



BENTLEY-GALLUP

BUSINESS IN SOCIETY SURVEY

2026 REPORT

GALLUP®



BENTLEY
UNIVERSITY

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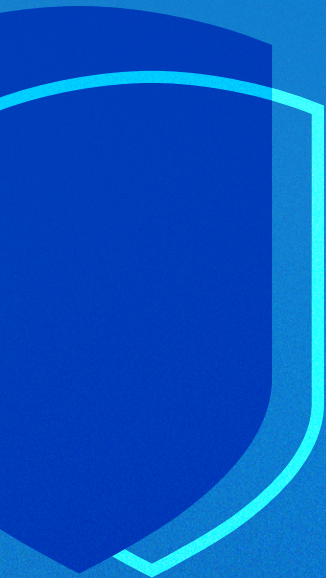
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FOREWORD

In the five years since the launch of the Bentley-Gallup Business in Society survey, Americans have, by and large, reported that they believe business has a positive impact on their lives. Despite a dip this year (61% in 2026 vs. 65% in 2025), the stability of this positive sentiment toward business strikes me as remarkable during a period in American life that has been fraught with financial volatility and political divisiveness.

But there are important areas where Americans trust business much less.

Only 27% of Americans trust businesses to use artificial intelligence (AI) responsibly, down four percentage points from a year ago. At the same time, the percentage who believe AI does more harm than good increased from 31% to 39%. That's a warning sign and call to action for every company investing heavily in AI right now. How do you incorporate this technology responsibly in a way that doesn't alienate your consumers?

And in a period of rising prices across the country, eight in 10 Americans believe businesses have raised prices a great deal (47%) or somewhat (33%) more than necessary because they wanted to increase their profits. Americans want businesses to make the same sacrifices that they themselves are enduring. But is that possible at a time when employees are asking for higher wages, increased benefits and more opportunity?

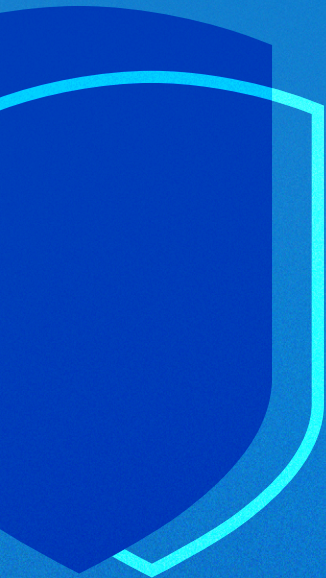
These findings and others in our *Bentley-Gallup Business in Society Report* deserve the attention of every business leader who cares about what their consumers think — in short, every business leader in America.

Because only by understanding Americans' views on where companies are succeeding — and where they are falling short — can business leaders take action to bridge that gap and meet their customers where they are. Only then can innovative executives and the organizations they lead realize the true potential of good business.



E. LaBrent Chrite

*President
Bentley University*



KEY FINDINGS



61%
OF AMERICANS

believe businesses have
a positive impact on
people's lives.

Since 2022, Bentley University and Gallup have partnered to annually quantify Americans' attitudes toward businesses and their effect on individuals and society.

Now in its fifth year, the 2026 *Bentley-Gallup Business in Society Report* builds on insights from the previous studies by examining changes in Americans' attitudes toward businesses and their views of AI. In addition to tracking long-term trends, this year's report presents findings on new questions about AI-generated advertising, rising prices and corporate profits. It also features direct quotes from respondents on the one piece of advice they would give business leaders in America.

The 2026 results are based on interviews with 3,270 U.S. adults, aged 18 or older, conducted May 4-11, 2026, using Gallup's probability-based panel.

Most Americans believe businesses are good for society, but years of steady improvement in those views ended in 2026.

- In 2026, 61% of Americans say businesses have a somewhat or extremely positive impact on people's lives, which is down slightly from 65% in 2025 but still higher than the low point of 55% in 2022. Adults in the 30 to 59 age group are primarily responsible for the decline in positive views between 2025 and 2026.
- Americans remain much more skeptical about businesses' impact on the environment. Nearly half (49%) say businesses have a somewhat or extremely negative impact, while just 22% say businesses have a somewhat or extremely positive impact.

Americans still see institutions as powerful, but less effective and less trusted than before.

- Trust and effectiveness ratings edged downward across businesses and government institutions in 2026. Trust in the federal government slipped most, falling from 31% in 2025 to 26%.

- The declines in trust and effectiveness were driven by Democrats as they became less likely to trust businesses (dropping from 39% to 31%) and view businesses as effective (58% to 49%), while Republicans became more likely to trust businesses (57% to 61%) and view them as effective (68% to 75%).
- Despite declining trust and effectiveness, strong majorities of Americans continue to believe businesses (88%), state and local government (93%) and the federal government (92%) have the power to make a positive impact on people's lives.

The mismatch between what Americans expect from businesses and what they believe businesses deliver is still evident in 2026.

- Nearly all Americans say it is at least somewhat important for businesses to operate ethically (97%), improve communities (95%) and support environmental sustainability (94%).
- About a third (32%) say businesses perform well on ethical business practices and 25% give them the same grade on environmental sustainability. Executive compensation remains the lowest-rated area of business performance, with just 15% saying businesses perform well in limiting the pay gap between CEOs and average employees.

Support for businesses taking public stances on current events cooled in 2026, while more Americans say businesses with diverse workforces are more innovative and more profitable.

- Support for businesses taking public stances on current events declined from 51% in 2025 to 47% in 2026, driven largely by a nine-point decline among Democrats.
- Americans became more positive about the contributions of workplace diversity. Seventy-five percent say businesses with diverse workforces have more innovative products, while 71% say they are more profitable. Views became more positive across Democrats, independents and Republicans.

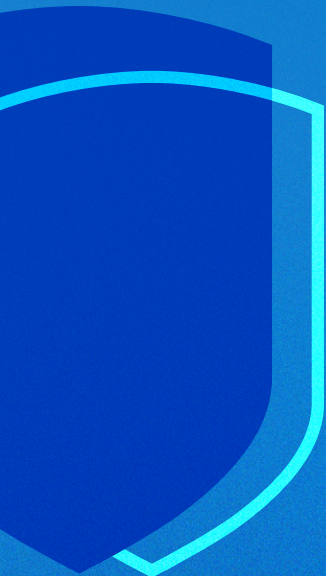
After two years of modest gains in positive attitudes toward AI, sentiment turned more negative in 2026.

- Americans report knowing more about AI than they did two years ago, but trust in businesses to use AI responsibly declined slightly from 31% to 27%. At the same time, the percentage who believe AI does more harm than good increased from 31% to 39%.
- Concern about AI's impact on employment increased for the first time since the study began tracking the question in 2023. Nearly eight in 10 Americans (79%) believe AI will reduce the number of U.S. jobs over the next decade, up from 73% in 2025.

- Americans continue to rate AI as worse than people across tasks ranging from offering financial and medical advice to hiring decisions and driving. Still, more Americans see AI as performing about the same as a person.
- Americans distinguish between different uses of AI in advertising. Nearly half (49%) view businesses' use of AI-generated advertisements negatively, but 75% find it acceptable when AI helps employees brainstorm ideas or create early drafts of advertisements so long as that use is disclosed.

Most Americans see prices rising and believe businesses have increased them more than necessary to boost their profits.

- Nearly nine in 10 Americans (89%) say prices increased over the past year, and eight in 10 believe businesses raised prices a great deal (47%) or somewhat (33%) more than necessary because they wanted to increase profits. Americans who hold that view are less likely to say business has a positive impact on society.
- Americans find some corporate approaches to combating costs more acceptable than others. Four in 10 (40%) support reducing the size or quantity of products and services, compared with just 5% who support reducing quality. Just 4% support reducing employee pay and benefits.



BUSINESS HAS GOODWILL, BUT LESS MOMENTUM

Most Americans believe businesses are good for society, but years of steady improvement in those views ended in 2026.

Americans give businesses credit for their impact on people’s lives, but they remain skeptical about whether they are good for the planet and the environment.

Compared with their attitudes in 2022, Americans today are more positive about the role of business in society and are less negative about its impact on the environment. However, after years of steady improvement, Americans’ views took a less favorable turn in 2026.

In 2026, 61% of Americans believe that businesses have a somewhat positive (41%) or extremely positive (20%) impact on people’s lives. This is down slightly from 65% the previous year, driven by a drop in those feeling extremely positive, but it is still higher than the low of 55% in 2022.

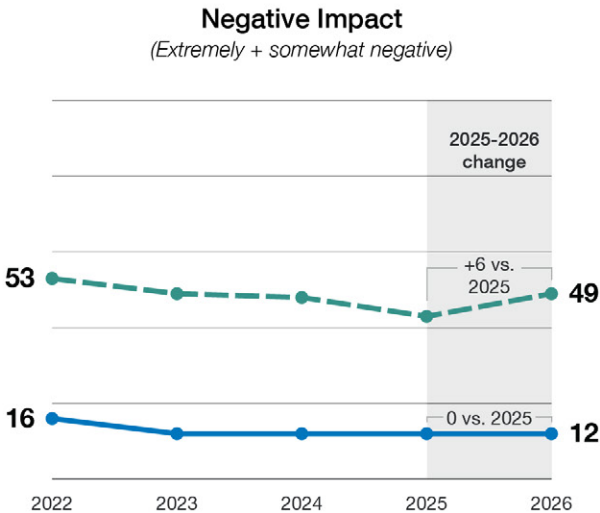
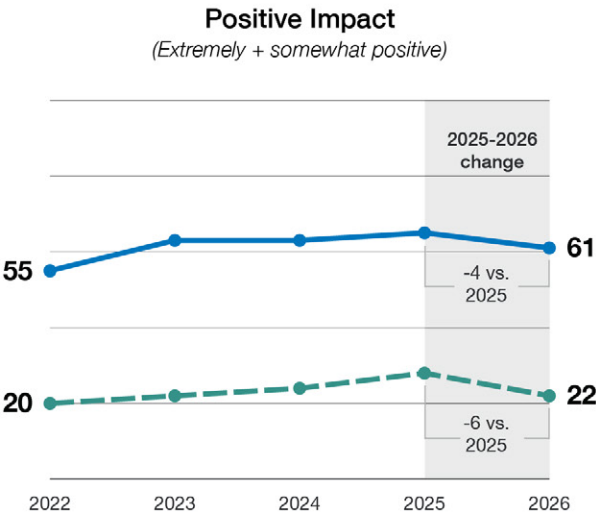
The decline in positive views is concentrated among adults aged 30 to 59, particularly those aged 45 to 59. In this group, the percentage who rate businesses’ impact as extremely positive fell from 30% to 18%, while the percentage with neutral views increased from 21% to 30%.

Views of environmental impact remain more negative than positive, as they have throughout the past several years. Just over one in five (22%) U.S. adults say businesses have a somewhat or extremely positive impact, erasing nearly all the gains since 2022. Nearly half (49%) say businesses have a somewhat or extremely negative impact, up six points from 2025, but still slightly less negative than in 2022 (53%).

FIGURE 1
Businesses’ Impact on Society

In your opinion, which of the following best describes the impact businesses have on ... ?

— % People’s lives — % Planet/Environment



Americans still see institutions as powerful, but less effective and less trusted than before.

The federal government experienced the largest declines in effectiveness and trust of any institution measured in 2026, while charitable and advocacy organizations continued to receive the highest ratings on trust.

The federal government remains the least-trusted institution measured, with 26% of Americans saying they trust it some or a lot to act in society’s best interest. Americans express much higher levels of trust in businesses (41%), state and local government (47%) and especially charitable and advocacy organizations (80%).

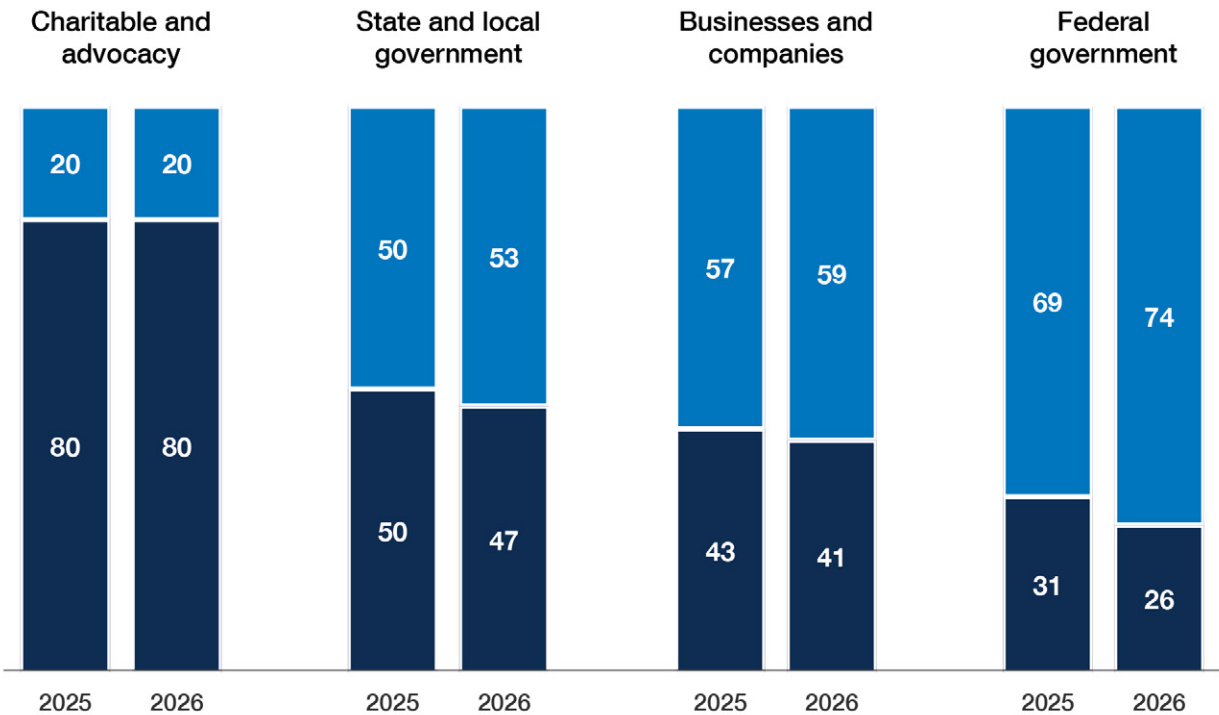
Trust in businesses and government institutions edged downward between 2025 and 2026, while trust in charitable and advocacy organizations remained unchanged. The federal government experienced the largest decline, with trust falling five points.

FIGURE 2

Americans Trust the Federal Government Least to Act in Society’s Interest

How much do you trust the following groups to act in the best interest of society?

■ % Some/A lot ■ % Not at all/Not much



Since 2022, Americans have consistently viewed businesses as more effective than the federal government at making a positive impact on people’s lives. In 2026, 56% say businesses are somewhat or extremely effective, compared with 43% who say the same of the federal government. State and local government receive similar ratings (58%), while charitable and advocacy organizations continue to receive the highest effectiveness ratings (77%).

Ratings of institutional effectiveness declined across businesses, government institutions and charitable and advocacy organizations between 2025 and 2026. The federal government experienced the largest decline, falling eight points. Businesses and state and local governments are down four points while charitable organizations are down three points.

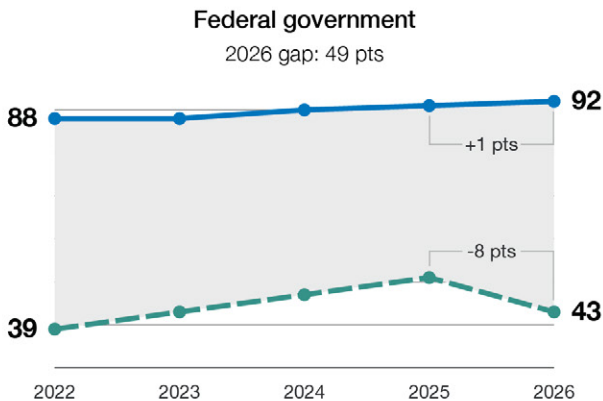
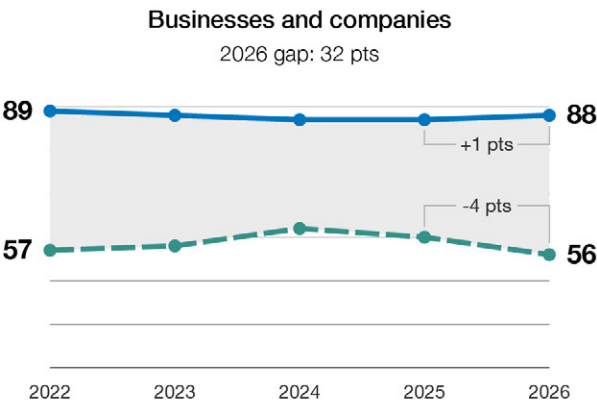
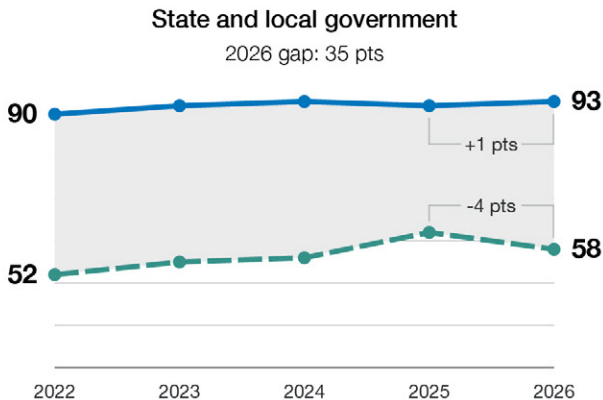
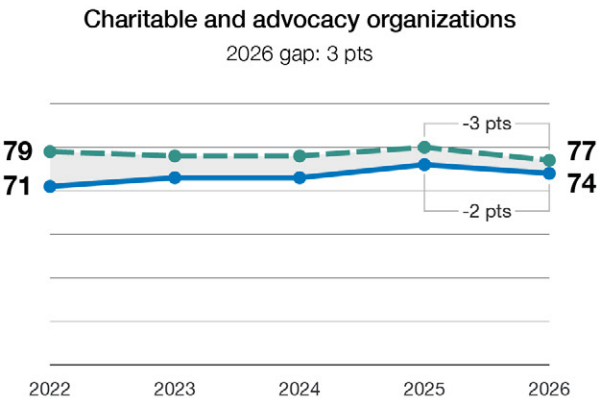
The federal government’s eight-point decline erased the gains it had made since 2023. Even with the recent declines, the federal government and state and local government both remained more positively rated than they were in 2022.

Fifty-six percent say businesses are somewhat or extremely effective, compared with 43% who say the same of the federal government.

FIGURE 3
Americans See a Gap in Perceived Power vs. Effectiveness to Impact People’s Lives

In your opinion, which of the following best describes the impact businesses have on ... ?

- How much power do each of the following groups have to make a positive impact on people’s lives? % **Some/A great deal**
- How effective are the following groups at making a positive impact on people’s lives? % **Somewhat/Extremely effective**



The declines in trust and perceived effectiveness between 2025 and 2026 were not evenly distributed across political groups. Democrats became less likely to trust businesses to act in society's best interest (39% to 31%) and to view them as effective (58% to 49%), while Republicans became more likely to trust businesses (57% to 61%) and to view them as effective (68% to 75%).

A similar pattern emerged for the federal government. Among Democrats, the percentage saying they have some or a lot of trust declined from 33% to 21%, while effectiveness ratings fell from 54% to 41%. Republicans' trust increased from 36% to 41%, while effectiveness ratings changed little (56% to 55%).

Even as trust and effectiveness declined in 2026, strong majorities of Americans, regardless of their political affiliation, continue to recognize the capacity of businesses and governments to make a positive difference. Eighty-eight percent of all adults say businesses have some or a great deal of power to positively impact people's lives, compared with 93% for state and local government and 92% for the federal government.

“

ADVICE FOR BUSINESS LEADERS IN AMERICA

You have a responsibility to help the people of the world given the position you find yourself in.

— MALE, 18-29

There continues to be a mismatch between what Americans expect from businesses and what they believe businesses deliver.

Five years into the study, Americans have not lowered the bar for business. They continue to expect businesses to meet certain standards, particularly in relation to how they conduct themselves and contribute to society.

Nearly all Americans in 2026 say businesses should operate ethically, improve their communities, support environmental sustainability, offer flexible work arrangements when possible and help make the world better. These expectations have changed little from previous years.

Americans continue to see businesses falling short in many of these areas. Four of Americans' top five expectations are among the lowest-rated areas of business performance: environmental sustainability (25% say businesses are doing a good or excellent job), making the world a better place (26%), ethical business practices (32%) and flexible work arrangements (33%).

As in previous years, executive compensation remains the lowest-rated area of business performance. While 84% of Americans say it is somewhat or extremely important for businesses to avoid a major pay gap between CEOs and average employees, just 15% believe businesses are performing well in this area.

FIGURE 4

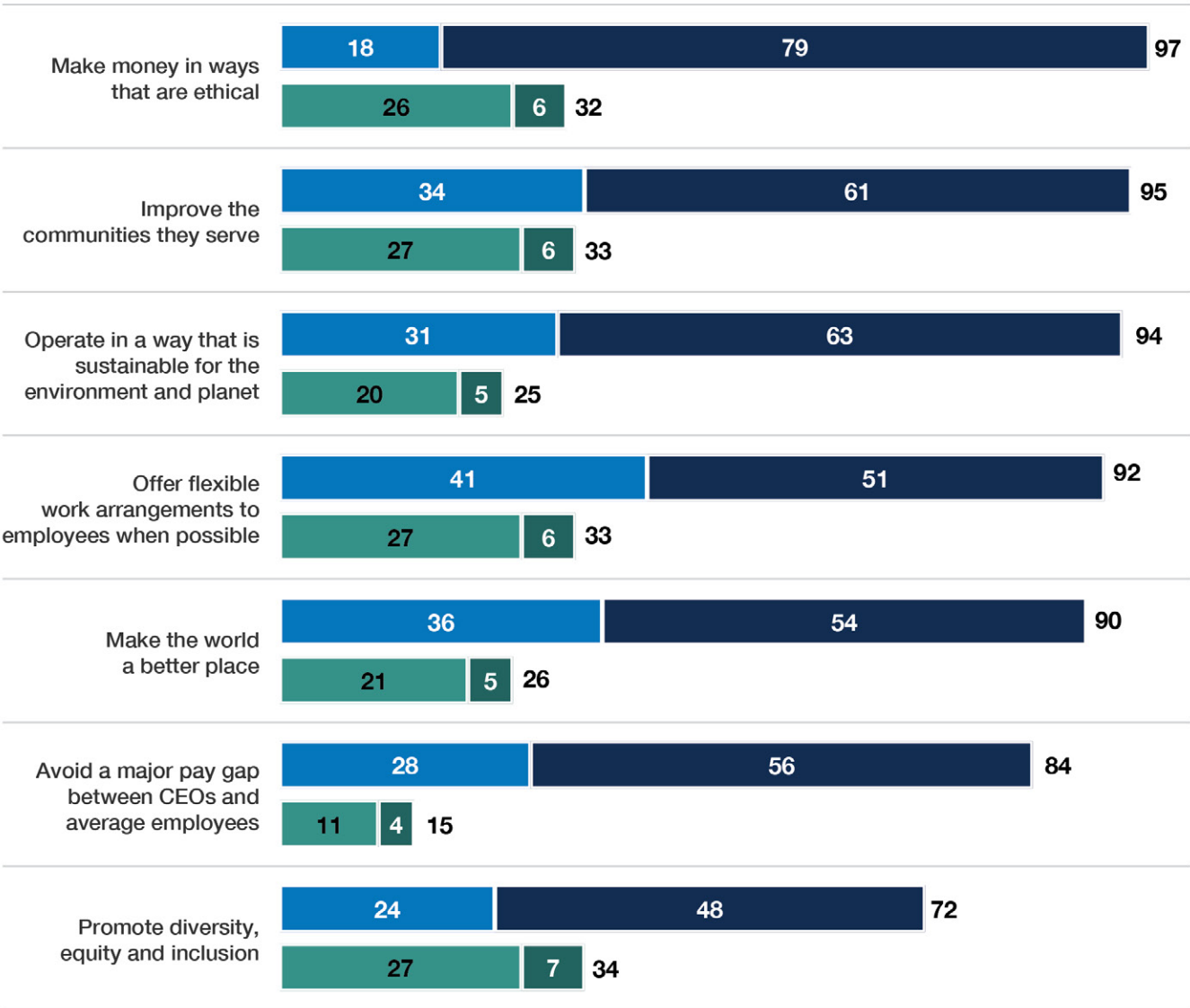
Business Priorities vs. Performance

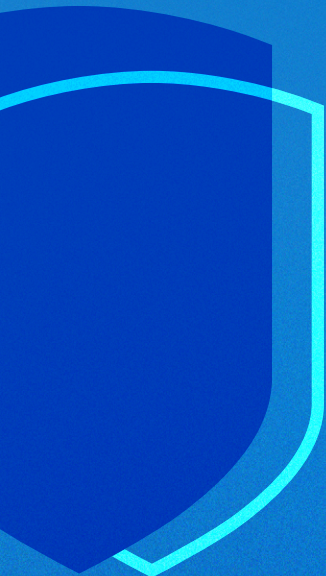
In your opinion, how important is it that businesses, in general, do the following?

■ % Somewhat important ■ % Extremely important

In your opinion, how do you think businesses, in general, are doing in the following areas?

■ % Good ■ % Excellent





WHAT AMERICANS WANT BUSINESSES TO STAND FOR

Support for businesses taking public stances on current events cooled in 2026, while more Americans say businesses with diverse workforces are more innovative and more profitable.

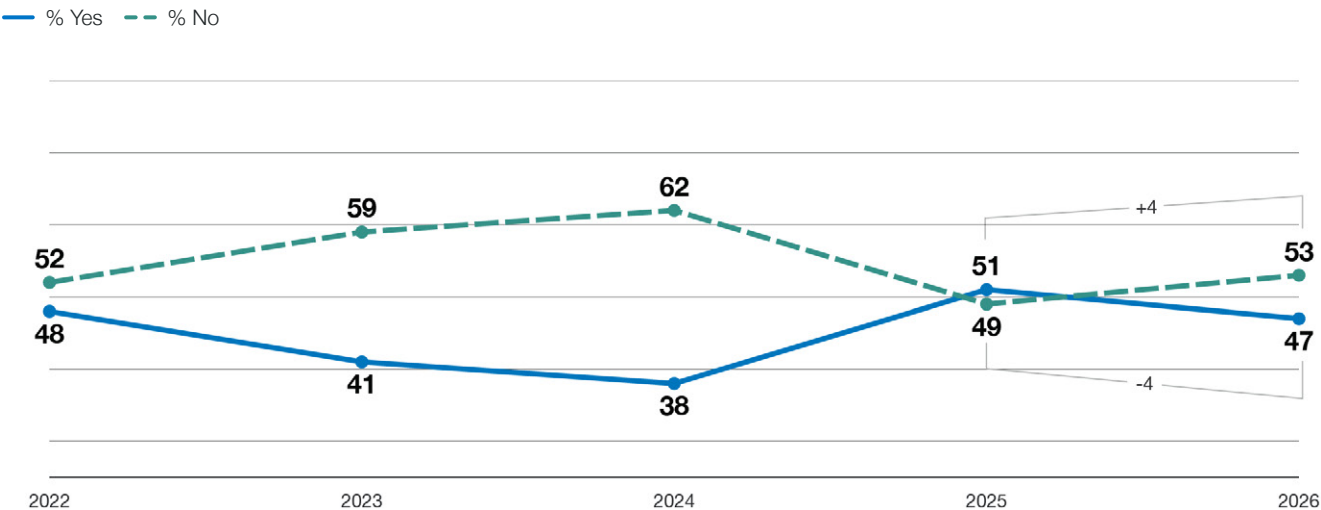
After reaching a new high in 2025, the public’s desire for businesses to speak out on current events fell back to levels more in line with where it was in 2022.

Americans remain closely divided on whether businesses should take public positions on current events.

A slim majority of Americans (53%) do not think businesses should take a public stance on current events, while nearly half (47%) say businesses should. Since 2022, support has fluctuated considerably. In 2023 and 2024, Americans leaned more decisively toward the “no” position. Their attitudes in 2026 are more similar to those when the study began.

FIGURE 5
Desire for Businesses to Take a Public Stance Slips

Do you think businesses, in general, should take a public stance on current events?



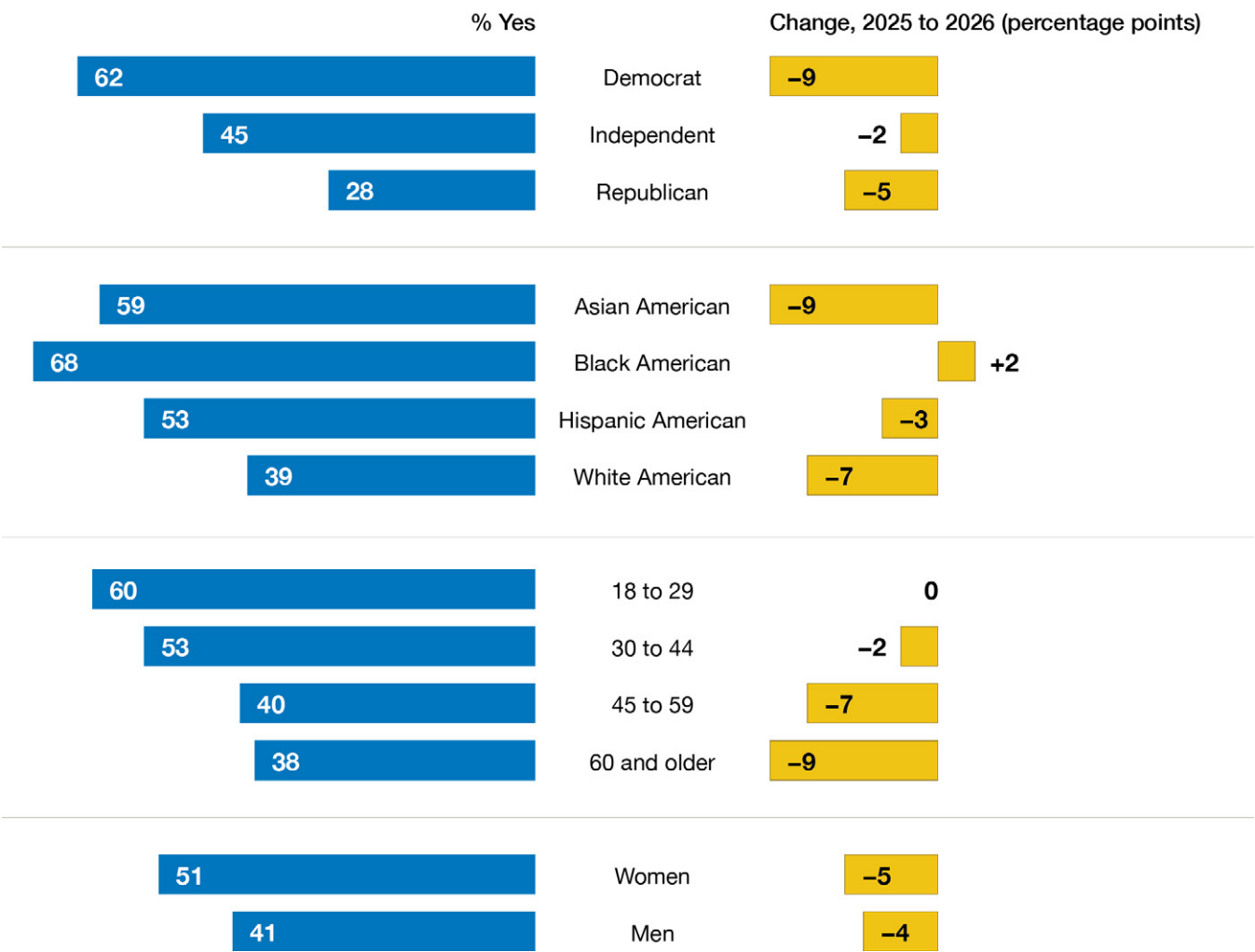
Support for businesses taking a public stance remains unevenly distributed across the population in 2026. Support still skews Democratic, although Democrats registered the largest decline of any partisan group between 2025 and 2026. However, Democrats are not alone as support declined across most demographic groups.

Support for taking a public stance remains at or above the majority level among Black, Asian and Hispanic adults, women, adults younger than 45 and Democrats. Majority opposition comes from White adults, men, adults aged 45 and older as well as Republicans and independents, who all shifted further in that direction between 2025 and 2026.

FIGURE 6

Support for Businesses Taking a Public Stance Declines Across Most Demographics

Do you think businesses, in general, should take a public stance on current events?



Since 2025, support for public stances shifted on several politically contentious issues, but Americans’ highest priorities for businesses remained stable in 2026.

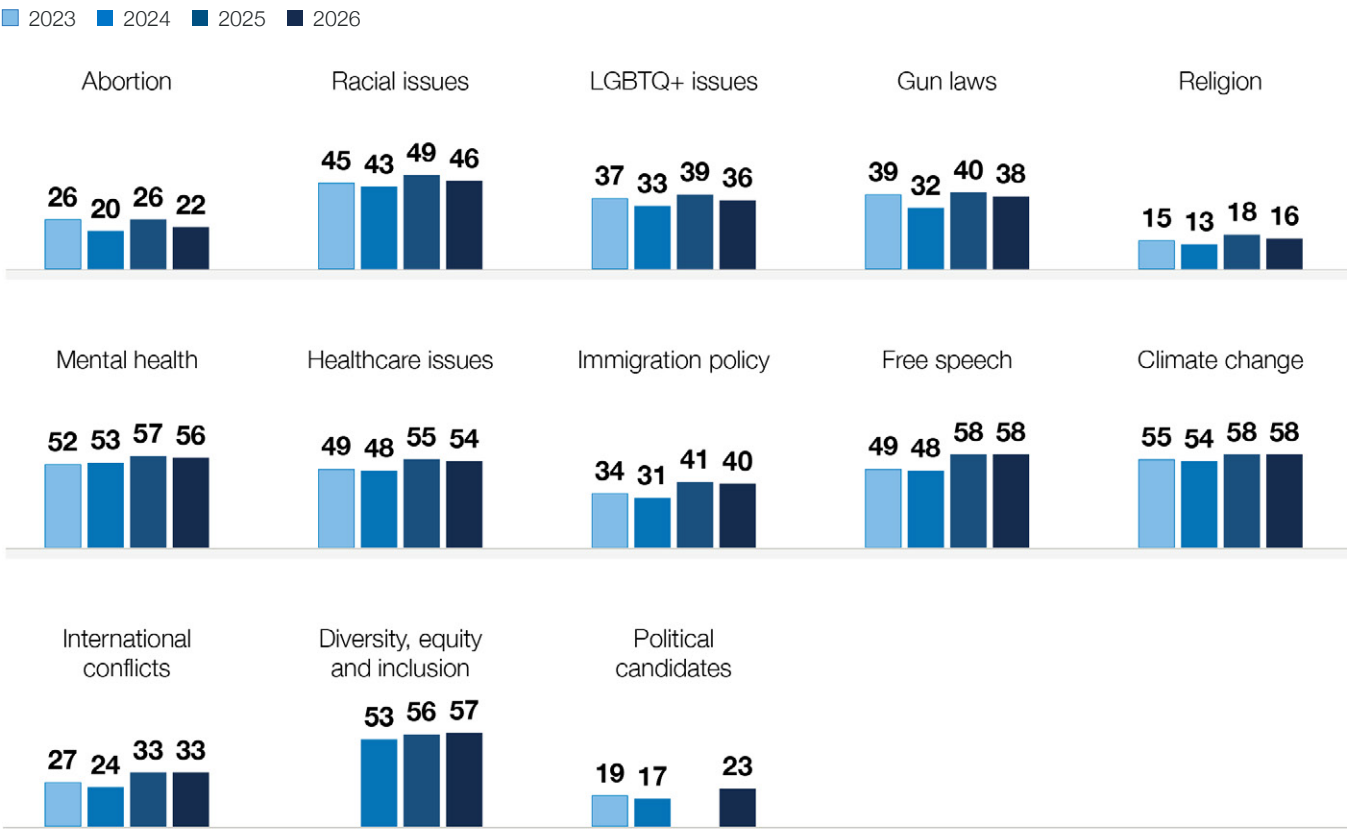
The gains in support for businesses taking public stances on key issues in 2025 largely held in 2026.

After support increased across every comparable topic in 2025, modest declines occurred on five issues in 2026. Support for businesses taking public stances decreased on abortion (down four points), racial issues and LGBTQ+ issues (both down three points) and gun laws and religion (each down two points).

Almost all the declines on these five issues occurred among Democrats. Even so, support for each issue remained above its 2024 level, suggesting a partial pullback rather than a reversal of the broad gains recorded in 2025. In 2026, a majority of Americans continue to want businesses to speak out on the same five topics they wanted to hear about in 2025: free speech, climate change, mental health, diversity, equity and inclusion, and healthcare.

FIGURE 7
Support Eases in 2026 for Businesses Taking a Public Stance on Abortion, Racial Issues, LGBTQ+, Gun Laws and Religion

Do you think that businesses, in general, should take a public stance on subjects that have to do with the following?
% Yes



Sorted by change between 2025 and 2026. Political candidates, which has no 2025 data, is sorted by change between 2024 and 2026.
Note: Political candidates was not asked about in 2025, and diversity, equity and inclusion was not asked about in 2023.

Most employees still prefer that their employers not communicate a stance on current events.

Employees are slightly more open than they were a year ago to their employers expressing a position on current events, and they want to hear from them on the same four topics: mental health, healthcare issues, diversity, equity and inclusion, and free speech.

For the second consecutive year, a majority of employees (56%) say their own employer should not communicate a stance on current events, down four points from 60% in 2025. At the same time, the percentage who say employers should do so increased four points, slightly narrowing the gap between the two views.

Compared with 2025, support for employers communicating a stance declined modestly, but statistically significantly, on healthcare issues (62% to 56%), abortion (21% to 18%) and religion (17% to 14%). The decline on healthcare issues was driven by both employed Democrats and Republicans, whereas Democrats alone account for much of the decline on abortion. Support for employers communicating a stance on abortion also declined significantly among 18- to 29-year-old employees, who tend to identify as Democrats.

Despite the few changes, the same four topics continued to receive majority support in 2026: mental health (62%), healthcare issues (56%), diversity, equity and inclusion (56%), and free speech (52%). As in 2025, three of these four topics — mental health, healthcare issues, and diversity, equity and inclusion — relate directly to employees' workplace experience, suggesting that employees remain most interested in hearing from their employers on issues closely connected to the workplace.



ADVICE FOR BUSINESS LEADERS IN AMERICA

Concentrate on running your business efficiently and stay out of politics.

— MALE, 60+

56%

say their own employer should not communicate a stance to them on current events — down from 60% in 2025.



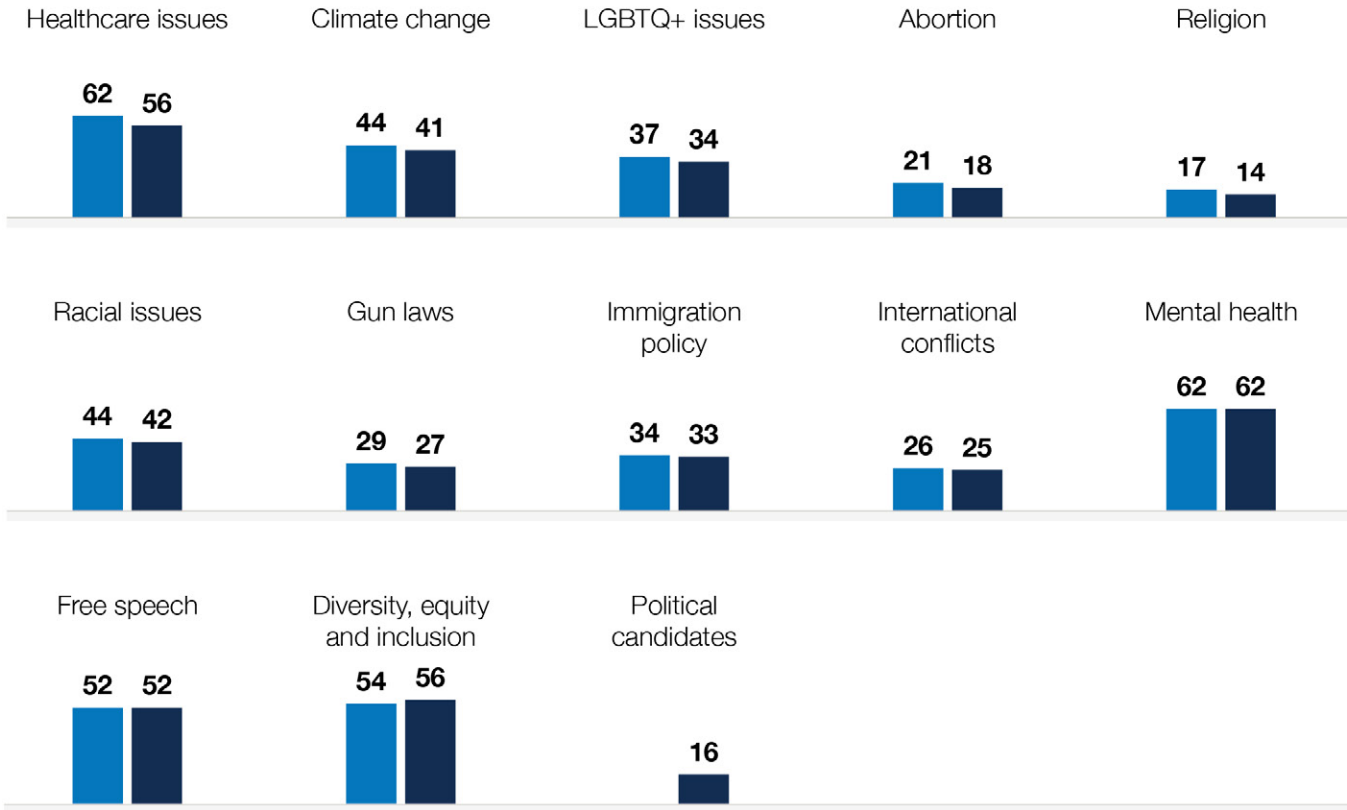
FIGURE 8

Employees Less Likely to Say Their Employers Should Communicate Stance on Healthcare Issues, Abortion and Religion

Do you think your employer should communicate a stance to employees on subjects that have to do with the following?

% Yes, among employees

■ 2025 ■ 2026



Sorted by change between 2025 and 2026. Political candidates, which was not asked about in 2025, is listed last.

Americans are even more positive about diversity’s impact on business performance and innovation in 2026.

Most Americans continue to view workplace diversity as a strength rather than a weakness for businesses.

Americans increasingly associate workforce diversity with stronger business outcomes. Seventy-one percent say it is somewhat (46%) or completely (25%) true that businesses with diverse workforces are more profitable, while 75% say it is somewhat (42%) or completely (33%) true that businesses with diverse workforces have more innovative products. Both increased by at least 10 points between 2025 and 2026.

FIGURE 9

Perceptions of Diverse Workforces

Based on what you know, or have experienced, please indicate the extent to which you feel the following statements are true.

% Somewhat/Completely true

2024 2025 2026



10+ pts

In 2026, Americans grew more likely to see diverse workplaces as more profitable and innovative.



Notably, views on diversity in the workplace grew more positive across all three partisan groups between 2025 and 2026. Democrats were at least six points more likely and independents at least 10 points more likely to say these statements are somewhat or completely true. Republicans were also 11 points more likely to say businesses with diverse workforces are more profitable and make more innovative products.

Views on diversity in the workplace grew more positive across all three partisan groups between 2025 and 2026.

Despite these gains, partisan differences remain: 92% of Democrats, 70% of independents and 41% of Republicans say it is somewhat or completely true that businesses with diverse workforces are more profitable.

Similarly, 94% of Democrats, 75% of independents and 46% of Republicans say businesses with diverse workforces make more innovative products. Even after growing more positive in 2026, a majority of Republicans continue to say these statements are somewhat or completely untrue.

“

ADVICE FOR BUSINESS LEADERS IN AMERICA

Understand that diversity of the workforce results in more productive and creative output.

— FEMALE, 60+

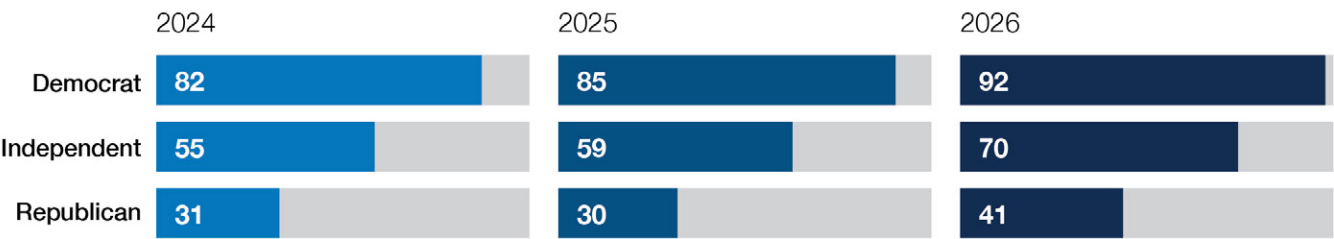
FIGURE 10

Perceptions of Diverse Workforces by Political Party

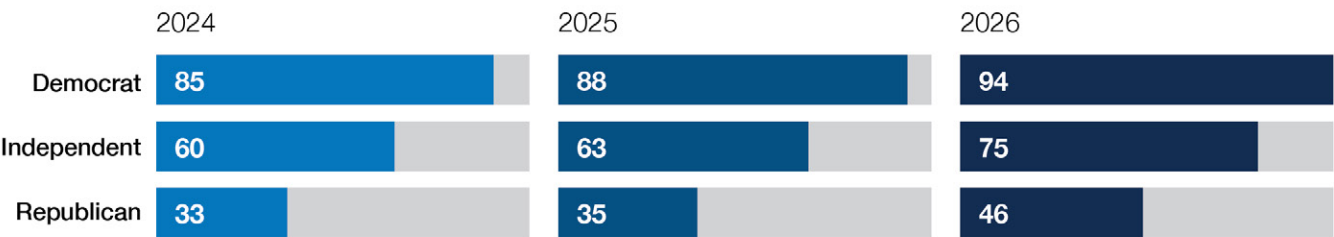
Based on what you know, or have experienced, please indicate the extent to which you feel the following statements are true.

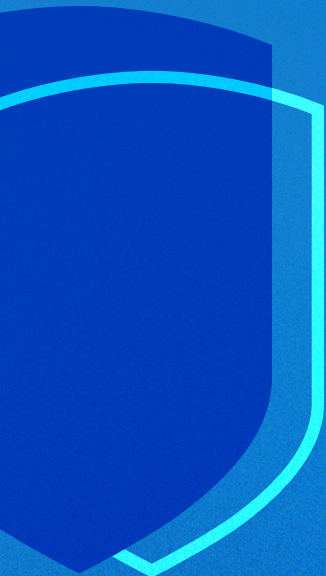
% Somewhat/Completely true

Businesses with a diverse workforce are more profitable.



Businesses with a diverse workforce make more innovative products.





ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, REAL DOUBTS

After two years of modest gains in positive attitudes toward AI, sentiment turned more negative in 2026.

Despite growing familiarity with AI, trust in businesses’ use of the technology declined in 2026.

Trust in businesses’ use of AI fell this year, but it remains somewhat higher than in 2023 and 2024.

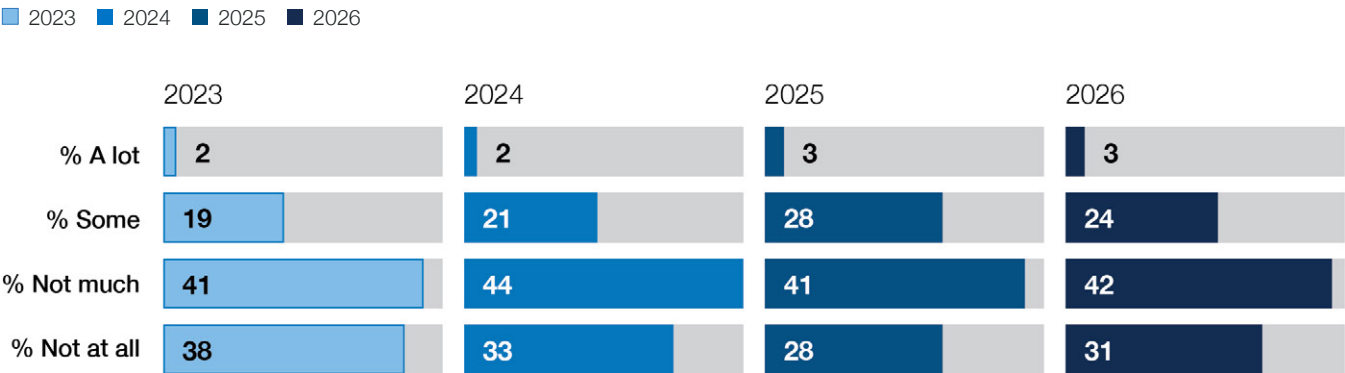
Americans are more familiar with AI than they were two years ago. Seven in 10 Americans now report being somewhat or extremely knowledgeable about AI, up from 64% in 2024, with familiarity increasing in every age group.

Even so, trust in businesses to use AI responsibly declined slightly in 2026, suggesting that greater awareness of the technology alone may not be enough to build public trust. Twenty-seven percent of Americans now say they trust businesses some or a lot to use AI responsibly, down from 31% in 2025.

The loss of trust is especially pronounced among young adults. Among those aged 18 to 29, the percentage expressing “some” or “a lot” of trust fell from 30% to 20%, while the percentage saying they have no trust at all increased from 29% to 41%. Republicans remain the most trusting political group, but they also experienced the largest year-over-year decline, with trust falling from 41% to 35%.

FIGURE 11
Americans Lose Trust in Businesses to Use AI Responsibly

In general, how much do you trust businesses to use artificial intelligence responsibly?



Most Americans continue to express little or no trust in businesses’ use of AI, but the 2026 decline is notable because it halted two years of gradual improvement. When public trust is already low, even modest declines may matter as businesses expand the use of AI across products, services and workplaces.

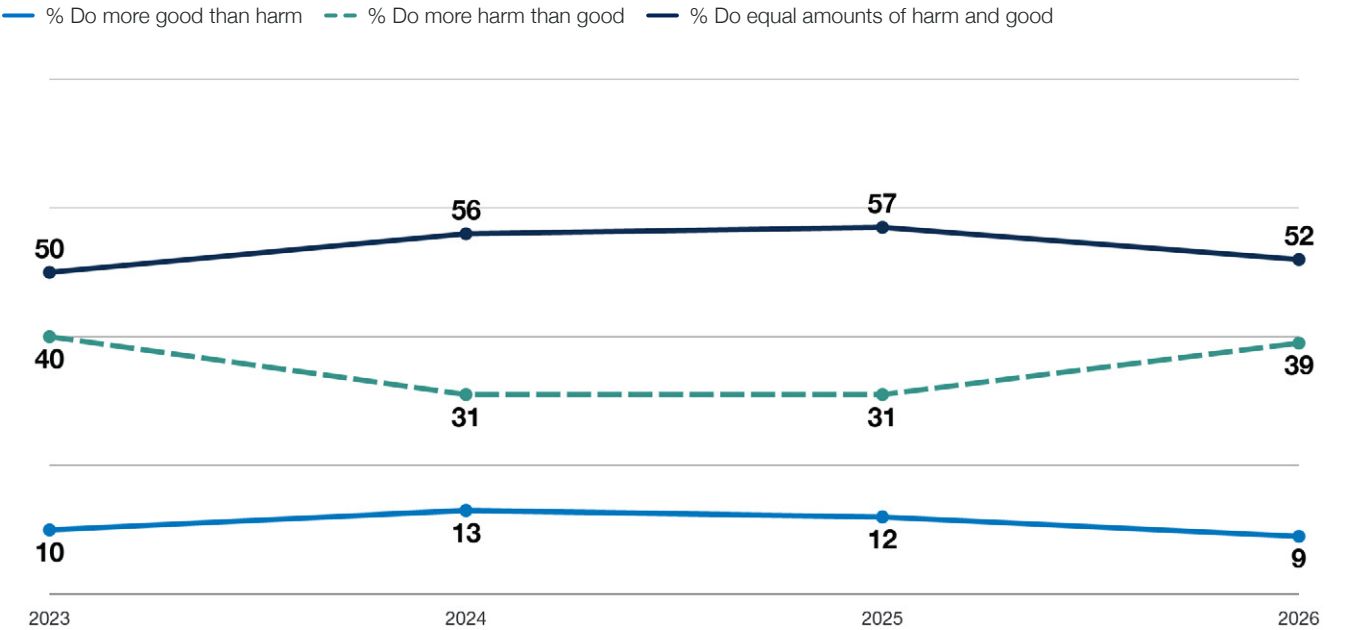
Belief that AI does more harm than good increased in 2026.

Although many Americans continue to recognize both the benefits and risks of AI, perceptions have grown more negative since 2025, particularly among young adults.

Americans’ skepticism about AI’s overall impact has increased this year. The percentage of Americans who believe AI does more harm than good rose from 31% in 2025 to 39% in 2026. At the same time, a smaller majority (52%) than in the past said AI does equal amounts of harm and good, while the percentage who believe AI does more good than harm fell slightly, from 12% to 9%.

FIGURE 12
Americans Became More Negative About AI in 2026

In your opinion, does artificial intelligence ... ?



Note: “No opinion” responses are not shown.

Negative perceptions increased across every age group but were especially pronounced among young adults. Nearly half of adults (47%) aged 18 to 29 (part of Gen Z) now believe AI does more harm than good, up from 36% in 2025 and considerably higher than the 30% recorded in 2023 and 27% recorded in 2024. The 11-percentage-point increase between 2025 and 2026 was the largest among any age group.

The shift among young adults is consistent with broader research from the Walton Family Foundation, GSV Ventures and Gallup showing that members of Gen Z have become more skeptical of AI even as their use of the technology has remained steady.¹

¹ Gallup. (2026, April 9). *Gen Z’s AI adoption steady, but skepticism climbs*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/708224/gen-adoption-steady-skepticism-climbs.aspx>



39%

of Americans
say AI does
more harm than
good — up eight
points from 2025.

47%

of adults aged
18 to 29 say AI
does more harm
than good — up 11
points from 2025.

Concerns about how AI is being used increased in 2026.

Americans continue to express strong concerns about several uses of AI, especially when it comes to decisions that potentially affect employment, safety and health.

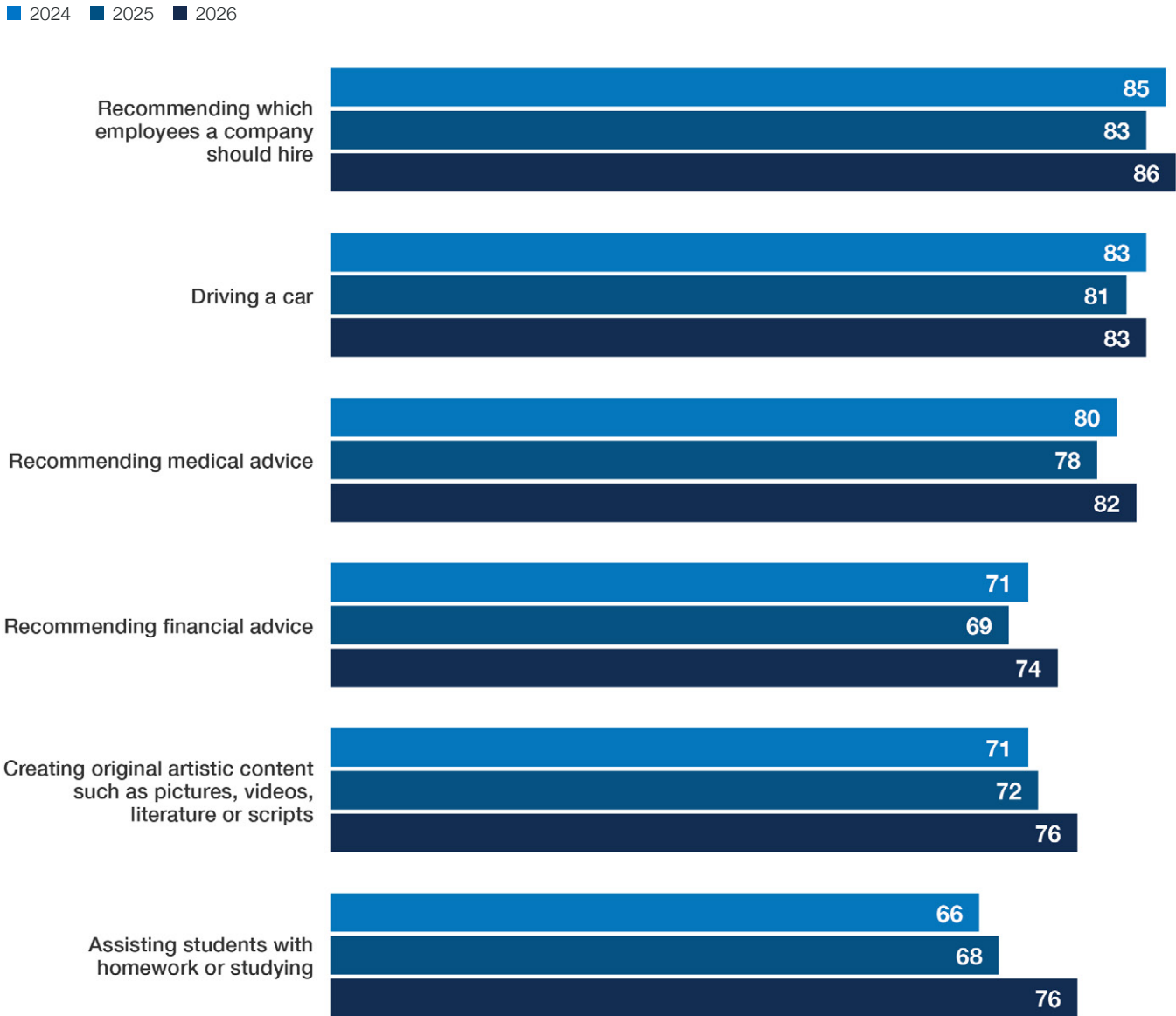
Americans express the greatest concern about AI recommending which employees a company should hire, driving a car and recommending medical advice. At least eight in 10 Americans say they are somewhat or extremely concerned about each of these applications.

Concern increased across five of the six AI applications between 2025 and 2026. The largest increase was for AI assisting students with homework or studying, up eight points. AI recommending financial advice followed with a five-point increase, while medical advice and creating original artistic content each increased four points, and hiring decisions increased three points. Only views of AI driving a car did not change significantly.

FIGURE 13
Americans Express Elevated Levels of Concern About AI Applications

How concerned are you about artificial intelligence being used in the following areas?

% *Extremely/Somewhat concerned*



The increase in concern about AI assisting students with homework or studying was evident across every age group. Among adults aged 18 to 29, concern increased from 56% to 67%, and among adults aged 45 to 59, it increased from 66% to 77%. The 11-point increases are the largest observed for any AI application measured. Despite the broad increase, parents remain less concerned than non-parents about AI assisting students with homework or studying.

More Americans today believe AI will reduce the number of U.S. jobs.

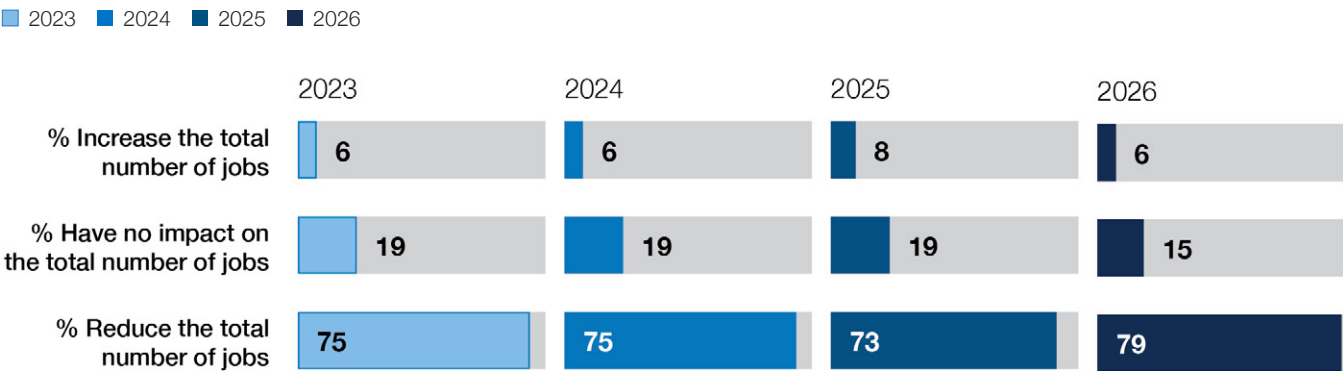
Job displacement remains a top concern about AI, especially among Americans likely to be at earlier and later stages of their careers.

Most Americans continue to anticipate that AI will lead to job losses and disrupt the labor market over the next decade. Concern increased for the first time in 2026, when nearly eight in 10 Americans (79%) said AI will reduce the number of U.S. jobs over the next 10 years, up from 73% in 2025 and 75% before that.

FIGURE 14

More Americans Expect AI to Reduce Jobs

In your opinion, what type of effect will artificial intelligence have on the total number of jobs in the United States over the next 10 years?



The belief that AI will reduce jobs increases most among Americans likely to be at earlier and later stages of their careers. Among adults aged 18 to 29, the percentage who believe AI will reduce jobs increased 13 points between 2025 and 2026, rising from 62% to 75%, while the percentage among adults aged 45 to 59 increased nine points, from 75% to 84%. Concern did not change among other age groups.

Relative to their older peers, younger adults' optimism in 2025 that AI would create jobs largely faded in 2026. Among adults aged 18 to 29, belief that AI would increase U.S. jobs over the next decade fell from 14% in 2025 to just 5%, bringing their attitudes in line with other age groups.

“

ADVICE FOR BUSINESS LEADERS IN AMERICA

Do not be too quick to adopt AI and cut employees.

— FEMALE, 30-44

Americans increasingly view AI as comparable to people, but not better.

Americans continue to say AI performs worse than people do across applications ranging from assisting with homework to providing medical advice.

Most Americans expect AI to reduce the number of U.S. jobs over the next decade, but they are not more likely to believe AI performs certain tasks better than people.

Instead, Americans increasingly view AI as comparable to people, even as they continue to rate human performance above AI across every application measured.

Americans have become less likely to say AI performs worse than people in several areas. The largest declines in the percentage saying AI performs worse than people were for driving a car (down seven points), financial advice (down six points) and medical advice (down five points).

-7 pts

Fewer Americans say AI performs worse than people when it comes to driving a car.

-6 pts

Fewer Americans say AI performs worse than people when it comes to giving financial advice.

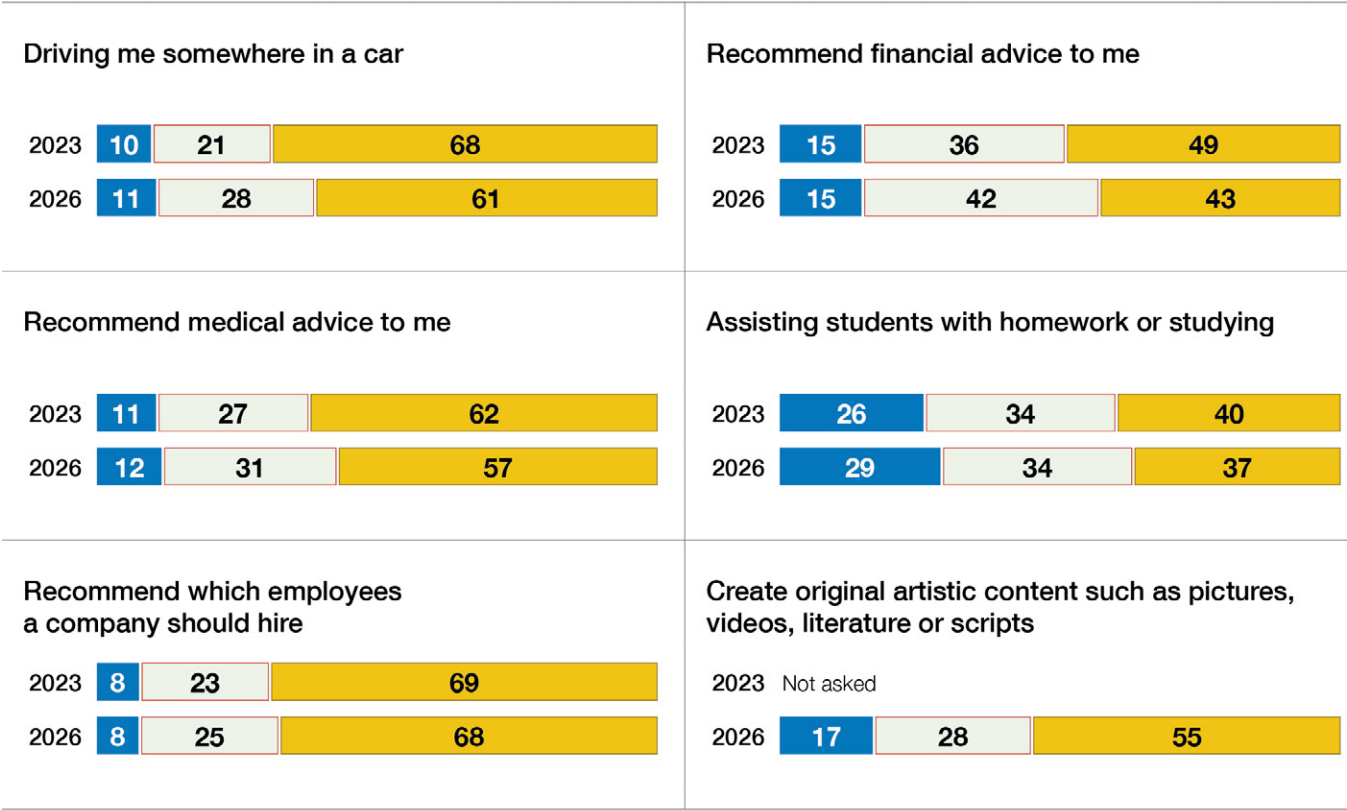


FIGURE 15

AI vs. Humans

How well does artificial intelligence do the following compared to a person?

■ % Better than a person ■ % Same as a person ■ % Worse than a person



However, there has been a general shift from viewing AI as worse than a person to viewing it as about the same as a person, rather than growing confidence that AI outperforms people.

Hiring recommendations are the exception, with views that AI performs worse than people essentially unchanged. Helping students with homework or studying was the only area where the percentage of Americans who said AI performs better than people increased, rising slightly from 26% to 29%.

Nearly half of Americans view businesses’ use of AI to create advertising negatively.

Most Americans say they have seen advertisements that appear to have been created using AI. Although many view the practice negatively, they are more accepting of certain uses when businesses disclose how the technology was used.

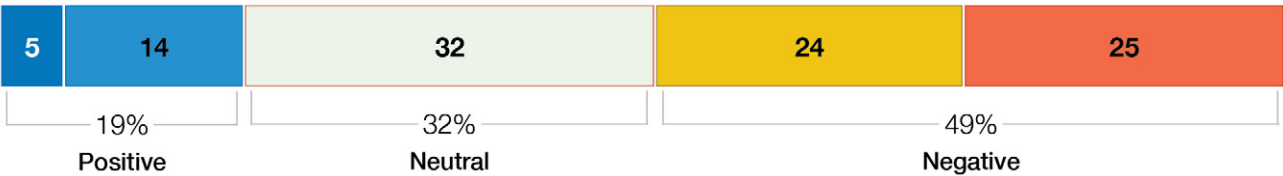
This year, the Bentley-Gallup Business in Society survey for the first time measured Americans’ attitudes toward businesses’ use of AI in advertising. Nearly eight in 10 Americans (79%) report seeing advertisements that appear to have been clearly created using AI in the 30 days before completing the survey. Americans are more likely to view businesses’ use of AI to create advertisements negatively than positively, with nearly half expressing negative views.

FIGURE 16

Americans More Negative Than Positive About AI in Advertising

In general, how do you feel about businesses using artificial intelligence (AI) to create advertisements (e.g., product images or videos, AI-generated models, social media posts)?

■ % Very positive ■ % Somewhat positive ■ % Neither positive nor negative ■ % Somewhat negative ■ % Very negative

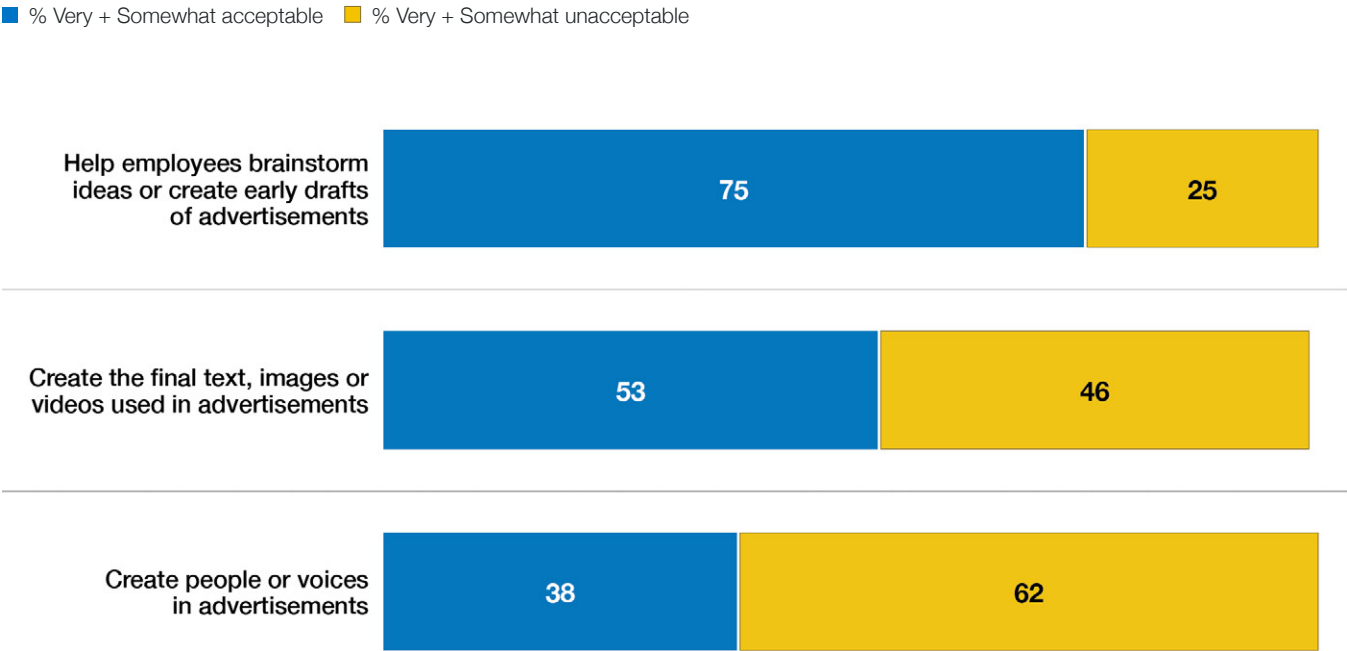


Americans distinguish between different uses of AI in advertising. Three in four find it acceptable for businesses to use AI to help employees brainstorm ideas or create early drafts of advertisements when that use is disclosed. A slim majority also accepts businesses using AI to create the final text, images or videos used in advertisements. However, 62% of Americans find using AI to create people or voices in advertisements unacceptable, even when businesses disclose how the technology was used.

FIGURE 17

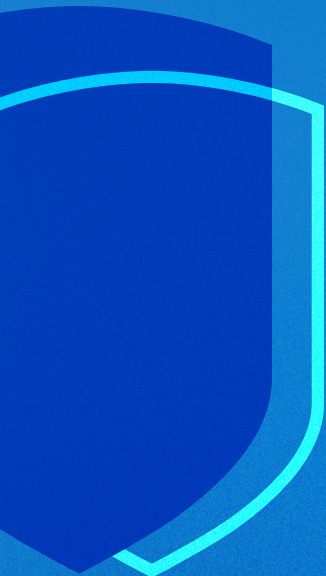
Americans Distinguish Between Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses of AI in Advertising

How acceptable or unacceptable is it for businesses to use artificial intelligence (AI) in the following ways, if that use is clearly disclosed?



Adults aged 18 to 29 are among the most likely to report seeing AI-generated advertisements. They are also the most negative toward businesses that use AI to create them. Two-thirds express negative views, and they are less accepting than older Americans of uses of AI in advertising.

Republicans are generally more accepting than Democrats and independents of businesses' use of AI in advertising. Even so, majorities across all political groups continue to find using AI to create people or voices in advertisements unacceptable.



PRICES VS. PROFITS

Price increases may affect more than consumers' wallets. They may also influence how Americans view business.

Most Americans see prices rising and believe businesses have increased them more than necessary to boost their profits.

Beliefs about why prices are rising are closely tied to perceptions of business. Americans who believe companies raised prices beyond what was necessary are less likely to view business positively.

New questions introduced in the 2026 Bentley-Gallup Business in Society survey examine how Americans view recent price increases, businesses’ pricing decisions and the ways companies should respond to rising costs.

Nearly nine in 10 Americans (89%) say the prices of the products and services they buy have increased over the past 12 months, including 62% who say prices have increased significantly.

Majorities across every major demographic group report that prices have increased at least somewhat.

Americans do not simply see prices rising. Overall, eight in 10 Americans believe businesses have raised prices a great deal (47%) or somewhat (33%) more than necessary because they wanted to increase profits. Republicans and conservatives are the only groups surveyed in which less than half say businesses raised prices a great deal more than necessary.

Eight in 10 Americans believe businesses have raised prices a great deal (47%) or somewhat (33%) more than necessary because they wanted to increase profits.

FIGURE 18
Perception of Businesses Raising Prices for Profit

In the past 12 months, to what extent do you believe businesses have raised prices more than they needed to because they wanted to increase their profit?

■ % A great deal ■ % Somewhat ■ % Not much ■ % Not at all ■ % Did not notice a price increase



Question asked of respondents who said prices significantly or somewhat increased, rebased to the total population.
Data values less than 3% not shown.

Americans who believe businesses are raising prices a great deal more than necessary hold less favorable views of the impact business has on society than those who do not, though a majority (53%) still view business positively. Those who believe businesses are raising prices a great deal more than necessary are more likely to view the impact business has on society as negative (20%) than those who believe businesses are raising prices somewhat more than necessary (8%) or not much more than necessary or not at all (3%).

“

ADVICE FOR BUSINESS LEADERS IN AMERICA

Don't be so greedy. Their profit line is not the most important thing.

— FEMALE, 45-59

Americans have clear ideas about what they think businesses should do when costs rise.

There is a clear hierarchy of acceptable actions for businesses to take, with accepting lower profits, raising prices and reducing product sizes or quantity preferred over reductions in quality or employee compensation.

Americans distinguish between price increases they view as justified and those they view as excessive. While most say businesses should accept lower profits when costs increase, about half also believe businesses should raise prices, and four in 10 say businesses should reduce the size or quantity of products and services.

53%

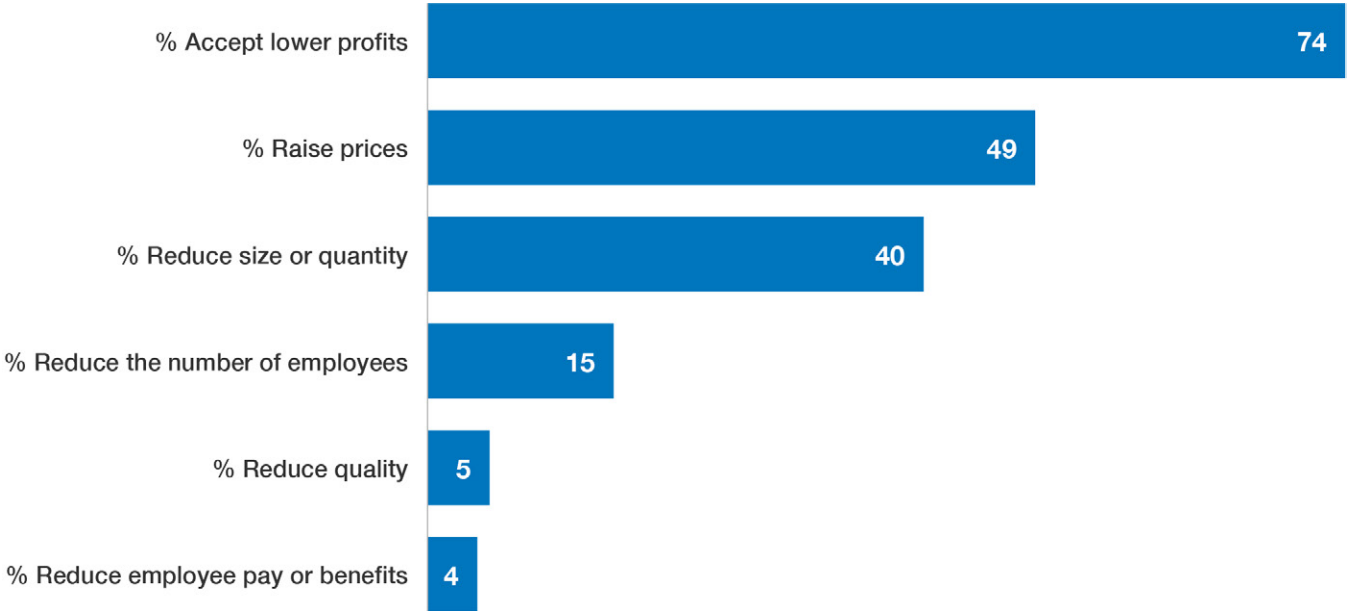
of Americans who believe businesses raise prices a great deal more than necessary still view business positively overall.



FIGURE 19

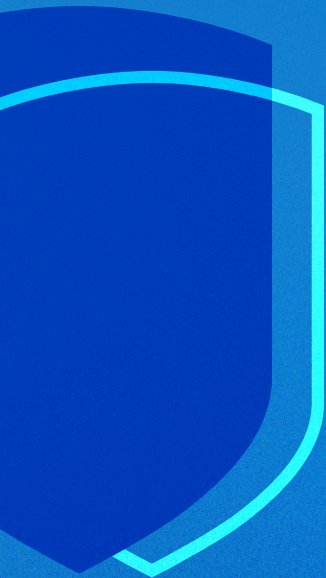
Actions a Business Should Take When Costs Increase

Respondents were asked what a business should do first when costs increase, then asked to select up to two additional actions. Results combine responses across both questions.



Americans are relatively open to shrinkflation — reducing a product’s size, weight or quantity while keeping its price the same — when costs rise. Four in 10 say businesses should reduce the size or quantity of products and services, compared with just 5% who say businesses should reduce quality. This suggests many would rather receive less than receive a lower-quality product. They are also three times more likely to support reducing the number of employees than reducing quality.

Americans are especially resistant to workers bearing the cost of rising prices: Just 4% say businesses should reduce employee pay and benefits, while 15% support reducing staff.



METHODOLOGY

Results for the 2026 Bentley-Gallup Business in Society survey are based on a Gallup Panel™ web study completed by 3,270 U.S. adults, aged 18 and older, conducted May 4-11, 2026. For results based on this sample of adults, the margin of sampling error at the 95% confidence level is ± 2.4 percentage points for response percentages around 50% and is ± 1.4 percentage points for response percentages around 10% or 90%, design effect included.

The data are weighted to match national demographics of sex, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, employment status and region for the population of U.S. adults aged 18 and older. Demographic weighting targets are based on the 2024 American Community Survey figures. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

2025, 2024, 2023 and 2022 results are from previous iterations of the Bentley-Gallup Business in Society survey:

- In 2025, the survey was conducted May 5-12; margin of sampling error ± 2.8 percentage points (50%), ± 1.7 percentage points (10%/90%).
- In 2024, the survey was conducted April 29-May 6, the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 2.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, design effect included.
- In 2023, the survey was conducted May 8-15, the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 1.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, design effect included.
- In 2022, the survey was conducted June 8-19, the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 1.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, design effect included.



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