

The Community Pulse

Tech, AI and Us

Objectives & Methodology



Objectives

This study examines how Americans across consumer, small business, and public sector segments are adopting and integrating AI and emerging technologies into their daily lives, workplaces, and communities, and how they are defining the boundaries for responsible technology development.

Methodology

This survey was conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of Verizon between January 5 - February 6, 2026 among national samples of 3,007 US adults, 1,000 small to midsize business decision makers, and 511 public sector employees. Oversamples were also collected of 507-1,001 adults, 100-300 SMBs, and 200-245 public sector employees each in NY, CA, TX, FL, IL, and NV. The interviews were conducted online. Results from national data have margins of error of +/- 2-4 percentage points, and results from oversamples have margins of error of +/- 3-10 percentage points.

A supplemental survey was conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of Verizon between April 1 - 2, 2026 among 2,502 US adults, including 889 employed adults and 358 managers or HR decision-makers. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points, results for employed adults have a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points, and results for managers or HR decision makers have a margin of error of +/- 5 percentage points.

Key Findings

1

Americans Embrace Technology While Demanding Human Connection

- Consumers, small businesses, and public servants demonstrate universal digital fluency and widespread AI adoption, viewing technology as a positive force in their communities.
 - Despite this enthusiasm, Americans establish clear boundaries: prioritizing authentic relationships, maintaining human judgment in critical decisions, and refusing to sacrifice personal connection for automation.
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2

The Workforce Skills Gap Requires Immediate Investment

- Consumers and business leaders recognize a significant preparedness gap, with concerns that today's youth lack essential workforce skills and over-rely on technology.
 - Communities are actively problem-solving: parents are leading technology education, small businesses are leveraging digital tools for employee development, and public servants are pursuing digital literacy training.
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3

Employees Want To Build Their AI Skills, And They Are Looking To Their Employers To Help Them Do It

- 90% of employers say it is important that their employees have strong AI skills, but only 30% of employees currently feel fully prepared to use AI at work
 - 72% of employees trust their employer to help them build their AI skills
 - 91% of employers see at least a moderate AI skills gap at their organizations, yet 60% of employees view building their AI skills as a priority
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4

Communities Are Building Disaster Resilience Through Technology

- Public servants and consumers support modern emergency response technologies, recognizing that escalating threats require advanced tools like AI prediction systems and smart wearables for first responders.
 - While communities feel generally prepared, they acknowledge their technology infrastructure needs significant upgrades, viewing technological resilience as essential foundational infrastructure.
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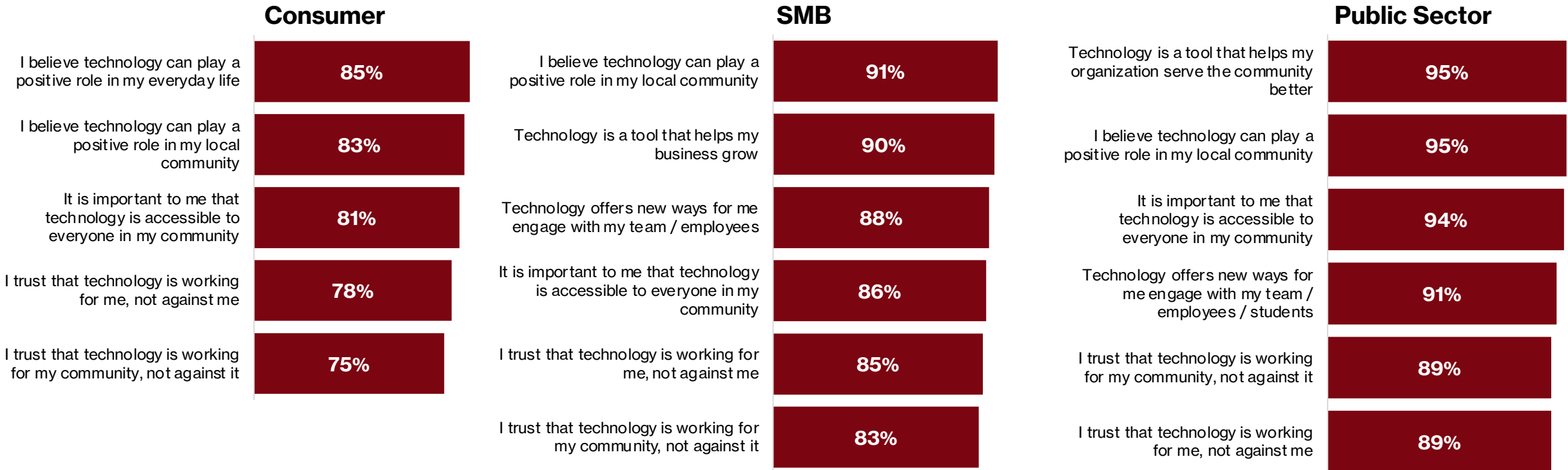
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Cyber Safety Remains Critical, Yet Communities Face Preparedness Gaps

- The majority of Americans have experienced cyber threats, with widespread concern about protecting families from online dangers, deepfakes, and scams targeting vulnerable populations.

Technology and Community

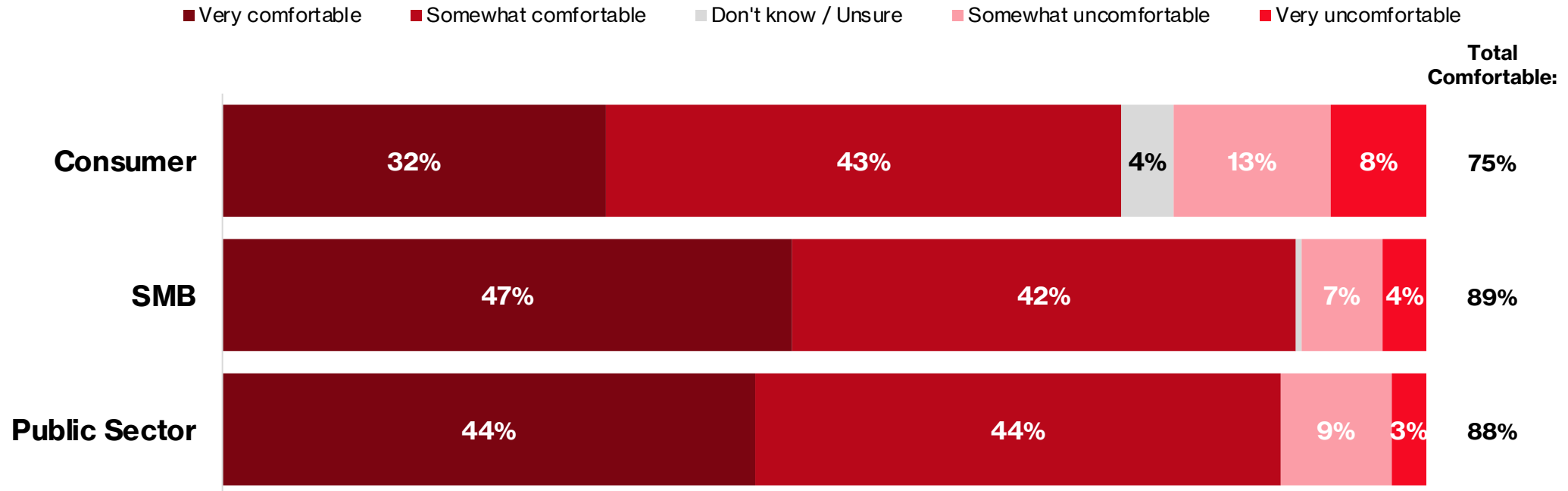
Majorities of consumers, SMBs, and those in the public sector believe technology can play a positive role in their communities and trust that it's working for them.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% "Strongly agree" + "Somewhat agree")
 Base: Consumer, SMB, PS

Most Americans are comfortable adopting new technologies, with SMBs & public servants expressing higher levels of comfort than consumers.

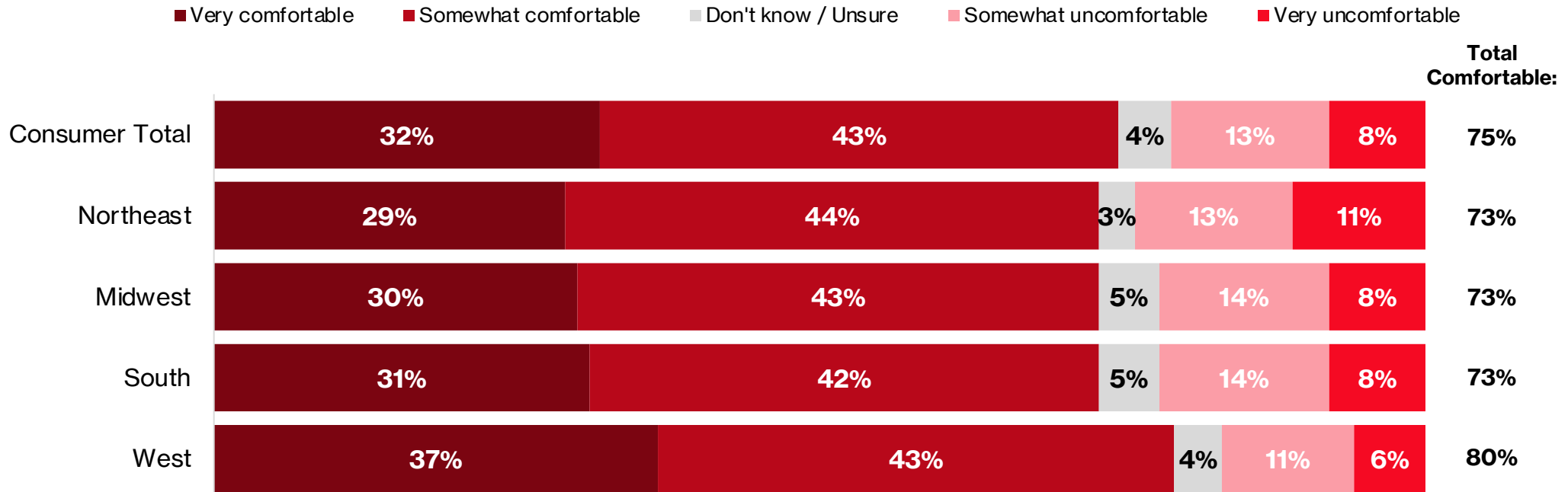
Comfort with Adopting New Technology



Overall, how comfortable are you with adopting new technology?
Base: Consumer, SMB, PS

Consumers in the West feel more comfortable adopting new technology compared to other regions.

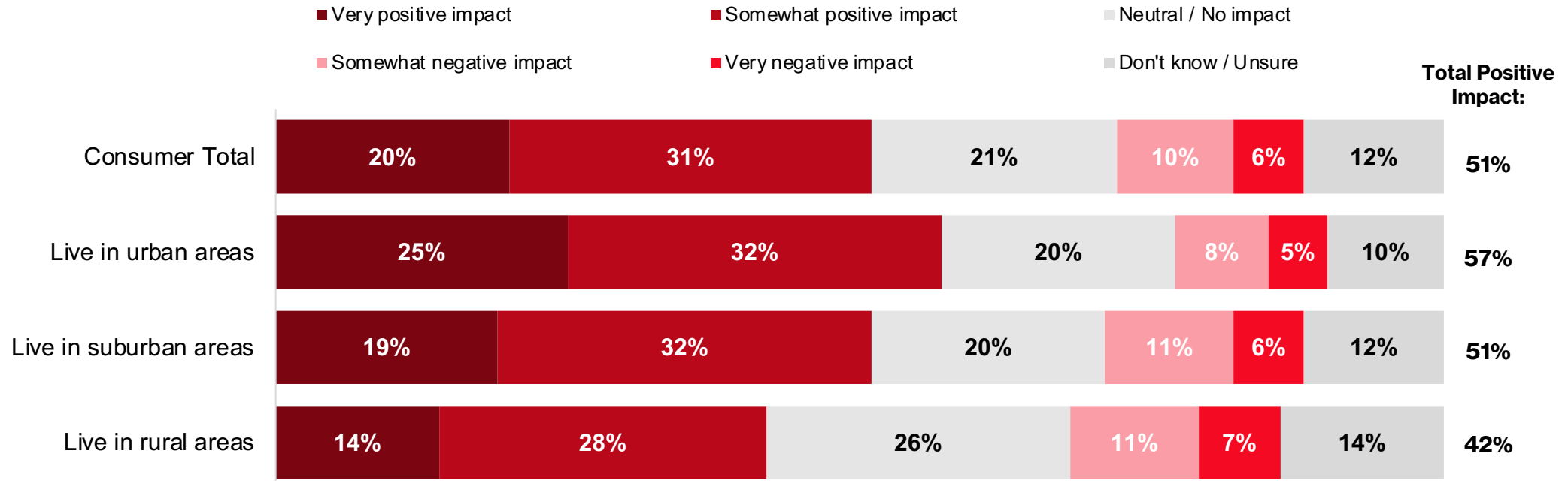
Comfort with Adopting New Technology



Overall, how comfortable are you with adopting new technology?
Base: Consumer, SMB, PS

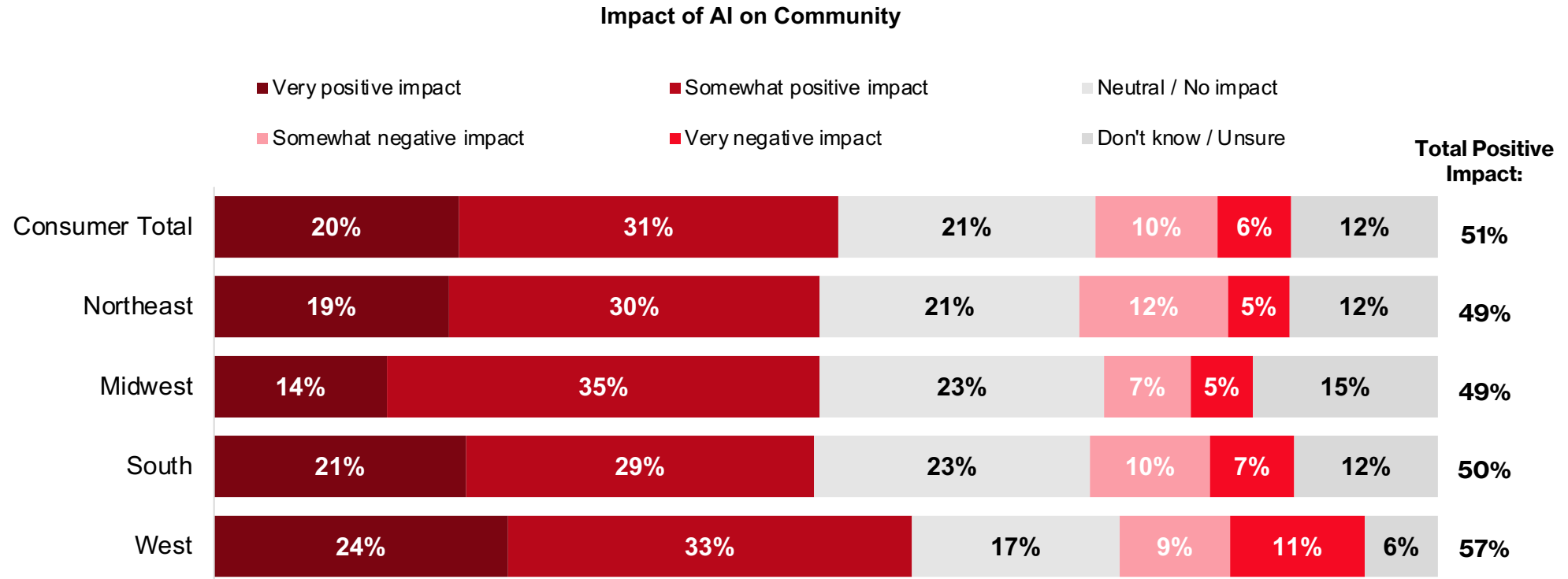
Just over half of consumers believe AI will have a positive impact on their communities, with those in urban areas most optimistic.

Impact of AI on Community



Now, thinking about AI specifically, how much of an impact do you think adoption & use of AI will have on your local community?
 Base: Consumer

Consumers in the West are more optimistic than other regions about AI's impact on their communities.

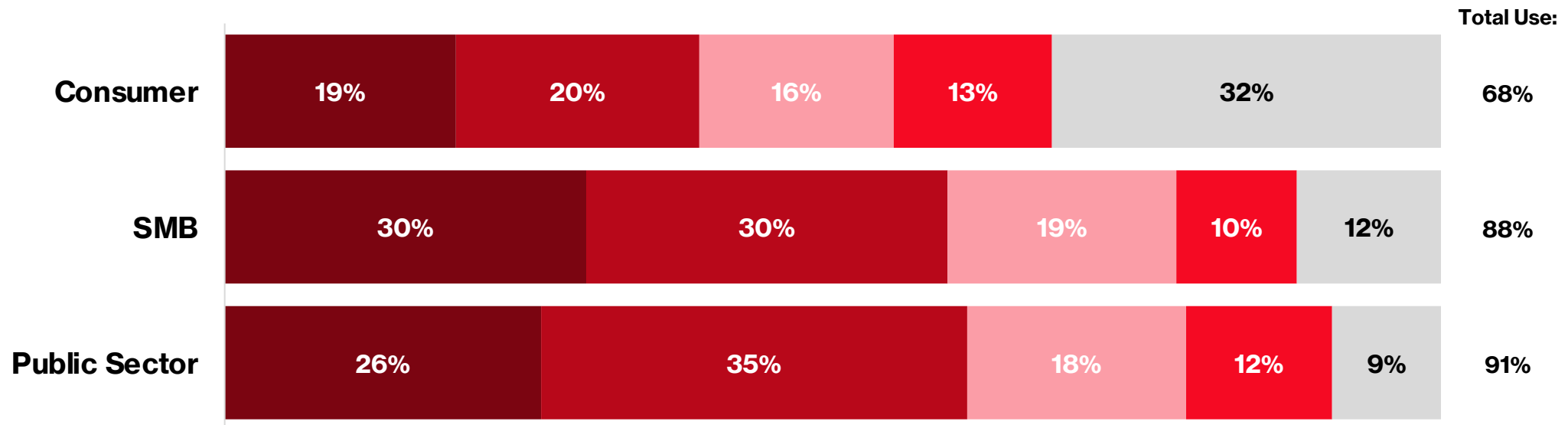


Now, thinking about AI specifically, how much of an impact do you think adoption & use of AI will have on your local community?
 Base: Consumer

Most Americans have used AI tools, with SMBs & public servants showing higher levels of engagement.

Personal Use of AI Tools

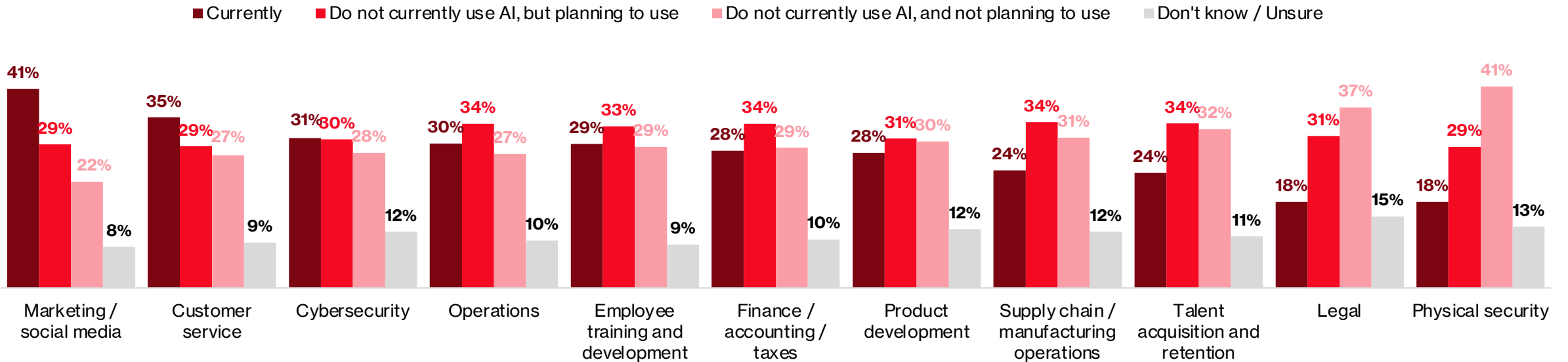
■ Daily ■ Frequently (a few times a week) ■ Occasionally (a few times a month) ■ Rarely (once a month or less often) ■ Never



How often do you use the following technologies? - AI chatbot / assistant (e.g. Claude, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft CoPilot)
Base: Consumer, SMB, PS

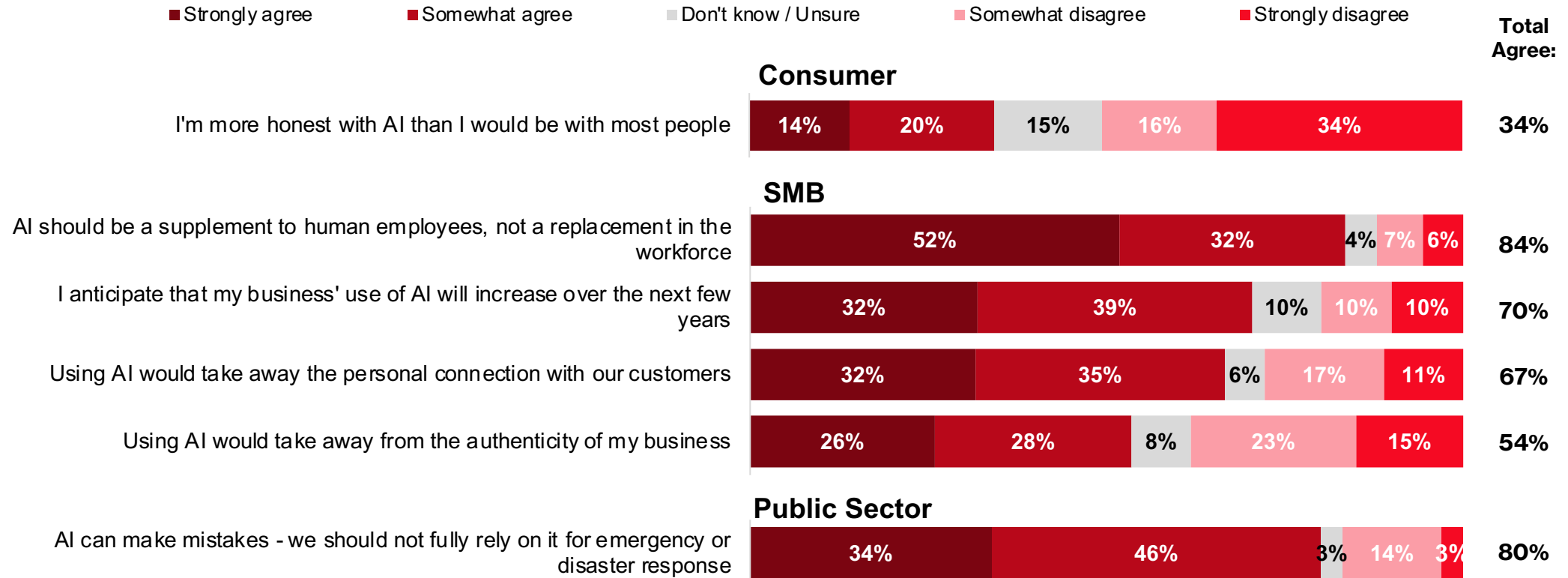
SMBs are most likely to report using or planning to use AI in marketing (70%), customer service (64%), and operations (64%).

Business Use of AI Tools



In which of the following areas does your business currently use or plan to use AI?
Base: SMB

SMBs and public servants believe AI should not *fully* replace human judgement & connection; consumers trust in AI is still building.

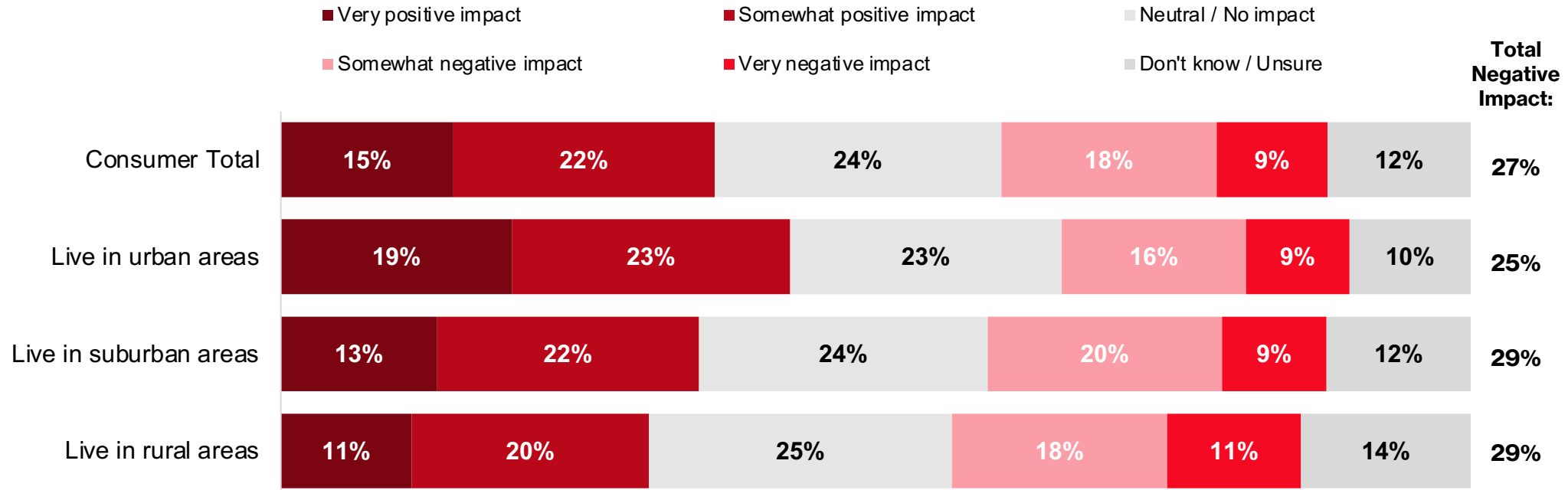


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: Consumer, SMB, PS

Workforce of the Future

Just over a quarter (27%) of Americans think AI will have a negative impact on job security, with those in suburban and rural areas slightly more pessimistic.

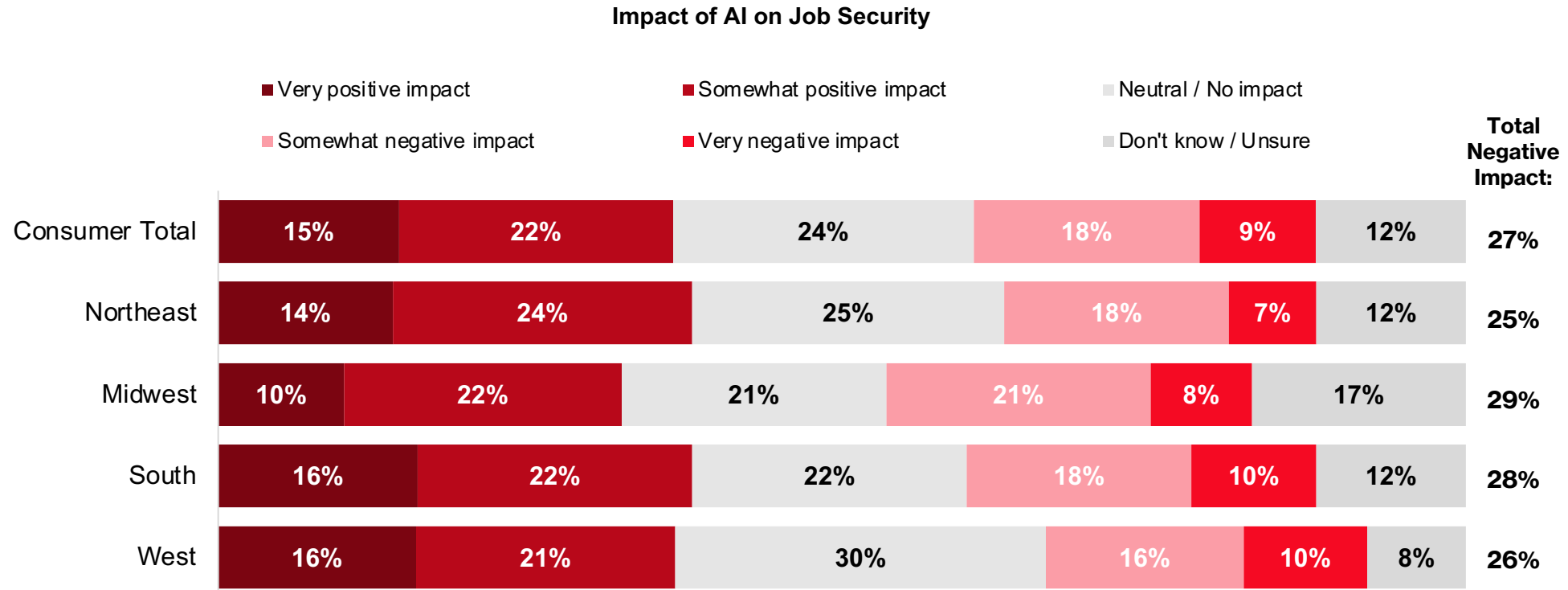
Impact of AI on Job Security



How much of an impact do you think adoption & use of AI will have on job security in your local community?

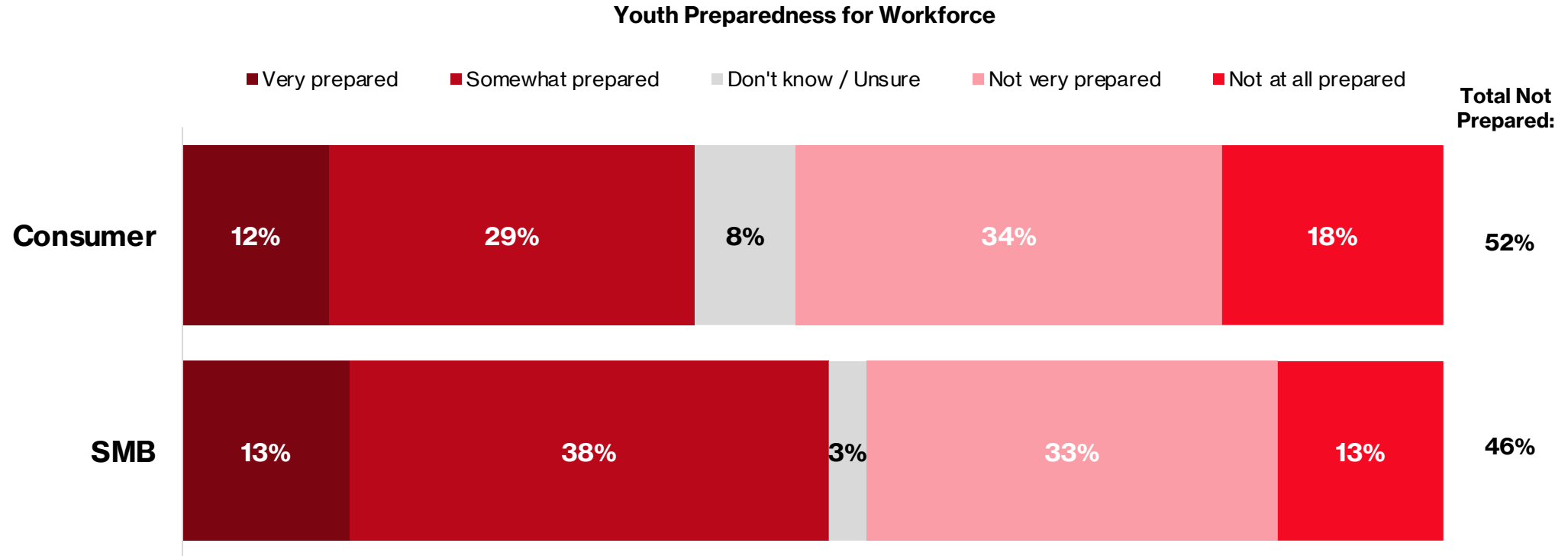
Base: Consumer

Americans in the West are more likely to believe AI will have no impact on job security, while those in the Midwest are more unsure of its impact.



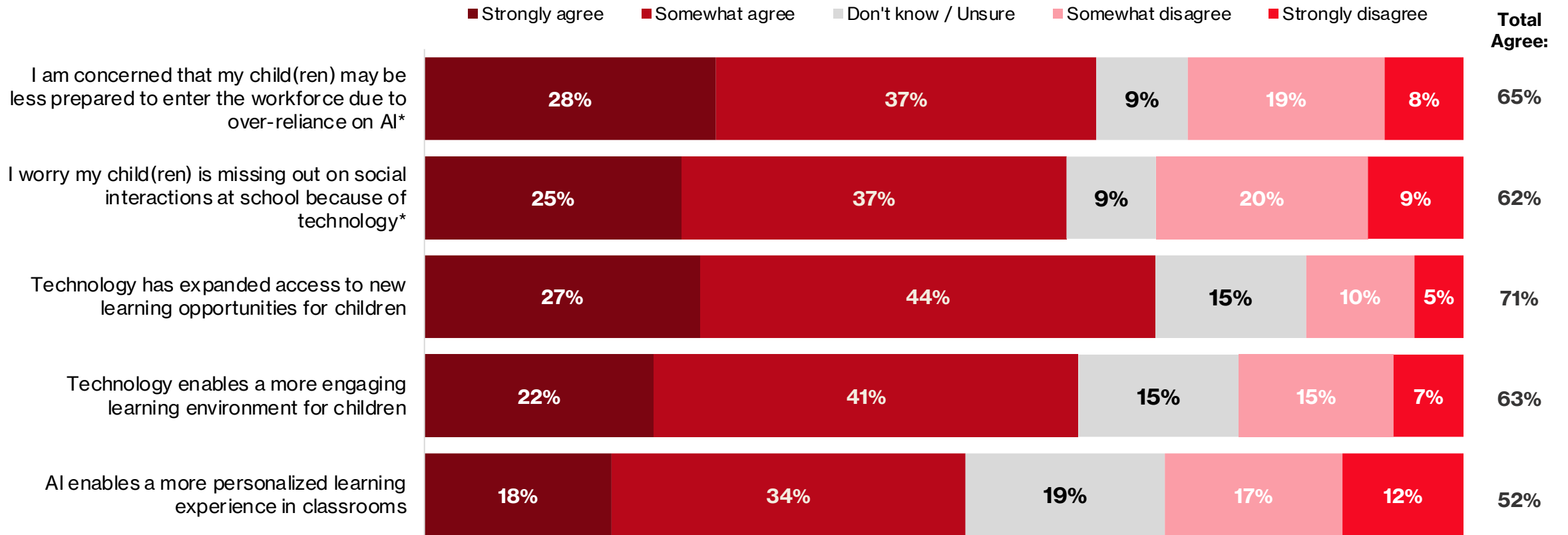
How much of an impact do you think adoption & use of AI will have on job security in your local community?
 Base: Consumer

Around half of consumers & SMBs view today's youth as unprepared for entering the workforce.



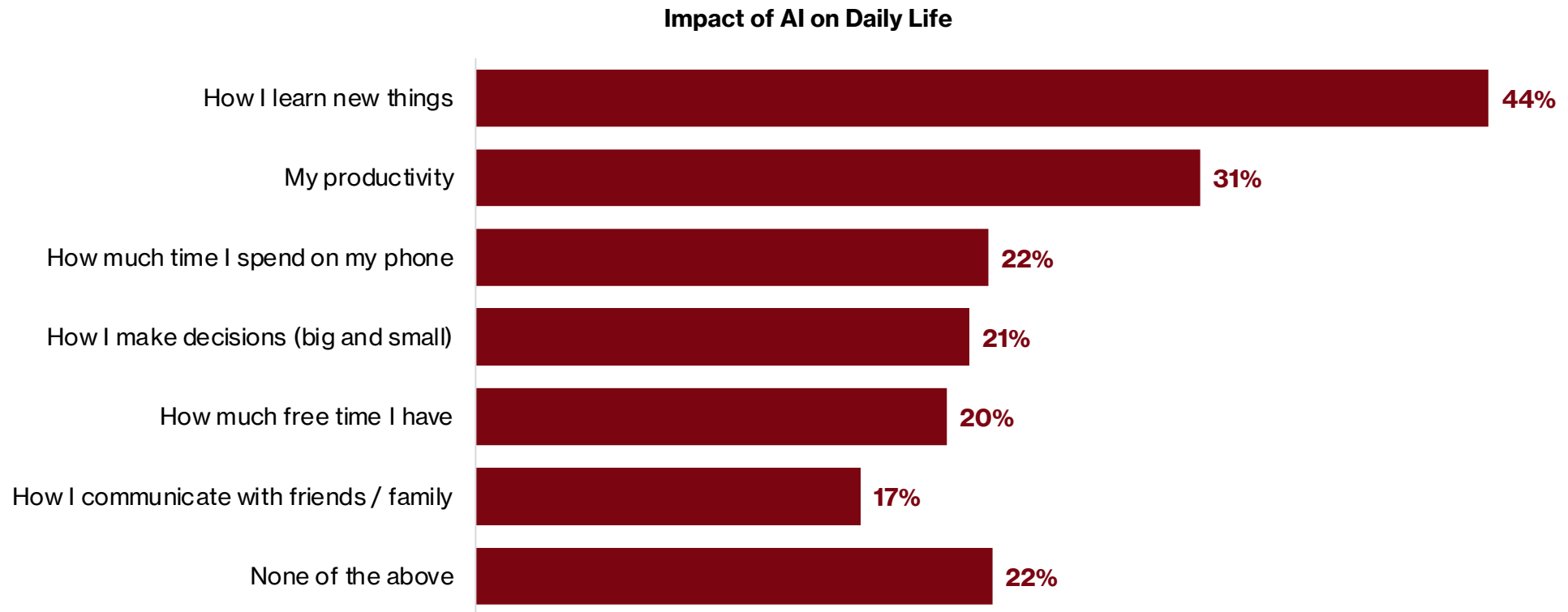
How prepared do you feel today's youth are for entering the workforce?
Base: Consumer, SMB

Parents are concerned about their children’s over-reliance on AI and workforce preparedness, but also see benefits of technology to the learning experience.



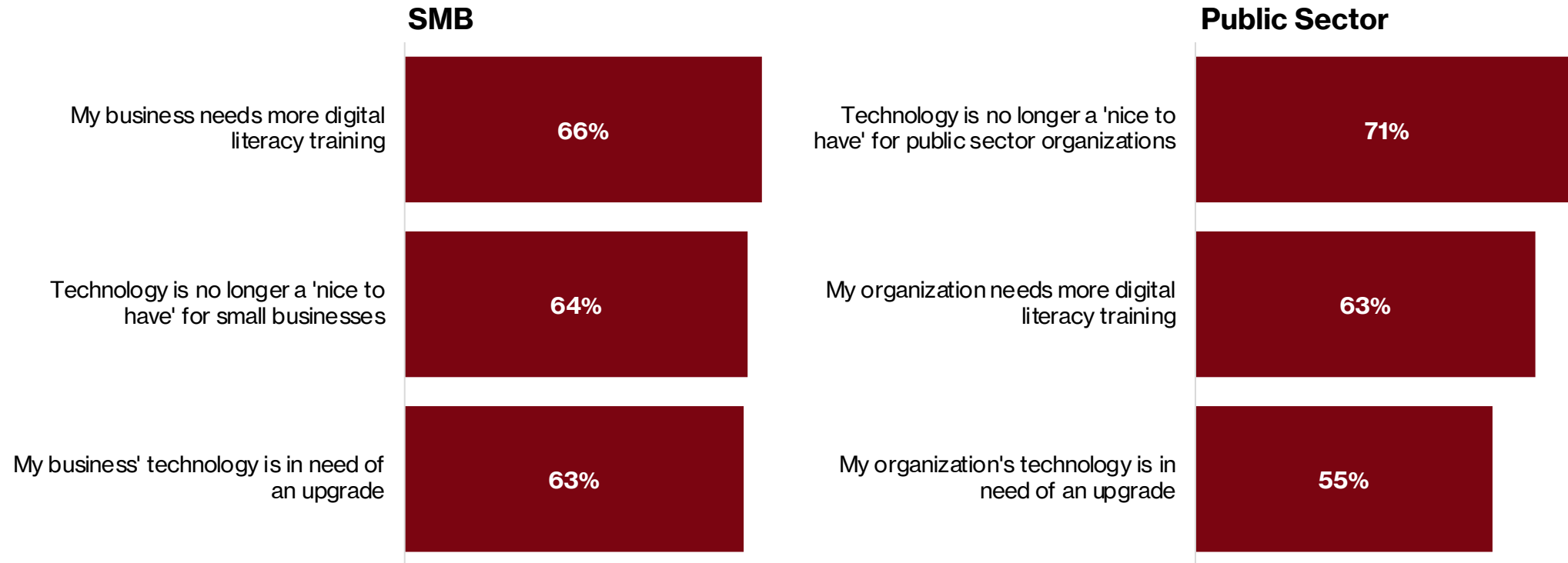
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: Consumer, *Parents

Over 2 in 5 consumers report that AI tools have changed the way they learn new things.



Has the use of AI tools had an impact on any of the following in your daily life? Select all that apply.
Base: Consumer

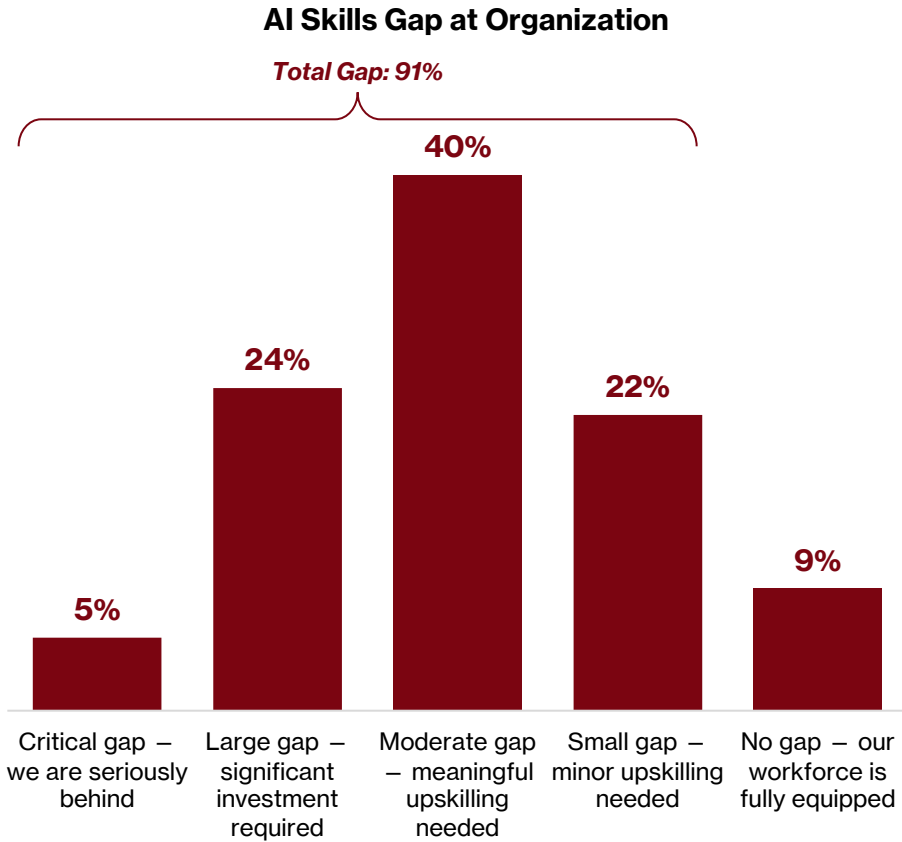
SMBs & public servants acknowledge that their organizations must upgrade tech and improve digital literacy in order to meet the moment.



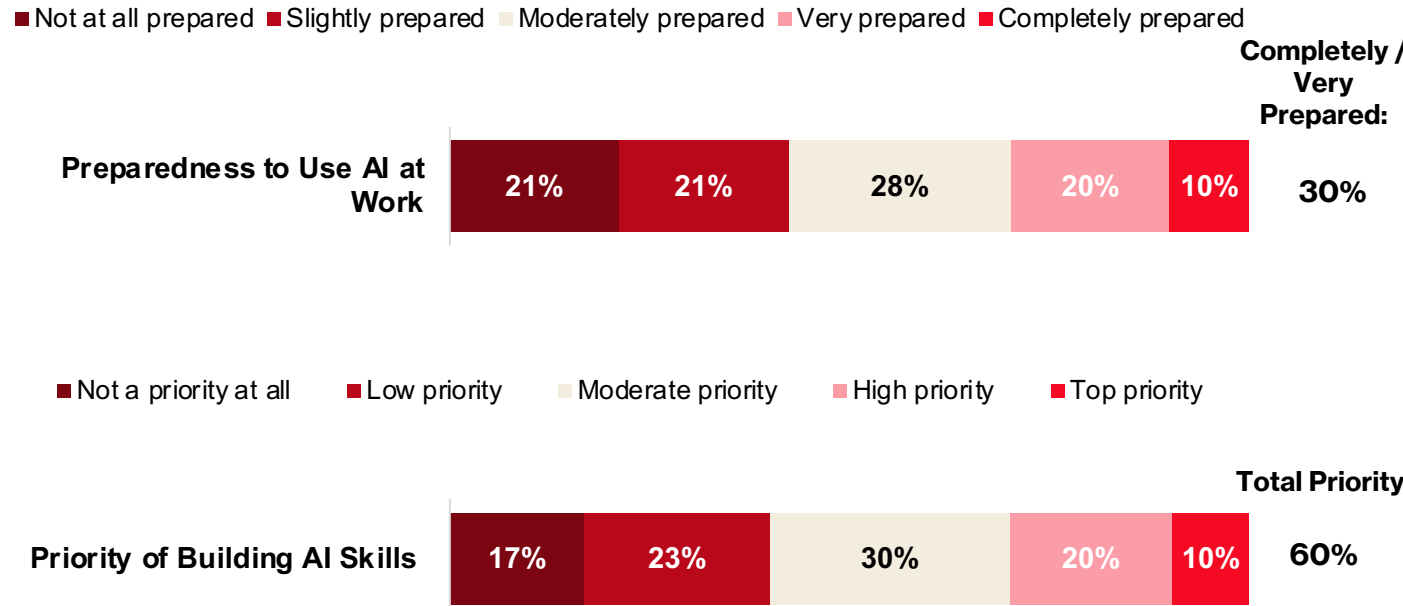
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% "Strongly agree" + "Somewhat agree")
Base: Consumer, SMB, PS

AI Skills Training

Employees & employers know the AI skills gap is real – creating feelings of unpreparedness – but workers are making upskilling a priority.



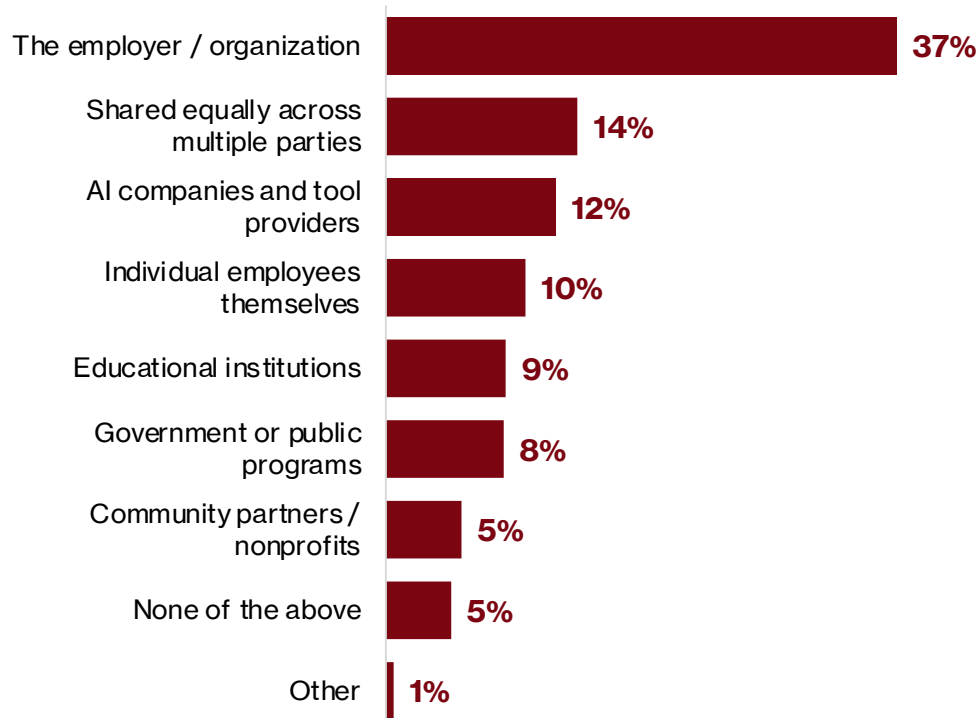
How large of a gap, if any, do you believe exists between the AI skills your workforce currently has and the AI skills your business needs?
Base: Employers



How prepared do you feel to use AI tools effectively in your current job or line of work?
How much of a priority is it for you personally to build your AI skills in the next 12 months?
Base: Employees

Employees & employers are aligned on who bears responsibility for AI training – but a delivery gap threatens to erode that trust before it can be earned.

AI Training Responsibility



Who do you think bears the primary responsibility for closing the AI skills gap in your organization? (Select one)
Base: Employers



■ Yes, should ■ No, should not



■ No trust at all ■ Not much trust ■ Some trust ■ A lot of trust ■ Complete trust

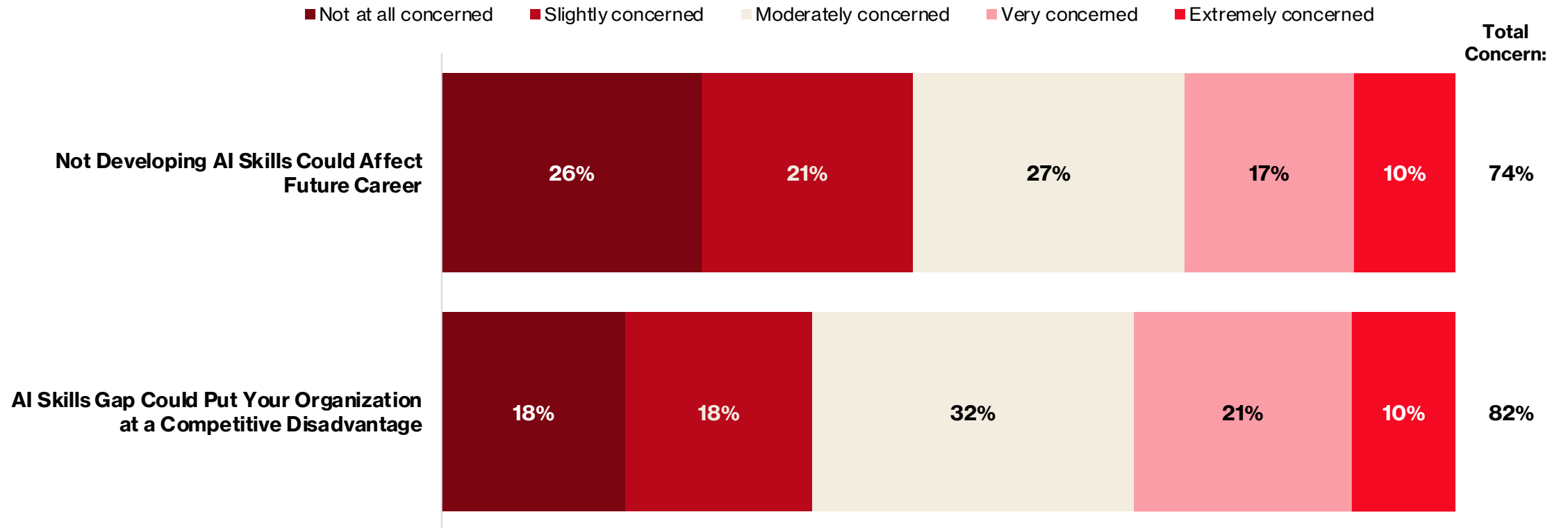


■ Yes, definitely ■ Yes, somewhat ■ No, not really ■ No, not at all



Do you think the following should or should not help you improve your AI skills? (Select one per row)
How much do you trust each of the following to help you improve your AI skills? (Select one per row)
Do you feel your employer is providing you with enough support to develop the AI skills you need for your job?
Base: Employees

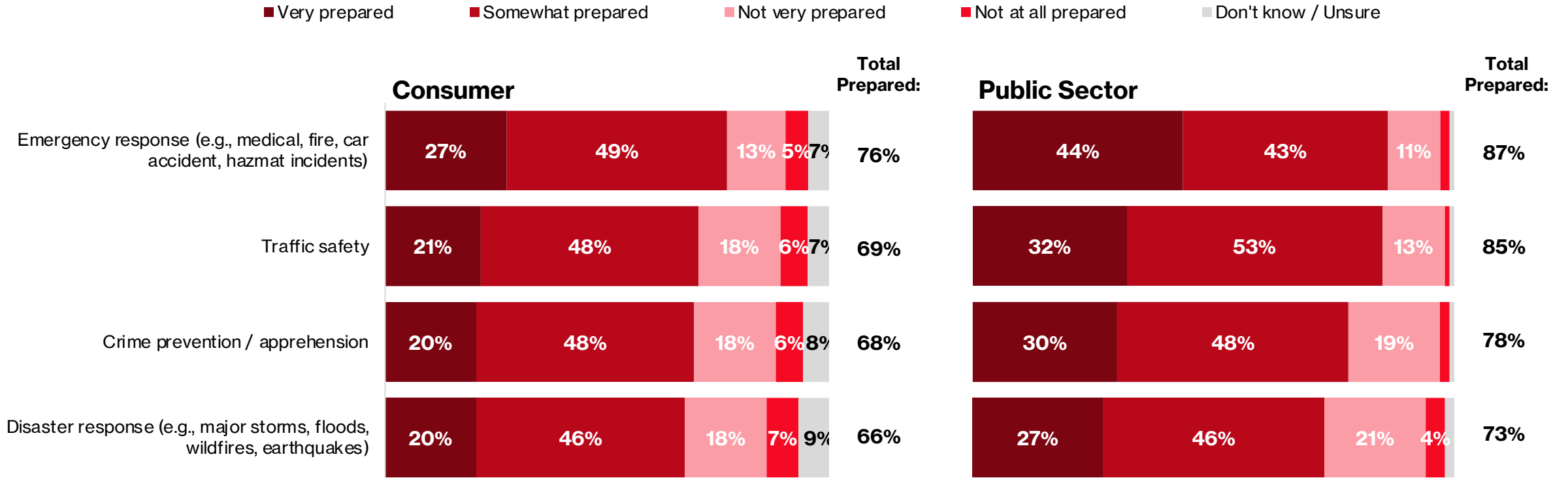
Closing the AI skills gap is both a competitive imperative and a talent advantage that employers must act on – those who invest in training will win on both fronts.



How concerned, if at all, are you that not developing AI skills could affect your future career or work opportunities?
How concerned are you that a skills gap in AI could put your organization at a competitive disadvantage?
Base: Employers / Employees

Disaster Readiness

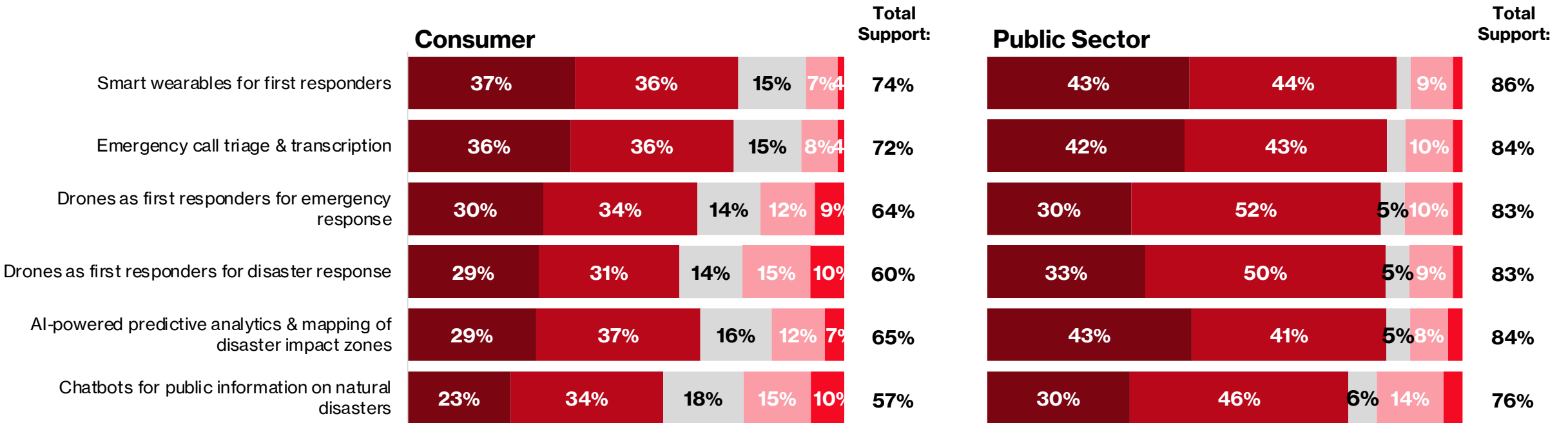
Majorities of Americans feel their communities are prepared for emergencies or natural disasters, with public servants showing even more confidence.



How prepared do you feel your community is in each of the following areas?
 Base: Consumer, PS

Consumers and public servants show broad support for emergency and disaster-related public safety technologies.

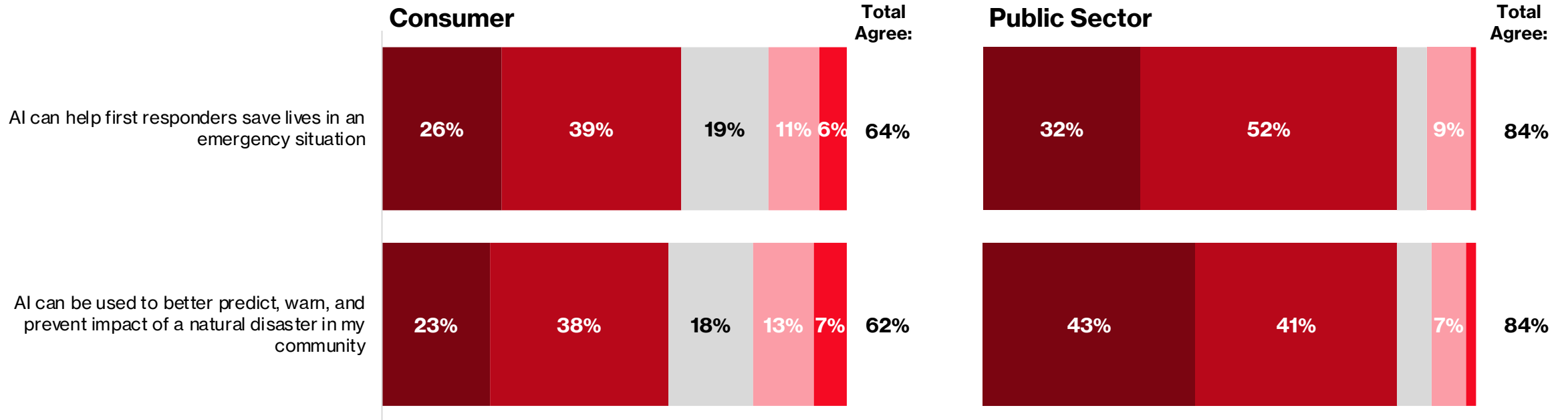
■ Strongly support
 ■ Somewhat support
 ■ Don't know / Unsure
 ■ Somewhat oppose
 ■ Strongly oppose



Do you support or oppose the use of public safety technology for each of the following?
 Base: Consumer, PS

Consumers and public servants believe AI can be used to help save lives in emergencies or natural disasters.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Don't know / Unsure ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree



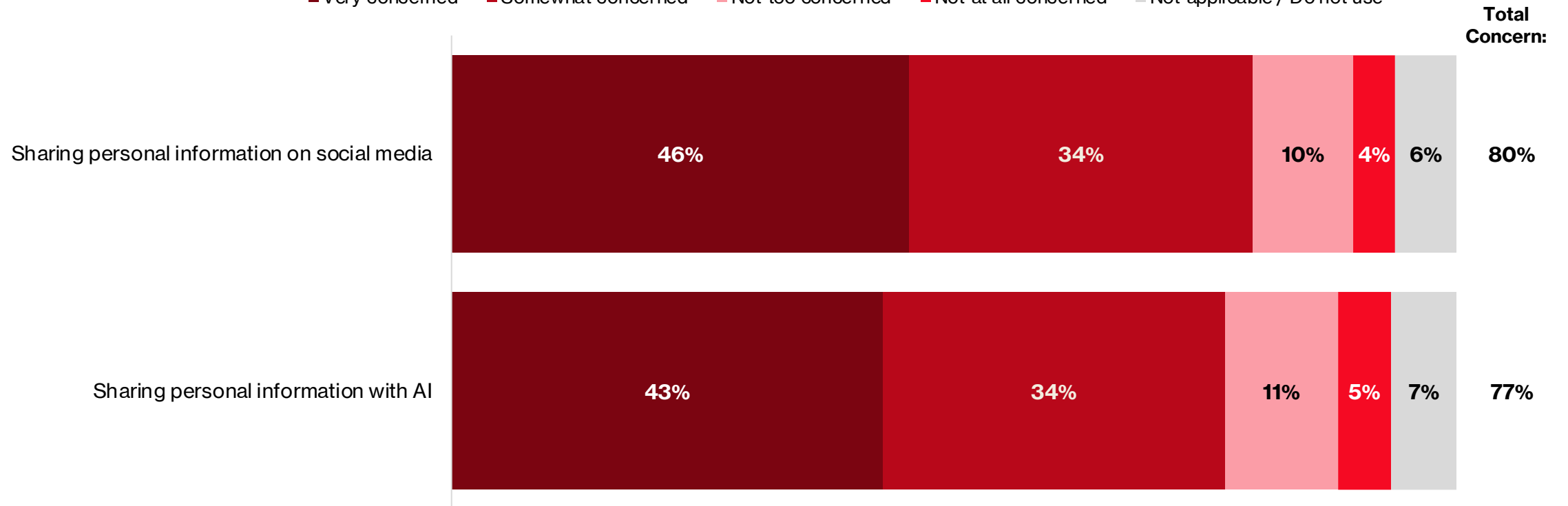
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: Consumer, PS

Cyber Safety

Most consumers express concerns around sharing personal information on social media and with AI.

Data Security Concerns

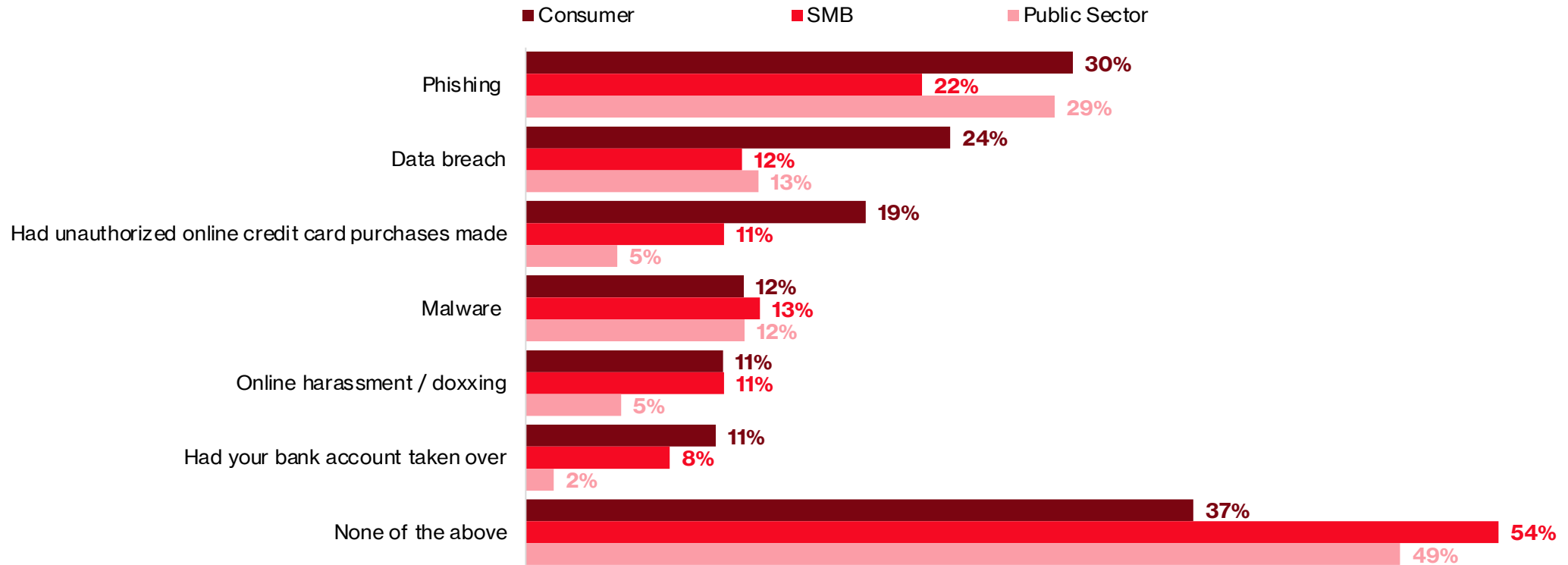
■ Very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not too concerned ■ Not at all concerned ■ Not applicable / Do not use



When it comes to your personal data security, how concerned are you about each of the following?
Base: Consumer

Over 3 in 5 Americans (63%) report having experienced some type of cyber threat in the past year, compared to roughly half of SMBs (46%) and public servants (51%).

Past Year Cybersecurity Issues Experienced



Have you / has your organization experienced any of the following in the past 12 months? Select all that apply.
Base: Consumer, SMB, PS

Americans want to protect their families from online dangers and worry about children or older family members being scammed.

	Consumer Total	GenZers	Millennials	GenXers	Baby Boomers
It is important to me to protect myself and my family from online dangers	87%	74%	86%	89%	96%
I should be more cautious about what information I post on social media	75%	72%	76%	75%	78%
I should be more cautious about what information I share with AI	77%	68%	77%	76%	82%
I have regretted posting something personal on social media	50%	60%	58%	50%	34%
I do not post pictures of my family on social media due to deepfake concerns	61%	58%	58%	55%	73%
I worry about older family members being manipulated by online scams	76%	70%	76%	78%	77%
I worry about my children being manipulated by online scams	80%	80%	79%	83%	86%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% “Strongly agree” + “Somewhat agree”)

Base: Consumer

State Level Highlights

Key Stats: New York

New Yorkers are on par with the rest of the country when it comes adopting and embracing new technology

- **84%** of New Yorkers believe technology plays a positive role in their everyday lives, and **79%** trust that technology works for them, not against them (*vs. 85% and 78% nationally*)
- **52%** of consumers in New York see AI as having a positive impact on their communities (*vs. 51% nationally*) and **70%** engage with AI tools (*vs. 68% nationally*)

New York public servants are even more enthusiastic about AI's role in public safety tech, but still view human oversight as essential

- **86%** support smart wearables for first responders (*vs. 86% nationally*)
- **90%** of New York public servants say AI can help first responders save lives in an emergency situation (*vs. 84% nationally*) but **76%** say it shouldn't fully replace human judgement (*vs. 80% nationally*)

Key Stats: California

Californians are adopting AI at higher rates than US consumers overall and see greater positive impacts

- **76%** of Californians engage with AI tools (*vs. 68% nationally*)
- **50%** report that using AI has changed the way they learn new things (*vs. 44% nationally*) and **39%** say they are more honest with AI than they would be with humans (*vs. 34% nationally*)
- **59%** of consumers in California see AI as having a positive impact on their communities (*vs. 51% nationally*)

SMBs in California see similar role for AI and skills gaps in the workforce as SMBs nationally

- **65%** of SMBs in California are currently or planning to use AI for operations at their business (*vs. 63% nationally*) and **74%** anticipate that their business' use of AI will increase over the next few years (*vs. 70% nationally*)

California public servants see AI as a crucial tool for disaster preparedness and response

- **75%** of public sector workers in California say their communities are prepared for disaster response (*vs. 73% nationally*)
- **89%** of California public servants support drones as first responders for disaster response (*vs. 83% nationally*), **89%** support AI-powered mapping of impact zones (*vs. 84% nationally*), and **81%** support chatbots for public information on natural disasters (*vs. 76% nationally*)
- **50%** strongly agree that AI can be used to better predict, warn, and prevent impact of natural disasters (*vs. 43% nationally*)

Key Stats: Texas

Texans are more confident in the workforce of the future than Americans overall

- **76%** of consumers in Texas engage with AI tools (*vs. 68% nationally*) and **50%** report using AI has changed how they learn new things (*vs. 44% nationally*)
- **43%** see AI as having a positive impact on job security in their community (*vs. 36% nationally*)
- **46%** say today's youth are prepared for the workforce (*vs. 41% nationally*), and while still a majority, **60%** worry that their children's over-reliance on AI will leave them unprepared for entering the workforce (*vs. 65% nationally*)

Key Stats: Florida

Floridians are on par with the rest of the country in embracing new tech, and see greater community impact of AI

- **83%** of consumers in Florida believe technology plays a positive role in their everyday lives, and **76%** trust that technology works for them, not against them (*vs. 85% and 78% nationally*)
- **72%** engage with AI tools (*vs. 68% nationally*)
- **58%** of Floridians see AI as having a positive impact on their communities (*vs. 51% nationally*)

SMBs in Florida rely on technology for resiliency, but need upgrades to stay prepared

- **74%** of Florida SMBs feel prepared to handle a natural disaster (*vs. 67% nationally*)
- **64%** of SMBs in Florida say using technology has helped their business recover from natural disasters (*vs. 55% nationally*)
- Still, **64%** report that their technology is in need of an upgrade (*vs. 63% nationally*)

Key Stats: Illinois

Illinoisans mirrors national trends in optimism & trust around technology

- **88%** of Illinoisans believe technology plays a positive role in their everyday lives, and **79%** trust that technology works for them, not against them (*vs. 85% and 78% nationally*)
- **53%** of consumers in New York see AI as having a positive impact on their communities (*vs. 51% nationally*) and **72%** engage with AI tools (*vs. 68% nationally*)

SMBs in Illinois are ahead of the curve on AI adoption

- **40%** of SMBs in Illinois are currently using AI for operations at their business (*vs. 30% nationally*)
- **72%** anticipate that their business' use of AI will increase over the next few years (*vs. 70% nationally*)

Illinois public servants embrace new public safety tech while maintaining human oversight

- **87%** support smart wearables for first responders (*vs. 86% nationally*), **88%** support AI-powered video surveillance for traffic safety (*vs. 80% nationally*)
- **87%** of New York public servants say AI can help first responders save lives in an emergency situation (*vs. 84% nationally*) but **78%** say it shouldn't fully replace human judgement (*vs. 80% nationally*)

Key Stats: Nevada

Nevadans outpace the national average in both AI adoption and recognition of its positive impacts

- **77%** of Nevadans engage with AI tools (*vs. 68% nationally*)
- **49%** report that using AI has changed the way they learn new things (*vs. 44% nationally*)
- **55%** of consumers in Nevada see AI as having a positive impact on their communities (*vs. 51% nationally*)

SMBs in Nevada feel the workforce skills gap more acutely and are using technology to help close it

- **37%** believe AI will have a negative impact on job security in their communities (*vs. 27% nationally*)
- **88%** of SMBs in Nevada report using technology to engage and develop employees (*vs. 88% nationally*)

