Deloitte.

The keys to innovation:
unlocking progress
to power tomorrow

Innovation is inherently a human endeavor, rooted in progress: advancing ideas, products, or methodologies that challenge the status quo. Today, the urgency for innovation seems more intense than ever before.

Introduction

With rapid technological advancements, shifting social dynamics, and demographics, as well as evolving ways of creating value, many organizations face immense pressure to transform their businesses. Leaders should cultivate adaptive environments, build agile teams, and develop engagement models that can help amplify human impact to inspire progress for an era where change is constant. Inclusive innovation is an engine, powering organizations not only to thrive in a rapidly evolving world but to redefine the boundaries of possibility.

Inclusive innovation can act as an essential fuel of progress as society becomes increasingly diverse (Gen Z is the most diverse generation yet[1]). Today, most innovative organizations recognize diversity as a strategic advantage—83% actively recruit to elevate diverse voices[2]. Despite these trends, underrepresentation is still pervasive. For example, a 2020 World Economic Report found that women represent only 26% of data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) positions in the workforce, even though they make up nearly half (47%) of the US workforce and earn the majority of advanced degrees from US institutions[3]. The cost of exclusion can be steep – missing out on creativity, collaboration, and resilience. Inclusive innovation could be essential to meeting the demands of an increasingly diverse world.

The journey toward inclusive innovation is core to reaching transformative potential and begins with understanding – and acting on – the insights from unexpected sources. Throughout this report, we will delve into insights generated from geographically and racially diverse technology savvy women, who are entering or at early stages of their careers. With these insights, leaders can boldly pursue fresh approaches to innovation by considering actionable strategies that help bolster problem-solving, drive growth, and reinforce organizational resilience, extending frontiers of progress.

Inclusive innovation is the intentional design and execution of human-centric strategies that can help organizations to unlock value for stakeholders. Rooted in a commitment to equity and accessibility, it asks leaders to embed inclusivity into decision-making processes, ensuring that innovations reflect diverse needs and create broad, meaningful impact. At its core – inclusive innovation is a commitment to shared prosperity, where decisions consciously advances opportunity, representation, and dignity for all communities, leaving no one behind. This approach could redefine progress – transforming innovation from a competitive advantage into a collective leap forward.

We teamed with **Kode With Klossy (KWK)**, a nonprofit focused on building the next generation of women and gender expansive innovators to further explore how to build stronger innovation for the future. KWK surveyed more than 750 KWK alumni, aged 18-26 so that together we could gain insight into opportunities, challenges, and strategies that can assist leaders in driving transformational changes necessary to meet the demands of the next era of innovation.

By examining a focused population of technology-savvy, early-career women, emerging trends shaped by increasing population diversity and nuanced differences within this demographic that have the potential to influence innovation processes were identified. These insights can help leaders to consider new workforce and customer engagement strategies that can adopt more human-centric approaches that embrace the unique experiences and perspectives within evolving populations.

Opportunity I

Capitalize on strengths of **Innovation Archetypes** to improve innovation program effectiveness.

Defining Innovation Archetypes

Values, interests, preferences, beliefs, habits, and other cognitive characteristics play a pivotal role in how people participate in innovation – both as part of the workforce and as customers. By leveraging 'Innovation Archetypes,' which are empathy-based profiles designed to capture nuanced behaviors to streamline an understanding of individuals, even within narrowly defined populations, organizations can unlock a new strategic advantage that goes beyond individual capabilities to systemically foster organizational adaptability and creativity. Within the surveyed population, we identified four Innovation Archetypes that bring complementary approaches and skill sets accretive to a holistic innovation process, which may vary based on population of interest. By understanding the motivations and preferences of each, leaders can better understand how to tap into their potential, both individually and collectively, to build superior innovation processes, which can act as a source of sustainable differentiation and value creation.
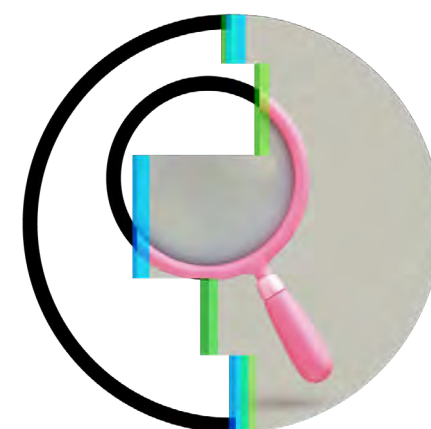
Innovation Archetypes and their strengths

Innovation stage
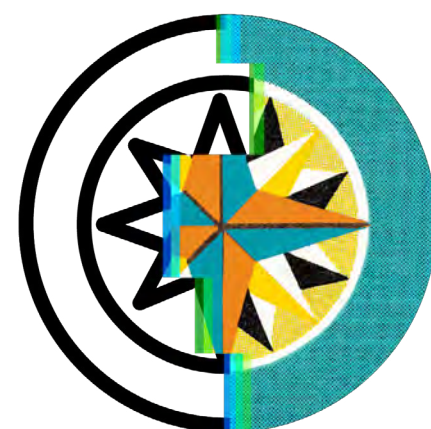
Progress Visionaries

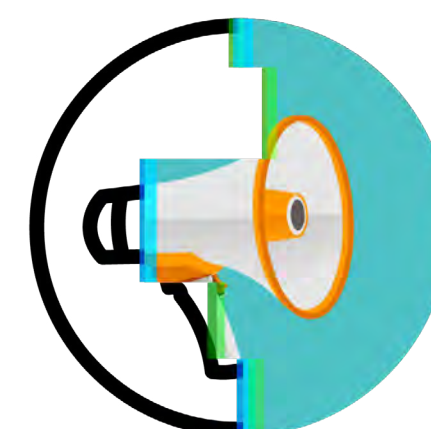Come up with groundbreaking ideas, set strategic direction, and bring teams together to catalyze change.

Ideation:
sparking possibilities through bold, divergent thinking

Insight Trailblazers

Design technical solutions and experimental proof of concepts, evaluate performance, and identify improvement areas.
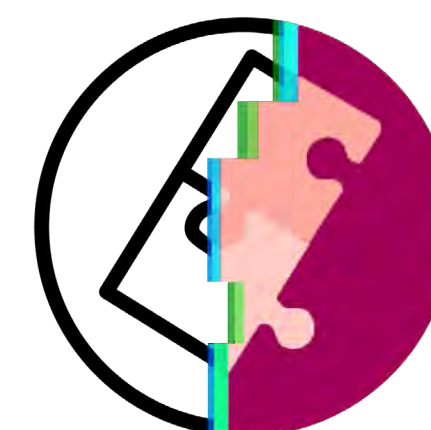
Experimentation:
developing new solutions

Network Catalysts

Bring together diverse stakeholders and translate their needs into solution requirements or tap into motivations of different groups.

Adoption:
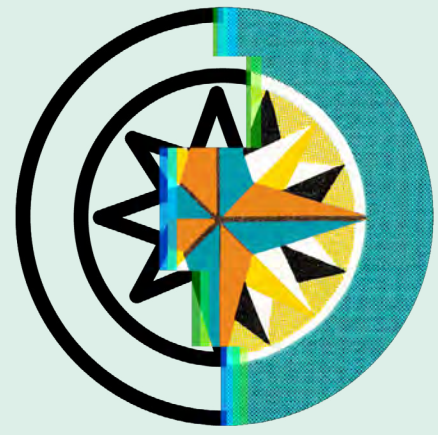aligning to diverse stakeholder interests

Integration Orchestrators

Implement change at scale by creating frameworks and playbooks to systematically drive change.

Scale implementation:
integrating with core business processes

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Innovation Archetype characteristics

Progress Visionaries

- Aspire to lead and contribute to meaningful change across multiple fields and disciplines.
- Seek out certifications and advanced degrees to build credibility as they grow as leaders.
- Take risks to achieve their ambitions and tend to be pragmatic collaborators.
- Act as change agents for the broader organization, identifying opportunities overlooked by others.
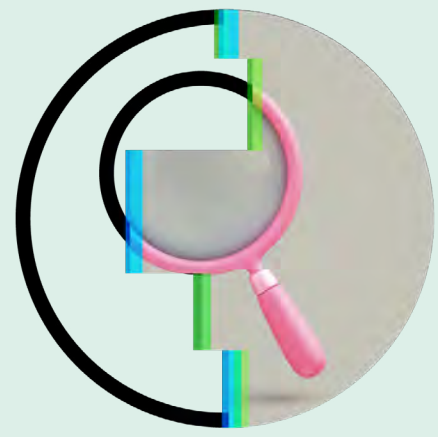
Insight Trailblazers

- Seek to become experts in their field of choice, often pursuing advanced degrees and continued education.
- Rely on organizational support and technical competency to carry out change.
- Avoid risk but thrive on knowledge and free thinking to overcome challenges.
- Further new understanding for the broader organization by seeking out and testing ideas.

Network Catalysts

- Demonstrate highly social behavior in interactions with brands, employers, and peers.
- Balance practical and risk-averse tendencies with curiosity to adopt and use emerging technologies.
- Engage with social and organizational networks regularly.
- Rally others to influence change and organizational adaptation.
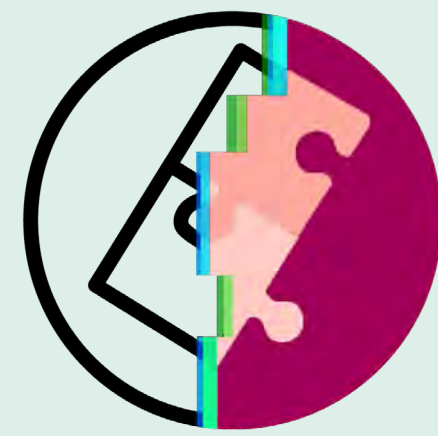
Integration Orchestrators

- Approach problems pragmatically, while leaning on transactional motivators (such as earning power or career prestige).
- Demonstrate resilience by confidently recovering from setbacks.
- Switch between individual and group pursuits as the need arises.
- Adapt personal approaches to implement change critical to scaling and operationalizing innovation.

Strategies for consideration to help maximize impact

- **Refresh talent approaches with Innovation Archetypes**—identify Innovation Archetypes within your workforce and customer base to understand uniqueness in values, interests, and behaviors to design programs that unlock human potential and build awareness of these approaches with team and broader business leaders.

- **Adapt roles and responsibilities**—incorporate key characteristics in job descriptions and performance management systems to better allocate talent to the right roles to amplify potential and drive superior outcomes.

- **Infuse human-centric design in operating models**—deploy divergent talent methodically at each stage of innovation to align work with interests, strengths, and motivators to reduce burnout and spur creativity.

Measurements of progress

- Innovation Output
- Workforce Burnout and Engagement
- Skills Awareness and Utilizations

Takeaway I:

Evolve people management practices to adopt empathetic approaches, based on tailored Innovation Archetypes, to optimize each stage of innovation for improved agility – turning adaptability into a clear competitive advantage.

Opportunity II

Tailor engagement to unlock collaborative innovation through dynamic **value ecosystems**.

Creating value ecosystems

Value ecosystems tend to involve a broader and more collaborative framework where diverse stakeholders contribute to feedback, content creation, and community growth that extends from increasingly open innovation approaches (where ideas and capabilities come from outside of the organization as well as from within). Technology is evolving the ways customers and organizations connect, engage, and cocreate value across various channels, and can provide advantage to companies that strategically embrace omnichannel engagement, prioritize personalization, and actively participate in creator economies. Customer participation can propel value in this ecosystem – to maximize value our insights suggest that organizations can no longer afford a "one-size-fits-all" approach to engagement and should instead consider tailoring engagement to reflect meaningful uniqueness in each Innovation Archetype.

"Across groups surveyed, the majority expect feedback to be incorporated within three months."

Although customers surveyed are generally willing to provide feedback (54%) and even more likely to participate when asked, not all groups are as likely to participate (Integration Orchestrators and Insight Trailblazers are the least likely). When soliciting feedback, respondents expect organizations to act on it—and quickly—92% see it as moderately to extremely important that feedback directly influences future offerings and features. Across groups surveyed, the majority (77%-93% depending on Innovation Archetype) expect feedback to be incorporated within three months.

These patterns indicate that organizations that fail to proactively reach out to groups may be less likely to provide feedback and face major blind spots in customer sentiment. Leaders should also carefully consider how they weigh feedback, as those least likely to provide feedback have high expectations for their feedback being heard (and acted upon) when they do—while Insight Trailblazers are the least likely to provide feedback (2%), they are also the most likely to expect that their interaction will influence the direction of an organization's products or services within three months (93%).
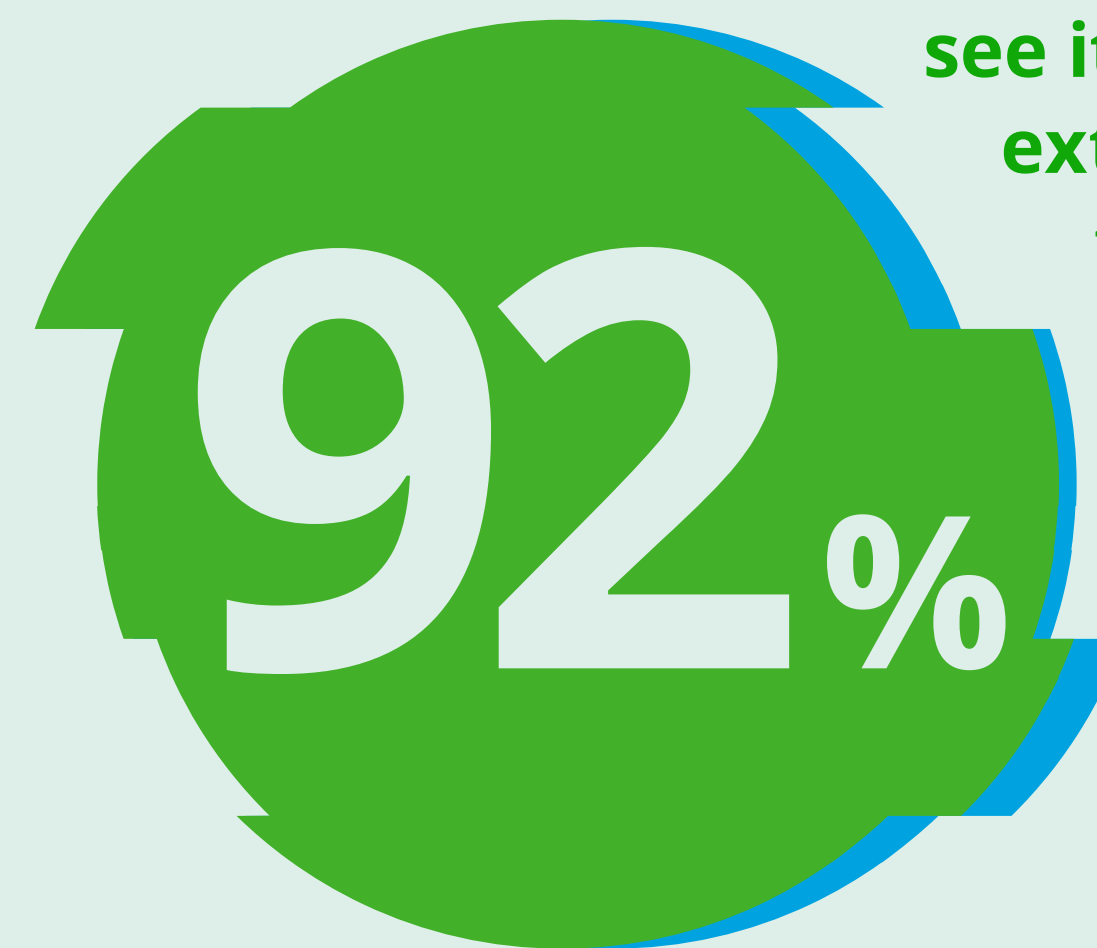
92%

see it as moderately to extremely important that feedback directly influences future offerings and features.
Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Establishing clear product development cycles that are responsive to weighted feedback models can strengthen connectivity between customer engagement and product teams while championing rapid responsiveness. By evolving to adaptive development processes and proactively communicating with customers how their feedback has driven product improvements, organizations can improve customer retention and satisfaction to reduce the threat of competitive disruption.
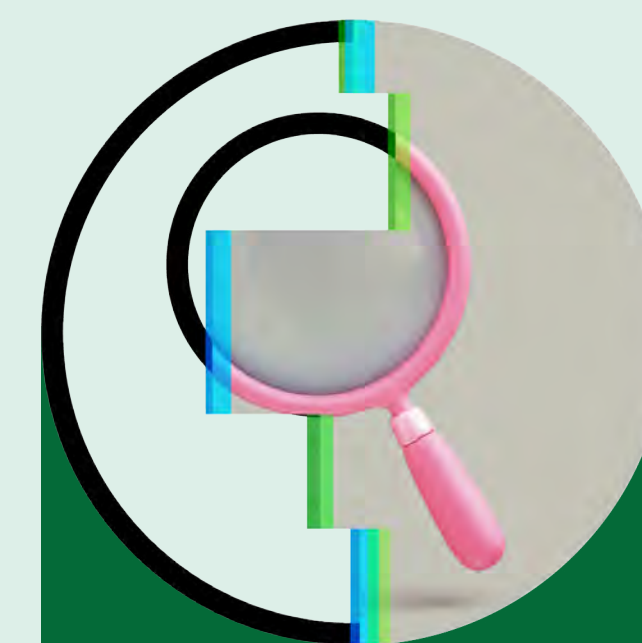
Insight Trailblazers are the least likely to provide feedback

Engaging in a creator economy

Customers are engaging with content in fundamentally different ways and organizations may face threats to their businesses if they fail to adapt. Consumption among respondents is shifting to video-based content (65%), which commands the most significant portion of time. Customers are not only consuming different content, but they are also acting as creators themselves—over half (54%) of respondents said post on digital platforms at least monthly. However, there is significant variation across Innovation Archetypes (Network Catalysts and Progress Visionaries are the most prolific content creators). Organizations that align content their strategy with the most posted about topics—personal achievements, travel and adventure, fashion and lifestyle, social and political, and entertainment—which are consistent across Innovation Archetypes—are likely positioned to amplify their activation potential.

Pursuing multiple complementary strategies to content engagement can reduce consumption friction, amplifying the lift of investments and reducing wasted spend. Transitioning to video-based content can offer improved audience reach and engagement. Breakthrough multimodal AI
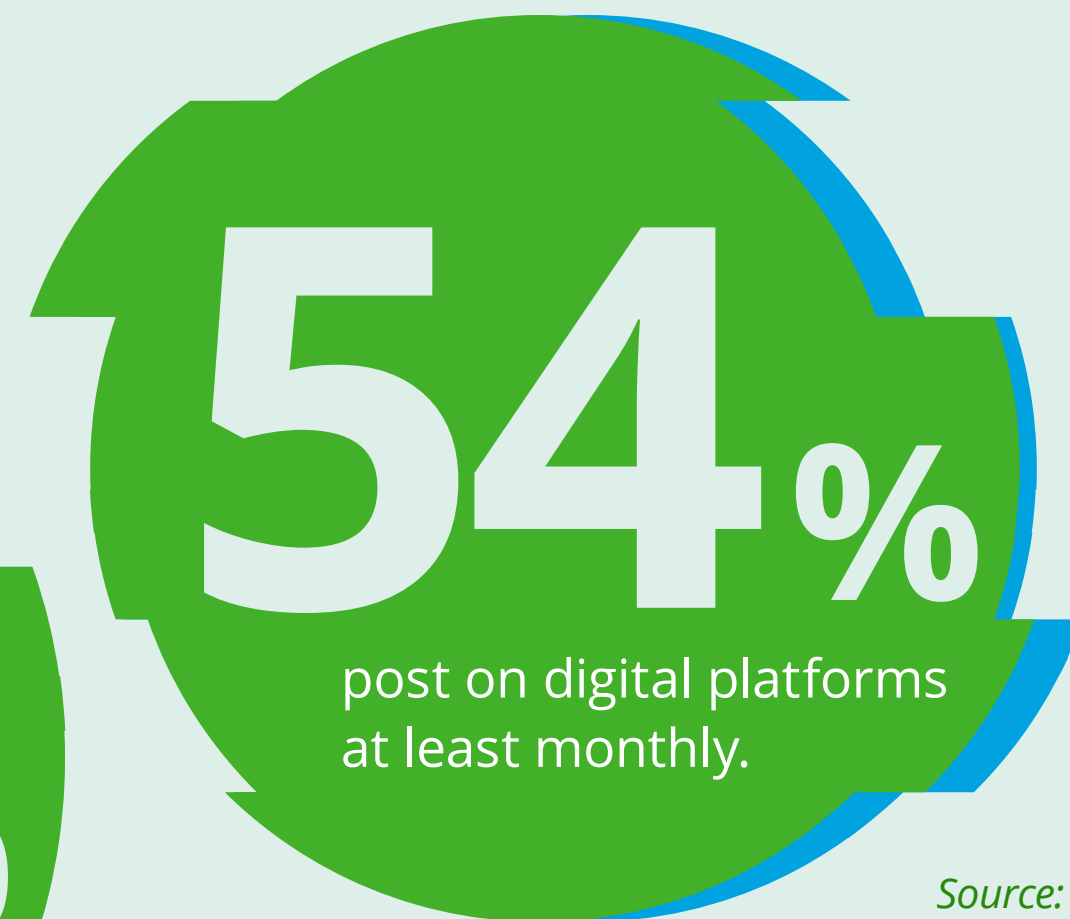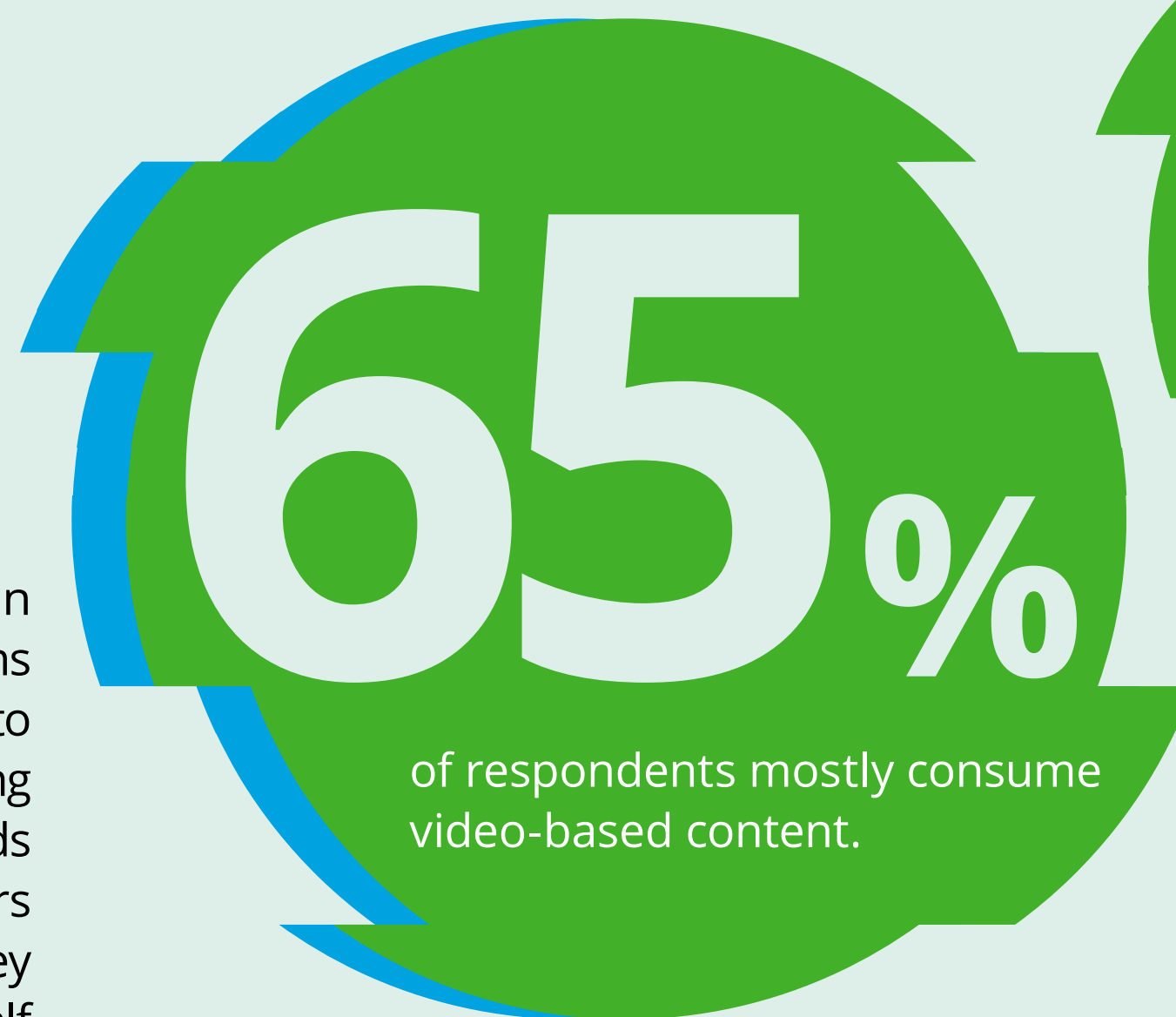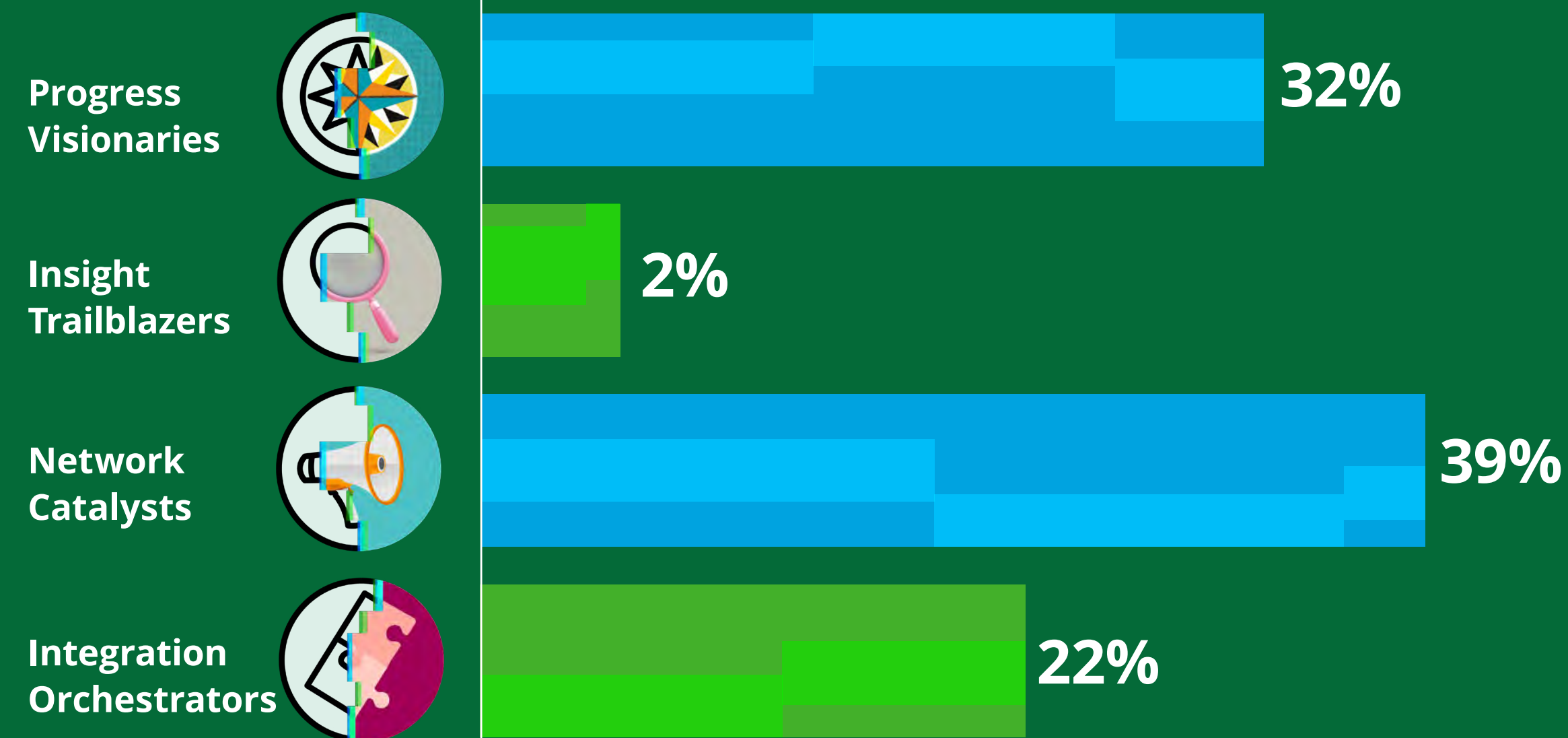
capabilities offer the potential to expand video-based content generation at scale and affordably to more effectively reach customers. By aligning brands with organically posted about content while activating select Innovation Archetypes as content creators, organizations can activate broader networks at scale, extending their reach and return on investments.

Success today is about nurturing deep and meaningful connections across the value chain. Those who harness the power of a well-connected value ecosystem can create the kind of agility and creativity that defines standout products and experiences. Seamless collaboration, from employees and customers to creators and partners, can make a difference – helping organizations excel in an ever-competitive marketplace.

65%

of respondents mostly consume video-based content.

54%

post on digital platforms at least monthly.

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Frequently create content on digital platforms:

Progress Visionaries — 32%

Insight Trailblazers — 2%

Network Catalysts — 39%

Integration Orchestrators — 22%

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Takeaway II:

Create a connected ecosystem that adapts to Innovation Archetypes, driving personalized, meaningful interactions across each touchpoint, to help strengthen engagement and stay ahead in a future defined by relentless transformation.

Strategies for consideration to help maximize impact

• **Create active customer communities**—develop tailored engagement models for customer communities – adjust interactions based on the distinct motivations and behaviors of Innovation Archetypes to deepen engagement and foster an active, loyal community.

• **Adopt cocreation strategies**—implement cocreation strategies by partnering with key customer segments to develop content aligned with organic engagement trends across platforms and topics, enhancing content and relevance.

• **Build high velocity feedback channels and development cycles**—proactively solicit and 'weight' feedback based on Innovation Archetype to adopt more adaptive capability road maps that are responsive to customer trends and preferences.

• **Invest in platforms to facilitate collaboration** – create an integrated view of touchpoints, subsequent actions, and resulting behaviors to create a constant feedback loop for improved engagement strategies.

Measurements of progress

· Audience Engagement Velocity

· Customer Retention and Growth

· Interaction Value

· Feedback Implementation and Responsiveness Rate

Opportunity III

Streamline **emerging technology** adoption with methodical engagement underpinned by trust & ethics.

Adopting emerging technologies in a modern era

Emerging technologies, such as AI and blockchain, can act as innovation force multipliers across markets and industries, but users' willingness to adopt and accept these advancements could pose a threat to progress. Digital first culture is transforming technology adoption patterns—almost half (47%) of respondents utilize recently developed digital technologies in most of their daily activities, generating vast possibilities for value beyond physical goods and services. Pace of adoption is intense—approximately two-thirds of those surveyed use recently developed digital technologies (within the last two years) in between 25% and 75% of their daily activities.
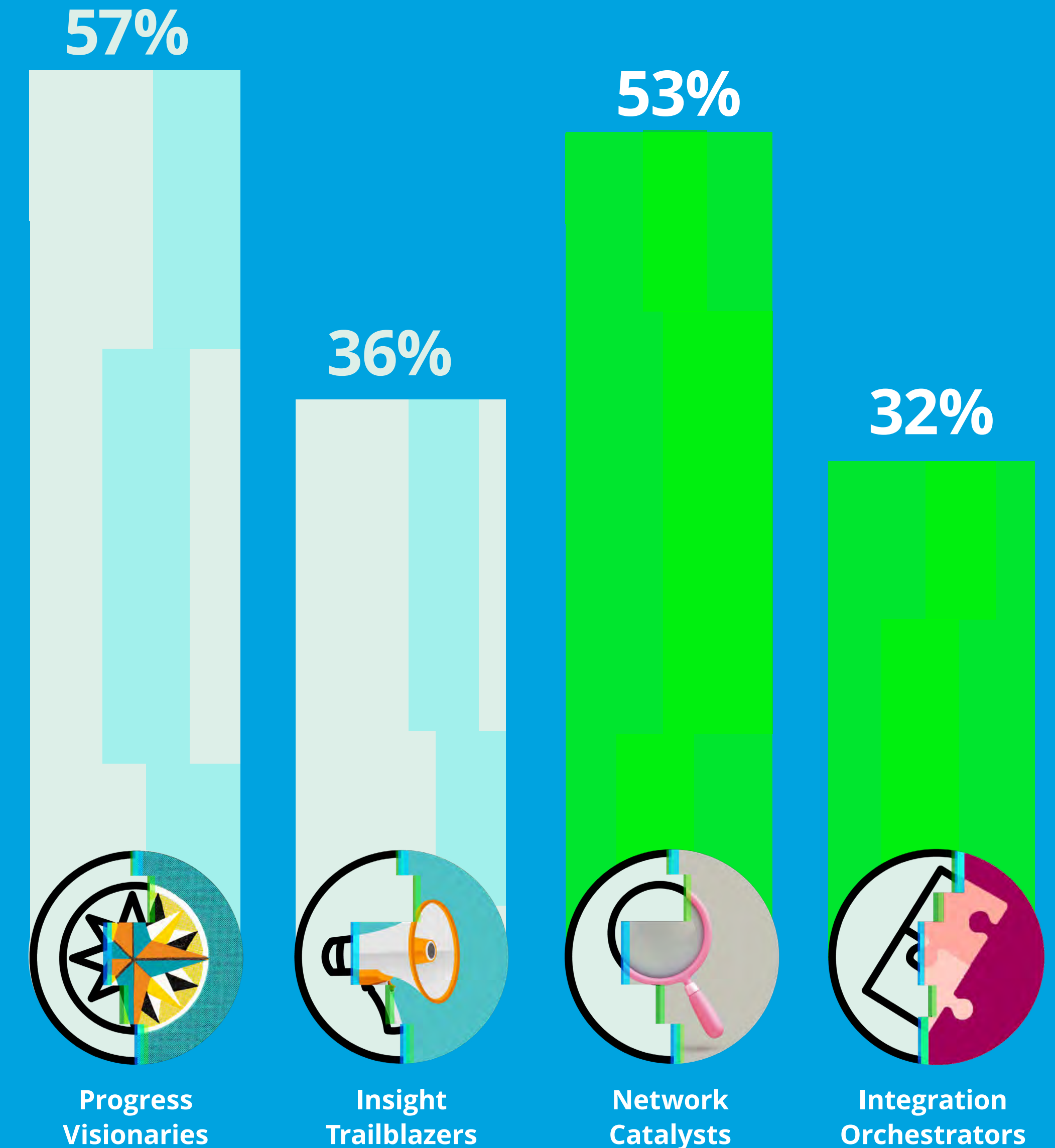
While the rate of adoption is meaningful across groups, adoption varies by Innovation Archetype. Progress Visionaries and Network Catalysts act as 'super users' of emerging technologies, which paired with their social tendencies, make them strong contenders to act as 'adoption champions' in new technology pilot programs.

Navigating the trust and ethics dilemma

While AI has made the most significant impact on life (65% across multiple AI technologies) among those surveyed, it has raised concerns surrounding "implicit biases within the models themselves" and "environmental impacts of AI," such computing power and energy required to cool servers. These concerns are supported as increasing electricity consumption currently required for AI threatens climate goals due to increasing indirect emissions [5]. From 2022 to 2023, the percent of US adults who say the increased use of AI in daily life makes them feel 'more concerned than excited' grew from 38% to 52% demonstrating a growing trust gap that threatens future AI adoption [6].

Building trustworthy and secure AI should be a priority for executives, as a large majority of organizations are still early in their adoption journeys (less than a third of Generative AI ("GenAI") experiments have moved into production[7]). Recognizing both the incredible value and threat posed by scaling AI, leaders have the responsibility and strategic imperative to use AI adoption to build stakeholder trust in technology, but also in the broader organization.

"Over 50% of daily activities utilize recently developed digital technologies"

57%	36%	53%	32%
Progress Visionaries	**Insight Trailblazers**	**Network Catalysts**	**Integration Orchestrators**

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

"Clearly conveying value of the technology, building a user's confidence to learn new skills required for adoption, and demonstrating positive impact on quality of life are seen as the most influential factors in incentivizing rapid adoption [8]."

Strategies for consideration to help maximize impact

- **Establish adoption frameworks**—systematically target subsets of your populations that have higher propensity to act as adoption champions while appealing

- **Proactively build trust and ethics**—establish governance frameworks that 'build in' safeguards that are developed and enforced through cross-functional task forces dedicated to monitoring the ethical implications of emerging technology deployment

- **Design communications to reduce adoption friction**—clearly convey value, quality of life impacts, intuitive design, and proactive measures to safeguard trust and ethics through clear and transparent messaging that is enforced with educational programs

Measurements of progress

- Trust and Brand Indicators
- Emerging Technology Sentiment Analysis
- Technology Adoption and Integration Rate

Accelerating technology adoption

Building trust, both in capability and perception, when adopting emerging technologies can help accelerate value. Factors like data privacy, transparency, and ethical considerations often play a role in technology adoption and use behavior. Strategically leveraging select personas within the workforce and customer base as adoption champions can strengthen adoption tailwinds and outpace the competition, but there are also factors that facilitate more seamless adoption. Clearly conveying value of the technology, building a user's confidence to learn new skills required for adoption, and demonstrating positive impact on quality of life are often seen as influential factors in helping to incentivize rapid adoption [8]. Emerging technologies hold promise – but only if their adoption is approached with trust and empathy. It is not just about scaling technology, it is about empowering people to adapt, to feel confident, and to recognize the impact that these solutions have on their work and lives. By focusing on readiness and ethical integration, organizations can foster faster adoption, drive meaningful insights, and create a culture where technology becomes a genuine enabler of progress.

Takeaway III:

Drive rapid adoption of emerging technologies by establishing dedicated adoption champions, fostering trust through transparent communication, and leading with ethical standards to help accelerate value realization with a deliberate and cohesive strategy.

Transform **learning** by converging adaptive and personalized AI technologies with Innovation Archetypes to fuel innovation.

Gaining advantage with tech-enhanced learning

28% — favor learning as a method of problem solving

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Rigid learning structures are often being left in the past as digital learning platforms, modular, on-demand training, and powerful learning approaches, like gamification, become standard practices [9]. This shift is being accelerated not only by increased demand for interactive learning experiences, but also by the increased speed and scale of technology impacts to digital learners' jobs, with 62% of surveyed leaders saying their Learning & Development teams are already pivoting toward "more-interactive" content versus conventional modes[9]. These technology-driven methods can create an exponential impact to innovation, fostering creativity, problem solving, and adaptability. These capabilities can help bridge gaps in the fast-evolving areas of transformation, such as GenAI, where only 20% of organizations currently believe that their talent is prepared to scale [7].
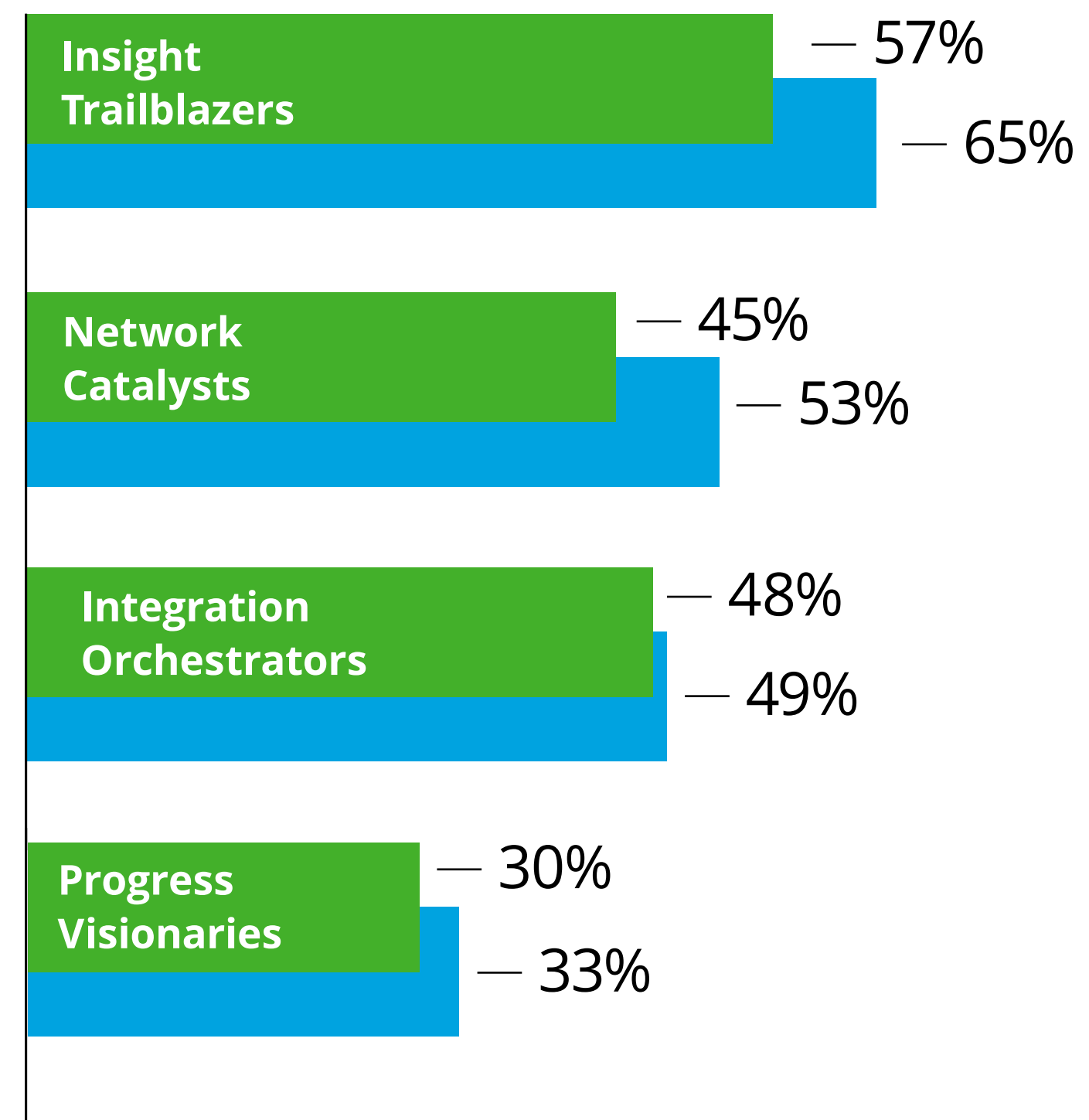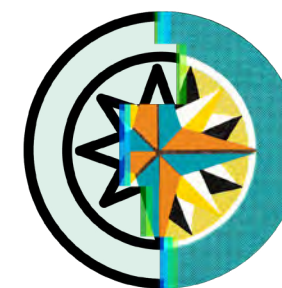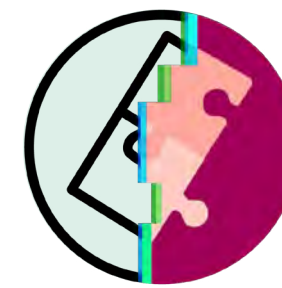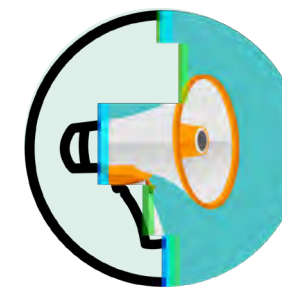
New learning technologies can unlock greater personalization and adaptability that can cater to each individual's needs, using their own behavior and neurological factors[10], by Innovation Archetype to personalize such training. Adaptive learning tools help individuals receive content tailored to their learning style and progress, creating dynamic, and engaging experience that aligns with an organization's broader
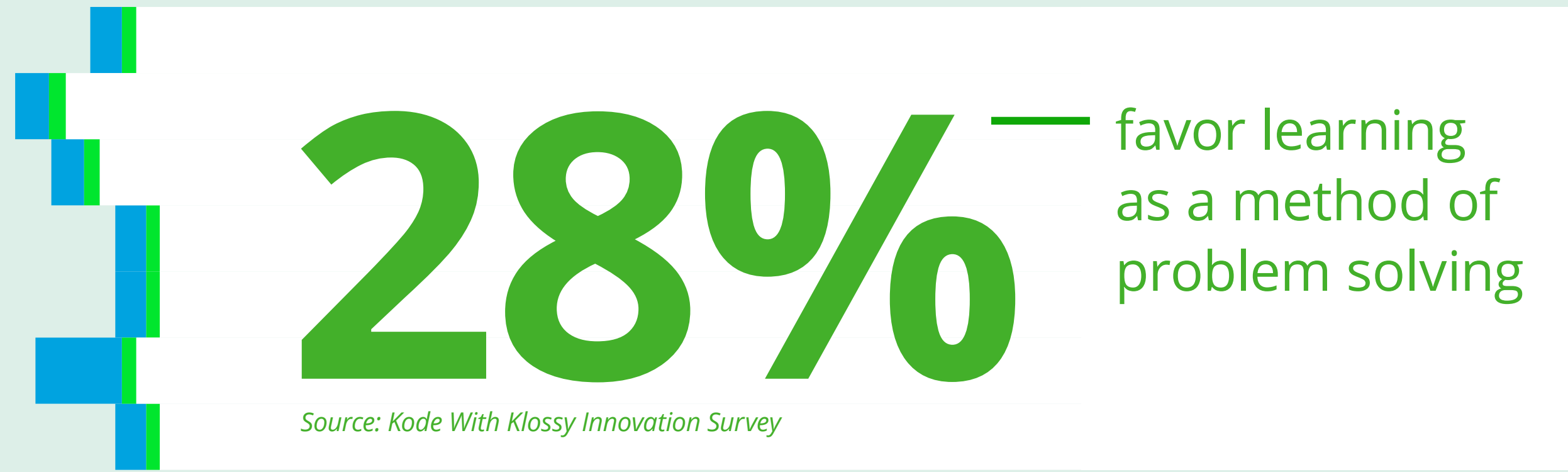
Adaptive learning technology benefits

Percentage that indicates top benefit of adaptive learning technology to improve workplace innovation

🟩 Personalization

🟦 Real-time feedback and continuous improvement

Value placed on technology-enabled learning for innovation

	Personalization	Real-time feedback	Value placed
Insight Trailblazers	57%	65%	Immense
Network Catalysts	45%	53%	High
Integration Orchestrators	48%	49%	High
Progress Visionaries	30%	33%	Moderate

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

strategic goals. Personalization and continuous real-time feedback are not merely enhancements – they can be used as fundamental elements to help make learning more effective, particularly those that favor learning as a method of problem solving (nearly a third or 28% of Innovation Archetypes).

Organizations that utilize these adaptive learning technologies effectively might expect improved outcomes in skills development, employee satisfaction, and overall agility. By transforming learning into an engaging, personalized process, leaders can confirm that their workforce is not only upskilled but also inspired to innovate and tackle unforeseen challenges.

AI can help make adaptive learning technologies more effective by providing deeper personalization, predictive insights, and real-time adaptability. AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of "learner data" can allow it to create individualized learning paths, suggest tailored resources, and even predict areas where additional support might be needed – where this precision can enhance engagement and improve retention rates and learning objectives. Moreover, AI-enabled technologies can democratize access to high-quality, personalized learning at scale, making it accessible to those who might not have previously had the opportunity. For organizations, this advancement can mean not only closing the skills gap but fostering a more inclusive, resilient workforce ready to innovate in the face of complex challenges.

Extending learning with experience simulation and real-world integration

While AI-driven learning can be transformative, it should be paired with experiential learning

for maximum impact. Real-world experiences – internships, professional placements, hands-on projects – can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Among respondents, internships and professional settings are seen as the most conducive environment for learning and education (27%) followed by in-person classes with technology (25%). Experiential learning can deepen adaptive learning by situating individuals in scenarios that require real decision-making and problem-solving. When learners apply their skills in controlled, hands-on manner, it helps reinforce understanding, builds confidence, and enhances adaptability.

Although in-person 'real world' experiences might not always be possible (or practical), Virtual Reality (VR)/ Augmented Reality (AR) stand out as technologies with the potential to revolutionize learning—31% of respondents believe that VR/AR will play a major or transformative role in future corporate / organizational learning. Combining technologies like VR with practical, real-world applications can create a learning ecosystem that mirrors the complexity of modern challenges, helping prepare individuals for high-stakes situations.

In-person experiences are not always feasible, but emerging experiential engagement could reshape our learning programs. Imagining learning that does not just teach – it immerses you, challenges you, and makes the complex feel conquerable. By blending the virtual with real-world applications, dynamic ecosystems where learning is not confined to theory but becomes an experience can be created – preparing individuals for the unpredictable, high-stakes challenges of tomorrow with a confidence that comes more often from true immersion.

31%

believe that VR/AR will play a major or transformative role in future corporate / organizational learning.

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Strategies for consideration to help maximize impact

- **Invest in integrated, adaptive, and experiential learning models** – combine AI-driven personalization with real-world experiential opportunities to improve understanding, retention, and ability to apply new skill sets.

- **Create cross-functional collaborative learning environments** – encourage group-based projects and peer interactions across functions to support network-based problem-solving skills that align with complex organizational goals.

- **Experiment with immersive technology** – pilot AR/VR capabilities in learning programs to simulate complex real-world business scenarios, providing "hands-on" experience in a controlled environment.

- **Connect learning and mentorship programs**—design programs to not only track and measure skillset progression, but also connect adaptive learning to practical career-oriented growth through mentorship for sustained impact.

Measurements of progress

- Skill Progression Rates
- Retention and Application
- Collaboration Indicators
- Mentorship Effectiveness

Takeaway IV:

Invest in adaptive learning programs that prioritize personalization and real-world experiences to help strengthen problem-solving capabilities and create a differentiated workforce better prepared to meet tomorrow's challenges – today!

Build enterprise entrepreneurial fortitude to **overcome obstacles**, both real and perceived, to catalyze innovation.

Triumph over adversity

Traditional norms and ingrained institutional structures often stand in the way of meaningful innovation. Over one-third of respondents believe that existing organizational rules, hierarchies, and outdated processes will hinder their ability to innovate in the next one year to three years. Among those surveyed, resistance to change, insufficient freedom to experiment, and limited support or mentorship are seen as the biggest obstacles to innovation within organizations. To break free from these constraints, organizations should consider an environment where experimentation and adaptability are actively encouraged – supported by the recruitment and retention of top talent – turning obstacles into opportunities for growth.

Progress Visionaries, who are highly likely to spearhead novel initiatives, are as much as two times more likely to view organizational support for innovation as a major criterion for career selection. Early career entrants who are less experienced with these challenges posed by workforce bureaucracy can be a potential source of opportunity for innovation, as inexperience can act as an advantage in this case. While policies and institutional structures serve a purpose, leaders should empower workforces to effectively navigate these structures to avoid the hidden costs of rigid restrictions.

1/3

of respondents believe that existing organizational rules, hierarchies, and outdated processes will hinder their ability to innovate in the next one to three years
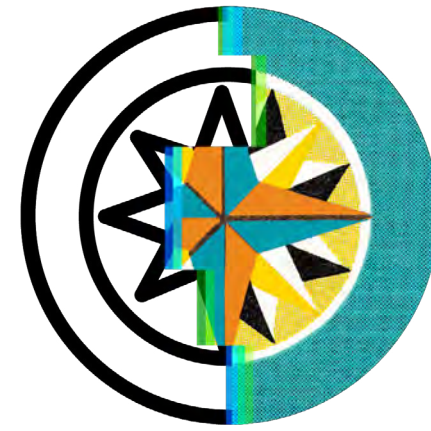
Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Opportunity V

Fostering impactful hybrid work

Hybrid work may be more than just an option – it is a way forward to balance not only in-office and remote work, but also a geographically distributed workforce. Colocation is not always feasible (or practical) when engaging diverse innovation participants within and outside the organization, making collaboration models strategic imperatives for success. Effective collaboration frameworks are pivotal to unlocking workforce potential, as face-to-face interaction remains essential for fostering trust, alleviating burnout, and reigniting imagination[11] – in fact, nine out 10 respondents indicated that an organization's approach to collaboration significantly influences their decision to accept or remain in a role. The appropriate collaboration model can vary depending on the nature of work, career stage, and Innovation Archetype, but its design must extend beyond logistics to reflect deeper human-centric principles. Leaders should craft systems that balance flexibility with connectivity, blending technology and interpersonal interaction in ways that inspire engagement and cultivate shared purpose. Thoughtfully constructed collaboration models can do more than facilitate productivity – they can create cultural ecosystems where diverse ideas flourish, individuals feel valued, and innovation thrives – today and into the future.

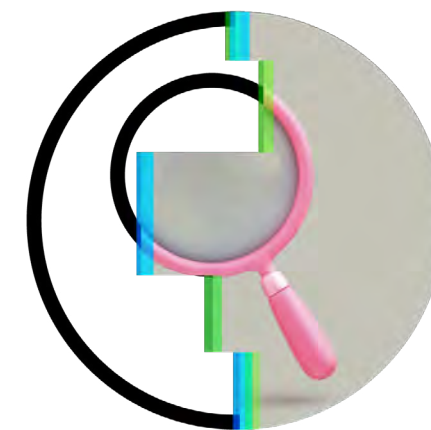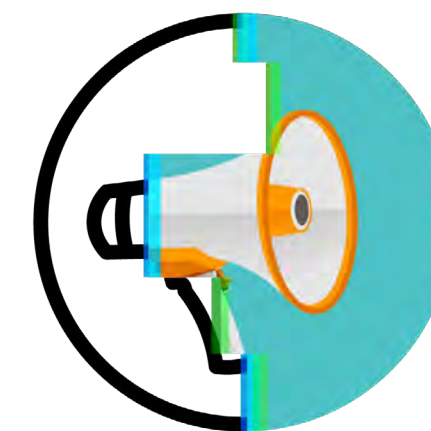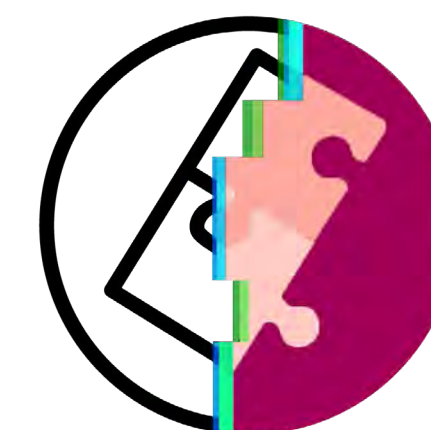| Environments to enable innovation		Ideal collboration level
Progress Visionaries	Prefer to work and learn "with people" in a collaborative structure, but excel with more independent work, making hybrid in-person their ideal collaboration model.	Medium
Insight Trailblazers	Value independent and flexible work models, with the ability to choose between remote and in-person work to fit the nature of their project and life circumstances.	Low
Network Catalysts	Prioritize teaming and digital collaboration tools making them true hybrid workers, collaborators, and learners, despite preference for in-person collaboration.	High
Integration Orchestrators	Shift between individual work and teamwork as needed to maximize innovation output, making hybrid work models with regular in-office days ideal.	Medium/High

To enhance the impact of in-person collaboration opportunities as part of more adaptive collaboration strategies, carefully consider the relationship between physical space design creativity, connection, and collaboration. Some organizations are reimagining how physical and digital spaces complement each other. In this way, leaders can unlock hybrid work's full potential, ensuring it drives engagement, sparks new ideas, and empowers teams to do their most meaningful work.
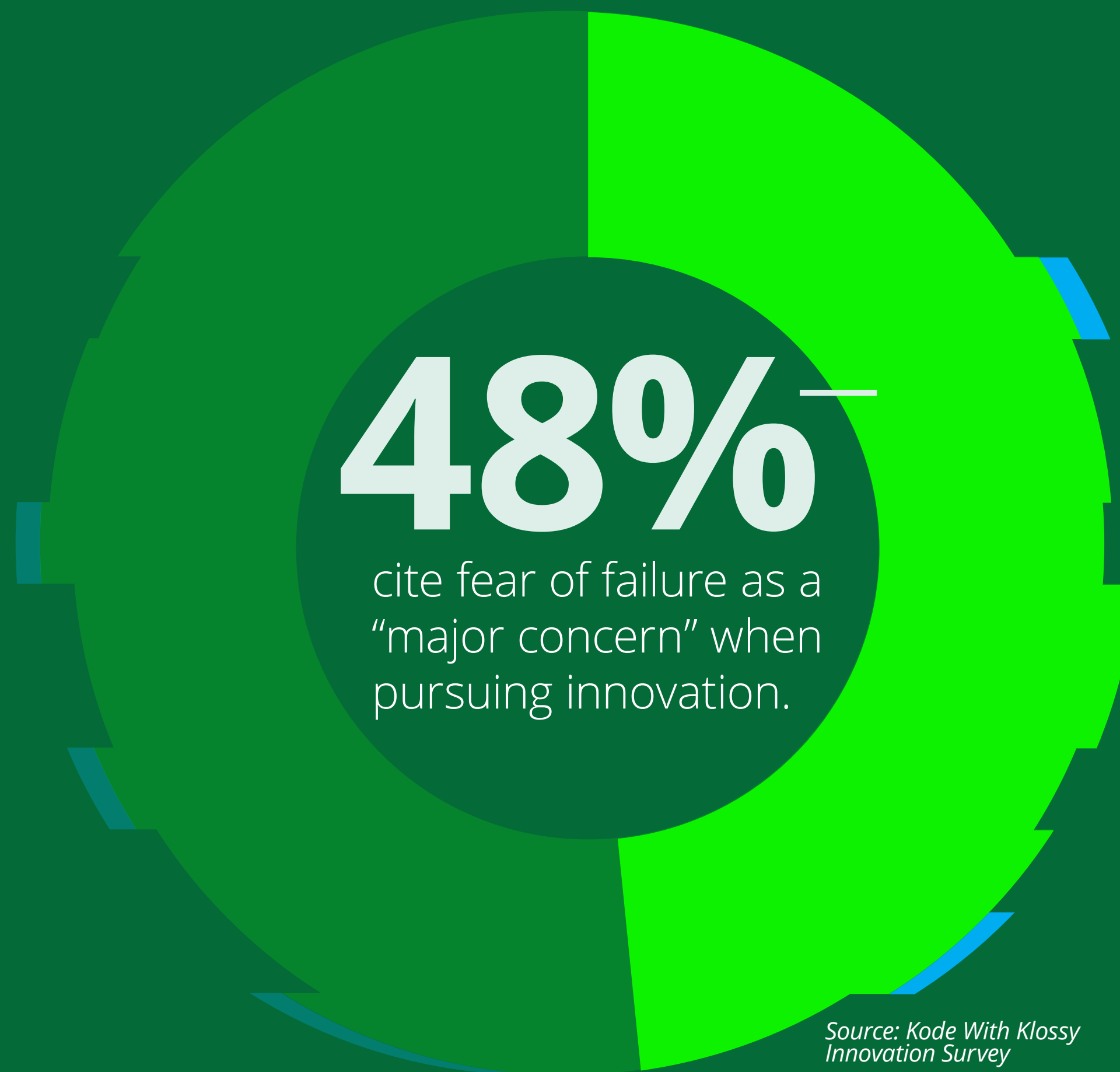
Cultivating freedom to experiment

Fear of failure is one challenge in driving innovation (an estimated 70%-90% of innovations fail [12]), with nearly half of respondents citing it as a major concern (48%) when pursuing these projects, underscoring the importance of cultivating psychological safety in the workplace. Embracing failure as a constructive part of the ideation process can help individuals to refine risk-taking strategies, aligns them with broader innovation goals, enhances problem-solving capabilities, and generates critical insights that fuel potential breakthrough solutions. Respondents with direct experience with failure were able to learn valuable lessons to apply to their future work (23%), strengthen their resilience and perseverance (22%), and find motivation to seek further feedback and collaboration (20%), underscoring the importance of failure as part of broader learning that is essential to the innovation process. Failure, when reframed as a learning mechanism, can be a powerful driver for progress.

**Building resilient teams**

To better navigate the obstacles inherent in innovation, resilience should be cultivated across the organization. Creative thinking and problem solving, emotional intelligence and empathy, and adaptability are often essential skills for helping to overcome resistance to change. Leaders play an important role in modeling resilience by championing a culture that values experimentation and calculated risk-taking over rigid productivity metrics. By setting the tone at the top, leaders can demonstrate the value of problem-solving skill sets and engender confidence in individuals and teams to overcome risks and pitfalls inherent to the innovation process.

When given tools and support for development, resilience can flourish. With access to training, mentorship, and other resources, nearly six in 10 surveyed see themselves as comfortable or very able to adapt to risks and challenges and half are confident or very confident in their ability to recover from setbacks. Experience with failure can plant seeds that can thrive in a variety of environments, even those that may be hostile to growth.

48% —

cite fear of failure as a "major concern" when pursuing innovation.

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

56%

over half of respondents leveraging relationship-driven problem solving when solving complex problems or adapting to rapid change - either through consulting peers or mentors (32%), group brainstorming sessions (15%), or group trial and error or experimentation (9%).

32%

15%

9%
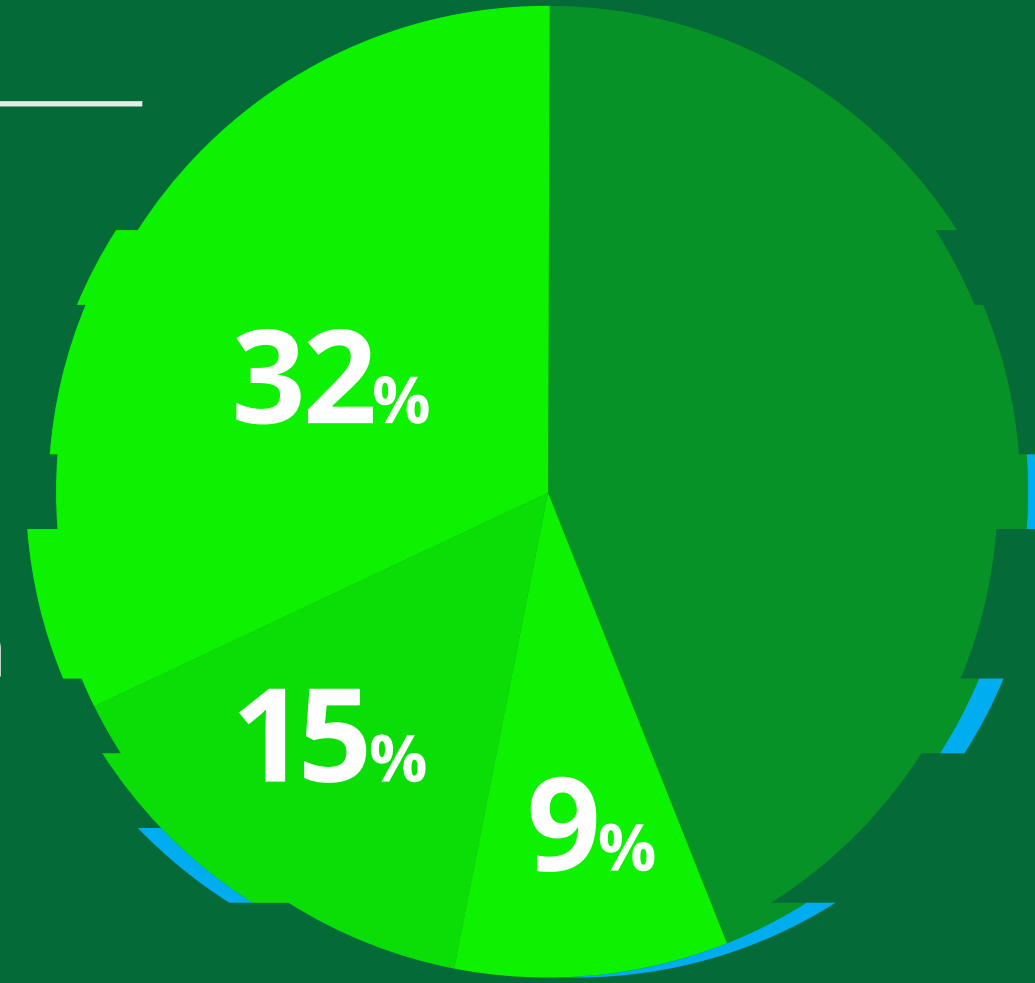
Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

40%

expect to spend at least half of their time doing innovation-related activities.

Source: Kode With Klossy Innovation Survey

Activating diverse networks

Collaboration, both internal and external, is key to overcoming institutional barriers. Leveraging a broader network is seen as the most common way of overcoming obstacles, with over half of respondents leverage relationship-driven problem solving when solving complex problems or adapting to rapid change—either through consulting peers or mentors (32%), group brainstorming sessions (15%), or group trial and error or experimentation (9%).

Creating teams that combine multiple Innovation Archetypes can stimulate complementary problem-solving approaches that supercharge progress. For example, connecting Progress Visionaries, who are the most likely to turn to others for help in problem solving, with Insight Trailblazers, who are least likely to seek help from others, can jumpstart outreach when teams are stuck. Diverse teams that blend different strengths and perspectives provide a fertile ground for innovation to flourish. Teams that leverage their collective intelligence are often better equipped to transform obstacles into opportunities.

Championing personal accountability

Embedding innovation-based accountability as part of core job descriptions can unleash hidden potential. Two-thirds of respondents see performing innovation-based activities as part of day-to-day responsibilities as important to their career choice and 40% expect to spend at least half of their time doing innovation-related activities. The desire for innovation to be part of work responsibilities indicates it can act as a powerful tool to tap into underlying intrinsic motivation – helping unleash a culture where innovative thinking becomes the norm rather than the exception. However, demonstrating leadership value and commitment to innovation may require disrupting assumptions that organizational priorities focus on transactional productivity.

Many organizations claim to embrace failure as part of their culture, but few systemically enable it. Leaders (and their organizational systems) should go beyond good intentions – they should actively remove the fear of failure that holds back genuine innovation (and adoption). Real progress is achieved when failure is not only accepted, but recognized as crucial for growth and learning, empowering individuals to take calculated risks, learn from setbacks, and drive bold initiatives. This commitment to personal accountability unleashes the full potential of individuals, transforming challenges into stepping-stones for achieving transformative results.

Essential strategies to maximize impact

- **Dismantle institutional barriers** – identify top system and process impediments to innovation to create innovation pathways that work with instead of against the organization.

- **Adapt collaboration models** – emphasize in-person approaches for activities such as creative ideation, team bonding, and complex problem solving, to bolster hybrid team performance while redesigning physical spaces from the ground up to optimize innovation in the age of hybrid work.

- **Foster a culture of experimentation** – develop structures that encourage cross-business connection/teaming and idea generation, provide resources to develop and test the ideas, and reinforce the value of failure as a learning mechanism to motivate your workforce and capitalize on their full potential.

- **Redefine leadership expectations** – shift leadership incentives to reward resilience and creativity, alongside interdepartmental teaming for complex problem solving, rather than purely focusing on transactional outputs.

- **Enable and encourage network access** – develop resources that give individuals and teams access to diverse perspectives and support that is essential to problem solving and furthering cross-functional objectives.

Measurements of progress

- Team Creativity, Productivity, and Efficiency
- Trust and Relationship Building Indicators
- Risk-Taking Frequency
- Resilience Indicators
- Cross-Functional Collaboration and Impact
- Employee Accountability in Innovation

Takeaway V:

Embed transformational progress into every facet of your organization – structure, culture, and management systems to incentivize resilience and entrepreneurship that is important to innovation and establishing market leadership.

Looking forward

The future holds untold potential – for those willing to seize the opportunity. By taking deliberate action, you can transform not only your organization but also could reshape entire industries and enrich society.

The journey toward sustainable, inclusive, and adaptable innovation often begins with the courage to act boldly – building a path beyond traditional boundaries without limits by fostering a culture of ingenuity.

Think beyond today's expectations to shape tomorrow's breakthroughs, where innovation and human potential work together to forge new realities. By daring to push forward with diverse voices and resilient minds, your organization can become not just a participant in progress, but a beacon lighting the way forward.

To help make these visions actionable, initiate conversations within your organizations and executive teams that focus on catalyzing transformative change:

- How are we reinventing the way we connect with our customers and workforce to uncover Innovation Archetypes and opportunities for value that extend the boundaries of human potential?

- How will our business models adapt to include the entire value chain, including customers, in our innovation model so we may seize upcoming opportunities within a constantly shifting landscape?

- How can we tailor emerging technology adoption strategies to accelerate time to value at scale?

- What targeted investments in learning and development can help confirm that we realize our boldest innovation ambitions?

- How can we foster an environment within our organization that nurtures elite and resilient teams capable of disrupting the status quo and achieving extraordinary outcomes?

The time has come to act. Champion inclusive innovation and start these conversations today, transforming your organization into one that leads decisively – propelling progress where customers and employees are at the very core.

About the authors

Deborah Golden

Deborah is wired for unconventional thinking and blending visionary leadership with her rare ability to turn audacious ideas into groundbreaking solutions and industry-defining realities. As Deloitte's Chief Innovation Officer, she leads at the forefront of technological evolution – tackling complex challenges and reimagining solutions. Rooted in personal experiences of overcoming adversity, Deborah is known for challenging the status quo with purposeful intention by enveloping humanity into innovation that not only drives progress but redefines the way organizations and individuals alike engage with the world. With a proven track record across global markets and industries, her career spans pioneering roles, such as Deloitte's Cyber & Strategic Risk Leader and Strategic Growth Offering Leader, forging uncharted paths for transformative growth unleashing exponential possibilities for clients worldwide. While other ask "why", Deborah asks "why not, harnessing her expertise in technology, innovation, and market transformation to delivery bold solutions that have empowered industries, reshaped markets, and unlocked untapped potential for clients worldwide.

Experts have long recognized the value of Deborah's insights. She has been featured in the Economist, The Wall Street Journal, CNBC, Harvard Business Review, SC Magazine, Women in Cybersecurity, World Economic Forum, Fast Company, and as a superhero in "The Big Hack" in the Ella the Engineer comic book series. Follow Deborah on LinkedIn.
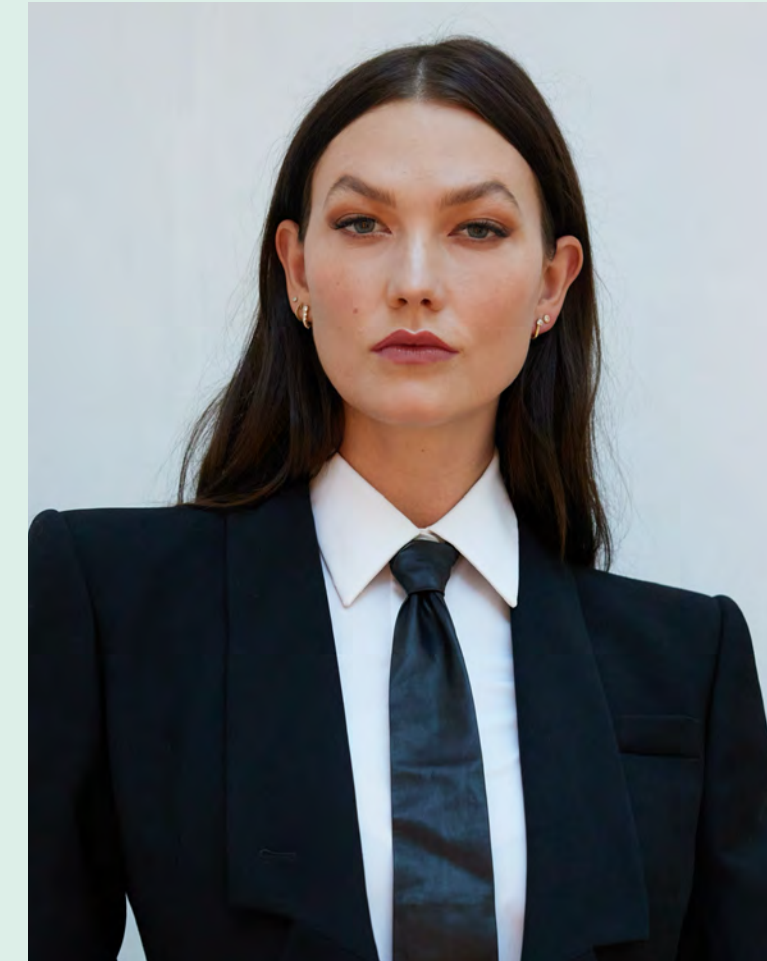
Karlie Kloss

Karlie is supermodel, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. Throughout her career, she has walked and shot campaigns for a myriad of top designers and is the face of numerous international campaigns, including Estée Lauder, Adidas, and Carolina Herrera. She has been on the cover of Vogue more than 40 times. In 2020, Karlie led a group of prestigious investors assembled by W Magazine Editor-in-Chief Sara Moonves to acquire the brand as part of a newly formed joint venture called W Media. In 2023, she established Bedford Media, a new media holding company focused on creator authenticity and reviving legacy brands with storied histories and cultural resonance. Recent Bedford acquisitions include i-D Magazine in 2023 and LIFE magazine in 2024. Karlie has focused a great deal of her philanthropic career on expanding opportunities for women and girls and protecting their rights. In 2015, Kloss founded Kode With Klossy. In 2022, Karlie started the Gateway Coalition, a collective that directs funds and resources to frontline Midwest organizations and clinics and the patients they serve. Gateway Coalition focuses on helping abortion providers maintain access to critical health care, covering wraparound patient costs, and simply keeping clinics' doors open.

Osi Imeokparia

Osi has spent her career working to support for-profit, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations. She is the first CEO of Kode With Klossy. Before joining Kode With Klossy, Osi was a VP of Technology at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI). CZI is a philanthropy that leverages technology to maximize the social impact of addressing systemic challenges. Osi started her career in tech spending 15+ years as a product leader in start-up, midsize, and large organizations with experience across both enterprise and consumer technology. At eBay, Osi managed seller and trust and safety products for the marketplace. While at Google, she served in product leadership roles for ad tech platforms like AdWords and Doubleclick.

Acknowledgments
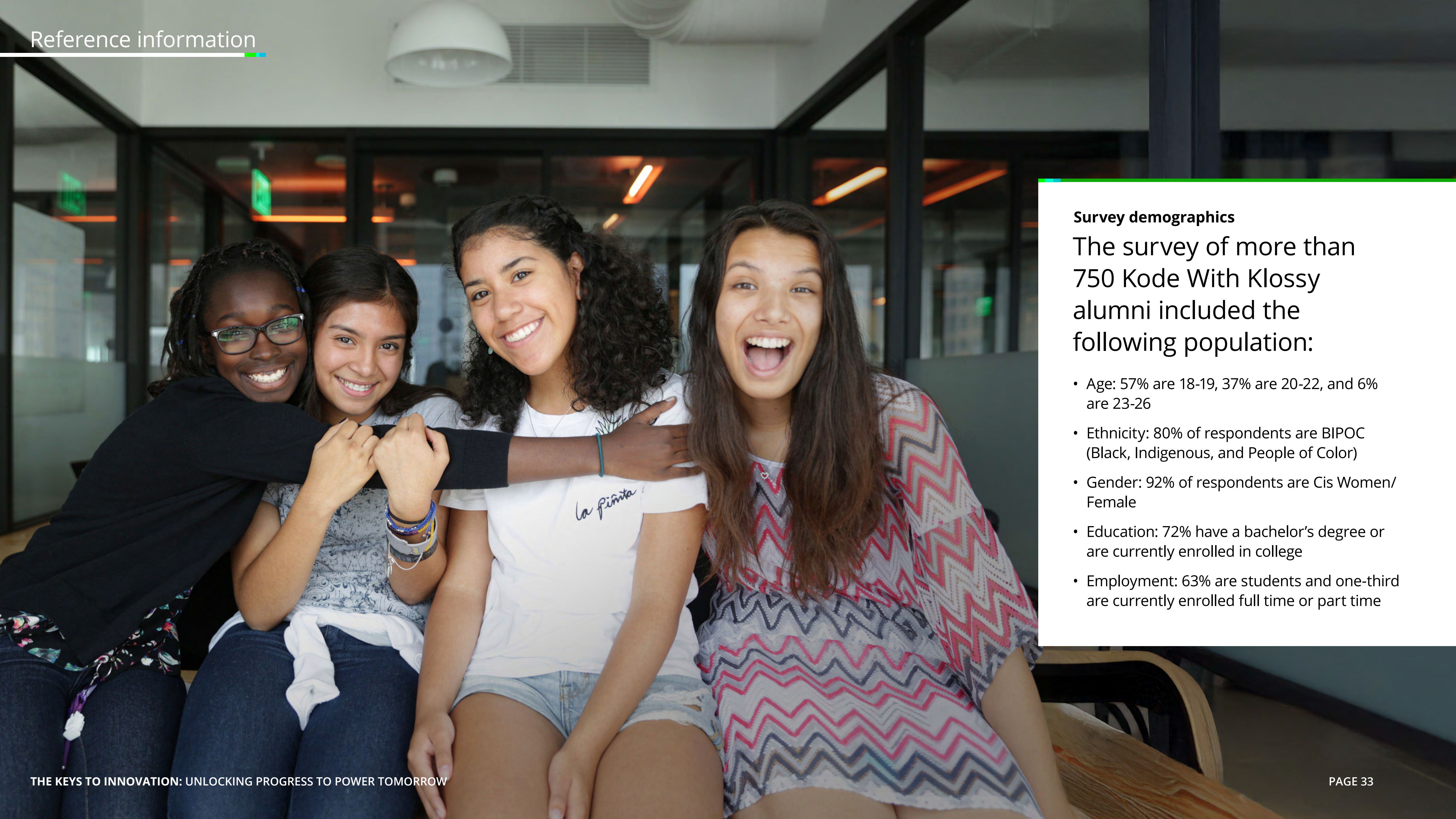
Survey demographics

The survey of more than 750 Kode With Klossy alumni included the following population:

- Age: 57% are 18-19, 37% are 20-22, and 6% are 23-26

- Ethnicity: 80% of respondents are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)

- Gender: 92% of respondents are Cis Women/ Female

- Education: 72% have a bachelor's degree or are currently enrolled in college

- Employment: 63% are students and one-third are currently enrolled full time or part time

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About Kode With Klossy

Kode With Klossy (KWK) is a 501c3 nonprofit founded in 2015. KWK programs offer a talent retention solution that is focused on closing the gender equity gap in tech. By providing ongoing technical learning experiences and curated opportunities, KWK supports a community of almost 11,000 young women and gender-expansive youth across their career and educational milestones, from age 13 to 26. Longitudinal investment in talent with an emphasis on culture and community are central to KWK's differentiation. Unlike traditional coding education nonprofits, KWK interventions act as a continuum of care over the long-term. KWK is able to assist with early talent identification for companies willing to invest in their future workforce. Most importantly, KWK provides supportive infrastructure that keeps young women and gender-expansive young adults committed to the technical career pathway in the face of headwinds that otherwise might derail them. While the onramp programs are designed for young people 13-18 years-old, today more than 60% of KWK community members are 18 and over. All of KWK's programs have been offered 100% free of charge. Nationally, only 3.8% of women are studying computer science or engineering in college. Comparatively, 78% of KWK's alumni go on to pursue majors or minors in computer science or engineering.

Learn more about Deloitte, Deloitte Foundation, and Kode With Klossy's collaboration

Deloitte and Kode With Klossy are teaming on multiple initiatives to harness the power of technology and open innovation models to tackle global challenges while reaching diverse communities. In addition, the Deloitte Foundation* has funded $100,000 to Kode With Klossy who awarded scholarships to winners of two Kode With Klossy alumni coding challenges to support their educational pursuits in credential programs in business, computer science, technology, engineering, and related academic disciplines.

Together, we are enhancing the innovation talent pipeline to drive progress for a new era.

*Note: The Deloitte Foundation was not involved in the research or creation of this report.