



# Pathways to Narratives

Steering Committee Research Read-Out

DECEMBER 2024



# Agenda

Updates

Employer IDI Insights

Panel 1 Findings and  
Discussion

What's Next?



# Employer IDI Insights about Skills-Based Hiring

# ASPIRATIONAL

- **Thriving businesses lead to better results:** Employers want thriving businesses, an invested team, and a good company culture—leading to better results for their customers/audiences.
- **“Diamond in the rough”:** They’re looking for people who can slot right into their teams and deliver value right away.

# SOCIAL

- **Skills-based hiring is used, but not always discussed:** Employers said that this was a very popular, much utilized trend in hiring.

*“Nobody is talking about it because everyone is just doing it.”*

- **Skills-based hiring helps employee morale:** Delivering value, while not draining time or resources in training from scratch.

*“Do you want to teach someone how to do things or bring them in to get things done?”*

- **Find the cultural fit:** Employers are hiring for soft skills/values and more willing to train for the hard skills

# EMOTIONAL

- **Under pressure:** More jobs to fill than people to fill them, and every day the job is open costs money.
- **Taking the weight out of the decision:** While some employers think skills-based hiring is risky, HR leaders have found ways to dial down the risk.
- **The kinds of workers they want:** Candidates hired for skills are described as more loyal to company, more willing to take initiative, and more willing to work outside their job description.
- **Fear of being left behind:** Several spoke about becoming obsolete if they didn't use SBH – that it's becoming the new normal.



# FUNCTIONAL

- **Financial cost is heavy:** HR leaders were all quick to talk about their “time to fill” metrics, as well as the opportunity costs associated with open positions. There’s significant cost to *not acting*.
- **Skills-based hiring requires evolving the whole hiring process:** Beyond removing degree requirements, hiring managers are retooling job descriptions for skills/problems to be solved, changing up interview questions, and rethinking hiring panels.
- **Employers are largely building assessments themselves:** Using a mix of personality/behavioral screenings to test for cultural fit and hands-on assessment to evaluate hard skills

# Learner/Employer Panel Findings: First Wave

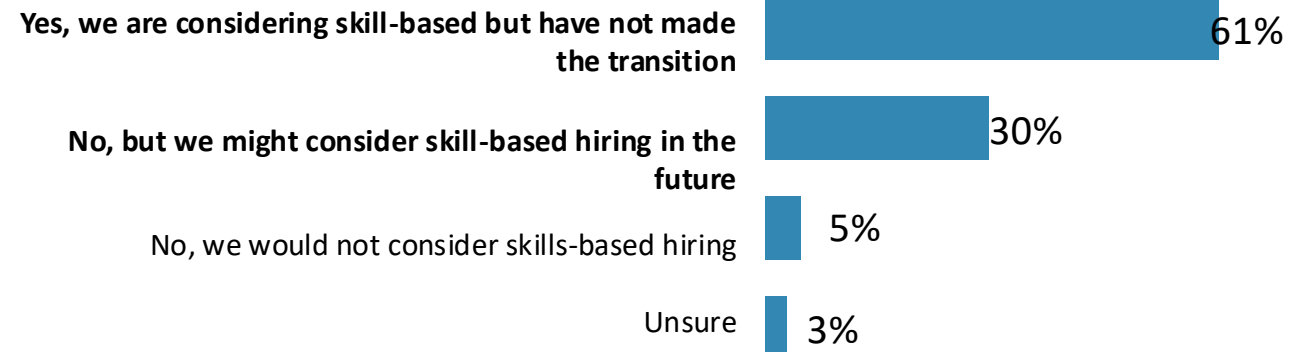


# Hiring Managers

## Targeted Sample:

- Consider their work “white collar”
- Make decisions at work about who should be hired
- Work in an industry that could consider skill-based hiring, but it not currently using the approach
- Manager level and above

*Q. Has your company considered adopting a skills-based hiring approach for some jobs?*

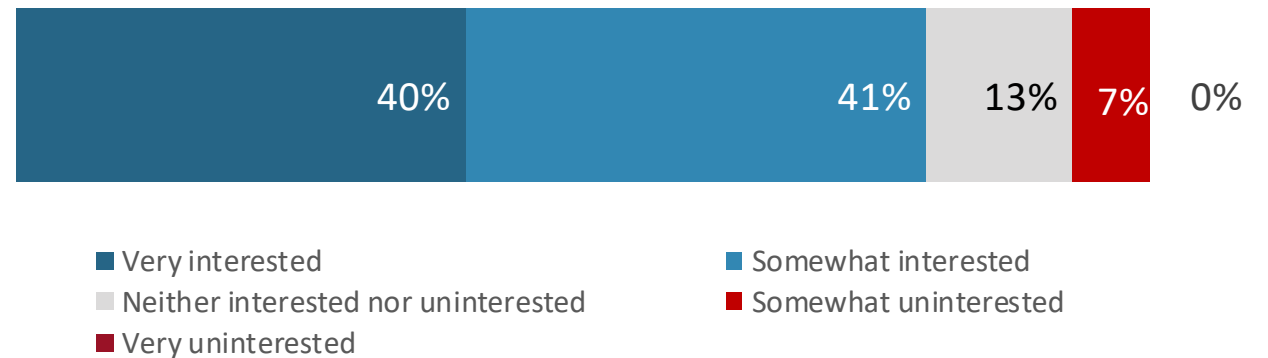


# Learners

## Targeted Sample:

- Ages 14-24
- Interested in or neutral about pursuing education or training in the future
- Not “very uninterested” in pursuing a non-degree pathway in the future

*Q. With that in mind, how interested are you personally in pursuing a non-degree pathway in the future?*



## Key Findings

- Our audiences are **ready to be reeled in**
- But they **need more support**
- **Communications** matters



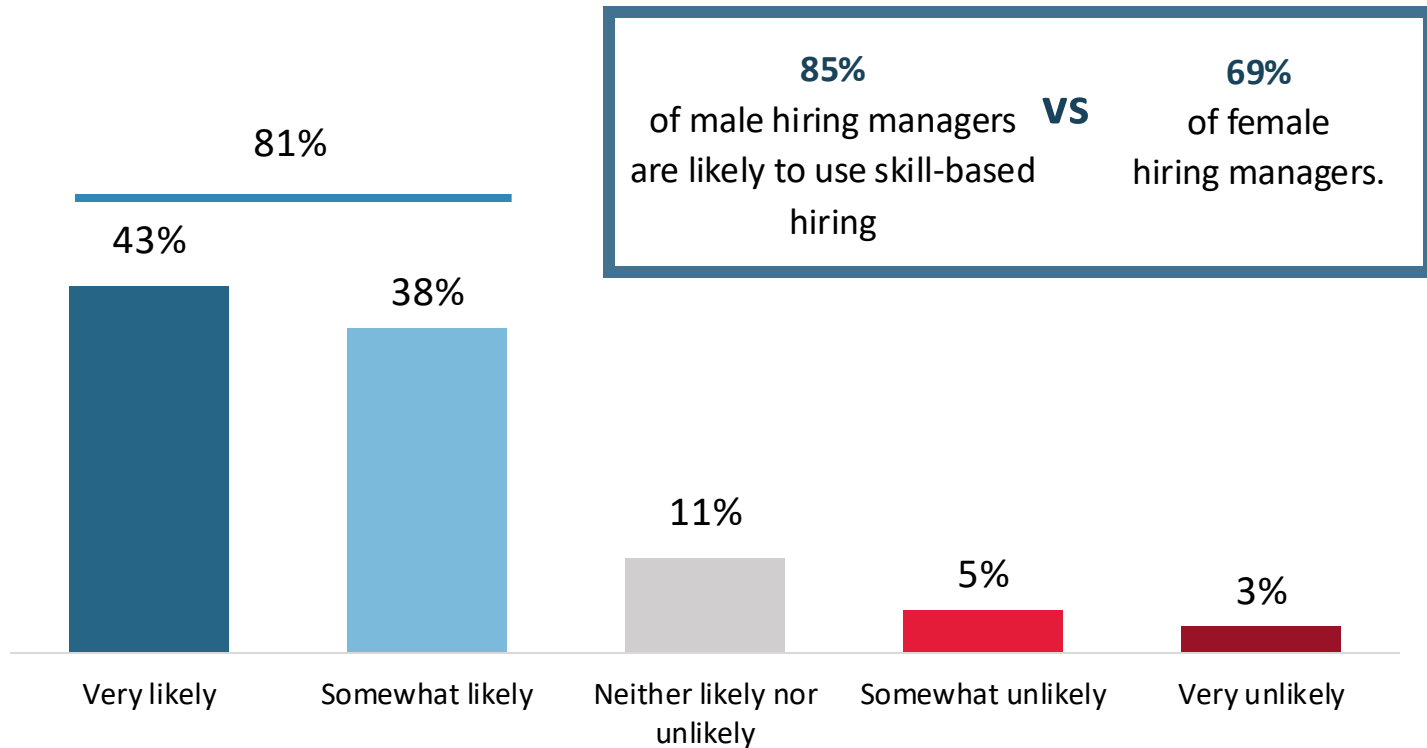
# Ready to Be Reeled In

Our audiences are eager and ready to explore non-degree pathways and skill-based hiring.  
It's just not top of mind for them.

But when they *are* focused on the issue and provided the right information,  
**they're primed to engage.**

# Four in 5 hiring managers are likely to hire candidates without a degree if they demonstrate proven skills.

Q. How likely or unlikely are you to hire a candidate without a college degree based on their proven skills?

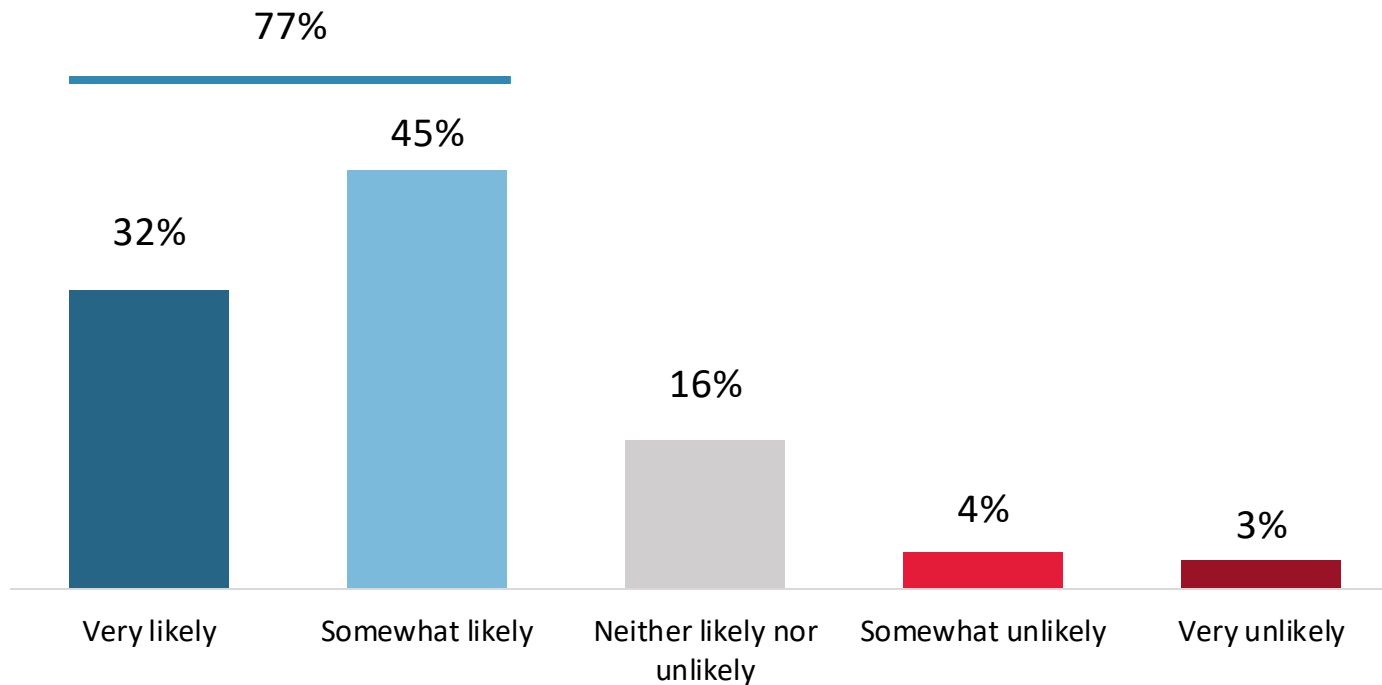


*"I know many skilled people who have no formal college education. They are lifelong learners who are mostly self-taught. They know more than many people with college degrees."*

*"I think experience plays a major role in how effective an employee can and will be. A degree doesn't necessarily give the same confidence in hiring."*

# Over three fourths are willing to advocate internally to adopt skill-based hiring.

Q. How likely or unlikely are you to advocate within your company for adopting skill based hiring?



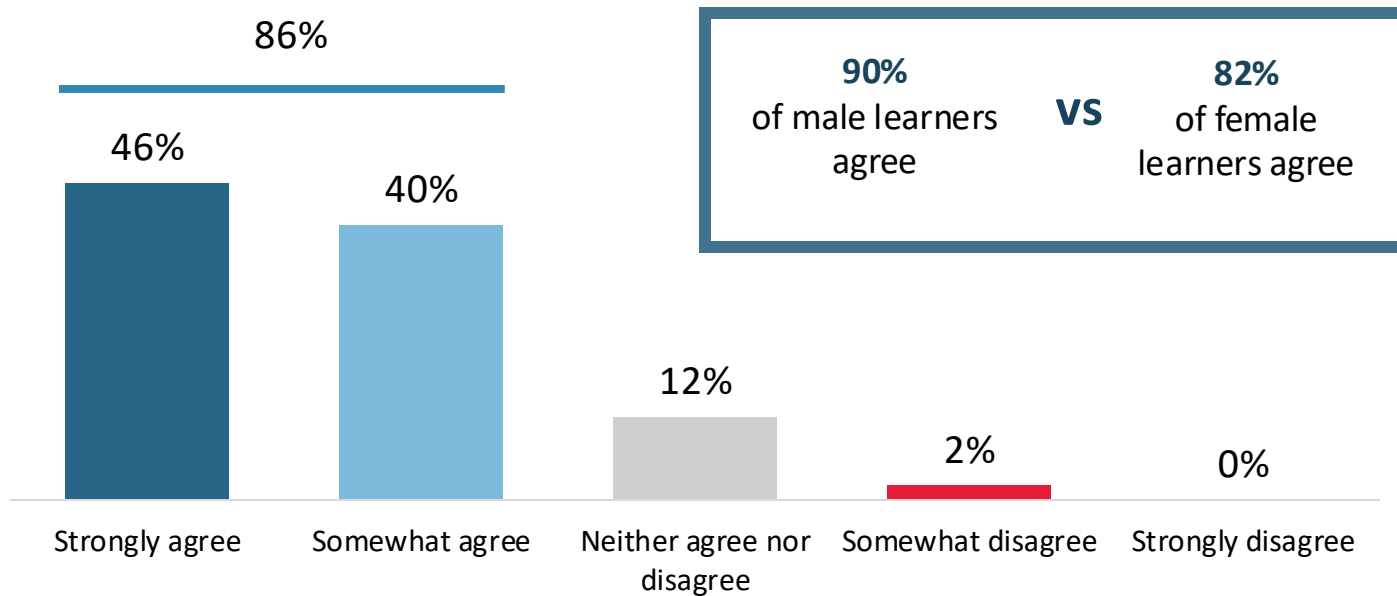
*"I will increase our productivity and reduce how much we spend on training employees for required skills."*

*"This provides us with a larger employee base to choose from. This also shows us what people have learned from other jobs or on their own."*

# Nearly all learners agree that non-degree pathways could make a big impact on their lives.

**Q.** Based on what you know about non-degree pathways, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*Completing a non-degree pathway program could make a big impact on my own life.*



*"I could start a good career without going into debt for school. Sometimes life doesn't let you have time to get a degree."*

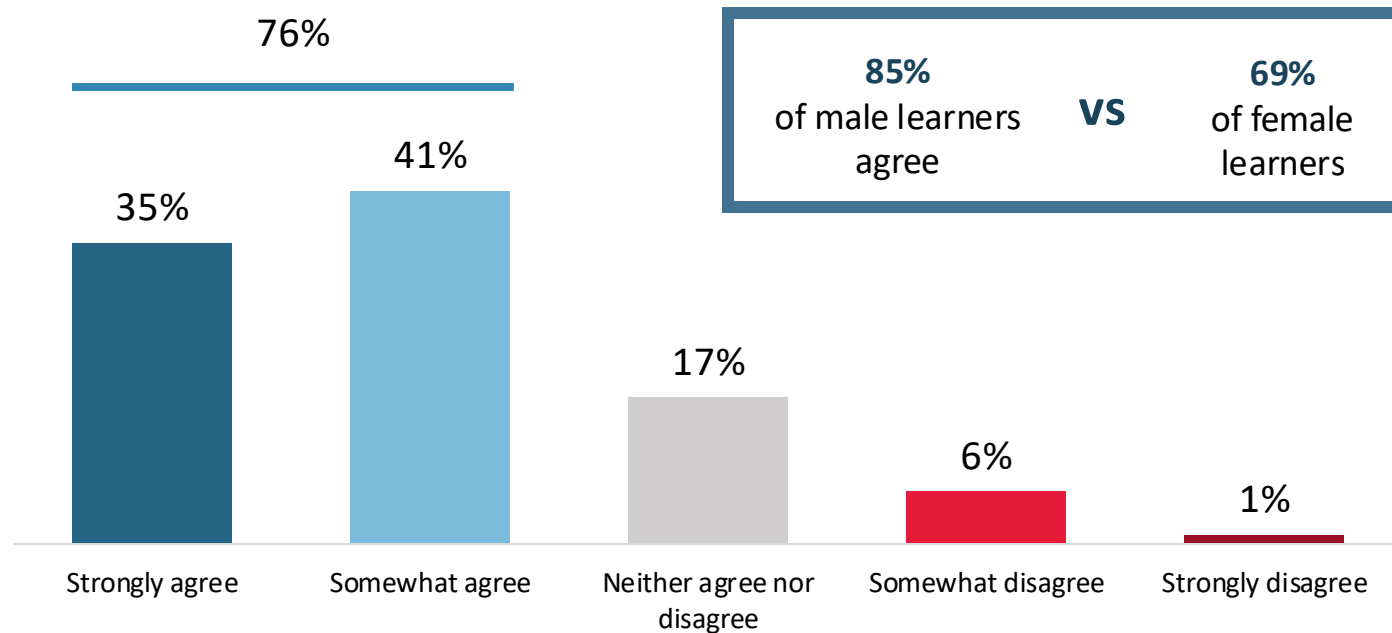
*"It provides a focused, accessible way to gain valuable skills and credentials that can significantly improve your job prospects, career advancement opportunities, and overall earning potential, even without a full degree."*



# Three fourths are ready to start exploring their options now.

**Q.** Based on what you know about non-degree pathways, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*It's important that I start exploring my non-degree pathway options now.*



*"I'm young, and the earlier I start, the better."*

*"Time moves fast, and there's no point in wasting it. The sooner I start, the further I can get, and the better I can do."*



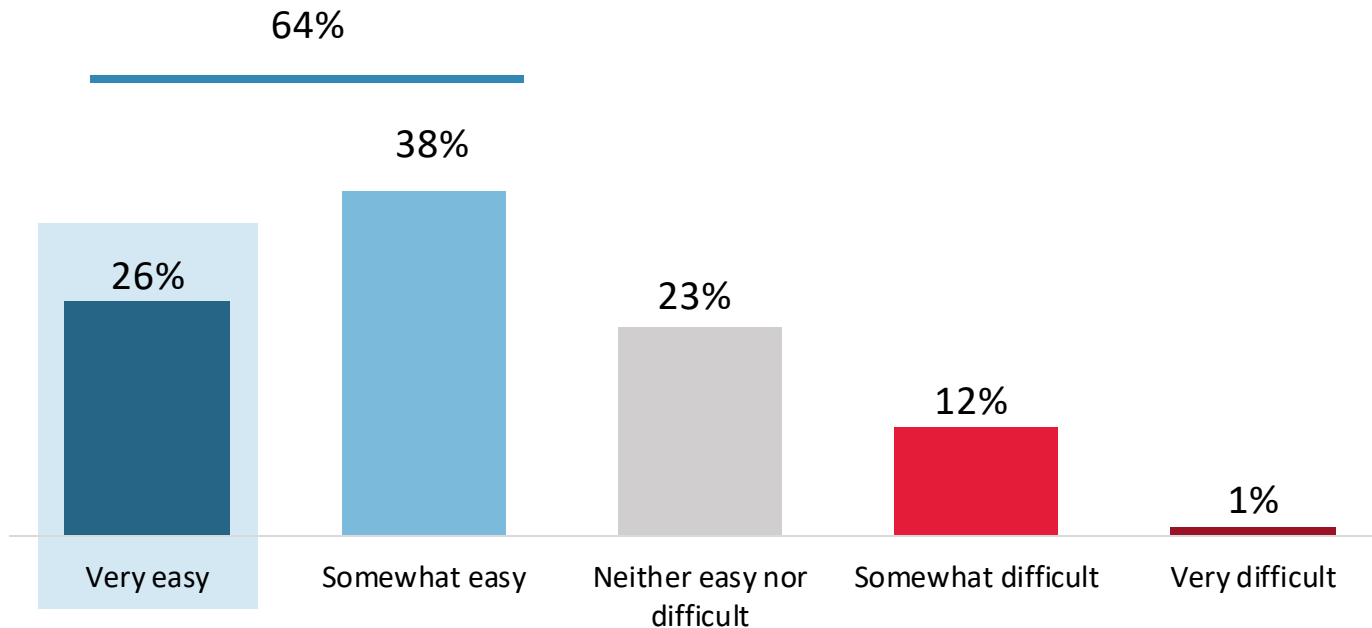
# Everyone Needs More Support

Hiring managers need support  
to persuade others.

Learners need support to get started.

# Only a quarter of hiring managers say it would be very easy to implement skill-based hiring.

Q. How easy or difficult do you think it would be to implement skill-based hiring at your company?

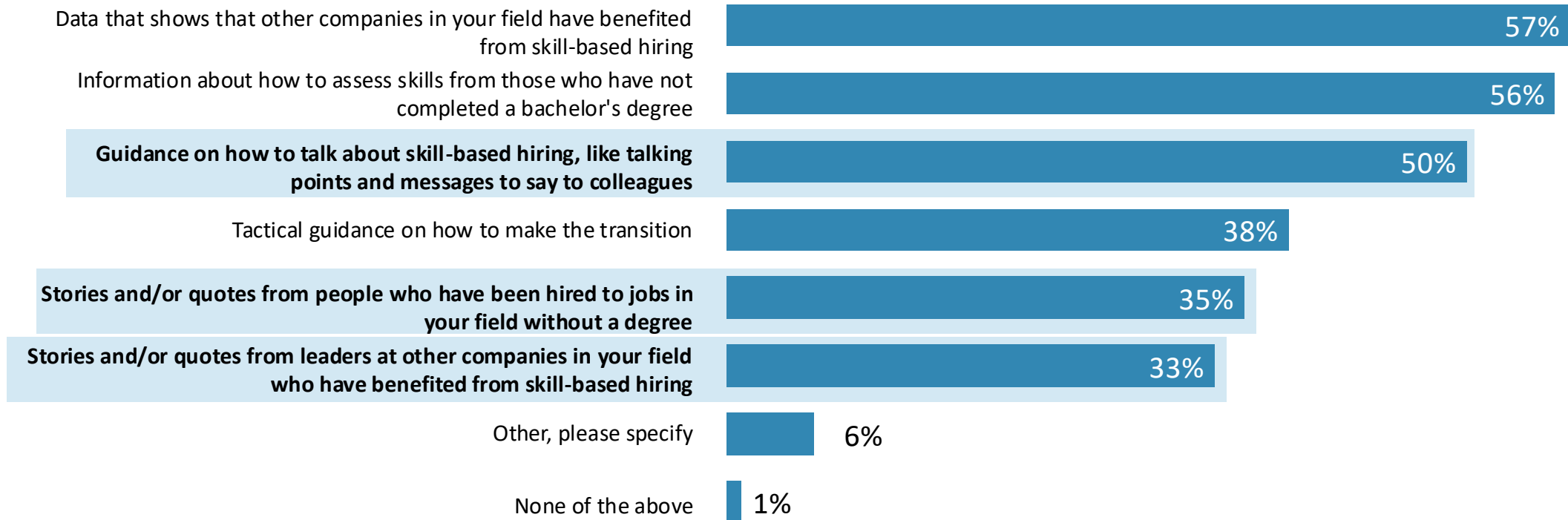


*"Leadership is split on this topic."*

*"I don't know if it would mesh well with the company's culture."*

# Half of hiring managers want guidance on how to talk to colleagues about making the transition.

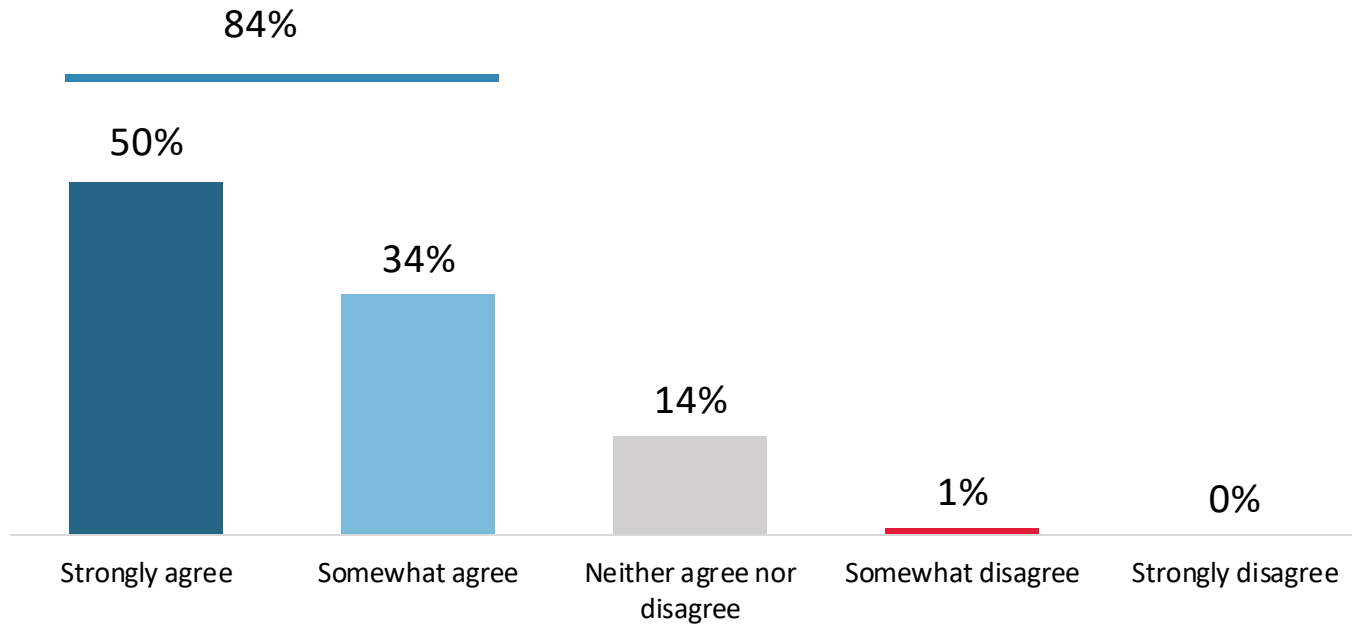
Q. *What information or resources would you need to advocate within your company for adopting skill-based hiring?*



## When asked directly, learners say they do feel confident they will make good decisions regarding their education and training.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*I feel confident that I will make good decisions for my future when it comes to education and training.*



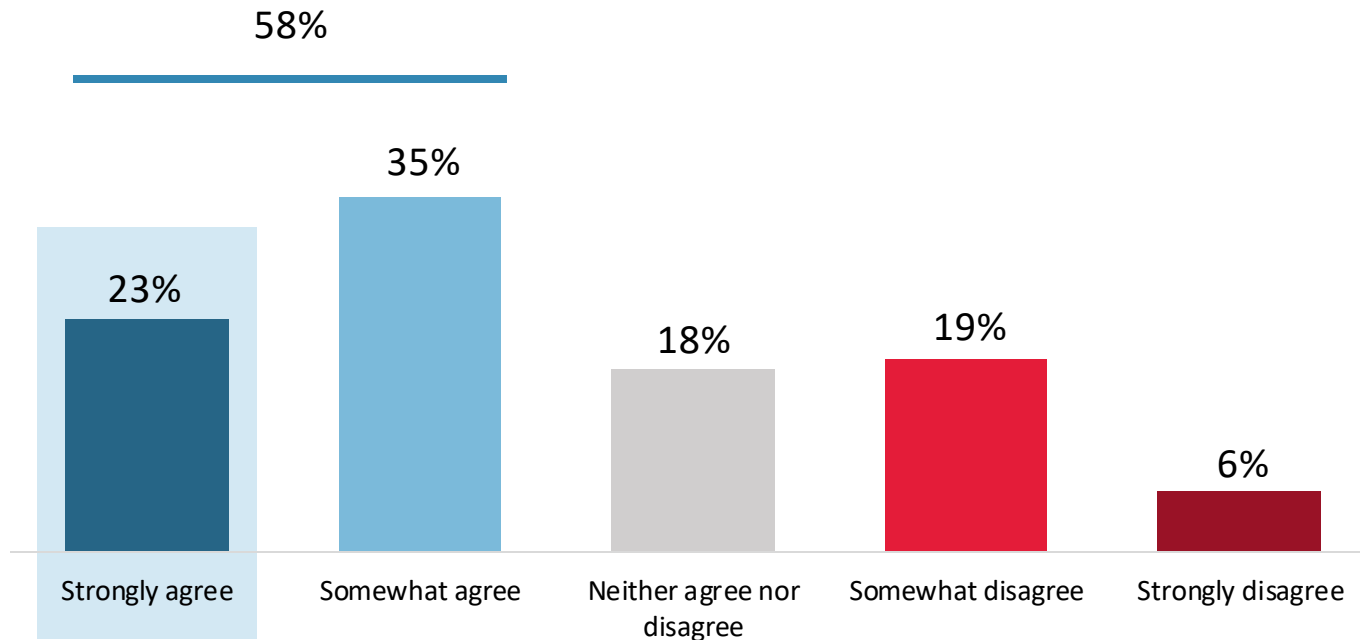
*"I feel confident with the knowledge I have."*

*"I think that pathways look interesting and appealing."*

# Less than a quarter of learners strongly agree they know how to get started.

**Q.** Based on what you know about non-degree pathways, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*I know how to get started exploring non-degree pathways programs.*



*"I don't know where to start looking or how many options there are that are interesting to me."*

*"There are probably so many I don't know about and just need some help finding it."*

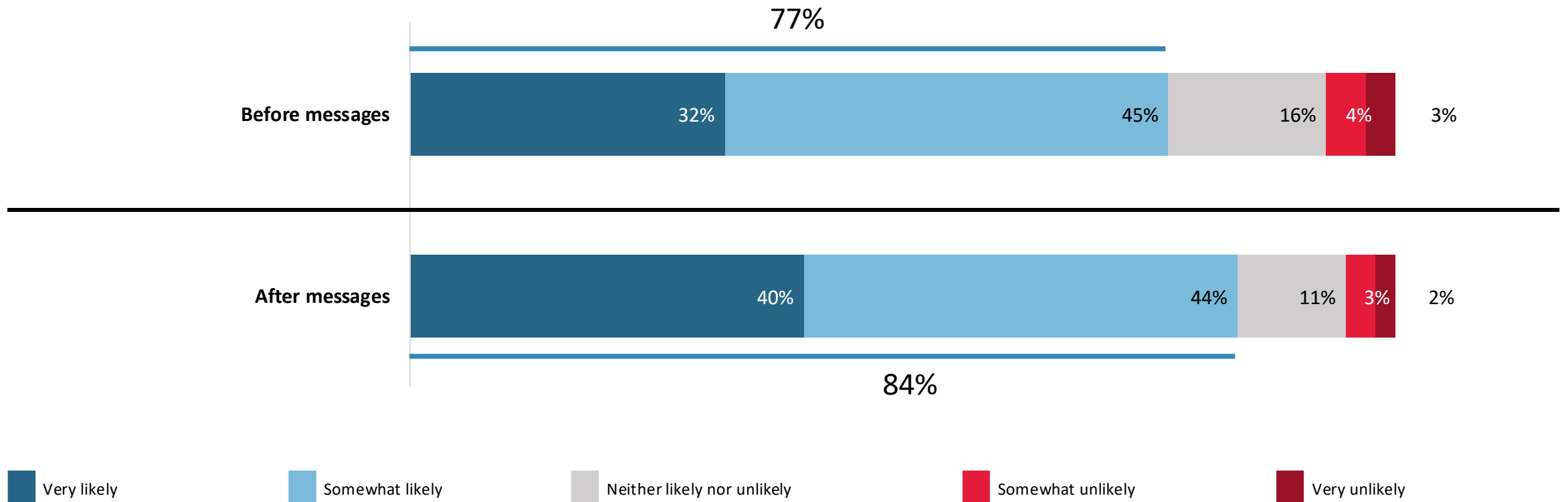


# Communications Matters

Attitudes shifted **markedly** as a result of the message testing for both learners and hiring managers.

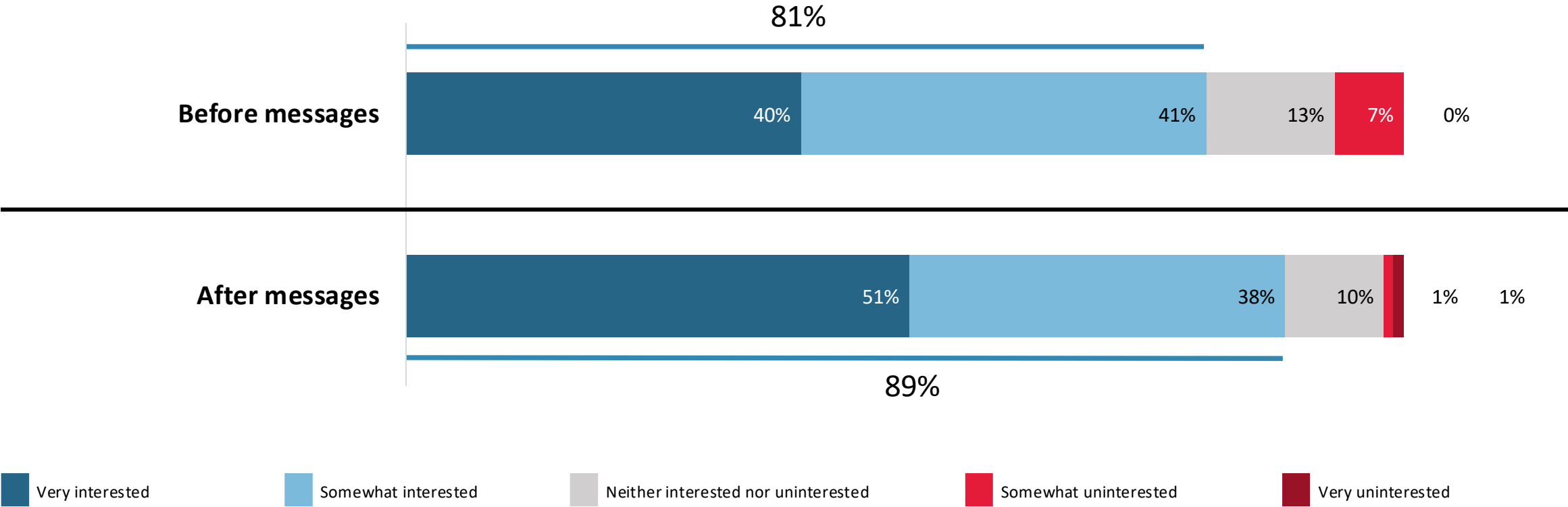


**Hiring managers are much more likely to advocate for skill-based hiring—“very likely” up 8 points after messages.**



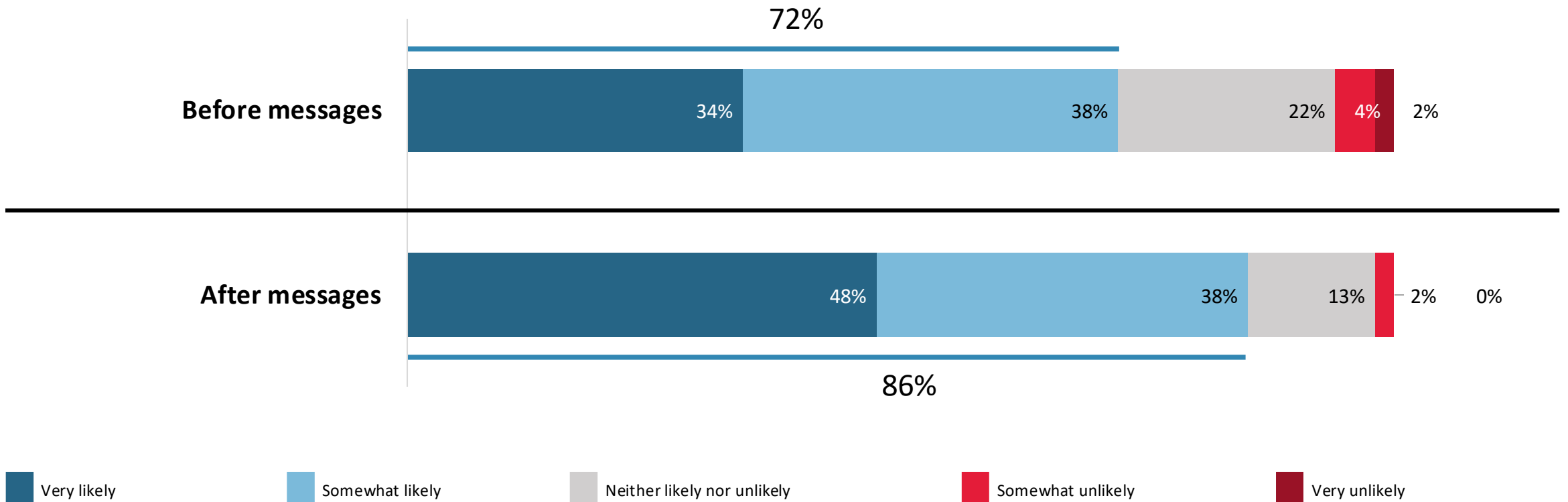
# A majority of learners are very interested in pursuing a non-degree pathway—up 11 points after messaging.

Q. How interested or uninterested are you personally in pursuing a non-degree pathway in the future?



# A near majority of learners would be very likely to recommend someone they know explore pathways—up 14 points after messages.

Q. How likely or unlikely are you to recommend someone you know to explore a non-degree pathway?



# Message Testing: Hiring Managers

	Very/Somewhat favorable	Motivating (7-10)
Win Win	86%	76%
Many Options	85%	72%
Build Confidence	84%	75%
Thriving Community	84%	75%
Jobs For The Future	78%	72%

# Messages that stress the collective impact of skill-based hiring are most useful for advocating internally

**Q.** Which of the following statements are true for you personally based on what you read in this statement?

*“This is something I could say to my colleagues to make the case for skill-based hiring within my company”*

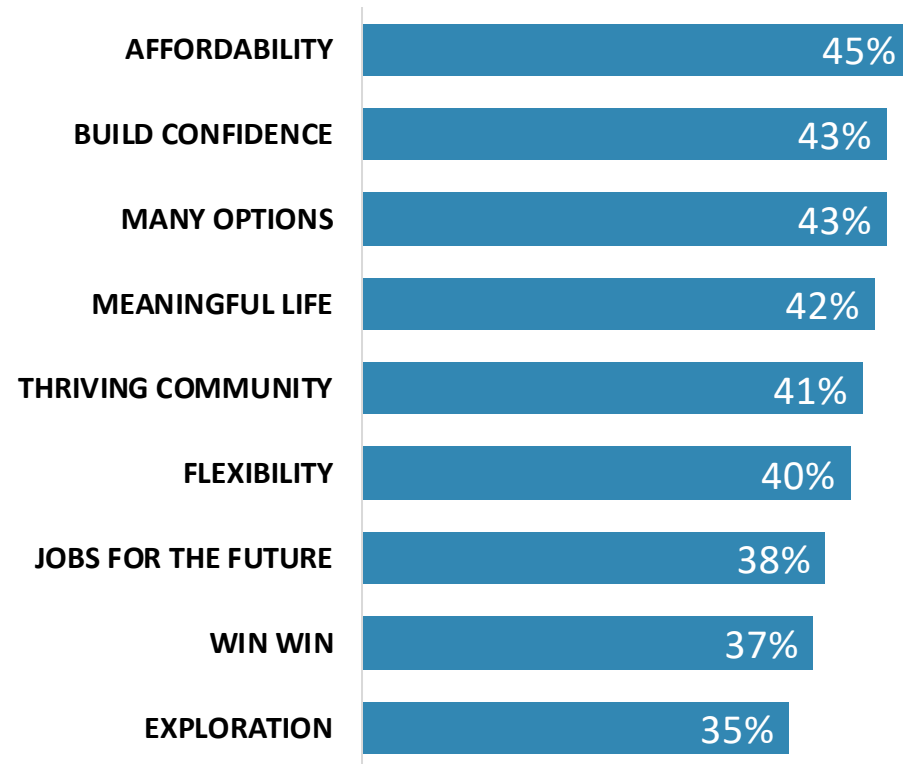


# Message Testing: Learners

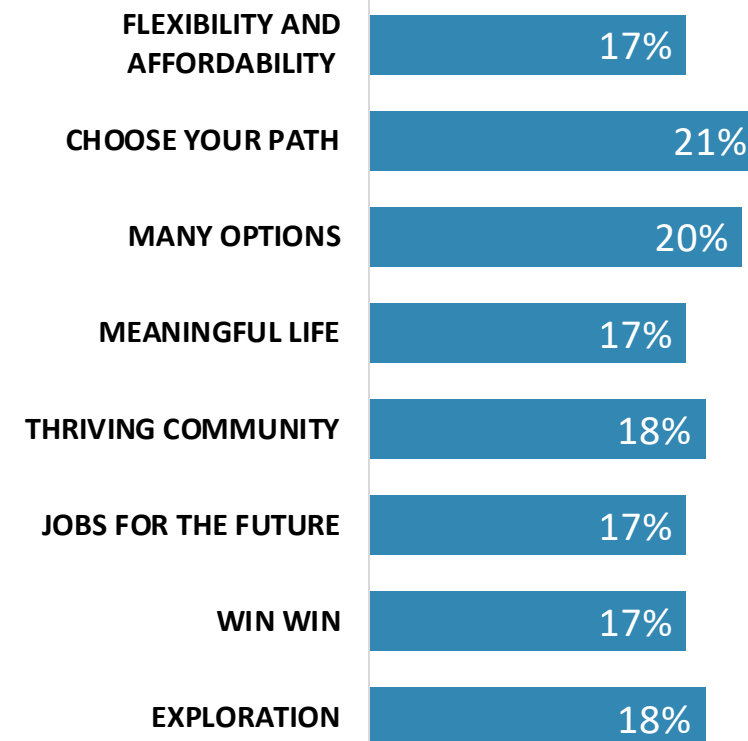
	Very/Somewhat Favorable	Motivating (7-10)
Affordability	86%	78%
Meaningful Life	85%	73%
Flexibility	84%	73%
Many Options	84%	70%
Build Confidence	83%	76%
Win Win	82%	72%
Thriving Community	81%	70%
Jobs For The Future	79%	67%
Exploration	77%	69%

# More actionable messages help learners understand how to take the next step, but to take it further, we need more specificity.

*Q. This gives me the information I need to take the next step in pursuing a non-degree pathway program*



*I know how to act on this statement (May 2024 Survey)*





**What's Next?**



## Learner Roundtables

- Hear from learners directly about the language that resonates best and helps them take action.
- Involve a wide diversity of learner voices, including high school and young adult learners from geographically and culturally diverse areas.
- Gather real life success stories and quotes from learners that could be motivating to all audiences.



## Hiring Manager Roundtables

- Hear directly from a group who are very influential for learners about what language resonates
- Understand what's getting in the way of employers using skill-based hiring—and how communications might help



HATTAWAY  
COMMUNICATIONS