

CFO PULSE SURVEY

# 2025 Finance & Accounting Talent Market Outlook

## Ongoing Talent Shortage Spurs Adoption of New Strategies to Optimize Efficiency

Decision makers are acutely aware that the accounting talent shortage is getting worse. In response, they're increasingly embracing AI and automation alongside outsourcing to keep operations on track.



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# The Accelerating Accounting Talent Shortage

In Personiv's fourth CFO survey since 2020, more accounting and finance decision makers than ever agree that there's a talent shortage in the field. After steady survey-over-survey rises in the number of leaders noting the shortage, 87 percent agree it's a problem.

In fact, it's now the biggest problem these decision makers face, according to survey results. Twenty percent of decision makers and decision influencers also agree that the talent shortage is getting worse — double the percentage who said it was getting worse a year ago.

After declining enrollment in accounting and finance in degree programs from 2016 through early 2024, the talent pipeline is down to a trickle. On average, respondents' organizations had five open accounting and finance roles during the winter 2025 survey period. During the same period in 2024, respondents reported an average of two open roles.

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The average number of open accounting and finance roles is now 5 — up from 2 in 2024, a **150% increase**.



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**MEGAN WEIS**

VP, General  
Manager Finance  
& Accounting  
Outsourcing

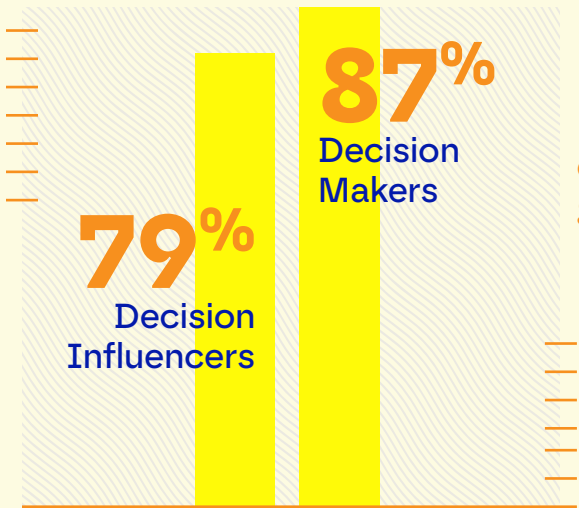
The talent shortage isn't just a challenge; it's a financial firestorm. CFOs and other financial leaders said hiring to fill open roles amid a worsening years-long talent shortage is their biggest challenge this year, ahead of managing inflation, macro-economic uncertainty, and regulatory and compliance pressures.

The time is now for leaders to embrace new strategies and overcome hiring issues, resulting in more effective teams and more bandwidth to address other pressing issues.

## How is the Talent Shortage Viewed?

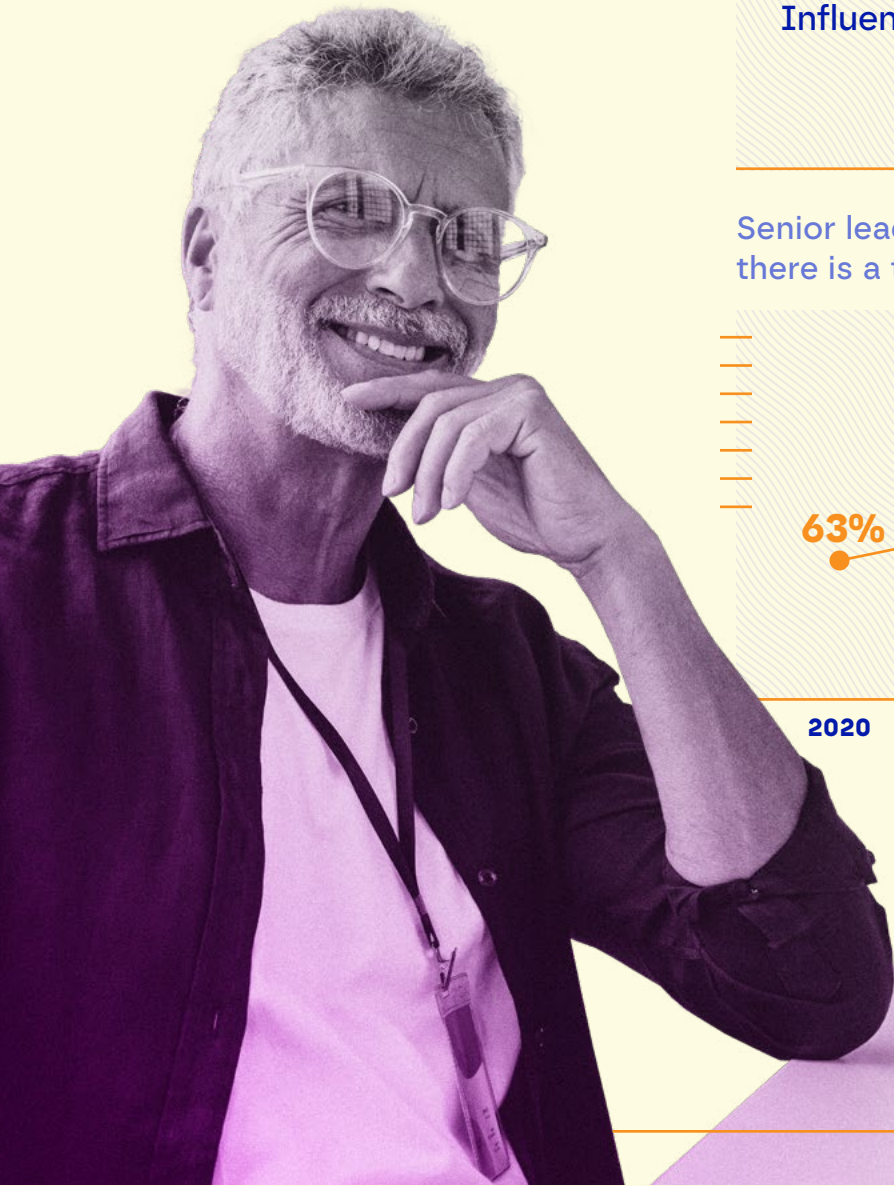
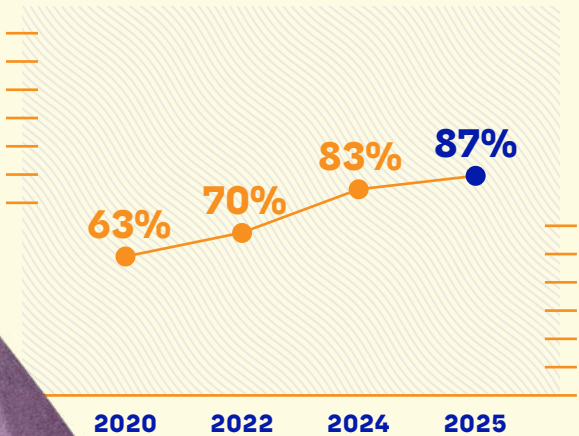
Survey respondents closest to hiring decisions were the most likely to say there's an accounting talent shortage. Whether they're directly in charge of hiring or their feedback is influential in the hiring process, everyone agrees that the situation is getting worse.

Respondents who agree that there is a talent shortage.



**20%**  
of both say it's getting worse

Senior leaders who agreed there is a talent shortage.





## • EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Waiting for a Talent Turnaround Isn't the Solution

The good news about the talent pipeline is that undergraduate accounting enrollments were 12 percent higher in the fall of 2024 than in the fall of 2023. If this trend continues, it should reduce the intensity of the talent shortage in a few years.

That said, organizations still need to fill open roles now so they can maintain productivity and avoid overworking their existing employees.

Forward-thinking CFOs are embracing a combination of outsourcing, AI and automation to handle routine tasks and processes, allowing in-house teams to focus on more complex and engaging projects.



# 12%

Undergraduate accounting enrollments were increased by 12% from 2023 to 2024.



“”

**MATT WOOD**  
Global Head of Finance  
& Accounting Outsourcing

As with any industry, the ongoing talent shortage in accounting and finance poses the risk of a negative cycle. When employees are overworked because the organization is short-staffed, the consequences can include errors, employee burnout, and more employee turnover, which increases the workload for remaining employees.

Although the accounting and finance space has been conservative in its adoption of AI-powered automation, this year's survey reflects a greater willingness to use this technology strategically to reduce the volume of work that in-house teams must handle. This can cut the likelihood of burnout, turnover and human error in automated tasks.

**Q** If you could solve one finance and accounting talent challenge, what would it be?

*most common answers*

**More Qualified Candidates.**

**Talent Retention.**

**Time Constraints.**

# Our 2025 Participants

## 20+

Industries including:

- Advertising and Marketing
- Airlines, Aerospace and Defense
- Business Support and Logistics
- Construction, Machinery and Homes
- Finance and Financial Services
- Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals
- Insurance
- Nonprofit
- Telecommunications, Technology, Internet and Electronics

## Influencers

"I do not make hiring decisions, but my feedback is influential."

## 28%

## 253

Finance and accounting leaders took the survey Jan–Feb 2025.

## 43%

## Decision Makers

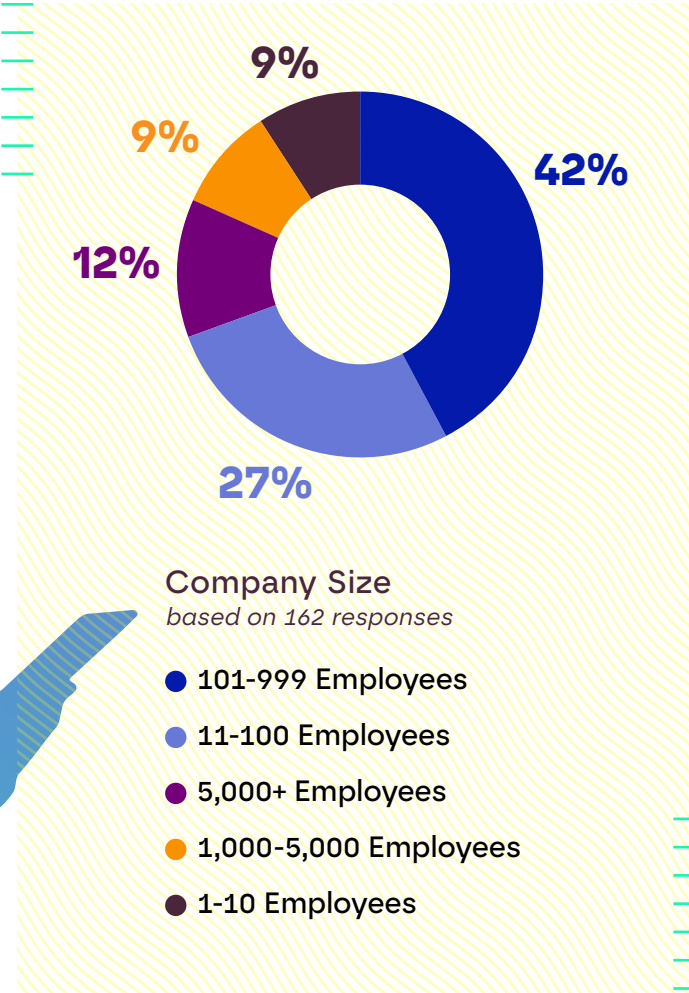
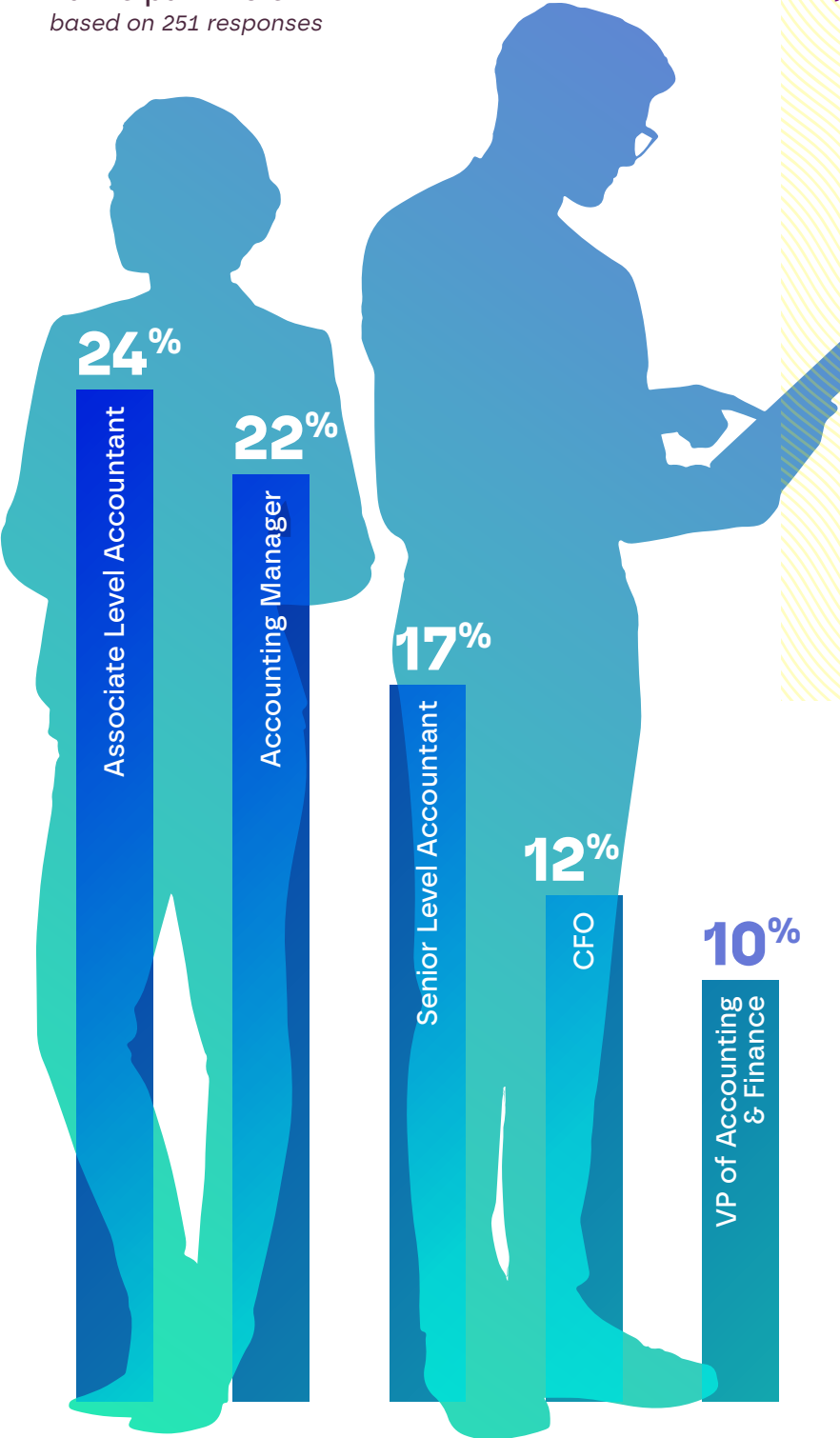
"I am directly involved in deciding who we hire."





● PARTICIPANTS

Participant Role  
based on 251 responses



## • OPEN ROLES

# More Open Roles. No Change in Sight.

The average number of open roles at respondents' companies during the survey period more than doubled from 2024 to 2025.

Survey participants also predicted a slight worsening of the situation through the end of 2025. They expected an average of 5.4 roles expected to remain open during the rest of the year (based on 124 responses).

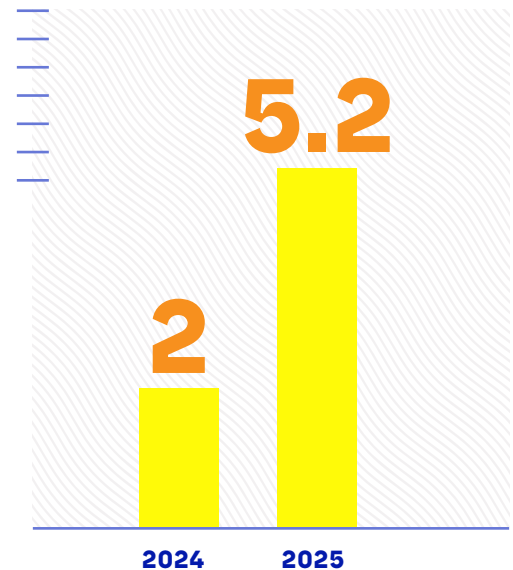
## Hiring Challenges Vary by Role

Although the talent shortage affects roles at all levels, roles that require specialized or advanced training or more experience were rated as harder to fill than other roles.

Percentage of participants who ranked the following roles as "very difficult to hire":

<b>21%</b> Controller	<b>15%</b> FP&A
<b>18%</b> Tax accountant	<b>13%</b> Senior accountant
<b>16%</b> Auditor	<b>11%</b> Payroll

Current Open Roles  
average based on 125 responses



**Q** If you could solve one finance and accounting talent challenge, what would it be?

**A** Everyone would know all about tax accounting.





## • OPEN ROLES

### Time to Fill Open Roles

The time to hire an employee is continually increasing. In 2024, the average timeline for job listing to hire time was 44 days, with difficult to fill positions taking as long as 120 days.

Now, it's taking even longer.

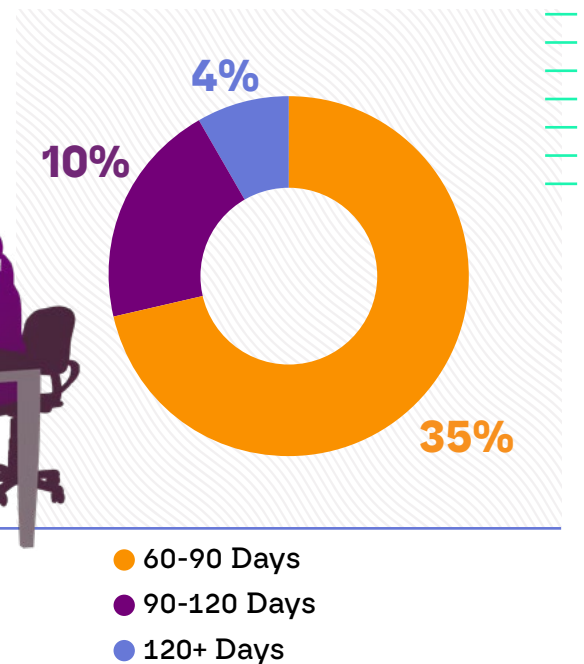
**49%**

of respondents said it takes at least **60 days or more**, on average, to fill an open role at their organization.



### Number of Days to Fill Roles

average based on the 49% who responded



“”

Hiring is taking longer than before, and the talent shortage impacts companies more strongly when senior and specialized roles like controller and tax accountant go unfilled.

When recruiting is coming up empty or taking many months to deliver results, organizations can leverage outsourcing, AI and automation to free up time to upskill existing employees. That can create an internal promotion pipeline for harder-to-fill roles.

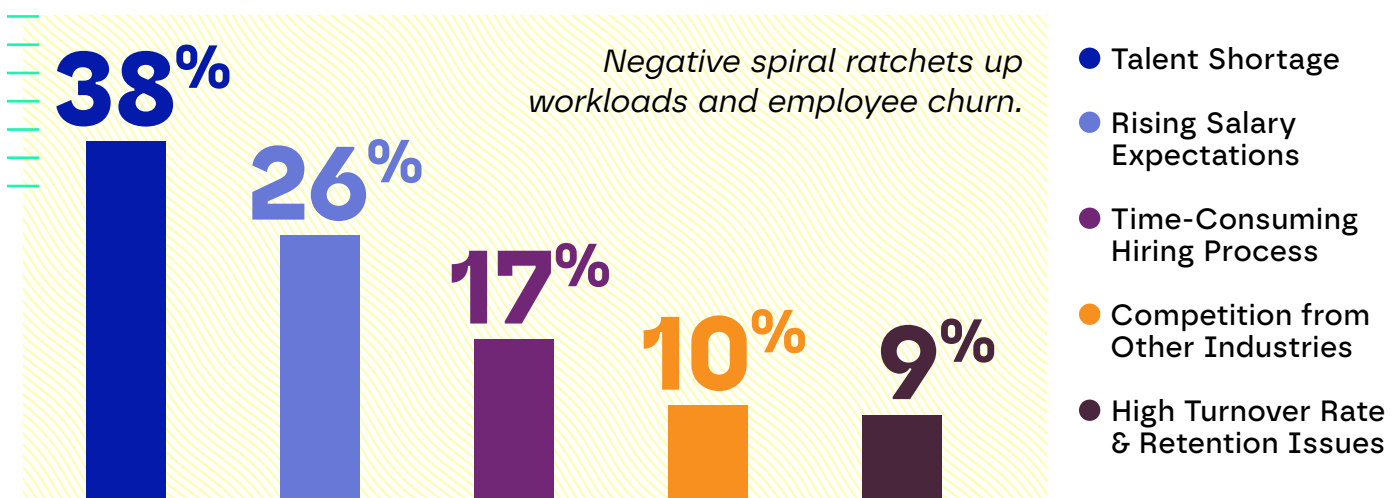
**MEGAN WEIS**

VP, General Manager Finance & Accounting Outsourcing

# Hiring Challenges for Finance & Accounting

The lack of abundant talent was the top challenge for 38% of decision makers. Unfortunately, they also face other obstacles to filling roles.

The Top Hiring Challenges



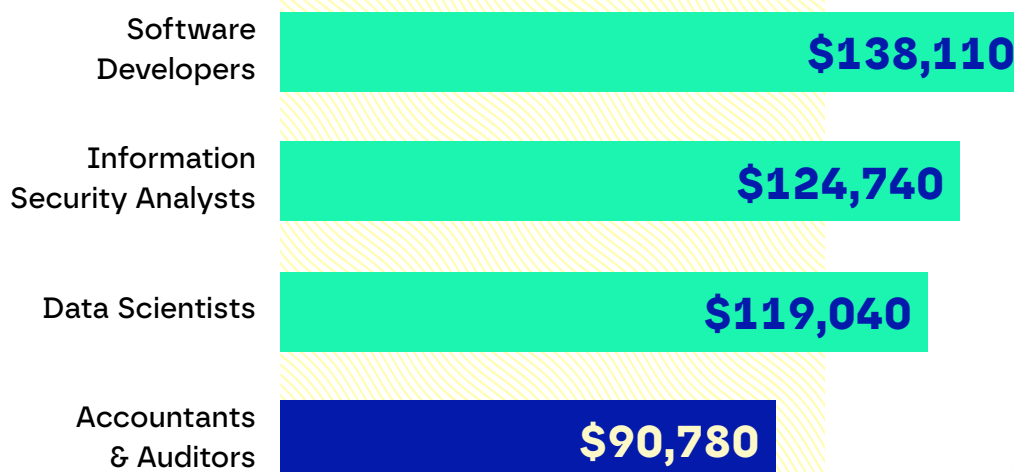
What Gen Z Employees Value at Work



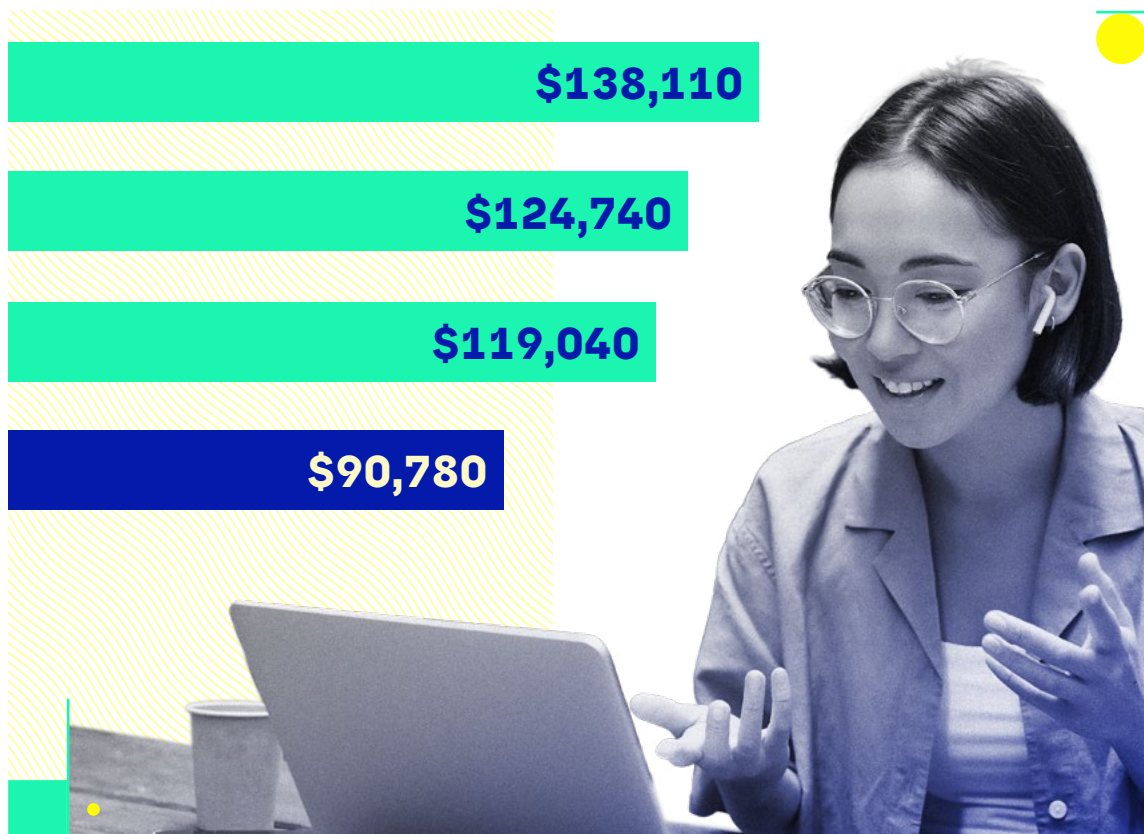


## • HIRING CHALLENGES

### Accounting Salaries Lag Other Fields\*



*\*Mean annual wages May 2023, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*



“”

The talent shortage is just one of the headwinds that finance and accounting leaders face as they try to fill open roles and retain their current employees. To compete with other fields or new talent, the industry needs to re-examine what it offers in terms of compensation, culture, growth opportunities, technology adoption, and work-life balance.

These changes take time and resources to implement, at a time when many accounting and finance organizations are already doing too much with too few people. The quickest step to smoother sailing is deciding which tasks and processes to take off your team's plate using emerging technology.”

**MATT WOOD**

Global Head of Finance & Accounting Outsourcing



**38%**

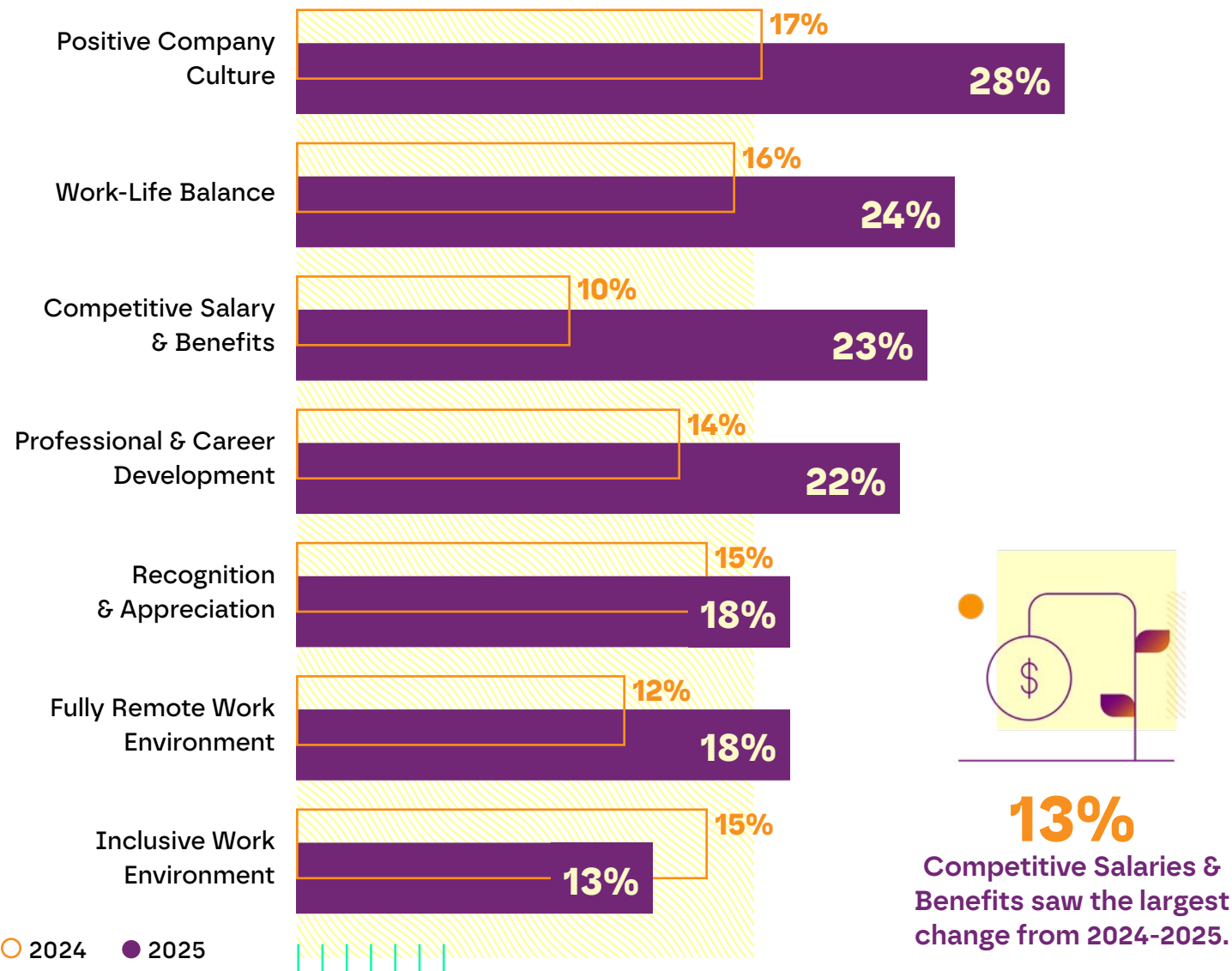
Decision makers say the lack of abundant talent was their top challenge.

# What Matters Now for Attracting Talent?

This year’s survey data shows a growing awareness among decision makers and influencers of the factors that matter most to prospective employees, especially positive company culture and work-life balance.

Interestingly, the proportion of respondents agreeing that competitive pay and benefits are extremely important more than doubled from 2024 to 2025, reflecting the reality that younger workers expect higher starting salaries and can find them in other industries.

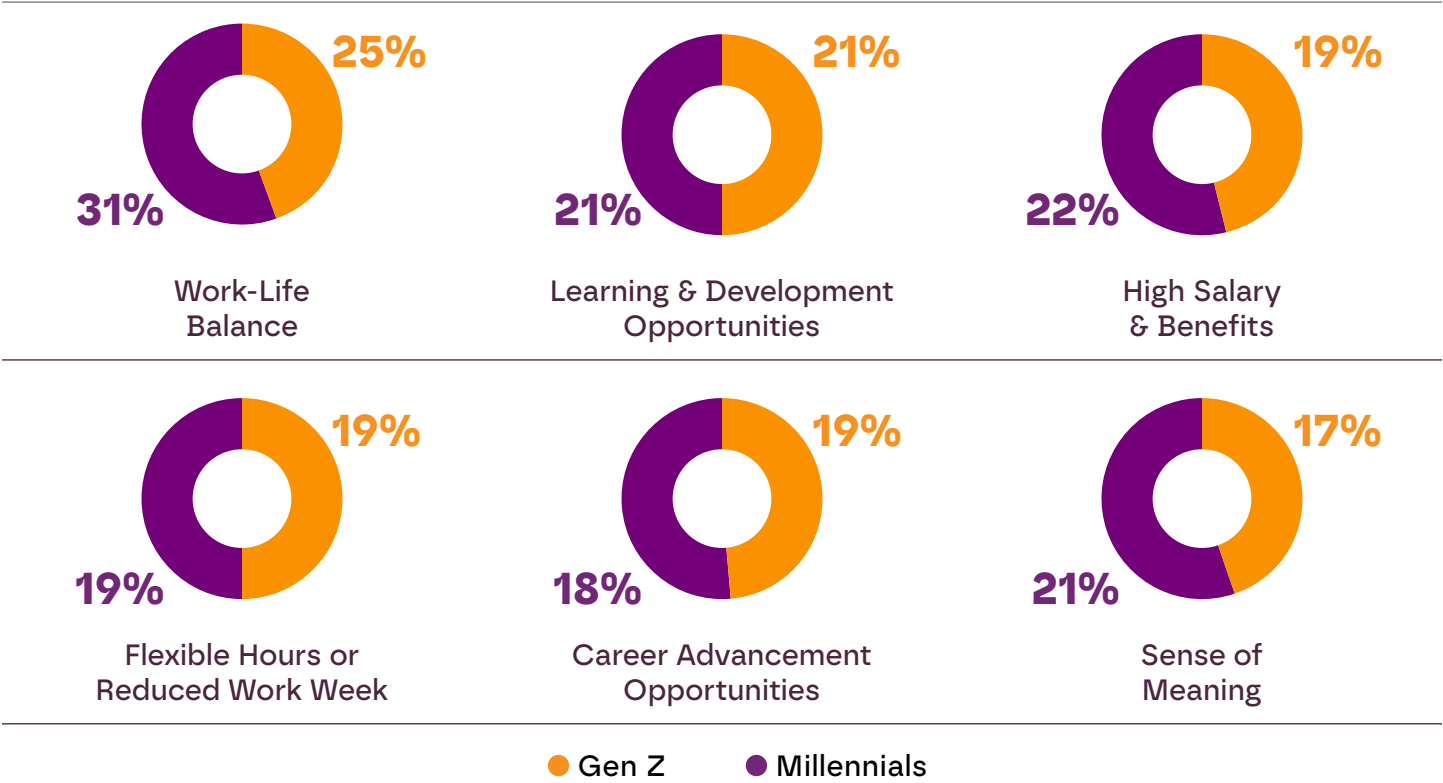
“Extremely Important” Factors for Attracting Talent





• ATTRACTING TALENT

Based on this year’s data, accounting and finance leaders seem more attuned to what younger workers want from their employers.



Source: [Deloitte Global 2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey](#)

**Q** If you could solve one finance and accounting talent challenge, what would it be?

**A** To be able to pay higher wages.

“”

The data this year shows that leaders increasingly understand what talent wants in terms of career, company and day-to-day work — and that they’re aware of the competitive hiring landscape and their position in it.

This insight is critical for informing decisions about how to lay the foundation for making accounting and finance more appealing not only to new graduates but also to employees currently in the industry.”

**MEGAN WEIS**

VP, General Manager Finance & Accounting Outsourcing

# The Rising Role of AI & Automation

More organizations are seeing firsthand how AI and automation can relieve the stress on overworked employees by taking rote tasks off their to-do list. This technology can also save employers money and reduce the risk of human error in data entry, calculations and processes.

As with any new and fast-changing technology, there are technical, compliance, culture, and skill issues that need to be addressed for successful implementation.

## Challenges with AI & Automation Implementation

- 29% Data Security & Compliance Concerns
- 28% High Implementation Costs
- 21% Lack of Skilled Talent to Manage AI Systems
- 9% Resistance to Change from Leadership or Teams
- 8% None / Not a Priority
- 4% Unclear ROI / Benefits

## How Accounting and Finance Organizations Currently Use AI & Automation

- 38% Helping Teams Work More Efficiently but Not Replacing Jobs
- 26% No Significant Impact Yet but Expect in the Future
- 23% Reducing the Need for Certain Roles
- 12% Not Yet Implemented
- 1% Other

2024

In 2024, many survey participants expressed caution and described a wait-and-see approach.

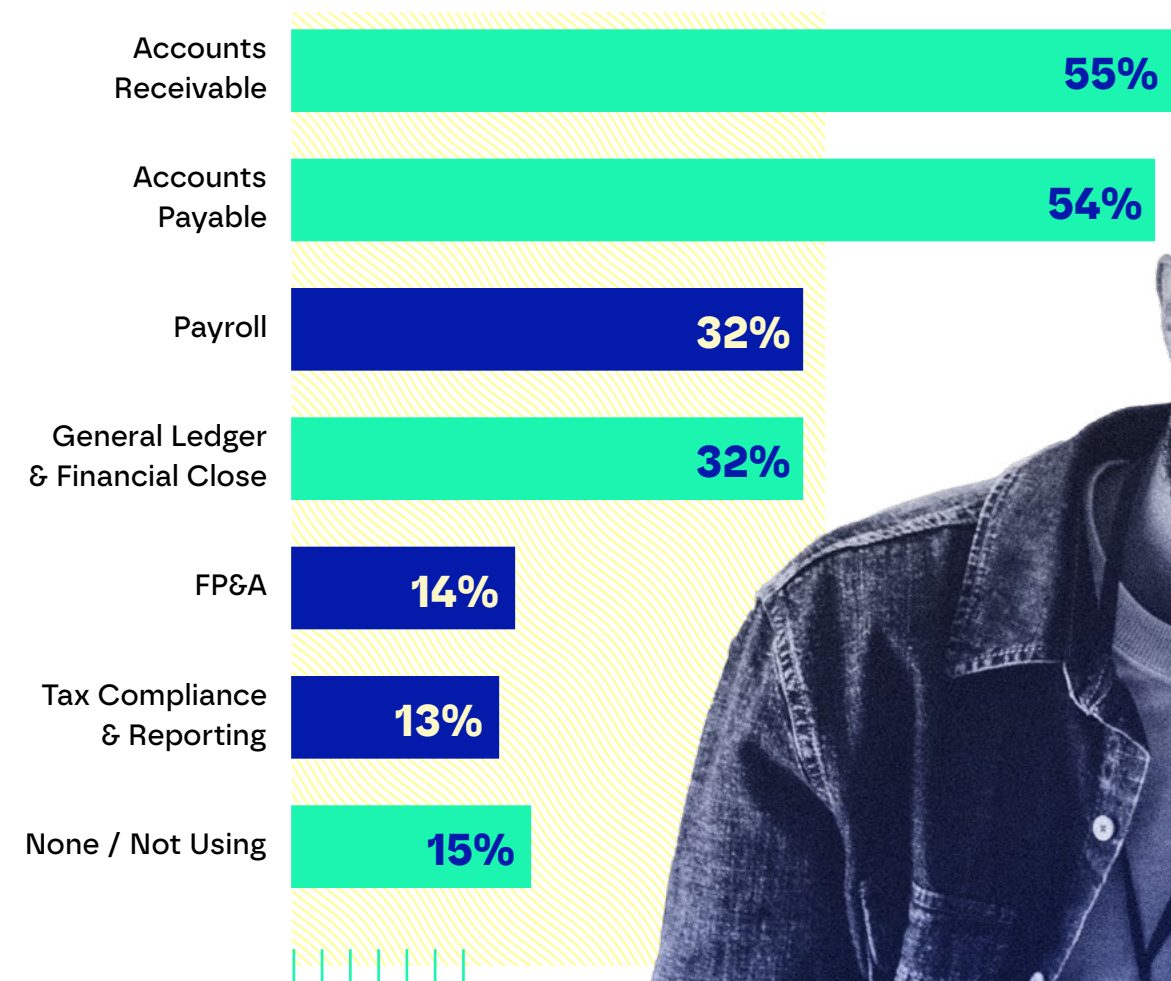
“It is helpful with some of our AP functions; just need to find the time to evaluate it for other areas.”

“Most likely will be useful. Would like to know more about the experience of early adopters.”

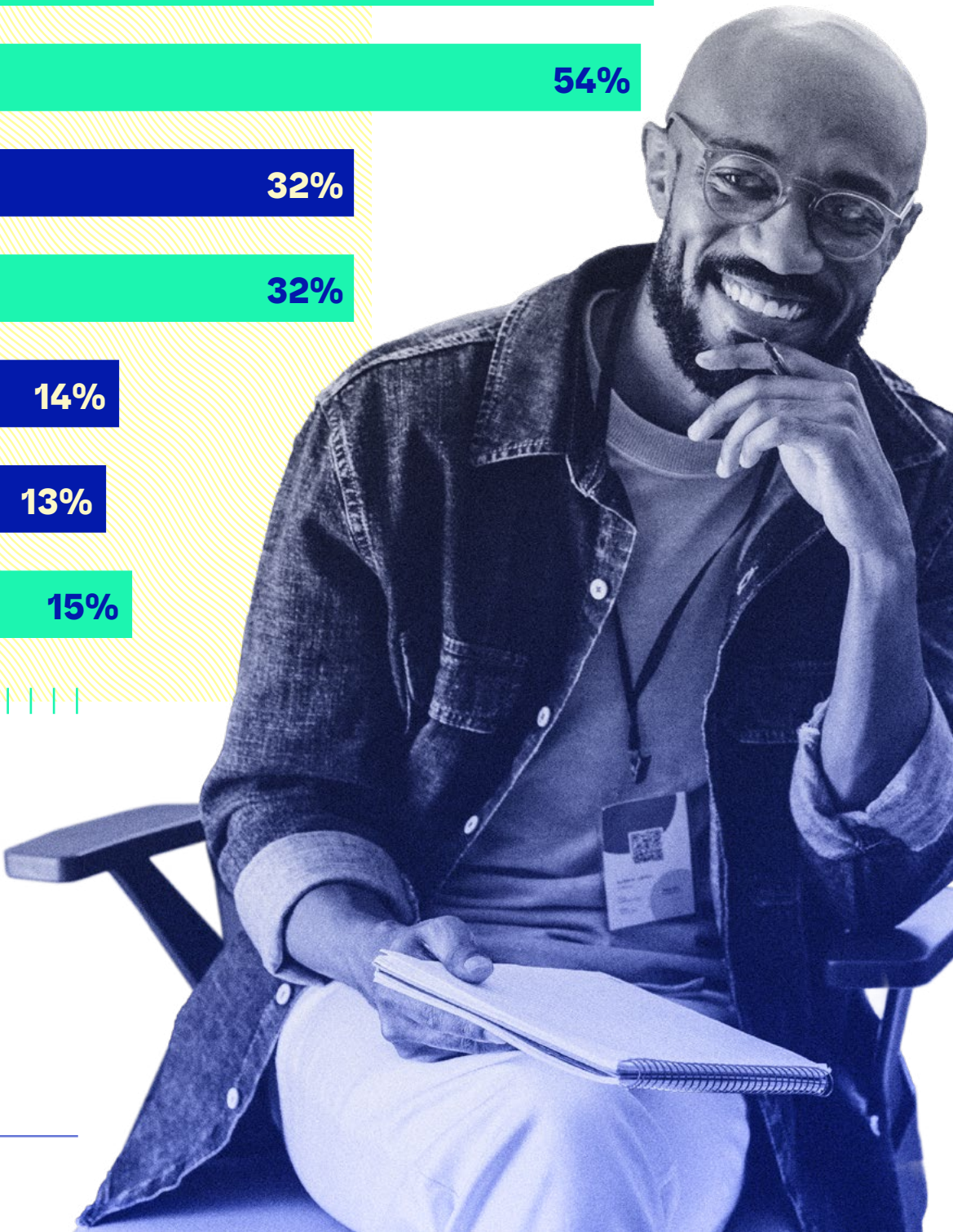


● AI & AUTOMATION

Where Automation Already has the Biggest Impact



● Hardest to Fill Roles





## • AI & AUTOMATION

**Q** If you could solve one finance and accounting talent challenge, what would it be?

**A** Incorporating AI technology & automation.



It's clear that there's room to adopt more use cases to improve efficiency, reduce the need for some roles, improve employees' work-life balance and give them opportunities to work with this fast-growing technology.

“”

Accounting and finance organizations that are already using AI and automation are realizing benefits from it, but hurdles related to security, culture, cost and skills are still holding many companies back.

Experienced partners can help accounting and finance leaders plan ways to address those concerns so they can start their first use cases and move toward a more competitive, scalable posture in today's economy.

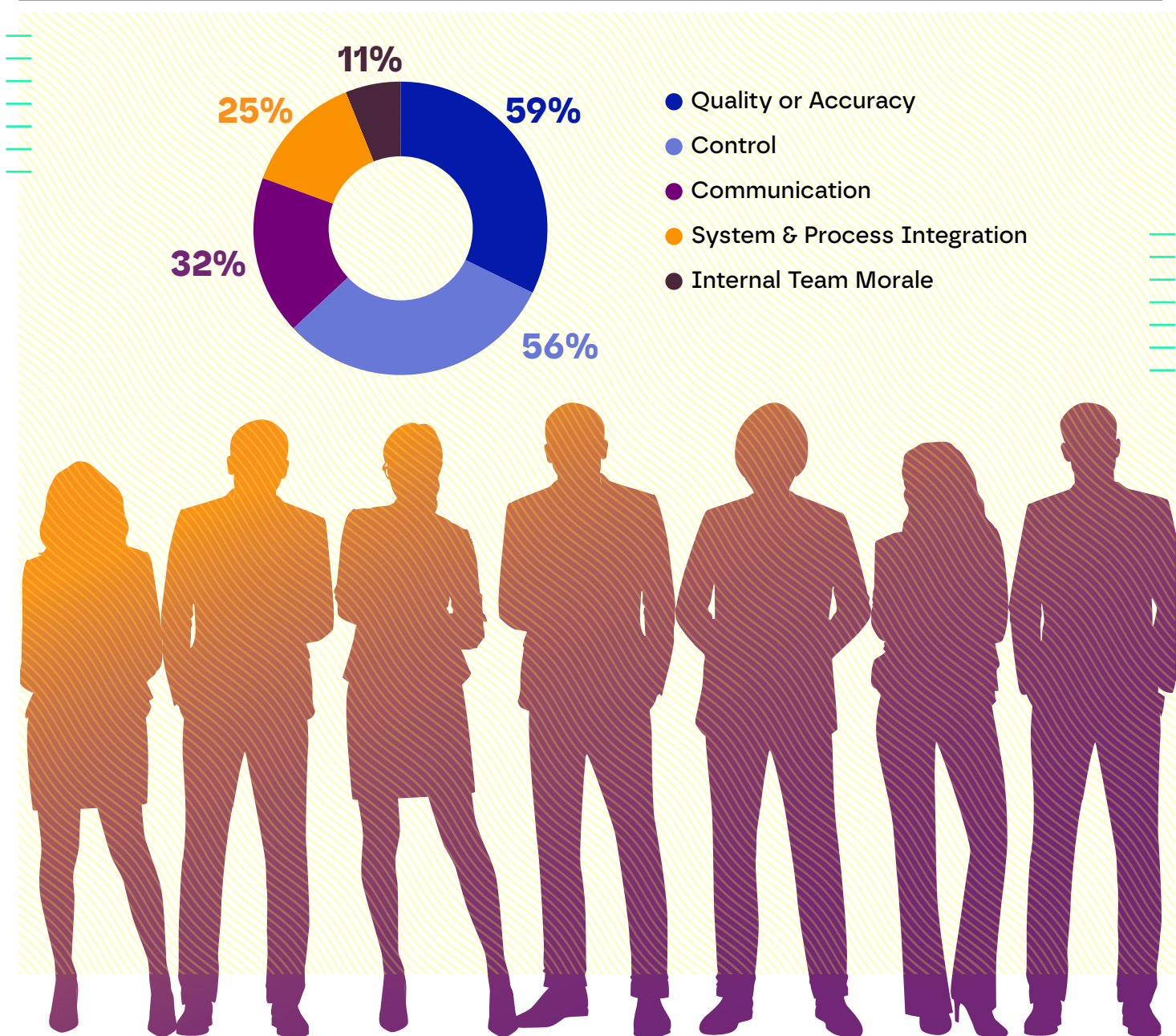
**MATT WOOD**

Global Head of Finance & Accounting Outsourcing

# Most Organizations Outsource to Fill Open Accounting Roles

Sixty-five percent of all survey respondents said they were filling open roles by outsourcing. More than a third reported outsourcing AP and AR roles, either currently or in the past.

## Lingering Concerns of Some Leaders Still Have About Outsourcing

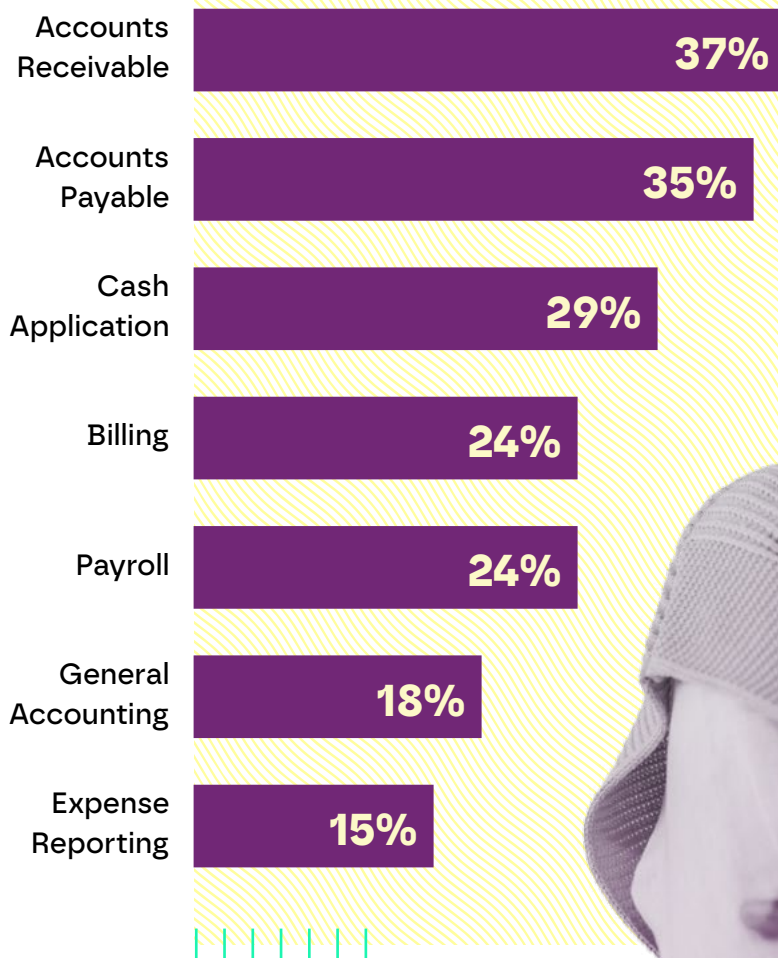




## • OUTSOURCING

### Most Commonly Outsourced Roles

*current or past*



“”

Working with an experienced outsourcing partner allows organizations to enjoy the competitive advantages that high-quality outsourcing can deliver — like lower costs, greater operational efficiencies, and better work-life balance for internal teams — while avoiding the issues that concern many decision makers.

**MEGAN WEIS**

VP, General Manager Finance & Accounting Outsourcing



# Charting a New Way Forward

After long-standing accounting talent shortages, there's a new normal emerging.

Decision makers are now more focused on understanding what matters most to potential hires, allowing them to align their offers with what today's talent expectations.

More decision makers are adopting AI, automation, and outsourcing in strategic ways to close talent gaps, improve operational efficiency, and protect their employees' work-life balance.

None of these solutions on its own is a magic wand that can wave away the field's talent pipeline issues, but together they can resolve many of the issues leaders would most like to fix. That, in turn, can make their organizations more appealing in the competition for scarce talent.

The time to start or expand your outsourcing, AI and automation initiatives is now, because organizations that embrace the new normal sooner and more strategically will gain an advantage. Working with an experienced partner can make the transition easier and deliver faster time to value.



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Contact us today and learn how Personiv helps finance leaders across industries solve their talent challenges without compromise on quality, cohesion and results.

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