



FIIT | Federal IT **Personas**

A Deeper Look Into Your
Government Customer
Civilian Personas Bundle

July 2020



About Market Connections

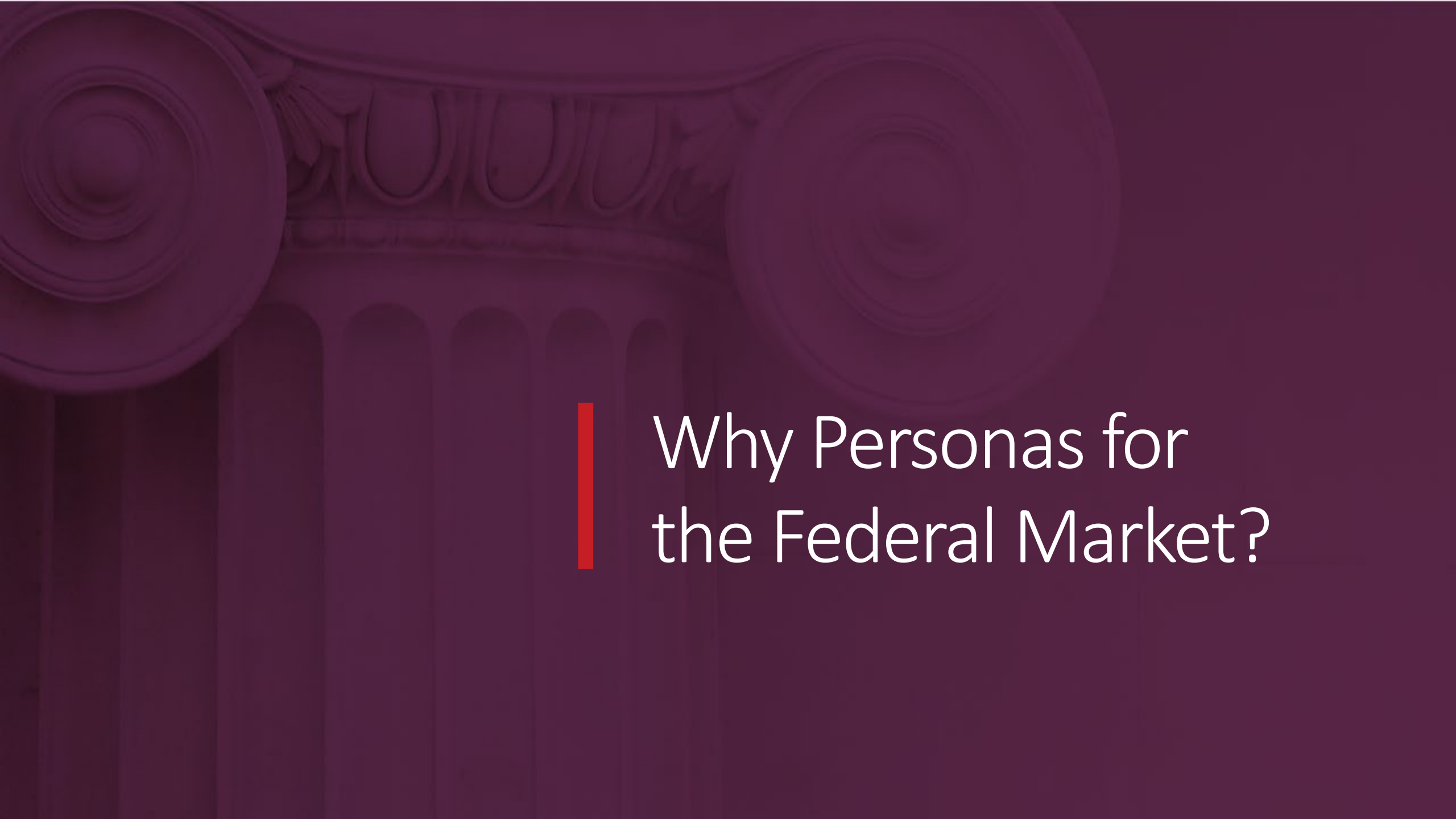


- Over 20 years advising public sector and commercial contractors, large, small, and everywhere in between.
- Work with business development, marketing, communications and product development teams.
- Thousands of surveys and interviews with institutional decision makers EVERY YEAR!
- Experience with hard to reach public sector agencies, defense and civilian, state, municipal and city, K12 and higher education.
- Experience in international markets including North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia.
- Understanding of your business and the unique needs of the market – it's all we do.

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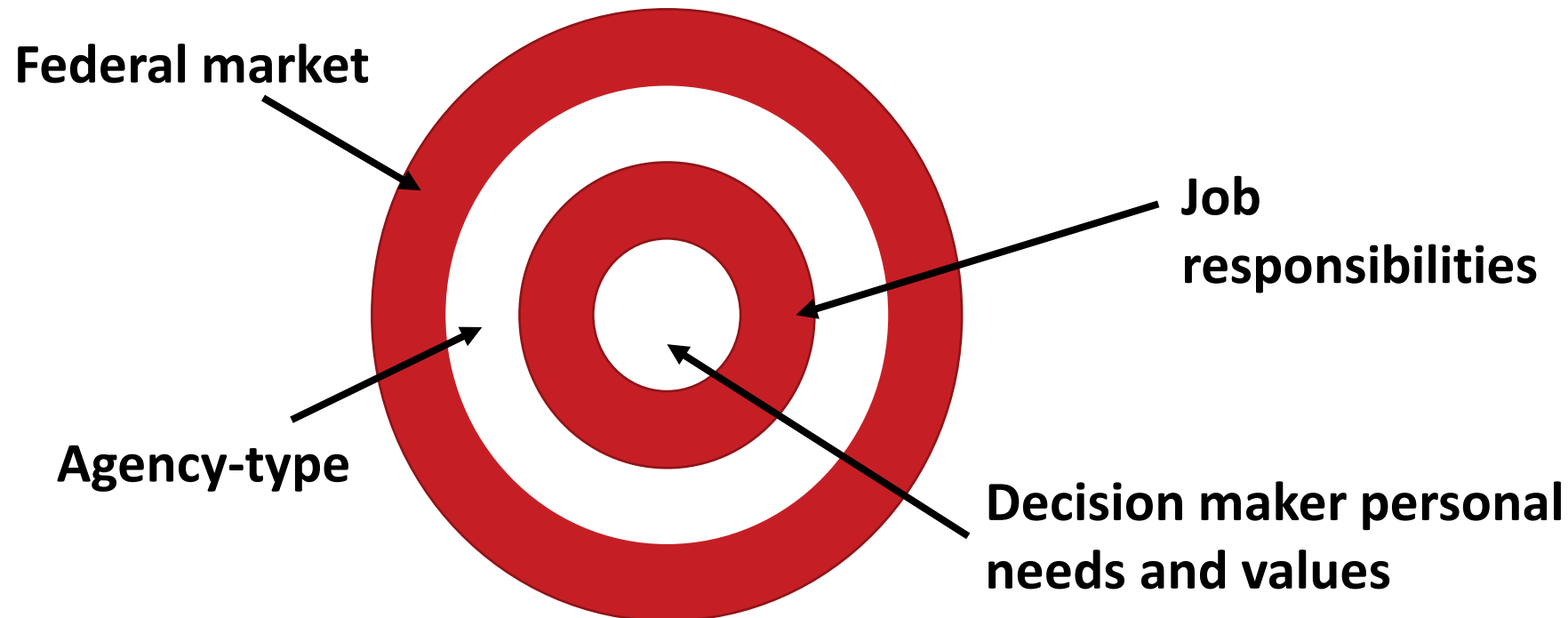
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| Why Personas for the Federal Market?

Marketing to the Federal Market 2020 and Beyond

The federal market requires marketing that is layered, and tailored, to the version of that market that is of interest to your company. It is not the monolith that the government was 30 years ago. Altogether, it is the largest buyer of technology products and services in the U.S. You wouldn't market to a large company with only one message and through one channel.



Reaching Through the Various Layers

Each layer of the federal market requires different information to improve your company's position:

Federal market:

Target the media where Feds go for news and information

Job responsibilities:

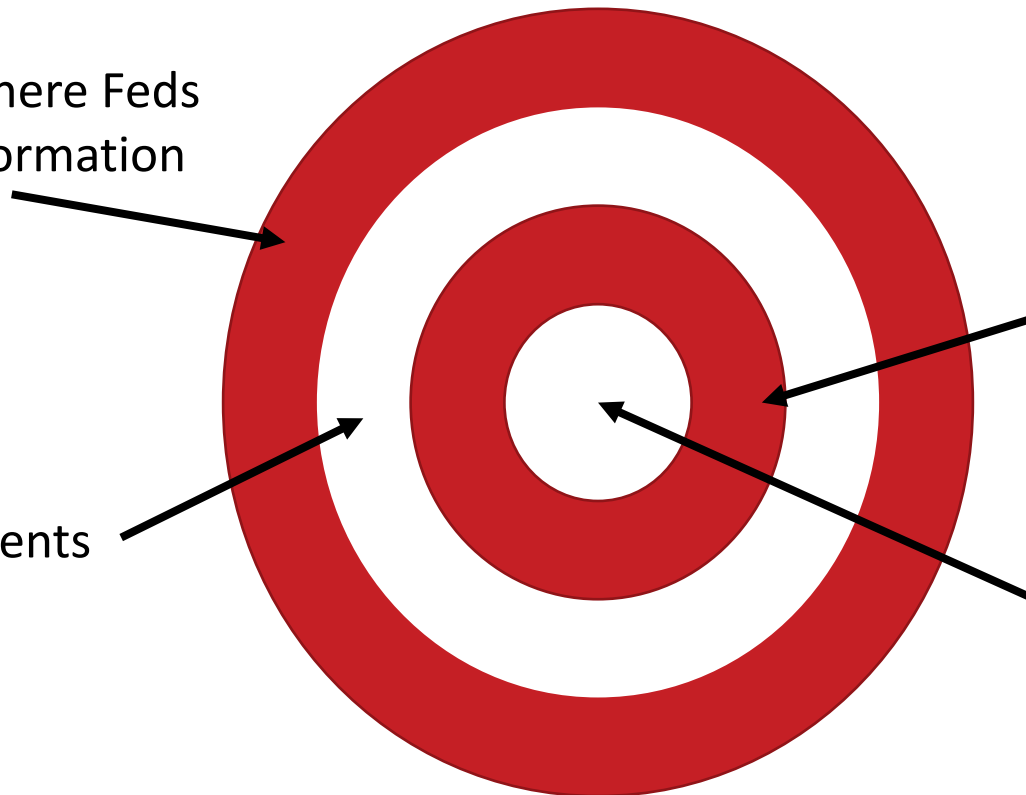
Create content that speaks to the job that needs to be done.

Agency-type:

Be present at events and meetings

Decision maker's personal needs and values:

Deliver messaging that is relevant to the day-to-day concerns of those making choices



A Layered Market

In a multi-layered market and a competitive and crowded space, you must differentiate yourself from others daily.

Federal marketing has typically included the following steps:

1. Make buyers aware your company exists.
2. Highlight the features and benefits of your products and services.
3. Demonstrate those features and benefits that address a federal government need.

Marketing 2020 and beyond will have to take the next step to ensure continued relevance for your company:

4. Connect the ways your company and/or services align with the needs, concerns and values of the **INDIVIDUAL(S)** participating in the process.

Individualized personas help speak to the person, not just the job.

Consider this:

Many marketers focus their efforts only to the final decision maker. However, behind every decision maker, there is a team of influencers.

Individuals can make a difference. Speak to decision makers and INFLUENCERS in your marketing.

WHILE ONE CAN SAY “YES”, MANY CAN SAY “NO” ALONG THE WAY.



Questions We Asked

We needed to know:
How are the
motivations and
decision-making
different based on
role?

Certain aspects of a person's history can influence the way they make decisions, interpret information, and prioritize factors in the decision-making process. We sought information on individual's:

- Educational and professional background
- Age and experience
- Personality type
- Professional ambitions and motivations
- Commitment to the technology industry
- Daily professional challenges and issues
- Attitudes toward vendors and current efforts/plans
- Communication preferences and learning style

Building Personas

In spring 2020, Market Connections used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to gather information about the personal and professional preferences of federal IT decision makers and influencers.



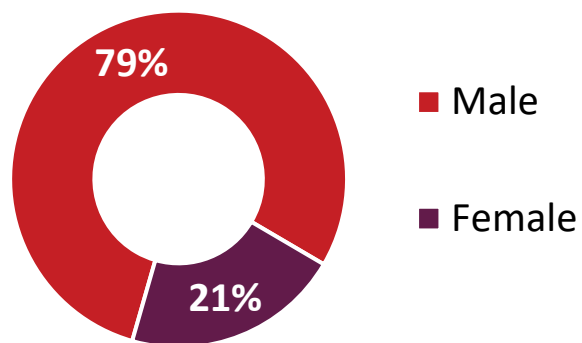
- The quantitative portion of this research included a survey of 300 federal IT decision makers and influencers both inside and outside the beltway.
- Additional in-depth interviews were held with key federal personnel to develop a well-rounded analysis.
- Results included an overall look at the federal technology audience and a deeper dive into specific types of individuals who are involved in the decision-making process.
- Specific personas were built based on quantitative findings from this survey, insights gained from the individual conversations with respondents and experience from Market Connections 25 years of market research in the public sector environment.



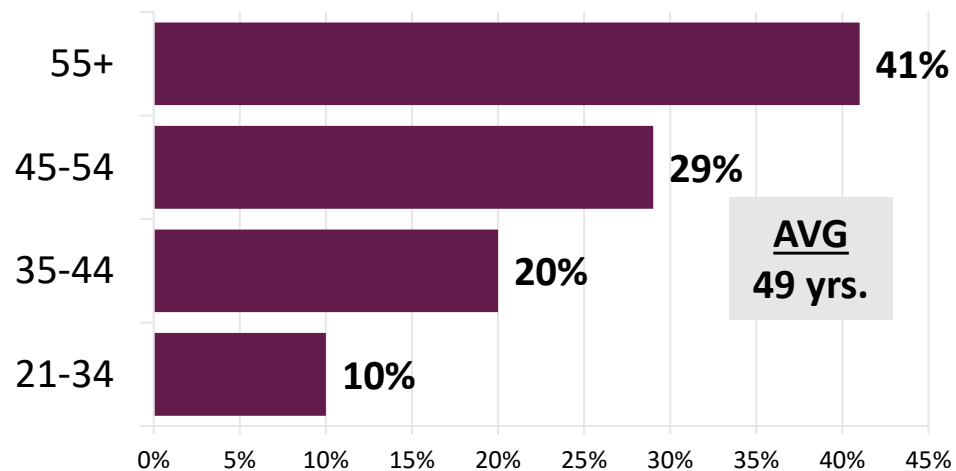
Overview of the Federal IT Audience

Overall Demographics

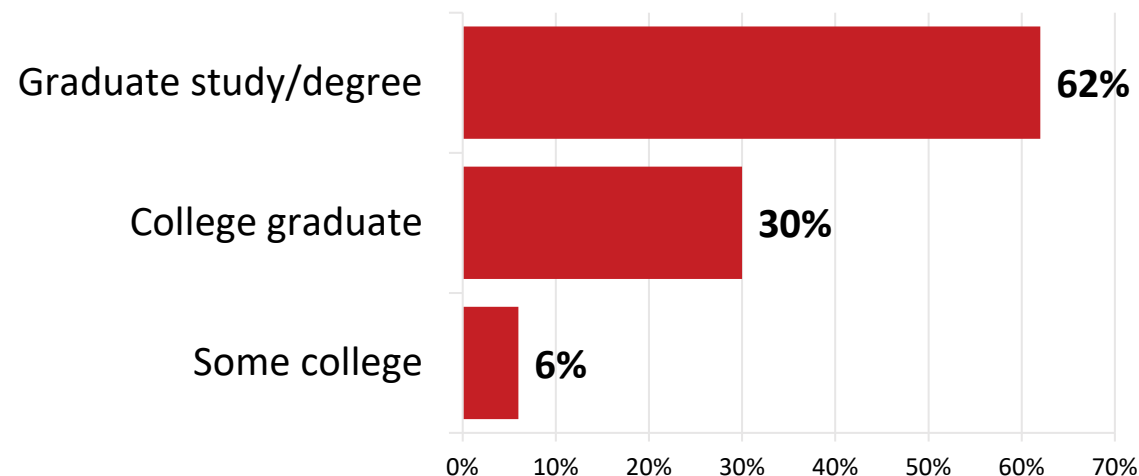
Gender



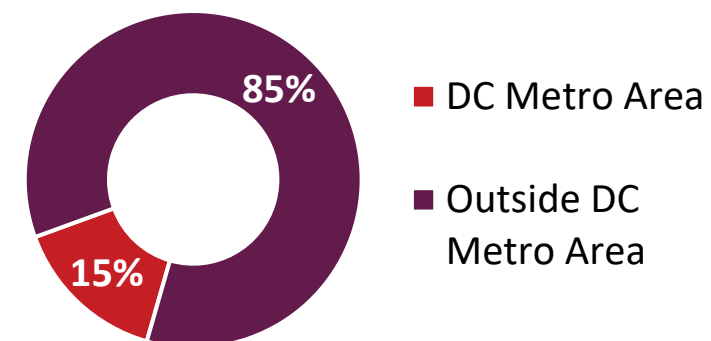
Age



Education



Location



Personality Traits

Extrovert



Introvert

Reactive



Proactive

Seeks information

Waits to receive
information

Ahead of the curve



Always catching up





Optimistic



Pessimistic



Personality Traits


Makes decisions quickly		Makes decisions deliberately
Makes decisions based on research/facts		Makes decisions based on gut feeling
Adapts easily to change		Slow to accept change
Risk taker		Cautious



How would you describe your personality? (For each item, first click the dot, and then slide the dot to the appropriate position)

Greatest Satisfaction at Work

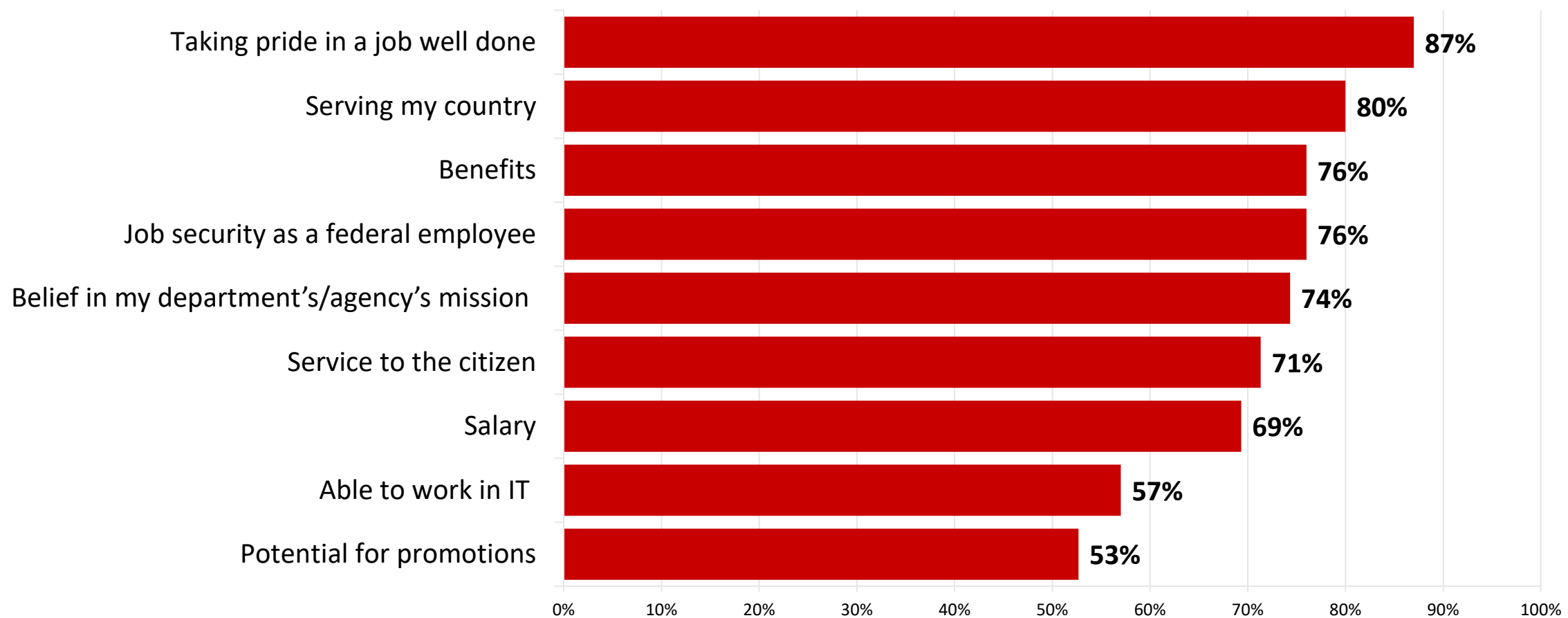





“ The mission of [AGENCY] is among the most important on the planet.

CLOUD SOLUTION ARCHITECT

Motivation to Work for the Federal Government



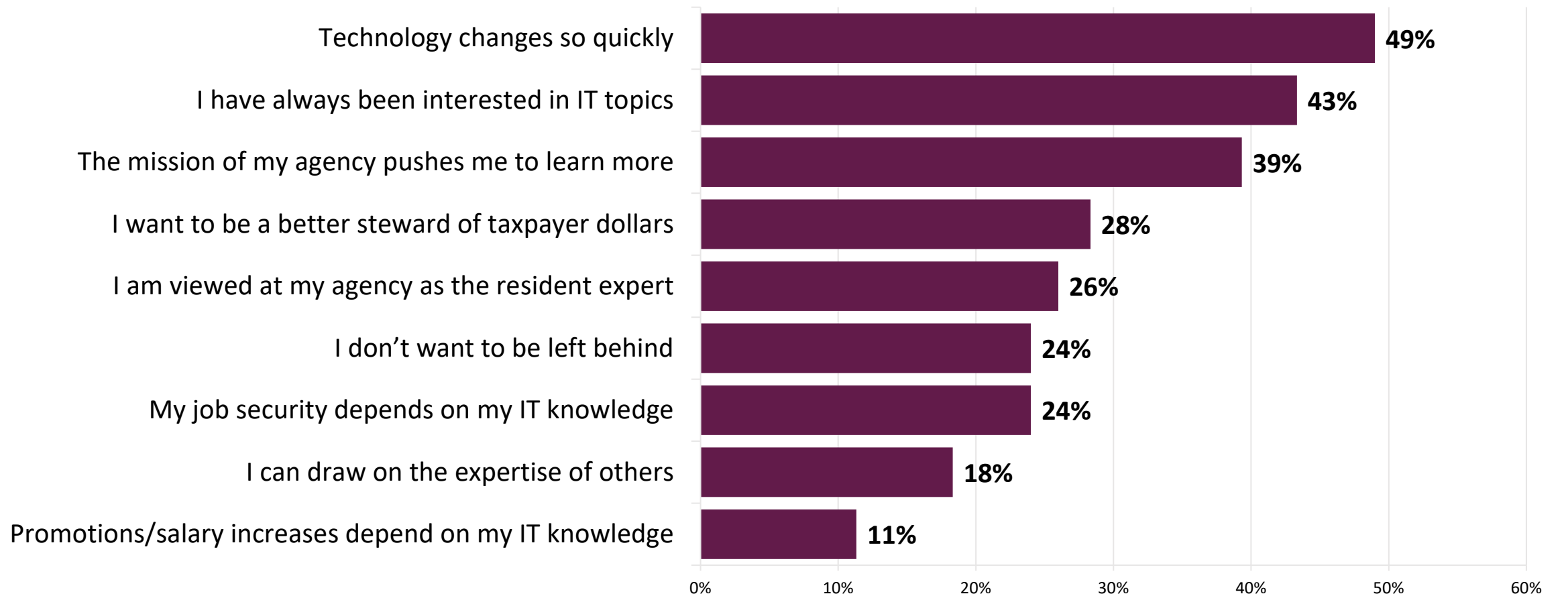
To what extent do any of the following work-related factors motivate you to work for the federal government?



“ For me it’s all about trying to help the organization meet its strategic objectives.

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE

Motivation to Learn About IT



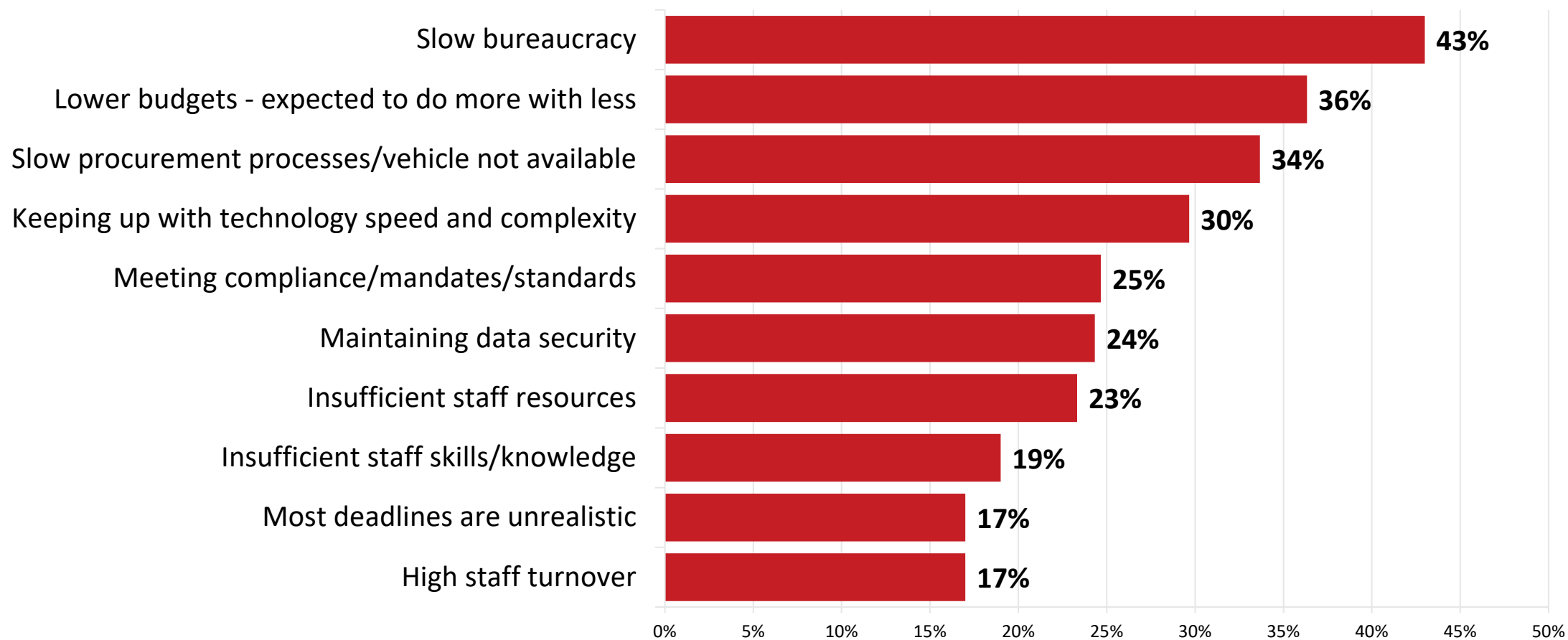


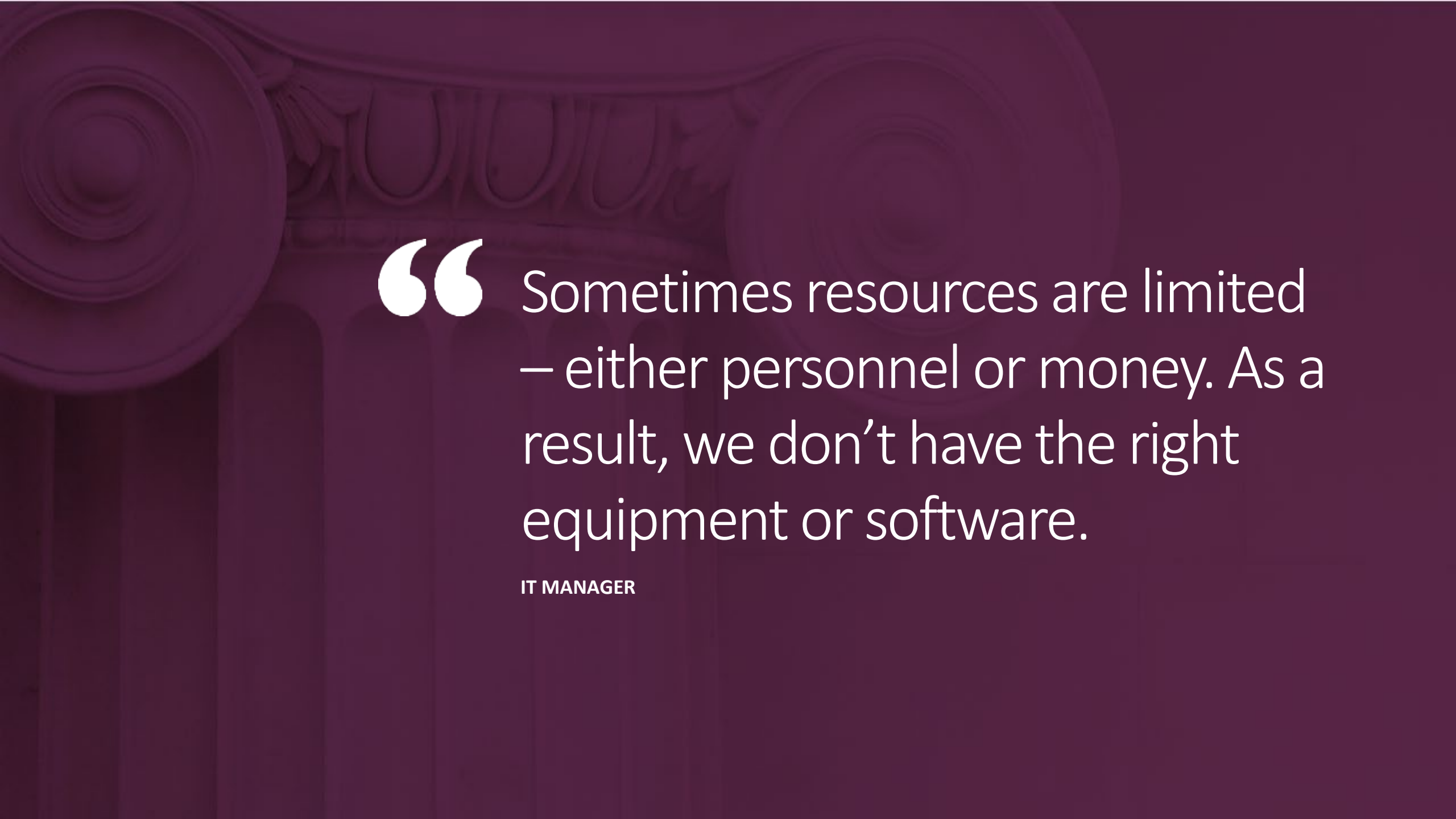
“

I like the fast innovation of the market. You have a big choice of companies you can use.

IT ARCHITECT

Top Professional Challenges



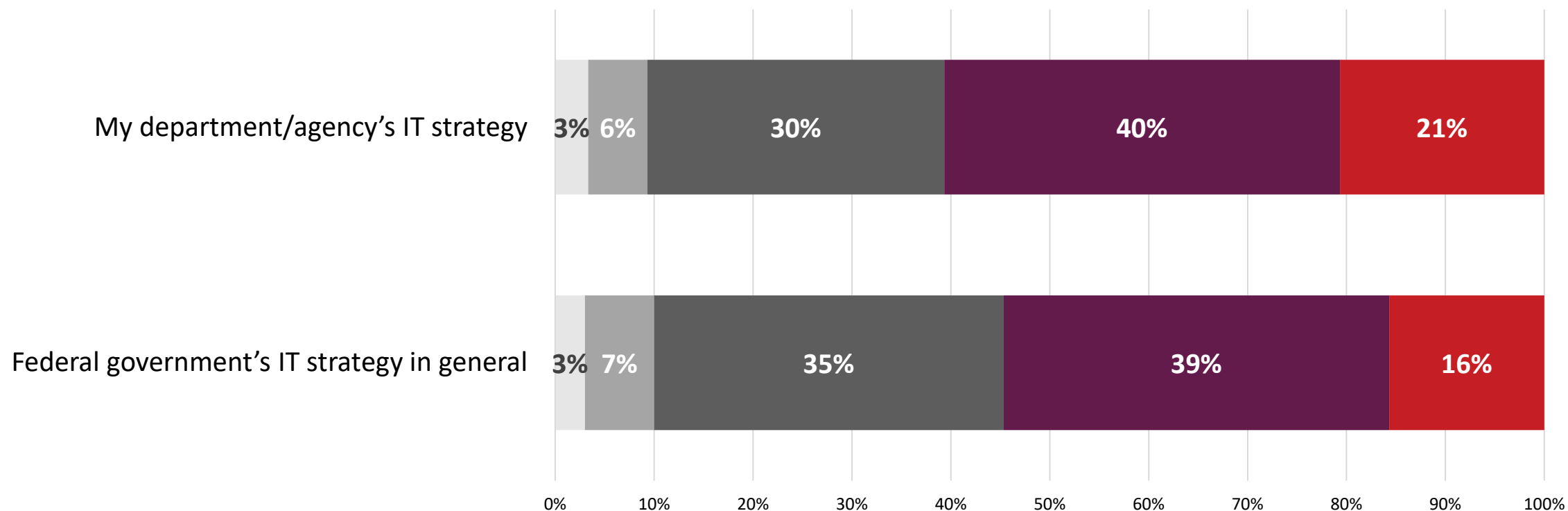


“ Sometimes resources are limited – either personnel or money. As a result, we don’t have the right equipment or software.

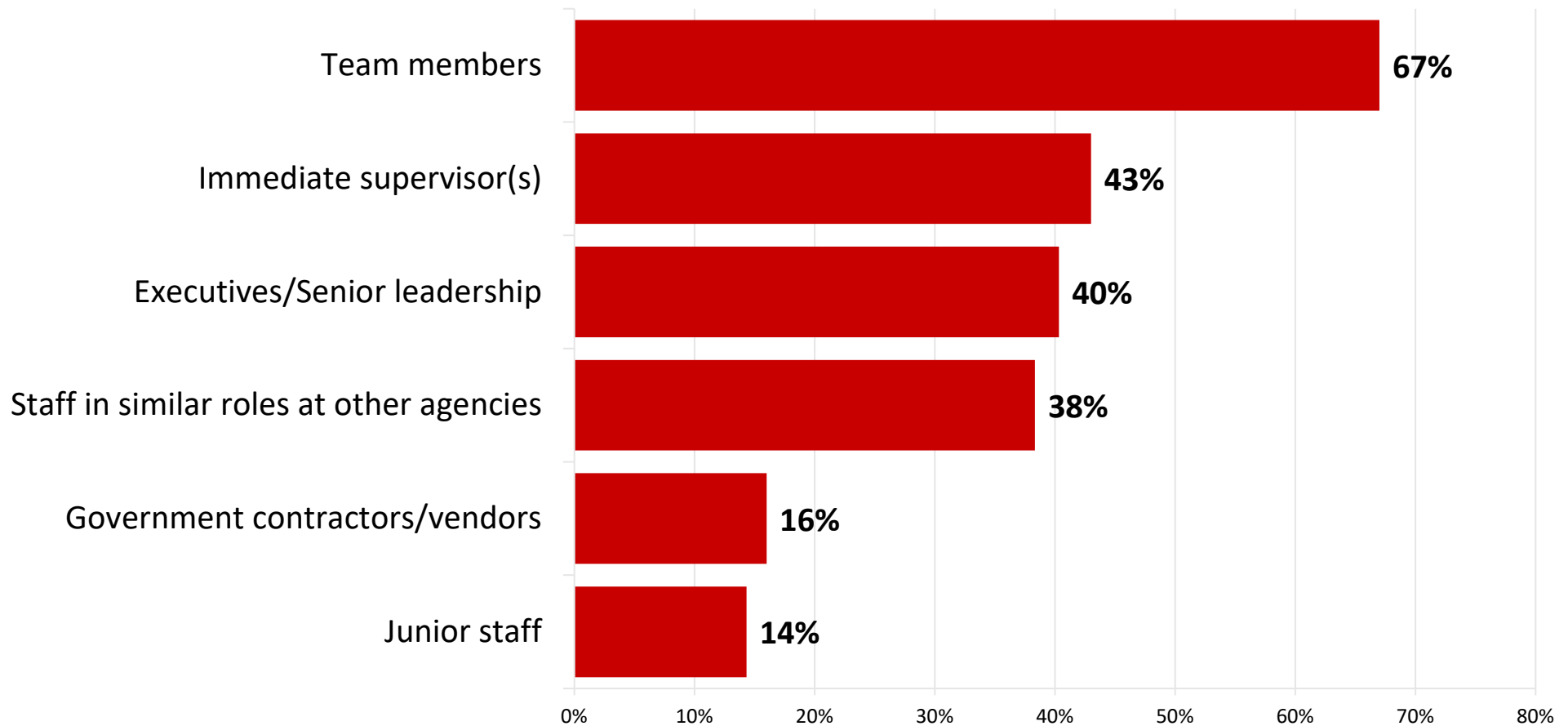
IT MANAGER

Belief IT Strategy is on Track

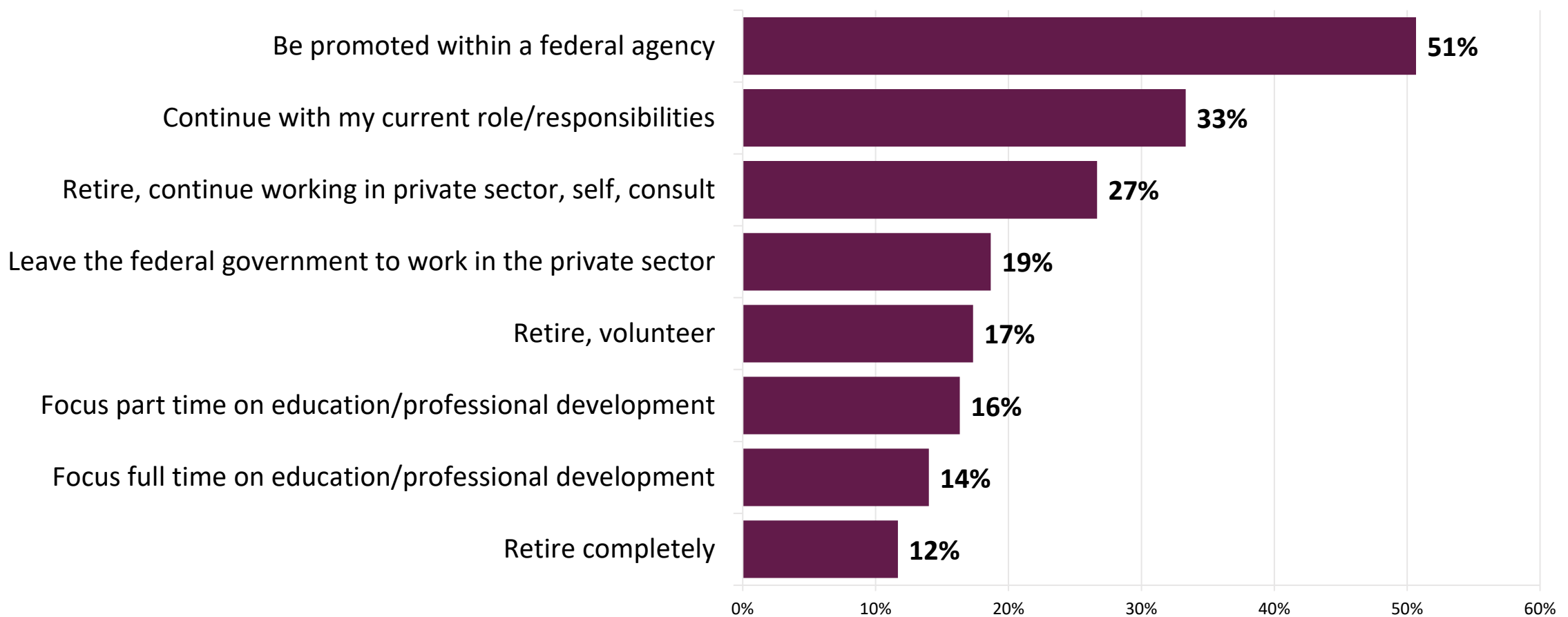
1 - Definitely on the wrong track 2 3 4 5 - Definitely on the right track



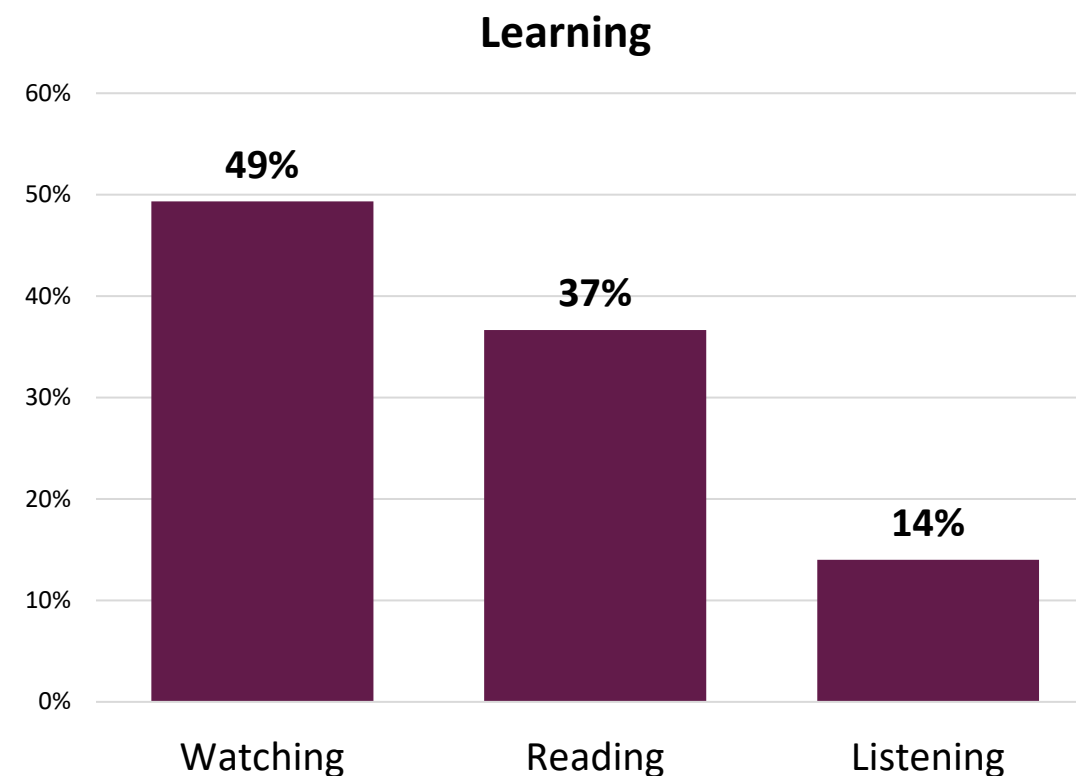
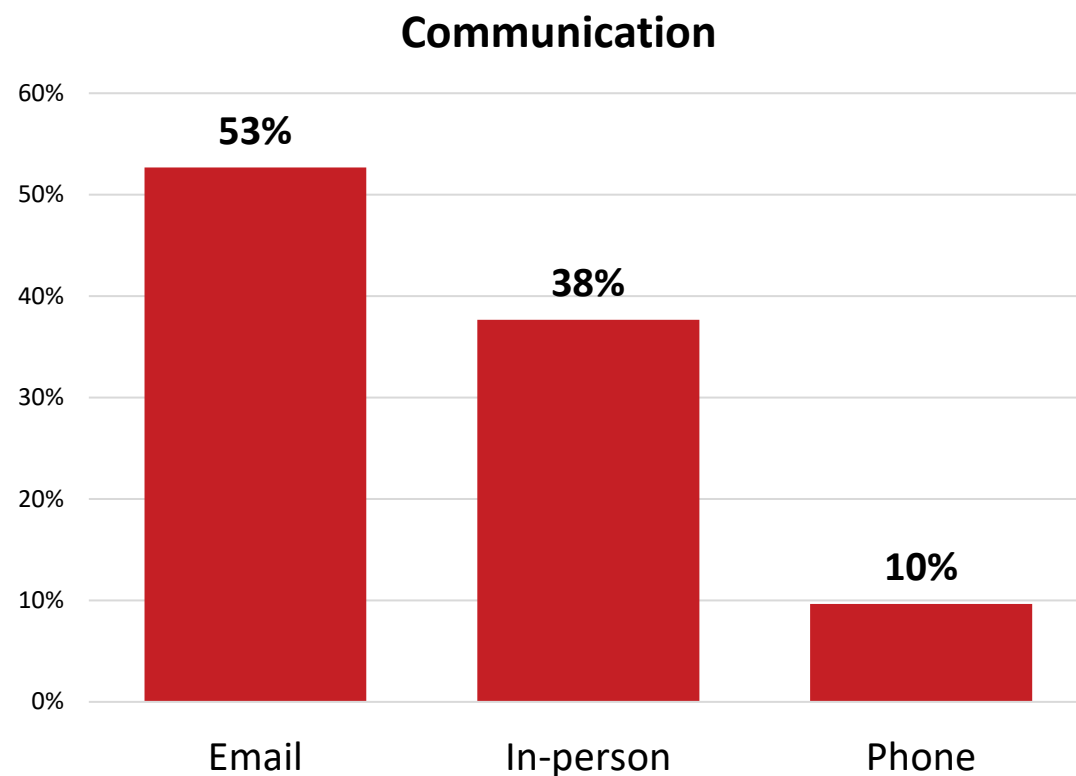
Confidence in Making Good Technology Decisions



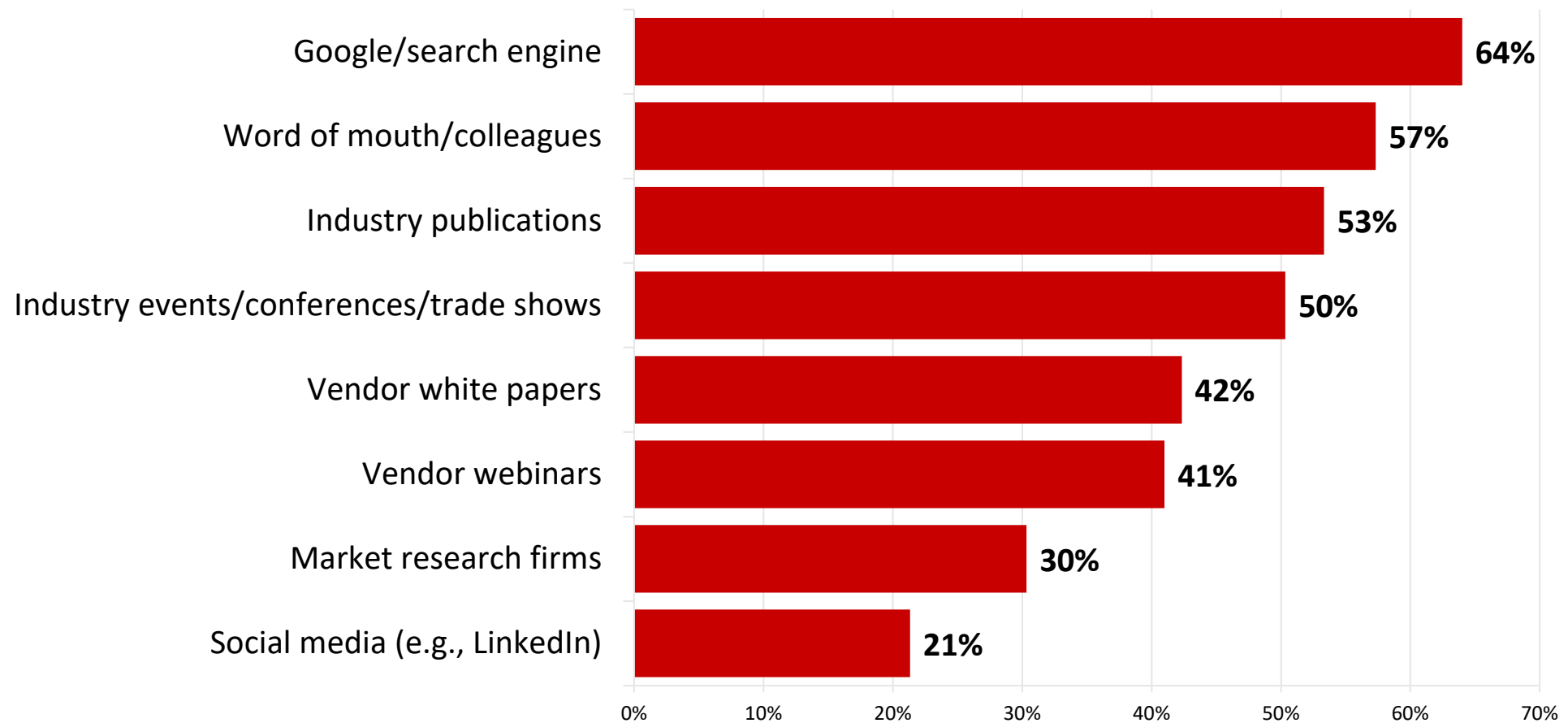
Career Plans/Ambitions for the Next Five Years



Preferred Communication and Learning Method

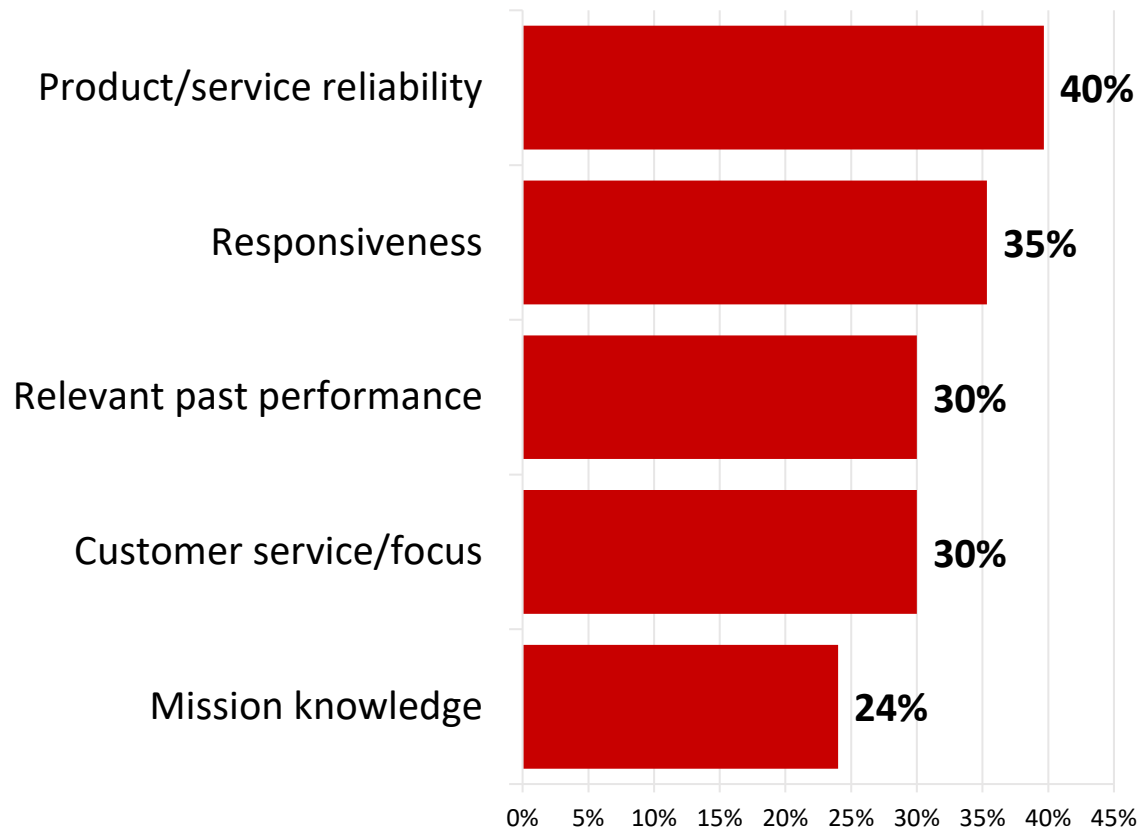


Go-To for Information to Evaluate Technology Solutions

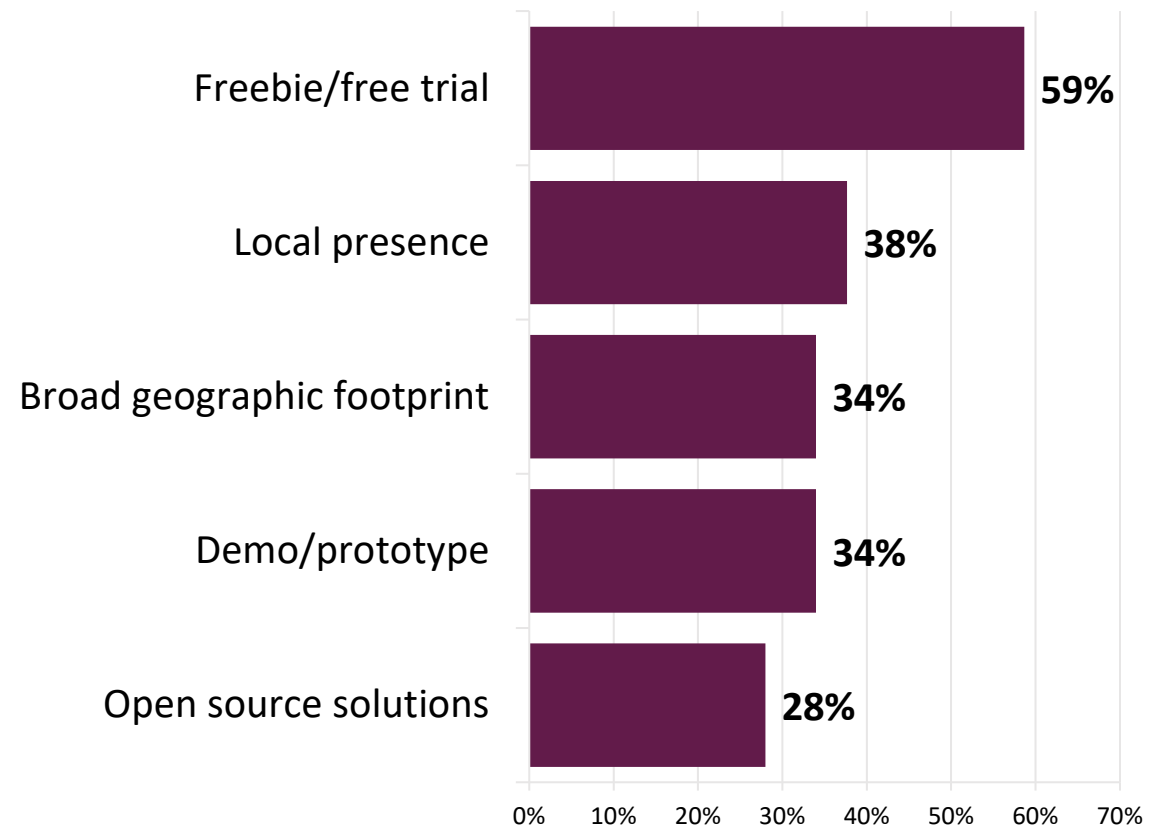


Considerations When Hiring a Vendor

Most Important

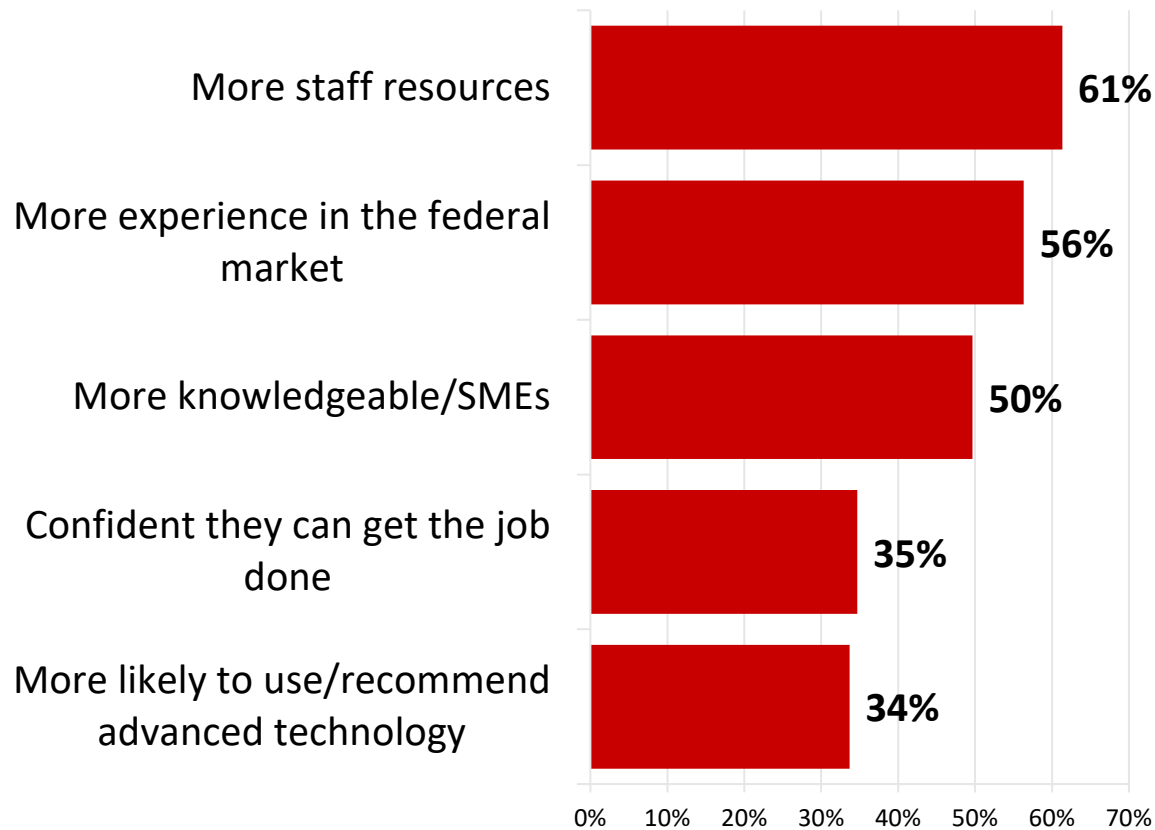


Least Important

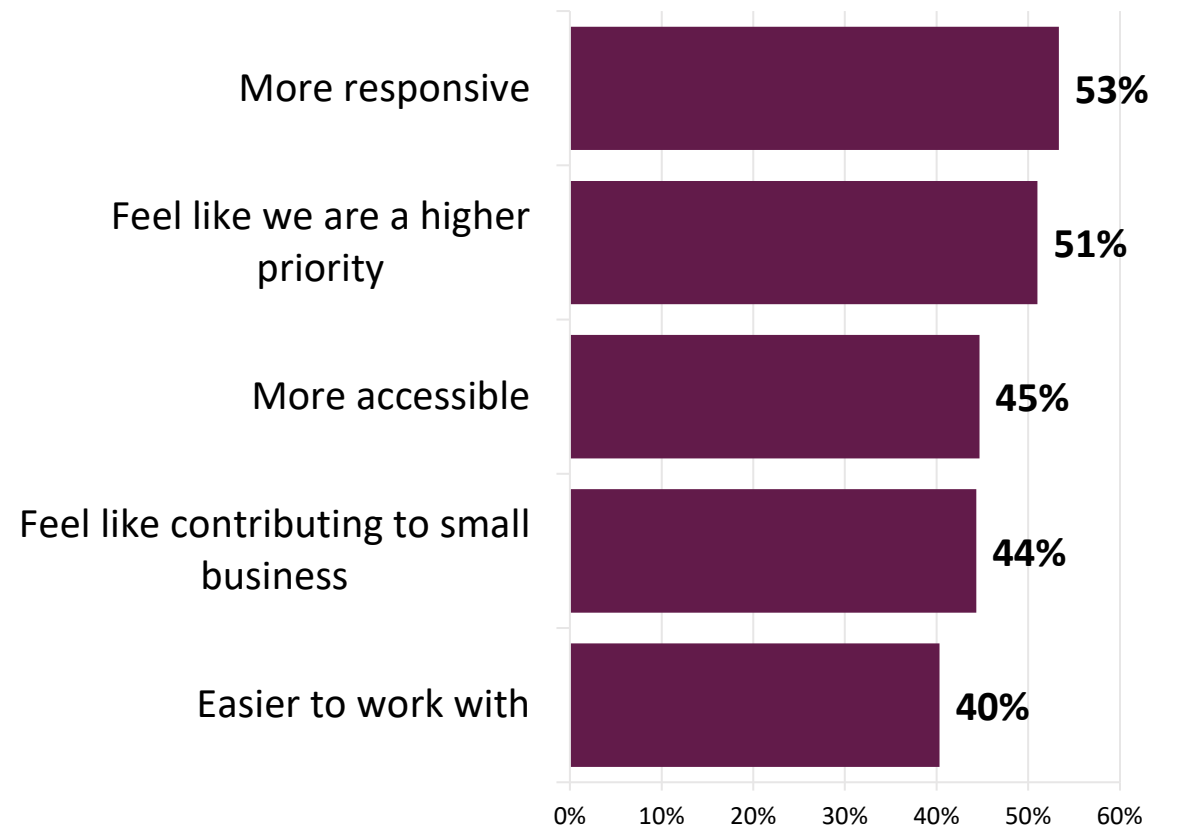


Top Benefits of Working with Vendors

Large Vendors



Small Vendors





| Individual Personas

Using Personas

Personas are frequently developed to help marketers and sales teams refine messaging and strategy to approach the specific individuals in a market.



- Feds are people, too. Personas remind you to treat them that way.
- Personas are not indicative of every person within the market. Assumptions are made in order to provide a personalized, human view of the individuals you are marketing to.
- Be cautious of creating targeting plans meant to reach these individuals based on just the persona. The persona is meant to help guide WHAT you say and WHY you might say it, not necessarily the WHERE and HOW.
- Personas can be used as the “test group” for your messaging and language. Ask yourself, “How would this play with the person described in my persona?”

Civilian Agencies

Includes all civilian and independent agencies.

Notes:

- Includes senior executives, IT and program managers, procurement and admin and operations teams
- Mix of influencers (red) and final decision makers (purple)

BIO

Agency Homeland Security

Title CTO

Years in Current Role 10 years

Years as Federal Employee 20 years

Pay Grade/Level SES

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Lower budgets
- Insufficient staff resources

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Taking pride in a job well done

Belief in my department's/
agency's mission

Service to the citizen

- **Motivation to Learn About IT** -

Technology changes so quickly

FINAL DECISION MAKER

Involved in:

- ✓ Makes final decision/approves purchase
On a team that makes purchase decision
- ✓ Evaluate/recommend contractors
- ✓ Identify the need for a product/service
Determine requirements, specs, features
Manage/implement product

VENDOR SELECTION

Most Important Considerations

- Product/service reliability ● ● ● ● ● ●
- Responsiveness ● ● ● ● ● ●
- Relevant past performance ● ● ● ● ● ●

Least Important Considerations

- Freebie/Free trial ● ● ● ● ● ●
- Local presence ● ● ● ● ● ●

PREFERENCES

Communication



email



phone



in-person

Learning



watching



listening



reading

Discovery



colleagues



search
engine



industry
publications

PERSONALITY TRAITS

- Proactive
- Seeks information
- Ahead of the curve
- Optimistic
- Adapts easily to change
- Risk taker
- Fact-based decision-making
- Extrovert



My agency must be ready to adapt, and therefore, so do I. Things change quickly and while we can't always be out on the forefront of new technology, we can be ready to put something in place to make our agency better.

Civilian Senior Executive

Age: 55 | Male

Education: Master's Degree
Public Administration

Location: Washington, DC



Civilian Techy

Age: 49 | Male

Education: Bachelor's Degree
Computer Science

Location: Washington, DC

BIO

Agency Health & Human Services

Title IT Specialist

Years in Current Role 8 years

Years as Federal Employee 20 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-13

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Slow bureaucracy
- Lower budgets – expected to do more with less
- Slow procurement/vehicle not available

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Taking pride in a job well done
Job security as a federal employee
Benefits

- **Motivation to Learn about IT** –
I am viewed as the expert at
my agency

INFLUENCER

Involved in:

Makes final decision/approves purchase

On a team that makes purchase decision

- ✓ Evaluate/recommend contractors
 - ✓ Identify the need for a product/service
 - ✓ Determine requirements, specs, features
- Manage/implement products

VENDOR SELECTION

Most Important Considerations

Responsiveness



Product/service reliability



Customer service



Least Important Considerations

Freebie/Free trial



Open source solutions



PREFERENCES

Communication



email



phone



in-person

Learning



watching



reading



listening

Discovery



search engine



vendor white
papers



industry
publications

PERSONALITY TRAITS



Proactive



Seeks information



Ahead of the curve



Optimistic



Adapts easily to change



Fact-based decision-making



I'm allowed the freedom
to do my job, being
considered the IT expert,
and being free to choose
the course of where we're
going to take things next.

Civilian Procurement

Age: 56 | Female

Education: Master's Degree
Finance

Location: Georgia



BIO

Agency Health & Human Services

Title Budget Analyst

Years in Current Role 15 years

Years as Federal Employee 20 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-13

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Low staff morale
- Slow procurement processes/vehicle not available

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Taking pride in a job well done

Salary

Serving my country

- Motivation to Learn About IT -
I don't want to be left behind

TEAM DECISION MAKER

Involved in:

Makes final decision/approves purchase

✓ On a team that makes purchase decision

✓ Evaluate/recommend contractors

Identify the need for a product/service

✓ Determine requirements, specs, features

Manage/implement product

VENDOR SELECTION

Most Important Considerations

Product/service reliability



Relevant past performance



Responsiveness



Least Important Considerations

Local presence



Freebie/free trial



PREFERENCES

Communication



in-person



email



phone

Learning



watching



reading



listening

Discovery



vendor white
papers



industry
publications



search
engine

PERSONALITY TRAITS



Proactive



Seeks information



Ahead of the curve



Optimistic



Makes decisions quickly



Fact-based decision-making



As I continue to move up
in the federal
government, one of my
goals is to mentor junior
staff members and
improve staff morale.

BIO

Agency Treasury

Title Operations Manager

Years in Current Role 5 years

Years as Federal Employee 15 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-14

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Lower budgets - expected to do more with less
- Slow bureaucracy

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Benefits

Taking pride in a job well done

Salary

- **Motivation to Learn About IT** -

Technology changes so quickly

INFLUENCER

Involved in:

Makes final decision/approves purchase

On a team that makes purchase decision

- ✓ Evaluate/recommend contractors
- ✓ Identify the need for a product/service
- ✓ Determine requirements, specs, features
- Manage/implement product

VENDOR SELECTION

Most Important Considerations

Product/service reliability



Responsiveness



Customer service/focus



Least Important Considerations

Freebie/free trial



Demo/prototype



PREFERENCES

Communication



email



in-person



phone

Learning



watching



reading



listening

Discovery



search
engine



colleagues



Industry
publications

PERSONALITY TRAITS



Introvert



Proactive



Seeks information



Ahead of the curve



Optimistic



Fact-based decision-making



Adapts easily to change



IT folks need to understand we're all on the same team and support same mission, and that we're here to support the staff and the critical mission that they do.

Civilian Admin/ Operations

Age: 51 | Female

Education: Bachelor's Degree
Business Administration

Location: California



BIO

Agency Veterans Affairs

Title Program Manager

Years in Current Role 10 years

Years as Federal Employee 23 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-14

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Slow bureaucracy
- Slow procurement/vehicle not available

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Service to the citizen

Taking pride in job well done

Belief in my department's/
agency's mission

- **Motivation to Learn About IT** -
Technology changes so quickly

TEAM DECISION MAKER

Involved in:

Makes final decision/approves purchase

- ✓ On a team that makes purchase decision
- ✓ Evaluate/recommend contractors
- ✓ Identify the need for a product/service
- ✓ Determine requirements, specs, features
- ✓ Manage/implement product

VENDOR SELECTION

Most Important Considerations

Product/service reliability ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Relevant past performance ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Tech support ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Least Important Considerations

Freebie/Free trial ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Broad geographic footprint ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

PREFERENCES

Communication



in-person



email



phone

Learning



watching



listening



reading

Discovery



search
engine



colleagues



market
research firm

PERSONALITY TRAITS



Proactive



Seeks information



Ahead of the curve



Extrovert



Adapts easily to change



Makes decisions quickly



Fact-based decision-making



Every step of the process from planning to evaluating, I think of my role as the connection to those we serve. They are obsessed with the technology, but I'm focused on the mission.

Civilian Program Manager

Age: 47 | Male

Education: Bachelor's Degree
Management

Location: New York





Moving Forward with Personas



Key Takeaways

People make decisions based on their experiences, background and beliefs, even at work.

- **Decisions are not always logical.** Benefits and features are enough if logic always ruled. Consider each influencer and make decisions for marketing based on their personality and values. Align your messages to connect with who they are but explain how your product and/or service will get them to become who they want to be.



Key Takeaways

While it is important to consider the individual, one cannot ignore their environment.

- **Federal workers are individuals but are limited by their work culture.** Federal government workers often have a greater connection and sense of purpose within their jobs as public servants. BUT they are individuals operating within a broader organizational culture. You need to balance the needs/desires of the individual with the limitations of the culture.



Key Takeaways

The playbook of personas only works if everyone has it and reads it.

- **Sharing is caring.** Make sure all members of the team are working from the same basic documents. This includes marketing, sales, product development and senior administration. Explain and educate about the purpose of the personas upon launch.



Key Takeaways

Personas are a beginning,
not an end.

- **There are exceptions to the rule.** Your teams will highlight specific individuals to refute the viability of the persona you develop. Remember, these are a starting point to appeal to the greatest number, the common denominator. Make sure any exceptions are proven with facts and not based on hunches and assumptions.

Additional Resources

- Federal Media & Marketing Study

<https://www.marketconnectionsinc.com/federal-media-and-marketing-study/>

- Content Marketing Review: Federal & Beyond

www.marketconnectionsinc.com/cmr2019study/

- Market Connections Federal Central

www.marketconnectionsinc.com/fedcentral/

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https://twitter.com/mkt_connections

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