



# 2026 Small Business Happiness Report

Presented by  **vistaprint**





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Against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, VistaPrint set out to better understand the current state of small business happiness in Canada.

While 2026 has presented its challenges, the data shows Canadian small business owners haven't stopped pursuing their possible.





“With more than 2.7 million Canadians self-employed, it’s clear that small business ownership is offering people greater control over how they work and build. That’s changing how many are thinking about traditional roles, their careers, and what it means to be happy and feel fulfilled in their work.”

**Dave DeSandre**

Senior Vice President of  
North America at VistaPrint

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



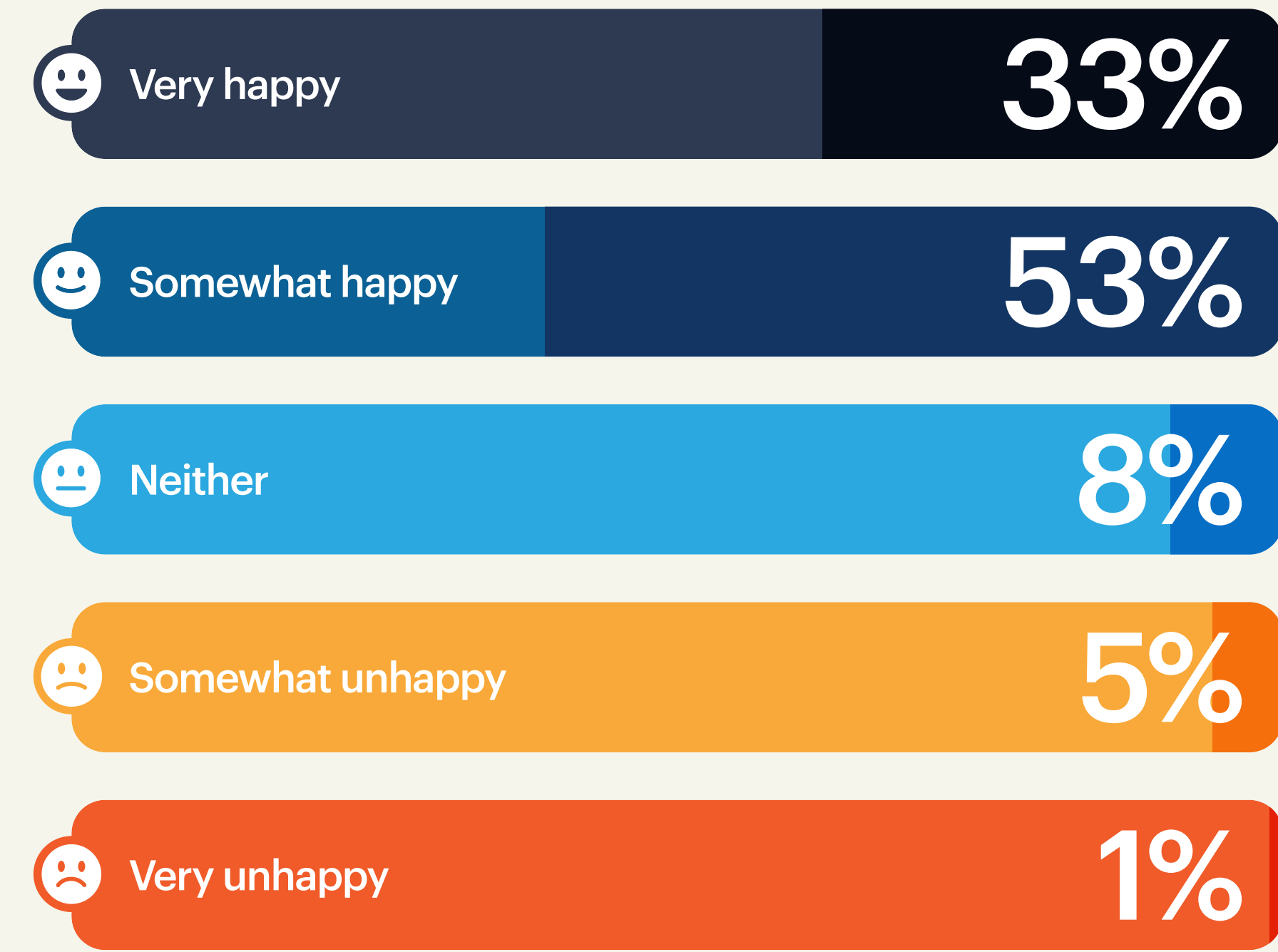
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# At the heart of it

Data tells a story of joy and fulfilment

# Small business happiness today

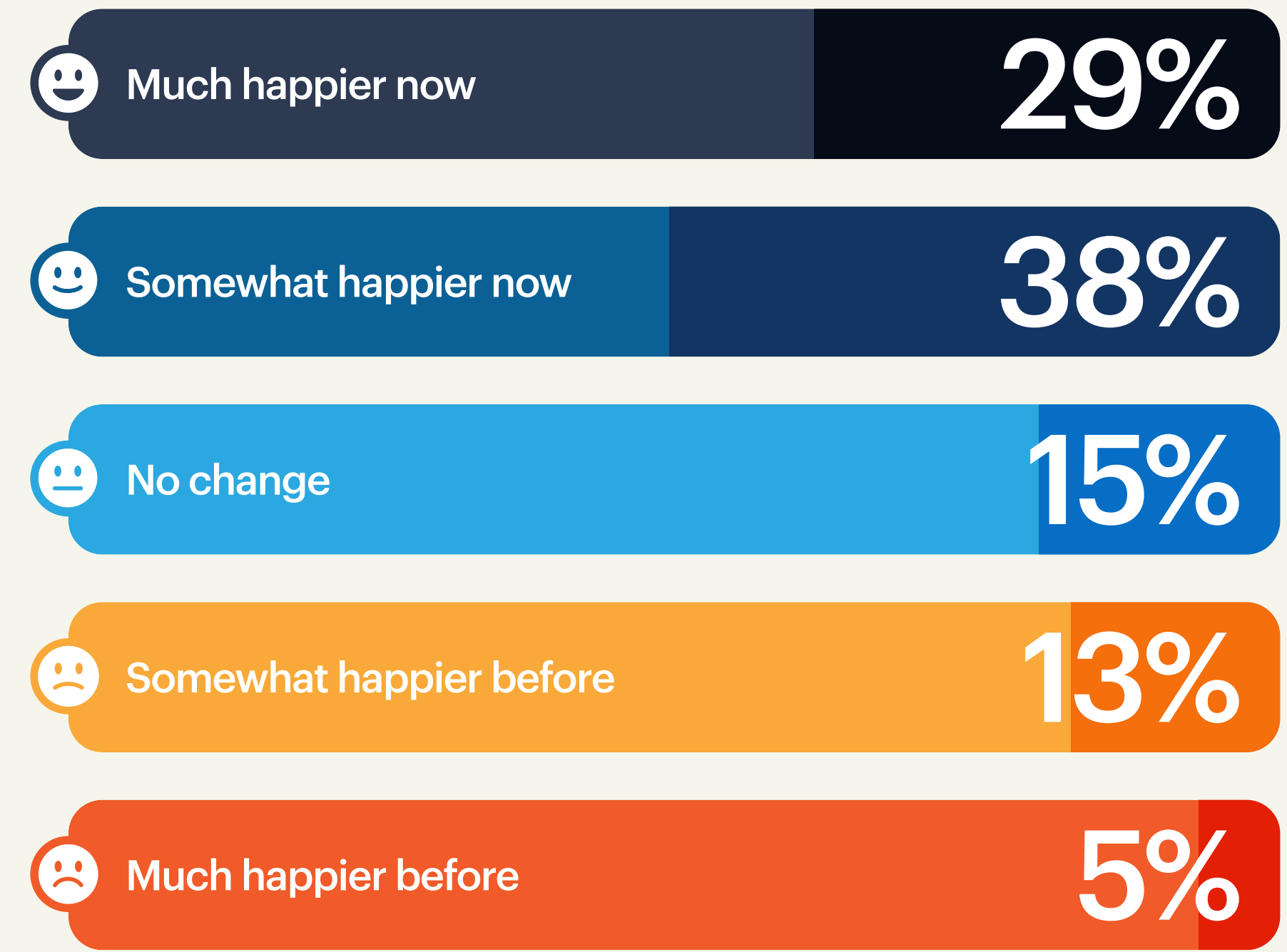
Nearly 90% of small business owners say they're happy today.



Personal fulfillment > the grind

# What tenure has to say about it

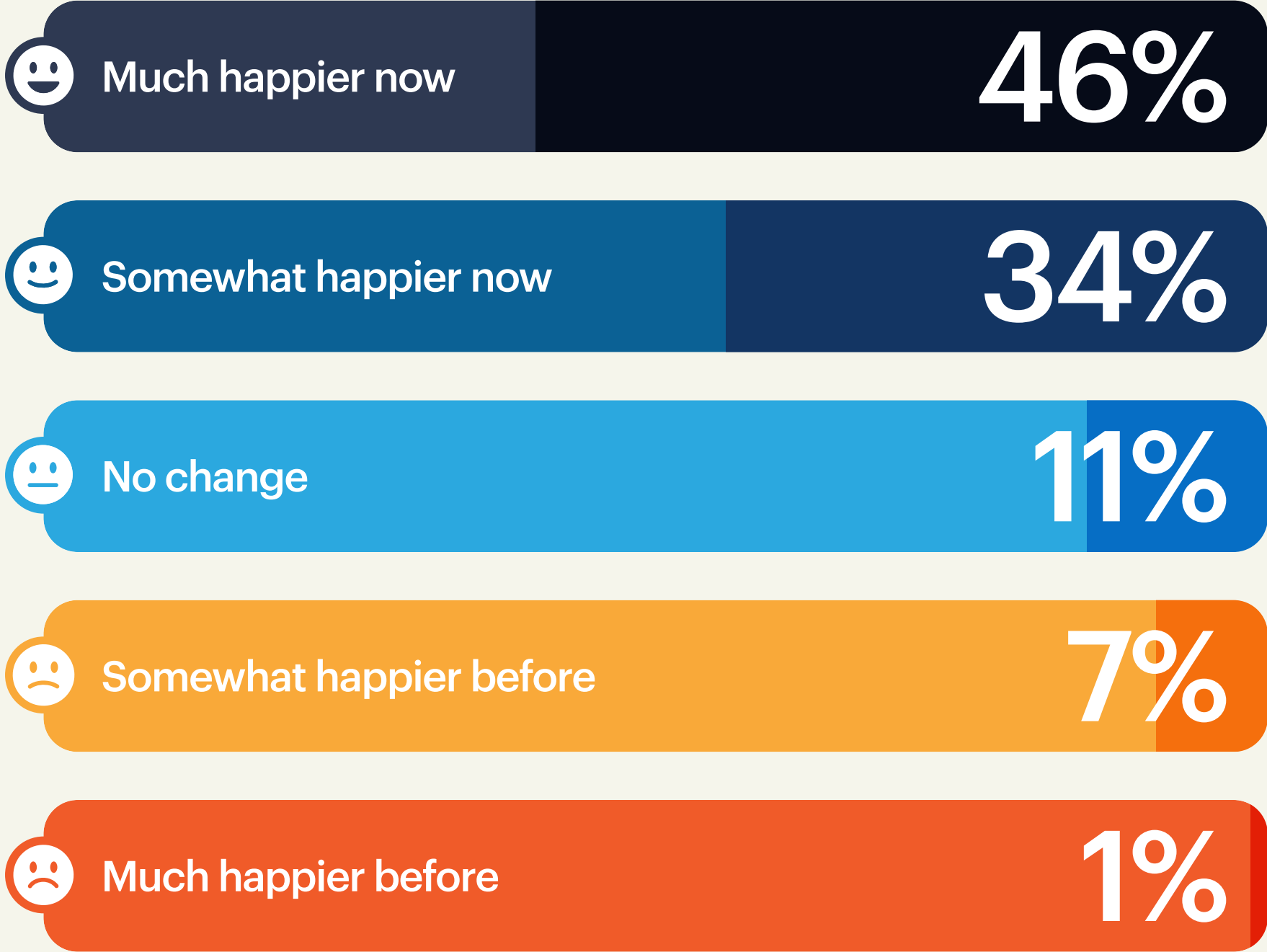
67% of small business owners report that their happiness has increased since they first opened their doors.



The good feelings strengthen over time

# Being your own boss

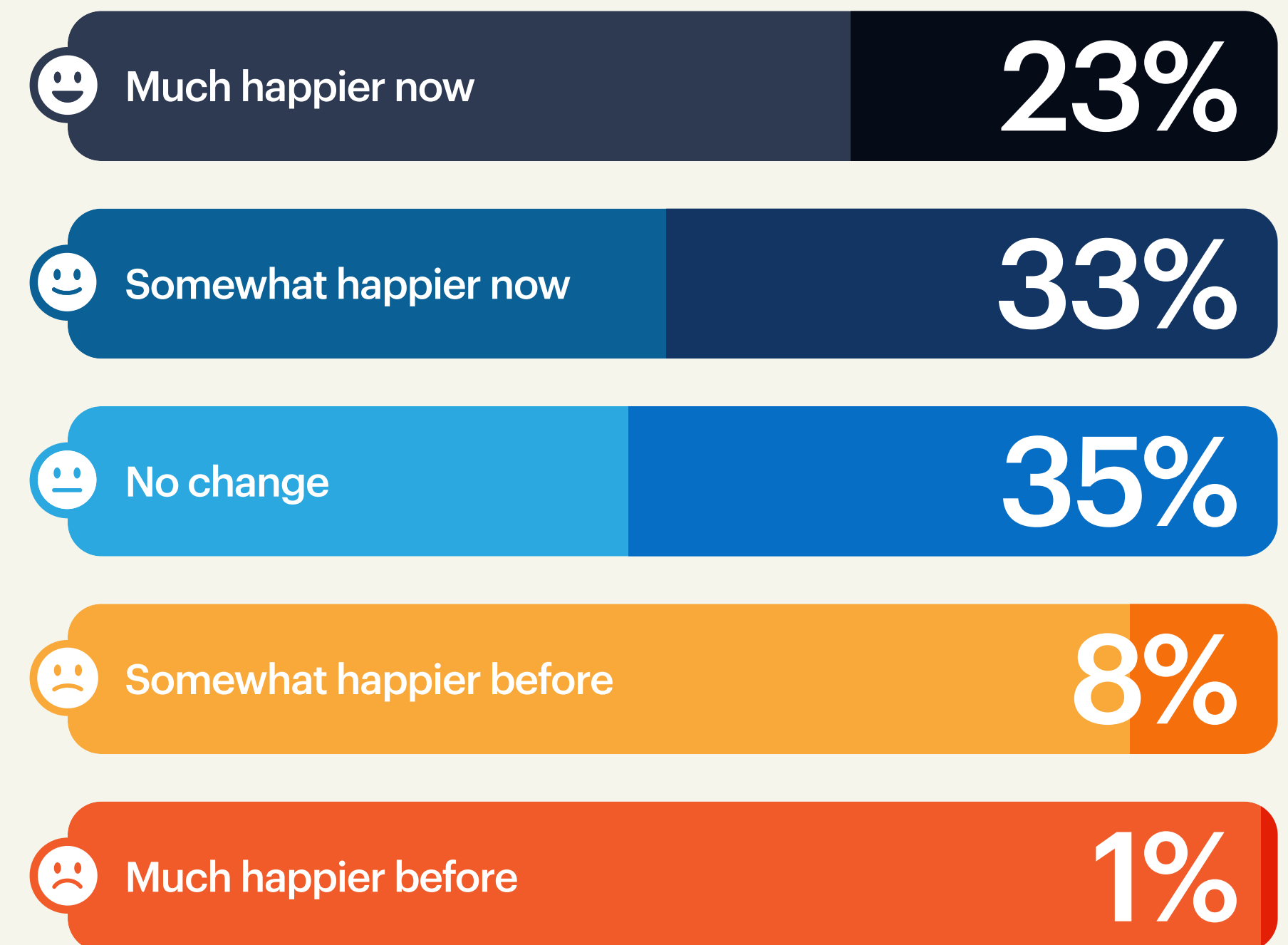
80% of small business owners report being happier now compared to when they worked for someone else.



Being your own boss > a traditional paycheck

# Happiness this year vs. last

Over half (56%) 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

Canadian 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?

**36%** of small business owners with improved happiness credit internal, day-to-day factors alone – the choices they make, the work they love, the business they've built with their own hands.

External or macro influences

**15%**

Internal or micro influences

**36%**

Both

**49%**



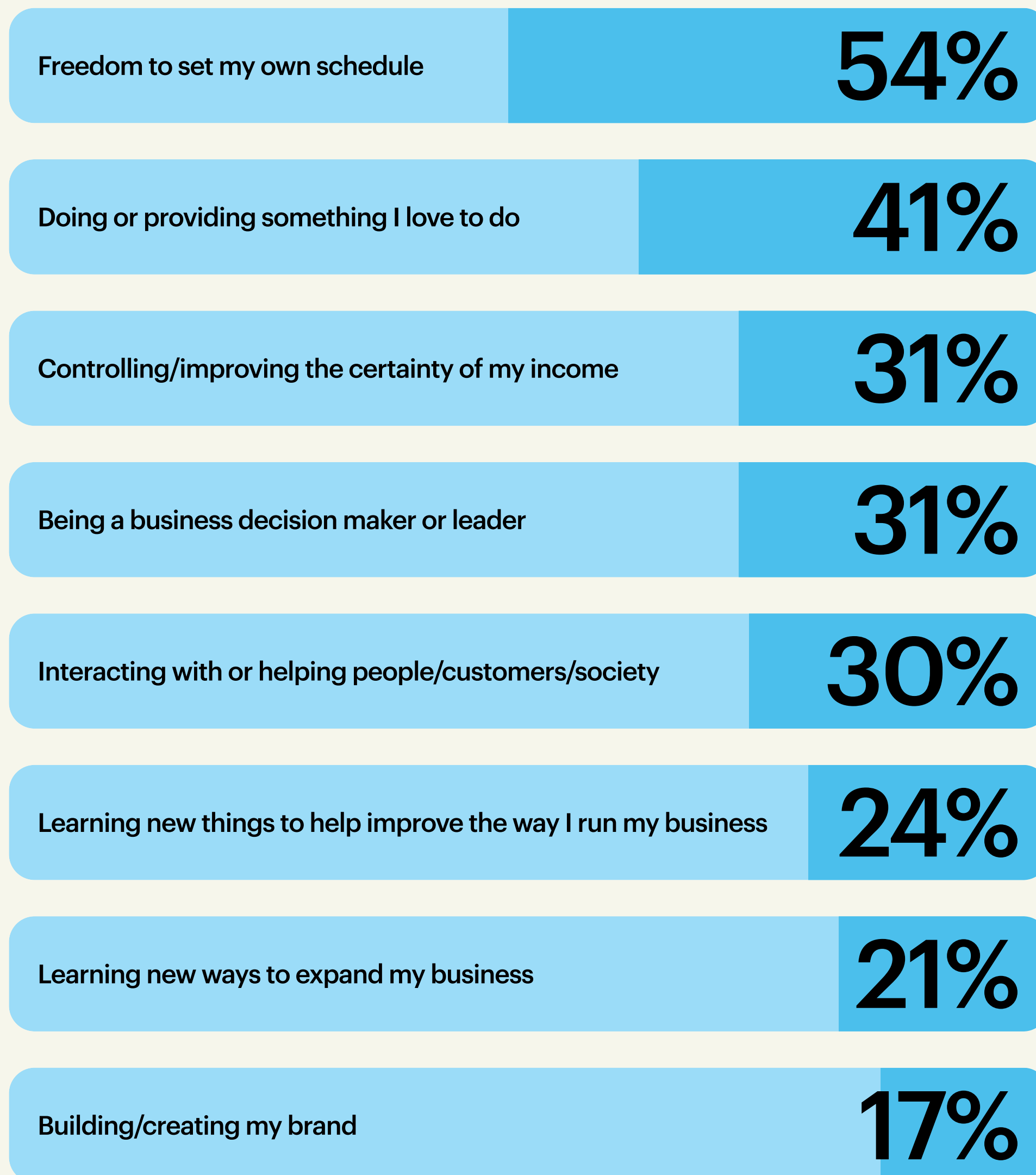
# What small biz owners love about small biz owning

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



The rewards of entrepreneurship are intensely personal

\* Percent ranked as a top three "like."



# 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

\* Percent ranked as a top three "dislike."





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# A closer look

Breaking it down by who, what and where



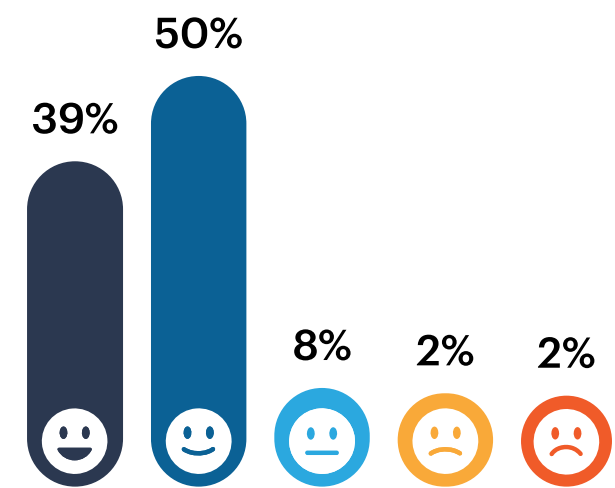
# Happiness by tenure

While the early years can be tough, small business owner happiness peaks to **91%** when in business for 6-10 years.

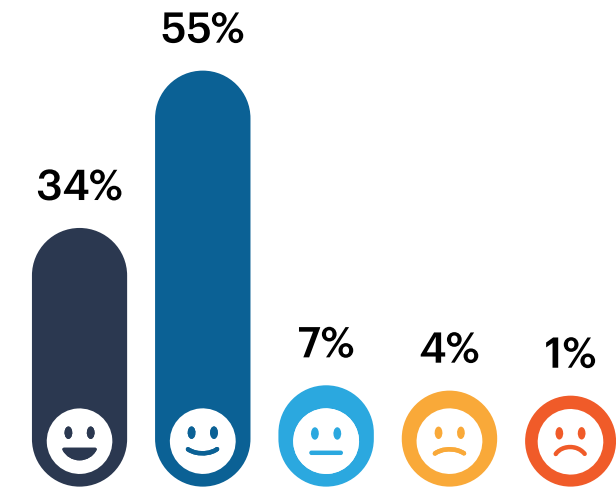


## Happiness by Tenure

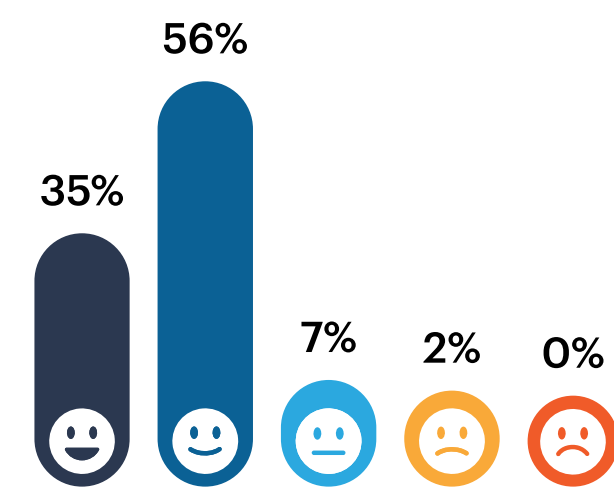
### Less than 3 years



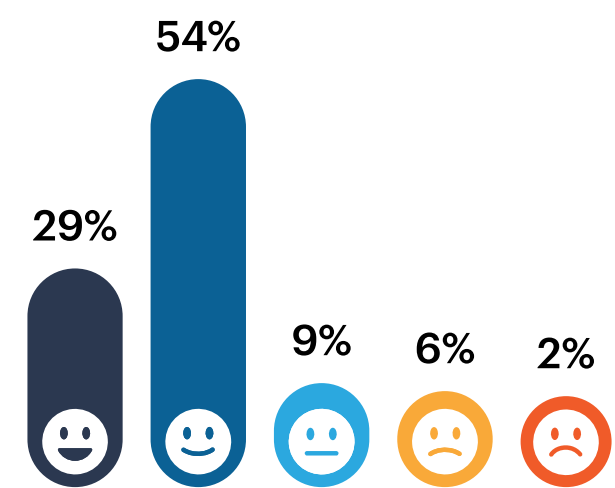
### 3-5 years



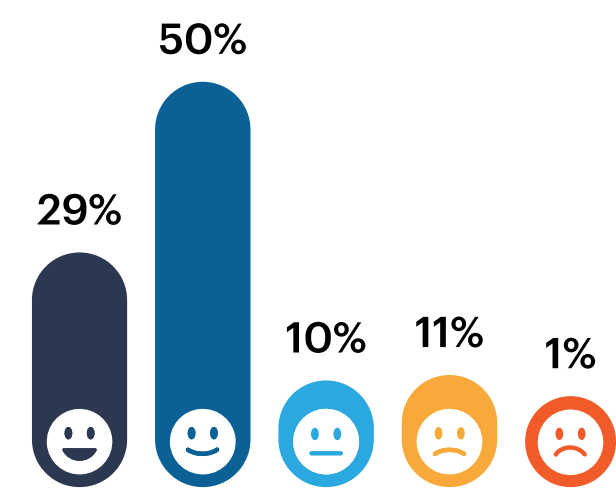
### 6-10 years



### 11-16 years



### 17+ years



**Stick with it!**  
Happiness is often higher after the first 3 years





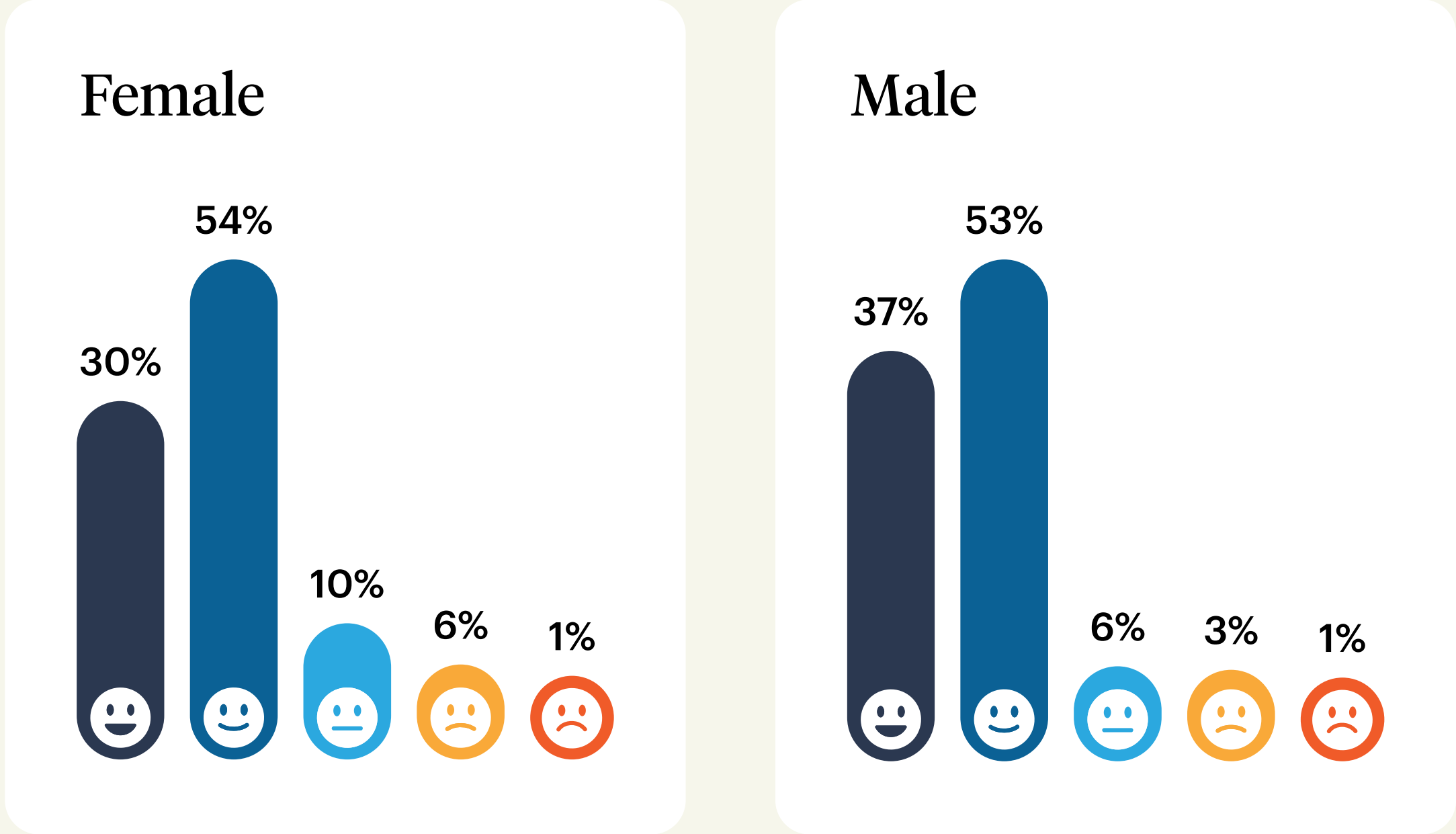
# Happiness by gender

The overwhelming majority of both male (89%) and female (84%) business owners report being happy. AKA, the joys of running a business transcend gender.

*meet Maria, the  
proud owner of  
Aperitivo The Shop*



### Happiness by Gender



Very happy
 Somewhat happy
 Neither
 Somewhat unhappy
 Very unhappy



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

Maria Colalancia, Aperitivo  
VistaPrint Ambassador

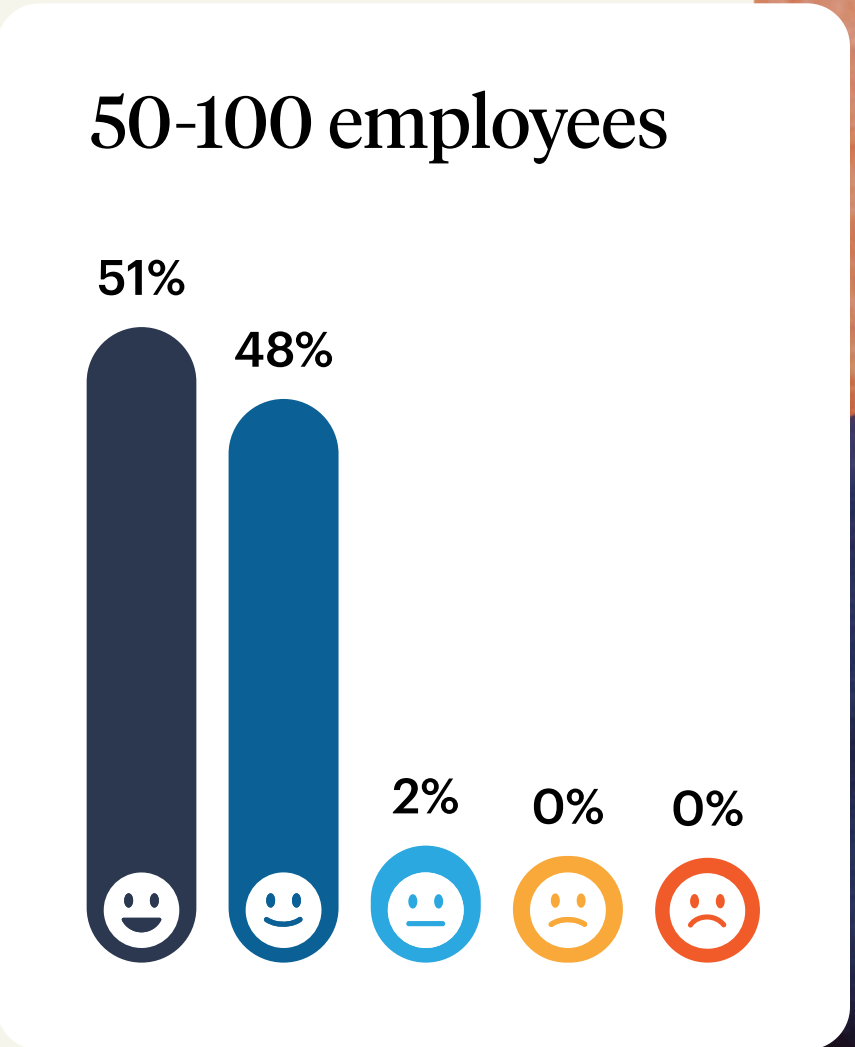
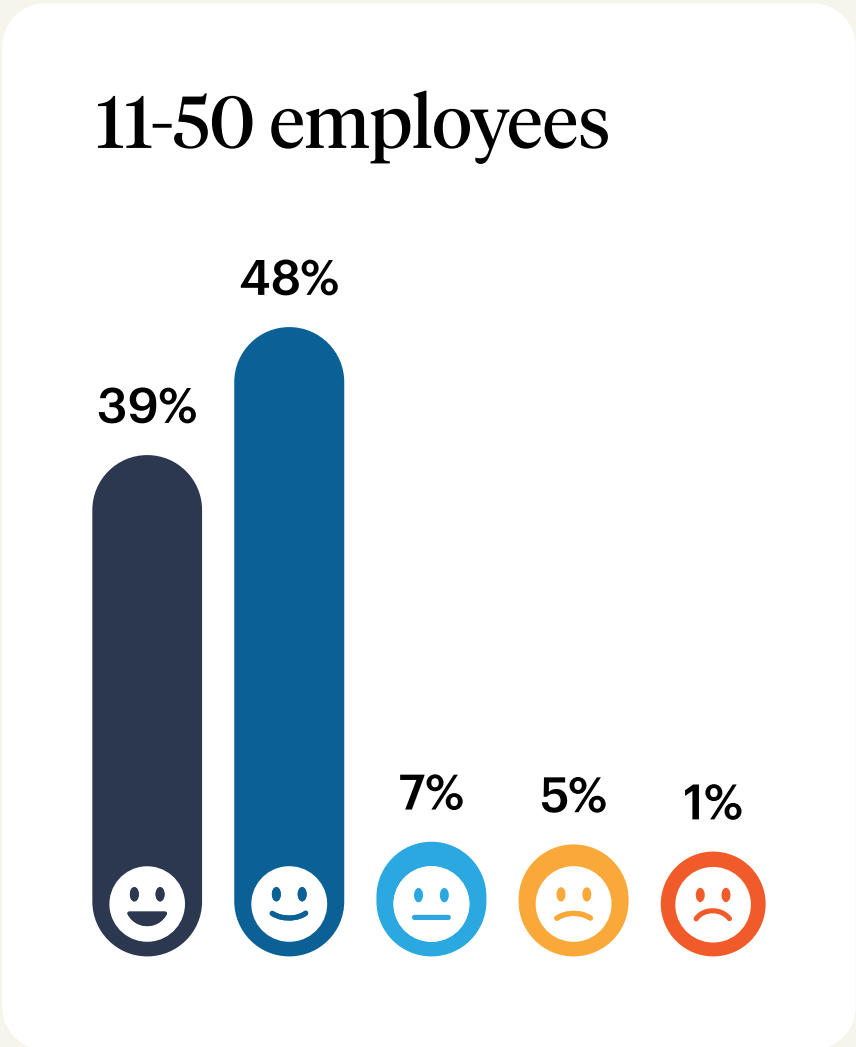
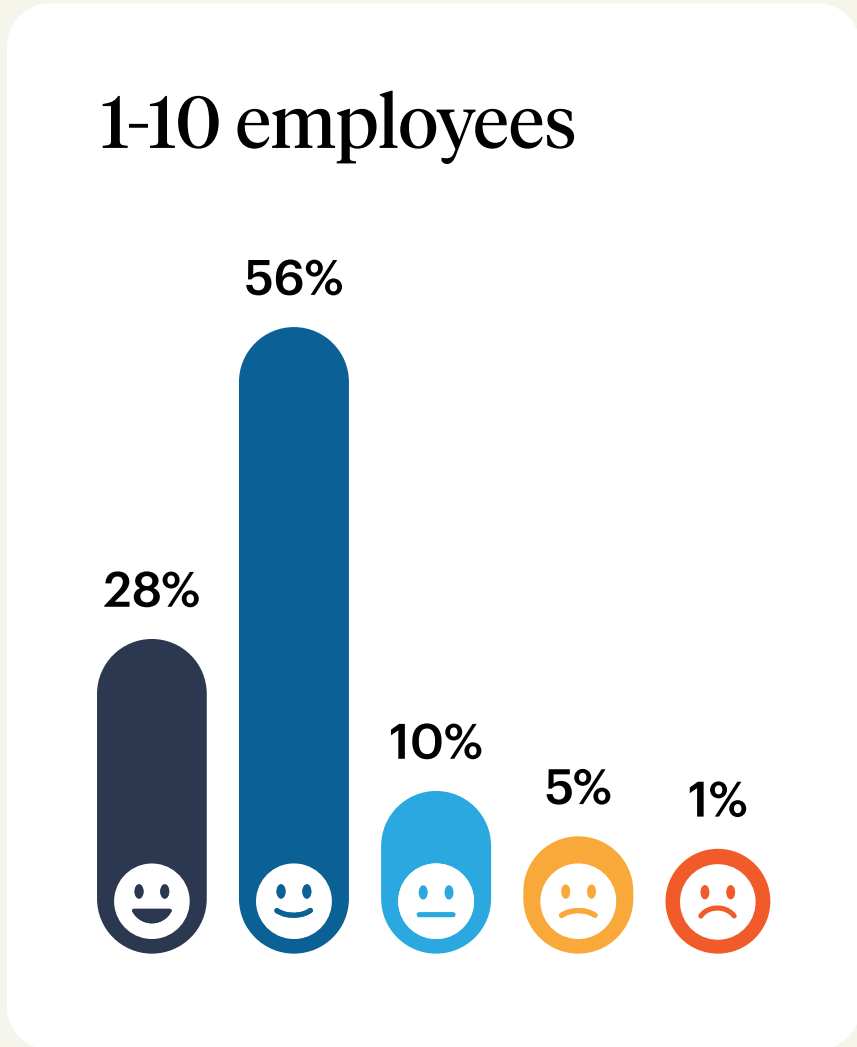


# Happiness by employee size

Small business owners' happiness scales with the size of their teams, with happiness peaking at **99%** among business owners who manage 51 to 100 employees.



# Happiness by Employee Size



😊 Very happy    😊 Somewhat happy    😐 Neither    😞 Somewhat unhappy    😡 Very unhappy



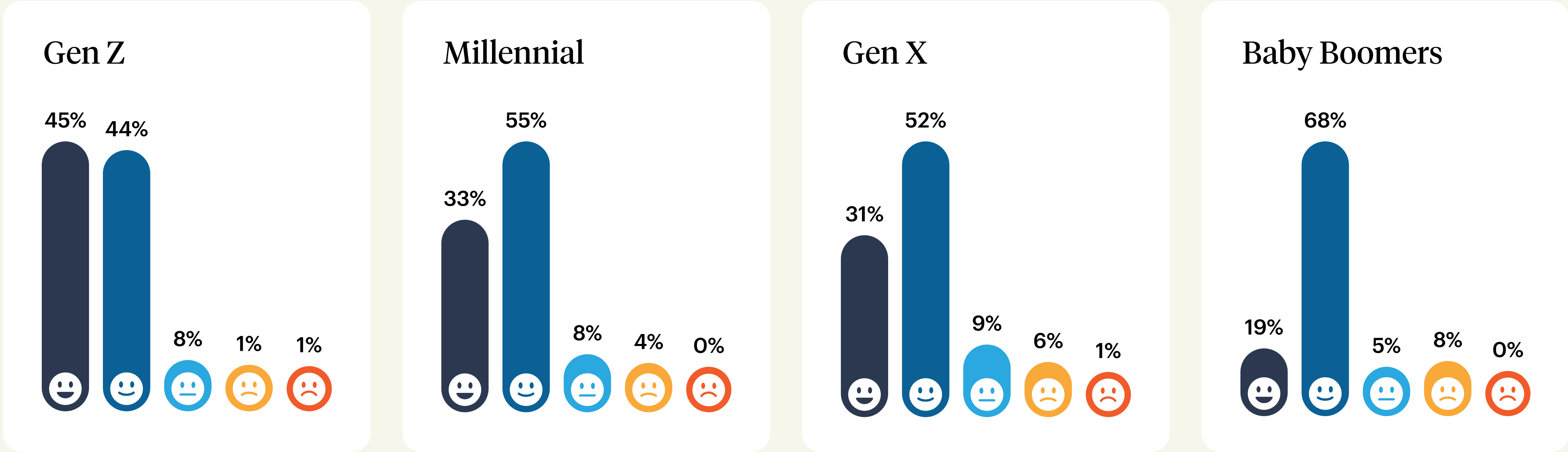


# Happiness by generation

Gen Zers are very happy in running their small business today, much higher compared to Millennials, Gen Xers, and Baby Boomers.



# Happiness by Generation



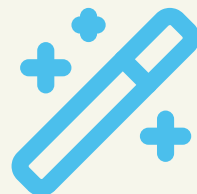
Very happy Somewhat happy Neither Somewhat unhappy Very unhappy



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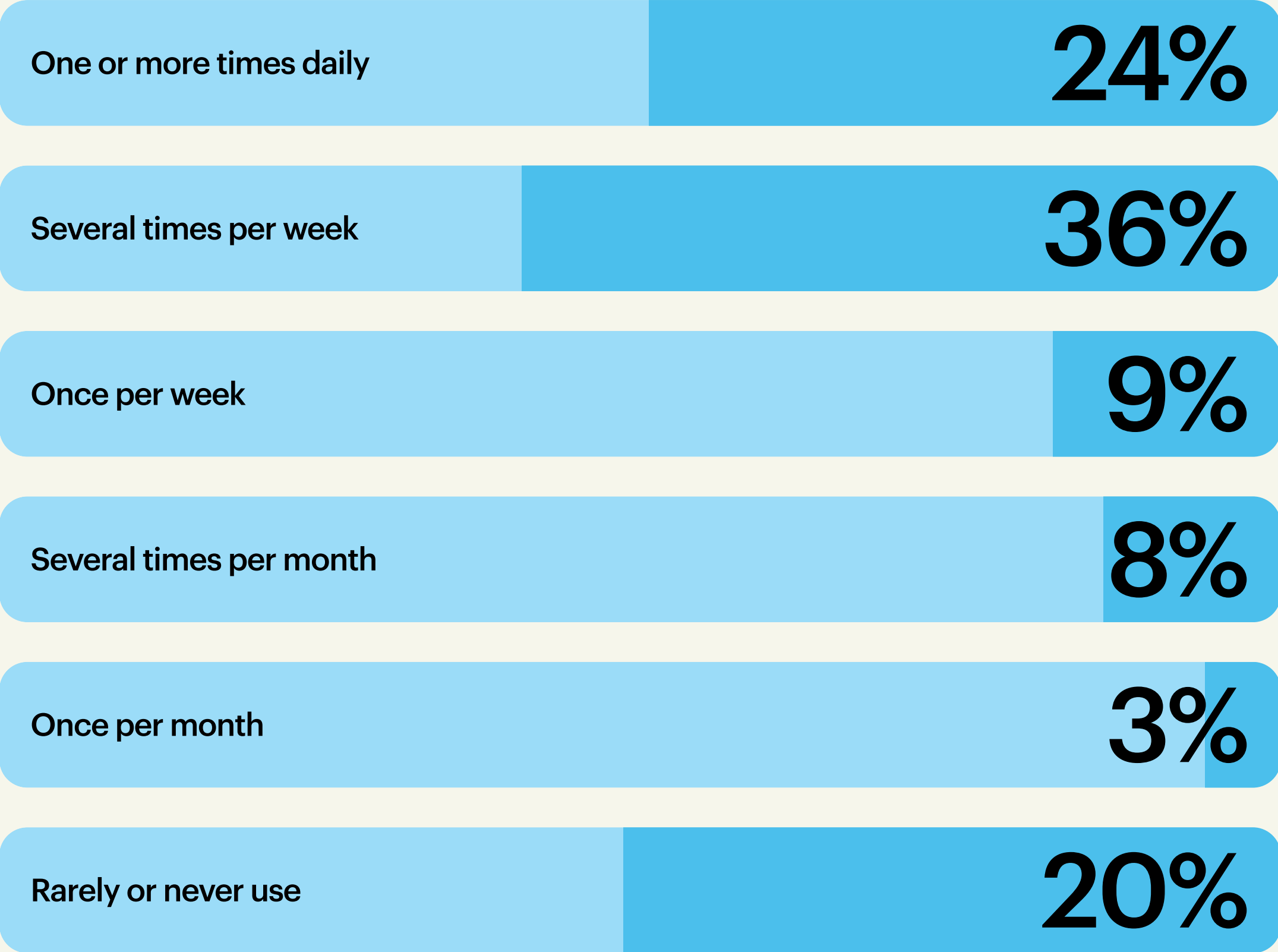
# Full speed ahead

How Canadian small businesses are taking 2026 in stride



# Are small business owners using AI?

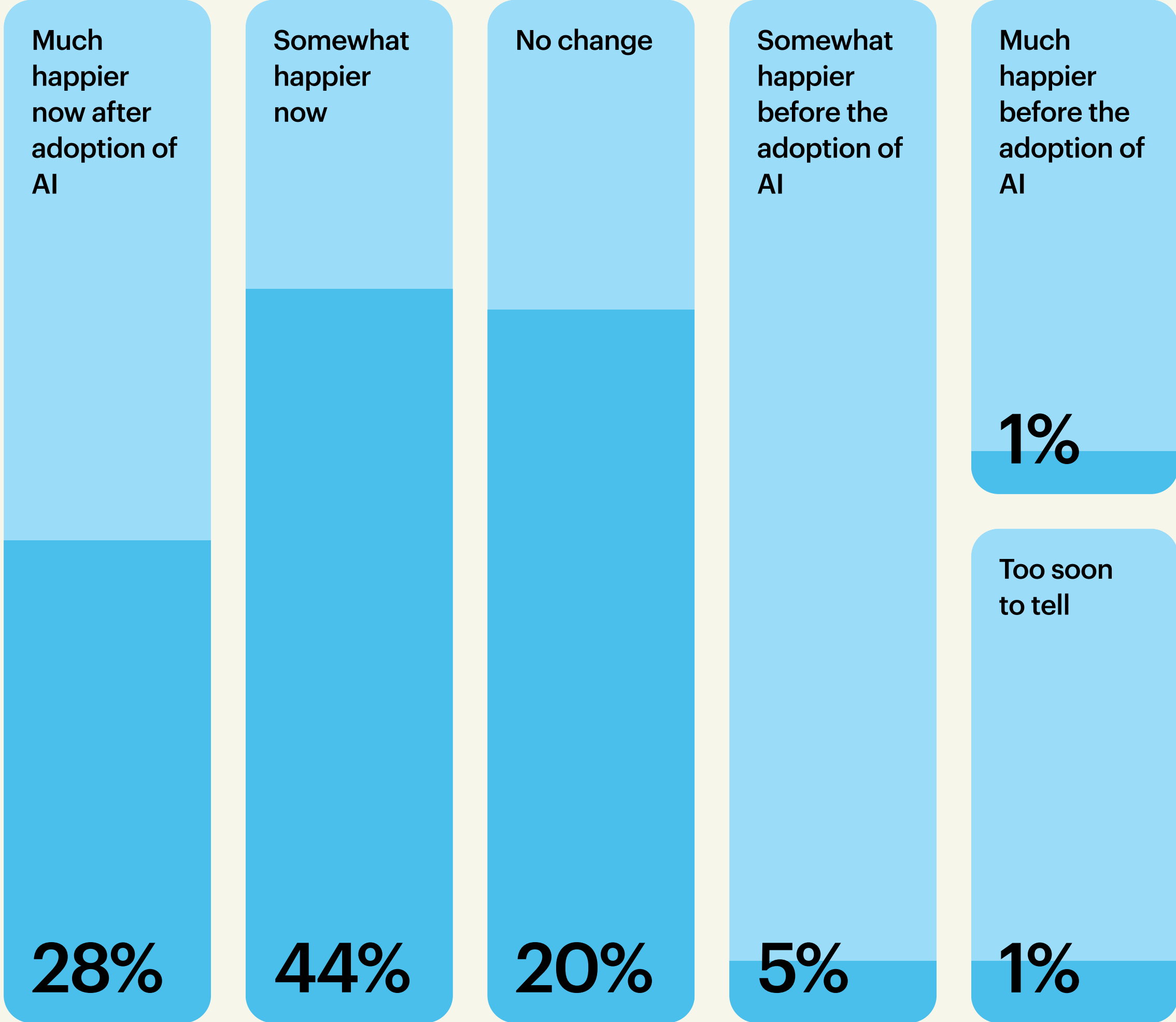
80% of small business owners are using AI on a monthly basis.





# AI is a happiness booster

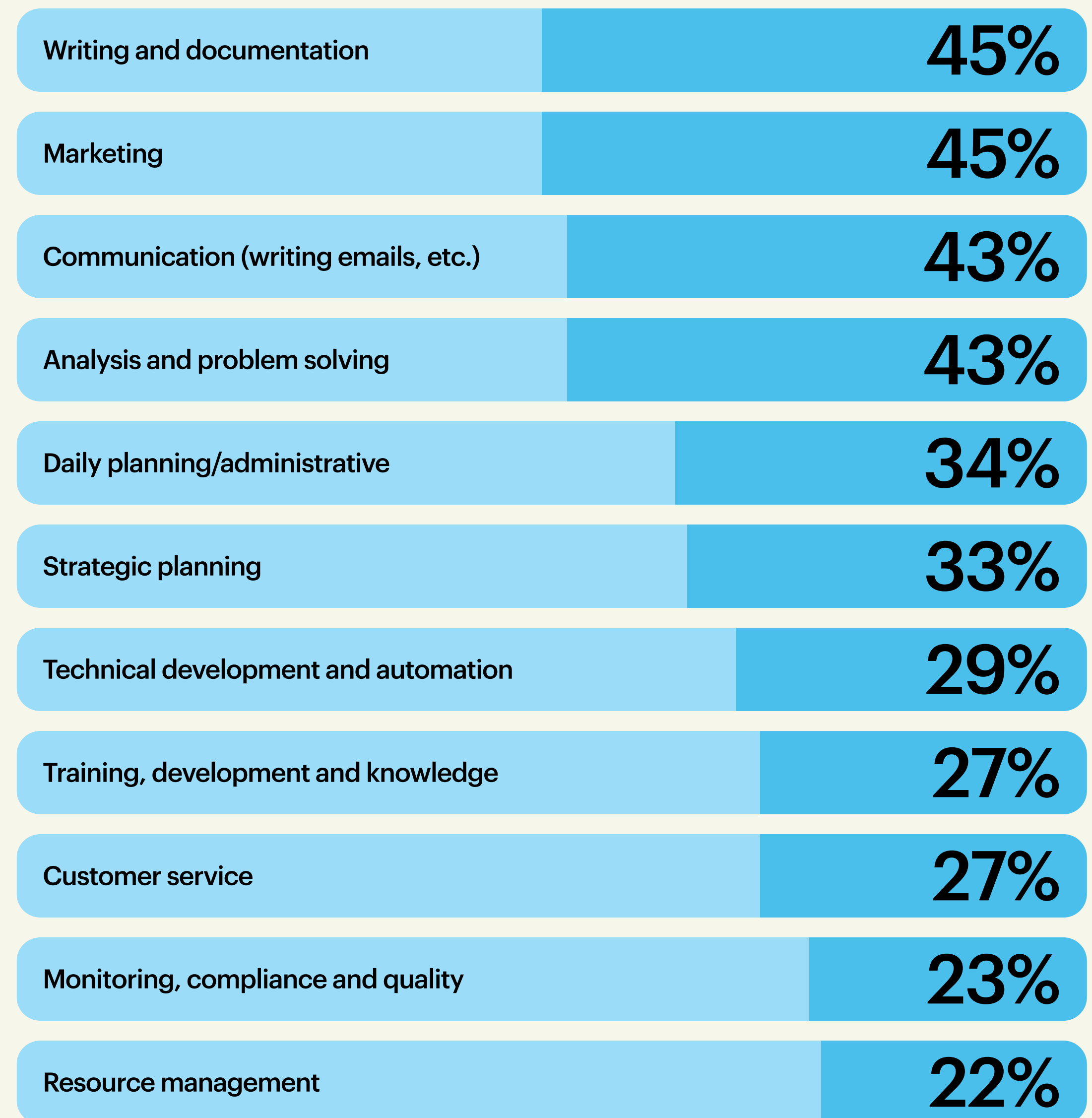
A majority of small business owners say AI is actively making them happier.





# How AI is used as a small biz sidekick

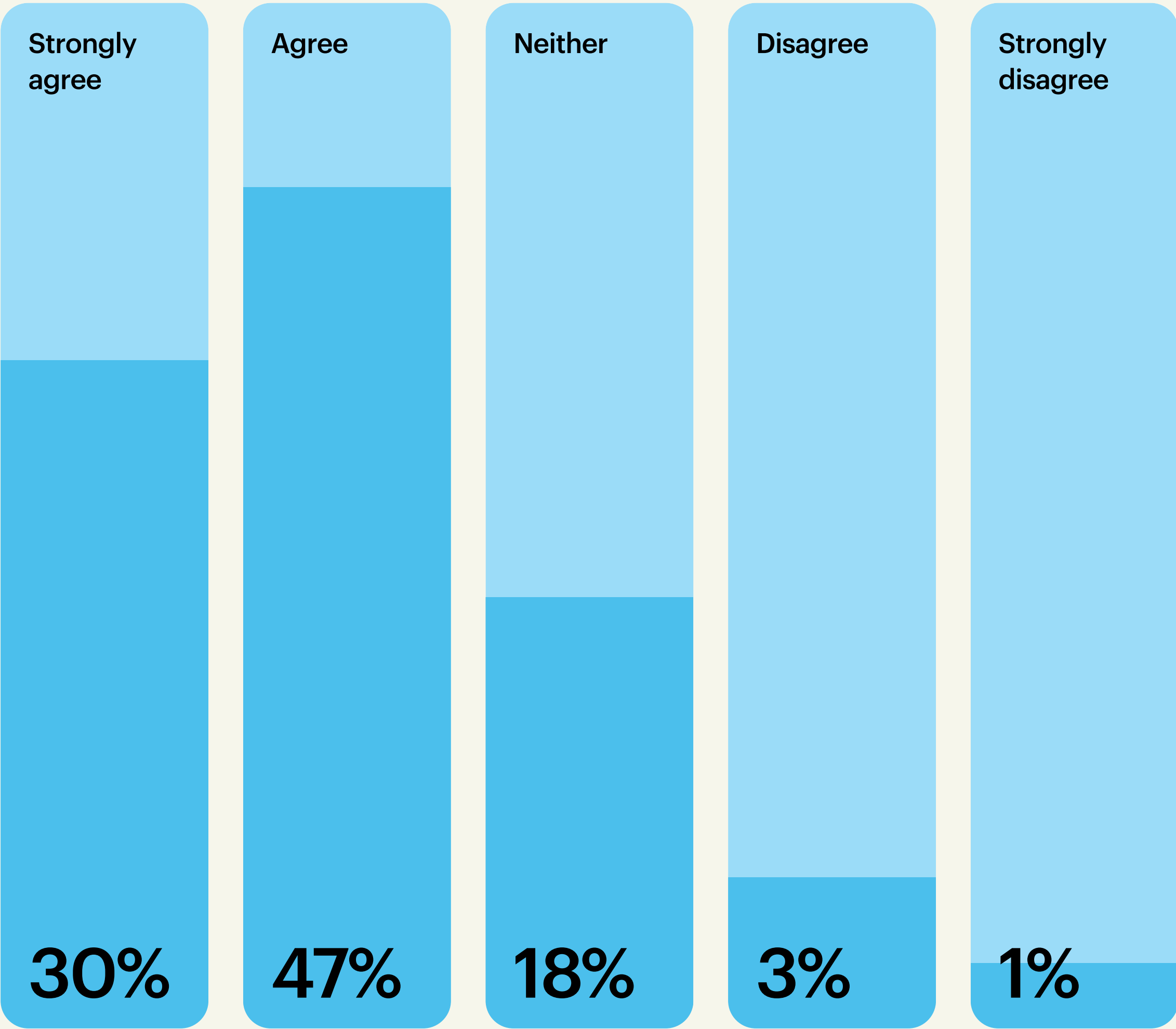
Canadian small business owners show versatility of AI use. This includes marketing, writing/documentation, analysis/problem solving, and communication, which frees valuable time.





# Eyes on the future

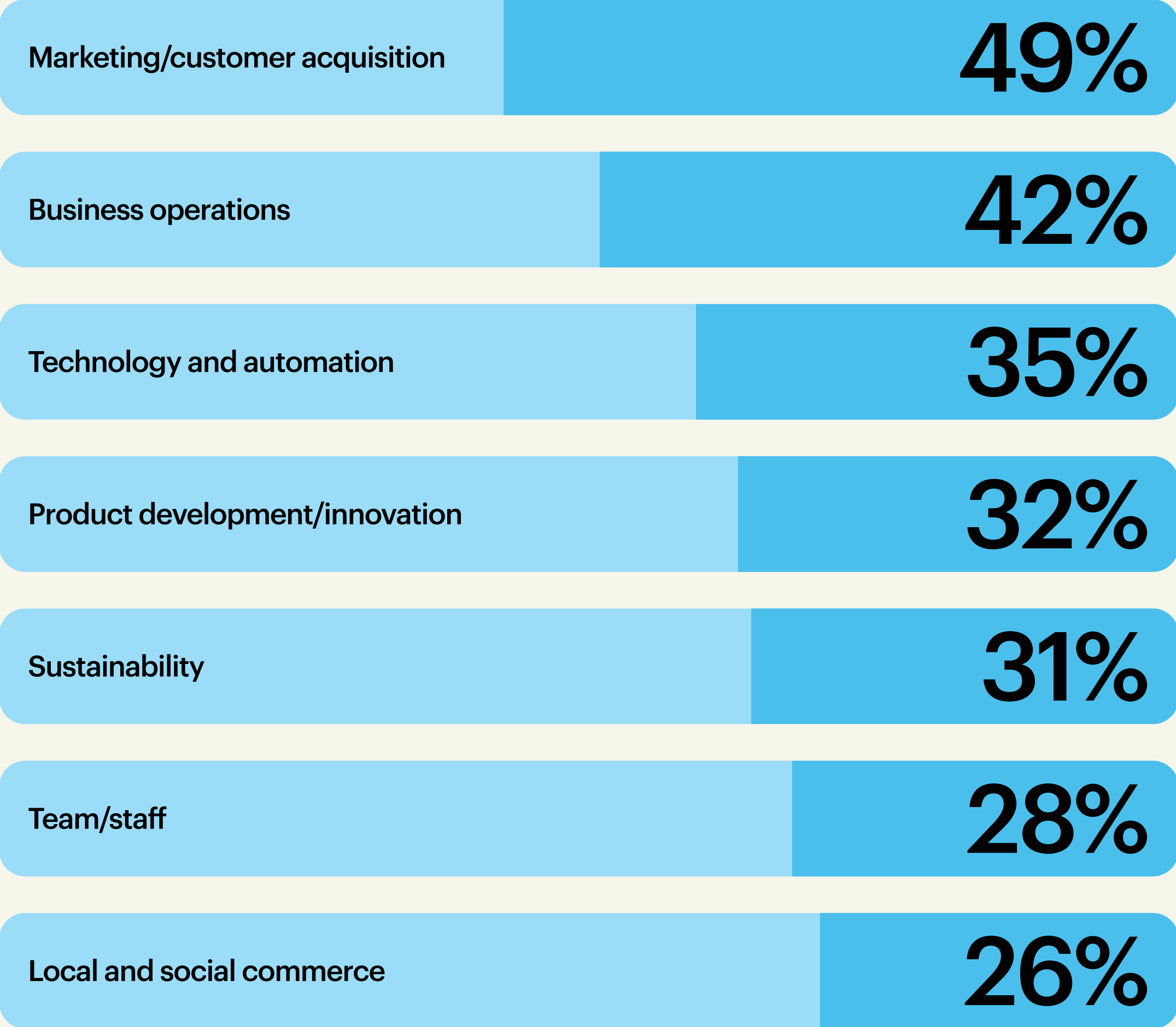
**77%** of SBOs either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I am confident in my ability to grow or expand in the next 12 months.





# Where are small businesses putting their money?

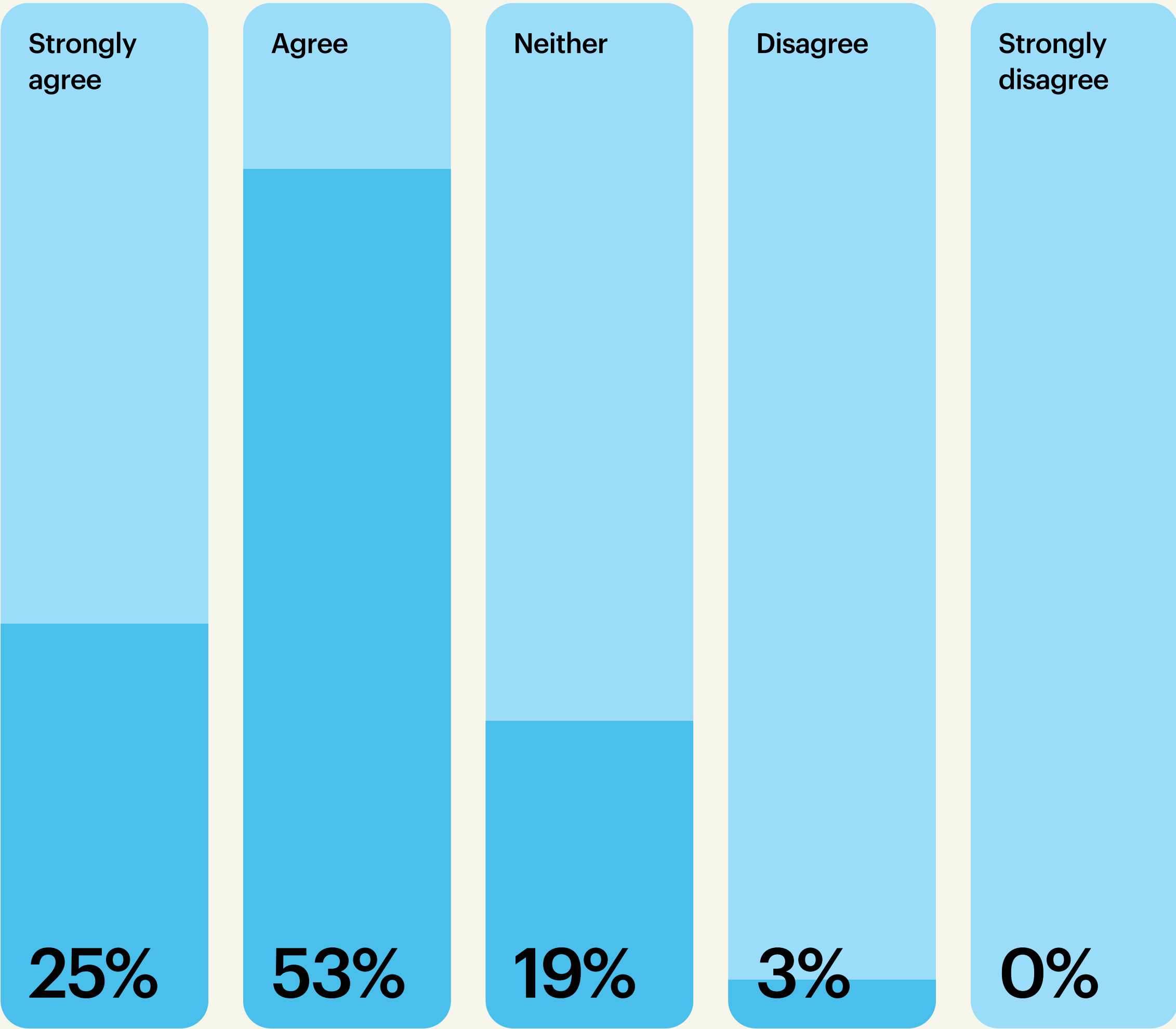
Small business owners are prioritizing marketing and customer acquisition over the next 12 months.





# Is marketing doing its job?

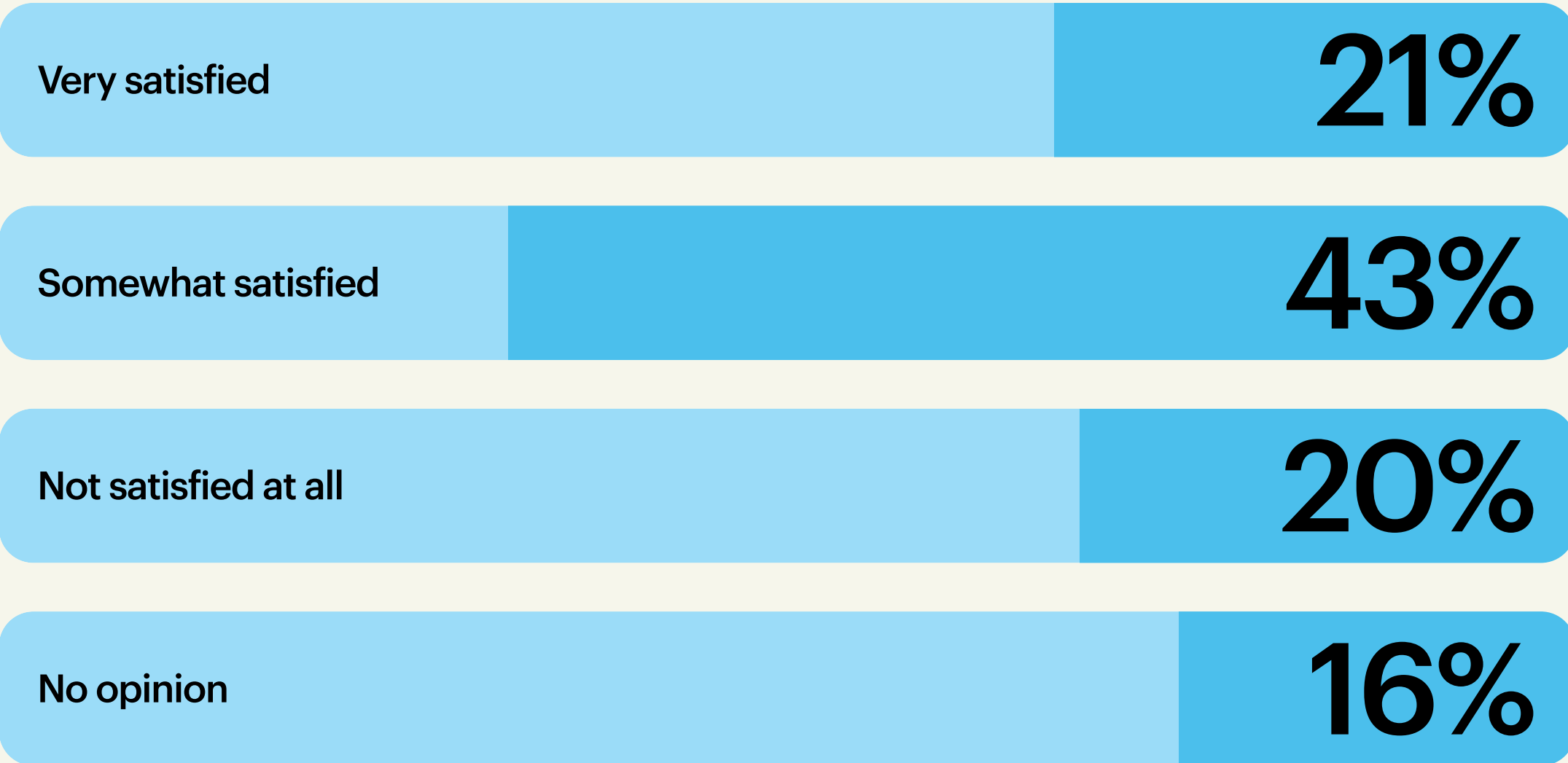
**78%** of small business owners agree that their marketing connects with customers and reflects the core values of their community.





# Confidence in government support

Small business owners have mixed feelings about government programs and support for small businesses in Canada.





"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

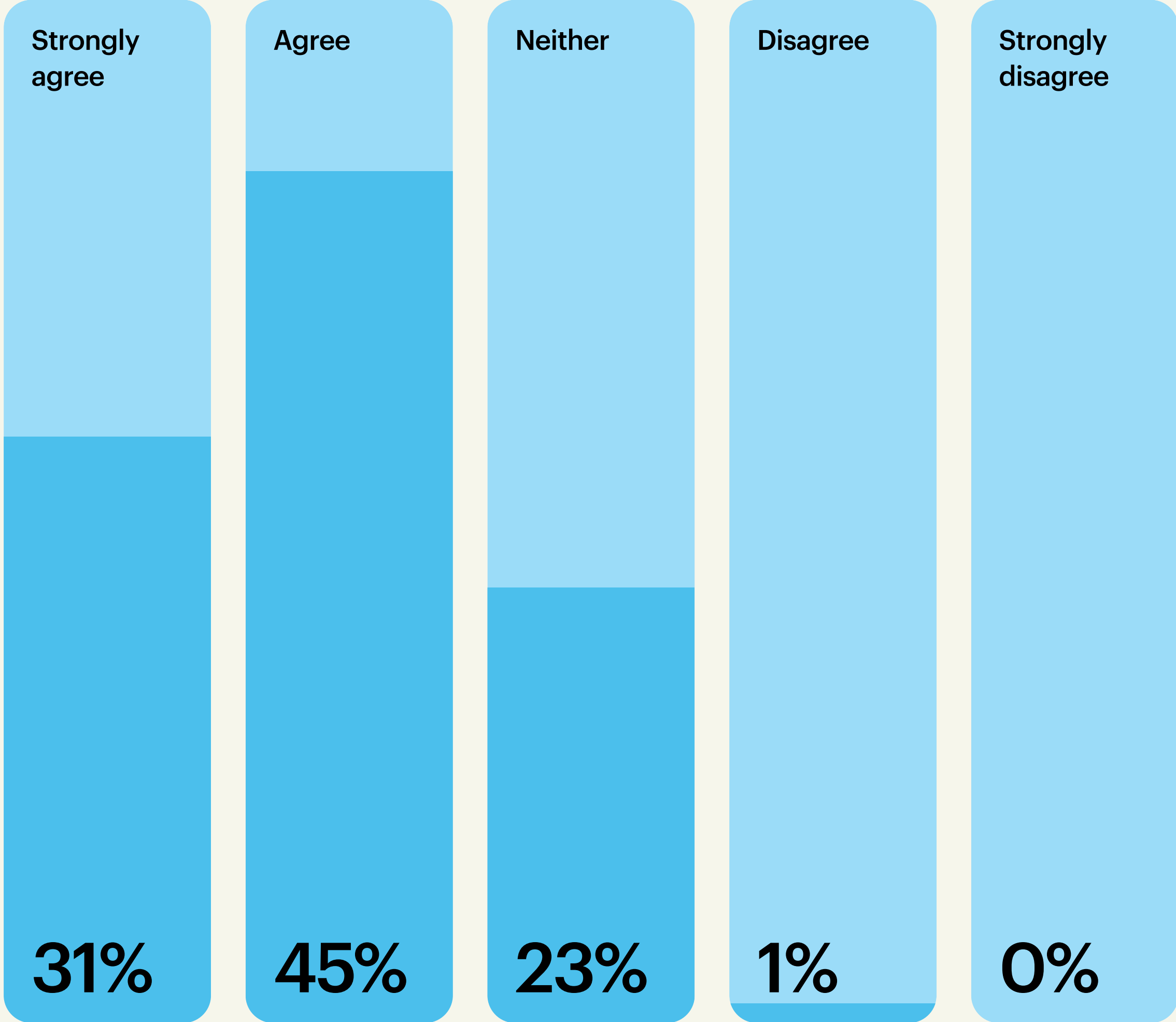


# Happiness is shared

76% small business owners feel that their employees seem happy.



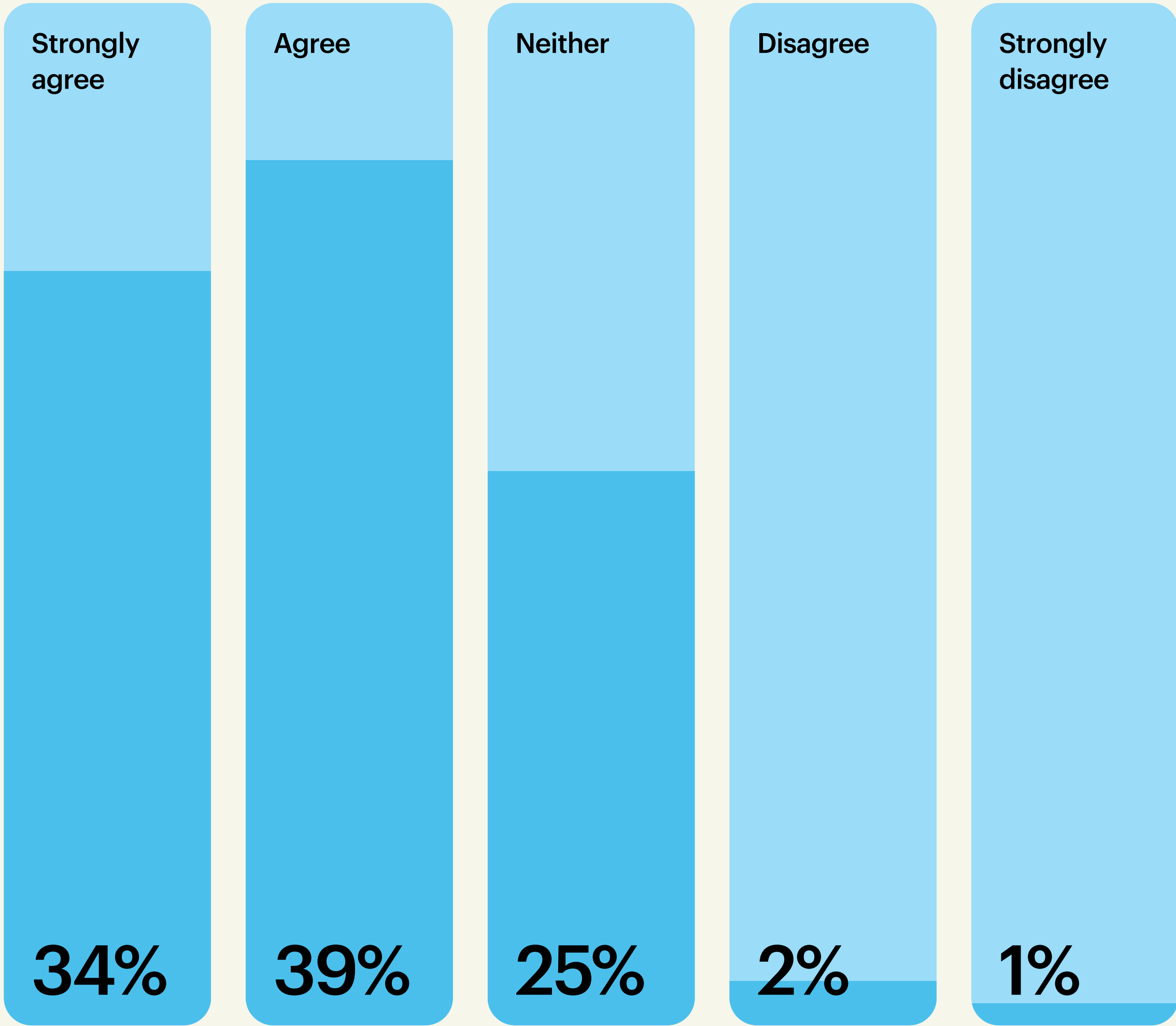
They say happiness is contagious within the business





# Happiness is shared

**73%** of small business owners enjoy high employee retention.



# Small business owners are happy

Not in spite of the hard parts, but right alongside them. They value freedom over security, fulfilment over ease and they're more optimistic than the headlines suggest. That's worth knowing as we celebrate small businesses everywhere.

**VistaPrint.**

**Print Your Possible.**



### About the Research

VistaPrint commissioned YouGov to conduct a research study of 644 small business owners aged 21 to 64 and with 100 employees or less, located in Canada. The data was collected between Feb. 7, 2026 – Mar 3, 2026 and has a margin of error of 4% 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).



 **vistaprint**

Print *your* Possible