THE UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX CAREER OPTIMISM INDEX

NATIONAL SURVEY, RESEARCH FINDINGS
FEBRUARY 2021

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: CAREER OPTIMISM INDEX

- On behalf of the University of Phoenix, Edelman Data x Intelligence, an independent market research firm, conducted 20-minute, online survey among:
  - N=5000 nationally representative US adults, age 18+, who either currently work or wish to be working
    - National fieldwork was conducted December 12 – January 6, 2021

  - Oversamples of n=300 adults in each of the top 20 US designated market areas (DMAs): New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas, San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, Washington D.C., Houston, Boston, Atlanta, Phoenix, Tampa, Seattle, Detroit, Minneapolis, Miami, Denver, Orlando, Cleveland, Sacramento
    - DMA fieldwork was conducted between December 12 – January 15, 2012

- Throughout the report, there are multiple demographic data points, including generational data. The following age groups correspond to each:
  - Gen Z, ages 18-21
  - Millennial, ages 22-37
  - Gen X, ages 38-53
  - Boomer, ages 54-72

- Margin of error for main sample and over-samples:
  - U.S. General Population, Employed +/- 1.39% (n=5000)
  - New York City +/- 5.66 (n=300)
  - Los Angeles +/- 5.66 (n=301)
  - Chicago +/- 5.66 (n=300)
  - Philadelphia +/- 5.66 (n=303)
  - Dallas +/- 5.66 (n=302)
  - SF-Oak-San Jose +/- 5.66 (n=302)
  - Washington D.C. +/- 5.66 (n=304)
  - Houston +/- 5.66 (n=301)
  - Boston +/- 5.66 (n=302)
  - Atlanta +/- 5.65 (n=304)
  - Phoenix +/- 5.66 (n=301)
  - Tampa +/- 5.65 (n=304)
  - Seattle +/- 5.66 (n=300)
  - Detroit +/- 5.65 (n=300)
  - Minneapolis +/- 5.66 (n=301)
  - Miami +/- 5.66 (n=305)
  - Denver +/- 5.66 (n=301)
  - Orlando +/- 5.65 (n=300)
  - Cleveland +/- 5.65 (n=300)
  - Sacramento +/- 5.65 (n=301)

This report is part of The Career Optimism Index Study developed and conducted by the University of Phoenix Career Institute, a newly established department within the University's College of Doctoral Studies is focused on studying American workforce dynamics to inform societal solutions that spur career growth.

This specific report covers key findings across a nationally representative sample of US adults who either currently work or wish to be working and includes multiple demographic and designated metro area (DMA) data points.

OVERVIEW

- Almost one year into the pandemic, Americans' careers have been taken off course and many are living paycheck to paycheck
- Despite challenges, hope exists, and Americans are optimistic for the future
- Americans believe they are resilient, prepared, and highly employable if they had to search for a job in the short-term
- Americans define themselves by their careers. Yet, many don’t see a clear path forward to develop skills and advance in their careers for the long-term
- There are acute and on-going challenges facing working adults as they navigate their careers, including but not limited to:
    - COVID-19 pandemic
    - Financial concerns
    - The future of jobs/automation
    - Emotional and structural barriers
- American workers need additional support and resources to translate their optimism into future career outcomes. They are looking for support in finding upskilling opportunities, mentorship, and access to mental health resources

ALMOST ONE YEAR INTO THE PANDEMIC, AMERICANS' CAREERS HAVE BEEN TAKEN OFF COURSE AND MANY ARE LIVING PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK

COVID-19 IMPACT
(Shown % Top 2 Agree)

1 in 3

Americans say their career has been **taken off course/ derailed** due to COVID-19 (34%)

- More Latinx (38%) than White (31%) Americans
- More Gen Z & Millennials (46%, 41%) than Gen X & Boomers (32%, 22%)
- More people with lower incomes, under $50k (42%) than incomes of $50k-$99k (35%), $100k-$149k (29%) or $150k+ (25%)

PERSONAL FINANCES
(Shown % Top 2 Agree)

43%

Of Americans **live paycheck to paycheck**

- More Women than Men (51%, 36%)
- More Black, Latinx and White Americans (61%, 49%, 40%) than Asian Americans (31%)
- More Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen X (59%, 55%, 40%) than Boomers (23%)

Q27: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the pandemic and how it may have impacted you? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Latinx n=4125, White n=8274, Gen Z n=1595, Millennials n=6320, Gen X n=4834, Boomers n=2276, income under $50k n=5150, $50,000-$99,999 n=4763, $100,000-$149,000 n=2404, $150,000+ n=2258.Q13: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about finances? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Women n=3177, Male n=3207, Black n=491, Latinx n=1651, White n=3714, Millennial n=2487, Gen Z n=531, Gen X n=2089, Boomers n=1257.

HOPE EXISTS, AND AMERICANS ARE OPTIMISTIC FOR THE FUTURE

DESPITE CHALLENGES, AMERICANS ARE OPTIMISTIC

IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC
(Shown % Top 2 Agree)

70%

Of Americans say that **hope** has helped them get through this past year

32% ***strongly*** agree that hope helped them through

CAREER TRAJECTORY
(Shown % Top 2 Agree)

78%

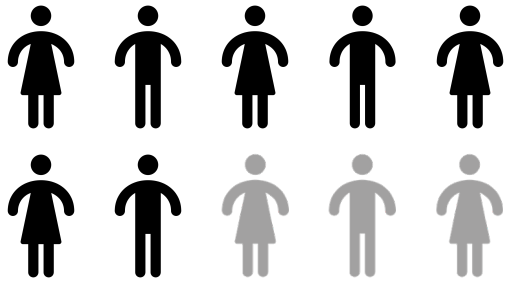
Of Americans are **hopeful** about the future of their careers

26% ***strongly*** agree that they are hopeful about the future of their careers

Q27: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the pandemic and how it may have impacted you? Base: Gen Pop n=5000 Q16: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your career trajectory? Base: Gen Pop n=5000.

THEY PERSONALLY BELIEVE THEY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL

JOB SEARCH READINESS
(Shown % Top 2 Prepared)



7 IN 10

Feel **prepared** to search for a job if they had to (70%)

PERSONAL BELIEFS
(Shown % Top 2 Agree)

83% Believe they are **highly employable**

Even more in Atlanta (89%), Orlando, and Houston (both 88%)

83% Believe they **adapt easily** to new work situations

Even more in Detroit and Tampa (91%)

82% Believe they are **resilient** when facing challenges in their career

Even more in New York City and Boston (91%)

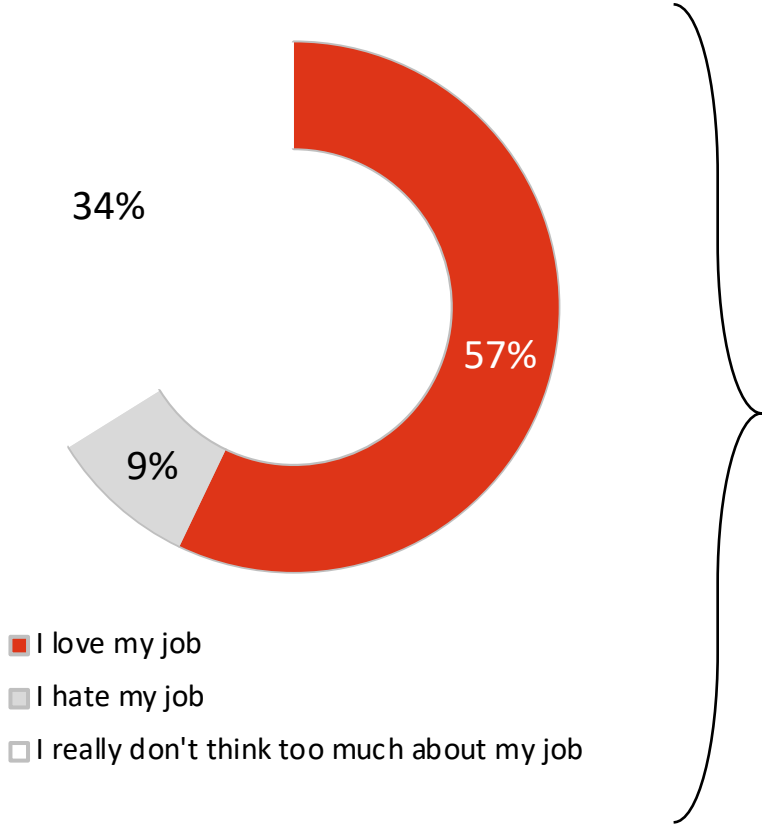
Q2: Please indicate which of the following responses best describes how prepared you currently are or would be if you needed to search for a job. Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Frontline workers n=1667, Atlanta n=304, Washington D.C. n=304, Boston n=302, Orlando n=300, Denver n=301, Miami n=301. Q12: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about job security? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Atlanta n=304, Orlando n=300, Houston n=301. Q15: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your mental health/ well-being? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Detroit n=300, Tampa n=304, NYC n=300, Boston n=302

ABOUT HALF OF THOSE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED LOVE THEIR JOBS, EVEN MORE IN ATLANTA AND WASHINGTON, D.C. DO

- Boomers (63%) are more likely than Millennials & Gen X (52%, 57%) to love their job
- More people with higher incomes, $150k+ (67%) are more likely than people with incomes of Under $50k (50%), $50k-$99k (55%), and $100k-$150k (59%) to love their jobs

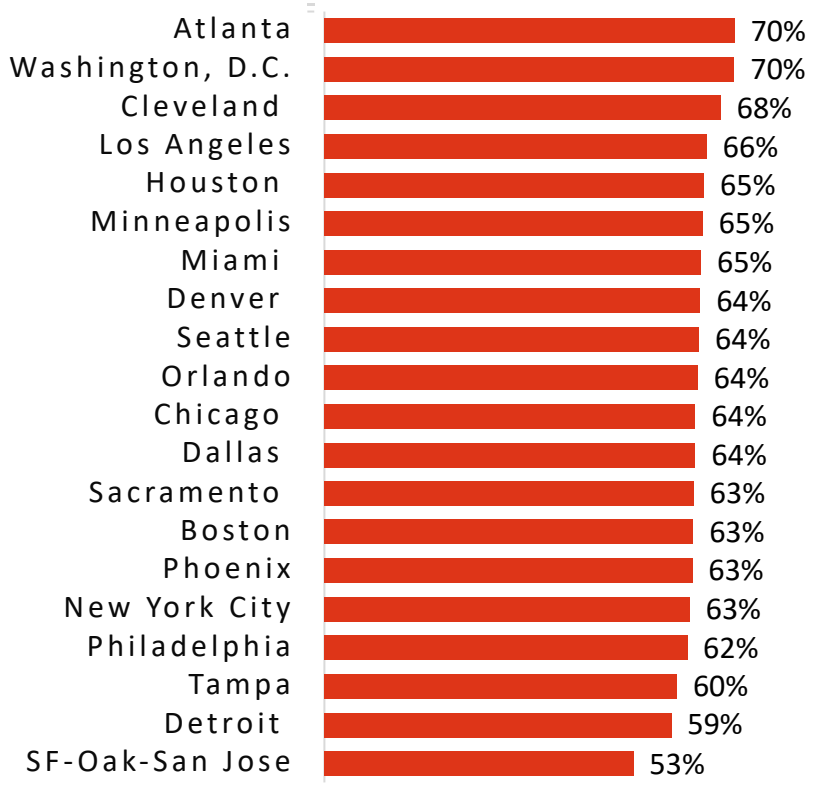
CAREER STATEMENTS

(Shown % Selected Response, Among those Employed)



"Love my job"

(Shown % Selected Response, DMA breakdown)



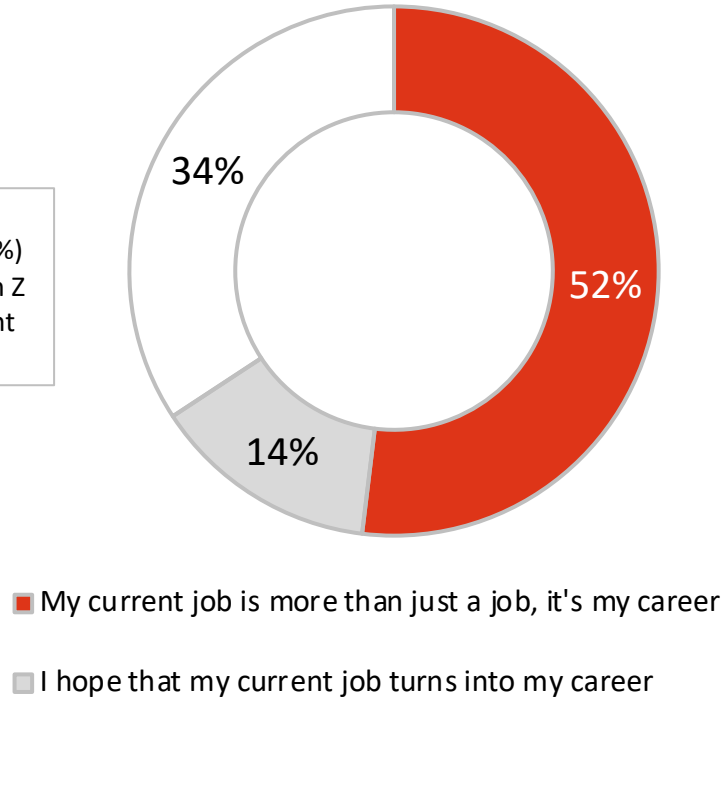
Q6: Which of the following statements best applies to your current job? Base: Employed n=4123. Q8: If you had to choose, which statement comes closer to your opinion? On most days… Base: Employed n=4123, Employed NYC n=294, Employed Los Angeles n=290, Employed Chicago n=291, Employed Philadelphia n=288, Employed Dallas n=291, Employed SF-Oak-San Jose n=287, Employed Washington, D.C. n=252, Employed Houston n=292, Employed Boston n=288, Employed Atlanta n=296, Employed Phoenix n=295, Employed Tampa n=293, Employed Seattle n=285, Employed Detroit n=291, Employed Minneapolis n=290, Employed Miami n=282, Employed Denver n=295, Employed Orlando n=286, Employed Cleveland n=296, Employed Sacramento n=267

THEY ALSO BELIEVE THEIR JOB IS NOT JUST THEIR JOB, IT IS THEIR CAREER

- Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers (36%, 57%, 67%) are more likely than Gen Z (23%) to say their current job is their career

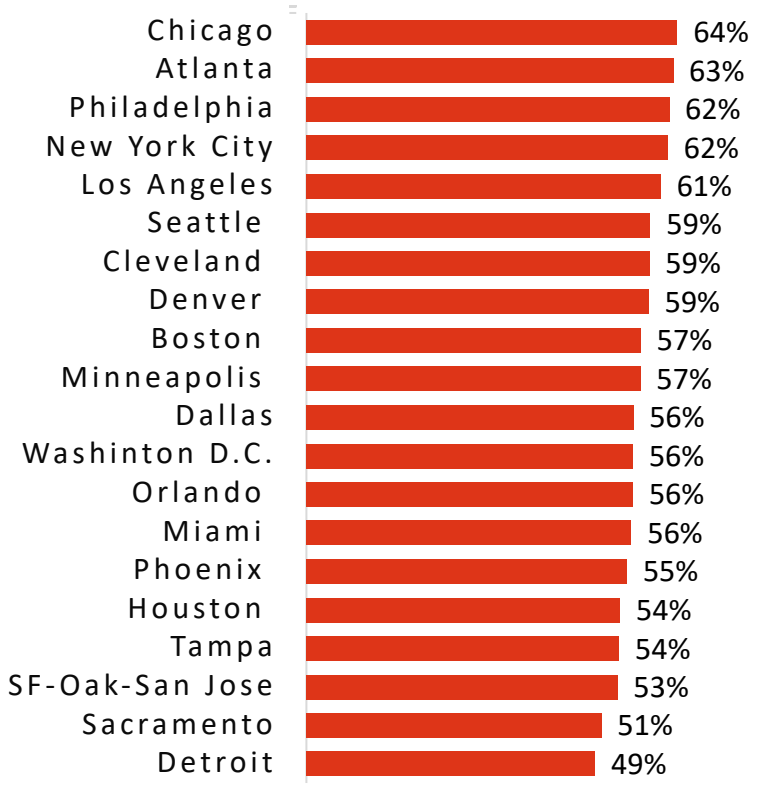
CAREER STATEMENTS

(Shown % Selected Response, Among those Employed)



"My current job is more than just a job, it's my career"

(Shown % Selected Response, DMA breakdown)



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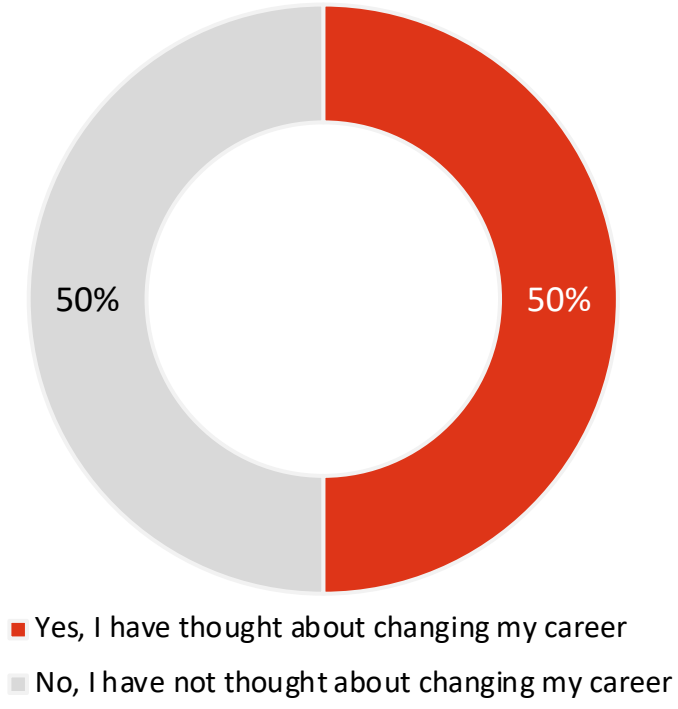
HALF HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT CHANGING CAREERS – ESPECIALLY YOUNGER GENERATIONS, LOWER INCOME, AND BLACK AMERICANS

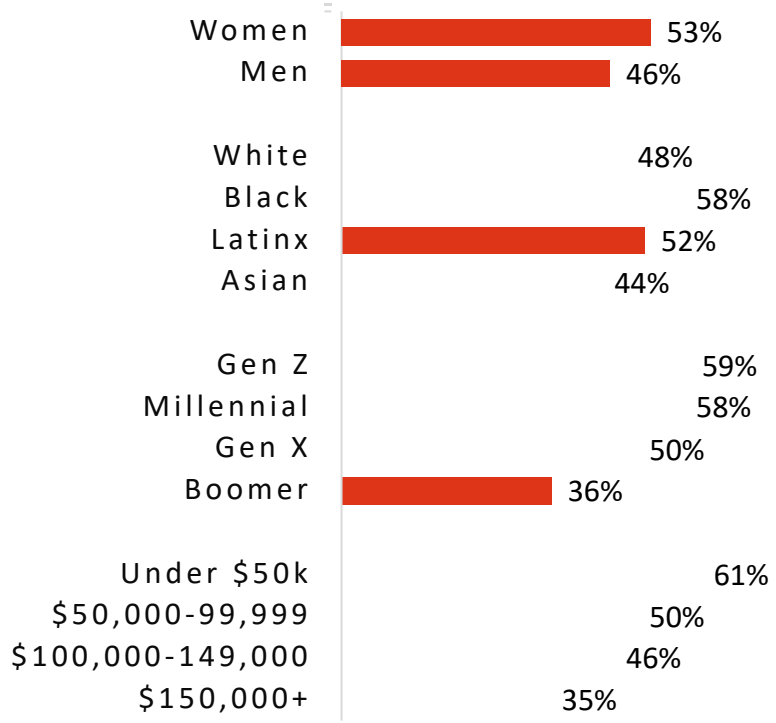
CONSIDERATION OF CHANGING CAREERS

(Shown % Selected Response)



AUDIENCE BREAKDOWN

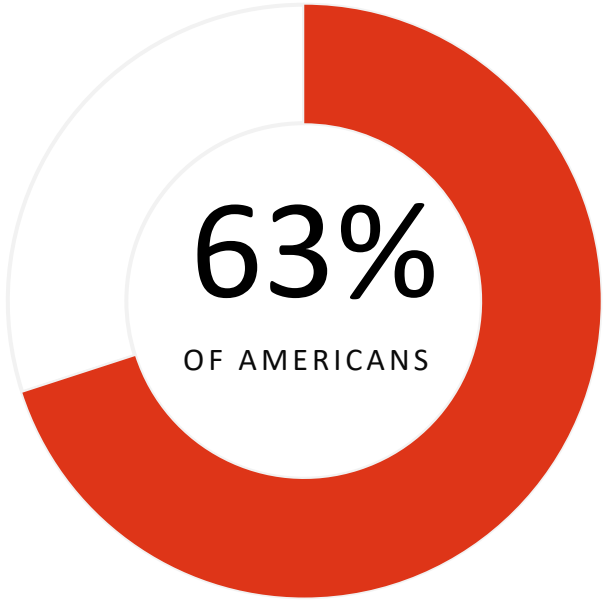
(Shown % Selected 'Yes' Response)



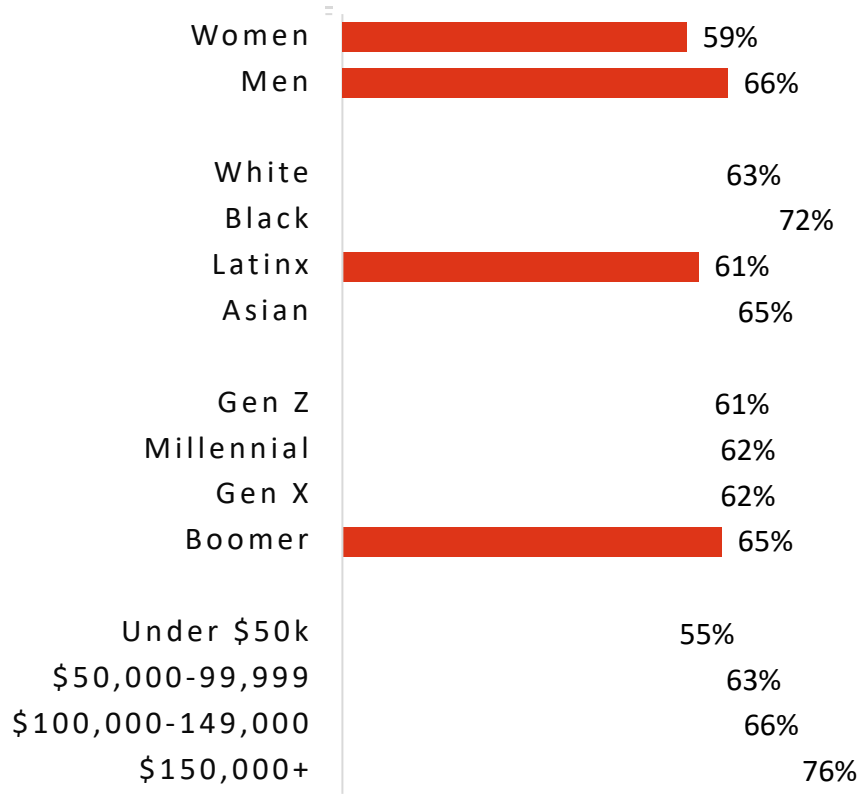
Q20: Have you ever thought about changing your career? By changing your career, we mean moving from one industry or field to a totally different industry or field. Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Women n=2340, Men n=2637, Gen Z n=401, Millennial n=1684, Gen X n=1666, Boomer n=1197, White n=3029, Black n=325, Latinx n=1193, Asian n=259, Income under $50k n=1589, $50,000-$99,999 n=1537, $100,000-$149,999 n=864, $150,000+ n=912.

AND THEY ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THEM

JOB OPPORTUNITIES
(Shown % Top 2 Positive)

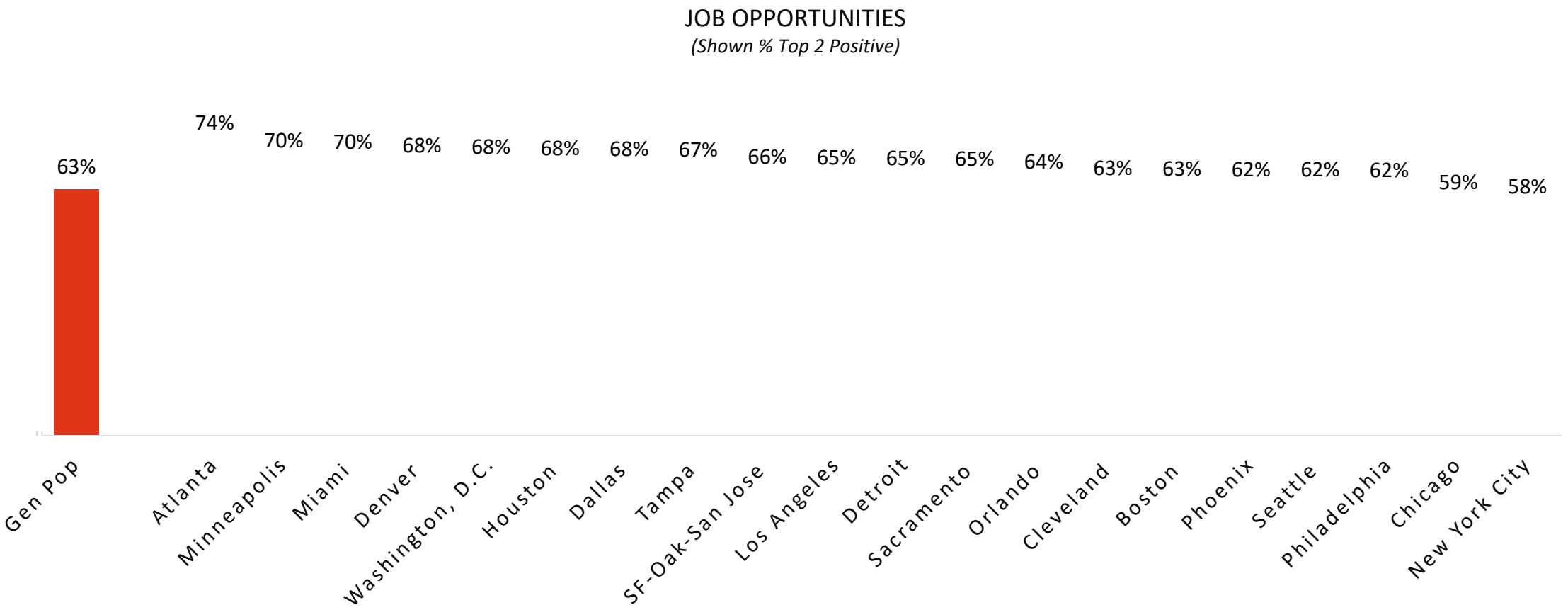


Feel positive about the **job opportunities available to them**



Q1: Regardless of your current employment status, how do you feel about the job opportunities available to you? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Women n=2340, Men n=2636, Gen Z n=401, Millennial n=1684, Gen X n=1666, Boomer n=1197, White n=3029, Black n=325, Latinx n=1193, Asian n=259, Income under $50k n=1489, $50,000-$99,999 n=1537, $100,000-$149,999 n=864, $150,00+ n=912

ATLANTA FEELS MOST POSITIVE ABOUT THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY MINNEAPOLIS AND MIAMI

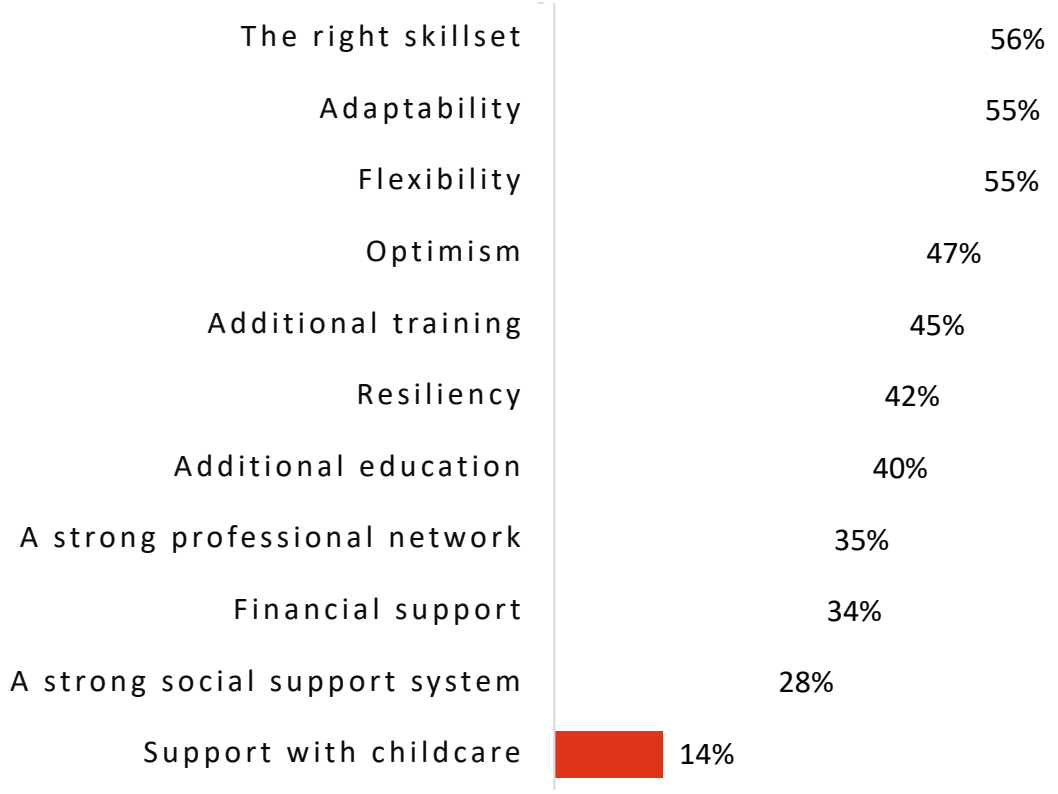


Q1: Regardless of your current employment status, how do you feel about the job opportunities available to you? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, NYC n=300, Los Angeles n=301, Chicago n=300, Philadelphia n=303, Dallas n=302, SF-Oak-San Jose n=302, Washington, D.C. n=304, Houston n=301, Boston n=302, Atlanta n=304, Phoenix n=301, Tampa n=304, Seattle n=300, Detroit n=300, Minneapolis n=301, Miami n=305, Denver n=301, Orlando n=300, Cleveland n=300, Sacramento n=301

CONCEPTUALLY, THEY BELIEVE THE RIGHT SKILLSET, ADAPTABILITY, FLEXIBILITY, AND OPTIMISM ARE WHAT IS NEEDED TO PIVOT IN YOUR CAREER

ELEMENTS NEEDED TO SUCCESSFULLY CHANGE CAREERS

(Shown % Selected Response)



Q23: Which of the following, if any, do you think are necessary for someone to successfully change their career? Base: Gen Pop n=5000

SKILL BUILDING AND NETWORKING GO HAND IN HAND AS THE CORE ACTIONS THEY BELIEVE NEED TO BE TAKEN TO CHANGE CAREERS

Q24: Which actions do you think people would have to take to successfully change careers? Base: Gen Pop n=5000

CAREER PERCEPTIONS

AMERICANS DEFINE THEMSELVES BY THEIR CAREERS – YET MANY DON'T SEE A CLEAR PATH FORWARD IN THEIR CAREERS

AGREE/ DISAGREE STATEMENTS

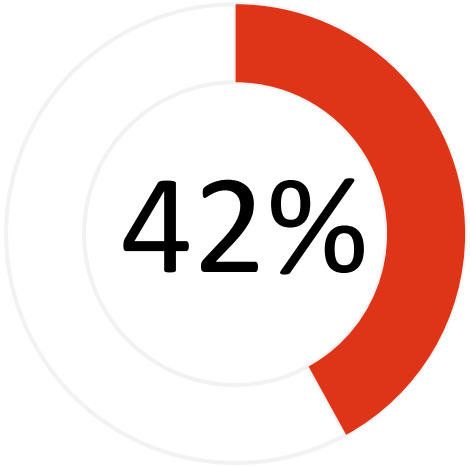
(Shown % Selected Top 2 Agree, Among those Employed)

2 IN 3

Employed Americans say that their job/career is part of their **identity**

CAREER TRAJECTORY

(Shown % Selected Top 2 Agree)



Of Americans don't see a **clear path forward** for advancing their careers

CAREER DEVELOPMENT/ SKILLSET

(Shown % Top 2 Agree)

43%

Of Americans want to expand their skillset but don't know where to begin

35%

Of Americans say they do not have access to opportunities to develop the skills they need to advance in their careers

Q7: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Employed n=4124. Q16: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your career trajectory? Base: Gen Pop n=5000. Q14: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your career development? Base: Gen Pop n=5000

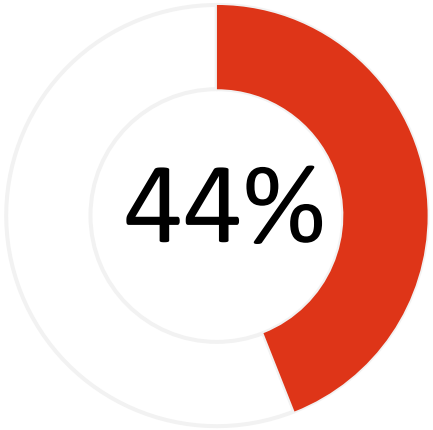
MORE THAN ONE-QUARTER SAY THEY DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE RIGHT TOOLS TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS – EVEN MORE NEED AN ADVOCATE IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL LIFE

CAREER TRAJECTORY PERCEPTIONS
(Shown % Bottom 2)

More than

1 IN 4

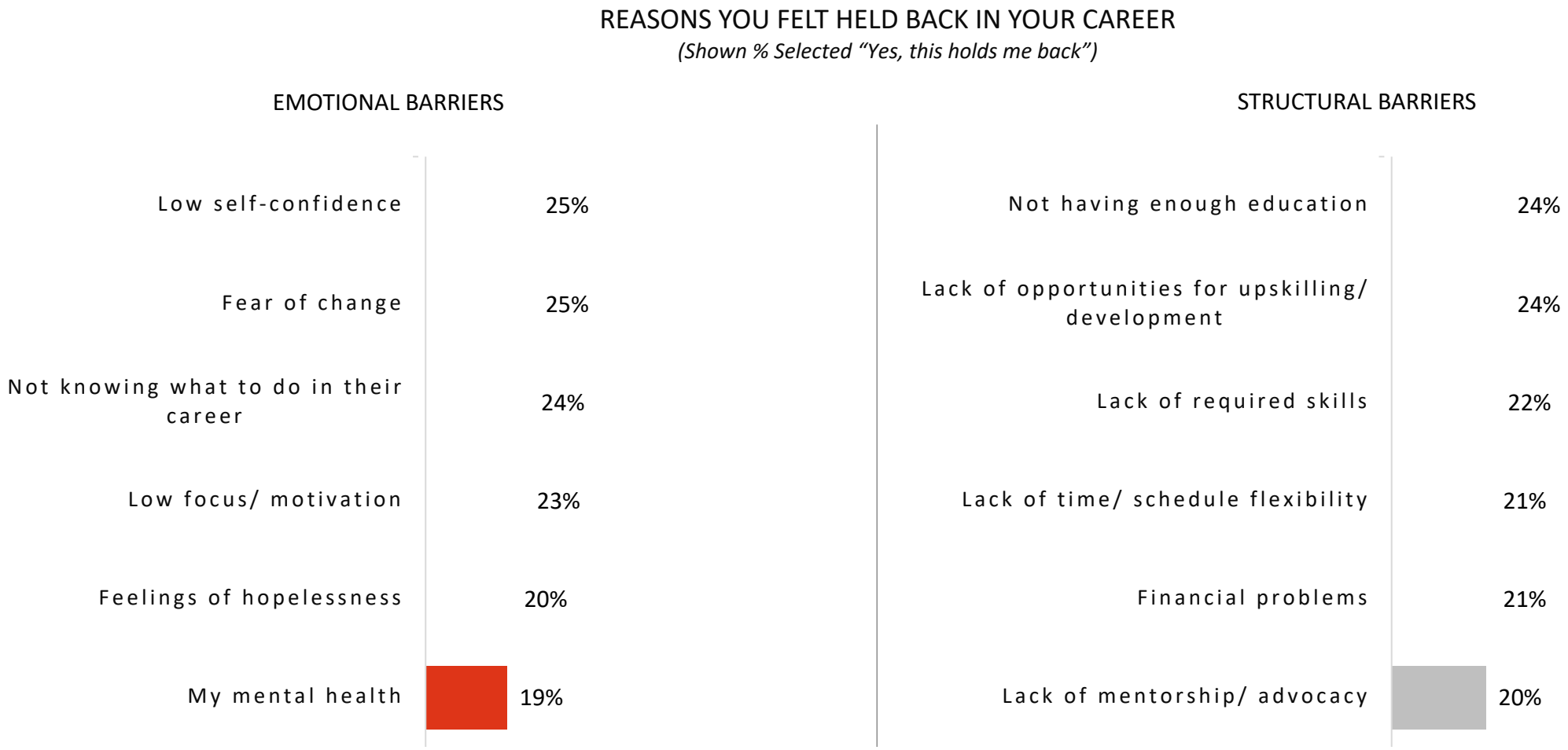
Americans **do not have access** to the right tools and resources to achieve their career goals (27%)



Of Americans **do not have someone in their professional life** who advocates for them

Q16: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your career trajectory? Base: Gen Pop n=5000

AT LEAST ONE-FIFTH OF AMERICANS EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL BARRIERS IN MOVING FORWARD IN THEIR CAREERS



Q17: Which of the following, if any, are reasons why you might feel like you are held back in your career? Base: Gen Pop n=5000

NEARLY HALF ARE WORRIED ABOUT BEING ABLE TO KEEP UP – AND ONE-FIFTH WATCHED THEIR JOB BECOME AUTOMATED THIS PAST YEAR

TECHNOLOGY
(Shown % Top 2 Agree)

55% are worried about the impact of technology on their careers in at least one way

I am worried about being able to keep up in a job market that is becoming increasingly dependent on technology

I am worried that my job skills will become outdated because of advancements in technology

IMPACT OF COVID-19
(Shown % Selected "Yes")

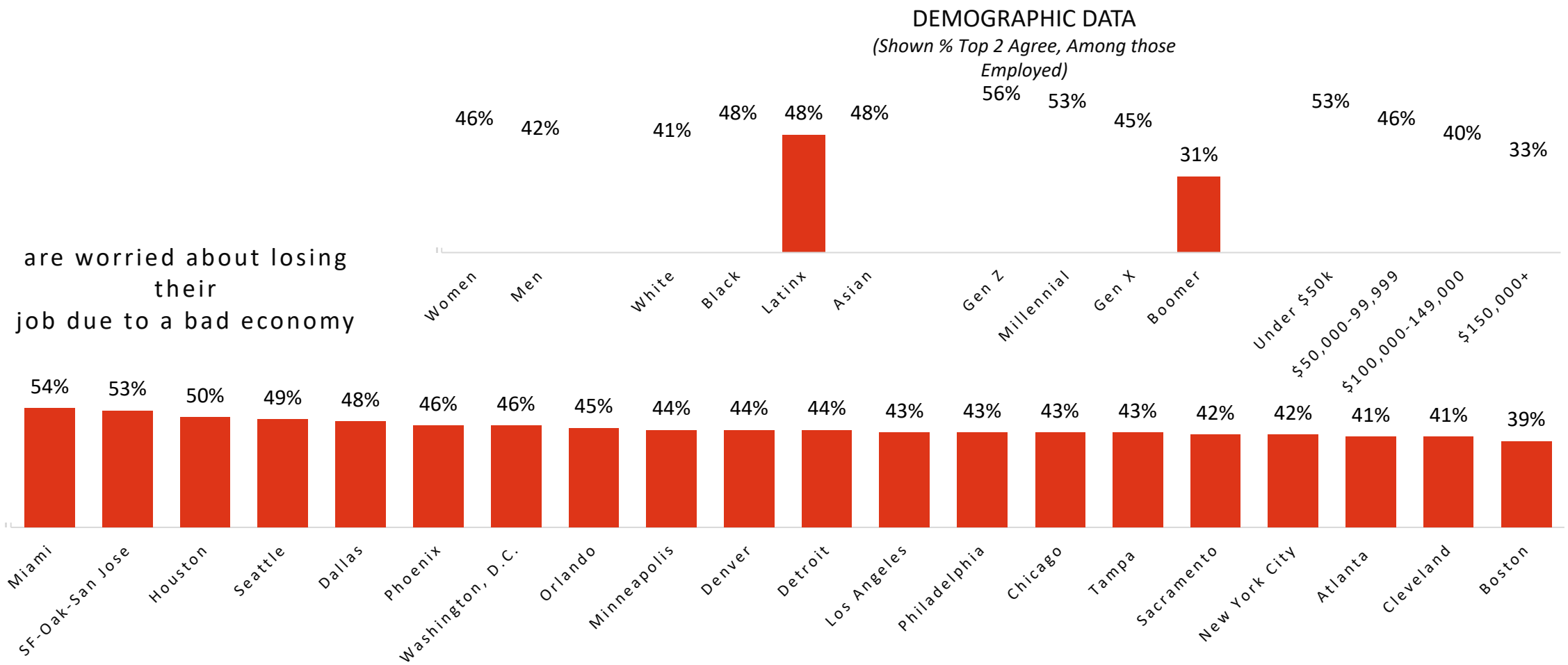
1 IN 5

Say "my job has become **automated** due to the pandemic" (22%)

Even more in Washington, D.C., Miami (both 30%), Orlando (28%), Houston (26%), Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New York City (all 24%) say this.

Q7: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Gen Pop n=5000. Q27: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the pandemic and how it may have impacted you? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Washington, D.C. n=304, Miami n=305, Orlando n=300, Houston n=301, Atlanta n=304, Los Angeles n=301, NYC n=300

THEY WORRY THAT A BAD ECONOMY WILL CAUSE THEM TO LOSE THEIR JOBS



Q7: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Employed n=4123, Employed Women n=1829, Employed Men n=2273, Employed White, n=2594, Employed Black n=220, Employed Latinx n=986, Employed Asian n=193, Employed Gen Z n=193, Employed Millennial n=1279, Employed Gen X n=1492, Employed Boomer n=1111, Employed Income Under $50,000 n=1004, Employed $50,000-$99,999 n=1329, Employed Income $100,000-$149,999 n=793, Employed Income +$150,000 n=857, Employed NYC n=294, Employed Los Angeles n=290, Employed Chicago n=291, Employed Philadelphia n=288, Employed Dallas n=291, Employed SF-Oak-San Jose n=287, Employed Washington, D.C. n=252, Employed Houston n=292, Employed Boston n=288, Employed Atlanta n=296, Employed Phoenix n=295, Employed Tampa n=293, Employed Seattle n=285, Employed Detroit n=291, Employed Minneapolis n=290, Employed Miami n=282, Employed Denver n=295, Employed Orlando n=286, Employed Cleveland n=296, Employed Sacramento n=267

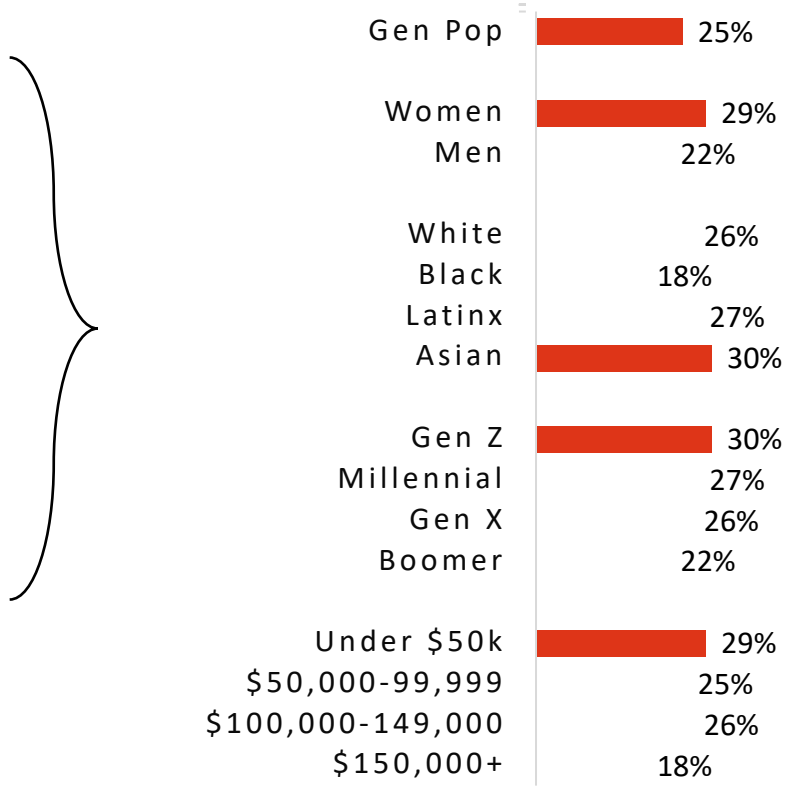
THESE CHALLENGES HAVE LEFT MANY AMERICANS FEELING STRESSED ABOUT THEIR CAREERS – ESPECIALLY WOMEN, YOUNGER GENERATIONS AND THOSE WITH LOWER INCOMES

1 IN 4

Americans feel **stressed** about their own careers

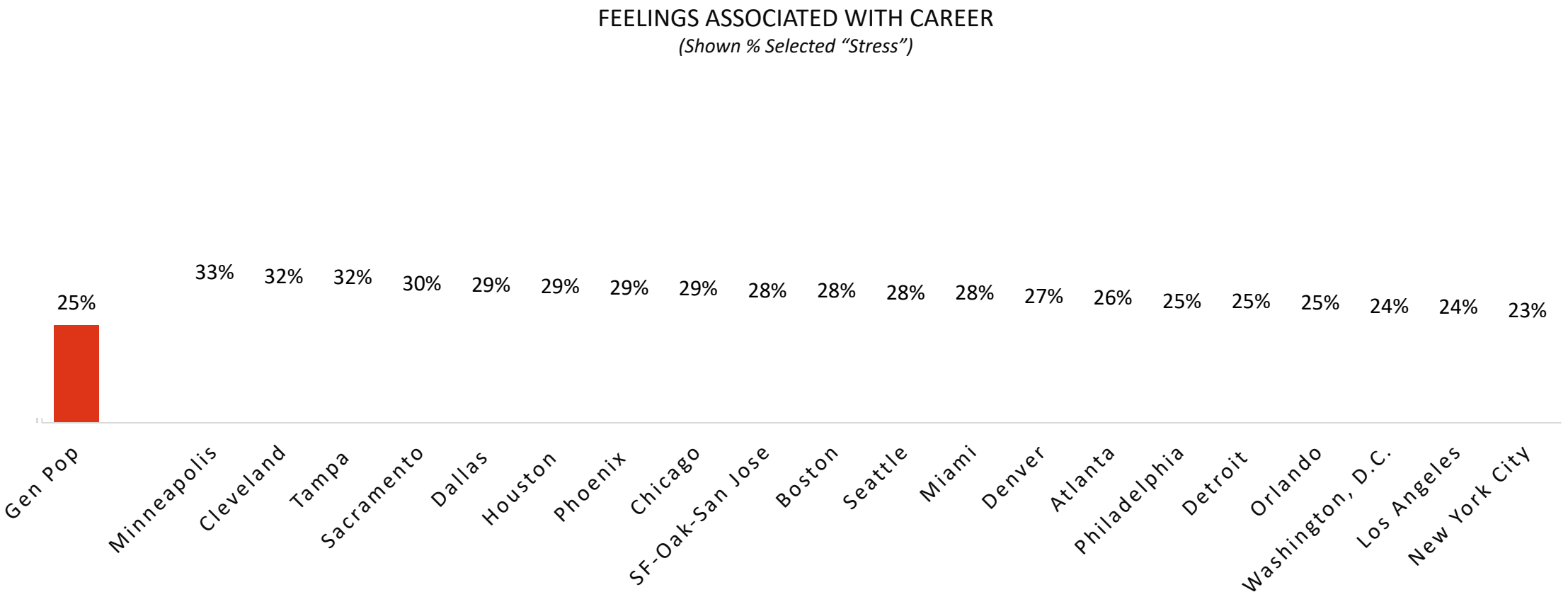
FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH CAREER

(Shown % Selected Response)



Q9: Which of the following feelings do you associate most with your own career? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, Women n=2340, Men n=2636, White n=3027, Black n=325, Latinx n=1193, Asian n=259, Gen Z n=401, Millennial n=1684, Gen X n=1666, Boomer n=1197, Income Under $50k n=1489, Income $50,000-$99,999 n=1537, Income $100,000-$149,999 n=864, Income +$150,000 n=912

MOST METRO AREAS FEEL MORE STRESSED THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR CAREERS



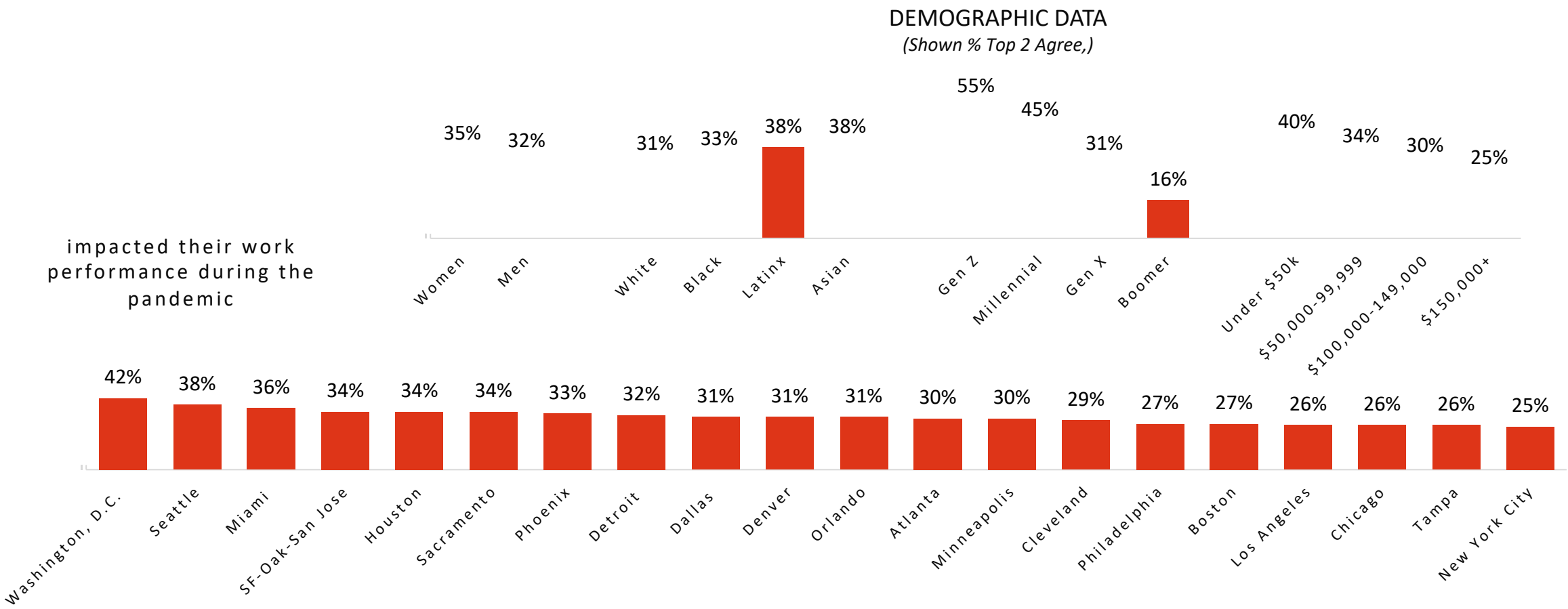
Q9: Which of the following feelings do you associate most with your own career? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, NYC n=300, Los Angeles n=301, Chicago n=300, Philadelphia n=303, Dallas n=302, SF-Oak-San Jose n=302, Washington, D.C. n=304, Houston n=301, Boston n=302, Atlanta n=304, Phoenix n=301, Tampa n=304, Seattle n=300, Detroit n=300, Minneapolis n=301, Miami n=305, Denver n=301, Orlando n=300, Cleveland n=300, Sacramento n=301

SUPPORT NEEDED TO BUILD CAREER OPTIMISM

AMERICANS WANT MORE SUPPORT IN MANY DIFFERENT AREAS – PARTICULARLY NETWORKING, FINDING A MENTOR, AND IN TRAINING PROGRAMS

Q25: For the below activities, please indicate the level of support you feel you need with each. Base: Gen Pop n=5000

MENTAL HEALTH HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED WORK PERFORMANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC – NOTABLY, FOR THOSE IN WASHINGTON D.C. AND YOUNGER GENERATIONS



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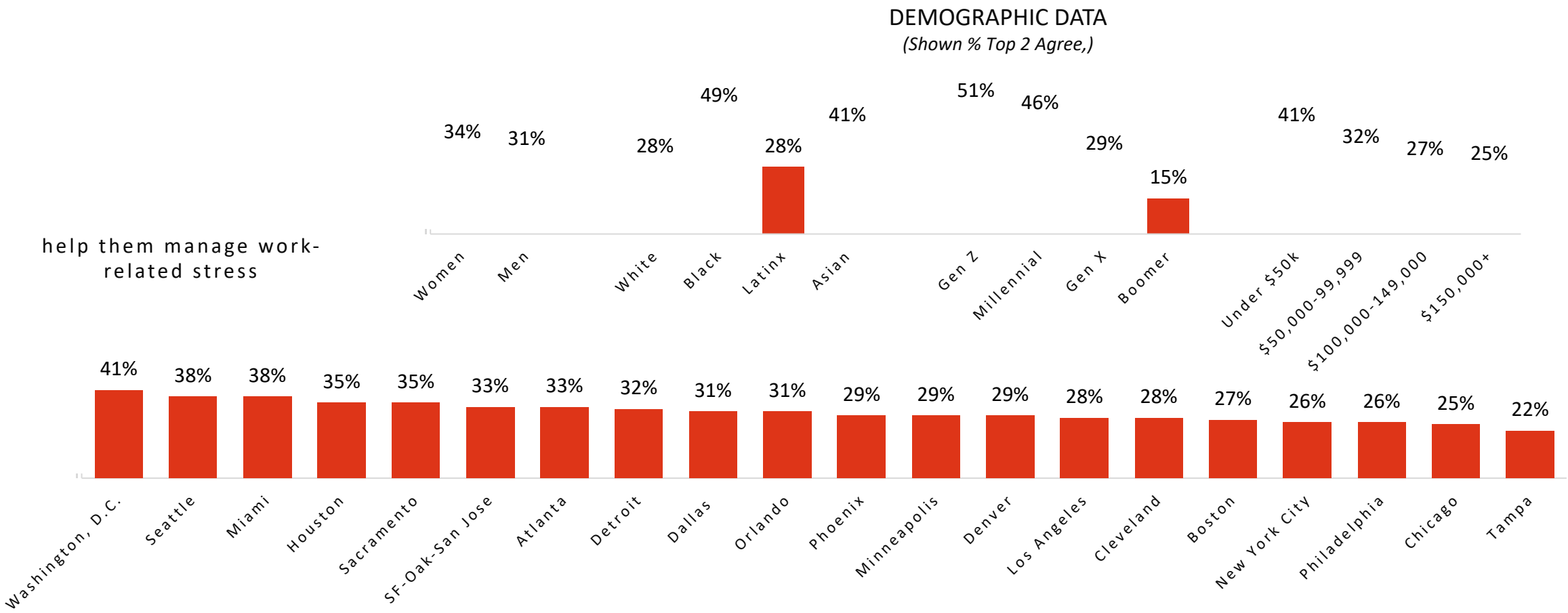
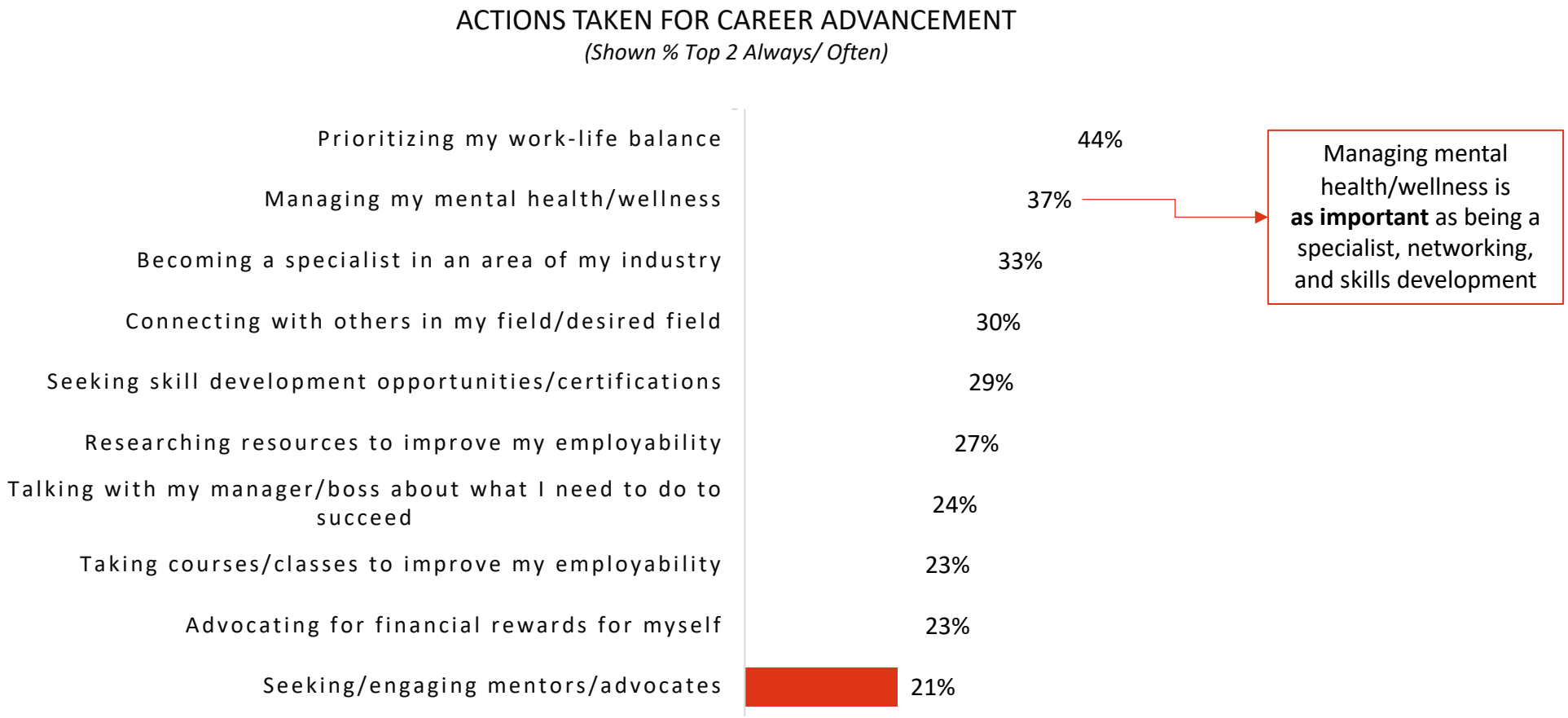
PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR RESOURCES TO HELP THEM MANAGE STRESS, ESPECIALLY YOUNGER GENERATIONS AND PEOPLE WITH LOWER HOUSEHOLD INCOMES



Q15: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your mental health/ well-being? Base: Gen Pop n=5000, NYC n=300, Los Angeles n=301, Chicago n=300, Philadelphia n=303, Dallas n=302, SF-Oak-San Jose n=302, Washington, D.C. n=304, Houston n=301, Boston n=302, Atlanta n=304, Phoenix n=301, Tampa n=304, Seattle n=300, Detroit n=300, Minneapolis n=301, Miami n=305, Denver n=301, Orlando n=300, Cleveland n=300, Sacramento n=301, Women n=2340, Men n=2636, White n=3027, Black n=325, Latinx n=1193, Asian n=259, Gen Z n=401, Millennial n=1684, Gen X n=1665, Boomer n=1197, Income Under $50k n=1489, Income $50,000-$99,999 n=1537, Income $100,000-$149,999 n=863, Income +$150,000 n=912

PEOPLE ARE PRIORITIZING WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN ORDER TO ADVANCE – MENTAL HEALTH IS AS CRITICAL TO ADDRESS AS NETWORKING AND SKILLS



Q19: How often are you taking the following actions, if at all, to advance in your career? Base: Gen Pop n=5000

THANK YOU