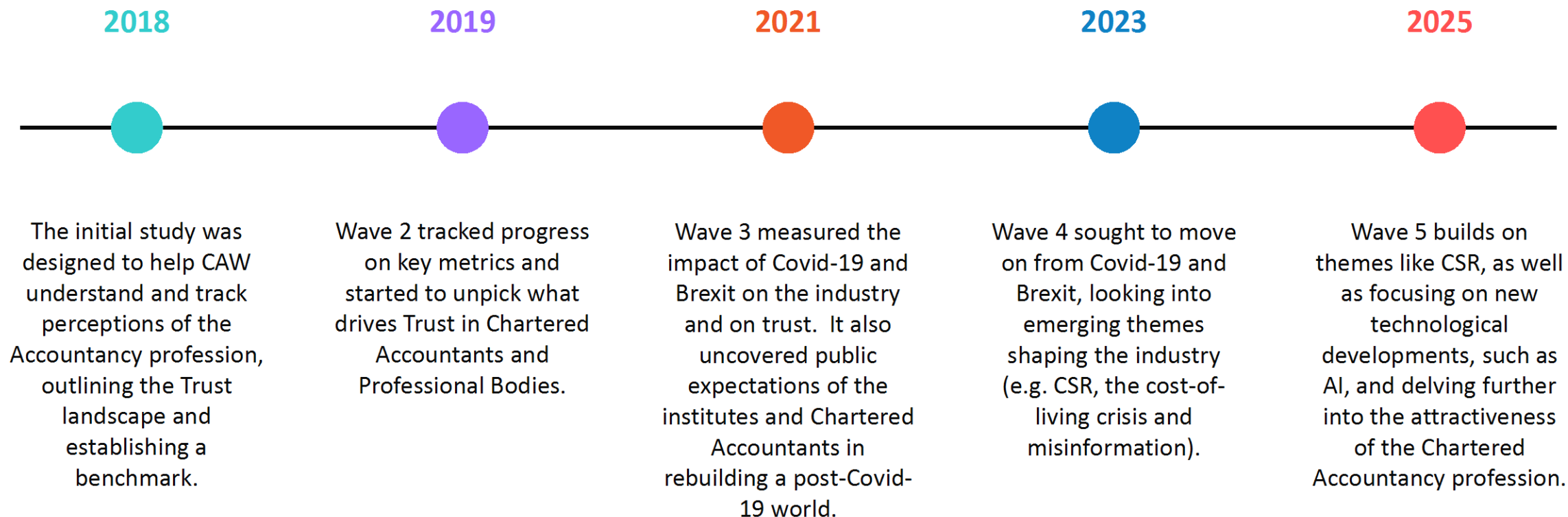


EVALUATING TRUST IN THE ACCOUNTANCY SECTOR FOR CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Wave 5 | September 2025



Background



Objectives

Business objectives:

To build Trust in the accountancy industry across key markets

Communication objectives:

To develop a proactive reputation strategy towards business leaders across markets

Research objectives:

- Measure current levels of Trust in the accountancy sector, focusing on Chartered Accountants in particular, amongst business leaders in key markets
- Track any shifts in sentiment in comparison to the four previous waves (2018, 2019, 2021, 2023)
- Understand what is driving Trust and how to build it (in the accountancy industry more broadly and in perceptions of professional bodies operating within the sector)

Methodology

The research was conducted by Edelman Dxl, an independent market research firm, in partnership with CAW.

- **How:** 15-minute online survey
- **Who we spoke to:** Financial decision makers (Director level or above)
- **Where:** England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Rep. Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, [Singapore \[NEW since 2019\]](#), South Africa, [Zimbabwe \[NEW\]](#)
- **When:** Fieldwork was conducted between April and May
- **Sample size:** 1,725 total participants across 10 markets



n=413



n=102



n=159



n=205



n=59



n=129



n=129



n=250



n=204



n=75

Key findings

Trust in Chartered Accountants and Professional Bodies continues to grow

Trust in Chartered Accountants (83%) is stable since 2023, while Accountants (78%) saw a drop of -3pts, suggesting a clear Trust differential between the two, as a 5pt-gap has now developed.

The stability seen in Chartered Accountants is unique among the top trusted professions, as Chartered Accountants secured their position as the third most trusted, moving above Scientists (82%) and closing the gap on Doctors and Engineers (both 85%). However, to ensure growth, better performance on confidentiality, which dropped -5pts, is needed.

Chartered Accountants are reliable partners on guiding businesses through AI adoption and misinformation

After acting as reliable partners during crises over the last four years (Covid-19, Brexit and economic uncertainty), Chartered Accountants are now playing a vital role in guiding businesses to adapt to new challenges (85%), such as misinformation and AI challenges.

In fact, 3 in 4 say their organisation is already relying on Chartered Accountants to ensure data integrity, increasing +6pts since 2023, consolidating Chartered Accountants' position as Data Custodians.

Purpose (ESG) is gaining importance; yet Chartered Accountants, despite improvements, are struggling to keep up

Though not among top expectations, Purpose is growing in importance at a fast rate (+4 vs. 2023) – more so than other dimensions of Trust which are stable. However, as Chartered Accountants' performance on Purpose drivers is growing at a slower rate (+2 vs. 2023), a bigger performance-expectation gap starts to emerge compared to 2023.

Despite this gap, the credibility of Chartered Accountants' voice regarding Purpose issues is undoubted (82%), up +13pts since 2023, signalling both an opportunity and necessity to regain focus.

Despite being held in high esteem, Chartered Accountancy profession is suffering a talent shortage

Not only is Chartered Accountancy viewed as a prestigious profession (86%) that attracts quality candidates (77%), but it is one that financial decision makers would encourage new graduates to enter (81%), only behind Engineers, Science and Technology / FinTech (all 84%).

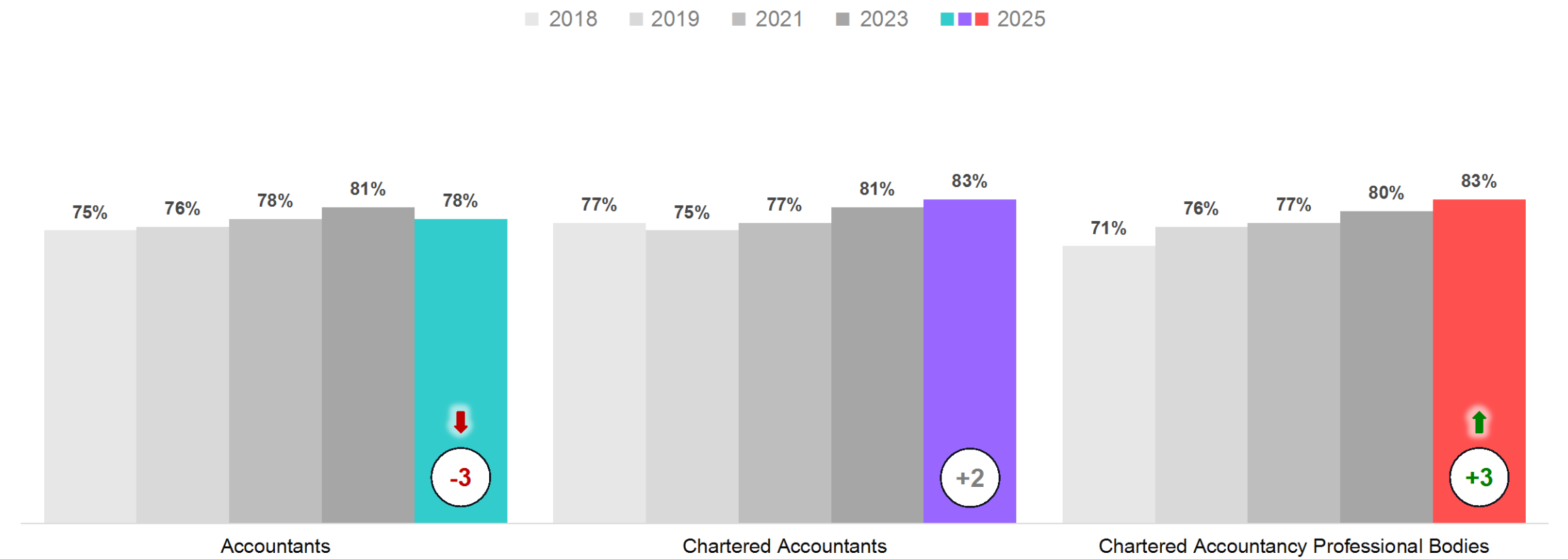
However, the profession is facing a shortage in talent (70%), which is having profound effects on businesses, including on costs (77%) as well as compliance and financial risks (74%).

Trust in Chartered Accountants and Professional Bodies show trending growth

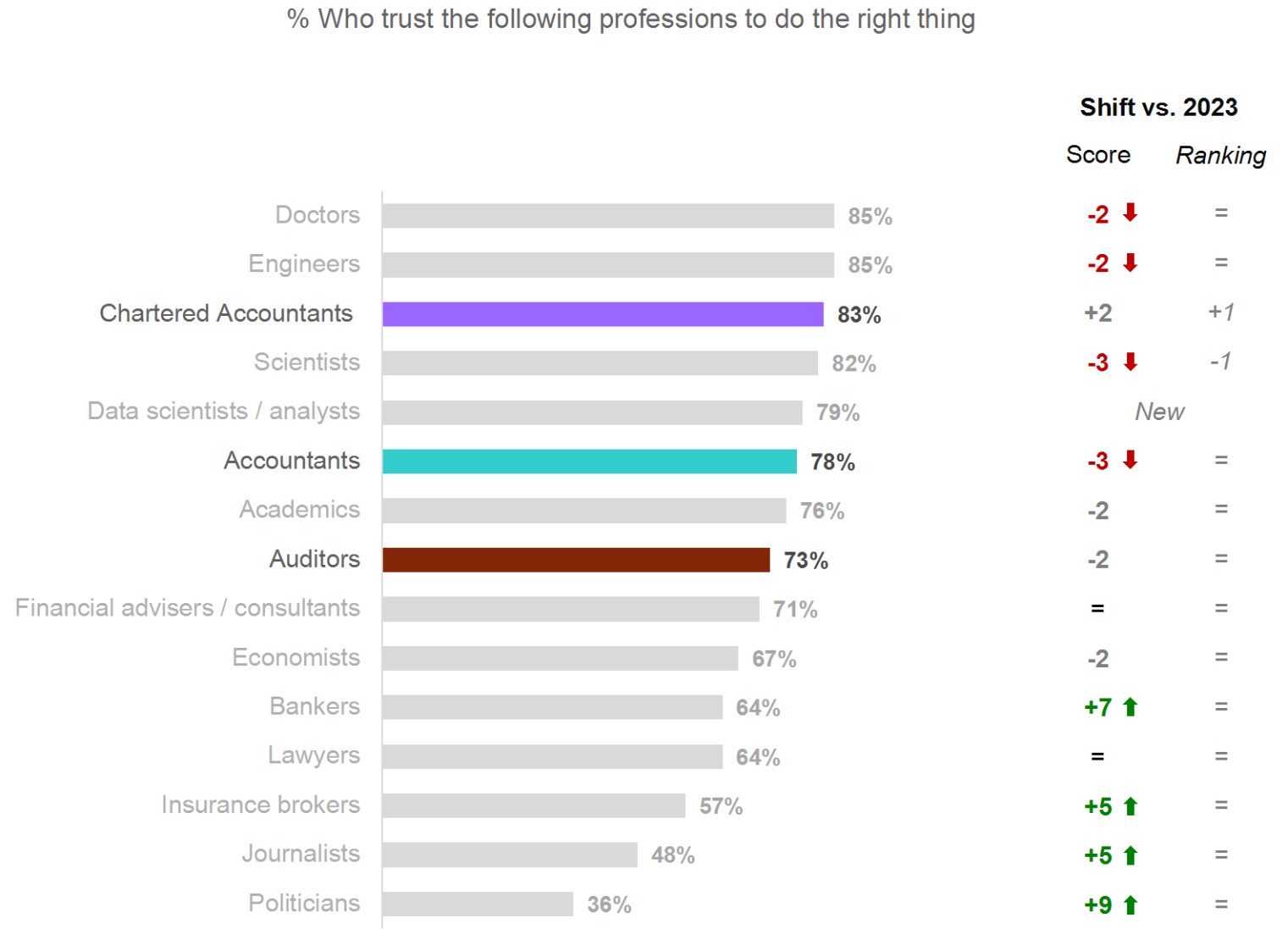


Chartered Accountants develop a 5-pt gap in Trust over Accountants, the biggest since the start of the study

% Who trust the following to do the right thing
(Bubbles denote shift vs. 2023)



Despite shifts in Trust among several professions, the ranking has remained stable, with only Chartered Accountants rising



SIMILAR PATTERNS AS LAST WAVE
EMERGE REGARDING TRUST DRIVERS,
ALTHOUGH IMPORTANCE OF PURPOSE
(ESG) IS INCREASING

Trust is made up of four strategic dimensions



Ability

Has the skills, competencies, and resources to have influence in some domain (competence, capabilities, expertise)

Good at what they do



Integrity

A believes B adheres to a set of principles that A finds acceptable (fairness, transparency, credibility, honesty)

Is honest



Dependability

A believes B consistently adheres to a set of principles that A finds acceptable (dependability, reliability)

Keeps its promises



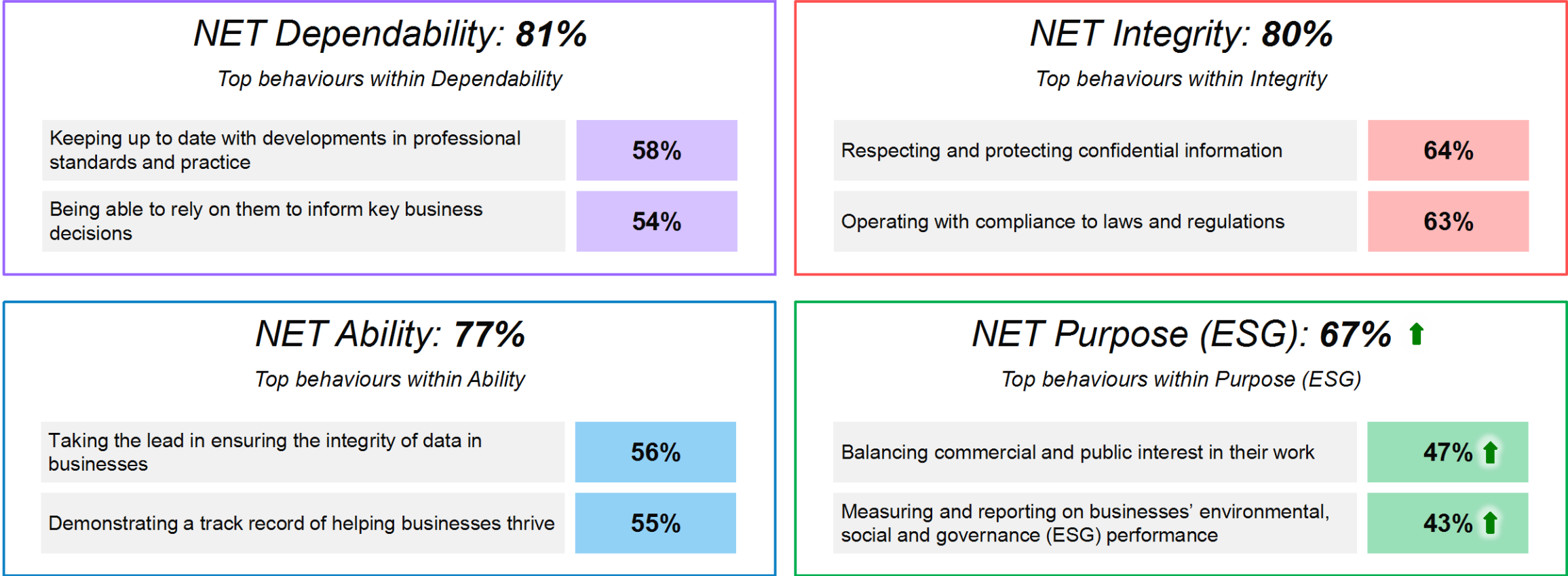
Purpose (ESG)

A believes B wants to do good for A (loyalty, caring, non-opportunistic)

Tries hard to have a positive impact on society

Purpose (ESG) is the only dimension to grow in importance, as Dependability and Integrity maintain the lead

% Who say the following are very important in building Trust in Accountants



Trust drivers' ranking is generally stable since 2023, though ensuring data integrity moves into the top five

% Who say the following are very important in building Trust in Accountants



Opportunity areas for Chartered Accountants to continue to build Trust




Become a reliable partner in making businesses more resilient by becoming an authoritative voice for key issues such as misinformation and AI



Continue to focus on ESG, which is growing in importance at a faster rate than other drivers

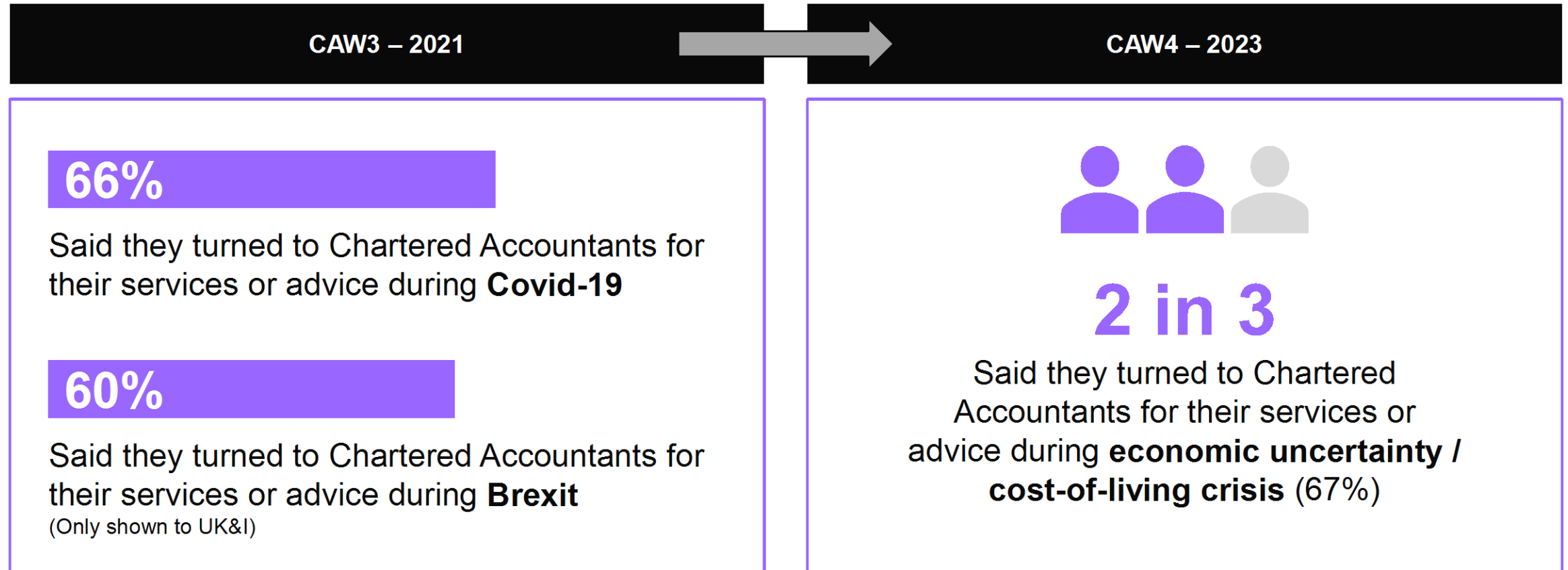
We explore these areas throughout the rest of the report

Chartered
Accountants are
considered
reliable partners
in guiding
businesses
through AI
adoption and
misinformation

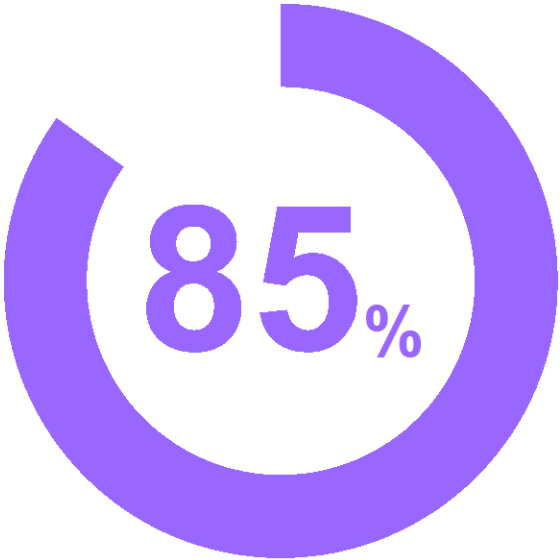
A photograph of four business professionals (three men and one woman) seated in a modern office environment. They are sitting in blue, curved chairs arranged in a circle, facing each other. The background consists of large glass windows and doors, creating a bright and open atmosphere. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey filter, and the text is in white. A short red horizontal line is positioned above the first line of text.

Having played a key role in building resilience previously in the face of Covid-19 and economic uncertainty, Chartered Accountants are now helping to prepare businesses for key digital transformation issues: misinformation and AI utilisation

Over the last four years, Chartered Accountants have been a reliable partner during geopolitical, health and economic issues

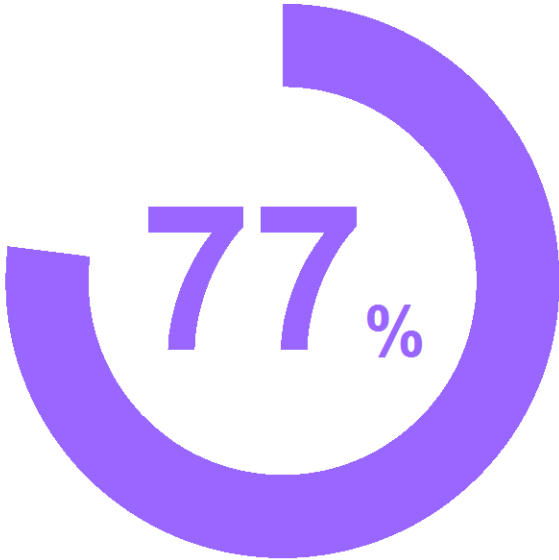


And continue to play a vital role in supporting organisations adapt to a new business environments



Say Chartered Accountants play a vital role in helping businesses adapt to new challenges

+2 vs. 2023



Say their organisation relies on Chartered Accountants for strategic guidance

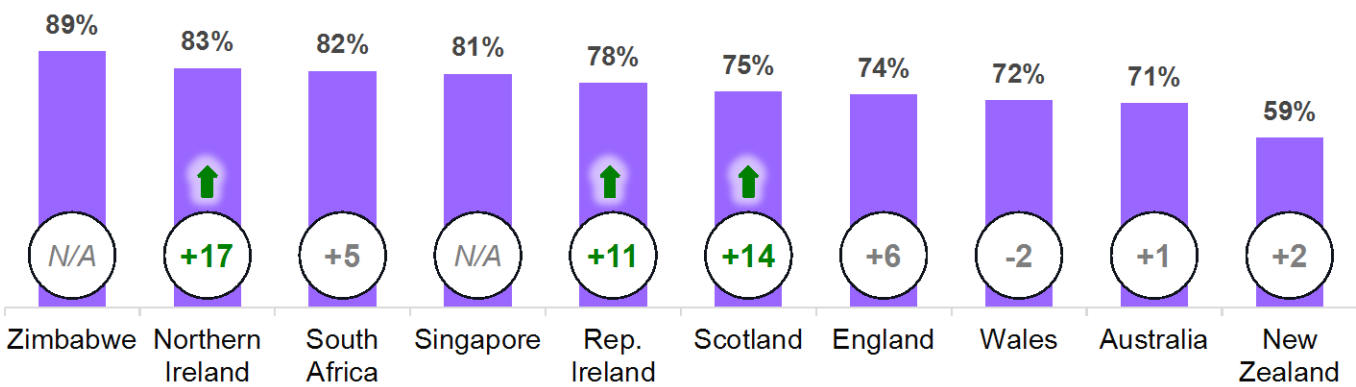
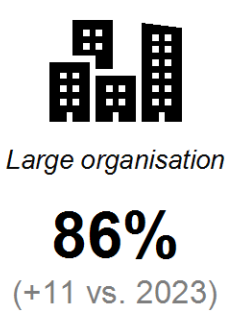
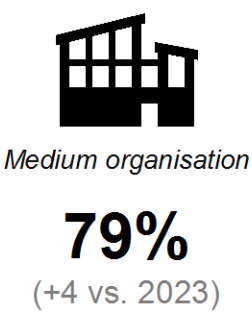
+5 vs. 2023 

Data accuracy and misinformation is a key challenge in the current business environment and a growing concern for financial decision makers

3 in 4

Challenges relating to data accuracy and misinformation are **key concerns** for my business (76%)

+8 vs. 2023 



And in 2025, Chartered Accountants are playing an important role in how businesses manage misinformation



82%

Say that Chartered Accountants are **expected to be custodians for data integrity**
(+1 vs. 2023)



81%

Say that the role of Chartered Accountants is **becoming increasingly important to businesses given the growth of misinformation**
(+6 vs. 2023) ↑



3 in 4

Say that their organisation relies on Chartered Accountants to ensure the integrity of data (75%)

+6 vs. 2023 ↑

Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe are the most likely to rely on Chartered Accountants to ensure data integrity

% Who say their organisation relies on Chartered Accountants to ensure the integrity of data



Small organisation

63%

(+9 vs. 2023) ↑



Medium organisation

81%

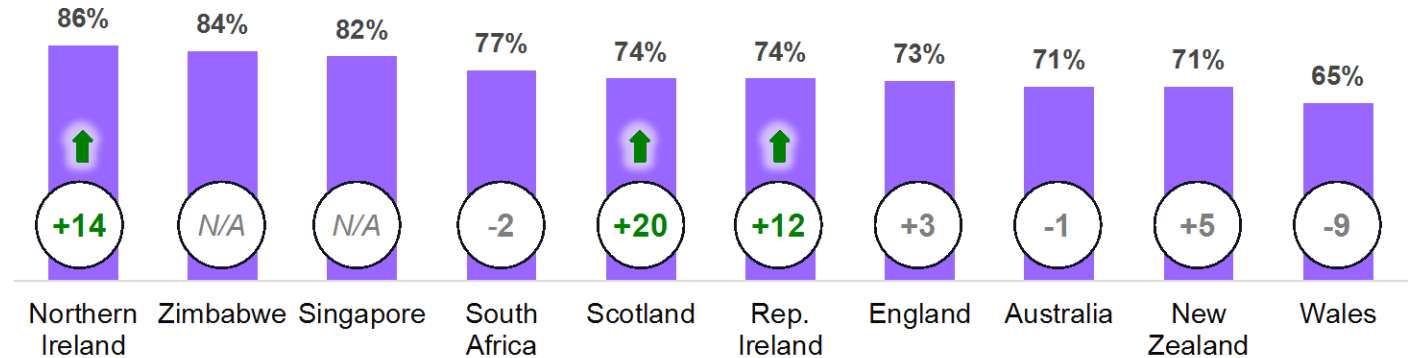
(-2 vs. 2023)



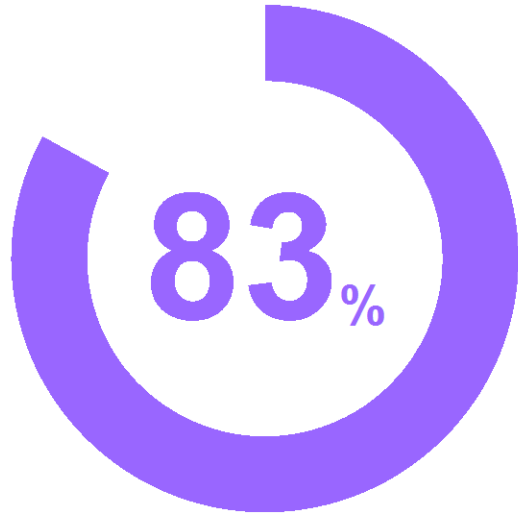
Large organisation

87%

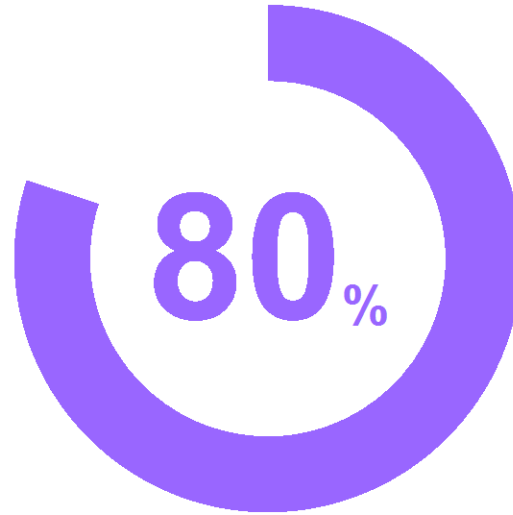
(+4 vs. 2023)



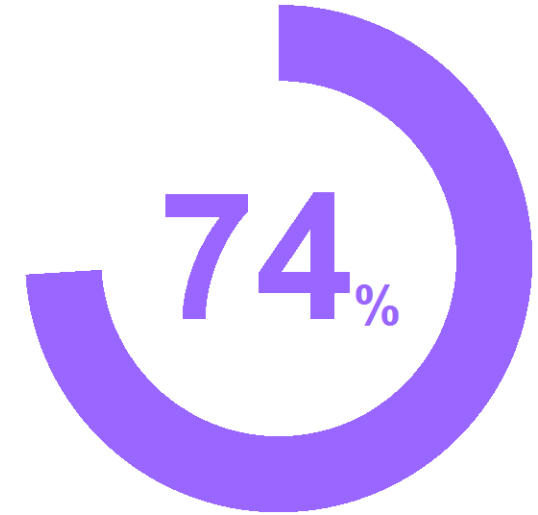
Furthermore, Chartered Accountants are also key in helping businesses navigate the challenges brought on by AI adoption



Say that AI can process data, but Chartered Accountants **provide critical analysis** for informed business decisions



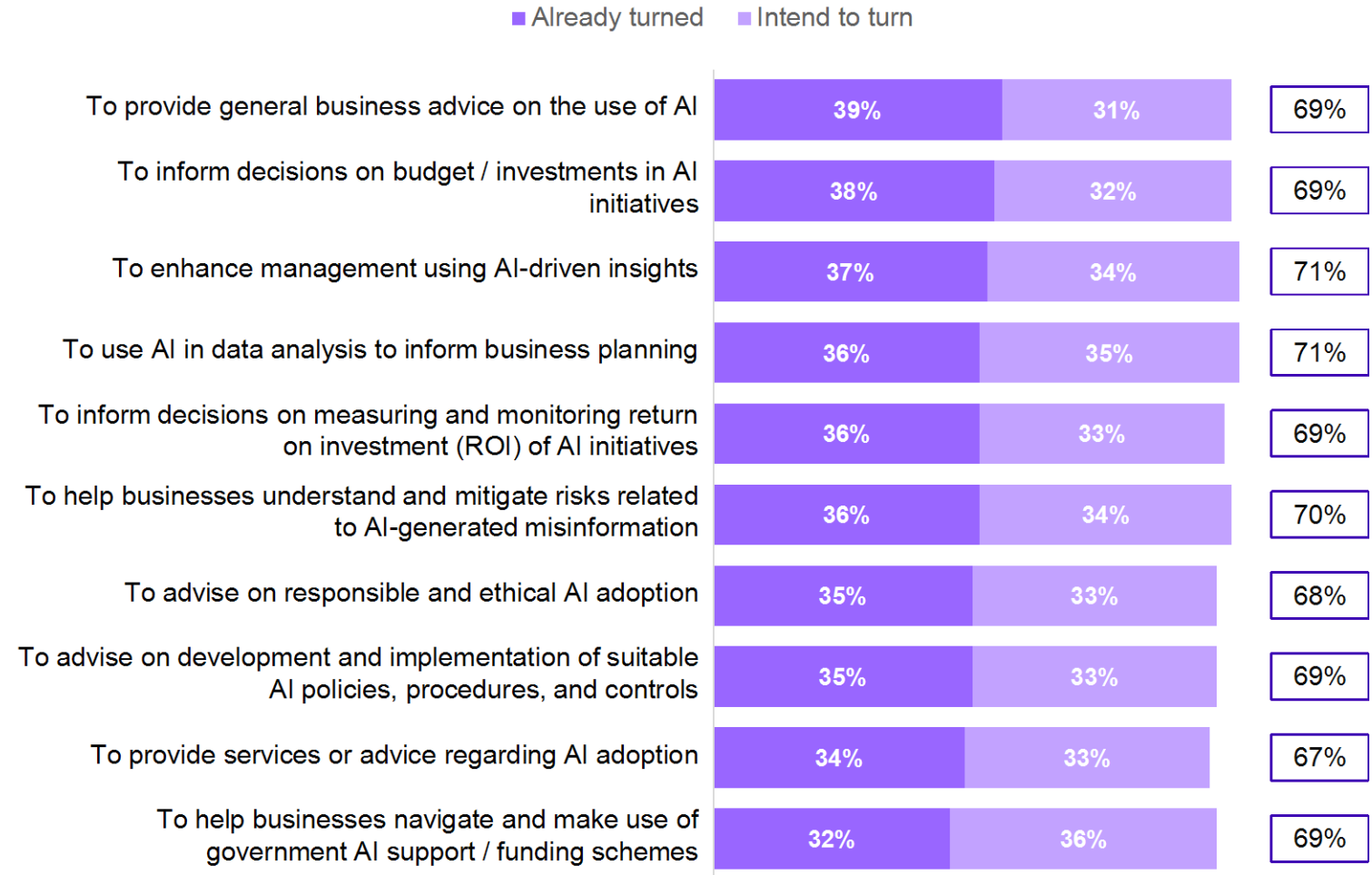
Say Chartered Accountants can play an essential role to businesses in **navigating challenges** arising from AI / automation adoption



Say that Chartered Accountants play a crucial role in **driving business AI investment**

In fact, many organisations have turned or intend to turn to Chartered Accountants for support with AI adoption

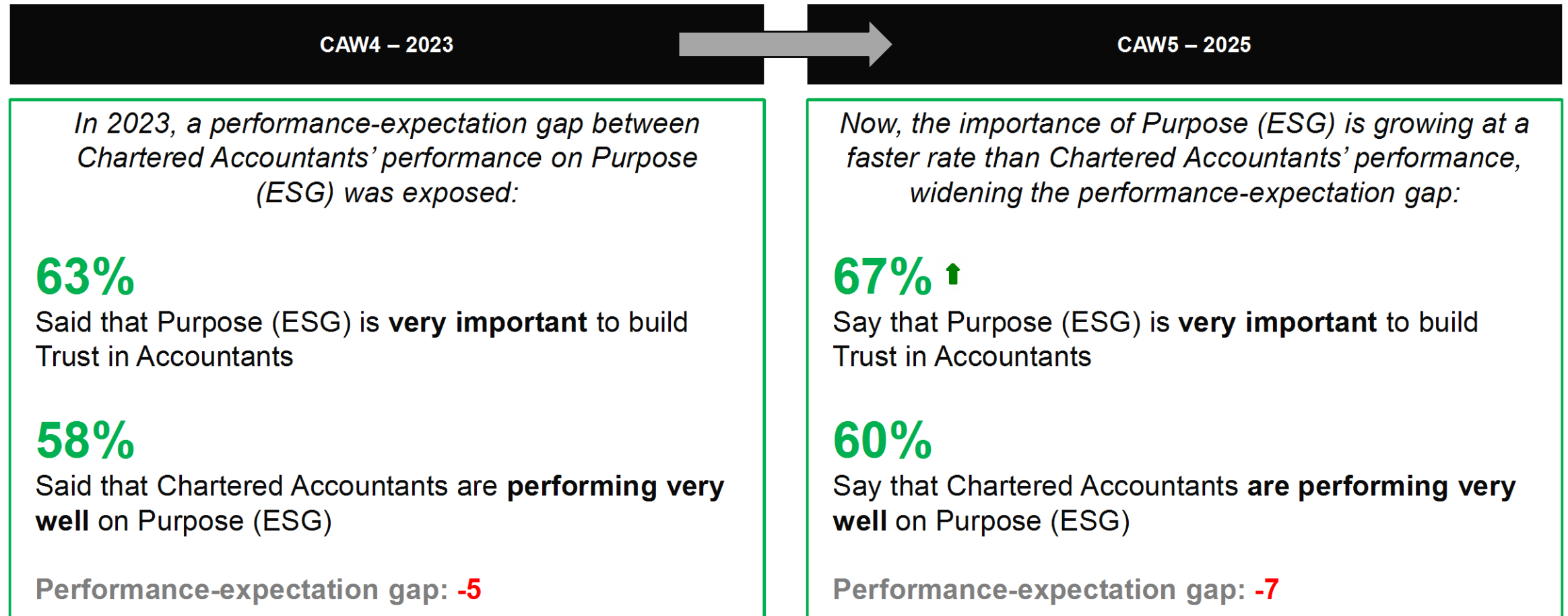
% Who have turned or intend to turn to Chartered Accountants regarding AI adoption
(Boxes refer to those who have already turned or intend to turn to Chartered Accountants)



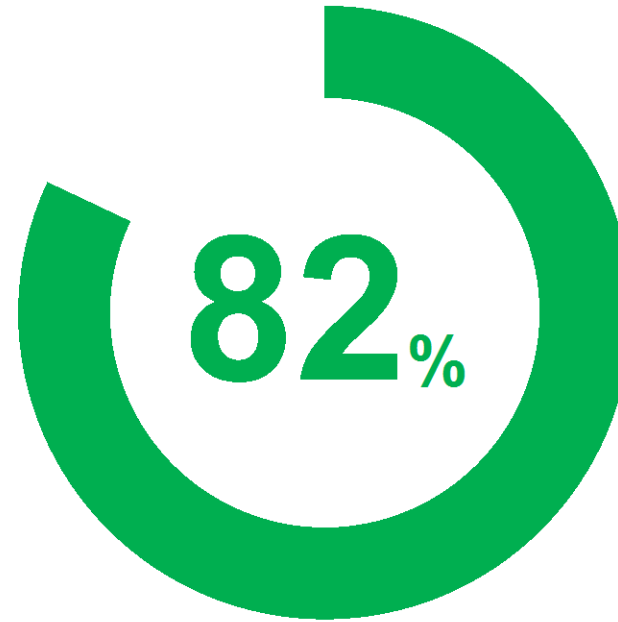
Chartered
Accountants'
position
regarding
Purpose (ESG)
is growing in
importance



Purpose (ESG) is growing in importance for businesses and emerges as an area on which Chartered Accountants need to focus to avoid slipping behind



Chartered Accountants' position regarding Purpose (ESG) is growing in importance, as they are widely regarded as a valuable voice on key business issues



Say that Chartered Accountants are credible spokespeople on business issues such as sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion*

+13 vs. 2023 ↑

The perception of Chartered Accountants as credible spokespeople is widespread amongst markets, though small organisations are less likely to think so

% Who say that Chartered Accountants are credible spokespeople on business issues such as sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion



Small organisation

74%

(+15 vs. 2023) ↑



Medium organisation

87%

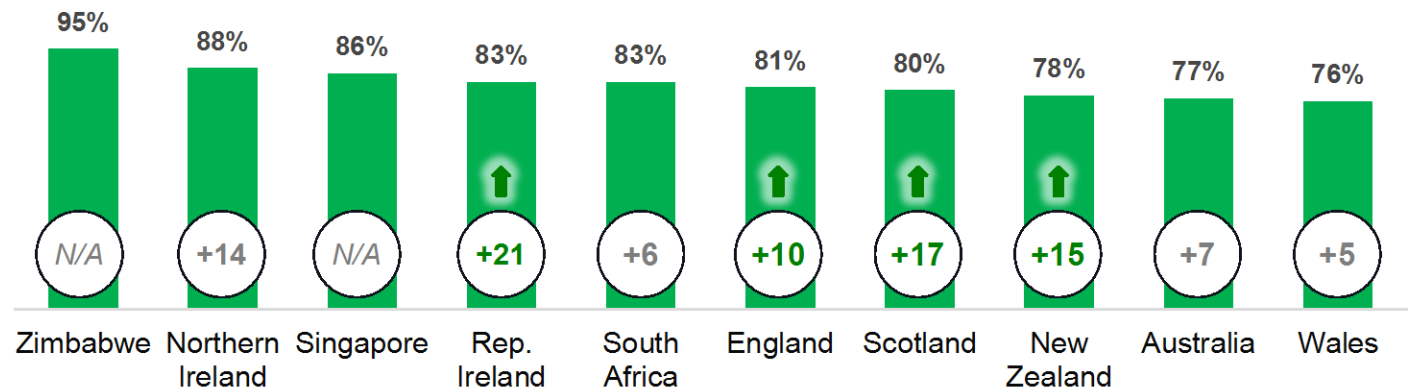
(+8 vs. 2023) ↑



Large organisation

89%

(+10 vs. 2023) ↑



Despite being
held in high
esteem,
Chartered
Accountancy
profession is
suffering a talent
shortage

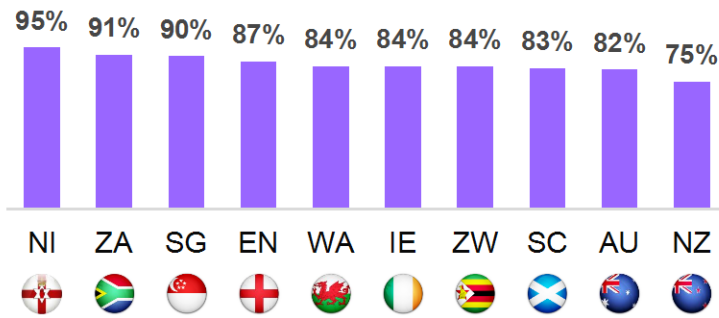


Chartered Accountancy is seen as a highly prestigious profession which, for many, continues to attract top talents



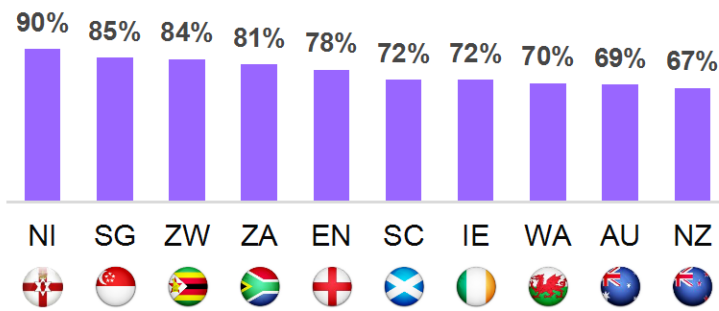
9 in 10

Say Chartered Accountancy is a **profession with high prestige** (86%)



8 in 10

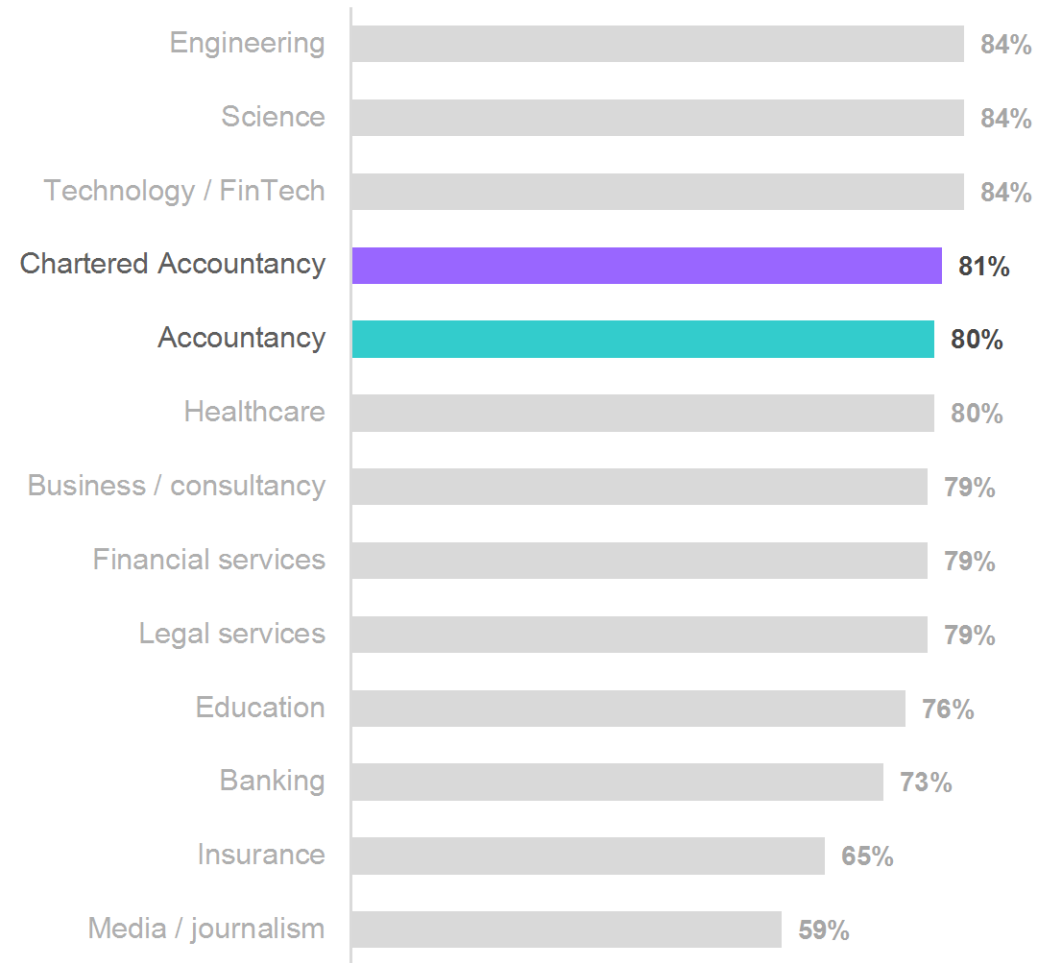
Say Chartered Accountancy **continues to attract the most promising candidates** (77%)



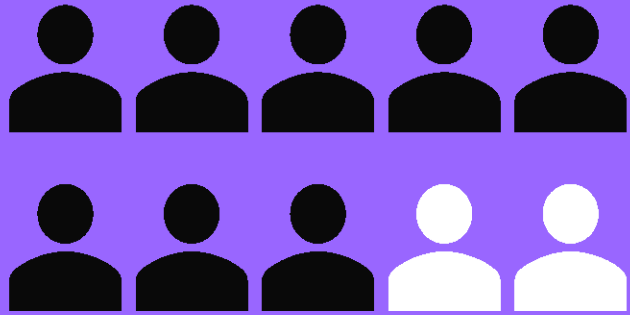
In fact, Chartered Accountancy is among the top professions in which financial decision makers would encourage new graduates to pursue a career



% Who would encourage new graduates to pursue a career in the following professions



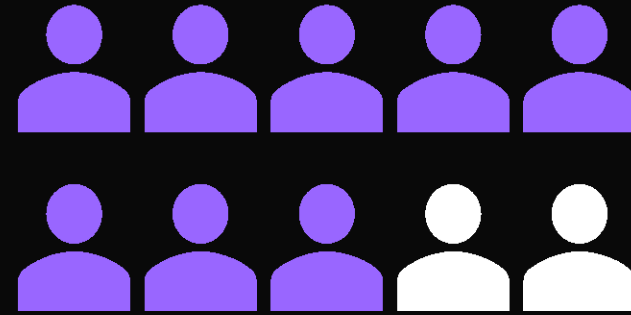
Finally, despite technological developments such as AI and automation, the role of Chartered Accountants will remain as important as ever



8 in 10

Say the value Chartered Accountants provide could not be replaced by automated systems (83%)

+3 vs. 2023



8 in 10

Say that AI can process data, but Chartered Accountants provide critical analysis for informed business decisions (83%)



Singapore



INSIGHTS FROM INTERNATIONAL STUDY ON TRUST IN CHARTERED ACCOUNTANCY

**BASED ON THE SENTIMENTS OF FINANCIAL DECISION
MAKERS (DIRECTOR-LEVEL AND ABOVE) IN SINGAPORE**

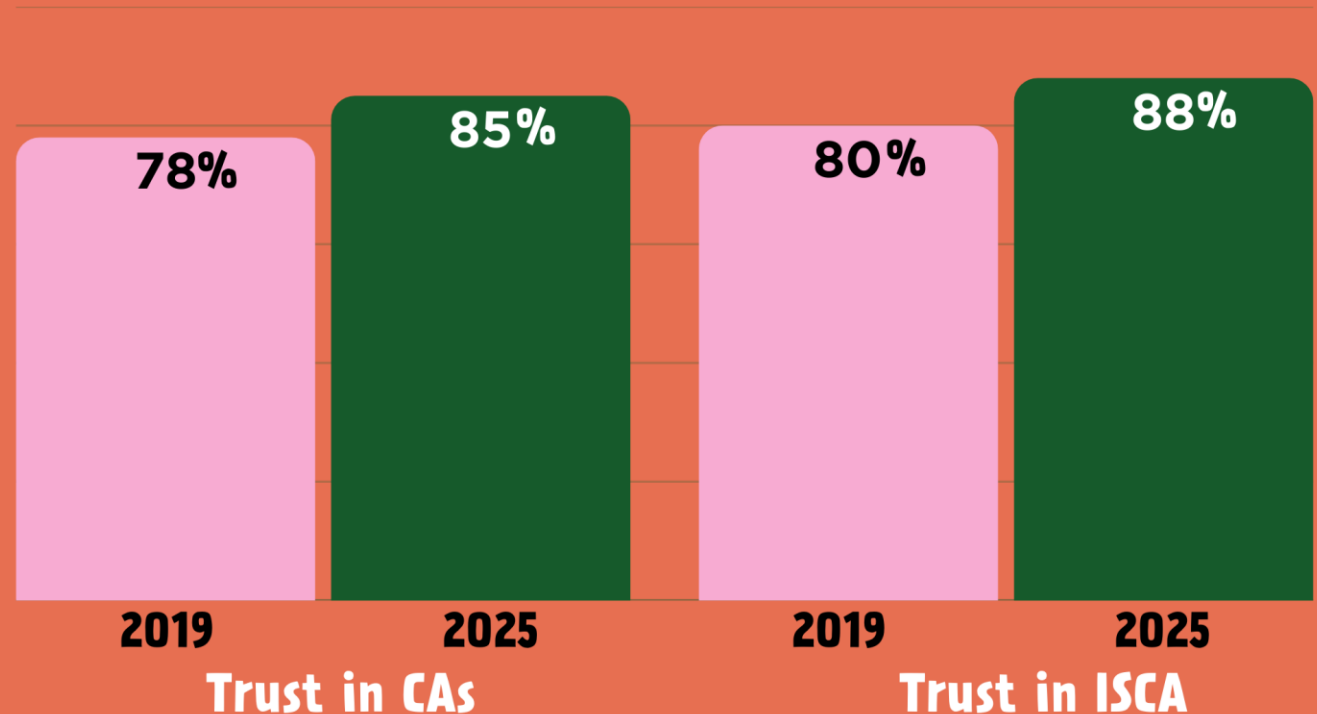
85%

**trust Chartered Accountants (CAs)
to do the right things.**

High trust in Singapore CAs.



CAs are the second most trusted profession in the country



Chartered Accountants are widely recognised as essential partners and strategic advisors.

✓ **87%**

say CAs help
businesses adapt to
new challenges

✓ **84%**

rely on CAs for
strategic guidance

✓ **82%**

say CAs ensure
data integrity

✓ **81%**

rely on CAs to manage
key concerns
(especially around
data accuracy and
misinformation)

**Integrity is driving trust more than ever, ethical
leadership is no longer optional, it is expected.**



% Growth from 2019–2025



12%

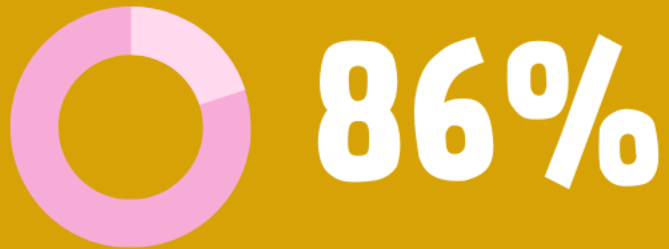
**trust that CAs respect
confidential information**



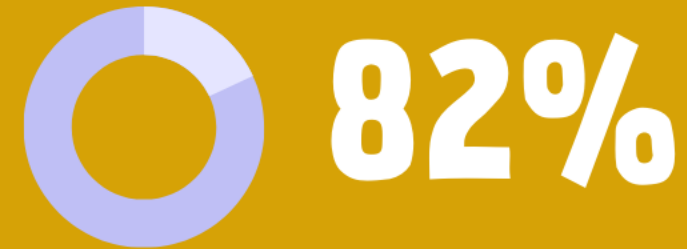
14%

**trust that CAs comply
with laws and regulations**

**In the age of AI, CAs
remain indispensable.**



**say CAs help businesses
navigate challenges
arising from AI and
automation**



**say CAs play a crucial
role in driving business
AI investment**