PERCEPTIONS AND INTEREST IN A MINING SECTOR CAREER

abacus data

April 2026

MIHR RHIM

MINING INDUSTRY HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

MINING NEEDS YOU

METHODOLOGY - DISCOVERY SESSION

The survey was conducted with 3,000 Canadians, aged 15 to 24, from March 30 to April 21, 2026. A random sample of panelists were invited to complete the survey from a set of partner panels based on the PureSpectrum exchange platform. These partners are typically double opt-in survey panels, blended to manage out potential skews in the data from a single source.

The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 1.78%, 19 times out of 20.

The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

KEY FINDINGS – DISCOVERY SESSION

- **Positive impressions now outpace negative ones (32% vs. 21%), though many young Canadians have yet to form firm views**. Gains since 2023 and 2020 are evident, but the sector still trails industries like healthcare and tech.

- Mining continues to be associated with strong pay and benefits, but also with risk and traditional, physical work. **Encouragingly, perceptions have improved across several attributes since 2023, including safety, enjoyment, and future outlook, though absolute ratings remain modest.**

- **42% would consider a career in mining (+8 pts vs. 2023; +14 vs. 2020); one of the largest gains across industries.** However, mining still trails more established sectors.

- **There is growing optimism about the sector's future. 40% (+6 pts vs. 2023) believe mining jobs will increase over the next decade**.

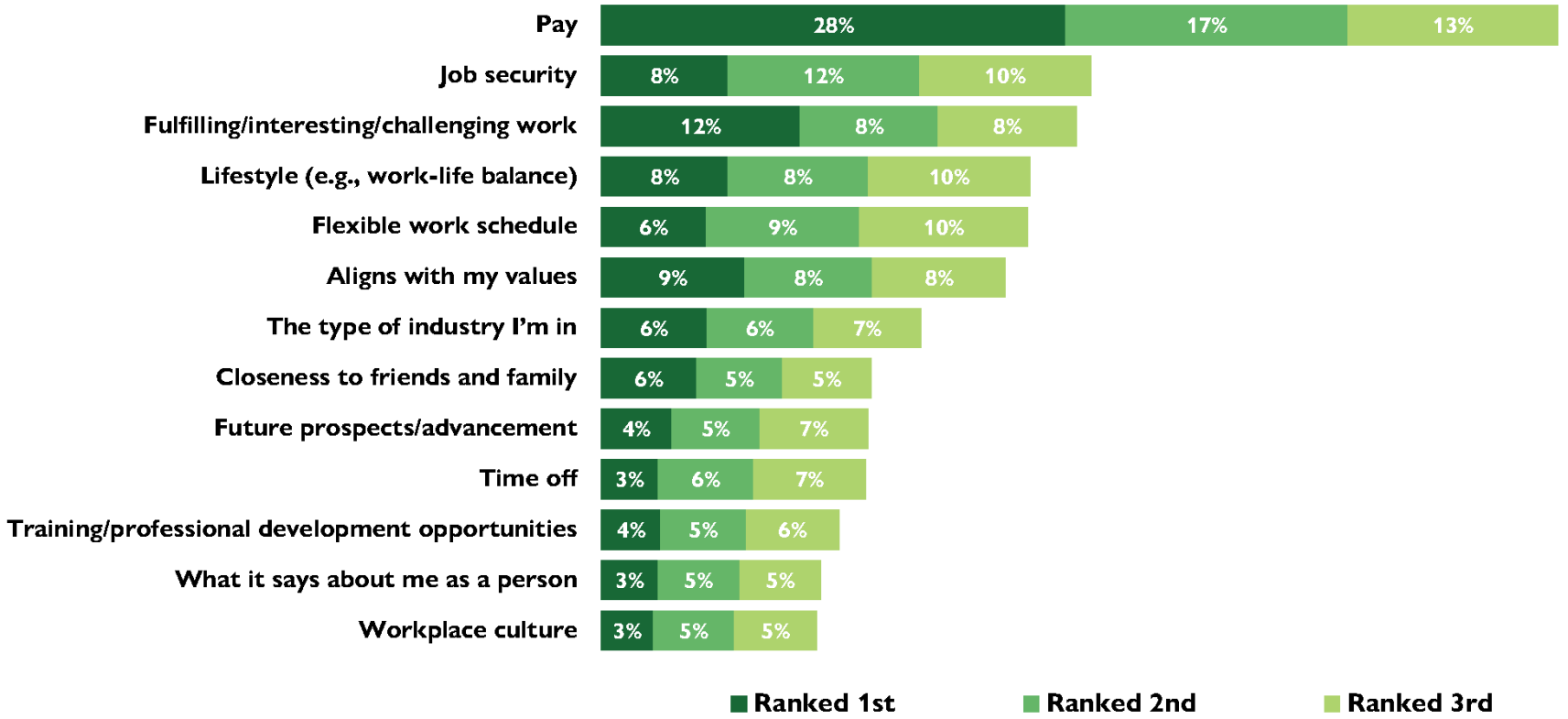
CURRENT CAREER AND CAREER PREFERENCES

MINING INDUSTRY
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

Q. Please rank the following from most important to least important in choosing a career.

In an increasingly narrow market, pay remains the dominant driver (+2) while job security gains importance (+4) and work-life balance declines (-6) in career decision-making.



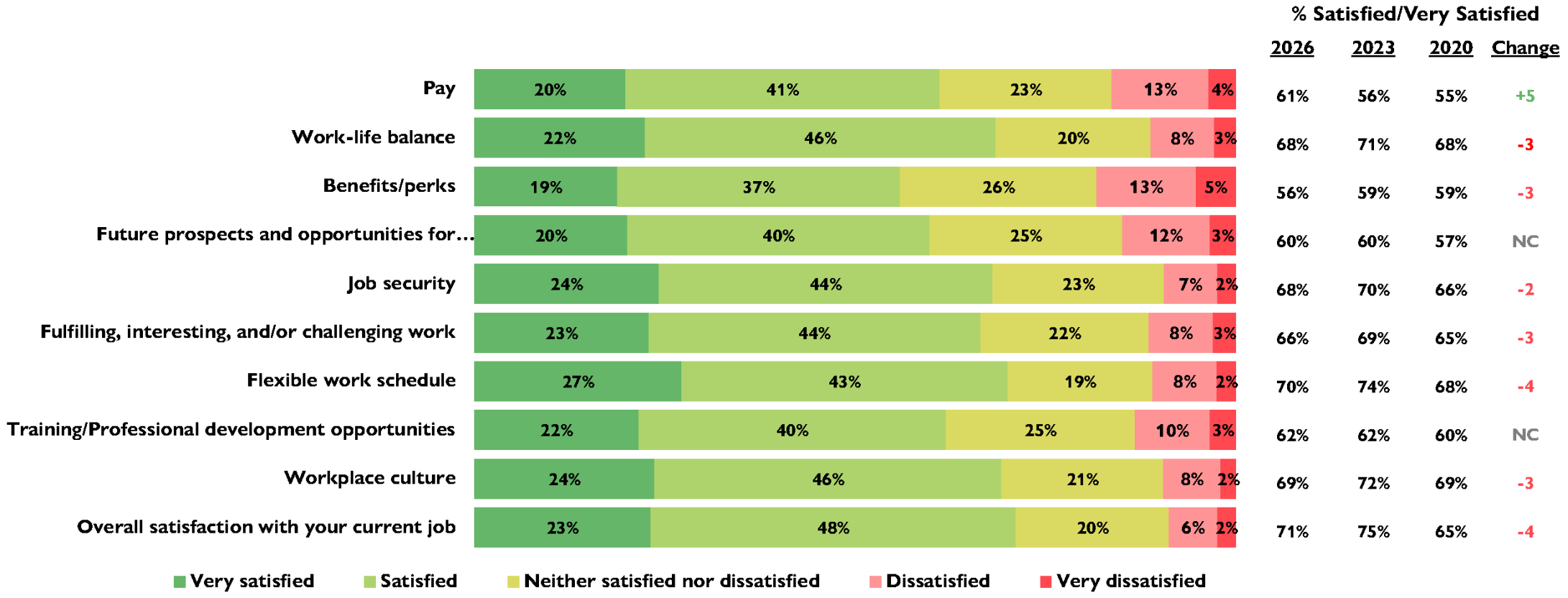
% Top 3 Rank

	2026	2023	2020	Change
Pay	58%	56%	52%	+2
Job security	30%	26%	30%	+4
Fulfilling/interesting/challenging work	29%	29%	33%	NC
Lifestyle (e.g., work-life balance)	26%	32%	31%	-6
Flexible work schedule	26%	27%	23%	-1
Aligns with my values	24%	25%	26%	-1
The type of industry I'm in	19%	17%	20%	+2
Closeness to friends and family	16%	18%	17%	-2
Future prospects/advancement	16%	15%	16%	+1
Time off	16%	16%	13%	NC
Training/professional development opportunities	14%	14%	13%	NC
What it says about me as a person	13%	13%	11%	NC
Workplace culture	13%	13%	14%	NC

Base [all], n=3,000

Q. How would you rate your satisfaction with each of the following in your current job?

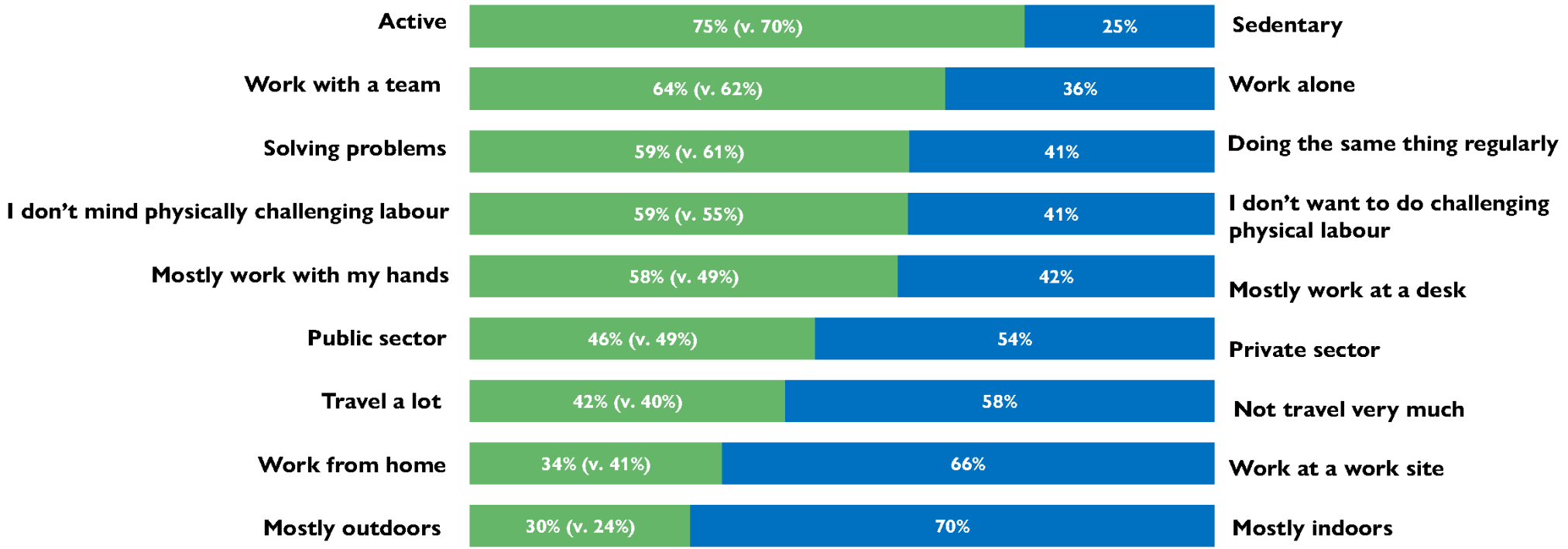
Satisfaction remains high overall, but declines in flexibility (-4), culture (-3), and overall satisfaction (-4) signal emerging softness despite gains in pay (+5).



Base [employed], n=1,748

Q. What best describes the type of work you would most **like** to do?

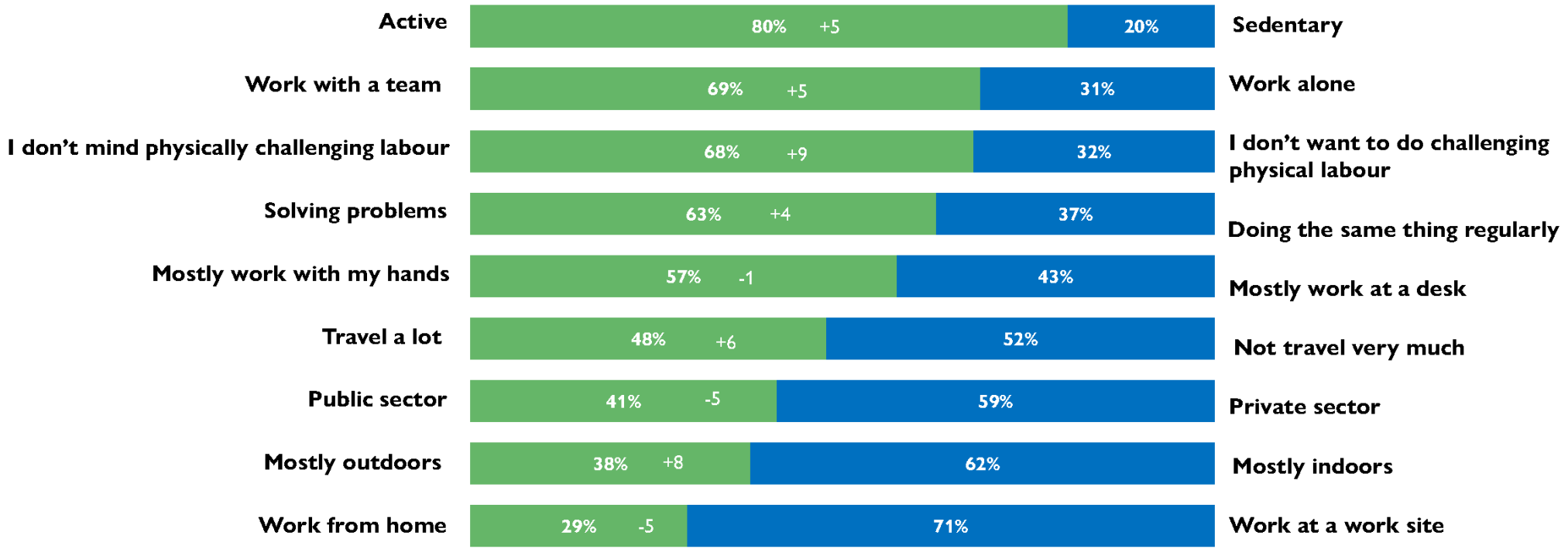
Top preferences remain unchanged: most young people like an active job, working with a team and solving problems. Preference shifts toward more active, hands-on (+9) and outdoor (+6) roles, while interest in working from home continues to decline (-7)



Base [all], n=3,000
(DATA CALLOUTS FROM PREVIOUS WAVE)

Q. What best describes the type of work you would most **like** to do?

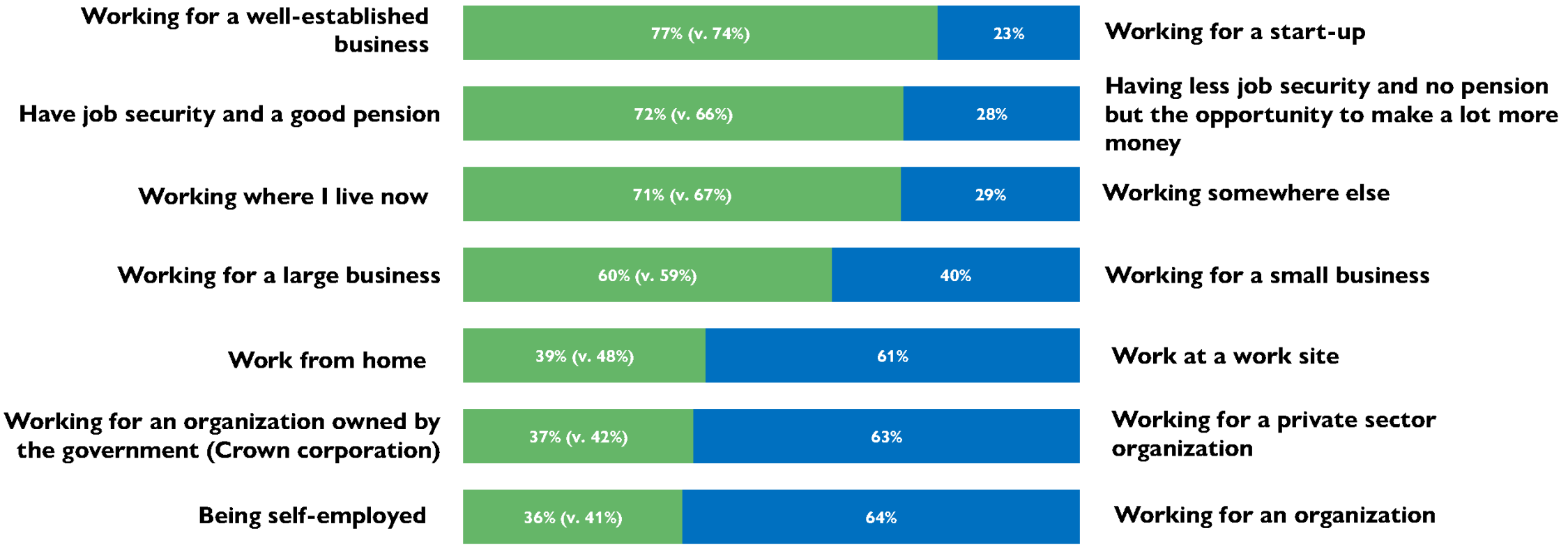
Those with a positive impression of mining, are more likely to want to work outdoors, part of a team and don't mind physically challenging work, all of which have seen an increase in interest since the last wave. Increases include: hands-on (+9) and outdoor (+8), travel (+6), and active (+5).



Note: +/- compares those with favourable impression with the overall population
Base [Favourable impression of Mining], n=1,005

Q. Thinking about employment opportunities, which of the following would you prefer?

Shift toward stability and security vs. 2023: increased preference for established employers (+3 pts), job security (+6 pts), and local work (+4 pts), while interest in remote work declines (-9 pts).



Base: All, n=3,000
(DATA CALLOUTS FROM PREVIOUS WAVE)

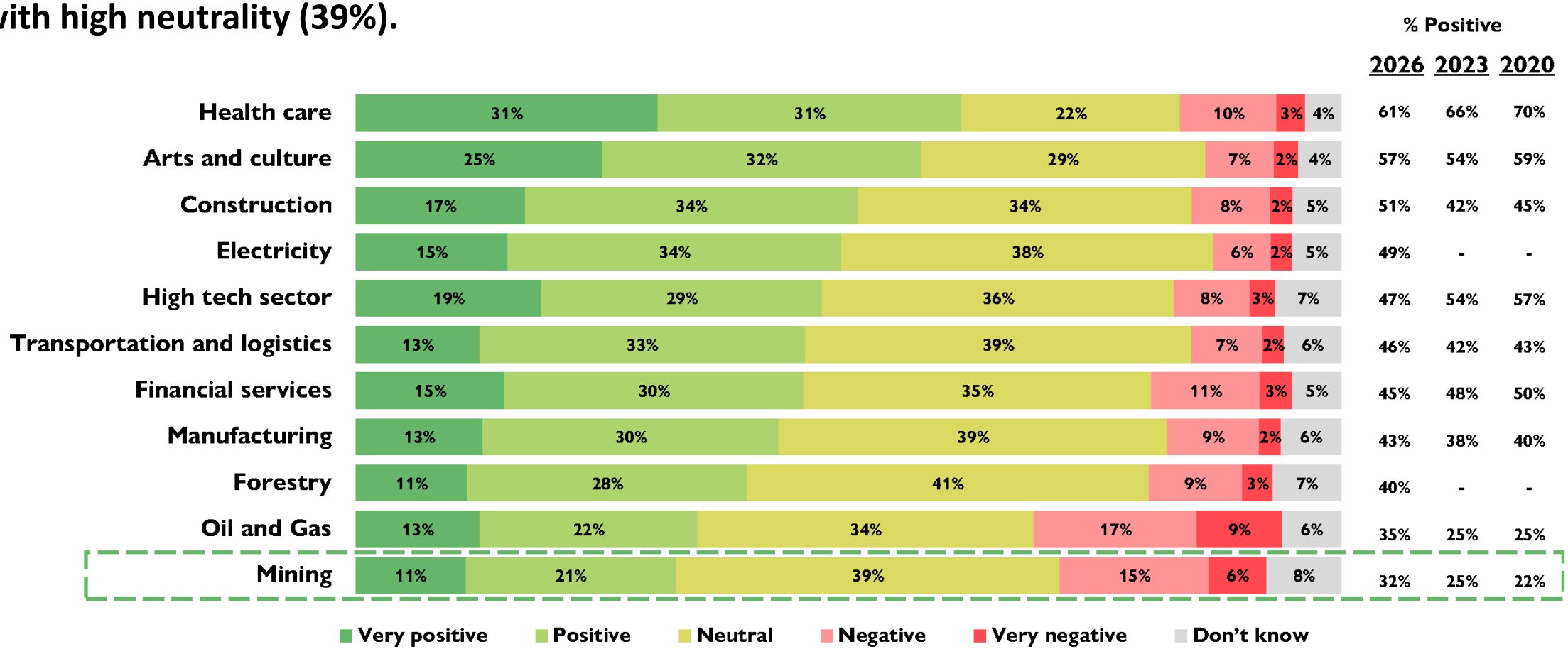
MINING COMPARED WITH COMPETING INDUSTRIES

MINING INDUSTRY
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

Q. Do you have a positive or negative impression of the following sectors or industries?

Mining perceptions are improving (32% positive, up from 25% in 2023) but still trail most sectors, with high neutrality (39%).



Base [all], n=3,000

Q. What words first come to mind when you think of mining?

Mining is most associated with "coal," "gold," and "danger," reinforcing perceptions of physical, high-risk work.

1. COAL
2. GOLD
3. MINE
4. HARD
5. DANGER
6. WORK
7. MINER
8. ROCK
9. DIG
10. LABOUR

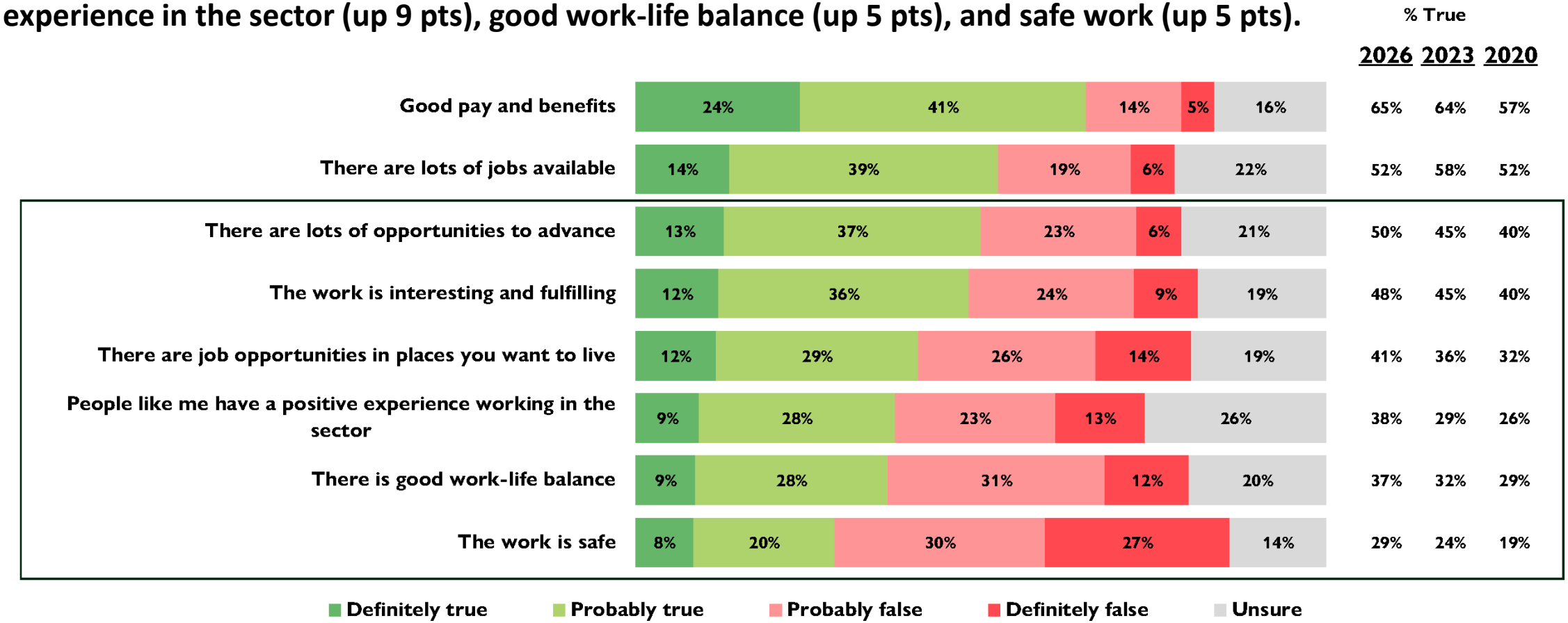
2023

1. COAL
2. GOLD
3. DANGER
4. ROCK
5. DIAMOND
6. HARD
7. DIRTY
8. LABOUR
9. MINE
10. OIL

Base [all], n=3,000

Q. Thinking about working in the Mining Sector, to what extent, if at all, are the following statements true or false?

Perceptions of the sector have improved across most indicators since 2020- in particular: advancement opportunities (up 5 pts), job opportunities where they want to live (up 5 pts), people like them have a positive experience in the sector (up 9 pts), good work-life balance (up 5 pts), and safe work (up 5 pts).



Base [all], n=3,000

Q. Thinking about working in the Mining Sector, to what extent, if at all, are the following statements true or false?

Statements by sector

% definitely/ probably true	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Health Care	Oil and Gas	Transportation	High Tech
Good pay and benefits	65%	68%	61%	72%	67%	61%	73%
There are lots of jobs available	52%	64%	54%	65%	50%	55%	48%
There are lots of opportunities to advance	50%	58%	53%	68%	54%	53%	66%
The work is interesting and fulfilling	48%	61%	50%	72%	44%	50%	62%
There are job opportunities in places you want to live	41%	69%	54%	72%	45%	58%	57%
There is good work-life balance	37%	48%	48%	41%	39%	46%	49%
People like me have a positive experience working in the sector	38%	49%	43%	52%	38%	46%	55%
The work is safe	29%	35%	43%	56%	33%	57%	64%

Lowest of statement Highest of statement

Base: Randomly assigned sector, n=476 -542 | Base [asked Mining], n=3,000

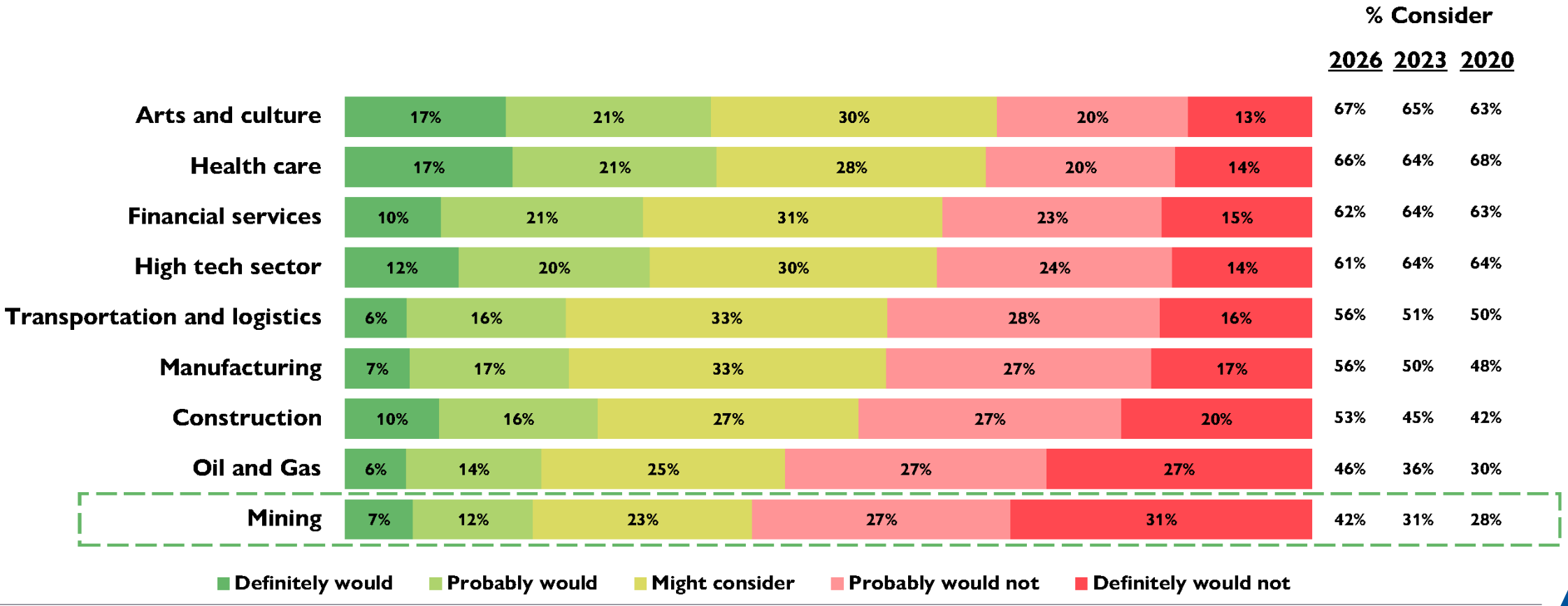
CHOOSING AN INDUSTRY

MINING INDUSTRY
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

Q. How likely, if at all, would you consider working in these sectors?

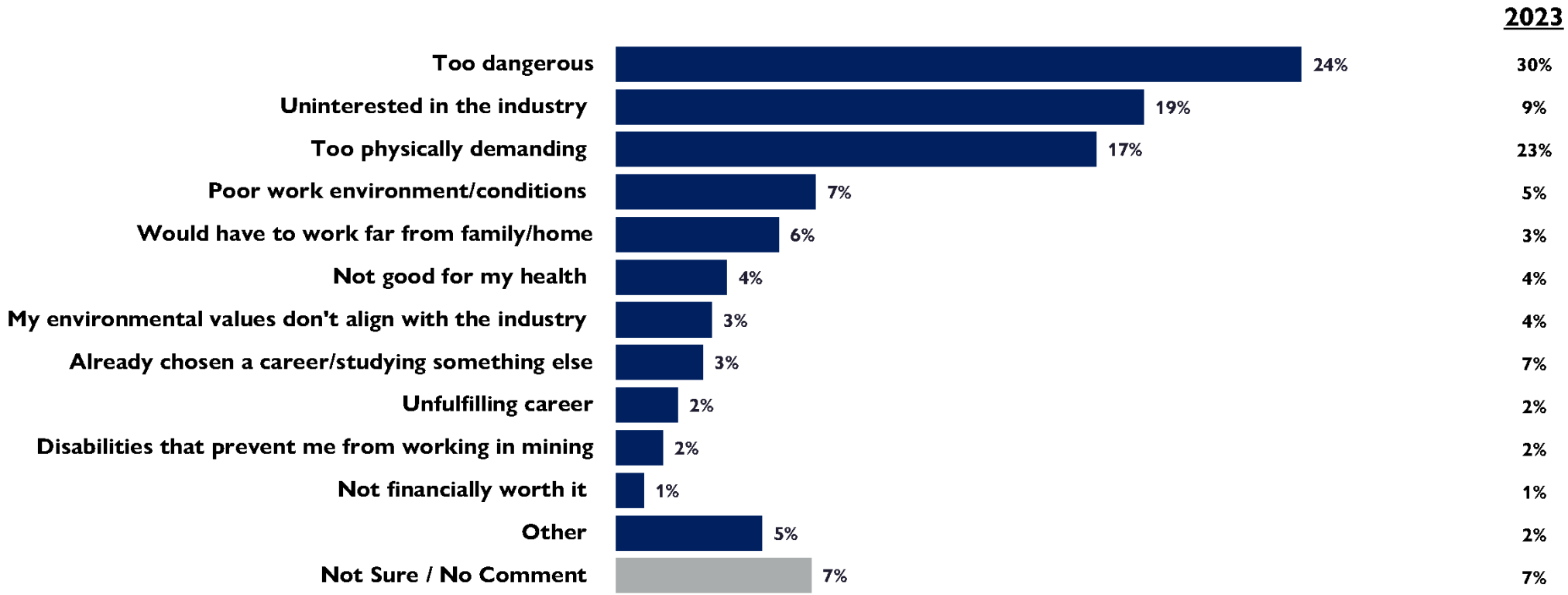
42% would consider a career in mining (+11 pts vs. 2023), but resistance remains higher than other sectors.



Base [all], n=3,000

Q. Earlier you said you would not consider working in the mining sector. What is the main reason you feel that way?

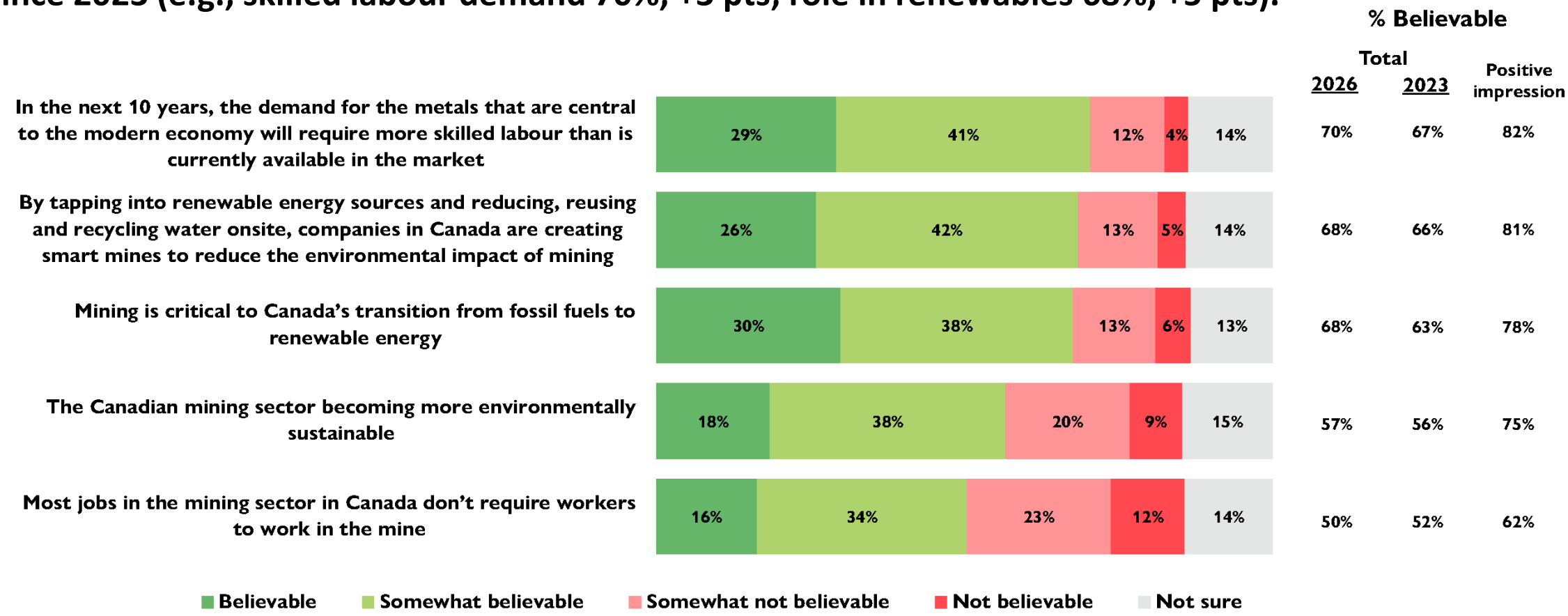
Perceived danger and disinterest in the industry are top reasons for lack of interest in mining sector perceptions of danger (-6), and physical demands (-6) declining, while general disinterest rises.



Base [those who responded probably/definitely would not consider working in mining sector], n=1,739

Q. Now we are going to show you some statements about the mining industry in Canada. For each one, we'd like to know if this statement is believable or not?

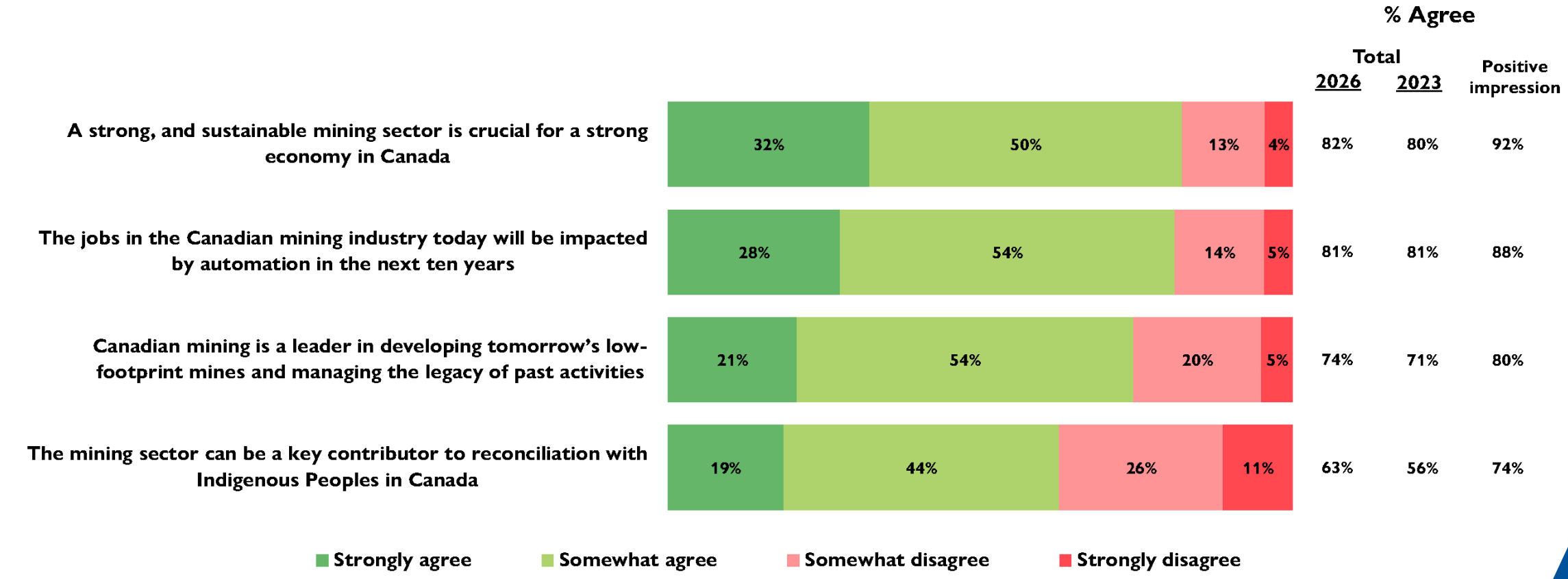
Around 7 in 10 believe key narratives about mining's role in the energy transition, with modest gains since 2023 (e.g., skilled labour demand 70%, +3 pts; role in renewables 68%, +5 pts).



Base [all], n=3,000

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strong agreement that mining is vital to Canada's economy (82%, +2 pts) and will be impacted by automation (81%, no change), with notable growth in seeing its role in reconciliation (63%, +7 pts)



Base [all], n=3,000

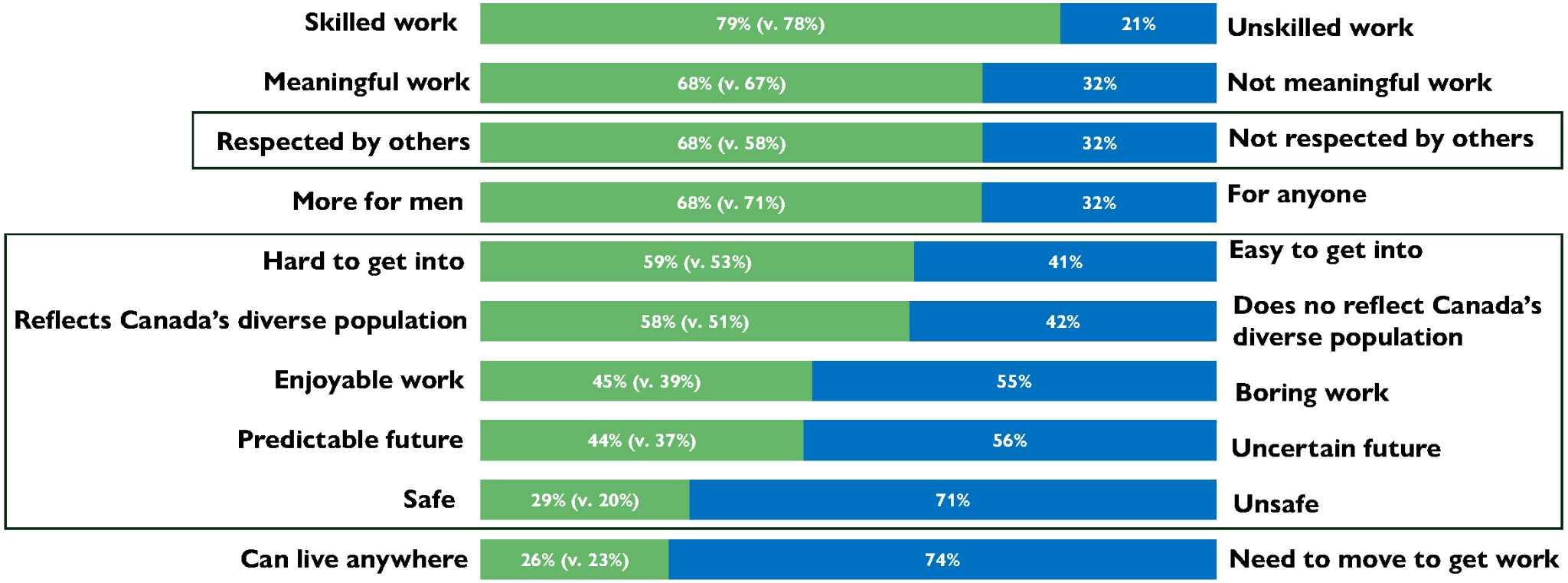
DEEPER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MINING

MINING INDUSTRY
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

Q. When you think specifically about a career in mining, which of the following words or phrases of each pair best describes how you feel about it?

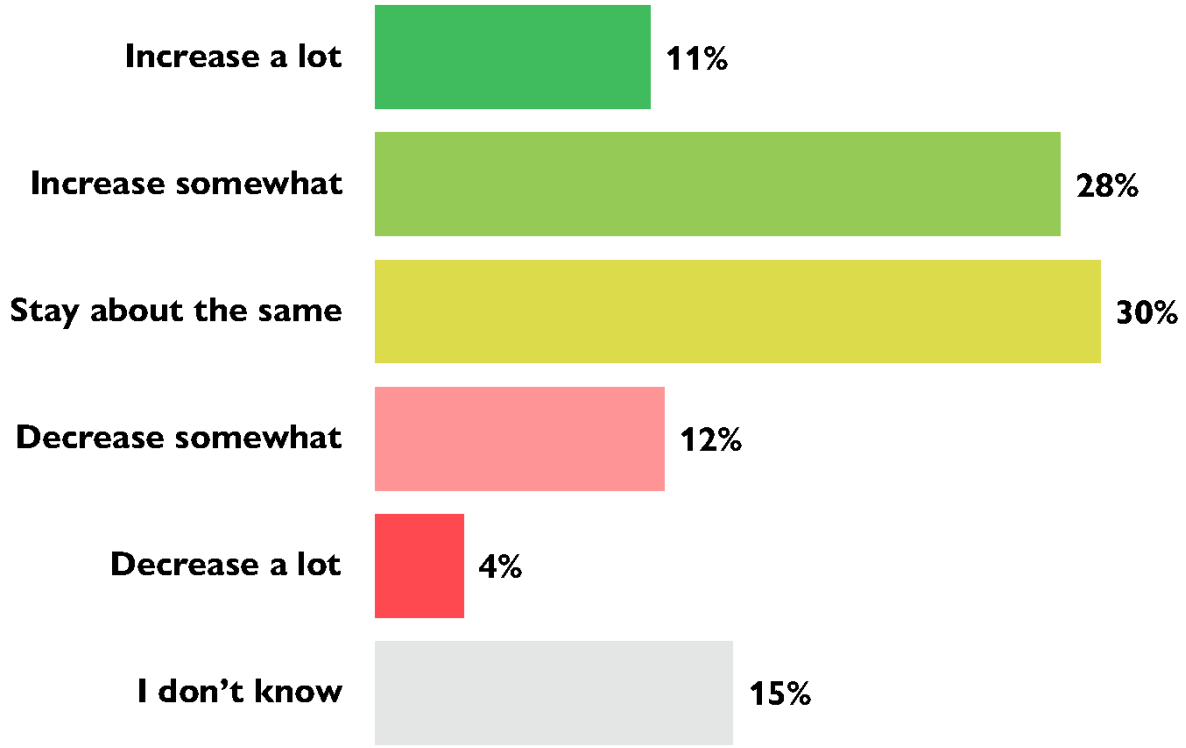
Mining still seen as skilled (79%) and meaningful (68%). While there have been gains for respected (+10), reflective of diversity (+7), enjoyable work (+6), predicable future (+7) and safety (+9), there is also a growing perspective it is harder to get into (+6).



Base [all], n=3,000
(DATA CALLOUTS FROM PREVIOUS WAVE)

Q. Ten years from now, do you think the number of jobs in the mining sector in Canada will increase a lot, increase somewhat, stay about the same, decrease somewhat, or decrease a lot?

39% (+5 from 2023) believe jobs in the mining sector will increase in Canada in the next 10 years.



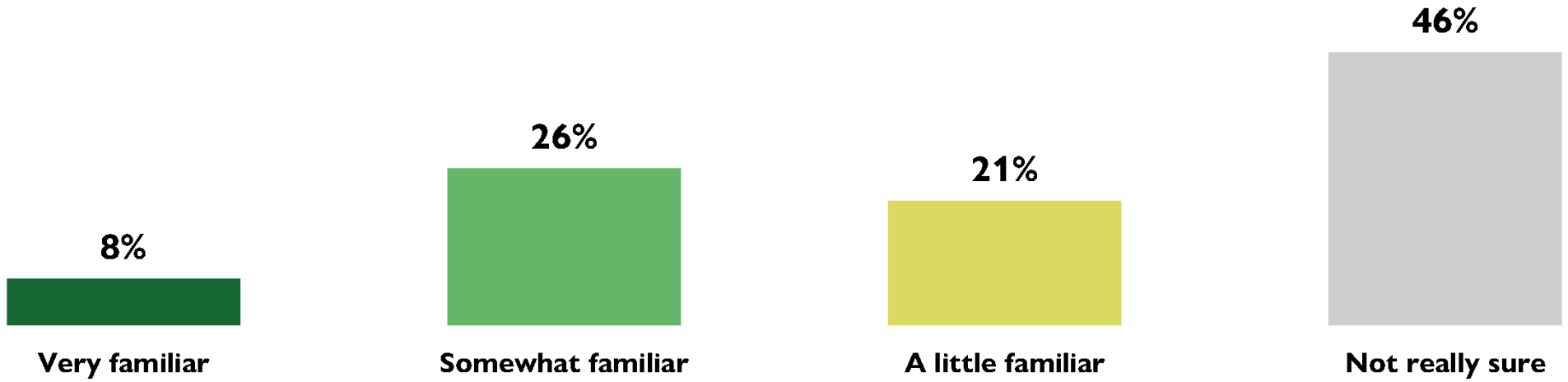
39% (+5 from 2023) believe that in 10 years, jobs in the mining sector in Canada will increase

16% (-9 from 2023) believe that in 10 years, jobs in the mining sector in Canada will decrease

Base [all], n=3,000

Q. How familiar are you with the kinds of career possibilities that are available in the mining sector?

Despite perceptions of a growing sector, and increased willingness to explore a career familiarity remains limited: 1 in 3 are at least somewhat familiar with the career possibilities available in the mining sector.

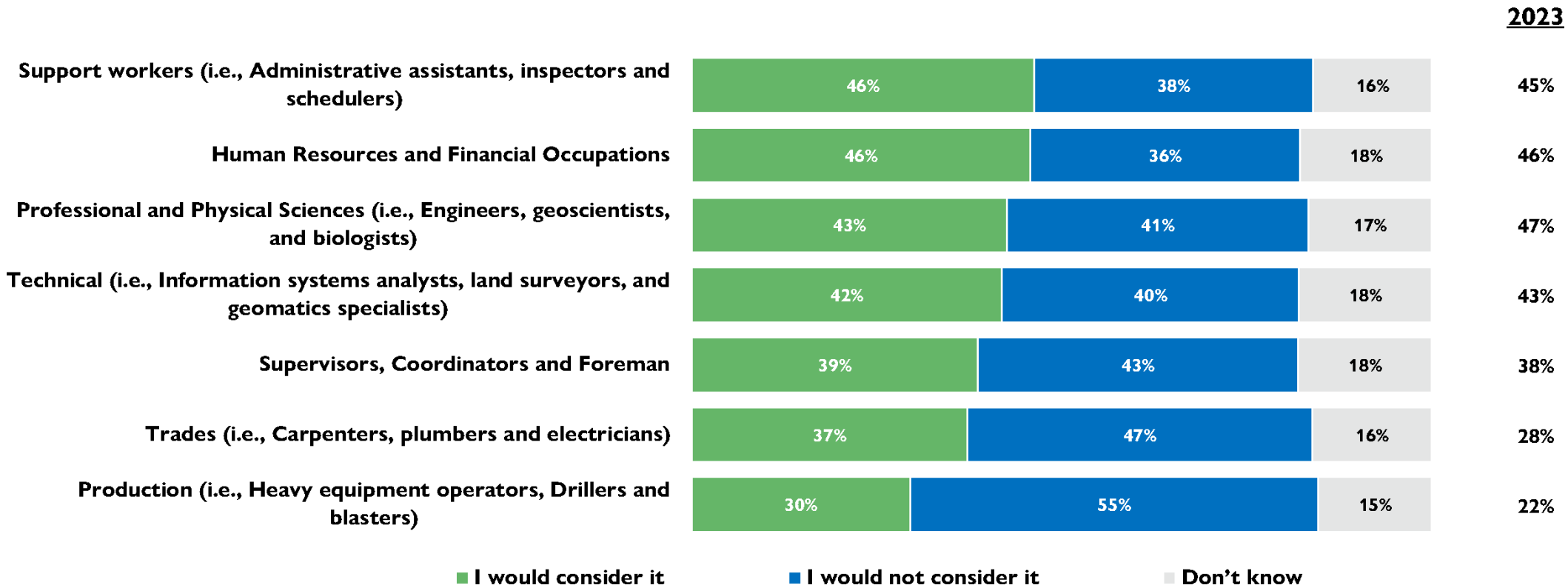


	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	A little familiar	Not really sure
2023	6%	24%	25%	44%

Base [all], n=3,000

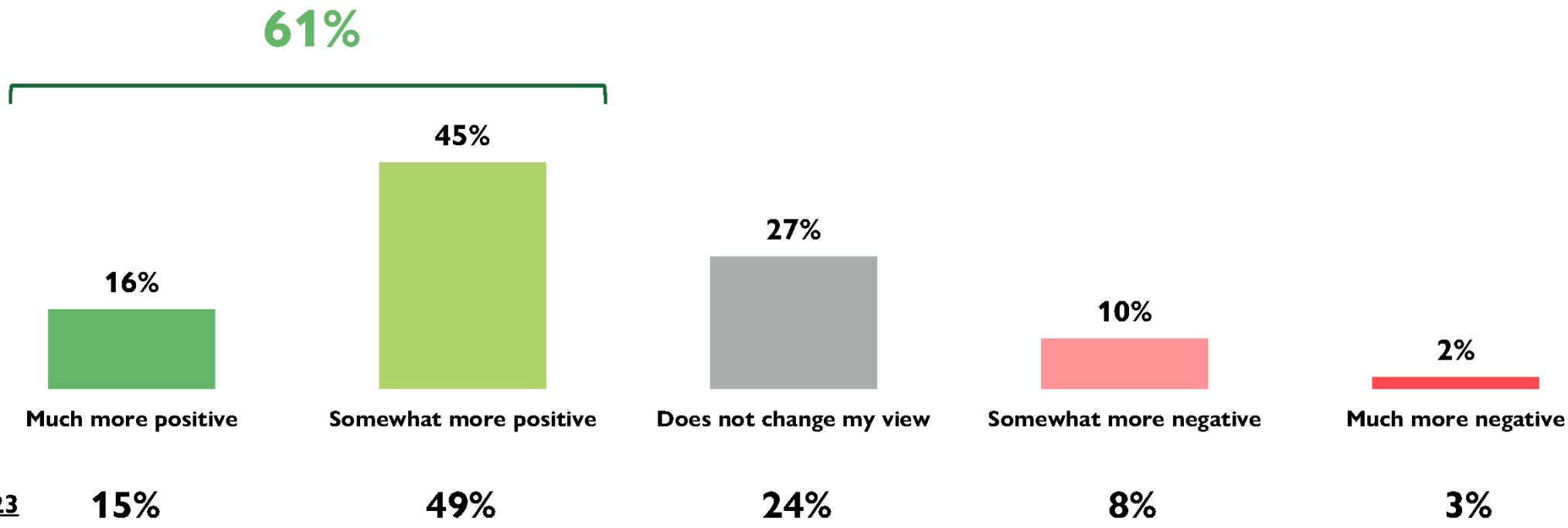
Q. There are lots of different positions available to people in the mining sector. Would you consider or not consider performing the following jobs in the sector?

Non-operational roles drive interest: up to 46% would consider administrative or HR roles, compared to 30% for production jobs. Gap between non-operational and operational roles is narrowing: production (+8 pts) and trades (+9 pts) see the largest gains since 2023, while admin/HR roles remain steady at ~46%.



Base [all], n=3,000

Learning about career opportunities improves perceptions for 61% (-4 pts vs. 2023), though the impact has softened slightly.



Base [all], n=3,000

MINING NEEDS YOU: CAMPAIGN PERSPECTIVES

MINING NEEDS YOU

MINING INDUSTRY HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

METHODOLOGY – ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Additional qualitative research was also conducted through a three-day online community involving 40 participants aged 15 to 24 from across Canada. Participants were recruited from a prior quantitative survey and selected to reflect a diverse mix by age, region (including urban, suburban, and rural communities), and education/employment status (in school, post-secondary, working, or job-seeking). The community included both younger youth (aged 15–18) and older youth (aged 19–24), allowing for comparison across life stages.

The community tested creative concepts and messaging from the *Mining Needs You* campaign to understand what resonates with youth, what does not, and how communication can be refined to better align with their values, expectations, and decision-making processes.

KEY FINDINGS – ONLINE COMMUNITIES

- ***Mining Needs You* Campaign Content is effective at shifting perceptions but less effective at converting interest.** Exposure to campaign content increased interest for 65% of participants.

- **The biggest barrier is not negativity, it's lack of clarity and trust.** Youth disengage from content that feels vague, overly promotional, or lacking substance, while credibility increases when content includes specific details, real experiences, and balanced messaging.

- **Safety, lifestyle, and location concerns outweigh financial appeal for many.** Despite strong interest in high pay and stability, concerns about risk, remote work, and time away from home remain the most significant deterrents to consideration.

- **To drive deeper consideration, content must move from inspiration to clarity.** Youth need clear answers to three core questions: what the job is really like, how to get into it, and whether the lifestyle fits their goals, requiring more transparency, detail, and representation.

CAMPAIGN CONTENT

The online community polling participants were exposed to *Mining Needs You* campaign materials (videos, social media content, and influencer-style posts) designed to promote the Canadian mining industry and its opportunities to youth.

We assessed their reactions and will share what worked, what didn't, how content could be more effective and more.

MOST PERSONALLY RELEVANT CONTENT

Video 4 (29%) stands out as the most personally relevant piece of content due to how real and grounded it feels compared to the others. Viewers consistently point to the fact that it didn't come across like a polished ad, but more like someone genuinely sharing their life. The inclusion of specific details - like a 4-day work week, different roles such as accounting, and even personal hobbies - helped people picture themselves in that career. It also broadened appeal by showing that mining isn't just physical labour, which made more people feel included.

Video 2 (21%) follows as the next most relevant, driven largely by how clearly it shows the day-to-day reality of the job. People appreciated being able to visualize the work through examples like travel, outdoor environments, and varied tasks. For many, this was the first time mining felt tangible rather than abstract. The combination of adventure, hands-on work, and time off made it especially appealing to those looking for a different kind of lifestyle.

A smaller but notable group chose **Post 2** (14%) and **Video 1** (14%). Post 2 stood out because it felt modern and engaging, with strong visuals and a sense of energy that matched how younger audiences consume content. It also benefited from representation and a mix of facts and storytelling, which made it feel more personal. Video 1, on the other hand, appealed for its simplicity - it clearly explained career growth and salary without overwhelming the viewer, making it easier to understand as a starting point.

CONTENT MOST LIKELY TO MAKE MINING CAREERS FEEL REALISTIC / ATTAINABLE

When it comes to what made mining careers feel realistic and attainable, **Video 4** (39%) leads. It stands out because it combines relatability with concrete detail. Viewers saw the speaker as "someone like me… [who] took a leap of faith," which made the path into mining feel achievable. The video also showed multiple entry points and career paths, helping people understand that there is no single "perfect" way in.

Participants pointed to a few things that made it feel more real:

- A clear journey from school into the workforce
- Visibility of different roles beyond physical labour
- Specific examples of schedules, roles, and progression
- A sense that it showed "actual people, not actors reading lines"

CONTENT MOST LIKELY TO MAKE MINING CAREERS FEEL REALISTIC / ATTAINABLE

A second tier includes **Video 2** (18%) and **Video 3** (18%), which resonated for different reasons. Video 2 felt realistic because it grounded the experience in day-to-day work and lifestyle. Participants noted that it "didn't guarantee advancement" and gave a clearer sense of schedules and work-life balance. Video 3, on the other hand, stood out for relatability. Featuring a student perspective helped viewers connect, with comments like "I relate to the person in the video" and "she showed her progress," making the pathway feel more accessible.

Post 2 (11%) also contributed by showing representation and variety. For some, seeing a young woman navigating both technical and field roles made the career feel more flexible and inclusive.

Overall, content feels most realistic and attainable when it clearly shows how someone enters the field, highlights multiple pathways, and features relatable people. Video 4 performs best because it moves beyond promotion and demonstrates how someone like the viewer could realistically see themselves in mining.

WHAT CONTENT SHOULD DO LESS OF / AVOID

Overall, feedback highlights a clear concern with content that feels inauthentic, vague, or overly promotional. The biggest issue is not negative content, but content that feels empty or “salesy.”

A major theme is avoiding overly polished or inauthentic delivery. Participants quickly disengage when people seem “too excited” or scripted, when content feels like “fake glamour,” or when stock visuals are used instead of real workers. This ties closely to a broader concern around credibility, as one-sided positivity that ignores challenges makes the content feel unrealistic and less trustworthy.

There is also strong frustration with vague or generic messaging. Phrases like “fuel innovation” or “spark real change” without examples, generalized statements, and unclear job descriptions fail to resonate. Similarly, content that is too short or lacks substance is seen as ineffective, especially when it provides no clear takeaway or skips important details like requirements, career paths, or working conditions.

Repetition and overemphasis on certain themes also reduce impact. Constant focus on “six-figure salaries” without context, or repeating the same high-level messages across content, can feel shallow and unconvincing.

Finally, participants noted the importance of avoiding assumptions. Content should not assume prior knowledge of mining or existing interest, and should not rely on generic calls to action like “visit the link” without explaining the value.

CHANGE IN INTEREST IN MINING CAREERS

Overall, the study and content had a positive impact. A majority (65%) said their interest increased, while 35% said it stayed the same. There was no indication of decreased interest.

The increase (65%) was largely driven by new information and expanded perceptions. A key factor was discovering the variety of roles available, including business, finance, and tech, which helped shift mining from a narrow, physical image to a broader, more accessible industry. Seeing real people and relatable experiences also played a major role. Participants responded to authentic stories, different backgrounds, and clear career journeys. Specific details such as advancement opportunities, work-life balance, travel, salary, and stability made the career feel more tangible. For some, this led to a clear shift in perception, with comments like “it opened my eyes” and “changed my preconceptions.” Representation, especially seeing women and diverse paths, reinforced the idea that “there’s a place for everyone.”

Why interest stayed the same (35%) For those whose interest did not change, the main reason was personal fit rather than content quality. Many felt the career simply did not align with their interests, even if they recognized its benefits. Others said the content repeated what they already knew or did not provide enough new or detailed information to shift their views. A smaller group pointed to concerns such as environmental impact, lack of day-to-day detail, or skepticism about overly positive messaging. Overall, the content was effective at improving perceptions by expanding awareness, showing relatable people, and highlighting tangible benefits. However, increasing interest further requires going beyond surface-level messaging. Interest is less likely to change when the career does not align with personal preferences or when content lacks depth and realism.

MINING INDUSTRY
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

MINING NEEDS YOU

Questions? Contact **info@mihr.ca**

mihr.ca