



Navigating Growth in Interesting Times

The 2025 BOMA Canada Emerging Leaders
Industry Survey Report

What are Emerging Leaders looking for?

Building and maintaining successful teams is challenging in any industry. This is especially true for commercial real estate (CRE), which lacks a direct path of entry for young professionals starting their careers. So, when a CRE firm finds the right person for the right role, is it doing enough to keep them?

With that in mind, we reached out to emerging leaders in the industry to understand the challenges and successes they've encountered in their careers. We asked them key questions; this document is a summary of their insights.

Questions:

1. *What is the main obstacle you hope to overcome in 2025?*
2. *How flexible is your work environment?*
3. *How can your employer make it more supportive?*
4. *What initiatives would you like to see more from your organization?*
5. *Does your organization support your career growth?*
6. *If you answered "yes" to Question 5, what support does your organization provide for career growth?*
7. *What's missing in the industry in terms of better equipping Emerging Leaders and excelling in their careers?*
8. *What topics or themes would you like to see covered in future events/ programs from BOMA Canada?*



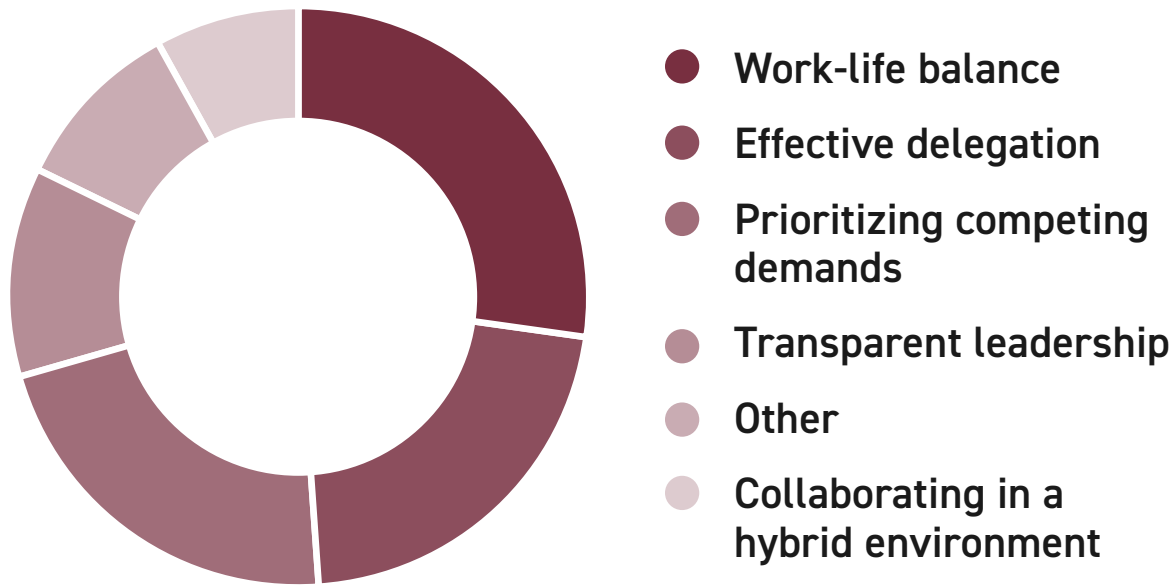
Most respondents report generally supportive work environments, with nearly 79% stating their organizations actively support their career.

Q1: What is the main obstacle you hope to overcome in 2025?

“I want to learn how to better myself, so I can set myself up for success. This includes how to have hard conversations with my managers and the rest of the team.”

A diverse set of challenges were reflected in the answers to this question. There were four top responses from participants:

- 27.45%** said “work-life balance.”
- 21.57%** said “effective delegation.”
- 21.57%** said “prioritizing competing demands.”
- 11.76%** said “transparent leadership.”



Some also spoke to growing economic concerns, such as retailers not wanting to extend or renew leases due to declining revenues, and increasing competition from online platforms such as Amazon and Temu. Others pointed to internal struggles, including professional development, communication breakdowns within teams and securing competitive compensation.

All of these answers make sense given the broader challenges facing the industry, which is still dealing with the fallout of COVID and ongoing economic uncertainty. This has led to shifting workplace

dynamics—and in an industry that needs to be on call around the clock, the struggles to find a balanced workload make sense. Added to this are increased leadership responsibilities where younger professionals sometimes feel unprepared or unsupported in their career trajectories, which speaks to a talent retention issue in CRE. The industry is also going through a digital transformation that is forcing property managers and owners to rethink leasing strategies and tenant engagement. All of these factors are impacting a young professional’s day-to-day activities.

Highlights



Work/life balance
One respondent candidly noted: “Work/life balance—expected that we must always be available.” This sentiment echoes throughout the responses, with another pointing out that “most companies max out holidays at four weeks; not enough time to recharge.”



Better tools
Several respondents noted the inadequate tools available for managing these concurrent demands. One called for “better tools [and] programs for day-to-day activities ... to free up time to permit growth,” while another mentioned “[fewer] open-office concepts or more flexible work-from-home strategies allowing for focused work.”



Empowering your team
One respondent highlighted the need for “manager training on delegating and empowering your team,” suggesting a recognition that this skill doesn’t develop automatically but requires deliberate cultivation.

Q2: How flexible is your work environment?

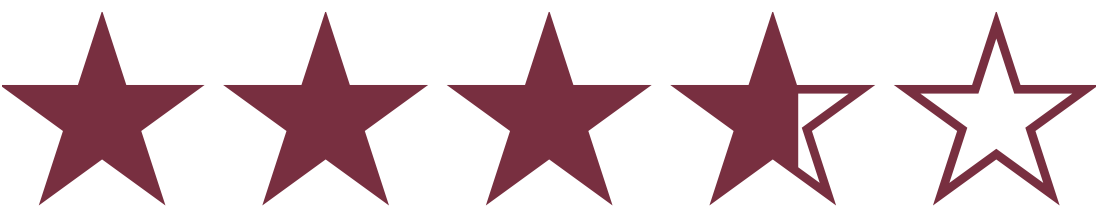
“My employer allows hybrid work, but clearer guidelines on expectations would be helpful.”

Workplace flexibility in the CRE sector received a generally positive rating, with most respondents classifying their environment as “very good” or “excellent.” However, flexibility remained a nuanced issue, with some professionals experiencing inconsistencies in remote-work policies or unclear expectations regarding hybrid arrangements. While many firms have adapted to more flexible models post-pandemic, some respondents still feel constrained by what they perceive as outdated management styles that prioritize physical office presence over results-driven work.

The fact that a significant number of emerging leaders rated flexibility favourably suggests that CRE firms are evolving, but there is still room for improvement from their perspective. This is an

obvious challenge given the nature of the business we are all in—leasing commercial real estate. In a sector traditionally resistant to remote work, companies that embrace hybrid models could gain a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent. This sentiment underscores the need for structured policies that balance operational needs with employee autonomy, something that will likely become a key differentiator in workplace satisfaction moving forward.

Average rating of 3.7

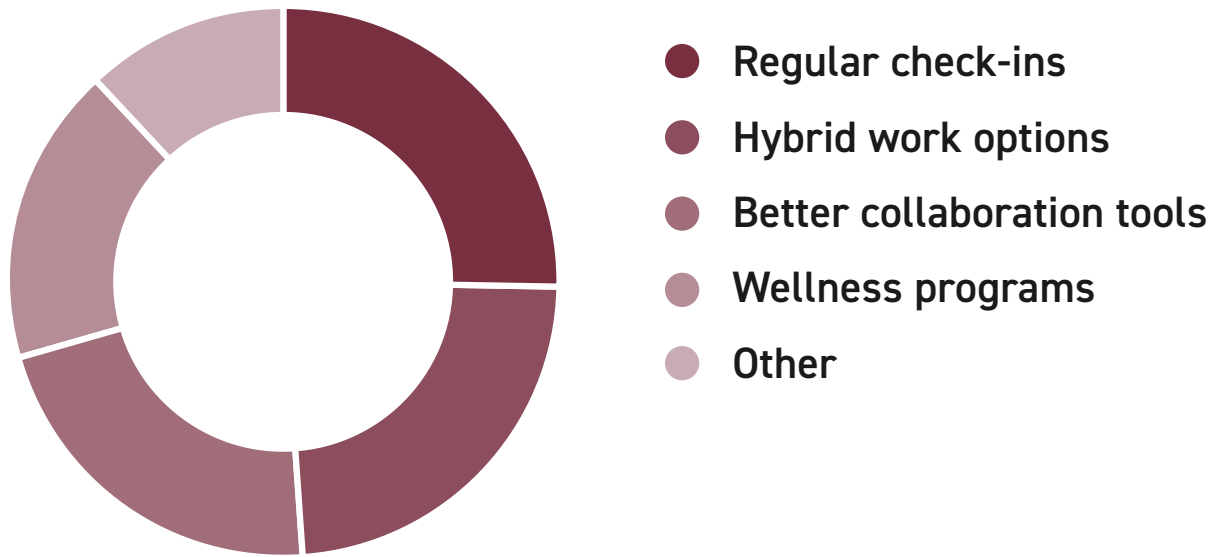


Q3: How can your employer make the workplace more supportive?

“Most companies offer \$1,000–\$1,500 [in mental health benefits], which is only 4–5 visits with a therapist a year—not close to being enough.”

Respondents identified four significant ways employers could be more supportive:

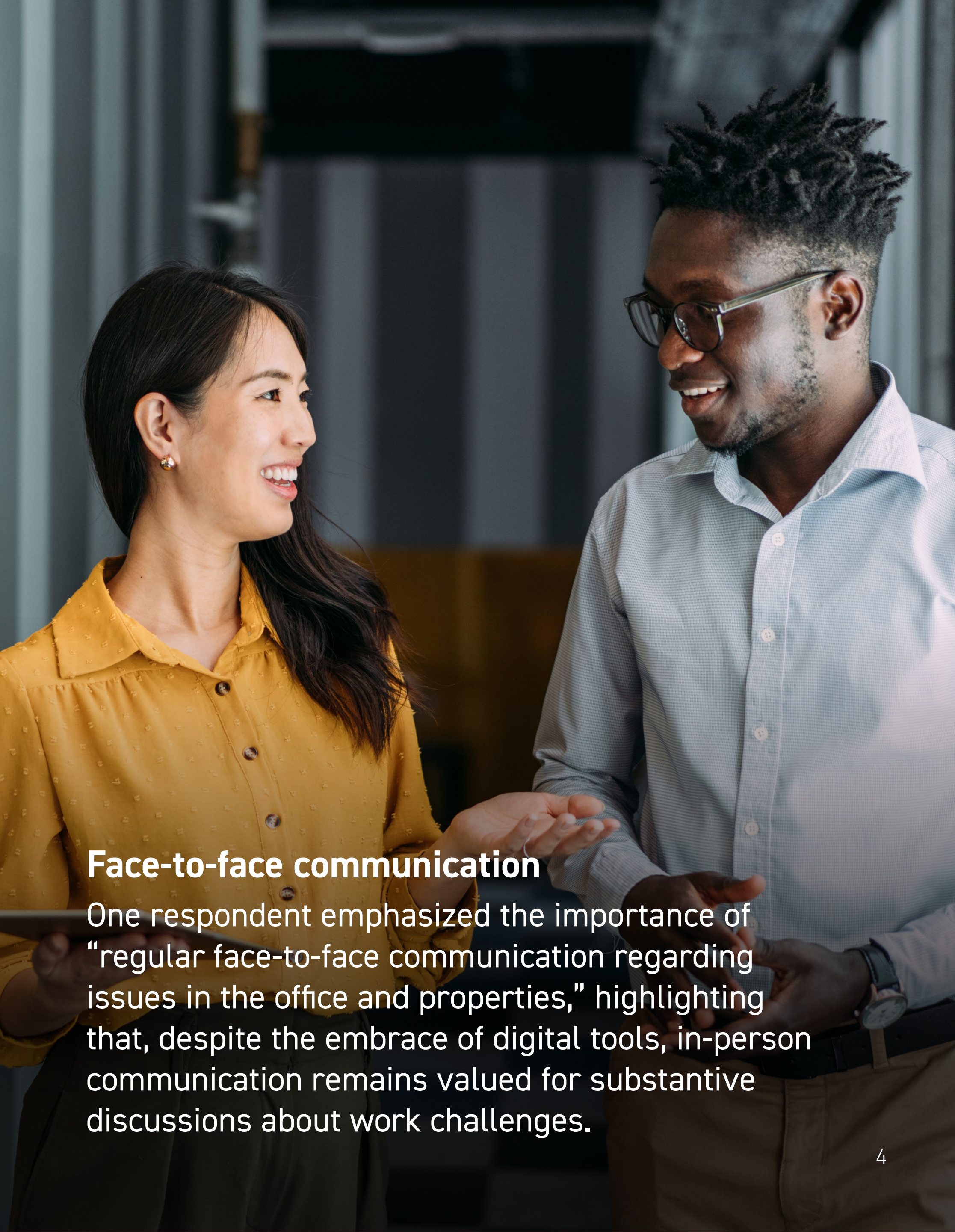
- 25.49% said “regular check-ins.”
- 23.53% said “hybrid work options.”
- 21.57% said “better collaboration tools.”
- 17.65% said “wellness programs.”



An additional 11.76% selected “Other,” with specific requests including mental health resources, more upfront training and clearer leadership communication.

It was interesting that mental health support was not in the top four but did receive a number of comments. The general concern was limited financial investment in mental health support, with multiple respondents

stating that current benefit plans are insufficient. This sentiment aligns with broader workplace trends, in which employees expect organizations to move beyond surface-level wellness initiatives and provide meaningful, ongoing support. Given the high-stress nature of CRE, increasing investments in employee mental health could improve retention and engagement.



Face-to-face communication
One respondent emphasized the importance of “regular face-to-face communication regarding issues in the office and properties,” highlighting that, despite the embrace of digital tools, in-person communication remains valued for substantive discussions about work challenges.

Q4: What initiatives would you like to see more from your organization?

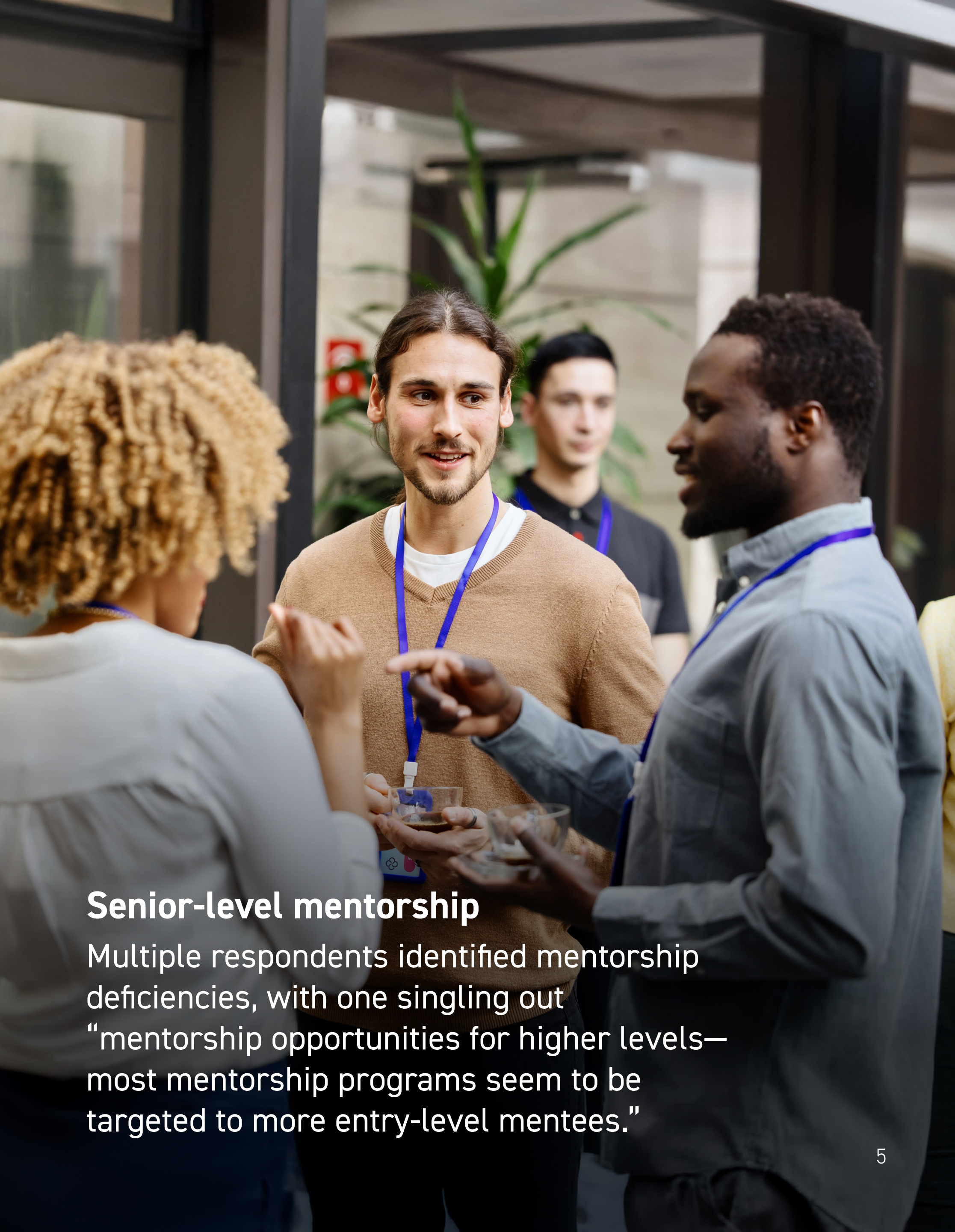
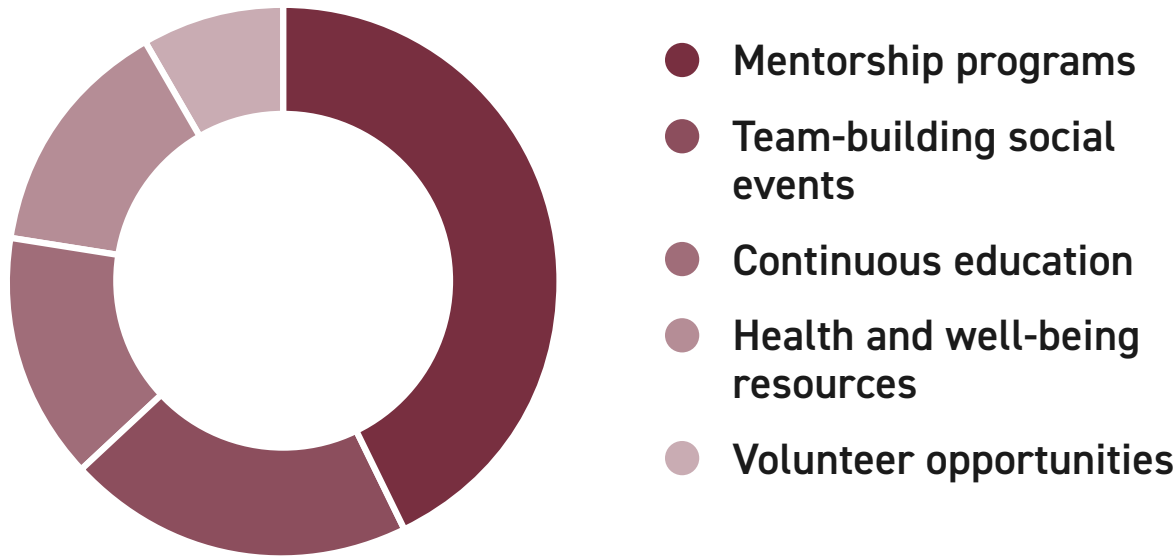
“More mentorship opportunities! It’s hard to find structured guidance from experienced leaders.”

When asked about workplace initiatives, the most-cited programs were:

- 42.86% said “mentorship.”
- 20.41% said “team-building social events.”
- 14.29% said “continuous education.”

“Health and well-being resources” (14.29%) and “volunteer opportunities” (8.16%) didn’t rank as highly but were still noted.

The demand for mentorship programs identifies a clear gap within the industry, which is surprising given the industry’s reputation for sharing knowledge. It also says that the respondents care about their careers and want to excel. Knowing that the industry lacks formal entry pathways—and instead relies on experience-based progression—means that companies that proactively invest in mentorship and career coaching will gain a competitive edge in team building.



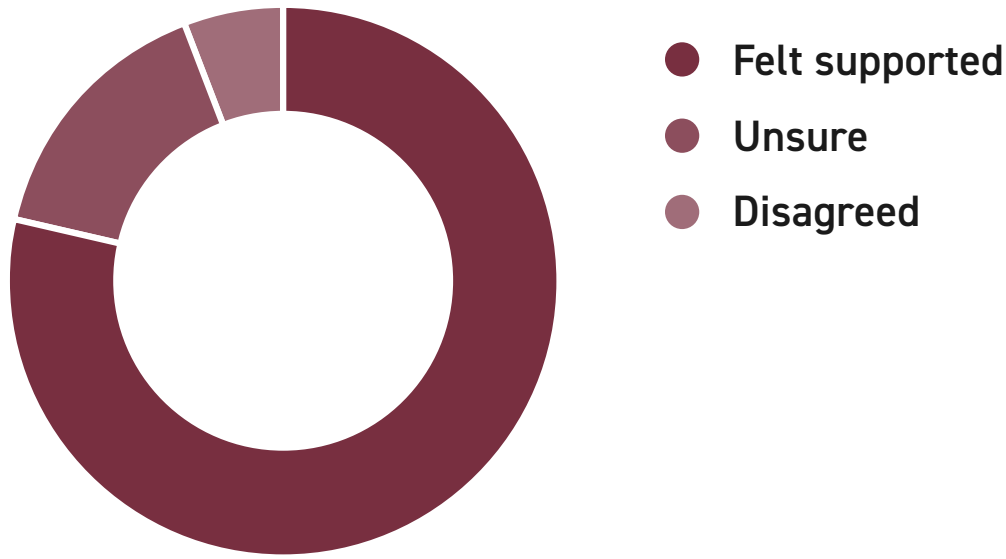
Senior-level mentorship
Multiple respondents identified mentorship deficiencies, with one singling out “mentorship opportunities for higher levels—most mentorship programs seem to be targeted to more entry-level mentees.”

Q5: Does your organization support your career growth?

“They support any valid initiative in career growth but do not provide any leads—I have to bring them forward.”

Encouragingly, 78.85% of respondents felt their organization supported their career growth while 15.38% were unsure and 5.77% disagreed.

Those who felt their employers were engaged cited leadership programs, professional development opportunities and networking support as key indicators. There was a catch, as some noted that, while opportunities existed, they had to proactively seek them out. This suggests that, while many firms have the right programs in place, they may not be effectively communicating or promoting them to employees.



Q6: If you answered “yes” to Q5, what support does your organization provide for career growth?

“They cover the cost of related courses, within reason.”

The most commonly discussed subjects were:

23 responses mentioned “mentorship.”

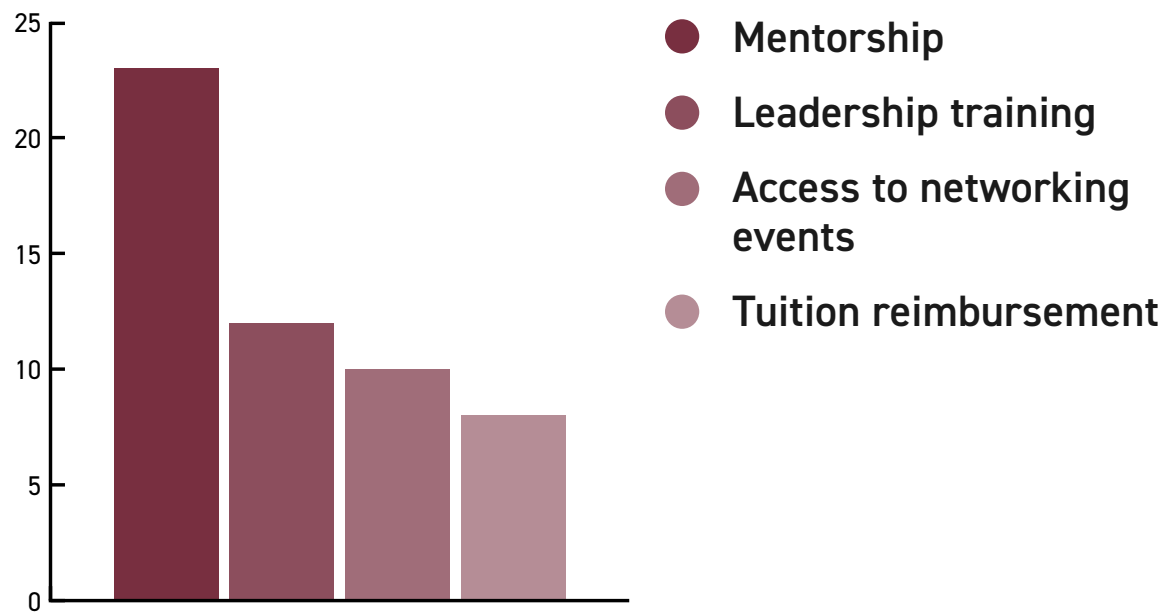
12 responses mentioned “leadership training.”

10 responses mentioned “access to networking events.”

8 responses mentioned “tuition reimbursement.”

Some companies also funded industry certifications and provided structured learning plans.

Financial support kept coming up, with several respondents saying that, while they received tuition reimbursement, they wished the amounts were higher. One key area was that, while tuition assistance was fundamental, employees wanted more guidance in choosing the right professional development opportunities. It’s clear that organizations that proactively offer career mapping along with financial support would enjoy stronger engagement from emerging leaders.



Q7: What's missing in the industry in terms of better equipping Emerging Leaders and excelling in their careers?

“Wish I could see think-tank exercises that allow us to use our skills in a small group setting to solve problems and gain exposure to different challenges.”

Again, we go back to structured leadership training, mentorship and work-life balance support. What was new here was the need for clearer succession planning. Several respondents also noted the need for more industry-specific networking opportunities.

One of the things noted—tying into current education trends—is the demand for experiential learning opportunities replacing traditional training sessions. This finding is consistent with those emerging leaders who move into leadership roles with technical expertise but no formal leadership development, which can create long-term management challenges. Addressing this gap through structured programs could improve the industry's ability to cultivate strong future leaders.

Taking the next step

- Approaching difficult conversations
- How to communicate with senior leadership
- How to properly delegate
- Soft-skills development, real-world experience

Q8: What topics or themes would you like to see covered in future events/programs from BOMA Canada?

“Opportunities for Senior Leaders, not just COO or CEO, to discuss the direction they believe the industry is going in, or challenges they see, or what they would like to see in the future in regard to opportunities, education and leadership.”

Respondents were most interested in sustainability strategies, AI and technology, leadership skills, and industry-specific professional development. Some also requested a stronger focus on networking events designed for younger professionals.

They preferred actionable sessions that featured sustainability discussions instead of high-level overviews. They also wanted more environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations to become a greater priority in CRE. Firms that provide concrete implementation strategies will likely have a stronger competitive advantage.

AI and CRE

Multiple respondents requested events covering:

- How to adapt to working alongside AI and other technologies
- The role of AI in emerging building technologies

Summary: Key areas for development

1. Structured mentorship and leadership development

Mentorship was the top-requested support mechanism, yet most existing programs were seen as informal or skewed toward entry-level team members. Several participants emphasized the importance of peer learning and leadership training:

“Manager training on delegating and empowering your team.”

“The ability to network and collaborate with other emerging leaders.”

“Overloading the leaders with follow-up/mundane/repetitive work that limits their ability to lead, identify pathways and execute on plans for success.”

These comments support a desire for not just one-on-one guidance, but also structured programs, networking opportunities and practical leadership-development resources.

2. Work-life balance and mental health support

Work-life balance was the most-cited challenge in the survey. Respondents voiced the emotional and physical challenge of always being “on”:

“Work-life balance—expected that we must always be available.”

“Most companies max out holidays at four weeks—not enough time to recharge.”

These responses highlight the need for policy and cultural shifts that support boundaries, downtime and mental wellness as strategic priorities.

Highlights



1. Mentorship and development

One respondent noted they were looking for “the ability to network and collaborate with other emerging leaders.”



2. Work-life balance

One respondent noted that “most companies max out holidays at four weeks—not enough time to recharge.”

Summary: Key areas for development (cont.)

3. Transparent career progression and compensation clarity

While the majority believed their organizations support growth, there was clear dissatisfaction with how career paths and compensation structures are communicated:

“Tuition reimbursement, but [I] wish the amount was more.”

“Funding for education.”

These responses reflect a need for more comprehensive, well-communicated investments in professional development and advancement.

4. Adapting to industry trends: Sustainability, AI and hybrid work

Respondents made it clear: They want to lead, but they need tangible tools to adapt to new industry realities—especially sustainability, AI and flexible work.

“Better tools [and] programs for day-to-day activities ... to free up time to permit growth.”

“More collaborative work between departments, especially for sustainability initiatives. It is hard to get the ball moving when there is little communication and no one really understands what they’re supposed to be doing in terms of sustainability or how it applies to them and their work.”

“Sustainability topics, but in a very tangible way in terms of implementation. Often ESG is a big topic in terms of high-level coverage, but we need to be talking about actionable, technical pieces more. We all know we need to be more sustainable, but events should be covering how.”

“[Fewer] open-office concepts or more flexible work-from-home strategies allowing for focused work.”

“How to adapt to working alongside AI and other technologies.”

“The role of AI in emerging building technologies.”

“Organization leaders need to communicate more effectively to younger employees. Stop calling younger generations (Millennial, Gen Z) lazy or entitled.”

These direct comments reflect a workforce that is eager to embrace change but needs support to make it actionable.

Highlights



3. Career progression

One respondent noted they were thankful for “tuition reimbursement, but [I] wish the amount was more.”



4. Industry trends

One respondent noted they wanted to learn “how to adapt to working alongside AI and other technologies.”

Where we need to be: Building the future thoughtfully

To attract and retain talent, CRE must evolve with intention. Emerging leaders want more than perks—they want meaningful career development aligned with values such as sustainability, flexibility and transparency.

Organizations must:

- Create structured mentorship programs with clear objectives
- Provide targeted training on soft skills, communication and delegation
- Support well-being through workload reform and mental health initiatives
- Invest in ESG, smart tech and AI education
- Outline clear, equitable career paths and salary expectations

As one respondent suggested:

“BOMA [could] partner with colleges and universities to offer the certification programs required by the industry to try and gain more interest in the industry as a chosen career path, as opposed to something you fall into.”

Another added:

“Why [should] future generations get into the CRE industry, and what kind of impact can they have on their communities? How will the industry change in the next 10–15 years and what [can we] expect?”

Where does CRE go next?

One respondent wanted to know “why [should] future generations get into the CRE industry, and what kind of impact can they have on their communities?”

Conclusion: Empowering the next chapter

From the perspective of those who answered the survey, the industry can continue business as usual and potentially lose key individuals, or it can invest meaningfully in their emerging leaders. This would include committing to mentorship programs, mental health considerations, and practical training in sustainability and leadership—not just in principle, but in practice.

The future of commercial real estate depends on the professionals who shape it. With the right structures, clarity and support, emerging leaders won't just grow—they'll lead the transformation.

Emerging leaders are invested in their careers; now, they expect their leaders to be as equally invested.





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