

# NORTH AMERICAN COMMUNICATION MONITOR

2018-2019

TRACKING TRENDS IN FAKE NEWS,  
ISSUES MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP  
PERFORMANCE, WORK STRESS, SOCIAL  
MEDIA SKILLS, JOB SATISFACTION  
AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF 1,020  
COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS  
IN THE U.S. AND CANADA



**THE PLANK CENTER**  
FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS



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**2018-2019**

**TRACKING TRENDS IN FAKE NEWS, ISSUES MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP  
PERFORMANCE, WORK STRESS, SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS, JOB SATISFACTION  
AND WORK ENVIRONMENT.**

**JUAN MENG, BRYAN H. REBER, BRUCE K. BERGER, KARLA K. GOWER, & ANSGAR ZERFASS  
A STUDY ORGANIZED AND CONDUCTED BY THE PLANK CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

# IMPRINT

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# FOREWARD

Jon Iwata, former CMO and CCO of IBM, is regarded as the foremost thought leader in the field of public relations. One day, we engaged in a conversation on the transformation of our profession, the emergence of new models and expectations PR practitioners have of the academy. Having pondered the question of what educators can do to truly help advance our profession, Iwata bore down on a hard truth: “The degree to which academic institutions start to create models – what is the function going to look like in the years ahead? How will the function be organized? What roles and skills will be needed? What measurements will be needed in the new profession?”

“This would be of great value to the profession,” he said. “I don’t see enough of that coming out of academia.” Great leaders exert significant influence on the success, future and image of their profession. And yet, few major studies have plumbed the depths of these important topics. Now comes the North American Communication Monitor (NACM), the first survey of its kind that explores the status quo, qualities and trends of communication management.

The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations is proud to sponsor the NACM, now an integral part of the Global Communication Monitor, the largest regular global study in the field of strategic communication and public relations. With this publication, we celebrate the efforts of five great scholars — men

and women associated with The Plank Center — who’ve joined together to help us transcend old boundaries and uncover new truths for our profession.

A.J. Lafley is known as “one of the most lauded CEOs in history.” Twice CEO and current Executive Chairman of Procter & Gamble, Lafley was asked how top leaders build great brands. He pondered the question and said leaders must take steps to define the meaningful “outside;” decide how they want to do business; balance the present and future state; and shape values and standards. How do we want to do business in the future? It’s a critical question for our profession.

The Plank Center has a seminal goal to build a research-based foundation of knowledge regarding the values, qualities and dimensions of excellent leadership, mentorship and diversity and inclusion in PR. With the NACM, we’re stepping forward to help students, educators and professionals gain knowledge and insights that we believe will drive the leadership and mentoring of future generations.

*S. Keith Burton*  
**KEITH BURTON**  
CHAIR, BOARD OF ADVISORS  
THE PLANK CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

# INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to premiere the North American Communication Monitor (NACM), a comprehensive report on strategic issues, practices and roles for communication professionals in Canada and the United States. The NACM joins existing Communication Monitors in Europe, Latin America and Asia-Pacific in providing the largest and only truly global study for the profession based on sound empirical standards. More than 6,000 professionals from 80-plus countries are surveyed in each wave of the comparative study. The goal is to stimulate and promote the knowledge and practice of excellent communication management worldwide.

This NACM includes perceptions and insights from 1,020 communication professionals in North America (255 in Canada and 765 in the U.S.). We track top-of-mind trends like fake news and strategies to deal with it, and identify the most pressing strategic issues today for communicators, nearly half of whom (49.4%) said trust was the most crucial issue.

We also explore professionals' perceptions of their organizational cultures and their leaders' performance, and learn how strongly culture and leaders affect employees' work engagement, trust and job satisfaction. In addition, we asked the professionals about stress levels in our hyper-speed profession, and three were mentioned most often: lack of advancement opportunity (34.3%), heavy work load (33.6%) and information overload (33.3%).

Other areas in the report focus on professionals' social media skills and management knowledge, and the contributions they make to organizational success. In our study, 36% of communication departments were deemed "excellent," based on their advisory and executive influence in the organization, information providing, and performance results, among other factors. Excellence counts: professionals in excellent departments in our study were more engaged and trusting, expressed greater loyalty, delivered greater value, were more satisfied with their jobs and saw more career opportunities than those in other departments.

On behalf of the NACM research team, I want to thank The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations at the University of Alabama for sponsoring and supporting this important study. I also want to recognize Plank Center board advisors Dr. Bryan Reber and Dr. Juan Meng, University of Georgia, for their leadership of this project, and our European research colleagues for their invaluable guidance and advice. We are proud to be part of the Global Communication Monitor research project and to join a distinguished team of international scholars and professionals dedicated to better understanding and enriching our profession.



**BRUCE K. BERGER, PH.D.**

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
MEMBER, THE PLANK CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

# RESEARCH DESIGN

The North American Communication Monitor (NACM) 2018-2019 explores current practices, trends and future leadership development of public relations and communication management in public companies, private companies, non-profits, governmental organizations and other communication sectors including communication agencies and consultancies in the U.S. and Canada. This is the first edition of a survey that focuses on the communication practices in North America, sponsored and organized by The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations.

The NACM 2018-2019 is part of the Global Communication Monitor series. It is complemented by other surveys covering five continents and more than 80 countries altogether. Other studies in the Global Communication Monitor series include the annual European study led by Zerfass and his colleagues since 2007, Latin America (Moreno et al., 2015, 2017, 2019) and Asia-Pacific (Macnamara et al., 2015, 2017).

The NACM 2018-2019 is based on responses from 1,020 communication professionals from U.S. and Canada. The online questionnaire used for the NACM is largely derived from the European Communication Monitor (ECM) 2018 to ensure the consistency of the Global Communication Monitor series. The questionnaire consisted of 39 questions reflecting seven topic-based sections in the survey. We also designed two filter questions at the beginning of the online questionnaire to ensure that the survey reflects the qualification and diversity of the communication field across North America.

A stratified sampling strategy was used to recruit qualified respondents from Qualtrics, a leading online survey, research platform. In total, 4,997 respondents started the survey and 1,020 of them were qualified candidates who completed it. Answers from participants who did not meet the sampling criteria were deleted from the dataset. The strict selection of respondents is a distinct feature of the NACM, and it ensures the relevance and reliability of the results.







































The final sample consisted of 765 communication professionals in U.S. (75.0%) and 255 in Canada (25.0%). The demographics show that 5 out of 10 respondents are communication leaders: 11.8% hold a top leadership position as head of communication or as CEO of a communication agency; 38.2% are unit leaders or in charge of a single communication team or division in an organization. Of the professionals surveyed, 64.7% have more than 10 years of experience in public relations and communication management. This reveals the high quality of the sample. Because of our stratified sampling strategy, we were able to achieve a balanced gender split among all respondents (50% women and 50% men). The average age across the entire sample is 46.0 years.

A vast majority (90.7%) of our respondents work in communication departments in different types of organizations (public organizations, 24.8%; private companies, 37.5%; governmental organizations, 16.0%; and nonprofit organizations, 12.5%), while 9.3% are communication professionals working for agencies or as independent consultants.



# METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of **1,020 communication professionals** in the U.S. and Canada completed the survey

DEMOGRAPHIC	 <b>UNITED STATES</b> (N = 765)		 <b>CANADA</b> (N = 255)	
AGE	46.07 (S.D. = 13.50)		45.87 (S.D. = 12.95)	
GENDER	FEMALE (368, 48.1%)    MALE (397, 51.9%)		FEMALE (142, 55.7%)    MALE (113, 44.3%)	
ORGANIZATION TYPE	CORPORATE  26.4% PRIVATE  41.6% GOVERNMENT  9.3% NONPROFIT  14.0% AGENCY  2.2% SELF-EMPLOYED  6.5%	CORPORATE  23.1% PRIVATE  33.3% GOVERNMENT  22.7% NONPROFIT  11.0% AGENCY  4.7% SELF-EMPLOYED  5.1%		
LEADERSHIP POSITION	HEAD/CEO  11.9% TEAM/UNIT LEADER  39.9% TEAM MEMBER  38.8% OTHER  9.4%	HEAD/CEO  11.7% TEAM/UNIT LEADER  36.5% TEAM MEMBER  42.4% OTHER  10.2%		
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	<5  16.6% 6-10  20.4% 11-15  13.6% 16-20  16.2% >20  33.2%	<5  20.8% 6-10  12.9% 11-15  14.5% 16-20  16.5% >20  35.3%		
PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP	JOINED ONE  28.1% JOINED MORE THAN ONE  15.0% JOINED NONE  56.9%	JOINED ONE  25.9% JOINED MORE THAN ONE  9.8% JOINED NONE  64.3%		

# PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

GENDER AND REPORTING LEVEL	TOP LEADER	ONE LEVEL	TWO LEVELS	2+ LEVELS
WOMEN	24 (4.7%)	195 (38.2%)	131 (25.7%)	160 (31.4%)
MEN	47 (9.2%)	228 (44.7%)	129 (25.3%)	106 (20.8%)
TOTAL	71 (7.0%)	423 (41.5%)	260 (25.5%)	266 (26.1%)

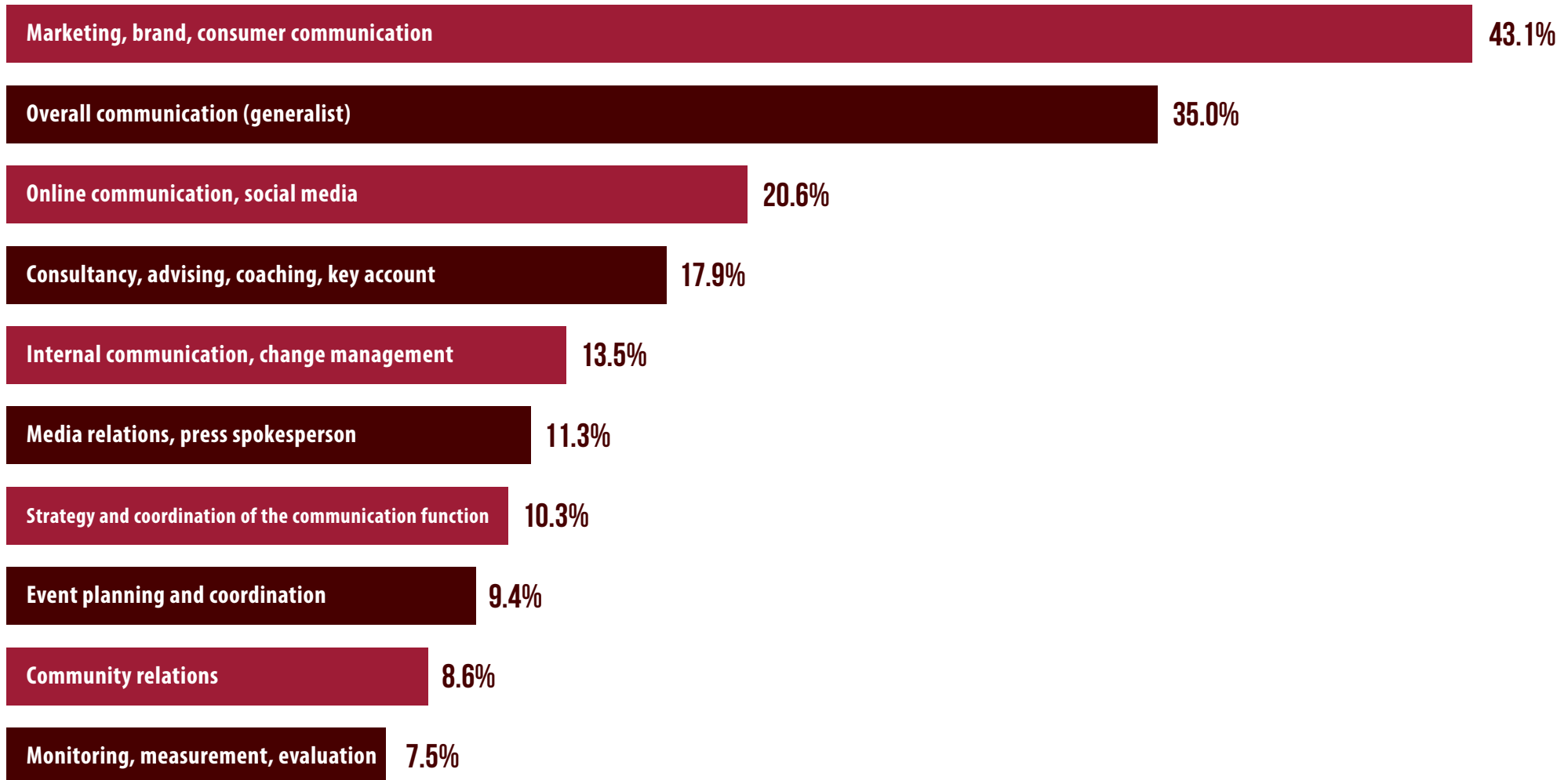
GENDER AND LEADERSHIP POSITION	HEAD OF COMM/ AGENCY CEO	TEAM/UNIT LEADER	TEAM/CONSULTANT	OTHER
WOMEN	38 (7.5%)	180 (35.3%)	233 (45.7%)	59 (11.6%)
MEN	81 (15.9%)	218 (42.7%)	172 (33.7%)	39 (7.6%)
TOTAL	119 (11.7%)	398 (39.0%)	405 (39.7%)	98 (9.6%)

GENDER AND YEARS OF JOB EXPERIENCE	<5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	>20 YEARS
WOMEN	106 (20.8%)	108 (21.2%)	73 (14.3%)	83 (16.3%)	140 (27.5%)
MEN	74 (14.5%)	81 (15.9%)	68 (13.3%)	83 (16.3%)	204 (40.0%)
TOTAL	180 (17.6%)	189 (18.5%)	141 (13.8%)	166 (16.3%)	344 (33.7%)

GENDER AND MEMBERSHIP IN A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION	JOINED ONE	JOINED MORE THAN ONE	JOINED NONE
WOMEN	131 (25.7%)	52 (10.2%)	327 (64.1%)
MEN	150 (29.4%)	88 (17.3%)	272 (53.3%)
TOTAL	281 (27.5%)	140 (13.7%)	599 (58.7%)



# TOP 10 AREAS OF WORK IN COMMUNICATION AS INDICATED BY PARTICIPANTS





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FAKE NEWS AND STRATEGIES  
TO DEAL WITH FAKE NEWS

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Fake news has become one of the most prominent issues in recent years, especially in the political field (e.g., U.S. presidential elections, Brexit debate, etc.) (Zerfass et al., 2018). It also takes on the form of celebrities, brands or organizations to appear like traditionally trusted content, especially in a social media environment where the actual source of information often gets removed (Kang et al., 2011). Such reality presents challenges to communication practices: What does fake news mean? What is fake news about? What is the potential impact of fake news on organizations? And what is the role of communication professionals in identifying fake news and developing strategies to manage fake news?

In this section, we designed five questions to explore how communication professionals in North America are encountering the phenomenon. The results clearly show that fake news is a much-debated topic with the majority of respondents (57.7%) themselves giving attention to this issue and considering fake news a much-debated topic in their country (68.2%). The comparison between respondents in the two countries shows such perception is more prominent for professionals in the U.S.

However, despite the high levels of awareness and attention that have been devoted to the debate about fake news, the level of relevance of this issue for communication professionals' daily communication work is low (19.0% in general; 18.7% in U.S.; and

19.3% in Canada). Gender comparison reveals male professionals follow the fake news debate more intensively than women (3.74 vs. 3.38 on a five-point Likert scale,  $t$ -value = 23.33,  $p < .01$ ). Results also show professionals with longer years of working experience in the communication field give more attention to the debate about fake news.

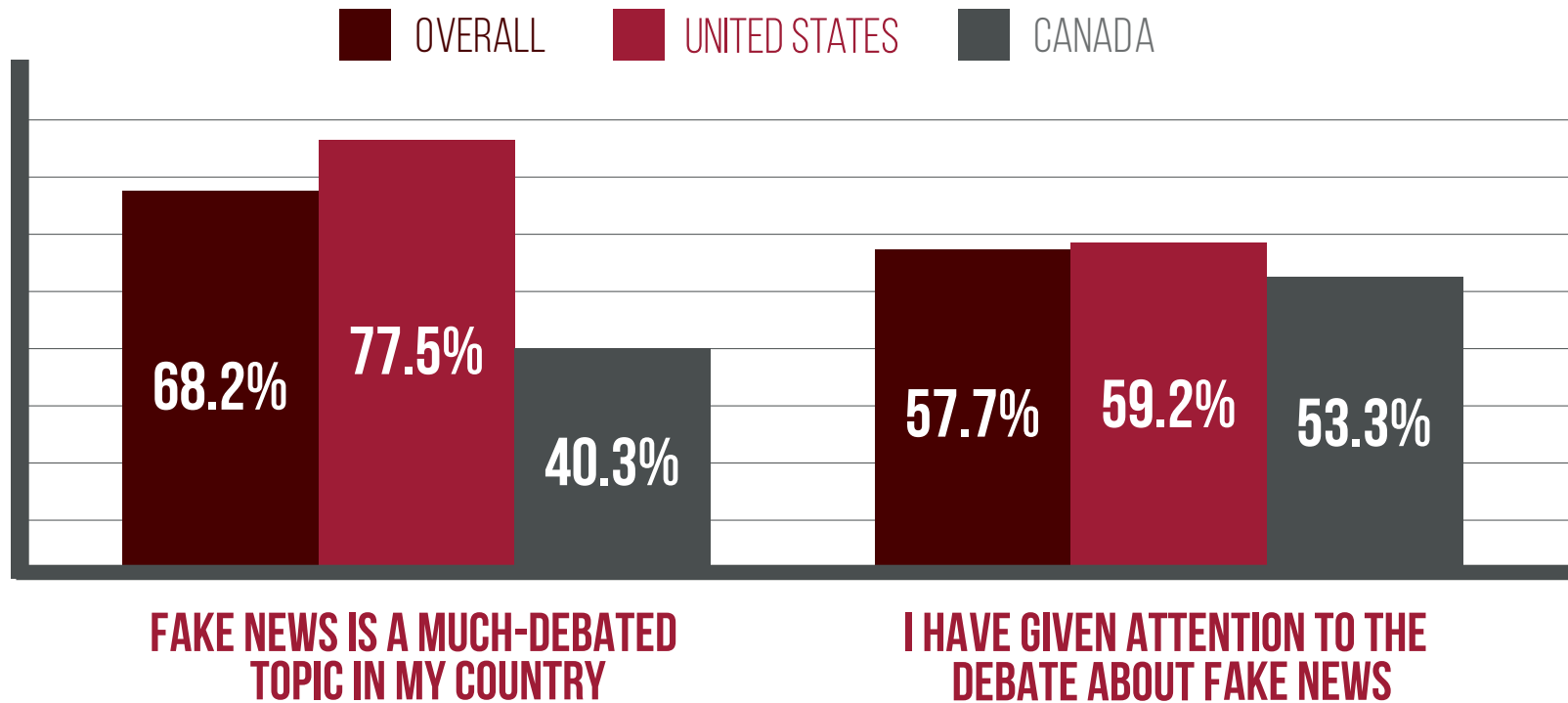
Two out of 10 respondents indicate their organizations were affected by fake news (at least once or multiple times). When broken down by organizational type, it is evident that governmental organizations are more impacted by fake news than other types of organizations. It is not surprising to find that social media are the main source of misleading content (80.3%), followed by traditional mass media (54.1%). The content and focus of fake news tend to be related to products and/or services (51.8%), organizations and/or brands (49.5%), or individuals (44.5%).

When it comes to identifying potential fake news, a substantial percentage of respondents (42.6%) indicate their organizations mainly rely on individual competencies and the experience of communication professionals. Formal guidelines, policies, systems and processes are still under exploration and development for most organizations. However, about 30.0% of surveyed communication professionals believe being prepared to identify fake news is not a necessity for their organizations.

# FAKE NEWS IS A MUCH-DEBATED TOPIC IN BOTH COUNTRIES, BUT MORE SO IN THE U.S.

Fake news is defined as news in mass or social media that is intentionally and verifiably false with low facticity, intended to mislead recipients.\*

Communication professionals in both countries have given attention to the debate about fake news.

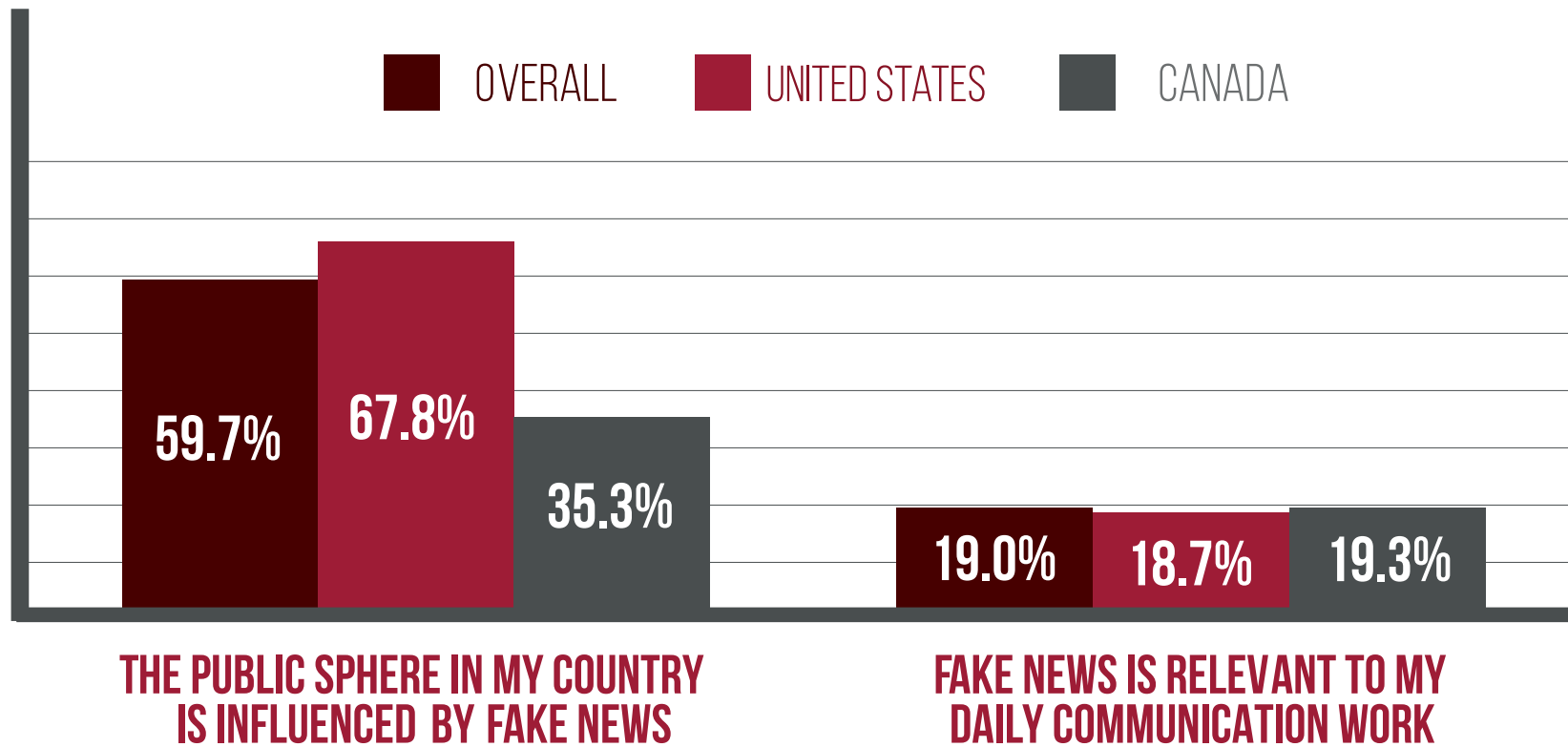


\* Source: Zerfass, A., Tench, R., Verhoeven, P., Verčič, D., & Moreno, A. (2018). *European Communication Monitor 2018*.

*Strategic communication and the challenges of fake news, trust, leadership, work stress and job satisfaction.*

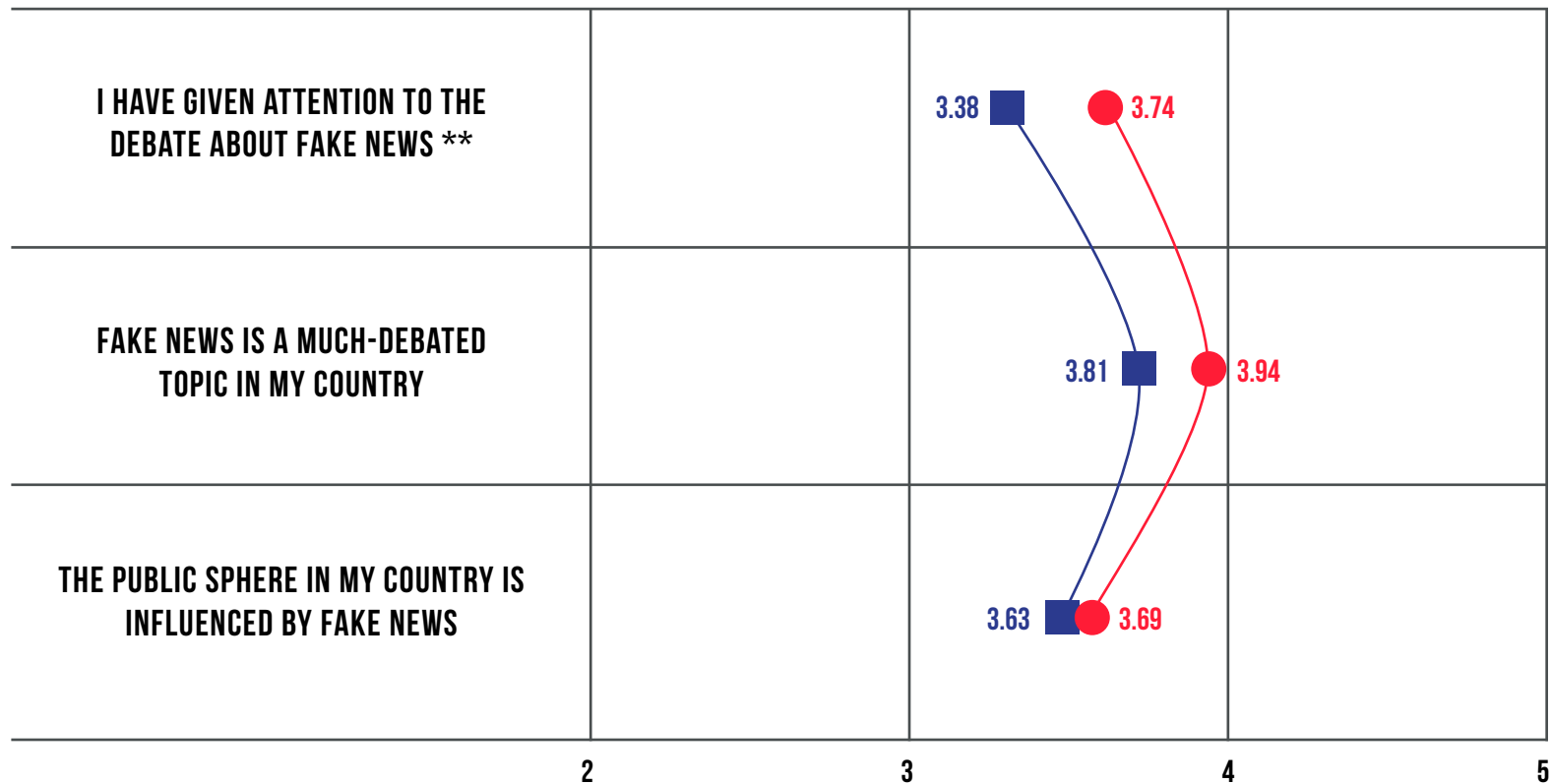
*Results of a survey in 48 countries. Brussels: EACD/EUPRERA, Quadriga Media Berlin.*

**ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF THE U.S. PARTICIPANTS FELT THE PUBLIC SPHERE IS INFLUENCED BY FAKE NEWS, THE RELEVANCE OF FAKE NEWS TO DAILY COMMUNICATION IS RELATIVELY LOW**



*Note: Scale 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent). Percentages showed here: frequency based on scale points 4-5.*

## MALE PROFESSIONALS FOLLOW THE FAKE NEWS DEBATE MORE INTENSIVELY THAN FEMALE PROFESSIONALS



*Note: Participants were asked to rate the items based on own experience on Likert-type scale 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent).*

■ WOMEN

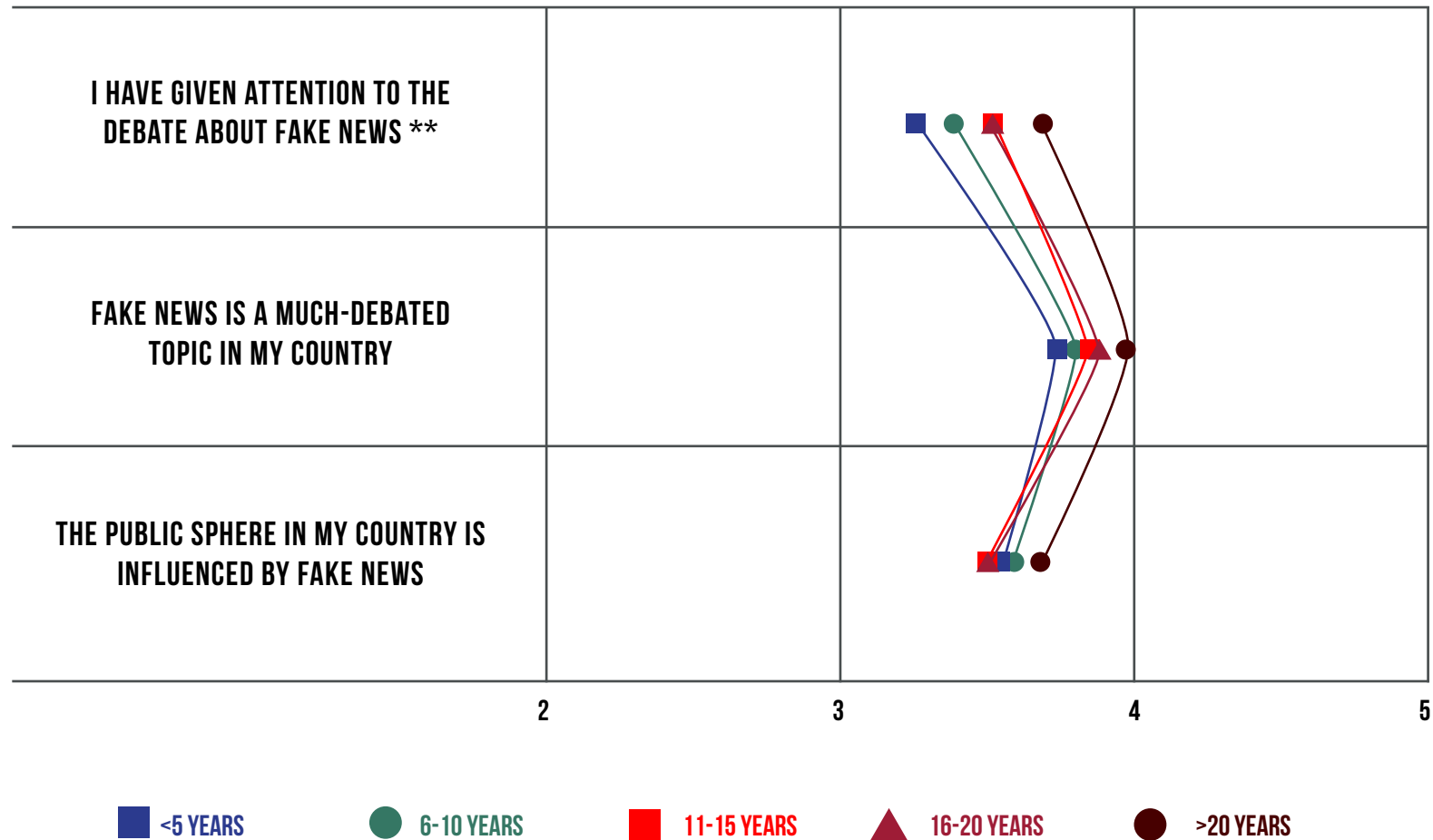
● MEN



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## PROFESSIONALS WITH MORE YEARS OF JOB EXPERIENCE GIVE MORE ATTENTION TO THE DEBATE ABOUT FAKE NEWS



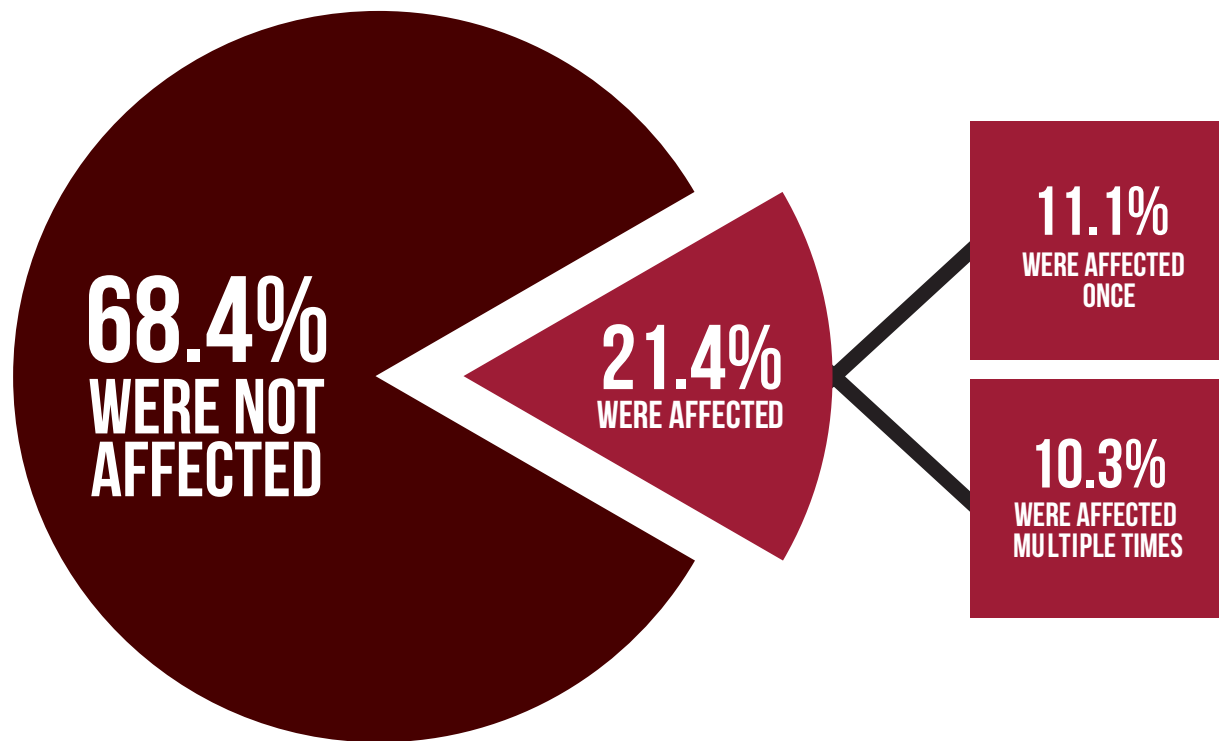
Note: Participants were asked to rate the items based on own experience on Likert-type scale 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent).

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

# IMPACT OF FAKE NEWS ON ORGANIZATIONS

## QUESTION:

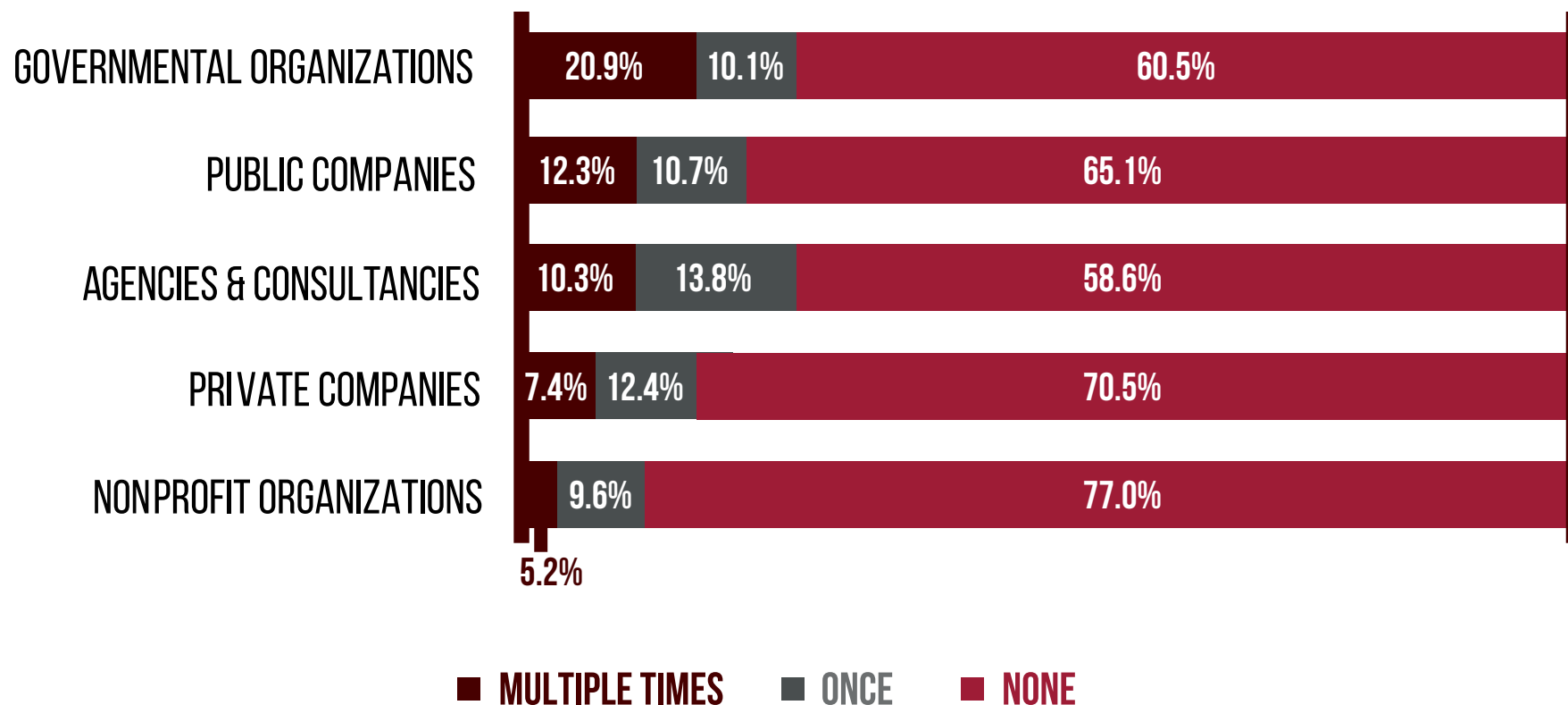
HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION AND ITS REPUTATION BEEN AFFECTED BY FAKE NEWS, AND IF SO, HOW OFTEN IN 2017/2018?



*Note: Percentages in the pie chart show proportion among respondents who were able to assess this for their organization.  
A small number of respondents (10.2%) said "I don't know."*

# GOVERNMENTAL, PUBLIC SECTOR OR POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA ARE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY FAKE NEWS

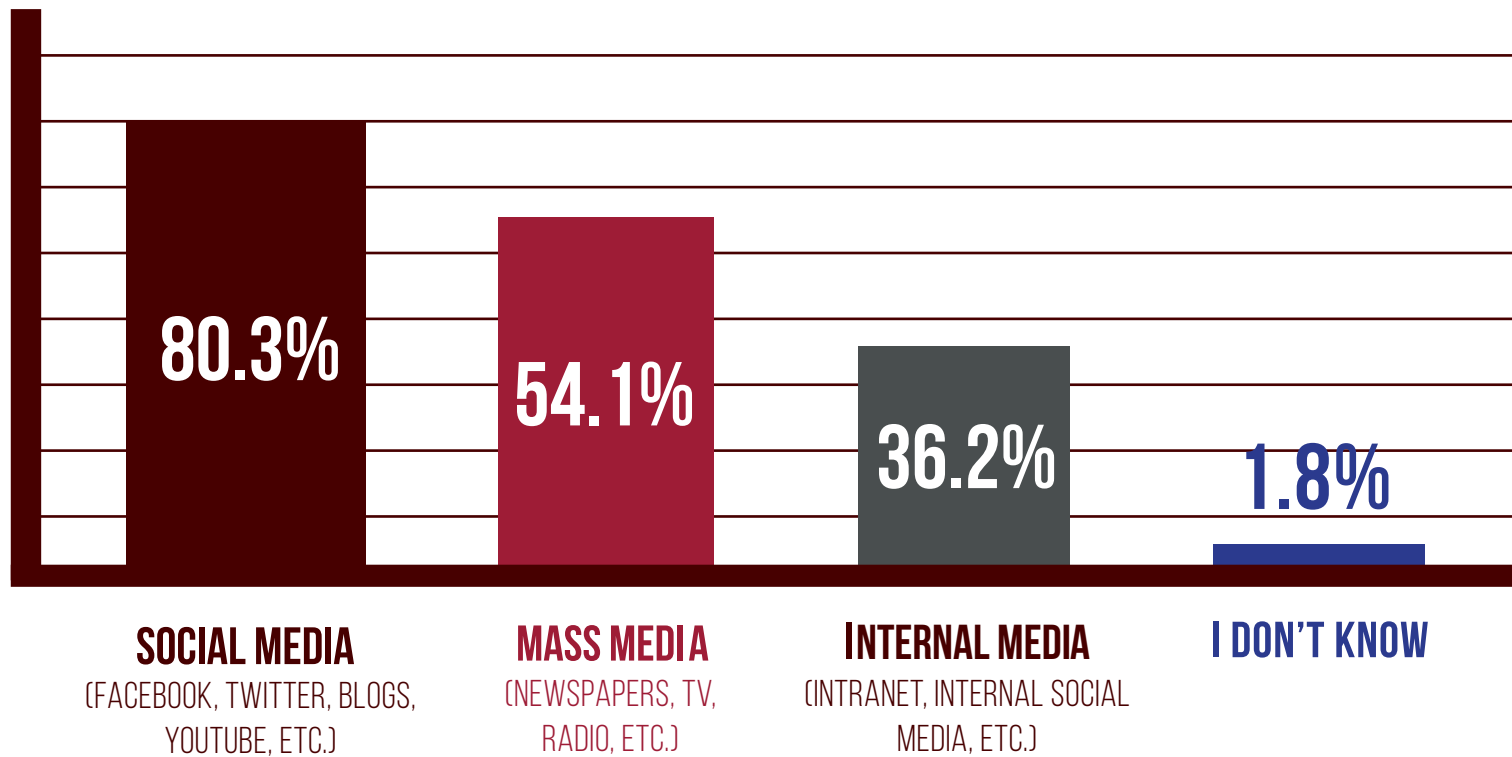
TYPE OF ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED BY FAKE NEWS



# SOCIAL MEDIA ARE THE MAIN SOURCE FOR FAKE NEWS



WHERE HAS FAKE NEWS BEEN PUBLISHED?



# FALSE AND MISLEADING NEWS MAINLY TARGET PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, BUT ORGANIZATIONS AND BRANDS ARE AFFECTED AS WELL

## CONTENT AND FOCUS OF FAKE NEWS

PRODUCTS AND/OR SERVICES

51.8%

ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR BRANDS

49.5%

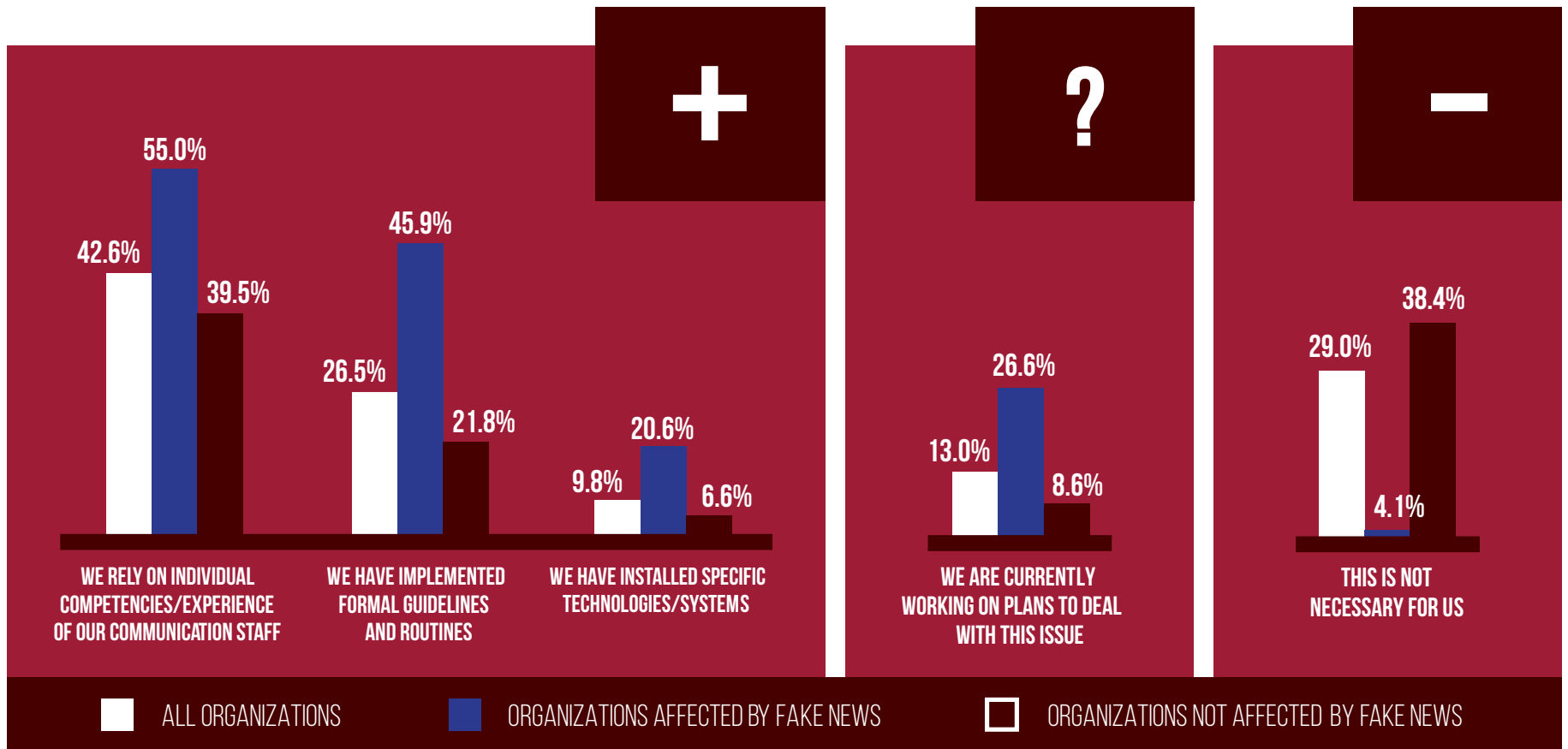
PERSONS

44.5%

OTHER 5.5%

# INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCIES ARE THE CORE FORCES TO IDENTIFY FAKE NEWS

HOW IS YOUR COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT/AGENCY PREPARED TO IDENTIFY (POTENTIAL) FAKE NEWS?





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# 2

STRATEGIC ISSUES  
FOR COMMUNICATION  
MANAGEMENT

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The most important strategic issues for North American public relations and communication managers over the next three years will be building and maintaining trust and coping with the digital evolution and the social web. There was no difference in the top two issues when comparing respondents from Canada and the United States. Trust as the biggest concern echoes findings from the 2018 European Communication Monitor data.

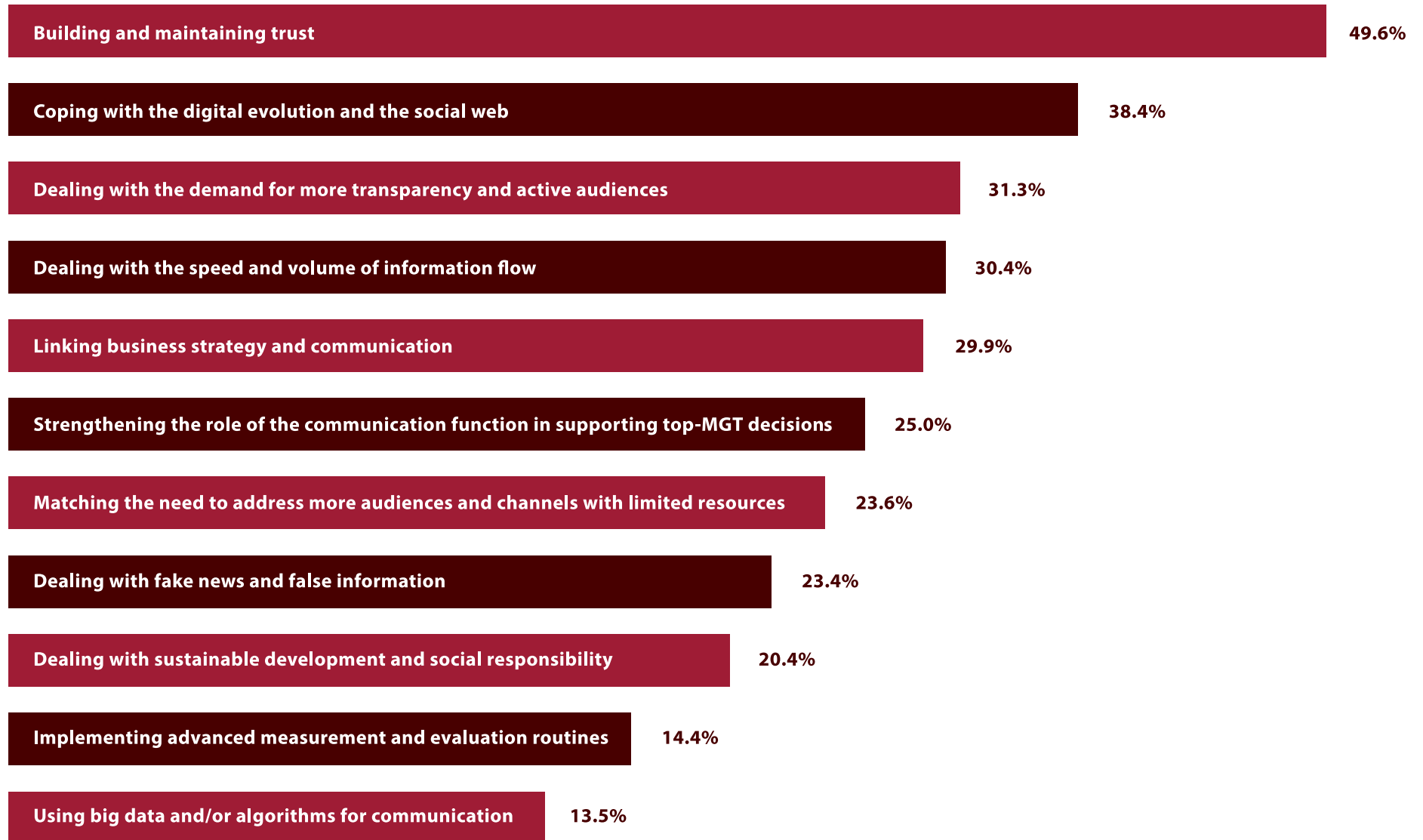
Female practitioners in this year's survey were most concerned with the challenge of addressing more audiences and channels with only limited resources. Male practitioners' concerns focused on dealing with false information, reinforcing the impact of fake news.

Comparing types of organizations, all categories (i.e., public companies, private companies, governmental organizations, and nonprofits) rated building and maintaining trust as the greatest concern. Nonprofits were substantially more concerned (58.5%) than were publicly held companies (45.6%).



Team members, unit leaders and C-suite executives all ranked trust as their greatest concern. It was a 10-percentage-point greater concern for team members than it was for executives, however.

# MOST IMPORTANT STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT UNTIL 2021

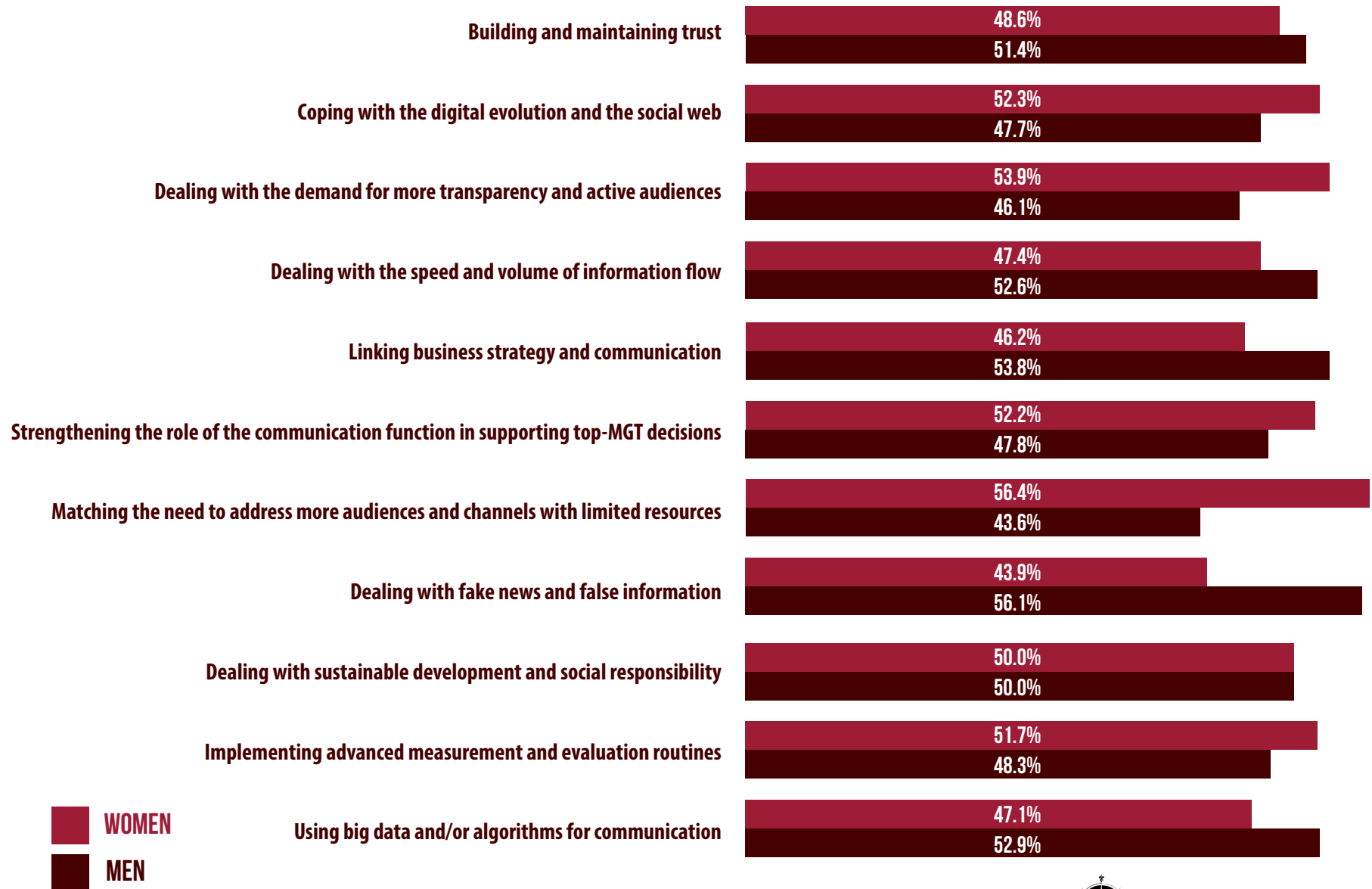
OVERALL RANKING ACROSS ALL ORGANIZATIONS



# PROFESSIONALS IN THE U.S. AND CANADA PERCEIVE THE TOP-3 ISSUES SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY

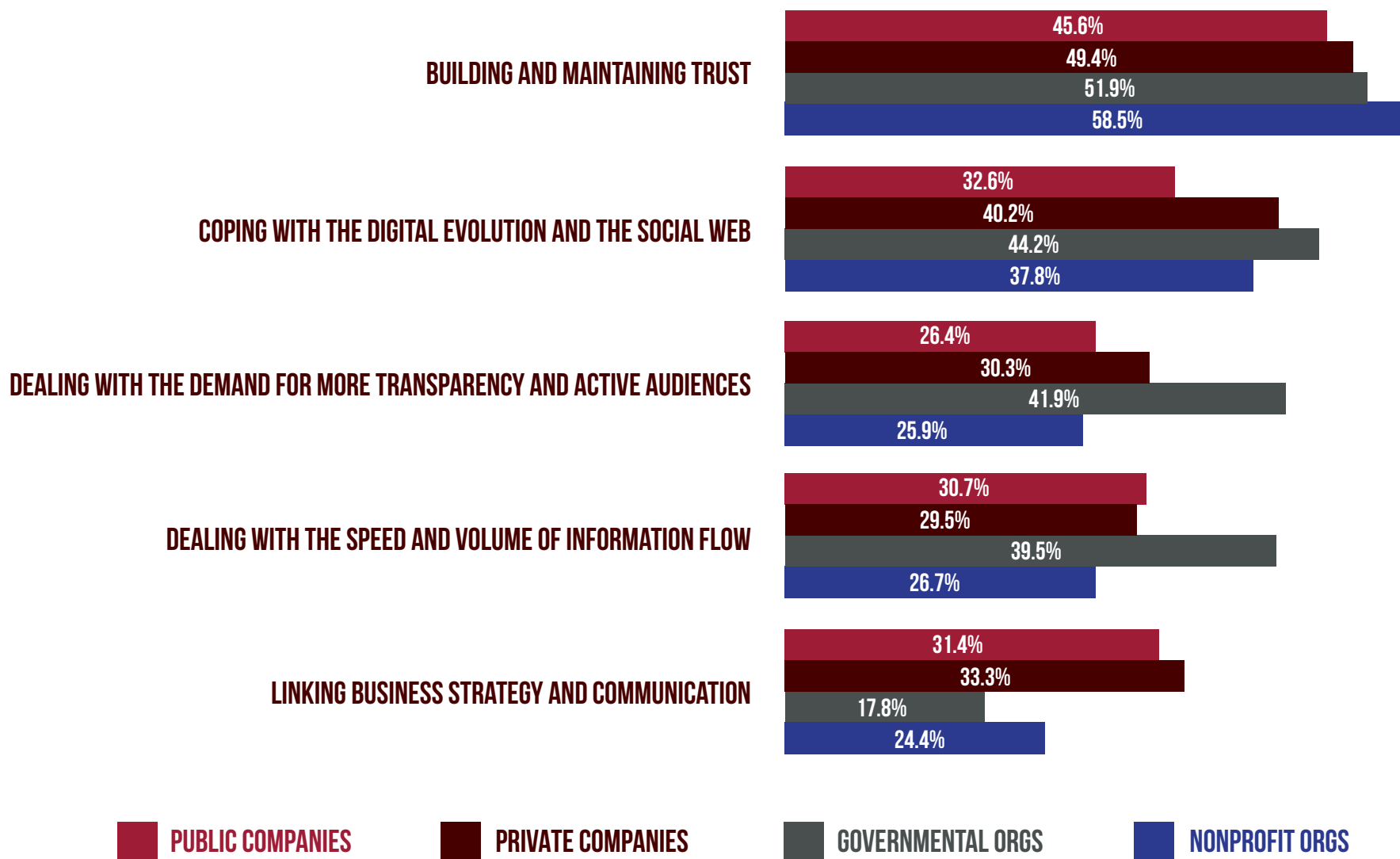
	 <b>UNITED STATES</b>	 <b>CANADA</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>BUILDING AND MAINTAINING TRUST</b> 49.5%	<b>BUILDING AND MAINTAINING TRUST</b> 49.8%
<b>2</b>	<b>COPING WITH THE DIGITAL EVOLUTION AND THE SOCIAL WEB</b> 38.6%	<b>COPING WITH THE DIGITAL EVOLUTION AND THE SOCIAL WEB</b> 38.0%
<b>3</b>	<b>DEALING WITH THE SPEED AND VOLUME OF INFORMATION FLOW</b> 31.1%	<b>DEMAND FOR MORE TRANSPARENCY AND ACTIVE AUDIENCES</b> 36.1%

# WOMEN FOCUS ON BALANCING WITH LIMITED RESOURCES AND DEALING WITH ACTIVE AUDIENCES, WHILE MEN LEAN ON STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH FAKE NEWS AND LINK STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATION



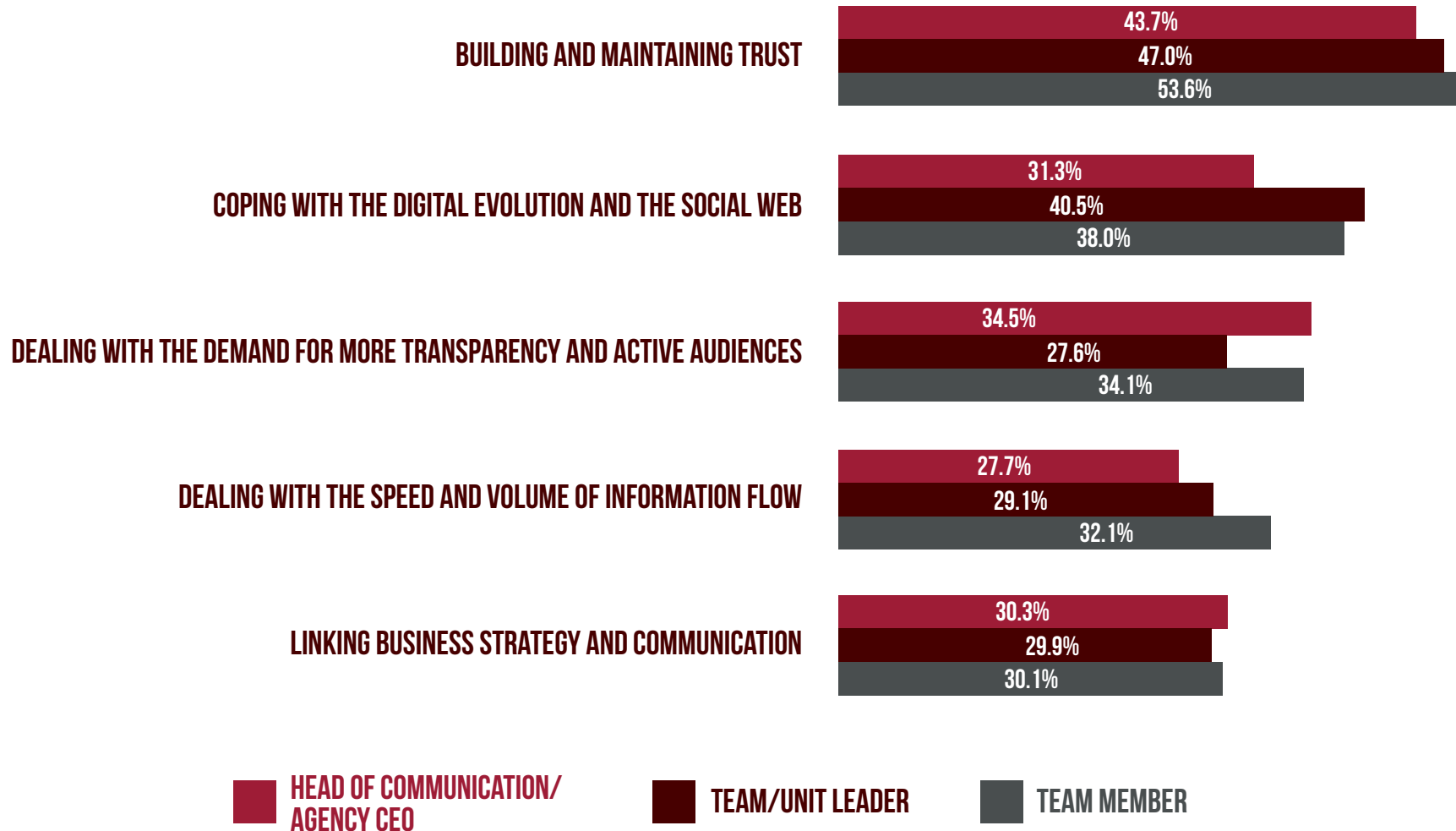
**WOMEN**  
 **MEN**

# STRATEGIC ISSUES AND ORGANIZATION TYPES: GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS HEAVILY ON TRUST BUILDING; NONPROFITS ADDRESS THE URGENT NEEDS ON ALL THREE TOP ISSUES

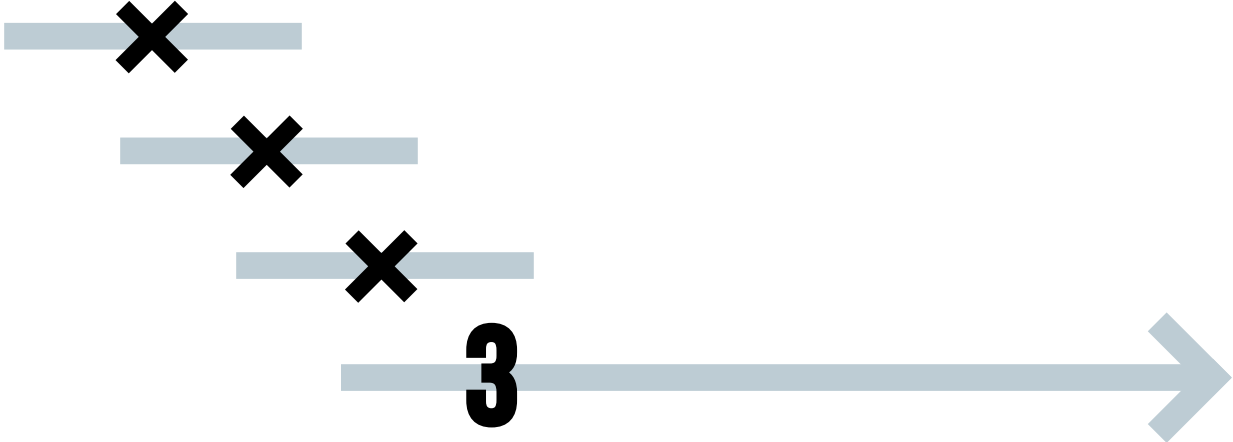


Note: Public companies = 261, Private companies = 403, Governmental organizations = 129, Nonprofit organizations = 135

# THE HIERARCHICAL LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS INFLUENCES THEIR PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE TOP FIVE IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THE FIELD; TEAM MEMBERS EXPRESS A HIGH NEED IN BUILDING TRUST



Note: Head of Communication/Agency = 119, Team/Unit leader = 398, Team member = 405.



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# 3

THE ROLE OF PROVIDING  
INFORMATION TO SUPPORT  
DECISION-MAKING

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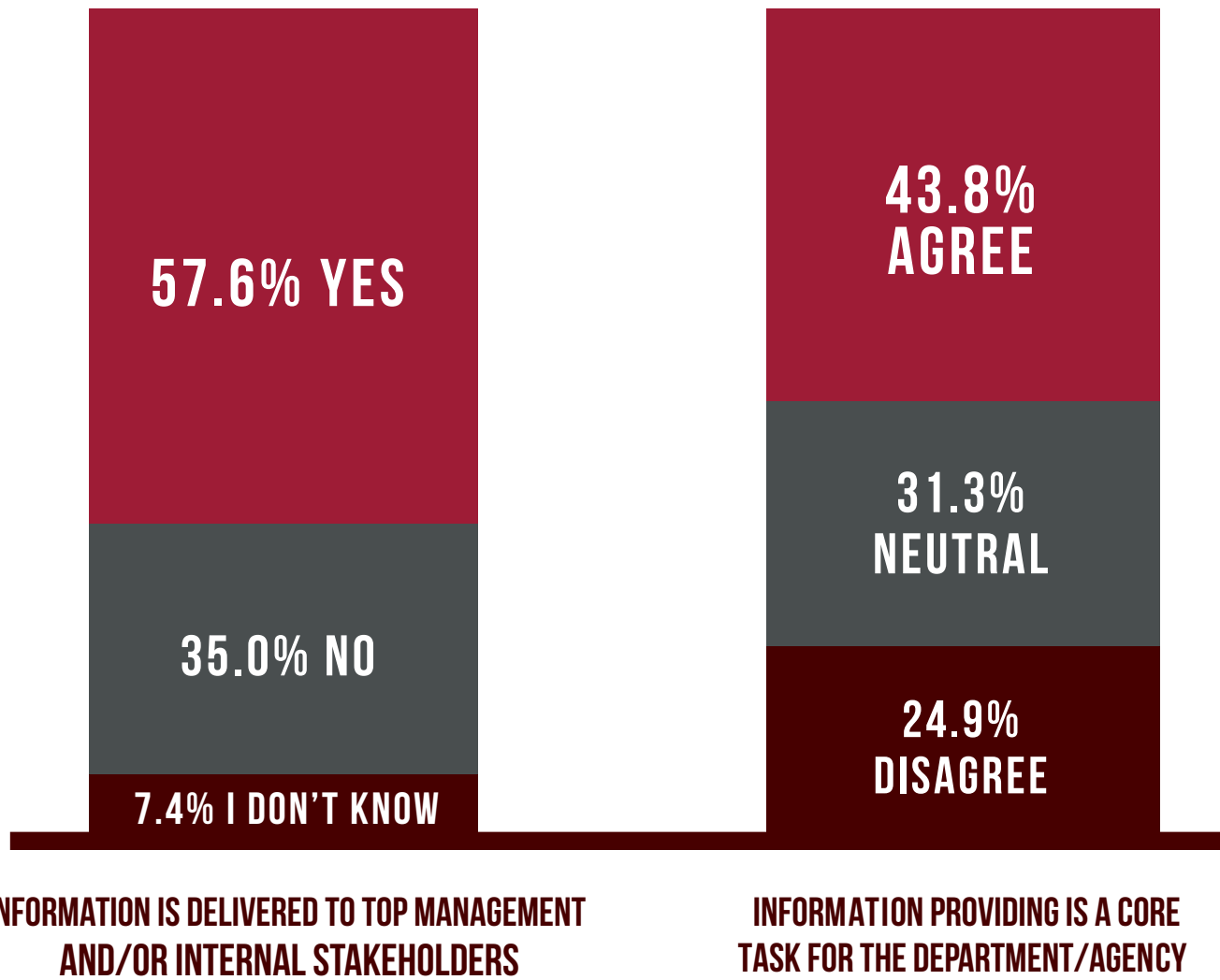


More than half of our respondents said information regarding communication outcomes is regularly reported to organization leaders. However, fewer than half considered such reporting a core task for their function.

While the majority do not see information reporting to top executives as a core task, about two-thirds do view such reporting as an opportunity to stand out. Across types of organizations, half or more said that information reporting to executives provides opportunities to gain recognition and position themselves favorably in comparison to other departments or agencies. Sixty-nine percent of respondents from public companies and government entities said that such behavior was a good opportunity to gain recognition. Sixty-eight percent of respondents in public companies said it was a way to position themselves favorably compared to other units.

Respondents said they most frequently reported on media monitoring. Among a variety of reports, the most frequently outsourced reporting was related to survey research. Canadians were substantially more likely to present reports to senior management than were U.S. professionals. Canadians reported with more regularity on media monitoring, news briefings, benchmarking and backgrounders. Social media monitoring was the most commonly reported across organization types.

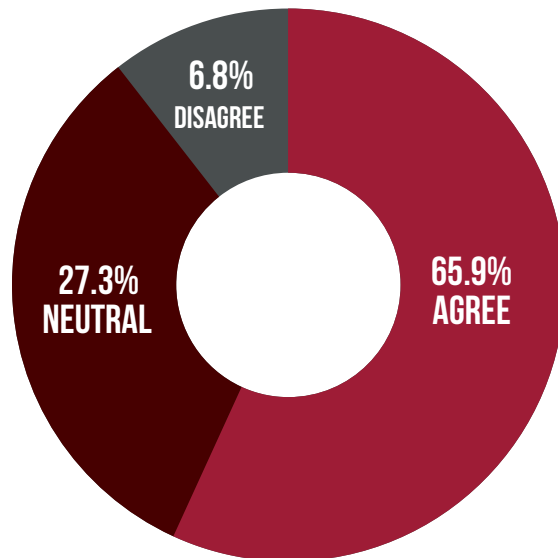
**TWO-THIRDS INDICATE DELIVERING INFORMATION TO TOP MANAGEMENT AND/OR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS; LESS THAN HALF CONSIDER PROVIDING INFORMATION A CORE TASK**



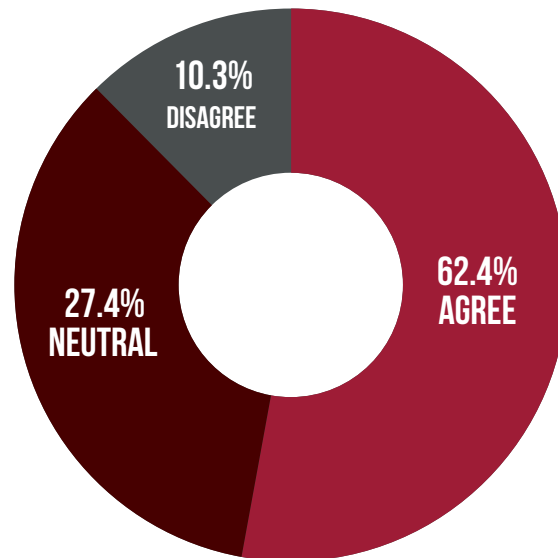
# THE MAJORITY OF PROFESSIONALS AGREE PROVIDING INFORMATION HELPS COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT/AGENCY GAIN RECOGNITION

## PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR DECISION-MAKERS...

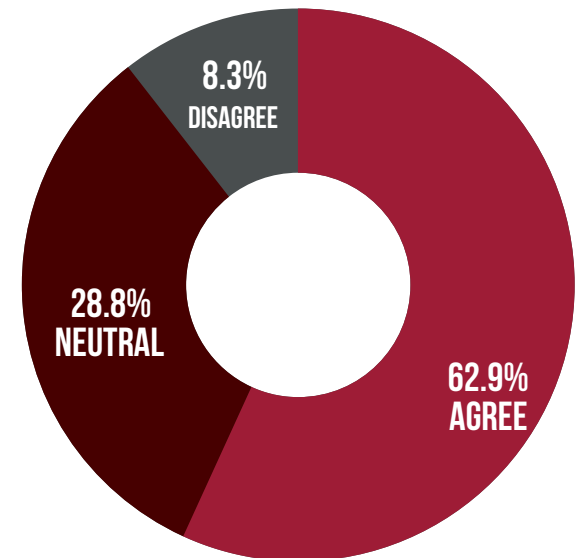
OFFERS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO GAIN RECOGNITION FROM TOP MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



OFFERS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO POSITION OURSELVES AGAINST OTHER DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES



IS GAINING RELEVANCE FOR OUR DEPARTMENT/AGENCY



# COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS VALUE THE OPPORTUNITIES OF PROVIDING INFORMATION MORE THAN PEERS IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

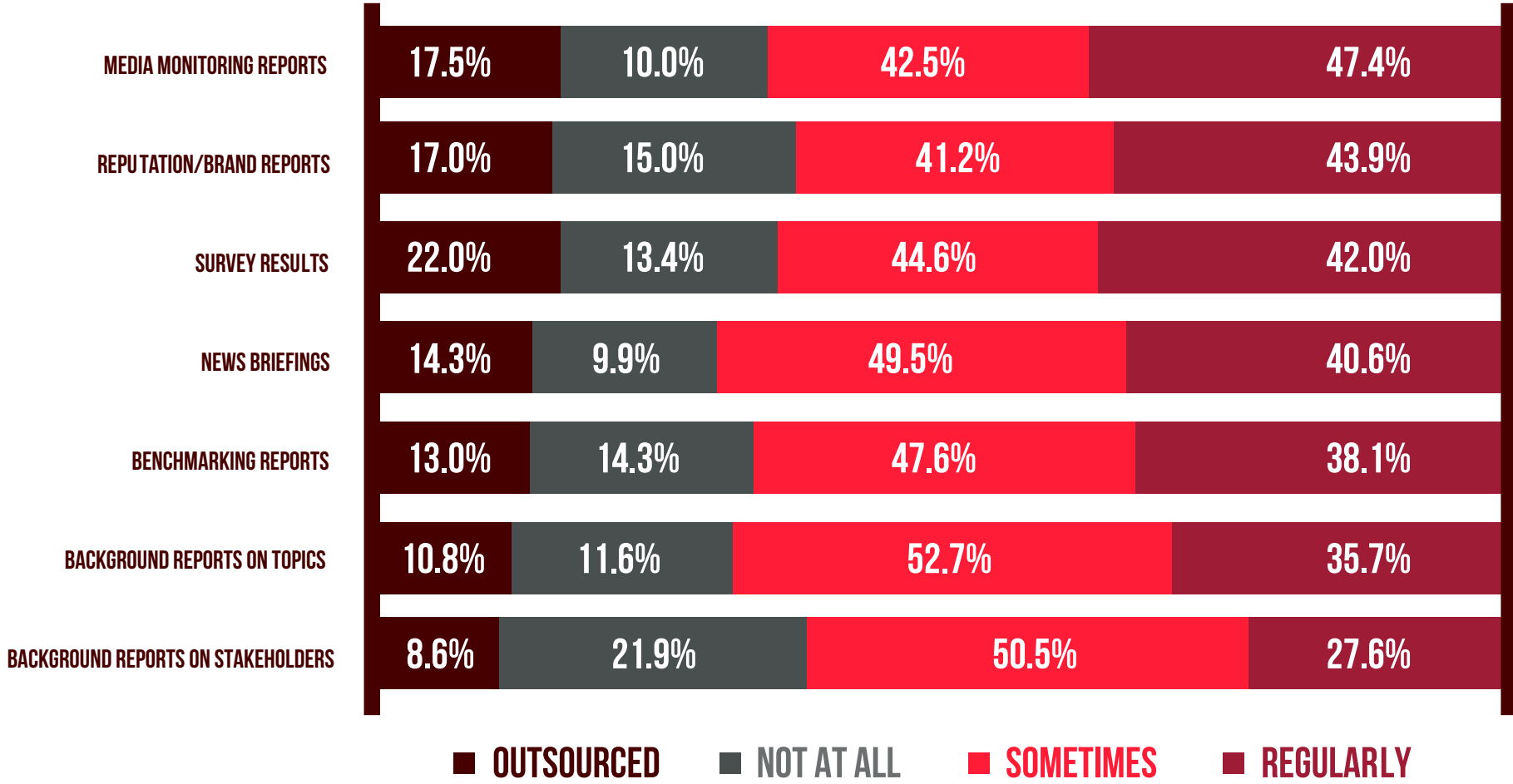
## PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR DECISION-MAKERS...

	PUBLIC COMPANIES	PRIVATE COMPANIES	GOVERNMENTAL ORGS	NONPROFIT ORGS	COMMUNICATION AGENCIES	CONSULTANCIES
IS GAINING IN RELEVANCE FOR OUR DEPARTMENT/AGENCY	66.3%	62.0%	71.3%	56.3%	41.4%	60.3%
OFFERS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO GAIN RECOGNITION FROM TOP MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	69.0%	65.5%	69.0%	60.0%	58.6%	65.0%
OFFERS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO POSITION OURSELVES AGAINST OTHER DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES	68.2%	61.3%	61.2%	60.7%	61.9%	50.8%
IS A CORE TASK FOR OUR DEPARTMENT/AGENCY	44.1%	42.7%	47.3%	47.4%	44.8%	34.9%



Note: Scale 1 (Strongly disagree)-5 (Strongly agree). Percentages: Frequency based on scale points 4-5.

# KEY REPORTS PROVIDED TO DECISION MAKERS ARE MEDIA MONITORING, REPUTATION/BRAND AND SURVEY REPORTS

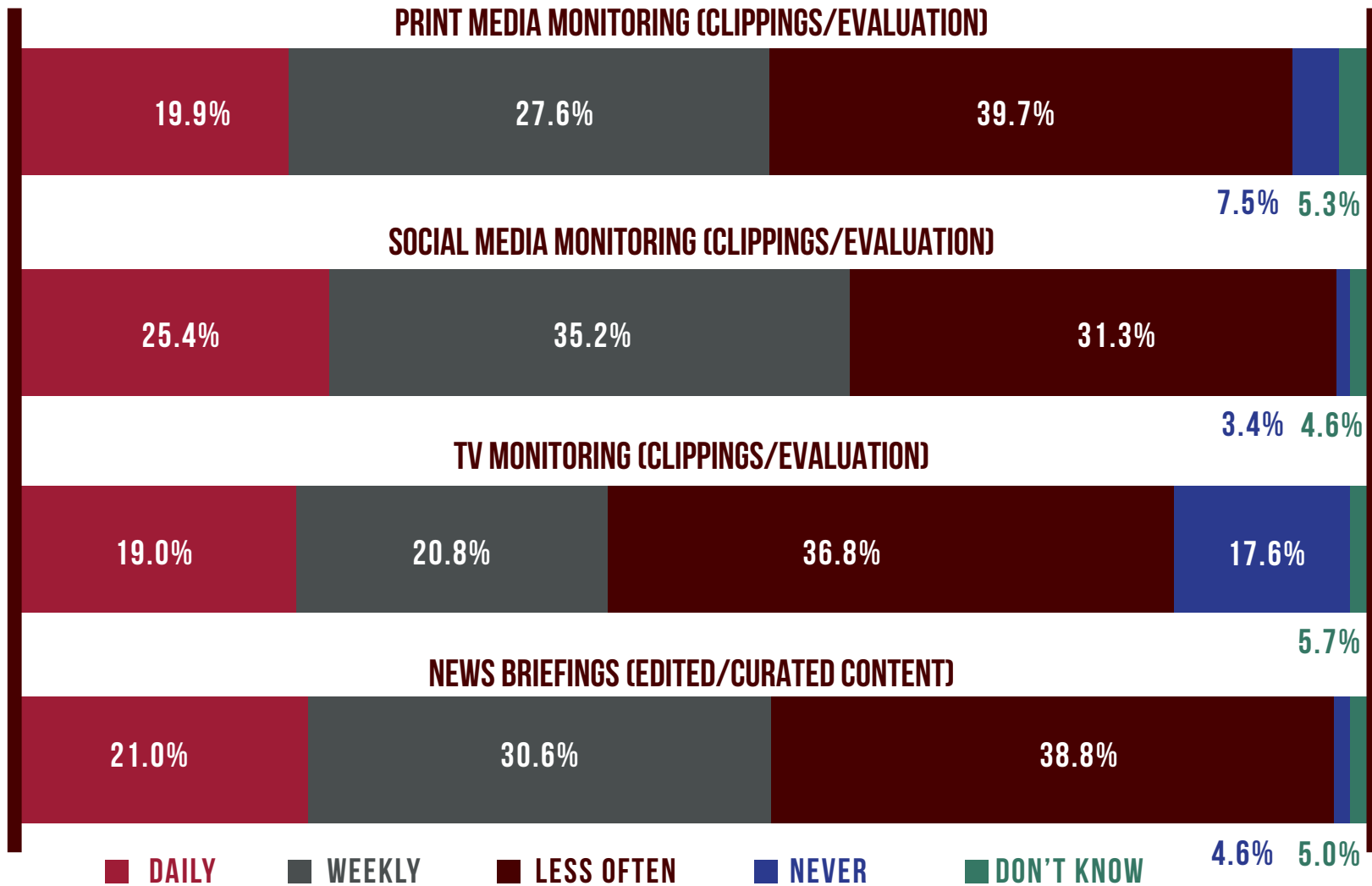
INFORMATION PROVIDED TO TOP MANAGEMENT AND/OR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS BY FREQUENCY



# TYPES OF REPORTS PROVIDED TO TOP MANAGEMENT IN U.S. AND CANADA

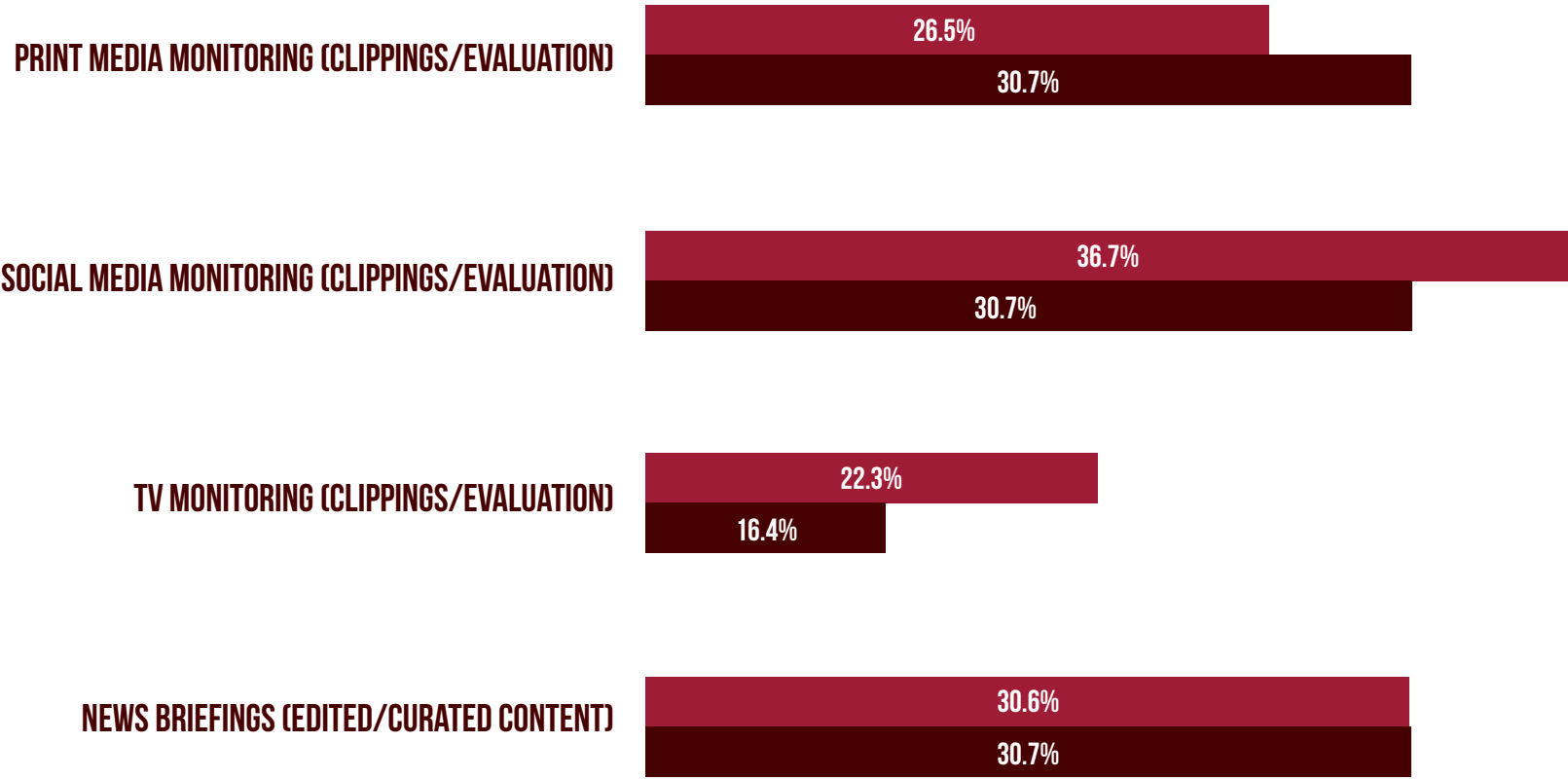
	 <b>UNITED STATES</b>		 <b>CANADA</b>	
	REGULARLY	OUTSOURCED	REGULARLY	OUTSOURCED
<b>MEDIA MONITORING REPORTS</b>	44.9%	17.9%	55.2%	16.5%
<b>REPUTATION/BRAND REPORTS</b>	44.0%	17.3%	43.4%	16.1%
<b>SURVEY RESULTS</b>	42.0%	20.8%	42.1%	25.5%
<b>NEWS BRIEFINGS</b>	38.8%	15.4%	46.2%	11.0%
<b>BENCHMARKING REPORTS</b>	36.3%	13.3%	43.4%	12.2%
<b>BACKGROUND REPORTS ON TOPICS</b>	32.7%	11.6%	44.8%	8.2%
<b>BACKGROUND REPORTS ON STAKEHOLDERS</b>	26.0%	8.8%	32.4%	8.2%

## FREQUENCY OF MONITORING REPORTS AND NEWS BRIEFINGS: SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING IS MORE COMMON



# WEEKLY PROVISION OF MEDIA/SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING AND BRIEFINGS IS MORE COMMON FOR BOTH U.S. AND CANADA

WEEKLY PROVISIONS OF ...

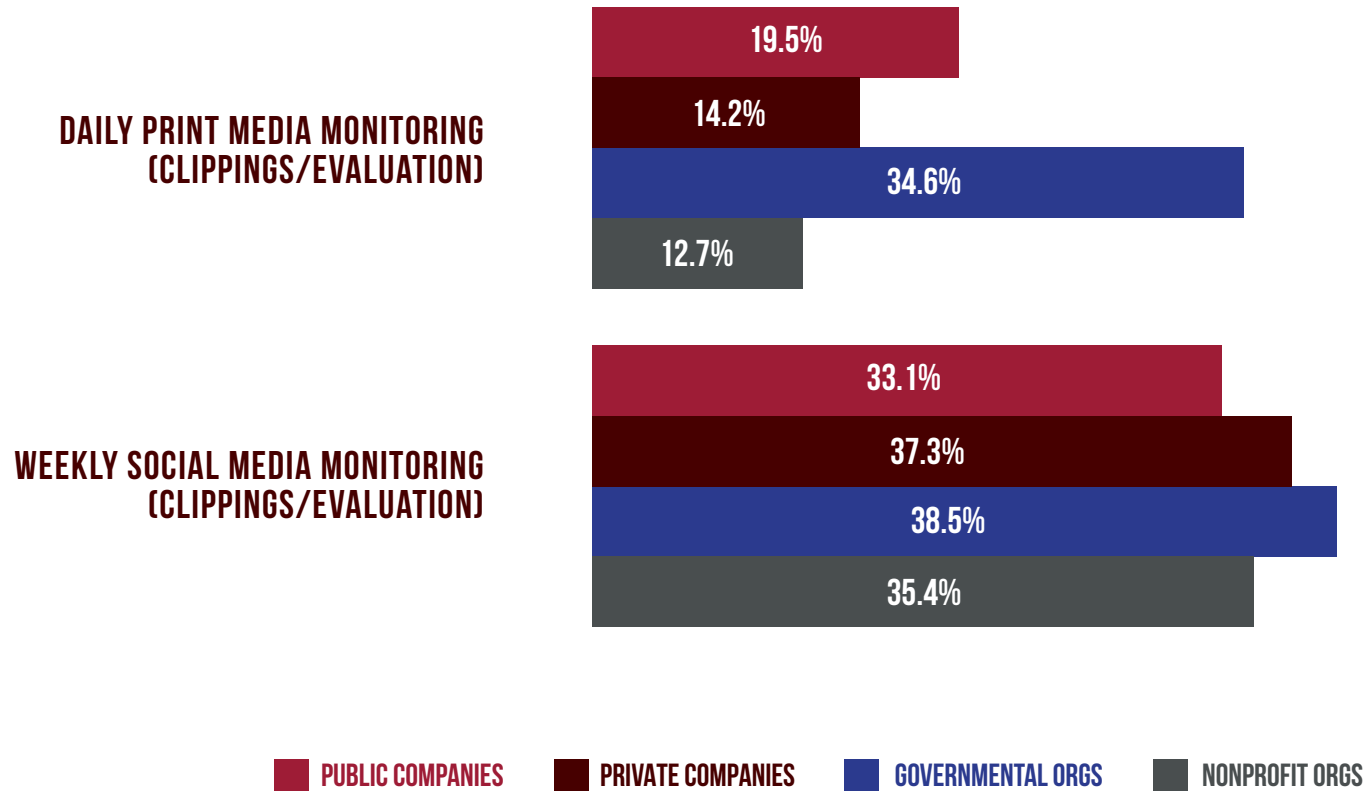


■ UNITED STATES      ■ CANADA



# GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE AHEAD IN TERMS OF PRINT MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

DAILY OR WEEKLY PROVISIONS OF ...



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# 4

ORGANIZATIONAL  
CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP  
PERFORMANCE

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The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations has conducted its biennial Leadership Report Card study since 2015. This study focuses on the state of public relations leadership practice and the organizational conditions to support public relations leadership. Results from the 2015 and 2017 Leadership Report Card confirm that a supportive institutional environment is a critical factor in enhancing the overall efficiency and value of public relations practice. Meng and Berger (2019) argue that supportive organizational culture and excellent leader performance are two related and essential conditions for fostering communication professionals' work engagement, trust and job satisfaction. Along this line, this section of our NACM study embeds The Plank Center's Leadership Report Card to explore communication professionals' perceptions on organizational culture, leadership performance, work engagement, trust in the organization, and job satisfaction.

The questions on communication structure and organizational culture reveal some interesting findings. It is promising to find that most top decision makers (e.g., the CEO or top leader) within the organization (75.7% in agreement) understand the value of public relations and communication. The majority of respondents (69.2%) also agree that the highest-ranking communication professional in their organization is an excellent leader. Similarly, the majority (69.0%) agree that their organization practices two-way communication with employees or members. However, nearly half of the organizations (46.3%) either do not do enough in terms of sharing decision making

or do not share decision making with employees or members at all. Shared decision-making power received the lowest rating across different types of organizations.

Gender comparison reveals that male professionals tend to rate communication structure and organizational culture more positively than women. Women rate the shared decision-making power significantly lower than men (4.40 vs. 4.65 on a seven-point Likert scale,  $t$ -value = -2.42,  $p < 0.5$ ). It is also important to note that the views on organizational culture are different. Top leaders (e.g., head of communication or the CEO of communication agency) rated organizational culture significantly higher than professionals at lower levels (e.g., team leaders or team members) did.

The majority of surveyed communication professionals (71.9%) agree that their leader is an excellent leader, particularly in two aspects: 1) being actively involved in the organization's decision-making processes (78.1% in agreement), and 2) demonstrating a strong ethical orientation and set of values to guide actions (76.7% in agreement). A promising finding is there is no gender gap as related to leadership performance: both female and male professionals rated their communication leaders' performance high. However, a similar perceptual gap is seen along the line of hierarchy: top leaders rated themselves significantly higher than communication professionals at lower levels did.

## MOST TOP DECISION MAKERS UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION; A SUBSTANTIAL PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNICATION LEADERS LACK STRONG LEADERSHIP SKILLS

LEADERS OF MOST WORK UNITS IN MY ORGANIZATION (OR CLIENT LEADERS IF WORKING IN AN AGENCY) UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF PR/COMMUNICATION



THE CEO OR TOP LEADER OF MY ORGANIZATION UNDERSTANDS THE VALUE OF PR/COMMUNICATION

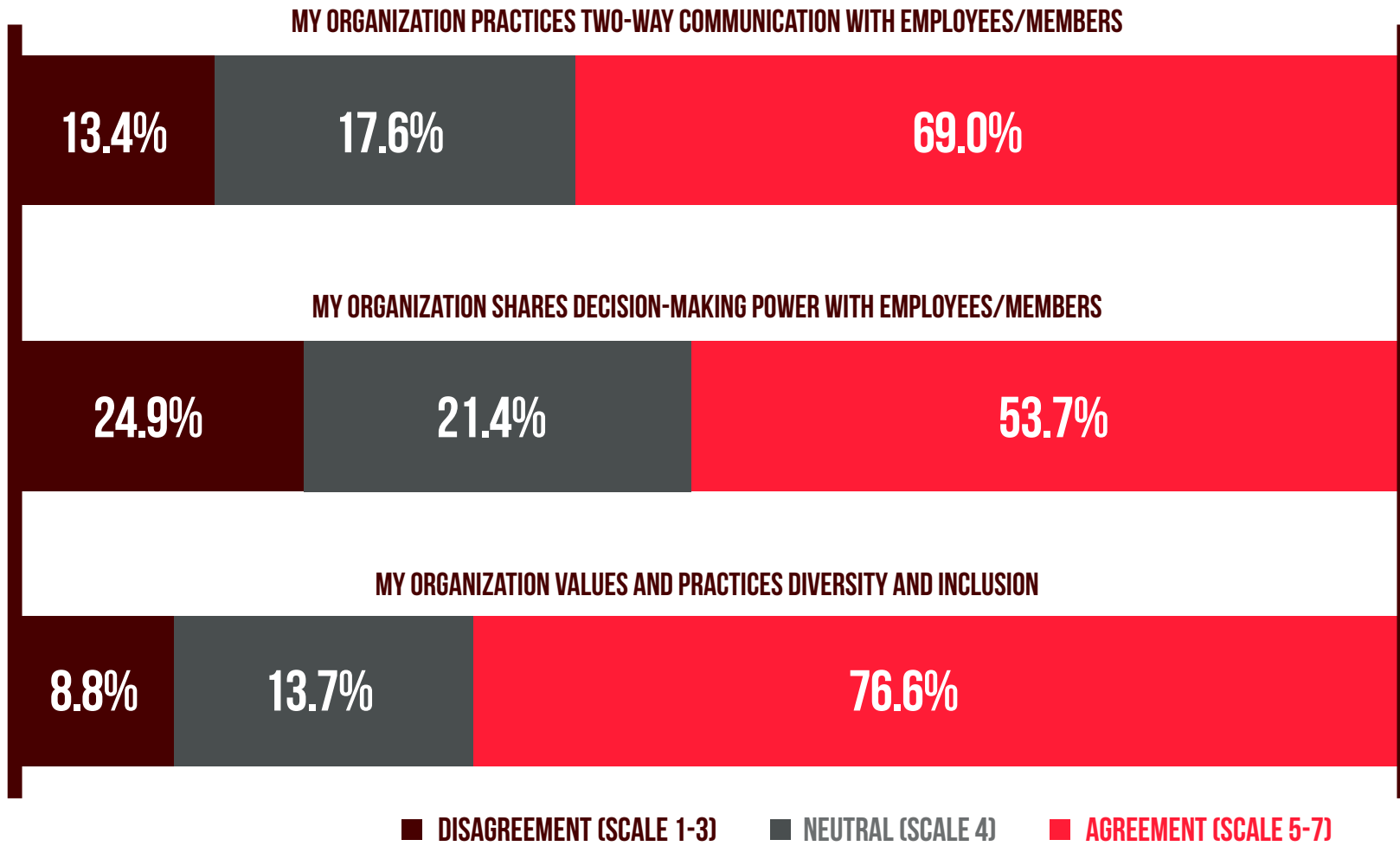


THE HIGHEST-RANKING COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONAL IN MY ORGANIZATION IS AN EXCELLENT LEADER

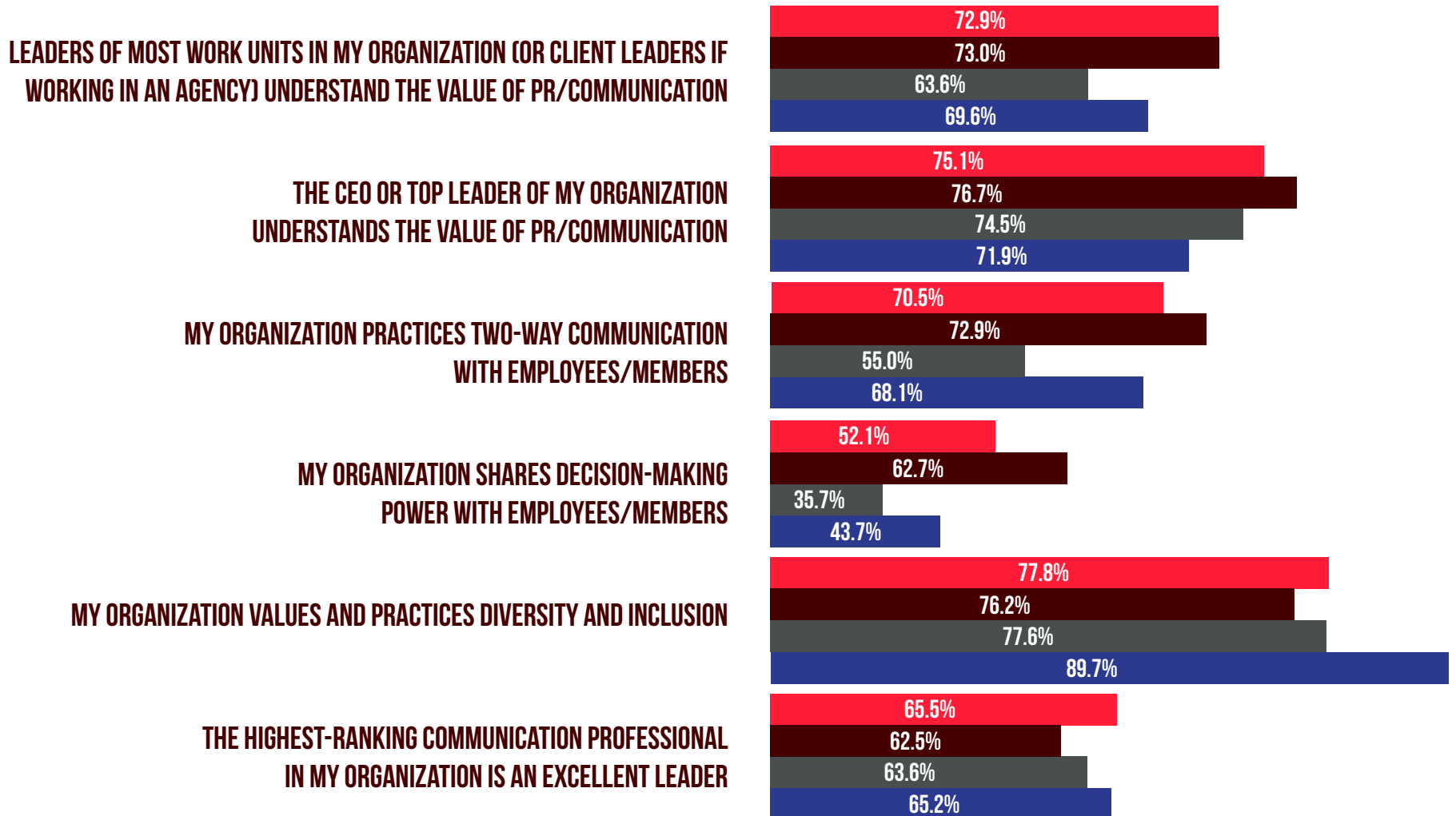


■ DISAGREEMENT (SCALE 1-3)   ■ NEUTRAL (SCALE 4)   ■ AGREEMENT (SCALE 5-7)

# ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IS CRITICAL FOR LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE; HOWEVER, NEARLY HALF OF THE ORGANIZATIONS DO NOT SHARE DECISION MAKING WITH EMPLOYEES/MEMBERS



# ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS: SHARED DECISION-MAKING POWER RECEIVED THE LOWEST SCORE ACROSS VARIOUS TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS



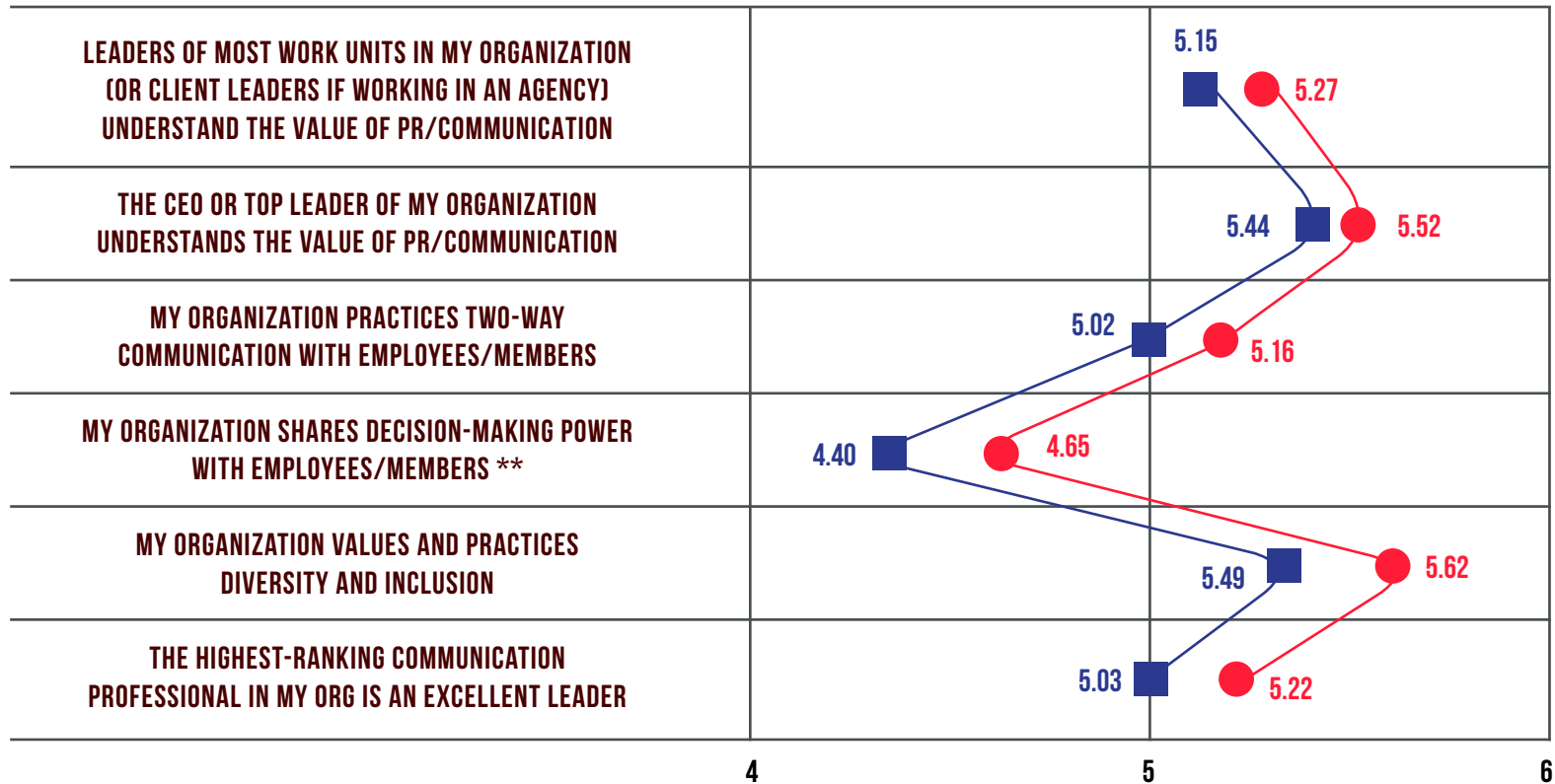
**PUBLIC COMPANIES**

**PRIVATE COMPANIES**

**GOVERNMENTAL ORGS**

**NONPROFIT ORGS**

## DIFFERENT GENDER PERCEPTIONS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: MEN GIVE HIGHER RATINGS THAN WOMEN WITH A PARTICULARLY HIGHER VALUE ON SHARED DECISION-MAKING POWER

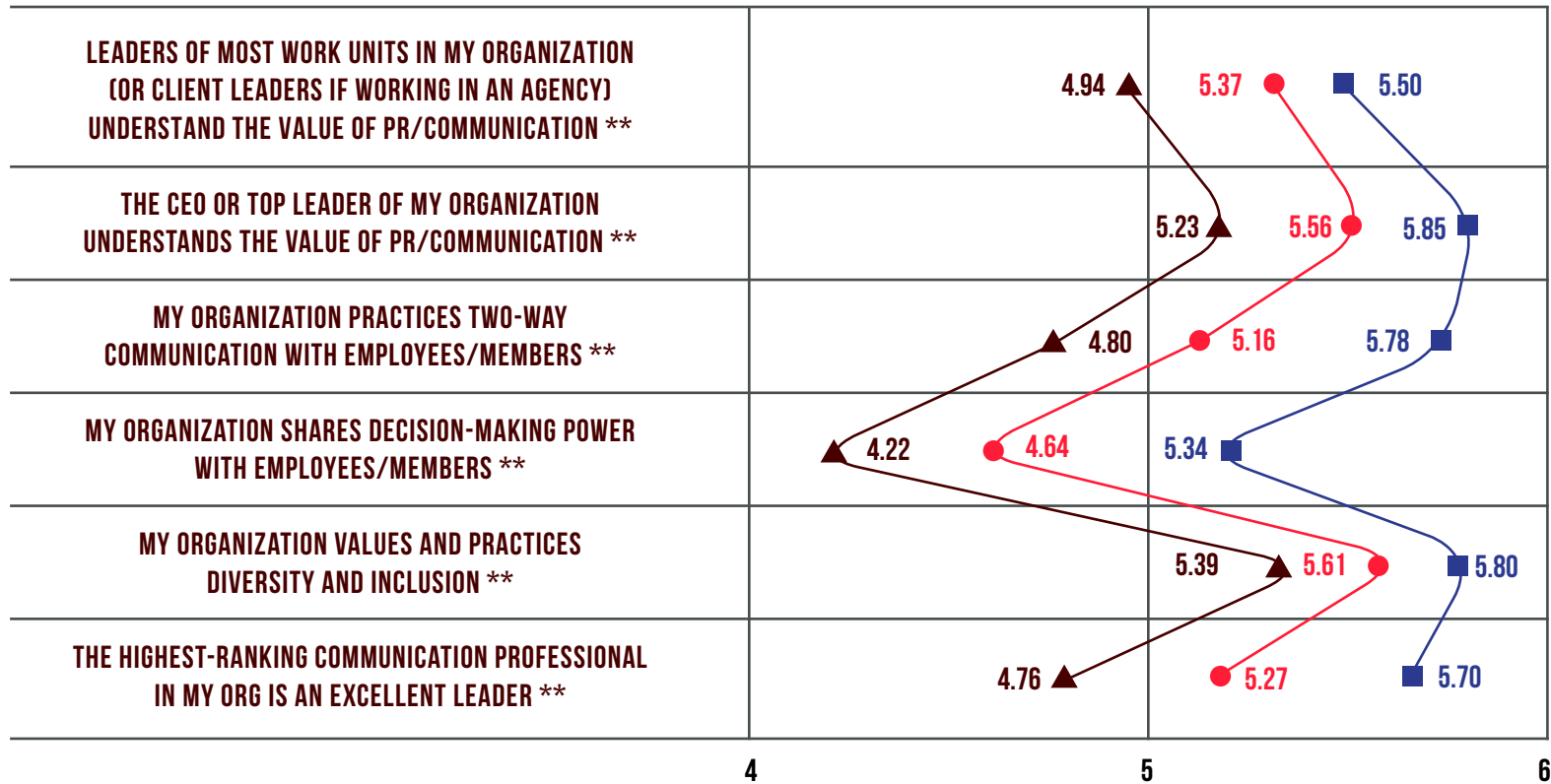


**NOTE: MEN RATED SHARED DECISION-MAKING POWER SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN DID WOMEN.**

■ WOMEN N = 510      ● MEN N = 510

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

# VIEWS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ARE DIFFERENT: TOP LEADERS RATED ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN UNIT LEADERS AND TEAM MEMBERS



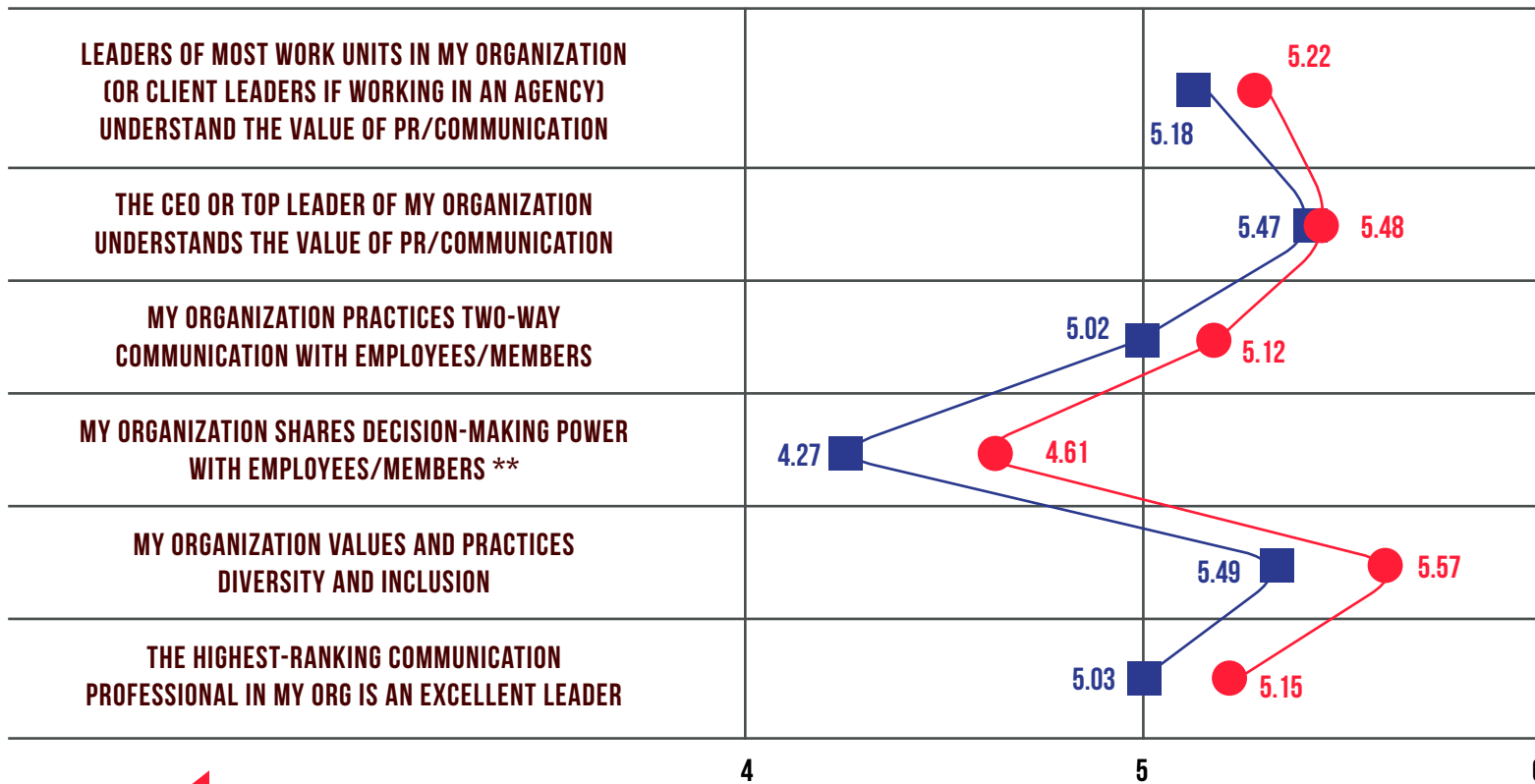
■ HEAD OF COMMUNICATION/AGENCY CEO  
 N = 119
 ● TEAM/UNIT LEADER  
 N = 398
 ▲ TEAM MEMBER/CONSULTANT  
 N = 405

**NOTE: TOP LEADERS RATED SHARED DECISION-MAKING SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN TEAM MEMBERS.**

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$



## PROFESSIONALS IN BOTH COUNTRIES SHARE SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE; U.S. PROFESSIONALS RATED SHARED DECISION-MAKING POWER SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THEIR PEERS IN CANADA



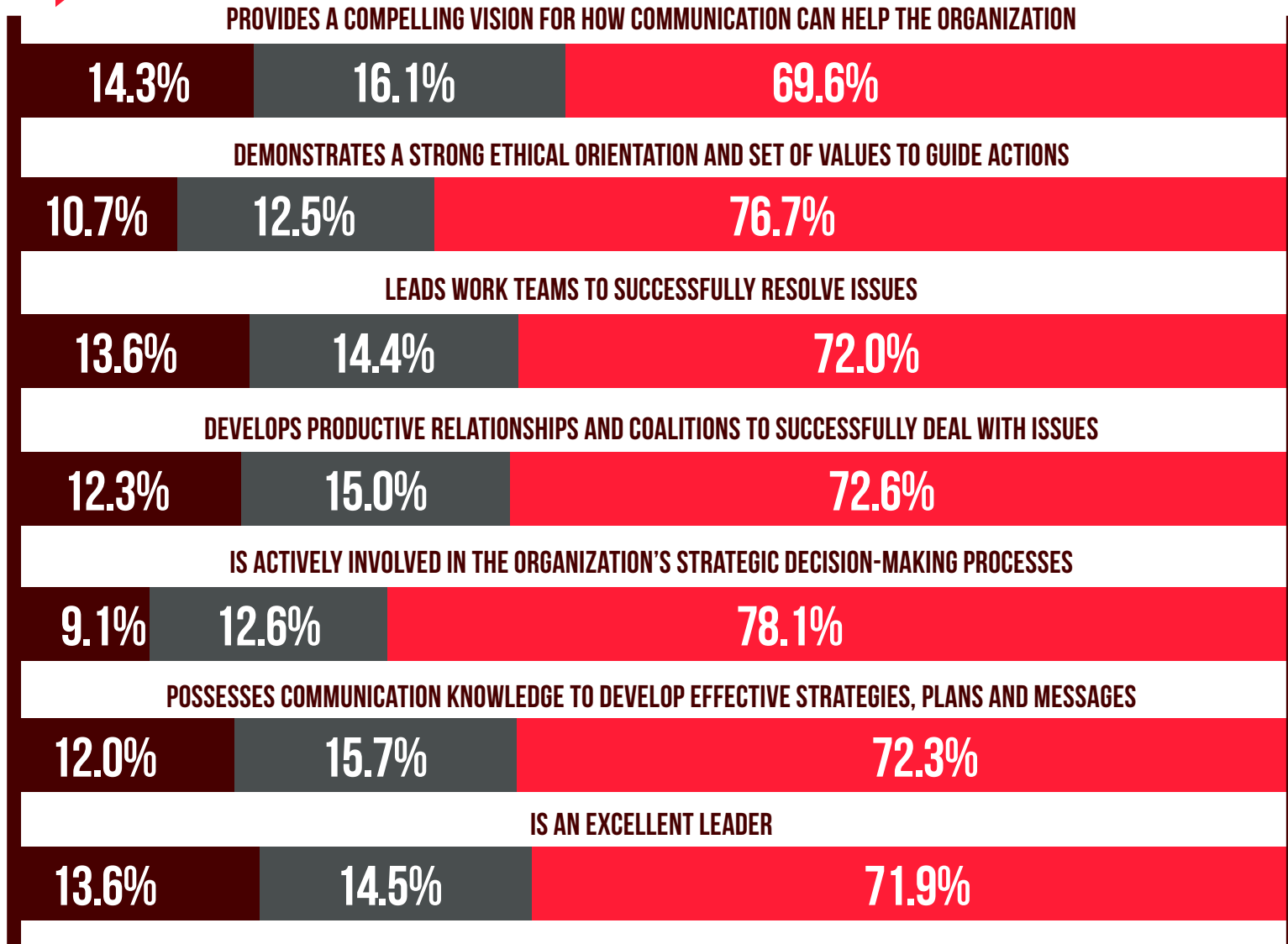
**NOTE: PROFESSIONALS IN UNITED STATES RATED SHARED DECISION-MAKING POWER SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THEIR PEERS IN CANADA.**

■ CANADA N = 255      ● UNITED STATES N = 765

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

MY LEADER ...

# PERFORMANCE OF COMMUNICATION LEADERS



■ DISAGREEMENT (SCALE 1-3)   ■ NEUTRAL (SCALE 4)   ■ AGREEMENT (SCALE 5-7)

# BOTH FEMALE AND MALE PROFESSIONALS RATED THEIR COMMUNICATION LEADERS' PERFORMANCE AS HIGH

MY LEADER ...



■ WOMEN  
N = 510      ■ MEN  
N = 510

**MY LEADER ...**

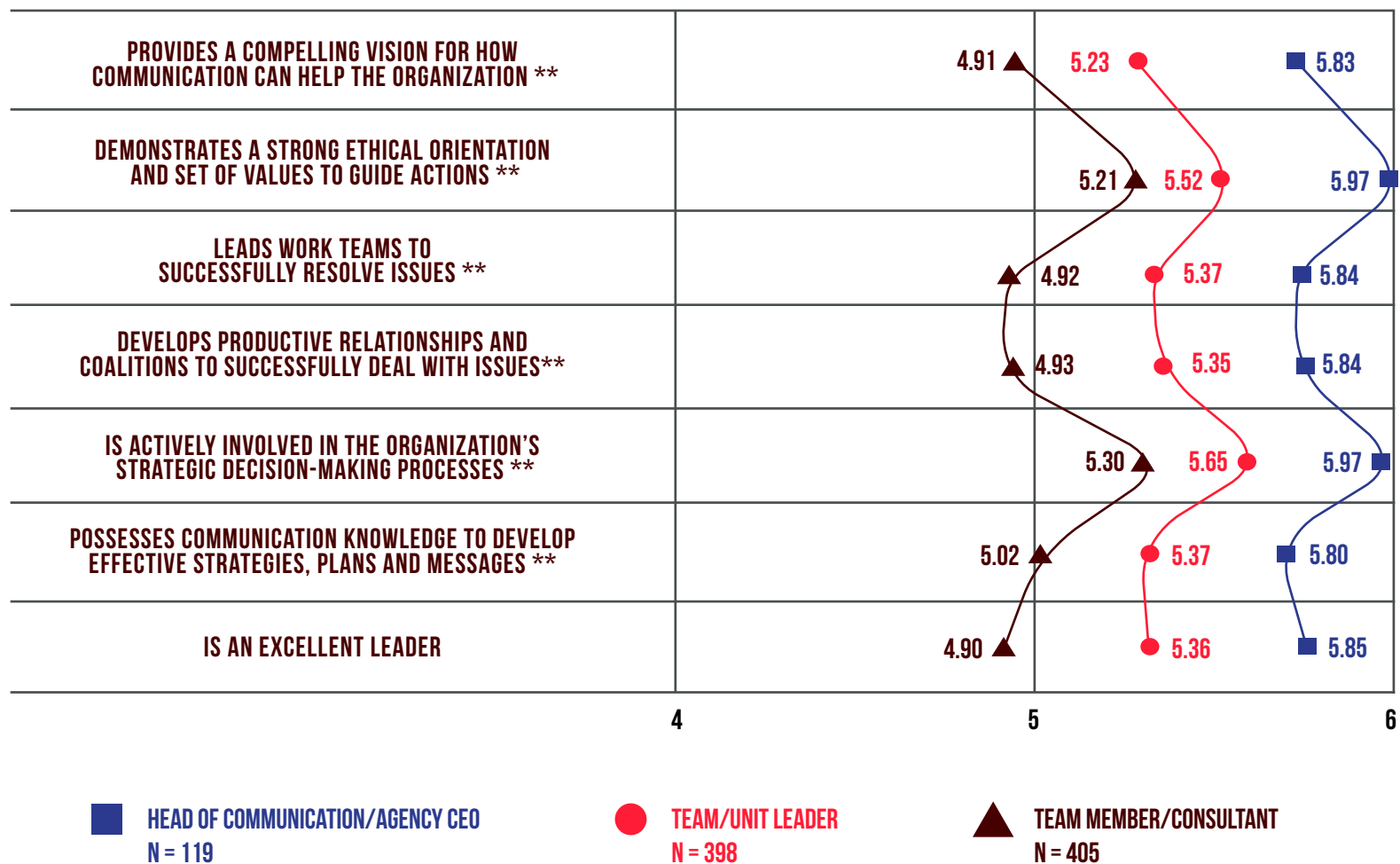
## SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS FROM PROFESSIONALS IN U.S. AND CANADA ON COMMUNICATION LEADERS' PERFORMANCE



 **UNITED STATES**  
N = 765

 **CANADA**  
N = 255

## COMMUNICATION LEADERS RATED THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN PROFESSIONALS ON LOWER LEVELS OF THE HIERARCHY DID

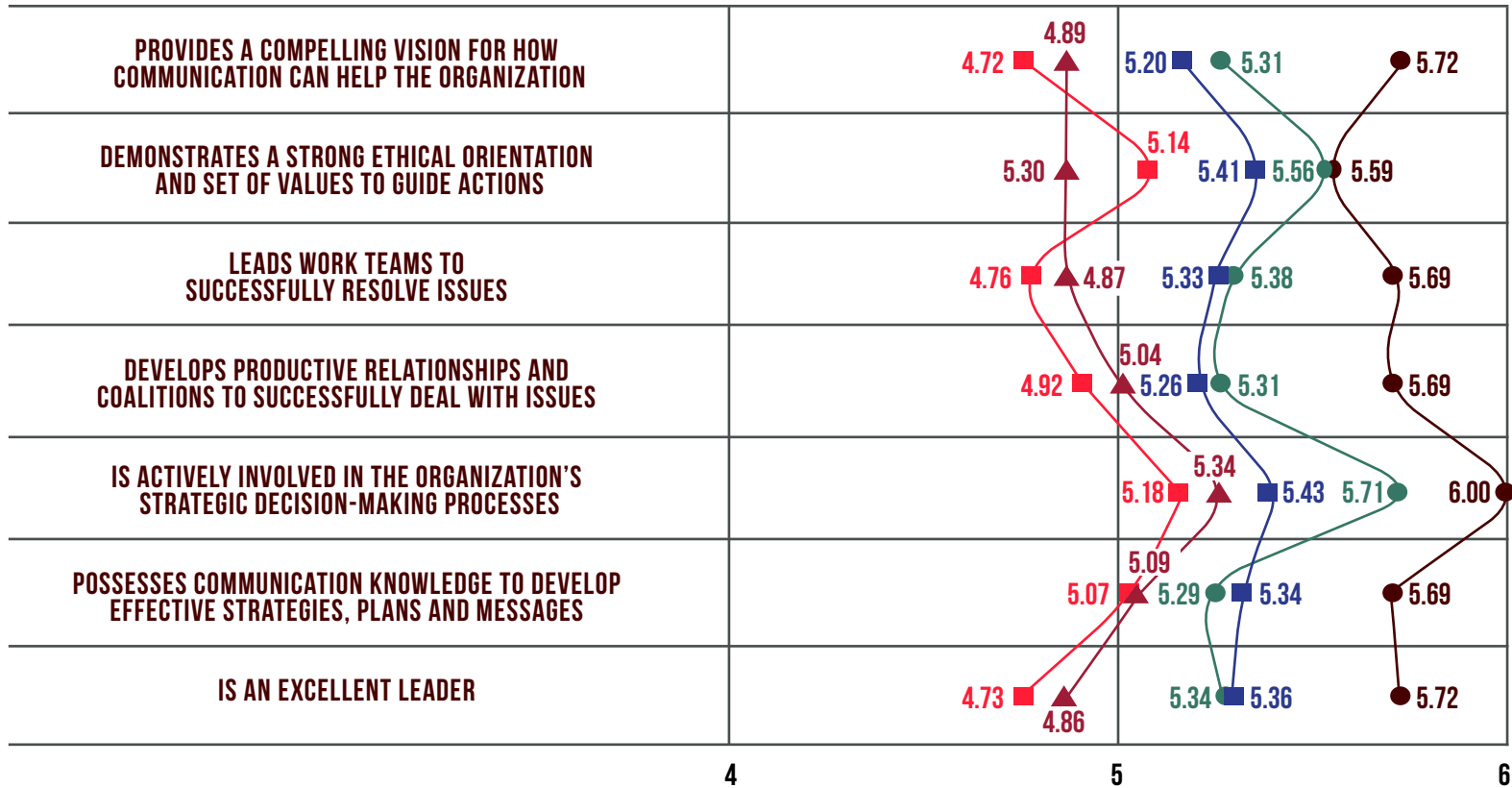


Note: Scale ranges from 1 (I don't agree at all) to 7 (I agree to very great extent).

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

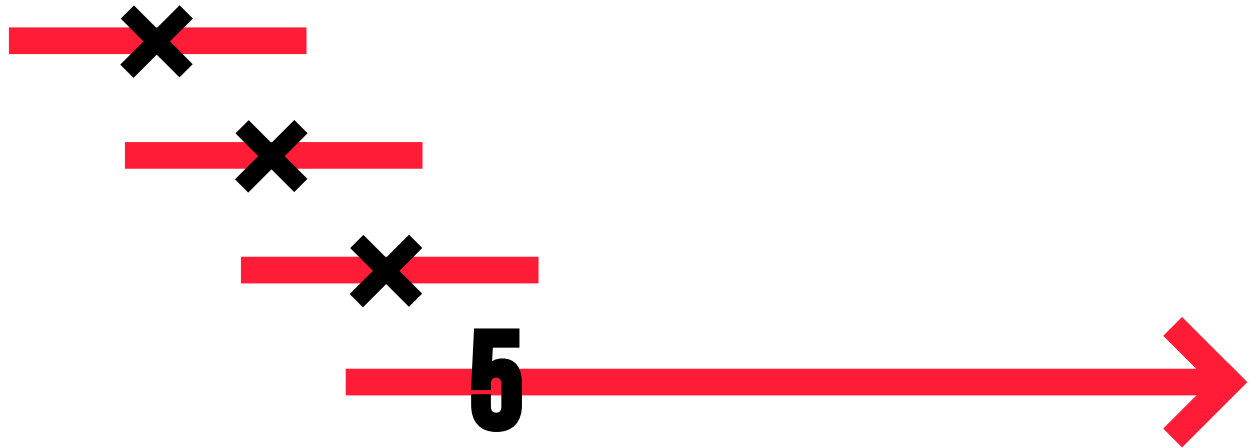
MY LEADER ...

COMMUNICATION LEADERS AT VARIOUS TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE DIFFERENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SCORES: LEADERS IN COMMUNICATION AGENCIES TAKE THE LEAD WHILE THOSE IN GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS LAG BEHIND



■ PUBLIC COMPANIES N = 261    
 ● PRIVATE COMPANIES N = 403    
 ■ GOVERNMENTAL ORGS N = 129    
 ▲ NONPROFIT ORGS N = 135    
 ● COMMUNICATION AGENCIES N = 29

Note: Scale ranges from 1 (I don't agree at all) to 7 (I agree to very great extent).



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# 5

WORK ENGAGEMENT, TRUST  
AND JOB SATISFACTION

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Employees' work engagement has received a great deal of attention in industrial research (e.g., Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement Survey) and has been linked to employees' organizational commitment and citizenship behavior (e.g., Saks, 2006). Public relations research has also explored various aspects of work engagement as related to effective public relations practice and identified that satisfactory internal communication will generate a positive impact on employees' work engagement (e.g., Verčič & Vokić, 2017). Some other important outcomes as related to work engagement include employees' trust in organizations and their job satisfaction (e.g., Saks, 2006). All these outcomes serve as strong indicators for the performance of communication leaders in the organization.

This year's NACM asked questions related to communication professionals' job engagement, their trust in organizations and their job satisfaction by integrating The Plank Center's Leadership Report Card study into our research design. Work engagement was measured by adapting the 12 items from the Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement Survey. The trust measures were adapted from Hon and Grunig's (1999) research. We also asked professionals to rate their overall job satisfaction, as well as different aspects of the job situation as related to job satisfaction.

The overall job engagement index based on the assessment of 12 statements shows that the majority of respondents are engaged (62.8%). However, more than one-third (33.0%) reported as not engaged, and 4.1% respondents are even actively disengaged. Over 75% of surveyed professionals know what is expected of them at work (86.0%), are in an

environment where fellow employees are committed to doing quality work (81.3%), have the opportunity to do what they can do best every day (79.1%), feel their opinions count at work (75.3%), and feel their job is important (75.2%). However, a substantial percentage of the respondents said they lacked feedback about their performance on the job (24.6%) and they did not receive recognition or praise for doing good work (15.4%).

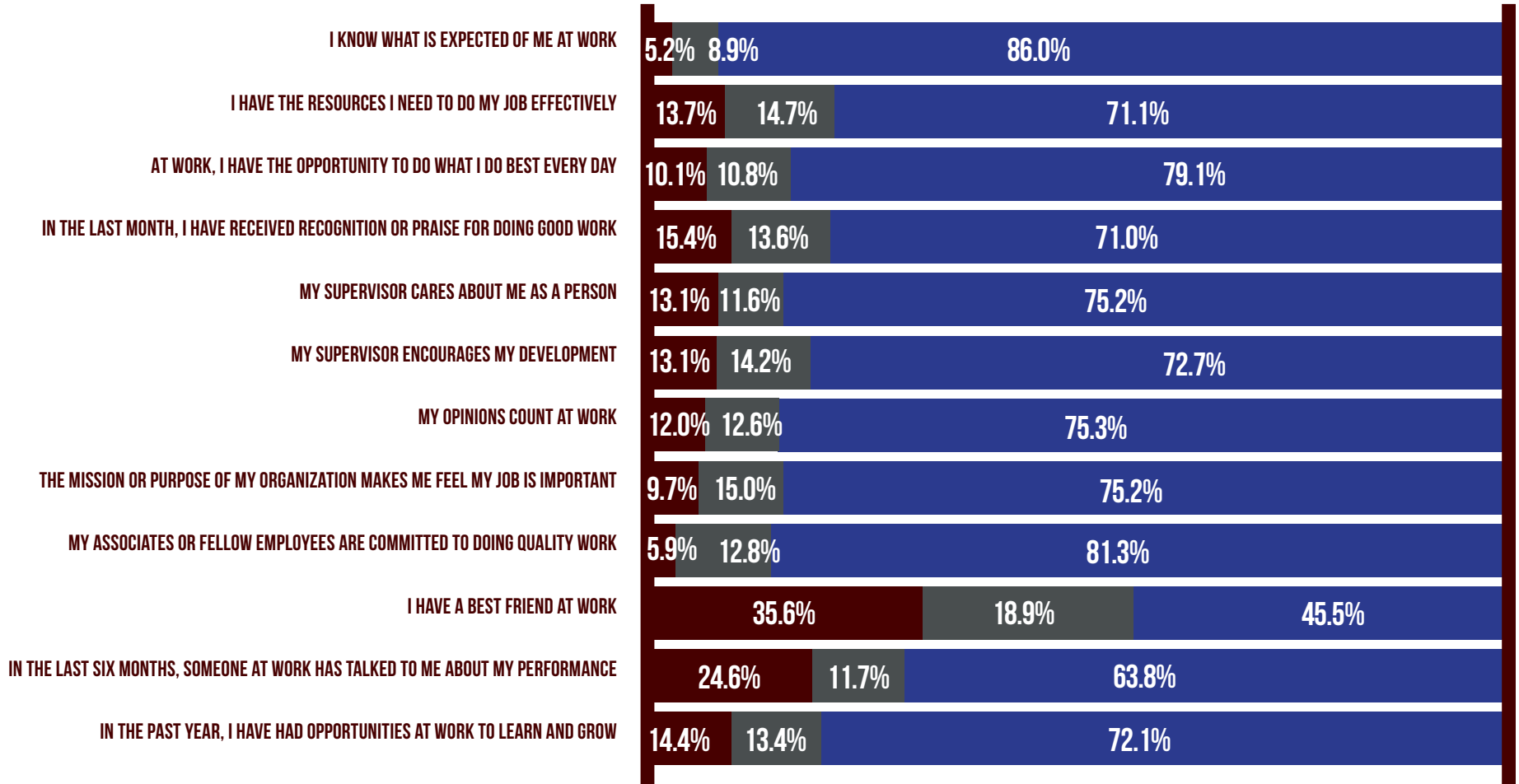
Female and male professionals share similar perceptions on job engagement. However, women expressed a much lower score when evaluating whether their opinions count at work. Professionals working in communication agencies showed the highest level of engagement scores. Those working in governmental and nonprofit organizations reported much lower engagement scores.

The majority of respondents feel very confident in their organization's skills (76.8% in agreement), the ability to accomplish what it says it will do (77.0% in agreement), and the capability to keep its promises (70.9% in agreement). However, trust level varied along the line of hierarchy: top leaders trust their organization significantly higher than employees at lower-levels do.

Nearly three-quarters of the communication professionals are satisfied with their job. Professionals working in communication agencies are the most satisfied group, while the most unhappy colleagues can be found in governmental organizations. Women are less satisfied than their male colleagues are. In terms of the dimensions contributing to job satisfaction, communication professionals indicated that their tasks are interesting and manifold, but they felt less satisfied about their job's status and career opportunities.

# JOB ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS IN NORTH AMERICA

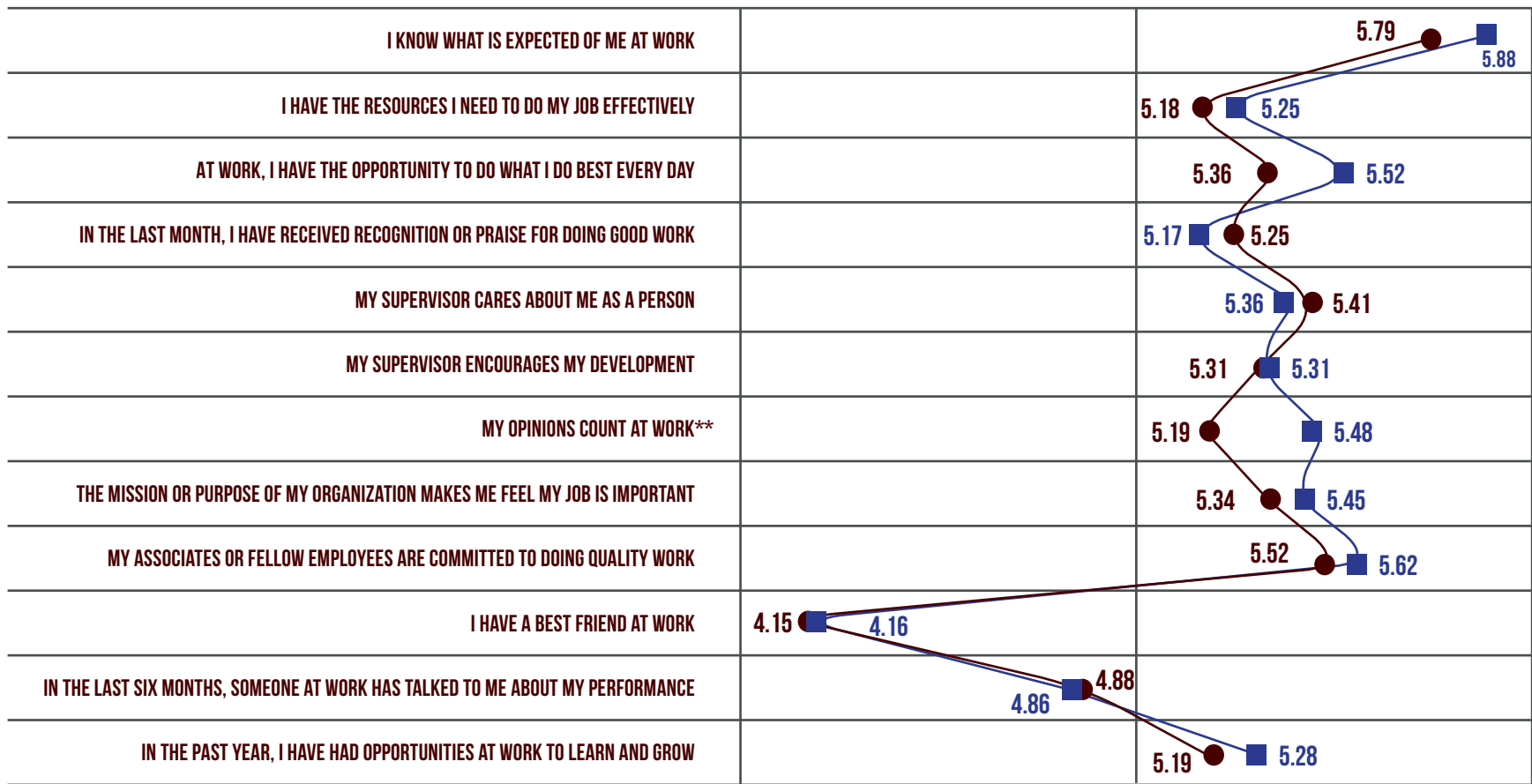
ABOUT MY JOB ENGAGEMENT...



■ DISAGREEMENT (SCALE 1-3) ■ NEUTRAL (SCALE 4) ■ AGREEMENT (SCALE 5-7)

# FEMALE AND MALE COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS SHARE SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS ON JOB ENGAGEMENT; HOWEVER, WOMEN EXPRESSED A SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER SCORE WHEN EVALUATING WHETHER THEIR OPINIONS COUNT AT WORK

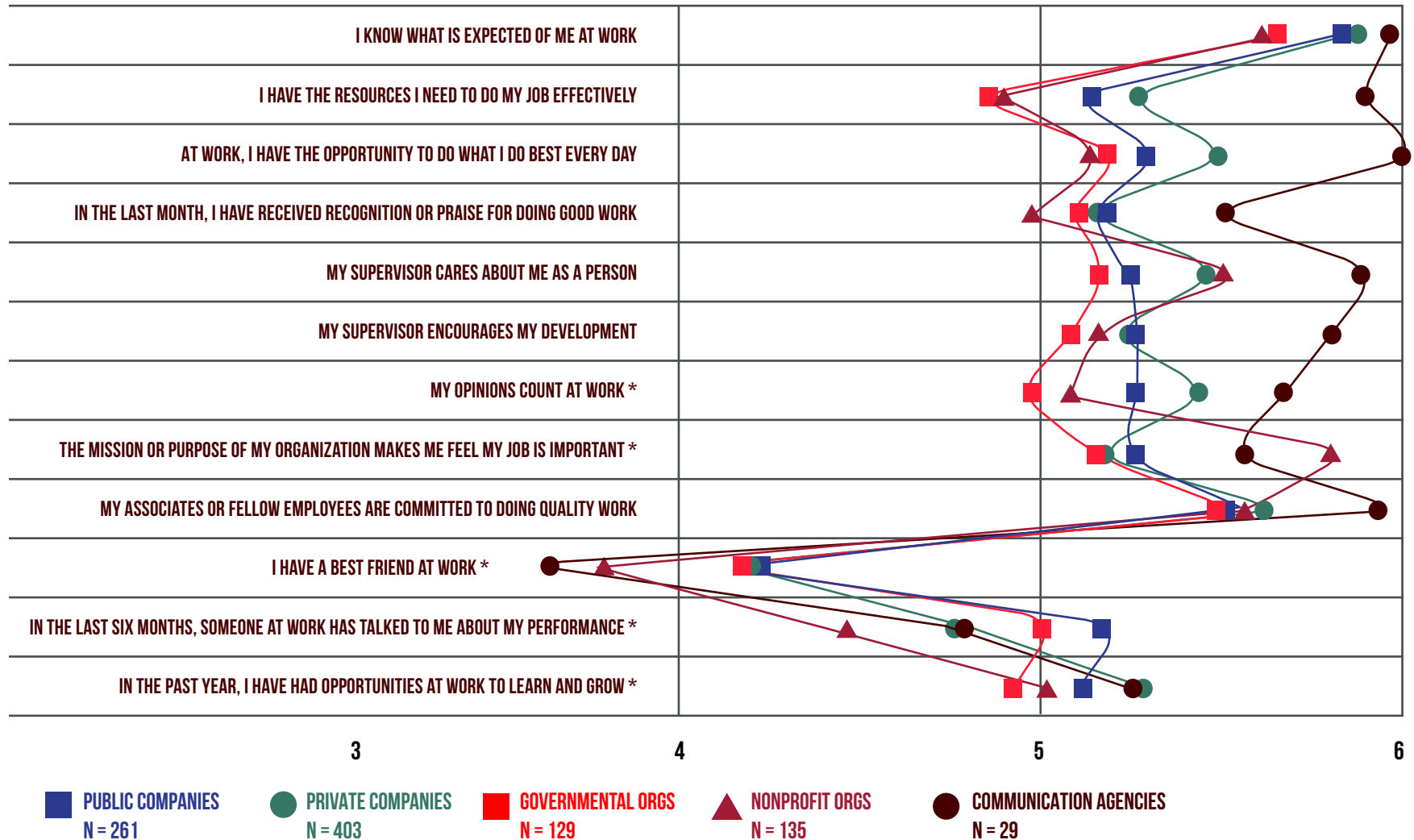
## ABOUT MY JOB ENGAGEMENT ...



\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

# PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN AGENCIES AND COMPANIES ARE MORE ENGAGED THAN PEERS IN GOVERNMENTAL AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

## ABOUT MY JOB ENGAGEMENT ...



**PUBLIC COMPANIES**  
N = 261

**PRIVATE COMPANIES**  
N = 403

**GOVERNMENTAL ORGS**  
N = 129

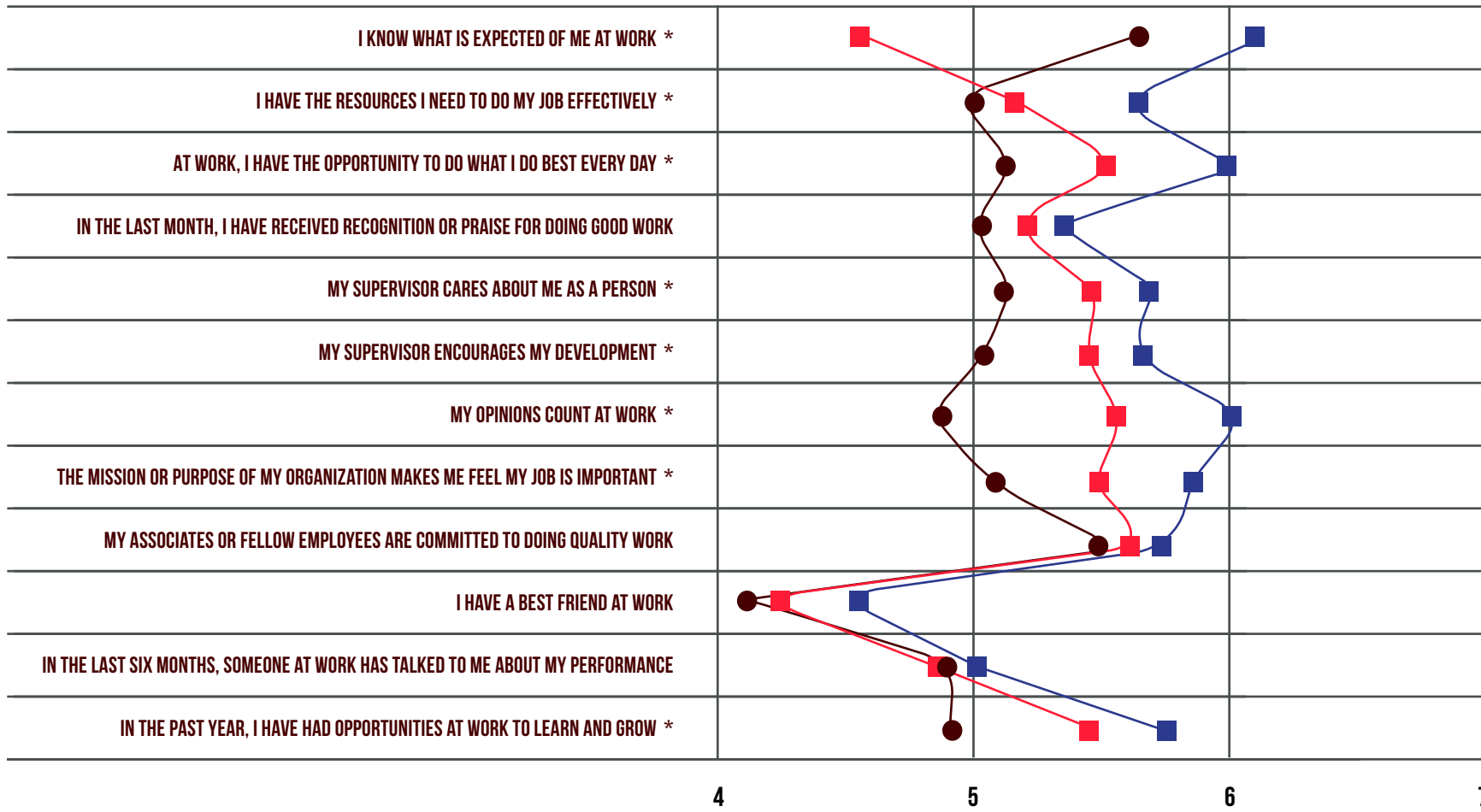
**NONPROFIT ORGS**  
N = 135

**COMMUNICATION AGENCIES**  
N = 29

\* Significant difference,  $p < .05$

# COMMUNICATION LEADERS FEEL MORE ENGAGED THAN TEAM MEMBERS; PROFESSIONALS AT ALL LEVELS REPORT SIMILAR LOW SCORES ON PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

ABOUT MY JOB ENGAGEMENT ...

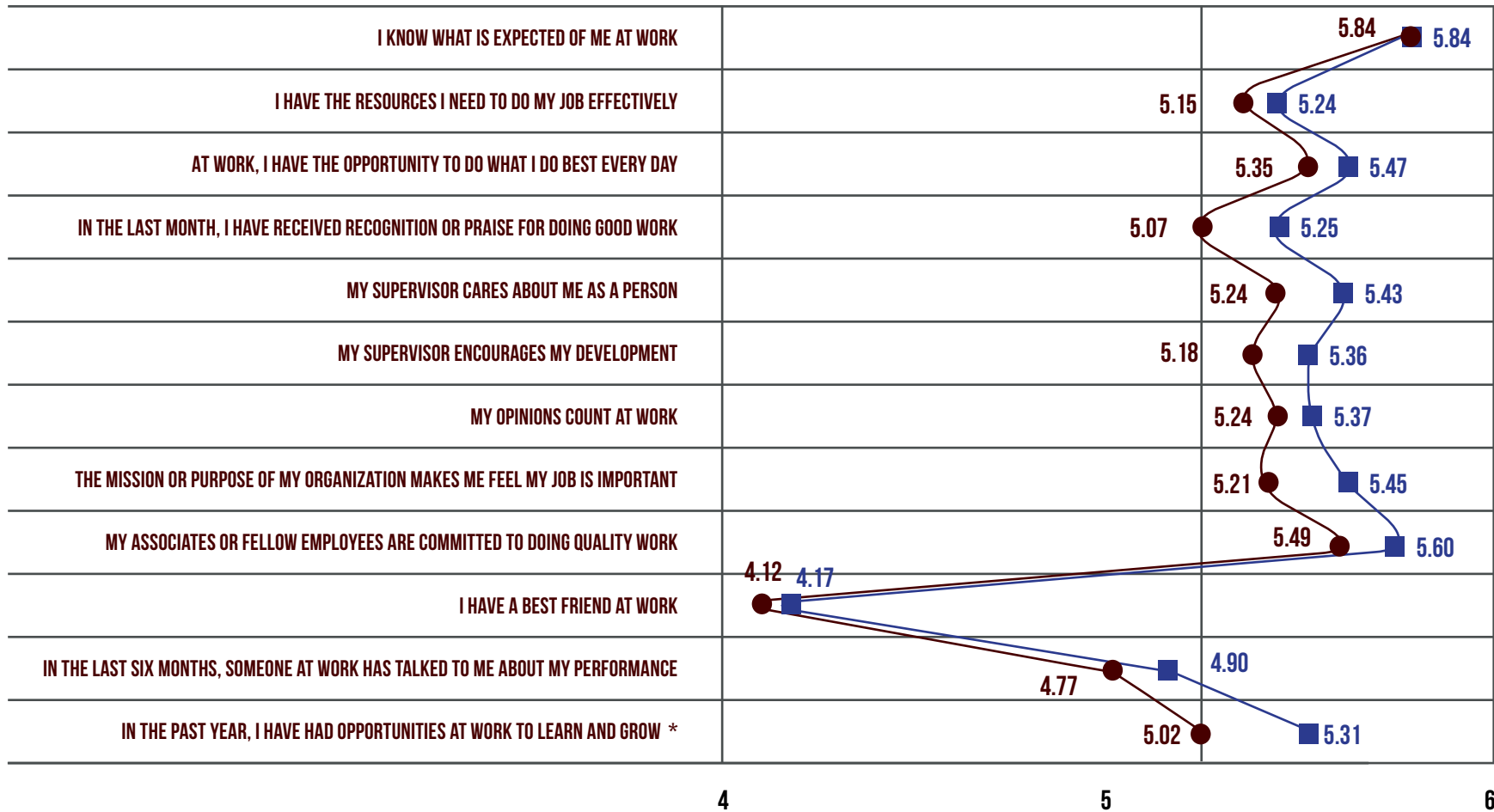


■ HEAD OF COMMUNICATION/AGENCY CEO N = 119
 ■ TEAM/UNIT LEADER N = 398
 ● TEAM MEMBER/CONSULTANT N = 405

\* Significant differences,  $p < .05$

# JOB ENGAGEMENT SCORES: PROFESSIONALS IN THE U.S. REPORTED A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER OPPORTUNITY AT WORK TO LEARN AND GROW

## ABOUT MY JOB ENGAGEMENT ...



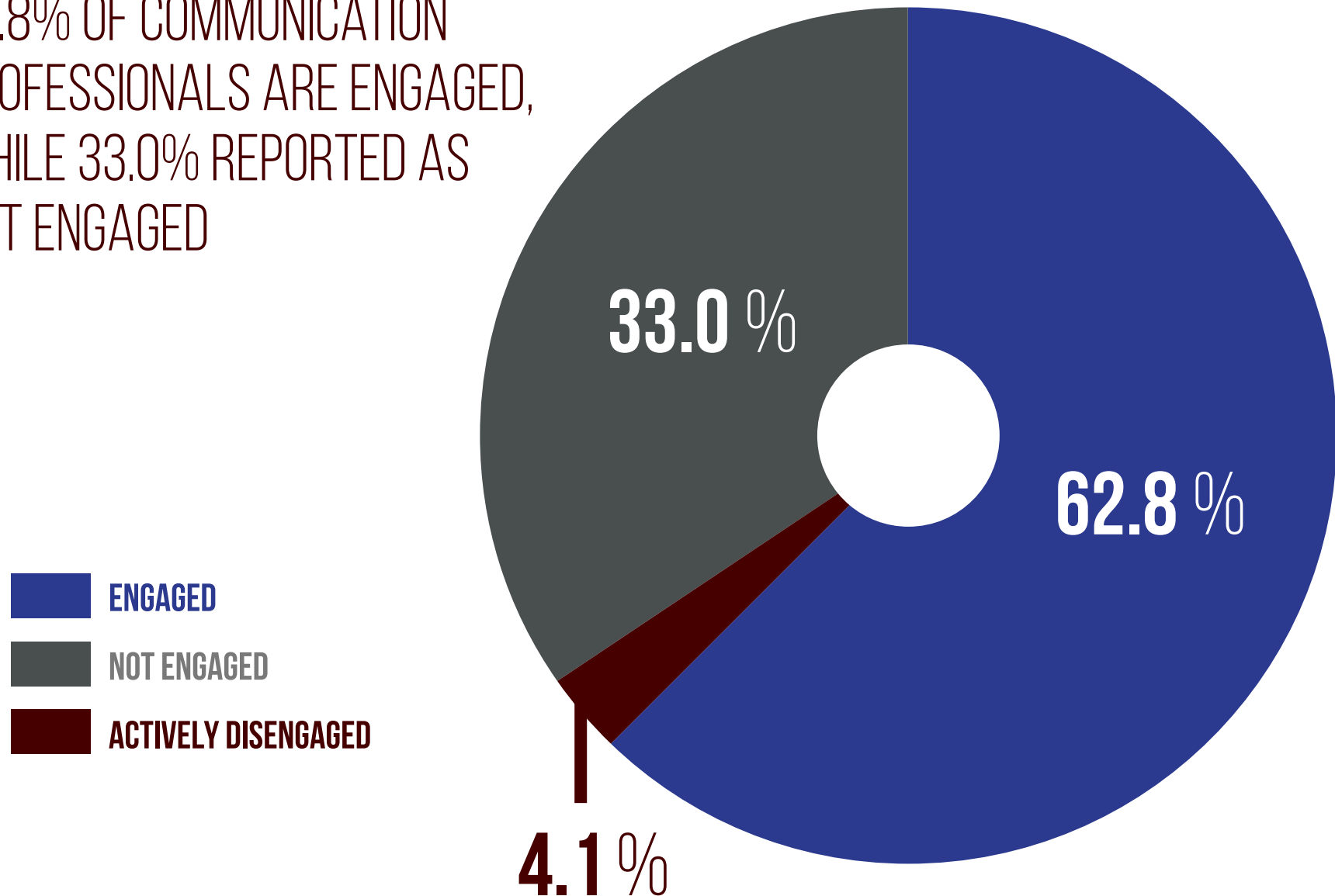
\* Significant difference,  $p < .05$

**UNITED STATES**  
N = 765

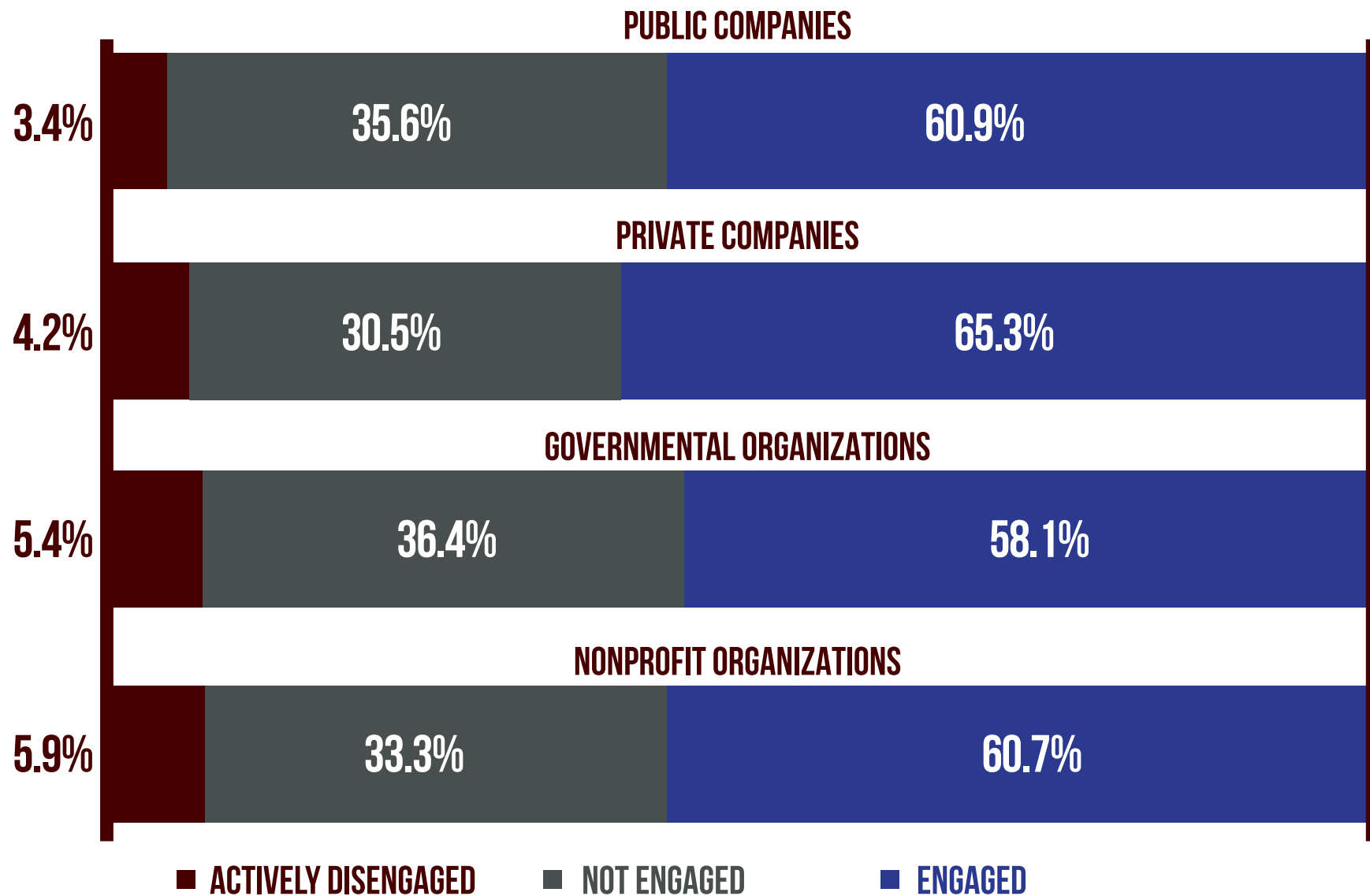
**CANADA**  
N = 255

## JOB ENGAGEMENT INDEX:

62.8% OF COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS ARE ENGAGED, WHILE 33.0% REPORTED AS NOT ENGAGED



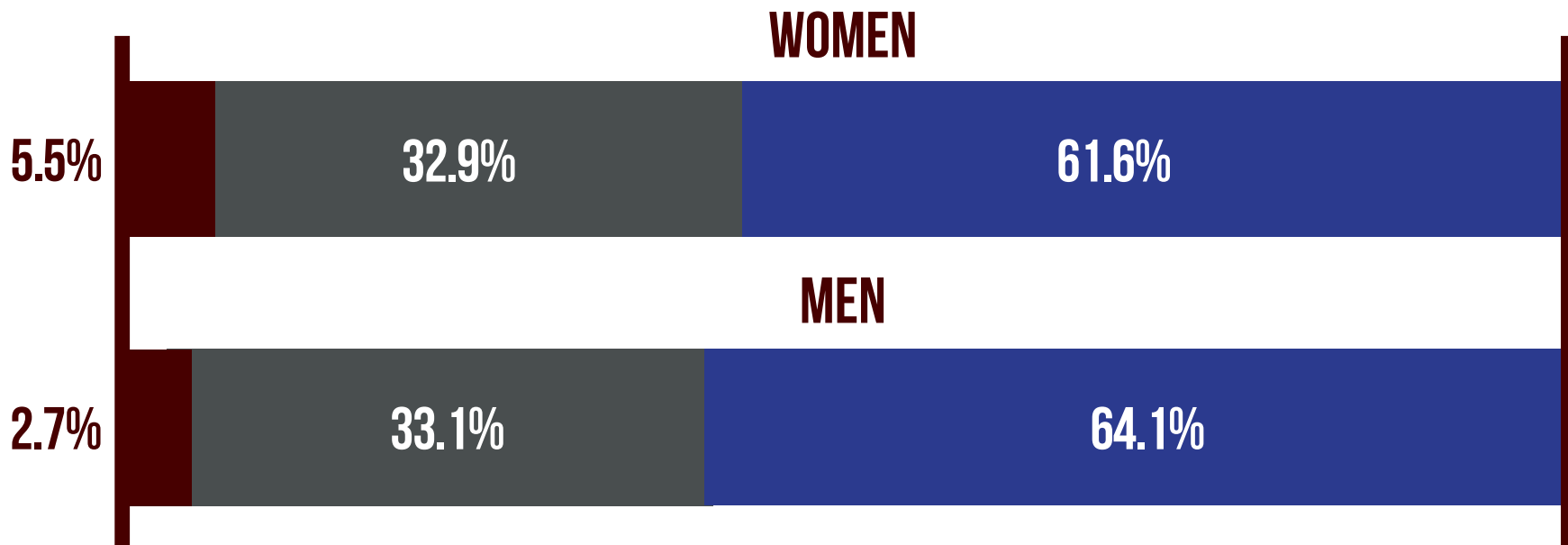
## OVERALL JOB ENGAGEMENT INDEX AS REFLECTED IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS: PRIVATE COMPANIES HAVE THE HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT PERCENTAGE



*Note: The percentage of communication agencies are not included in the calculation due to the small size (n=29).*



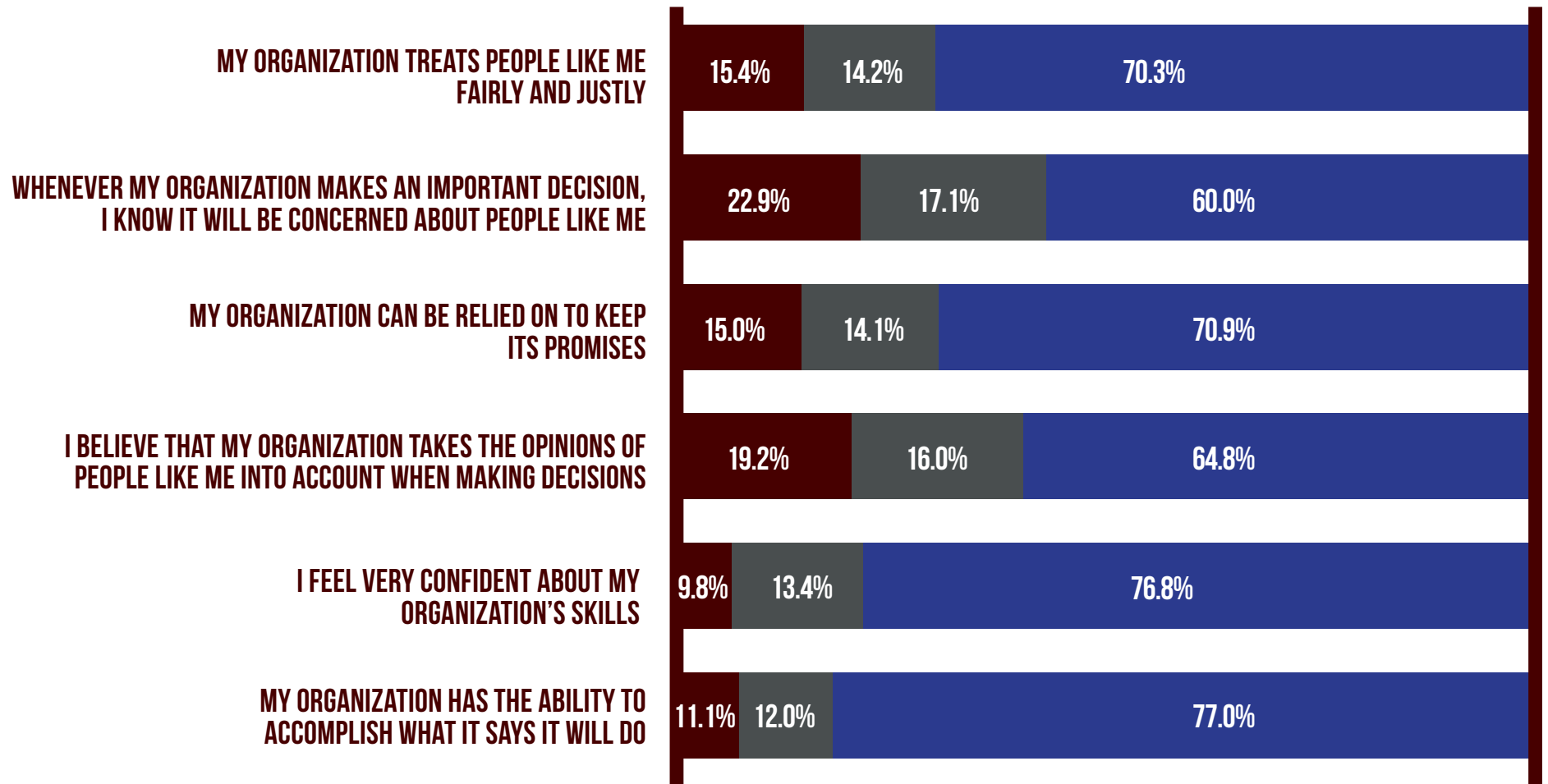
# OVERALL JOB ENGAGEMENT INDEX AS REFLECTED BY GENDER: MORE MALE PROFESSIONALS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES IN THE ENGAGED GROUP



**NOTE: MORE MEN IDENTIFY THEMSELVES IN THE ENGAGED GROUP**

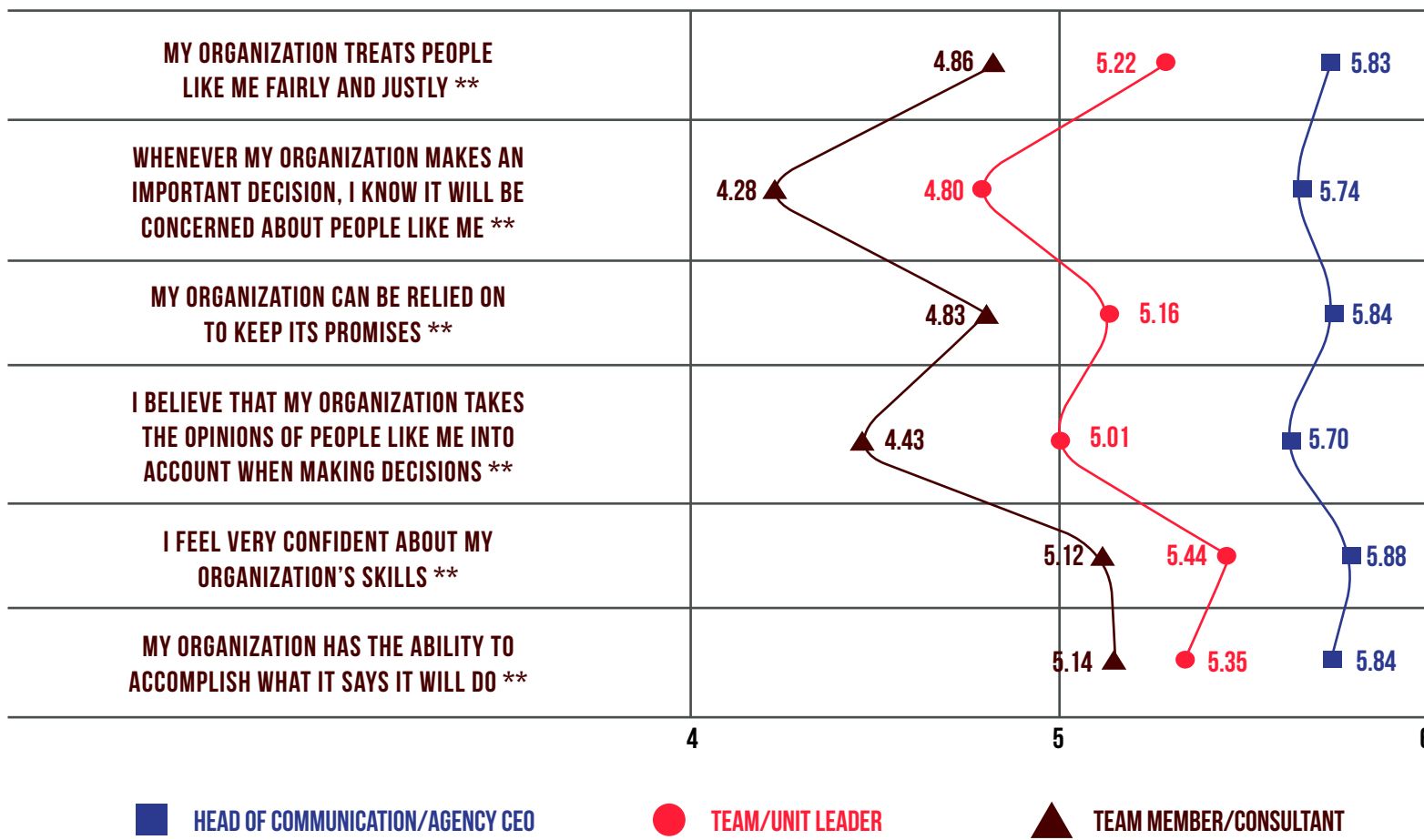
- ACTIVELY DISENGAGED
- NOT ENGAGED
- ENGAGED

# TRUST IN THE WORKPLACE: HOW COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS TRUST THEIR OWN ORGANIZATION



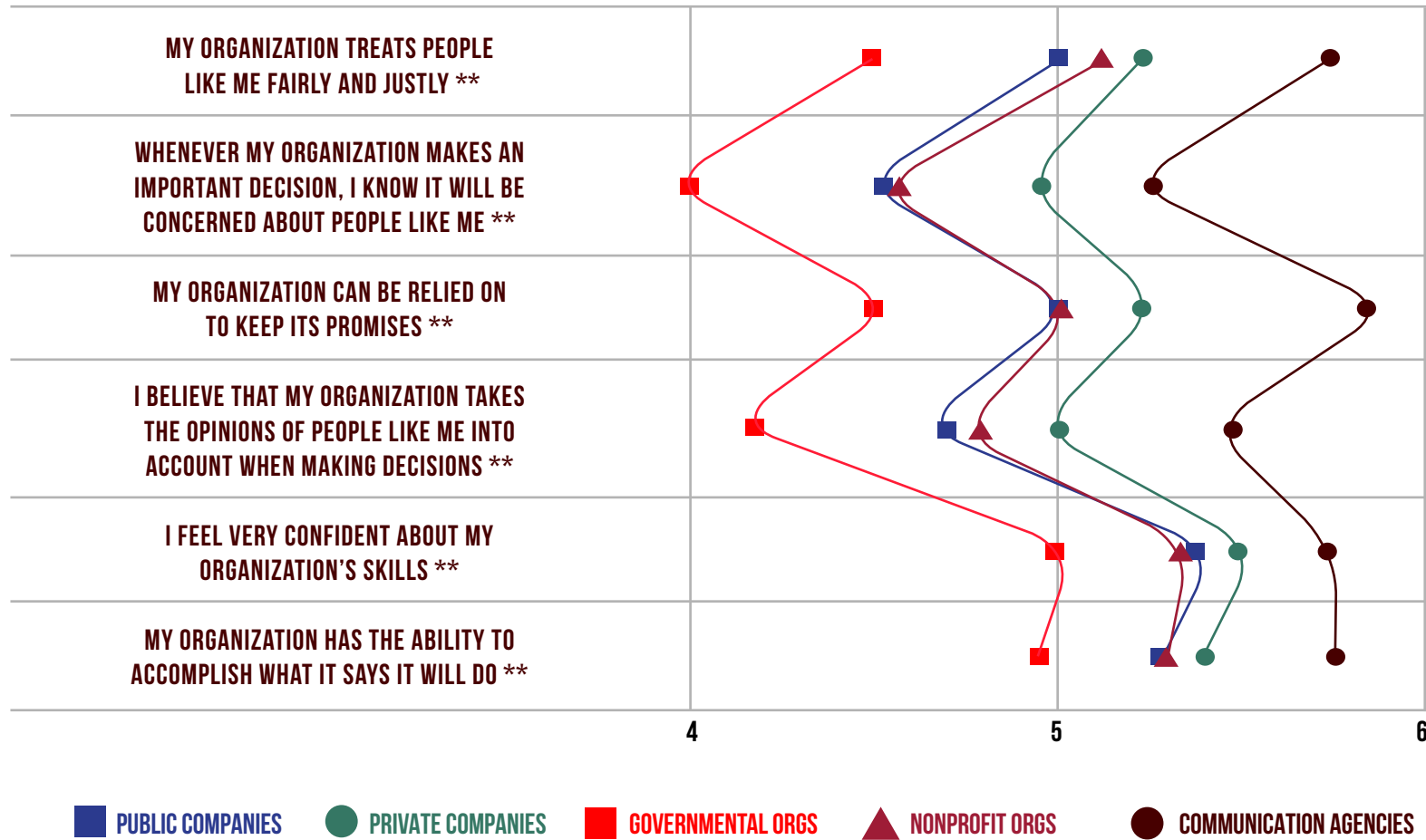
■ DISAGREEMENT (SCALE 1-3)   ■ NEUTRAL (SCALE 4)   ■ AGREEMENT (SCALE 5-7)

# TRUST VARIED BY THE HIERARCHICAL LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP: COMMUNICATION LEADERS TRUST THEIR ORGANIZATION SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN TEAM MEMBERS



\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

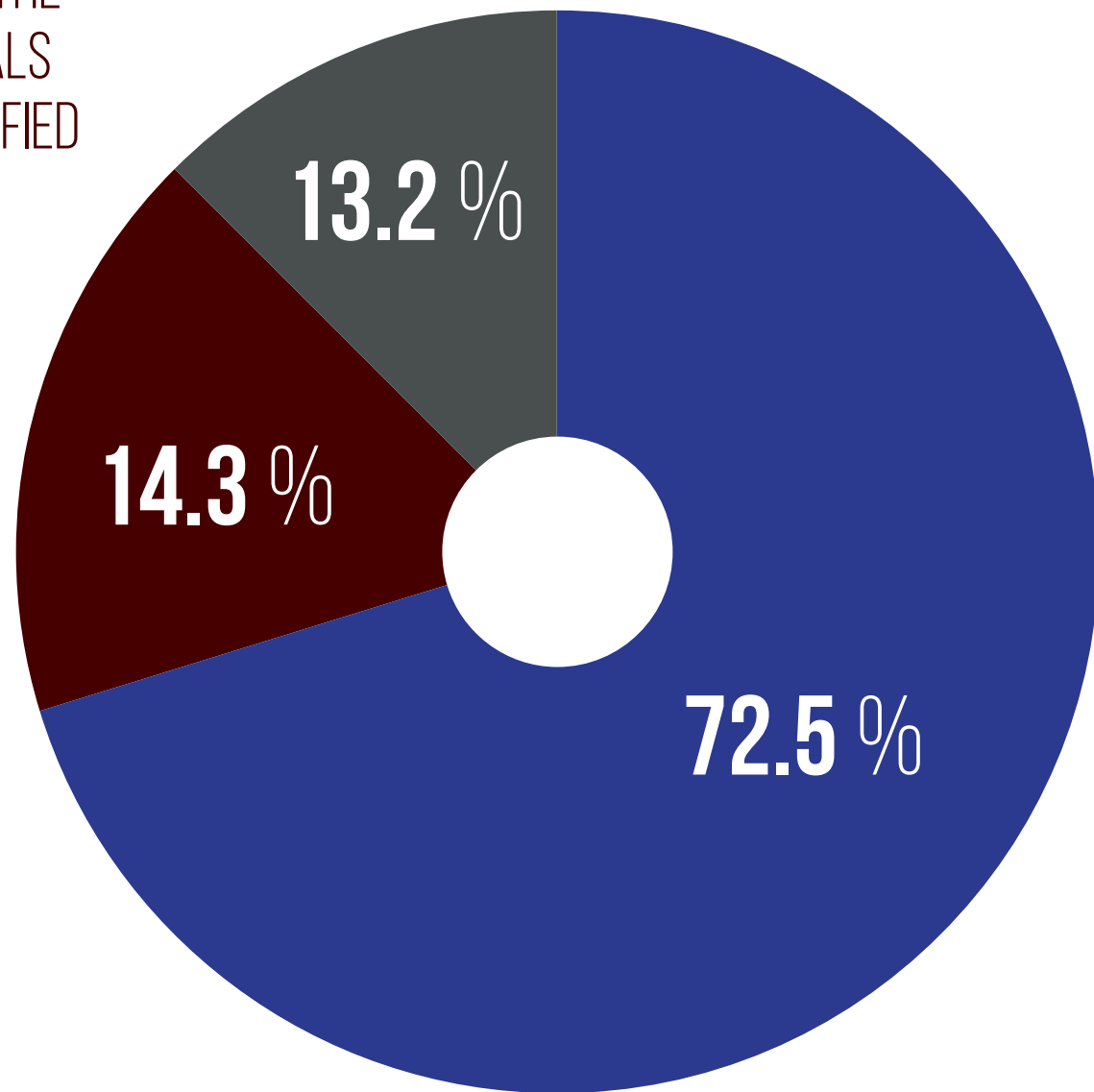
# TRUST VARIED BY ORGANIZATIONAL TYPE: PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS HOLD LOWEST TRUST IN THEIR ORGANIZATION



\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

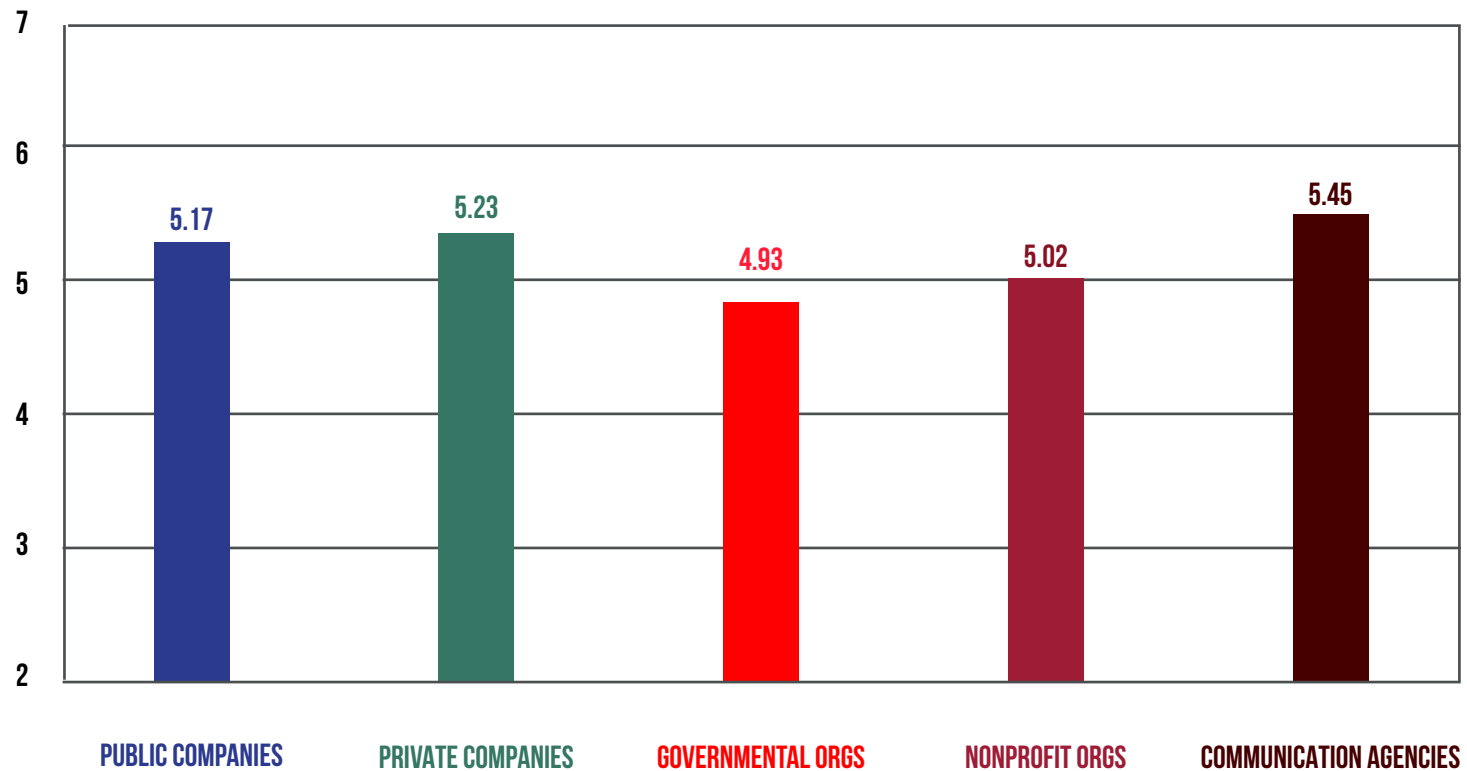
## OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION:

NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS IN U.S. AND CANADA ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOB



# PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN COMMUNICATION AGENCIES ARE THE MOST SATISFIED GROUP; THE LEAST SATISFIED CAN BE FOUND IN GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

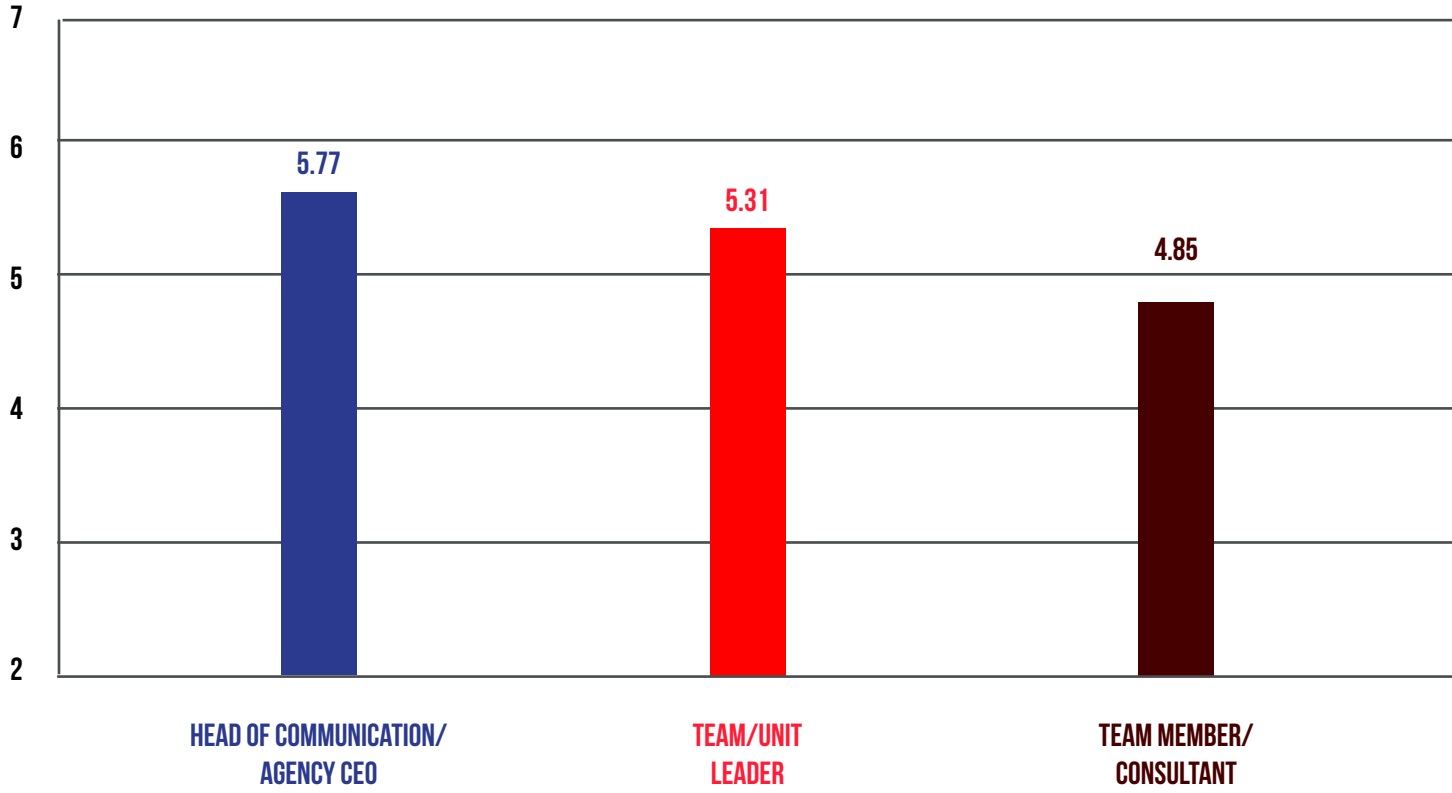
OVERALL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY JOB



Note: Differences on all items are statistically significant ( $p < .01$ )

# COMMUNICATION LEADERS ARE MUCH MORE SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOB

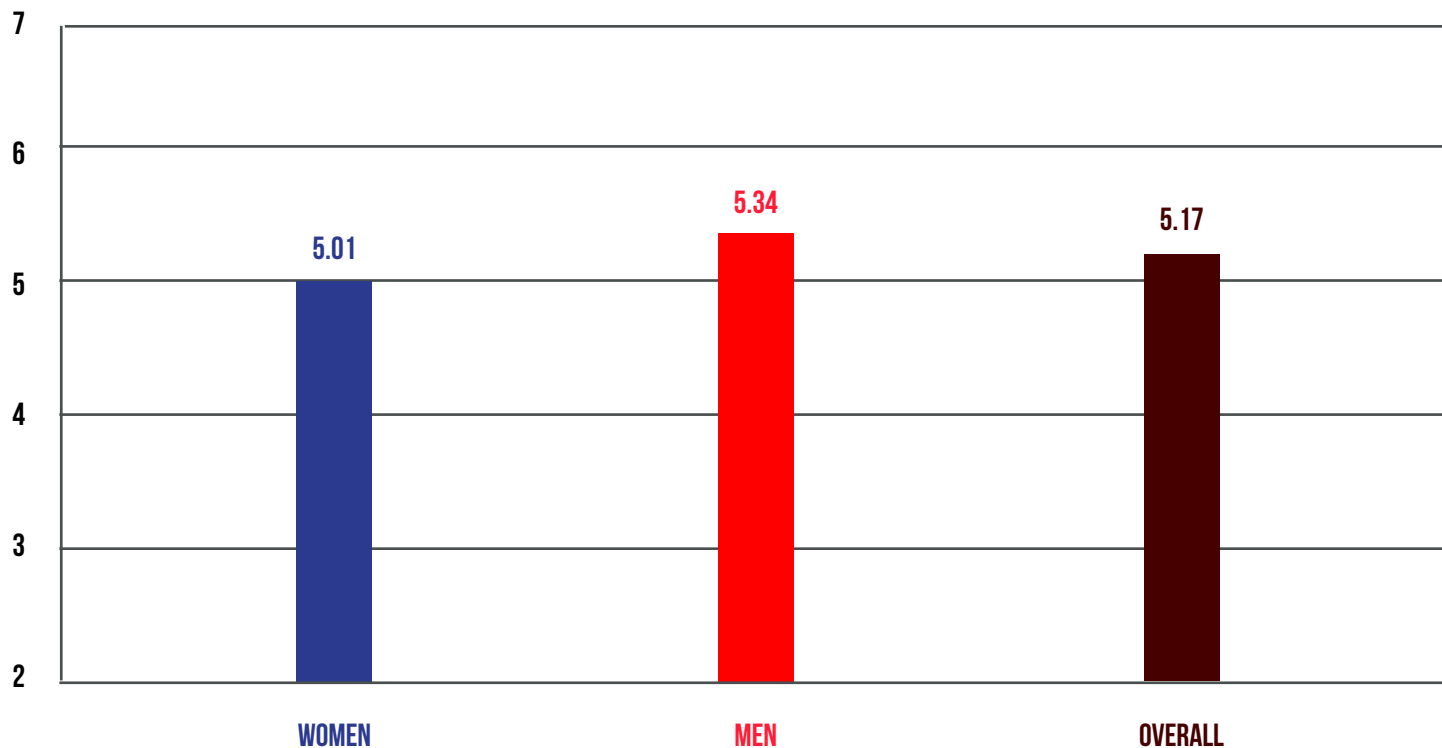
OVERALL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY JOB



\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

## GENDER DIFFERENCE IN JOB SATISFACTION: WOMEN ARE LESS SATISFIED THAN THEIR MALE COLLEAGUES

OVERALL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY JOB

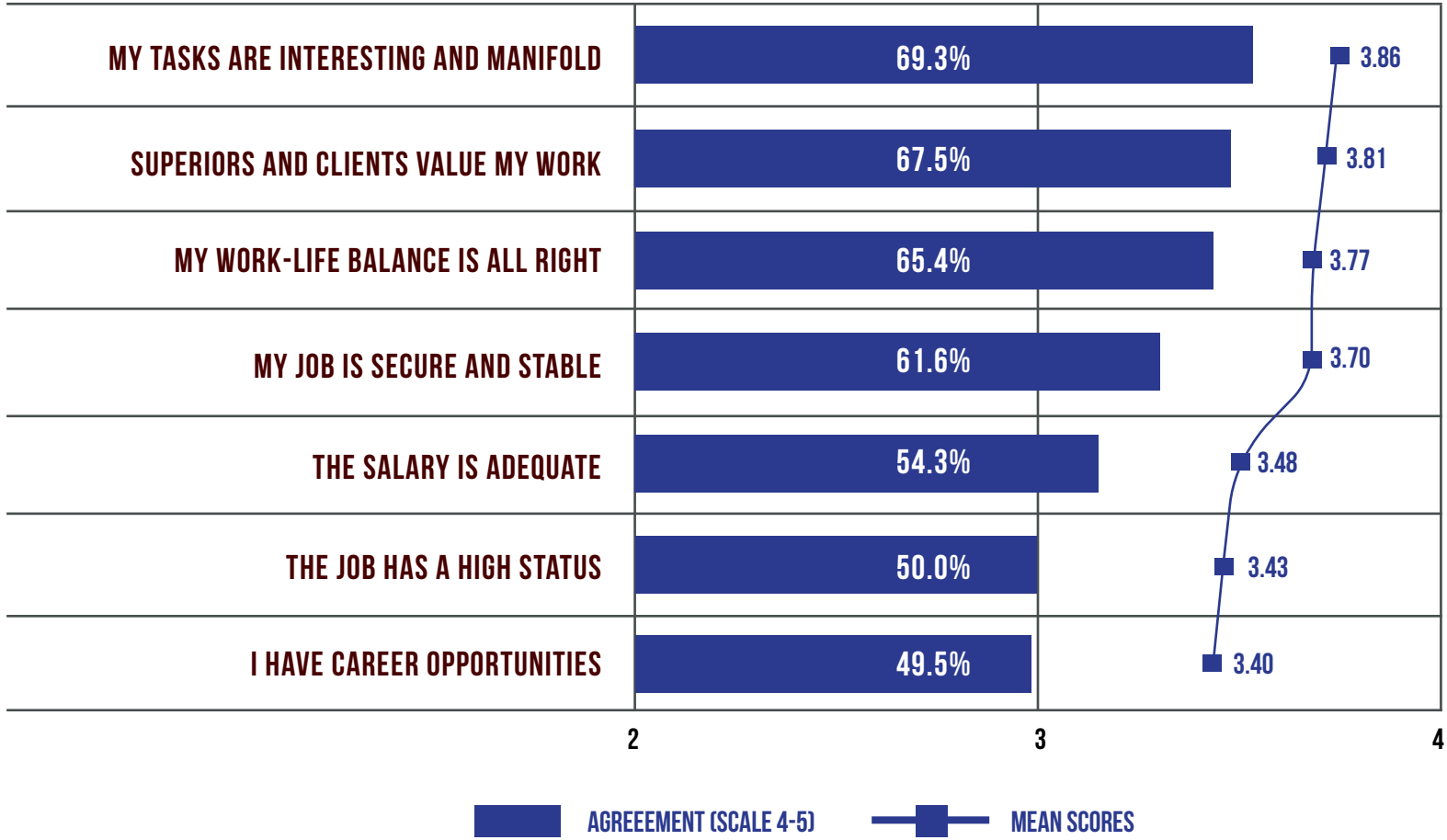


\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$



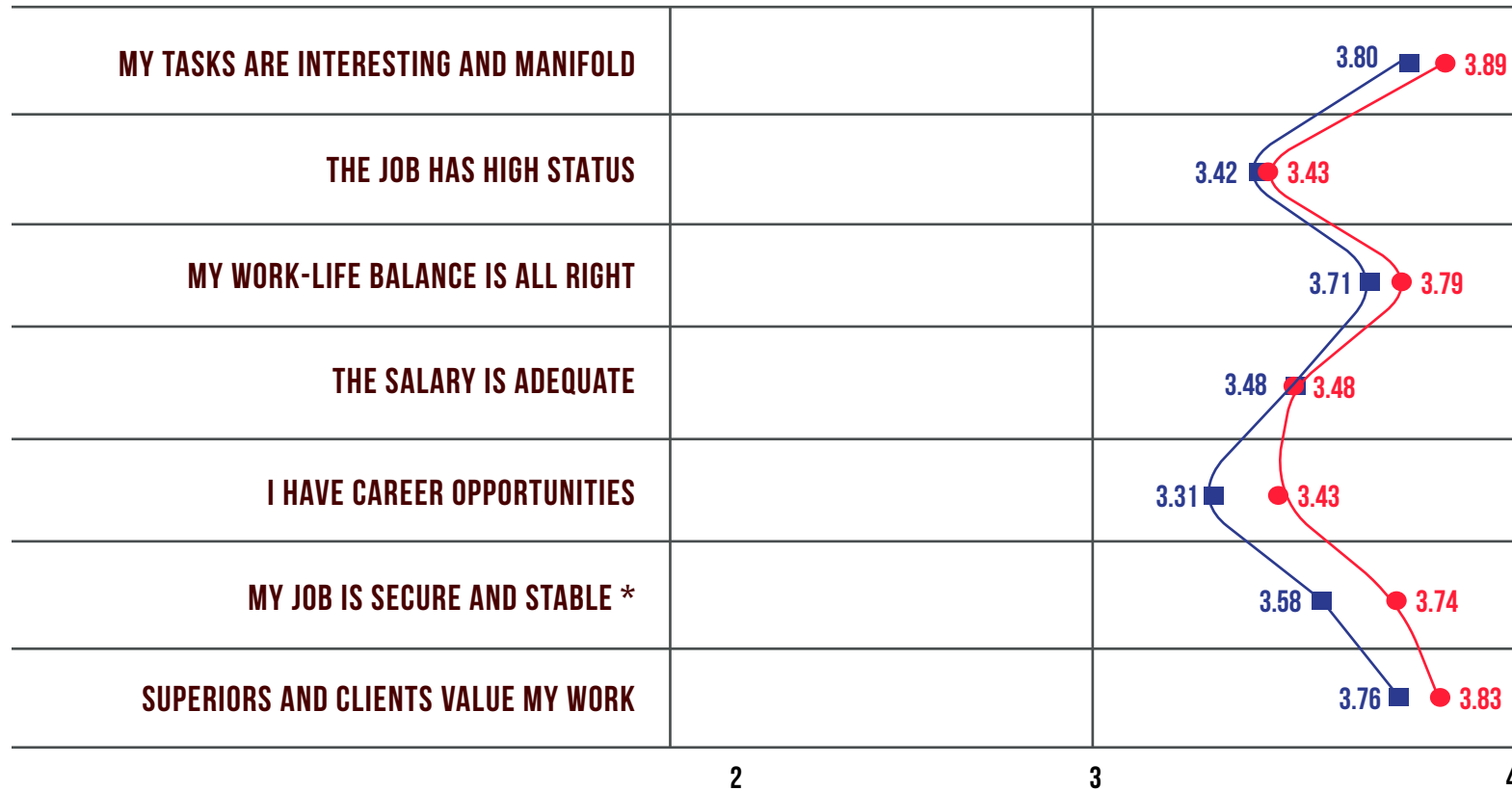
# DIMENSIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION: COMMUNICATION

## PROFESSIONALS ENJOY AN INTERESTING JOB, BUT THEY ARE LESS SATISFIED ABOUT JOB STATUS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



Note: Scale ranges from 1 (I don't agree at all) to 7 (I agree to very great extent). Agreement based on scale points 4-5.

# SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS ON JOB SATISFACTION DIMENSIONS REPORTED BY PROFESSIONALS IN U.S. AND CANADA



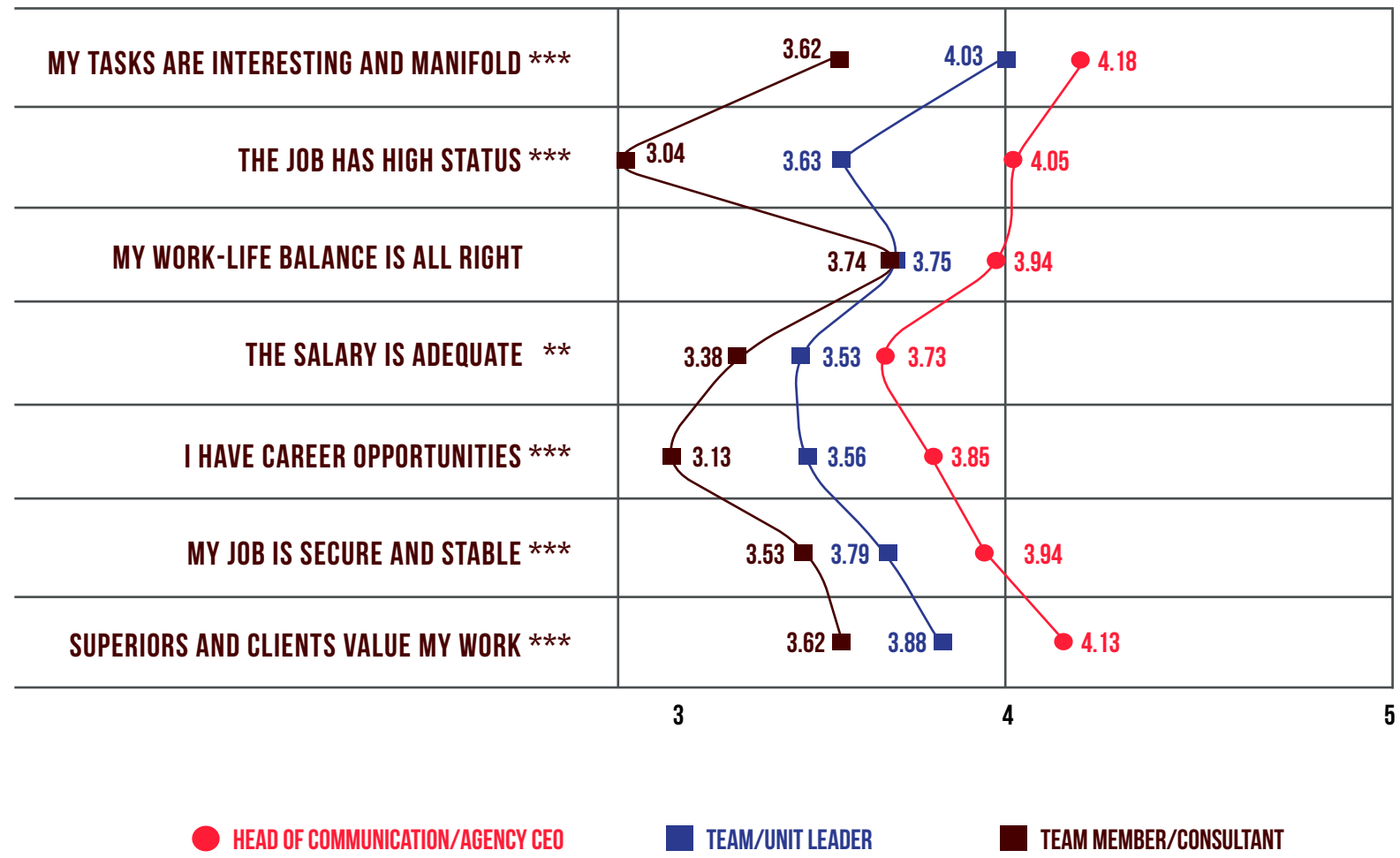
● UNITED STATES

■ CANADA

**U.S. PROFESSIONALS REPORTED A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER LEVEL OF JOB SECURITY THAN THEIR PEERS IN CANADA.**

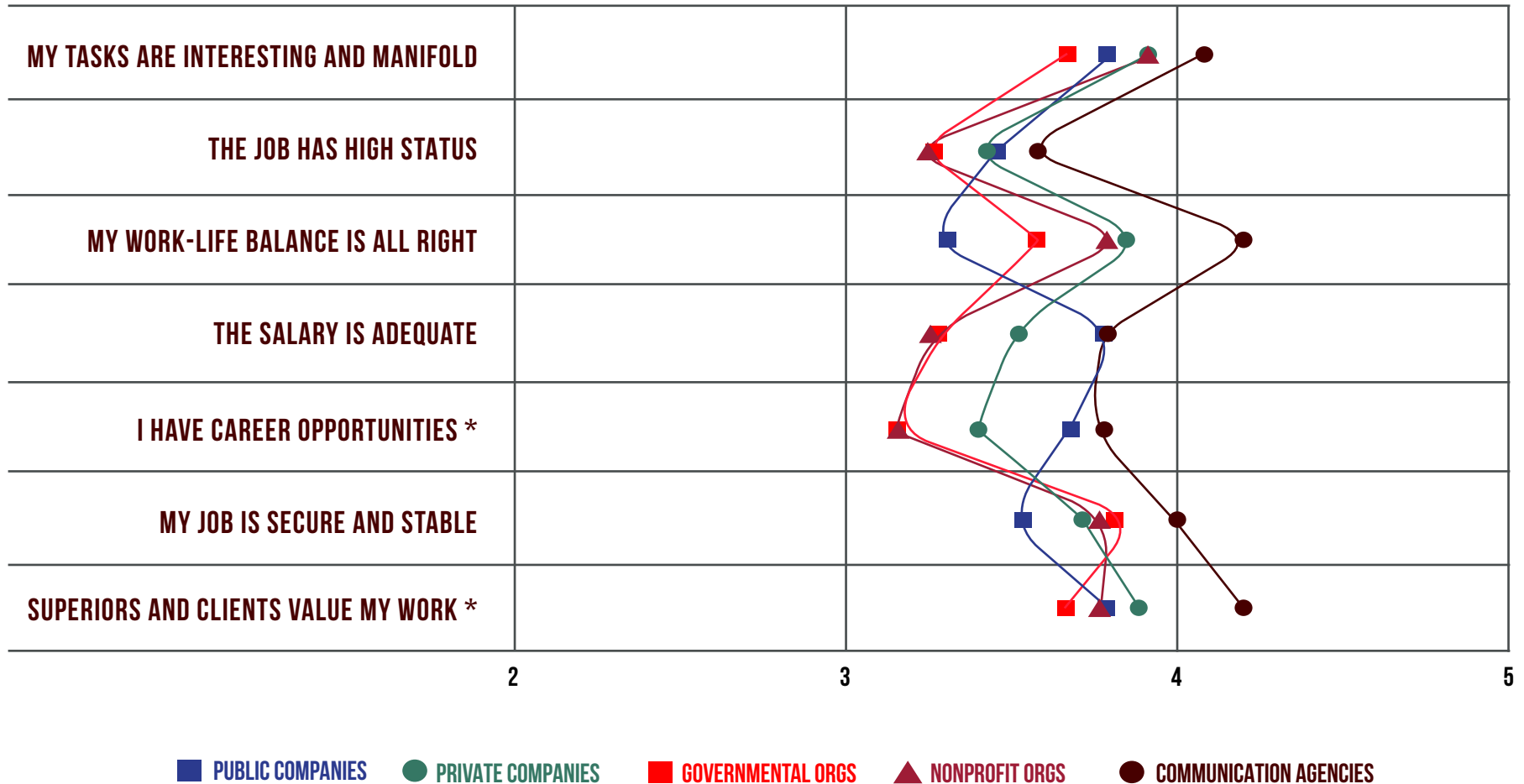
\* Significant difference,  $p < .05$

# THE MORE SENIOR PROFESSIONALS ARE, THE HIGHER THEIR JOB SATISFACTION IS



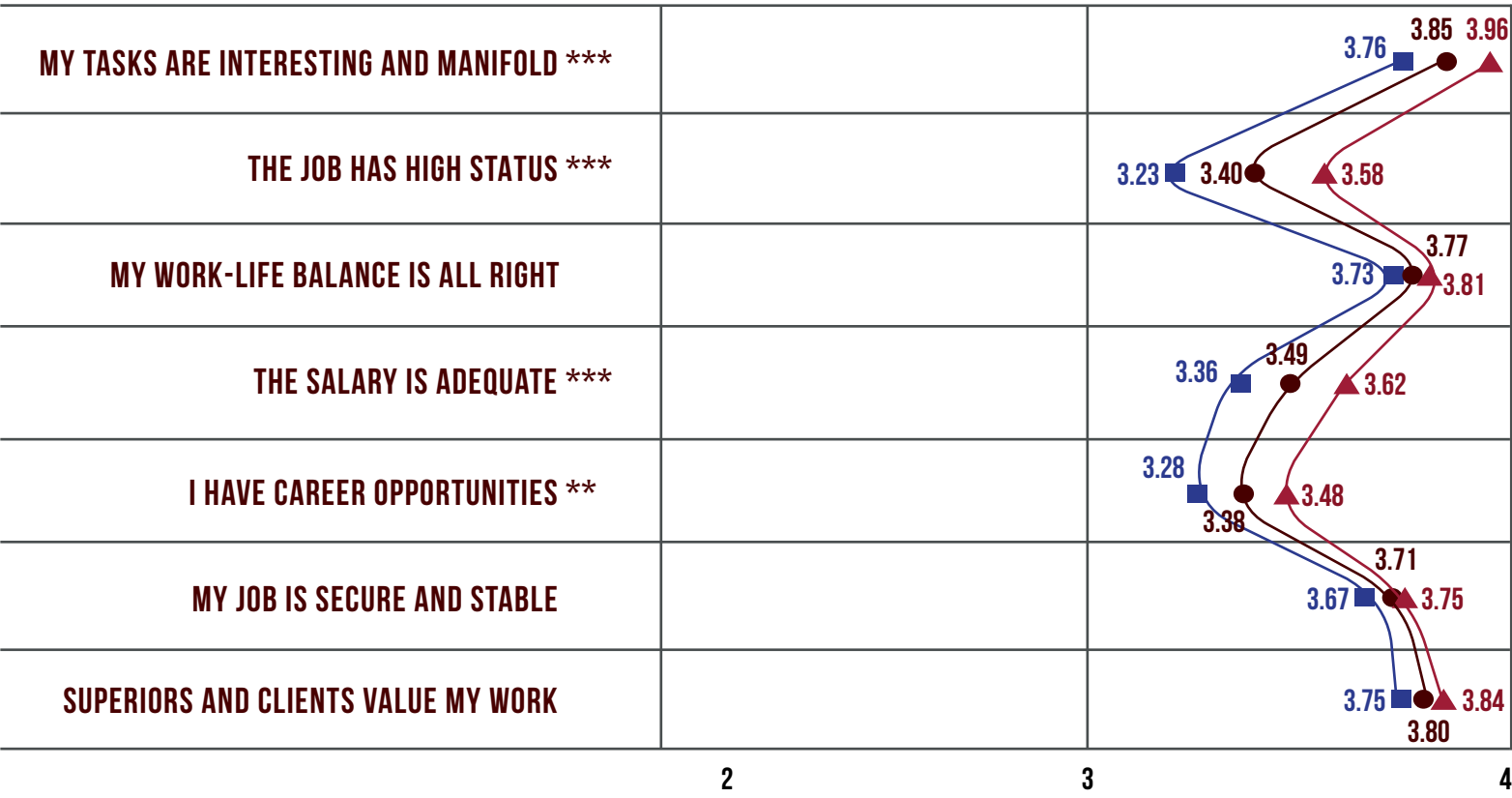
Significant difference: \*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01

# TYPE OF ORGANIZATION AND DIMENSIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION



\* Significant difference,  $p < .05$

# GENDER DIFFERENCES ON JOB SATISFACTION DIMENSIONS



**MEN ARE MORE SATISFIED IN GENERAL**

■ WOMEN  
▲ MEN  
● OVERALL

Significant Difference: \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

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# 6

LEADERSHIP  
REPORT CARD  
MODEL

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This section further tests the leadership performance model as developed by The Plank Center's Leadership Report Card. As part of those results, Meng and Berger (2019) investigated the complicated relationships among critical institutional environments (i.e., organizational culture and leadership performance), and communication professionals' work engagement, their trust in organizations and their overall job satisfaction.

Results of the model testing showed strong evidence that supportive organizational culture could generate a positive impact on communication professionals' work engagement and trust. In this regard, a supportive culture that understands the value of public relations, shares decision-making power, practices two-way communication and embraces diversity is crucial.

The model further depicts the critical role of leadership performance demonstrated by top communication leaders in the organization in fostering engagement and trust. Communication professionals expect excellent leadership performance in providing a compelling vision for how communication can help their organization and being actively involved in the organization's strategic decision-making processes. Organizations with effective communication

leaders who can articulate and create the conditions for strong leadership will be more effective in engaging communication professionals and fostering their trust in the organization.

Finally, as indicated in the leadership performance model, communication professionals' overall job satisfaction is influenced, both directly and indirectly, by all these crucial organizational conditions (i.e., supportive organizational culture and top communication leader's strong leadership performance) and by their own work engagement and trust in the organization.

Communication professionals who perceive higher organizational support and stronger communication leadership are more likely to be actively engaged in their work and organization. Furthermore, engaged professionals are more likely to trust their organization's decisions and capabilities, which further contribute to their job satisfaction in a reciprocal manner.

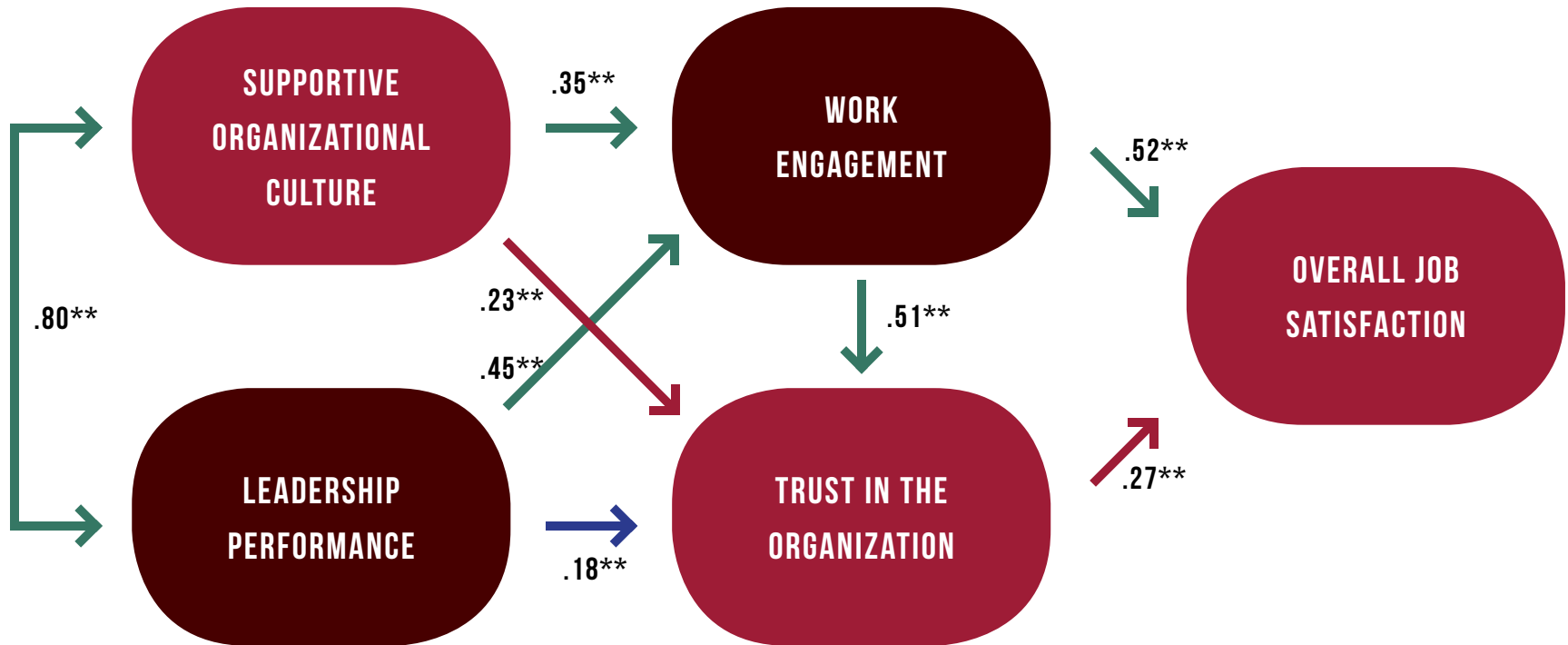
## STRONG SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS SHOWED AMONG FACTORS PREDICTING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE, WORK ENGAGEMENT, TRUST IN ORGANIZATION AND JOB SATISFACTION

CORRELATION MATRIX (N = 1,020)	OC SCALE	LP SCALE	EG SCALE	TR SCALE	JS	SCALE MEAN (SD)	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE (OC) SCALE	1.00					5.16 (1.21)	.88
LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE (LP) SCALE	.80**	1.00				5.31 (1.38)	.96
WORK ENGAGEMENT (EG) SCALE	.71**	.73**	1.00			5.39 (1.15)	.91
TRUST IN ORGANIZATION (TR) SCALE	.73**	.73**	.80**	1.00		5.13 (1.40)	.94
OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION (JS)	.52**	.54**	.73**	.68**	1.00	5.17 (1.54)	—

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$



# SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND EXCELLENT LEADER PERFORMANCE HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON PROFESSIONALS' JOB SATISFACTION AS MEDIATED BY WORK ENGAGEMENT AND TRUST IN THE ORGANIZATION



**Note: Model Fit Index Statistics:**

Chi-square = 10.33, d.f. = 2, p = 0.006; RMSEA = 0.064, NFI = 1.00, NNFI = 0.99, Standardized RMR = 0.014, GFI = 1.00

**Green** indicates very strong and significant direct effects; **Red** indicates significantly strong direct effects; and **Blue** indicates moderate and significant direct effects.

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# 7

WORK STRESS AND  
STRESS FACTORS

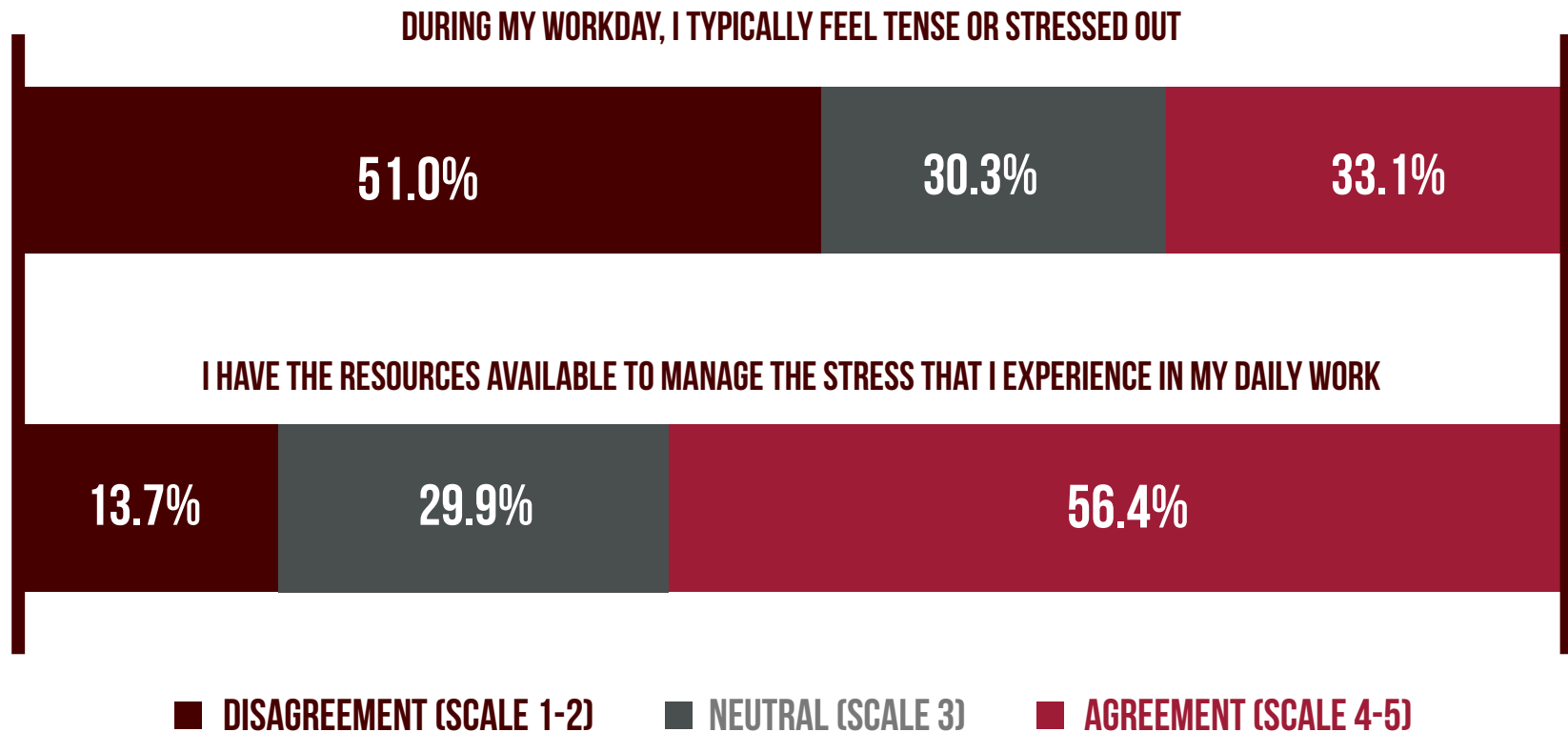
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One-third of North American communication professionals surveyed said they feel tense and stressed during the course of a normal workday. Nearly 14% said they lacked the resources needed to manage their stress. The most stressed (but also the most resourced) are communication heads. Women are more stressed than men and reported fewer resources compared to men.

The top three sources of stress, according to our respondents, are a dearth of advancement opportunities and an overload of information and work. Communication heads are most stressed by information overload, team leaders are most stressed by work overload, and team members are most stressed by their lack of opportunity for advancement. Women said they are most stressed by lack of opportunity and too much work. Men are most stressed by information overload and being constantly available via email, text and phone.

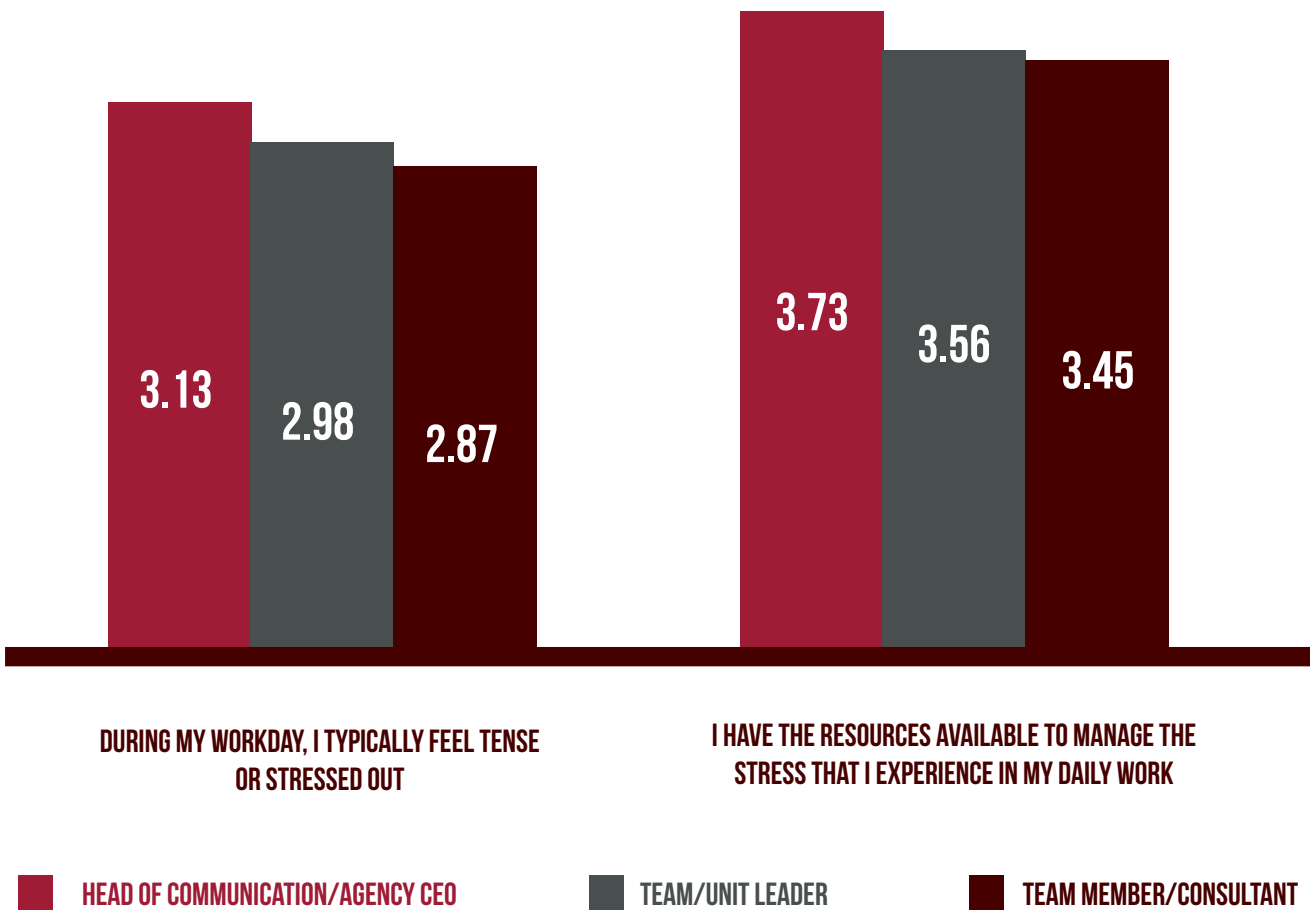
Stress factors are generally higher for the youngest respondents and lowest for the oldest. While there were statistically significant differences in all categories, no matter the age, respondents listed lack of opportunity for advancement and information overload among their top three stressors. Low salaries were listed as a top three stressor among the youngest respondents, 36 and under.

# WORK STRESS: 3 OUT OF 10 PROFESSIONALS IN NORTH AMERICA FEEL STRESSED AND MORE THAN 10% REPORT LACKING RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH STRESS



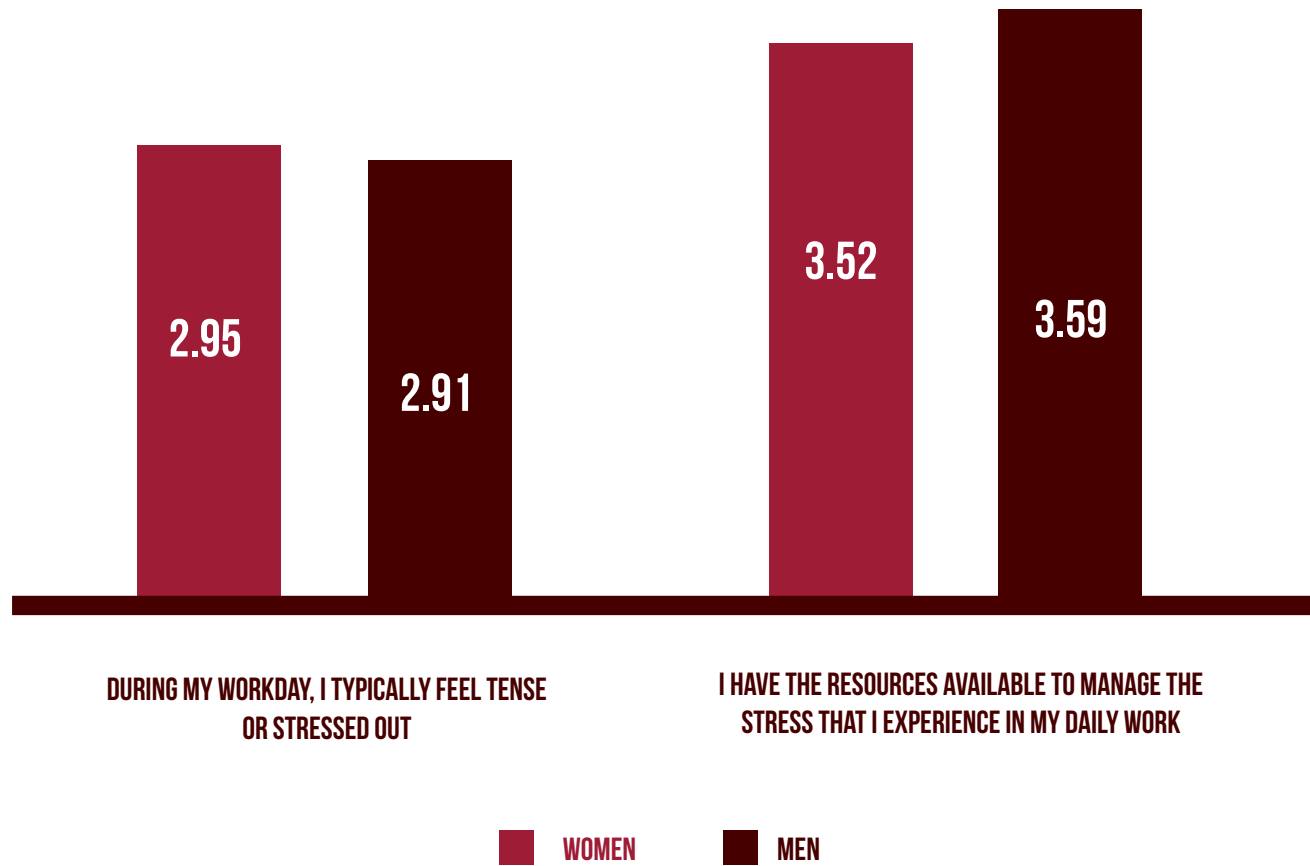
*Note: Items are measured based on a 5-point Likert-type scale; agreement (scale 4-5), neutral (scale 3), and disagreement (scale 1-2).*

# COMMUNICATION LEADERS RECEIVE MORE RESOURCES TO COPE WITH STRESS WHILE MAINTAINING A HIGHER STRESS LEVEL



Note: Items were measured based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)

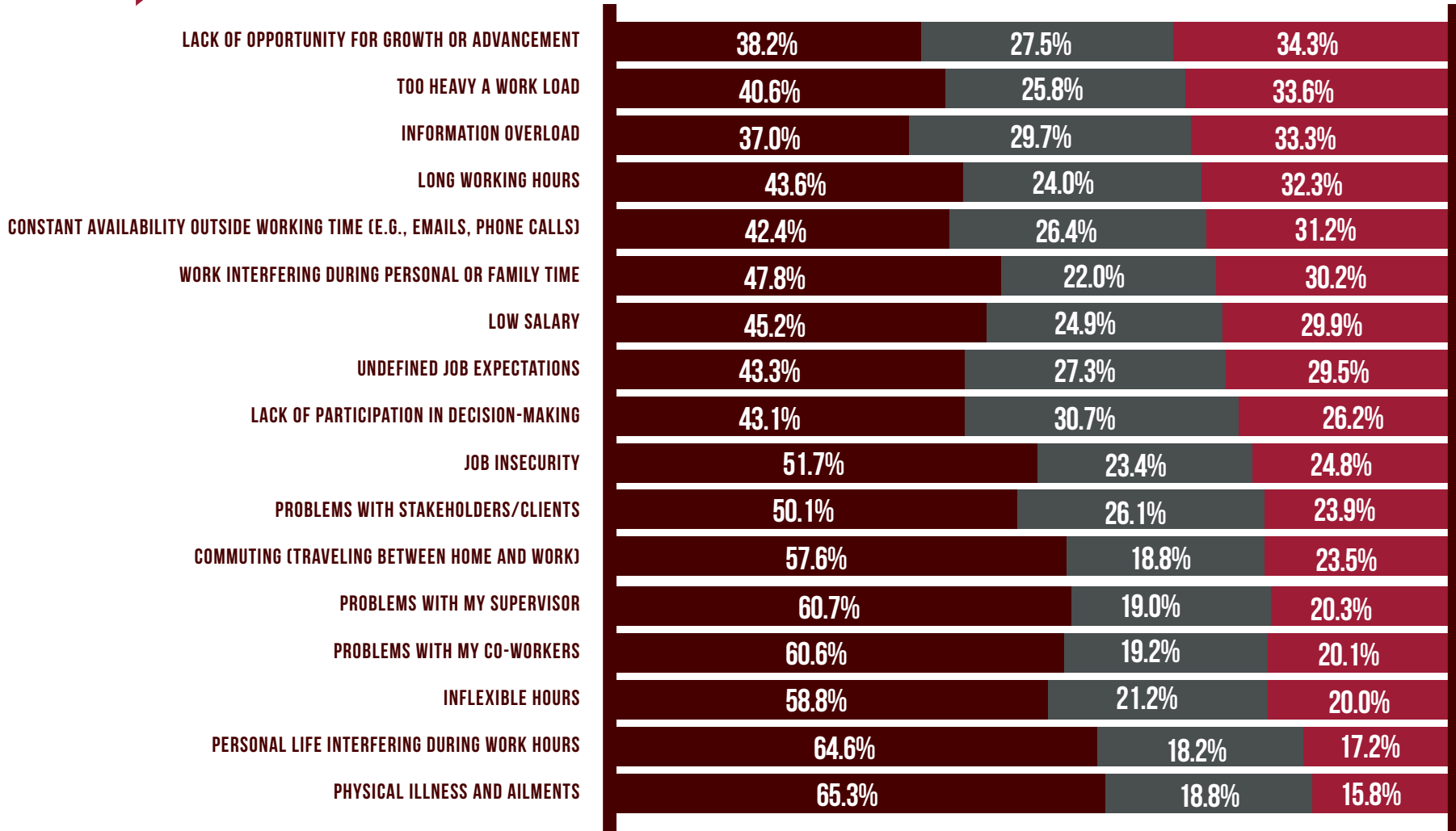
# FEMALE PROFESSIONALS ARE MORE STRESSED THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS AND RECEIVE FEWER RESOURCES TO MANAGE THE STRESS



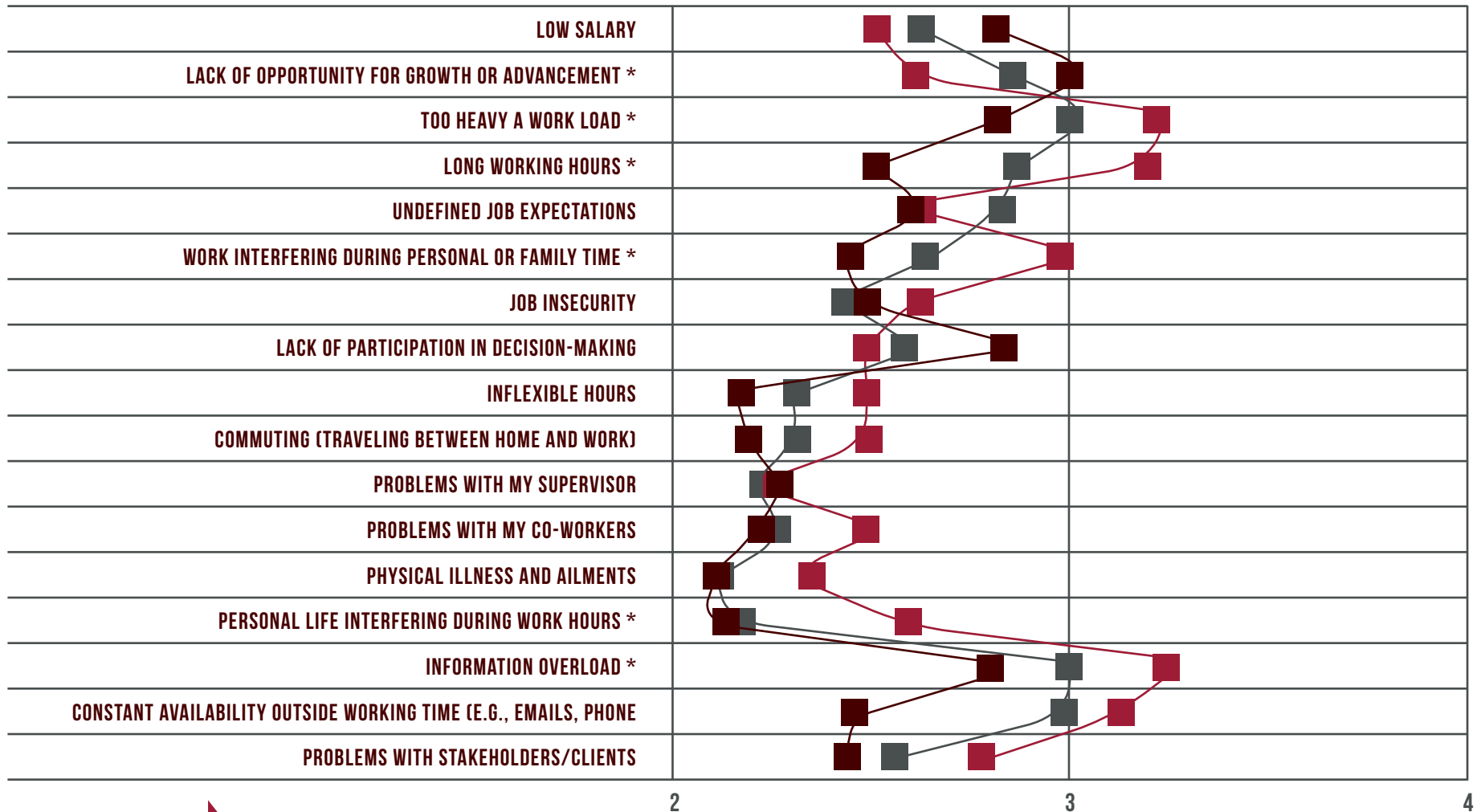
Note: Items were measured based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

# FACTORS DRIVING WORK STRESS: LACK OF ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY, HEAVY WORK LOAD, INFORMATION OVERLOAD ARE THE TOP THREE REASONS

## I AM STRESSED BECAUSE OF ...



# STRESS FACTORS FOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP HIERARCHY: COMMUNICATION LEADERS ARE STRESSED BY HEAVY WORK LOAD, LONG WORKING HOURS, INFORMATION OVERLOAD AND CONSTANT AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE WORKING HOURS



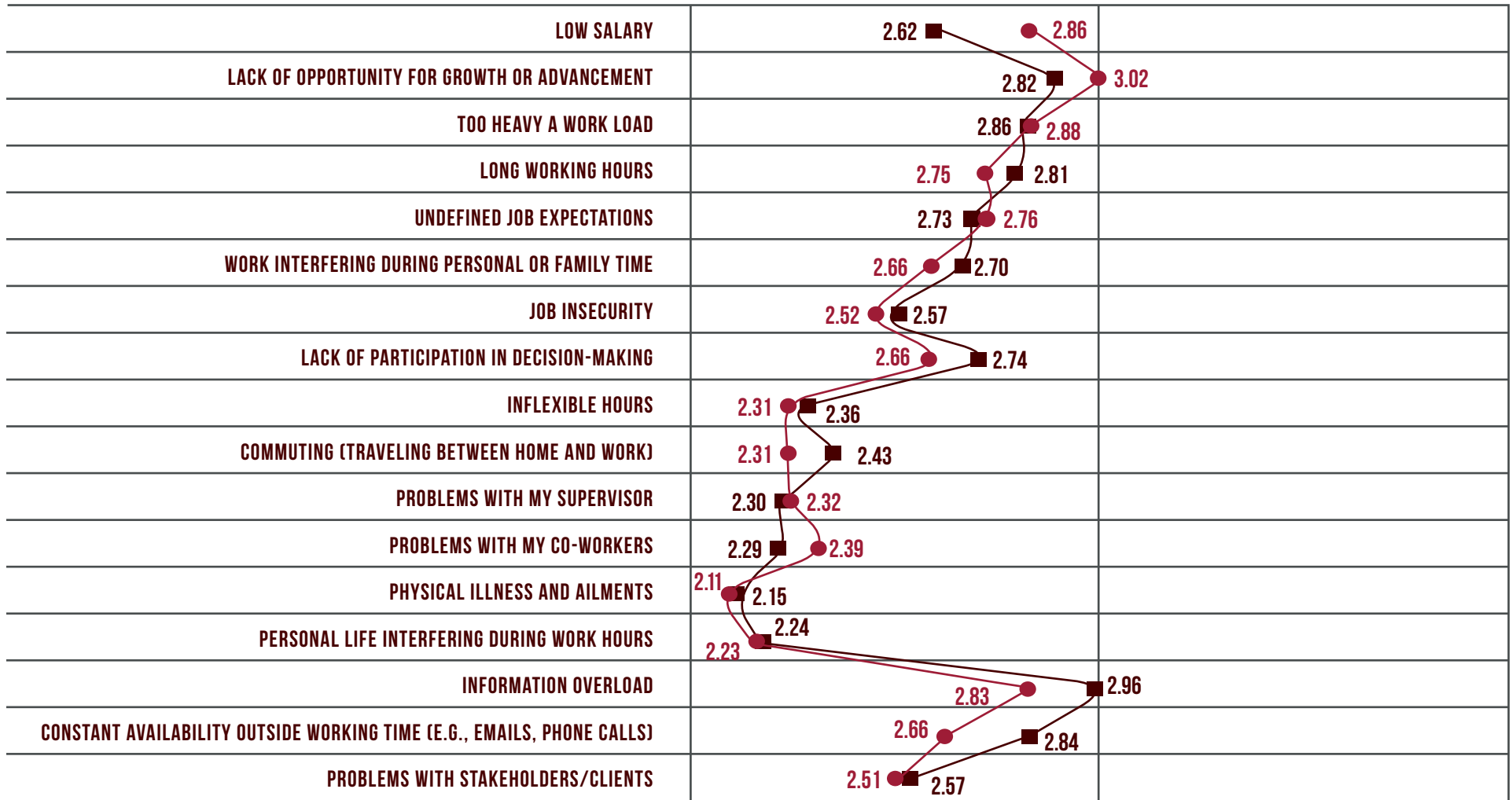
I AM STRESSED BECAUSE OF ...

■ HEAD OF COMMUNICATION/AGENCY CEO ■ TEAM/UNIT LEADER ■ TEAM MEMBER/CONSULTANT

\*Significant differences,  $p < .05$



# STRESS FACTORS FOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS BY GENDER: WOMEN ARE STRESSED BY LACK OF ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES WHILE MEN ARE STRESSED BY INFORMATION OVERLOAD AND CONSTANT AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE WORKING TIME



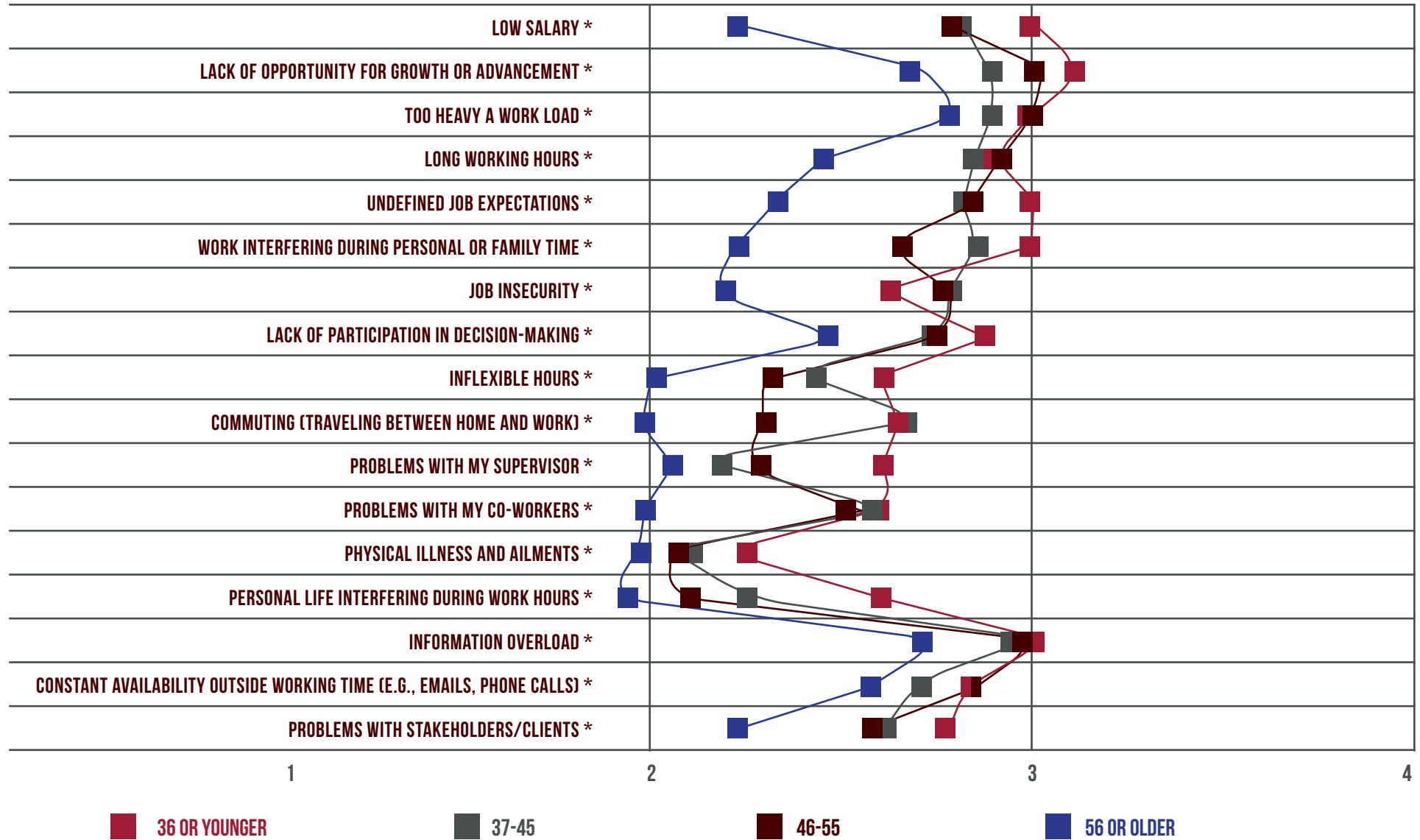
I AM STRESSED BECAUSE OF ...

● WOMEN

■ MEN

# I AM STRESSED BECAUSE OF ...

## STRESS FACTORS FOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS



36 OR YOUNGER

37-45

46-55

56 OR OLDER

\* Significant difference,  $p < .05$



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# 8

SOCIAL MEDIA  
SKILLS AND  
MANAGEMENT  
KNOWLEDGE

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Generally those with the most experience, in years or job level, show the most confidence in their expertise. The group, as a whole, has the most confidence in their social media message delivery and evaluation and the least confidence in their understanding of the technical, algorithmic aspects of social media. Heads of the communication function were more confident, at a statistically significant level, about their social media savvy compared to team leaders and members.

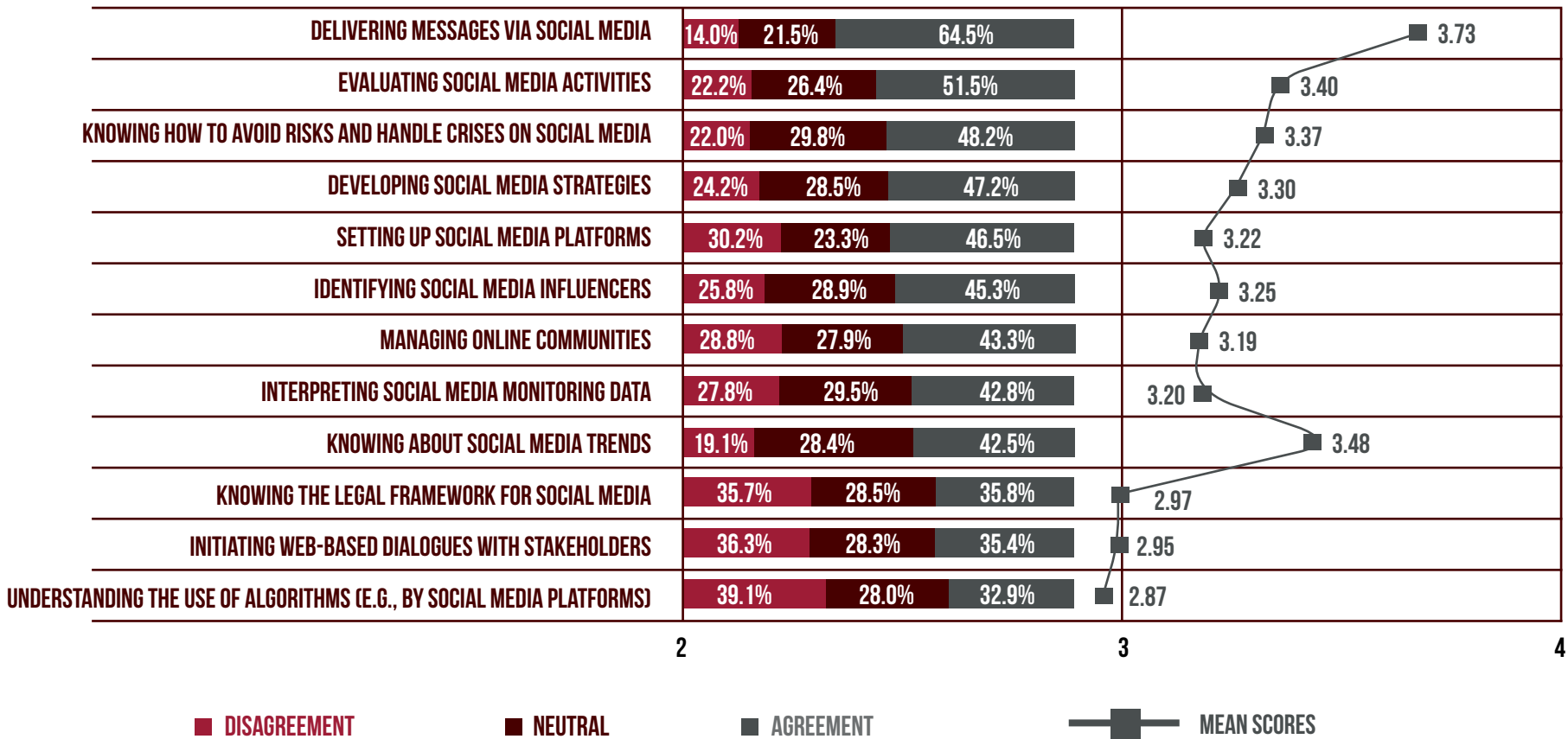
Men and women differed when it came to confidence in their social media skills. Women are significantly more confident in their knowledge of social media trends, ability to deliver messages via social media and skill at setting up social media platforms, compared to men. Men show significantly more confidence compared to women in categories of understanding legal frameworks and algorithms related to social media. U.S. professionals are significantly more confident in their ability to message via social media compared to Canadians. In every category of social media skills and knowledge, professionals with 6 to 10 years' experience were most confident in their expertise when compared to other age groups.

When it comes to general management skills, about 7 in 10 respondents were confident in their skills in managing relationships, planning activities, leading people and groups and managing information – the four categories with highest levels of agreement. Once again, the top leaders were significantly more confident about their management skills universally when compared to team leaders and team members.

Men are significantly more confident, compared to women, about their abilities in strategic planning and management of human and financial resources. U.S. professionals are significantly more confident about their skill in strategic positioning and managing relationships when compared to Canadian professionals. Apart from those areas of statistically significant difference, men and women and U.S. and Canadian professionals were roughly equal in their assessment of their management expertise. Senior professionals, by age and by years in the workplace, are most confident about their abilities in the management of human and financial resources.

## COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS ARE CONFIDENT ABOUT DELIVERING MESSAGES; LESS CONFIDENT KNOWING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK, INITIATING WEB-BASED DIALOGUE WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF ALGORITHMS

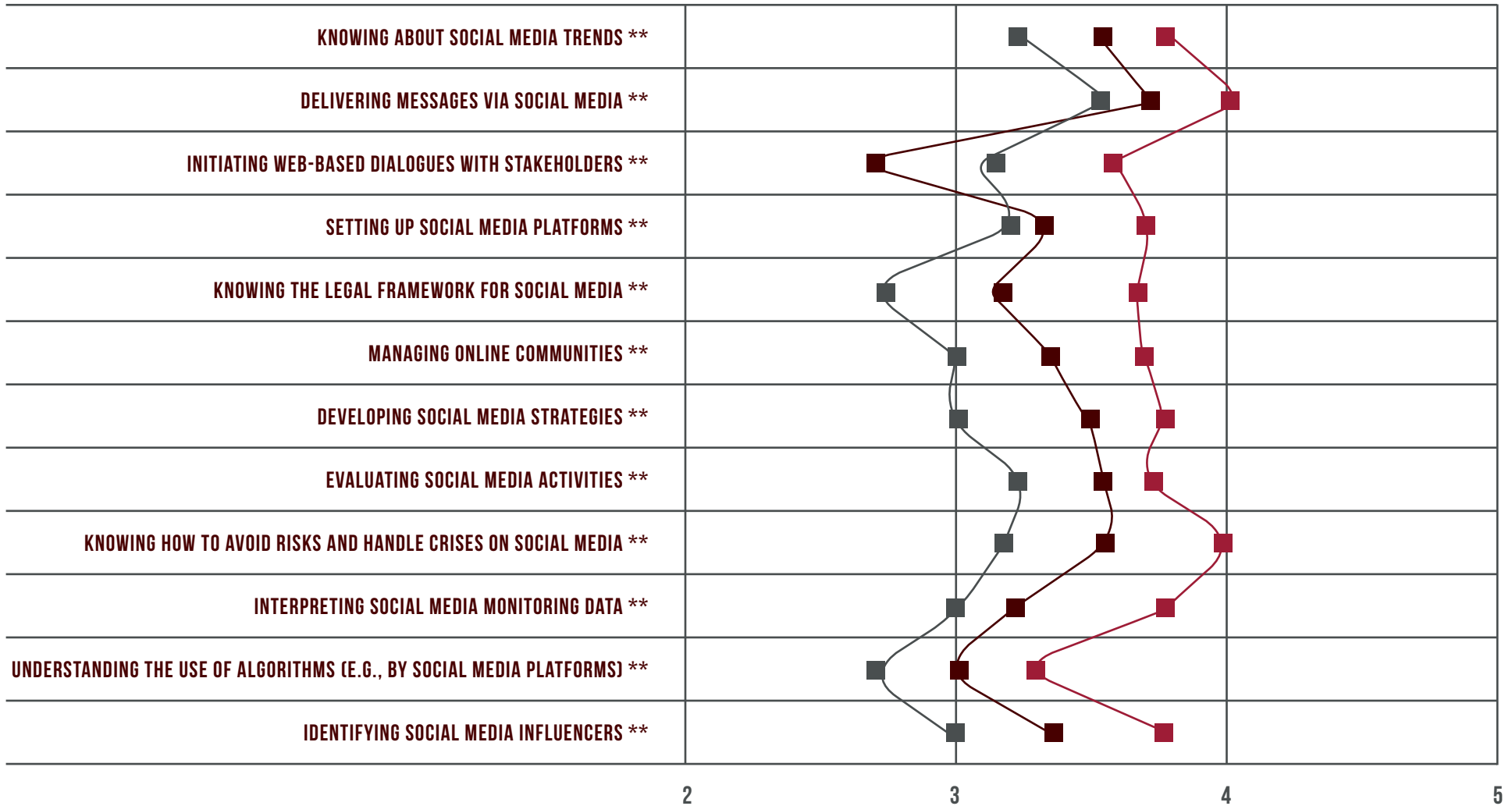
HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



Note: Items are measured based on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 (very low) to 5 (very high); agreement (scale 4-5), neutral (scale 3), and disagreement (scale 1-2).

**COMMUNICATION LEADERS RATED THEIR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN TEAM LEADERS AND TEAM MEMBERS; THERE ARE MORE LEARNING AND TRAINING NEEDS AT THE LOWER LEVELS OF HIERARCHY**

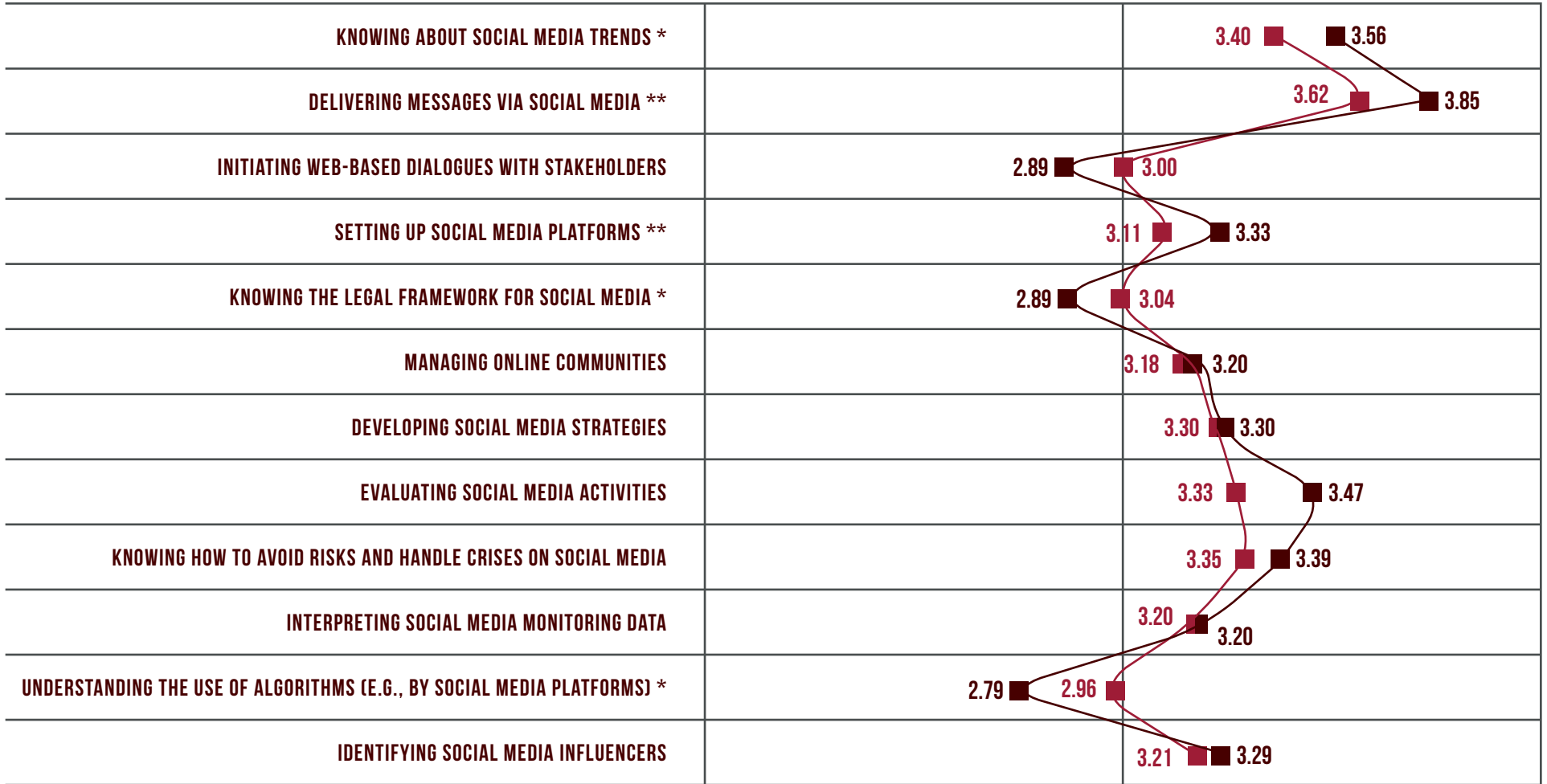
HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

# FEMALE PROFESSIONALS ARE MORE CONFIDENT ON MOST SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE EXCEPT ASPECTS SUCH AS KNOWING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AND UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF ALGORITHMS

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



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Significant difference: \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

■ WOMEN  
N = 510

■ MEN  
N = 510

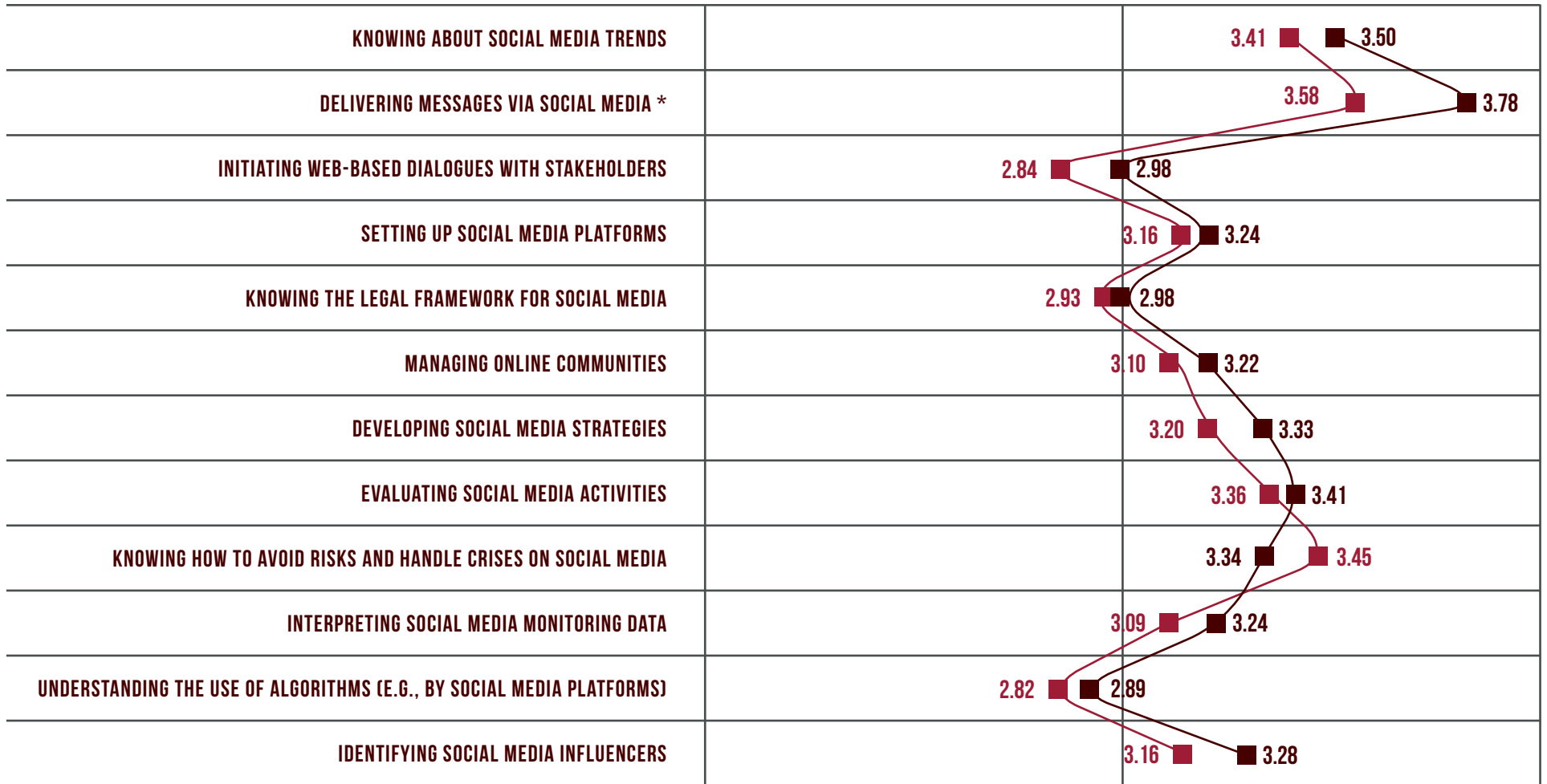


THE PLANK CENTER  
FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS



# PROFESSIONALS IN U.S. AND CANADA SHARE SIMILAR PROFICIENCY IN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?

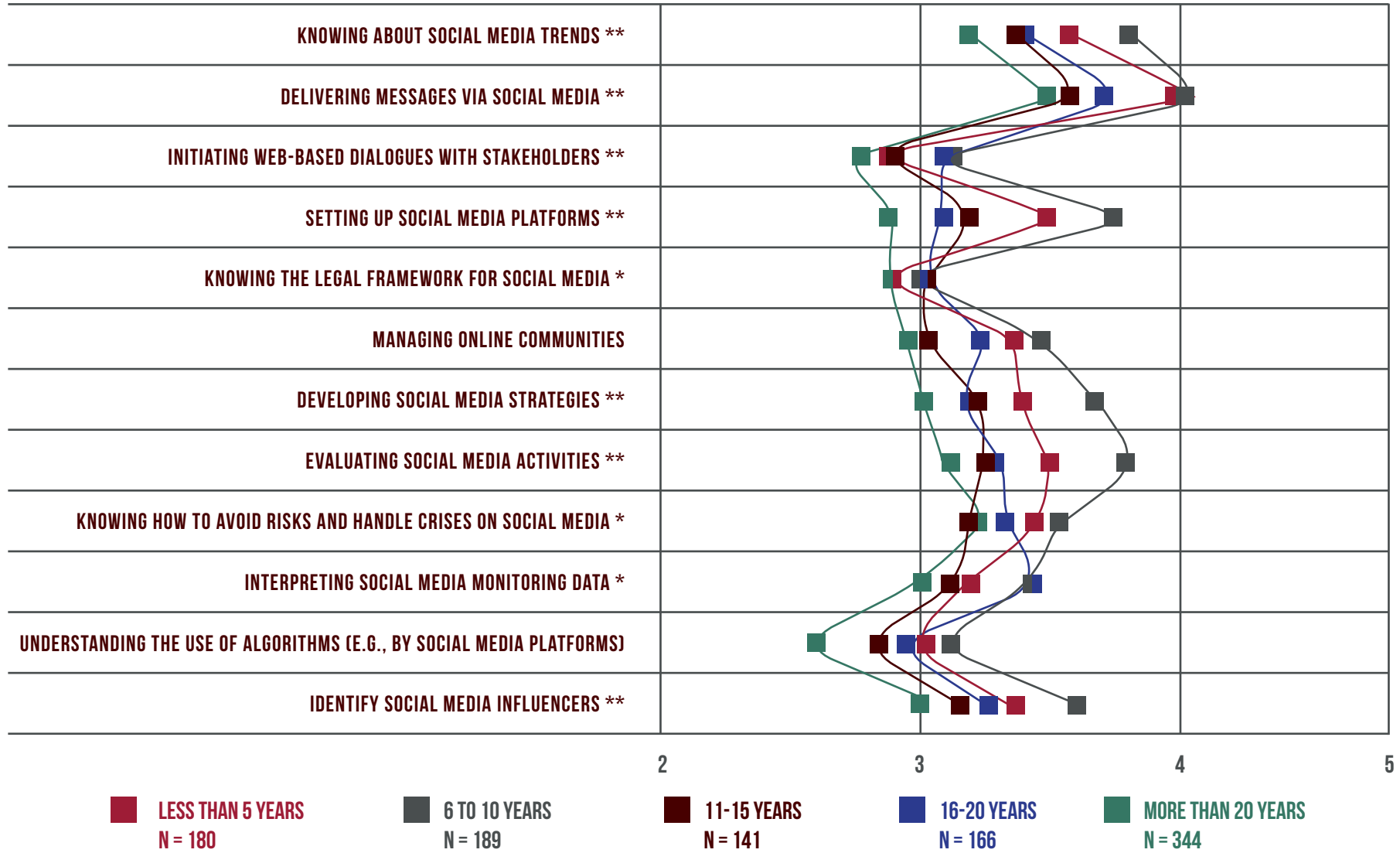


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\* Significant difference,  $p < .05$

## YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE: PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE WORKED IN THE COMMUNICATION PROFESSION FOR 6 TO 10 YEARS TAKE THE LEAD

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



**LESS THAN 5 YEARS**  
N = 180

**6 TO 10 YEARS**  
N = 189

**11-15 YEARS**  
N = 141

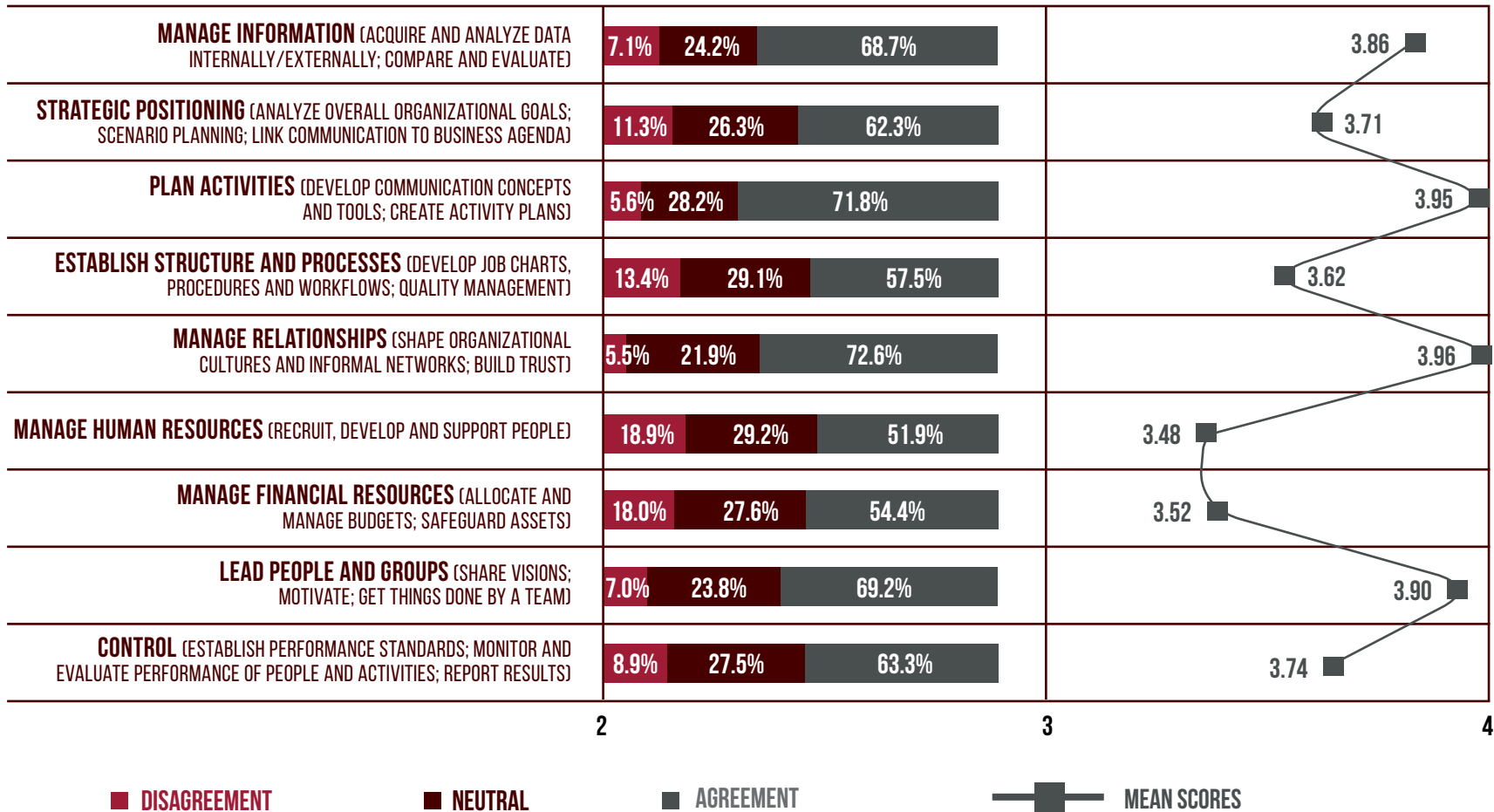
**16-20 YEARS**  
N = 166

**MORE THAN 20 YEARS**  
N = 344

Significant difference: \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

# OVERALL MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

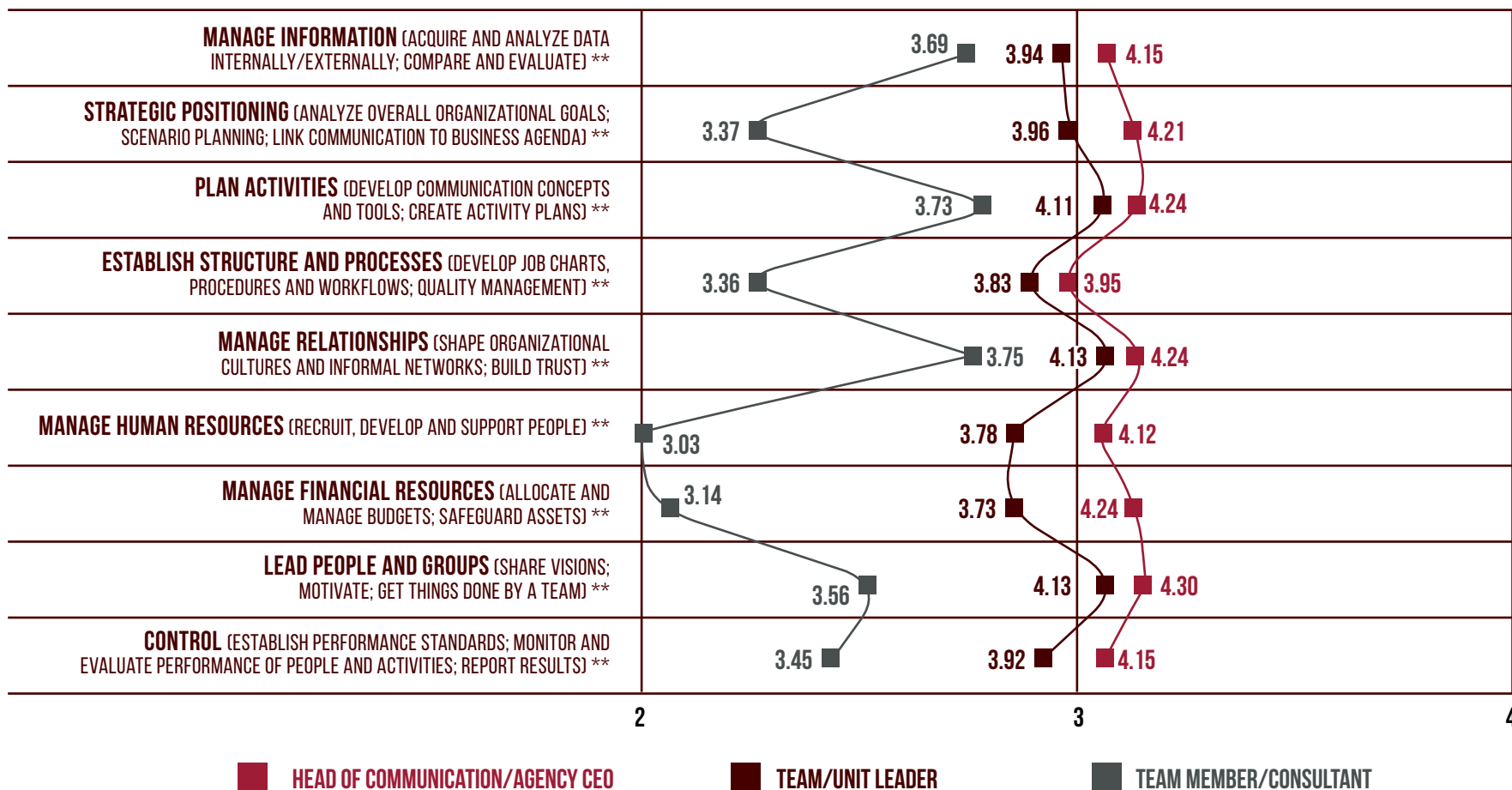
HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



Note: Items are measured based on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 (very low) to 5 (very high); agreement (scale 4-5), neutral (scale 3), and disagreement (scale 1-2).

# MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ARE HIGHER THE MORE SENIOR PROFESSIONALS ARE

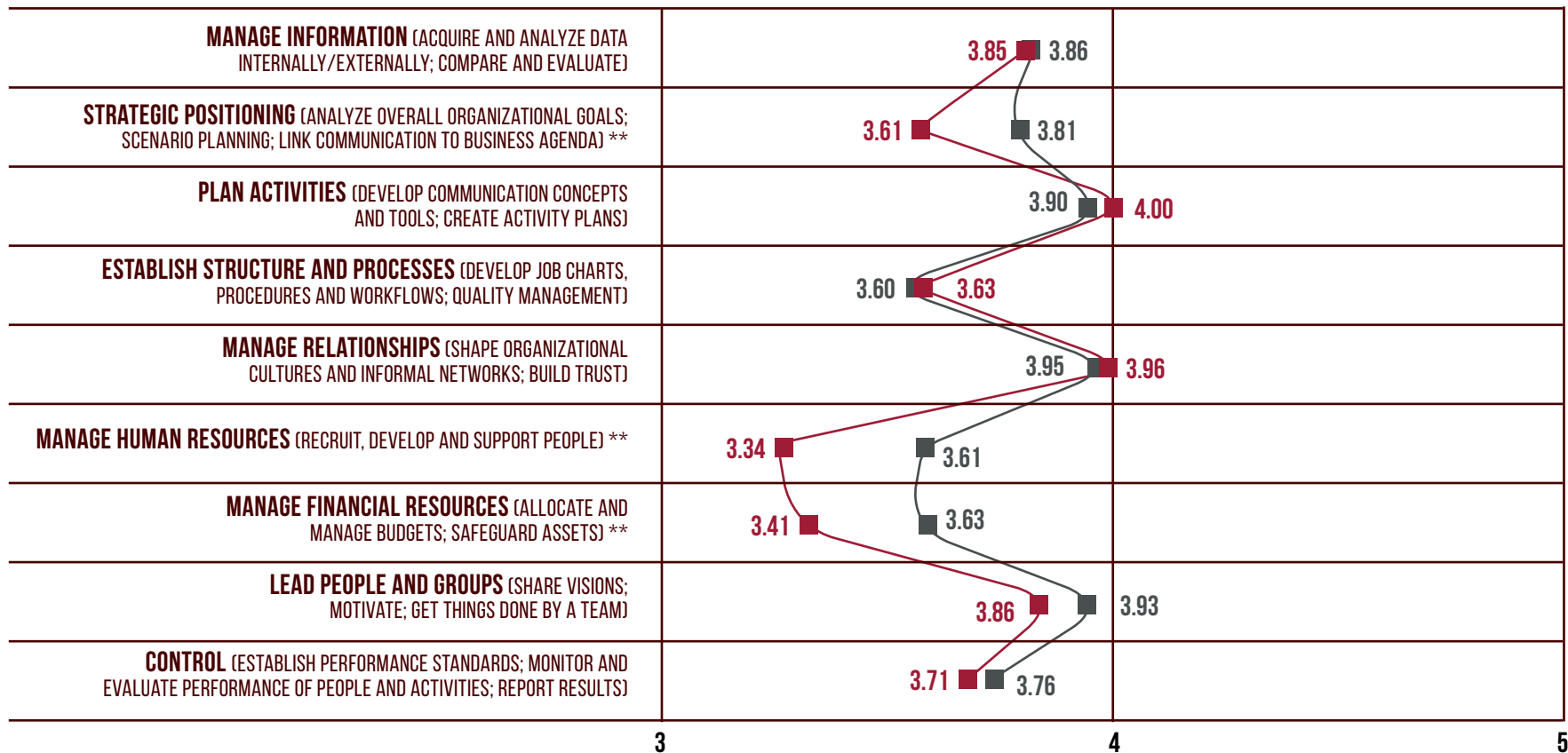
HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



\*\* Significant difference, p < .01

# GENDER AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE: MALE PROFESSIONALS LEAD IN STRATEGIC POSITIONING, MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES AND MANAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?

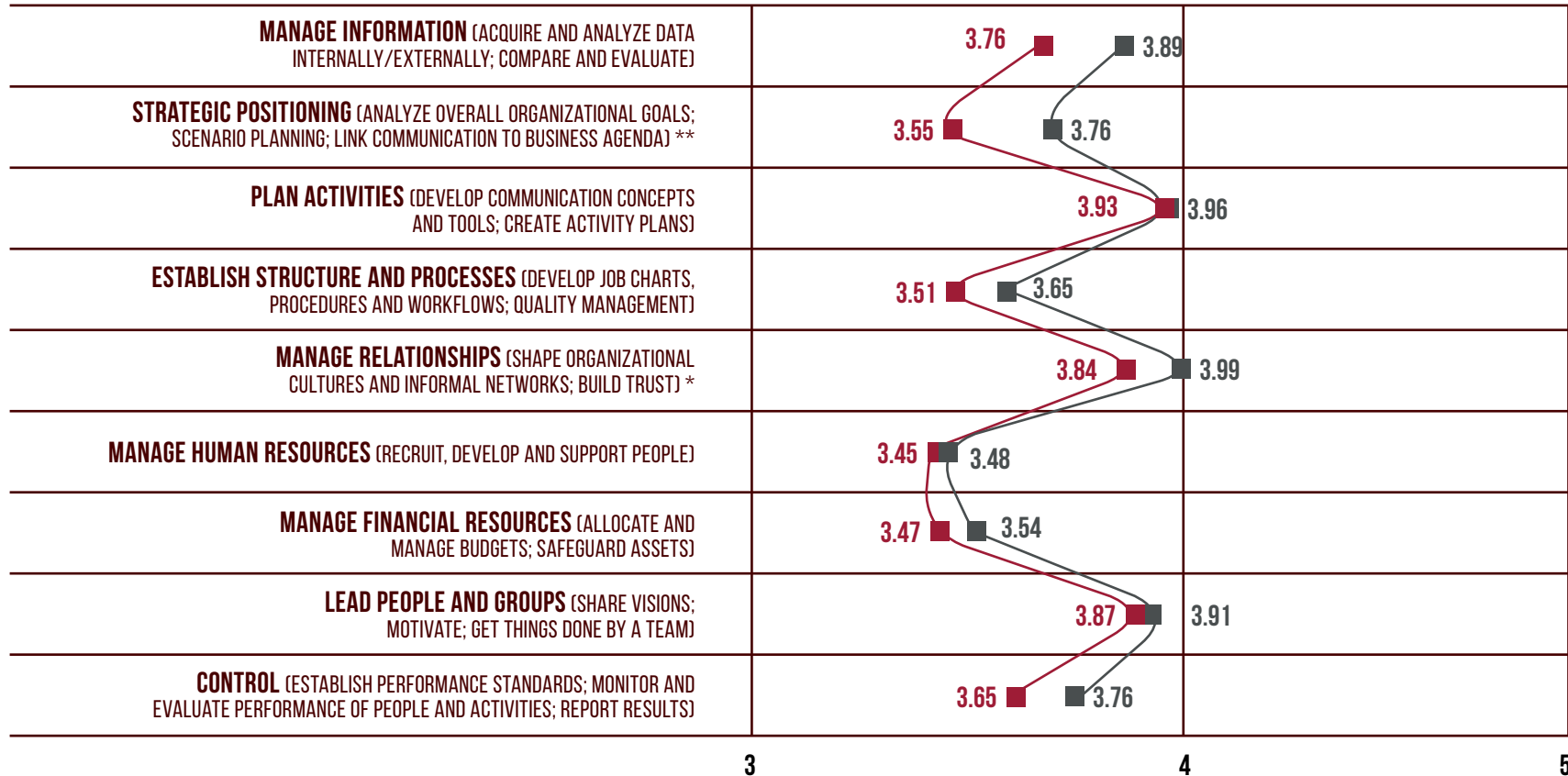


\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

■ WOMEN ■ MEN

# COUNTRY DIFFERENCES IN MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE: PROFESSIONALS IN U.S. SLIGHTLY LEAD IN STRATEGIC POSITIONING AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



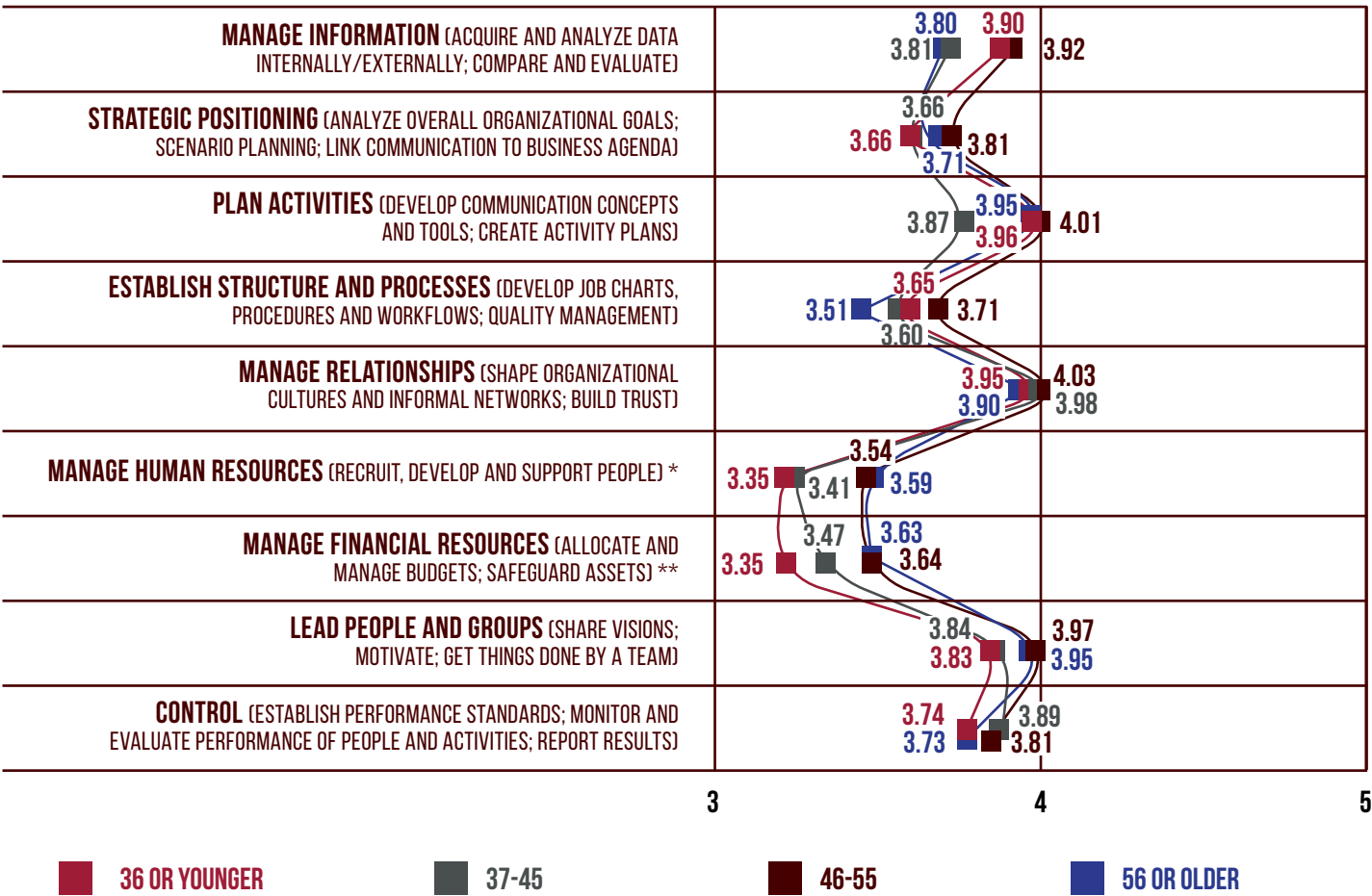
Significant difference: \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

CANADA

UNITED STATES

# AGE GROUPS AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE: SENIOR PROFESSIONALS LEAD IN MANAGING HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

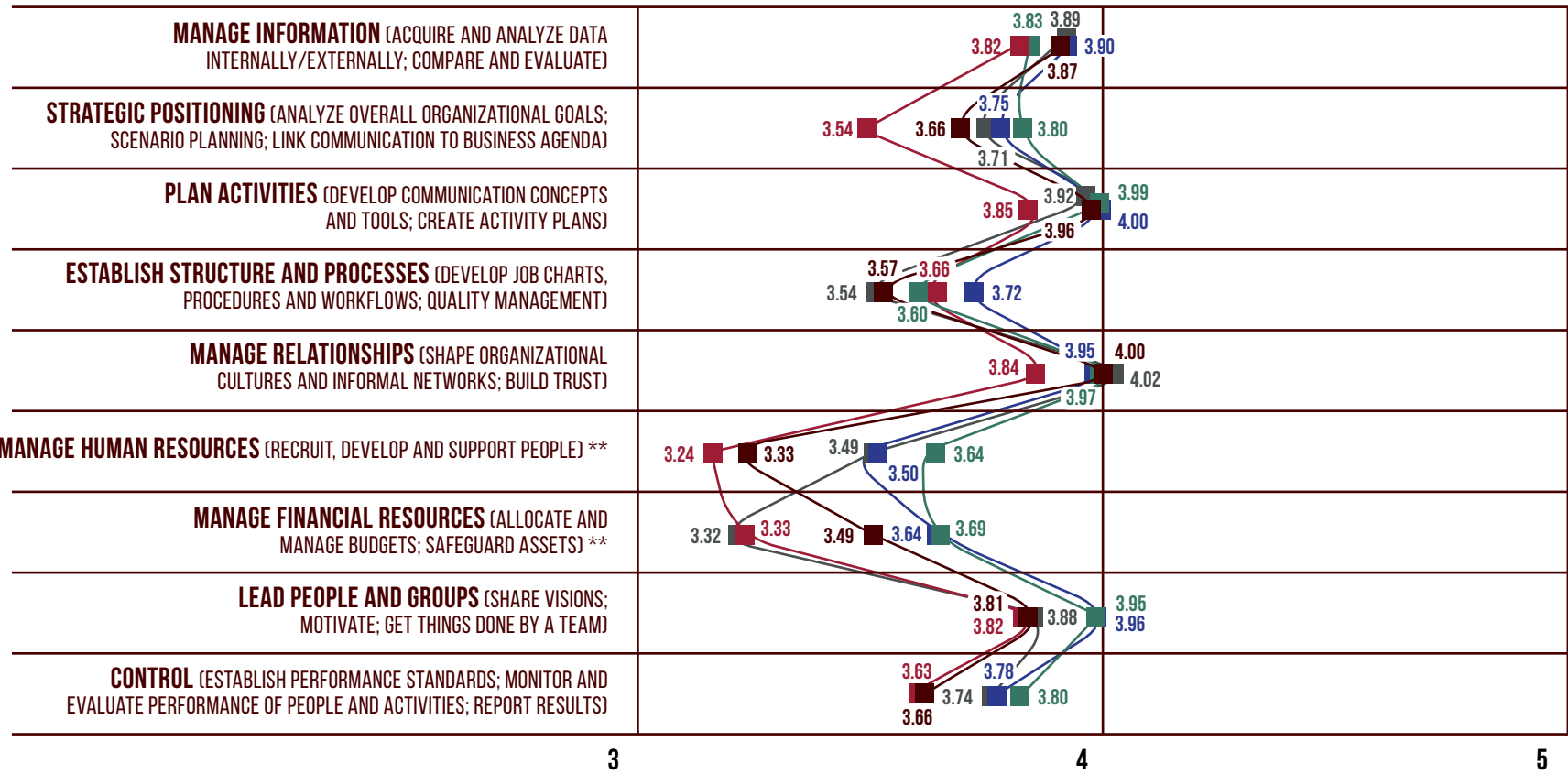
HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



Significant difference: \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05

# CAREER TENURE AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE: PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE WORKED IN THE PROFESSION FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS SHOW STRONG SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN MANAGING HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

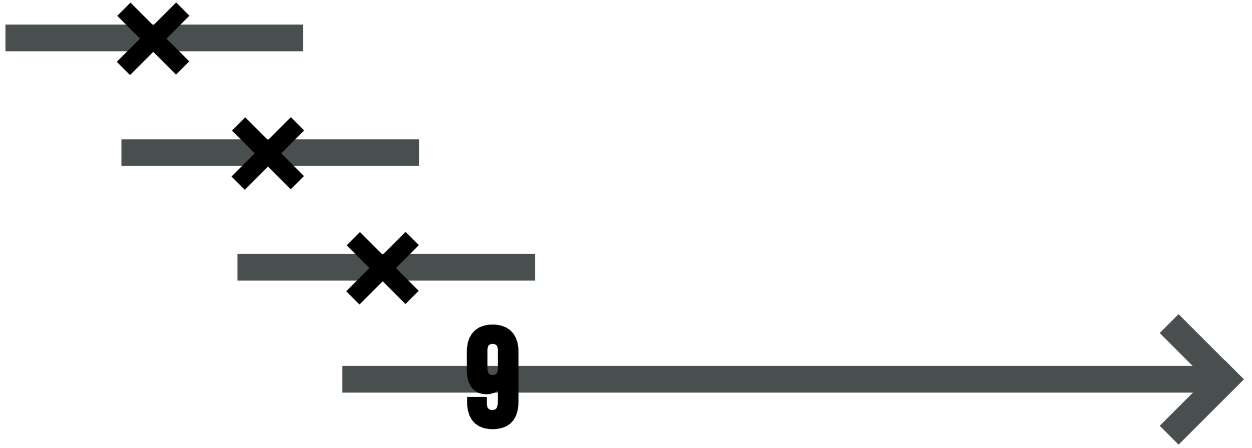
HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?



■ LESS THAN 5 YEARS    
 ■ 6 TO 10 YEARS    
 ■ 11-15 YEARS    
 ■ 16-20 YEARS    
 ■ MORE THAN 20 YEARS

Significant difference: \*\* p < .01





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# 9

EXCELLENT  
COMMUNICATION  
DEPARTMENTS, WORK  
ENVIRONMENT AND  
WILLINGNESS  
TO CHANGE

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About two-thirds of respondents said their chief communicator has membership on the organization's executive team. Three in four respondents said the top communicator in their organization reports directly to the CEO or top decision maker. Gauged by dimensions of excellence, 36% of respondents work at excellent communication departments; 64% work at other communication departments.

Excellent communication departments are more likely than other communication departments to have installed technologies or systems and formal guidelines to manage fake news. Other communication departments are more likely to rely on existing staff competencies in dealing with fake news or are working on plans to deal with the problem.

Seventy percent of excellent departments said their department or agency delivers information such as news briefings, media monitoring, survey results, reputation reports, benchmarking or background reports to top management in their organization; 52% of other organizations reported such information delivery. Excellent communication departments show important differences when compared to other departments. Excellent departments are significantly more likely to show the characteristics of

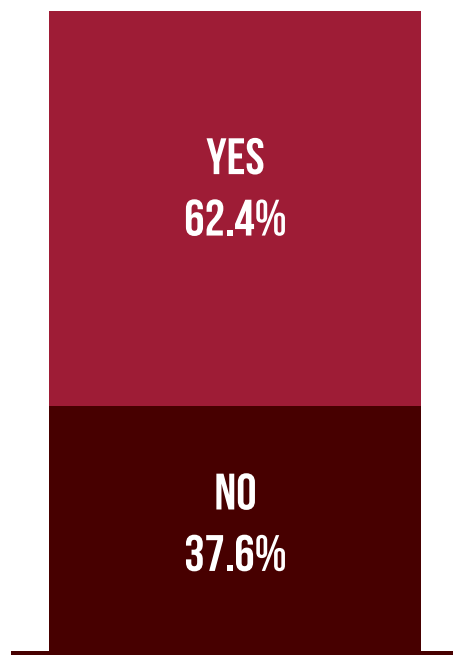
a positive work culture and to demonstrate outstanding leadership.

Excellence pays dividends for employees, too. Respondents who worked in excellent communication departments were significantly more engaged in their workplace, compared to respondents from other communication departments. They show significantly higher levels of trust in their organization and are significantly more satisfied with their job situation. Ninety percent of respondents from excellent communication departments report overall job satisfaction, compared to 63% in other communication departments.

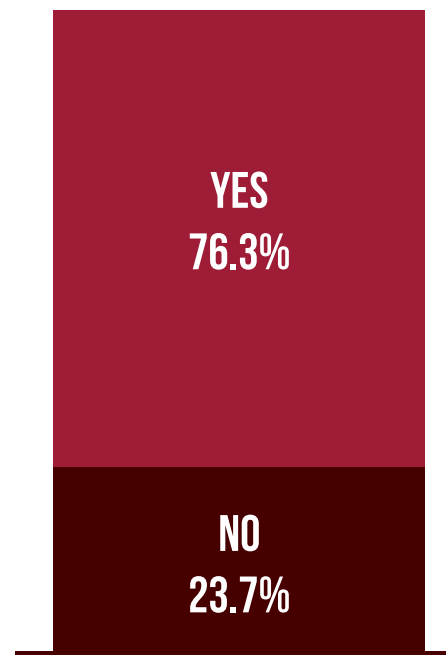
About one in three respondents report being stressed at work. However, 71% of respondents in excellent communication departments said they had adequate resources to deal with stress, whereas only 47% of respondents from other communication departments reported adequate resources. Seventeen percent of respondents said they were likely to change employers within the coming year. But excellent communication departments showed substantially stronger retention than did other communication departments.

## ALIGNMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS TO TOP MANAGEMENT: NEARLY 4 OUT OF 10 COMMUNICATION LEADERS ARE NOT A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION, THE TOP COMMUNICATION MANAGER OR CHIEF COMMUNICATION OFFICER IS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD



WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION, THE TOP COMMUNICATION MANAGER OR CHIEF COMMUNICATION OFFICER REPORTS DIRECTLY TO THE CEO OR HIGHEST DECISION MAKER ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD



# DIMENSIONS OF EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS



Source: *European Communication Monitor 2018*

# IDENTIFYING EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS

## ADVISORY INFLUENCE



## EXECUTIVE INFLUENCE



## SUCCESS

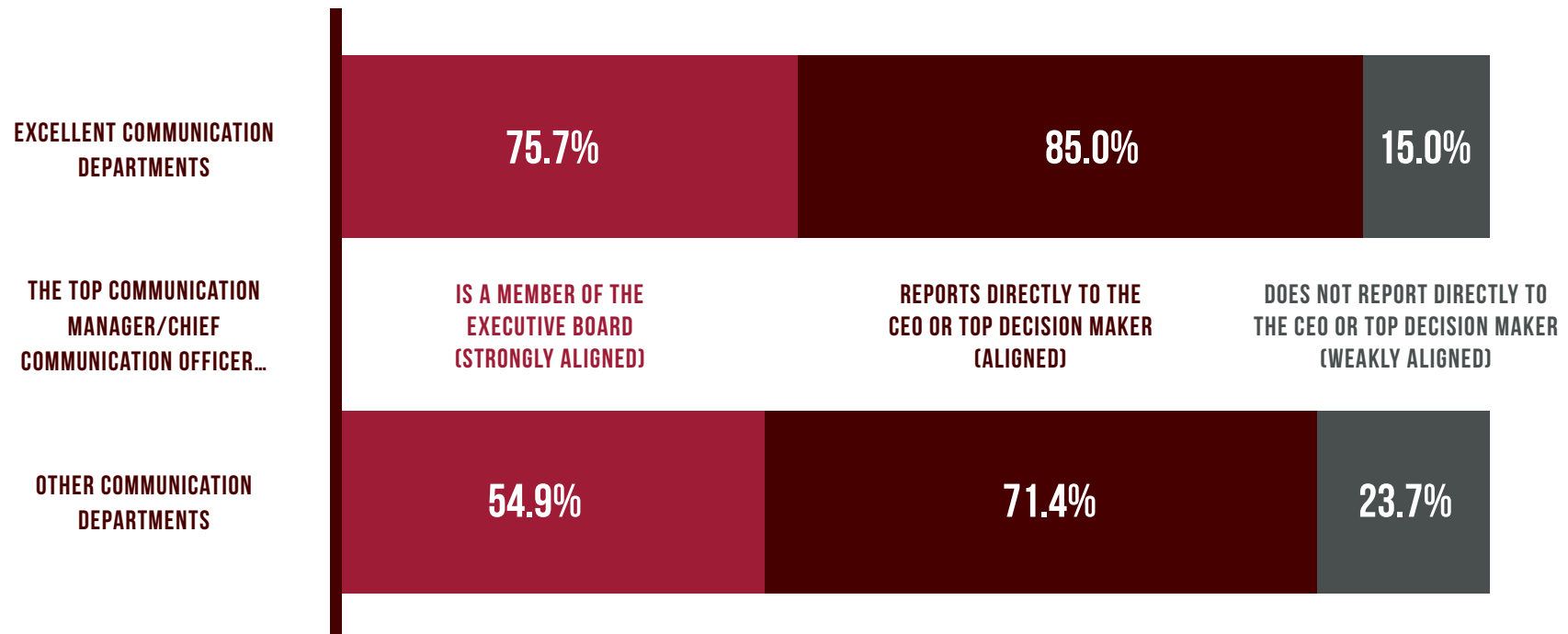


## COMPETENCE

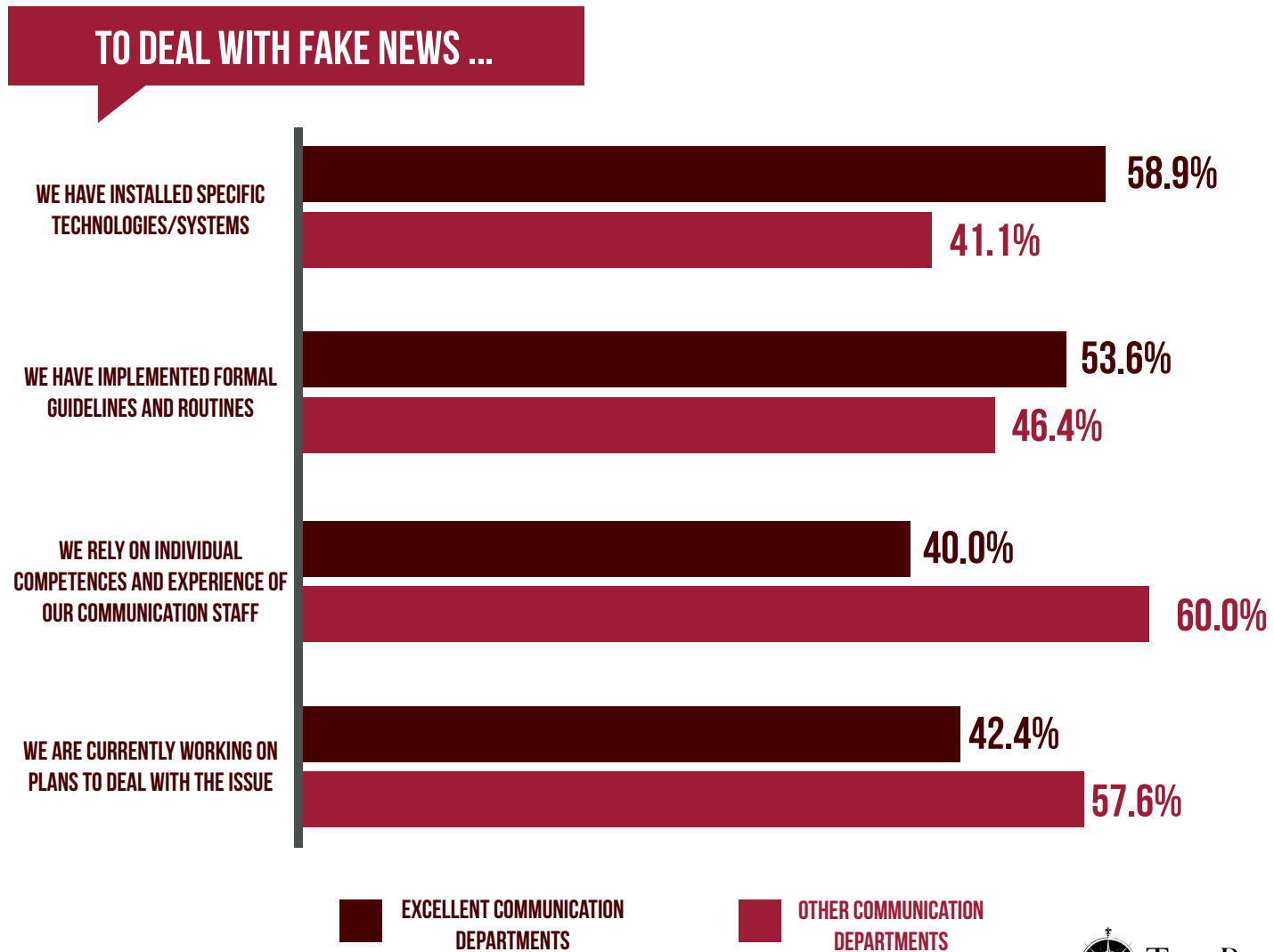


Note: All items are measured by using a seven-point Likert type scale. Only organizations outperforming in all four dimensions (scale points 6-7 for each question) are considered excellent communication departments.

## ALIGNMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS TO TOP MANAGEMENT: SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EXCELLENT AND OTHER COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS



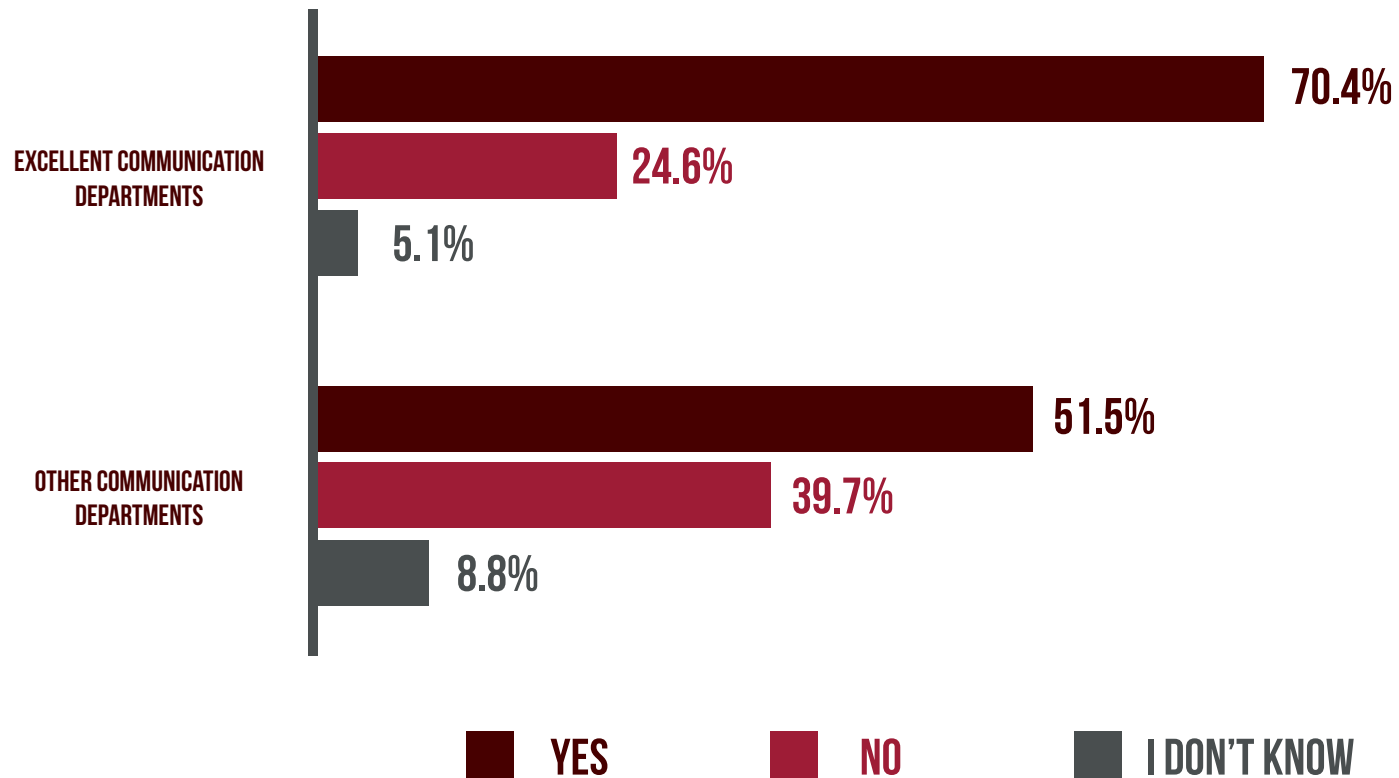
# EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS ARE MORE READY TO DEAL WITH FAKE NEWS, WHILE OTHER COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS HEAVILY RELY ON INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCIES OR ARE WORKING ON PLANS





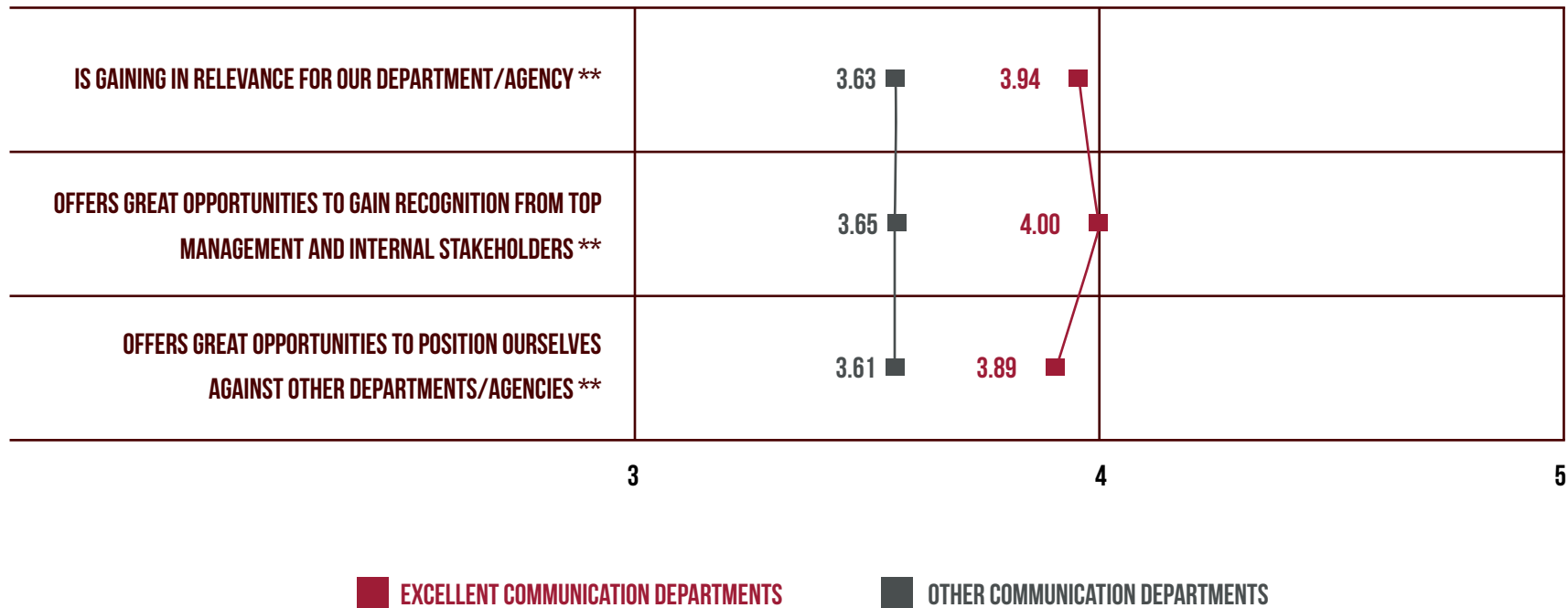
## EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS ARE DELIVERING VALUE BY PROVIDING INFORMATION TO TOP DECISION MAKERS

Does your department/agency deliver information like news briefings, media monitoring, survey results, brand/reputation reports, benchmarking or background reports to top management and/or (internal) stakeholders?



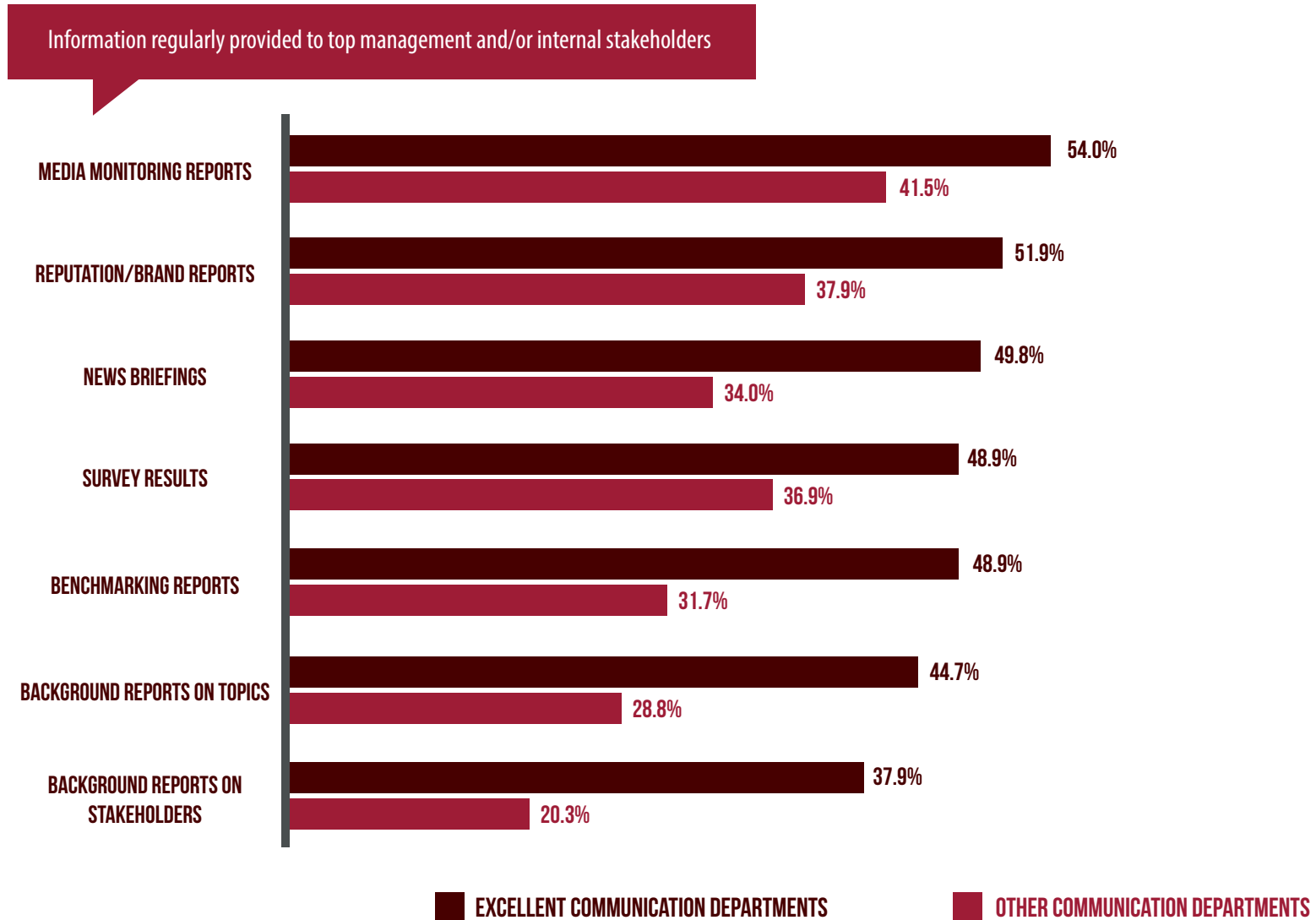
# EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS DELIVER STRONG VALUE BY PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR DECISION MAKERS

PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR DECISION MAKERS



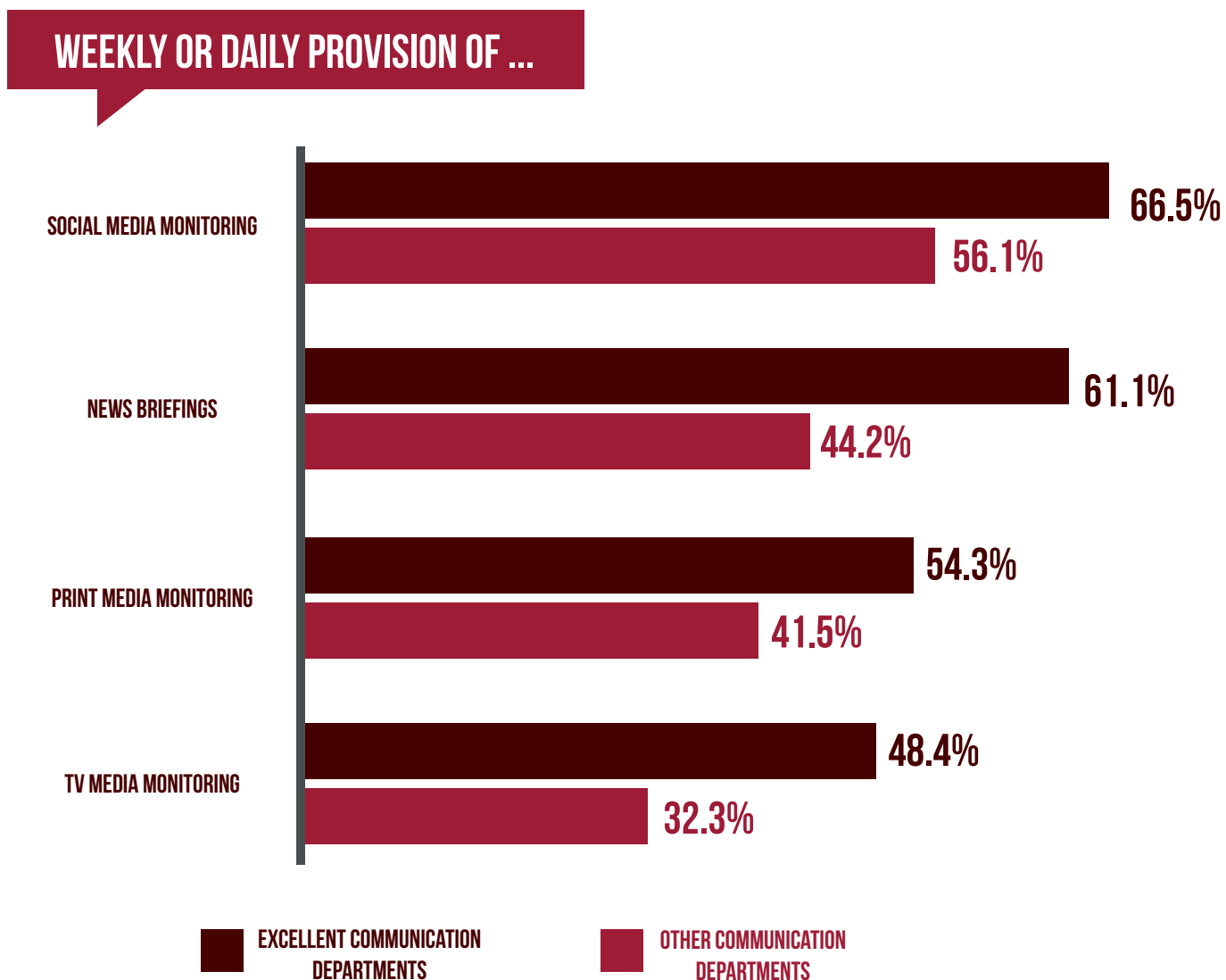
\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

# EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS REGULARLY OFFER DIFFERENT TYPES OF INFORMATION TO TOP MANAGEMENT AND/OR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



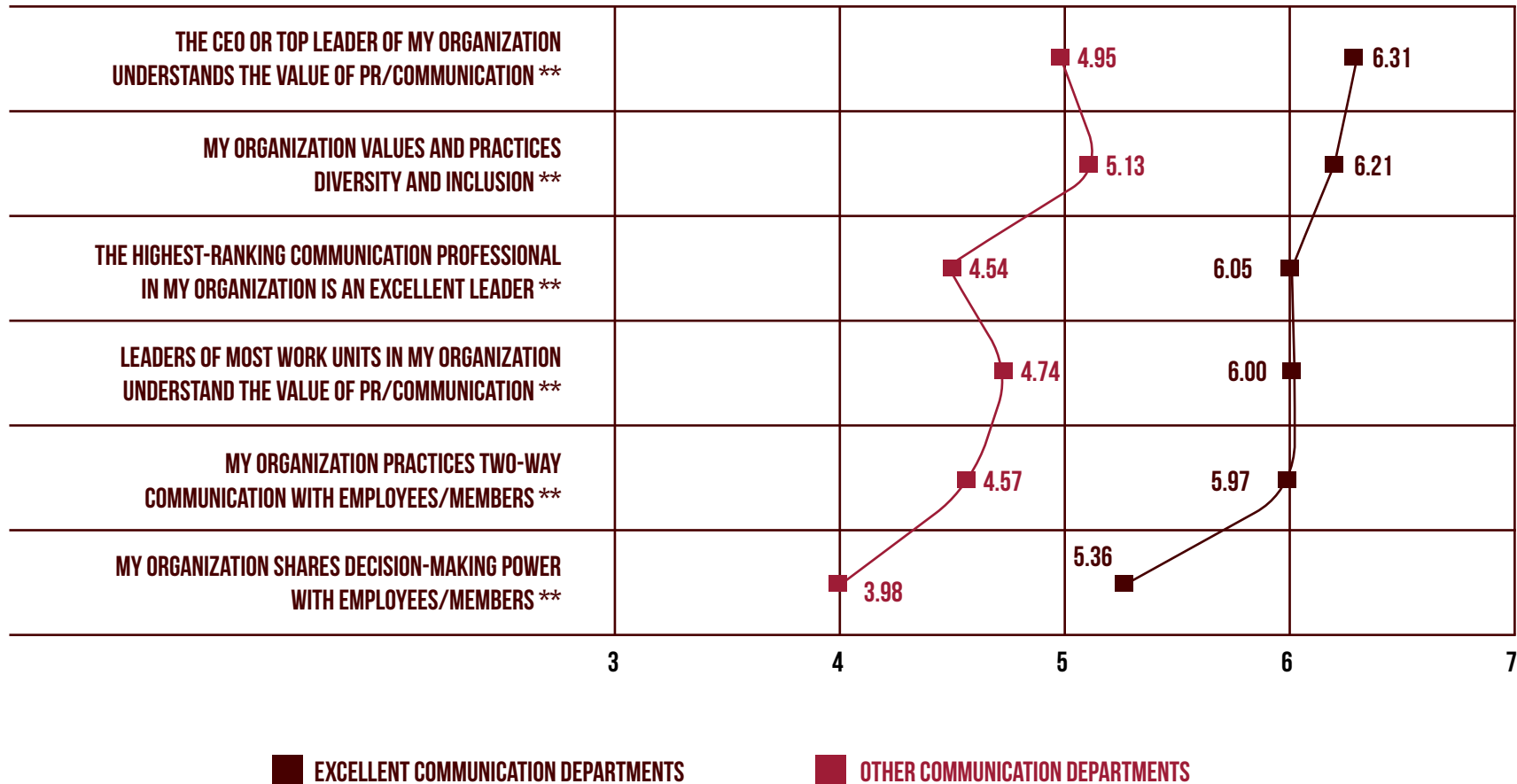
Note: Percentages show agreement for "regularly."

## TO INFORM DECISION MAKING, EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS OFFER SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING AND NEWS BRIEFINGS MORE FREQUENTLY



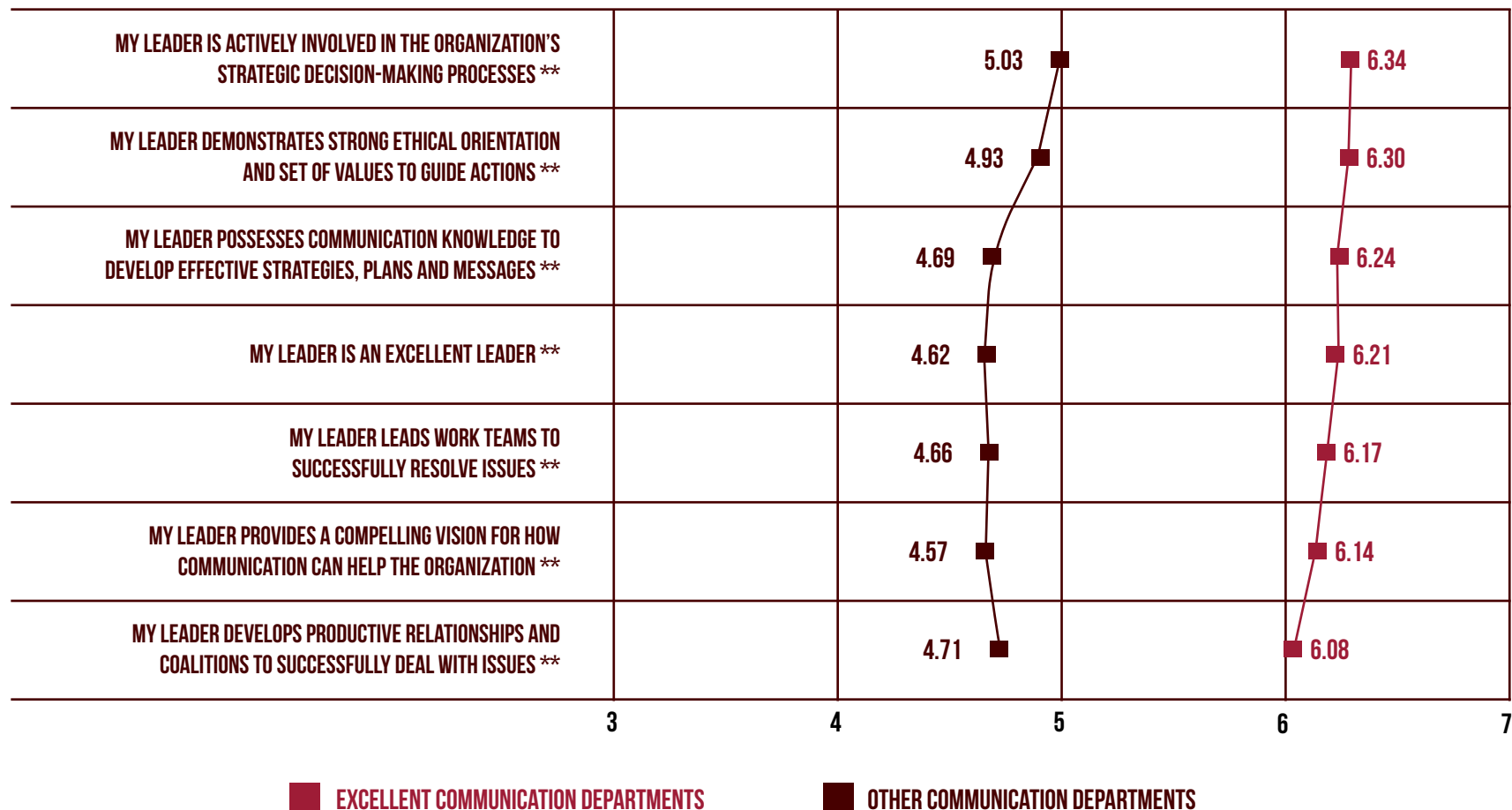
*Note: Percentages show combined agreement for "daily" and "weekly."*

# SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE CULTIVATES EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS



Significant difference: \*\*  $p < .01$

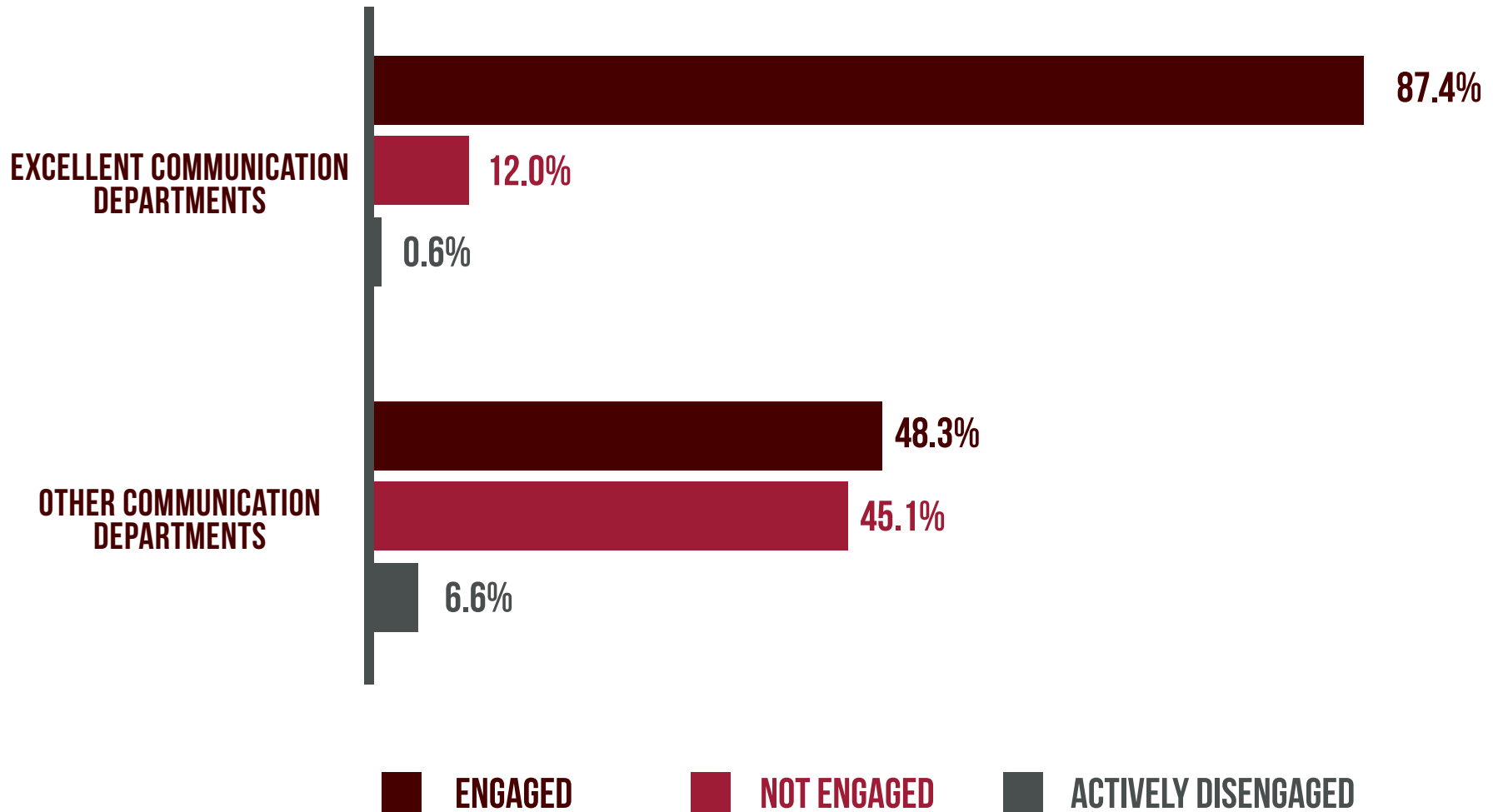
## EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS DEMONSTRATE STRONG LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE



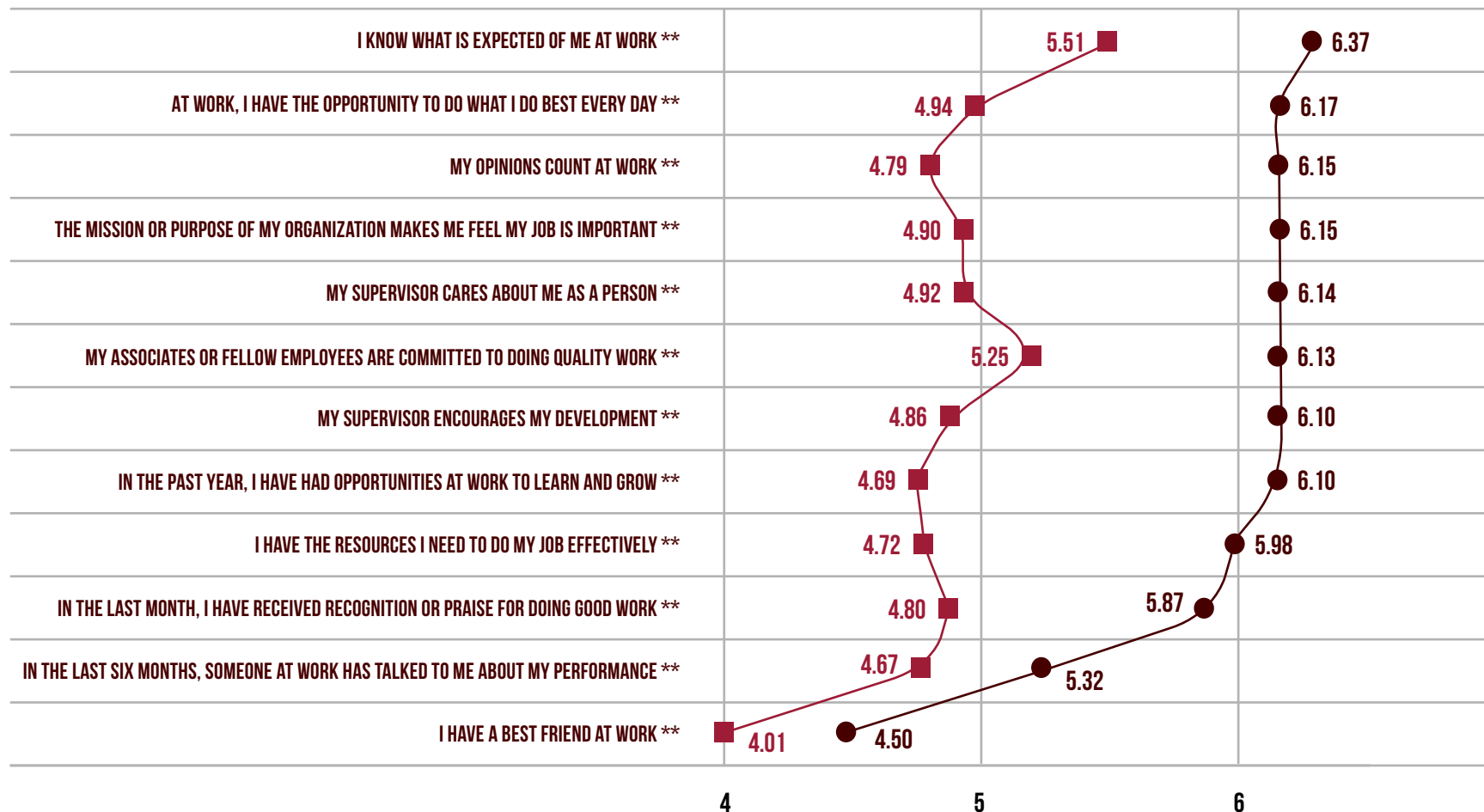
Note: All items were measured based on a seven-point Likert-type scale with 1 = "I don't agree at all" to 7 = "I agree to a very great extent."

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

# PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS ARE MORE ENGAGED THAN PEERS IN OTHER COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS



## PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER WORK ENGAGEMENT



● EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS

■ OTHER COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS

\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

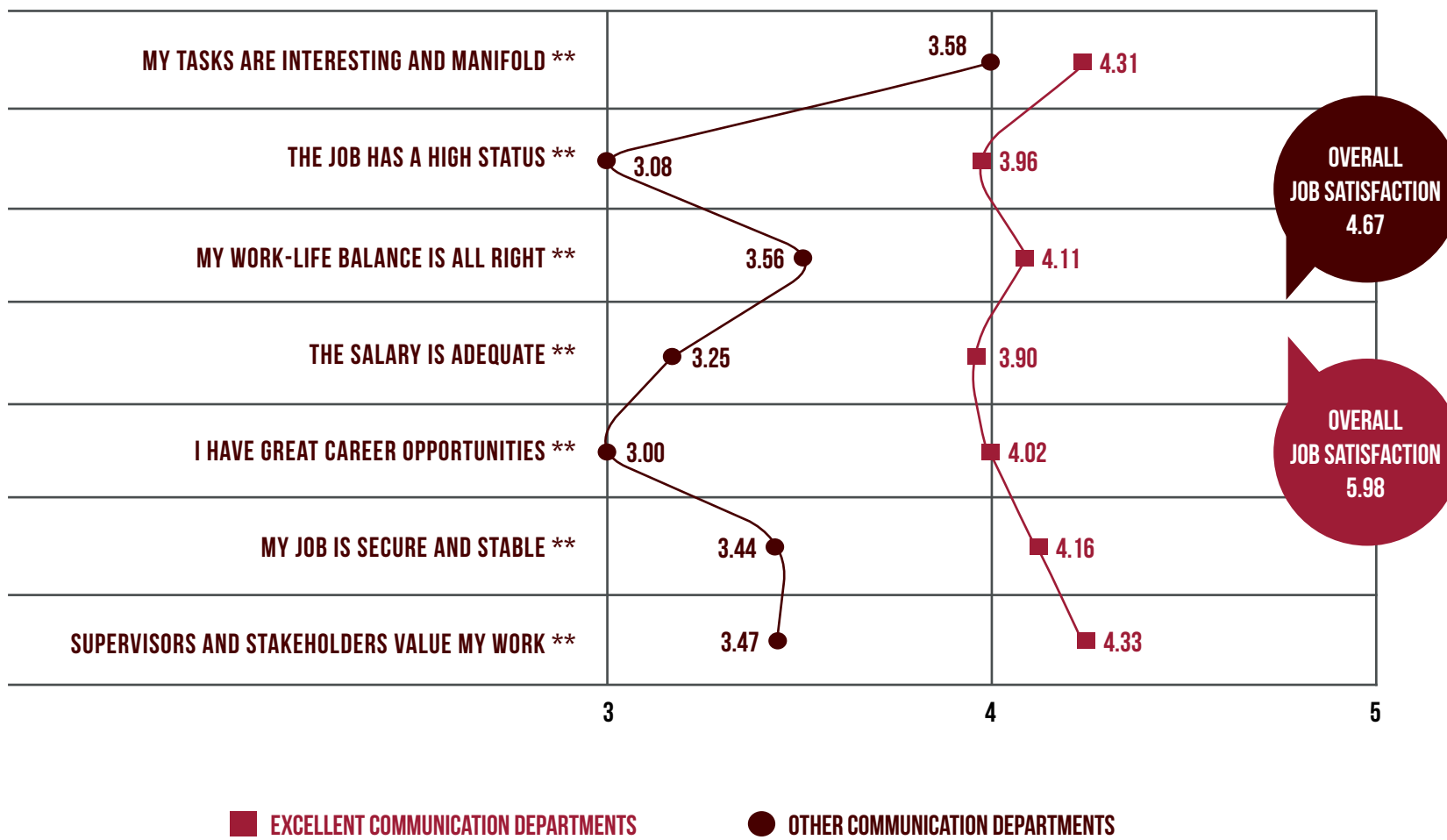


# PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS HAVE A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER LEVEL OF TRUST IN THE WORKPLACE



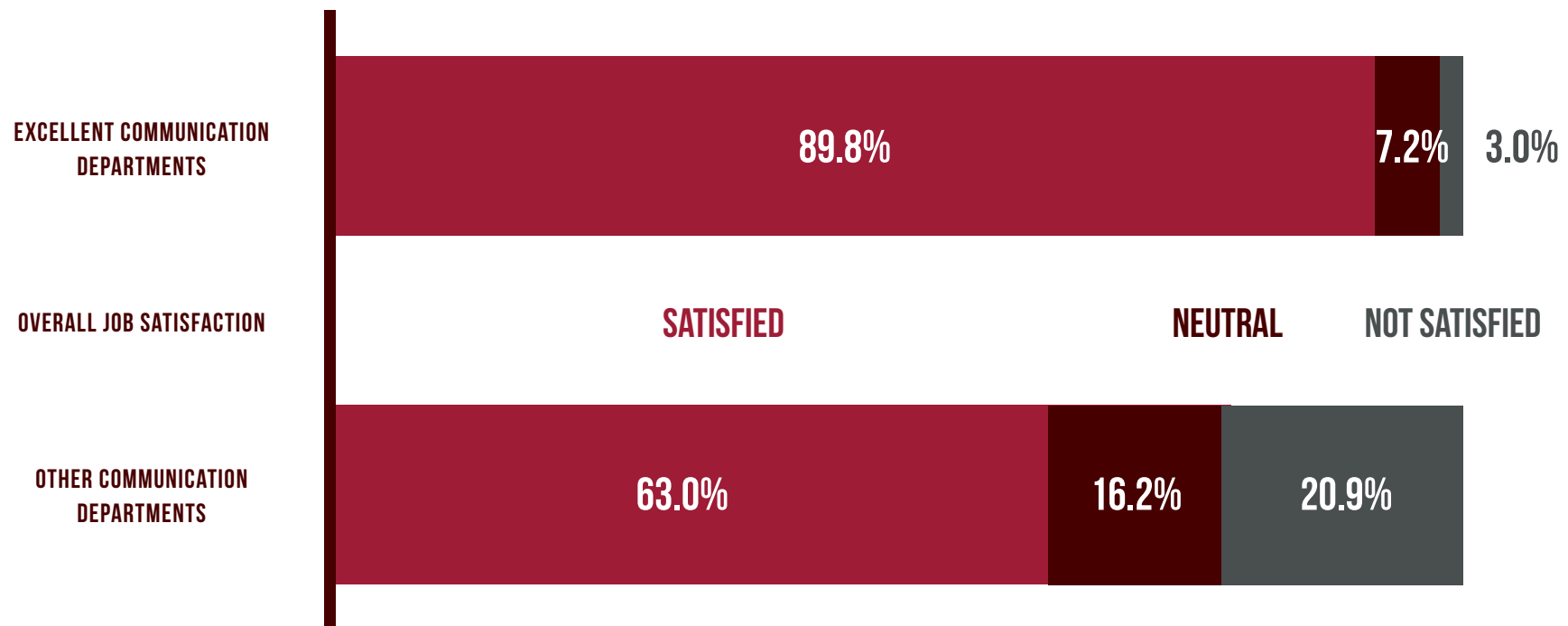
\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

## PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS ARE MORE SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOB SITUATION, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO JOB SECURITY, PERCEIVED JOB VALUE, WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



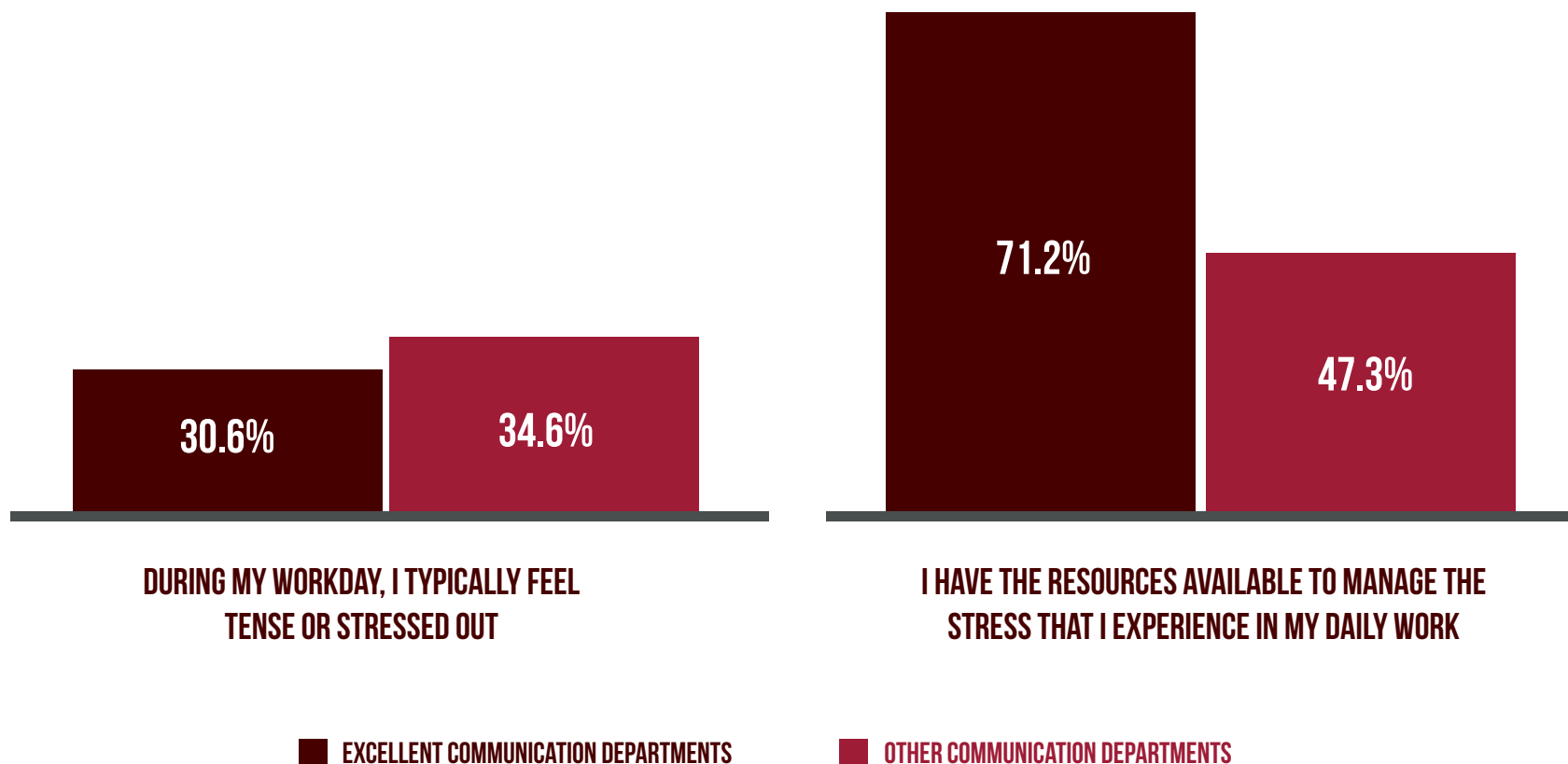
\*\* Significant difference,  $p < .01$

# PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER JOB SATISFACTION

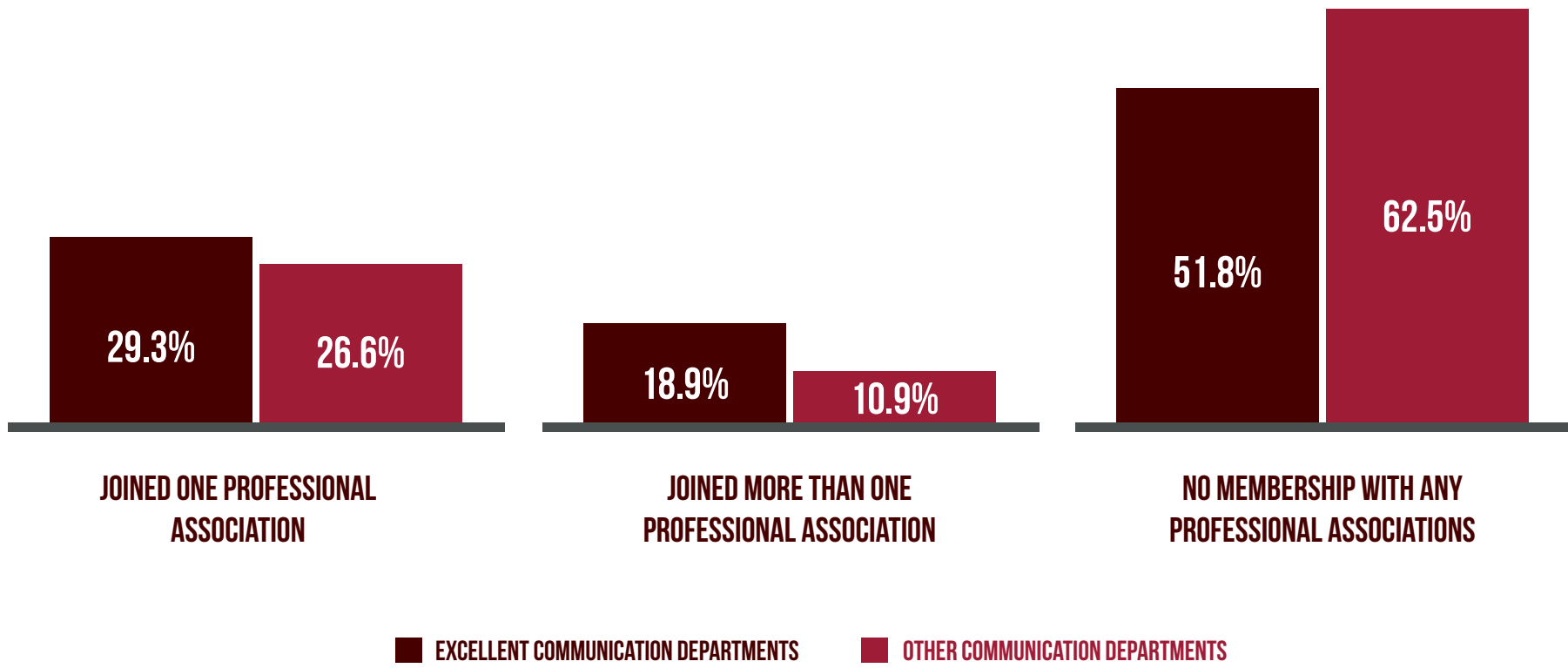


*Note: Percentage was grouped based on scale points: satisfied (scale point 5-7), neutral (scale point 4), and not satisfied (scale point 1-3).*

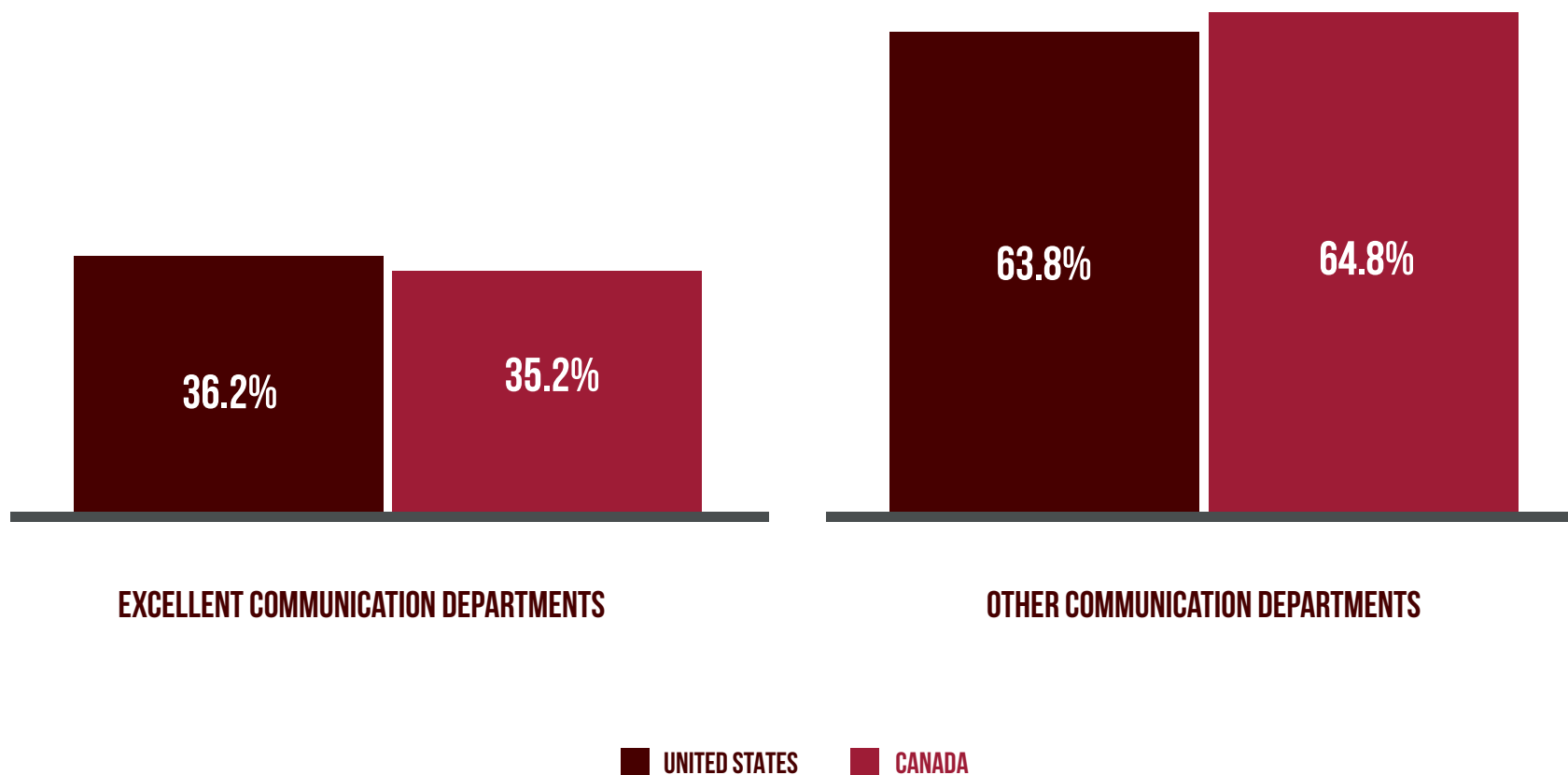
## PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS ARE LESS STRESSED AND HAVE MORE RESOURCES TO MANAGE STRESS



# PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS ARE MORE ACTIVELY CONNECTED WITH PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



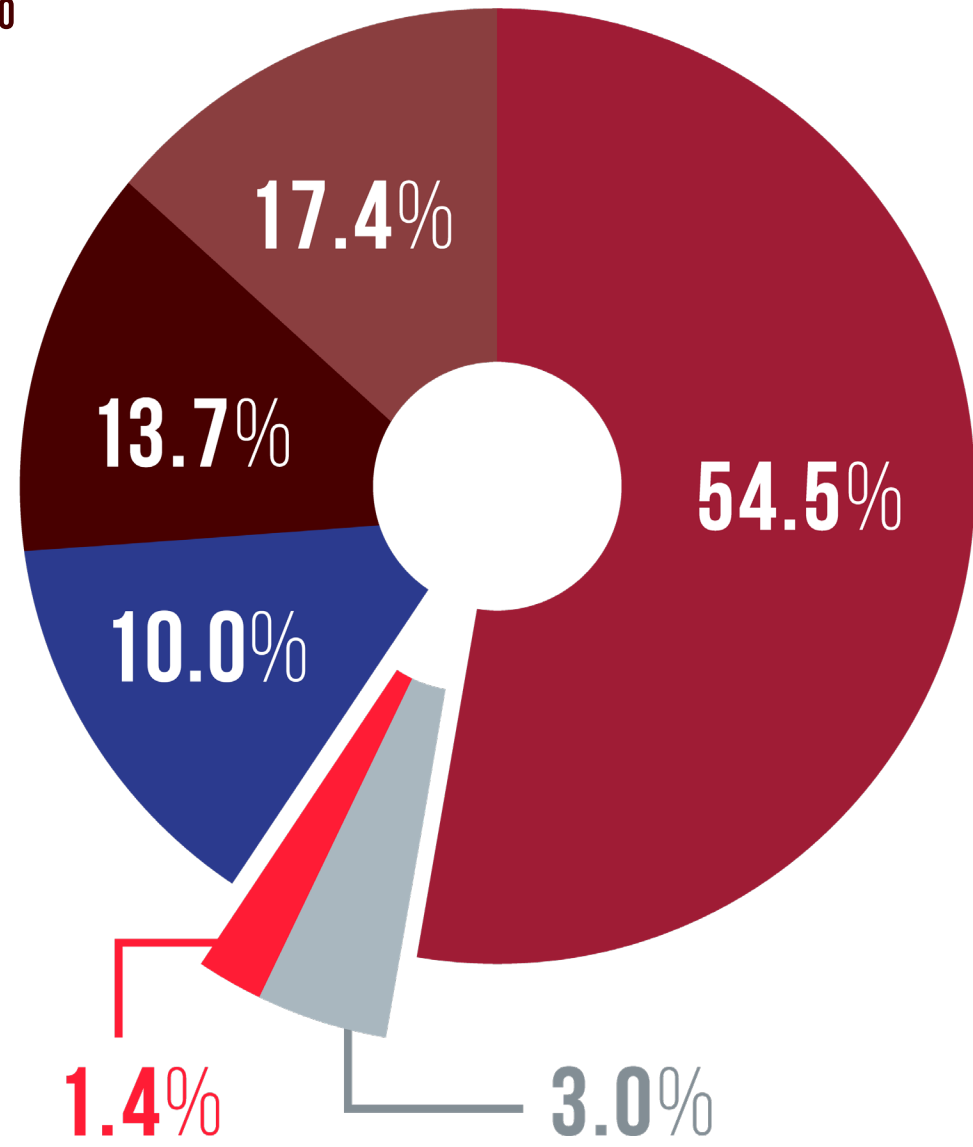
## SIMILAR PROPORTION OF EXCELLENT DEPARTMENTS IDENTIFIED IN U.S. AND CANADA



# WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE AND FUTURE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 15% OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE ENTIRE SAMPLE WANT TO LEAVE THEIR CURRENT EMPLOYER

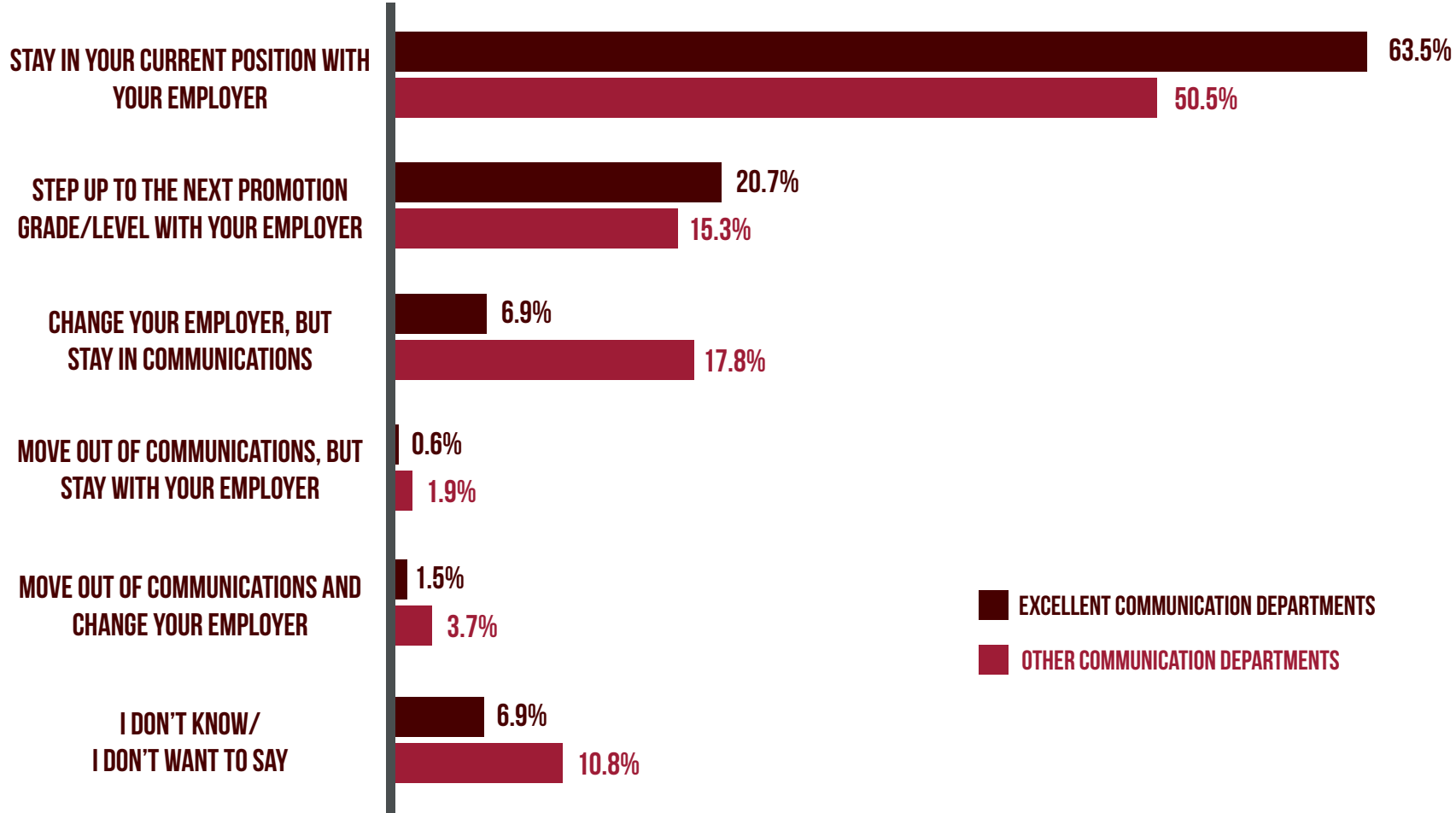
IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, ARE YOU PLANNING TO ...

- STAY IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION WITH YOUR EMPLOYER
- STEP UP TO THE NEXT PROMOTION GRADE/LEVEL WITH YOUR EMPLOYER
- CHANGE YOUR EMPLOYER, BUT STAY IN COMMUNICATIONS
- MOVE OUT OF COMMUNICATIONS, BUT STAY WITH YOUR EMPLOYER
- MOVE OUT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND CHANGE YOUR EMPLOYER
- I DON'T KNOW/I DON'T WANT TO SAY



# PROFESSIONALS IN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS ARE MORE LOYAL TO THEIR EMPLOYER AND MORE POSITIVE ABOUT THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, ARE YOU PLANNING TO ...**



*Note: Percentages show agreement for "regularly."*





**—REFERENCES→**

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