2026 Edelman Trust Barometer

Special Report:
Trust at Work

Edelman
Trust Institute

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

METHODOLOGY

Online survey of employees in its 5th edition

Fieldwork conducted: Aug 14 – Aug 31, 2026

10
Countries

10,018
Respondents

1,000+/-
Respondents per country*

- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Germany
- India
- Japan
- S. Africa
- UAE
- UK
- U.S.

*Data collected is representative of employees across age, gender, and region within each country**. We defined the employee population as anyone who is employed full- or part-time, regardless if they are self employed or work for an organization. The data shown in this report is a subset of the sample collected, containing only those that are employed by an organization.*

*The sample size varies by country, from 1,000 to 1,006.

**Data also representative across nationality in UAE, and race/ethnicity in the UK and U.S.

Margin of error for full employee population 10-market global average: +/- 1.3 percentage points.
Margin of error for full employee population country averages: +/- 4.1 percentage points (varies by country).
Margin of error is calculated at the 99% confidence level.

Global averages

Unless otherwise indicated, global averages are composed of all 10 countries surveyed.

Statistical significance

Significant change

Indicates a statistically meaningful difference or change in the data that is unlikely to be due to chance or a random fluctuation.

All indicated year-over-year significant changes were determined using a t-test set at a 99%+ confidence level.

Job Levels

Associates (34%)
Entry level and experienced non-manager
Mid-Level (49%)
Associate manager to senior VP
Executives (13%)
Executive director to CEO

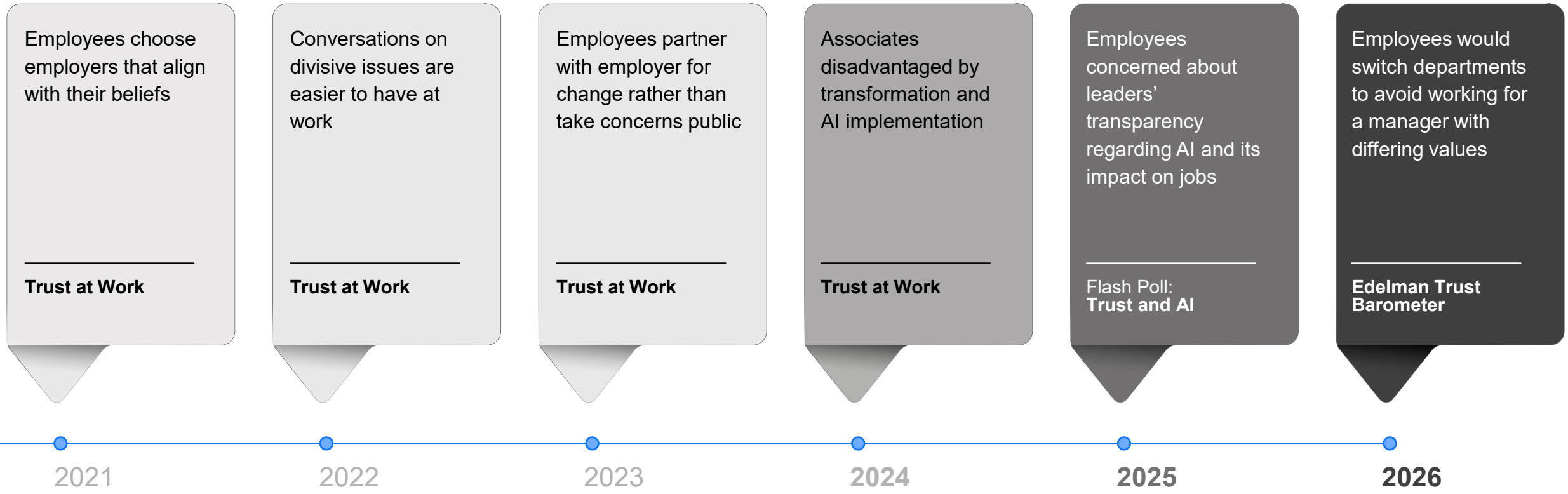
Shortened question text

Throughout the report, question text has been edited for readability.

For more details on the margin of error, global averages, country-specific sample information, questions asked to partial sample, or to see the full text for any shortened statements, please see the Technical Appendix.

All contents in this report are the property of the Edelman Trust Institute.

Since 2021, the Workplace Becomes Destabilized



While Employer Trust Falters, Transformation is Everywhere

Destabilizing Trust: Employer Trust Drops in Last Two Years

Percent of employees who say

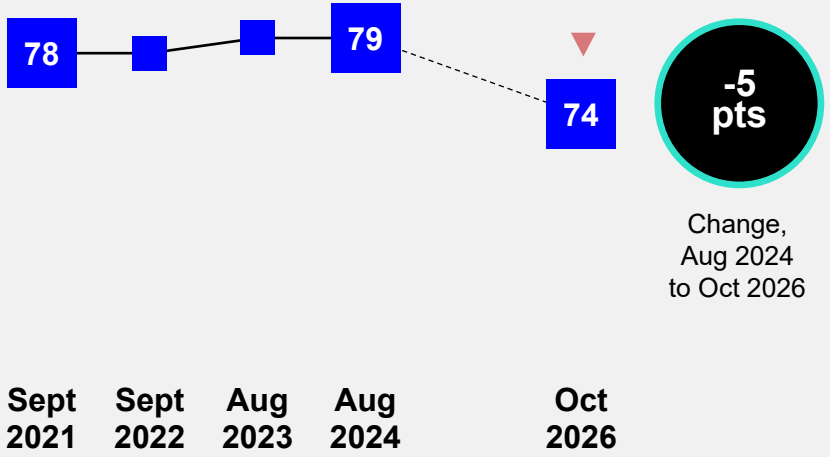
GLOBAL 7

Distrust (1-49) | Neutral (50-59) | Trust (60-100)

Significant change

All-time highs and lows

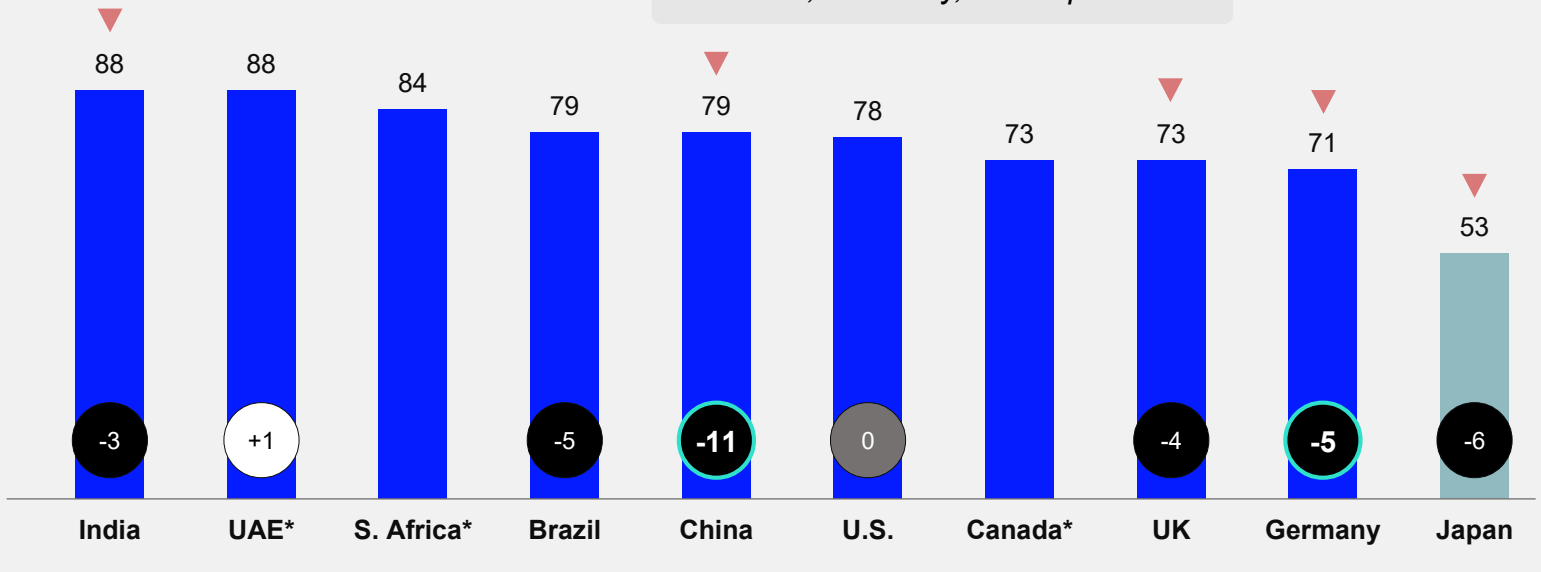
I trust **my employer** to do what is right



-5 pts

Change, Aug 2024 to Oct 2026

All-time lows in India, China, UK, Germany, and Japan



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRU_INS. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. 7-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level. *Canada, S. Africa, and the UAE are not included in the global average or the all-time low analysis.

Splintering Workplace Relationships: Since 2021, Record Low Trust in My Colleagues, Managers, and CEO

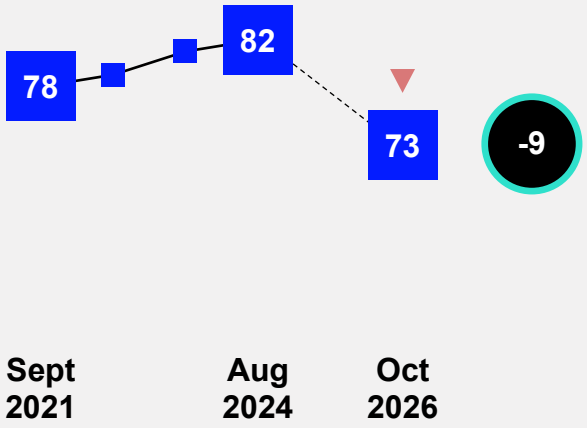
Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 7

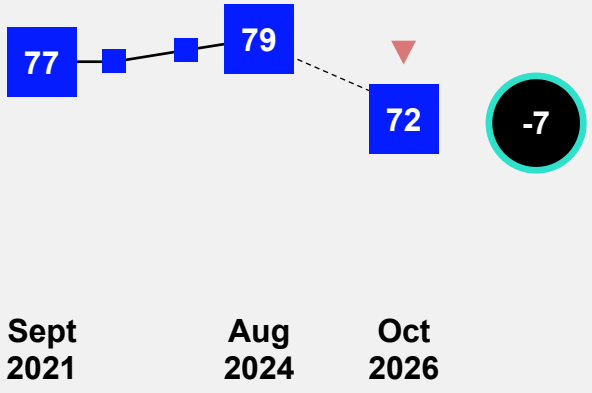
Distrust (1-49) | Neutral (50-59) | Trust (60-100)

Change, Aug 2024 to Oct 2026 | Significant change | All-time highs and lows

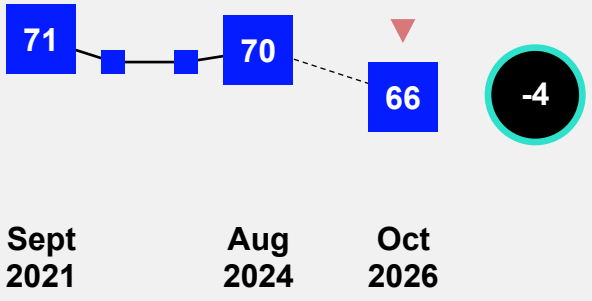
I trust
my coworkers



I trust
my manager



I trust
my CEO



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRU_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. 7-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.

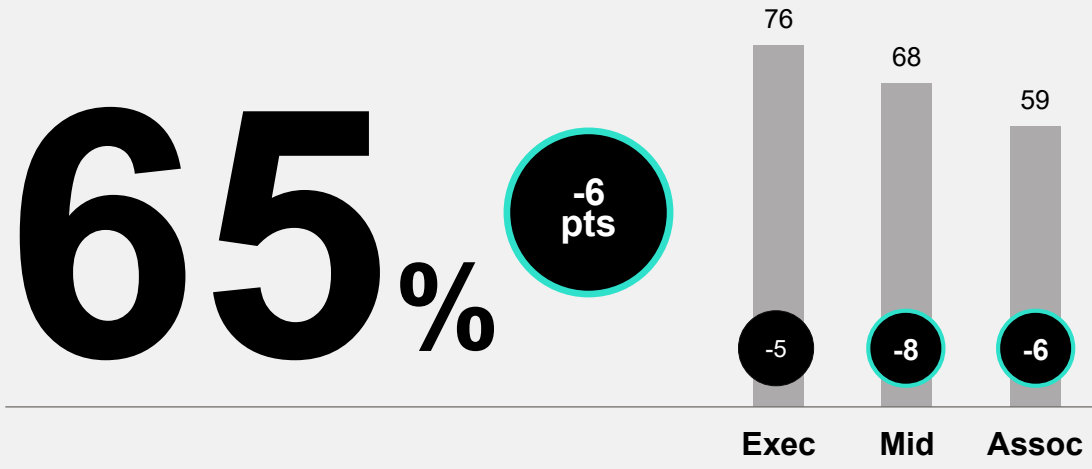
Declining Civility:
Less Comfort With Discussing Divisive Issues at Work

Percent of employees who say

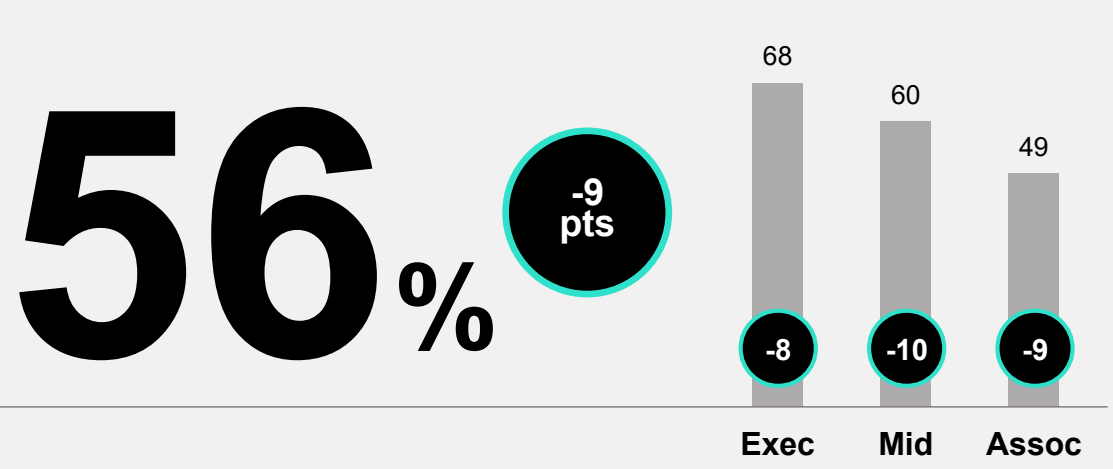
GLOBAL 7 | Change, Sept 2022 to Oct 2026 | Significant change

Even if we disagreed on this issue,
I would be comfortable talking with my coworkers about …

Climate change



Racism and discrimination



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. WRK_TOPICS. How comfortable would you be with having a conversation about the following issues with someone in your workplace whom you disagree with about that issue? 9-point scale; top 4 box, comfortable. Question asked to half the sample. 7-mkt avg., and by job level. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.

Rising Insecurity: Job Loss Fears Jump; 1 in 4 Expect To Be Laid Off Soon

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 8 Significant change

I worry about losing my job
due to one or more of these reasons (net)

- *Automation*
- *Cheaper foreign competitors*
- *Gig economy*
- *International trade and tariffs*
- *Lacking training and skills*
- *Looming recession*
- *Offshoring*

77%

+4 pts

Change, Aug 2024 to Oct 2026

It is likely that I will be laid off
from my job within the next 12 months

26%

+6 pts

Change, Aug 2024 to Oct 2026

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. POP_EMO. Some people say they worry about many things while others say they have few concerns. We are interested in what you worry about. Specifically, how much do you worry about each of the following? 9-point scale; top 4 box, worried. "Job loss" is a net of attributes 1-3, 5, 22-24. JOB_SECURE. How likely or unlikely do you feel it is that you will be laid off from your job within the next 12 months? 9-point scale; top 4 box, likely. Question asked to half the sample. 8-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.

Stalling Mobility: Expectations for Pay and Career Growth Rise, Employer Performance Lags

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 8 | −0+ | Significant change

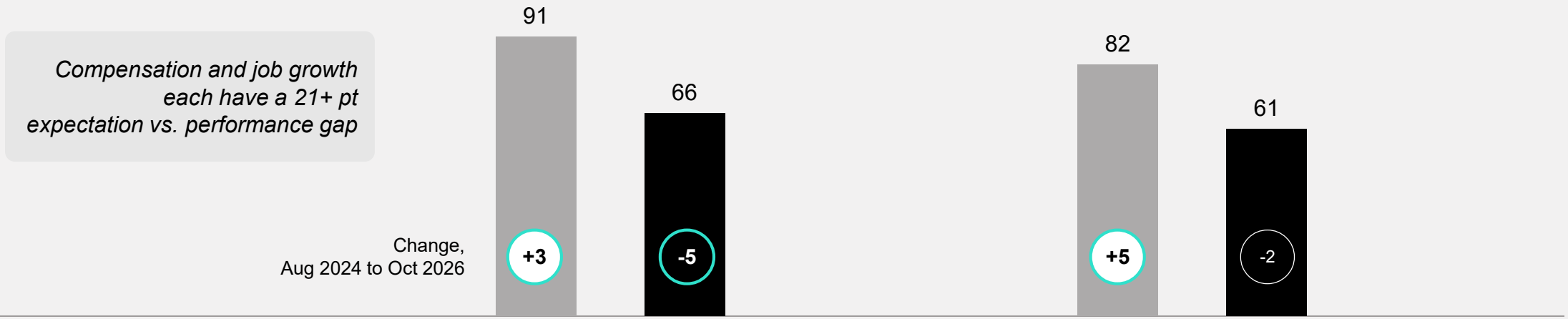
This is an **important job consideration**

This is true of my employer

I am paid fairly for the work I do

There are many **opportunities to move up** in the organization

Compensation and job growth each have a 21+ pt expectation vs. performance gap



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. EMP_IMP. When considering an organization as a potential place of employment, how important is each of the following to you in deciding whether or not you would accept a job offer there? 3-point scale, top 2 box, important. EMP_VAL. Thinking about your current employer, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? 9-point scale; top 4 box, agree. Attributes shown to half the sample. 8-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.

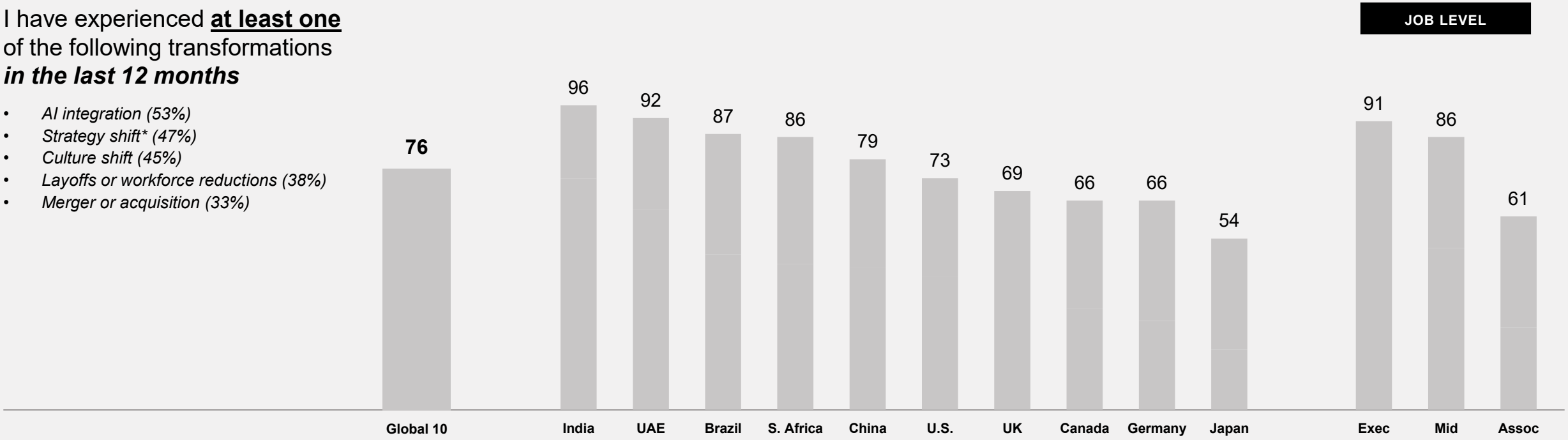
The Workplace in Flux:
3 in 4 Employees Have Experienced At Least One Transformation in Past 12 Months

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

I have experienced **at least one** of the following transformations ***in the last 12 months***

- *AI integration (53%)*
- *Strategy shift* (47%)*
- *Culture shift (45%)*
- *Layoffs or workforce reductions (38%)*
- *Merger or acquisition (33%)*



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. CNG_HAP. Think about the organization(s) you have worked for over the past 12 months. For each of the following types of major changes or transformations, please indicate whether each has happened at any organization you have worked for in the past 12 months. 2-point scale; code 1, yes. Data shown is the result of a "count" analysis where respondents were grouped based on the number of transformations they experienced and reflects the sum of the percentages of respondents who said "yes" for 1-2 transformations and 3 or more transformations. 10-mkt avg., and by job level. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).
*"Strategy shift" was shown to respondents as "Reorganization: Your organization changed leadership, lines of reporting, eliminated products or services, or pivoted its overall business strategy."

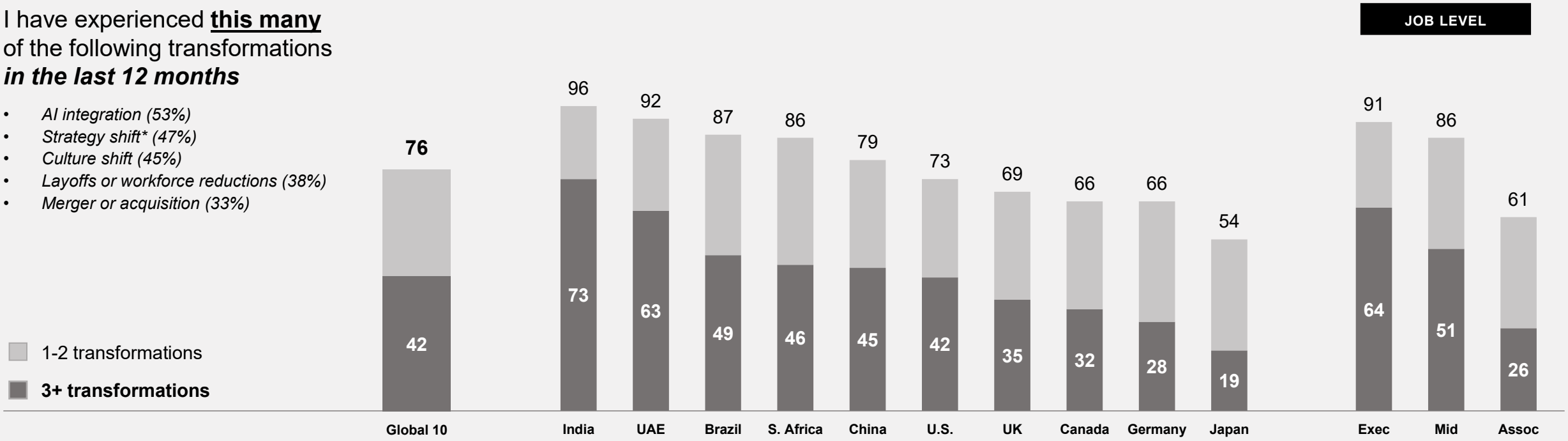
The Workplace in Flux: Over 4 in 10 Have Experienced 3+ Transformations in the Past Year

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

I have experienced **this many** of the following transformations ***in the last 12 months***

- *AI integration (53%)*
- *Strategy shift* (47%)*
- *Culture shift (45%)*
- *Layoffs or workforce reductions (38%)*
- *Merger or acquisition (33%)*



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*"Strategy shift" was shown to respondents as "Reorganization: Your organization changed leadership, lines of reporting, eliminated products or services, or pivoted its overall business strategy."

The New, Less Trusting Workplace

Over Past Two Years, Employees Feel Less Trusted by Leaders

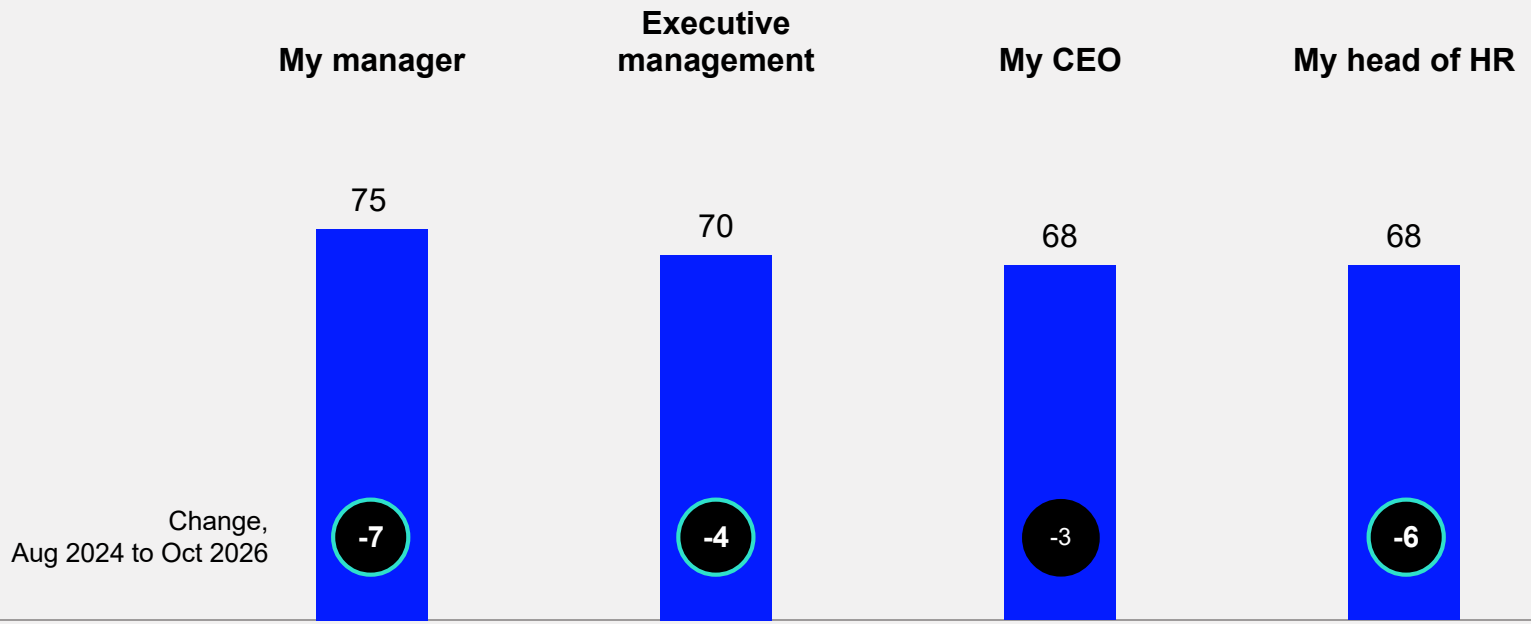
Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 8

Distrust (1-49) Neutral (50-59) Trust (60-100)

Significant change

I ***feel trusted*** by…



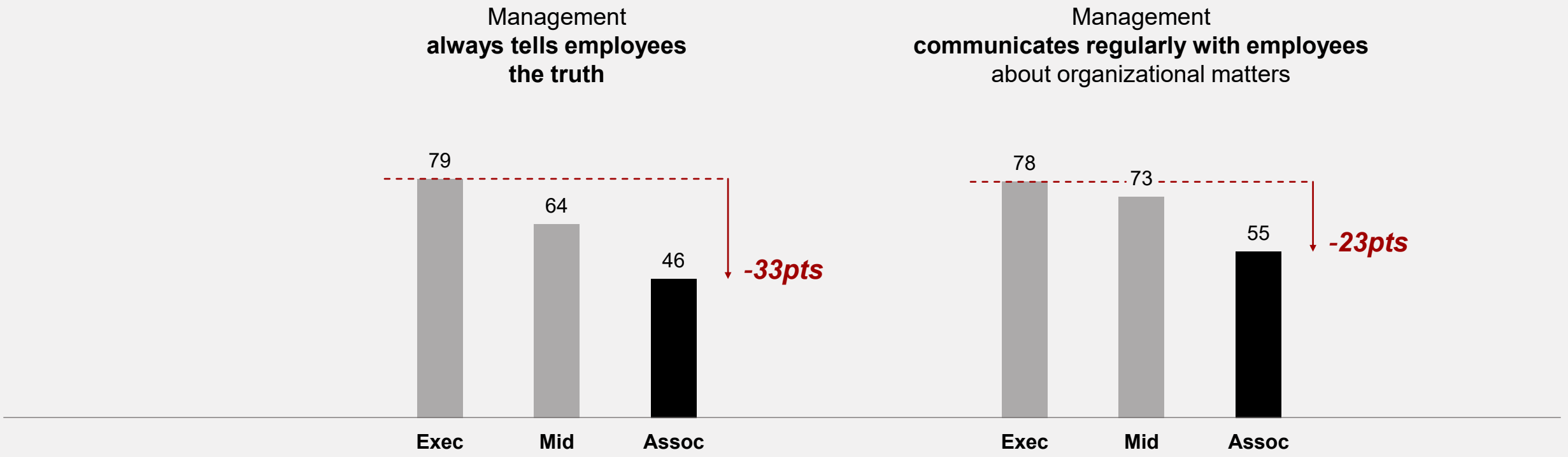
Significant declines in feeling trusted by *managers, executive management, and heads of HR*

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRU_ME. Below is a list of people. For each one, please indicate how much you feel trusted by them. 9-point scale; top 4 box, feel trusted. Question asked to half the sample. 8-mkt avg.
All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.

Associates Feel Skeptical of and Disconnected from Leaders' Communications

Percent of employees who agree

GLOBAL 10



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. EMP_VAL. Thinking about your current employer, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? 9-point scale; top 4 box, agree. Attributes shown to half the sample. 10-mkt avg., by job level. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

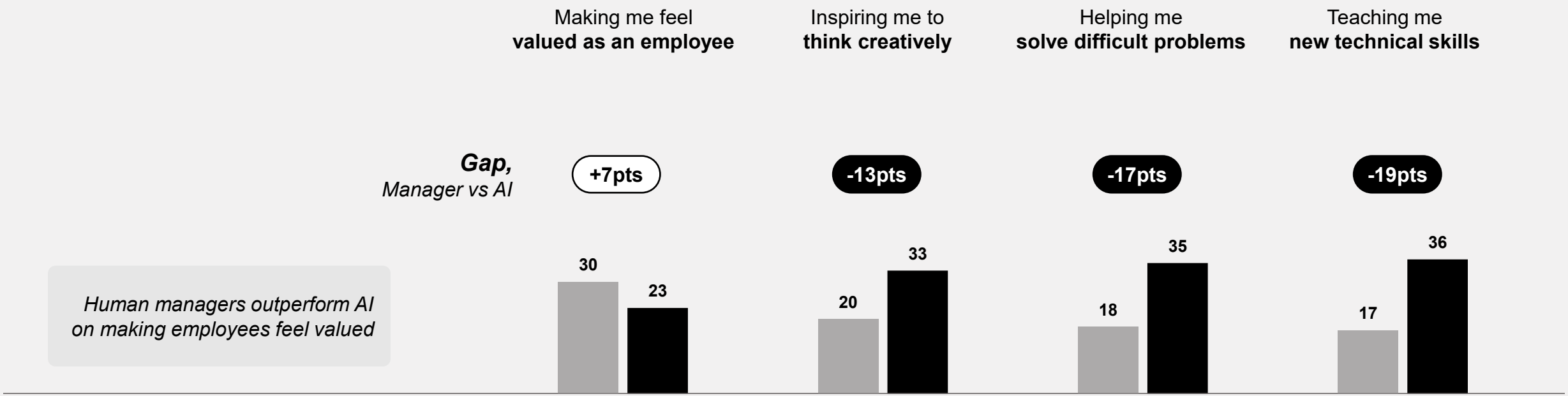
Artificial Intelligence Encroaches on Manager Responsibilities

Among employees who use AI at work and have a manager (70%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10

My manager is better at this

AI platforms are better at this



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. AI_VS_MGR. Think about your interactions with your manager and with the AI platforms you use at work. For each of the following statements, please indicate whether it better describes your manager, the AI platforms you use, both equally well, or neither. 4-point scale; code 1, better describes my manager; code 2, better describes AI platforms I use at work. Question asked to those who use AI at work (AI_USE/2-6) and have a manager (SUP_YN/1). 10-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

We Feel Watched:
6 in 10 Fear Their Employer is Surveilling Them

Percent of employees who say

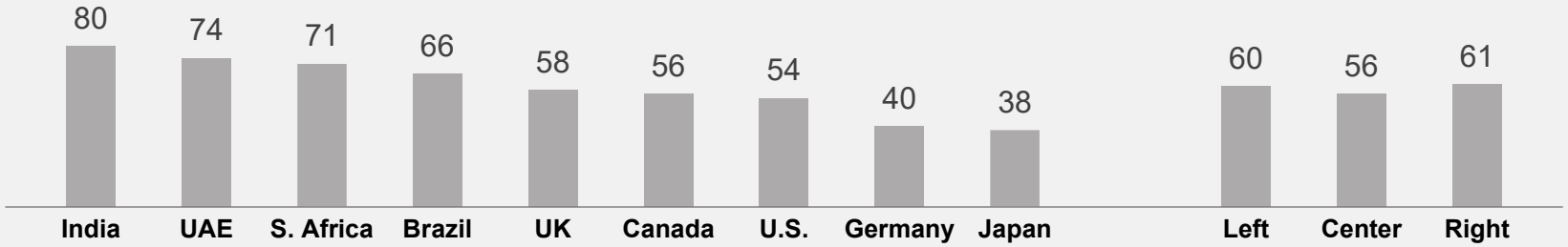
GLOBAL 9 excl. China

I worry about being monitored by my employer without my consent (net)

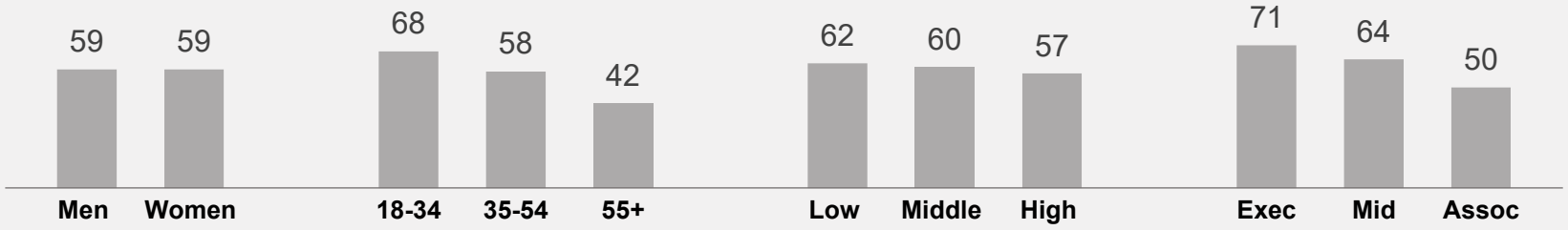
- *Being listened to, monitored, or surveilled by my employer without my knowledge*
- *My digital conversations or AI platform inquiries being used against me by my employer*

59%

COUNTRIES | POLITICAL-LEANING‡



GENDER | AGE | INCOME | JOB LEVEL



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. POP_EMO. Some people say they worry about many things while others say they have few concerns. We are interested in what you worry about. Specifically, how much do you worry about each of the following? 9-point scale; top 4 box, worried. 9-mkt avg., and by demographics. "Monitored by my employer" is a net of attributes 78 and 79. "Being listened to, monitored, or surveilled by my employer without my knowledge" is not asked in China. ǂPolitical-leaning not asked in China or the UAE and represents an 8-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

Transformation Can Worsen or Improve My Workplace Experience

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), rank order based on percent who say

GLOBAL 10

I had at least one ***bad*** **transformation experience** (28%) because it …

Top 5 of 14

#1	**Added more work** without pay
#2	**Lacked alignment** with our strategy
#3	**Created divisions** among employees
#4	Came as a **surprise**
#5	Made meeting customer needs **harder**

I had at least one ***good*** **transformation experience** (76%) because it …

Top 5 of 12

#1	Made my workload **more manageable**
#2	**Aligned** with our strategy
#3	gave me **adequate guidance**
#4	Made meeting customer needs **easier**
#5	Gave me opportunity for **growth**

Workload is the top driver of a bad or good transformation experience

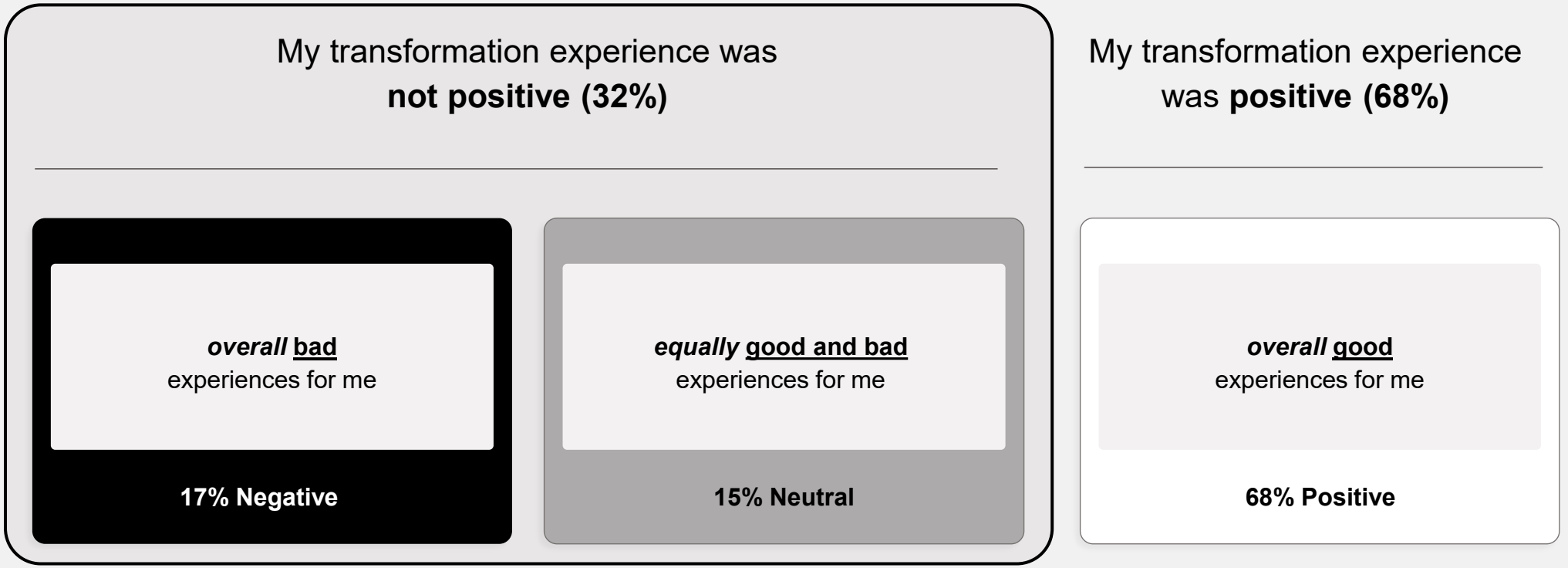
2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. CNG_BAD. You just indicated that your personal experience with one or more of the major changes or transformations that happened at your workplace(s) in the past year was bad or very bad. Why is that? Pick all that apply. Question asked to those who had bad experiences with transformation in the workplace (CNG_RATE/c1-2 for any r1-5). CNG_GOOD. You just indicated that your personal experience with one or more of the major changes or transformations that happened at your workplace(s) in the past year was good or very good. Why is that? Pick all that apply. Question asked to those who had good experiences with transformation in the workplace (CNG_RATE/c4-5 for any r1-5).10-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). "None of the above" was not included in the rankings.

Transformation: The Inflection Point for Workplace Trust

Transformation Leaves 1 in 3 Employees Behind

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10

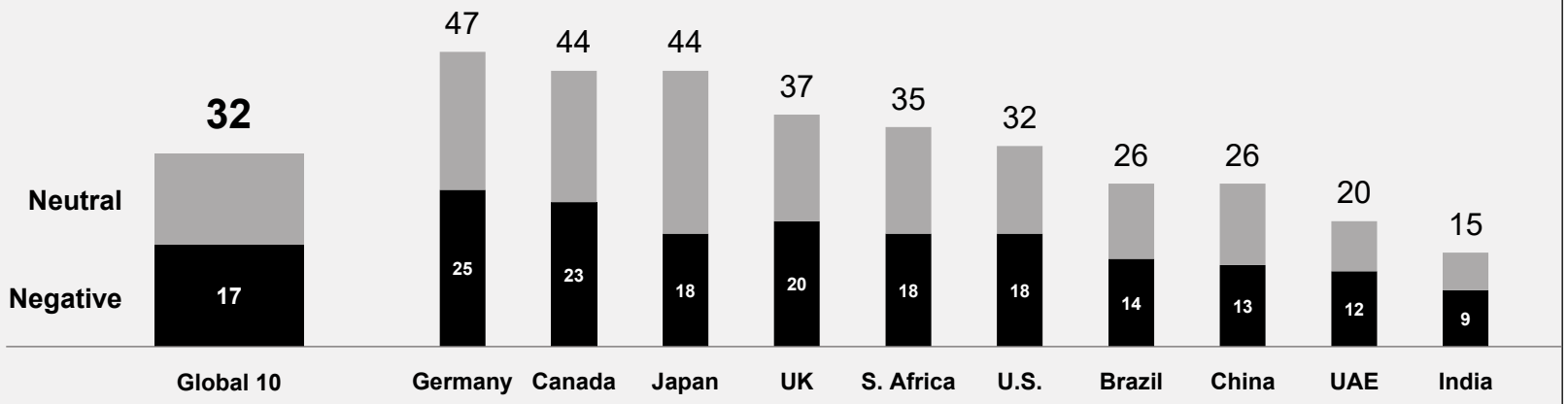


Across Countries and Job Levels, Much of Workforce Left Behind By Transformation

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), percent who say

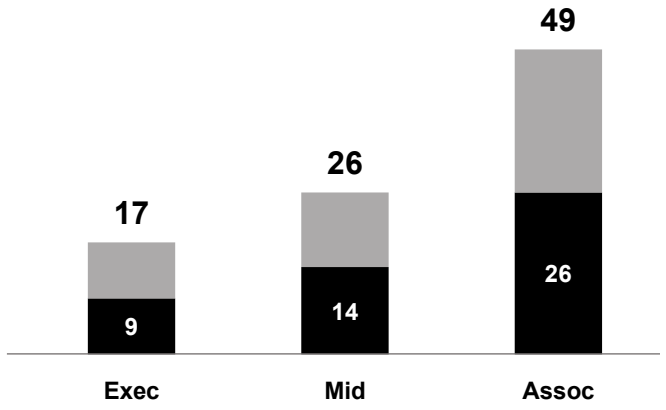
GLOBAL 10

My transformation experience was **not positive**



JOB LEVEL

*Associates **3x more likely** than executives to have a **negative** experience*



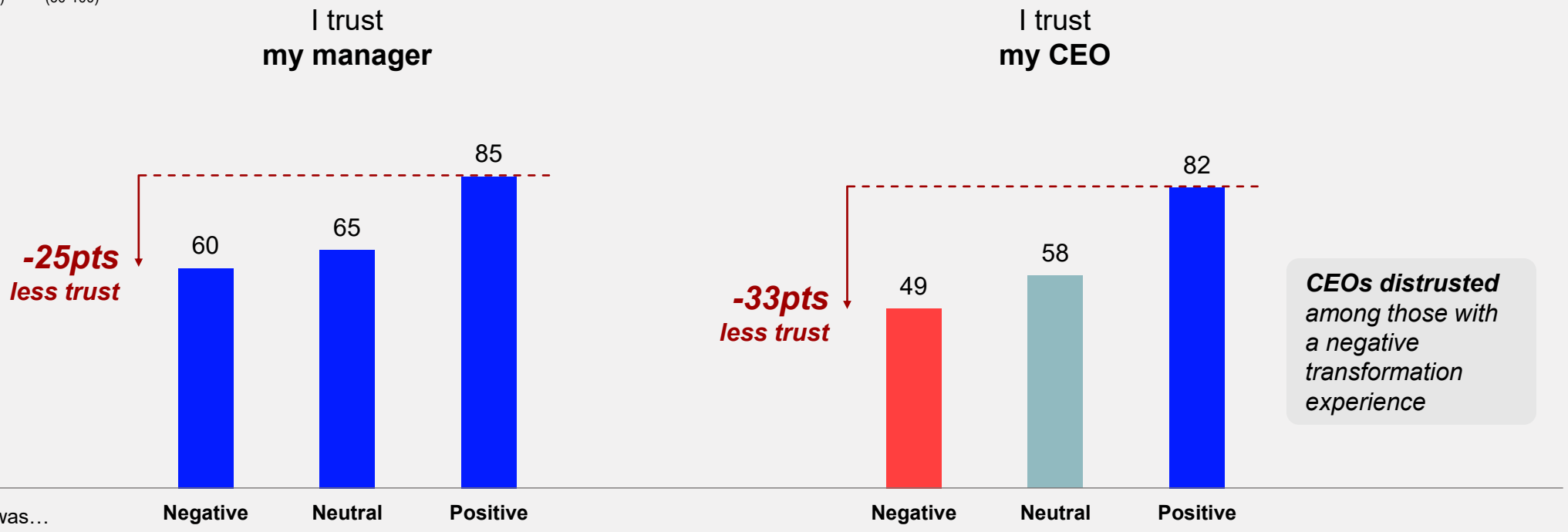
2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. Transformation experience segments. 10-mkt avg., and by job level. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). For a full explanation of how the transformation experience segments were created, please see the Technical Appendix.

With Poor Transformation Experiences, Less Trust in Leaders

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10

Distrust (1-49) Neutral (50-59) Trust (60-100)



And my transformation experience was…

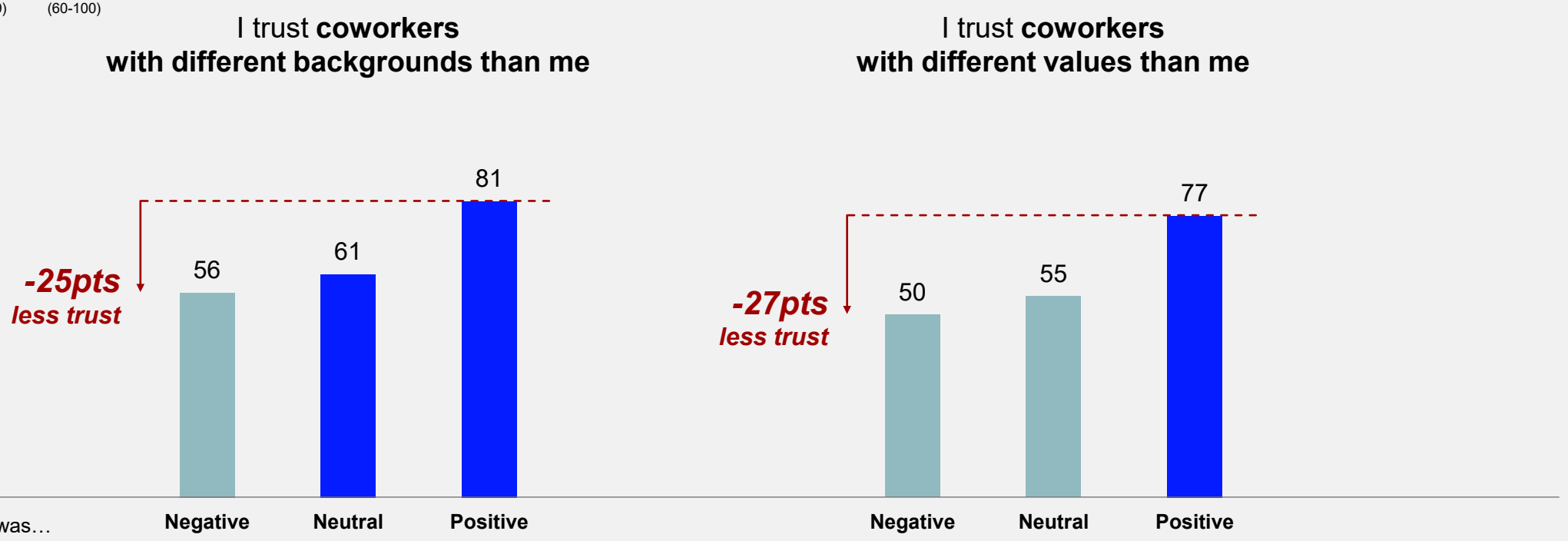
2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRU_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. 10-mkt avg., by transformation experience segments. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). For a full explanation of how the transformation experience segments were created, please see the Technical Appendix. The percentage of employees in each transformation experience is: Negative = 17%, Neutral = 15%, Positive = 68%.

With Poor Transformation Experiences, Difference Becomes a Barrier to Trust

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10

Distrust (1-49) Neutral (50-59) Trust (60-100)



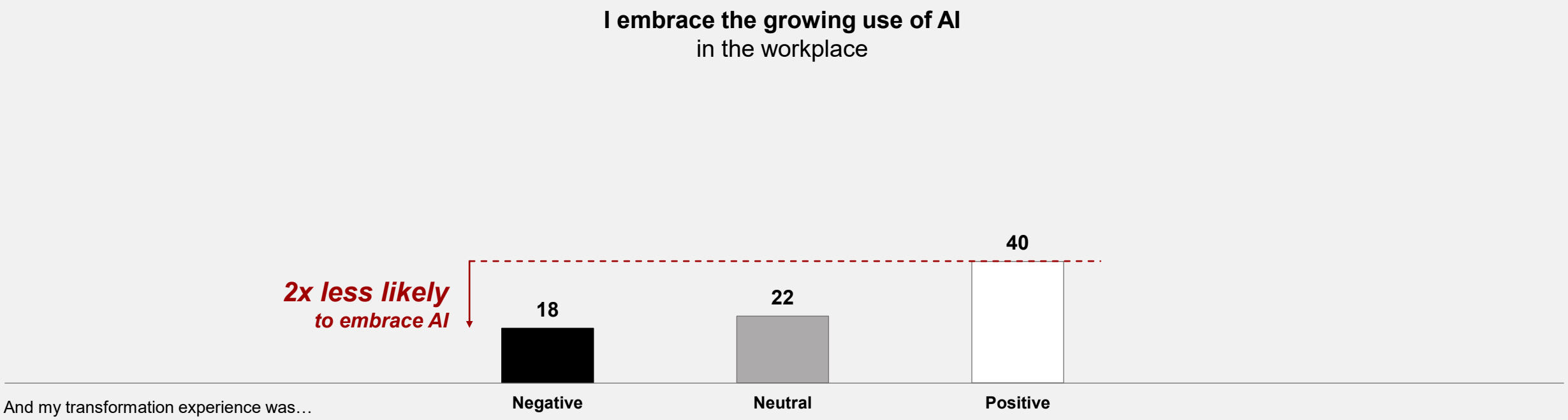
And my transformation experience was…

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRU_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. 10-mkt avg., by transformation experience segments. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). For a full explanation of how the transformation experience segments were created, please see the Technical Appendix. The percentage of employees in each transformation experience is: Negative = 17%, Neutral = 15%, Positive = 68%.

With Poor Transformation Experiences, Less Likely to Embrace Innovation

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10



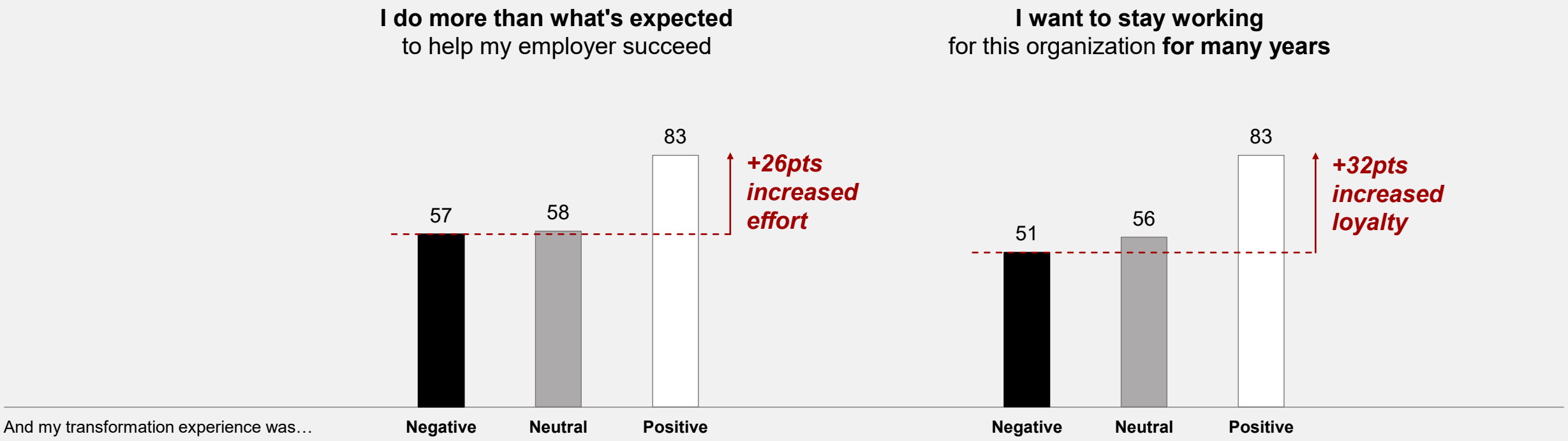
2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. EMP_TEC_COM_AI. How would you characterize your feelings about the growing use of artificial intelligence such as machine learning, natural language processing, and generative AI in the workplace? 5-point scale, top 2 box, enthusiastic or passionate=embrace. Question asked to half the sample. 10-mkt avg., by transformation experience segments. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). For a full explanation of how the transformation experience segments were created, please see the Technical Appendix. The percentage of employees in each transformation experience is: Negative = 17%, Neutral = 15%, Positive = 68%.

Transformation Can Unite the Workforce

With Positive Transformation Experiences, Employees Invest in Their Organizations

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. EMP_ENG. Thinking about your current employer, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? 9-point scale; top 4 box, agree. 10-mkt avg., by transformation experience segments. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). For a full explanation of how the transformation experience segments were created, please see the Technical Appendix. The percentage of employees in each transformation experience is: Negative = 17%, Neutral = 15%, Positive = 68%.

To Drive Positive Experiences, Give Employees Agency Over What Transformation Means For Them

Among employees who had at least one good transformation experience (76%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10

I had a good transformation experience because **I was empowered to adapt on my own terms** (net)

67%

	%
I received **adequate guidance**	30
I had **time to plan**	26
My **skills grew**	24
My concerns **were listened to**	22

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. CNG_GOOD. You just indicated that your personal experience with one or more of the major changes or transformations that happened at your workplace(s) in the past year was good or very good. Why is that? Pick all that apply. Question asked to employees who had good experiences with transformations in the workplace (CNG_RATE/c4-5 for any r1-5). 10-mkt avg. Personal agency is a net of attributes 6, 8, 9, and 11. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). The percentage of employees that had at least one transformation experience = 76%.

Transformation Is Justified by Tangible Outcomes: Productivity, Stability, Wellbeing, and Survival

Rank order based on percent who say

GLOBAL 10

If my employer were to carry out a workplace transformation, **it would be most justified by:**

	AI integration	Strategy shift*	Culture shift	Layoffs	Merger
Top 1 of 12	Improving **productivity**	Improving **organizational stability**	Improving **employee wellbeing**	Ensuring **company survival**	Improving **organizational stability**
Bottom 12 of 12	Avoiding **political backlash**	Avoiding **political backlash**	Improving **shareholder value**	Improving **shareholder value**	Avoiding **political backlash**

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRN_REA_[1-5]. If your employer decided to carry out a [workplace transformation such as AI integration, strategy shift, culture shift, layoffs, or merger], what would you consider to be the best motivation or reason? Pick up to three reasons. Questions asked to two-fifths of the sample. 10-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). *"Strategy shift" was shown to respondents as "Reorganization: Your organization changed leadership, lines of reporting, eliminated products or services, or pivoted its overall business strategy." "None of the above" was not included in the rankings.

To Keep Workforce Informed, Communicate Through Two-Way Conversations Over One-Way Information Sharing

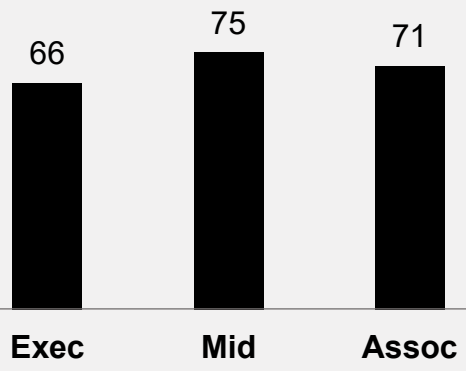
On average, across all five transformations, percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

I want to **learn about my workplace transformation through:**

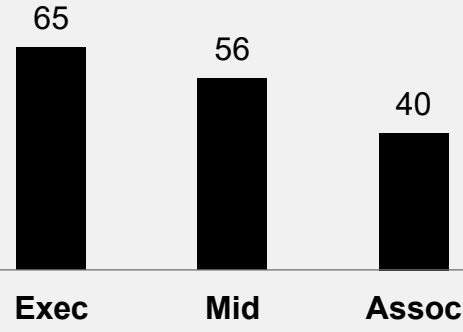
Two-way conversation (net)

- *Company-wide meeting with senior leadership*
- *Meeting with my team*
- *Talking with my manager*



One-way information (net)

- *Email*
- *Employee-only social media*
- *Internal company webpage or bulletin board*



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRN_CHL_[1-5]. Where would you want to hear about what your organization is doing to carry out a [workplace transformation such as AI integration, strategy shift, culture shift, layoffs, or merger]? Pick all that apply. Questions asked to two-fifths of the sample. 10-mkt avg., by job level. Data shown is the average across the five transformations. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). "Two-way conversation" is a net of attributes 2, 3, and 9; "One-way information" is a net of attribute 1, 4, and 8.

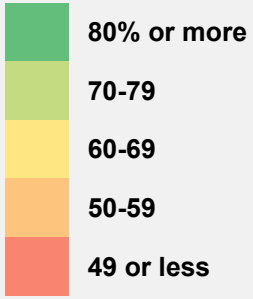
Make Transformation an Opportunity, Not a Disruption

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

I would make a **positive assumption about an organization that has initiatives to achieve ...**

	Global 10	JOB LEVEL		
		Exec	Mid	Assoc
Opportunity	75	82	80	68
Wellbeing	74	80	79	68
Productivity	74	81	80	66
Fairness	73	80	77	68
Belonging	70	78	74	63
AI transformation	57	76	66	40
Disruption	39	53	44	30



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. WORD_EMO. When an organization has initiatives that aim to achieve each of the goals below, do you tend to make a positive or negative assumption about that organization? 5-point scale; top 2 box, positive. Question asked to half the sample. 10-mkt avg., and by job level. Data is in rank order, based on the Global 10 average, with ties broken by decimals. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

CEOs: Humanize Change, Earn Trust

Be Transparent About Your Uncertainty: Share What You Do and Do Not Know About Change

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

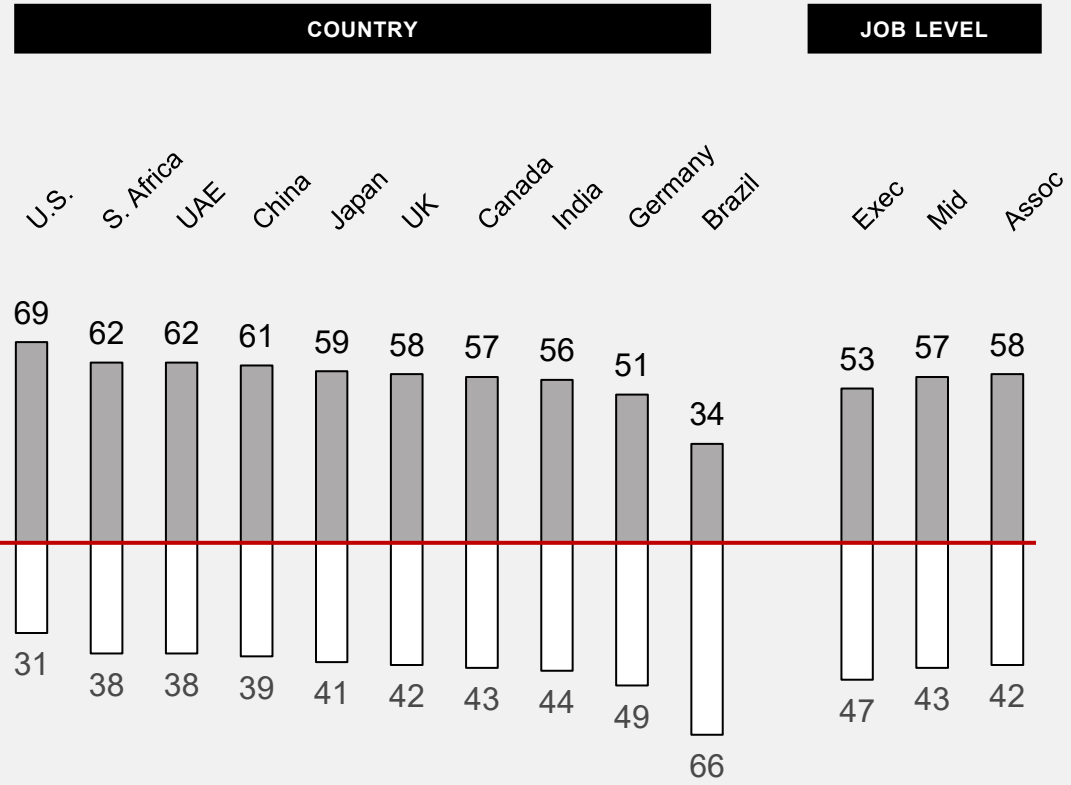
During a workplace transformation, I want my CEO to …

Share what they do *and* don't know for certain

57%

--- or ----------

Only share what they know for certain



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. CEO_TON. When undergoing a major change or transformation within a workplace, there will always be some amount of uncertainty that arises from it. For each of the following, please indicate which is the more effective way for a CEO to communicate amid uncertainty resulting from a major change or transformation in the workplace. Question asked to half the sample. 10-mkt avg., and by job level. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

Be Empathetic With Their Uncertainty: Acknowledge Employees' Experiences Over Making a Business Case

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

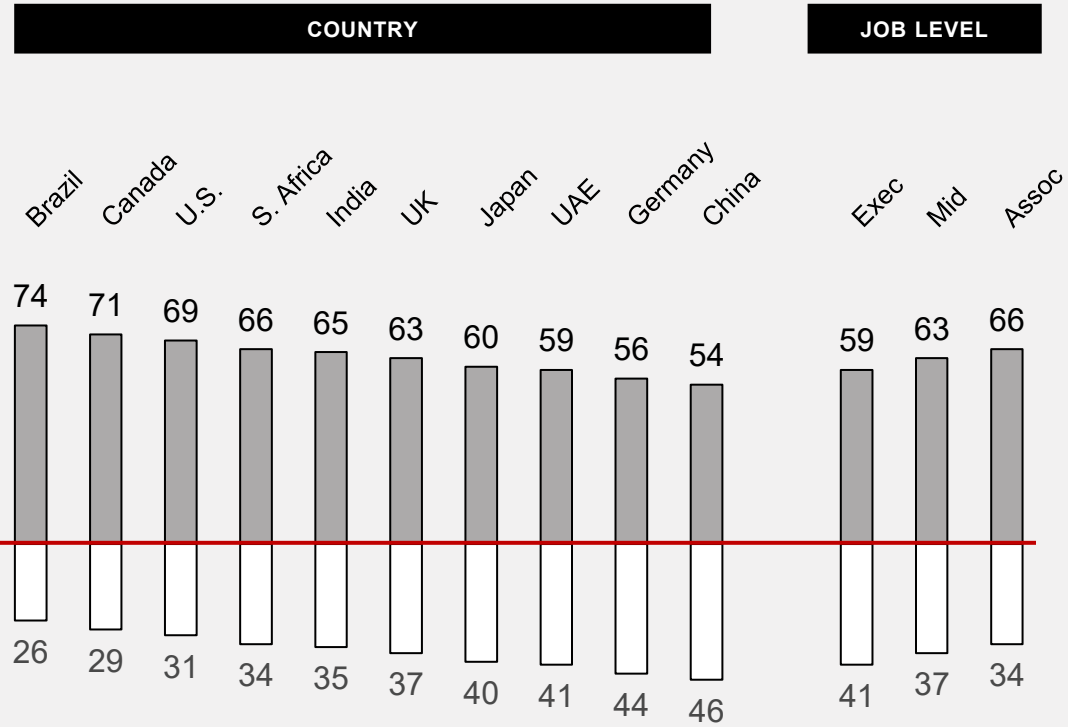
During a workplace transformation, I want my CEO to …

Acknowledge what employees are feeling

64%

--- or ----------

Focus on the business aspects rather than employees' feelings



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. CEO_TON. When undergoing a major change or transformation within a workplace, there will always be some amount of uncertainty that arises from it. For each of the following, please indicate which is the more effective way for a CEO to communicate amid uncertainty resulting from a major change or transformation in the workplace. Question asked to half the sample. 10-mkt avg., and by job level. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

CEOs:
Partner With Managers to Foster Transparency

On average, across all five transformations, rank order based on percent who say

GLOBAL 10

I would be most likely to trust this person to tell me the truth about
why the transformation is happening

Top 4 of 11

#1	**My manager**
#2	**My CEO**
#3	Coworkers at my same job level
#4	My head of HR

My manager ranks #1 and my CEO ranks #2 across AI integration, strategy shifts, culture shifts, layoffs, and mergers*

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRN_VOI_[1-5]. For each of the following pieces of information that you could receive from your employer about an AI integration, strategy shift, culture shift, layoffs, or merger they were carrying out, please indicate who you are most likely to trust to tell you the truth. Questions asked to two-fifths of the sample. 10-mkt avg. Data shown is the average across the five transformations. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). *"Strategy shift" was shown to respondents as "Reorganization: Your organization changed leadership, lines of reporting, eliminated products or services, or pivoted its overall business strategy." "I do not trust anyone to tell me the truth about this" is not included in the ranking.

Trust is Mutual: For Leaders to Gain Trust, They Must Give Trust

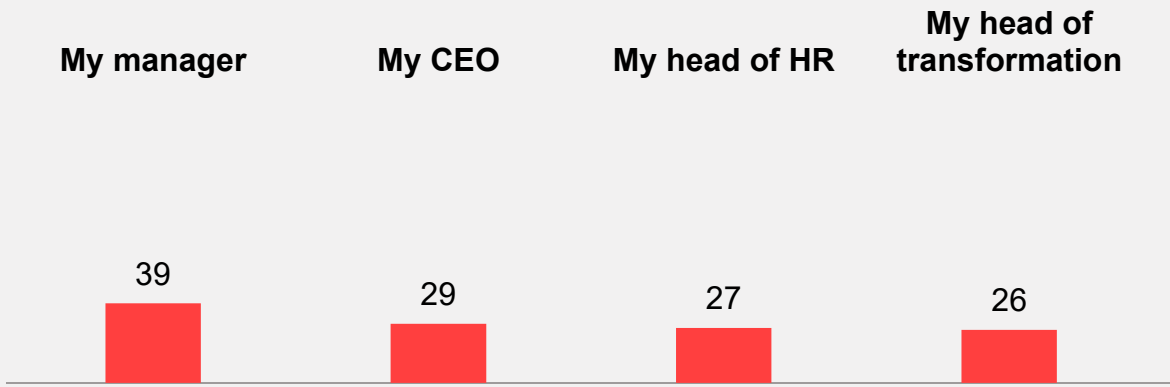
Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

Distrust (1-49) Neutral (50-59) Trust (60-100)

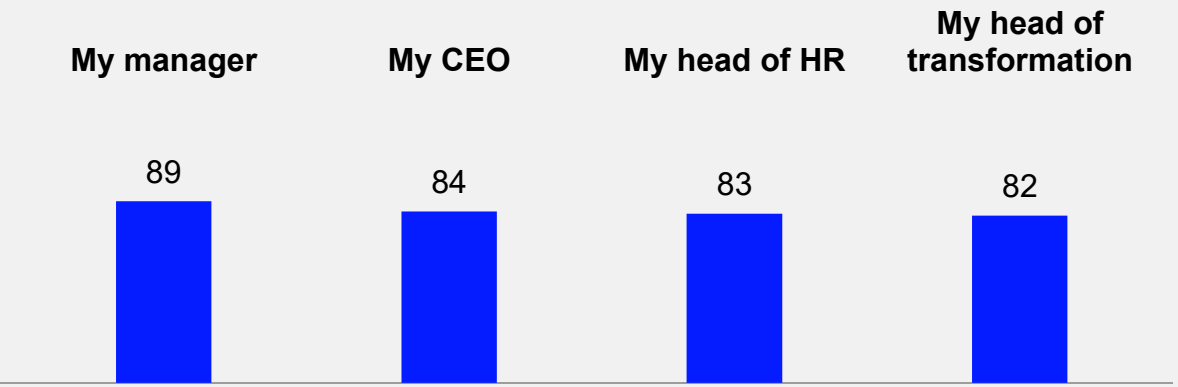
I feel executive management **does not trust me** (30%)

and I trust…



I feel executive management **trusts me** (70%)

and I trust…



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. TRU_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. 10-mkt avg., by those who feel trusted by executive management (TRU_MEr4 = 6-9) and those who do not feel trusted by executive management (TRU_MEr4 = 1-5, 99). TRU_ME. Below is a list of people. For each one, please indicate how much you feel trusted by them. 9-point scale; top 4 box, feel trusted; codes 1-5 and 99, don't feel trusted. Question asked to half the sample. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work
Building Trust Amid a Workplace in Flux

1

Trust in employers is faltering

Employer trust remains high, but it is moving in the wrong direction. Employees are less trusting of the people closest to them at work, with trust in coworkers, managers and CEOs falling to all-time lows.

2

Transformation is a trust inflection point

Transformation defines professional life today. Three in four employees experienced major change in the past year, making this a critical moment for organizations to build or lose trust.

3

CEO trust is at risk in times of transformation

Transformation puts CEO trust on the line. Employees who experience change negatively are much less likely to trust their CEO, raising the stakes for transparent, empathetic, and accountable leadership.

4

Transformation must be at a human scale

Rather than a company mandate, spell out what transformation means for individuals. Prioritize the personal experience, both in the costs absorbed and opportunity to adapt to transformation on one's own terms.

Supplemental Data

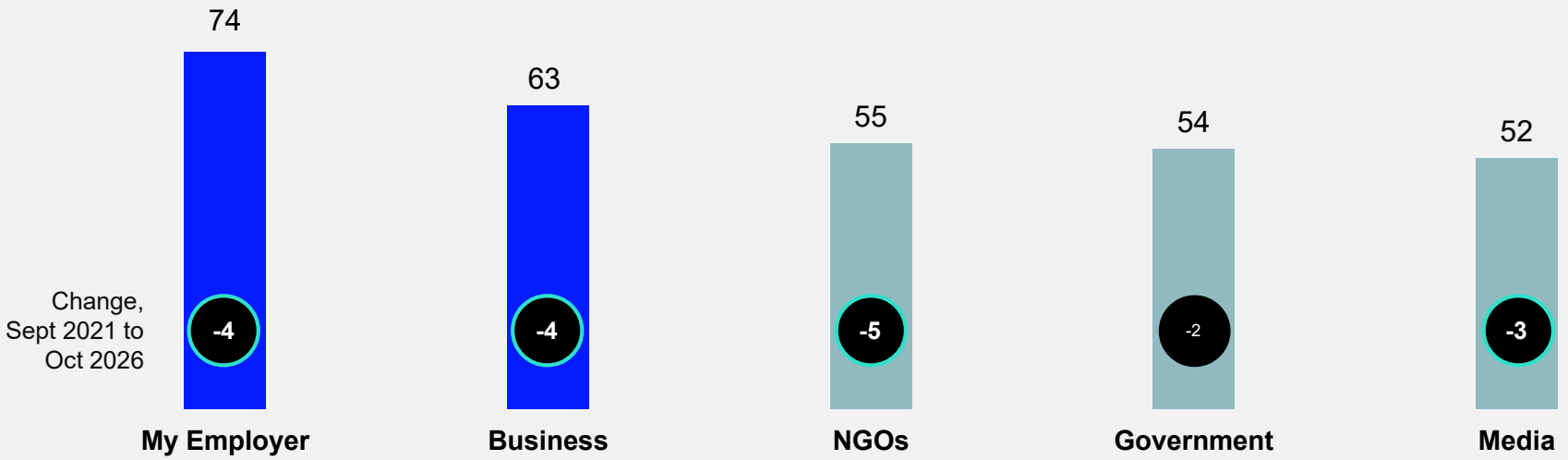
Trust Declines Across Institutions; Only My Employer and Business Remain Trusted

Percent of employees who trust

GLOBAL 7

Distrust (1-49) Neutral (50-59) Trust (60-100)

Significant change



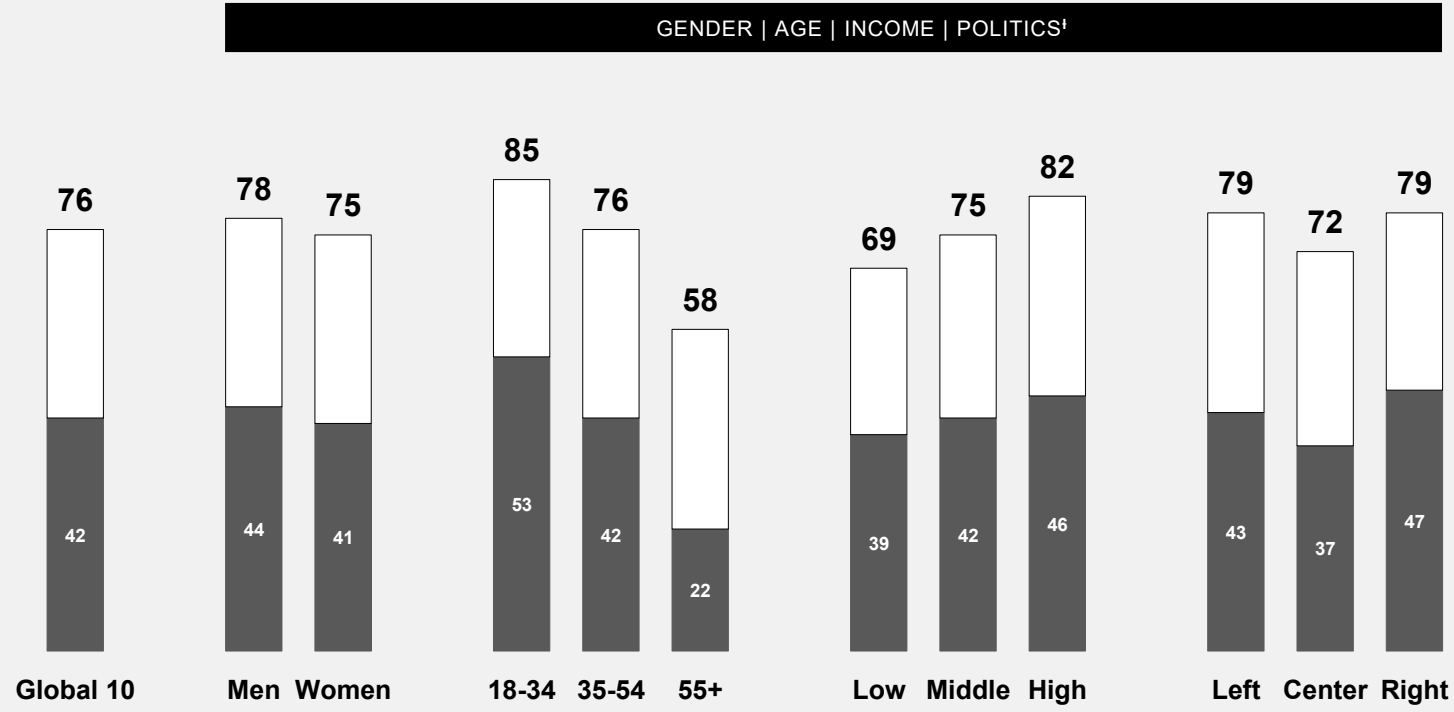
The Workplace in Flux: Over 4 in 10 Have Experienced 3+ Transformations in the Past Year

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

I have experienced **this many** of the following transformations ***in the last 12 months***

- *AI integration (53%)*
- *Strategy shift* (47%)*
- *Culture shift (45%)*
- *Layoffs or workforce reductions (38%)*
- *Merger or acquisition (33%)*



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. CNG_HAP. Think about the organization(s) you have worked for over the past 12 months. For each of the following types of major changes or transformations, please indicate whether each has happened at any organization you have worked for in the past 12 months. 2-point scale; code 1, yes. Data shown is the result of a "count" analysis where respondents were grouped based on the number of transformations they experienced and reflects the sum of the percentages of respondents who said "yes" for 1-2 transformations and 3 or more transformations. 10-mkt avg., and by demographics. ‡Political-leaning not asked in China or the UAE and represents an 8-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). *"Strategy shift" was shown to respondents as "Reorganization: Your organization changed leadership, lines of reporting, eliminated products or services, or pivoted its overall business strategy."

Make Transformation an Opportunity, Not a Disruption

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 10

I would make a **positive assumption about an organization that has initiatives to achieve ...**

	Global 10	GENDER | AGE | INCOME | POLITICS‡											
		Men	Women	18-34	34-54	55+	Low	Middle	High	Left	Center	Right
Opportunity	75	77	73	78	75	69	66	75	80	78	74	78
Wellbeing	74	75	73	77	74	69	69	74	79	79	73	78
Productivity	74	76	72	77	73	69	66	74	78	72	75	80
Fairness	73	74	72	76	72	71	63	74	77	76	73	77
Belonging	70	70	70	75	69	62	60	70	75	74	68	73
AI transformation	57	61	53	64	56	44	49	56	63	51	52	64
Disruption	39	42	36	46	38	28	36	40	41	35	36	42

80% or more
70-79
60-69
50-59
49 or less

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. WORD_EMO. When an organization has initiatives that aim to achieve each of the goals below, do you tend to make a positive or negative assumption about that organization? 5-point scale; top 2 box, positive. Question asked to half the sample. 10-mkt avg., and by demographics. ǂPolitical-leaning not asked in China or the UAE and represents an 8-mkt avg. Data is in rank order, based on the Global 10 average, with ties broken by decimals. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

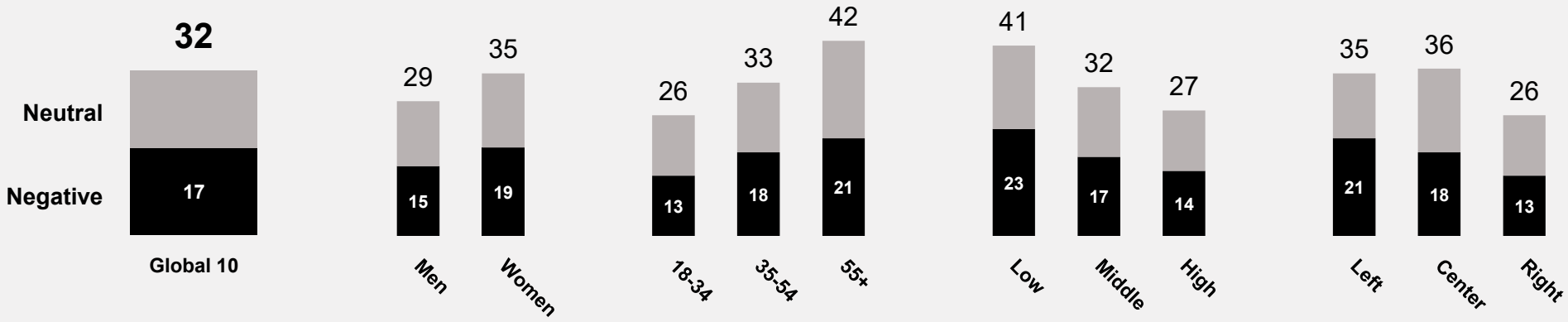
Across Countries and Job Levels, Much of Workforce Left Behind By Transformation

Among employees who experienced at least one transformation in the past year (76%), percent who say

GLOBAL 10

My transformation experience was **not positive**

GENDER | AGE | INCOME | POLITICS[‡]



Technical Appendix

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

Sample Targets Explained: Determining the Employee Sample

We conducted a ten-year historical analysis using data collected from the Edelman Trust Barometer (2016 - 2026) and Special Report: May Updates (2021 - 2022) to establish sample targets representative of each market's employee population.*

We looked at the natural fallout of employees in each market since 2016 across key demographics: Gender, age, region, and ethnicity or nationality (where applicable). We then averaged the natural fallout percentages across years for each demographic subgroup (for example, men versus women) to determine the targets for each market.

**We defined the employee population as anyone who is employed full- or part-time, regardless if they are self employed or work for an organization. The data shown in this report is a subset of the sample collected, containing only those that are employed by an organization.*

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

Country Sample Sizes, Margins of Error, and Quotas

Country	Weighted Sample Size[1]	Unweighted Sample Size	Margin of Error[2]	Quotas Set On[3]
Global 10[4]	10,000	10,018	+/- 1.3 percentage points total sample	Quotas set at the country level
Brazil	1,000	1,002	+/- 4.1 percentage points total sample	Age, Gender, Region
Canada	1,000	1,000		
China[5]	1,000	1,002		
Germany	1,000	1,003		
India	1,000	1,002		
Japan	1,000	1,000		
S. Africa	1,000	1,000		
UAE	1,000	1,006		
UK	1,000	1,000		
U.S.	1,000	1,003		

1. Data reported on slides is weighted to the same total base size to ensure each country has an equal effect on the global average. Some questions were asked to partial sample and margins of error will be larger. Please refer to the footnotes on each slide for details.
2. Margin of error is calculated on the unweighted sample sizes, utilizing a 99% confidence interval.
3. There were additional quotas on ethnicity in the UK and U.S., and on nationality in the UAE.
4. The "global average" indicates the average result of all the countries where data was collected. As mentioned above, there has been no adjustment made to the population size relative to each country and the global average is not intended to suggest a total result of the entire global population.
5. All data collected in China is from the mainland. Regions of Greater China were not surveyed.

The sample sizes indicated here are reflective of the employee population, which we define as anyone who is employed full- or part-time, regardless of whether they are self-employed or work for an organization.
The data shown in this report is a subset of the total sample collected, containing only those that are employed by an organization.

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

Countries Included in the Various Global Averages

	Global 10	Tracking Average Global 8	Tracking Average Global 7	Tracking Average Global 9 excluding China
All countries surveyed:	Used for **current year averages**	Used for **tracking to 2024**	Used for **tracking to 2021 and 2022**	Used for current year averages; excludes sensitive countries[1]
Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil
Canada	Canada	-	-	Canada
China	China	China	China	-
Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany
India	India	India	India	India
Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan
S. Africa	S. Africa	-	-	S. Africa
UAE	UAE	UAE	-	UAE
UK	UK	UK	UK	UK
U.S.	U.S.	U.S.	U.S.	U.S.

1. Because some of the content we ask is deemed politically or culturally sensitive there are several countries where we take special precautions in order to avoid putting our respondents, or ourselves, in a position to break any local laws. We work closely with our sample partner and its legal team to identify which questions, and in what countries, we should refrain from asking. Certain data included in this report was not collected in China and is indicated in the global average note of relevant slides.

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

Survey Languages Used and Internet Penetration by Country

	Languages	Internet Penetration*
Brazil	Portuguese	84%
Canada	Localized English, Canadian French	94%
China	Simplified Chinese	92%
Germany	German	93%
India	Localized English	70%
Japan	Japanese	86%
S. Africa	Localized English, Afrikaans	78%
UAE	Localized English, Arabic	100%
UK	Localized English	95%
U.S.	English, Localized Spanish	95%

*Data source: Individuals using the Internet (% of population) | Data (worldbank.org). Date accessed: January 13, 2026. In countries with lower internet penetration, the online sample in those countries tends to skew younger, urban, and more affluent.

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

Organization Level Composition

Q421. Which of the following best describes your position or level within your company or organization? Please select one response.

Shortened text	Full text
Executive	Senior executive level (CEO, President, etc.) Executive level (General Manager, Executive Vice President, Executive Director, etc.)
Mid-Level	Upper-level management (Senior Vice President, Vice President, Senior Director, etc.) Mid-level management (Director, Senior Manager, etc.) Lower-level management (Supervisor, Associate Manager, etc.)
Associate	Experienced (Non-manager) Entry level

Demographic Profile of Job Levels

Percent of employees at each job level who are…

GLOBAL 10

COUNTRIES

	Executive	Mid-level	Associate
Brazil	9%	9%	9%
Canada	6%	9%	13%
China	4%	13%	9%
Germany	7%	7%	17%
India	17%	12%	3%
Japan	4%	6%	16%
South Africa	15%	11%	6%
UAE	11%	14%	5%
UK	10%	10%	12%
U.S.	17%	8%	10%

GENDER

	Executive	Mid-level	Associate
Men	57%	59%	47%
Women	43%	41%	53%

AGE

	Executive	Mid-level	Associate
18-34	45%	38%	34%
35-54	47%	48%	43%
55+	8%	14%	23%

JOB LEVEL

	Executive	Mid-level	Associate
Low	9%	9%	20%
Middle	40%	54%	59%
High	51%	37%	21%

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. QA. Please tell us the country or region where you currently reside. S6. What is your gender? S15. What is your current age? S8. Thinking about your annual household income in 2025, which of the following categories best describes your total household income that year? 10-mkt avg., by executives (Q421/1-2), mid-level (Q421/3-5) and associates (Q421/6-7). All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1).

Job Level Across Country and Demographics

Percent of employees in each demographic who have each job level

GLOBAL 10

	Global 10	Brazil	Canada	China	Germany	India	Japan	S. Africa	UAE	UK	U.S.
Associates	34%	34%	45%	31%	56%	10%	53%	22%	17%	38%	35%
Mid-level	49%	49%	43%	64%	31%	65%	31%	56%	67%	47%	39%
Executives	13%	13%	8%	5%	8%	24%	4%	21%	14%	12%	21%

	GENDER		AGE			INCOME		
	Men	**Women**	**18-34**	**35-54**	**55+**	**Low**	**Middle**	**High**
Associates	30%	40%	31%	32%	48%	50%	37%	22%
Mid-level	53%	43%	50%	51%	39%	33%	49%	56%
Executives	14%	12%	16%	13%	6%	9%	10%	20%

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work. Q421. Which of the following best describes your position or level within your company or organization? 10-mkt avg. All data is filtered to be among employees who work for an organization or corporation (Q43/1). Job level was not targeted or controlled for in this sample. All percentages represent the natural fallout in each country and demographic and may not be representative of the employed population. Variance across markets reflects patterns in internet penetration, the sampling method, and other country-specific factors.

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

How We Created The Transformation Experience Segments

The transformation experience segmentation assigns respondents to one of three groups based on their overall experience with workplace transformations. First, respondents indicated whether they had experienced any of five listed workplace transformations in the past 12 months (see list in table to the right). In our sample, 76% of respondents experienced one or more workplace transformations. Respondents who did not experience a workplace transformation are excluded from the segmentation.

Next, respondents rated their experience with each workplace transformation they had faced on a scale from “very bad” to “very good”. Ratings are recoded from a 1 to 5 scale to a −2 to +2 scale, as shown in the table to the right. Then each respondent’s recoded ratings are summed to create their transformation experience score. Depending on the number of transformations they experienced, an individual respondent can have a possible score ranging from −2 to +2 (one transformation) to −10 to +10 (five transformations). Transformations a respondent had not experienced were not rated and do not contribute to their score.

Respondents are placed into one of three groups based on their final transformation experience score*:

- **Negative (17%):** Overall, I rated my experiences with transformations as more negative than positive. My transformation experience score was between -10 and -1.
- **Neutral (15%):** My overall experience with transformations was neutral. My transformation experience score was zero.
- **Positive (68%):** Overall, I rated my experiences with transformations as more positive than negative. My transformation experiences score was between 1 and 10.

A score of 0 can result from rating all experienced transformations as “neither good nor bad,” or from positive and negative ratings that cancel one another out.

*Group percentages are calculated among respondents who said they experienced at least one workplace transformation, rather than the full sample.

Question text	**CNG_RATE.** Overall, how would you rate your personal experience with each of the following major changes or transformation(s) that you indicated have happened at your place(s) of employment in the past 12 months? (Please select one response for each.)	
Scale points	**Question text**	**Converted value**
	1. Very bad	-2
	2. Bad	-1
	3. Neither good nor bad	0
	4. Good	1
	5. Very good	2
	99. Don’t know / not sure	n/a
Workplace transformations	1. **Layoffs or workforce reductions:** A large group of employees were let go, roles were eliminated, or there was a pause on hiring new people 2. **Merger or acquisition:** Your company acquired or was acquired by another company which merged to form a single business entity 3. **Reorganization:** Your organization changed leadership, lines of reporting, eliminated products or services, or pivoted its overall business strategy 4. **AI implementation:** Employees were newly expected to use AI tools, such as generative AI-based platforms, in their day-to-day tasks 5. **Culture shift:** Workplace culture or expectations changed regarding employee behavior such as where you are meant to work (virtual or remote), the values your organization stands for, or its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion programming	

2021 to 2026 Timeline Sources

2021

Employees choose employers that align with their beliefs

2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: The Belief-Driven Employee

2022

Conversations on divisive issues are easier to have at work

2022 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust in the Workplace

2023

Employees partner with employer for change rather than take concerns public

2023 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

2024

Associates disadvantaged by transformation and AI implementation

2024 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work

2025

Employees* concerned about leaders' transparency regarding AI and its impact on jobs

2025 Edelman Trust Barometer Flash Poll: Trust and Artificial Intelligence at a Crossroads

2026

Employees would switch departments to avoid working for a manager with differing values

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer: Trust Amid Insularity

*Data shown in the 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer Flash Poll: Trust and Artificial Intelligence at a Crossroads is among the general population. 53% of employees in Brazil, 45% in China, 54% in Germany, 63% in the UK and 63% in the U.S. are concerned about business leaders' transparency regarding AI and its impact on jobs.

Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust at Work
Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

Rising Insecurity:
Job Loss Fears Jump; 1 in 4 Expect To Be Laid Off Soon

POP_EMO. Some people say they worry about many things while others say they have few concerns. We are interested in what you worry about. Specifically, how much do you worry about each of the following?

Shortened text	Full text
Automation	Automation and/or other innovations taking your job away
Cheaper foreign competitors	Cheaper foreign competitors driving companies like yours out of business
Gig economy	Permanent jobs with benefits being replaced by freelance, gig-economy or short-term jobs that do not offer benefits
International trade and tariffs	International conflicts about trade policies and tariffs hurting the company you work for
Lacking tracking and skills	Not having the training and skills necessary to get a good paying job
Looming recession	Losing your job as a result of a looming recession
Offshoring	Your job being moved to other countries where workers are paid less

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Stalling Mobility:
Expectations for Pay and Career Growth Rise, Employer Performance Lags

EMP_IMP. When considering an organization as a potential place of employment, how important is each of the following to you in deciding whether or not you would accept a job offer there?

Shortened text	Full text
I am paid fairly for the work I do	They pay me fairly for the work I do
There are many opportunities to move up in the organization	There are many opportunities for me to move up within the organization

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Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

Stalling Mobility:
Expectations for Pay and Career Growth Rise, Employer Performance Lags

EMP_VAL. Thinking about your current employer, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Shortened text	Full text
I am paid fairly for the work I do	I am being paid fairly for the work I do
There are many opportunities to move up in the organization	My employer provides me with many opportunities to move up within the organization

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The Workplace in Flux:
3 in 4 Employees Have Experienced At Least One Transformation in Past 12 Months; Over 4 in 10 Have Experienced 3+ Transformations in the Past Year

CNG_HAP. Think about the organization(s) you have worked for over the past 12 months. For each of the following types of major changes or transformations, please indicate whether each has happened at any organization you have worked for in the past 12 months.

Shortened text	Full text
AI integration	AI implementation: Employees were newly expected to use AI tools, such as generative AI-based platforms, in their day-to-day tasks
Strategy shift	Reorganization: Your organization changed leadership, lines of reporting, eliminated products or services, or pivoted its overall business strategy
Culture shift	Culture shift: Workplace culture or expectations changed regarding employee behavior such as where you are meant to work (virtual or remote), the values your organization stands for, or its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion programming
Layoffs or workforce reductions	Layoffs or workforce reductions: A large group of employees were let go, roles were eliminated, or there was a pause on hiring new people
Merger or acquisition	Merger or acquisition: Your company acquired or was acquired by another company which merged to form a single business entity

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Over Past Two Years, Employees Feel Less Trusted by Leaders

TRU_ME. Below is a list of people. For each one, please indicate how much you feel trusted by them.

Shortened text	Full text
My manager	My direct boss or manager
Executive management	The executive management of the organization that I work for
My CEO	The CEO or leader of the company / organization that I work for
My head of HR	The head of HR

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Associates Feel Skeptical of and Disconnected from Leaders' Communications

EMP_VAL. Thinking about your current employer, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Shortened text	Full text
Management communicates regularly with employees about organizational matters	Management communicates regularly with employees about what is happening within the organization

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Artificial Intelligence Encroaches on Manager Responsibilities

AI_VS_MGR. Think about your interactions with your manager and with the AI platforms you use at work. For each of the following statements, please indicate whether it better describes your manager, the AI platforms you use, both equally well, or neither.

Shortened text	Full text
Making me feel valued as an employee	Makes me feel valued as an employee
Inspiring me to think creatively	Inspires me to think creatively about how to solve problems
Helping me solve difficult problems	Helps me find solutions to difficult problems
Teaching me new technical skills	Teaches me new technical skills

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Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

Transformation Can Worsen or Improve My Workplace Experience

CNG_BAD. You just indicated that your personal experience with one or more of the major changes or transformations that happened at your workplace(s) in the past year was bad or very bad. Why is that? Pick all that apply.

Shortened text	Full text
Added more work without pay	I had to take on more work than I was doing before without additional pay
Lacked alignment with our strategy	It wasn't clear to me why this change was made or how it aligned with the company's long-term strategy
Created divisions among employees	It created divisions among employees, making it more difficult for them to work with people they disagree with
Came as a surprise	It came as a complete surprise to me and I didn't have time to plan for or adjust to it
Made meeting customer needs harder	It made it harder for me to adequately meet the needs of our company's clients and customers

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Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

Transformation Can Worsen or Improve My Workplace Experience

CNG_GOOD. You just indicated that your personal experience with one or more of the major changes or transformations that happened at your workplace(s) in the past year was good or very good. Why is that? Pick all that apply.

Shortened text	Full text
Made my workload more manageable	My workload became more manageable
Aligned with our strategy	It was clear to me why this change was made or how it aligns with the company's long-term strategy
Gave me adequate training	I received adequate training or guidance about how to adjust to this change
Made meeting customer needs easier	It made it easier for me to adequately meet the needs of our company's clients and customers
Gave me opportunity for growth	I received more upward mobility and opportunity for career growth

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With Poor Transformation Experiences, Difference Becomes a Barrier to Trust

TRU_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right.

Shortened text	Full text
Coworkers with different backgrounds than me	My coworkers that have a different culture, background, or life experiences than me
Coworkers with different values than me	My coworkers that live by different core values than me

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With Poor Transformation Experiences, Less Likely to Embrace Innovation

EMP_TEC_COM_AI. How would you characterize your feelings about the growing use of artificial intelligence such as machine learning, natural language processing, and generative AI in the workplace?

Shortened text	Full text
Enthusiastic	Enthusiastic: I am excited about this. I actively seek out organizations that use these technologies.
Passionate	Passionate: I am a big advocate for this. I actively seek out organizations that use these technologies, and I actively encourage others to do the same.

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To Drive Positive Experiences, Give Employees Agency Over What Transformation Means For Them

CNG_GOOD. You just indicated that your personal experience with one or more of the major changes or transformations that happened at your workplace(s) in the past year was good or very good. Why is that? Pick all that apply.

Shortened text	Full text
I received adequate guidance	I received adequate training or guidance about how to adjust to this change
I had time to plan	I had adequate time to plan for and adjust to the change
My skills grew	I was newly assigned tasks that were highly visible to leadership, would get me promoted, or that were a greater stretch of my skillset
My concerns were listened to	My concerns about the major change or transformation were listened to

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Transformation Is Justified by Tangible Outcomes: Productivity, Stability, Wellbeing, and Survival

TRN_REA_[1-5]. If your employer decided to carry out a [workplace transformation such as AI integration, strategy shift, culture shift, layoffs, or merger], what would you consider to be the best motivation or reason? Pick up to three reasons.

Shortened text	Full text
Improving productivity	Productivity: if it improves overall output of the organization
Improving organizational stability	Long-term stability: if it means my organization will be resilient in the face of uncertainty
Improving employee wellbeing	Employee wellbeing: if it helps employees to feel more valued and mentally well at work
Ensuring company survival	Company survival: if it is the only thing the organization can do to survive, and all other options have been exhausted
Avoiding political backlash	Political pressure: if it means my employer avoids political backlash and retribution
Improving shareholder value	Shareholder value: if it raises share prices and stock value for shareholders

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To Keep Workforce Informed, Communicate Through Two-Way Conversations Over One-Way Information Sharing

TRN_CHL_[1-5]. Where would you want to hear about what your organization is doing to carry out a [workplace transformation such as AI integration, strategy shift, culture shift, layoffs, or merger]? Pick all that apply.

Shortened text	Full text
Meeting with my team	Meeting with my direct team
Talking with my manager	Through my direct manager
Employee-only social media	Employee-only social media such as Fishbowl, Glassdoor, WhatsApp, OpenWork, Blind, Viva Engage or Maimai
Internal company webpage or bulletin board	A common information point such as a bulletin board or internal company webpage

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Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

Be Transparent About Your Uncertainty: Share What You Do and Do Not Know About Change

CEO_TON. When undergoing a major change or transformation within a workplace, there will always be some amount of uncertainty that arises from it. For each of the following, please indicate which is the more effective way for a CEO to communicate amid uncertainty resulting from a major change or transformation in the workplace. Please select only one of the two options given.

Shortened text	Full text
Share what they do and don't know for certain	They share both what they are certain about and what they don't know OR They only share what they are certain about
Only share what they know for certain	

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Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

Be Empathetic With Their Uncertainty: Acknowledge Employees' Experiences Over Making a Business Case

CEO_TON. When undergoing a major change or transformation within a workplace, there will always be some amount of uncertainty that arises from it. For each of the following, please indicate which is the more effective way for a CEO to communicate amid uncertainty resulting from a major change or transformation in the workplace. Please select only one of the two options given.

Shortened text	Full text
Acknowledge what employees are feeling	They are empathetic, acknowledging what employees are feeling and experiencing OR They are clinical and analytical, focusing on the business aspects rather than employees' feelings
Focus on the business aspects rather than employees' feelings	

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Full Text for Shortened Answer Choices

CEOs:
Partner With Managers to Foster Transparency

TRN_VOI_[1-5]. For each of the following pieces of information that you could receive from your employer about an AI integration, strategy shift, culture shift, layoffs, or merger they were carrying out, please indicate who you are most likely to trust to tell you the truth.

Shortened text	Full text
My manager	My direct boss or supervisor
Coworkers at my same job level	My co-workers who share the same job level as me
My head of HR	The head of Human Resources