Hunter Campbell

Mood of the *CFO.*

2025 Report



In partnership with

tax traders

Infometrics

INSIGHTS EXCHANGE

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Mood of the CFO

A word from Lee Marshall

We launched the Hunter Campbell Mood of the CFO in 2024 not completely sure how it would land. What we did know was that there was space in the market for the voices of New Zealand's CFOs to be heard, and you showed up.

That meant for 2025 we carried the responsibility of making sure we did this insights report justice. We set ourselves an ambitious goal of more than 200 respondents and were proud to surpass it with 238 CFOs taking part. Representation of female CFOs also increased from 19% in 2024 to 25% this year. Still not where it needs to be, but an important step in the right direction.

Again this year, we also collected over 600 verbatim responses from CFOs, which provides a depth of insight beyond the numbers. The report itself is structured differently, too. We wanted to give clear, understandable insights that were easy to digest, with sections covering Business Performance, Economic Outlook, Government Relations and Policy, Tech and Systems, Talent and Workforce, and Board Relationships.

Just as importantly, we were conscious that the topics needed to reflect what matters most to CFOs themselves.

That's why this year's report is 'for CFOs, by CFOs', with the support of a working group of some of New Zealand's top Accounting and Finance leaders. They helped to curate the themes and shape the questions that would add the most value to the community.

As always, none of this would be possible without those who contributed. To our foundation partners – Tax Traders, Infometrics, and Insights Exchange – thank you for your continued support. To our new partner for 2025, Extraordinary, welcome aboard. To our CFO working group, who gave their time and input to make sure this report is as impactful as possible. And to the 238 CFOs who completed the survey and shared their views – this report belongs to you.

Lee Marshall
Managing Partner, Hunter Campbell

A note from our Foundation Sponsors.

tax traders

At Tax Traders, we know that CFOs are far more than guardians of the bottom line.

You are strategic architects, cultural barometers, and leaders who shape direction. Often, you are the ones lighting the way, helping your organisations navigate next steps with clarity and care.

This year's Mood of the CFO report offers a compelling snapshot of the opportunities, perspectives and complexity shaping finance across Aotearoa. Complexity continues to define our two-speed economy, and the role of CFOs. Most CFOs anticipate ongoing macroeconomic challenges, call for policy reform to ease compliance and simplify tax, and face critical decisions around AI transformation, all in an environment where some are exceeding performance targets, and others are contending with stagnation or decline. The role of the CFO has never been more important for business, for the flourishing of your people and Aotearoa.

At Tax Traders, we're proud to support the Hunter Campbell Mood of the CFO Survey and the CFO community it represents. The report is both a window into future trends and a moment to pause and reflect. We acknowledge and thank you for the leadership, the critical decisions you make and the deep thinking that defines your work.

Mā te ngākau aroha koe e ārahi.

Nicola Taylor
Co-Founder, Tax Traders & Taxi





Infometrics

At Infometrics, we're focused on economics, put simply, and making sure that decision-makers and the public are better informed.

Which is why we're part of the Hunter Campbell Mood of the CFO survey and report – so we can help distil what CFOs are thinking, and look to address the opportunities and challenges going forward.

In 2025, uncertainty has become a key theme. Around 17% of businesses reported being unsure about the global economic outlook in 2025, up from just 5% last year. These challenges around uncertainty are taking up an increasingly large amount of attention from CFOs, with 77% of CFOs saying that economic uncertainty or market volatility would be a key driver of company performance over the next year. Some of this uncertainty is clearly unhelpful. However, other changes across business are important adjustments to be considered to achieve further progress.

Part of enabling these important changes is having the right settings from government, and nearly 4 in 5 CFOs stated that current government policies need to change in order to accelerate progress. There's a lot more that CFOs are looking for when it comes to getting the right settings. Tax, capital and investment, and talent are all important areas, and technology and AI are areas of continual upheaval and opportunity.

Despite everything that CFOs are having to navigate at present, it's encouraging to see that recent business performance for some businesses has improved, but also challenging to see that nearly a third of businesses have seen declining performance. The outlook is brighter, with fewer businesses pessimistic, and more seeing anything from the same results, to modest or strong growth occurring.

Brad Olsen
Chief Executive and Principal Economist, Infometrics

Executive Summary

CFOs across New Zealand are navigating a two-speed economy shaped by pressure on margins, operational complexity, and shifting expectations.

Half of all respondents report meeting or exceeding performance targets in the past year, while the rest have faced stagnation or decline. Confidence is closely tied to past performance, with CFOs from profitable businesses feeling more optimistic about the year ahead.

Despite that optimism, 92% expect ongoing macroeconomic challenges. Competitive markets, cost pressures, and workforce concerns remain front of mind. Smaller organisations have performed better over the past year, yet it is larger enterprises that are more confident in the global outlook.

Policy settings are a clear friction point. Four in five CFOs want wholesale reform to ease compliance and simplify tax. Female CFOs and those aged 55+ are most sceptical of government's understanding of business realities, while those aged 45–54 report slightly more optimism. Among all groups confidence in the government's responsiveness remains low.

Technology investment continues to rise. While only 16% report meaningful impact from AI today, two-thirds expect it to reshape team structures within two years. Data analytics and automation are seen as the most valuable applications, with services industries experiencing the most disruption to date. ERP system rollouts are common but often hindered by budget, training, and data migration challenges.

Talent remains under pressure. Succession planning is the weakest link, with just one in four CFOs confident their organisation is ready for leadership transitions. Internal pipelines are limited, and L&D options remain thin outside the Big Four. Younger CFOs prioritise ambition in hiring, while older peers place more weight on experience, indicating a growing generational divide. Hybrid work is still common, though many larger and older organisations are shifting back towards the office.

Board relationships are generally strong, particularly in financial oversight. However, performance in succession planning, diversity, and leadership development continues to lag, most notably in blue-collar sectors and among CFOs nearing retirement.

Strategically, CFOs are thinking long-term and emphasising adaptable and sustainable growth. The right people, technology, and leadership structures are essential to navigate the current market.



Who we spoke to

Survey Demographics

Hunter Campbell, together with Tax Traders, Infometrics, Insights Exchange and Extraordinary, provided a database of 730 Senior Finance Professionals for this research.

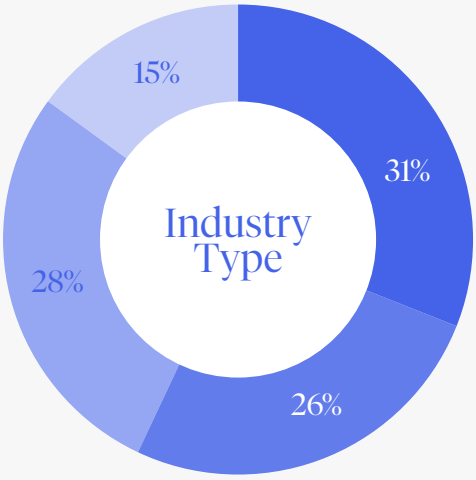
The response to the online survey was 33%. These contributors were highly engaged with 600 verbatim responses.

Our contributors' perspectives are reflective of large business (i.e. those with 100 or more employees) and the CFO role.

238
Contributors

600
Verbatim Responses

94%
of respondents are Senior Management and C-Suite Executives



- ***Industrial & Primary:*** *Agriculture, Construction, Manufacturing, Transport.*
- ***Professional Services Industry:*** *Financial, Marketing and Communications, Professional Services, Technology, Telecommunications.*
- ***Consumer Retail & Health:*** *Food Services, Healthcare, Retail Trade / FMCG, Tourism, Wholesale Trade.*
- ***Other.***



25%
▲ 2024 (19%)

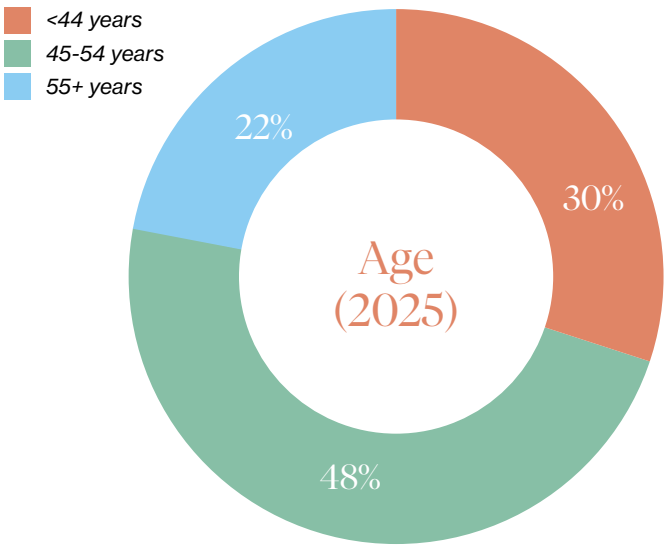


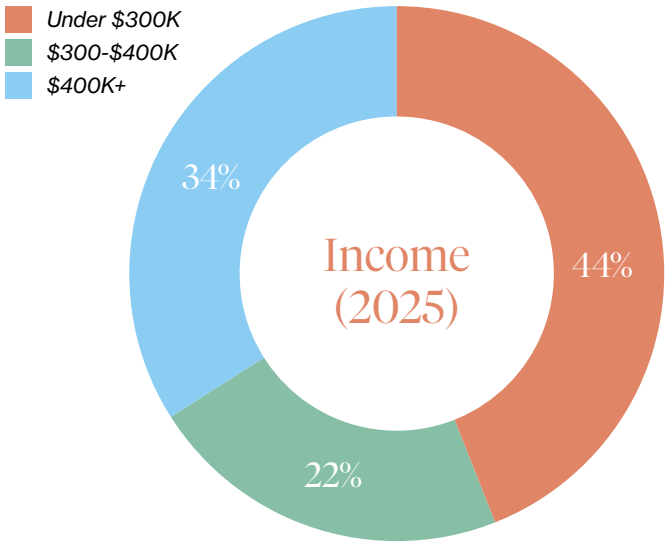
75%
▼ 2024 (81%)

Due to rounding, some figures in this report may not total exactly 100%

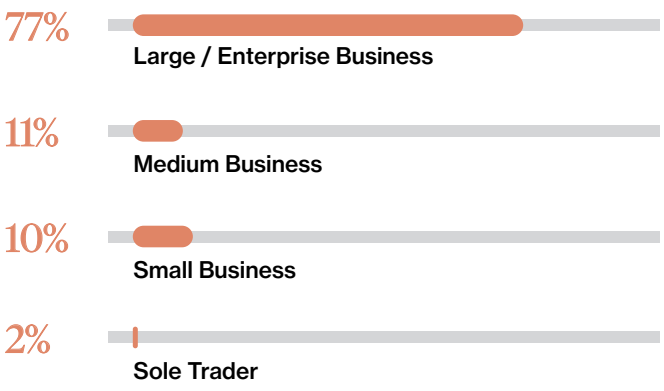
Who we spoke to

Survey Demographics

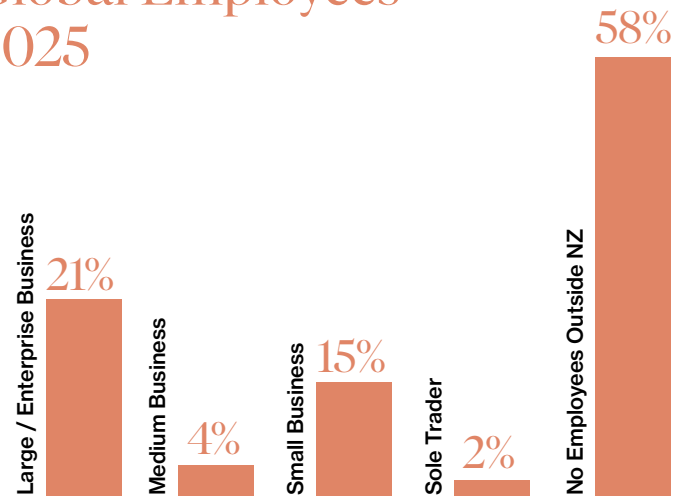




Employees in New Zealand 2025



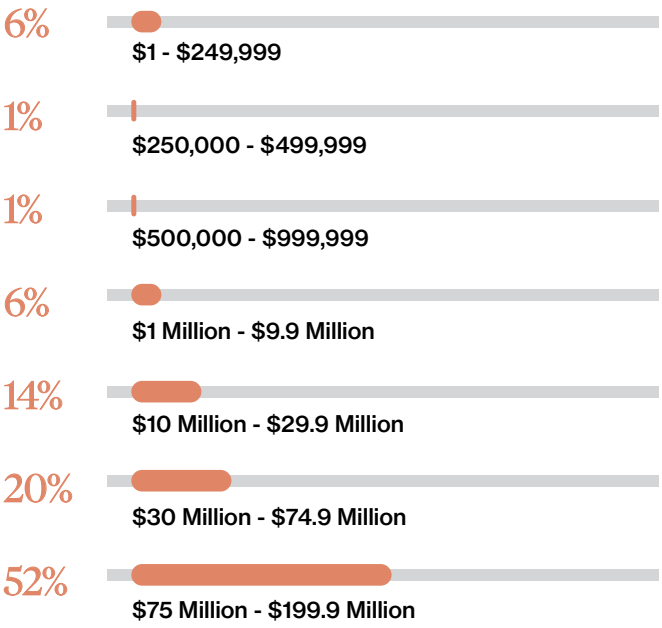
Global Employees 2025



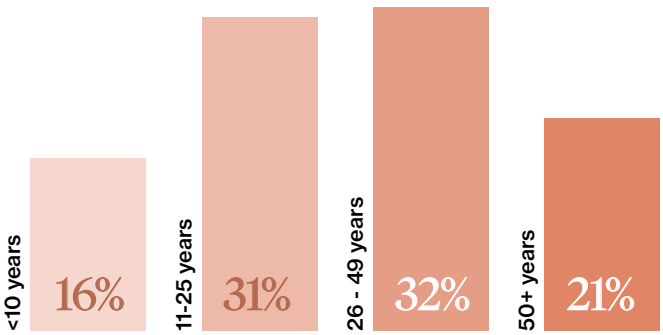
Who we spoke to

Survey Demographics

Company Revenue



Age of Company



Business Performance

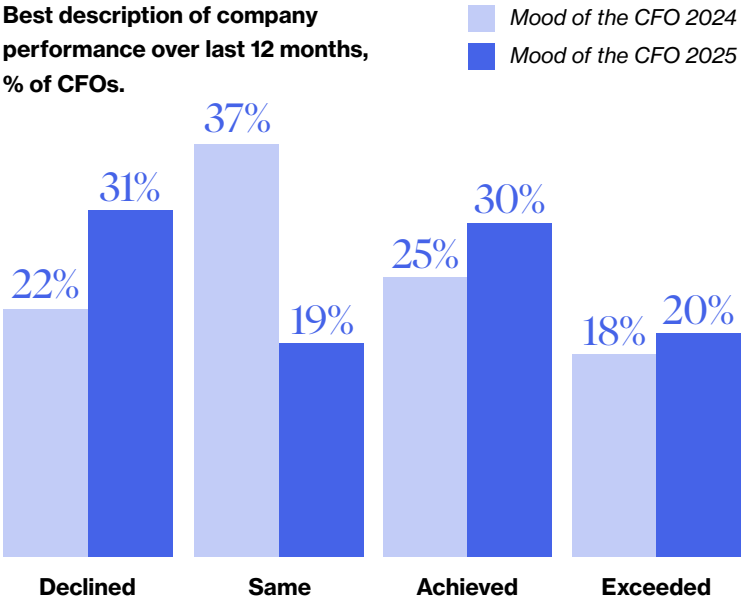
Two-speed economy

CFOs state, on balance, that their company had a better year in the last 12 months than the company saw two years ago. This trend mostly continues through to CFOs optimism or predictions about the company's performance over the next year. Recent profitability and future performance expectations align, with CFOs who had strong 2024 results remaining optimistic.

It's been more of a challenge recently...

The CFO community is clearly divided with half reporting positive company performance; having achieved or exceeded their growth targets; and the other half experiencing stagnation or decline, indicating a two-speed economy.

Best description of company performance over last 12 months, % of CFOs.

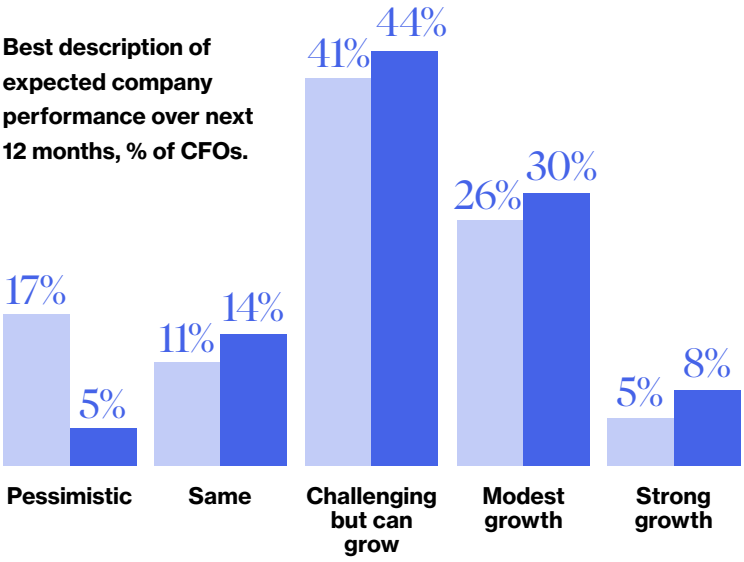


...but expectations for the future are better.

These recent metrics act as a future predictor of company performance. Recent profitability and future performance expectations align, with CFOs who had strong 2024 results remaining optimistic, while those who struggled expecting continued challenges.

This trend also demonstrates that confidence begets confidence – an important reminder that cautious optimism and educated vigilance is essential to navigate relatively uncertain and unpredictable times.

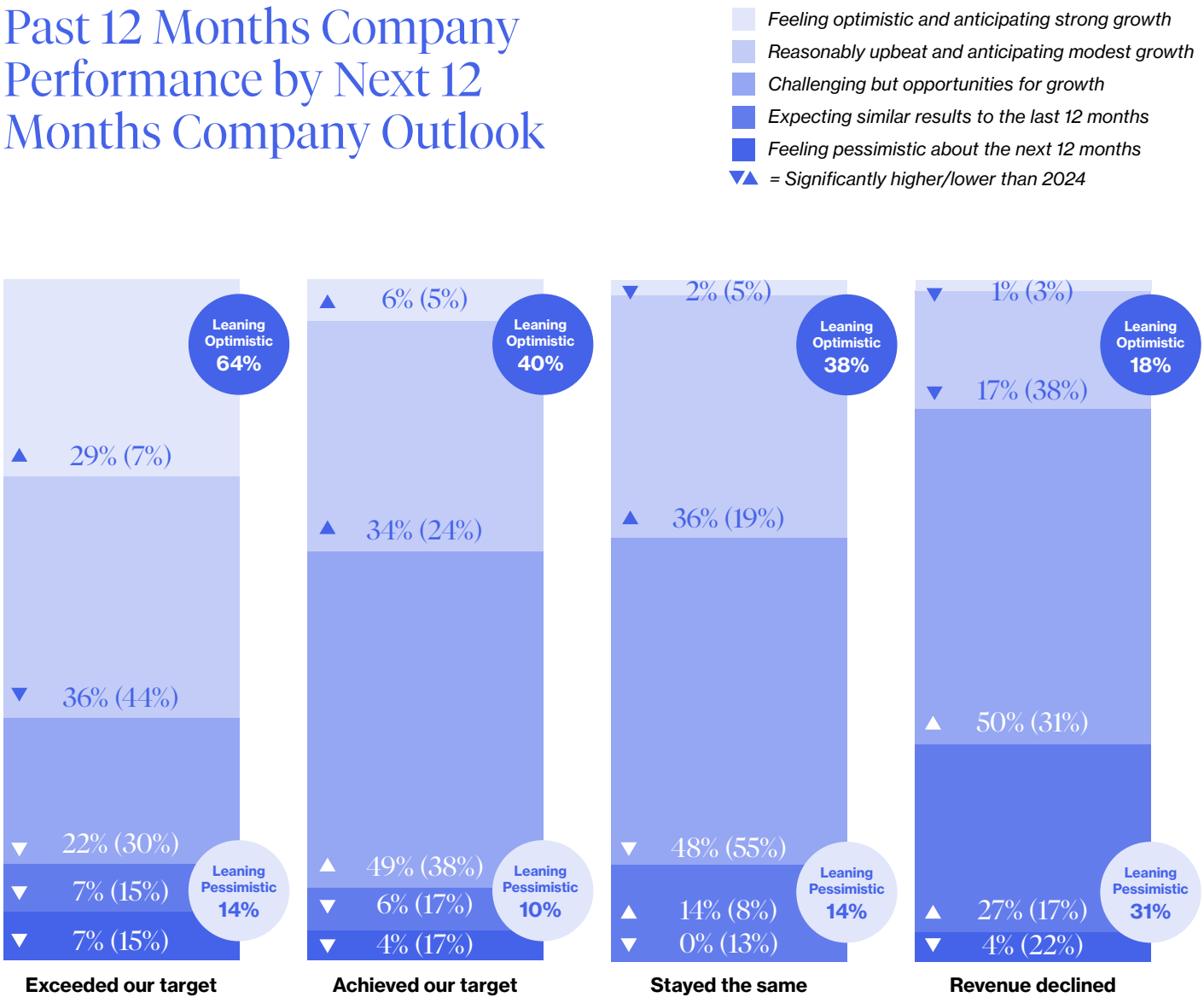
Best description of expected company performance over next 12 months, % of CFOs.



Business Performance

Unsurprisingly, CFOs in 2025 who had positive results in the past year have positive predictions for the year to come, mirroring the pattern seen in 2024. Importantly though, even CFOs who reported a strong performance in 2023 were expecting a challenging year ahead in 2025. The increasing optimism suggest that CFOs are generally becoming more confident in navigating uncertain economic conditions.

Past 12 Months Company Performance by Next 12 Months Company Outlook

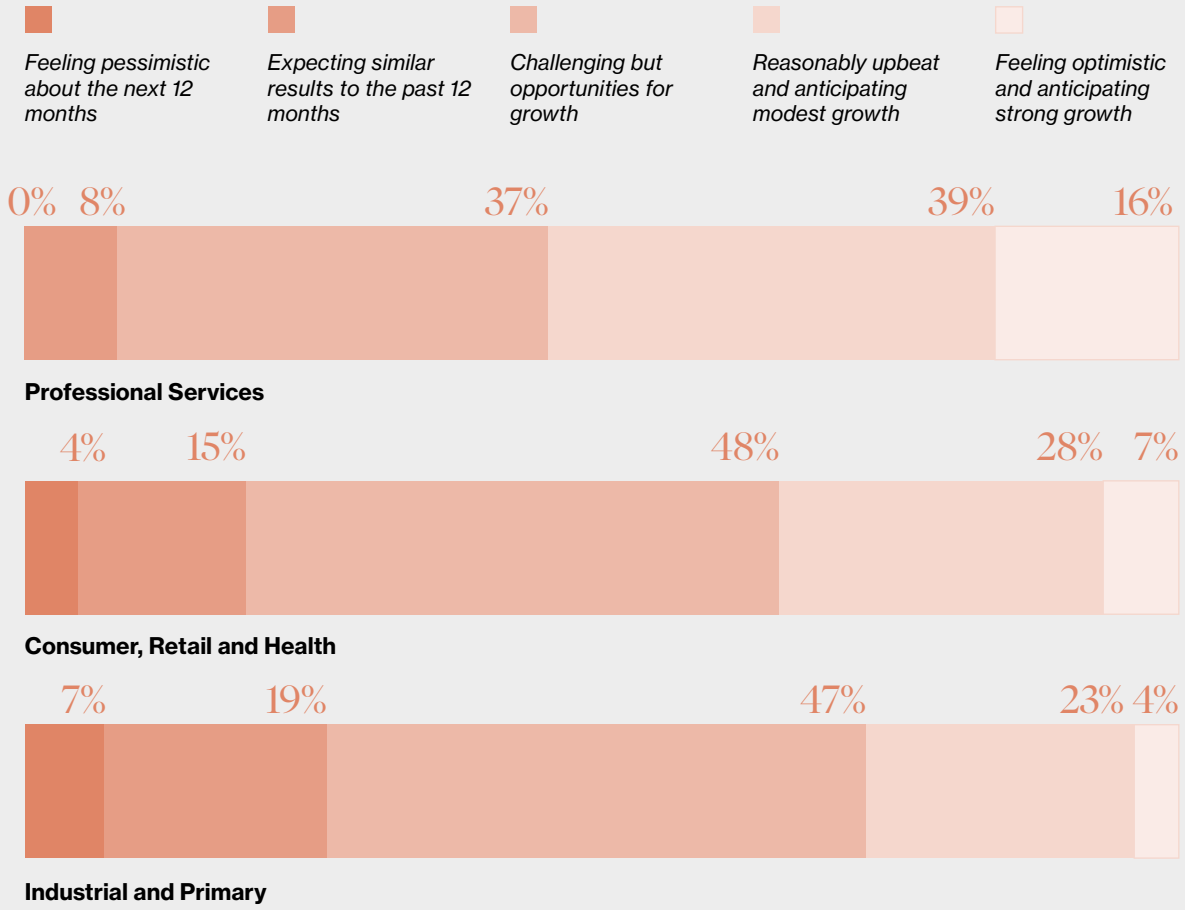


Business Performance

CFOs working in Professional Services are feeling most optimistic about their business performance in the next 12 months, and while CFOs working in Industrial and Primary and Consumer, Retail and Health industries aren't as confident, they lean toward more confident than not.

Next 12 Month Company Outlook by Industry 2025

"Our business does better in times of market volatility, so the outlook in the short to medium term for our business is good. We are reasonably unique in this. Although talent and skill shortages and rising costs are still a concern."



Business Performance

As expected, market and economic conditions are the primary considerations underlying CFO predictions for company performance. However, there are also operational elements that are outside of their control; for example, market saturation or rising costs, which are impacting these predictions.

Drivers of Company Outlook for Next 12 Months



Other key findings

01 Businesses anticipating strong or modest growth in the next 12 months also report strong market demand, and greater access to capital.

02 Businesses anticipating similar or pessimistic times ahead report virtually no additional market demand, and higher regulatory barriers.

03 Businesses in the middle report more economic uncertainty, competition for work, and rising costs.

04 SME operators are reporting improving access to capital, larger operators are still facing challenges.

Economic Outlook

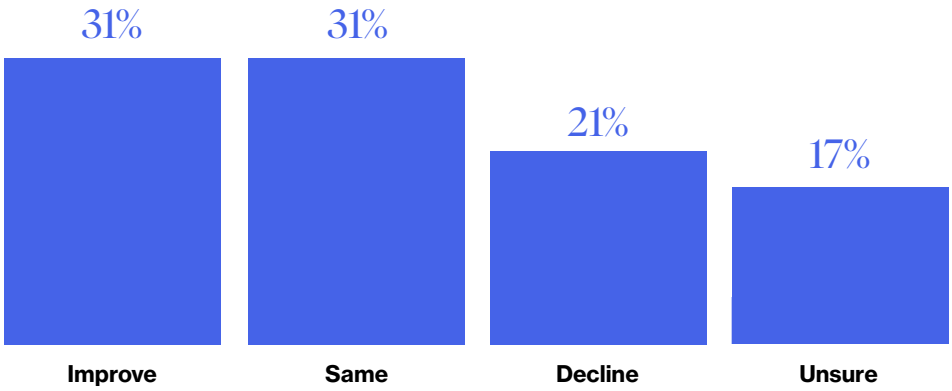
CFOs are split in their predictions for the global economy over the next year, which aligns to the equal split of CFOs that reported positive vs negative company performance. Interestingly, CFOs are generally more upbeat than pessimistic about the next 12 months, albeit cautiously so, recognising that there will be challenges ahead.

Next 12 Months Global Economic Outlook

"Plan for tomorrow, not just today. The economy will improve (it's only a question of when, not if). This means investing time, money and effort to be ready for tomorrow - so be prepared for not just the next 12 months but scenarios and plans for 3-5 years. Your DCF will show you if the business is heading in the right direction to take advantage of the improving economy."

More positive but also more uncertain...

Expectations for the global economy over the next 12 months, % of CFOs.



Cautious Optimism Amid Uncertainty

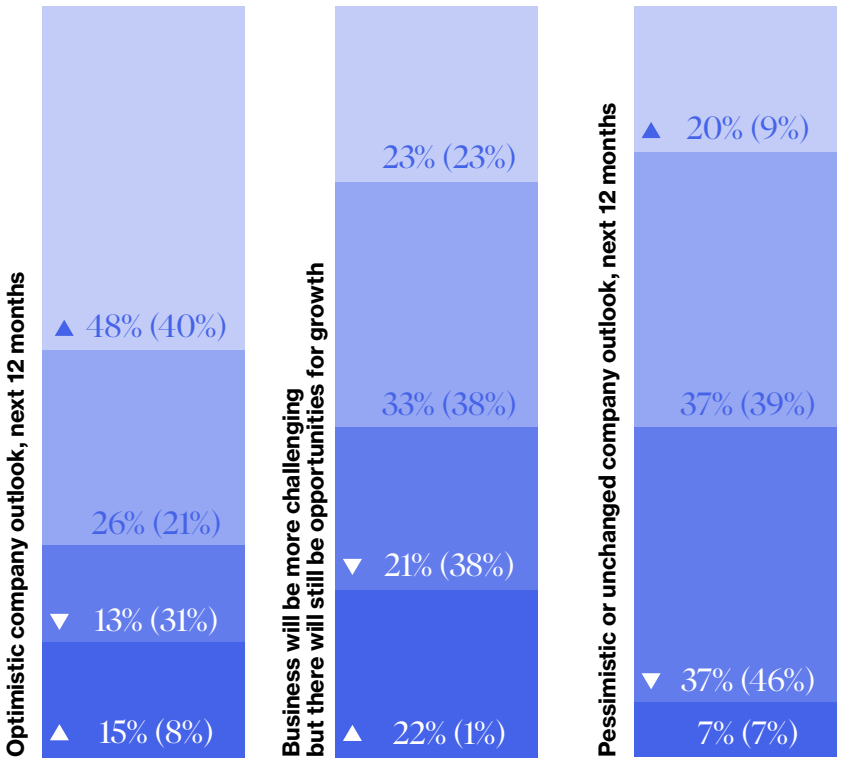
CFOs are split on global economic outlook (31% improve, 31% stay same, 21% decline), showing more balanced sentiment than pure pessimism.

Economic Outlook

Expectations for individual businesses tend to mirror views of the global economy. Those with pessimistic outlooks for their own performance also anticipate weaker global conditions. By contrast, businesses that are more optimistic about their own prospects expect stronger global results, yet they also see the outlook as harder to predict, reinforcing a sense of uncertainty in the operating environment.

This suggests that internal performance is shaping external confidence; businesses experiencing growth are projecting that momentum forward, rather than reacting purely to macroeconomic conditions.

Next 12 Months Global Economic Outlook by Next 12 Months Company Performance Outlook 2025 (2024)



Other key findings

Female CFOs and CFOs aged over 55 are more wary of the coming global economy, preferring to be more conservative in their predictions.

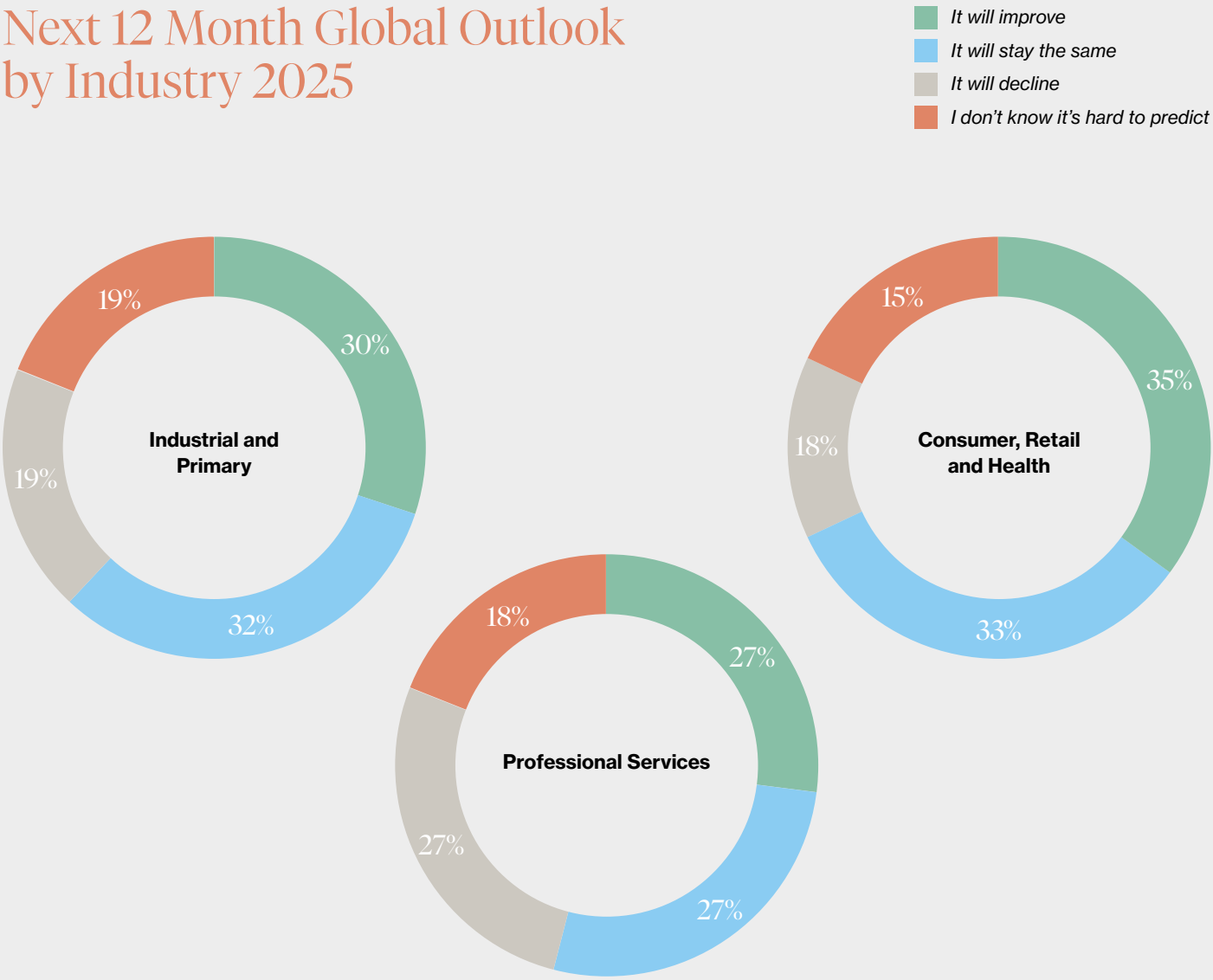
Male CFOs are generally more positive about what's to come, even if the past 12 months performance doesn't warrant it.

Although CFOs employed in SMEs reported better company performance over the last 12 months than large enterprises, it is the larger organisations that have a more positive outlook for the global economy for the coming year.

Economic Outlook

CFOs from all industries are increasingly unsure of what is to come in the global economy, with significantly more CFOs across the board saying they "don't know, the global economy is hard to predict". Despite that, both the Professional Services and Consumer, Retail and Health industries are both now aligned to the Industrial and Primary industries in their predictions for improvement, with Consumer, Retail and Health companies overtaking Industrial and Primary in their optimism for 2026.

Next 12 Month Global Outlook by Industry 2025



Government Relations and Policy

Widespread Call for Policy Reform

There is a general consensus that the NZ government needs to do more to support business and accelerate progress, but that working with government to achieve that is not straightforward.

CFOs have little faith that the government appreciates the need for tax policy reform (focusing on tax incentives), or that they are focusing sufficiently on wholesale strategic policy-shifts to enable businesses to grow in areas that are most needed (e.g. infrastructure, healthcare, and immigration.)

A substantial 79% of CFOs believe government policies need to change to accelerate progress, with compliance-related reforms (63% want reduced compliance costs, 57% want streamlined tax laws) topping the priority list.

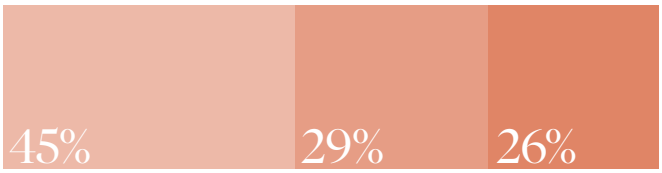
Government & Regulations - Agreement



Government policies that are currently in place need to change in order to accelerate progress



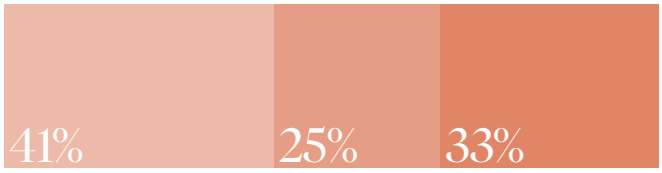
Overseas investors are avoiding NZ businesses due to regulatory complexity



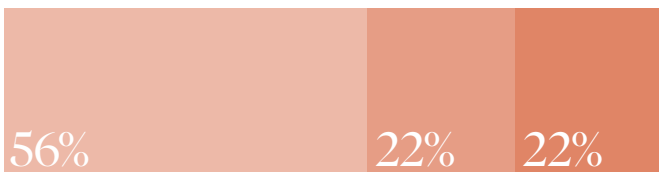
Current government tax policies and settings need to be improved



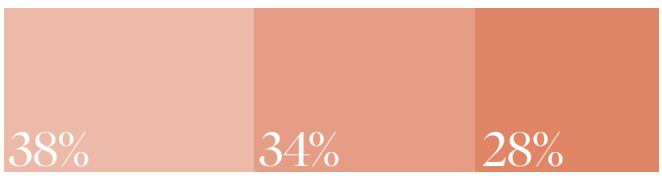
Overseas investors are avoiding NZ businesses due to cost



Government policies that are currently in place generally support business growth



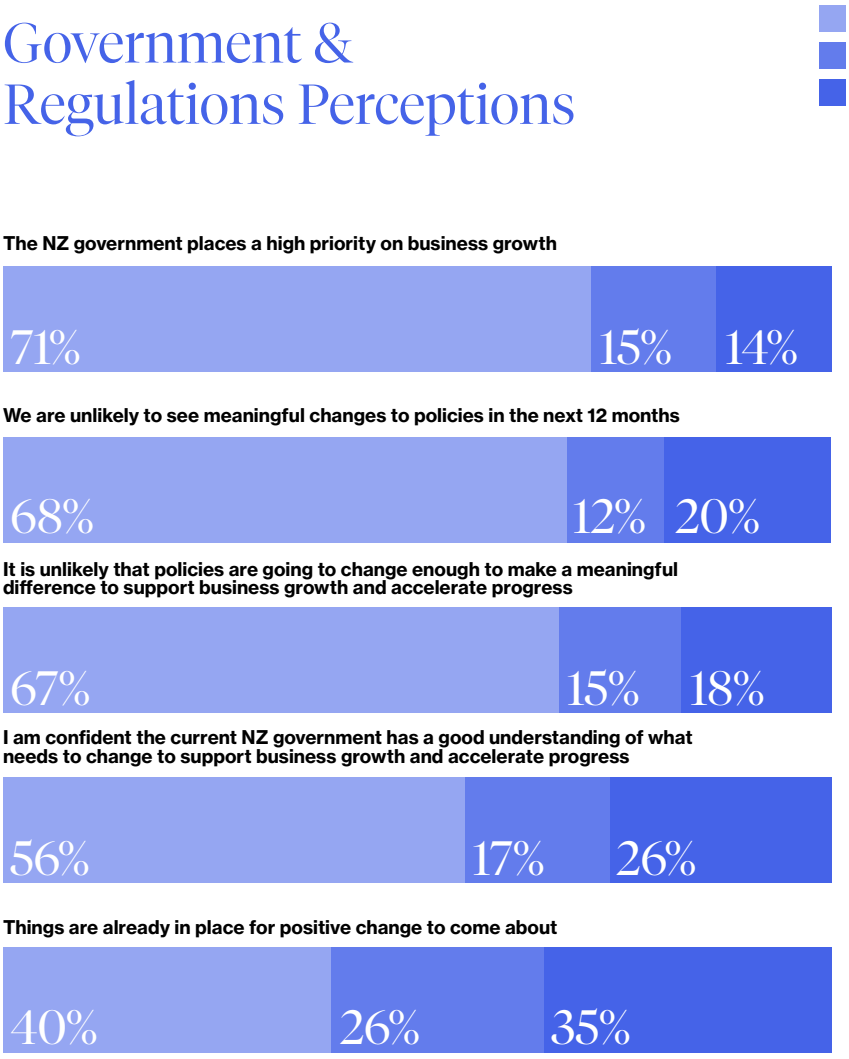
Our business has successfully worked with the NZ government to remove blocks



Government Relations and Policy

While there is a sense that the New Zealand Government does place a high enough priority on business growth, imminent change is unlikely.

Government & Regulations Perceptions



Gender Divide on Government Effectiveness

84% of female CFOs believe that wholesale change is needed in order to meaningfully make a difference in this space, compared to 65% of male CFOs. Female CFOs have less faith that meaningful change is likely to be easy or imminent.

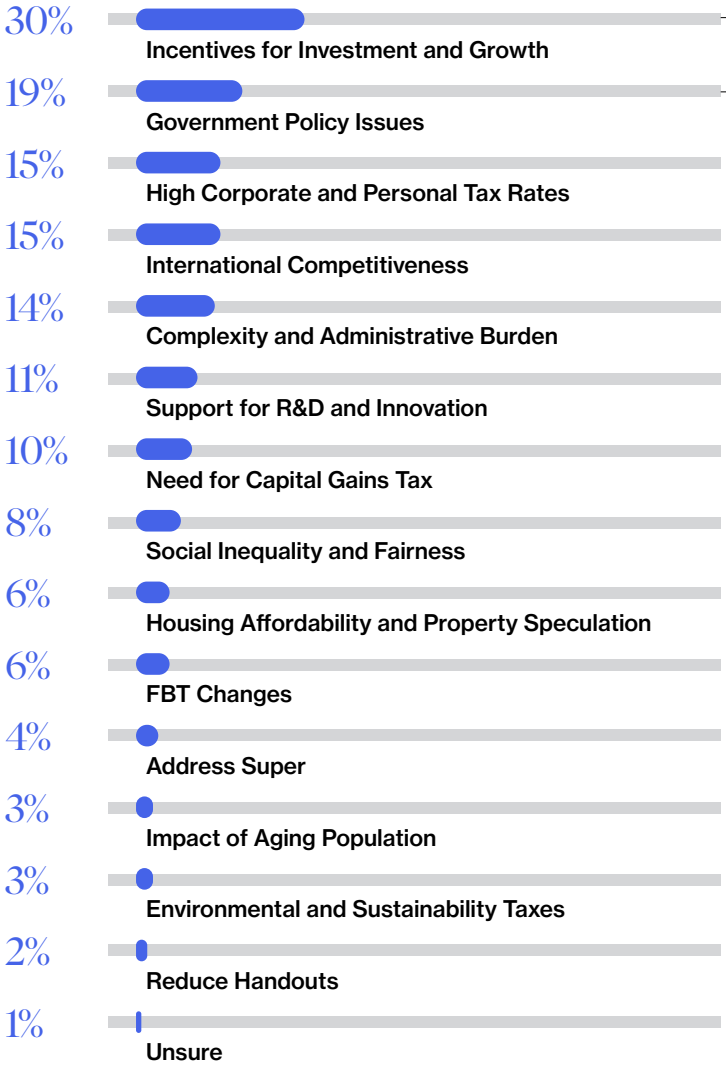
Generational Gap

CFOs differ in how they see current government policies, with those aged 45 – 54 reporting a stronger belief that government places a high priority on business growth and is aware of what needs to change.

Government Relations and Policy

Complex, inefficient, and overly punitive tax policy underlies the sentiment that the current New Zealand tax policies need to be improved. CFOs note that the current state of play actively hinders New Zealand businesses from being competitive both locally and abroad.

Reasons why CFOs think Government settings need to change



Other key findings

01

Encompasses feedback advocating for enhanced tax incentives to stimulate business investment, attract foreign direct investment, and support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in New Zealand. Respondents emphasise the need for policies that encourage capital investment, provide depreciation uplifts, and offer tax deductions for new assets, aiming to drive economic growth and increase business confidence.

02

Encompasses concerns regarding the government's lack of strategic vision and coherence in policy-making, particularly in areas such as infrastructure, healthcare, and immigration. Respondents highlighted the government's defensive mindset, focus on cost-cutting, and prioritisation of minority party policies over national needs, which they believe hinder long-term growth and development in New Zealand.

Tech and Systems

We could be on the cusp of mainstream AI adoption

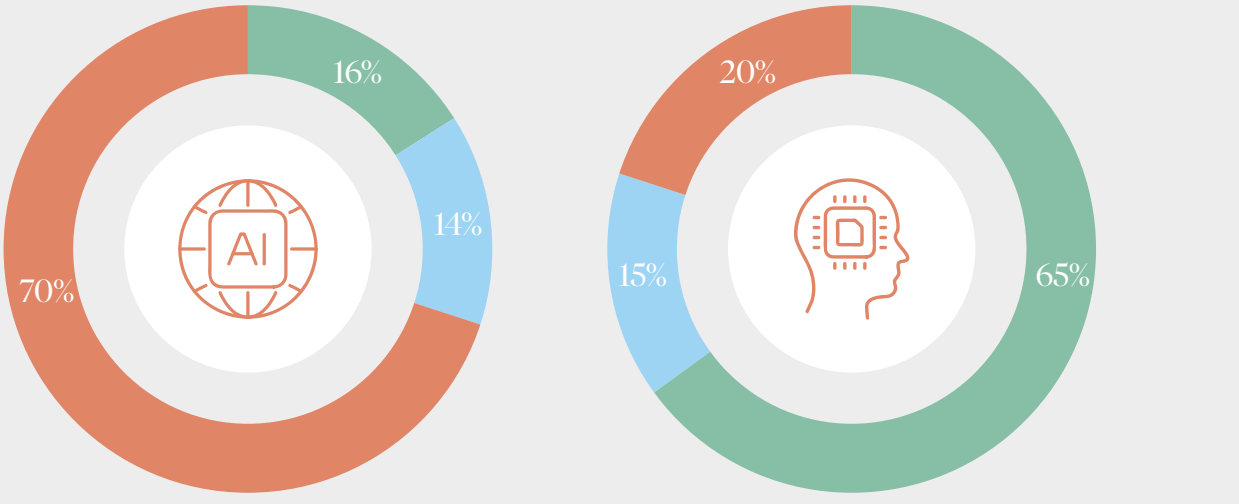
CFOs are demanding real impact from technology investment. While optimism about AI remains high, adoption remains inconsistent. To deliver strategic value, CFOs must now shift focus from tools to transformation: enabling workforce integration, managing risk, and embedding AI into business-critical processes.

Technology Focus

AI Impact Acceleration Expected

While only 16% of CFOs report their business has experienced substantial impacts from AI in the past 12 months, 2 in 3 CFOs expect significant impact on team size and structure in the next 1-2 years, indicating we could be on the cusp of mainstream AI adoption, after already seeing the impacts of market shifts by early adopters.

> **"We are facing some of the most uncertain times experienced in our lifetimes. AI is changing just about everything we have grown to know and expect. Working out how we are going to navigate the new world order is a massive priority, and we owe it to our employees to be extremely considered about how we handle the AI revolution. What messages should our education system be sending to students now to prepare them for what they will come out into when they leave school and/or university? Are we preparing these future entrants to the workforce for what the job market will look like for them?"**



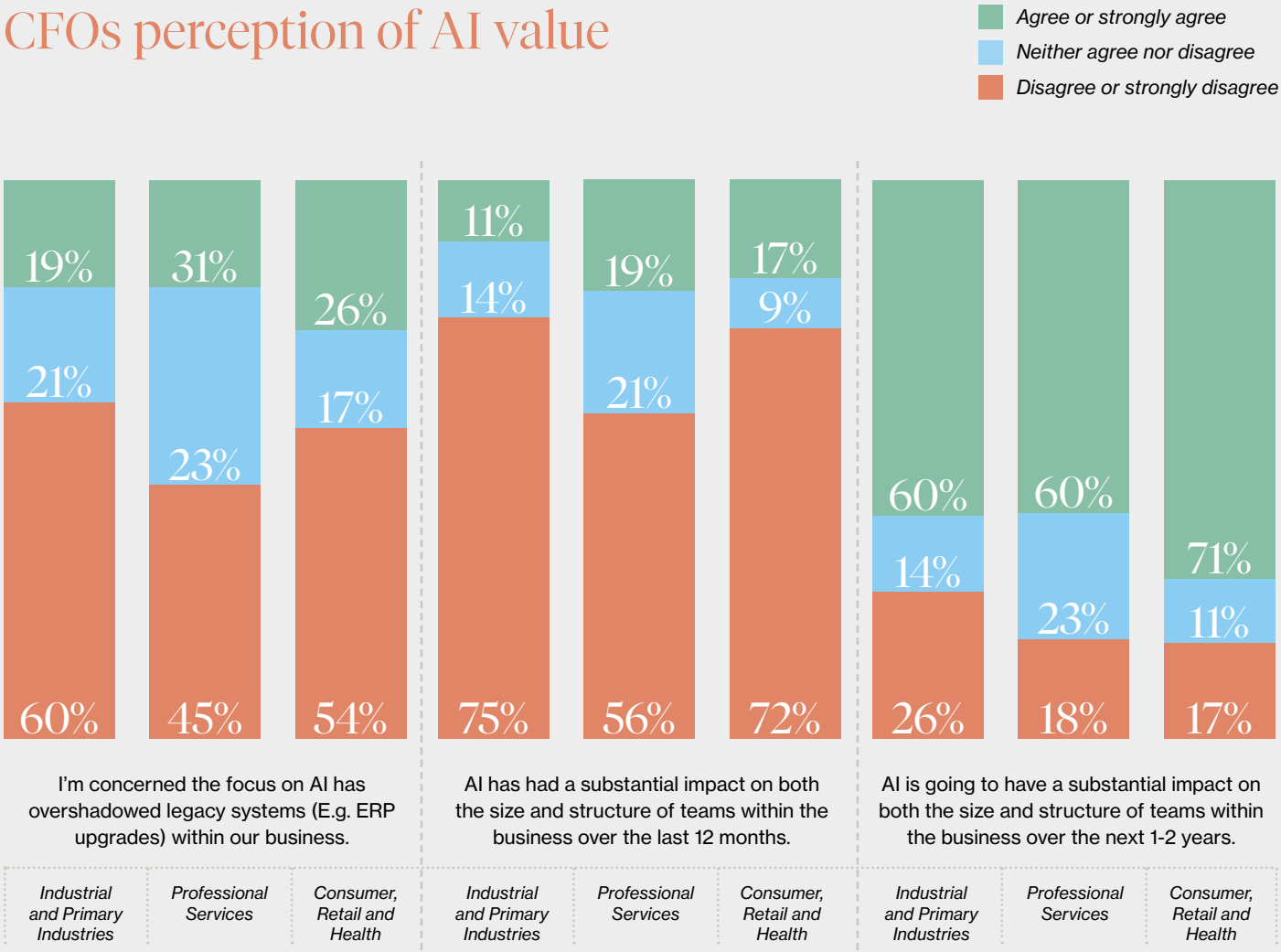
AI has had a substantial impact on both the size and structure of teams within the business over the last 12 months.

AI is going to have a substantial impact on both the size and structure of teams within the business over the next 1-2 years.

Tech and Systems

CFOs in Professional Services industries are marginally more likely to have experienced impacts from AI on their teams over the last 12 months, particularly compared to CFOs in Industrial and Primary industries. While CFOs across all industries are bracing for the impact of AI in the near future, Blue Collar industries are marginally less concerned.

CFOs perception of AI value



Tech and Systems

Data Analysis Drives AI Value

Data analysis and automation are the dominant AI applications, with CFOs seeing these tools as delivering the highest business value, focusing on operational efficiency over innovation. CFOs working across different industries unsurprisingly have different use-cases for various AI tools; however, they are relatively consistent with the primary tools used.

AI for Cybersecurity and Fraud Detection is used by half of Industrial and Primary companies, but Consumer, Retail and Health companies are more likely to focus on AI tools that enable a better customer-experience around their marketing and personalisation e.g.: providing personalised experiences to customers through AI-driven recommendations, content curation, and targeted marketing product recommendations to their customers.

AI Use & AI Value by Business Size

AI TOOL RANKED FOR VALUE	INDUSTRIAL & PRIMARY	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	CONSUMER, RETAIL & HEALTH
Data Analysis	48%	63%	56%
Automation	45%	47%	44%
Cybersecurity & Fraud Detection	51% ▲	32%	31%
Marketing	26%	26%	44% ▲
Customer Service	16% ▼	44% ▲	31%
Customer Relationship Management	18% ▼	32%	30%
Personalisation	14% ▼	26%	29%
Human Resources	21%	23%	24%
Sales	14%	31% ▲	19%
Product Recommendation	4% ▼	11%	18% ▲
Supply Chain Management	15%	3% ▼	13%
Predictive Maintenance	10%	13%	6%
Different Use	21%	18%	16%

▼▲ = *Significantly higher/lower than 2024*

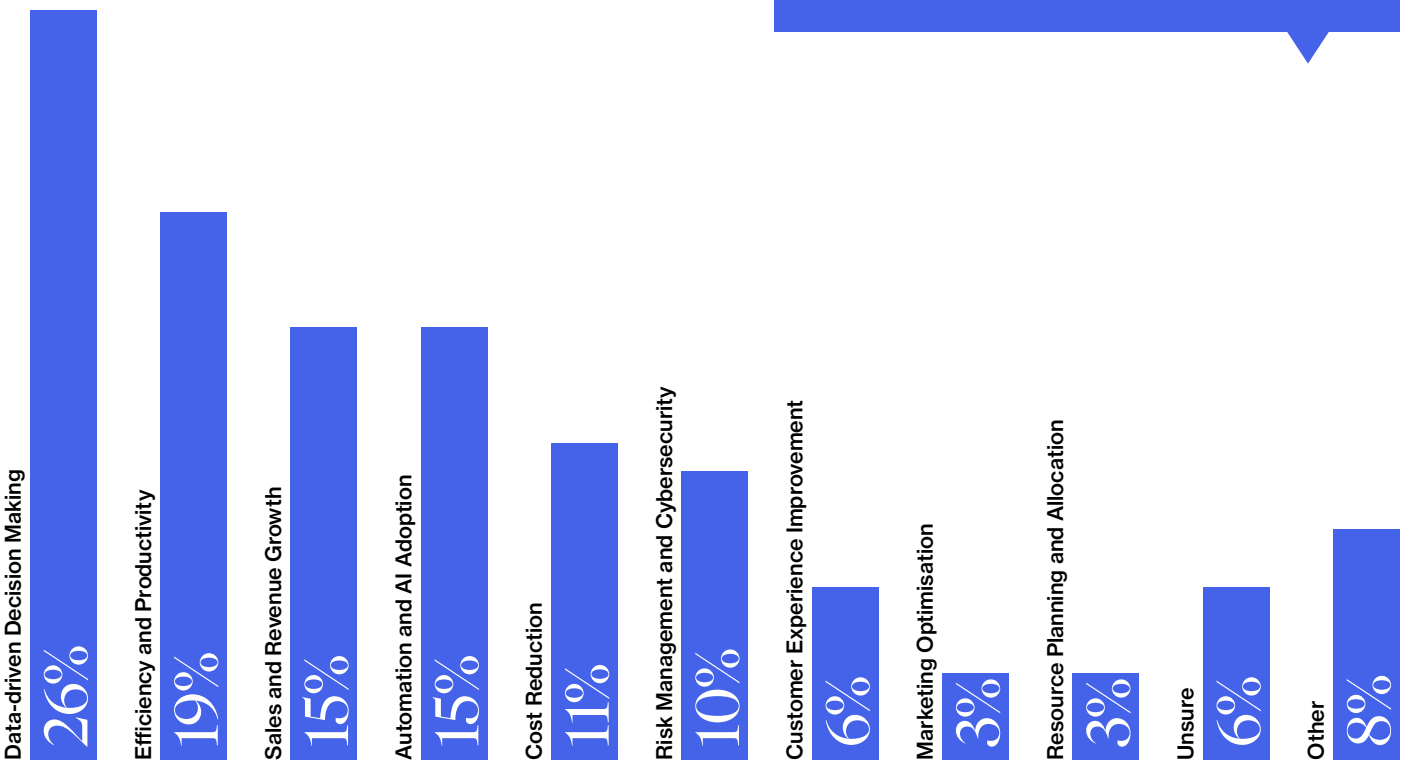
Tech and Systems

The AI-Powered CFO

AI strengthens CFOs' strategic decision-making through advanced data analytics, enabling comprehensive analysis across business functions and improved forecasting capabilities that support more effective long-term planning.

Where AI is Driving Business Value

"Automation has been around for a number of years in various forms, but most businesses are yet to fully solve for data challenges, particularly for large and complex businesses. AI is set to make the difference here."



Tech and Systems

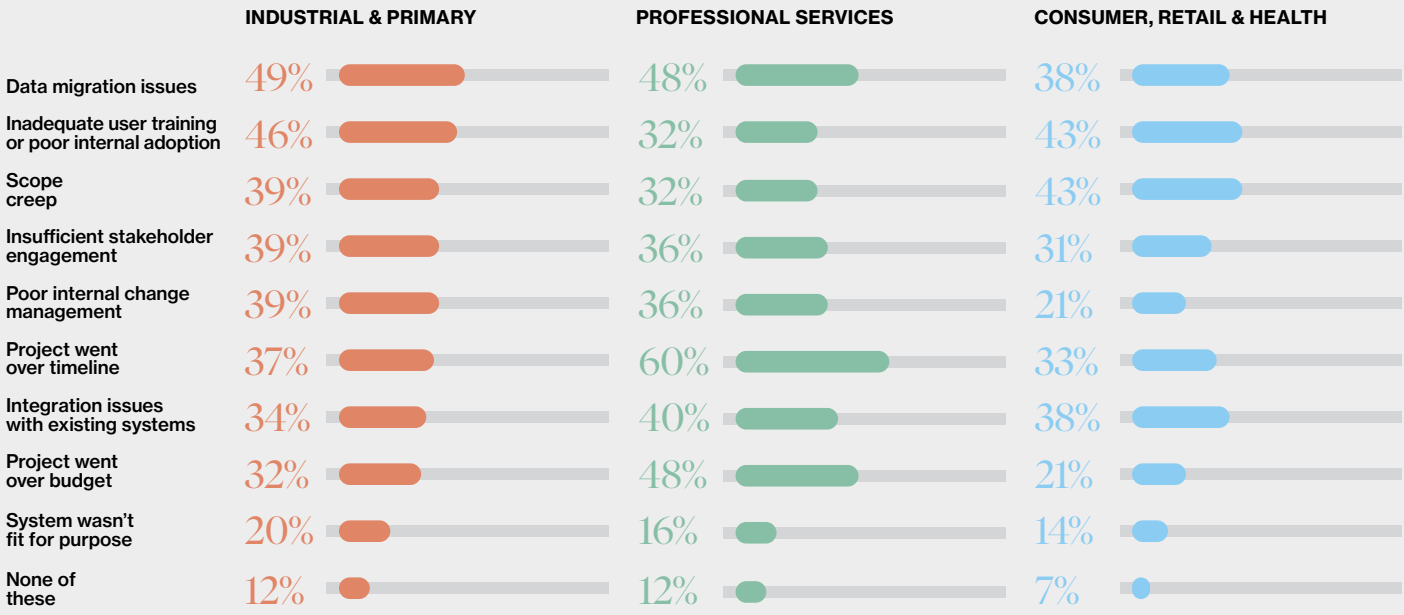
48% of CFOs have implemented a new ERP in the last 5 years and 90% identified challenges in doing so.

91% of those used a combination of internal and external resources – showing that you can't go at it alone.

For the 1 in 2 businesses that have rolled out a new ERP in the last five years, CFOs reported experiencing data migration issues, inadequate internal training / adoption, and timeline blowouts. Professional Services firms demonstrate a notable technology adoption pattern: they're less likely to modernise core systems (only 33% modernise core systems vs. 50% across both Industrial and Primary and Consumer, Retail and Health) and face distinctly different implementation challenges. While Industrial and Primary and Consumer, Retail and Health CFOs primarily encounter technical data migration and internal adoption issues during ERP rollouts, Professional Services CFOs more commonly experience project management challenges – specifically, timeline and budget overruns.

ERP System Roll Out Issues

"Building a new system is easy; it is migrating over clean data from the legacy systems, which is a challenge. Cleaning up large data sets can be time-consuming and labour-intensive. Strict budgets also mean that finance teams take on a lot of the data migration on themselves, with minimal training and handover from the experts, as this comes at an additional cost."



Talent and Workforce

CFOs are signalling a growing need for deliberate, future-facing workforce strategies.

CFOs are facing mounting challenges in attracting, retaining, and developing talent - particularly in succession planning, access to quality training, and adapting to hybrid work - while also contending with shifting economic conditions and changing expectations of the CFO role.

Challenges impacting how effectively CFOs can do their job

Unsurprisingly, the economy is top of mind when it comes to challenges faced by the CFO in 2025, with nearly 2 in 3 ranking it in their top three challenges. Of those respondents, 67% rank it as the most significant thing that impacts how effectively they can do their job.

"We can often be the canary in the coal mine. We have access to the data and information first, and if we are well-versed in business operations and truly are a trusted adviser and partner to the business, then we should be able to get ahead of most issues before they spiral. Our role is constantly changing, and if we still believe we live in a spreadsheet and reviewing numbers is our primary role, then we will be left well behind."

Ranked Top Three Challenges

	2025 Rank	2024 Rank	Difference in Rankings
Economic Performance	1	1	=
Using technology well	2	3	▲
Maintaining a strong culture	3	2	▼
Expanding expectations of the CFO remit	4	8	▲
Understanding AI	5	7	▲
Attracting and retaining talent	6	4	▼
Continuing to innovate	7	5	▼
ESG	8	6	▼
Political landscape	9	9	=
Immigration / managing skills shortage	10	10	=

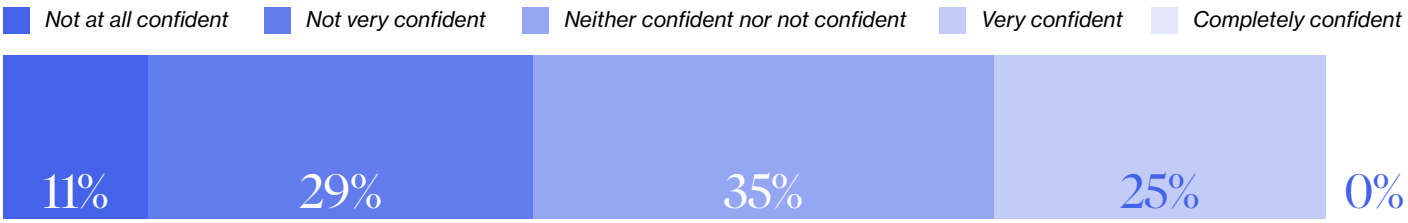
Talent and Workforce

Succession planning is a strategic blind spot

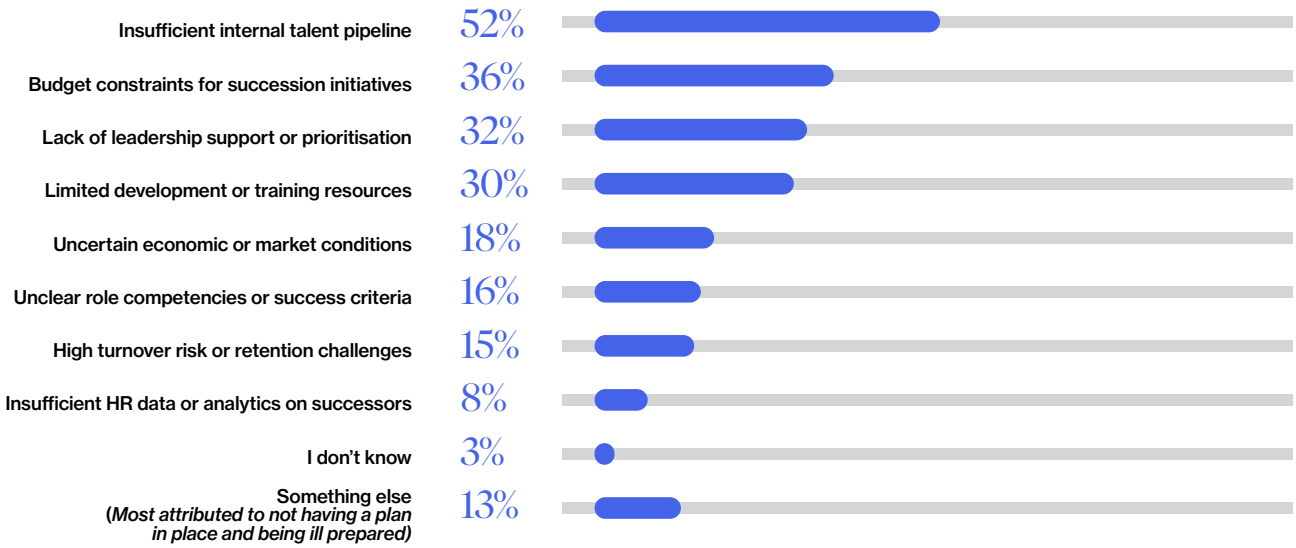
Only 1 in 4 CFOs feel confident their business is prepared for leadership transition. Older CFOs (55+), those in global organisations, and underperforming companies feel the least prepared - citing weak internal pipelines and budget limitations. Unless addressed, this exposes businesses to continuity risk and capability loss at senior levels.

52% report insufficient internal talent pipeline, with budget constraints (36%) and lack of leadership support (32%) as primary barriers, creating a looming leadership gap across New Zealand businesses. CFOs need strong support in ensuring they have the right people in place. This comes in the shape of learning and development opportunities and backing from executive leadership to ensure this is prioritised.

Succession Planning Concern



Reasons CFOs have Succession Planning Concerns



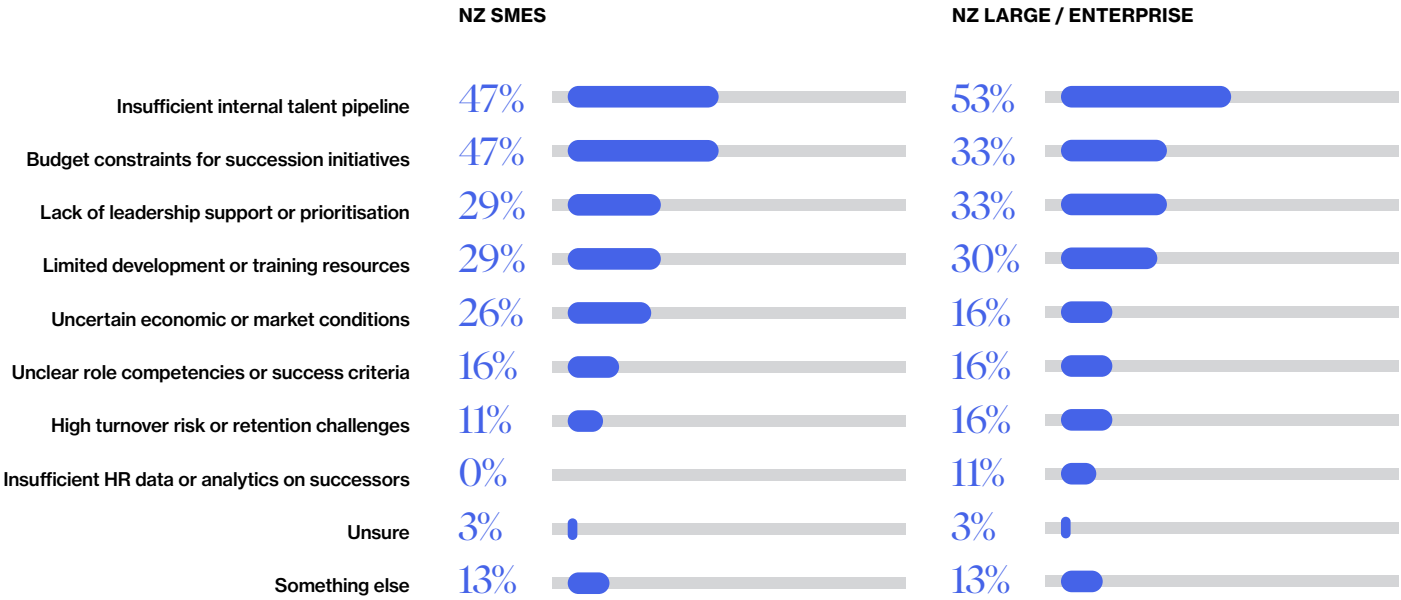
Talent and Workforce

NZ's SMEs are most exposed to lack of succession planning

CFOs in larger enterprise businesses typically have the structure and HR support needed for effective succession planning. In contrast, CFOs in SMEs face financial challenges in this area. Smaller companies often operate with a lean senior management team, which means they usually start succession planning later than larger businesses that have both the resources and infrastructure to begin earlier.

Why CFOs are Lacking Confidence in Succession Planning

"Building a strong successor in a small to medium-sized NZ business is a real challenge. The CFO is generally someone who needs to roll up their sleeves and get things done, with reluctance to spend money on another reasonably senior hire. This can leave a large knowledge and experience gap between a CFO and their number two, so much so that this person will not be ready for several years."



Talent and Workforce

Cash is king

CFOs report that competitive compensation remains the primary factor in talent acquisition, while noting a concerning dependency on Big 4 accounting firms for quality training. The research indicates that high-calibre learning and development opportunities for finance teams are predominantly concentrated within these major firms.

Talent Retention & Development

"A key challenge in our business is connecting and retaining staff."

"The organisation needs to be clear about its people strategy and invest in capability."

"It's time for the CFO to lead from the front – not just manage numbers, but grow people."

NEW TALENT SEES MORE VALUE IN BUSINESSES THAT...



QUALITY TRAINING AND L&D COURSES FOR FINANCE TEAMS ARE...



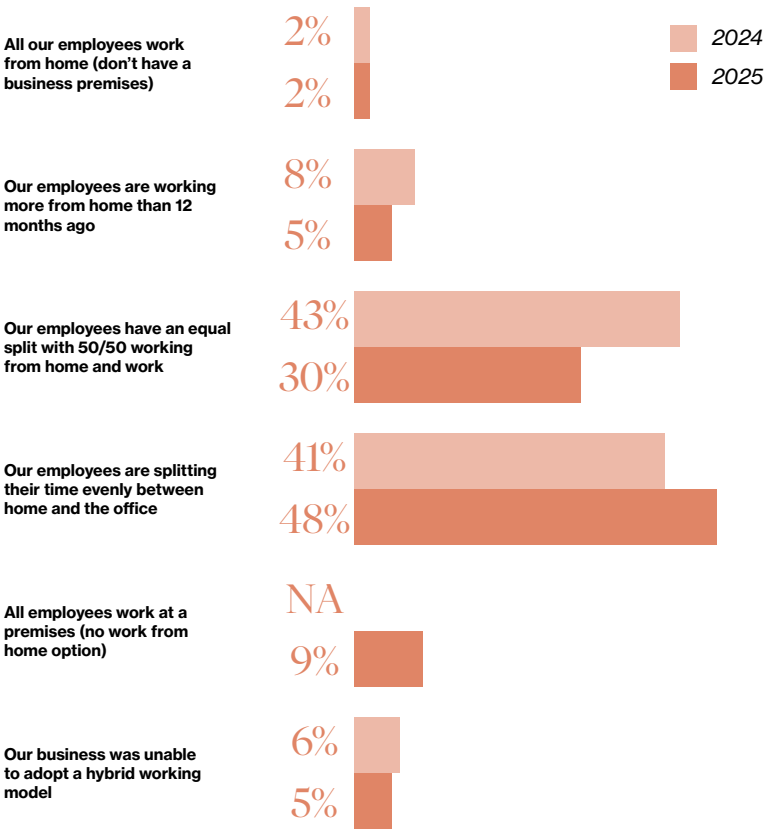
Talent and Workforce

The 'return-to-office' trend continues

There has been a significant shift toward office-based work with 48% of employees working more from the office than 12 months ago, compared to only 8% working more from home, indicating a clear reversal of pandemic-era remote work trends.

While hybrid models are stable compared to 2024, larger and older organisations are showing signs of return-to-office drift. Hybrid success will increasingly depend on structured policies, cultural alignment, and embedded digital practices. Working arrangements have stayed relatively consistent, with an increase in working from the office over the last 12 months, a trend driven by large enterprises in NZ and older businesses. Newer companies are least likely to drive return-to-office mandates, with businesses over 50 years old least likely to offer hybrid work options.

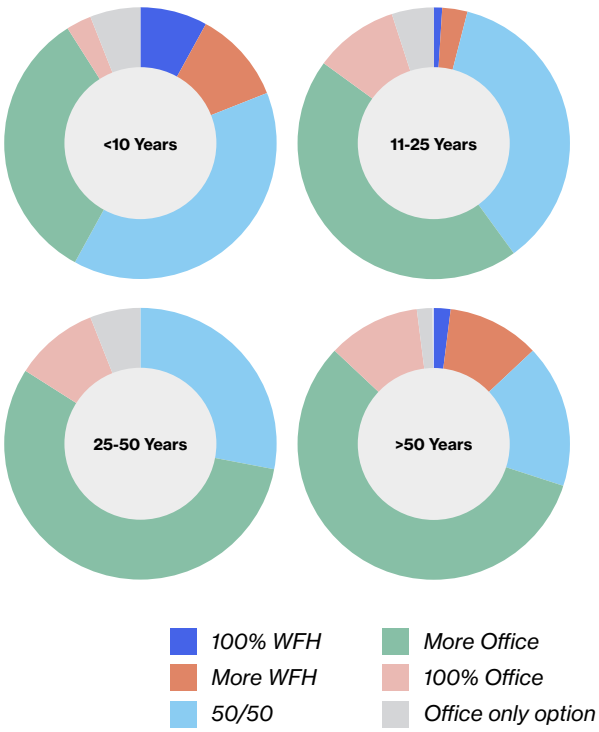
Hybrid Working Arrangements



Other key findings

Companies less than 10 years old are the least likely to have increased office mandates over the last 12 months

AGE OF BUSINESS



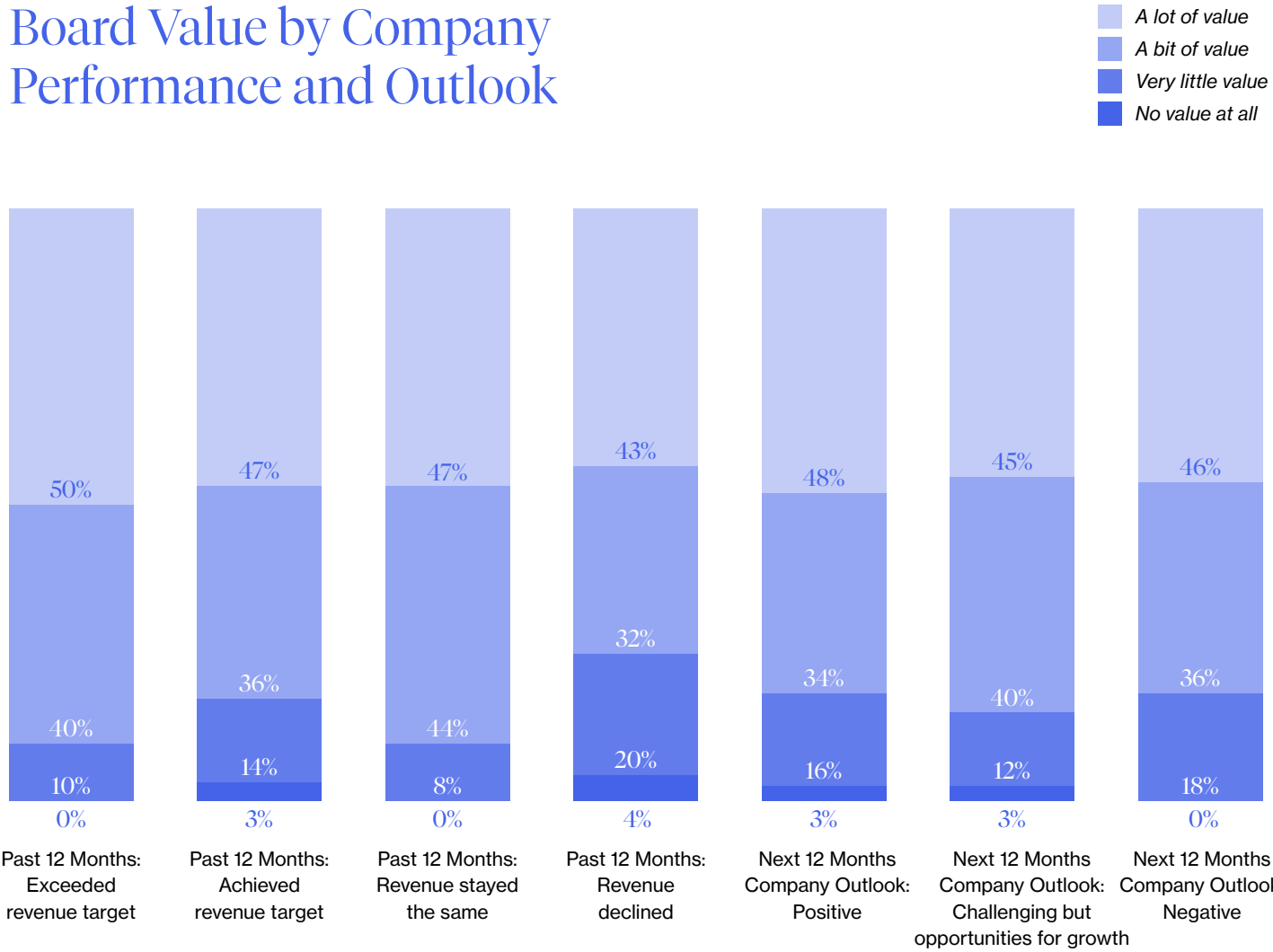
Board Relationships

Company performance impacts the perception of the board

There appears to be a positive correlation between past company performance and perceived board value. CFOs from better-performing companies are more likely to see their board as highly valuable. 90% of respondents that thought their Board added value also recorded their company exceeded their revenue target, suggesting strong boards are especially relied upon during challenging periods.

However, this correlation does not extend to expectations for future company performance. Regardless of what they anticipate for the next 12 months, CFOs report relatively consistent perceptions of board value (82% top two boxes value for positive outlook vs. 85% top two boxes value for challenging but opportunistic outlook vs. 82% top two boxes value for positive outlook).

Board Value by Company Performance and Outlook



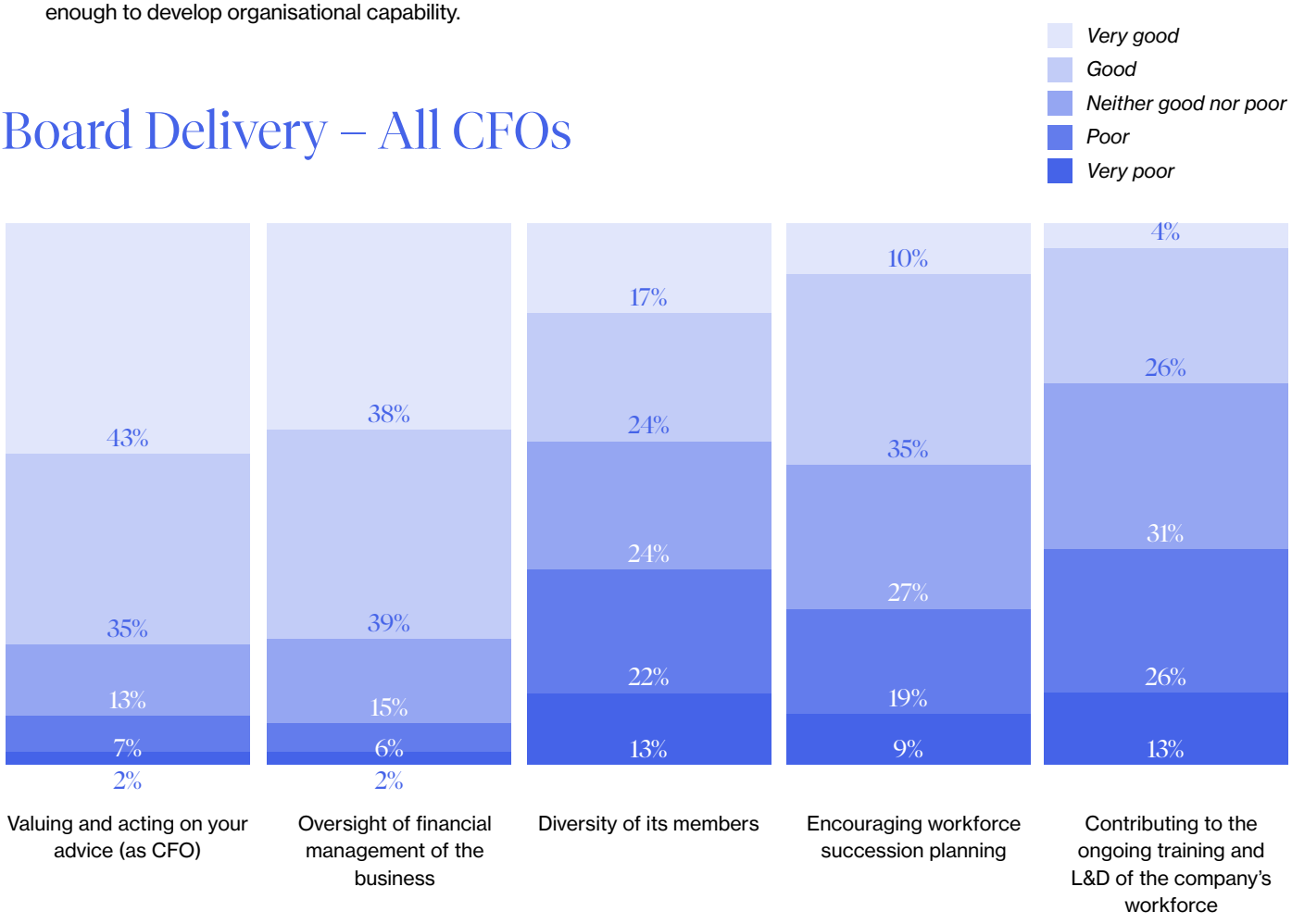
Board Relationships

Boards consistently underperform in three key areas

CFOs broadly feel that their Boards of Directors value their input and have great oversight of the financial management of the business. However, three key areas consistently stand out as underperforming:

1. **Succession planning** is a critical gap. CFOs aged 55 and over rate board performance in this area the lowest, aligning with their overall lower confidence in succession readiness; likely reflecting proximity to retirement and heightened personal relevance.
2. **Diversity of board membership** is also a concern, especially for CFOs in Industrial and Primary industries, who rate their boards significantly lower on representation and inclusion.
3. **Training and L&D** contributions receive low marks across all groups, indicating a broader perception that boards are not doing enough to develop organisational capability.

Board Delivery – All CFOs



Board Relationships

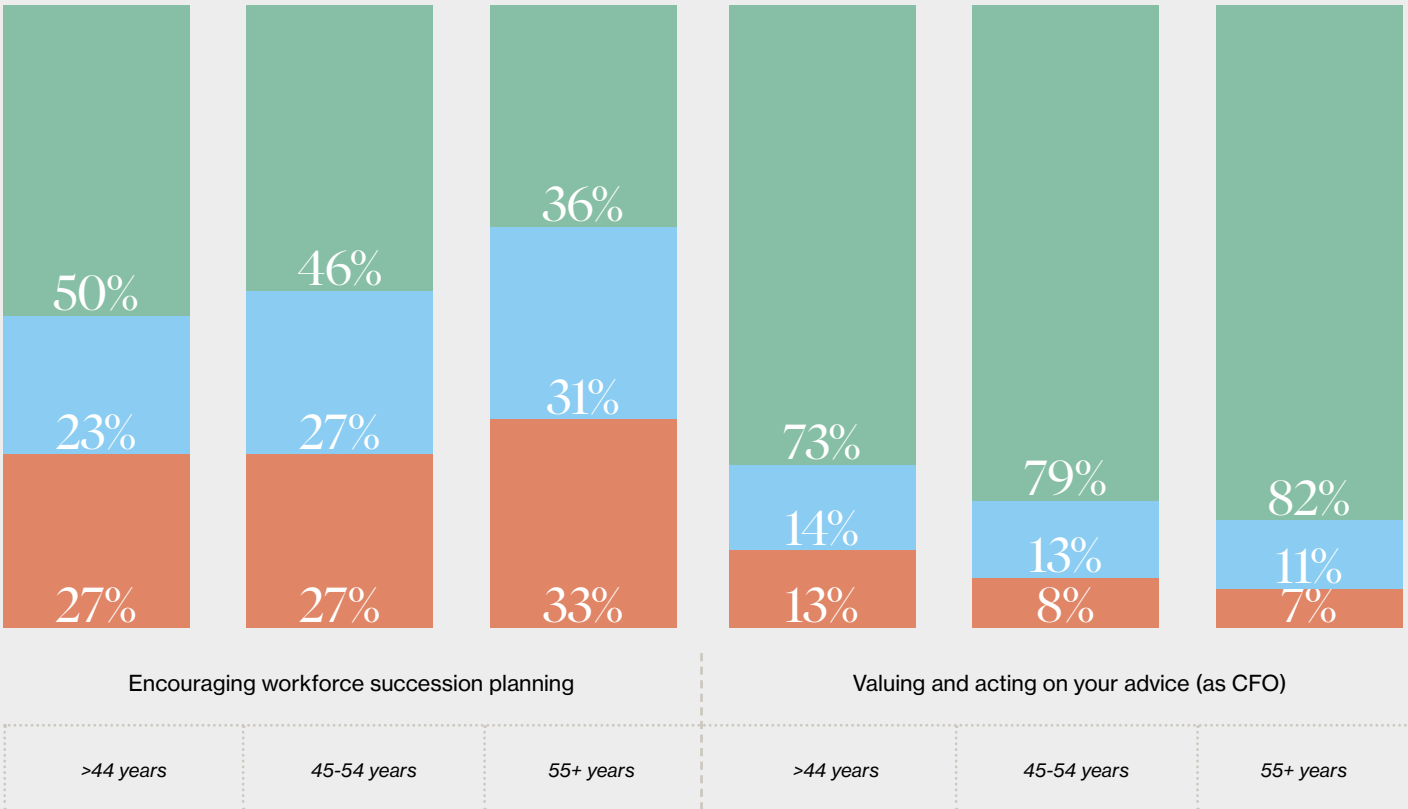
A generational gap in board perception

CFOs 55 years and older rate the board more poorly for succession planning, suggesting this is top of mind for CFOs closer to retirement. Conversely, CFOs under 45 don't feel their board value and act on their advice compared to their older counterparts.

"The role of the CFO today isn't just about reporting the numbers, it is about being the strategic navigator through volatility."

There appears to be a positive correlation between past company performance and perceived board value. CFOs from better-performing companies are more likely to see their board as highly valuable, suggesting strong boards are especially relied upon during challenging periods. However, this correlation does not extend to expectations for future company performance. Regardless of what a CFO anticipates for the next 12 months, CFOs report relatively consistent perceptions of board value.

Board Delivery by Age Groups



Board Relationships

If you had 15 minutes with your Board...

We invited CFOs to imagine addressing their boards for 15 minutes and asked what they would choose to emphasise.

What CFOs would emphasise as priorities to their Boards



Key messages

01 Defining clear strategic goals, aligning organisational efforts to achieve long-term shareholder value, and identifying growth opportunities amidst economic uncertainty. Respondents emphasise the importance of scenario planning, capital allocation, and maintaining flexibility to adapt to changing market conditions while fostering innovation and sustainable business models.

02 Encompasses the urgent need for CFOs to integrate AI and digital tools into their operations to remain competitive and relevant. It highlights the transformative impact of AI on business processes, the importance of leveraging technology for automation and efficiency, and the necessity for finance teams to adapt quickly to technological advancements to unlock potential and drive innovation.

Expressions of personal sentiments such as feeling time-constrained, motivational advice to enjoy one's roles while pushing hard, and general comments on the importance of understanding the breadth of one's role.



Thank You

This report exists because of the 238 CFOs who took the time to complete our survey, and we can't thank you enough for your contribution.

At Hunter Campbell, we remain committed to serving the sectors we recruit within, and we're looking forward to rolling out new initiatives in the coming months to support the New Zealand CFO community as it navigates the big issues highlighted in this report.

A special thank you also goes to the CFO working group. Scott Maud, Liz O'Neil, Stewart Reynolds, Kerry Conway, Will Wadworth, and Andrea Waters, who generously gave their time and expertise to ensure this report is as valuable as it can be.



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