



# 2024 CHIEF OF STAFF SALARY REPORT

NOVEMBER 26, 2024

# Introduction

The Chief of Staff role continues to increase in prominence all around the world, appearing in companies of all sizes and industries. Due to this company variability, the disparate backgrounds and responsibilities of Chiefs of Staff, and the relatively small number of Chiefs of Staff compared to other roles and functions, benchmarking compensation remains a daunting task.

As usual, this report exists to assist current and future Chiefs of Staff in understanding their market value and advocating for fair pay. Our research considered the specific factors that heavily impact Chief of Staff compensation, including years of experience, CoS level, company stage/size, gender, location, and more. Previous compensation data is available in our [2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), and [2023](#) reports.

This report provides one view of the survey data, but there are many alternative ways to slice and pivot it. The raw data of this survey is available to members of the [Chief of Staff Network](#). apply [here!](#)

## What is a Chief of Staff?

At the Chief of Staff network, we broadly define a Chief of Staff as the primary strategic operator reporting directly to a C-Level Executive. As the role continues to proliferate in organizations of different sizes, Chiefs of Staff are also emerging as key operators outside the C-suite, reporting at the VP level or even further down the corporate hierarchy.

The Chief of Staff has a unique relationship with their principal as the facilitator of the principal's key objectives. The role is rarely an administrative function, rather focusing on operational, strategic, and cross-functional execution. Chiefs of Staff take on diverse responsibilities that depend on their previous career experiences, leadership capabilities, and the priorities of their principal. These are also potential factors that impact compensation on a case-by-case basis. We have also written about [where CoS come from](#) and [where they go](#) upon “graduating” the role, as well as the [State of CoS Jobs](#).

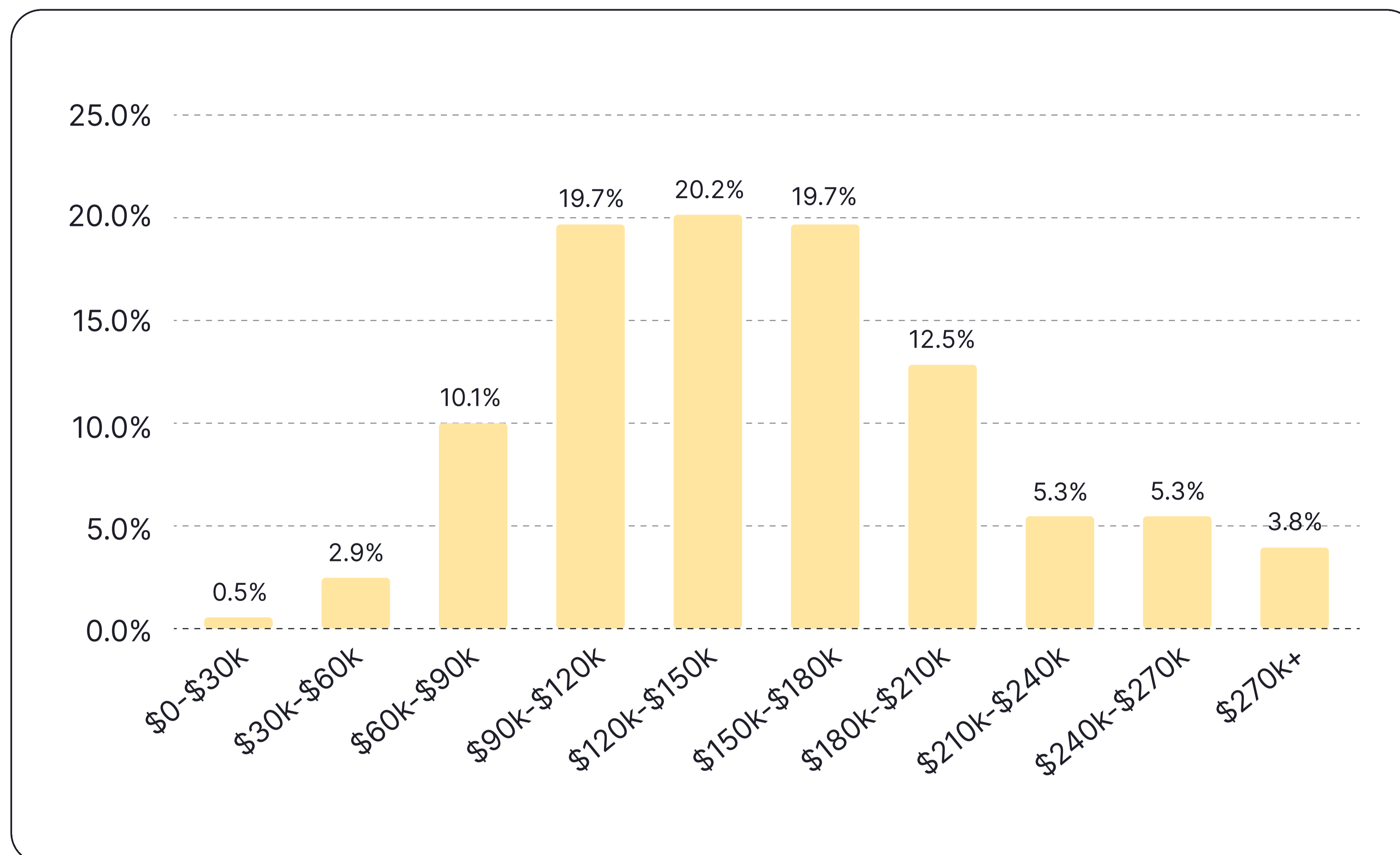
## Chiefs of Staff by Level

As noted, Chiefs of Staff come from a variety of professional backgrounds and bring different amounts of experience and skills to the table. The “Chief” in CoS can be deceptive as not every CoS is working at the executive level. Despite sharing the same title, CoS operate with varying amounts of influence & ownership and therefore at different levels within their companies.

With this in mind, the Chief of Staff Network conducted independent research to establish a [Leveling Framework](#) characterizing the dimensions of growth and advancement criteria across six common CoS role archetypes. Survey participants were asked to review the leveling framework and self-select into one level. Additionally, we collected number of years of professional experience noting that the two (experience and level) are not always the same.

# Cash Rules Everything Around Me

CoS remains a lucrative career option.



As in prior years, our data shows a relatively normal distribution.

This year, the average salary increased to \$154k, from \$131k last year. This is likely due to improvement in the CoS job market compared to 2023.

Notably, 63.73% of CoS earn between \$100k-200k, and 20.59% earn over \$200k, indicating the role is lucrative.

Given that the mean, median, and mode are all almost the same, the salaries in this dataset are evenly distributed and 150k might be considered “typical” for CoS base pay.

**\$154,673** Average

**\$150,000** Median & Mode

**Note:** survey respondents provided base salary as an exact figure, rather than as a range.

## Average Base Salary by CoS Level

This year, we see YoY increases in salary across all CoS levels.

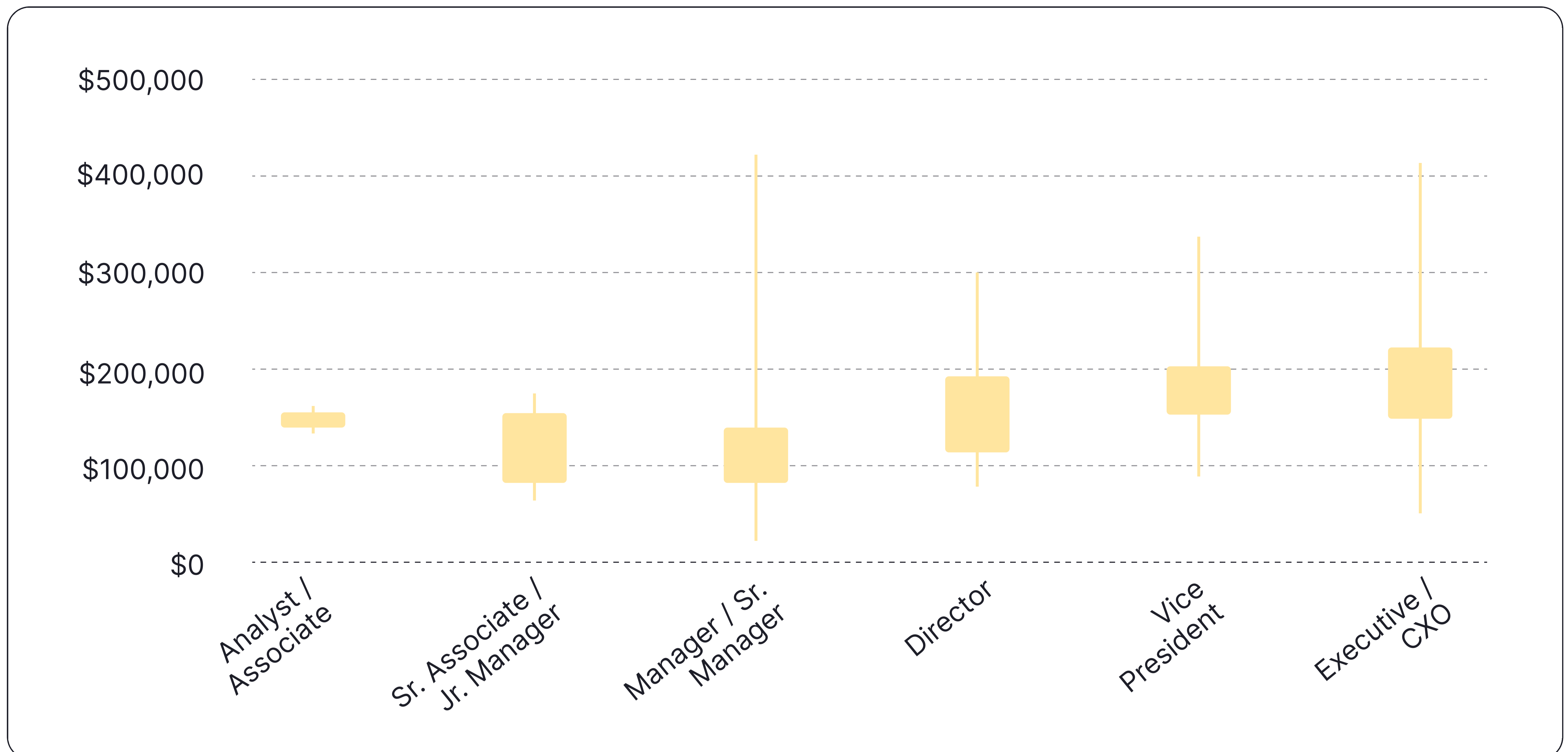
On a blended basis, salaries have increased by 21% across all levels. This effect is strongest at lower levels - Level 1 salary is 53% higher than last year & Level 2 is 31% higher. This tapers off at Level 6 which is only 1.8% higher.

Interestingly, we also see a dip from Level 1 to 2 to 3, which may be partially explained by more non-US salaries at Level 3. It could also be that salaries must be more competitive at lower levels to recruit from banking & consulting.

Learn more about our proprietary Chief of Staff Leveling Framework [here](#).



## Base Salary Bands by CoS Level



The salary data for Chief of Staff roles exposes significant disparities, reflecting the role's evolving and inconsistent nature. Level 1 and 2 show tight salary bands, indicating standardized responsibilities.

Level 3 has extraordinary variability, with salaries spanning \$20,000 to \$425,000, which suggests unclear role definitions and variability by company size and industry.

The Executive/CXO range—from \$48,000 to \$415,000—highlights the role's dual possibilities: as a cost-efficient leader in smaller firms and a strategic advisor in larger ones.

The data underscores the need for organizations to align compensation with impact, while professionals must advocate for clarity, as the CoS title means different things to various stakeholders.

### Analyst / Associate (Level 1):

- Middle 50% range: \$141k-\$153k

### Sr. Associate / Jr. Manager (Level 2):

- Middle 50% range: \$85k-\$153k

### Manager / Sr. Manager (Level 3):

- Middle 50% range: \$86k-\$138k

### Director (Level 4):

- Middle 50% range: \$117k-\$190k

### Vice President (Level 5):

- Middle 50% range: \$155k-\$200k

### Executive / CXO (Level 6):

- Middle 50% range: \$150k-\$220k

## Average Base Salary by Company Headcount



In a dramatic change from last year, company headcount no longer explains most of variability in salary (only 16.2% from 87.5% in 2023). This indicates that, while it's an employer's market for labor, the competition for the best talent is fierce regardless of company size.

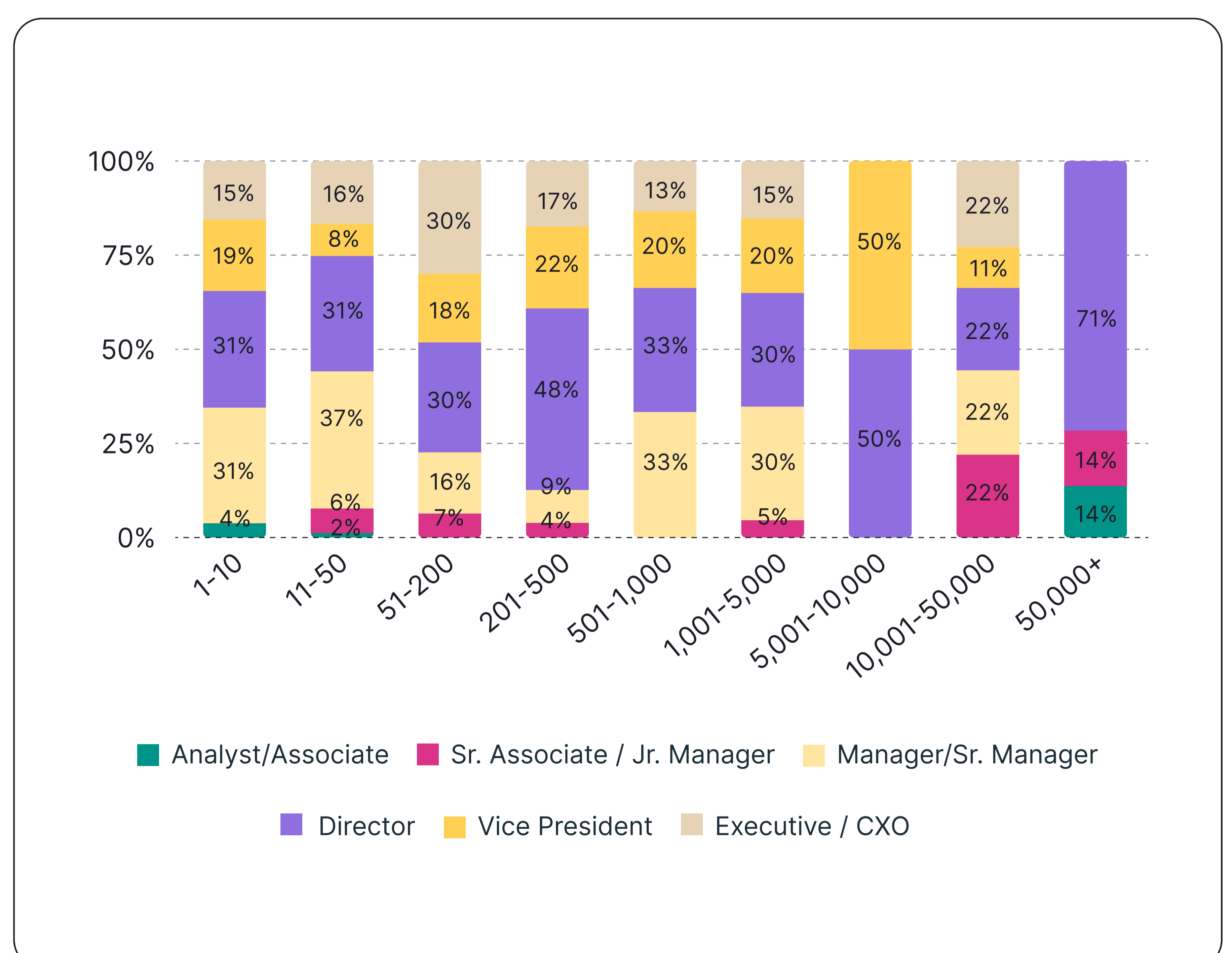
Indeed, where the largest firms used to pay the most in prior years, it now appears that the highest pay is slightly downmarket, away from the 10k+ headcount behemoths. The largest firms continue to cut headcount via layoffs, which may be pressuring salaries while slightly smaller firms still have room to grow.

## Company Headcount by CoS Level

The distribution of Chief of Staff seniority by company size reveals clear trends in role evolution. Small companies (1-10 employees) favor Manager-level Chiefs of Staff (29%), while Directors dominate across most headcounts, peaking at 71% in firms with over 50,000 employees.

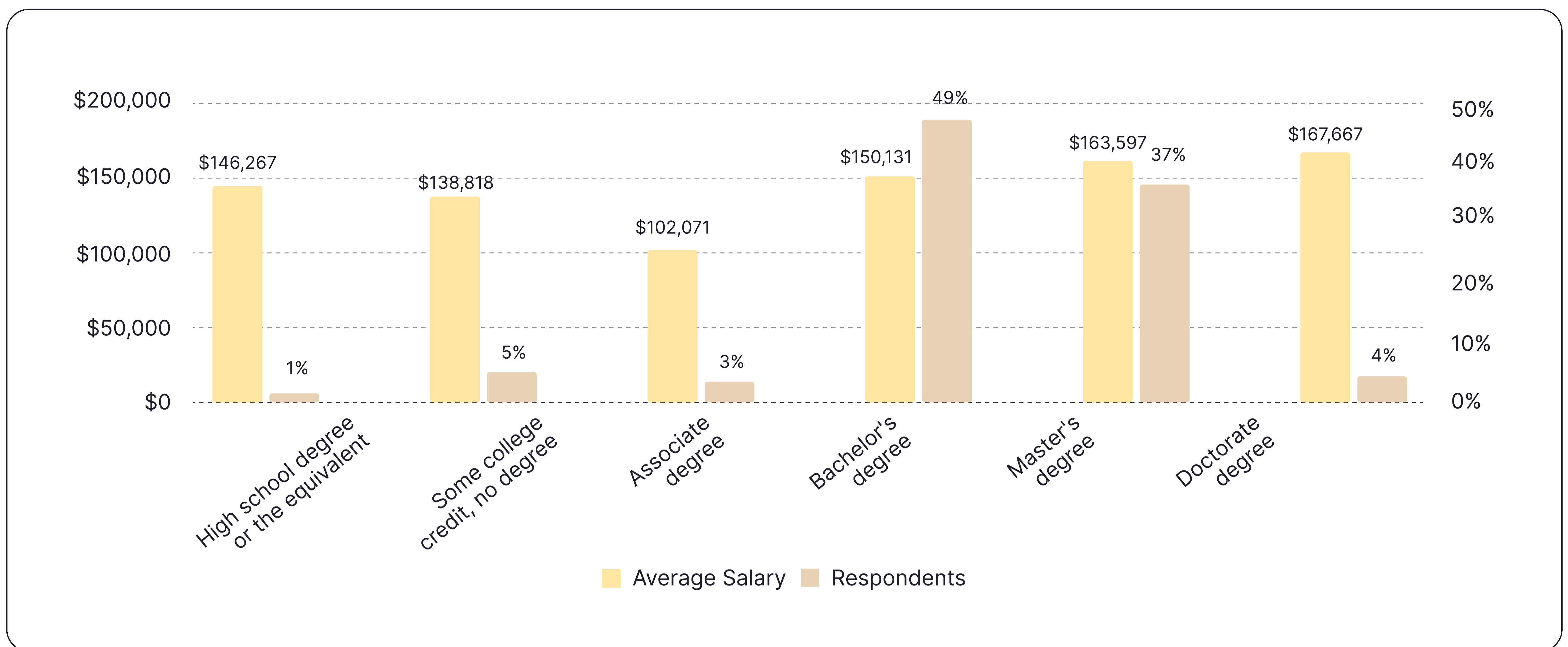
Vice Presidents and Executives are better represented in mid-sized organizations (201-5,000 employees) but taper off in the largest, suggesting these roles are more important for scaling companies (and that they are harder to reach at the largest firms).

Interestingly, entry-level roles (Analyst/Associate) are almost absent, except at firms with 50,000+ employees (14%), hinting at structured talent pipelines for entry-level in large organizations.



This data underscores how the Chief of Staff role shifts from singular (recruiting manager+ talent at lower headcount) to bifurcated (recruiting both very junior and very senior talent at higher headcount).

## Average Base Salary by Educational Attainment



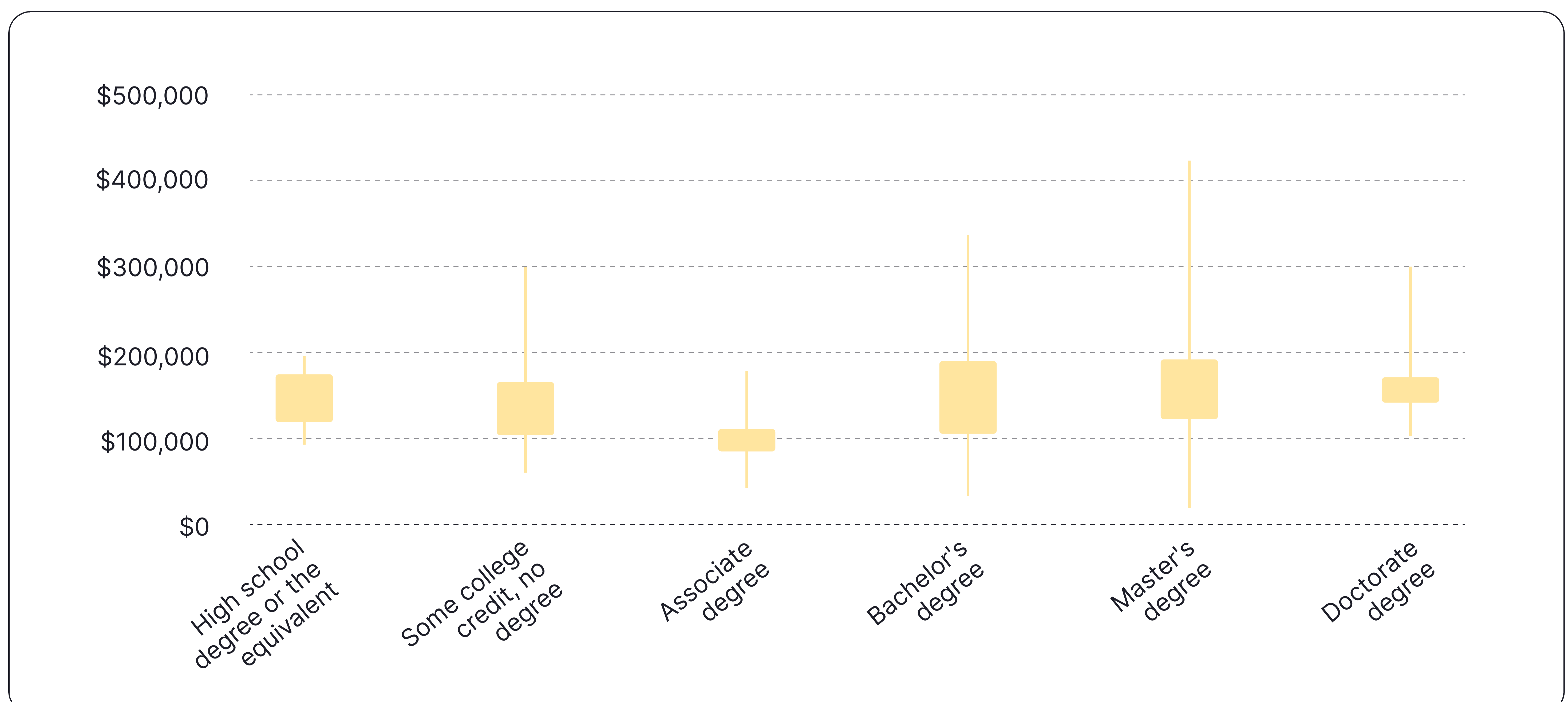
CoS with a higher degree earn about \$15,000 (11%) more on average than those without one. And contrary to last year's lack of correlation, among the degreed, the higher the degree, the higher the pay.

With that said, a Master's degree holder had the highest salary reported of \$425,000, as you can see below. Those with Associate's and High School degrees had the tightest spread between 25th and 75th percentile salaries.

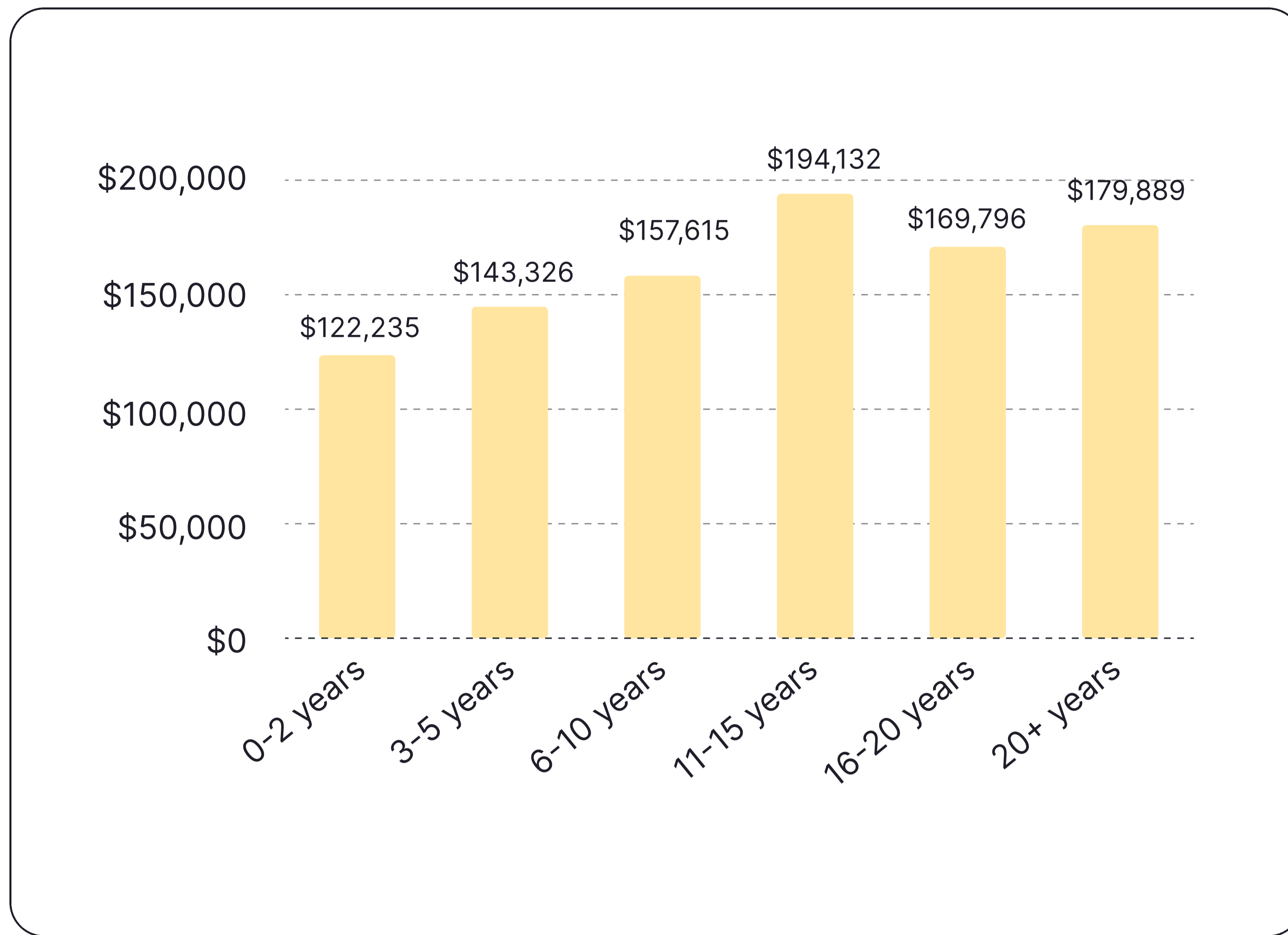
As in 2023, Master's degree holders had the largest spread between the 25th and 75th percentile salaries, perhaps indicating that different schools or Master's programs have disparate outcomes on salary (e.g. Harvard MBA vs. Ohio State MFA)

In most cases, we see that any degree is better than no degree on average when it comes to salary. But even so, those with high school diplomas or only some college credit can still earn great incomes.

## Base Salary Bands by Educational Attainment



## Average Salary by Years of Relevant Experience



The relationship between relevant experience and Chief of Staff salaries highlights a clear trajectory, with earnings peaking at 11-15 years (\$194,132) before declining for those with 16+ years. Early-career salaries (0-2 years) reflect limited strategic expertise (\$122,235), while the sharp rise through 3-10 years indicates increasing value from accumulated skills. The late-career drop, however, suggests that the CoS role is not meant to be terminal. Most CoS move on after 2 years in role, so finding CoS with 16+ years of relevant experience is rare. Sadly, as usual, we also speculate workplace ageism contributes to the dip.

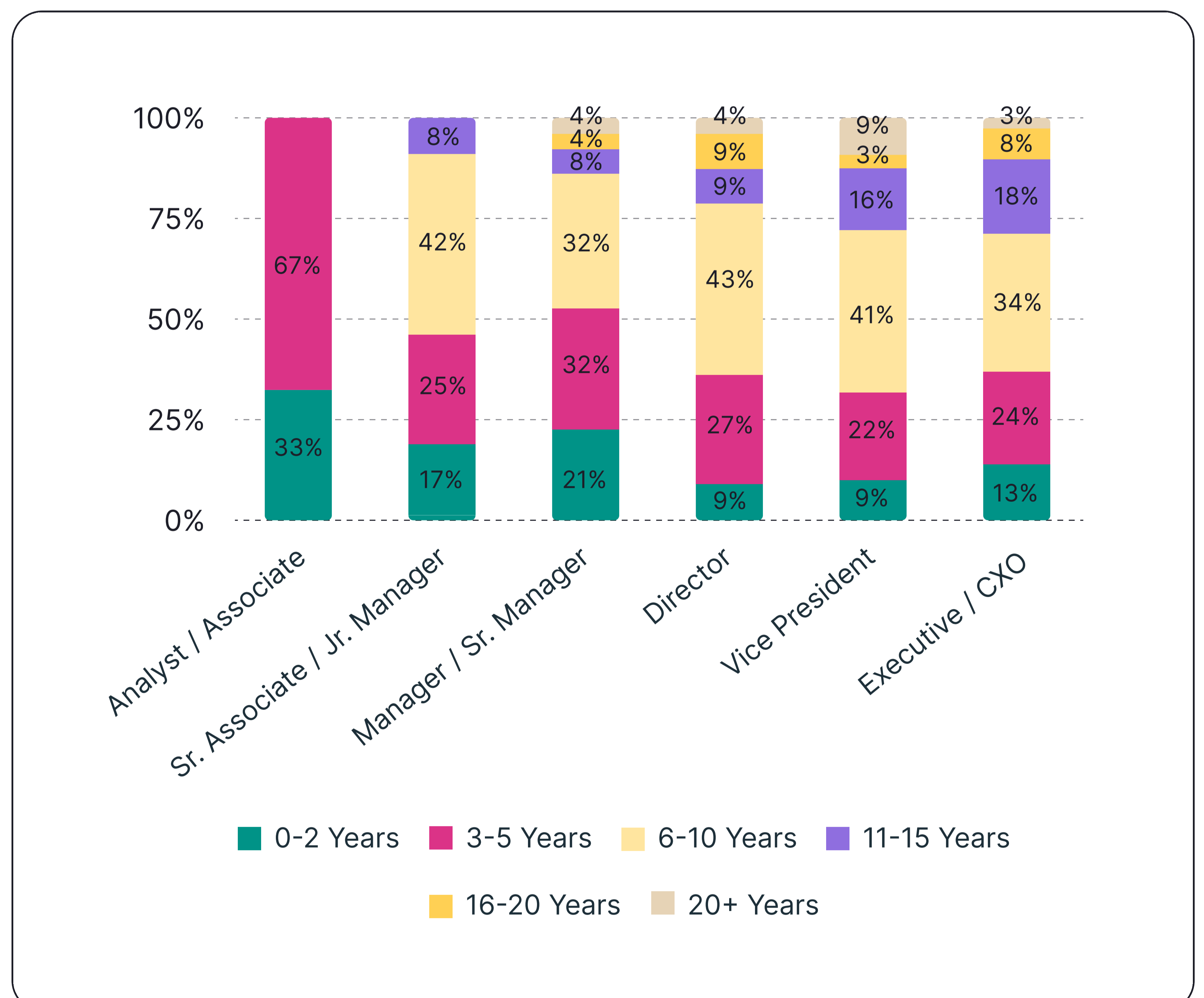
## Years of Relevant Experience by CoS Level

There is a clear trajectory of experience aligning with seniority, with junior roles (Level 1 and 2) dominated by those with 0-5 years of experience (67%).

Mid-level roles like Manager/Sr. Manager and Director shift to 6-10 years as the most common range (34%-43%), reflecting a career inflection point where operational skills are paired with strategic acumen.

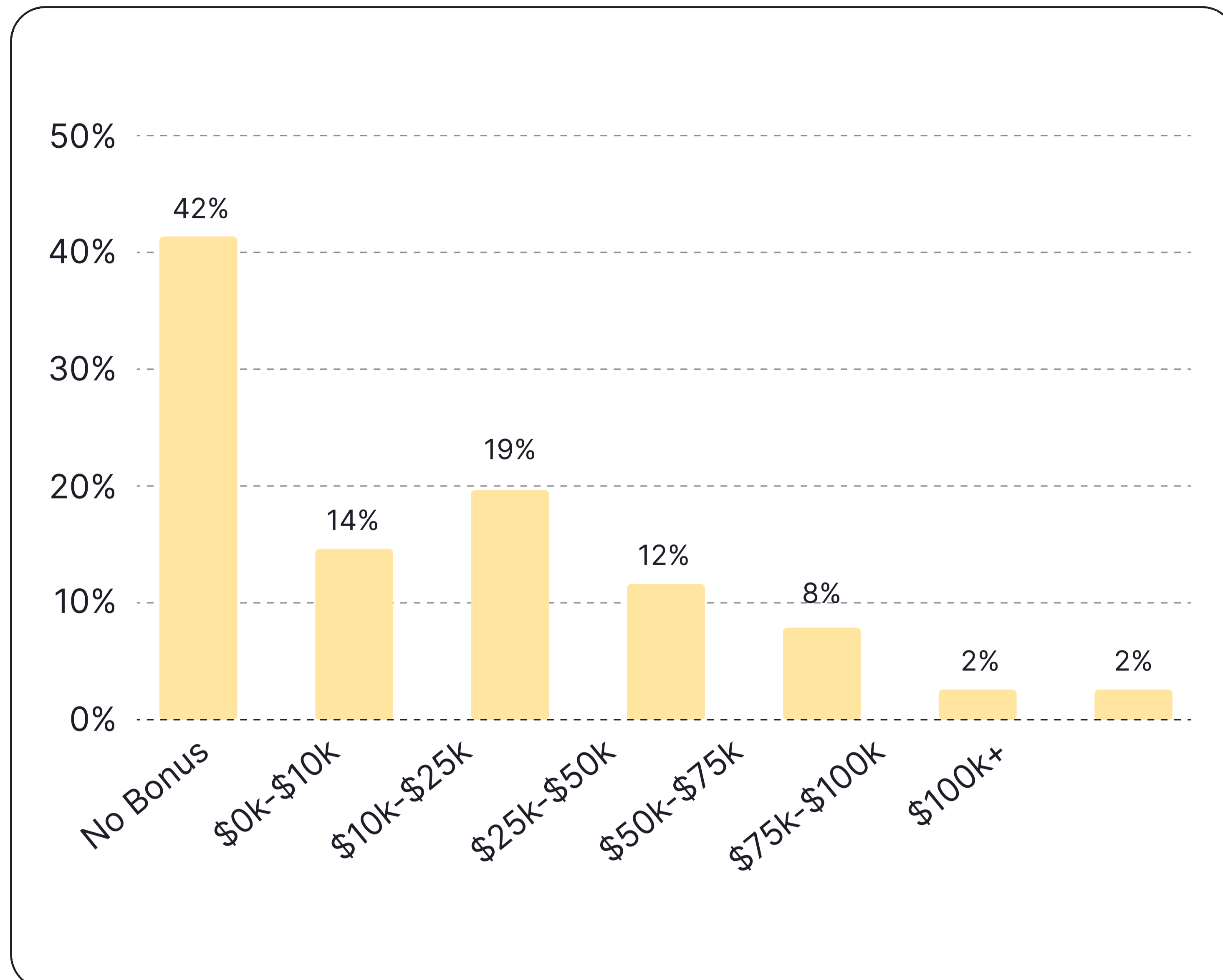
Notably, experience beyond 15 years becomes rare across all levels, even at Vice President and Executive/CXO roles, suggesting either a transition to broader leadership positions or a shift in demand toward professionals with fresher perspectives and adaptability.

This trend highlights the Chief of Staff role as one where career relevance peaks mid-career, reinforcing its value as a launchpad to higher executive paths.

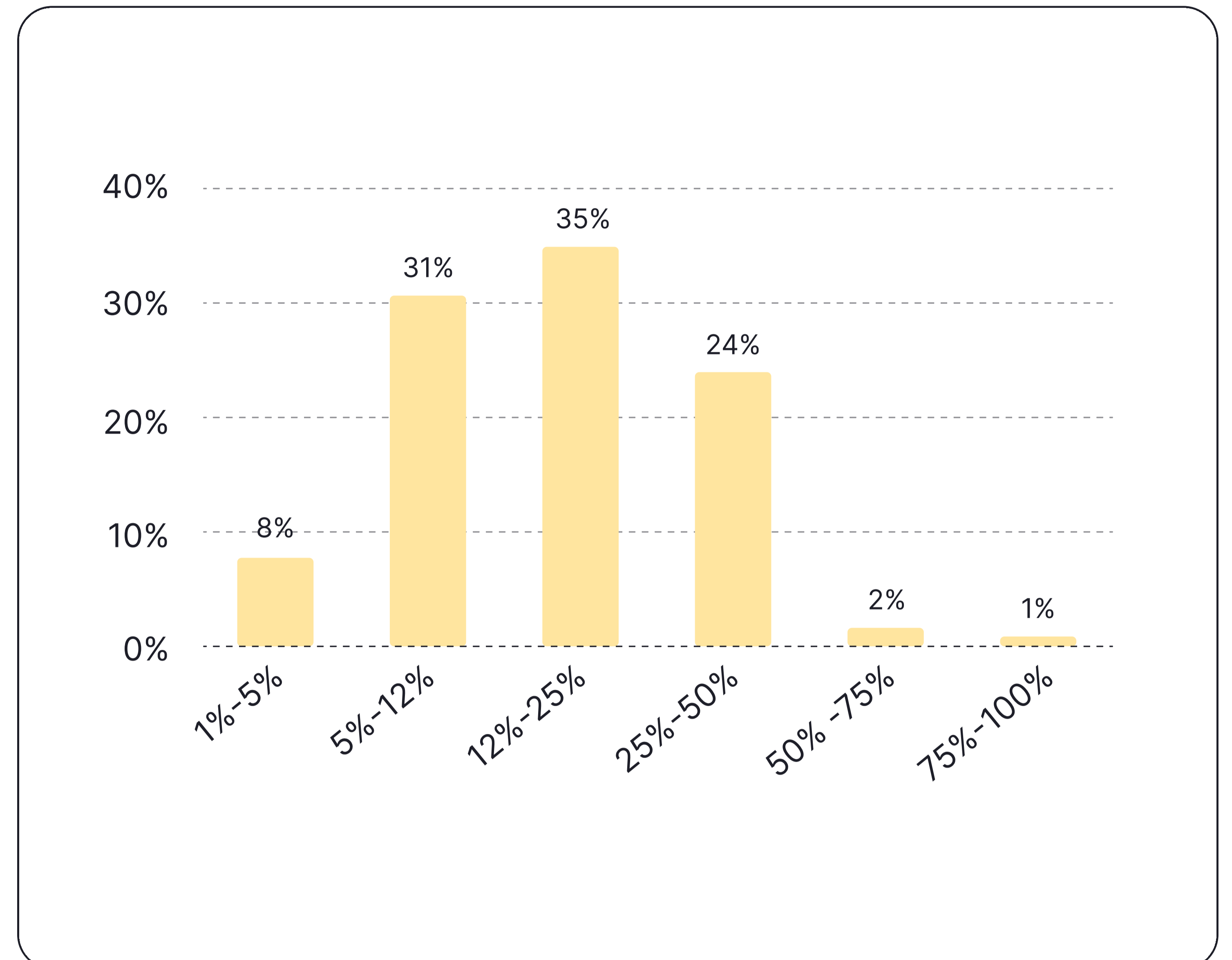


# Annual Cash Bonus

## Annual Bonus



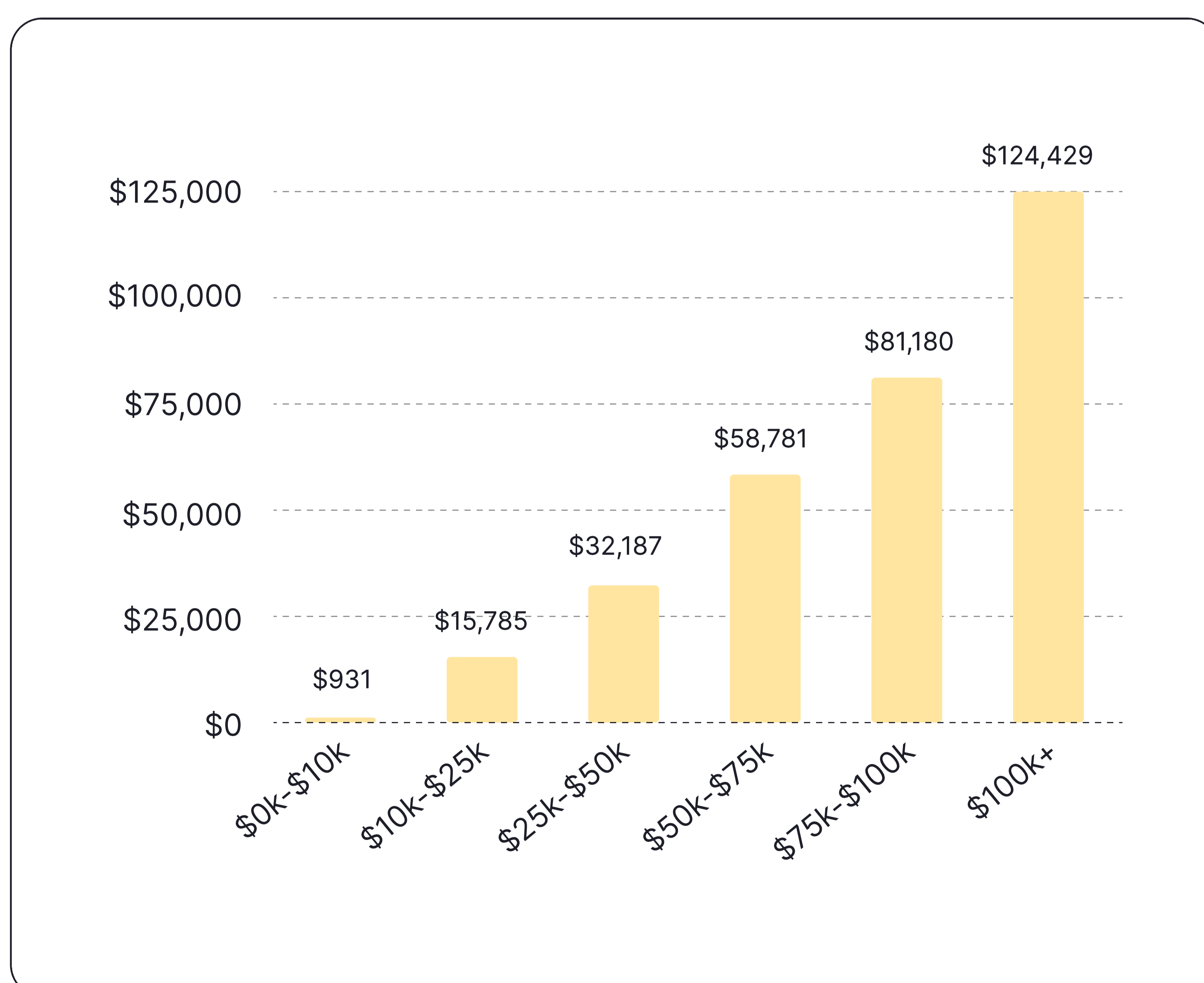
## Annual Bonus As % Of Base Salary



As we've seen in the past, primarily, respondents did not receive cash bonuses. For those that did, their bonuses averaged ~\$33k. This lines up with research from PayFactors, indicating median CoS Bonuses are ~\$35k.

The largest proportion of CoS' bonus value fell in the 12-25% range of annual salary. CoS had a broad range of bonuses, with a standard deviation of \$31k and a range between the min and max of \$174k.

## Average Bonus by Bracket



### Key Metrics

**\$33,853**

Average Bonus

**\$31,839**

Standard Deviation of Bonus

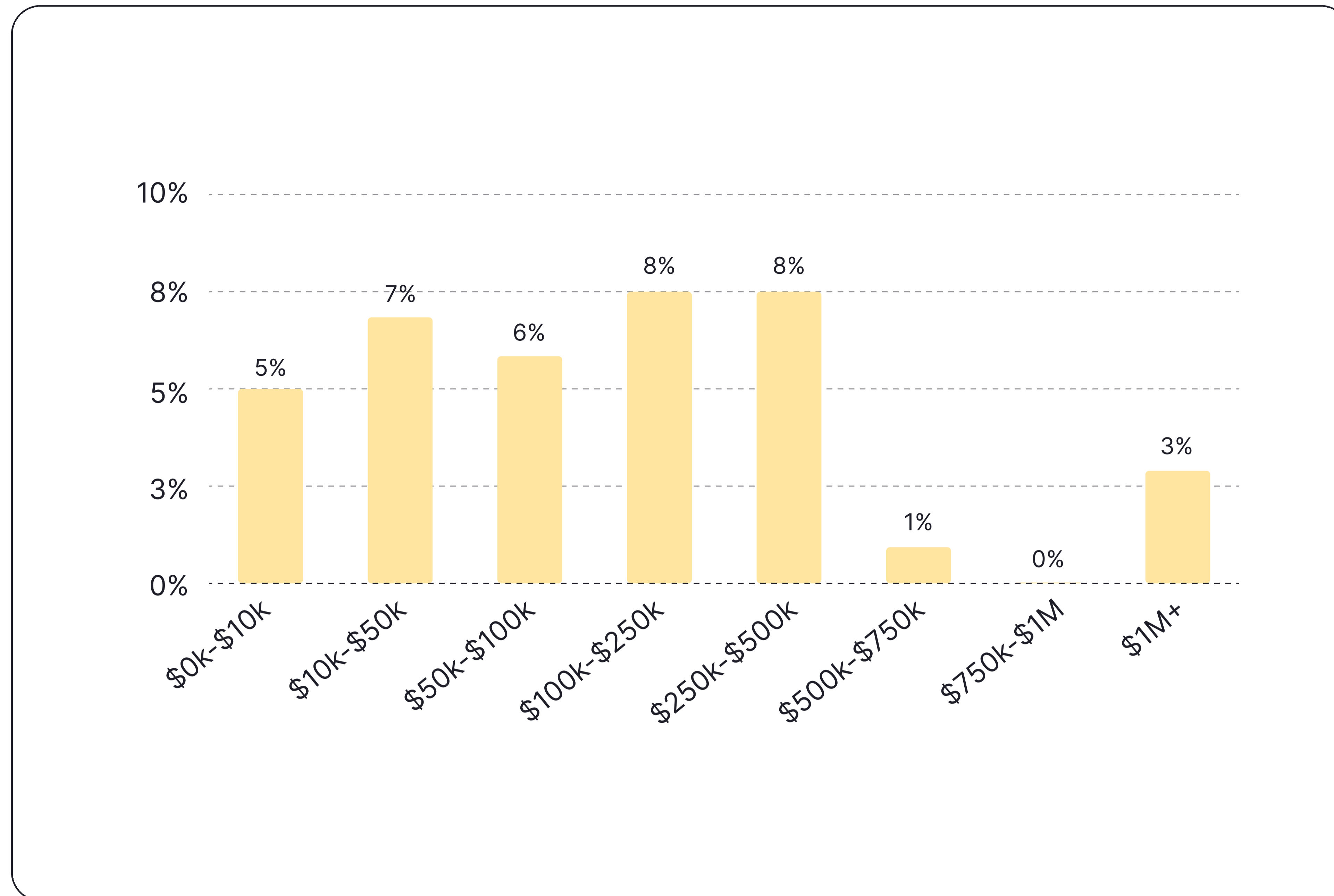
**\$174,000**

Range between Min & Max Bonus



# Stock Compensation

## Estimated value of equity (USD)



Chief of Staff equity packages show extreme variability, reflecting the role's diversity across companies. While the average is \$404,758, outliers like the \$6 million maximum skew this figure.

The median (\$125,000) and mode (\$300,000) suggest typical equity is moderate, tied to the success of mid-sized or growth-stage companies. A standard deviation of \$966,184 highlights the wide range of possible equity, driven by company headcount, stage, and strategic proximity to leadership.

With most respondents reporting no equity, the role offers significant financial upside only for a select few, underscoring the need for clearer equity benchmarks.

### Key Metrics

**\$404,758**  
Average Equity Value

**\$3,000**  
Minimum Non-Zero Equity Value

**\$125,000**  
Median Equity Value

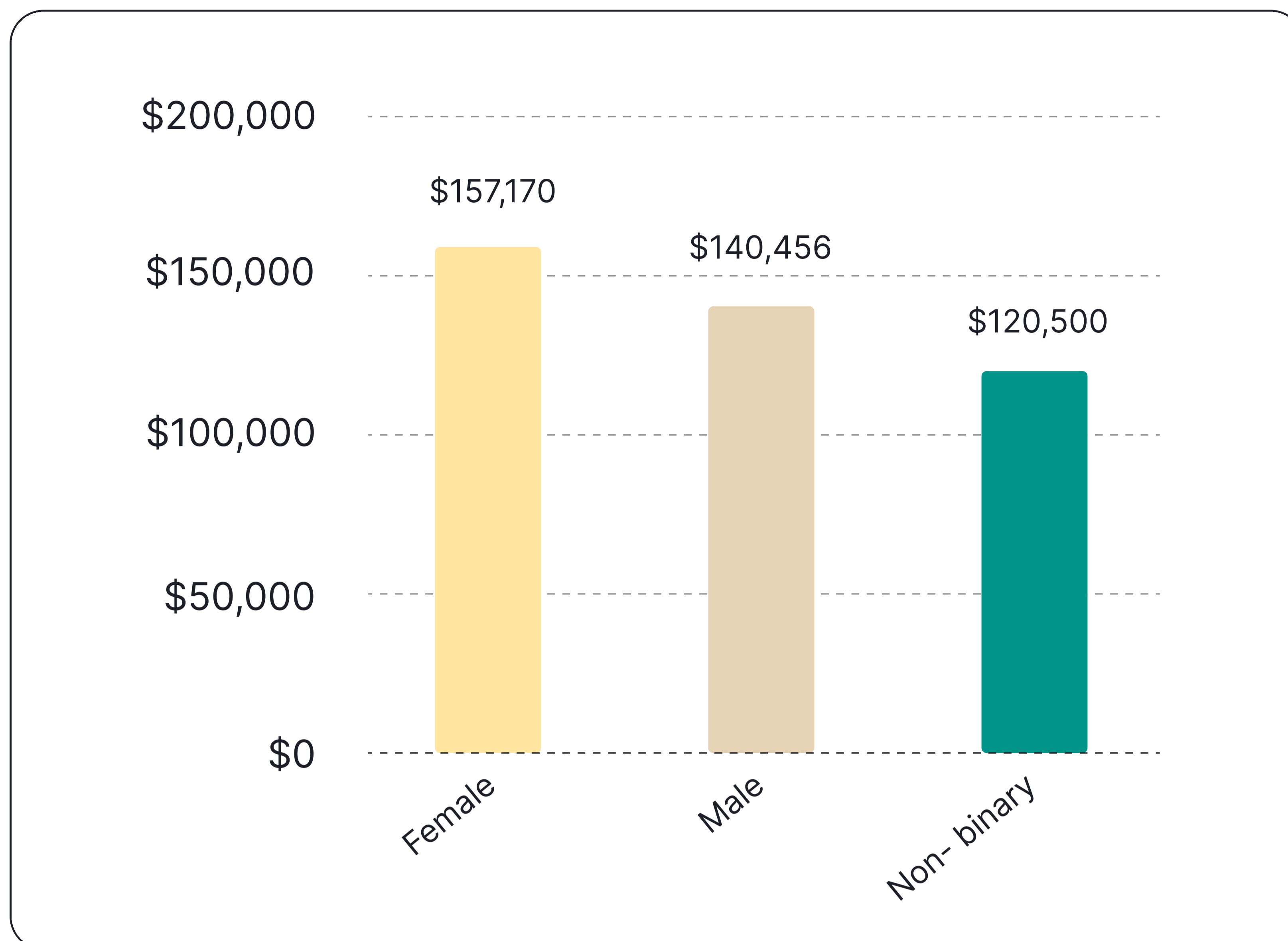
**\$6,000,000**  
Maximum Equity Value

**\$300,000**  
Mode Equity Value

**\$966,184**  
Standard Deviation of Equity Value

# Impact of Gender on Compensation

## Average Salary by Gender



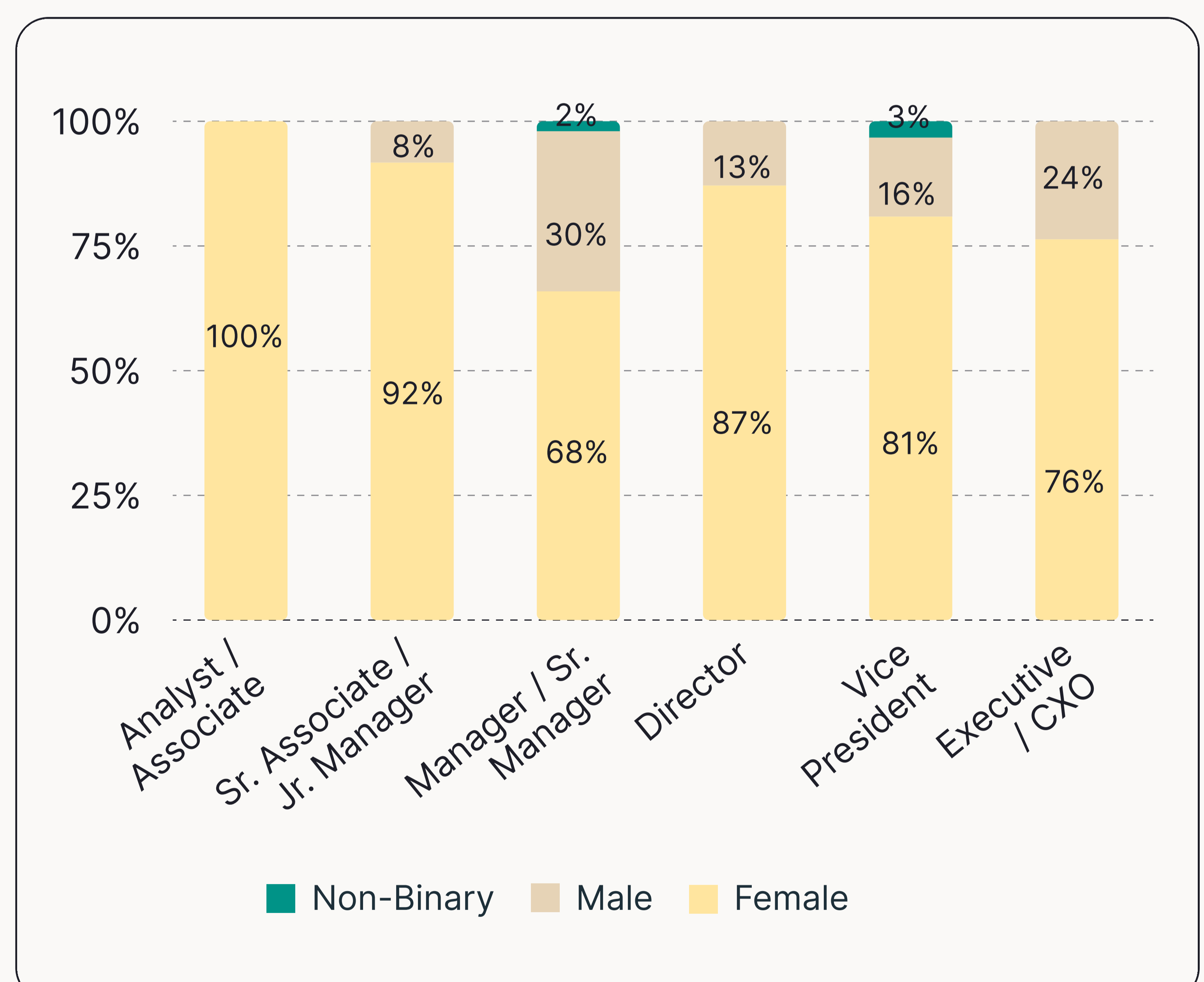
For the second time since we began conducting this survey, we see that women are earning more than men on average! In fact, the gap has widened since last year!

Some of this is related to the fact that CoS in general skew female (66% of CoS are women, based on our historical data).

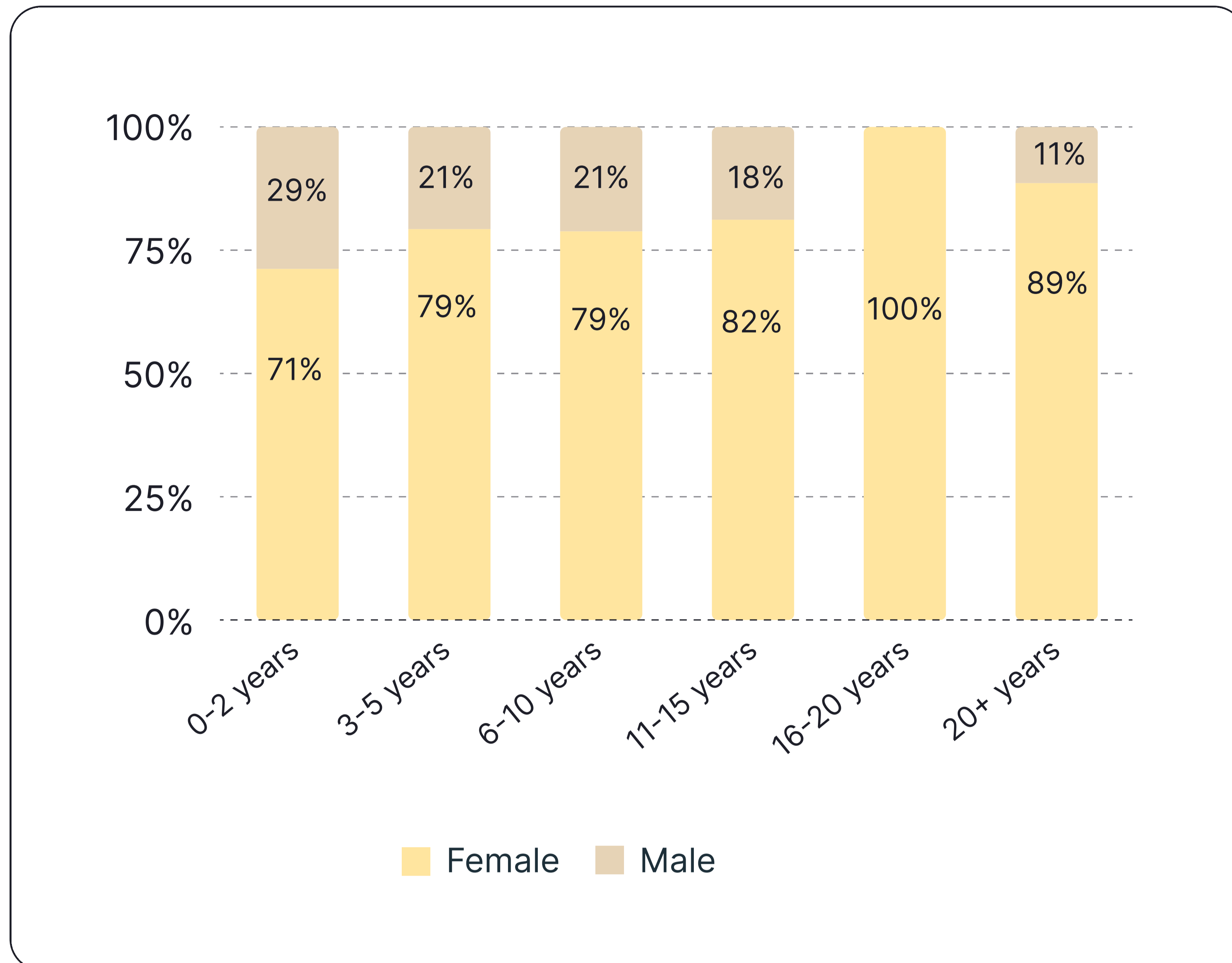
However, the fact that the wage gap between males and females is expanding suggests that females may be getting higher quality CoS roles than males.

## CoS by Level by Gender

The gender breakdown of Chiefs of Staff reveals fascinating patterns of career progression: women dominate the early stages, making up 100% of Analysts and Associates and 92% of Senior Associates, but their representation narrows to 68% at the Manager level and 76% among Executives. Men, though a small fraction at junior levels, rise to 30% at the Manager stage and 24% at the Executive tier, pointing to a competitive shift as roles become more senior. This trajectory suggests that as stakes and responsibilities increase, so does the competition among genders for those roles.



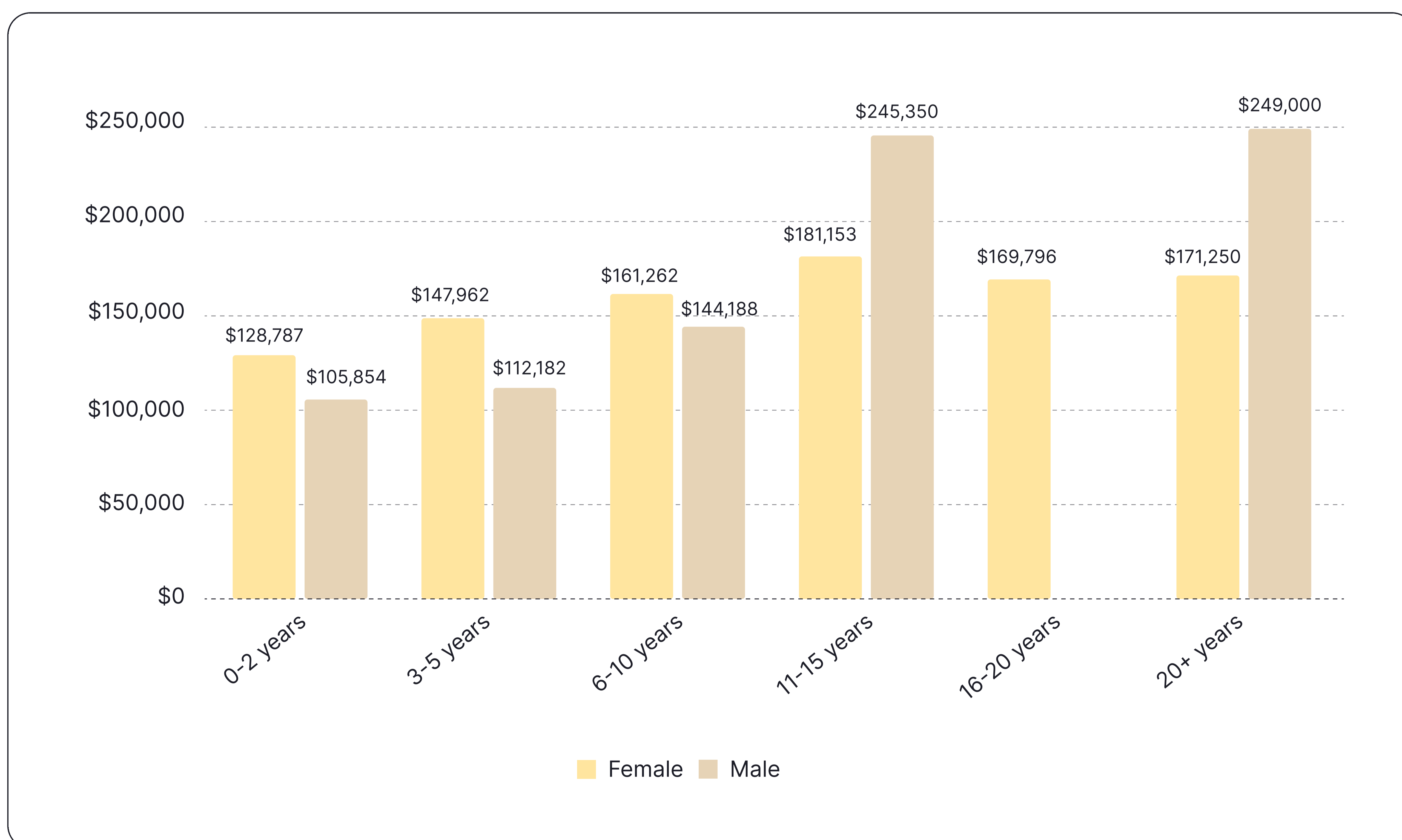
## Years of Relevant Experience by Gender



The data shows females dominate the Chief of Staff role, with representation growing from 71% at 0-2 years to 100% at 16-20 years, while males' presence declines significantly, reaching just 11% at 20+ years.

This suggests that CoS appeals more to females and may serve as a key leadership pipeline. Conversely, it may be the case that males prefer very short tenures in CoS roles and then jump to other roles, which may explain the decreasing tenure for them.

## Years of Experience vs Salary by Gender



From 0-10 YoE, Females earn more than Males on average. This trend reverses in the 11-20 YoE range, when Males earn more than Females. It is highly likely that this is evidence of the "Motherhood Penalty" described by economists.

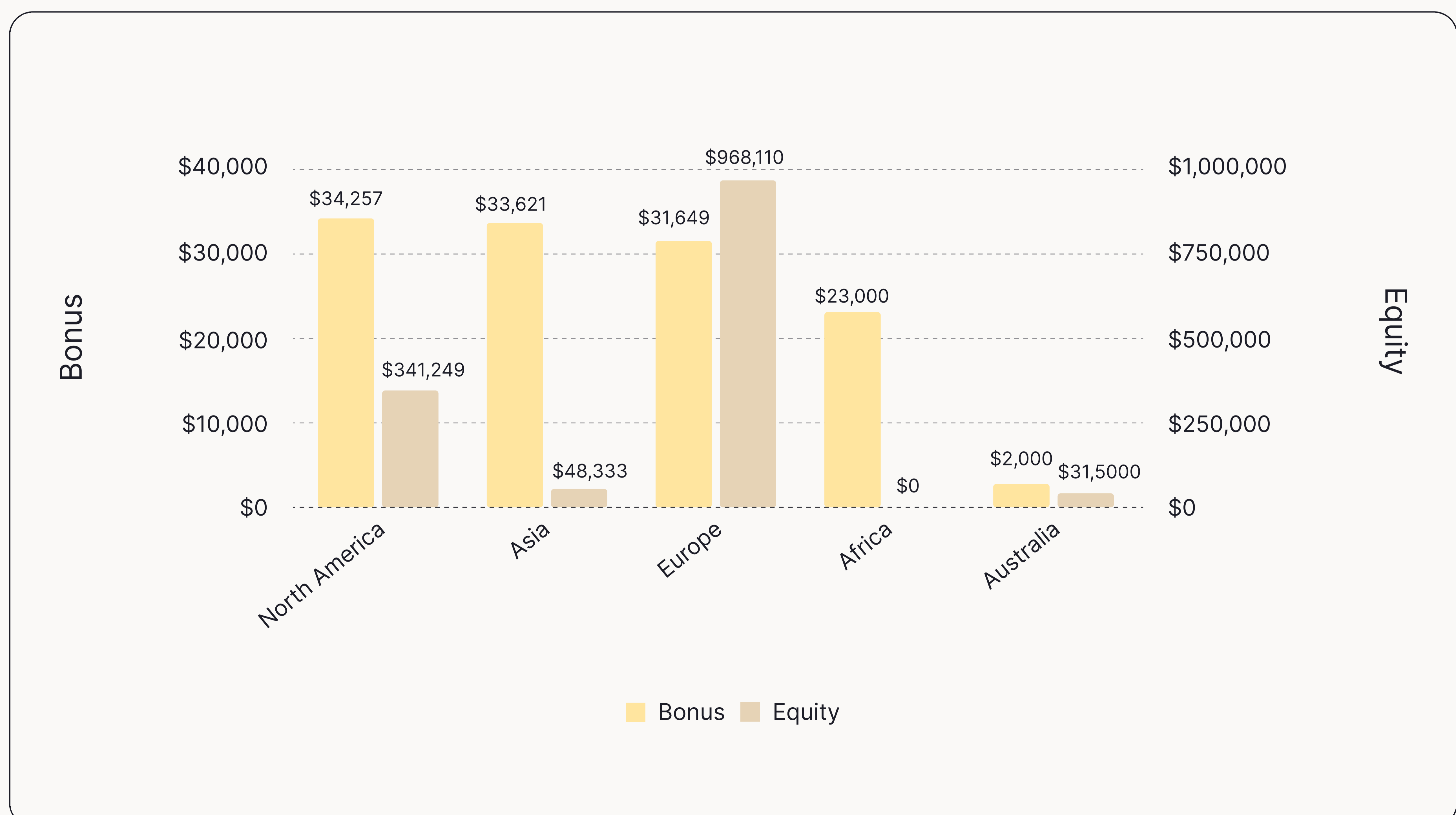
# Impact of Geography on Compensation

## Average CoS Salary by Geographic Region



As we saw last year, CoS roles pay by far the most in North America, specifically the United States. The pay in North America is 21% higher than in Europe, 43% higher than the pay in Asia, and 1.5x higher than in Africa. This year, we did not get any responses from South America.

As shown below, average bonuses (left axis) are highest in the North America and equity grants (right axis) are highest in Europe; equity is skewed high because of some respondents who have had long tenure at unicorn companies and therefore have multimillion dollar equity grants.



## Average Salary, Bonus, & Equity by City

City	Salary	Bonus	Equity
Houston	\$216,333	\$55,000	\$500,000
Brisbane	\$196,500	\$37,500	\$180,000
San Diego	\$195,000	\$40,000	\$0
SF Bay Area	\$191,432	\$24,868	\$251,399
New York	\$187,727	\$29,773	\$74,233
Dallas	\$176,000	\$8,667	\$0
Madison	\$173,500	\$14,500	\$0
Atlanta	\$170,569	\$26,000	\$7,000
Nashville	\$167,000	\$17,000	\$133,333
London	\$160,900	\$30,067	\$714,000
Austin	\$157,300	\$4,600	\$22,384
Los Angeles	\$155,867	\$21,333	\$5,244
San Francisco	\$152,500	\$0	\$200,000
Washington	\$151,958	\$13,042	\$29,167
Denver	\$151,505	\$19,238	\$125,105
Seattle	\$149,500	\$21,667	\$116,667
Chicago	\$145,122	\$20,143	\$21,429
Tampa	\$145,000	\$25,500	\$310,945
Norfolk	\$143,000	\$3,000	\$0
Saint Paul	\$137,500	\$9,000	\$0
Eindhoven	\$129,192	\$19,500	\$117,105
Santa Barbara	\$127,500	\$0	\$2,500
Toronto	\$110,333	\$23,215	\$81,000
Edmonton	\$94,500	\$5,000	\$0
Berlin	\$93,660	\$5,000	\$22,000

**Note:** we removed certain cities with limited or highly skewed data from this table, so as not to accidentally dox any of our respondents.

# Impact of Industry on Compensation

## Top Industries for CoS Salary

Industry	Salary
Hiring & Staffing	\$195,667
Sports & Media	\$184,067
Professional Services	\$180,429
BioTech	\$178,833
Consulting	\$169,700
Health Tech / Healthcare	\$169,000
FinTech / Finance	\$168,044
Philanthropy	\$164,250
B2B SaaS	\$160,652
AgTech/ Agriculture	\$159,000

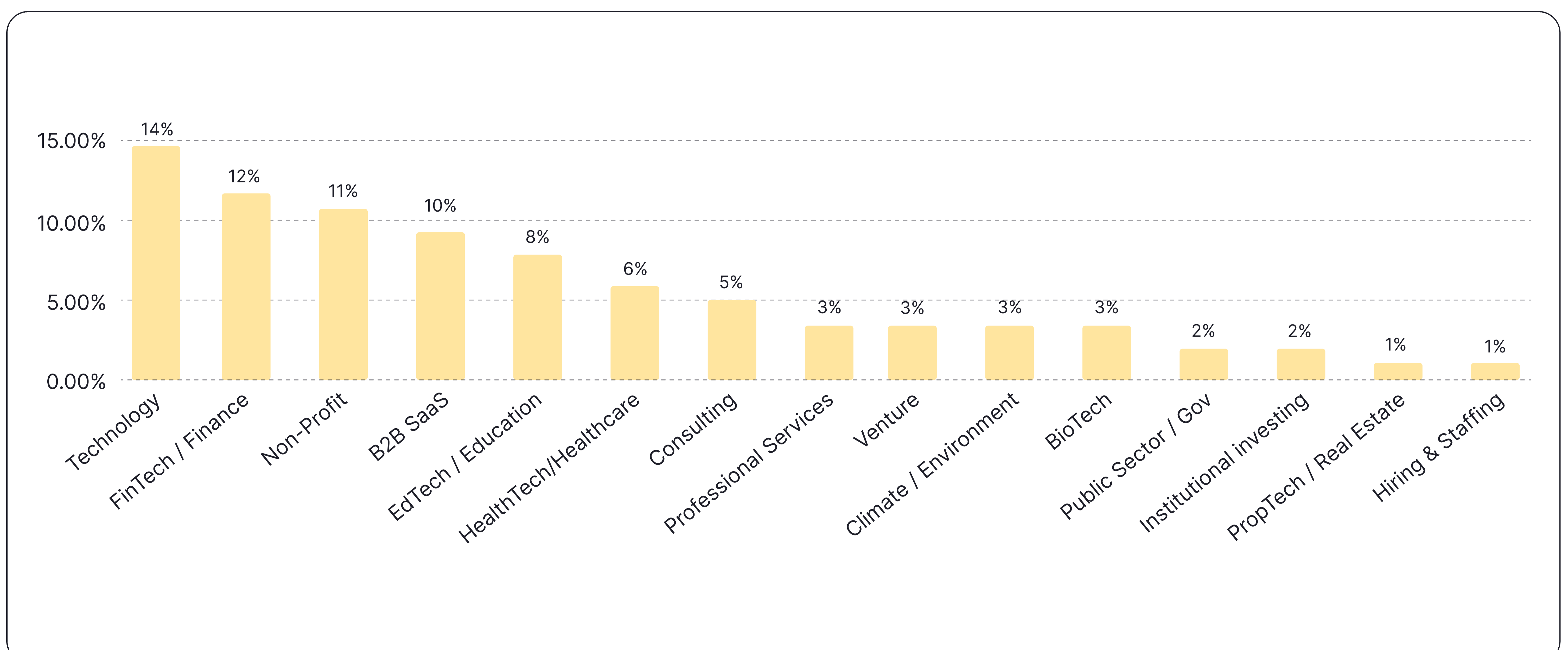
Facing are the top industries for CoS Salary.

These are the industries in which the average pay exceeds the average salary for all respondents. Many of them are repeats from last year.

The higher salaries in some of these industries likely stem from the capital intensity of sectors such as healthcare, transportation, real estate, and finance. The presence of philanthropy was surprising, however.

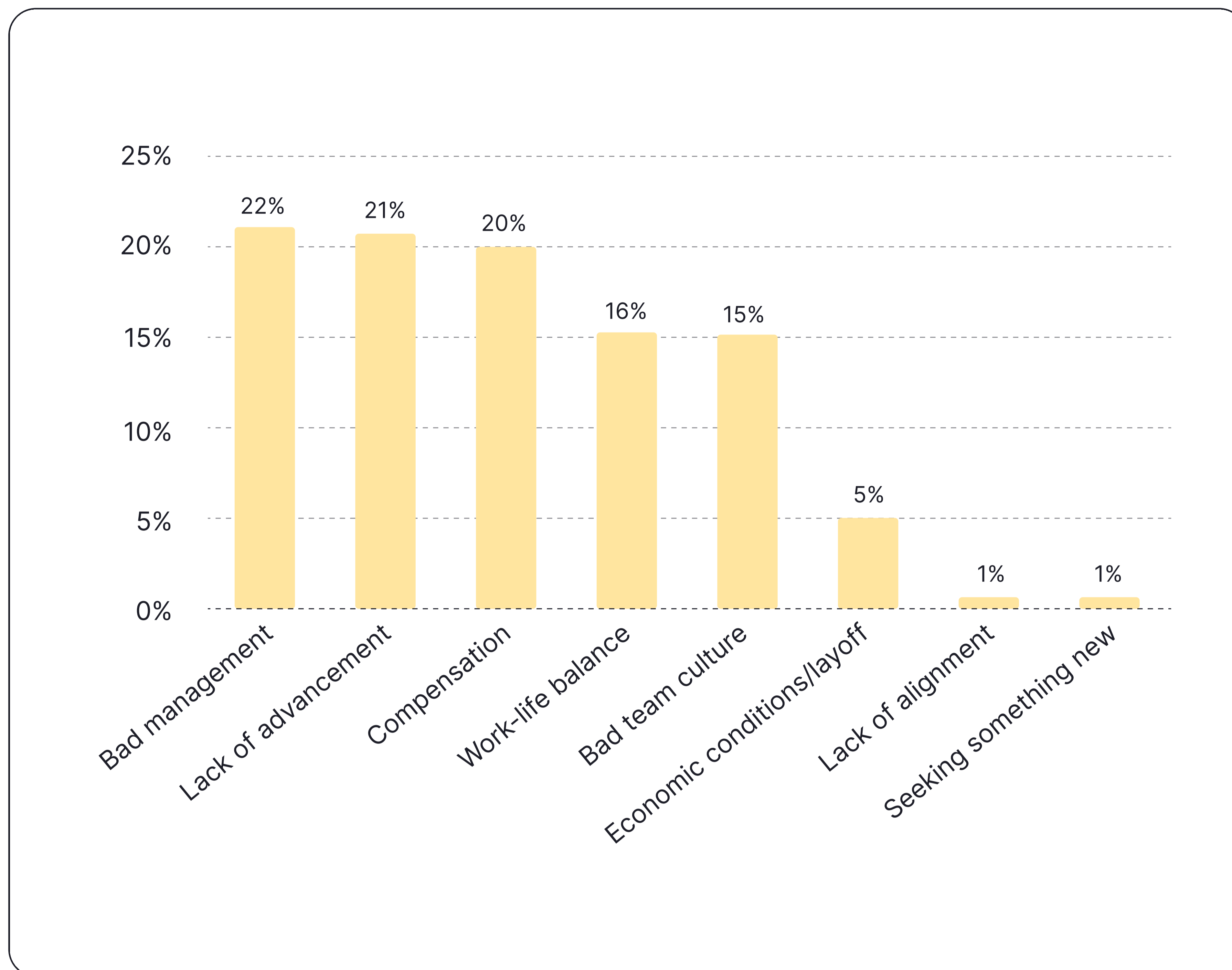
As shown below, tech, finance, non-profits, and B2B SaaS have the most CoS, based on our survey responses.

## CoS by Industry



# Career Planning

## What reasons would cause you to leave your current job?



Given the sustained turbulence in the economy, we wanted to understand how CoS were looking at job transitions. Unlike 2023, the single biggest driver to leave a job has become “bad management” from “lack of advancement.” Compensation remains in the 3rd place spot.

Even so, most CoS are not looking to change jobs. In fact, we remain impressed at the uncommon loyalty of Chiefs of Staff: 53% wish to stay at their current company in some form or fashion. With that said, 41% of respondents told us that they feel their career is stalled due to organizational limitations or that they are outright stuck.

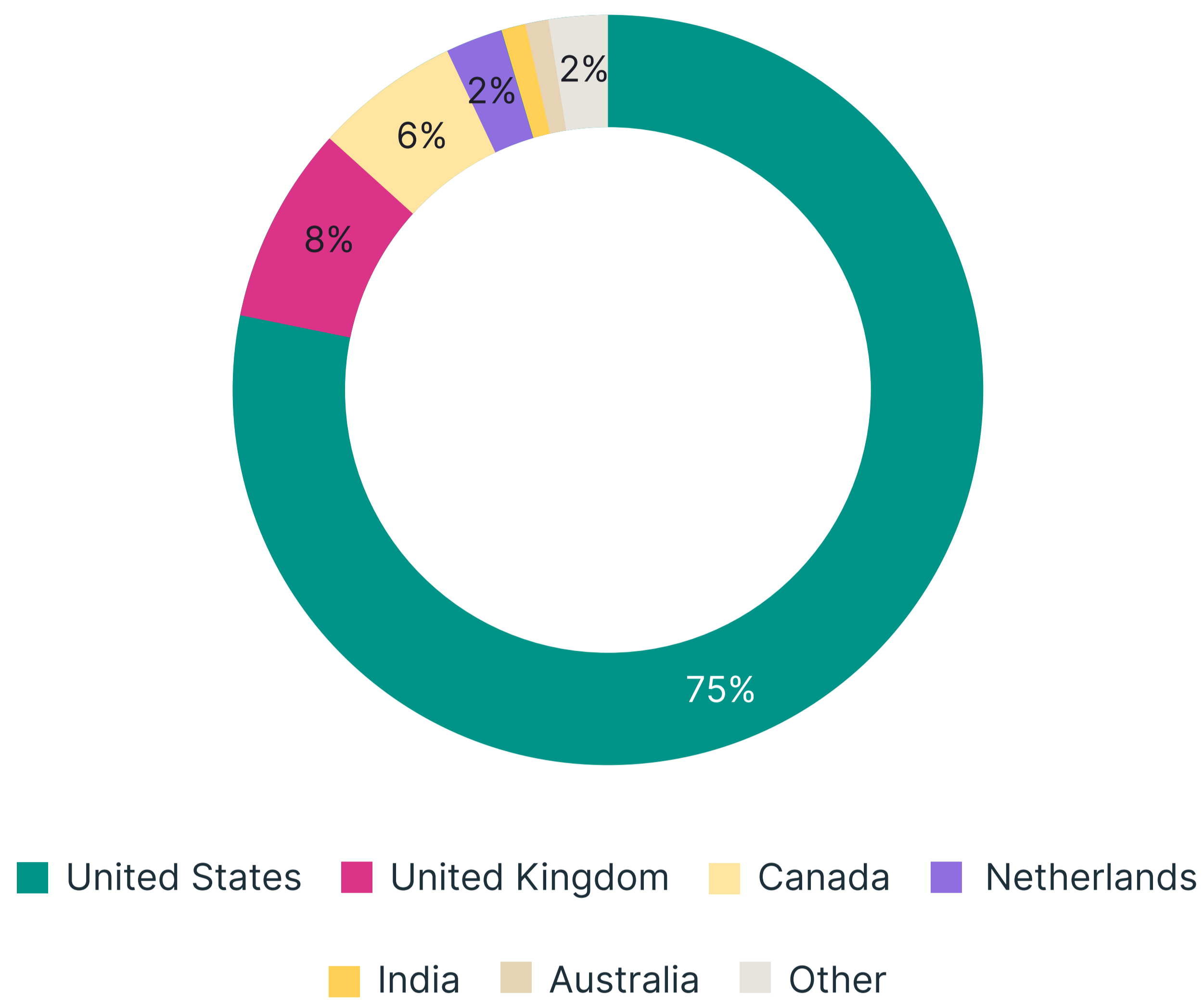
## Career Path + Desire to Remain in Current Role

How's your career path in your current company?	Percentage
Developing well	47%
Limited due to organizational limitations	36%
Developing, but seek more speed	12%
I'm stuck	5%

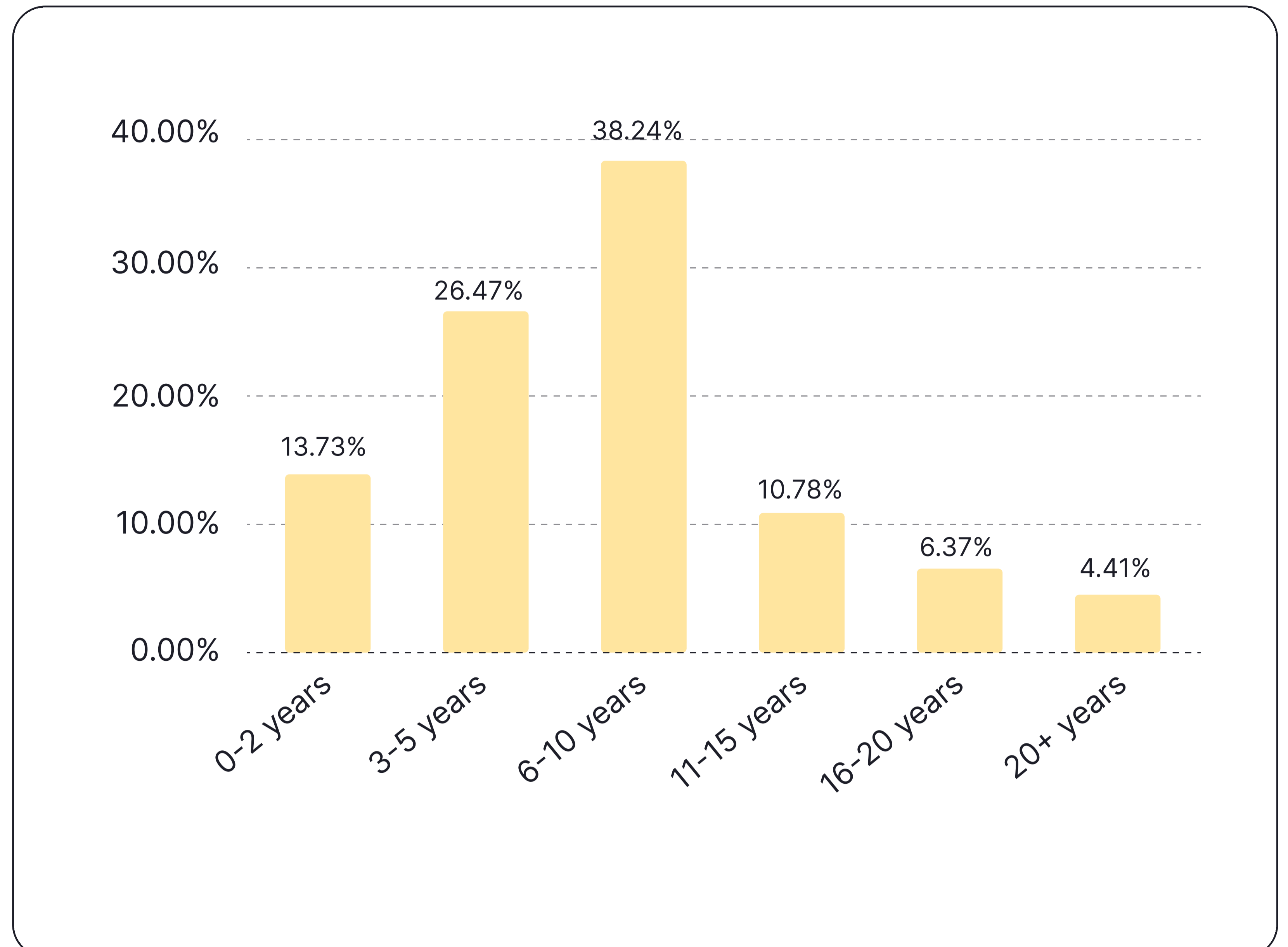
Do you want to stay in your current role?	Percentage
Stay but expand role with more responsibilities	40%
Change company but keep the role	17%
Not sure	17%
Stay with the same exact role	12%
Change company and role	9%
Prefer not to say	4%
Stay at the company but move departments	2%

# Respondent Demographics

## Country Representation

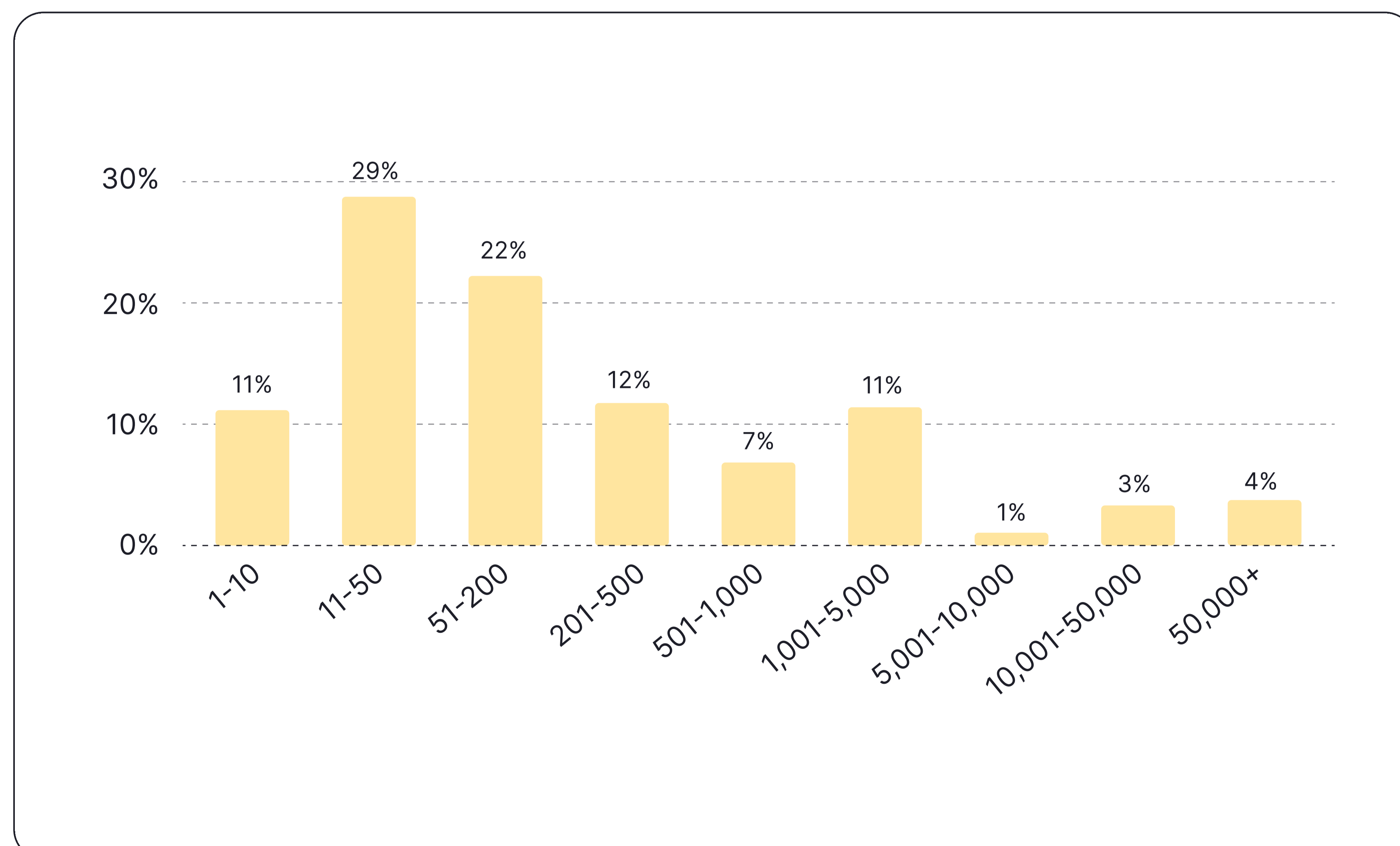


## Experience Representation



As usual, CoS from the USA accounted for most of our respondents, more so than in the past. This perhaps represents relative strength in the job market for US CoS relative to other places.

Most CoS are in the 3-10 years of experience range, indicating that CoS is really an early-to-mid career launchpad for people, rather than a terminal position.



## Organization Headcount

Just as we saw last year, companies with 11-50 and 51-200 accounted for the majority of respondents. Overall, the breakdown of organization headcount looks almost exactly the same as 2022 & 2023, though we do have greater representation from 1001-5000 than in the past.





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