Workplace Environment at Oregon's Office of Emergency Management

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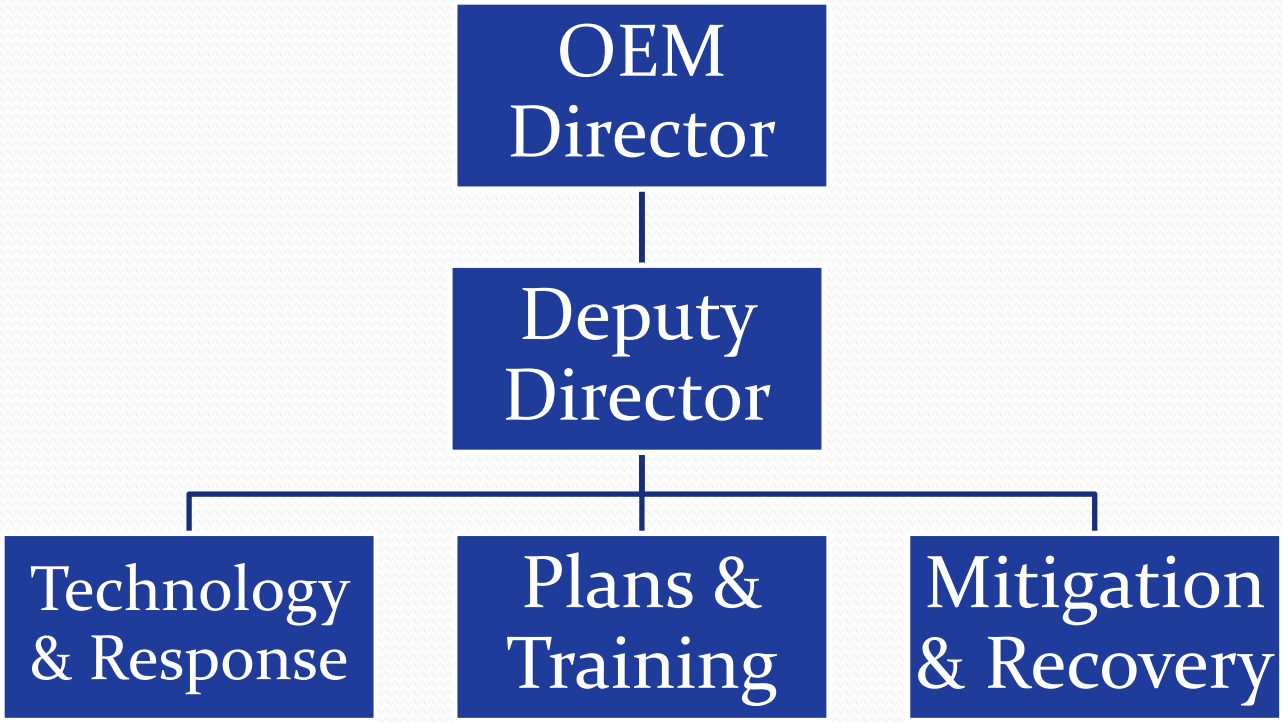
Elliot Shuford, MPA – Staff Auditor
Oregon Audits Division

Outline

- Background on Oregon Office of Emergency Management
- Hazards
- Audit objective
- Work environment survey results
- Reflections on Survey
- Q & A

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Organizational Chart



Emergency Management Activities

NORDSTROM

But then….

The Oregon Resilience Plan

Reducing Risk and Improving Recovery for the Next Cascadia Earthquake and Tsunami

Report to the 77th Legislative Assembly from Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC)

OEM Audit Topics

- ~~Disaster Recovery~~
- Hazard Mitigation
- Support to Local Emergency Managers

But then…

Internal Issues

- Two section managers quit
- Director (in place for less than a year) placed on leave, then fired
- Unfair labor complaints & tort claims filed
- Lack of key practices (e.g. no strategic plan)

OEM Audit Topics

- ~~Disaster Recovery~~
- ~~Hazard Mitigation~~
- ~~Support to Local Emergency~~ Managers
- **Management Practices**

Audit Methodology

- Conducted a survey of employees
- Conducted interviews
- Reviewed:
  - Policies, procedures and plans
  - Meeting minutes
  - Personnel files, position data & employee development documentation
  - Guidance & communication with OEM-led stakeholder groups

Survey Methodology

- Reviewed workplace surveys & developed a tailored one
- Administered using Survey Monkey
- Emailed to non-supervisory employees (35 total)
- Gave one full week to complete
- Anonymous

Survey Methodology

- 47 closed-ended questions framed as positive statement about the organization
- Answer options

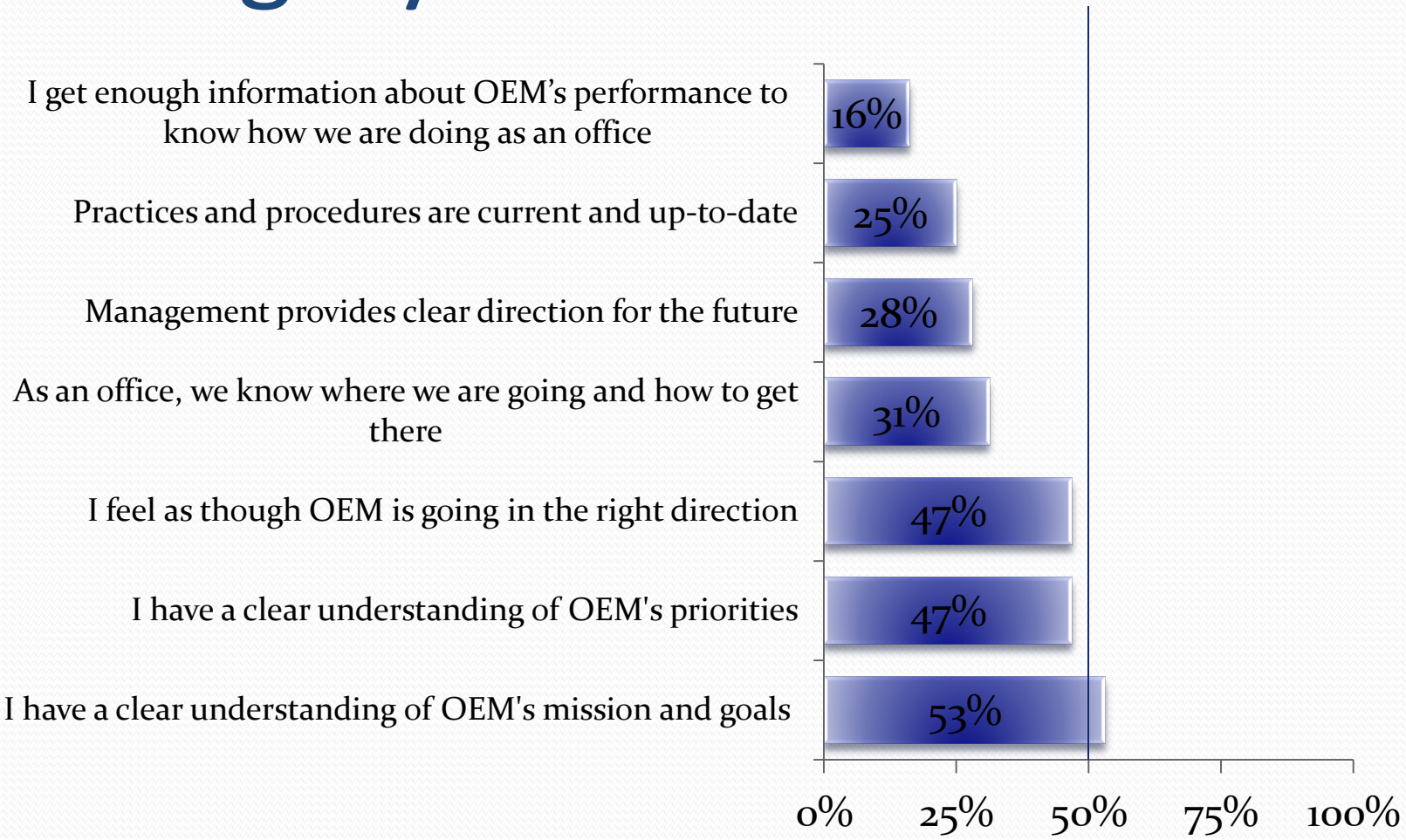
  Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

- Included three general, open-ended questions

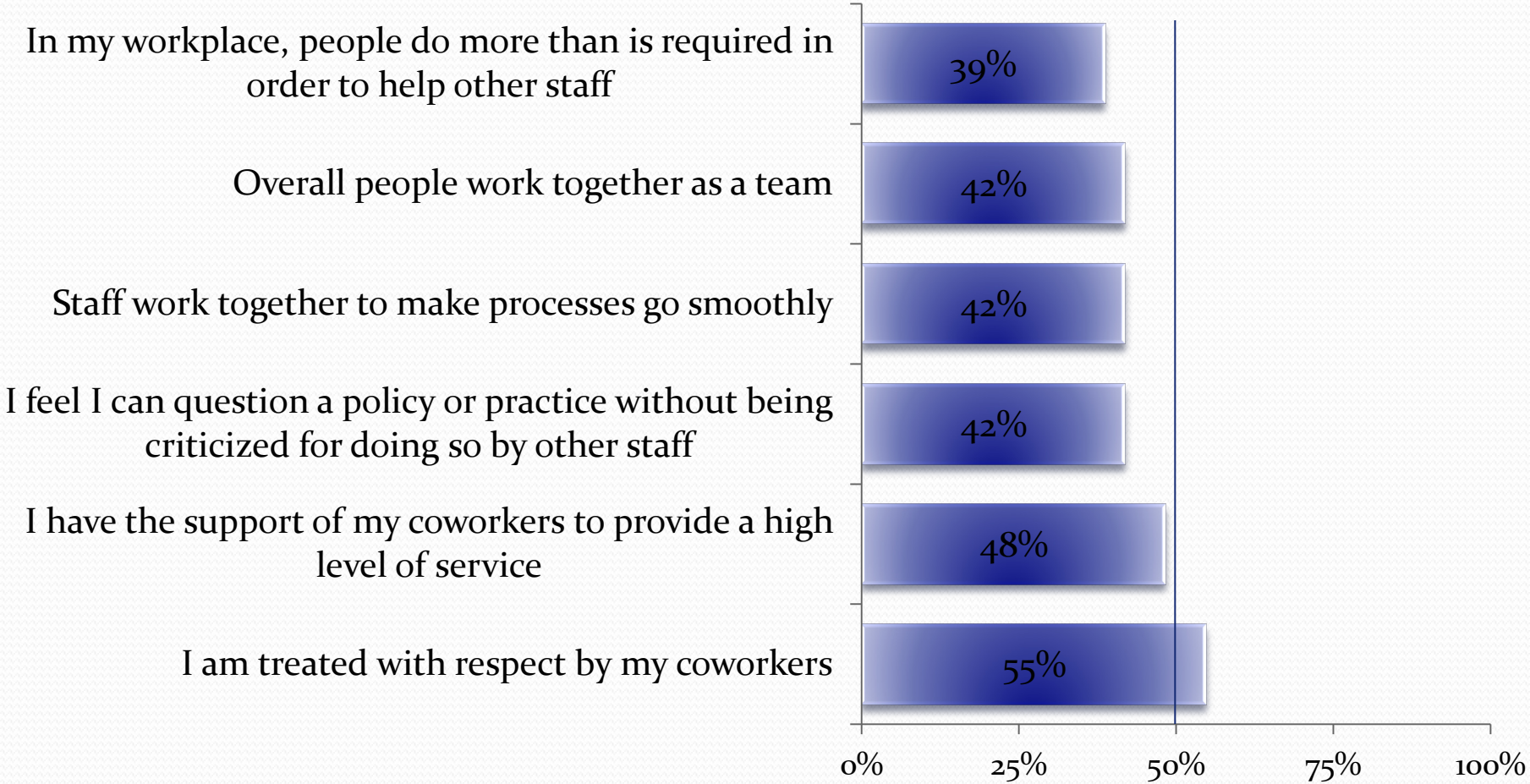
Survey results

- 90% return rate
- Low scores overall
  - Only 11 questions cleared 50% agreement
  - Over half below 45% agreement
- Open ended revealed and documented issues

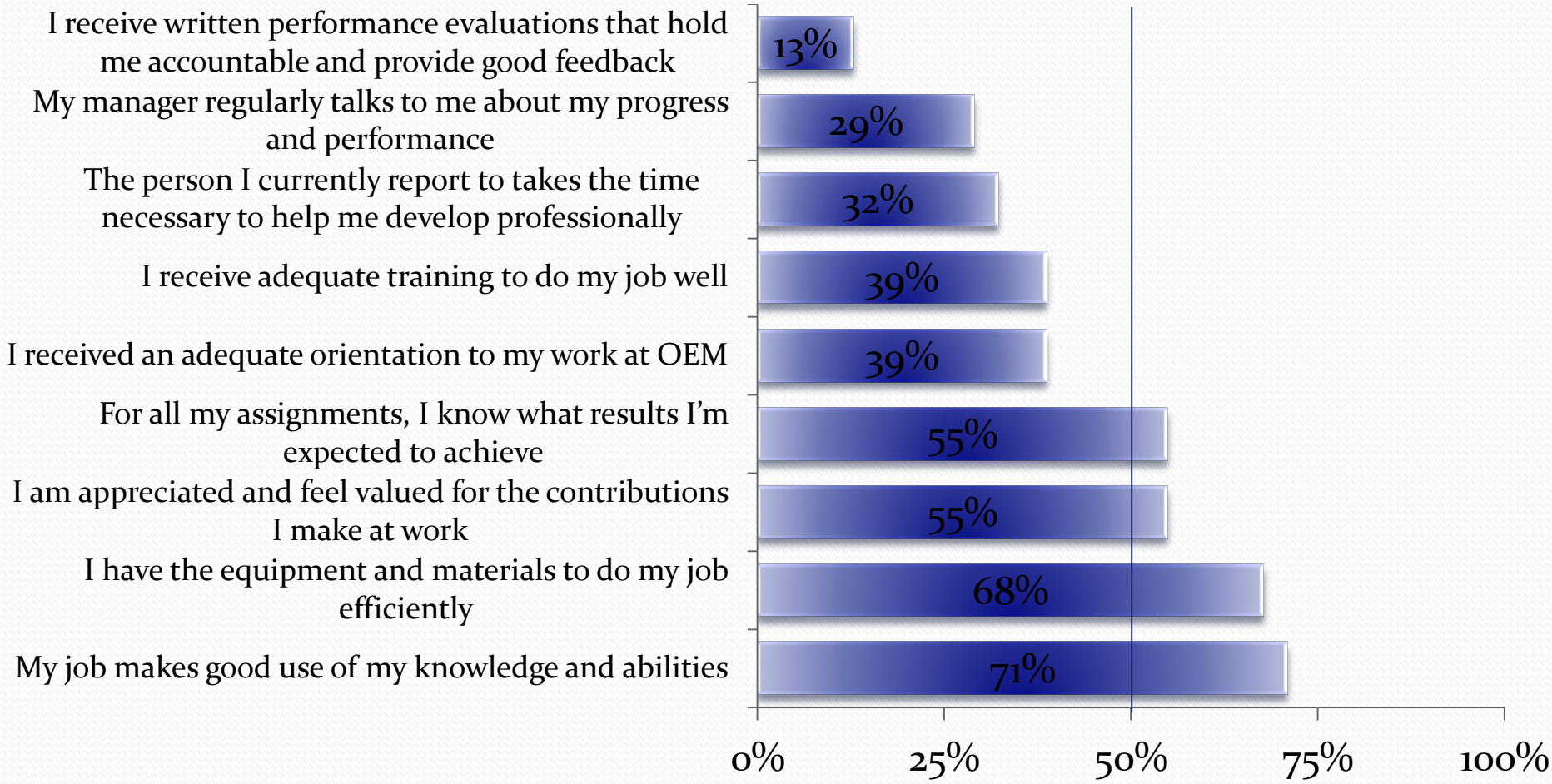
Strategery


I get enough information about OEM's performance to know how we are doing as an office
16%
Practices and procedures are current and up-to-date
25%
Management provides clear direction for the future
28%
As an office, we know where we are going and how to get there
31%
I feel as though OEM is going in the right direction
47%
I have a clear understanding of OEM's priorities
47%
I have a clear understanding of OEM's mission and goals
53%
0%
25%
50%
75%
100%

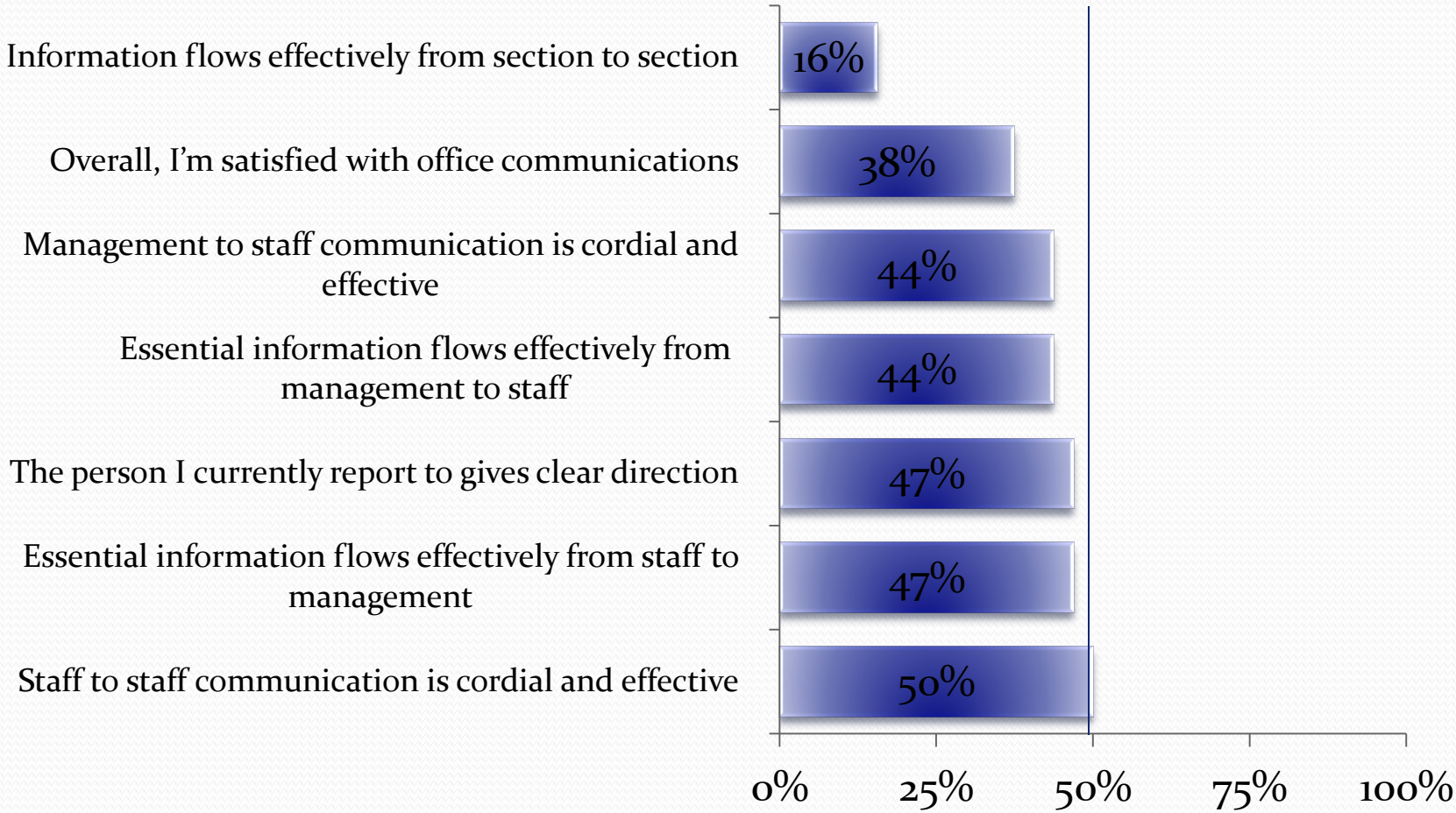
Support Among Employees



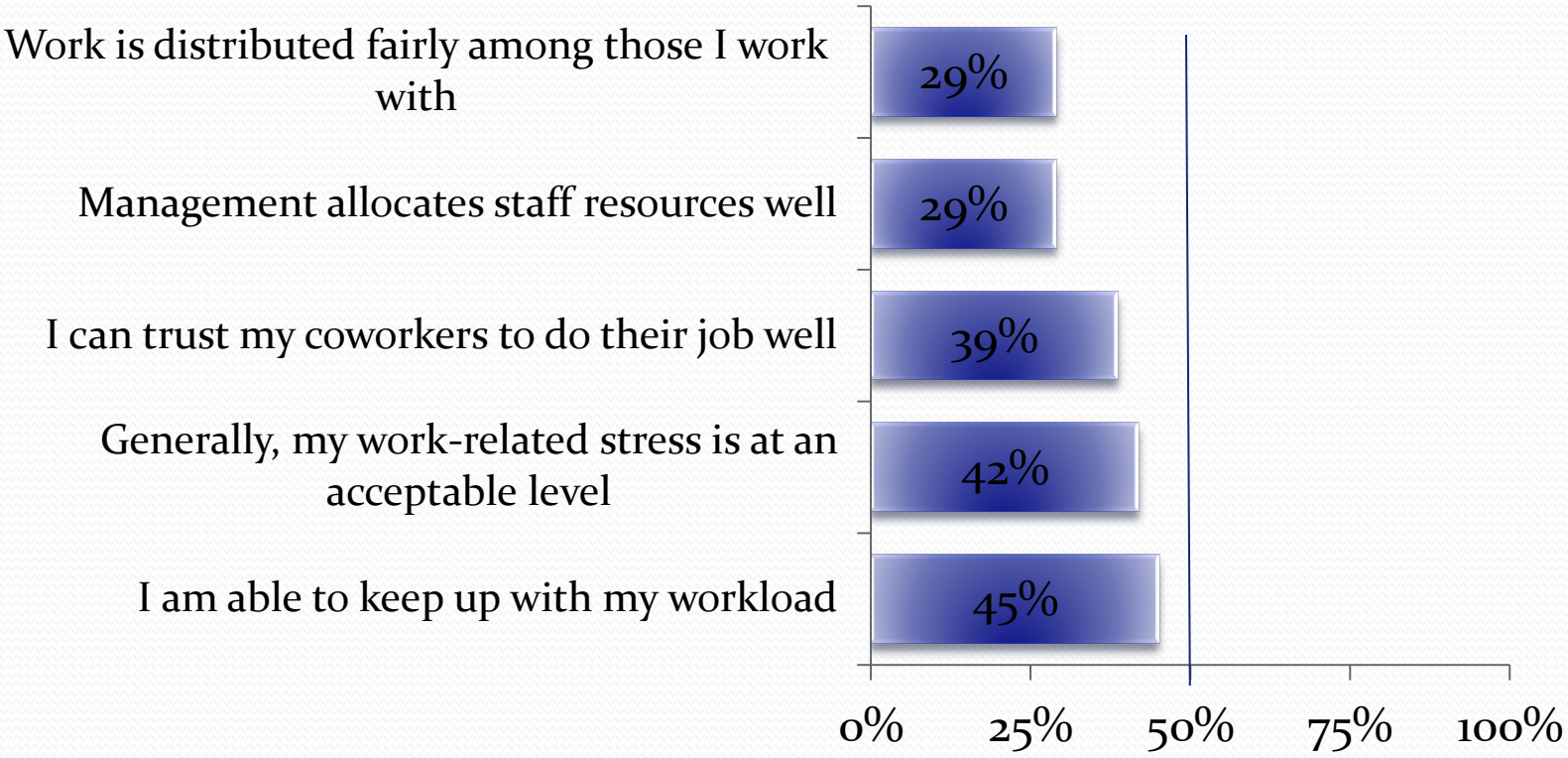
Feedback and Employee Development



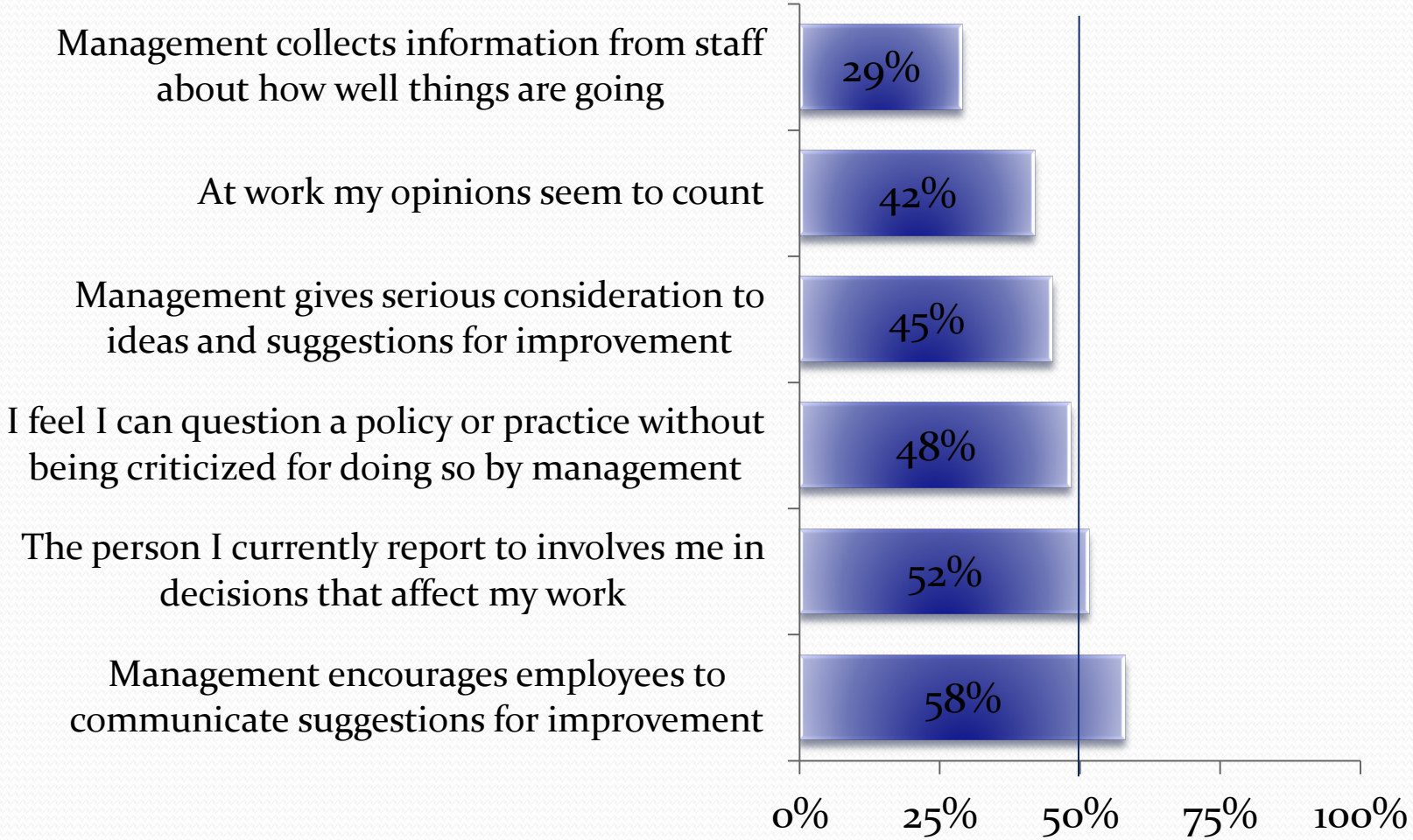
Quality & Results of Communications



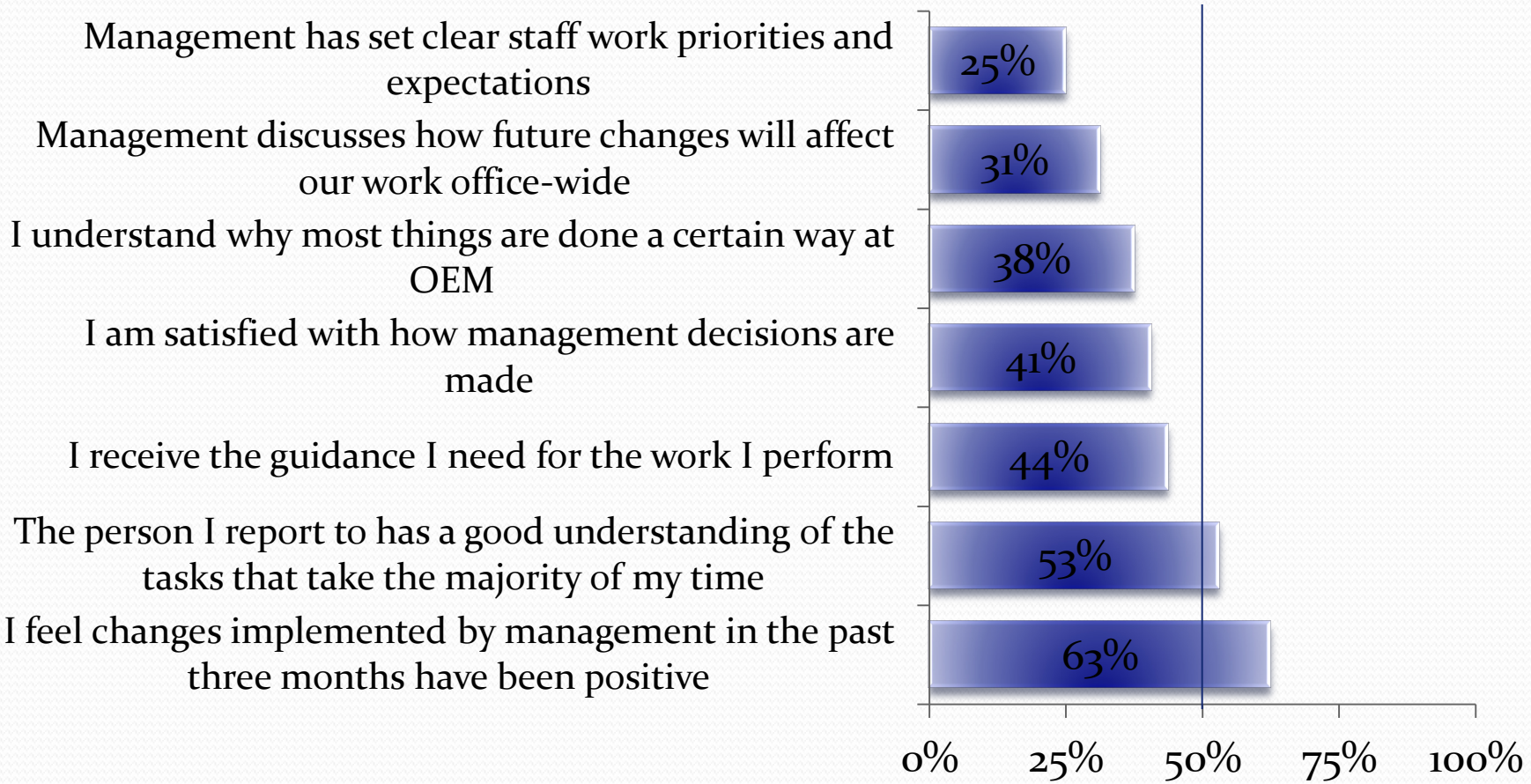
Resources & Workload



Openness & Involvement



Leadership in General



Audit Results

- Lack of strategic direction
- Poor internal communication
- Policies & procedures outdated or nonexistent
- Performance evaluations long overdue
- Poor cooperation among employees (in many cases)
- Workload distribution and staffing issues
- Incomplete plans
- Stakeholder groups not fully utilized

Summary of Recommendations

- Resolve organizational issues with
  - Clear and specific workplace expectations
  - Improved policies and work processes
  - Better communication strategies
  - Improved feedback mechanisms to improve performance

Reflections on Survey

- Easy to design & implement
- Quantified a lot of information
- Additional source of evidence to corroborate interviews
- Chance to test a hypothesis
- Be sure to beta-test!

Questions?

Contact Information:

Elliot Shuford

Elliot.D.Shuford@state.or.us

503-986-2171