BCG Investor Perspectives Series

US Edition, Q2 2026

SURVEY CONDUCTED JUNE 22–23, 2026

BCG Investor Perspectives Series | US Edition, Q2 2026

BCG surveyed leading investors June 22–23, 2026, to understand their perspectives on the US economy and US stock market, as well as their expectations for the companies they invest in or cover. This survey has important implications for the strategic decisions being made by senior executives and boards of directors.

This is BCG's 34th US investor pulse check since March 2020. In addition, we have conducted three European investor pulse checks since April 2025.

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = 150 for each survey, except for June 2023 (n = 151), January 2024 (n = 153), September 2024 (n = 153), March 2025 (n = 151), June 2025 (n = 151), September 2025 (n = 152), and June 2026 (n = 151).

BCG conducted this pulse check survey to help corporate executives and boards of directors understand investors' perspectives in this rapidly changing environment.

- Approximately 63% of the participants in the June 2026 survey overlap with the respondents in the survey conducted March 23–27, 2026, and 82% of the March participants overlapped with those surveyed September 25–28, 2025
- Across the three most recent surveys (September 25–28, 2025, March 23–27, 2026, and June 22–23, 2026), the overlap in respondents is 57%

About the respondents:

- They represent investment firms that have approximately $10 trillion in combined assets under management
- Over 90% are portfolio managers and senior buy-side analysts who are responsible for buy, sell, and hold decisions
- They cover a broad spectrum of investor types and investment styles, including deep value, income, quality value, growth at a reasonable price (GARP), and core growth; they also include some quantitative, technical, and special situation investors

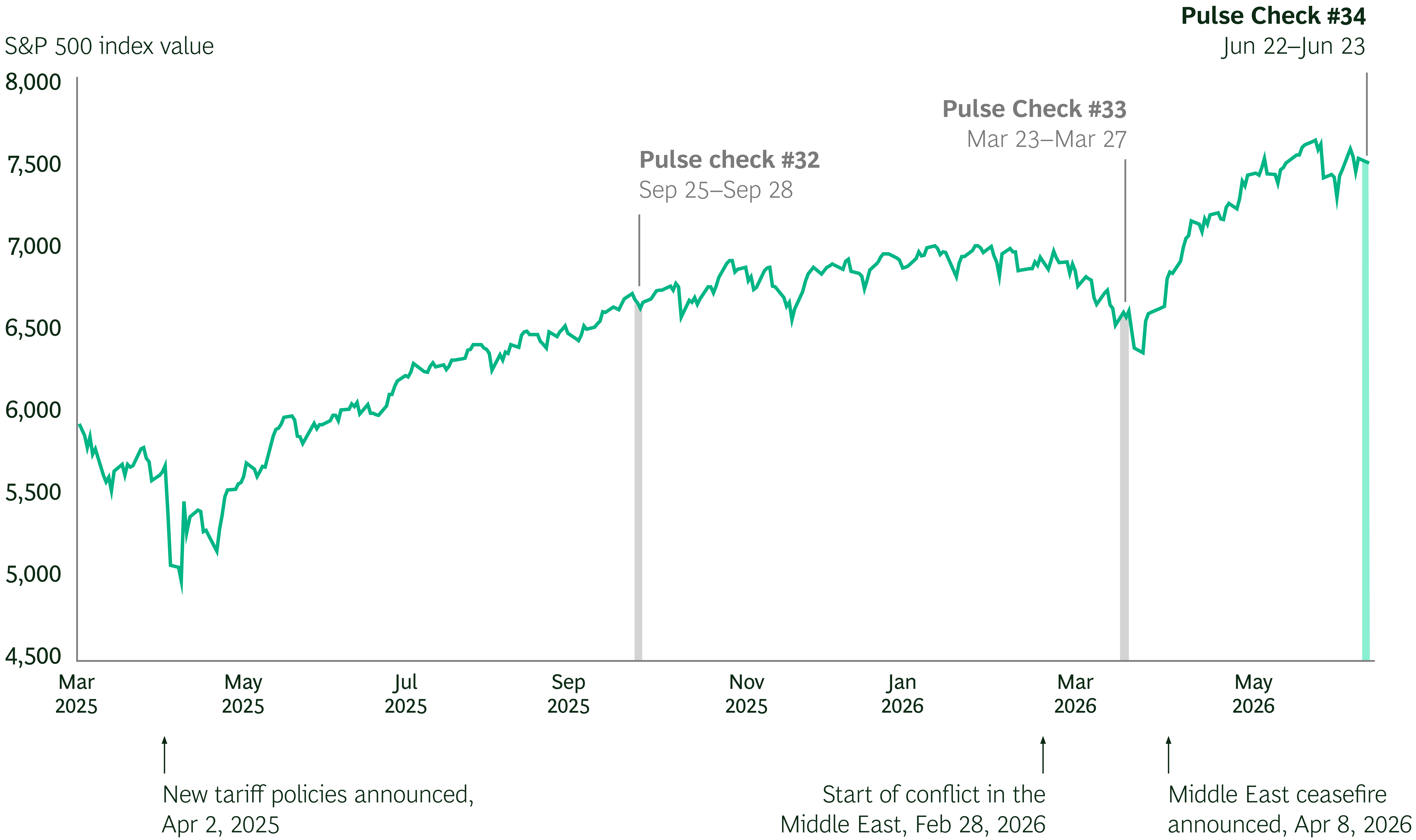
The survey focused on three key topics:

1. Investors' views of and expectations for the US economy and stock market, and their views on key risks and opportunities in the current environment
2. Investors' expectations regarding the future impact of AI and GenAI as well as their related priorities for companies they invest in or cover
3. Investors' perspectives on and implications for important decisions that corporate executives and boards are considering and making

- Because the market environment is evolving, especially regarding macroeconomic conditions, some questions from prior surveys were not asked or were replaced with new ones in this edition
- The analysis shared in this document represents an aggregated view that is not segmented by investor type; it is important for corporate executives and boards of directors to keep in mind their current and target investor types while interpreting the results
- The results represent surveyed investors' views only—reflecting current investor sentiment and currently priced-in expectations—both of which are subject to change as new information becomes available; to understand BCG's point of view on current topics, please visit bcg.com

This edition compares the findings from the June 2026 US pulse check to the March 2026 and September 2025 pulse checks

June 22–23



Pulse check #34

- Followed a strong market upswing (since April) and renewed market volatility in June
- S&P 500 closed at 7,472 points on June 22, 2026 (about 1.8% below current all-time high[1])

Pulse check #33

- Initiated over three weeks after the start of the conflict in the Middle East
- S&P 500 closed at 6,506 points on March 20, 2026 (about 6.7% below prior all-time high[2])

Pulse check #32

- Initiated after the market had recovered from the correction following the April 2025 new tariff policy announcement
- S&P 500 closed at 6,638 points on September 24, 2025 (about 0.8% below prior all-time high[3])

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG analysis.
[1]Current all-time closing high of the S&P 500 was about 7,609 on June 2, 2026. [2]Prior all-time closing high S&P 500 level was about 6,976 on February 2, 2026. [3]Prior all-time closing high S&P 500 level was 6,694 on September 2, 2025.

Investor Pulse Check, Q2 2026 | Highlights

June 22–23

- Investor sentiment improved materially, with 46% of investors bullish for the rest of 2026 (up from 26% in March 2026). At the same time, increased concerns about the S&P 500 being overvalued (raised by 67% of investors vs. 62% in March 2026) and potential profitability headwinds (raised by 51% of investors) led to market-average TSR expectations remaining muted at 6.2% over the next three years (versus 6.3% in March).
- Interest rates and inflation have risen to become the top two macro risk factors, highlighted by 61% and 47% of investors, respectively (up from 47% and 35%, respectively, in March 2026), with geopolitics dropping from number one to number three, highlighted by 44% of investors (down from 69% in March).
- AI now is the number one expected market driver (highlighted by 66% of investors, up from 54% in March 2026), with 56% seeing the market as too optimistic on AI (up from 55% in March), and 77% expecting future TSR headwinds as a result of elevated valuation levels due to AI (up from 63% in March).
- Investors anticipate that AI will have a material impact on companies' financial performance (80% expect this to be reflected in revenue growth and/or profitability within the next two years), with more than 60% of investors expecting AI to primarily deliver efficiency gains or temporary first-mover advantages, compared with only 25% of investors seeing AI as a source of durable competitive advantage for AI winners.
- As a result, investor scrutiny of AI is high, with 78% of investors specifically analyzing companies' AI strategies (up from 72% in March 2026), and three times as many investors believing companies are overinvesting in AI rather than underinvesting (45% vs. 15%).
- More broadly, investors remain strongly focused on companies' growth prospects (cited by 60% as a key investment criterion, up from 55% in March 2026), but most investors expect companies to also fully deliver on near-term EPS guidance and consensus (58%, up from 52% in March).
- Investors want capital allocation to be disciplined and balanced across high-return investments (with 33% focusing on returns on capital) while maintaining healthy balance sheets (69% of investors avoid companies with over three times leverage) and paying consistent dividends (expected by 79%).
- Investors want companies to actively shape their portfolios, with 79% saying that companies should consider divesting businesses and 78% supporting focused tuck-in acquisitions.

Sources: BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).

US investors' current perspectives on the US economy and stock market

June 22–23

Macroeconomic outlook

INVESTORS WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR VIEWS ON **US RECESSION RISKS**

17%

Investors that believe the US will experience a recession by the end of 2026

Below the March 2026 and September 2025 survey results of 43% and 53%, respectively

INVESTORS WERE ASKED HOW LONG THEY EXPECT **INFLATION TO REMAIN ABOVE THE FEDERAL RESERVE'S 2% TARGET**

49%

Investors that believe inflation will remain elevated beyond year-end 2026

Above the March 2026 and September 2025 survey results of 47% and 38%, respectively

INVESTORS WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR **INFLATION EXPECTATIONS**

3.6%

The average expected **inflation rate for year-end 2026**

3.3%

The average expected **inflation rate for 2027 and 2028**

Bull vs. bear sentiment

INVESTORS WERE ASKED TO PLACE THEMSELVES ON THE **BULL-BEAR SPECTRUM OVER DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS**

46%

Investors that are **bullish for the remainder of 2026**

Above the March 2026 and September 2025 survey results of 26% and 36%, respectively

68%

Investors that are **bullish for the next three years**[1]

Between the March 2026 and September 2025 survey results of 71% and 63%, respectively

INVESTORS WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR **SENTIMENT TODAY, COMPARED WITH THREE MONTHS AGO**

50%

Investors that are **more bullish on the economy**

Above the March 2026 survey result of 22% and equal to the September 2025 survey result

46%

Investors that are **more bullish on the stock market**

Between the March 2026 and September 2025 survey results of 28% and 57%, respectively

Expected stock market low

S&P 500 market low — **6,946**

Implied potential **S&P decline from current level**[2] — **7%**

***Matches series low** vs. 8% in both March 2026 and September 2025 surveys*

Timing of low — **Q4 2026**

Stock market level in three years

S&P 500 level of…[2] — **8,664**

…implies an average annual **TSR for the next three years**[1] — **6.2%**

Near the March 2026 result of 6.3% and equal to the September 2025 result

Bullish | Neutral | Bearish

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: A series high, average, or low is a percentage that reflects a comparison across the 34 US investor pulse checks.
[1]Through March 2029. [2]S&P 500 was approximately 7,472 to 7,501 during the survey window.

Interest rates and inflation have become the top two macro risk factors, while geopolitical risks dropped to number three

June 22–23

Most important macro risk factors[1]

Investors that consider these factors to be among the top three risks (%)		Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026 (pp)	Jun 2026 vs. Sep 2025 (pp)
Interest rates and monetary policy[2]	61	+14	+3
Consumer price inflation[2]	47	+12	+4
Geopolitical risks (for example, the war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East)	44	–26	+9
Cost and wage inflation	25	+11	+8
Inflated asset valuation	25	+12	–4
Growth in key regions and countries that is lower than expected (for example, in China)	14	+9	+9
Consumer sentiment	14	–1	–8
Private-sector credit and default risks	13	–2	+9
Company-specific and other idiosyncratic risks	13	+7	+1
Public-sector debt and spending	11	–4	–8
Supply chain and other operational risks	9	–7	+1
Tightening of liquidity in capital markets (for example, equity fund outflows)	5	–4	–3
Tax policy (for example, the impact on corporate profits and consumer spending)	4	–4	–5

More significant change

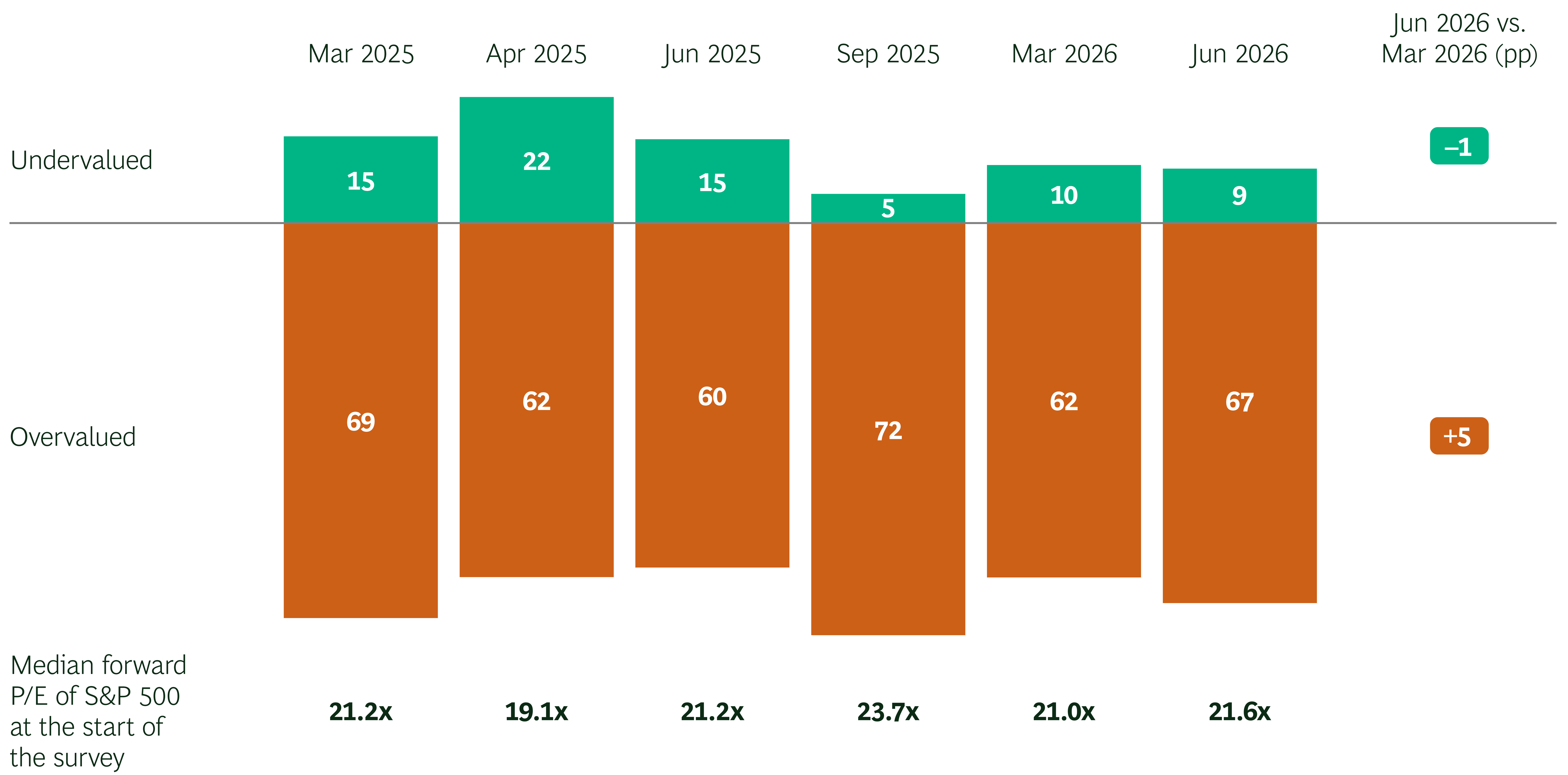
Less significant change

Sources: BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151), Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026), and Q3 2025 (September 25–28, 2025).
Note: Top 13 answers shown for legibility. Any apparent discrepancies when compared with prior survey results are due to rounding.
[1]Survey question: What are the most important risks for investors to consider in today's environment? Rank the top three. [2]In previous surveys, this question referred to consumer price inflation and consumer sentiment.

Two-thirds of investors view the S&P 500 as overvalued

June 22–23

Investor perspectives on current S&P 500 valuation level (%)[1]



77% | Investors that **anticipate TSR headwinds due to the current market valuation level and bullish AI expectations** (up 14pp since March 2026).[2]

51% | Investors that **expect meaningful earnings resets** over the next 12 to 24 months.[3]

As a result, it will be **important to have a clear and compelling value-creation agenda** to offset lower profitability and/or valuation multiple compression.

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).
[1]Survey question: What is your opinion of the current valuation level of the S&P 500 level? For reference, the current (12-months trailing) median P/E of the S&P 500 level is 25.2x and median forward P/E (based on NTM earnings) is 21.6x.
[2]Percentage of investors agreeing with this statement: The current market valuation level and bullish expectations for the advancement of AI are likely to create future valuation and return headwinds. [3]Percentage of investors agreeing with this statement: A meaningful share of the companies in my investable or coverage universe will require a substantial earnings reset (for example, earnings outlook lowered by 10%+) over the next 12 to 24 months, because prior earnings guidance was too bullish or they need to make P&L investments.

Investors see the market as too bullish on all market drivers, especially the future impact of AI, US federal policies, and interest rates

June 22–23

Key geopolitical and macro factors influencing the US equity market[1]

Factor	Assessment of factors' importance: Investors that consider these factors to be among the top three factors (%)	Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026 (pp)	Jun 2026 vs. Sep 2025 (pp)	Evaluation of the market's view: Investors that consider the market's view to be overly bullish or overly bearish on a given factor (%) — Overly bearish[3]	Overly bullish[3]	Net over-bullishness[2]	Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026 (pp)
AI development and regulation (for example, generative AI risks and the impact on semiconductors)	66	+12	+12	9	56	48%	+5
Interest rate policy (for example, the number and magnitude of Federal Reserve rate cuts)	65	+4	–9	13	34	21%	+12
US federal policies (for example, tax legislation, tariffs, and job cuts)	60	–1	–19	9	39	30%	+5
War in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East	39	–27	+26	7	26	19%	–5
Cost of capital (for example, opportunities for efficiency across capital spending and working capital)	26	+6	–2	11	30	19%	–12
China GDP outlook	10	–3	–1	11	26	16%	–2
M&A activity and regulation (for example, FTC objections)	7	+3	–4	9	14	5%	0
Structural changes in asset management and allocation (for example, shifts toward passive money and decline of the sell side)	6	+3	–3	5	15	11%	0
Labor relations and cost (for example, risks of strikes and substantial declines in labor productivity)	5	0	0	12	21	9%	–10
BRICS expansion (and global rivalries such as US-China)	5	0	–3	13	21	8%	–4
Rest-of-Asia trade and economic acceleration (for example, India and Southeast Asia)	5	+3	0	8	17	9%	+2
Green industrial policy (for example, clean energy incentives in the US and the European Green Deal)	1	0	–1	10	16	6%	–3

Overly bearish[3] Overly bullish[3]

Sources: BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151), Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026), and Q3 2025 (September 25–28, 2025).
Note: BRICS = Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa; FTC = Federal Trade Commission. Any apparent discrepancies in totals or comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding.
[1]Survey question: Which of the following factors do you believe will most influence the overall direction of the US equity market for 2026? [2]Net overbullishness is the share of investors considering the market to be overly bullish minus the share of investors considering the market being overly bearish. [3]The market being overly bullish implies downside risk, whereas the market being overly bearish implies potential upside risk.

While the expected impact of US tariffs remains broadly negative across macro and corporate indicators, it has moderated

June 22–23

Investors' expected 12- to 24-month impact of US tariff policy (%)[1]

	Strongly negative	Moderately negative	Little or none	Moderately positive	Strongly positive	Net perspective[2]	Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026[3]	Jun 2026 vs. Sep 2025[3]
Consumer price levels[4]	17	50	17	14	2	–50	+7	+3
Consumer spending	9	54	21	13	1	–49	+9	+2
Corporate margins	7	50	24	16	3	–38	+14	+12
US interest rates[5]	9	44	23	16	7	–30	–13	–32
Corporate revenues	5	41	26	25	3	–19	+14	+15
Corporate investment levels	6	35	34	19	5	–17	+13	–6
US stock market performance	7	34	30	22	7	–12	+26	+11
US GDP growth	5	36	26	26	5	–11	+12	0
US government income	13	15	25	38	7	+17	–15	–17

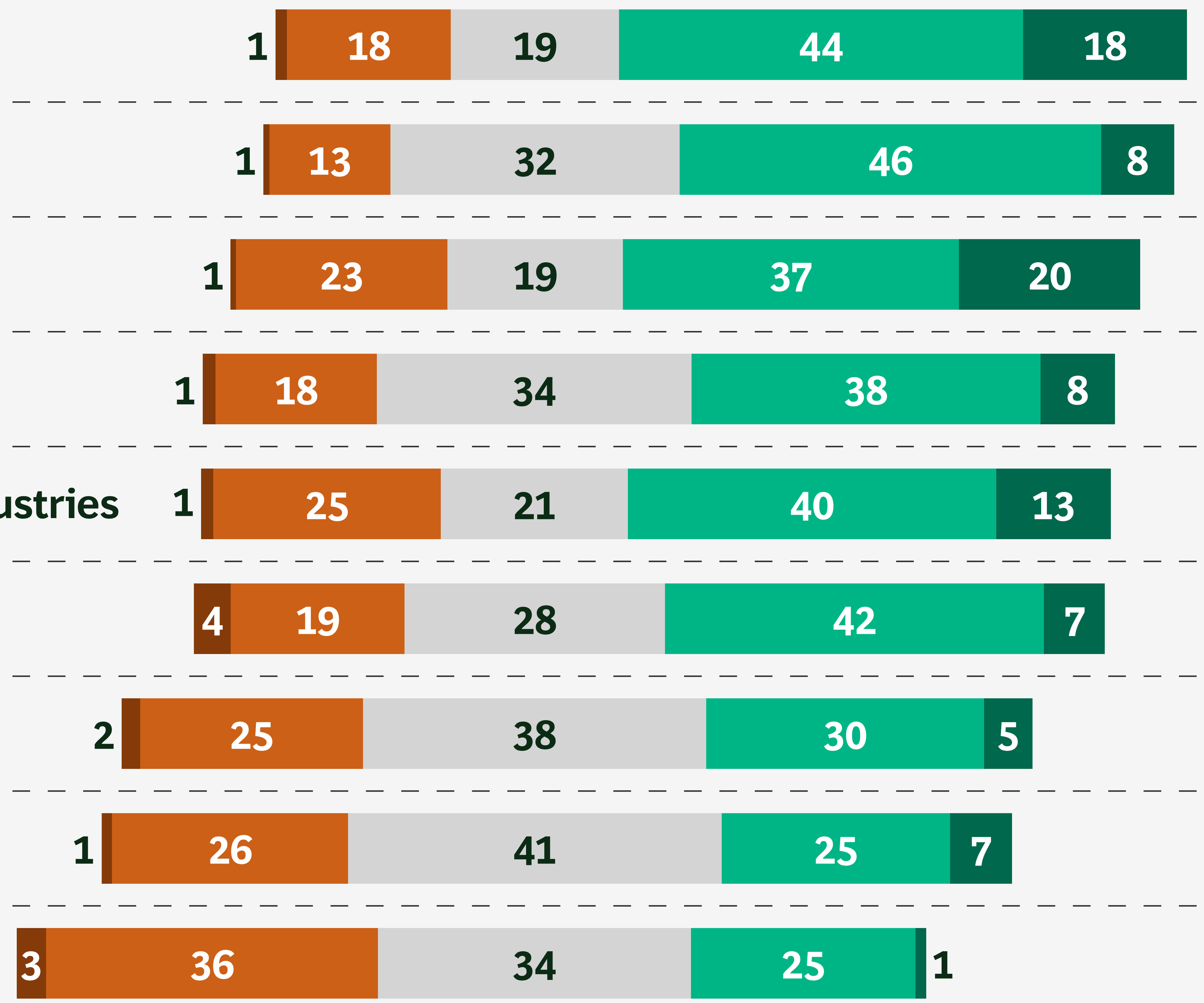
When asked whether the expected impact of tariffs is fully priced in, 56% say that the US equity markets have underreacted to the likely impact of tariffs on the US economy, compared with 59% in March 2026 and 62% in September 2025.[6]

Sources: BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151), Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026), and Q3 2025 (September 25–28, 2025).
Note: Series may not sum to 100 because a small share of respondents reported being unsure of the prospective impact of US tariffs on a given indicator. Any apparent discrepancies in totals or comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding.
[1]Survey question: How would you rate the impact of the US tariff policy over the next 12 to 24 months? [2]Net perspective is the share of investors expecting positive impact minus the share of investors expecting negative impact. [3]Change in net perspective compared with the results from the same question asked in the surveys conducted March 23–27, 2026, and September 25–28, 2025, respectively. [4]Negative impact on consumer prices means the consumer price index will increase from current levels. [5]Positive impact on US interest rates means that interest rates will decline from current levels. [6]Percentage of investors agreeing with this statement: The US stock market has so far underreacted to the likely macroeconomic impact of tariffs.

Exploration-based industries, financial institutions, and tech sectors are seen as macro winners, while consumer sectors are expected to lag

June 22–23

Investors’ expected impact of the current economic climate and political agenda on different sectors (%)



	Strongly negative	Moderately negative	Little or none	Moderately positive	Strongly positive	Net perspective[1]	Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026[2]	Jun 2026 vs. Sep 2025[2]
Exploration-based industries	1	18	19	44	18	+43	–9	+11
Financial institutions	1	13	32	46	8	+40	+37	+9
Technology-related industries	1	23	19	37	20	+33	+6	–18
Utilities	1	18	34	38	8	+27	+2	+2
Industrials and manufacturing industries	1	25	21	40	13	+26	+7	+23
Materials-based industries	4	19	28	42	7	+25	+14	+21
Services industries	2	25	38	30	5	+9	+15	+8
Health care-related industries	1	26	41	25	7	+5	+11	+20
Consumer industries	3	36	34	25	1	–14	+17	+7

Strongly negative · Moderately negative · Little or none · Moderately positive · Strongly positive

Investors are confident in their understanding of macroeconomic factors.

For example, 79% of survey respondents say that they have a strong grasp of the likely tariff impact on the companies they invest in, compared with 71% in March 2026 and 75% in September 2025.[3]

Sources: BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151), Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026), and Q3 2025 (September 25–28, 2025).
Note: Series may not sum to 100 because a small share of respondents reported being unsure. Any apparent discrepancies in totals or comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding.
[1]Net perspective is the share of investors expecting positive impact minus the share of investors expecting negative impact. [2]Change in net perspective compared with the results from the same question asked in the surveys conducted March 23–27, 2026, and September 25–28, 2025, respectively. [3]Percentage of investors agreeing with this statement: I believe that I have a good understanding of how tariffs will impact the financial performance of the companies I invest in or cover.

Most investors expect AI to have a material impact on fundamentals, but only 25% think AI will create durable competitive advantages

June 22–23

Investors' views on the expected impact of AI

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).
[1]Survey question: When do you expect AI and GenAI to have a materially positive impact on corporate fundamentals and profitability across most industries, excluding technology companies focused on AI? [2]Changes relative to corresponding time frames in prior survey. Series does not sum to 100% because 2% of investors do not believe there will be an impact on growth or margins. [3]Survey question: Which of the following best describes your overall view on the likely average impact of AI and GenAI on corporate value creation over the next one to two years?

AI is expected to positively impact GDP growth, stock market performance, and corporate fundamentals, at the cost of jobs and wages

June 22–23

Investors' expected 24-month impact of AI (%)[1]

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).
Note: Series may not sum to 100 because a small share of respondents reported being unsure. Any apparent discrepancies in totals or comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding.
[1]Survey question: What impact do you expect AI to have in the following areas over the next 24 months in [your region]? [2]Net perspective is the share of investors expecting positive impact minus the share of investors expecting negative impact.
[3]A reduction in consumer price levels and unemployment is considered a positive impact.

About 80% of investors are actively evaluating companies' AI strategies and stress the importance of having a clear AI narrative

June 22–23

Investors' responses excluded technology companies focused on AI, including infrastructure and tools

Significant increase | Limited or no change | Significant decrease

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).

Many investors view AI investments as too aggressive, but they are increasingly willing to accept margin dilution to build AI capabilities

June 22–23

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).
Note: The results reflect investors that somewhat agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Any apparent discrepancies in comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding.

Investors ultimately expect AI to create meaningful value, especially in health care, technology, financial institutions, and industrials

June 22–23

Investors' expected three-year impact of AI on financial fundamentals by sector (%)[1]

Sources: S&P Capital IQ; BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).
Note: Any apparent discrepancies in sums or comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding.
[1]Survey question: How do you expect the development of AI to affect the financial fundamentals (for example, revenue growth, margins, profitability, and free cash flow generation) of companies across different sectors within the next three years (by year-end 2028)?
[2]Net perspective is the share of investors expecting positive impact minus the share of investors expecting negative impact.

Investors are prioritizing structural growth and macro beneficiaries, while being cautious by increasing cash holdings and smaller positions

June 22–23

Changes in investment practices and priorities

Investors that report making the following changes to capital allocation and investing practices or recommendations since the beginning of 2025 (%)[1]

Sources: BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151), Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026), and Q3 2025 (September 25–28, 2025).
Note: Shown are the changes indicated by at least 25% of respondents. Any apparent discrepancies in comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding.
[1]Survey question: How have your capital allocation and investing practices or recommendations changed since the beginning of 2025?

Long-term organic growth remains the dominant investment consideration, followed by strong returns on capital

June 22–23

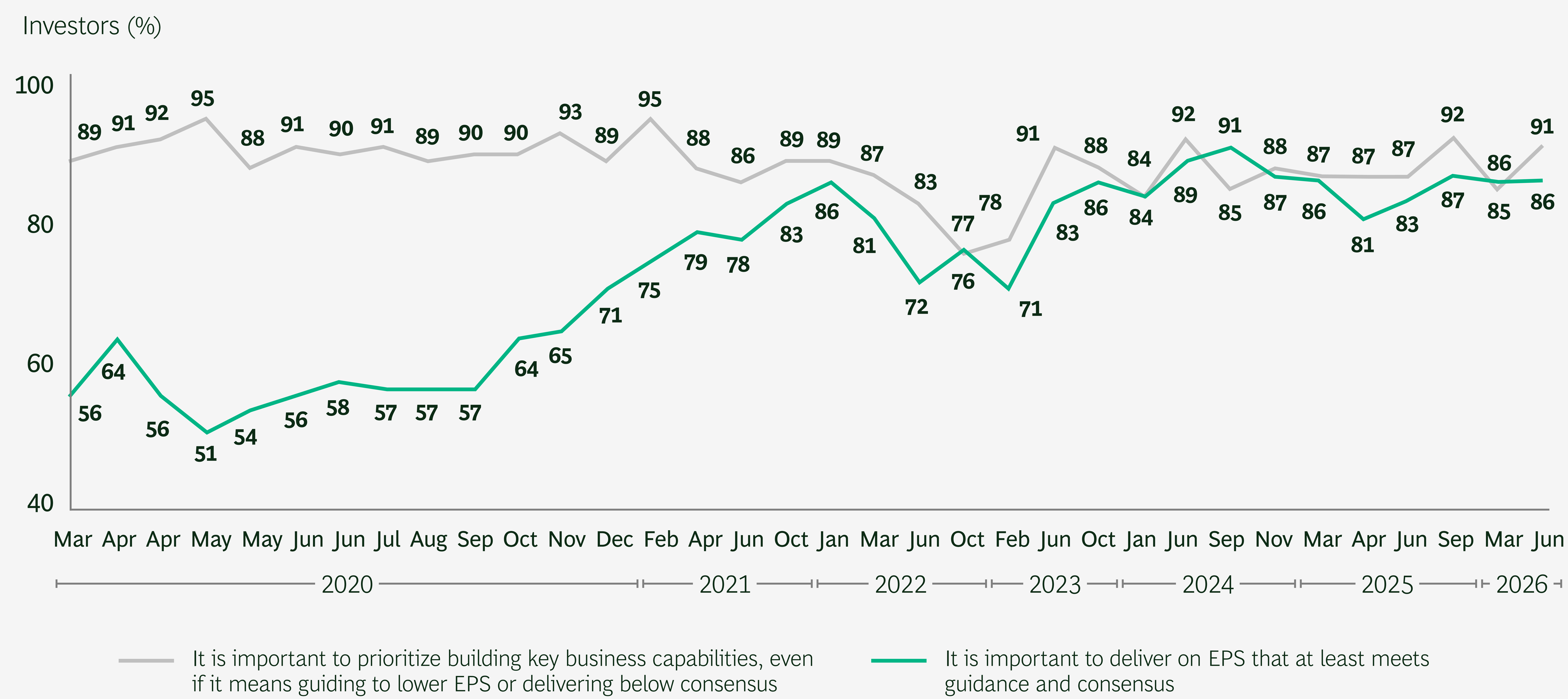
Most important company-specific factors driving investment decisions or recommendations

Sources: BCG Investor Perspectives Series, Q2 2026 (June 22–23, 2026, n = 151) and Q1 2026 (March 23–27, 2026).
Note: FCF = free cash flow; EPS = earnings per share. Any apparent discrepancies in comparisons with prior survey results are due to rounding. The ranking for climate and sustainability factors would likely be very different for sectors where environmental considerations are central to the investment thesis.

A clear majority of investors want companies to deliver on near-term EPS expectations while making disciplined growth investments

June 22–23

Investors' priorities for financially healthy companies



When asked to choose, investors skew toward investing for growth by a three-to-one margin[1]

28% | Investors that would **prefer companies to prioritize growth investments** (below the March 2026 survey result of 37%)

14% | Investors that would **prefer companies to focus on delivering short-term EPS performance** (near the March 2026 survey result of 11%)

58% | Investors that **expect companies to thread the needle and both deliver** near-term EPS and invest for the future (higher than the March 2026 survey result of 52%)

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: EPS = earning per share.
[1]Survey question: How do you want companies that you invest in or follow to manage the complex tradeoff between delivering on near-term guidance and consensus (for example, quarterly or annual EPS) and investing to support medium- and long-term organic top-line growth? Respondents selected an answer on a scale from one to five, where one indicated that companies should strongly prioritize delivering on guidance and five indicated that companies should strongly prioritize investing to support growth.

Investors remain supportive of investing for growth, while more strongly emphasizing cost discipline and transformation initiatives

June 22–23

Do investors support companies that prioritize long-term investments or short-term performance?

83% | Investors that support companies **investing in innovation and go-to-market strategies, even if that affects margins short term**

3pp lower than the March 2026 result of 86%, and equal to the September 2025 result

79% | Investors that support companies focusing on **reducing costs to strengthen near-term profitability and hunkering down**—that is, not reinvesting cost savings into medium- and longer-term growth

9pp higher than the March 2026 result of 70%, and 6pp above the September 2025 result of 73%

How should companies prepare to tackle the challenges raised by the current environment?

78% | Investors that believe that in 2026, there is an **increased need for transformative initiatives** (such as cost programs, pricing optimization, and growth acceleration) compared with prior years

6pp higher than the March 2026 result of 72%, and 8pp above the September 2025 result of 70%

51% | Investors that believe companies should expect an increase in activist activity and, therefore, **take proactive steps to mitigate activism risk** by strengthening their businesses' fundamentals

13pp lower than the March 2026 result of 64%, and 8pp below the September 2025 result of 59%

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: All questions were posed with respect to financially healthy companies, which were defined as companies with relatively strong and resilient free cash flow and a healthy balance sheet.

Investors increasingly back portfolio reshaping through acquisitions and divestitures

June 22–23

Should companies reshape their portfolios through divestitures or acquisitions, or both?

79% | Investors that believe **exiting or divesting lines of businesses** should be considered to strengthen the overall company in the current market environment

Same as the March 2026 result, and 1pp above the September 2025 result of 78%

72% | Investors that believe **acquisitions should be actively pursued** to strengthen the business at current valuation levels

9pp higher than the March 2026 result of 63%, and 8pp above the September 2025 result of 64%

Do investors support tuck-in or even larger acquisitions in the current environment?

78% | Investors that support companies making **focused tuck-in acquisitions** (for example, well below 20% of their market cap) that do not materially increase their leverage

3pp lower than the March 2026 result of 81%, and 4pp above the September 2025 result of 74%

72% | Investors that support companies making **substantial or even transformative acquisitions (above 20% of their market cap)** that have the potential to be strategic and competitive game changers, even if they substantially increase short-term leverage (one to two years)

3pp higher than the March 2026 and September 2025 results of 69% for each period

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: All questions were posed with respect to financially healthy companies, which were defined as companies with relatively strong and resilient free cash flow and a healthy balance sheet.

Investors increasingly value disciplined cash returns, indicating durable dividends are critical and showing more support for buybacks

June 22–23

Should companies prioritize dividends and/or repurchase shares?

79% | Investors that think it is **important to pay dividends that are at least in line with historical levels**[1]

2pp higher than the March 2026 result of 77%, and 7pp above September 2025 result of 72%—matching a series high

58% | Investors that agree that **dividends have become a more important consideration** in decision making and recommendations in the current market environment

5pp higher than the March 2026 result of 53%, and 1pp below the September 2025 result of 59%

48% | Investors that think it is important to **aggressively repurchase shares** in today's market environment

9pp higher than the March 2026 result of 39%, and 5pp above the September 2025 result of 43%—matching a series high

The vast majority of investors remain strongly committed to the importance of durable dividends as a sign of quality.

Given the current uncertainty, dividends also have become more important considerations in investment decisions.

While more investors support aggressive share buybacks despite near-record S&P levels, such decisions depend on the individual company's valuation and TSR outlook.

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: All questions were posed with respect to financially healthy companies, which were defined as companies with relatively strong and resilient free cash flowand a healthy balance sheet.
A series high, average, or low is a percentage that reflects a comparison across the 34 investor pulse checks.
[1]In earlier editions of the BCG Investor Perspectives Series, participants were asked about the importance of paying dividends that are at least equal to those paid before the pandemic.

Investors' aversion to leverage remains high, especially for companies with elevated debt levels

June 22–23

Investor perspectives and approaches regarding companies with debt

	Investors that report taking this approach regarding financially healthy companies (%)	Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026 (pp)	Jun 2026 vs. Sep 2025 (pp)
Actively avoiding or reducing exposure to companies carrying higher leverage (for example, more than three times the net debt-to-EBITDA ratio)	69	–4	+3
Actively avoiding or reducing exposure to companies carrying near-average leverage (for example, about two times the net debt-to-EBITDA ratio)	46	–6	0

More significant change — Less significant change

Most investors continue to avoid companies with elevated leverage, underscoring the importance of balance sheet resilience.

While leverage concerns have eased since March, investors remain cautious on companies with higher debt levels.

Companies with moderate leverage have more room, but they should preserve flexibility in case the macro backdrop deteriorates.

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: All questions were posed with respect to financially healthy companies, which were defined as companies with relatively strong and resilient free cash flow and a healthy balance sheet.
Any apparent discrepancies when compared with prior survey results are due to rounding.

Almost 80% of investors seek more C-suite engagement, while over two-thirds remain concerned about the accuracy of sell-side forecasts

June 22–23

Does the current environment present special challenges that companies need to address through guidance and engagement?

68% | Investors that believe that **most sell-side forecasts do not accurately reflect the current uncertainty** and fast-changing environment

5pp lower than the March 2026 result of 73%, and 3pp below the September 2025 result of 71%

78% | Investors that would like to engage more frequently with senior executives of the companies they invest in or cover

4pp higher than the March 2026 and September 2025 results of 74%

Companies should ensure clear guidance and proactively manage expectations, while providing more C-suite access for high-quality investors.

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: All questions were posed with respect to financially healthy companies, which were defined as companies with relatively strong and resilient free cash flow and a healthy balance sheet.

Comparison of BCG's US investor pulse checks (1/7)

	2020													2021		
What are your expectations for...	**Mar 22 #1**	**Apr 5 #2**	**Apr 19 #3**	**May 3 #4**	**May 17 #5**	**Jun 7 #6**	**Jun 28 #7**	**Jul 19 #8**	**Aug 9 #9**	**Sep 19 #10**	**Oct 17 #11**	**Nov 14 #12**	**Dec 13 #13**	**Feb 7 #14**	**Apr 30 #15**	**Jun 20 #16**
Duration of COVID-19's impact on the US economy	Through Q3 2020	Through Q3 2020	Through Q4 2020	Through Q4 2020	Through Q4 2020	Through Q4 2020	Through Q1 2021	Through Q2 2021	Through Q2 2021	Through Q2 2021	End of Q2 or start of Q3 2021	Through Q2 2021	Through Q2 2021	Through Q4 2021	Through Q4 2021	Not asked
Stock market decline:																
▪ S&P 500 level after the decline (from the current level at the time of the survey)	2,062 (–14%)	2,158 (–14%)	2,393 (–15%)	2,382 (–16%) ↓	2,449 (–16%) ↓	2,676 (–14%)	2,664 (–14%)	2,765 (–14%)	2,935 (–12%)	2,962 (–12%)	3,108 (–11%)	3,153 (–9%)	3,288 (–10%)	3,468 (–10%)	3,828 (–9%)	3,812 (–9%)
▪ Timing of decline	End of May 2020	End of June (Q2) 2020	Early Q3 2020	End of Q3 2020	End of Q3 2020	End of Q3 2020	End of Q3 2020	End of Q4 2020	End of Q4 2020	End of Q4 2020	End of Q1 2021	End of Q1 2021	End of Q2 2021	End of Q2 2021	End of Q3 2021	End of Q4 2021
Three-year S&P 500 level (implied TSR)[1]	3,075 (11%) ↑	3,165 (10%)	3,411 (9%)	3,591 (9%)	3,525 (9%)	3,717 (8%)	3,685 (8%)	3,727 (7%)	3,869 (7%)	3,938 (7.5%)	4,061 (7.5%)	4,153 (7.5%)	4,232 (7%)	4,488 (7%)	4,840 (7%)	4,829 (7%)
Bull vs. bear																
Investors that are bullish for:																
▪ Current CY	55%	53%	44%	46%	45%	41%	40%	35%	36%	45%	35%	38%	47%	51%	50%	39%
▪ Next CY	63%	64%	67% ↑	64%	62%	55%	64%	57%	57%	65%	56%	55%	50%	41%	47%	45%
▪ Next three years	65%	68%	69%	69%	64%	61%	61%	57%	60%	66%	63%	59%	57%	53%	52%	52%
More bullish vs. last month/three months ago: economy[2]	Not asked	Not asked	34%	35%	30%	64%	35%	28%	43%	45%	39%	47%	60%	63%	73%	55%
More bullish vs. last month/three months ago: stock market[2]	Not asked	Not asked	45%	40%	33%	53%	30%	31%	36%	34%	35%	49%	54%	59%	57%	40%

↑ Series high ↓ Series low

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: CY = calendar year.
[1]TSR is derived through the CAGR of the S&P 500 level and the S&P-average dividend yield. [2]Respondents were asked for their change in bullishness relative to the prior month until Investor Pulse Check #16 (June 2021) and relative to the three months prior since then.

Comparison of BCG's US investor pulse checks (2/7)

	2021	2022				2023			2024				2025				2026		
What are your expectations for...	**Oct 31 #17**	**Jan 31 #18**	**Mar 22 #19**	**Jun 21 #20**	**Oct 11 #21**	**Feb 22 #22**	**Jun 8 #23**	**Oct 13 #24**	**Jan 18 #25**	**Jun 16 #26**	**Sep 23 #27**	**Nov 10 #28**	**Mar 25 #29**	**Apr 9 #30**	**Jun 8 #31**	**Sep 28 #32**	**Mar 27 #33**	**Jun 23 #34**	**Difference (Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026)**
Duration of COVID-19's impact on the US economy	Not asked	End of Q2 2022	End of Q2 2022	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
Stock market decline:																			
▪ S&P 500 level after the decline (from the current level at the time of the survey)	4,140 (–10%)	3,875 (–10% to –12%)	3,920 (–10%)	3,240 (–12%)	3,375 (–10%)	3,712 (–8%)	3,878 (–9%)	3,965 (–9%)	4,397 (–8%)	4,984 (–8%)	5,257 (–8%)	5,523 (–7%) ↑	5,251 (–9%)	4,539 (–10%)	5,543 (–8%)	6,096 (–8%)	5,970 (–8%)	6,946 (–7%) ↑	+125bps
▪ Timing of decline	End of Q2 2022	End of Q2 2022	End of Q3 2022	End of Q4 2022	End of Q4 2022	End of Q2 2023	End of Q4 2023	End of Q1 2024	End of Q2 2024	End of Q4 2024	End of Q2 2025	End of Q2 2025	End of Q4 2025	End of Q4 2025	End of Q4 2025	End of Q1 2026	End of Q3 2026	End of Q4 2026	NA
Three-year S&P 500 level (implied TSR)[1]	5,273 (6.5%)	5,120 (7%–7.5%)	5,140 (7%)	4,460 (8.5%)	4,400 (8%)	4,692 (7%)	4,953 (7%)	4,948 (6%) ↓	5,532 (6.5%)	6,293 (6.5%)	6,546 (6%) ↓	6,920 (6.5%)	6,688 (6.5%)	5,978 (7%)	6,911 (6%) ↓	7,631 (6.2%)	7,562 (6.3%)	8,664 (6.2%)	–10bps
Bull vs. bear																			
Investors that are bullish for:																			
▪ Current CY	41%	20%	22%	6%	5% ↓	22%	21%	19%	37%	41%	44%	65% ↑	25%	20%	28%	36%	26%	46%	+20pp
▪ Next CY	43%	43%	41%	29%	25% ↓	51%	51%	38%	59%	51%	52%	57%	60%	48%	48%	41%	50%	Not asked	NA
▪ Next three years	45% ↓	60%	62%	59%	62%	73%	69%	65%	67%	60%	60%	67%	76% ↑	66%	68%	63%	71%	68%	–3pp
More bullish than one or three months ago: economy[2]	41%	33%	25%	14%	13% ↓	60%	58%	35%	62%	53%	59%	74% ↑	31%	18%	41%	50%	22%	50%	+28pp
More bullish than one or three months ago: stock market[2]	42%	25% ↓	29%	27%	28%	53%	53%	37%	59%	53%	60%	75% ↑	37%	29%	45%	57%	28%	46%	+18pp

↑ Series high ↓ Series low ■ Significant decrease ■ Moderate decrease ■ No change ■ Moderate increase ■ Significant increase

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: CY = calendar year; NA = not applicable; bps = basis points.
[1]TSR is derived through the CAGR of the S&P 500 level and the S&P-average dividend yield. [2]Respondents were asked for their change in bullishness relative to the prior month until Investor Pulse Check #16 (June 2021) and relative to the three months prior since then.

Comparison of BCG's US investor pulse checks (3/7)

Investors that agree with the following statements about financially healthy companies (%)[1]

	2020													2021		
It is important for financially healthy companies to...[1]	**Mar 22 #1**	**Apr 5 #2**	**Apr 19 #3**	**May 3 #4**	**May 17 #5**	**Jun 7 #6**	**Jun 28 #7**	**Jul 19 #8**	**Aug 9 #9**	**Sep 19 #10**	**Oct 17 #11**	**Nov 14 #12**	**Dec 13 #13**	**Feb 7 #14**	**Apr 30 #15**	**Jun 20 #16**
Prioritize building key business capabilities	89%	91%	92%	95% ↑	88%	91%	90%	91%	89%	90%	90%	93%	89%	95% ↑	88%	86%
Actively pursue acquisitions	58%	64%	65%	66%	70%	68%	68%	69%	71%	72% ↑	65%	63%	65%	63%	71%	68%
Actively consider exiting or divesting lines of business	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	65%	64% ↓	75%	67%	73%	75%	73%	77%	71%	83% ↑	75%	77%
Aggressively repurchase shares	39%	44%	38%	36%	42%	43%	34% ↓	44%	37%	41%	43%	36%	36%	35%	41%	36%
Maintain the dividend per share	41%	43%	35%	29% ↓	36%	43%	33%	36%	36%	37%	40%	45%	43%	47%	53%	47%
Consider significant equity issuance a reasonable move	Not asked	48%	56%	55%	53%	53%	61%	59%	55%	37% ↓	56%	52%	61%	55%	55%	63% ↑
Deliver EPS that at least meets revised guidance or consensus	56%	64%	56%	51% ↓	54%	56%	58%	57%	57%	57%	64%	65%	71%	75%	79%	78%
Expect an increase in activist activity and take proactive steps to mitigate risk	59%	66%	64%	70%	61%	65%	63%	66%	63%	57%	67%	67%	67%	68%	67%	69%
Continue to fully pursue their ESG agenda and priorities[2]	Not asked	56%	46%	48%	45%	51%	48%	53%	51%	69% ↑	45%	48%	50%	50%	47%	55%
Double down on ESG initiatives that create value and/or reduce risk longer term[2]	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	49% ↑

↑ Series high ↓ Series low

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: EPS = earnings per share; ESG = environmental, social, and governance.
[1]Financially healthy companies were defined as companies with relatively strong and resilient free cash flow and a healthy balance sheet. [2]Leading investment industry institutions and executives have voiced their strong and unwavering commitment to and focus on ESG and sustainable investing. However, most of the investors BCG recently surveyed indicated that ESG is not currently a primary consideration in day-to-day investment decisions and recommendations.

Comparison of BCG's US investor pulse checks (4/7)

Investors that agree with the following statements about financially healthy companies (%)[1]

	2021	2022				2023			2024				2025				2026		
It is important for financially healthy companies to...[1]	**Oct 31 #17**	**Jan 31 #18**	**Mar 22 #19**	**Jun 21 #20**	**Oct 11 #21**	**Feb 22 #22**	**Jun 8 #23**	**Oct 13 #24**	**Jan 18 #25**	**Jun 16 #26**	**Sep 23 #27**	**Nov 10 #28**	**Mar 25 #29**	**Apr 9 #30**	**Jun 8 #31**	**Sep 28 #32**	**Mar 27 #33**	**Jun 23 #34**	**Difference (Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026)**
Prioritize building key business capabilities	89%	89%	87%	83%	76% ↓	78%	91%	88%	84%	92%	91%	88%	87%	87%	87%	92%	85%	91%	+6pp
Actively pursue acquisitions	71%	72% ↑	62%	69%	68%	68%	57%	61%	61%	59%	55% ↓	62%	60%	61%	65%	64%	63%	72% ↑	+9pp
Actively consider exiting or divesting lines of business	79%	75%	74%	78%	75%	75%	76%	81%	78%	80%	78%	78%	77%	77%	76%	78%	79%	79%	No change
Aggressively repurchase shares	37%	43%	39%	47%	44%	36%	37%	41%	38%	34% ↓	37%	37%	40%	43%	37%	43%	39%	48% ↑	+9pp
Maintain the dividend per share	45%	51%	49%	54%	47%	66%	68%	71%	74%	76%	76%	77%	79% ↑	76%	72%	72%	77%	79% ↑	+2pp
Consider significant equity issuance a reasonable move	61%	61%	61%	54%	55%	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
Deliver EPS that at least meets revised guidance or consensus	83%	86%	81%	72%	77%	71%	83%	86%	84%	89% ↑	85%	87%	86%	81%	83%	87%	86%	86%	No change
Expect an increase in activist activity and take proactive steps to mitigate risk	69%	73% ↑	62%	61%	57%	63%	64%	67%	58%	63%	54%	63%	62%	55%	55%	59%	64%	51% ↓	–13pp
Continue to fully pursue their ESG agenda and priorities[2]	45%	43%	44%	41%	37%	37%	32%	29%	25%	29%	27%	28%	21% ↓	21% ↓	30%	28%	27%	28%	+1pp
Double down on ESG initiatives that create value and/or reduce risk longer term[2]	45%	42%	41%	37%	35%	33%	30%	29%	29%	25%	24%	29%	23% ↓	23% ↓	23% ↓	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA

↑ Series high ↓ Series low Much less important Less important Minimal or no change More important Much more important

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: EPS = earnings per share; ESG = environmental, social, and governance; NA = not applicable.
[1]Financially healthy companies were defined as companies with relatively strong and resilient free cash flow and a healthy balance sheet. [2]Leading investment industry institutions and executives have voiced their strong and unwavering commitment to and focus on ESG and sustainable investing. However, most of the investors BCG recently surveyed indicated that ESG is not currently a primary consideration in day-to-day investment decisions and recommendations.

Comparison of BCG's US investor pulse checks (5/7)

Investors that ranked these criteria among the top three investment risk factors (%)	2022				2023			2024				2025				2026		
	Jan 31 #18	Mar 22 #19	Jun 21 #20	Oct 11 #21	Feb 22 #22	Jun 8 #23	Oct 13 #24	Jan 18 #25	Jun 16 #26	Sep 23 #27	Nov 10 #28	Mar 25 #29	Apr 9 #30	Jun 8 #31	Sep 28 #32	Mar 27 #33	Jun 23 #34	Difference (Jun. 2026 vs. Mar. 2026)
Interest rates and US Federal Reserve policy[1]	82%	84%	91% ↑	87%	69%	75%	77%	70%	65%	58%	45% ↓	50%	46%	51%	58%	47%	61%	+14pp
Consumer price inflation and sentiment[2]	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	42%	43%	45%	41%	53% ↑	45%	31% ↓	46%	53% ↑	38%	43%	35%	47%	+12pp
Geopolitical risks[3]	46%	63%	38%	39%	39%	39%	53%	49%	42%	53%	49%	40%	33%	32% ↓	35%	69% ↑	44%	–25pp
Cost and wage inflation[4]	39%	43%	45%	62% ↑	37%	40%	29%	36%	32%	25%	27%	24%	13%	12% ↓	16%	13%	25%	+12pp
Tightening of liquidity in capital markets	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	25% ↑	15%	16%	12%	6%	6%	9%	9%	19%	16%	7%	9%	5% ↓	–4pp
Inflated asset valuation[5]	21%	13%	11%	8% ↓	22%	25%	21%	23%	23%	33% ↑	25%	21%	12%	19%	28%	13%	25%	+12pp
Public-sector debt and spending	12%	7%	4% ↓	8%	18%	15%	23%	22%	27%	28% ↑	25%	14%	10%	27%	19%	15%	11%	–4pp
Climate and other ESG-related risks[6]	7%	5%	7%	5%	12% ↑	7%	4%	5%	9%	5%	7%	1% ↓	2%	2%	1% ↓	2%	1% ↓	+1pp
Supply chain and other operational risks[7]	19%	19%	19%	9%	11%	8%	5% ↓	12%	7%	7%	11%	9%	17%	21% ↑	9%	16%	9%	–7pp
Private-sector credit and default risks	2% ↓	6%	3%	3%	7%	3%	9%	12%	15% ↑	12%	6%	5%	8%	8%	5%	15% ↑	13%	–2pp
Company-specific risks	7%	5% ↓	6%	5% ↓	7%	6%	7%	9%	12%	10%	9%	7%	5% ↓	7%	12%	6%	13% ↑	+7pp
Lower growth in key regions and countries (for example, China)[8]	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	18% ↑	7%	6%	6%	14%	9%	9%	11%	5% ↓	5% ↓	5% ↓	14%	+9pp
Stagnation in world trade	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	27%	47%	55% ↑	39%	25%	27%	2% ↓	–25pp
Tax policy impact[9]	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	18%	15%	12%	19% ↑	9%	8%	4% ↓	–4pp
Macroeconomic risks	24% ↓	38%	58%	61% ↑	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
Pandemic- and COVID-19-related risks	33% ↑	12%	12%	5% ↓	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
Stock market liquidity risk	4% ↑	2% ↓	3%	4% ↑	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
Consumer sentiment	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	22% ↑	15%	14% ↓	–1pp
Foreign exchange rate changes	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	3% ↑	2% ↓	2% ↓	No change

↑ Series high ↓ Series low ■ Much higher risk ■ Higher risk ■ No change ■ Lower risk ■ Much lower risk

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: ESG = environmental, social, and governance; NA = not applicable.
[1]This factor was inflation and interest rate risk or inflation rates and US Federal Reserve policy in previous surveys. [2]This factor was consumer price inflation and consumer sentiment in prior surveys. [3]For example, the war in Ukraine, trade wars, and areas with civil unrest. [4]This factor was wage inflation or pressure in previous surveys. [5]This factor was asset price risks in recent surveys. [6]Leading investment industry institutions and executives have voiced their strong and unwavering commitment to and focus on ESG and sustainable investing. However, most of the investors BCG has surveyed indicated that ESG is not currently a primary consideration in day-to-day investment decisions and recommendations. [7]This factor was supply chain risk in previous surveys. [8]This factor was "China growth (after COVID reopening) lower than expected" in prior surveys. [9]For example, on corporate profits and consumer spending.

Comparison of BCG's US investor pulse checks (6/7)

		2022				2023			2024				2025				2026		
Investors that ranked these criteria among the top three considerations for investment decisions or recommendations (%)		**Jan 31 #18**	**Mar 22 #19**	**Jun 21 #20**	**Oct 11 #21**	**Feb 22 #22**	**Jun 8 #23**	**Oct 13 #24**	**Jan 18 #25**	**Jun 16 #26**	**Sep 23 #27**	**Nov 10 #28**	**Mar 25 #29**	**Apr 9 #30**	**Jun 8 #31**	**Sep 28 #32**	**Mar 27 #33**	**Jun 23 #34**	**Difference (Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026)**
Growth	Short-term growth momentum (for example, recovery from a recessionary environment)	19%	16%	11% ↓	13%	14%	22% ↑	15%	17%	15%	14%	17%	15%	19%	20%	13%	18%	19%	+1pp
	Long-term organic-growth outlook (for example, an attractive industry)	65%	61%	67% ↑	61%	50% ↓	53%	52%	52%	59%	54%	57%	59%	55%	58%	53%	55%	60%	+5pp
	Potential for market share gains	25%	28%	31%	32% ↑	18%	10% ↓	15%	10% ↓	17%	12%	14%	14%	10% ↓	12%	16%	18%	17%	–1pp
	M&A-driven growth opportunity	6%	7%	9%	11%	7%	1% ↓	4%	7%	3%	7%	5%	2%	4%	5%	5%	11%	15% ↑	+4pp
Margins and returns	Short-term margin outlook (that is, the impact of pricing, inflation, and transformation impact)	7%	7%	5% ↓	9%	7%	11%	11%	14% ↑	13%	7%	9%	12%	13%	10%	7%	7%	11%	+4pp
	Medium- to long-term margin potential (for example, operating leverage)	22%	20%	19%	15% ↓	19%	18%	21%	24% ↑	15% ↓	24% ↑	16%	19%	15% ↓	17%	22%	15% ↓	15% ↓	No change
	Return on capital (for example, ROIC or ROA and ROE)	19% ↓	29%	21%	23%	19% ↓	23%	22%	24%	27%	26%	31%	23%	27%	24%	30%	35% ↑	33%	–2pp
Cash flow and capital allocation	FCF conversion, generation, and/or yield	27%	29%	29%	31%	33%	26%	36%	35%	32%	39% ↑	25%	28%	25%	25%	33%	19% ↓	19% ↓	No change
	Growth spending (such as M&A and capex)	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	5%	6%	8%	8%	10%	7%	9%	9%	9%	7%	4% ↓	10%	15% ↑	+5pp
	Dividend payout and yield[1]	9%	7%	6%	9%	11% ↑	5%	11% ↑	3% ↓	6%	6%	7%	11% ↑	7%	7%	8%	9%	10%	+1pp
	Buyback approach	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	5% ↑	1% ↓	1% ↓	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%	1% ↓	2%	3%	5% ↑	3%	–2pp

↑ Series high ↓ Series low — Much less important — Less important — No change — More important — Much more important

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: Questions on this slide were added to the survey in October 2021. ROIC = return on invested capital; ROA = return on assets; ROE = return on equity; FCF = free cash flow.
[1]This factor was attractive cash returns in previous surveys.

Comparison of BCG's US investor pulse checks (7/7)

Investors that ranked these criteria among the top three considerations for investment decisions or recommendations (%)		2022				2023			2024				2025				2026		
		Jan 31 #18	Mar 22 #19	Jun 21 #20	Oct 11 #21	Feb 22 #22	Jun 8 #23	Oct 13 #24	Jan 18 #25	Jun 16 #26	Sep 23 #27	Nov 10 #28	Mar 25 #29	Apr 9 #30	Jun 8 #31	Sep 28 #32	Mar 27 #33	Jun 23 #34	Difference (Jun 2026 vs. Mar 2026)
Risk and valuation levels	Attractive valuation level	31% ↓	32% ↑	32% ↑	32% ↑	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
	Absolute valuation level	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	20%	16% ↓	20%	22%	18%	27% ↑	26%	25%	22%	16% ↓	27% ↑	17%	18%	+1pp
	Relative valuation (vs. peers or sector)	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	10%	17% ↑	11%	14%	10%	7% ↓	12%	11%	14%	13%	14%	17% ↑	8%	–9pp
	Healthy balance sheet	29%	25%	34% ↑	31%	18%	21%	21%	14%	14%	11% ↓	11% ↓	12%	18%	13%	12%	13%	14%	+1pp
	Volatility of earnings	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	3%	2%	5% ↑	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1% ↓	4%	+3pp
	EPS consistency and meeting guidance	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	3%	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	1% ↓	3%	2%	7%	9% ↑	6%	–3pp
	Macroeconomic risks	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	5%	9%	9%	8%	4%	8%	7%	3% ↓	11%	8%	7%	15% ↑	10%	–5pp
	Regulatory environment and changes	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	2%	2%	3%	1% ↓	1% ↓	2%	2%	2%	3%	7% ↑	3%	3%	5%	+2pp
Nonfinancial	Business strategy and vision[1]	16%	17%	15%	11% ↓	21%	25% ↑	17%	16%	23%	19%	18%	25% ↑	15%	21%	13%	12%	10%	–2pp
	Portfolio strategy, (re)shaping, and turnover	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	5%	7% ↑	1% ↓	3%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	7% ↑	5%	2%	1% ↓	–1pp
	Management credibility and track record	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	12%	14% ↑	7%	8%	9%	8%	9%	11%	8%	11%	11%	3% ↓	5%	+2pp
	Management incentives and stock ownership	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	4%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	4%	5% ↑	3%	2%	0% ↓	0% ↓	No change
	Climate and sustainability[2]	6%	6%	7% ↑	7% ↑	3%	4%	3%	6%	1%	1%	2%	3%	0% ↓	2%	2%	1%	1%	No change
	Climate and carbon footprint	5%	5%	4% ↓	6% ↑	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
	Other material environmental factors	1% ↓	1% ↓	3% ↑	1% ↓	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	NA
	Material social factors and stakeholder impact	5% ↑	3%	3%	2%	1%	0% ↓	0% ↓	1%	1%	0% ↓	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	0% ↓	–1pp
	Corporate governance[3]	5% ↑	5% ↑	4%	5% ↑	3%	1% ↓	1% ↓	1% ↓	1% ↓	2%	2%	1% ↓	1% ↓	4%	1% ↓	1% ↓	1% ↓	No change

↑ Series high ↓ Series low Much less important Less important No change More important Much more important

Sources: BCG's investor pulse checks, March 2020 through June 2026; n = ~150 for each survey.
Note: The questions on this slide were added to the survey in October 2021. NA = not applicable; EPS = earnings per share.
[1]This factor was a compelling strategy to win in previous surveys. [2]This factor was asked as climate and carbon footprint and other material environmental factors. [3]This factor was best-in-class governance policies in previous surveys. This includes corporate policies, board composition, and effectiveness.

BCG contact information

If you would like to discuss our findings, please reach out to one of the authors

Jeff Kotzen
kotzen.jeffrey@bcg.com

Greg Rice
rice.gregory@bcg.com

Callan Sainsbury
sainsbury.callan@bcg.com

Hady Farag
farag.hady@bcg.com

Daniel Riff
riff.daniel@advisor.bcg.com

Alexis Colombo
colombo.alexis@bcg.com

Julien Ghesquieres
ghesquieres.julien@bcg.com

Disclaimer

The services and materials provided by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) are subject to BCG's Standard Terms (a copy of which is available upon request) or such other agreement as may have been previously executed by BCG. BCG does not provide legal, accounting, or tax advice. The Client is responsible for obtaining independent advice concerning these matters. This advice may affect the guidance given by BCG. Further, BCG has made no undertaking to update these materials after the date hereof, notwithstanding that such information may become outdated or inaccurate.

The materials contained in this presentation are designed for the sole use by the board of directors or senior management of the Client and solely for the limited purposes described in the presentation. The materials shall not be copied or given to any person or entity other than the Client ("Third Party") without the prior written consent of BCG. These materials serve only as the focus for discussion; they are incomplete without the accompanying oral commentary and may not be relied on as a stand-alone document. Further, Third Parties may not, and it is unreasonable for any Third Party to, rely on these materials for any purpose whatsoever. To the fullest extent permitted by law (and except to the extent otherwise agreed in a signed writing by BCG), BCG shall have no liability whatsoever to any Third Party, and any Third Party hereby waives any rights and claims it may have at any time against BCG with regard to the services, this presentation, or other materials, including the accuracy or completeness thereof. Receipt and review of this document shall be deemed agreement with and consideration for the foregoing.

BCG does not provide fairness opinions or valuations of market transactions, and these materials should not be relied on or construed as such. Further, the financial evaluations, projected market and financial information, and conclusions contained in these materials are based upon standard valuation methodologies, are not definitive forecasts, and are not guaranteed by BCG. BCG has used public and/or confidential data and assumptions provided to BCG by the Client. BCG has not independently verified the data and assumptions used in these analyses. Changes in the underlying data or operating assumptions will clearly impact the analyses and conclusions.