



2026 Small Business Happiness Report

Presented by  **vistaprint**





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This **National Small Business Week**, VistaPrint took a look at the current state of small business happiness.

Yes, 2026 has been a year of uncertainty, but data shows small business owners haven't stopped pursuing their possible.





“What this research makes clear is that happiness isn’t just a byproduct of success for entrepreneurs; it’s a driver of it. From embracing AI to building resilient teams, small businesses are finding smarter ways to work that allow them to focus on what matters most.”

Dave DeSandre

Senior Vice President of
North America at VistaPrint

Let’s dive into what’s making these dream-makers so happy →



BY DOMINIC

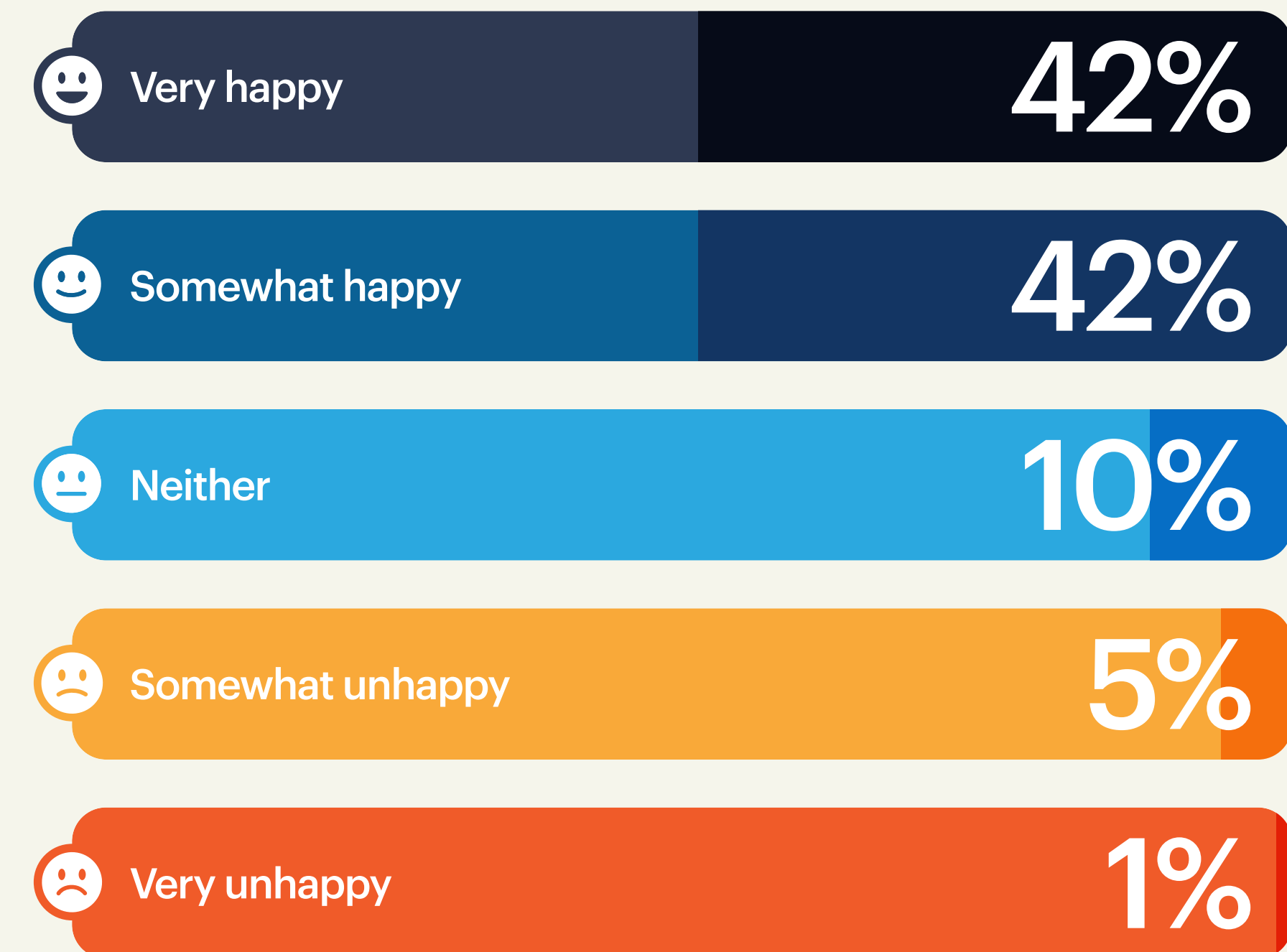
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At the heart of it

Data tells a story of joy and fulfillment

Small business happiness today

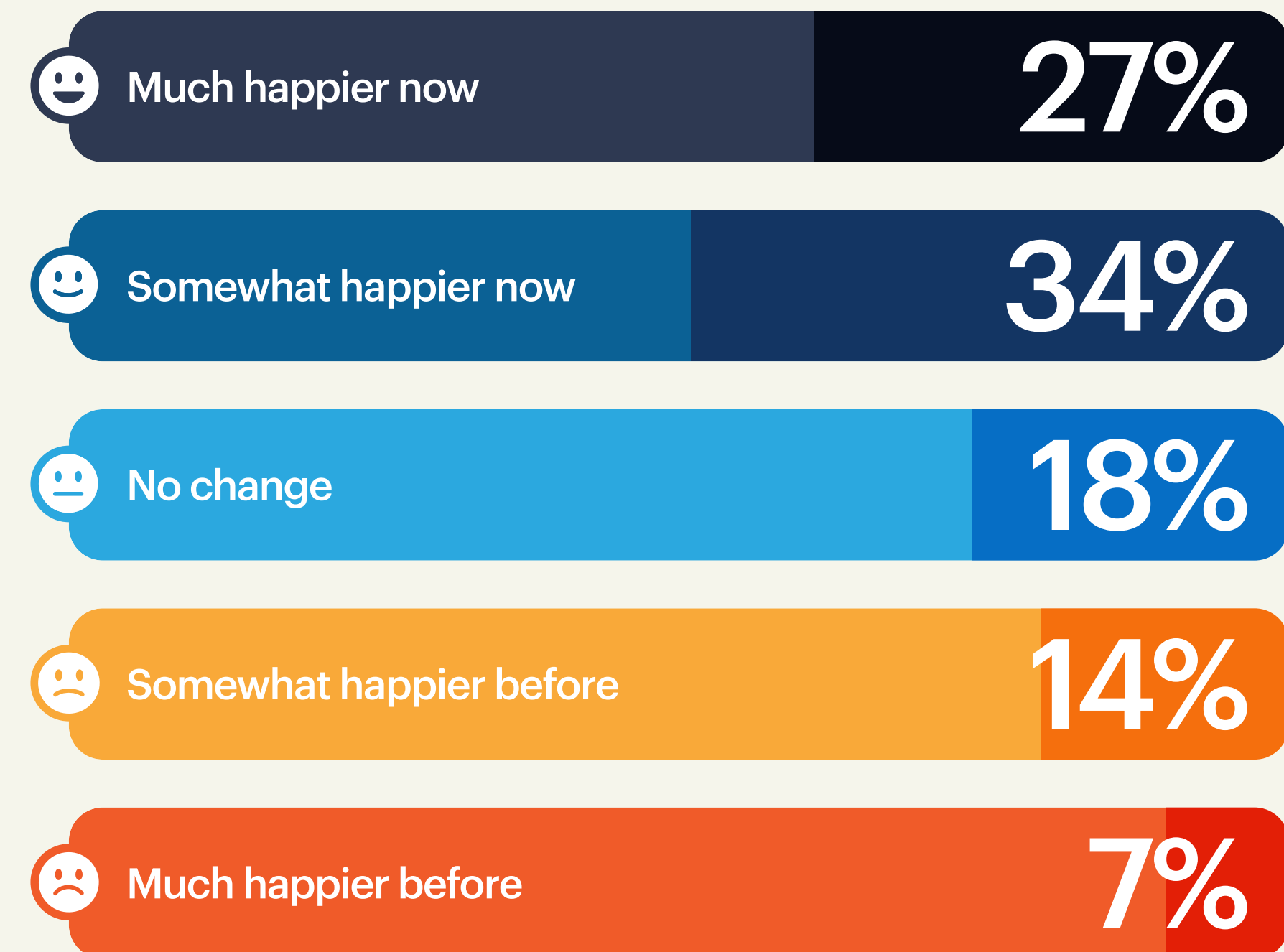
84% of small business owners say they're happy today.



Personal fulfillment > the grind

What tenure has to say about it

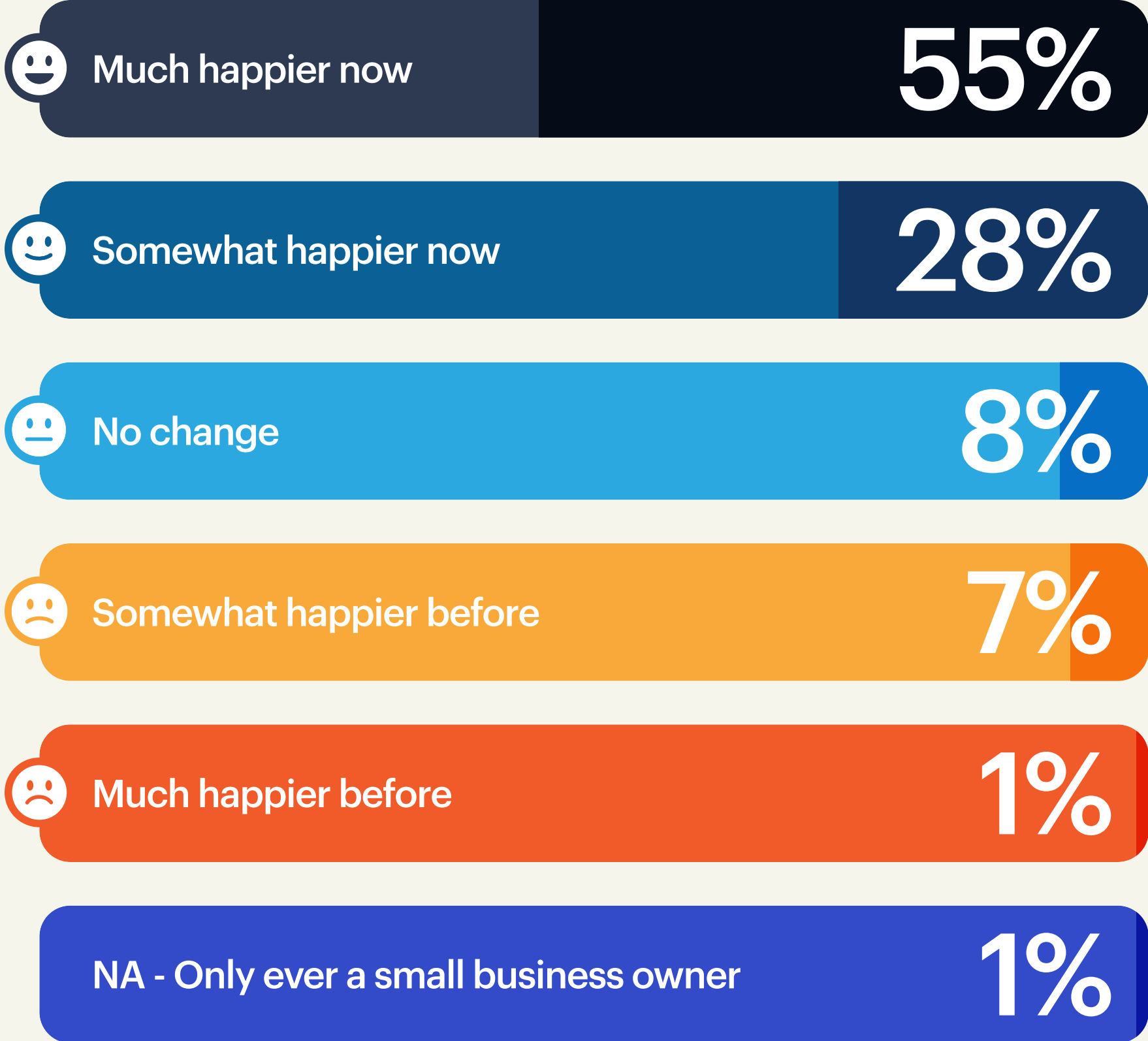
61% of small business owners report that their happiness has increased since they first opened their doors.



The good feels strengthen over time

Being your own boss

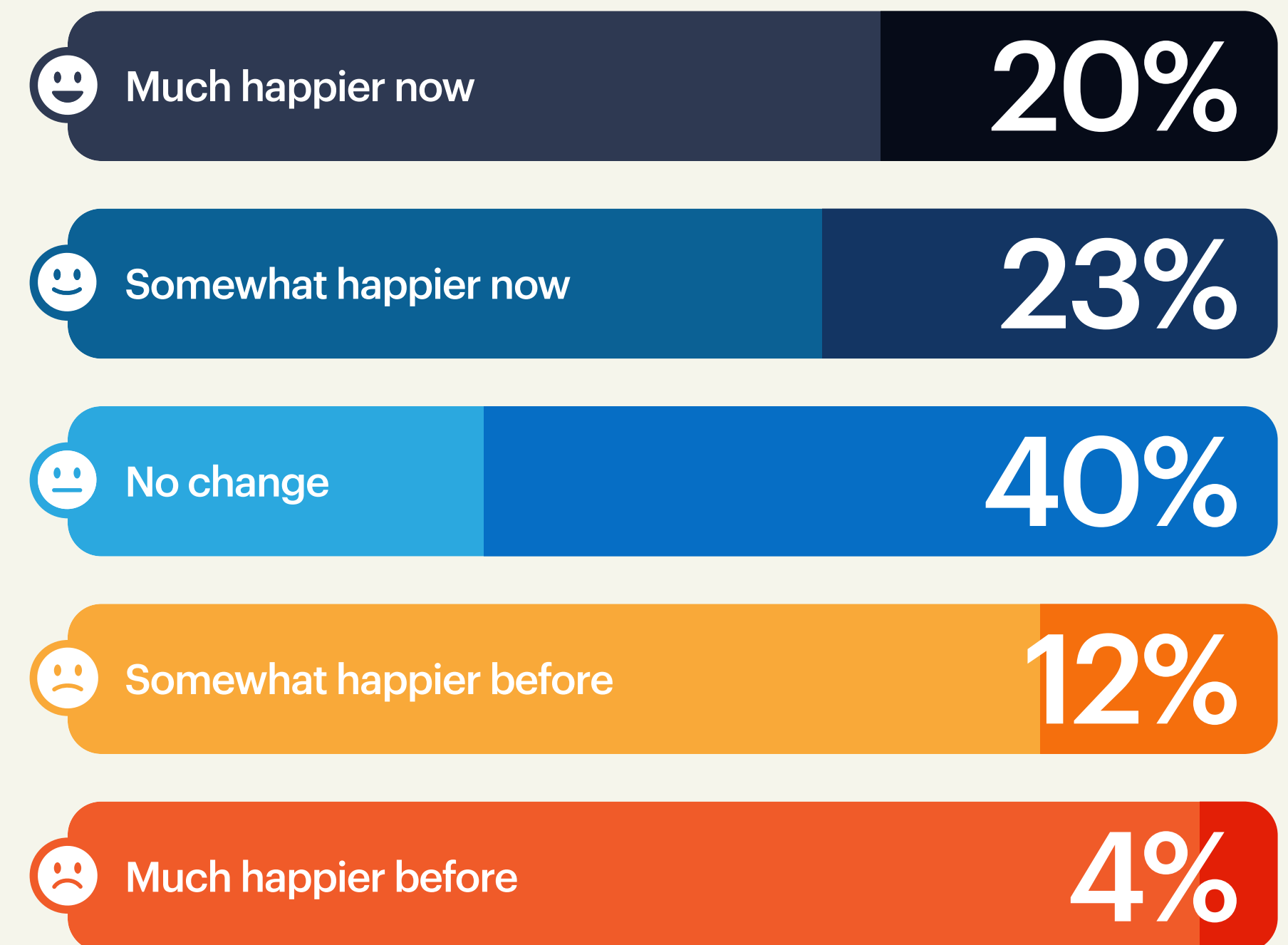
83% of small business owners report being happier now compared to when they worked for someone else.



Being your own boss > a traditional paycheck

Happiness this year vs. last

Nearly half of small business owners report being happier than they were last year.



The joys of running a business > a hard economic year



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Happiness factors

Small businesses are defined by resilience, not struggle

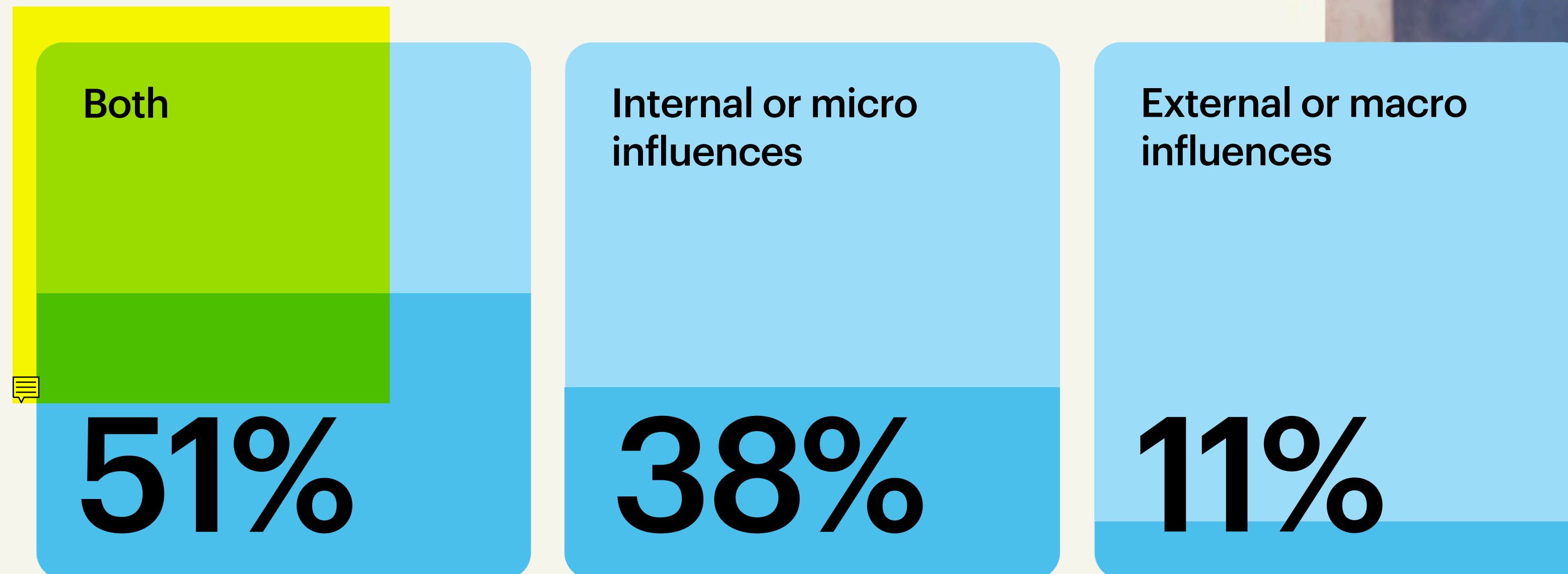
So, why's everyone so dang happy?

For small business owners who are happier today than when they started, the reasons are closer to home than you might expect.



So, why's everyone so dang happy?

38% of small business owners credit internal, day-to-day factors alone – the choices they make, the work they love, the business they've built with their own hands.

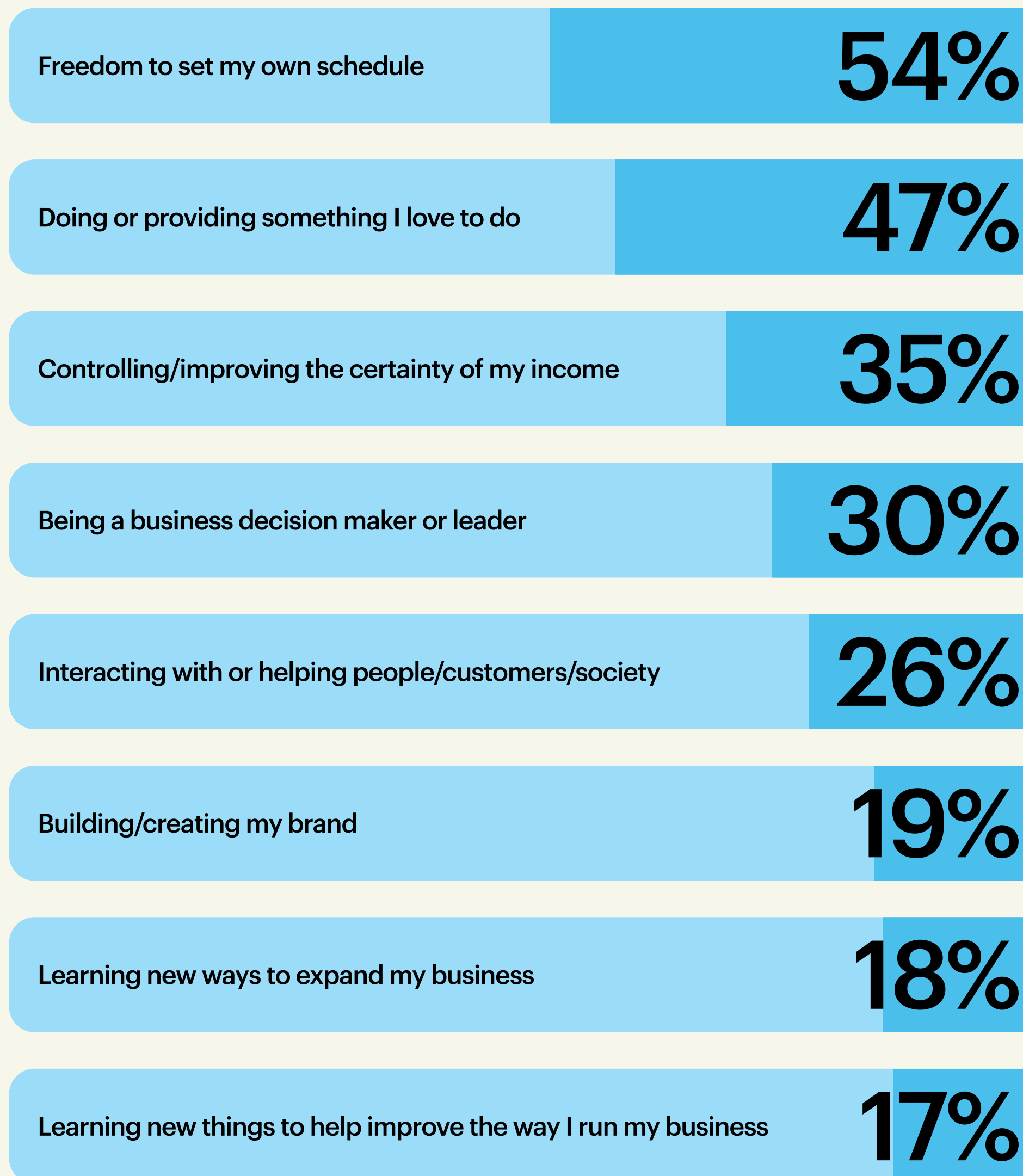


What small biz owners love about small biz owning

The freedom to set their own schedule and the fulfillment of pursuing their passions ranked highest.



The rewards of entrepreneurship are intensely personal



The (very real) challenges

Income uncertainty, working too much and keeping up with current and evolving trends were the most common dislikes.



Small business owners make big sacrifices





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A closer look

Breaking it down by who, what and where

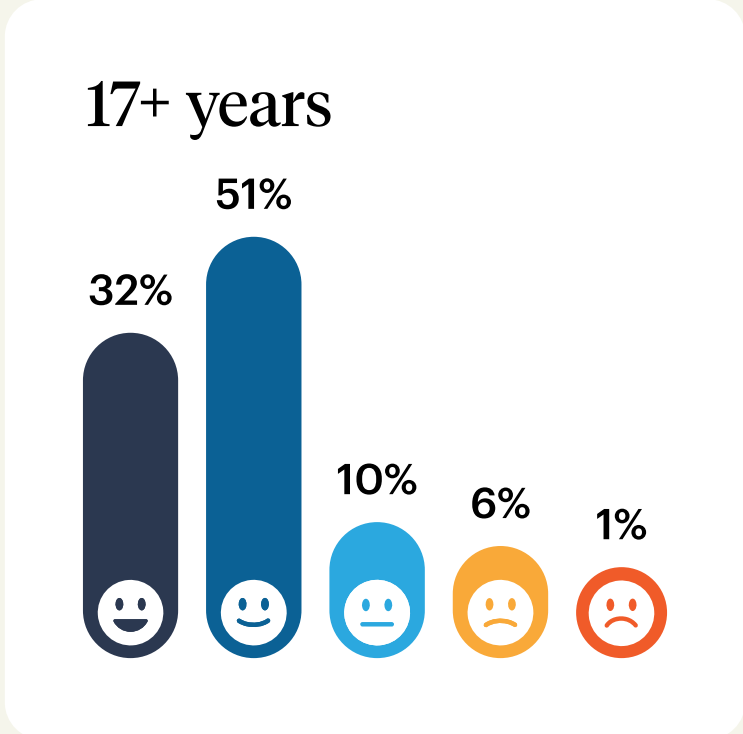
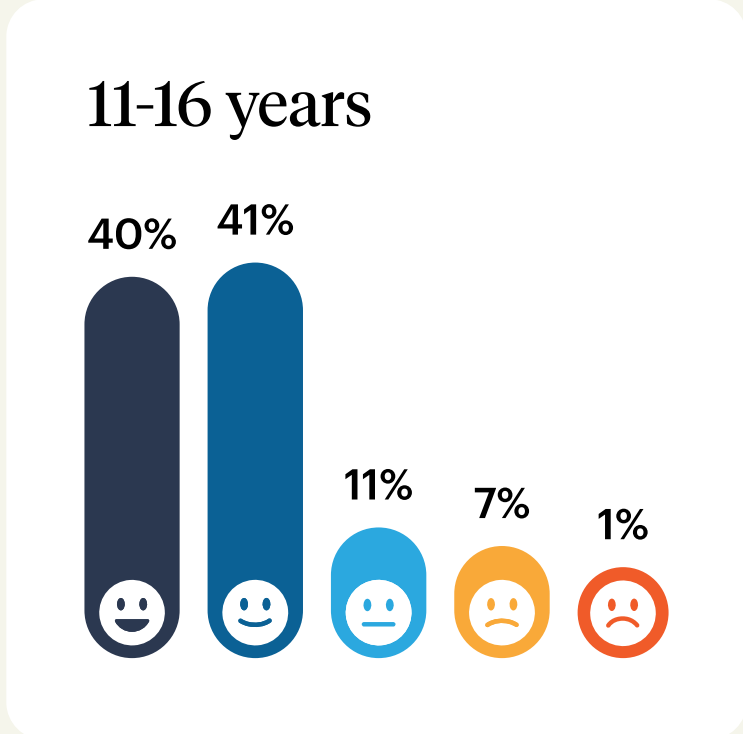
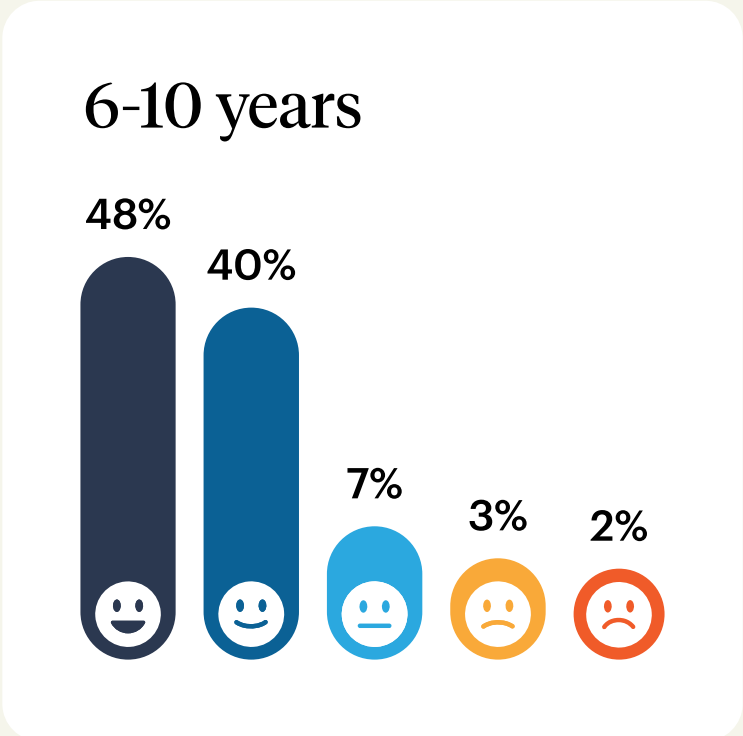
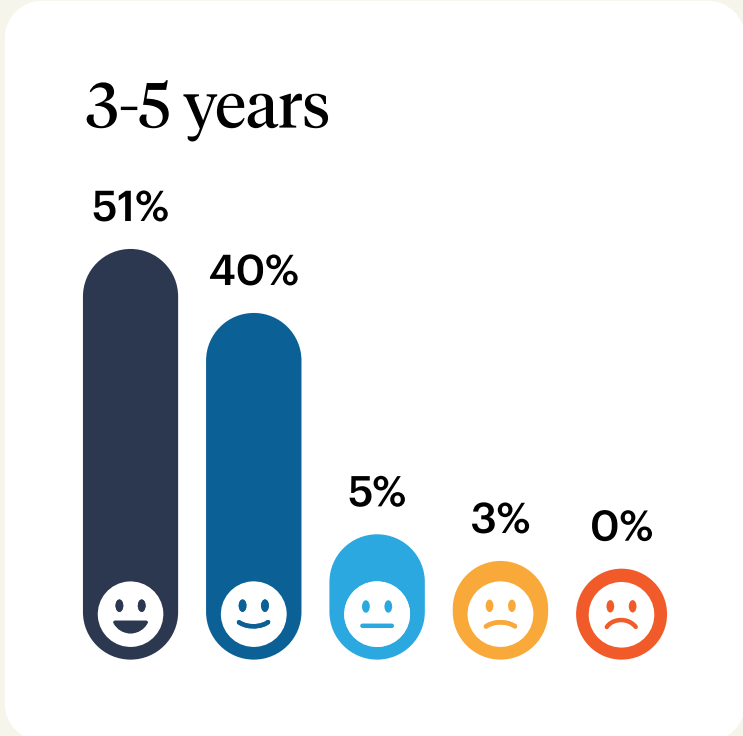
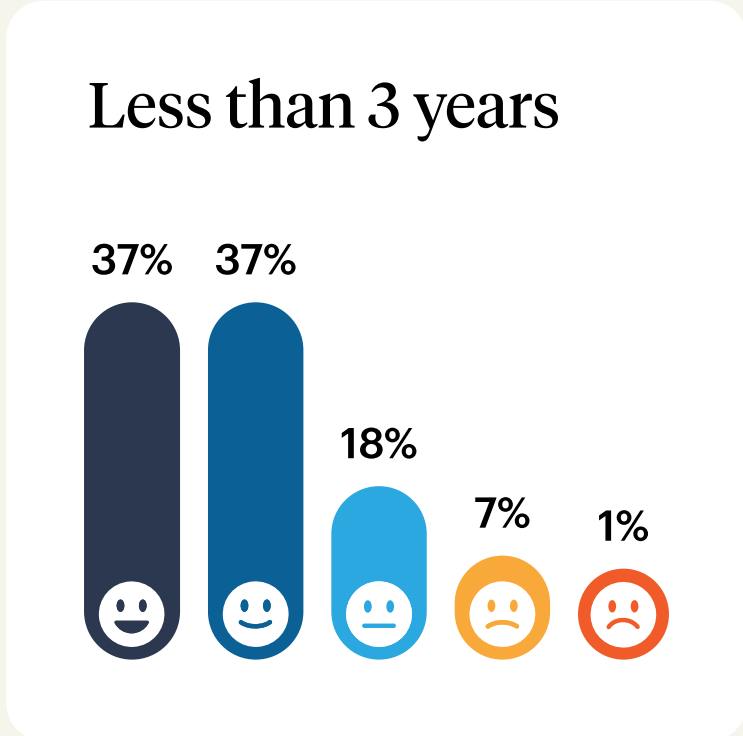


Happiness by tenure

While the early years can be tough, small business owner happiness peaks to **91%** when in business for 3-5 years.



Happiness by Tenure



Very happy
 Somewhat happy
 Neither
 Somewhat unhappy
 Very unhappy



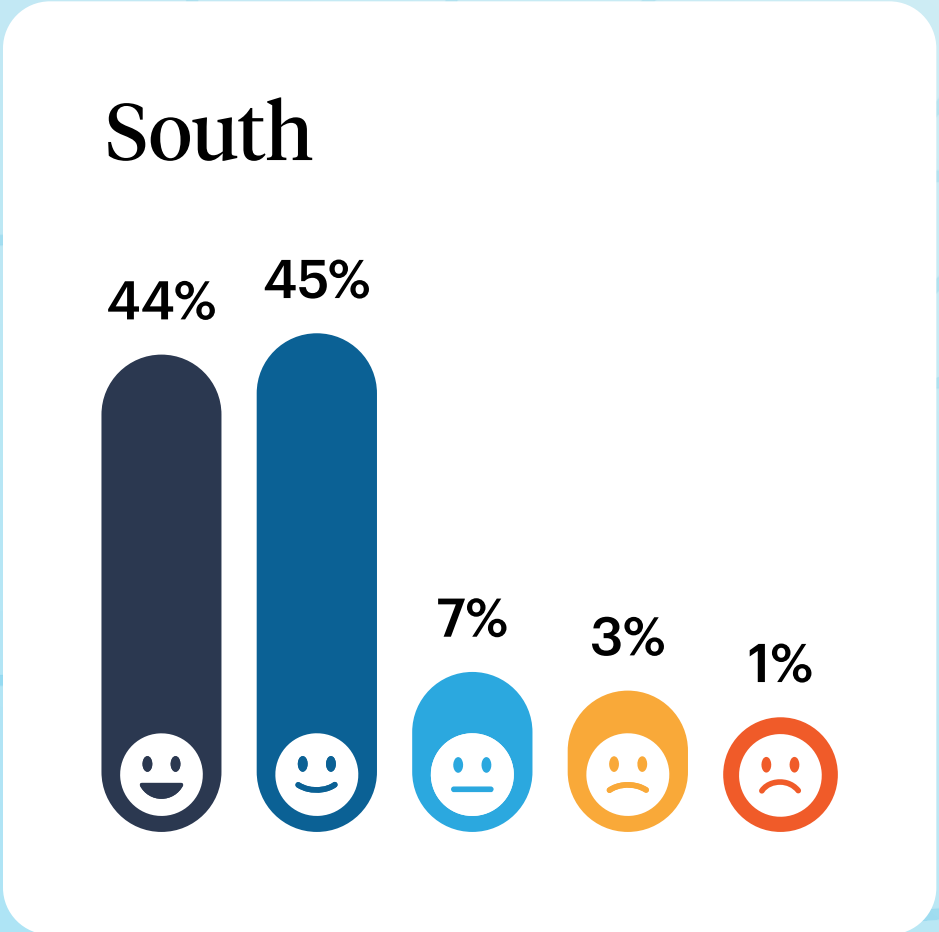
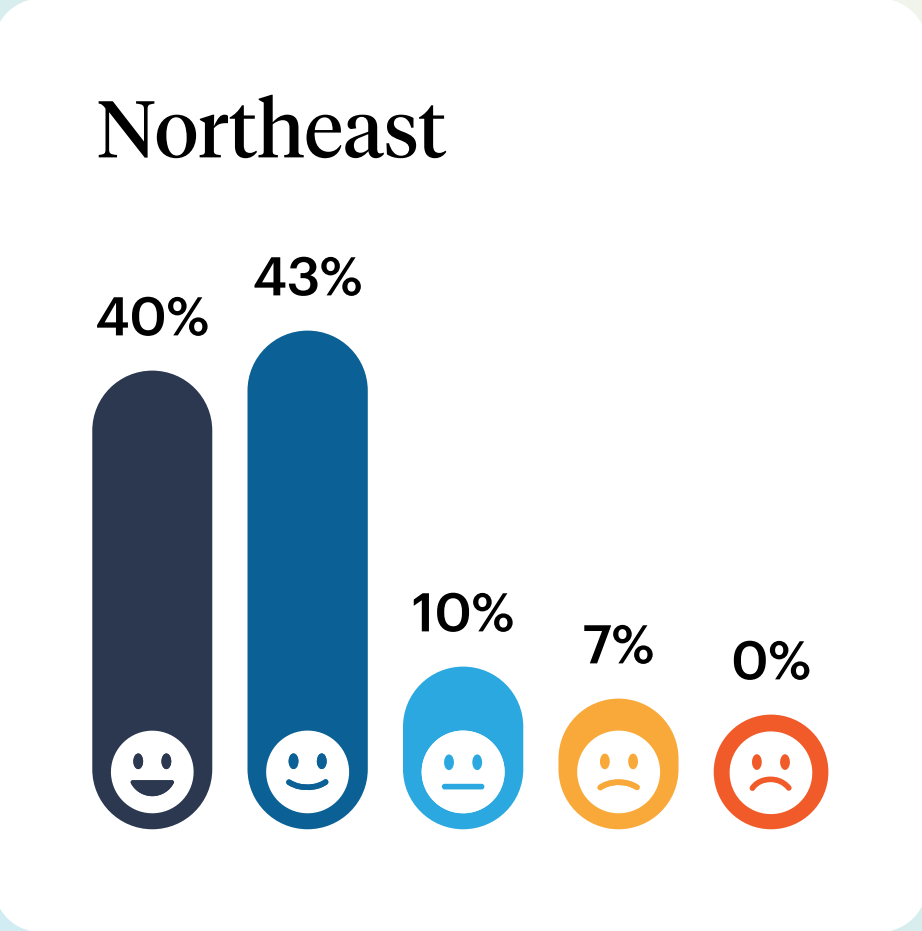
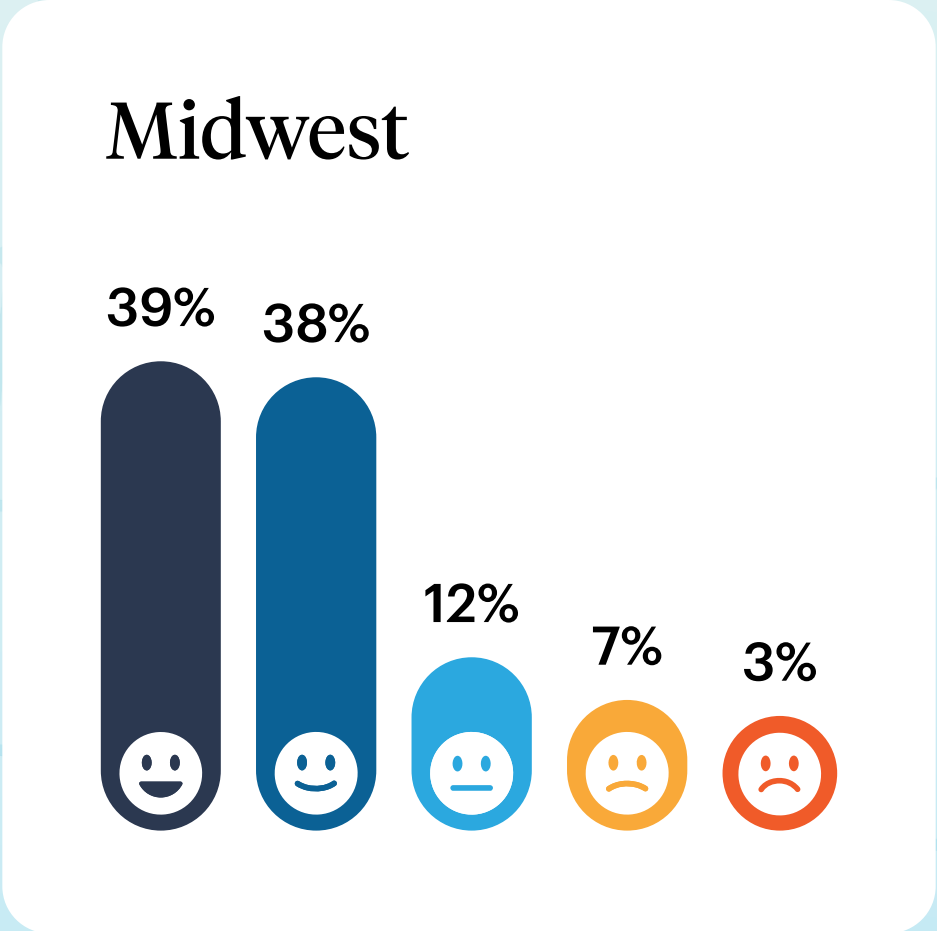
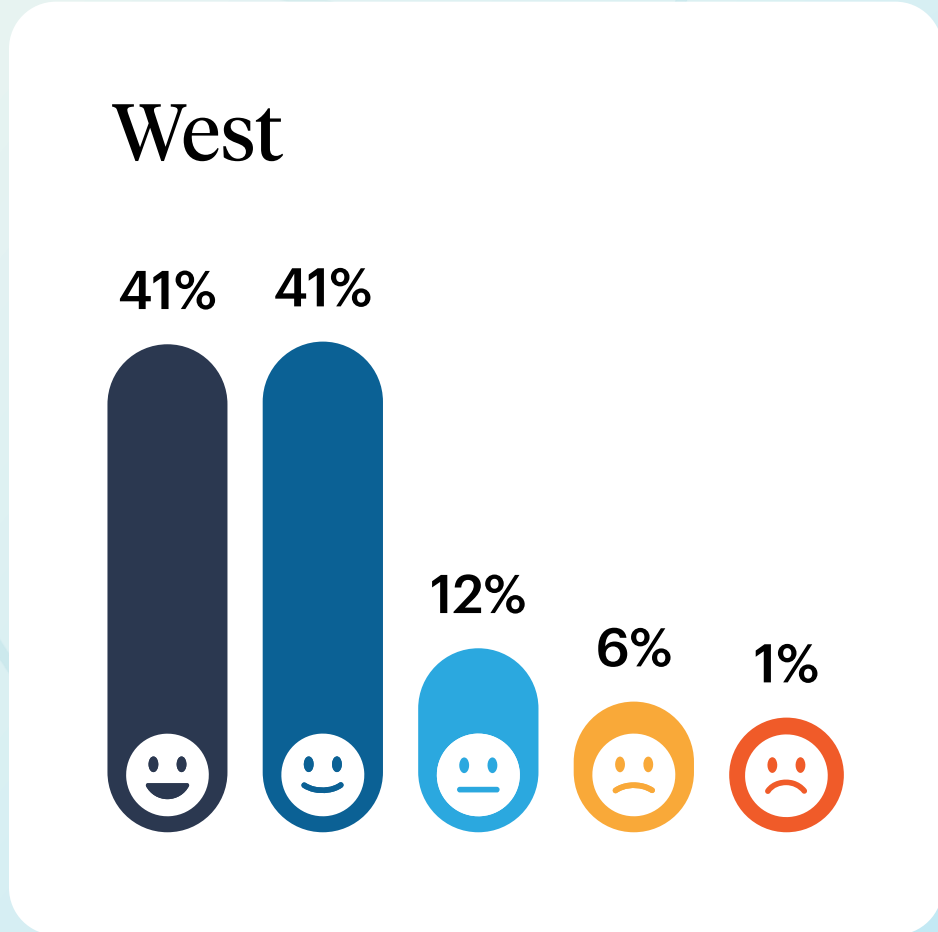


Happiness by region

Small business happiness is a national story, but southern small business owners report the highest levels of happiness **(89%)**.



Happiness by Region



Very happy
 Somewhat happy
 Neither
 Somewhat unhappy
 Very unhappy



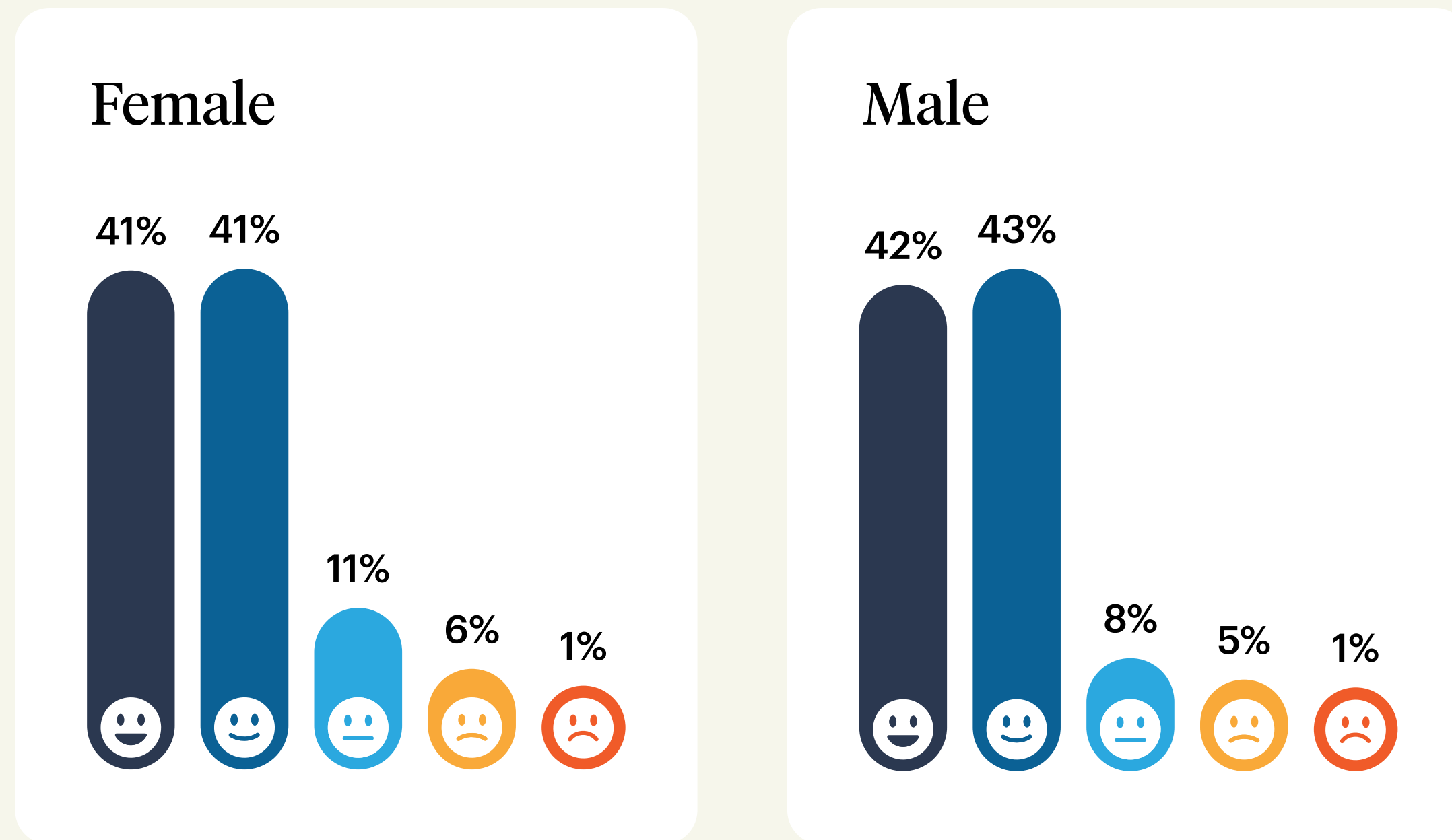
Happiness by gender

The overwhelming majority of both male (85%) and female (82%) business owners report being happy. AKA, the joys of running a business transcend gender.

*meet Maria, the
proud owner of Boston's
beloved Aperitivo*



Happiness by Gender



"My brand and business are an extension of myself, and it's so fulfilling to work on something you wholeheartedly believe in."

Maria Colalanica, Aperitivo
VistaPrint Ambassador

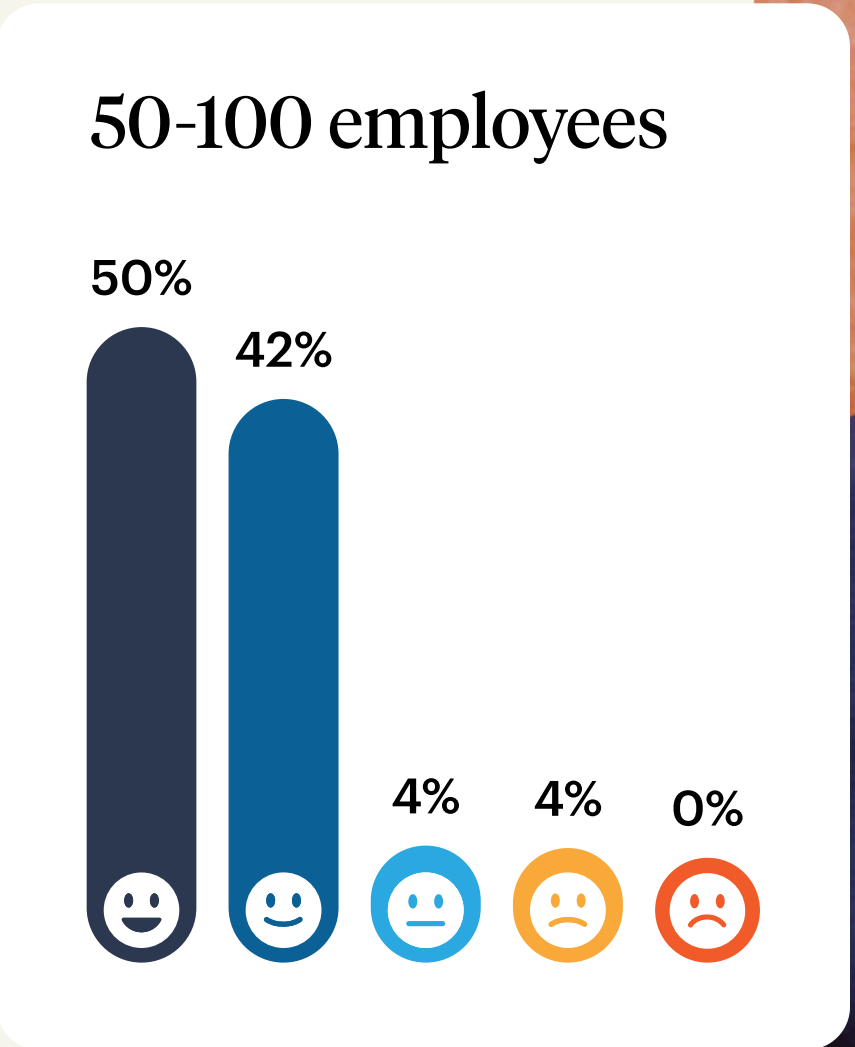
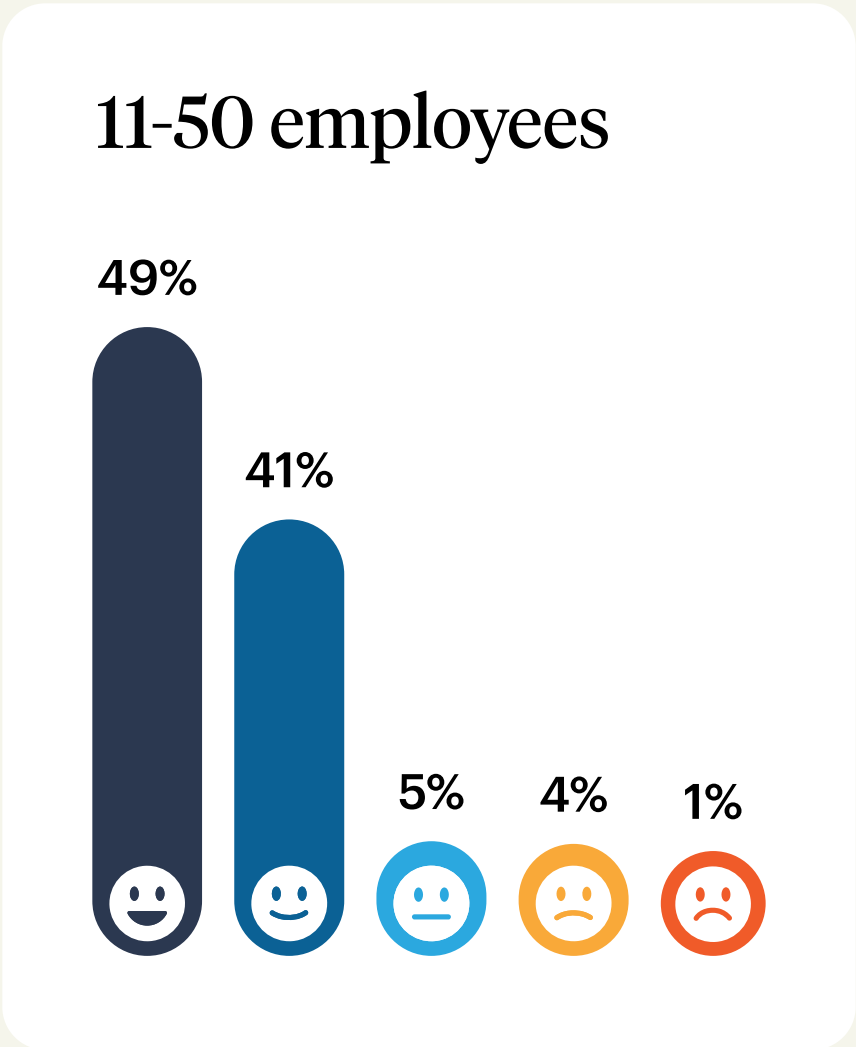
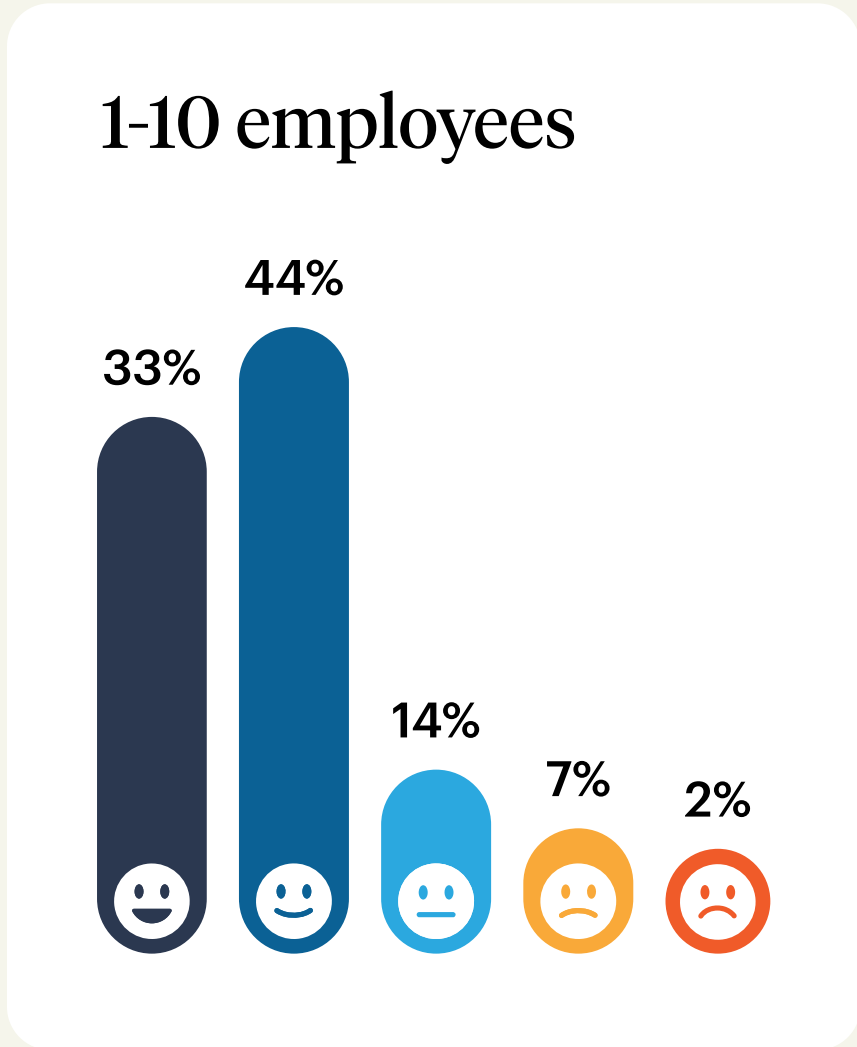


Happiness by employee size

Small business owners' happiness scales with the size of their teams, with happiness peaking at **92%** among business owners who manage 51 to 100 employees.



Happiness by Employee Size



Very happy Somewhat happy Neither Somewhat unhappy Very unhappy



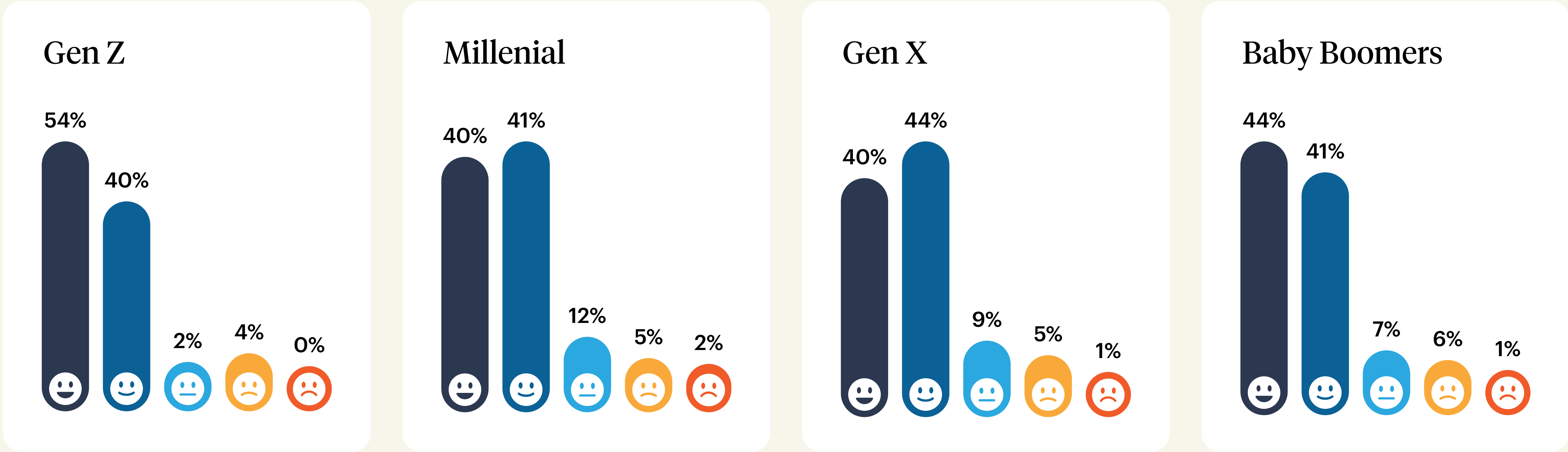


Happiness by generation

Gen Z business owners show **higher than average** happiness compared to Millennials, Gen Xers and Baby Boomers.



Happiness by Generation



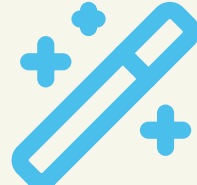
Very happy Somewhat happy Neither Somewhat unhappy Very unhappy



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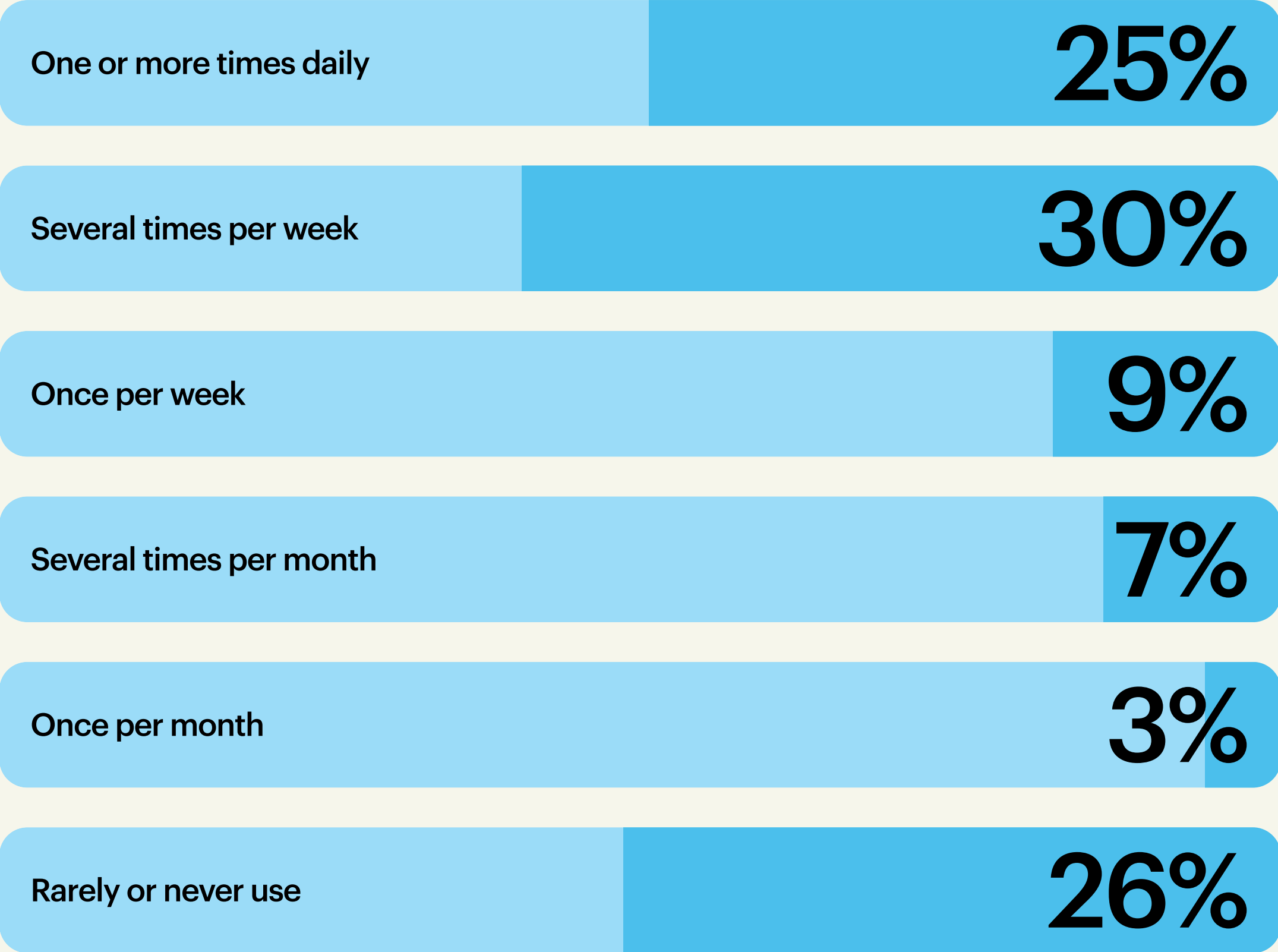
Full speed ahead

How small businesses are taking 2026 in stride



Are small business owners using AI?

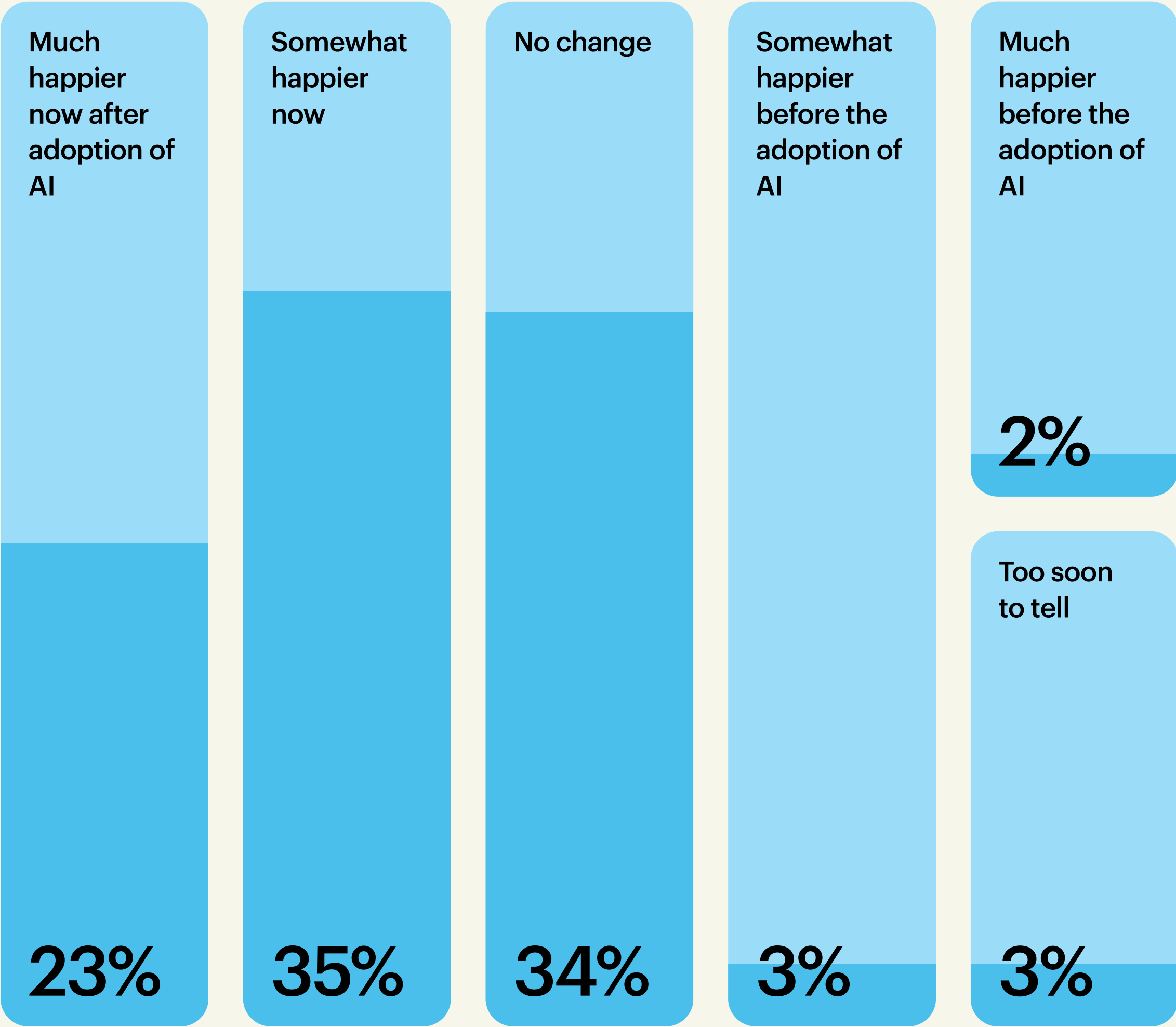
74% of small business owners are using AI on a monthly basis.





AI is a happiness booster

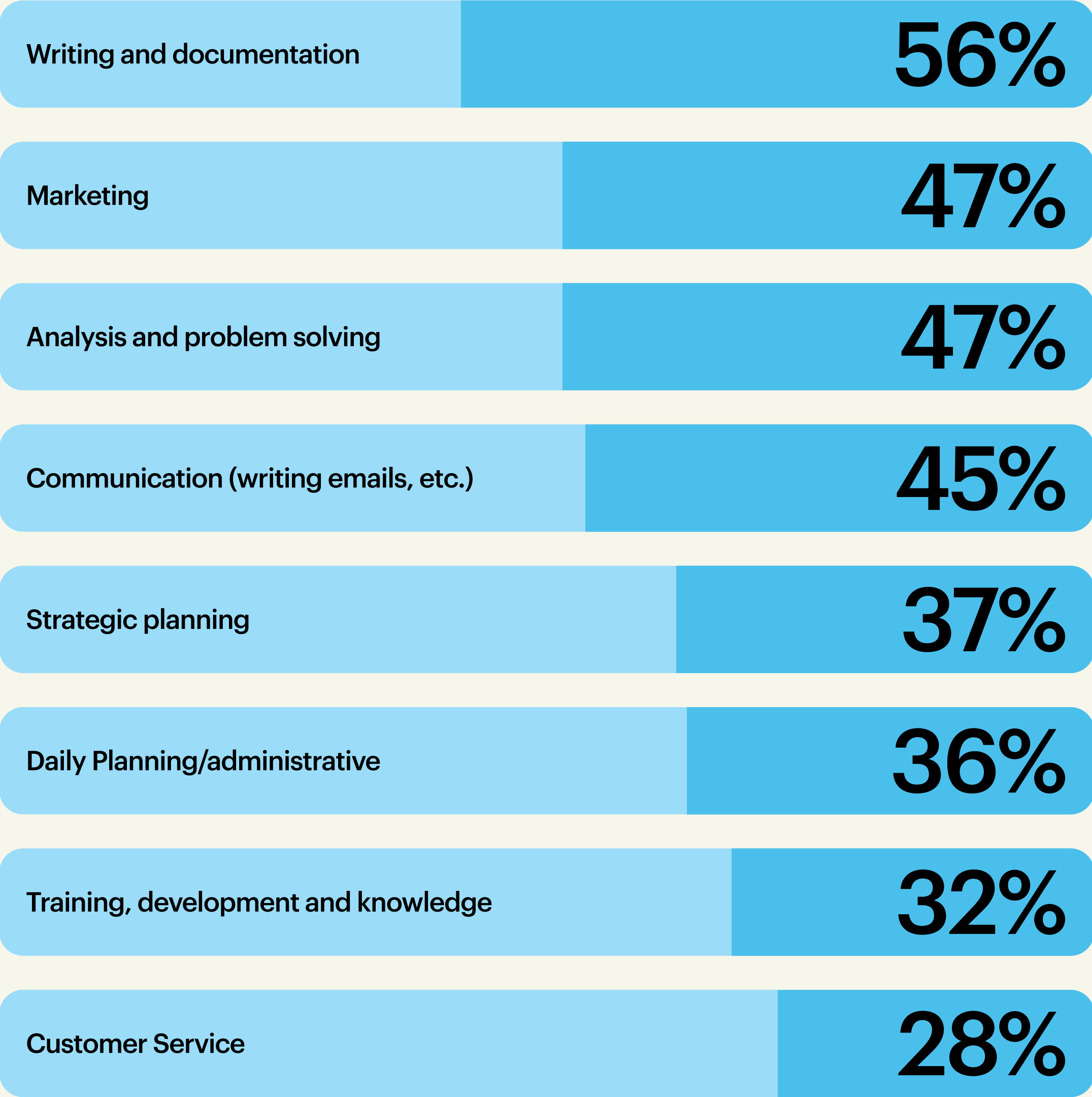
A majority of small business owners say AI is actively making them happier.





How AI is used as a small biz sidekick

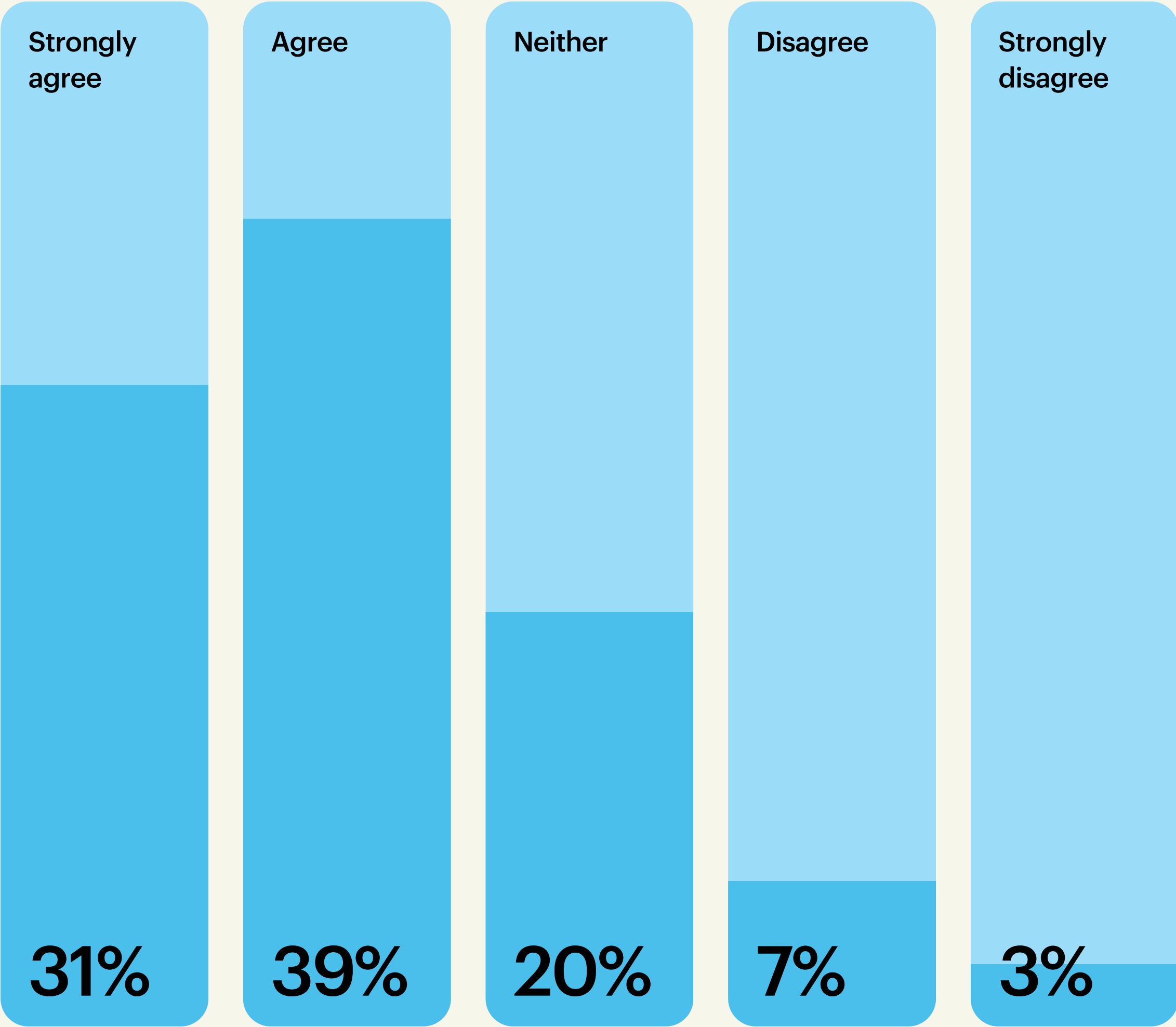
Small business owners are using AI to buy back their time.





Eyes on the future

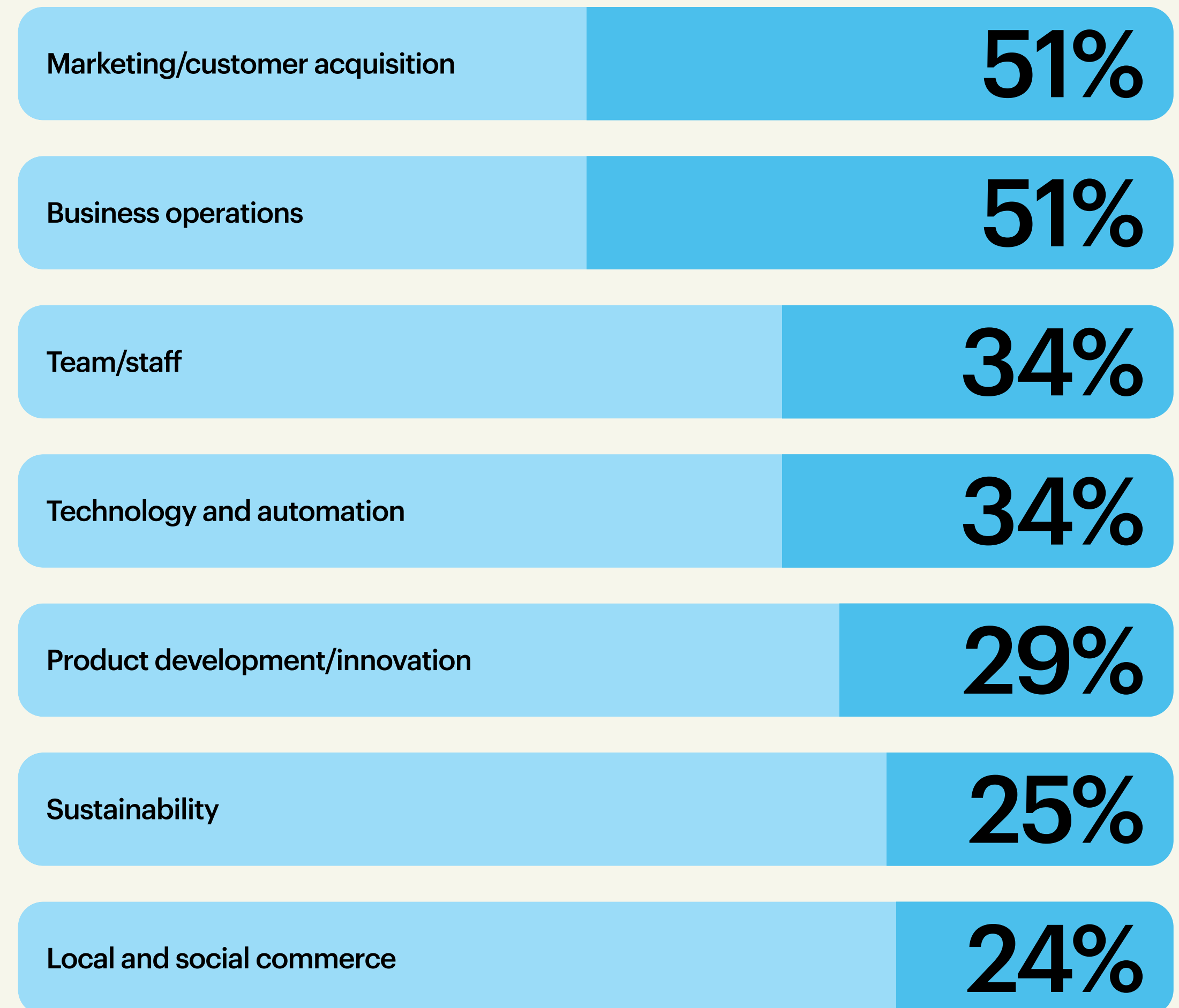
Despite the uncertainty narrative, **70%** of small businesses are optimistic about the future and express confidence in their ability to grow.





Where are small business putting their money

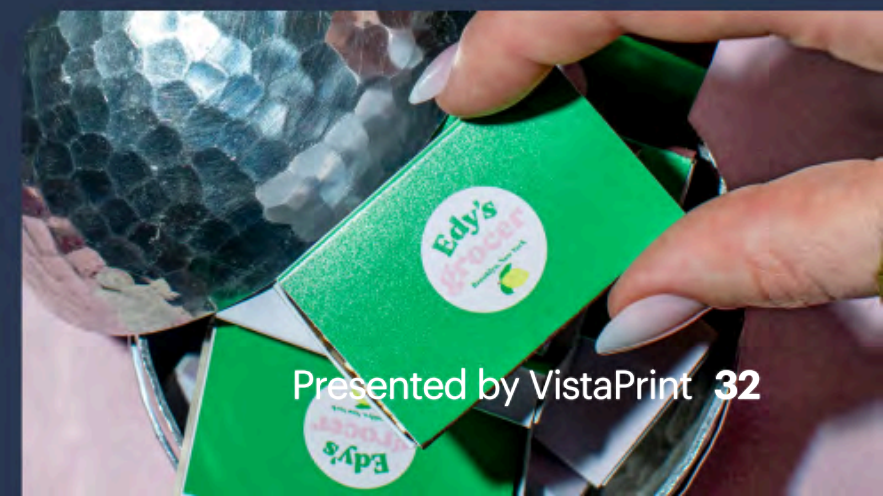
Small business owners are splitting their top growth investments evenly for the year ahead.





"Supporting my team means they support me - we all help each other succeed. I would not be where I am today without my amazing team."

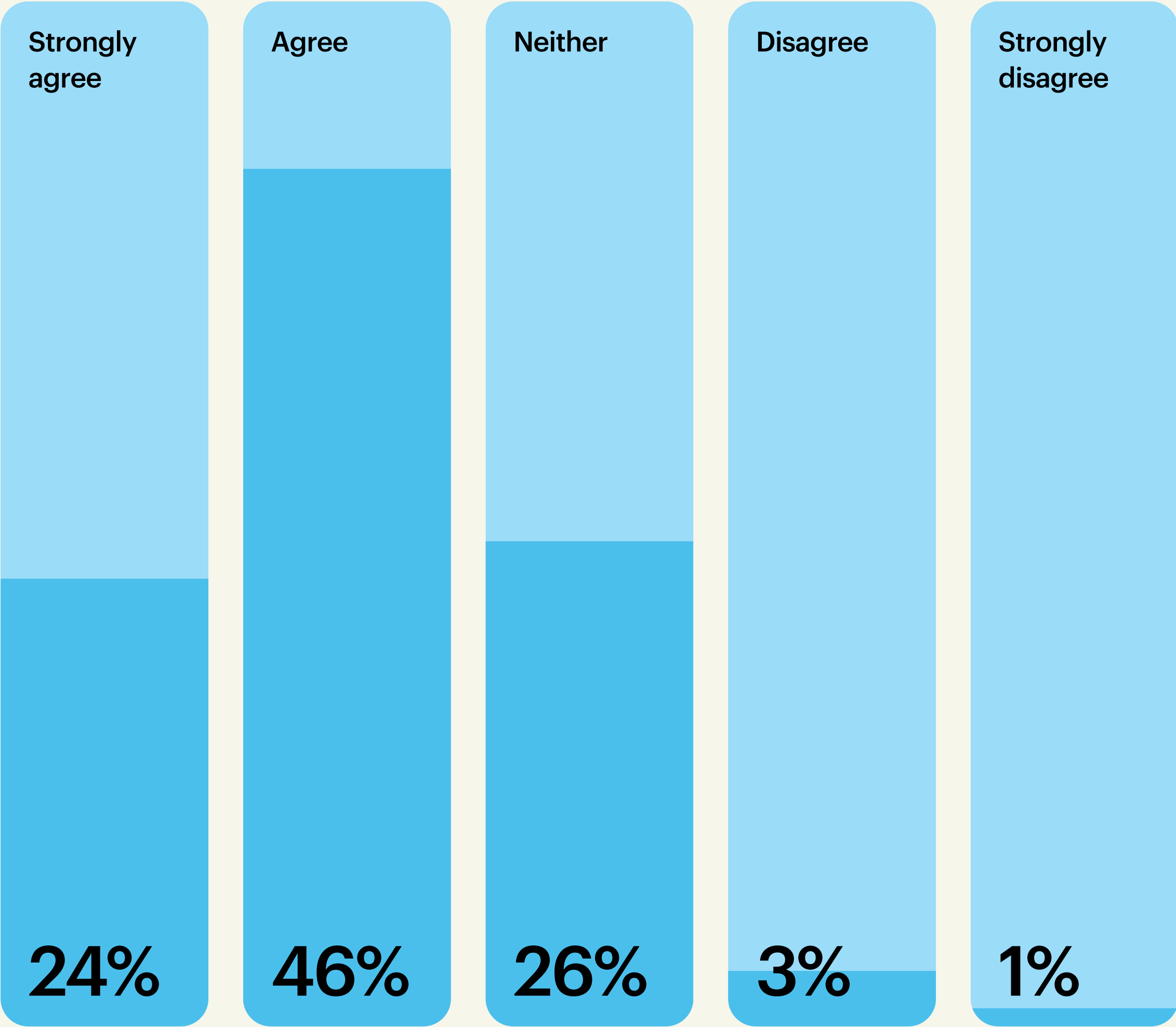
Edy Massih, Edy's Grocer
VistaPrint Ambassador





Is marketing doing its job

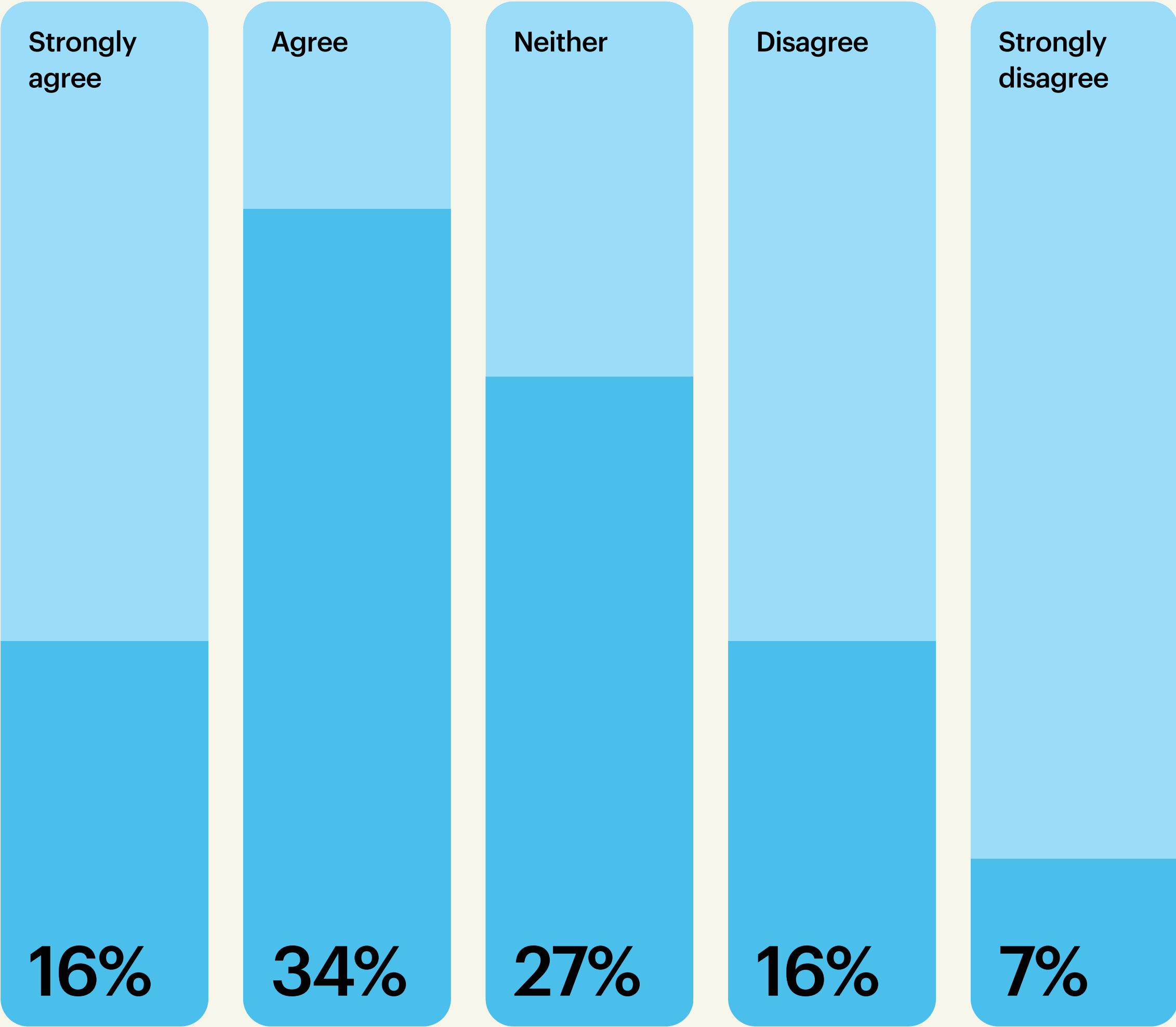
70% of small business owners agree that their marketing connects with customers and reflects the core values of their community.





Resilience in uncertain times

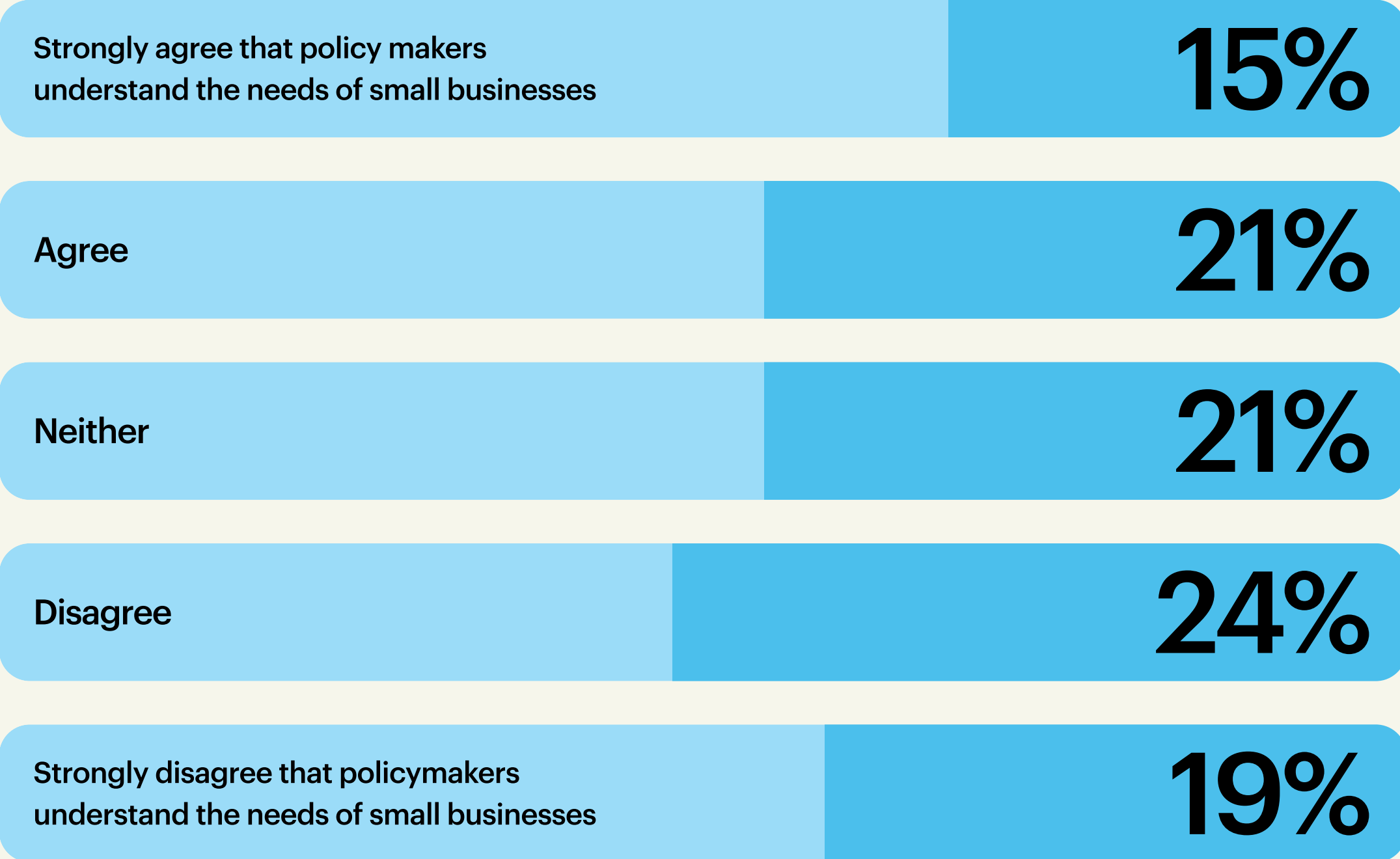
A resilient **50%** of small business owners feel prepared to weather an economic downturn.





Small business confidence in policymakers

43% of small business owners feel like policymakers don't understand the day-to-day responsibilities of running a business.



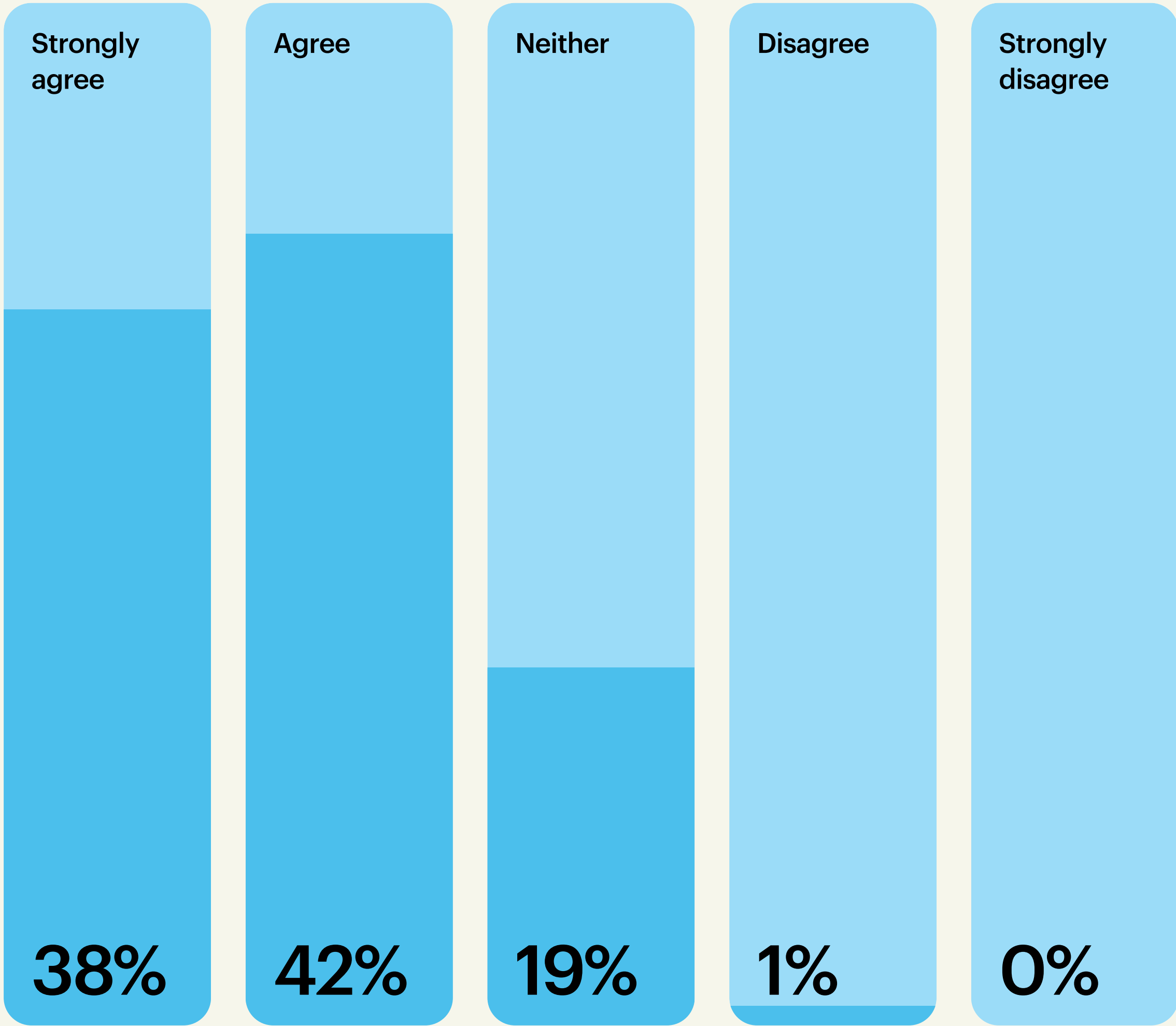


Happiness is shared

80% of small business owners feel that their employees seem happy.



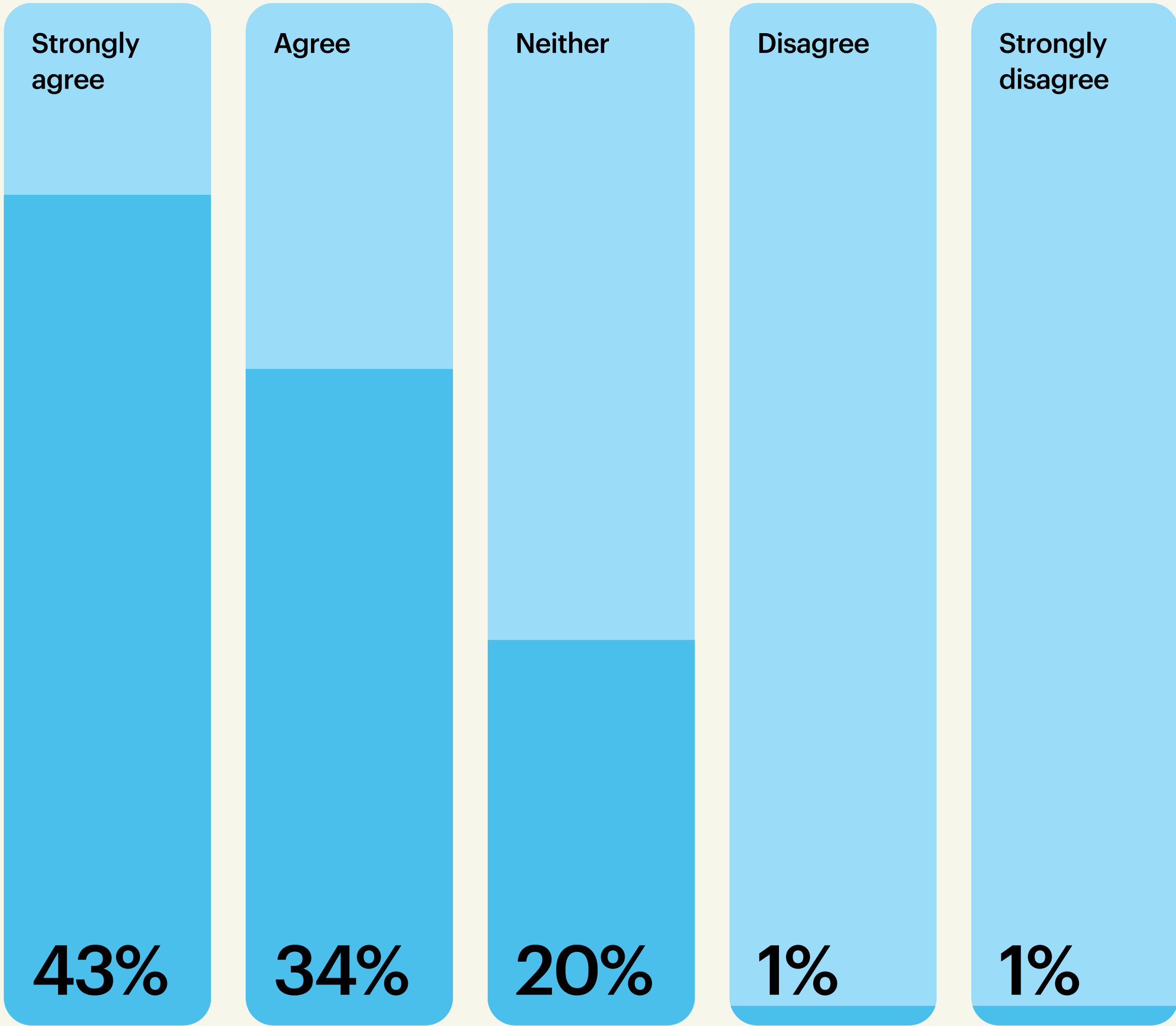
They say happiness is contagious.





Happiness is shared

77% of small business owners enjoy high employee retention.



About the Research

VistaPrint commissioned YouGov to conduct a research study of 610 small business owners aged 21 to 64 and with 100 employees or less, located in the United States. The data was collected between Jan. 20 - Feb. 15, 2026 and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% level of confidence.

About VistaPrint

VistaPrint is the print and design partner to millions of small businesses around the world. We help small business owners bring their ideas to life through custom print products, easy-to-use digital tools and expert design support. VistaPrint is a Cimpres company (Nasdaq: CMPR).



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