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CPRN RCRPP

Workplace Reform & Workforce Renewal in Government

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Human Resources in Government

Study: *Key Questions*

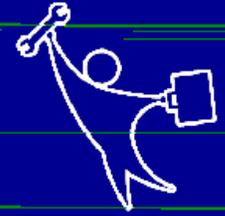


- ✓ How can Phase I of government restructuring (cost and service focus) give way to a Phase II (workplace reform and workforce renewal)?
- ✓ What workplace models and HRM practices can meet the demands for service effectiveness *and* quality work-life?
- ✓ How can workplace innovation be encouraged, given that it is crucial for recruitment, retention, and skill/knowledge development?



Project sponsors

- The *Human Resources in Government Study* is sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada, Public Service Commission, and Treasury Board Secretariat at the federal level; the provinces of Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia; and the Public Service Alliance of Canada
- 4 provincial employee unions cooperated
- Advisory Committee of sponsors and academic experts
- CPRN creates a 'neutral space' for management, labour, and academic researchers to collaborate



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Government employment trends

Key questions:

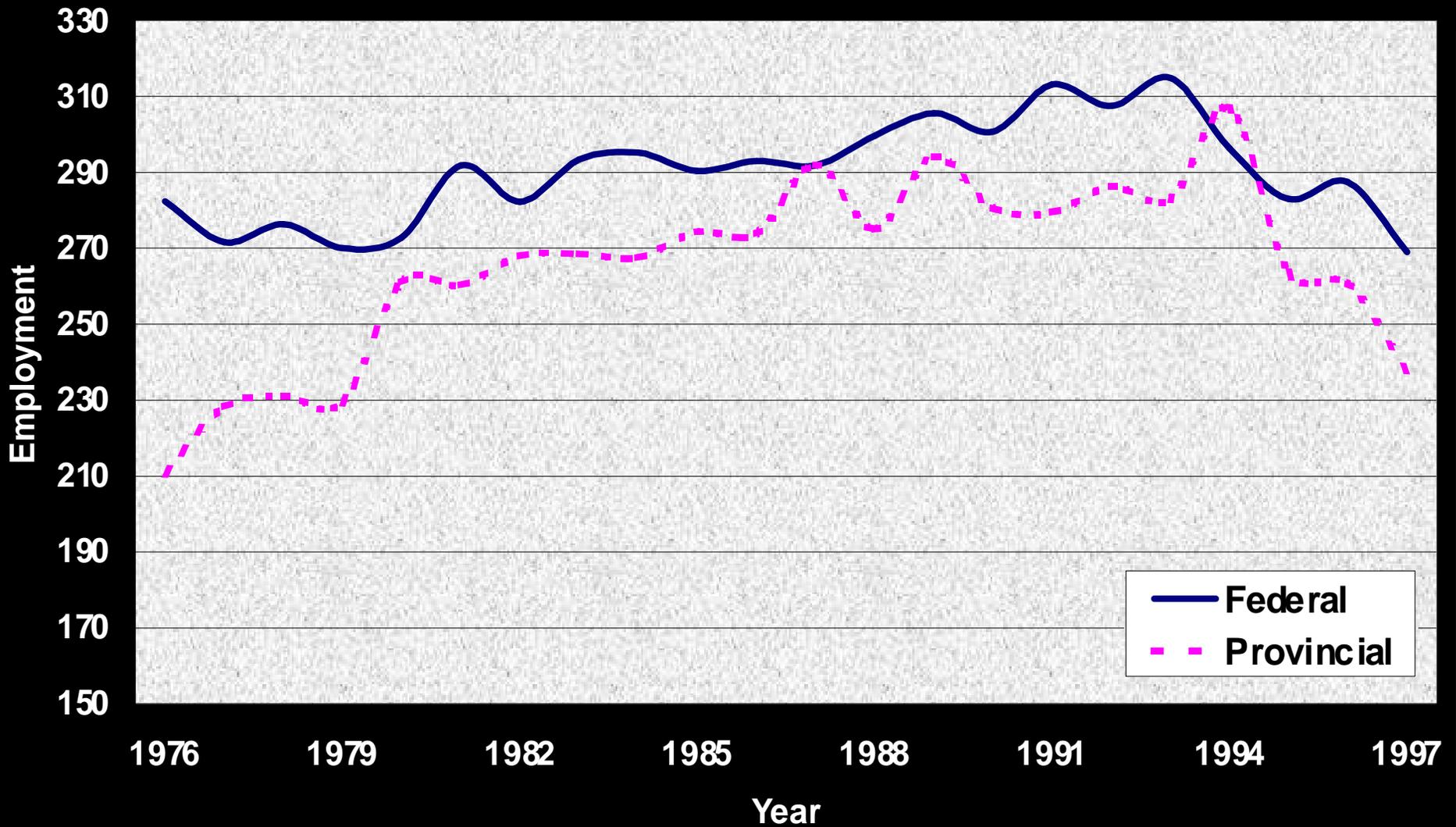
- In a decade of massive public sector restructuring, how has government employment changed?
- What are the implications for governments, employees, unions, and the public?
- Has the goal of renewing public service delivery been balanced with the renewal of the public service workforce?

Key trends:

- Large decreases in federal and provincial government employment
- Government now a smaller part of the labour force
- More managers and administrators, fewer clerical and service workers
- Significant aging
- The gender gap in participation has shrunk overall, but remains part of the occupational structure

Source: Joe Peters, An Era of Change: Government Employment Trends in the 1980s and 1990s.
Canadian Policy Research Networks, June 1999.

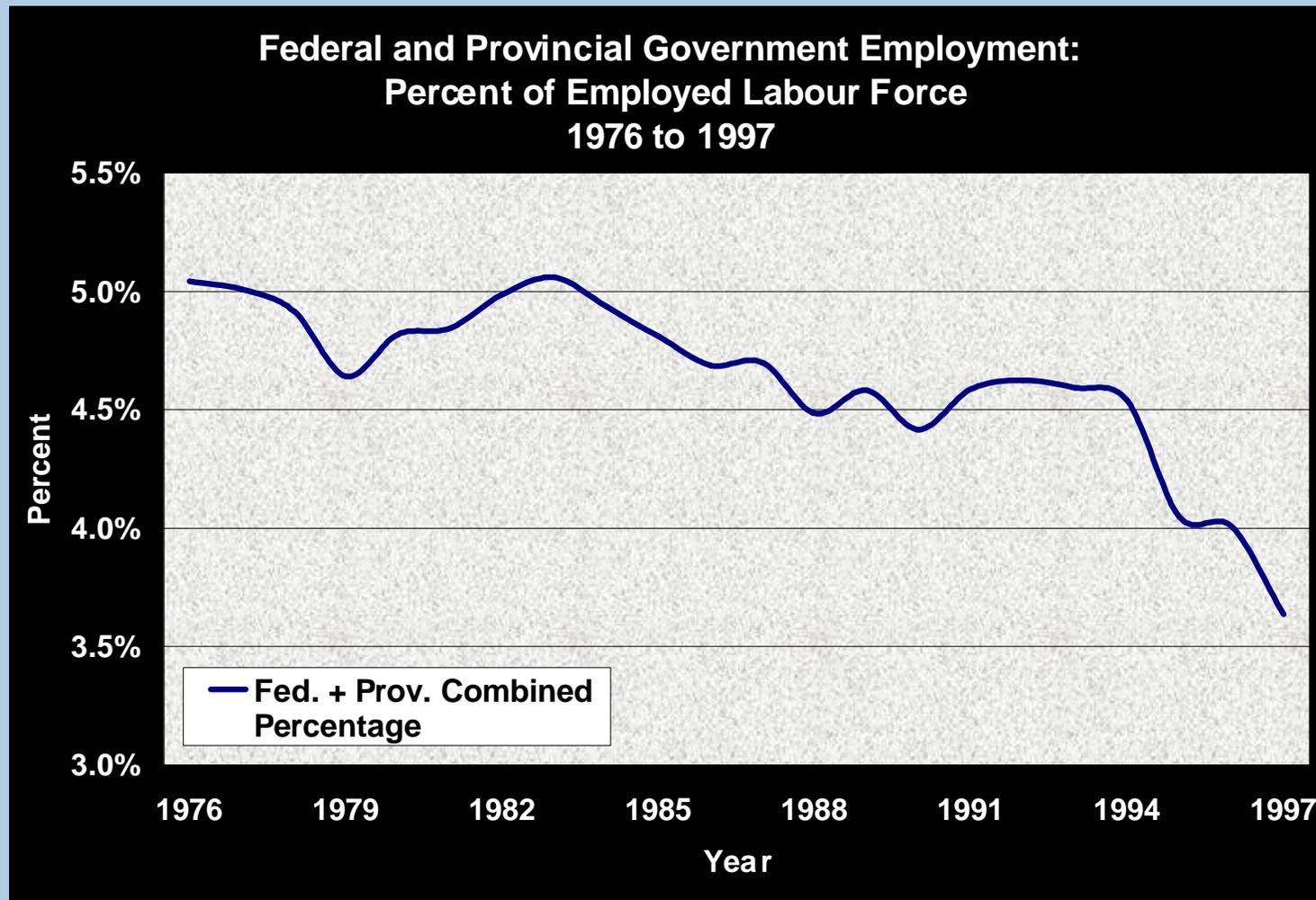
Federal and Provincial Government Total Employment (in 000s) 1976 to 1997





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A shrinking share of the labour market

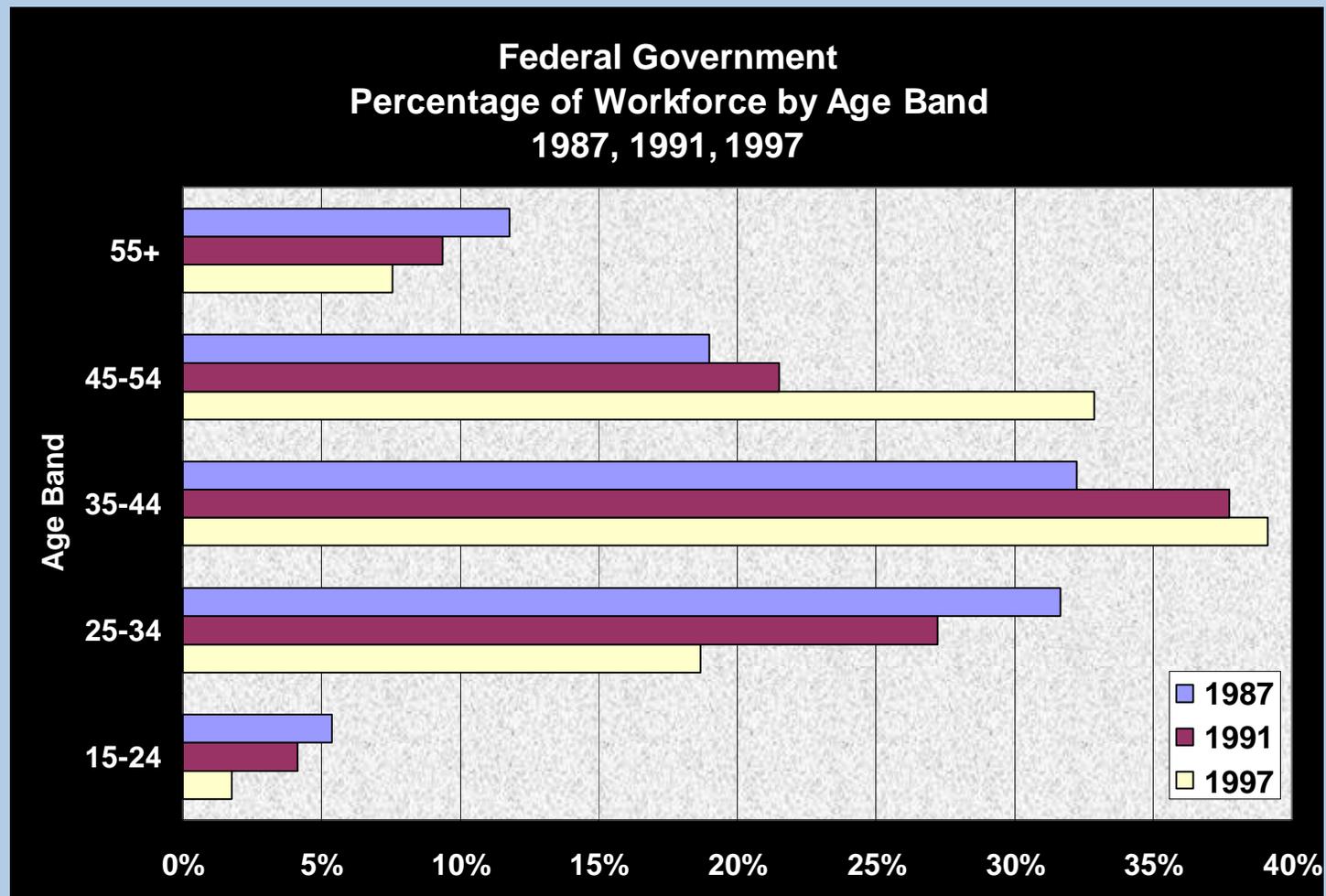


Labour Force Survey



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A rapidly aging public service



Federal Government



Looking inside government workplaces....

Based on the assessments of unit managers
(1998 Survey of Workplace Issues in Government, n=802)

To what extent have there been changes in:

- organizational structures?
- workload?
- work content ?
- human resource management practices?
- training and skill?
- technology?
- unit performance?

Question...

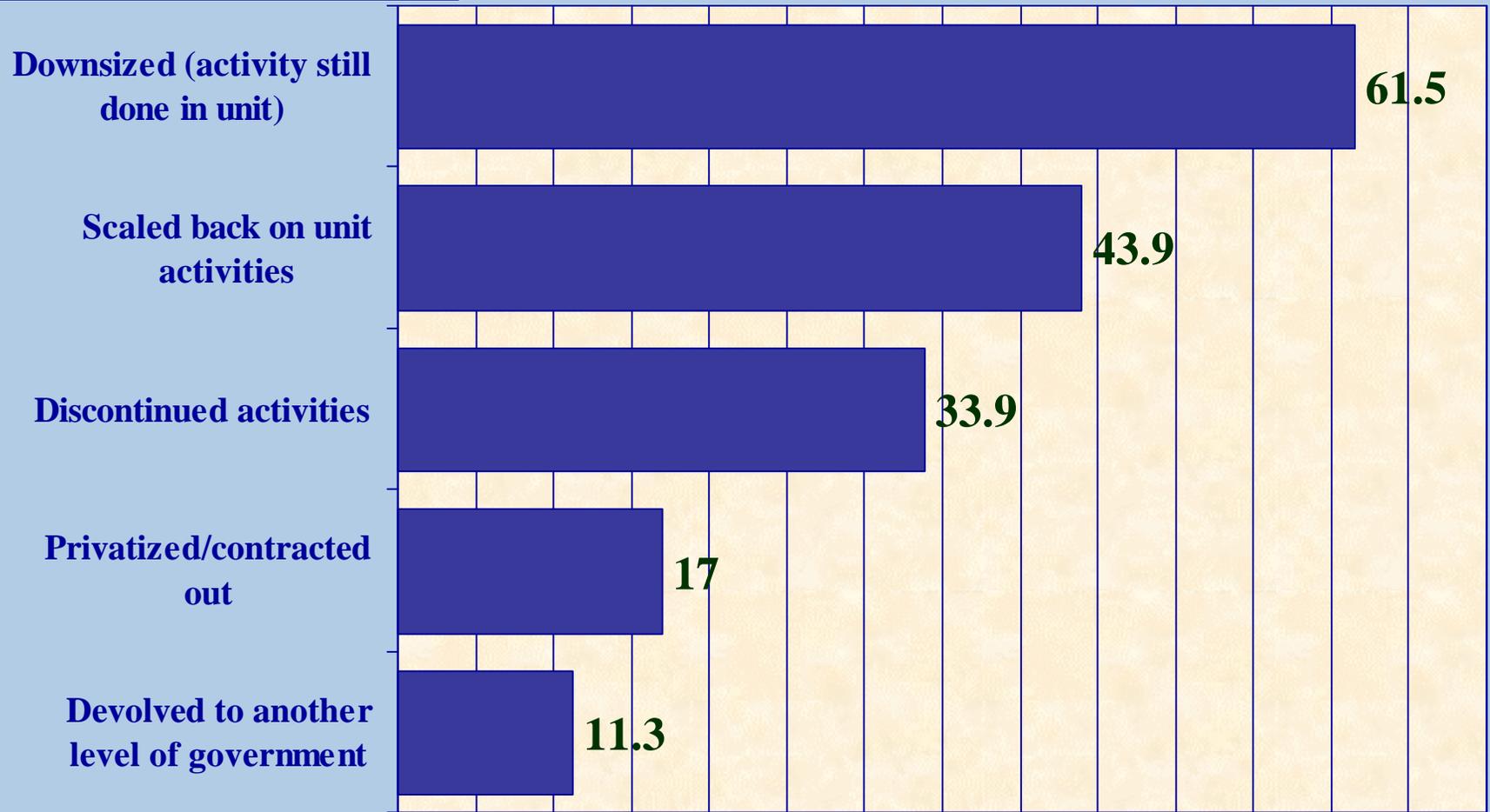


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What are the implications of these changes for human resource renewal.... and for future workplace innovation?



Downsizing was the key restructuring method used in units surveyed, 1995-1998



Percent reporting use of restructuring method



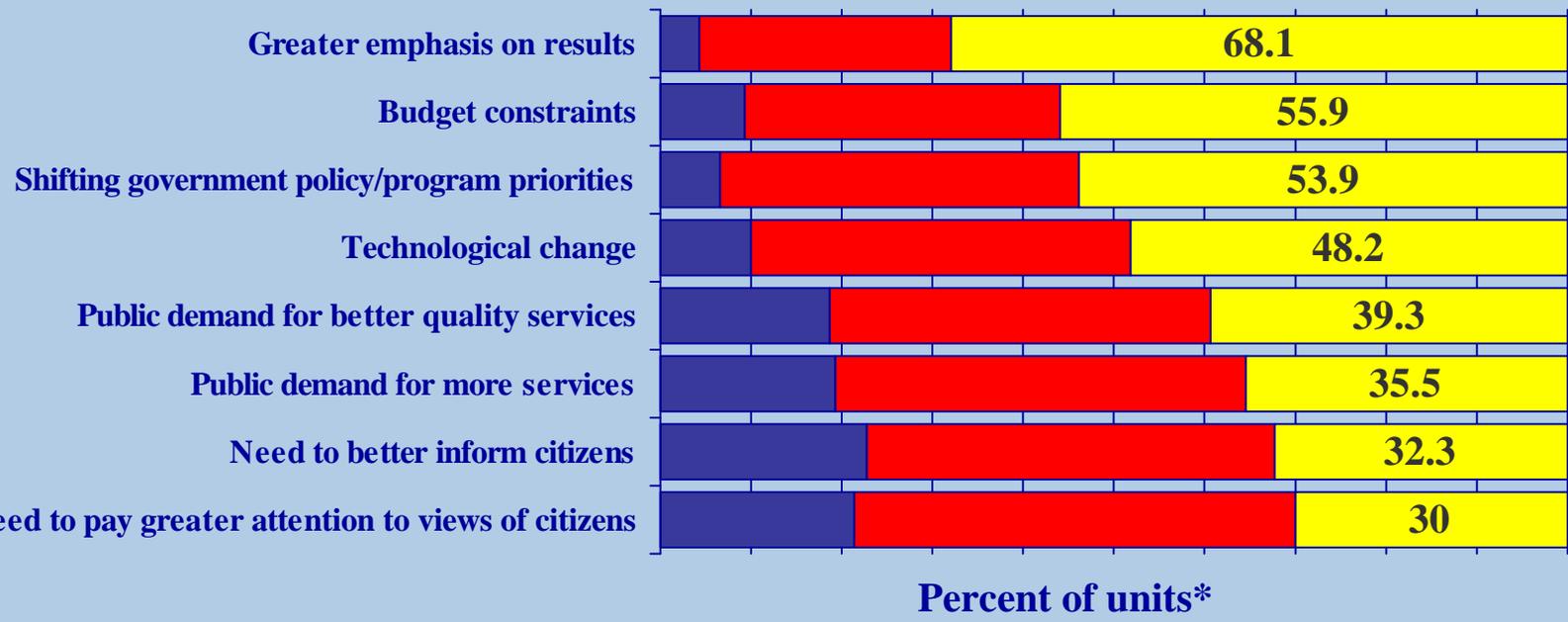
The volume and content of work also changed

- 82% of managers reported that their unit's work volume had increased between 1995-1998
- work volume increased regardless of whether the unit's size increased, decreased or stayed the same
- only 16% of units were doing the same work in the same way in 1998 as 3 years earlier
- when changes in unit size and work volume are combined, over half of the units experienced work intensification

Pressures to restructure government work and workplaces



Not important
 Somewhat important
 Extremely important



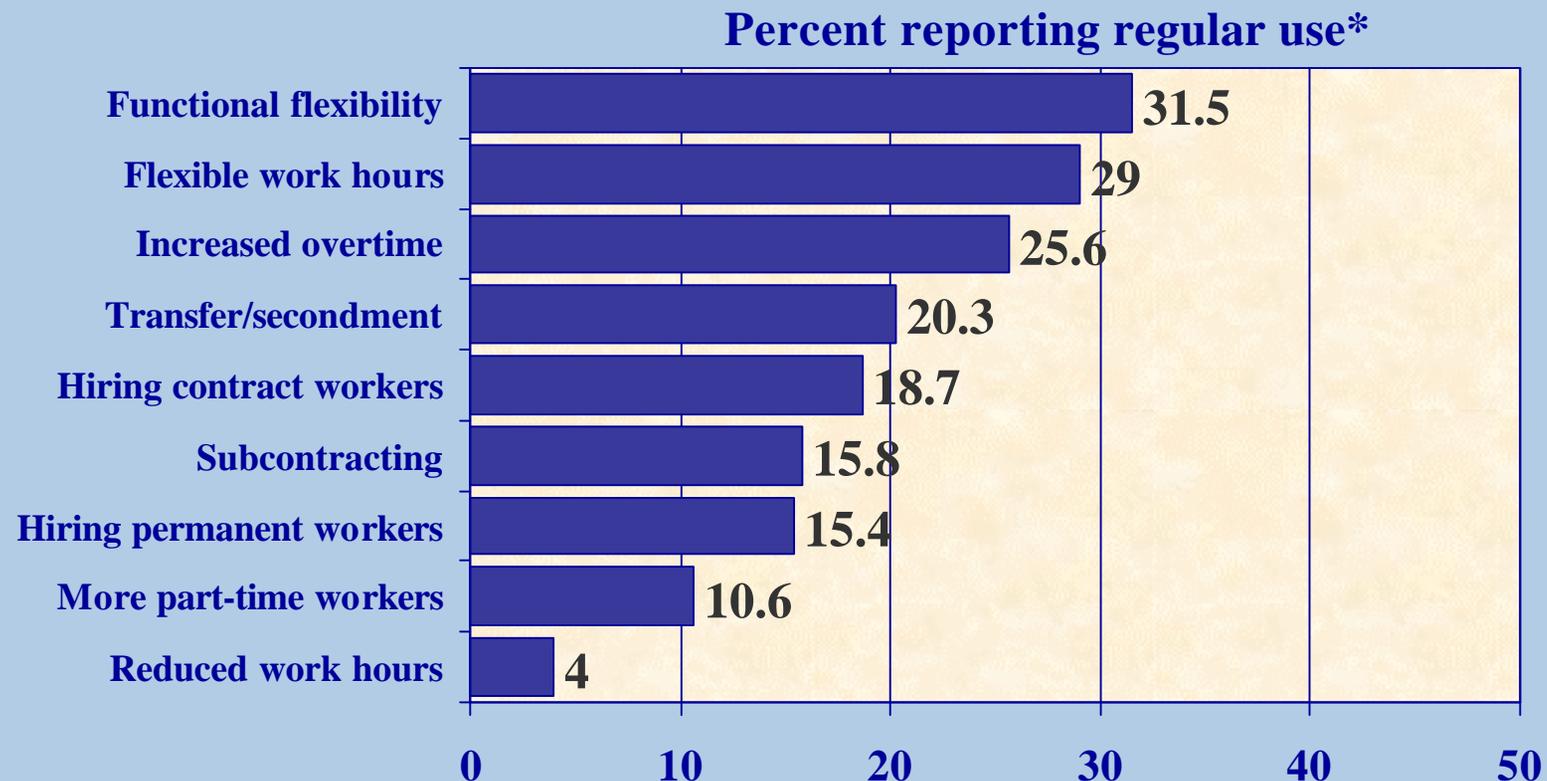
Public Accountability

* Based on responses to the question: "How important has each of the following factors been in determining what you do now compared to 3 years ago?"



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Regular use of human resource management practices



* Based on responses to the question: "How often has this work unit used each of the following practices over the past 3 years?" Responses on a 7-point scale have been collapsed into 3 categories: rarely, occasionally, regularly.



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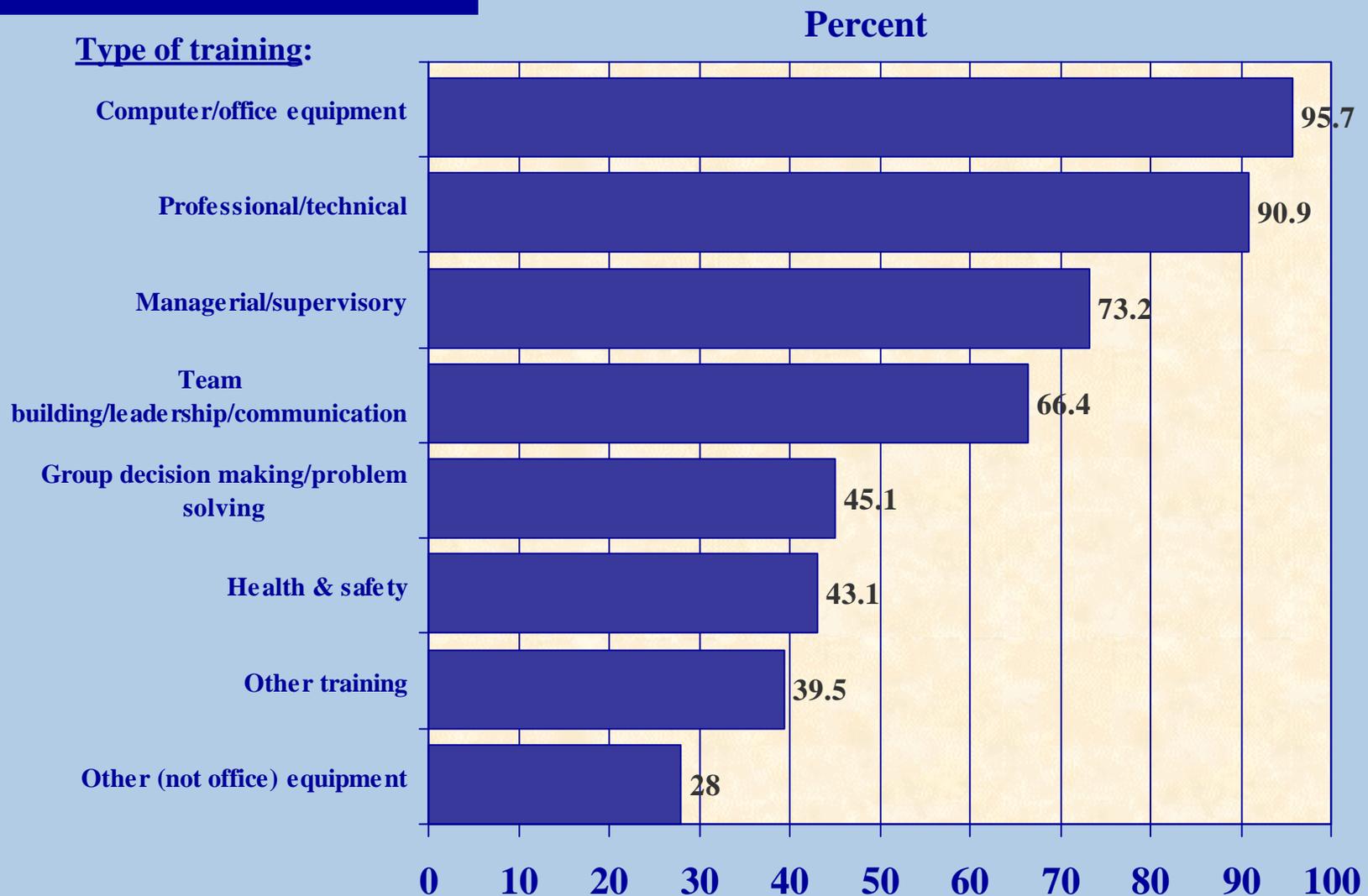
Patterns of HRM innovation

- Note that ‘functional’ flexibility (multi-skilling, job rotation, job enlargement, job enrichment, teams) is more common than ‘numerical’ flexibility
- But not widespread: in only about 1/4 to 1/3 of units do more than half of employees participate
- Job enrichment and teams linked to changes in work content (opposite true for work volume)
- Flexibility also ‘bundled’ with other workplace changes, (training, suggestion programs, quality circles, information sharing about change, technology)
- Also positively associated with performance



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Percentage of units providing or paying for training in the past fiscal year

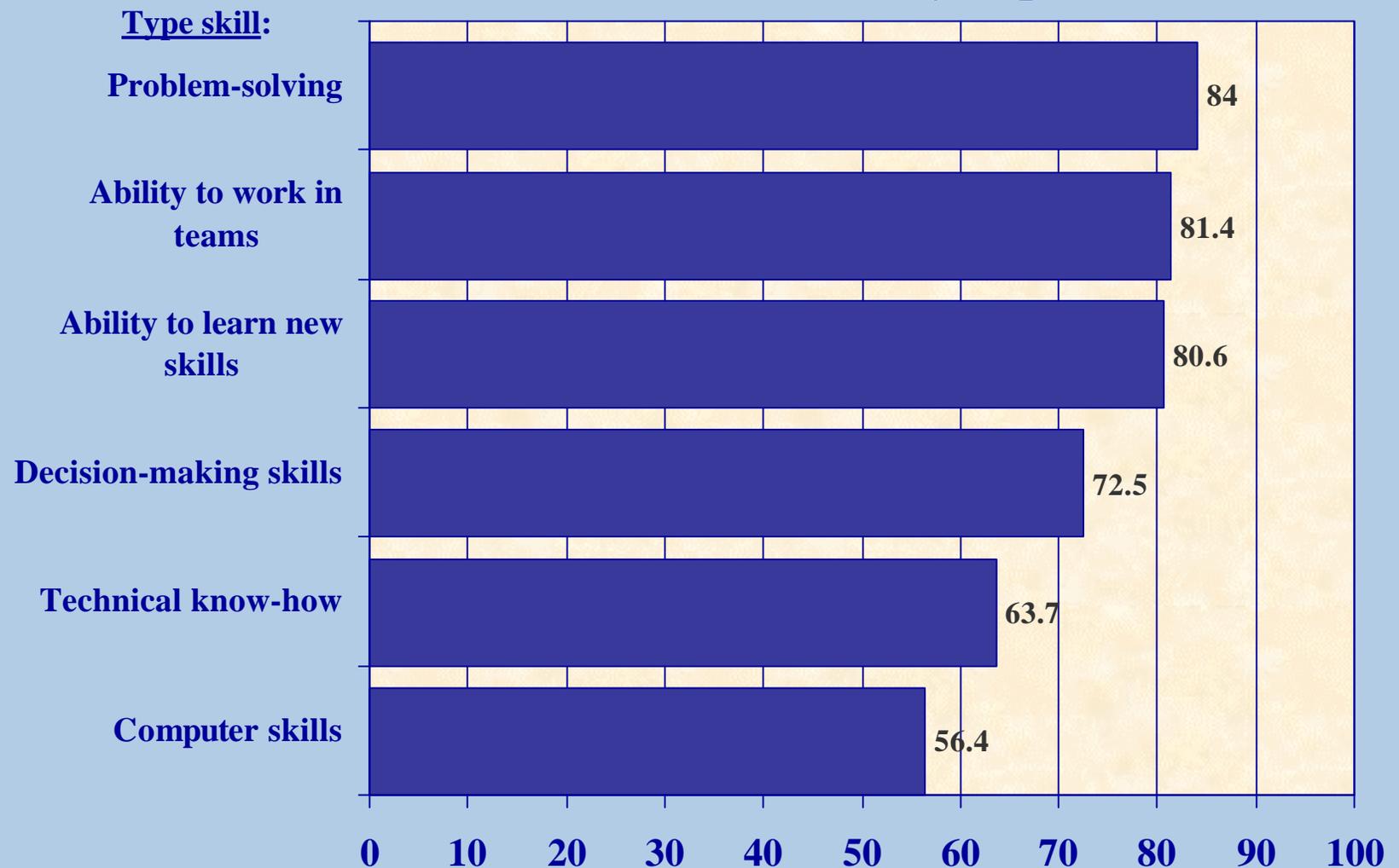




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Managers' assessments of current skill needs

Percent "extremely important"



Use and impact of information and communication technology



Use

- 82% of units provide all employees access to networked PCs
- 88% have email access, 63% Internet
- percentage of work time using ICT varies from 67% for clerical/admin support to 41% for operational

Impact

- 64% of managers “strongly agreed” that ICT increased unit work capacity
- 59% strongly agreed that ICT increased effectiveness
- 35% strongly agreed that ICT changed the nature of the unit’s work
- 12% strongly agreed that ICT meant fewer people were needed to do the work



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Future human resource challenges

- The majority of managers surveyed reported improvements in efficiency/productivity, service quality and on-time delivery
- But what are the costs?
- Managers identified 4 big future challenges:
 1. employee burnout / fatigue
 2. loss of experience / corporate memory
 3. morale
 4. hiring / staffing



Change from the perspective of union representatives (*Survey of Union Reps, n=531*)

- Unions had very limited involvement in the workplace change process
- Workloads, work pace, and stress have increased among union members
- Quality of work life has deteriorated
- Requirements for technical and problem solving skills have increased, but little evidence of employee ‘empowerment’

Question...



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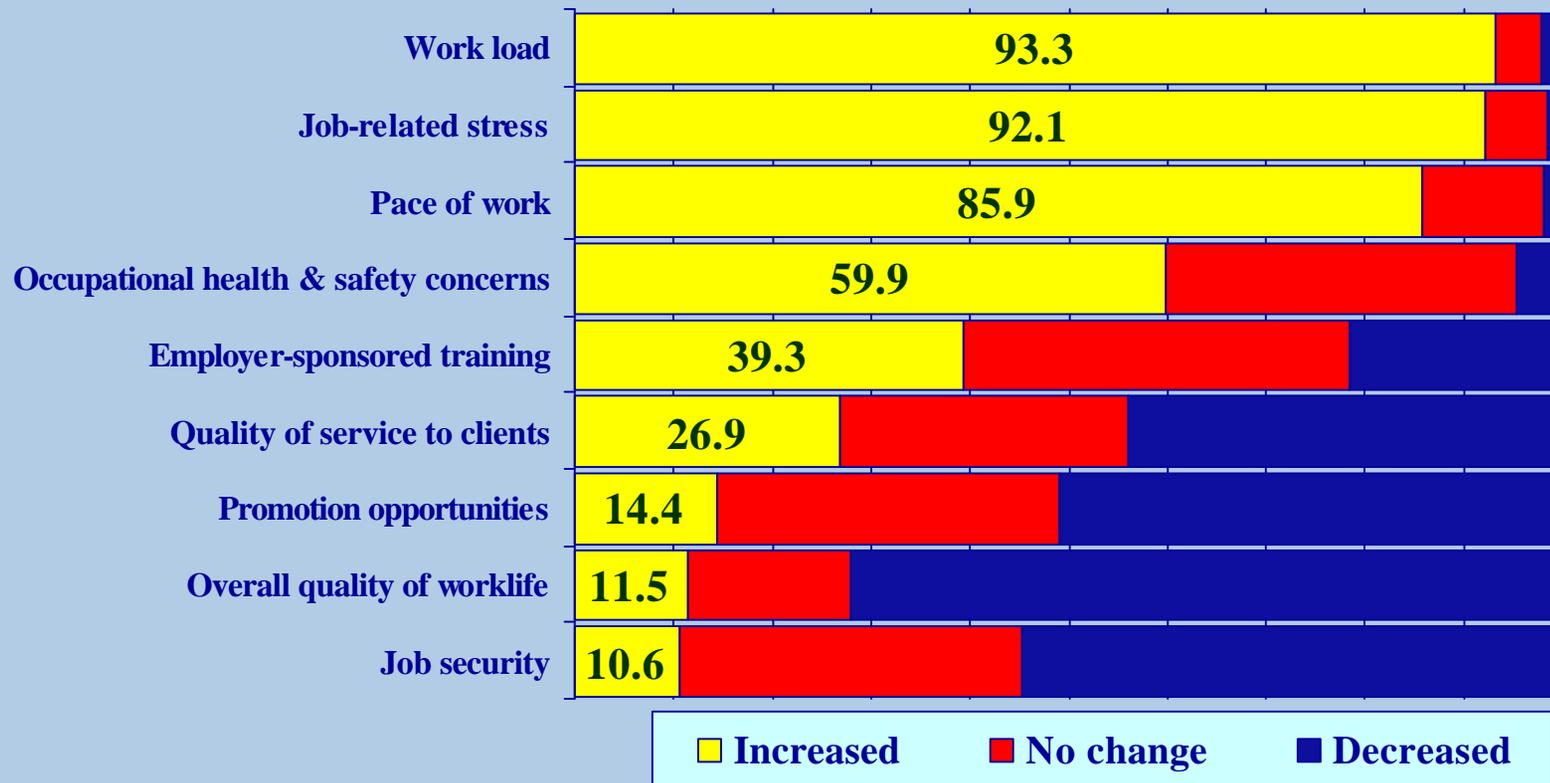
What forms of labour-management relations best facilitate workplace reform and workforce renewal?



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Working conditions have deteriorated, according to union reps

Percent reporting changes to specific working conditions in past 3 years*

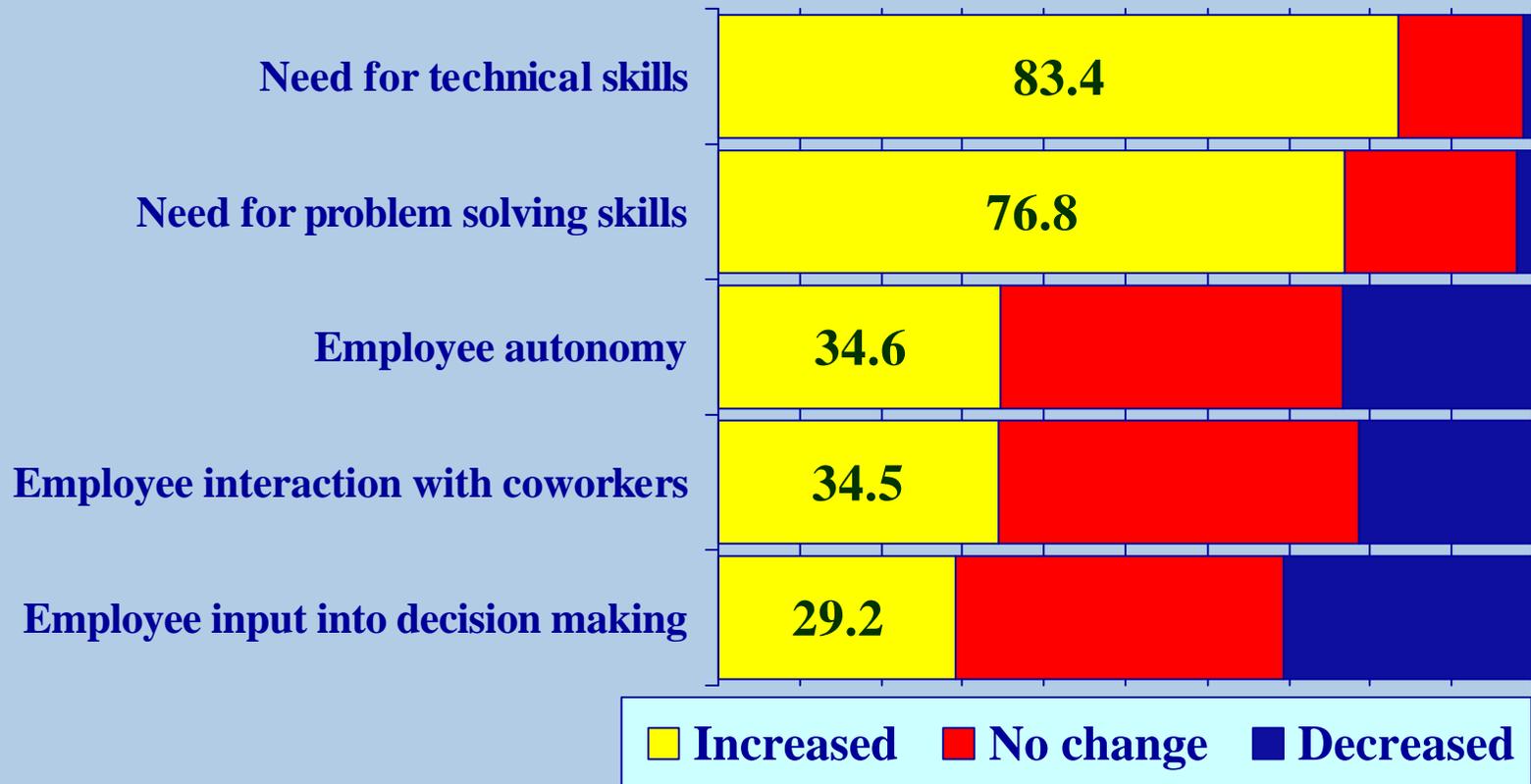


* Graph reports responses on a 7-point “large decrease - large increase” Likert scale, combining 5, 6, and 7 into ‘increased’ and 1, 2, and 3 into “decreased”.



Union members have greater skill requirements without expanded authority

Reported changes in job requirements in past 3 years*



* Graph reports responses on a 7-point "large decrease - large increase" Likert scale, combing 5, 6, and 7 into 'increased' and 1, 2, and 3 into "decreased".



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5 Future Human Resource Management Challenges

- ✓ Heavy workloads, morale and stress: the downside of 'doing more with less'
- ✓ Quality of worklife a renewal issue
- ✓ Balancing higher skill requirements and responsibilities with consultation and empowerment
- ✓ Integrating and coordinating functional, organizational, technological changes with HRM reforms
- ✓ Adapting labour-management relations to support innovation



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(and to download this presentation)

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