



Cost Management Barometer

2026 Outlook

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Cost Management Barometer

CEO and CFO perspectives are critical in shaping strategic direction amid ongoing uncertainty.

2026 is not a year for heroic cost cuts. It is a year for disciplined cost leadership - protecting margin, funding transformation, and staying resilient in a volatile operating environment.

Based on feedback from 1,000 senior decision-makers across EMEA, this report highlights the trends shaping 2026 and the priorities CEOs and CFOs should set now.



Executive Summary

This year's findings show a leadership shift from crisis response to disciplined optimization under persistent uncertainty. Many expect growth - but not at any cost. The dominant posture is stability with intent: protect margin, fund targeted change, and keep optionality.

The winners in 2026 will treat cost management as a strategic capability: clearer visibility, tighter governance, and faster decisions that convert volatility into advantage.

Methodology

The 2026 Cost Management Barometer is based on a comprehensive survey of 1000 senior decision-makers - primarily CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and operational leaders - across a wide range of sectors including manufacturing, retail and healthcare organizations.

The research was conducted in Q1 2026 and captures the priorities, concerns, and strategic outlook of leaders managing cost pressures, supply chain disruption, and transformation across the business landscape.

Respondent Profile:

The survey targeted executives responsible for financial, operational, and procurement decisions within organizations of various sizes and sub-sectors - including industrial, consumer goods, packaging, automotive, and more.

Geographic Scope:

While global in perspective, this edition places particular emphasis on the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East, and Africa), ensuring insights are relevant across both mature and emerging markets.

Data Collection:

Responses were collected via a structured online questionnaire designed to gather both quantitative benchmarks and qualitative context on sector-specific cost strategies.

Data Integrity:

All data was anonymized and aggregated to protect confidentiality and ensure a reliable, unbiased reflection of prevailing trends across key sectors.

The findings offer a clear view into the realities and ambitions of organizations navigating rising costs, operational complexity, and the growing pressure to transform sustainably and strategically.

Key Findings

- **Cautious confidence replaces aggressive growth.** While nearly half of organizations expect revenue growth, many anticipate flat performance – signalling a strategic pivot toward stability, margin protection, and risk management.
- **Profit expectations rest on internal levers.** Strong EBITDA outlooks are driven by cost control, pricing discipline, and operational efficiency, not by assumptions of favourable market conditions.
- **Cost management becomes a growth enabler.** Cost optimization is no longer defensive; it is central to resilience, profitability, and sustainable growth.
- **Strategy is deliberately diversified.** Leaders are balancing multiple priorities; technology, workforce capability, sustainability, innovation, and cost, rather than betting on a single transformation lever.
- **Pricing power exists, but with limits.** Most organizations expect to pass on cost increases, though confidence varies by sector and remains highly sensitive to customer behaviour and competitive pressure.
- **Execution risks outweigh demand concerns.** Supply chain fragility, skills shortages, and unpredictable cost pressures pose greater threats to targets than market demand, reinforcing the need for dynamic, forward-looking planning.





What CEOs And CFOs should do next

In 2026, the question is not whether to manage cost - it is how to do it while funding growth and transformation. The strongest performers will combine visibility, governance, and speed of execution.

CEO/CFO takeaways:

- Cost management is now a growth enabler. Use it to fund capability (technology & skills), not just to cut.
- Execution risk is the bigger threat. Prioritize resilience in supply chain and workforce and monitor systemic cost volatility.
- Pricing is conditional. Protect margin with data: elasticity, cost-to-serve, and competitor index - then act segment by segment.

Insight 01.

Growth optimism is strong, but increasingly cautious

The majority of organizations across EMEA are forecasting revenue growth in 2026, with confidence strong among smaller mid-market firms, while organizations with turnover above £175m are much more cautious, preferring stability over acceleration.

Across EMEA, survey data shows that **45.7%** of organizations expect to grow this year. However, the statistics show caution:

Most Optimistic:

- o Mid-market organizations with a turnover between **£75m - £100m** with **48.7%** forecasting revenue growth.
- o Retail & Wholesale leads the industries with **49.1%** predicting growth and **34.8%** expecting parity.

Most Cautious:

- o Organizations with turnover between **£175m - £250m** have entered 2026 with plenty of caution, with **52.8%** forecasting parity and only **27.8%** forecasting growth.
- o Portugal has the most negative outlook for the year ahead, with **23%** expecting decline this year.

Insight 01. Growth optimism is strong, but increasingly cautious

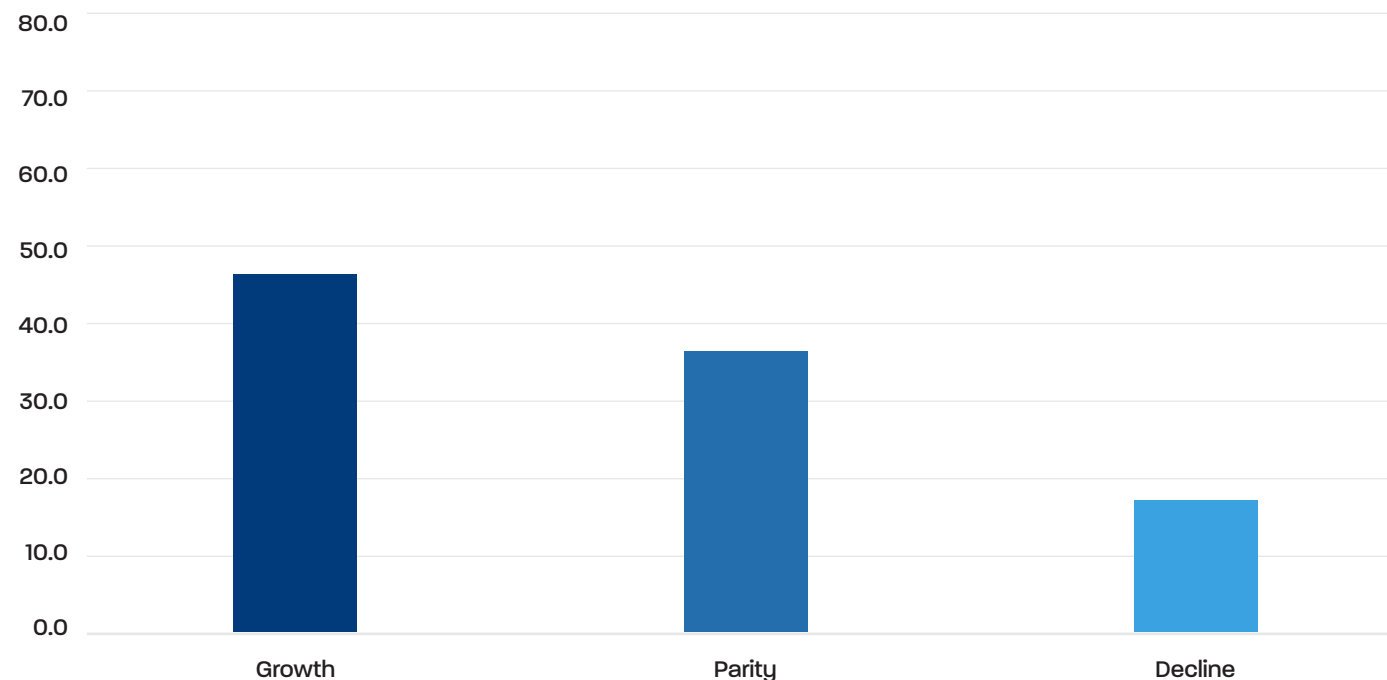


What this tells us

While nearly half of businesses forecast revenue growth in 2026, the high proportion expecting parity, particularly among larger firms, suggests a more measured outlook. Growth ambition exists, but it is tempered by realism. This signals a market shifting from post-volatility rebound to steady-state performance management, where protecting margins is as important as top-line expansion.

Leaders are placing guardrails around growth plans, stress-testing assumptions, and prioritising predictability over risk-heavy expansion. Sustainable growth in 2026 will come from smarter cost structures, not aggressive volume chasing.

01. What revenue trend is your business forecasting to achieve in 2026 compared to 2025?



CEO/CFO takeaway:

Growth is expected, but many leaders are planning for steady-state performance - margin protection matters as much as topline.

- Build a margin bridge for each business unit.
- Re-forecast quarterly using leading indicators, not annual assumptions.

Insight 02.

Margin discipline defines success

Despite cautious revenue expectations, 61.7% of executives expect EBITDA to increase in 2026.

Profit optimism is still strong, although weaker when compared to 2025. More organizations are anticipating a slight increase, and a considerable number don't foresee any change in 2026.

Those with the most confidence in profit increase are:

- Retail & Wholesale and Manufacturing are foreseeing considerable profit growth this year, with **63%** and **62.8%** respectively.
- The mid-market organizations with turnover of between **£75m - £100m** have responded with confidence for EBITDA increase in 2026 at **69.9%**.
- Spain has the highest proportion of answers within the survey leaning to increases this year, with **70.5%**.

Those with a more pessimistic outlook are:

- Organizations with lower turnover between **£20m - £50m**, with **36.4%** predicting parity in 2026.
- **19.4%** of the high earning organizations with turnover between **£175m - £250m** are foreseeing a decrease in their EBITDA.

Insight 02. Margin discipline defines success



What this tells us

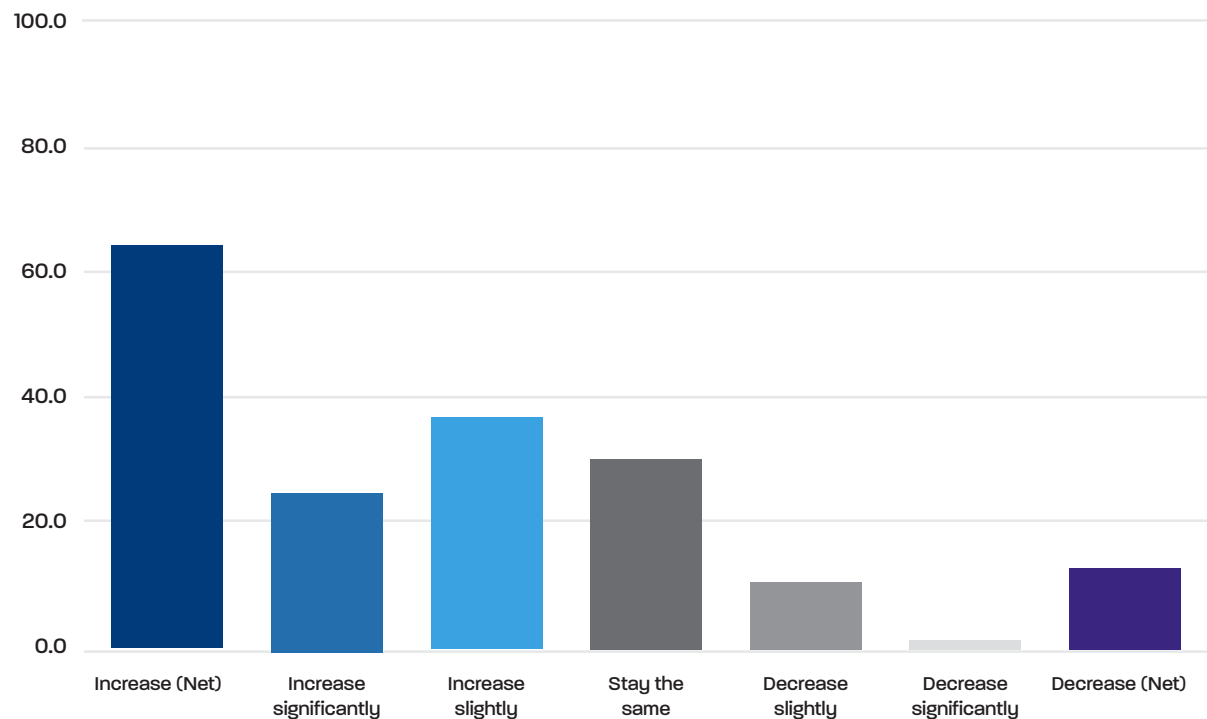
EBITDA confidence in 2026 is widespread but grounded in realism rather than expectations for step-change growth. Across sectors and geographies, leaders are planning for incremental margin improvement, not outsized profit expansion. This reflects an environment where stability and predictability are valued as much as growth, particularly as revenue expectations remain cautious.

Margin improvement is being engineered internally rather than assumed from external conditions. Leaders are relying on procurement optimization, pricing discipline, and operating model efficiency to protect and grow EBITDA. This confirms that margin control is no longer episodic, instead it is a permanent leadership capability requiring ongoing governance and insight.

Variation in confidence across revenue bands also highlights the beginning of a growing divide in execution maturity. Smaller organizations face tighter constraints, while organizations of scale have stronger pricing power and are therefore better positioned to sustain margin discipline.

In this context, success in 2026 will be defined less by market exposure and more by an organization's ability to institutionalize margin management as a core strategic discipline.

Q2. Are you predicting your EBITDA to increase or decrease in 2026 compared to 2025 (i.e. your business' profit as a net percentage of its revenue)?



CEO/CFO takeaway:

EBITDA confidence is being built through internal levers (cost, pricing, productivity), not favourable markets.

- Lock monthly governance on the biggest cost categories.
- Redesign cost-to-serve for low-margin segments.

Insight 03.

Strategic priorities are deliberately diversified

In 2026, there is no dominant transformation lever. Cost optimization, technology upgrades and workforce development are all prioritized almost equally, signalling a focus on balancing concentration across multiple value drivers.

Top priorities by sector (percentage indicates organizations selecting that area):

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	LEADING SECTOR	SECOND SECTOR
Cost optimization	Manufacturing, 42.5%	Retail & Wholesale, 39.7%
Technology upgrades	Manufacturing, 41.3%	Retail & Wholesale, 40%
Workforce development	Retail & Wholesale, 43.6%	Manufacturing, 37.8%
Product innovation	Manufacturing, 37.2%	Retail, 35.5%
Market expansion	Healthcare, 38.4%	Retail, 30%

Most sectors reported such similar weightings across initiatives, reflecting no dominant strategies, but instead broad focus. Healthcare in particular reported no more than **5%** variation across all 5 specified focuses.

This pattern continued for the various revenue bands, although we can see clear distinction for high turnover organizations of between £175m - £250m:

- Cost Optimization: **50%**
- Workforce Development: **47.2%**
- Product Innovation: **36.1%**
- Technology Upgrades: **27.8%**
- Market Expansion: **22.2%**

Indicating that scale brings greater clarity and capacity to prioritize initiatives without overextending resources.

Insight 03. Strategic priorities are deliberately diversified



What this tells us

The near-equal weighting across cost optimization, technology upgrades, workforce development, indicates that organizations are pursuing a deliberately diversified strategy. Rather than leaning on a single transformational lever, they are balancing investments across multiple value drivers to hedge against uncertainty and maintain flexibility in a rapidly evolving market.

This approach tells us that no single initiative is likely to guarantee competitive advantage. For example, focusing solely on cost optimization may improve short-term efficiency but risks neglecting innovation and talent development, which are essential for long-term growth.

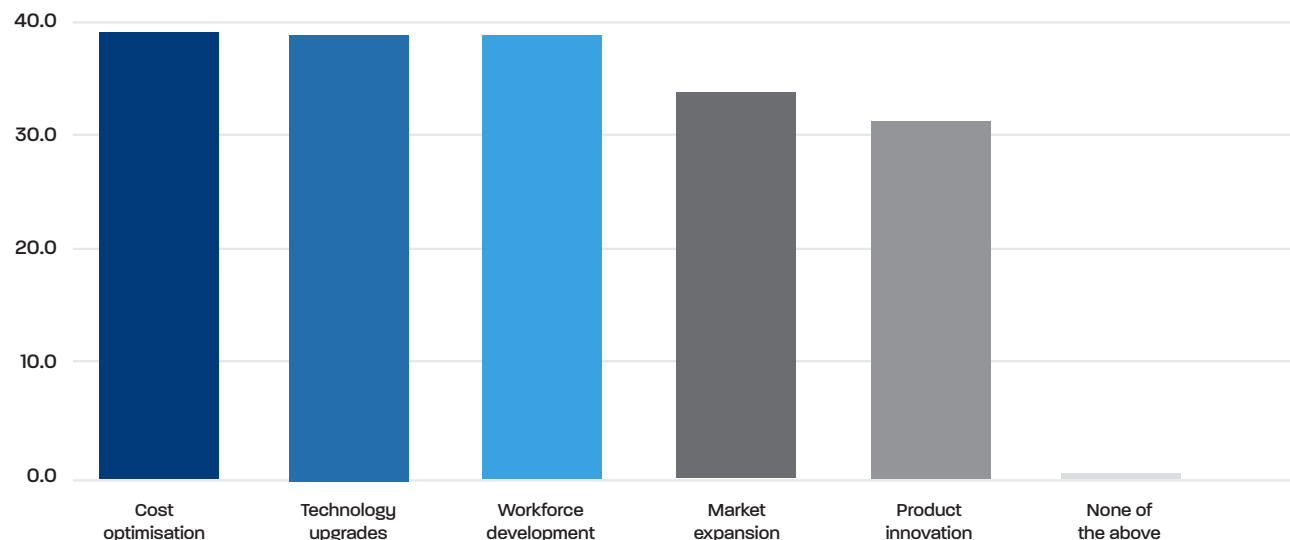
Ultimately, the data highlights a strategic mindset that values resilience and adaptability over single-minded pursuit, reflecting a broader trend toward balanced transformation portfolios across industries.

CEO/CFO takeaway:

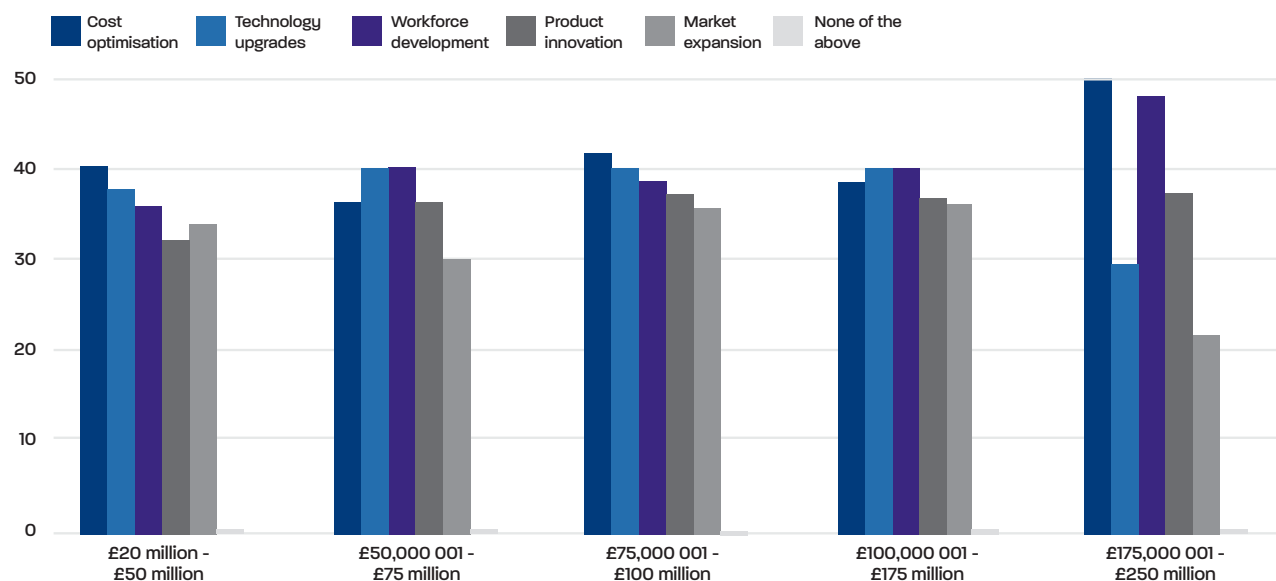
Diversified priorities signal a hedged strategy - leaders are investing across cost, technology and people to stay flexible.

- Prioritise 2-3 initiatives with measurable payback.
- Link technology investment to decision speed and cost visibility.

Q3. Which of the following initiatives, if any, is your business prioritising in 2026? (Select up to 3)



Q3. Which of the following initiatives, if any, is your business prioritising in 2026? (Revenue band view)



Insight 04.

Pricing power is conditional

Whilst most organizations expect to raise prices in 2026, nearly one-third remain neutral. This change from 2025 indicates some fragility in pricing power. It remains a viable lever, but not a guaranteed one.

Retail organizations show the strongest confidence, while other sectors adopt a more cautious stance.

Sectors and Revenue Bands most likely to rely on price increases:

- Retail & Wholesale: **63.9%**
- £175m - £250m: **77.8%**
- £75m - £100m: **69.5%**

This increased neutrality from 2025 is prevalent across most geographies, sectors and revenue bands, but most noticeable in the lowest revenue band surveyed (turnover between **£20m - £50m**) with **38.3%** of organizations remaining neutral in the face of their ability to pass on price increases in 2026.

Insight 04. Pricing power is conditional



What this tells us

Pricing remains a viable but increasingly conditional lever. While most organizations expect to pass on cost increases, rising neutrality highlights uncertainty around customer tolerance and market elasticity. Pricing power is no longer universal, it must be earned and actively defended.

Smaller organizations appear most exposed, with weaker brand leverage and more price-sensitive customers limiting their ability to raise prices without impacting sales. Retail and mid-to-large organizations are more confident, reflecting stronger brands and more established customer relationships.

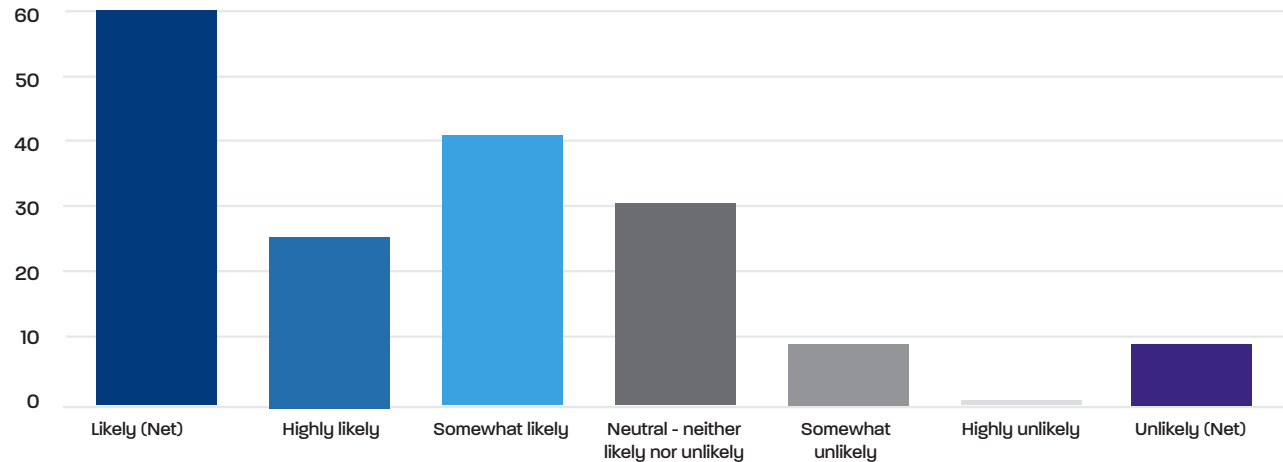
Pricing in 2026 is more disciplined than discretionary. Organizations can no longer rely on price alone to protect margins. Pricing power must be underpinned by clear value, competitive awareness, and cost control.

CEO/CFO takeaway:

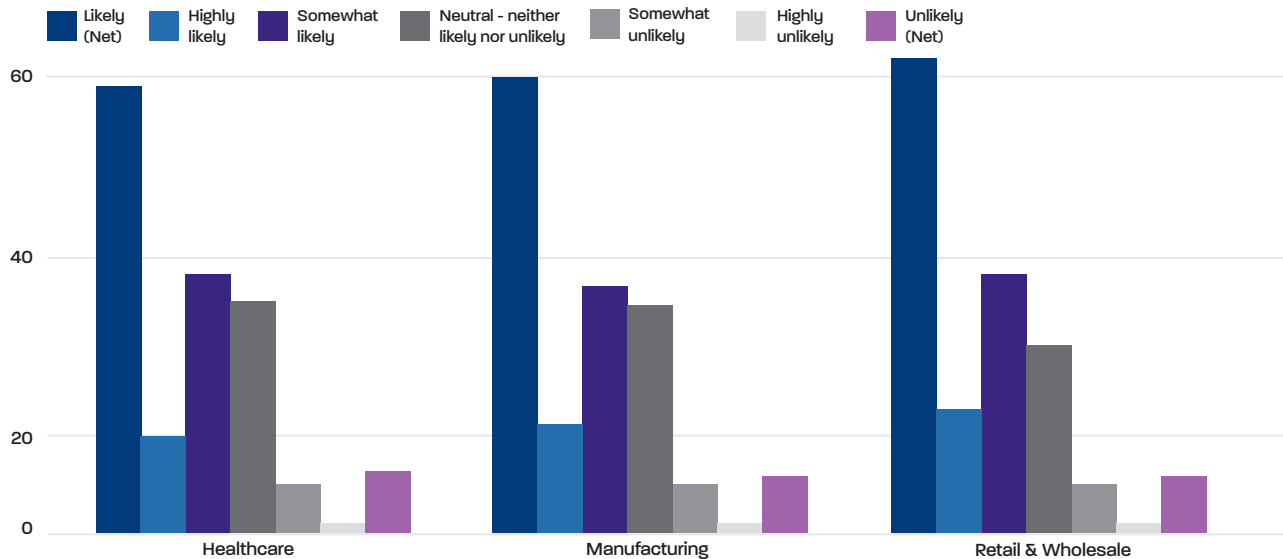
Pricing remains viable, but only with evidence and segmentation.

- Run elasticity and competitor pricing checks by segment.
- Align price moves to cost-to-serve and service levels.

Q4. How likely or unlikely do you expect the ability to pass on any cost increases to your customers through your pricing to be in the next months?



Q4. How likely or unlikely do you expect the ability to pass on cost increases to your customers through your pricing to be in the next 12 months?



Insight 05.

Strategic balancing act

Similarly to 2025, no single theme dominates organizations strategic priorities in 2026. Instead, priorities are broadly balanced, reflecting a multifaceted approach to growth and efficiency.

Overall, the gap between the highest and lowest ranked priorities is just **4%**:

- Growth or expansion: **37.1%**
- Supply chain optimization: **36.1%**
- Cost management: **35.6%**
- Improved technology: **34.5%**
- Revenue management: **34.4%**
- Sustainable objectives: **33.1%**

Looking at priorities by revenue band reveals some nuances among larger organizations:

£100m - £175m:

- o Supply chain optimization: **41.4%**
- o Cost management: **40.8%**
- o Revenue management: **36.6%**

£175m - £250m:

- o Supply chain optimization: **50%**
- o Growth or expansion: **44.4%**
- o Sustainable objectives: **36.1%**

Insight 05. Strategic balancing act



What this tells us

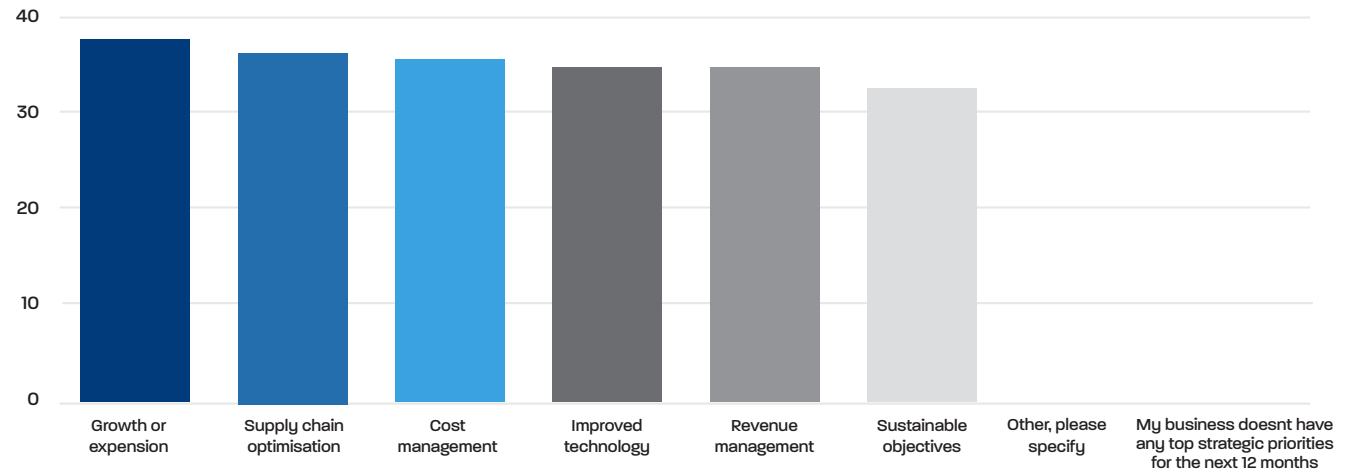
The traditional tension between growth and cost control has all but disappeared. Leaders now view cost optimization not as a defensive necessity, but as a strategic enabler. A fuel for growth rather than a brake. Growth, efficiency, and sustainability are no longer competing priorities; they are interconnected levers for scaling success.

To put it simply, organizations are learning to run on all cylinders at once. Cost management frees capital from inefficiency, supply chains are sharpened for agility, and growth initiatives are powered by these efficiencies. Strategic balance isn't a compromise, it's a new competitive advantage.

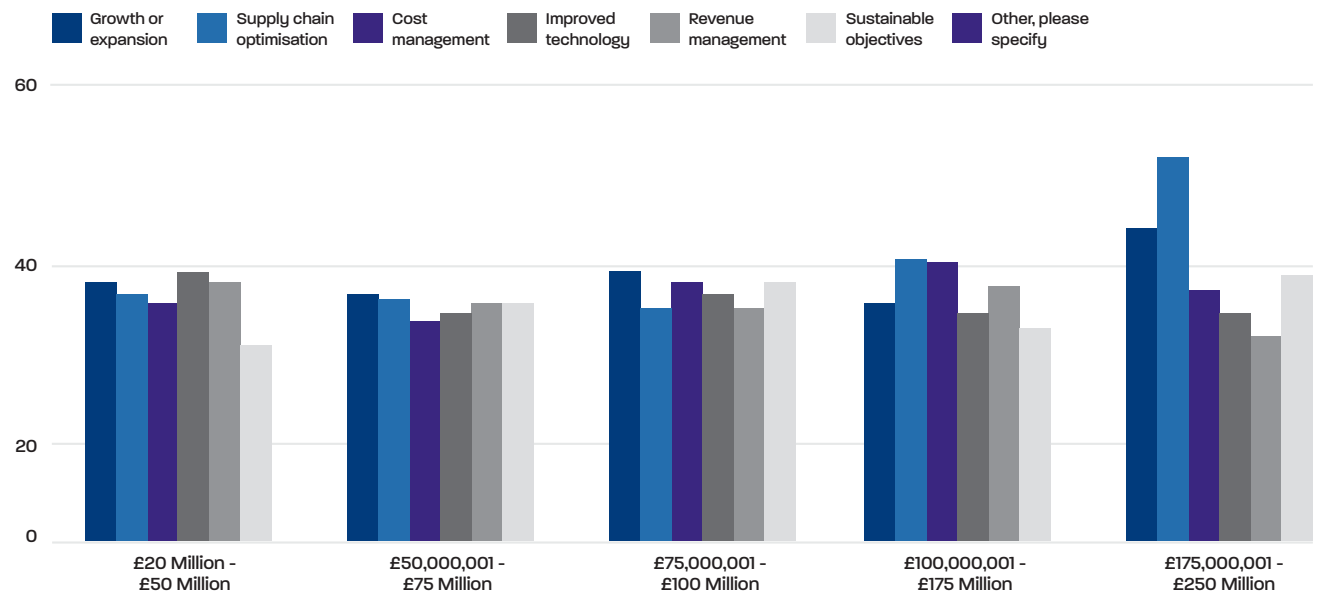
CEO/CFO takeaway:

With many strategic priorities, ensure you are surrounded by the expertise needed to impact change.

Q5. What, if anything, are your top strategic priorities for the next 12 months? (select up to 3)



Q5. What, if anything, are your top strategic priorities for the next 12 months? (Revenue band view)



Insight 06.

Sustainability becomes operational

Sustainability initiatives, closely followed by supply chain optimization, lead planned funding initiatives for 2026. Beyond these, investment ambitions are spread relatively evenly across sales and marketing, AI and automation, vertical integration, and acquisitions.

Top Funding Initiatives by Sector:

INITIATIVE

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMIZATION

SALES & MARKETING

AI AND AUTOMATION

VERTICAL INTEGRATION

ACQUISITION

SECTOR

Manufacturing (**44.2%**), Healthcare (**38.1%**)

Healthcare (**40.8%**), Manufacturing (**38.1%**)

Retail & Wholesale (**35.2%**), Manufacturing (**33.9%**)

Retail & Wholesale (**35.2%**), Manufacturing (**31.6%**)

Healthcare (**32.6%**), Manufacturing (**31%**)

Healthcare (**28.4%**), Retail & Wholesale (**28.2%**)

When analyzed by revenue band, a more concentrated focus is revealed. Organizations with turnover between **£175m - £250m** regard sustainability initiatives as their top funding priority in 2026, receiving **50%** of responses.

Insight 06. Sustainability becomes operational

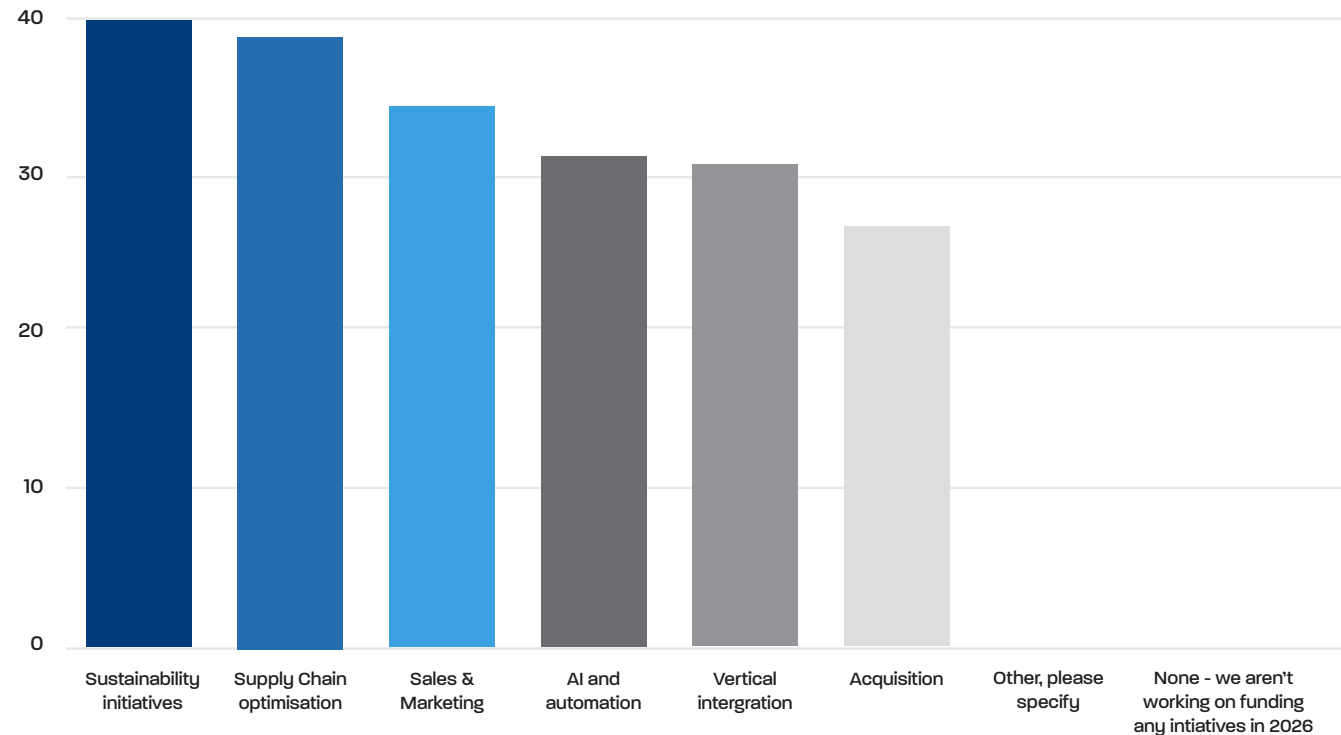


What this tells us

Sustainability has transitioned from a reputational concern to an operational imperative. Funding decisions signal that organizations increasingly view ESG initiatives through a lens of cost, risk, and compliance, rather than solely branding or corporate responsibility.

However, funding intentions are not limited to sustainability initiatives alone. While sustainability and supply chain optimization lead, planned investments are quite evenly distributed across sales & marketing, AI & automation, vertical integration, and acquisitions. This spread suggests that organizations are balancing multiple funding priorities rather than concentrating on a single area.

Q6. What initiatives, if any, are you working on funding in 2026? (select all that apply)



CEO/CFO takeaway:

Sustainability spend is shifting toward operational outcomes (risk, compliance, efficiency).

- Treat ESG as a risk & ROI portfolio.
- Quantify payback from energy, waste and supply resilience.

Insight 07.

Supply chain strains and labour gaps persist

In 2026, organizations are facing a multitude of challenges. Supply chain issues and labour shortages top the list for the second year, indicating the intensity of pressure that continues to be felt across the board.

Notable insights:

- The Healthcare and Manufacturing sectors consider supply chain issues their top priority with responses of **41.4%** and **38.6%** respectively.
- Organizations with turnover between **£175m - £250m** rank competition highly (**52.8%**) and technology limitations low (**19.4%**)
- Organizations with turnover between **£20m - £50m**, **£50m - £75m**, and **£100m - £175m** are all focused on the challenge of supply chain issues (**40.7%**, **38.5%**, **41.4%**)

Insight 07. Supply chain strains and labour gaps persist



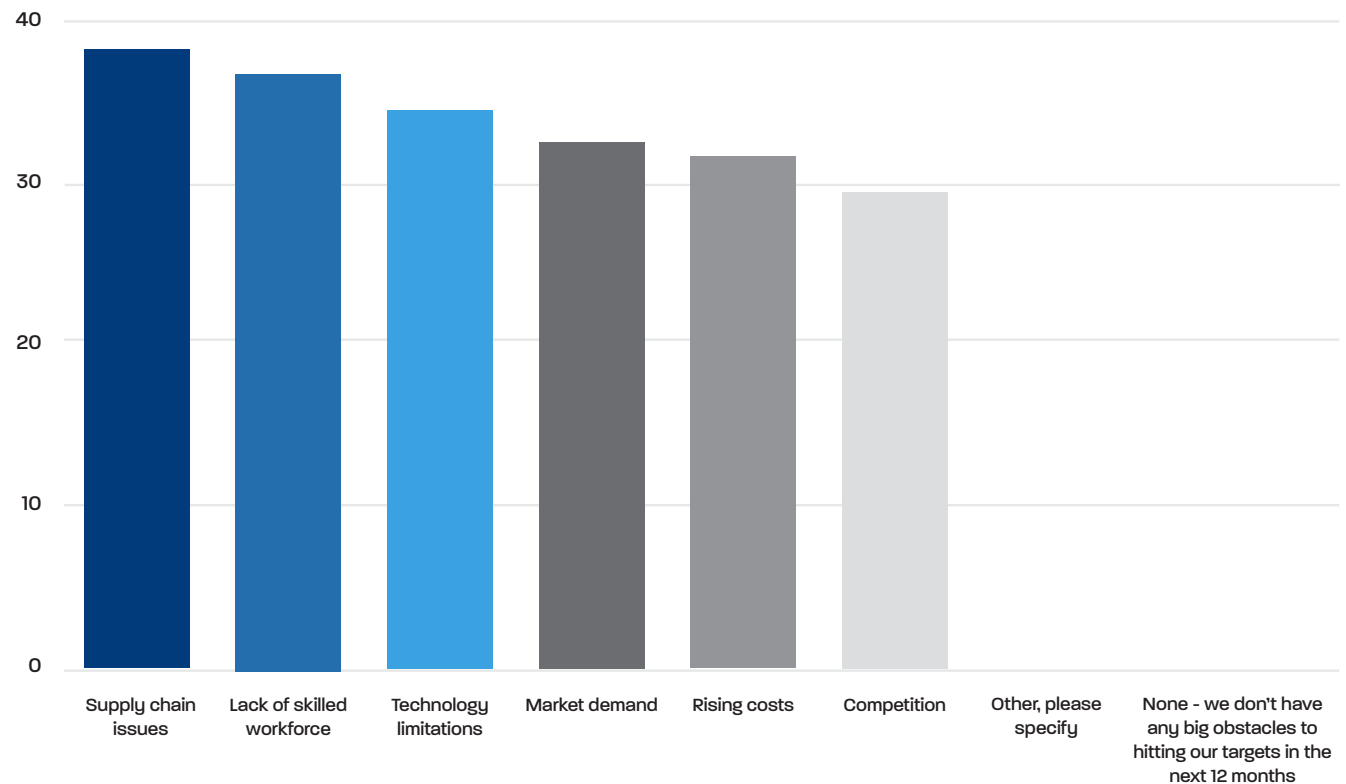
What this tells us

Organizations in 2026 are navigating a landscape defined by persistent pressure rather than isolated issues. Supply chain bottlenecks and labour shortages continue to challenge many sectors, while larger organizations are increasingly seeing competition as their primary obstacle.

Across the board, the challenge isn't just identifying problems, it's managing multiple pressures at once and deciding where to focus attention and resources.

The organizations best positioned to thrive will be those that can turn disruption into advantage: simplifying processes, reallocating resources strategically, and strengthening internal flexibility to respond quickly to whatever challenges arise next, whether operational, competitive, or strategic.

Q7. What, if any, are your company's biggest obstacles to hitting it's target in the next 12 months? (select up to 3)



CEO/CFO takeaway:

Execution risk (supply chain and labour) continues to be a top constraint.

- Map critical supply and labour dependencies.
- Build mitigation plans for the biggest bottlenecks.

Insight 08.

Cost volatility is now systemic

Looking back at 2025, organizations faced a wide range of unexpected cost challenges that prevented them from achieving their intended results. In particular, increases in infrastructure costs, supply chain expenses, and technological investments caused the most disruption, although no single issue dominated.

Highest Unexpected Cost Challenges by Revenue Band:

- **£175m - £250m:** Rising labour costs, **41.7%**
- **£100m - £175m:** Increased infrastructure costs, **35.6%**
- **£75m - £100m:** Increased cost of energy, **32.8%**
- **£50m - £75m:** Increased infrastructure costs, **34.7%**
- **£20m - £50m:** Increased technological costs, **33%**

Insight 08. Cost volatility is now systemic



What this tells us

The spread of unexpected costs shows that cost volatility is now a systemic feature of today's business environment. Organizations can no longer rely solely on annual budgets or static planning approaches, as these methods fail to capture rapidly shifting cost pressures. Instead, leaders need a more dynamic approach that combines monitoring, market benchmarking, and flexible budgeting to anticipate and respond to emerging risks.

The range of these cost challenges across revenue bands highlights that each one can affect organizations of all sizes and operational scales. There is a need for integrated cost management strategies that connect finance, operations, and technology teams, enabling faster decision-making, prioritization of cost interventions, and alignment with broader strategic objectives.

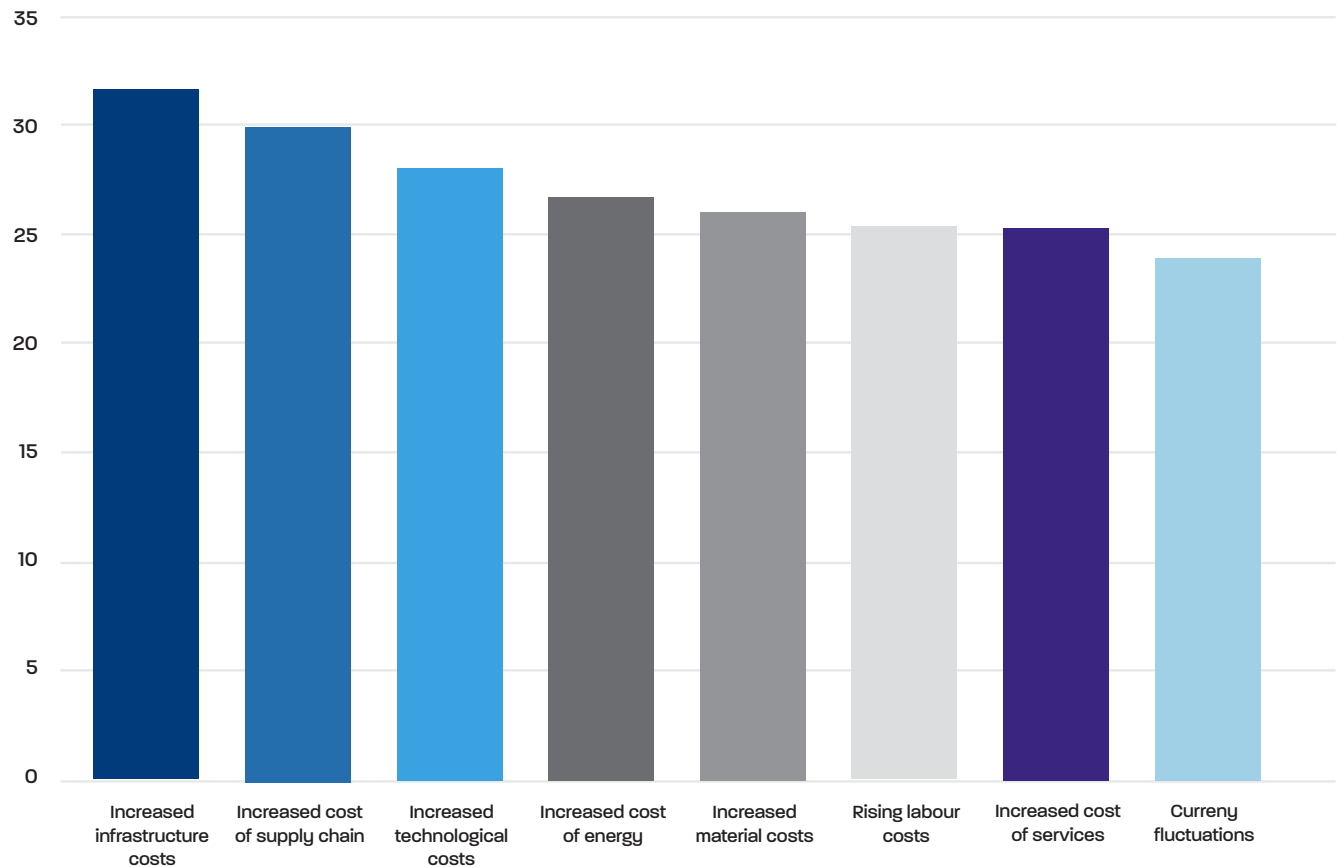
In essence, cost resilience has become a core organizational capability, rather than a tactical afterthought.

CEO/CFO takeaway:

Execution risk (supply chain and labour) continues to be a top constraint.

- Map critical supply and labour dependencies.
- Build mitigation plans for the biggest bottlenecks.

Q8. What unexpected cost challenges, if any, have your company from achieving its intended results in the past 12 months? (select all that apply)



Insight 09.

Business anxiety shifts over time, but never disappears

09a. Concerns over the next 12 months

In the near term, leaders are focused on the immediate enablers of performance, people, technology, and sustainability.

Top three concerns:

- Workforce: **20.5%**
- Sustainability: **19.9%**
- Technology: **19.1%**

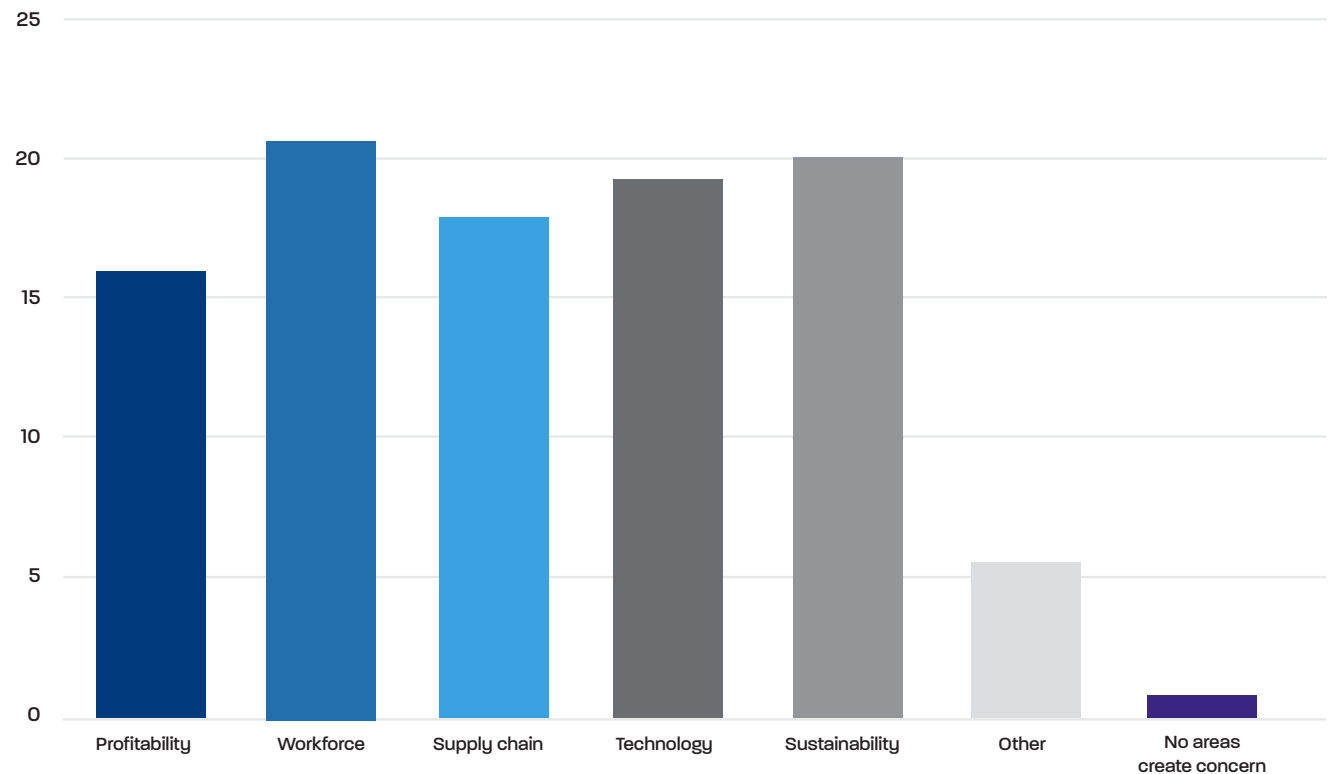
Insight 09a. Concerns over the next 12 months



Notable insights

- **Geographical considerations:** In Spain, their highest concern within the next 12 months is Sustainability (25%), while Supply Chain risk leads in Sweden (25%).
- **Size matters:** Smaller organizations are the least concerned about workforce issues (14.8%), while it is a top issue for mid-market and larger firms.
- **Sustainability paradox:** The largest of organizations rank sustainability lowest (11.1%).
- **Profitability confidence:** Across all sectors, profitability is ranked the lowest concern for the next 12 months.

Q9a. Concerns over the next 12 months



Insight 09.

Business anxiety shifts over time, but never disappears

09b. Concerns over the next two years

As attention moves beyond the immediate, anxiety shifts from enablers to exposure. The mid-term picture is defined less by people and purpose, and more by resilience, systems, and margin pressure.

Top three concerns:

- Supply Chain: **18.6%**
- Technology: **18.4%**
- Profitability: **18.1%**

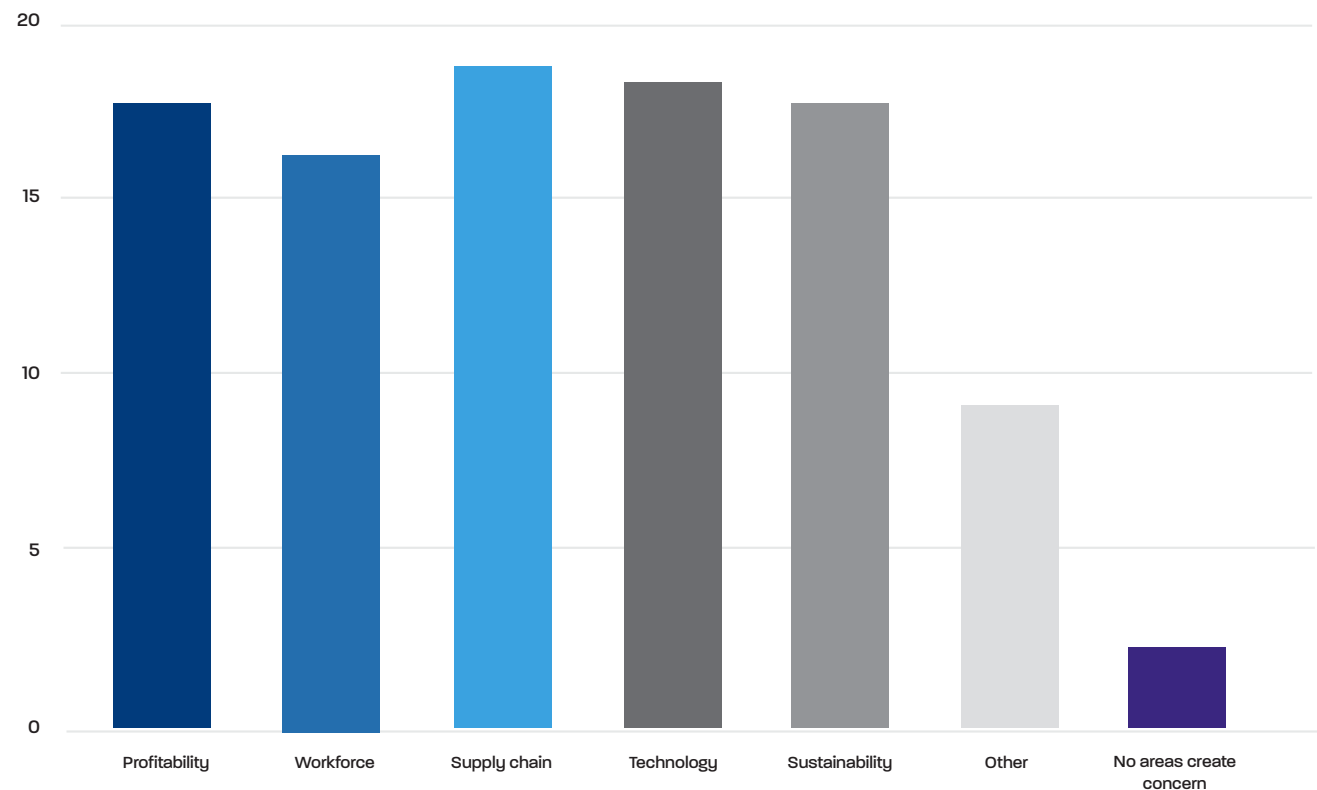
The narrow-spread signals broad uncertainty rather than a single dominant threat.

Insight 09b. Concerns over the next two years

Notable insights

- **Sustainability fades fast:** For smaller and mid-market organizations, sustainability appears front-loaded and drops to 17.7% (£20m – £50m) and 15.6% (£50m – £75m) over the next two years.
- **Workforce anxiety cools:** Despite dominating short-term thinking for mid-market organizations, workforce concerns fall to the lowest-ranked pressure in the mid-term (11.9%).
- **Technology stays sticky:** It remains a top concern for large organizations (22.2%), and is especially pronounced in Italy (22.5%)
- **Profitability re-enters the conversation:** While less visible in Manufacturing and Retail & Wholesale today, it climbs into the top three mid-term concerns overall.

09b. What area of your company, if any, creates the most concern over the following time frames? Over the next 2 years



Business anxiety shifts over time, but never disappears

09c. Concerns over the next three years

Looking further ahead, business anxiety stabilizes around the fundamentals that ensure long-term viability: profitability, supply chain resilience, and technology enablement. Unlike the short-term focus on people and sustainability, these are the pressures that endure, shaping strategy and investment decisions over the long haul.

Top three concerns:

- Profitability: **18.9%**
- Supply chain: **18.6%**
- Technology: **17.7%**

The narrow-spread signals broad uncertainty rather than a single dominant threat.

Insight 09c. Concerns over the next three years

Notable insights

- **Technology tapers off:** Technology becomes a minor concern in the largest organizations (5.6%) but remains critical for mid-market companies, highlighting different innovation pressures by size.
- **Workforce takes a back seat:** Retail & Wholesale places workforce low on the long-term agenda (15.8%), suggesting confidence in talent pipelines or automation adoption.
- **Profitability holds sway:** Profitability retains particular weight in the UK, even though short-term concerns are dominated by people and technology.

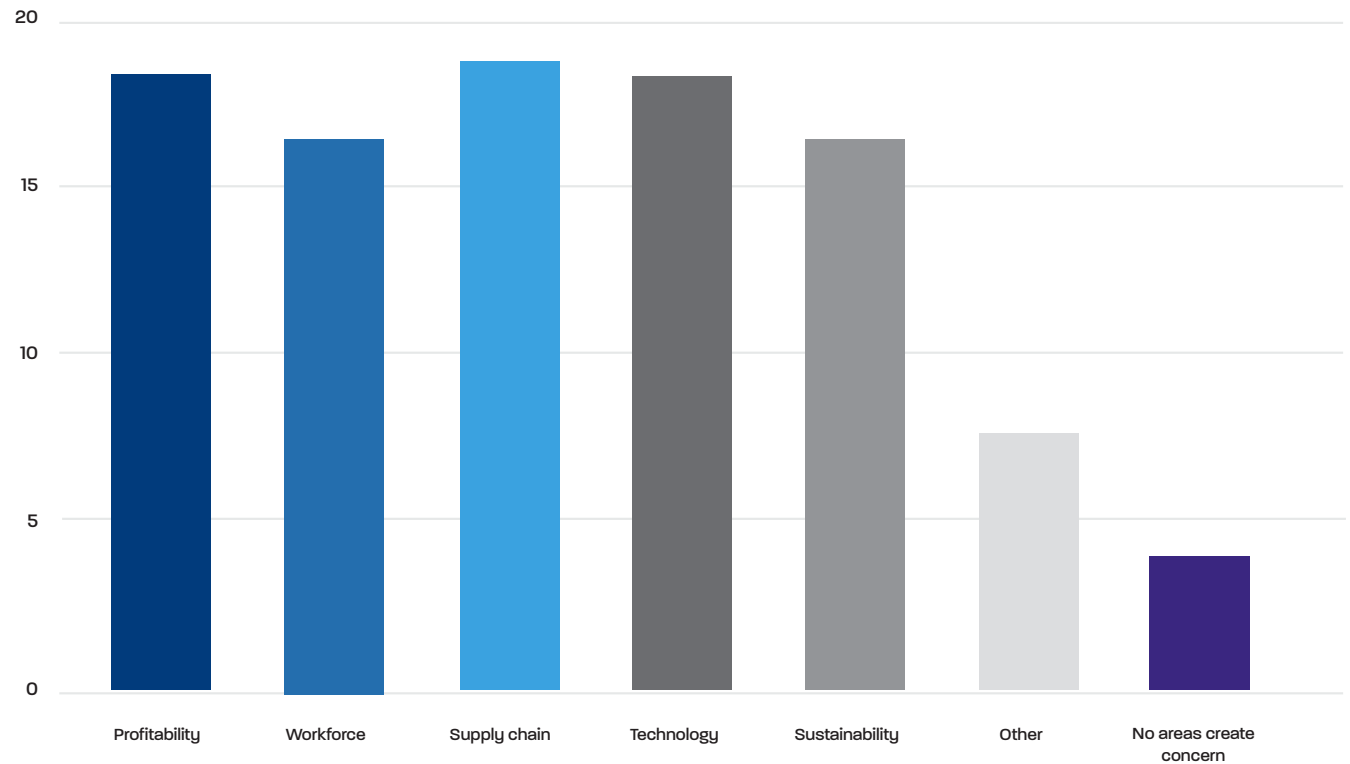
What this tells us

Anxiety in business never disappears, it just evolves.

In the short-term, leaders are focused on people, technology, and sustainability, but over the long horizon, attention shifts to profitability, supply chains, and resilience. Size and sector shape priorities: large enterprises juggle multiple pressures, while mid-market organizations feel the pinch of technology and supply chain risks more acutely.

The key for executives is to think long and act smart. Today's performance enablers can become tomorrow's vulnerabilities. Success comes from balancing investment across technology, operational resilience, and profitability, rather than chasing a single fix.

Q9c. What area of your company, if any, creates the most concern over the following time frames? Over the next 3 years



CEO/CFO takeaway:

Business anxiety moves from short-term shocks to longer-term structural concerns.

- Run scenario planning on 12/24/36-month horizons.
- Align capex and talent plans to these scenarios.

Insight 09.

Tariffs are a strategy issue, not a cost problem

Despite the prevailing narrative that tariffs are a headwind, nearly two-thirds of respondents expect them to have a net positive impact on their business. While over a quarter anticipate downside risk, the overarching message is clear: tariffs are not a theoretical concern.

They will materially reshape competitive dynamics.

Anticipated overall impact of tariffs on business:

- Positive impact (NET): **65.7%**
 - o Significant: **22.3%**
 - o Moderate: **43.4%**
- No impact: **6.8%**
- Negative impact (NET): **27.5%**
 - o Moderate: **24.6%**
 - o Significant: **2.9%**

Insight 10. Tariffs are a strategy issue, not a cost problem



What this tells us

Tariffs are less a cost issue and more a test of strategic positioning. The confidence among respondents reflects the reality that tariffs rarely hit competitors evenly, and those with stronger supply chains or pricing power can gain, not lose.

For leadership teams, this is about understanding relative exposure, not absorbing absolute cost. Tariffs are creating space to reprice intelligently, expose weaker competitors and elevate procurement from an operational function to a driver of margin and resilience.

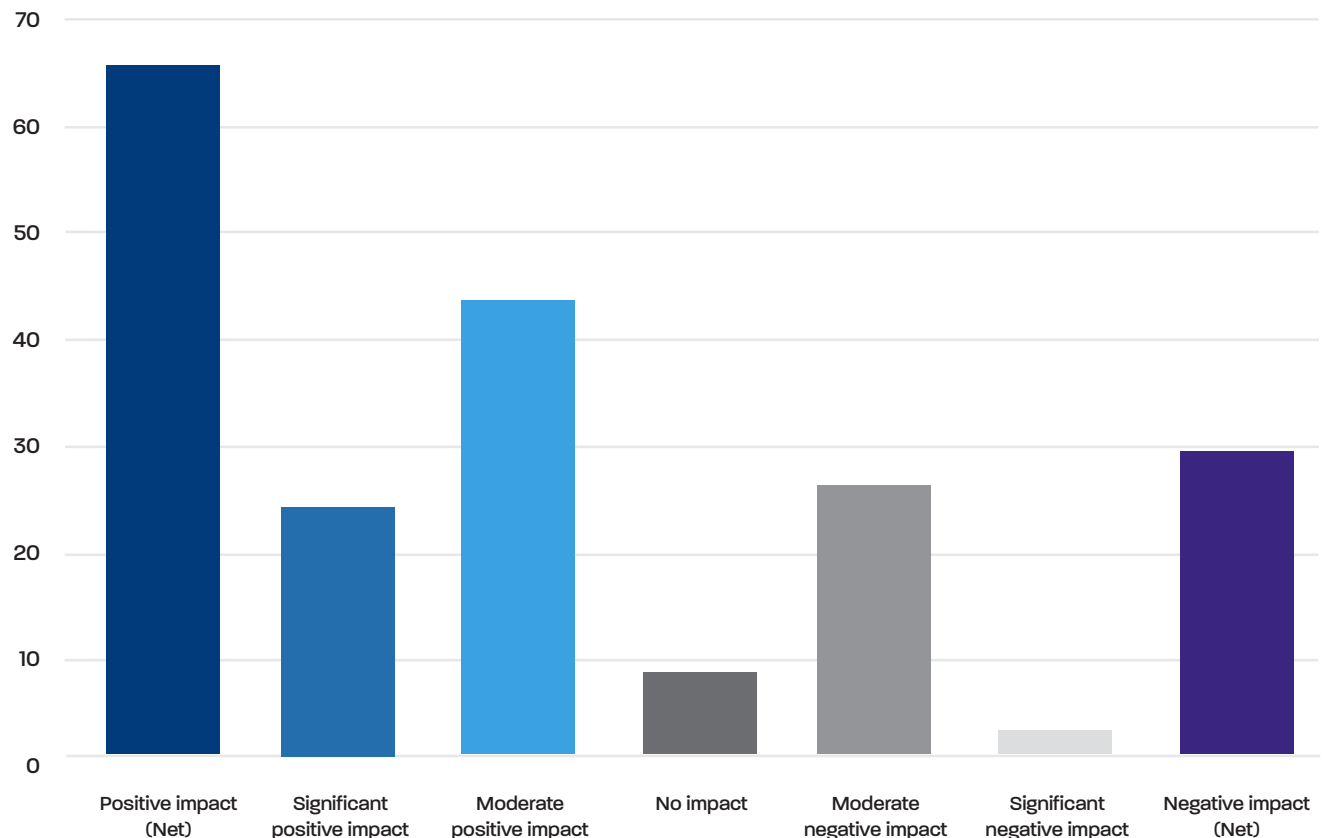
Those anticipating significant downside are not necessarily wrong, but they may be underestimating their ability to adapt. The real risk is not tariffs themselves, but failing to model where they hurt, where they help, and how quickly competitive dynamics can change.

CEO/CFO takeaway:

Tariffs test strategic positioning - uneven impacts create both losers and winners.

- Model tariff exposure by lane and input.
- Identify renegotiation, re-routing, or pricing options by segment.

Q10. What overall impact, if any, do you expect tariffs to have on your business in 2026?



Final Observations

Leading with strategic cost leadership in an ERA of persistent uncertainty

In 2026, CEOs and CFOs are no longer navigating crisis conditions, but nor are they operating in calm waters. Persistent cost volatility, supply chain fragility, and workforce pressures now sit alongside measured growth ambitions and rising expectations to invest, transform, and build long-term resilience.

The insight from this year's Cost Management Barometer is clear:

- **Cost leadership is strategic, not reactive:** The winners in 2026 will be those who treat cost management as a strategic leadership discipline, not a defensive measure. Reactive cost-cutting is no longer sufficient. Success comes from proactive, continuous control.
- **Growth requires discipline and balance:** Confidence in revenue and EBITDA exists, but it is measured. Growth, efficiency, innovation, and sustainability are no longer competing priorities, they are interconnected levers that must be managed in parallel. To thrive, organizations must balance multiple strategic imperatives without overextending resources.
- **Resilience is built through adaptability:** Persistent cost volatility, supply chain pressures, and workforce gaps define the 2026 landscape. Tariffs, sustainability, and technology are not just operational issues, they are tests of strategic positioning. Organizations must anticipate disruption and integrate flexibility into their operating model to become truly resilient.

Final Observations

Confidence exists, but it is cautious and grounded. Growth is achievable, margins can be protected, and investment can continue. But only for organizations that move beyond episodic cost cutting toward continuous, intelligence-led optimization.

The organizations that treat tariffs as a strategic variable - not a line item - will be best positioned to protect margin and gain share.

We combine cost intelligence, market insight, and strategic procurement expertise to support leadership teams in:

- Funding growth and transformation through disciplined, self-financed cost optimization
- Strengthening operational and supply chain resilience in a volatile cost environment
- Protecting margins while balancing investment across technology, talent, and sustainability

In a year defined by strategic trade-offs rather than singular bets, traditional cost reduction is no longer enough. ERA Group delivers value through insight, helping organizations convert control into capability, navigate uncertainty with confidence, and lead decisively through 2026 and beyond.





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