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AUTOMOTIVE DESIGN REPORT 2025
GLOBAL DESIGN SALARY & CAREER MONITOR

KONZEPT HAUS

WE BUILD CREATIVE TEAMS.

Konzepthaus provides specialized services for the automotive design industry, empowering companies to innovate, grow, and build future-proof foundations for success in an evolving market. Through our four pillars - Recruitment, Consulting, Learning, and Design Project Management - we offer the full range of solutions tailored to empower creative teams.

Our Consulting services lay the groundwork for strategic, future-ready growth; our Learning programs equip teams with new skills to stay ahead and help managers excel in leadership; our Recruitment solutions bring in top talent to enhance capabilities; and our Design Project Management expertise ensures seamless project delivery, allowing teams to focus on innovation. Together, we help automotive design leaders shape a forward-thinking industry where creativity and excellence thrive.



RECRUITING

CONSULTING

LEARNING

DESIGN PROJECT
MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

66

It's our fifth year exploring the state of design talent in the automotive and transportation industries - and we're excited to share the latest findings.

In 2025, we highlight three key shifts: Administrative tasks are increasingly merging with creative roles, reshaping the day-to-day work. At the same time, AI skills are now essential. Design teams can no longer treat AI as experimental - it's an integral part of how work gets done.

Salaries are rising, especially with the expansion of Chinese studios in Europe, the US and Japan. Their above-market offers are raising the bar in the competition for talent. Local studios are countering with non-monetary benefits such as flexible working, professional development and a healthy work-life balance - now crucial to retaining talent.

As always, this research is free to use to inform your career or team strategy decisions.

Thanks to everyone who contributed - we hope this study helps you move forward with confidence.

Martin Groschwald
CEO



TOP 3 TAKEAWAYS

1

AI

AI has firmly arrived. While today image creation and chat bots take centre stage, the real opportunity lies ahead. AI capabilities and demand stretches further into design studio workflows and beyond experimentation. Studios who are prioritising AI literacy across their team now, will see faster concept development, deeper insights and enhanced creativity tomorrow.

2

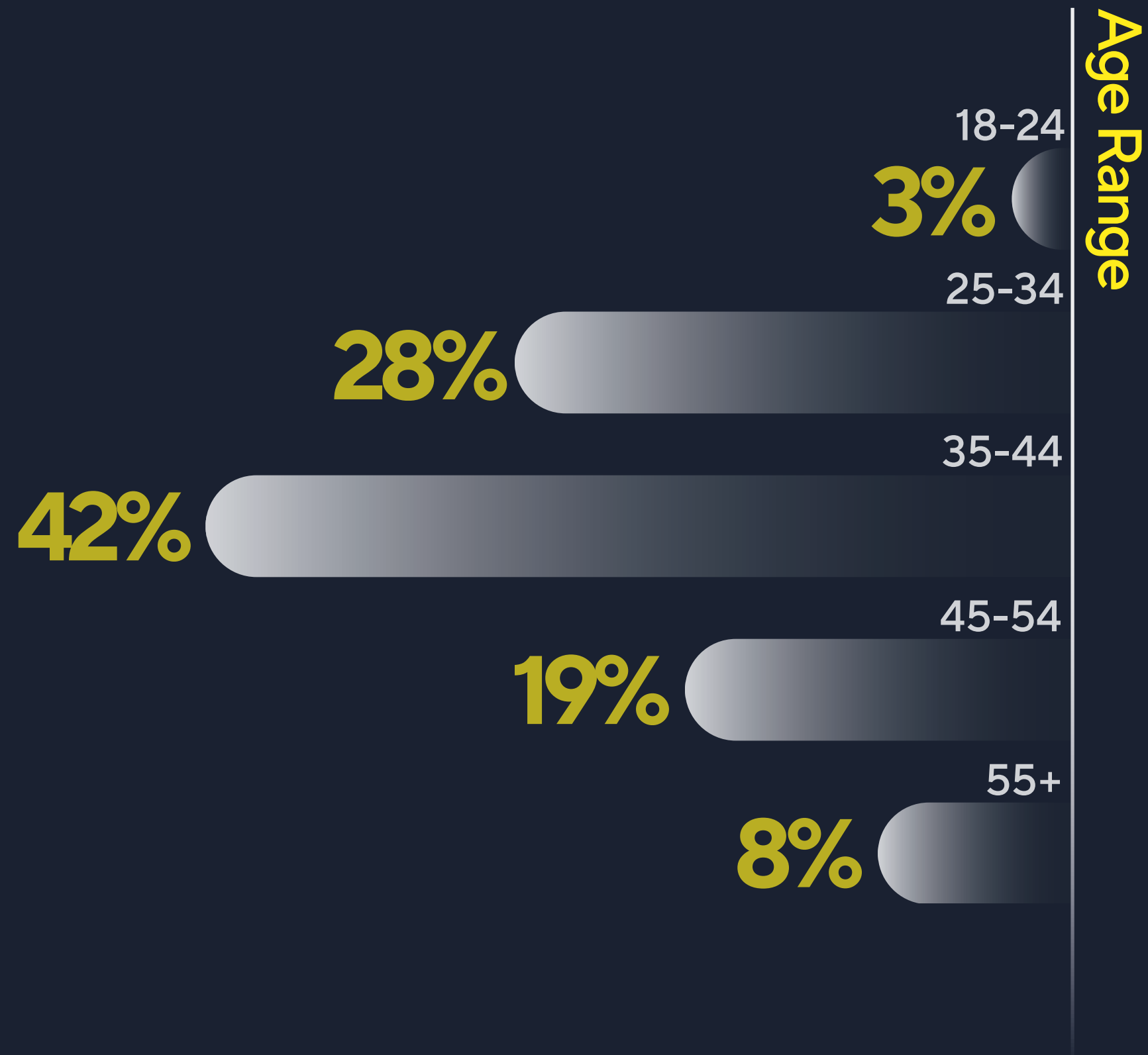
Lost in Administration

Creativity is under pressure. Our data shows admin tasks are crowding out design time - especially for senior leadership. This is more than an efficiency issue, it's a cultural risk. Studios must protect creative work time or risk burnout, quality falling and a disengaged team. The future-ready studio builds systems around creativity - not bureaucracy.

3

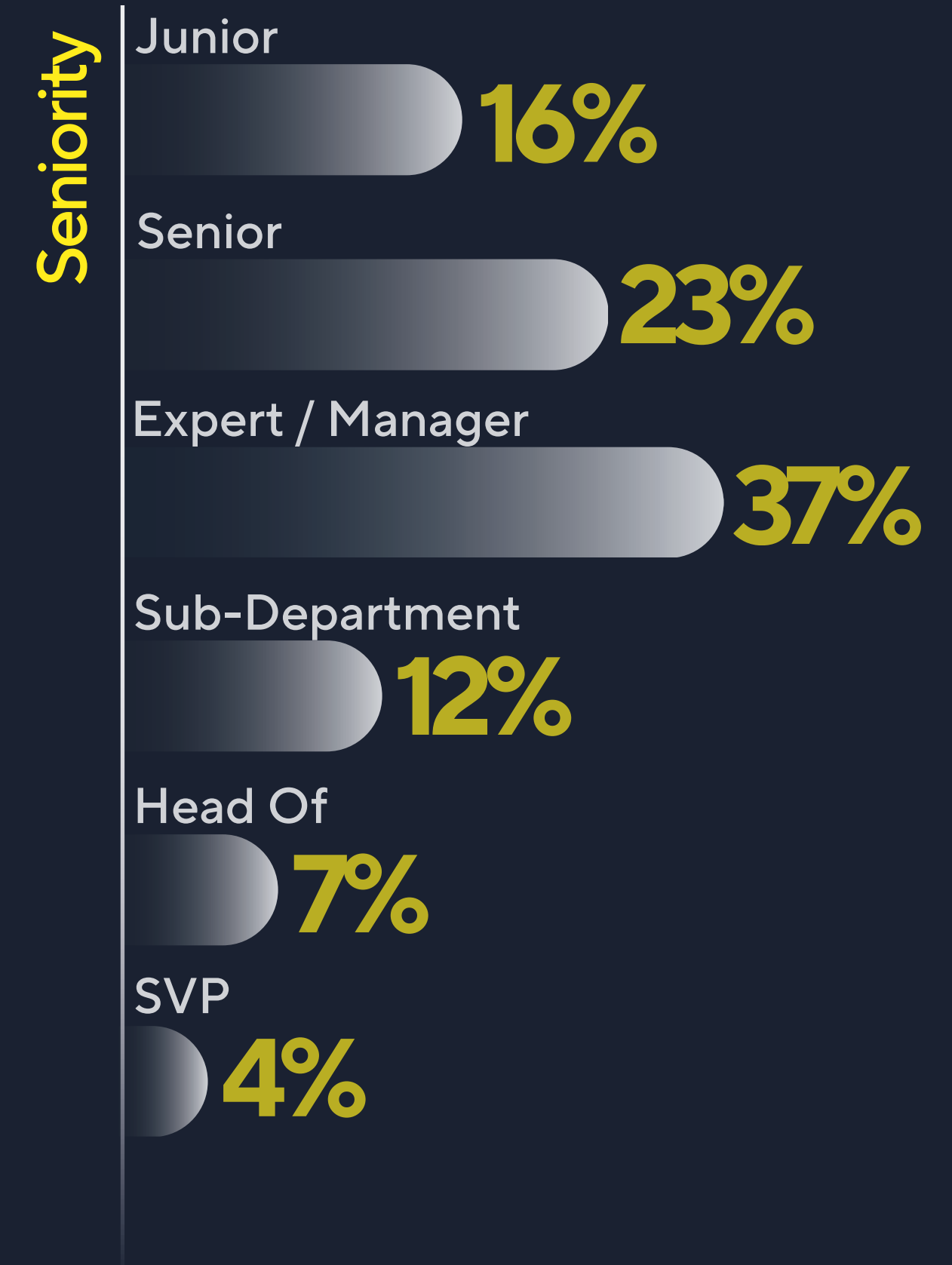
Brain Drain

70% of designers say they are happy, but over half are open to new jobs in the next 3 years - quite the paradox. The reason - happiness is not enough. Designers need growth, flexibility, purpose and modern leadership. Employer branding is not reputation - it's a real, lived experience. Studios who understand this will keep their best people. The others will lose them.



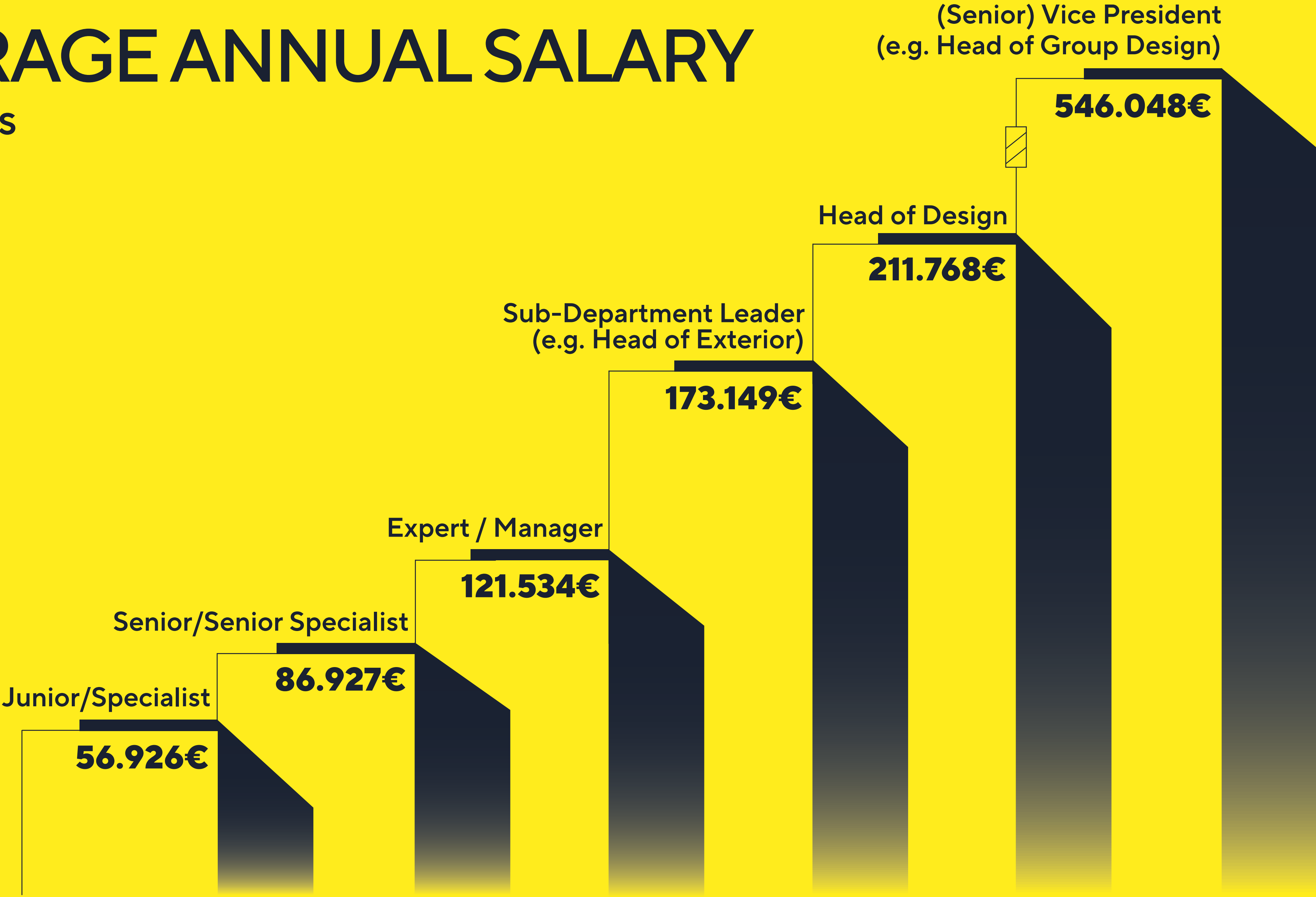
University Background

-
- 1 Coventry University
UK
 - 2 Hochschule Pforzheim
Germany
 - 3 Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design
Italy
 - 4 ArtCenter College of Design
California, USA
 - 5 Royal College of Art
UK
- A dark grey graduation cap icon is positioned to the right of the list.

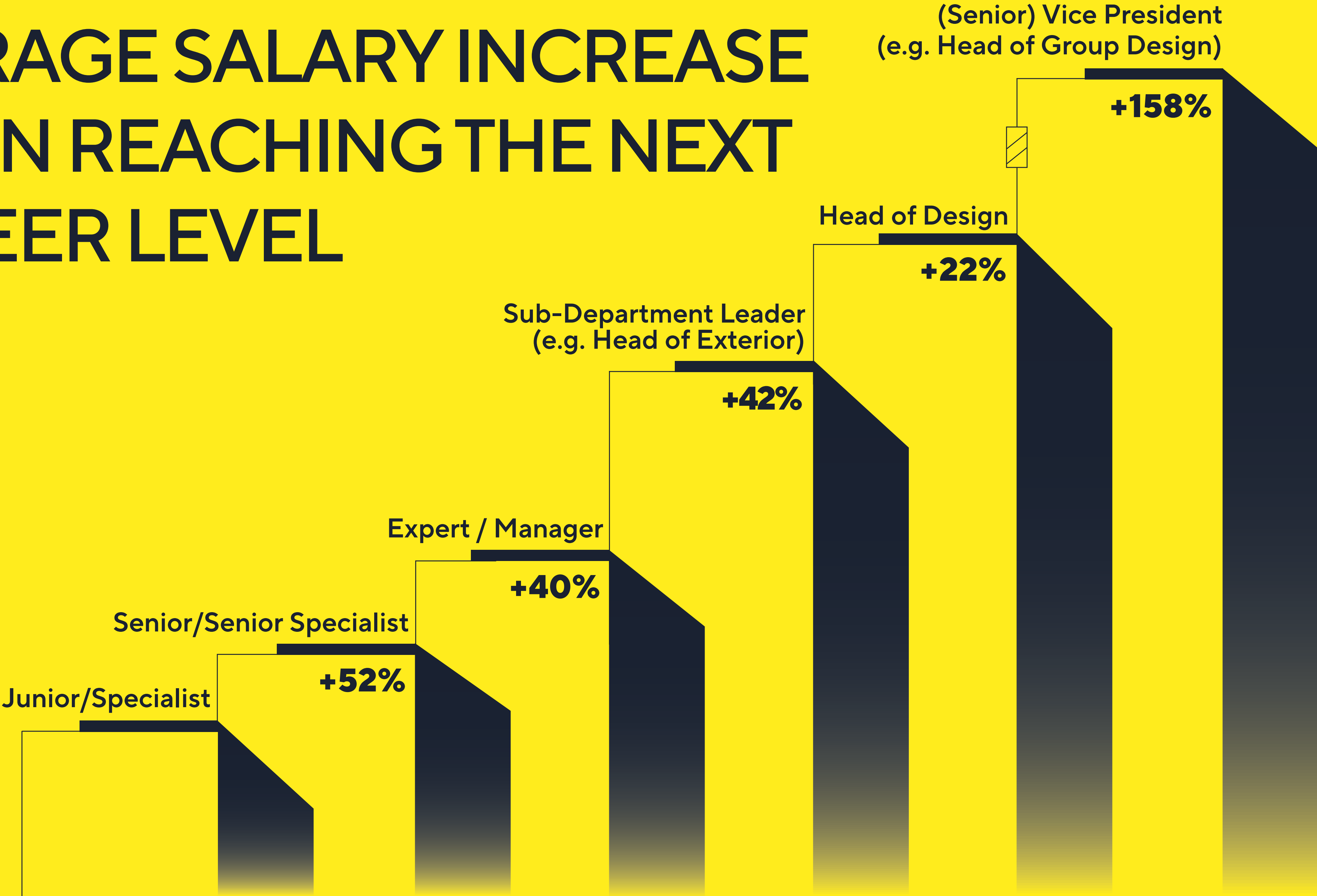


AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY

incl. Bonus



AVERAGE SALARY INCREASE WHEN REACHING THE NEXT CAREER LEVEL



AVERAGE ANNUAL BONUS (%) ON BASIC SALARY



No leadership responsibility
(Junior | Specialist | Senior | Senior Specialist | Expert)



Lower and middle management
(Manager | Team Leader | Sub-Department Leader)



Top management
(Head of Design | Vice President | Senior Vice President)

SALARY INCREASE AT COMPANIES FOUNDED AFTER 2010



+ 23%

Companies founded after 2010 pay about 23% more than companies founded before 2010.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Essential

Benefits to offer

1 **Flexible Work & Time Off**
(e.g. flexible schedules, sabbaticals, personal time off)

2 **Employee Perks**
(e.g. discounts, events, team building)

3 **Retirement & Insurance**
(e.g. pension scheme, life insurance)

Desirable

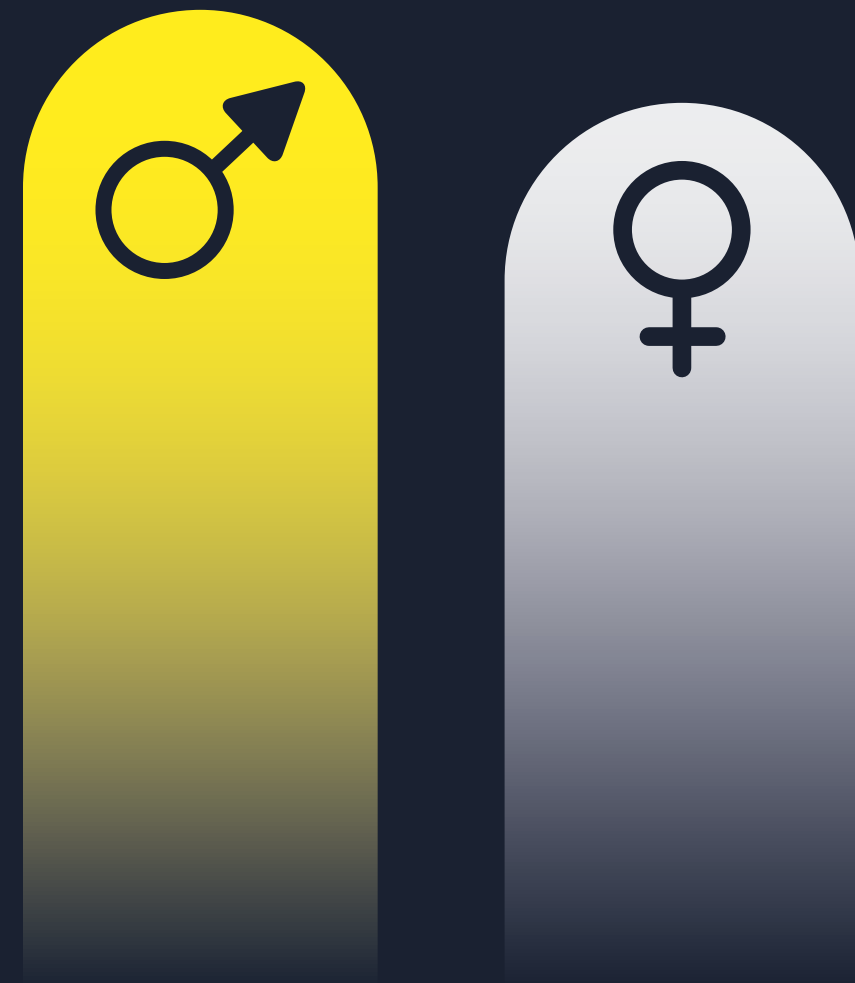
Benefits of the employees

1 **Education & Personal Growth**
(e.g. training budget, further education support)

2 **Child & Family Support**
(e.g. childcare facilities, parentalsupport)

3 **Financial & Transport Benefits**
(e.g. meal subsidies, vehicle leasing)

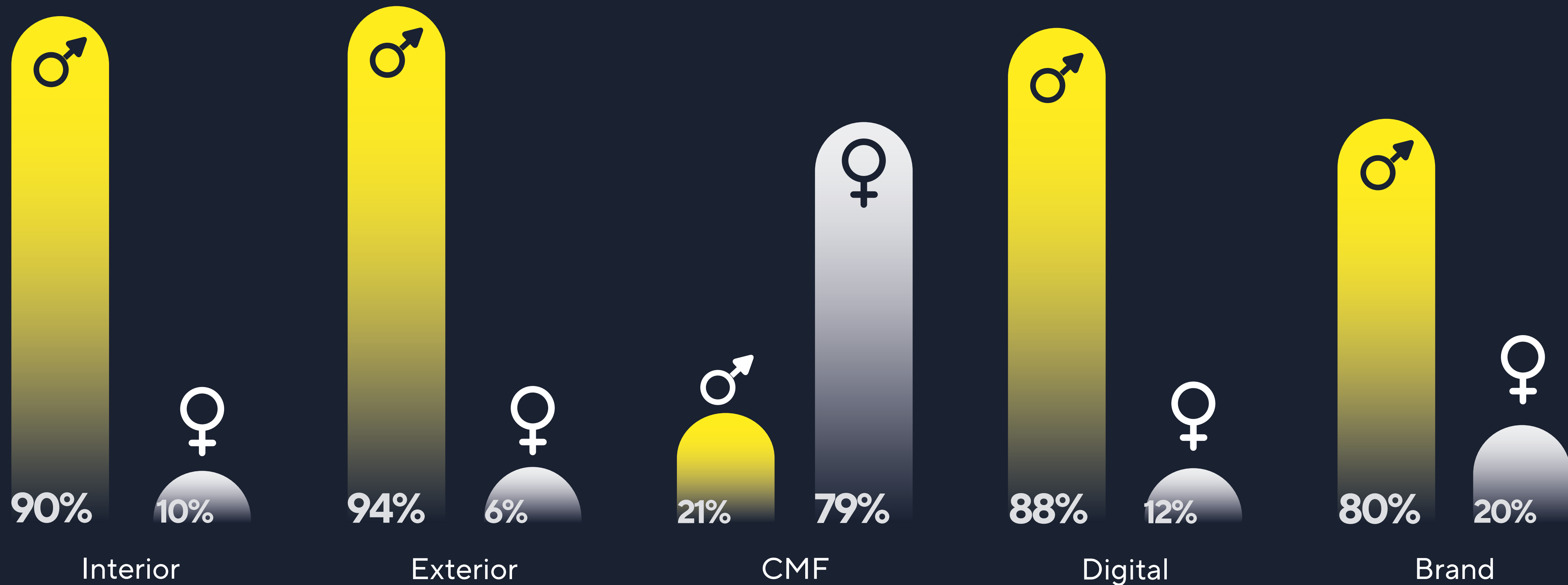
GENDER PAY GAP



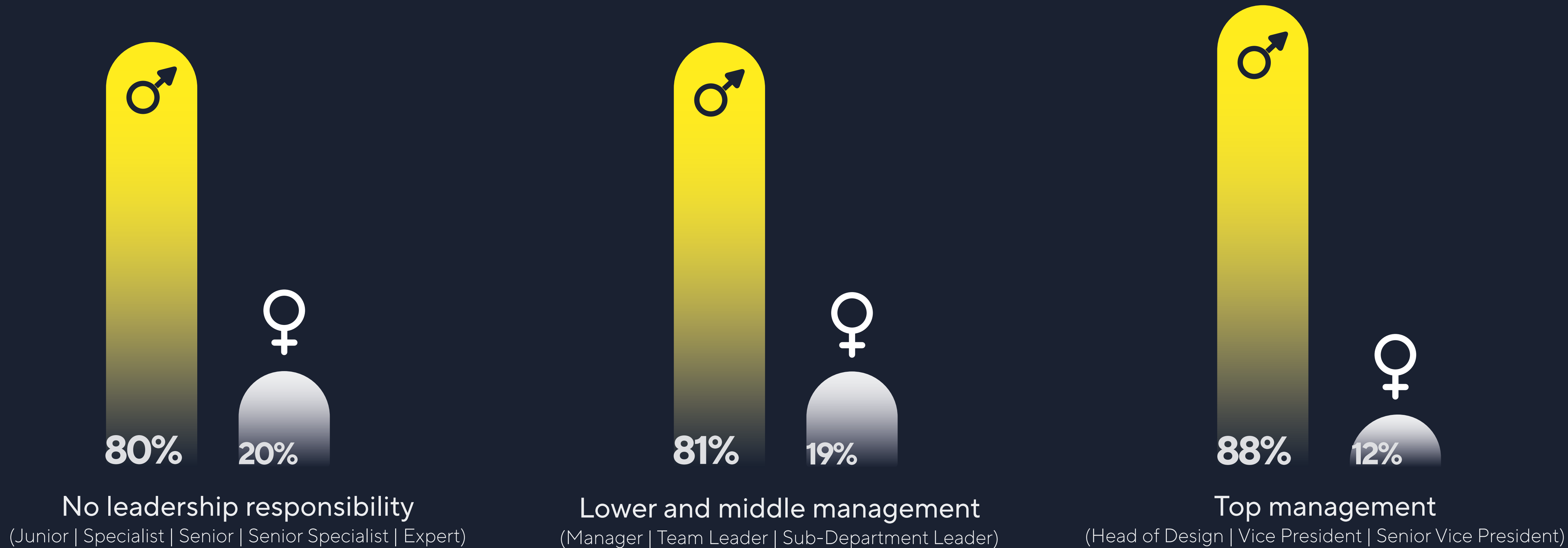
-13%

earn women less than men

GENDER COMPARISON

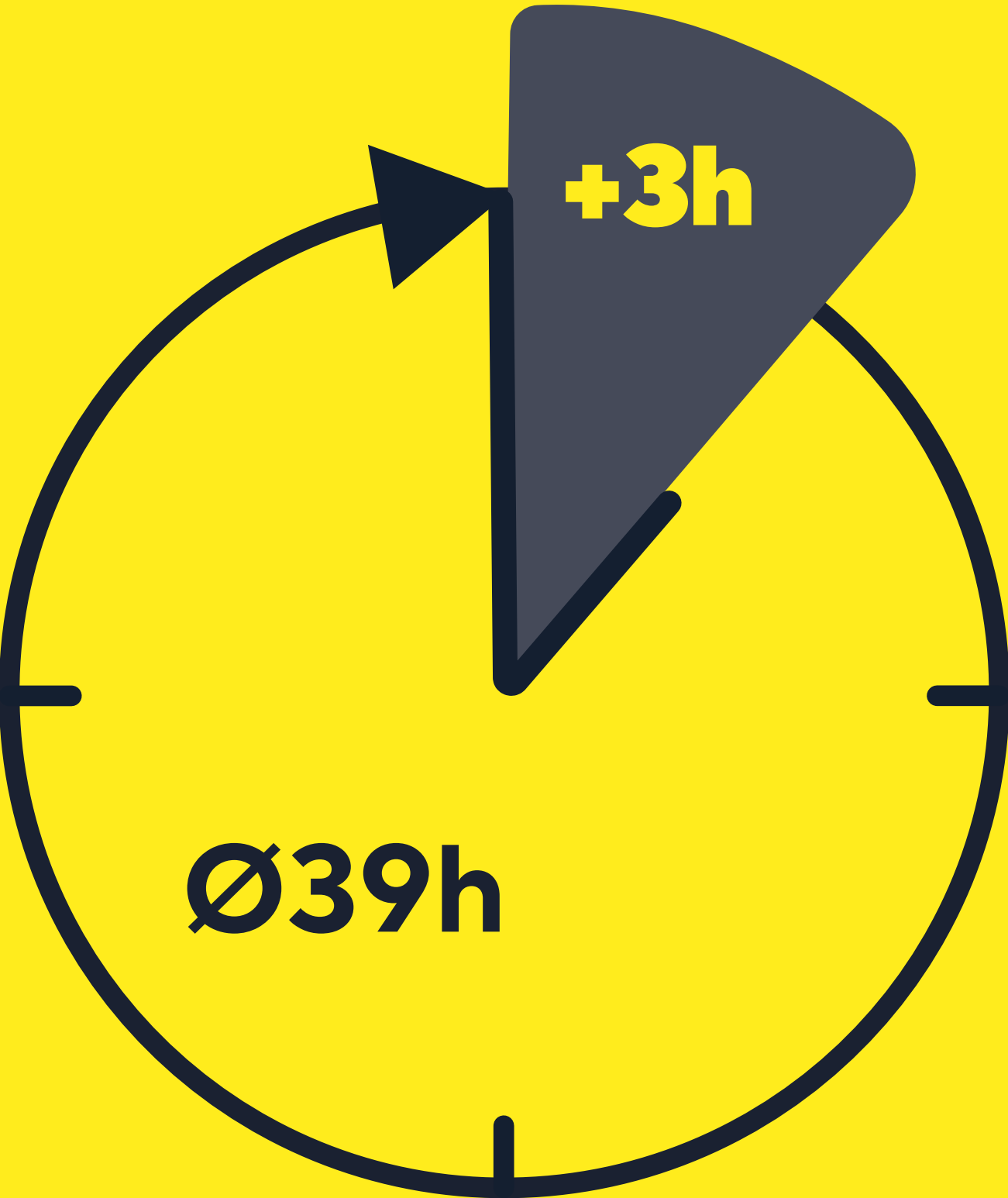


GENDER DISTRIBUTION

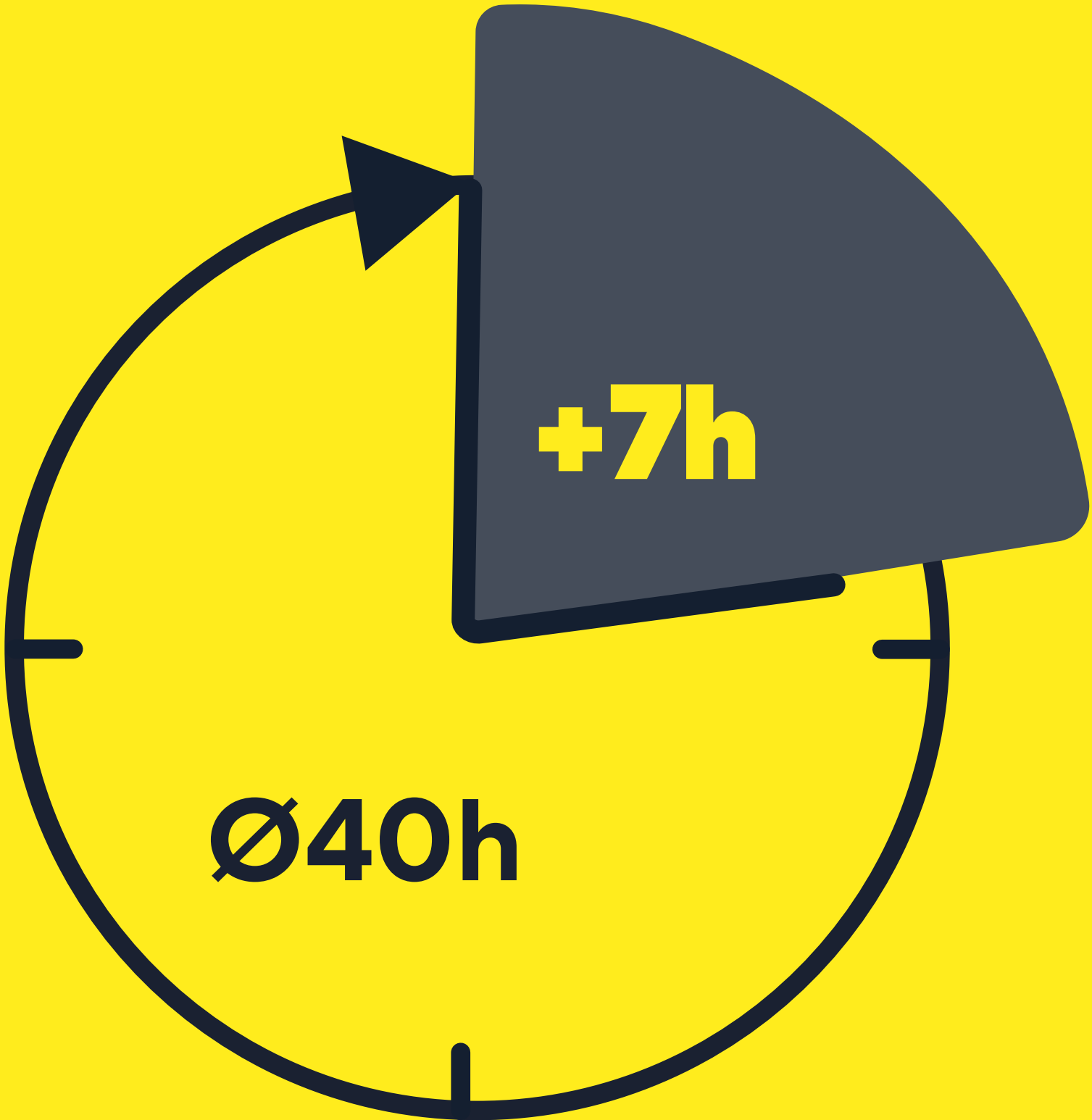


WORKING HOURS PER WEEK

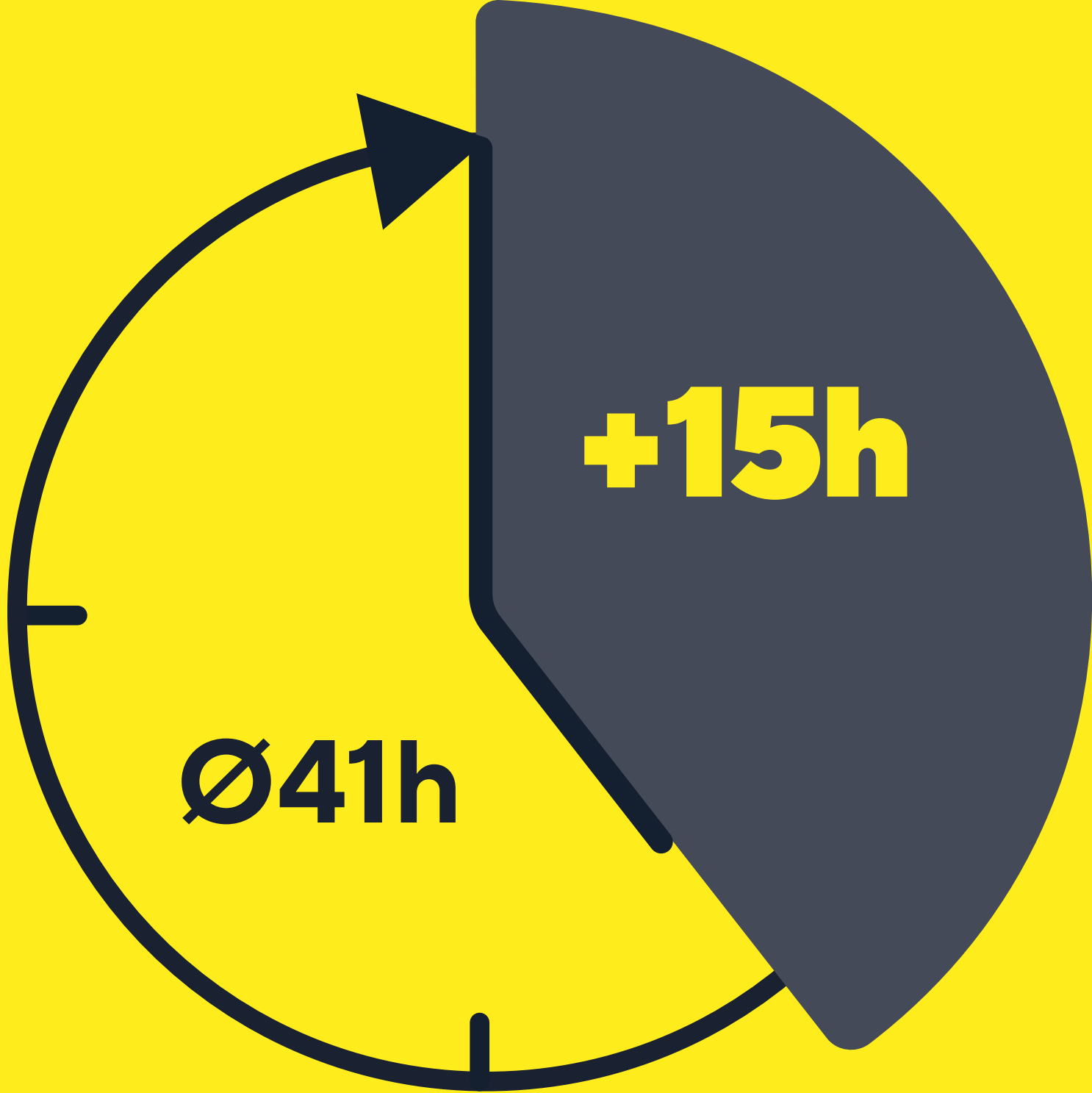
 contracted working hours  overtime



No leadership responsibility
(Junior | Specialist | Senior | Senior Specialist | Expert)



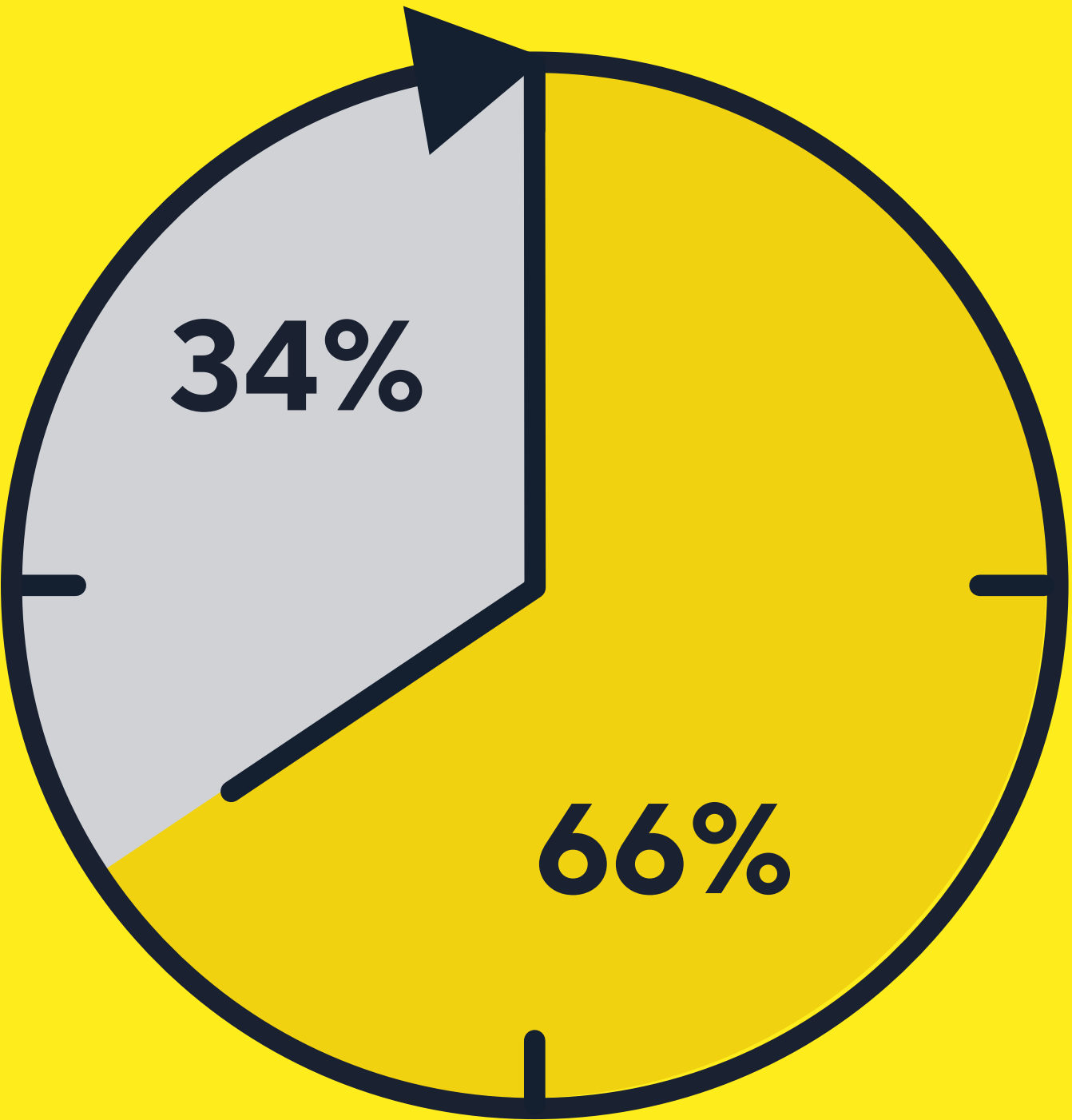
Lower and middle management
(Manager | Team Leader | Sub-Department Leader)



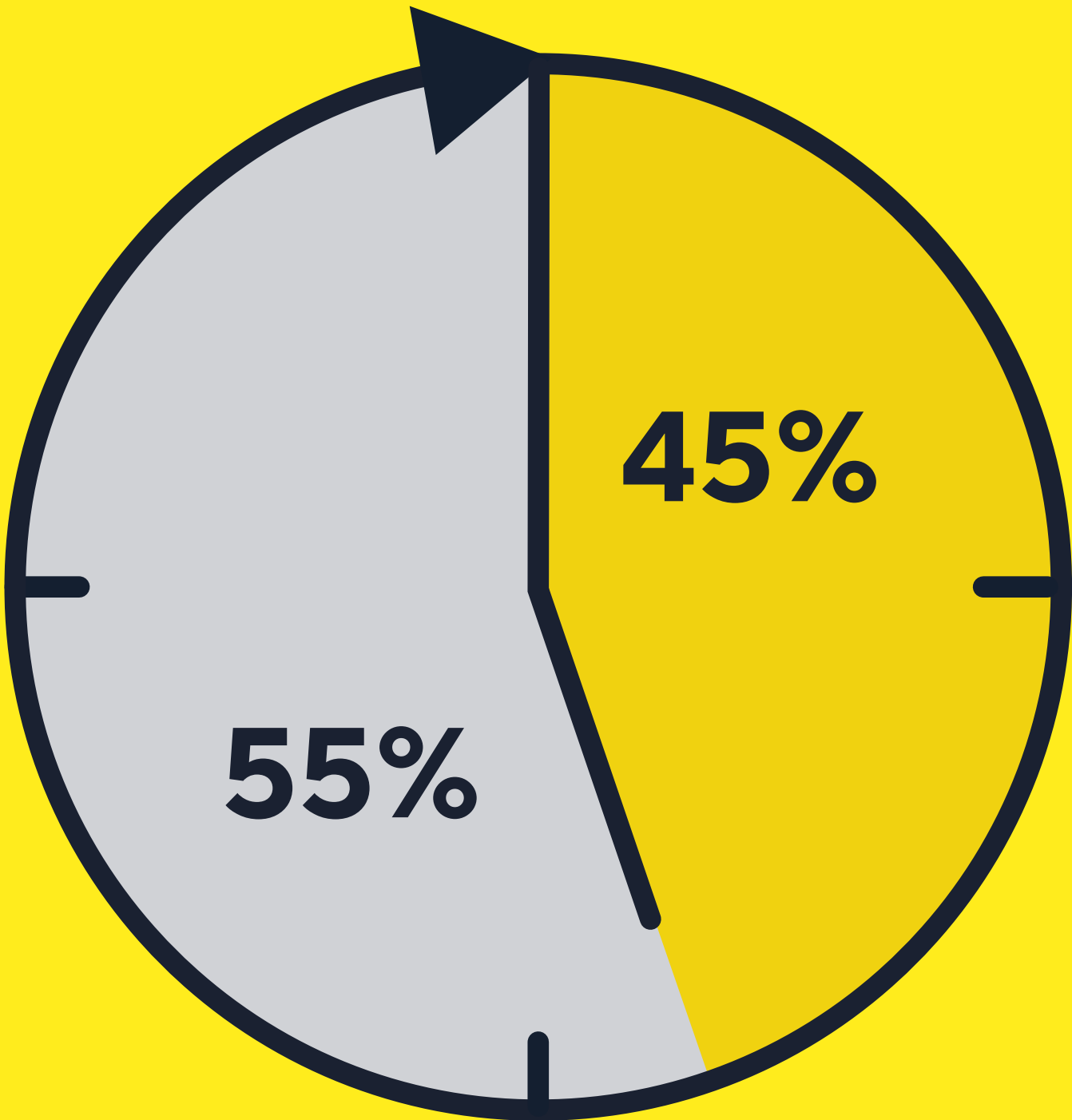
Top management
(Head of Design | Vice President | Senior Vice President)

RATIO OF CREATIVE TO ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

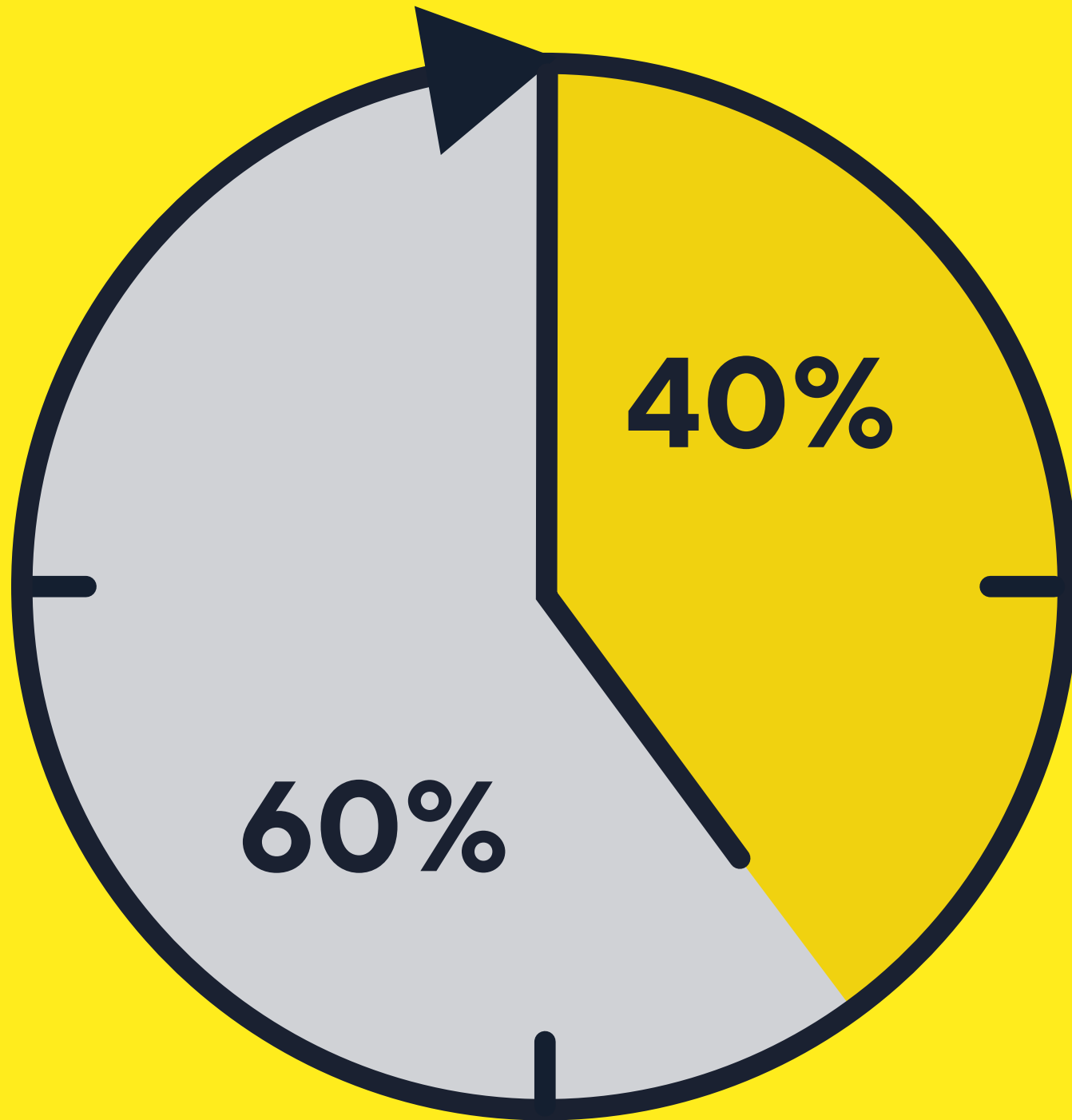
 administrative work  creative work



No leadership responsibility
(Junior | Specialist | Senior | Senior Specialist | Expert)

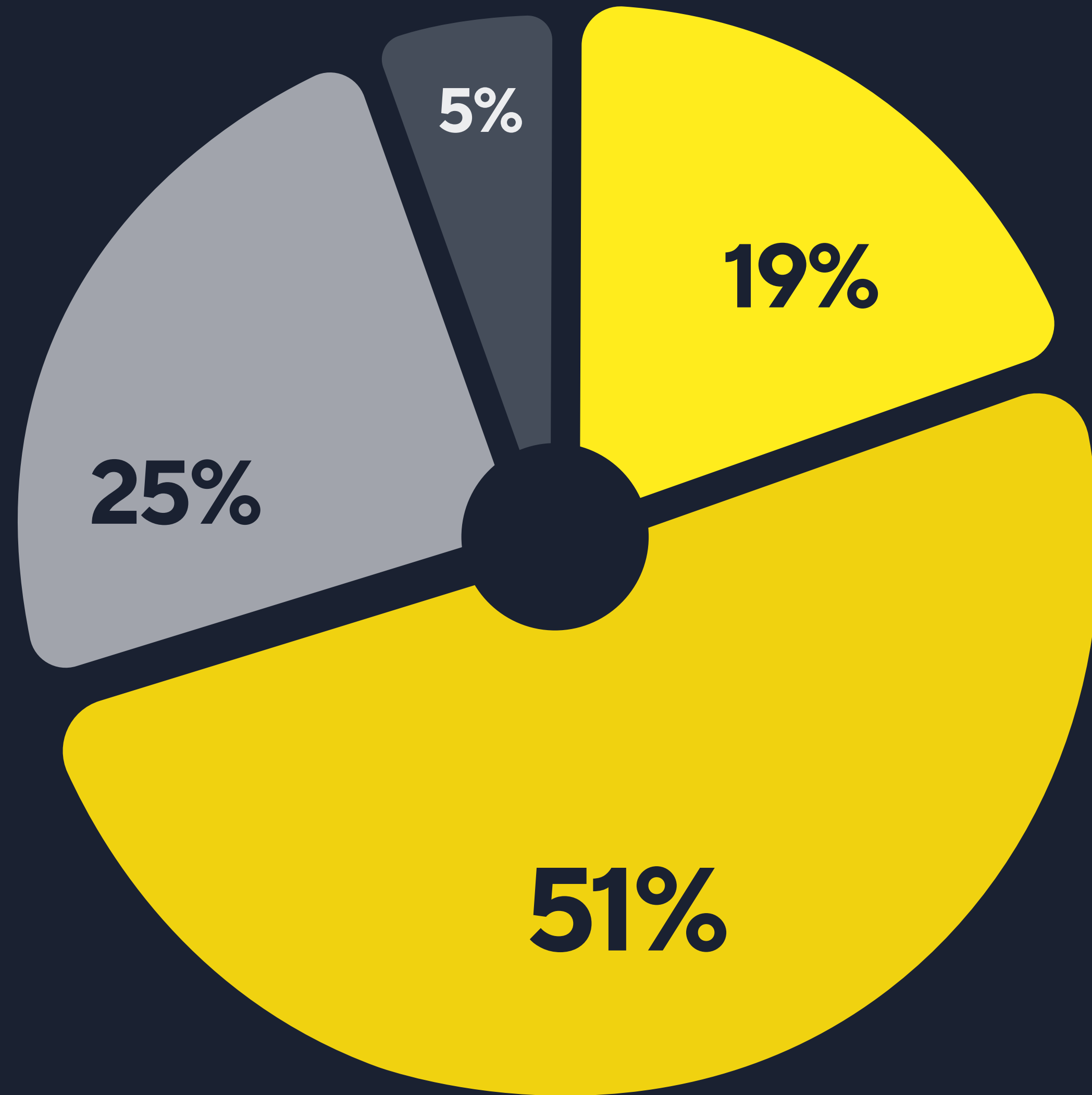


Lower and middle management
(Manager | Team Leader | Sub-Department Leader)



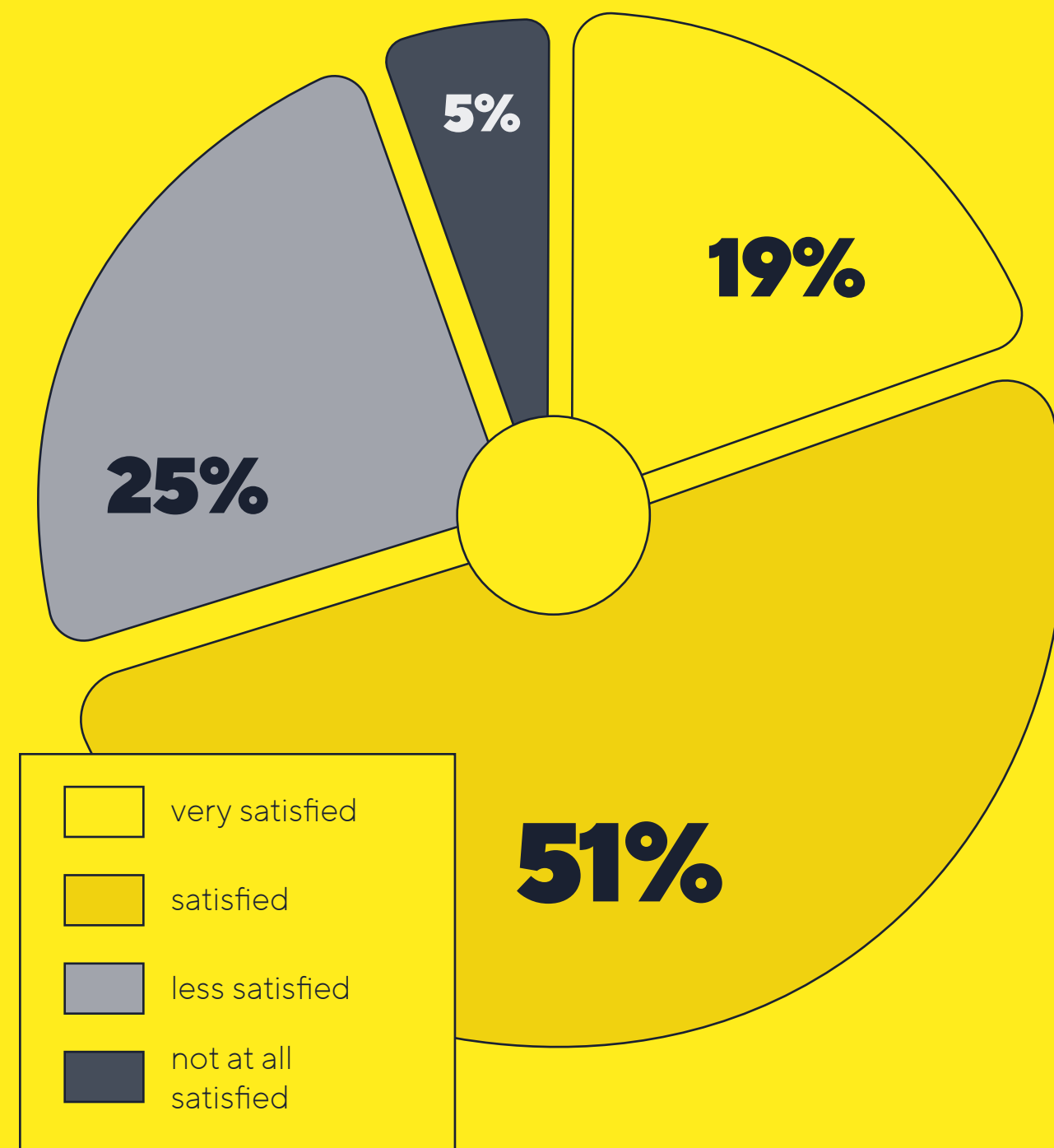
Top management
(Head of Design | Vice President | Senior Vice President)

MOOD BAROMETER

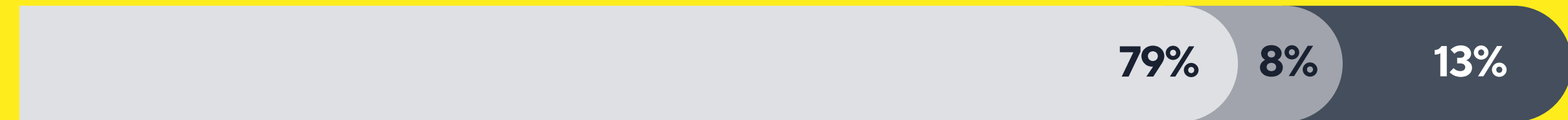


JOB CHANGE IN CONNECTION WITH SATISFACTION LEVEL

Probability of Job Change depending on Satisfaction Level



very satisfied



satisfied



less satisfied



not at all satisfied



no plans within 1 year within 3 years

TOP DESIGNER SKILLS

Top leadership skills

1 Vision
& Strategic Thinking

2 Collaboration
& Team Building

3 Communicating with
Clarity & Effective Feedback

4 Decision Making
& Problem Solving

Top desired skills

1 AI Integration

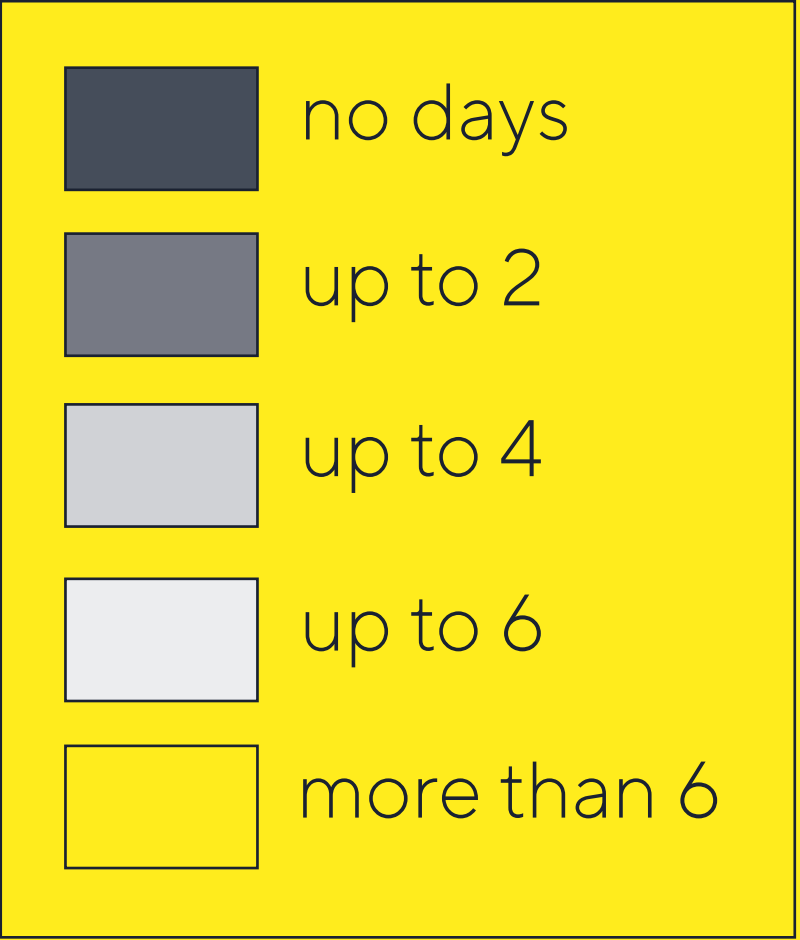
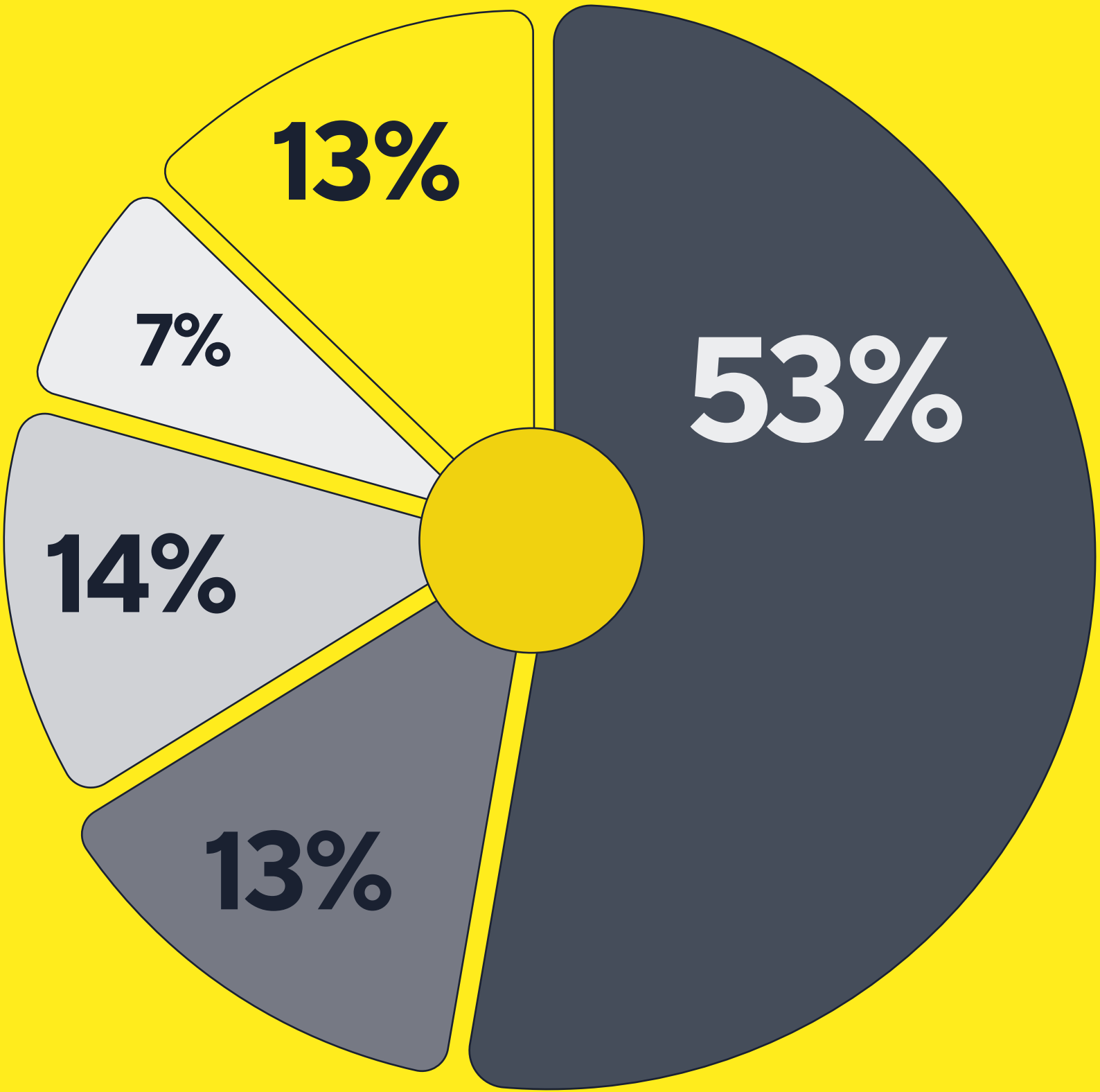
2 Concept Development

3 3D Modelling
& Visualisation

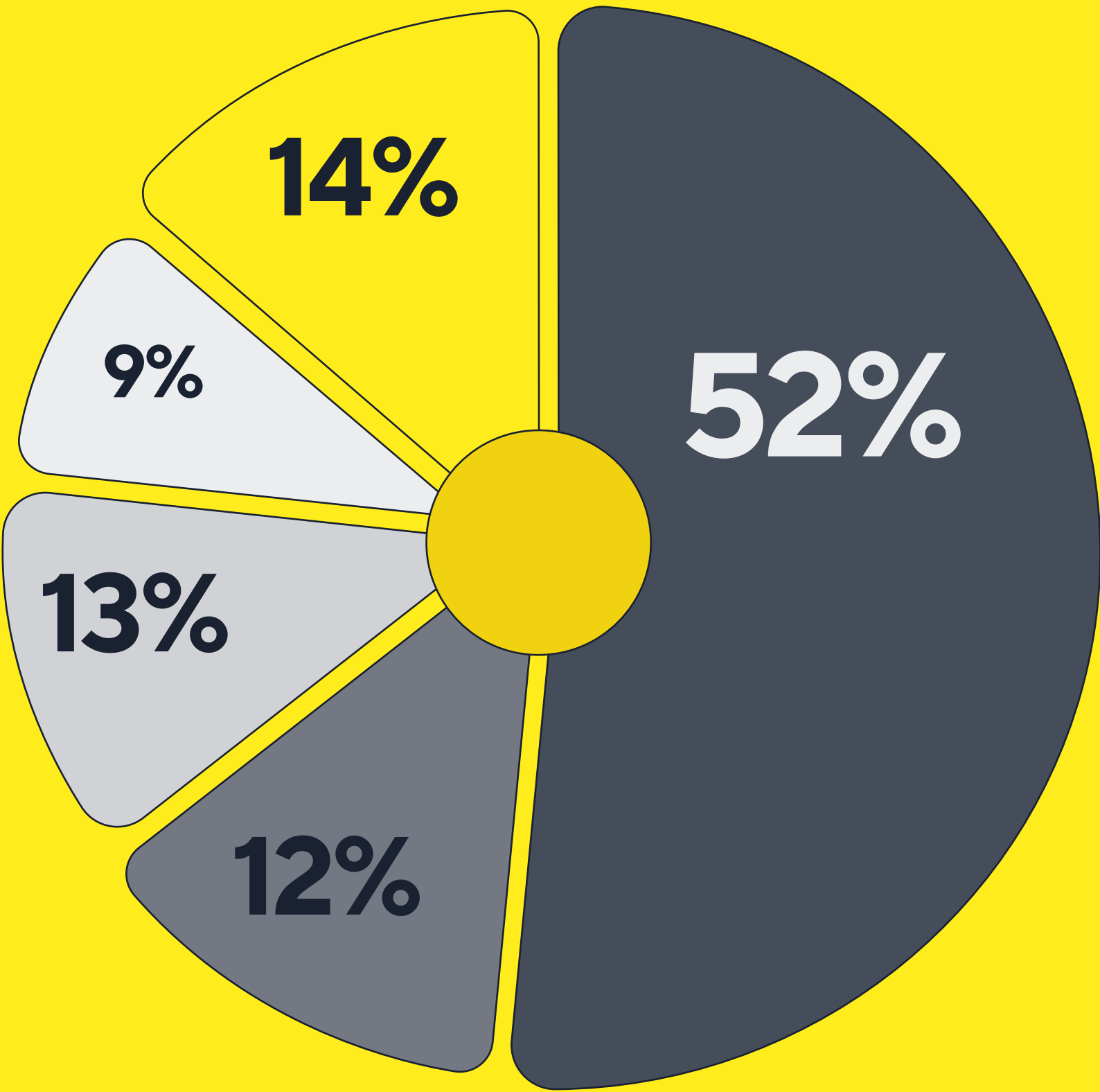
4 Sustainable Design

ANNUAL AVAILABLE TRAINING DAYS

Leadership Training



Software Training



BUDGET FOR TRAINING DAYS

 654€

annual average training budget per person

GET IN TOUCH!

This study was conducted in the period from 3rd February to 2nd May. The aim of the survey was to gain an understanding of the current salary structures in different regions, as well as insights into satisfaction and trends in the automotive design sector.

A total of 864 people took part in the study. The sample includes permanent and part-time designers in the automotive sector. The study was distributed worldwide.

The data was collected using an online questionnaire. Participation in the study was voluntary, anonymous (no IP address was retrieved) and unpaid. The data collected were processed and analysed in accordance with the applicable data protection guidelines.



Martin Groschwald
CEO



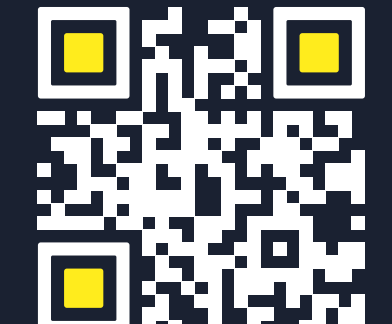
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