



THRIVING AT WORK SURVEY RESULTS

FEBRUARY 2016

**Author
Sarah Sparks**



CHOOSE TO THRIVE

Contents

Content	Page
Introduction, Aim, Objective & Methodology	1
Results	2
Conclusion	3
Key facts about the sample group	4
Appendix 1 - 'I am thriving at work' by Sector and Gender	5
Appendix 2 - The biggest personal challenges right now are...	6
Appendix 3 – Some of the important factors that contribute to career success	7
Appendix 4 - What motivates individuals to thrive and do their best work?	8
Appendix 5 - Effective relationships	9
Appendix 6 – Productivity	10
Appendix 7 – Managing your energy	11-12
Appendix 8 – Leadership	13-14
Appendix 9 – Gender Appendix 10 – Number of years in your career	15
Accompanying notes	16



CHOOSE TO THRIVE

Introduction

- Having spent the last 16 years coaching hundreds of executives in Financial Services and large corporate organisations, I have noticed that there is, not surprisingly a difference in the mind set and behaviour of those individuals who appeared to be 'thriving in the workplace' vs those who are not. In January 2016 I set up a research survey to test my theory that there are 4 key components that people need to master in order to 'thrive in the workplace'
 - A strong foundation
 - Effective relationships
 - Productive work methods
 - Sustain their energy

Aim

To gather data about peoples' perceptions of whether they were 'thriving at work' and to test whether my theory was supported by people's experience

- Do they have a **strong foundation**, made up of knowing their values, strengths and core beliefs, so that they don't get knocked off course easily?
- Do they **Build relationships** that work & inspire so that they feel part of something and can get more done?
- Do they have **productive work methods** that cut through the noise and allow them to focus on what's important?
- Do they look after themselves and **sustain their energy** so that they can achieve sustainable high performance?

Objective

- To see if there was a difference in the behaviour, beliefs and mind set between those that were 'thriving' and those that are not

Methodology

I devised a short questionnaire that could be completed on-line in less than 10 minutes.

With the help of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and my own network, over a 3 week period, I gathered over 170 responses from a number of different sectors, including Financial Services, Corporate, Legal, Education, Government and others.

Please note a significant number of the people who completed the survey are engaged in personal development compared to the general population and therefore the results are likely to indicate a more biased positive view than the norm



CHOOSE TO THRIVE

Results

- Only 48% of the sample group thought they were 'Thriving at Work'
- The overriding message from the survey is that 'common sense isn't always common practice'. People know what they should be doing but aren't doing it
- The most apparent example of this is in the area of managing personal energy whether that was sleep, nutrition, exercise or time out. E.g. 57% admitted that having more sleep would improve their productivity. Only 33% said that they did sufficient exercise, despite 76% acknowledging that exercise would improve their effectiveness
- The top 3 challenges are stated as:
 - Not having enough time to do everything
 - Staying healthy and working hard
 - Keeping their confidence high
- It is very striking that only 32% said that they created sufficient time to think during their working day
- The results clearly show that the sample group felt that creating relationships that work well was important in their career (94%) however only 67% felt that they had a strong and supportive network.
- The results by gender show that fewer women feel like they are thriving compared to men (42% vs 58%) and that women generally rated things lower throughout the survey

And what about my theory?

- Do people concur that there are at least 4 key components you need to master in order to 'thrive in the workplace'?
 - **Strong foundation** – 70% of the participants agreed that knowing key aspects about yourself increases career success
 - **Effective relationships** – 94% said that creating relationships that work well is important to their career
 - **Productive work methods** – Key productivity activities like time to think and prioritising were thought of as important – **86% and 84% respectively**
 - **Sustaining their energy** – The majority of participants said that having more exercise and sleep would make them more productive, and 52% said that they would benefit from knowing more about how to manage their energy

Overall my experience tells me that the above issues are key to an individual's success, productivity and mental wellness however more work needs to be done to prove it conclusively.



CHOOSE TO THRIVE

Conclusion

When it comes to Thriving in the work place, there is a large gap between awareness and action. Common sense is clearly not always common practice. People know what they should be doing but aren't doing it. This is not a new phenomenon. However, any narrowing of the gap could have a significant positive impact on an individual's productivity and mental wellbeing and therefore an organisation's productivity and bottom line.

The question is how?

Organisations that I have spoken to recently concur that conventional training that continues to tell individuals what they already know will not sustainably change behaviour. In my experience individuals need to be either inspired to change or have their current habits and thinking interrupted so they can see a different way forward. People change by inspiration or desperation. Despite coaching being known as an effective approach to learning (note 1) it is impractical to think that an organisation can invest in 1:1 coaching that will have a significant impact systemically. I have therefore developed a unique coaching 1:many approach, which is in its trial phase. I will be sharing the results of the trial in due course

Although this survey did not look at mental health specifically recent statistics indicate that stress related illnesses are on the increase for example:

- Since 2009, the number of working days lost to 'stress, depression and anxiety' has increase by 23% (note 2)
- 60-70% of people with common mental disorders (such as depression & anxiety) are in work but this can be seen as a risk factor for employers (note 2)
- Mental illness costs the UK economy £70-100bn per year – 4.5% of GDP (OECD estimate) (note 2)

The above statistics need to be borne in mind when reviewing the significance of these results and the potential costs to employers

The consequences of not addressing the current situation is that potentially organisations will have significant financial drain on their resources due to increased absence, stress, burnout, stress related illnesses such as musculoskeletal and mental health problems, reduced productivity and potentially a disengaged workforce.

I suspect that the organization that is able to narrow this gap and change the mind set of its employees will have a huge competitive advantage by increasing productivity and engagement and reducing the risk of stress, burnout and mental health issues

If you would like to discuss these findings in more detail and explore the implications for your organisation please get in contact with the author Sarah Sparks.

Key facts about the sample group

Total of 172 participants	39% M 61% F
% of total who thought of themselves as thriving	48%
% of Males who thought of themselves as thriving	58%
% of Females who thought of themselves as thriving	42%
% of total who felt in control of their lives	60%
The correlation between thriving and feeling in control is	0.6
% of participants with career > 20 years (estimated age 40+)	55%



CHOOSE TO THRIVE

Appendix 1

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Weighted Average
I feel in control of my life	1.7%	11.6%	26.7%	41.3%	18.6%	172	3.6
	3	20	46	71	32		
I am thriving at work	5.2%	13.4%	33.1%	35.5%	12.8%	172	3.4
	9	23	57	61	22		

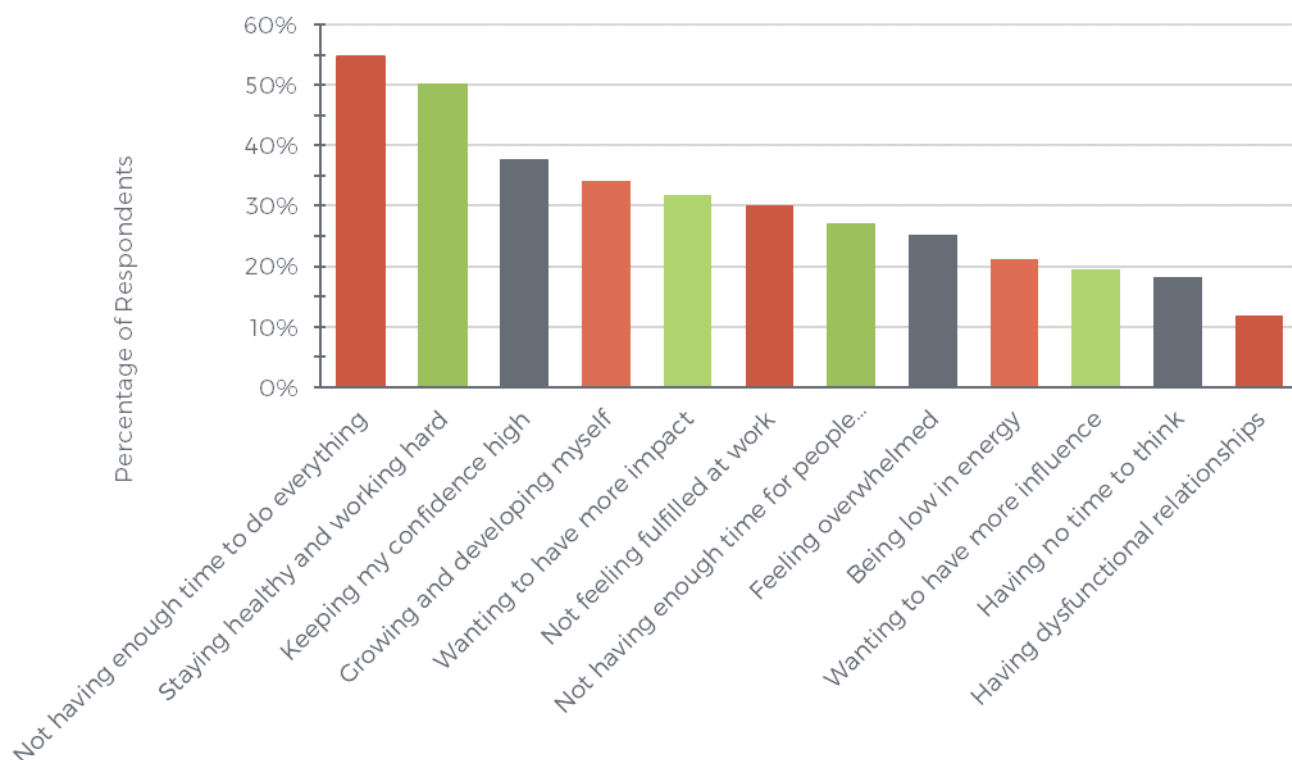
'I am thriving at work' by Sector and Gender

I am thriving at work	Male WA*	Score 4-5	Female WA*	Score 4-5	Total	Score 4-5	Total No
Media	3.5	1	3.5	6	3.5	70% 7	10
Financial Services	3.7	12	3.3	8	3.5	51.3% 20	39
Corporate	3.7	13	3.1	7	3.4	48.8% 20	41
Other (medical etc)	3.9	13	3.2	17	3.4	48.4% 30	62
Education	4.0	3	3.1	4	3.3	46.7% 7	15
Legal	3.3	3	2.3	0	3.0	33.3% 3	9
Government	3.5	1	2.7	1	2.9	28.6% 2	7
TOTAL	3.6	38	3.2	43	3.4	48.3% 83	

* WA = Weighted Average

Appendix 2

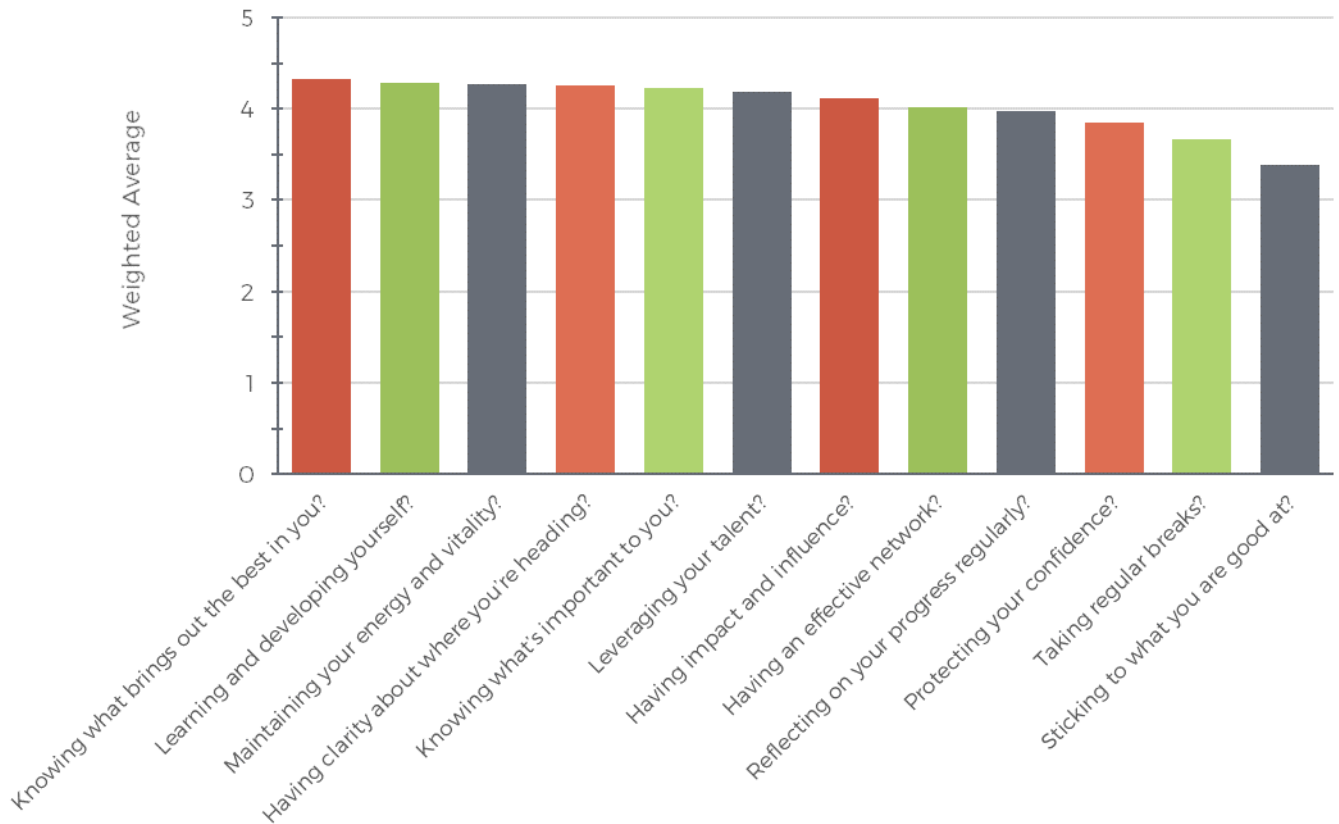
The biggest personal challenges right now are...



- Not having enough time to do everything is the number one personal challenge for women. Staying healthy and working hard is the number one challenge for men
- 68% of **FS professionals** felt that they did not have time to do everything and 66% said that they were finding it a challenge to work hard and stay healthy, while 40% said growing and developing themselves was a challenge
- 43% of people working in **corporate organisations** said that they wanted to have more impact
- 63% of the people who thought of themselves as 'thrivers' said their number one challenge was 'not having enough time to do everything' and 59% said staying healthy and working hard was also a challenge
- 59% of the people who thought of themselves as 'not thriving' said 'keeping their confidence high' was their no. 1 challenge, 53% said that they didn't feel fulfilled at work. 47% said they were low in energy & 44% said that growing and developing themselves was a challenge
- Some of this group appeared to be coming to terms with loss or bereavement

Appendix 3

How important are the following to contributing to career success?



- All of the above attributes were thought of as important to contributing to career success – with the weighted average score being more than 3.8
- For women, 'knowing what brings out the best in you' was seen as the top factor contributing to career success, however men felt it was having 'clarity about where you're heading'
- Learning and developing yourself was seen as the number 2 factor while 'maintaining your energy and vitality' was seen as number 3
- 70% said that having high score in most of these categories would have increased their career success

Appendix 4

What motivates individuals to thrive and do their best work?

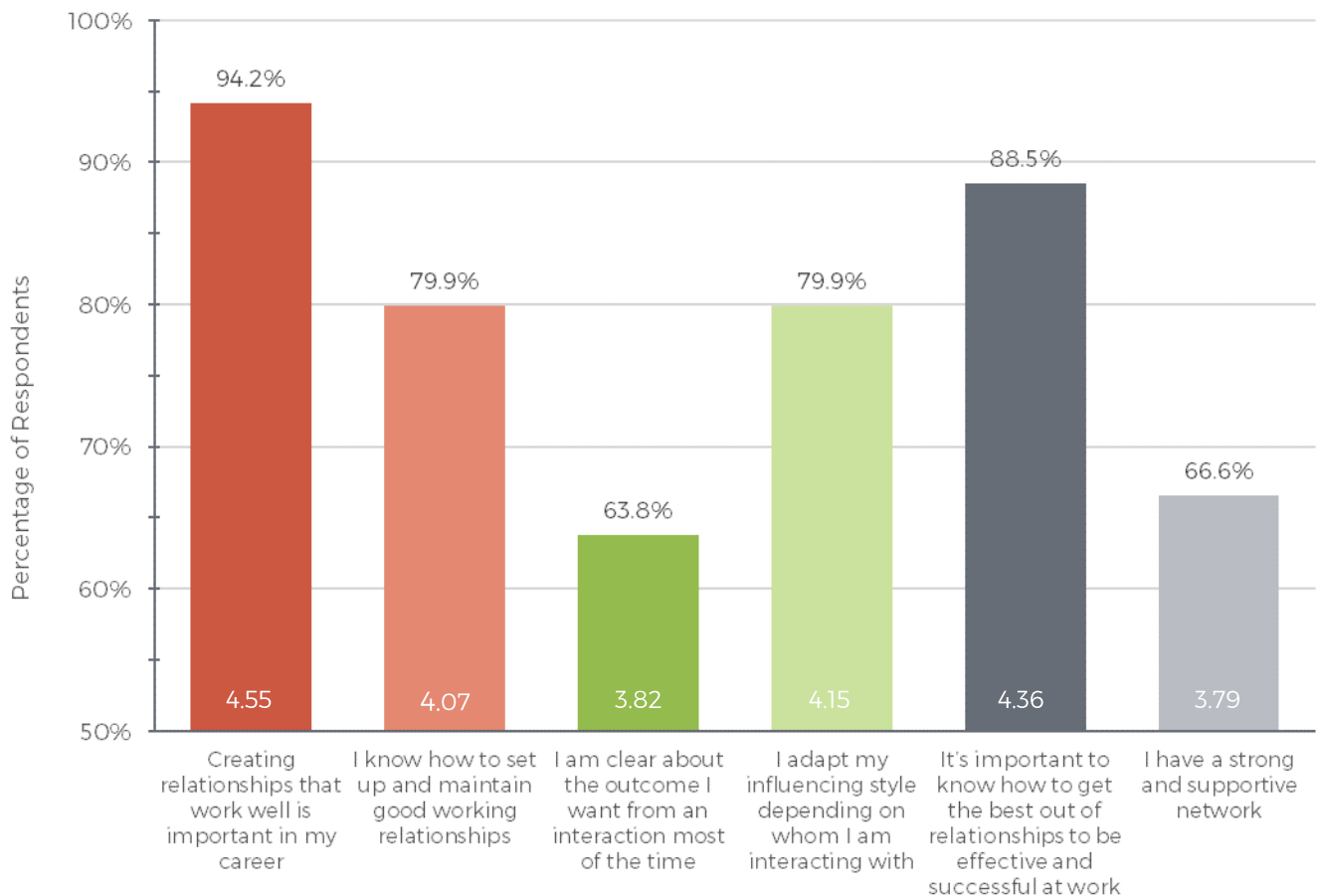


- The above word cloud represents the importance of what individuals felt motivated them and helped them do their best work

Appendix 5

Effective relationships

The % represents the number of sample group who scored 4 or 5 in the following questions (weighted averages in white)

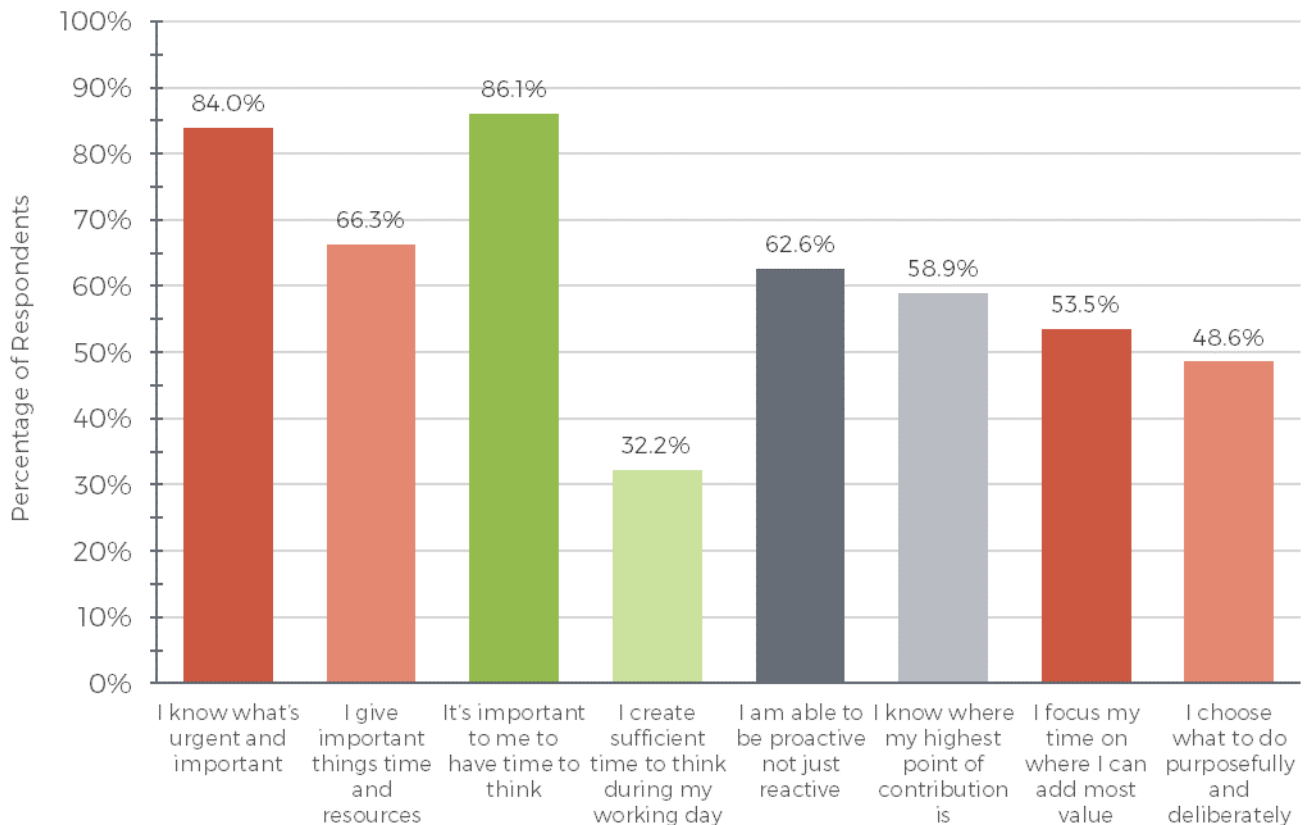


- 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that creating relationships that work well is important in their careers
- However only 80% said that they knew how to set up and maintain good working relationships
- This % did not significantly change between the 'thrivers' and 'non thrivers'
- Interestingly only 64% said that they were clear about the outcome they wanted from an interaction
- 80% said that they adapted their influencing style dependant on who they were interacting with
- 88% agreed or strongly agreed that knowing how to get the best out of relationships was important in being effective and successful at work
- While only 67% said that they had a strong and supportive network

Appendix 6

Productivity

The % represents the number of sample group who scored 4 or 5

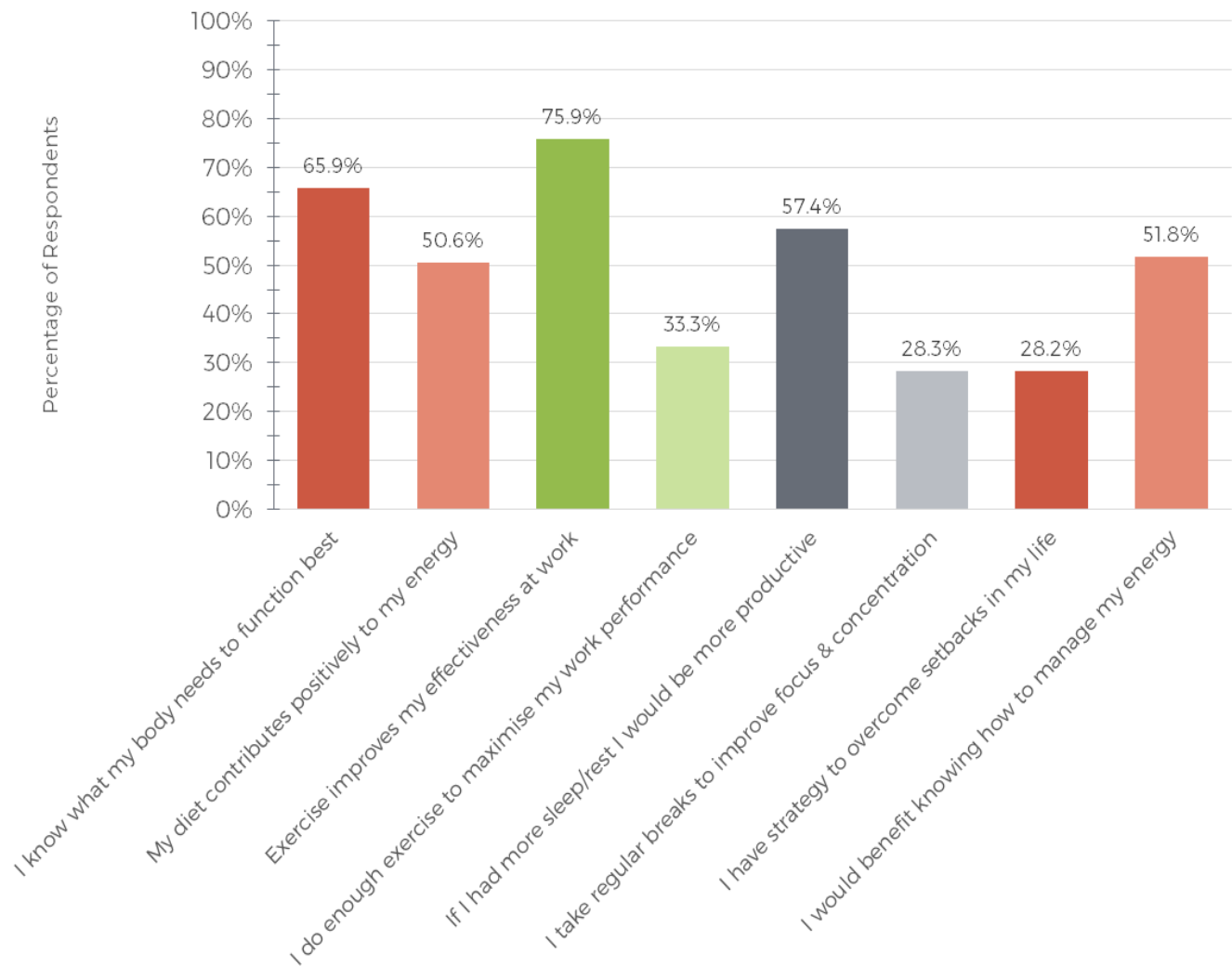


- Although 84% said they knew the difference between what's urgent and important, only 66% felt they gave the important things appropriate time and resources
- 86% said that it was important to have time to think although only a staggering 32% said that they did create sufficient time to think during their working day. The percentage was lower for women at 29%
- Of the people who scored low (1 & 2) in thriving at work, 90% said that it was important to have time to think, and yet only 19% found sufficient time to think during their working day
- 63% (61% for women) said that they were able to be proactive not just reactive but only 59% (57% women) said they knew what their highest point of contribution was
- Only 54% (48% women) said that they focused their time on where they can add most value and only 49% (44% for women) said that they choose what to do with their time purposefully and deliberately

Appendix 7

Managing your energy

The % represents the number of sample group who scored 4 or 5

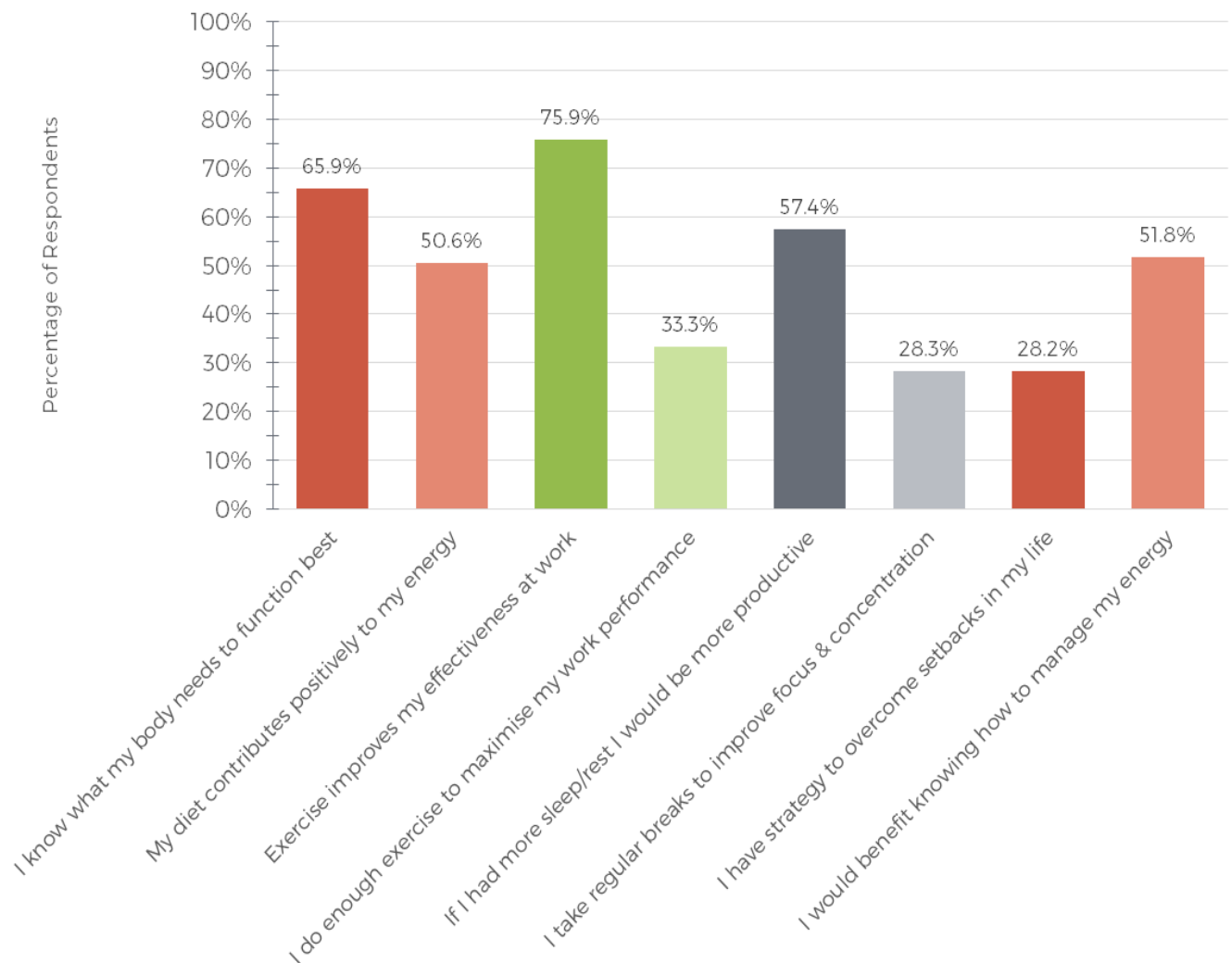


- 65% of those participating believed they knew what their body needs to function at its best although only 51% said that their current diet contributes positively to their energy levels. The % gap is even wider for women with 68% saying they knew what their body needed but only 46% saying their current diet contributed positively
- 76% of the participants said that exercise improves their effectiveness at work with only 33% saying they do sufficient exercise. Again the gap is larger for women with 77% saying that exercise improves their performance with only 29% saying they do sufficient exercise
- Overall 57% (64% for women) said that they would be more productive if they had more sleep

Appendix 7 (cont)

Managing your energy

The % represents the number of sample group who scored 4 or 5

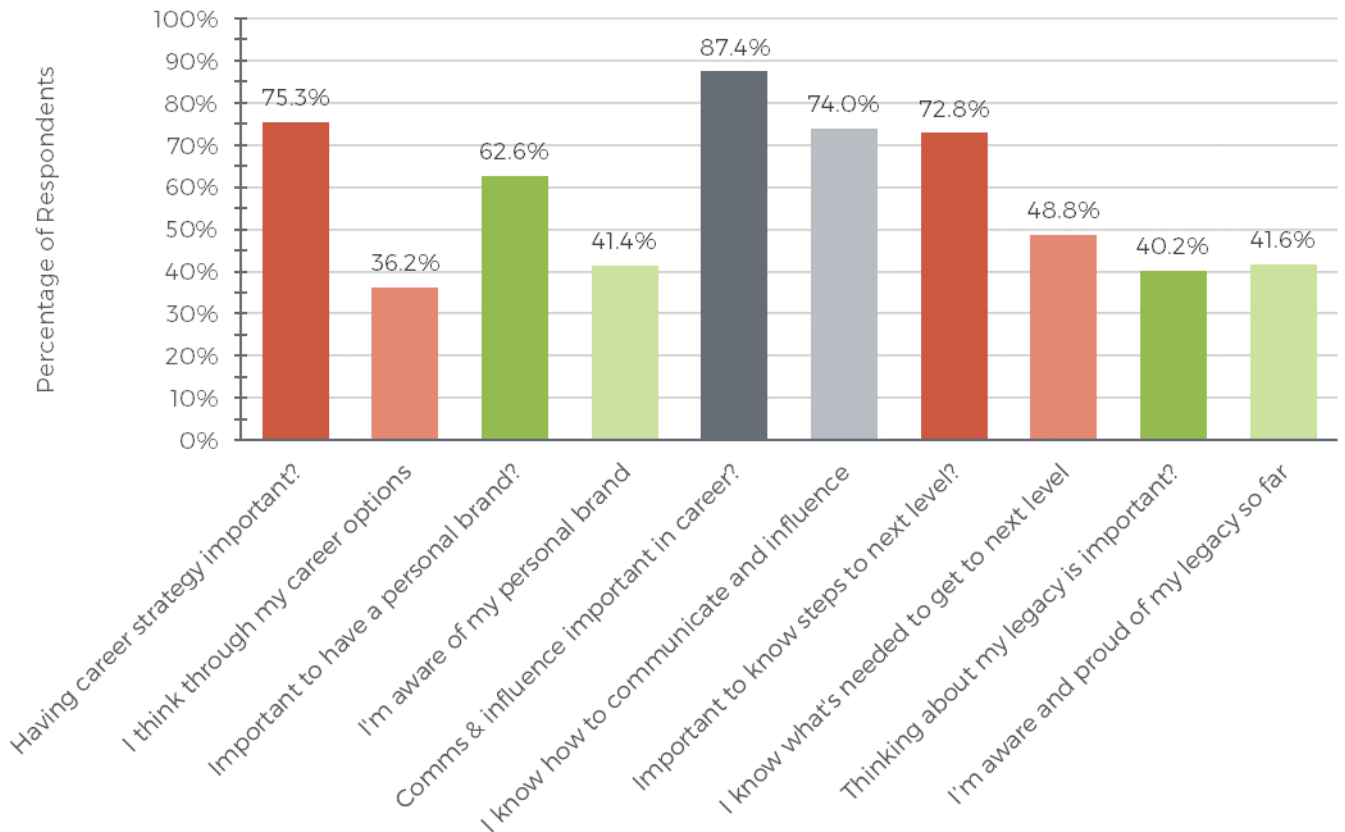


- Of those who thought of themselves as not thriving, 77% felt they would be more productive if they had more sleep
- Only 28% said that they took regular breaks to improve their focus and concentration. This became only 16% when looking at just the people who felt they were not thriving
- 28% overall said that they had a strategy in place to overcome setbacks in life but there was a big discrepancy between men 34% and women 25%. That still leaves the majority of 65-75% of people not having a strategy to bounce back after adversity
- 51% said that they would benefit from knowing more about how to manage their energy

Appendix 8

Leadership

The % represents the number of sample group who scored 4 or 5

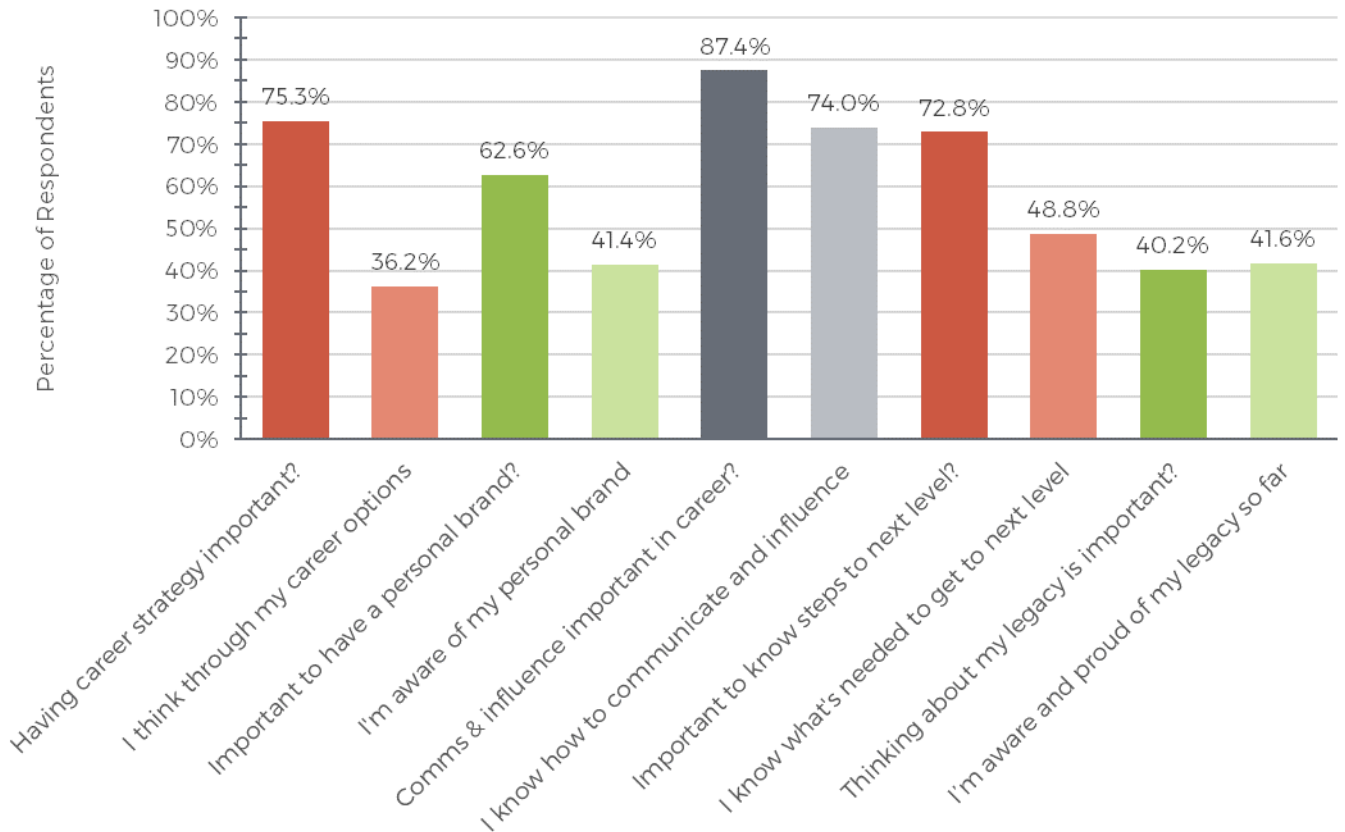


- 75% of respondents (85% men, 70% women) felt it was important to have a career strategy
- However only 36% (43% men, 33% women) said they thought through their career options regularly
- 63% (66% men, 62% women) thought it was important to have a personal brand
- But only 41% said they were aware of their brand. Interestingly fewer men were aware of their brand than women (37% vs 45%)
- Not surprisingly 87% (93% men, 84% women) thought that communication and influence was important in their career

Appendix 8 (cont)

Leadership

The % represents the number of sample group who scored 4 or 5

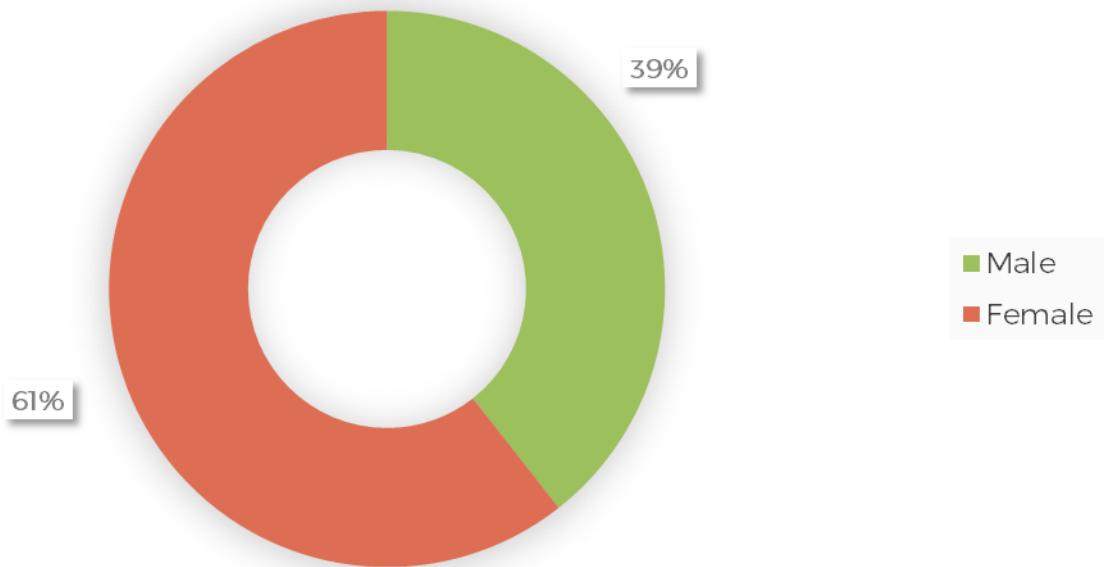


- 74% (77% men and 73%) said they knew how to communicate and influence effectively. However there was a big difference between 'thrivers' and 'non thrivers' - 83% vs 51%
- 73% said it was important to know how to get to the next level
- Only 49% said they know what they had to do to get to the next level. Again there was a big difference between 'thrivers' and 'non thrivers' - 58% vs 38%
- Only 40% thought it was important to think about their legacy (thrivers 48% vs non thrivers 42%) (men 40% vs women 45%)
- 42% were proud of their legacy so far (thrivers 53% vs non thrivers 39%) (men 46% vs women 39%)

Appendix 9

Gender

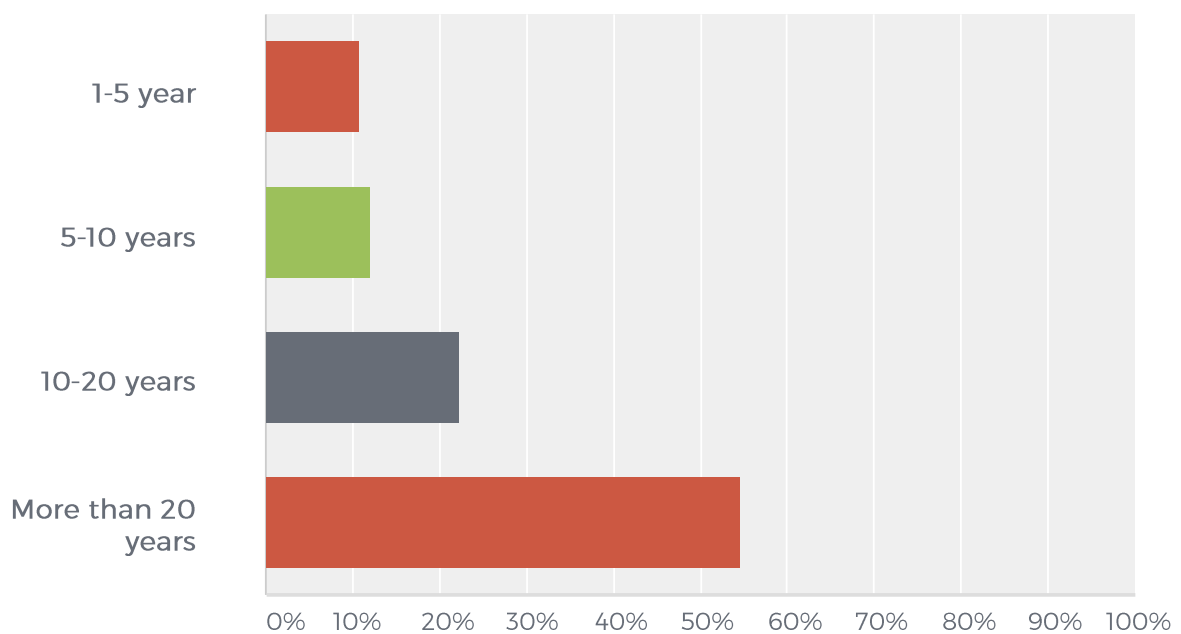
Total respondents: 172



Appendix 10

Number of years in your career

Respondents: 174



Accompanying Notes

1. Data & Figures from the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 2013, Labour Force Survey 2013 & OECD Mental Health at Work UK 2014
2. A recent CIPD study stated that >95% believed that coaching delivered benefits to both individuals and organisations and was an effective way to promote learning in organisations
3. When analyzing the results, I have grouped the scores 4 & 5 in one category and 1 & 2 in another. Unless mentioned I have ignored the middle score of 3
4. I have assumed that people who consider themselves as thriving have scored themselves as 4 or 5 out of 5 in the question 'I am thriving at work' Conversely those that score themselves as 1 or 2, I have assumed are not thriving at work