

Quality of Work -- Quality of Life

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My focus today...

- ✓ Wellness and balance are part of a larger quality of work agenda.
- ✓ Why does the quality of work matter for individuals, employers, society?
- ✓ How can we create higher quality work environments?



A quality of work checklist

- ✓ Decent living standard and economic security
- ✓ Mutual trust among employers and workers
- ✓ Participation in decision making
- ✓ Culture of openness regarding information
- ✓ Healthy and safe work environment
- ✓ Work-life balance
- ✓ Encourages initiative and creativity
- ✓ Opportunities to use and develop skills



Six trends influencing the quality of work

- Global knowledge economy: skills, knowledge, creativity -- 'human capital' -- are the key ingredients for economic prosperity
- Information & communication technology: payoffs from these investments depend on work design and environments
- Education: Canada has the best educated labour force in the world, so we need to ensure that this talent is used
- Life-long learning: what kinds of work contexts support this?
- Demographics: ageing workforce, baby-boom retirements create workforce renewal challenges
- Values: this is what Canadians want

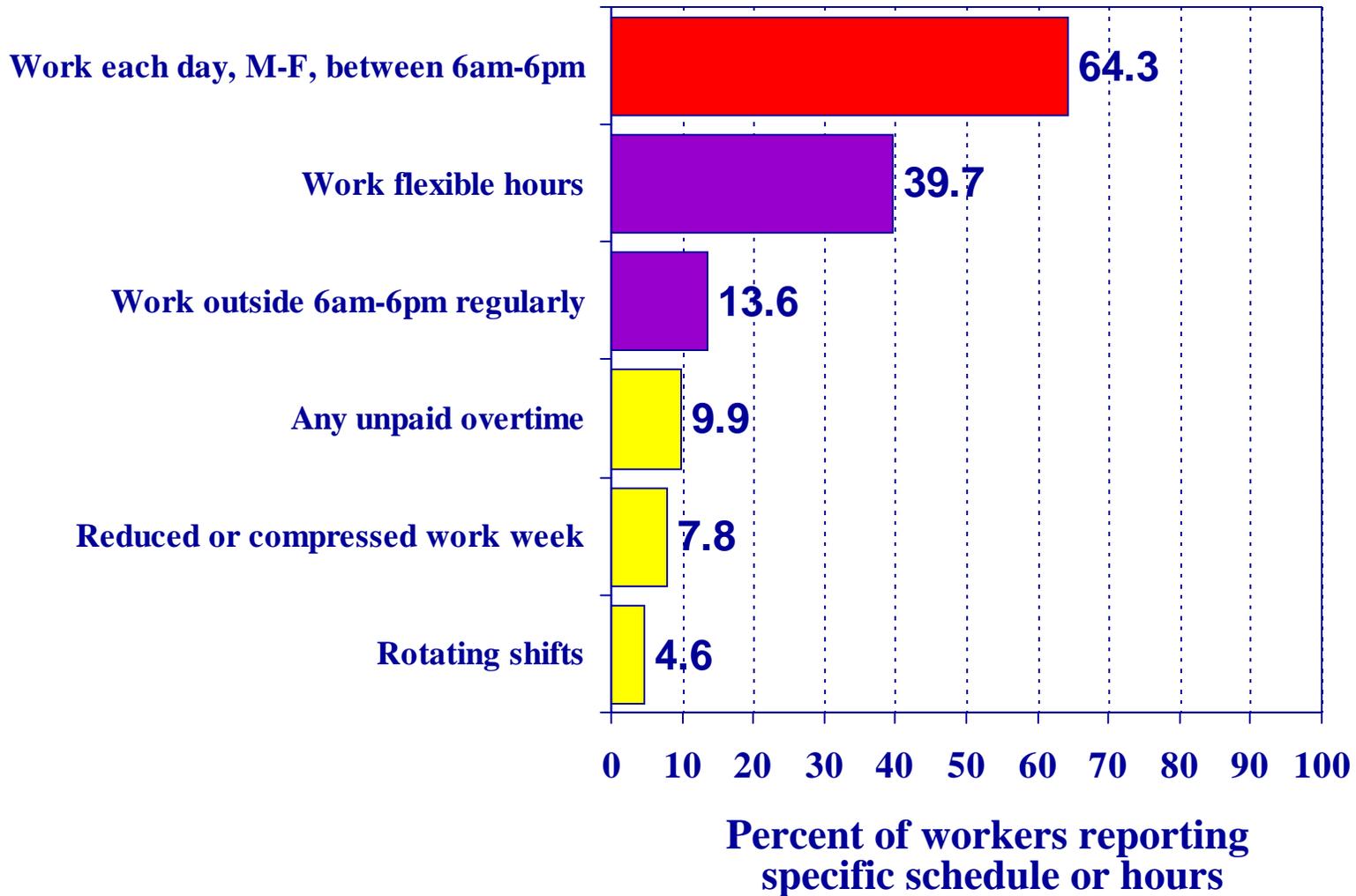


Work time -- options and tradeoffs

- Control over work time is crucial for a person's quality of life
- Options for greater flexibility involve big costs (e.g.: self-employment, part-time work, horizontal career track)
- Canadians are working harder, however you measure it
- What ever happened to the 'leisure society' and the 'labour saving' promises of computers?



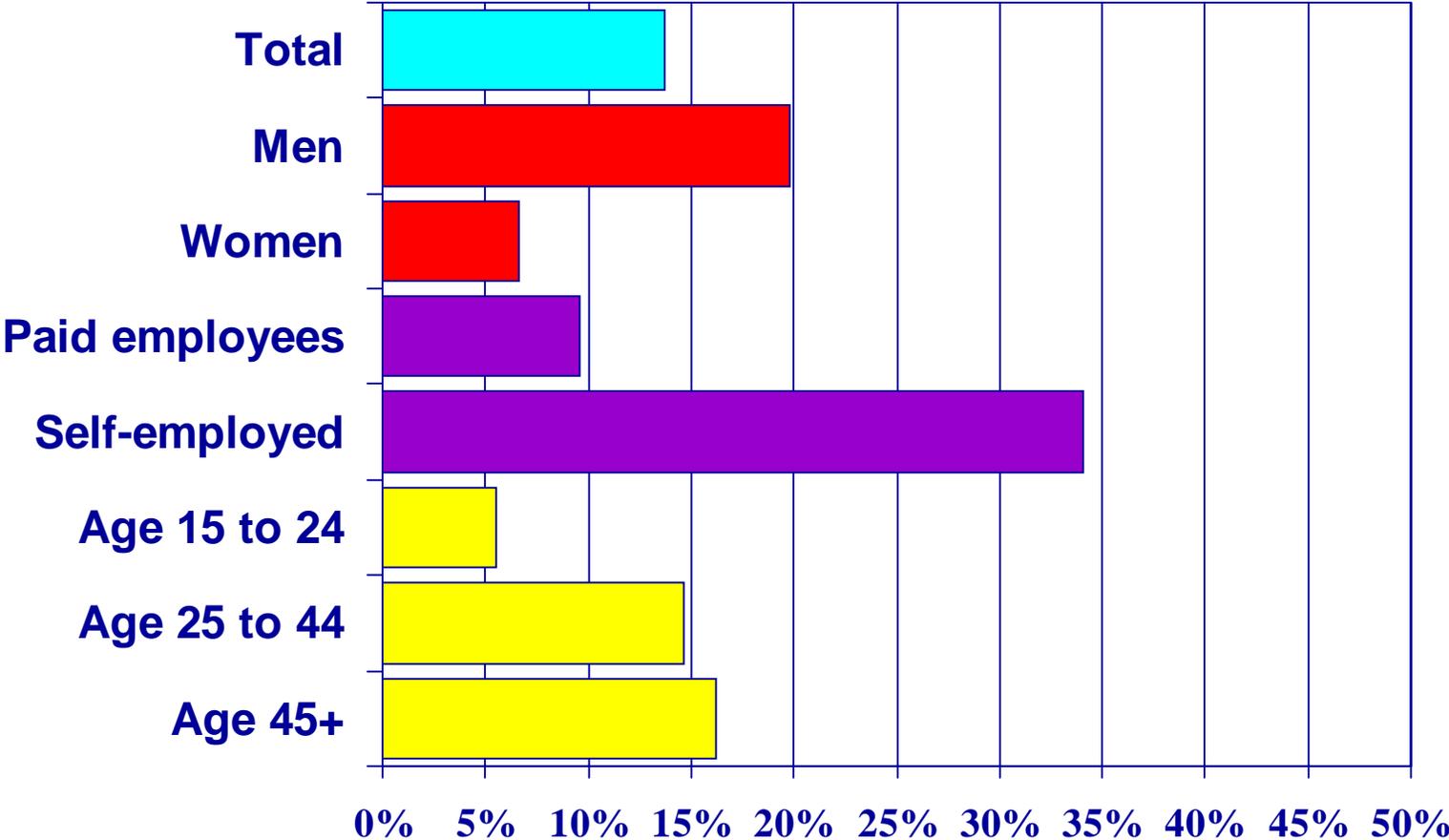
Work hours and schedules, all workers, Canada, 1999



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.



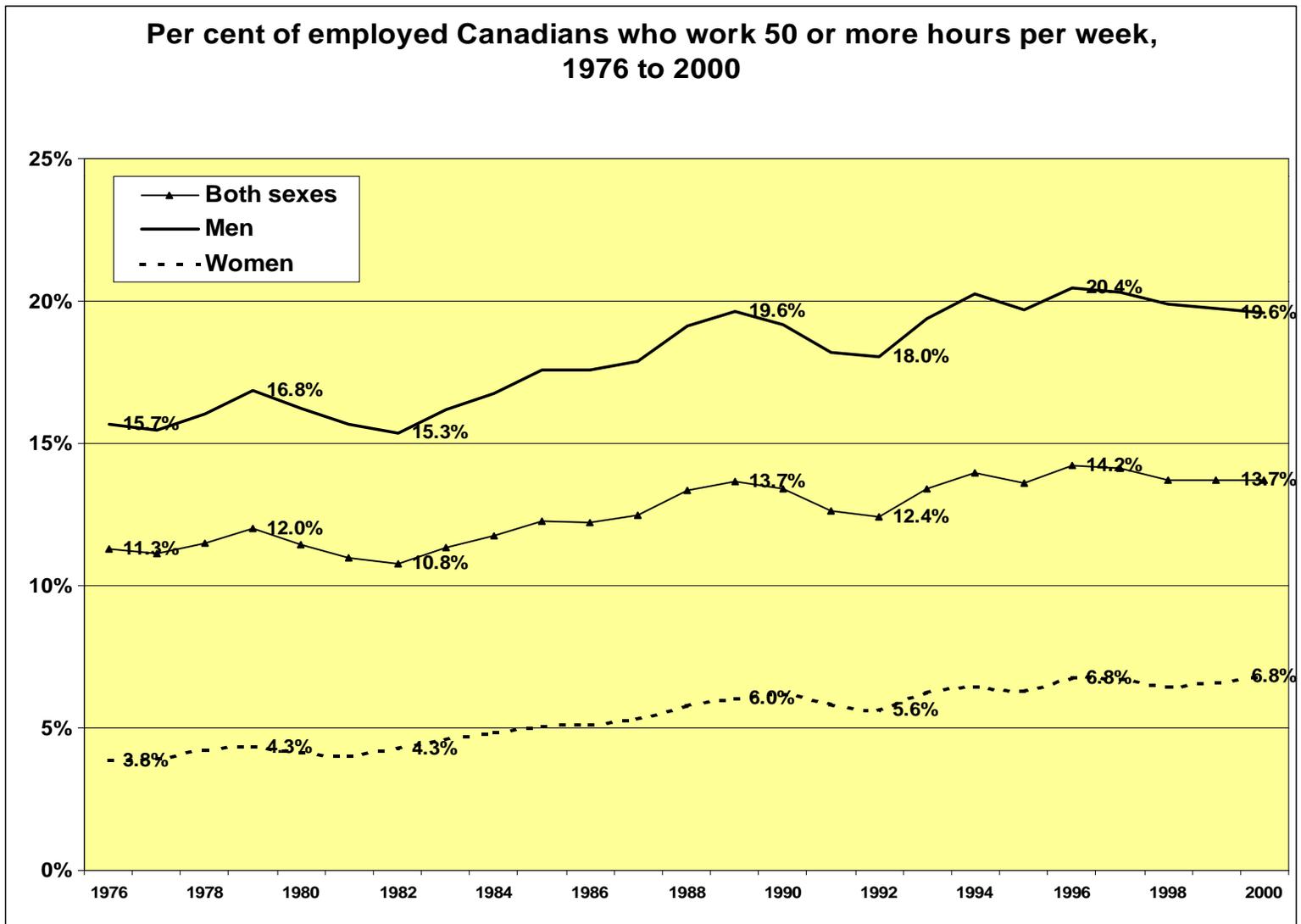
Percent of persons working 50 hours or more per week in their main job, by selected characteristics, Canada, 1999



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.



The rise in long work hours

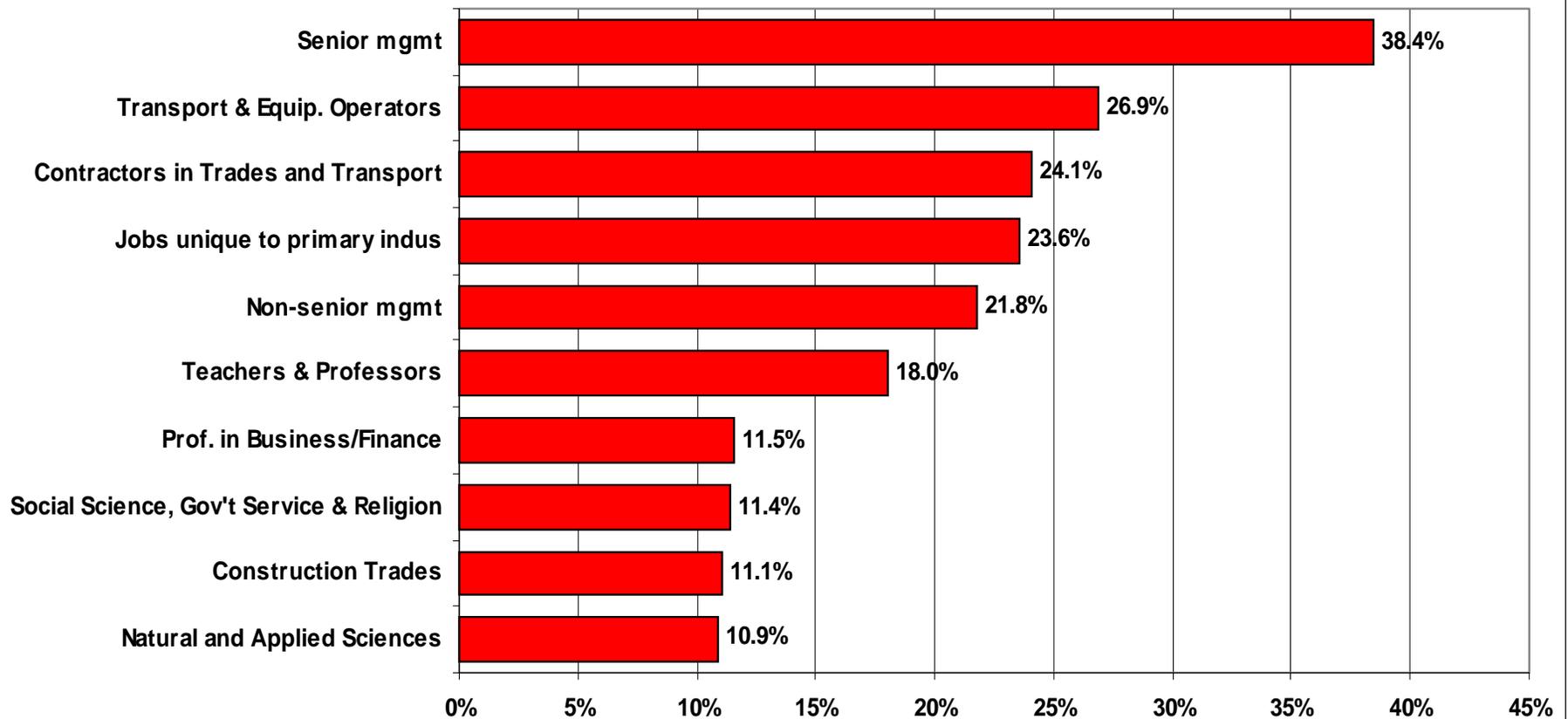


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

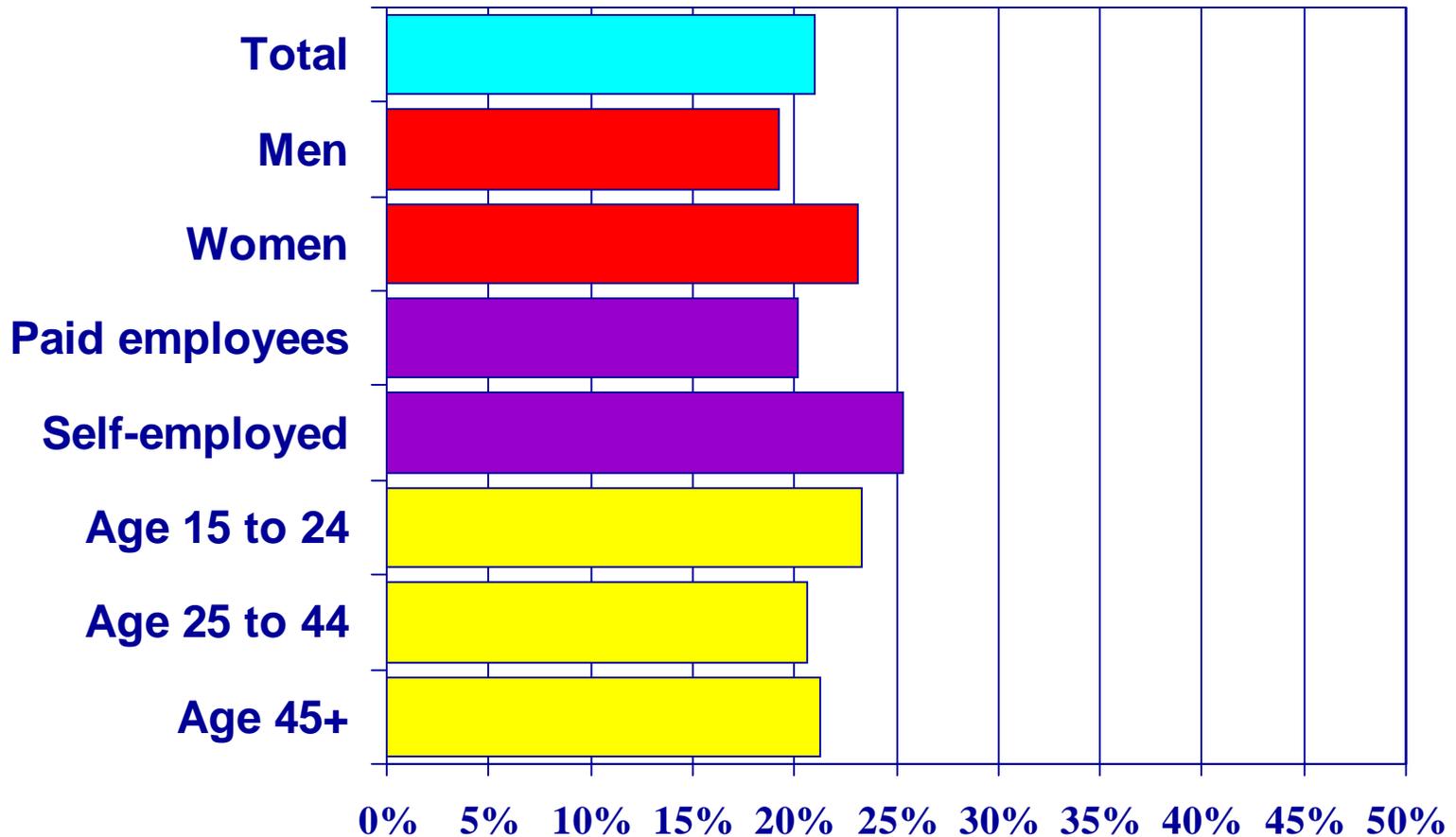


Long work hours: implications for quality of life and productivity?

Per cent of Employees Working 50 or more Hours per Week, (Top 10 Occupations), Canada 1999



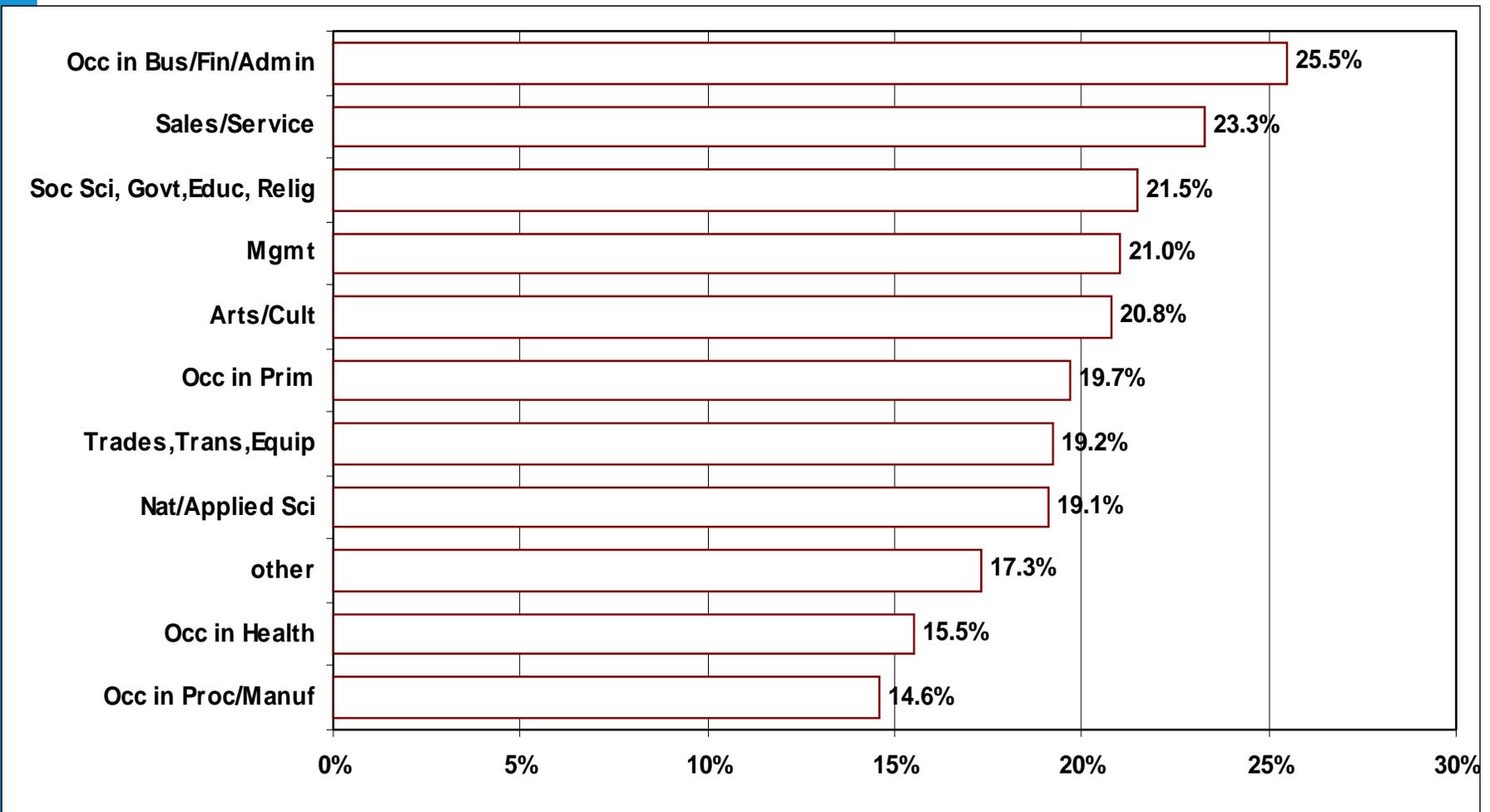
Percent of workers who 'strongly agree' that
"Your job allows you to balance your work and family or
personal life," selected characteristics, Canada, 2000



Source: CPRN-Ekos Changing Employment Relationships Survey 2000 (n=2500).



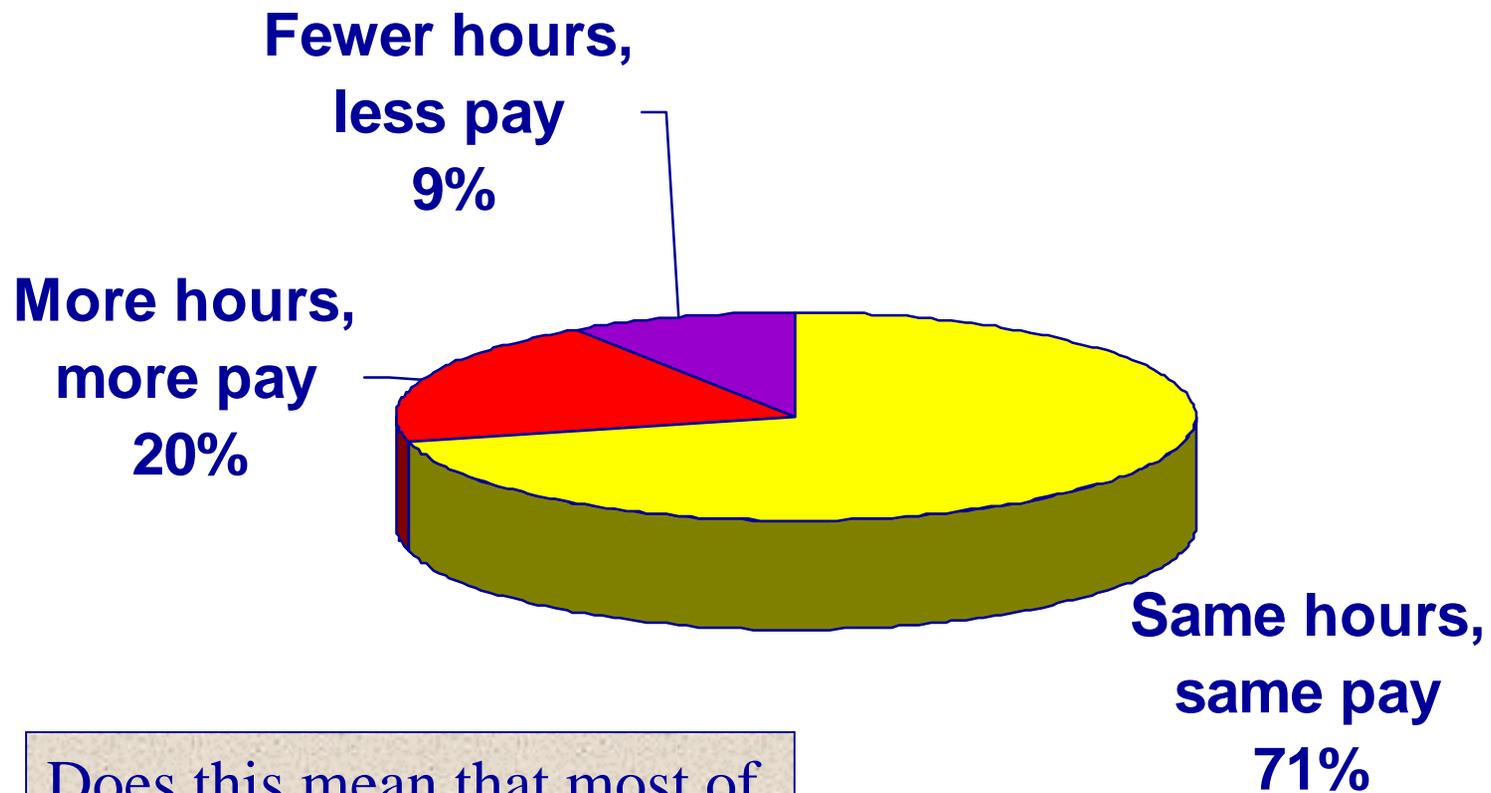
Percent of workers 'strongly agreeing' that their job allows them to balance work and family or personal life, by occupation, Canada, 2000



Source: CPRN-Ekos Changing Employment Relationships Survey 2000 (n=2500).



Work hour preferences of paid employees, Canada, 1999

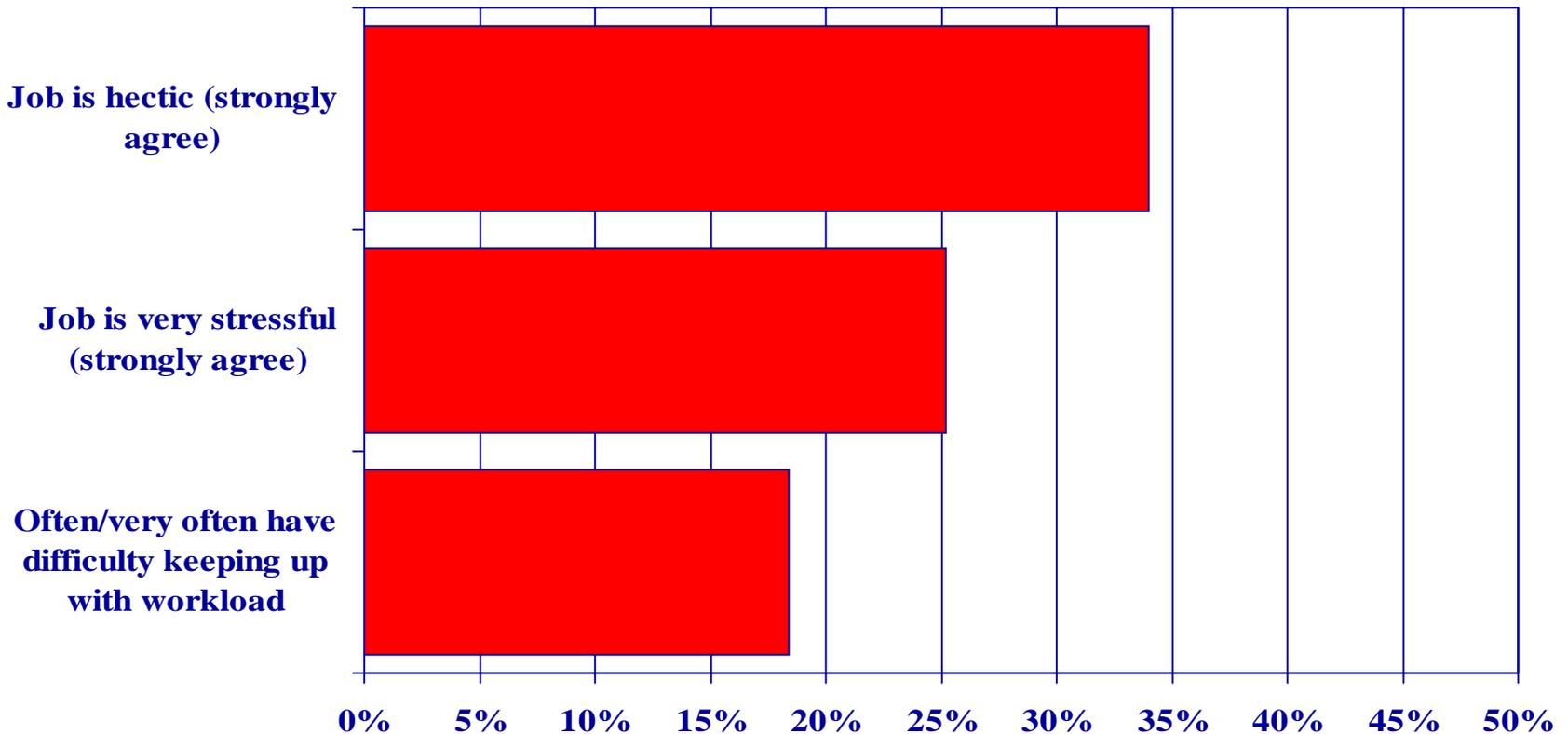


Does this mean that most of us can't afford to work less?



More signs that low-quality work is a problem

Percent of Canadian workers reporting that

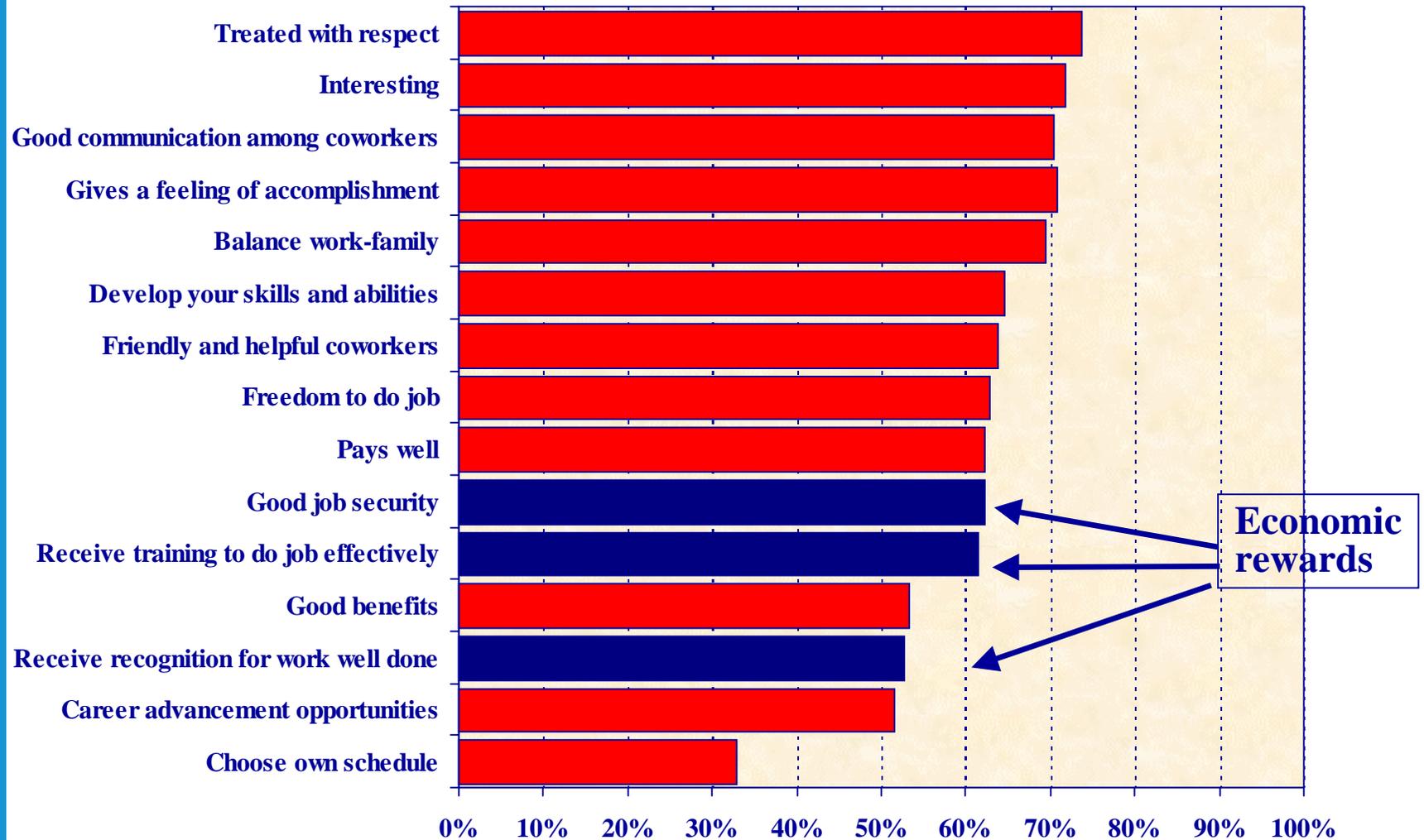


Work pace, job demands and workload are strong influences on the quality of life.

Source: CPRN-Ekos Changing Employment Relationships Survey 2000 (n=2500).



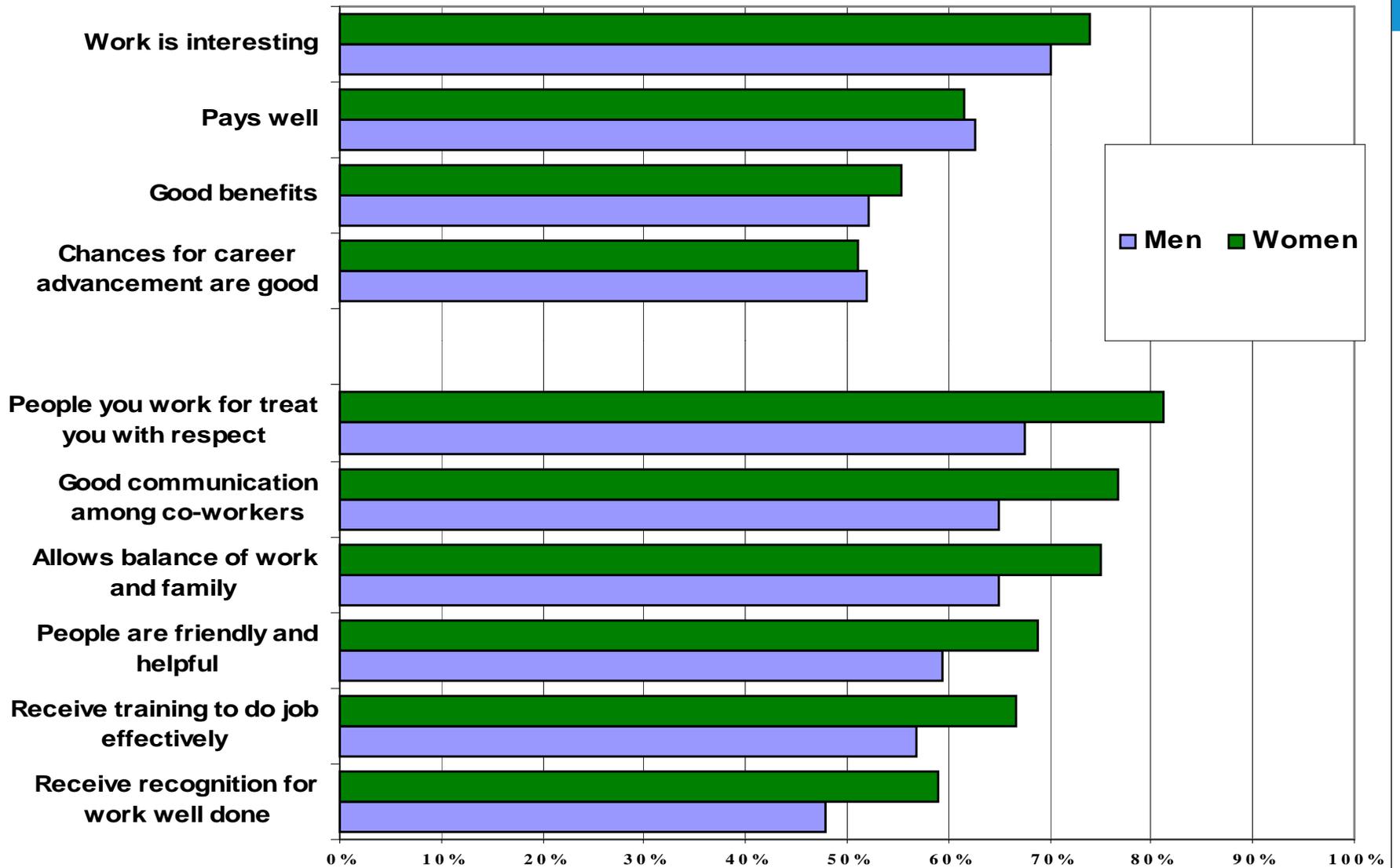
What workers consider “very important” in a job, Canada, 2000



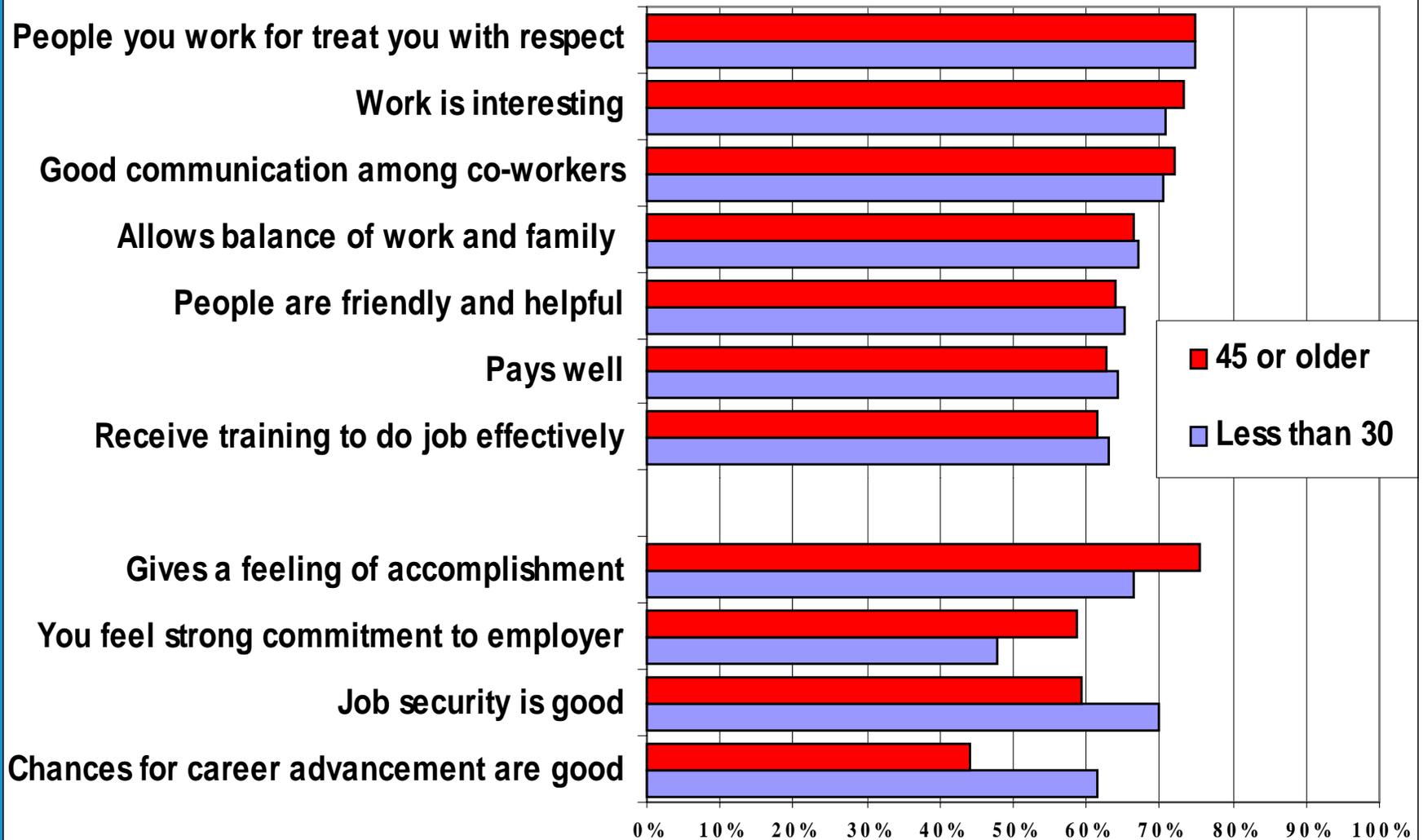
Source: CPRN-Ekos Changing Employment Relationships Survey 2000 (n=2500).



What men and women consider "very important" in a job, Canada 2000



What younger and older workers consider "very important" in a job, Canada 2000



The generations converge on job quality goals

- Job quality problems first seriously raised when baby boomers entering job market in 1970s
 - Needs urgent attention in an era when human resource development and ‘life-long learning’ and ‘knowledge’ really matter
 - The same basic management and organizational barriers exist today as in 1970s
- **KEY IMPLICATION:** Work rewards and working conditions that will attract and retain youth also desired by older workers
 - In this respect, there is continuity across the generations
 - However, there’s always been age differences in job expectations and satisfaction, because workers adapt to their changing circumstances and diminishing choices over time as they move through the life course (e.g., youth are more ‘critical’)
 - This approach avoids the internal inequities created by emphasizing the needs of one age group over another

DON'T FORGET THE WORK AND LIFE NEEDS OF 35, 45 AND 55 YEAR OLDS!

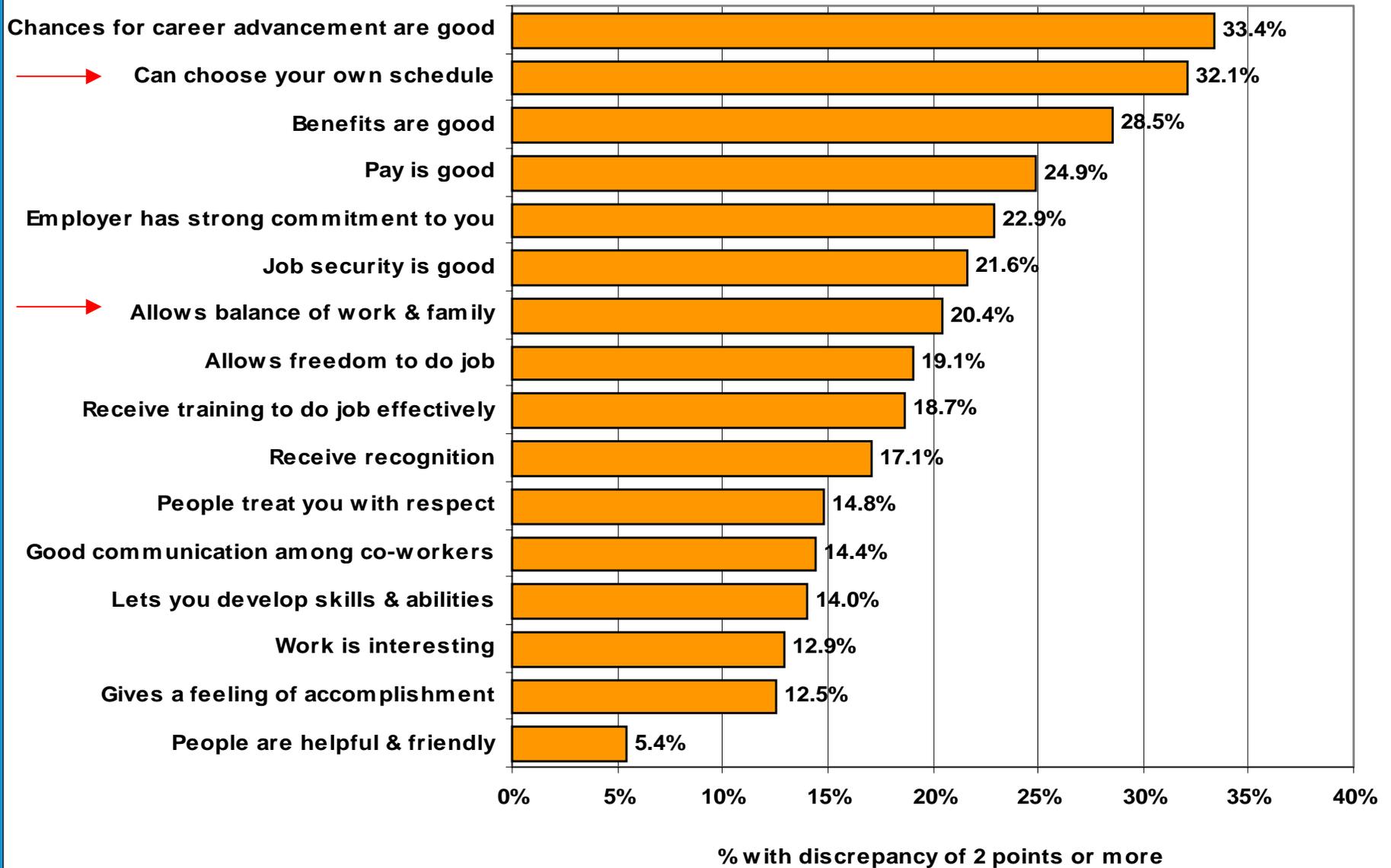


The 'Job Quality Deficit'

- Developed for CPRN's new Quality of Employment Indicators web site
- *CPRN-Ekos Changing Employment Relationships Survey, 2000* (n=2500)
- Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed (5-point Likert scale) that each statement *described* their current job
- Also asked to indicate how *important* (5-point 'not at all important - very important' Likert scale) each aspect would be if they were looking for a new job today
- Subtracting the "importance" scale from the "description" scale provides a discrepancy score -- the Job Quality Deficit
- This is the gap between what workers want and what they have



Per cent of employees with a large 'job quality deficit' (discrepancy between their actual and desired job characteristics), Canada 2000

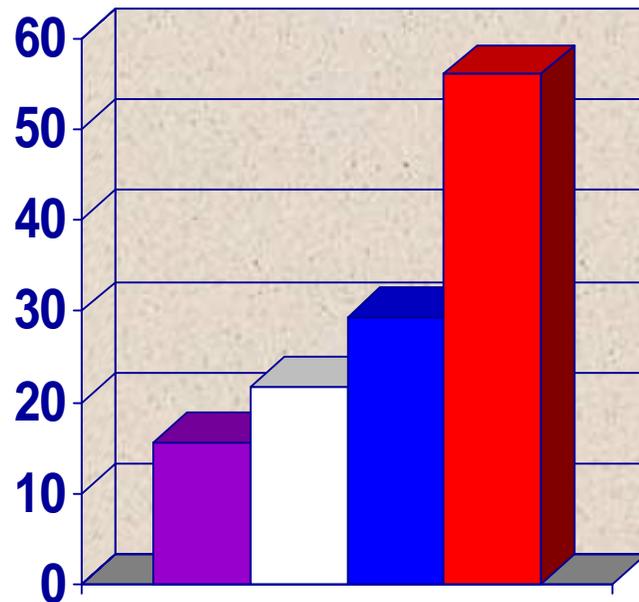
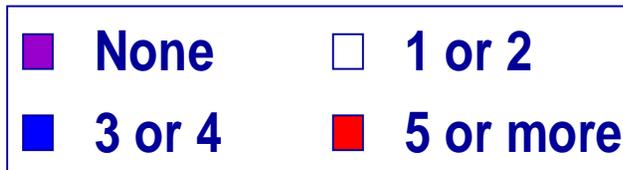


Note that flexibility and balance have large gaps.

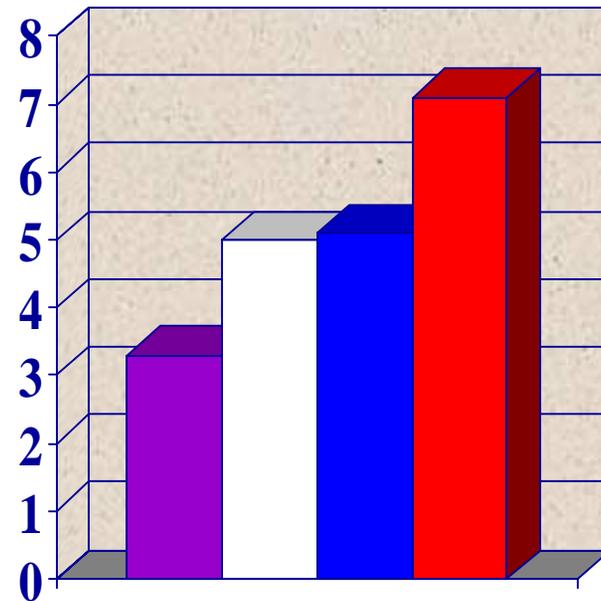
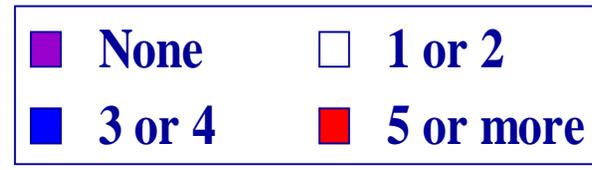


Job Quality Deficits cost employers

of Job Items on Which Respondent Reported a Large Job Quality Deficit



% agree/strongly agree
workplace morale is low



Average # days absent
for illness/injury last yr.



Reducing the job quality deficit

- **High quality work must provide decent benefits and pay**
- **But also crucial, ‘intrinsic’ job rewards that provide personal fulfillment are most important to Canadians**
- **Human resource management policies and practices must address both sets of needs**
- **A comprehensive HR strategy is required -- a few new ‘programs’ is not enough**



Four dimensions of employment relationships

- CPRN's *Changing Employment Relationships Project* identifies four underlying dimensions of employment relationships:
 - ✓ trust
 - ✓ commitment
 - ✓ communication
 - ✓ influence
- the social and psychological underpinnings of work
- expands our understanding of what defines a 'good job'

See: G. Lowe and G. Schellenberg, *What's A Good Job? The Importance of Employment Relationships*. CPRN Research Report, May 2001. www.cprn.org



Major influences on employment relationships among employees

- Demographic characteristics or location in the labour market (e.g., standard or non-standard work) do not account for variations in employment relationships.
- Strong employment relationships depend on :
 - a healthy and supportive work environment
 - interesting work
 - receiving the needed training
 - having the tools and resources to do the job
 - job security
- Organizational change also affects employment relationships.
 - downsizing reduces commitment and trust
 - ‘restructuring’ negatively affects communication



Strong employment relationships contribute to high job satisfaction

- **Employment relationships matter for individuals**
- **Job satisfaction is a good indicator of the overall quality of work life**
- **Employment relationships and job satisfaction are closely linked**
- **Individuals with ‘strong’ employment relationships report significantly higher levels of job satisfaction (net of other factors)**

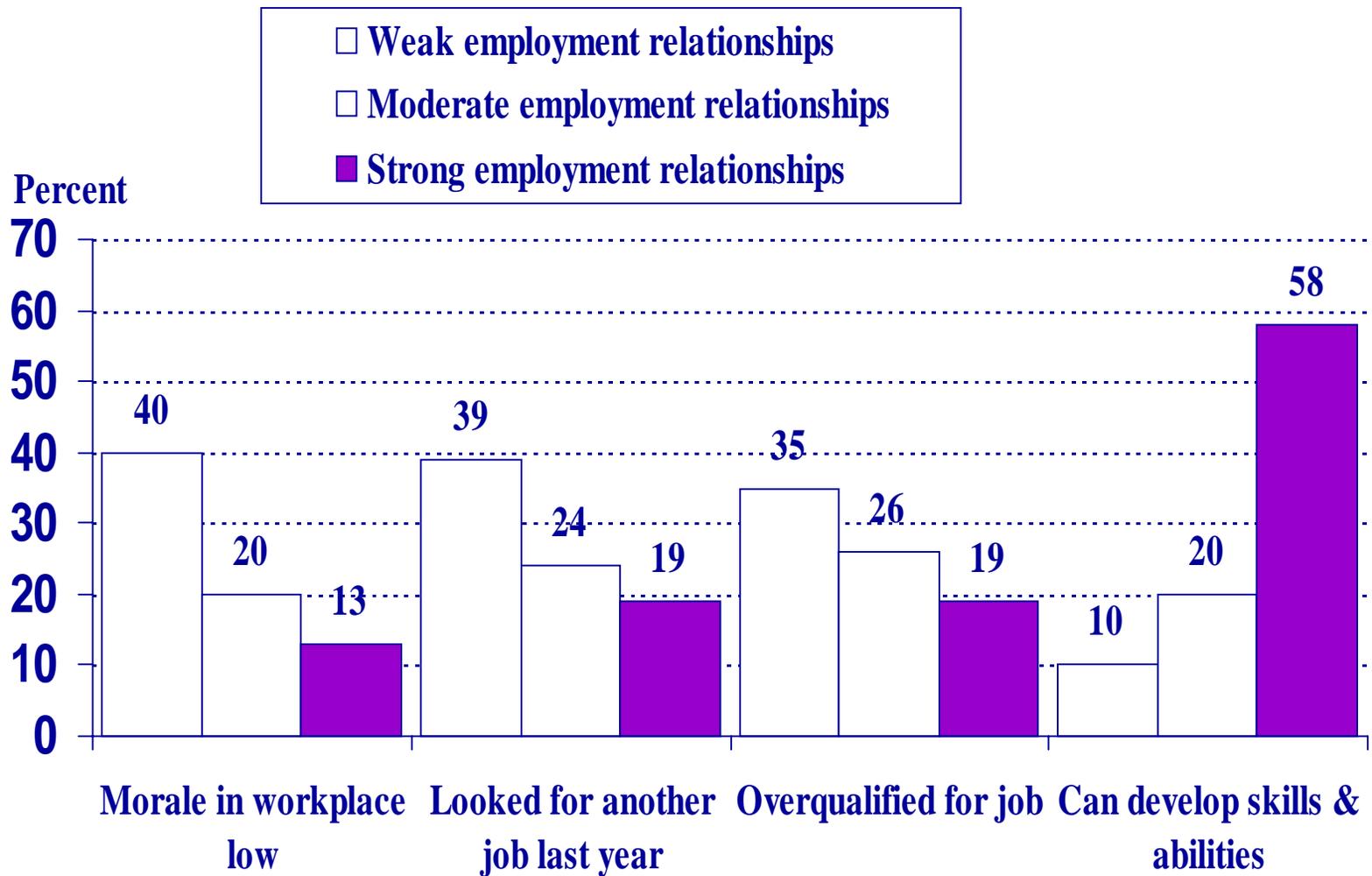


Employment relationships impact employers

- **Growing concerns about recruitment and retention**
- **So we examined the impact of employment relationships on turnover**
- **Employees in weak employment relationships were significantly more likely to have looked for another job than individuals with moderate or strong relationships (net of other factors)**
- **Similar pattern for absenteeism, after taking into account employee health status and a range of other characteristics known to influence absenteeism.**



How employment relationships matter: selected outcomes by strength of employment relationships



Many factors influence the quality of work

- **employment relationships**
- **work environment**
- **organizational structures and processes**
- **job design**
- **management practices and supervision**
- **overall business strategy**
- **organizational culture**
- **worker attitudes and behaviour**



Improving quality through workplace innovation

The high performance workplace model is also called ‘high-trust - high-skills’, ‘high involvement’, ‘flexible’:

- flat organization
- team-based work
- flexible job design
- commitment to training and learning
- employee participation
- sharing of rewards and information
- promote health, well-being, work-family balance
- supportive supervisors

Research suggests that ‘bundles’ of these factors are linked to improved quality of work life and productivity.



Moving from insights to action

WE NEED TO...

- ✓ Document the benefits of high quality jobs for workers, employers and society
- ✓ Build work quality goals into HRM strategies and practices
- ✓ Identify changes in a workplace that would most improve the quality of work
- ✓ Define clear roles and responsibilities for governments, employers and other stakeholders (unions, professional associations, sector councils)



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