

EXPORTNZ DHL

ExportNZ   
EXPORTERS HELPING EXPORTERS



# EXPORT BAROMETER REPORT

2025



Exporters delivering  
for New Zealand,  
**and looking to do even  
better next year.**

# THE FINDINGS IN A NUTSHELL

**+ DECREASE IN  
COST OF DOING  
BUSINESS**

**INCREASED -  
CONCERN ABOUT  
TRADE WARS**

**333**  
RESPONSES

The results of the latest ExportNZ DHL Export Barometer show that two-thirds of exporters increased their exports during the last 12 months or maintained their performance. This is reinforced by recent Statistics New Zealand data that shows that New Zealand exports in both goods and services in the March 2025 quarter had risen when compared with the March 2024 quarter\*. Looking ahead, a substantial majority of respondents expect to export more in the coming year.

Australia and the USA are expected to remain the most popular markets, although the UK and Japan are attracting increased attention.

Increased tariffs on exports to the USA are expected to have some negative impacts, but most exporters are yet to make changes to mitigate them. Those that have responded are most likely to attempt to diversify into other markets.

Compared to last year, the barriers to trade have largely remained in the same order, the exception being the increasing concern about escalating trade wars. The number of exporters facing barriers due to trade tensions more than doubled since last year.

While the cost and availability of transport and logistics continues to be the number one barrier for exporters, the number of respondents noting it as a barrier fell—we can attribute this to the bedding in of issues in the Red Sea and new shipping routes and shipping costs remaining high, but stable. It remains to be seen how New Zealand supply chains respond to any flare ups in trade tensions or the introduction of new tariffs.

Interestingly, the number of respondents identifying the high cost of doing business in New Zealand as a barrier fell steeply. While the cost of material and goods remains high, we attribute this to a fall in interest rates on loans, and potentially an easing in labour shortages in New Zealand.

Respondents continue to favour the government negotiating and bringing into force new Free Trade Agreements. Given the current context with tariffs and increasing protectionism, it is important the New Zealand continues to engage new partners, lower tariffs, establish clear rules and processes to give exporters certainty in a range of markets. Respondents also support more support from the government to help exporters attend trade shows overseas.

Only a small proportion of export orders were generated using online platforms and few exporters had used AI to increase their productivity.

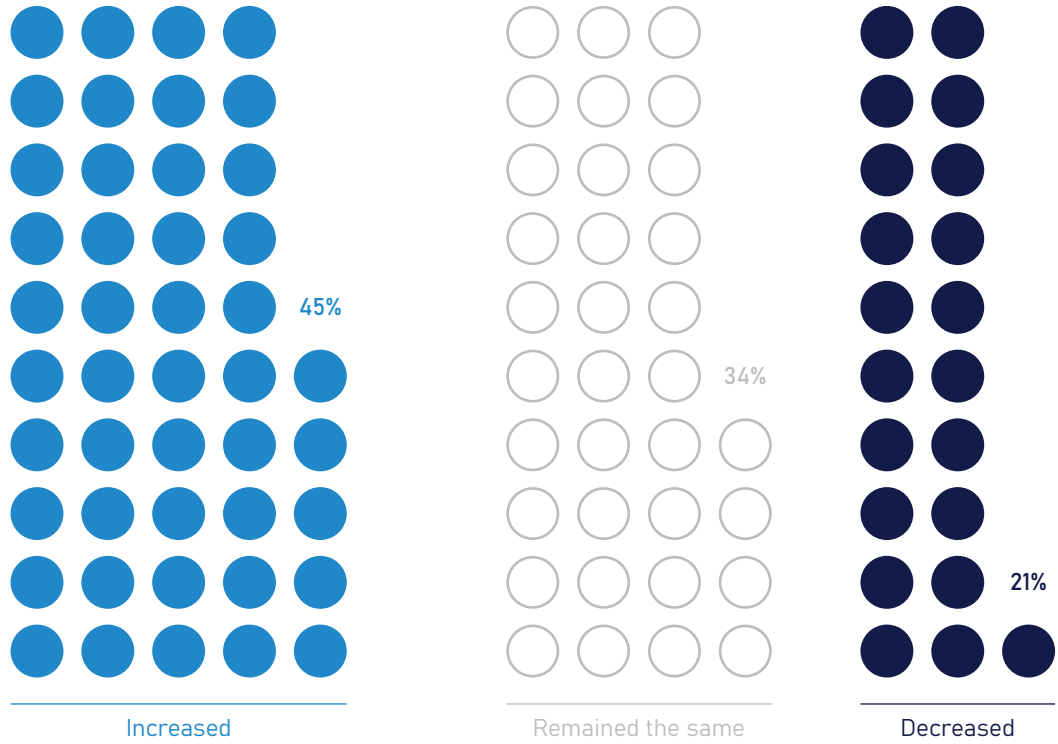
\* <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/international-trade-march-2025-quarter/>

# THE NEXT 12 MONTHS LOOK PROMISING

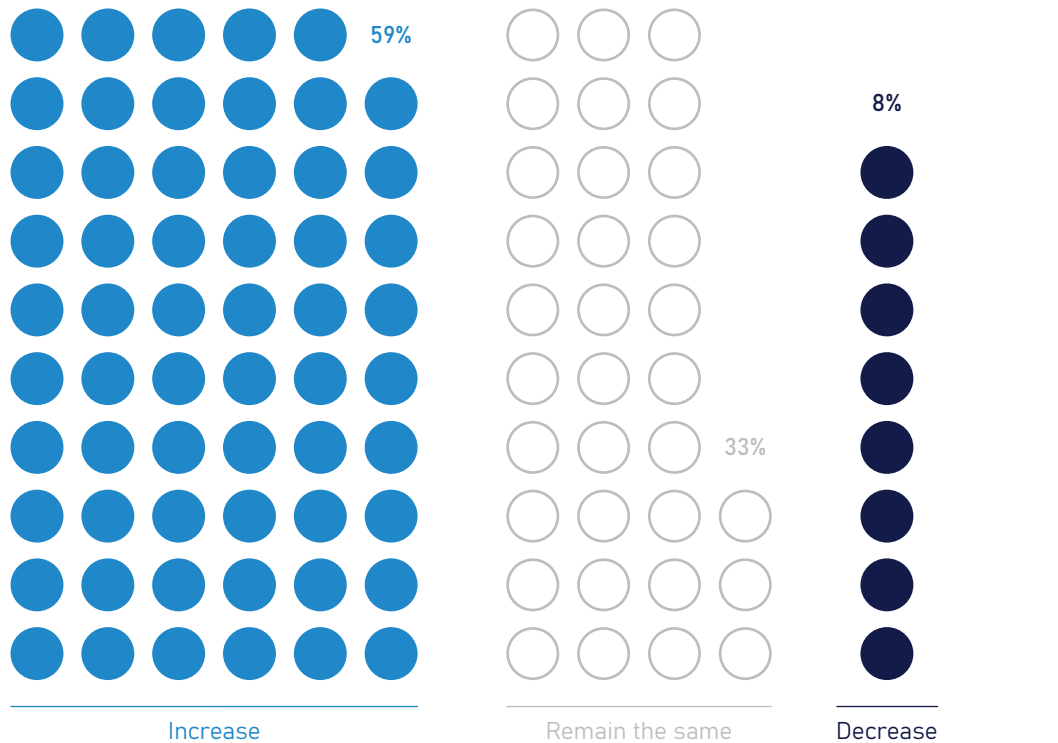
Almost half of the respondents reported that they had increased their exports in the last 12 months, and more than a third had maintained the same level as previously. Only one fifth said that their exports had decreased.

Encouragingly in light of the uncertain trade environment, a sizeable majority expect their exports to increase in the coming 12 months, while only a few expect their exports to decrease.

## Export order performance 2024-2025



## Expected export order performance 2025-2026



# WHERE ARE WE EXPORTING TO?

As was the case in 2024, the large majority of respondents this year named Australia as one of their export destinations. More than half also mentioned the USA and Europe (excluding the UK). By contrast, Statistics NZ ranks China first, in terms of the value of exports. However, exports to China are dominated by a small number of large companies.

Looking ahead to the next 12 months, Australia is expected to remain in top spot amongst the businesses participating in the survey.

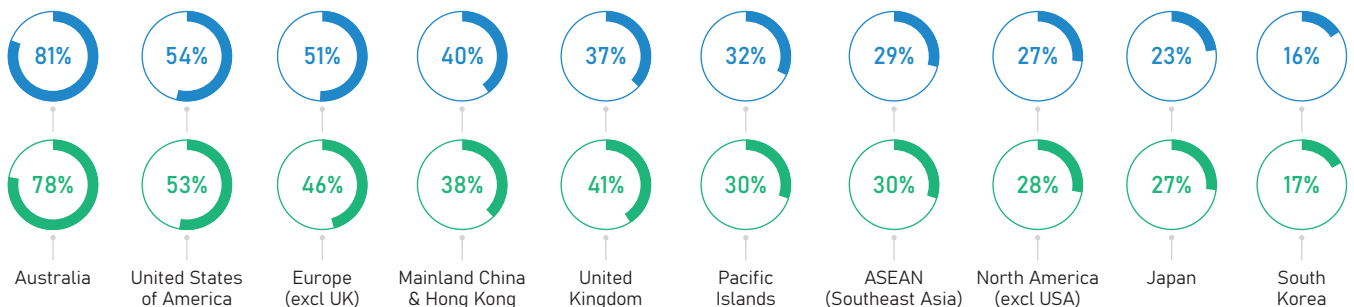
But the most notable finding is that the percentage of respondents who said they expect to export to the USA in the next 12 months is virtually unchanged from the percentage who did so in the last 12 months.

The results also suggest that the proportion of businesses exporting to China and Europe (excluding the UK) could fall a little, but the proportion exporting to the UK and Japan looks likely to increase. In the case of the UK, the expected increase could be due to the bedding-in of New Zealand-UK Free Trade Agreement, which came into effect in mid-2023.



## Key markets for NZ exports

● 2024-2025 ● 2025-2026



# WHAT'S HOLDING EXPORTERS BACK?

This year's survey revealed several significant changes, between this year and last, in the barriers to exports experienced by the respondents.

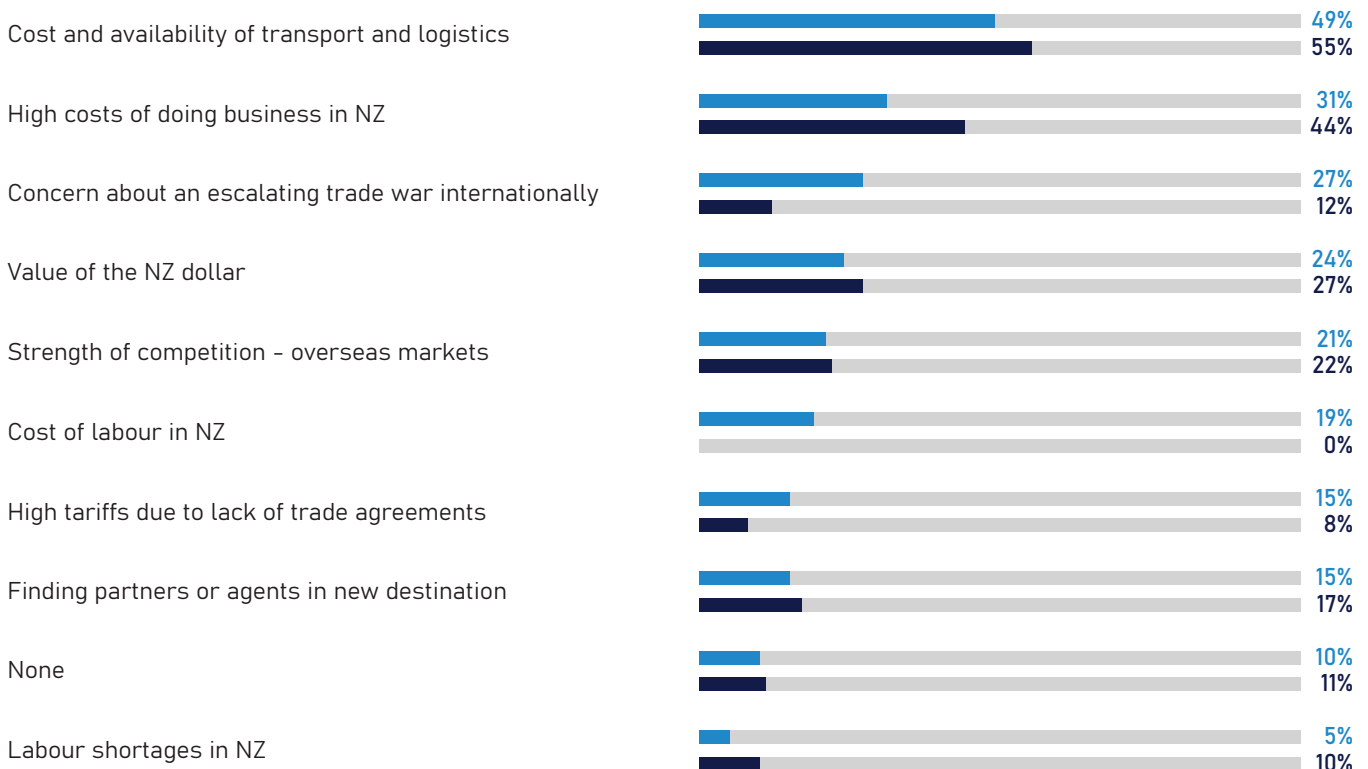
There was a dip in the proportion of businesses being held back by the cost and availability of transport and logistics, which have been stable relative to the cost spikes over the past five years and are likely baked in to deals.

There was a surprisingly large drop in the proportion pointing to the cost of doing business in New Zealand, which we attribute to the fall in bank interest rates and a slowdown in inflation.

The value of the NZ dollar and labour shortages also decreased in frequency as barriers. By contrast, and not unexpectedly, concerns about an escalating trade war increased dramatically as a barrier, while high tariffs due to a lack of trade agreements also increased in prominence as a barrier.

## Top 10 barriers to exporting faced by New Zealand businesses

● 2025 ● 2024



The cost of doing business in NZ. Time consumed on compliance and documentation to export. Transport costs very high. Find staff that can work with skills required and commitment to the job.

**Online Retail**  
Sole Trader, Hawkes' Bay



The increasing concerns about an escalating trade war cast a dark shadow over the strong export receipts in quarters one and two of 2025 and the optimism reflected earlier in the survey. While New Zealand is held at the baseline tariff of 10%\*\*, the constant changes to tariffs that other countries face, plus the potential for retaliatory action, impact to global economic growth, and the uncertainty regarding displaced exports—are all cause for concern.

As was found in last year’s survey, the respondents this year were most likely to say that they had attempted to increase their export orders in the last 12 months by developing new products or services and by enhancing their online presence. A range of other actions were also mentioned.

These findings are very similar to what businesses were doing in 2024 to increase their export orders.

**What businesses have done to increase their export orders in the last 12 months**

● 2025



Overall, there are global instability and cost of living impacts which are impacting demand at global level. Being savvy and agile in the ways we operate in markets and having the support of govt are keys to riding out the current downturn.

**FMCG**  
5–19 FTEs, Bay of Plenty



\*\* This survey was conducted in June 2025, when the additional US tariff on the majority of New Zealand goods was 10%. Since August 7<sup>th</sup> 2025, the additional tariff rate on the majority of New Zealand goods has been 15%.

# SUPPLY CHAIN PRESSURES EASE

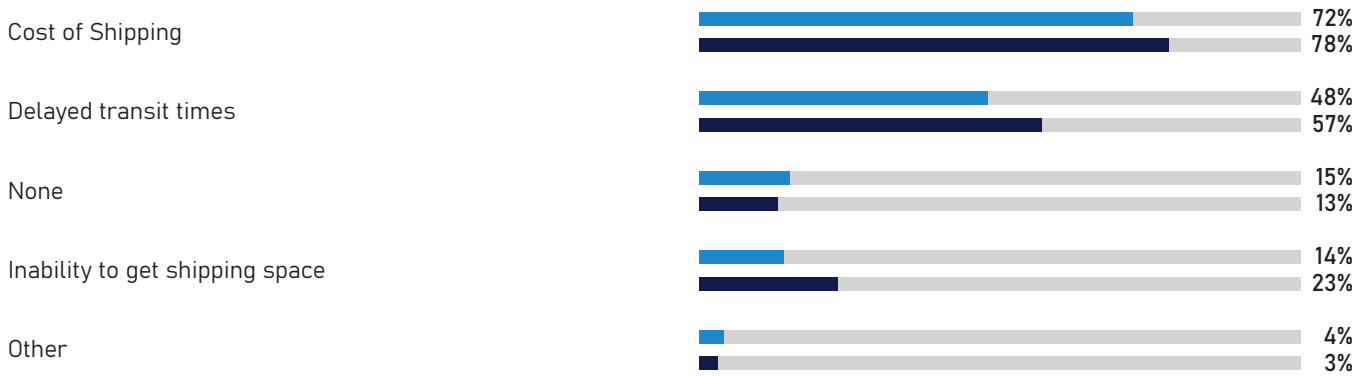
Consistent with the finding earlier about a drop in the proportion of respondents being impeded by the cost and availability of transport and logistics, there was a drop in the proportion of businesses saying that they had experienced fewer impacts on their supply chains because of shipping costs, transit delays, or a shortage of space on ships. Consequently, a slightly larger proportion of respondents reported no impacts. While there are still significant disruptions in the Red Sea, and costs won't return to pre-COVID levels, prices have been relatively

stable, risk baked in, and the reliability of service has improved. All these factors contribute to the slight fall in supply chain pressures.

The easing of supply chain pressures was also evident from the large drop, between 2024 and 2025, in the proportion of businesses that have changed their logistics/shipping provider. There were also noteworthy increases in the proportions saying that they had invested in new software to manage inventory, track shipments etc. or had hired new staff overseas.

## Impacts to their supply chains businesses have experienced in the last 12 months

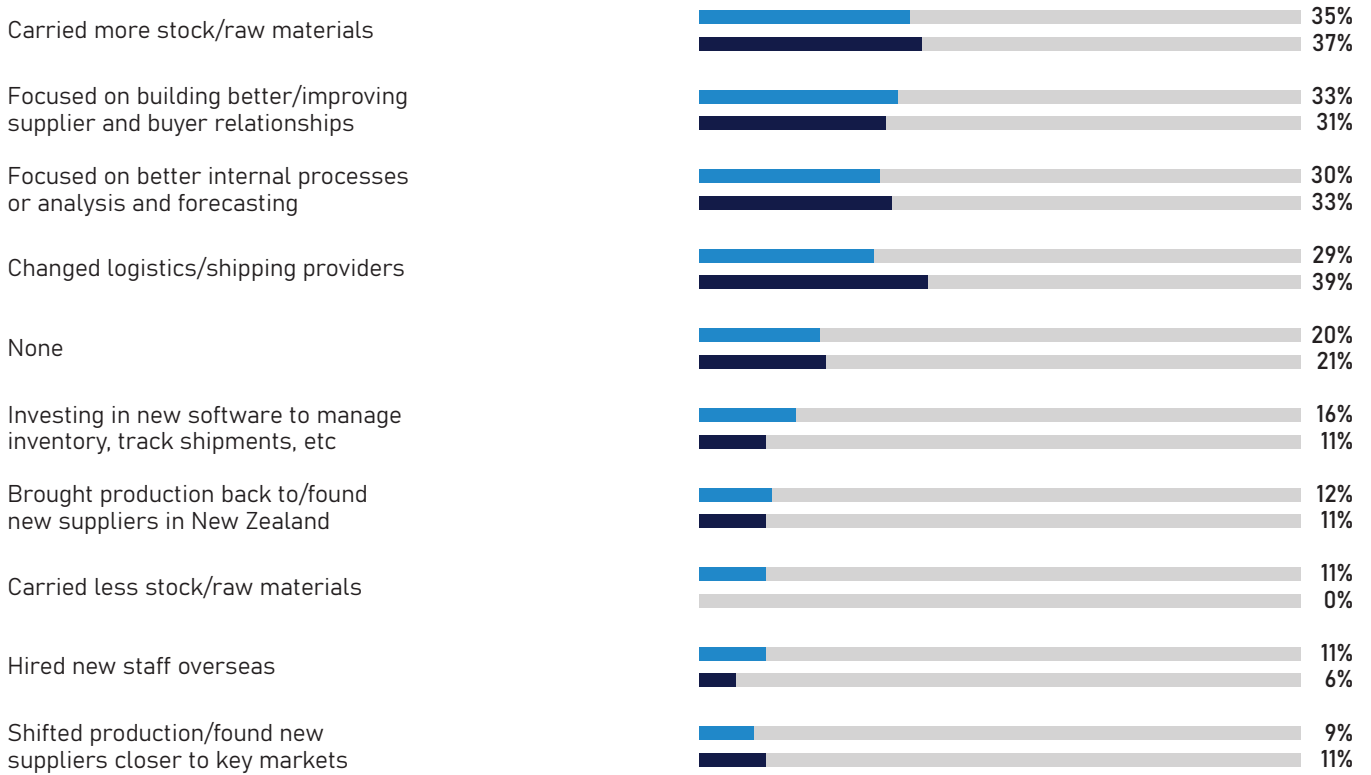
● 2025 ● 2024





Changes made by businesses in the way they deal with supply chains and logistics

● 2025 ● 2024



We're seeing constant cost increases passed down from carriers – largely driven by environmental levies, carbon offset schemes, and cost of business here in NZ (labour). While well-intentioned, these add up to millions (if not billions) across the system and directly impact small exporters trying to stay competitive.

**Online Retail**  
2-4 FTEs, Northland



Tariffs haven't been a significant problem to work around, but the frustration with shipping has caused enormous stress and additional cost to our relationships with clients in the US.

**Manufacturing**  
5-19 FTEs, Auckland



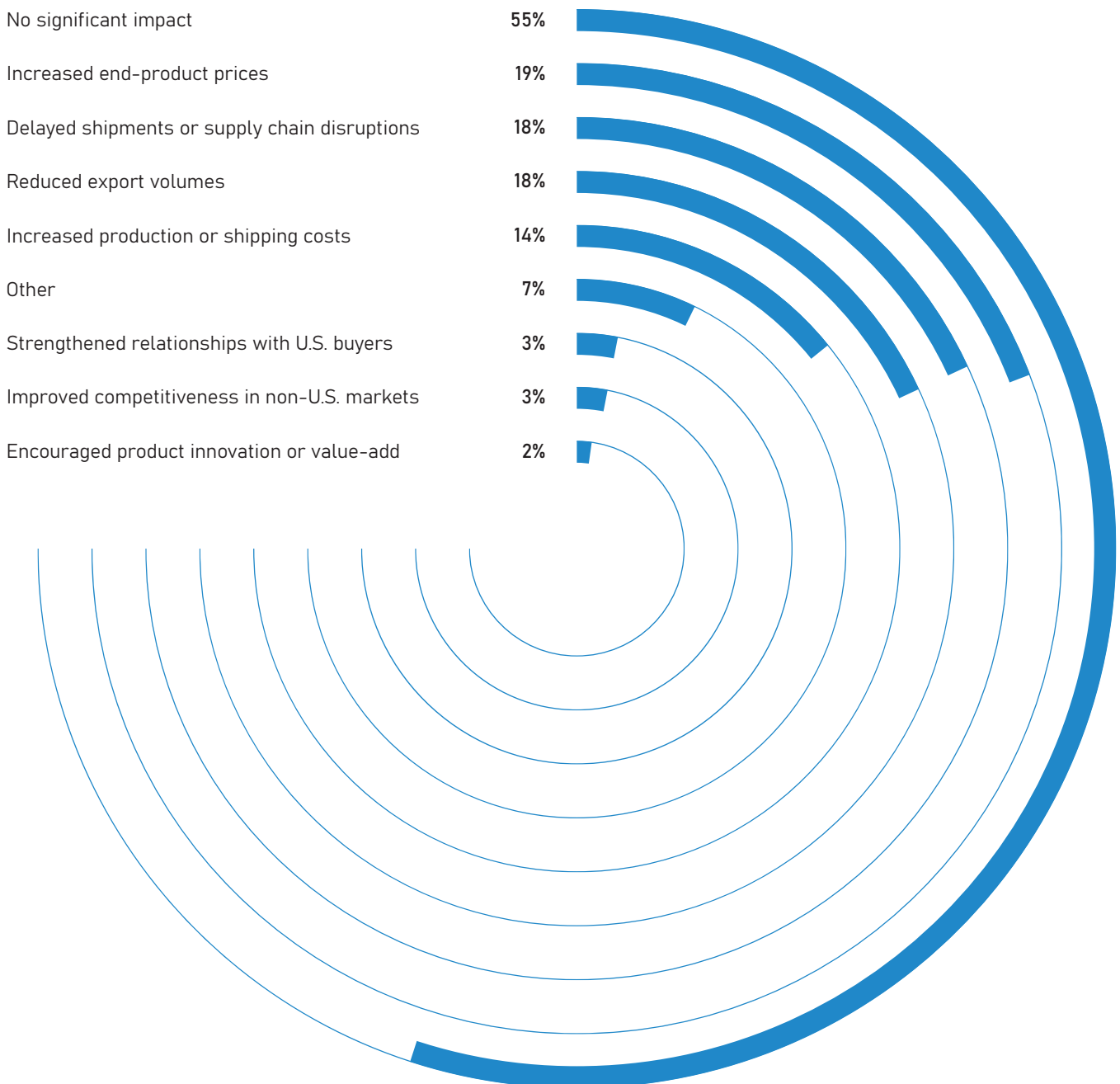
# TRADE, TARIFFS & TRUMP

More than half of the respondents said that they had not experienced any significant impacts from the recent US tariff announcements, although this is not surprising given that it was shown earlier that just over half of the respondents' export, or plan to export, to that market. Moreover, the expected tariffs had not been imposed at the time of the survey.

Nonetheless, it is clear that a sizeable proportion of the respondents are concerned about how the tariffs will affect their businesses.

## How recent US tariffs have affected their businesses' export operations

● 2025





We've seen a decrease in demand from China-based customers who subsequently process our product and export to the US.

We've seen an increase in demand from US customers due to our price being more competitive compared to our EU competitors who now have a higher tariff than we do.

**Agriculture, Forestry, or Fishing**  
5-19 FTEs, Canterbury



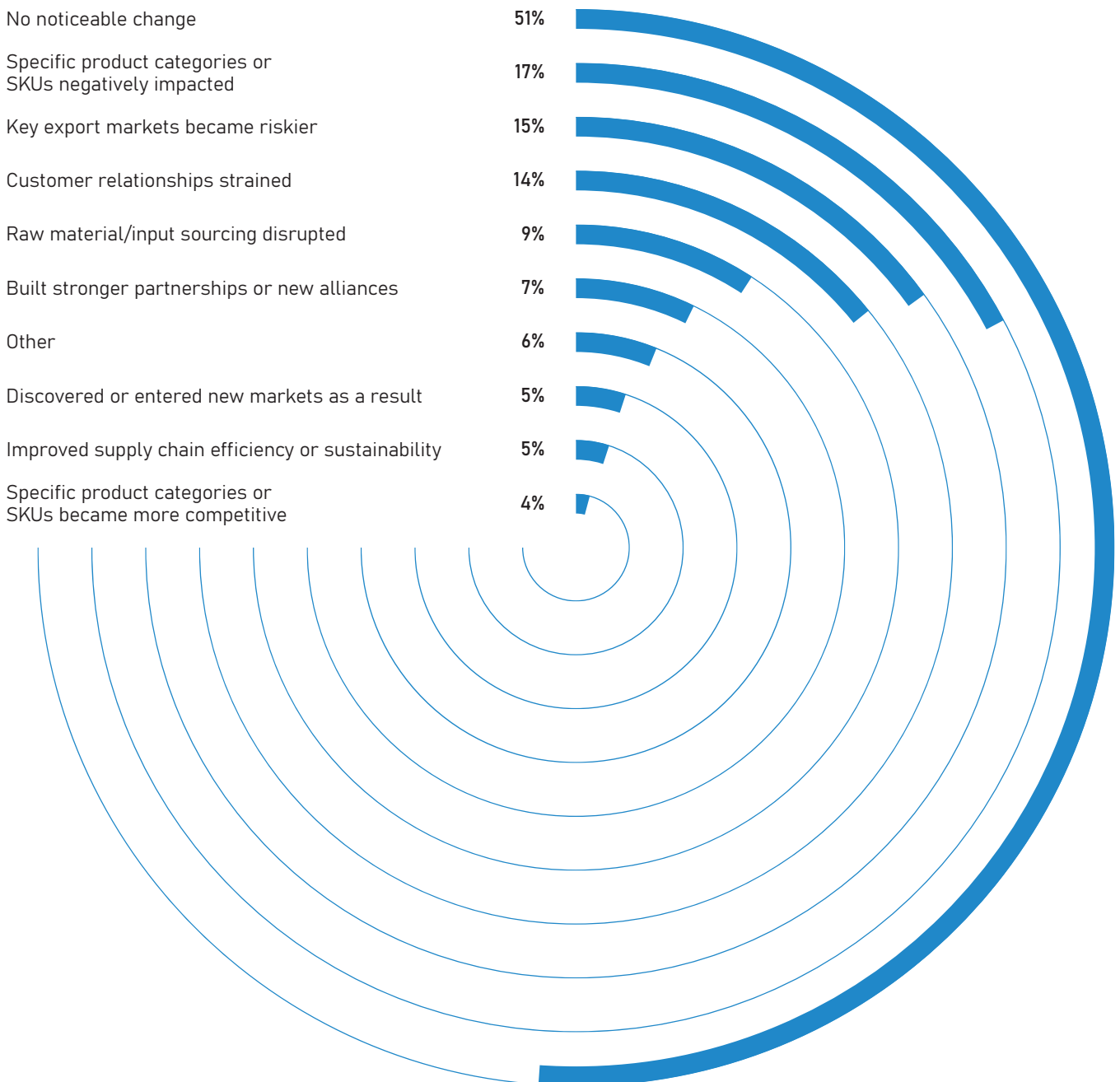
It has caused a lot of confusion for our customers. We have likely lost a few sales due to the hectic tariff conversations in the media. We have had a few customers email us and ask if the price includes tariffs or if they get added post-purchase.

**Online Retail**  
2-4 FTEs, Auckland



Which areas of your business have been most affected – positively or negatively – by the tariffs?

● 2025

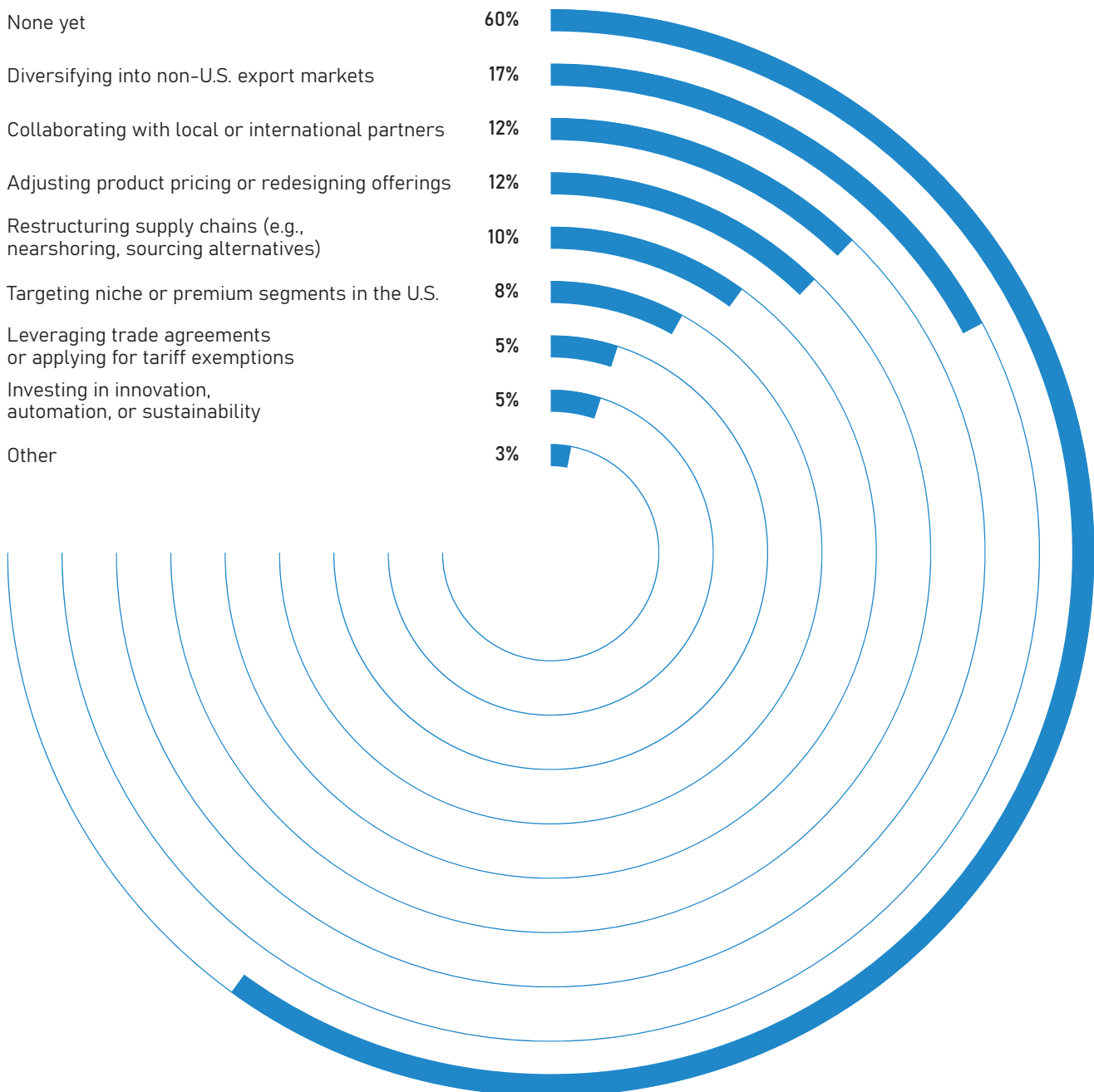


Unsurprisingly, given the findings above, the majority of respondents had done nothing yet to implement or consider strategic responses to the introduction of tariffs by the USA. However, those that had taken action were most likely to say that they were diversifying into non-US markets.

It is also noteworthy that a sizeable proportion of respondents were looking to collaborate with local or international partners, or to restructure their supply chains, including nearshoring. Both these responses imply moving some business functions into, or at least nearer, the USA.

**Strategies businesses are using or considering to manage or benefit from U.S. tariffs**

● 2025



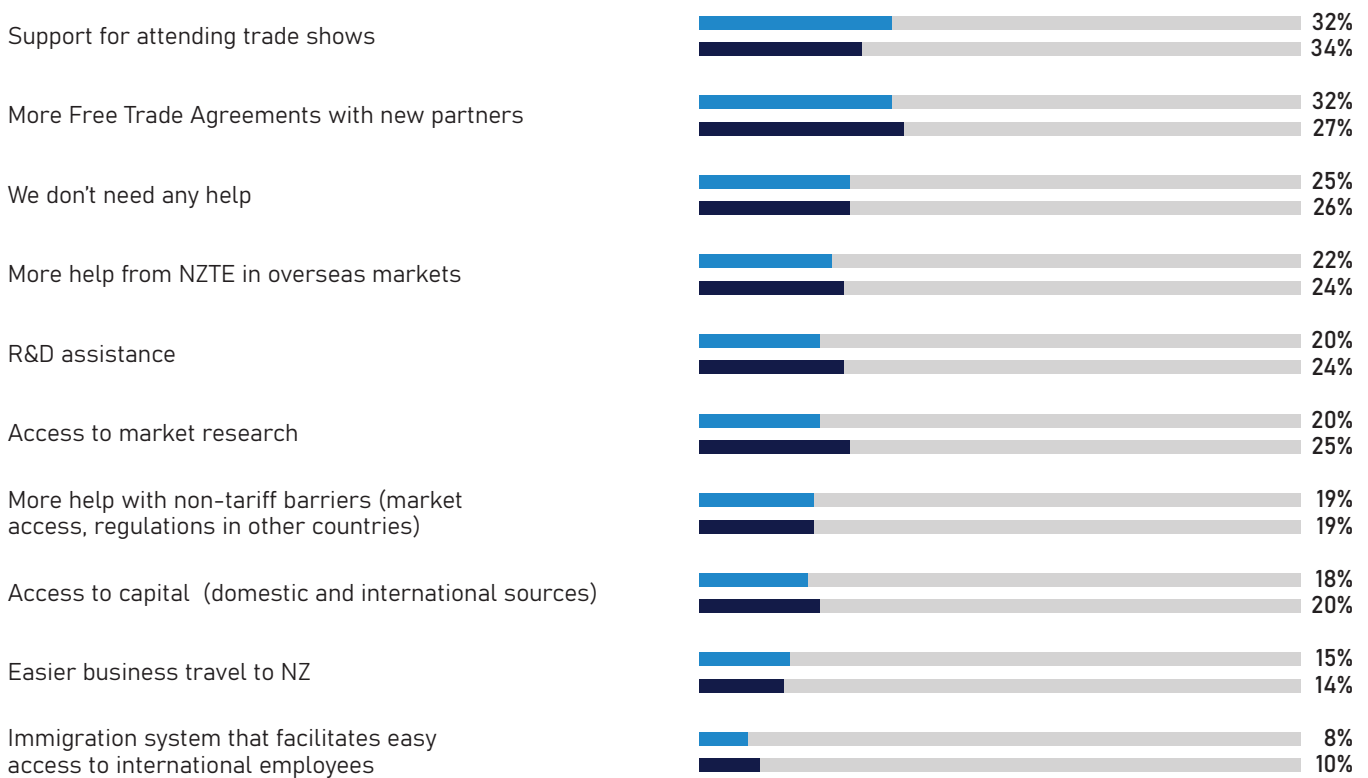
# GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR EXPORTERS

The development of new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and support for attendance at trade shows remain the type of government support the respondents would like, in order to assist them to export more. These results have remained consistent for the past three years, and should give the New Zealand government a clear idea about how to support New Zealand companies on their exporting journeys.

It is striking that a quarter of the respondents said that they didn't need any help, but similar proportions indicated that they would like more help from NZTE in overseas markets, assistance with Research and Development (R&D), or access to market research.

## Top 10 types of Government assistance (if any) that would help businesses to export more

● 2025 ● 2024



We'd benefit from simplified export documentation, faster customs and biosecurity processing for low-risk goods, and practical government incentives – whether tax incentives, funding, or better digital tools. Exporters are injecting international revenue into the local economy; there should be stronger support for that. We're not asking for shortcuts – just a system that moves at the pace of business.

**Online Retail**  
2-4 FTEs, Northland



Access to quality mentoring and up to date information on technology helping increase productivity and marketing that works.

**Services Exporter**  
Sole Trader, Auckland



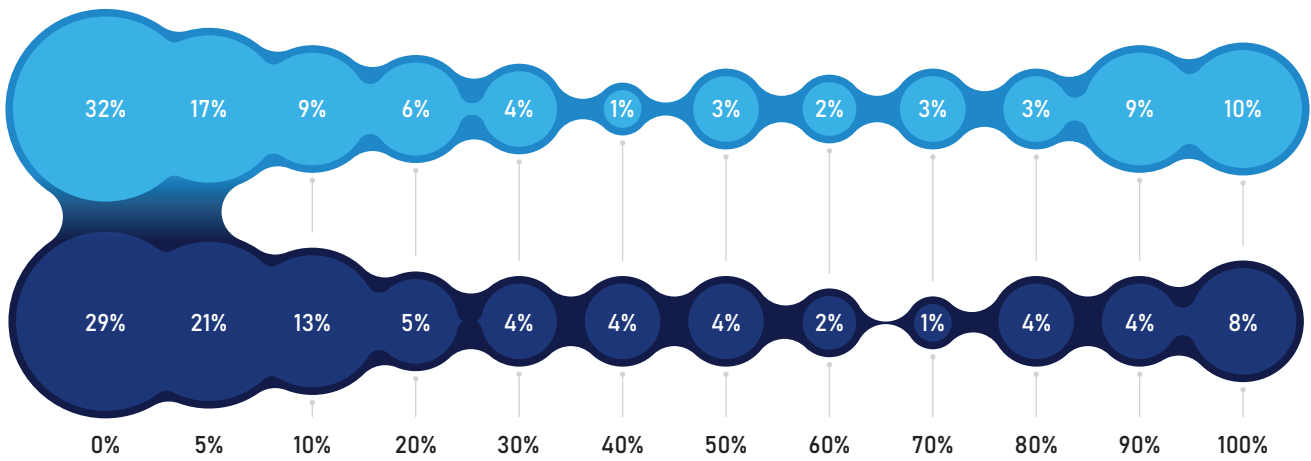
# UTILISING E-COMMERCE CHANNELS

It remained the case in 2025 that a relatively small proportion of the respondents' export orders were generated from online orders or enquiries. However, there was an increase in the proportion of respondents who indicated that all or most of their order were generated this way.

Given that only a small proportion of export orders are generated from online orders or enquiries, it is unsurprising that almost half of the respondents do not use any online platform for this purpose, and that a third only use their business website. Long-established platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, were also relatively commonly used.

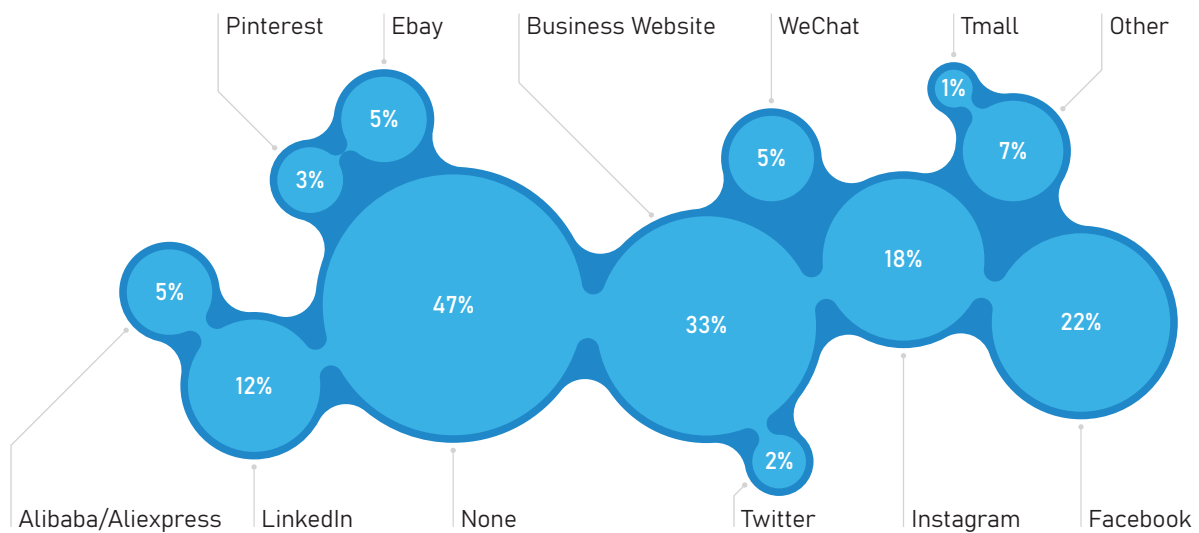
Percentage of export orders that are generated from online orders or enquiries

● 2025 ● 2024



Most frequently used platforms to generate export orders or enquiries

● 2025



# EXPORTERS SLOW TO ADOPT AI TOOLS

The government recently launched an AI strategy for New Zealand, and made it clear its concerns that too few businesses are using or even planning to use the technology. The survey added weight to the concerns, showing that only a little more than a quarter of the respondents use the technology.

Exactly a half said that they do not, and the remainder were either unsure or did not wish to comment. One possible explanation for the non-use is that businesses simply do not understand how AI can help.

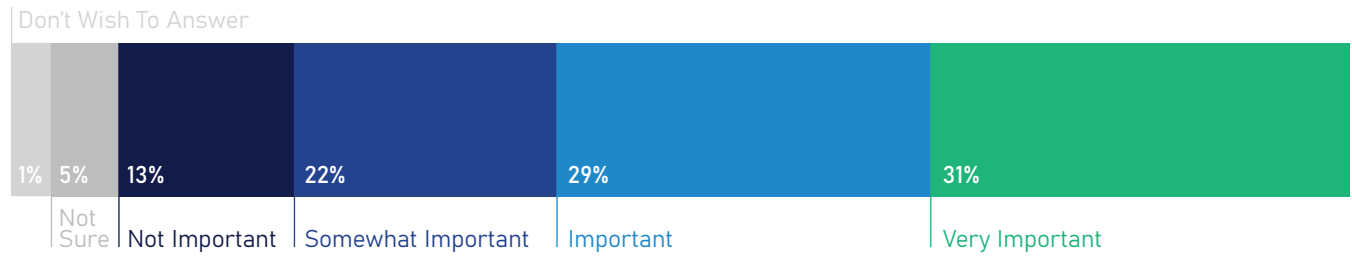
## Do the businesses use AI to improve productivity



# SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN SUPPLY CHAINS

Lastly, the survey found that although 60% of the respondents' rate sustainability in the supply chains as being very important or important, only a little over a quarter said that they had sustainability targets or goals for their supply chain.

## How important is sustainability in businesses' logistics and supply chain decisions



## Do the businesses have any sustainability targets or goals for their supply chain



“ Our organisation is committed to achieving sustainability throughout our supply chain, with a primary focus on working towards zero carbon emissions. We are actively reviewing and optimising our logistics and sourcing practices to minimise our environmental footprint and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all operations. Our approach is to build a supply chain that is not only efficient and responsible but also sustainable and ethical in the long term. **Telecommunications Distributor** 100+ FTEs, Auckland ”

“ We manage these in-house around our packaging primarily. All our shipments go airmail so we leave initiatives around emission reduction etc, over to the carriers. **Online Retail** 2-4 FTEs, Wellington ”



## ABOUT THE SURVEY & THE RESPONDENTS

The ExportNZ DHL Export Barometer Survey takes place every year and has run since 2016. This year, 333 businesses completed the questionnaire, compared to 271 in 2024.

The increase in participation accounted for mainly by an upsurge in the number of responses from the Auckland region. The number of responses from

Canterbury remained unchanged, but the number from the Wellington region fell. There was also an increase in the number of sole-traders and small businesses participating.

As in previous years, the respondents were most likely to have been in business for more than 20 years, but there was also an uptick in the proportion who had been in business for 10 years or less.



ExportNZ is a national industry association representing a diverse range of exporters throughout New Zealand. ExportNZ is a division of BusinessNZ, New Zealand's peak business advocacy body. We are a membership organisation with approximately 2,000 export members nationwide.

ExportNZ advocates for, inspires, connects, and celebrates New Zealand exporters.

We aim to build a thriving ecosystem that supports each other.

We are Exporters Helping Exporters



DHL is the leading global brand in the logistics industry. Our DHL divisions offer an unrivalled portfolio of logistics services ranging from national and international parcel delivery, e-commerce shipping and fulfilment solutions, international express, road, air and ocean transport to industrial supply chain management. With about 594,000 employees in more than 220 countries and territories worldwide, DHL connects people and businesses securely and reliably, enabling sustainable global trade flows. With specialised solutions for growth markets and industries including technology, life sciences and healthcare, engineering, manufacturing & energy, auto-mobility and retail, DHL is decisively positioned as "The logistics company for the world".

DHL is part of the DHL Group. The Group generated revenues of more than 81 billion euros in 2023. With sustainable business practices and a commitment to society and the environment, the Group makes a positive contribution to the world. The DHL Group aims to achieve zero-emissions logistics by 2050.