



2012 PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE STUDY

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Introduction

Project Purpose

When York College of Pennsylvania's Center for Professional Excellence was created in 2009, it was decided that an integral part of the Center would be a research component. Each year, the Center conducts a national study of professionalism in the workplace.

Findings from the annual studies are used to track changes in the state and definitions of professionalism. They also help direct the content of the professionalism seminars that the Center for Professional Excellence offers every year to the college's students, faculty, and administrators.

Each year's study includes a national sample of HR professionals. These persons are in a position to assess the level of professionalism found in new hires who have recently graduated from college. The findings from this sample are tracked over time.

Last year, a sample of upper class undergraduates was added. This provided insight into how students about to enter the workforce perceive professionalism among their peers. Interestingly, many of their answers paralleled those of the HR professionals.

This year, a sample of managers/supervisors was included in the study. While a significant amount is now known about new hires, the research had yet to examine experiences with existing employees. This was accomplished with the inclusion of this group of respondents.

Report Format

The first four sections of the report constitute an executive summary. These sections are Introduction, Research Design, Major Findings, and Observations.

The sections following the executive summary present the detailed findings. These findings are reported in both graphic and narrative forms.

Research Design

Sample	<p>As stated earlier, the study used two randomly selected national samples. A total of 309 HR professionals were surveyed. The second sample consisted of persons responsible for managing or supervising employees. This was composed of 312 managers. The characteristics of each sample are presented in the final section of this report.</p> <p>The maximum margin of error associated with the samples is + or – 5.5% at the 95% confidence level. This means the answers that would be obtained from either the population of all HR professionals or managers would be within + or – 5.5% of the samples’ answers 95% of the time.</p>
Data Collection	<p>The data was collected using online surveys. Respondents were sent an e-mail from Dr. George Waldner, President of the York College. The e-mail introduced the study and contained a link to the online survey.</p>
Research Instrument	<p>The surveys were developed using input from the Center for Professional Excellence’s Advisory Board. Some questions from the 2009 and 2010 HR professional surveys were used to permit comparisons over time.</p> <p>The survey for the managers was a variation on the HR professional survey. The wording of the questions was modified to reflect these respondents’ positions interacting with existing employees.</p> <p>Prior to being administered, the surveys were reviewed and approved by the Advisory Board and the Center for Professional Excellence.</p>

Data Analysis

In addition to the total samples, the findings for each sample were statistically examined for any differences due to respondents' demographics.

In the HR and manager samples, the demographics included the respondent's age, education level, number of employees at all locations and in the human resources department, and industry type.

Any statistically significant differences related to respondents' demographics are reported in the text.

Where applicable, comparisons are made between the 2009 and 2010 findings. These are shown in the graphs.

Open-ended responses were coded into descriptive categories for presentation purposes. The report shows the predominant categories. The data tables can be consulted for a complete review of all the coded responses.

Major Findings

Annual Survey of Professionalism

This is the third annual professionalism poll conducted for the Center for Professional Excellence. In this year's study, managers as well as HR professionals were surveyed. Previous studies with HR professionals focused on experiences with recently hired college graduates. With the inclusion of managers, an examination of professionalism in existing employees is also possible.

Overview

Professionalism is more prevalent in existing employees than in new hires. Consistently, managers were less likely than the HR respondents to report a lack of professionalism. When managers specified the employee segments that most lack professionalism, they pointed to younger employees. The generation gap in behaviors and expectations discovered in earlier studies continues with this study.

Despite the apparent generation gap, the majority of both managers and HR respondents feel that the definition of what is professional should not be subject to change. The attitude appears to be that young employees should learn to conform to current standards of professionalism rather than the standards being modified in response to larger societal changes.

Differences that do exist between manager and HR respondents are not surprising. HR respondents encounter the employee either during the hiring process or when the employee has done something severe enough to have it become an HR matter. Managers see the employees on the job once they have been hired.

To permit a comparison of the answers from the two types of respondents, their findings are presented separately.

Comparing the findings from all three studies, there may be indications that some aspects of professionalism are improving in the workplace. The bad economy could be partly responsible for this. Both sets of respondents note that with the bad economy the pool of applicants from which to hire has grown. With more persons applying for employment, the ability to hire someone who already exhibits professionalism increases.

Defining Professionalism

After three years of asking HR respondents what qualities characterize professionalism, a firm understanding of these qualities now exists. The managers' answers are generally similar to those from the HR respondents. The expected qualities to be a professional are common to both new and existing employees.

The predominant qualities associated with professionalism are: interpersonal skills, appearance, communication skills, time management, confidence, being ethical, having a work ethic, and being knowledgeable.

The quality of Interpersonal skills involves several dimensions. It includes etiquette, being courteous, showing others respect, and behavior that is appropriate for the situation.

Similarly, time management encompasses being punctual as well as using one's time efficiently.

The differences that exist between HR and manager respondents are predictable. Managers more often than HR respondents name work ethic (managers, 32.7% vs. HR, 14.2%) and time management (managers, 27.2% vs. HR, 20.8%) as qualities of the professional. Managers are more likely to see these qualities in existing employees than HR professionals are to experience them in the interview process.

The qualities that define being unprofessional tend to be the mirror image of the qualities of the professional. Again, managers name the same qualities as do the HR respondents. The qualities named most often as unprofessional by both types of respondents are: inappropriate appearance, lack of dedication, poor work ethic, sense of entitlement, disrespect, poor communication skills, unfocused, and a poor attitude.

Again, the differences that do exist between HR and manager respondents are understandable. Managers are notably less likely to mention sense of entitlement (managers, 9.1% vs. HR, 22.7%) and communication skills (managers, 11.2% vs. HR, 21.0%). A sense of entitlement is probably more apparent during an employment interview than once the person is hired. Someone with poor communication skills may get no further than an interview.

State of Professionalism	<p>For a sizable percentage of respondents, the state of professionalism in employees has decreased over the past five years. A third of the HR respondents (33.1%) and a fifth of the managers (21.2%) feel this way.</p> <p>The good news is professionalism has increased for 16.0% of the HR respondents and 27.2% of the managers. This could be one good result of a bad economy. When asked why they believe the presence of professionalism has increased, respondents most often observe that the poor economy and consequent downsizing has increased the pool of applicants from which to choose.</p>
International Scene	<p>The HR and manager respondents whose companies have locations outside the United States were asked about the state of professionalism seen abroad. Unlike the United States, few of them believe professionalism has decreased outside the United States (managers, 4.4%; HR, 7.2%). The lack of professionalism may be largely a United States phenomenon. It may be productive to perform more in-depth international comparisons.</p>
Sense of Entitlement	<p>Half of the HR respondents (50.5%) and a third of the managers (33.7%) feel a sense of entitlement among employees has increased over the past five years. The difference between the HR and manager respondents may be partly due to the age of employees encountered. HR respondents are more likely than managers to interact with younger employees. Comments from the managers indicate that it is younger employees who are most likely to exhibit a sense of entitlement.</p> <p>The question about sense of entitlement has been asked to the HR respondents since the initial study in 2009. It is a positive sign that the number of HR professionals reporting an increase in the percentage of employees having a sense of entitlement has decreased each of the three years this study has been conducted (2009, 60.9%; 2010, 55.3%; 2011, 50.5%). Future studies will continue to track this to determine if a trend exists.</p>

IT Abuses

While HR respondents may be less likely to report a sense of entitlement among employees, this is not the case with IT abuses. After two years when nearly 40% of the HR respondents indicated that IT abuses have increased, the percentage feeling this way has increased to 51.8% this year. Obviously, this will be monitored in future studies to see if this larger percentage is an aberration.

About a third of the managers (34.3%) report an increase in IT abuses. Comments by the managers suggest that, while this problem encompasses most of the workforce, it is still the younger employees who are most likely to be engaging in this behavior.

The IT problems being witnessed are similar for both HR and manager respondents. The most common abuses are excessive twittering/Facebook (managers, 79.4%; HR, 82.5%), inappropriate use of the Internet (managers, 86.9%; HR, 78.1%), text messaging at inappropriate times (managers, 79.4%; HR, 81.9%), and excessive cell phone usage for personal calls (managers, 64.5%; HR, 65.0%).

HR respondents have been asked about these types of abuses for the past two studies. From last year to this year, the percentage reporting problems with twittering or Facebook has jumped from 67.3% to 82.5%. This large of an increase is worth watching to see if it continues in subsequent studies.

Unfocused Employees

Last year's research discovered that unfocused employees may be a new emerging phenomenon. To pursue this, a structured question was included in this year's survey of managers asking if the percentage of unfocused employees has changed over the past five years. A fifth of the managers (21.8%) indicated that this has increased. Of the 14.7% of the managers willing to specify an employee segment most likely to be unfocused, half (54.3%) pointed to younger employees.

Causes of being unfocused were most often identified as Internet and social media (26.9%), personal problems related to the economy (20.9%), and less ownership of one's work (19.4%).

Qualities of the Professional

Qualities considered important in a professional are similar for HR and manager respondents. When rating a list of possible qualities, most importance is assigned to displaying a sense of ethics and accepting personal responsibility for one's decisions and actions. The only difference is managers rate being an expert in one's field as being more important than do HR respondents. This is understandable given the employee segments each type of respondent encounters.

Managers are more likely than HR respondents to find these qualities in employees. This may be due to managers rating existing employees and HR respondents rating new employees. There are two exceptions to this. Managers are less likely than HR respondents to feel existing employees are able to do work that is creative. Of course, managers are the ones who would experience that once the employee is hired. Managers also believe that existing employees are less likely to be concerned about opportunities for advancement. This concern may be more often voiced by employees during the hiring process. There could well be a relationship between a sense of entitlement and asking about opportunities for advancement before one is actually hired.

A comparison of importance and prevalence ratings reveals that the prevalence of the professionalism qualities is less than the importance assigned to them. HR and manager respondents are similar in this finding. This reinforces findings from previous years. The largest gap between the two ratings is found for "accepts personal responsibility for decisions and actions" and "is open to criticism."

Similar to previous years, the only quality whose prevalence receives a higher rating than its importance is "concern about the opportunities for advancement." The gap is larger in new employees than in existing employees.

Impact of Professionalism	<p>The importance of exhibiting professionalism is clearly seen in the impact it has in both hiring and advancement. In last year's study, 96.0% of the HR respondents reported that one's professionalism affects the likelihood of being hired. This year, 92.9% of the managers stated that an employee's professionalism has an impact on promotion opportunities.</p>
Impact of Appearance	<p>The majority of the respondents' companies have a dress code (managers, 75.0%; HR, 77.7%). The dress code in nearly all cases applies to attire (managers, 99.1%; HR, 98.3%). Quite often, the code also includes facial piercings other than ears (managers, 31.4%; HR, 44.8%) and visible tattoos (managers, 21.8%; HR, 39.3%).</p> <p>According to the respondents, one's appearance has an impact on being hired and promoted. Appearance goes beyond hiring or promotion, it also affects the perception of one's ability to perform their job requirements competently.</p>
Changing Definitions of Professionalism	<p>One possibility is that definitions of professionalism should change over time to reflect cultural shifts in society. Most HR and manager respondents disagree with this. Consistent with this, they disagree with the thought that a perceived lack of professionalism may be the result of older generations judging younger generations.</p>
Deadly Mistakes During An Interview	<p>HR respondents identified the following as the most common mistakes that an applicant can make during an interview: inappropriate attire (39.9%), being late for the interview (29.1%), lack of preparation for the interview (25.9%), and poor verbal skills including grammar (22.7%).</p>

Worst Problems in New Employees

Managers were asked about the worst problems they see in new employees once they are hired and working. The four mentioned by a fifth or more of the managers are: lack of urgency in getting a job done (32.6%), a sense of entitlement (27.2%), poor performance coupled with a mediocre work ethic (23.0%), and poor attendance (22.2%). Often cited with the lack of urgency was employees exercising poor time management.

Reasons for Firing

The final set of mistakes examined was activities or shortcomings that can lead to an employee’s dismissal. For both HR professionals (50.7%) and managers (43.6%), the most common factor that causes an employee to be fired relates to attendance. Poor attendance includes being tardy, leaving early, and numerous absences.

Other frequently named factors by HR respondents are: poor work ethic (25.7%) and IT abuses (22.8%).

The additional predominant reasons for dismissal cited by managers are: poor work ethic (34.8%), poor time management (31.1%), and unethical behavior (30.7%).

Developing Professionalism

Since less than half of the respondents (managers, 47.1%; HR, 45.6%) report that their companies have programs to orient new employees on what is considered to be professional behavior, it is understandable that most of the respondents feel colleges should develop professionalism regardless of the student’s major.

Role of Age

A reoccurring theme throughout the research findings is the role of age in defining what is professionalism. Repeatedly, managers single out younger employees as the ones least likely to exhibit professionalism. The younger respondents are the ones who most often feel that the perceived lack of professionalism in the workplace is due to an older generation reviewing the behaviors and attitudes of a younger generation. Consistent with this, they are also the respondents who agree that definitions of professionalism should change to reflect the standards of younger employees.

A challenge when discussing changing what is associated with professionalism is what should be accepted. Is it acceptable for employees to text during a meeting or surf the Internet whenever they get bored? If a sense of entitlement is left unchecked, how does self-centered behavior affect fellow workers or a sense of teamwork?

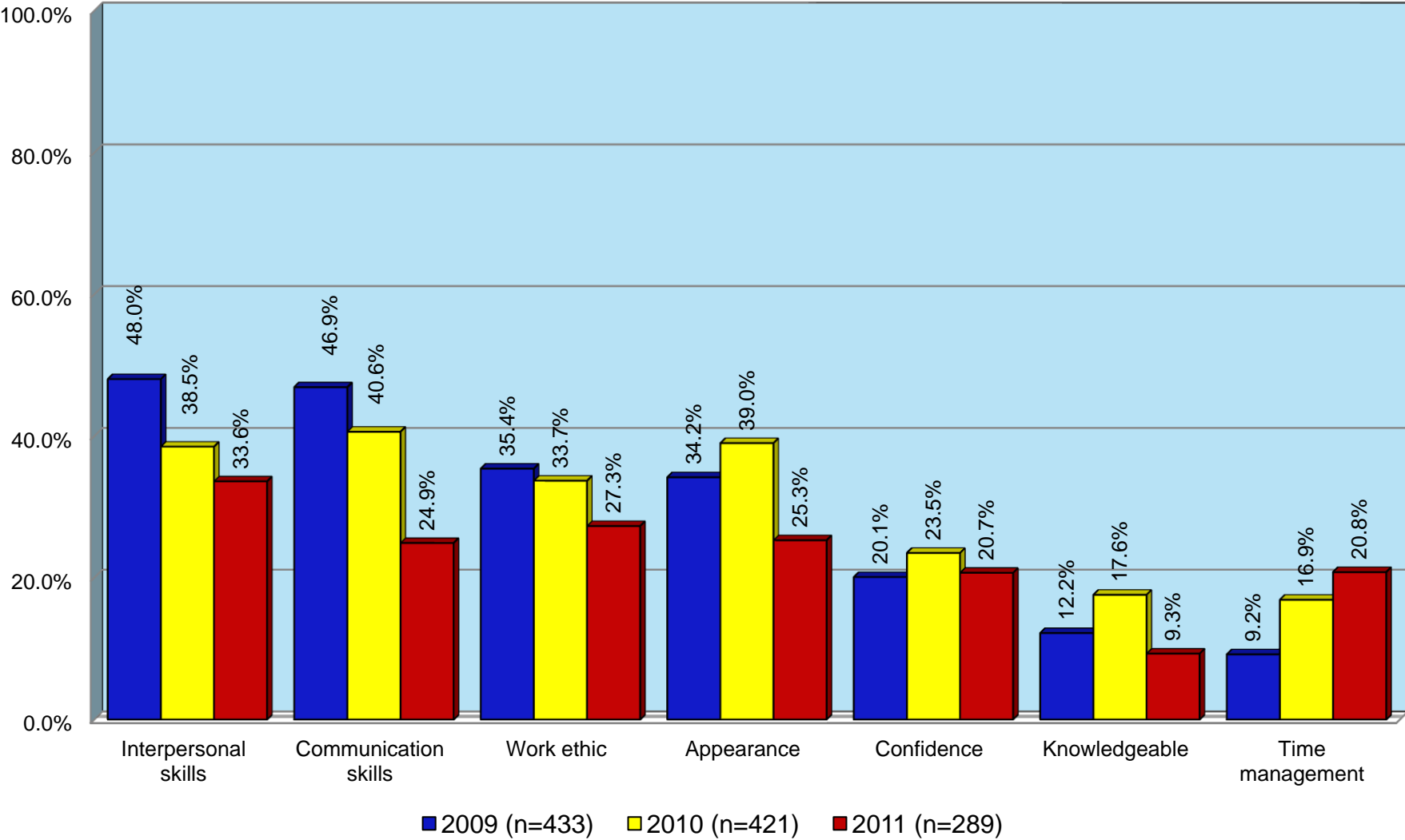
Defining Professionalism

Qualities That
Describe
Professionalism -
HR

One question that led to the initial research was how do employers define professionalism. Understanding the employer’s perspective is important since they are the ones who are hiring college graduates. To answer this question, HR professionals were asked what three qualities best describe an employee who is considered to be professional. This question is asked in every professionalism study to permit tracking over time.

Responses were more varied this year than in previous years. The graph presents the predominant answers. The data tables should be consulted for all responses.

While there are changes in the percentages, the most frequently cited qualities are same as previous years. These are interpersonal skills (33.6%), work ethic (27.3%), appearance (25.3%), and communication skills (24.9%).

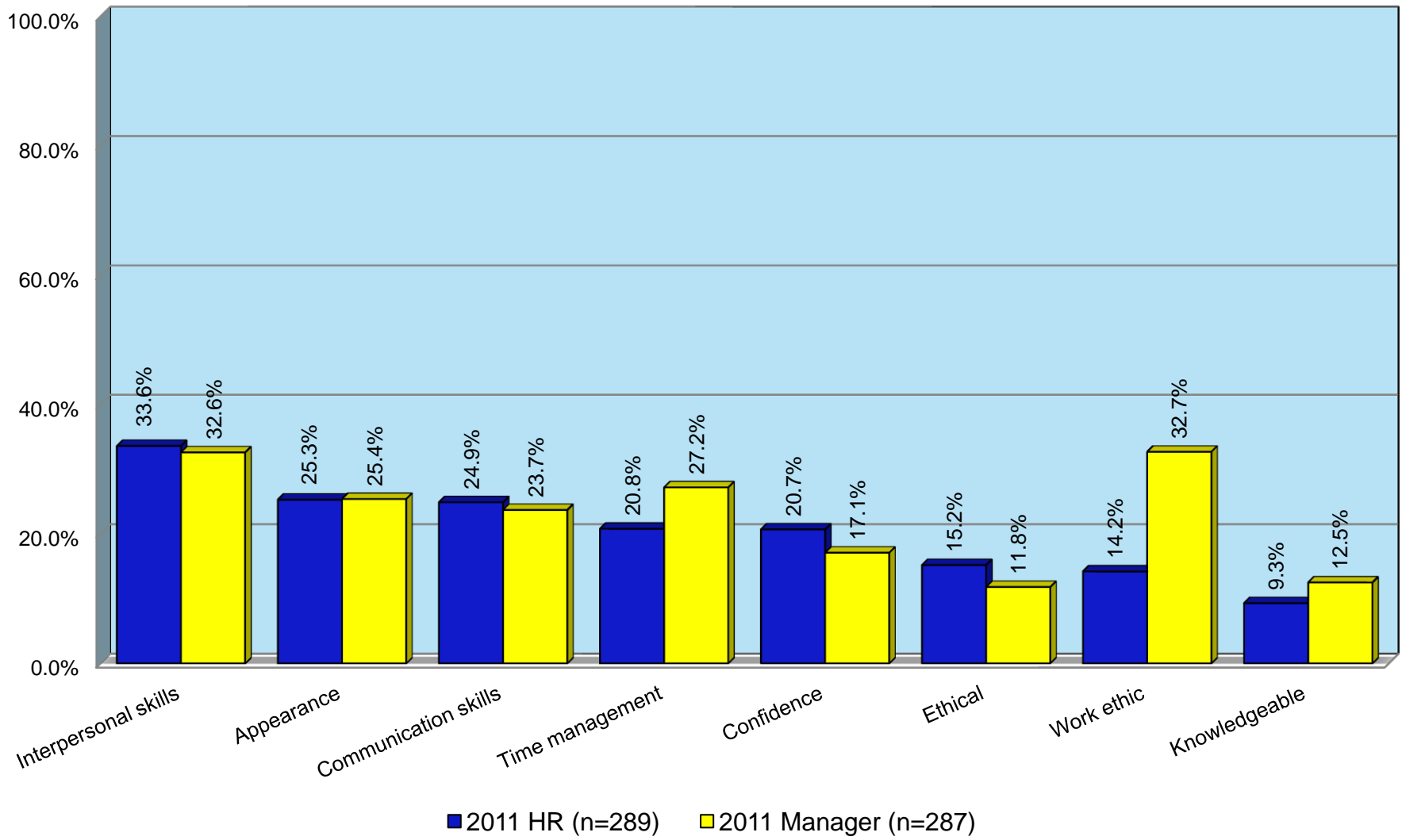


**Qualities That
Describe
Professionalism**

To date, the research has focused on experiences with newly hired employees. This year, the scope of the research was expanded to also include existing employees. This was done by surveying managers or supervisors of employees.

As seen in the next graph, HR professionals and managers share the same perspective on the qualities that constitute professionalism. The largest difference between HR professionals and managers applies to work ethic. Managers (32.7%) are notably more likely than HR professionals (14.2%) to mention this quality. This may be due to managers actually experiencing the employees' work ethic. This would be a quality that HR professionals may not see while they are hiring the employee.

Qualities That Describe Professionalism - HR



**Qualities That
Describe Being
Unprofessional -
HR**

Knowing how not to act can be as useful as knowing how to act. Recognizing this, respondents were asked what three qualities best describe the unprofessional employee. Similar to the qualities that characterize professionalism, this question has been asked in each of these studies. Again, this permits an examination of the definition over the years.

This year, the qualities associated with being unprofessional are most often: Appearance (25.5%), lack of dedication (22.7%), sense of entitlement (22.7%), poor work ethic (22.7%), not showing respect (21.7%), and poor communication skills (21.0%).

**Comparison To
Previous Years**

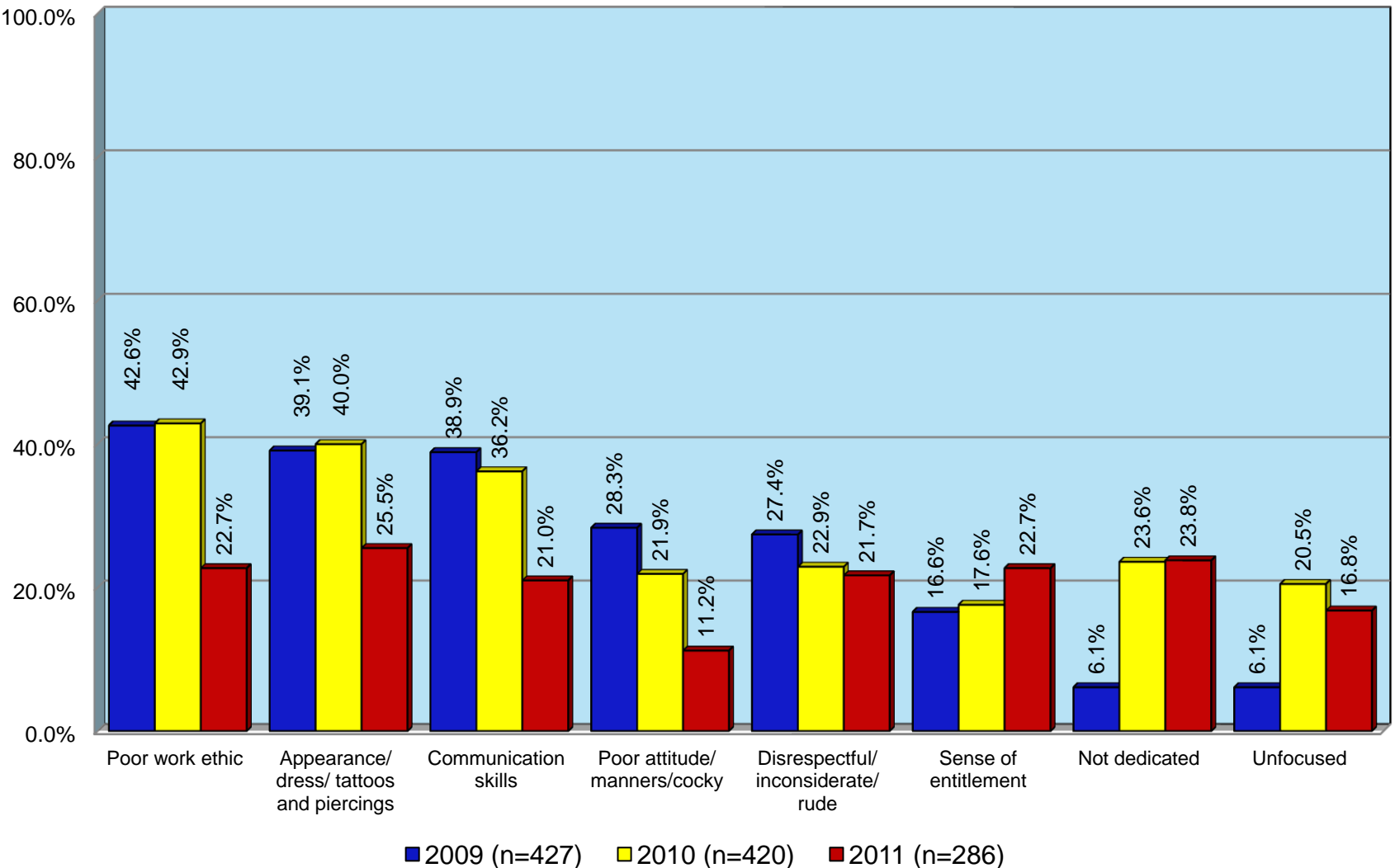
These are the same qualities named in the two previous studies. However, the percentage of HR respondents citing each is less. This is largely due to respondents this year giving a wider variety of answers.

From 2009 to 2010, there was a significant increase in HR respondents mentioning lack of dedication and being unfocused. These percentages have remained at relatively high levels this year. This could signal emerging problems being seen in new employees.

2012 Professionalism Study

Defining Professionalism

Qualities That Describe Being Unprofessional - HR



Qualities That Describe Being Unprofessional

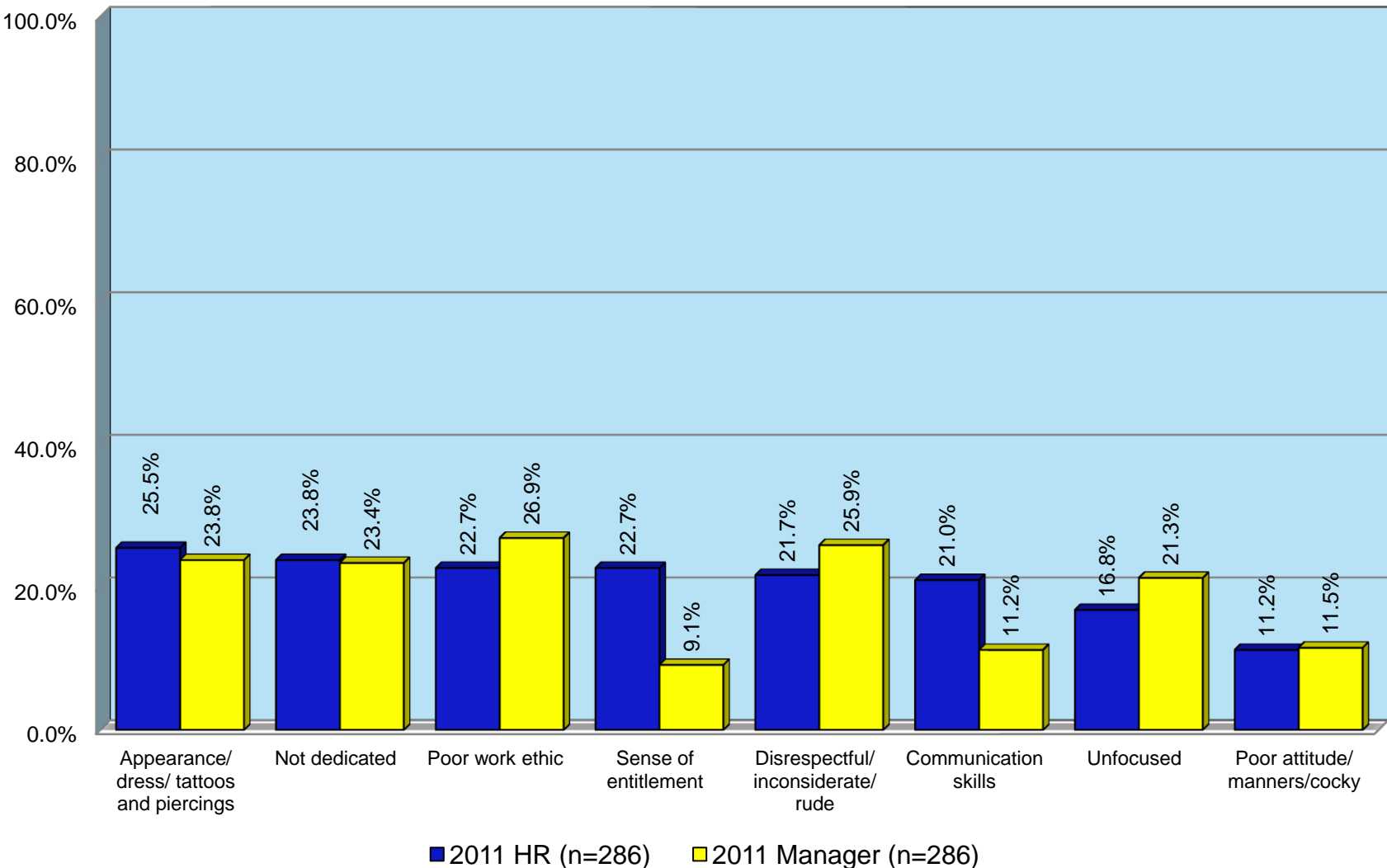
Managers were also asked to describe the qualities that characterize the unprofessional employee. Their answers may reveal differences between newly hired and longer term employees.

For the most part, managers agree with HR professionals in their answers. However, they are less likely to name a sense of entitlement (9.1%) and poor communication skills (11.2%).

2012 Professionalism Study

Defining Professionalism

Qualities That Describe Being Unprofessional



State of Professionalism

**Percentage Of
Employees Exhibiting
Professionalism**

HR professionals were asked what percentage of new college graduates they hire exhibit professionalism in their first year. For managers, the wording was modified to refer to the percentage of the employees they supervise who exhibit professionalism.

Managers (41.0%) are much more likely than HR professionals (10.3%) to report that 90% or more of the employees they supervise exhibit professionalism.

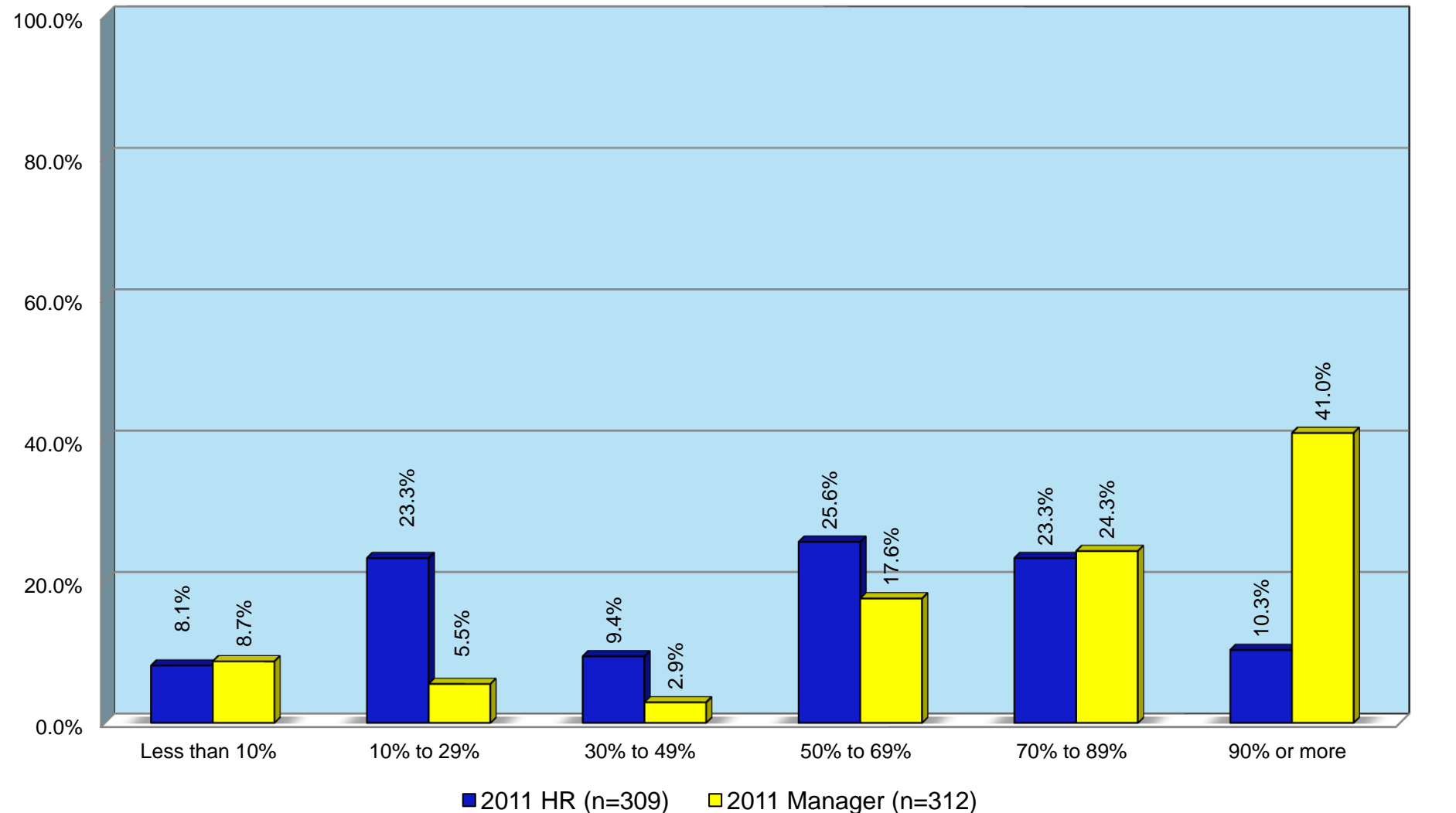
**Comparison To
Previous Years**

This is another question that has been asked of HR professionals in every study. The findings in this study are similar to those in the previous two studies.

2012 Professionalism Study

State Of Professionalism

Percentage Of Employees Exhibiting Professionalism



Changes In Exhibiting Professionalism - HR

HR professionals indicated if the percentage of new employees exhibiting professionalism in their first year on the job has changed over the past five years.

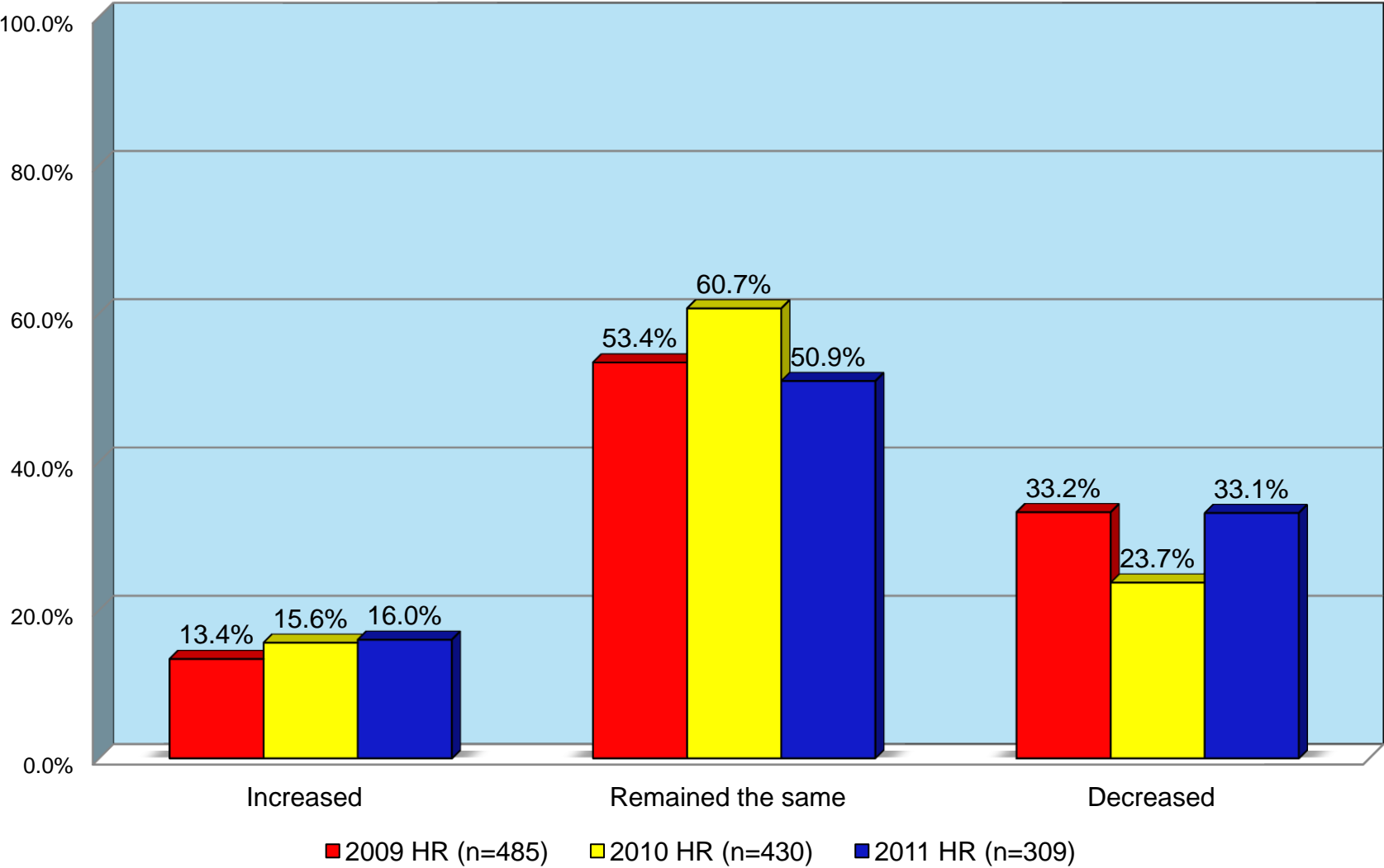
The most striking finding is a third of these respondents (33.1%) feel the presence of professionalism in new employees has decreased.

Comparison To Previous Years

This year's findings are a return to those from the 2009 study. Future studies will show if the 2010 findings were an aberration.

The percentage who believe professionalism has increased has increased slightly over the three studies. This change is too small to represent a trend. However, it is worth watching in future studies. If this is actually an increase, it could be a reflection of the economy and the increased pool of applicants looking for employment.

Changes In Exhibiting Professionalism - HR



Changes In Exhibiting Professionalism

Managers were asked about changes in the professionalism of employees they supervise over the past five years.

Over a fourth of the managers (27.2%) feel professionalism has increased. This is in contrast to the 16.0% of HR professionals who say the same thing about first year employees.

It is possible that the lack of professionalism is more prevalent in newer employees. This possibility is reinforced by managers' comments concerning employee segments that are less likely than others to exhibit professionalism. Of the 36.5% of the managers who identify a segment who is less professional, about a third of them (30.5%) give younger employees this distinction. These would be the persons seen by HR respondents.

Reasons For Increased Professionalism

For most HR professionals who see an increase in professionalism, the economy is considered the primary reason for this increase. Over half of these respondents (57.5%) point to fewer jobs and, consequently, more competition as a reason for more professionalism. This was followed by the belief that schools are doing a better job preparing students to act professionally (20.0%).

Managers who report an increase in professionalism also most often feel that increased competition for jobs has expanded the pool from which to hire (33.3%). The next most common reason offered for this perception is better training (15.4%).

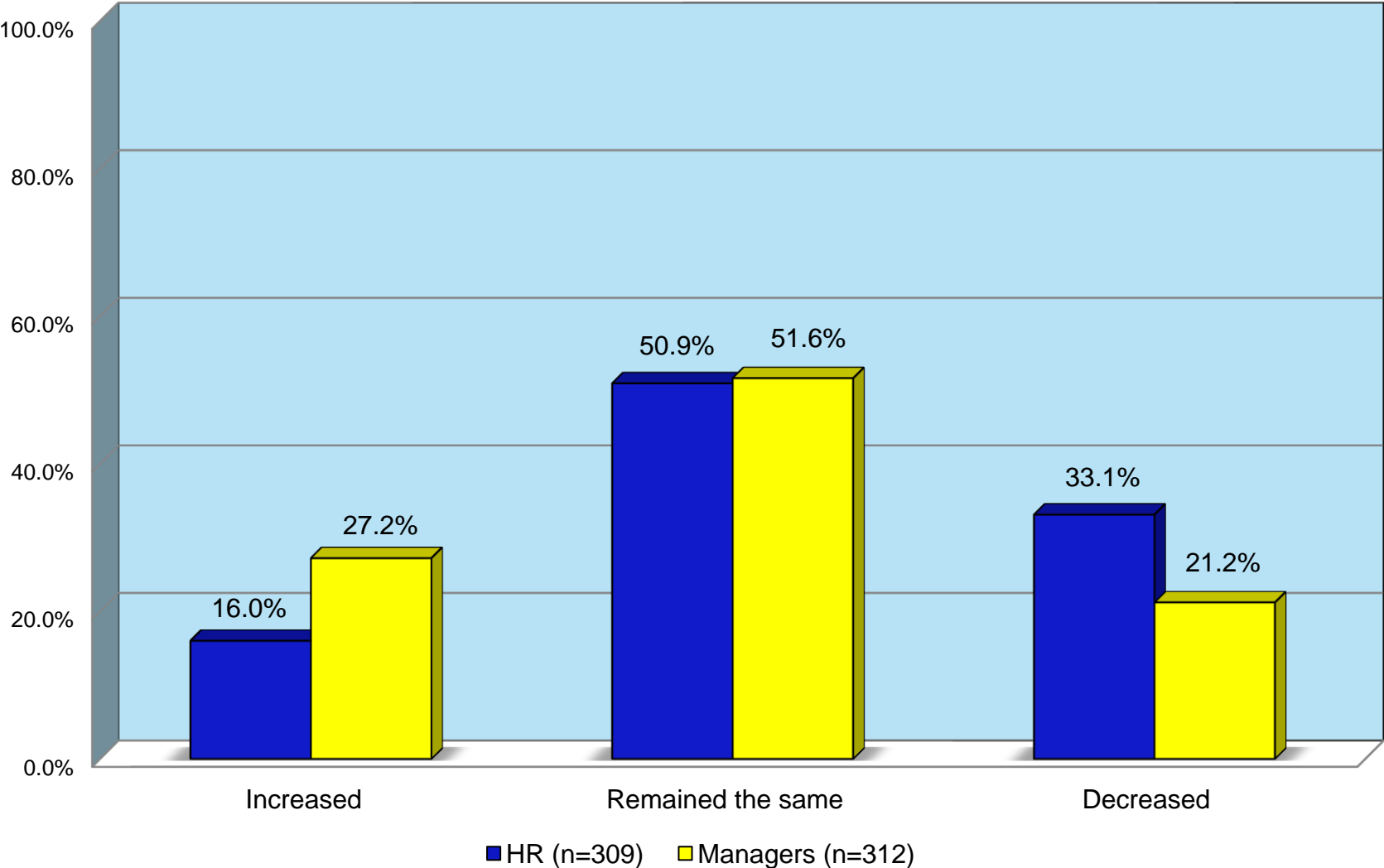
Reasons for Decreased Professionalism

When responding why there is a decrease in professionalism, HR respondents most often point to a change in our cultural values (22.6%). Mentioned next frequently was new hires lacking experience or training (15.1%).

The most commonly given reasons cited by managers for a decrease in professionalism are less formality in the workplace (15.6%) and a change in the work ethic (12.5%).

Segmentation Analysis

HR respondents under 35 were significantly less likely to believe that professionalism has decreased (24.5%). This effect of age was not found for manager respondents.



International Changes In Exhibiting Professionalism

To get a sense for the state of professionalism outside the United States, respondents whose companies have international locations were asked the same question about changes in professionalism over the past five years. HR professionals were asked about new college graduates. Managers were asked about employees in general.

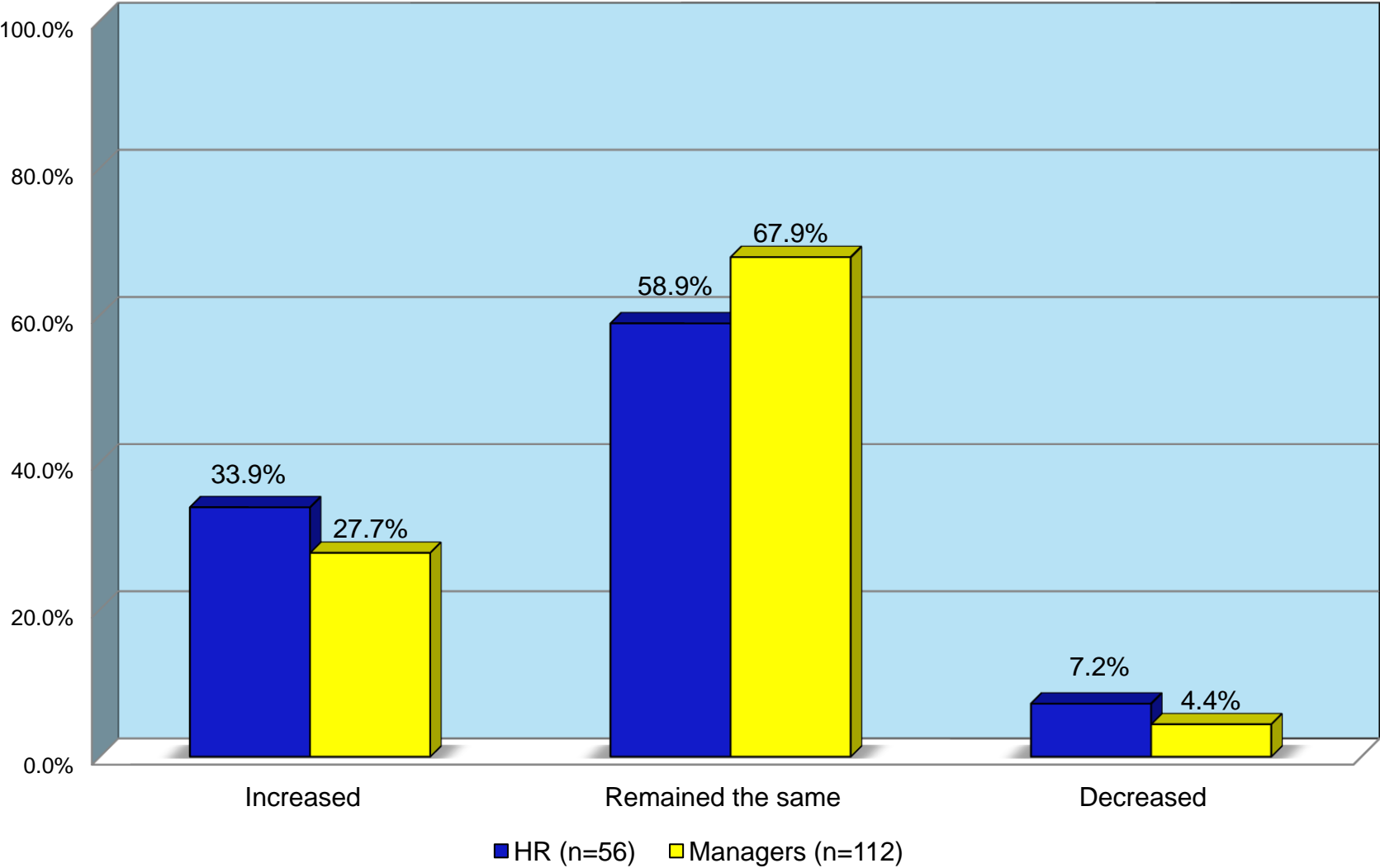
A total of 28.5% of the HR professionals and 56.7% of the managers reported their companies have international locations.

Few of the HR (7.2%) or manager (4.4%) respondents have experienced a decrease in professionalism among new and existing employees respectively. This is in contrast to the 33.1% HR and 21.2% manager respondents in the United States who have seen a decrease in professionalism.

HR professionals are notably more likely to believe professionalism in new employees has increased outside the United States (33.9%) than in the United States (16.0%). The percentage of managers feeling professionalism has increased outside the United States (27.7%) is essentially the same as the percentage who believe it has increased in the United States (27.2%).

The international experience will be researched further in future studies. At this time, it can be speculated that the lack of professionalism is mainly an American phenomenon.

International Changes In Exhibiting Professionalism



**Change In Sense Of
Entitlement - HR**

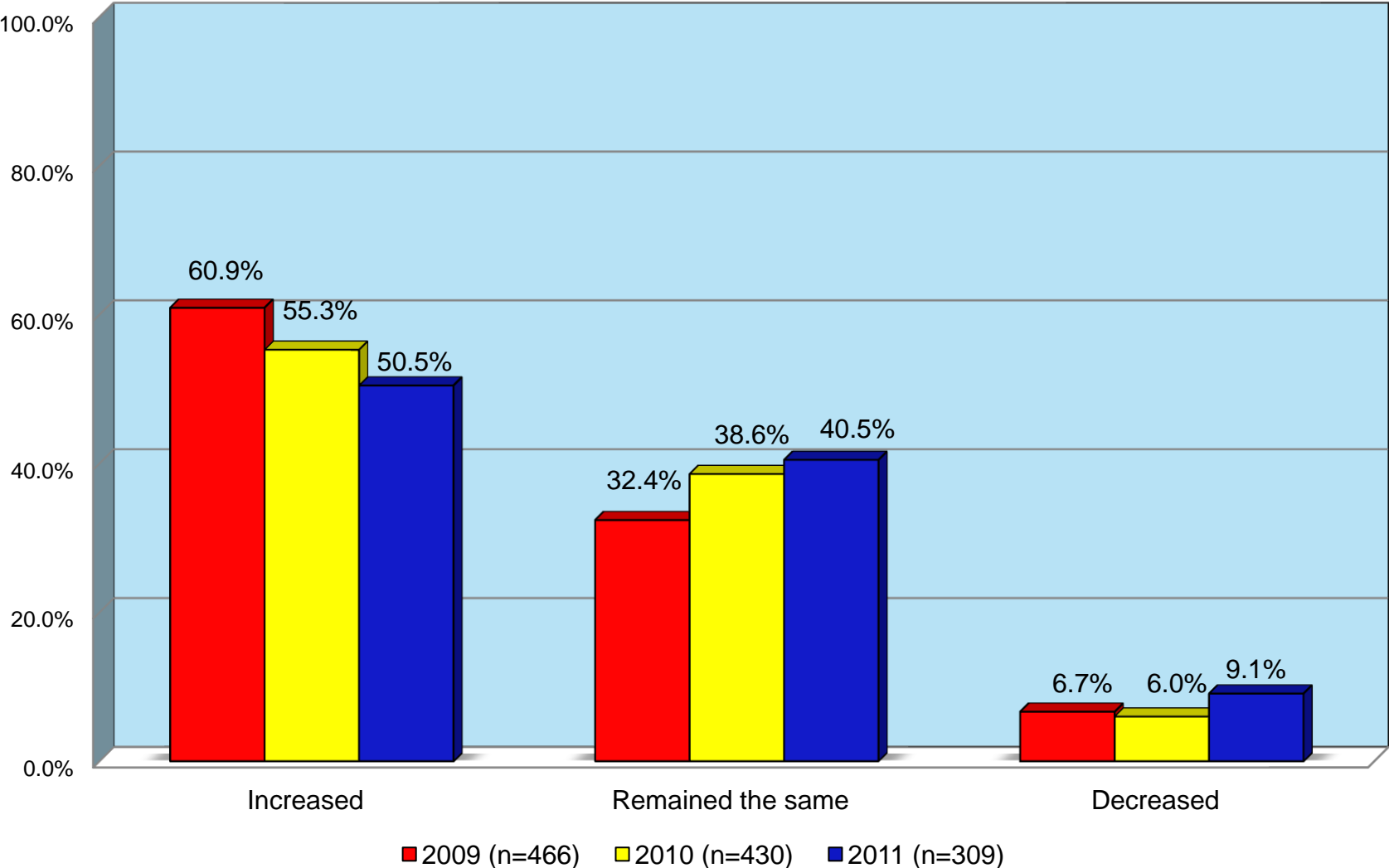
Suggestions that the younger generation has a sense of entitlement prompted including questions about this in the research. HR professionals have been asked every year if the percentage of new college graduates exhibiting a sense of entitlement has changed over the past five years.

The findings that are most instructive are the percentage who report either a decrease or increase in a sense of entitlement. The percentage indicating it has remained the same is not very informative since the baseline is not known.

**Comparison To
Previous Years**

The percentage of HR respondents who believe the sense of entitlement has increased has gone down each year. The percentage this year is 50.5%. This may be a positive sign. Of course, future studies will continue to track this measure to see if this is a trend.

Change In Sense Of Entitlement - HR



Change In Sense Of Entitlement

HR professionals (50.5%) are more likely to witness an increase in a sense of entitlement among new employees than managers (33.7%) are among existing employees. This may be further evidence that it is a specific segment of employees who exhibit certain qualities.

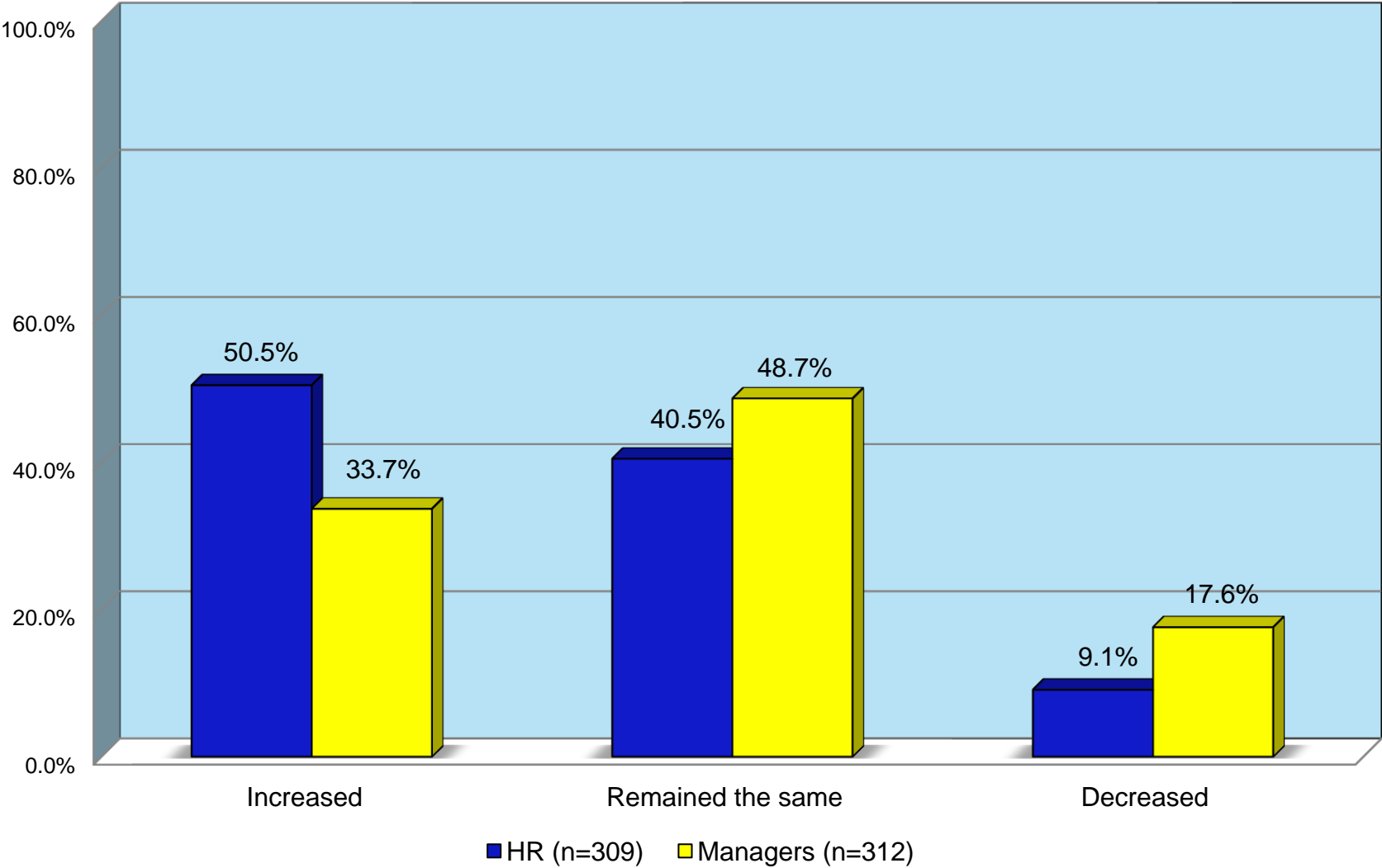
The above statement receives support in the 38.1% of the managers are able to identify a specific segment that is most likely to display a sense of entitlement. Singled out most often for this distinction are younger employees (45.6%). Interestingly, 11.4% of the managers pointed to older employees who are ready to retire as being the ones exhibiting a feeling of entitlement.

Reasons For Sense Of Entitlement

The HR professionals most often cite the upbringing of children by parents (17.8%) and a cultural change (17.0%) as the reasons for an increase in a sense of entitlement. Managers cite similar reasons for feelings of entitlement. They most often referred to cultural change (15.3%), upbringing of children by parents (14.3%), and a younger workforce (12.2%) as reasons for a sense of entitlement.

Segmentation Analysis

Entitlement is more likely to be found in larger than smaller companies.

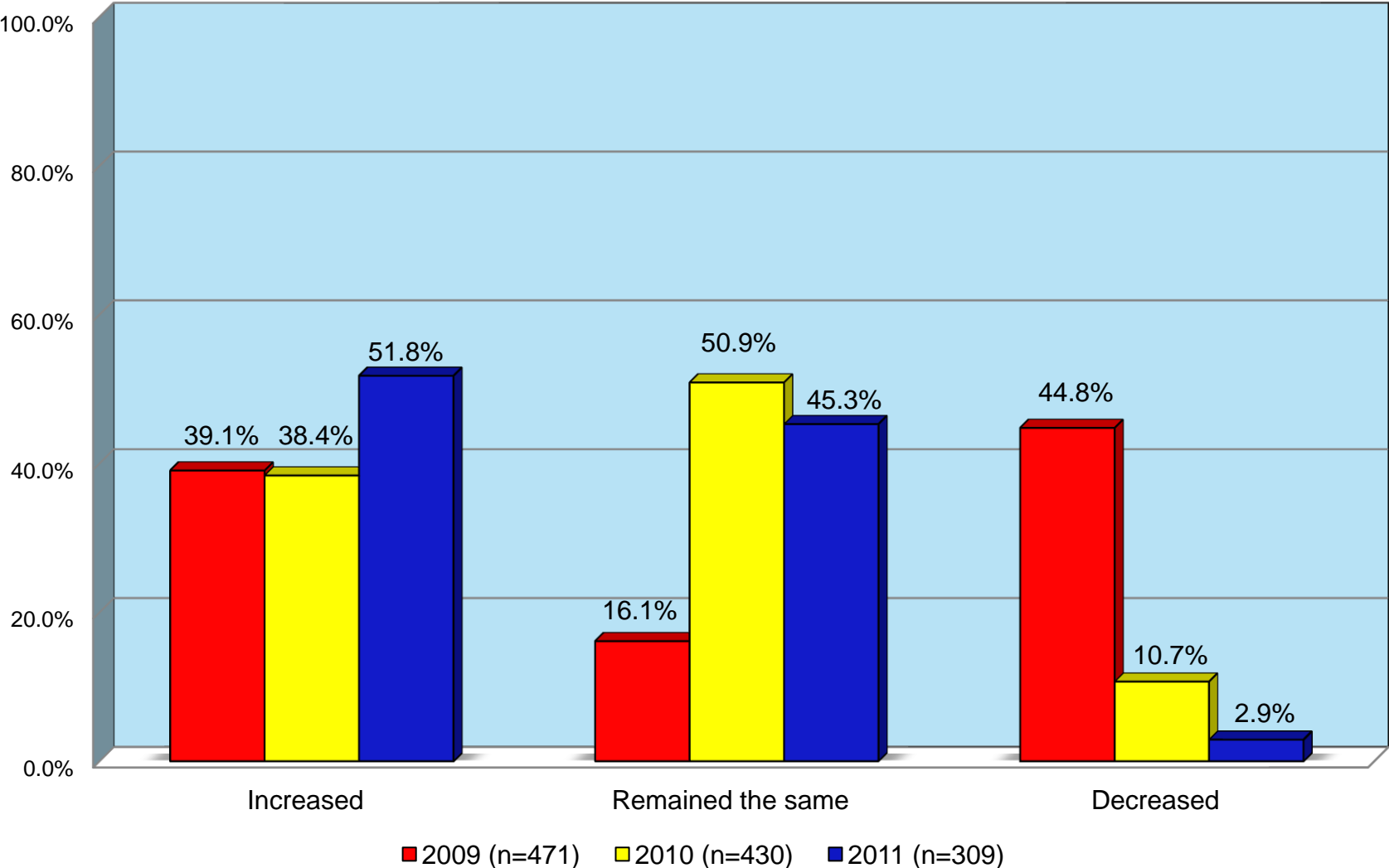


Problems With IT Etiquette/Abuses - HR

While fewer HR professionals are seeing an increase in a sense of entitlement among new employees, this is not the case with problems related to IT misuse or etiquette.

When asked if these types of problems have changed over the past five years, the percentage of HR professionals (51.8%) stating they have increased is the largest ever.

Problems With IT Etiquette/Abuses - HR



Problems With IT Etiquette/Abuses

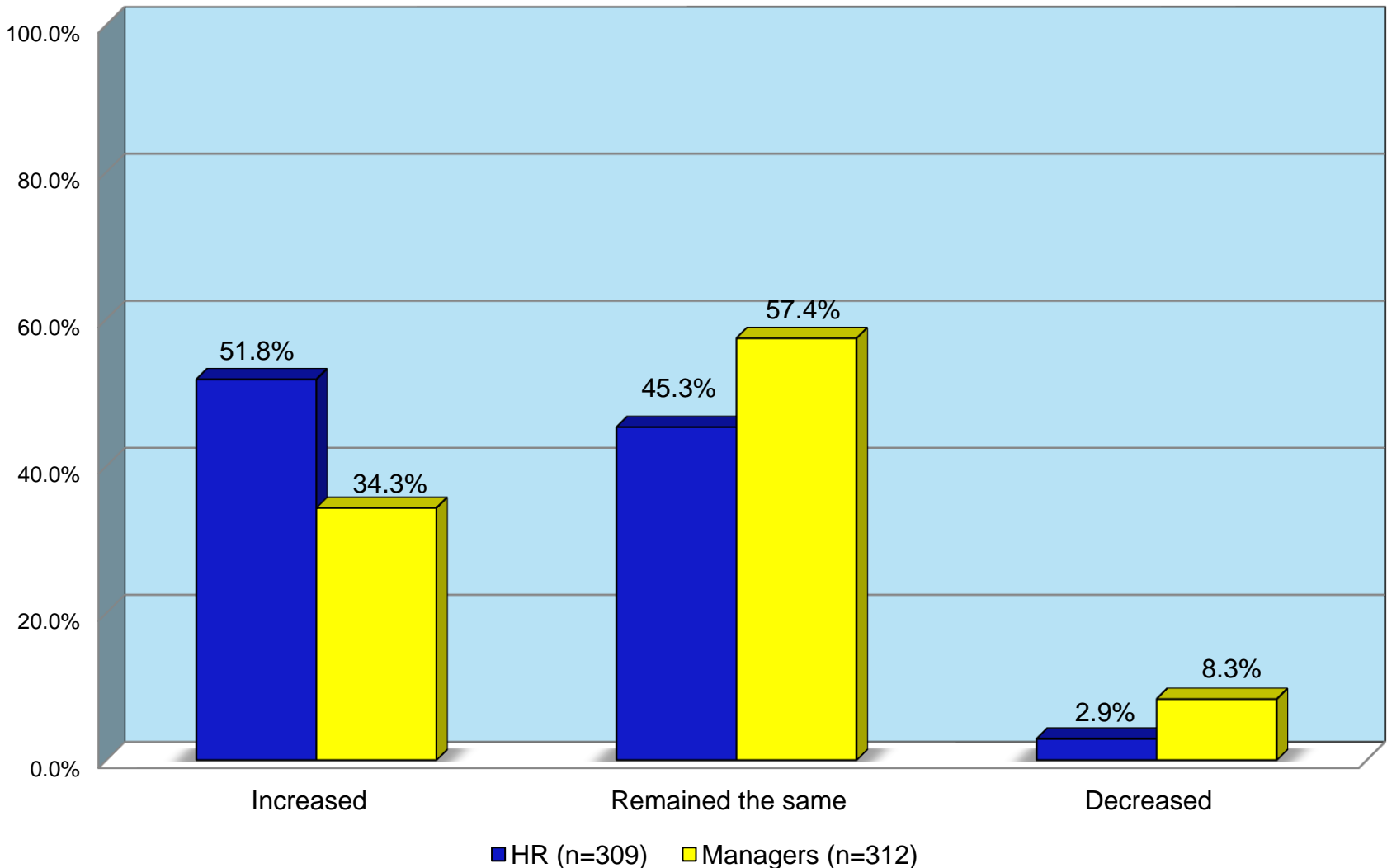
The possibility that IT abuses, similar to decreased professionalism and a sense of entitlement, is a phenomenon related to the younger generation is seen in the differences between HR professionals' and managers' responses to the question on changes in the prevalence of IT abuses. HR professionals (51.8%) are significantly more likely than managers (34.3%) to report an increase in IT abuses.

It may be the HR respondents who have to deal with these abuses.

The argument that is a problem mainly with younger employees receives some support from the managers identifying a specific segment as most likely to have problems with their IT etiquette. Of the 22.8% of the managers naming a segment, 60.3% referred to younger employees as the most likely abusers.

However, that only 22.8% specified a segment indicates that IT problems may be more widespread throughout the workforce than is a lack of professionalism or a sense of entitlement.

It should be recalled that the question directed to HR professionals referred to new employees. The managers were asked about all employees.

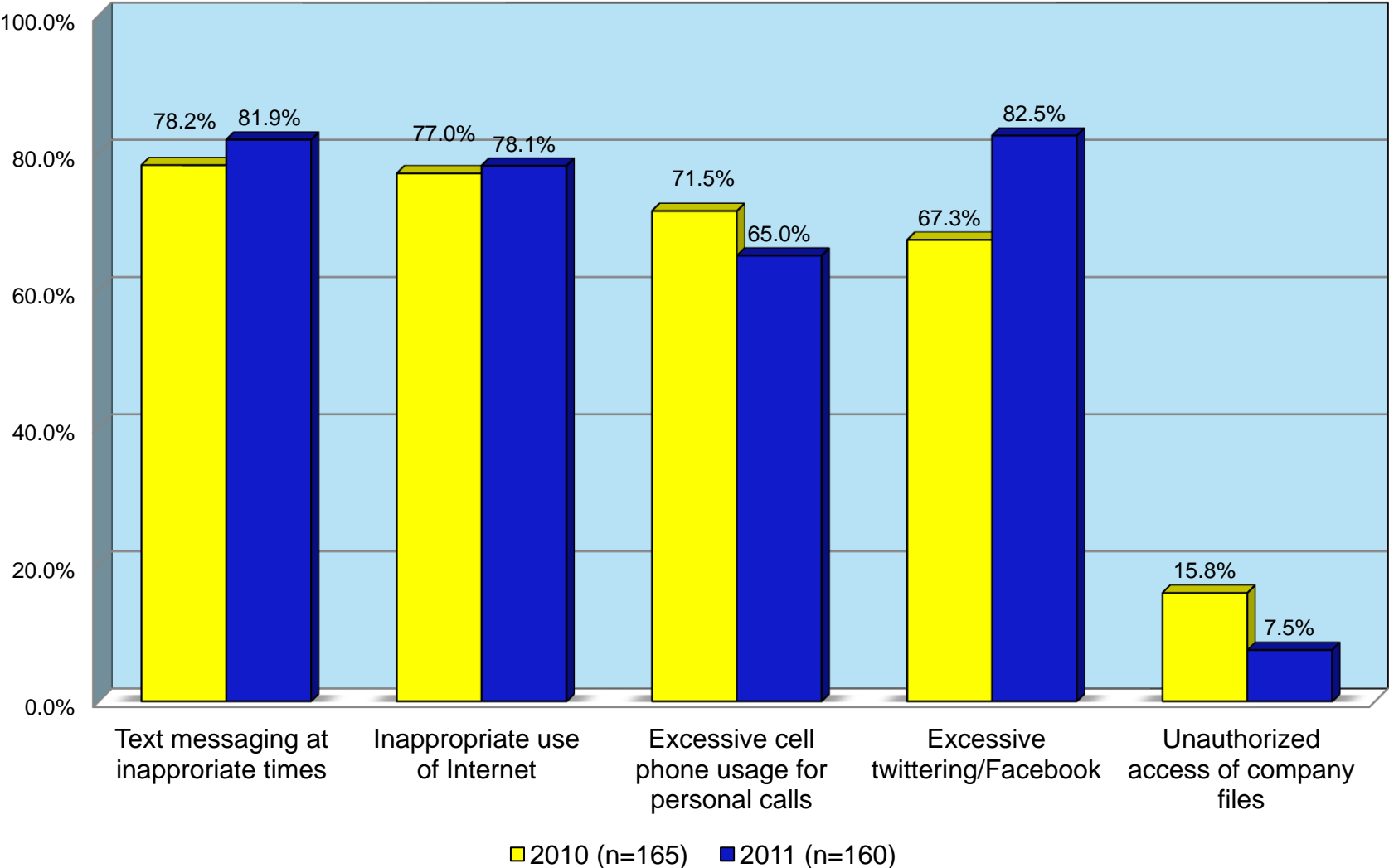


Problems Being Experienced - HR

The IT problems being encountered most often by HR professionals are numerous. The predominant four problems are: Excessive twittering/use of Facebook (82.5%), text messaging at inappropriate times (81.9%), inappropriate use of the Internet (78.1%), and excessive use of cell phones for personal calls (65.0%).

Comparison To Last Year

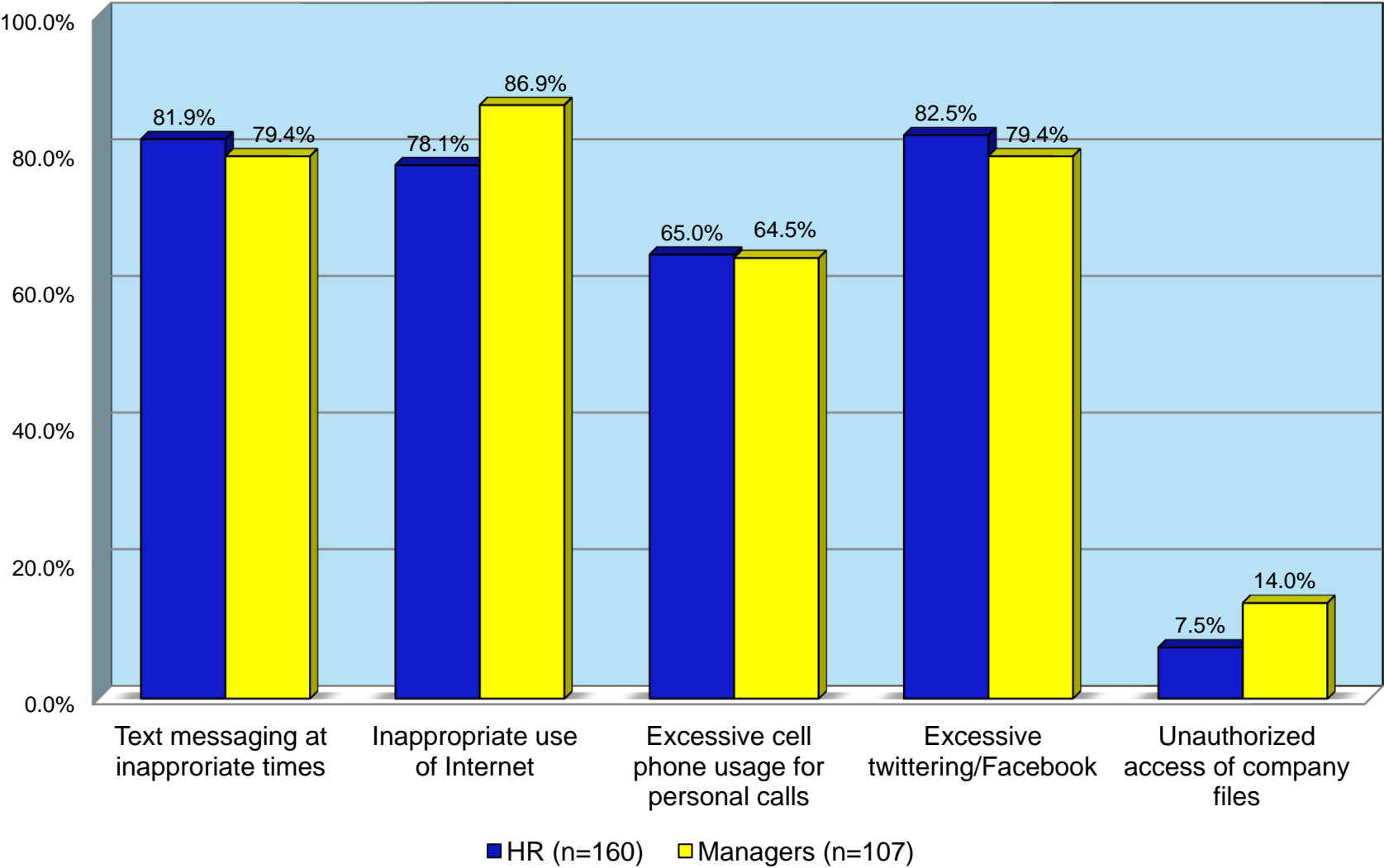
The consistency in the HR professionals' answers for the past two years increases confidence in these findings. The increase in the percentage commenting on excessive twittering/use of Facebook, going from 67.3% in 2010 to 82.5% this year, is worth noting. Next year's study will shed more light on whether this is really an increased problem.



Problems Being Experienced

Apparently, the types of IT misuses being experienced are common for both HR professionals and managers. The responses from the two samples are similar.

Managers (86.9%) are more likely than HR respondents (78.1%) to find employees using the Internet inappropriately. This may be because this behavior does not become an HR issue as readily as some of the other abuses.



**Changes In
Employees Being
Unfocused -
Managers**

In the 2010 study, a significant increase occurred from 2009 in the percentage of HR professionals who named being unfocused as a quality they associate with being unprofessional. That percentage went from 6.1% to 20.5%.

Reacting to that finding, managers were queried in this study if they have observed a change in the percentage of employees who are unfocused over the past five years. In fact, a fifth of the managers (21.8%) reported that they believe the percentage of unfocused employees has increased during this time period. It is uncanny how close this percentage is to the percentage of HR professionals identifying unfocused as a quality of being unprofessional.

When asked if a particular employee segment is more unfocused, 14.7% were willing to identify a segment. Of these managers, over half (54.3%) named younger employees as the most likely to be unfocused. If it is assumed that entry level employees are mostly young, this percentage increases to 65.2%.

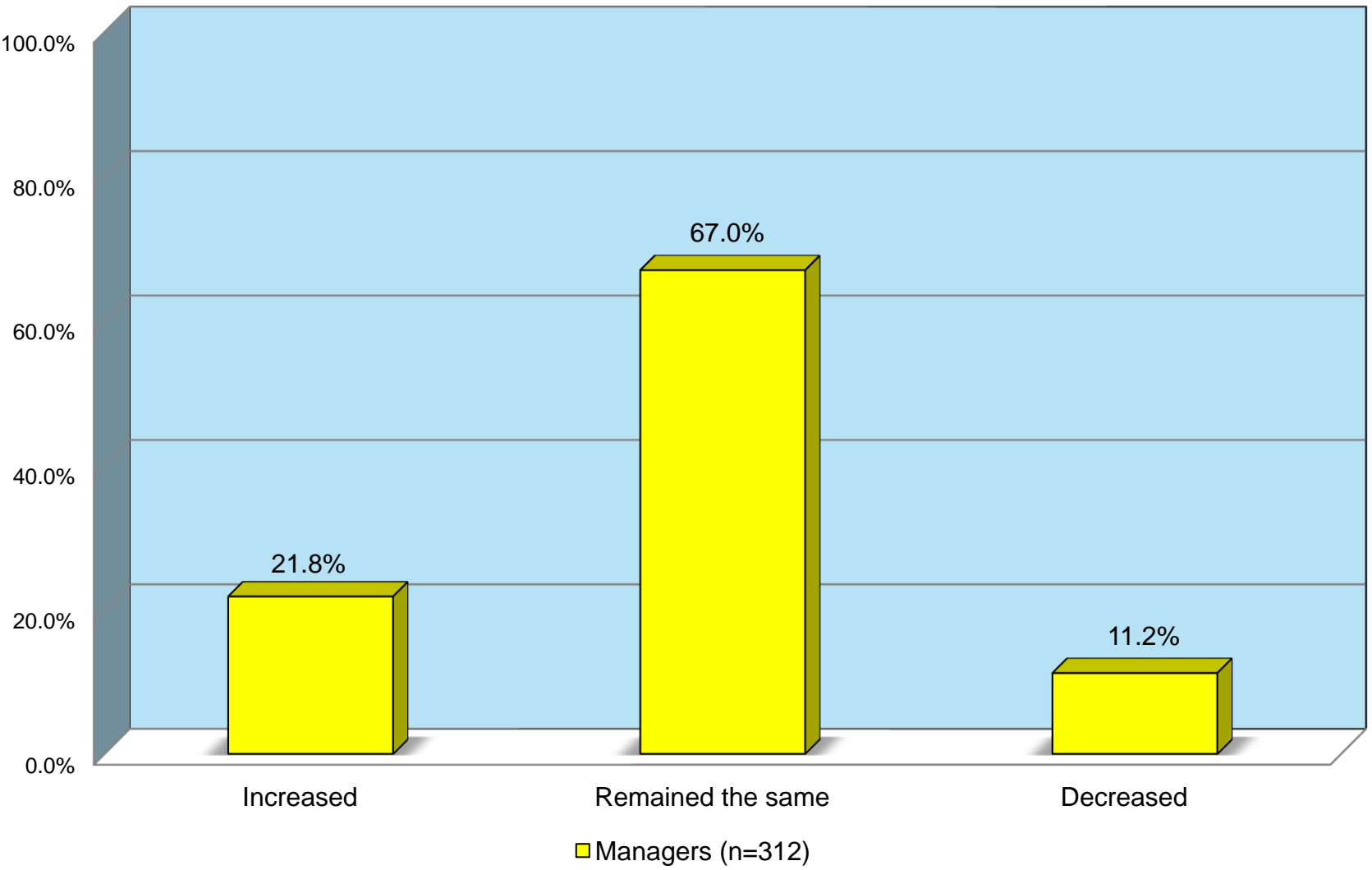
**Reason For The
Increase**

Managers who feel employees being unfocused has increased most often referred to these causes for the increase: Electronic devices including the Internet and social media (26.9%), personal problems often driven by the poor economy (20.9%), and less ownership of one's work (19.4%).

2012 Professionalism Study

State Of Professionalism

Changes In Employees Being Unfocused - Managers



Important Qualities In Professionalism - HR

In addition to asking HR professionals to describe the qualities associated with being a professional, a more structured approach has also been used since the initial study. The structured approach has respondents rate qualities according to how important they are in a recent college graduate being considered for a position requiring professionalism. Possible ratings range from 1, not important, to 5, very important. Mean ratings are presented in the graph.

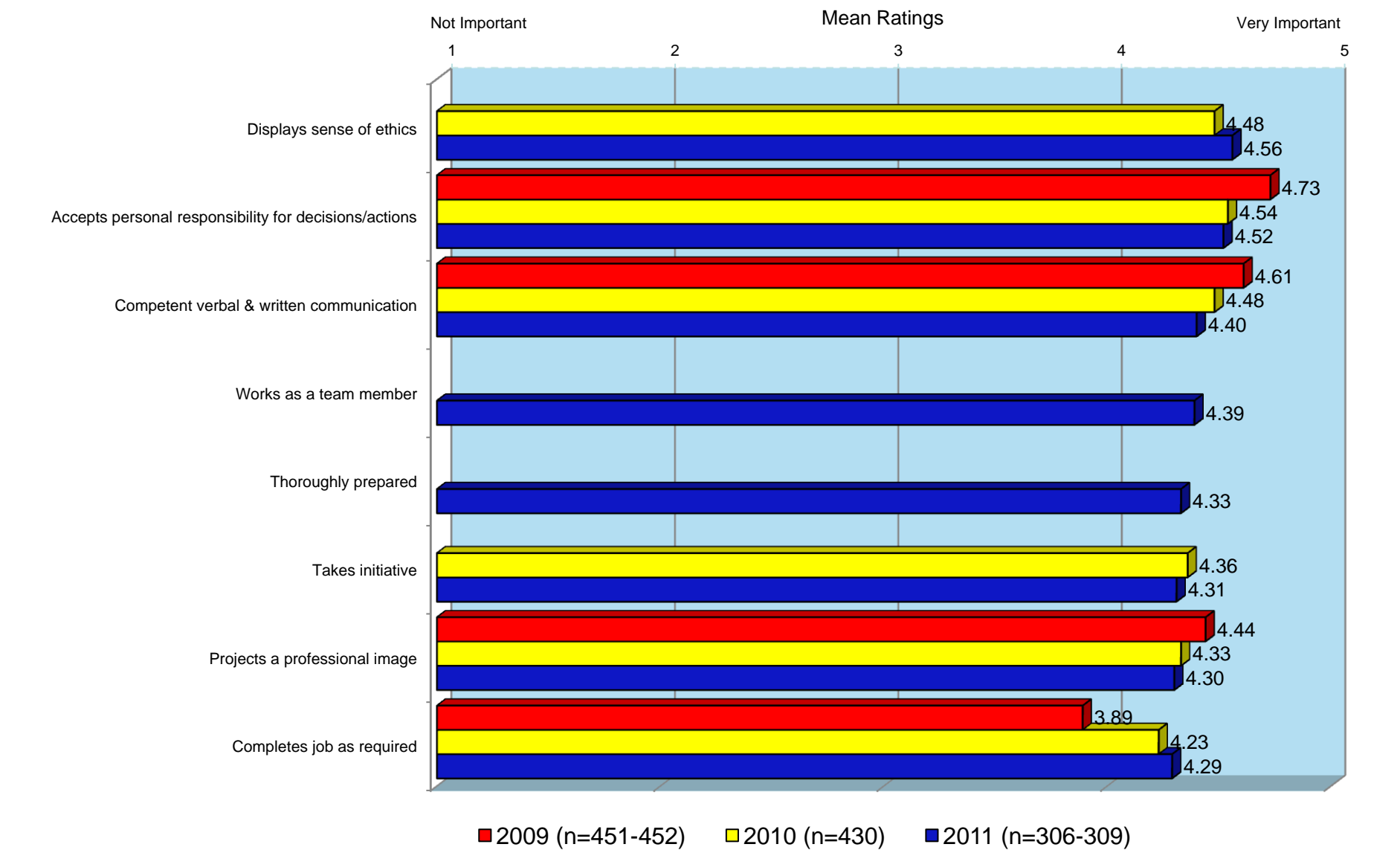
Since the first study, some qualities have been added to the list. Typically, their addition is due to findings in the previous year's study. This is why a rating is not shown for every year for some qualities.

This measure is used in all studies to reveal any changes that occur over time. Most notable about these findings is their consistency across the three studies. For example, there is no doubt that "displaying a sense of ethics" and "accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions" are important qualities of a professional.

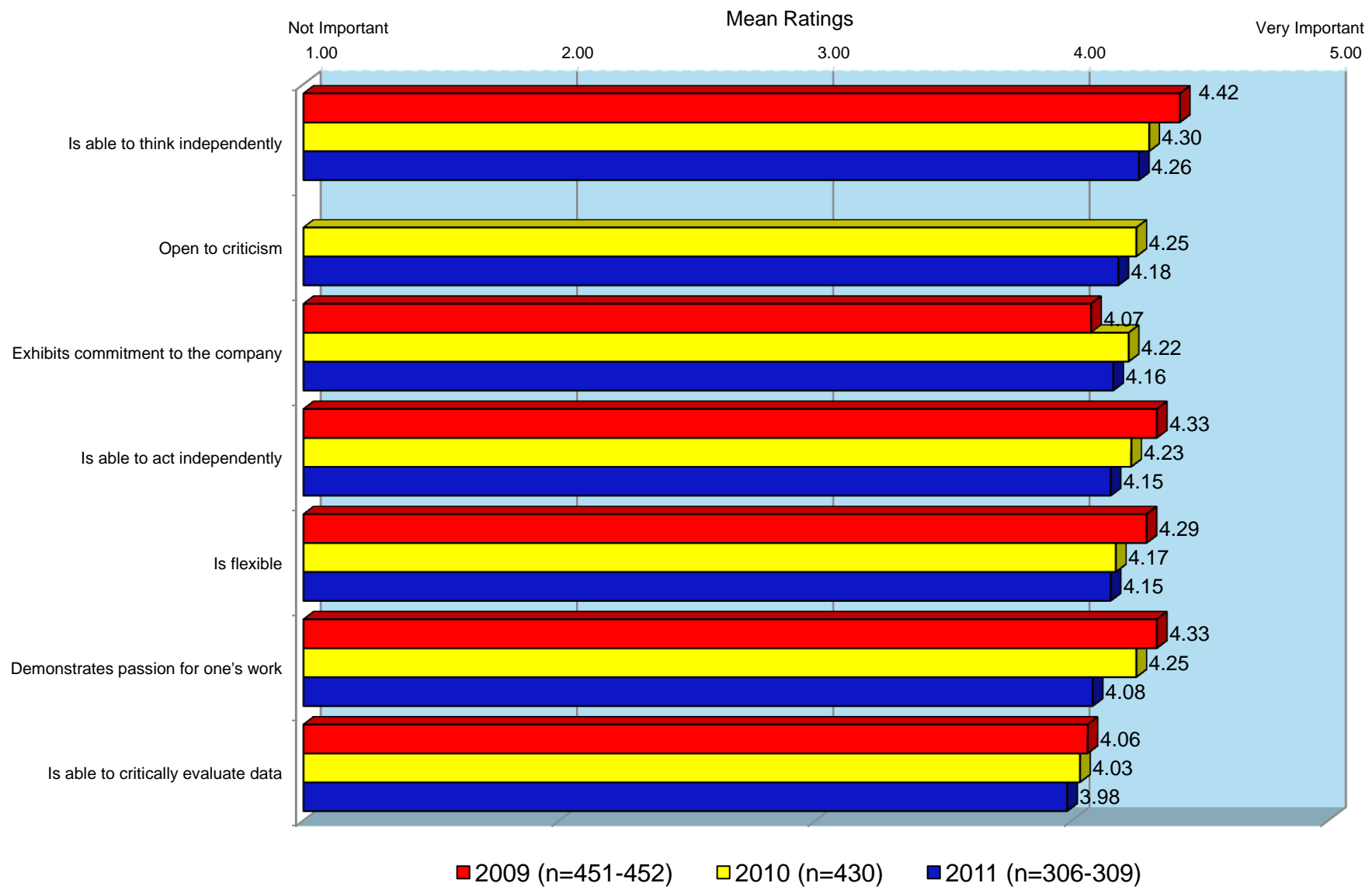
At the other extreme, "being an expert in one's field" is the least important quality of a professional as it applies to a new employee.

The only quality for which a change is noteworthy is "completing the job as required." This quality has been assigned more importance in both 2010 and 2011 than in 2009.

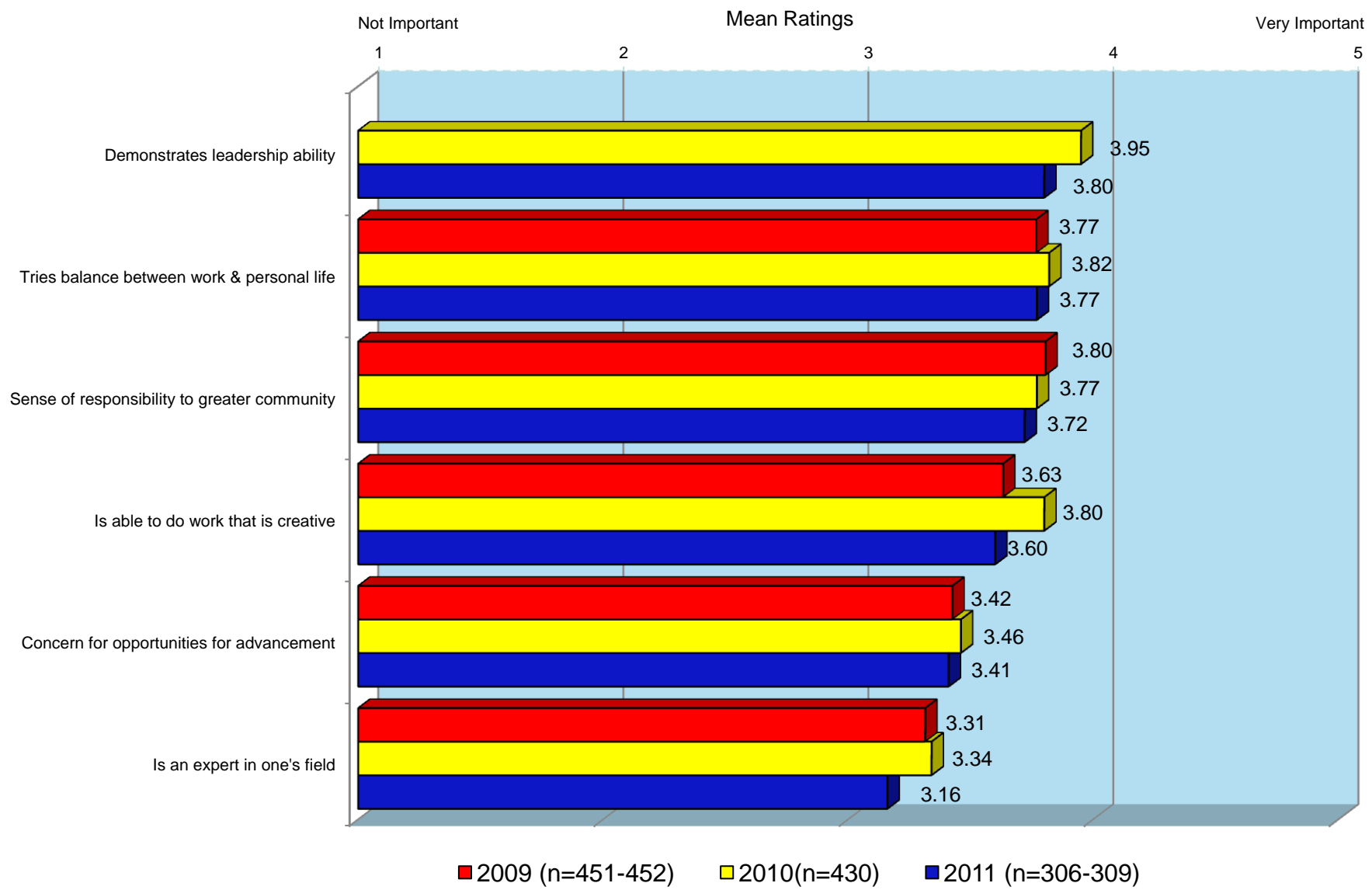
Important Qualities In Professionalism - HR



Important Qualities In Professionalism - HR (continued)



Important Qualities In Professionalism - HR (continued)

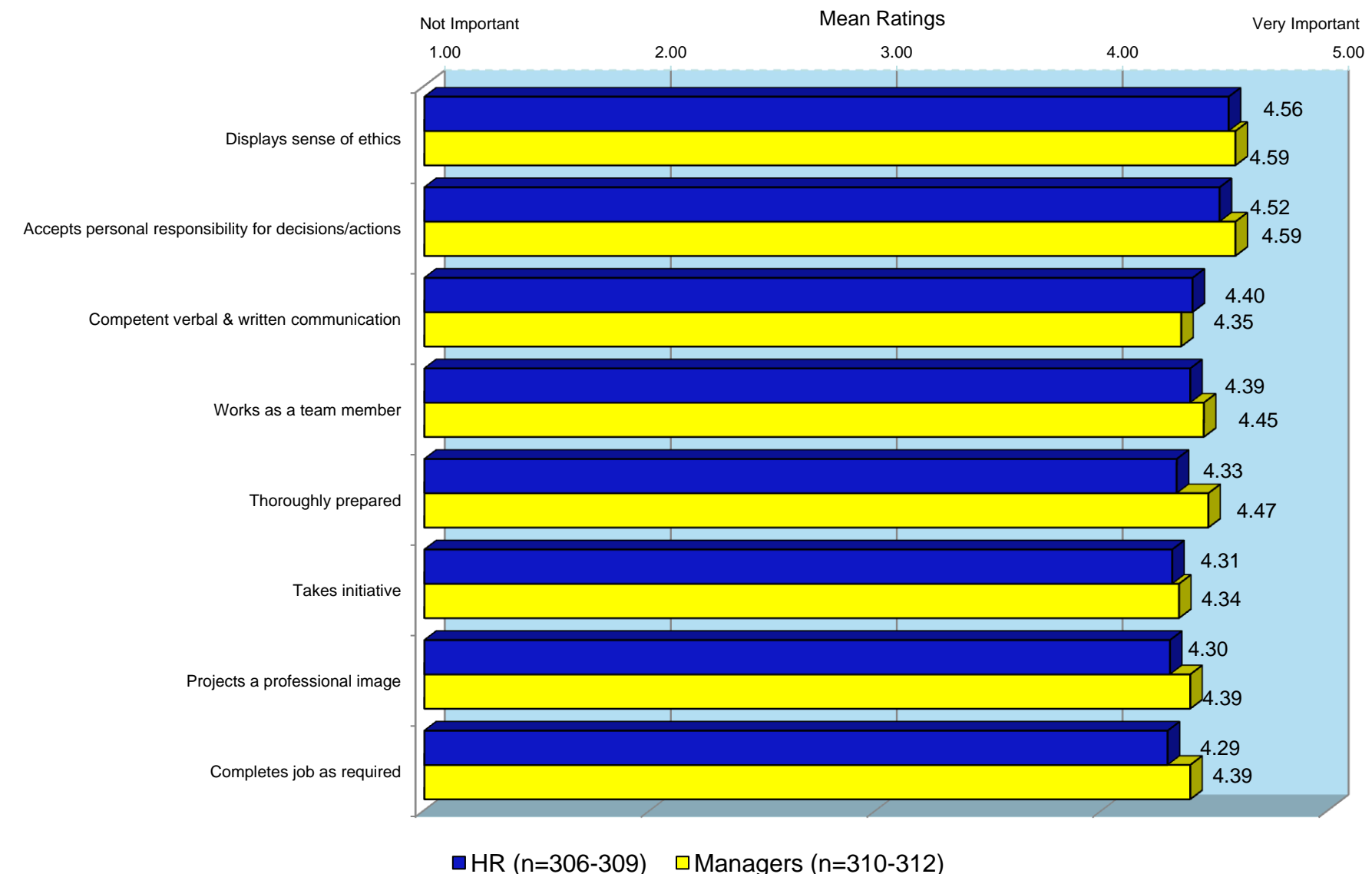


Important Qualities In Professionalism

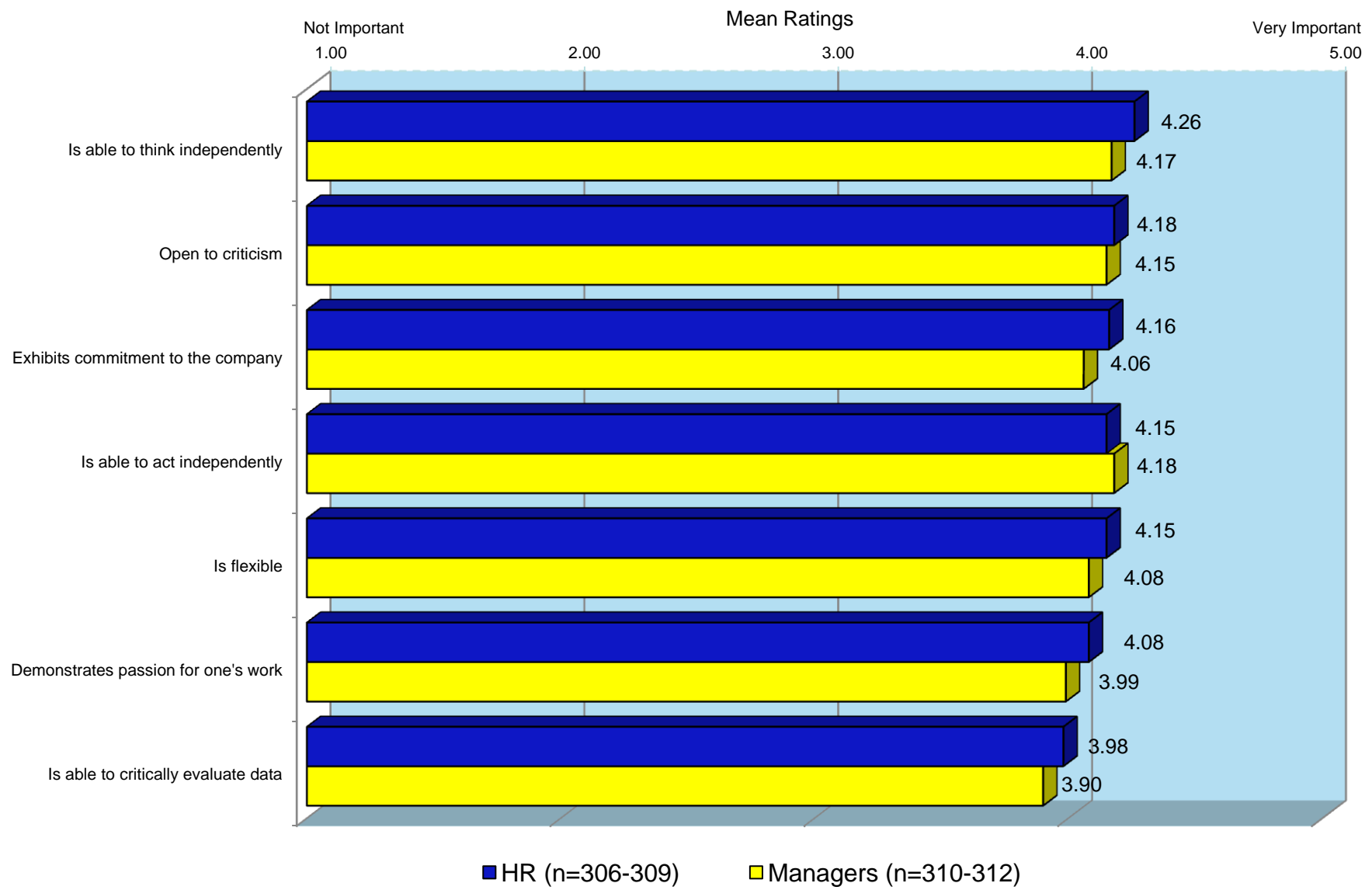
The comparison of HR professionals and managers continued with the rating question on the importance of qualities associated with professionalism. For the managers, the question asked about the importance of the qualities in all employees.

The similarity in the ratings shows that the qualities apply equally to both new and existing employees. The only difference would be expected. Managers (3.55) assign more importance to “being an expert in one’s field” than do the HR professionals (3.16). This is probably due to HR professionals rating the importance of the qualities in new employees. New employees are not expected to be experts in their field.

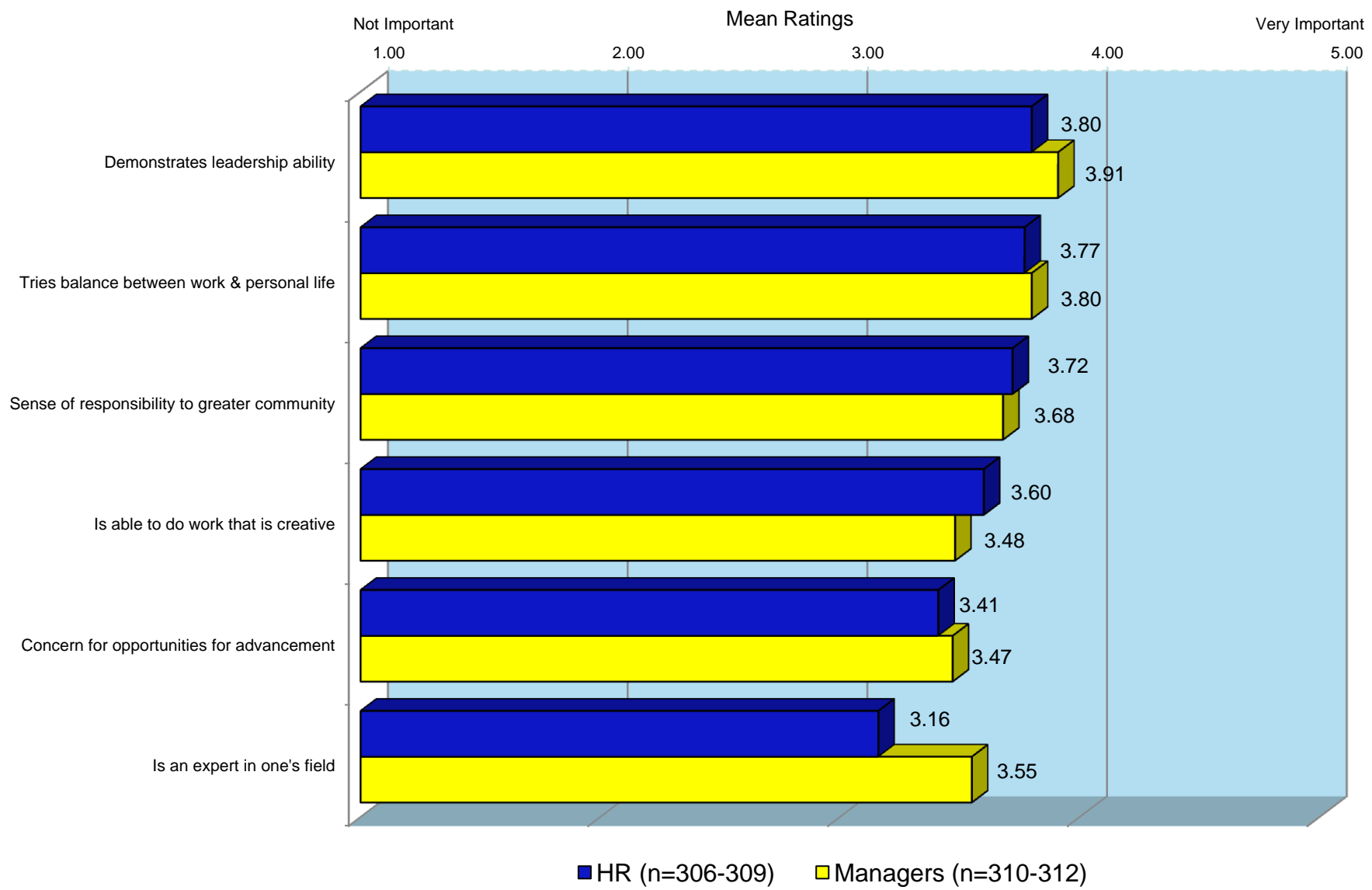
Important Qualities In Professionalism



Important Qualities In Professionalism (continued)



Important Qualities In Professionalism (continued)



**Extent To Which
Qualities Exist In
First Year Employees**

Supplementing the measure of importance of qualities is the prevalence to which the qualities are found in first year college educated employees. The scale used for this rating went from 1, very rare, to 5, very common.

The graph shows little change over the three years in which this study was conducted.

The only quality that has a significant presence continues to be “a concern about opportunities for advancement.”

At the other extreme, the quality that is least prevalent is “being an expert in one’s field.” It should be recalled that this was also the least important quality for a new employee being a professional. The steady increase in this quality’s prevalence is probably a reflection of the bad economy. The pool of applicants from which hiring is occurring has gotten larger. This results in the ability to hire persons who have more expertise than would normally be present in a good economy.

The change from 2009 to 2010 and 2011 for “completing the job within the required time” is consistent with the change seen in the importance assigned to this quality.

There are other small changes that have occurred over the past three years that may mark the beginning of a trend. For example, the presence of “the ability to think and act independently” have been increasing since the initial study. Similar small increases have occurred for “a sense of responsibility to the greater community.”

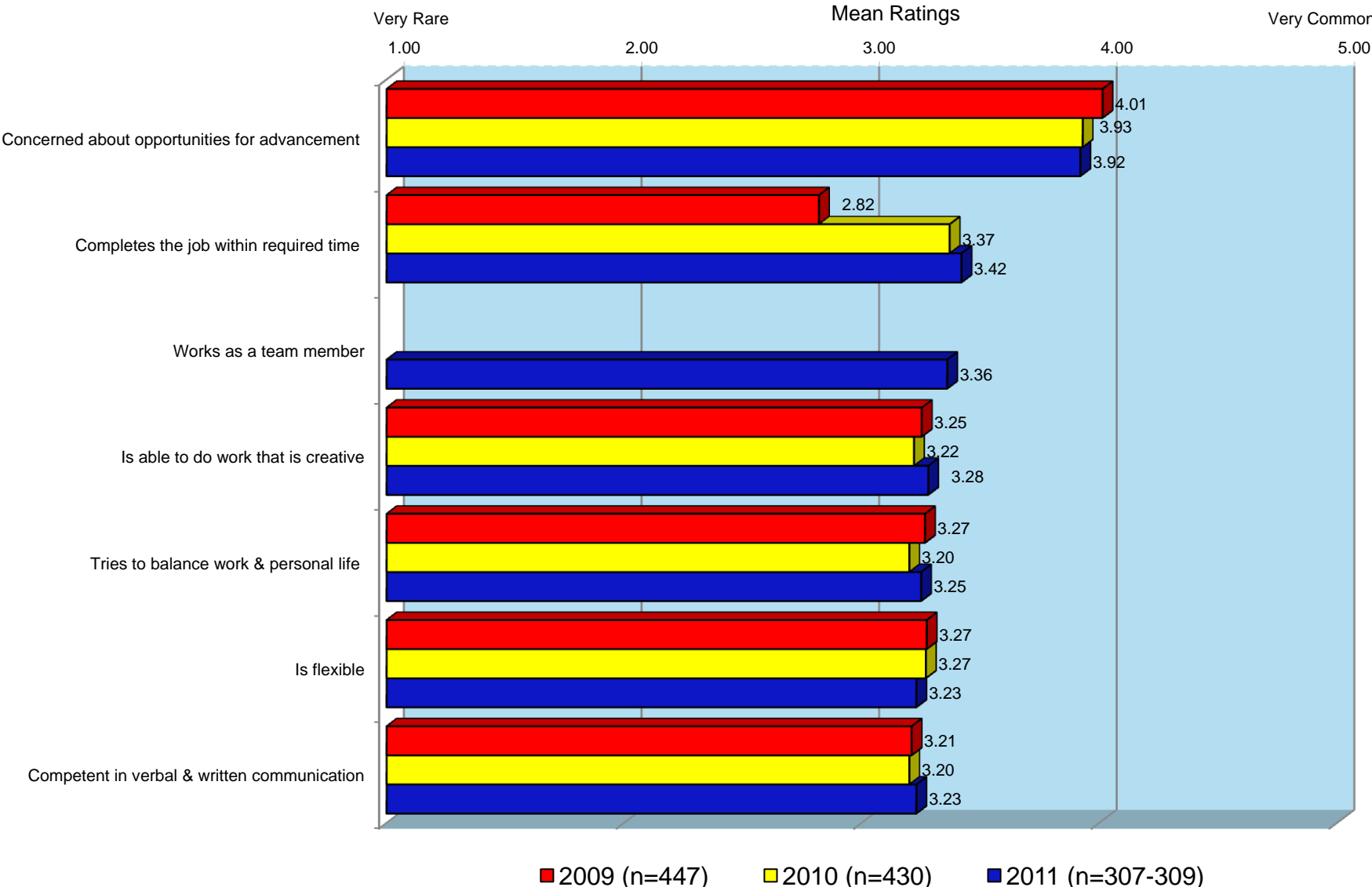
In the opposite direction, there has been a small decrease over time in the prevalence of “demonstrating a passion for one’s work.” It should be recalled that a lack of dedication is a quality often associated with being unprofessional.

These changes are too slight to permit drawing any conclusions. Future studies may show if these are really trends.

2012 Professionalism Study

State Of Professionalism

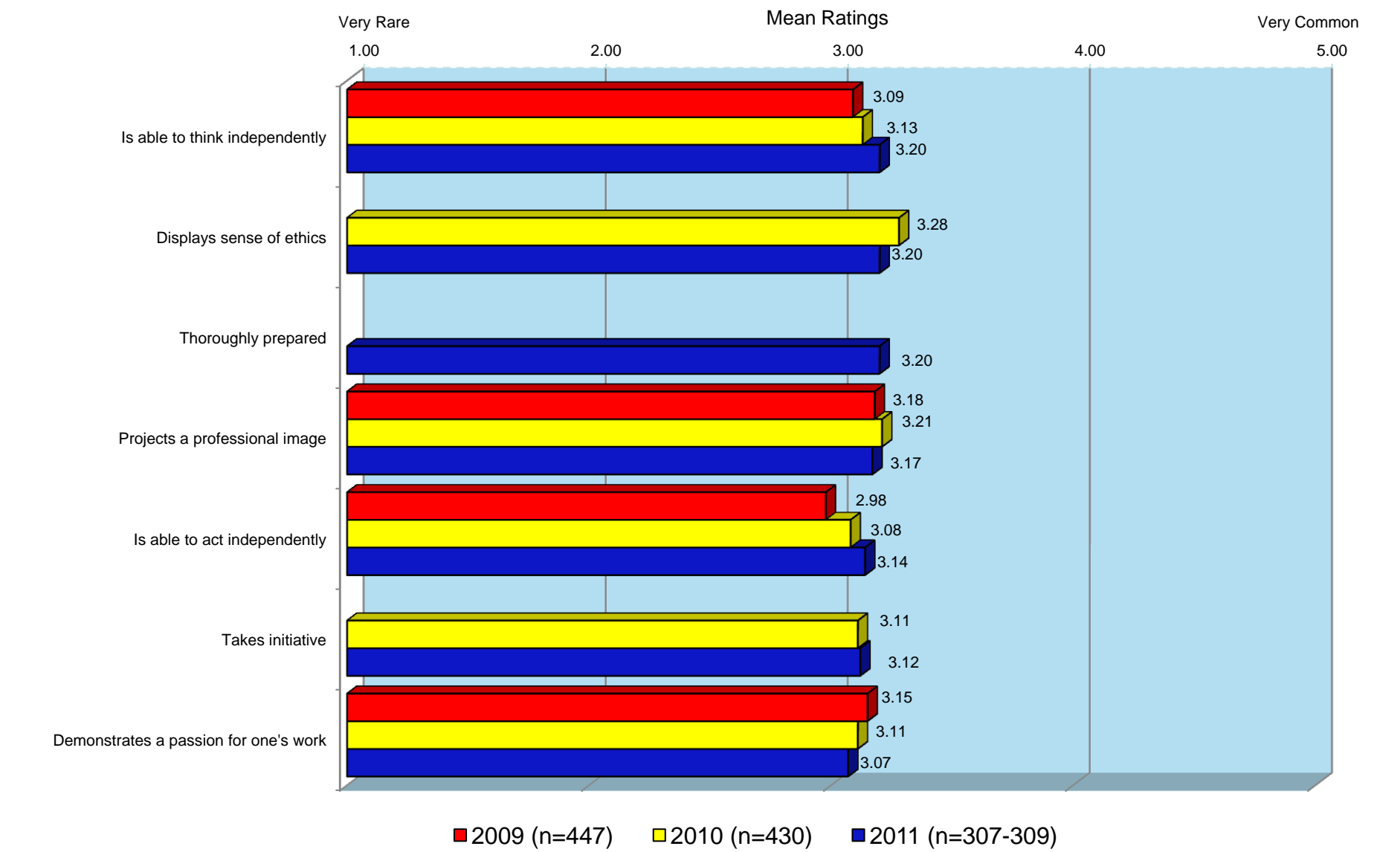
Extent to Which Qualities Exist In First Year Employees - HR



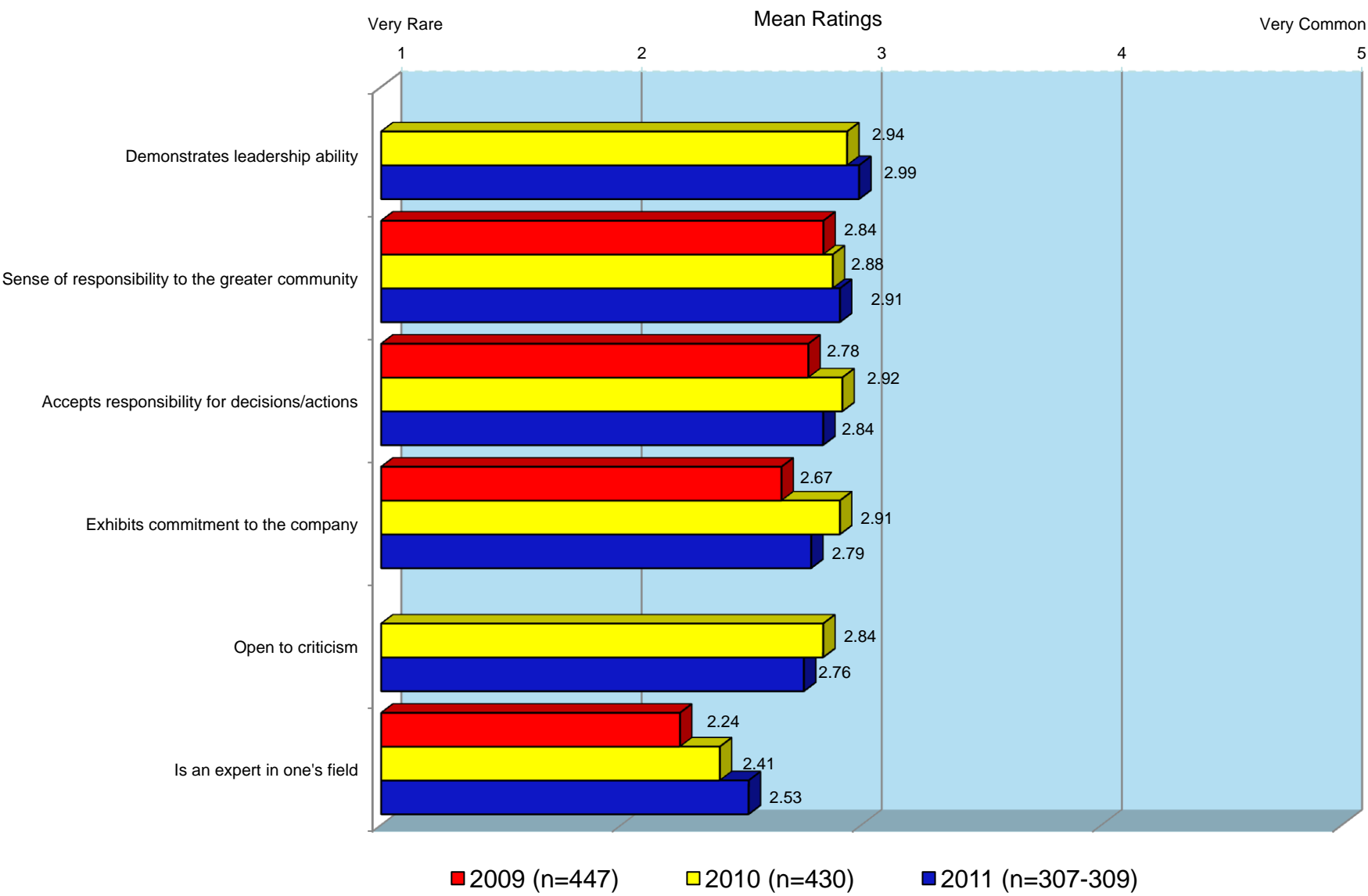
2012 Professionalism Study

State Of Professionalism

Extent to Which Qualities Exist In First Year Employees - HR (continued)



Extent to Which Qualities Exist In First Year Employees - HR (continued)



Extent To Which Qualities Exist In Employees

The comparison of HR and manager respondents continues with the rating of the extent to which qualities are present in either new employees or existing employees. HR respondents rated new employees. Managers rated existing employees.

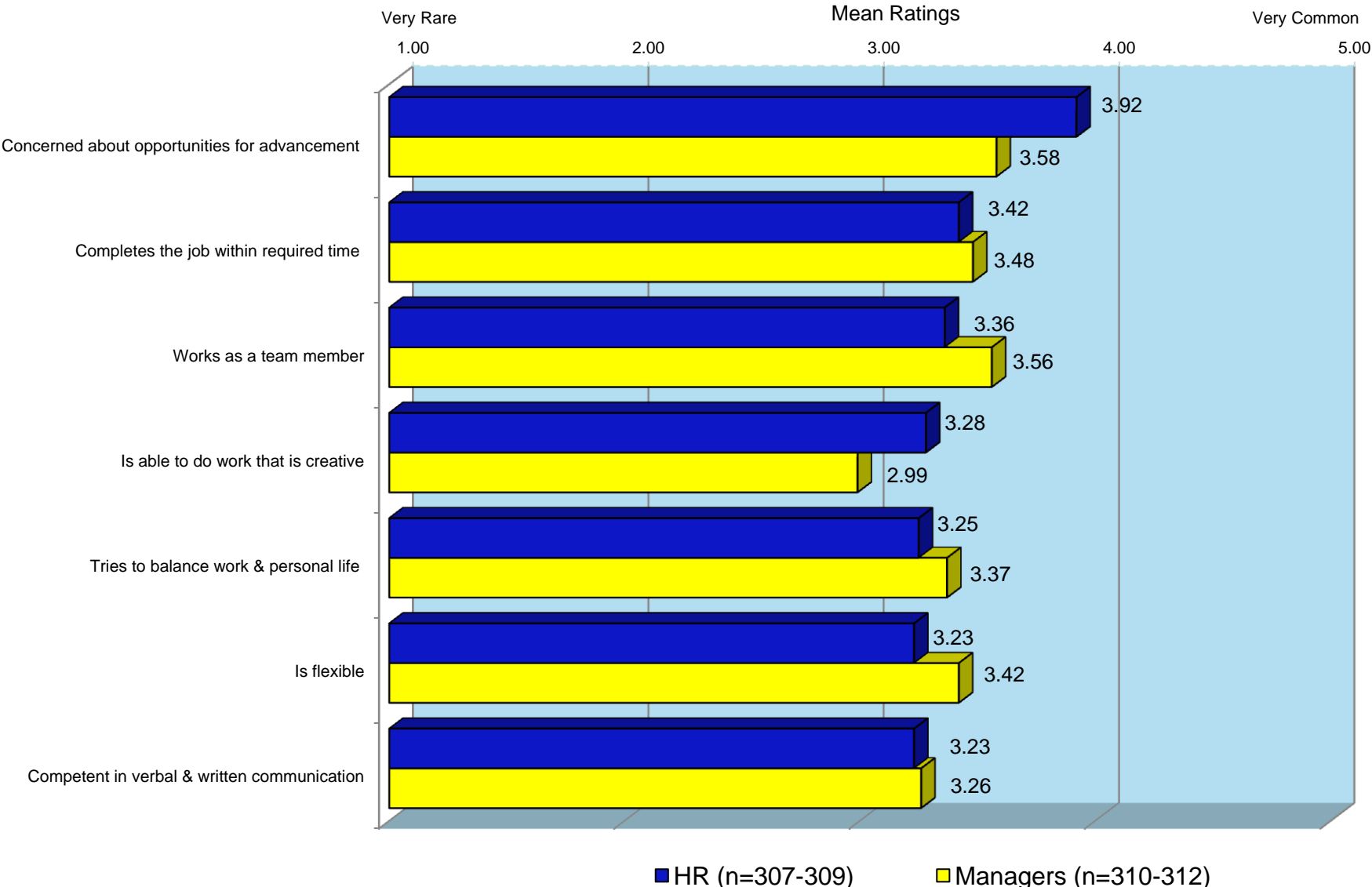
The qualities associated with professionalism tend to be present more in existing employees than in new employees. This is especially the case with “being an expert in one’s field,” “exhibiting commitment to one’s company,” “displaying a sense of ethics,” and “accepting responsibility for decisions and actions.”

The two qualities that are less prevalent in existing employees are “the ability to do work that is creative” and “concern about opportunities for advancement.” The lower prevalence of “concern about opportunities for advancement” is a positive finding.

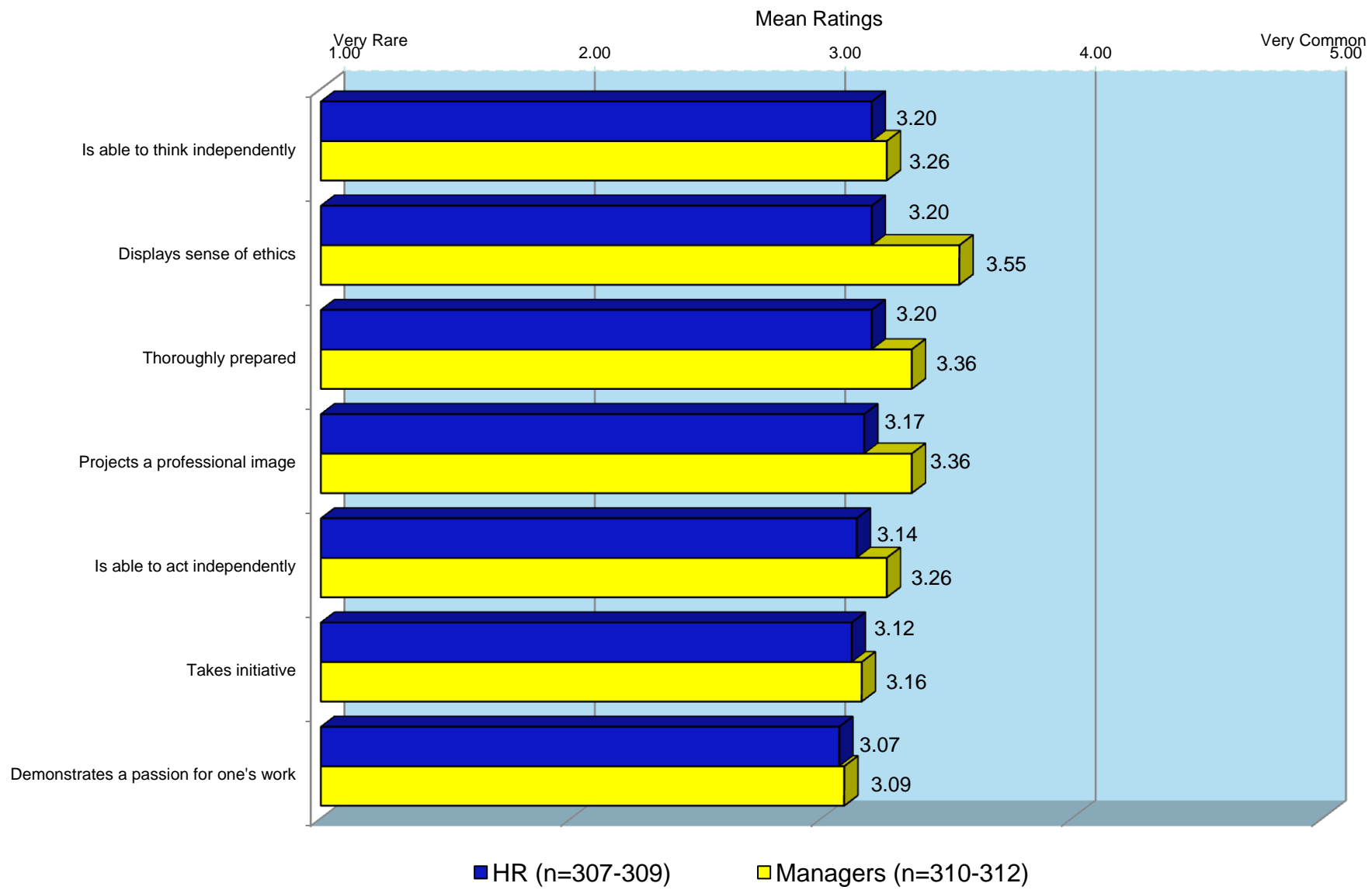
2012 Professionalism Study

State Of Professionalism

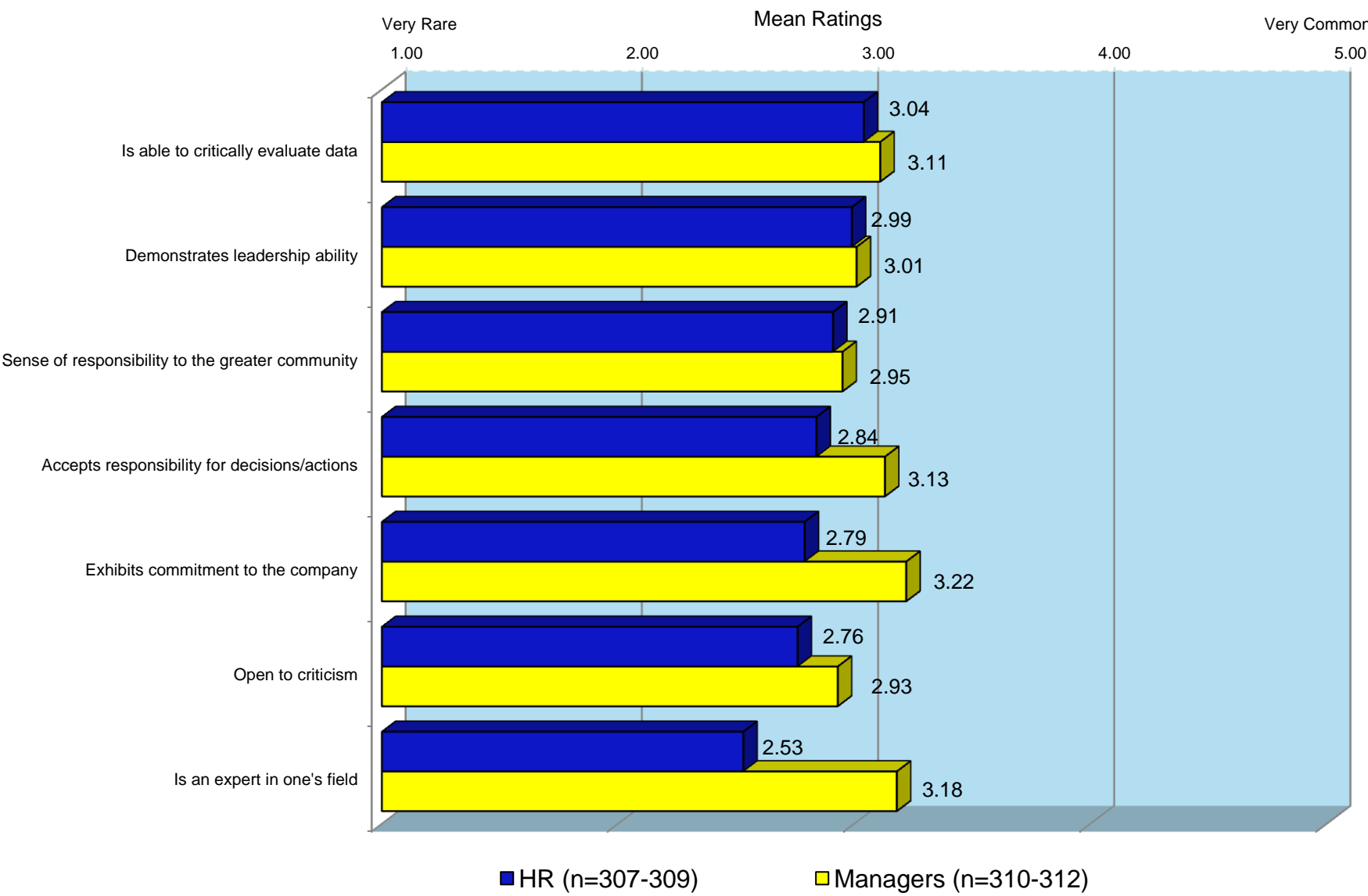
Extent to Which Qualities Exist In Employees



Extent to Which Qualities Exist In Employees (continued)



Extent to Which Qualities Exist In Employees (continued)



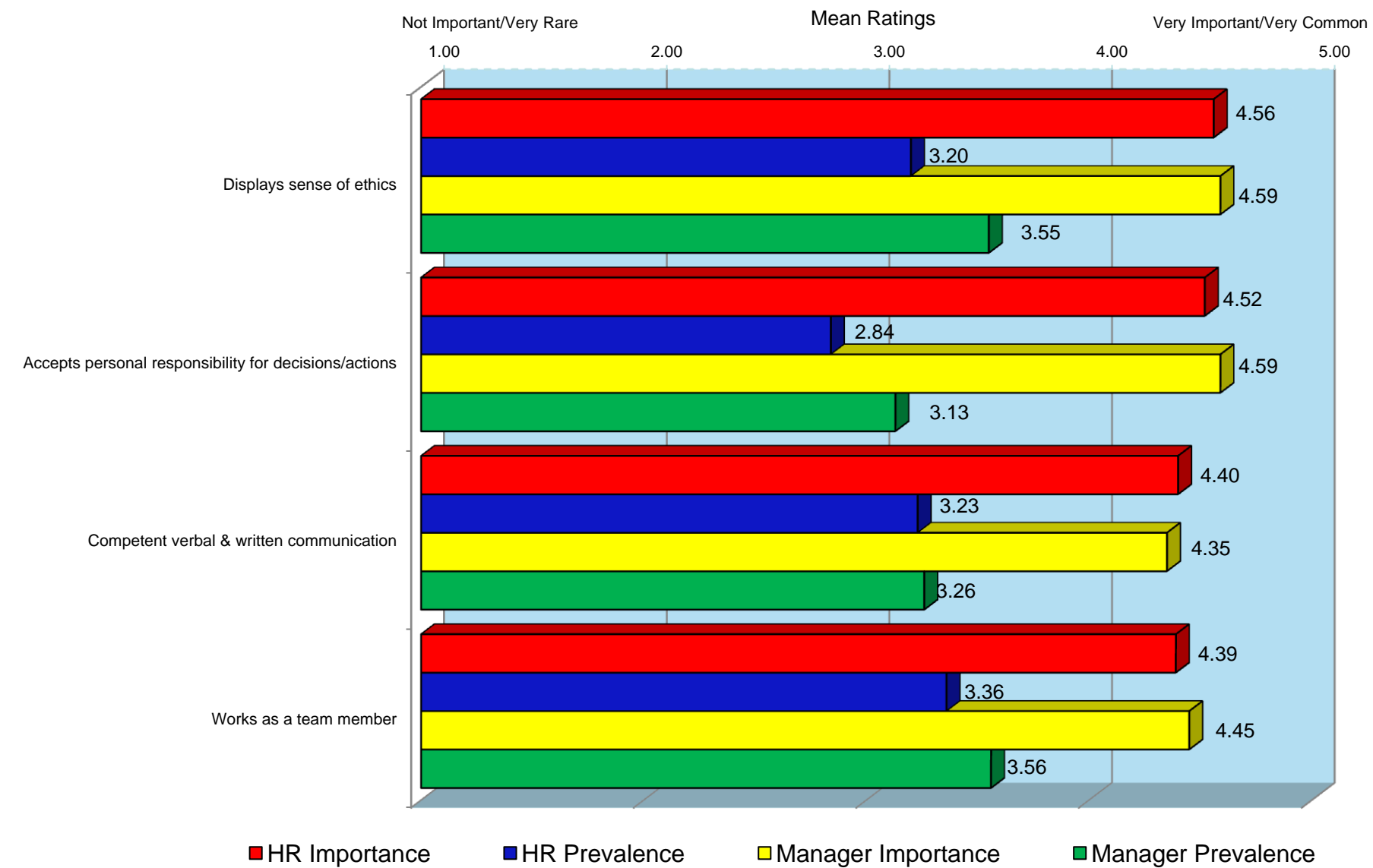
Gap Analysis

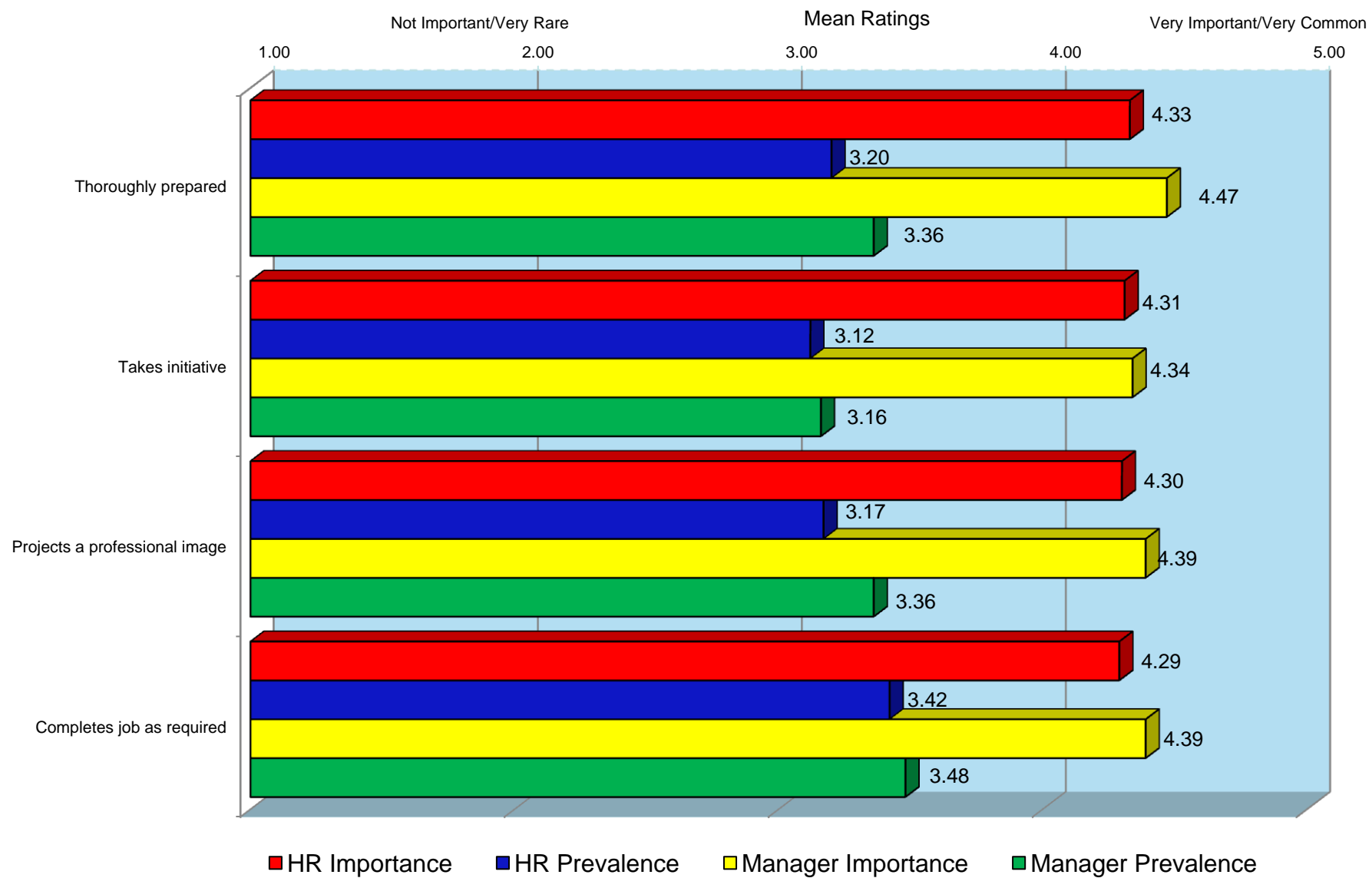
Gap Analysis compares the importance and presence of each of the qualities. With one exception, prevalence does not equal importance for both HR professionals and managers.

The exception is for “concern for opportunities for advancement.”

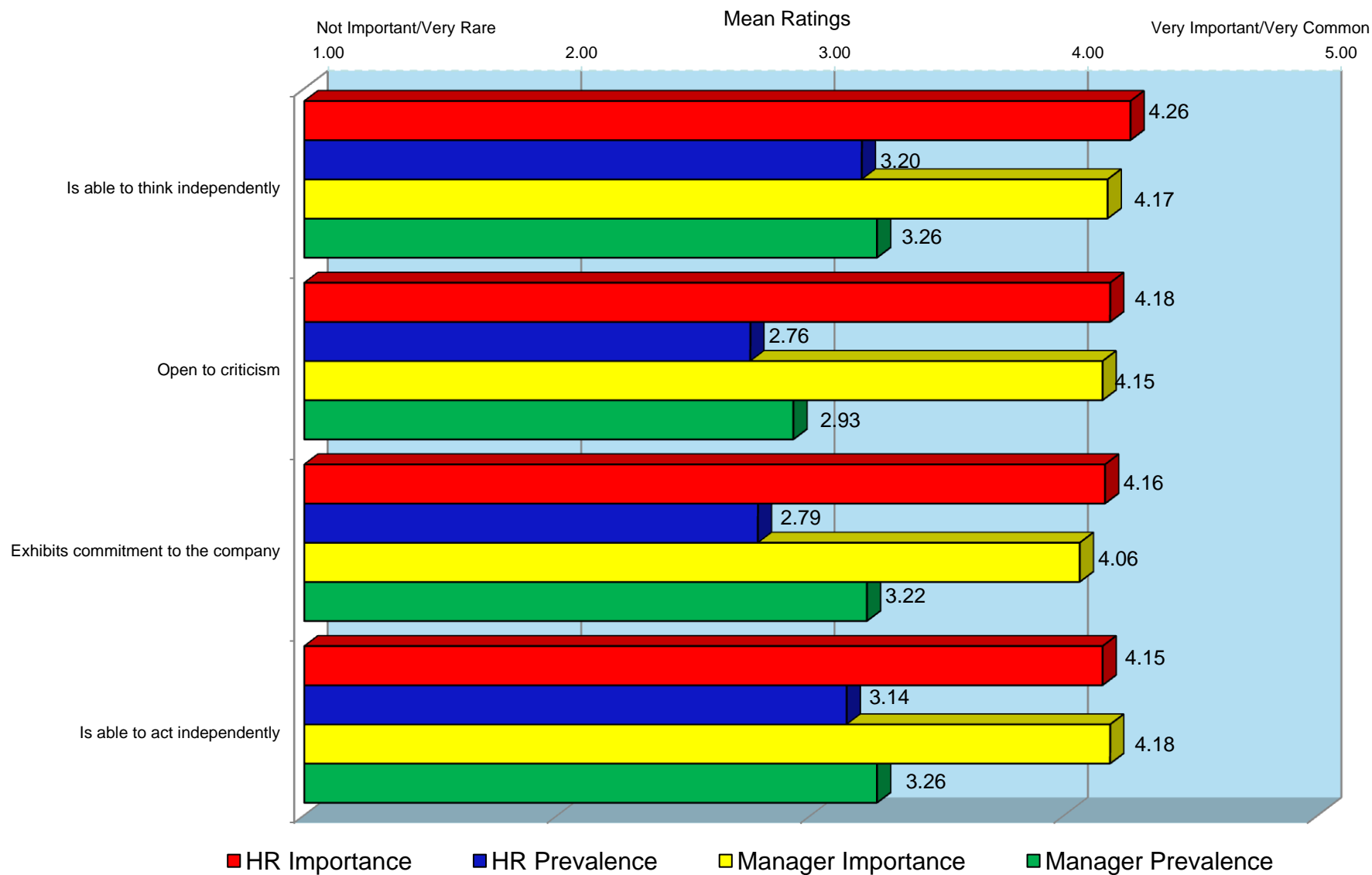
These findings are similar to previous years’ surveys of HR professionals.

The largest gaps according to both HR professionals and managers are found for “accepts personal responsibility for decisions and actions” and “open to criticism.” These qualities are considered to be important for professionalism, but are lacking in both new and existing employees.

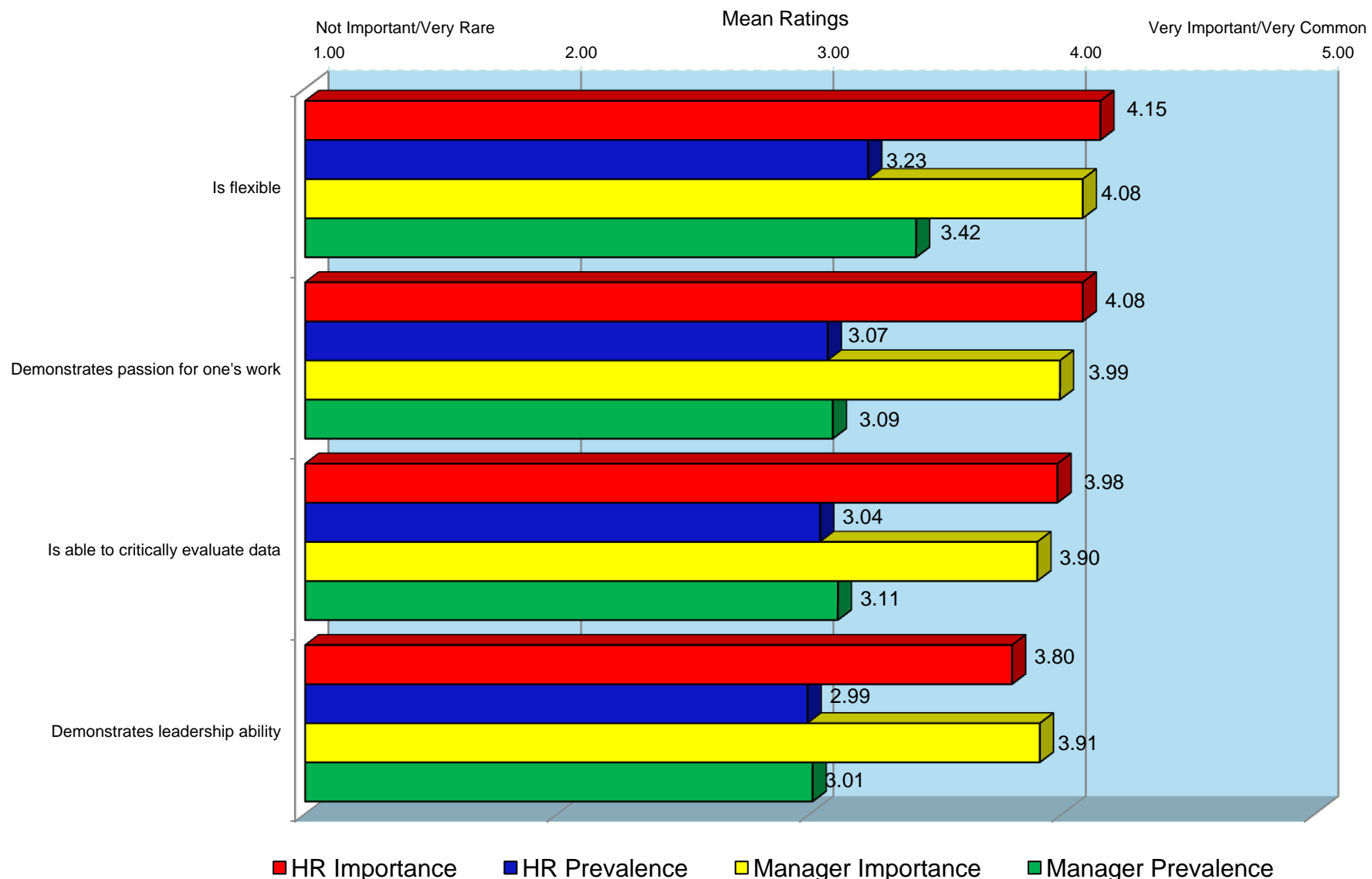




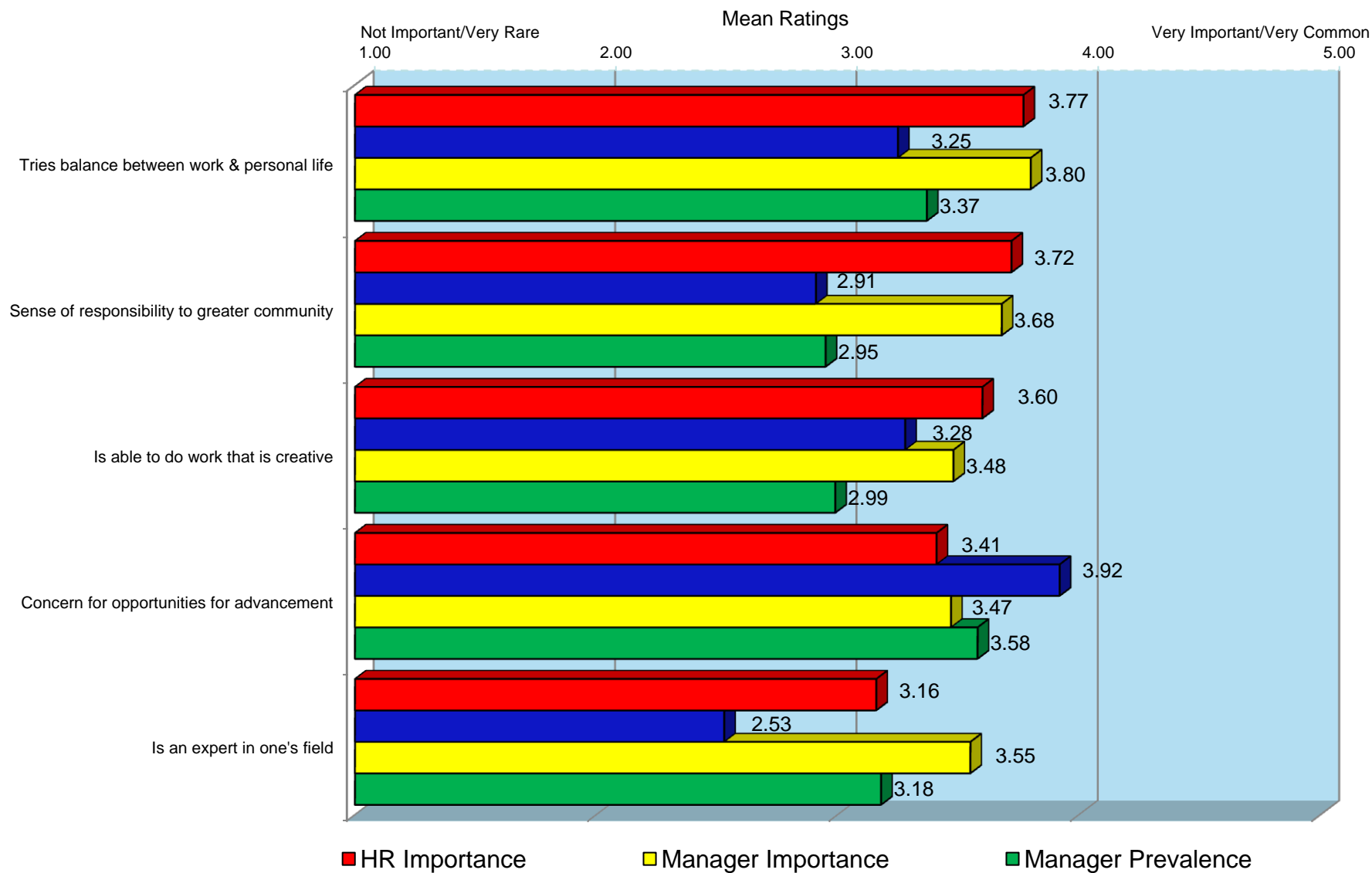
Gap Analysis (continued)



Gap Analysis (continued)



Gap Analysis (continued)



Impact of Professionalism

Impact Of Professionalism

The previous studies clearly found that professionalism has an effect on the hiring decision. In the 2010 study, 96.0% of the HR professionals reported that an applicant’s professionalism affects the likelihood of being hired.

In this year’s study, managers were asked if an employee’s professionalism has an impact on their opportunities for advancement or promotion. A total of 92.9% of the managers responded that it does have an impact.

Means Of Assessing Professionalism Potential

As might be expected, the means used to assess an employee’s professionalism varies by type of respondent. HR respondents were asked how they assess an applicant’s potential to be professional. Managers were queried on how they assess an existing employees’ professionalism.

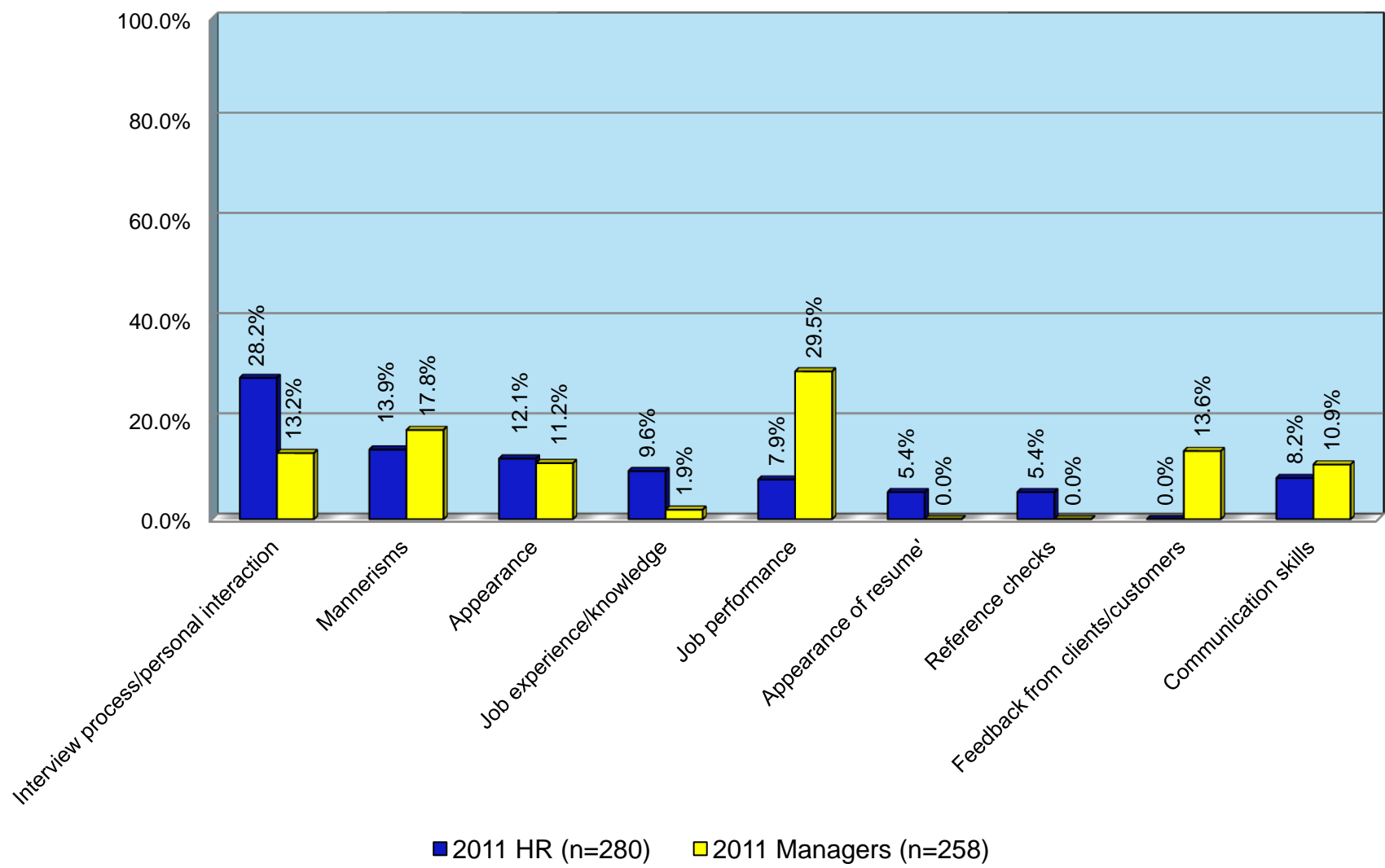
The applicant’s performance during the interview process (28.2%) is used by the greatest percentage of HR professionals to assess the potential to be professional.

For managers, it is most often one’s job performance that is used as an assessment of professionalism (29.5%).

2012 Professionalism Study

Impact of Professionalism

Means Of Assessing Professionalism Potential



Appearance and Professionalism

Dress Code

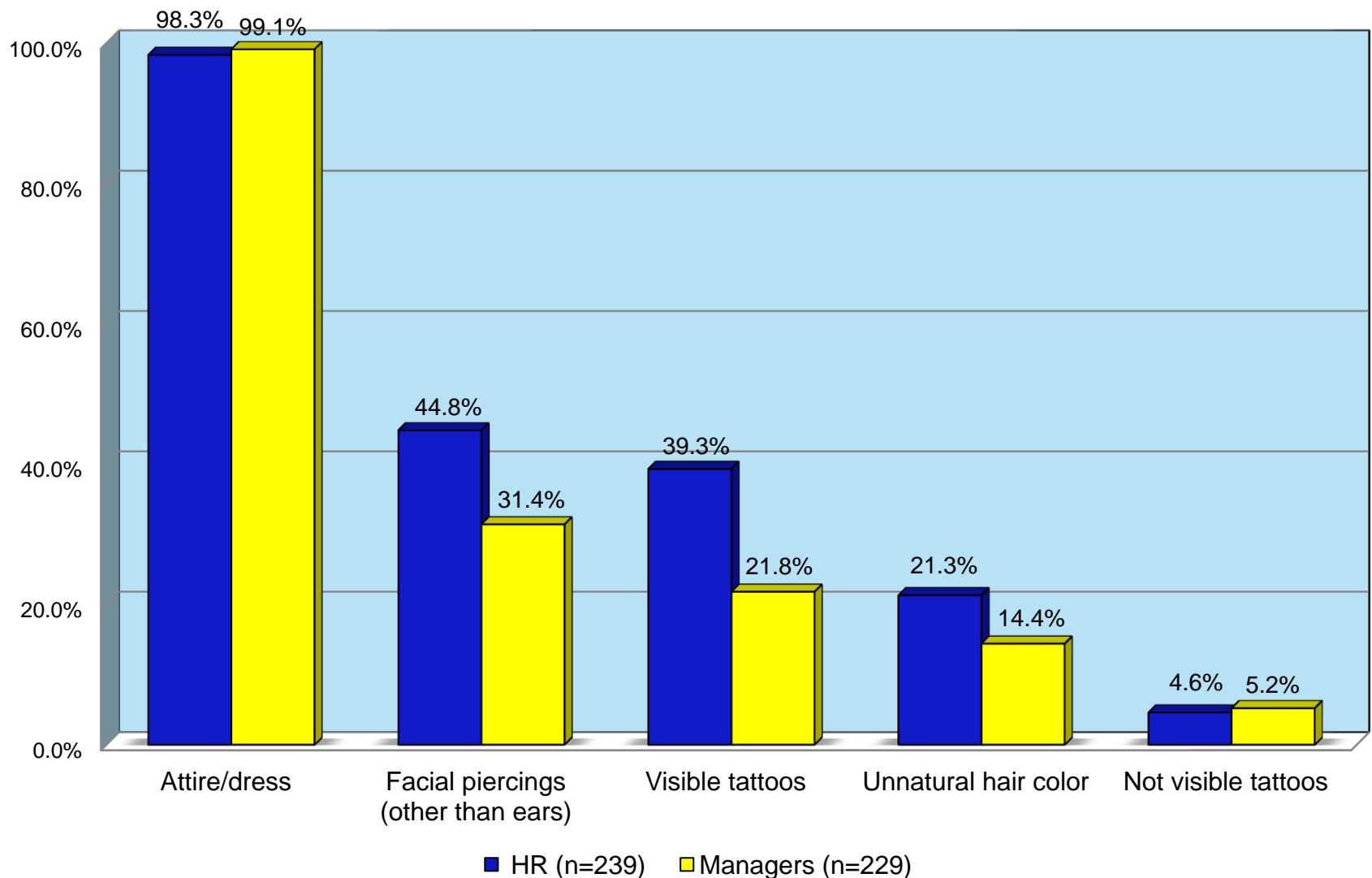
About three-fourths of the HR professionals (77.7%) and managers (75.0%) reported that their companies have a dress code.

The dress codes have most often in existence for over five years. A total of 69.4% of the HR professionals and 82.1% of the managers who knew about their dress code’s history cited this amount of time.

Nearly all of the dress codes deal with attire. This is followed by facial piercings, other than ears, and visible tattoos.

Reasons For Dress Code

The reasons for the creation of a dress code were similar for HR professionals and managers. These most often were an interest in increased professionalism (HR, 22.3%; managers, 31.4%), wanting to make a good impression on clients or customers (HR, 25.7%; managers, 23.7%), and inappropriate attire (HR, 34.3%; managers, 20.5%)



**Negative Effects On
Being Hired/Promoted**

To understand the impact of appearance, HR professionals were presented a list of factors related to appearance and asked which have a negative effect on someone being hired. Managers were shown the same list. However, they were asked which ones have an effect on being hired or promoted.

It is clear that appearance matters. Four of the factors had notable percentages of respondents identifying them as deterrents to being hired or promoted. These factors, in order of the percentage selecting each, are attire, facial piercings other than ears, visible tattoos, and unnatural hair color.

Other Factors

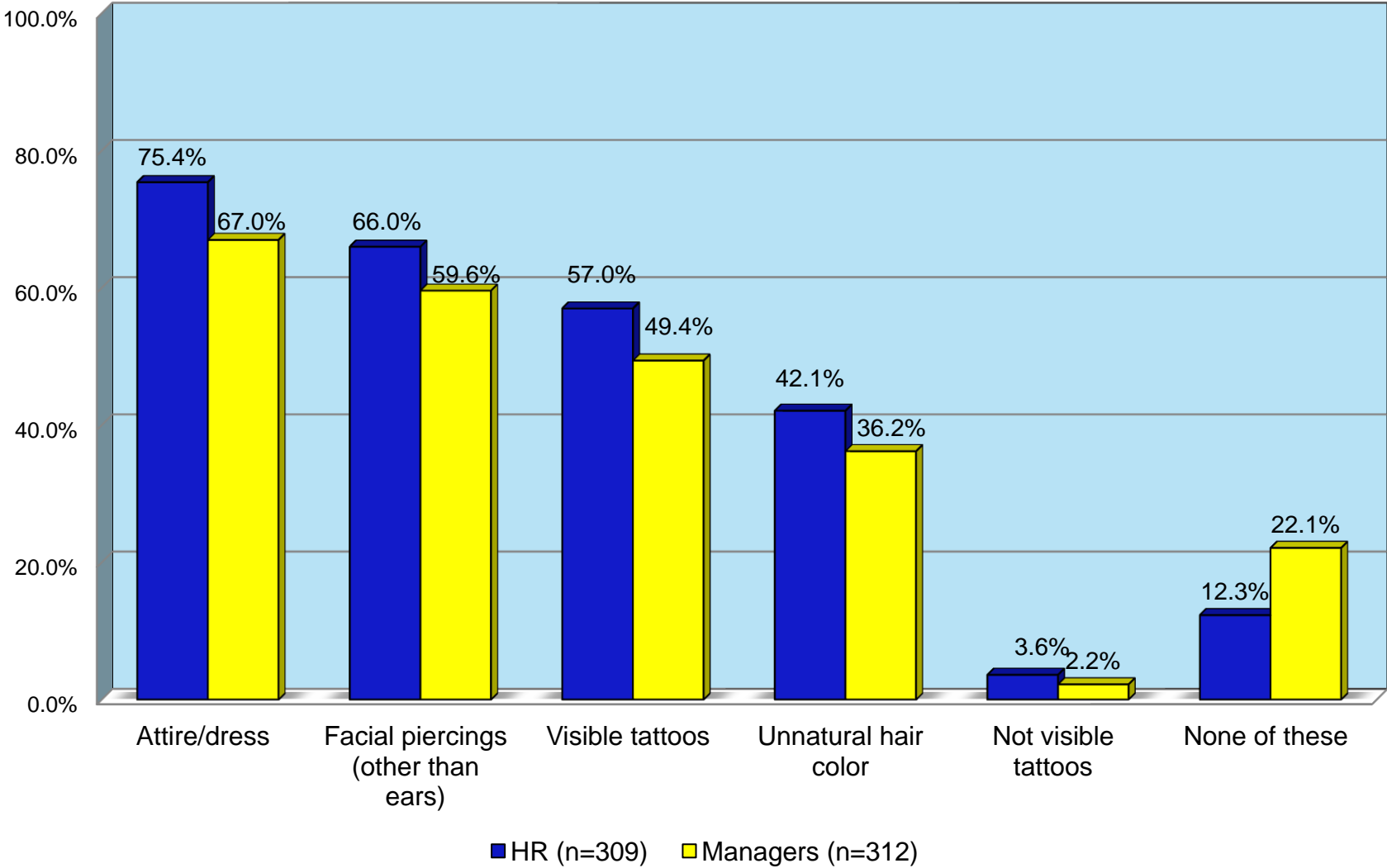
Respondents were also given the opportunity to name any other factors that have a negative effect on someone getting hired.

Of the 101 HR professionals and 80 managers citing other factors, they most often named personal hygiene (HR, 47.5%; managers, 53.8%), slovenly appearance (HR, 34.7%; managers, 22.5%), clothes (HR, 19.8%; managers, 20.0%) and body language (HR, 16.8%; managers, 2.5%).

2012 Professionalism Study

Appearance and Professionalism

Negative Effects On Being Hired/Promoted



**Impact Of
Attire/Appearance On
Being Hired/Promoted**

To further understand the effects of attire and appearance, HR professionals rated the impact of a prospective employee’s attire or appearance on their likelihood of being hired. Managers rated the impact on being hired or promoted. A five point rating scale was used that ranged from 1, no impact, to 5, great impact.

As seen in the graph, one’s attire and appearance play a substantial role in being hired or promoted. Almost three-fourths of the HR professionals (72.5%) assigned a rating of 4 or 5. Two-thirds of the managers (67.0%) did the same.

Segmentation Analysis

Education level of the HR respondent is related to the belief that appearance affects being hired or promoted. As education level increases, the perceived impact of appearance also increases.

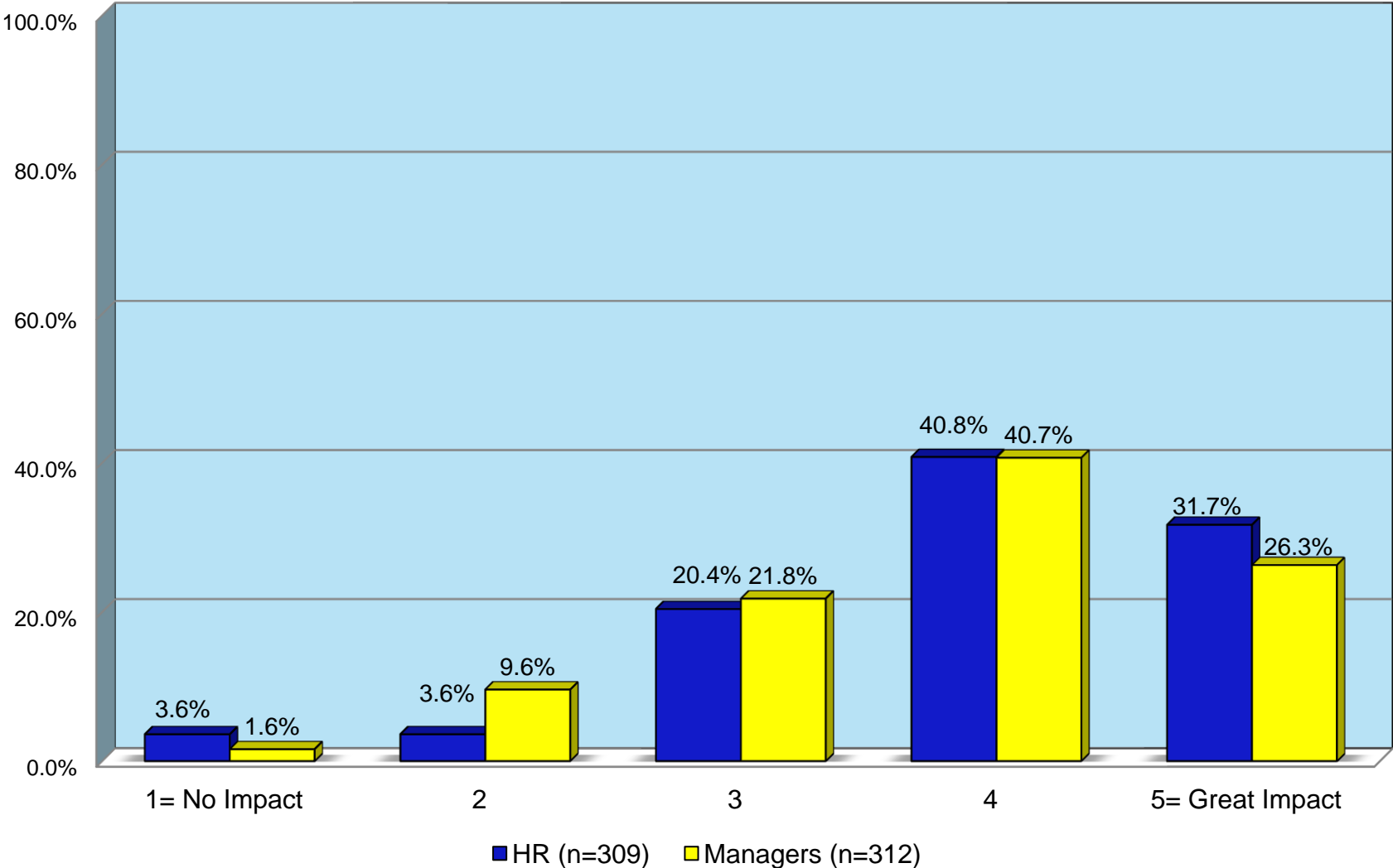
The opposite was found in smaller companies. Smaller is defined as companies with under 100 employees. In these companies, HR respondents were less likely than those in larger companies to feel attire plays a role in being hired or promoted.

This relationship did not exist for managers.

2012 Professionalism Study

Appearance and Professionalism

Impact Of Attire/Appearance On Being Hired/Promoted



**Impact Of
Attire/Appearance On
Perception Of
Competence**

In addition to having an impact on hiring and promotion, one’s attire or appearance also has an effect on the perception of an employee’s competence.

About half of the HR professionals (52.7%) and the managers (50.3%) gave a rating of 4 or 5 to describe the impact of attire and appearance on the perception of one’s ability to perform their job requirements.

Segmentation Analysis

Older HR professionals, over age 55, are more likely than younger respondents to feel attire has an impact on the perception of one’s competence.

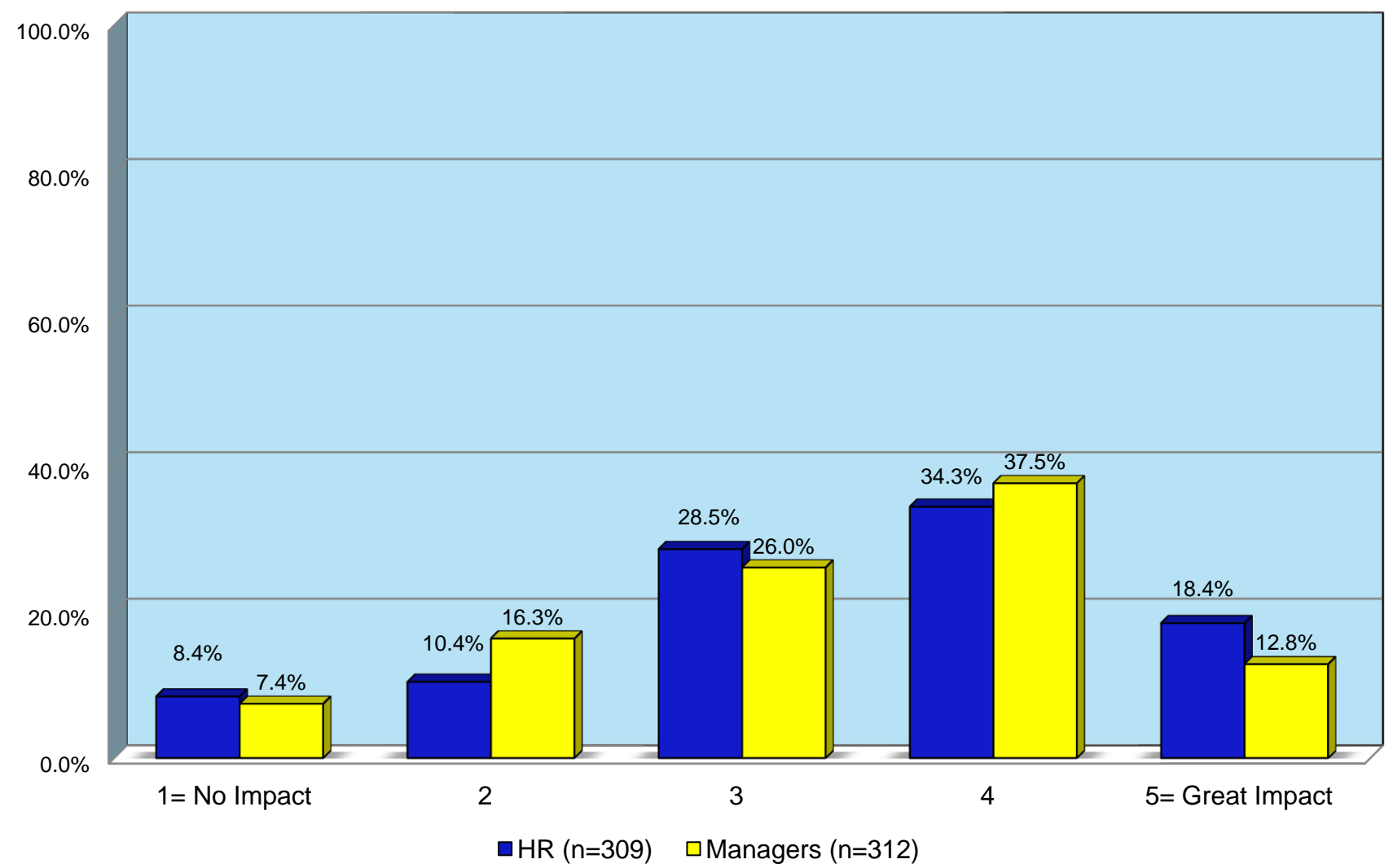
Education level of the HR respondent is also related to the belief that attire has an effect on this perception. As education level increases, the impact which attire has also increases. This is similar to what was found for appearance and its effect on being promoted.

Similar relationships involving managers were not discovered.

2012 Professionalism Study

Appearance and Professionalism

Impact Of Attire/Appearance On Perception Of Competence



Changing Definitions of Professionalism

Changing Definitions of Professionalism - HR

A point raised in reaction to the first study on professionalism was whether the perceived lack of professionalism in new employees is the result of older persons judging the younger generation. Perhaps, the definition of professionalism should be seen as subject to change as cultural norms and values change in younger generations.

To test this, three statements were included in the HR professionals' study last year. The statements were repeated again this year.

The level of agreement with the statements this year was very similar to what was discovered last year. The majority of HR respondents felt definitions of professionalism should not be subject to change (59.2%). However, it should be observed that about a fourth of them (26.5%) disagreed with this statement.

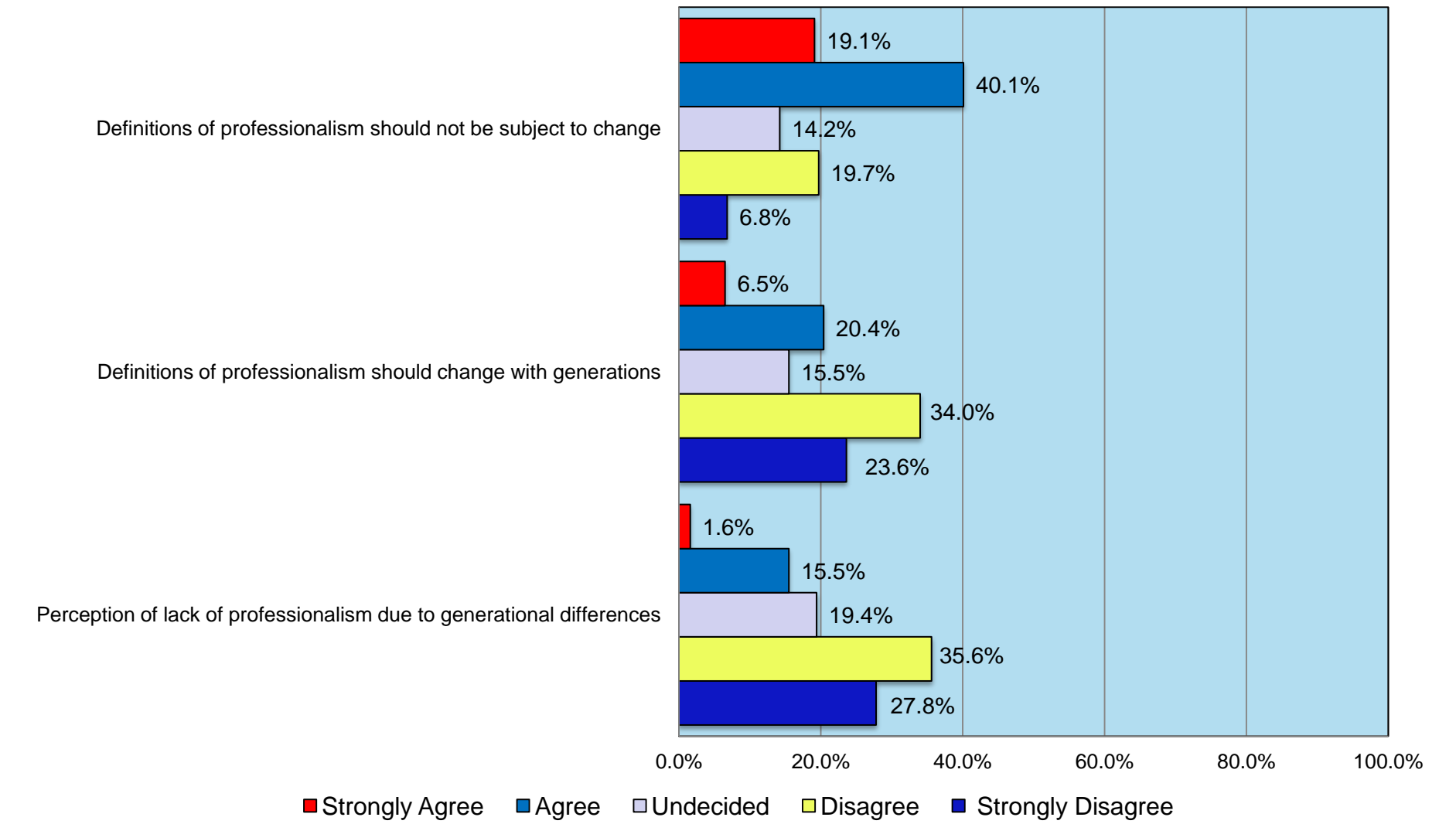
Consistent with the above findings, 57.6% disagreed that the definition of professionalism should change with generations. In the opposite direction, 26.9% agreed with the statement that the definition should change with generations.

Nearly two-thirds of the HR professionals (63.4%) disagreed with the idea that the perceived lack of professionalism is due to generational differences between those evaluating the state of professionalism and those being evaluated.

2012 Professionalism Study

Changing Definitions of Professionalism

Changing Definitions Of Professionalism - HR

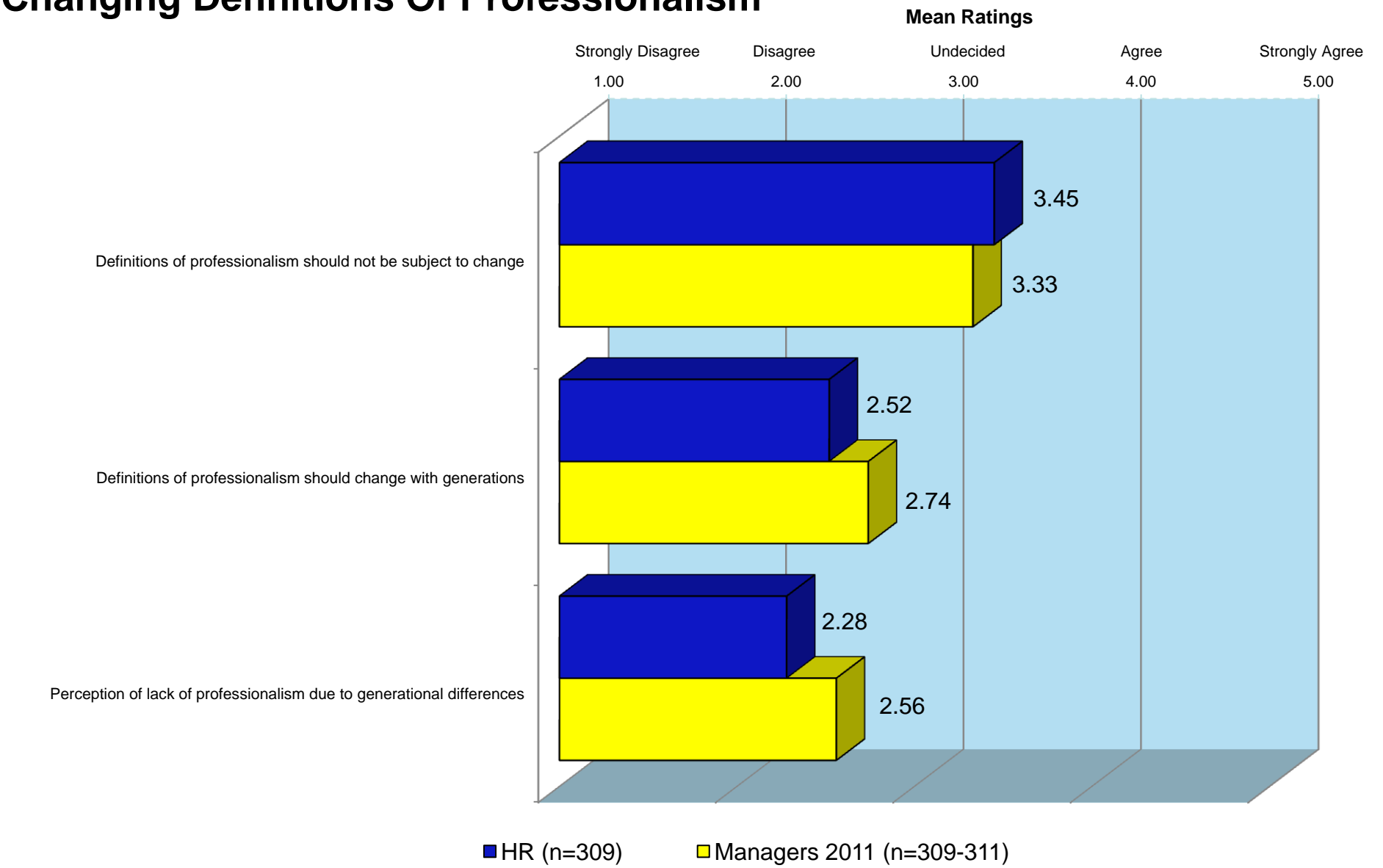


Changing Definitions of Professionalism	<p>Continuing an examination of possible differences in the experiences of HR professionals and managers, the managers were presented the same three statements about changing definitions of professionalism. For purposes of this graph, the possible answers were scored 1= strongly disagree, and 5= strongly agree.</p> <p>Managers are more likely than HR respondents to feel that definitions of professionalism can change with time. However, most managers like HR respondents disagree with this idea.</p>
Segmentation Analysis	<p>The effect which age has on what is considered to be professional receives support from the respondents' ratings of these statements. For both HR and manager respondents, those under 35 are the most likely to believe that definitions of professionalism should change with the generations. They are also the respondents to most likely feel that a generation gap is responsible for the perception of lacking professionalism in the workplace.</p>

2012 Professionalism Study

Changing Definitions of Professionalism

Changing Definitions Of Professionalism



Deadly Mistakes

**Deadly Mistakes
During An Interview -
HR**

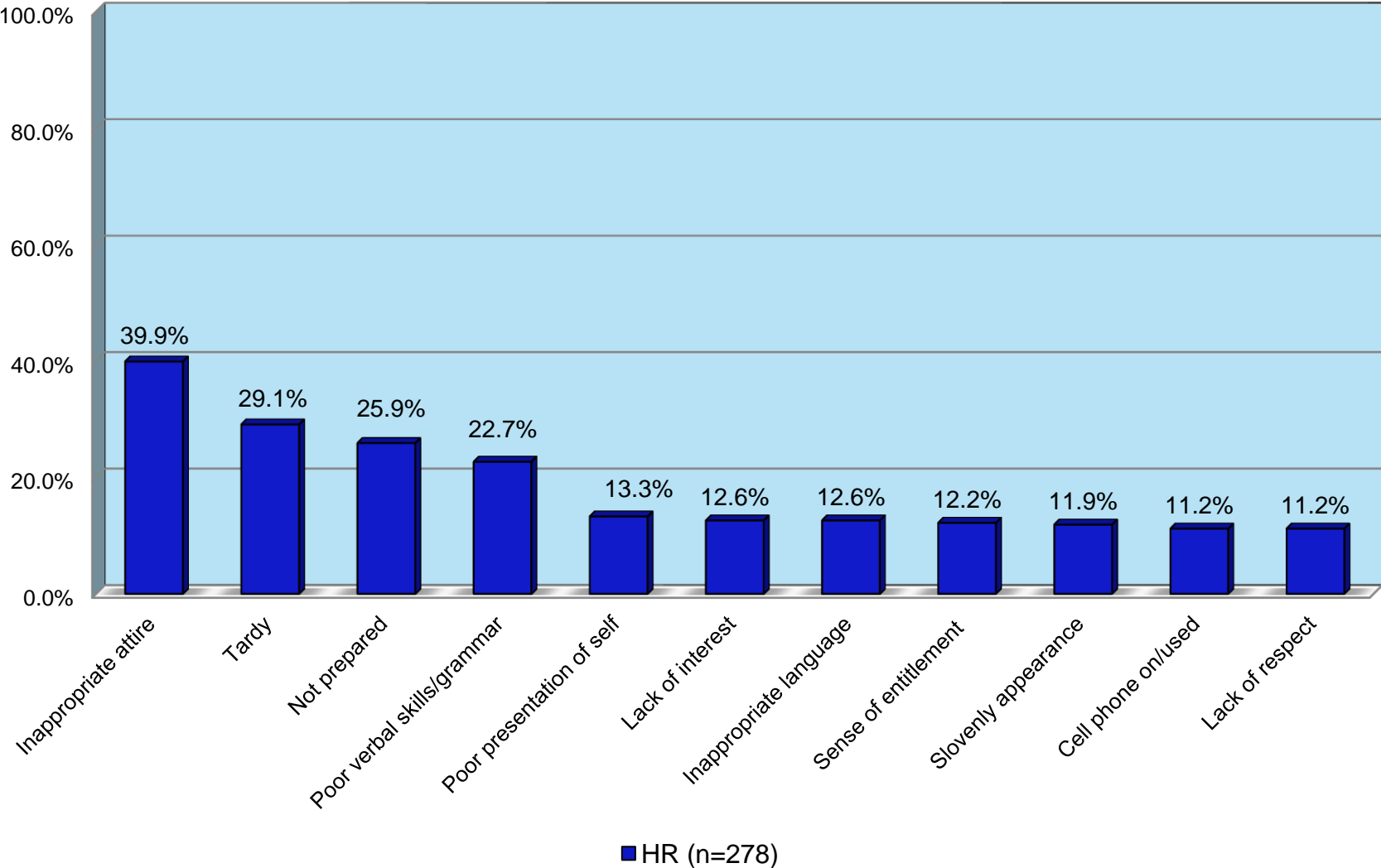
HR professionals named the three most deadly mistakes an applicant can make during an interview for a position requiring professionalism.

The most frequently described mistakes are shown in the graph. All of the responses are listed in the data table.

Reinforcing the importance of attire, the most common mistake was inappropriate attire at the interview (39.9%). This was followed by being late for the interview (29.1%), not being prepared for the interview which includes not knowing about the company (25.9%), and having poor verbal skills (22.7%).

As hard as it may be to believe, the 11.2% of the HR respondents who mentioned cell phones being on or used during the interviews represents 31 persons. Rather than this being an isolated incident, it appears to be relatively common.

Deadly Mistakes During An Interview - HR



Worst Problems In New Employees - Managers

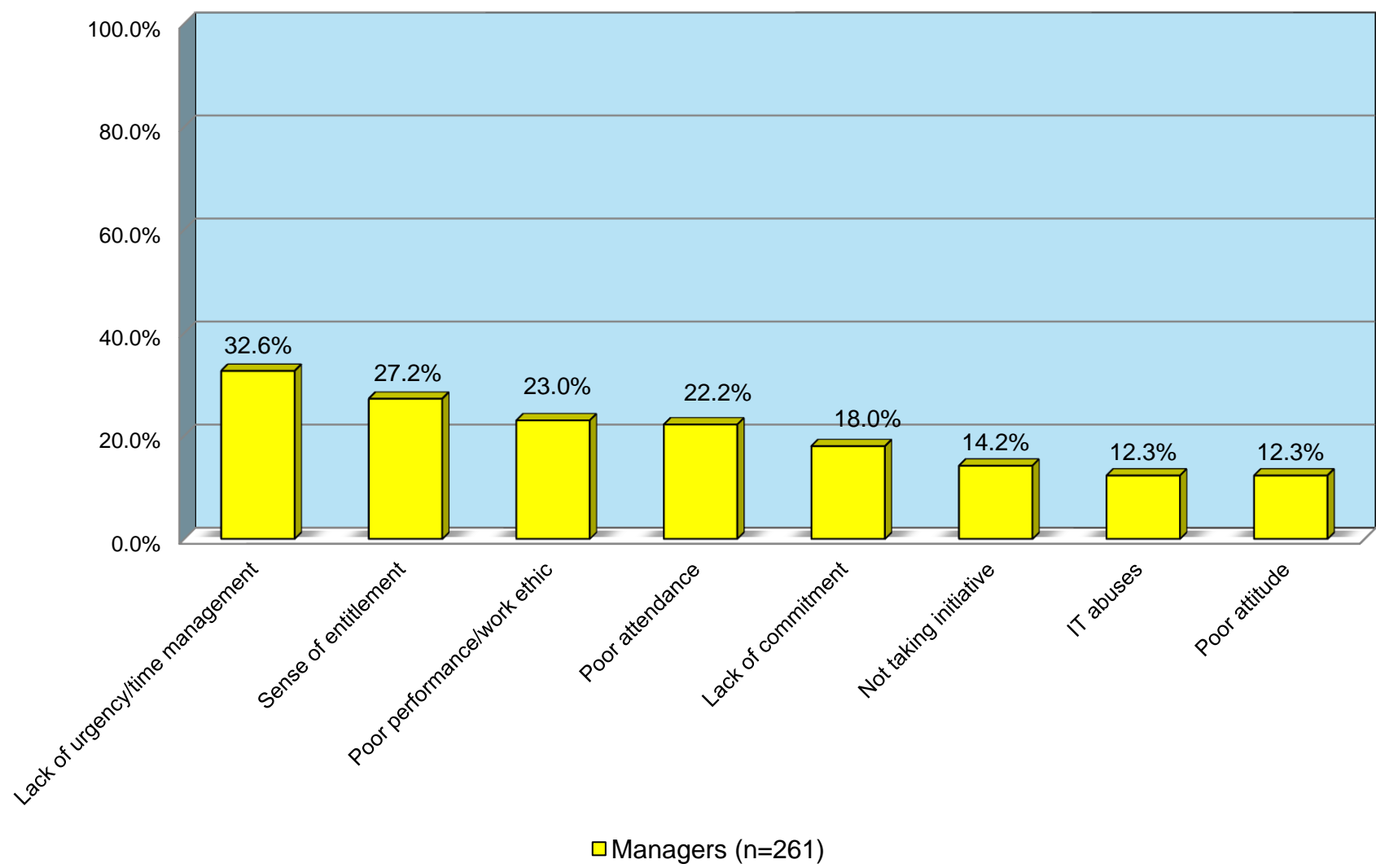
Managers were asked to identify the three worst problems they see in new employees once they are hired and working.

The most frequent problem is employees not understanding the urgency required for completing assignments (32.6%). Poor time management is seen as being largely responsible for this.

Following this is the self-centered employee who displays a sense of entitlement (27.2%).

Other commonly named problems are poor performance accompanied by a weak work ethic (23.0%) and poor attendance (22.2%). The poor attendance includes being late, leaving early, and missing many days of work.

Worst Problems In New Employees - Managers



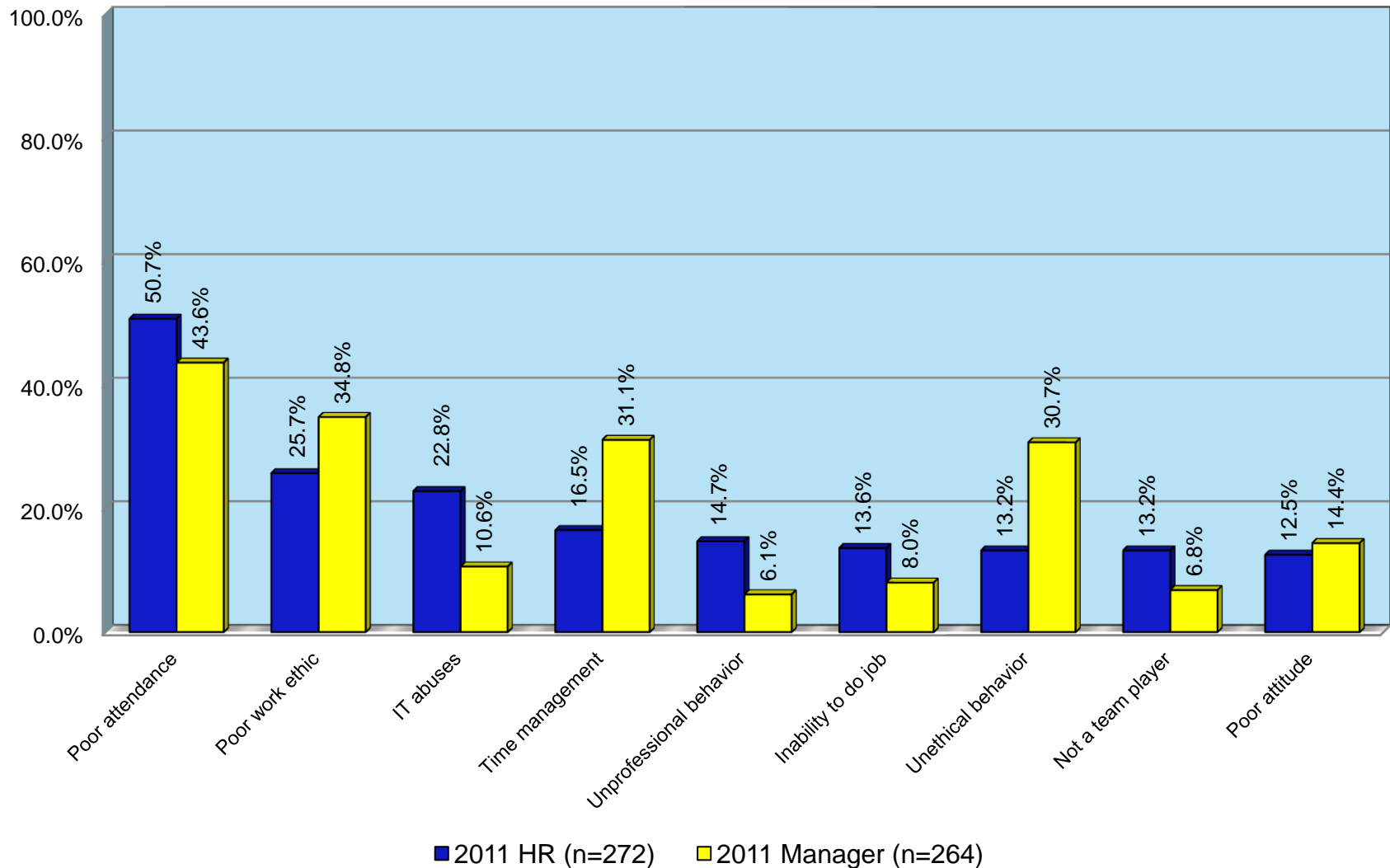
Reasons For Firing

HR professionals and managers also described the three behaviors or shortcomings that are likely to get a new college graduate fired. They were informed to not include downsizing as a reason.

While the reasons are shared by both HR professionals and managers, there are differences in the percentage of respondents giving each reason for dismissal. This is most likely the result of the respondents' positions.

For both HR professionals (50.7%) and managers (43.6%), the most common reason for being fired is related to poor attendance. This was also cited as a problem which managers encounter in new employees.

A greater percentage of managers than HR respondents mentioned a poor work ethic, time management, and unethical behavior. It is likely that managers experience these behaviors more often than do HR respondents.

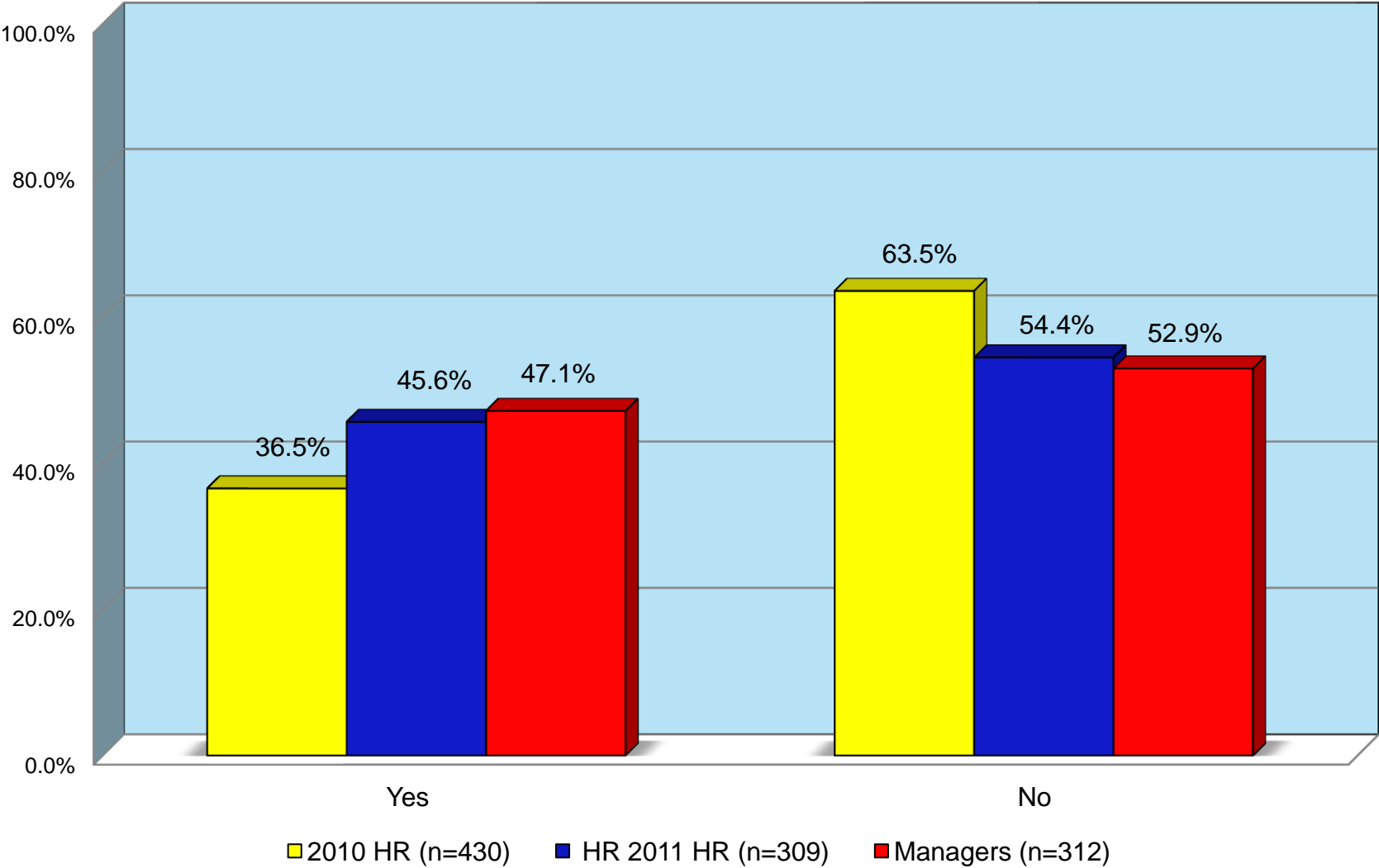


Developing Professionalism

**Company Programs
On Professionalism**

Almost half of the HR professionals (45.6%) and managers (47.1%) report that their companies have programs that specifically orient new employees to what is considered to be professional behavior.

Most of the HR professionals (92.9%) and managers (94.5%) indicated that this topic is included as part of the orientation program.



Should Colleges
Prepare Students To
Be Professionalism

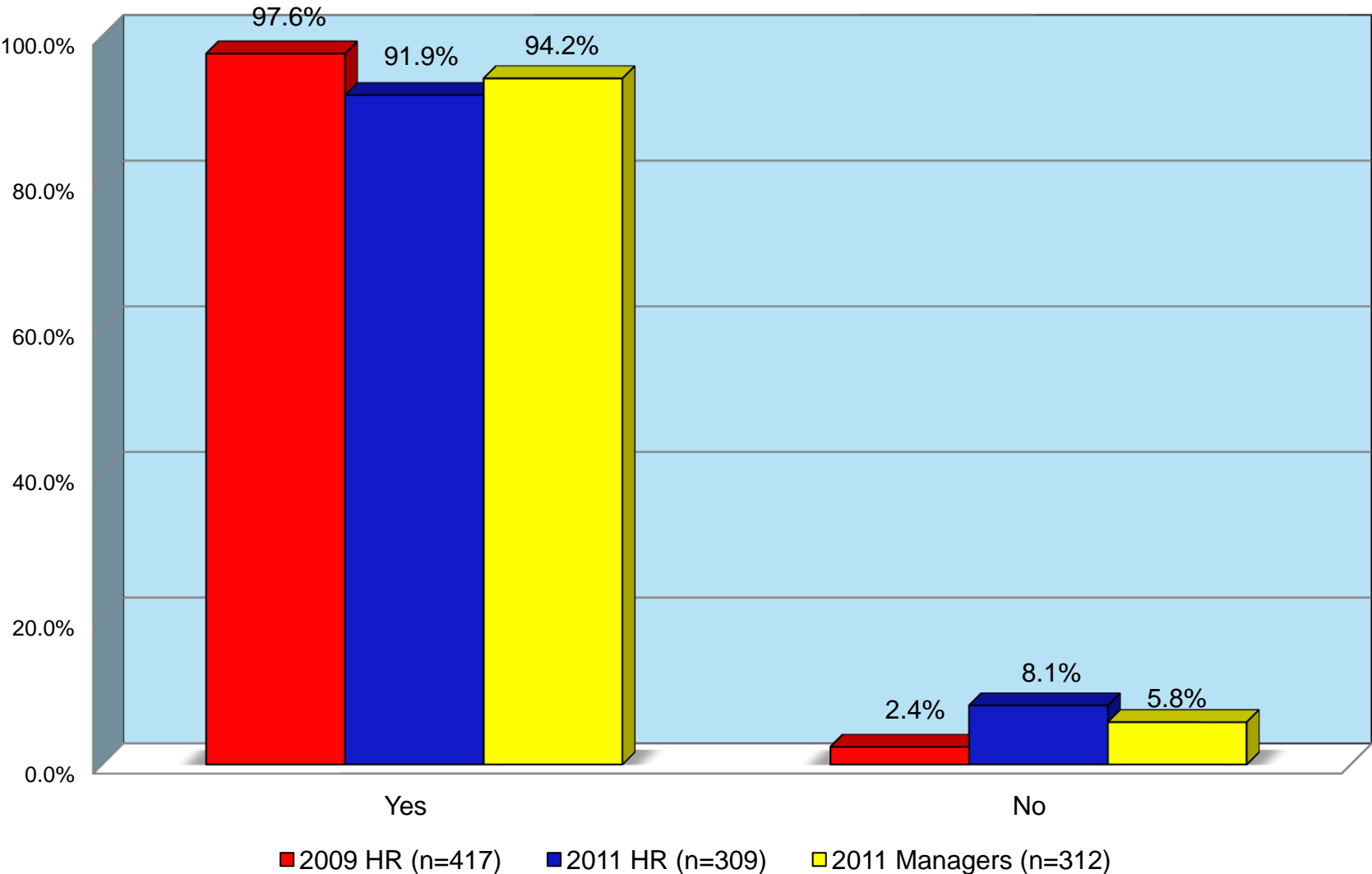
Almost all of the HR professionals (91.9%) and managers (94.2%) believe that college should develop professionalism in students regardless of their field of study. In the 2009 study, an even higher percentage of HR professionals (97.6%) felt this way.

When asked what activities colleges should have to develop professionalism in undergraduates, respondents most often gave the following suggestions.

	HR (n=151)	Managers (n=141)
More internships/on-the-job training	15.2%	24.8%
Business etiquette classes/workshops	15.2%	14.9%
Workplace preparedness and expectations	13.2%	18.4%
Interviewing skills	11.9%	0.0%
Communication skills	6.6%	8.5%
Business/professional ethics	6.6%	2.8%
Professionalism class	6.0%	10.6%

2012 Professionalism Study

Should Colleges Prepare Students To Be Professional



Profile Of Respondents

HR Sample

The characteristics of the HR professional respondents are presented below.

Number Of Employees
At All Locations

Under 10	2.3%
10 to 50	4.2%
51 to 100	21.8%
101 to 250	26.6%
251 to 500	11.7%
Over 500	33.4%
n=	308

Number Of Employees
In HR Department

1 to 2	39.8%
3 to 5	28.8%
6 to 10	12.9%
Over 10	18.4%
n=	309

Type Of Industry

Service	17.2%
Manufacturing	16.2%
Construction	7.8%
Financial/banking	6.8%
Government	5.8%
Retail	5.5%
Medical/healthcare	5.2%
Education	4.5%
Wholesale	4.2%
Other	26.7%
n=	308

Respondent's Age

Under 35	15.4%
35-55	61.2%
Over 55	23.4%
N=	428

Respondent's Level Of Education

High school graduate of less	3.2%
Some college/technical school	15.2%
Undergraduate degree	44.3%
Graduate degree	37.2%
n=	309

Position

President/CEO/CFO	17.5%
Administrative	3.8%
Human Resources	35.0%
Vice President/ Sr Vice President	3.1%
Manager	14.0%
Director	4.5%
Controller	3.1%
Other	19.0%
n=	286

Position Of Person To Whom Report...

President/CEO	32.7%
VP of Administration	15.9%
CFO	10.4%
Board of Directors	10.0%
COO	4.5%
Other	26.5%
n=	309

Manager Sample

The characteristics of the manager respondents are presented below.

Number Of Employees
At All Locations

Under 10	2.6%
10 to 50	32.%
51 to 100	10.3%
101 to 250	7.4%
251 to 500	11.0%
Over 500	65.5%
n=	310

Number Of Employees
In Supervise

1 to 2	26.6%
3 to 5	25.3%
6 to 10	22.1%
Over 10	26.6%
n=	312

Type Of Industry

Manufacturing	20.5%
Service	14.4%
Financial/banking	8.3%
Retail	7.4%
Medical/healthcare	5.1%
Education	4.5%
Government	4.2%
Construction	3.5%
Wholesale	1.6%
Other	30.4%
n=	312

Respondent's Age

Under 35	28.1%
35-55	56.5%
Over 55	15.5%
n=	310

Respondent's Level Of Education

High school graduate of less	3.5%
Some college/technical school	19.6%
Undergraduate degree	42.8%
Graduate degree	34.1%
n=	311

Position

Manager	51.6%
Senior Manager	9.9%
Administrative	9.2%
Supervisor	9.2%
Other	20.1%
n=	273



Center *for* PROFESSIONAL
EXCELLENCE
at York College of Pennsylvania