

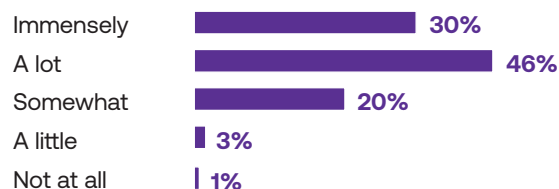
State of HR Spotlight:

HR Professionals and Their Outlook for HR

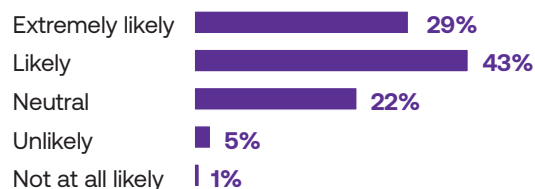
A generally optimistic outlook ...

Results from the 2026 *State of HR* report show that HR professionals are broadly optimistic about their field, with solid majorities saying they enjoy working in human resources and are likely to recommend the profession to others. This is an encouraging sign, bolstered by the finding that nearly two-thirds of those surveyed are hopeful about the future of HR.

Enjoy Working in HR



Likelihood to Recommend HR



With challenges ahead

Not all results are so rosy, however. The profession faces headwinds related to career paths and opportunities, workload, and stress levels.

- Just 34% of respondents say they see a “clear career path” for themselves, and over four in 10 are considering careers outside of HR.
- Half believe their HR department’s responsibilities will increase in the coming year.
- 40% report “extreme” or “high” job stress.

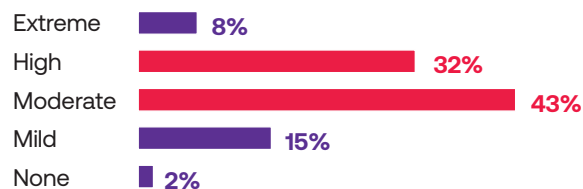
Career Path Is...



Responsibilities Are...



Stress Level



How many are truly enthusiastic about HR?

Positive attitudes could shift if stress levels continue to rise or career opportunities grow murkier. To separate reasonably content HR professionals from those more firmly committed to and excited about HR, we created a composite metric to identify individuals who enjoy working in HR, are likely to recommend HR, and have not considered other career paths. We call them HR Evangelists, and they compose over one-third of professionals surveyed.

A few distinguishing characteristics of HR Evangelists

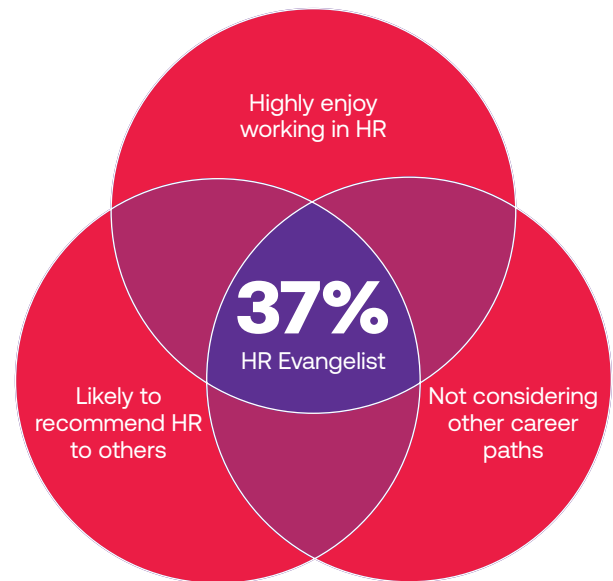
HR Evangelists are more likely to be found within certain working conditions or roles, notably:

- They are more commonly found within departments where budgets and staffing are stable or rising (45%), as opposed to groups reporting decline or shrinkage (35%).
- They are more often found within well-prepared HR departments than less-prepared departments.
- There is a higher proportion of HR Evangelists among managers and other senior HR professionals than among those in lower-level or entry-level roles.

Momentum for the profession

HR professionals are facing rapid change and growing challenges with an upbeat attitude that bodes well for the future of the field. Understanding more about what makes individuals particularly committed to HR is a key to maintaining this positive state.

You can find these findings, along with much more, in the full 2026 State of HR report.



Department Health

45%

Growing or stable

35%

Shrinking

Department's Level of Preparation

57%

Completely

22%

Minimally

Job Level

42%

More senior

33%

Entry-level