



HOSPITAL HR BAROMETER 2024

HRM Trends and Challenges in
Belgian Hospitals

By Vlerick Business School & Hudson



Dear HR professional

Vlerick Business School and Hudson have carried out an **HR Barometer** on HR trends and challenges in the **Belgian Hospital Sector**.

The Hospital HR Barometer was conducted for the second time (the first study dates back to 2021) and comprises two parts. The first part focuses on the **strategic importance of different HR practices** by investigating **priority** and **mastery** levels of 23 HR domains. The second part focuses on the topic of **strategic workforce planning**: a practice gaining momentum in a challenging labour market.

This report was created by the **Strategic Talent Management Centre** (Vlerick-Hudson). It contains an overview of the most important findings from the 2024 study and compares results from the hospital sector with HR Barometer results from other sectors. We hope it will provide you with interesting and useful insights!

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INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

Strategic Talent Management Centre (sTm)

The HR Barometer is a research project initiated by the Strategic Talent Management (sTm) Centre of Vlerick Business School and Hudson.



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WHO WE ARE

> We are a **knowledge-driven network** with over 20 years of expertise and on a mission to put talent management on the map as a strategic decision science in organisations

WHAT WE DO

> Achieve **thought leadership** in strategic talent management
We continuously monitor our field to stay ahead of new research, trends and business solutions

> Be the **gatekeeper between theory & practice** in our field
We provide relevant and evidence-based insights

> **Accumulate knowledge** in our field across industries via **applied and effective research & tool development**
We develop, share and validate knowledge and good practices

> Build an impactful **community**
We facilitate networking amongst talent management professionals

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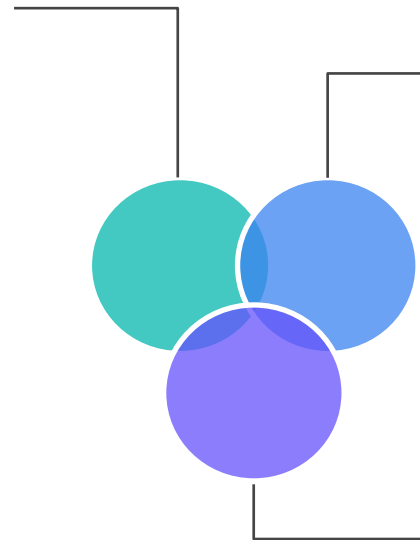
5. More Information

01 METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE



Research design

- Online survey
- Target population:
Hospital sector in Belgium*
- Target audience:
CHROs and HR Directors



Sample

- **N = 42**
(+/- half of the Belgian hospitals)

Data collection

- January - March 2024

**All general hospitals were invited to fill out the HR Barometer survey*

HR BAROMETER SURVEY

1

PRIORITY & MASTERY HR PRACTICES

Looking back at the past year (2023), HR leaders indicate the **priority** of 23 HR practices and how well they **master** these practices

2

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING (SWP)

How are Belgian hospitals approaching strategic workforce planning (**SWP**)?

HR BAROMETER: HOSPITAL SECTOR vs BUSINESS

This year, the HR Barometer surveyed HR priorities in different sectors. This report presents the results of the hospital sector. Throughout the report, we will also compare these results with the overall business industry, this will each time be indicated by different logos:



**HOSPITAL
HR BAROMETER
(Ho-HRB)**



Hospital sector



**BUSINESS
HR BAROMETER *
(B-HRB)**

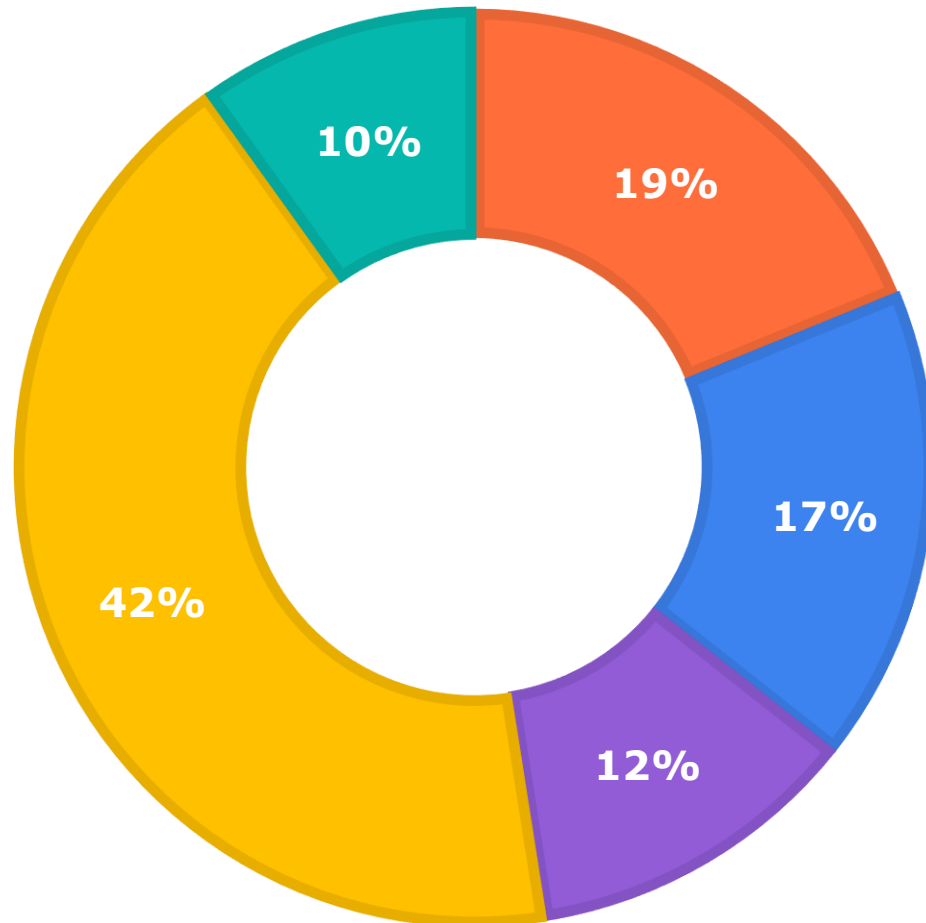
** 124 of the 250 largest organisations in Belgium, from different sectors*



Business

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN BELGIUM



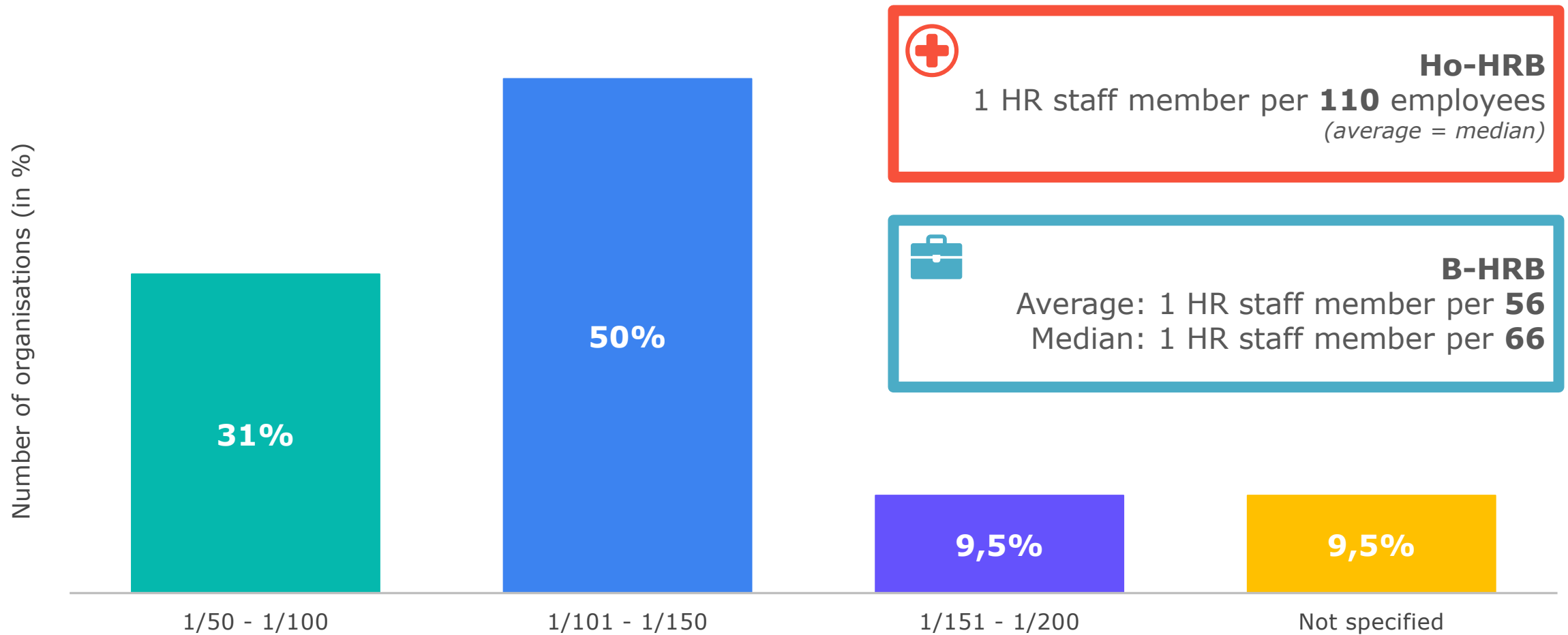
- < 1.000 employees
- 1.000 - 1.500 employees
- 1.501 - 2.000 employees
- >2.000 employees
- Not specified

Total number of employees represented by all hospitals in sample: +/- **87.100**

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

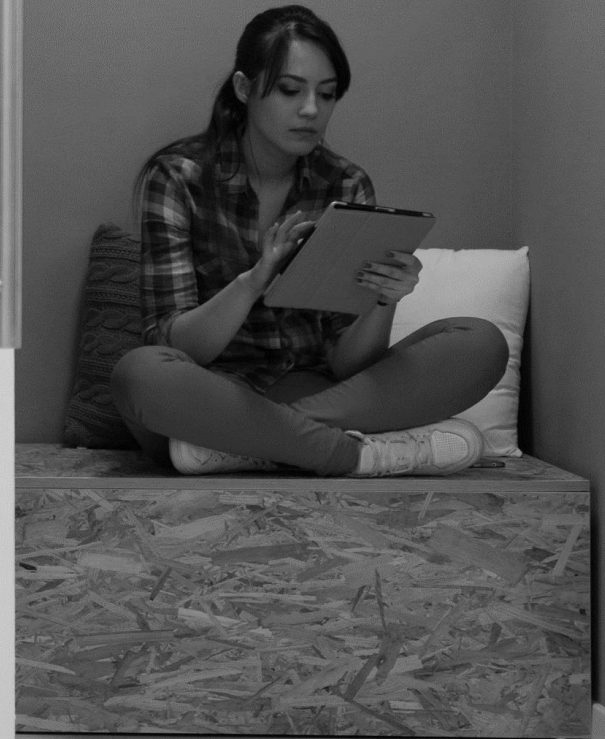
RATIO OF HR STAFF TO EMPLOYEES

(HR Ratio = HR staff / total staff)



02

**HR BAROMETER
RESULTS 2024**





I.

**HR BAROMETER 2024
PRIORITIES**

HR BAROMETER 2024: PRIORITIES

"Looking back at the past 12 months (Jan-Dec 2023), please indicate the priority level for each HR domain"



TOP 3



Reported HR priorities for the past year (Jan-Dec 2023)
Scale: 0 - 100

HR PRIORITY

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR 2024 WITH HOSPITAL SECTOR 2021 (BIGGEST GAPS)



Cultural Change **+25**

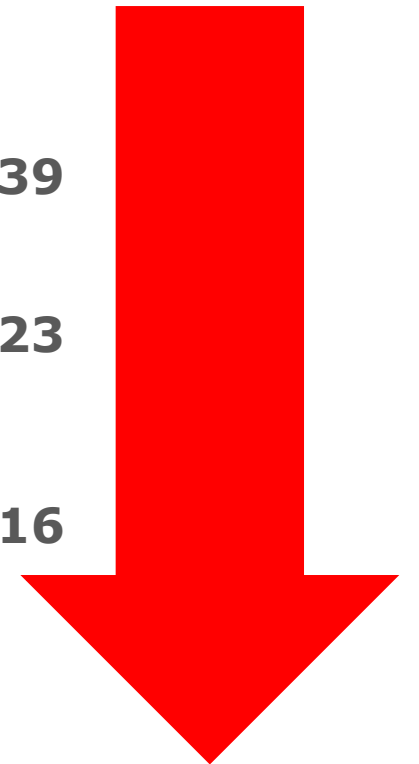
Compensation & Benefits **+20**

Retention **+19**

New Ways of Working **-39**

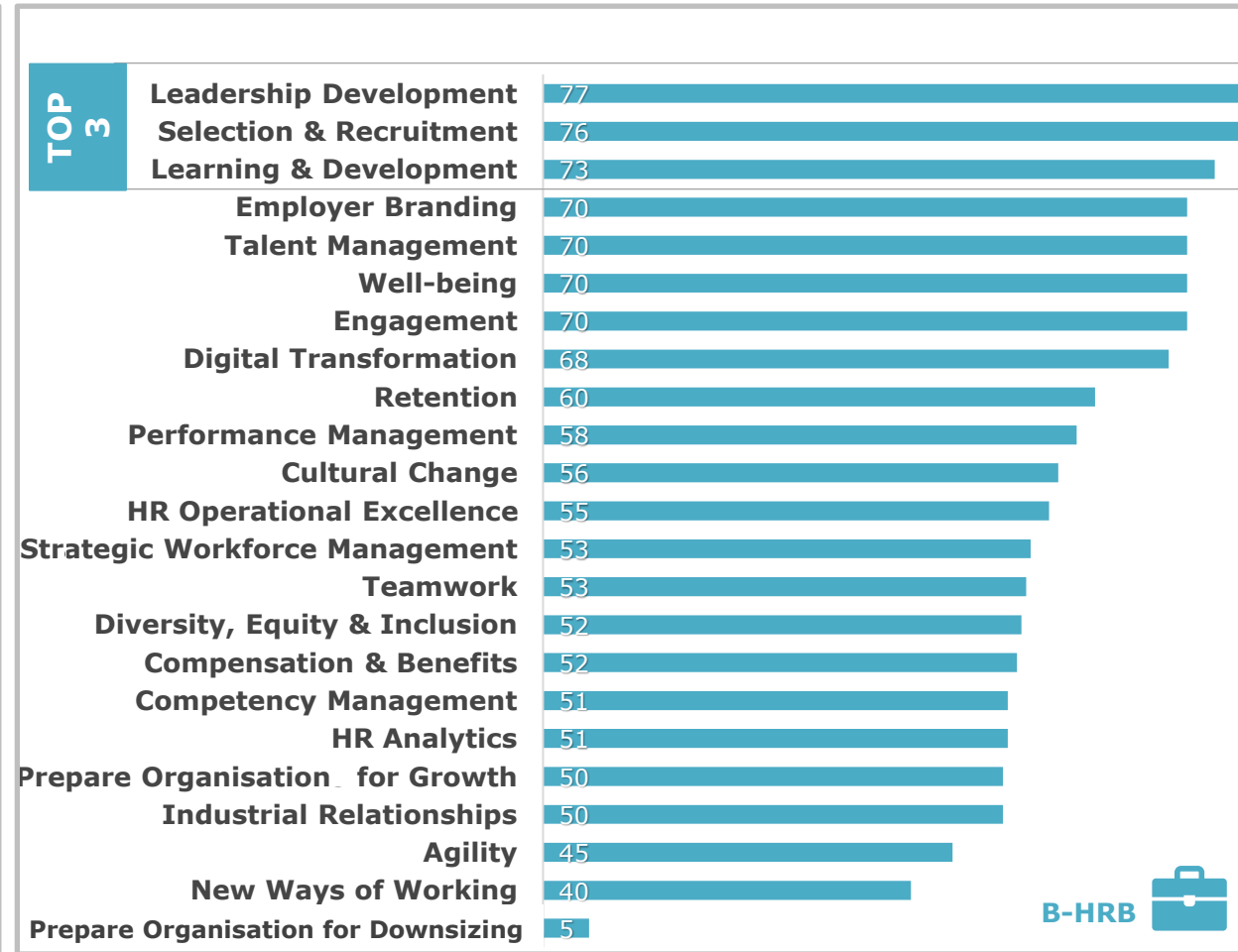
Agility **-23**
Teamwork

Digital Transformation **-16**



HR PRIORITY

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS



HR PRIORITY

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS (BIGGEST GAPS)



Ho-HRB

Retention	+19
Prepare Organisation for Stagnation/Downsizing	+15
Well-being	
Strategic Workforce Management	+12

Industrial Relationships	-40
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	-24
Talent Management	-20



B-HRB



II.

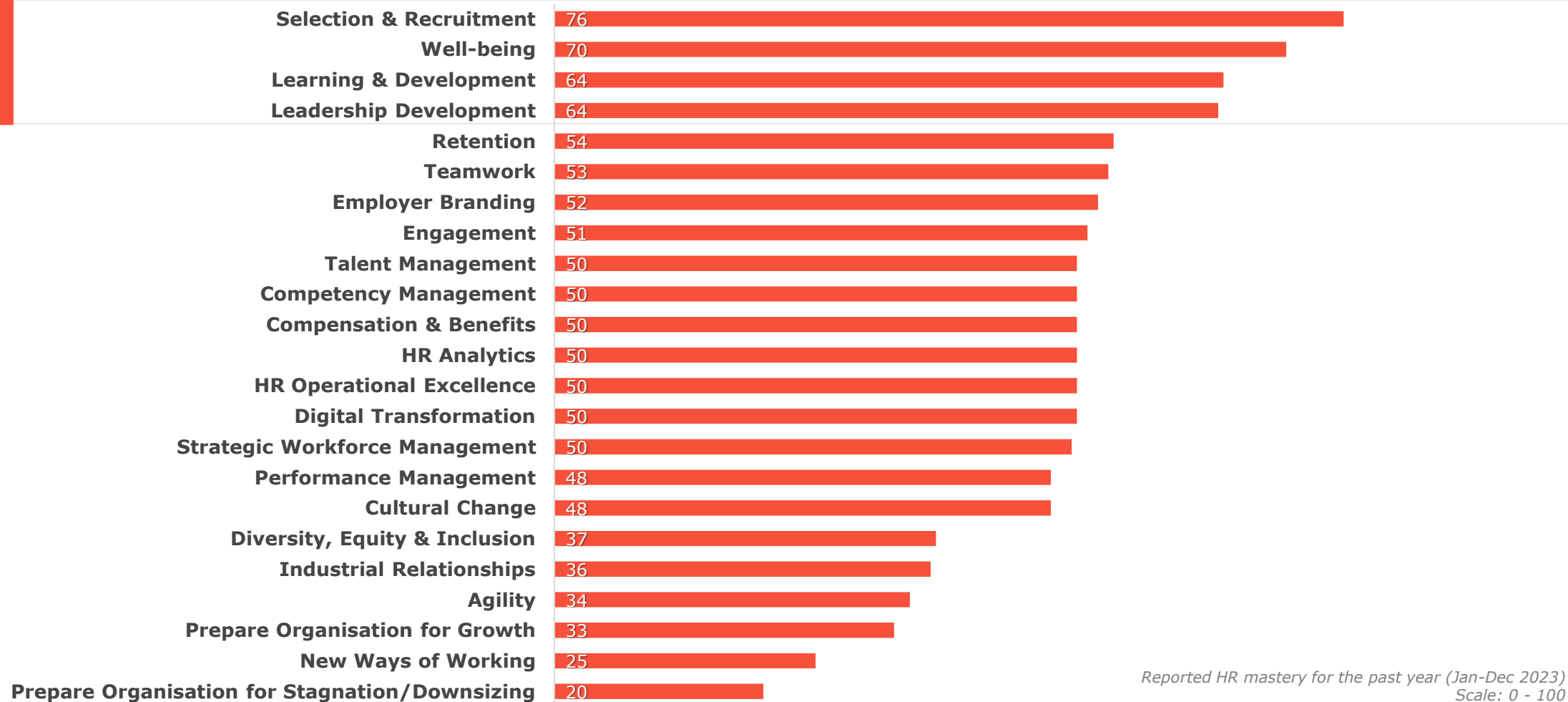
**HR BAROMETER 2024
MASTERY**

HR BAROMETER 2024: PERCEIVED MASTERY

"Looking back at the past 12 months (Jan-Dec 2023), please indicate how well you master each HR domain"



TOP 3



Reported HR mastery for the past year (Jan-Dec 2023)
Scale: 0 - 100

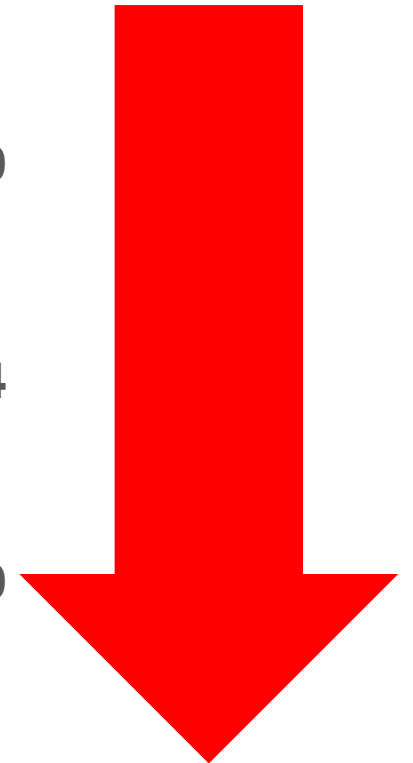
HR MASTERY

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR 2024 WITH HOSPITAL SECTOR 2021 (BIGGEST GAPS)



Leadership Development	+13
Strategic Workforce Management	+10
Cultural Change	+8

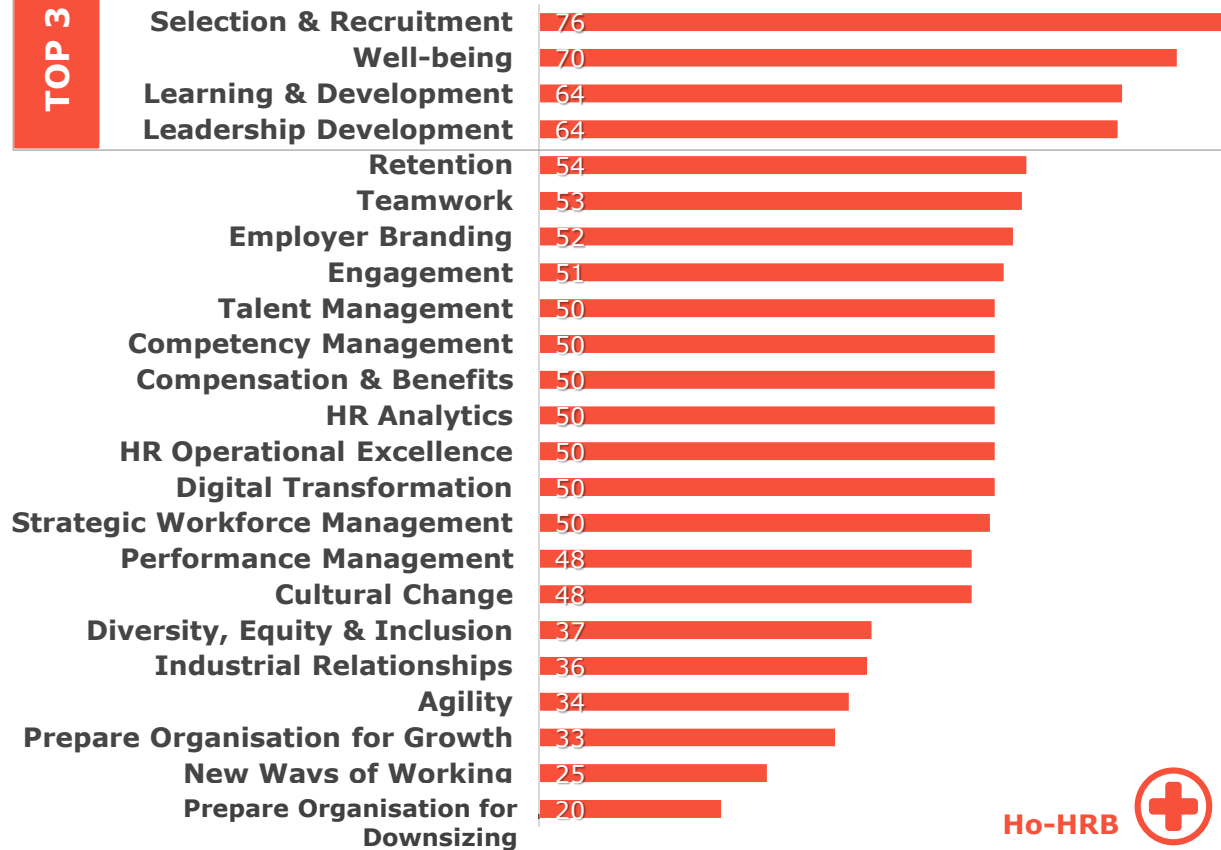
Prepare Organisation for Stagnation/Downsizing	-20
Industrial Relationships	-14
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	-14
HR Operational Excellence	-10



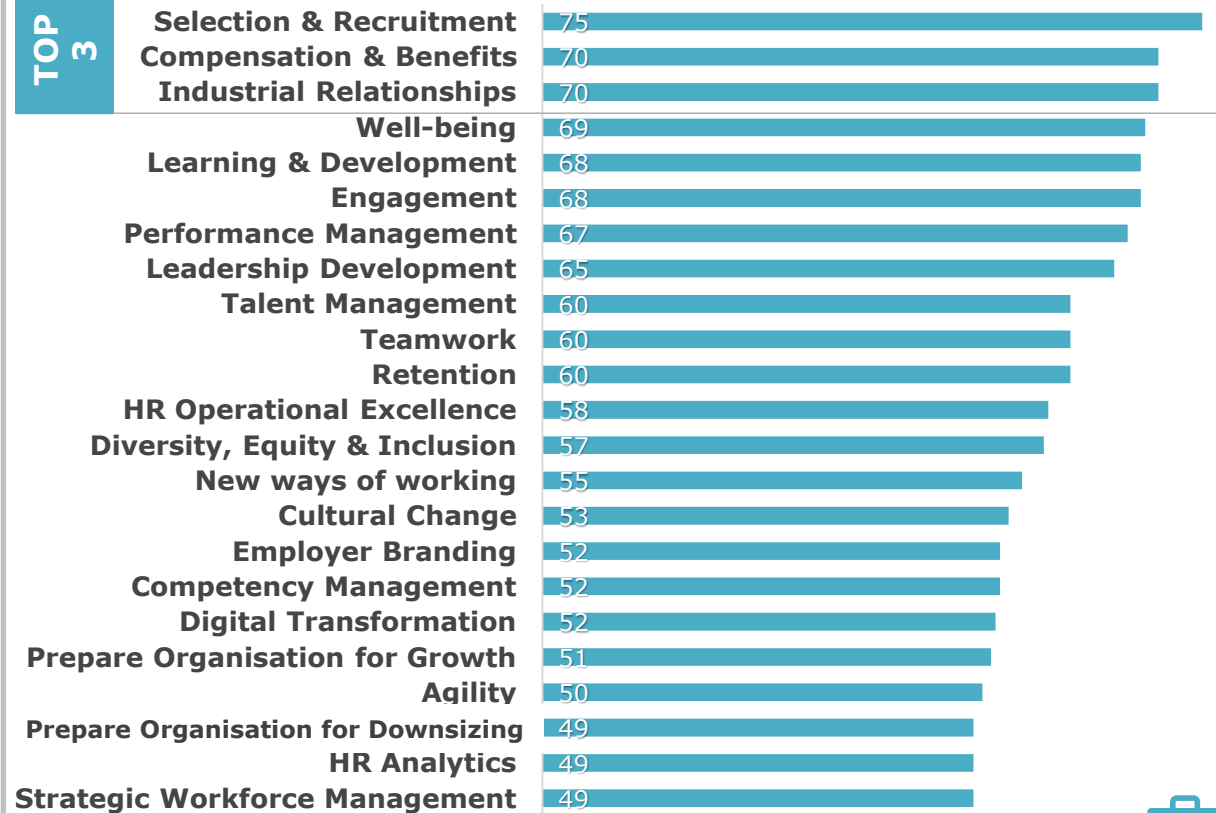
HR MASTERY

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS

TOP 3



TOP 3



HR MASTERY

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS (BIGGEST GAPS)



Ho-HRB

Well-being	+2
HR Analytics	
Selection & Recruitment	+1
Strategic Workforce Management	

Industrial Relationships	-34
New Ways of Working	-30
Prepare Organisation for Stagnation/Downsizing	-29



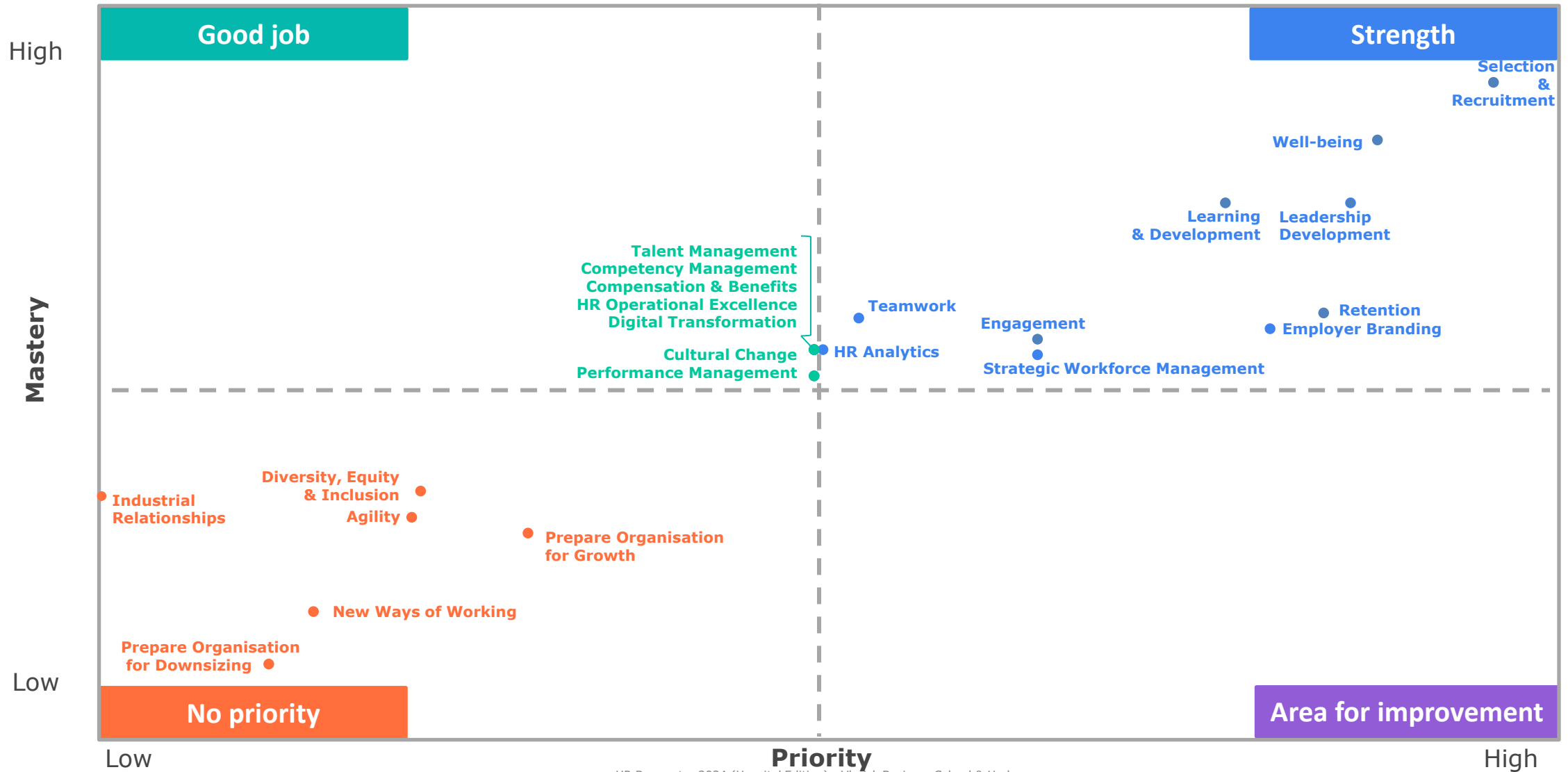
B-HRB



III.

**HR BAROMETER 2024
PRIORITY VS. MASTERY**

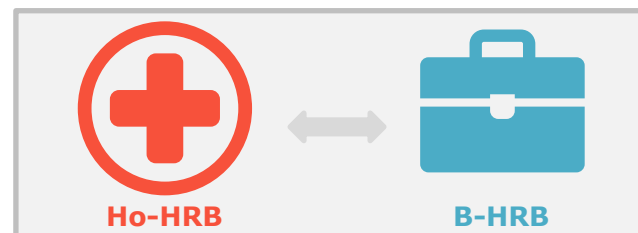
HR BAROMETER 2024: PRIORITY x MASTERY



PRIORITY x MASTERY

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS (BIGGEST DIFFERENCES)

- > No **'areas for improvement'** in Ho-HRB, 3 areas for improvement in B-HRB: Cultural Change, Digital Transformation, and Employer Branding
- > More profound **'good jobs'** in B-HRB (Compensation & Benefits, Industrial Relationships) than in Ho-HRB
- > **HR Analytics** & **Teamwork** just fall in the 'strengths' quadrant in Ho-HRB, while those are indicated as 'no priority' and 'good job' by business
- > **Higher spread** (max score – min score) in priority & mastery scores in H-HRB than in B-HRB: broader distribution over 100-point scale
- > 5 HR domains with **overlapping scores** in Ho-HRB. No similar observation in B-HRB



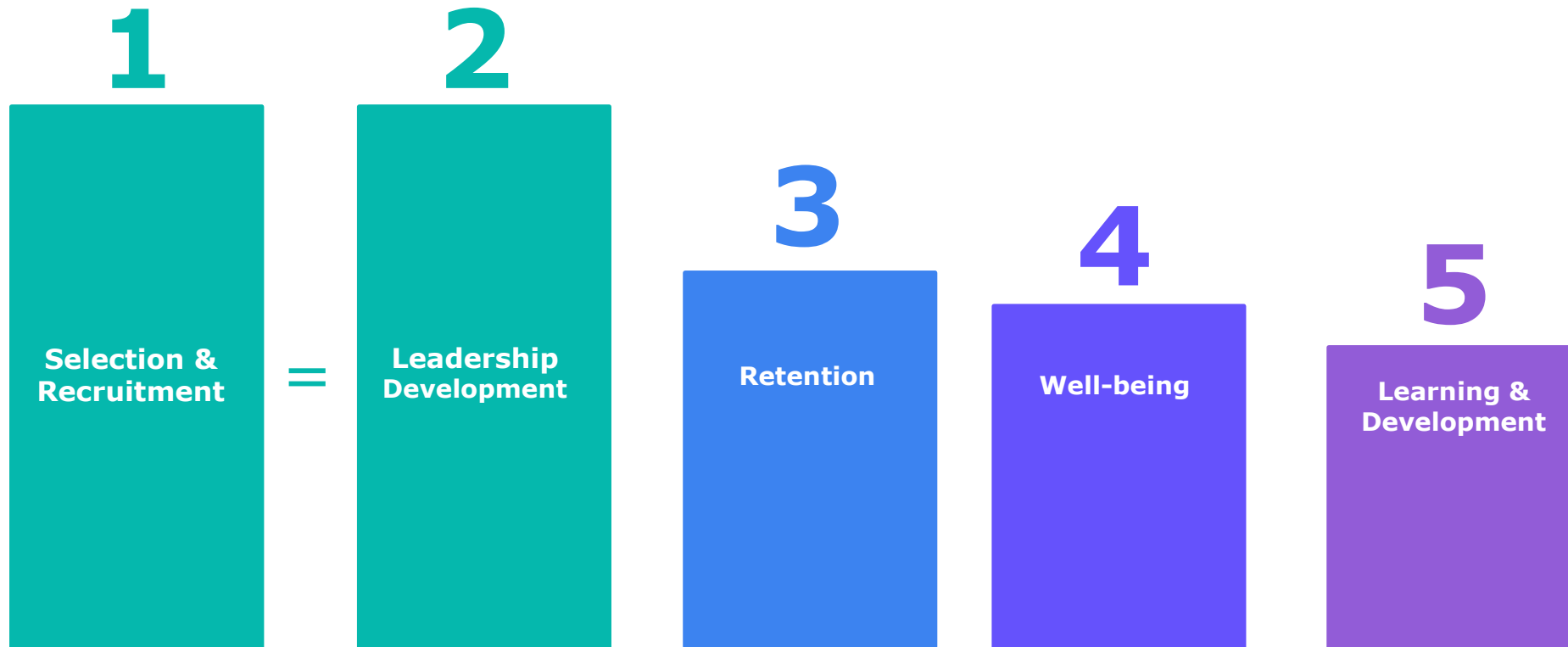


IV.

**HR BAROMETER 2024
PLANNED PRIORITIES
FOR 2024**

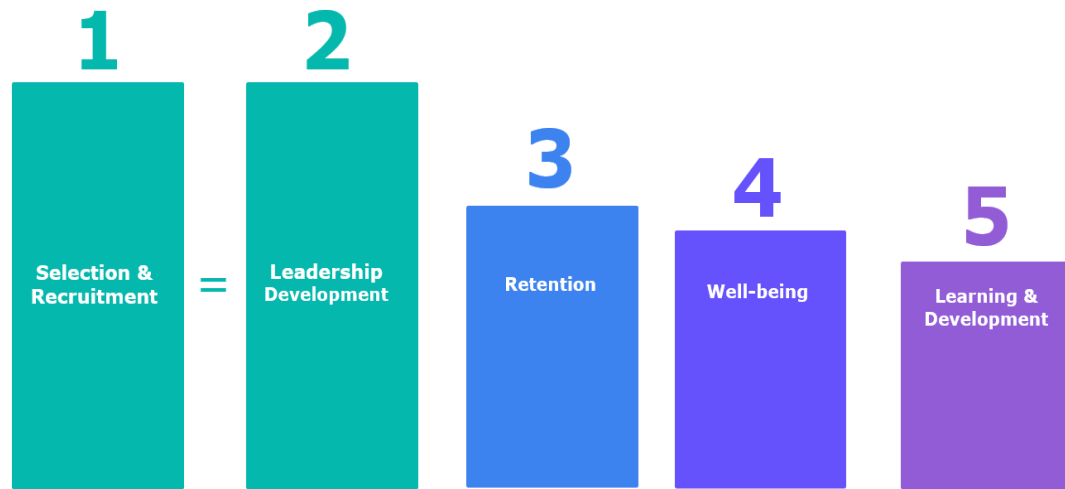
PLANNED PRIORITIES FOR 2024

TOP 5 PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR

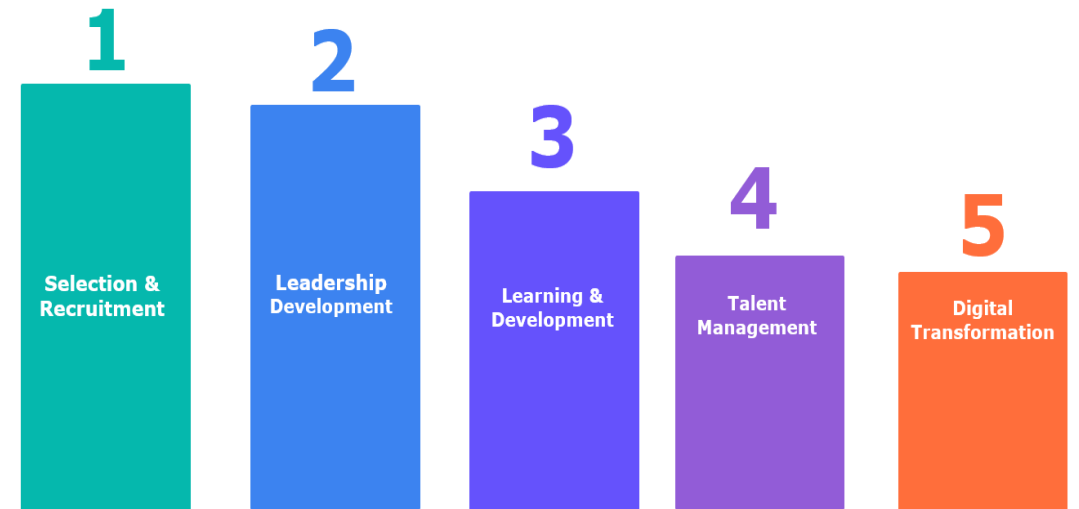


PLANNED PRIORITIES FOR 2024

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS



Ho-HRB 



B-HRB 

03

**SPOTLIGHT ON
STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING
(SWP)**



A black and white photograph of a person in a suit holding a tablet computer. The person is looking at the screen. The background is a blurred cityscape with many buildings. A purple rectangular overlay is on the left side of the image, containing white text.

I.

SWP

CURRENT STATE

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING DEFINED

- > Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) is a proactive business process that aligns organisational needs and external evolutions with an organisation's people strategy and staffing needs.
- > The goal of SWP is to ensure that an organisation has the right people in the right place at the right time to achieve its objectives.

The five dimensions of SWP:

**DEMAND
FORECASTING**

**SUPPLY
FORECASTING**

**WORKFORCE
SEGMENTATION**

**SCENARIO
PLANNING**

**ACTION
PLANNING**

HOW DO BELGIAN HOSPITALS LOOK AT SWP?

"SWP is **essential** for business survival"

74%

*of surveyed
HR Directors agree*

"SWP is a **buzzword** and is not here to stay"

3%

*of surveyed
HR Directors agree*

DRIVERS TO CONDUCT SWP

The business
(e.g. production targets,
budgets, cost savings,
acute staffing needs)

95%

Our strategy
(e.g. vision, mission,
values, objectives)

83%

**The external
environment**
(e.g. industry
transformation, labour
market conditions)

70%

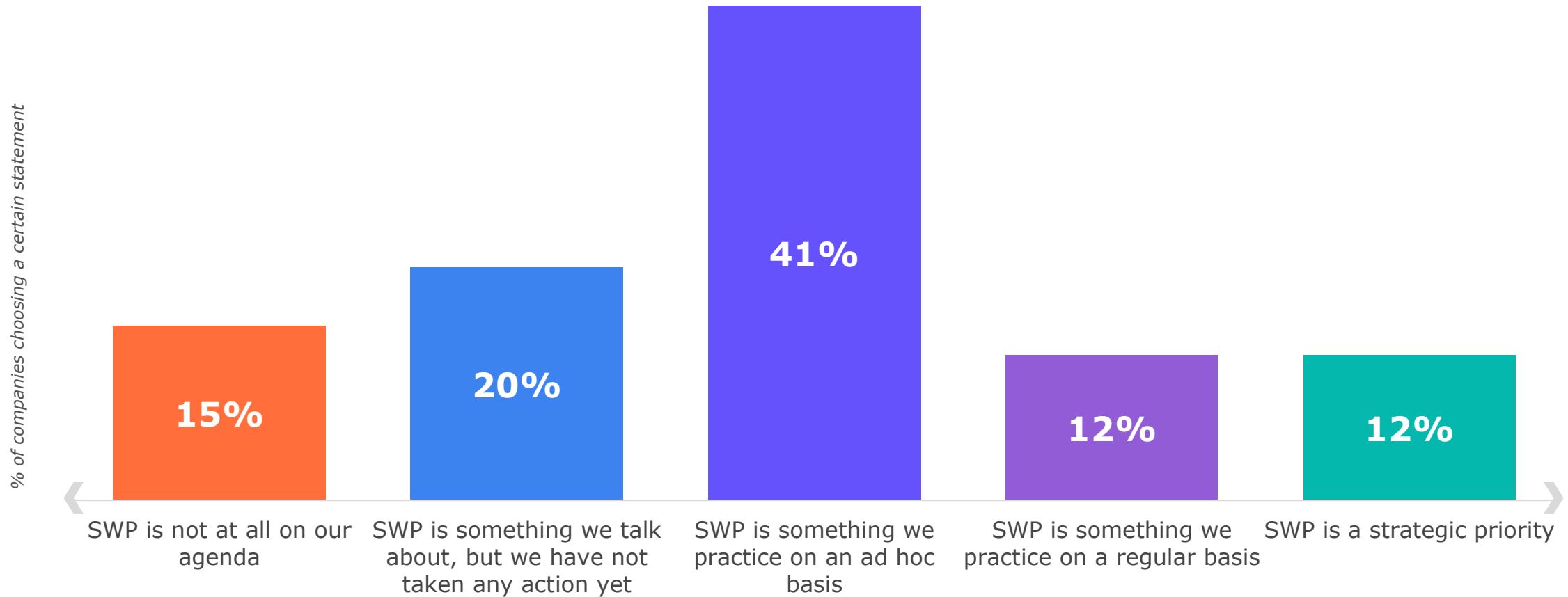
**Organisational
change**
(e.g. mergers &
acquisitions, successions)

53%

% of companies stating to find a certain driver rather or very important

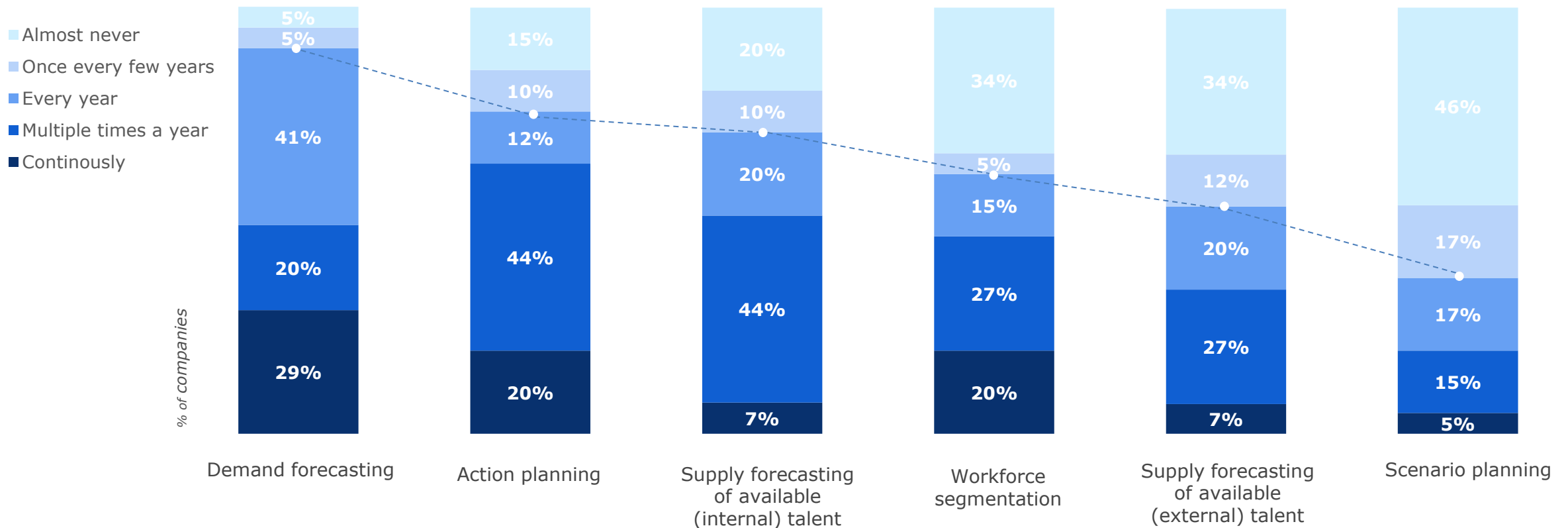
CURRENT STATE OF SWP IN HOSPITAL SECTOR

"Which statement best describes how your organisation applies SWP?"



IMPLEMENTATION OF DIFFERENT SWP DIMENSIONS

"How often does your organisation engage in the following SWP activities?"



KEY FIGURES

% of HR Directors agrees with the statement that...

...They are satisfied with the outcomes of SWP actions in their organisation

5%

...They actively communicate about SWP

18%

...SWP remains a theoretical notion without clear actions in their organisation

31%

LEARNINGS CURRENT STATE IN HOSPITALS

- HR leaders who report a **more advanced current state** of SWP (reflected by the implementation of SWP activities*), also report a **higher satisfaction** with SWP outcomes
- When SWP is driven by **strategic drivers**, HR leaders believe more in the **essence of SWP**, and the **active role HR** can play in further professionalising SWP
- There is more **active communication** about SWP when SWP is driven by **strategic drivers** and when **SWP mastery** is perceived higher by HR actively

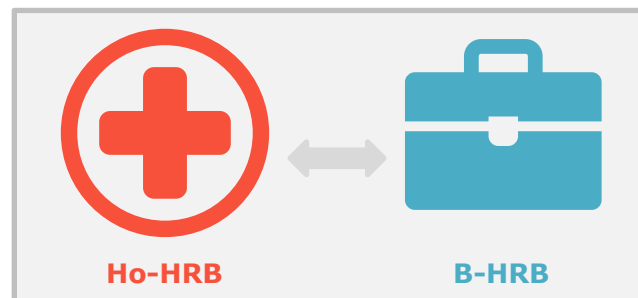


* Demand forecasting, supply forecasting, scenario planning, action plans to close gaps

CURRENT STATE OF SWP

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS

- > Hospitals attach **more importance** to SWP (74% vs 65%) and see it less as a buzzword (3% vs 30%) than business
- > Hospitals are **less satisfied** with outcomes of SWP actions than business (5% vs 13%)
- > **Action planning** to close the gaps performed more often in hospitals: SWP is performed at least once per year by 76% of hospitals (2nd popular SWP dimension) and by only 69% of the business organisations (4th SWP dimension)



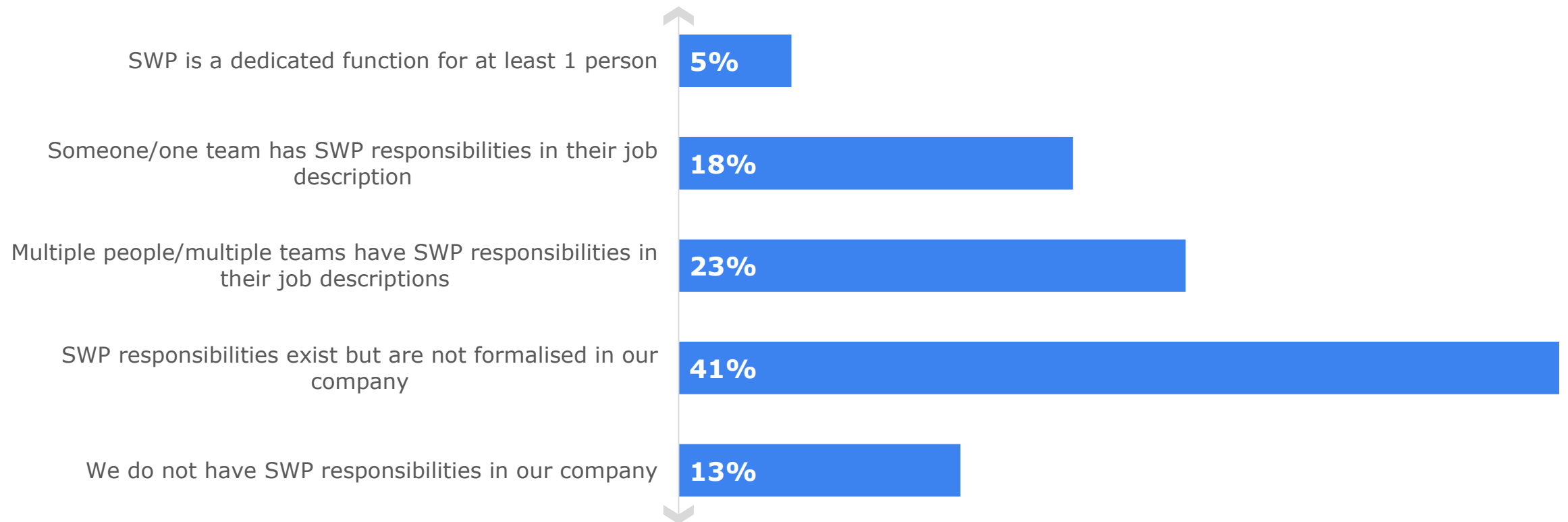


II.

SWP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FORMALISATION OF THE SWP FUNCTION

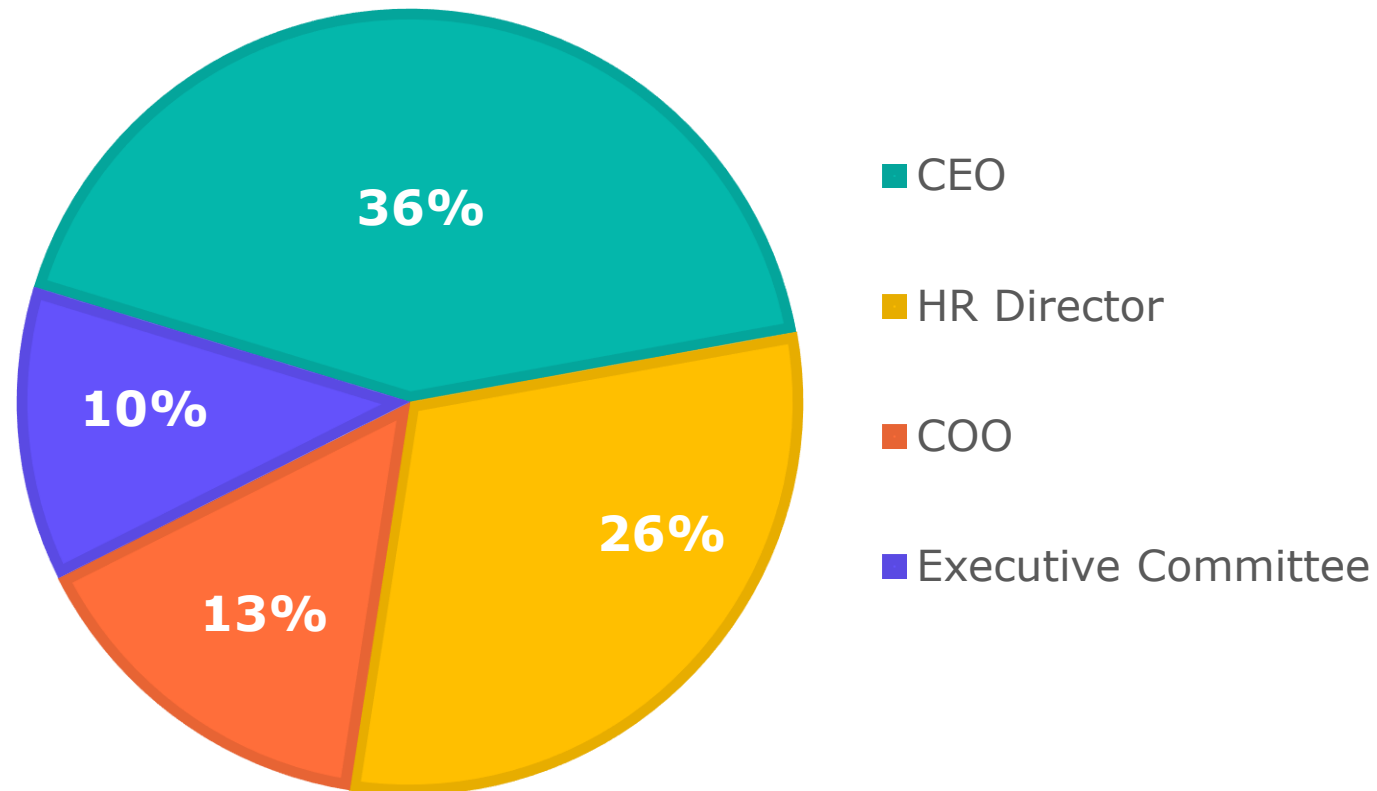
"Which statement best represents how SWP responsibilities are formalised in your organisation?"



% of companies choosing a certain statement

WHO HAS (END) RESPONSIBILITY OVER SWP?

"If someone in the organisation has formalised SWP responsibilities, to whom does the person/team most responsible for SWP report?"



% of companies indicating a certain end responsible

PIVOTAL ROLE FOR HR

% of HR Directors agrees with the statement that...

...HR is **not** in the driving seat to further professionalise SWP

18%

...It is better to partner with external partners for SWP than to develop SWP expertise in-house

38%

DOES HR RELY ON TECHNOLOGY FOR SWP?

% of HR Directors agrees with the statement that...

...Their organisation relies on mapping tools to gather data relevant to SWP

21%

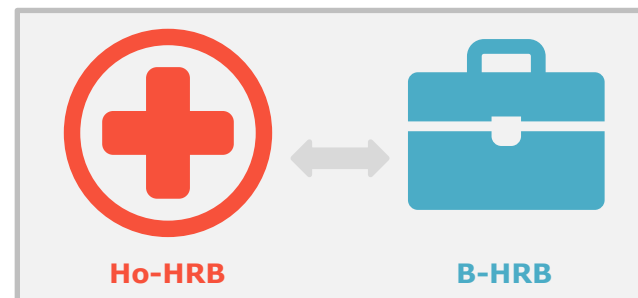
Organisations that use mapping tools involve more often in **workforce segmentation** as SWP action ($r = .355$)



SWP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS

- > **SWP responsibilities** are slightly **less formalised** in hospitals than in business (46% vs 53%)
- > In hospitals, the person that is responsible most often reports directly to the **CEO** (36%) ; in business this person reports most often to **HR Director** (56%)
- > Hospitals are more prone to collaborate with **external partners** (38% vs 13%)



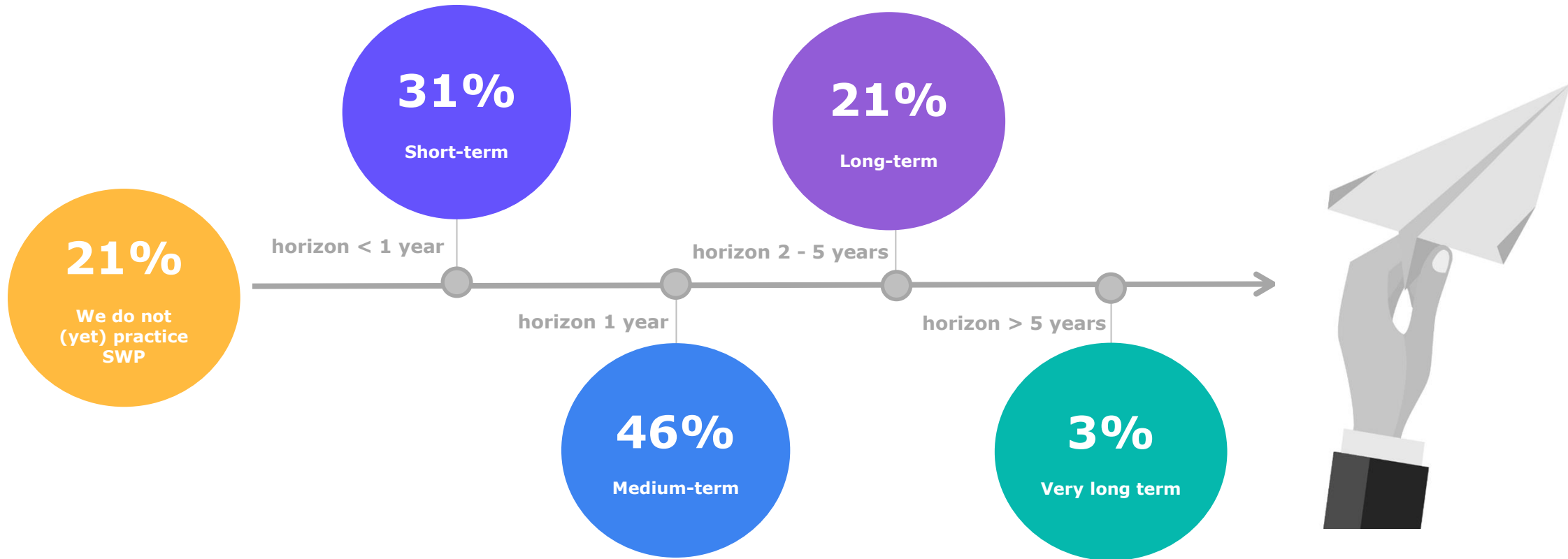


III.

SWP

SCOPE OF SWP

WHAT TIME HORIZON IS ADOPTED?



% of companies adopting certain time span for SWP

SWP & ANNUAL BUDGETING

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

% of HR Directors agrees with the statement that...

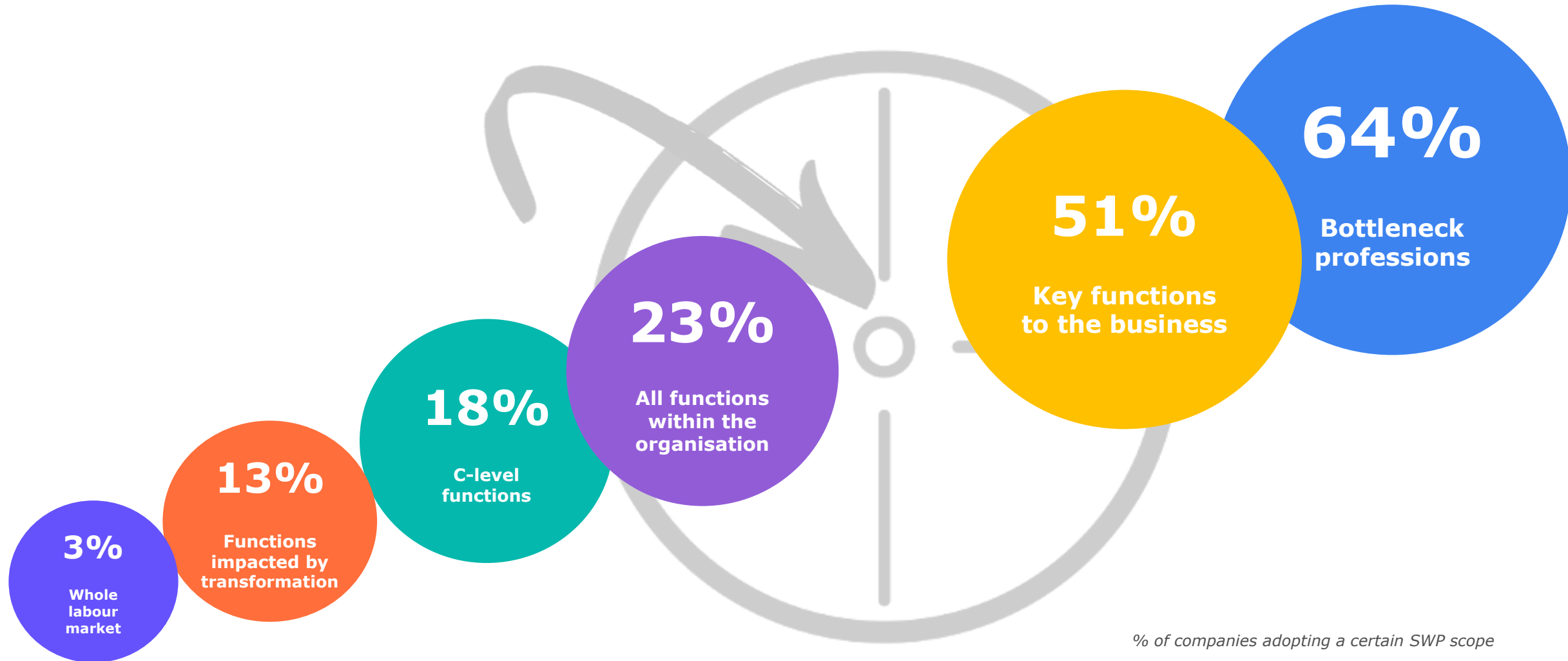
...The annual budgeting cycle has more impact than long-term SWP in their organisation

64%

In organisations where annual budgeting has more impact, SWP is more focused on **traditional jobs** – cfr. slide 55 ($r = .323$)

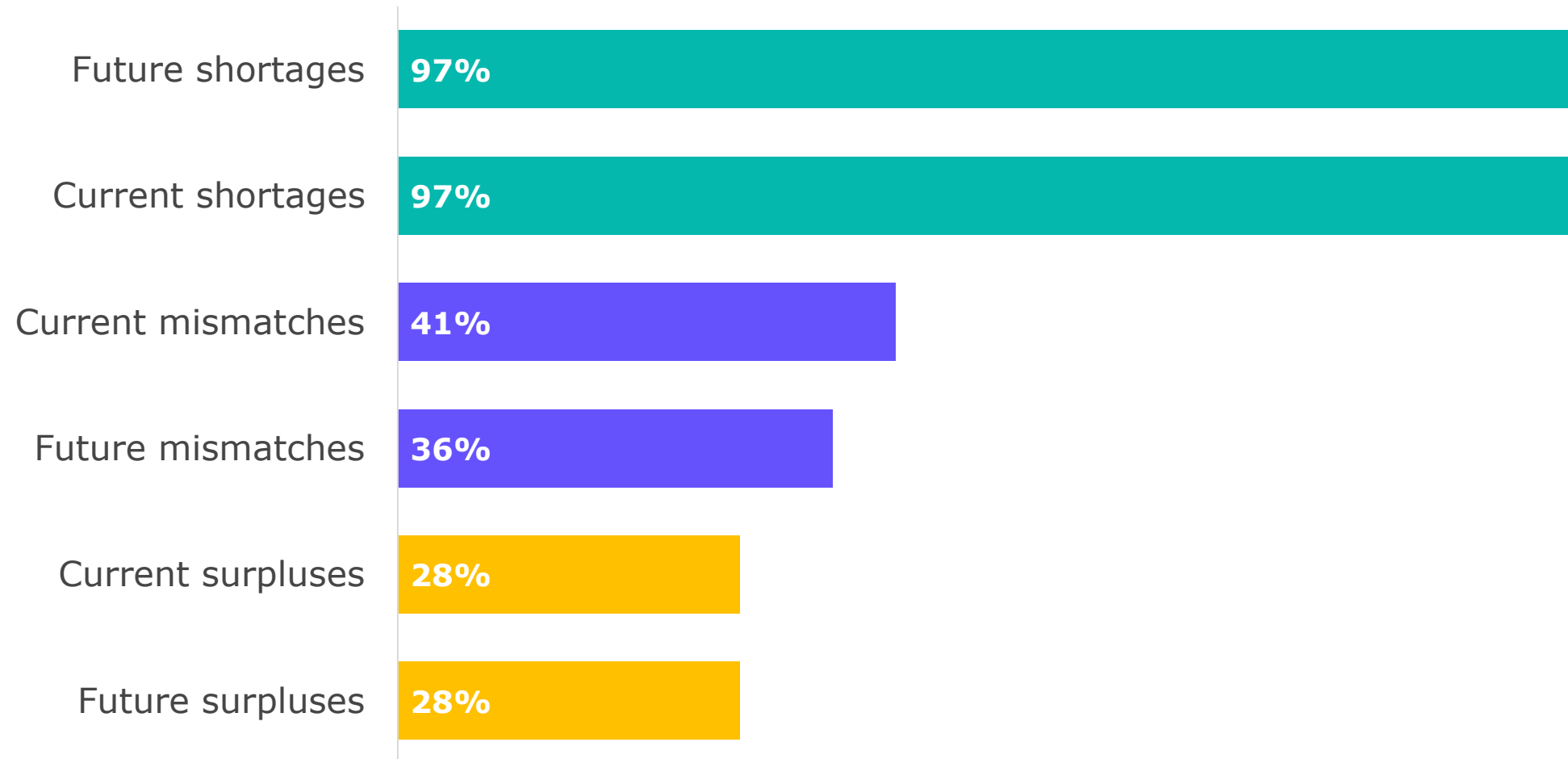


WHICH FUNCTIONS ARE IN SCOPE?



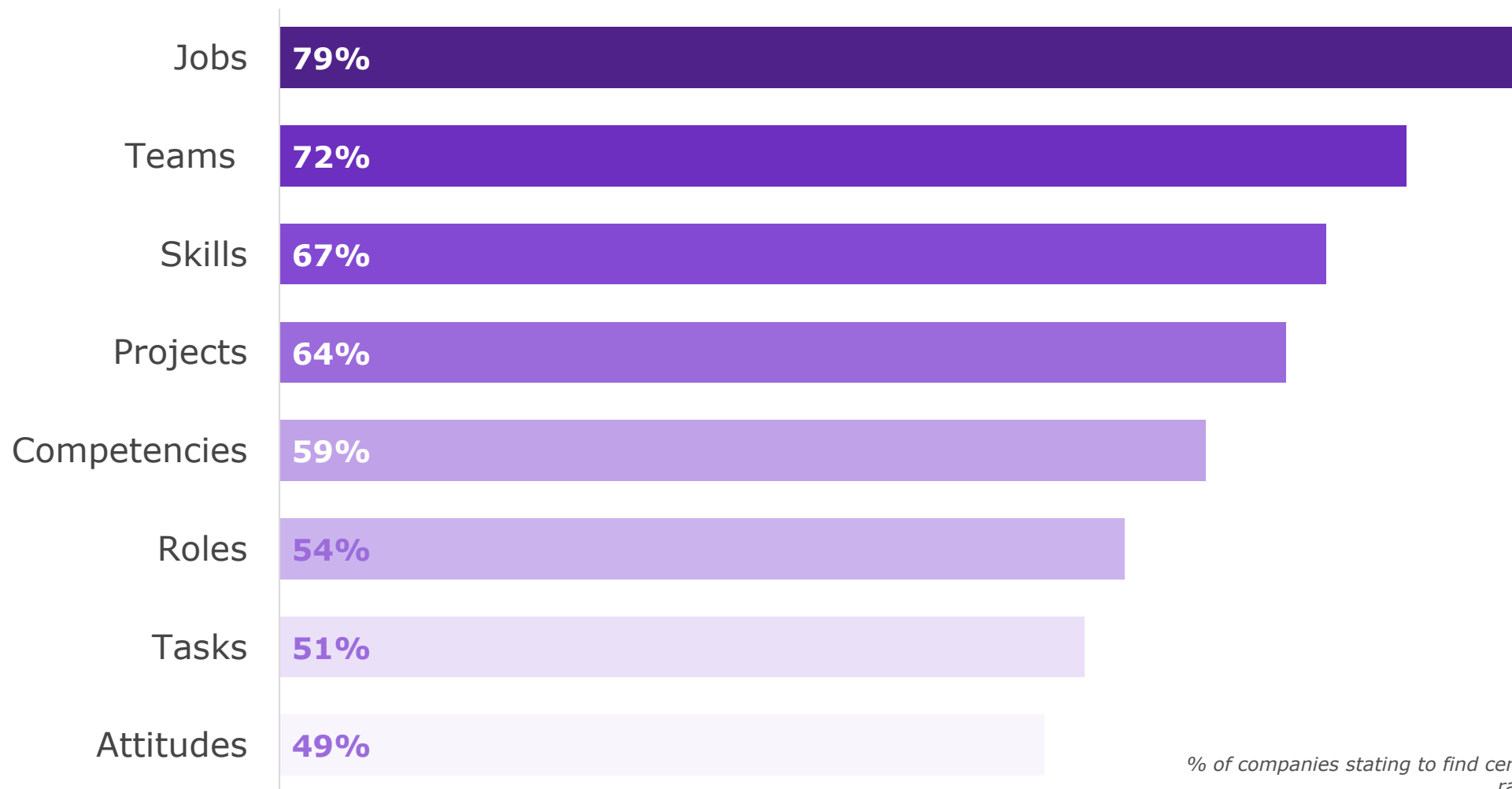
% of companies adopting a certain SWP scope

WHICH GAPS ARE ANALYSED?



% of companies stating to find certain gaps rather or very important

WHICH WORK ELEMENTS ARE CONSIDERED?



% of companies stating to find certain granular elements rather or very important

WHAT ABOUT SKILL-BASED?

% of HR Directors agrees with the statement that...

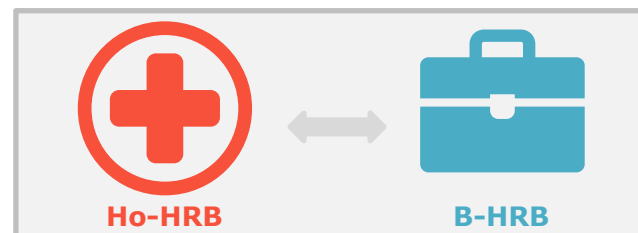
...They want to adopt a more skill-based perspective to prepare their organisation for the future

62%

SCOPE OF SWP

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS

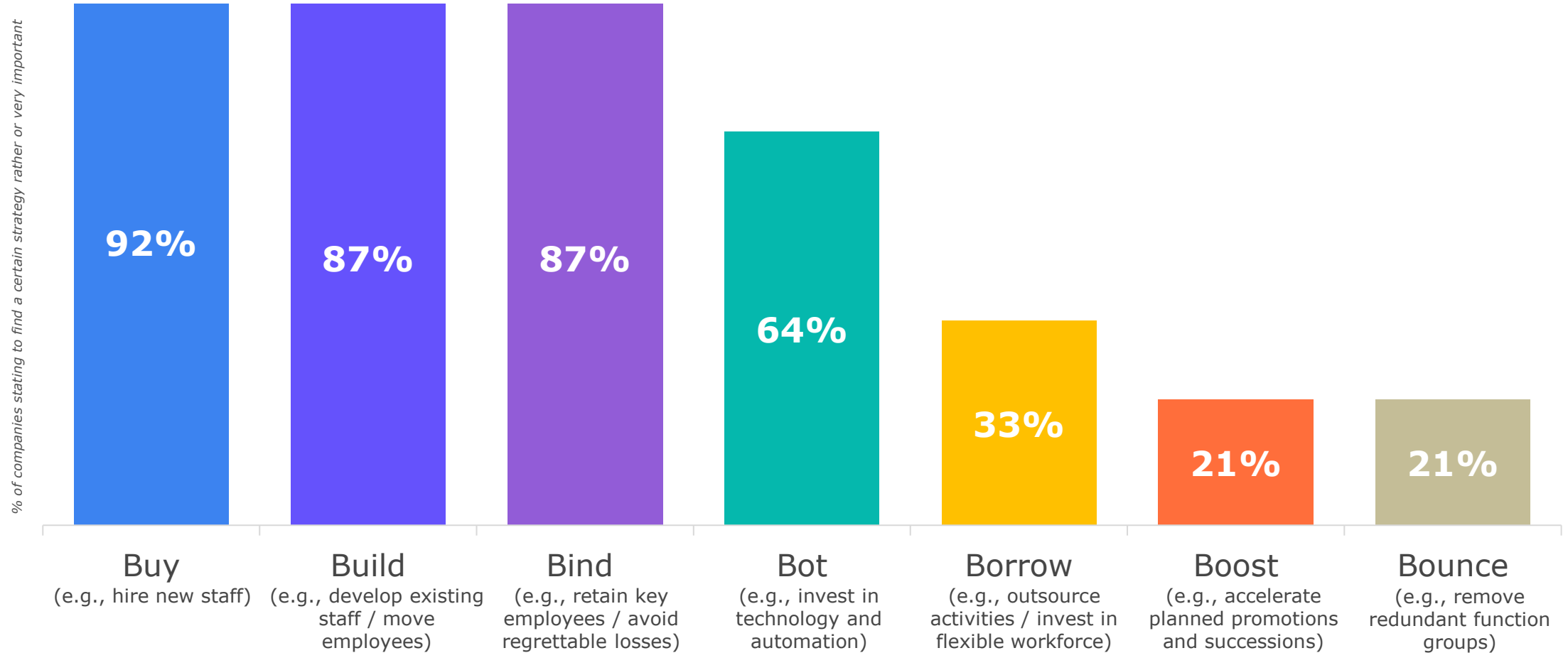
- > **Time span** for both hospitals and business mostly **1 year** (44-46%)
 - > However, in hospitals a time span of **less than 1 year** is popular as well (31% vs 22%)
 - > A focus on 2-5 years is less popular in hospitals than in business (21% vs 36%)
- > Higher focus on **Bottleneck professions** in hospitals (64% vs 32%)
- > Extremely high focus on **quantitative shortages** (97% vs 73%)
- > Hospitals put more emphasis on **teams** (after 'jobs', 'teams' is the most popular lens); for business teams are less important (72% vs 42%)
- > Hospitals want to adopt a more **skill-based perspective**, but this is less the case than in business (62% vs 78%)





IV.
SWP
TAKING ACTION TO
MOVE FORWARD

WHICH HR ACTIONS ARE TAKEN TO CLOSE IDENTIFIED GAPS?



MAIN CHALLENGES FOR HR TO FURTHER PROFESSIONALISE SWP

**Lack of skills to
conduct SWP**

01

**Complexity of
implementation**

02 Lack of clear strategy/vision

03 Lack of resources (e.g. budget)

04 Lack of data

05 Time constraints

06 Belief that the labour market is too scarce

07 Limited executive support

08 Resistance to change

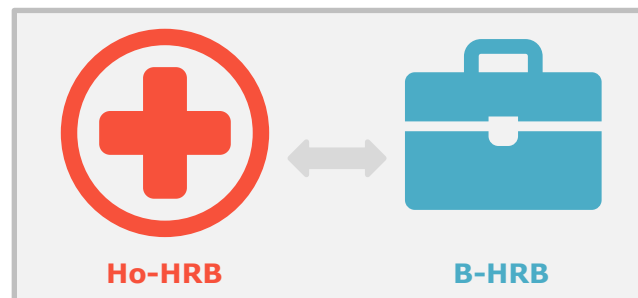
09 Lack of awareness

10 Belief that the future is too volatile to prepare for

TAKING ACTION TO MOVE FORWARD

COMPARING HOSPITAL SECTOR WITH BUSINESS

- > **'Build strategy'** much more adopted in hospitals than in business (87% vs 51%):
 - > building new skills is the 2nd most popular talent strategy in hospitals, while it only comes at place 4 in business (after 'Buy', 'Bind' and 'Bot')
- > **Complexity** and **Lack of skills** are main challenges for both hospitals and business.
 - > Lack of clear strategy/vision more indicated as a challenge in the hospitals





04
FINAL
TAKEAWAYS

TAKEAWAYS

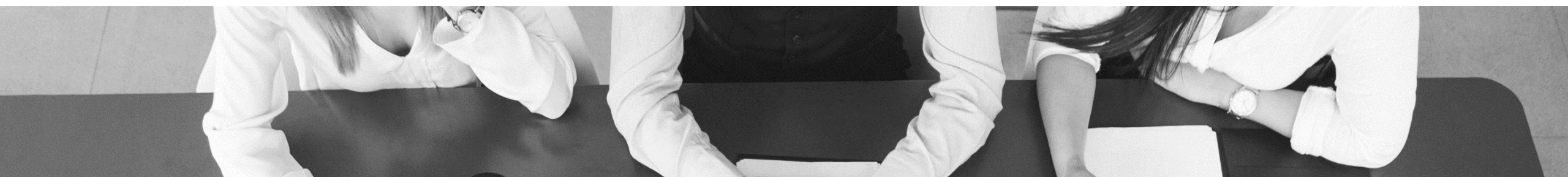
HR PRIORITY & MASTERY

1. Reported **HR Priorities**:

- > **Selection & Recruitment** is n°1 priority, and is even more dominant in hospital sector than in business
- > **Well-being** and **Leadership Development** complete the top 3 priorities
- > Biggest increases (since 2021) reported for **Cultural Change, Compensation & Benefits**, and **Retention**
- > Biggest loss of priority reported for: **New Ways of Working, Teamwork** and **Agility**

2. Reported **HR Mastery**:

- > Highest mastery reported for **Selection & Recruitment** (main HR strength), **Well-being, Learning & Development**, and **Leadership Development**
- > Biggest increases (since 2021) reported for **Leadership Development, Strategic Workforce Planning** and **Cultural Change**
- > Biggest decreases reported for **Prepare for Downsizing**, as well as for **Industrial Relationships**, and **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
- > **Range of mastery scores** across HR domains is larger in hospitals (highest score: 76, lowest score: 20) than in business (highest score: 75, lowest score: 49)



TAKEAWAYS

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING (SWP) – PART 1

1. Many (74%) HR leaders are convinced about the **importance** of SWP, but few (5%) are happy with current **outcomes**. Tension between indicated importance and satisfaction with outcomes is bigger in hospitals than in business
2. In most hospitals (65%) SWP is already **conducted on an ad hoc or regular basis**, but SWP responsibilities are not often formalised in a dedicated function or job description
3. Despite lack of formalisation, HR seems to be in the driving seat for SWP: 82% finds **HR in charge** to further professionalise SWP
4. The perceived **mastery level of SWP** increased since 2021 and is average (50)
5. SWP is a **complex theme** for HR:
 - > The main **bottlenecks** are (1) the complexity of implementation and (2) lack of skills to conduct SWP
 - > HR does not use specialised **technology** or mapping tools to gather data for SWP (21%)
 - > There is not a lot of active **communication** on SWP (18%)



TAKEAWAYS

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING (SWP) – PART 2

6. Key **drivers** for SWP are the **business** (95%) and **organisational strategy** (83%); SWP is less driven by organisational change (53%)
7. **Most popular SWP activities** are **demand forecasting** (90%) and **action planning** (76%);
Least implemented SWP dimensions are scenario planning (37%) and supply forecasting of external talent (54%)
8. Current SWP seems to be focused on the short- and medium-term: most adopted time spans are the **1-year horizon** (46%) or a horizon of **less than 1 year** (31%) ; most considered functions are **bottleneck professions** (64%) and **key functions to the business** (51%);
only 23% of hospitals applies SWP to all their functions
9. **Gap analyses** are mainly directed towards:
 - > **Quantitative shortages** (97%), with no distinction between current or future ones;
There is less emphasis on qualitative mismatches today (41%) or in the future (36%), nor on quantitative surpluses (28%)
 - > **Traditional jobs** (79%) and **teams** (72%)
10. HR leaders indicate **'Buying'** new staff (92%), **'Building'** new skills (87%) and **'Binding'** existing staff to the company (87%) as most popular **talent strategies** to close identified workforce gaps



05
MORE
INFORMATION



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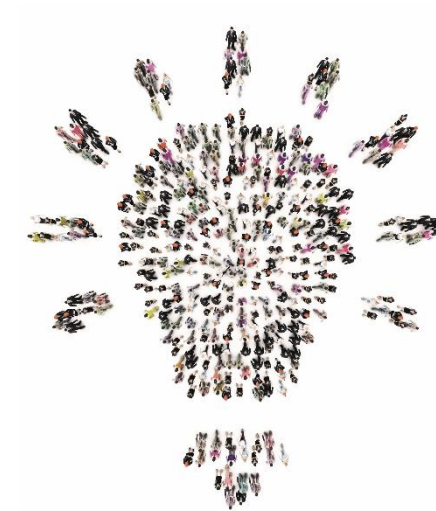
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