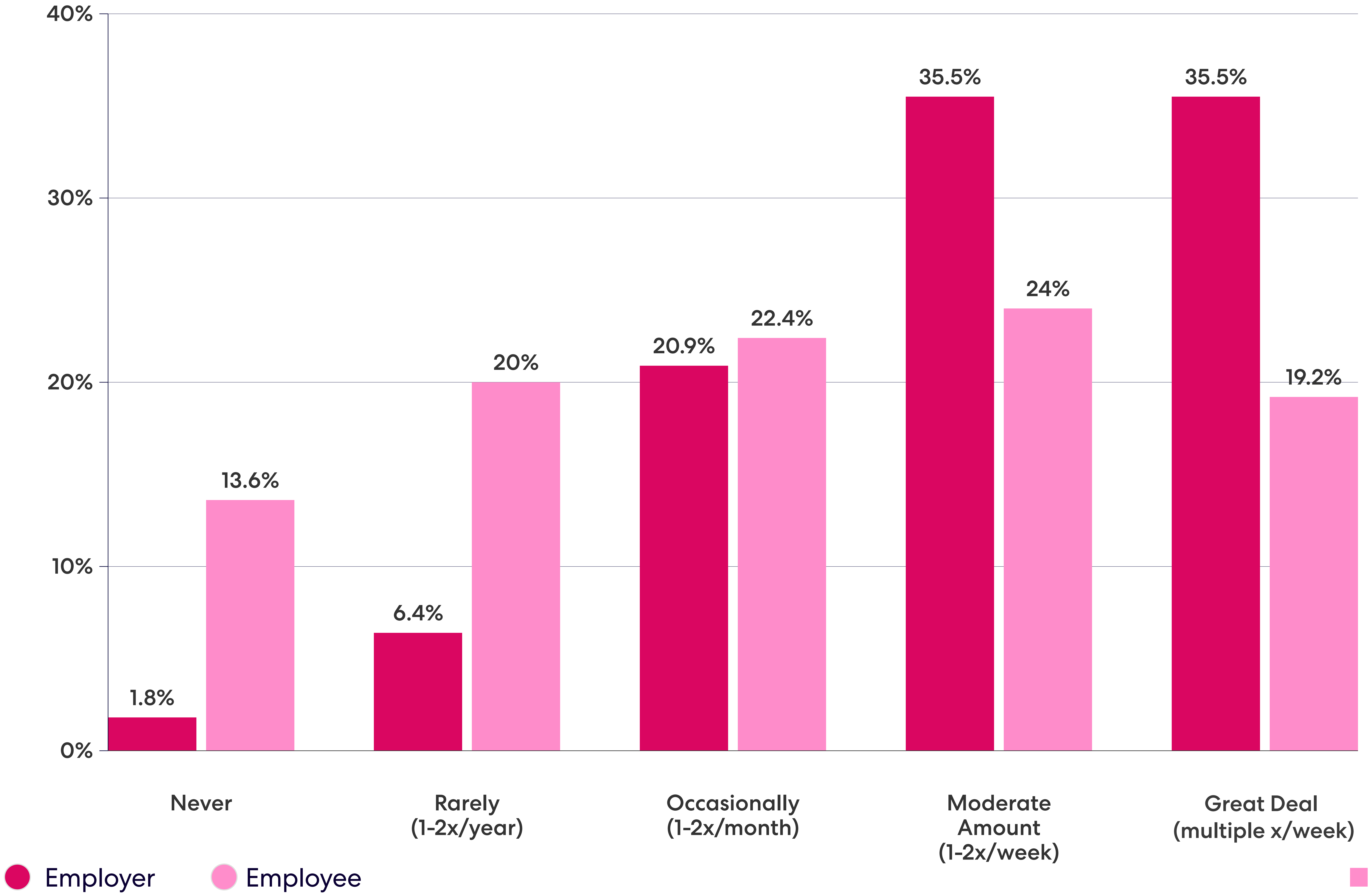
07.
AI IN HR

The majority, 71.0% of employers use AI weekly or more (moderate + great deal) while only 43.2% of employees do so. One third (33.6%) of employees are using AI rarely or never. Mid-Atlantic employers use AI more frequently compared to national rates (71% versus 66%).

AI Frequency of Use

QUESTION (Employer):
How frequently do you use AI at work?

QUESTION (Employee):
How frequently are you using AI at work?



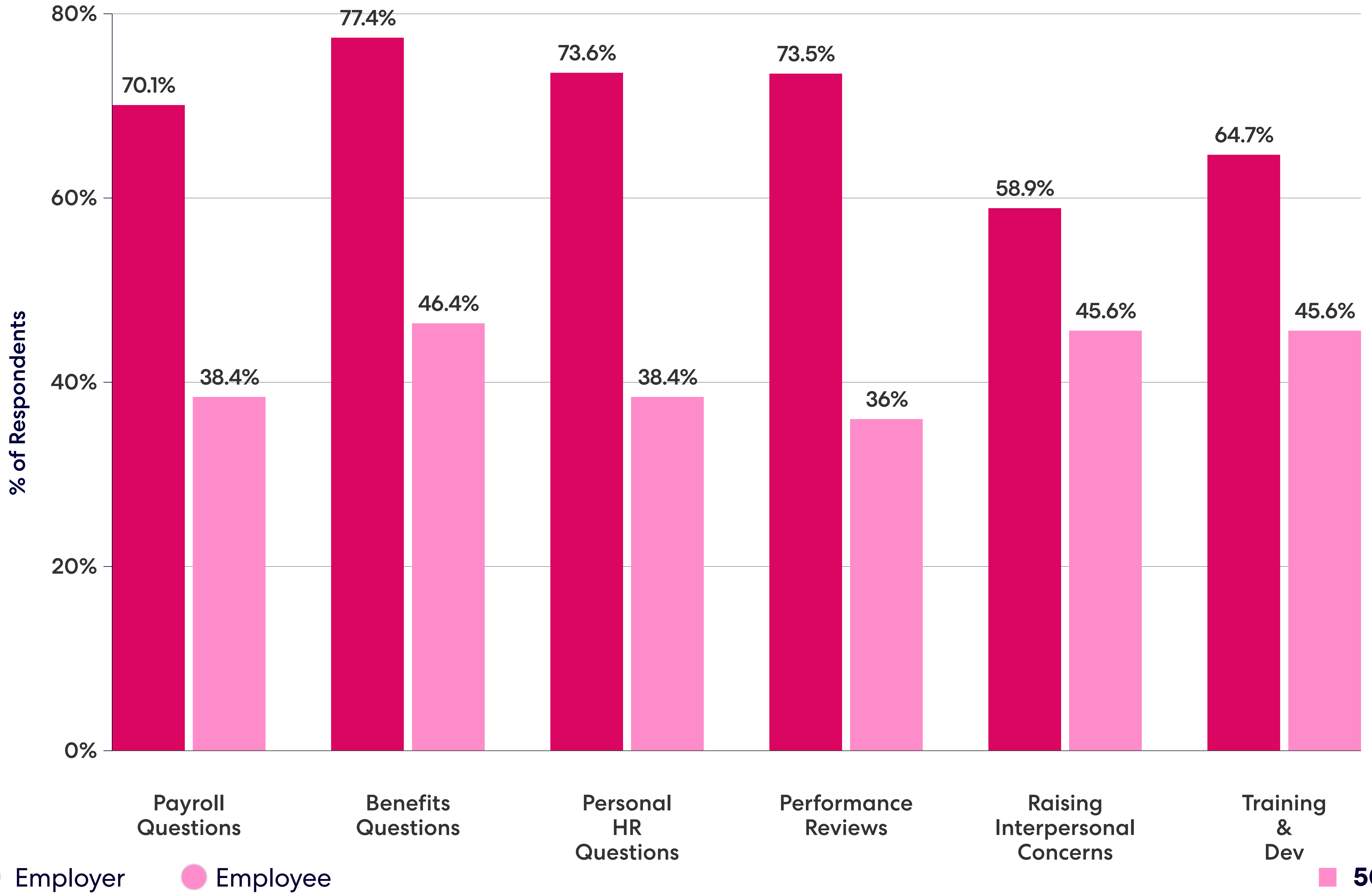
07.
AI IN HR

Across nearly all HR tasks, employer acceptability exceeds employee AI use. The gap is smallest for transactional tasks (payroll, benefits) and largest for interpersonal and evaluative tasks. For payroll questions, 70.1% of employers say AI use is moderately or extremely acceptable while 38.4% of employees use AI almost every time or every time and 67.2% use it at least occasionally. Employees in this region are using AI for payroll questions and performance reviews at lower than national rates. Employers in this region tend to be more accepting of AI in HR compared to national results.

AI by HR Function

QUESTION (Employer):
How acceptable is it for employees to use AI for each HR function?

QUESTION (Employee):
How often do you use AI for each HR function?



07.
AI IN HR

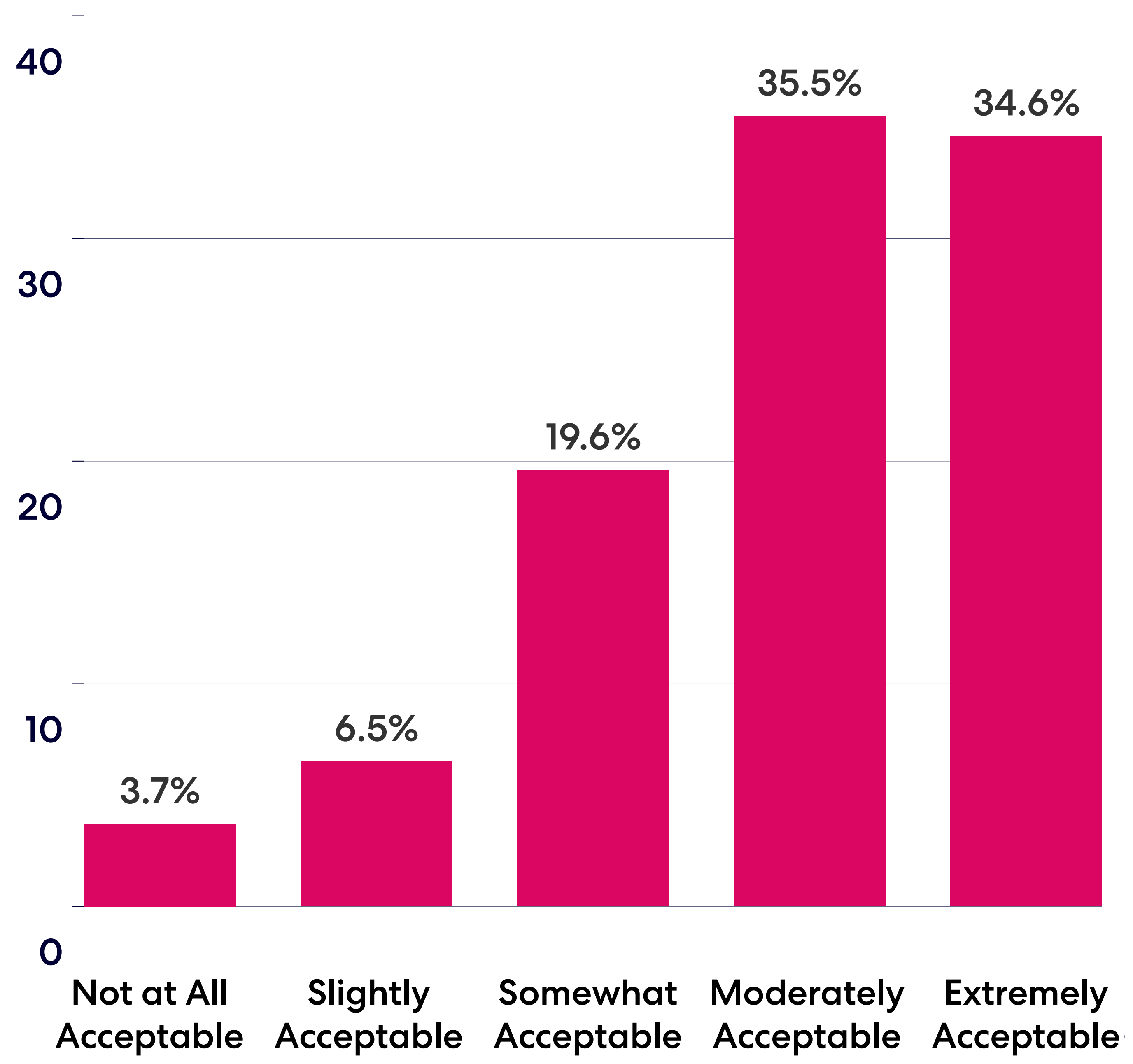
Payroll questions show strong employer endorsement paired with moderate employee adoption. 70.1% of employers rate AI Moderately or Extremely acceptable, while 38.4% of employees use it frequently. The largest single employee response is occasional use (28.8%), suggesting many turn to AI situationally rather than as a default channel for routine payroll inquiries.

Asking Payroll Questions

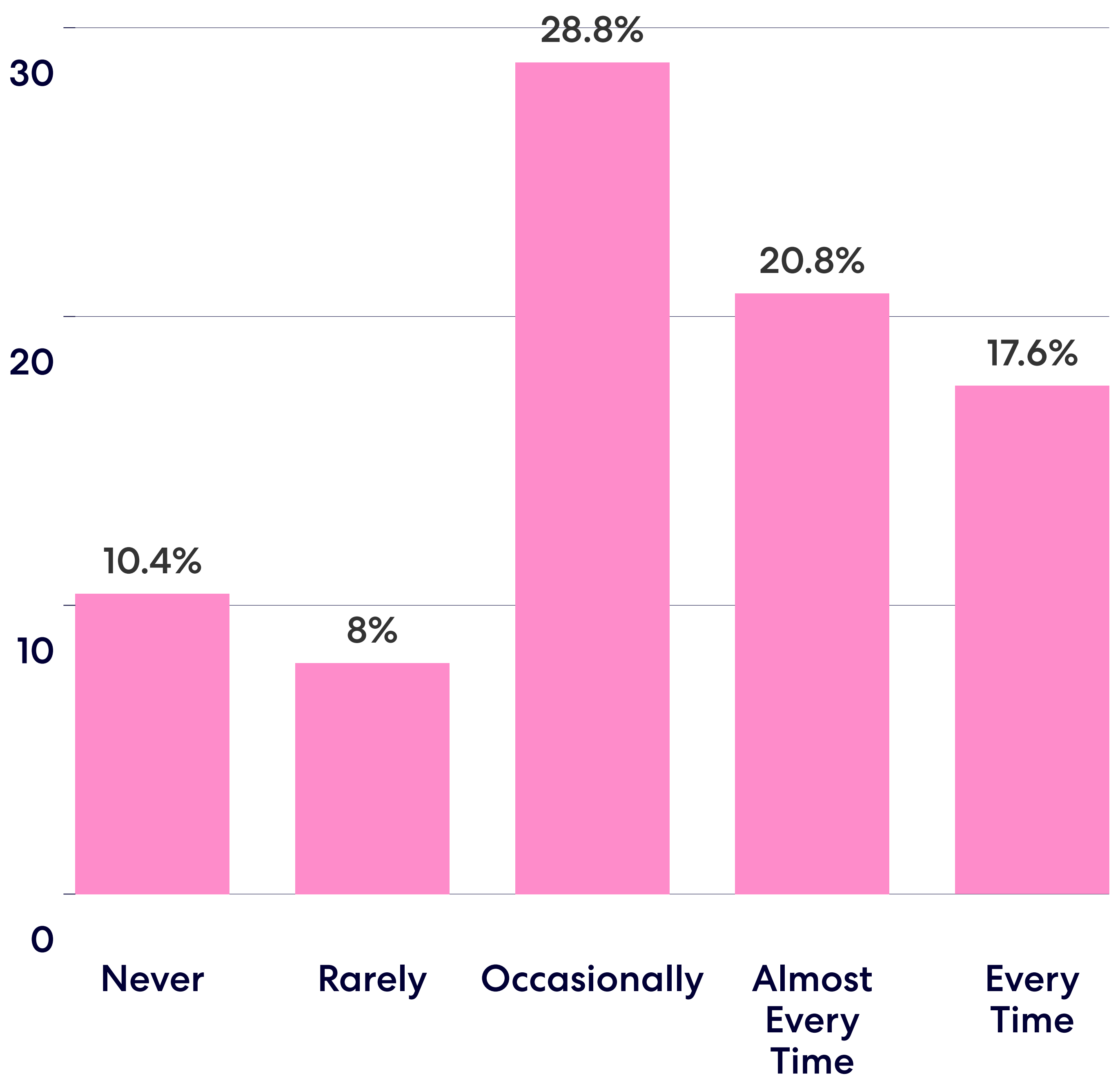
QUESTION (Employer):
Please indicate how acceptable it is for employees to use an AI assistant in your HR platform to complete the following tasks vs. reaching out to an HR admin.

QUESTION (Employee):
How frequently are you using AI for the following HR-related tasks?

Combined (Moderately + Extremely Acceptable: 70.1%



Combined (Moderate + Great Deal): 38.4%



Employer
Employee

07.
AI IN HR

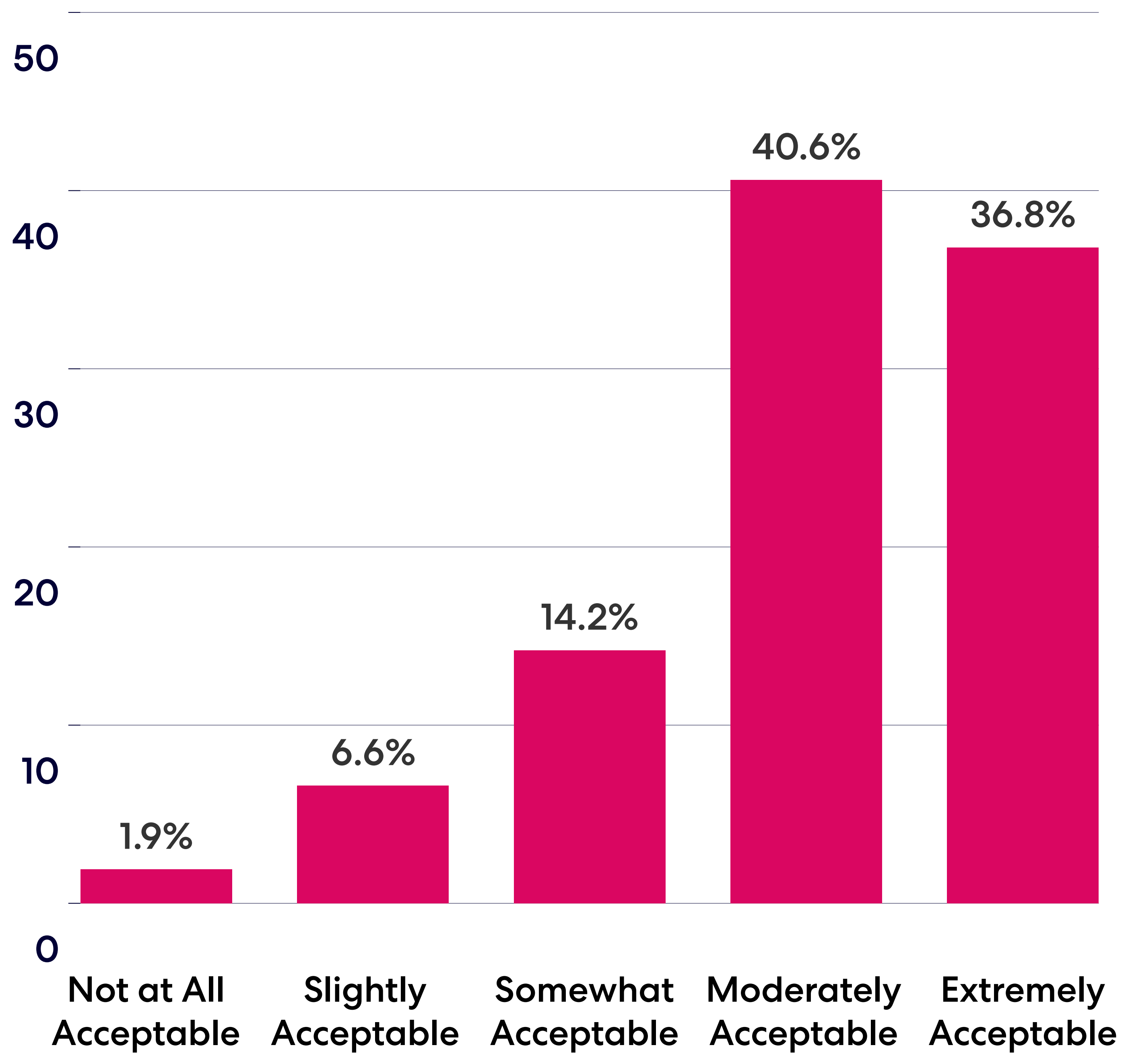
Asking benefits questions represent the strongest alignment in the region. 77.4% of employers rate AI Moderately or Extremely acceptable—the highest acceptability of any function—and employee usage is also the highest at 46.4% frequent use. With both sides peaking here, benefits inquiries stand out as the function where AI-supported HR is most fully embraced in the Mid-Atlantic.

Asking Benefits Questions

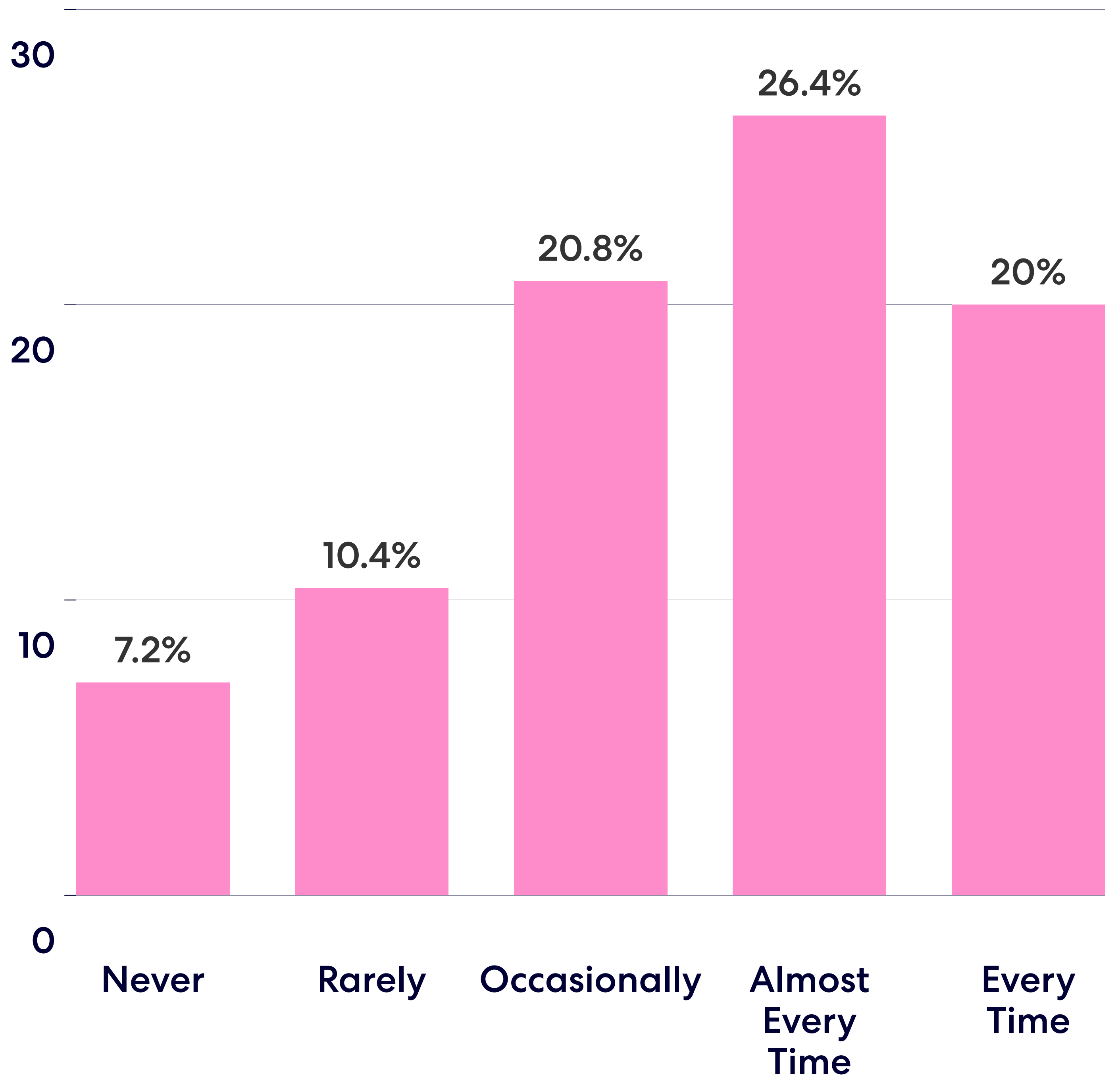
QUESTION (Employer):
Please indicate how acceptable it is for employees to use an AI assistant in your HR platform to complete the following tasks vs. reaching out to an HR admin.

QUESTION (Employee):
How frequently are you using AI for the following HR-related tasks?

Combined (Moderately + Extremely Acceptable: 77.4%



Combined (Moderate + Great Deal): 46.4%



Employer
Employee

07.
AI IN HR

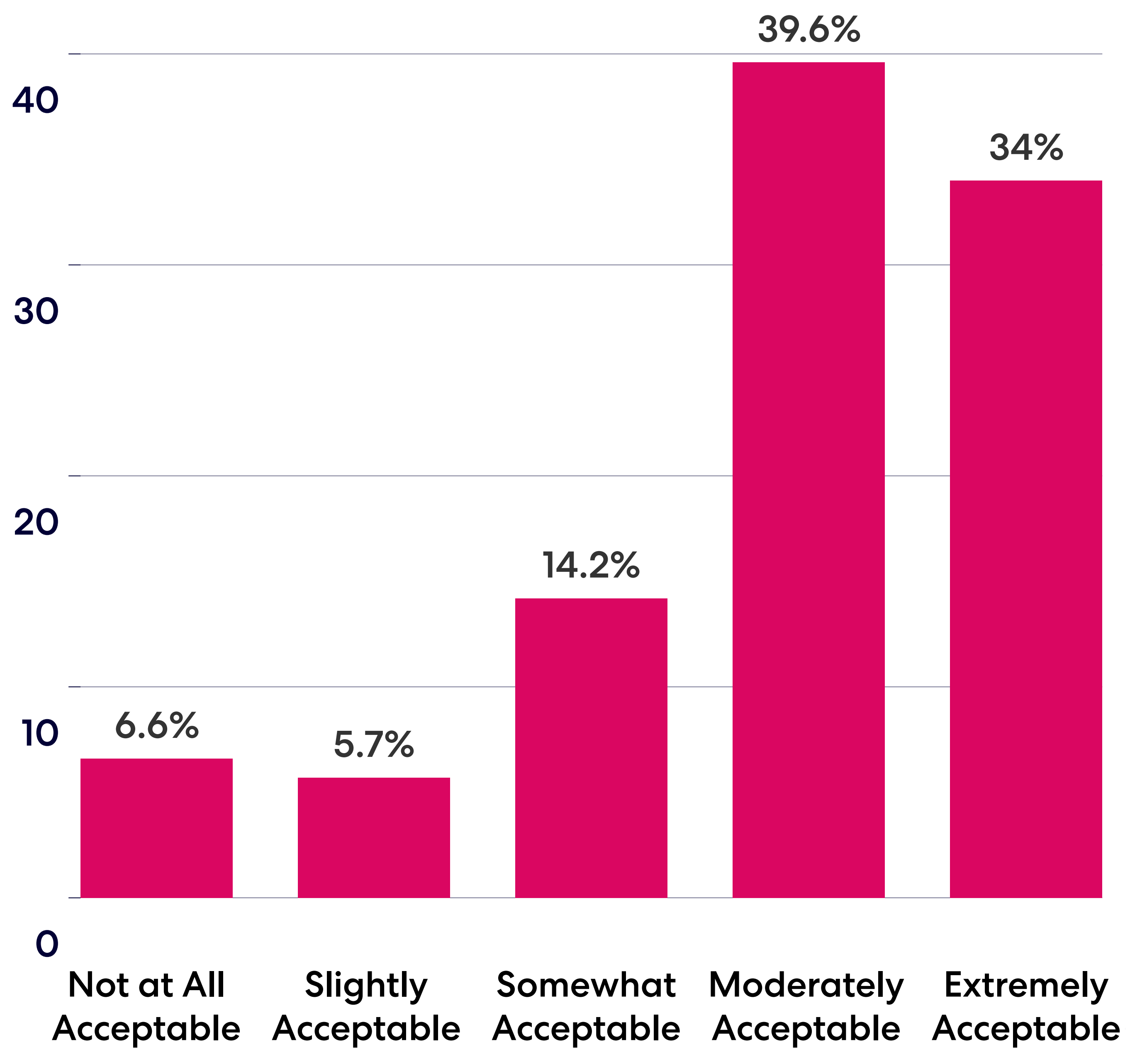
Personal HR questions show high employer comfort alongside substantial employee use despite the sensitive nature of these queries. 73.6% of employers rate AI Moderately or Extremely acceptable, while 38.4% of employees use it frequently. Adoption holds up well here relative to other regions, indicating employees are reasonably willing to route personal HR matters through AI when employer support is strong.

Asking Personal HR Questions / Asking Interpersonal Questions

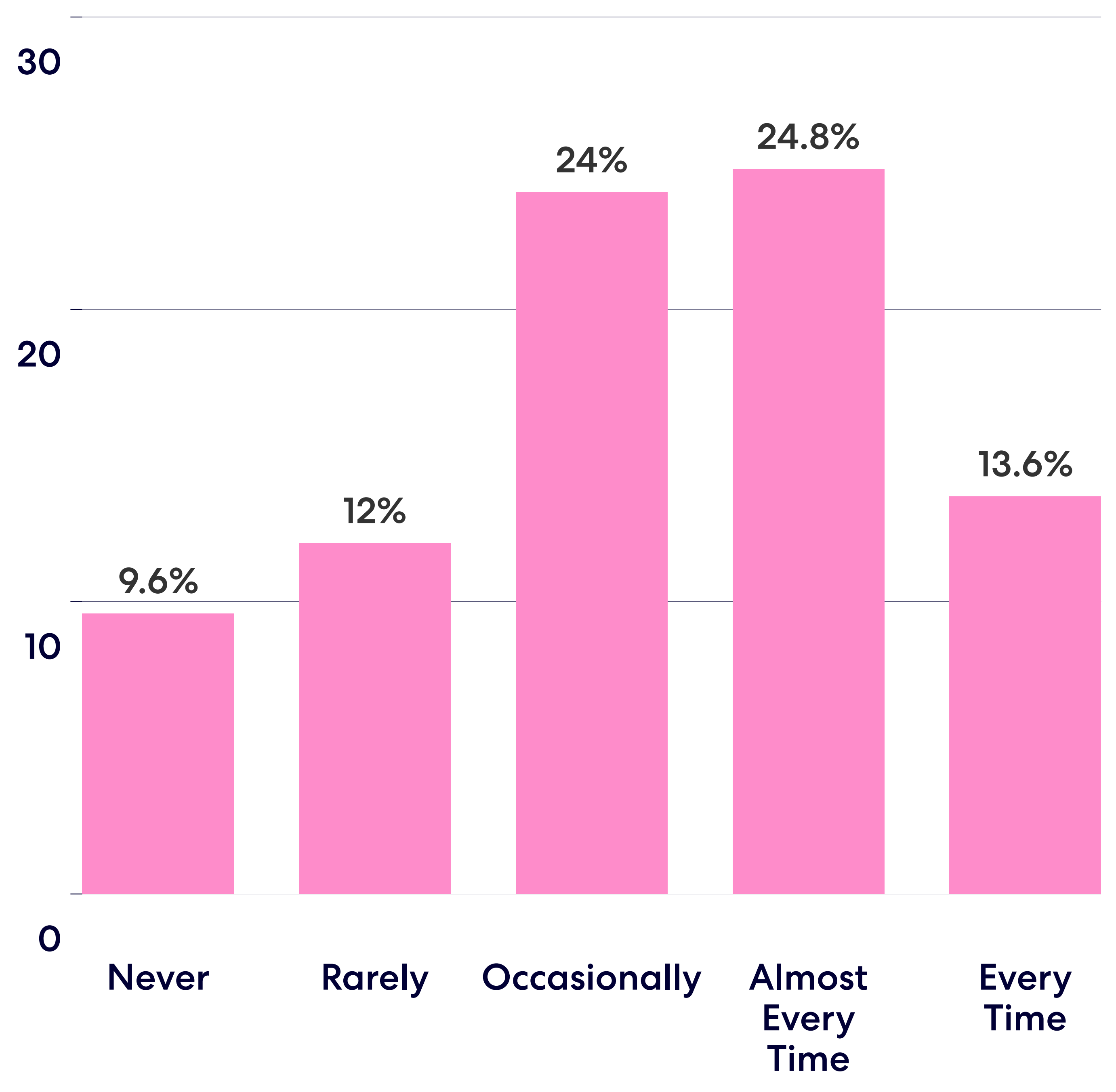
QUESTION (Employer):
Please indicate how acceptable it is for employees to use an AI assistant in your HR platform to complete the following tasks vs. reaching out to an HR admin.

QUESTION (Employee):
How frequently are you using AI for the following HR-related tasks?

Combined (Moderately + Extremely Acceptable: 73.6%



Combined (Moderate + Great Deal): 38.4%



Employer
Employee

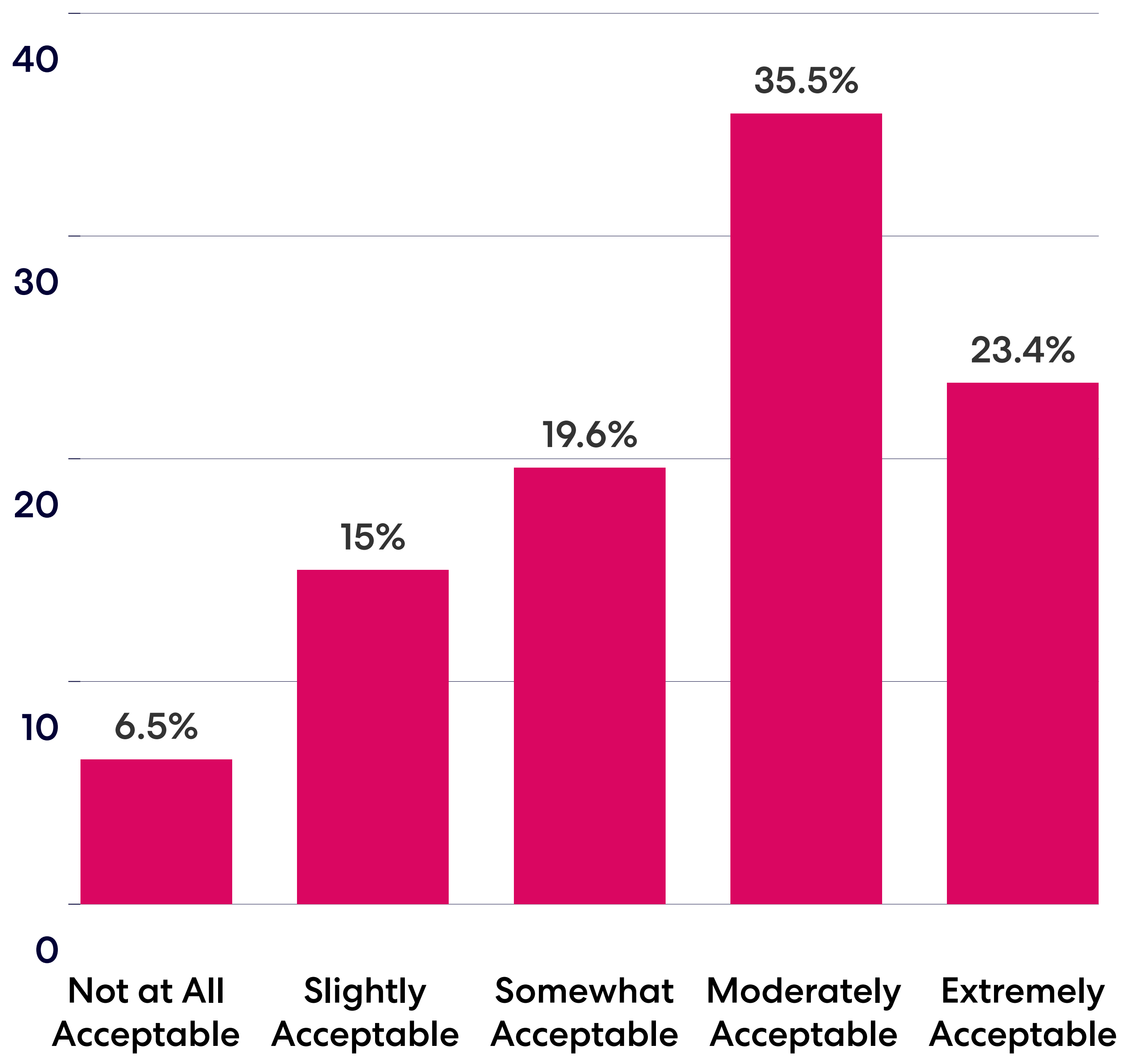
Interpersonal concerns reveal a notable reversal of the usual pattern: employee usage (45.6%) actually exceeds the share of employers giving strong endorsement (58.9%) by a narrower margin than most functions, and this is the lowest employer acceptability in the region. Almost Every Time is the single largest employee response (32.0%), suggesting employees may value AI as a more private channel for sensitive workplace issues even where employer comfort is more reserved.

Raising Interpersonal Concerns

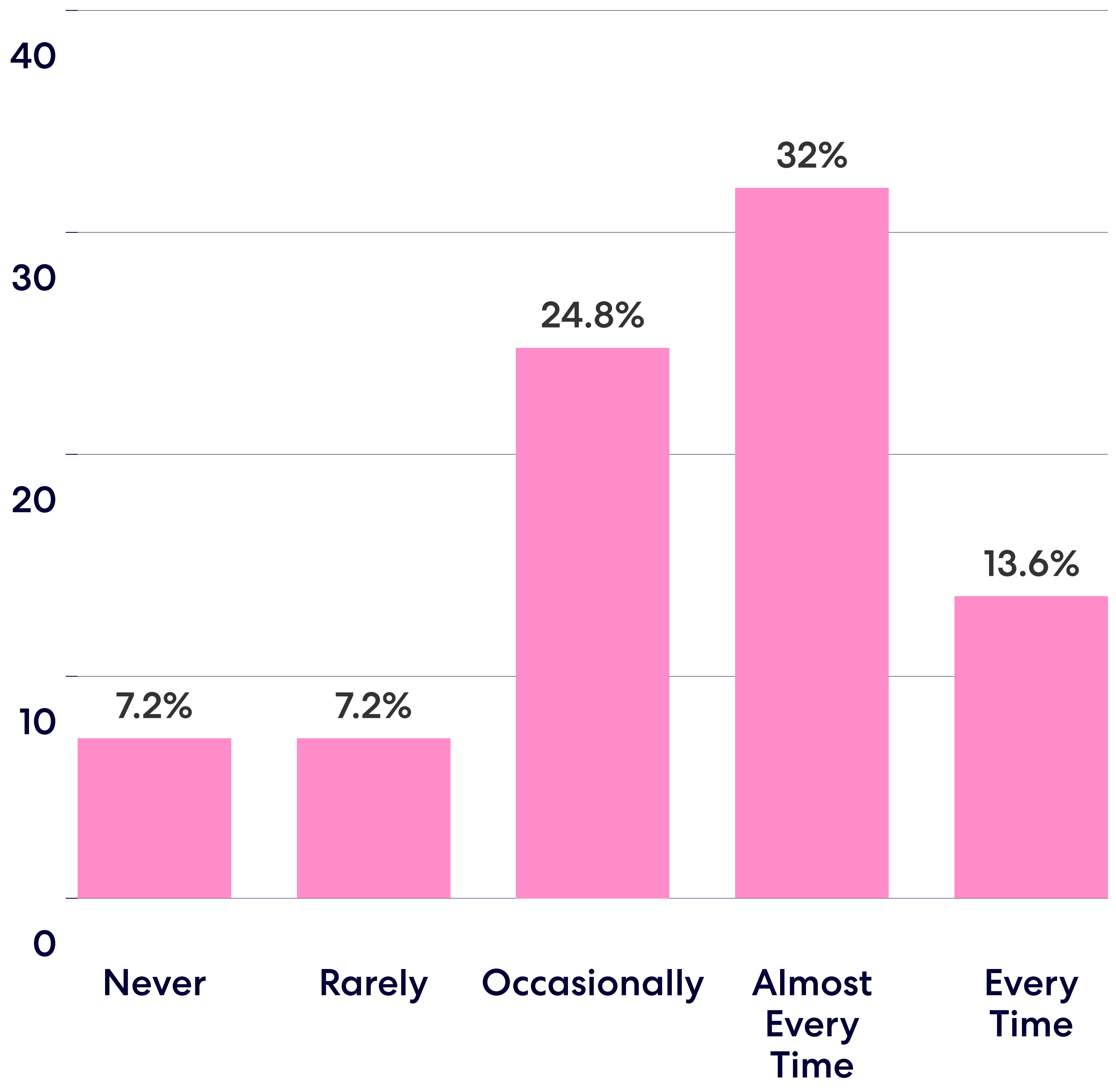
QUESTION (Employer):
Please indicate how acceptable it is for employees to use an AI assistant in your HR platform to complete the following tasks vs. reaching out to an HR admin.

QUESTION (Employee):
How frequently are you using AI for the following HR-related tasks?

Combined (Moderately + Extremely Acceptable: 58.9%



Combined (Moderate + Great Deal): 45.6%



Employer
Employee

07.
AI IN HR

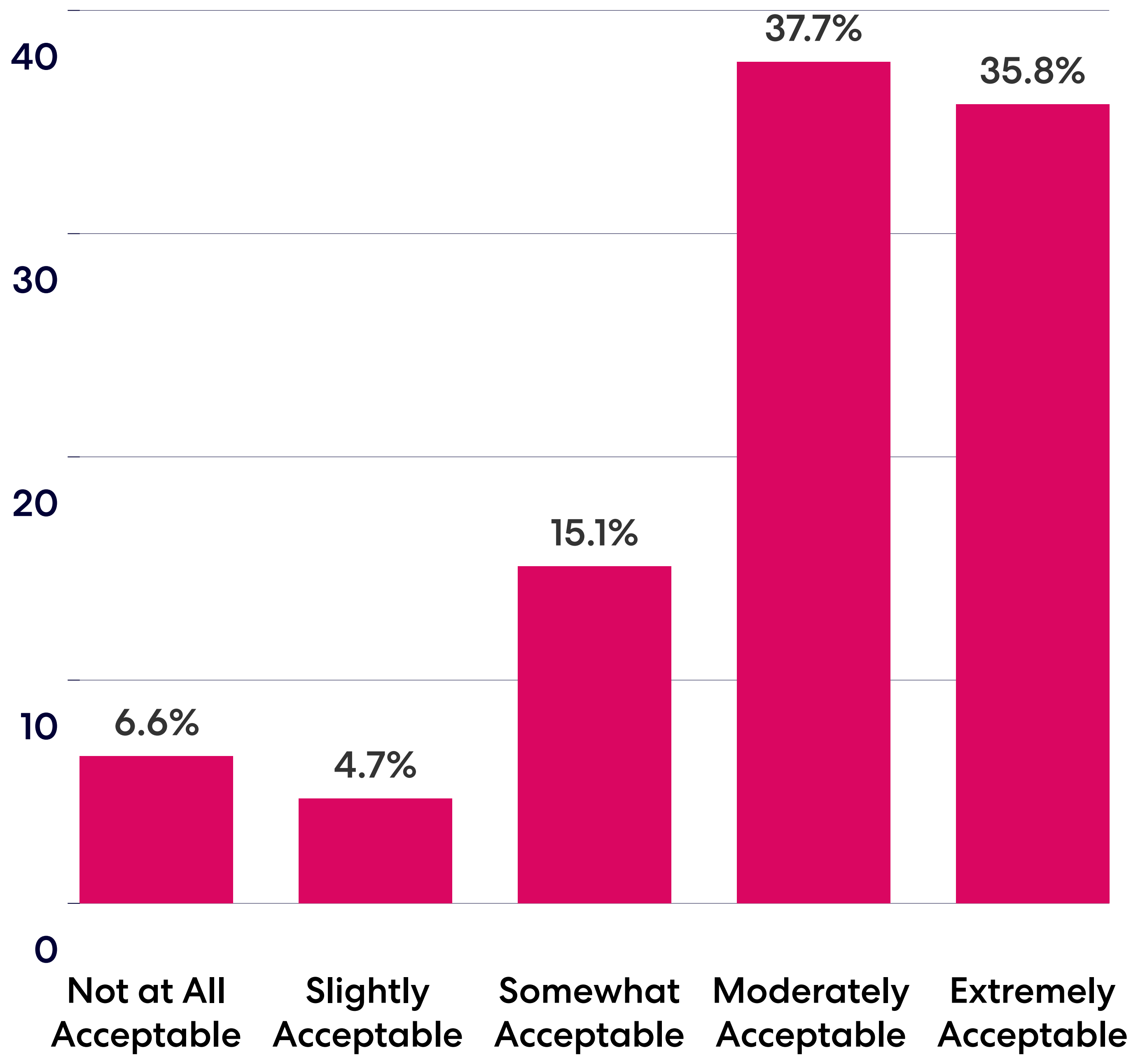
Performance reviews show one of the larger acceptance-to-usage gaps in the region. 73.5% of employers rate AI Moderately or Extremely acceptable, yet only 36.0% of employees use it frequently—the lowest high-frequency use of any function. Occasional use is the largest employee response (30.4%), pointing to organizational enthusiasm that currently outpaces consistent employee adoption in evaluative contexts.

Performance Reviews

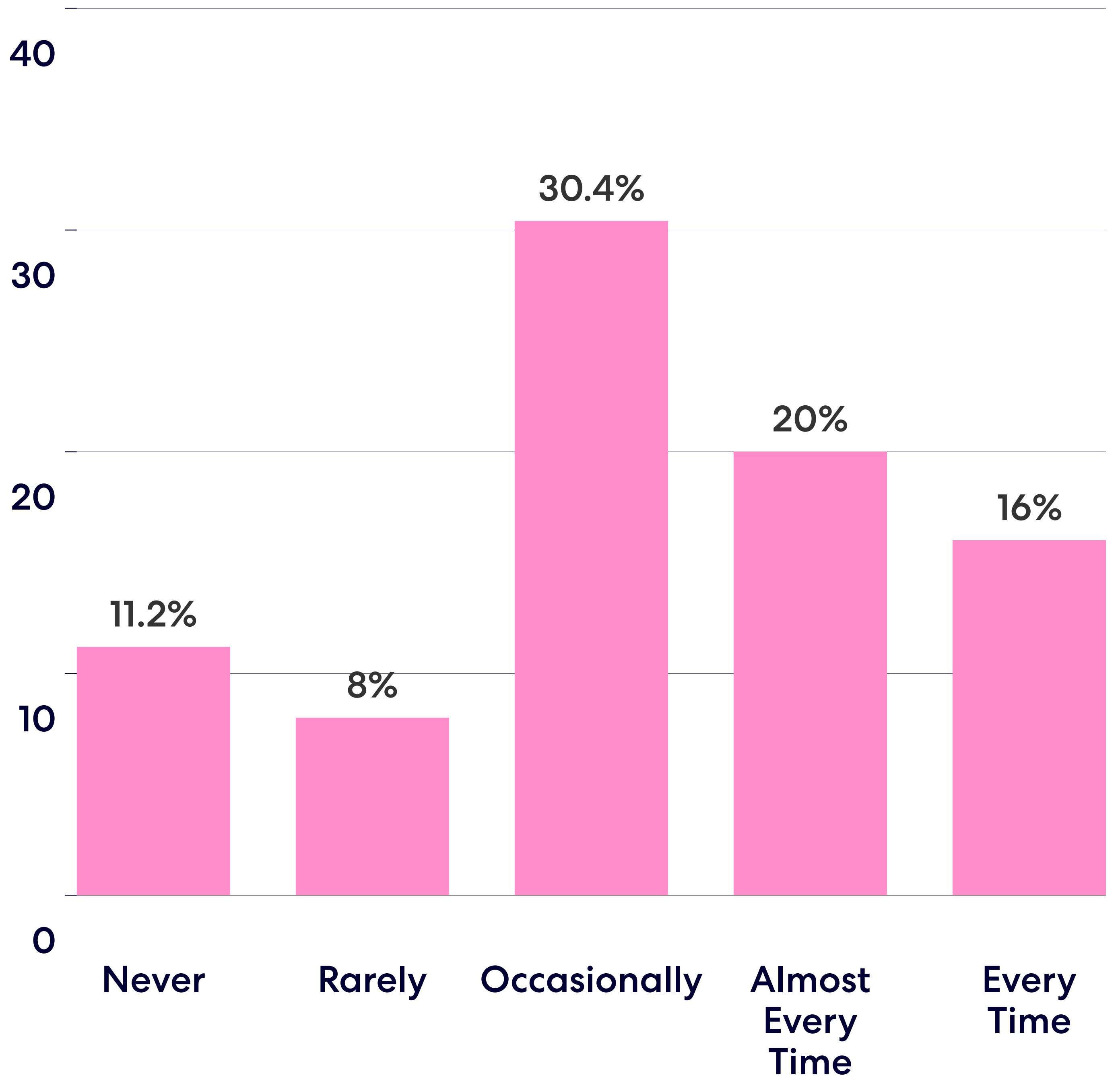
QUESTION (Employer):
Please indicate how acceptable it is for employees to use an AI assistant in your HR platform to complete the following tasks vs. reaching out to an HR admin.

QUESTION (Employee):
How frequently are you using AI for the following HR-related tasks?

Combined (Moderately + Extremely Acceptable: 73.5%



Combined (Moderate + Great Deal): 36.0%



Employer Employee

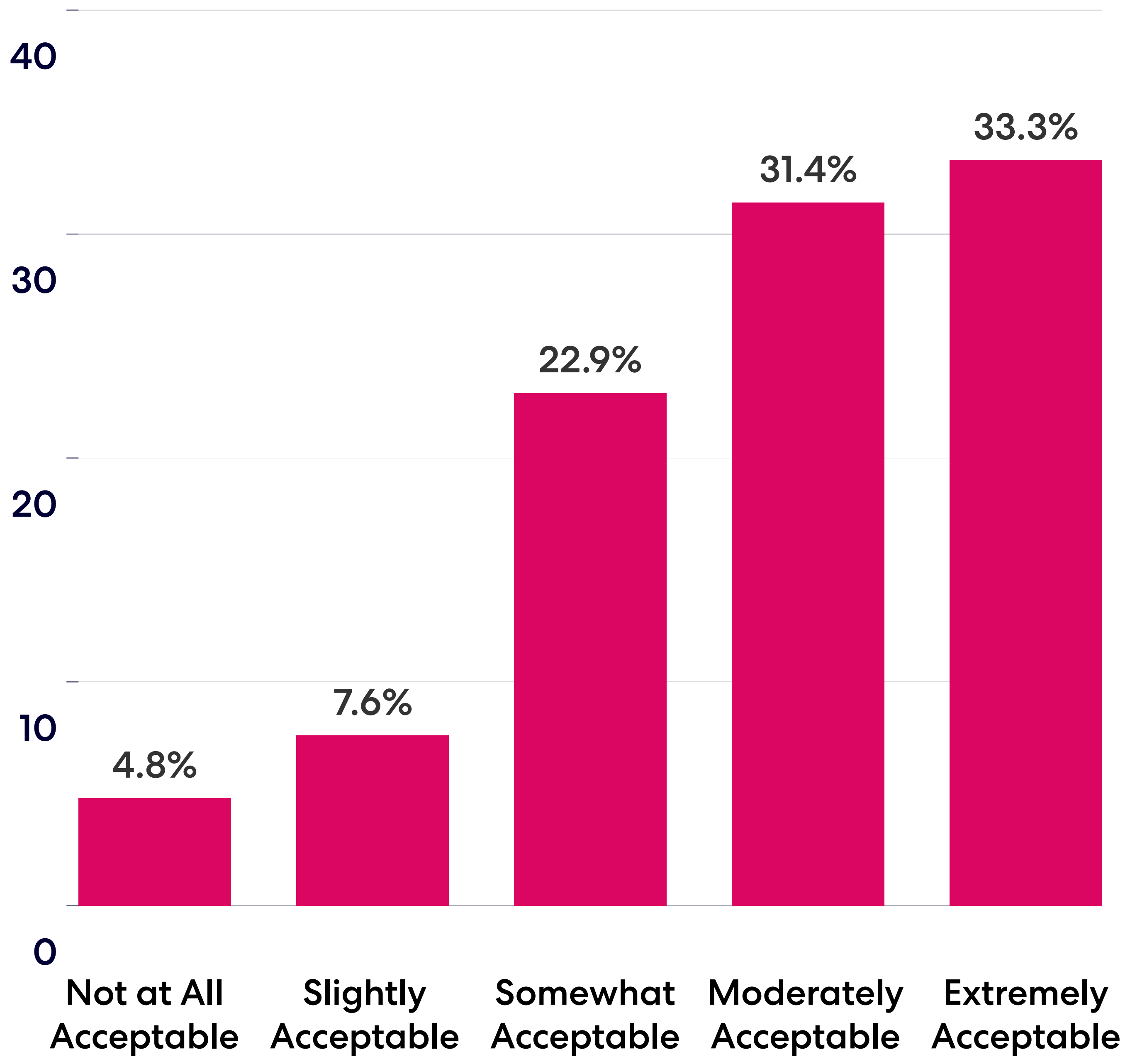
07.
AI IN HR

Training and development shows strong adoption alongside reasonably high employer support. 64.7% of employers rate AI Moderately or Extremely acceptable, while 45.6% of employees use it frequently—among the highest usage in the region. With Almost Every Time the largest employee response (28.0%), employees clearly see AI as a natural fit for learning and professional development.

Training & Development

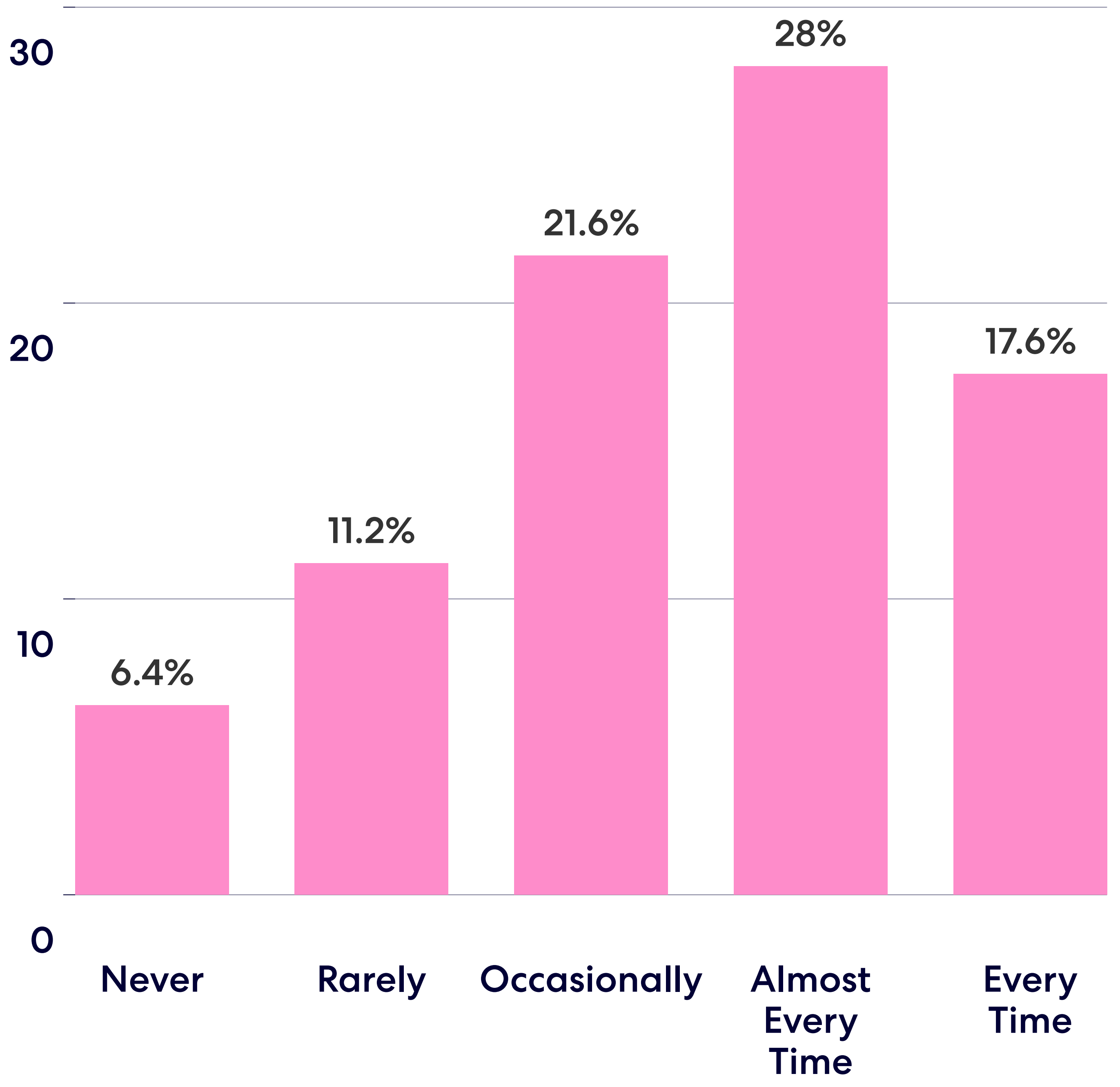
QUESTION (Employer):
Please indicate how acceptable it is for employees to use an AI assistant in your HR platform to complete the following tasks vs. reaching out to an HR admin.

Combined (Moderately + Extremely Acceptable: 64.7%



QUESTION (Employee):
How frequently are you using AI for the following HR-related tasks?

Combined (Moderate + Great Deal): 45.6%



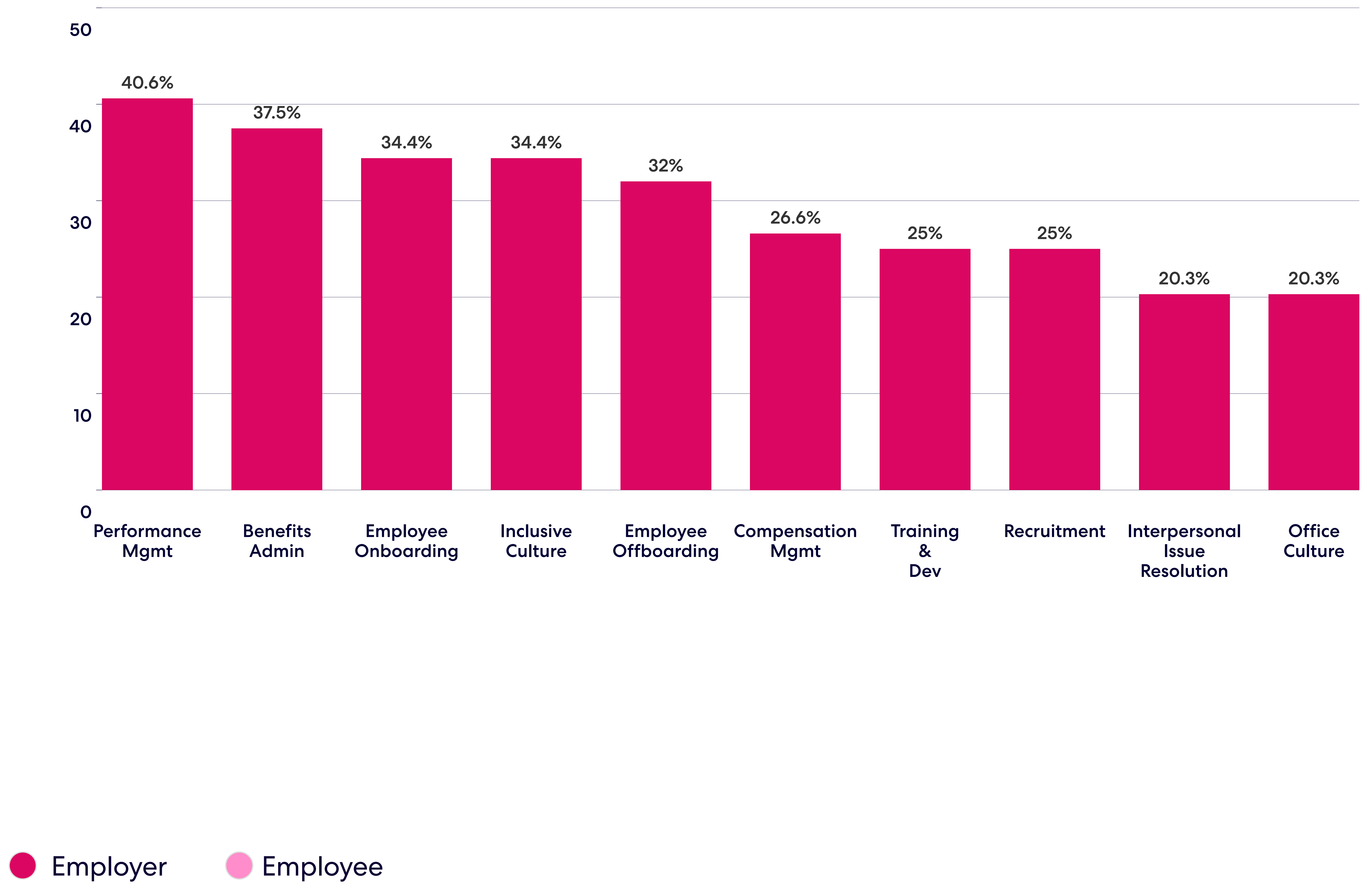
Employer Employee

07.
AI IN HR

Performance management leads employer AI delegation preference (40.6%), followed closely by benefits administration (37.5%)—higher than the national rate. Mid-Atlantic employers show notably higher interest in delegating performance management to AI compared to national data. Interpersonal issue resolution (18.8%) and office culture (20.3%) remain areas where human judgment is preferred. Managers in this region are more interested in delegating performance management to AI, compared to nationally (40.6% versus 33%), but less willing for employee onboarding (32% versus 40%).

The Mid-Atlantic pattern mirrors the national finding that employers are comfortable delegating structured, measurable processes to AI—and resistant to delegating anything relational or cultural. The elevated performance management preference suggests this region's employers see AI as especially valuable for reducing bias and inconsistency in the evaluation process.

Tasks Employers Would Delegate to AI



07.
AI IN HR

Employees generally have more serious concerns about using AI for HR, but when it comes to data privacy and lack of empathy, employers express greater concern. Employees are far more worried about AI failing to act or follow through (25.6% extremely concerned versus 17.8% employers), likely reflecting lived experience with unresolved issues.

Top Concerns About AI in HR

QUESTION (Employer):
What are your top concerns when using AI for HR tasks?

QUESTION (Employee):
What are your top concerns when using AI for HR tasks?

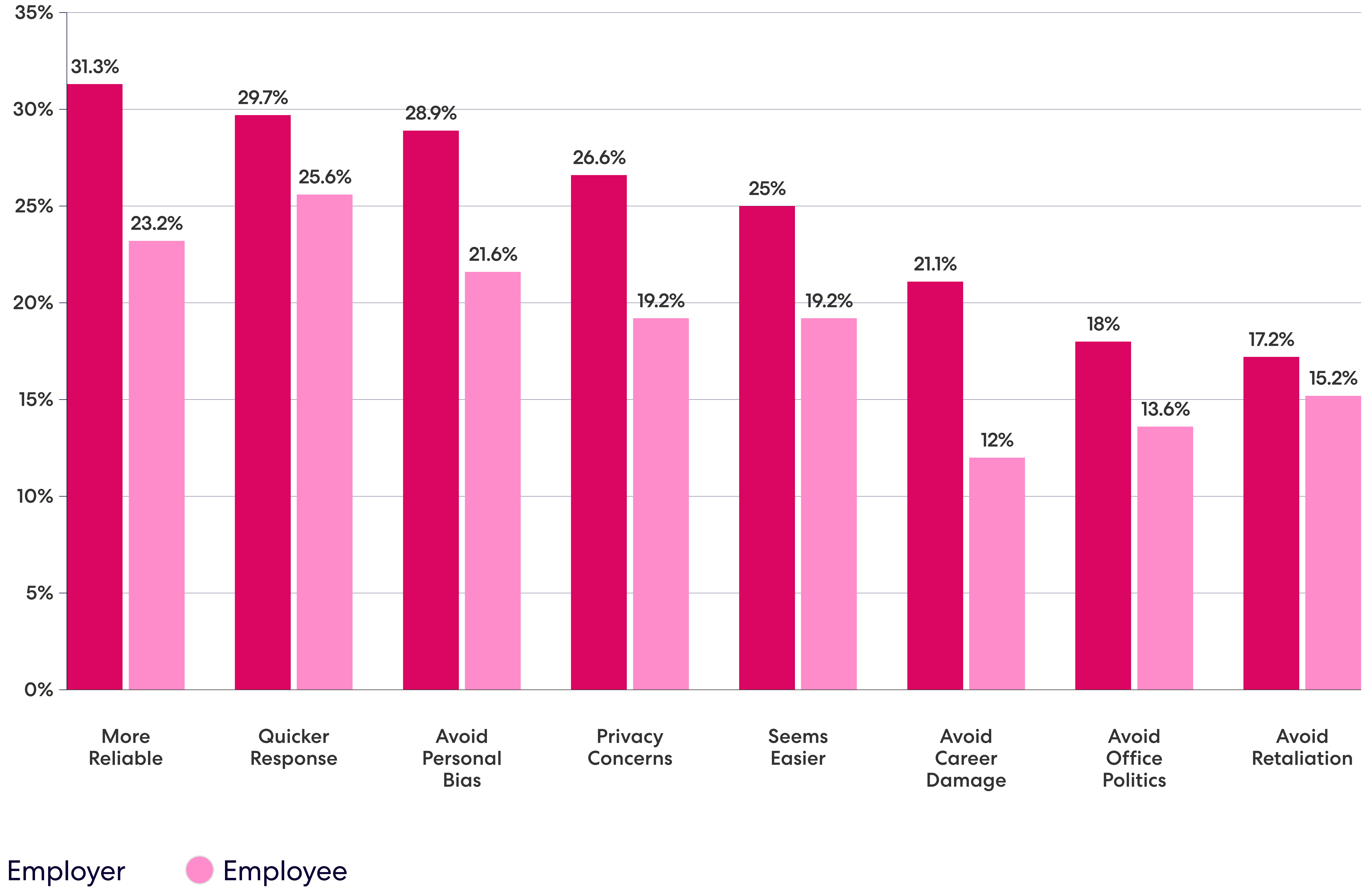
07. AI IN HR

Employers and employees are most interested in using AI for its greater reliability and quicker responses. Avoid person bias was also high on the list for both, but employers have greater interest in this function (28.9% versus 21.6%).

Why AI Was Selected Over an HR Administrator

QUESTION (Employer):
Select from the following reasons why you chose AI Assistant for one or more of the previous scenarios.

QUESTION (Employee):
Select from the following reasons why you chose AI Assistant for one or more of the previous scenarios.



08. CONCLUSION

The Mid-Atlantic data reveal a consistent optimism gap between employers and employees across workload, engagement, growth clarity, and turnover risk.

Over three-quarters of Mid-Atlantic employers believe employees are working the right number of hours. Only half of employees agree—and more than a third report working slightly too many, too many or extremely too many hours. What leaders see as sustainable, employees experience as strain.

Engagement levels are real, but they're masking flight risk. Employers dramatically underestimate how many employees are actively looking or open to leaving, and the gap is sharpest among Gen Z and Millennials. Employers are far more confident that a growth path exists at their companies than employees are.

On AI, employers are ahead on adoption and broadly comfortable with AI across HR functions. Employees are more measured—especially for sensitive use cases. Concerns about data privacy, bias, and lack of empathy are consistent and elevated. The organizations that make progress here will earn trust incrementally, not move fastest.

About TriNet

TriNet is a leading provider of comprehensive human resources solutions for small and medium-size businesses (SMBs). TriNet offers human capital expertise, access to benefits, risk mitigation and compliance support, payroll, and real-time technology.

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