A portrait of a young woman with long, wavy, reddish-brown hair, smiling broadly. She is wearing a mustard-colored turtleneck sweater and has a nose ring. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

State of the Nordic Frontline Workforce 2024

Report

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Introduction

On a global scale, frontline workers are feeling strained in 2024. Within the past year, as many as **one in two frontline workers have considered quitting their jobs**. In the Nordics, it's no different. What is causing stress for frontline workers, and causing them to look for other work?

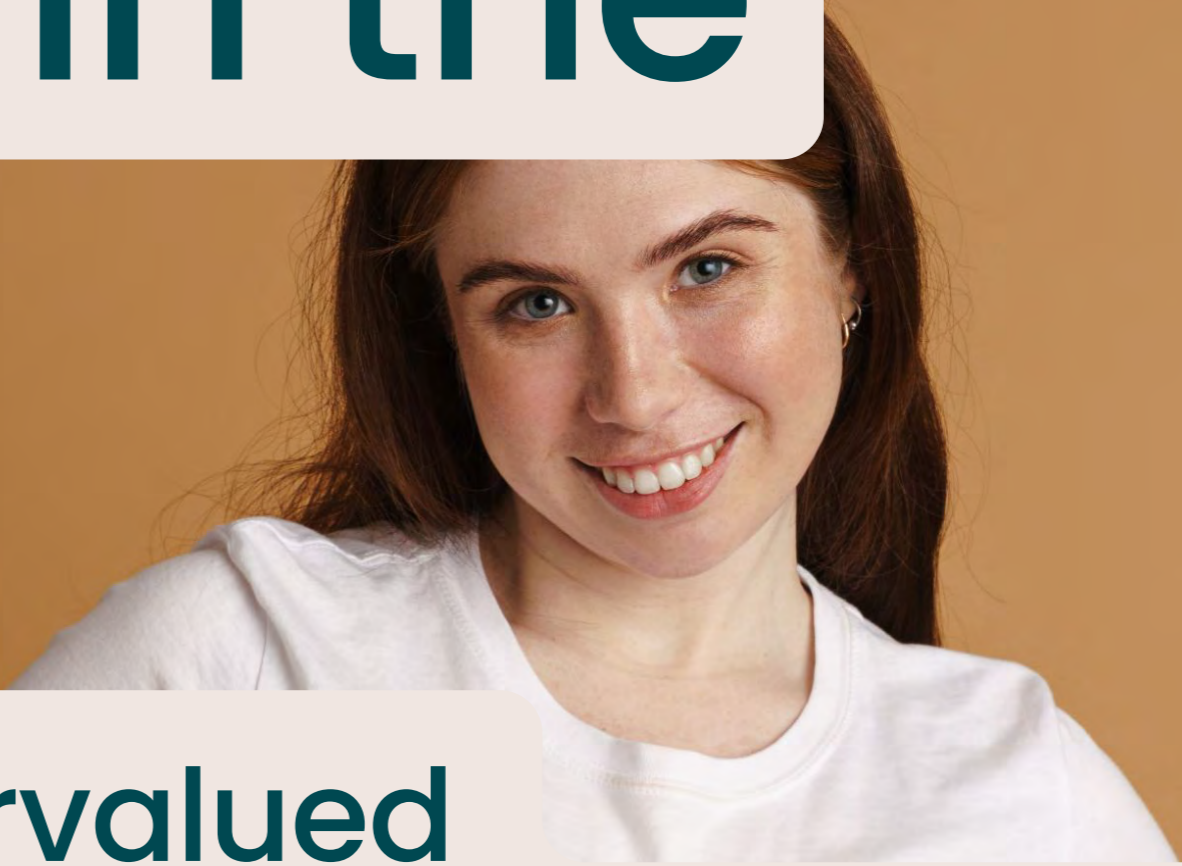
In the Nordics, economic stressors are also top of mind for frontline workers. Like the rest of the world, the Nordic countries have seen an increased cost of living and spiking interest rates.

62% of frontline workers in the Nordics say they are experiencing work-related stress. The top three reasons for this stress are income not covering the cost of living, working too many hours, and lack of scheduling flexibility. Addressing these top three stressors can help companies retain their frontline workforce.

We are at a moment in time where technology holds a lot of amazing possibilities, but there is also uncertainty about the impact of AI on the workforce. Frontline workers in the Nordics have an overall positive outlook on AI and the future role technology can play in their work in 2023: **55% are moderately positive or strongly positive towards the potential impacts of technology on their jobs.**

The state of Nordic frontline workers in 2024 is putting pressure on employers to improve the employee experience and decrease stress. Businesses that find ways to support their frontline workers, and listen to what their employees are saying will be the winners. Let's dive into specific stats and how employers can take matters into their hands to meet the challenges, needs and wishes of their workers.

Improving employee experience in the Nordics



Feeling stuck and undervalued

The good news first: Many frontline workers in the Nordics have been satisfied with their jobs in 2024. About 59% said they are satisfied or very satisfied with their work. Denmark is leading with around 80% saying they're satisfied, followed by Norway at 71%, Sweden at 64%, and Finland at 57%.

However, 52% of frontline workers in the Nordics have said they've considered quitting their jobs in the past year, which is an increase of 8% from 2023.

What are the reasons frontline workers in the Nordics have considered quitting within the past year?

42%

want an increase in salary

29%

say it's because they don't feel their employer values them

26%

say it's because they feel they can't progress in their career

Salary is a significant factor, and the Nordics have also seen an increase in cost-of-living particularly in the past one to two years. However, budgets are tight for companies and increasing salaries is not always an option. If it's not possible to increase salaries, addressing the second and third reasons employees have considered quitting can help retain staff.

Finding ways to create a less stressful environment with benefits such as flexible schedules, and investing in leadership growth and training can help improve the value employees feel from companies. Opening up opportunities for leadership training or growth plans can provide the growth that frontline workers are looking for.

Why are 20% of frontline workers in Finland less satisfied with work?

Compared to the rest of the Nordic countries, Finland has the lowest satisfaction with work in 2024, with one in five saying they're dissatisfied. Compared to its Nordic peers, Finland frontline workers reported issues with work-life balance as one of their top three reasons they've considered quitting within the past year.



25%

of frontline workers in Finland have considered quitting because they feel they don't have a good balance between work and free time.

In Norway, feeling valued is most important

For Norwegian frontline workers, the top reason for considering leaving their jobs was that they feel their employer doesn't value their work. In second and third place is a higher salary, and feeling like they can't develop their career.



34%

of frontline workers in Norway have considered quitting because they feel their employer doesn't value their work

The health of the frontline workforce



A less stressful work environment and greater work-life balance are important to Nordic workers. However, about 62% say they are experiencing work-related stress. Higher stress correlates with lower productivity, more mistakes, and employees can't perform at their best.

The top 3 stressors for frontline workers in the Nordics

29%

responded that their income does not cover the cost of living

19%

feel they're working too many hours

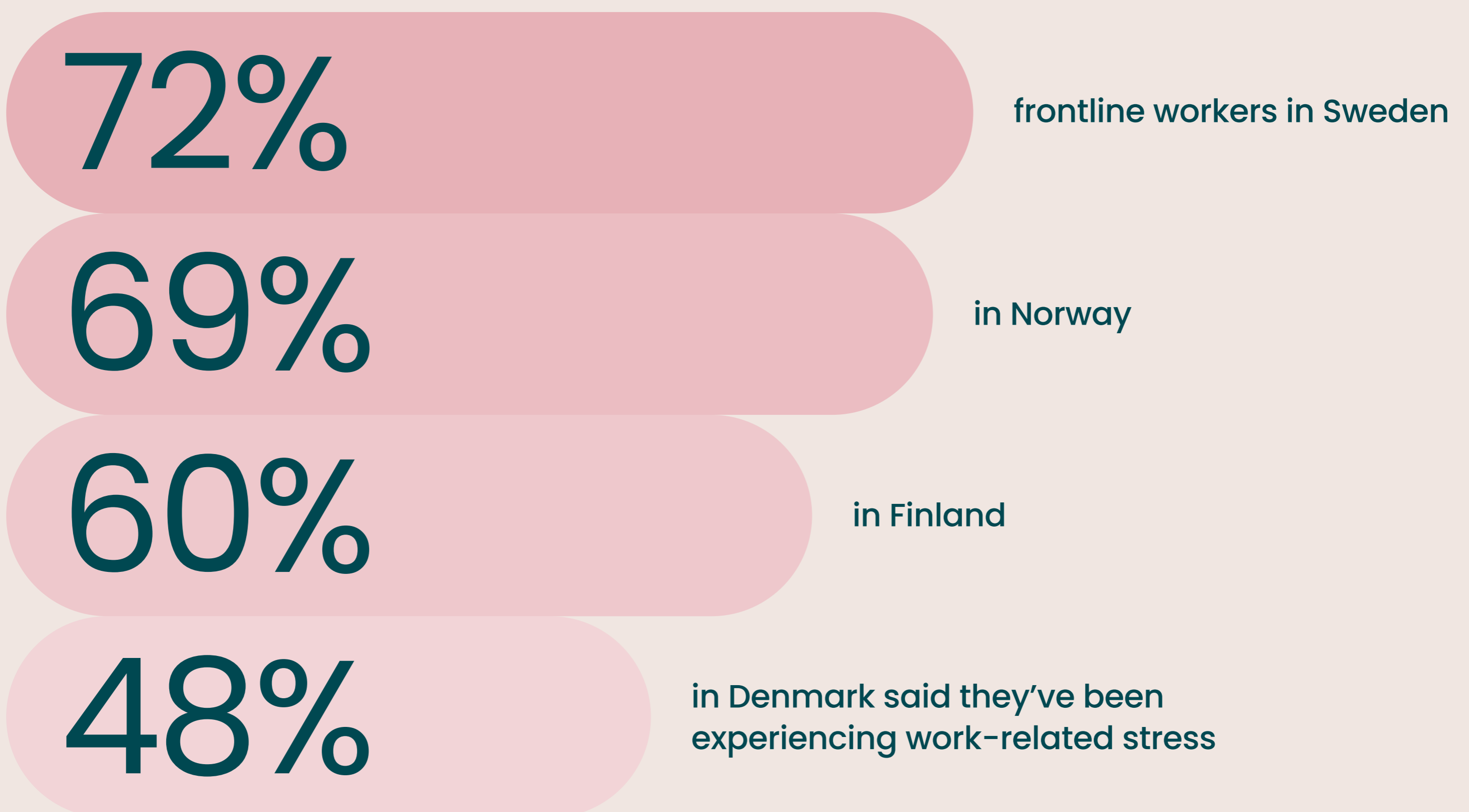
15%

are frustrated with the poor communication between management and staff

The option to swap or pick up extra shifts when needed is a great opportunity to improve the overall wellbeing of frontline workers. How? It allows for flexibility that workers are asking for and to easily pick up extra shifts to help cover the increasing cost of living. As we mentioned before, increasing salaries isn't always possible, so this can be a great way to help your frontline workers.

Stress levels are high in the Nordics

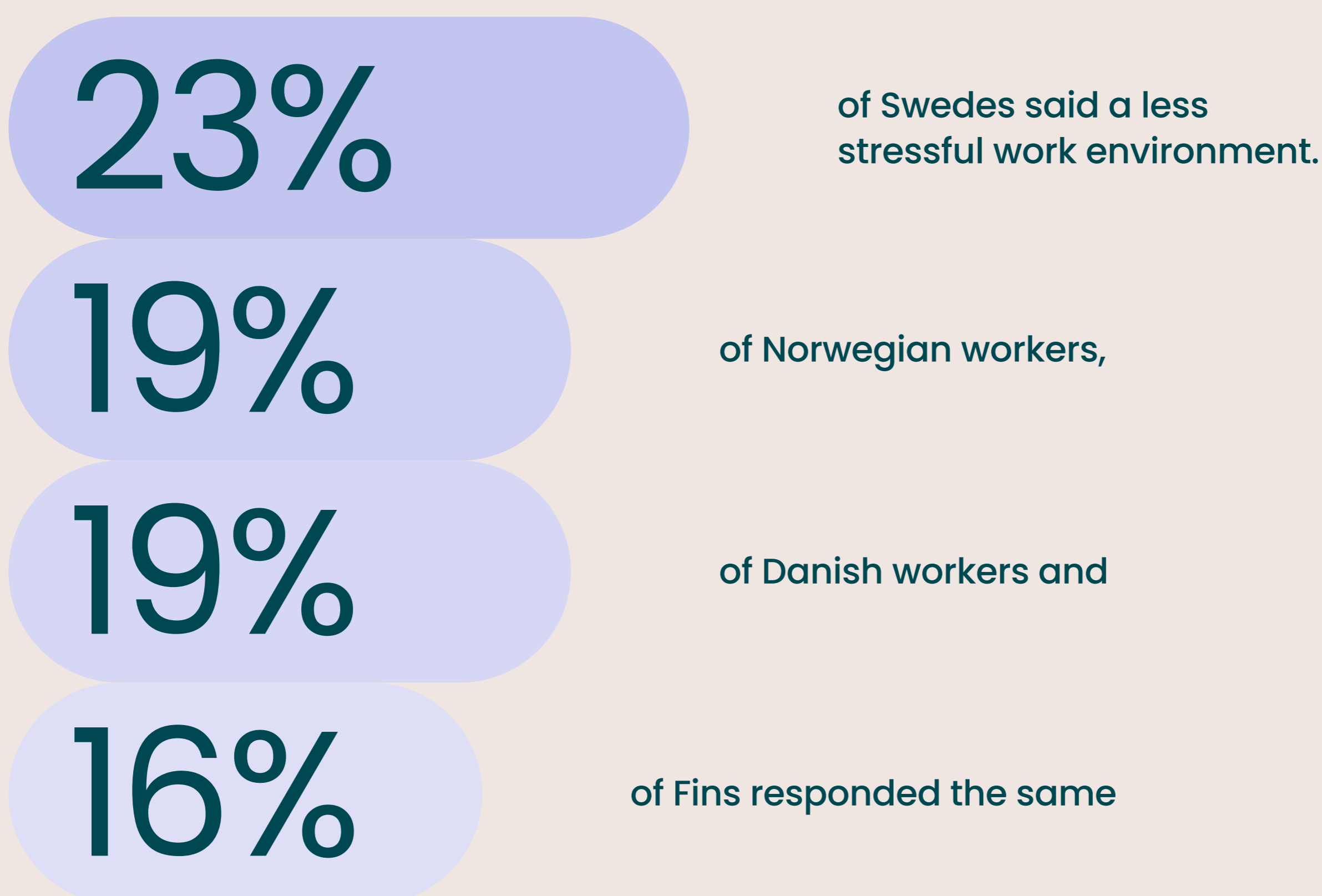
From 2023 to 2024, stress levels have increased in every country except for Denmark. Of all Nordic countries, Swedish workers have been experiencing the most stress in 2024



Compared to last year, work-related stress for workers in Finland has increased by 10%, in Sweden it increased by 41%, and in Norway, by 33%. The one exception is with Danish workers. There we see a 33% decrease in work-related stress for frontline workers in 2024 compared to 2023.

Among Nordic frontline workers, some of the top reasons mentioned above for experiencing stress are income not covering their cost of living, working too many hours, and poor communication between management and staff. With increased interest rates and inflation in Sweden, many feel strained to keep up with their basic costs. To compensate, many are picking up extra shifts or working more with fewer resources.

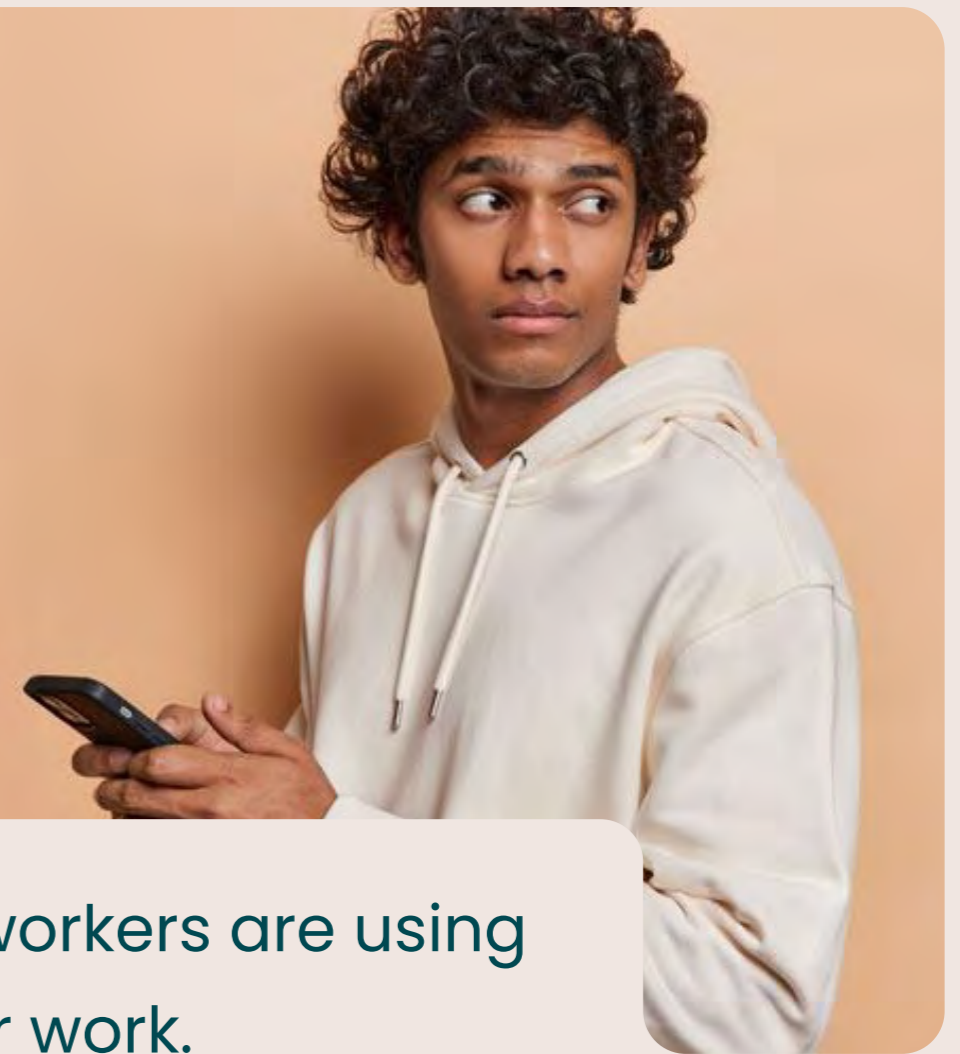
When asked what would make their job more attractive



A less stressful work environment was second to a higher salary in all countries. Finding ways to help decrease the level of stress – like increasing scheduling flexibility – will be an important factor in retaining frontline workers in the Nordics.

Communication issues

More apps are not greater than one. 42% of Nordic frontline workers are using between two to three different platforms to communicate for work.



71%

of Swedish frontline workers

68%

of Norwegian workers

66%

of Finnish workers and

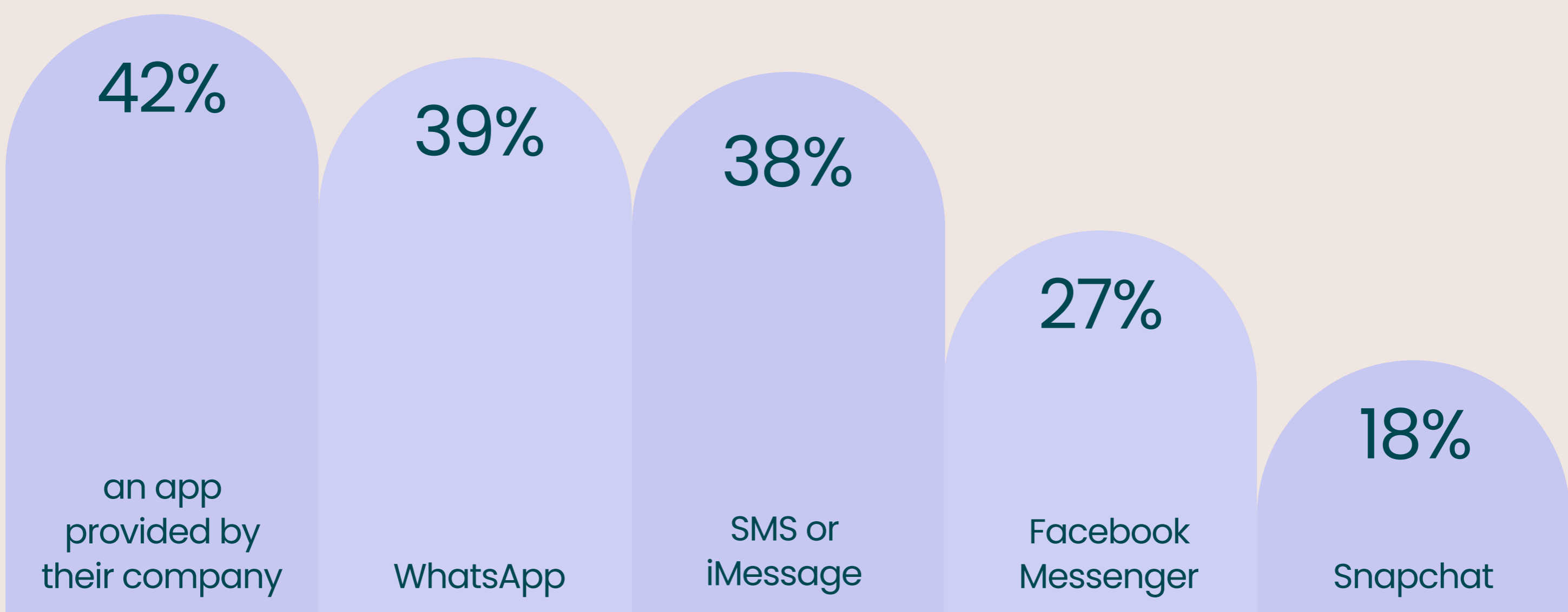
41%

Danish workers use 2 or more apps at their work

When looking to reduce stress, improve retention, and improve staff experience, improving how you communicate with staff can make a big difference. A great way to do this is by improving the technology you use to communicate with staff. We've seen that the fewer platforms a company uses, the easier it is for employees to keep track of every important update.

Having one single platform where staff and managers can communicate schedule changes and news – both big and small – can help alleviate some of the stress and communication breakdown that can happen.

The top 5 platforms for work communication for frontline workers in the Nordics



A positive trend in 2024 is more companies are choosing to use and provide workers with internal communication platforms instead of relying on external ones. In 2023, only 13% were using a company-provided communication application, and this year it jumped up to 42%!

The communication platforms used vary between direct communication and social media. It's easy to see how things can get missed, or miscommunicated when spreading communication across so many platforms that can serve such different purposes.

Food for thought from our CEO Erik Fjellborg!



Consider consolidating communication into one central location as much as possible. This approach minimizes the risk of miscommunication and ensures consistent communication across all frontline workers, preventing important information from being overlooked.



The Future of Technology



AI has the potential to transform the way we work and interact. In many ways it already is! AI will inevitably be incorporated into the workplace, but it's important to keep human concerns top of mind when doing so. Companies should think about how they can leverage AI not only to increase efficiency but also to increase inclusivity and ways to enhance the frontline worker experience.

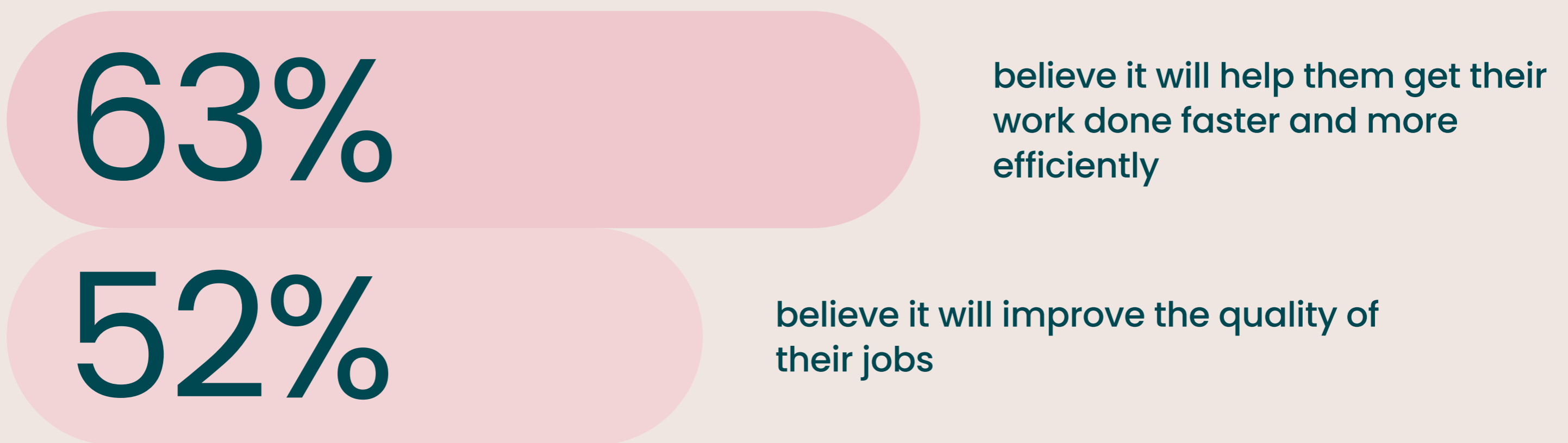
Looking forward to an AI-enabled workplace

The year 2023 seemed to be the explosion of AI, and the awareness of the workforce increased significantly. That also brought concerns and hopes around the impact AI might have on frontline work.

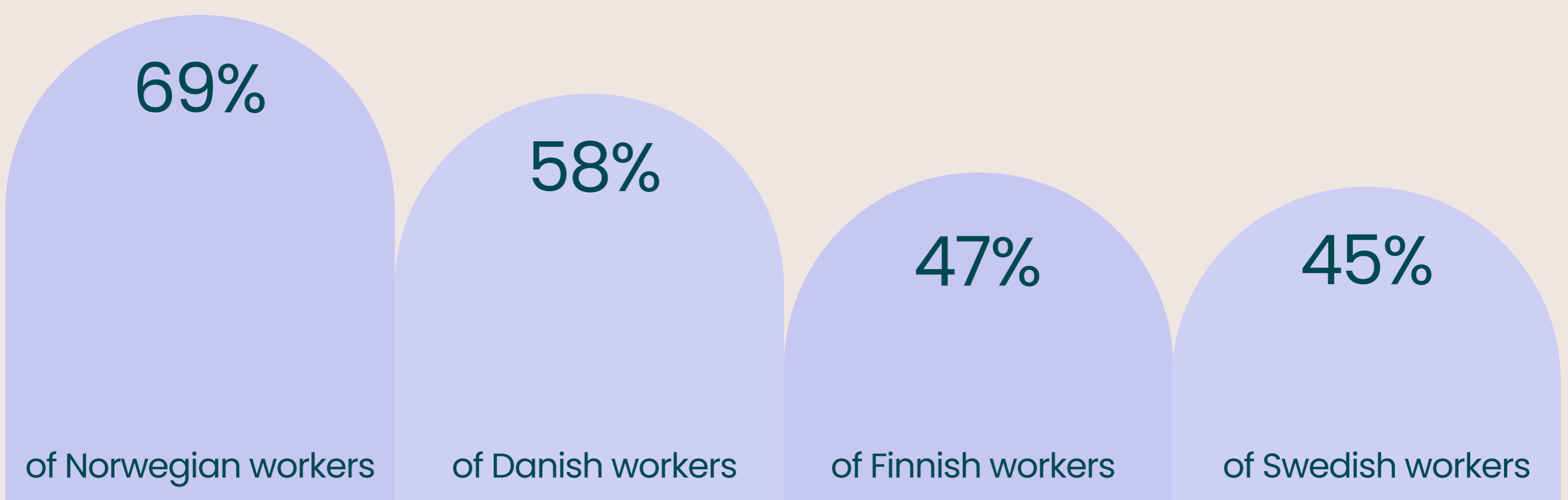
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The positives frontline workers in the Nordics see



Out of the Nordic countries, Norwegians are the most positive towards AI. The frontline workers in the Nordics who feel moderately or strongly positive toward the future of technology are spread across all markets as follows:



Only about 12% of frontline workers in the Nordics are feeling negatively towards AI and future technology. Of those workers who feel hesitant towards the future of technology and AI

52%

worry it will take their job or be able to replace them

40%

are concerned with the risk of technology malfunctions leading to frustrations rather than solutions

Food for thought from our CEO Erik Fjellborg!

Be transparent with your vision for incorporating AI and other tech, and build understanding and trust with your frontline staff. The best way forward is to find a collaborative approach to work with humans and AI.



Wrapping up



Frontline workers in the Nordics are more stressed out than ever

With 62% of frontline workers experiencing work-related stress in the past year. Behind the stress and dissatisfaction is a mix of financial concerns, feeling undervalued at work, and not seeing opportunities for growth in their career.

Financial concerns are top of mind in the Nordics. If salary increases are not an option, employers can find other ways to improve the employee experience and help alleviate stress for their staff. Perks such as flexible scheduling, investing in leadership programs so workers can learn and grow, and technology that takes the mundane tasks and makes them more efficient. Retention, employee satisfaction and wellness should take a new level of importance for employers. They should be as important as revenue and profit.

There is quite a bit of positive sentiment towards technology and AI in the Nordics. This is great for employers who are looking to incorporate the technology to improve efficiency and make the daily lives of their frontline workers better. However, there are important hesitations and skepticism around AI and tech that shouldn't be taken lightly by companies. Businesses should prioritize transparency and honesty around their goals and intentions by incorporating these new technologies into the workforce.

Frontline workers are the muscle driving your success and they make up the personalities your customers see and associate with your brand. In the end, they help get your products and services out into the world for people to enjoy so they are an essential part of the equation for your business.

Your frontline workers have spoken. How will you listen and respond?

How this survey was done

The 2024 State of the Frontline Workforce Report is based on an online survey that took place between February and April 2024. During that time, we received survey responses from a total of 3,500 frontline workers across retail, hospitality and logistics. The survey was conducted in 4 countries: Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark. In Sweden in Finland we also received results from the Healthcare sector – you can find those results following the links below.

Results were analyzed and compared to survey results from prior State of the Frontline Workforce reports to identify key trends. The most significant findings and what they mean for frontline employers are outlined in this report.

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