

Federal Employees Say They Need Training: Are the Most Critical Competencies Trainable?

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U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board
Office of Policy and Evaluation



MSPB Objectives and Functions

Objective	Function
Protect employees from abuse	Adjudicate appeals from personnel actions
Personnel decisions based on merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terminations• Demotions• Suspensions > 14 days• Reductions in pay• Others
Freedom from prohibited practices	
Personnel policies and practices based on merit	Study OPM policies and agency practices

Office of Policy and Evaluation (OPE)

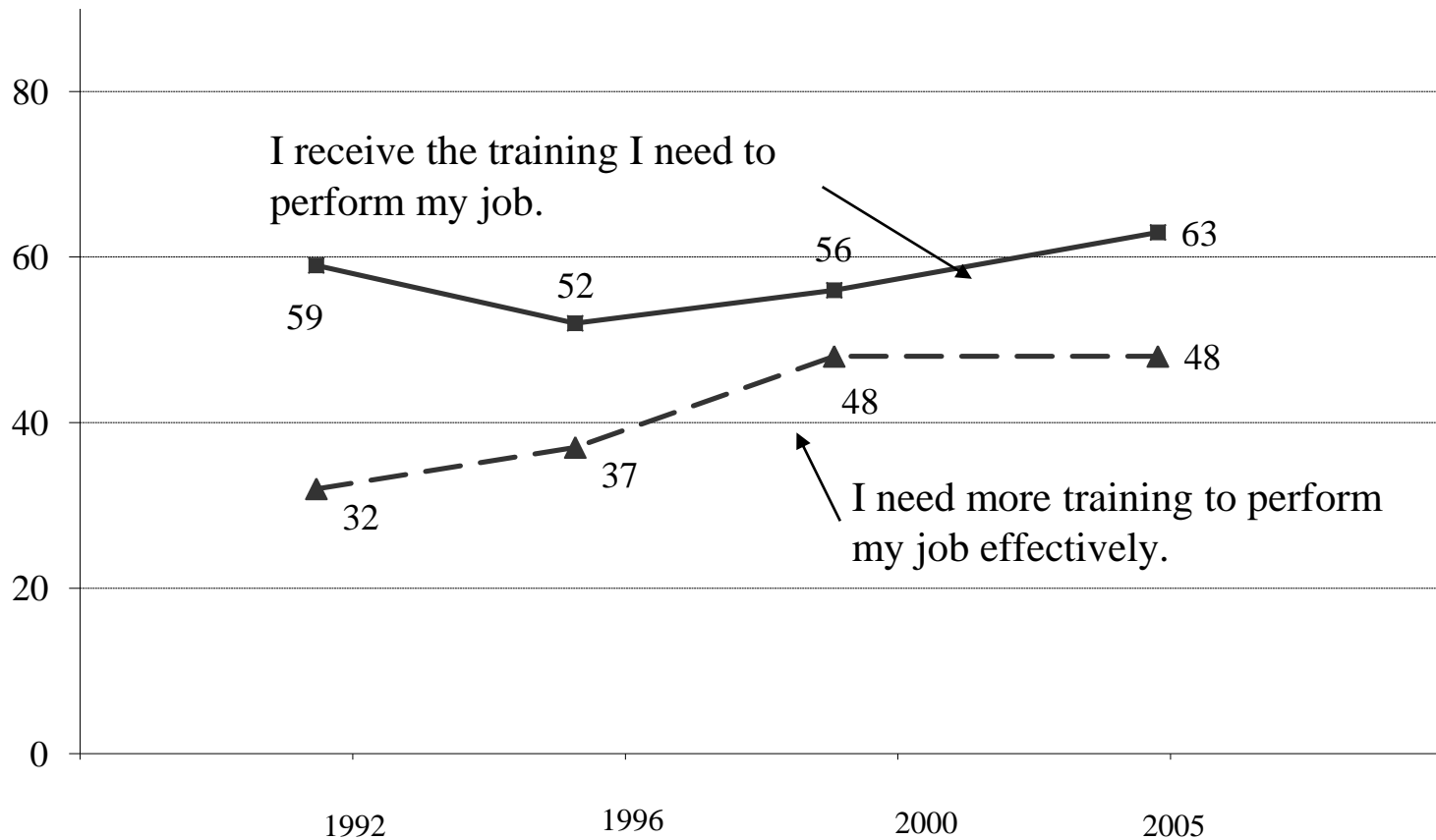
- An independent, nonpartisan perspective
 - Distinct from GAO (a Congressional agency)
 - Distinct from OPM
- Objective information on Federal human resources management (HRM) that –
 - Supports strategic, merit-based HRM
 - Educates, provides solutions, or recommends improvements
- Ensures the public's interest in a merit-based civil service

MSPB's Perspective on Training

- Merit Principles
(Section 2301, Title 5, United States Code)
 - Train employees for better organizational and individual performance
 - Select employees based on relative ability
 - Manage employees efficiently and effectively
 - Manage employees fairly and equitably
- Strategic Perspective
 - Not a substitute for training needs analysis or career development planning

Federal Training Trends

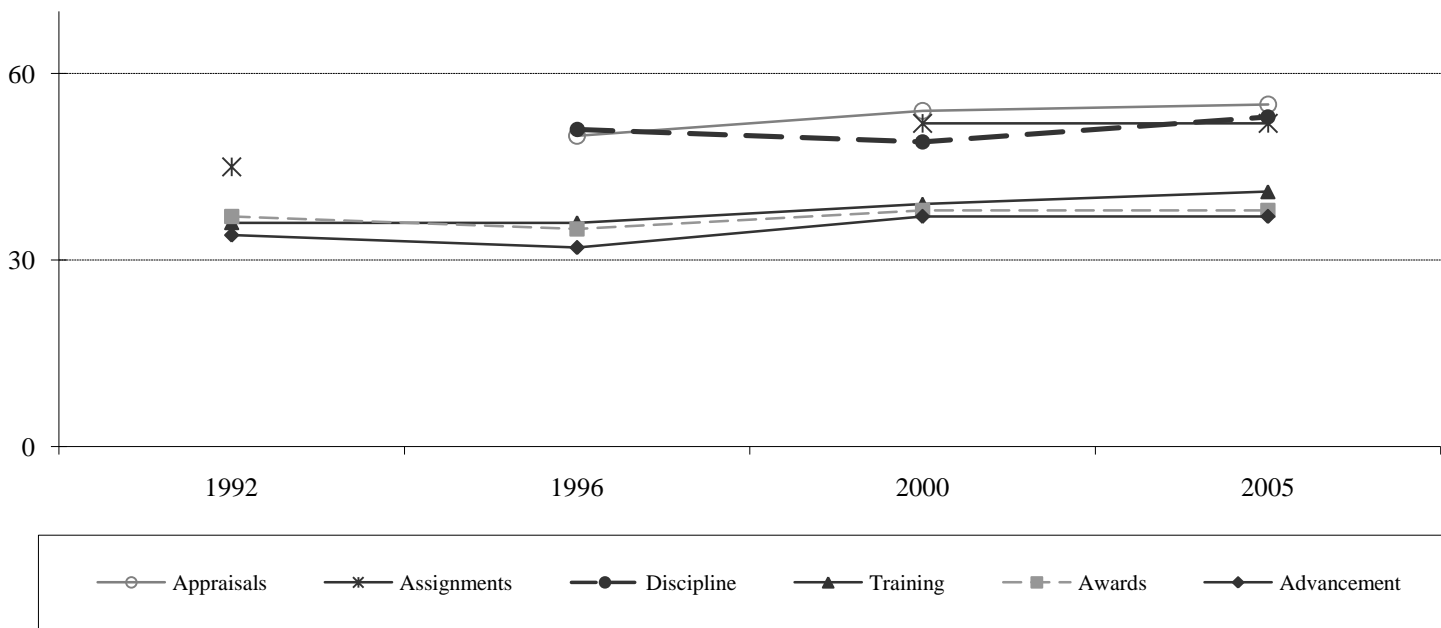
Percent of participants agreeing with two statements about their training needs in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2005



Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Surveys: 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2005, questions 15 and 16.

Treated Fairly in Past 2 Years...

Percent of participants agreeing with the statement "In the past 2 years, to what extent do you believe you have been treated fairly regarding various aspects of your job," in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2005



Note: Line breaks occur during years the question was not asked.

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Surveys: 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2005, questions 22a-22f.

Merit Principles Surveys

- MSPB's statutory responsibility to assess the "health" of merit systems
- Periodically for the past 20 years
- Questions determined by:
 - Are merit principles being followed?
 - How prevalent are prohibited personnel practices?
 - What are OPE's current research topics?
- Our focus: MPS 2005 & MPS 2007

MPS 2005 Training Needs Question

“Briefly describe, in one or two sentences, the most important skill or ability you could learn to improve your performance in your current job.

Please describe this skill or ability well enough that a training specialist who does not know your job could understand what you need to learn.”

OPM Executive Core Qualifications

- **Leading Change**

Continual Learning, Public Service Motivation, Creativity and Innovation, External Awareness, Flexibility, Resilience, Strategic Thinking and Vision

- **Leading People**

Integrity / Honesty, Conflict Management, Leveraging Diversity, Developing Others and Team Building

- **Results Driven**

Accountability, Customer Service, Decisiveness, Entrepreneurship, Problem Solving and Technical Credibility

- **Business Acumen**

Financial Management, Human Capital Management & Technology Management

- **Building Coalitions**

Written Communication, Oral Communication, Interpersonal Skills, Partnering, Political Savvy, and Influencing / Negotiating

Executive Core Qualifications

Extended

- Leading Change

Learning Ability, Motivation, Creativity and Innovation, Context Knowledge, Flexibility, Resilience, Planning Work and Vision

- Leading People

Integrity / Honesty, Conflict Skills, Leveraging Diversity, and Teamwork

- Results Driven

Making Standards, Customer Skills, Decisiveness, Entrepreneurship, Analyzing & Solving and Job Knowledge

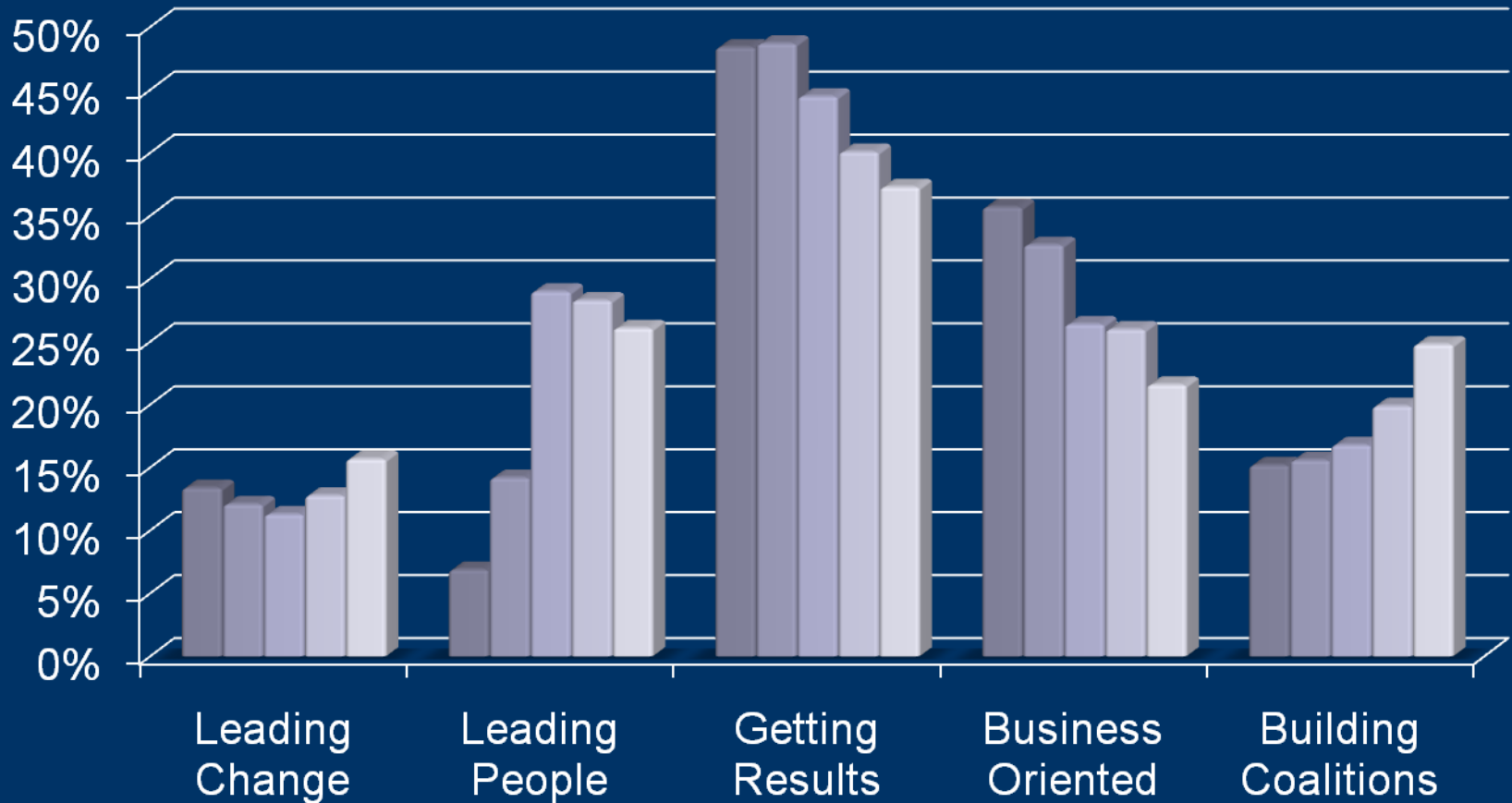
- Business Acumen

Financial Calculation, HR Knowledge & Computer Skills

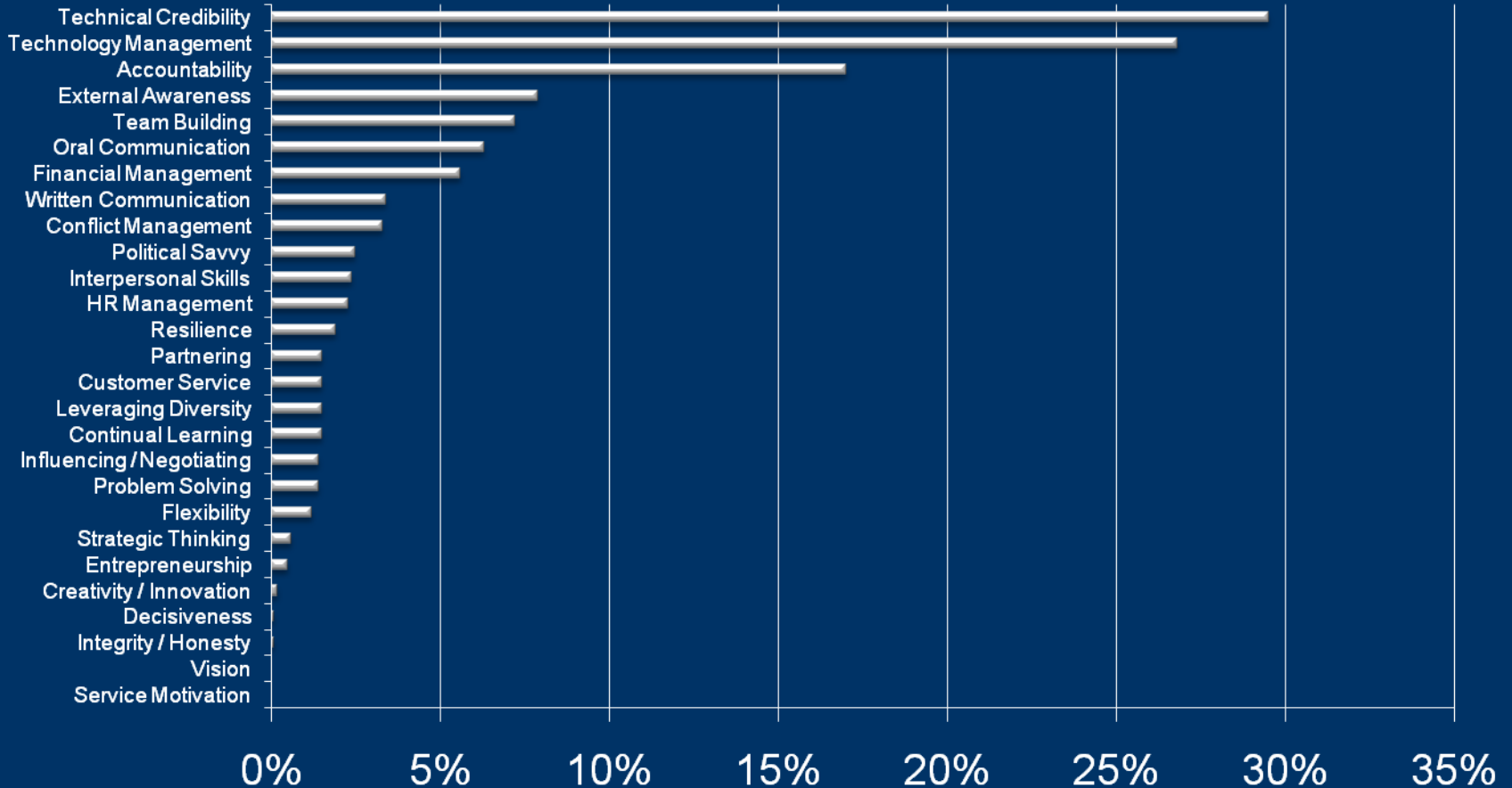
- Building Coalitions

Written Communication, Oral Communication, Interpersonal Skills, Partnering, Political Savvy, and Influencing / Negotiating

Most Needed ECQ by Leadership Level



Most Needed Competency



MPS 2007 Critical Competency Question

“Your agency is hiring more staff as a result of increased funding and expansion of its mission. You have been asked to help hire a new employee who will be doing the same type and level of work that you do, but will be part of a different work team.

Please describe in a few words or phrases the *most important knowledge, skill, or ability* this new employee needs to do his or her job well.”

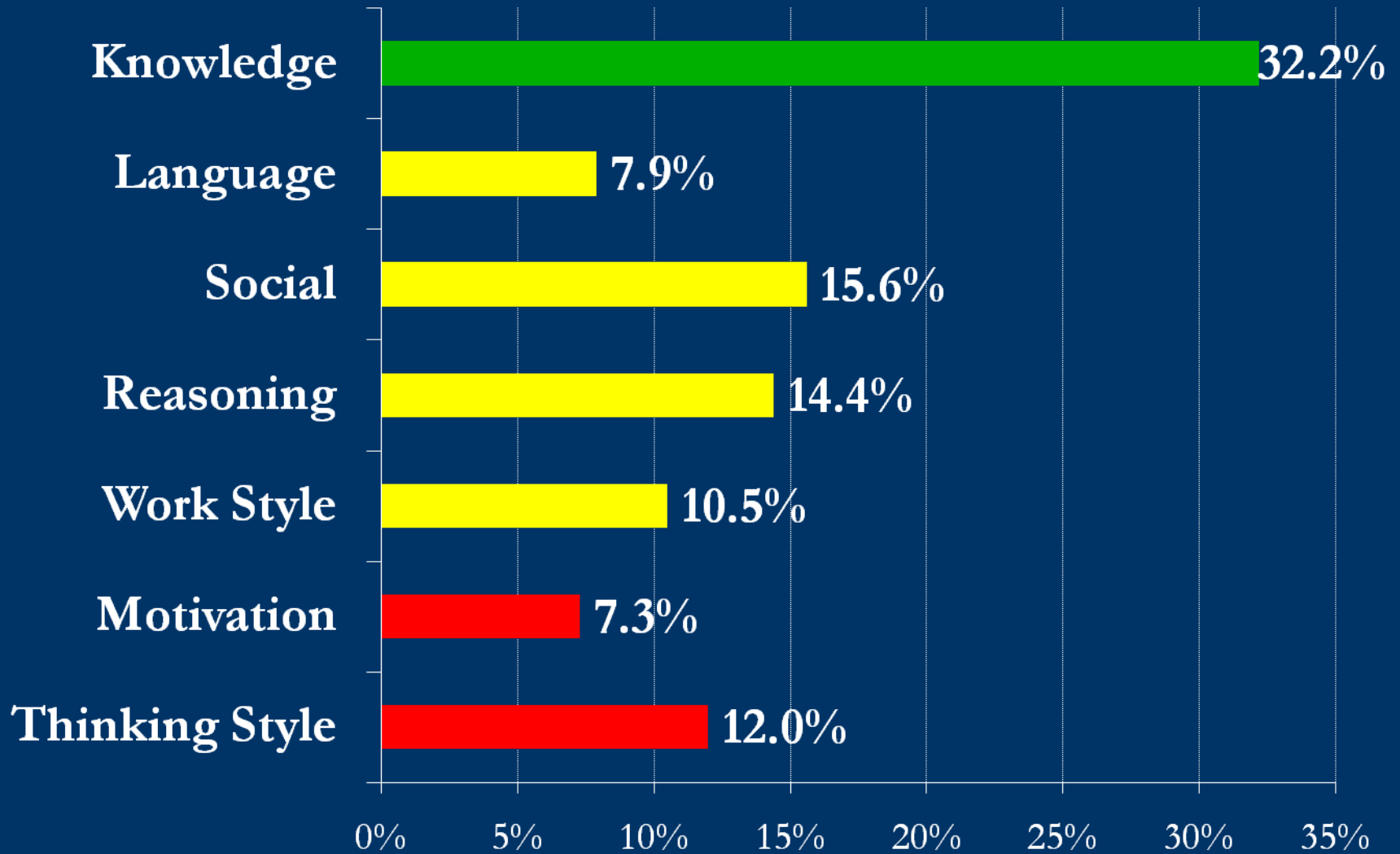
Grouped by Human Abilities

- **Knowledge**
Job Knowledge, Context Knowledge & HR Knowledge
- **Language**
Oral Communication & Written Communication
- **Social**
Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork, Conflict Skills, Diversity Skills, Customer Skills, Influencing & Negotiating, Partnering & Political Savvy
- **Reasoning**
Analyzing & Solving, Financial Calculation & Computer Skills
- **Work Style**
Planning Work & Making Standards
- **Motivation**
Resilience, Work Motivation, Integrity & Vision
- **Thinking Style**
Flexibility, Creativity, Learning Ability, Decisiveness & Entrepreneurship

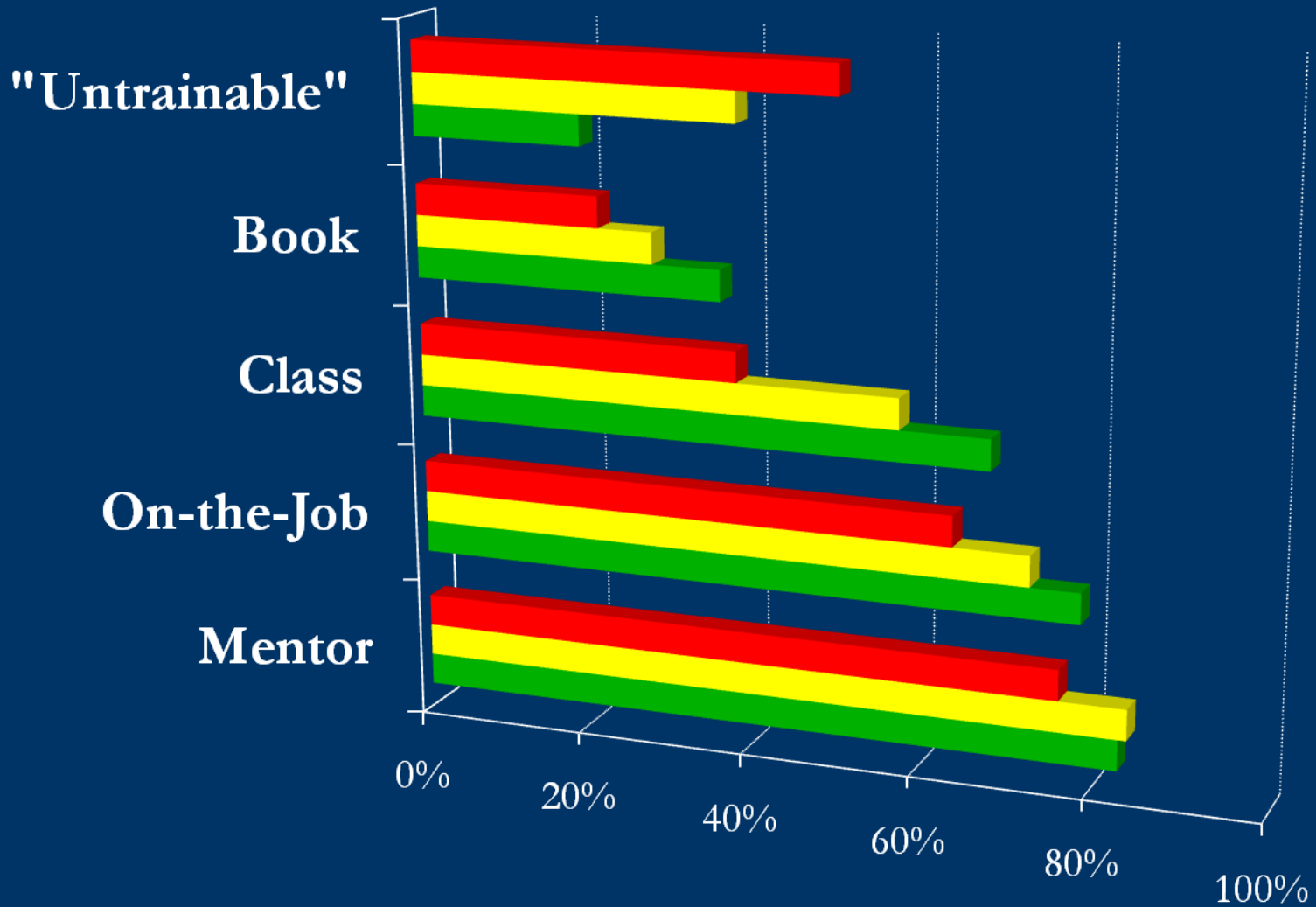
...and by Trainability

- **Knowledge (+)**
Job Knowledge, Context Knowledge & HR Knowledge
- **Language (\approx)**
Oral Communication & Written Communication
- **Social (\approx)**
Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork, Conflict Skills, Diversity Skills, Customer Skills, Influencing & Negotiating, Partnering & Political Savvy
- **Reasoning (\approx)**
Analyzing & Solving, Financial Calculation & Computer Skills
- **Work Style (\approx)**
Planning Work & Making Standards
- **Motivation (-)**
Resilience, Work Motivation, Integrity & Vision
- **Thinking Style (-)**
Flexibility, Creativity, Learning Ability, Decisiveness & Entrepreneurship

Most Important KSA

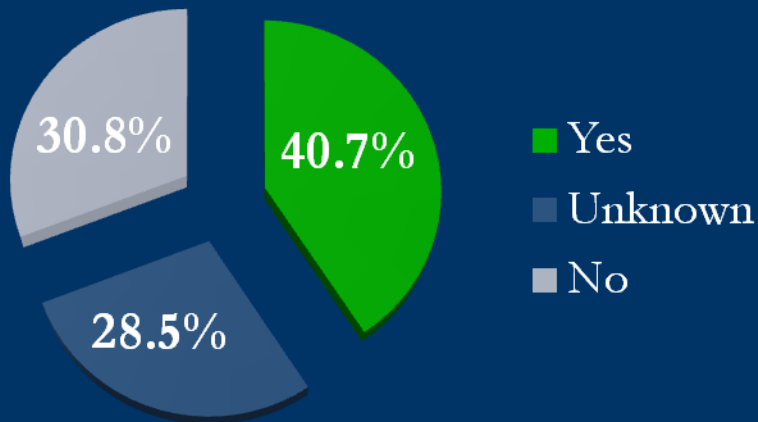


"Could you learn it from...?"

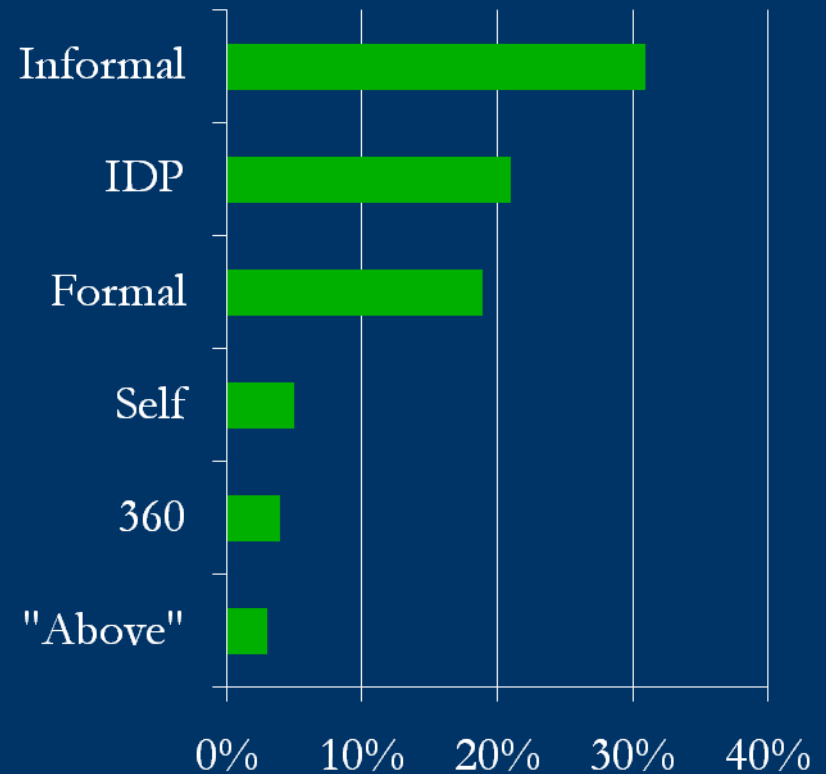


Training Needs Analysis

Training needs assessed?



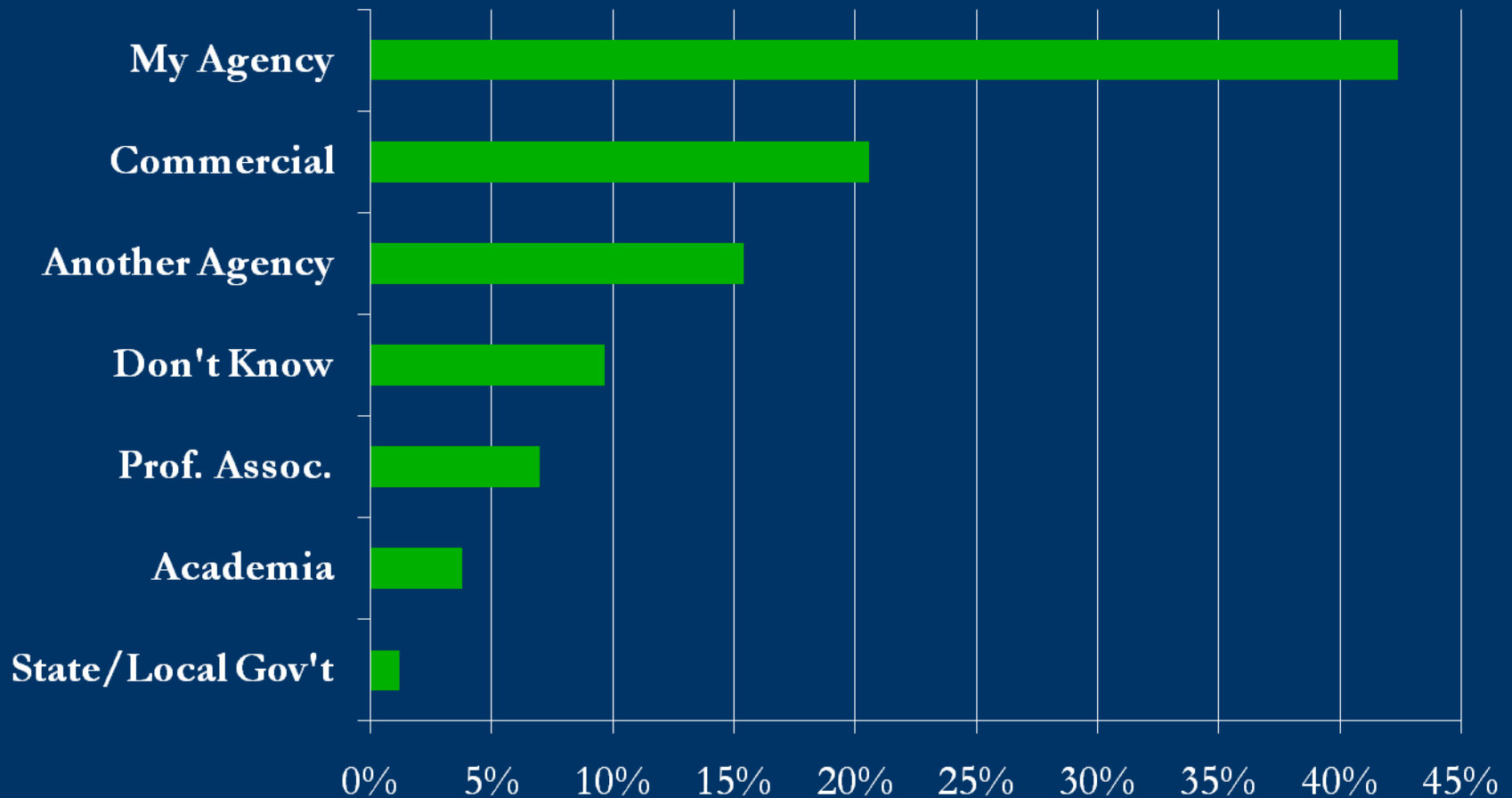
If so, how?



Recommendations

- *Job analysis* should include consideration of competency trainability
- *Training needs analysis* should include consideration of competency trainability
- *Training prerequisites* should include consideration of competency trainability
- *Employee expectations* should be tempered by consideration of competency trainability

Who develops the training?



Desirable Outcomes

- Better organizational and individual performance
 - Select employees based on key abilities
 - More efficient and effective training
 - Increased fairness and perceived fairness in access to training
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- More effective organizational needs analysis and career development planning

For More Information

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