



HSEQ Employer Survey Results

HSEQ Recruitment.
Done Differently.



Key takeaways



John Shaddick

The Connector of HSEQ Professionals
Director of Sundstrom Recruitment

At Sundstrom Recruitment, we wanted to better understand how Australian employers are navigating the challenges and opportunities in Health, Safety, Environment, and Quality. To do this, we surveyed a cross-section of business leaders and hiring managers across industries such as mining, resources, and construction.

The findings highlight both optimism and concern in equal measure. Most organisations are planning to increase headcount over the next 12 months, signalling strong demand for HSEQ professionals. However, employers are also struggling with persistent shortages of qualified candidates and rising salary expectations, with many indicating they may need to offer higher remuneration to secure the right talent.

When asked about skills gaps, respondents consistently pointed to a lack of communication, commercial awareness, and audit readiness, alongside the need for more rounded technical knowledge. External pressures - including cost constraints, changing regulations, and heightened client expectations - are also shaping HSEQ strategies, placing further strain on employers.

Perhaps most tellingly, while some organisations are confident they can find the right people, the majority admit the current HSEQ talent pool does not fully meet their needs. Concerns about skills shortages, compliance burdens, and cultural challenges continue to dominate the landscape.

These insights underline the reality that demand for skilled HSEQ professionals is growing faster than supply, and that employers must adapt - not just in remuneration, but in how they attract, develop, and retain talent.



Skills gaps
hindering performance



Talent demand
outpacing supply



Rising costs
shaping strategy

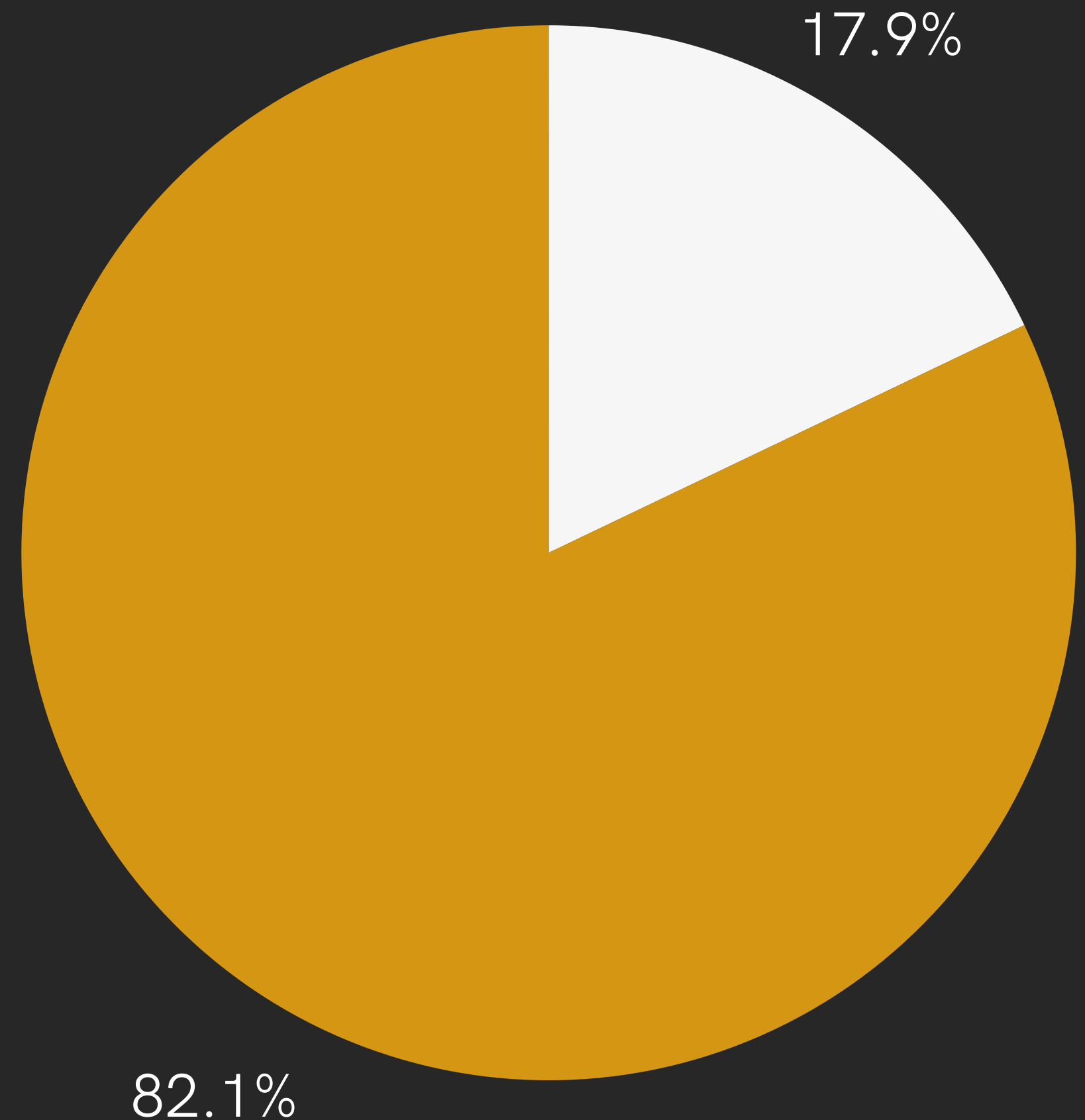
Do you personally, or does your organisation, employ HSEQ professionals?

-  Yes, I directly employ or manage HSEQ professionals
-  Yes, our organisation employs HSEQ professionals

The survey revealed that every respondent reported employing HSEQ professionals in some capacity, underlining the critical role these functions play across industries.

A large majority stated they directly employ or manage HSEQ professionals, while a smaller group indicated that their organisation employs HSEQ professionals without direct personal management involvement.

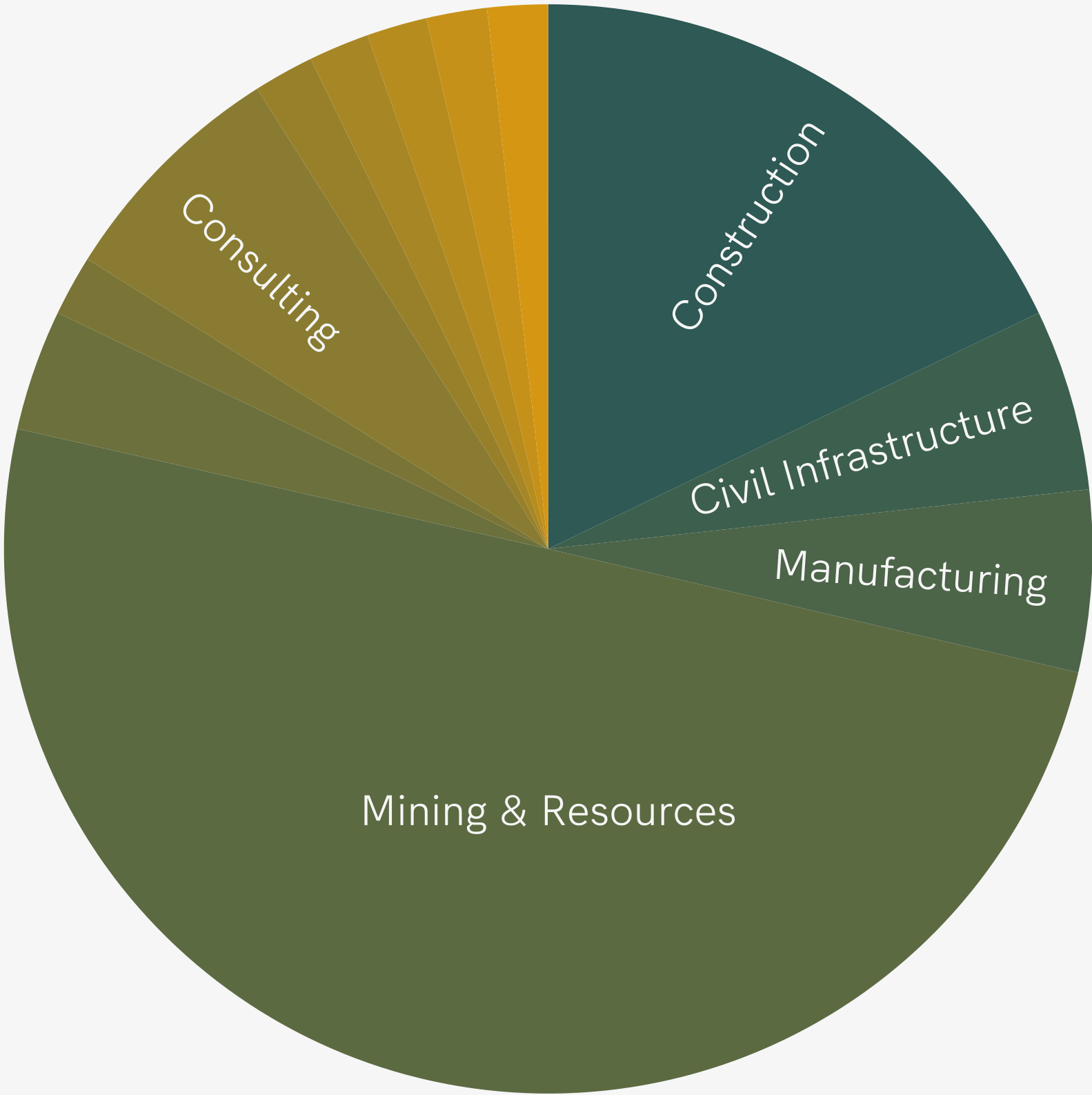
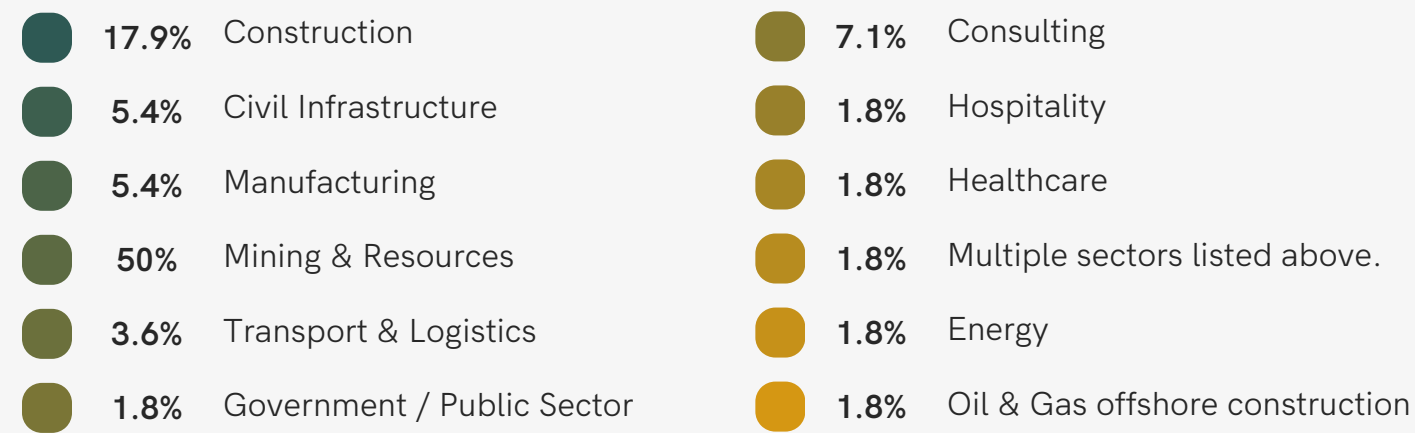
This consistency highlights how deeply embedded HSEQ expertise is within organisations, and it reinforces the idea that investment in health, safety, environment, and quality is now considered a non-negotiable requirement rather than an optional resource.



Which sector does your organisation operate in?

The survey responses reflected a broad mix of industries, with a clear concentration in Mining & Resources, underscoring the sector’s heavy reliance on HSEQ expertise. Construction followed as the second most represented industry, while Consulting, Civil Infrastructure, and Manufacturing (3) also featured prominently. Other sectors such as Transport & Logistics, Energy, Oil & Gas, Healthcare, Hospitality, and Government were each represented by a smaller number of organisations.

This distribution highlights that while HSEQ remains critical across a wide range of industries, its presence is particularly pronounced in high-risk, resource-intensive sectors such as mining and construction.

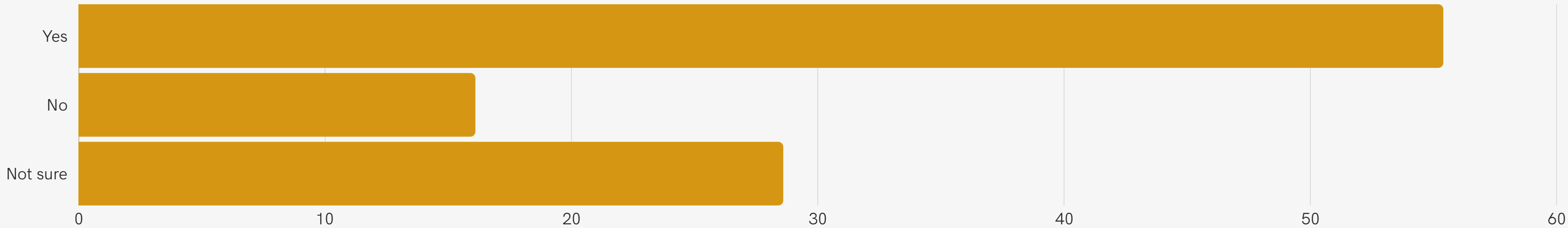


Are you looking to hire HSEQ professionals in the next 12 months?

When asked about hiring intentions, the majority of organisations confirmed they are planning to recruit HSEQ professionals within the next year, reflecting the continued demand for these roles across industries.

A further 28% of organisations were unsure, suggesting uncertainty linked to market conditions, budgets, or project pipelines. Only 16% respondents indicated they had no plans to hire, showing that the overwhelming trend points toward ongoing growth in HSEQ headcount.

These findings underline a strong forward-looking demand for HSEQ talent, with most employers either committed to or considering expansion of their teams in the near term.



How many HSEQ hires has your organisation made in the past 12 months?



Most organisations hired at least one HSEQ professional in the past year, showing consistent demand across sectors.



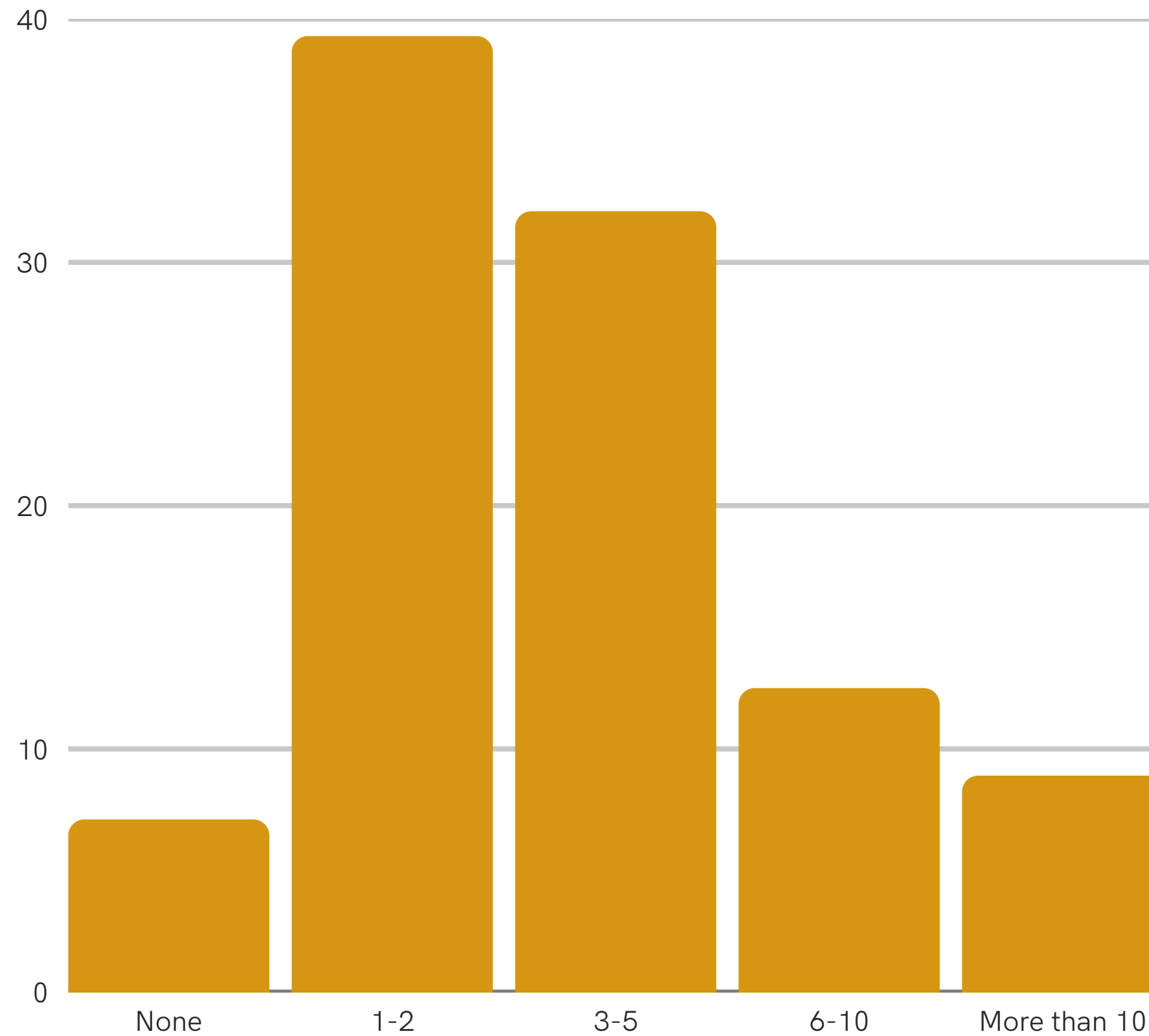
The majority of organisations made 1–5 hires, indicating steady, incremental growth rather than large-scale recruitment.



A smaller group reported 6 or more hires, reflecting concentrated demand in high-risk or rapidly scaling industries.



Very few organisations made no hires at all, underlining that HSEQ recruitment is now the norm rather than the exception.



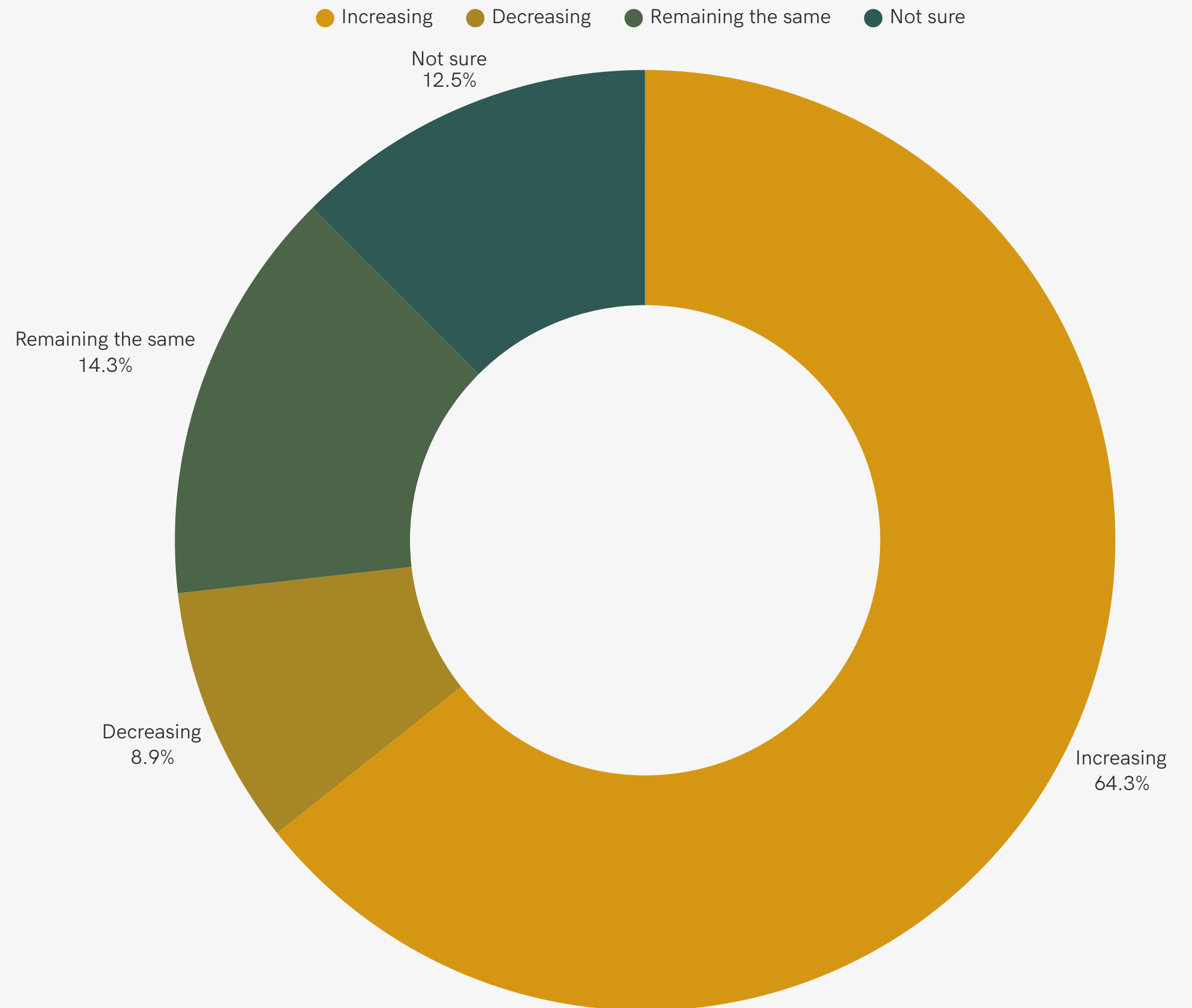
Is your organisation increasing or decreasing HSEQ headcount?

The majority of organisations surveyed are increasing their HSEQ headcount, with most respondents confirming expansion. This reflects the growing importance of health, safety, environment, and quality functions in meeting regulatory and operational demands.

A smaller group of organisations indicated that their headcount will remain the same, suggesting a steady state of resourcing.

Meanwhile, 12.5% of respondents were unsure, and only 8.9% of organisations reported a decrease.

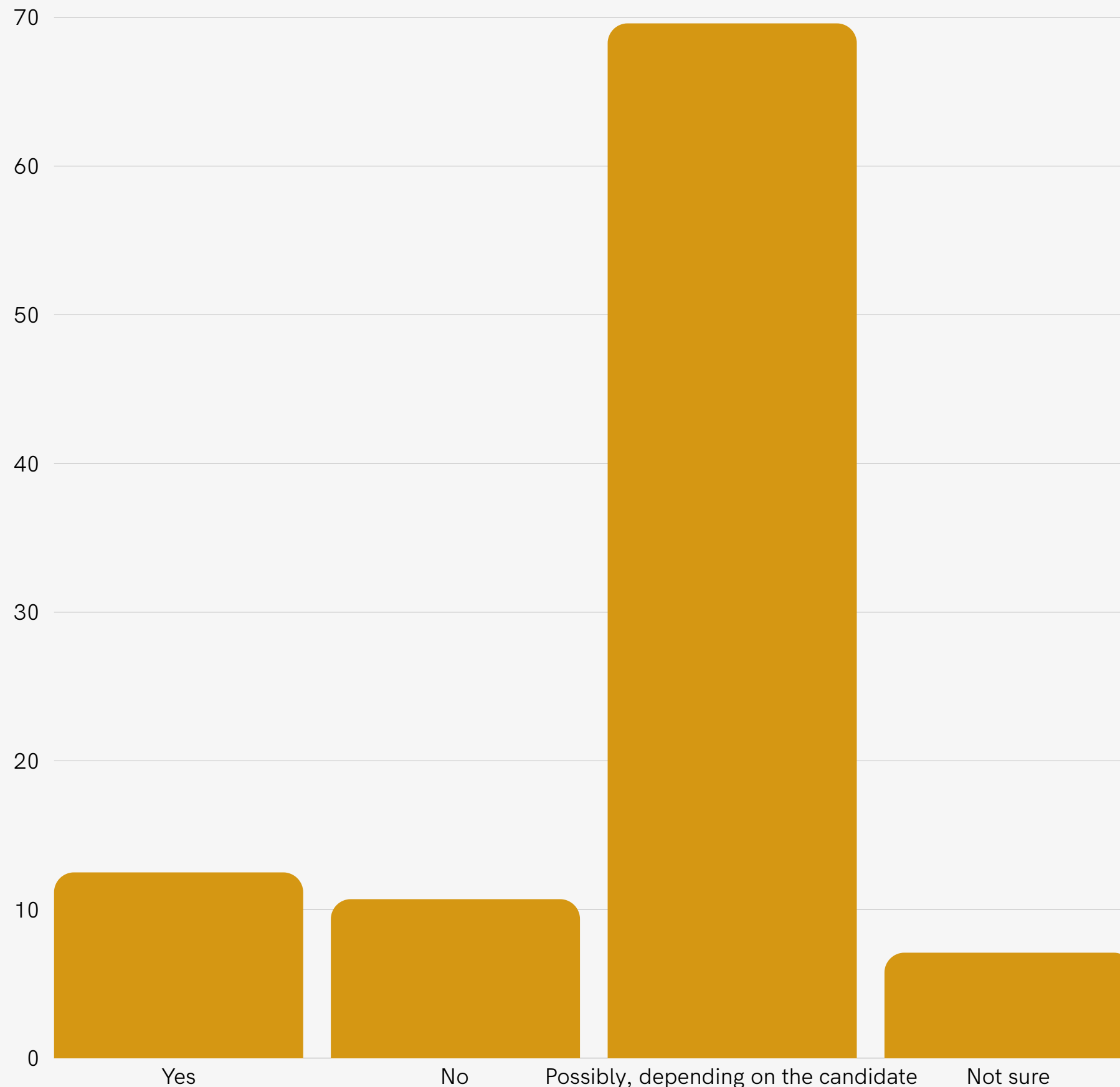
Overall, the findings point to a strong upward trend in HSEQ hiring, with most employers prioritising additional investment in these roles despite pockets of uncertainty.



Are you expecting to offer higher remuneration to secure HSEQ talent?

The survey findings highlight that while most organisations recognise the pressure on salaries for HSEQ professionals, many are taking a selective approach. A clear majority said they would possibly offer higher remuneration depending on the candidate, showing flexibility for standout talent rather than across-the-board increases.

A smaller number confirmed they are definitely planning to raise salaries, while only a small percent stated they would not or remain unsure. This suggests that while salary inflation is a reality in the market, employers are seeking to balance competitiveness with sustainability, rewarding the best candidates without driving blanket wage escalation.



What challenges have you faced when hiring HSEQ professionals?



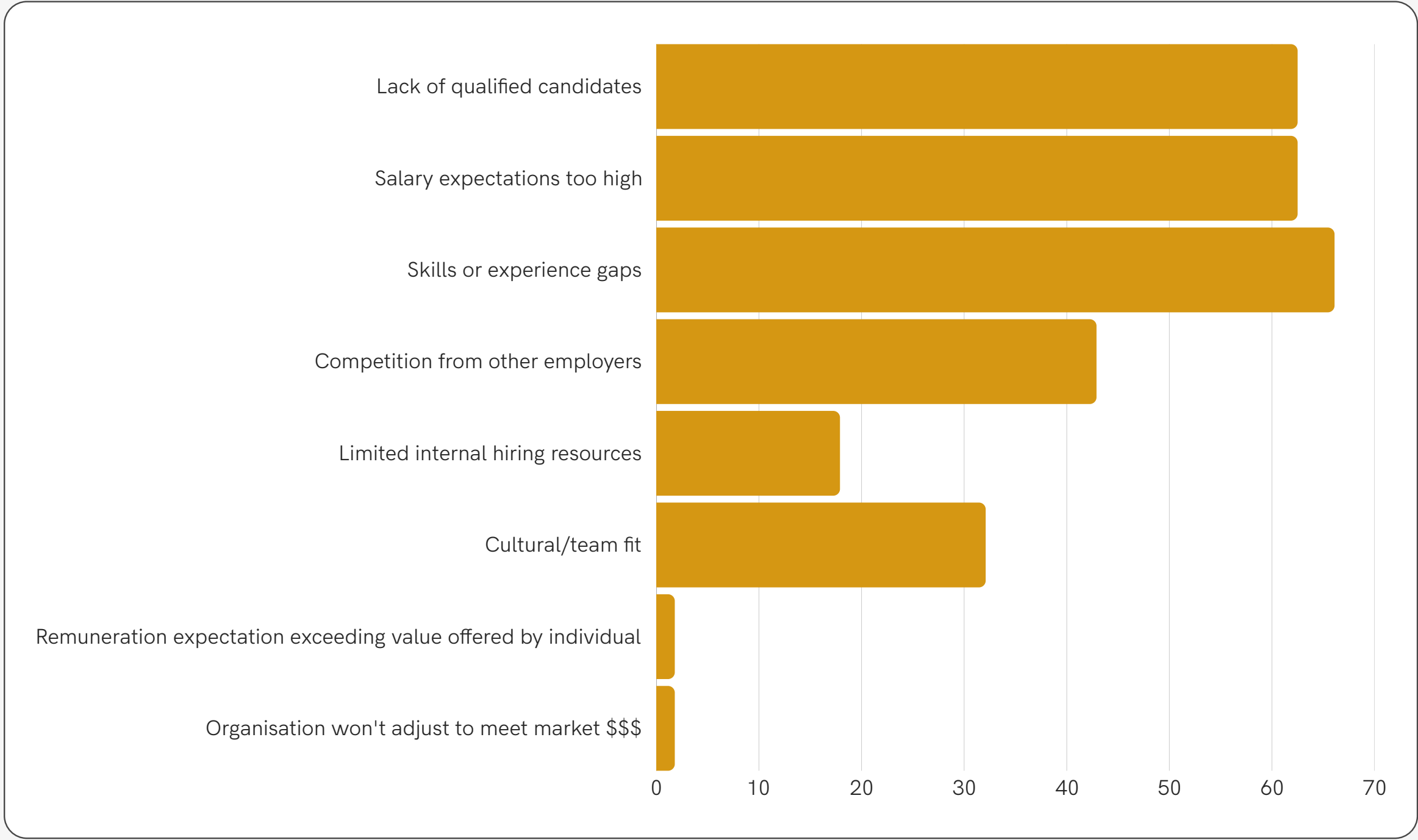
The survey highlights a recruitment market where demand for HSEQ talent far outstrips supply.

The biggest challenges reported by employers were skills or experience gaps and a lack of qualified candidates - signalling that even when roles can be filled, many candidates don't meet the technical or professional standards required.

Adding to this, salary expectations are often higher than employers are prepared to pay, creating a mismatch between what candidates want and what organisations can offer.

Meanwhile, competition from other employers intensifies the struggle, as businesses are effectively fishing in the same limited pool of talent.

Beyond these market-level pressures, cultural alignment also emerged as a notable barrier, with some organisations finding it hard to secure candidates who fit their teams. Taken together, these results suggest that the challenge is not just about finding people, but about finding the right people at a cost that works for both sides.



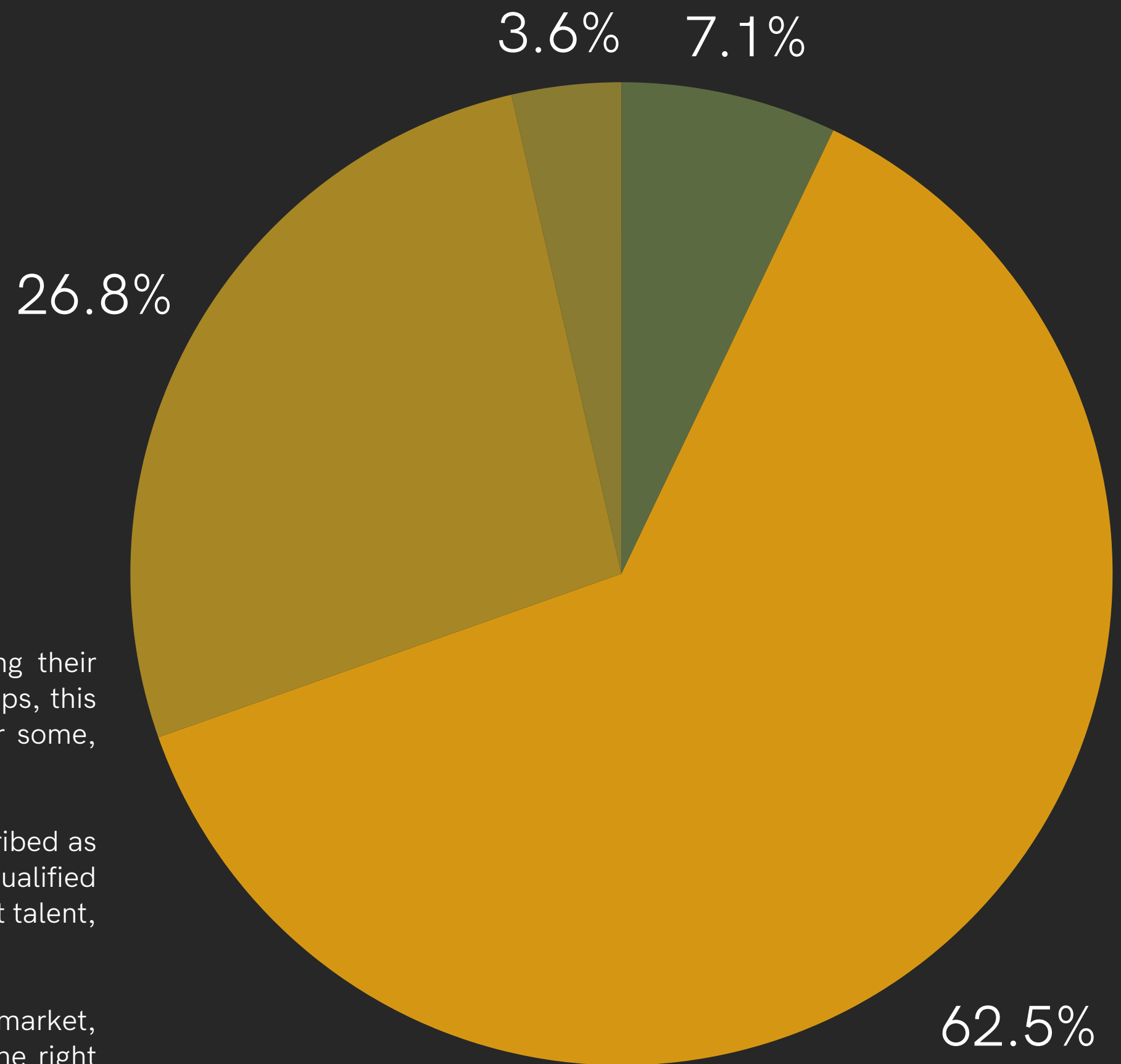
Do you believe the current HSEQ talent pool meets your organisation's needs?

- Yes - we can find the right talent
- Mostly - but with some gaps
- No - it's a constant challenge
- Not sure

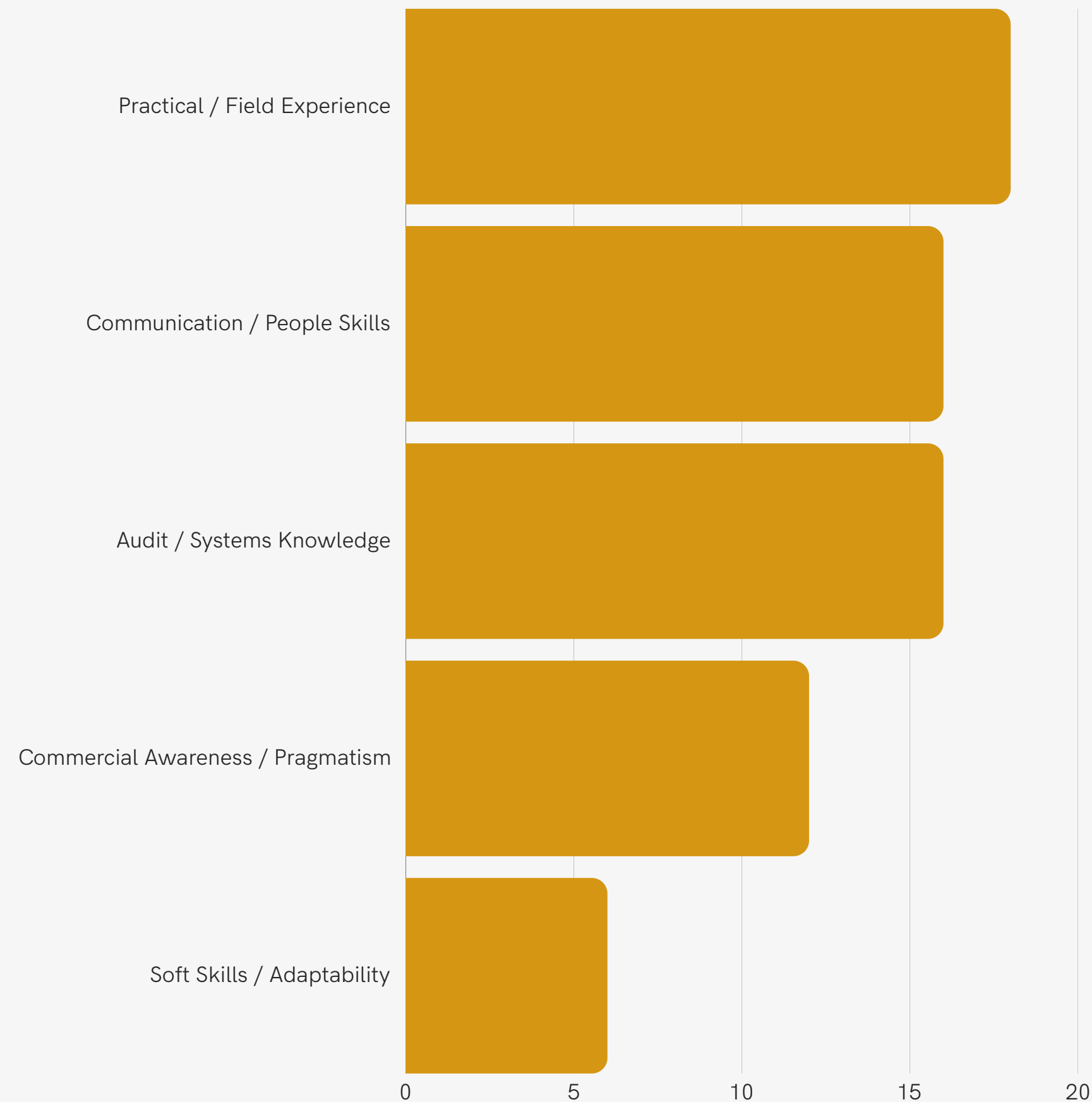
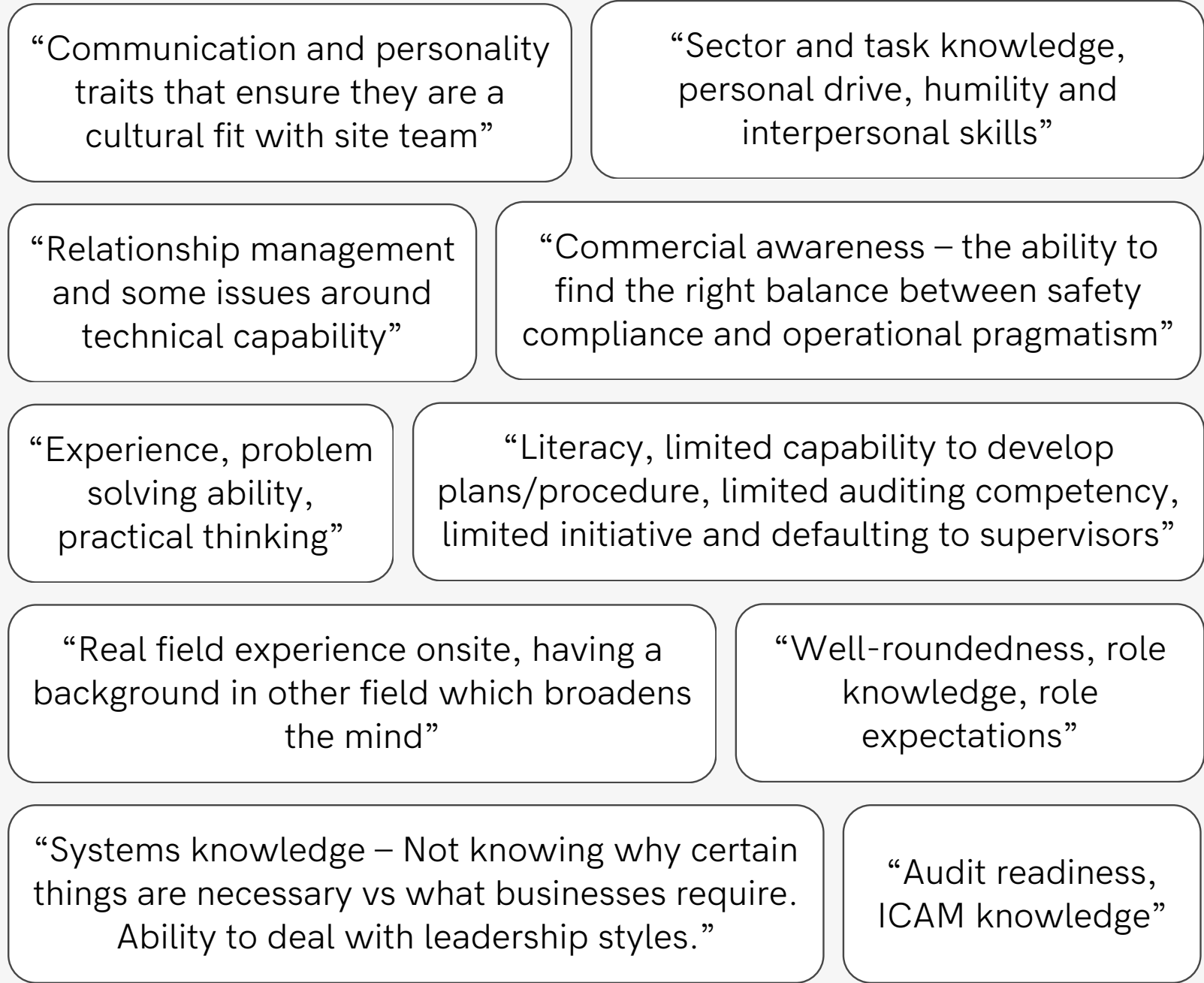
Most organisations feel the HSEQ talent pool falls short of fully meeting their needs. While respondents said it “mostly” meets requirements but with gaps, this reflects a growing reliance on compromise - hiring candidates who cover some, but not all, critical skills.

For 26.8% of organisations, the situation is more acute, with the pool described as a constant challenge, highlighting persistent shortages of suitably qualified professionals. Only a handful reported that they can reliably access the right talent, underlining how rare that confidence is.

Overall, the results suggest employers are operating in a constrained market, where finding professionals is not the problem - but finding those with the right blend of expertise, experience, and adaptability remains the real obstacle.



In your opinion, what skills or qualities are most lacking in HSEQ candidates today?



What do you see as the major areas of concern within the HSEQ landscape currently?

“Wage and roster expectations vs experience”

“Unskilled HSEQ personnel elevated to positions outside their capabilities to ‘fill seats’”

“Admin burden of client requirements”

“Is the generic WHS professional ready to deal with an ever-expanding range of risks and associated regulation combined with a fast-changing technological landscape?”

“Culture change, regulation change”

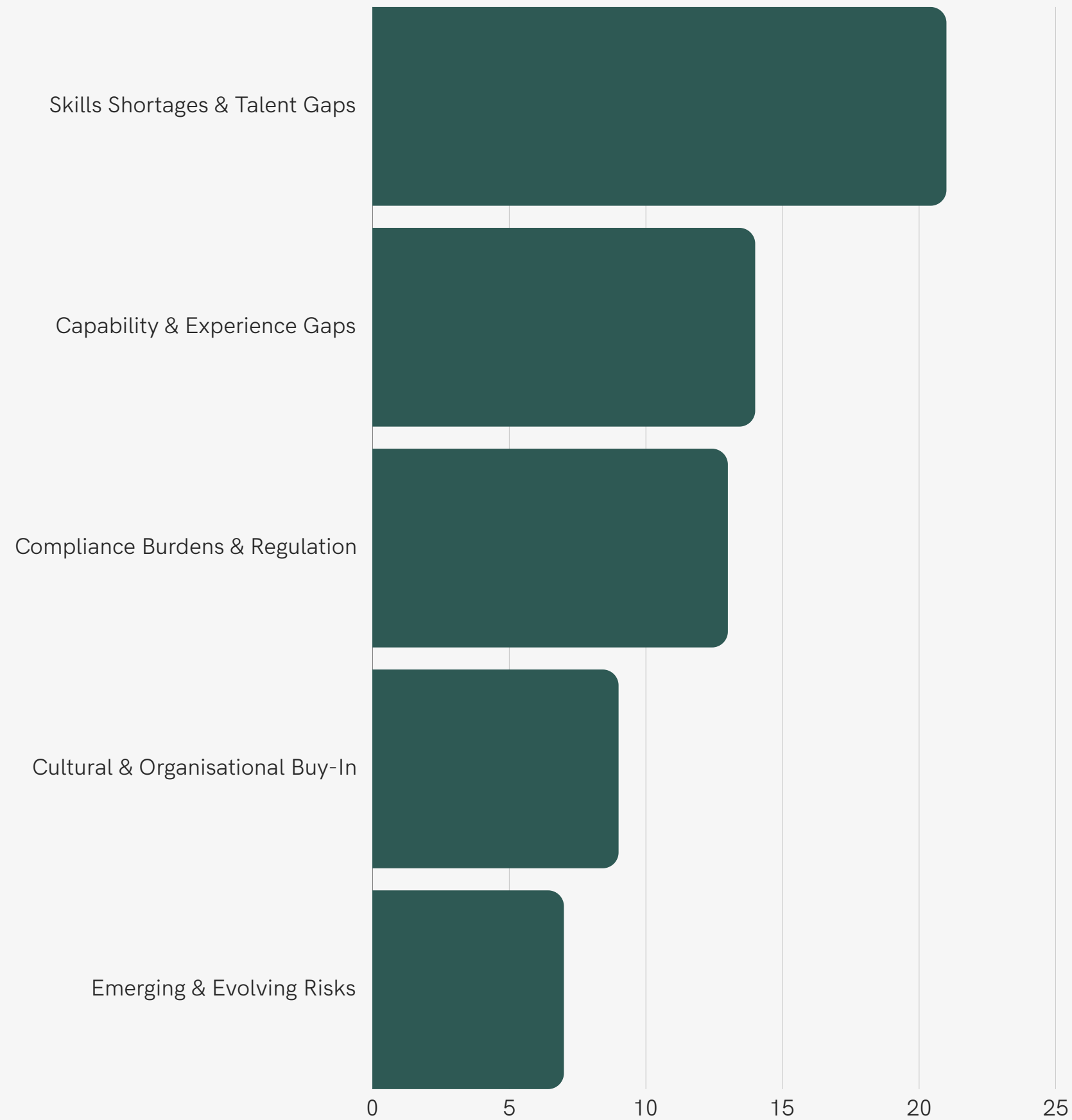
“Compliance burdens and varied expectations between clients”

“Over-regulation, including complex and onerous requirements. Culture wars, particularly a lack of individual accountability for HSEQ”

“Skills shortages, understanding and focus on energies/critical risk, and psychosocial”

“Lack of onsite field experience. Extremely challenging to preach or manage OHS without personal experience”

“Understanding how to implement effective controls that do not restrict safe work. Lack of planning. Senior leadership buy-in for safety to be an integral part of the project”



Partner with Sundstrom.

Get in touch

🌐 www.sundstromrecruitment.com.au

📞 (08) 6285 8888

📍 Level 15, 1 Spring Street, Perth (Boorloo), 6000

