

# **Tomorrow's Professional: Employer Demand for Public Relations Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

**Donald K. Wright, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA,**  
Harold Burson professor and chair in public relations,  
College of Communication, Boston University

**Christina M. Darnowski, MLS,** director of research  
and project management, PRSA

# Research Objectives

- This study will provide information to establish a definition for the role of the public relations professional in 2015 by examining knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) deemed necessary for future career success by current employers of public relations professionals.
- Knowledge, skills and abilities for success will be examined by:
  - Career stages (entry, mid-career and senior).
  - Organizational setting (agency, corporate, nonprofit/association, government).

# Research Objectives

- **The study will explore specific questions about how KSAs will be impacted over the next five years by factors such as:**
  - Social media/new communications.
  - Disintegration of traditional media.
  - Integrated marketing/communications.
  - Globalization (including foreign language abilities).
  - Demand for results – focus on measurement and evaluation.
- **KSA's and proficiencies deemed important for the future will be compared to what public relations practitioners currently report doing.**
  - Comparison with UAB's recent "Practice Analysis."

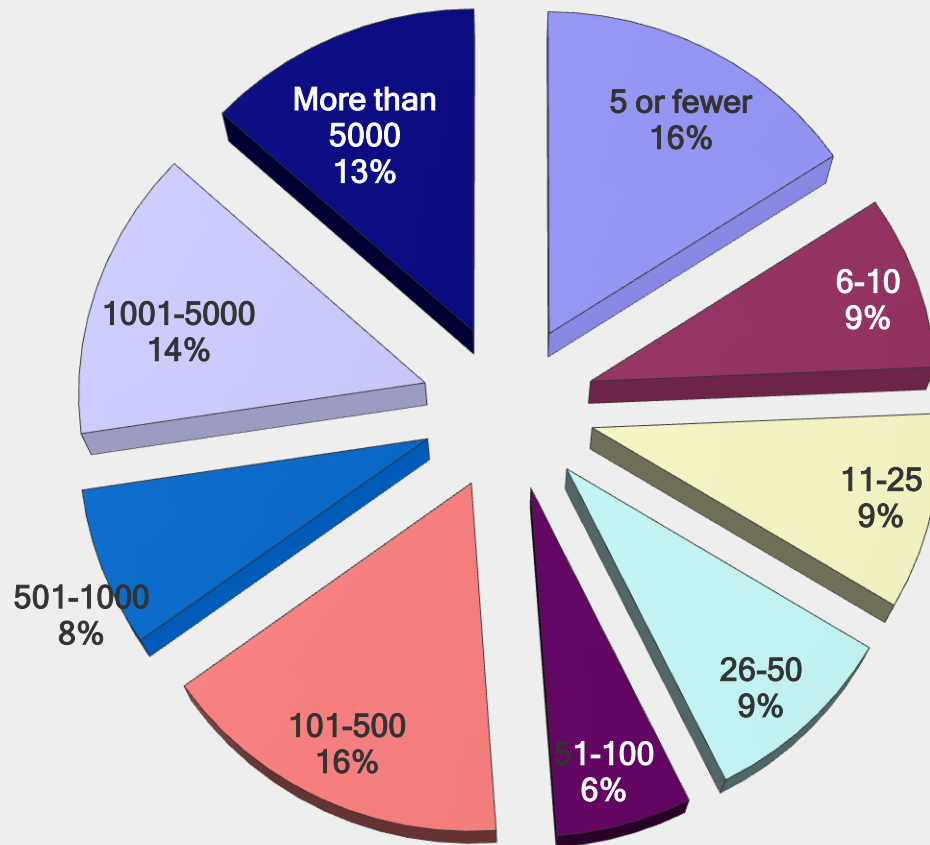
# A First Look at the Results...

- What proficiencies (public relations related) and knowledge, skills and abilities (broader) do current employers of public relations practitioners feel will be most important for public relations or communication practitioners in 2015?
- How do KSA's and proficiencies deemed important for the future differ by career stage?

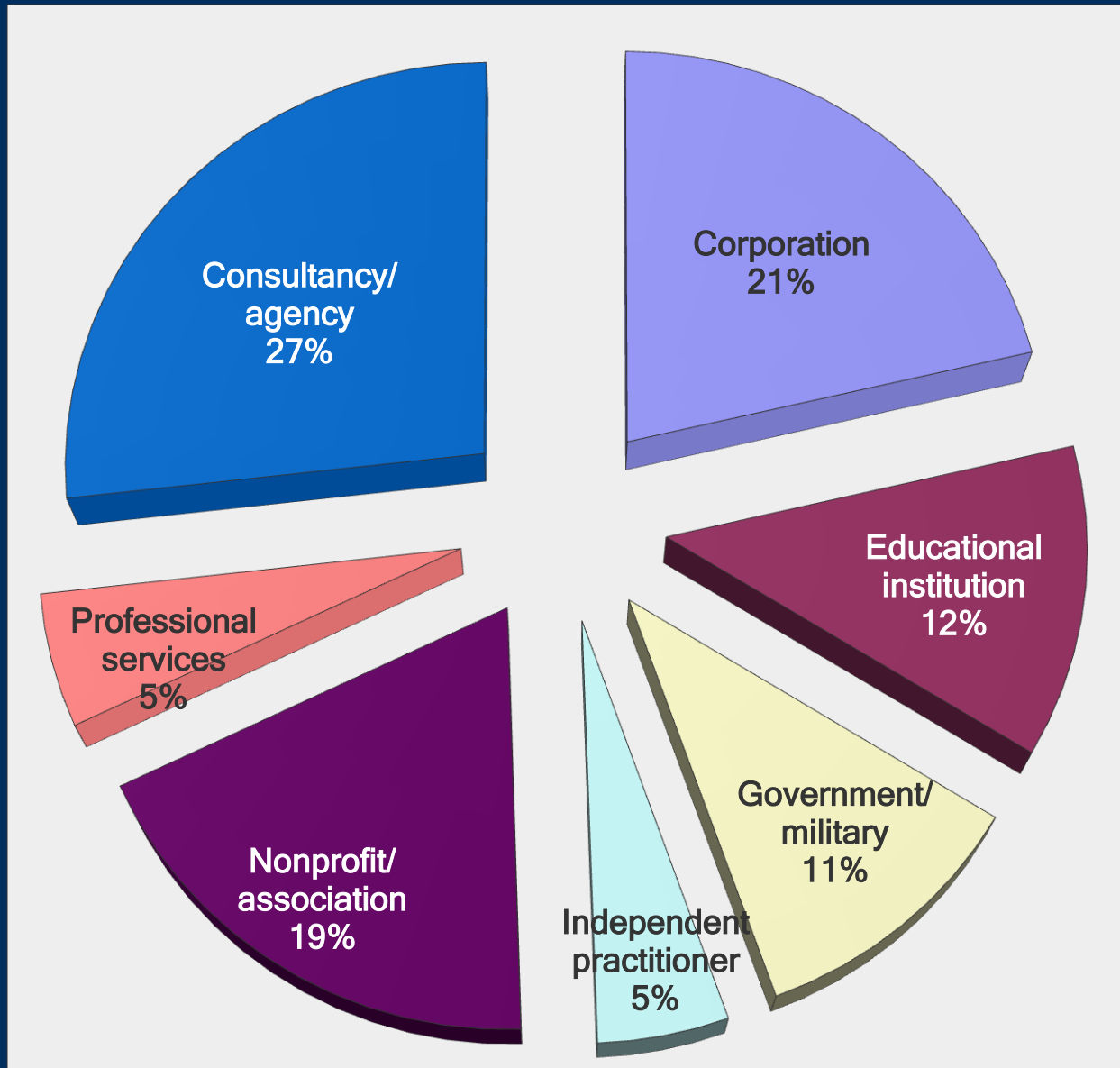
# Methodology

- E-mail survey fielded August – September, 2010.
- Sent to PRSA members and PRSA prospects (Conference attendees, Silver Anvil entrants, PD seminar attendees, others who have purchased products and services from PRSA).
- Total of 1,060 completed surveys; 794 from PRSA members, 266 from PRSA prospects.

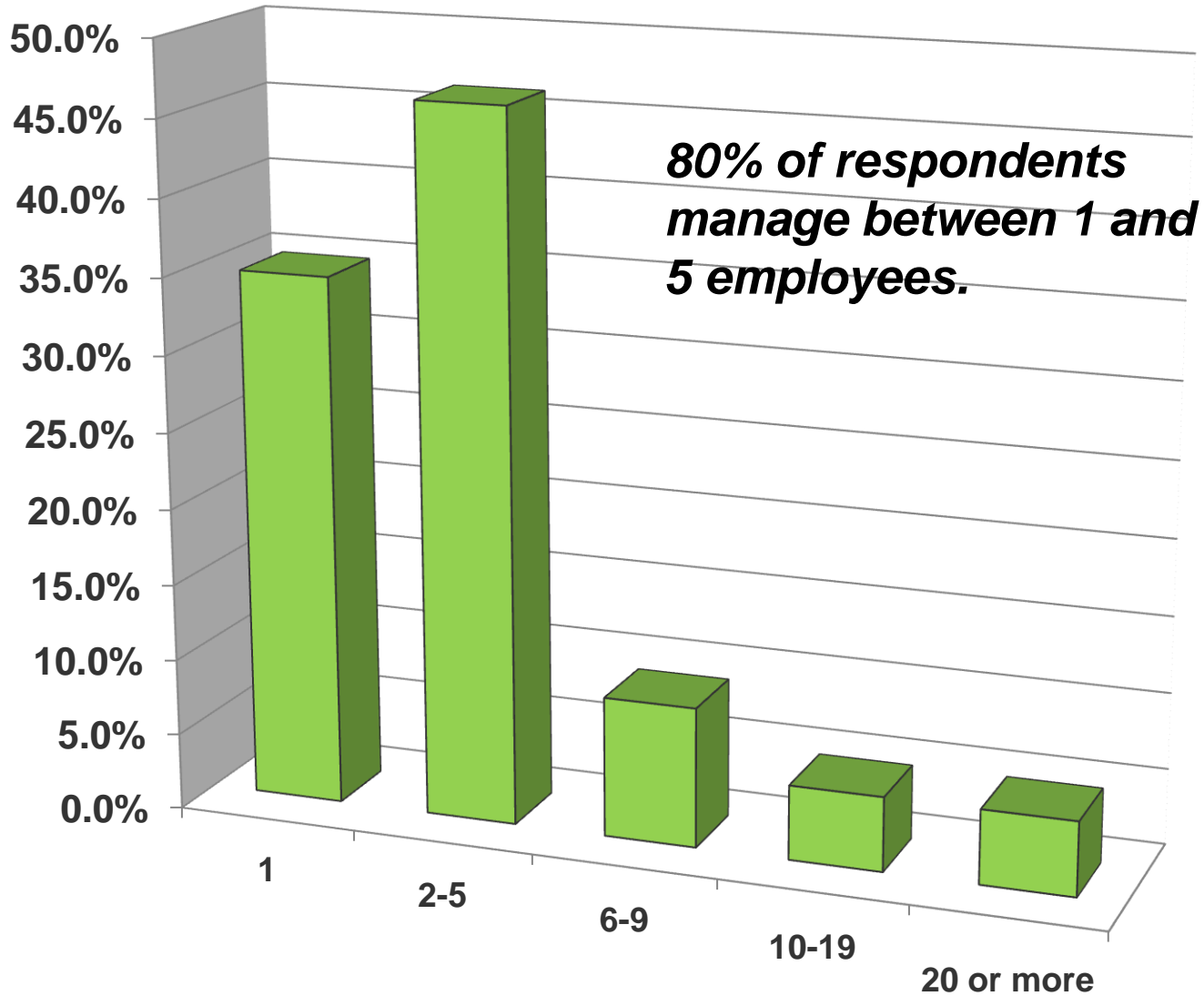
# How many employees does your organization have?



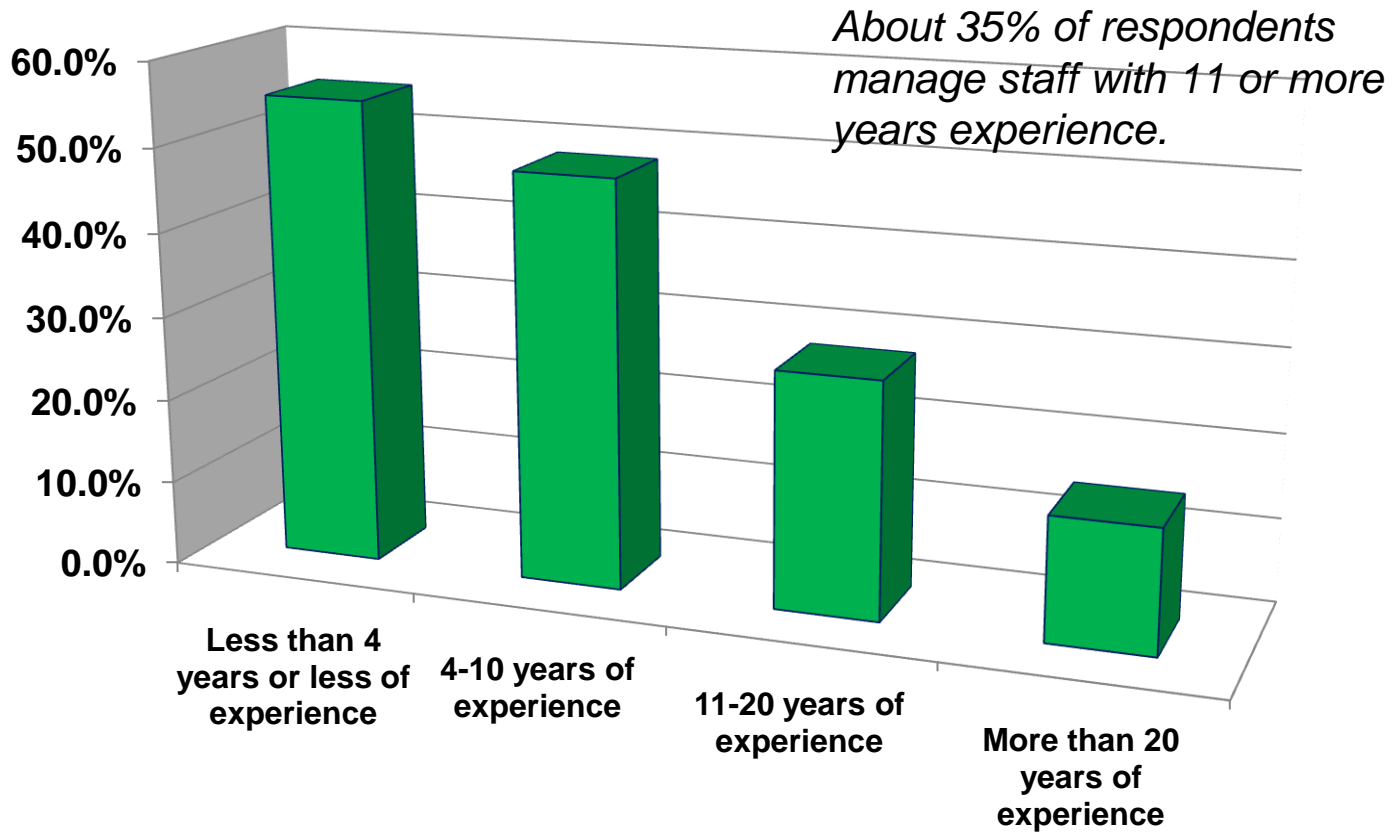
# Which of the following best describes where you work?



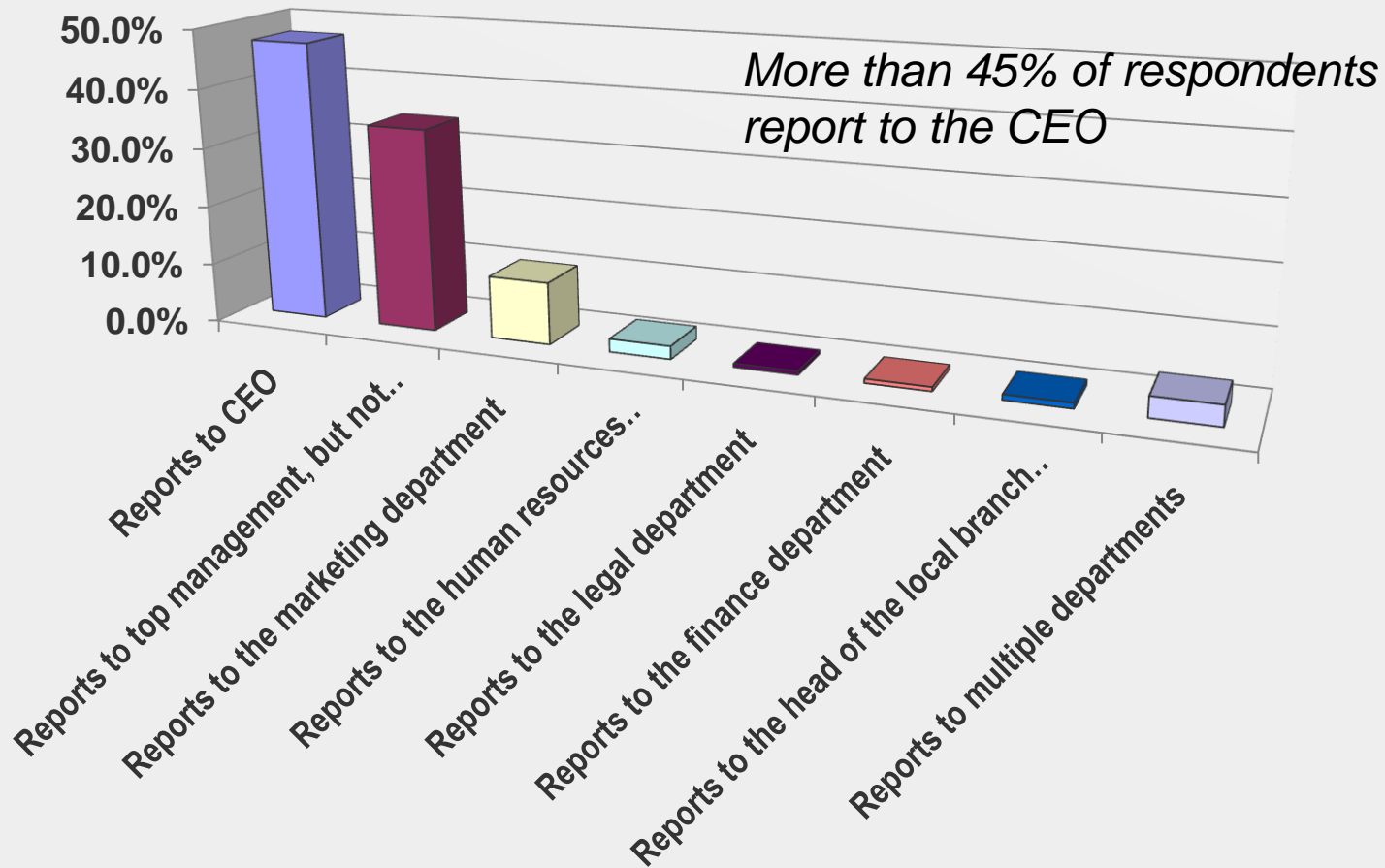
# How many public relations or communication practitioners report to you?



# What level(s) are the public relations or communication practitioner(s) that report to you? Select all that apply.



# Where does the public relations or communications department fall within the organization where you work?



# How important will the following proficiencies be for public relations or communication practitioners in 2015?

Very Important



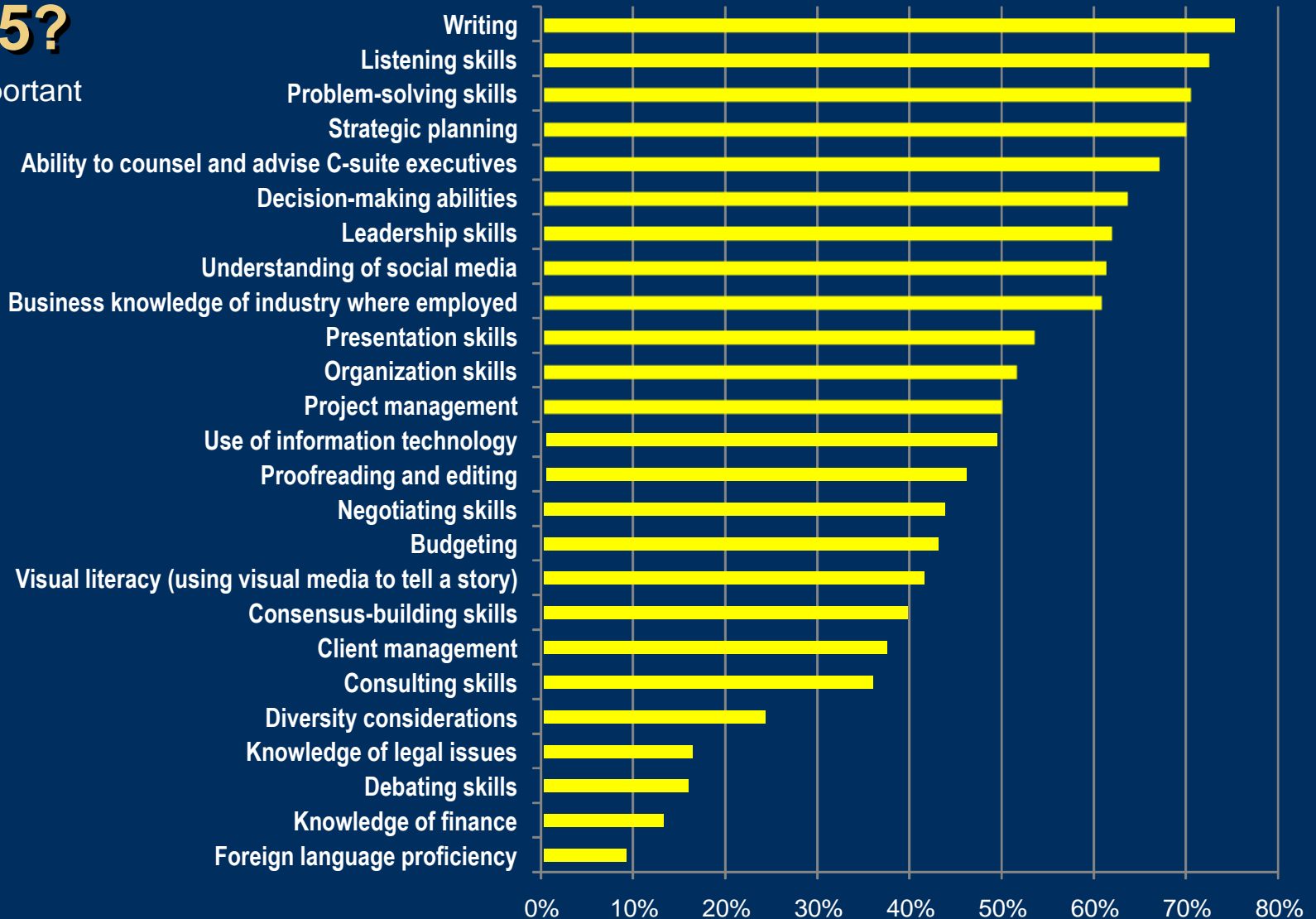
# How important will the following proficiencies be for public relations or communication practitioners in 2015?

## Top proficiencies by tenure in the profession

Issues Management				X
Understanding public relations in a global environment				X
Reputation management			X	X
Crisis communications		X	X	X
Brand building		X	X	
Integrated marketing/communication		X		
Public relations program planning		X		
Media relations	X	X		
Social media engagement	X	X		
Years experience in public relations	Under 4	4-10	11-20	Over 20

# How important will the following KSA's be for public relations and communication practitioners in 2015?

■ Very Important



# How important will the following KSA's be for public relations and communication practitioners in 2015?

Top KSA's by tenure in the profession

Leadership skills				<b>X</b>
Strategic planning				<b>X</b>
Ability to counsel and advise c-suite executives			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Business knowledge of industry where employed		<b>X</b>		
Client management		<b>X</b>		
Listening skills	<b>X</b>			
Writing	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>Years experience in public relations</b>	<b>Under 4</b>	<b>4-10</b>	<b>11-20</b>	<b>Over 20</b>

# Proficiencies and KSA's deemed most important for public relations practitioners in 2015

At least 50% of respondents rated very important



- Additional analysis to follow.
- Final report to be available early in 2011.

Thank you!