

2022





DEDICATION TO MALCOLM P. EHRHARDT, III

In 1996, Malcolm Ehrhardt, Byron Arthur and nearly a dozen interns watched, logged and studied more than 27,000 news stories to analyze how different TV stations in one local market presented their news to the public. This determined group delved into topics like the prevalence of crime-related stories in each news broadcast...a topic still dominating news programs 26 years later. They even tracked which TV station had the most news in each broadcast and which reporters had the most stories "in the field."

Even back then, we wanted to see the impact local news had in molding how we see the world and our community surroundings. The 1996 New Orleans Television News Study was the inspiration for the Gulf South Index, now in its third year.

That News Study was the idea of Malcolm Ehrhardt, who with his wife, Pia, began The Ehrhardt Group in 1996. We lost Malcolm suddenly in March, but his foresight about how the people of this region receive information and make decisions remains at the heart of what we do and at the heart of the Gulf South Index. Malcolm was a scholar, counselor, entrepreneur, dad, husband and son. He believed in the power of storytelling and the news media. He would say that we offer our clients and the community our ideas and time, both intensely personal and incredibly valuable.

We dedicate the 2022 Gulf South Index and every future Index to him.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



IN THE GULF SOUTH and throughout the United States, concerns about inflation, supply chain disruptions, rising crime and the brutal war in Ukraine have taken over headlines and brought us to new vistas of the future.

The 2022 Gulf South Index is a type of GPS to help navigate the uncertainty of our future as a country and a Gulf South region. It is a future that will be determined to a large degree by how we behave in a post- pandemic environment with a host of new challenges for our region, nation and world.

At this point, there are many unanswerable questions that will weigh heavily on the future of communities, businesses and public attitudes. How long will the war in Ukraine last? What type of employment opportunities may exist in our region of the country?

In some important ways, the 2022 Index indicates how the Gulf South differs from the rest of the country and how states in the Gulf South U.S. differ from one another in attitudes and behaviors. Great opportunities for businesses and institutions lie within those differences.

The 2022 GSI surmises that while it would be misleading to say the U.S. is awash in a growing sense of optimism, only 12% of Gulf South and national residents say they expect 2022 to be worse than 2021 for them personally. About a third say they expect 2022 to be about the same as last year.

It's clear that for the rest of this year, a large percentage of Americans will engage in family holiday traditions that were quashed during the pandemic. People are also showing a desire to go to movies, concerts and sporting events. And, heading across state lines for a vacation is also in the offing for many Americans.

This notion is driven home in the survey's conclusion that people in the Gulf South continue to trust local television news networks for accurate information more so than national or cable news networks and newspapers. This mindset can offer businesses and opinion makers a compass to direct them to the best channels through which to deliver their messaging.

What is also clear is that the crystal ball is groaning under the weight of uncertainty. Mix in the divisiveness of our political institutions and a heap of social unrest and you have the recipe for a spicy gumbo of confusion far less palatable than the savory variety served in the Gulf Coast eateries that people are flocking to these days.

Notions forwarded by people two years ago that the pandemic would leave the Gulf South unrecognizable are no longer being bandied about. However, the euphoria that we envisioned for the time when the vile virus released its grip on us has been tempered somewhat by the emergence of other heavy-duty issues.

Understanding how people feel about these issues and how their attitudes and behaviors might be influenced as a result provide a play book for those who want to avoid taking the wrong road to the future. This survey provides real time data to enhance that understanding, allowing us to make responsible decisions for the future. Tomorrow's world will grow from the seeds of knowledge and information that are currently at our disposal.

In the words of President Abraham Lincoln: "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."



LOCAL NEWS



"Local news of all types is very much alive. Like the sun rising in the east, citizens' trust in local news remains consistent."

WHAT CHANGES STAYS THE SAME.

The dissemination of information in a fair and accurate manner is one of the cornerstones of democracy. However, past surveys have indicated a growing distrust in the news media to answer the call. This troubling trend has brought the public's news consumption habits to the forefront.

This most recent survey echoes previous ones that indicate both national and Gulf South residents favor local news over others when it comes to the issue of trust. When asked which source they trusted for news, roughly 49% of both Gulf South and national audiences said they had a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of faith in information from local news networks.

When asked about cable news, 31% of Gulf South residents and 37% of national respondents expressed a great deal or quite a lot of trust in those networks.

"Local news of all types is very much alive. Like the sun rising in the east, citizens' trust in local news remains consistent. We believe in local voices, and we want to know what's happening around us. In fact, we trust the local news more than we trust our family and friends when it comes to the news. Local voices can speak the language. They are familiar. This hasn't changed since we began the Gulf South Index. Being local and knowing local is just as important as it ever was. With the

onslaught of misinformation online, it's more difficult than ever to sort through the noise," said Ehrhardt.

The trust divide is evident beyond the Gulf South Index. In the Edelman 2022 Global Trust Barometer, an 11-point gap exists between citizens who see the news media as a "dividing source in society" and those who see the media as a "unifying force."

Newspapers, often viewed as a last bastion against political corruption and other societal ills, also appear to be challenged with it comes to trust. Nationwide, 41% of survey respondents said they had a lot or a great deal of trust in newspapers and periodicals. That number dipped to 35% of people surveyed in the Gulf South.

Gulf South residents are not as likely to follow news from outside their local areas as are those in the national sample. This holds true in both the 2021 and 2022 surveys. Last year's results show that 41% of people nationwide "care deeply" about news happening outside their immediate area. That number rose to 55% in the 2022 survey, perhaps a reflection of the war in Ukraine.

In 2021, 39% of Gulf South residents indicated they cared deeply about news outside their communities. That number dropped to 36% in the 2022 survey.

The index evolves from a cooperative research project between The Ehrhardt Group and Causeway Solutions. For the purposes of this project, the U.S. Gulf South is defined as Louisiana, Mississippi, coastal Alabama and the Florida Panhandle. The report offers insights on trust issues, media usage and lifestyle trends in these southern states based on a high-tech evaluation of hundreds of thousands of data points. The result is a report that helps to identify how people make decisions, both locally and nationally. It provides a valuable tool to help counter the uncertainty in a world that might otherwise seem incalculable.

LOCAL NEWS



74% of Americans worry about false information or “fake news” being used as a weapon, according to the 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer.

IF WE DON'T TRUST SOCIAL MEDIA, THEN WHY DOES IT PLAY SUCH A LARGE ROLE IN OUR INFORMATION DIET?

Social media websites like Twitter and Facebook fared much worse in the trust department, with only about a quarter of those surveyed both nationally and in the Gulf South saying they had a great deal or a lot of trust in those sources for news.

40% of Gulf South residents possess little trust or none at all when it comes to social media platforms. Nationally, 49% of citizens feel the same way. The only platform less trusted by consumers in the Gulf South is podcasts. The same percentage of Gulf South citizens use TikTok as citizens do nationally. Facebook usage has remained steady for the last three years with more than 60% of the U.S. population 18 years old and older having a presence on the platform. The percentage of Americans 18 years old and older on TikTok more than doubled between 2020 and 2022.

In 2021, TikTok users around the world spent an average of nearly 26 hours a month on the app, up from 8 hours a month in 2018. For comparison, the average time spent on Facebook has decreased from nearly 20 hours a month on the platform to 16 hours in 2021.

However, more and more data shows that social media is where the seeds of misinformation and conspiracy

theories are sown. Those concerns contribute to 77% of all Gulf South residents being somewhat or very concerned about how companies use the data they collect about us. The concerns here mirror the concerns nationally, which come in at 78% somewhat or very concerned.

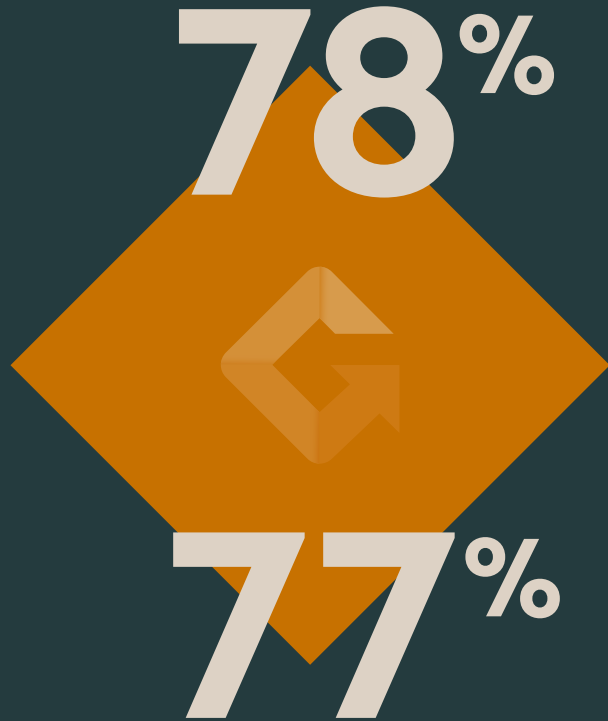
Similarly, 74% of Americans worry about false information or “fake news” being used as a weapon, according to the 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer.

“Much of what we see, read and hear has to do with how that information is presented to us. It also relies on the ethical standards of the outlet providing the venue for that information to be shared. Our smartphones, laptops and televisions are fixtures in our lives, providing valuable information, entertainment and hundreds of ways for us to express ourselves. However, if there are no rules for the platforms we visit every minute of every day, entities lacking the ethical standards of most citizens will continue to seize the opportunity to push incorrect information in front of us, sowing doubt and frustration,” said Ehrhardt.



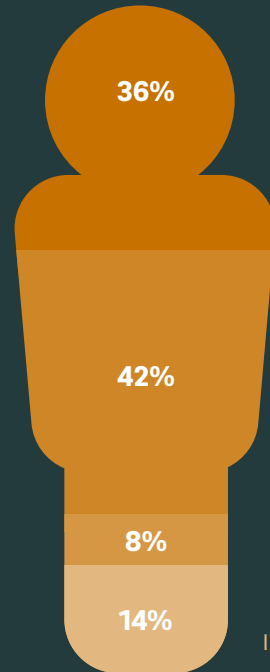
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT NEWS HAPPENING IN AREAS OUTSIDE THE GULF SOUTH/YOUR IMMEDIATE AREA?

PEOPLE WHO CARE 2022 - G.S.

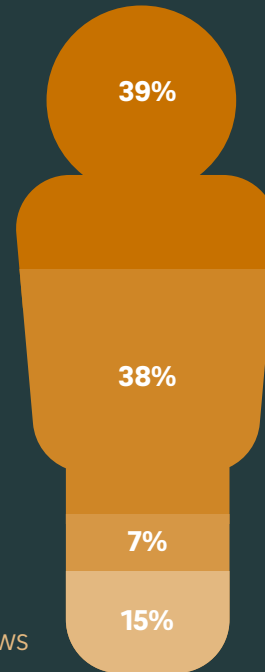


PEOPLE WHO CARE 2021 - G.S.

GULF SOUTH 2022



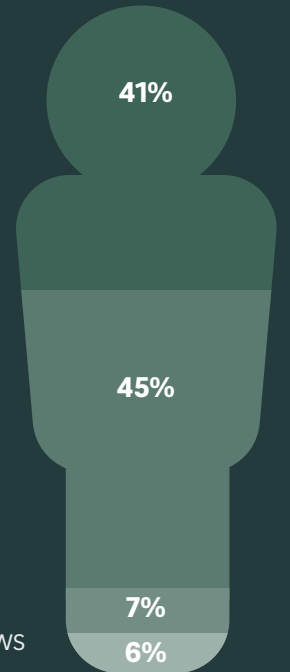
GULF SOUTH 2021



U.S. 2022



U.S. 2021

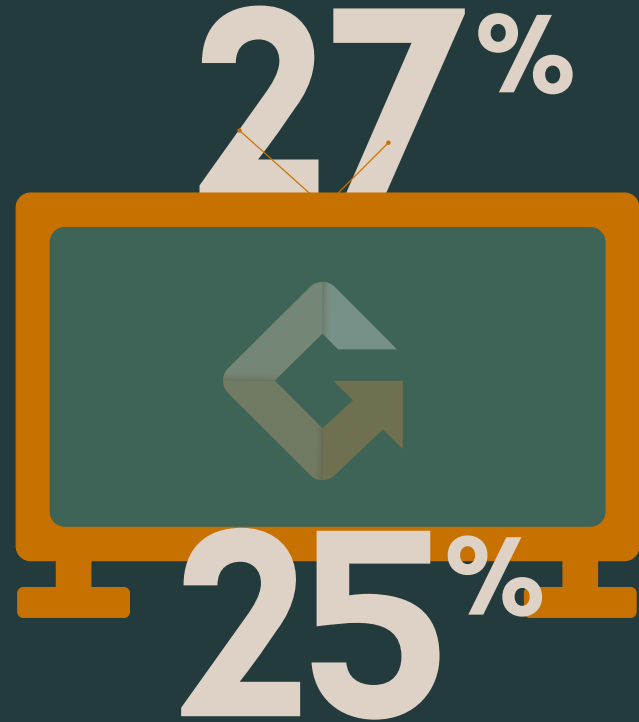


Gulf South residents were more likely than the national sample to not follow news in other areas. From 2021 to 2022, there was an increase in people nationally caring deeply about news happening in areas outside their immediate area, perhaps a symptom of the war in Ukraine.

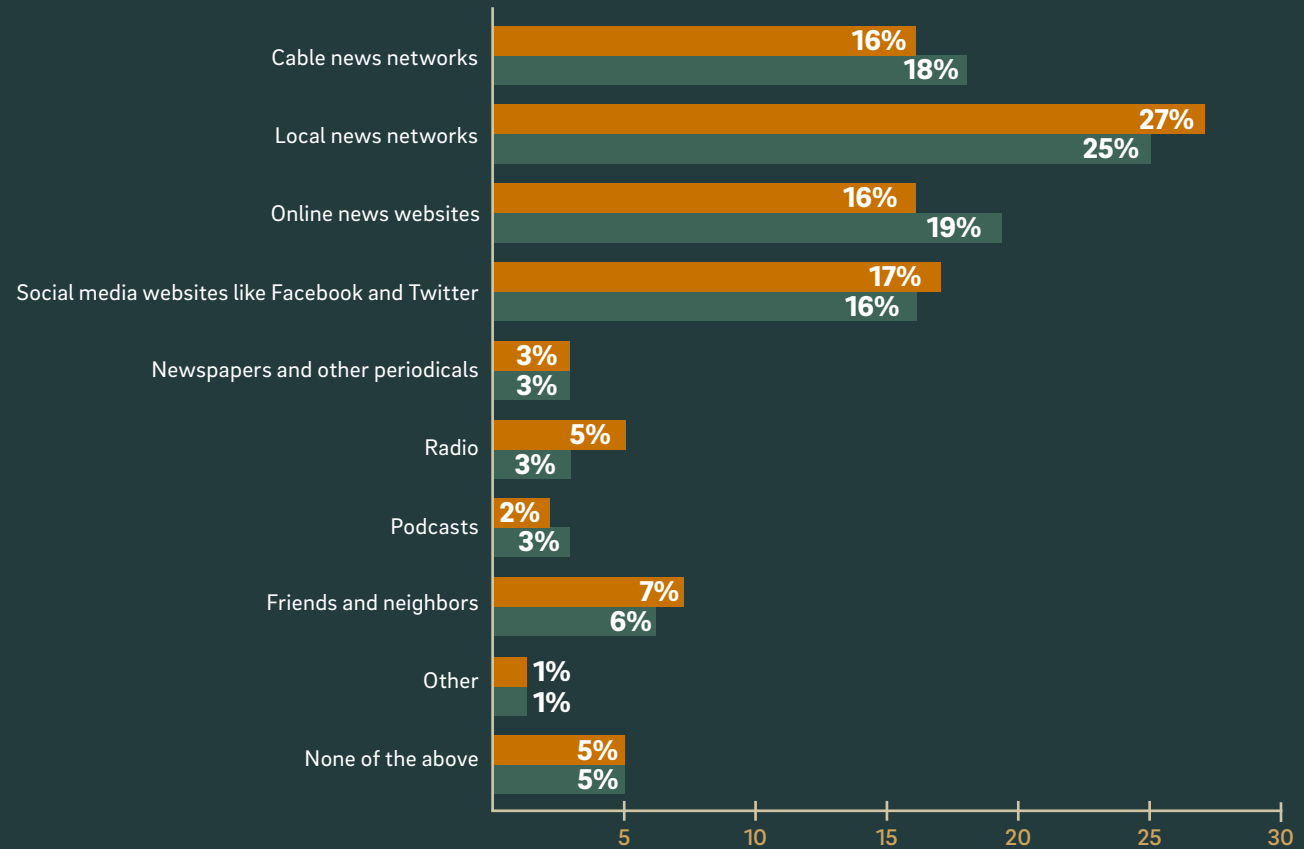
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SOURCES WOULD YOU SAY YOU RELY ON MOST OFTEN FOR YOUR INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT EVENTS AND POLITICS?

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

LOCAL NEWS NETWORKS - G.S.



LOCAL NEWS NETWORKS - U.S.

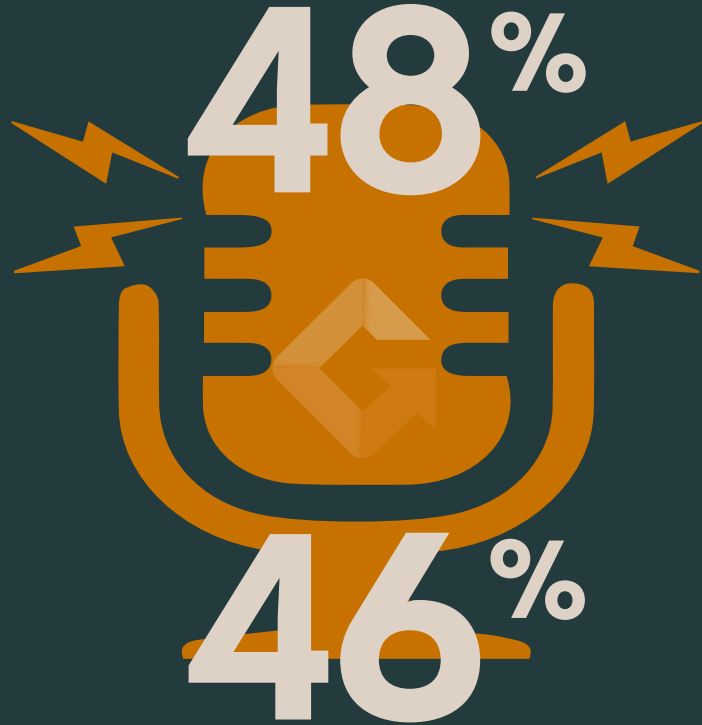


The national and Gulf South data are very similar regarding news sources, with both groups favoring local news networks the most. High-income respondents (>\$150k) nationally used online news websites the most (31%) while in the Gulf South they prefer social media (24%). Lower-income respondents (<\$50k) both nationally and in the Gulf South preferred local news networks (27% and 29%, respectively).

HOW MUCH, IF AT ALL, DO YOU TRUST THE INFORMATION THAT COMES FROM EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SOURCES?

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

TRUST IN LOCAL NEWS NETWORKS - G.S.



NO TRUST IN PODCASTS - G.S.

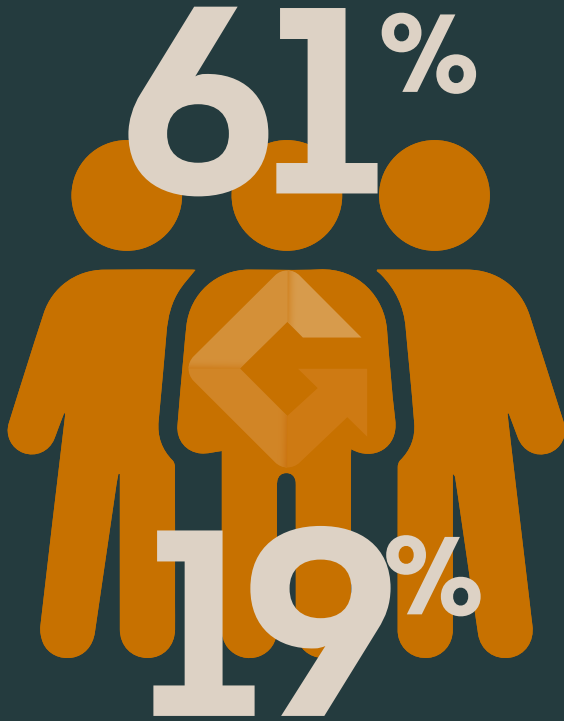
Source	Trust Level	Gulf South (%)	National (%)
Cable News Networks	A great deal	14%	17%
	Quite a lot	17%	20%
Local News Networks	A great deal	22%	20%
	Quite a lot	26%	29%
Online News Websites	A great deal	13%	15%
	Quite a lot	18%	21%
Social media websites like Facebook and Twitter	A great deal	13%	13%
	Quite a lot	11%	12%
Newspapers and other periodicals	A great deal	15%	14%
	Quite a lot	20%	27%
Radio	A great deal	13%	12%
	Quite a lot	17%	21%
Podcasts	A great deal	10%	10%
	Quite a lot	13%	14%
Friends and neighbors	A great deal	16%	16%
	Quite a lot	21%	20%

We trust the local news more than we trust our family and friends.

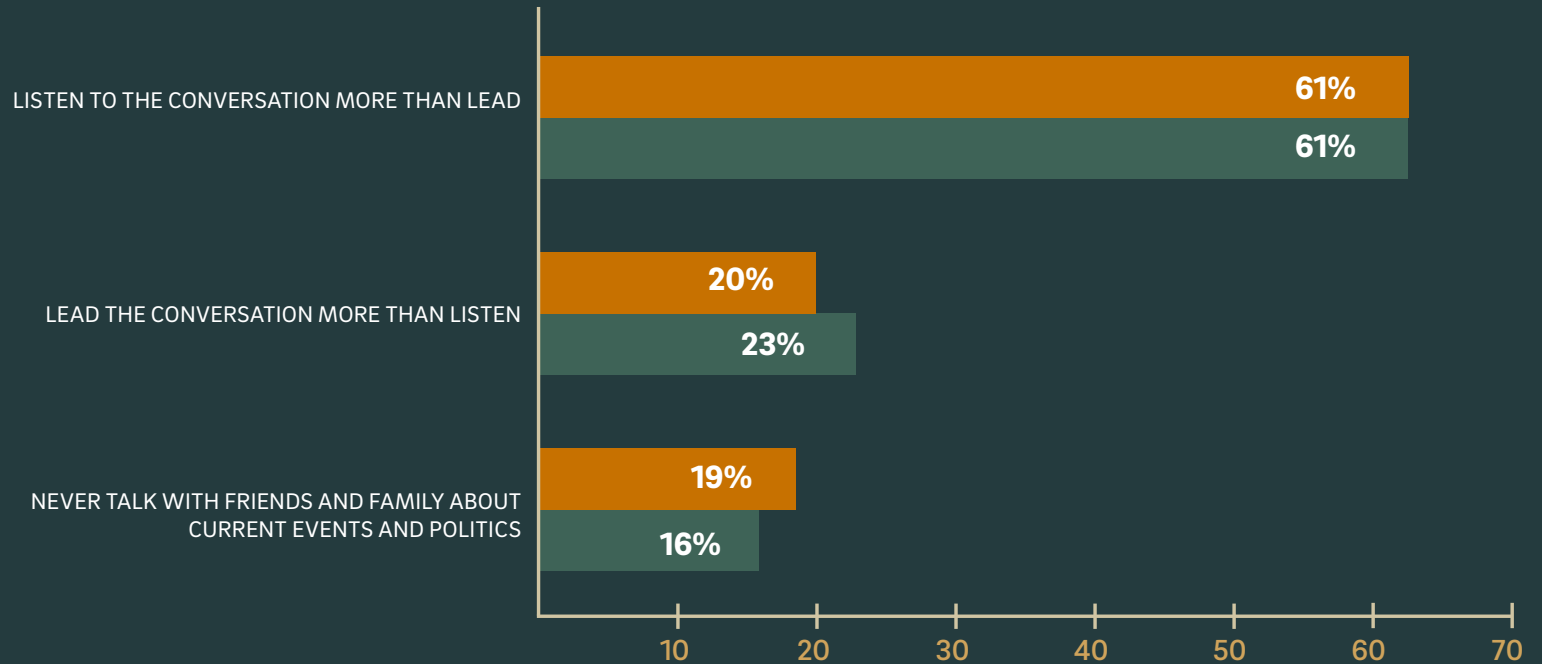
WHEN YOU TALK WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT CURRENT EVENTS AND POLITICS, DO YOU TEND TO...

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

LISTEN MORE THAN LEAD - G.S.



NEVER TALK POLITICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS - G.S.



Both national and Gulf South respondents listen to the conversation more than lead 61% of the time. Gulf South respondents were slightly more likely (19% vs. 16%) than national respondents to never talk with friends and family about current events and politics.

ARE YOU AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ONLINE COMMUNITIES?

■ GULF SOUTH
■ NATIONAL

FACEBOOK - G.S.

76%



18%
21%

REDDIT



7%
7%

QUORA



76%
73%

FACEBOOK



28%
33%

TWITTER



46%
48%

INSTAGRAM



17%
17%

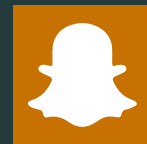
LINKEDIN

34%



34%
34%

TIKTOK



30%
29%

SNAPCHAT



58%
60%

YOUTUBE

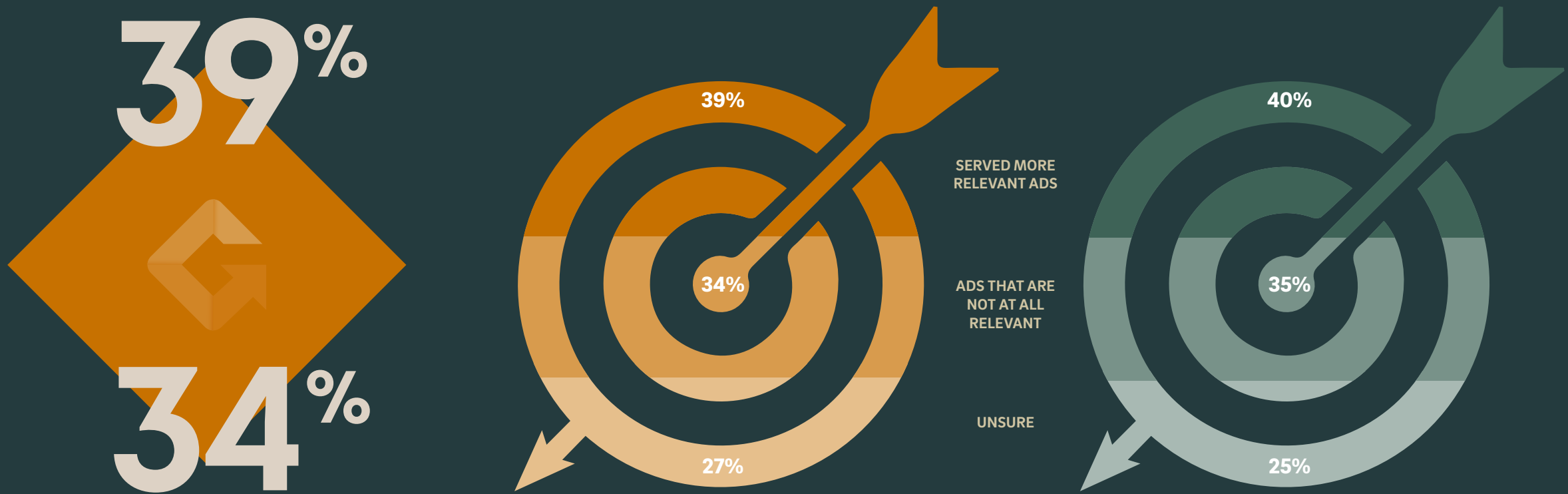
TIKTOK - G.S.

Overall, national and Gulf South respondents had very similar levels of social media use, with 8% nationally and 6% in the Gulf South stating that they used none of the options provided. Twitter use in the Gulf South is about 5% lower than the national level (28% vs. 33%), while Facebook use was about 3% higher in the Gulf South.

WOULD YOU RATHER BE SERVED RELEVANT ADS AT THE EXPENSE OF GIVING AWAY PERSONAL DATA TO COMPANIES, OR ADS THAT ARE NOT RELEVANT BUT PROTECT ALL YOUR DATA?

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

SERVED MORE RELEVANT ADS - G.S.



ADS THAT ARE NOT RELEVANT - G.S.

Overall, national and Gulf South respondents had very similar answers regarding their personal data. However, a plurality (39%) of lower-income respondents (<\$50k) nationally would rather have ads that are not at all relevant. In the Gulf South, a plurality (37%) of lower-income respondents would rather have relevant ads. A majority of higher-income (>\$150k) respondents both nationally and in the Gulf South would rather be served more relevant ads.

HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU, IF AT ALL, ABOUT HOW COMPANIES ARE USING THE DATA THEY COLLECT ABOUT YOU?

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

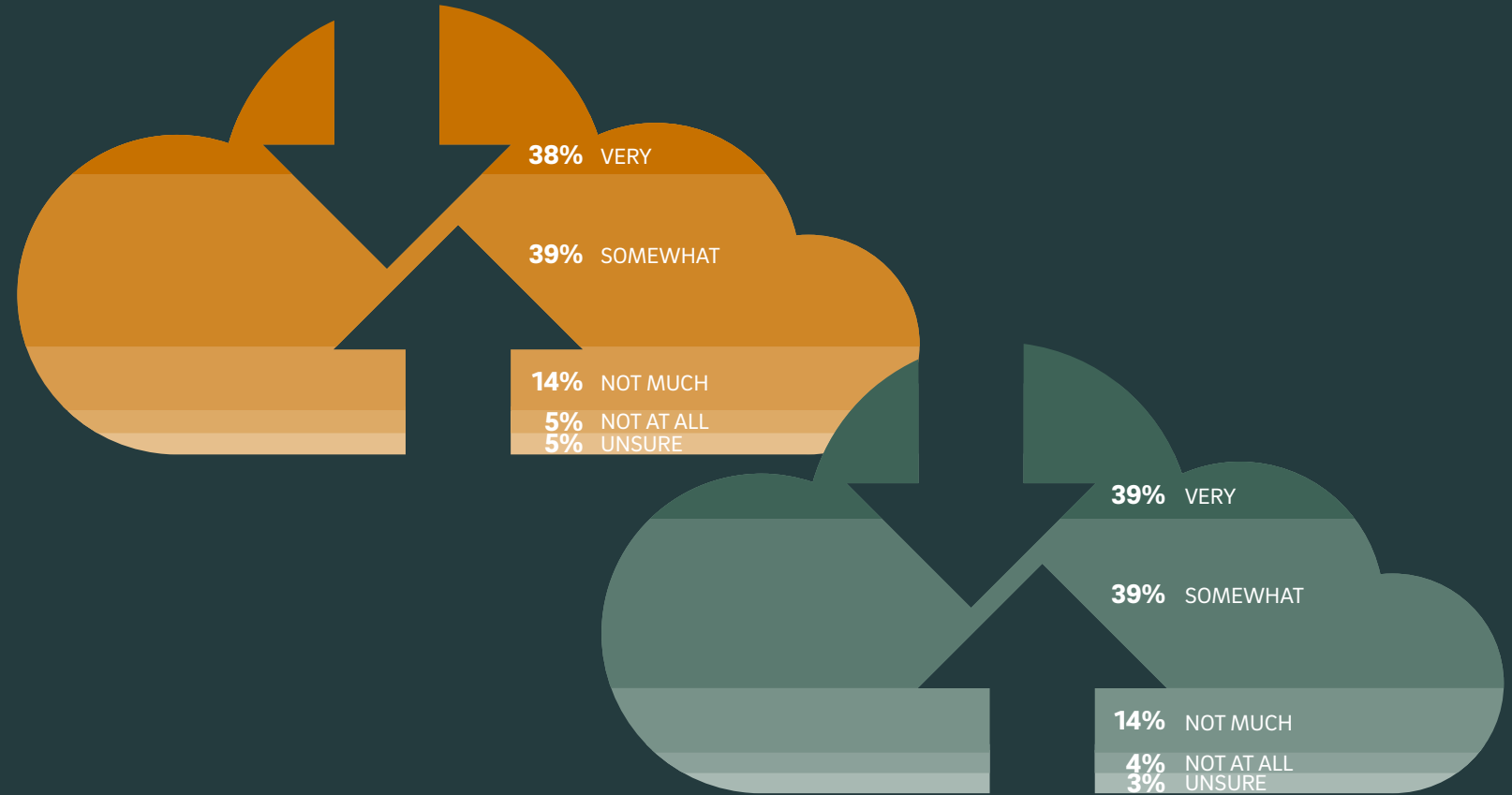
CONCERNED - G.S.

77%



19%

NOT CONCERNED - G.S.



Overall, national and Gulf South respondents had very similar answers regarding their concerns about companies collecting and using their data. A majority of higher-income (>\$150k) respondents both nationally (51%) and in the Gulf South (54%) are very concerned. A plurality of lower-income (<\$50k) respondents both nationally (39%) and in the Gulf South (40%) were only somewhat concerned.

APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND USING THE FOLLOWING DEVICES DURING A TYPICAL DAY?

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

USE A SMART OR CELL PHONE
6+ HOURS - G.S.

34%



46%

DO NOT USE TABLETS - G.S.

Device	-1 hr	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	6 hours		
Smartphone or cell phone	4%	11%	16%	13%	13%	10%	34%		
	4%	13%	15%	14%	16%	12%	26%		
Television	6%	15%	19%	17%	15%	9%	19%		
	7%	16%	21%	18%	14%	9%	15%		
Tablet	-1 hour 46%		1 hour 22%		2 hours 13%	3 hours 6%	4 hrs 5%	5 hrs 3%	6 hrs 5%
	-1 hour 43%		1 hour or less 24%		2 hours 12%	3 hours 9%	4 hrs 5%	5 hrs 4%	6 hrs 3%
TV-connected devices e.g., streaming devices, video game consoles)	-1 hour 31%		1 hour 17%	2 hours 18%	3 hours 12%	4 hours 8%	5 hrs 5%	6 hours 10%	
	-1 hour 28%		1 hour 21%	2 hours 16%	3 hours 13%	4 hours 7%	5 hours 6%	6 hours 9%	
Laptop/desktop computer	-1 hr 22%	1 hour 22%	2 hours 13%	3 hours 12%	4 hours 9%	5 hours 6%	6 hours 16%		
	-1 hr 20%	1 hour 20%	2 hours 17%	3 hours 12%	4 hours 9%	5 hours 6%	6 hours 16%		

Gulf South respondents are slightly higher heavy (6+ hours daily) users of smartphones/cell phones than the national respondents (34% vs. 26%).

Gulf South respondents are also slightly higher heavy (6+ hours daily) viewers of television (19%) compared to the national respondents (15%).



OUR FUTURE

*WITH ALL OF THIS, HOWEVER,
54% OF GULF SOUTH RESIDENTS
STILL BELIEVE THEY CAN
ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM.*

“PESSIMISM NEVER WON ANY BATTLE.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th president of the United States and commanding general of the victorious forces in Europe during World War II, once said “pessimism never won any battle.” Today, in both the Gulf South and nationally, optimism appears to be waning and a battle may be brewing to keep pessimism at bay.

Early last year, respondents were asked if 2021 would be a better year for them personally than 2020, 69% of those polled nationwide said “yes.” For the Gulf South, 60% answered yes. Only 8% nationwide and 10% in the Gulf South answered “no.” The rest answered, “about the same.”

Earlier this year, the same question was posed, and the responses indicate a decline in optimism. Only a slight majority – 53% of Gulf South and national respondents are optimistic as we move deeper through 2022. Moreover, 21% of both national and Gulf South residents surveyed answered “no” when asked if this year would be better for them than 2021. That’s more than double the amount of pessimism than what was displayed in last year’s survey.

“Higher prices for basic items, such as groceries, gas and electricity, combined with national and international stories of division and war weigh on the public of the Gulf South and all of America. Just look at what leads the news each day. In many ways, our news is a window on our personal concerns,” said Marc Ehrhardt.

As one might expect, the optimism scale rises and falls in accordance with income levels. For both Gulf South and national audiences, a growing gap in optimism exists between those who earn \$25,000 a year or less and

higher earners who make \$150,000 or more. Among the lower wage earners, optimism is about 25 percentage points lower than those who rake in more than six figures annually.

The Gulf South had a slightly higher percentage of people who are unemployed and unable to find a job in their desired field when compared to a nationwide audience. However, to the statement “I am employed in a job that I enjoy in my desired field,” 31% of Gulf South respondents agreed compared to 30% nationwide.

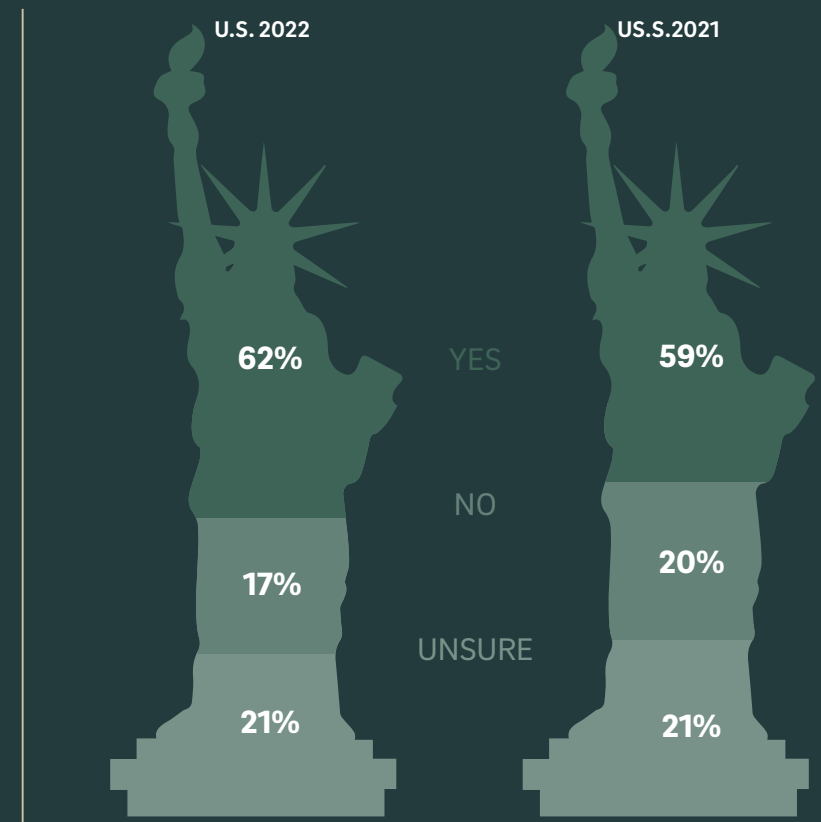
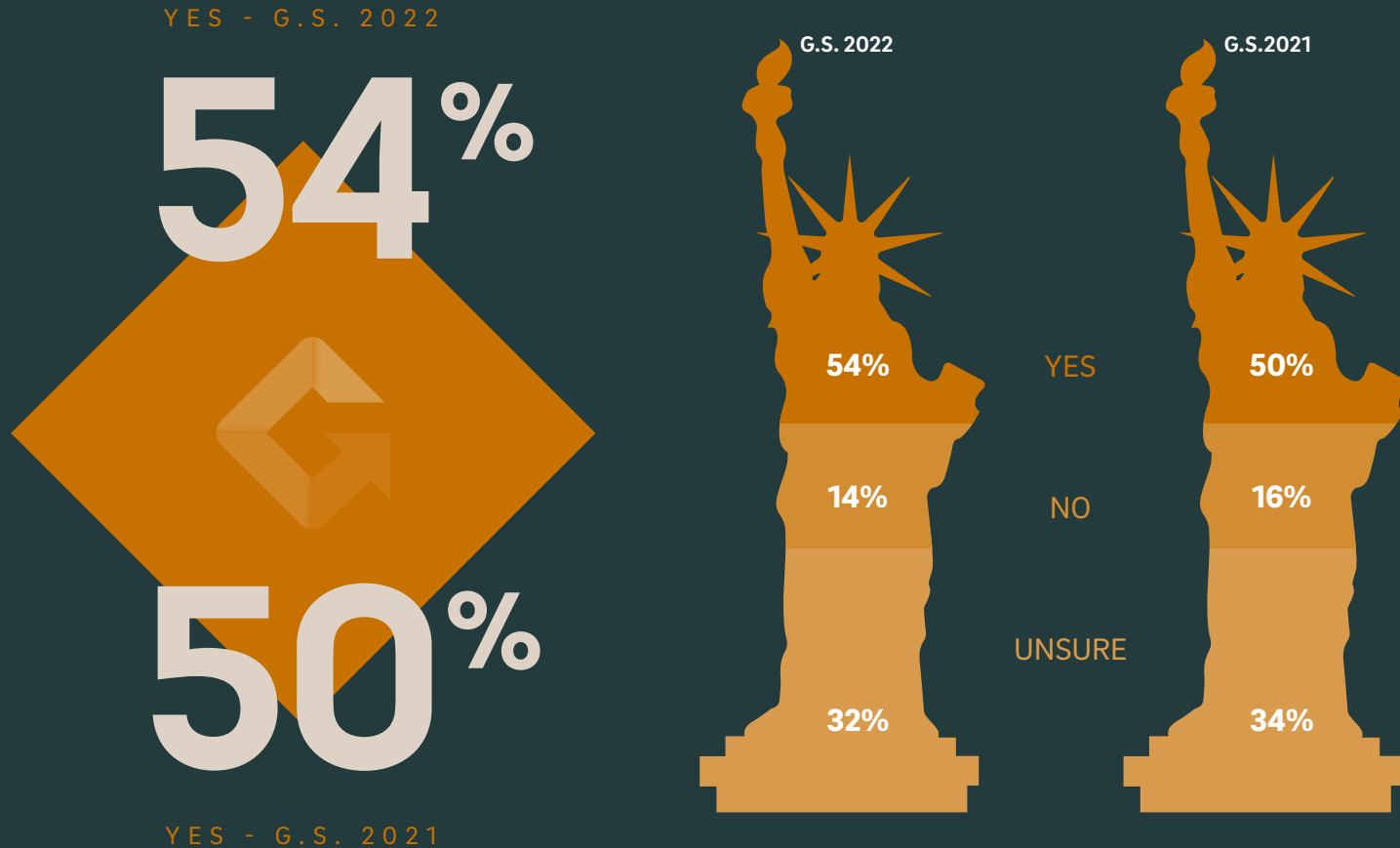
Consistent with last year’s survey results, the 2022 version showed that Gulf South residents are more unsure about career opportunities in their area than the national sample.

When asked if they were better off financially now than two years ago, 36% of respondents nationwide said yes, while 34% said they were worse off. The rest said they were about the same. In the Gulf South, 29% said they were better off and 39% said they were in a worse situation.

When asked to rate the economy from one to five stars, only 8% of people in the U.S. and 7% in the Gulf South gave the top five-star rating. Meanwhile, 21% of those nationwide and 28% of those in the Gulf South gave the economy one star.

The numbers indicate a declining sense of the performance of the economy. In 2021, 14% of the nationwide respondents and 18% of those in the Gulf South granted the economy a single star.

MORE GULF SOUTH RESIDENTS BELIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM IS WITHIN REACH THAN IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.



Overall, the U.S. is more optimistic about being able to achieve the American Dream. However, the Gulf South is not necessarily more negative, but rather more unsure than the nation as a whole. The longitudinal results show an increase in optimism about achieving the American Dream in the U.S. and the Gulf South.

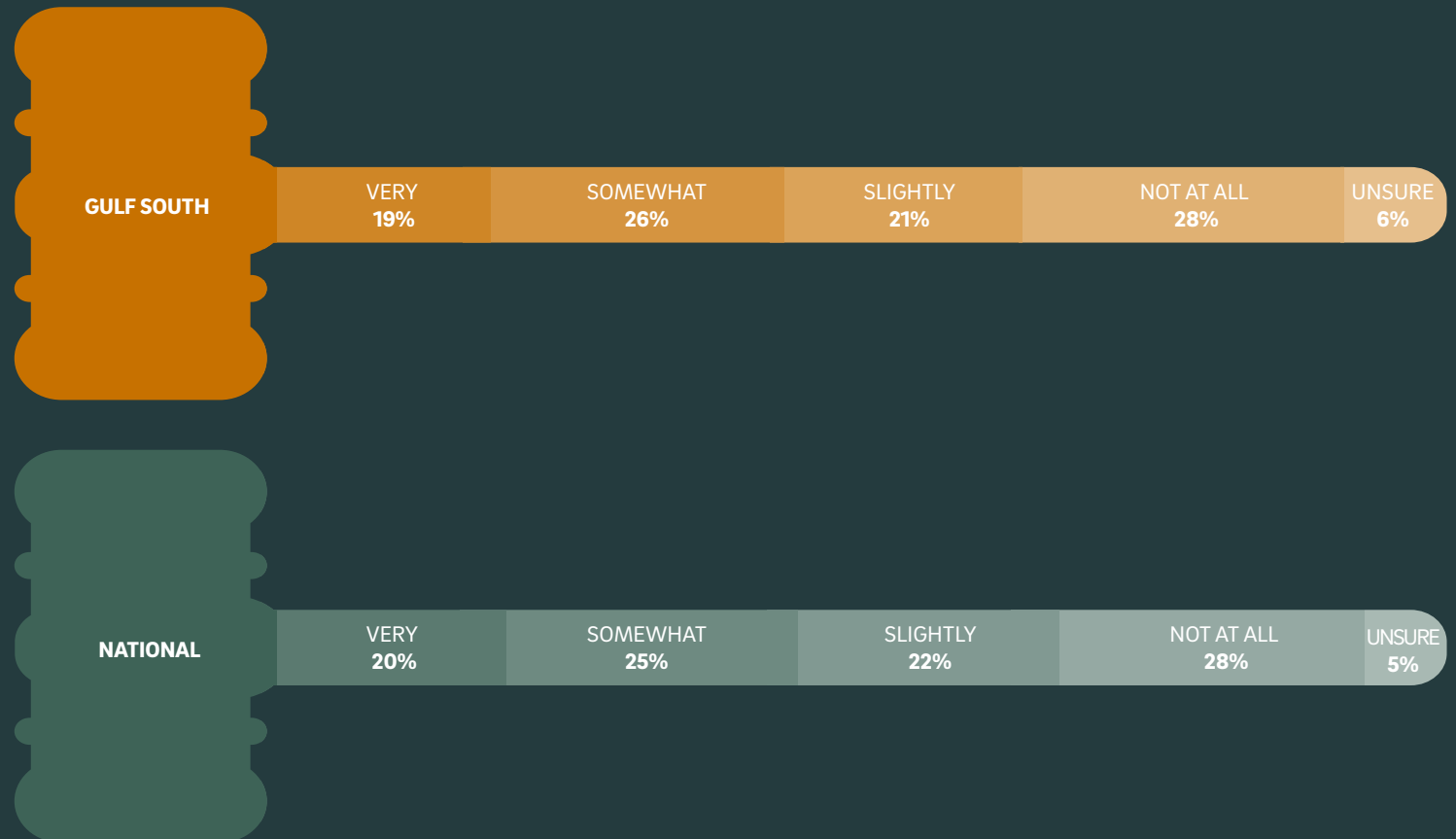
WORRY ABOUT A BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER IN COMMUNITIES IS A RISING CONCERN IN THE GULF SOUTH.

WORRIED - G.S.

66%



34%

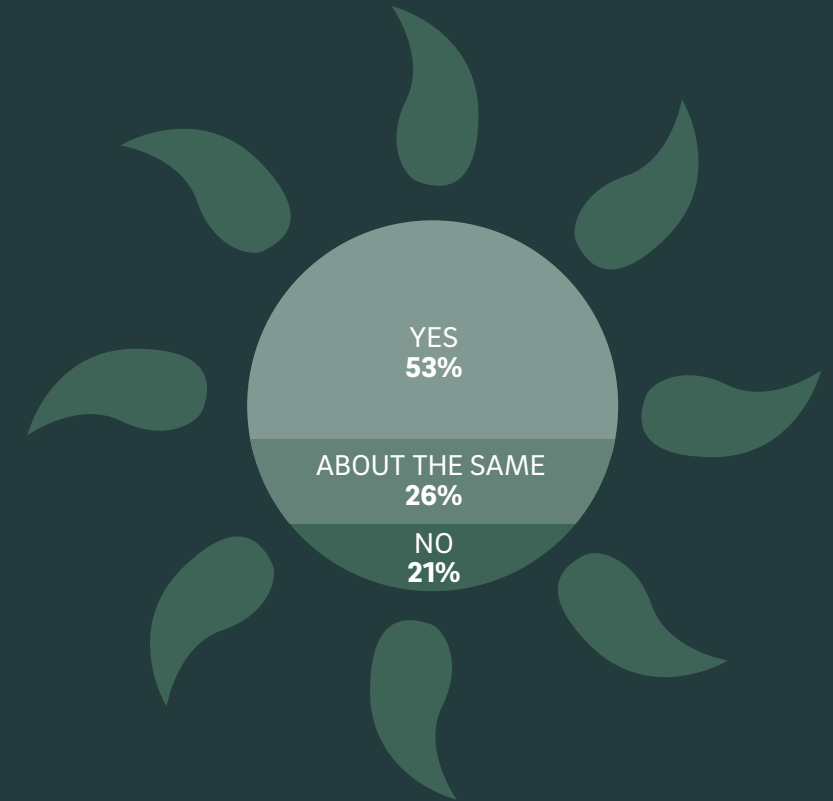
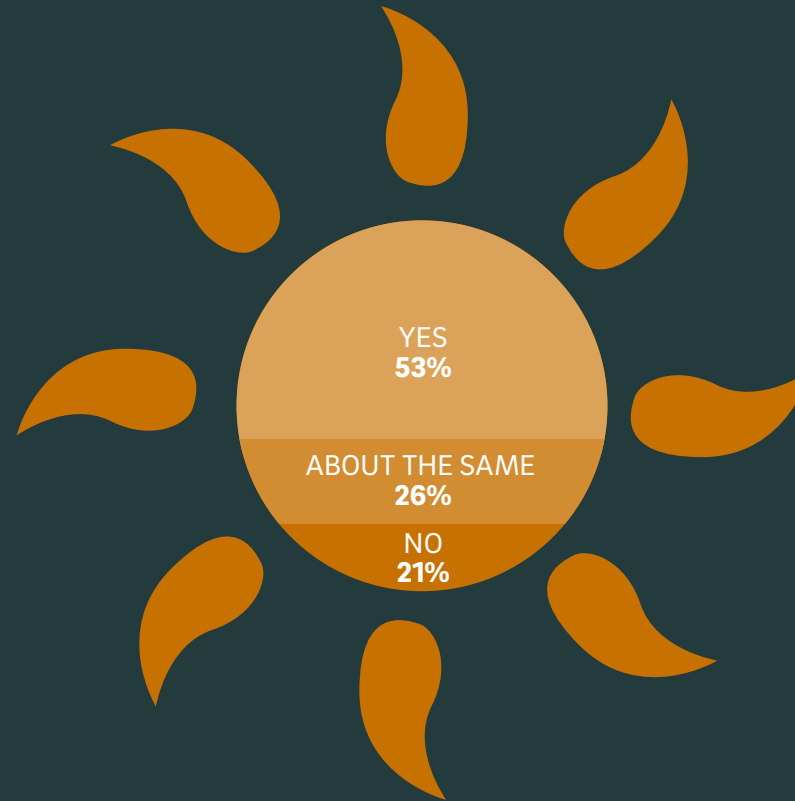
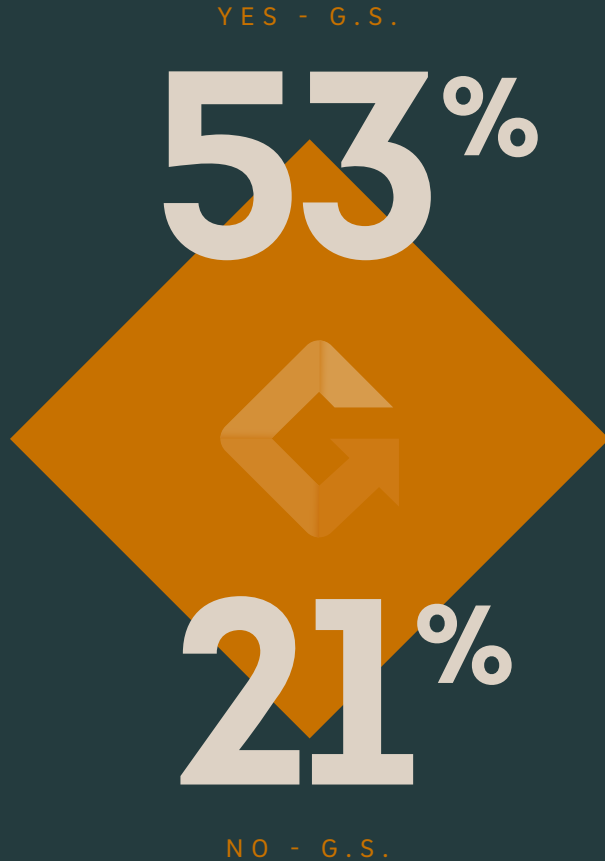
NOT WORRIED - G.S.



Overall, national and Gulf South respondents had very similar levels of worry regarding a potential breakdown of law and order of their communities. A plurality (30%) of high-income (>\$150k) Gulf South respondents were very worried, while a plurality (32%) of national high-income respondents were not worried. A plurality of lower-income (<\$50k) respondents in both the national and Gulf South data were not worried (28% and 29%, respectively).

THE MAJORITY OF GULF SOUTH RESIDENTS STILL THINK 2022 WILL BE A BETTER YEAR THAN 2021.

 GULF SOUTH
 NATIONAL



On an income level, for both Gulf South residents and the US, there is a large gap of optimism between the low earners of \$25k or under (about 49% optimistic for GS, about 47% optimistic for U.S.) and high earners of over \$150k (about 78% optimistic for GS, 74% optimistic for U.S.).

SOMETHING WE CAN ALL AGREE ON – WE AREN'T AS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE AS WE USED TO BE.

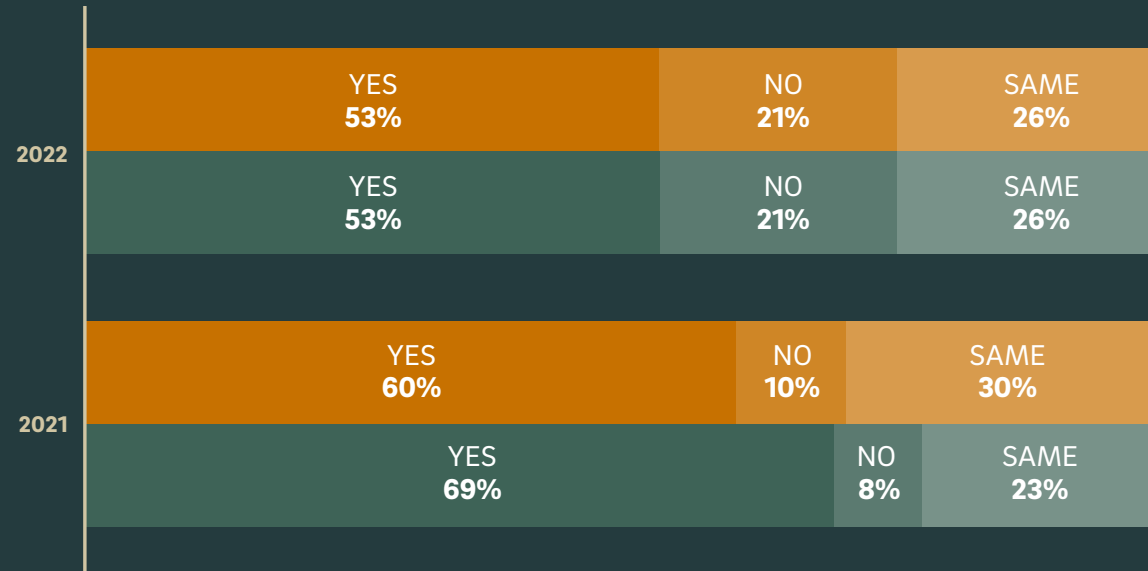
GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

2022 YES - G.S.

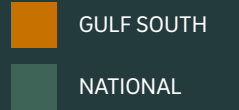
53%



2021 YES - G.S.



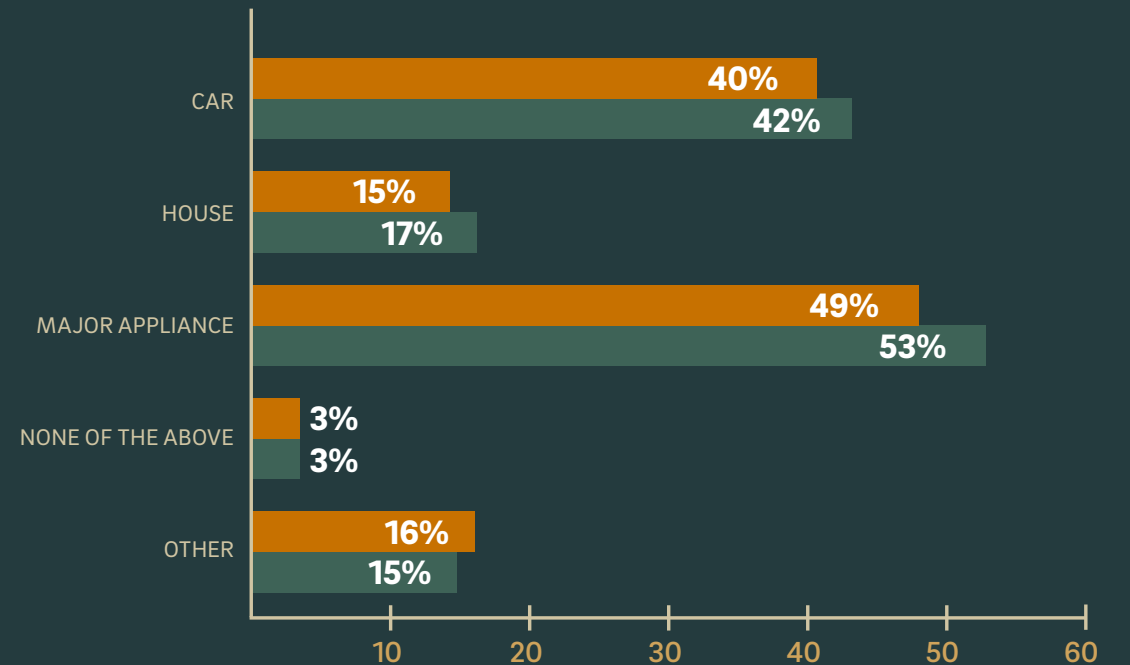
MAYBE THEY DIDN'T PLAN ON IT, BUT AMERICANS MADE LARGE PURCHASES LAST YEAR.



DID YOU MAKE A LARGE PURCHASE IN 2021?

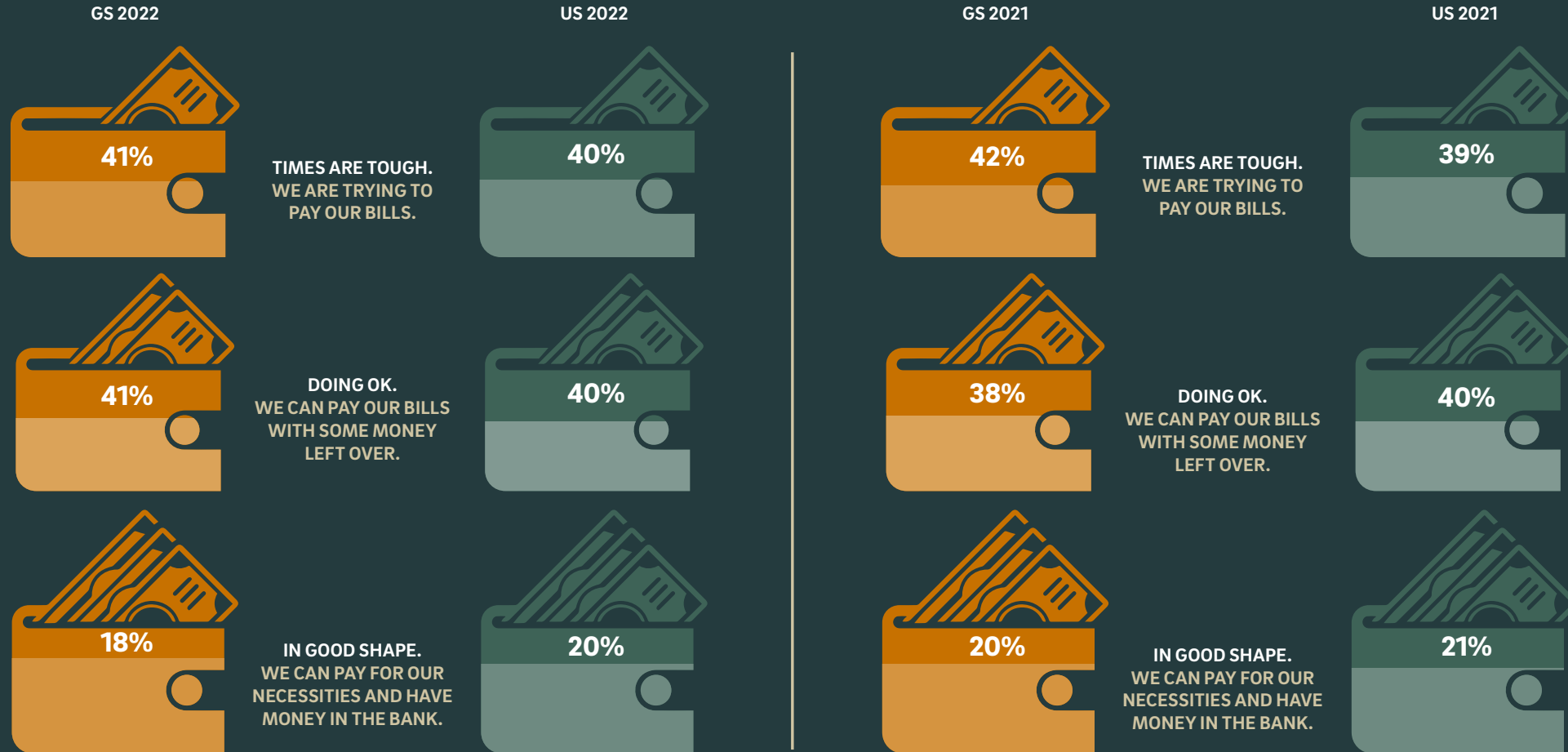


WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DID YOU PURCHASE IN 2021?



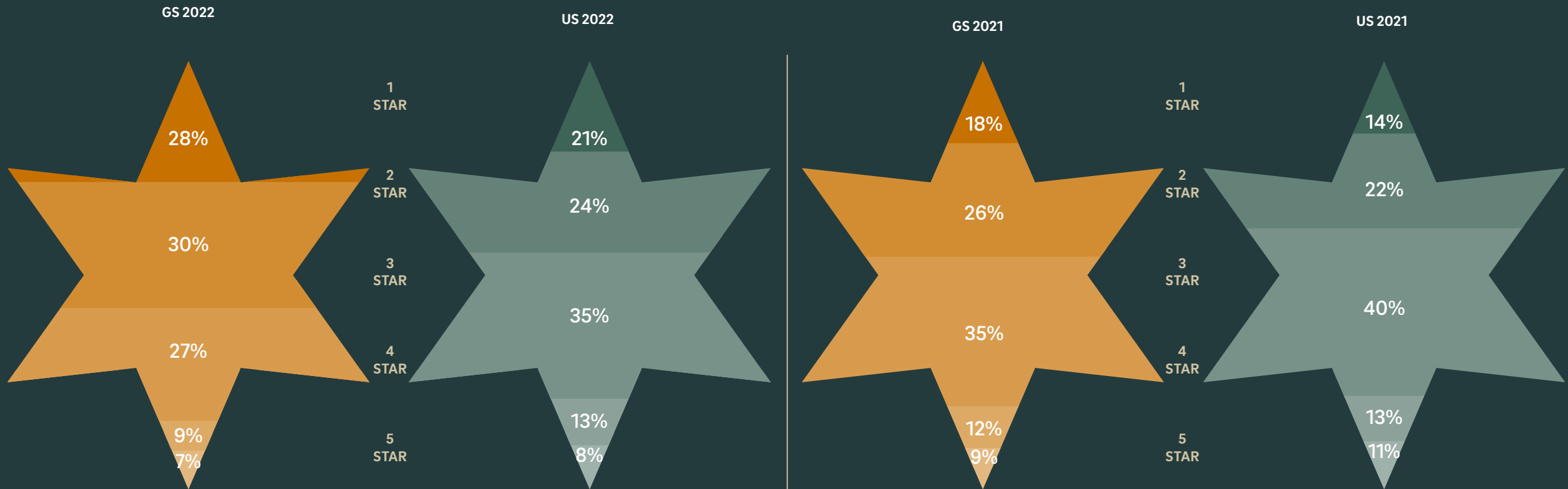
Income disparities were observed nationally, with 48% of respondents nationally making under \$50k made a large purchase, while 79% of respondents nationally making over \$100k made a large purchase. In the Gulf South this disparity also exists, with 48% of respondents nationally making under \$50k made a large purchase, while 76% of respondents nationally making over \$100k made a large purchase.

WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT PERSONAL FINANCIAL SITUATION?



Despite very similar aggregate numbers, there are differences when we drill deeper. Not surprisingly, higher-income (>\$150k) Gulf South respondents more often selected that they were in good shape (42%) than lower-income (<\$50k) Gulf South respondents (11%). Nationally this was also the case, with higher-income respondents more commonly selecting that they were in good shape (49%) than lower-income respondents (11%). There do not appear to be any large differences between 2021 respondents and 2022 respondents.

HOW DO YOU RATE THE ECONOMY?



Higher-income (>\$150k) Gulf South and national respondents most commonly rated the economy as 5 stars (29% and 31%, respectively). Lower-income (<\$50k) Gulf South respondents most commonly rated the economy as 1 star (31%) while national respondents most commonly rated the economy as 3 stars (34%). It appears that the trend is downward with regards to rating the economy.

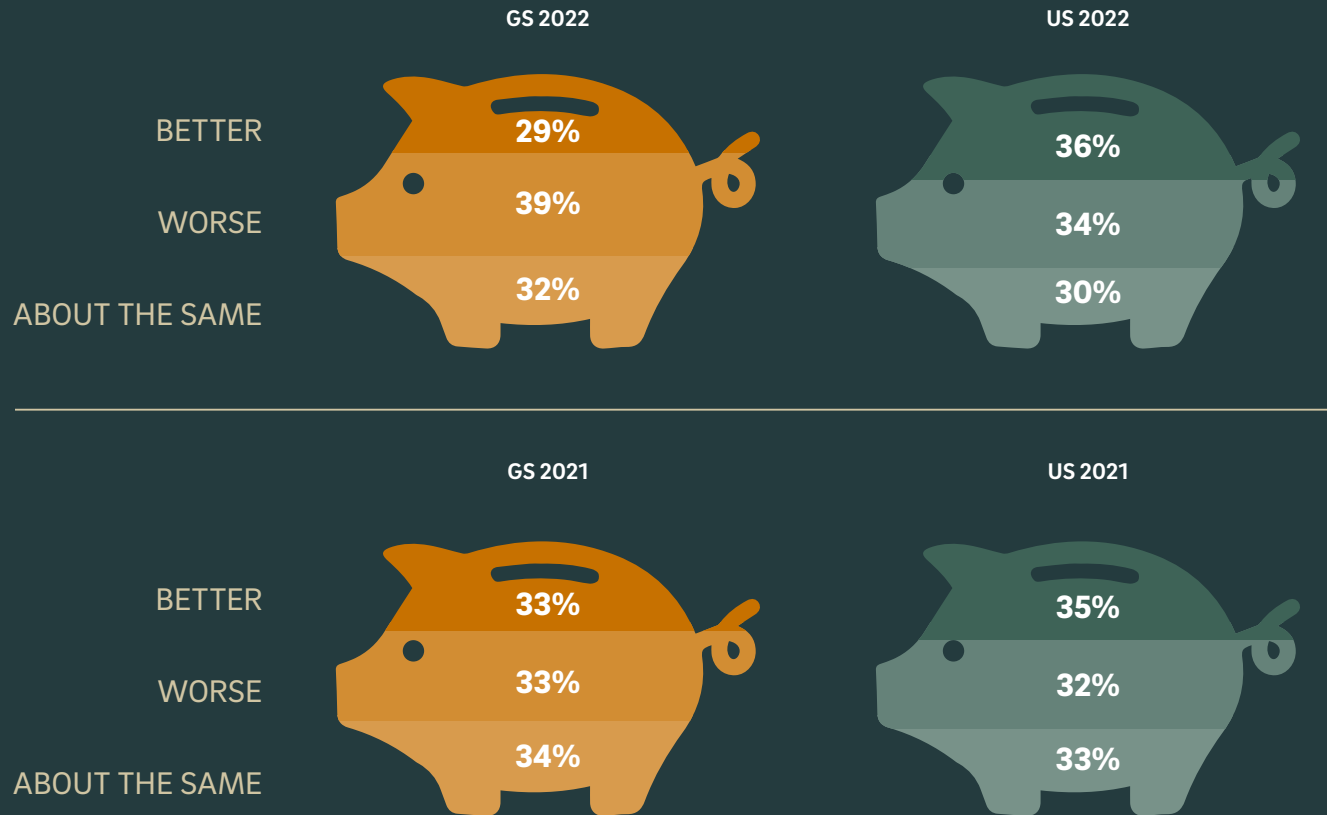
GULF SOUTH RESIDENTS SAY THEY ARE WORSE OFF FINANCIALLY THAN THEY WERE TWO YEARS AGO.

BETTER - G.S. 2022

29%

39%

WORSE - G.S. 2022



Lower-income (<\$50k) Gulf South and national respondents most commonly answered that they were worse off (44% and 42%, respectively). Overwhelmingly, higher-income respondents answered that they were better off (63% for GS, 64% for U.S.). Overall, it appears that there is a downward trend in financial health, more noticeably in the Gulf South.

IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, HAVE YOU...

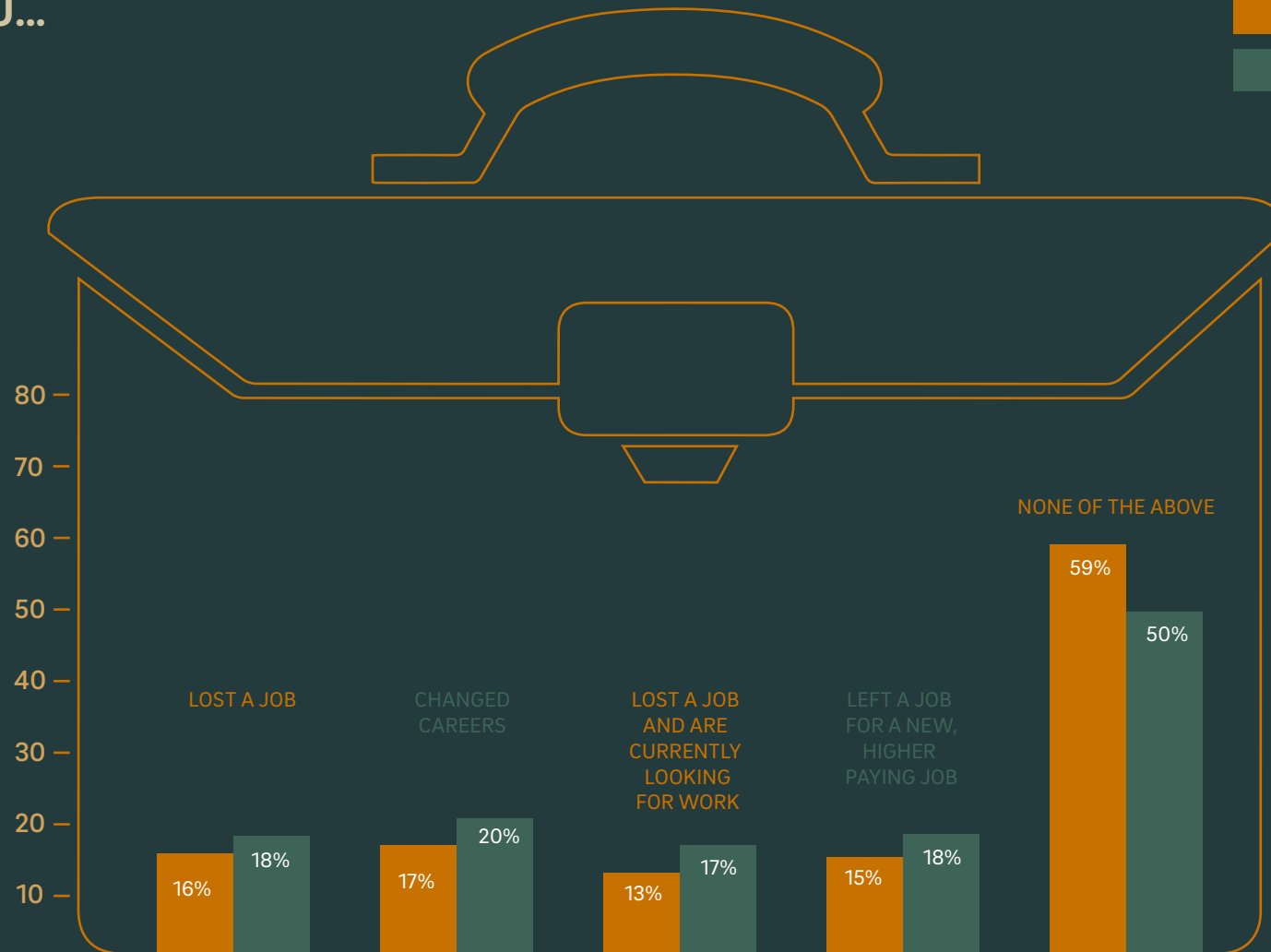
CHANGED CAREERS - G.S.

17%

20%

CHANGED CAREERS - U.S.

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL



In both the national and Gulf South data, higher-income (>\$150k) respondents were much more likely to have changed careers than lower-income (<\$50k) respondents. 32% of national higher-income respondents have changed careers, while 24% of Gulf South higher-income respondents have changed careers. 18% of lower-income respondents nationally have changed careers, while 15% of lower-income Gulf South respondents have changed careers.

WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT JOB SITUATION?

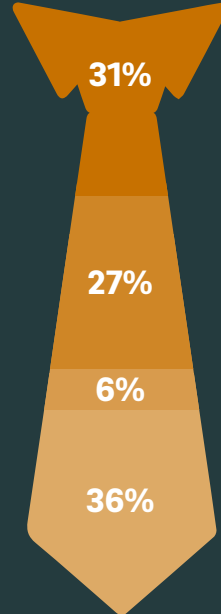
GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

I AM EMPLOYED IN A JOB THAT I ENJOY
IN MY DESIRED FIELD - G.S.

31%

36%

GS 2022



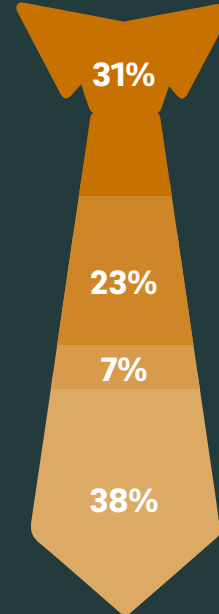
I AM EMPLOYED
IN A JOB THAT
I ENJOY IN MY
DESIRED FIELD

I AM EMPLOYED AND
LIKE MY JOB, BUT
I AM OPEN TO NEW
OPPORTUNITIES

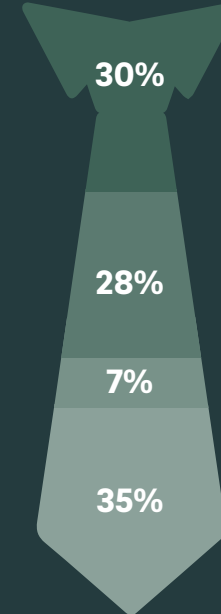
I AM EMPLOYED
BUT DO NOT LIKE
MY CURRENT JOB

I AM UNEMPLOYED AND
CANNOT FIND A JOB IN
MY DESIRED FIELD

GS 2021



US 2022



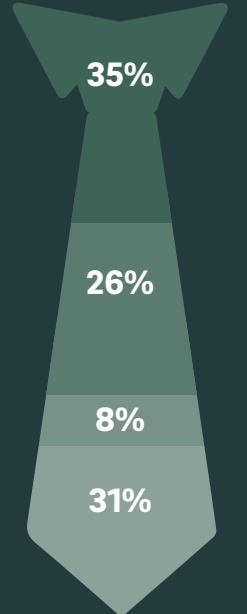
I AM EMPLOYED
IN A JOB THAT
I ENJOY IN MY
DESIRED FIELD

I AM EMPLOYED AND
LIKE MY JOB, BUT
I AM OPEN TO NEW
OPPORTUNITIES

I AM EMPLOYED
BUT DO NOT LIKE
MY CURRENT JOB

I AM UNEMPLOYED AND
CANNOT FIND A JOB IN
MY DESIRED FIELD

US 2021



I AM UNEMPLOYED AND CANNOT FIND
A JOB IN MY DESIRED FIELD - G.S.

The Gulf South has a slightly higher percentage of people who are unemployed and cannot find a job in their desired field. Over time, there appears to be an increase in the U.S. but a slight decrease in the Gulf South with regards to people who cannot find a job in their desired field.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE TO BE TRUE ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR AREA OF THE U.S.?

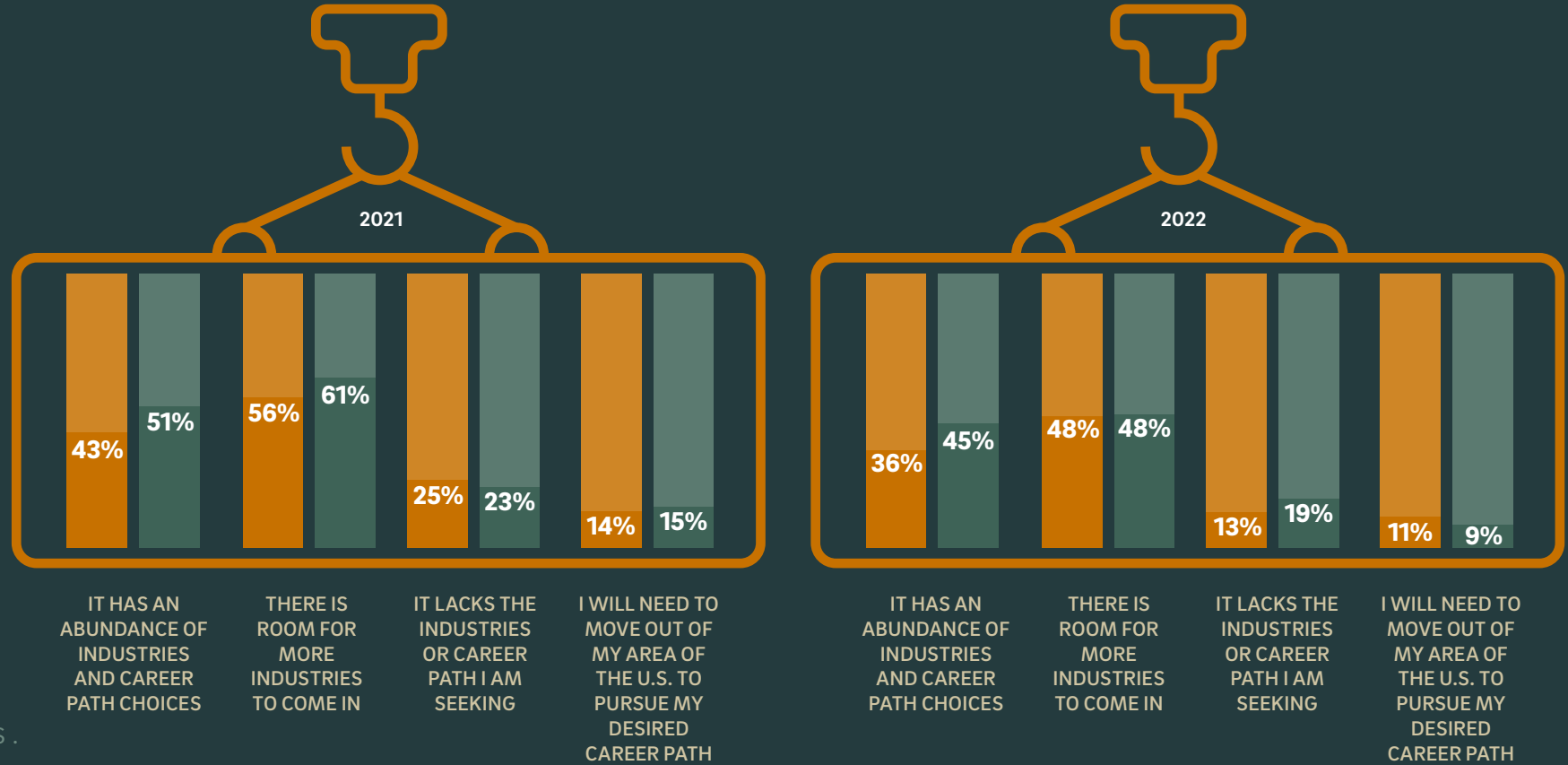
GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

IT HAS ABUNDANT INDUSTRIES - G.S.

36%

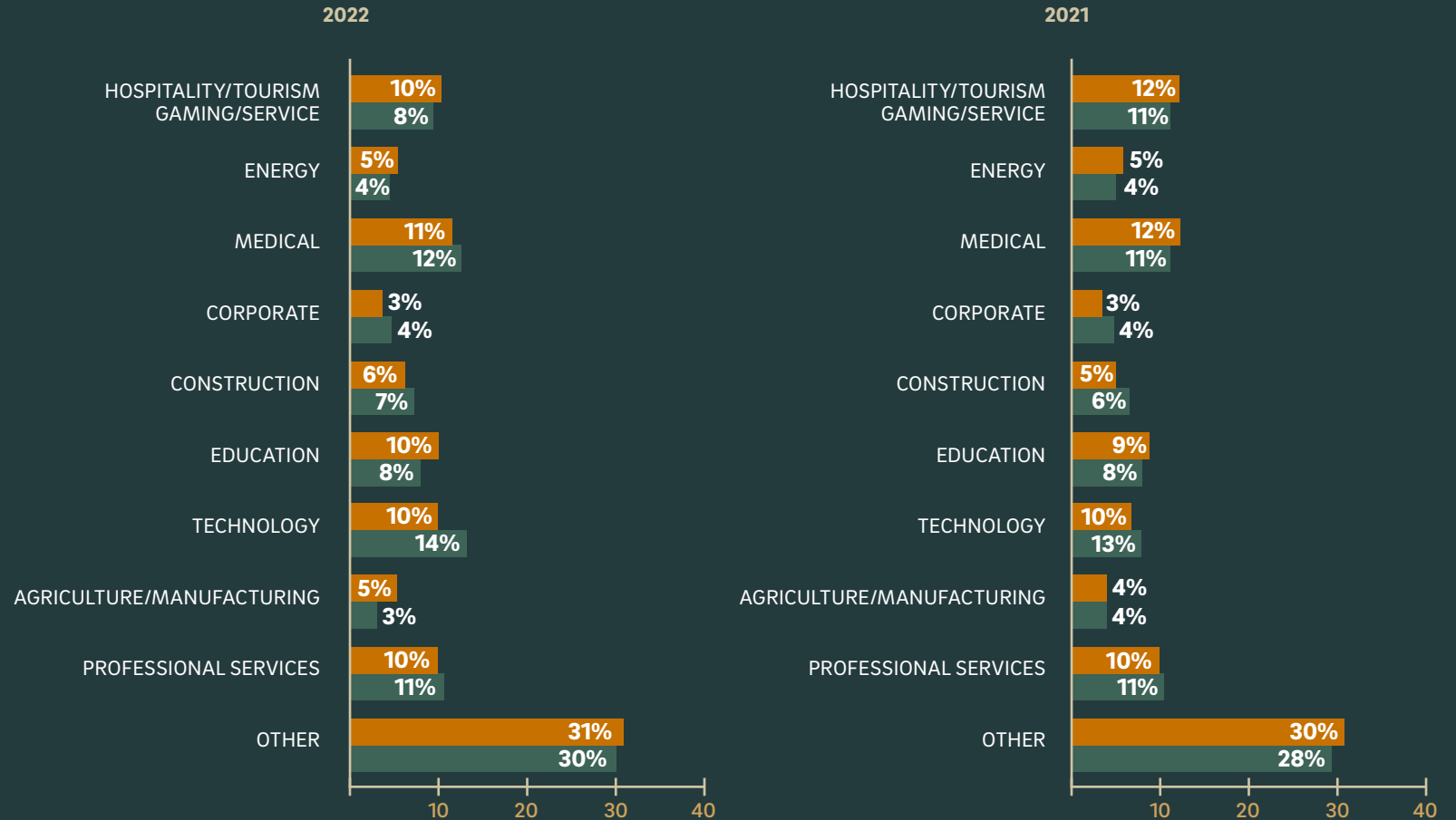
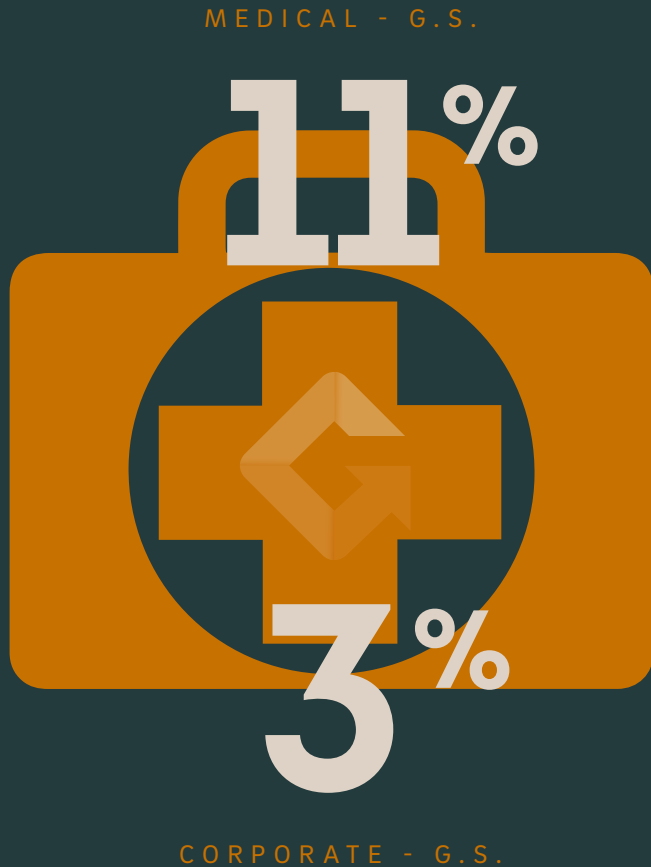
45%

IT HAS ABUNDANT INDUSTRIES - U.S.



The Gulf South has a lower percentage of people who think there is an abundance of industries and career path choices.

WHAT INDUSTRY DO YOU WORK IN OR ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING IN?



Higher-income (>\$150k) Gulf South respondents most commonly work in technology (38%) while lower-income (<\$50k) Gulf South respondents most commonly worked in "other" categories (38%) and hospitality (12%). Nationally, higher-income respondents also are most commonly working in technology (35%) and lower-income respondents are most commonly working in "other" categories (35%) and the medical field (11%). There is a reassuring consistency to the longitudinal data when comparing 2021 and 2022, providing evidence that respondents are quite similar, at least with regards to their professions.

DO YOU THINK YOUR AREA OR THE GULF SOUTH OFFERS ATTRACTIVE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR DESIRED FIELD?

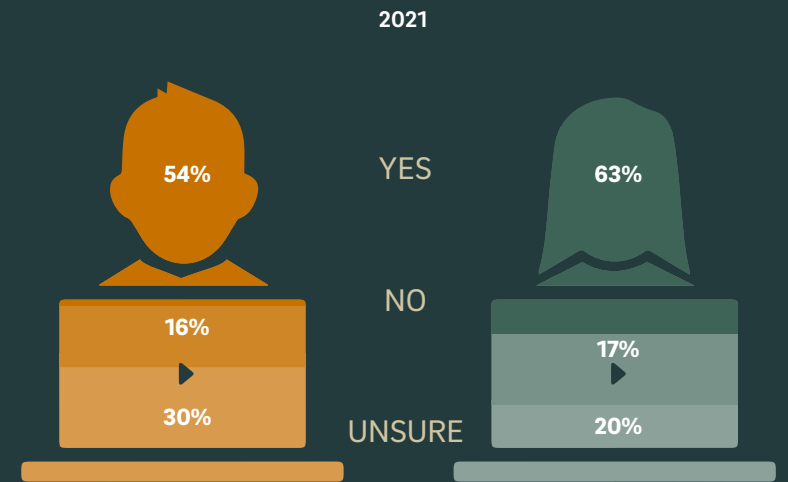
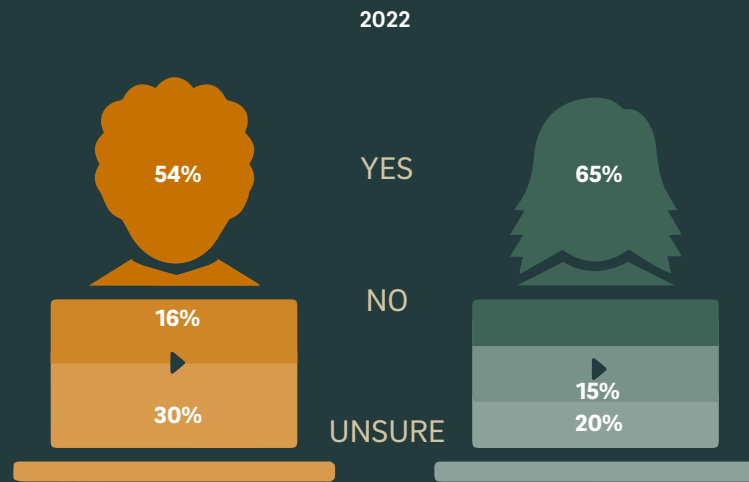
GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

YES - G.S.

54%

16%

NO - G.S.



Gulf South residents are more unsure about career opportunities in their area than the national sample. There is a remarkable consistency in the 2021 vs. 2022 data.



LIFESTYLE



"Businesses have taken steps to garner trust. You have to go out and earn someone's trust. Businesses more than anyone else have gone out and done that during the pandemic."

LOVE WHERE YOU ARE, BUT IT COULD BE BETTER.

The numbers indicate a declining sense of the performance of the economy. In 2021, 14% of the nationwide respondents and 18% of those in the Gulf South granted the economy a single star.

On the plus side, Americans end up shopping after all. Forecasting early last year predicted that most people did not plan to make a major purchase in 2021. However, the 2022 survey results show that more than half of respondents both nationwide and in the Gulf South made large purchases such as a home, vehicle or major appliance in 2021.

"The value of personal savings in the United States reached almost \$2.3 trillion in 2021. It was \$1.2 trillion in 2019," said Ehrhardt. "Many people making less than \$50,000 a year in salary had more in savings than at any point in their lives. Money in the bank can turn into 'money in motion.' People feel better about buying and do just that."

In fact, 42% of respondents nationwide and 40% in the Gulf South reported purchasing a car in 2021. Reflecting a heated housing market, 17% of those surveyed nationwide and 15% in the Gulf South purchased homes last year. Major appliances were also hot commodities, with just under 50% of Gulf Southerners purchasing one and 53% of nationwide respondents doing the same.

Use of social media has been a hot topic for a while. Elon Musk's planned \$44 billion purchase of Twitter has

poured gasoline on the issue. The blockbuster deal warrants a look at social media habits in both the Gulf South and nationwide.

Overall, national and Gulf South respondents had very similar levels of social media use when questioned in the spring of 2022, with 8% nationally and 6% in the Gulf South saying they did not participate in any of the online communities listed in the survey. The listing included Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and others.

Overall, Facebook had the highest percentage of usage of all listed platforms – 73% nationwide and 76% in the Gulf South. YouTube was second with 60% nationwide and 58% in the Gulf South, followed closely by Instagram with 48% and 46% for national and Gulf South respondents respectively. Twitter use in the Gulf South was about 28% compared to 33% nationwide.

The survey also sought to gauge whether people are concerned about companies collecting and using their personal data gleaned from their online habits. Overall, Gulf South and national respondents had similar levels of concern with about 39% in both groups saying they were "very concerned" and another 39% saying they were "somewhat concerned."



WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE TO BE TRUE ABOUT THE GULF SOUTH OR YOUR AREA OF THE U.S.?

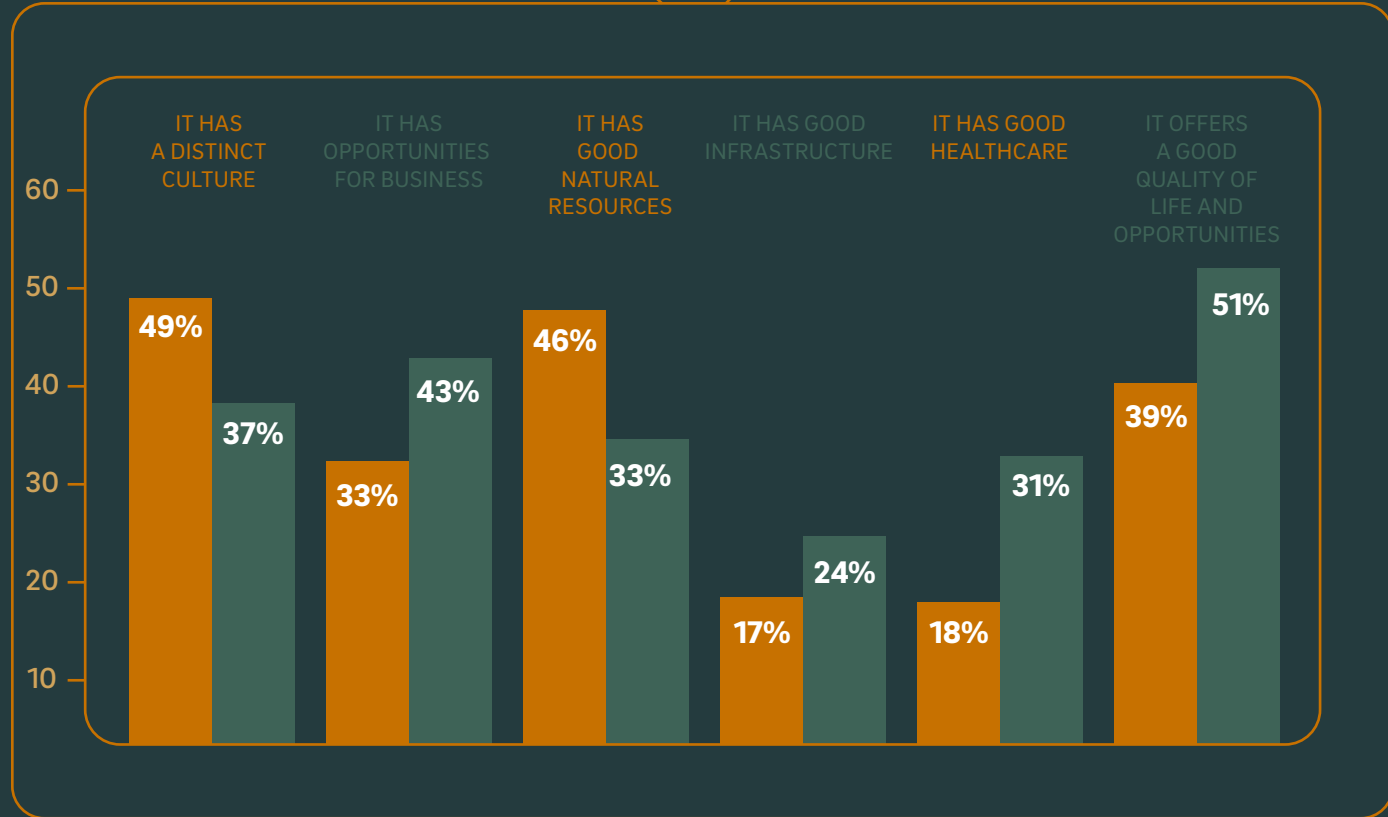
GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL

IT HAS A DISTINCT CULTURE - G.S.

49%

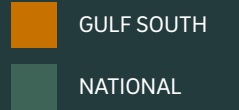
51%

IT OFFERS A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE/OPPORTUNITIES - U.S.



This question shows the most differences between the Gulf South and the rest of the U.S. While respondents perceive positives about the Gulf South, like having a distinct culture and good natural resources, everything else was rated higher nationally.

WHAT APPEALS TO YOU MOST ABOUT YOUR AREA OF THE U.S.?



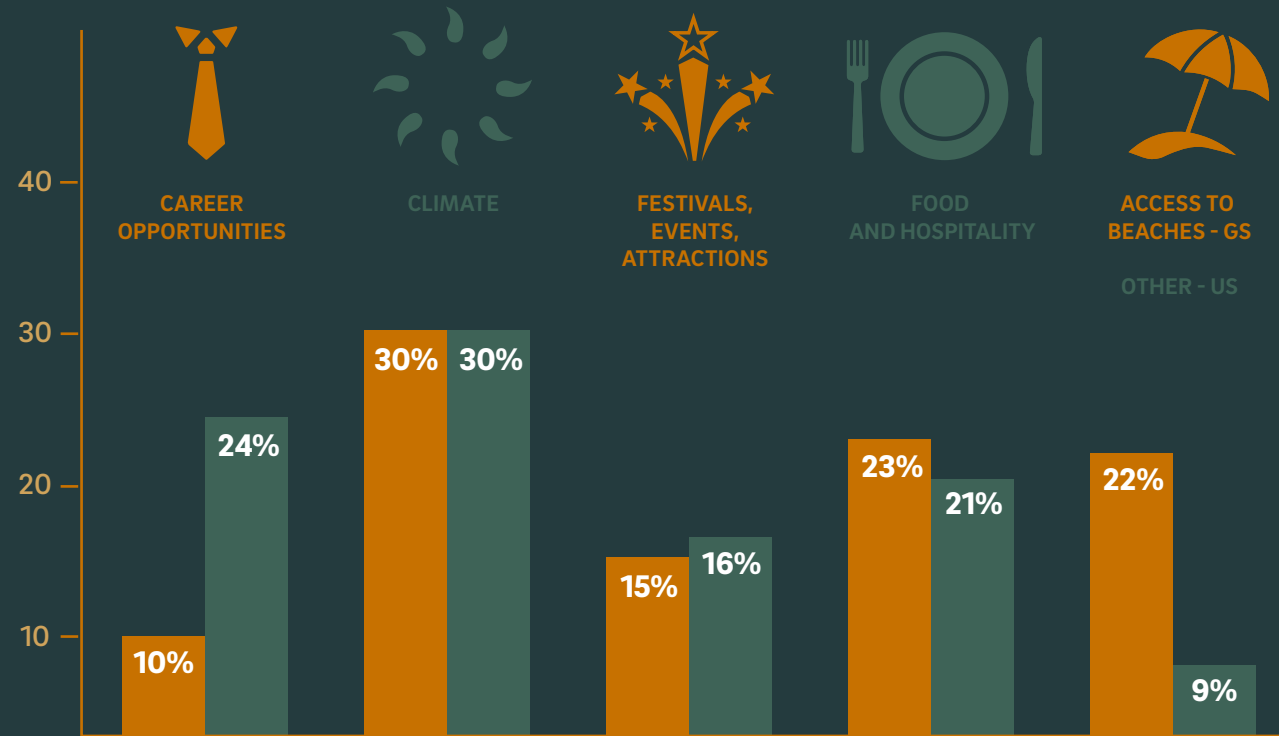
CLIMATE - G.S.

30%



30%

CLIMATE - U.S.



A large difference exists between the Gulf South and the U.S. for perceived career opportunities. Small differences existed between black respondents and white respondents in both the Gulf South (14% vs 9%) and the rest of the U.S. (37% vs 21%). However, large differences exist between higher-income respondents and lower-income respondents both in the Gulf South (35% and 9%, respectively) and the rest of the U.S. (43% and 21%, respectively).

IN GENERAL, WHEN SHOPPING FOR SOMETHING THAT YOU HAVEN'T PURCHASED BEFORE, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO BE ABLE TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

GULF SOUTH
NATIONAL


ABLE TO ASK QUESTIONS - G.S.



TRY A PRODUCT IN PERSON - G.S.

Activity	EXTREMELY	VERY	SOMEWHAT	NOT
Look at or try out the product in person	Gulf South: 35%	Gulf South: 37%	Gulf South: 23%	Gulf South: 5%
	National: 34%	National: 38%	National: 23%	National: 5%
Read ratings or reviews that other people have posted online	Gulf South: 31%	Gulf South: 35%	Gulf South: 26%	Gulf South: 8%
	National: 35%	National: 34%	National: 24%	National: 8%
Buy online, without having to make a trip to the store	Gulf South: 18%	Gulf South: 25%	Gulf South: 36%	Gulf South: 21%
	National: 20%	National: 26%	National: 32%	National: 23%
Compare prices from a number of different sellers	Gulf South: 33%	Gulf South: 38%	Gulf South: 23%	Gulf South: 6%
	National: 35%	National: 38%	National: 23%	National: 4%
Be able to ask questions about what it is that you're buying	Gulf South: 33%	Gulf South: 39%	Gulf South: 21%	Gulf South: 7%
	National: 34%	National: 38%	National: 22%	National: 6%
Get advice or recommendations from people you know	Gulf South: 22%	Gulf South: 33%	Gulf South: 33%	Gulf South: 12%
	National: 24%	National: 32%	National: 32%	National: 12%
Buy from a store or seller that you are familiar with	Gulf South: 29%	Gulf South: 38%	Gulf South: 25%	Gulf South: 8%
	National: 31%	National: 37%	National: 25%	National: 7%

PEOPLE WHO ARE LIKELY (6+ ON A 1-10 SCALE) TO DO THE FOLLOWING THIS YEAR:

 GULF SOUTH
 NATIONAL

2022 HOLIDAY TRADITIONS - G.S.

77%

68%

2021 HOLIDAY TRADITIONS - G.S.

FAMILY HOLIDAY TRADITIONS



2022



2021



ATTEND A LIVE SPORTING EVENT



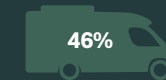
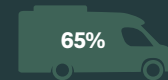
GO TO A MOVIE THEATER



ATTEND A LIVE CONCERT



GO OUT OF STATE FOR VACATION



TRAVEL OUT OF STATE FOR BUSINESS



Gulf South residents are slightly less likely than the rest of the U.S. to participate in family holiday traditions this year (77% vs 81%). Comparing the likelihood for the rest of 2022 and the likelihood from 2021, it is clear that both the U.S. and the Gulf South is in recovery from the pandemic.



CONCLUSIONS



IN A TIME OF GREAT DIVISIVENESS AND ONGOING UNCERTAINTY, THE PEOPLE OF THE GULF SOUTH HAVE MORE IN COMMON WITH THE REST OF THE COUNTRY THAN WE HAVE DIFFERENCES. WE ARE FIERCELY LOYAL TO WHERE WE COME FROM, BUT OUR CHALLENGES ARE SIMILAR TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.

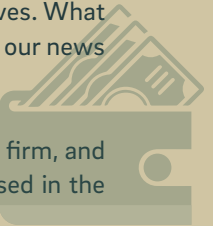




HOW DO WE KNOW ALL OF THIS?

THE GULF SOUTH INDEX DELVES INTO hundreds of thousands of data points to shed light on what millions of people in both the Gulf South region of the U.S. and around the country are thinking and how they are living their lives. What emerges is a picture showing how and why we make purchasing decisions, what we are buying, how we get our news and where we are spending our money.

The index is a cooperative project between The Ehrhardt Group, a public relations, content, issues and crisis firm, and Causeway Solutions, a nationally recognized research and data analysis company. Both companies are based in the Gulf South and have years of experience conducting major research projects like this one.



For more information please contact us.

MARC EHRHARDT

President

The Ehrhardt Group

marc@tegpr.com

WILLIAM SKELLY

CEO

Causeway Solutions

bskelly@causewaysolutions.com