

8Bit

Gamedev
**Salary
Pulse**
2026



North America, Western Europe,
Nordics, Central and Eastern Europe

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INTRO

Monika Michalak

FOUNDER & CEO,
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The game development industry continues to navigate a period of uncertainty. While layoffs and studio restructurings have reshaped the landscape over the past year, another force is now entering the conversation: artificial intelligence. For many professionals, AI brings both excitement and anxiety - raising questions about how roles may evolve, how teams will be structured, and what skills will define the next generation of game development.

In this year's edition of the Gamedev Salary Pulse report, we once again go beyond compensation alone. Alongside salary benchmarks, we look at hiring trends, job stability, and how developers themselves perceive the changing dynamics of the industry. The report is based on insights from a global survey of game development professionals, combined with our day-to-day experience supporting studios and talent across the industry.

Despite the challenges, one thing remains clear: **the creativity, resilience, and passion within the gamedev community are as strong**

as ever. New studios continue to emerge, teams are adapting to new technologies, and the industry is gradually redefining what the future of game development will look like.

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in the survey. Your input not only helped shape this report, but also supported a cause close to our hearts. As in previous years, we donated \$1 for every response received. This year, the funds were equally distributed between Koty Spod Bloku and Bezdomniaki Żabiowolskie, helping them continue their important work supporting animals in need.

We hope this report provides useful perspective - whether you're negotiating your next role, evaluating the state of the industry, or leading a studio through a rapidly evolving landscape. **By sharing data, insights, and the voices of developers themselves, we hope to contribute to a more transparent, informed, and ultimately stronger game development community.**

ABOUT 8BIT

8Bit is a **recruitment agency dedicated exclusively to the game development industry**. Since 2015, we've partnered with over 120 studios worldwide, helping them connect with top talent. In 2025, we expanded our services by launching a dedicated games industry job board, further solidifying our role as a talent hub for the industry.

Supporting pet rescues through our survey donations isn't just a tradition, it's a reflection of our values. We are passionate about games, but we also care deeply about making a positive impact, both in the industry and beyond.



Report Overview

OBJECTIVE

This year marks the fourth edition of the Gamedev Salary Pulse. What began four years ago as a concise salary overview has since evolved into a comprehensive industry report.

From the very beginning, our goal has been to provide the industry with a transparent, data-driven overview of **how professionals experience their work**: how much they earn, how secure they feel, and how they assess the overall state of the market.

With each edition, we aim not only to capture a snapshot of the current landscape but also to build a consistent dataset that allows for meaningful year-to-year comparisons. Starting this year, we place stronger emphasis on question repeatability to enable **clearer trend analysis over time**. As a result, only a limited number of entirely new questions have been introduced, while most sections revisit the same core topics as in previous editions.

In areas related to sentiment, morale, and emotional outlook, we now explicitly track year-over-year percentage point changes, highlighting shifts in optimism, uncertainty, and job stability across the industry.

Our objective remains unchanged: **to provide actionable insights for both individuals and studios navigating an increasingly complex and evolving market**.

DATA COLLECTION

The 2026 edition of the Gamedev Salary Pulse is based on data collected between October and December 2025 through an open industry survey promoted via LinkedIn and other social platforms.

In total, we worked with nearly 1,200 individual responses. **We would like to sincerely thank everyone who participated and helped amplify the survey within the community.**

As part of this year's initiative, we also continued our commitment to giving back. Based on the number of completed responses, we made financial donations to two pet rescue organizations: Koty Spod Bloku and Stowarzyszenie Bezdolniaki Żabiowolskie. Supporting animal welfare remains an important element of our broader mission.

Beyond survey responses, this report incorporates:

- insights from our recruitment processes conducted throughout 2025,
- analysis of job postings with publicly available salary ranges,
- benchmarking against additional industry data sources,
- and internal compensation data shared within active recruitment collaborations.

By triangulating these sources, we aim to ensure that our conclusions reflect not only declared perceptions but also observable market realities.

As in previous editions, some regions, departments, or seniority levels did not reach sufficient sample size to publish detailed salary figures. In those cases, we chose not to disclose specific compensation data in order to preserve methodological reliability. However, **all responses contributed to the broader analysis of demographics, work conditions, and sentiment trends**.

Through this multi-layered approach, the 2026 Gamedev Salary Pulse provides not just a yearly overview, but an increasingly structured, comparable dataset that helps the industry track change over time.

Participant Profiles

A CLOSER LOOK

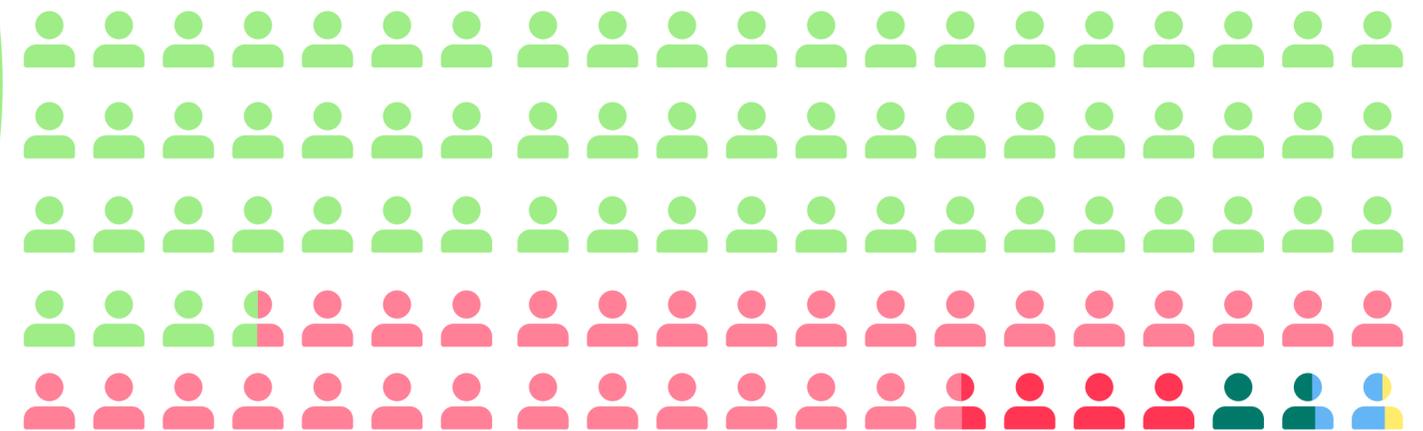
This section provides an overview of the survey participants, helping to contextualize the subsequent findings.

1. **GENDER REPRESENTATION**
2. **AGE DISTRIBUTION**
3. **STUDIO LOCATION BREAKDOWN**
4. **ROLES IN GAME DEVELOPMENT**
5. **SENIORITY LEVELS**
6. **INDUSTRY TENURE**

GENDER REPRESENTATION

Our data continues to reflect the **gender imbalance that remains a characteristic of the global games industry**. While men represent the majority of our respondents at 63.6%, women account for 30.0%, and non-binary, non-conforming, or transgender individuals collectively make up 4.5%.

Despite the slight variations in survey participation from year to year, the core message remains clear: the industry still has a long way to go in achieving true gender parity. In an era where some global tech players are deprioritizing diversity initiatives, it is more important than ever for game studios to maintain a focus on inclusivity. **Ensuring that game dev is an accessible and welcoming career path for all, remains essential for the long-term health and creativity of the sector.**



 Man	63.6%
 Woman	30.0%
 Non-binary/non-conforming	3.5%
 Prefer not to respond	1.6%
 Transgender	1.0%
 None of these	0.3%

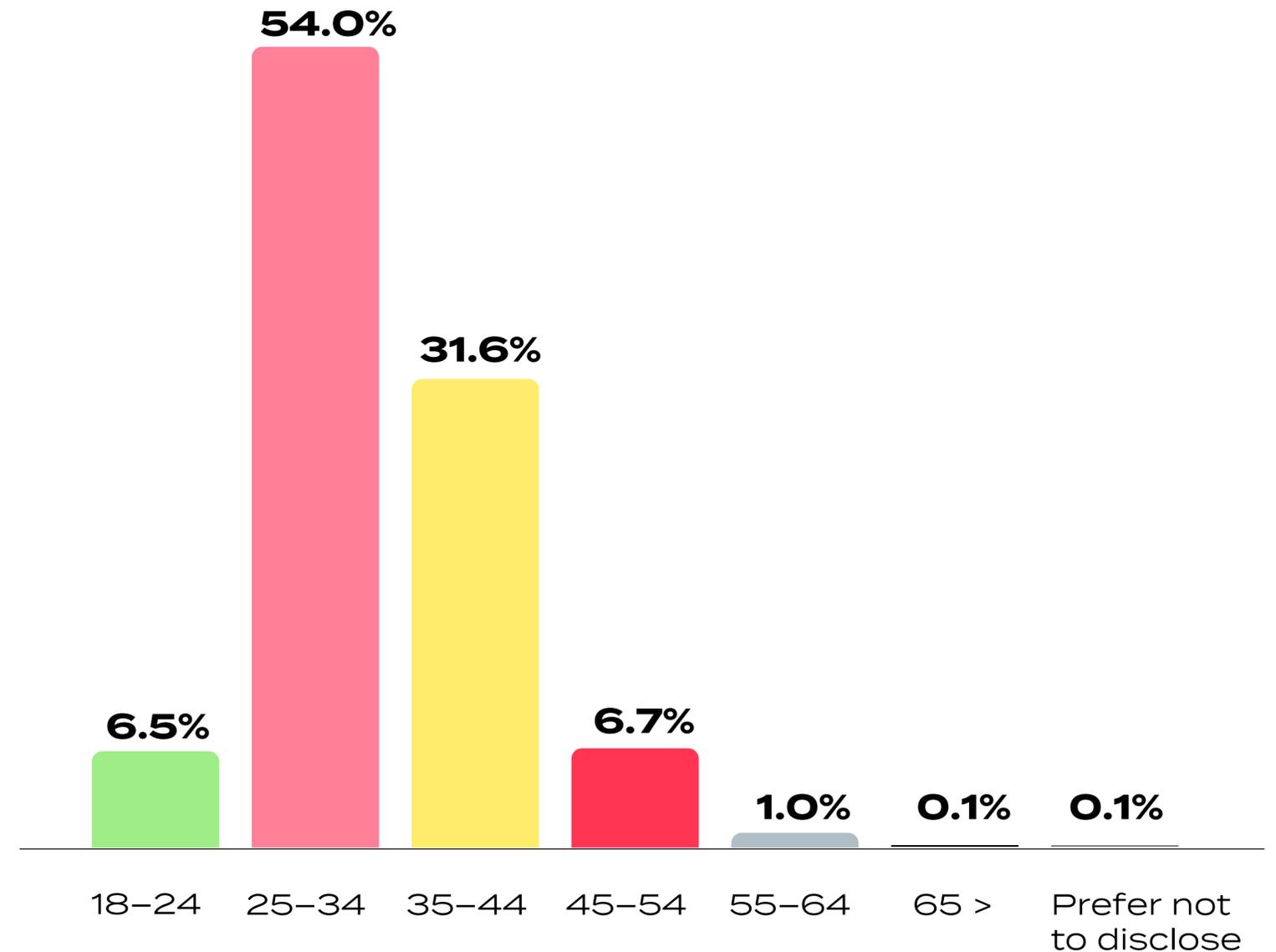
? QUESTION ASKED:
Which of the following best describes your gender?

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The majority of respondents fall within the 25–34 (54.0%) and 35–44 (31.6%) brackets, meaning this year’s dataset is largely shaped by Millennials in their mid-career stage. Compared to the previous edition, we gathered fewer responses from the youngest working group (18–24), dropping from 10.4% to 6.5% - despite making the survey more inclusive by adding an “Entry level” seniority category and proactively promoting it among gamedev courses.

This **shift may suggest that some individuals considering a gamedev career are increasingly cautious in the current market climate, potentially opting (at least temporarily) for more stable sectors.**

Overall, the age distribution continues to reflect a strong presence of professionals navigating salary progression, leadership pathways, and strategic career moves rather than those just entering the industry.



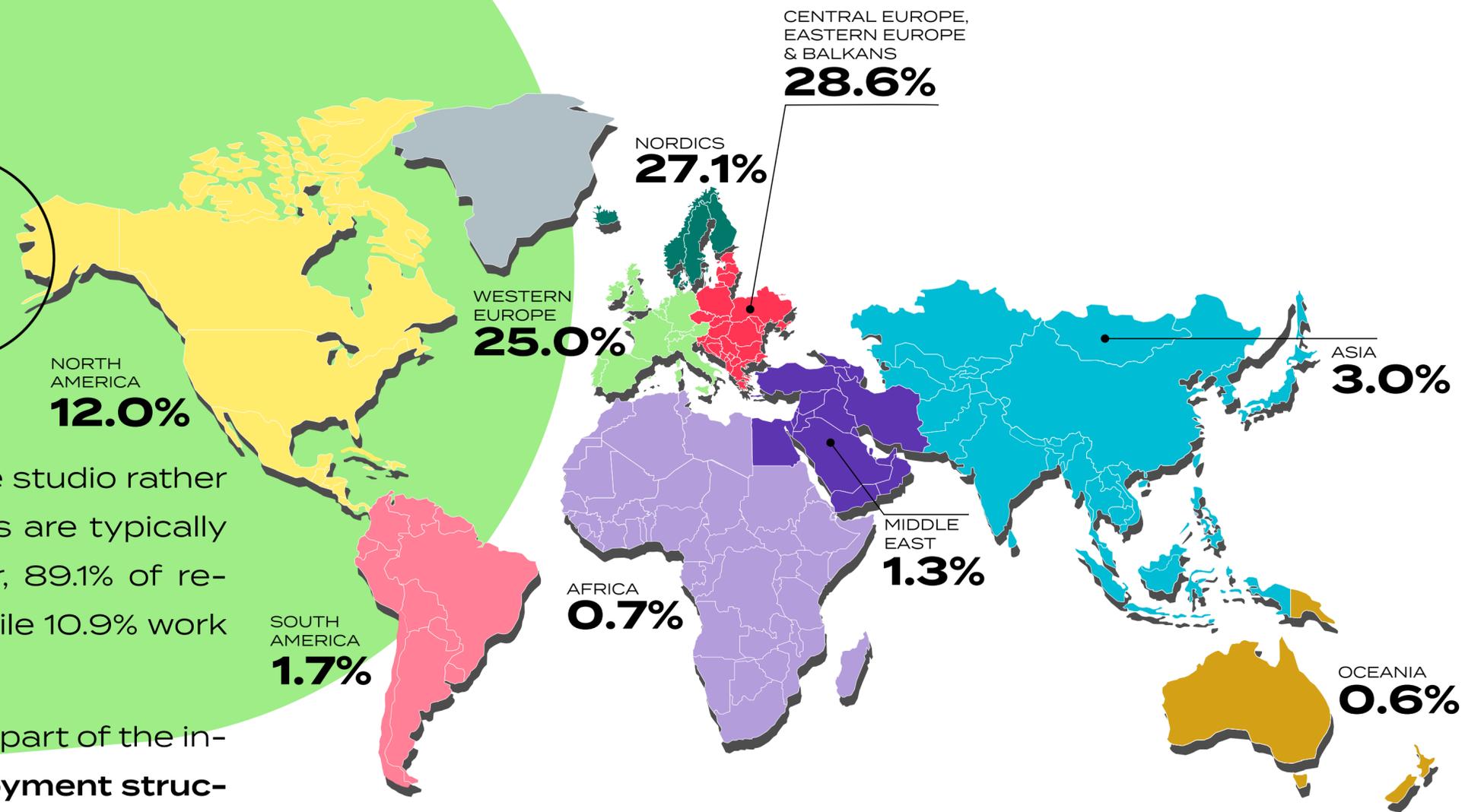
QUESTION ASKED:

What is your age group?

STUDIO LOCATION BREAKDOWN

As in previous editions, we focus on the location of the studio rather than the employee's residence, as salary benchmarks are typically aligned with where the company operates. This year, 89.1% of respondents live in the same country as their studio, while 10.9% work across borders.

Although fully remote and international setups remain part of the industry landscape, the data suggests that **local employment structures still dominate**. At the same time, the broader trend of **studios diversifying beyond high-cost hubs** continues to shape hiring strategies. Expanding into regions with strong talent pools and more sustainable cost structures appears to be a long-term shift rather than a temporary reaction to market turbulence.



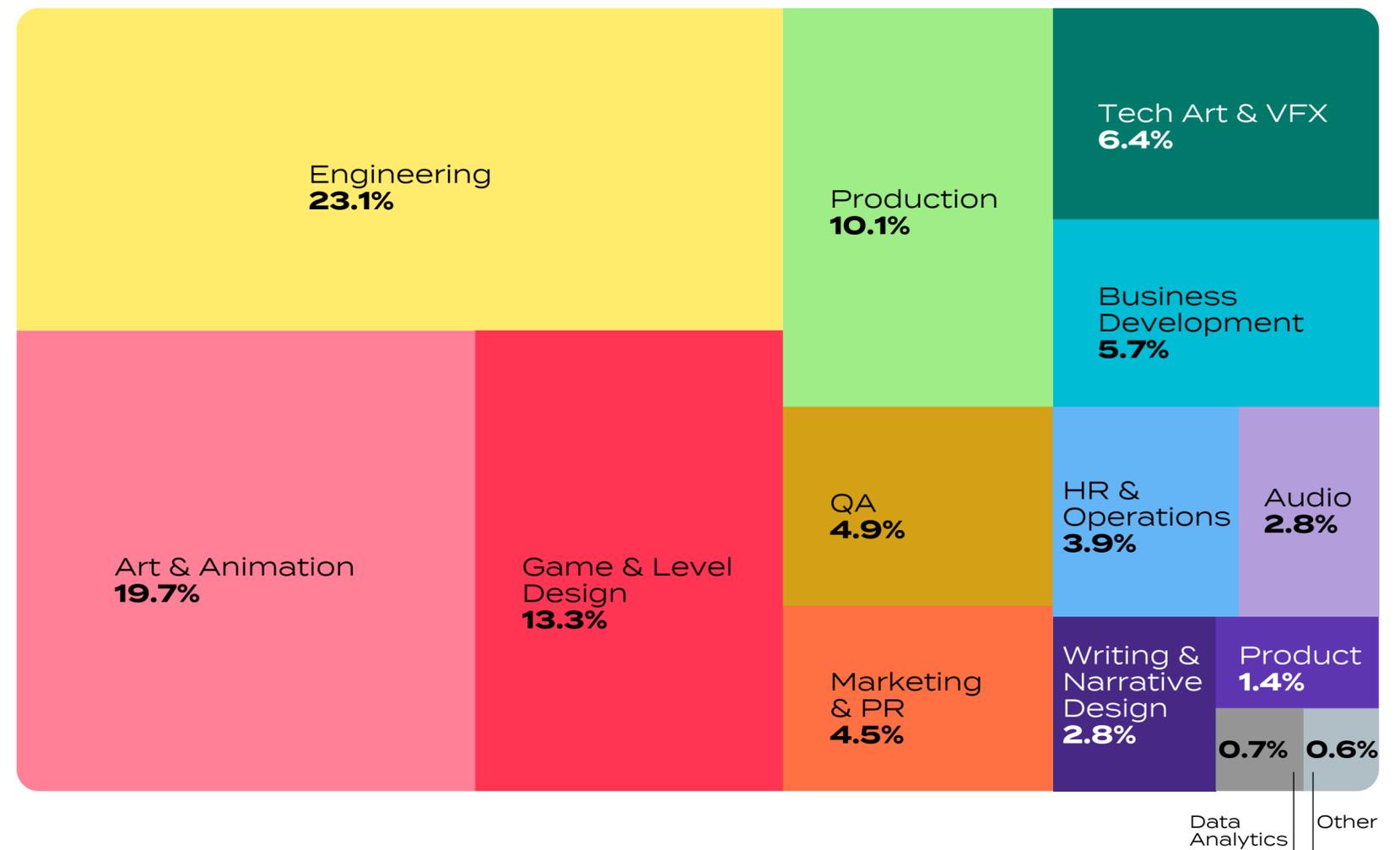
QUESTION ASKED:

Where is the company/studio you work for located?

***If the studio has multiple locations, please select the one where you primarily work.**

ROLES IN GAME DEVELOPMENT

Engineering (23.1%) and Art & Animation (19.7%) form the largest groups in this year's sample, followed by Game & Level Design (13.3%) and Production (10.1%). **These functions traditionally represent core production roles in most studios, which is also reflected in our recruitment pipelines.** Business-support and specialized disciplines, including Business Development, Marketing & PR, HR & Operations, Audio, Writing, and Data Analytics, are present in smaller shares but provide important perspective on the broader ecosystem supporting game development beyond pure production.

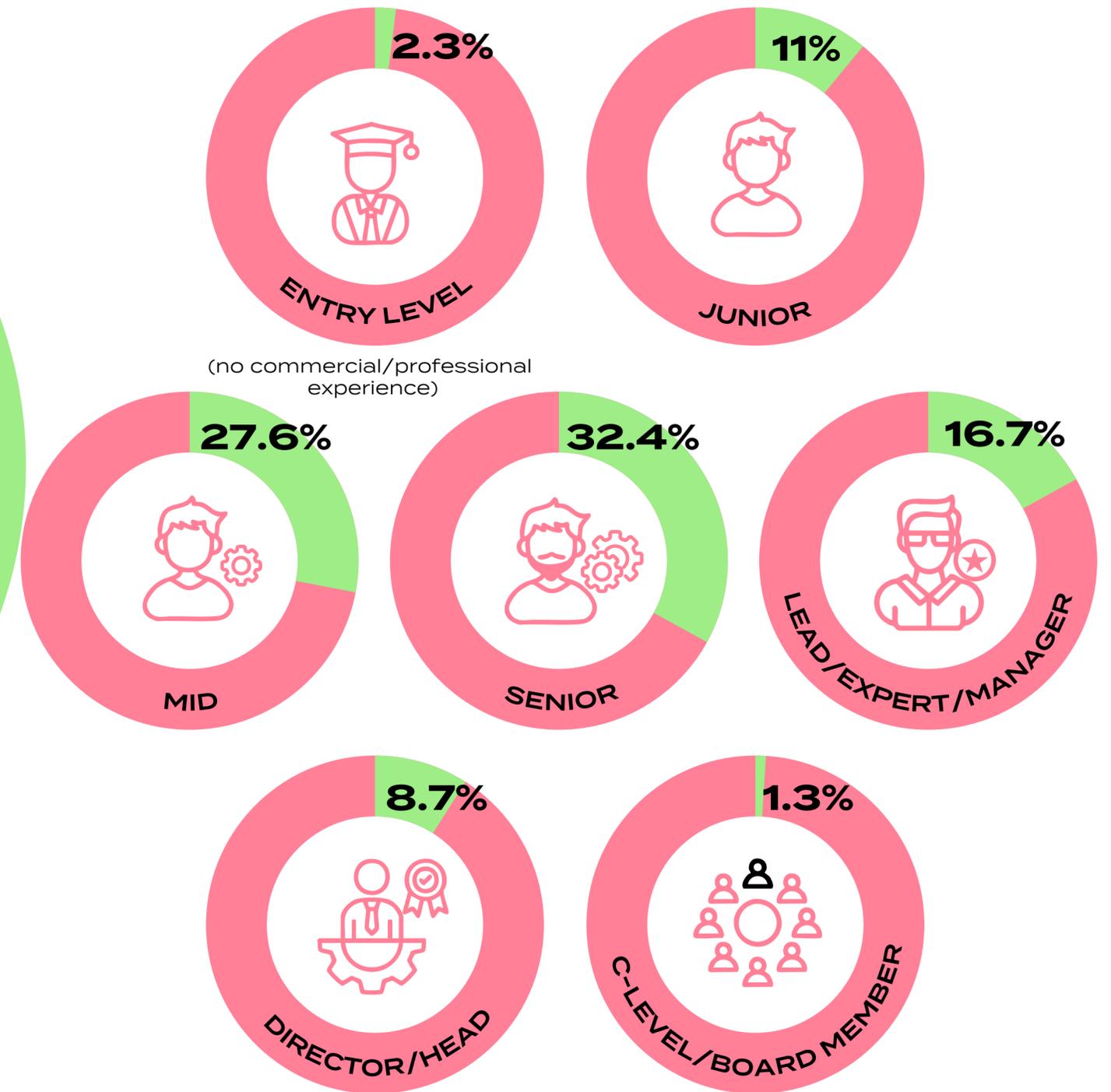


QUESTION ASKED:

In which area of game development do you primarily work?

SENIORITY LEVELS

The dataset leans toward experienced professionals, with Senior roles representing the largest segment (32.4%), followed by Mid-level positions (27.6%). Leadership roles (Lead and above) together account for over a quarter of responses, while Entry-level professionals make up a relatively small portion (2.3%). From a recruitment standpoint, **this mirrors the current hiring landscape, where studios tend to prioritize experienced hires, especially during periods of market uncertainty.** As a result, salary insights may be more robust for mid-to-senior levels than for entry roles.

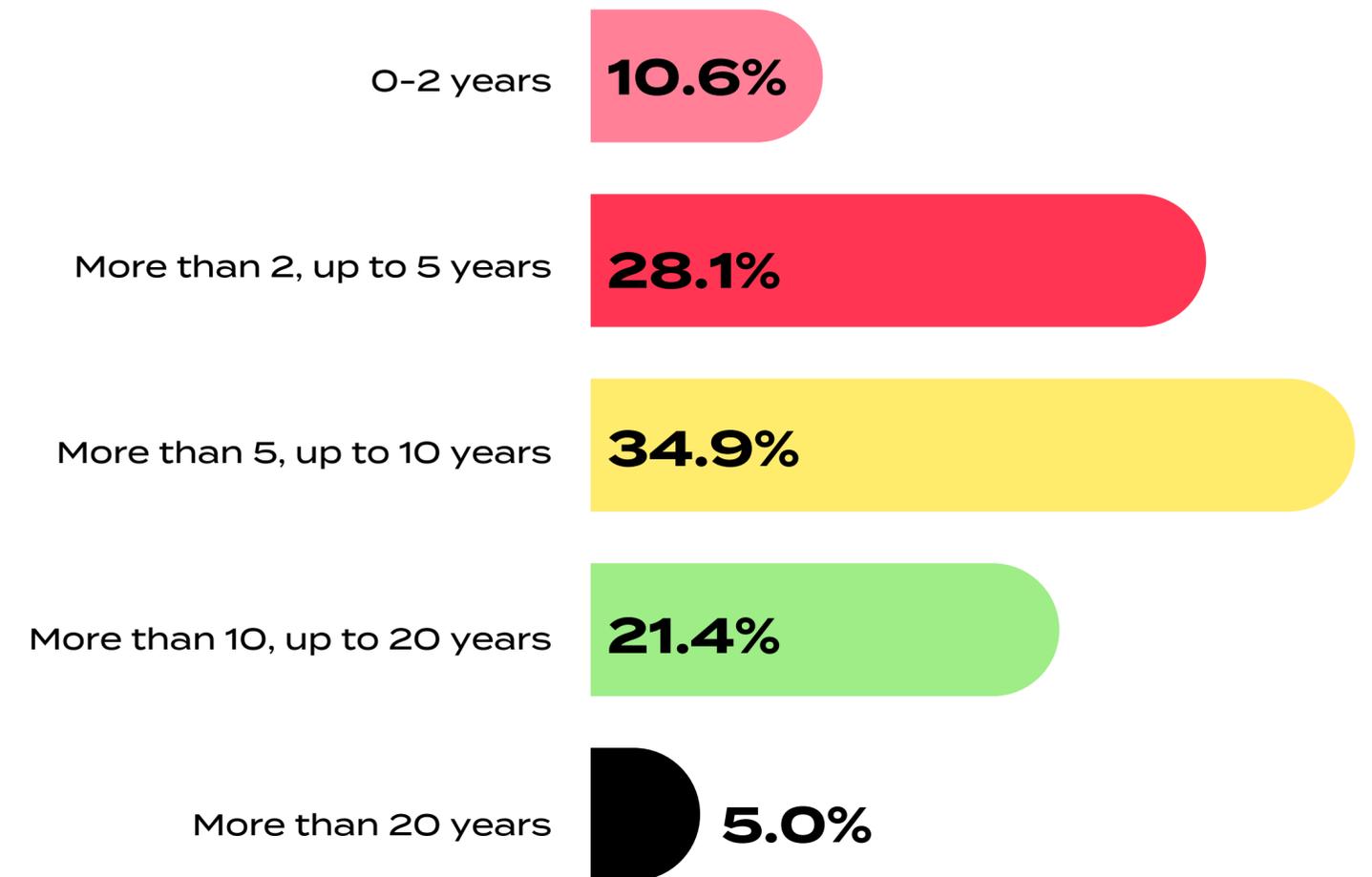


QUESTION ASKED:

What is the seniority level of your role?

INDUSTRY TENURE

Most respondents report between 5–10 years of experience (34.9%) or 2–5 years (28.1%), with a significant portion (26.4%) having over 10 years in the industry. Only 10.6% are in their first two years of professional work. **This distribution reinforces that the report is largely informed by individuals who have already navigated multiple industry cycles, studio structures, or career transitions** - which, we believe, adds valuable depth to perspectives on stability, compensation expectations, and morale trends.



? QUESTION ASKED:
What is your total tenure in the games industry, in years?

Employment Landscape

A CLOSER LOOK

Here we explore the current employment situation of the respondents, providing insights into the structure of the game development industry.

1. **CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS**
2. **B2B WORK STRUCTURE**
3. **B2B TIME MANAGEMENT**
4. **WORKPLACE ARRANGEMENT**
5. **STUDIO TYPE OVERVIEW**
6. **STUDIO SIZE BREAKDOWN**

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

At the time of completing the survey, 57.1% of respondents were employed under an employment contract, while 17.6% worked under B2B arrangements. Together, this means nearly three-quarters of participants remain formally engaged in the industry under structured contractual models.

However, 9.3% reported losing their job and actively looking for work within gamedev, and an additional 3.9% are seeking opportunities across multiple industries. When combined with those who resigned and are actively job hunting (2.6%), this suggests that **over 15% of respondents are currently in active transition.**

Compared to previous editions, this metric is particularly important in assessing perceived market stability. The proportion of individuals



QUESTION ASKED:

What does your employment situation look like at the moment of filling out this survey?

57.1%

Employed under an employment contract.

17.6%

Employed under a B2B contract.

9.3%

I lost my job and am actively looking for work in the games industry.

5.2%

Employed based on another type of contract.

3.9%

I lost my job and am actively looking for work in various industries.

2.6%

I have resigned from my employer on my own initiative and am actively looking for work.

1.7%

Trying to break into gamedev.

1.5%

Running own project.

0.7%

I lost my job and am not looking for new work.

0.4%

I have resigned from my employer on my own initiative and am not looking for new work.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

actively seeking work continues to reflect ongoing turbulence, though it is worth noting that the majority of respondents remain employed.

The relatively low share of respondents attempting to break into gamedev (1.7%) further supports earlier observations that **entry into the industry remains challenging in the current climate.**

Overall, this section suggests a market that is stabilizing in structure but still experiencing meaningful levels of mobility and forced transitions.

Contract structures vary significantly by region, and this distribution remains consistent with last year's findings. Central & Eastern Europe continues to show a strong prevalence of B2B arrange-

ments (51.0%), while Western Europe, the Nordics, and North America lean heavily toward traditional employment contracts, which typically provide stronger legal protections and benefits.

These structural differences are not merely administrative, they directly influence perceptions of job stability, security, and overall morale within each regional market.

	Central & Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Nordics	North America
Employed under an employment contract.	39.2%	76.3%	95.3%	84.1%
Employed under a B2B contract.	51%	16.9%	4.3%	6.1%
Employed based on another type of contract.	9.7%	6.8%	0.3%	9.8%

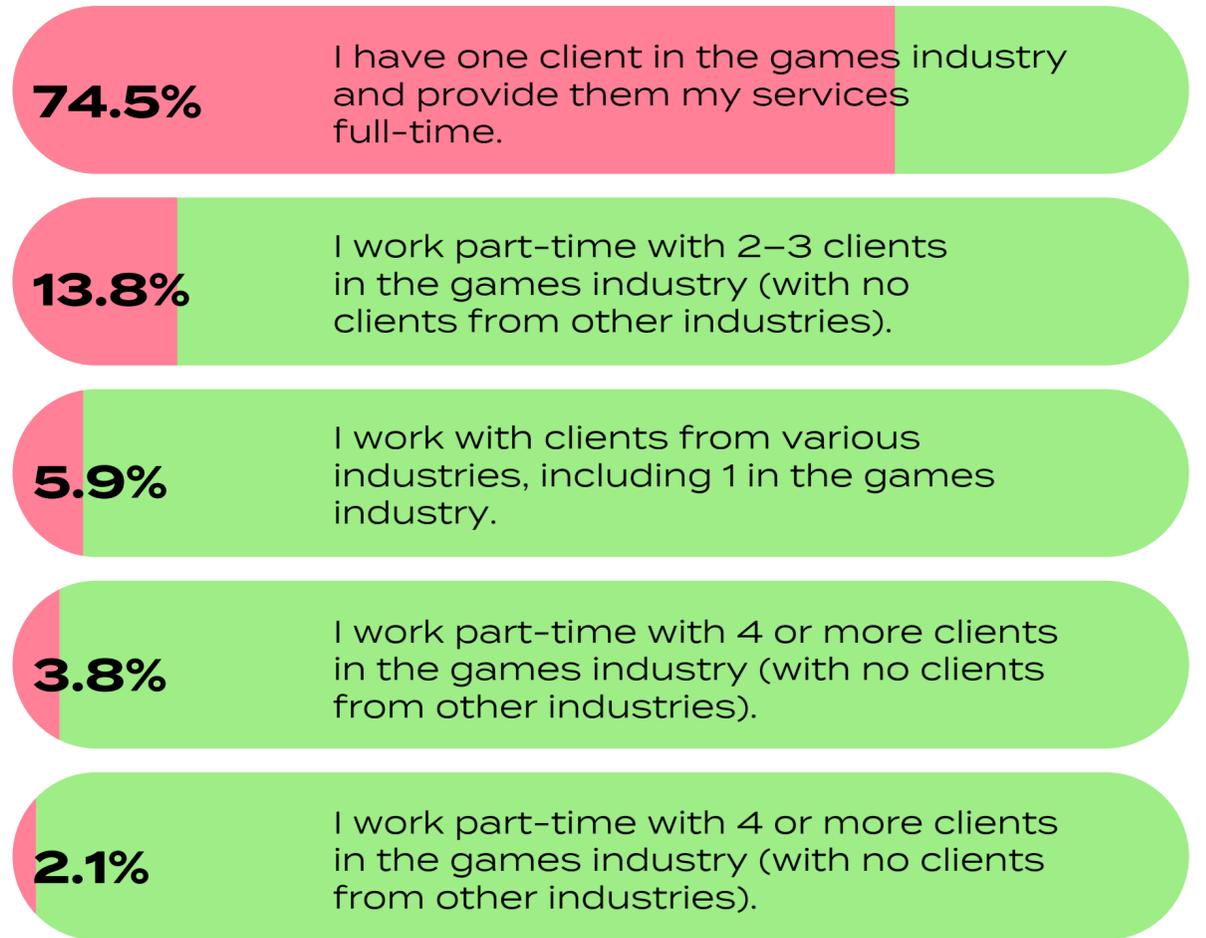
QUESTION ASKED:
What does your employment situation look like at the moment of filling out this survey?

B2B WORK STRUCTURE

Only a small share of respondents working under B2B arrangements diversify across multiple clients or industries, suggesting that many “independent” contractors function in practice much like full-time employees. This level of concentration may influence perceived stability, as **reliance on a single primary client can amplify exposure during periods of market turbulence.**

QUESTION ASKED:

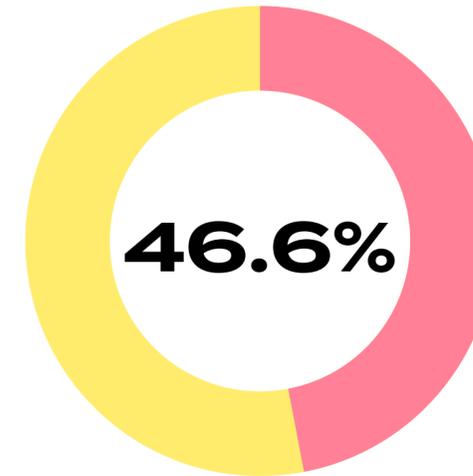
Do you collaborate with a single client in the games industry, multiple entities, or clients from different industries?



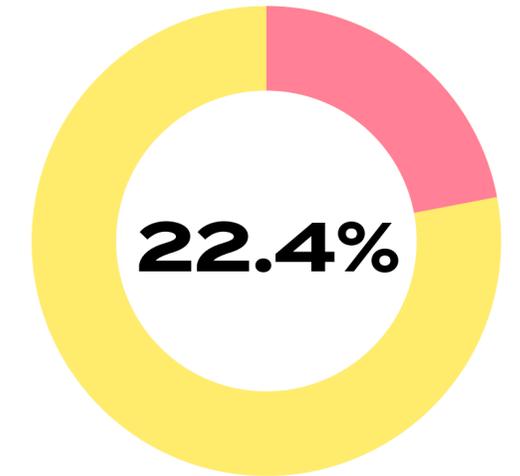
B2B TIME MANAGEMENT

We introduced this question to address a recurring, often unspoken concern: whether professionals working with multiple entities are able to maintain sufficient focus and efficiency. Among respondents collaborating with more than one client, nearly half report mostly separate engagements with only occasional short overlaps, while 22.4% keep their working hours strictly separated. However, roughly one-third operate with regular or full overlap, routinely handling tasks for multiple clients simultaneously - highlighting that **diversification may increase flexibility, but also adds complexity to time management and workload balance.**

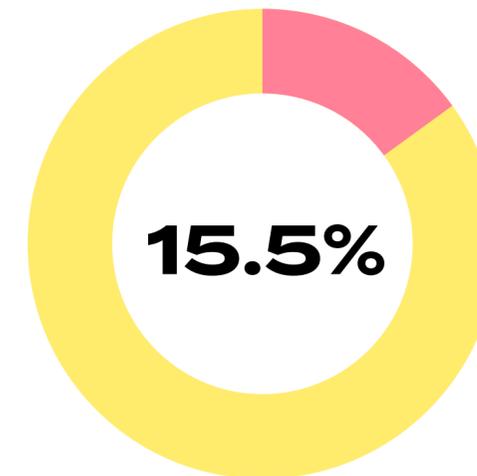
? QUESTION ASKED:
Working for more than one client, how do you manage your time?



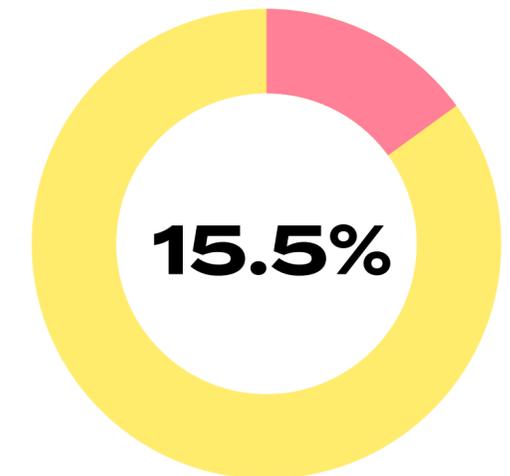
Mostly separate, with occasional short overlaps (e.g. quick meetings/context switches)



I keep engagements **strictly separate,** no overlap in working hours



Full overlap, I routinely handle tasks for multiple clients at once



Regular overlap in the same hours/day

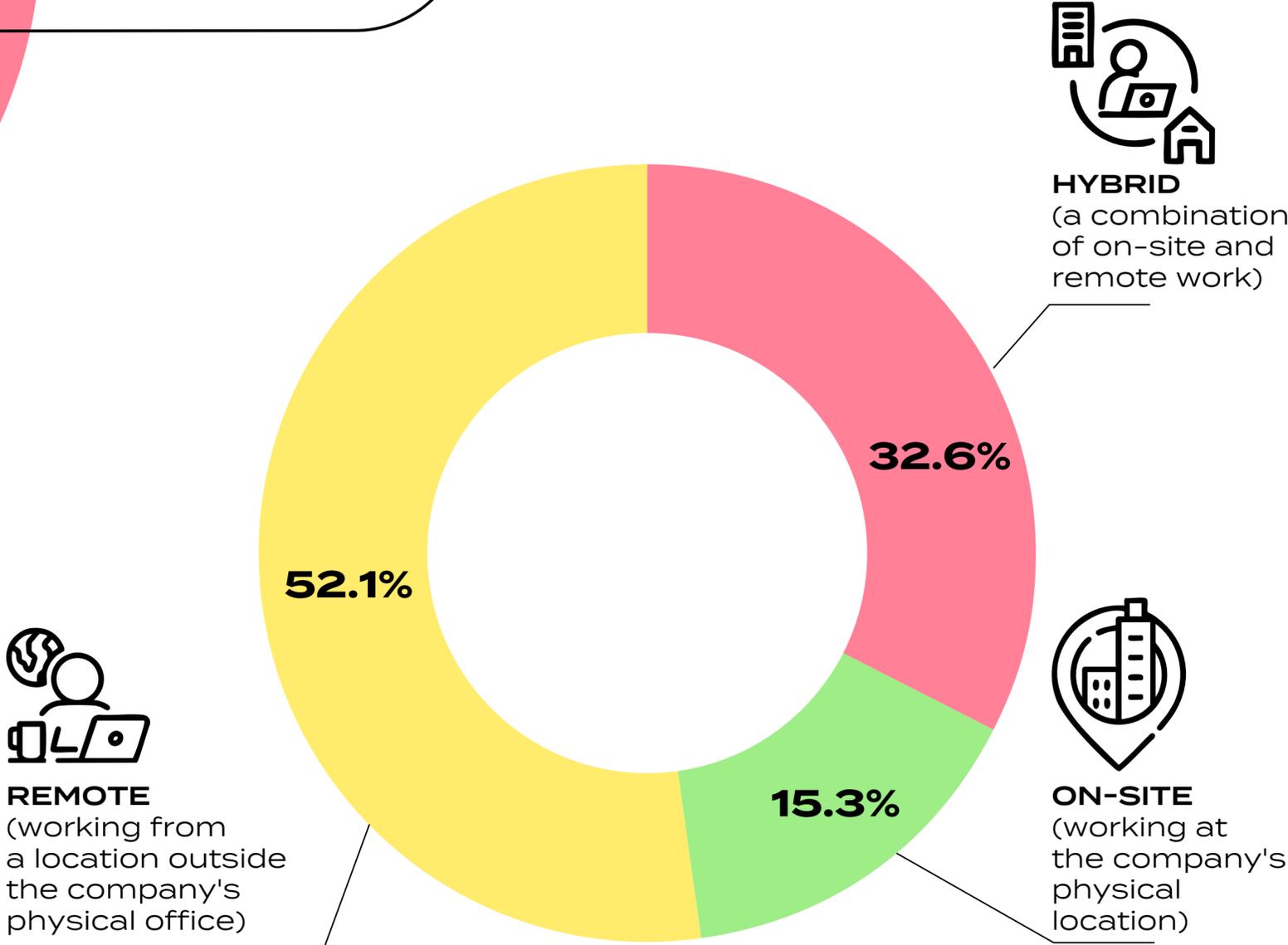
WORKPLACE ARRANGEMENT

Remote work remains the dominant model at 52.1%, though slightly lower than last year's 55%. Hybrid arrangements have increased to 32.6% (up from 28.1%), while fully on-site work has declined marginally.

This reversal of last year's hybrid dip may suggest that **studios and professionals are recalibrating rather than moving in a single direction**. While remote continues to lead, hybrid appears to be stabilizing as a viable middle ground, possibly reflecting evolving expectations around flexibility, collaboration, and long-term team cohesion rather than a clear return to office-centric structures.

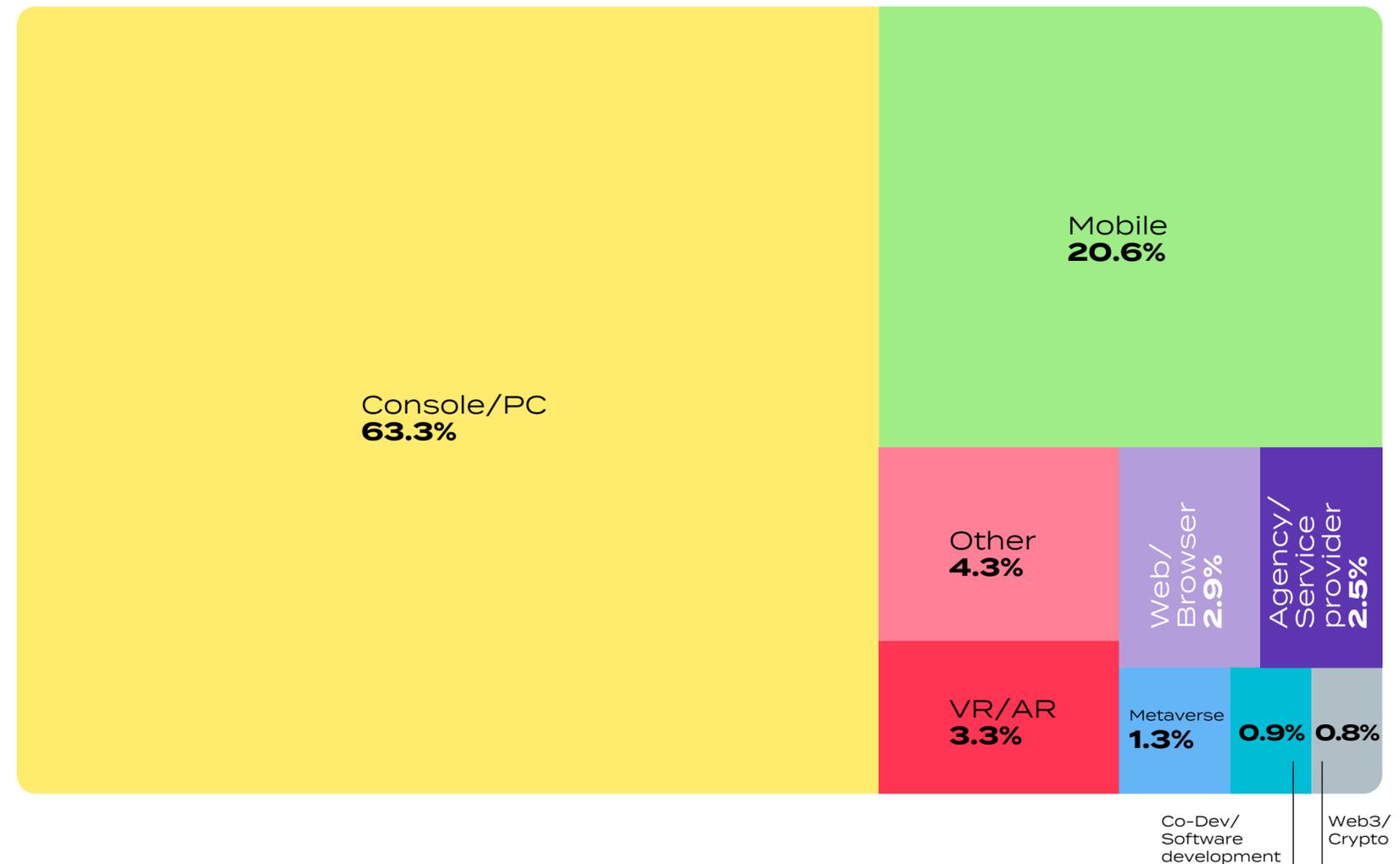


QUESTION ASKED:
How would you describe your current work arrangement?



STUDIO TYPE OVERVIEW

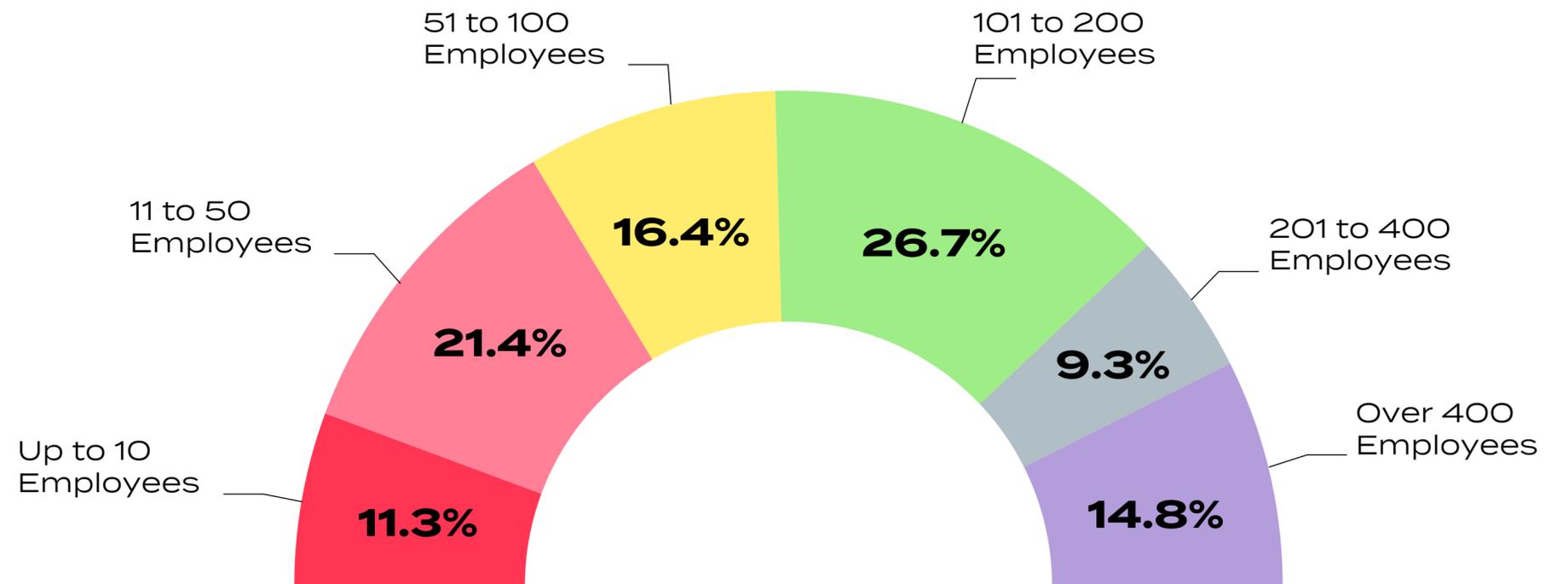
Most respondents work in Console/PC studios, followed by Mobile, while other segments (including VR/AR, Web/Browser, Web3, service providers, and emerging areas) together form a smaller but diverse portion of the dataset.



? QUESTION ASKED:
What type of studio or company do you work for?

STUDIO SIZE BREAKDOWN

Our respondents most commonly work in mid-sized studios, with the largest group employed in companies of 101-200 employees (26.7%), followed by 11-50 (21.4%) and 51-100 (16.4%), while both very small teams and large enterprises remain meaningfully represented in the dataset.



? QUESTION ASKED:
How large is the company/studio you work for?

Industry Morale and Job Security

A CLOSER LOOK

This section focuses on the current state of the industry, job stability, and professionals' outlook on their careers.

1. **EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS: JOB SECURITY**
2. **EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS: JOB MARKET INTEREST**
3. **AI AS A CAREER THREAT**
4. **EMPLOYMENT CHANGES**

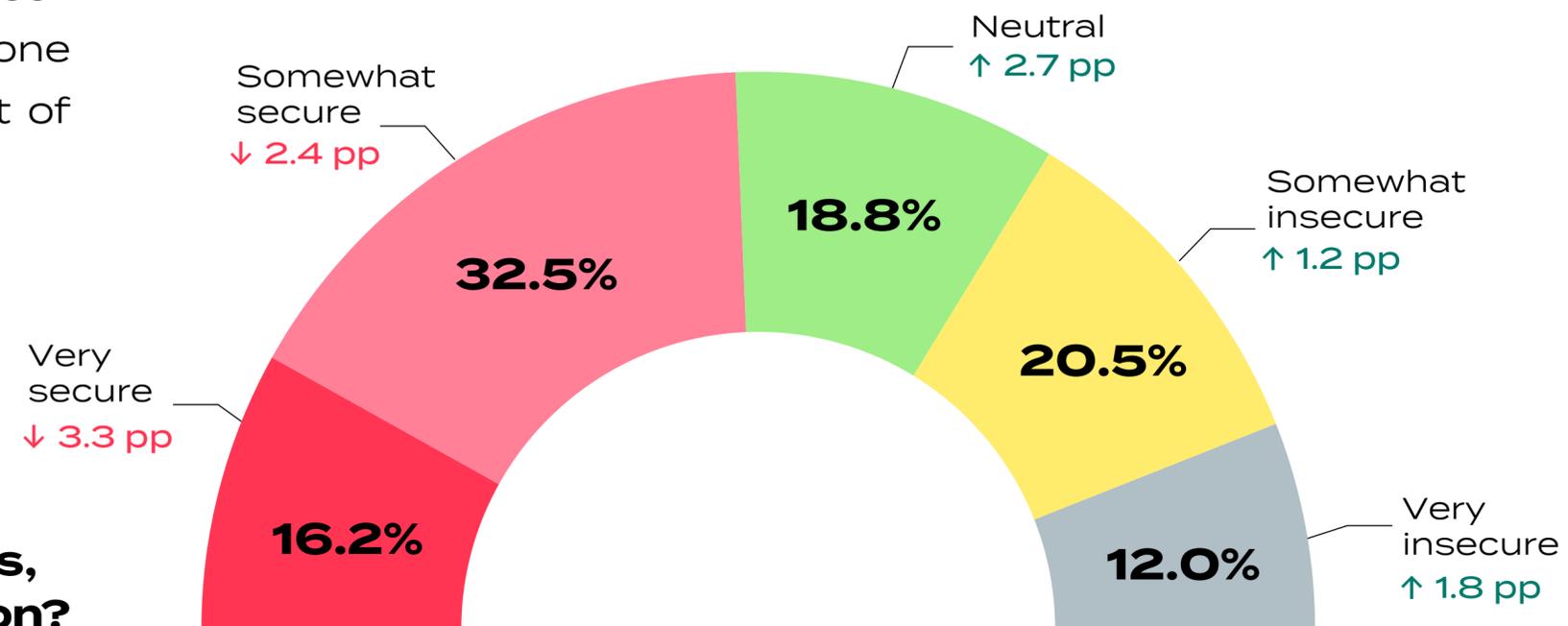
EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS: JOB SECURITY

The numbers don't point to panic, but they do suggest a shift. Fewer respondents describe themselves as "secure," while neutral and insecure answers have edged up.

It feels less like fear and more like recalibration. **People are still in their roles, still delivering - but more of them are quietly reassessing their position in the market.** In an industry that has gone through turbulence, that kind of watchfulness is becoming part of the new normal.

QUESTION ASKED:

Considering the current job market and industry trends, how do you feel about the security of your current position?



EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS: JOB MARKET INTEREST

Again, there's no dramatic swing, but the movement is there. The share of respondents actively looking for a new role has increased by 3.4 pp, while those "not interested in the job market" have decreased.

Fewer people are sitting fully on the sidelines, and more are either actively searching or at least open to conversations. While this isn't something we can quantify beyond the survey data, it aligns with what we're feeling as recruiters - more gamedevs in our network are willing to talk, even if they're not urgently planning a move.

And it's worth remembering: **those who are unemployed aren't only competing with fellow jobseekers, they're also competing with professionals who already have roles but remain open to better ones.**

QUESTION ASKED:

Are you currently not interested in the job market, or are you actively looking for a new role?

NOT INTERESTED

in the job market

↓ 2.1 pp

20.7%

ACTIVELY
LOOKING

for a new job/
new clients

↑ 3.4 pp

22.7%

17.3%

OPEN
TO OFFERS

but not actively
searching

↑ 1.2 pp

39.3%

CASUALLY
BROWSING
opportunities

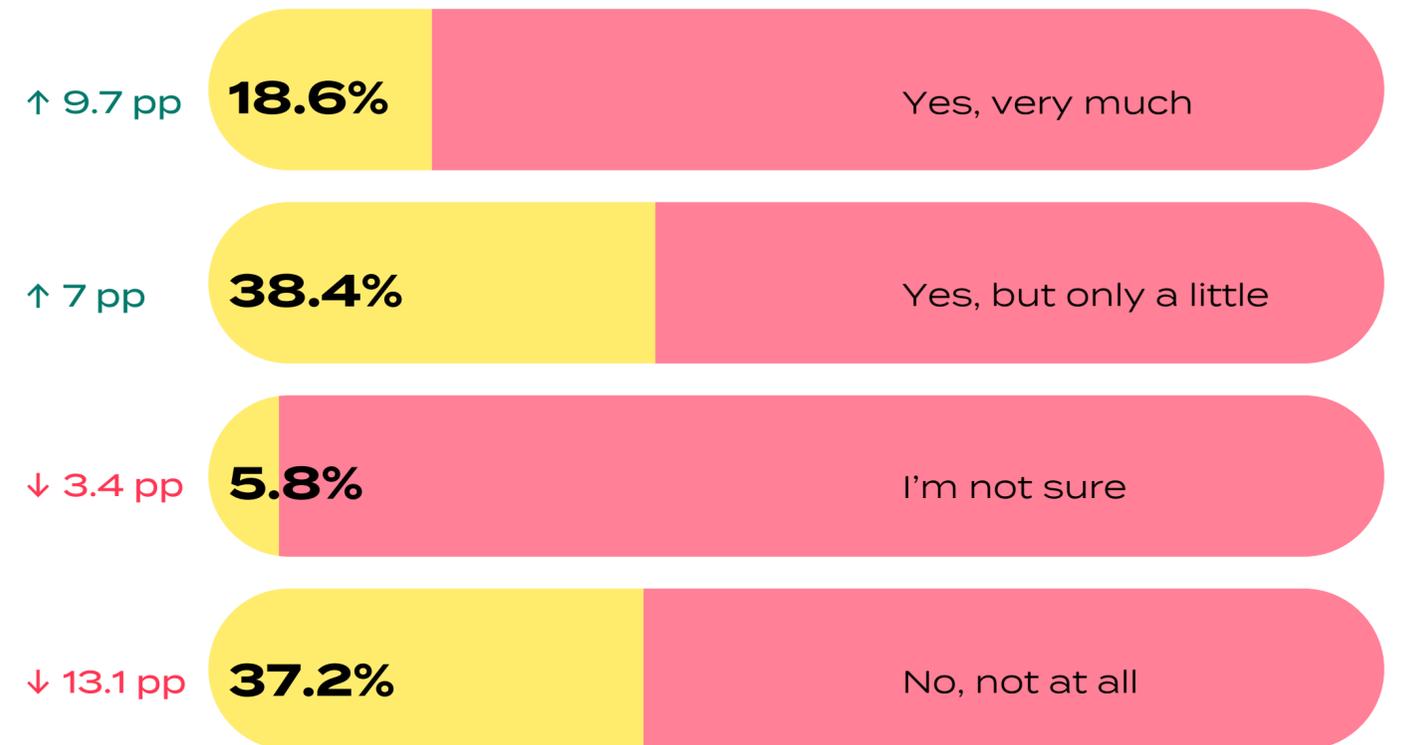
↓ 2.6 pp

AI AS A CAREER THREAT

This is one of the most visible year-to-year shifts in the report. The share of respondents who feel “very much” threatened by AI has nearly doubled (+9.7 pp), and those feeling at least “a little” threatened have also grown significantly. At the same time, the group saying they feel “not threatened at all” has dropped sharply by 13.1 pp.

What makes this shift particularly striking is that - as shown on page 28 - only 3% of respondents report having lost their job to AI. The fear is growing much faster than the direct impact.

In just one year, the tone has changed. The industry isn’t dismissing AI anymore. **The uncertainty is no longer theoretical, it’s personal.** And even if many professionals are still learning how to position themselves alongside AI rather than against it, the sense of invulnerability has clearly faded.



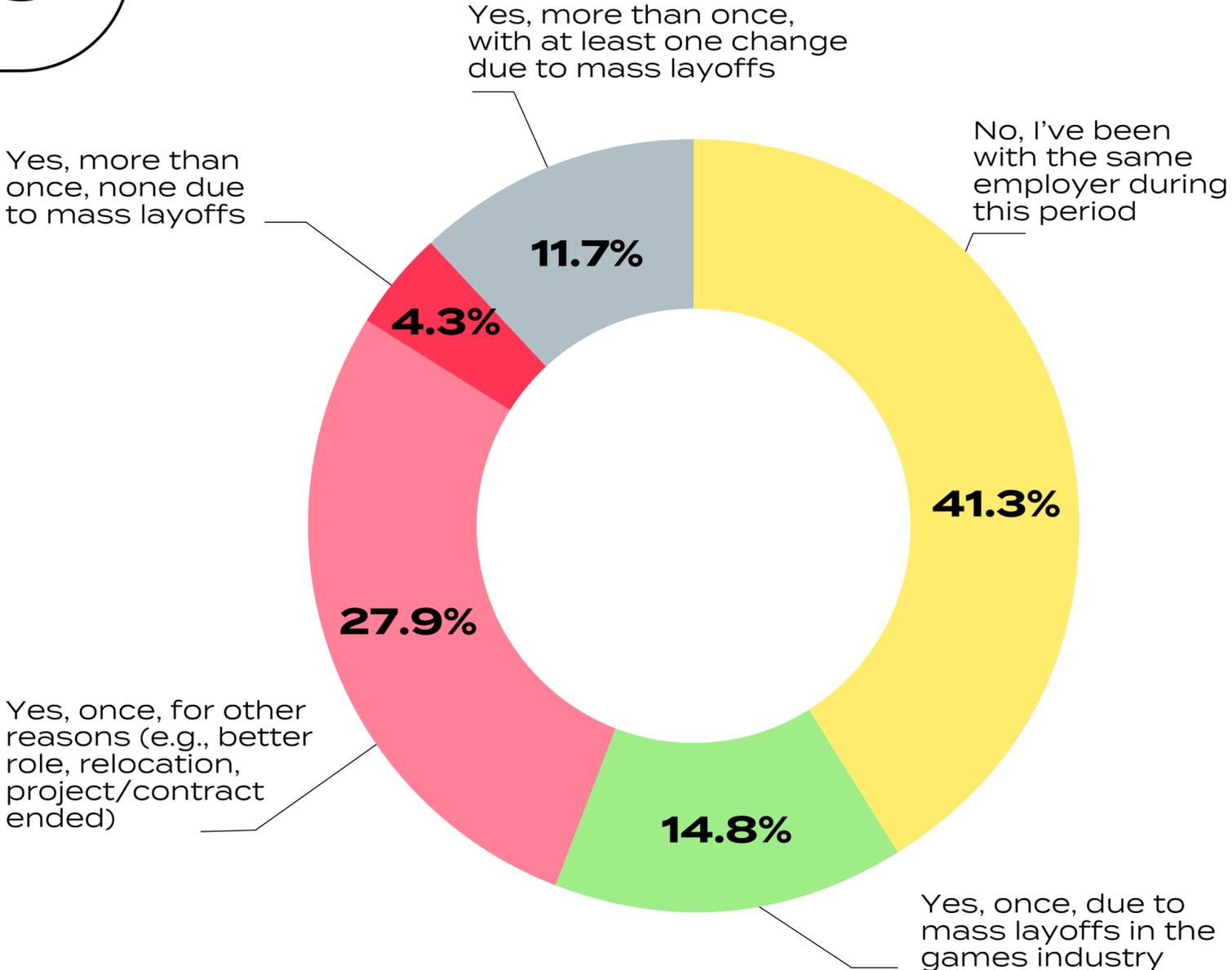
QUESTION ASKED:

Do you feel threatened by the development of AI in your profession?

EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

This is a question we introduced for the first time in the survey, aiming to provide a more nuanced view of how employment in gamedev has fluctuated over the past three years. Remaining with the same employer was the most common scenario: 41.3% did not change companies during that period.

But the deeper story lies in the split beneath that surface. More than a quarter of respondents (26.5%) changed jobs at least once due to mass layoffs - a clear sign of structural disruption rather than voluntary churn. At the same time, nearly a third (32.2%) moved for career-driven reasons, whether for better roles, relocation, or project endings. That duality, with ambition on one side, and instability on the other, has been quietly reshaping the competitive landscape for talent.



? QUESTION ASKED:
Have you changed employers in the last 3 years?

Job Search and Unemployment:

A CLOSER LOOK

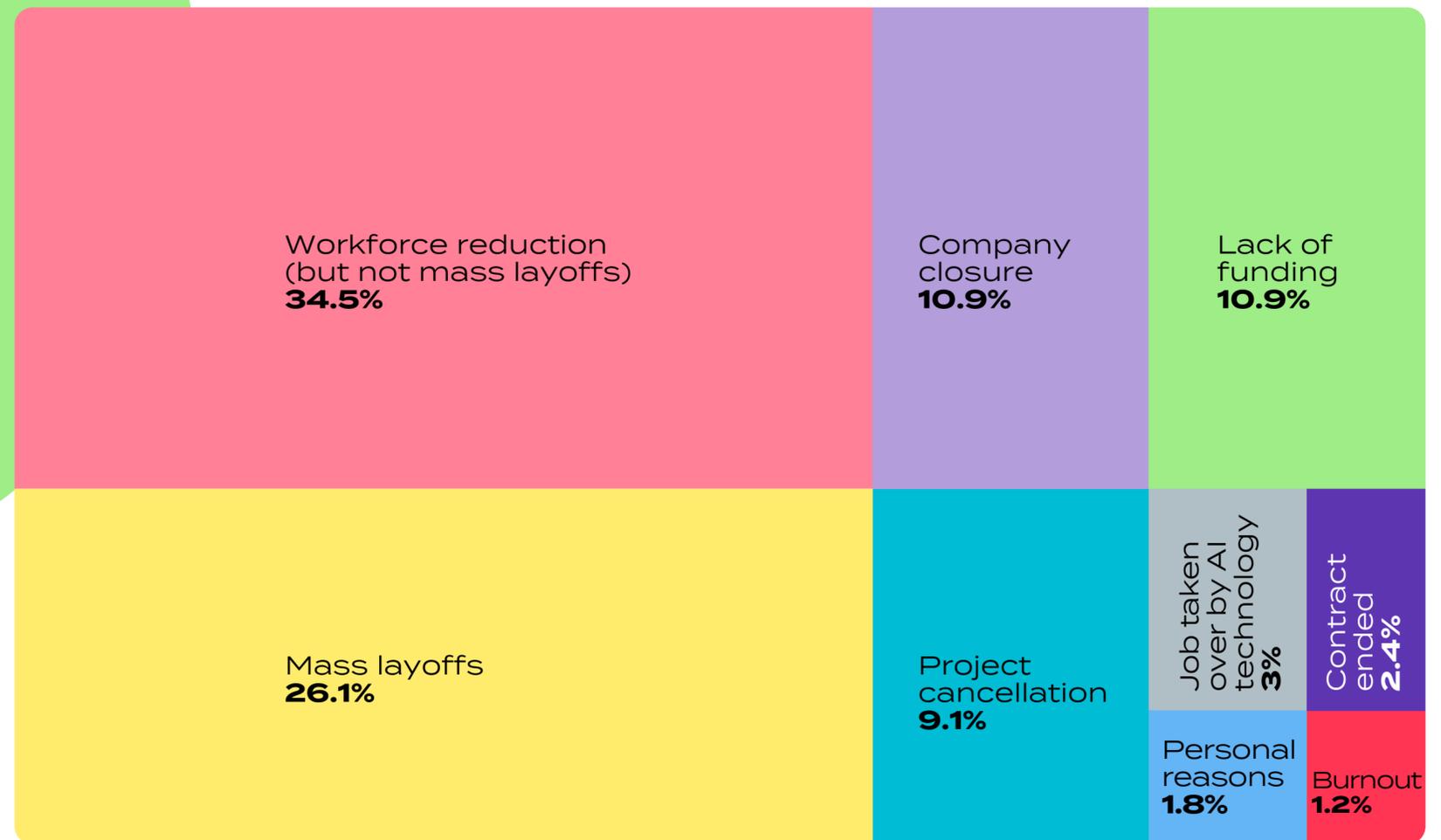
This section provides insights into the experiences of those currently seeking employment in the industry.

1. **JOB LOSS CIRCUMSTANCES**
2. **JOB SEARCH DURATION**
3. **JOB SEARCH MORALE**

JOB LOSS CIRCUMSTANCES

This data strongly reinforces what we saw in the previous question about employer changes. **Most respondents currently on the job market were impacted by structural decisions rather than personal choice** - workforce reductions and mass layoffs dominate the reasons. When we add company closures and lack of funding (both 10.9%), the picture becomes even clearer: financial and organizational contraction has been the primary driver of job loss. Project cancellations further highlight how closely employment in gamedev is tied to production cycles.

Notably, only 3% report their role being taken over by AI, suggesting that, for now, industry economics, not automation, is what's pushing professionals back into the talent pool.



? QUESTION ASKED:
In what circumstances did you lose your job?

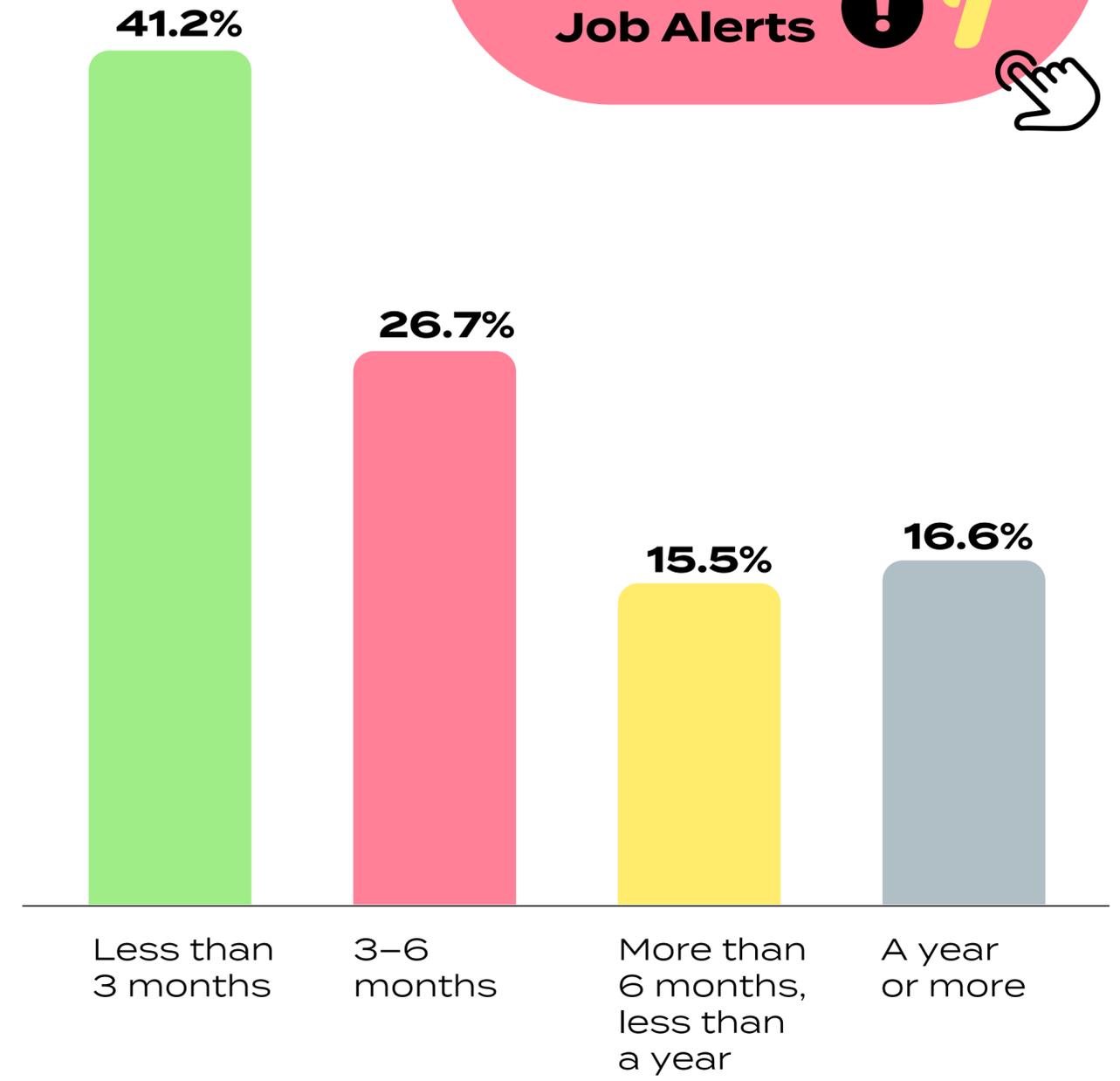
JOB SEARCH DURATION

This data gives us a snapshot of how long respondents who were unemployed at the time of filling in the survey have been actively searching.

While 41.2% have been on the market for less than three months, the remaining majority have been searching longer - with nearly one third (32.1%) looking for over six months, including 16.6% for a year or more. That suggests that **re-entering the industry isn't always immediate, even for experienced professionals.**

Combined with the earlier data on layoffs and workforce reductions, it paints a picture of a market where job loss is often structural, and recovery can take time.

? QUESTION ASKED:
How long have you been on the job search now?



Enhance your job search with 8Bit's **free Email Job Alerts**  

JOB SEARCH MORALE

This question was answered only by respondents who were unemployed at the time of filling in the survey - and when we look at it alongside the previous dataset on search duration, the picture becomes more cohesive.

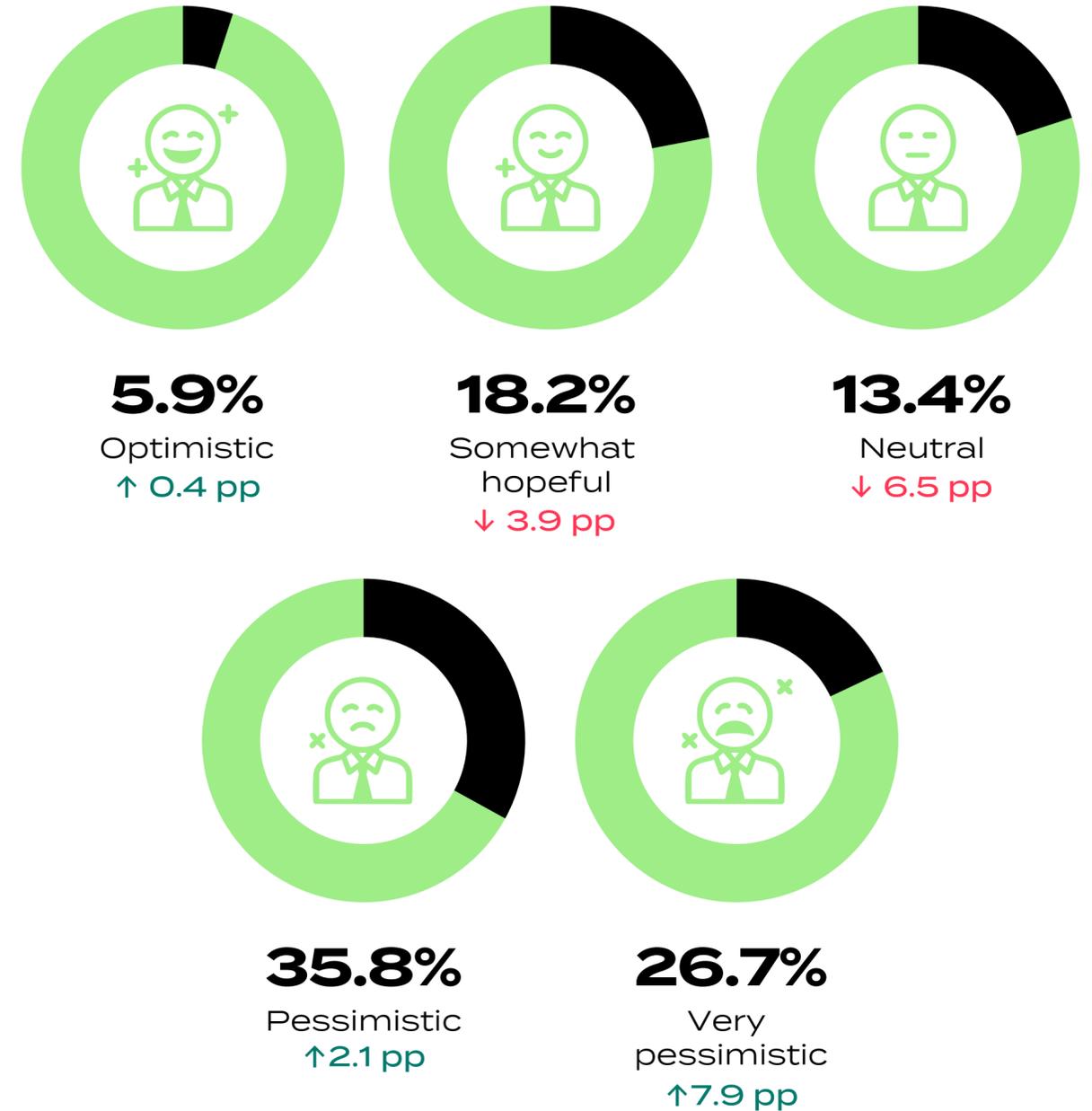
With nearly one third searching for over six months, it's not surprising that morale is deteriorating. Very pessimistic sentiment has increased sharply (+7.9 pp), and combined pessimism now clearly outweighs hopeful attitudes. Neutral and somewhat hopeful responses have both declined.

In other words, **prolonged job searches appear to be translating directly into emotional fatigue**. The longer professionals remain on the market, the more confidence in securing a new role seems to erode.



QUESTION ASKED:

Considering the current job market and industry trends, how do you feel about securing new job?



Benefits and Work-Life Balance

A CLOSER LOOK

This section explores the benefits currently offered to game development professionals and those they desire most, as well as their openness to relocation in today's job market.

1. **BENEFITS: WHAT'S OFFERED VS. WHAT'S WANTED**
2. **OPENNESS TO RELOCATION**

BENEFITS: WHAT'S OFFERED VS. WHAT'S WANTED



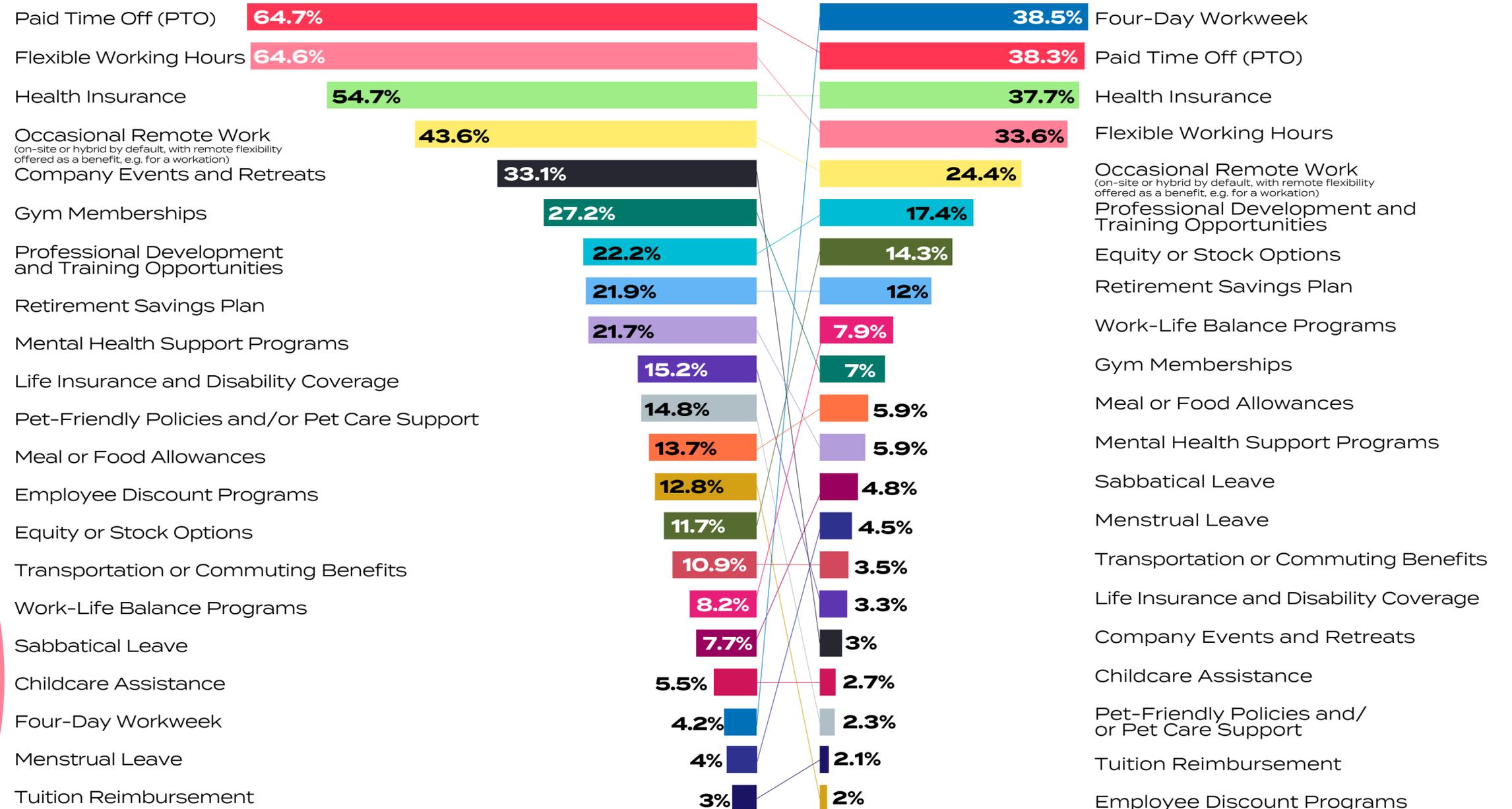
QUESTION ASKED:

1) What benefits does your employer offer?

2) What are the top 3 benefits that you currently have or wish to have in your role that would really make a difference for you?

WHAT BENEFITS DOES YOUR EMPLOYER OFFER?

WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 BENEFITS THAT YOU CURRENTLY HAVE OR WISH TO HAVE IN YOUR ROLE THAT WOULD REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOU?



*Options offered by the company to work remotely e.g., for a designated period each year counted as an additional benefit, rather than a full-time remote work arrangement.

BENEFITS: WHAT'S OFFERED VS. WHAT'S WANTED

If we listen closely, the signal is clear. The **four-day workweek ranks as the most desired benefit** this year (38.5%), yet only 4.2% of employers currently offer it. The gap is noticeable. While this question captures what professionals would like to have rather than strict dealbreakers, it does suggest that reduced working time is increasingly seen as a meaningful upgrade to quality of life - beyond traditional flexibility models.

Flexible hours and PTO are widely available (both around 65% offered) and remain highly valued. But availability alone doesn't fully satisfy the deeper need emerging here. The priority is shifting toward control over time, not just the ability to move hours around, but the ability to reclaim them.

Health insurance continues to sit high both in provision and demand, reinforcing that security still matters. Meanwhile, lifestyle perks such as company events, gym memberships, or food allowances appear far less decisive when professionals are asked what would really make a difference.

In a year marked by layoffs, prolonged job searches, and rising pessimism, benefits are no longer about extras. They are about resilience. Time, protection, and predictability are becoming the true currency of employer attractiveness.

OPENNESS TO RELOCATION

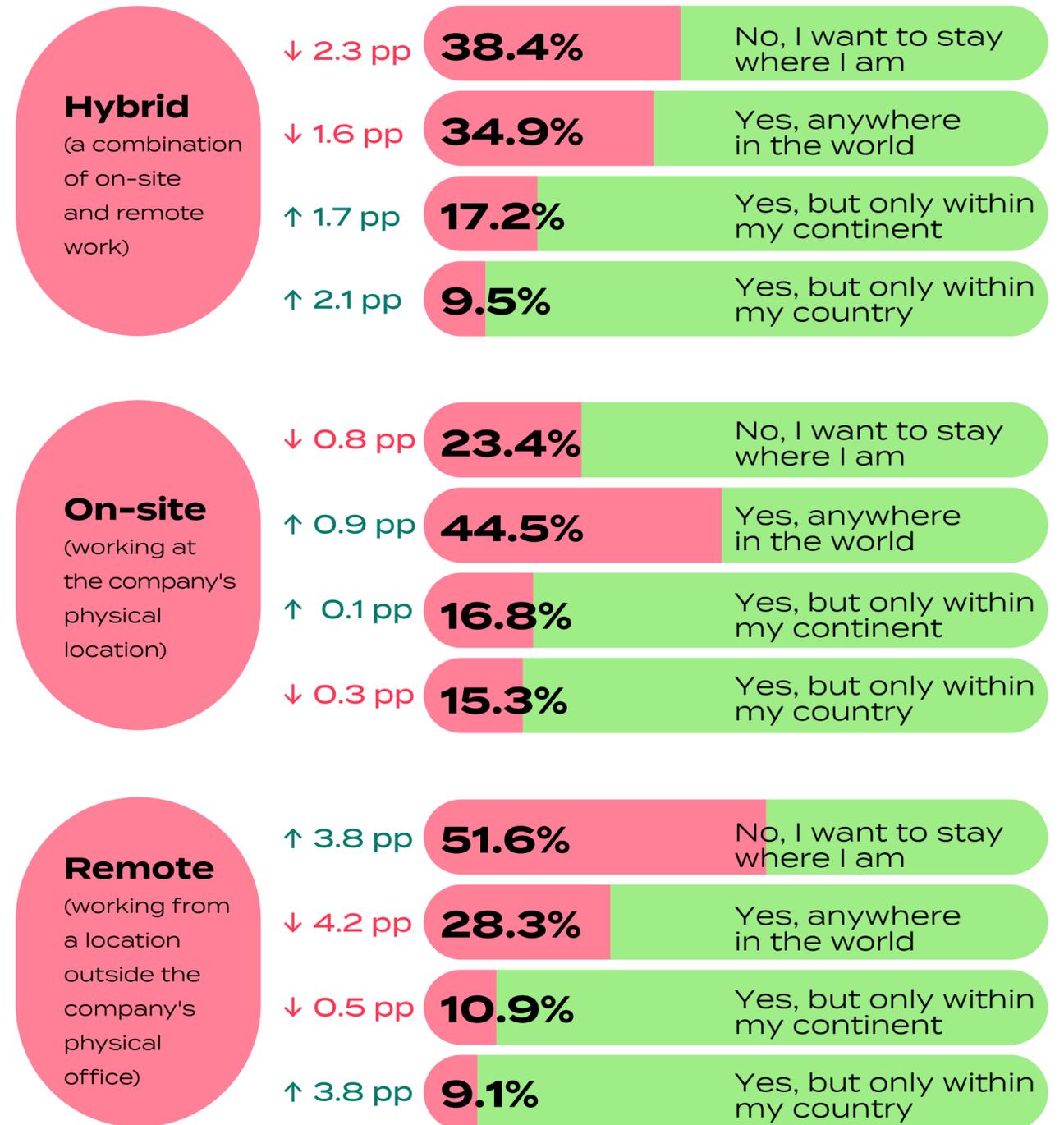
This data reveals a clear connection between work model and geographic flexibility.

Remote professionals are the least willing to relocate. The share saying “No, I want to stay where I am” has increased to 51.6% (+3.8 pp year to year), while willingness to relocate anywhere in the world has dropped (-4.2 pp). Remote work appears to anchor people more firmly in place - **once flexibility is secured, global mobility loses some of its appeal.**

Interestingly, on-site employees remain the most globally open group. Nearly 44.5% would relocate anywhere in the world, it’s the highest share across all arrangements. When physical presence is

QUESTION ASKED:

Would you consider relocating for a gamedev job?



OPENNESS TO RELOCATION

already required, changing countries may feel less disruptive. That's real food for thought for studios insisting on on-site roles.

Hybrid workers sit in the middle, with a more balanced distribution between staying and considering global or regional moves. Their mindset seems less “go anywhere” and more “move, but within boundaries.”

Overall, the pattern suggests **the industry is still mobile, but less nomadic. Flexibility no longer automatically translates into global relocation.** For many, attachment to place is becoming as important as opportunity itself.

Looking Forward

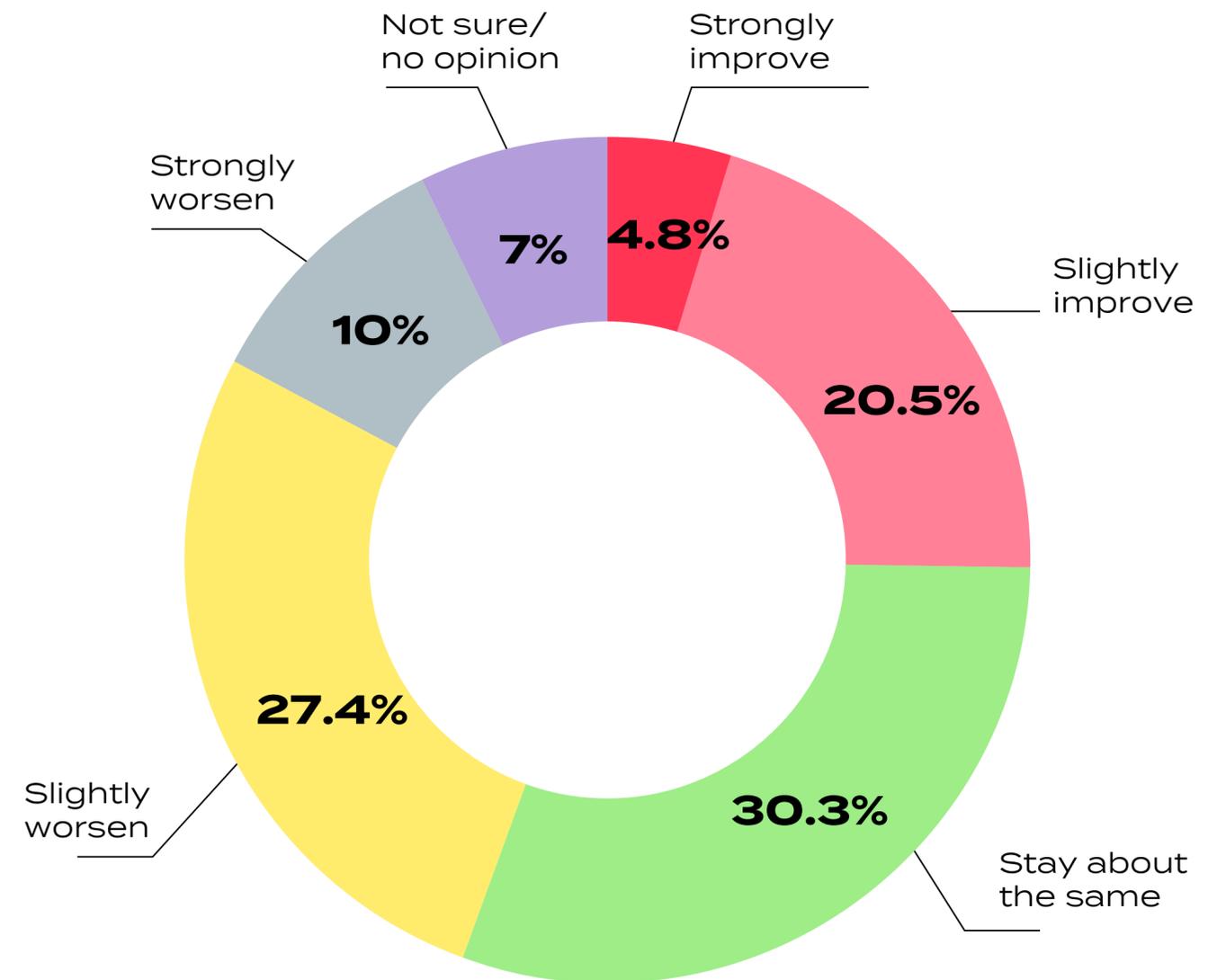
LOOKING FORWARD

This is another question we introduced for the first time - and it captures the industry's forward-looking mood.

The dominant expectation is neither strong recovery nor further collapse, but continuity. 30.3% believe the situation will stay about the same, making steady state the most common outlook. At the same time, pessimistic forecasts (slightly or strongly worsen) together account for 37.4%, outweighing the 25.3% who expect improvement.

In other words, cautious realism defines the next 12 months. **The industry isn't betting on a rapid rebound - but it's not bracing for dramatic decline either.** The prevailing sentiment suggests consolidation and adjustment rather than acceleration.

? QUESTION ASKED:
In your opinion, how will the overall games industry situation evolve over the next 12 months?



Putting a Price on Passion

HOW WE PRESENT THE DATA

In this edition of the Gamedev Salary Pulse, salary data is presented using regional breakdowns and median values to ensure clarity and comparability across markets. We show salaries separately for four major regions: North America, Western Europe, Central & Eastern Europe, The Nordics.

This structure reflects how significantly compensation varies depending on geography and provides a more realistic benchmark for both professionals and hiring managers operating within specific regions.

Following feedback from last year's report, we have also **reintroduced salary figures in USD alongside EUR**, making international comparisons easier, particularly for studios hiring globally and for North American readers.

Thanks to everyone who helped us spread the word about the survey, we were able to **expand the number of job categories presented** this year. While some specializations are still not shown due to insufficient dataset size, increasing representation across disciplines remains a priority for future editions.

WHY WE FOCUS ON MEDIANS

All salary figures in this report represent the median annual gross salary.

The median marks the midpoint of the dataset - half of respondents earn more, and half earn less. Unlike averages, which can be distorted by extremely high or low values, the median provides a more stable and realistic picture of typical compensation levels within a given role and region. This makes it particularly useful for benchmarking and negotiation.

HOW TO USE THIS DATA

For professionals, this report can serve as a reference point when evaluating offers, negotiating salary, or assessing career progression. However, compensation is influenced by more than seniority alone. Studio size, project scope, specialization, and overall experience all play an important role.

For hiring managers, the data supports competitive salary structuring, regional alignment, and informed budgeting decisions. It can also help

identify gaps between internal compensation frameworks and broader market expectations.

These refinements ensure the Gamedev Salary Pulse continues to be a practical, data-driven resource, offering deeper insights into the evolving landscape of game industry compensation.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIAN SALARY IN PRACTICE

All salaries in this report are shown as annual, gross figures, meaning they reflect pre-tax amounts before any local taxes or mandatory deductions are applied - an important consideration for international comparisons, given how strongly taxes can vary by region.

If you're working with a monthly rate, multiply it by 12 to compare it against the reported median. Being above or below the median does not automatically signal stronger or weaker positioning. Think of it as a reference baseline, useful for orientation, but never the full story.

FINANCIAL BONUSES AND PROFIT SHARING

Alongside base salaries, we also looked at additional compensation and regional gaps remain visible.

North America leads, with 53% of respondents receiving some form of bonus or profit sharing, followed by the Nordics at 48.8% and Western

Europe at 43.6%. Central & Eastern Europe remains the most conservative market, where nearly three quarters (73.2%) report receiving no extra compensation.

The pattern suggests that variable pay is more embedded in North America and the Nordics, while in much of Europe, base salary continues to be the dominant - and often sole - form of compensation.

	Central & Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Nordics	North America
Yes, company-performance/profit-sharing bonus	11.1%	17.4%	27.9%	23.9%
Yes, bonus based on my performance <small>(monthly/quarterly/annual)</small>	9.1%	16%	16.3%	20.1%
Yes, bonus of other kind <small>(eg. royalties tied to game/project sales, 401k matching, 13th salary)</small>	6.6%	10.2%	4.6%	9%
No, I don't receive extra compensation	73.2%	56.4%	51.2%	47%

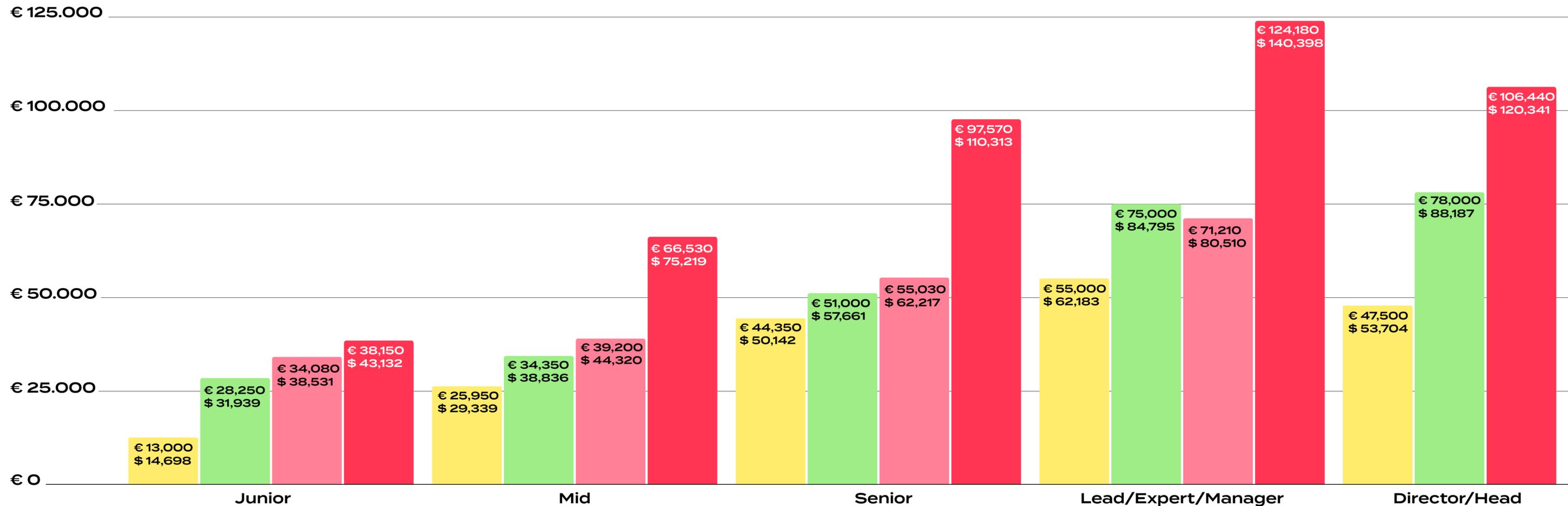


QUESTION ASKED:

Do you receive any extra compensation such as bonuses or profit sharing?

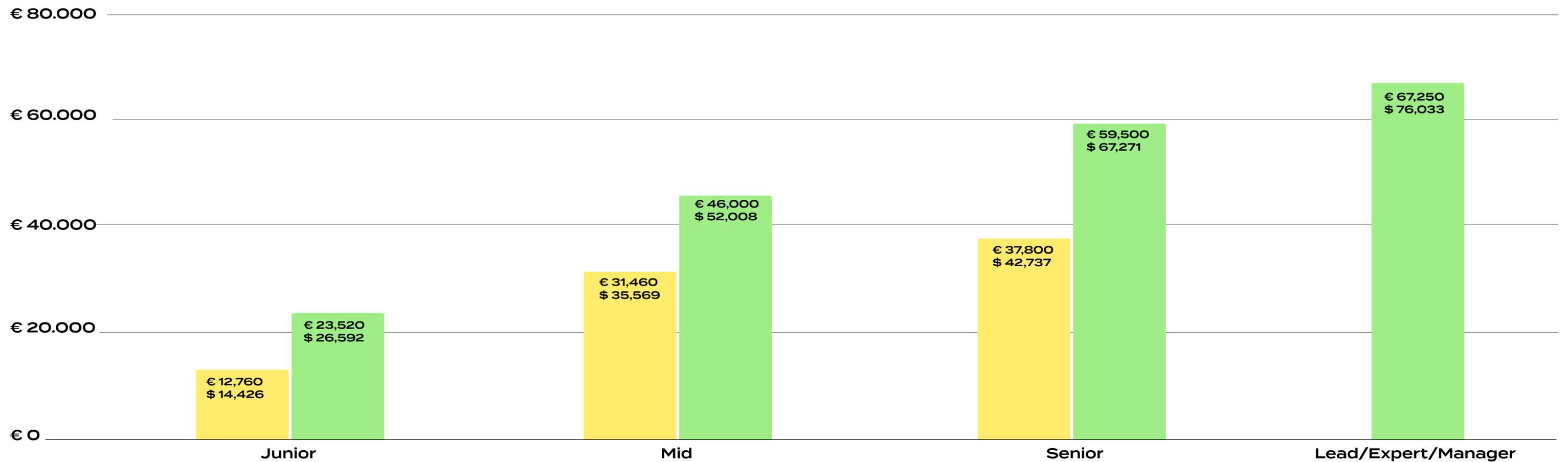
ART & ANIMATION

- Central & Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- Nordics
- North America



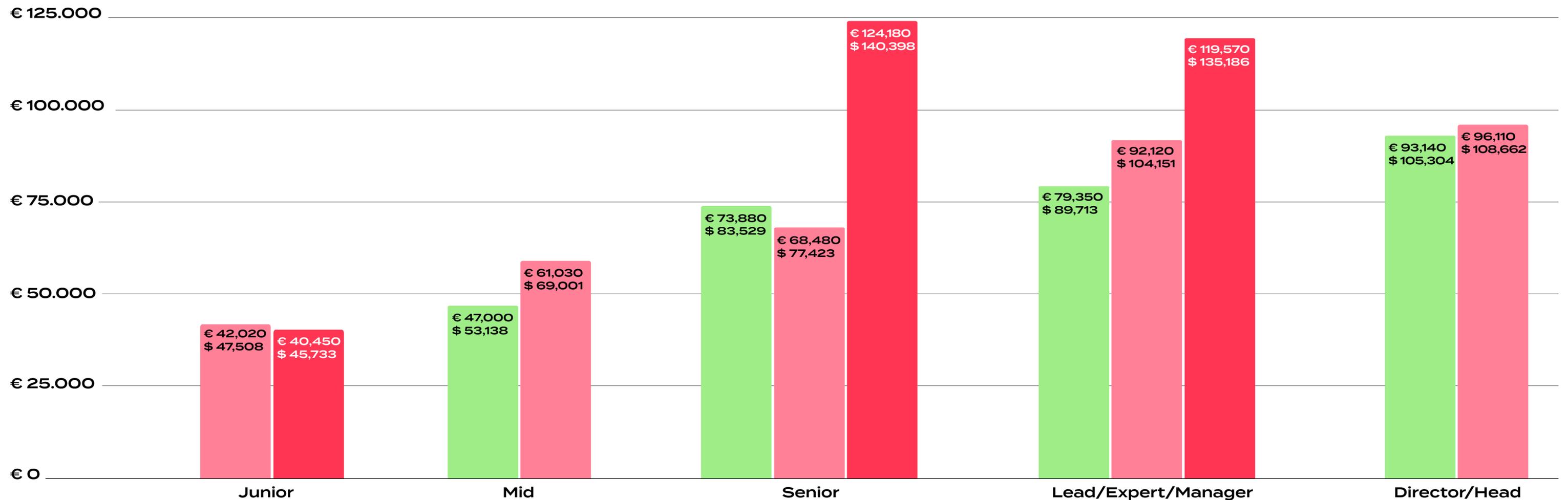
AUDIO

Central & Eastern Europe
Western Europe



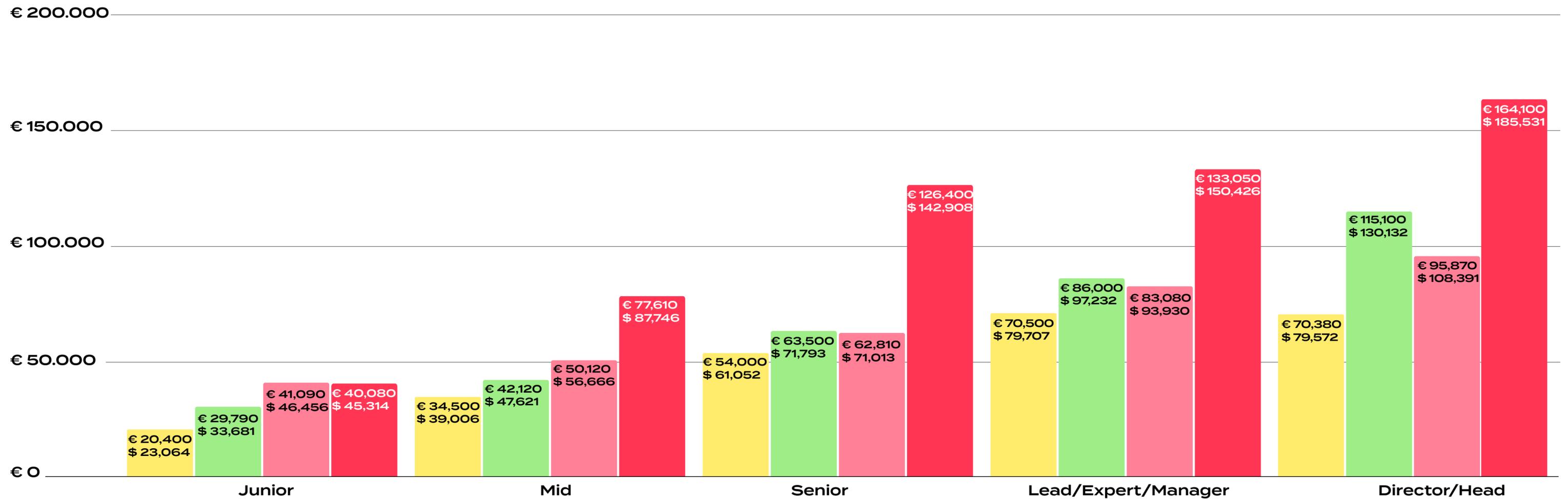
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Western Europe
- Nordics
- North America



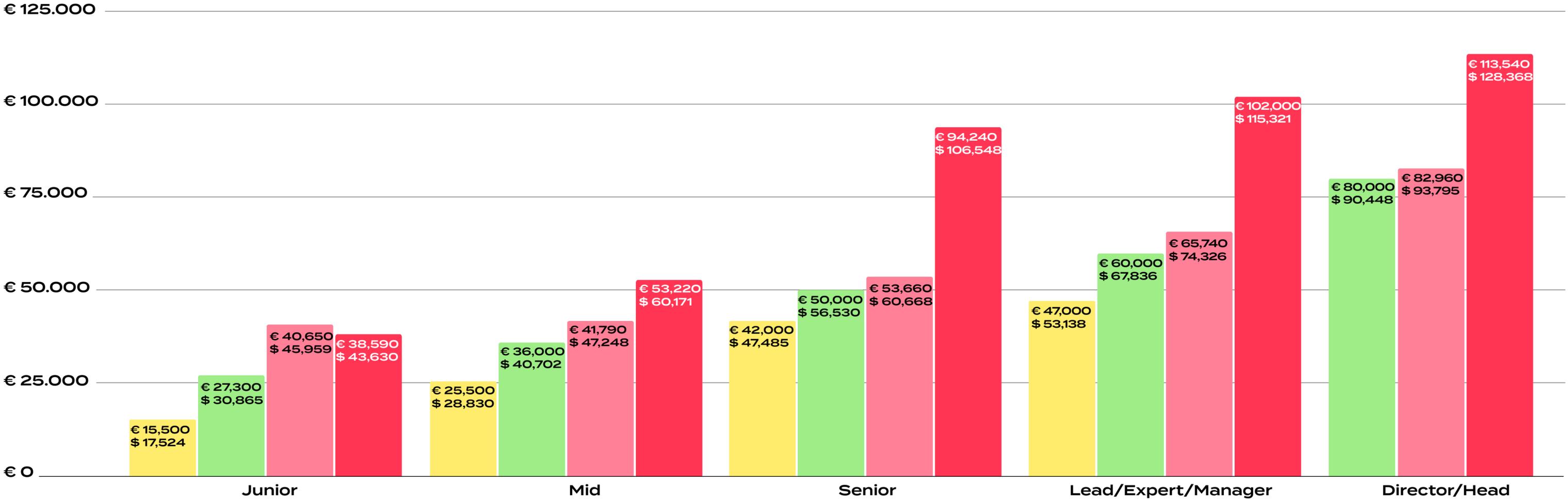
ENGINEERING

- Central & Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- Nordics
- North America



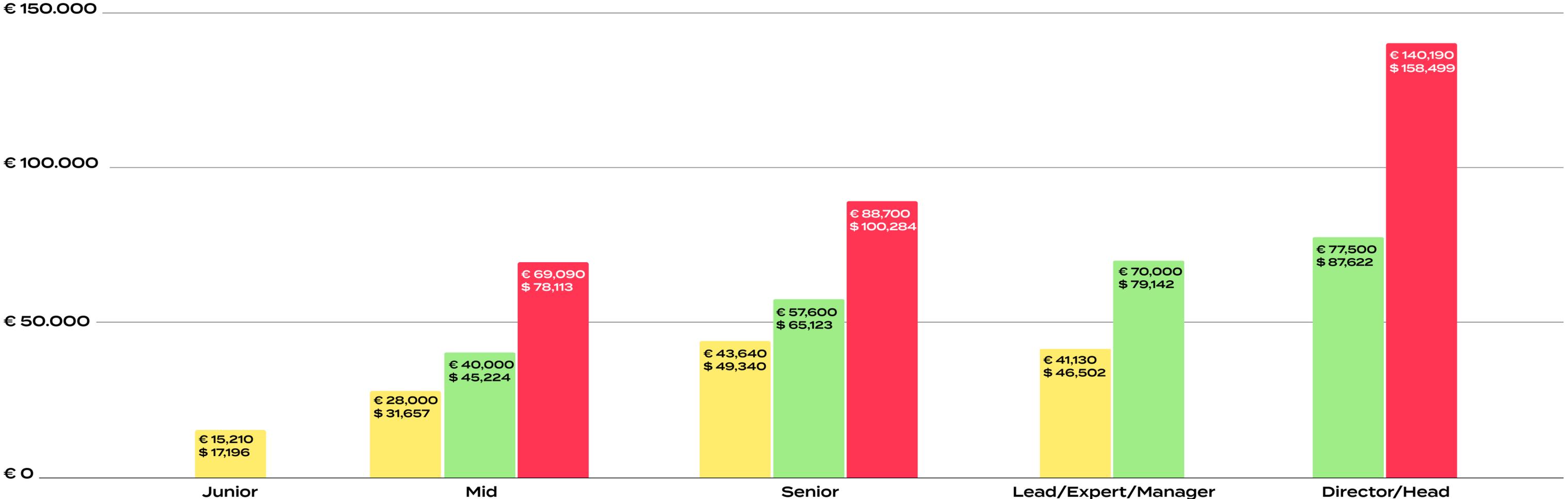
GAME & LEVEL DESIGN

- Central & Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- Nordics
- North America



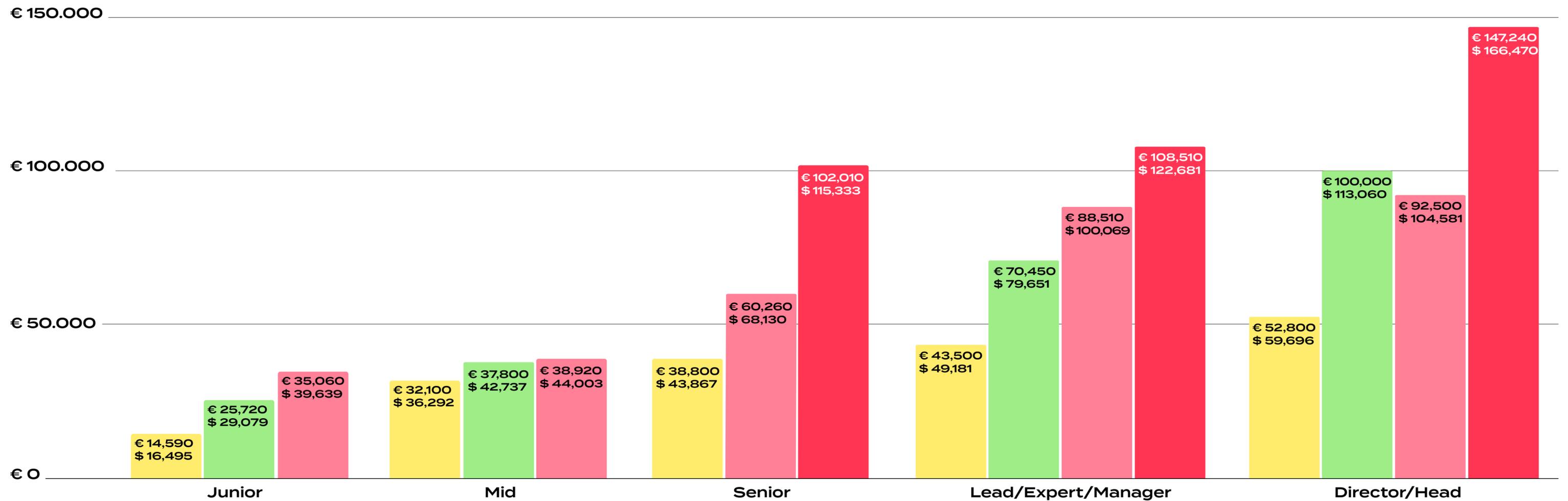
HR & OPERATIONS

- Central & Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- North America



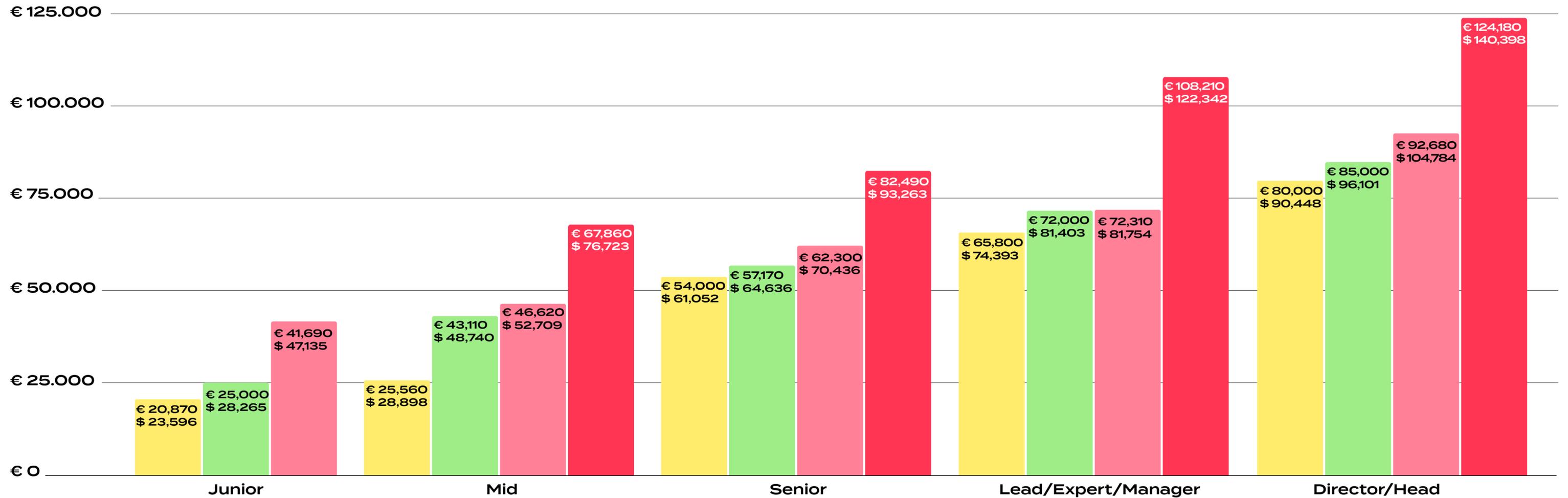
MARKETING & PR

- Central & Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- Nordics
- North America



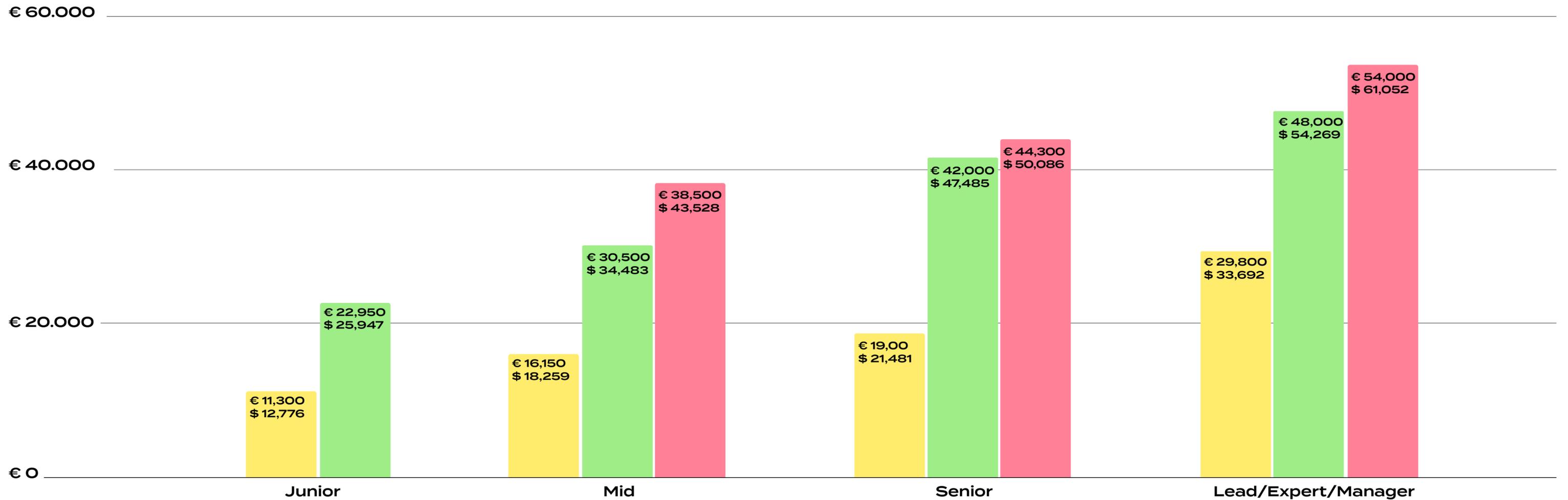
PRODUCTION

- Central & Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- Nordics
- North America



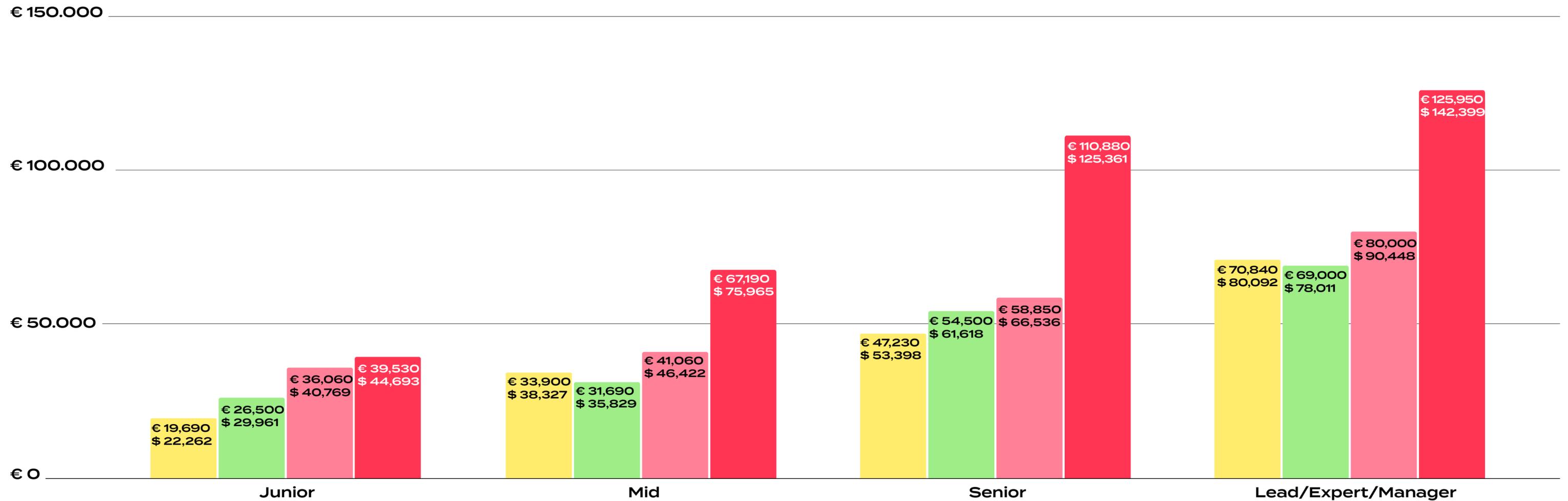
QA

- Central & Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- Nordics

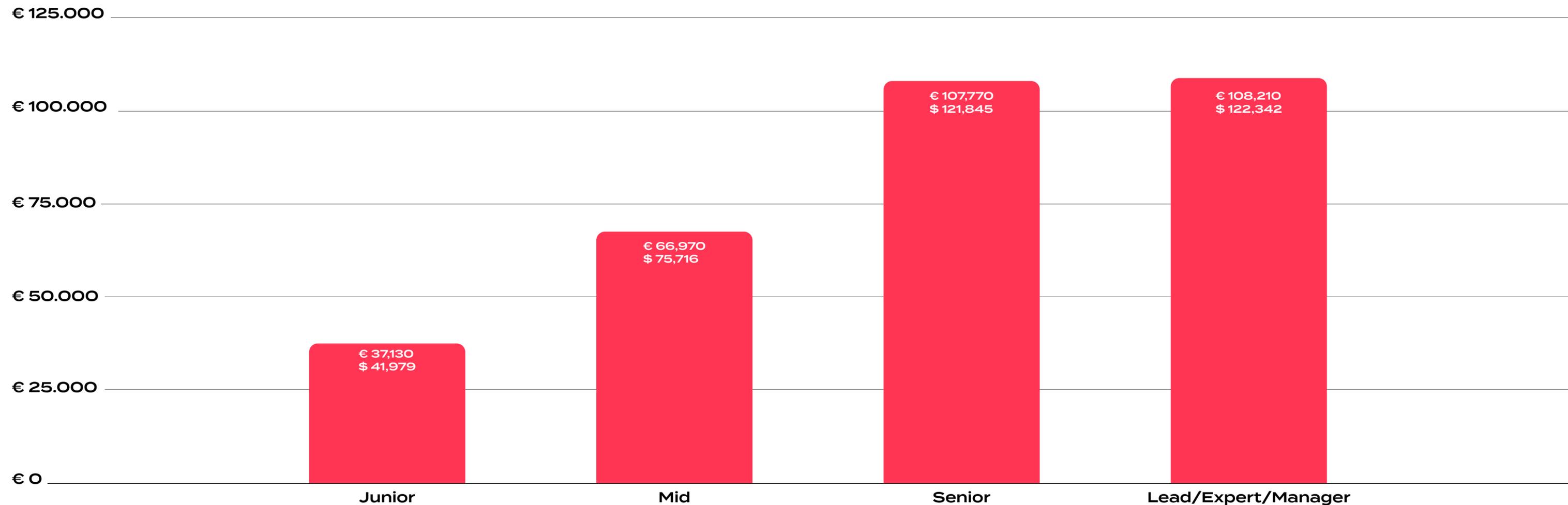


TECH ART & VFX

- Junior
- Mid
- Senior
- Lead/Expert/Manager

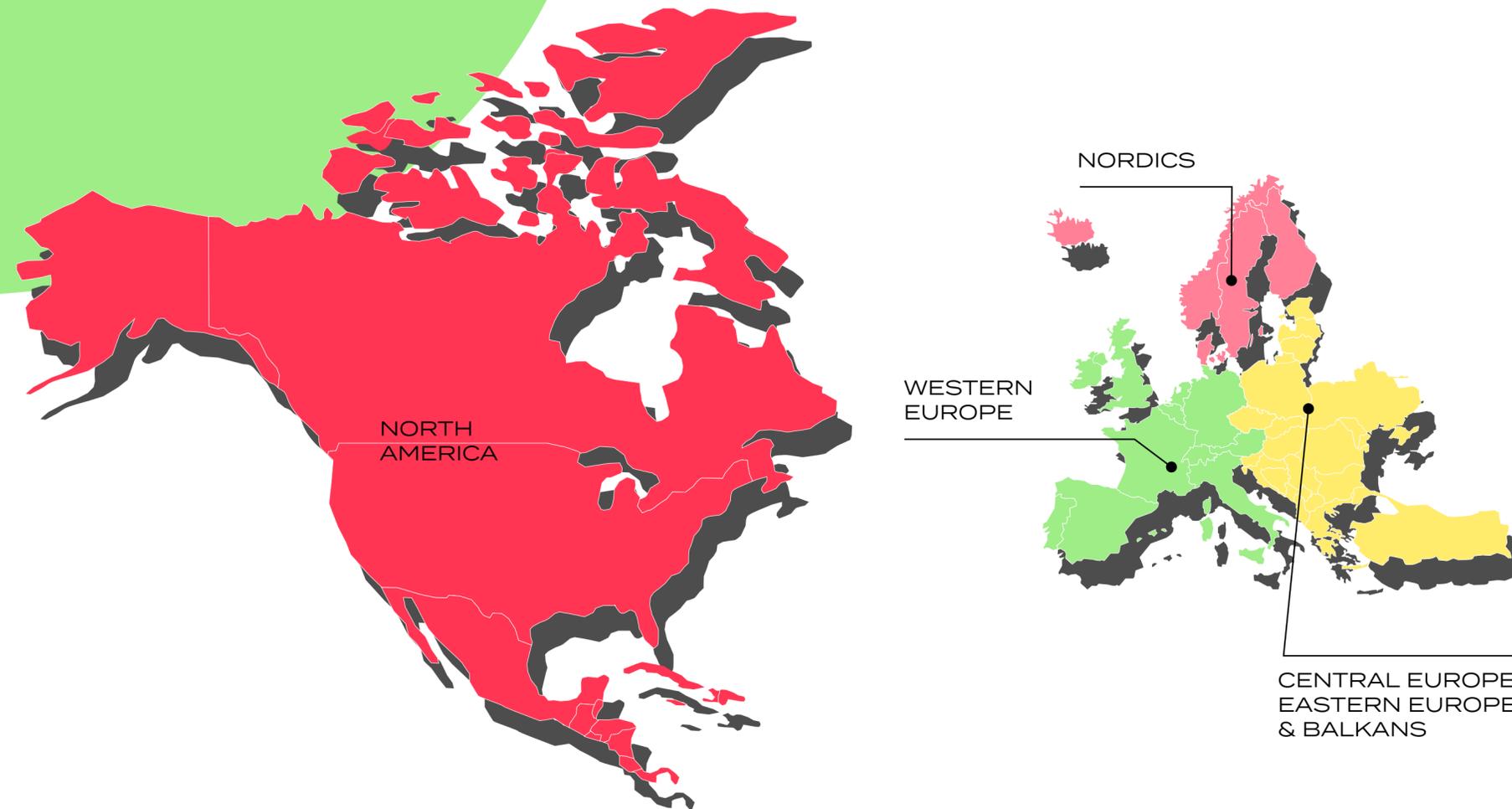


WRITING & NARRATIVE DESIGN



REGIONAL SALARY INSIGHTS

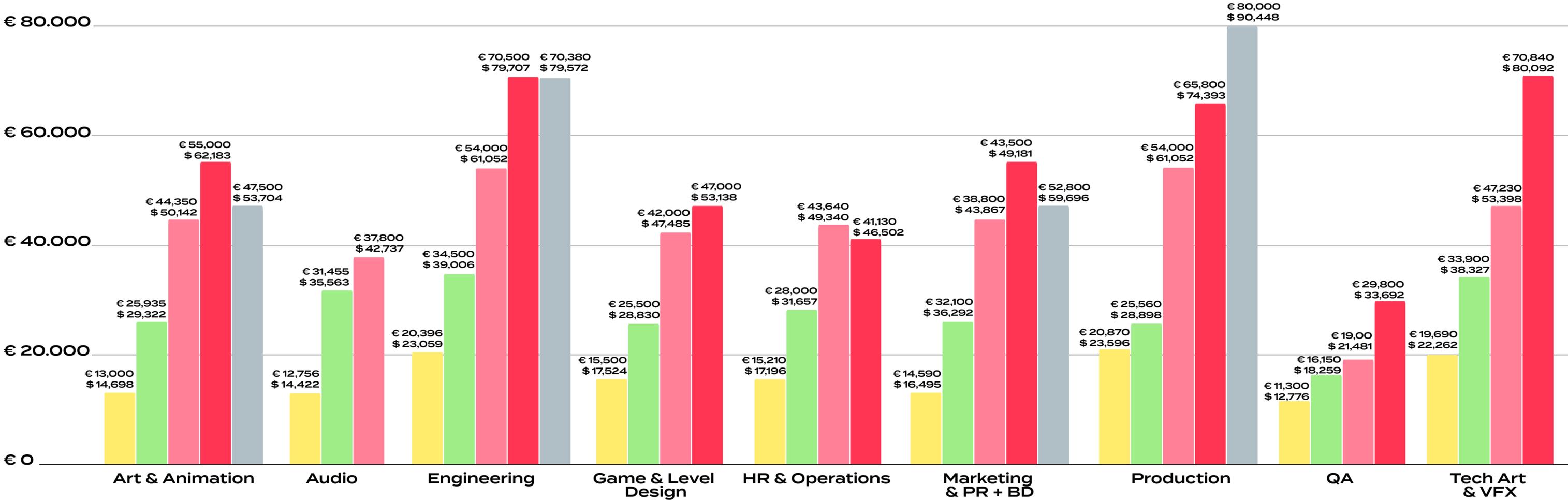
Drawing on all analyzed categories, this overview highlights local market fluctuations, compensation trends, and any notable outliers.



CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

- Junior
- Mid
- Senior
- Lead/Expert/Manager
- Director/Head

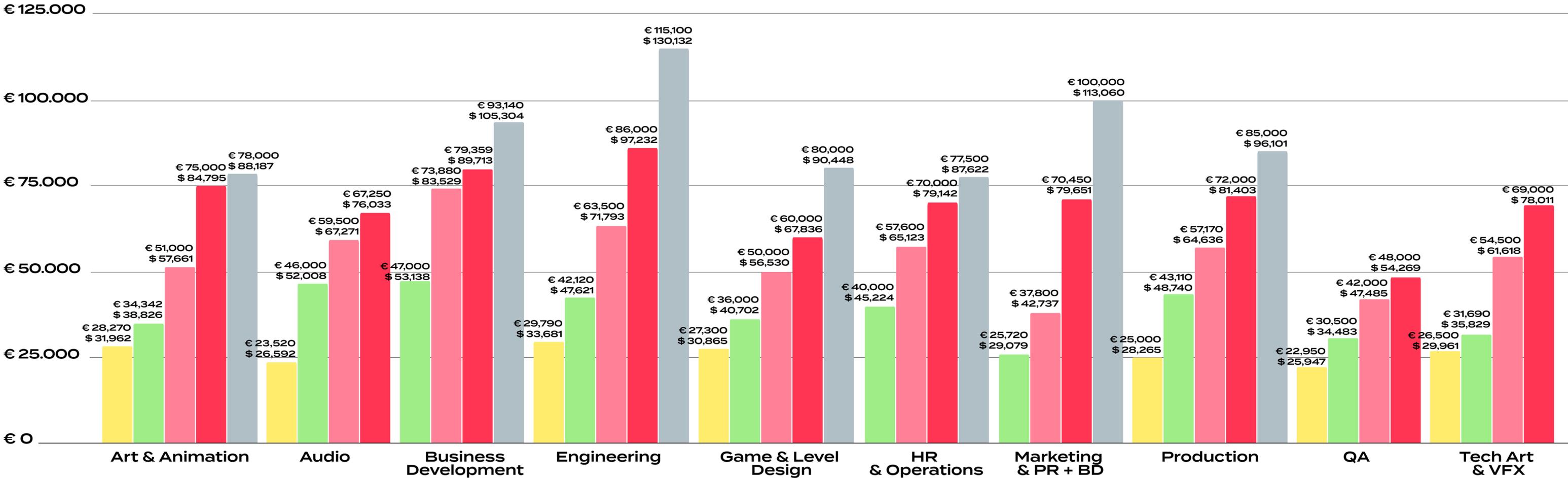
Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Türkiye, Ukraine



WESTERN EUROPE

Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom

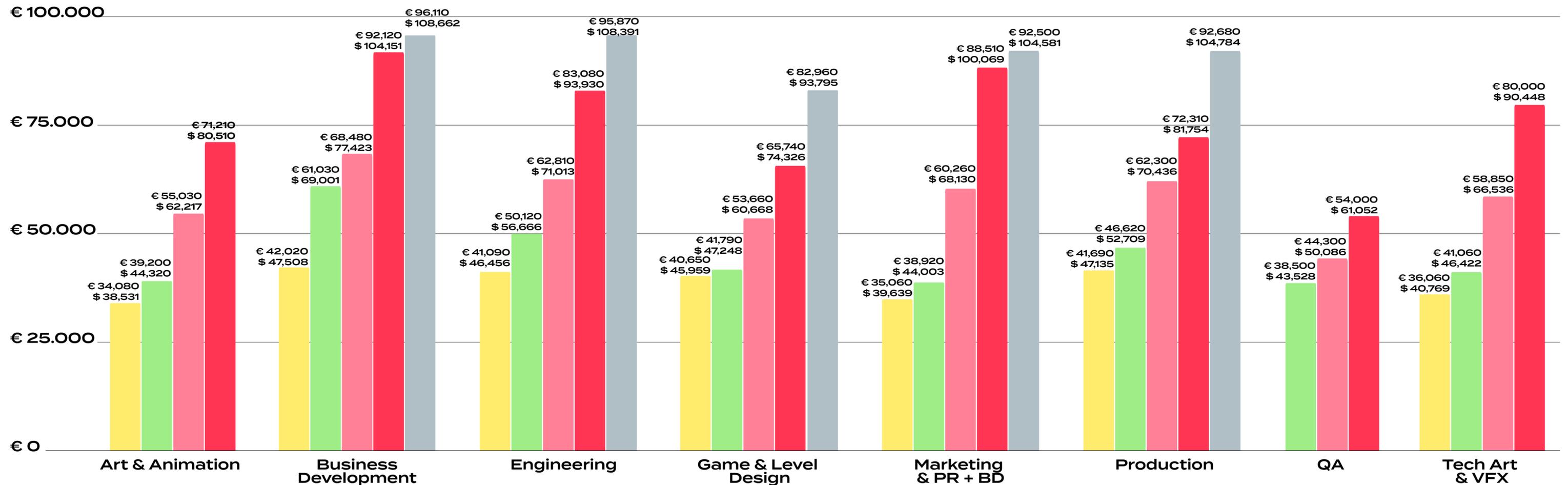
- Junior
- Mid
- Senior
- Lead/Expert/Manager
- Director/Head



NORDIC COUNTRIES

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

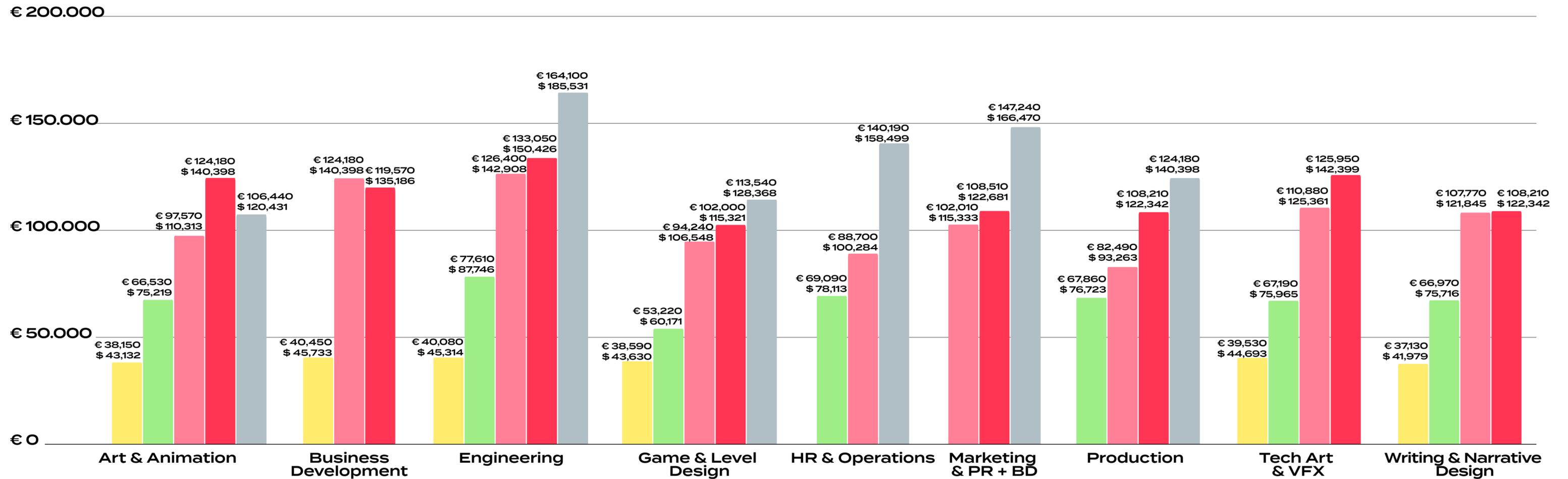
- Junior
- Mid
- Senior
- Lead/Expert/Manager
- Director/Head



NORTH AMERICA

- Junior
- Mid
- Senior
- Lead/Expert/Manager
- Director/Head

Canada, United States



CLOSING REMARKS

Marta Todorczuk
MARKETING & OPERATIONS
MANAGER



“

Thank you for being part of this year's **Gamedev Salary Pulse**.

What started as an initiative to bring more transparency into the industry has now become something bigger, an ongoing conversation.

Each edition builds on the previous one, not just in data points, but in depth, nuance, and the questions we ask. Your feedback shapes this report. We listen carefully, adjust, refine, and return with something that reflects the real voice of our community. I'd also like to personally thank everyone who responded when I reached out on LinkedIn (yes - it was actually me, not an automation tool). And to those who went beyond filling in the survey and exchanged a few messages, I genuinely appreciated those conversations.

This report exists because **professionals and studios are willing to share their perspectives**. That trust matters. Our mission remains unchanged: to be a trusted recruitment partner for both game studios and talent, while actively advocating for a more open, transparent, fair, and inclusive games industry.

We'll continue listening, and we'll continue showing the data as it is. Thank you for being part of it.

Thinking of growing your team?

Explore more



HERE IS WHAT MAKES 8BIT YOUR IDEAL RECRUITMENT PARTNER:

- 11 years of exclusive focus on gamedev recruitment, built by industry veterans who understand every aspect of technical, creative, and operational roles.
- Deep-rooted connections across PC/console, mobile, VR/AR, and blockchain studios** - matching you with talent that speaks your specific language.
- An outstanding **96%+ referral rate from 120+ global game development clients**, with Forbes recognition for remote work expertise.
- More than recruiters - we're consultants whose industry insights come from years of hands-on experience.
- Worldwide talent access with boutique agency attention**, plus a heart for giving back through pet rescue initiatives.

OUR SERVICES:

1 Subscription

Tailored specifically **for studios managing a larger volume of roles**. You receive a dedicated allocation of 100 hours per month from our expert recruitment team to handle your diverse hiring needs. Increasing your number of projects won't increase your costs, making Subscription one of the most cost-effective recruitment solutions available in the market.
Business model: flat fee.

2 Subscription Flex

Designed **for studios seeking a short commitment period**, building upon our standard Subscription service. Tailored for a 1-month duration with an intensive 140 working hours, it's ideal for studios looking to make multiple hires in a short timeframe while benefiting from budget predictability.
Business model: flat fee.

3 Success Fee

Straightforward process involving a small retainer start fee, with the remaining fee payable only upon successful completion of the project. Particularly suited **for studios newly engaging with recruitment agencies or those anticipating only a single hire in the foreseeable future**.
Business model: retainer start fee + success fee.

4 Retained Search

Designed **for studios of all sizes seeking a flexible and budget-friendly approach to recruitment**. This model allows for a fixed success fee agreed upon project engagement, with a payment structure that divides this total cost into smaller, manageable installments as we hit different milestones of the hiring process.
Business model: success fee segmented into smaller installments.

5 RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing)

We adopt a classic business process outsourcing approach, taking over designated recruitment tasks or the 360° hiring process with a selected recruiter embedded in your team. Well-suited **for studios seeking comprehensive, strategic and long-term recruitment support**.
Business model: flat fee.

Job Board

In addition to our recruitment services, **our platform is open for games industry job postings**. Your listing appears on our website, reaches engaged gamedev professionals through Email Job Alerts, and gets a promotional LinkedIn post shared with our industry-focused community, just without the full recruitment support.

[Check our offer](#)

[Add a job post](#)

Thank you!

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