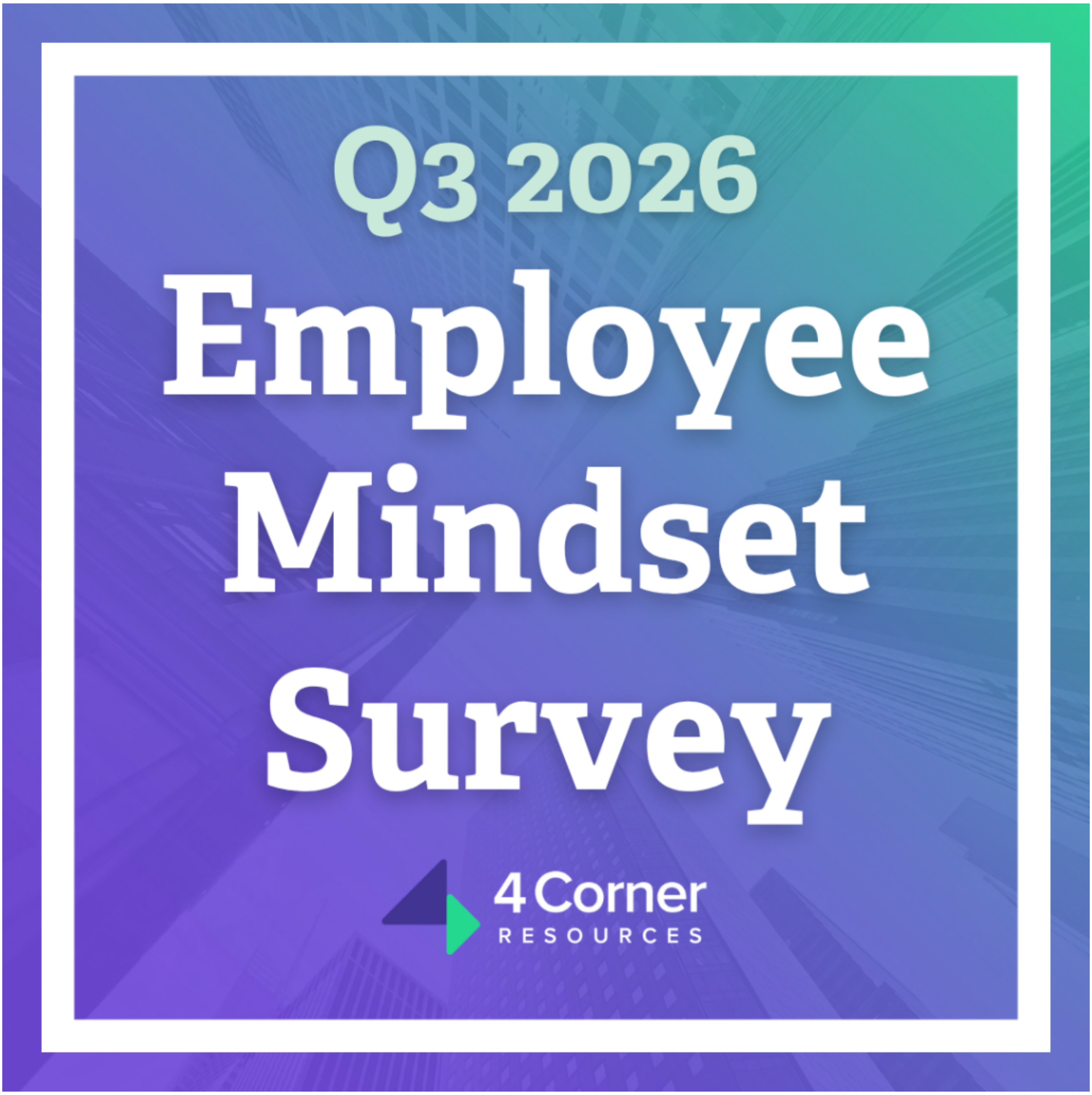
American Worker Sentiment Rebounds in Q3, But Savings and AI Optimism Lag, New Survey Finds

4 Corner Resources releases its Q3 2026 Employee Mindset Survey as new findings show market confidence recovering while savings stay thin and fewer workers expect AI to help their careers.



Orlando, Florida Sep 9, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - A quarterly survey of 756 employed Americans by 4 Corner Resources found that worker sentiment has recovered most of the ground it lost in the spring. The Employee Mindset Score, which tracks how American workers feel about their jobs, their market prospects, and AI, rose to 67.3 out of 100, up 1.3 points from Q2 and statistically even with the 67.8 the year opened at.

The rebound was driven by market confidence and pay perception. Two measures did not follow: 47.9% of workers still cannot cover 4 months of expenses without a paycheck, and the share expecting AI to help their career has fallen from 56.9% to 49.7% since the start of the year. Full survey results are available at 4cornerresources.com/employee-mindset-survey.

Key Findings

- **Employee Mindset Score**: 67.3, up 1.3 from Q2 and statistically even with Q1's 67.8. Worker sentiment sits where the year began.
- **Job Satisfaction Index**: 71.6 (up 1.2). 81% of workers are satisfied with their employer, and "extremely satisfied" climbed from 41.7% to 46.4%.
    - Pay perception drove the rebound: how workers feel their pay compares with the cost of living climbed from 59.2 to 63.5, the only satisfaction measure with a statistically significant recovery.
    - Work arrangement remains the biggest satisfaction factor. Workers in their preferred arrangement score 77.5 on job satisfaction; workers in an arrangement they did not choose score 51.4.
- **Employee Confidence Index**: 63.0 (up 2.0), the only statistically confirmed index recovery of the quarter. Market confidence fell from 68.6 to 63.5 in Q2, then climbed back to 66.7.
    - Savings did not recover: 47.9% of workers cannot cover 4 months of expenses without a paycheck, and 22.1% have no emergency savings at all.
    - Women are twice as likely as men to have zero emergency savings: 30.0% vs. 15.4%.
- **AI Threat Index**: 32.6 (down 0.3), flat for a third straight quarter. Just 15.1% of workers name AI their biggest employment threat, while 24.1% say nothing threatens their job at all.
    - AI career optimism keeps sliding: the share expecting AI to help their career fell from 56.9% in Q1 to 49.7% in Q3, a statistically significant drop that has not recovered.

"Workers feel better about the job market than they did in the spring, and the data says that recovery is real. But it lives in how people feel. Household savings are still thinner than they were in January, and fewer workers believe AI will help their careers than when the year began," said Pete Newsome, President of 4 Corner Resources.

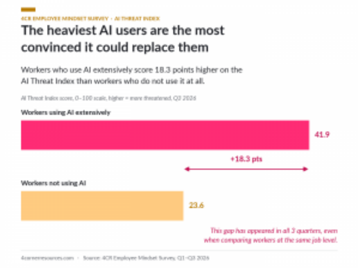
Methodology

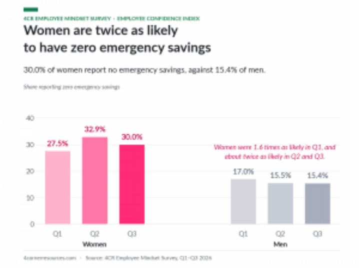
The Q3 2026 Employee Mindset Survey was conducted July 7-10, 2026, among 756 employed U.S. workers earning $50,000 or more per year. The Employee Mindset Score is a composite of the Job Satisfaction Index (40%), Employee Confidence Index (40%), and AI Threat Index (20%, inverted). All indexes are scored on a 0-100 scale. Full results and methodology are available at 4cornerresources.com/employee-mindset-survey.

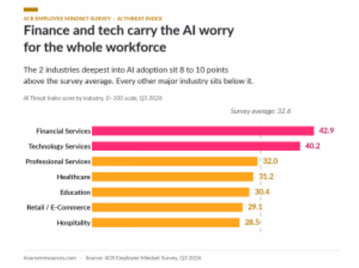
About 4 Corner Resources

4 Corner Resources is a national staffing and recruiting firm founded in 2005 and headquartered in Orlando, Florida. With more than 16,750 placements over 20 years, the company specializes in connecting employers with qualified talent through contract staffing, contract-to-hire, direct hire, and executive search across all major industries. 4 Corner Resources has been recently recognized by Forbes and Business Insider as one of America's Top Recruiting Firms, earned ClearlyRated Best of

Staffing recognition for 7 consecutive years, and has been named to the Inc. 5000. Visit our website for more information 4cornerresources.com.







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