# Future of Time



REDEFINING PRODUCTIVITY DURING UNCERTAINTY

A global study fielded by Adobe Document Cloud

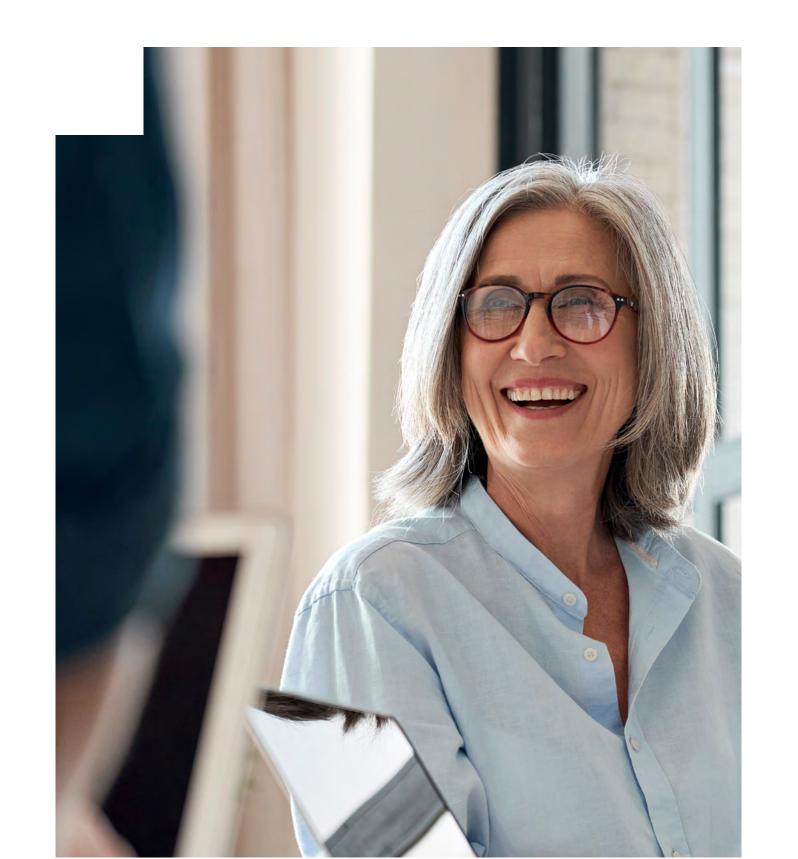




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## Future of Time

Adobe Document Cloud conducted a study to understand the impact that global uncertainty and change are having on **productivity**, **work culture**, and **innovation**.

**Uncertainty** is defined as the occurrence of unplanned news or events, globally and in the workplace, that make it difficult to predict the future of work.



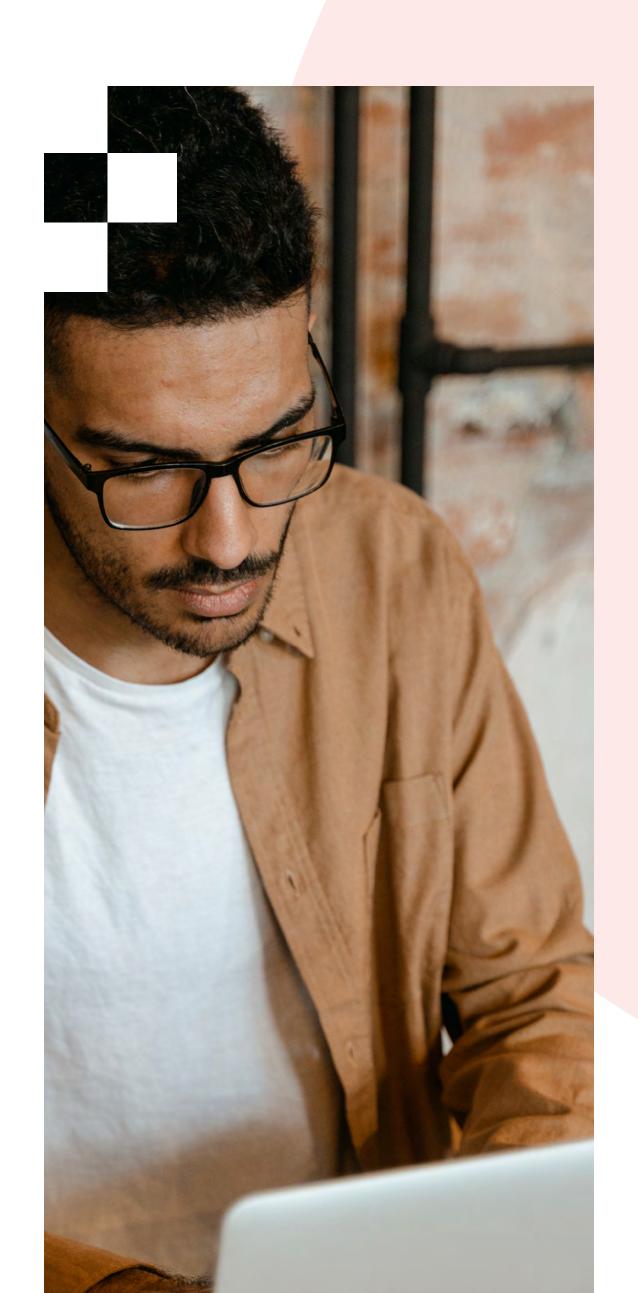
Small and medium business (SMB) leaders



**Enterprise managers** 



**Employees (SMB and enterprise)** 



#### Key areas of exploration

- How is the global workforce experiencing uncertainty in the workplace and what effect is this change having on how people spend their time?
- Are employees getting the support they need to navigate uncertainty from their managers and employers?
- → In what ways is uncertainty fueling business innovation and new ways of collaboration?

### Survey methodology

Adobe Document Cloud conducted a 20-minute survey among enterprise employees, enterprise managers, SMB leaders, and SMB employees in eight global markets, fielded July 11th-August 6th, 2022.

#### Audiences

- **Enterprise managers** (n=1400)
- (n=3500)

SMB leaders (n=1400)

SMB employees (n=3503)

#### **Audience definitions**

- Those employed at enterprise-size companies (1,000+ employees) who have direct reports and use digital documents at work.
- Those employed at enterprise documents at work.
- Those who handle contracts and documents that need legal signatures for a small or medium business they own or lead.
- **2**b
  - **Micro businesses** (1–9 employees)
  - **Small businesses** (10–99 employees)
  - **Medium businesses** (100-999 employees)

size companies who use digital

**Enterprise employees** 

Those employed at small or medium businesses who use digital documents at work but are not in a leadership role.

#### Markets -

US, UK, France, Germany, Australia & New Zealand, Japan, and India

#### Sample size

N=9,789

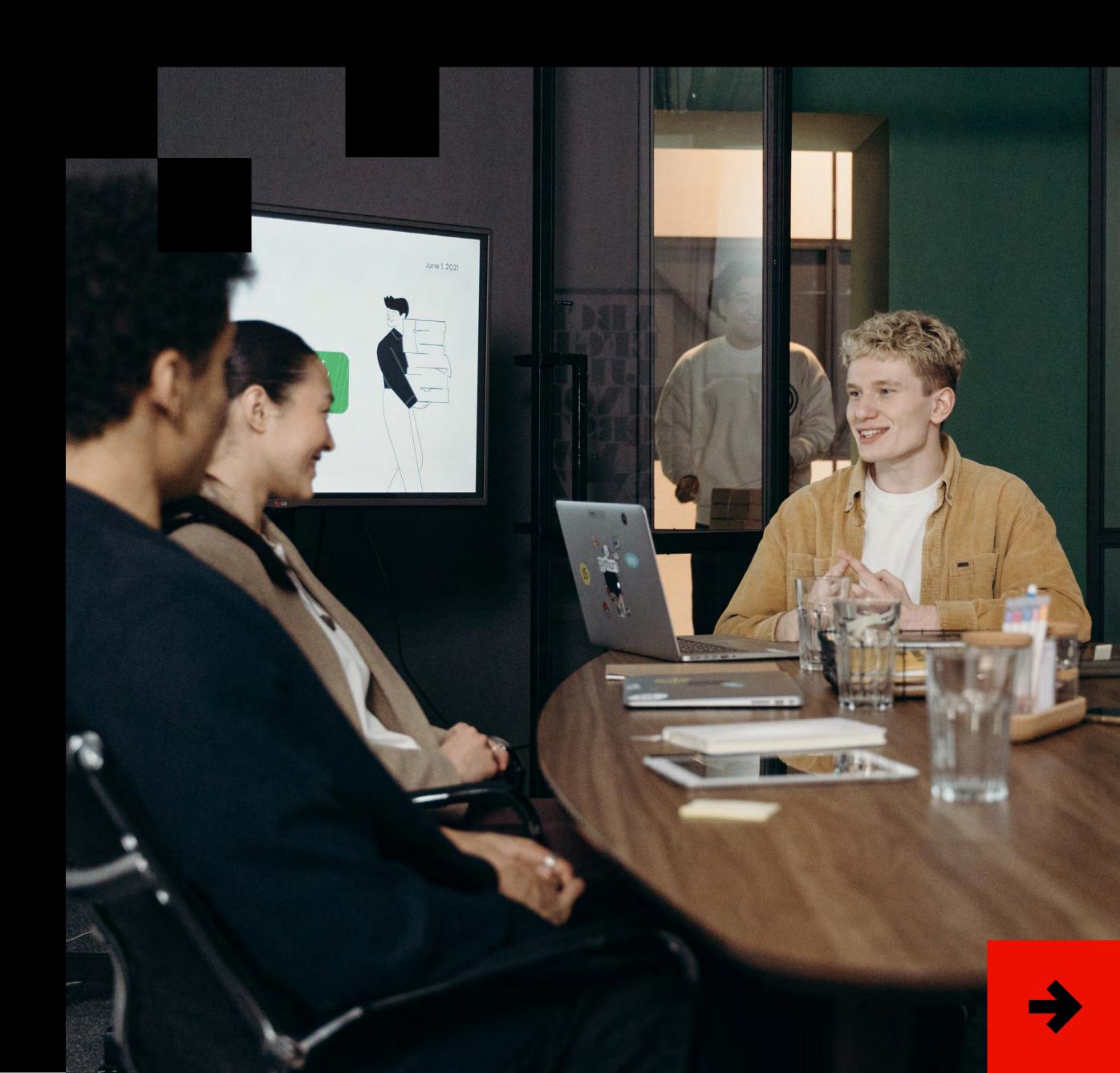
(n=1400 in the US, IN & UK, n= 1399 in AU/NZ, n=1398 in FR & DE, n= 1394 in JP)

#### Method -

20-minute online survey

Fielded July-August 2022 (7/11-8/6)

## Executive SUMMERY



## Change is the new constant in the workplace.

**1** 

Persistent global uncertainty is changing the ways managers and employees spend and prioritize their time, taking a toll on their productivity and efficiency, and decreasing job satisfaction. Relationships between employees and their managers have evolved as they continue to find new ways of working together amid uncertainties, with a renewed emphasis on a need for employee support.

- At least **70% of all audiences** agree that change is the new constant in the workplace and **64% of SMB leaders** are concerned about the future success of their business amid growing uncertainty. Economic instability and inflation are perceived across all markets as the most personally concerning driver of uncertainty today.
- → **70% of all audiences** report they are spending several additional hours during the workday absorbing or discussing news coverage compared to a year ago. **80%** say this has a direct effect on productivity and overall job satisfaction.
- Nearly 3 in 5 find work a welcome distraction in times of uncertainty and are turning to their workplace for support. Most managers are meeting employee expectations for providing support during uncertainty, but workers feel business leaders are not as concerned as they are about the biggest drivers of uncertainty.

## Technology is critical in supporting employees amidst uncertainty.

**1** 

Uncertainty is fueling business innovation and new ways of collaboration. Business leaders and employees are continually adapting—and already seeing benefits—by using their time and leveraging digital tools in new and creative ways and employees are eager to participate. Continued investment in technology is the primary way workers expect their companies to innovate, and in tandem with continued purpose-driven work culture investment, will lead to future business success amid uncertainty.

- → 7 in 10 SMB leaders agree constant uncertainty is forcing their business to innovate and come up with new ways to collaborate, that uncertainty is requiring them to innovate in their position via technology and business processes, and that uncertainty has sharpened their entrepreneurial mindset.
- 70-75% of all audiences report that they rely on digital tools for peace-of-mind at work, for staying productive when they have trouble focusing, and to ease the stress of completing work when a coworker needs to take time off to process unexpected events.
- 1 in 2 enterprise managers have invested in digital technologies or in-house tech to support employees during uncertainty in the past year.
- 77% of SMB Leaders, 88% of enterprise managers, and 70% of all employees expect at least one benefit from investing in digital tools (i.e., improved productivity and collaboration). Employees whose employers have invested in digital solutions or who report a purpose-driven work culture report significantly higher job satisfaction and work/life balance and are significantly more likely to stay at their current job.

# Employees are seeking both modern tech and a purpose-driven work culture.

**1** 

Amid uncertainty, employees are seeking out a purpose-driven work culture that prioritizes values of support and wellbeing. Companies that build a work culture based on employee values are more likely to retain talent. Managers are generally aligned with their employees on what changes should be made to make this happen but need more autonomy and resources from senior leadership to execute.

- → Half of employees and 2 in 3 managers have higher expectations for their employer to have a purpose-driven culture compared to a year ago.
- 3 in 4 employees (78%) say they are looking for a more supportive work culture to motivate them to stay in their current role. Employees whose values align with their work culture are 15% less likely to pursue a new job in the next year.
- When asked what workers need from their employers to help navigate uncertainty, they prioritize mental health and flexibility benefits.
- About two-thirds of managers feel they need more autonomy and better tools and resources from senior leadership in order to help create the work culture that employees need to thrive.

# Detailed findings



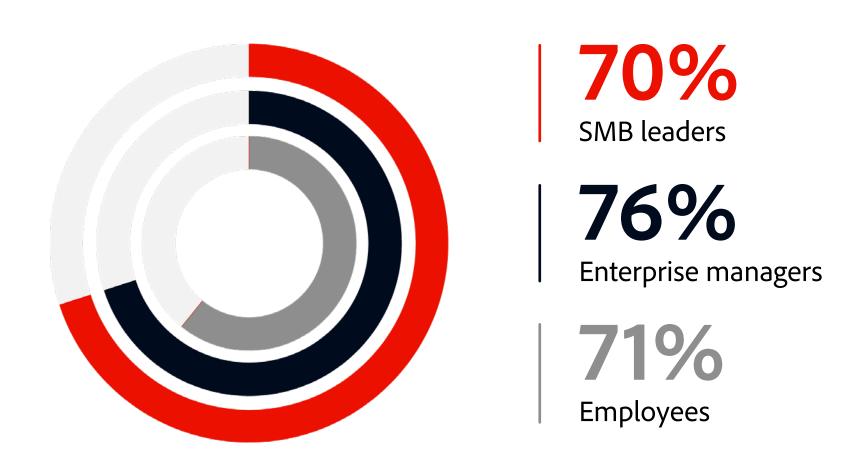


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## Global change and disruption is driving uncertainty across the global workforce and business community.

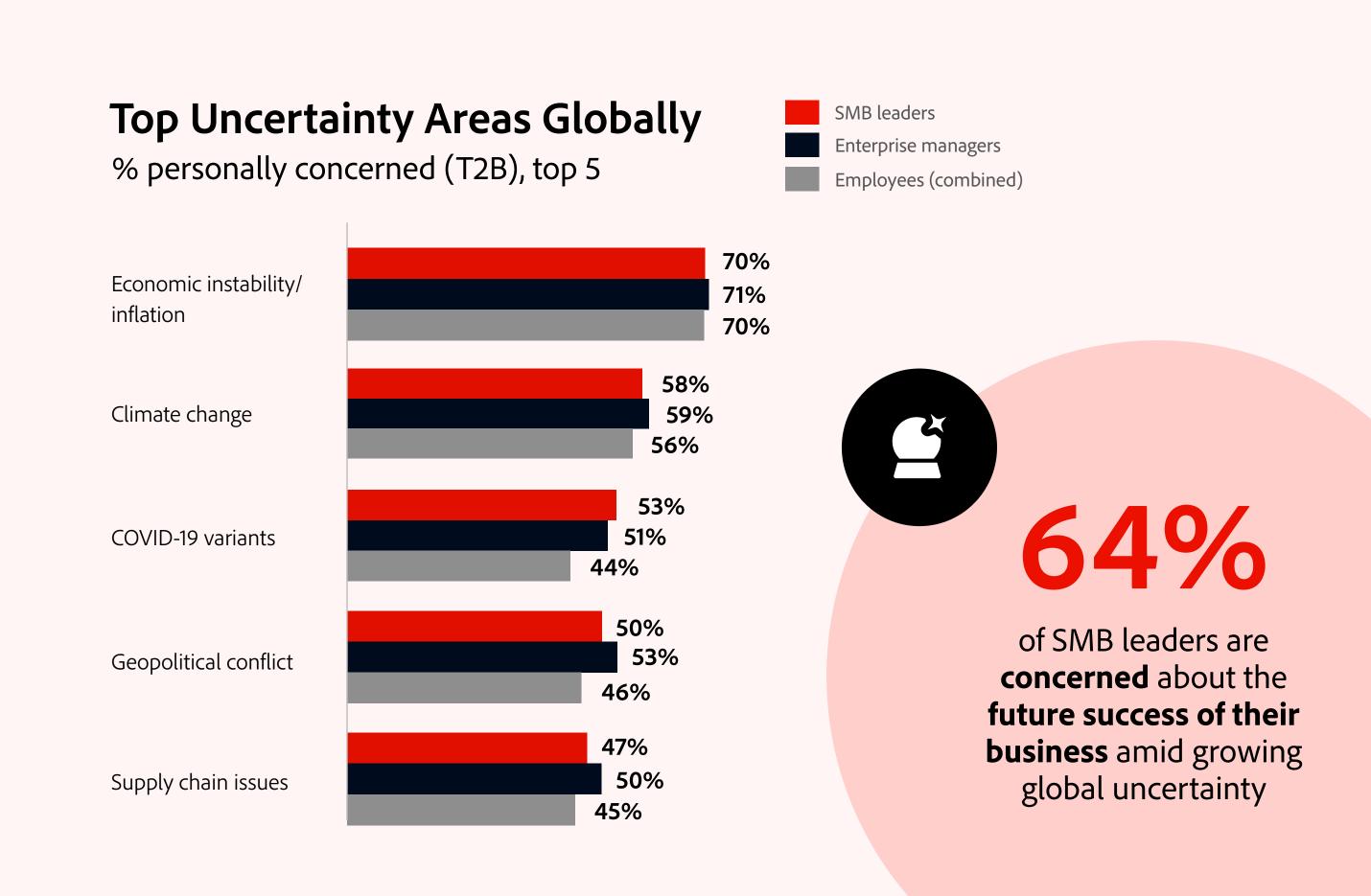
## "Change is the new constant in the workplace"

% agree (T2B)





| US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 74% | 72% | 81%   | 58% | 65% | 58% | 83% |
| 80% | 83% | 82%   | 64% | 78% | 62% | 86% |
| 78% | 77% | 79%   | 60% | 61% | 54% | 81% |

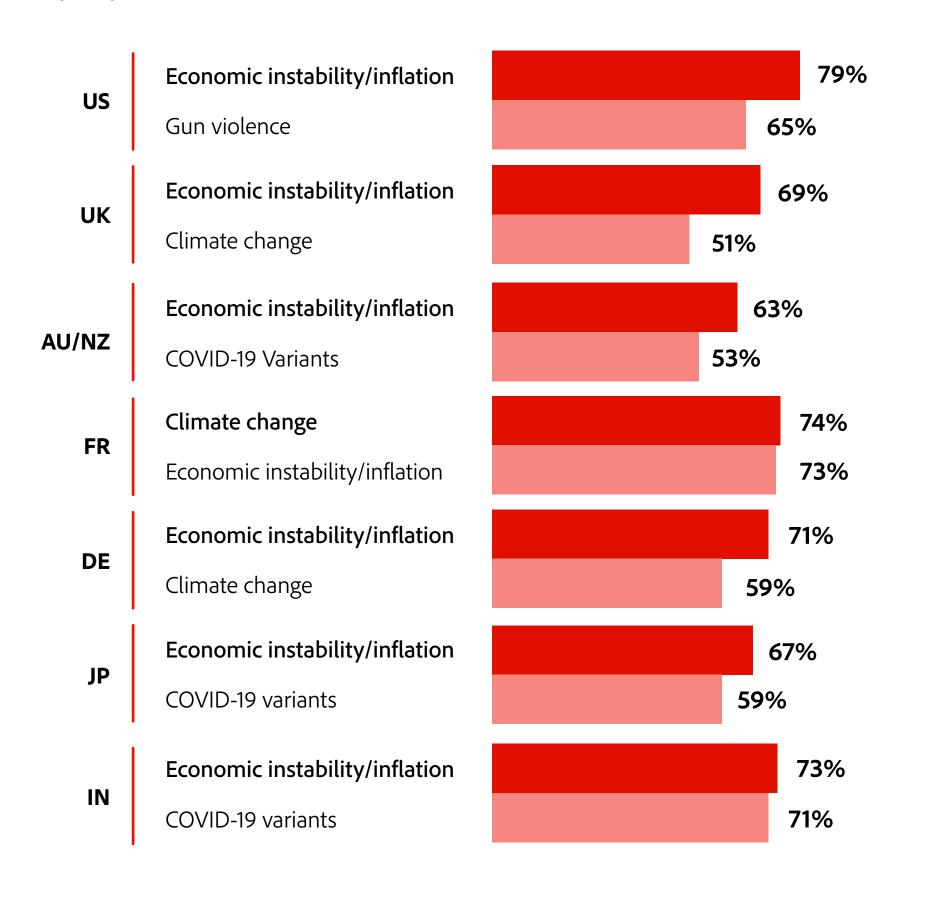


# While economic instability is top-of-mind for most global workers, regional uncertainties drive concern in unique ways.

Climate change is a major concern among European workers while COVID-19 variants remain highly concerning for those in the Asia Pacific.







"

The war in Ukraine and the major climate changes have impacted our way of doing business. COVID has also made us think differently."

— ENT Manager, France

6

In the wake of the new coronavirus, we are finding it increasingly difficult to see the future in business."

— SMB Employee, Japan

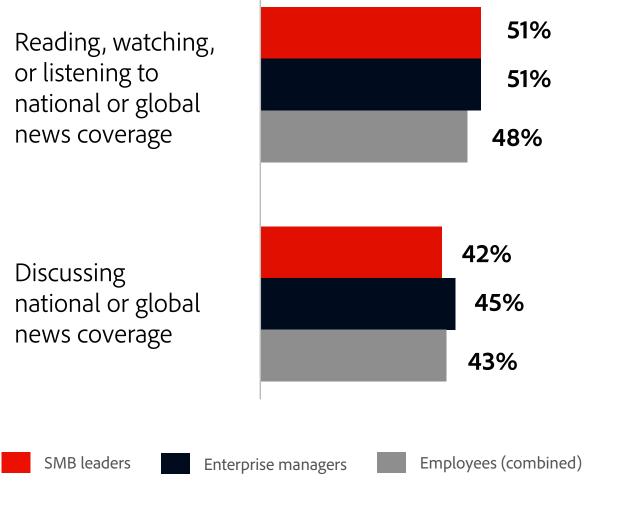
66

The ability to operate in the public space, COVID-19 rules kept changing on a regular basis, making planning almost impossible... the result being a large amount of stress caused."

— SMB Employee, Australia

### Uncertainty has impacted how workers and leaders spend their time.





## Hours per workday spent absorbing or discussing news coverage

% selected among total respondents



**Reading**, watching, or listening to national or global news coverage

hour per day

**Discussing** national or global news coverage

70% of total respondents

absorbing or discussing news coverage compared to a year ago

SMB leaders and enterprise managers are on average spending

3 hours per day

reading, watching, or listening to national or global news coverage during each workday.

## Uncertainty has decreased efficiency and productivity and lowered job satisfaction.

The same top-of-mind uncertainty areas (economic instability/inflation) cause the most negative impact on productivity. Gen Z employees are especially likely to feel an impact on their productivity from the negative news cycle.

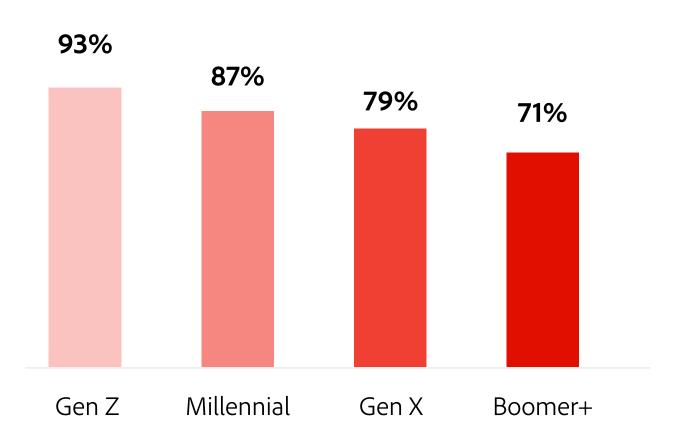
44%

of employees feel more
anxious and more
discouraged during
work than ever before

80%

of total respondents have found at least one global issue of concern negatively impacts their productivity and overall job satisfaction

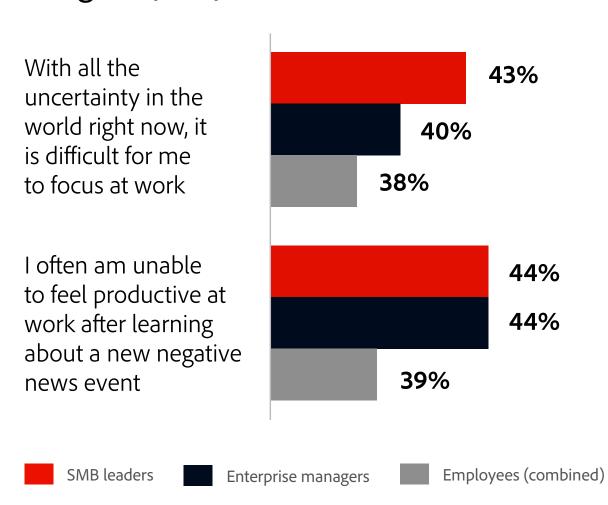
% selected, among employees



76%

of employees report a breaking news event typically impacts their workday for at least a few hours

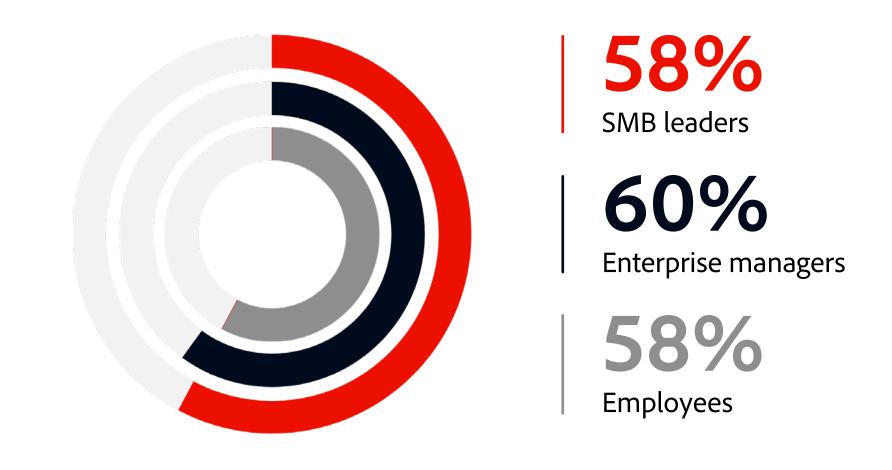
% agree (T2B)



## Many turn to work as a distraction and to their managers for support during times of uncertainty.

## "Work is a welcome distraction in times of uncertainty."

% agree (T2B)



| 2 |  |
|---|--|

| US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 71% | 65% | 63%   | 52% | 56% | 29% | 70% |
| 70% | 62% | 69%   | 57% | 59% | 28% | 75% |
| 63% | 62% | 66%   | 55% | 58% | 26% | 66% |

73%

#### of employees

say their managers are meeting or exceeding their expectations in providing support amid uncertainty 3 in 5

## SMB leaders and enterprise managers

say uncertainty has brought them closer to their direct reports than before

## Relationships between employees and their managers have evolved as they continue to find new ways of working together amid uncertainties.



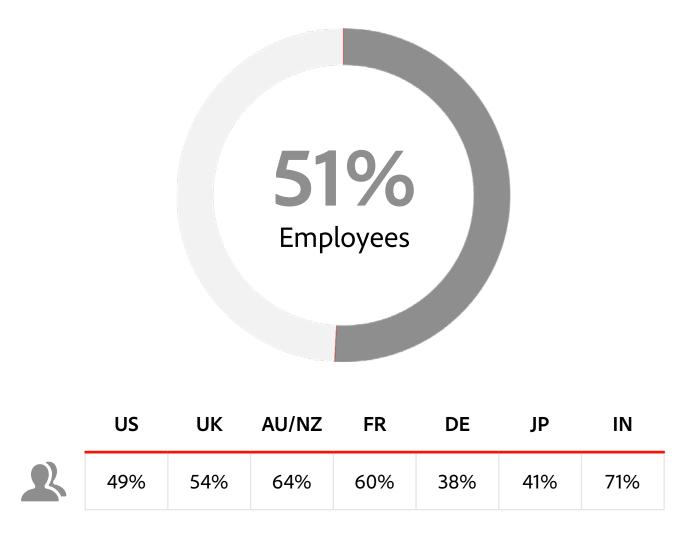
Gen Z employees are

10-20%

more likely than older employees
to feel comfortable discussing how
uncertainty is impacting their work
with their manager and half feel
this has brought them closer to their
manager than ever before

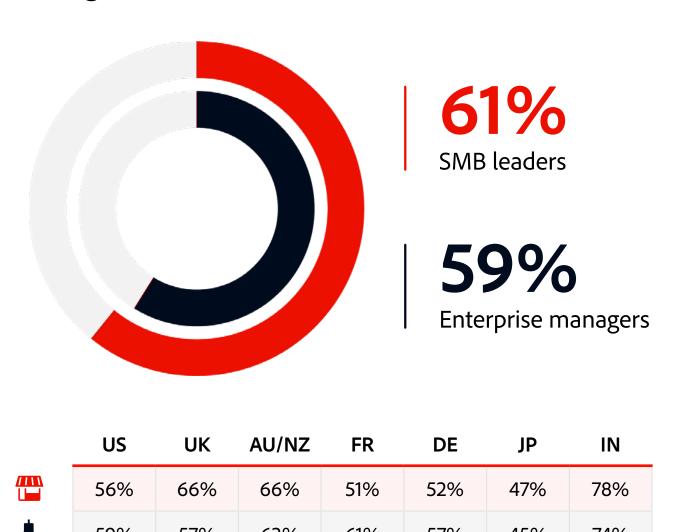
"I feel comfortable discussing with my manager how uncertainty is affecting my work experience."

% agree (T2B)



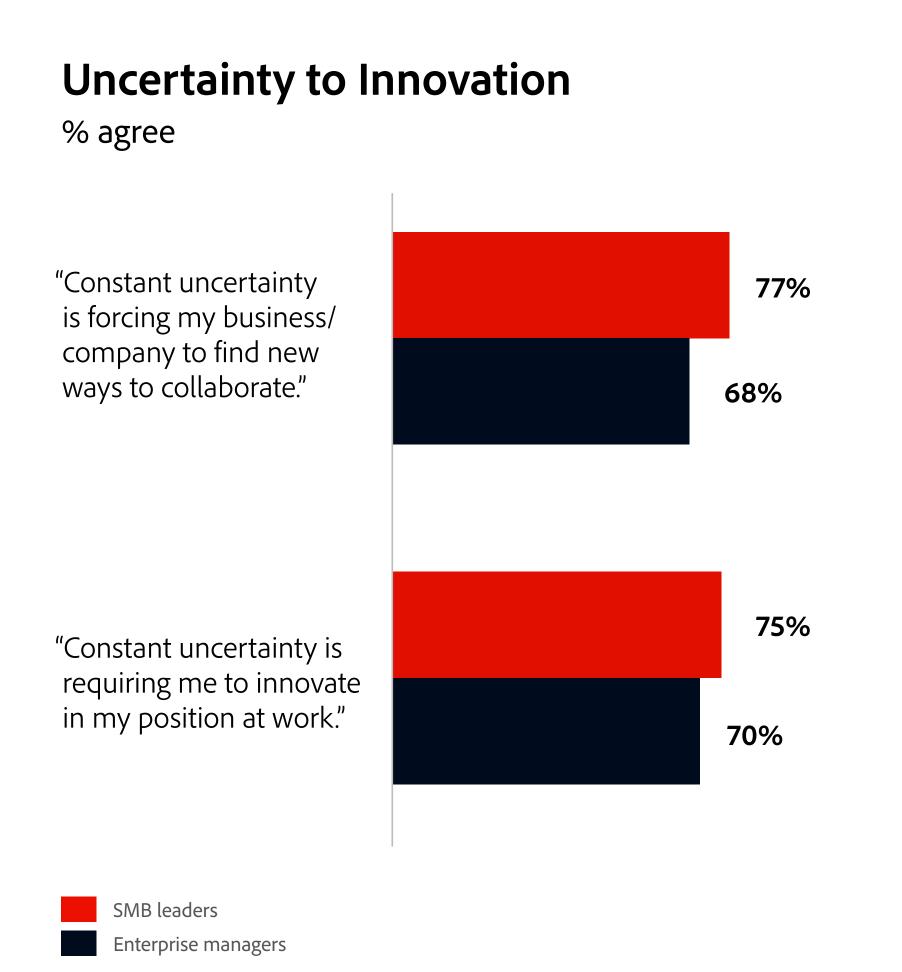
"Dealing with constant uncertainty has brought me closer to my direct reports than before."

% agree (T2B)



# Uncertainty fuels innovation.

# Global businesses are tapping into innovative mindsets like never before.



I think nowadays we have to adapt to different environments and constantly learn new skills to improve ourselves because in our country competition is very high."

— SMB Leader, India



feel that **innovation** has become a core business value in the past year

**Q25.** How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Q26. With change the new constant in the workplace, employees and their employers are having to adapt in new and creative ways. In response to increasing uncertainty in the workplace in the past year, in what ways have you observed more innovation at your business/company? Please select all that apply.

## Improvements to work efficiency and culture have been the most notable benefits of investing in innovation to date.

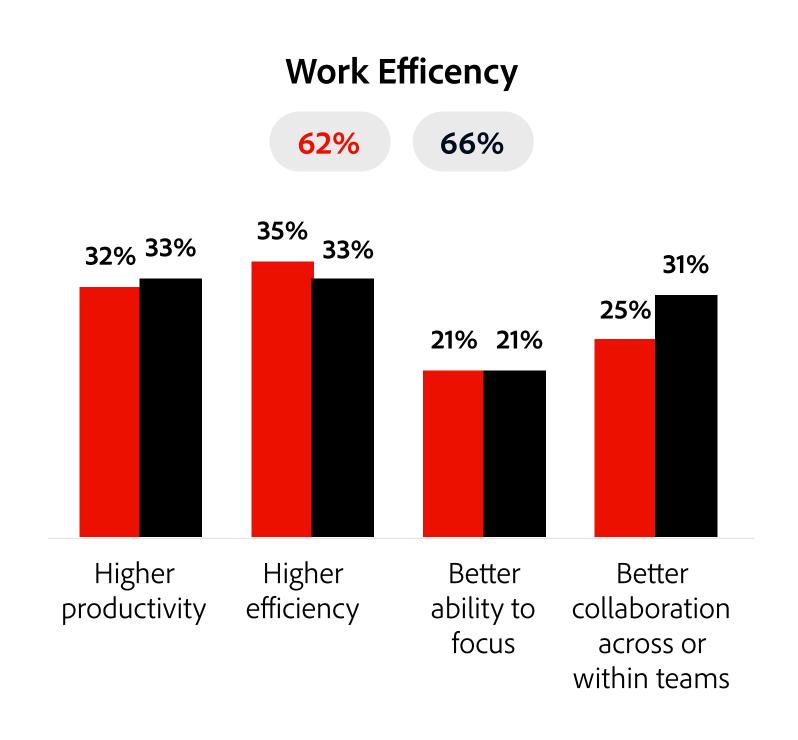
8 in 10

SMB leaders & enterprise managers

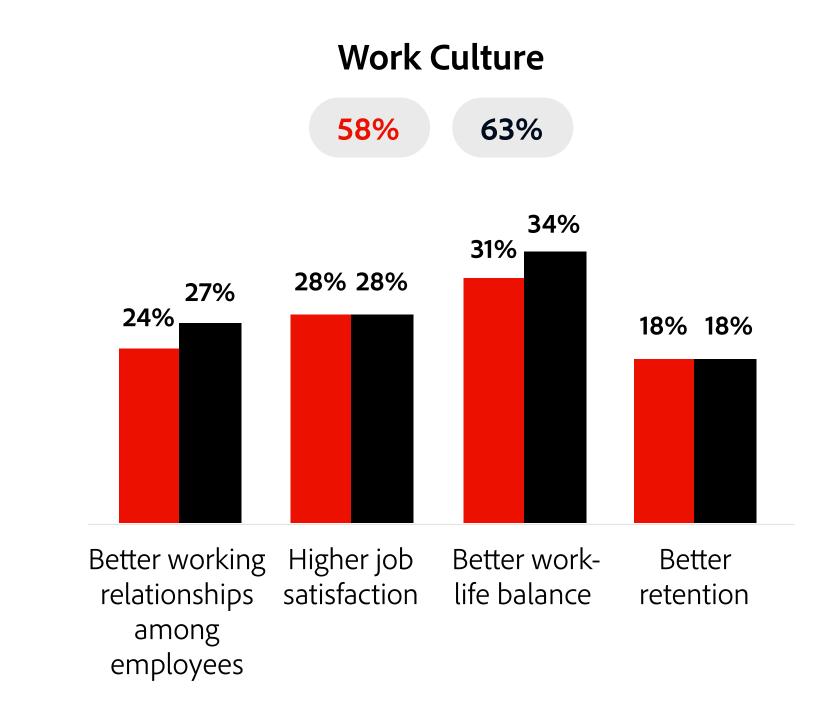
have observed at least one benefit of increased innovation in the workplace, including impact on....

#### **Innovation Outcomes**

% selected



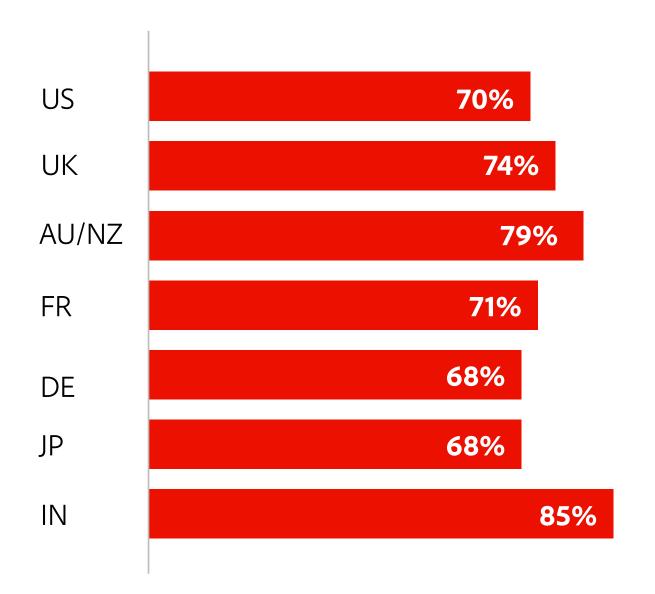




### Workers in India are especially likely to report uncertainty has fueled innovation and are experiencing major benefits as a result.

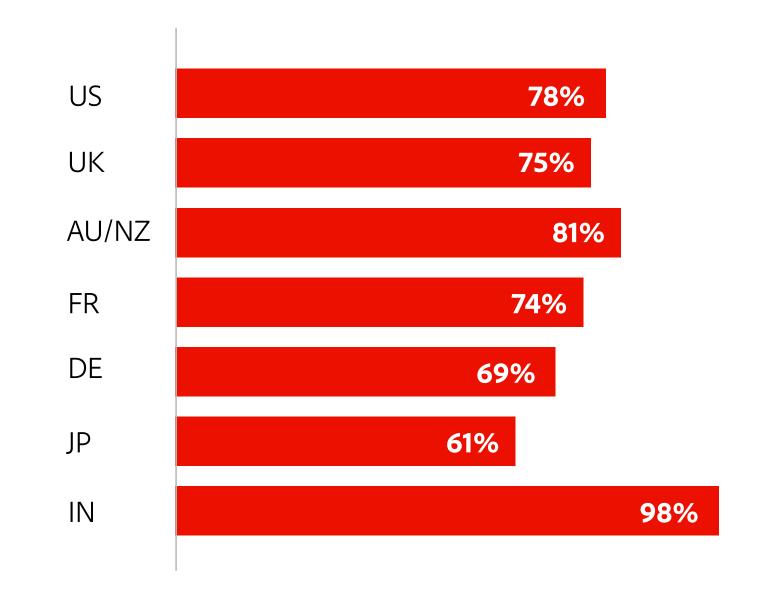
#### "Constant uncertainty is forcing my business to innovate"

% agree (T2B)



#### Observed at least one example of innovation in the past year

% agree (T2B)





## 9 in 10

#### workers in India

have observed positive impacts on work efficiency and work culture as a result of increased innovation

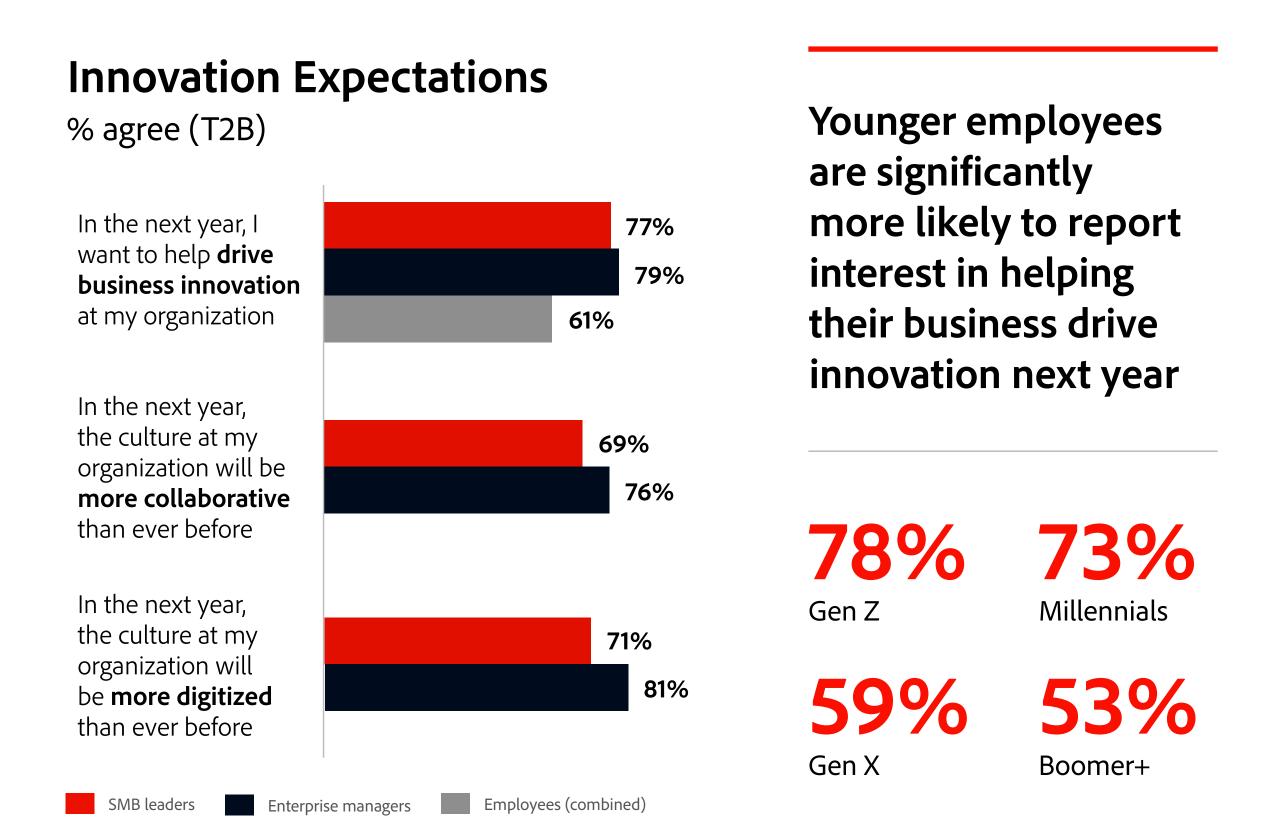
(nearly 30% higher than in the US or Europe)

Q29. What outcomes have you observed in your organization as a result of increased innovation? Please select all that apply.

**Q25.** How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Q27. In response to increasing uncertainty in the workplace in the past year, in what ways have you observed more innovation at your business/company? Please select all that apply.

## Leadership and management will increasingly prioritize future growth through innovation and digital technologies...



Invested in digital technologies or in-house tech to support employees during uncertainty in the past year

% selected

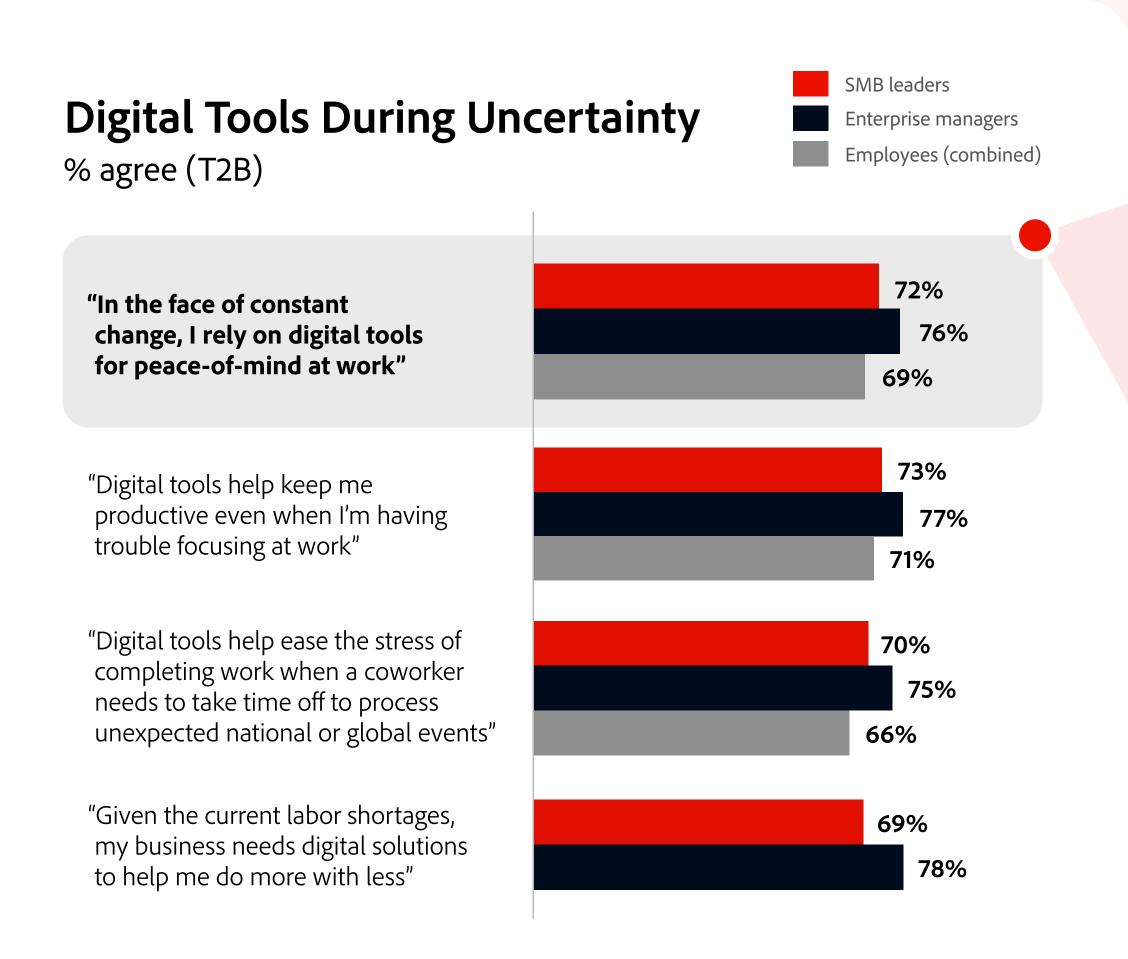


| US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 33% | 41% | 38%   | 36% | 34% | 28% | 72% |
| 46% | 50% | 50%   | 50% | 44% | 31% | 65% |

**Q26.** With change the new constant in the workplace, employees and their employers are having to adapt in new and creative ways. In response to increasing uncertainty in the workplace in the past year, in what ways have you observed more innovation at your business/company? Please select all that apply. Q31. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Q30. In the next year, in which of the following ways, if any, do you expect your business/company will innovate?

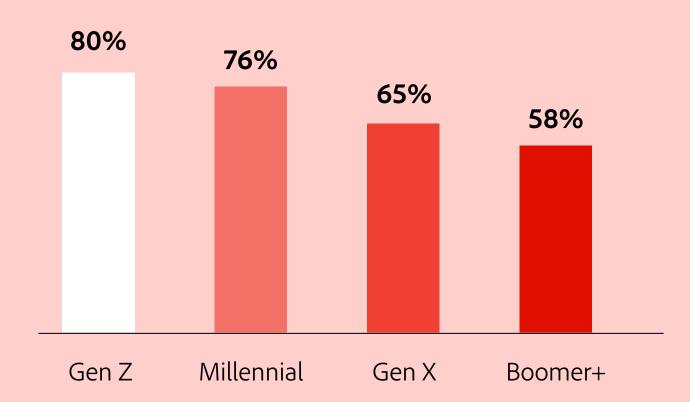
Base: SMB Leaders: n=1400, ENT managers: n=200, AU/NZ SMB: n=200, FR SMB: n=200, DE SMB: n=200, JP SMB: n=200, IN SMB: n=200, US SMB Leaders: usually SMB: n=200, US SMB Leaders: usually SMB: n=200, AU/NZ SMB: n=200, FR SMB: n=200, DE SMB: n=200, JP SMB: n=200, IN SMB: n=200, US ENT Managers: n=200, UK ENT: n=201, FR ENT: n=201, DE ENT: n=201, JP ENT

#### ...which will help both employees and businesses navigate future uncertainty.



"In the face of constant change, I rely on digital tools for peace-of-mind at work"

% agree (T2B), among employees



## **Just over**

#### of employees

report that uncertainty has required them to innovate in their position

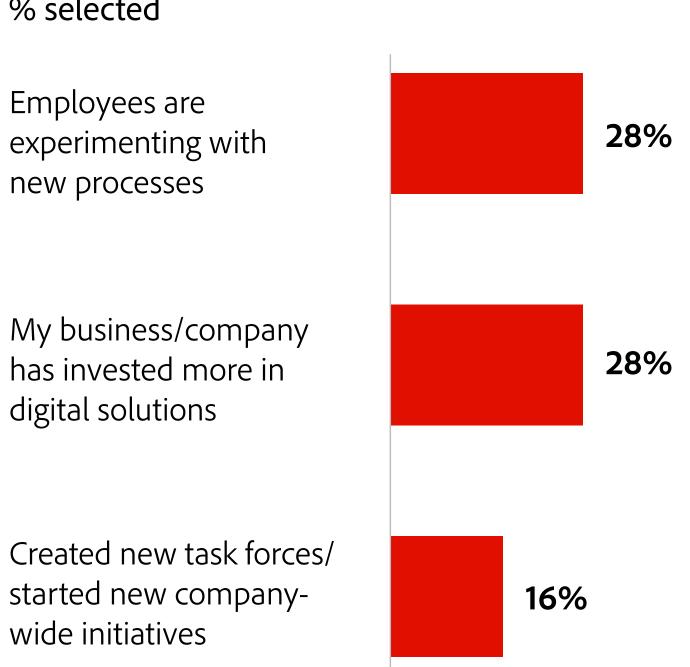
#### employees

expect their business/ company to innovate in the next year by giving employees the opportunity to experiment with new processes

### Digital solutions allow employees — particularly Gen Z — organic ways to collaborate on their own, contributing to their employer's overall innovation growth.

#### **Employee Innovation Observation**

% selected



Younger employees are significantly more likely to report observations of innovation at their company, including:

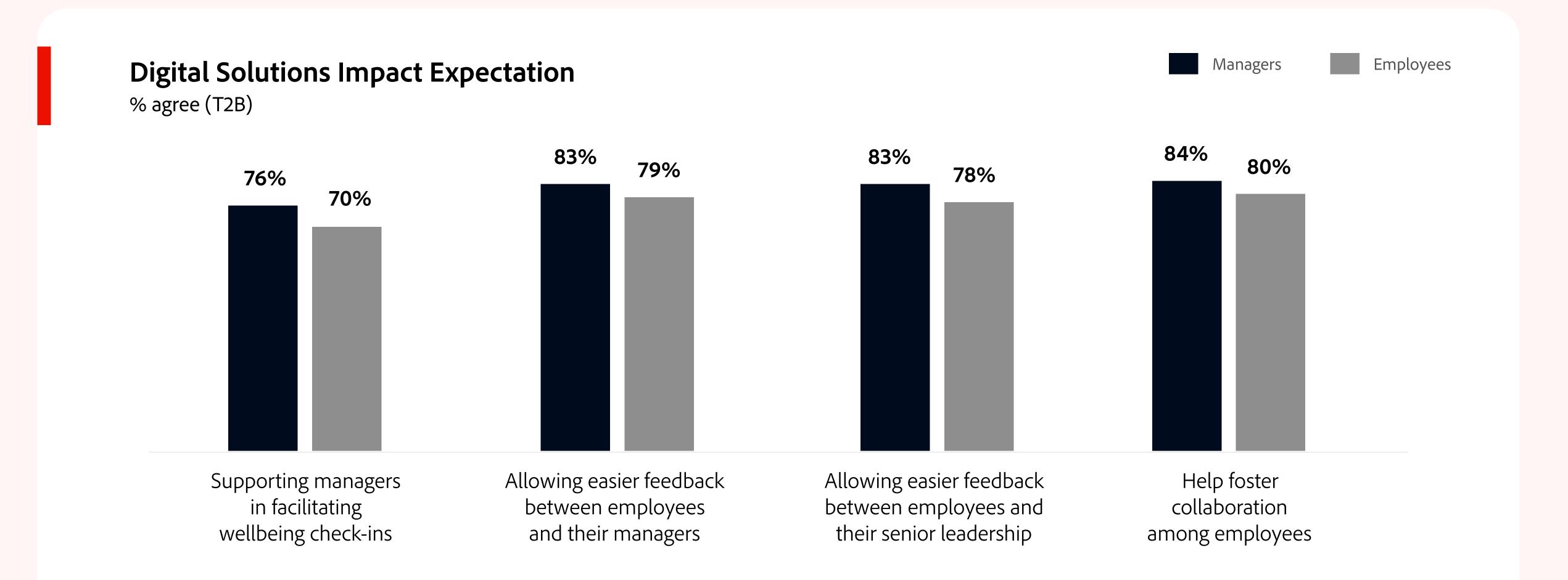
| Employees experimenting with new processes | <b>38%</b> Gen Z | <b>26%</b> Boomer+ |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Investment in digital solutions            | <b>33%</b> Gen Z | <b>25%</b> Boomer+ |
| New or expanded employee task forces       | <b>25%</b> Gen Z | <b>15%</b> Boomer+ |

**Q25.** How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Q27. In response to increasing uncertainty in the workplace in the past year, in what ways have you observed more innovation at your business/company? Please select all that apply.

Q30. In the next year, in which of the following ways, if any, do you expect your business/company will innovate? Please select all that apply.

## They also allow managers easier channels to facilitate and improve their relationships with their direct reports.



### Looking forward, business leaders and employees alike expect digital tool investments to continue paying for themselves through positive business outcomes.

#### Expectations of investing in digital tools

% agree (T2B)











**Productivity** 

Ability to Manage Uncertainty

Collaboration

**Innovation** 

Retention

of **SMB** 

of **enterprise** 

of **enterprise** managers

of **SMB** 

leaders

of **SMB** leaders

of **enterprise** 

of **SMB** 

of **enterprise** 

of **SMB** 

leaders

of **enterprise** 

managers

Those who expect at least one benefit from investing in digital tools

**77%** 

SMB leaders

88%

Enterprise managers

**Employees** 



A growing appreciation for a purposedriven culture.

#### Gen Z employees are

26%



more likely than Boomer+ employees to have higher expectations around a purpose-driven work culture

## Amid uncertainty, employees are seeking out a purpose-driven culture that prioritizes employee support and wellbeing.

"I have higher expectations for my employer to have a purpose-driven culture than I did one year ago"

% agree (T2B)



63% SMB leaders

**71%** Enterprise managers

56% Employees 3 in 4 employees

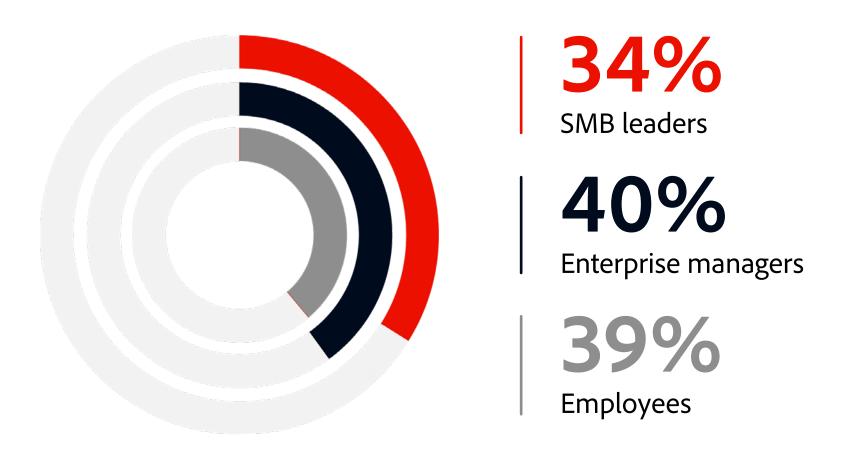
say they are looking for a more supportive work culture to motivate them to stay in their current role (78%)

|   | US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|---|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|   | 67% | 61% | 74%   | 77% | 66% | 71% | 95% |
|   | 77% | 80% | 86%   | 78% | 80% | 71% | 94% |
| 2 | 77% | 78% | 80%   | 80% | 78% | 73% | 91% |

Younger employees are nearly 10% more likely than Boomer+ employees to be motivated by a supportive work culture to stay in their current role (especially as it relates to mental health days and the ability to participate in employee task forces)

## Companies that build a work culture that matches its employees' values are most likely to retain talent.

## Likelihood to pursue a new job in the next year % agree (T2B)



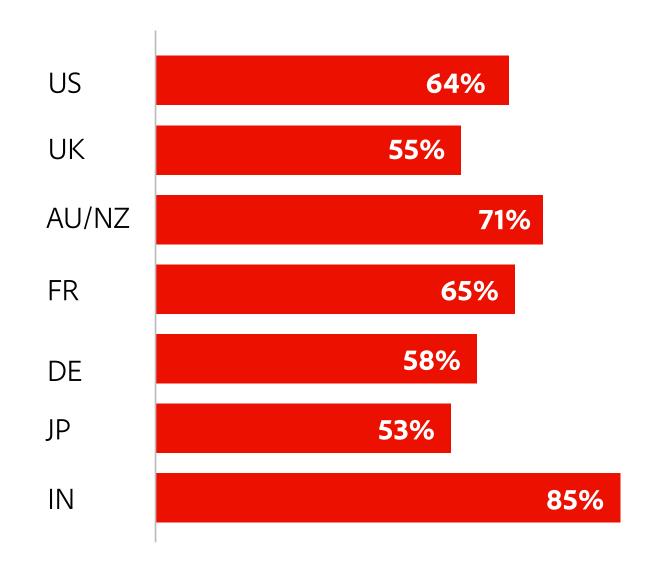
|   | US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|---|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|   | 30% | 29% | 35%   | 40% | 23% | 21% | 63% |
|   | 31% | 48% | 43%   | 37% | 29% | 20% | 69% |
| 2 | 34% | 43% | 38%   | 41% | 30% | 24% | 73% |

## Likelihood to pursue a new job in the next year % agree (T2B)

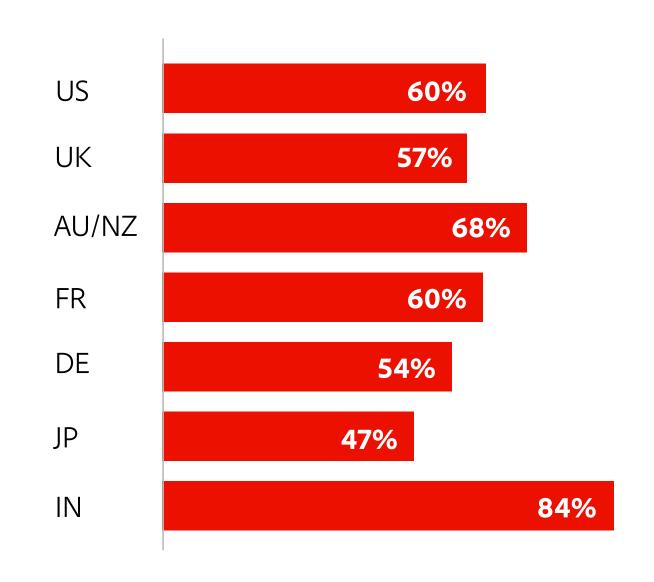


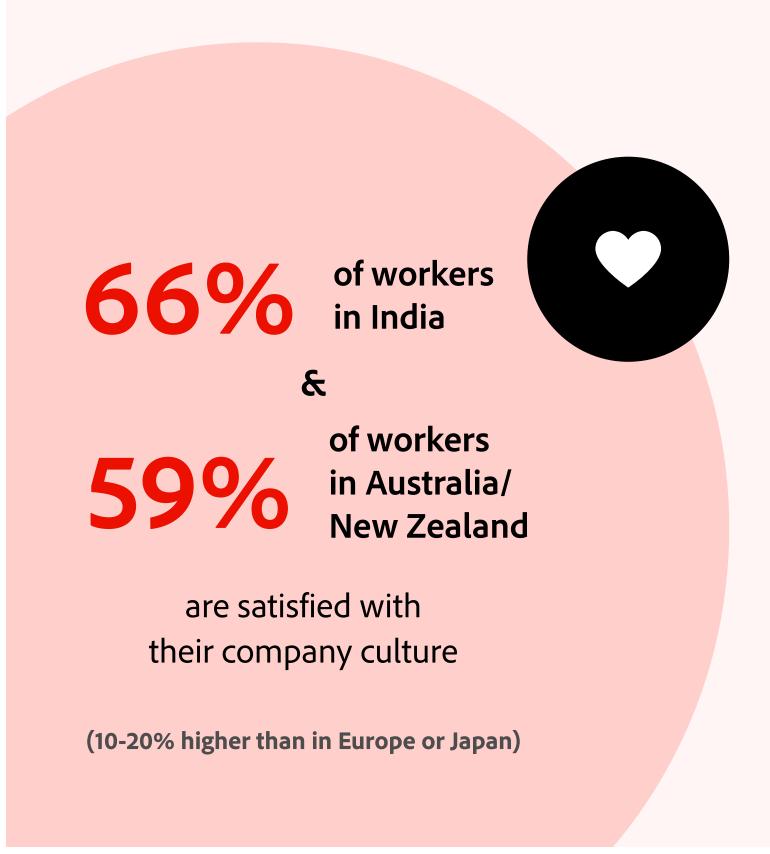
## Countries with workers who are actively shaping their work culture are more likely to be satisfied with their work culture, with expectations that their employer continues to focus on purpose.

"I am shaping the work culture of my organization" % agree (T2B)



"I have higher expectations for my employer to have a purpose-driven culture than I did one year ago" % agree (T2B)





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### Managers and employees are aligned in the changes they want to see to work culture in times of uncertainty.

#### Employee needs in times of uncertainty

% agree (T2B)

| Mental Health  | 53% |
|--|-----|
| Flexibility and understanding to take time off for mental health | 29% |
| Mental health tools/resources                                    | 16% |
| Wellbeing check-ins with managers                                | 29% |
| Flexibility  | 48% |
| Flexibility in scheduling daily work hours                       | 36% |
| Flexibility in scheduling PTO/sick days                          | 29% |
| Community  | 36% |
| Safe spaces for employee dialogue                                | 21% |
| Coworker socializing (virtually or in person)                    | 16% |
| Employee resource groups (ERGs)                                  | 9%  |
| Development  | 41% |
|  |     |
| Mentorship   | 11% |

#### Manager desires for work culture changes

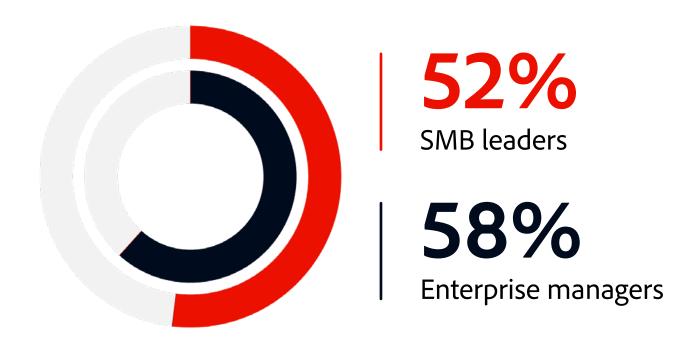
% agree (T2B)

| Mental Health  | 60% |
|--|-----|
| Flexibility and understanding to take time off for mental health | 36% |
| Mental health tools/resources                                    | 28% |
| Wellbeing check-ins with managers                                | 27% |
| Flexibility  | 58% |
| Flexibility in scheduling daily work hours                       | 41% |
| Flexibility in scheduling PTO/sick days                          | 36% |
| Community  | 47% |
| Safe spaces for employee dialogue                                | 27% |
| Coworker socializing (virtually or in person)                    | 22% |
| Employee resource groups (ERGs)                                  | 16% |
| Development  | 45% |
| Mentorship   | 23% |
| Career development/training                                      | 31% |
| <u> </u>   |     |

## But middle management needs more autonomy, tools and resources to create this work culture.

"I feel stuck between employees' and senior leadership's expectations of me in times of uncertainty"

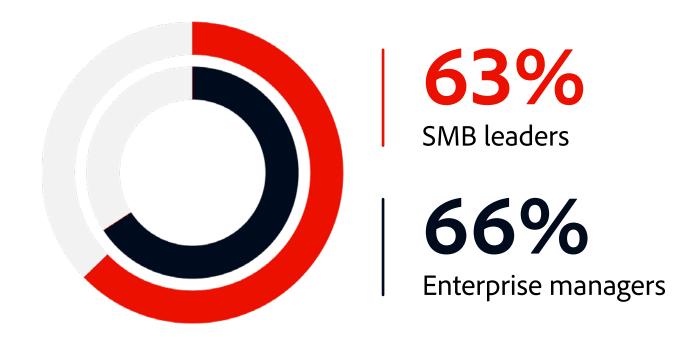
% agree (T2B)



| US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 42% | 48% | 51%   | 58% | 40% | 68% | 61% |
| 48% | 67% | 58%   | 56% | 46% | 64% | 68% |

"I need more autonomy from senior leadership to create a work culture that is more empathetic to employees amid constant uncertainty"

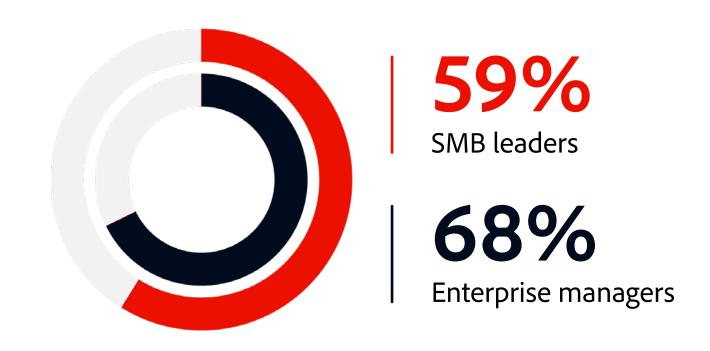
% agree (T2B)



| US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 49% | 54% | 55%   | 67% | 53% | 85% | 78% |
| 56% | 71% | 64%   | 58% | 59% | 77% | 81% |

"I need more tools and resources to support my employees in these times of uncertainty"

% agree (T2B)

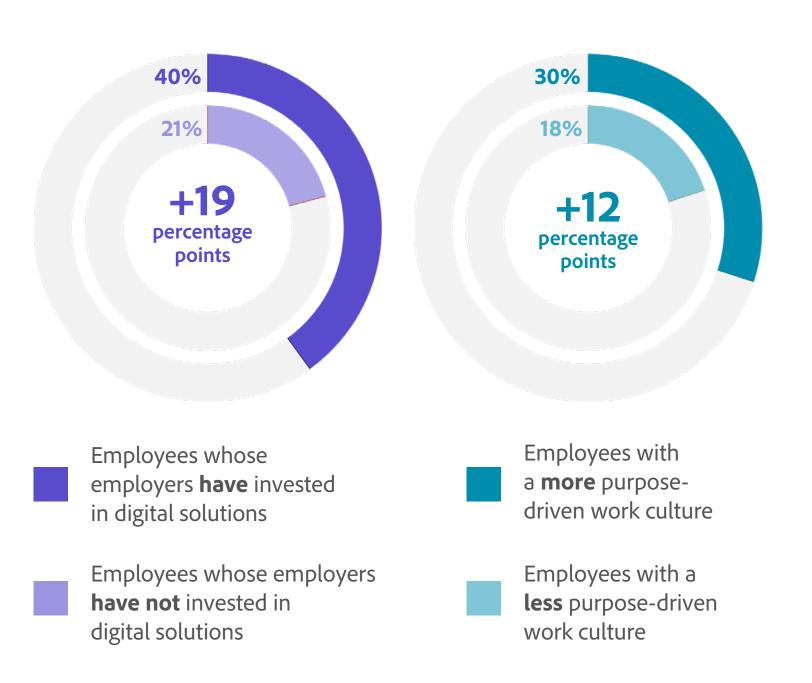


| US  | UK  | AU/NZ | FR  | DE  | JP  | IN  |
|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 51% | 51% | 54%   | 52% | 45% | 77% | 85% |
| 55% | 68% | 71%   | 59% | 60% | 80% | 83% |

## Leveraging digital technologies & purpose-driven work cultures together will ensure businesses can innovate in the face of future uncertainty.

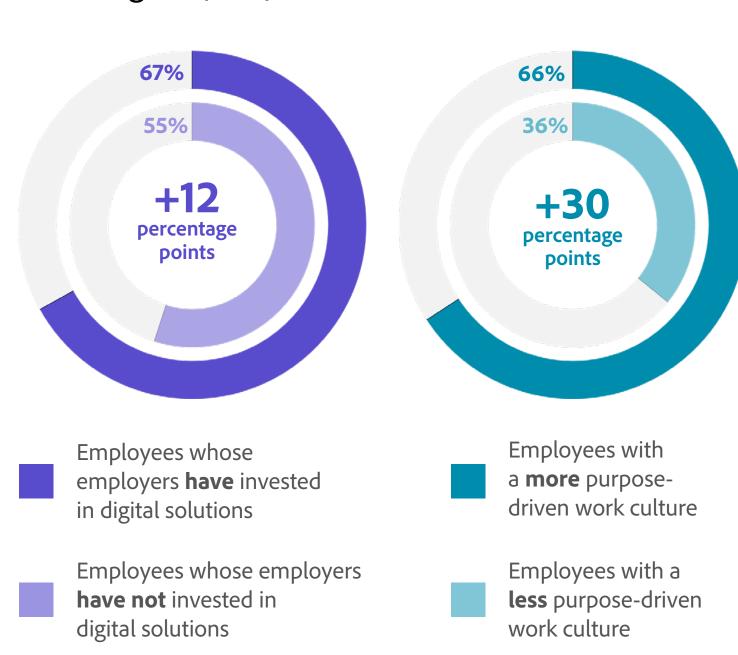
## Experienced better work-life balance as a result of innovation

% outcome selected



## "I am shaping the work culture of my organization"

% agree (T2B)



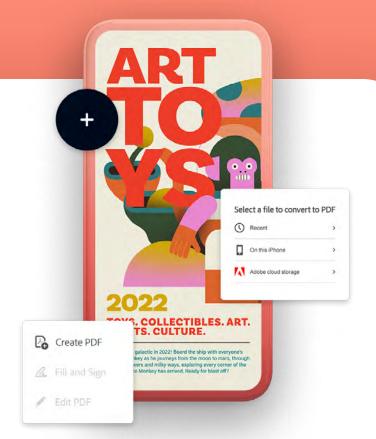
Employees with access to digital solutions and a purpose-driven work culture are happier and more visible, overall.



# Save time and boost productivity with Adobe Document Cloud.



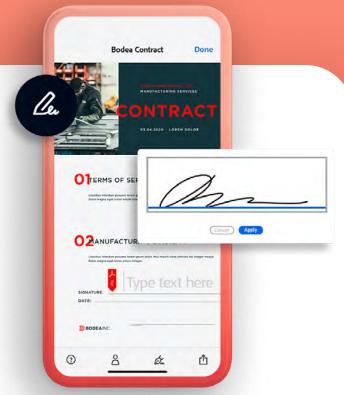
#### Adobe Acrobat PDF power, everywhere.



- We know PDFs. We invented them. Adobe Acrobat is the global standard for creating, scanning, editing, signing, protecting, and managing PDFs.
- Collaborate like you're in person. Collect comments, collaborate on responses, and track progress in real time all in one place from desktop, mobile, or web.
- → Business transformation built in.

  Embed PDFs into any digital experience,
  streamline forms, and deliver a better customer
  experience with artificial intelligence and
  deep learning powered by Adobe Sensei.
- → Streamline document workflows. Create, edit, view, and collaborate on PDFs right in Microsoft apps, including Teams, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, SharePoint, and OneDrive.

## E-signatures made easy with Adobe Acrobat Sign.



- Transform and speed up your workflows.

  Acrobat Sign is Microsoft's preferred e-signature solution and the only e-sign tool that also includes the power of Adobe Acrobat in one package.
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