

EY-Parthenon CEO Outlook Survey

Fall 2025



The better the question. The better the answer. The better the world works.



EY-Parthenon CEO Outlook Survey – Fall 2025

About the study

The EY-Parthenon CEO Outlook Survey is designed to offer critical insights into the main trends and developments that are influencing the world's leading companies, as well as into business leaders' expectations for future growth and long-term value creation.

In times of uncertainty and disruption, CEOs must build confidence in their ability to navigate risks and accelerate transformative strategies. Advancements in technology, an increased focus on geopolitical issues, an evolving regulatory landscape and ESG-related challenges all require the integration of strategy, transactions and transformation capabilities to create an ecosystem that is prepared for now and beyond.

Produced in association with FT Longitude, the specialist research and content marketing division of the Financial Times Group.

50 CEOs

surveyed in August 2025

Participant profile

Country

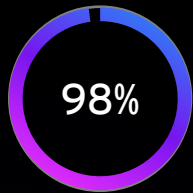
- Canada

Industries

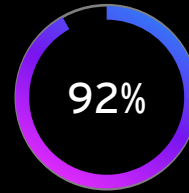
- Consumer and health
- Financial services
- Industrials and energy
- Infrastructure
- Technology, media and telecoms

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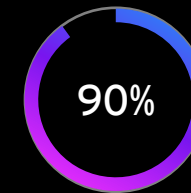
Key research findings



of Canada's business leaders are either very or somewhat optimistic about Canada's economic outlook as they adjust to new economic realities



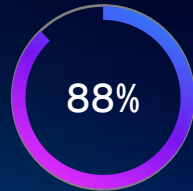
are either very or somewhat optimistic about the outlook for their revenue, costs and competitive position



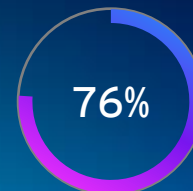
are either very or somewhat optimistic about their investment capital or free cash flow outlook



of Canadian businesses identify technology disruption and AI integration risk as the most significant challenges to achieving financial targets - surpassing geopolitical and trade tension risk, which had previously been the primary concern



of Canadian businesses have completed, are currently implementing or have definite plans to implement localization strategies in response to geopolitical uncertainty

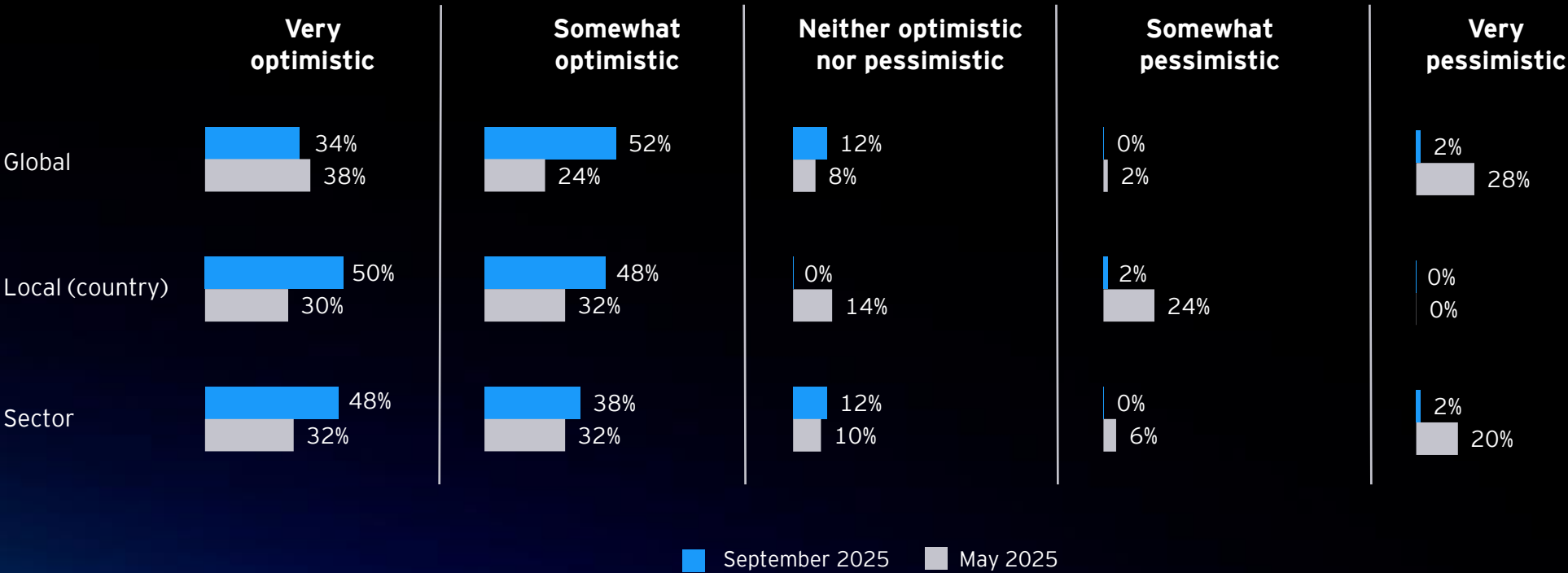


of Canadian CEOs plan to pursue M&A transaction activities within the next 12 months, up from 36% in May

Company performance and macroeconomic environment

Canadian CEOs are showing strong signs of confidence

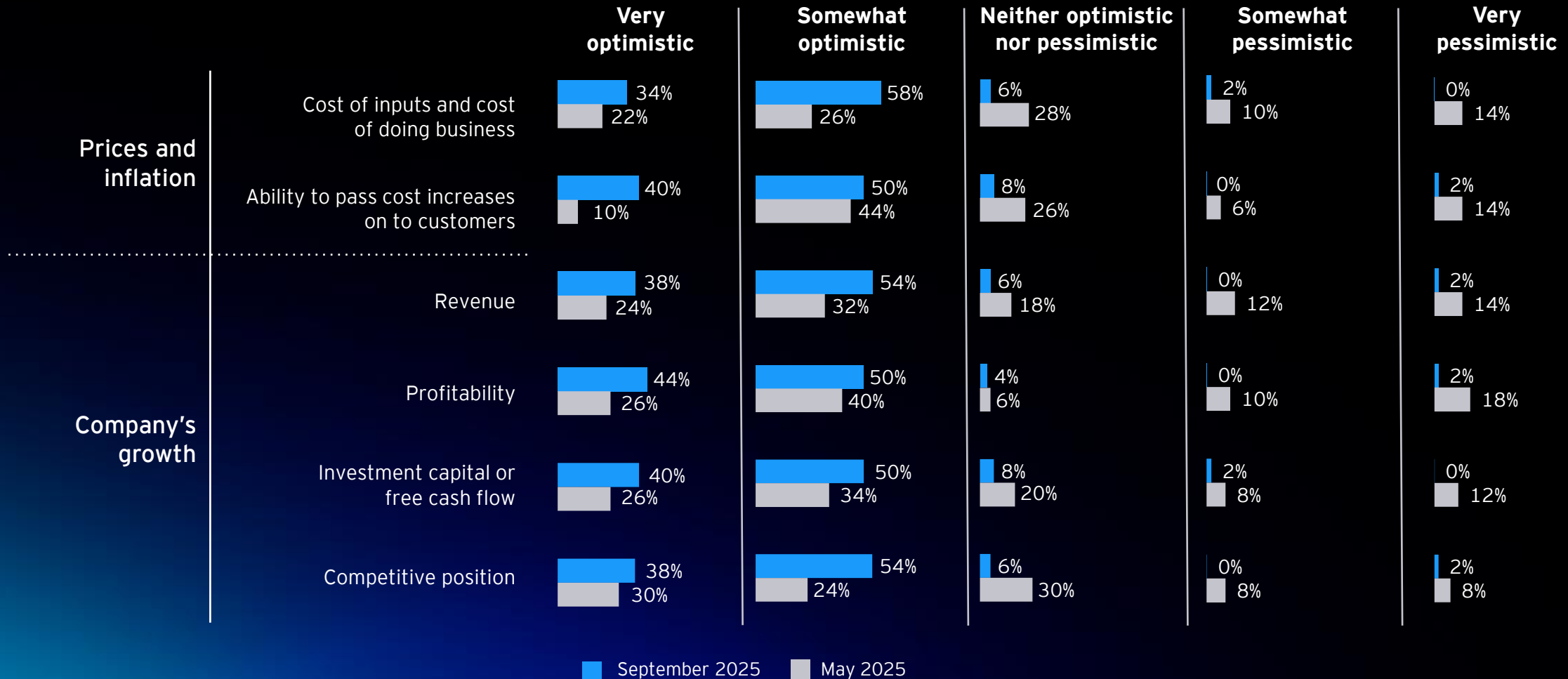
Q CEO Confidence Index: How confident do you feel about the outlook for the following areas over the next 12 months?
[The respondents were asked to select one option for each statement]



Optimism has improved across company growth drivers and pricing strategy

Q CEO Confidence Index: How confident do you feel about your own company's outlook for the following areas over the next 12 months?

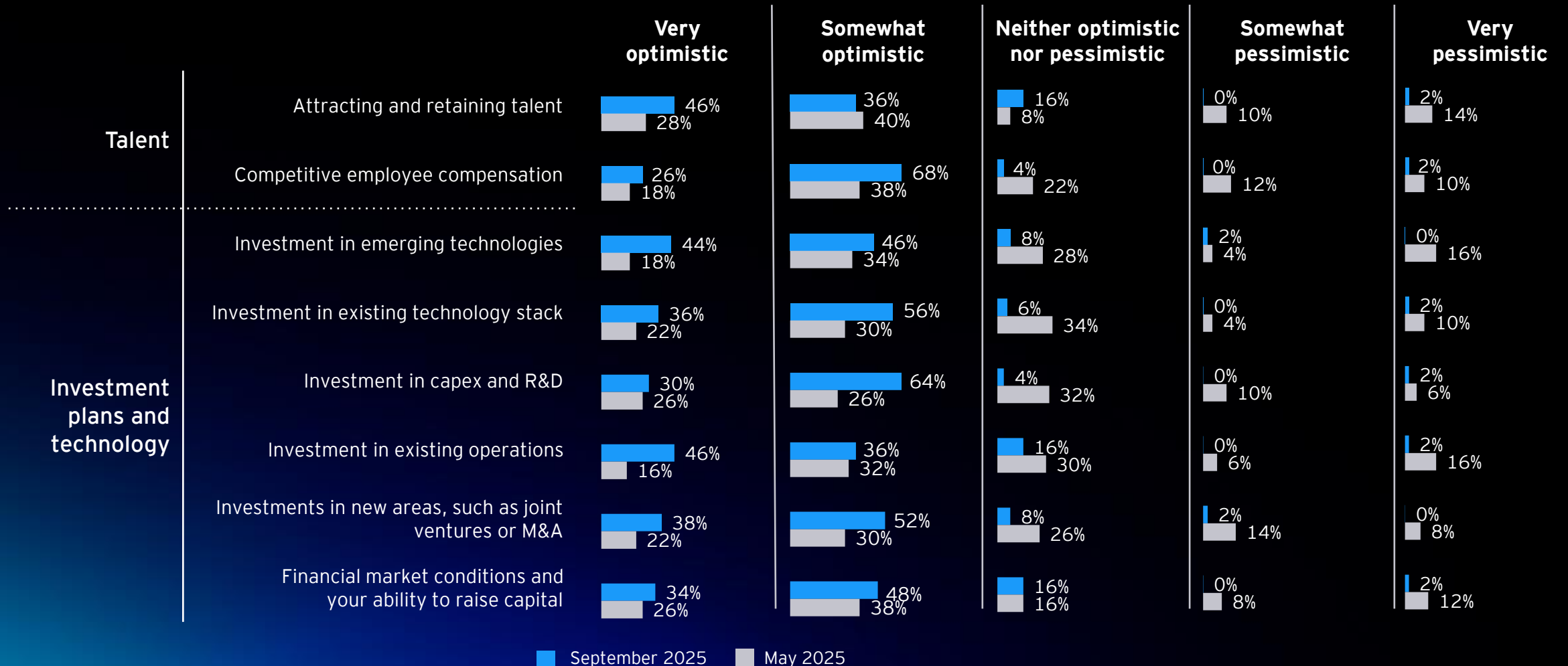
[The respondents were asked to select one option for each statement]



Confidence in talent strategy and investment plans continues to build

Q CEO Confidence Index: How confident do you feel about your own company's outlook for the following areas over the next 12 months?

[The respondents were asked to select one option for each statement]



Technology disruption and AI integration risks top the list of CEO concerns

Q

Which of the following do you expect to be the most significant challenges to achieving your company's financial targets over the next 12 months?

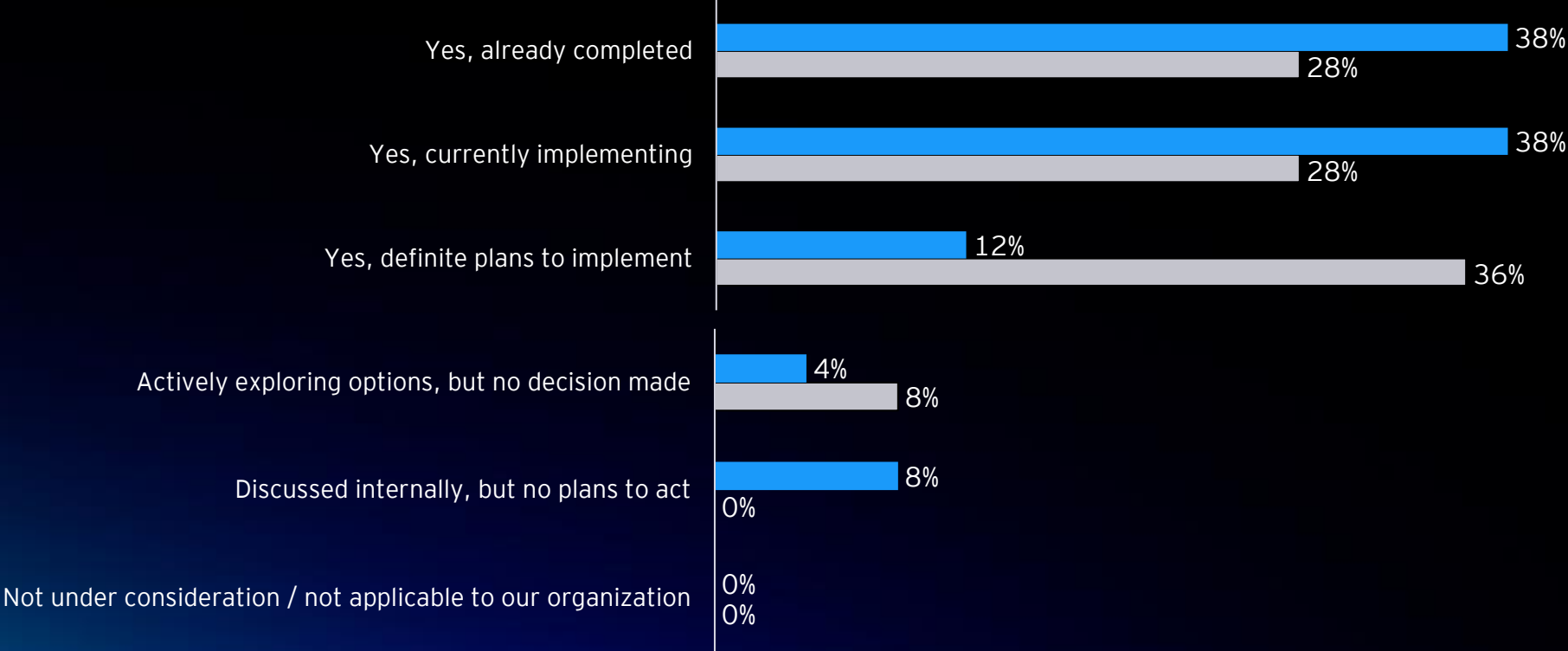
[The respondents were asked to select up to three responses]



A changing global operating environment

Localization and regionalization strategies are gaining traction in response to geopolitical developments

Q Is your company taking or considering any steps toward localization or regionalization in response to recent geopolitical developments, including tariffs and trade negotiations?
[The respondents were asked to select one option for each tactic]



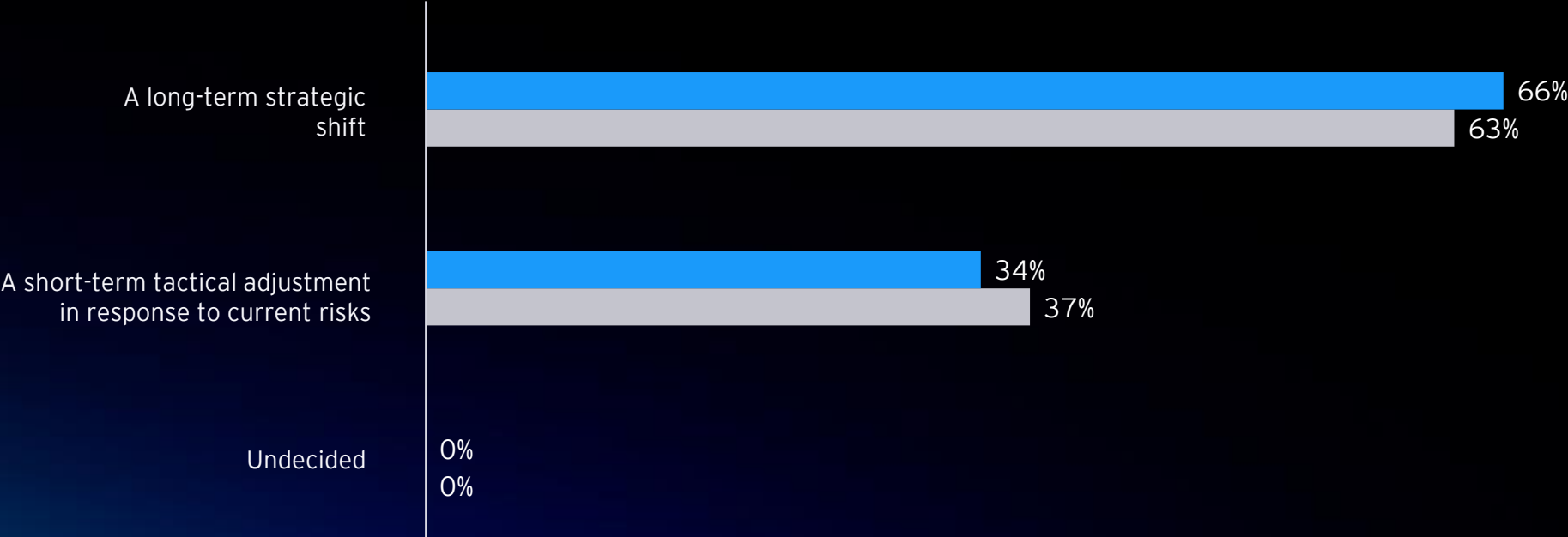
Note: By “localization” we mean tactics like producing goods within the country where they will be sold. By “regionalization” we mean tactics such as creating regional supply chains to serve a particular bloc.
Localization respondent count = 50
Regionalization respondent count = 50

Localization Regionalization

Most Canadian business leaders view localization and regionalization as long-term strategic shifts

Q Are you approaching your company’s overall transition to localization or regionalization as a long-term strategic shift or a short-term tactical adjustment?

[The respondents were asked to select one option for each tactic. This chart includes responses from CEOs who have either completed localization or regionalization or have decided to implement them.]



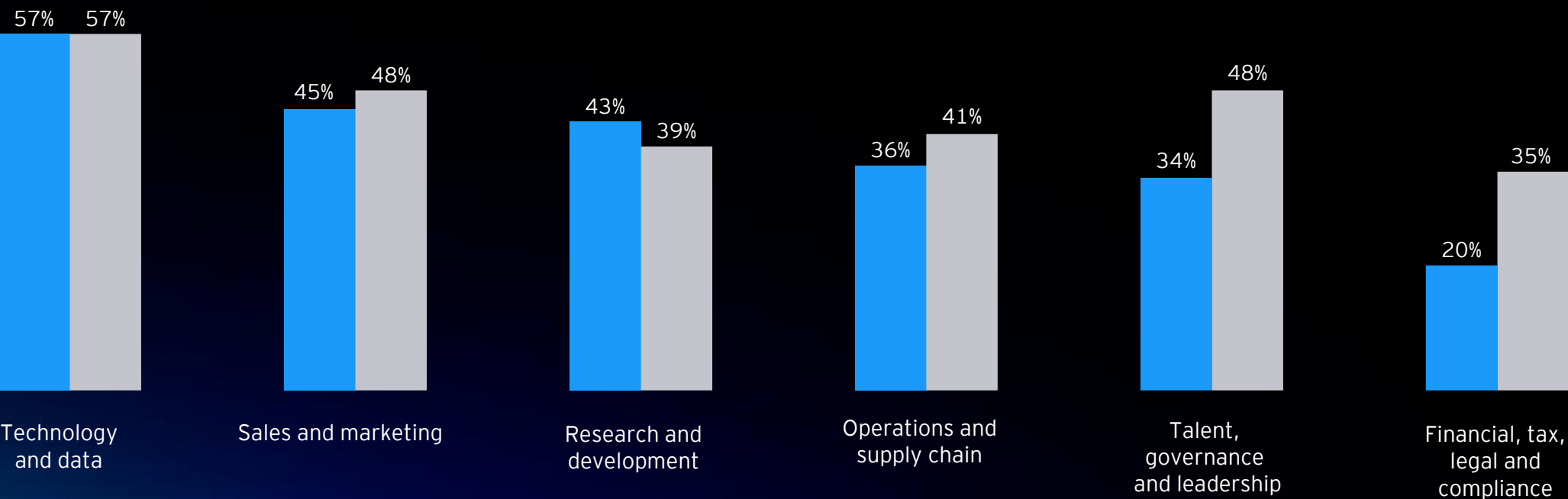
Note: By “localization” we mean tactics like producing goods within the country where they will be sold. By “regionalization” we mean tactics such as creating regional supply chains to serve a particular bloc.
Localization respondent count = 44
Regionalization respondent count = 46

■ Localization ■ Regionalization

Localization and regionalization strategies are being applied across business functions

Q In which areas of your business are you applying localization or regionalization?

[The respondents were asked to select options that apply for each applicable approach. This chart includes responses from CEOs who have either completed localization or regionalization or have decided to implement them.]

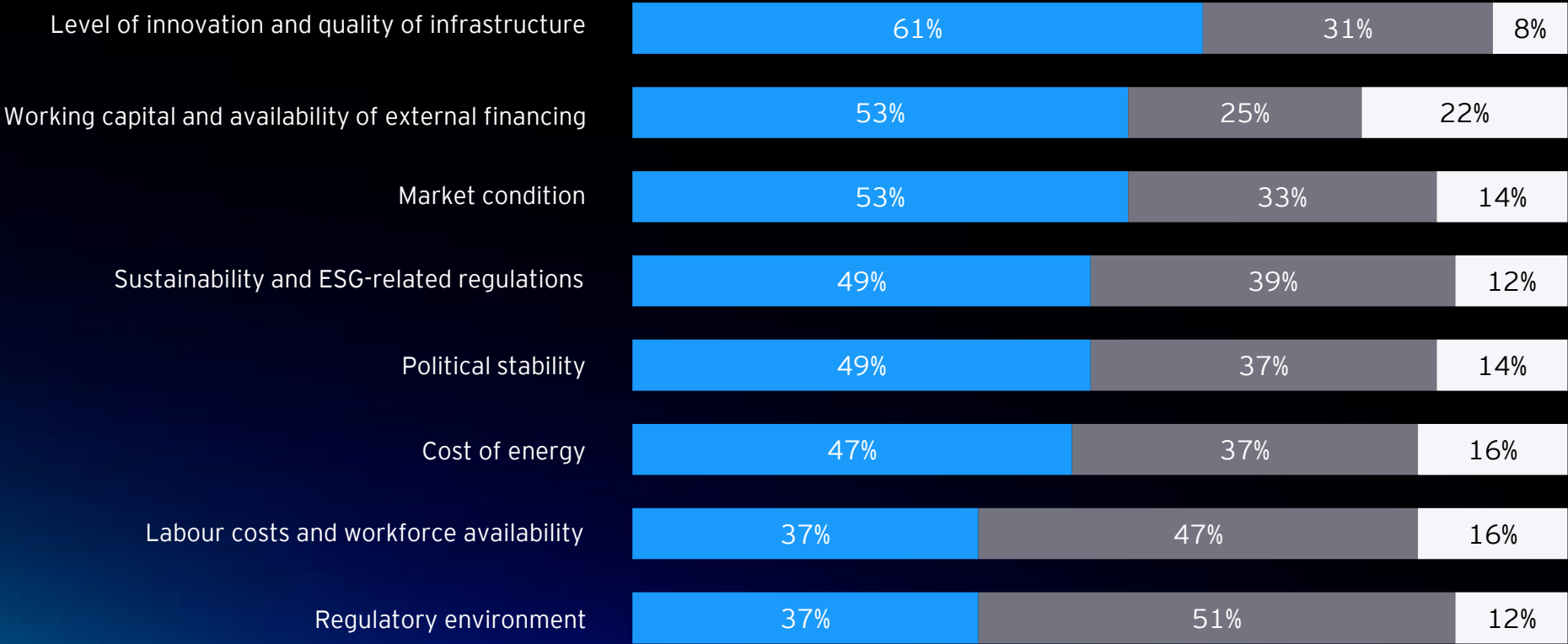


Note: By "localization" we mean tactics like producing goods within the country where they will be sold. By "regionalization" we mean tactics such as creating regional supply chains to serve a particular bloc.
Localization respondent count = 44
Regionalization respondent count = 46

■ Localization ■ Regionalization

Innovation levels, financing availability and market conditions are key enablers of localization and regionalization activity

Q For each of the following factors, please indicate whether it presents a challenge, acts as an enabler or has no impact on your localization or regionalization plans.
[The respondents were asked to select one option per area. This chart includes responses from CEOs who have either completed localization or regionalization or have decided to implement them.]



Note: By “localization”, we mean tactics such as producing goods within the country where they will be sold. By “regionalization”, we mean tactics such as creating regional supply chains to serve a particular bloc.

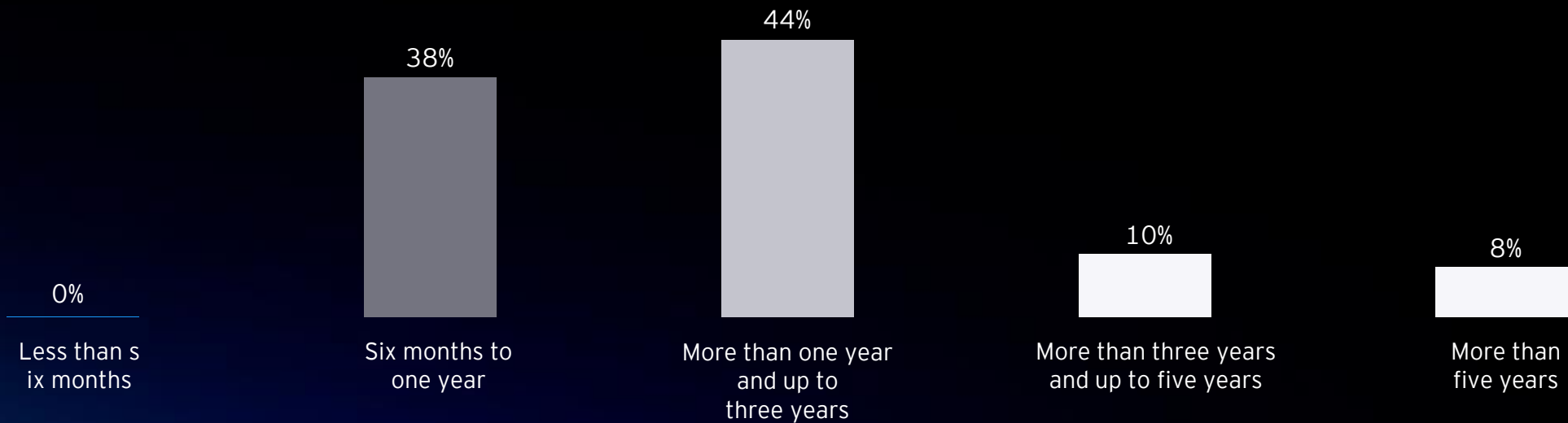
■ Enabler ■ Challenge ■ No impact

Many business leaders are expecting geopolitical and economic uncertainty to persist for several years



How long do you think the current elevated levels of geopolitical and economic uncertainty will persist?

[The respondents were asked to select one option only]



Portfolio transformation

Making automation and efficiency-focused investments is the top response for managing potential tariff increases



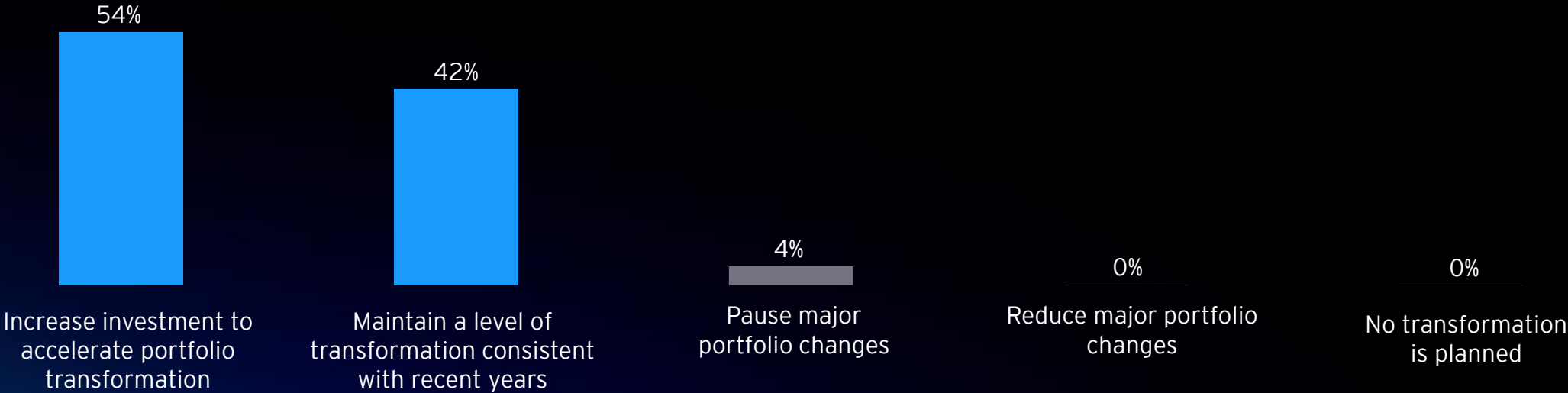
If new or increased tariffs come into effect over the next 12 months, which of the following responses will be most critical to your company’s strategy?

[The respondents were asked to select one option only]



Most CEOs plan to either increase investment to accelerate portfolio transformation or maintain existing levels

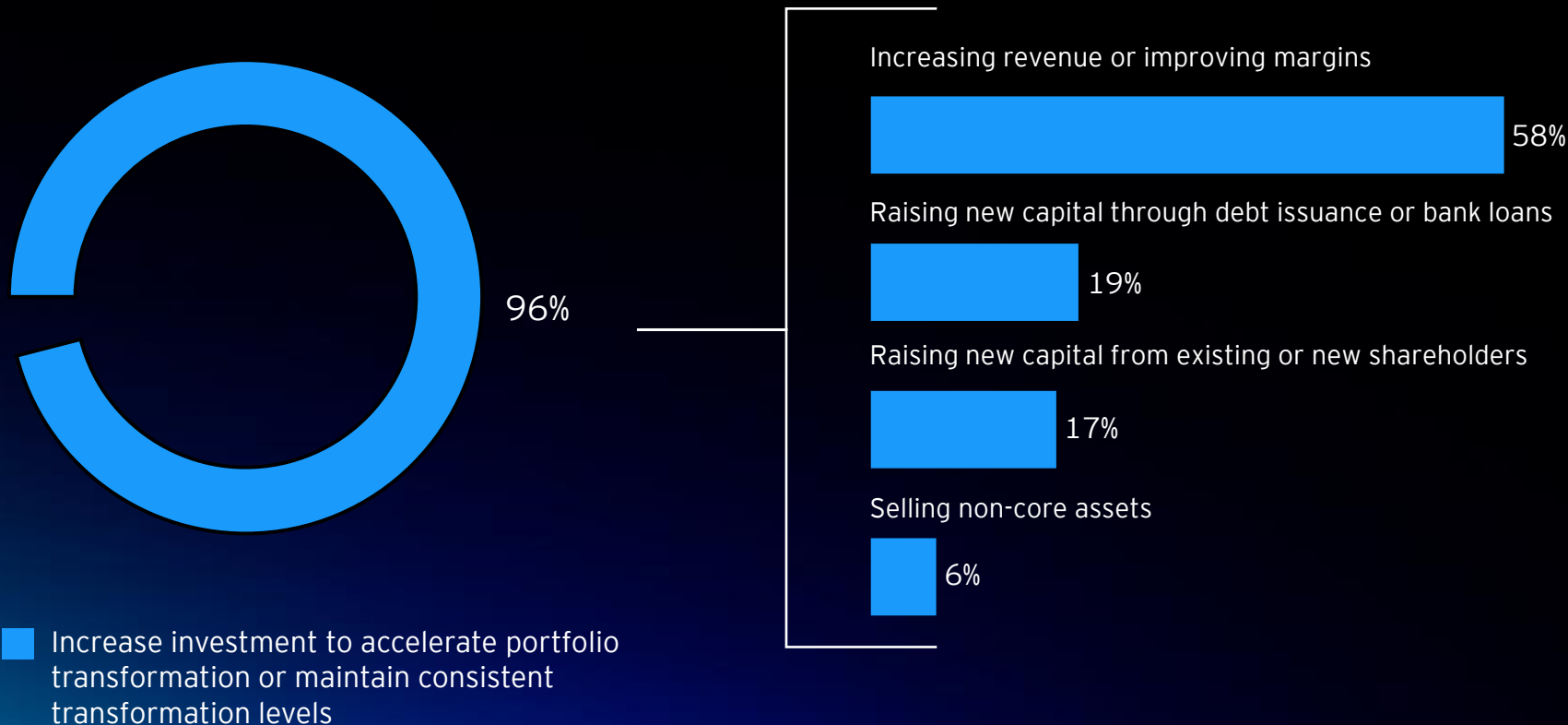
Q Which of the following best describes your company's approach to portfolio transformation over the next 12 months?
[The respondents were asked to select one option only]



Revenue growth and margin improvement are the primary sources of portfolio transformation funding

Q You have indicated you are accelerating or maintaining portfolio transformation efforts over the next 12 months. How do you intend to finance your transformation?

[The respondents were asked to select one option only. This chart includes responses from CEOs who have either increased investment to accelerate portfolio transformation or maintained a level of transformation consistent with recent years.]

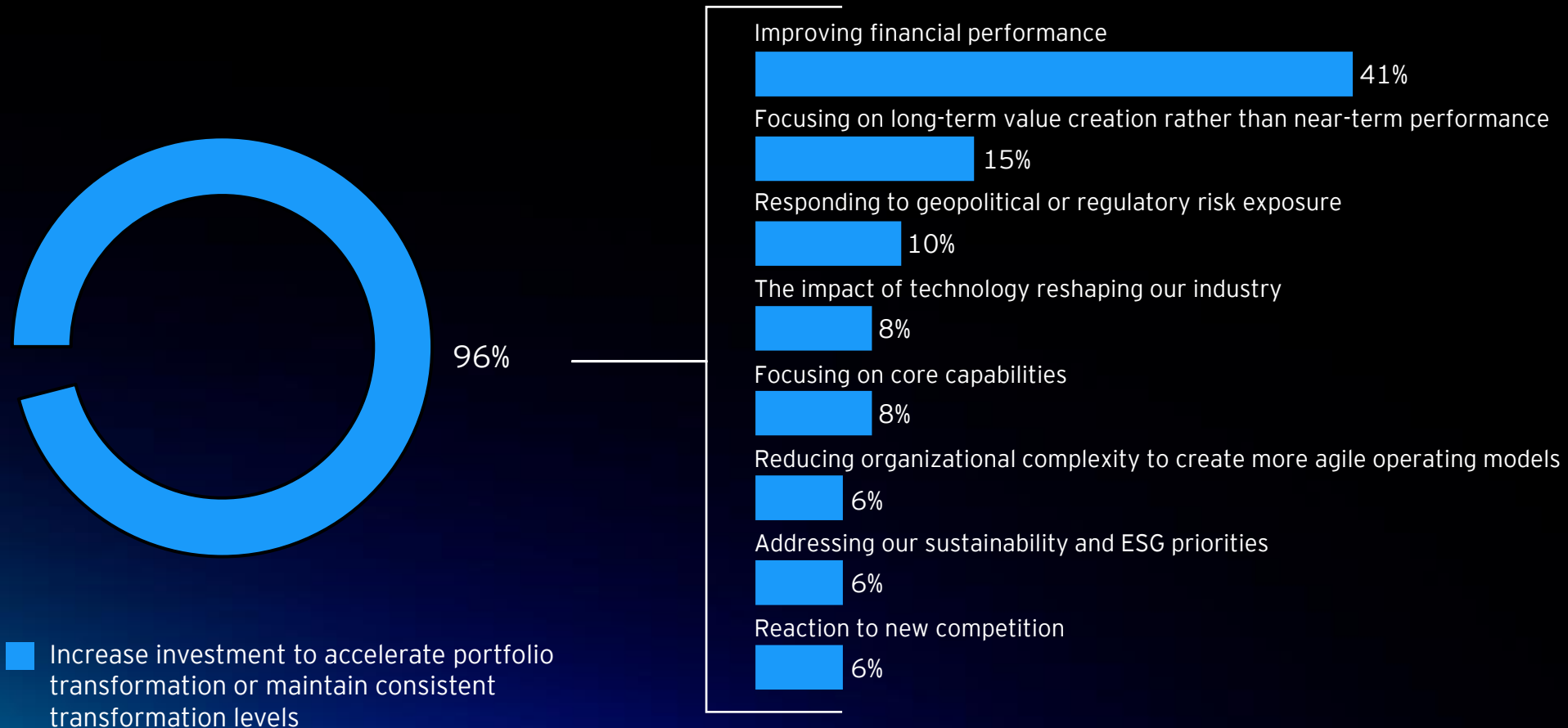


Improving financial performance is the leading consideration for reshaping portfolios

Q

What is the main driver that is causing you to rethink the composition and shape of your company portfolio?

[The respondents were asked to select one option only. This chart includes responses from CEOs who have either increased investment to accelerate portfolio transformation or maintained a level of transformation consistent with recent years.]

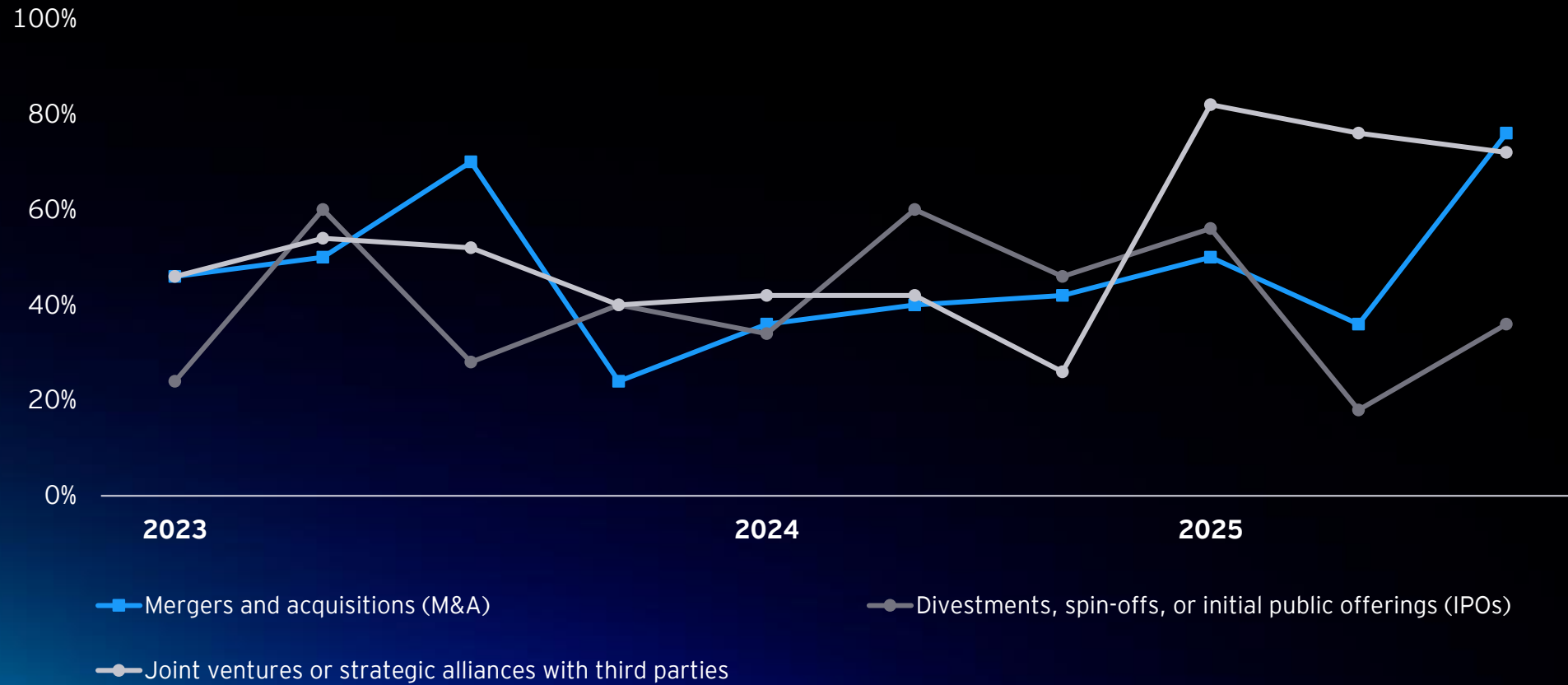


M&A and transactions

M&A has emerged as the top transaction priority among Canadian business leaders

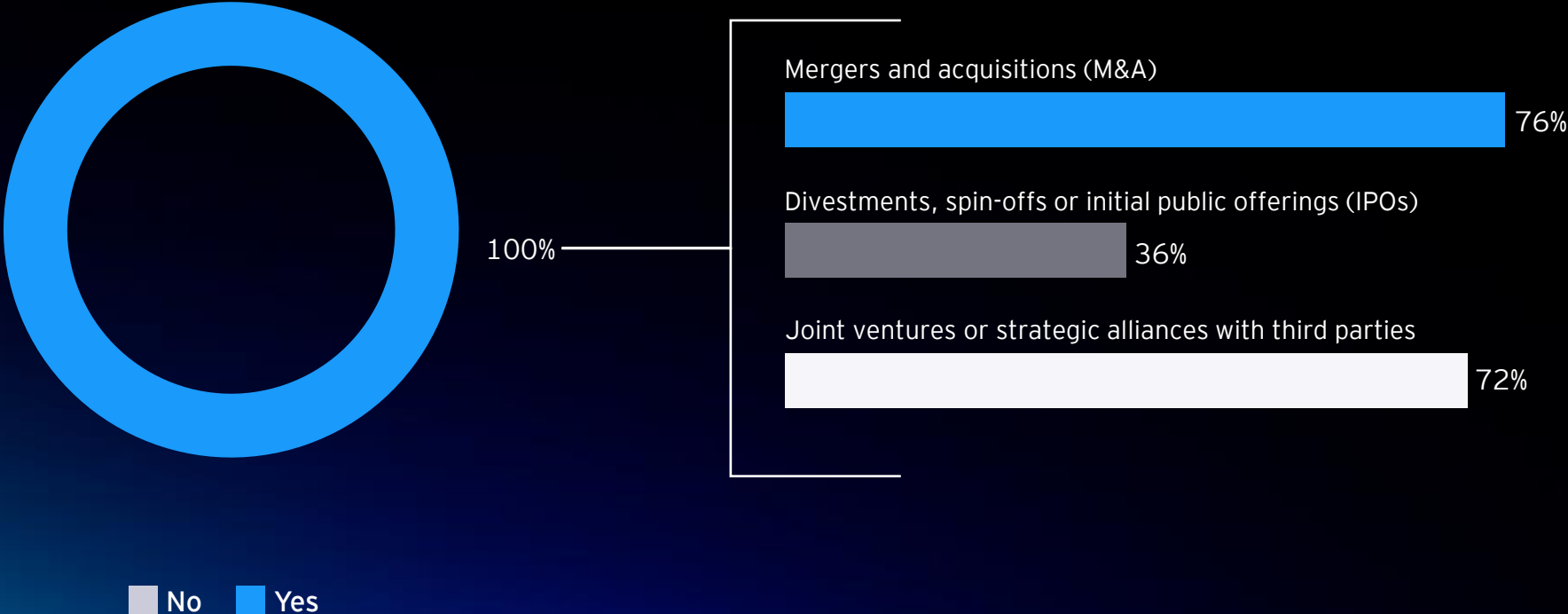


Do you expect to actively pursue any of the following transaction initiatives over the next 12 months?
[The respondents were asked to select multiple responses]



More than three quarters of Canadian CEOs plan to pursue M&A the next 12 months

Q Do you expect to actively pursue any of the following transaction initiatives over the next 12 months?
[The respondents were asked to select multiple responses]

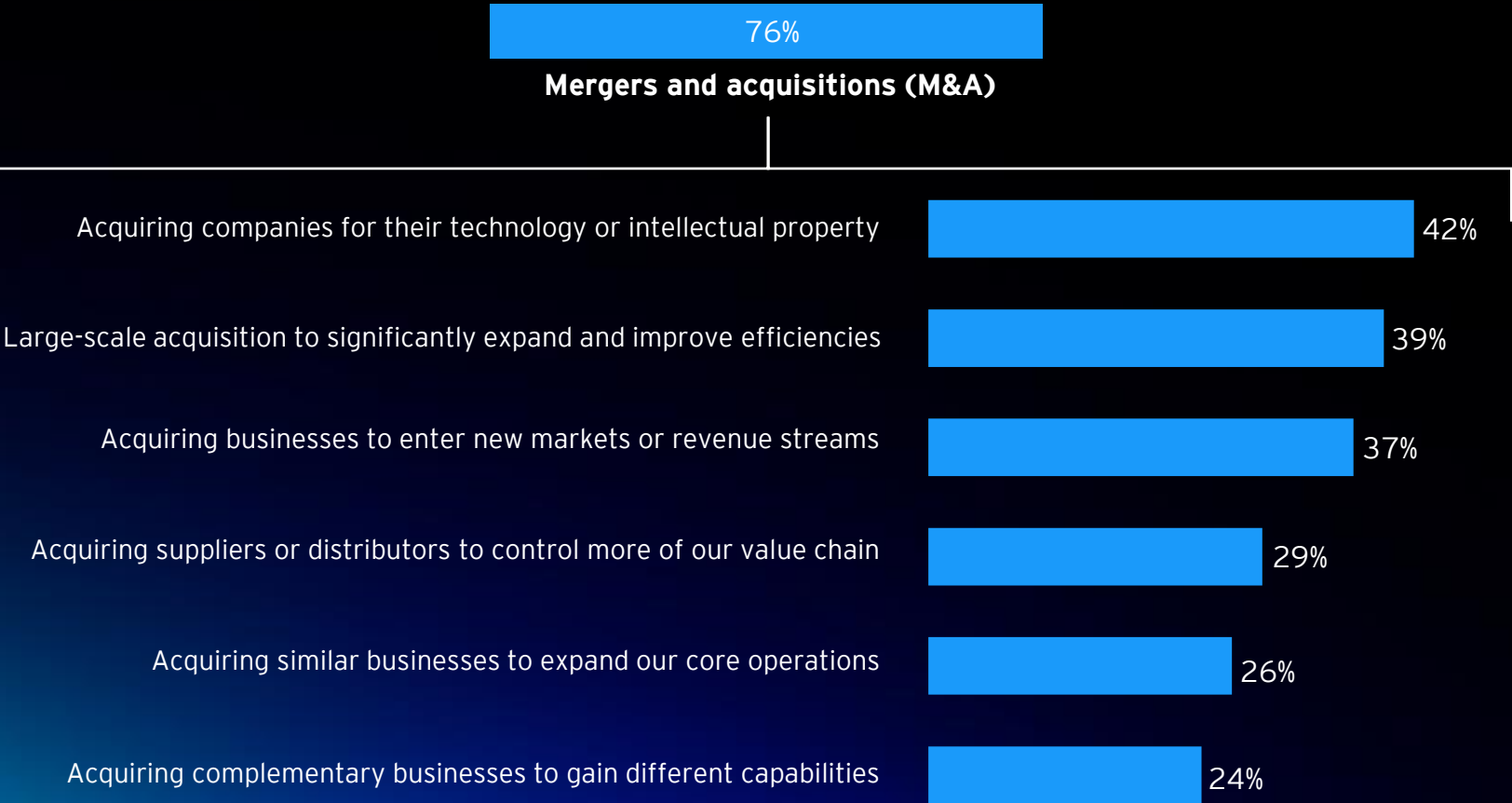


Technology and intellectual property-focused acquisitions represent the top focus of M&A strategy



What is the main focus of your acquisition strategy in the next 12 months?

[The respondents were asked to select up to two options. This chart includes responses from CEOs who have indicated an interest in actively pursuing M&A initiatives over the next 12 months.]



Canada, the US and the UK are the top destinations being prioritized for outbound capital deployment by Canadian businesses



What are the top three countries in which you are planning to invest capital over the next 12 months?
[The respondents were asked to select up to three countries]

Top three priorities for capital investment over the next 12 months



1. Canada



2. United States



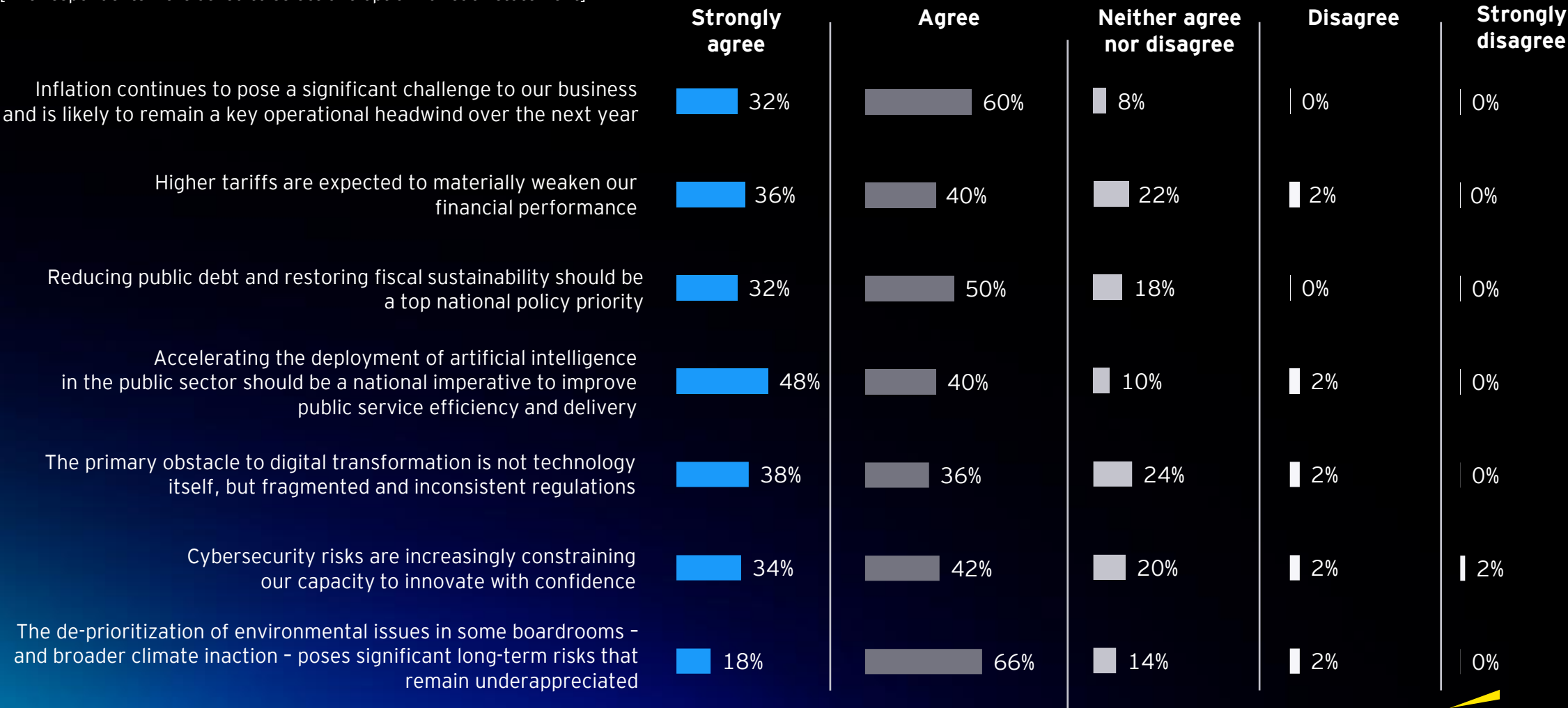
3. United Kingdom

Note: For the 50 respondents, the top three countries are listed above in order of priority for capital investment over the next 12 months. Canada (n=35), United States (n=26), United Kingdom (n=10)

Major issues in 2025

Business leaders view inflation, tariffs and public sector AI deployment as key policy priorities for Canada

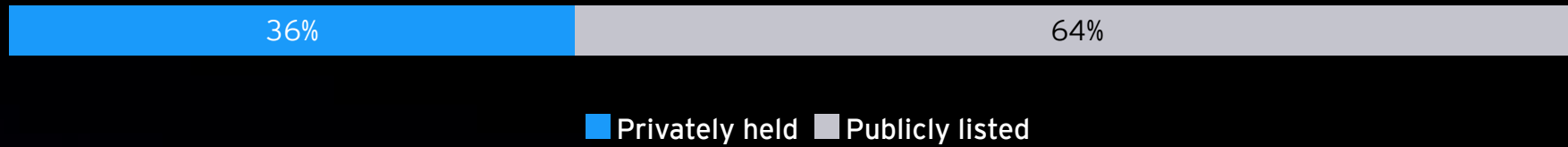
Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
[The respondents were asked to select one option for each statement]



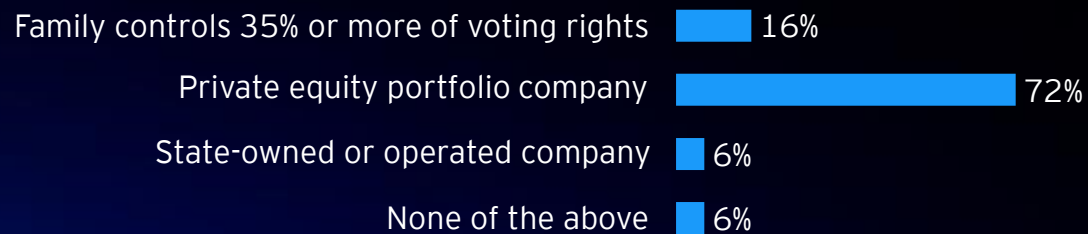
Participant profile

Participant profile

Q What is your organization's ownership structure?

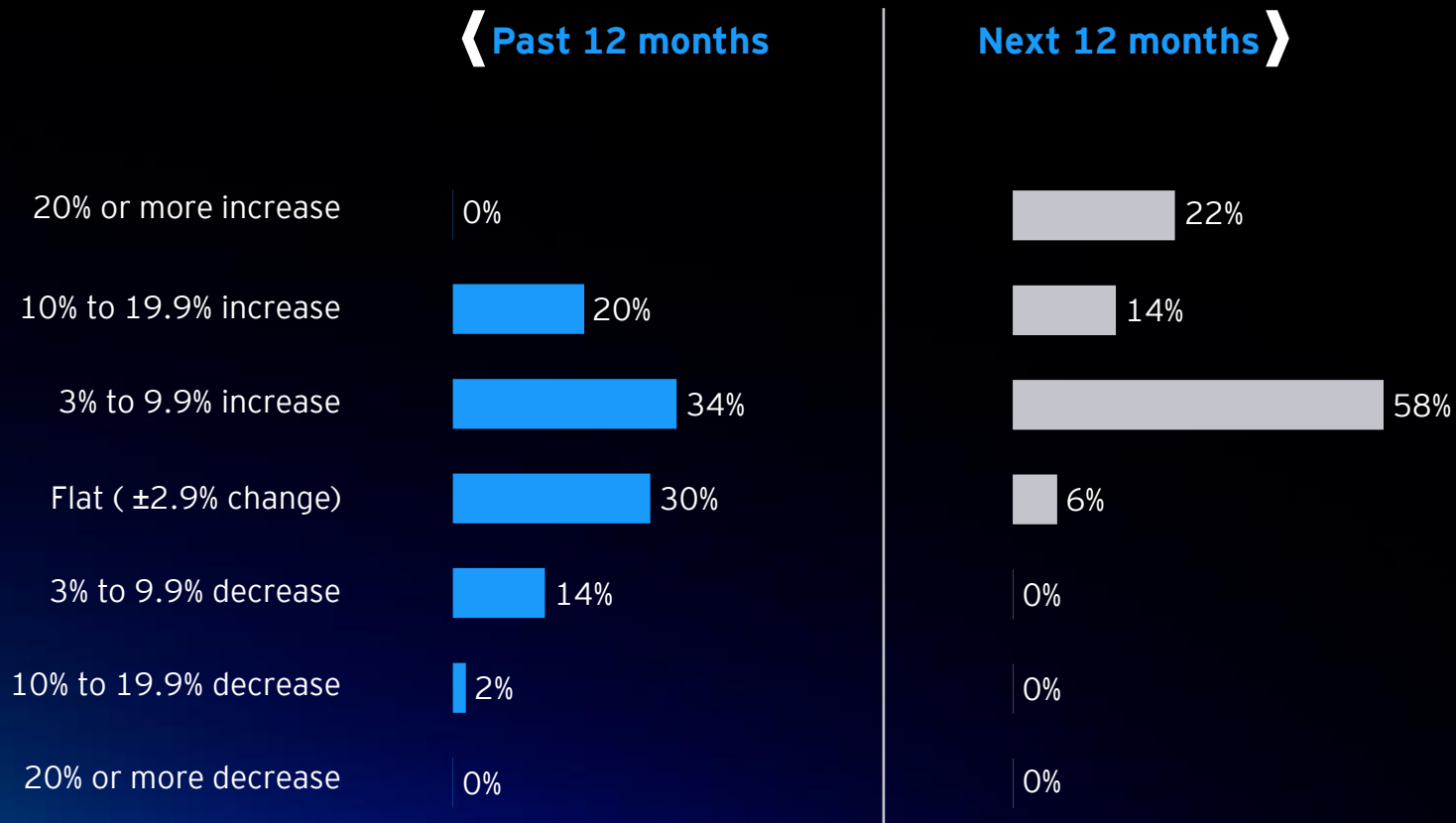


Q Which of the following, if any, apply to your organization's ownership structure (*only for "privately held"*)?



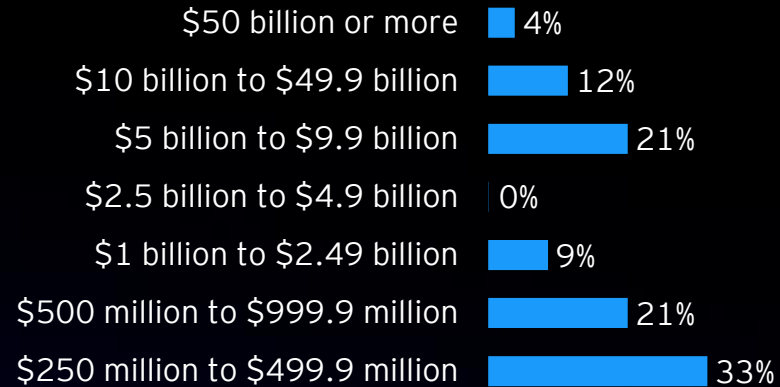
Participant profile

Q What was your company's annual revenue growth over the past 12 months, and what do you anticipate it to be in the next 12 months?

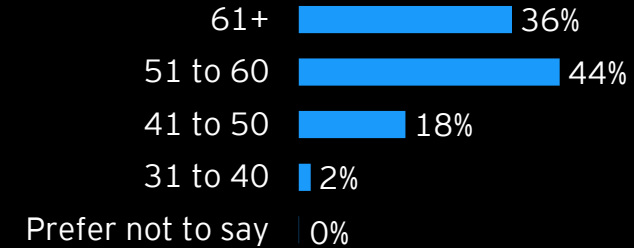


Participant profile

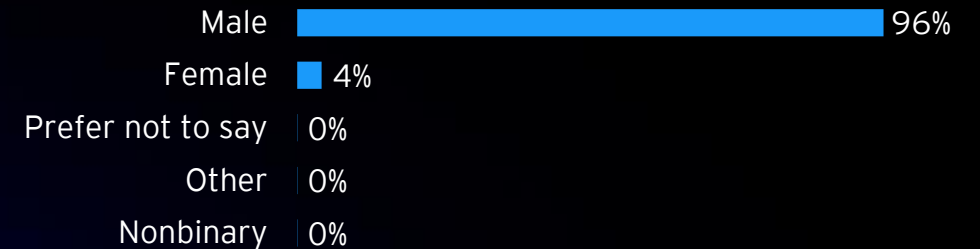
Q What was your organization's annual revenue in the most recent fiscal year (in US dollars)?



Q Please confirm your age group:



Q Please confirm your gender:



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Research methodology

On behalf of the global EY organization, FT Longitude, the specialist research and content marketing division of the Financial Times Group, conducted an anonymous online survey of 1,200 CEOs from large companies around the world in August 2025. The survey aims to provide valuable insights on the main trends and developments impacting the world's leading companies as well as business leaders' expectations for future growth and long-term value creation. Respondents represented 21 countries (Brazil, Canada, Mexico, the United States, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Australia, China, India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea) and five industries (consumer and health; financial services; industrials and energy; infrastructure; technology, media and telecoms). Surveyed companies' annual global revenues were as follows: less than US\$500m (20%), US\$500m-US\$999.9m (21%), US\$1b-US\$4.9b (29%) and greater than US\$5b (30%).

Meet the team and explore our resources



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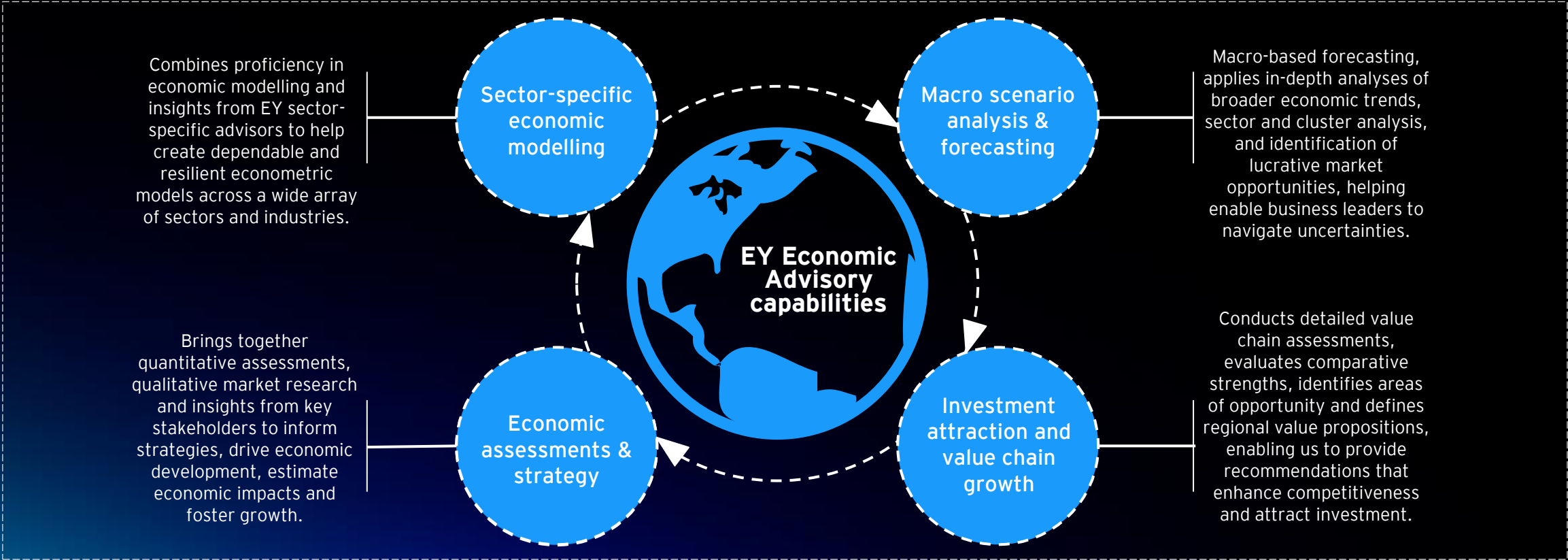
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Meet the team and explore our resources

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