

2022 Study

# THE NEW NORMAL? THE LOWDOWN ON WORKING FROM HOME.

**Working from home.  
During the pandemic and in the future.**

**iu**  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY OF  
APPLIED SCIENCES



# HOW COVID HAS REVOLUTIONISED WORKING FROM HOME.

**AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT HOW  
WORKING FROM HOME IS PERCEIVED  
AFTER TWO YEARS OF THE  
PANDEMIC – AND WHAT ARE THE  
EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.**

The coronavirus pandemic has been turning lives upside down in all areas since 2020. And that includes working life, too. Working from home became compulsory overnight for those whose job allowed it. Employers had to put in place the necessary prerequisites for working from home from one day to the next, regardless of how advanced the company was in terms of digitalisation.

But how have workers fared so far when it comes to working from home? And what does the future hold? That's what this study seeks to answer: More than three quarters of the respondents generally like working from home. More than half now even have a more positive attitude towards working from home compared to pre-COVID times.

The majority find it easy to keep work and personal life separate – even when working from home. More than half do not feel any more stressed or exhausted and are able to switch off after work. And the majority of managers that responded to the survey trust their employees to be at least as productive when working from home as they are in the office. Although more than half of the managers surveyed also state that the working from home situation has presented them with certain challenges, more than half confirm that they

are able to fulfil their tasks as supervisors just as well.

For most respondents, the advantages of working from home outweigh the disadvantages. For example, many find that working from home gives them more autonomy and they even consider their work performance to be more efficient than in the office. But even though the majority of people benefit from working from home, there are some who are less keen on the idea of doing it all the time. While most of the respondents do not feel lonely when working from home; one in four do. Some also miss the social interaction in particular.

And where will things go from here after COVID? Nine out of ten respondents will continue to work from home (at least occasionally). For most, this is even a key factor they consider when choosing to work for a company. In addition, three out of four respondents want their employer to provide them with support for working from home, not just in terms of digitalisation – and they want this to continue after COVID.

**Working from home is the new normal – since the coronavirus pandemic and in future. Employers need to be aware of this challenge and confront it head on.**



## EXPERT IN

## NEW WORKING TRENDS

**PROF. DR. REGINA CORDES IS A PROFESSOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION AT IU INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (IU).**

Her research focuses upon leadership, personnel psychology and employee motivation in agile systems. She heads the innovative New Work bachelor's programme at IU and is the prorector responsible for accreditation.

However, in addition to her academic work at the university she also puts her research findings to very practical use by managing the academic teaching media production for IU's distance learning programme, in which agile teams collaborate to produce all asynchronous teaching media for the university's digital degree programmes.

She lives in Chiemgau (Germany) with her partner, dog and horse.

# CONTENTS

## 04 FOUR IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS.

Working from home in Germany.

## 05 WORKING FROM MEETS COVID.

The situation before and during the pandemic.

## 12 HOW MUCH DOES THE CRISIS AFFECT US?

Close-up on COVID.

## 13 FREEDOM INSTEAD OF BURNOUT.

Home = workplace. The pros and cons.

## 19 MANAGING FROM HOME.

Supervisors on working from home.

## 22 HERE TO STAY.

Working from home after COVID.

## 28 ABOUT THE STUDY.

Facts about the study participants.

## 29 IMPRINT



WORKING FROM HOME IN GERMANY.

## FOUR IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS.

01

### WORKING FROM HOME IS POPULAR.

More than three quarters of the respondents like working from home. And over half had already had some experience of working from home before COVID. Nevertheless, COVID has turned working life upside down – and created new opportunities, too. In fact, 61.1% feel they are more productive at home than in the office. It is no surprise, then, that the opinion of the majority of respondents about working from home has either changed for the better or been confirmed.

02

### AUTONOMY MORE IMPORTANT THAN SOCIAL INTERACTION.

Of course, when working from home, the social interaction we are accustomed to in the office either ceases to exist or decreases significantly. This depends upon whether you are always working from home or only some of the time. 53.9% miss this interaction and 26.5% feel lonely. **However, almost three quarters feel more autonomous thanks to working from home – and more than half say that as a result, they have more free time, feel happier and spend less money.**



03

### UNPLUG AND UNWIND? RARELY A PROBLEM.

When your home becomes your workplace, it raises the question of how to separate work and leisure time – and whether working from home puts a strain on your personal life. **More than three out of five respondents say no. They are able to switch off after work – and just as many do not feel more exhausted or stressed than when working in the office.**

04

### WORKING FROM HOME AFTER COVID? A MUST-HAVE.

**If it were up to the respondents, employers would have to get used to flexible working models – because nine out of ten employees want to continue working from home, either all the time or some of the time, even after COVID.** They would like more support from their companies, for example in terms of equipment or internet costs. And just over half also consider the legal right to working from home as an option in order to secure the flexibility they have gained in the long term.



## THE SITUATION BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC.

# WORKING FROM HOME MEETS COVID.

All the respondents are employees and were working from home either some or all of the time during the coronavirus pandemic. **For more than half of them, this was nothing new: they were already occasionally working from home before the pandemic.**

Nevertheless, COVID has changed the way many people look at working from home: 57.5% now have a more positive attitude towards working from home.



### WORKING FROM HOME BEFORE COVID:

45.6

NO

54.4

have previously worked  
from home (at least  
occasionally).

Were you already  
working from home  
(at least occasionally) before  
the coronavirus pandemic?

In %

### WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID:\*

"I work or have worked from home  
some or most of the time (**more  
than 30% of my working time**)  
due to COVID."

55.7

"I work or have worked from  
home **100% of the time** due  
to COVID."

44.3

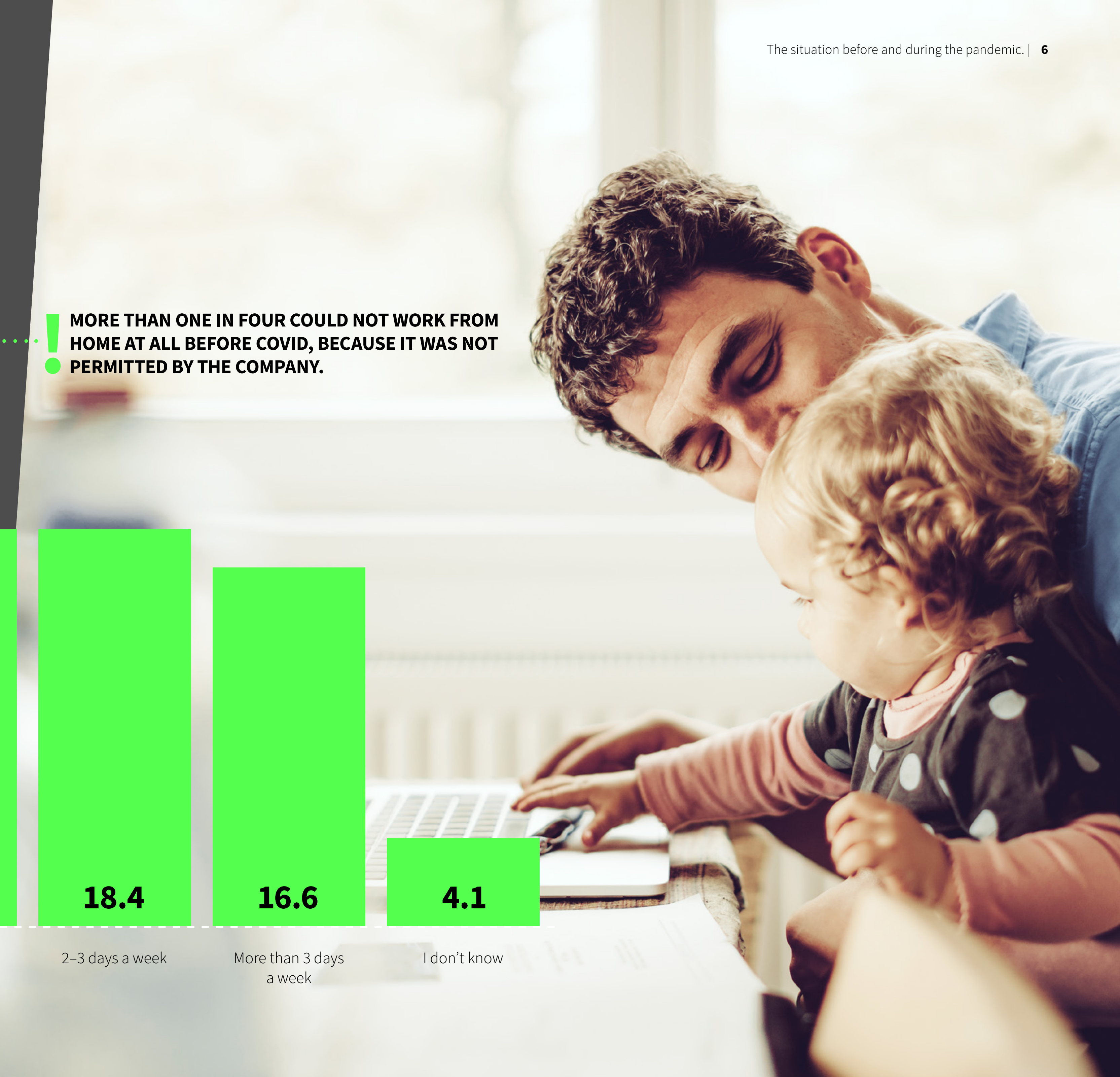
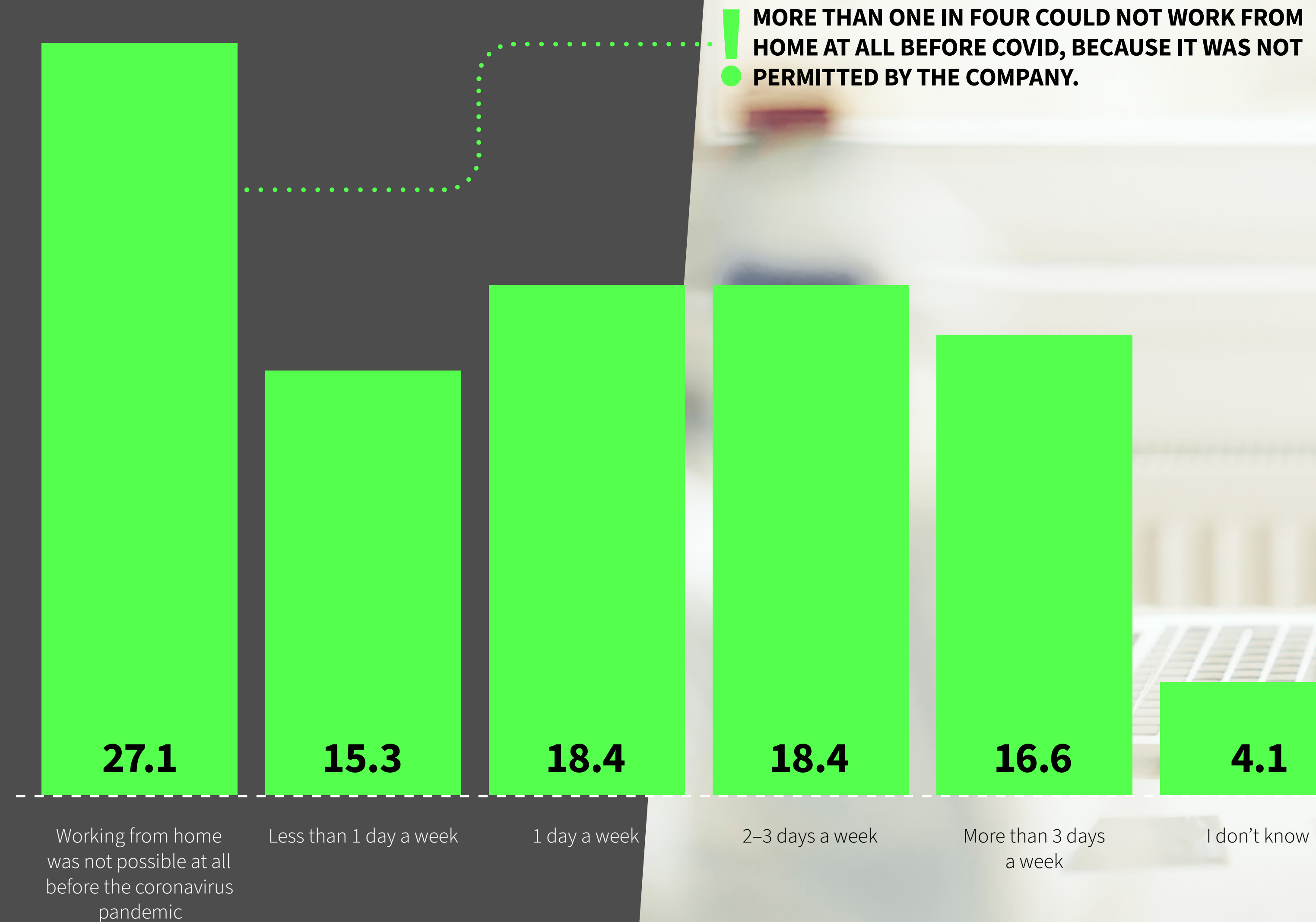
\* The target group of the study consisted exclusively of respondents who worked from home during the coronavirus pandemic or who currently work from home.

There could be marginal deviations in the results due to rounding off.



## WORKING FROM HOME? NOT POSSIBLE FOR ALL PRE-COVID.

Think back to the time before the coronavirus pandemic:  
How many days of working from home were allowed  
per week in your company? In %



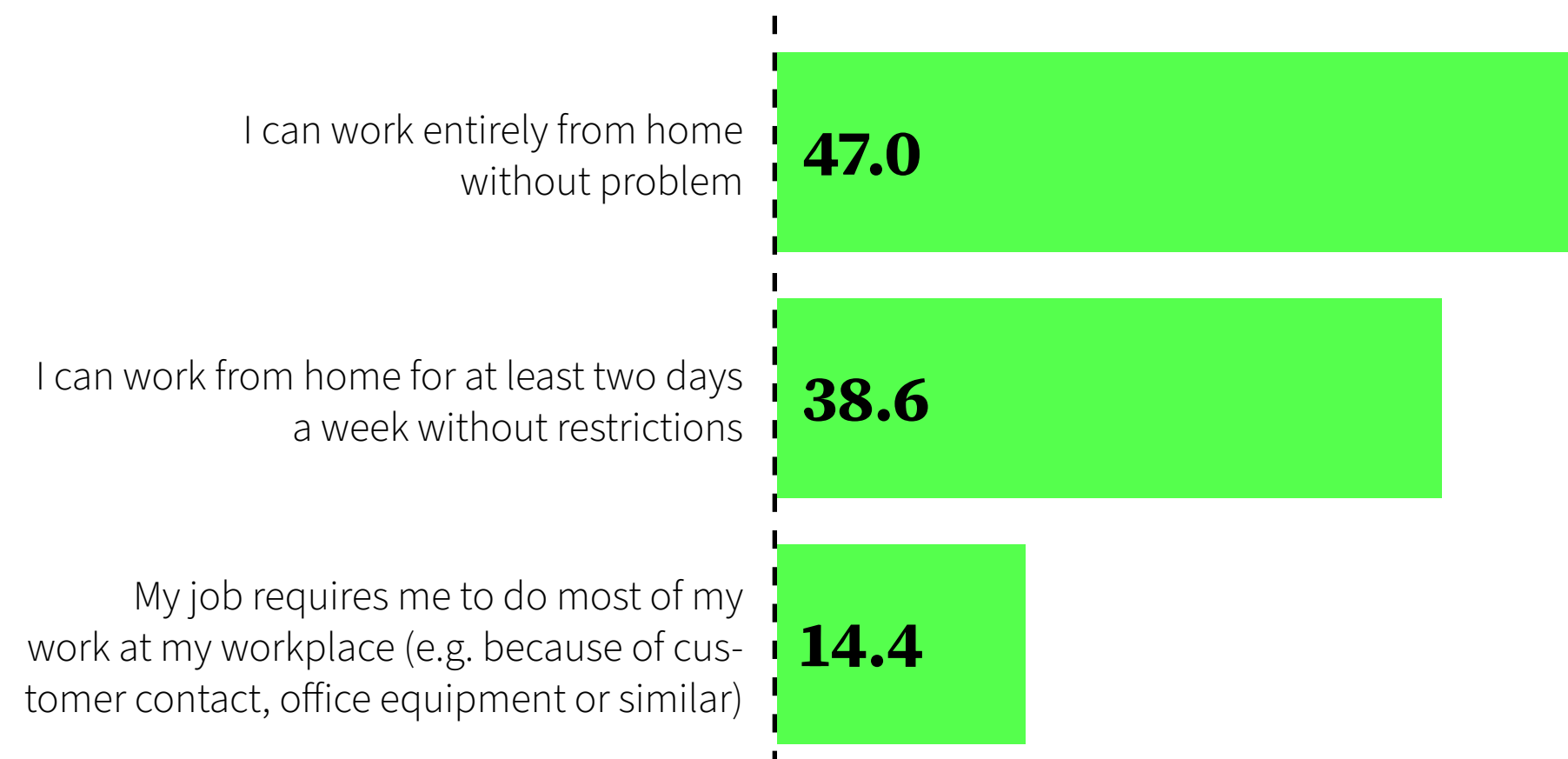


## JOBS. OFTEN COMPATIBLE WITH WORKING FROM HOME.

**85.6% of respondents say they can work from home for two or more days a week – without any limitations.** This is in stark contrast to the 60.8% who also say that before COVID, their company did not allow working from home at all (27.1%), allowed it for less than one day (15.3%) or for a maximum of one day a week (18.4%).

**Which of the following statements best describes your job?**

In %

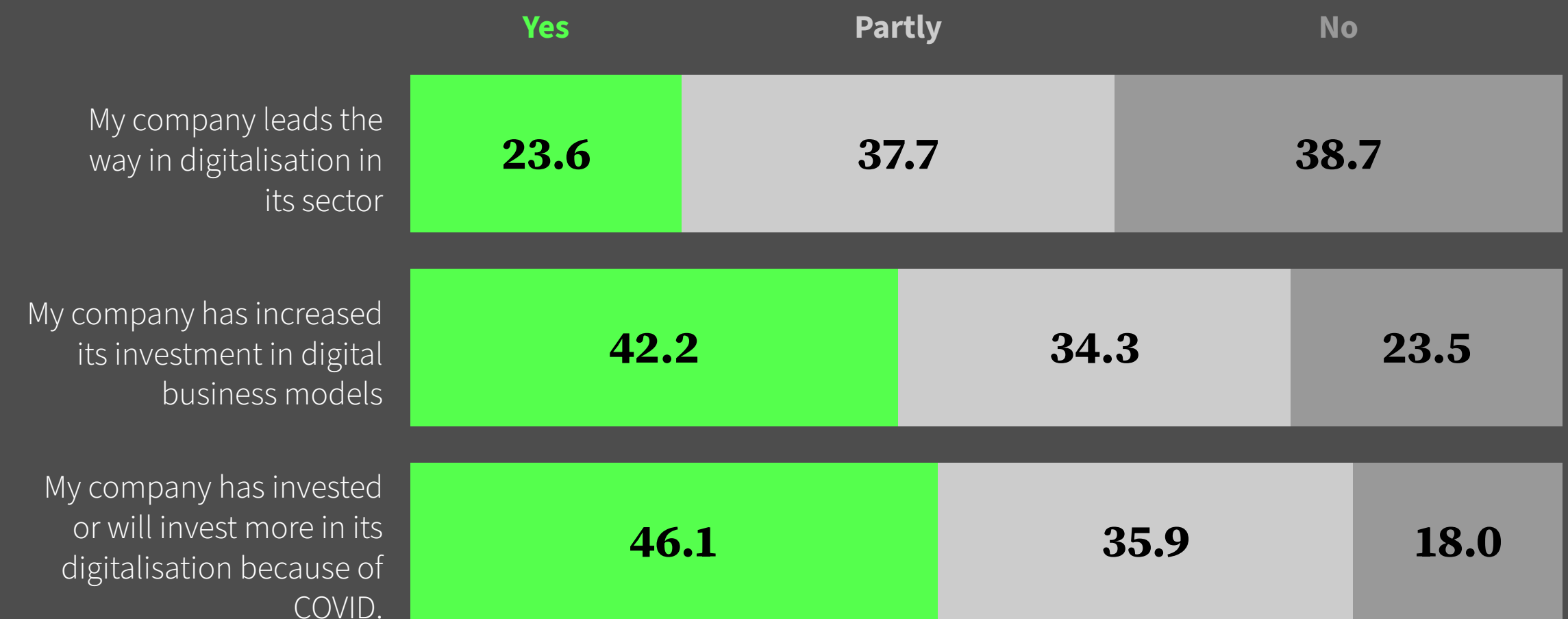


## THE COMPANIES. INVESTING MORE IN DIGITALISATION. PARTLY THANKS TO COVID.

The COVID crisis put companies under pressure – they not only had to allow working from home, but also arrange the necessary prerequisites for it. **82.0% of respondents agree either completely or partly that their company has invested or will invest more in digitalisation because of COVID.**

**To what extent do the following statements apply to your company?**

In %





## COMPANIES SCORE HIGHLY DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home?

Top 2 box from scale of 1 to 5

76.0%

“MY EMPLOYER IS AWARE OF HIS/HER RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARDS TO THE HEALTH OF HIS/HER EMPLOYEES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.”

“FOR MANY COMPANIES THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC WAS A CATALYST IN TERMS OF DIGITALISATION. AND IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES, THE WORKING FROM HOME “EXPERIMENT” HAS WORKED WELL. THE CHALLENGE FOR COMPANIES NOW IS TO TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS AND TO CREATE A CONCEPT AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF EVERYONE INVOLVED – EMPLOYEES AND MANAGEMENT ALIKE.

Prof. Dr. Regina Cordes

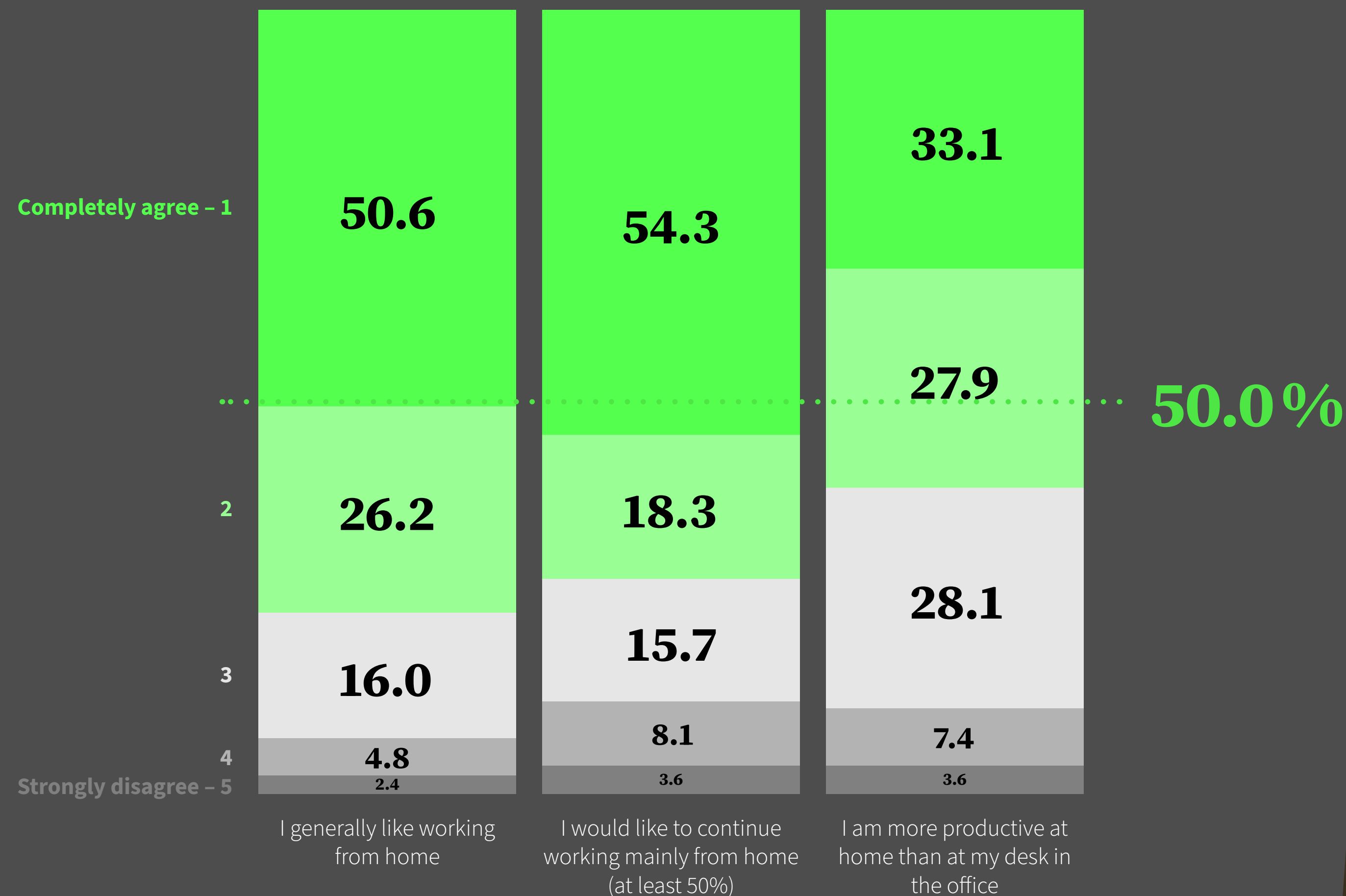
”



# WORKING FROM HOME IS POPULAR. AND INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY.

More than three quarters of the respondents like working from home – and almost as many would like to continue with the flexible working model for now. Why? 61.1% say they are more productive when working from home than in the office.

Which of the following statements best describes your job? In %





# FURNITURE, TECHNOLOGY, INTERNET: WORKING FROM HOME DEPENDS UPON THE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE.

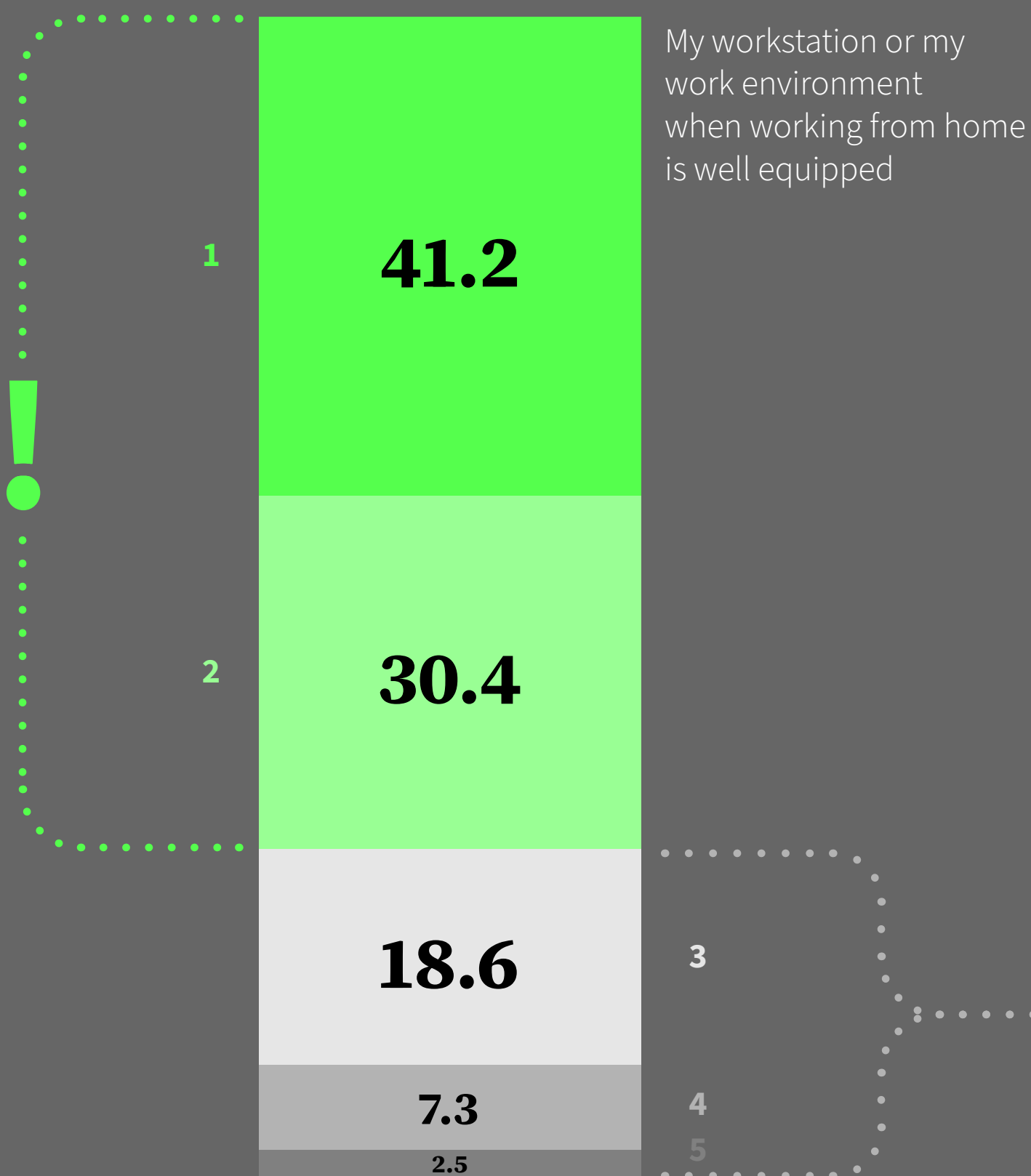
**71.6% of respondents are satisfied with their workplace at home.**

Only 28.4% think it is not well equipped. They cite unsuitable furniture, no home office and insufficient technical equipment as the main reasons.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home? In %

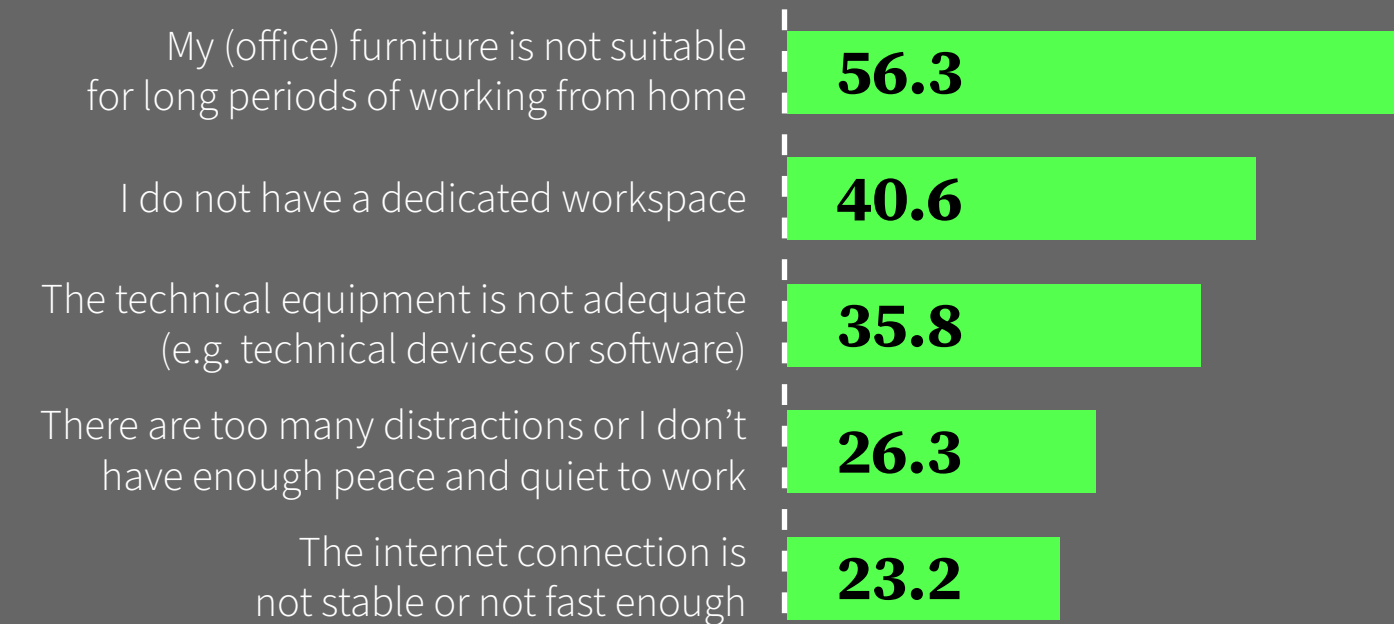
**71.6% OF RESPONDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR WORKSTATION AT HOME.**

- 1 – Completely agree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – Strongly disagree



**Why is your workstation or working environment when working from home not well equipped?**

In %: only respondents answering 3–5 on the scale

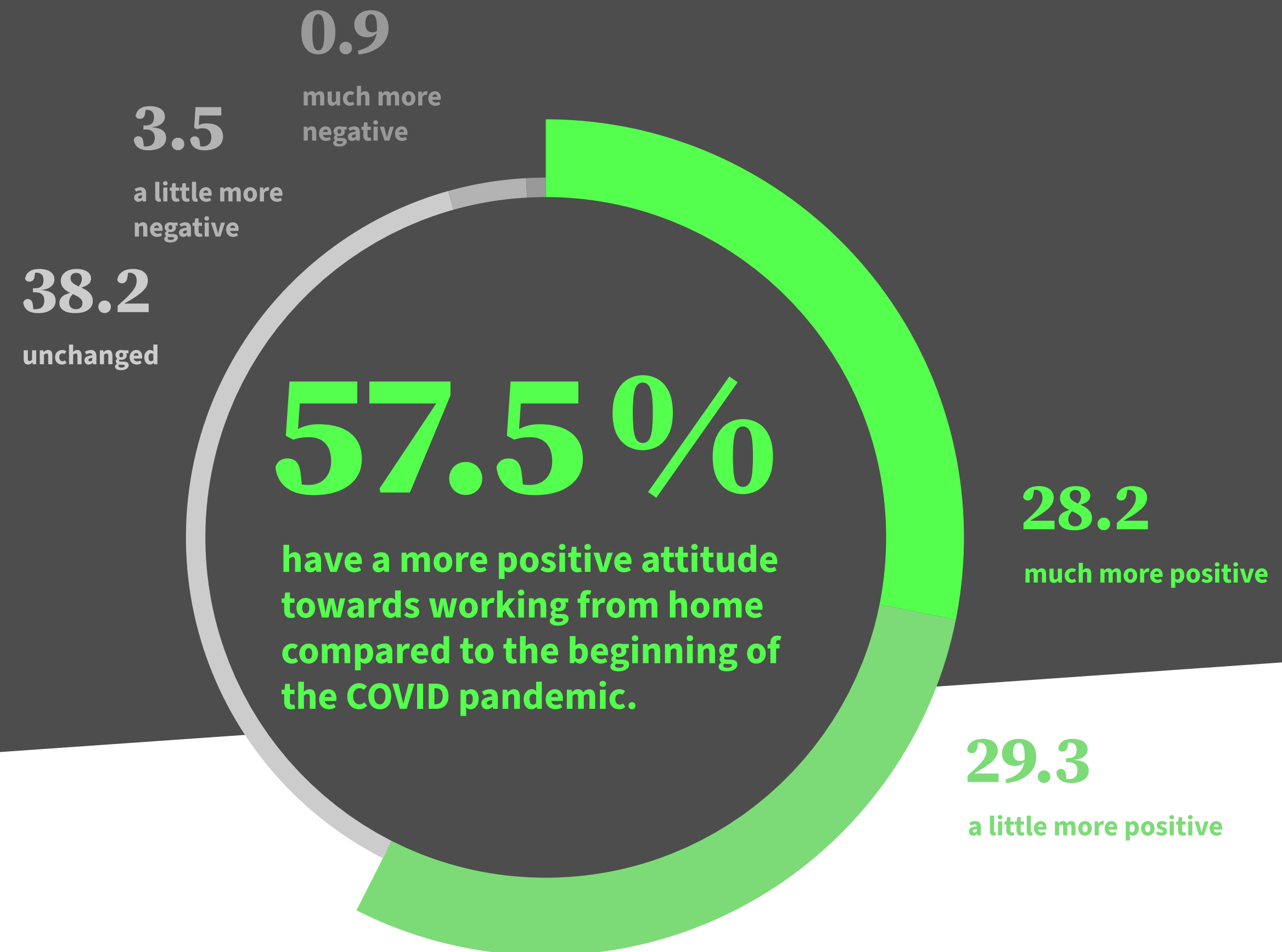




## PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING FROM HOME? BETTER THAN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.

COVID has made working from home the norm for all respondents – whether they want to or not. More than half now have a more positive attitude towards working from home as a result. And 38.2% say that their previous view has been reinforced.

To what extent has your attitude towards working from home changed compared to the beginning of the COVID pandemic? In %



“FOR MANY WHO HAD NO EXPERIENCE OF WORKING FROM HOME BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, THIS IDEA WAS SIMPLY TOO ABSTRACT. THE COVID SITUATION HAS GIVEN THEM PRACTICAL PROOF THAT WORKING FROM HOME IS AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO WORKING IN AN OFFICE, AND IN MOST CASES WORKS WELL OR EVEN BETTER THAN EXPECTED. IN THE FUTURE, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR COMPANIES AND MANAGERS TO EQUALLY ADDRESS THOSE EMPLOYEES WHO DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE OR EVEN FEEL LONELY WHEN WORKING FROM HOME.

Prof. Dr. Regina Cordes



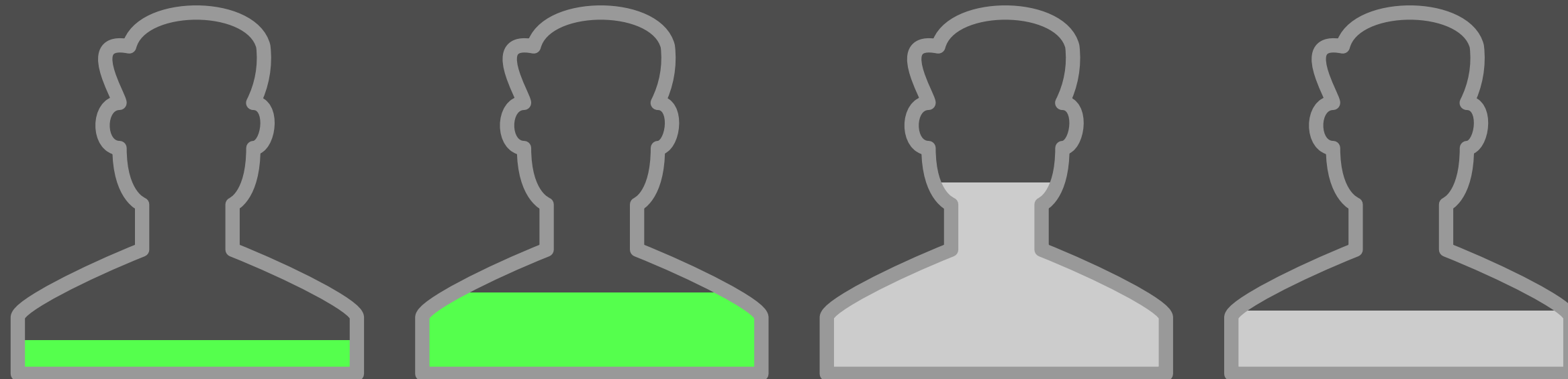


## CLOSE-UP ON COVID.

# HOW MUCH DOES THE CRISIS AFFECT US?

The COVID crisis affects us negatively. This is confirmed by far more than half of respondents (68.2%). However, the restrictive work situation in terms of working from home and short-time working is only a problem for a few. What affects us more is the general lack of social contact and leisure opportunities.

In general, how much does the current situation due to the coronavirus pandemic affect you? In %



9.7%

THE CURRENT SITUATION DOES NOT AFFECT ME AT ALL.

22.1%

THE CURRENT SITUATION DOES NOT AFFECT ME VERY MUCH.

50.7%

THE CURRENT SITUATION AFFECTS ME A LITTLE.

17.5%

THE CURRENT SITUATION AFFECTS ME VERY MUCH.





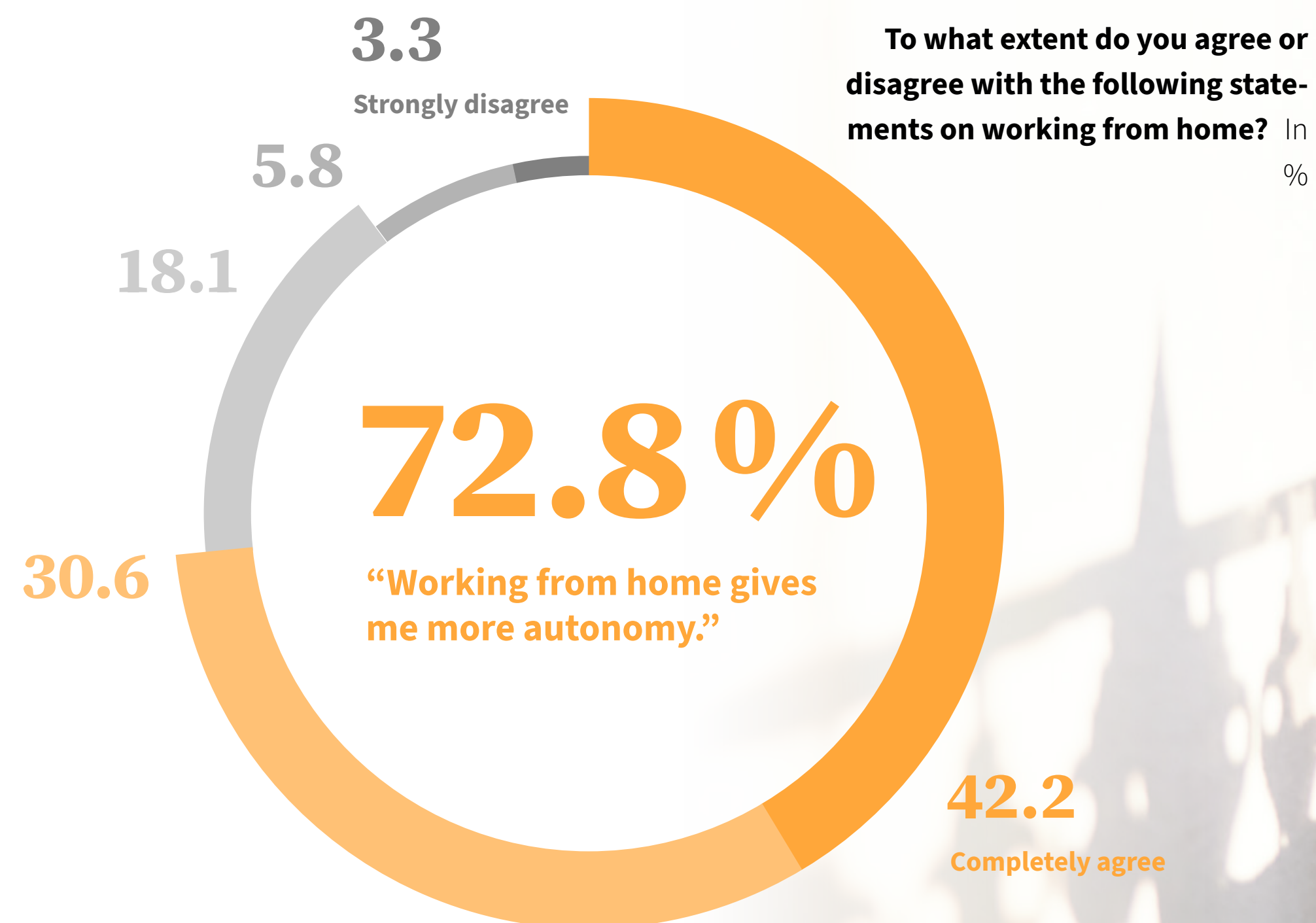
## HOME = WORK. THE PROS AND CONS.

# FREEDOM INSTEAD OF BURNOUT.

Working from home is not perceived as a particularly negative factor in relation to COVID. But what are the overall advantages and disadvantages when home becomes your workplace – and having a coffee with colleagues becomes a rarity?

**For most respondents, the advantages of working from home outweigh the disadvantages: Almost three quarters enjoy the feeling of more autonomy and two thirds organise their work more efficiently at home.**

In addition, most find it easy to separate work and personal life when working from home. Burnout is not a concern for them. **And yet:** More than half of respondents miss social interaction at work.

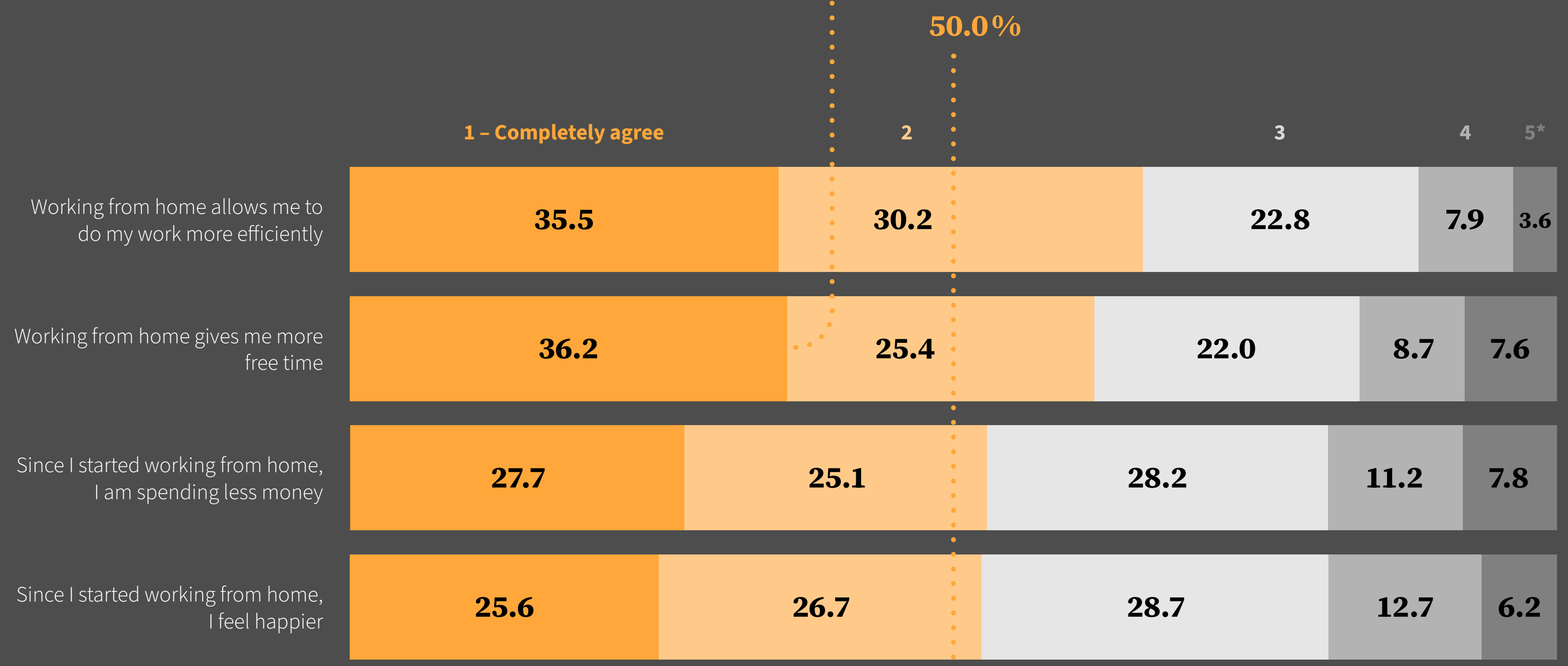




# BENEFITS OF WORKING FROM HOME: MORE EFFICIENCY, MORE FREE TIME, MORE MONEY.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home? In %

**WORKING FROM HOME ALSO MEANS: NO COMMUTE. AND THEREFORE MORE (FREE) TIME BEFORE AND AFTER WORK. THIS IS CONFIRMED BY 61.6% OF RESPONDENTS.**

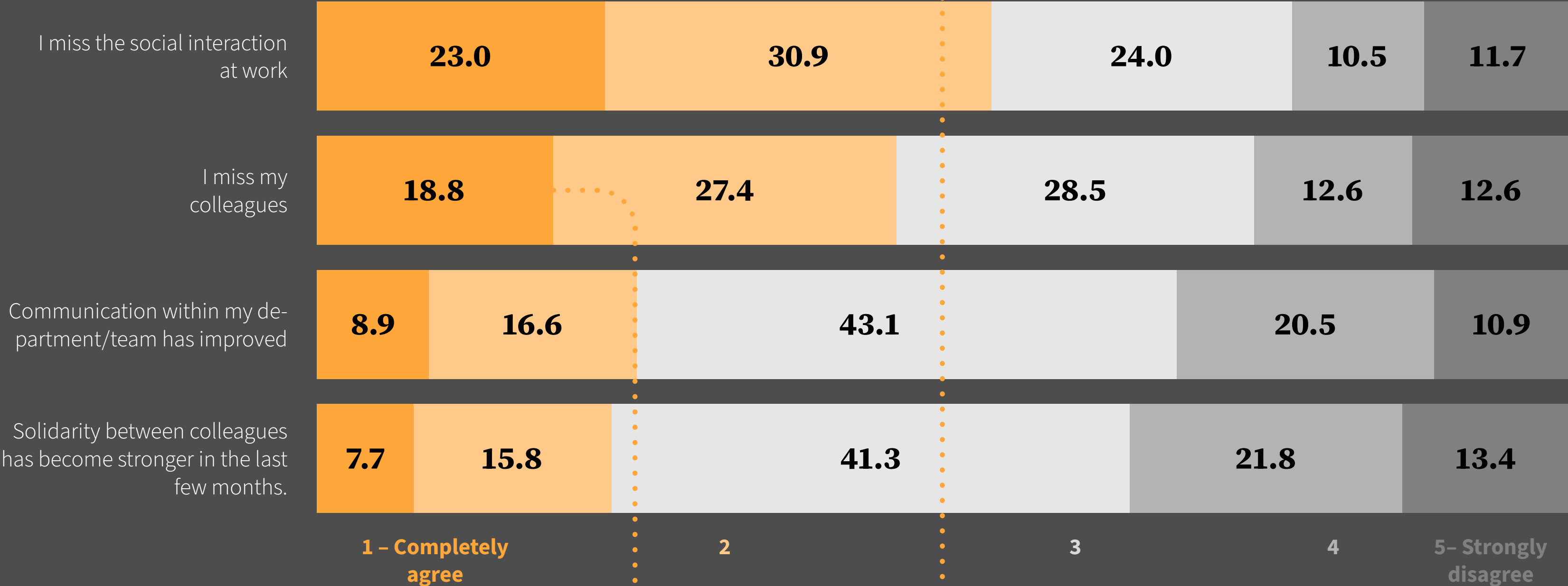


\*Strongly disagree



# DISADVANTAGES OF WORKING FROM HOME: LACK OF SOCIAL INTERACTION, LESS TEAM SPIRIT.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home? In %



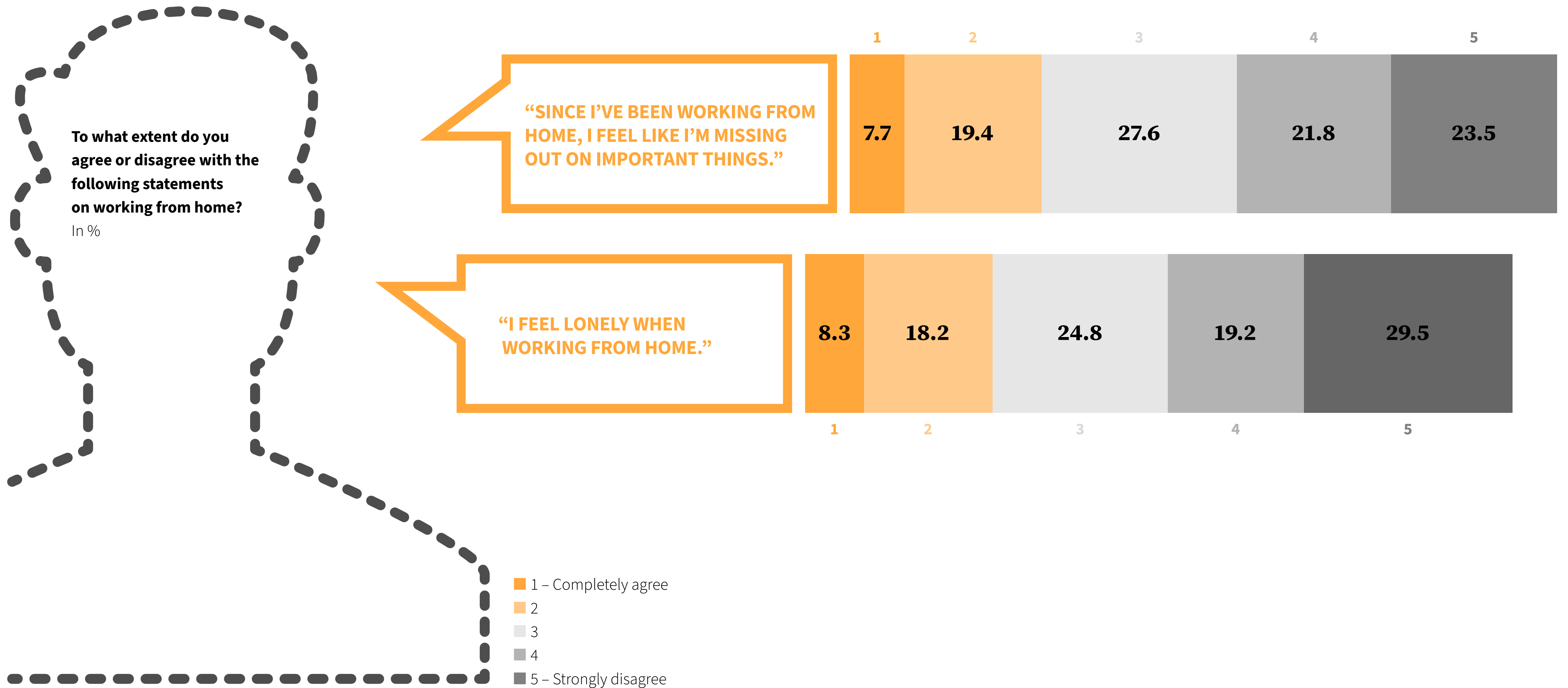
50,0%

**WHILE MANY RESPONDENTS MISS THE SOCIAL INTERACTION, LESS THAN HALF ACTUALLY MISS THEIR COLLEAGUES.**



## AND WHAT ABOUT LONELINESS AND FOMO? HARDLY A PROBLEM.

The coronavirus pandemic has shaken up many habits – and made many social activities impossible. But in spite of this, only 26.5% of respondents feel lonely when working from home, and only 27.1% experience FOMO (“fear of missing out”).



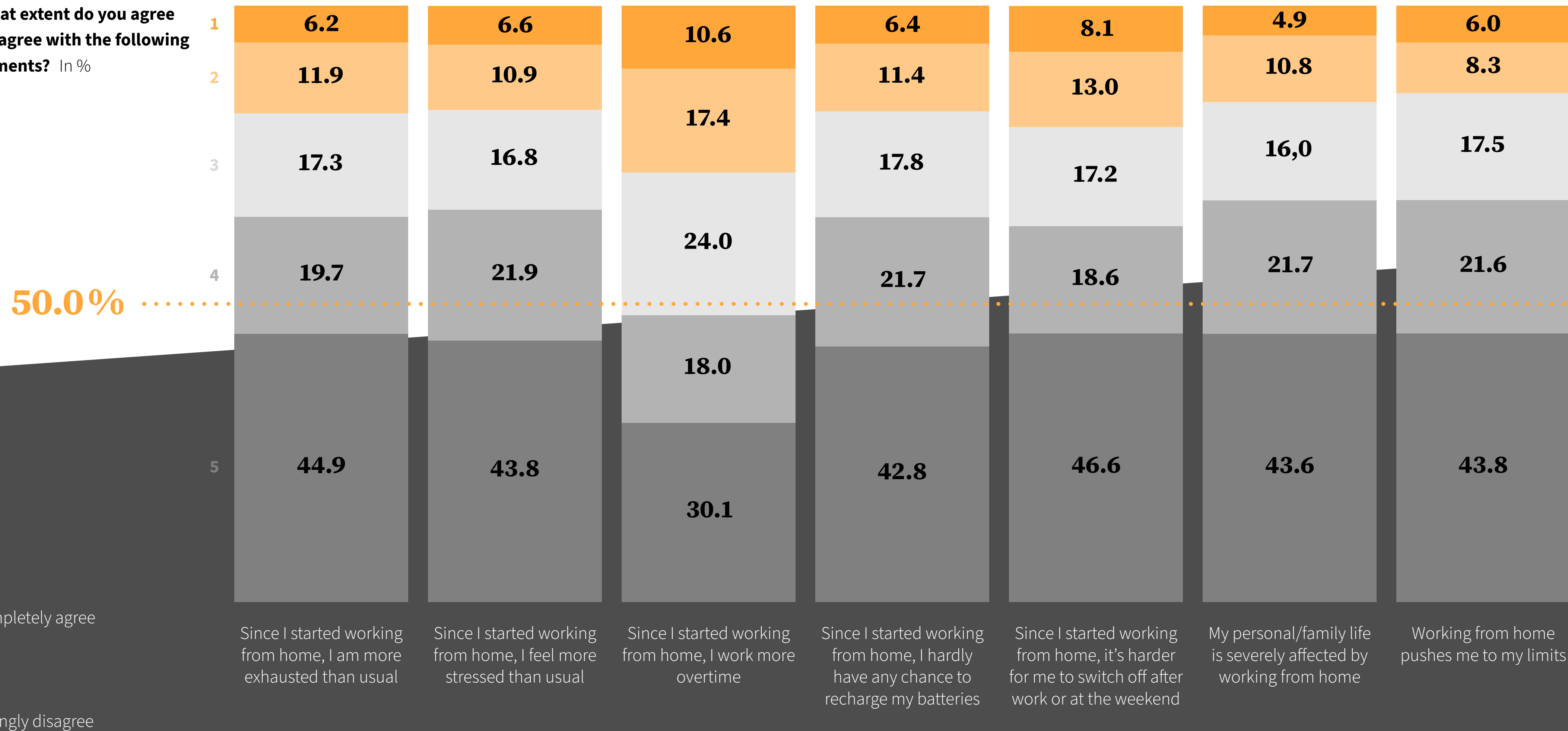


# SEPARATION OF WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE IS NOT A PROBLEM. EVEN WHEN WORKING FROM HOME.

Typical arguments against working from home are difficulties in separating home from work and thus a higher potential for burnout. The study largely refutes these assumption:

**Most respondents feel neither more stressed (65.7%) nor more exhausted (64.6%) – and the majority (65.2%) also have no problems switching off after work.** Only just over a quarter say that they work more overtime when working at home.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? In %



- 1 – Completely agree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – Strongly disagree





# OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, PRODUCTIVITY WHEN WORKING FROM HOME...

...has proven to be comparable and sometimes even higher than in the office. However, managers are more likely to overlook issues such as overload, overwork or health problems that would be evident through non-verbal signals in everyday office life. Therefore, caring and actively seeking feedback is particularly important.

**Prof. Dr. Regina Cordes**



**SUPERVISORS ON WORKING FROM HOME.**

# MANAGING FROM HOME.

One third of the respondents are in a managerial role – either in senior management or middle management. **For more than half of these managers, working from home is a particular challenge.**

What is your role  
within your company? In %

Senior management

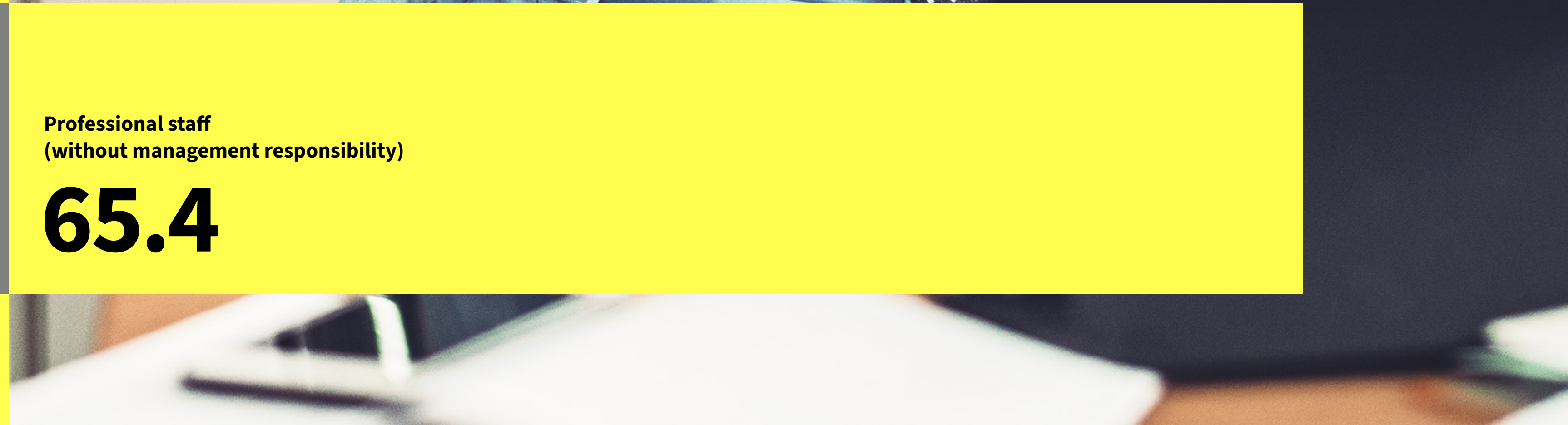
**14.7**

Middle management  
(e.g. departmental  
manager)

**19.9**

Professional staff  
(without management responsibility)

**65.4**







# **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES IS REDEFINED WHEN WORKING FROM HOME AND DEMANDS A HIGHER DEGREE OF EMPATHY FROM SUPERVISORS.**

Delegation of tasks needs to be even more precise, and opportunities for informal contact to clarify “minor” issues need to be created to replace meetings in the break room. Structures also have to be adapted for the onboarding process of new employees, and the induction process has to be much more detailed.”

**Prof. Dr. Regina Cordes**



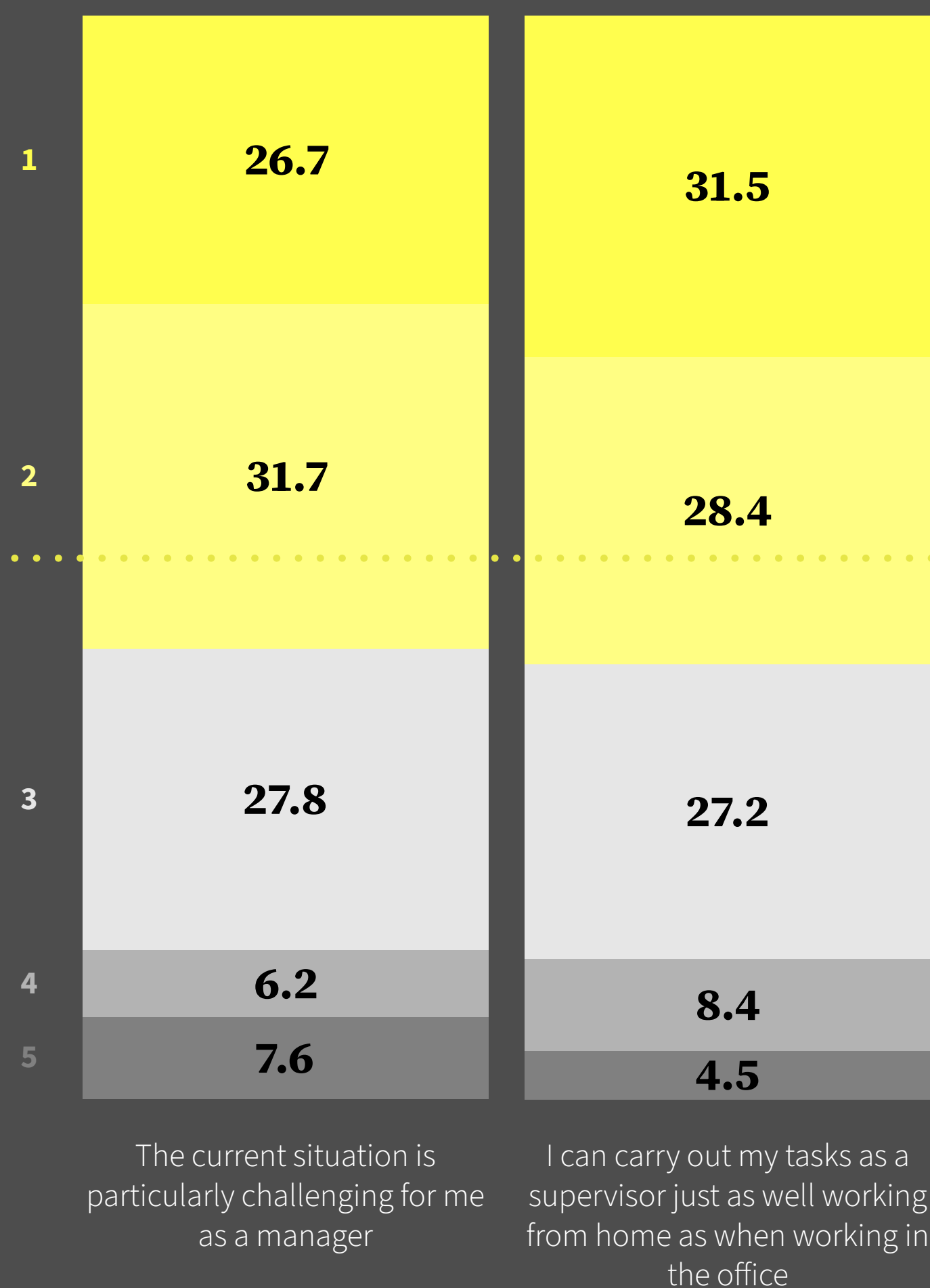
## WORKING FROM HOME: A CHALLENGE FOR MANAGERS...

58.4% find working from home a challenge as a manager. Nevertheless, 59.9% say they can carry out their tasks as a supervisor just as well as in the office.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home? In %; managers only

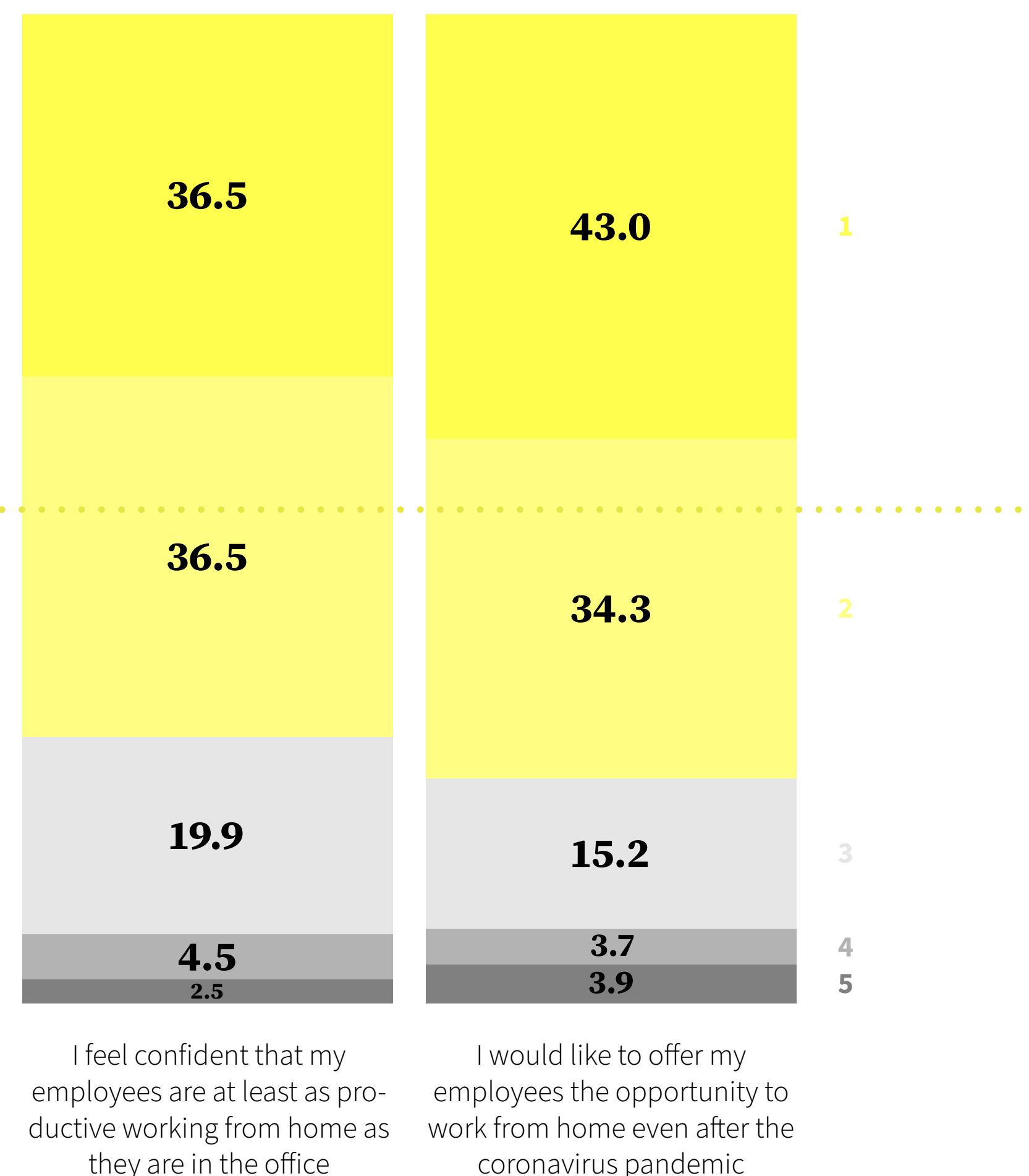
50.0%

- 1 – Completely agree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – Strongly disagree



## ...AND A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES.

73.0% of supervisors trust that their employees are at least as productive when working from home as they are in the office. Interestingly, this corroborates the finding that 61.1% of respondents definitely feel more productive at home. **Crucially, managers are open to working from home – even after the pandemic.**





**WORKING FROM HOME AFTER COVID.**

# HERE TO STAY.

**Working from home is here to stay – even after COVID. At least according to the workers surveyed.** The majority expect companies to continue to make working from home possible – and in a best case scenario, even encourage it.

**What will working from home arrangements look like in your company after the coronavirus pandemic?** In %

8.3

I don't know

16.6

There will be less working from home after the coronavirus pandemic

**75,0%**

think there will be just as much or even more working from home after COVID.

48.6

There will be more working from home after the coronavirus pandemic

26.4

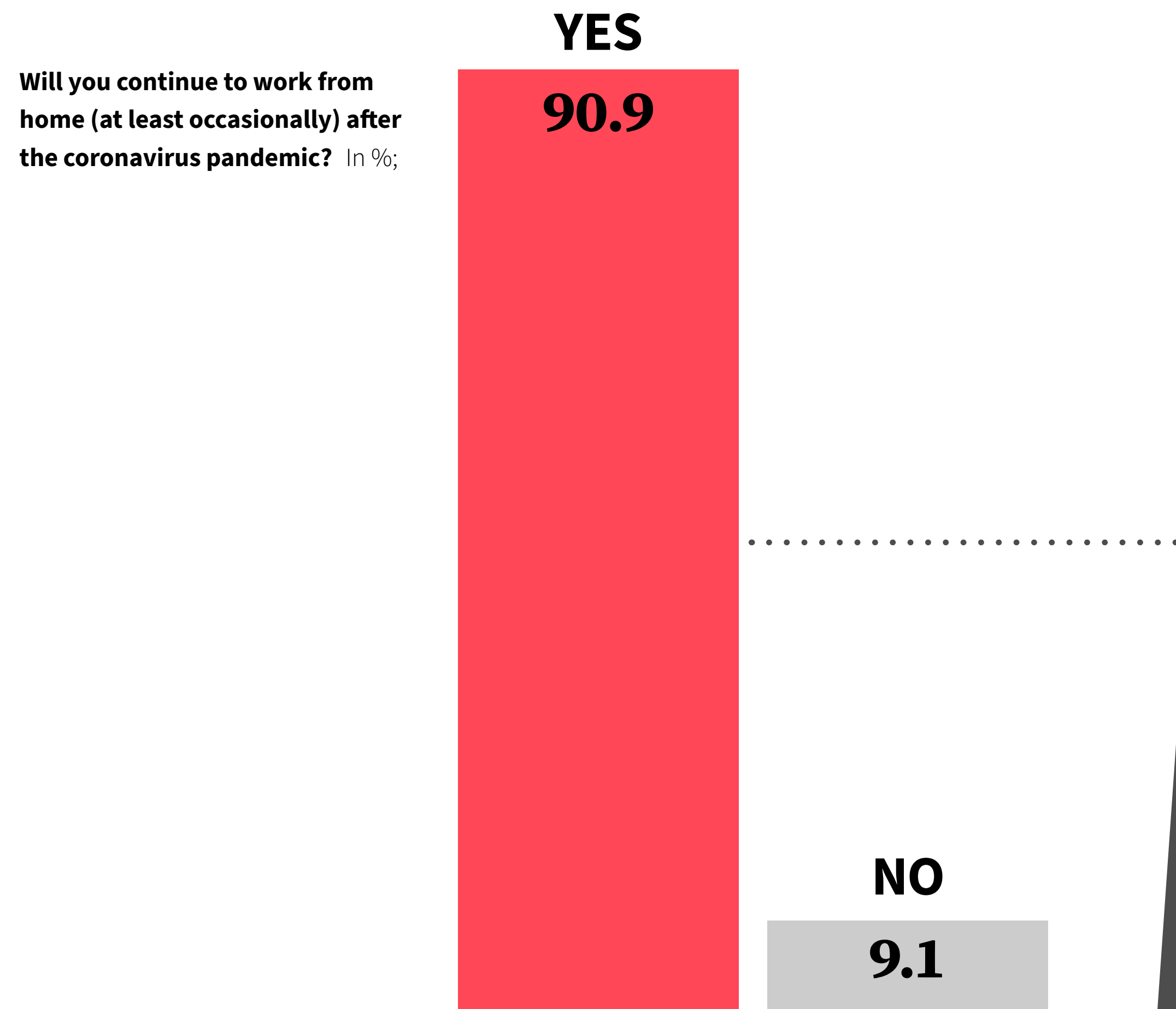
There will be just as much working from home after the coronavirus pandemic





# POPULAR AND (NOW) FAMILIAR: ALMOST ALL WANT TO CONTINUE WORKING FROM HOME...

A full 90.9% will continue to work from home in the long term. Three quarters of them will do this for two or more days a week – and almost one in five would like to continue working from home exclusively.



# ... PREFERABLY TWO OR MORE DAYS A WEEK.



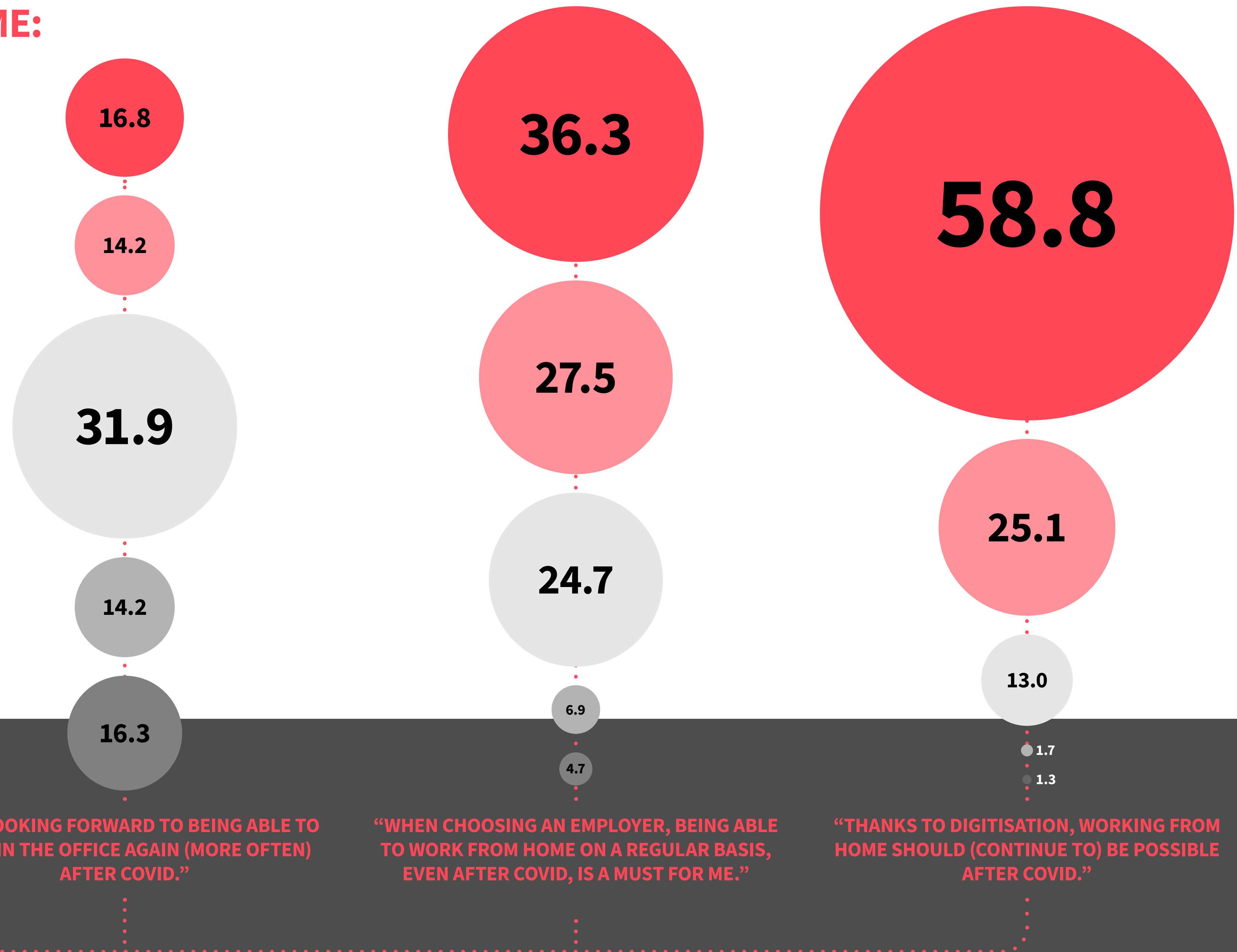


## WORKING FROM HOME: A NEW CRITERION FOR THE EMPLOYER BRAND.

For 63.8% of employees, the option to work from home is a key factor in choosing a company – even after COVID.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home after COVID? In %;

- 1 – Completely agree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – Strongly disagree





# “ AFTER A TWO-YEAR “TRIAL PERIOD”, WORKING FROM HOME HAS BECOME A GIVEN FOR MANY PEOPLE...”

...most have become accustomed to the flexibility and reduced time spent commuting. Employers who are now insisting on a full return to the office are met with incomprehension by their employees. When looking for a new employer, it is no longer the case that companies offering remote working models attract positive attention, but rather that those that do not offer the option of working from home draw negative attention. This is because flexible hybrid solutions have rapidly become established as the “new normal”.

**Prof. Dr. Regina Cordes**







## WORKERS WANT TO WORK FROM HOME MORE. AND MORE SUPPORT.

Working from home not only needs to remain a flexible option after the pandemic, but should also be actively promoted by companies. This is what three quarters of respondents would like to see. Their main concern is ensuring their home office is well equipped and not having to pay the full cost of internet, etc.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home after COVID?

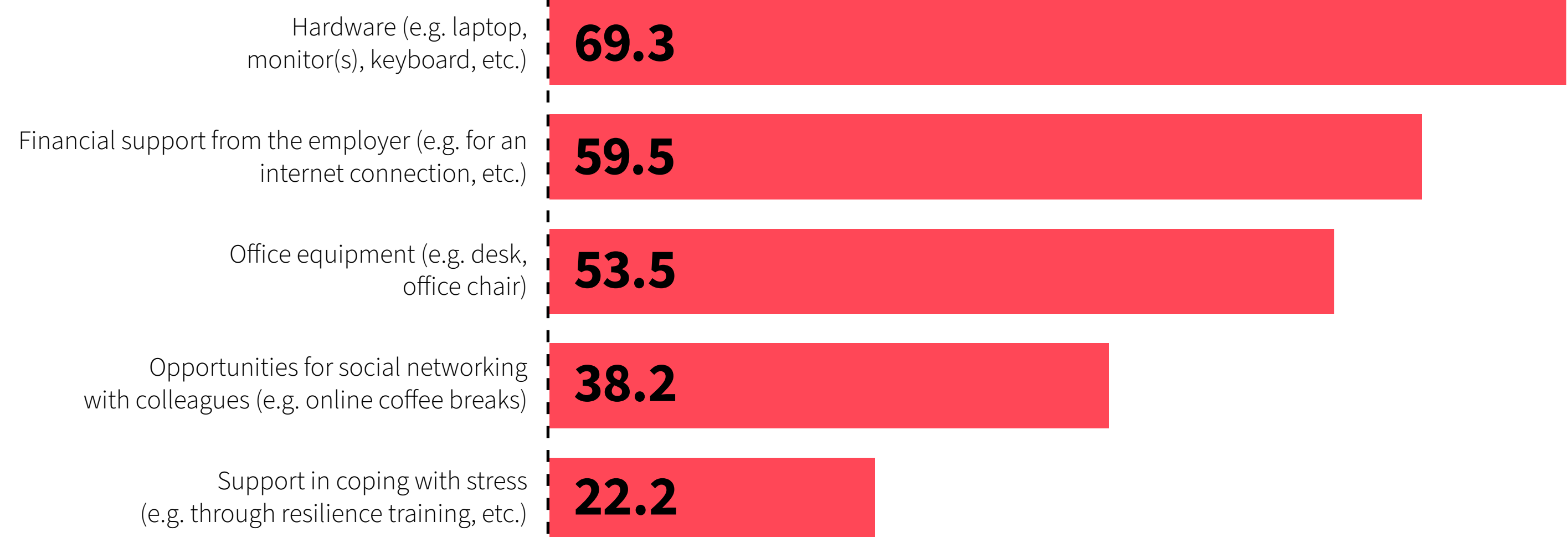
In %: top 2 box from scale of 1 to 5

# 75.5%

**“I WANT MY EMPLOYER TO PROVIDE ME WITH SUPPORT FOR WORKING FROM HOME AFTER COVID – NOT JUST IN TERMS OF DIGITALISATION.”**

How would you like your employer to support you with working from home after the coronavirus pandemic?

In %: only respondents answering 1–2 on the scale of 1–5





## A RIGHT TO WORK FROM HOME. YES OR NO?

Should there be a legal right to work from home? Respondents are divided on this.

**Just over half say they are in favour of such a law.** On the other hand, 42.0% are of the opinion that companies should continue to decide for themselves – without being forced to do so by law. Only 4.2% are unequivocally against the right to work from home.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on working from home after COVID?** In %;

“All workers should have **a legal right** to work from home.”

**53.8**

“Companies should continue to be allowed to **decide for themselves** whether working from home is allowed or not.”

**42.0**

4.2

“There should be **no legal right** to work from home.”

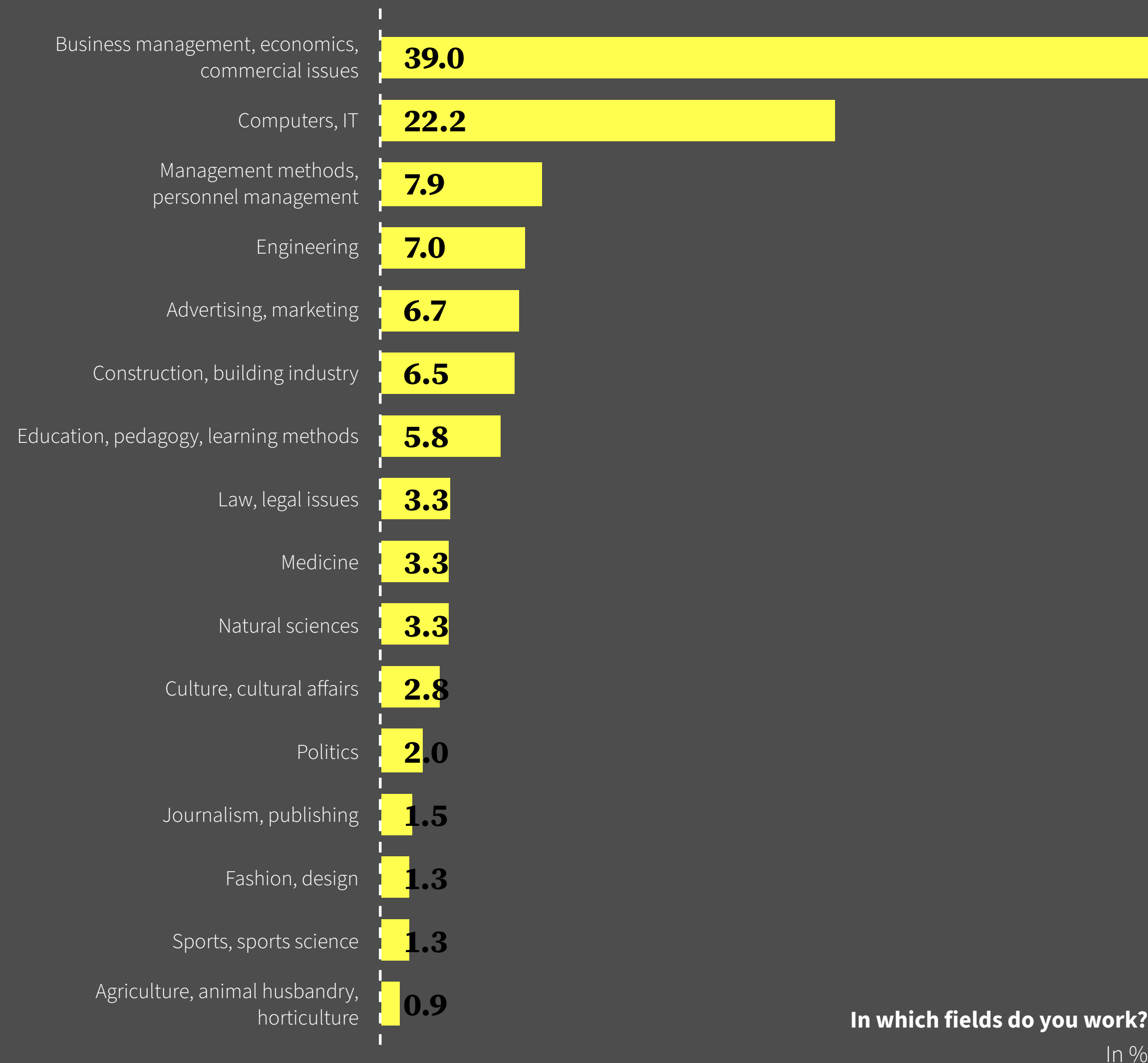




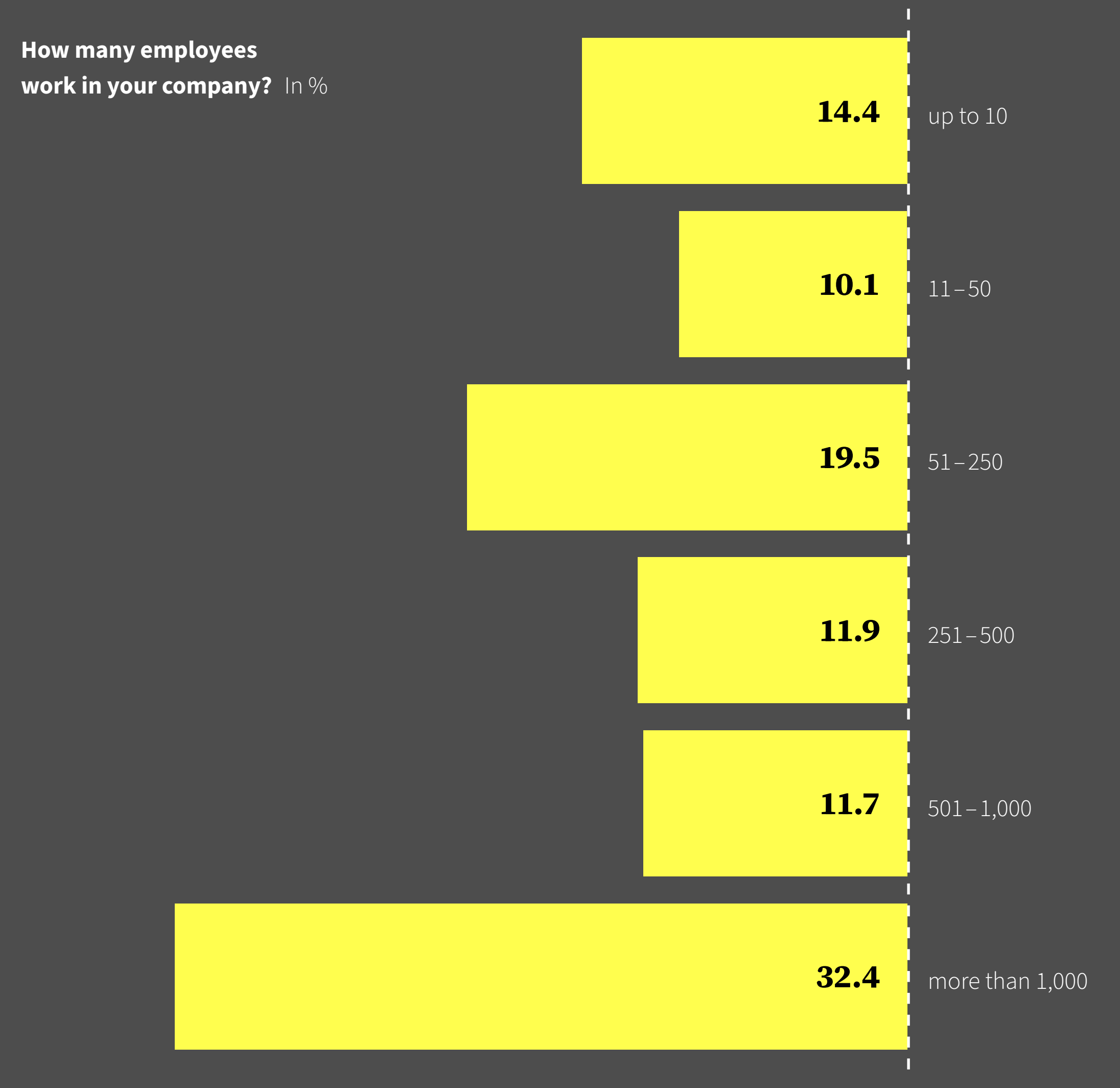
## FACTS ABOUT THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS.

# ABOUT THE STUDY.

**MANY RESPONDENTS IN THE COMMERCIAL AND IT SECTOR. ONLY A FEW FROM EDUCATION OR MEDICINE.**



**MORE THAN HALF WORK FOR LARGE COMPANIES WITH MORE THAN 250 EMPLOYEES.**





## FACTS ABOUT THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS.

# ABOUT THE STUDY.

# 1.030

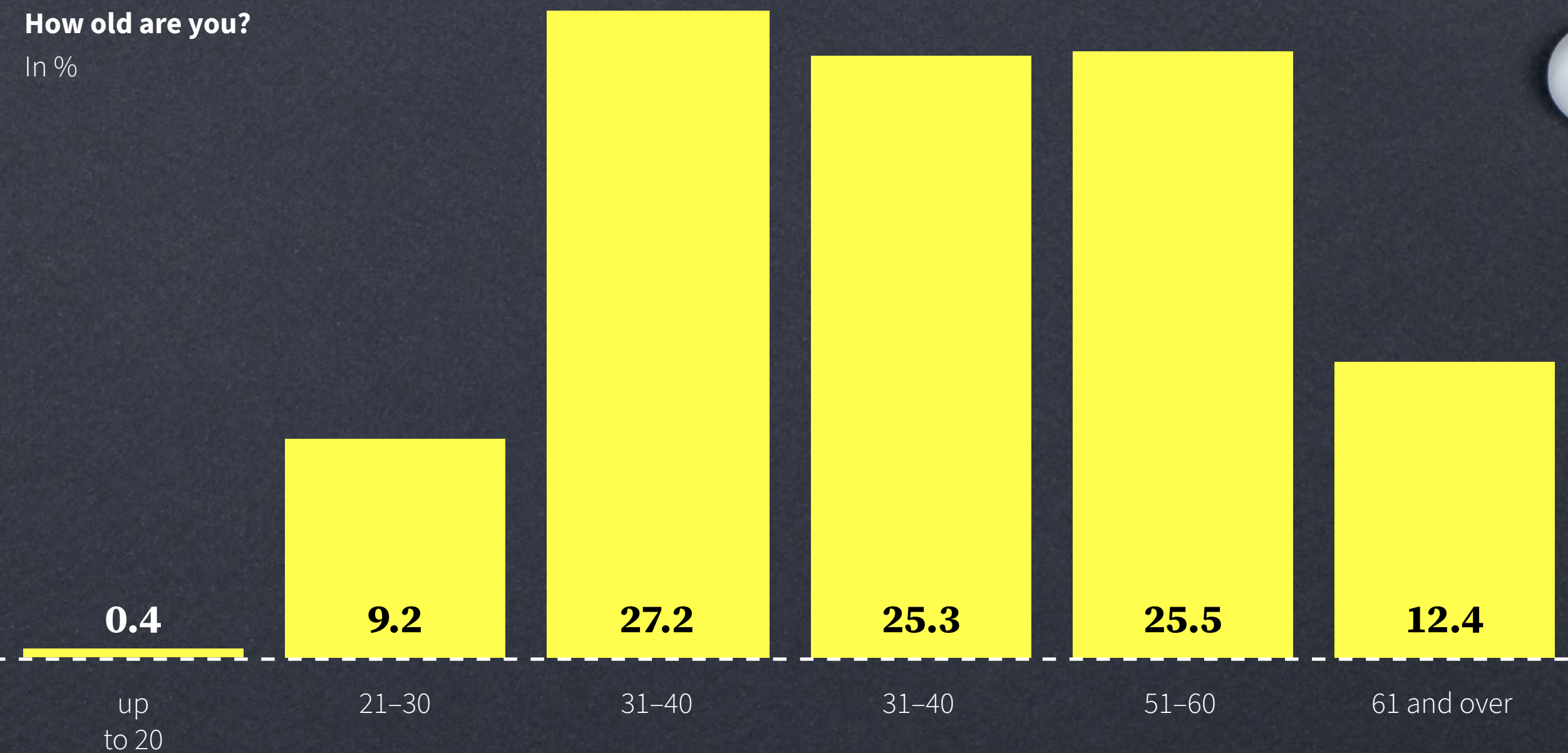
## Respondents from Germany

Target group: People who worked from home during the coronavirus pandemic or who are currently working from home.

**50% MEN AND 50% WOMEN.  
MORE THAN THREE QUARTERS OF THE  
RESPONDENTS ARE BETWEEN THE AGES  
OF 31 AND 60.**

### How old are you?

In %



## Contact us

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us: [research@iu.org](mailto:research@iu.org)

## IMPRINT

### Publisher:

IU International University of Applied Sciences  
Juri-Gagarin-Ring 152 · 99084 Erfurt  
[iu.de](http://iu.de)

The Ministry of Economics, Science and Digital Society of the State of Thuringia is responsible for the IU International University of Applied Sciences at all study locations in matters relating to higher education law.

### You can also find us on:



Survey period:  
14 January 2022 – 20 January 2022  
Anonymous survey  
Panel: Norstat