



Work Network



Women's and Men's Quality of Work in the New Canadian Economy

Presentation to Home Depot

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Canadian Policy Research Networks

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Key Questions



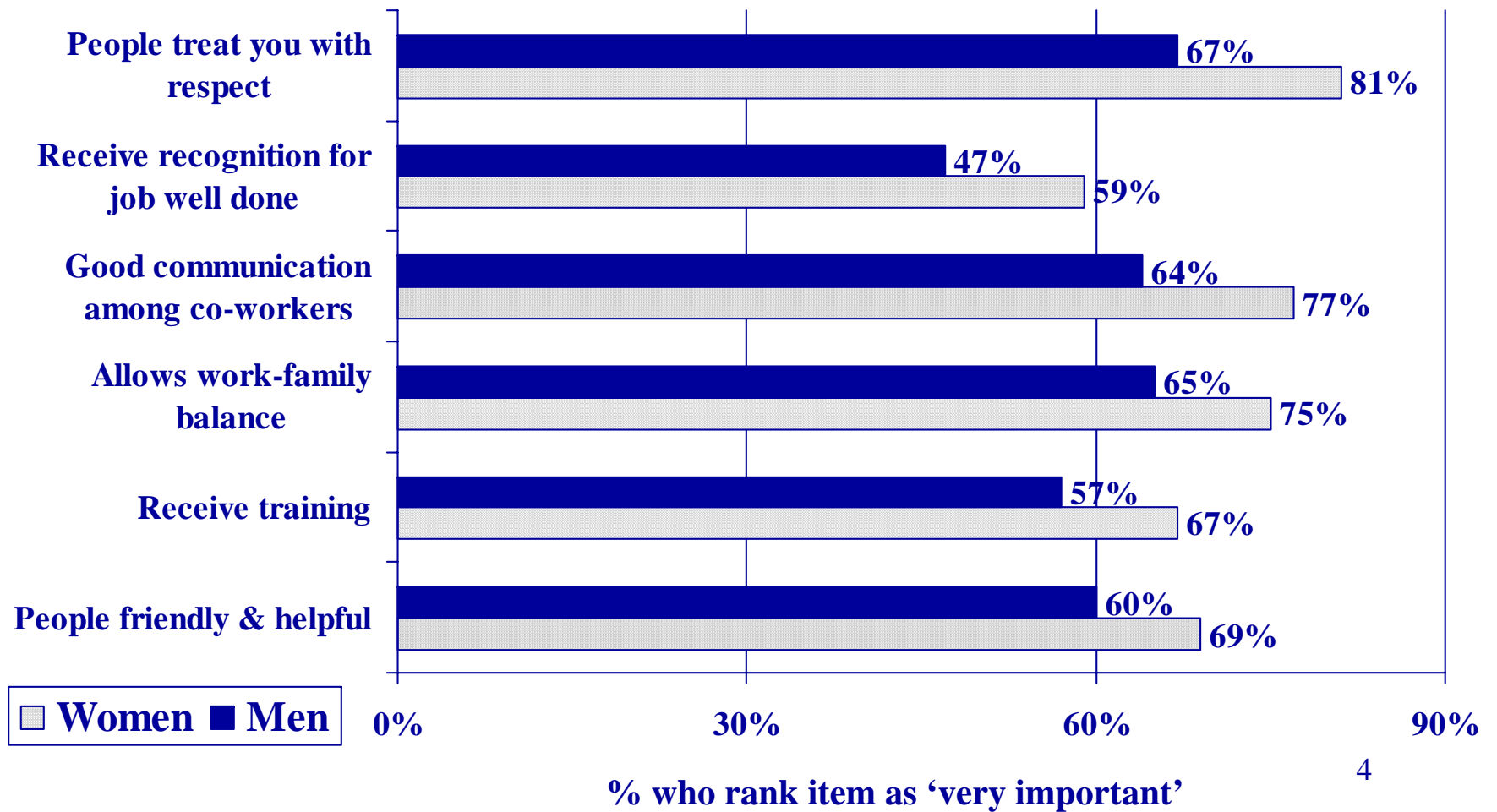
- Do women and men value the same things in a job?
- Are there differences in how women and men experience their quality of work life?
- To what extent are well-educated workers different from other workers in terms of work values and quality of work life?
- How does information technology affect the quality of jobs, and are there gender differences in this regard?
- What are the implications of these issues for human resource management practices?



Convergence, but

- Differences between women and men have narrowed on:
 - labour force participation rates
 - earnings
 - rates of unionization
 - % employed in managerial and professional occupations
 - educational attainment
- But convergence on these indicators is most evident among university graduates
- And we know little about how daily work experiences differ between men and women

What women value in a job



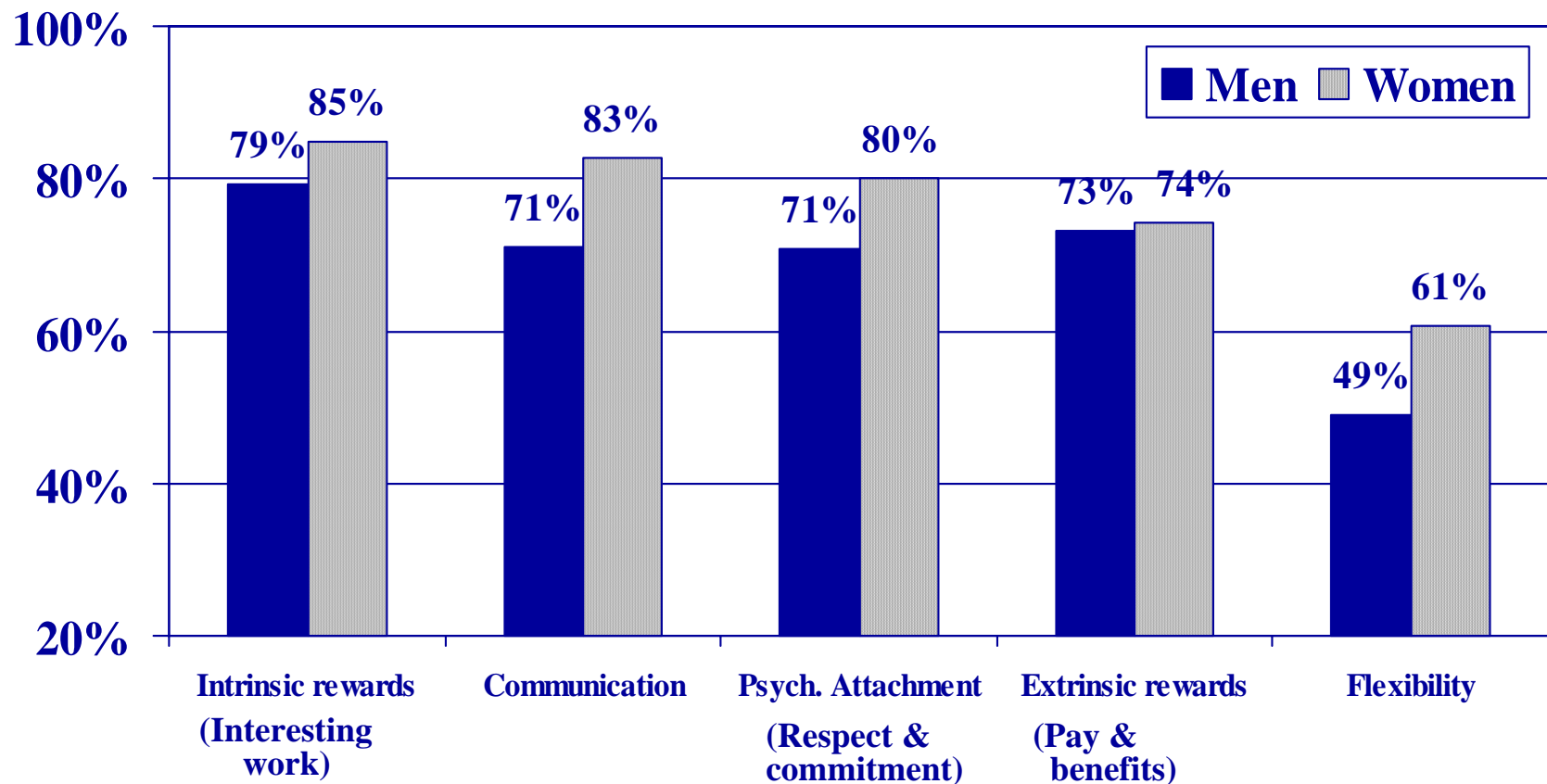


The job values scales

- Intrinsic rewards: the work is interesting, provides a sense of accomplishment, and allows work to develop skills
- Communication: good communication with co-workers, receive recognition for job well done, co-workers are friendly and helpful
- Psychological attachment: employer committed to employee, employee committed to employer, employee treated with respect
- Extrinsic rewards: good pay, good benefits, good job security, opportunity for advancement
- Flexibility: can choose schedule, balance work & family

Women value the soft stuff

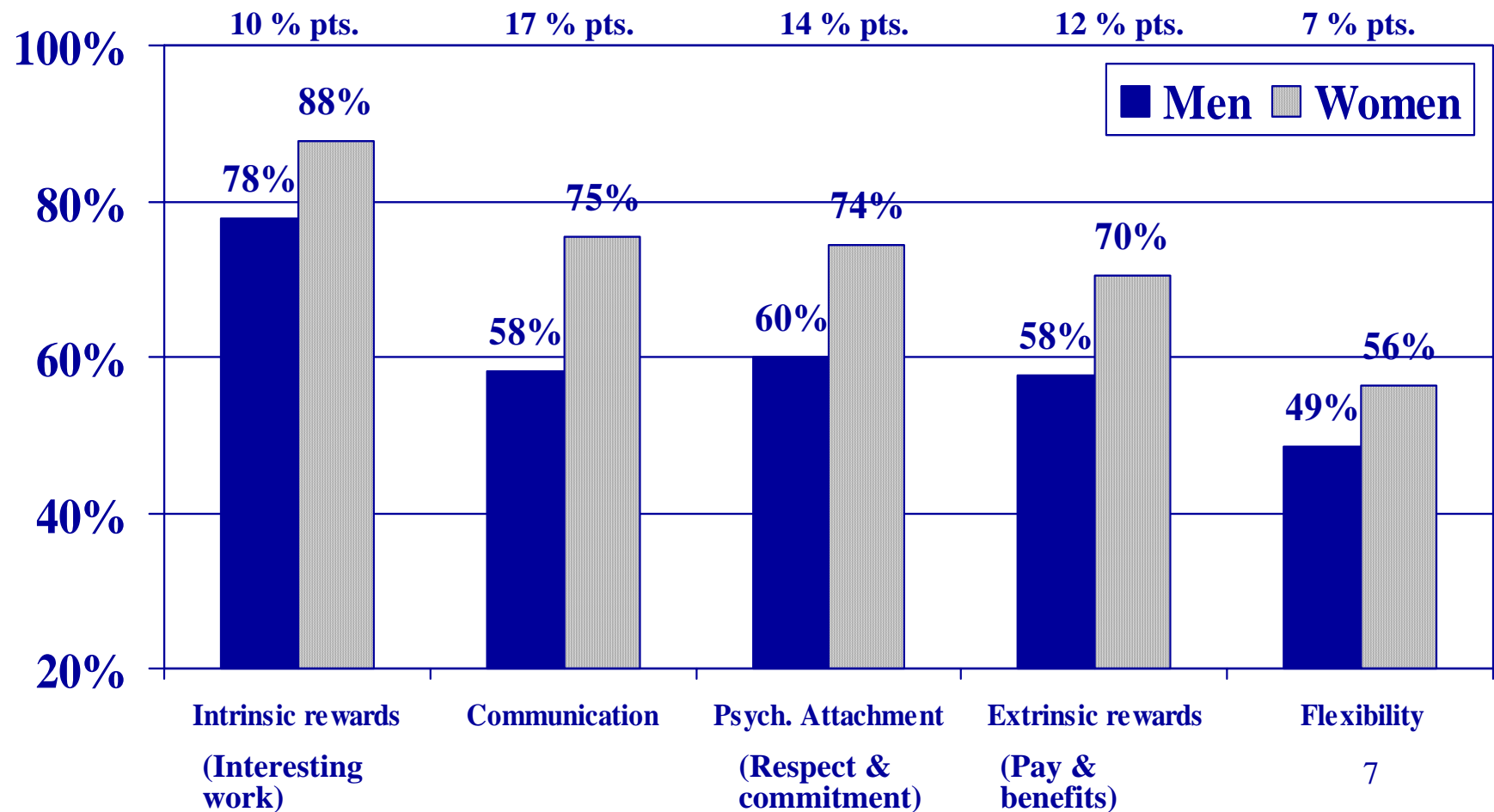
(% who score “high” on job value scale*)



* Questions on related issues were combined into scales with a range of 2 to 10. A “high” score is defined as 9 or 10.

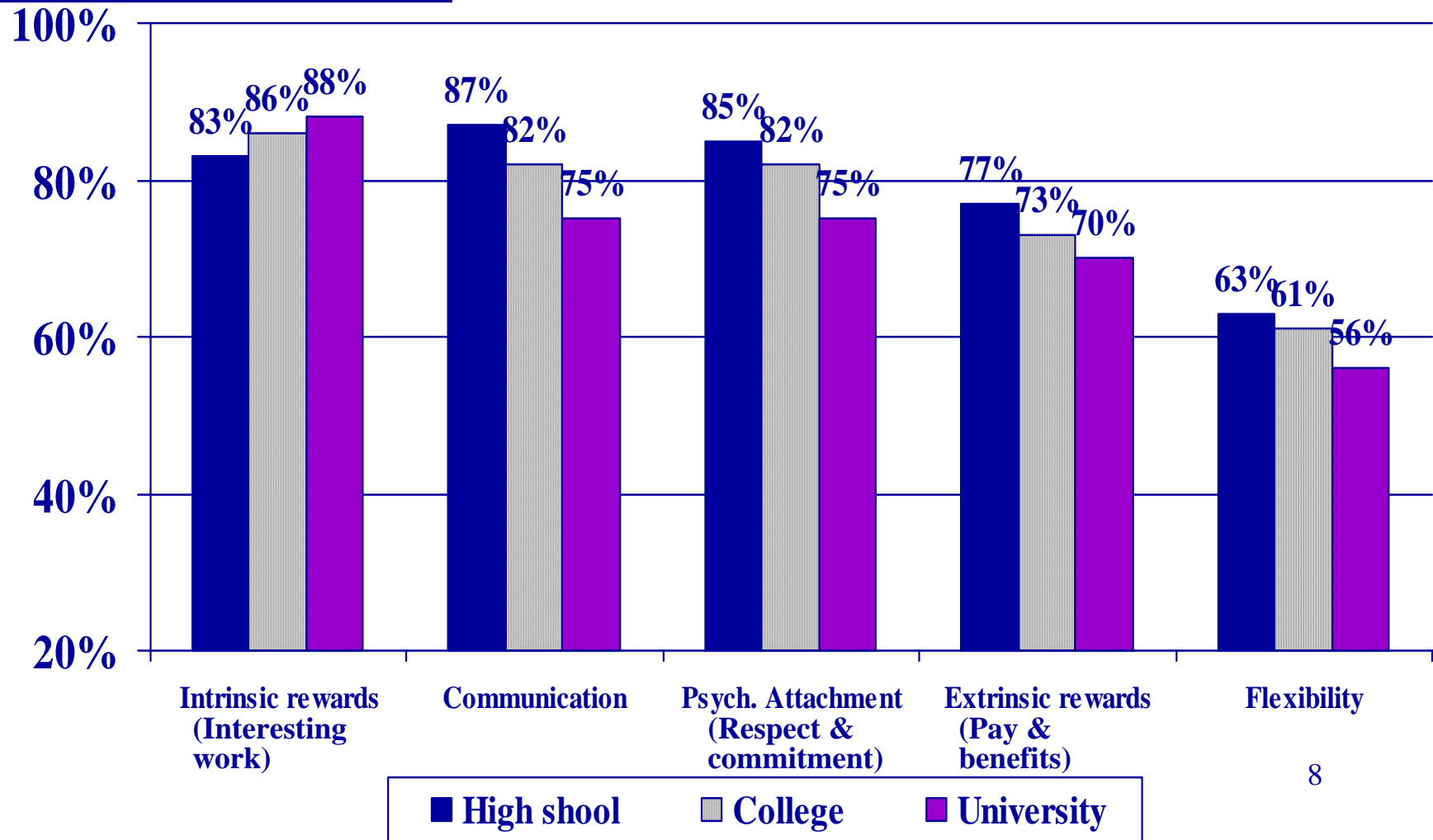
Especially university graduates

(% who score “high” on job value scale)



Women's values, by education

(% who score "high" on job value scale)



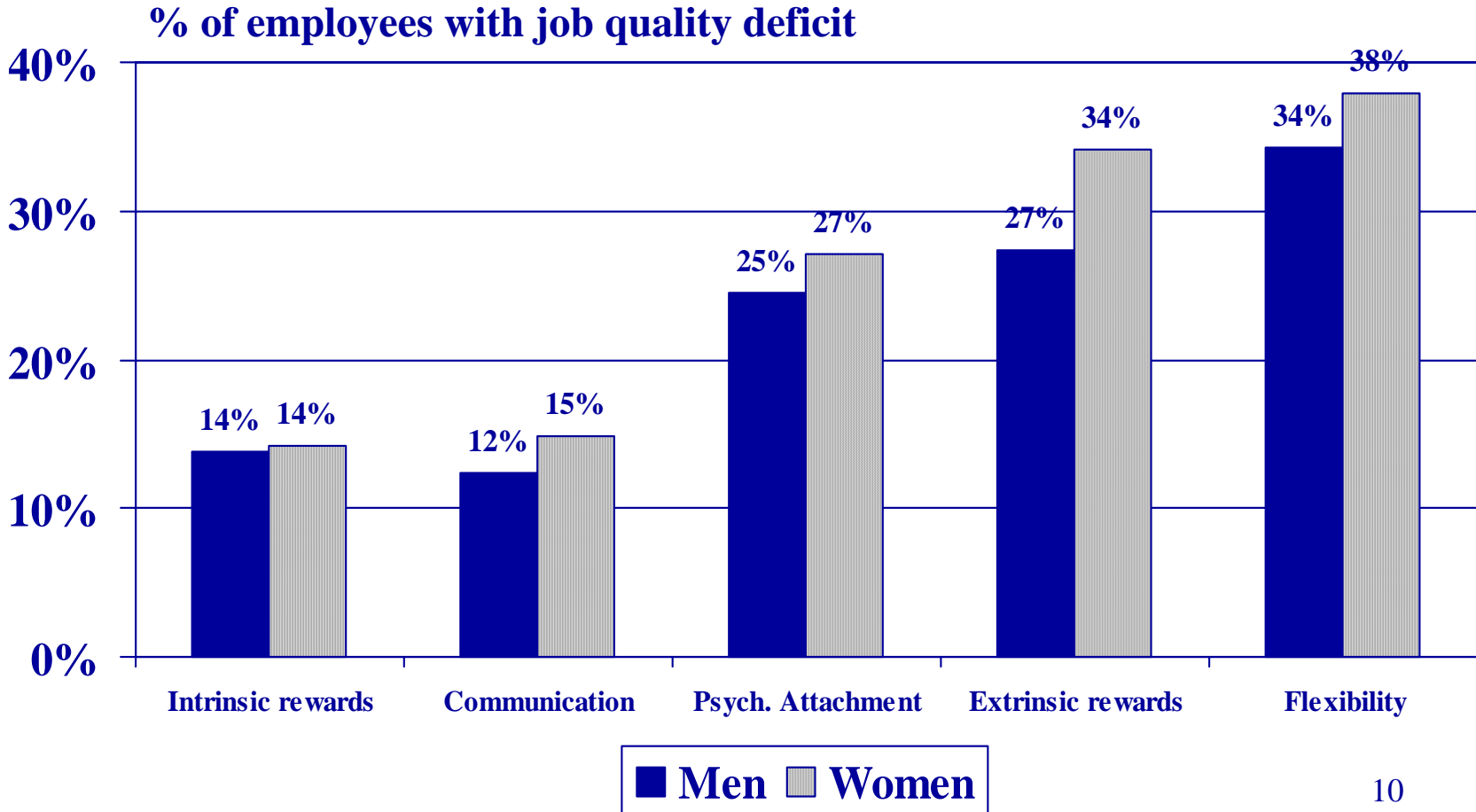
Assessing job quality “deficits”



- Job quality deficits exist when ‘what workers value in a job’ falls short of ‘what they have in their job’
- Job quality deficits are associated with
 - low workplace morale
 - job turnover
 - willingness to join a union
- Deficits vary for
 - women and men
 - high school and university graduates

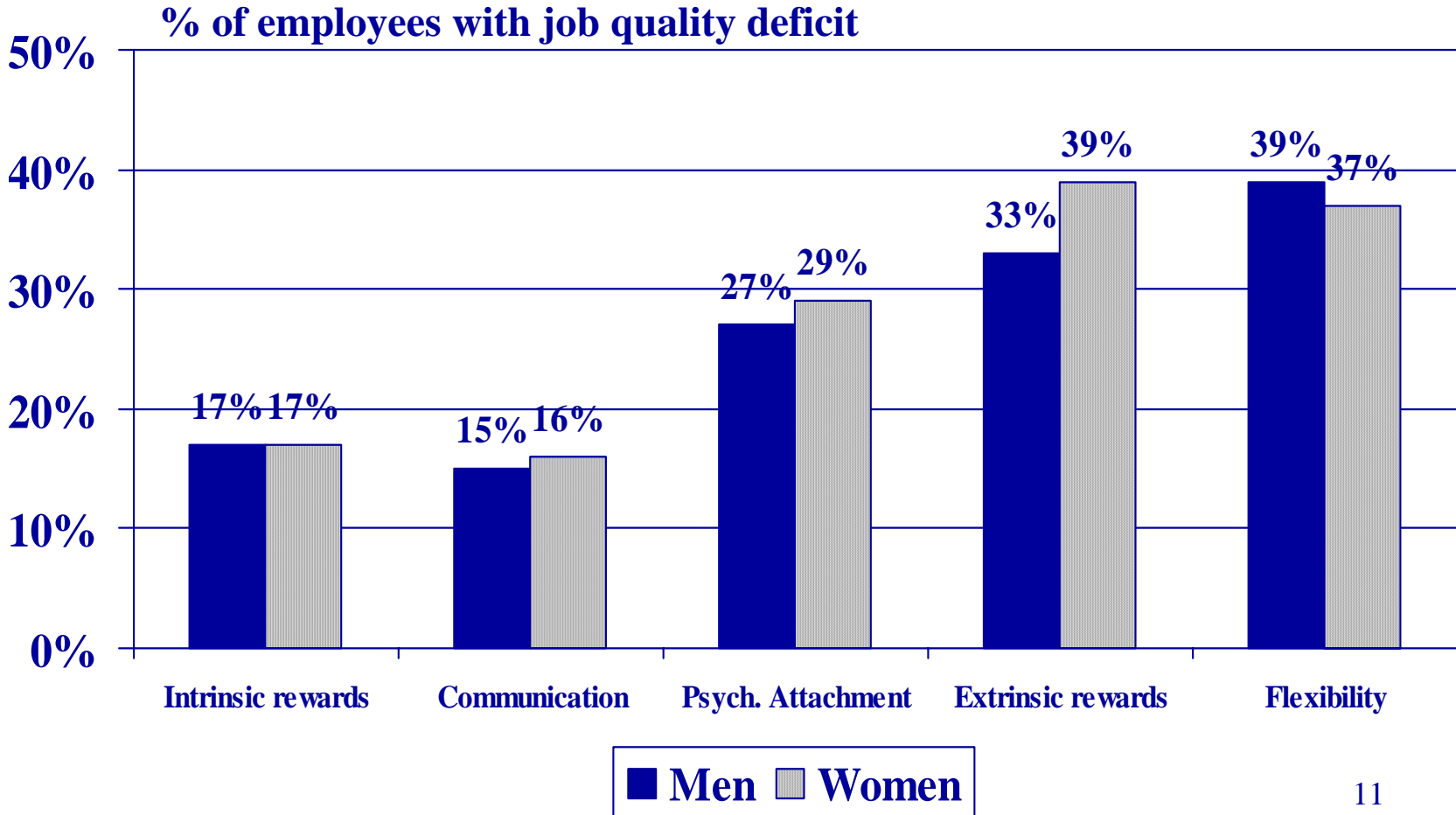


What kind of deficits occur?

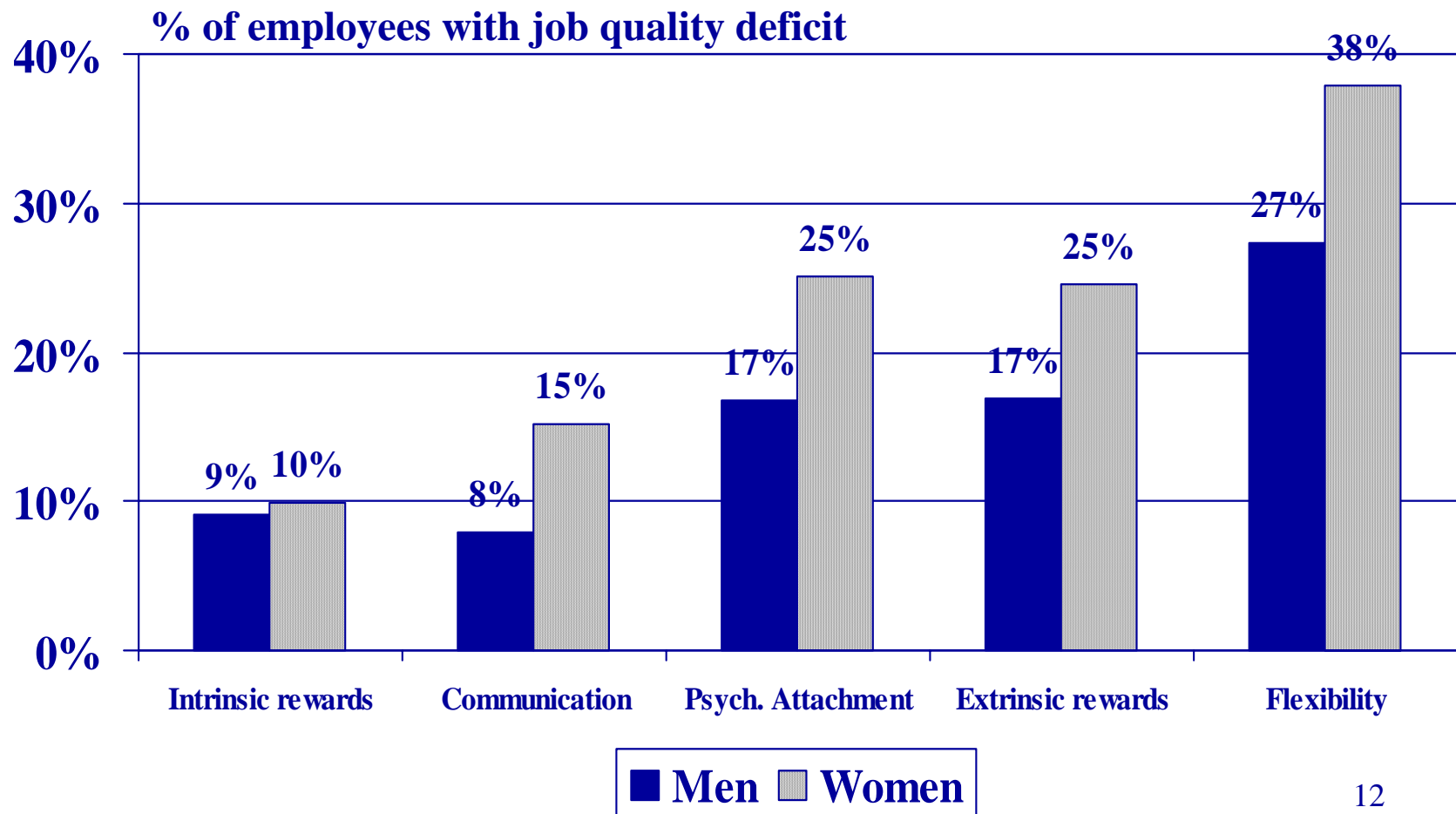




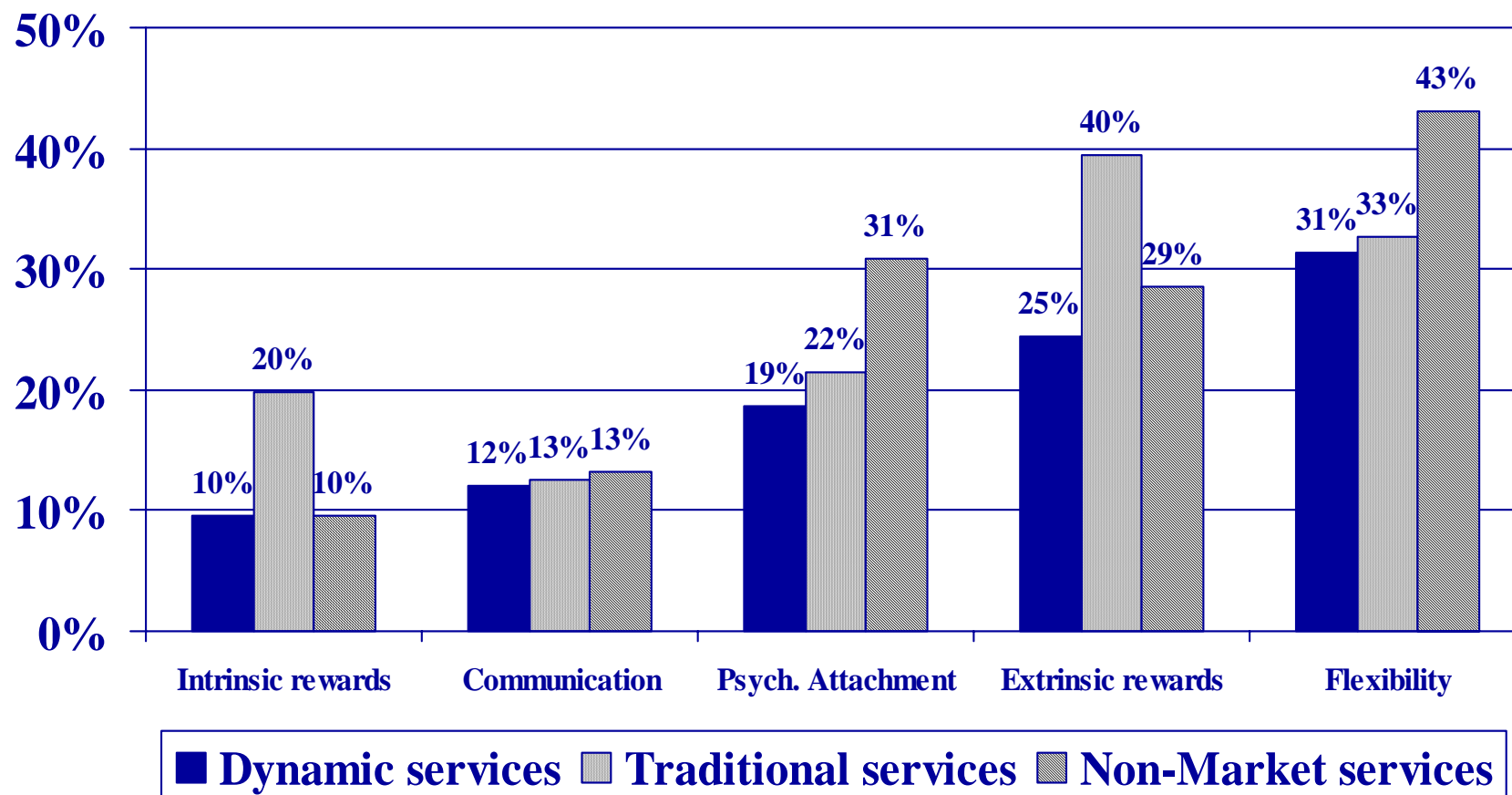
High school women similar to men



University women have greater deficits

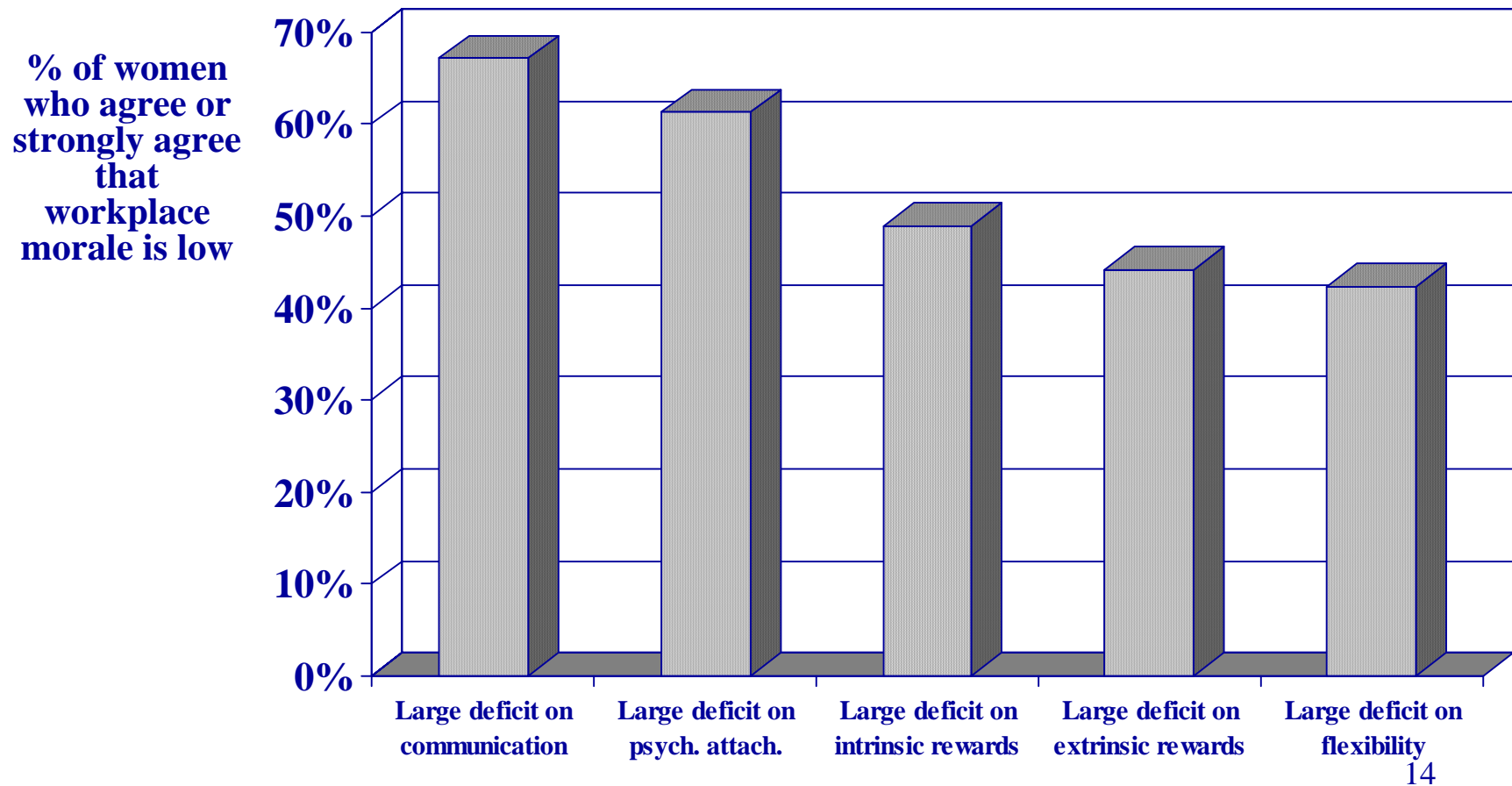


Deficits vary by industry



Dynamic services = finance, insurance, real estate, information services, professional & managerial services. Traditional services = retail trade, food & beverage, personal and other services. Non-market services = health, education and social services.

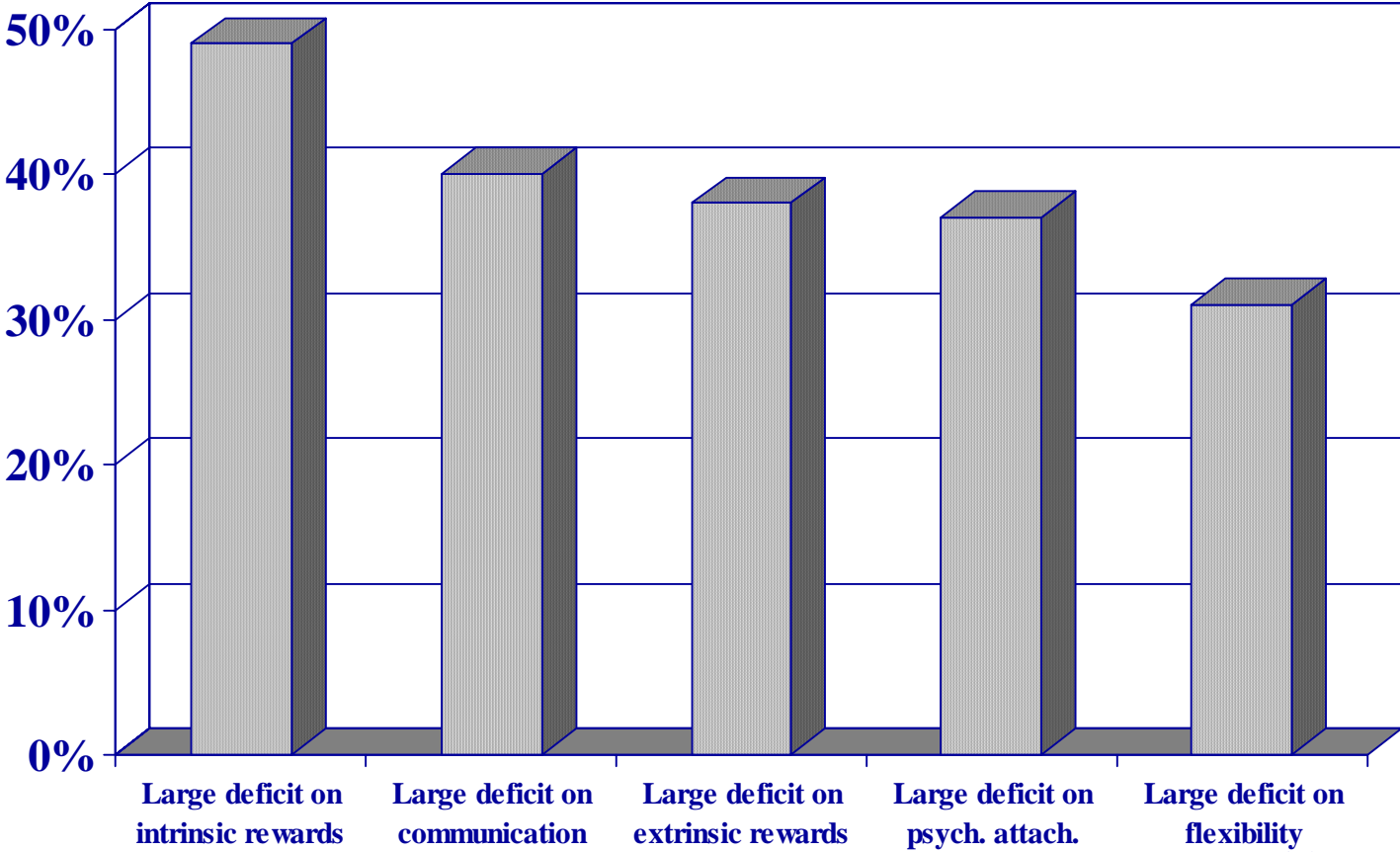
Deficits help explain workplace morale





Deficits help explain job turnover

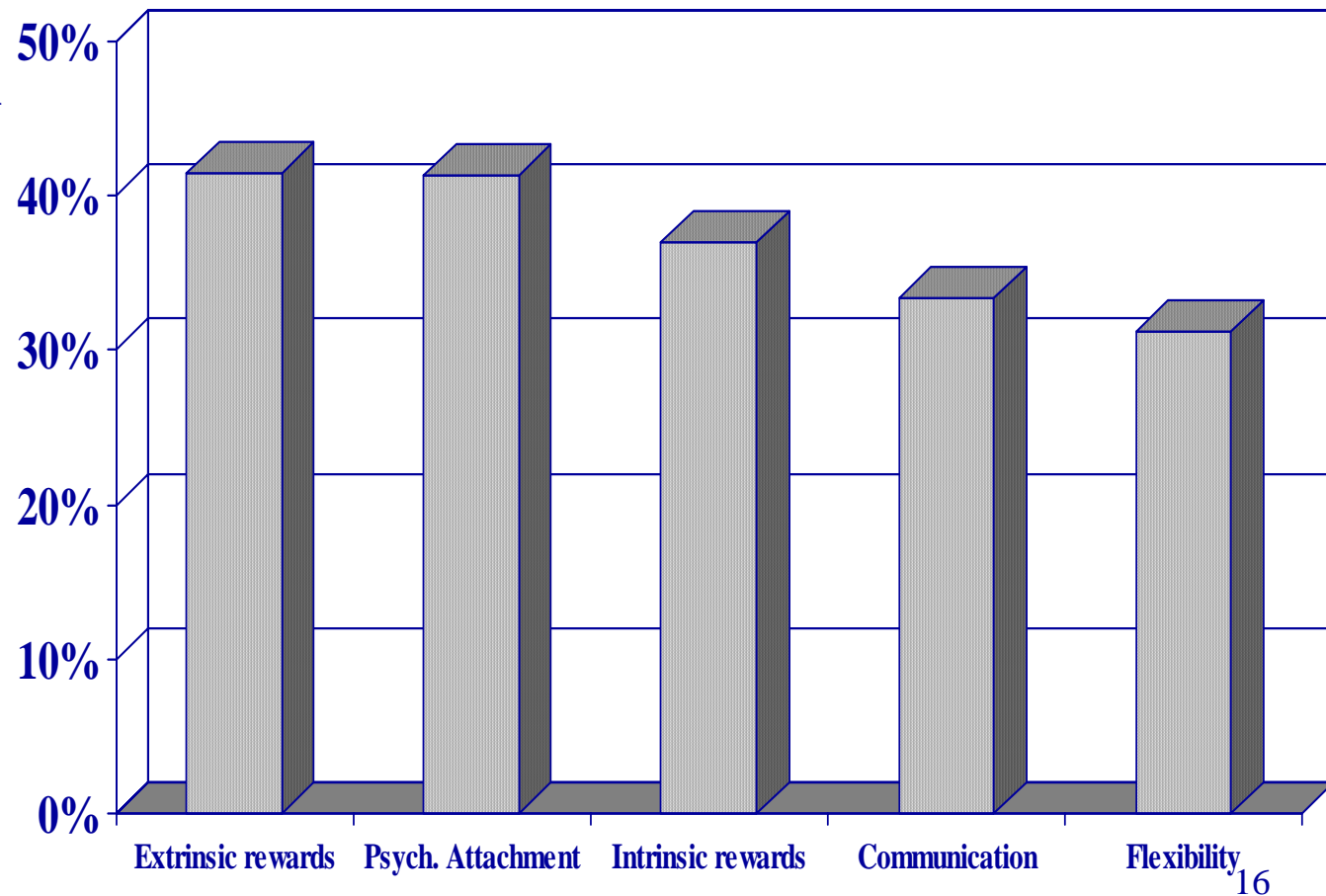
% of women who looked for a job with another firm in the past year



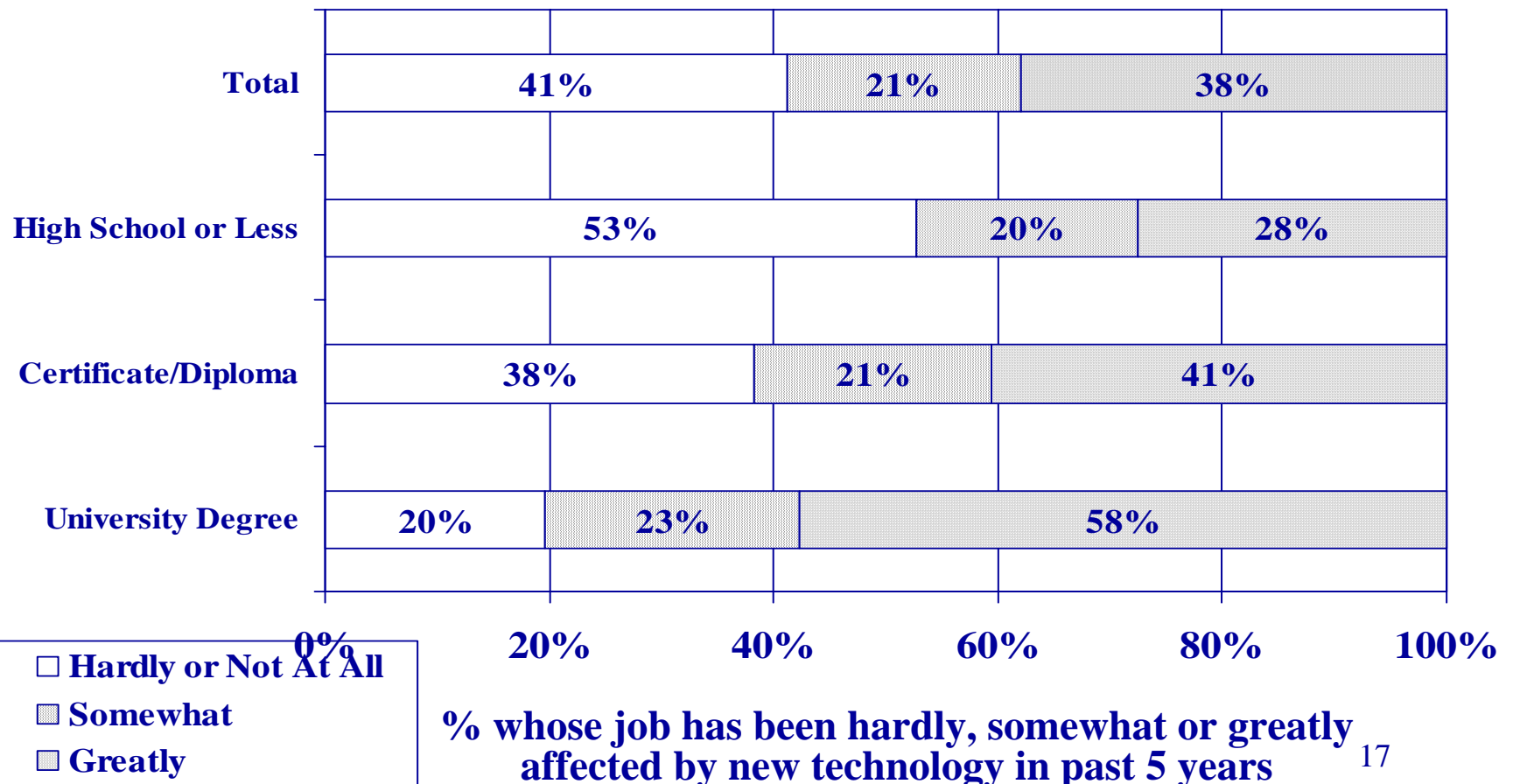


Deficits affect willingness to unionize

% of non-union women who would be somewhat or very likely to join a union if one existed in the workplace or profession

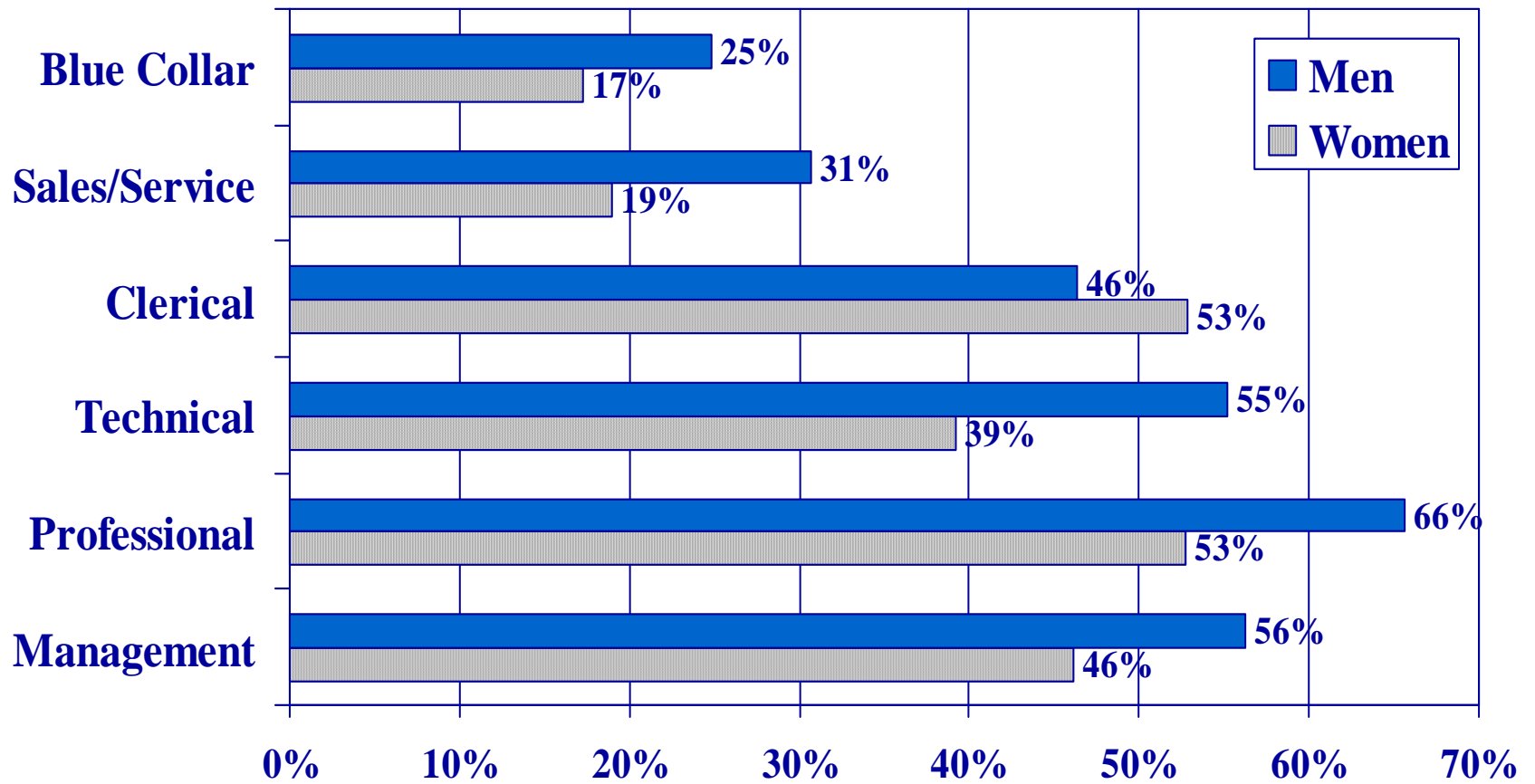


Impacts of technology rise with education



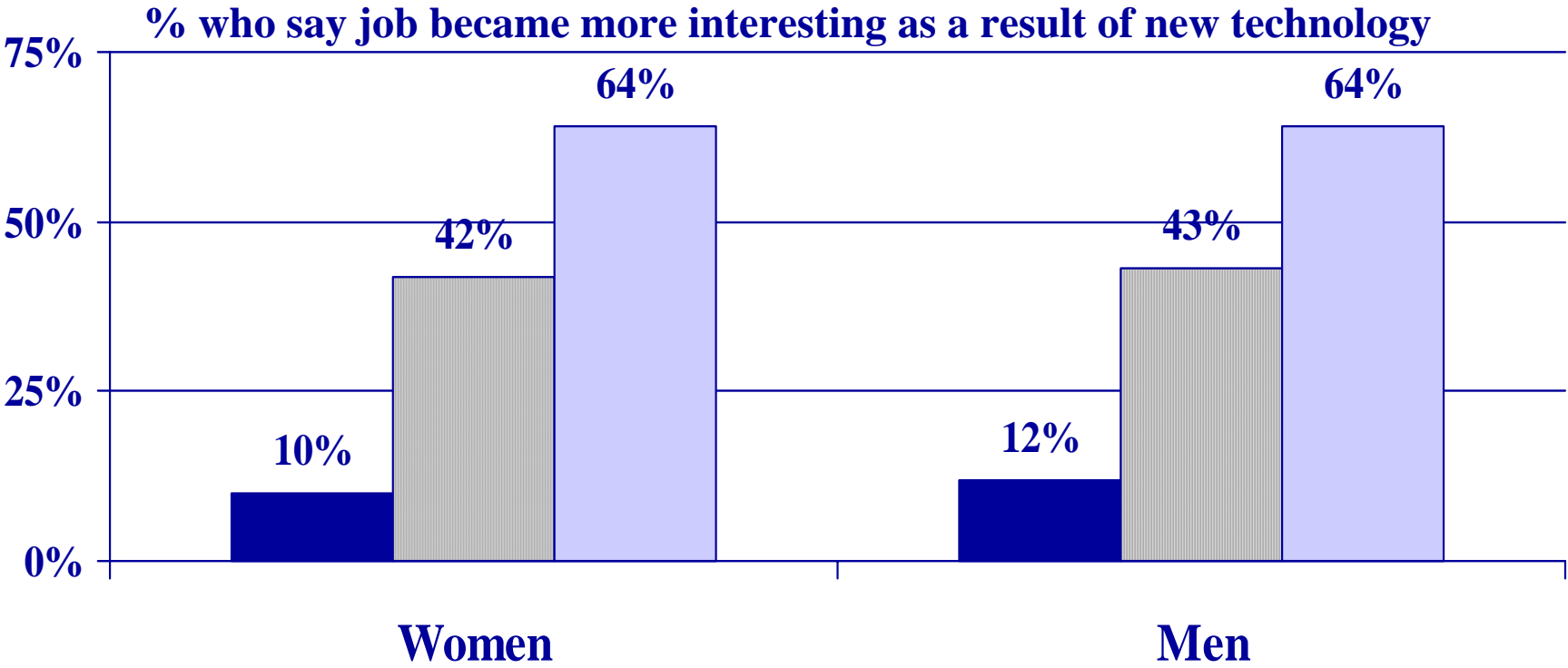


Men more affected by technology



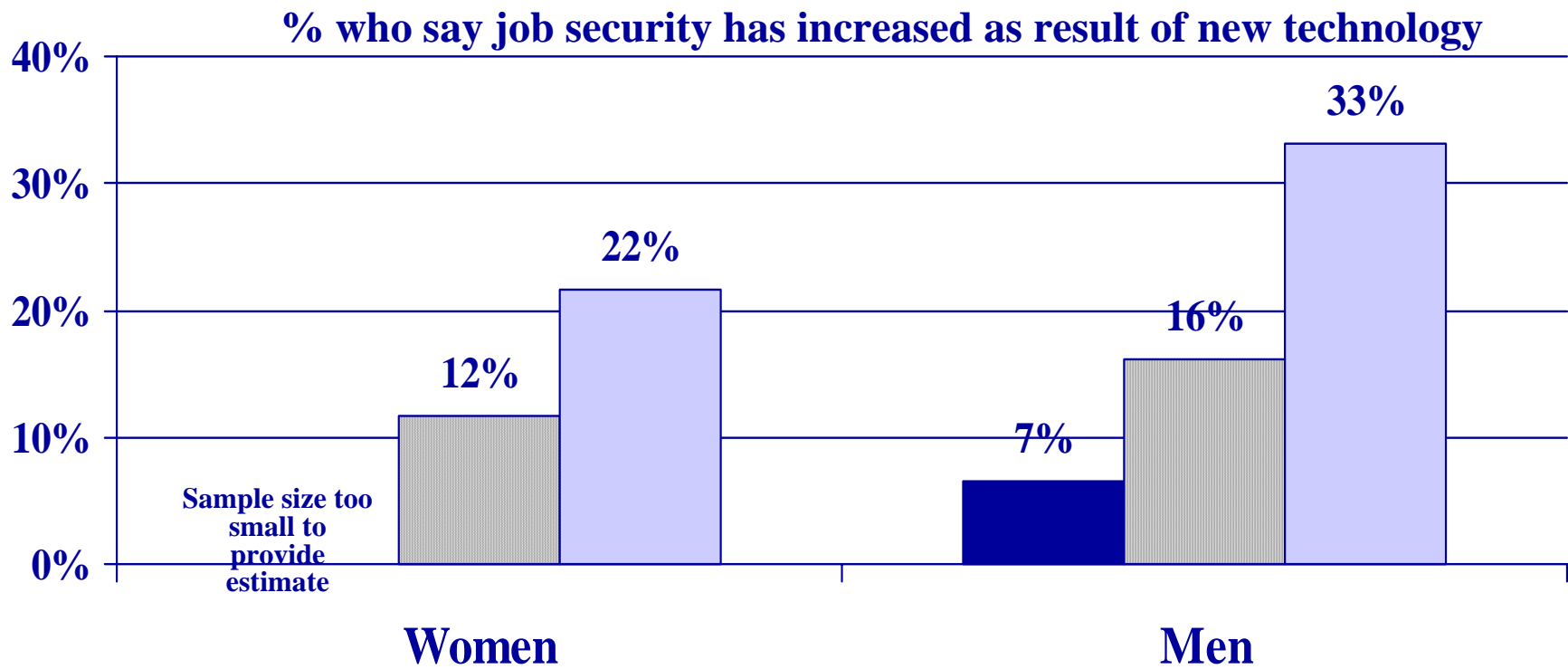
% whose job has been greatly affected by new technology over past 5 years 18

Technology reduces some deficits



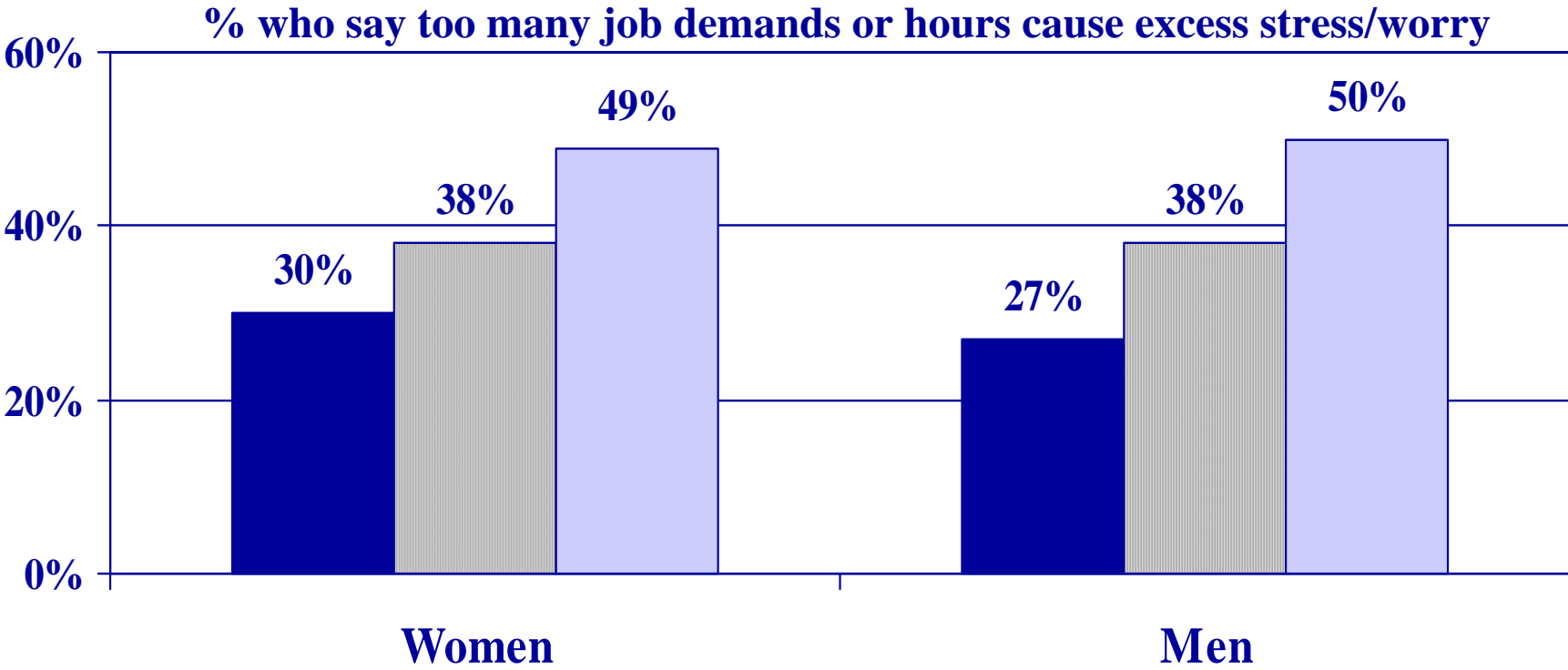
- Low intensity computer use at work
- ▨ Moderate intensity computer use at work
- High intensity computer use at work

More so for men than women



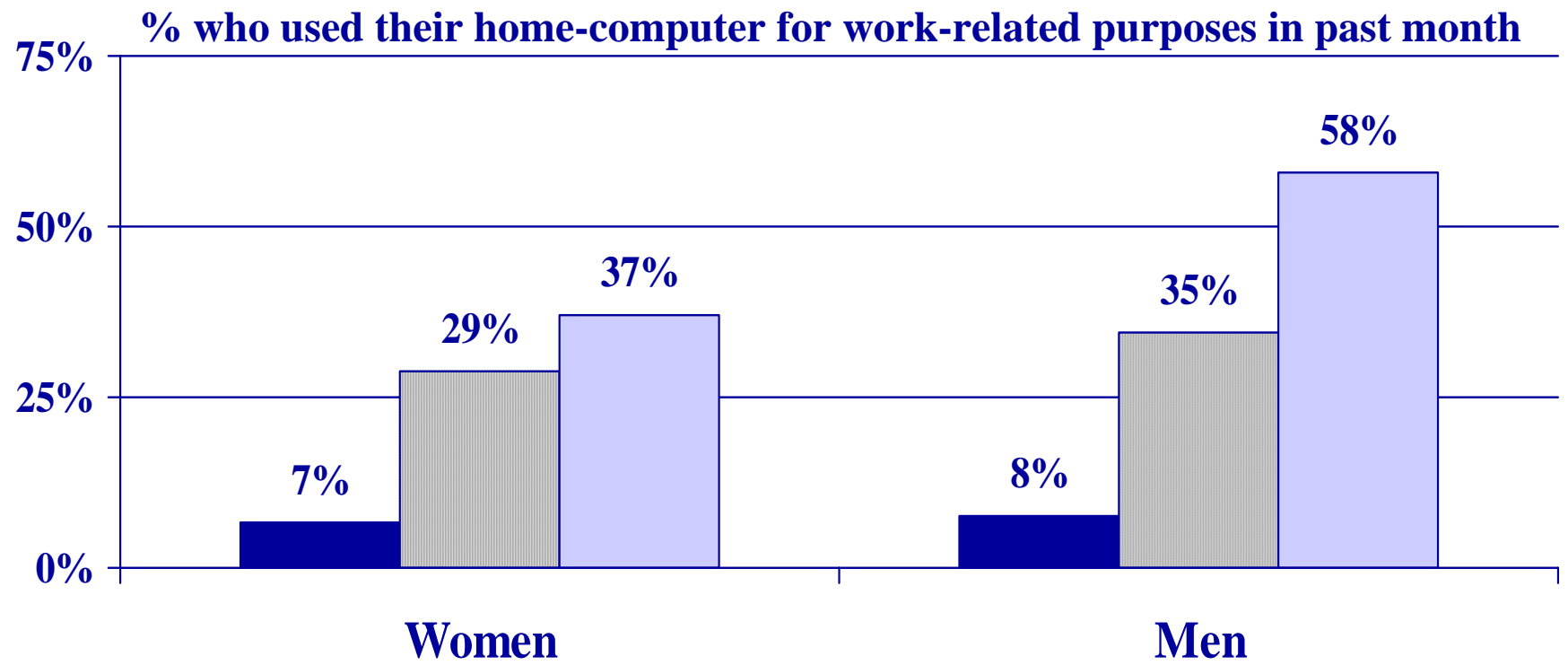
- Low intensity computer use at work
- ▨ Moderate intensity computer use at work
- High intensity computer use at work

Technology intensifies the work



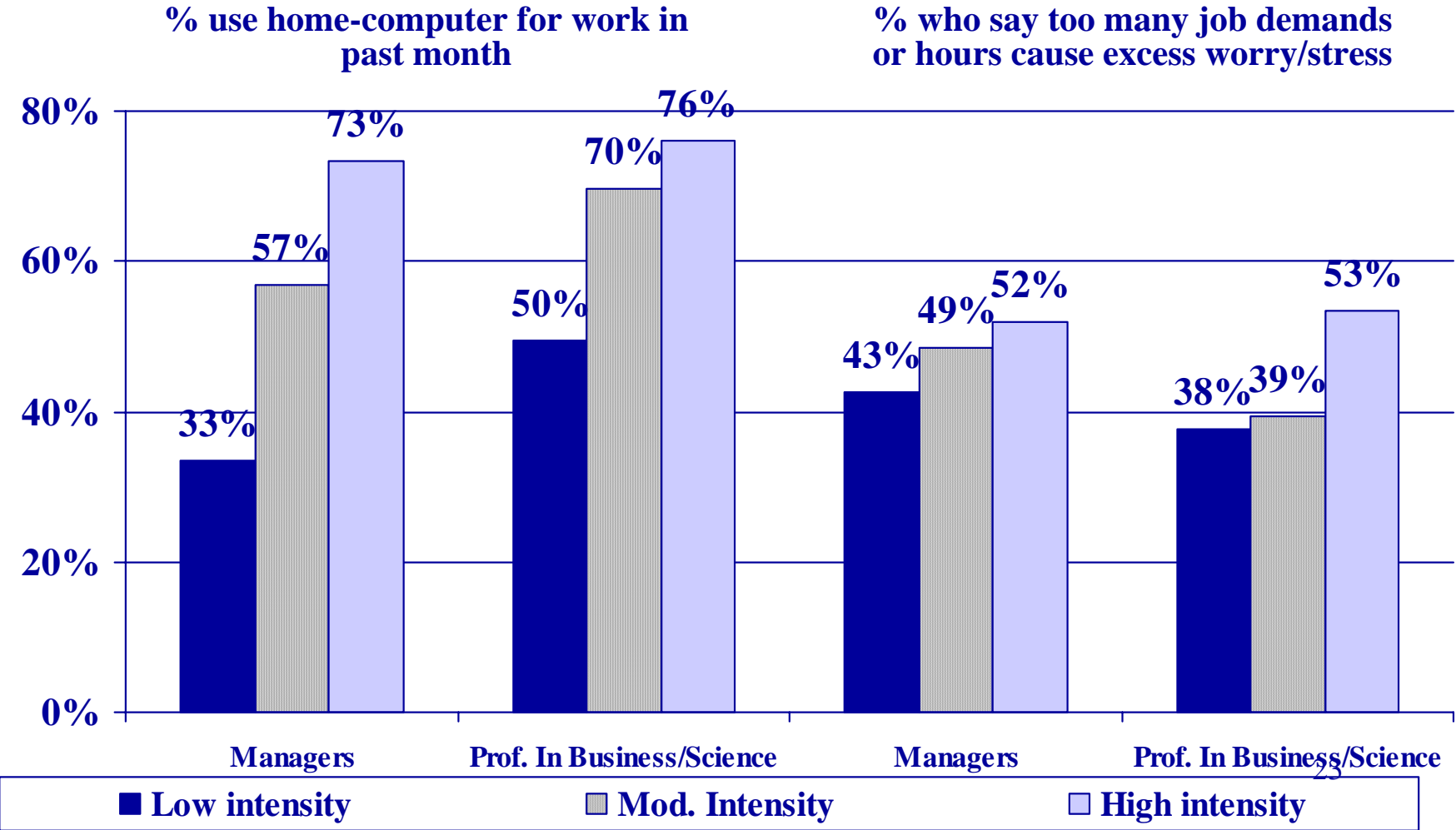
- Low intensity computer use at work
- Moderate intensity computer use at work
- High intensity computer use at work

And spill-over of work to home

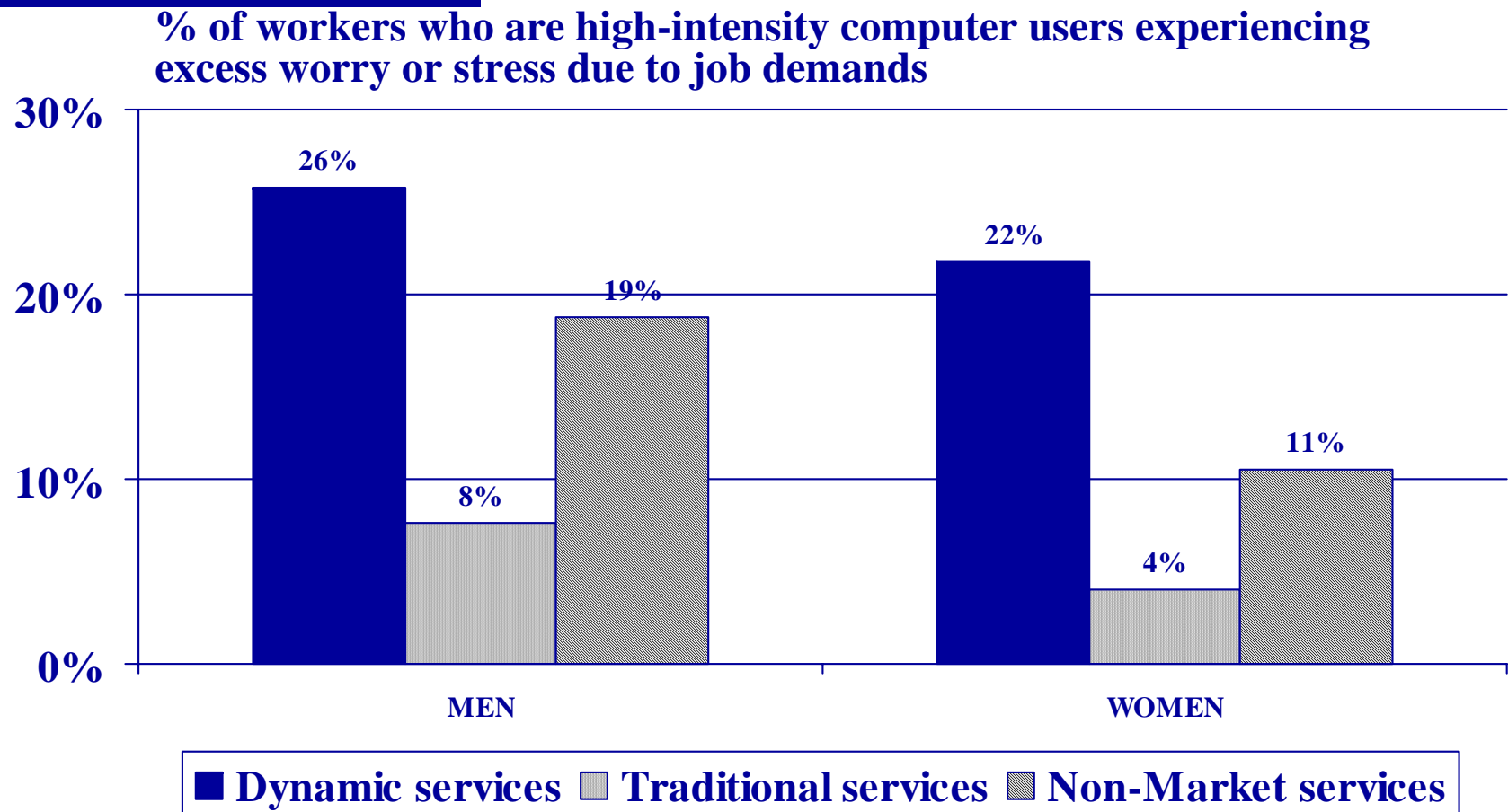


- Low intensity computer use at work
- Moderate intensity computer use at work
- High intensity computer use at work

Technology affects workload . . .



... and leads to worry and stress

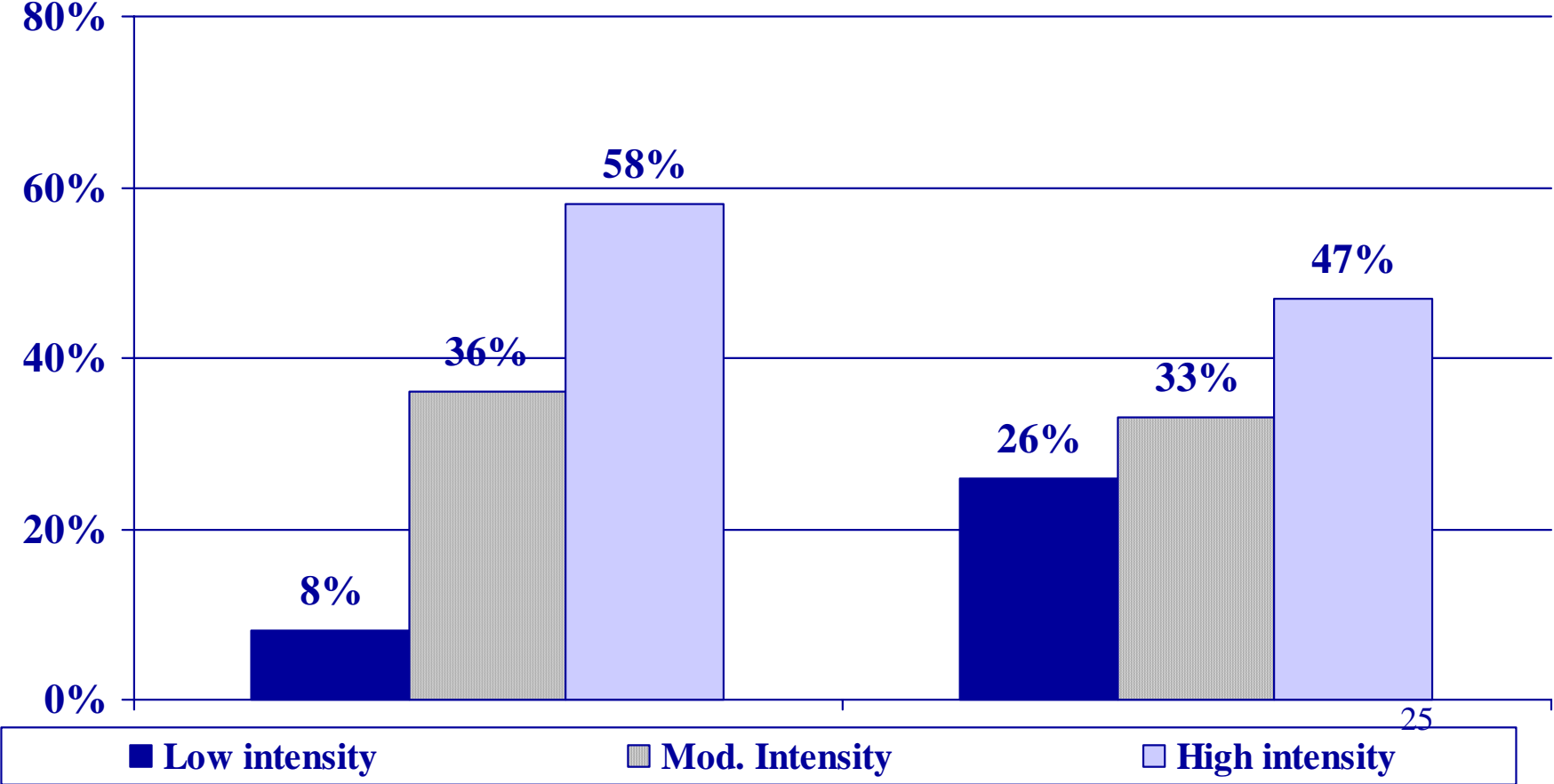


Technology impacts on sales & service



% who say job became more interesting due to new technology

% who say too many job demands or hours cause excess worry/stress



General conclusions



- The labour market experiences of well-educated women and men have converged in many ways, however...
- Women are more likely than men to value good communication, commitment & respect, and flexibility/work-family balance.
- Especially women who are university graduates
 - But, well-educated women still value employer commitment (as do other workers) and are less comfortable with being “footloose agents”
- Do employers include information on ‘soft issues’ in recruitment strategies? (e.g. commitment, respect, communication)

Communications and respect



- Job quality deficits on communication & respect are associated with poor workplace morale. If morale is a problem, start here
- Supportive supervisors enable employees to balance work and family
- Supervisors may need training on the significance of respect, recognition and communication, especially in workplaces with many women

Flexibility



- Flexibility can include a wide variety of options
- Examples:
 - Ability to move from full-time to part-time status (and back), with pro-rated benefits (with protected seniority)
 - Family leave (a few days per year)
 - Pro-rated benefits for part-time work



‘Bread and butter’ issues still matter

- Women experience large job quality deficit on extrinsic rewards (i.e. pay, benefits, security and opportunity for advancement)
 - 39% of women with high school education
 - 25% of women graduates
- Opportunities for advancement are important to women, yet they can be highly constrained by work-family stress
- ‘Bread and butter’ issues are a cornerstone of collective bargaining and deficits in this area are associated with a willingness to unionize



Interesting work matters too

- Men and women place a high value on interesting work that provides a sense of accomplishment and offers an opportunity for skill development
- Where jobs are routine, employers can consider
 - Job design, such as job rotation
 - task diversity
 - training
- Knowledge work has not yet changed the lives of women with high school or less. They still work in traditional job ghettos

New technologies



- New technologies present men and women with opportunities for advancement and more interesting work
- Individuals who do not use technology -- e.g. those with less education -- do not reap these benefits. There is a new divide in the labour market
- But women are less likely than men to say that new technology has had a positive impact on their job security
 - Could be related to their desire for more stable working relationships



Workloads and family

- New technologies are associated with excessive job demands. Work tends to spillover into home via laptops etc
- Women experience this more because of their desire to strike a better balance
- Telecommuting is still rare in Canada. It also raises issues such as job design, employer trust, strategies of evaluation, co-worker relations, & workload expectations
- Can the use of technology be shifted from ‘additional hours’ at home (i.e. unpaid overtime) to ‘supplemental hours’ at home (i.e. telework)?

Gender and work



- Educated women have crossed many barriers. But this is still a gendered economy
 - High school graduates are confined to traditional job ghettos and experience big job deficits
 - Women's experiences with technology are less positive than men's
- Focusing on job quality can
 - Mitigate the disadvantages women experience,
 - Help employers stay ahead of the demographic curve



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