

OCTOBER 2021 | REPORT

West Monroe's Quarterly Executive Poll—Q4 2021

Bullish or bearish? What had the biggest impact on your business in 2021? What are your M&A and hiring plans in Q4?

We asked—they answered.



In West Monroe's final Quarterly Executive Poll of 2021

Respondents are bullish on the U.S. economic recovery with aggressive plans. They're pushing through—and around—roadblocks, but the pandemic's lingering effects are providing stubborn headwinds in certain areas.

West Monroe polls 150 C-suite executives every quarter on the issues that are timely and matter most to decision-making that quarter

Our Q4 Executive Poll revealed three themes among the 150 C-suite executives who were surveyed

Execs remain positive and aggressive with their plans.

Despite the lingering effects of COVID, a supermajority of executives have a positive outlook on the U.S. economic recovery—75% are bullish and 25% are bearish. Reflecting on 2021, the Delta variant, The Great Resignation, and shortages affected their business the most. They have strong M&A plans for Q4 and are focused on sustainability heading into 2022.

Hiring is still hot, hot, hot—with execs trying new strategies.

Hiring is still hot: Only 5% say they'll lay off this quarter, while 71% say they'll hire more and 25% say "no change from last quarter," when hiring was at its highest. The war for talent is leading executives to approve higher contingent labor levels than they'd like—and increase wages, invest in retention, and grant more "work from anywhere" policies to open up their talent pool.

The future of business travel is on thin ice.

Executives are split on whether they're more compelled to travel for business or pleasure. However, they are aligned on what will drive business travel: new customer acquisition, face time within their own companies, and in-person events. But, 83% say new variants and rising cases or death rates from COVID would continue to hamper business travel in 2022.

See more results at westmonroe.com/perspectives/quarterly-executive-poll

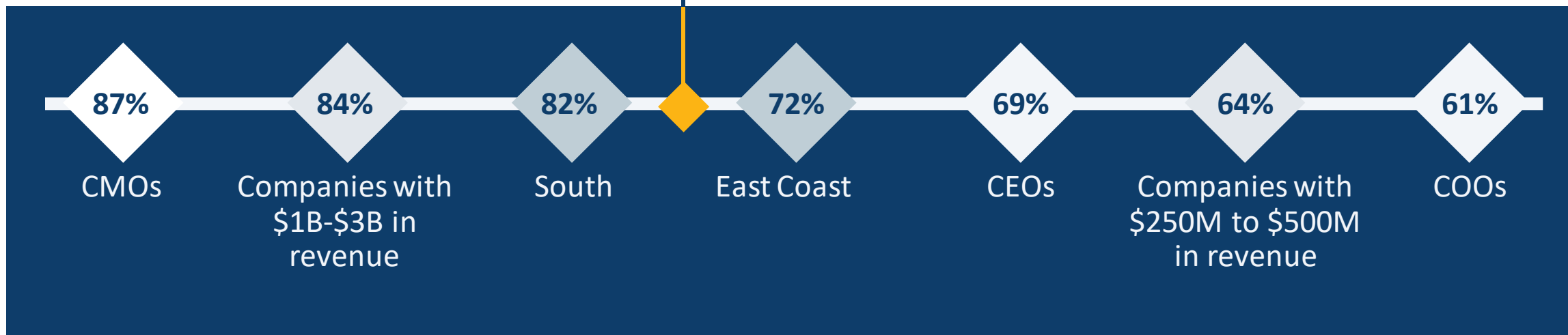
LOOKBACK & OUTLOOK

Execs remain positive—and aggressive with their plans.

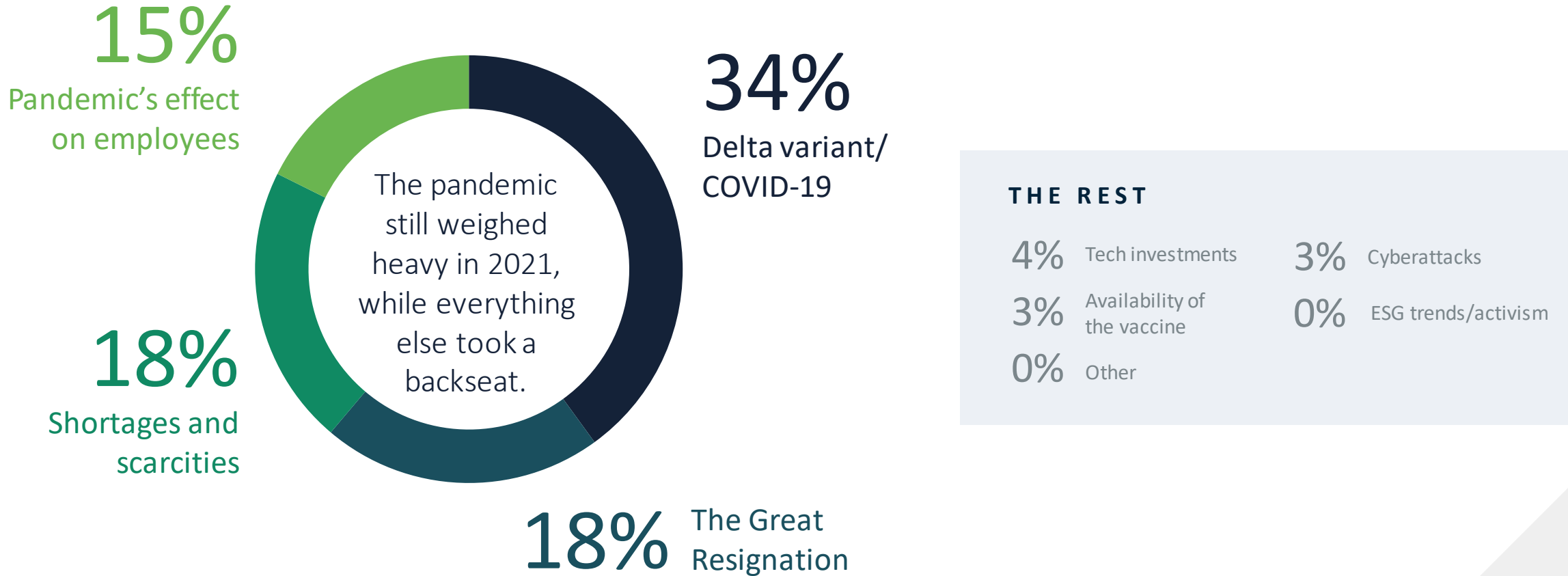


Executive Outlook on U.S. Economic Recovery

75% Bullish « **25%** Bearish

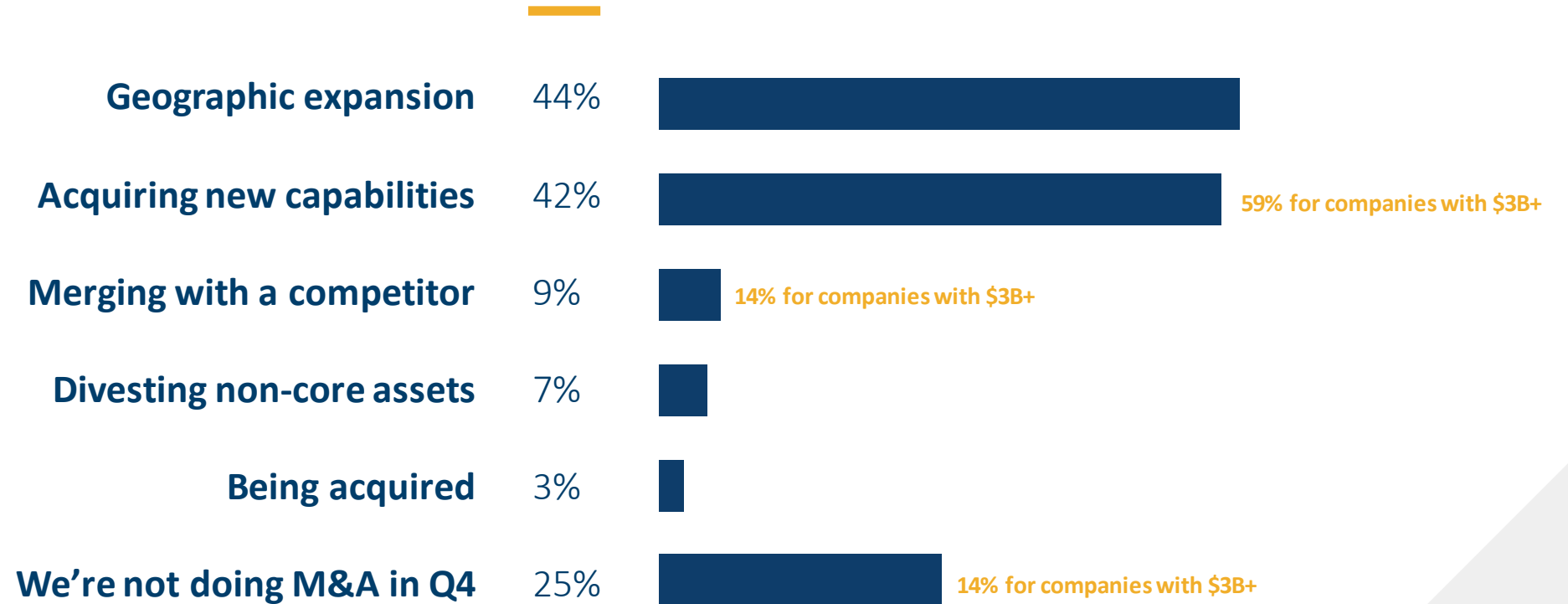


Lookback: 2021's Largest Impact on Business



Q4 is M&A Time: What's driving your strategy?

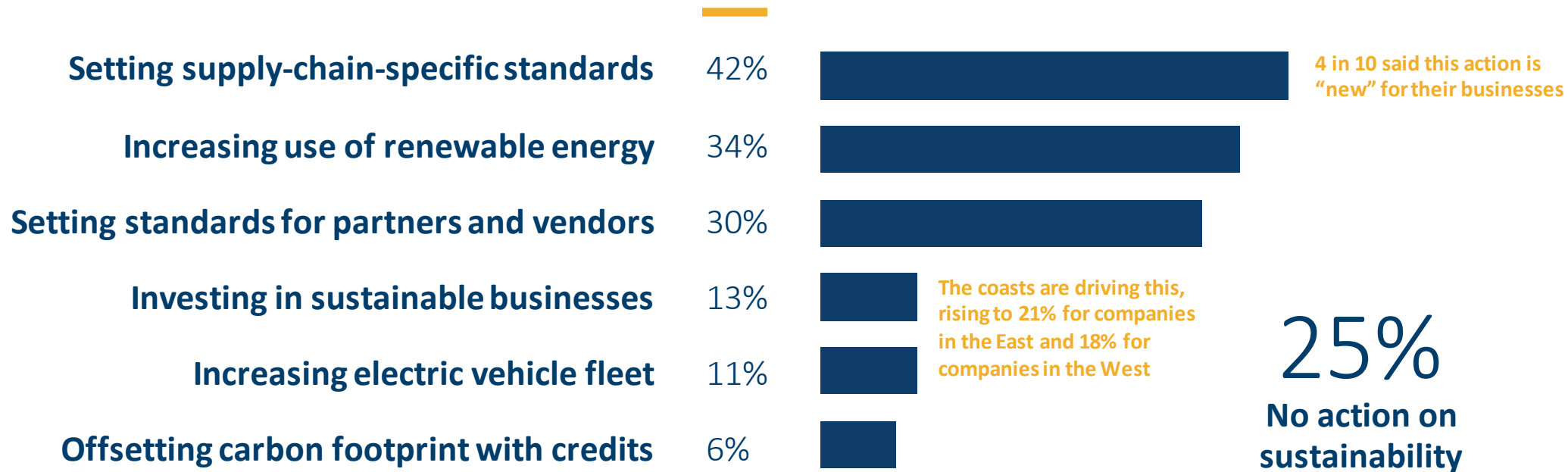
Q4 IS FILLED WITH BUYERS — NOT SELLERS — WITH THE LARGEST COMPANIES (\$3B+) THE MOST ACQUISITIVE THIS QUARTER.





Looking ahead: Sustainability actions rise

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES GAIN STEAM, AND IT'S HITTING THE SUPPLY CHAIN.



The largest companies are all in on sustainability: They're 4x as likely to offset their carbon footprint, 3x as likely to increase their electric fleet, and 1.5x as likely to increase use of renewable energy

HIRING & WORKPLACE

Hiring is still hot, hot, hot—with execs trying new strategies. And hybrid workplaces are behind, but coming along.

Hiring Plans in Q2

HIRING IS PICKING UP.

Expect to **hire** more people

71%

Decreased 6%

From 77% in Q3

Expect to **lay off** more people

5%

Increased 1%

From 4% in Q3

Little to no change

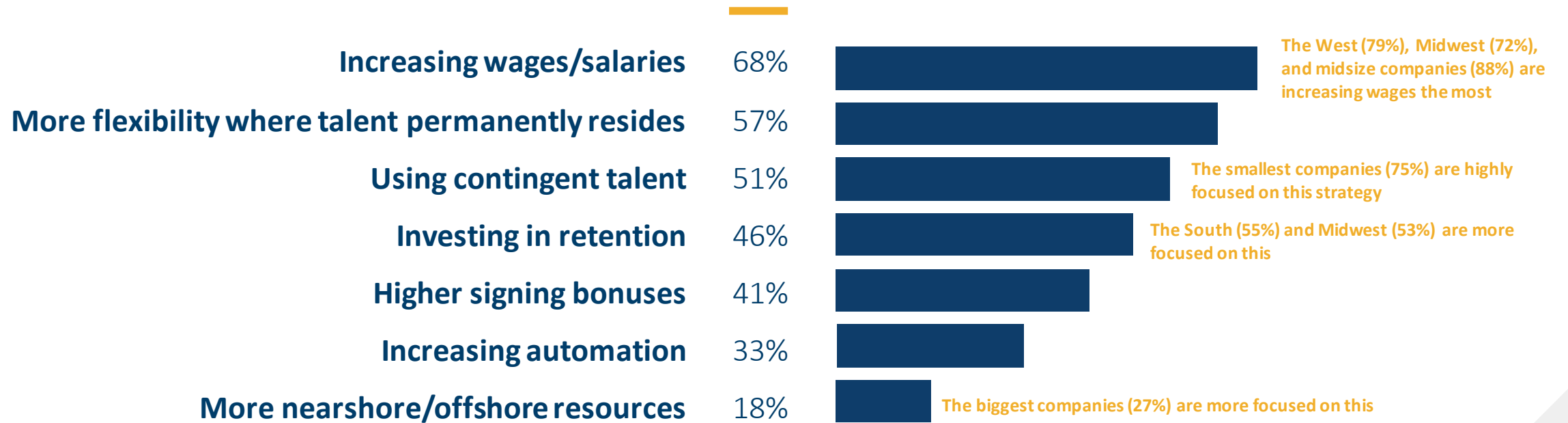
25%

Increased 6%

From 19% in Q3

Talent Shortage Strategies

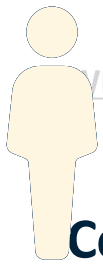
EXECUTIVES ARE TRYING A LOT OF NEW STRATEGIES — AND MULTIPLE STRATEGIES AT THE SAME TIME.



POINT OF VIEW

The worker shortage should be treated as a supply-and-demand issue

[READ MORE](#)



Contingent workforce levels



Up to 20% of employees



21% to 35%



36% or more

IS THIS HIGHER OR LOWER THAN WHERE YOU WANT TO BE?

44% higher

46% Just right

10% lower

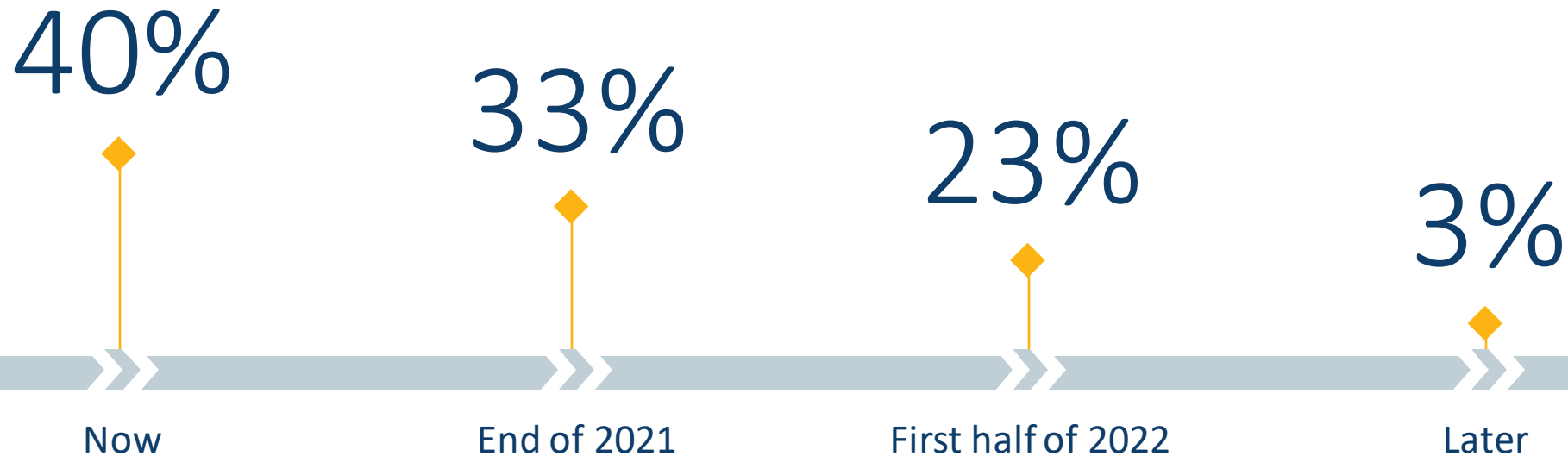
COVID WORKPLACE POLICIES

We asked executives how their company's workplace COVID policy relates to the Biden administration's proposed OSHA rule that all companies with 100 or more employees must require the vaccine or a weekly negative COVID test. Here's what they said.



HYBRID MODELS: Stops & Starts

Hybrid models are delayed: 67% of executives thought they'd be fully operational by now, according to Q2 data, but only 40% report being there. However, the vast majority expect their company's hybrid model to be fully operational by the end of the 2021.

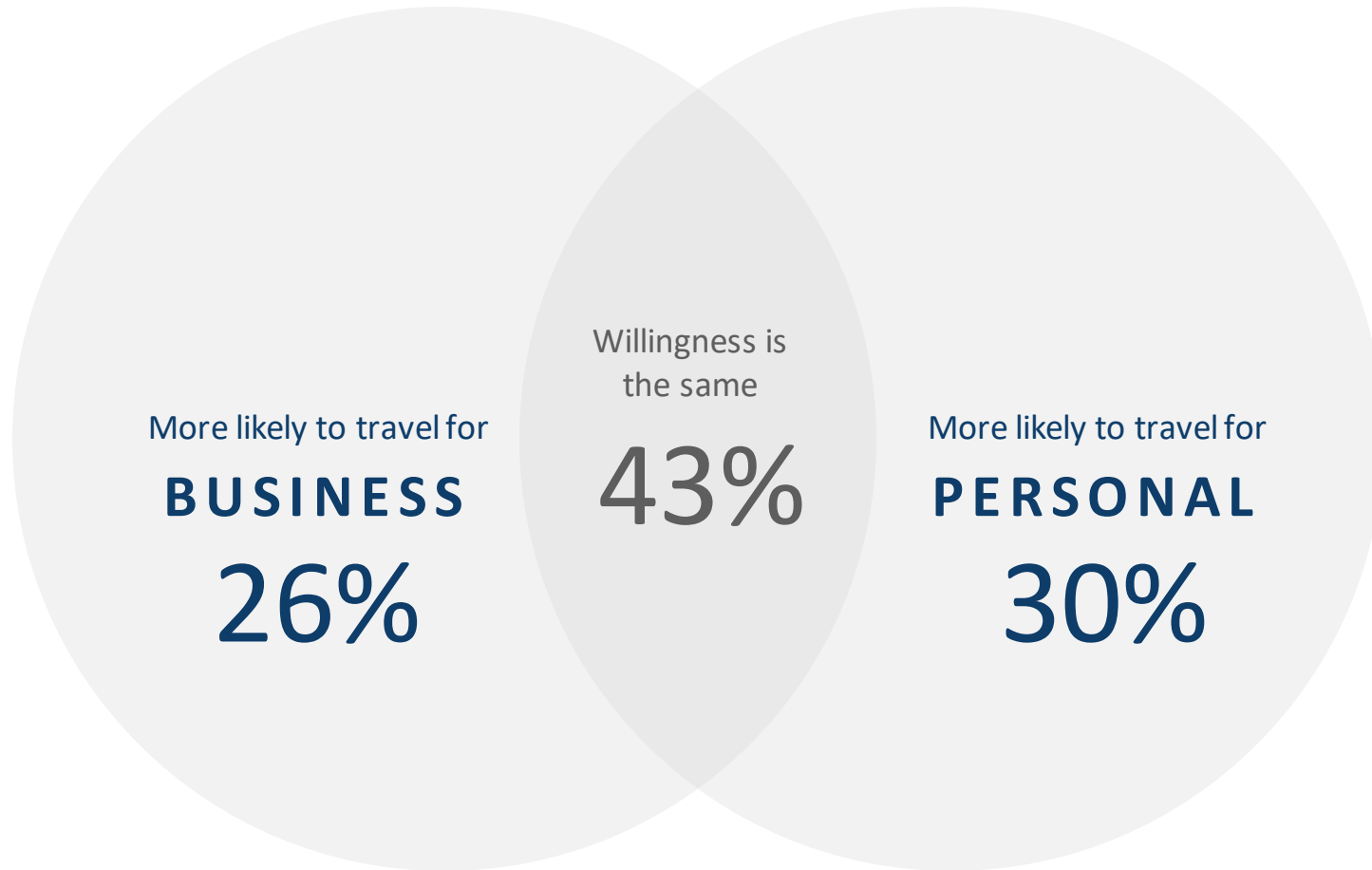


Future of Travel

The future of business travel is on thin ice.



Attitudes: Business vs. Personal Travel





Business Travel Priorities

1

Client and
prospect
meetings

Everyone agrees this is
the top priority

2

Internal travel

CMOs and East Coast
companies prioritize this
higher than their peers

3

Small
networking
events

4

Trade shows
and
conferences

The Midwest is most
enthusiastic here

What will affect your company's business travel in 2022?

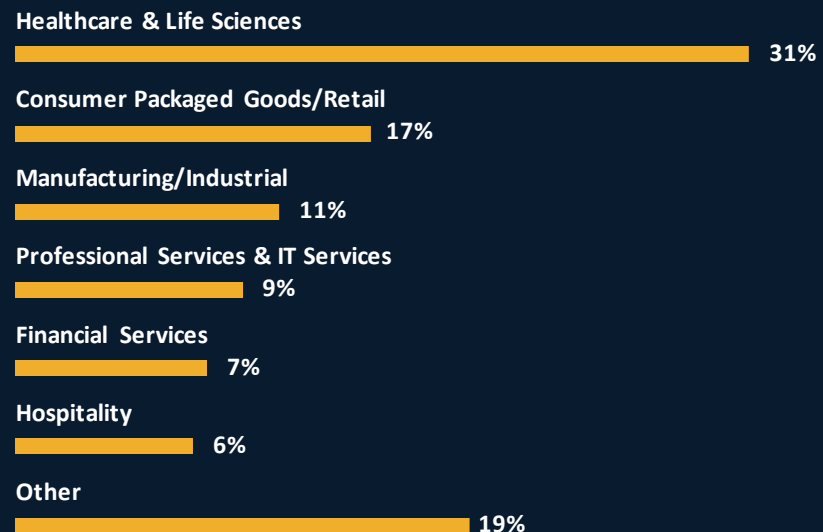


ABOUT THE POLL

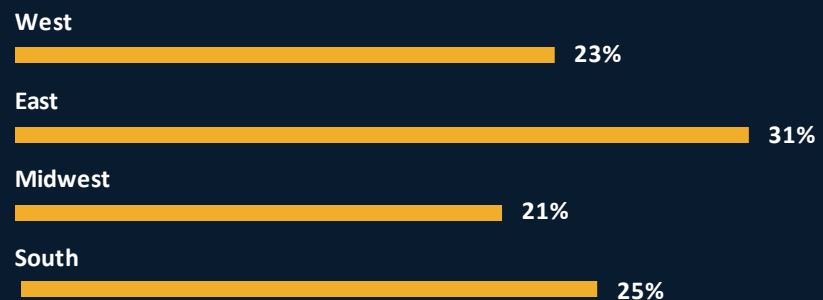
West Monroe's Quarterly Executive Poll takes the pulse of 150 C-level executives every quarter. This poll's data was collected Sept. 17-21, 2021. To qualify for the survey, respondents needed to have a C-level title at a company with at least \$250 million in annual revenue.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

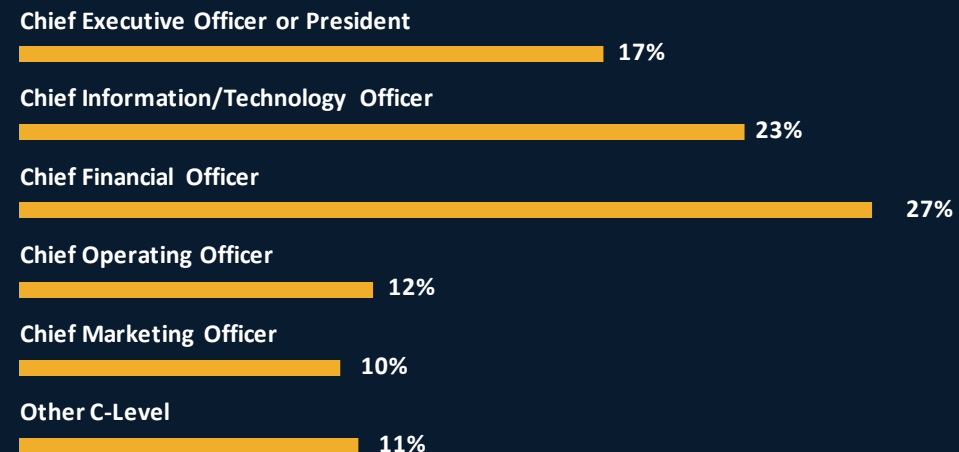
INDUSTRY



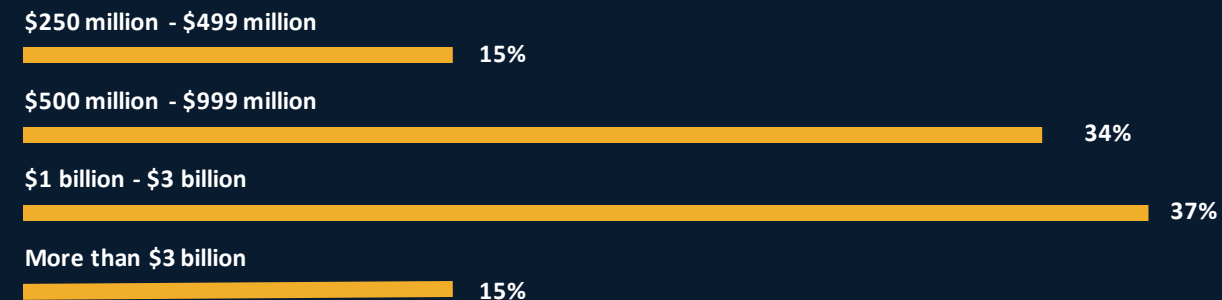
REGION



TITLE



COMPANY'S ANNUAL REVENUE





ABOUT WEST MONROE

**Experts. Doers.
Trusted Advisors.**

As a national consulting firm that was **born in technology and built for business**, we partner with organizations who want to drive progress, and deliver results.

We build **multidisciplinary teams** that combine the industry and technology experience you need to address your challenges, and the operational skills to make sure change happens—and sticks. Because we are 100% employee-owned, **your success is our success.**

Want to work with us? Get started at WestMonroe.com/contact.

STRATEGY

*Reimagine. And chart
a course from here
to there.*

OPERATIONS

*Evolve all
touchpoints across
the value chain.*

IMPLEMENTATION

*Keep pace with
everchanging
expectations.*