

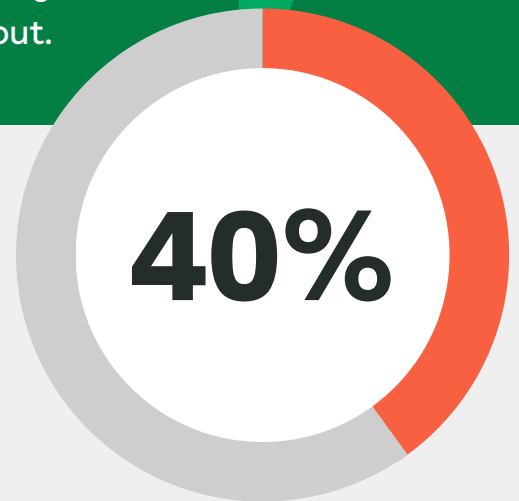
# Are associates ready for the difficult interactions that lie ahead?

The volatile financial market is having a severe impact on consumers, causing a notable increase in difficult and violent interactions that associates have to navigate. Are they ready? How can organizations maximize labor productivity amid the turmoil of the recession? We surveyed 1,000 associates working in grocery and retail to find out.

## SUMMARY

Grocery and retail workers are experiencing an increase in hostile and violent situations with customers, but they're not getting the right training and tools to handle these volatile interactions. As a result, 40% of associates feel scared to go to work.

Let's explore the situation deeper.



of grocery and retail associates feel scared to go to work

## The recession is taking a toll on customers

Associates are already seeing the recession impact consumers in a number of ways, from haggling and more disputes with staff or other customers to theft and violence.

### Increased customer behaviors noted by associates



### In the past 6 months...

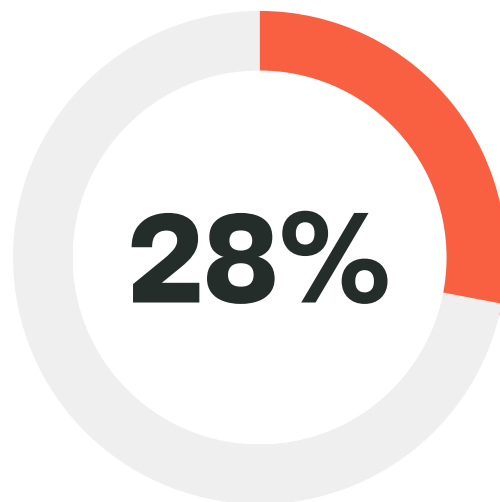
**50%** of associates have witnessed a theft or attempted theft

**33%** of associates' stores have experienced violent situations involving customers

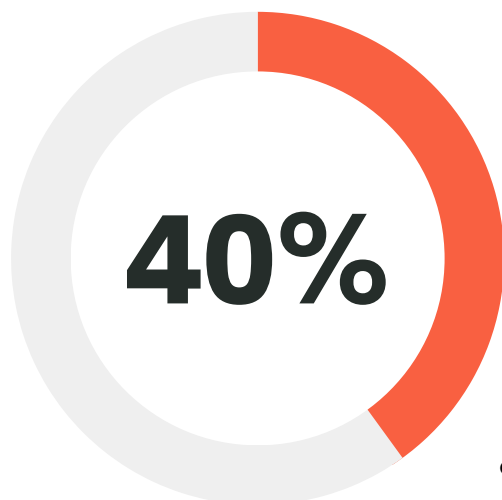
## But associates don't have what they need to navigate these difficult interactions—which puts them (and your operations) at risk

While associates are seeing a notable increase in hostile and violent situations with customers, many don't have the support, resources and tools they need to navigate these interactions and stay productive. As a result, vital protocols and operating procedures are at risk—and revenue, productivity and other business outcomes will be impacted.

For example, 28% of workers have even ignored a theft or attempted theft, and when asked why, 36% said it was because they didn't feel equipped with the skills to manage the situation.



**of associates have ignored a theft or attempted theft**



Beyond its impact on operations and revenue, this critical lack of preparation and support in managing these volatile customer situations is affecting workers' mental health and wellbeing. In fact, 40% of retail and grocery associates feel scared to go to work with these interactions on the rise.

**of associates feel scared to go to work**



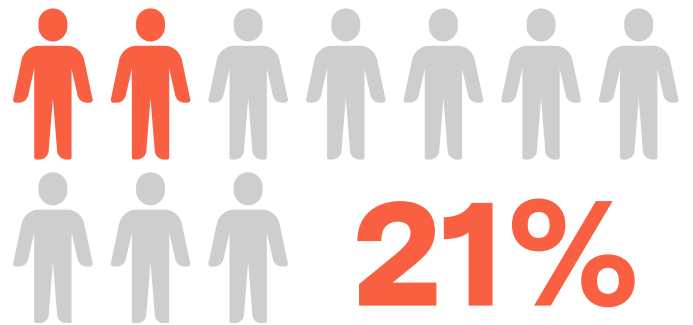
## The solution? **Training.**

What are associates looking for to help them navigate these challenging times? Training. Over 20% of grocery and retail workers don't feel prepared to handle situations involving theft.

**21%** of grocery and retail associates don't feel prepared to handle customer situations involving theft



But even more than that, associates are looking to go beyond the procedures and protocols and get at the soft skills to help them navigate these volatile interactions. Over 20% of respondents said their employer hasn't provided the right tools and training to empathetically manage and resolve tense customer situations. Without those resources, workers feel ill-equipped—or even scared—to navigate these challenging, hostile or even violent events.



**of associates haven't been given the right tools and training to empathetically manage tense customer interactions**

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**"Investing in providing the resources, training and tools grocery and retail workers desperately need is a pivotal step in providing the support and empathy that customers are looking for."**

Far too often, supporting the needs of customers comes before supporting the needs of associates. But in this case, they undoubtedly go hand-in-hand. Investing in providing the resources, training and tools grocery and retail workers desperately need is a pivotal step in providing the support and empathy that customers are looking for—and ensuring retail and grocery organizations are maximizing labor productivity in any economic climate.