



FIIT | Federal IT **Personas**

A Deeper Look Into Your
Government Customer
Defense Personas Bundle

July 2020



About Market Connections

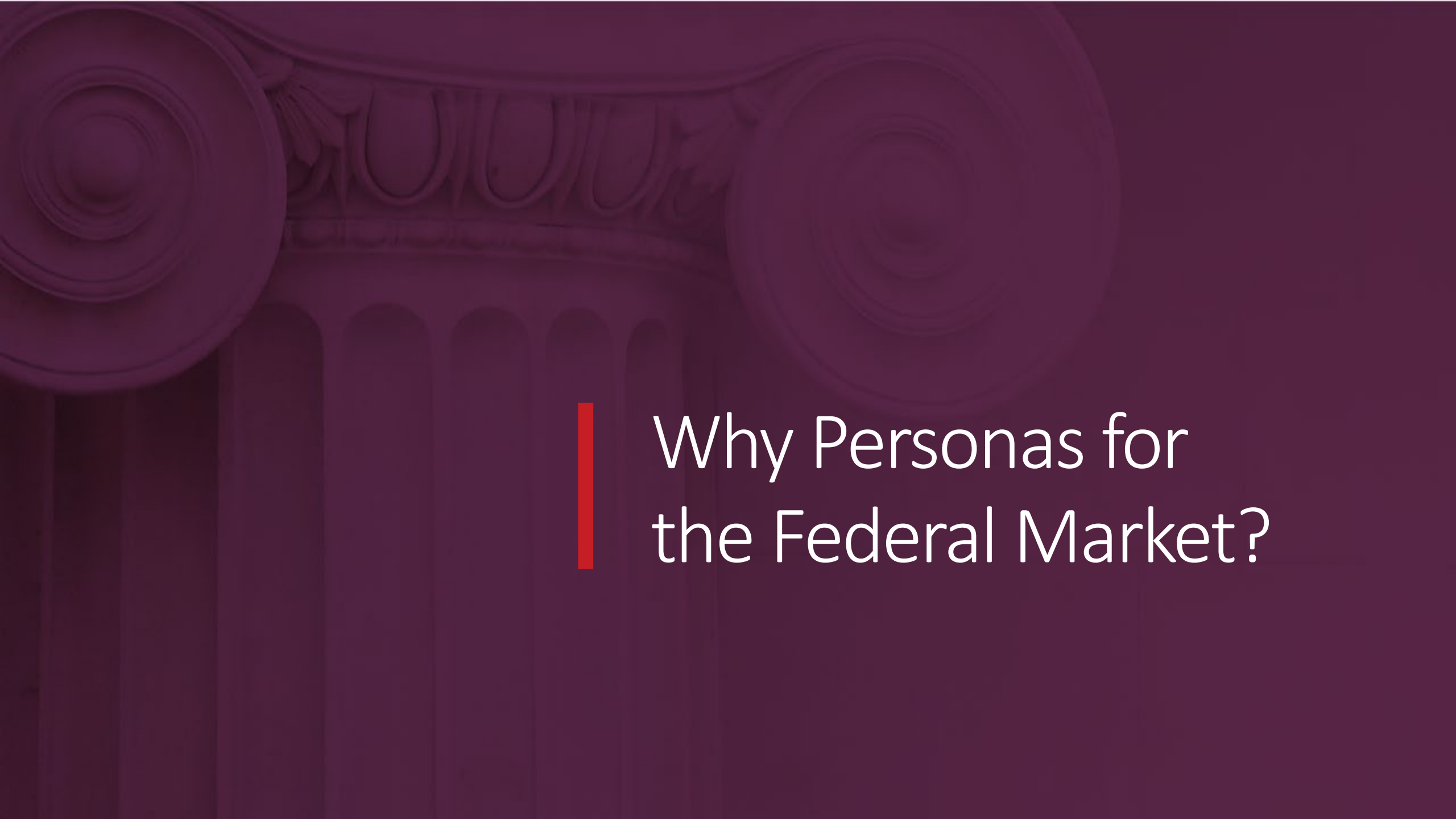


- Over 20 years advising public sector and commercial contractors, large, small, and everywhere in between.
- Work with business development, marketing, communications and product development teams.
- Thousands of surveys and interviews with institutional decision makers EVERY YEAR!
- Experience with 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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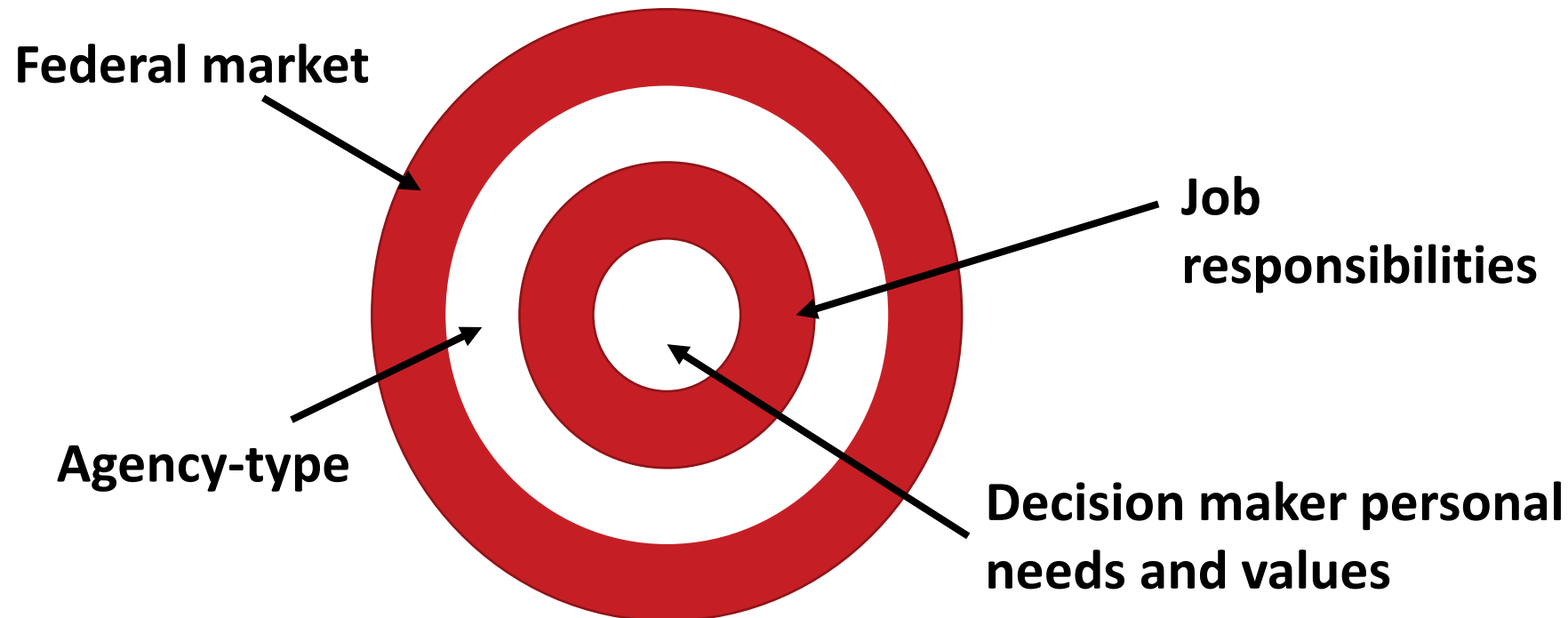
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| Why Personas for the Federal Market?

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:

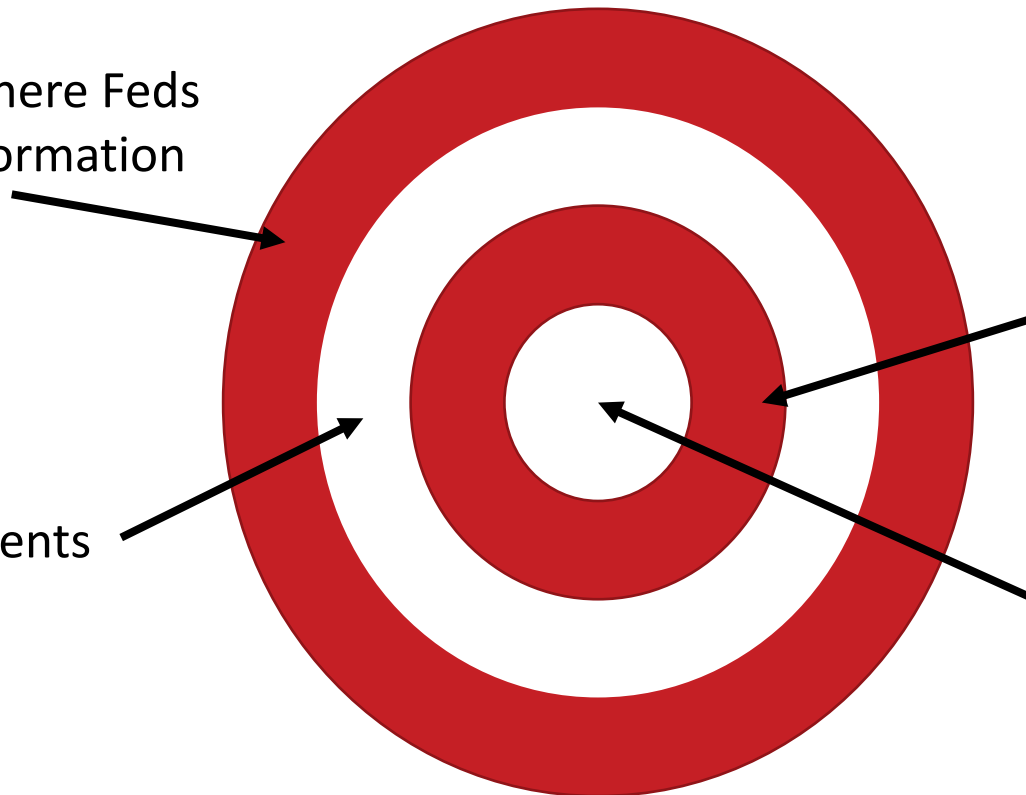
Create content that speaks to the job that needs to be done.

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.



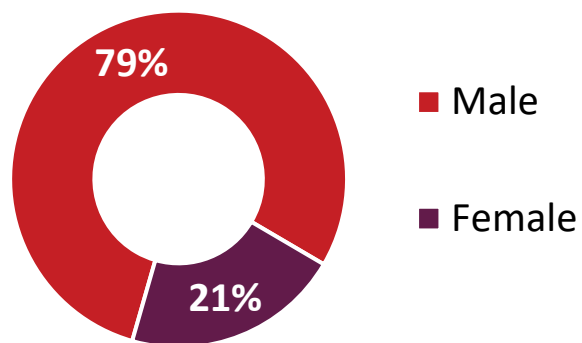
- The quantitative portion of this research included a survey of 300 federal IT decision makers and influencers both inside and outside the beltway.
- Additional in-depth interviews were held with key federal personnel to develop a well-rounded analysis.
- Results included an overall look at the federal 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.



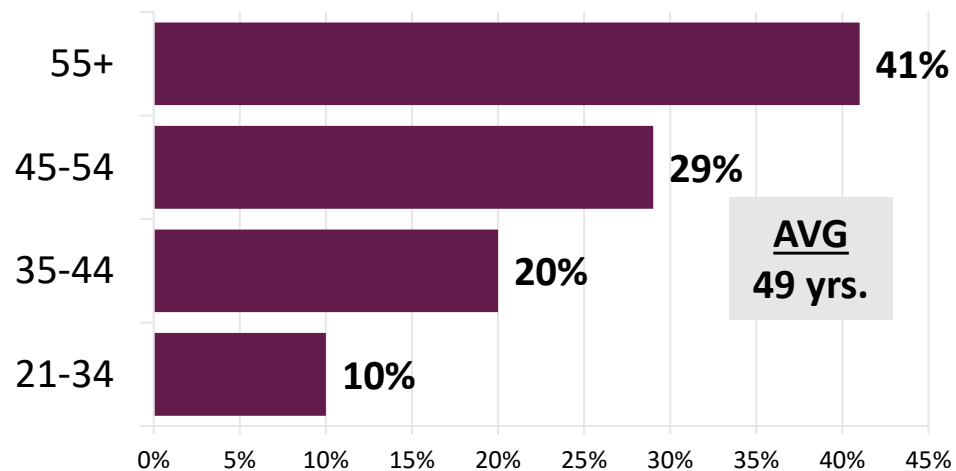
Overview of the Federal IT Audience

Overall Demographics

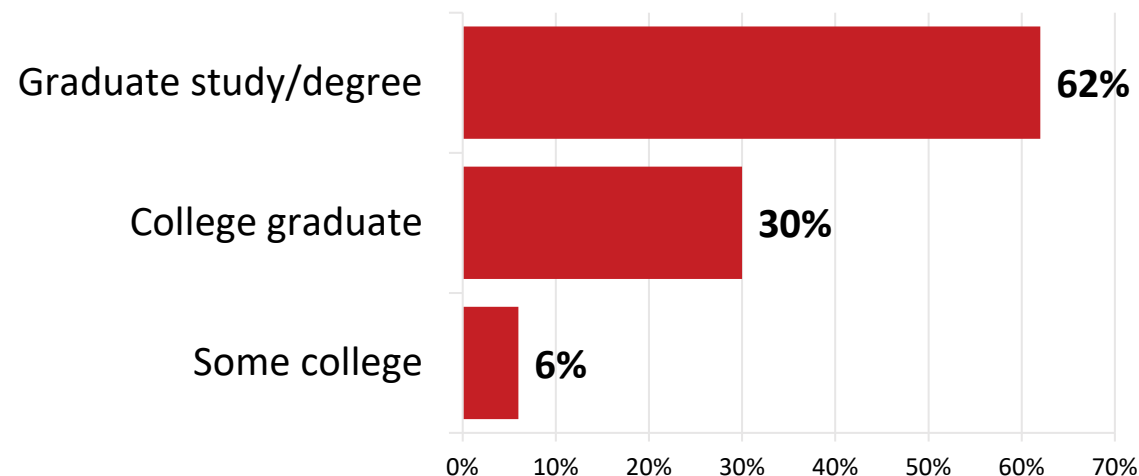
Gender



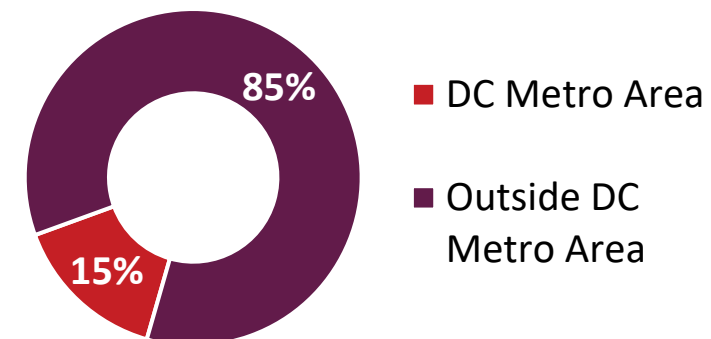
Age



Education



Location



Personality Traits

Extrovert



Introvert

Reactive



Proactive

Seeks information

Waits to receive
information

Ahead of the curve



Always catching up

Optimistic







Pessimistic



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

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

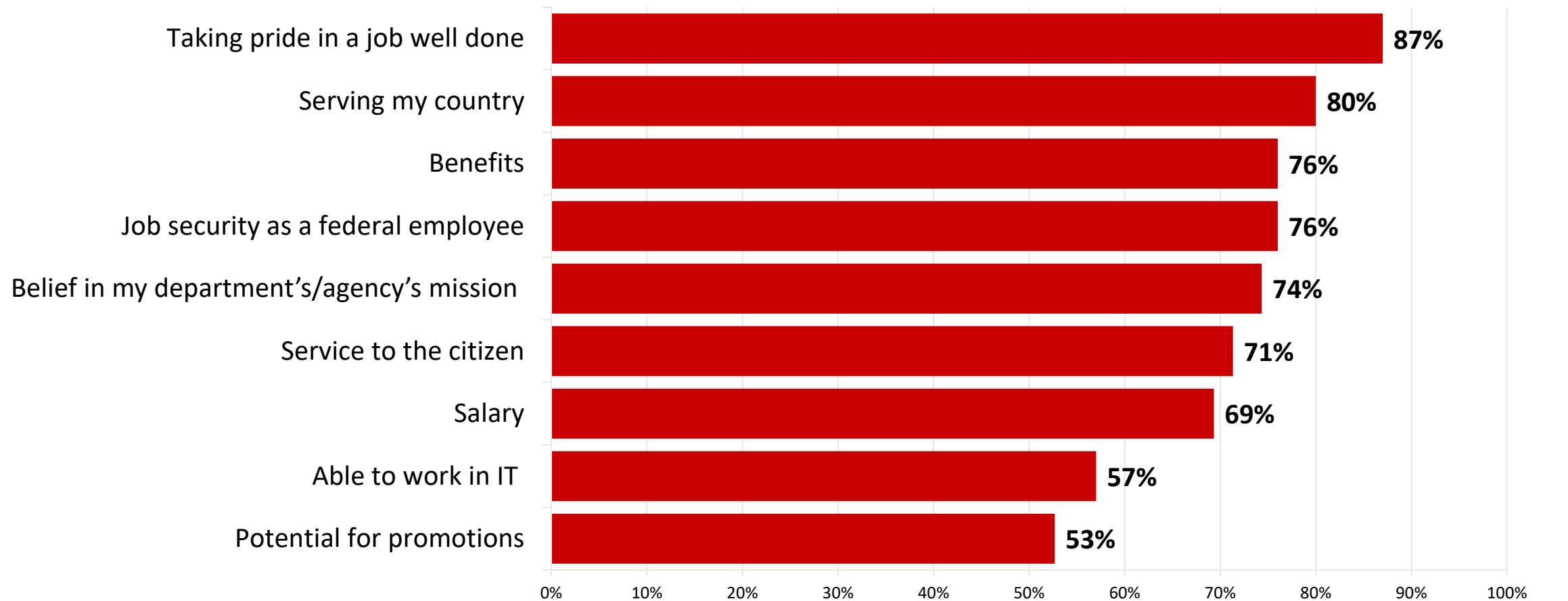





“ The mission of [AGENCY] is among the most important on the planet.

CLOUD SOLUTION ARCHITECT

Motivation to Work for the Federal Government



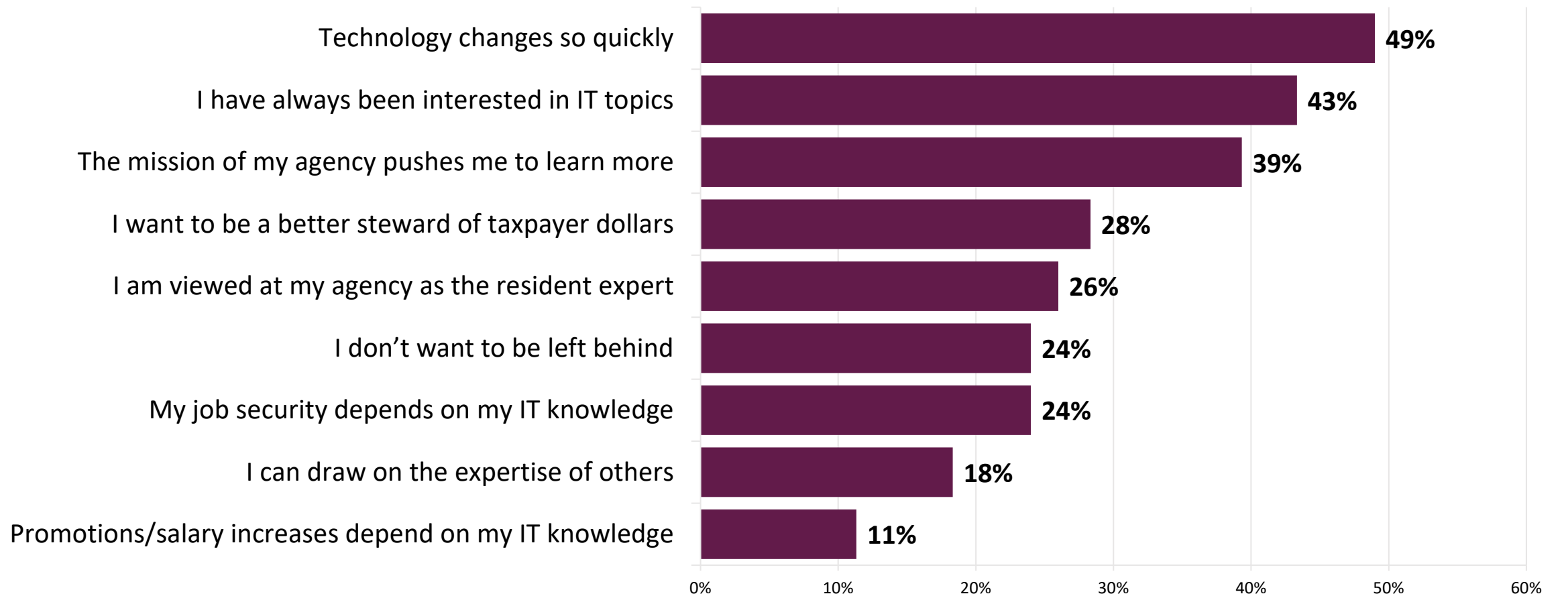
To what extent do any of the following work-related factors motivate you to work for the federal government?



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

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE

Motivation to Learn About IT



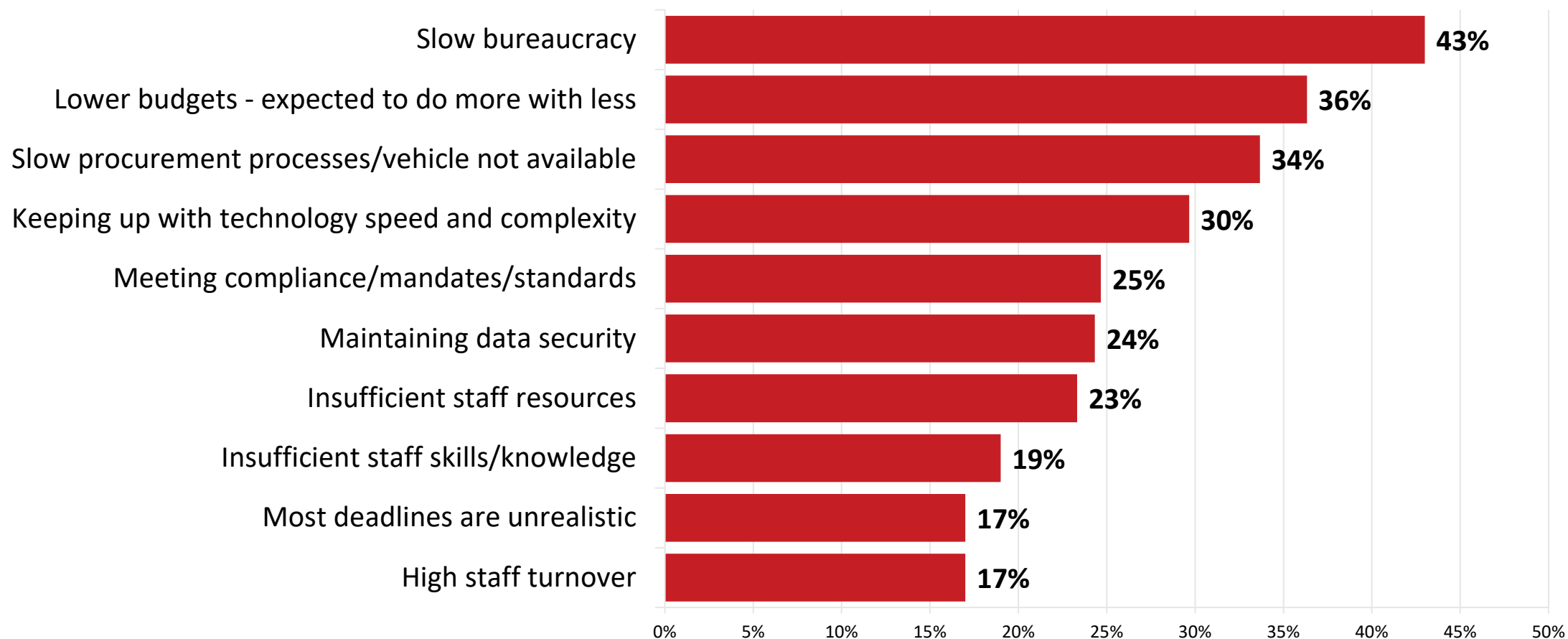


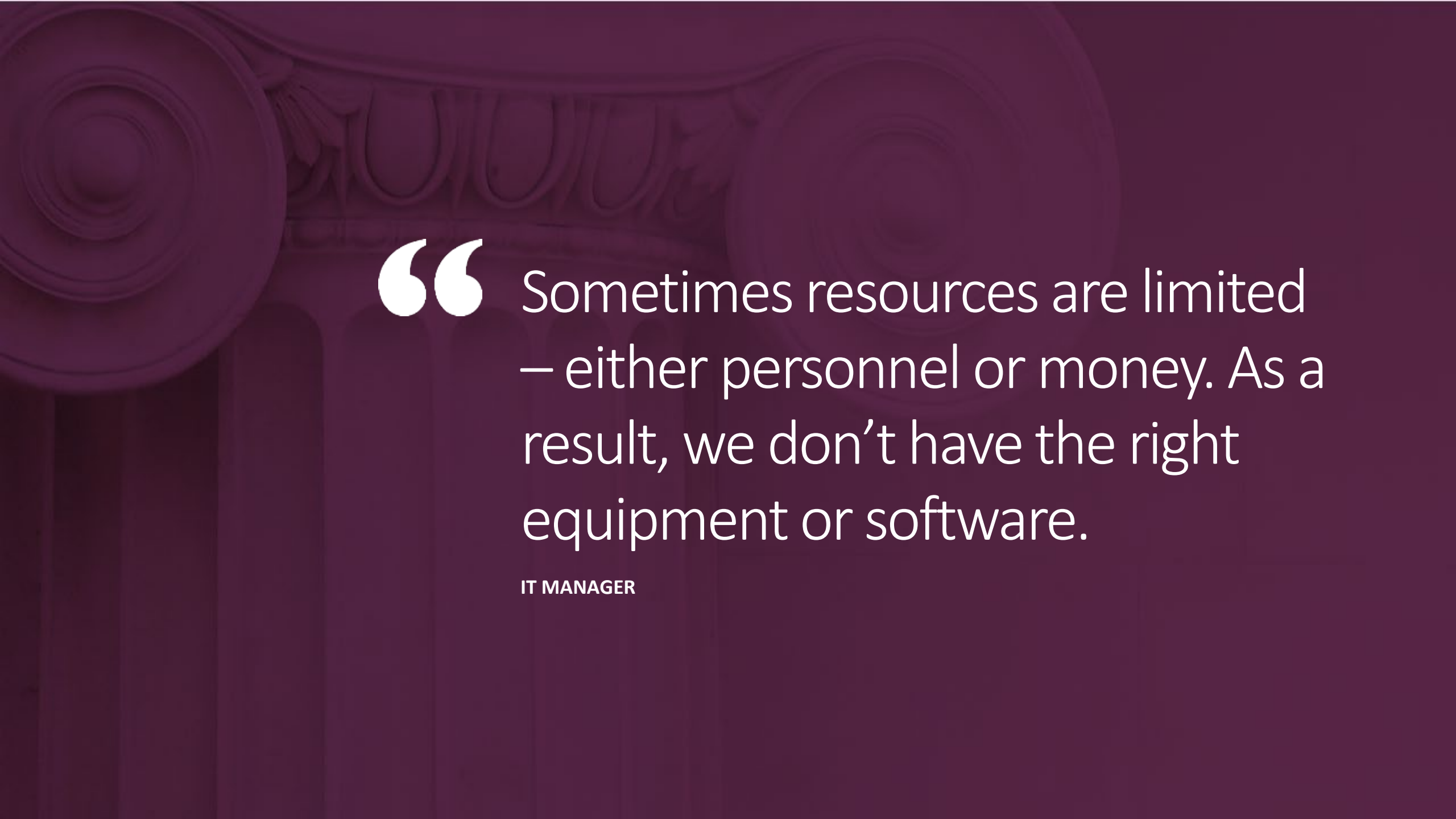
“

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

IT ARCHITECT

Top Professional Challenges



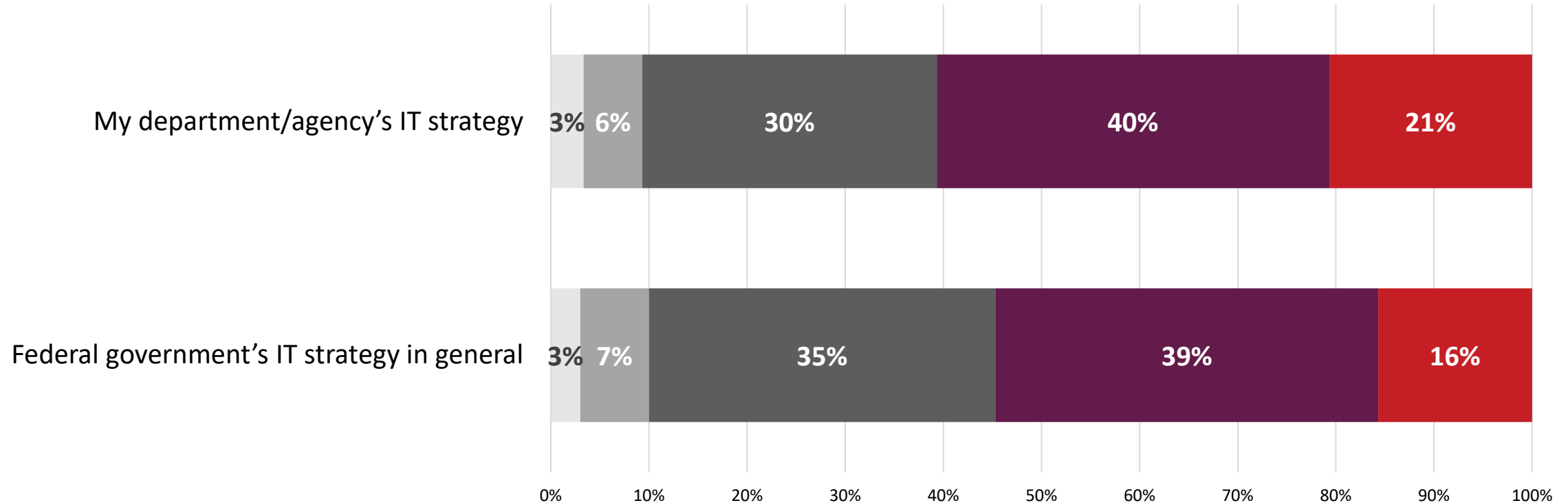


“ Sometimes resources are limited – either personnel or money. As a result, we don’t have the right equipment or software.

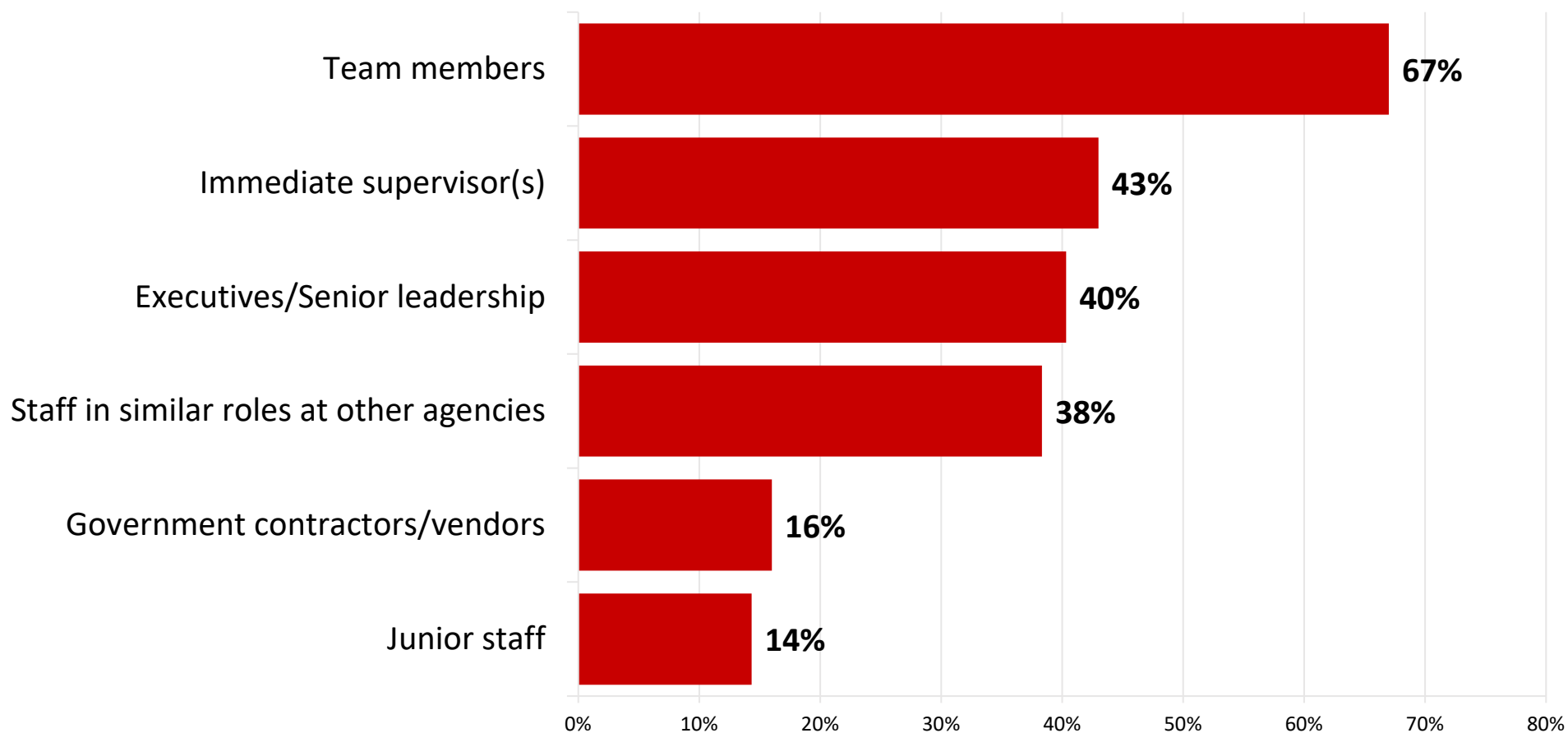
IT MANAGER

Belief IT Strategy is on Track

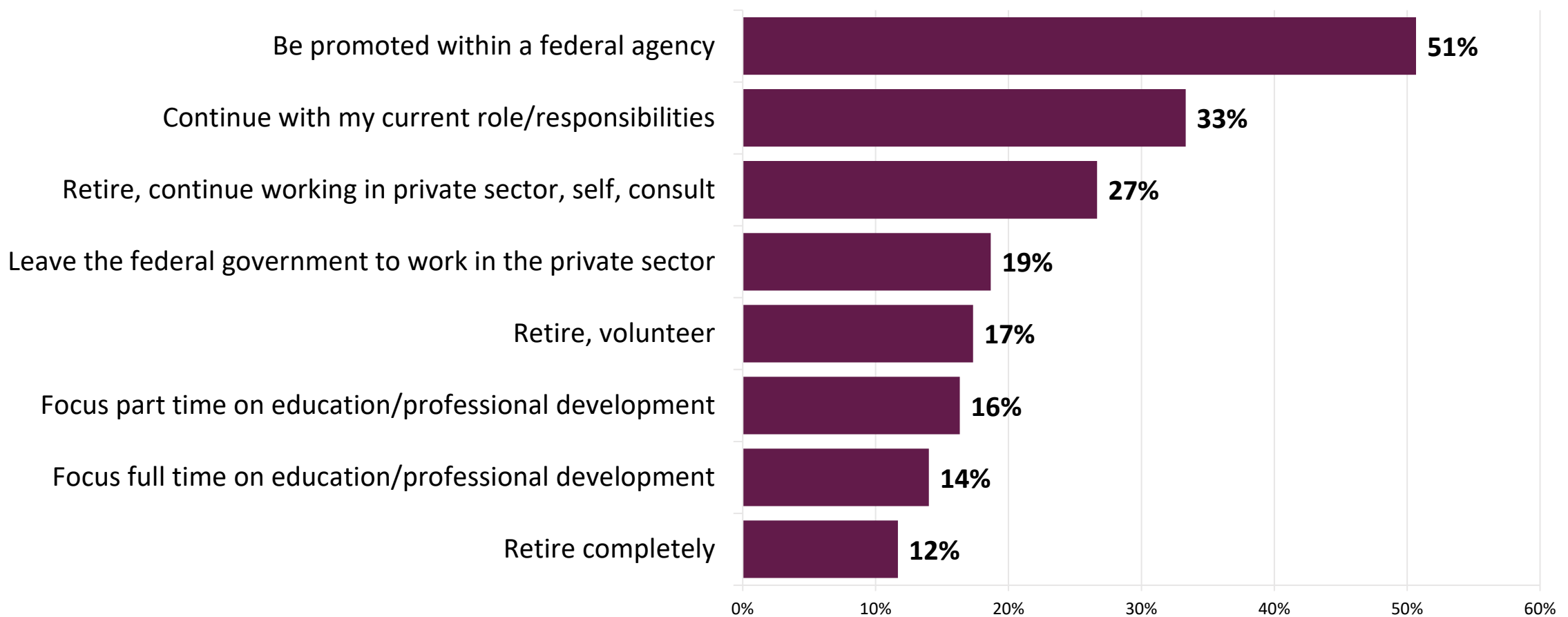
1 - Definitely on the wrong track 2 3 4 5 - Definitely on the right track



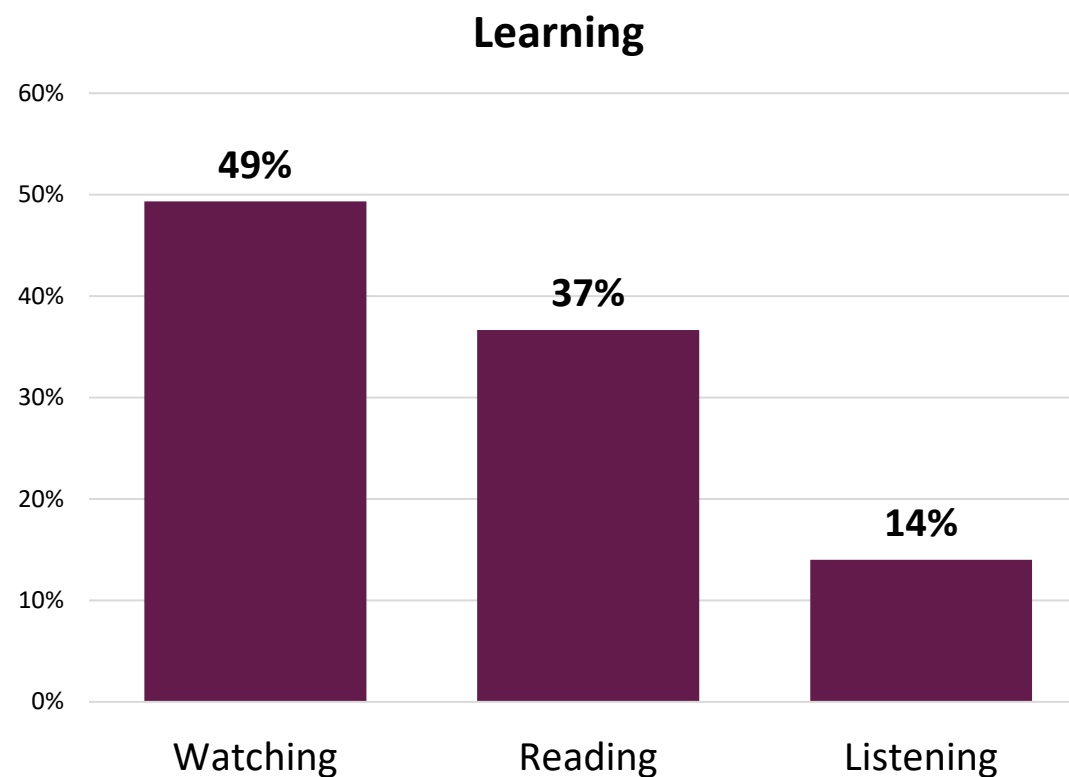
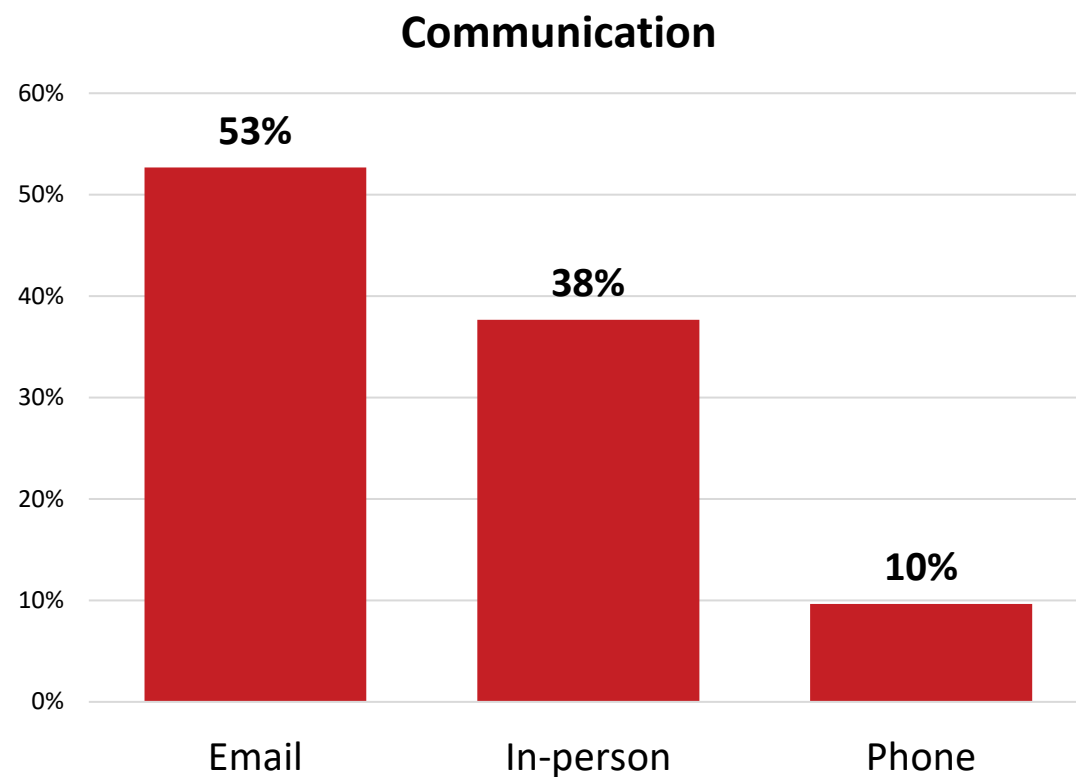
Confidence in Making Good Technology Decisions



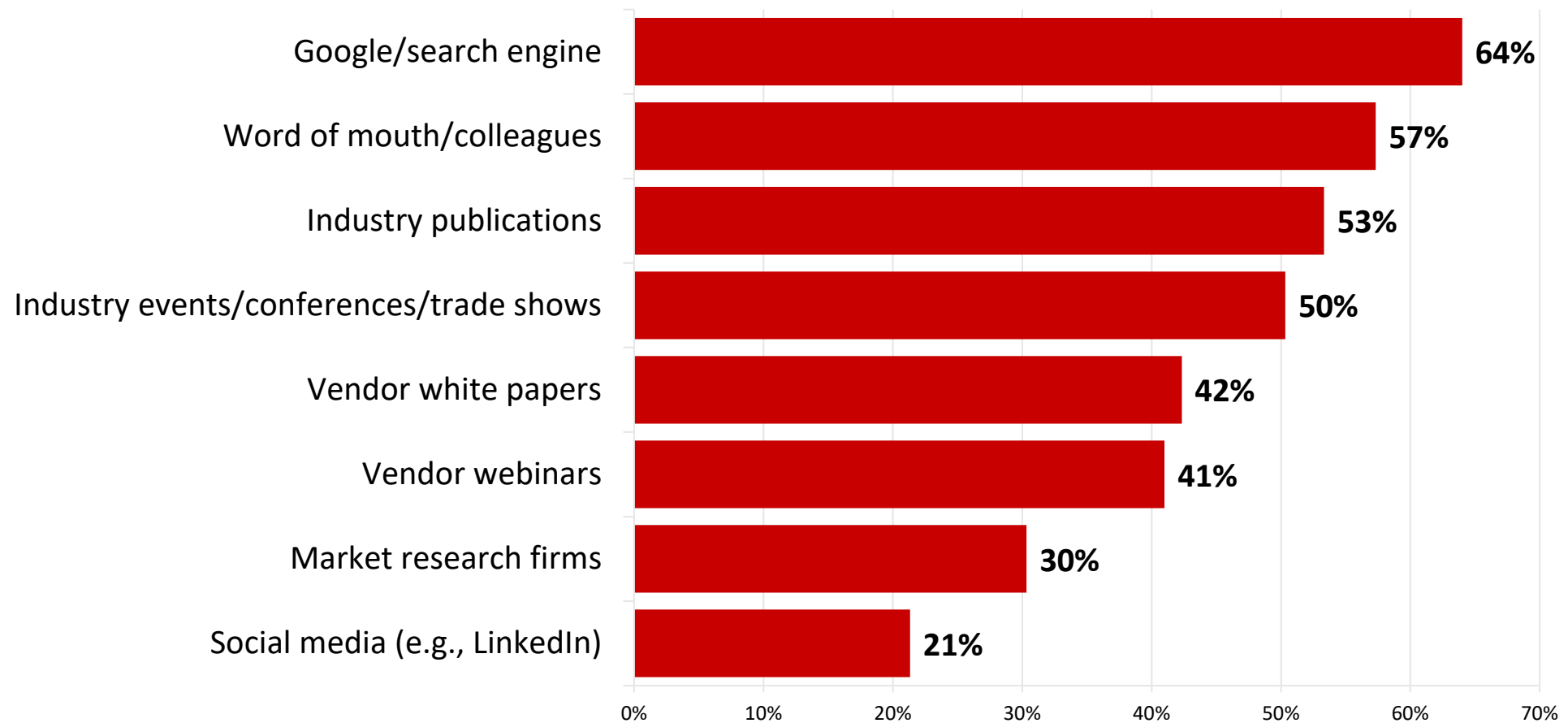
Career Plans/Ambitions for the Next Five Years



Preferred Communication and Learning Method

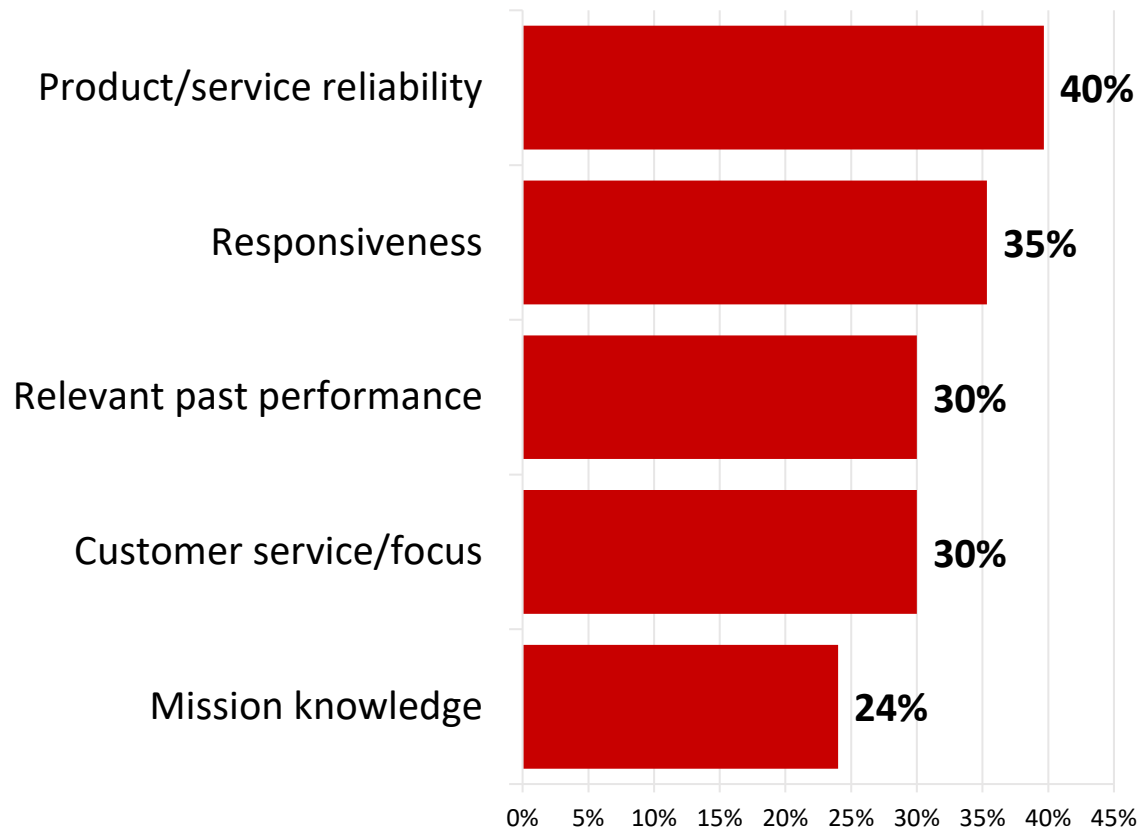


Go-To for Information to Evaluate Technology Solutions

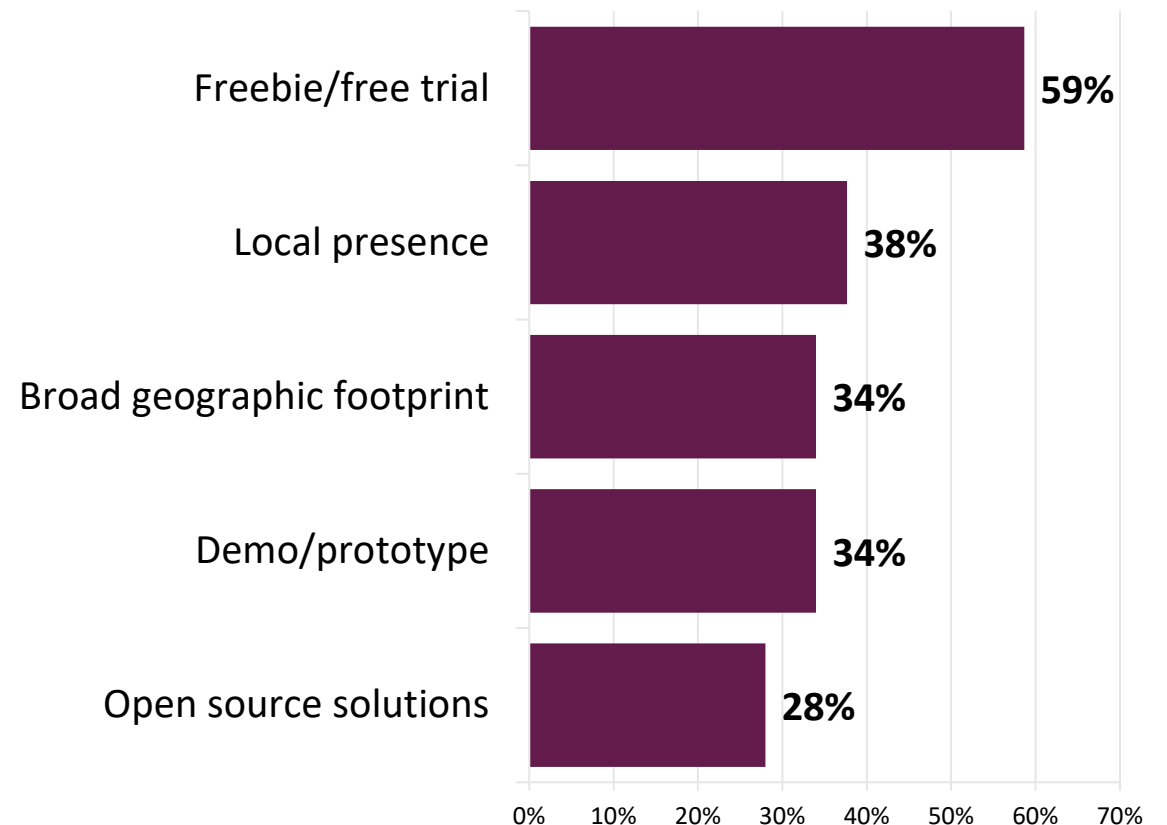


Considerations When Hiring a Vendor

Most Important

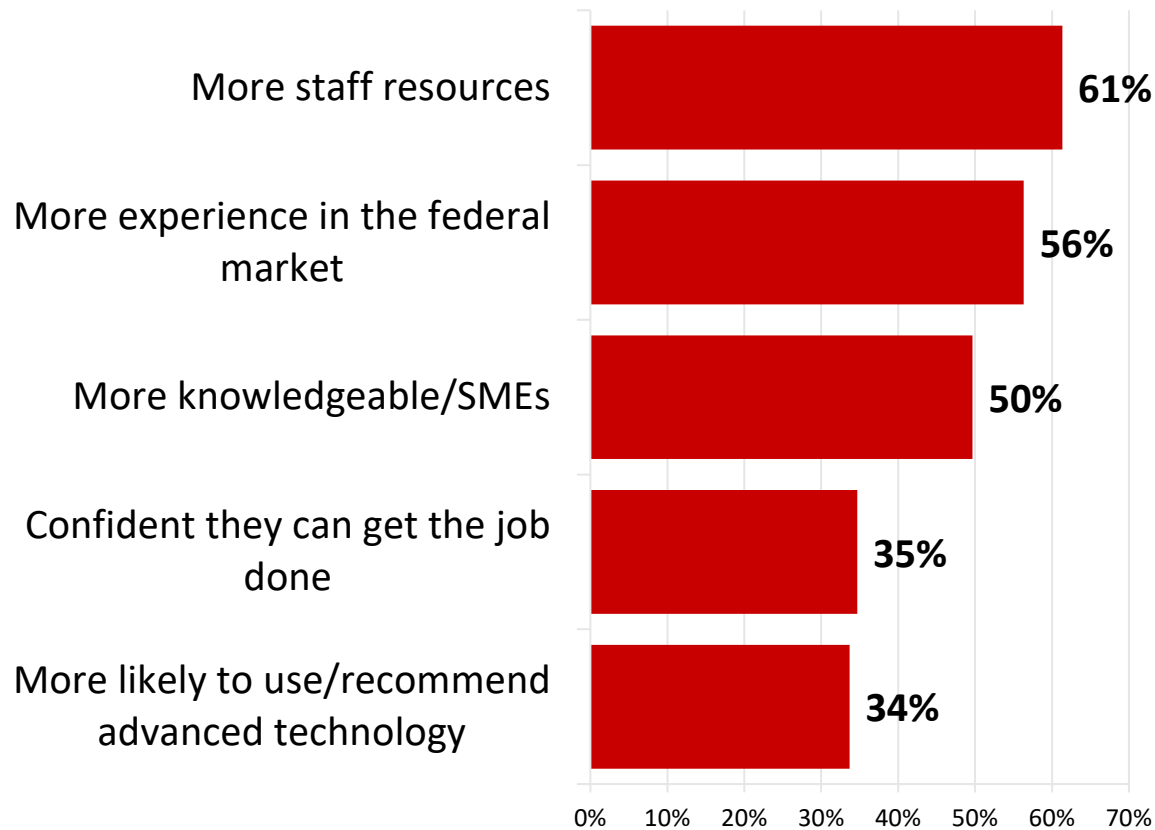


Least Important

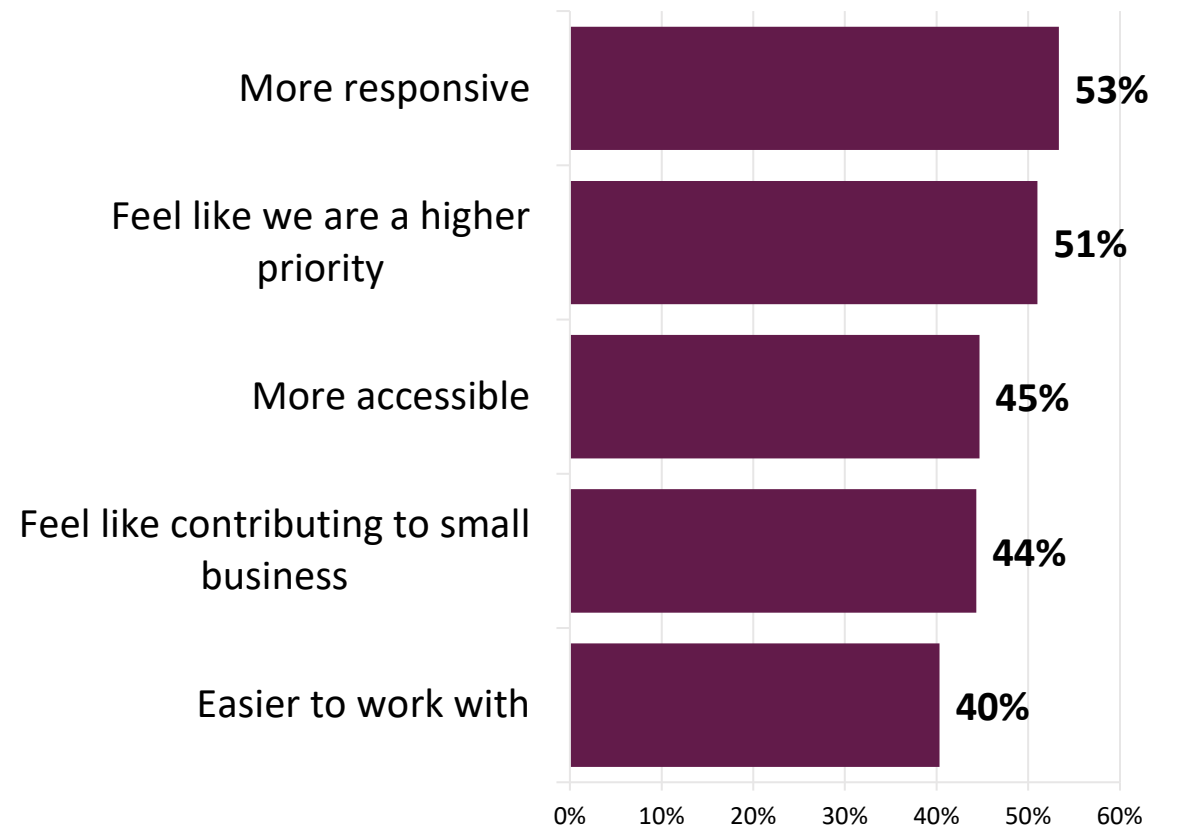


Top Benefits of Working with Vendors

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?”

Defense Agencies

Includes all branches and OSD.

Notes:

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

Defense Senior Executive

Age: 50 | Male

Education: Master's Degree
Business Administration

Location: Texas



BIO

Agency Air Force

Title CISO

Years in Current Role 5 years

Years as Federal Employee 20 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-15

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Meeting compliance/mandates/standards
- Lower budgets
- Generational differences among staff

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Belief in my department's/
agency's mission

Serving my country

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

- Responsiveness ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
- Mission knowledge ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
- Customer service/focus ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Least Important Considerations

- Freebie/free trial ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
- Local presence ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

PREFERENCES

- Communication**
- email in-person phone
- Learning**
- reading watching listening
- Discovery**
- industry events colleagues search engine

PERSONALITY TRAITS

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



For all you vendors,
understand our needs and
what we do. I don't want
to waste my limited time
explaining the technical
side of things and the
security and compliance
issues we face.

BIO

Agency Army

Title IT Specialist (civilian employee)

Years in Current Role 4 years

Years as Federal Employee 20 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-13

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Keeping up with technology speed and complexity
- Meeting compliance/mandates/standards

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Serving my country

Taking pride in a job well done

Job security as a federal employee

- **Motivation to Learn About IT** -

The mission of my agency pushes me to learn more

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

Responsiveness



Customer service/focus



Regulatory compliance



Least Important Considerations

Freebie/free trial



Broad geographic footprint



PREFERENCES

Communication



email



in-person



phone

Learning



reading



watching



listening

Discovery



search engine



industry events



industry publications

PERSONALITY TRAITS



Introvert



Proactive



Seeks information



Ahead of the curve



Deliberate decision-making



Fact-based decision-making



Cautious



What gets me fired up to come to work each morning? The pursuit of perfection. I need those I work with to be ready whenever I am.

Defense Techy

Age: 45 | Male

Education: Master's Degree
Computer Science

Location: North Carolina



BIO

Agency Air Force

Title Contract Specialist

Years in Current Role 17 years

Years as Federal Employee 23 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-12

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

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

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Taking pride in a job well done

Belief in my department's/
agency's mission

Serving my country

- **Motivation to Learn About IT** -
I have always been interested in
IT topics

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
- Regulatory compliance

Least Important Considerations

- Freebie/free trial
- Local presence

PREFERENCES

Communication



email



in-person



phone

Learning



watching



listening



reading

Discovery



vendor white
papers



search
engine



industry
publications

PERSONALITY TRAITS

- Proactive
- Seeks information
- Ahead of the curve
- Optimistic
- Adapts easily to change
- Deliberate decision-making



While large vendors may have more staff resources, I like working with small vendors because they are more responsive to my needs and it allows me to feel like we are supporting small businesses.

Defense Procurement

Age: 51 | Female

Education: Master's Degree
Finance

Location: Florida



Defense Admin/ Operations

Age: 45 | Male

Education: Bachelor's Degree
Computer Science

Location: Georgia



BIO

Agency Army

Title Supervisor of Logistics
Management

Years in Current Role 6 years

Years as Federal Employee 21 years

Pay Grade/Level O-6

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Slow bureaucracy
- Generational differences among staff

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Job security as a federal employee

Serving my country

Benefits

- **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



Financial stability



Tech support



Least Important Considerations

Local presence



Freebie/free trial



PREFERENCES

Communication



email



phone



in-person

Learning



watching



reading



listening

Discovery



search
engine



colleagues



Industry
publications

PERSONALITY TRAITS



Extrovert



Proactive



Seeks information



Ahead of the curve



Optimistic



Fact-based decision-making



Adapts easily to change



Obviously, I very much love the mission, and I'm always impressed with what our in-house IT staff manages to accomplish despite how difficult it can be to move things forward.

Defense Program Manager

Age: 49 | Male

Education: Master's Degree
Business Administration

Location: Texas



BIO

Agency Air Force

Title Program Manager

Years in Current Role 3 years

Years as Federal Employee 23 years

Pay Grade/Level GS-14

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Insufficient staff resources
- Maintaining data security

TOP WORK MOTIVATORS

Service to the citizen

Taking pride in a 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



Mission knowledge



Tech support



Least Important Considerations

Freebie/free trial



Demo/prototype



PREFERENCES

Communication



in-person



email



phone

Learning



watching



reading



listening

Discovery



industry
events



search
engine



colleagues

PERSONALITY TRAITS



Proactive



Seeks information



Ahead of the curve



Optimistic



Fact-based decision-making



Adapts easily to change



My military career taught me that my team is essential to accomplishing our mission. Because of limited staff resources here, I depend on vendors to be an extension of our team and expect them to be equally committed to meeting our goals.



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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