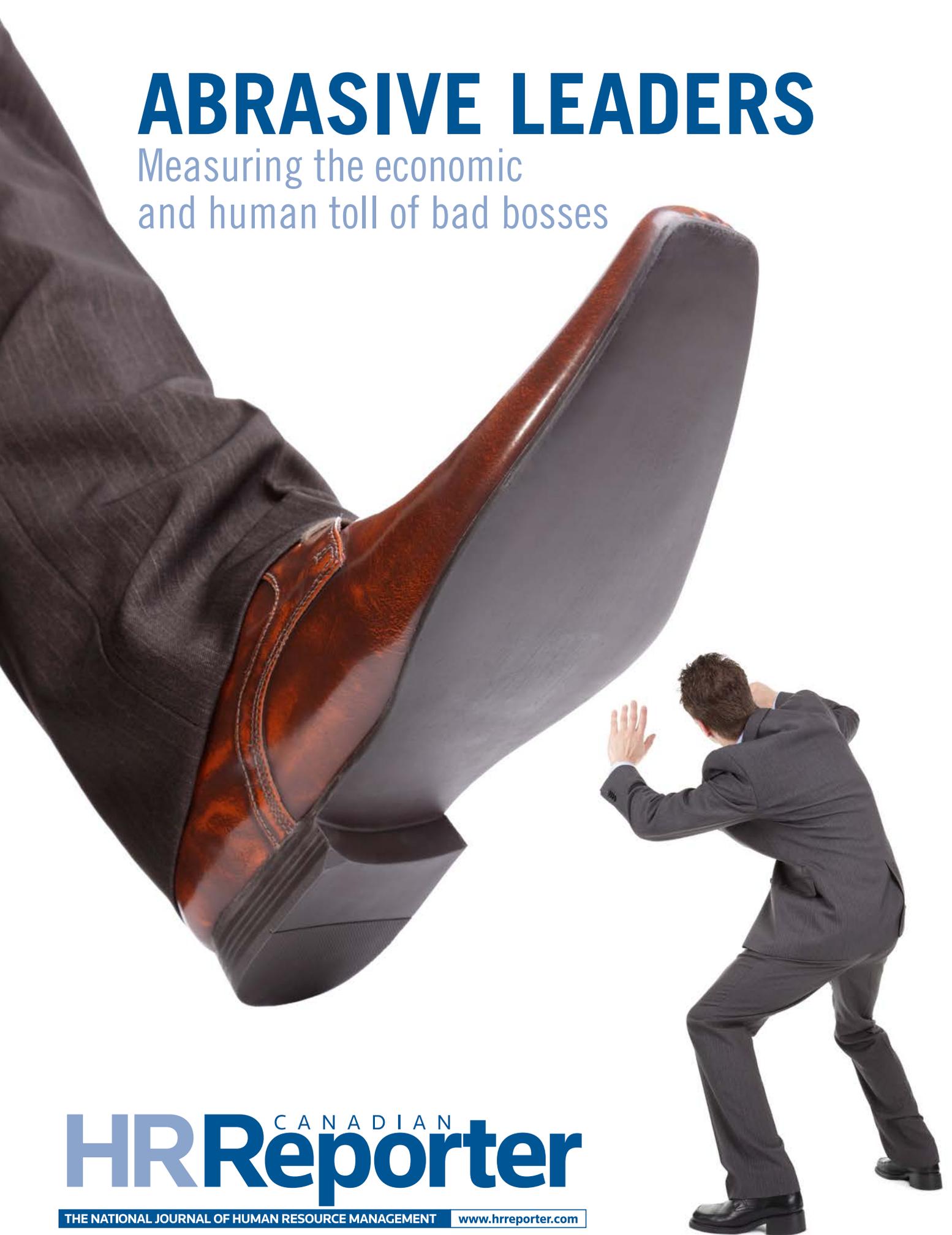


# ABRASIVE LEADERS

Measuring the economic  
and human toll of bad bosses



CANADIAN  
**HRReporter**

THE NATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT [www.hrreporter.com](http://www.hrreporter.com)

# Abrasive leaders

*You get more flies with honey*

**GOING INTO THIS** survey, we knew we were going to get strong opinions from HR professionals on the consequences of abrasive leadership. And the 257 respondents didn't mince words about the impact — sometimes minor, sometimes devastating — bad leaders can have on the mental health of workers and the bottom line of organizations.



## EDITOR'S NOTES

TODD HUMBER

The survey results suggest it may be time for a sea change in what organizations look for in leaders. There is a growing awareness of the toll abrasive leaders are taking. Just look at the top three consequences of abrasive leadership identified in the survey — lower employee retention, increased stress and decreased team performance. What organization can afford that?

Employees who are anxious about work, who walk on eggshells for fear of making a mistake and becoming the target of the bully's wrath, will not be productive. They won't be creative and innovation is already far too scarce in this country.

We heard from many respondents that organizations tolerate abrasive leaders because they "get results." Others commented that many of the leaders are promoted because of their industry skills, and leadership skills aren't part of the advancement equation.

Being a "tough boss" is too often a badge of honour, one respondent said. But there's a big difference between a tough boss and an abrasive one. There's nothing wrong with demanding results — but effective tough bosses know you catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

The survey also delves into solutions, and how effective they are, in managing these leaders. It also looked at the costs attached — the price tag of unchecked leaders is quite high.

In the following pages you'll find the article Sarah Dobson, one of *Canadian HR Reporter's* senior editors, wrote for the Oct. 22, 2012, issue. You'll also find analysis of the survey results from Sharone Bar-David, a good friend of *Canadian HR Reporter* who constructed the bulk of the survey, followed by charts from the survey.

If you have any further questions or comments about the survey, please drop me an email or give me a phone call.

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### ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Readers of *Canadian HR Reporter* ([www.hrreporter.com](http://www.hrreporter.com)) were invited by email to participate in the survey in September 2012. A total of 257 people completed the online survey. For more information on the survey demographics,

see questions 12 to 15 in the charts section at the back of this document.

This survey was developed in co-operation with Sharone Bar-David of Bar-David Consulting ([www.sharonebardavid.com](http://www.sharonebardavid.com)).

The goal was to collect data on abrasive leadership as seen uniquely from a human re-

sources perspective.

For the purposes of this survey, an "abrasive leader" was defined as "any individual charged with organizational authority whose interpersonal conduct is excessively harsh and causes significant distress in other workers, sufficient to disrupt the work environment."

# Abrasive leaders often 'irreplaceable'

*But bad behaviour leads to stress, turnover, lowered performance: Survey*

BY SARAH DOBSON

**DEBORA HUMENIUK** once had a particularly abrasive leader who made her work life unbearable. Despite doing everything she could to please him, she was always on his bad side and, in the end, Humeniuk lost her job.

"It was emotionally and physically abusive, and it was awful to go through," said the human resource service manager at the Regina Inn Hotel and Conference Centre.

Humeniuk found herself another job but again faced an abrasive leader, so she left.

"It can really do a number on your self-esteem, so that you start to believe the negative things they throw at you and you lose your sense of self and who you are as a person," she said. "It's really not worth staying for that kind of person."

When it comes to abrasive leaders, lower employee retention is one of the main impacts, according to 68 per cent of 257 respondents to a survey conducted by *Canadian HR Reporter*. Increased stress (86 per cent) and decreased team performance (73 per cent) round out the top three.

It's like having an alcoholic parent who has good days and bad days, said Zakeana Reid, senior manager of HR strategic initiatives at engineering firm Morrison Hershfield in Calgary.

"It's just that anxiety of never knowing what today's going to be and always having to adapt your behaviour to their moods."

There is definitely more stress at work and employees with an abrasive leader often don't want to come to work and if they do, it's with a sense of dread, said Fatima Mirza, director of HR at community centre MacDonald Island Park in Fort McMurray, Alta., which has about 300 workers.

"You're not going to get the full potential out of the employee — the dedication wanes after a point."

But dealing with abrasive leaders is no easy task, as many possess unique business knowledge and are considered irreplaceable, or are deemed a low priority compared to more pressing business issues, according to 68 per cent of respondents in both cases.

But if an abrasive leader does generate business results, it's a matter of removing

them from situations where they impact groups of people, said Reid.

"You can't have someone in charge of three-quarters of the company who makes people feel like crap."

HR should consider sending the person for training around sensitivity and how to manage with discipline and dignity, said Humeniuk, whose company has about 150 workers.

"Sometimes you put people in positions and, OK, they're great at the numbers thing but really have no people skills at all," she said. "Accepting it and allowing it to go on in your organization is an absolute disaster."

Anybody can be replaced, said Mirza.

"Skill sets are very important, especially in today's market... But, at the same time, I don't think any person in any company is indispensable."

Company culture definitely impacts how leaders are cultivated and employees are treated, she said.

"If a company has sort of an abrasive leadership or management team and everyone has an A-type personality, obviously there's not going to be much incentive to take action against any of them. But if a company has that team spirit and there's definitely that respect in there and it's a really important value for the company, then I don't think a whole lot of people will stand for something that's abrasive."

So, what solutions are effective in eliminating abrasive conduct? Not surprisingly, terminating an employee (57 per cent) came out on top, found the survey.

But this has larger-level operational considerations, said Reid, whose company has 700 Canadian employees. For example, if an important leader is let go, he might start up a competing business.

"That is a very real concern," she said.

Also effective in dealing with a bad apple is performance feedback from the abrasive leader's manager (43 per cent), progressive discipline (40 per cent), executive coaching (38 per cent) and 360-degree feedback (36 per cent), found the *Canadian HR Reporter* survey.

Looking at today's tight job market, it's preferable to have the abrasive person un-

derstand and change his behaviour, instead of terminating him, said Humeniuk.

"And what a joy to have that person realize it — it could impact their personal life too," she said. "To me, it's better that way than it is going and terminating an individual who's going to another company and (will) do the same thing again."

Progressive discipline can be effective with people who have inadvertent bad behaviour, said Reid, citing one boss accused of playing favourites who was shocked and hurt by the suggestion.

"In rare cases, people are unaware that they may be seen as a little too larger than life."

But research has shown feedback only works if the person understands what you're talking about, said talent development and career coach Tamara Parris in Toronto.

"For a lot of these leaders, they're in the dark, there's a blind spot about how they're impacting people around them. So, unless you're giving very detailed feedback that's going to help the person pull back and identify exactly what they're doing, they're not going to understand what you're talking about. And most people in management or senior leadership do not give feedback in that way — they're very vague or leave it open."

As for the direct and indirect costs of abrasive behaviour, the category of lower employee retention, severance costs, retraining costs and outplacement costs came out on top, with 30 per cent of survey respondents saying these cost \$75,000 or more.

Absenteeism, stress leaves and health-care costs, ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000, were cited by 23 per cent, followed by lost management and HR time (22 per cent).

However, many respondents said they were not sure of the costs when it came to issues such as lower productivity, decreased performance, lost clients or business, or harassment complaints.

Absenteeism, presenteeism and stress-related leaves are definitely among the costs, said Reid. However, it's hard to put dollar values around that and draw a direct causal relationship, which would make most people hesitate to draw that connection, she said.

Turnover cost is certainly an issue, said Humeniuk, citing one leader who went through six employees in seven months.

"It's frustrating from the end of human resources and also the individuals around them in that work unit who have to progress and who have to carry the load."

Mirza's company tends to look more at the soft skills and the ones that are difficult to measure, she said.

"If we actually brought out what, in reality, the dollars, the numbers are for this kind of behaviour, there'd probably be more action on it."

# Abrasive leaders taking serious toll

*Survey reveals picture of abrasive leaders trapped in their fallibility, fearful staff and frustrated HR professionals*

**IT'S INEVITABLE** — somewhere along your professional path, you will encounter an abrasive leader. As such, you already have your own observations about the effects a harsh interpersonal style can have on the workplace.

If we are to solve the problem of abrasive leadership, we need to develop a better collective understanding of this important issue. And so, in collaboration with *Canadian HR Reporter*, I developed the survey published on page 1 of this issue.

We defined abrasive leaders as “any individual charged with organizational authority, whose interpersonal conduct is excessively harsh and causes distress in other workers, sufficient to disrupt the work environment.”

The questions focused on four spheres — the abrasive leader’s conduct, the people affected by the behaviour, the organizational context and the cost.

A total of 257 HR professionals chimed in. The data they provided tells a story of abrasive leaders trapped in their own fallibility, fearful staff, senior leaders who turn a blind eye, organizations that lack effective mechanisms to prevent or deal with the problem, and frustrated and helpless HR professionals.

## What we learned

To start, what did we learn about the abrasive leader?

The vast majority of identified leaders occupied senior positions — 21 per cent were CEOs, 32 per cent senior executives and 23 per cent directors or equivalent.

Alas, the more highly ranked (and influential) the abrasive leader, the more protected he is — and therefore the more challenging it is to successfully intervene.

The male-female ratio of abrasive leaders was 60-40, respectively. If we consider that in most organizations, there are more males than females in senior positions, this 60-40 ratio suggests the possibility that, in Canada, female leaders demonstrate significantly more abrasiveness than their male counterparts.

It is also likely gender stereotyping still leads to harsher judgment of women who



## ■ ANALYSIS

SHARON BAR-DAVID

behave in a “non-feminine” manner.

Some abrasive behaviors are more prevalent than others. Canadian abrasive leaders “often” or “very often/always” engage in over-control, overreacting to situations and people, micromanaging, playing favourites, being rude, blaming others to avoid embarrassment, belittling, humiliating, ridiculing and expressing anger at

someone when mad about something else.

## Sexist, racist comments rare

What about sexual, racist or offensive comments and jokes? As it turns out, these behaviours were dramatically less prevalent. Two-thirds of respondents noted these behaviours occurred “never” or “rarely.”

Does this mean we have made real inroads in the area of diversity and anti-harassment, such that even harsh leaders refrain from these behaviours? Or is it perhaps a testament to Canada’s pluralistic, tolerant nature? These questions clearly warrant further study.

Abrasive leaders tend to be good at what they do. They’re often perceived as crucial contributors to an organization’s success, so much so that 61 per cent of respondents noted the abrasive leader’s talent and the perception he is irreplaceable is a major barrier to eliminating the behaviour.

Furthermore, 75 per cent of respondents said abrasive leaders “often” or “very often/always” demonstrate respect with higher-ups but are abrasive with employees.

A combination of stellar aptitude with acute political savvy enables abrasive leadership to persist across sectors and provinces. If higher-ups don’t observe the behaviour firsthand, they don’t believe it exists or are uncomfortable addressing it in the face of little clear evidence.

As one person commented, “They don’t see the behaviour, so they don’t trust the stats.” In other cases, respondents lamented that those who do find the courage to bring forth concerns are labelled as troublemakers or deemed unreliable.

## Why are some leaders abrasive?

What drives a person to adopt an excessively harsh interpersonal style?

Granted, abrasiveness is sometimes motivated by a need for power and control. Some respondents referred to these leaders as psychopaths, sociopaths, Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hydes and narcissists. The literature and common language often label these leaders as bullies.

However, an overwhelming number of comments echoed my own observations over many years of working in this field — the major force driving domineering behaviour is, paradoxically, deep-seated insecurity.

In my experience, abrasive leaders worry about being perceived as incompetent and about their ability to deliver results in what they consider a highly perilous environment.

The anxiety and insecurity manifest outwardly in attempts to control the environment through behaviours others experience as harsh and distressing.

Organizations are living, breathing organisms and, as such, respondents’ comments suggest abrasive leadership persists because, at every touchpoint, organizations fail miserably at creating safety valves that will prevent or arrest the behaviour.

They highlighted hiring practices that do not scan for abrasiveness, performance appraisals that don’t measure the right things, promotions based solely on technical skills, managers who are expected to lead without any interpersonal skills training, rewards with no accountability for bad behaviour and flawed exit data collection systems.

Finally, HR departments were perceived as powerless or even siding with the organization when a complaint was brought forth.

## Senior leadership – part of the problem?

Senior leadership was repeatedly underscored as a contributor to the problem. Sometimes the senior leadership itself models bad behaviour and this profoundly shapes the culture and makes it nearly impossible to intervene at lower levels.

On other fronts, one respondent said, “The network of senior executives tend to turn blind eyes to poor people managers,” and another said, “Addressing it takes great courage from senior leaders who are busy and are uncomfortable confronting

## COMMENTARY

an abrasive and confrontational person. They are also afraid of the heavy severance costs, as well as potentially damaging rumours and lost expertise if the abrasive person departs.”

That sums it up — a blind eye, other priorities, lack of skills and courage, and fear of the cost.

### How Canadians react to abrasive leaders

Organizations don't implement effective safety valves because they don't have a realistic assessment of the costs and the risks. We asked pointed questions on this front, and analyzed the survey's cost-focused data in a conservative fashion, using only the two most extreme categories of the five that participants could select for each question.

The top domains where the behaviour had “quite a bit” or an “extreme” effect in more than 60 per cent of cases were lower employee retention, increased stress and decreased team and individual performance. The loss of talent was repeatedly noted as particularly painful.

On top of that, there was also lost management time (61 per cent). Equally alarming, the category of “sabotage by affected employees” was noted as “moderate,” “quite a bit” or “extremely” in 53 per cent of the cases. This is troubling when one considers what sabotage can lead to at a hospital, bank or high-tech company, for example.

On the other hand, there was a cluster of activities where the expenses were “very slight” or “not at all” — labour board expenses, human rights or labour standard complaints, arbitration costs, investigation costs and legal-related expenditures.

### Fear and anxiety

Based on this data, it's clear Canadians react to abrasive leadership mostly with stress, reduced performance, sabotage or quitting altogether. What they don't do is file internal or external complaints.

Employees don't complain because they are afraid. The prevalence and degree of this fear were palpable through numerous comments in the open-ended sections of the survey. As one said: “Employees are afraid to speak out and therefore don't submit complaints — rather, they take stress leave.” When people are fearful, the business suffers: “Hiring became a revolving door process. Poor employment brand. Bad reputation.”

### Price tag

To put a price tag on some of the costs, respondents were asked to assess the expenditures triggered by the conduct of a specific abrasive leader and provided cat-



egories of dollar amounts, with the highest level being \$75,000 plus.

Looking at this highest category alone, the numbers relay the costs triggered by a single case are exponential — 31 per cent of respondents agreed lower retention, severance, retraining and outplacement costs fell within this category, and 15 per cent felt the same in the arena of absenteeism, stress leaves and health-care costs. Nearly one in five (18 per cent) reported that lower productivity and decreased individual and team performance cost more than \$75,000.

What about solutions? Numerous respondents were frustrated that no solutions were attempted at all. Others said solutions that were implemented were only partially effective. This is not surprising: Abrasive leaders possess a unique psychological makeup that is not well-understood and, therefore, solutions that are not specifically targeted to their uniqueness tend to fall short.

Indeed, even interventions such as performance feedback and progressive

discipline were “somewhat effective” or “highly effective” in only 43 per cent and 40 per cent of cases, respectively. Executive coaching (38 per cent), 360-feedback (36 per cent) and feedback from HR (31 per cent) fared worse.

The matter of abrasive leadership is complex. A superficial glance could lead to the impression it is a single-person problem. But the survey reveals the many ways in which organizations create or enable the problem, often not offering the right help to the troubled individual, whose harsh behaviour is triggering distress and heavy costs.

Perhaps it is time to address the issues more effectively by using the rich data contained in this survey.

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*Sharone Bar-David is president of Bar-David Consulting, a company offering solutions for creating respectful work environments and turning around abrasive leaders. She can be reached at [sharone@sharonebardavid.com](mailto:sharone@sharonebardavid.com) or visit [www.sharonebardavid.com](http://www.sharonebardavid.com).*

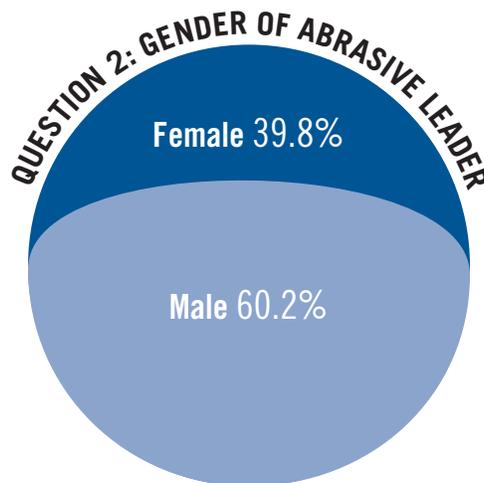
# FACTS & FIGURES

## QUESTION 1: BEHAVIOUR OF ABRASIVE LEADERS

### Abrasive Leaders Survey

Consider a specific abrasive leader whose interpersonal conduct is excessively harsh and has caused, or is presently causing, significant distress in other workers, sufficient to disrupt the work environment. From the list below, select all the behaviours that apply to this person.

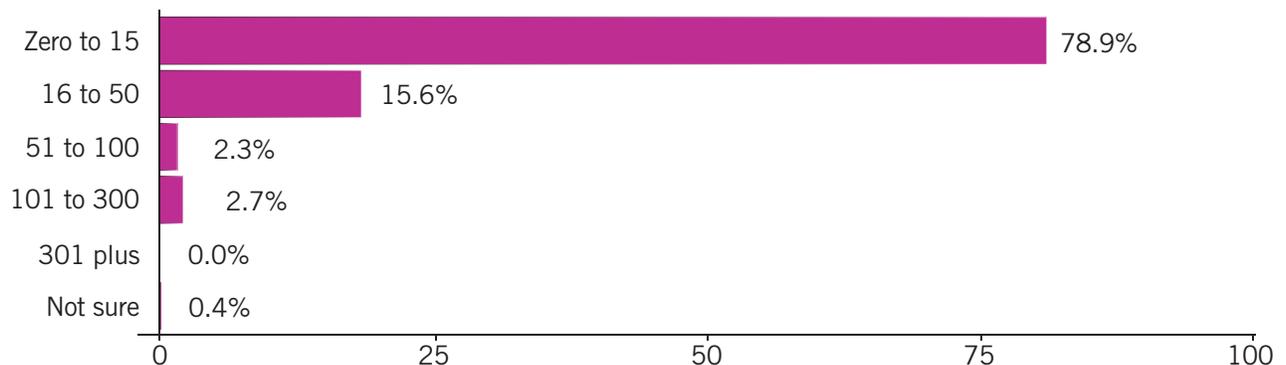
ANSWER OPTIONS	NEVER (%)	RARELY (%)	SOMETIMES (%)	OFTEN (%)	VERY OFTEN/ALWAYS (%)	N/A (%)
Yells, shouts, raises voice	6	12.7	33.3	28.2	19.8	0
Overreacts to situations and people	0	1.6	21.3	41.7	35.4	0
Over controls	0	2.8	8.3	21.3	67.7	0
Uses excessive sarcasm	3.2	12.6	31.2	28.5	23.7	0.8
Micromanages excessively	0.4	6.7	16.5	29.1	46.9	0.4
Belittles, humiliates, ridicules	2	15	31.9	24.4	26.4	0.4
Threatens	7.5	24	34.6	17.3	15.4	1.2
Uses foul language	17	26.9	25.7	14.2	15.8	0.4
Withholds information inappropriately	5.5	14.9	31	22.4	23.1	3.1
Plays favourites	5.1	5.9	18	26.6	43	1.6
Makes sexual, racist or offensive comments/jokes	40.5	25.8	17.5	7.9	7.1	1.2
Demonstrates respect with higher-ups, but is abrasive with employees	1.2	8.6	12.2	31.8	43.5	2.7
Tells people they're incompetent	8.7	19.7	28.7	23.6	18.5	0.8
Reminds people of past mistakes or failures	3.5	13.3	28.1	30.1	23.4	1.6
Is rude to people	4.7	9.1	26.5	32.4	26.1	1.2
Invades people's privacy	14.6	32.4	20.6	17.4	12.3	2.8
Tells people their thoughts/feelings are stupid	20.1	28	25.2	13	12.6	1.2
Gives people the silent treatment	13.4	17	28.5	21.3	19	0.8
Puts people down in front of others	5.5	13.7	30.5	28.1	21.1	1.2
Blames others to avoid embarrassment	6.7	9.8	22.8	28	29.9	2.8
Expresses anger at someone when mad for another reason	5.5	15	24.5	25.3	24.5	5.1



# FACTS & FIGURES

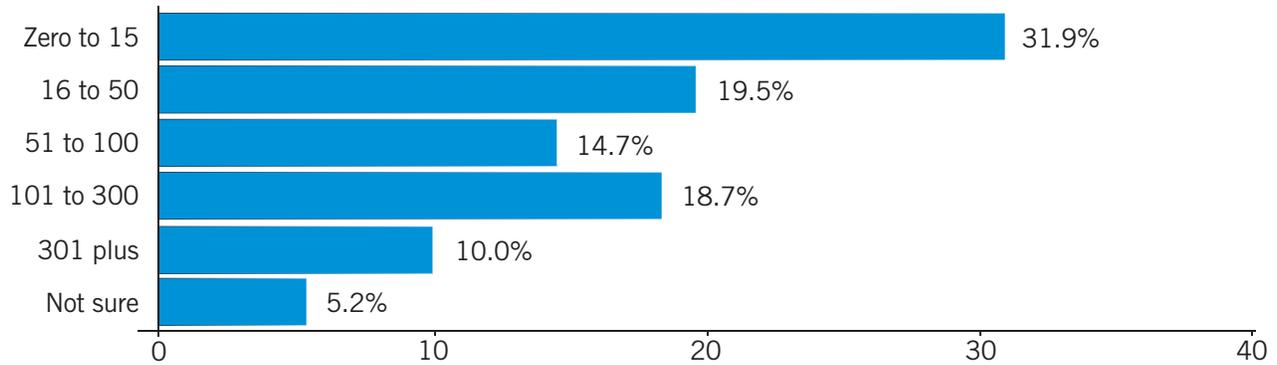


**QUESTION 5: NUMBER OF PEOPLE REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE ABRASIVE LEADER**



## FACTS & FIGURES

### QUESTION 6: NUMBER OF PEOPLE INDIRECTLY REPORTING TO ABRASIVE LEADER



### QUESTION 7: IMPACT OF ABRASIVE LEADERS

#### Abrasive Leaders Survey

Now, think about all of the abrasive managers you've encountered throughout your career. Has their behaviour impacted or triggered the following:

ANSWER OPTIONS	VERY SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL (%)	A LITTLE (%)	MODERATELY (%)	QUITE A BIT (%)	EXTREMELY (%)	NOT SURE (%)
Lower employee retention	1.6	10.5	18.7	44.4	24.1	0.8
Difficulties in attracting new employees	12.8	23	29.2	21.4	11.7	1.9
Increased absenteeism	3.1	12.5	25.7	39.7	17.1	1.9
Stress leaves	8.7	13	25.6	31.1	20.5	1.2
Increased disability	19.2	18.8	26.3	15.7	9.8	10.2
Increased presenteeism	14.1	11.7	17.6	30.5	15.6	10.5
Decreased individual performance	1.2	9.8	27.1	37.3	24.7	0
Decreased team performance	2	5.9	18.8	45.7	27	0.8
Lower productivity	2.3	10.1	25.3	40.5	20.6	1.2
Lost management time	3.1	10.6	21.2	36.5	24.7	3.9
Severance costs	18	14.1	18.4	23.5	18	7.8
Retraining costs	10.6	14.1	23.5	29.8	15.7	6.3
Increased health and safety incidents	31.3	21.9	16.8	13.3	4.7	12.1
Increased health-care costs	17.1	20.6	20.6	21	8.2	12.5
Increased stress	0.8	1.2	8.9	34.6	51.8	2.7
Lost clients/business	23.9	20.8	18	14.5	7.8	14.9
Diminished customer experience	18.1	19.3	15.7	20.5	13	13.4
Damage to vendor relationships	20	19.6	18	18.4	12.5	11.4
Damage to brand reputation	14.5	18	19.1	20.7	18.4	9.4
Sabotage by affected employees	16.9	22.8	24.4	17.3	11.4	7.1
Harassment or bullying complaints	9.3	15.2	26.1	24.5	20.6	4.3
Occupational health and safety complaints	31.3	23.8	18.4	10.5	4.7	11.3
Labour board expenses	39.1	20.2	10.3	10.3	6.7	13.4
Human rights/labour standards complaints	34	23.4	12.5	12.1	7.8	10.2
Arbitration and medical costs	38.1	20.2	10.5	10.1	7.4	13.6
Investigation costs	25.9	22	16.1	13.7	11.4	11
Legal and lawsuit-related costs	30.8	18.4	13.2	14	10.4	13.2

## FACTS & FIGURES

### QUESTION 8: COST OF ABRASIVE BEHAVIOUR

#### Abrasive Leaders Survey

This question will ask you to provide a rough estimate of the actual cost of abrasive behaviour. For the purpose of this question, think of a specific abrasive leader where you possess some knowledge of the costs the behaviour has triggered. It may or may not be the same leader you described earlier in this survey. As you consider this leader's conduct, please provide your best assessment of the direct and indirect costs along the following dimensions. (If you don't have exact data, please provide your best estimate.)

ANSWER OPTIONS	NO COST (%)	UP TO \$5,000 (%)	\$5,001 - \$20,000 (%)	\$20,001 - \$40,000 (%)	\$40,001 - \$75,000 (%)	\$75,001 PLUS (%)	NOT SURE (%)
Lower employee retention, severance costs (for the abrasive leader or others), retraining costs, outplacement costs	5.2	9.6	14.5	13.7	13.7	30.5	12.9
Absenteeism, stress leaves, health-care costs	4	12	22.8	14.4	14	15.2	17.6
Lower productivity, decreased individual and team performance	3.6	11.6	15.6	14.4	15.2	18.4	21.2
Lost management and HR time	3.2	12	22.1	14.5	14.5	18.1	15.7
Health and safety incidents	29	14.5	11.3	5.2	3.6	4.8	31.5
Lost clients/business	28.3	8.9	4.9	4	4	12.1	37.7
Diminished customer experience, damage to vendor relationships, damage to brand reputation	23.7	12.4	5.2	7.2	5.6	12.9	32.9
Sabotage by affected employees	24	17.2	11.6	6	4	7.6	29.6
Harassment/bullying complaints, health and safety complaints	18.5	18.9	14.9	7.6	6.8	8.8	24.5
Human rights complaints, labour board expenses, investigation costs, arbitration and mediation costs, legal and lawsuit-related costs	25.3	11.6	11.2	7.2	10	12.9	21.7

### QUESTION 9: COST OF RESOLVING/DEALING WITH ABRASIVE LEADER

#### Abrasive Leaders Survey

Thinking about the abrasive leader you described in the last question (where you possess some knowledge of the costs), how much did your organization spend on resolving or dealing with the issue? (If you do not have exact data, please provide your best estimate.)

ANSWER OPTIONS	NO COST (%)	UP TO \$5,000 (%)	\$5,001 - \$20,000 (%)	\$20,001 - \$40,000 (%)	\$40,001 - \$75,000 (%)	\$75,001 PLUS (%)	NOT SURE (%)
Executive coaching	36.6	19.1	16.3	5.3	4.5	3.3	15
360-degree feedback	48	20.3	8.9	2.4	1.6	0.8	17.9
Employment engagement or other surveys	36.6	24.8	10.6	6.5	4.9	3.7	13
Consultants' costs	40.8	11	15.9	4.5	3.7	7.8	16.3
Legal bills	26.8	11.4	15.9	8.9	7.7	11	18.3
Training	25.3	24.9	13.9	9	4.5	4.9	17.6
Transfer or role restructuring of the abrasive leader or others	40.3	12.1	8.9	7.3	2.8	7.3	21.4
Hiring	20.3	15.9	13.8	10.6	11	12.6	15.9
HR time spent on the issue	8.1	15.3	29	14.9	7.7	13.3	11.7
Management time spent on the issue	7.4	17.2	25	14.8	8.6	13.5	13.5

## FACTS & FIGURES

### QUESTION 10: WHAT TACTICS ARE EFFECTIVE IN ELIMINATING ABRASIVE CONDUCT?

#### Abrasive Leaders Survey

Organizations often deal with abrasive leadership by implementing various solutions. Overall, in the organizations you've worked for, to what extent have the following solutions been effective in eliminating the abrasive conduct?

ANSWER OPTIONS	HIGHLY INEFFECTIVE (%)	SOMEWHAT INEFFECTIVE (%)	NEITHER EFFECTIVE NOR INEFFECTIVE (%)	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE (%)	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE (%)	NOT SURE (%)
Executive coaching	11.4	17.1	11.4	31.4	6.9	21.6
360-degree feedback	11.8	17.9	11	26.4	9.8	23.2
Performance feedback from abrasive leader's manager	15.3	14.1	14.9	31	11.7	12.9
Feedback from HR	18.5	18.9	21.7	26.9	4	10
Withdrawing/reducing of bonus or other rewards	12.3	7.8	9.8	20.1	10.2	39.8
Termination of employment	8.6	2.9	4.9	12.7	44.3	26.6
Role restructuring for the abrasive leader	18.6	13.2	12	21.5	7.4	27.3
Transfer of the abrasive leader	25.5	16	11.5	11.9	5.3	29.6
Role restructuring/transfer of affected peers/employees	21	19.3	13.2	20.6	3.7	22.2
Removal of people management from role	14.4	14.4	11.9	17.7	11.5	30
Interpersonal skills training or other training-based solutions	14.4	20.6	14.8	24.3	4.9	21
Progressive discipline	10.2	9.4	14.3	30.3	9.4	26.2



# FACTS & FIGURES

## QUESTION 11: BARRIERS TO ELIMINATING ABRASIVE BEHAVIOUR

### Abrasive Leaders Survey

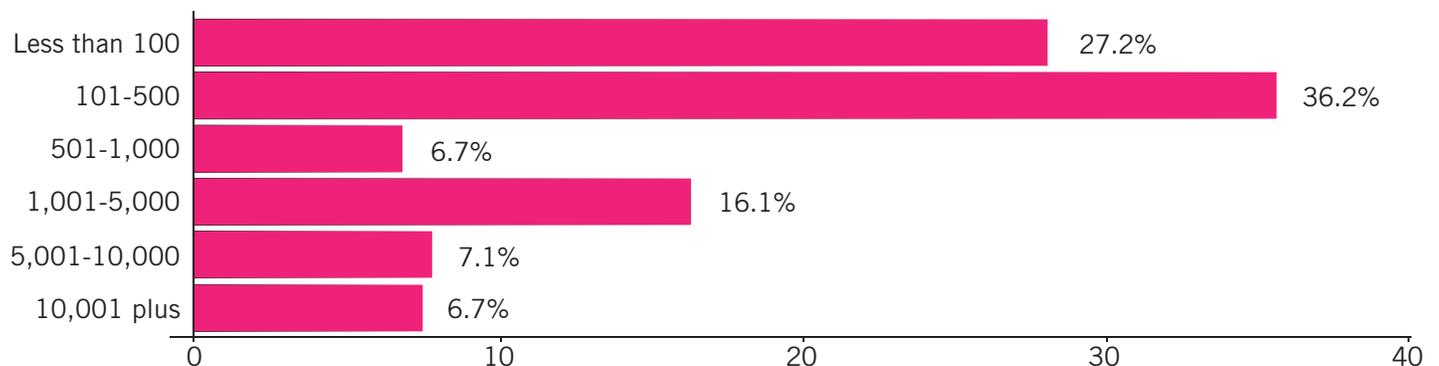
Organizational factors play an important role in preventing or enabling abrasive leadership. As you consider the various abrasive leaders you've encountered in the course of your career, to what extent do the following factors serve as barriers to eliminating leaders' abrasive conduct?

ANSWER OPTIONS	VERY SLIGHTLY/ NOT AT ALL (%)	A LITTLE (%)	MODERATELY (%)	QUITE A BIT (%)	EXTREMELY (%)	NOT SURE (%)
The abrasive leader possesses unique business knowledge that is perceived to be irreplaceable	8.7	10.3	11.5	34.5	33.7	1.2
A more senior leader or leaders model similar behaviour	18.6	13.4	16.2	29.6	20.9	1.2
Addressing the abrasive behaviours is a lower priority compared to more pressing business issues	4.4	10.7	15.5	38.9	29.4	1.2
The organization does not have a formal mechanism to evaluate performance and identify behavioural issues	25	14.7	18.7	19.4	19.8	2.4
Senior leadership is unaware of the hidden costs that the abrasiveness is triggering	8.4	14.5	12	29.7	31.3	4
Senior leadership is unaware of the abrasive behaviour because it only happens with lower-level employees	13.9	13.1	17.1	25.4	29	1.6
The abrasive leader's own manager is afraid of the abrasive leader, so the issue is avoided	22.2	13.1	16.3	18.7	18.7	11.1
The abrasive leader is highly talented and perceived as irreplaceable	11.2	13.1	15.5	27.5	29.9	2.8
The abrasive leader's own manager avoids the issue because of a lack of necessary skills to address it successfully	12.6	8.3	13	26.9	34	5.1
The abrasive leader's manager is in denial	15.9	15.1	10.3	22.2	30.2	6.3
There's concern that by addressing the issues, the organization may be admitting to legal culpability	28.9	16.6	11.9	13.8	16.2	12.6
A sense that it's "normal for managers to behave this way"	23.7	18.1	17.7	22.1	13.3	5.2

## QUESTION 12: FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

### Abrasive Leaders Survey

How many full-time employees do you have in your Canadian organization?

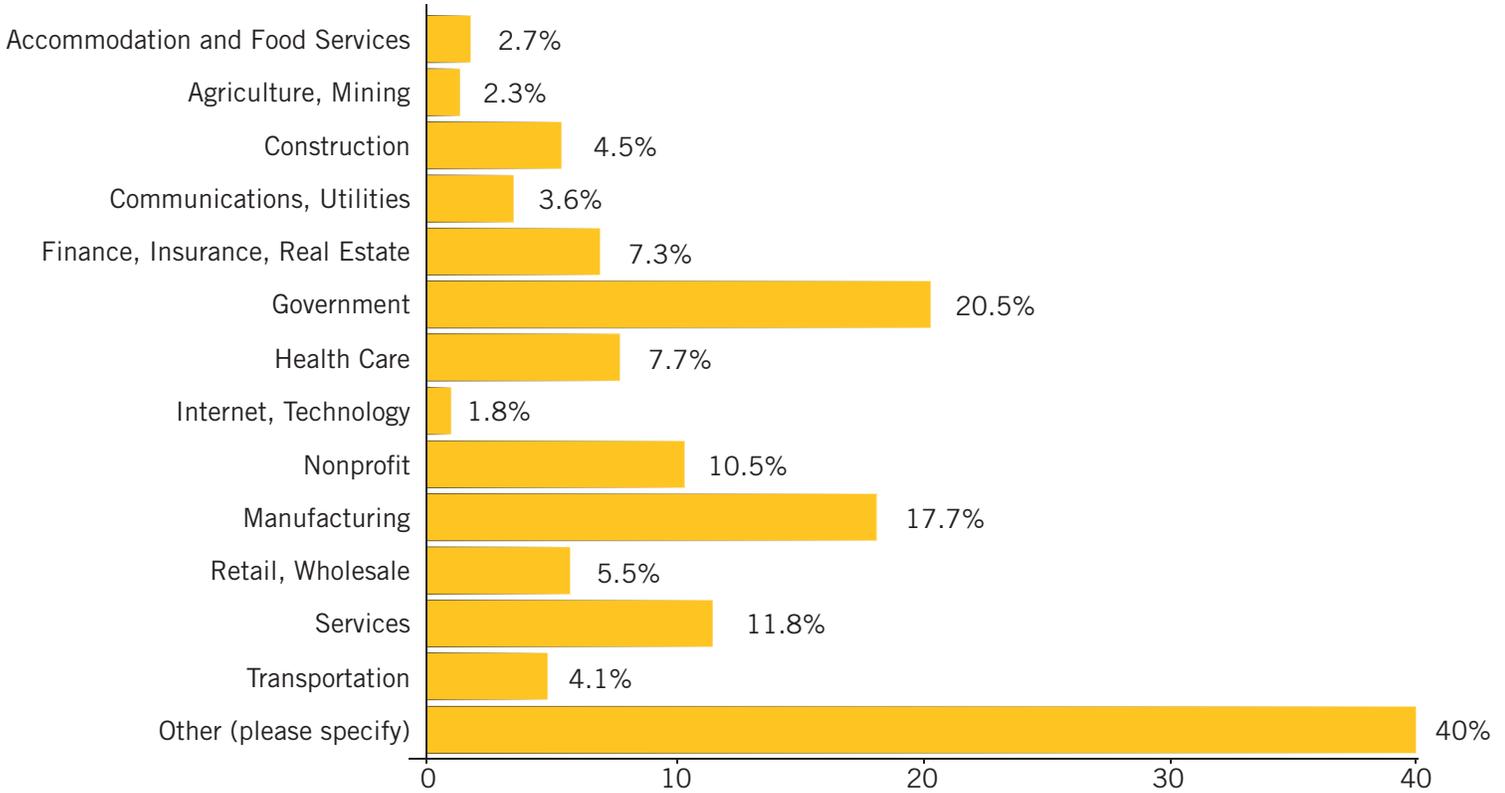


# FACTS & FIGURES

## QUESTION 13: PRINCIPAL INDUSTRY

### Abrasive Leaders Survey

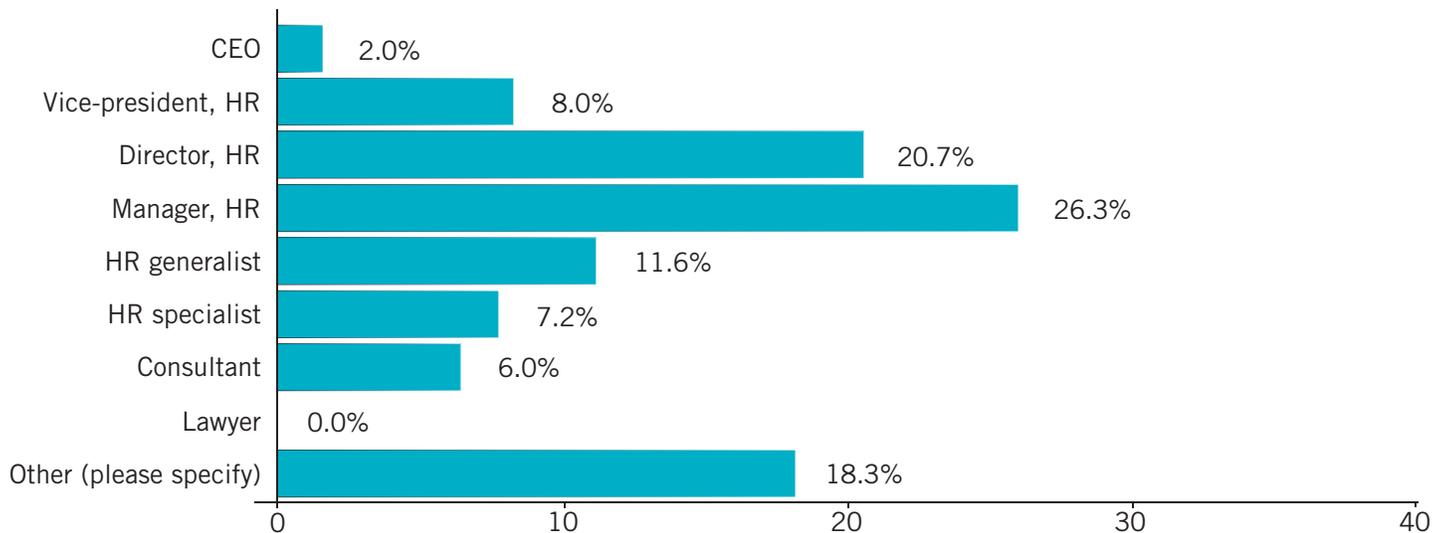
What is the principal industry of your organization? (Please check the most appropriate response.)



## QUESTION 14: CURRENT POSITION

### Abrasive Leaders Survey

What is your current position?



# FACTS & FIGURES

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## QUESTION 15: ORGANIZATION SIZE

### Abrasive Leaders Survey

How many full-time employees do you have in your Canadian organization?

