

The State of **Modern** **Work** and Wellbeing

Exploring how work patterns, pressure, and focus are shaping modern professionals.

Survey of Sunsama customers & alumni

Reflecting

Work got more flexible in 2025, but it also got more fragmented. People are fighting fewer '9-5' constraints and more 'always-on' pressure: context switching, meetings that don't feel necessary, and the constant need to re-prioritize. This report shares what Sunsama customers (and alumni) told us about focus, burnout, and what actually helps.

*Here's what **you taught us.***



Ashutosh, CEO

94%

Flexibility is high.
Productive days still aren't.

94% have flexible schedules (up from 90% in 2024), but only 25% feel productive **most days** (or always).

79%

The modern work problem is focus fragmentation.

79% cite their biggest struggle as:

1. deciding what to focus on
2. context switching
3. workload

67%

Always-on pressure is rising.

67% feel pressure to be constantly available.

49%

Burnout is still common, even for high performers.

49% experience work stress/burnout **often or very often**.

2025: Lessons & Takeaways

1 Protect the morning focus window

Most people noted that they peak before lunch. Design mornings for deep work.

2 Choose impact before urgency

“Most urgent” beats “most important” for how many people prioritize.

3 Kill optional meetings

A meaningful chunk of meetings feel optional to participants.

4 Pair flexibility with rituals

Schedule freedom helps most when paired with healthy routines.

5 Burnout isn't a personal failing

It's a system outcome: fragmentation + pressure + overload.

The simplest habit linked to better workdays: a shutdown ritual.

Shutdowns correlate with better work-life balance and lower frequent burnout, even when work is busy.

Shutdown routine = lower burnout rates

41% vs 54%

Daily planning is a **compounding advantage.**

Respondents who do daily planning are **3× more** likely to report productive days most of the time.

28% vs 9%

They are also **2× more likely** to say their work feels sustainable.

52% vs 25%

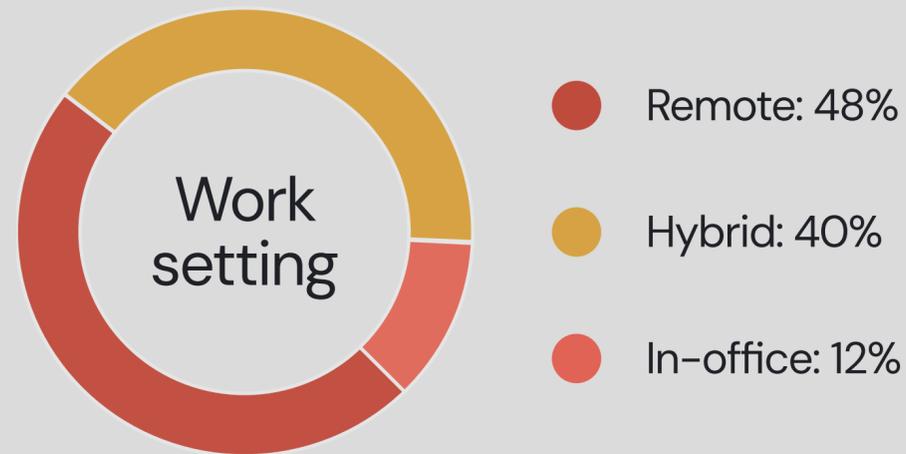
Who Responded

Role breakdown:

- Individual contributor: 29%
- Consultant / Freelancer: 20%
- VP/Director/Head: 15%
- Founder/CEO: 14%
- People manager: 12%
- Student/Educator: 6%
- Other: 4%



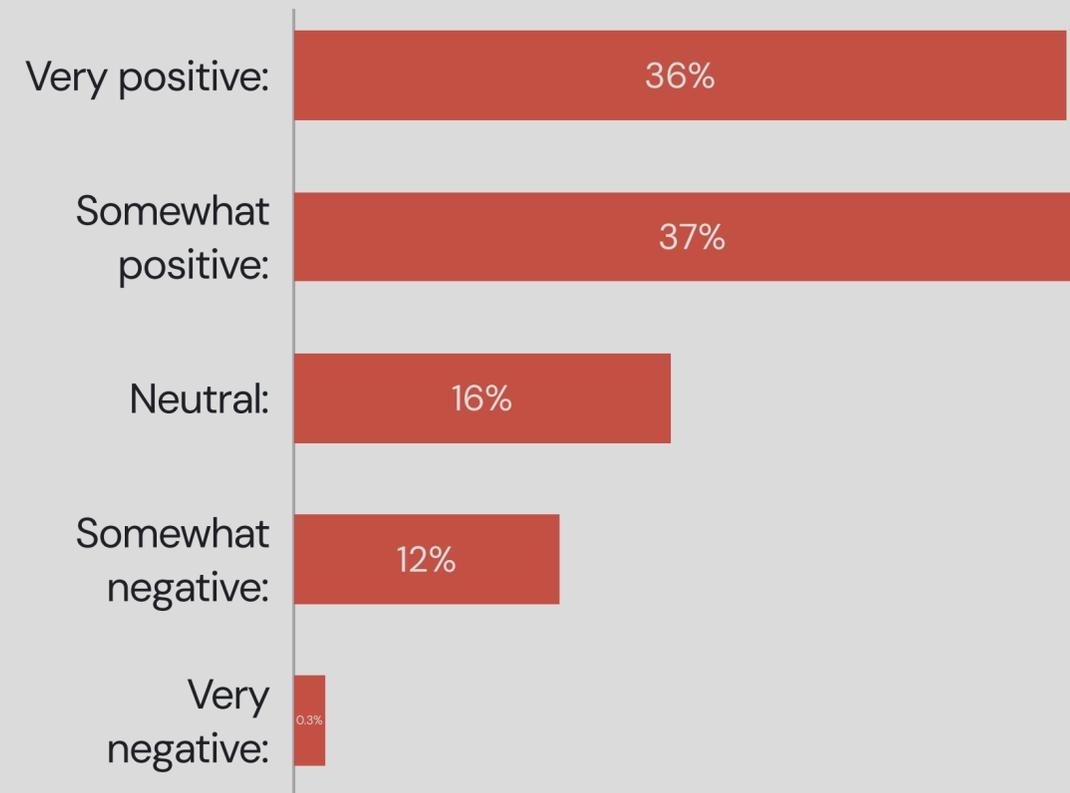
Remote **rose** & hybrid **dipped**



Remote remains the default for this audience, and it ticked up again year over year.

Most respondents say their work setting helps productivity, but it doesn't guarantee consistent productive days.

Environment impact on productivity



The 50-hour line is a cliff

Hours/week

Once people cross 50 hours/week, balance and sustainability collapse.

- ~1/2 of respondents work 30–40 hrs/week
- ~33% put in 41–50 hrs/week,
- ~16% fewer than 30 hrs/week,
- ~7% exceed 50 hrs/week.

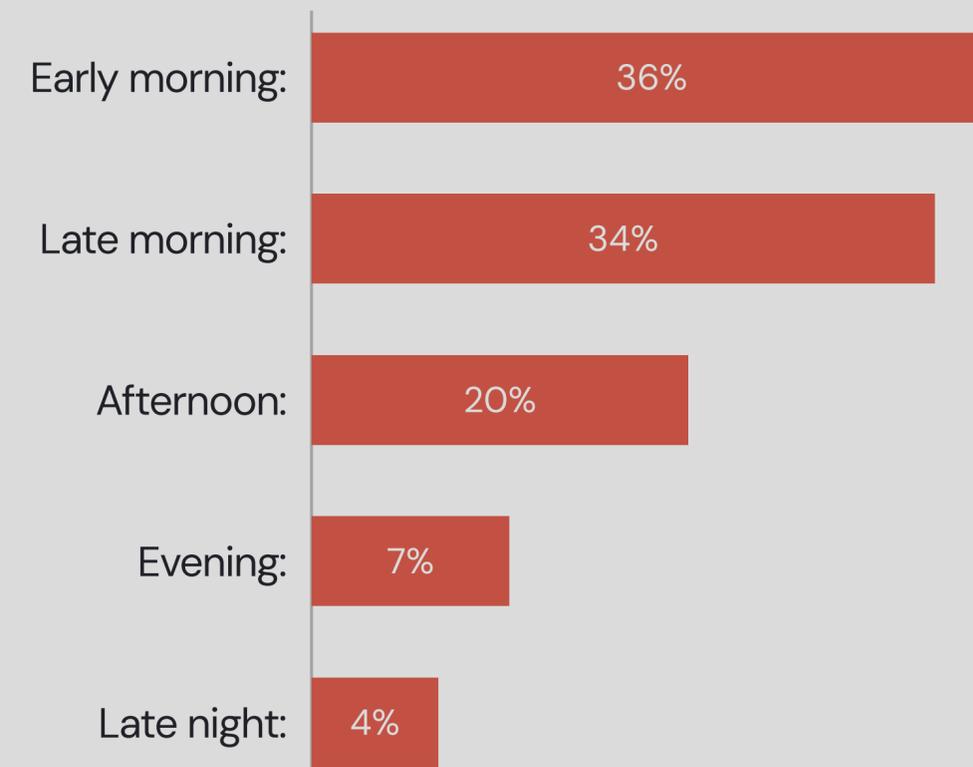


- Stay the same: **59%**
- Increase: **31%**
- Decrease: **10%**

Most people do their best work before lunch.

Nearly 70% hit their focus sweet spot before lunch. Protecting that window isn't a luxury — it's leverage.

Most productive time of day:



Urgency drives work

Urgency-first prioritization
↔ higher burnout
(58% vs 45%).

Urgency-first prioritization
correlates with worse
burnout and sustainability;
it keeps people moving but
not progressing.

Task prioritization



Fragmentation is **the problem**

Deciding what to focus on:

29%

Context switching:

26%

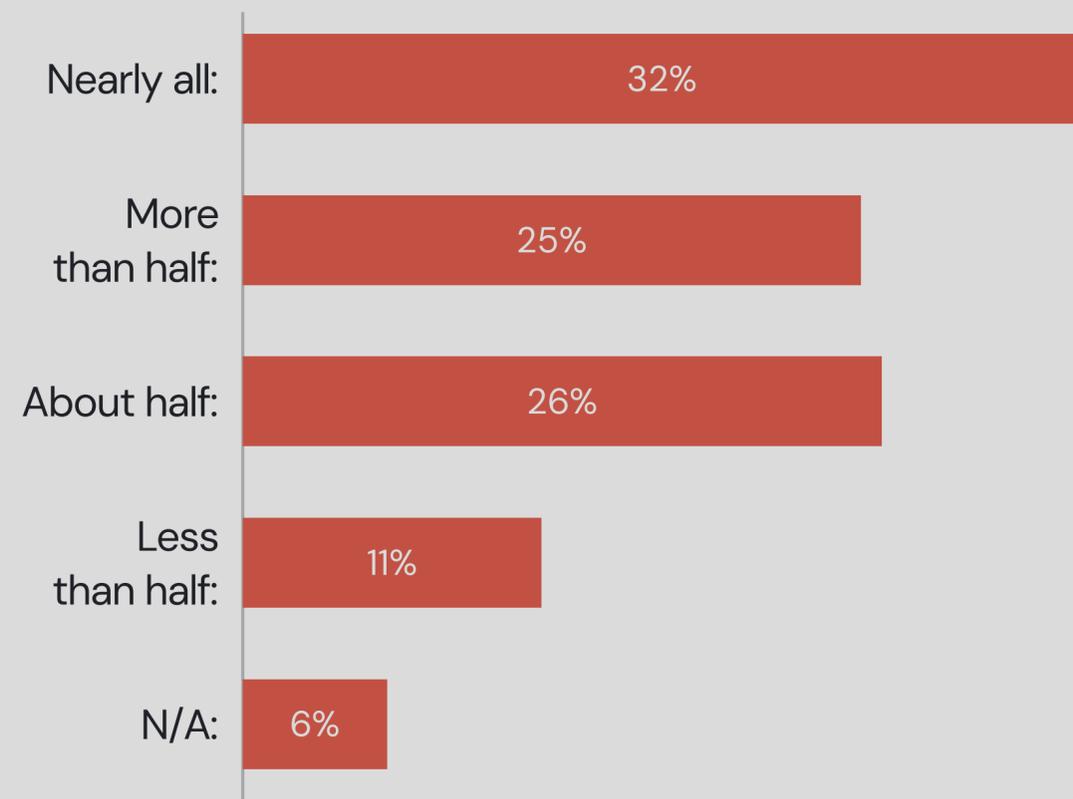
Overwhelming workload:

24%

People aren't losing because they lack tools. They're losing because attention gets shredded.

Meetings: volume vs value

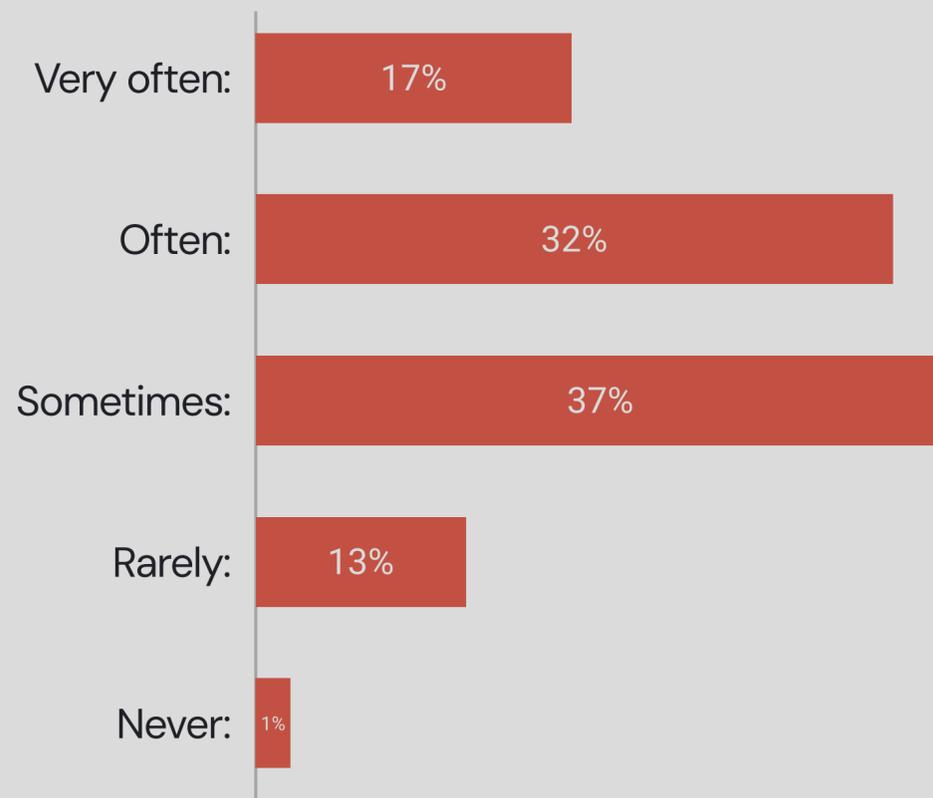
How many meetings feel necessary



Most respondents spend 10 hours/week or less in meetings, yet 36% say half or fewer meetings are truly necessary—so the real tax is inefficiency, not volume.

Burnout is still **the norm**

Frequency:



Even with more flexibility, burnout remains common.

Nearly half of our participants experience it often or very often.

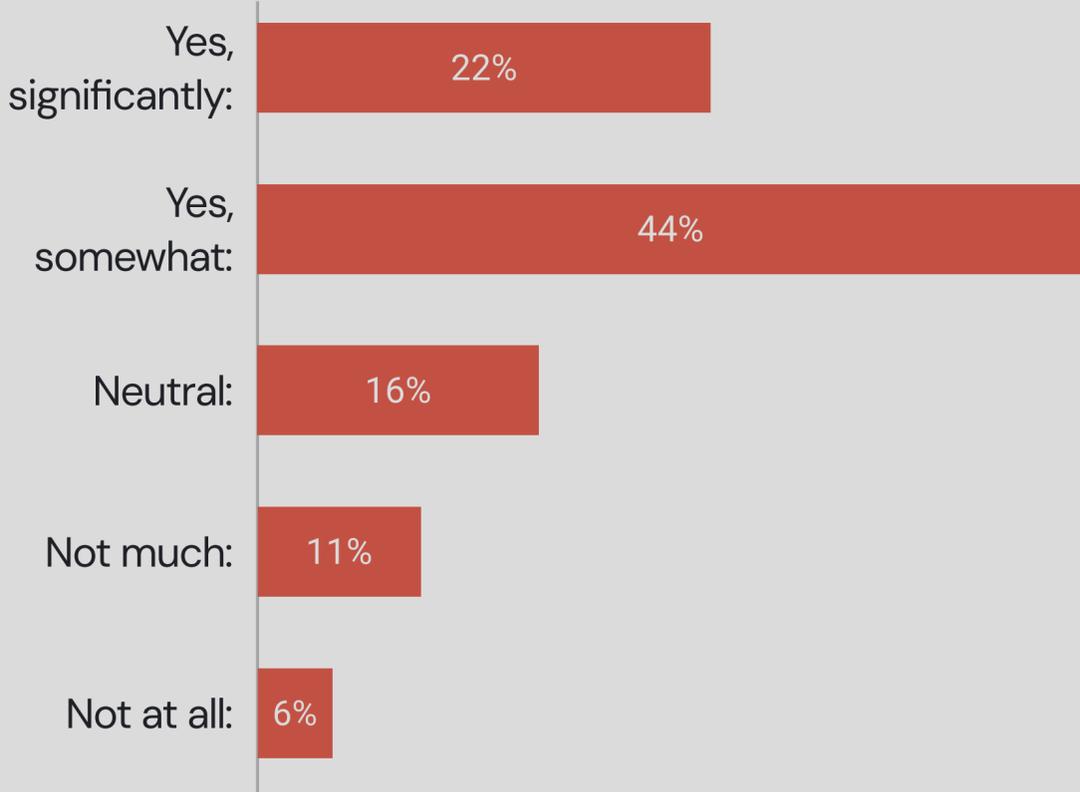
Misalignment is a **burnout multiplier**

Misaligned respondents—people who feel out of sync with their manager or team priorities—report **frequent burnout 77% of the time** (vs 46% when aligned) and are **3.6× less likely** to say their work is sustainable (14% vs 51%).

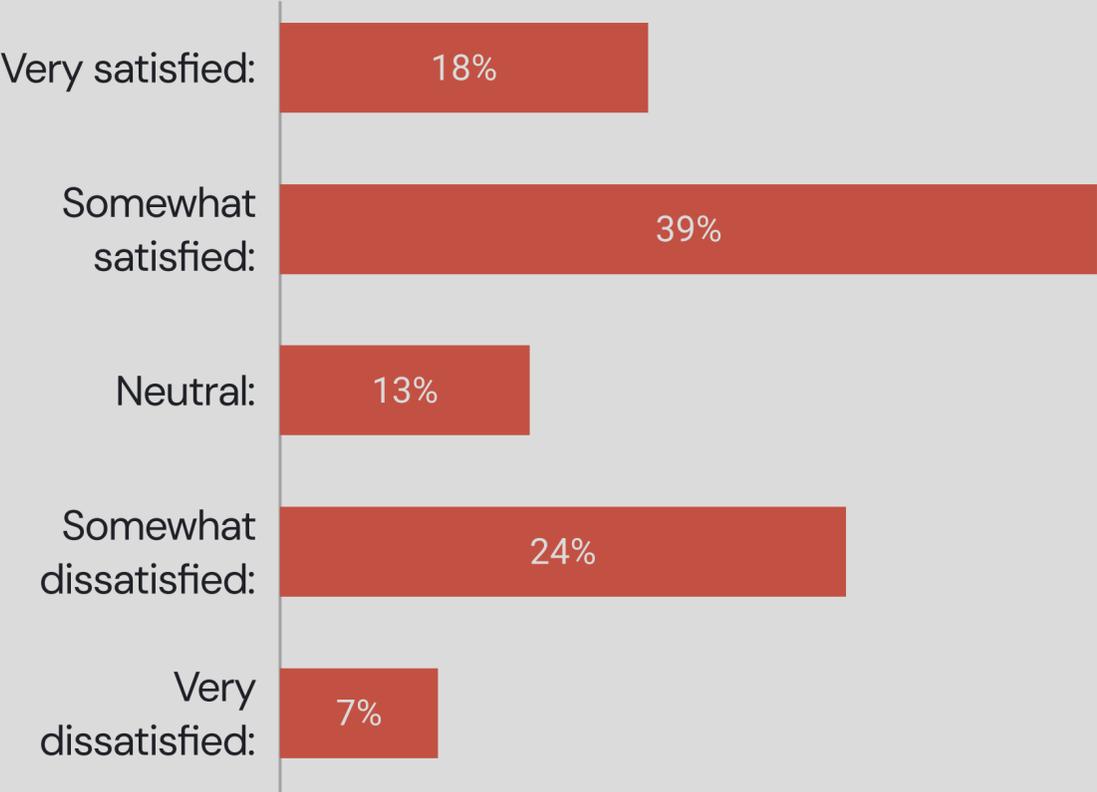
“Always on” is turning us off

As availability pressure rises, work-life satisfaction drops.

Pressure to be constantly available:

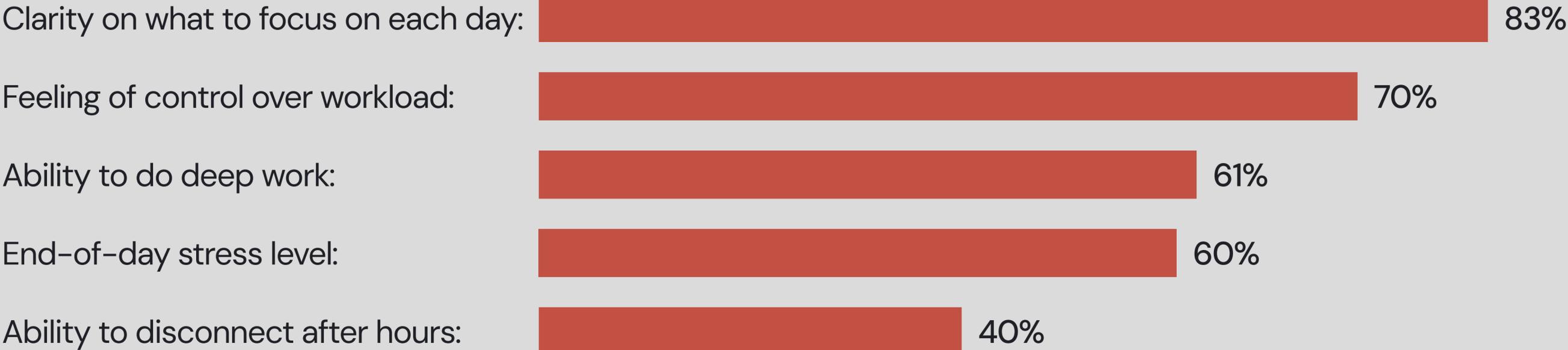


Work-life balance satisfaction



How Sunsama users turn chaos into clarity

Better + Much Better



2026: The Year for Sustained Focus

The opportunity in 2026 isn't more output, it's fewer context switches, clearer priorities, and better boundaries.

Start your day with clarity

Let Sunsama help you turn a scattered task list into a clear, intentional plan so you start the day knowing what actually matters.

Protect focus windows

Use [Focus Mode](#) to protect your attention by reducing context switching and staying aligned with your priorities when it's time to go heads-down.

End your day satisfied

Use Sunsama's [Daily shutdown](#) to close loops, reflect, and step away from work so unfinished thoughts don't follow you into the evening.

Don't Forget...

A few Sunsama tools that directly address this year's findings

Get it out of your head

Backlog 2.0 (Beta) captures not-today tasks in time buckets and folders.

See what actually fits

Task Projections shows tasks around meetings so overload is obvious early.

Start with clarity

Guided Daily Planning turns a messy list into a realistic plan for today.

Make your meetings count toward your productivity

Import your meetings into your plan so your workload reflects reality

Protect deep work

Focus Mode keeps you on one task with fewer distractions.

Reduce Slack noise

Set Slack status and pause notifications while you're working on a task.

Turn pings into work

Slack message → task turns requests into planned work you can complete.

End each day with calm composure

Daily Highlights + Shutdown creates a clean daily update in minutes.

New + noteworthy

Sunsama is getting faster at the moments that matter: capturing tasks, turning them into a plan, protecting focus, and ending the day clean. Here's what's new and what's next.

Sunny (AI voice assistant, Beta)

Capture tasks, thoughts, and next steps instantly, so ideas don't disappear and planning stays fast.

Backlog 2.0

A calmer place for "not today" work, organized into time buckets and folders.

Timeboxing 2.0

Automatically how tasks fit around meetings, so overload is obvious and tradeoffs are easier.

New and Improved Mobile Apps

Plan, check in, and capture on the go. Stay aligned even when you're away from your desk.

and there's so much more coming in 2026!

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2026, I hope work feels a little lighter. Not because there is less to do, but because you are spending more time on what matters. Flexibility helps, but structure is what creates focus and clearer boundaries. We hope Sunsama supports you in building a workday that feels calm, intentional, and sustainable.



Ashutosh, CEO

Thank *you!*

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approved at work?  Reach out

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