

JOY AT WORK

Results and analysis from our national survey



Reason Why

INTRODUCTION

We conducted a nationally representative survey of 300 people in the UK to explore the concept of joy at work.

We wanted to discover if it was important, how often it's experienced, if it's appropriate and what brings joy at work.

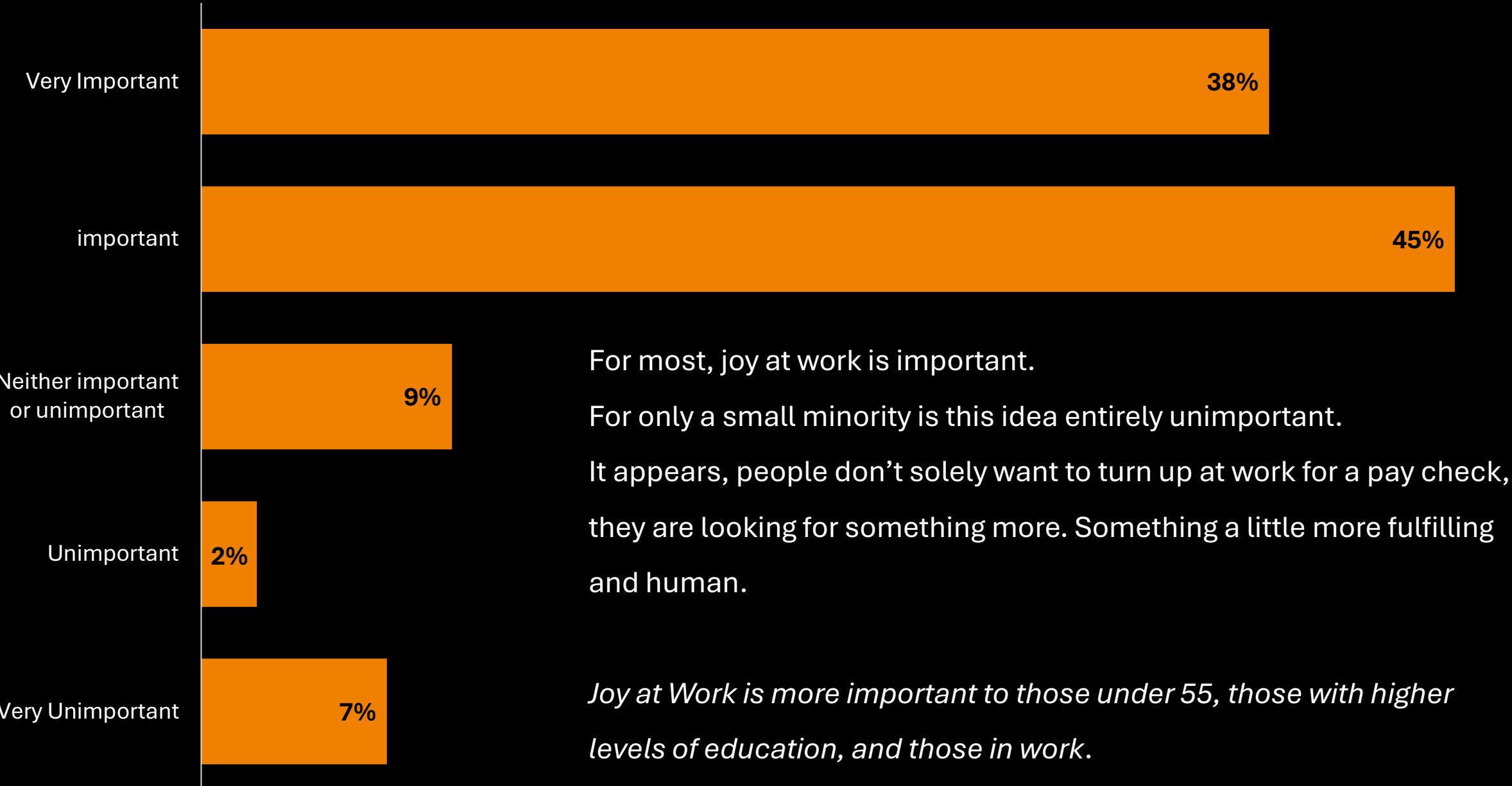
But before we did any of that, we needed to pre-research the concept to get to a valid definition of joy at work that we could share with participants.

This is what we used:

What it is: Joy at work is the satisfaction of doing meaningful tasks in a supportive environment.

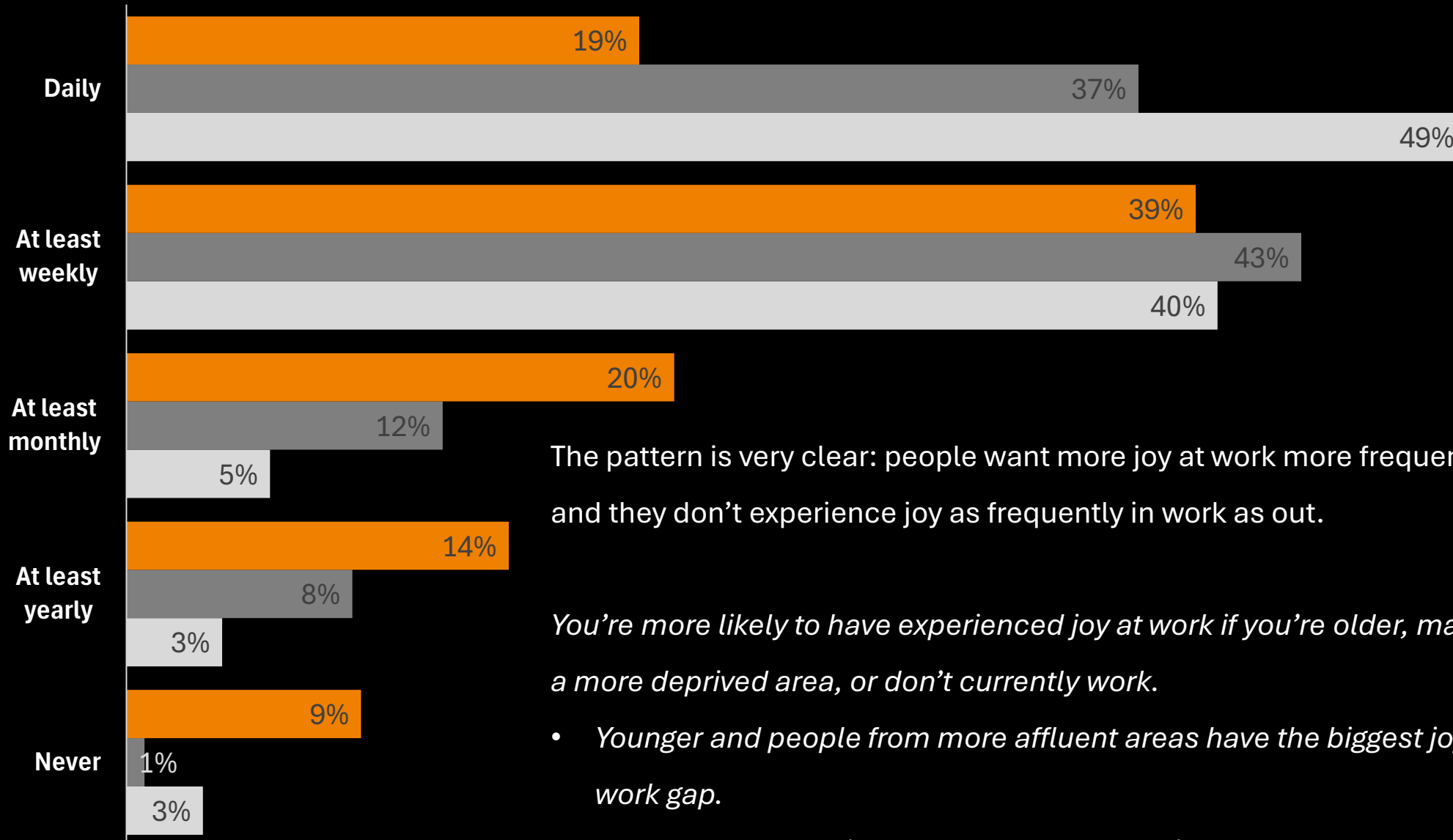
What it does: Joy at work enhances your well-being and productivity, in both good and challenging times.

How important is it to feel joy at work?



Frequency of Joy

- *How often do you experience joy at work?*
- *How often do you experience joy outside of work?*
- *How often do you think employees should expect to experience joy at work?*

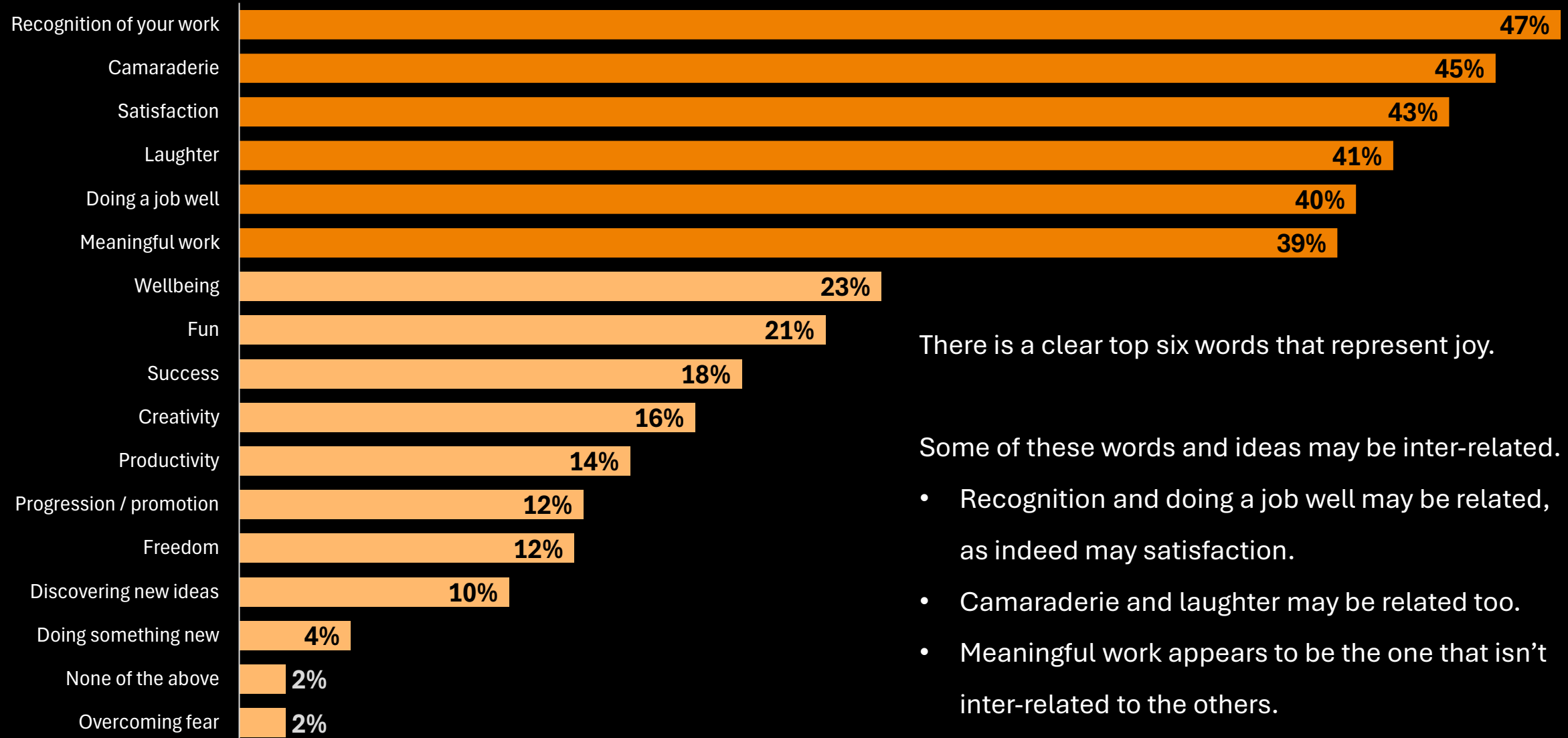


The pattern is very clear: people want more joy at work more frequently than they experience, and they don't experience joy as frequently in work as out.

You're more likely to have experienced joy at work if you're older, male, have faith, come from a more deprived area, or don't currently work.

- *Younger and people from more affluent areas have the biggest joy outside work to inside work gap.*
- *Women have the biggest gap between they joy at work they want, and what they get.*

Choose up to four words or phrases that best represent what you think of as joy at work

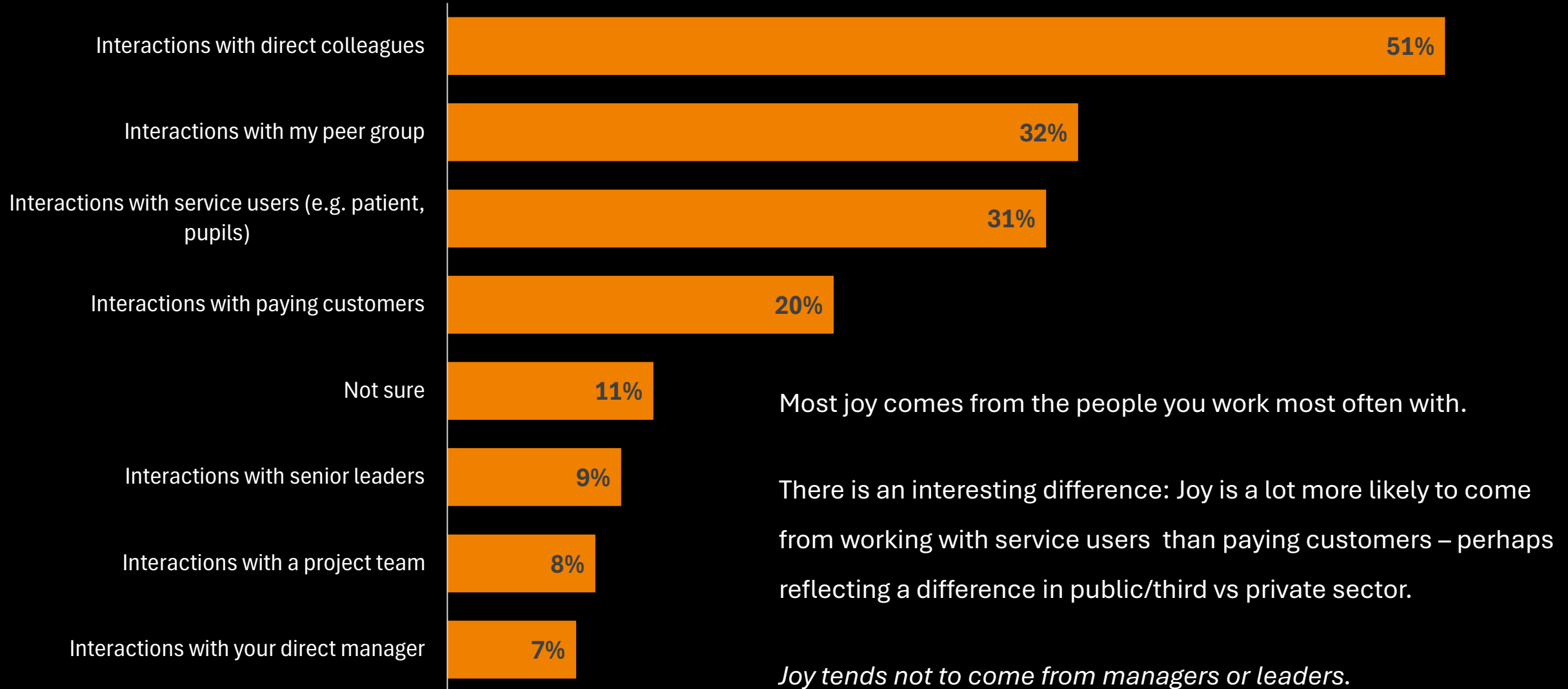


There is a clear top six words that represent joy.

Some of these words and ideas may be inter-related.

- Recognition and doing a job well may be related, as indeed may satisfaction.
- Camaraderie and laughter may be related too.
- Meaningful work appears to be the one that isn't inter-related to the others.

Which of these interactions is most likely to bring you joy at work? (Choose up to 2)

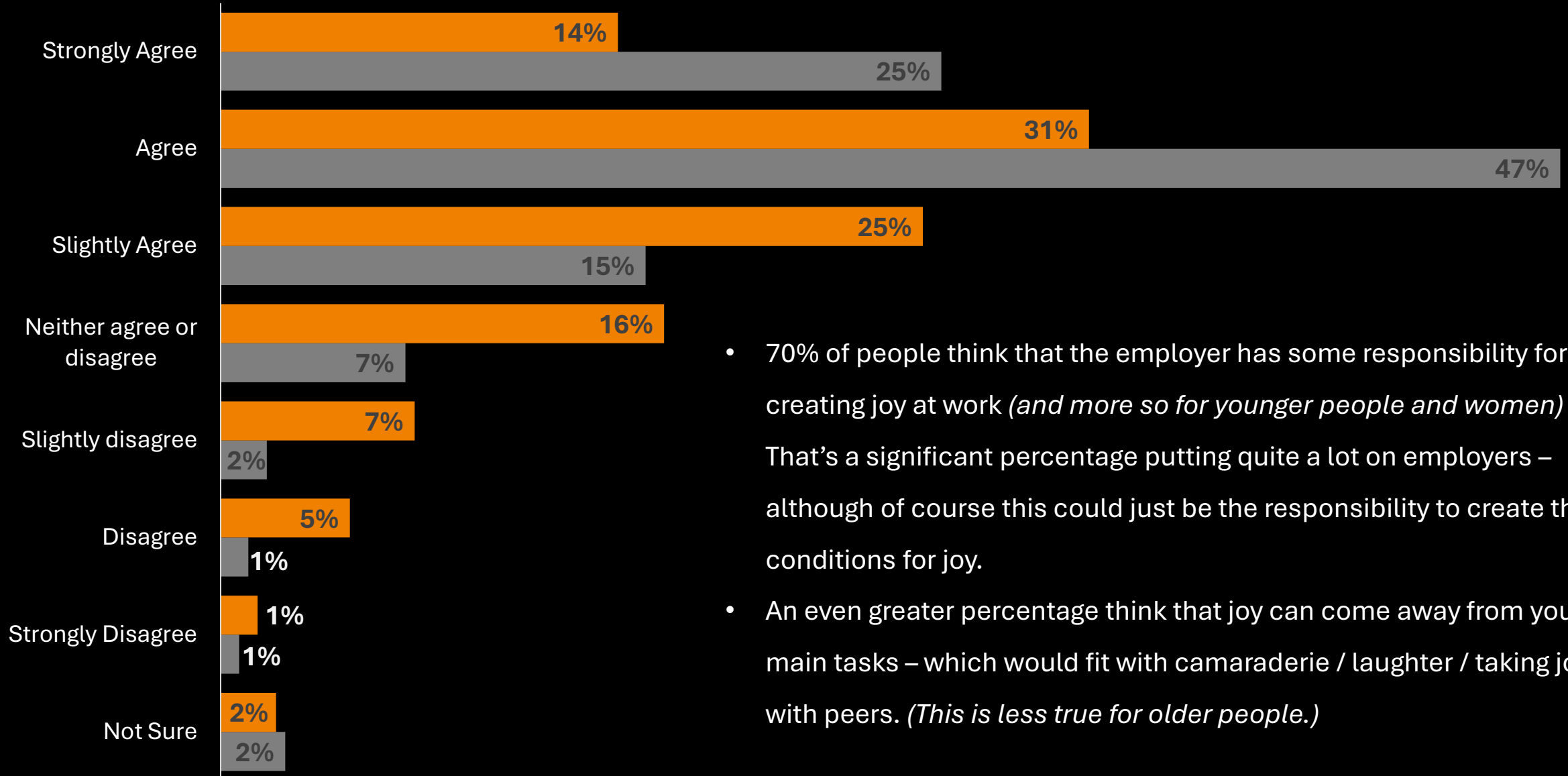


Sources of Joy



■ To what extent do you agree that: It is the role of the employer to create joy at work?

■ To what extent do you agree that: Joy at work can come from things other than what you are primarily paid to do?

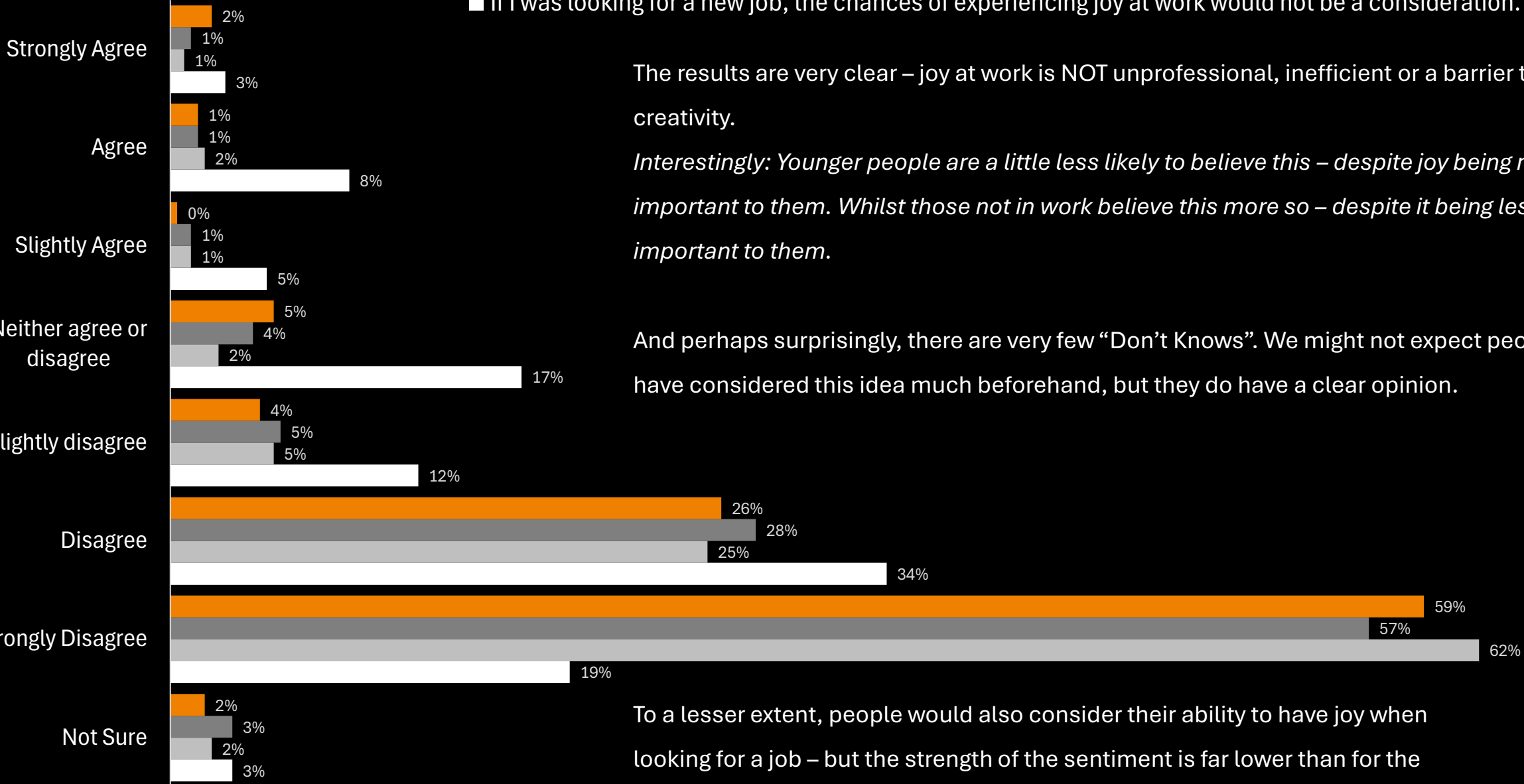


- 70% of people think that the employer has some responsibility for creating joy at work (*and more so for younger people and women*) That's a significant percentage putting quite a lot on employers – although of course this could just be the responsibility to create the conditions for joy.
- An even greater percentage think that joy can come away from your main tasks – which would fit with camaraderie / laughter / taking joy with peers. (*This is less true for older people.*)

Impact of Joy



- Experiencing joy at work is unprofessional.
- Experiencing joy at work is inefficient.
- Experiencing joy at work reduces creativity.
- If I was looking for a new job, the chances of experiencing joy at work would not be a consideration.



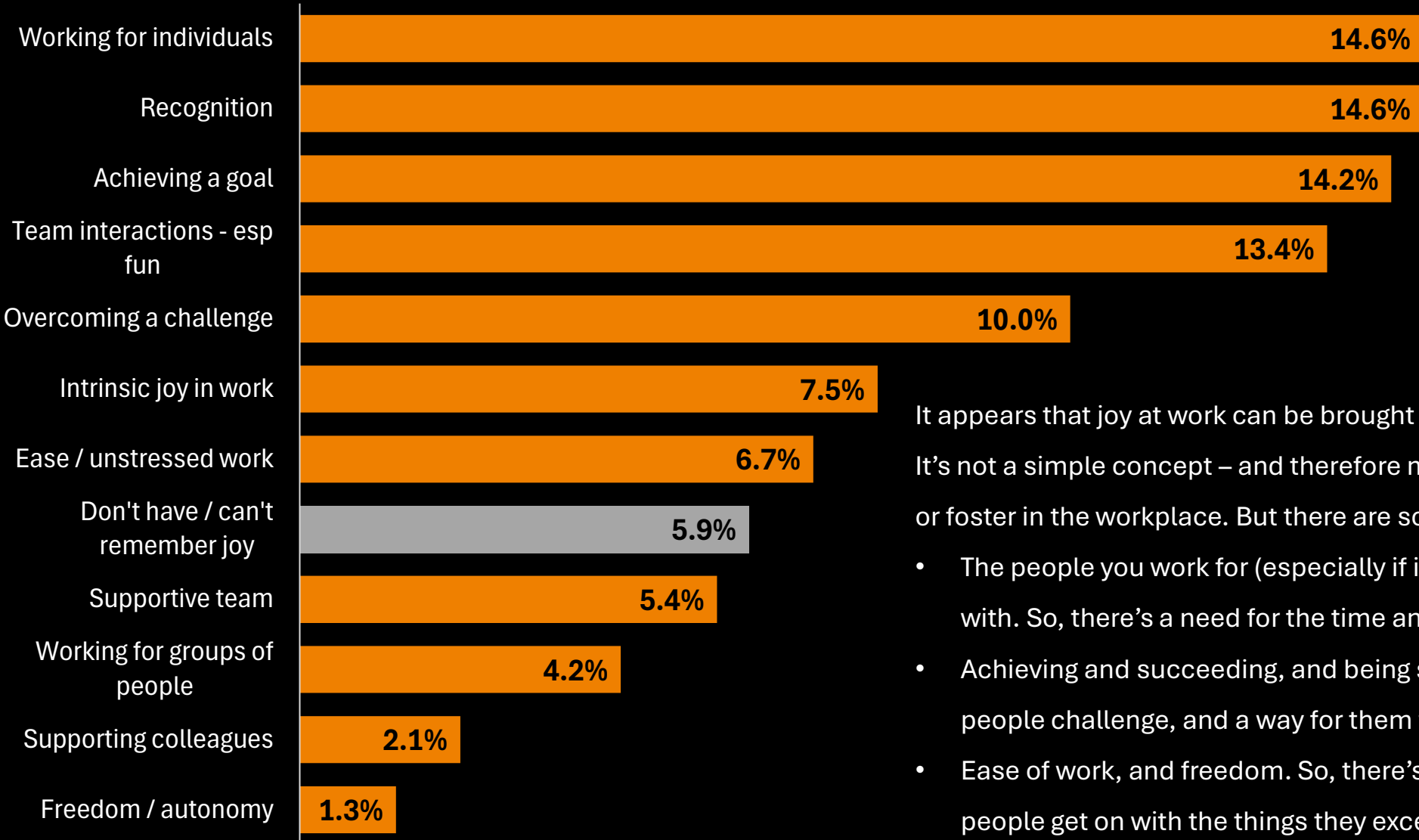
The results are very clear – joy at work is NOT unprofessional, inefficient or a barrier to creativity.

Interestingly: Younger people are a little less likely to believe this – despite joy being more important to them. Whilst those not in work believe this more so – despite it being less important to them.

And perhaps surprisingly, there are very few “Don’t Knows”. We might not expect people to have considered this idea beforehand, but they do have a clear opinion.

To a lesser extent, people would also consider their ability to have joy when looking for a job – but the strength of the sentiment is far lower than for the other questions

Can you describe a time when you felt joy at work, and how you felt? (Free text)



We qualified this question as: *Not the end of the working week or pay day - think about the times that match our definition: "Joy at work is the satisfaction of doing meaningful tasks in a supportive environment"* Just over 20% didn't answer or gave a non-answer – these are the responses excluding those.

It appears that joy at work can be brought about by many things.

It's not a simple concept – and therefore may not be easy for employers to create or foster in the workplace. But there are some common elements to joy.

- The people you work for (especially if it's one-one) and the people you work with. So, there's a need for the time and space to make human connection.
- Achieving and succeeding, and being seen to do so. So, there's a need to give people challenge, and a way for them to feel achievement.
- Ease of work, and freedom. So, there's a need to remove barriers, and let people get on with the things they excel at.

Can you describe a time when you felt joy at work, and how you felt? (Free text)

Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fulfilled my task and received an encouraging compliment for me and my team</i> • <i>Being recognised as doing a good job, just by saying that was amazing what you done today.</i> • <i>Getting positive and personal feedback from my clients</i>
Working for individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Being able to provide a client with support and knowing they are satisfied</i> • <i>Looking after a service user who was going through awful personal trauma to make their situation more bearable.</i> • <i>When a pupil makes a small achievement</i>
Achieving a goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Joy at work is seeing the results of your hard work</i> • <i>When a training session ended and all attendees understood what was expected and how to achieve it</i> • <i>When I absolutely nailed a task. I knew it and everyone knew it. It was nice to have that belief in myself validated.</i>
Team interactions - esp fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My employer provides a work place and environment which is pleasant to, but the joy is provided by the humour and chatter with work mates.</i> • <i>Having a laugh with others, doing the job well, getting on well with others</i> • <i>Working in a group where the atmosphere is relaxed. You can laugh and joke whilst still doing your job</i>
Overcoming a challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resolving major complaints/ problems between supplier and customer with mutual satisfaction that enhances relationship</i> • <i>Doing a very difficult assignment and succeeding against a tight deadline - no one else could have achieved it at the time.</i> • <i>When I successfully concluded a 14 month investigation that colleagues said couldn't be done!</i>
Intrinsic joy in work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I love my trade so I experience joy everyday I work</i> • <i>I have felt joy at work in many previous roles, where I felt my job made a difference and helped people</i> • <i>When I was in the royal navy, it felt really good and worthwhile. Getting up and looking forward to a new working day</i>
Ease / unstressed work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Days when everything went well for myself and others - made me feel happy and peaceful</i> • <i>Feeling good with no burdens or pressure</i> • <i>When the task has gone smoothly from start to finish.</i>

CONCLUSIONS

- **Joy at Work matters to people.** That's a great message to hear. People "get" the idea , it has meaning to them. Work doesn't have to be a relentless grind, it can add to the human experience.
- Joy doesn't detract from your ability to do the job, even if the joy comes from things other than your main tasks. In fact, we might interpret these results to say that **joy helps you work better.**
- **But, people don't get the joy they want** right now – by which we mean:
 - Connections with people – especially teammates or people you serve
 - The opportunity to achieve and / or the chance to be good at what you do
 - Having meaning in work, doing something worthwhile

These can be interlinked, which gives the opportunity for more profound joy.

- And people tend to believe that **their employer should be helping them achieve joy at work**, by:
 - Creating the time and space to make human connection.
 - Providing challenge, and a way for achievement to be felt
 - Removing barriers, and letting people do what they're best at

This tends to apply for all people. But younger people and women and have a higher expectation that isn't currently being met.

Younger people may be in less meaningful or secure roles, so might not have conditions for joy

Women may be lower paid / status roles, and more often part-time – again joy may be harder to access in these roles.

About Reason Why

Reason Why is a research consultancy for:
Employer value proposition, employee engagement and internal communications

We are on a mission to Improve the Experience of Work

We can help you:

- attract the right people to your organisation
- enhance engagement and communication

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