

workmonitor

workmonitor 2026

the great workforce
adaptation.

randstad Hong Kong SAR



randstad



The [randstad workmonitor](#), now in its 23rd year, explores the views of working people in 35 markets across Europe, Asia Pacific and the Americas. It aims to provide an inside look at their attitudes, ambitions and expectations as the world of work continues to transform.



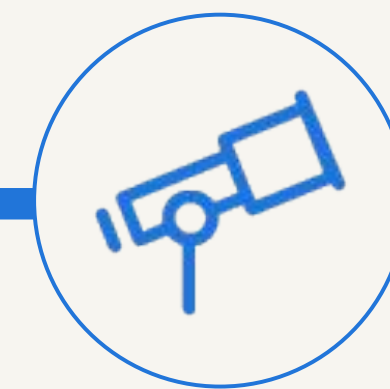
Launched in 2003, our flagship thought leadership report is one of the longest-running and largest studies of its kind.



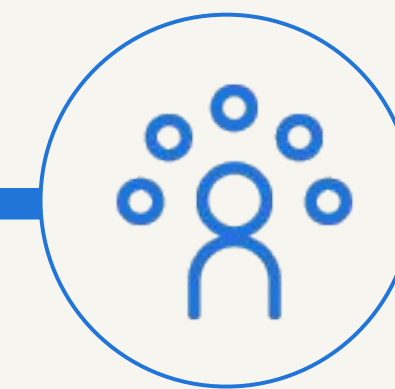
It surveys 27,000+ talent and 1,200+ employers across 35 markets in Europe, Asia Pacific and the Americas every year.



In 2023, the 20th edition gathered key insights from the last two decades of research.



Since 2020, the Workmonitor has seen a 732% increase in top-tier coverage.



This year, personalisation, community and skilling have emerged as key areas of focus.



key findings.

workmonitor 2026: key findings.

The Hong Kong SAR workforce is undergoing “The Great Workforce Transformation.” Amid rapid technological advancements and an unpredictable economic landscape, it is essential for employers and employees to bridge the trust gap to foster innovation. As industries pivot toward digitalisation and sustainability, both businesses and talent must embrace flexibility and commitment to lifelong learning. This is critical to maintaining Hong Kong SAR’s position as a global destination for talent.



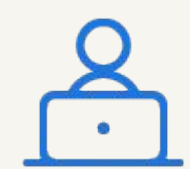
me and the world

from job displacement to task augmentation. Talent and employers must work together to close the AI reality gap.



me and my team

managers are key to stability. Managers and cross-generational collaboration are key to stability and success.



me

the rise of self-defined success. Talent is actively redefining success, moving away from linear career paths to a model that balances strong financial drivers with non-negotiable demands for work-life balance and autonomy.





me and the world:
from job displacement to
task augmentation.

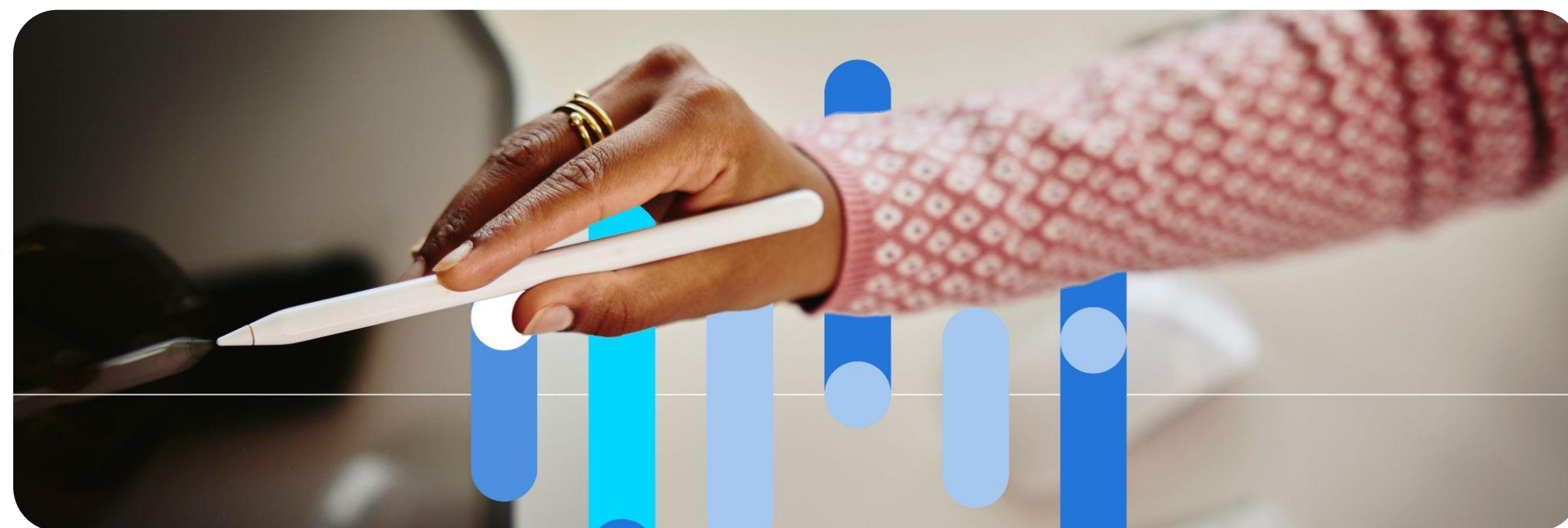
talent is adapting under pressure.

Hong Kong SAR's job market is shifting as the economy remains volatile.

While people were more mobile last year, they are now staying put this year. Respondents show a reduced willingness to change jobs.

Even though many feel disconnected or unsupported in their career goals, they are choosing the safety of their current roles over the risk of moving.

Stability has become more important than ambition.



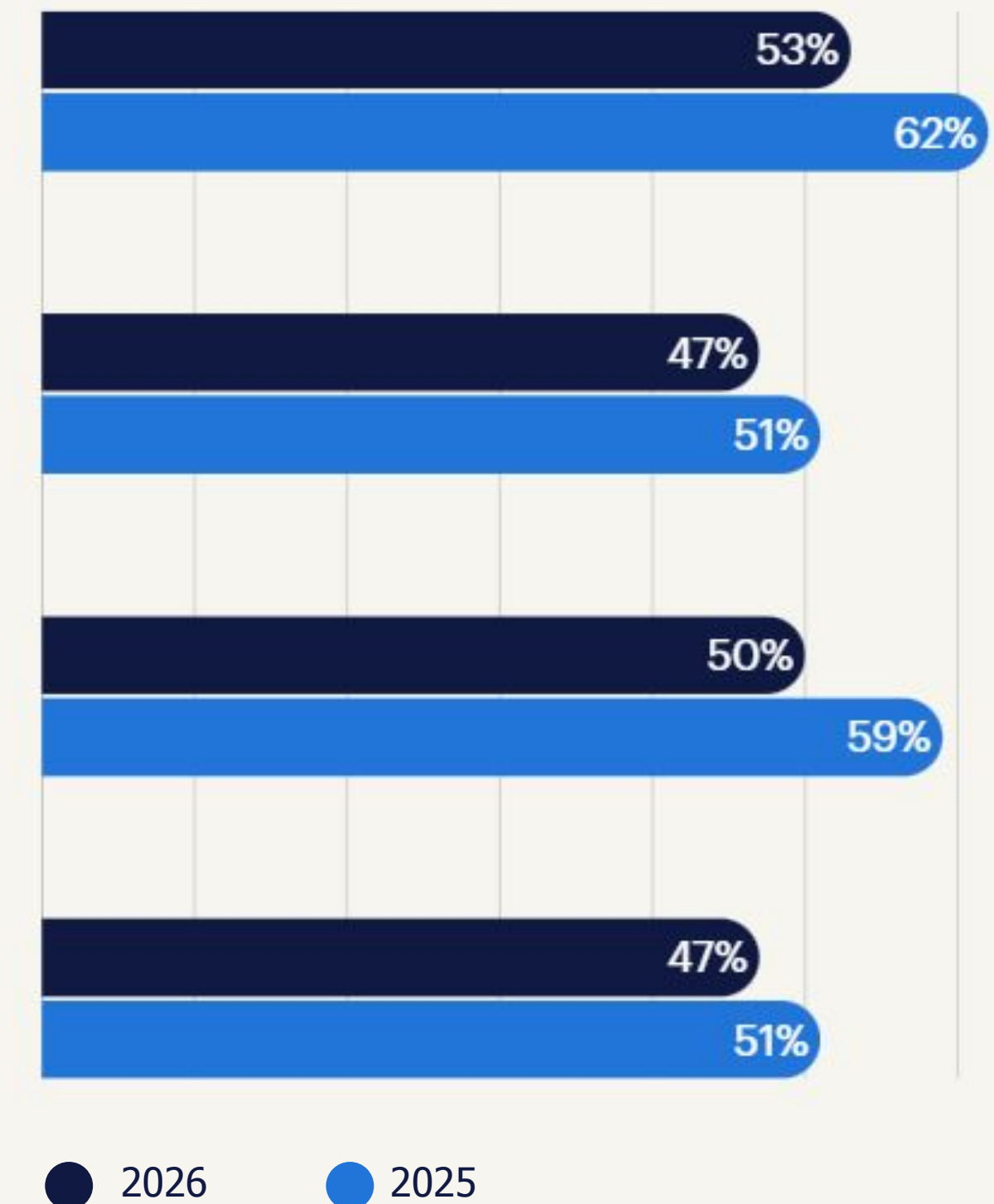
talent are more cautious to act

I started looking for a new job because I was dissatisfied

I requested a pay increase because I was dissatisfied

I would quit a job if I didn't feel like I belonged there

I would quit a job if my employer didn't support my career ambition



AI embedded.

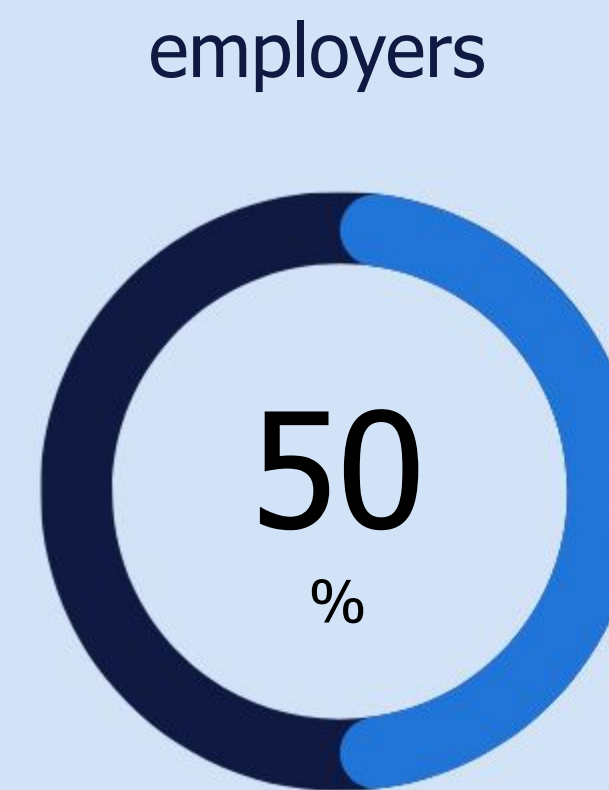
Over the past year, both employers and talent in Hong Kong SAR have come to see AI as an important tool at work. AI is no longer a “nice to have”. It has become a key differentiator and embedded in daily operations.

For talent, AI skills are now essential for career growth, while for companies, being 'AI-ready' is a major draw for attracting and keeping top talent.

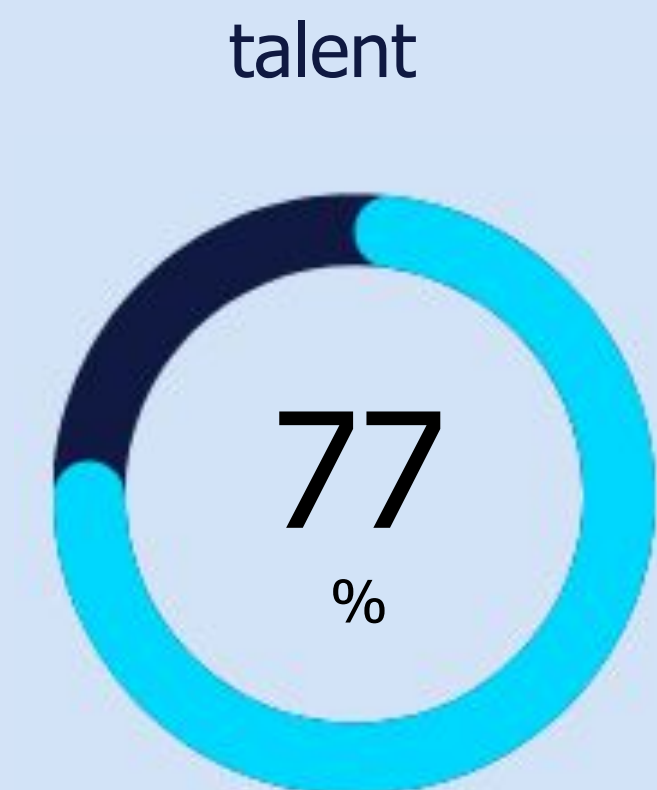
However, this rapid rollout has revealed a significant gap. While many talent are already using their own AI tools to work faster, most organisations haven't yet found a way to track or scale these individual progress or wins.

The result is a missed opportunity to turn personal productivity into company growth.

employers and talent agree:
AI drives productivity



AI has increased my workforce's productivity in the last year



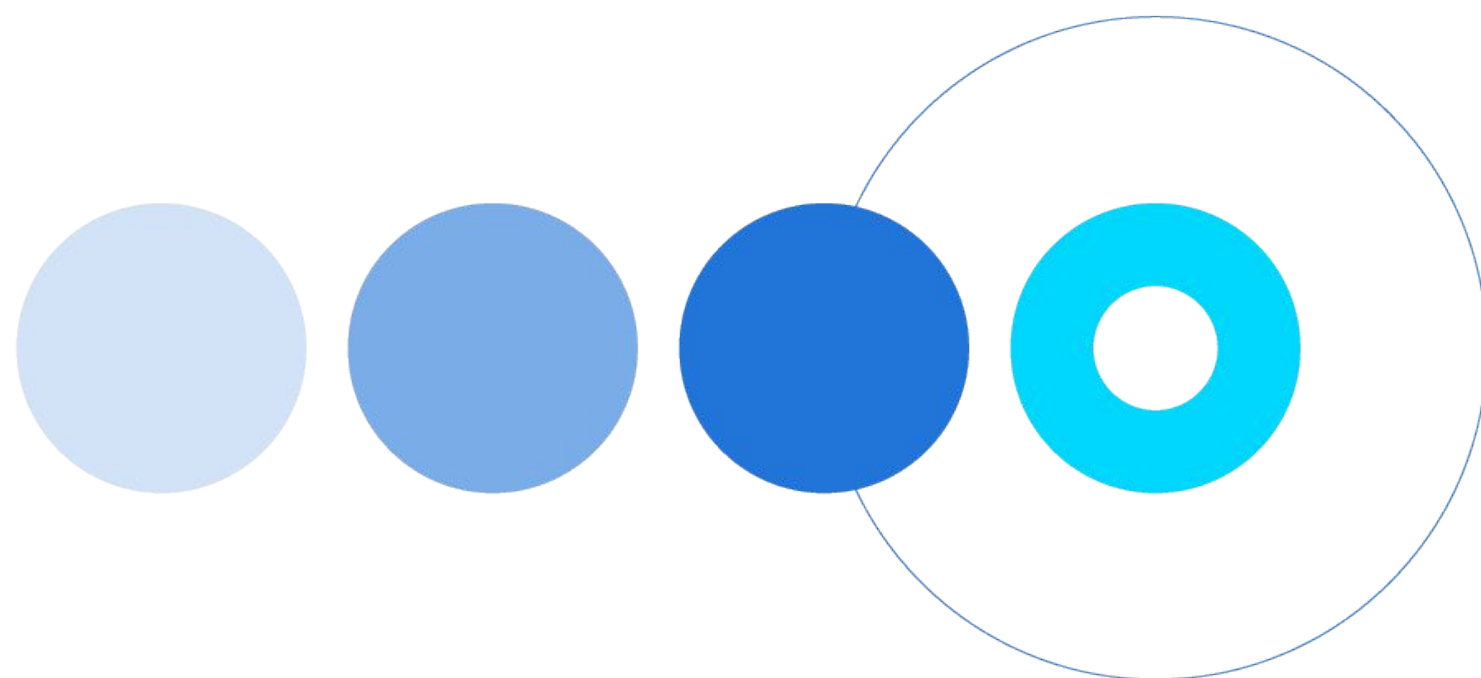
AI makes me more productive at work

mismatched AI expectations.

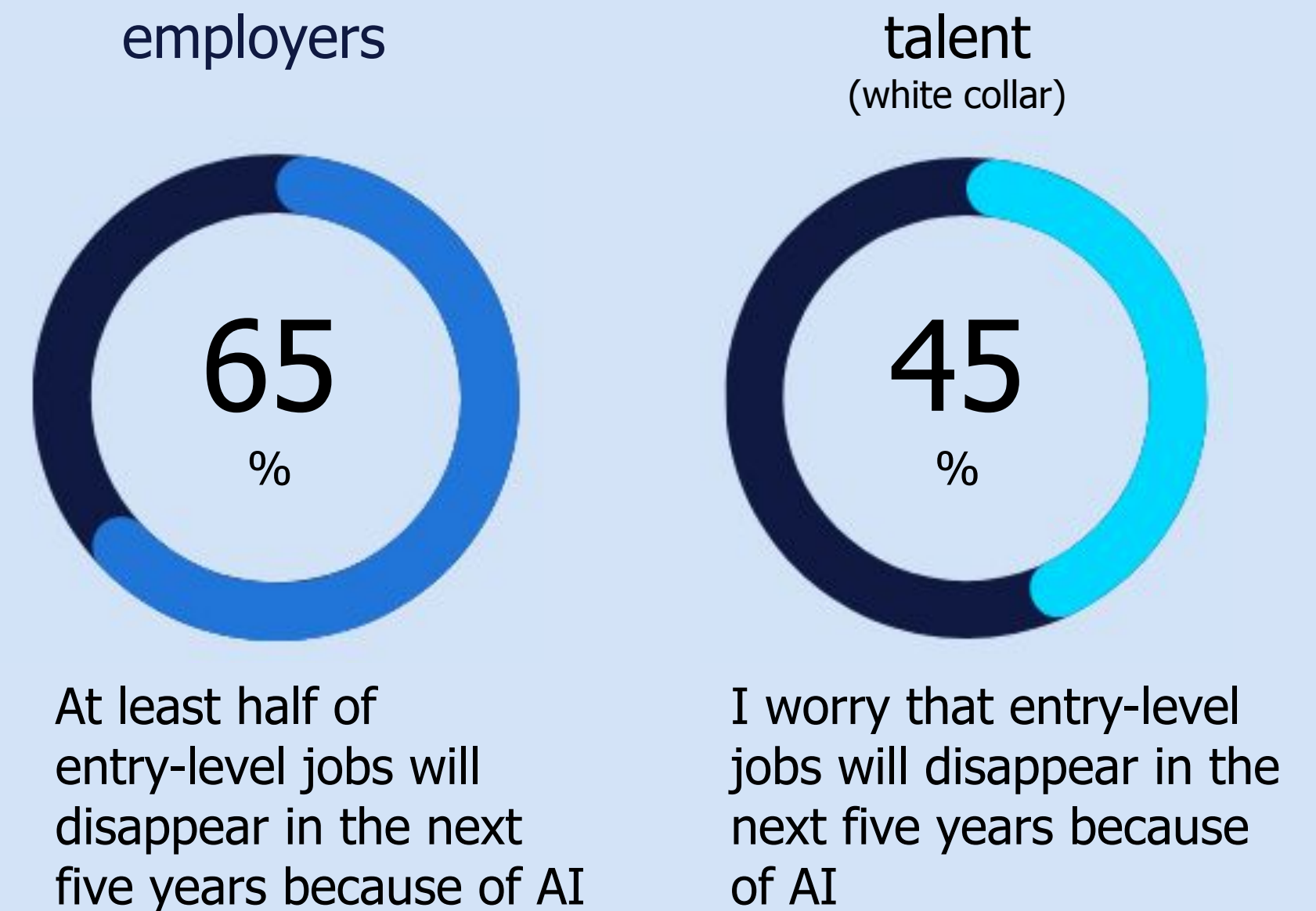
The acceleration of AI integration in Hong Kong SAR has revealed a distinct cognitive disparity between employers and talent regarding the future workforce landscape.

While 65% of employers anticipate that AI will eliminate at least half of entry-level positions within the next five years, only 45% of white-collar professionals share this concern regarding the vulnerability of entry-level roles.

This points to a major gap in how the Hong Kong SAR market views the threat of AI. While companies see AI as a disruptive force that could replace many junior roles, talent are still significantly underestimating the impact. This disconnect suggests that while leadership is preparing for a major structural shift, the wider workforce isn't yet seeing the threat to the future talent pipeline.



the disconnect on AI job displacement



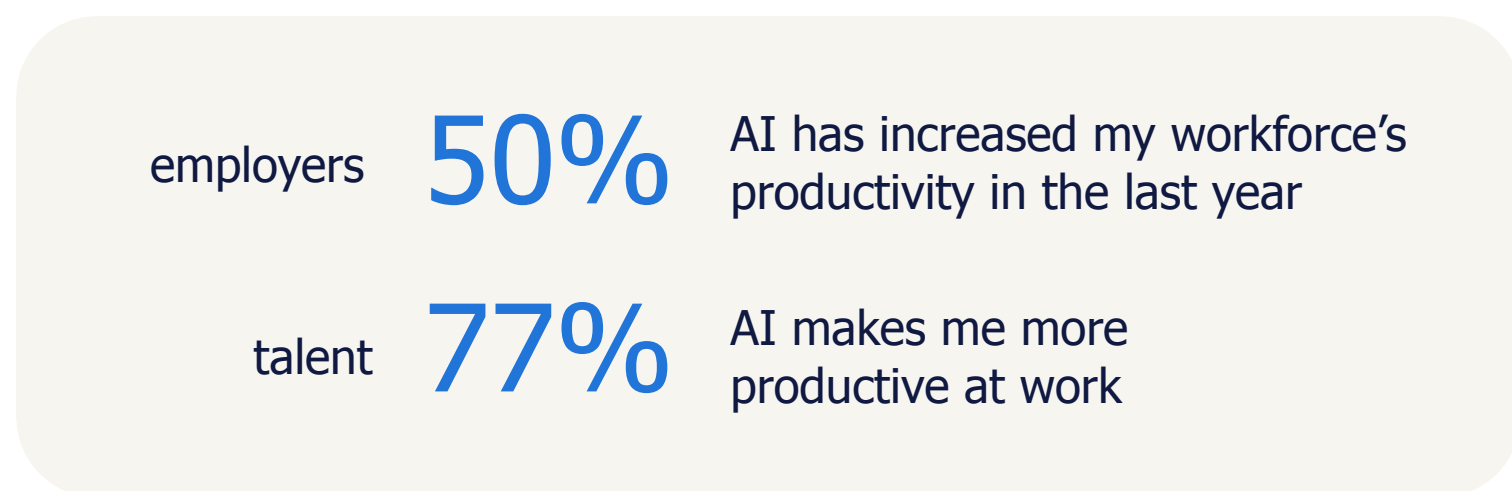
me and the world employer-talent gap analysis.

There is a clear gap in how employers and staff in Hong Kong SAR view AI. While employees are already seeing a boost in their own productivity, 74% of talent often feel are calling for more investment in AI training from employers.

Confidence among Gen Z in Hong Kong SAR is notably low, with only 29% feeling more secure in their jobs than they did a year ago. This falls short of both the global average (35%) and the much higher levels of optimism seen in Mainland China (46%). This suggests that Hong Kong SAR's youngest professionals feel particularly exposed to current market pressures.

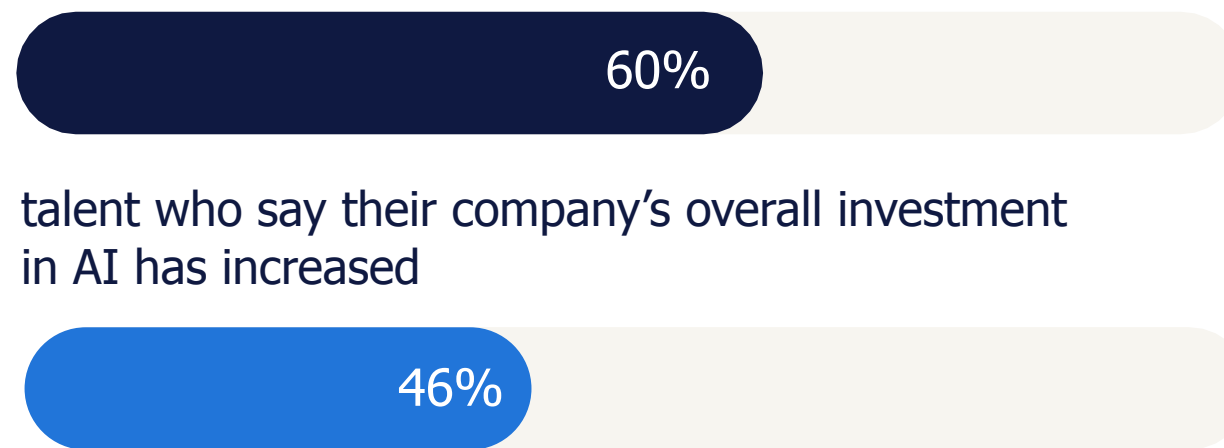
To bridge this gap, companies need to do more than just providing the tool. They must prioritise transparent, people-focused upskilling that genuinely prepares the workforce for the future. This would help ease fears about AI replacing junior roles too.

AI and productivity

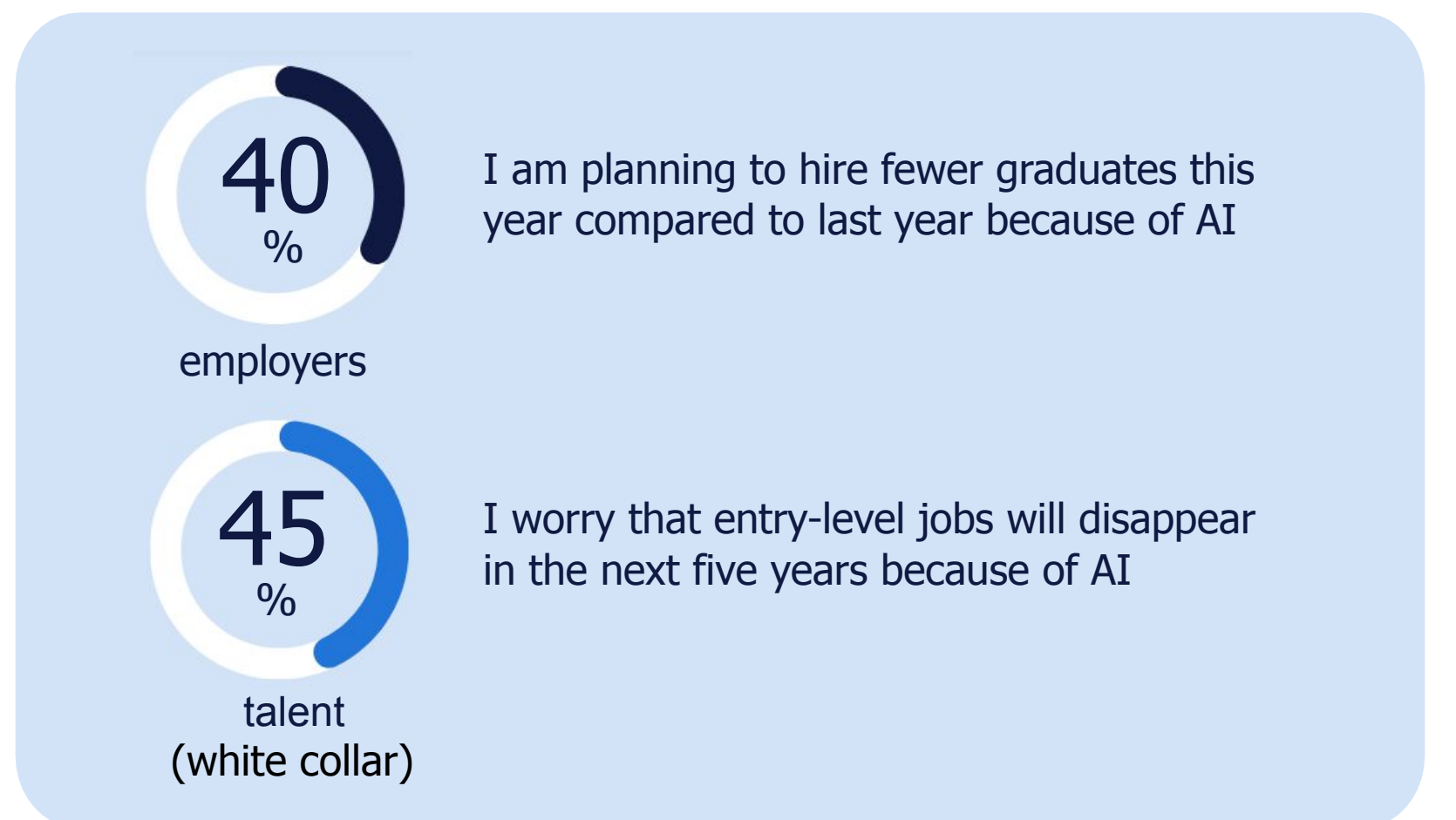


investment in AI

employers who have invested in AI in the last 12 months



the future of entry-level jobs



me and the world

key learnings.



belief needs to catch up with AI ambition

While AI is deeply embedded in working practices for many talent and employers, significant gaps remain between their perceptions of its impact.



enabling fluid AI adoption

Employers must identify the skill gaps arising from their strategies and train talent to fill these gaps. Talent, meanwhile, will need to commit to lifelong learning and adaptation to enhance their employability.



agility and empathy as retention levers

With the challenging economic landscape, talent have become more cautious about leaving their current roles. Employers need to enhance agility and show empathy to address the financial and career pressure their talent is under.



me and my team:
managers are
key to stability.

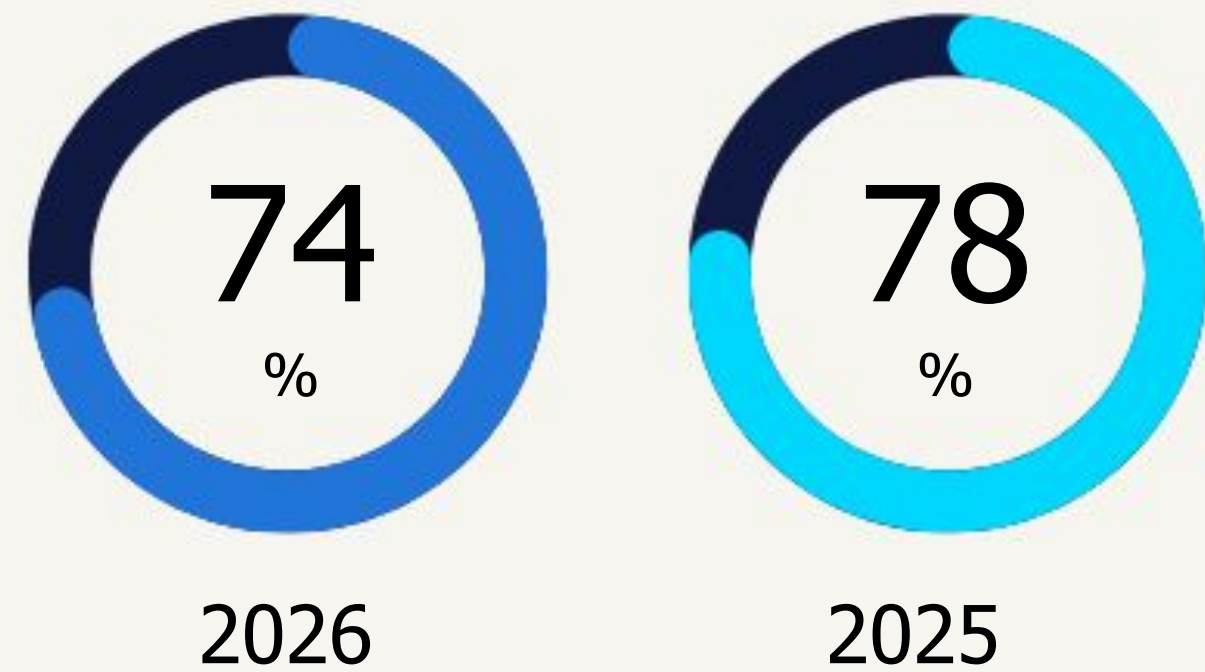


rebuilding trust.

In an unpredictable world, workplaces continue to provide a sense of community and stability.

Trust in leadership remains high, with 74% of talent reporting that they trust their company's leadership team. However, this figure has seen a slight decline from 78% to 74% when compared to 2025.

I feel I can trust the leadership team of my company



disconnect between managers and employees.

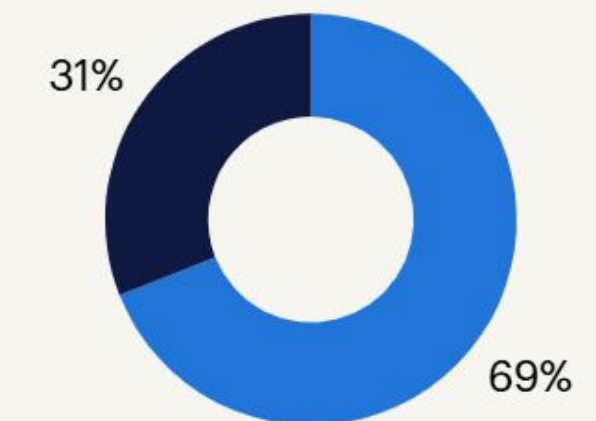
Managers in Hong Kong SAR are finding it harder to navigate today's volatile market.

While 69% of staff still look to them for support, 66% are too afraid to speak up about job security. This suggests a serious lack of psychological safety.

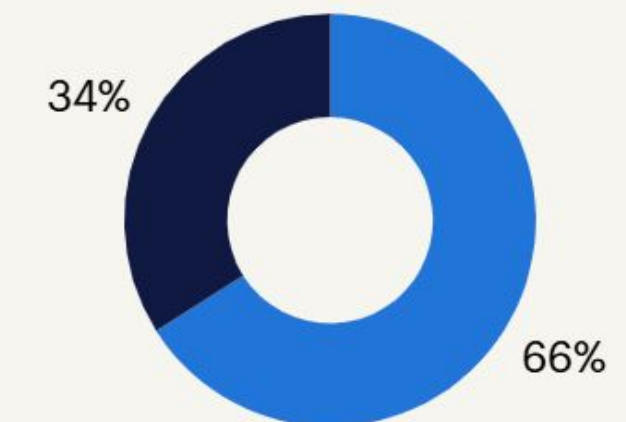
At the same time, AI is disrupting the traditional mentor-manager role; 57% of employees now turn to AI tools for work advice instead of their managers. This shift is fundamentally changing the relationship between managers and their teams.

reassurance, insecurity and AI advice

I seek more reassurance from my manager because of the current volatile macroeconomic environment



I avoid raising issues with my manager due to job insecurity



I use AI to seek work advice instead of asking my manager



● agree ● disagree



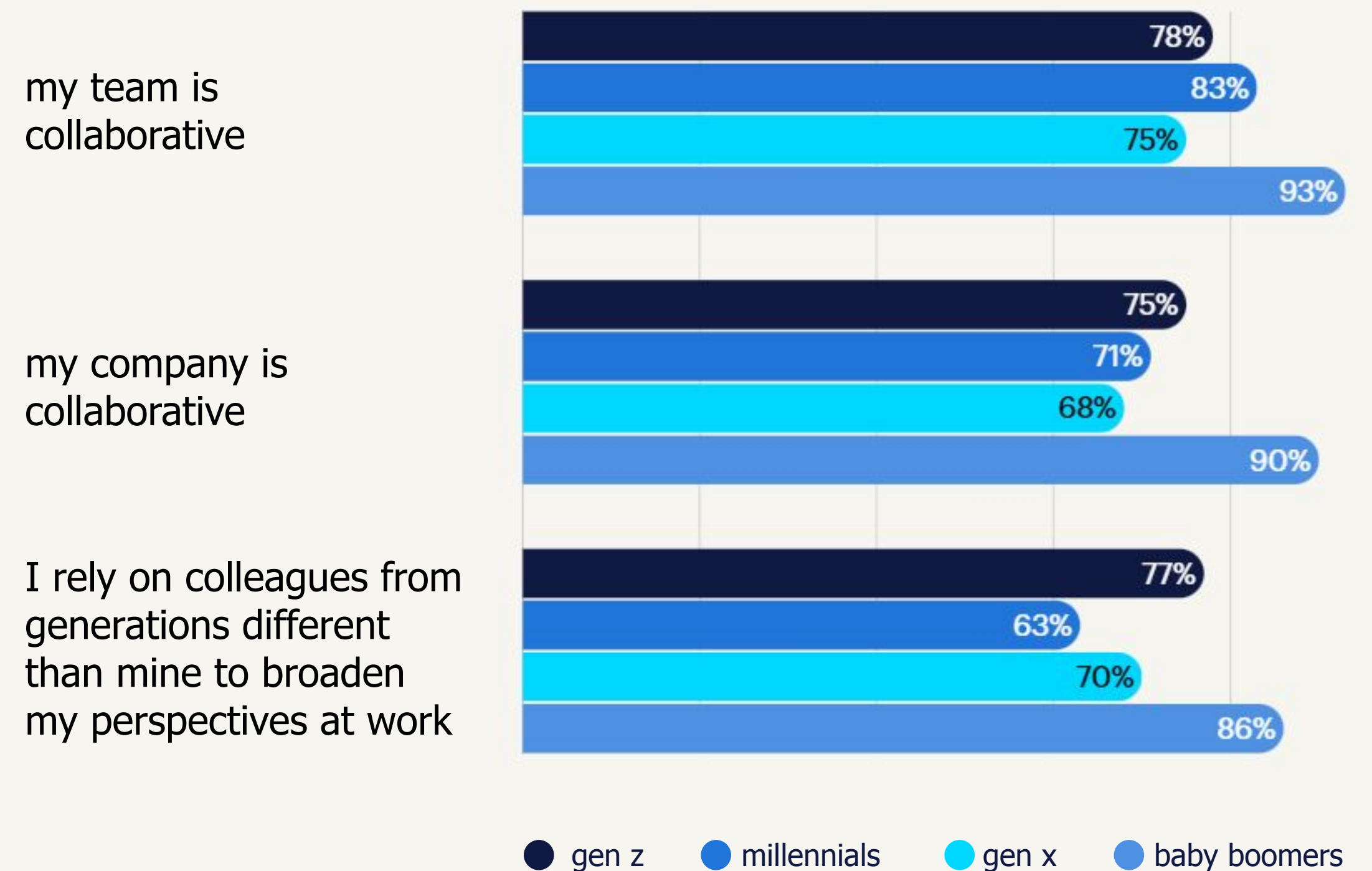
multigenerational collaboration as a productivity lever.

Employers are clear on the value of diversity: 100% believe multigenerational teams improve productivity.

Talent resonate with that. 77% of talent feel more productive when collaborating and taking others' views on board. 71% state that they rely on people from different generations to broaden the perspectives.

In Hong Kong SAR, baby boomers are the strongest advocates for teamwork, with over 80% committed to collaboration. In contrast, millennials show a noticeable drop in engagement. Only 63% are interested in seeking insights from other generations. This gap suggests a growing 'silo' effect between the most senior and mid-level professionals in the workforce.

the state of collaboration in businesses



me and my team employer-talent gap analysis.

Employers and staff in Hong Kong SAR agree that cross-generational teamwork is crucial. However, two major issues remain: the friction of hybrid work and a lack of psychological safety.

While companies are doing more 'check-ins' to keep people from leaving, they are neglecting the deeper issue of trust. This has created a 'silence gap,' where insecure employees hide their true concerns. Combined with the difficulty of staying connected while working remotely, leaders now face a serious risk to both productivity and talent retention.

the crisis of psychological safety

I have encouraged managers to check in with employees more due to retention risks

85% employers

I seek more reassurance from my manager because of the volatile macroeconomic environment

69% talent

I avoid raising issues with my manager due to job insecurity

66% talent



the hybrid collaboration challenge

remote or hybrid work has made collaboration more challenging

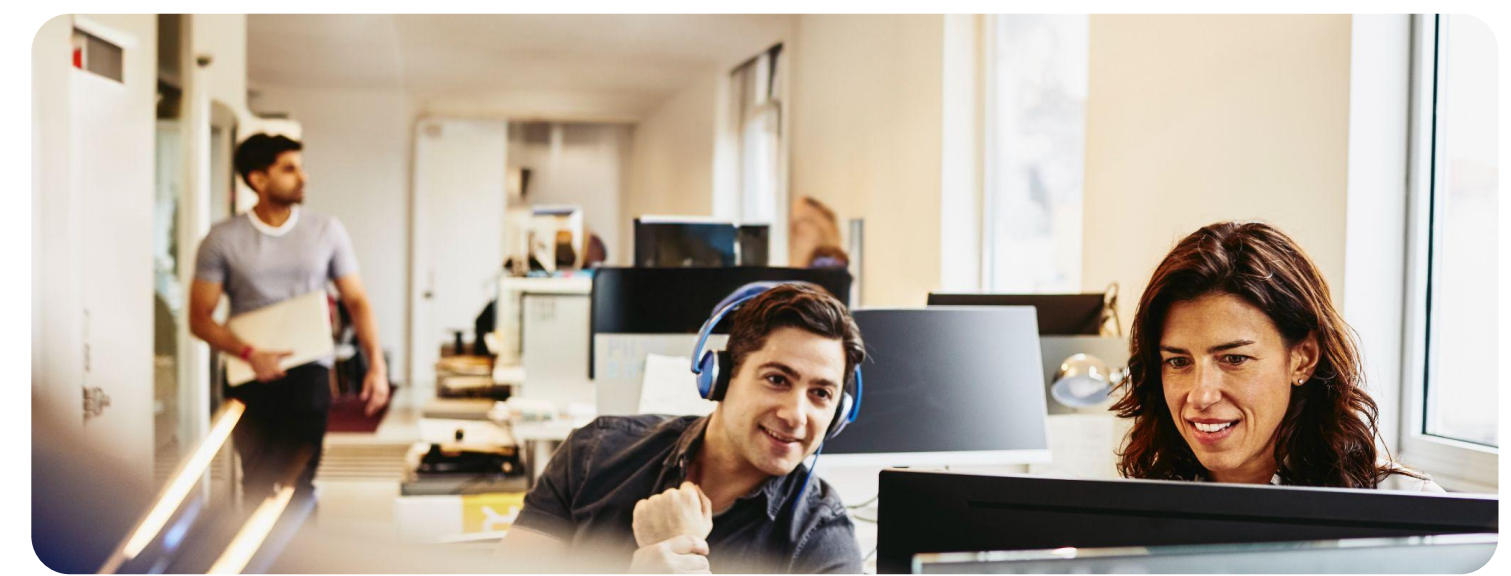
90% employers

working in the office/workplace improves my productivity

56% talent

95% employers management in my organisation should spend more time improving collaboration among teams

37% of talent quit a job because there wasn't a collaborative atmosphere



drawing on a mix of generations

77% talent I am more productive when I collaborate and multiple perspectives are involved

having a mix of generations working together is a positive for productivity

100% employers

me and my team

key learnings.



manager evolution from oversight to safety

The manager's role needs to evolve from operational oversight to emotional anchoring. A check-in is ineffective if employees hide their concerns due to insecurity. Organisations should train managers on psychological safety and treat "raising a red flag" as a business contribution rather than a career risk. By rewarding open communication, leaders can close the silence gap.



collaboration focus

Strengthening the links within and between teams will pay dividends for employers. With a solutions-oriented approach, talent must play a key part in enhancing collaboration, especially across different generations.



cross-generational learning

By creating pathways for employees to learn from one another, organisations can bridge the gap between industry knowledge, soft skills, and digital fluency. This exchange ensures that wisdom and innovation are not confined by age, but shared across the business.





me:
the rise of
self-defined
success.



charting their own course.

The appeal of traditional, linear careers is fading as talent increasingly prioritise diversity, autonomy and self-direction.

Employers tell us that the “one career, one company” model with regular promotions is outdated (75%). 10% of talent agree, stating they don’t want a linear career. Instead, they prefer gaining experience from various jobs across a variety of sectors. However, over half of talent still desire a traditional career path.

Perspectives on the ideal working model show a strong universal appetite for diversified income. 35% of full-time staff are now looking for side hustles, while part-time workers are overwhelmingly choosing flexibility over traditional stability.

Surprisingly, only 18% of part-time workers want a single full-time job. The vast majority prefer to stay part-time while balancing side hustles (35%) or gig work (28%). For most, the goal is no longer a 'steady job,' but a portfolio of different income streams.

the rise of the side hustle

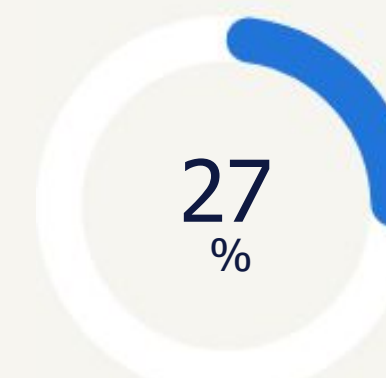
preferred working models
(top three preferences)

talent with a full-time role who say they prefer a

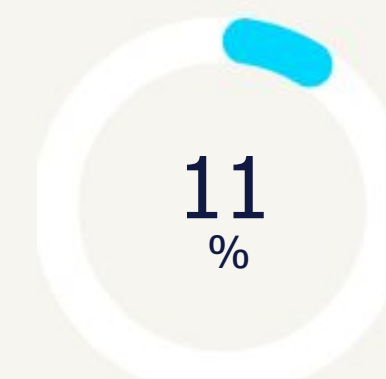
full-time role with side hustle/additional income stream



one full-time role



part-time role with a side hustle/additional income stream or freelancing/gig work

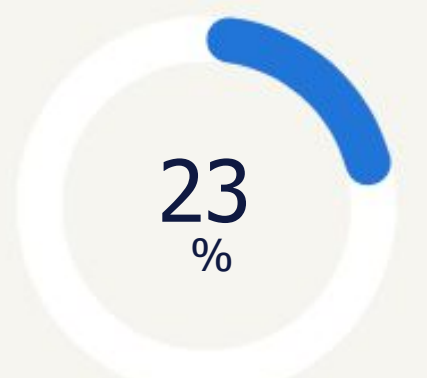


talent with a part-time role who say they prefer a

part-time role with a side hustle/additional income stream



multiple part-time roles



one full-time role



pay is paramount, so is work-life balance.

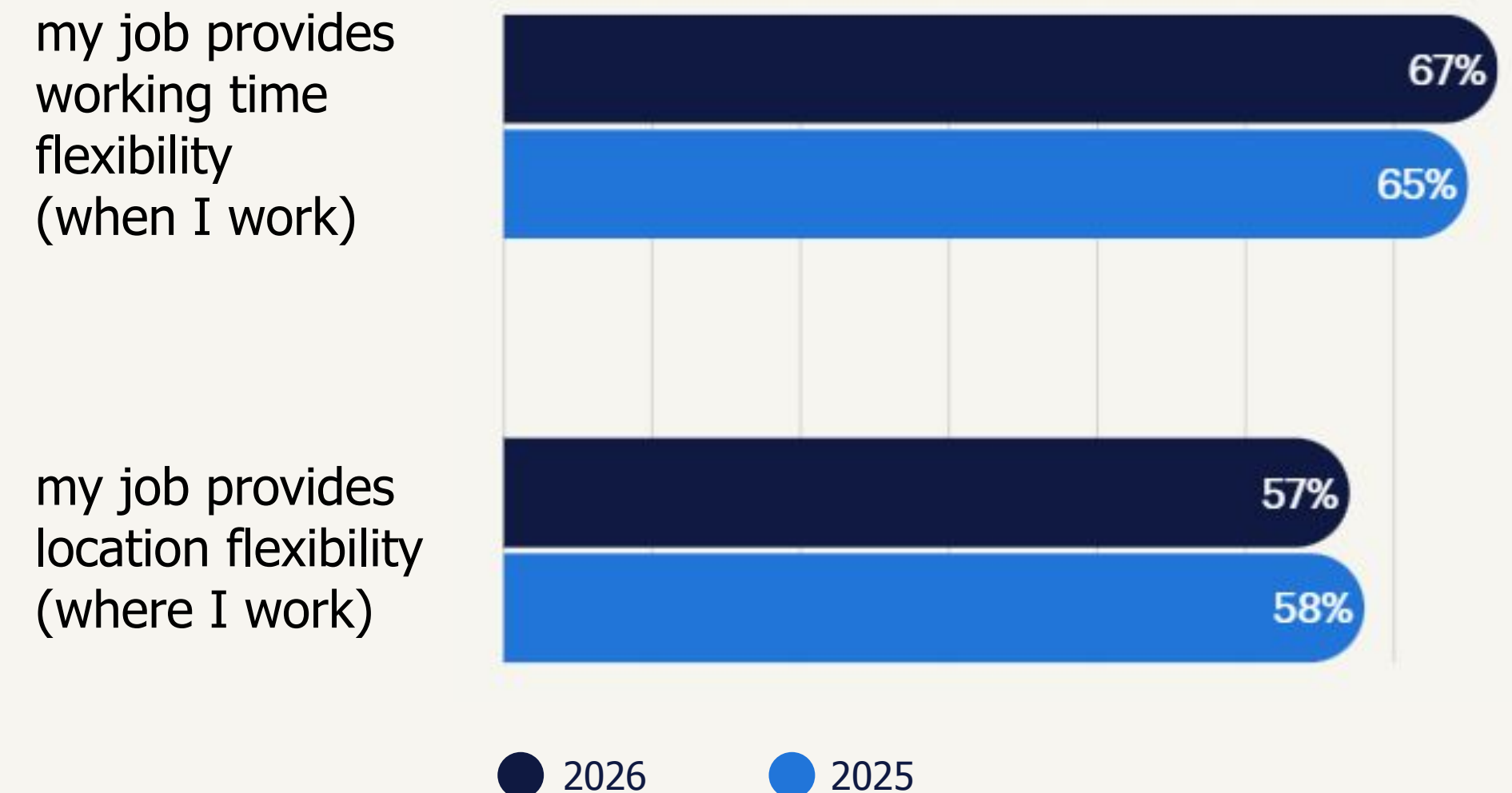
Talent is increasingly prioritising autonomy and outcomes over the traditional 9-to-6 schedule.

While pay is the top priority for most talent (87%), work-life balance has emerged and become the second most important factor (83%). This suggests that competitive pay gets talent through the door, but balance keeps them from looking for the exit in today's market,.

Flexibility in Hong Kong SAR is shifting rather than shrinking. As shown in the data, location flexibility has dipped slightly to 57%. But there is an increase flexibility on time with 67% of employers are offering talent more control over "when" they work.

While many talent are staying put, they are doing so for the paycheck rather than actual job satisfaction. That is risky for employers. If employers ignore the demand of work-life balance (83%), they will likely face rising friction and widening trust gap. Money is buying attendance, but it isn't buying loyalty.

flexibility in decline



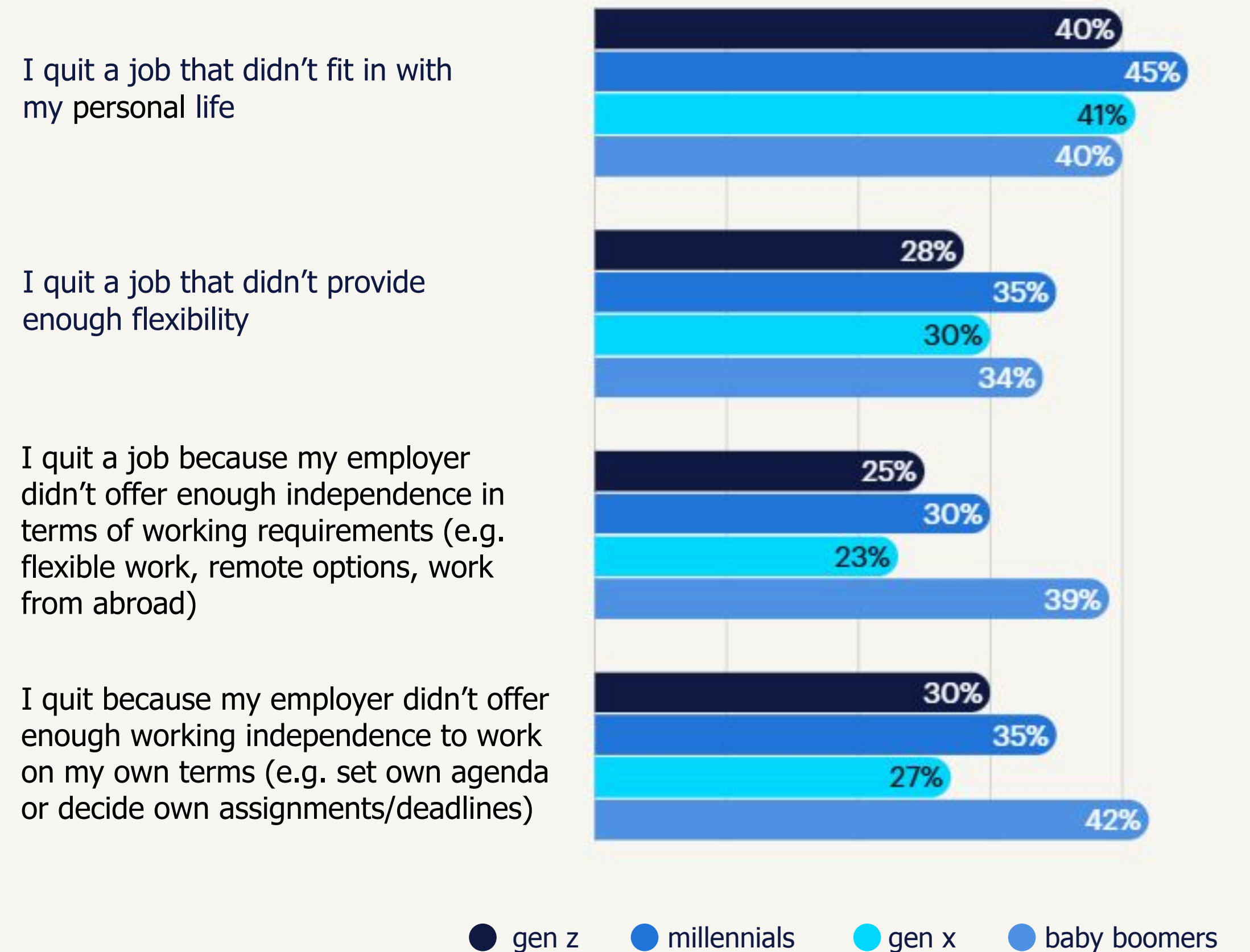
autonomy is the new loyalty pass.

As the demand for autonomy grows, employers must find a balance between granting independence and maintaining control over outcomes. To succeed, organisations should shift their focus from monitoring the process to measuring the results, ensuring that freedom for talent does not compromise business standards.

While 60% of employers believe that greater autonomy drives higher engagement, productivity and retention in their organisation, their support for it is inconsistent. Attitudes vary significantly depending on the type of autonomy being offered.

The push for autonomy in Hong Kong SAR shows a clear split between generations. Millennials (45%) are the least likely to compromise when work interferes with their personal life, while baby boomers (42%) are the most likely to quit if they aren't given independence in how they work. Surprisingly, Gen Z is actually the most stable group. They show the lowest turnover risk when it comes to flexibility.

autonomy and retention across generations



me

employer-talent gap analysis.

Talent are looking for total flexibility and clear career paths, but employers are struggling with the collaboration friction and mismatched expectations. To bridge this gap, leaders need to find a middle ground: giving people the independence they want, and also ensuring everyone stays aligned with the company's goals.

the value gap: high adoption, low buy-in

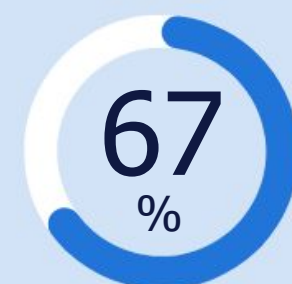
employers

greater autonomy leads to higher engagement, productivity and retention in my organisation



talent

my job provides flexibility in terms of working hours — I can control when I work



talent

My job provides flexibility in terms of location — I can decide where I work from



... but still remains a challenge for employers

autonomy can lead to challenges in collaboration and communication

employers 40%

workers today expect too much autonomy

employers 65%



the career path misalignment: flexibility vs. stability

I value skills and experience over formal qualifications when hiring talent

95% employers

the traditional linear career path (one career/company with regular promotions to management roles) is outdated

75% employers

lack of autonomy as an exit driver



talent

I quit a job because my employer didn't offer enough independence to work on my own terms (e.g. set own agenda or decide own assignments/ deadlines)



talent 54% I want to follow a traditional linear career path (one career/company with regular promotions to management roles)

talent 57% I want to have different types of jobs throughout my career (switching sectors and roles)

me

key learnings.



crafting portfolio careers

There are mixed preferences for the ideal career path. Employers who can offer a wide range of internal career pathways will gain a significant competitive advantage in the race for talent.



competitive pay and work-life balance

Pay attracts and retains. But work-life balance is now the top reason talent looks for something new. Most people will not move if it means losing the flexibility they already have. This makes flexibility a powerful lever; employers who treat it as a non-negotiable standard will gain a massive competitive edge.



autonomy requires trust

Autonomy now extends beyond the 'where' and 'when'. It is increasingly defined by how talent delivers outcomes on their own terms rather than within rigid, traditional frameworks. For employers, the shift is from monitoring the process to trusting the professional.





workmonitor 2026: the great workforce adaptation.

the great workforce adaptation: closing the gap.

Our findings highlight a critical disconnect in Hong Kong SAR's 2026 growth agenda. Business leaders in Hong Kong SAR are optimistic about 2026, but their teams are not.

This 'confidence gap' is a serious structural risk. To fix it, the city needs more than just a recovery. It requires what we call the Great Workforce Adaptation, the shift in how companies and talent work together.

To boost confidence and trust, talent and employers must work together to overcome the AI reality gap, unlock growth and usher in the rise of portfolio careers.





The Randstad Workmonitor, now in its 23rd year, explores the views of talent in 35 markets across Europe, Asia-Pacific and the Americas, providing an inside look at their attitudes, ambitions and expectations as the world of work continues to transform.

Data was collected from 27,062 talent and 1,225 employers across 35 markets including Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Chinese Mainland, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong SAR, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, the United States and Uruguay.

For this research, Randstad partnered with Evalueserve, a global research and analysis firm.

let's connect.

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thank
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