



Restaurant Barometer

2025



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Employees in the restaurant industry deserve their value

Restaurant industry professionals are the key to the sector's well-being and development. That's why we asked them: "How are you doing?". With the Restaurant Barometer, we want to:

- Share a realistic snapshot of the feelings among industry professionals
- Bring less-discussed perspectives into the conversation
- Offer a new viewpoint on the current discussion about the industry
- Open up the everyday life of the sector to broader audience
- Put the professionals at the center, regardless of the size or location of the establishment or business
- Provide a counterbalance to the one-sided narrative often presented by the media

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Implementer: Petteri Ohtonen, Vesa Heikkinen, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences together with MaRa ry

Target group: Decision-makers, entrepreneurs, employees, and students in the restaurant industry

Implementation: Online surveys and themed interviews (807 respondents in Finnish and English)

Research implementation period: September 8–30th, 2025

SUMMARY

Meaningful field

The greatest strength of the restaurant industry is related to the meaningfulness of work, customer encounters and the power of the work community. The restaurant industry as a career choice is "the only right one" for some of the staff. There is no substitute industry that gives them so much.

Work community and well-being

In terms of well-being at work, the most important resource is co-workers and the work community, which are often described as "second family". Regardless of the physical and mental strain of the work, colleagues and a good team spirit help to cope. The development needs are related to the support of supervisors and the work-life balance.

Professional pride and appreciation

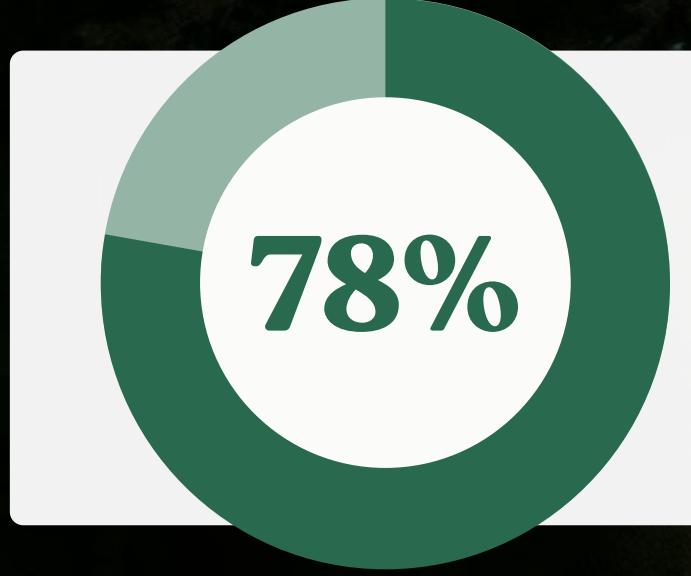
Employees and entrepreneurs feel proud of their professional skills and the feedback given by customers. However, the social appreciation of the industry is seen as inadequate, and the reality of the restaurant industry appears to be more diverse than the public debate often suggests.

Attraction and retention

The restaurant industry is still seen as attractive, as it offers variety, creativity and the opportunity to produce experiences for customers – things that are considered invaluable. Customers and the meaningfulness gained from customer service increase the retention and attractiveness of the industry.

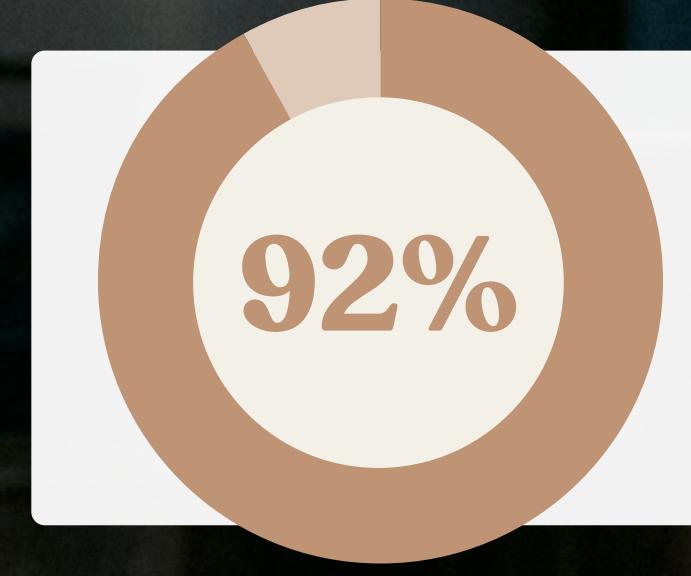
Digitalisation and internationalisation

Digitalisation is seen as being able to streamline processes and free up time for customer service, but the benefits are not yet as clearly visible in everyday work as would be hoped. With internationalisation, multiculturalism in work communities and an international customer base bring new opportunities to the industry, but require stronger leadership and language skills.



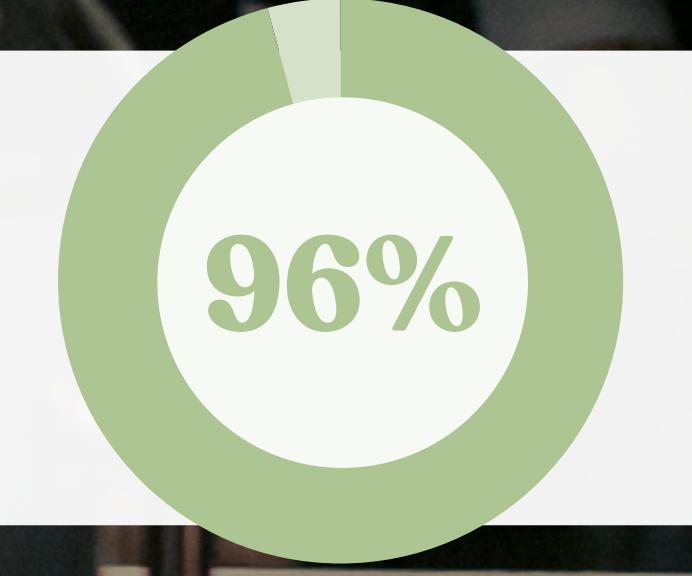
78%

rated their workplace as an employer as very or fairly positive.



92%

feel strong pride in their own professionalism.



96%

feel that their co-workers and colleagues support their own coping.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Views on the future emphasise both opportunities and uncertainty.

Measures are needed to strengthen the appreciation of the sector, working conditions and supervisory work, as well as to engage young people and the international workforce.



The most positive outlook comes from Lapland



Growing customer expectations: responsibility and experiences

Digitalisation to support the customer experience

OPPORTUNITIES

Internationalisation and multiculturalism as a resource

Restaurants as centres of communities and culture

Strengthening the appreciation of the industry and attracting new talent

Appreciation and professional pride

67%

feel that the restaurant industry is a better industry than its reputation.



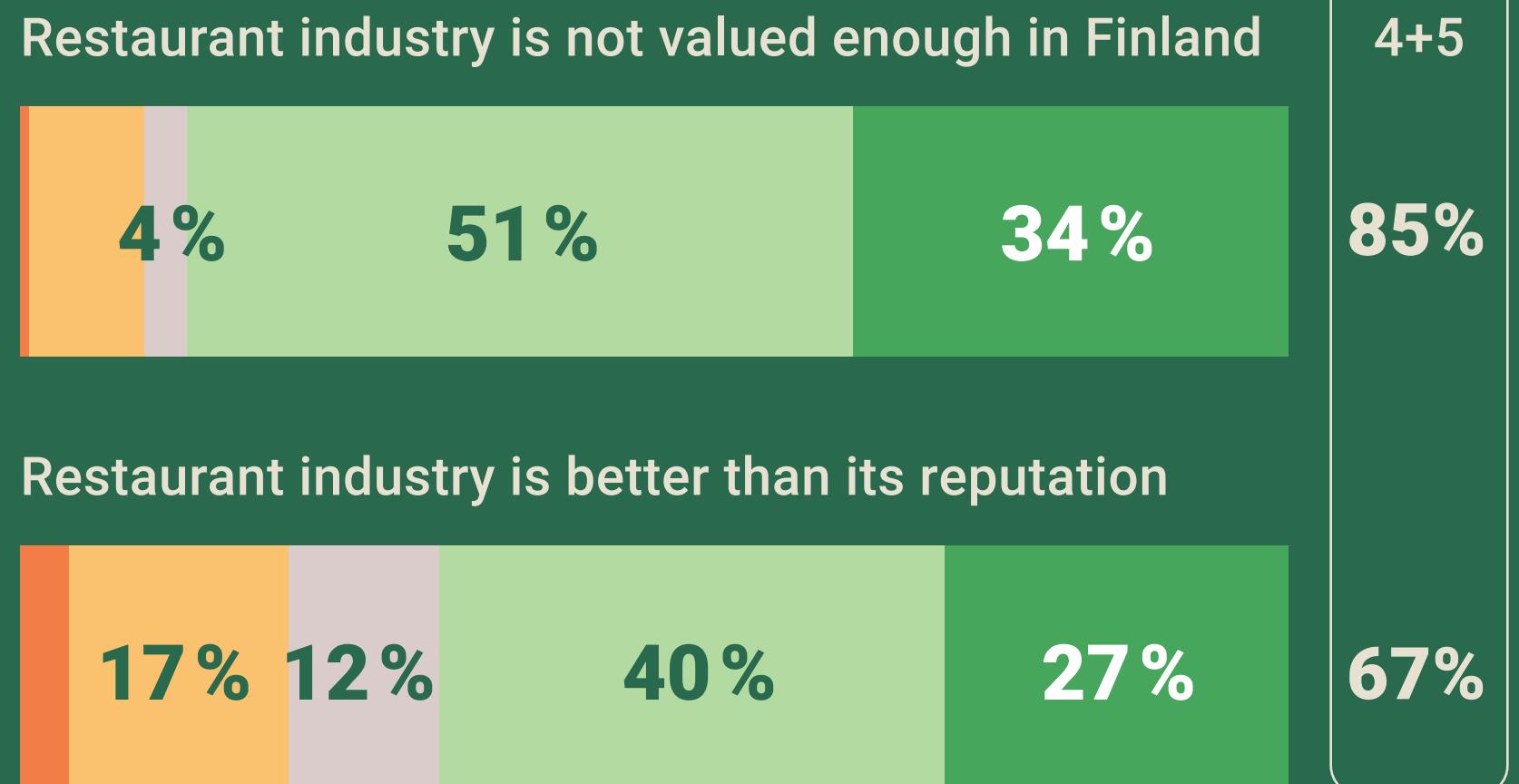
"When the media only talks about bankruptcies, you don't get a picture of how meaningful our work is."

Professional pride and social appreciation do not meet

- The biggest source of pride in the restaurant industry is customer satisfaction and feedback. The meaningfulness of work consists of creating experiences and joy for customers.
- Pride is also caused by professionalism and competence, as well as team spirit and community spirit in the field.
- Employees in the restaurant industry see the industry as better than their reputation, but they feel a conflict between their own pride and external appreciation.
- 85% think that the restaurant industry is not valued enough in Finland.
- It is felt that the field is seen as a "vocation", the demanding nature of the field is not sufficiently recognised, and the problems of the field are often highlighted in the media.
- Professional pride is strongest in Uusimaa and Lapland.

"I can make someone's day better with service."

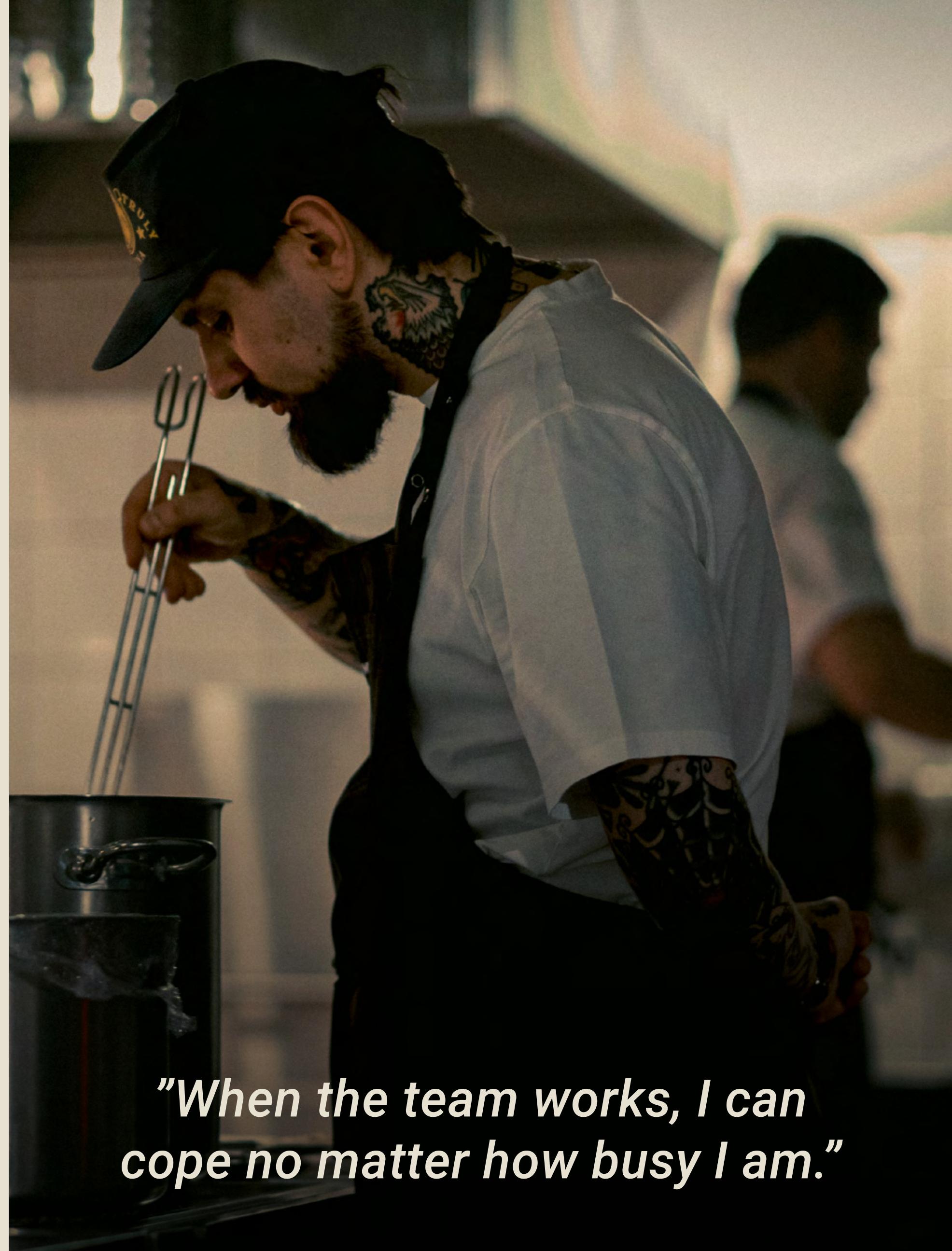
"It's great when you manage to build a team that receives praise from customers."



1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 I don't know
4 Somewhat agree 5 Totally agree

Well-being and work community

96% feel that their co-workers and colleagues support their own coping.

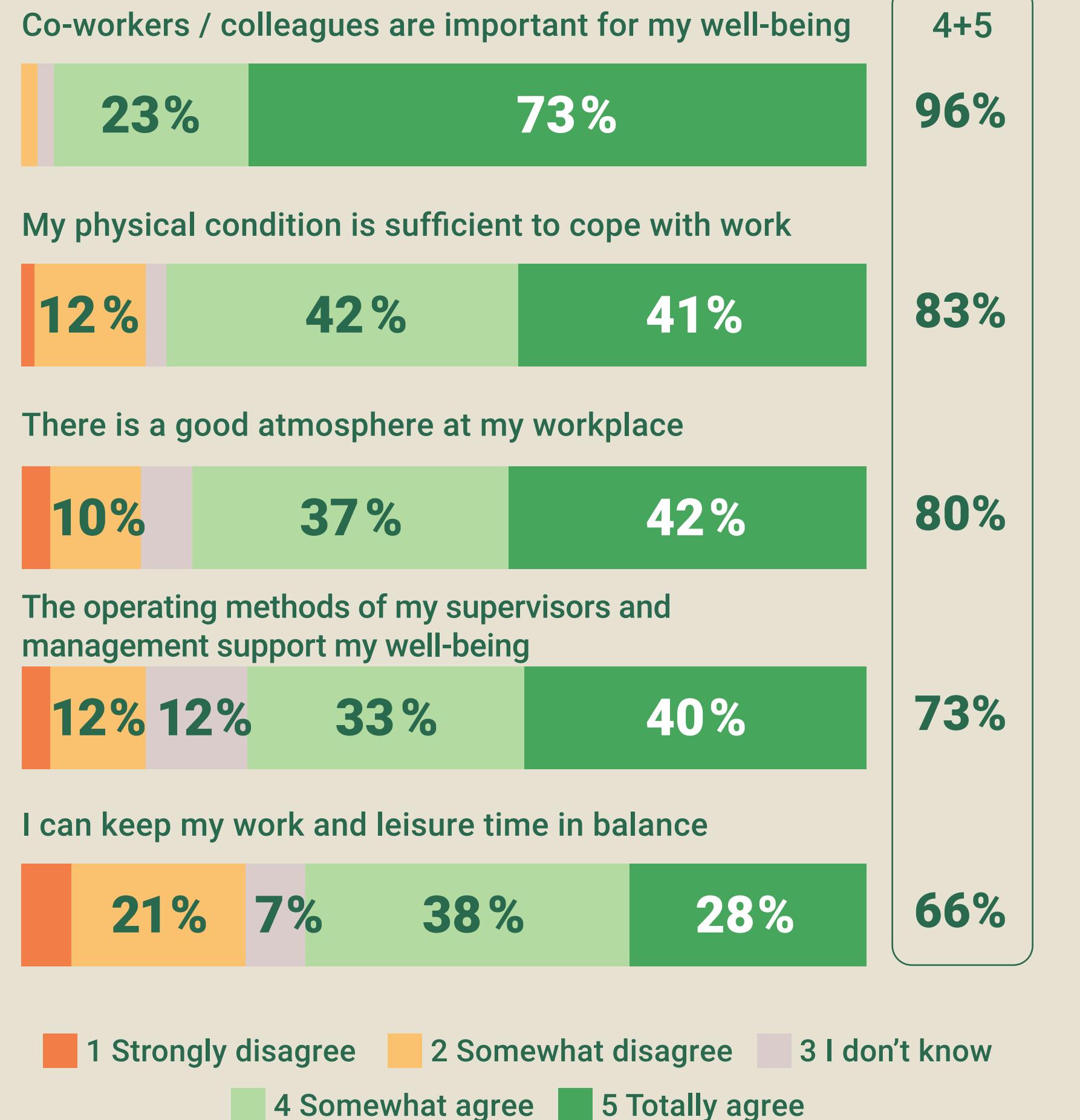


"When the team works, I can cope no matter how busy I am."

The work community supports well-being, work-life balance is challenging

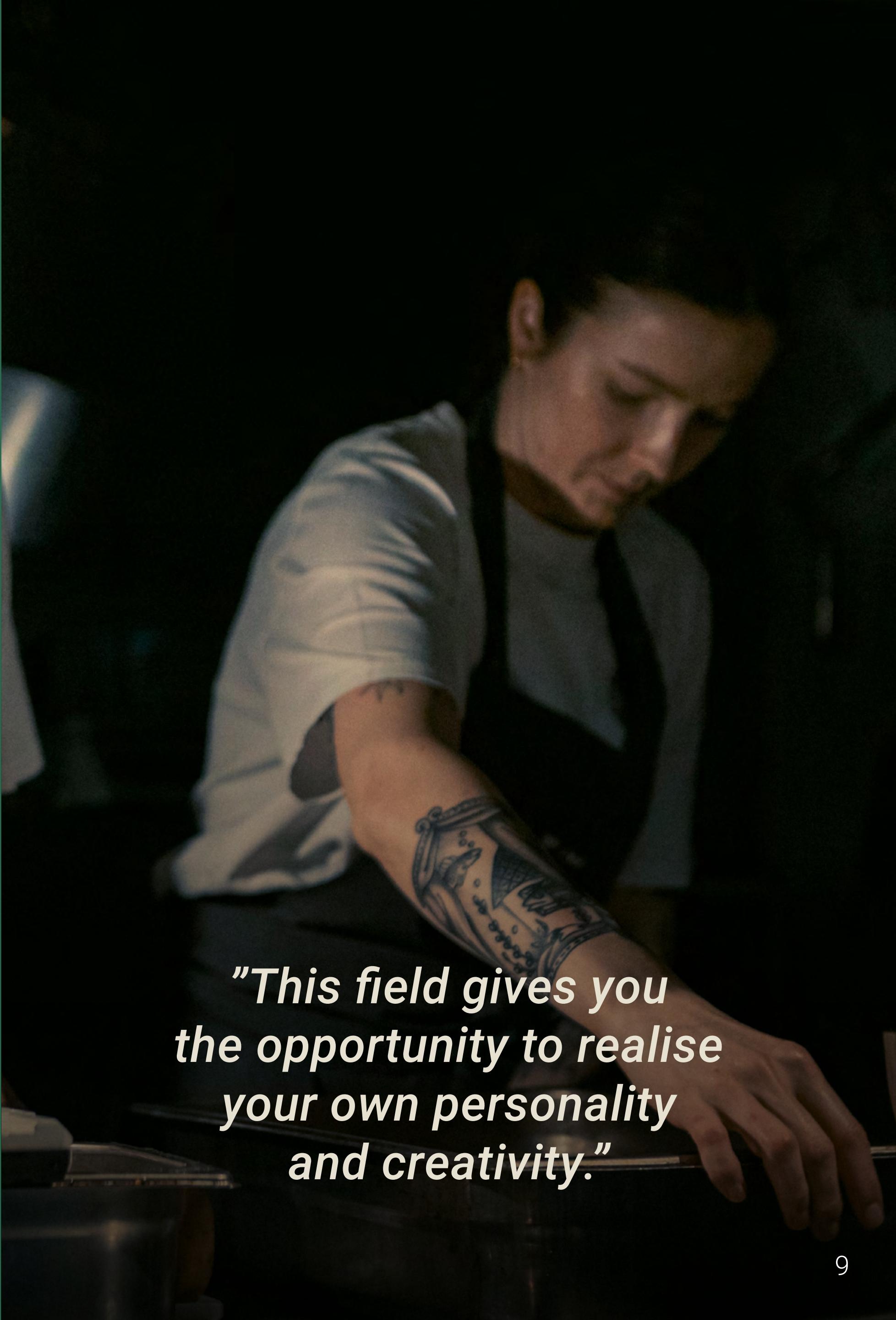
- The work community is important for the well-being of the entire restaurant industry. Co-workers and colleagues are clearly the most important resource.
- Managing the physical strain of work is seen as important. 83% feel that their physical condition is sufficient to cope at work.
- 73% feel that the operating methods of supervisors and management support well-being.
- Work-life balance is the clearest challenge, but about two out of three feel that they manage to keep them in balance.
- People with a foreign background assessed the impact of various factors on their well-being more positively than others.

"We have a good atmosphere, we laugh a lot together, and that goes a long way."



Retention and attractiveness

87% feel that they can be themselves and bring out their personality at work.



"This field gives you the opportunity to realise your own personality and creativity."

A career in the restaurant industry gives you meaningfulness that you don't get anywhere else

- The retention and attractiveness of the industry are based on the meaningfulness of the work and the opportunity to produce good customer experiences. 96% feel that offering them at work is rewarding.
- 87% see the use of personality in work tasks to strengthen the attractiveness of the industry.
- The work community is of great importance. Colleagues and the joy of working together support them in everyday life and encourage them to return to the field, even if the work is hard.
- The restaurant industry appears to its creators as diverse and lively. It is a meaningful career choice that is not easily replaced by other industries.
- Employees of food and fast food restaurants see the sector as more attractive than café workers. In restaurant companies with more than 250 employees, the sector is perceived as more attractive than in smaller companies.
- Difficult engagement of young people and unclear career paths are considered to be areas for development.

"I get to meet people and provide them with meaningful experiences, which is always rewarding."

"Even though the field is hard, it gives a lot. Especially colleagues and a sense of community make you come back if you ever get tired."

Providing good customer experiences is rewarding in my work



In my work I can be myself and bring out my personality



I have the opportunity to influence the operations and success of our company

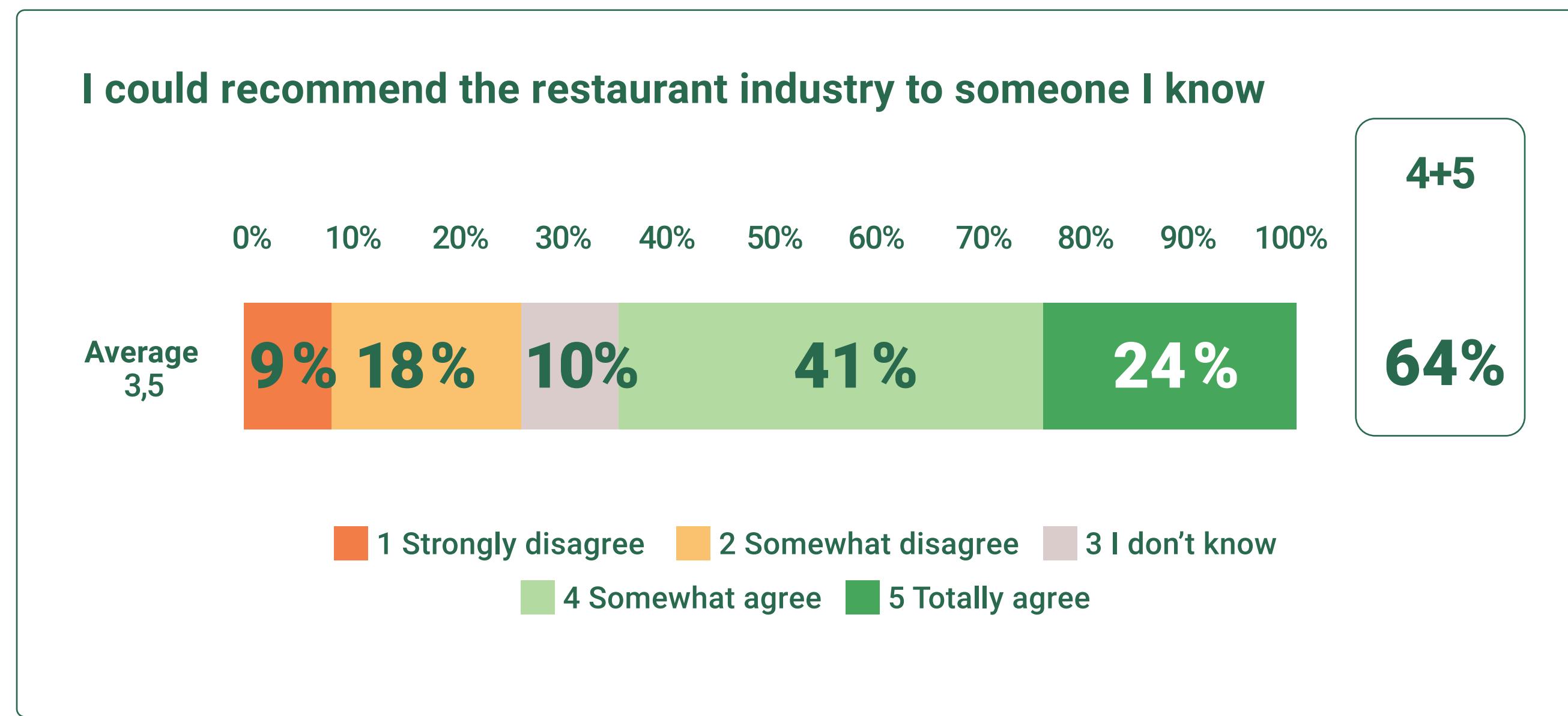


1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 I don't know

4 Somewhat agree 5 Totally agree

Two out of three would recommend the restaurant industry

- Overall, the willingness to recommend the restaurant industry is moderately good, with 64% of respondents recommending the industry. This creates a generally positive image, although 27% expressed clear criticism.
- Recommendation levels are highest among entrepreneurs and both small and large companies. The willingness to recommend is lowest in medium-sized companies and café/event restaurants.



	TOTAL	n= 807	Recommends (4+5)
Major area	Uusimaa	281	67%
	Southern Finland	70	53%
	Western Finland	299	66%
	Eastern Finland	58	64%
	Lapland	34	68%
	Other Northern Finland	65	55%
Job description	Entrepreneur	181	69%
	Other management	47	62%
	Supervisor + specialist	151	66%
	Employee	410	62%
Work experience from restaurant industry	Less than 2 years	55	64%
	2-5 years	122	66%
	6-10 years	115	70%
	Over 10 years	515	63%
Type of workplace	Restaurant	456	65%
	Cafe	147	60%
	Fast food	75	64%
	Pub/night club	109	67%
	Staff restaurant	110	60%
	Event restaurant	109	59%
	Service station restaurant	177	64%
Company size	Less than 10 people	269	67%
	10-49 people	268	62%
	50-99 people	52	56%
	100-249 people	57	58%
	Over 250 people	120	68%
Age	Under 25 years	79	67%
	25-34 years	178	62%
	35-44 years	181	67%
	45-54 years	168	64%
	55 years or more	201	62%
Gender	Female	546	66%
	Male	249	61%
Native language	Finnish / Swedish / Sámi	763	64%
	Other	44	75%

RECOMMENDING THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY



Meaningfulness and good learning opportunities

"The industry teaches life skills that you can't get anywhere else."

Sociability and good team spirit

"The joy of success with colleagues is the best reward."

Varied working days and new skills

"Resilience to pressure and problem-solving skills are constantly developing."

International and career development opportunities

"The industry opens doors to international experiences."

Physically and mentally demanding working conditions

"The work is physically demanding, you don't always have time to take breaks."

Irregular working hours

"Working hours are not suitable for everyone – it limits a lot."

Uncertainty and turnover in the industry

"The high turnover of personnel makes the work community unstable."

Salary level

"The salary does not correspond to the demands of the job."



Future and media visibility

88%

feel that customer demands have increased in the restaurant industry.



"Customers know how to demand more – it's a challenge, but it's also an opportunity."

There are plenty of opportunities and room for development in the restaurant industry

- The future of the industry is seen as an opportunity related to changes in trends. Customers' expectations are expected to increase and are related to the quality of the food, traceability of origin and the experiential nature of the service.
- 76% believe that the internationalisation of the restaurant industry is a positive thing.
- The most positive forecast for the future, more than ten percentage points higher than in Southern Finland, comes from Lapland.
- The least positive assessment of the future of the restaurant industry is among those who are just starting their careers and have been in the industry for less than two years.
- The most important areas for development in the sector are increasing the appreciation of the sector, improving working conditions and the well-being of the personnel. 87% think that the good sides of the restaurant industry should be talked about more in public.
- More investment in the coping of employees and supporting their well-being is hoped for.
- The labour shortage is seen as a real problem, as Finns no longer seek employment in the restaurant industry as entrepreneurs or employees as strongly as before.

"The restaurant industry is constantly renewing, that's our strength."

"The industry needs more visibility through positive stories – you need to show people that the restaurant industry can be a career, not just a temporary job."

Customer demands have increased in the restaurant industry



The good sides of the restaurant industry should be talked about more in public



The internationalisation of the restaurant industry is a positive thing



Legend: 1 Strongly disagree, 2 Somewhat disagree, 3 I don't know, 4 Somewhat agree, 5 Totally agree

Digitalisation and development of working life

61% feel that digitalisation is more of an opportunity than a threat in the industry.



"Automation takes care of the routines, so I can focus on the customer."

Digitalisation brings positive development, but it must not replace human encounters

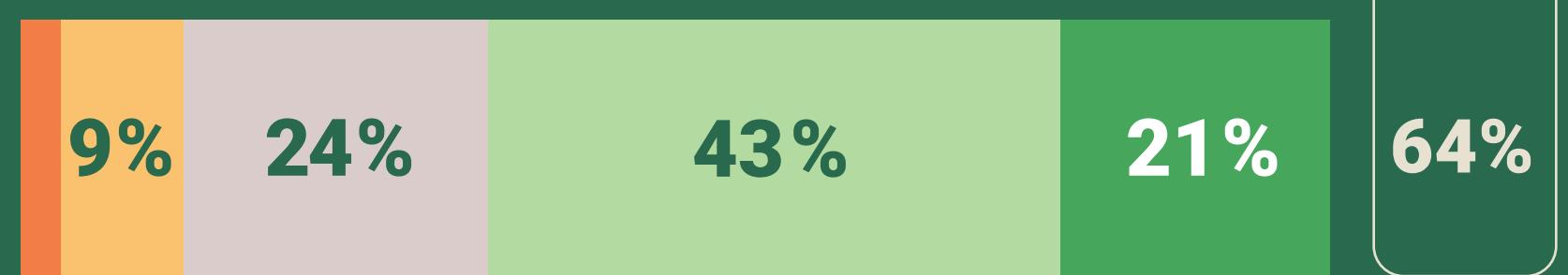
- Digitalisation is seen as a positive development as a whole, but its concrete benefits in one's own work and time management are not yet clearly visible.
- Young people under the age of 25 and employees of large restaurant companies with more than 250 employees have the most positive attitudes towards digitalisation in the sector.
- Technology is seen as facilitating orders, payments and background processes.
- The opportunities offered by technology are also seen in the utilisation of business expertise and the development of customer understanding and marketing. Digital tools help to track customer flows and preferences, which enables personalization of the service.
- International perspectives also emerged. Multilingual systems and digital solutions make it easier for foreign customers to handle affairs.
- Excessive digitalisation is not seen as a favourable development. Technology is hoped to be a support and tool, not a substitute for human encounters.

"Technology helps to serve international customers when language is not a barrier."

"Technology can be used to monitor customer flows and preferences – it can be used to make the service even more personal."

"The restaurant industry is work between people. If everything goes through machines, the customer experience will be poorer."

New technology can support the strengths of the restaurant industry, such as experiences



1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 I don't know

4 Somewhat agree 5 Totally agree

Assessment of one's own workplace and field

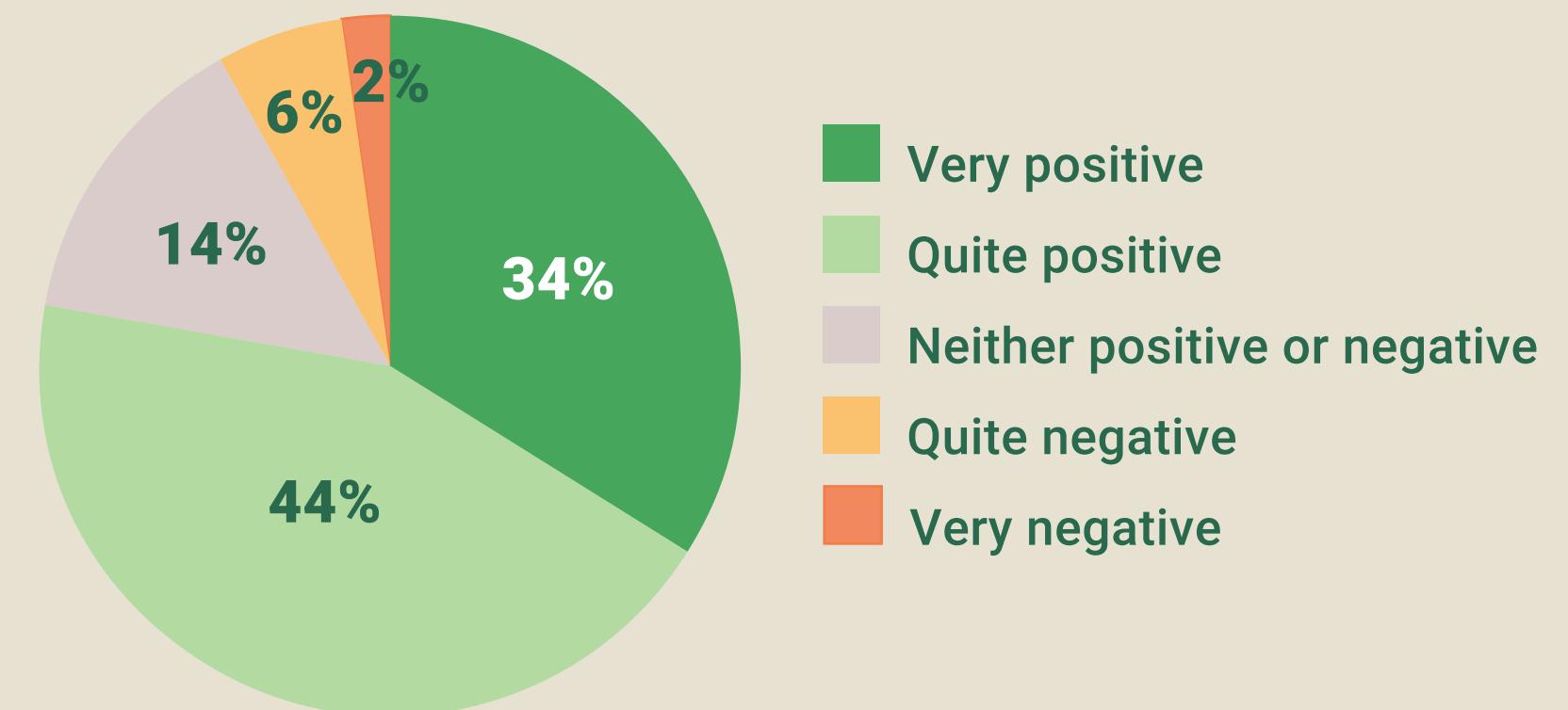
78% rated their workplace as positive.



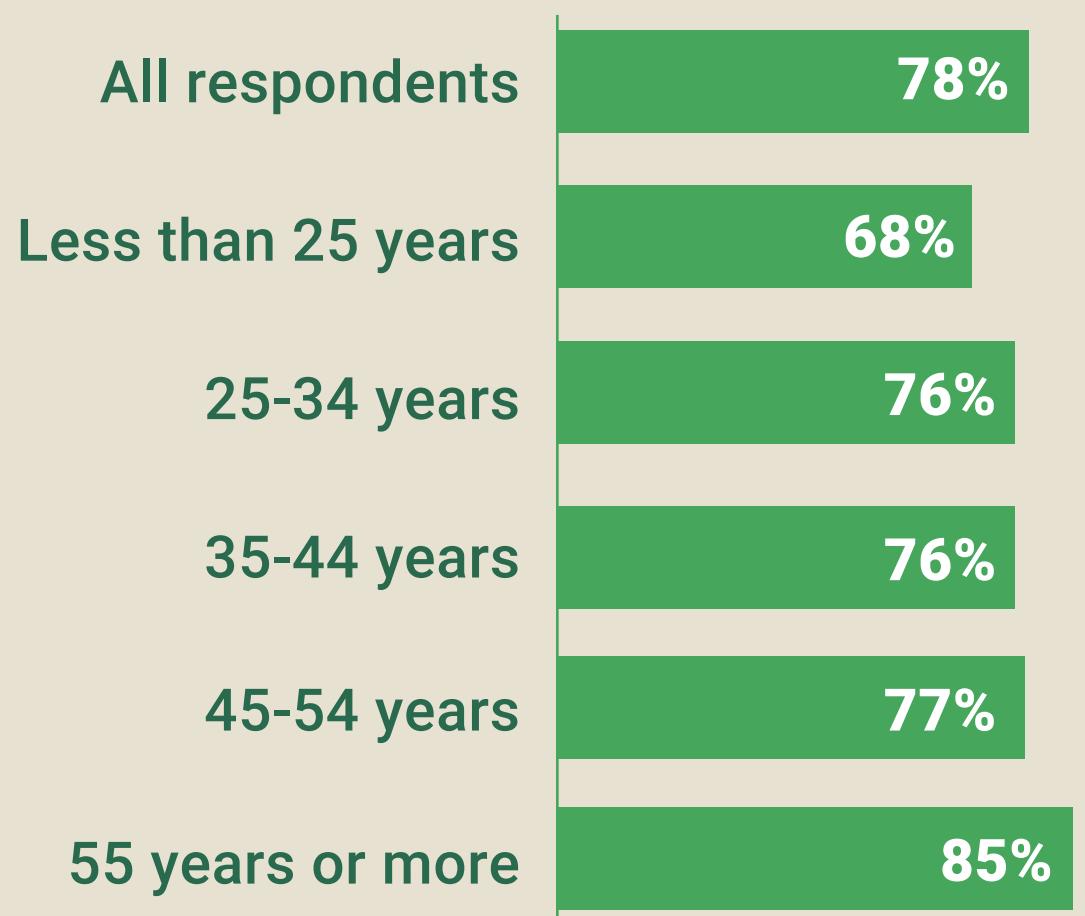
Perception of one's own workplace and employer

- Restaurant workers have a positive view of their own workplace.
- Based on work experience, those who have been in the restaurant industry for less than two years have the most negative perception of their own workplace.
- Of the different age groups, the most positive perception is among those aged 55 and older.
- Those with a foreign background have a significantly more negative assessment of their own workplace and employer than others, 18 percentage points lower.

What kind of perception do you have of your workplace / company as an employer?



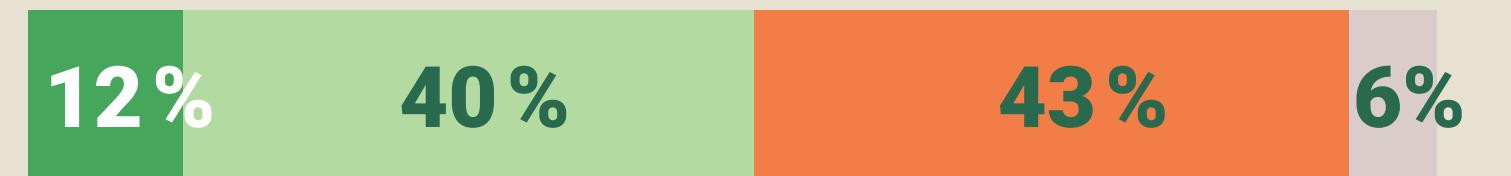
Positive perception of the workplace / company as an employer



Assessment of the situation in the restaurant industry and its development over the next year

- The development of the restaurant industry over the past year is seen to be clearly weaker at the level of Finland as a whole than in its own region. At the local level, it has been possible to adapt to the challenges or maintain the continuity of operations better than nationally. However, the overall picture at both levels is negative.
- Cautious and divided views on the coming year indicate general uncertainty in the sector and in the Finnish economy as a whole.
- Young people and employees with a foreign background stand out as clearly more optimistic, as does the event industry.

The situation in our area has during the last 12 months...

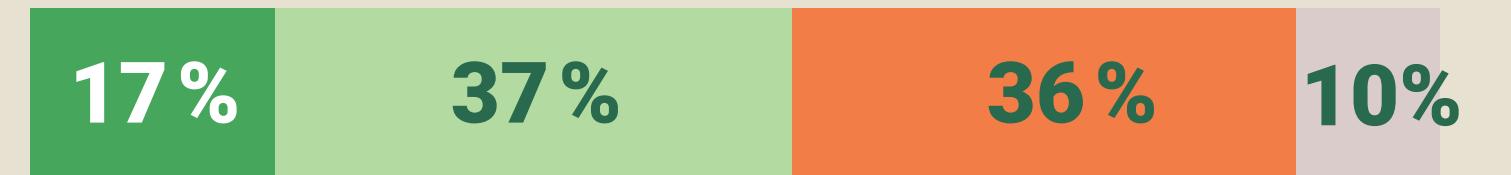


The situation in the field in Finland has during the last 12 months...



Improved Remained the same Degraded
I don't know

The overall situation in the field will...



Get better Stay the same Degrade
I don't know

Best things about the restaurant industry

Customers are the best in the restaurant industry, regardless of your own role. Otherwise, the values of entrepreneurs, employees and other people in the industry differ slightly from each other.

The best thing the restaurant industry has to offer its employees is the humane approach, the sense of community and immediate feedback, which few other industries offer. The restaurant industry is considered to develop important life skills: interaction, flexibility and the ability to cope with pressure. In the field, you learn about people, experiences, and doing things together, and this is also something which is wanted to convey outside the field.



"When a customer smiles and thanks me, I know I've done meaningful work."

"Everyone should work in a restaurant at some point – you learn to understand people and appreciate service in a different way."

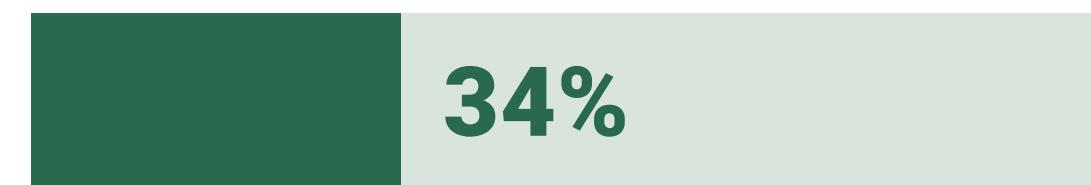
Best in the restaurant industry

Entrepreneurs

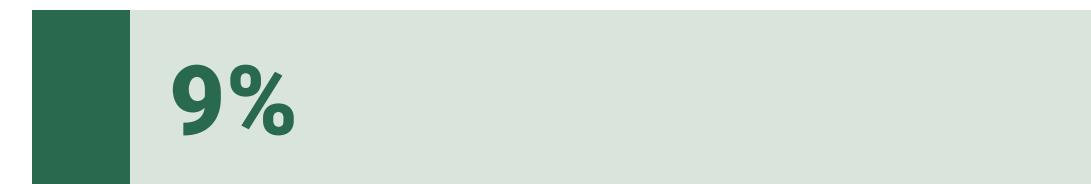
Customers & customer encounters



Creativity & development (implementation of ideas, development of concept/menu)



Freedom & autonomy (entrepreneurship)



Employees

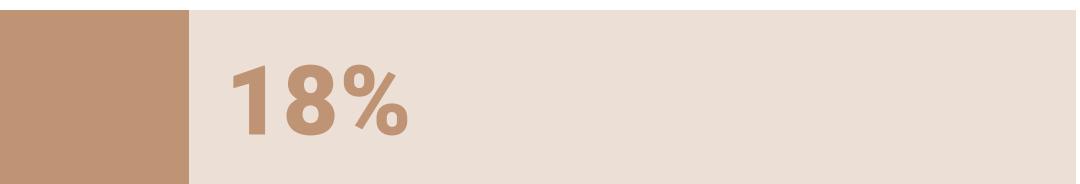
Customers & customer encounters



Co-workers & work community



Variety & versatility



Others (experts, supervisors, other management, students)

- Customers and customer encounters are at the center.
- Supervisors emphasize teamwork and leadership-related perspectives more than experts.
- The rest of the management emphasizes the constant change in the field and strategic perspectives (trends, developments) that students do not really discuss.
- The students emphasise learning and development, but their passion for the field is also mentioned more clearly than in other groups.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation is mainly viewed positively in the restaurant industry. It is seen as an inevitable development that opens up opportunities.

Internationalisation is considered to require new skills from work communities and management.

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a man in a restaurant kitchen. He is wearing a black cap and a dark jacket, and is looking towards the right. The background is blurred, showing shelves and equipment typical of a professional kitchen.

"Customers and employees are becoming more international – it keeps us moving, but it requires new skills."

"Tourists expect more – and that increases quality."

"Foreign employees are a great resource for us."

"Multiculturalism brings richness and new perspectives."



OPPORTUNITIES AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONALISING RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Workforce

Internationality is no longer just a trend of the future, but everyday life in the restaurant industry. It brings labour and expertise to the sector.

Customers

The growth of the international customer base raises quality levels and forces restaurants to develop their service to an even higher level.

Ideas

The diversification of food and cultural influences is seen as a strength. The international staff brings with them new recipe ideas and working methods.

Industry growth

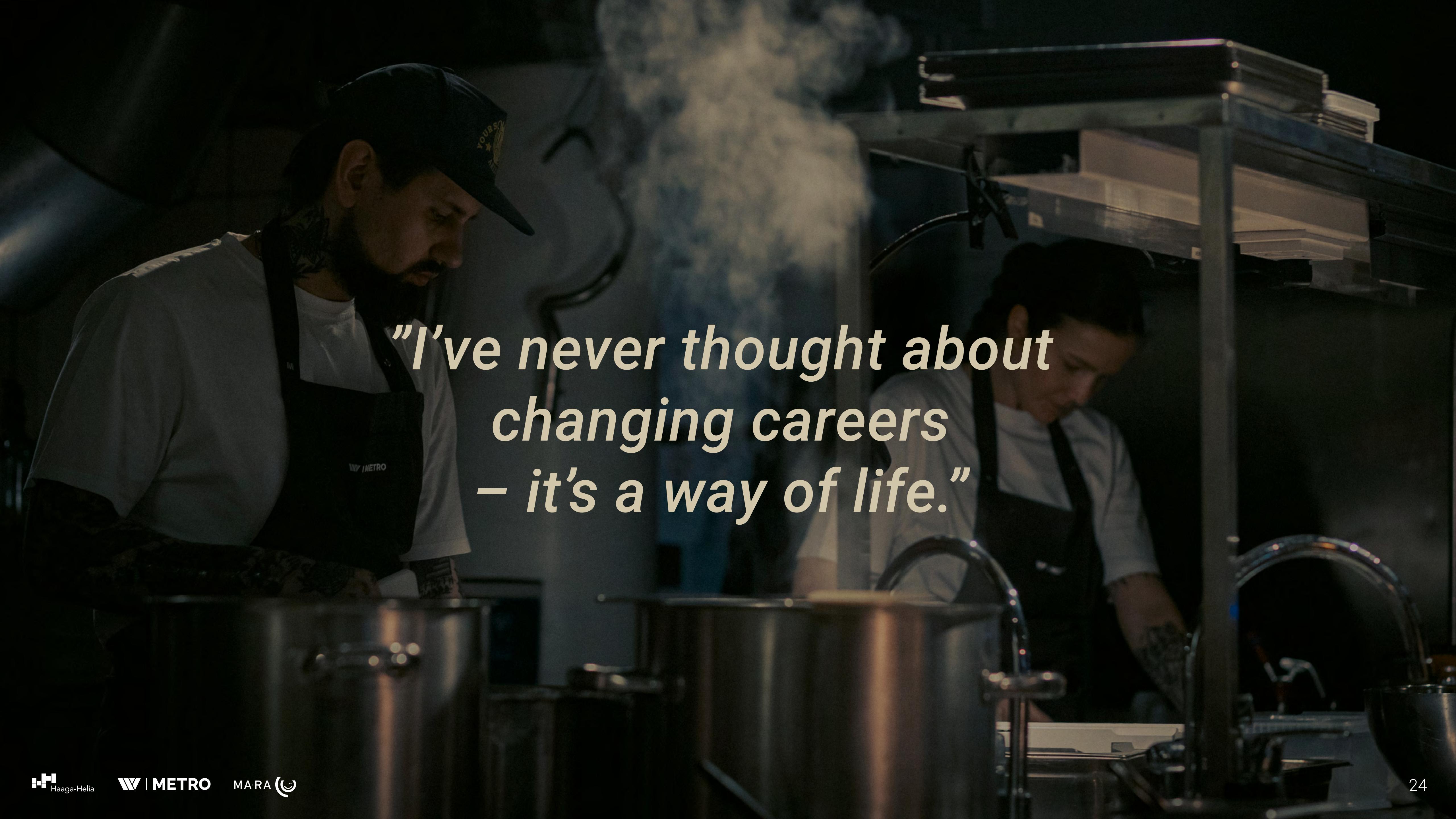
Internationality strengthens the vitality of the industry and can be used to develop new business opportunities. Internationality is seen as a resource, the utilisation of which can strengthen the attractiveness and growth of the entire sector in Finland.

Management

Multicultural work communities are seen as enriching, but they also place demands on leadership and language skills. Leaders are expected to have more interaction skills, flexibility and the ability to utilise different cultural strengths.

Language skills

The use of English as a tool divides opinions: for some, it is natural, while others find it challenging.



*"I've never thought about
changing careers
– it's a way of life."*



W | METRO MARA

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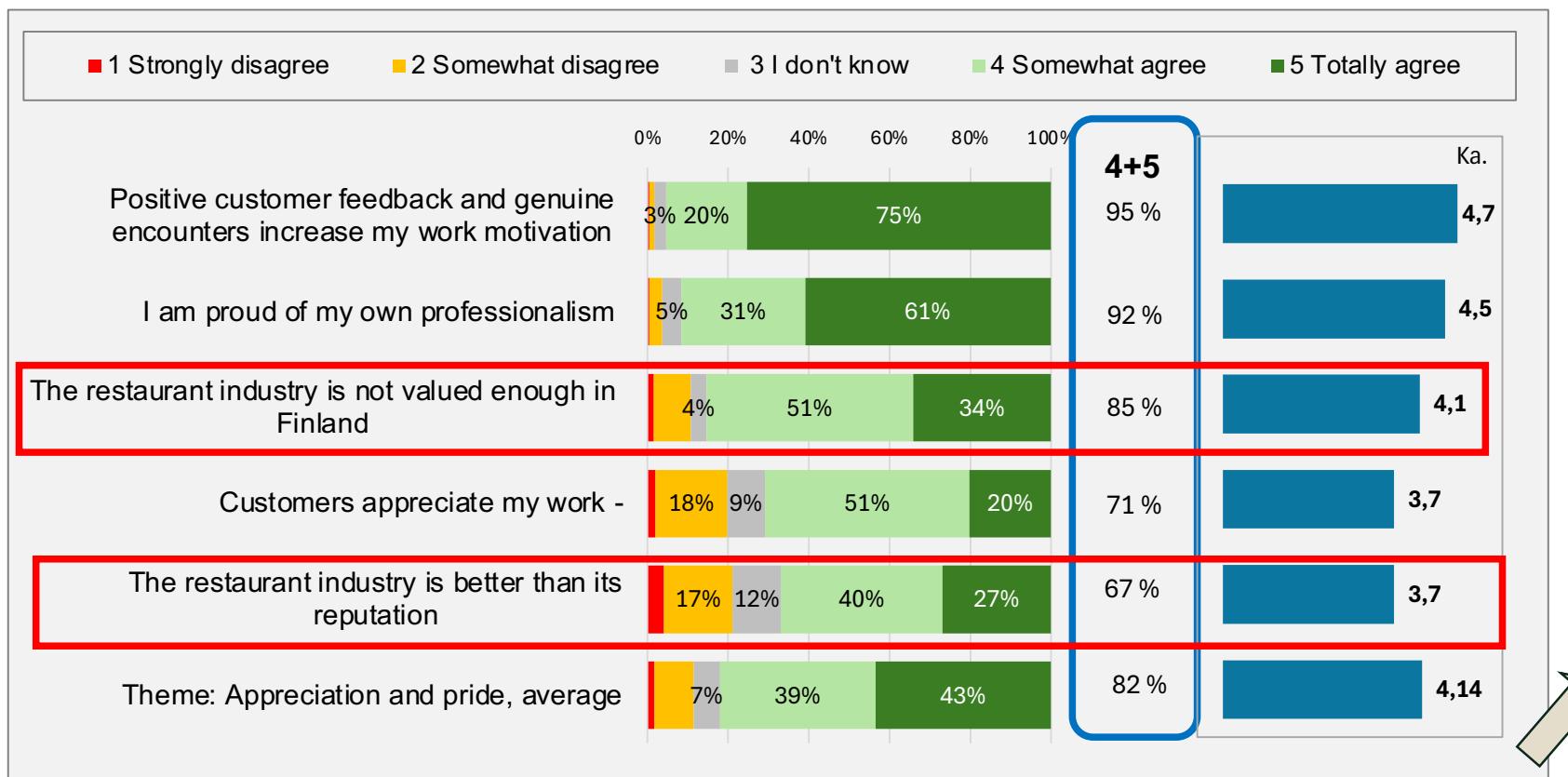
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Attachments



Appreciation of the restaurant industry in Finland

- Employees in the restaurant industry are highly motivated by positive customer feedback (95%) and feel strong pride in their own professionalism (92%). However, the social appreciation of the sector is seen as inadequate (85% agree that there is not enough appreciation)
- Employees see their reputation as better than their industry, but they feel a conflict between their own pride and external appreciation.



"The following are a number of statements related to the appreciation of the restaurant industry and working in the industry. Mark me if you completely agree with the statement, somewhat agree, I can't say, somewhat disagree, completely disagree. Answer according to your own view by choosing one option."

METRO

Result of the theme by background group

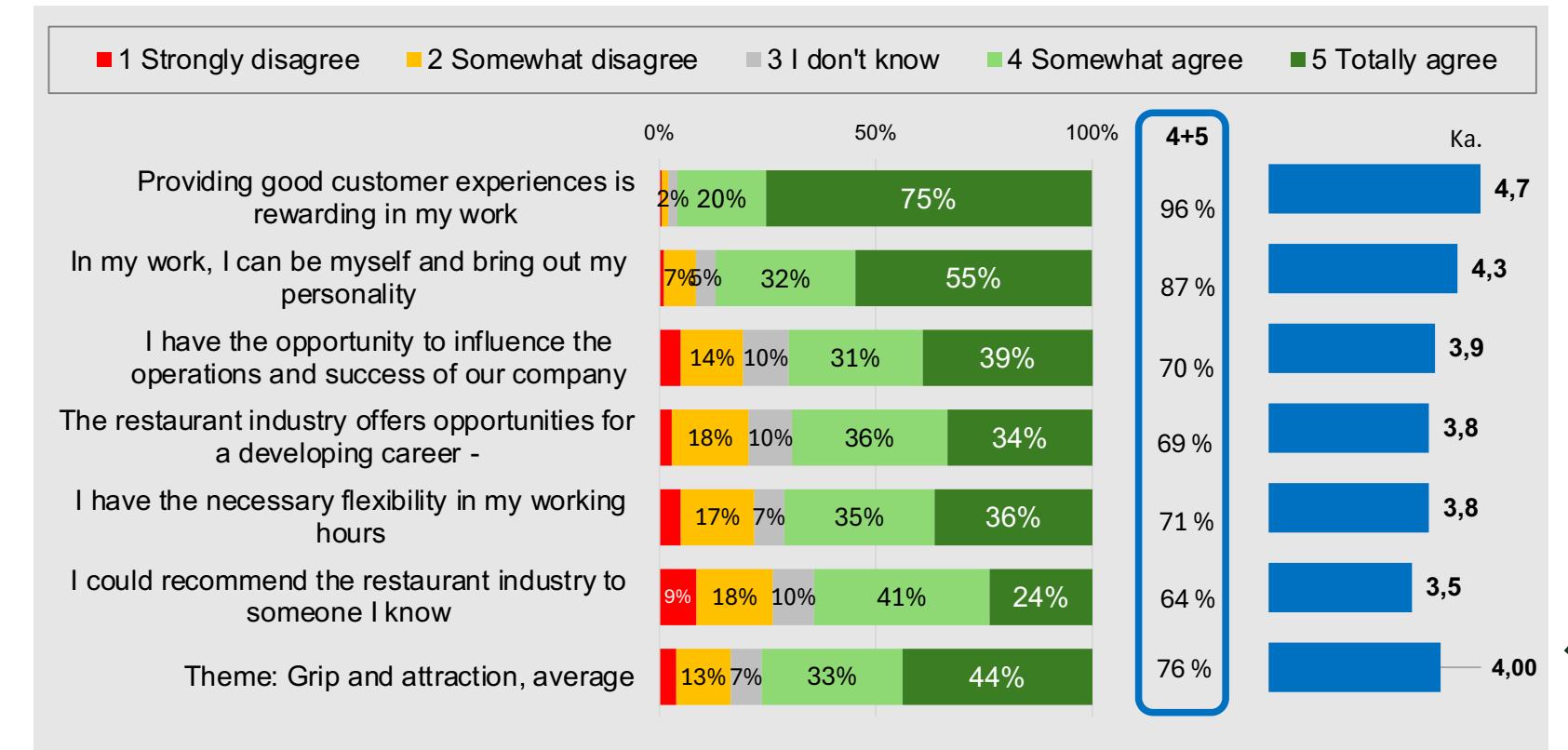


*Province of residence, job description, work experience in the restaurant industry, type of workplace, company size, age, gender, native language

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METRO

The retention and attractiveness of the restaurant industry is primarily based on the meaningfulness of the work and the opportunity to produce good experiences for customers, which is considered rewarding very generally (96%). **The use of personality in work tasks also strengthens the attractiveness of the field (87%).** Opportunities for influence, career paths and flexibility of working hours are assessed as moderate. **Two out of three respondents would recommend the field to an acquaintance.**



"Mark me if you completely agree with the statement, somewhat agree, I can't say, somewhat disagree, completely disagree. Answer according to your own view by choosing one option."

Result of the theme by background group

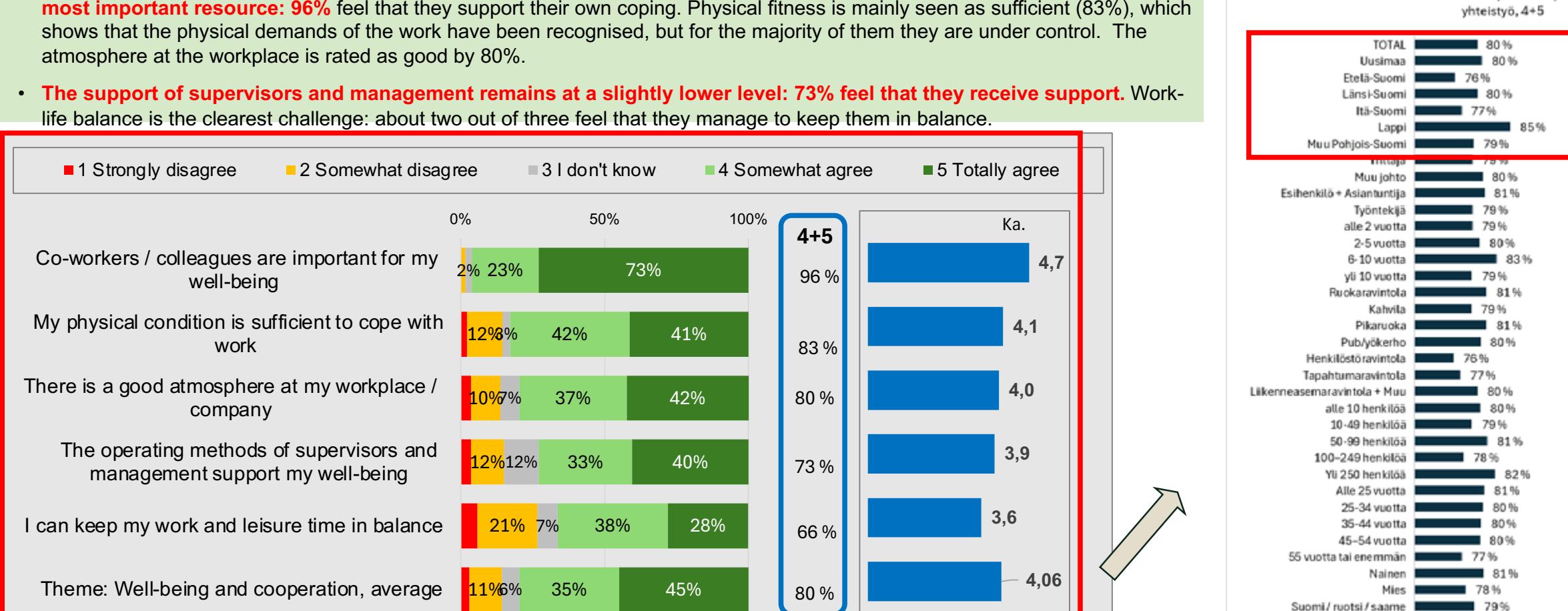


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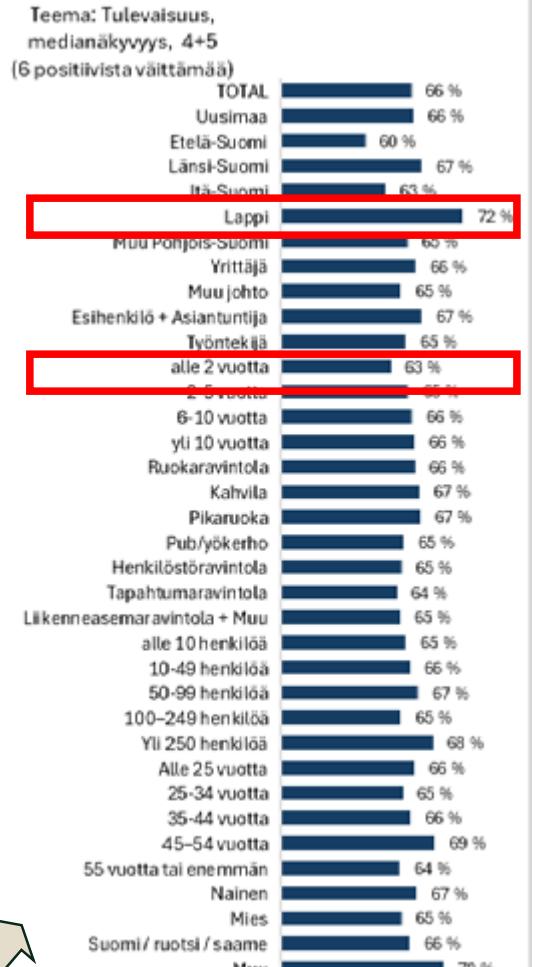
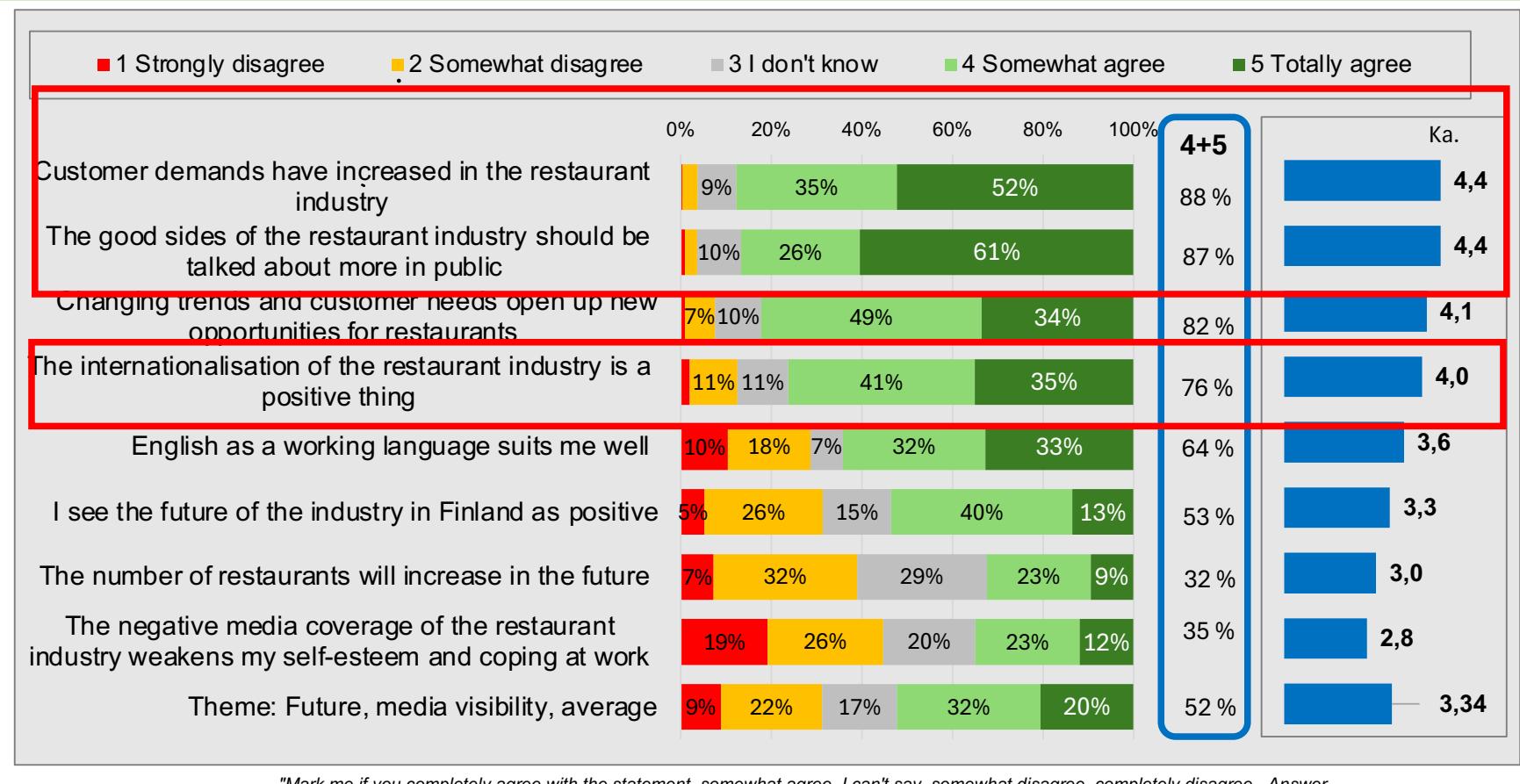
METRO

Result of the theme by background group



Assessments of matters related to the future

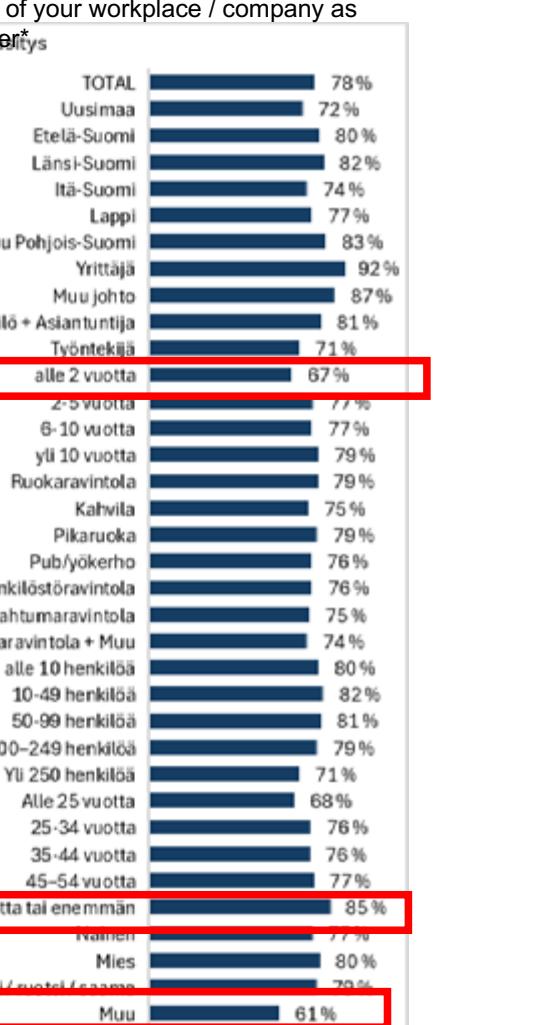
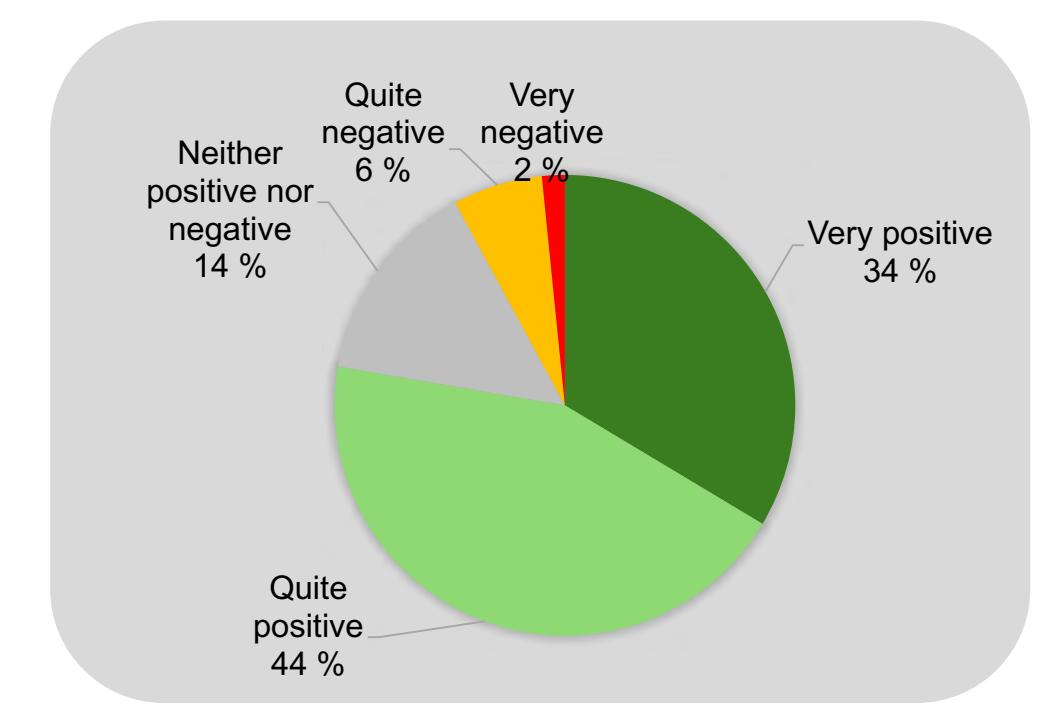
- Employees and management in the industry feel that customer expectations are increasing and see opportunities in changes in trends. The attitude towards internationalisation is positive, but the English language as a tool divides the respondents to some extent. **The most positive outlook comes from Lapland.**
- The future outlook for the sector in Finland is considered uncertain, and there is no strong belief in the growth of the number of restaurants.



*Province of residence, job description, work experience in the restaurant industry, type of workplace, company size, age, gender, native language

Perception of one's own workplace and employer

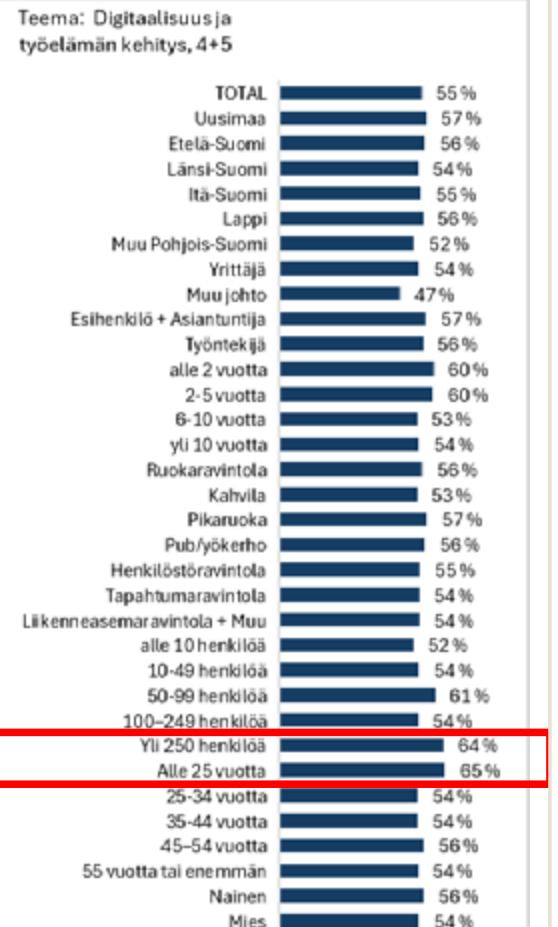
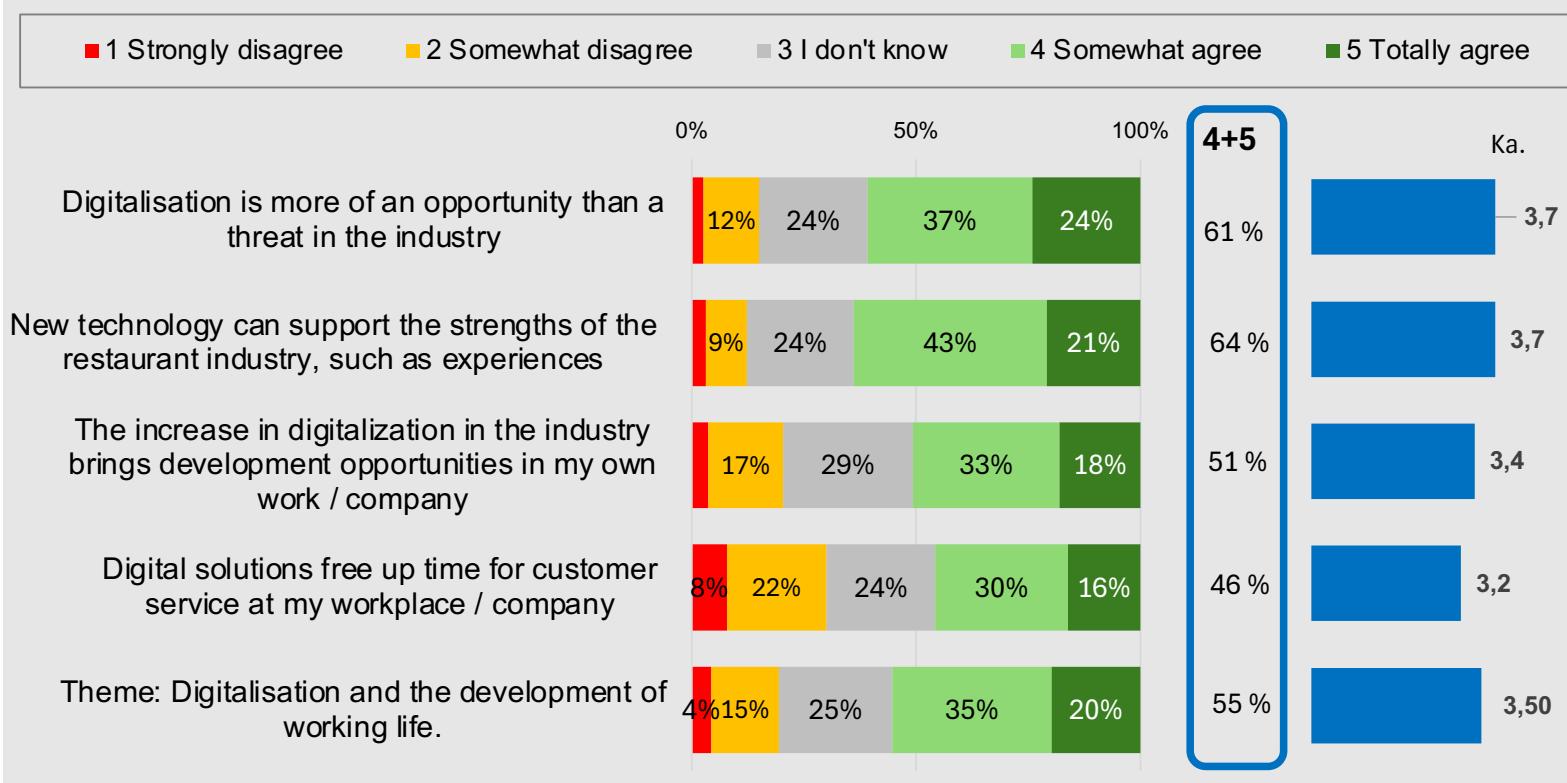
Based on the results, the employees' perception of their own workplace is positive. A total of 78% of the respondents rated their workplace as an employer very or fairly positive. Neutral assessments are 14%, which indicates that some people have reservations about their workplace without a strong opinion. Only 8% have a negative perception of the workplace.



*Province of residence, job description, work experience in the restaurant industry, type of workplace, company size, age, gender, native language

Assessments of matters related to digitalisation

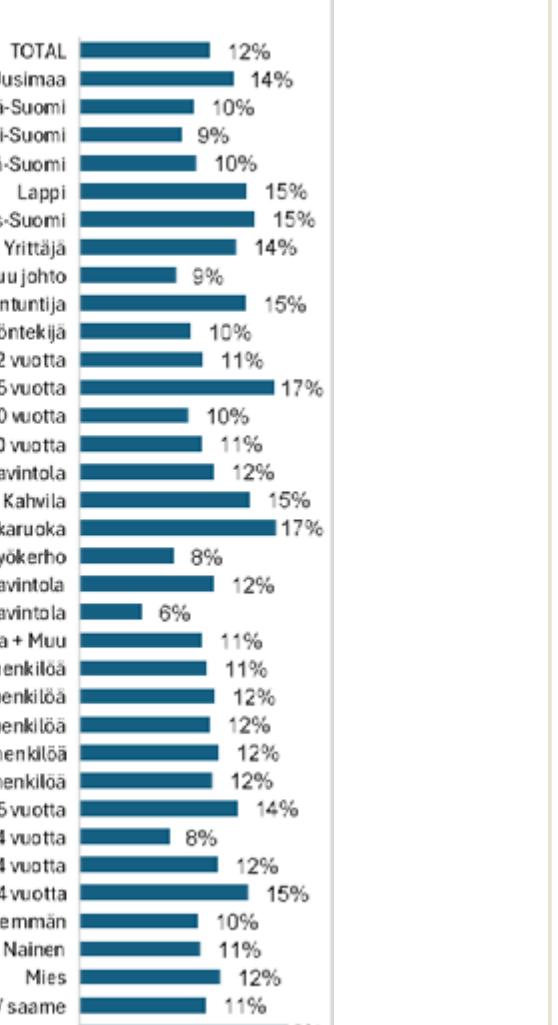
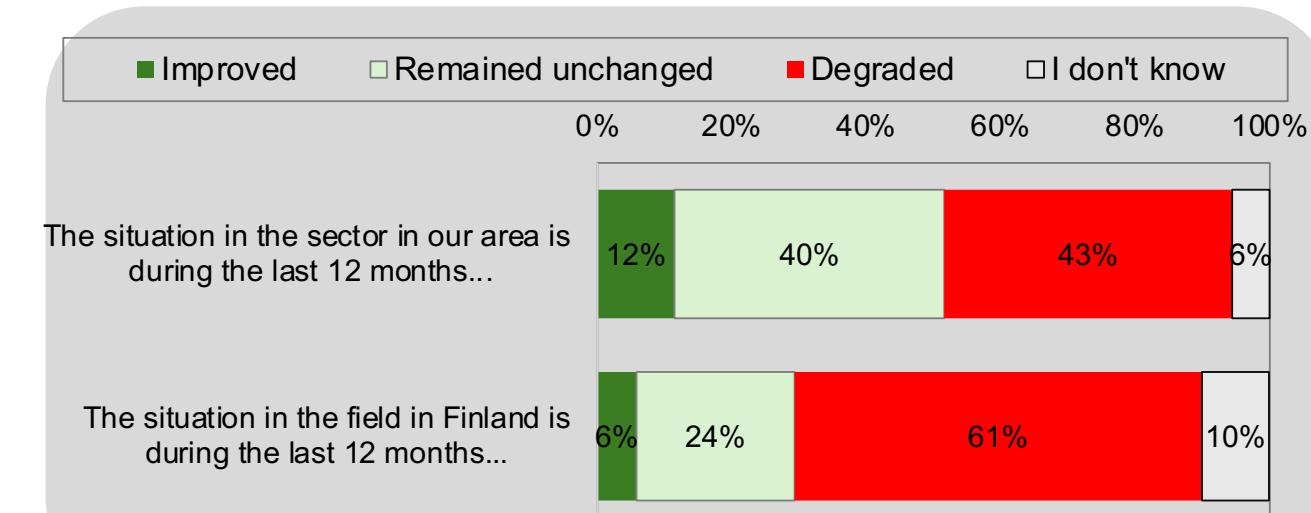
The respondents' attitude towards digitalisation is mainly positive, but cautious. **Digitalisation is seen as a positive development as a whole (average 3.5 / 5), but its concrete benefits in one's own work and time management are not yet clearly visible.** People under the age of 25 and those working in large companies have the most positive attitudes towards digitalisation.



*Province of residence, job description, work experience in the restaurant industry, type of workplace, company size, age, gender, native language

Assessment of the situation in the restaurant industry

- The development of the restaurant industry over the past year is seen to be clearly weaker at the level of Finland as a whole than in its own region. In their own area, 43% feel that the situation has deteriorated, but almost as many (40%) estimate that it has remained unchanged. In the whole of Finland, 61% consider the situation to have deteriorated and 6% see improvement.
- It is evident that the local level has been able to adapt to the challenges or maintain the continuity of operations better than nationally. However, the overall picture on both levels is negative.**



*Province of residence, job description, work experience in the restaurant industry, type of workplace, company size, age, gender, native language