# State of Equity
# 2025

# The data

**2550 survey respondents...**
in private tech companies

**...from 10 markets**
US 🇺🇸 UK 🇬🇧 DE 🇩🇪
CH 🇨🇭 NL 🇳🇱 FR 🇫🇷
NO 🇳🇴 FI 🇫🇮 SE 🇸🇪 DK 🇩🇰

**Roles**
· Junior roles · Middle Management
· Executives · C-suite · Owners/Founders

# Introduction

In our State of Equity 2025 report, we provide up-to-date commentary on the latest trends and issues in equity from our recent survey of over 2500 respondents within private tech businesses. Our survey was focused on 10 markets: the UK, Netherlands, Denmark, France, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Germany and the US. From the C-suite to Junior Staff, we have surveyed employees across various positions to analyse data by seniority, alongside gender and market, to uncover interesting trends and comparisons.

In this report, you'll find equity awards data, what changes we have observed since our previous report and how this is distributed by market, seniority and gender. We also explore the impact of equity awards on motivation, hiring and retention. Secondly, we focus on education and understanding of employees again split by market, seniority and gender. Lastly, we focus on liquidity, answering questions about IPO likelihood and secondaries.

# Data highlights of 2025

## 65%

of employees would be more likely to stay with their company for longer if they were offered **more equity**.

## 79%

of respondents said that equity has a **positive impact** on motivation.

## 21%pt

**ownership deficit for women** at the 'Junior Staff' level when compared to men.

## 78%

of businesses are either very likely or somewhat likely to **run a secondary share sale** in 12 months.

## 50%

of employees **don't know** what a secondary share sale is.

## 55%

of companies say they are **more likely to IPO now** when compared to 12 months ago.

# Perception, Expectation and Impact

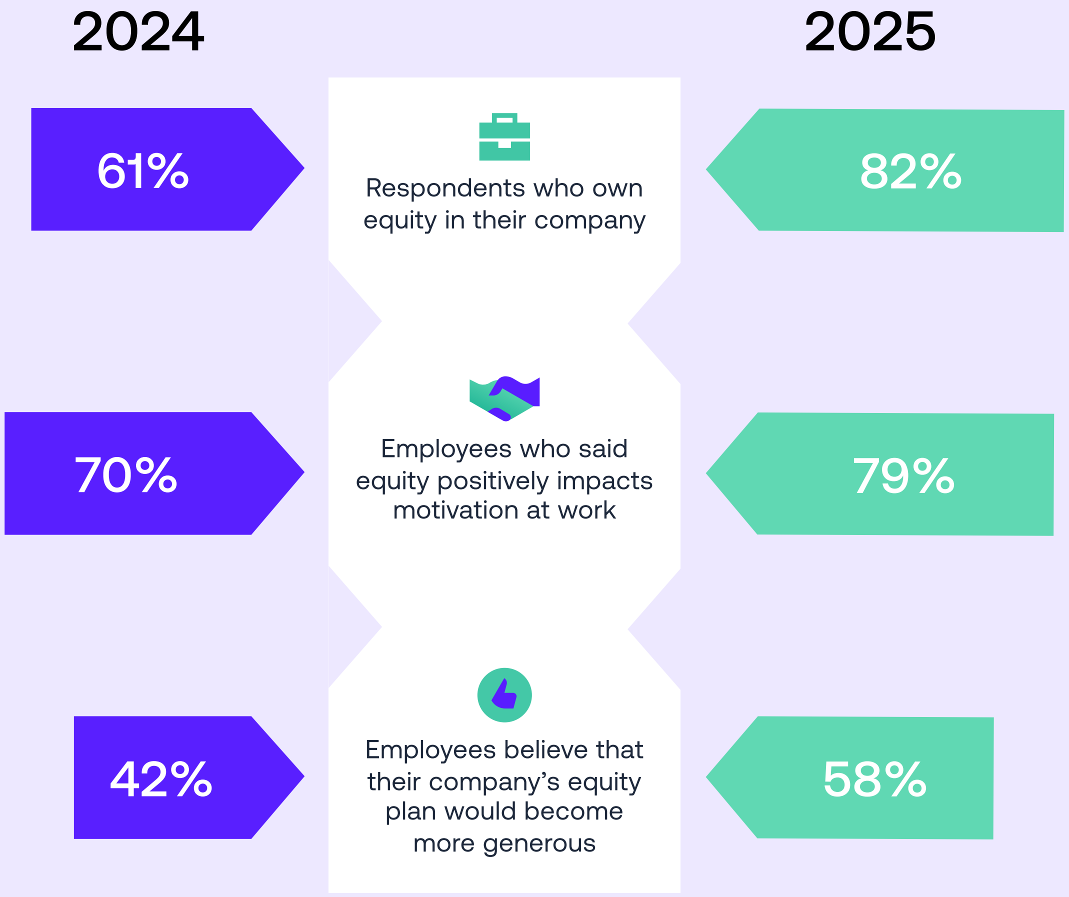
In this section of our State of Equity 2025 report, we will explore data points that directly affect the overall perception of equity. We will discuss changes from 2024 to 2025, ownership structures by seniority, and how equity ownership varies by gender. We will also highlight data that talent acquisition teams can use to meet the equity expectations of existing employees or potential hires.

# Changes in equity: 2024 vs 2025

In a market where fundraising has been scarce and public listings are less common, equity has remained a powerful tool for growth. **In 2025, 82% of all respondents own equity in their company**, a significant increase from 61% in 2024.

In addition to the increase in equity ownership, 79% of employees said that owning equity positively affects motivation at work, compared to 70% in 2024. Employees also have a very optimistic view of equity in the current market, with 58% of respondents believing their company's equity plan will be more generous in the next 12 months. In 2024 only 42% believed their company's equity plan would become more generous.

This data highlights the significance of equity and the positive impact it can have on an individual, irrespective of external market conditions. Employers are potentially becoming more generous in terms of equity to encourage growth and employees are more optimistic about equity as a result.



# Equity ownership leaderboard by country

DID YOU KNOW?

Equity has a significant motivational impact – 79% of employees report that owning equity positively influences their motivation.

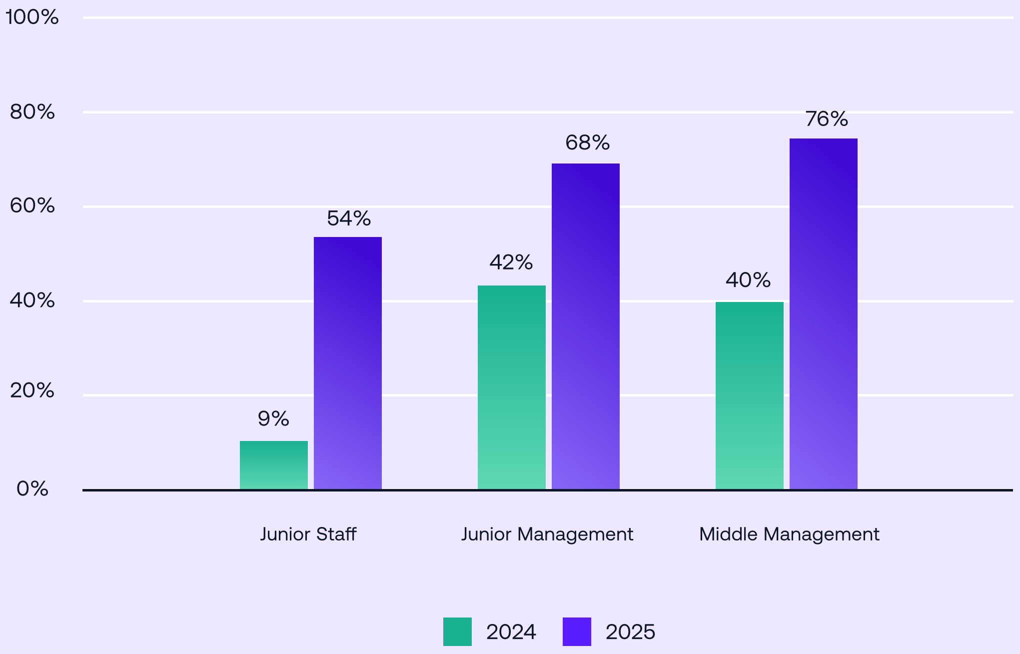
| RANKING | COUNTRY | 2025 OWNERSHIP | 2024 OWNERSHIP | CHANGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Germany | **90.3%** | 52.3% | ↑ 72.7% |
| 2 | Netherlands | 86% | 54% | ↑ 59.3% |
| 3 | Norway | 86% | 64.7% | ↑ 32.9% |
| 4 | Switzerland | 83% | 68% | ↑ 22.1% |
| 5 | Sweden | 82.7% | 60.7% | ↑ 36.2% |
| 6 | Finland | 82.7% | 62% | ↑ 33.4% |
| 7 | Denmark | 80% | 66% | ↑ 21.2% |
| 8 | UK | 79% | 60.5% | ↑ 14.9% |
| 9 | US | 78.3% | 75.3% | ↑ 4.0% |
| 10 | France | 77% | 52.8% | ↑ 45.8% |

# Breaking down equity ownership structures

As expected, the rates of equity ownership for Founders, C-suite and Senior Management/Executives all remain high: Founders (97%), C-suite (94%) and Senior Management/Executives (89%). However, when we look at the ownership for lower-level employees we observe some interesting trends. Since 2024 the Middle Management ownership has grown from 40% to 76% which is a significant change over twelve months. The increase in ownership levels is echoed in the other less senior roles, with Junior Management growing from 42% to 68%, and Junior Staff has grown from 9% to 54%.

**More businesses in our survey have shifted towards equity as part of their remuneration.** This is a significantly positive shift, meaning that in 2025, mid-level and junior employees will be awarded equity more often than in 2024.

Ownership levels by seniority (2024 vs 2025)

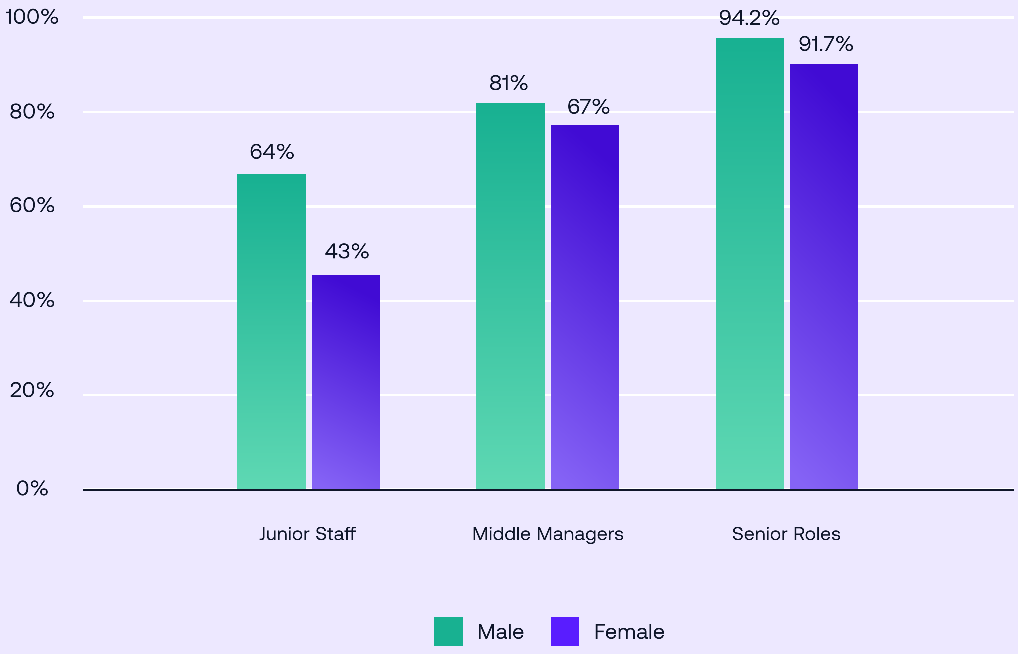


# Is equity distributed fairly between men and women?

Starting at the top of the chain, for C-suite, Executives and of course the Founders/Owners, the average equity ownership levels between male and female respondents are similar. However, we observe a large gap in two role profiles: Middle Management and Junior Staff. When compared to male equity ownership in these roles, women are experiencing a 14 percentage point deficit in Middle Management and a whopping 21 percentage point deficit for Junior Staff.

Given that junior-level roles very rarely differ in terms of experience or workload, it is hard to understand a world where the same job could constitute such a wide disparity in equity awards. However, an explanation for this gap could be the lack of women working in engineering roles instead of business roles like marketing. **The industry needs to do much more to encourage more women into tech-based roles, which will help reduce this gap and create a fairer equity awards system, especially for mid to low-level positions.**

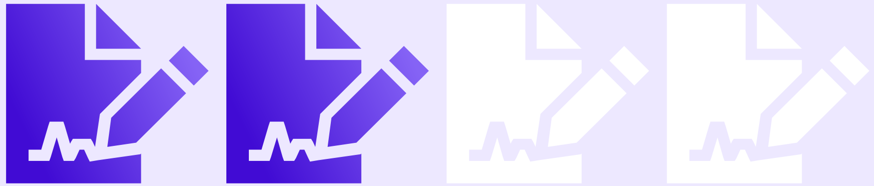
Equity distribution gender breakdown



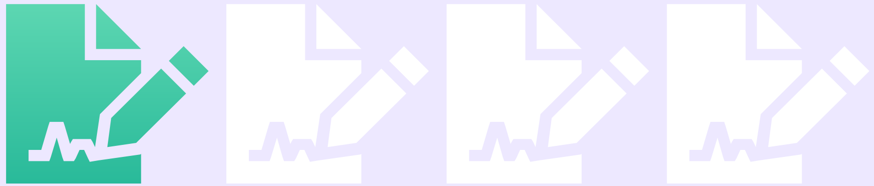
# How does equity impact hiring and retention?

Our 2025 survey data shows that equity is becoming more common across various roles and seniorities. The optimism surrounding future equity awards and their motivational impact on employees should excite HR and people teams. When asked about how equity options would impact applying for roles, 50% of respondents revealed they would be ‘more likely’ to apply for a role if they were offered equity. The biggest surprise is that **25% of respondents said they would only apply for roles that offered equity,** which shows an overwhelming interest in equity awards as part of remuneration packages.

These data points support the figure we shared in the first section, that 79% of employees said owning equity positively impacted motivation. With this in mind, businesses and hiring teams should aim to implement equity in some form, helping to attract a wider pool of talent and potentially increase their motivation at work.



**50%** are more likely to apply to roles offering equity

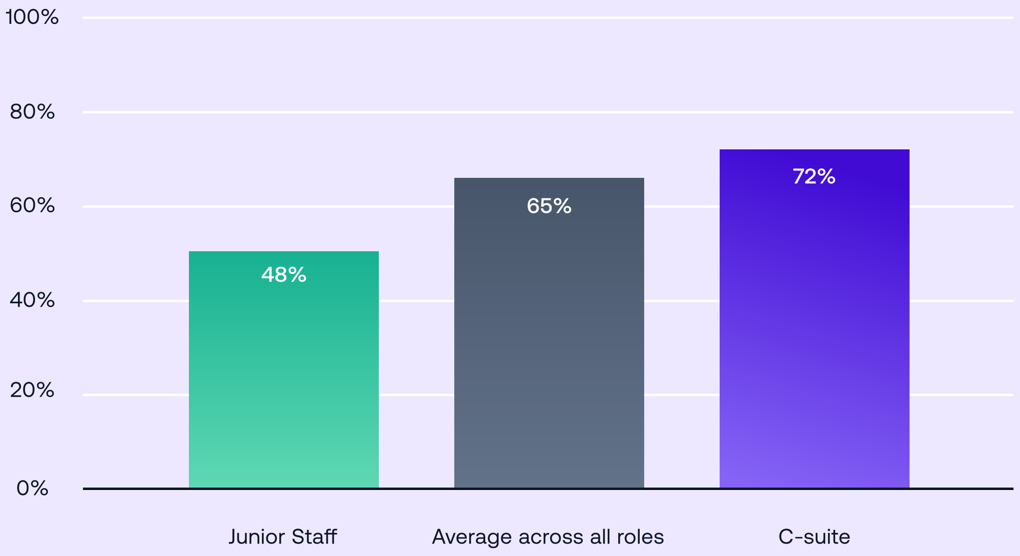


**25%** would only apply to roles offering equity

In terms of retention, we would expect that the results would mirror those of the hiring side of the equation. 26% of employees at the Middle Management level, 27% of Junior Management, and 28% of Junior Staff said that they were either unsure of how long they would remain in their current position, or they would expect to leave their current job in one year or less. As expected, senior roles have a slightly reduced rate, 23% for Executives and 20% for C-suite. So the question is, how can equity be utilised to retain highly valuable staff?

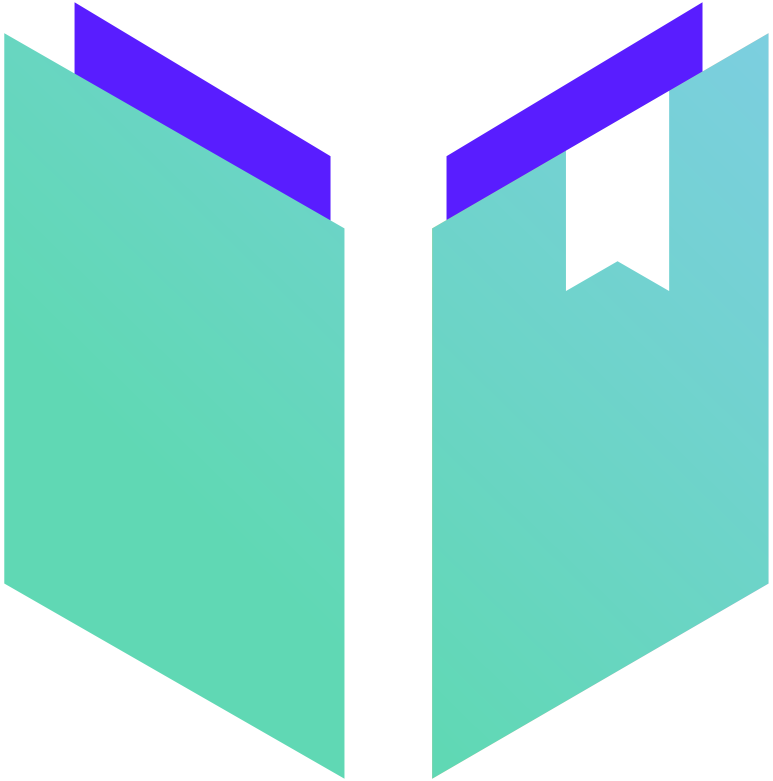
**On average across all roles, 65% of employees would be more likely to stay with their employer for longer if they were offered an increased equity stake.** For C-suite employees this figure is highest at 72% and at the lowest rate for junior staff at 48%. So, businesses looking to retain and attract top talent must either improve or utilise equity awards as part of their rewards strategy.

Percentage of staff that would stay with their employer for longer if they were offered an increased equity stake



# Education and understanding in equity

Last year we reported that 87.4% of C-suite level employees knew their company's latest valuation and only 36% of junior (non-manager) employees could say the same. If employees struggle to understand the types of equity, the latest company valuation, and the applicable tax implications of their plan, this will prevent positive engagement. In this section, we'll look at various data points to unpack the issues in equity knowledge and how they could be addressed.

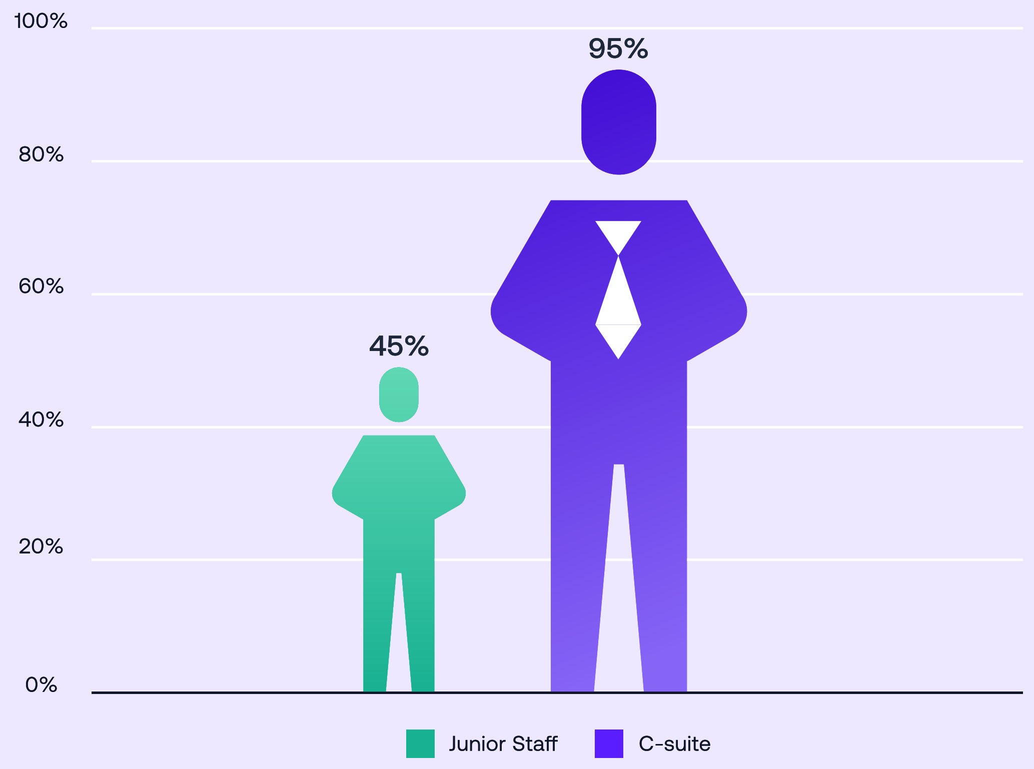


# The knowledge gap between senior and junior roles

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, C-suite respondents had a higher rate of understanding when looking at the latest company valuation compared to junior employees. In 2025, this grew to 95% (from 87.4% in 2024) of C-suite respondents who were aware of the current valuation of their company, yet only 45% of Junior Staff were aware of the current valuation.

Despite the significant gap in knowledge between senior and junior roles, both groups have shown increased levels since last year. In fact, in 2025 all employees seem to have reported a higher rate of knowledge when compared to 2024. **Yet over half of Junior Staff still don't know the valuation of the business they are working in** – does this highlight the need for further communication and education by companies to engage employees further?

Understanding of the latest company valuation

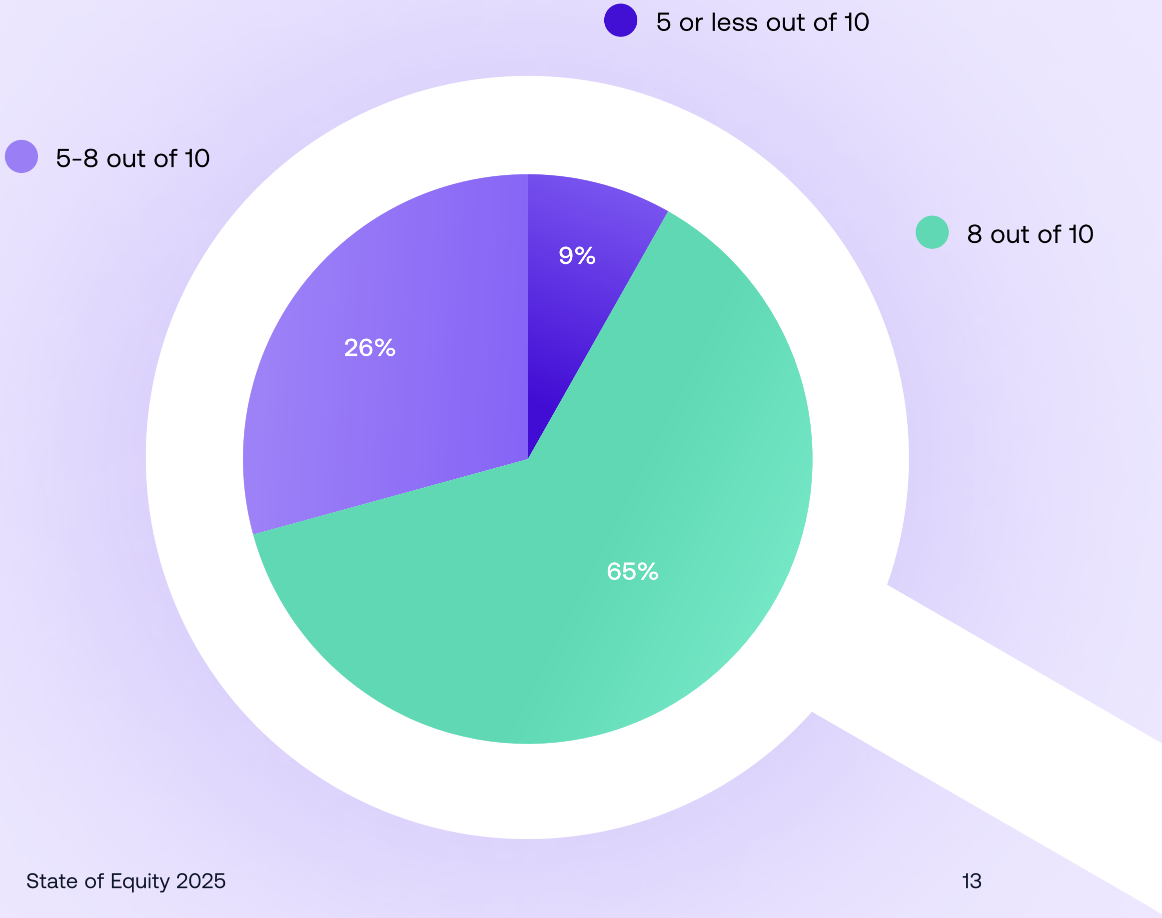


## EDUCATION AND UNDERSTANDING IN EQUITY

Continuing that theme, 71% of Junior Staff stated their company had shared information and/or guides on equity with them, this also increases as roles get more senior. For example, 76% of Middle Management and 85% of Senior Management roles reported they had received guides or information on equity. But are the guides or information helpful?

Well, **65% of Junior Staff rated the helpfulness of the information 8 out of 10 or better**, with only 9% rating the information 5 or less out of 10. The information shared with employees is clearly valued and will have a significant impact on the level of knowledge that Junior Staff have about equity. Companies should be encouraged by these statistics and continue to expand on the information and education offered to employees regarding equity.

How useful employees found the equity information provided by their company



# Equity knowledge leaderboard by country

In this table we have taken three figures into account: if employees know the type of equity they own, the current value of their equity stake and how tax may impact them.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The impact that tax has on equity is the most confusing area for respondents. Respondents in every territory (other than NL) scored tax knowledge the lowest.

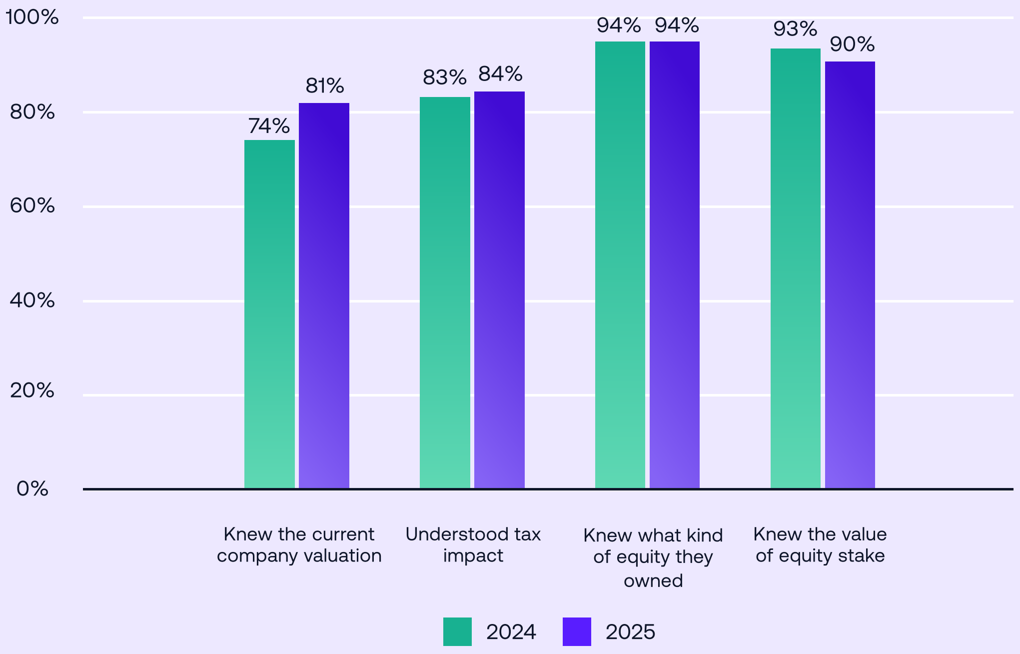
| RANKING | COUNTRY | TOTAL | EQUITY TYPE | EQUITY VALUE | TAX IMPACT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | NO | 94.3% | 96.9% | 93% | 93% |
| 2 | FI | 93.3% | 97.6% | 95.2% | 87.1% |
| 3 | US | 92.3% | 96.8% | 92% | 88.2% |
| 4 | CH | 89.8% | 96.4% | 91% | 81.9% |
| 5 | DK | 89.4% | 92.8% | 92.5% | 82.8% |
| 6 | SE | 89.2% | 92.7% | 91.9% | 83.1% |
| 7 | UK | 88.5% | 94.6% | 88.9% | 82% |
| 8 | DE | 87.5% | 92.8% | 87% | 82.8% |
| 9 | NL | 85% | 93% | 80.6% | 81.4% |
| 10 | FR | 84.9% | 88.3% | 88.3% | 78.2% |

# What has changed in the last 12 months?

Interestingly, the proportion of employees who knew the current valuation of their company was the area where knowledge had increased the most. Despite the other areas of knowledge remaining at similar levels year on year, **in 2025 employees reported a lower level of understanding of the value of their equity when compared to 2024.** This is an area where naturally you would believe employees would have a high understanding, due to the personal impact their equity value has on them.

Businesses should value all areas of education for equity awards to be as effective as possible, but each employee understanding their potential gain is arguably the most important for motivation and attractiveness.

Equity knowledge levels (2024 vs 2025)

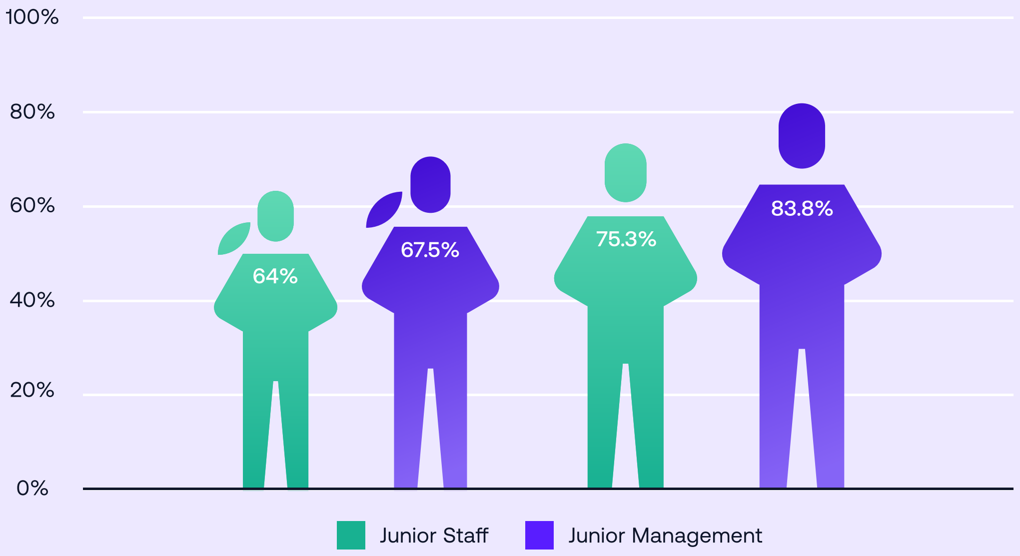


# The knowledge gap between men and women

Last year we reported a four percentage point difference between genders when evaluating if men and women knew an up-to-date value of their equity stakes. In 2025, this gap has grown to just over nine percentage points. The gap also exists between men and women when looking at their knowledge of the current valuation of their company, where **76.2% of women said they are aware of the most recent valuation compared to 83.3% of men.** As we look into these numbers in more detail, the senior roles show almost no recognisable gap in understanding when comparing men and women, but how do junior roles compare?

Mirroring ownership levels, we see a significant gap when comparing male and female equity knowledge in junior roles. Equity knowledge is an additional area that needs to be drastically improved. Not only is it important to close the equity ownership gap in junior roles, but those who own equity need to and deserve to understand what that means for them.

Percentage of respondents in junior roles who know the value of their equity



# Liquidity

Given the market conditions in recent years, liquidity events such as IPOs and M&A activity have been noticeably scarce. In this section of the report, we analyse the outlook of businesses in 2025, to better understand the appetite for IPOs. We'll also explore the data on where businesses are looking to list, alongside secondaries which act as a popular alternative to public markets as a way to offer liquidity to employees and shareholders.

LIQUIDITY

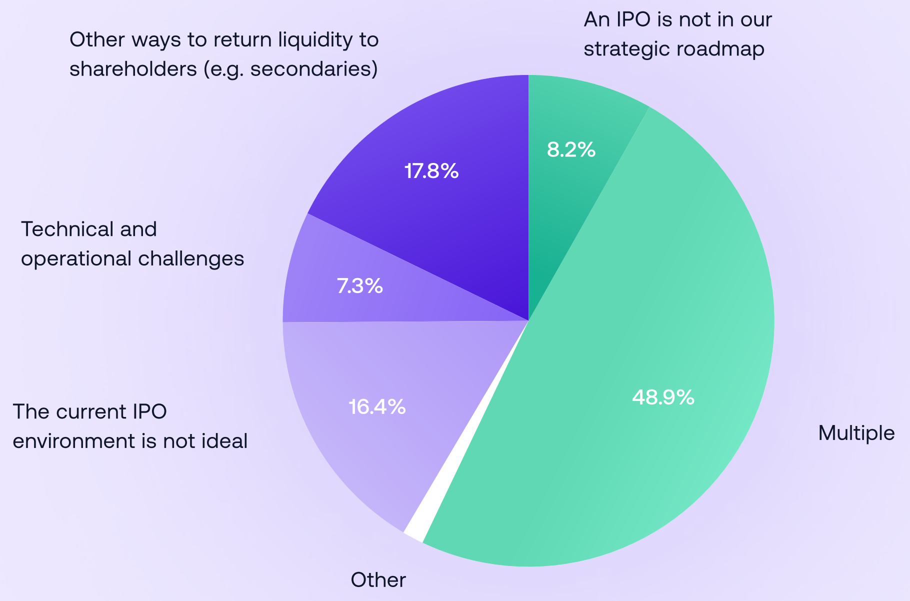
# IPOs in 2024

Our recent Equity Data Pulse report highlighted the unfortunate continuation of the negative trend in fundraising. Despite macroeconomic conditions still being uncertain, **55% of companies say they are more likely to IPO now when compared to 12 months ago.**

Out of those who said they were less likely to IPO compared to twelve months ago, 48.9% of respondents stated that there were multiple reasons as to why that was the case. The uncertainty surrounding the IPO environment was also listed by 16.4% as the third largest reason for not considering an IPO at this time.

The second most popular reason for businesses not considering an IPO, was having other ways to return liquidity to shareholders. Given the rise in popularity of secondary share sales, it is interesting to note that companies may consider that option as one of the main alternatives to an IPO.

## Reasons why companies won't IPO in the next 12 months

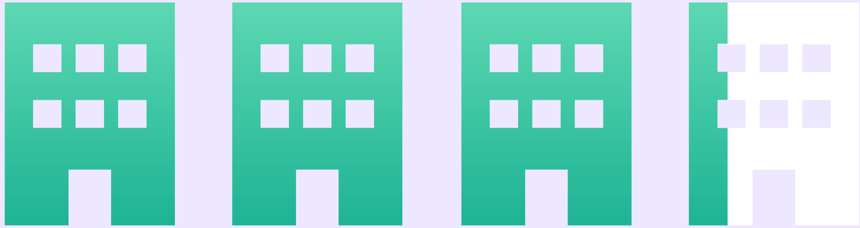


# Secondaries

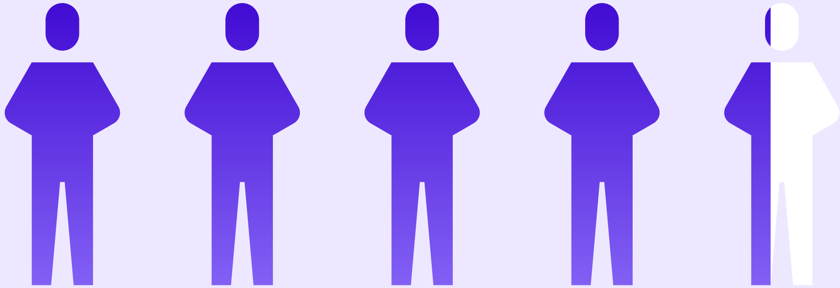
Secondaries are a popular tool for private businesses to provide liquidity to shareholders without the need for an exit event. **In fact, 77.8% of businesses said they were either very likely or somewhat likely to run a secondary share sale in the next 12 months.** This data suggests that businesses are comfortable delaying the IPO process given that secondaries can provide liquidity without having to list on public markets. As market conditions improve, secondaries may stall some private businesses from progressing IPO plans and therefore stall any significant increase in IPO numbers over the next 12 months.

83.2% of employees said they would like to participate in a secondary sale if their business decided to run a secondary sale in the near future. But given the complexities of secondaries, do employees understand what they are?

**77.8%** of businesses said they were very likely or somewhat likely to run a secondary share sale in the next 12 months



**83.2%** of employees said they would like to participate in a secondary sale

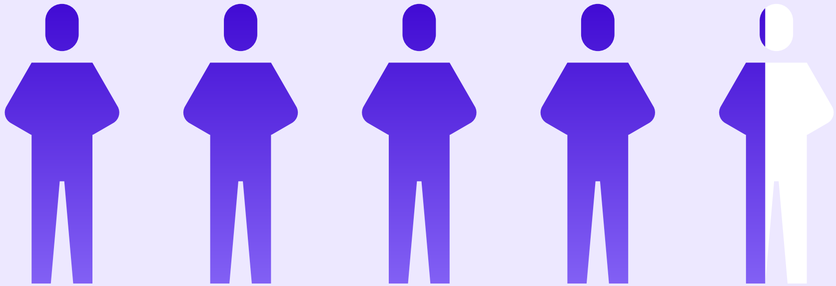


## LIQUIDITY

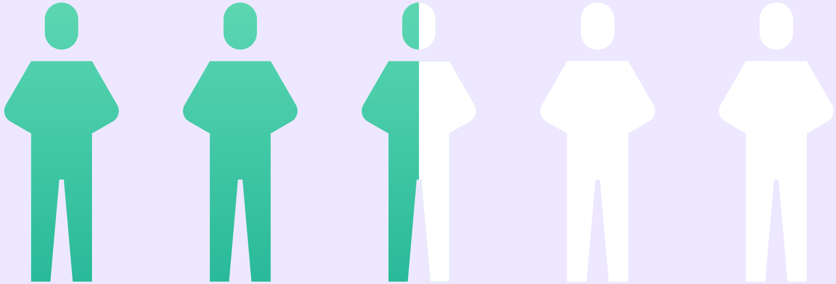
There is an obvious appetite from both businesses and employees for secondaries, which is understandable given the lack of liquidity options for those working in private businesses in today's market. However, despite a high number of employees wanting to participate in secondaries, only **50.4% of employees stated they know what a secondary share sale is.** So if only half of employees understand or know what a secondary is, how will they understand the benefits or pitfalls of secondaries?

There is a big opportunity for businesses to get ahead of the curve and educate their employees about liquidity in general. Covering the likelihood of IPOs and the impact of secondaries, will increase the overall understanding of equity and potentially increase the perceived value of equity.

**83.2%** of employees said they would like to participate in a secondary sale



**50.4%** of employees stated that they know what a secondary share sale is

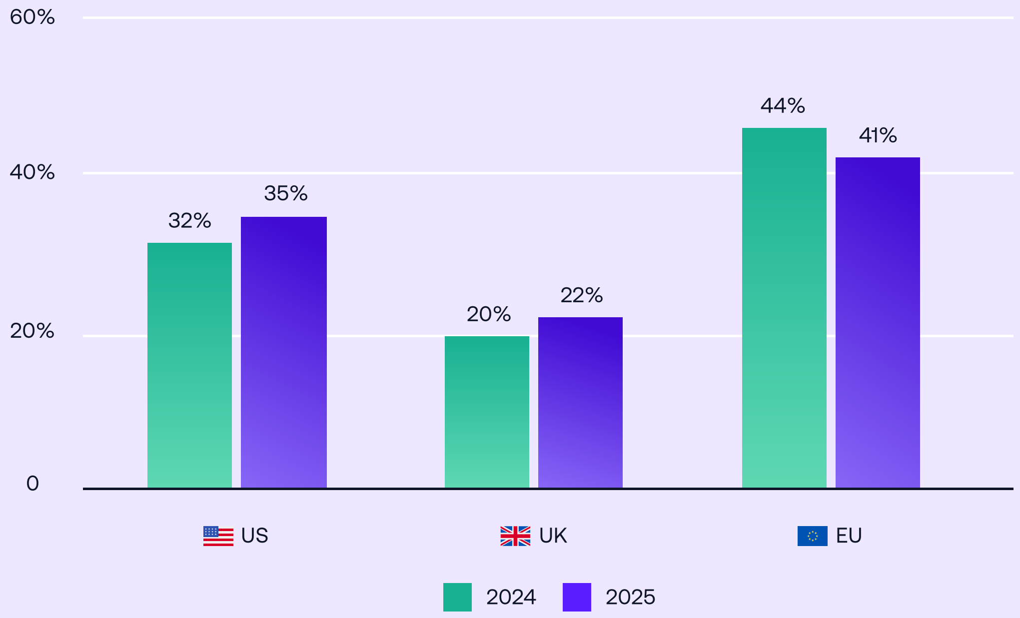


# Where to list?

Where companies choose to IPO is a somewhat controversial subject, where traditionally the US and the UK markets have been reasonably dominant. As market conditions remain poor, there have been ever-decreasing levels of IPOs in all markets, but have companies changed their minds on where to IPO based on market conditions?

In fact **the EU seems to be less popular for potential IPOs in 2025 compared to 2024** where there has been a 3.8 percentage point decrease. The US and UK however seem increasingly attractive when compared to 2024's numbers. Are businesses from the US and UK choosing to IPO in their respective markets? And, are businesses from the EU choosing to IPO in the US or UK instead of remaining in their local markets?

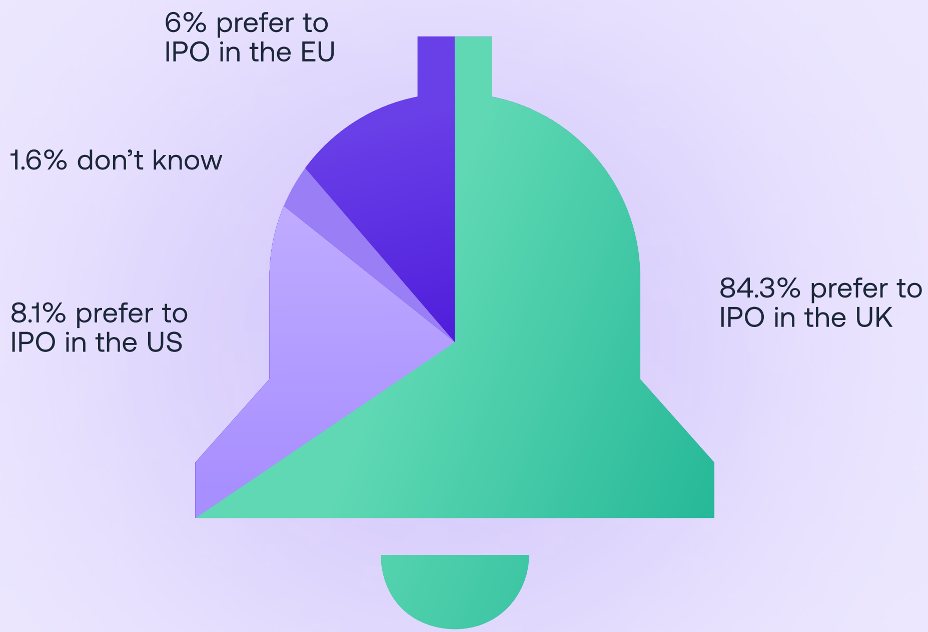
Where companies would prefer to IPO (2024 vs 2025)



Each company will have specific reasoning for whether they IPO in their home market or if they list on one of the more popular public markets. However, we observe **that respondents from the UK are more likely to IPO within their home market compared to 2024.** 84.3% (was 72% in 2024) of respondents in the UK said they'd IPO in the UK, 8.1% said US. So the increase from 72% to 84% shows that the prospect of a UK IPO has not lost its appeal. A similar trend is seen in the US data where 97% of US businesses said they'd IPO in the US compared to 88% in 2024.

The contrast is seen when observing 2025 data within the markets outside of the US and UK, where only 52.8% of businesses from all other markets said they'd IPO in the EU. In addition, 26.8% said they'd IPO in the US and 12.4% said the UK. This data in silo cannot tell the story of global IPO preferences, but it does shine a light on the attractiveness of the US and UK markets for businesses considering IPOs.

Where UK businesses stated they would prefer to IPO



# A note from our CEO

The macroeconomic conditions have been increasingly challenging for many businesses over the last few years. But in 2024, fundraising, IPOs and M&A activity started to recover. Additionally, secondaries have provided businesses with new liquidity opportunities, and when managed correctly they can have life-changing impacts on employees. Over the last 6 months, we have also observed the introduction of the PISCES framework in the UK, potentially providing private businesses with a new way to access liquidity.

There is ongoing support for EU reform to engage with tech businesses and fast-growth industries, to tackle the lack of attractiveness when considering IPO destinations. Over the next 12 months, I expect to see further collaboration and movement on this and the Ledgy team is very supportive of creating a fairer and more effective environment for businesses to thrive within Europe.

Although it is a major positive that equity awards are trending upwards, as an industry and, more importantly, as businesses utilising equity, we need to address the significant equity gaps observed at the junior level between male and female colleagues. Encouraging increased participation and inclusion for women in engineering roles will also impact these statistics, given the higher salary and equity expectations in STEM roles as opposed to commercial roles.

The work involved in equity doesn’t stop there. Engaging and educating employees more effectively when awarding equity will drive the success of employee equity plans, positively impacting employee motivation. For those in junior roles who have limited experience of the impact equity can have, we all need to work together to promote success stories to drive further engagement from junior employees.

Finally, on a personal level, I am very excited about the continued growth and innovation in the equity industry. With policy reform and technological advancement, we will see new opportunities to unlock greater efficiencies within equity management. At Ledgy, we will continue to be a technology enabler of these positive and progressive changes, empowering more teams globally with equity.

Y.S.

Yoko Spirig
CEO, Ledgy

Ledgy

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