Early Strength Breaks as Workforce Behavior Shifts in Tech

A joint publication by RONIN International and myCLEARopinion Insights Hub

Insights from Waves 6–8 of the Workforce Confidence Index (Jan 2026–March 2026)

Technology / Software / IT Sector

About This Study

The *Workforce Confidence Index* is a multi-wave quantitative tracking study conducted collaboratively by **RONIN International** and **myCLEARopinion Insights Hub.**

It measures U.S. workforce sentiment across key dimensions, including job security, personal financial confidence, institutional trust, and economic outlook.

This report focuses on professionals in the **technology, software, and IT sector**, drawing on data collected between January and March 2026 as part of an ongoing cross-industry tracking study.

Executive Summary:

The technology workforce enters 2026 from a position of strength but experiences a rapid shift across the first quarter.

Across Waves 6–8, core indicators move sharply. Job security declines significantly, financial confidence weakens steadily, and openness to job change accelerates, reaching a majority of workers by March. These shifts reflect a clear change in workforce behavior, not just sentiment.

At the same time, disruption emerges as an internal force. Technological change itself becomes the dominant perceived threat, signaling a sector that is being reshaped from within rather than pressured primarily by external factors.

While trust remains concentrated in industry-specific and professional sources, confidence in broader institutions remains uneven.

This is not a workforce in decline, but one undergoing rapid reconfiguration as early strength gives way to changing conditions.

Methodology:

Respondents were screened for U.S. employment across a diverse mix of industries, including construction, engineering, manufacturing, technology, healthcare, and professional services.

This report focuses on professionals in the **healthcare and pharmaceutical sector**, based on a subset of respondents from a broader cross-industry tracking study.

Wave	Field Dates
Wave 6	Jan 2026
Wave 7	Feb 2026
Wave 8	Mar 2026

The Big Picture

Core indicators shift rapidly across all dimensions.

Across key workforce indicators, the technology sector experiences a rapid shift over the first quarter. Measures that begin at elevated levels in January decline sharply by February and remain weakened in March.

At the same time, workforce behavior moves in the opposite direction. Openness to job change rises steadily, reaching a majority of workers by March. Together, these shifts indicate a clear break from early stability

Metric	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Trend
High Job Security	63%	31%	33%	↓↓↓
High Financial Confidence	67%	57%	36%	↓↓
Considering or Seeking a New Job	31%	43%	58%	↑↑↑

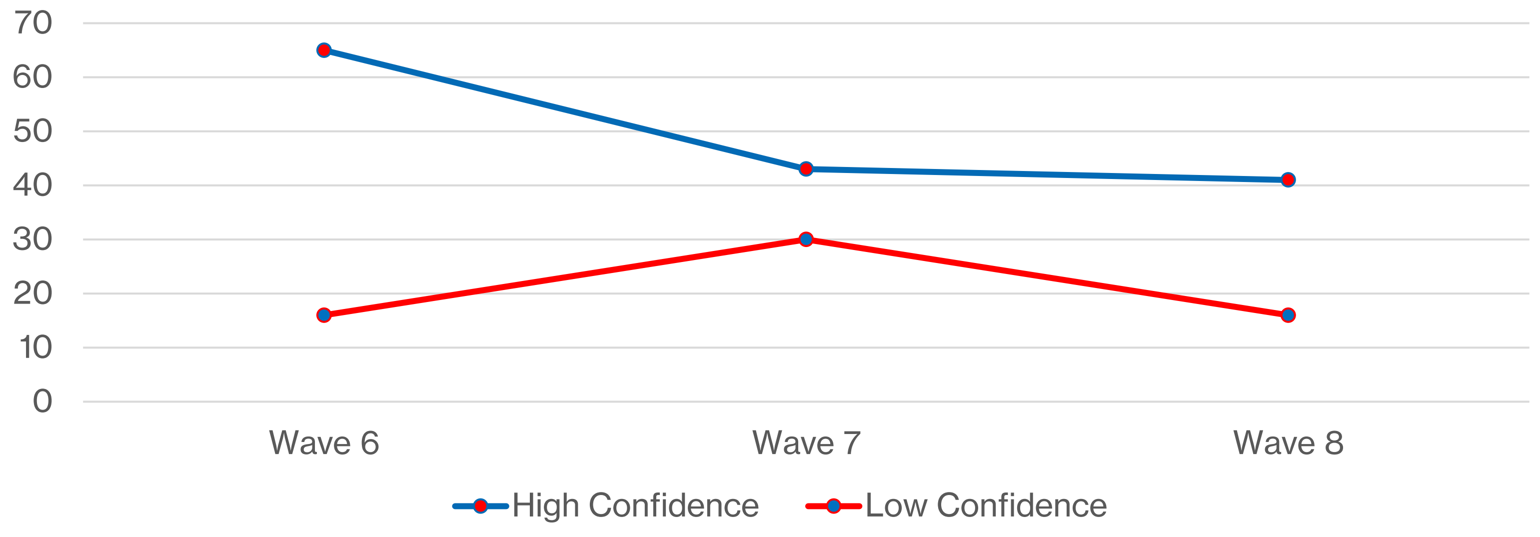
Early strength erodes quickly as workforce mobility accelerates

Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q305, Q310, Q311)

Sector confidence drops sharply from early highs

Confidence in the technology sector declines significantly over the first quarter. While January begins with a strong majority expressing high confidence in the industry's outlook, that sentiment drops sharply in February and remains subdued in March.

At the same time, the middle of the distribution expands, indicating a shift away from strong confidence rather than a full collapse into pessimism. The result is a sector that remains viable but is clearly recalibrating expectations.



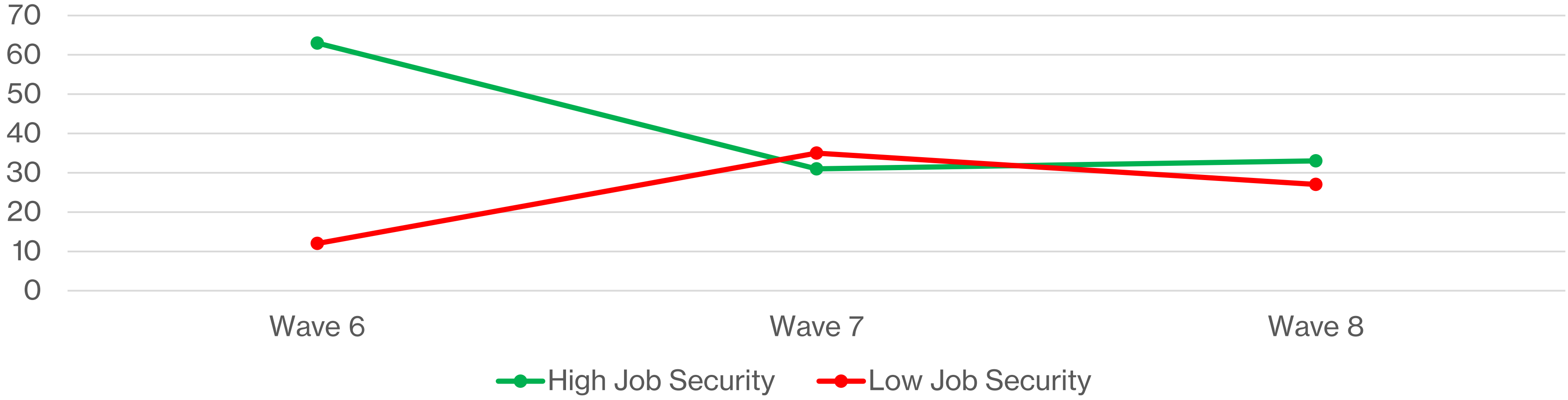
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q200)

Job security declines dramatically across waves

Job security experiences one of the most significant shifts across the study period. The share of workers reporting high job security drops sharply between January and February and remains at a substantially lower level in March.

At the same time, low job security rises quickly, reflecting a growing sense of instability. This marks a clear break from the strong baseline seen at the start of the year.

–32 point drop in high job security from Jan to Feb

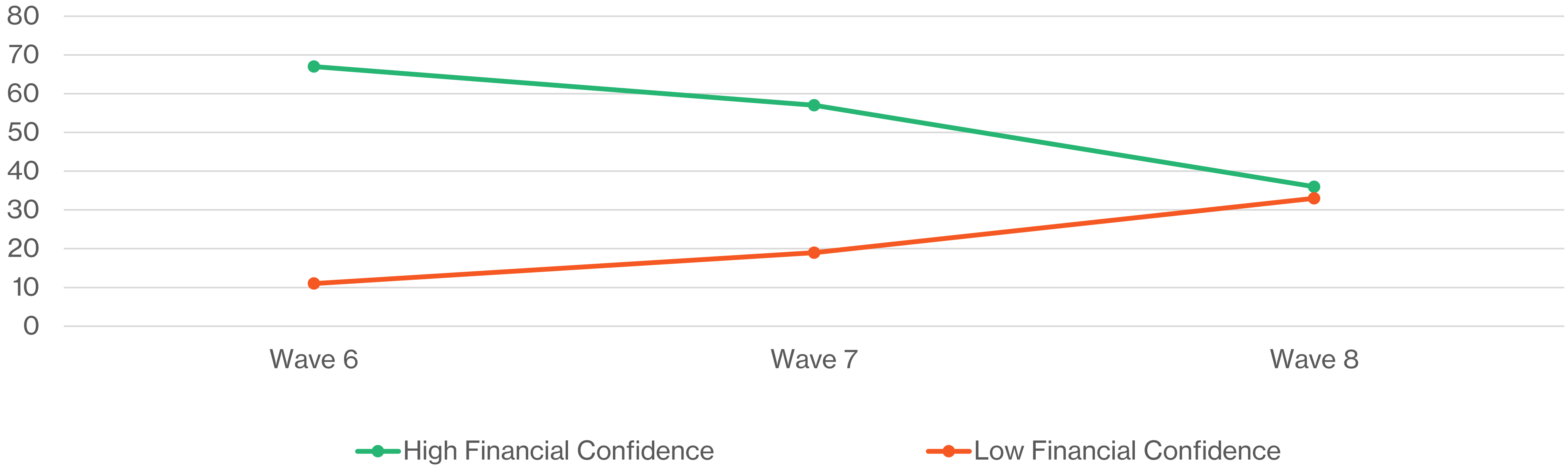


Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q305)

Financial Confidence Declines Sharply and Consistently

Personal financial confidence declines steadily across all three waves, showing a clear downward trajectory rather than short-term volatility. The share of workers reporting high confidence drops significantly from January to March, while low confidence rises to its highest level.

This pattern suggests sustained pressure rather than temporary fluctuation.



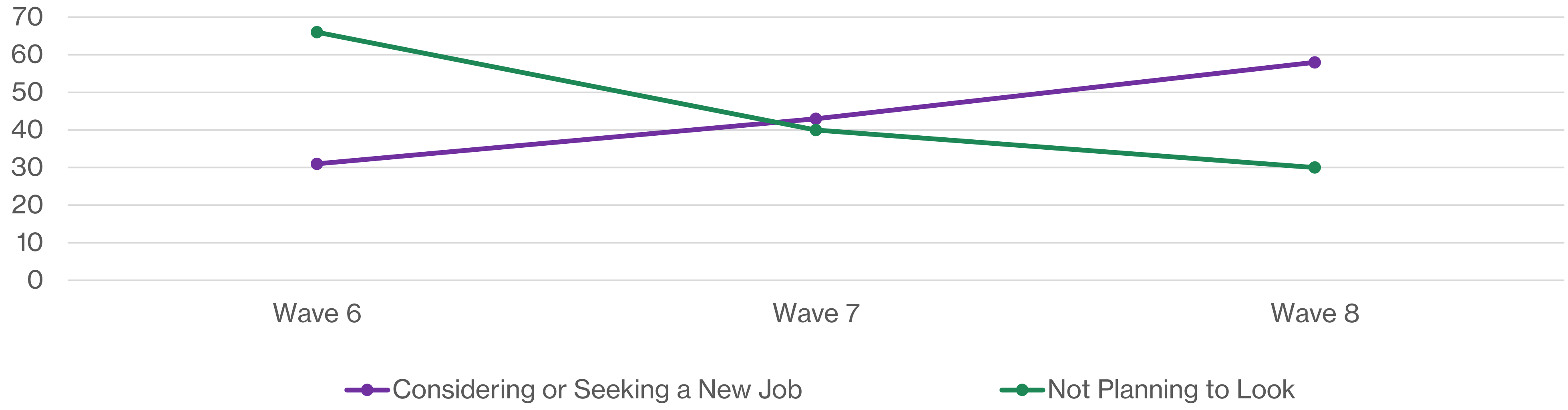
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q310)

Job-change intent accelerates rapidly across waves

Openness to job change increases significantly across the first quarter. By March, a majority of workers report that they are either actively seeking or considering a new role.

At the same time, the share of workers not planning to look declines sharply, indicating a meaningful shift in workforce mindset toward mobility.

A majority of workers are open to change by March.



Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q311)

Stability breaks across multiple dimensions simultaneously

Across key indicators, the technology workforce moves away from its early position of strength. Job security and financial confidence decline simultaneously, while openness to job change increases rapidly.

These shifts do not occur in isolation – they move together, signaling a broader change in workforce behavior. What begins as strong stability in January gives way to a more fluid and uncertain environment by March.

Confidence declines as workforce movement accelerates.

Metric	Direction	Interpretation
Job Security	↓	Declining sharply
Financial Confidence	↓	Sustained decline
Job-Change Intent	↑	Rapid acceleration

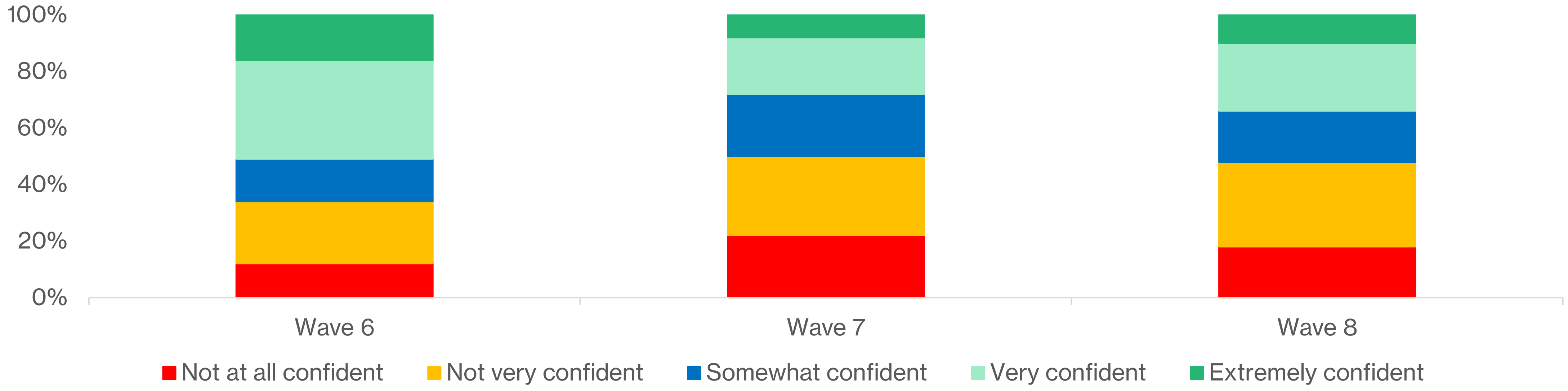
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q305, Q310, Q311)

Confidence in federal support declines from early strength

Confidence in the federal government's ability to support the industry declines sharply after January and remains subdued through March. While a majority of workers report high confidence at the start of the year, that sentiment drops significantly in February and does not recover. At the same time, low confidence increases and remains elevated, indicating a shift toward skepticism.

This pattern reflects a clear erosion of confidence rather than short-term fluctuation.

Confidence drops sharply after January and remains weak.



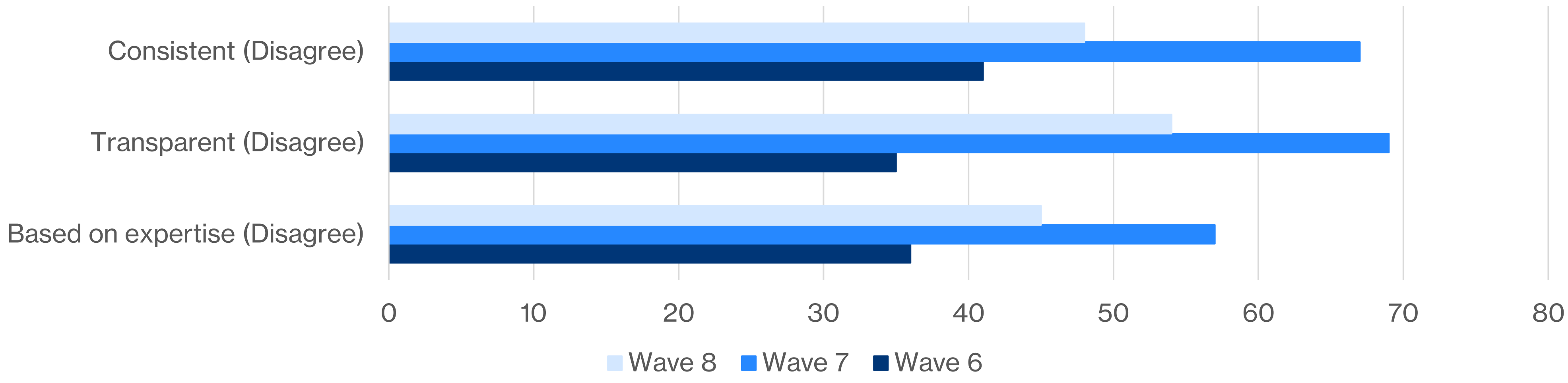
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q205)

Skepticism toward regulation increases sharply

Skepticism toward regulation increases sharply in February and remains elevated through March. Concerns are most pronounced around transparency and consistency, where disagreement peaks in February and stays significantly higher than January levels. While perceptions improve slightly in March, they do not return to baseline.

These patterns suggest that trust in how regulations are developed and applied weakens during the period, contributing to broader uncertainty within the sector.

Skepticism spikes in February and remains elevated.



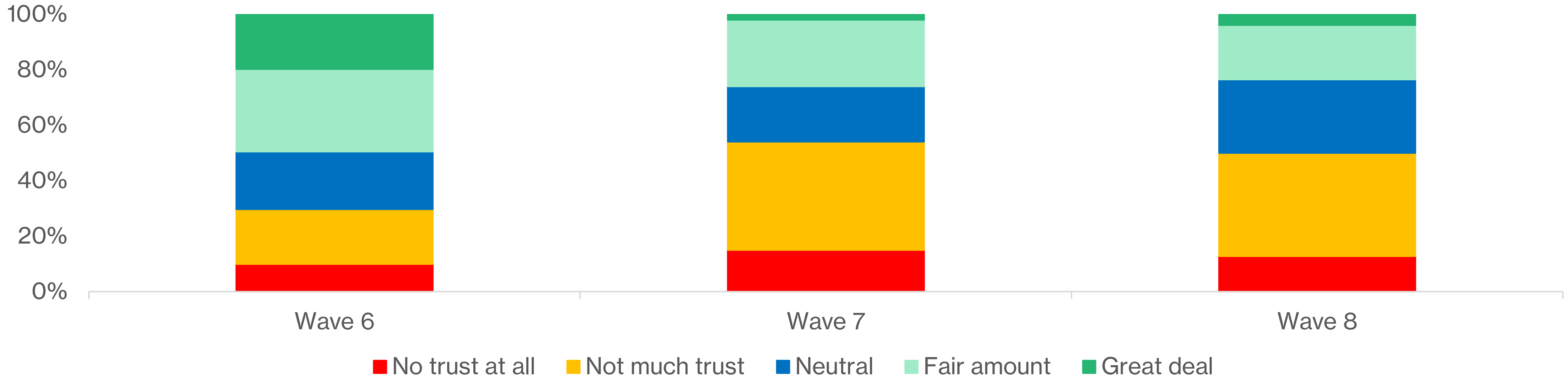
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q210_1, Q210_2, Q210_3)

Trust in general media declines significantly

Trust in general media declines sharply after January and remains low through March.

The sector begins with relatively strong trust, but that confidence drops significantly in February and does not recover. At the same time, low trust becomes the dominant sentiment across the workforce.
This shift reflects a clear erosion of confidence rather than short-term fluctuation.

Trust drops by more than half after January and remains low.

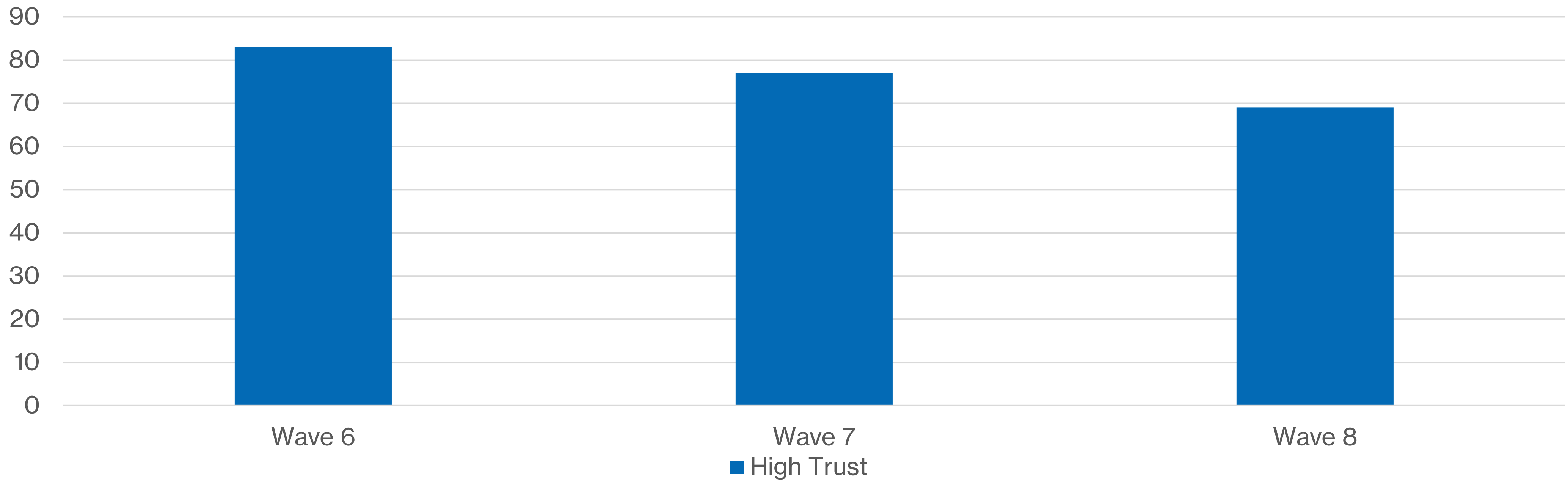


Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q215)

Industry-specific sources remain strongly trusted

In contrast to general media, trust in industry-specific publications remains consistently high across all waves. While trust declines modestly over time, a clear majority of workers continue to rely on these sources for accurate and relevant information. Even as broader media trust weakens, industry publications maintain their position as one of the most trusted information sources within the sector.

A majority of workers continue to trust industry-specific sources.



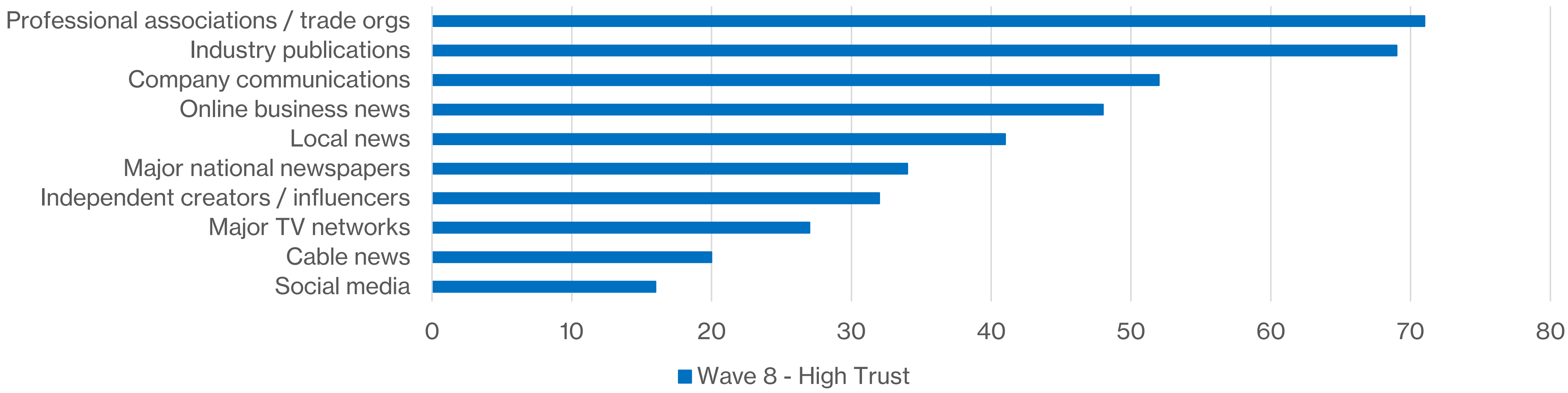
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q220_5)

Trust concentrates in industry and professional sources

Trust within the technology sector is clearly concentrated in sources closest to the industry. Professional associations and industry-specific publications remain the most trusted, followed by company communications and online business news.

In contrast, broader media sources, including television, cable news, and social media, continue to lag significantly. While trust levels vary across sources, the overall pattern reflects a highly selective trust environment, where credibility is strongest among sources with direct industry relevance.

Trust is strongest in industry-aligned and professional sources



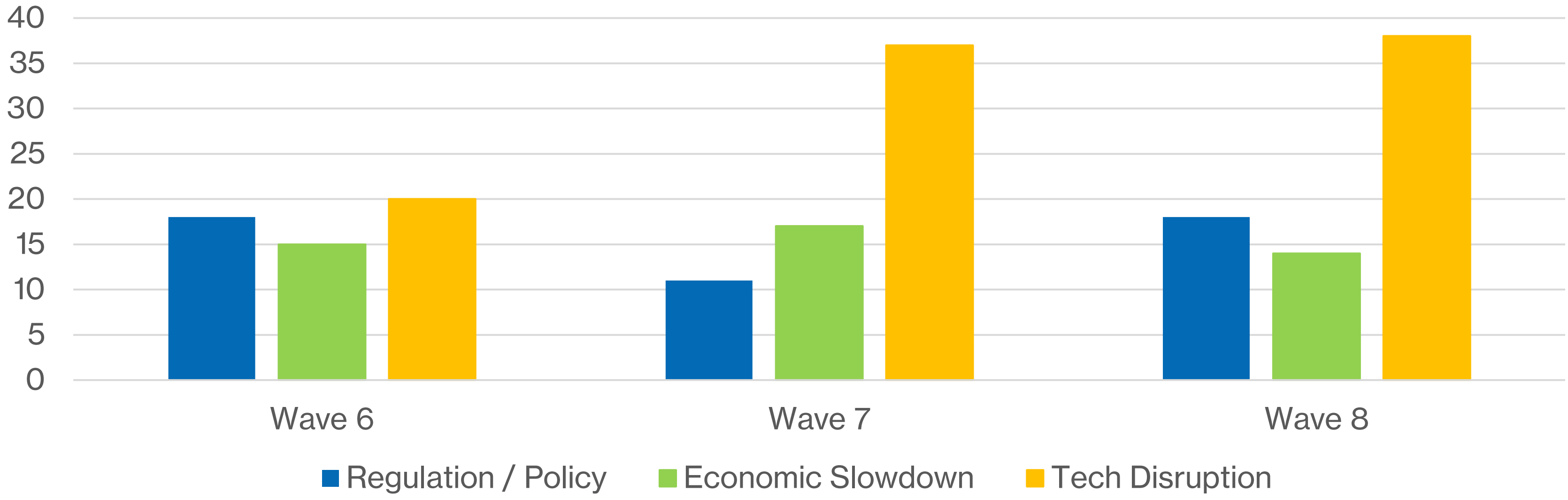
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Wave 8 (Q220 series)

Technology-driven change emerges as the dominant threat

Technological disruption emerges as the dominant perceived threat within the sector, rising sharply in February and remaining the top concern in March.

While economic concerns remain relatively stable and regulatory pressure fluctuates, disruption increases significantly and overtakes all other threats. This shift indicates that the primary source of uncertainty within the technology sector is internal rather than external.

The findings reflect a workforce navigating rapid change, where innovation itself is both a driver of growth and a source of instability.



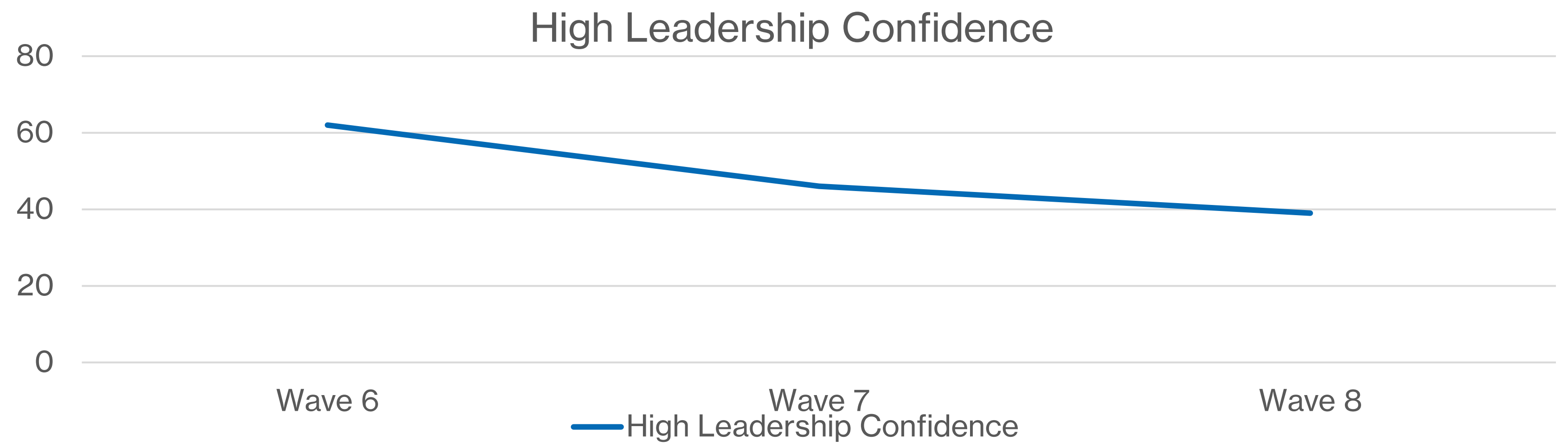
Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q300_1)

Leadership confidence declines from early strength

Confidence in executive leadership declines steadily across the first quarter, moving from a strong majority in January to a significantly lower level by March. This downward trend indicates that internal confidence is weakening alongside broader workforce indicators. While leadership remains a source of stability for some workers, it no longer serves as a consistent anchor across the sector.

The decline suggests that pressure is not only external, but increasingly reflected in perceptions of internal decision-making and direction.

Leadership confidence declines steadily across waves.



Source: Workforce Confidence Index, Waves 6–8 (Q305)

What This Means for the Tech Workforce

The technology sector enters 2026 from a position of strength but shifts quickly across the first quarter, with multiple indicators moving in the same direction.

Job security declines sharply, financial confidence weakens, and workforce mobility accelerates to a majority of workers by March. These changes signal a clear break from earlier stability and point to a workforce that is becoming more fluid and responsive to change.

At the same time, pressure is increasingly internal. Technological disruption rises as the dominant perceived threat, indicating that the pace of innovation itself is driving uncertainty alongside opportunity.

Confidence is not disappearing, but it is no longer evenly distributed. Trust remains concentrated in industry-specific and professional sources, while broader institutional confidence remains uneven.

This is not a workforce in decline – but one that is becoming more adaptive, more mobile, and more sensitive to shifts in both internal and external conditions.

Stability is giving way to adaptability as the defining workforce dynamic.

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Appendix | March 2026 Snapshot:

Job security:
Job security has declined sharply and remains at a lower level in March. Just 33% of workers report feeling very or completely secure in their current role, while 27% report low security, resulting in a net confidence of +6. This marks a significant drop from January and reflects a clear weakening in perceived role stability.

Personal financial confidence:
Financial confidence declines meaningfully across the quarter. In March, 36% report high confidence in their financial outlook, compared with 33% who report low confidence, yielding a net confidence of +3. This represents a substantial erosion from earlier waves and indicates tightening personal outlooks.

Job-change intent:
Workforce mobility accelerates significantly. In March, 58% of workers report that they are considering or actively seeking a new role, while just 30% say they are not planning to look. This reflects a clear shift toward a more fluid and movement-oriented workforce.

Federal government:
Confidence in federal policy support weakens after a strong start. In March, 34% of workers express a fair or great deal of confidence, compared with 48% who report little to no confidence, resulting in a net confidence of –14. Sentiment declines sharply from January and remains subdued.

Industry publications:
Industry-specific publications remain highly trusted, though trust declines over time. In March, **69%** of workers report a high level of trust, compared with **9%** who report low trust. Despite some erosion, these sources continue to be among the most credible within the sector.

This March snapshot reinforces the broader trend observed across the study: the technology workforce begins from a position of strength but undergoes a rapid shift across the quarter. Confidence declines across key indicators, workforce mobility accelerates, and disruption emerges as a central concern. At the same time, trust remains concentrated in industry and professional sources, highlighting a workforce that is not in decline, but actively adapting to rapid and continuous change.

About the partners:

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