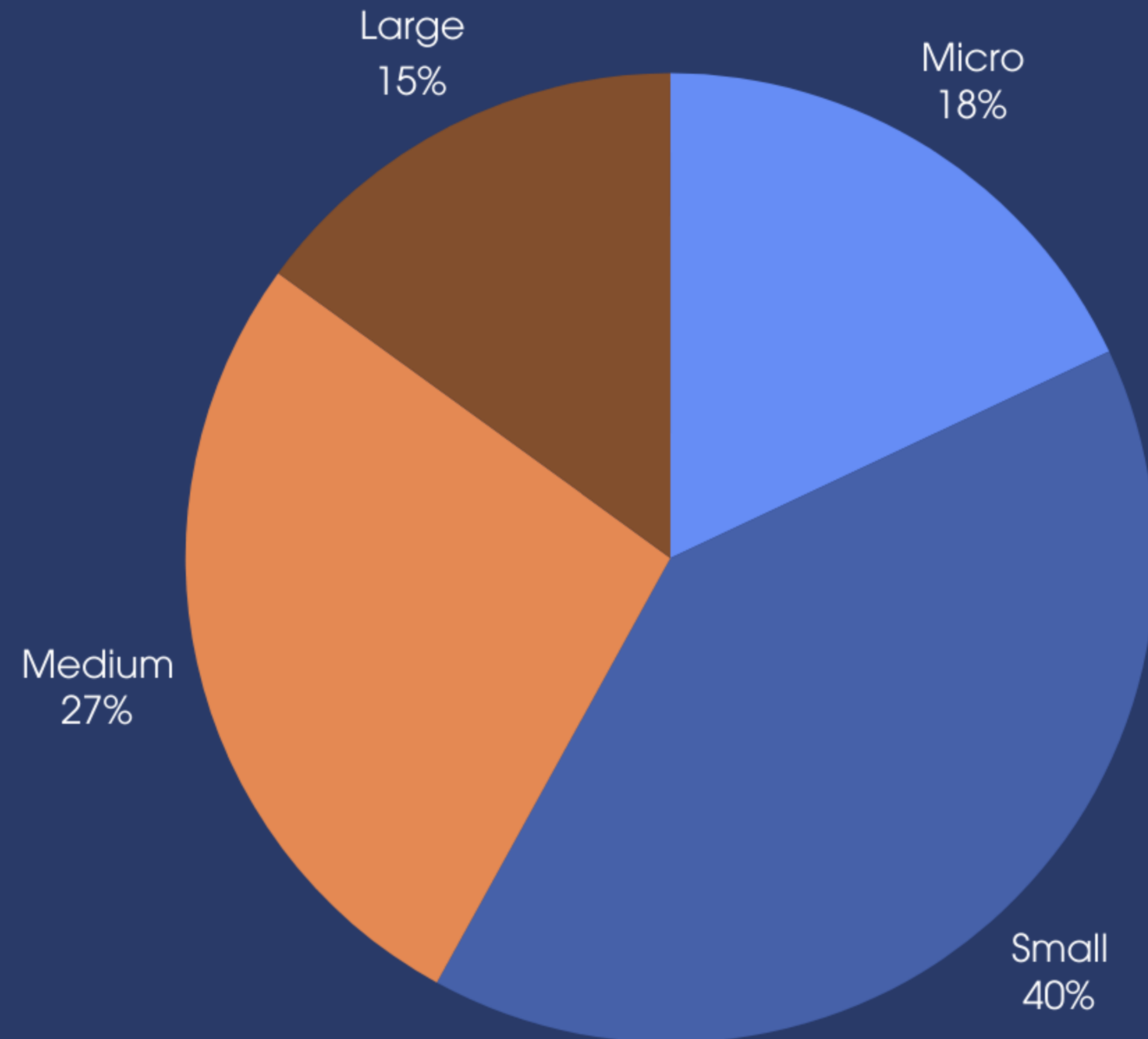


This study aims to:

- Investigate the key factors in **employer-employee relationship** in Malta's private sector.
- Goal: Develop actionable strategies to **improve engagement, satisfaction, and retention**.
- Aim: Foster more **cohesive and productive workplaces**.

Business Size Distribution by Respondents



- Spoke to hundreds of Employers and Employees.
- Focus groups with both employees and employers from different sectors.
- Questionnaires (online and face-to-face).



Our team of psychologists and psychotherapists analysed the results, comparing them to existing data and our own clinical practice.



Employee Perspectives:

Generally **positive trust**, but common concerns include: **communication gaps, feeling undervalued, limited growth, work-life balance.**

>66% cited at least one major issue: **uncompetitive pay, poor communication, lack of recognition.**

Yet **most agree** that **concerns are taken seriously** and **feel supported** in development.

(Allwork 2024, Mind Share)

Employer Perspectives:

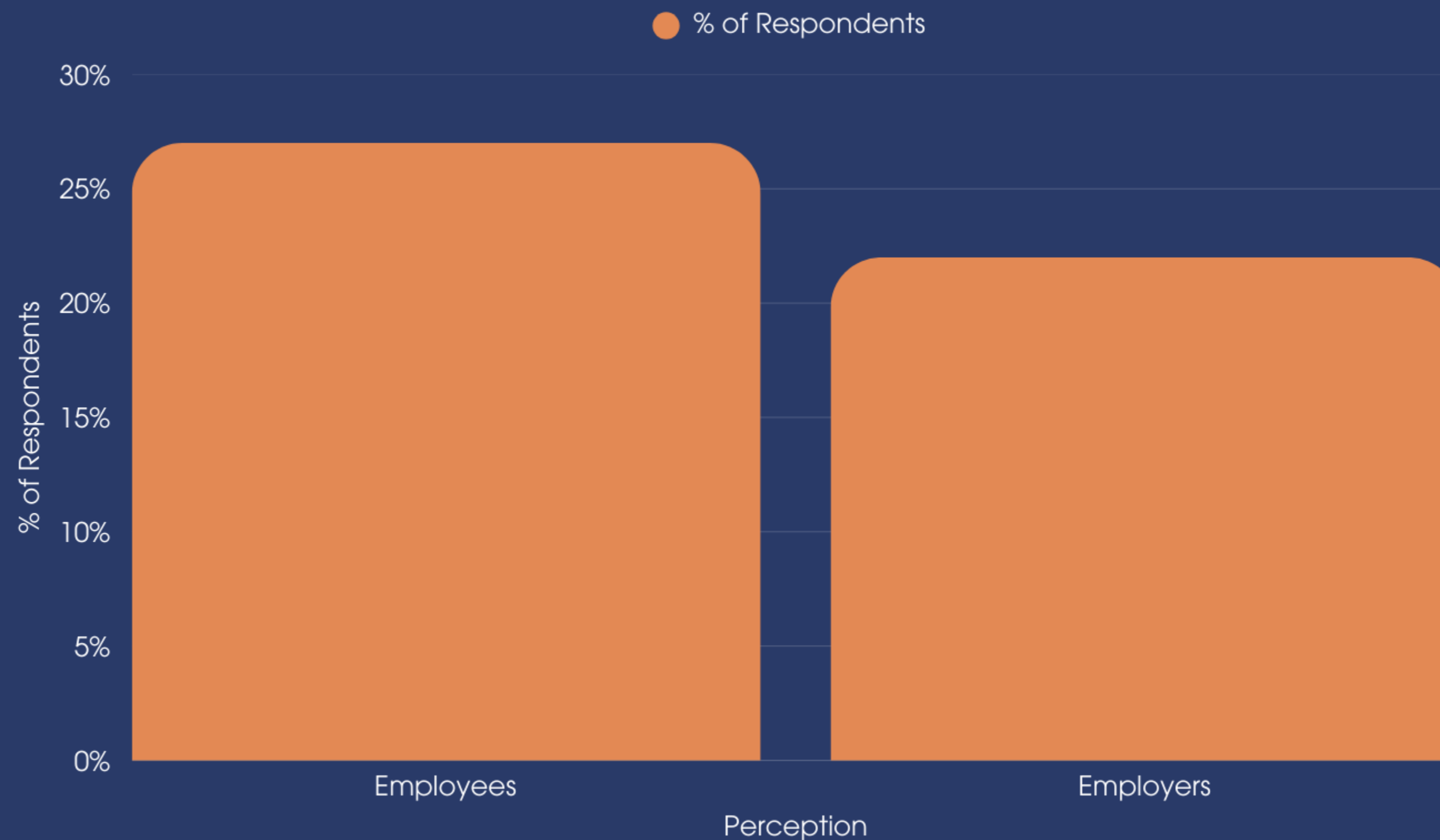
Generally confident in leadership and believe employees are committed to goals.

Key pressures: Competitive salaries (**44%**), employee resistance to change, lack of upward feedback/appreciation (**25% +**).

Workload: ~**90%** report high load; ~**77%** high stress. Burnout is critical (**50%** of mid-managers, **33%** of employees see bosses too stressed).

(Allwork 2024, Mind Share)

Communication Gap



A clear two-way perception gap emerges.

- Employees want clearer communication, regular feedback, and recognition from leaders.
- Employers want more initiative, openness, and upward feedback from employees.
- Both sides value open communication and trust.
- Lack of Mutual Appreciation: **18%** employees feel unappreciated; **27%** of employers feel unappreciated by staff.
- Pay/Compensation: Both sides see it as a problem (employees want higher pay; employers feel pressure to provide it)."

*“Employees **expect training without commitment**;
we’re training them for their next job.”*

Joe
49-year-old
Employer (26 staff)*

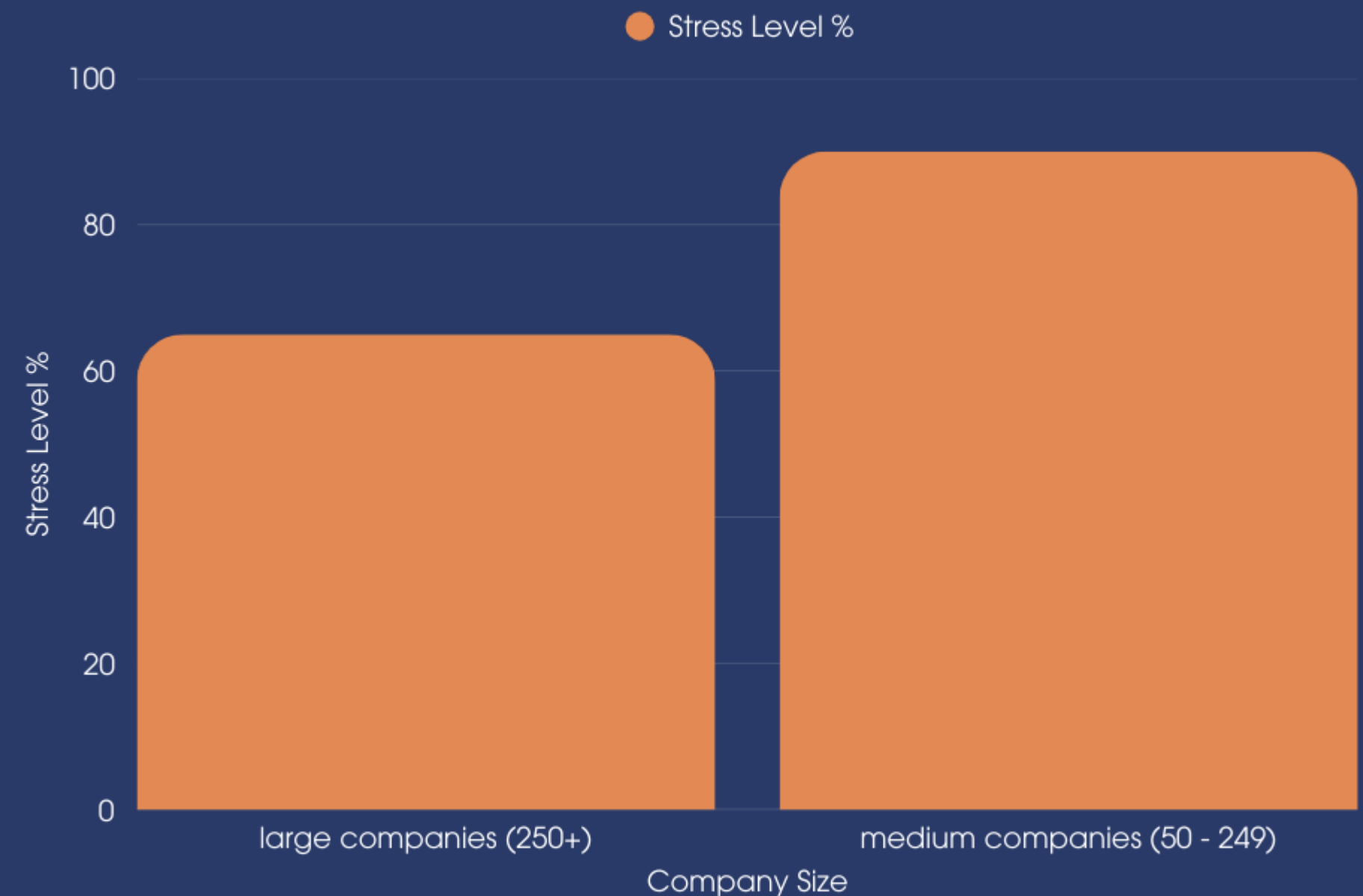
*"I hold **regular goal alignment meetings**, and one would tell me **how happy they are** and suggest changes to **then quit** few weeks later.*

*I understand that they would want to leave for a much better pay in the Gaming Industry but **I can never compete with that.**"*

Vanessa*
54-year-old
Employer (17 staff)

Managers Experiencing High Workload Stress

This might reflect that in **mid-sized firms, resources are stretched as companies grow**, whereas very large firms have more **support layers** (or our sample of large-firm managers included more senior executives who delegate more).



Confidence & Self-Efficacy:

The average rating was **4.37**, with **0%** rating below 3.

In fact, **three-quarters rated either 4 or 5 (“confident” or “very confident”)**. This suggests a generally high level of leader self-efficacy.

Larger-organization managers tended to rate themselves even higher (**average ~4.6 in 250+ orgs**) **than those in small firms (~4.3)**, potentially because in bigger settings those who reach leadership may have more training or because they are specialized in people-management.

What does this mean?

These numbers show that employers generally have a very positive view of their own leadership and of their employees' motivation and alignment.

Possible self-selection: those who agreed to take this survey might be more conscientious, effective leaders.



- Workplace dynamic that is largely positive yet strained at the margins by specific disconnects.
- Employees and employers share goals and issues but often see them differently.
- Same broad issues (communication, compensation, appreciation).

- **Behavioral factors:** perception gaps, cognitive biases, stress responses.
- **Contextual factors:** budgets, workloads, generational shifts.
- **Evidence:** improving relationships and communication boosts engagement, mental health, and performance (supported by research).

Enhance Two-Way Communication Structures:

- Regular dialogue forums (monthly town halls, weekly check-ins, anonymous feedback).
- Train managers in active listening (**36%** wanted this) and soliciting input.
- Provide safe channels for employees (suggestion boxes, skip-level meetings).

By ensuring employees feel heard and managers stay informed, trust will increase on both sides.

Build a Culture of Recognition and Appreciation:

- Catch people doing right: praise frequently, privately and publicly (employee-of-month, peer shout-outs, etc.).
- Leaders share their own challenges to foster mutual appreciation.
- Consider 360° feedback so employees can recognize managers.
- Research: recognition is linked to higher retention and engagement.

Address Work-Life Balance Proactively:

- Create/ enforce 'right to disconnect' policies (no after-hours work emails). ***How does this effect management?***
- Managers **model healthy behavior**: take vacation, encourage team to use time off.
- Emphasize **efficiency and prioritization** (time-management tools requested by **33%** of managers).
- Leverage **AI and tools to automate routine tasks**, freeing time for priorities.

Provide Training in Soft Skills and Mental Health for Leaders:

- Train leaders in emotional intelligence, active listening, conflict resolution, basic mental health awareness.
- Support needed: only **18%** of employees feel leaders are prepared for mental health issues.
- Many managers (**28–36%** in our survey) want training in EI and conflict management.
- Effective training helps managers spot burnout signs and use transformational leadership techniques (which improve balance and engagement).

Align Expectations and Growth Opportunities:

- Clear **career development programs**: map pathways for advancement tied to new challenges.
- Hold **regular Goal Alignment meetings** so employees and managers understand each other's objectives.
- Have **candid discussions on business reality**: e.g. explain if promotions are slow and offer lateral growth or skill expansion.

Foster Mutual Understanding and Team Cohesion:

- Invest in tailored team-building and cross-level activities to humanise all levels.
- These break down 'us-vs-them' barriers (**47%** employees & employers wanted team-building).
- Mentorship programs for senior managers to share perspectives.

- Focus on communication, trust, appreciation, balanced expectations, and well-being to create a positive feedback loop (better engagement & performance).
- Our survey provides a roadmap: closing these gaps leads to happier employees and more effective leaders.