

# POCAM

6

Visible

Vocal

&

The BIPOC  
experience  
in Canadian  
Advertising  
& Marketing  
in 2025



# Land Acknowledgement

**Please take a moment to acknowledge whose land you are situated on and consider what steps you can take to facilitate Truth and Reconciliation wherever you are.**

[www.whose.land](http://www.whose.land)



# **POCAM VISION**

**To ensure that the voice, vision and talent of BIPOC professionals are fully and fairly present in Canadian advertising and marketing.**

# **POCAM REASON FOR BEING**

**There is systemic injustice in Canadian Advertising and Marketing and there is a need for an organization that champions the cause of BIPOC professionals.**

# **POCAM MISSION**

**Empower BIPOC advertising and marketing professionals so they can succeed within a systematically white working environment.**





# **Educate**

# **Advocate**

# **Elevate**

**Teach and tell our industry of BIPOC contributions and of BIPOC in the community.**

**Be the trusted industry voice of BIPOC professionals.**

**Be a platform for BIPOC professionals to network, showcase and grow their impact.**



# POCAM Board Members

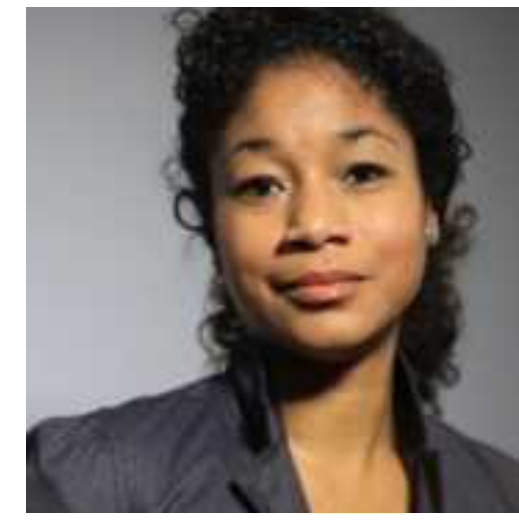
Meet the board members and co-founders\*



**Justin Senior\***  
Chair



**Gavin Barrett\***  
Vice-Chair



**Natalie Bomberry**  
Treasurer



**Joycelyn David**  
Director



**Erik dela Cruz**  
Secretary



**Aleena Mazhar**  
Director



**Ishma Alexander-Huet**  
Director



**Julian Franklin\***  
Director



# POCAM Steering Committee

Working alongside the board, these are our amazing steering committee members from across Canada.



**Deyra Jaye Fontaine**  
Winnipeg, MB



**Matthew Tsang**  
Vancouver, BC



**Chino Nnadi**  
Toronto, ON



**Mark Rutledge**  
Whitehorse, YK



**Ken St-Eloy**  
Montreal, QC

# Visible and Vocal 6

## Presented by



**Justin Senior**

POCAM Chair



**Julian Franklin**

Visible & Vocal Lead



**Nitin Bagga**

Visible & Vocal Data Analyst



**Param Saini**

Visible & Vocal Data Analyst

# Visible and Vocal 6 Leader Panel



**Joycelyn David**  
POCAM Board Member  
CEO, AVC



**Alica Hall**  
Executive Director  
Nia Centre



**Sartaj Sakaria**  
CEO, CCDI



**Melanie Issac Taitt**  
Senior Director Marketing,  
Lactalis

# Background

# METHODOLOGY

## FIELD DATES

December 2025 to February 2026

## SAMPLE SIZE

212 completes among BIPOC professionals in Canadian marketing & advertising.

## MODE OF SURVEY

**Online survey**

## AVERAGE LENGTH OF SURVEY

**9 minutes to complete**

## SCREENING

To qualify, a respondent had to be:

- Current Canadian resident
- Belong to a race/ethnicity classification exclusive of White/Caucasian
- Work within an advertising/marketing context either at an agency or client-side

## SAMPLE COMPOSITION

Natural over-sample in Black, Chinese, and South Asian respondents and those at creative agencies; F 64%/ M 34%/ Non-Binary 2%; 59% not born in Canada

## LANGUAGE

Survey was conducted in English (with survey accessible for people in both English and French Canada)

## STANDARDS

We followed the classic MRIA Code of Conduct for Market and Social Research

## SURVEY CONTINUITY

Question structure same as 2024 survey with minor additions.

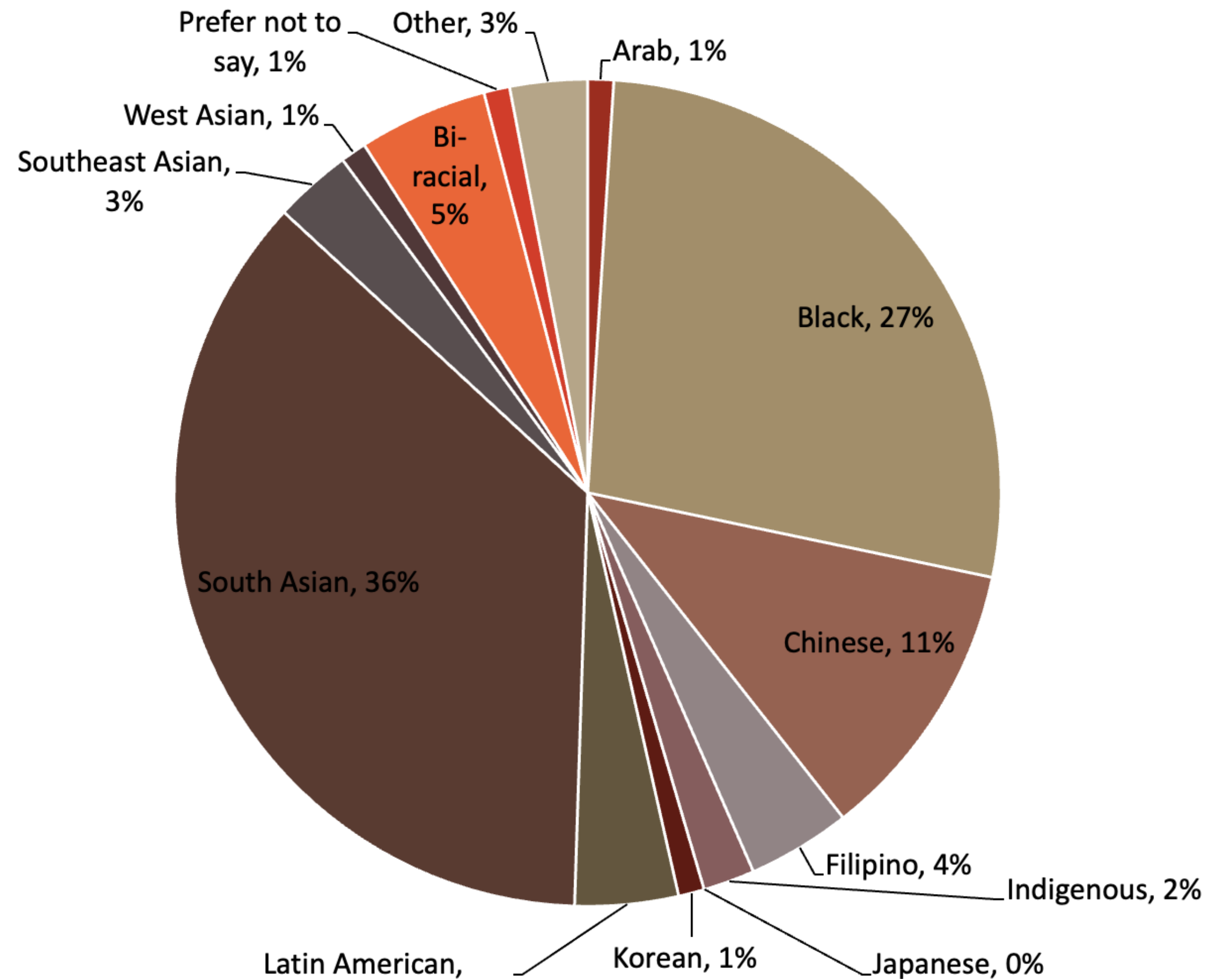
## DATA CLEANING AND VALIDATION

Review of respondent-level data to ensure quality



## ETHNIC SEGMENTS REPRESENTED IN THIS YEAR'S REPORT

**Over-indexing segments:  
South Asian, Black and Chinese**



Q2: What is your race/ethnicity? (n=205)



**CHAPTER 1**

# **Lay of the Land**



## SLIGHT INCREASE IN OPTIMISM ABOUT RACE RELATIONS IN CANADA (VS LAST YEAR)

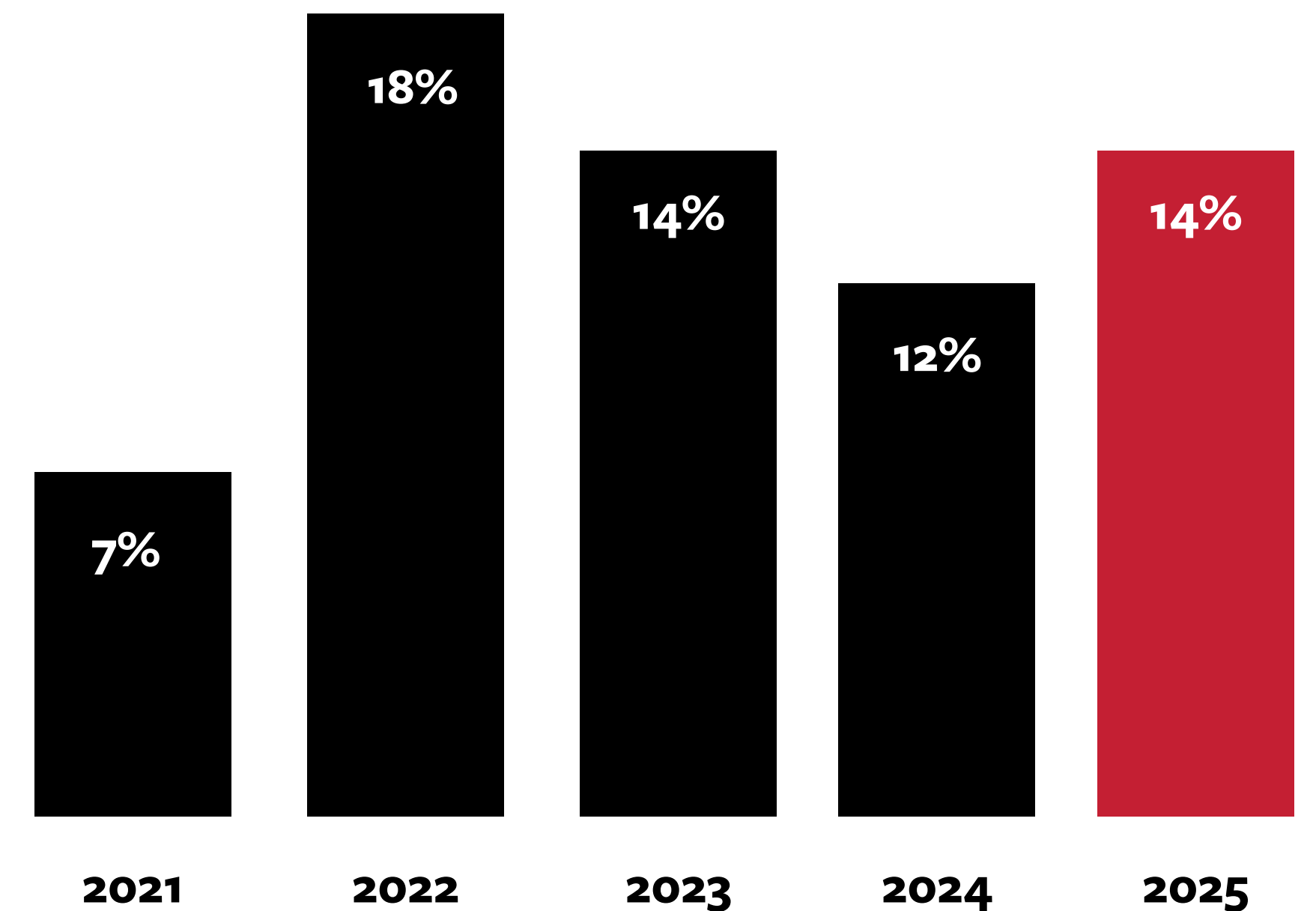
14%

of BIPOC think race relations are good in Canada (+2% versus last 2024; woman cohort see +4% increase to 14%)

VS

68%

of White Canadians, regardless of industry, think race relations are good in Canada\* (2025)



Q27: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: Race relations in Canada are good (n=145) (complete responses) (low sample size for women cohort at n=66)

**2025 HAD A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN ANTI-BLACK AND ANTI-ASIAN DISCRIMINATION AND A NOMINAL INCREASE IN ANTI-INDIGENOUS DISCRIMINATION COMPARED TO 2024**

**90%**  
agree anti-Black  
discrimination exists  
in Canada  
(+7% versus 2024)

**89%**  
agree  
anti-Indigenous  
discrimination  
exists in Canada  
(+2% versus 2024)

**92%**  
agree anti-Asian  
discrimination  
exists in Canada  
(+5% versus 2024)

Q27: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: anti-Black discrimination exists in Canada; anti-Indigenous discrimination exists in Canada; anti-Asian discrimination exists in Canada (n= 157)  
(complete responses)



## NO CHANGE IN WORKPLACE STRESS

**66%**  
(No change vs 2024)

of BIPOC, who work at predominantly White agencies/client side, believe racial bias exists at their agency/workplace.

By contrast, 23% (+3% from 2024) of BIPOC who work at BIPOC predominant agencies/workplaces.

(small sample size, n=35)

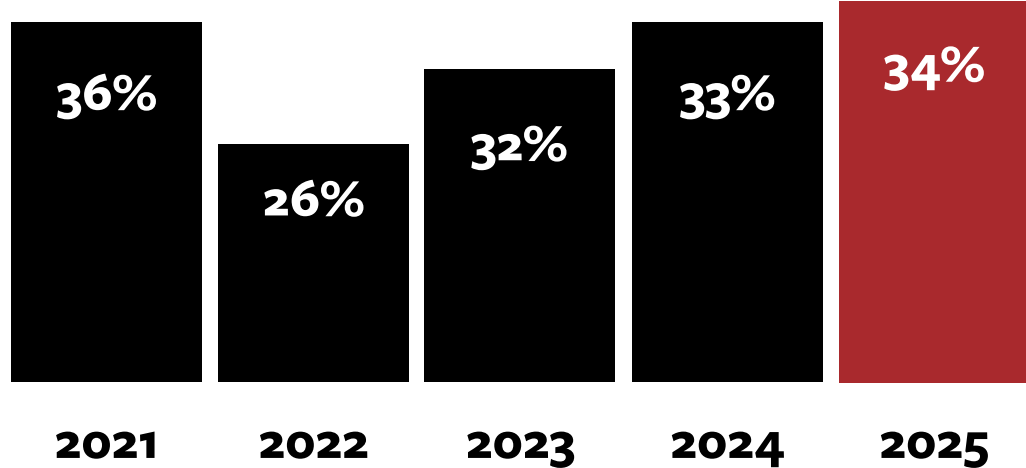
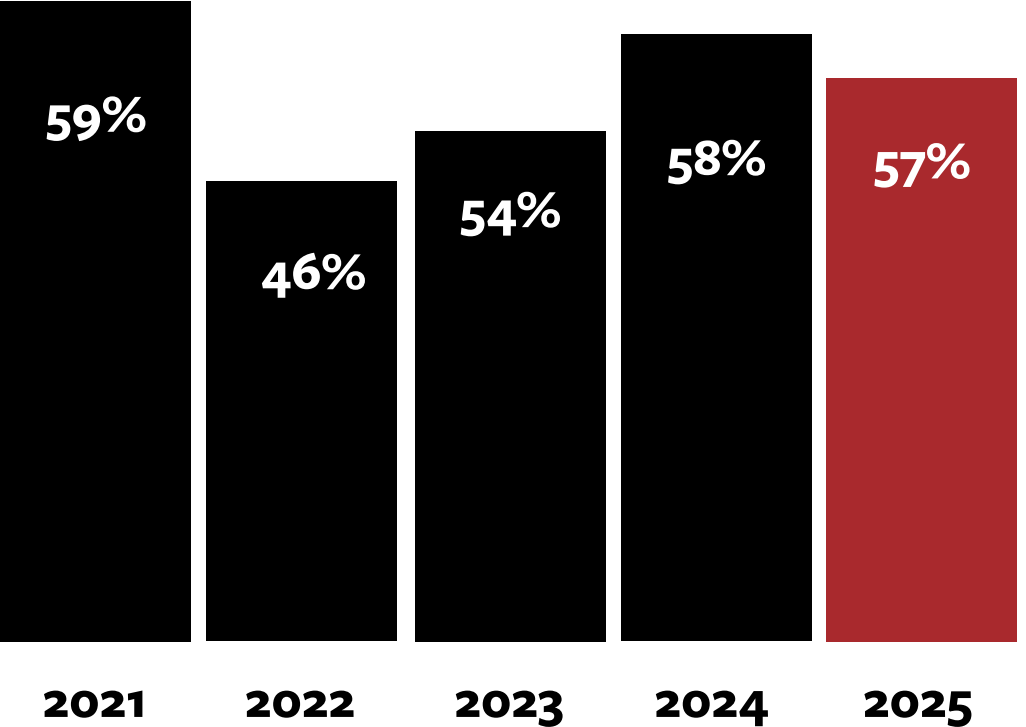
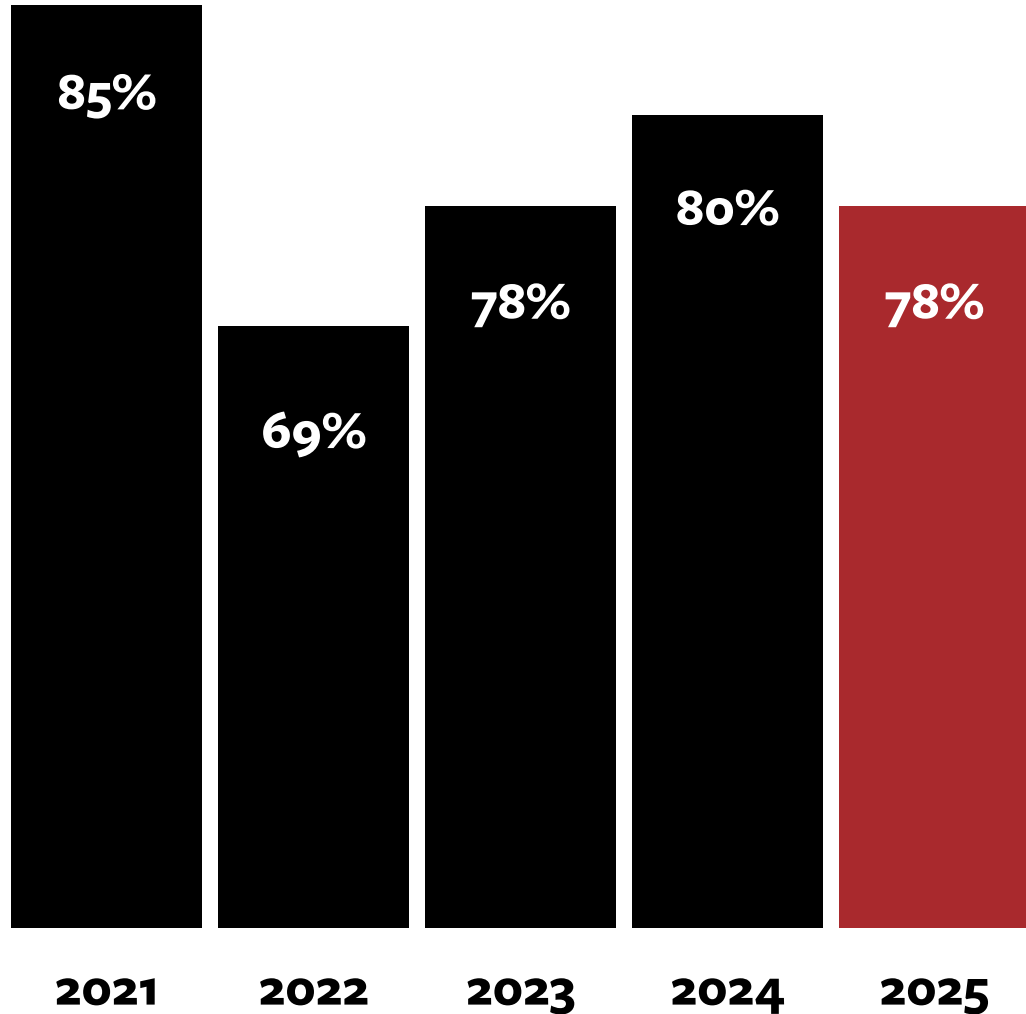
Q20: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: I believe that racial bias exists at my agency/workplace  
(all responses, agree + strongly agree)



# OUTWARD DISCRIMINATION REMAINS UNCHANGED

**BIAS**  
(structural, invisible, long-term)

## EXPLICIT DISCRIMINATION (lived experience and outward incidents)



Experienced a **microaggression** from a colleague at work in advertising.

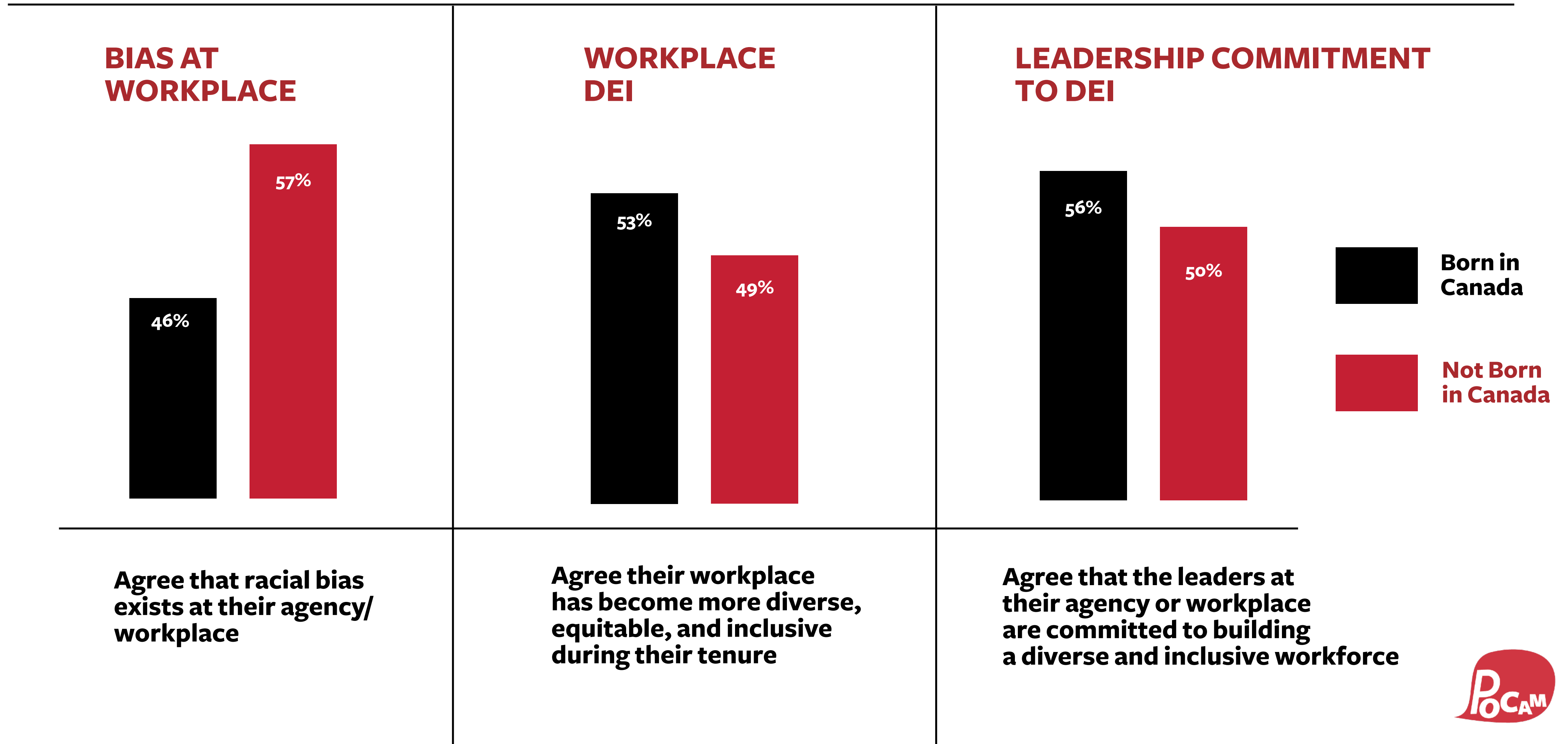
Experienced racial **discrimination** from a colleague at work in advertising.

Experienced **racial harassment** from a colleague at work in advertising.

Q21/23/25: Have you yourself ever experienced microaggression / racial discrimination / racial harassment from a colleague while working or attempting to work in Canadian advertising or marketing? (complete responses)



# CONTINUED PERCEPTION GAP BETWEEN BIPOC BORN IN CANADA VS THOSE NOT BORN IN CANADA. THOSE BORN IN CANADA HOLD A MORE OPTIMISTIC VIEW—A REVERSAL OF PREVIOUS YEARS.





“White colleagues do not face constant microaggressions and are constantly set up for success. I feel I have to work thrice as hard to be taken half as seriously as a white colleague with similar or even lesser experience and qualifications.”

In regards to day-to-day work life, how different do you feel your experiences are compared to your white colleagues?



**CHAPTER 2**

# **Progress?**



**14%**

**of companies installed  
unconscious bias training in 2025  
(-5% versus 2024)**

**26%**

**reported that programs were  
instituted in previous years.  
(+5% versus 2024)**

**14%**

**of companies instituted  
DEI policies in 2025  
(-15% versus 2024)**

**41%**

**reported that programs were  
instituted in previous years.  
(+7% versus 2024)**

Q39: Has your workplace instituted either of the following in the past 12 months?  
Unconscious Bias Training, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policies. (all responses)





# **SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN EXECUTIVE ENTRY**

# **-6%**

**decline in workplaces hiring BIPOC professionals in executive positions in the past 12 months.**

**(2025: 35%, 2024: 43%, 2023: 45%, 2022: 48%, 2021: 40%)**

Q40: Has your workplace hired BIPOC professionals in executive positions in the past 12 months? (completed responses)





**MENTORSHIPS  
LEVELS  
DECREASED  
SLIGHTLY**

**-2%**

**29% of respondents have a mentor or sponsor at their agency/workplace (who is also BIPOC).**

**(2025: 29%, 2024: 31%, 2023: 27%, 2022: 24%, 2021: 27%)**

Q28: Do you have a mentor or sponsor at your agency/workplace who is BIPOC? (completed responses)



“There is a general lack of mentorship and planned action for growth. This might be a general experience for everyone, but I feel it more so as a minority. Status quo is sufficient for the senior team, which has resulted in no BIPOC senior representation in all the years I have been here.”



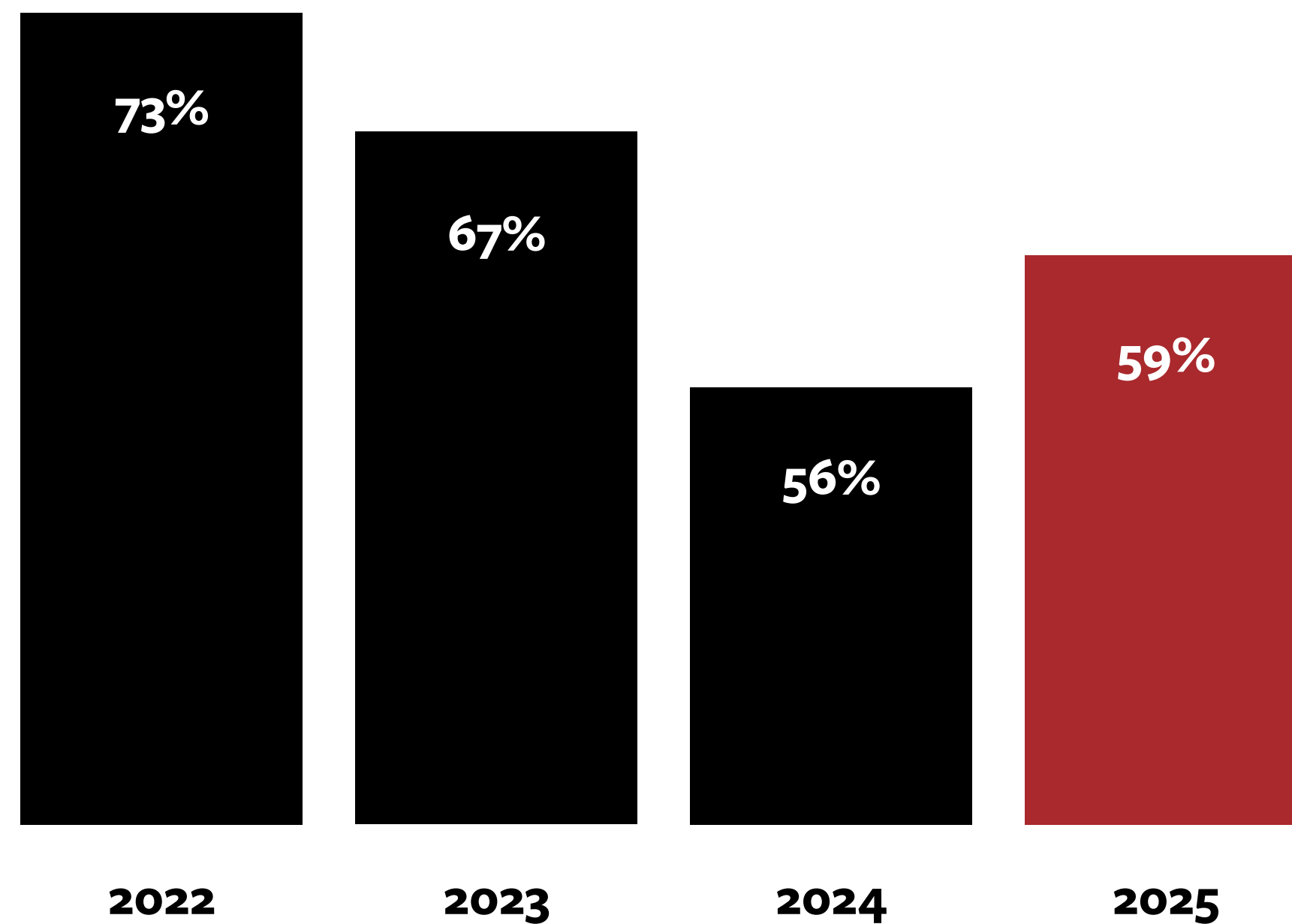
**CHAPTER 3**

# **Representation and Systemic Change Matters**





## **BELIEF THAT EMPLOYERS ARE MAKING POSITIVE STEPS TO FOCUS ON INCLUSION AND ADVANCEMENT OF BIPOC IN WORKPLACE**



# 59%

**of BIPOC believe their employer is making positive steps to focus on inclusion and advancement.**

**Contrast with 83% in BIPOC predominant companies; and 51% in non-BIPOC-predominant companies**

**(+3% vs 2024 AND -8% vs 2023)**

Q29: Has your employer continued making positive steps to focus on the inclusion and advancement of BIPOC employees in your workplace? (completed responses)





“I am privileged to work in a blessed environment where everyone is treated with equity, Black, white or any other identity. It starts with our Black-inclusive community champion founder, who operates with the guiding principle that ALL deserve a chance to dream. No one is better than anyone else.”



**BEING  
'ON GUARD'  
REMAINS AT AN  
ALL-TIME HIGH**

**88%**

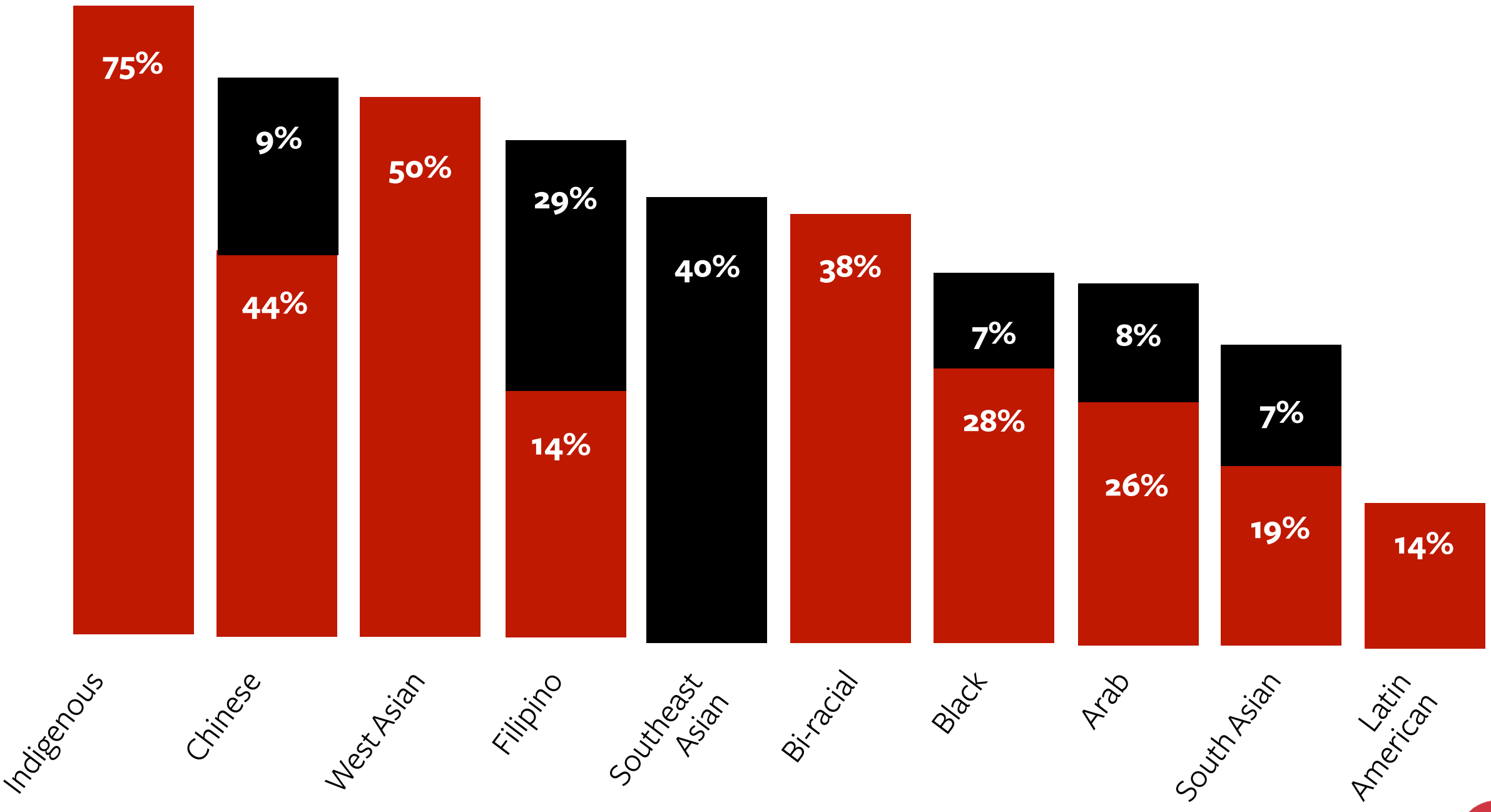
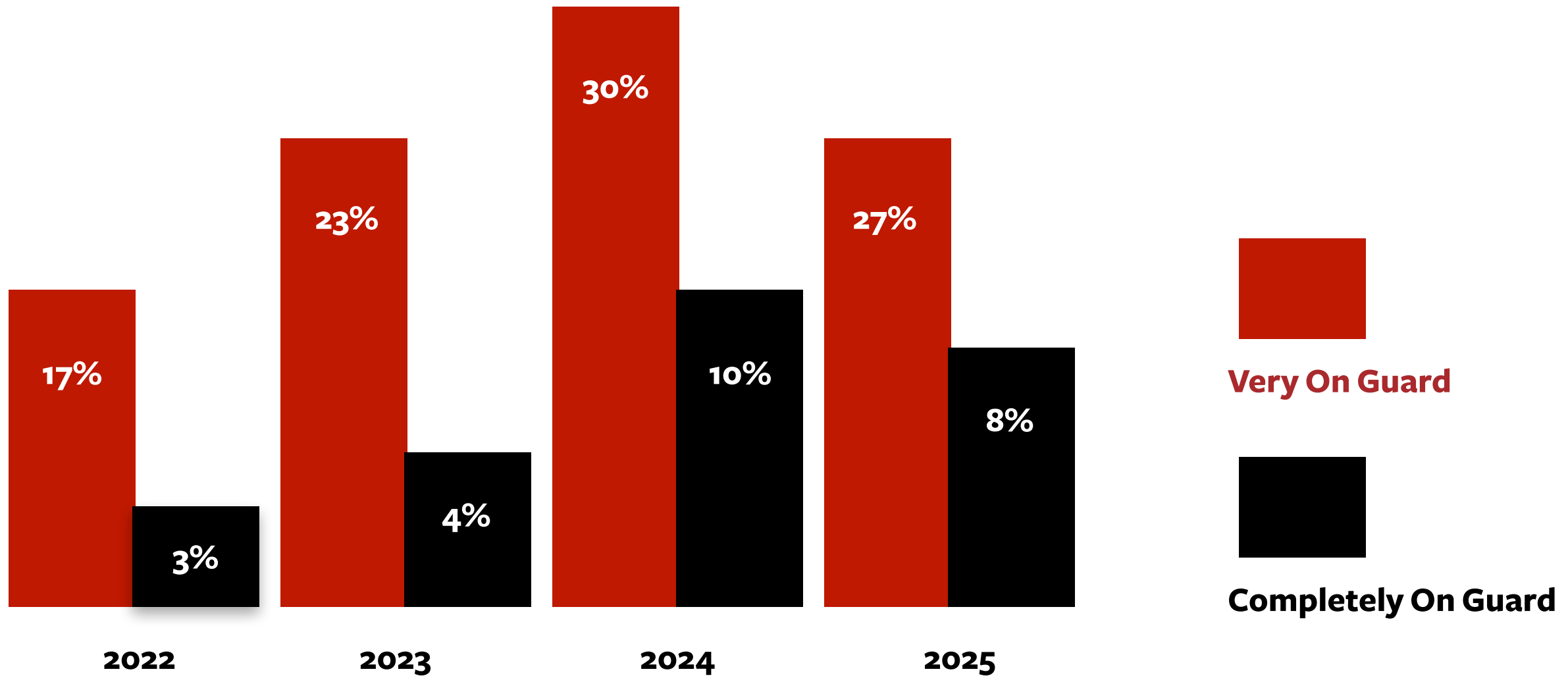
**(2025: 88%, 2024: 88%, 2023: 84%,  
2022: 77%, 2021: 86%)**

**BIPOC report needing to be on guard  
at their agency or place of employment.  
Very (-4%) + Completely (-2%)  
on guard increased YoY**



# DIGGING DEEPER:

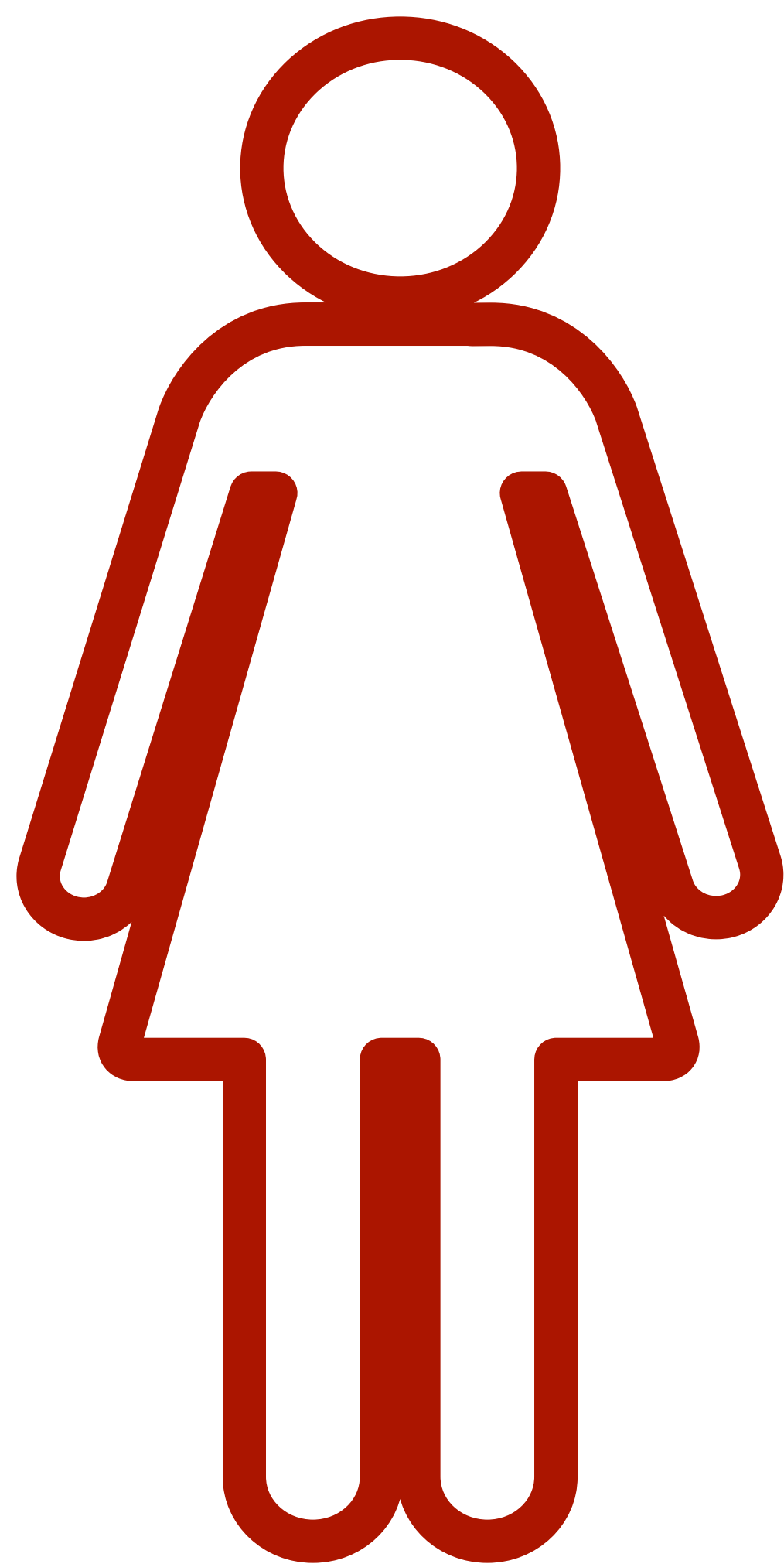
## VERY + COMPLETELY ON GUARD DECREASED SLIGHTLY



Q35: How on guard do you need to be against bias at your place of employment? n=145 (completed responses)



**CHAPTER 4**  
**Specific**  
**Experiences**



**BIPOC IDENTIFYING AS  
FEMALE WHO BELIEVE THAT  
RACIAL BIAS EXISTS AT THEIR  
AGENCY/WORKPLACE IS**

**1.13x**

**GREATER THAN MEN  
(2024: 1.1x, 2023: 1.4x, 2022: 1.8x)**



## EAST ASIAN EXPERIENCE

81%

have experienced a microaggression  
(+17% versus 2024)

81%

have experienced racial discrimination  
(+34% versus 2024)

Q21/Q23: Have you yourself ever experienced microaggression/racial discrimination from a colleague while working or attempting to work in Canadian advertising or marketing? (completed responses) (small sample size)





## **INEQUALITY OF PRIVILEGE: EAST ASIAN EXPERIENCE**

“I’ve witnessed favouritism in each workplace I’ve worked at with white colleagues. Even if I have more knowledge and experience, senior leadership will always defer to a white staff over me.”

## BLACK EXPERIENCE

# 92%

have experienced a microaggression  
(Flat versus 2024)

# 64%

have experienced racial discrimination  
(-8% versus 2024)

Q21/Q23: Have you yourself ever experienced microaggression/racial discrimination from a colleague while working or attempting to work in Canadian advertising or marketing? (completed responses) (small sample size)





## **INEQUALITY OF PRIVILEGE: BLACK EXPERIENCE**

“I have to work twice as hard to get an inch of recognition or promotion. I pride myself as a hard worker and consistently work to further my professional and personal development.

I’m also aware of the reality that I was born entering a world where I will face systemic barriers my entire life. I’ve been able to navigate these spaces to the best of my ability and had exposure quite early in my personal and professional life to understand how to work in these spaces.

I am aware of the privilege I have with my name being Anglo-Saxon and esthetically presenting, but I am also aware and constantly reminded that I am a dark-skinned black woman. I need to be at my 100% in order to be taken seriously and work twice as hard to obtain the life I want and be confident in my own skin and capabilities.”

## SOUTH ASIAN EXPERIENCE

71%

have experienced a microaggression  
(-13% versus 2024)

47%

have experienced racial discrimination  
(-14% versus 2024)

Q21/Q23: Have you yourself ever experienced microaggression/racial discrimination from a colleague while working or attempting to work in Canadian advertising or marketing? (completed responses) (small sample size)





## INEQUALITY OF PRIVILEGE: SOUTH ASIAN EXPERIENCE

“The mis-spelling of my name in emails and not attempting to learn my name in meetings, often while giving the common excuse of “Oh, I’m going to butcher your name so I won’t say it” Favourable discussions with white colleagues but treating me as a “resource” rather than a person. Cliques where BIPOC colleagues are shut out, often left on the outside looking in.”

---

“Because I’m in a senior role, I’m treated with more respect than earlier in my career, but I don’t know if it’s the same as my white counterparts.”



**CHAPTER 5**

# **Impact of AI**

## IMPACT OF AI

# 35%

believe that the emergence of AI is impacting their job security (-7% versus 2024)

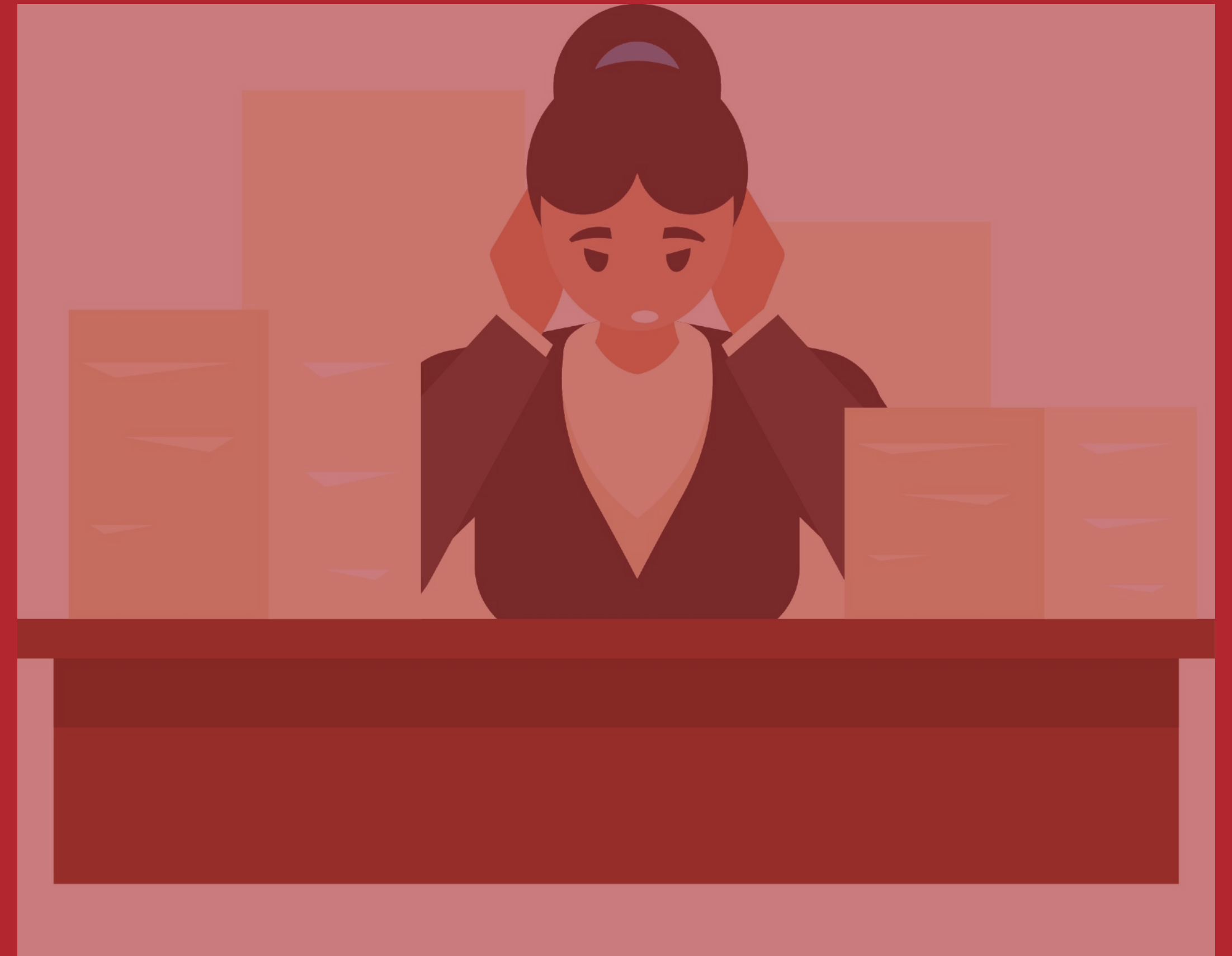
VS

# 47%

Nearly half of employed Canadians say they're worried that AI and automation could soon force them to change their job or career

\*Source: Canadian attitudes toward artificial intelligence study 2025 by Abacus Data

Q/33: Has the emergence of AI in your workplace had an impact on your current or future job security?






## IMPACT OF AI

“As a leader, I see AI as a tool I want my team to start using. Unfortunately, it means that some lower-level positions may no longer exist or will need to be changed.”

“The way business is conducted is quickly changing due to the emergence of AI. It has made it clear to me that most jobs will not function in the same way they always have, and becoming AI-equipped is more necessary than ever for future-proofing careers.”

“AI has helped provide more efficiency in my day-to-day role. Through email writing and/or note structuring, it’s certainly helped with my time management.”

# Implications & Recommendations



# **WORKPLACE EQUITY IMBALANCE**

DEI policies as tools to educate and personify organizational values are diminishing, and those that exist are delivering less impact in the workplace



## **AI. A TOOL FOR GOOD?**

BIPOC professionals are embracing AI as a tool for their personal development while cautious of its implications for their future job opportunities



# DIFFERENT STROKES FOR BIPOC FOLKS

BIPOC professionals are experiencing varying levels of exclusion and discrimination, requiring all to continue to step up and support one another through mentorship, advocacy, and employment opportunities



## **BIPOC FEMALE FORWARD**

Female BIPOC professionals now account for two-thirds of Visible & Vocal 6 respondents—an all-time high—underscoring the growing importance of intersectionality in shaping and interpreting workplace experiences.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**How POCAM**  
**can help**



**According to BIPOC professionals:  
Industry Advocacy  
and Mentorship  
Programming are  
the top priorities  
for POCAM**



**Our thanks to these organizations for their support.**



barrettandwelsh



The logo for POCAM is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif font. The letters 'P', 'O', and 'C' are significantly larger than 'A' and 'M'. The logo is contained within a large, black speech bubble shape. The background of the entire left side of the image is a vibrant red, filled with a dense pattern of smaller, black speech bubble shapes of various sizes and orientations.

**POCAM**

Thank you for reading  
**VISIBLE & VOCAL**  
Canadian BIPOC Advertising & Marketing  
Study 2025

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**in f** 