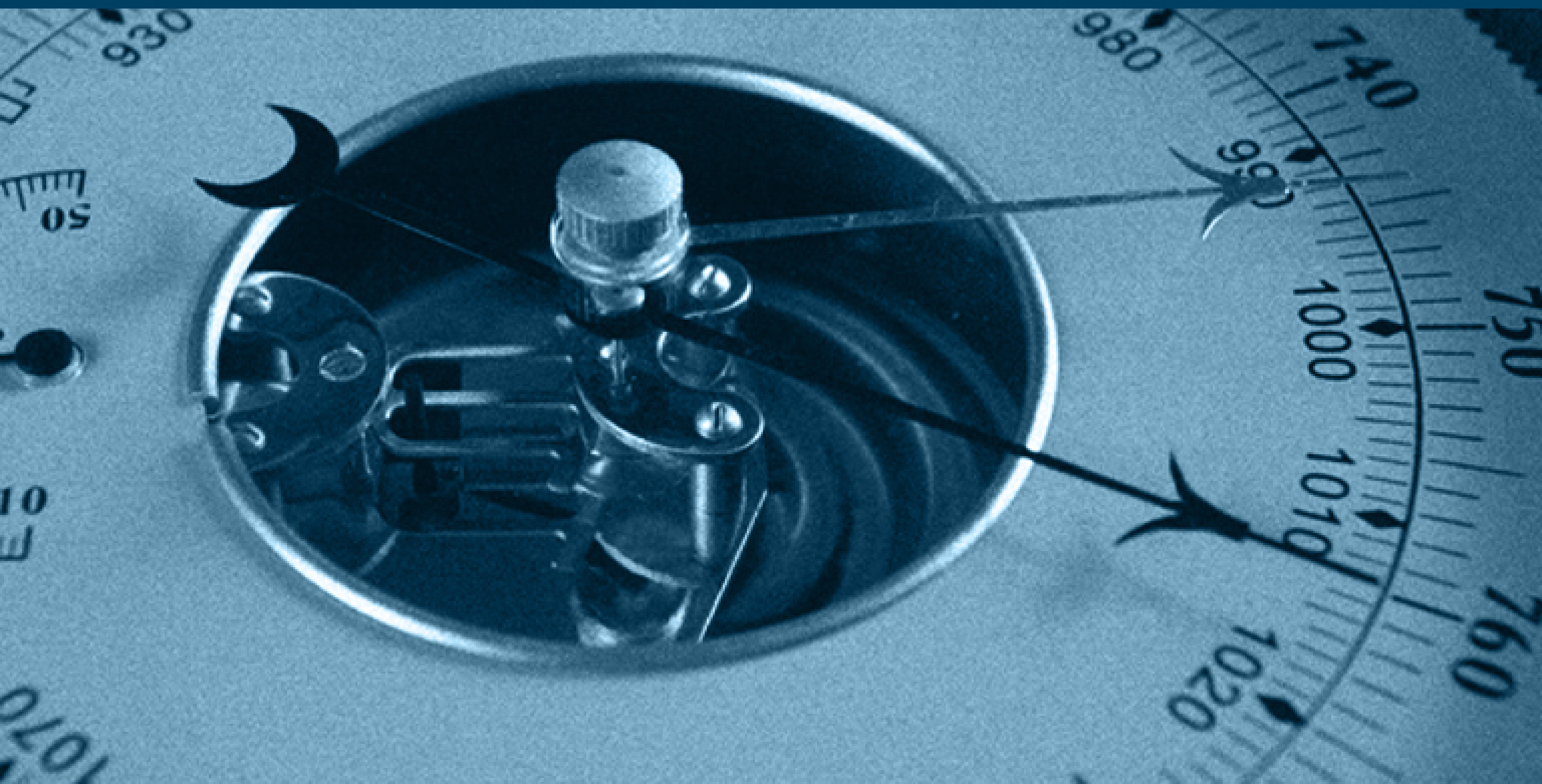


Monthly Business Barometer®

April 2025



12-month Small Business Confidence Index

34.8

Monthly change

↑ 9.3

3-month Small Business Confidence Index

40.1

Monthly change

↑ 8.3

April 2025

Business Barometer®: Report summary

Small business confidence in Canada

CFIB's Business Barometer® long-term index, which is based on 12-month forward expectations for business performance, recovered timidly reaching 34.8—about 10 points above March level but far below the historical average. The short-term optimism index, based on a 3-month outlook, edged upwards also by 8 points to 40.1. While the long-term optimism has trended in the right direction, the current level is similar to March 2020 reading, the beginning of the pandemic.

As seen in March, optimism among SMEs trading internationally is significantly lower than that of firms dealing only in Canada. The current state of business health dropped significantly in April.

Provincial overview

All jurisdictions maintained just about their very low levels of optimism. The four largest provinces ranged in the low to mid-30s for long term confidence.

sectoral overview

The small recovery of confidence was felt particularly by businesses in retail, hospitality, and construction. Another decline in optimism was felt by firms in agriculture, and wholesale.

Inflation indicators

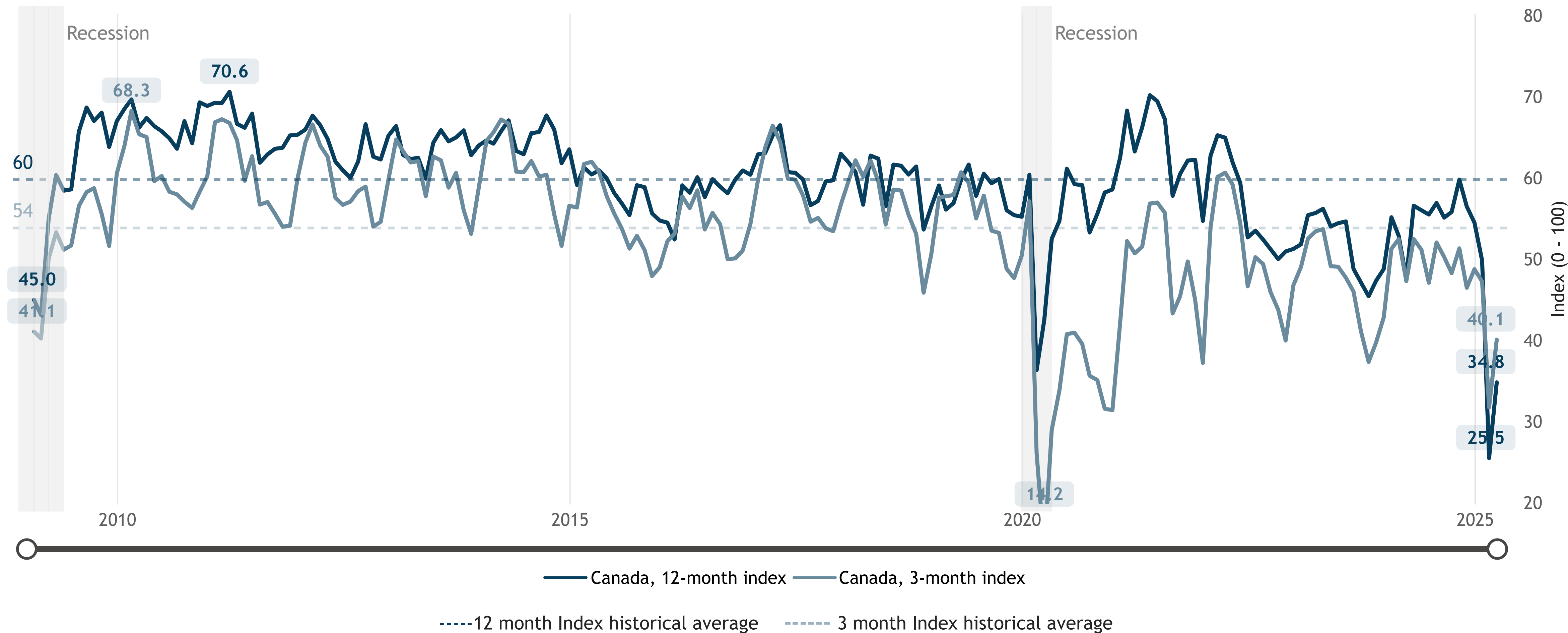
The average price increase indicator remained elevated at 3.5%. The average wage increase planned for the next 12 months zig-zagged back to the February level of 2.2%.

Other indicators

Full-time staffing plans recovered slightly also in April, but they are well below normal for this time of the year. Currently, 14% of firms are planning to hire and 17% are estimating layoffs for the next 12 months.

Some key cost constraints hindering business growth have lessened this month - such as fuel costs, tax or wage costs concerns, while others have gained more momentum - such as input product costs (as reported by 45% of SMEs) and equipment and technology costs (34%). Insufficient demand remains the primary barrier to business and production expansion (as reported by 55% of SMEs).

Business Barometer®: 12-month and 3-month small business confidence index, Canada



Survey questions:

How do you expect your firm to be performing in **12 months** compared to now?
Allowing for normal seasonal influences, what are your business performance expectations for the next **3 or 4 months**?

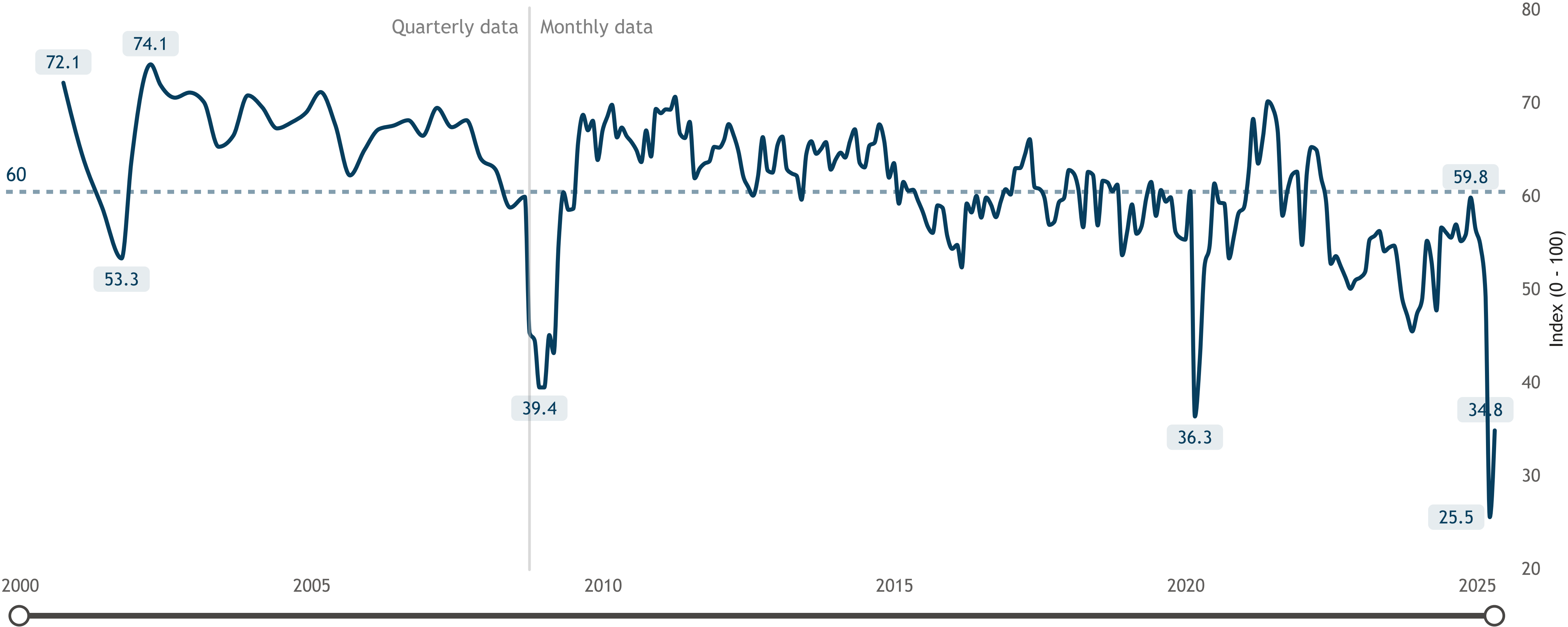
Sources : CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

C.D. Howe Institute Business Cycle Council (Recession dates)

Note: Index < 50 = more businesses expecting weaker performance than stronger performance



Business Barometer®: 12-month small business confidence index (2000-2025), Canada



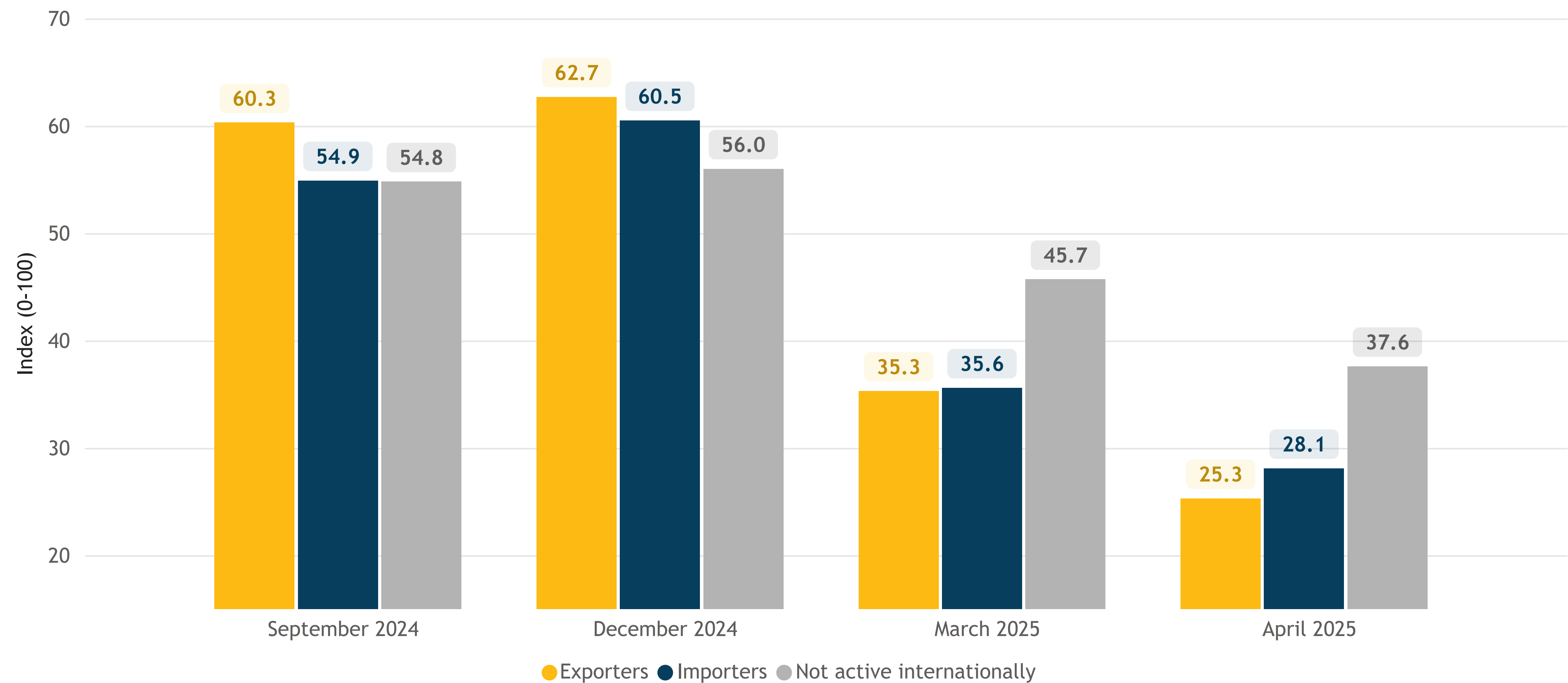
Survey question: How do you expect your firm to be performing in **12 months** compared to now?

Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, October 2000 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

The data for Oct. 2000 to Sept. 2008 is presented on a quarterly basis. Oct. 2008 to present is presented monthly.



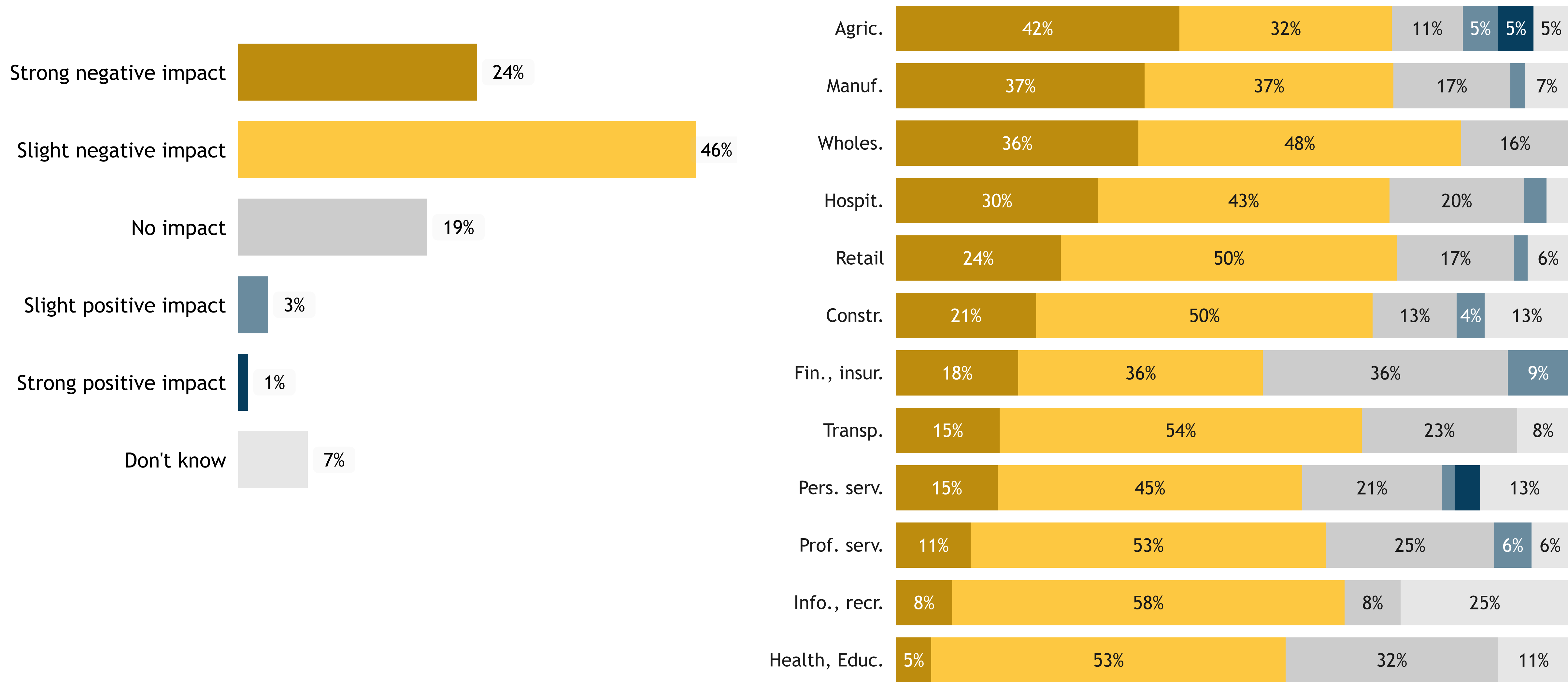
Business Barometer®: 12-month small business confidence index for exporters and importers, Canada



Survey questions: How do you expect your firm to be performing in 12 months compared to now?
International trade (Select one): **Buying from abroad**, **Selling abroad**, **A mix of both**, Not active internationally
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey. 417 responses received from April 3-8.
Note: Data presented as 3-month moving averages. New series started from September 2024.



Business Barometer®: Impact of tariffs on small businesses, Canada



Survey question: How has the current US-Canada trade situation impacted your business so far?
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey. 417 responses received from April 3-8.



Business Barometer®: Small business confidence index, provinces



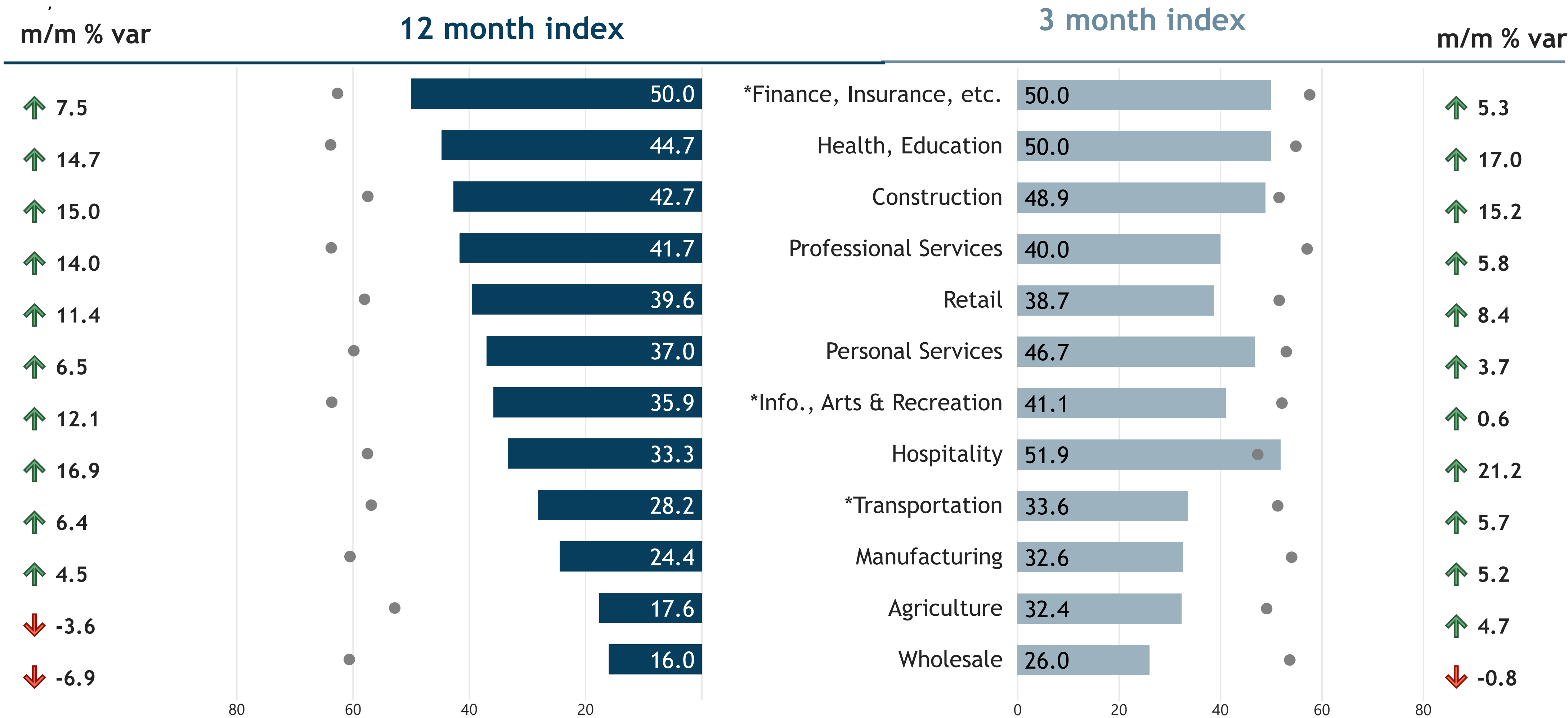
Survey question: How do you expect your firm to be performing in **12 months** compared to now?

Survey question: Allowing for normal seasonal influences, what are your business performance expectations for the next **3 or 4 months**?

Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

Note: ● Historical averages. *Data presented by 3-month moving average. Index < 50 = more businesses expecting weaker performance than stronger performance

Business Barometer®: Small business confidence index, sectors



Survey question: How do you expect your firm to be performing in **12 months** compared to now?

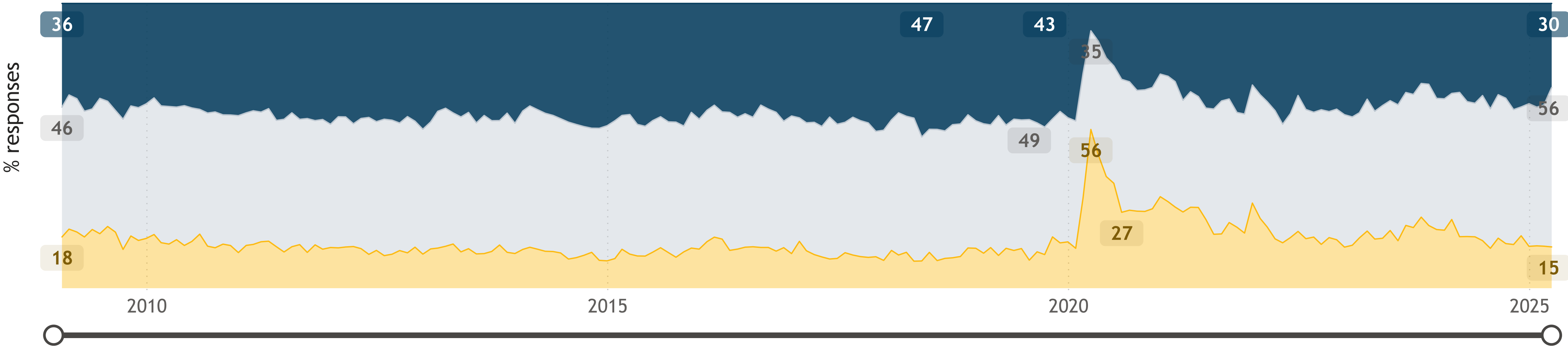
Survey question: Allowing for normal seasonal influences, what are your business performance expectations for the next **3 or 4 months**?

Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

Notes: ● Historical averages *Data presented by 3-month moving average. **Natural resources is not included.

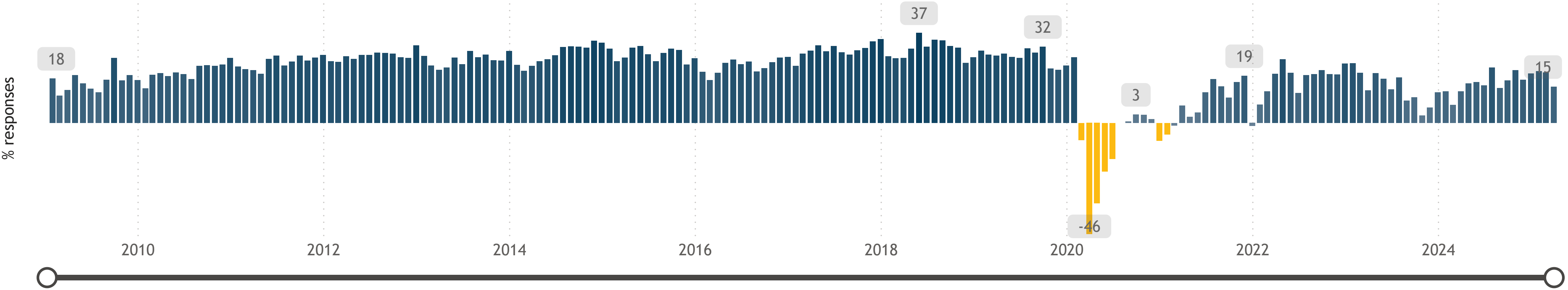
Index < 50 = more businesses expecting weaker performance than stronger performance

Business Barometer®: General state of business health



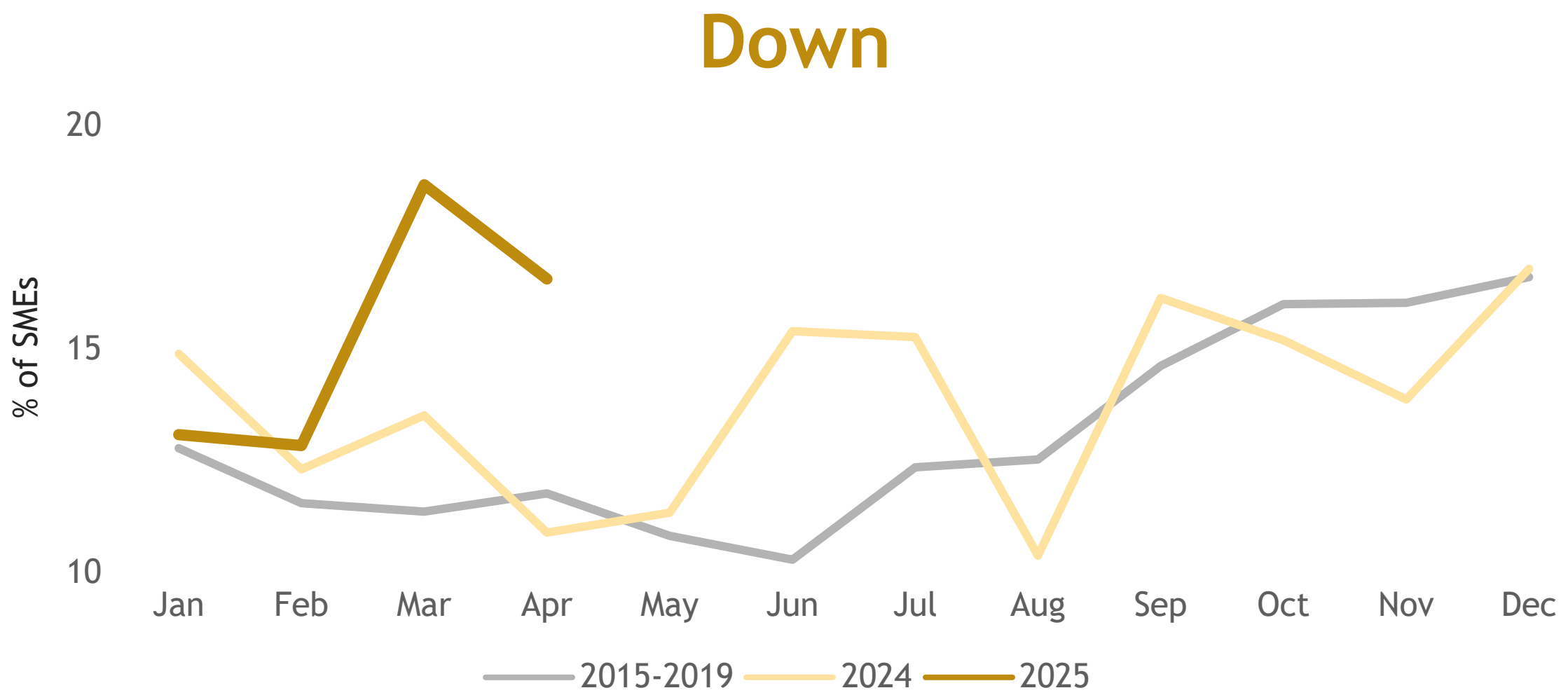
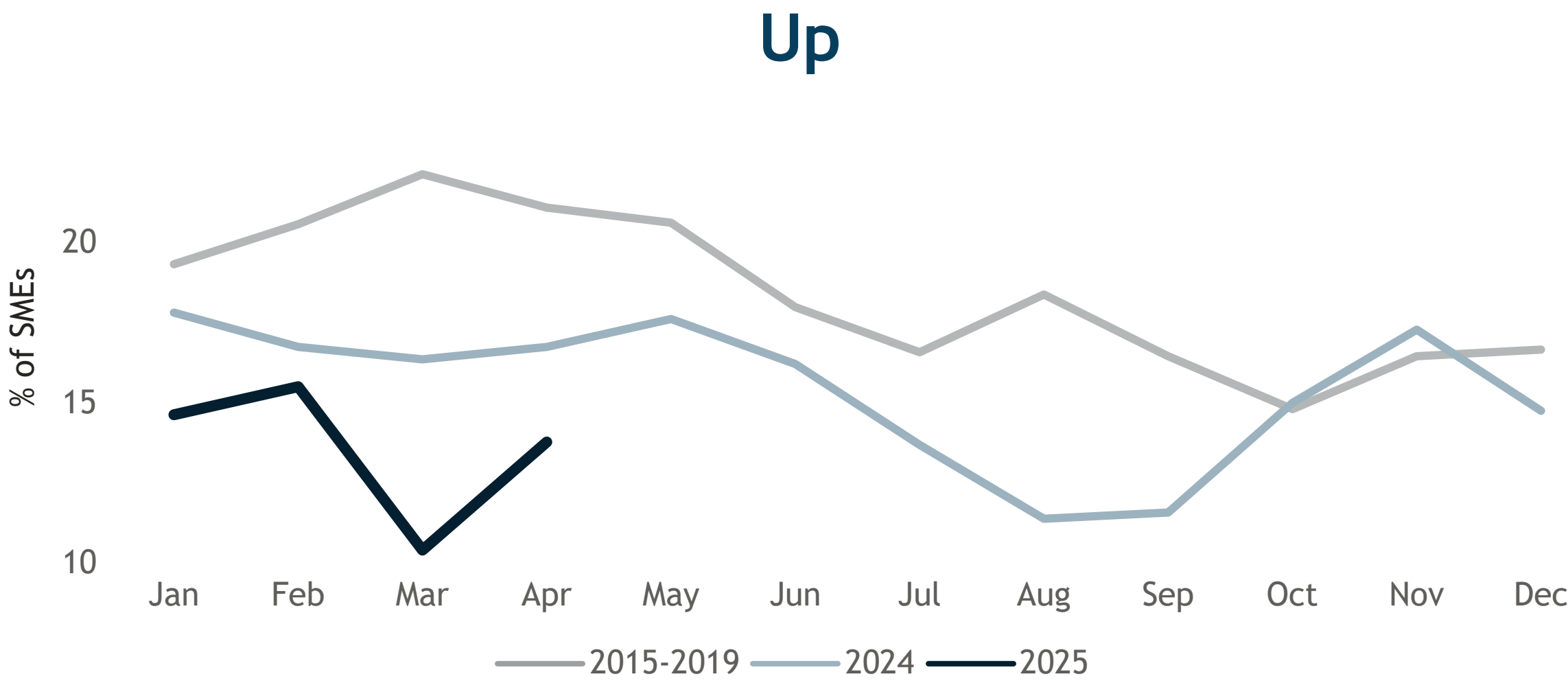
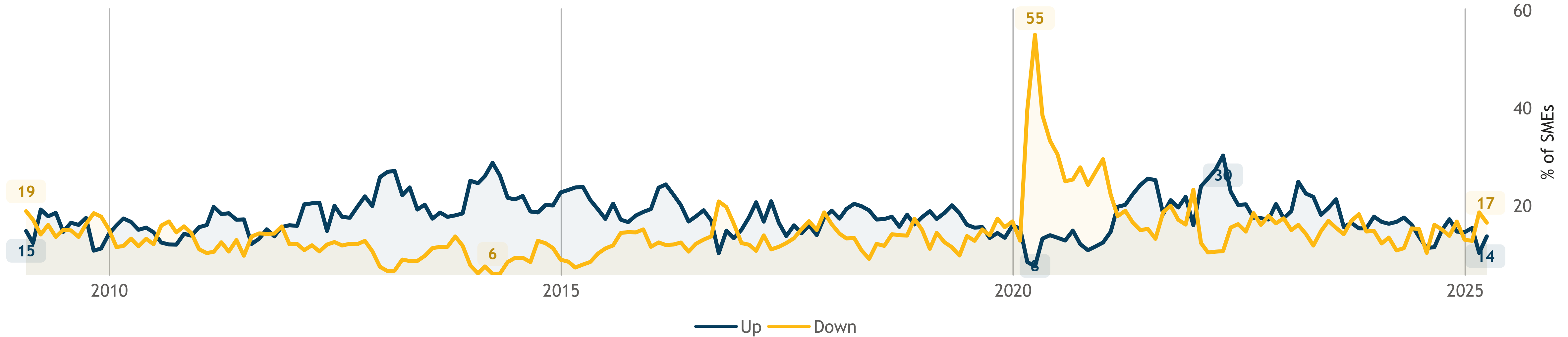
— Good — Satisfactory — Bad

Balance of opinion



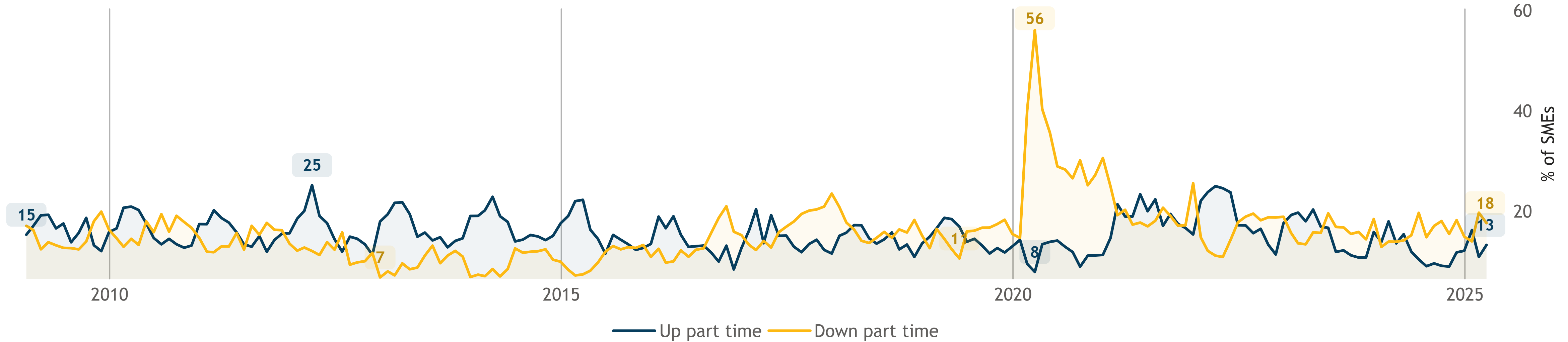
Survey question: Currently, what is the general business situation of your company?
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.
Note: Values are automatically rounded, so totals may not always equal 100%. Balance of opinion = [Share of respondents answering **Good**]- [Share of respondents answering **Bad**].

Business Barometer®: Full-time staffing plans, short term

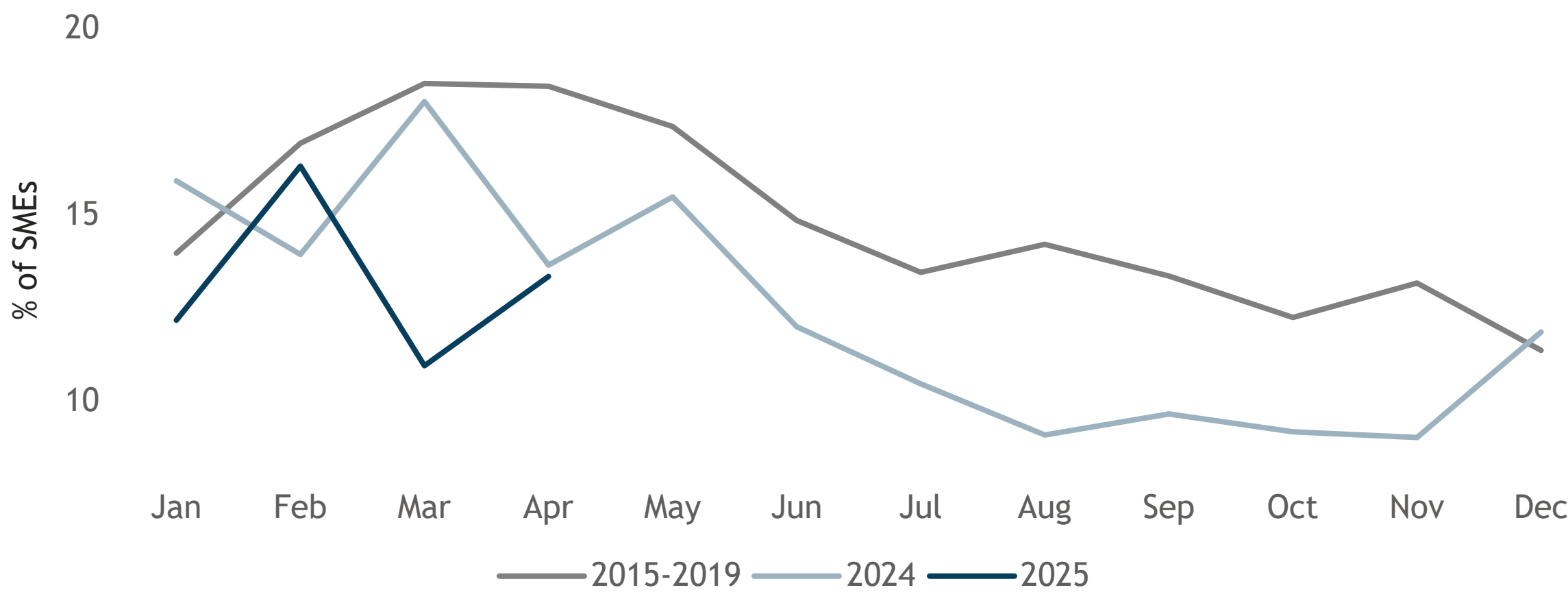


Survey question: How are your expected employment levels to change in the next 3 or 4 months? (Up, Same, Down)
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

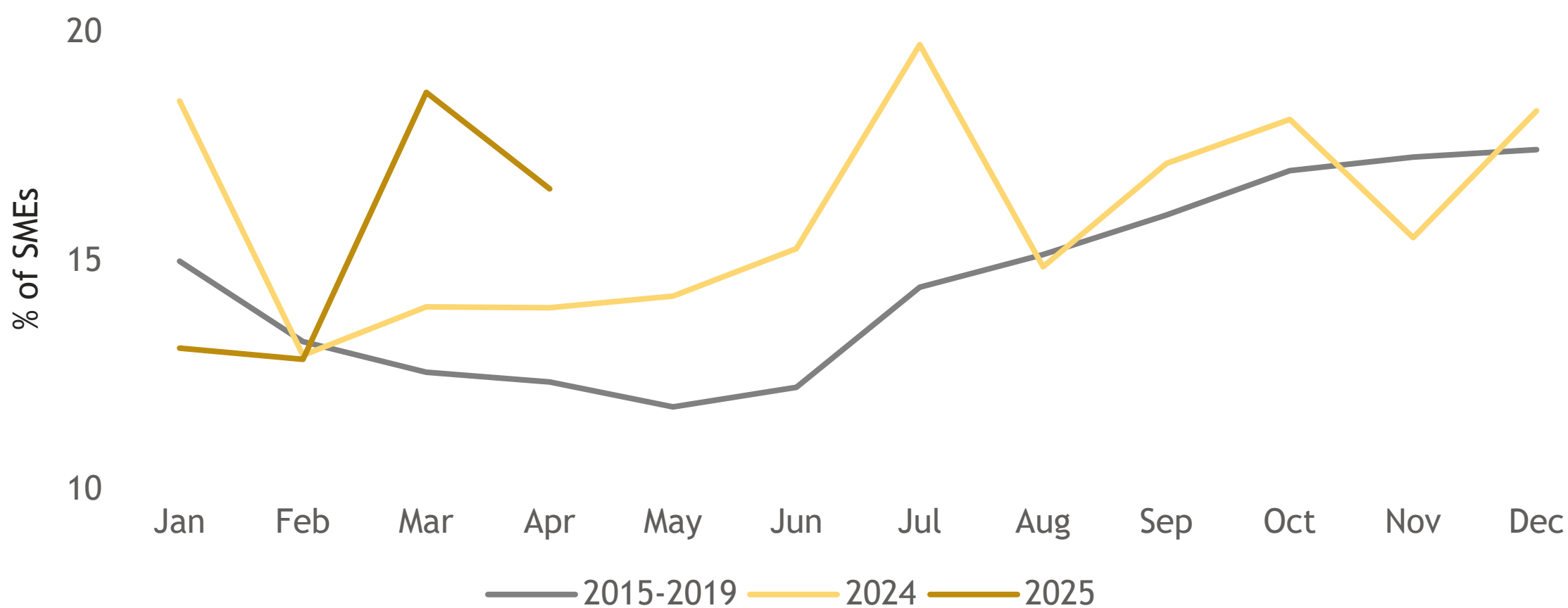
Business Barometer®: Part-time staffing plans, short term



Up part time



Down part time



Survey question: How are your expected employment levels to change in the next 3 or 4 months? (Up, Same, Down)
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.



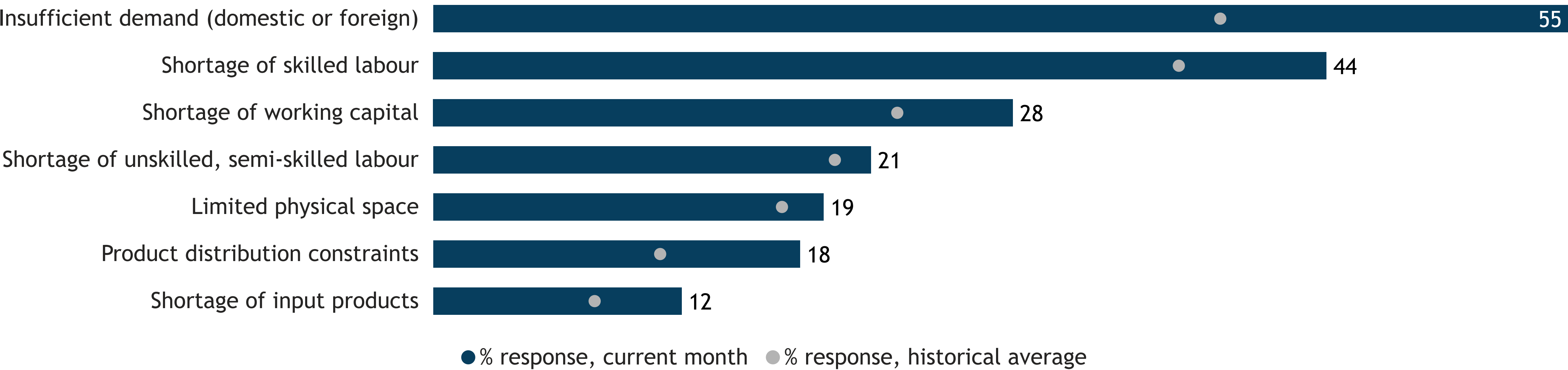
Business Barometer®: Future price and wage increase plans



Survey questions:
In the next year, how much do you expect **average prices** to change?
In the next year, how much do you expect **average wages** to change?
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

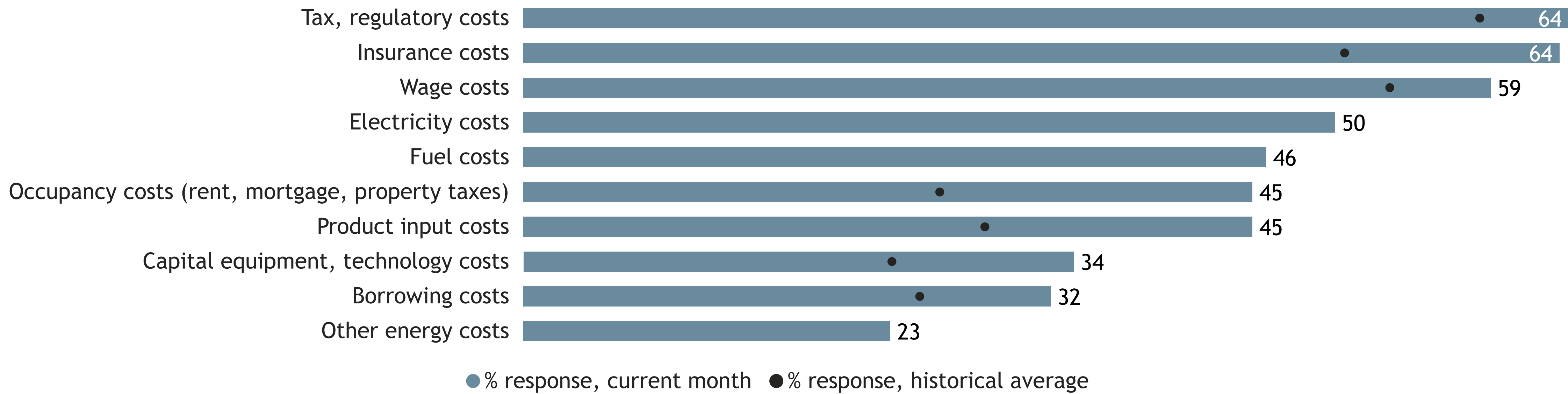


Business Barometer®: Factors limiting sales or production growth- current levels and trend



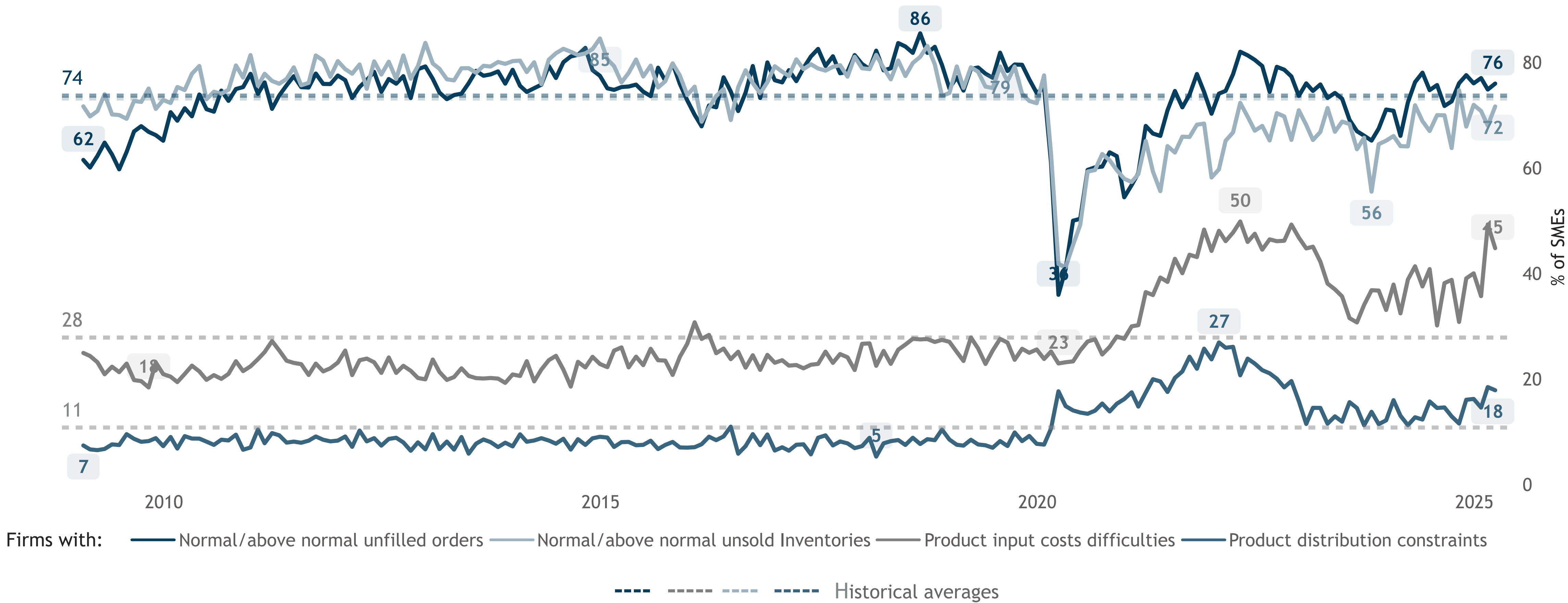
Survey question: What factors are limiting your ability to increase sales or production?
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

Business Barometer®: Major input cost constraints- current levels and trend



Survey question: What types of input costs are currently causing difficulties for your business?
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

Business Barometer®: Supply chain indicators

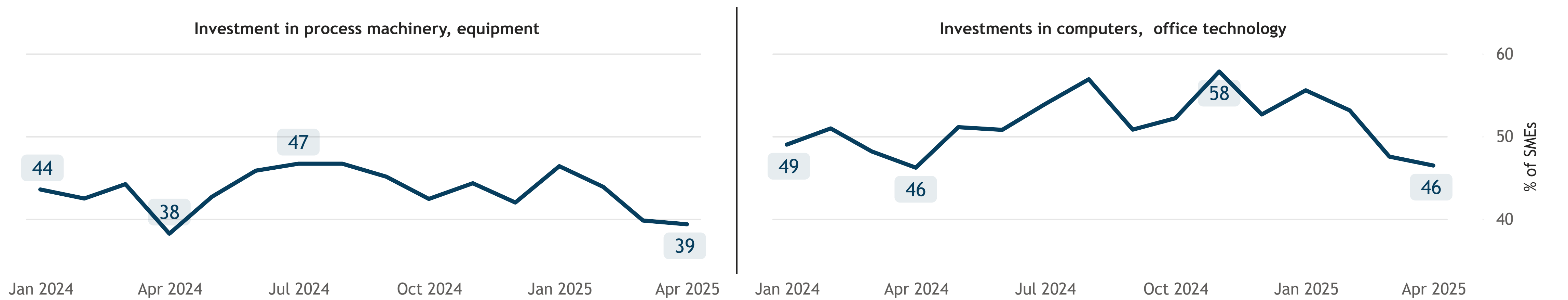
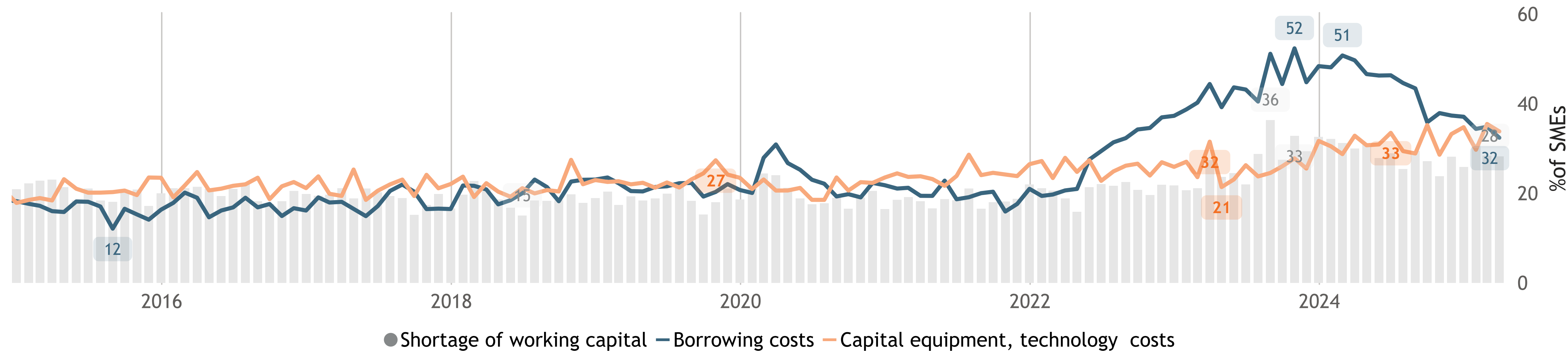


Survey questions:

- Allowing for normal seasonal influences, what are **current unfilled orders** and **unsold inventories** compared to normal?
- What types of input costs are currently causing difficulties for your business? [Respondents selecting "Product input costs"]
- What factors are limiting your ability to increase sales or production? [Respondents selecting "Product distribution constraints"]

Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

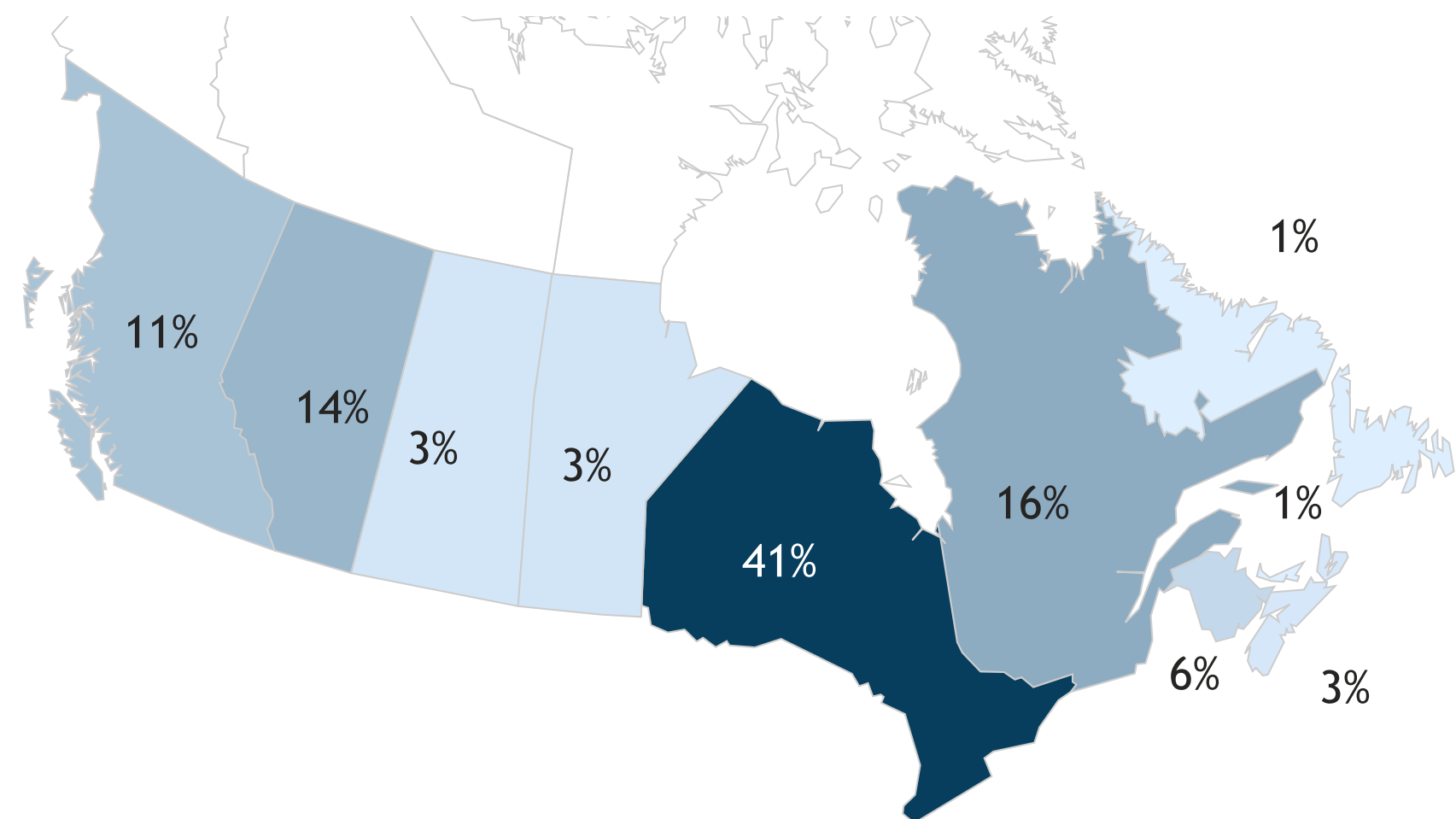
Business Barometer®: Investments



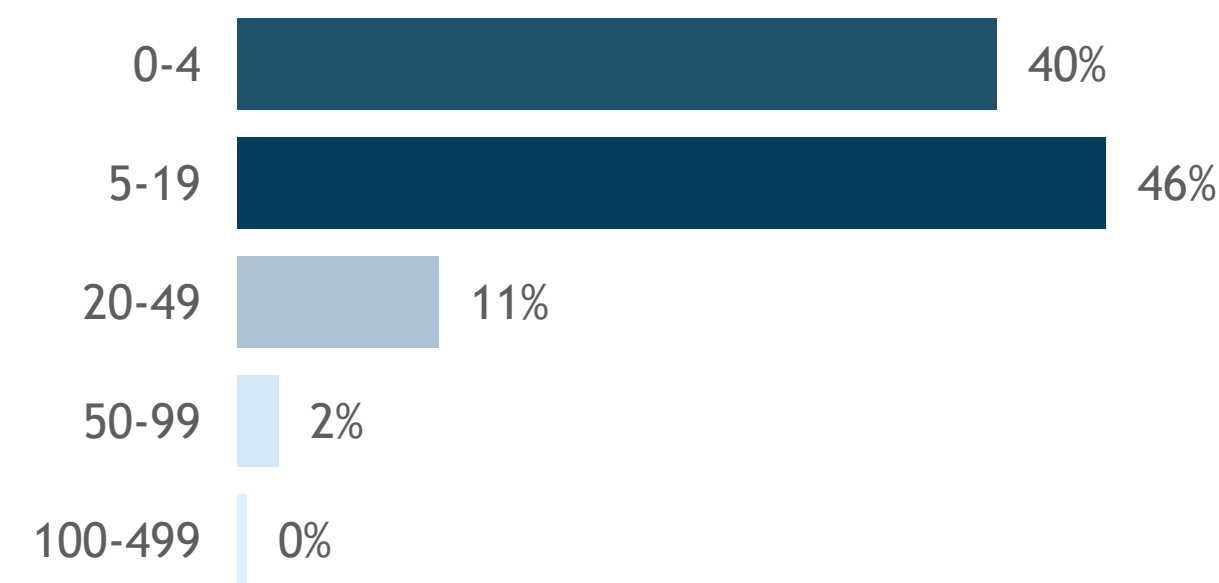
Survey questions:
Allowing for normal seasonal influences, what are the **investments in computers, communications, office technology** and investments in process machinery, equipment?
[% of Respondents selecting "Above Normal", "Normal"]
What types of input costs are currently causing difficulties for your business? [Respondents selecting "**Capital equipment, technology costs**"]
Source: CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025. 417 responses received from April 3-8.

Business Barometer®: Sample distribution

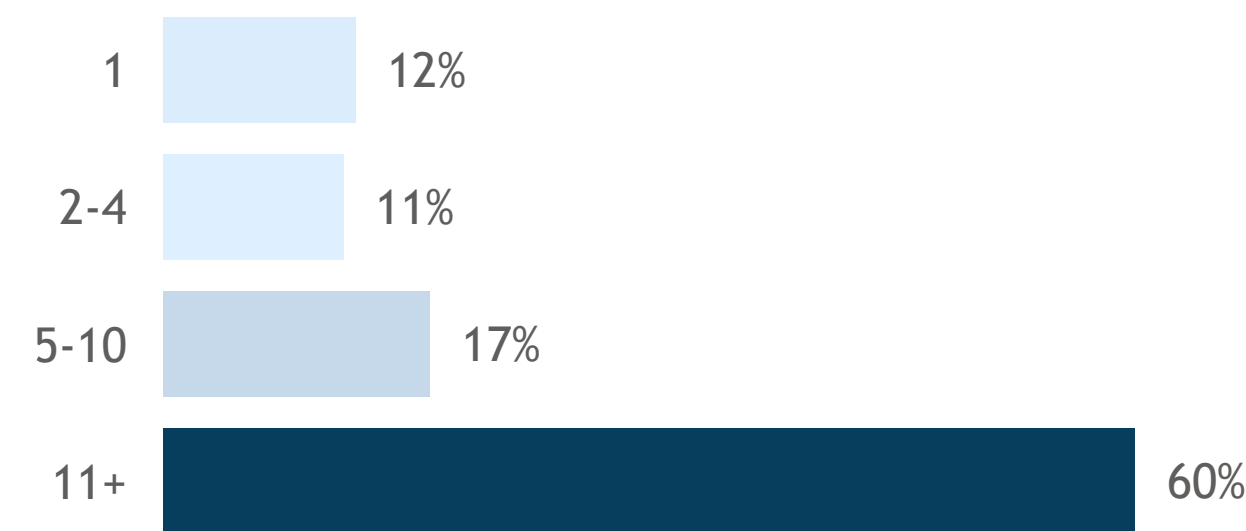
By location of the business



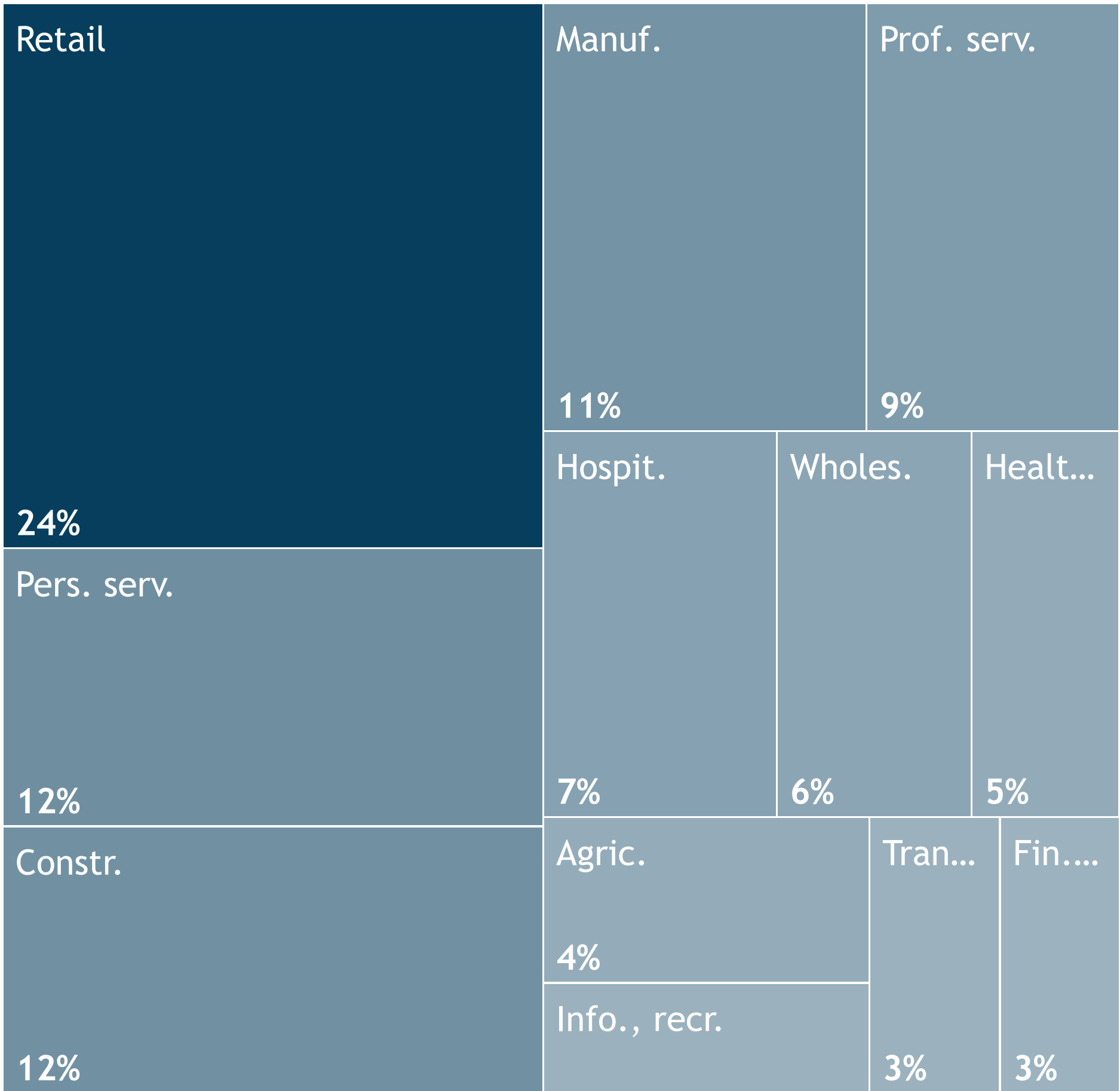
By number of employees



By years in business



By industry



Methodology

- CFIB, Your business outlook survey, February 2009 - April 2025
- Stratified random sample of CFIB members to a controlled-access web survey: 417 responses
- Responses were received from: April 3-8
- The survey is considered accurate to within +/- 4.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
- Every new month, all indicators are recalculated for the previous month to include all survey responses received in that previous month.
- Measured on a scale between 0 and 100, an index below 50 means owners expecting their business's performance to be weaker over the next three or 12 months outnumber those expecting stronger performance.

Questions or data requests

Simon Gaudreault

Chief Economist and Vice-President
Research

simon.gaudreault@cfib.ca



Andreea Bourgeois

Director, Economics

andreea.bourgeois@cfib.ca

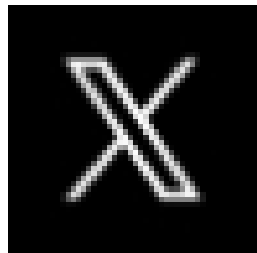


Additional information

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research@cfib.ca