

# From Young Female Designers to Firm Leaders: The Boston Experiment

TH506

Thursday, June 21, 2018

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1.00 LU

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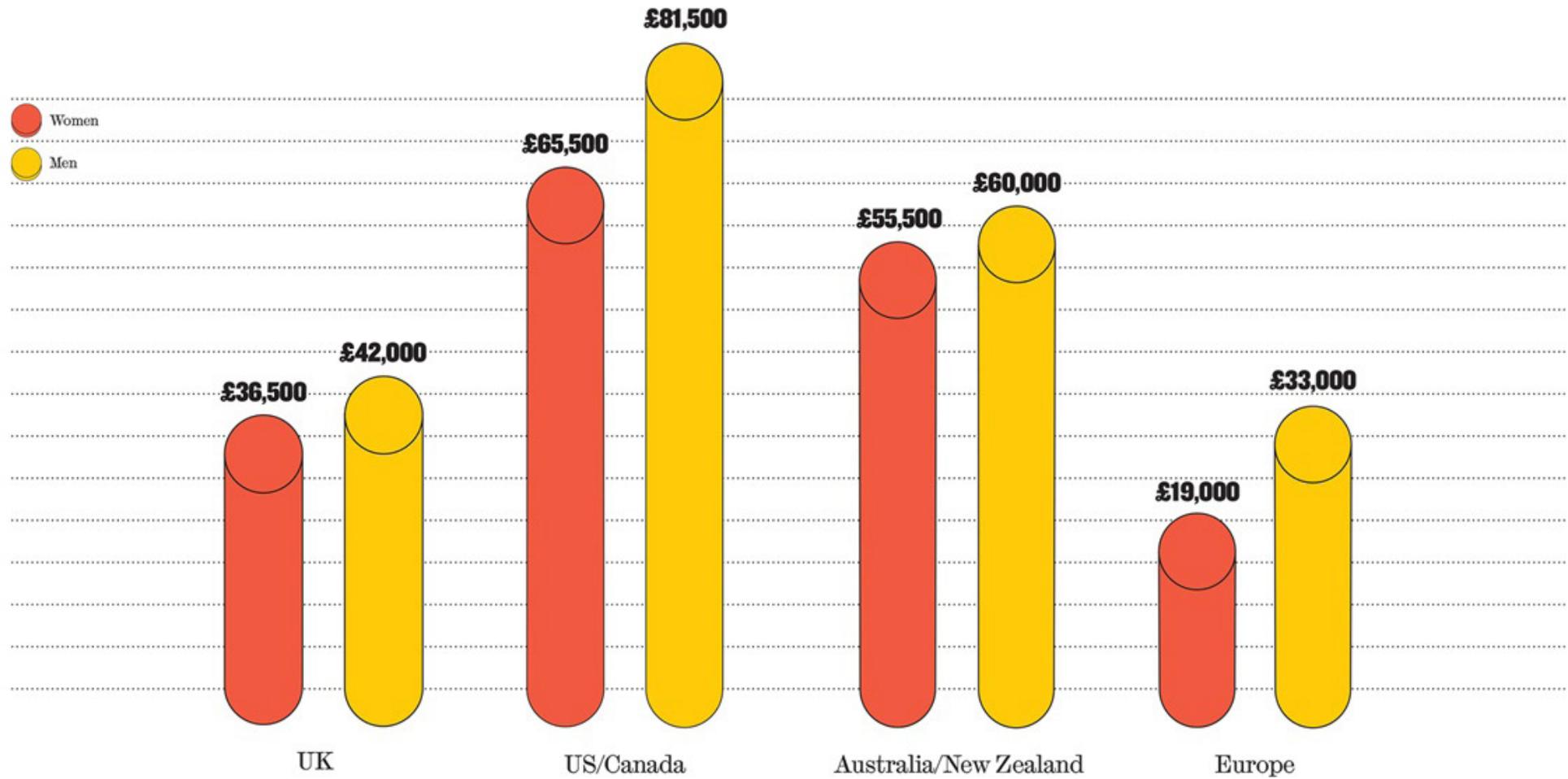
# Speakers List

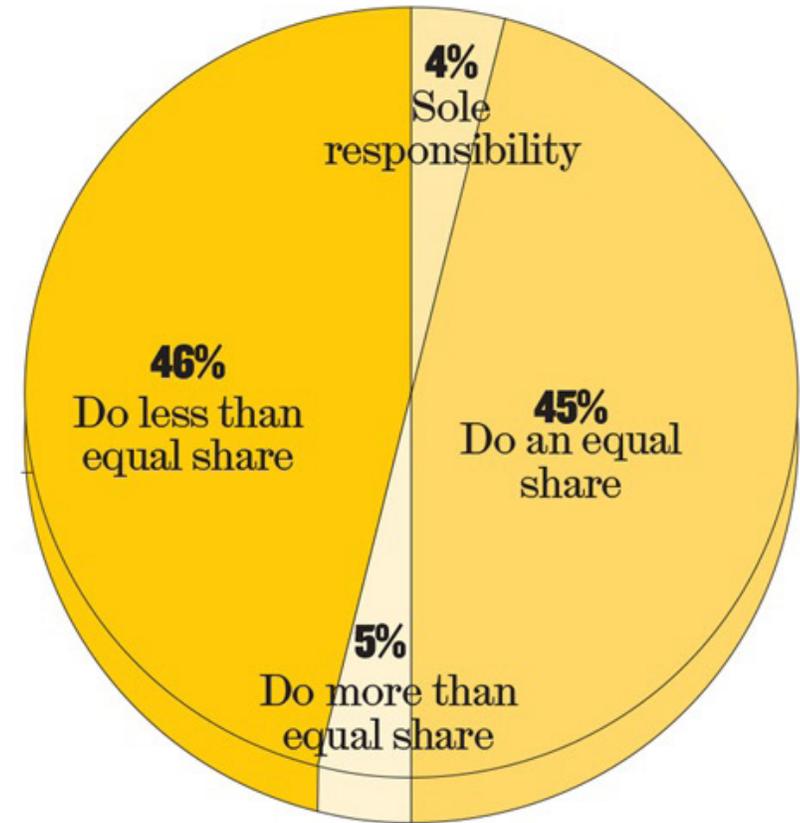
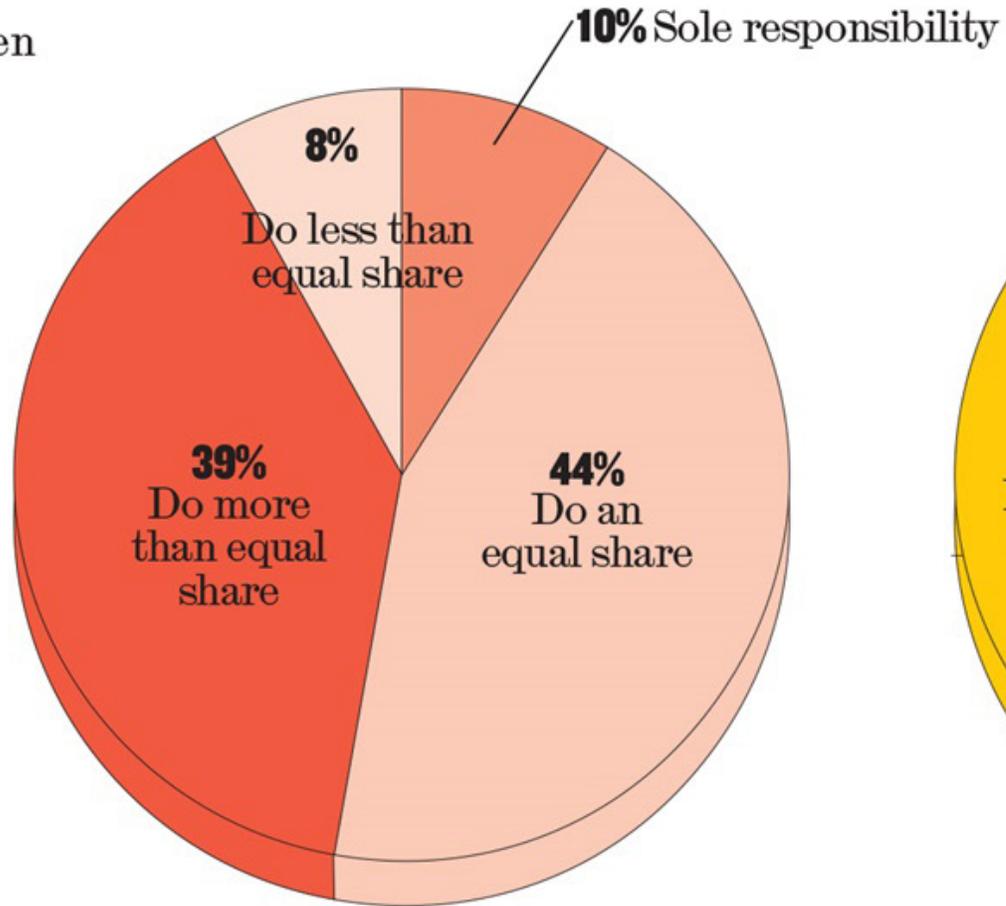
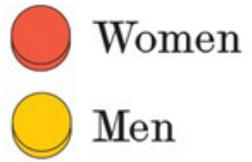
- Zhanina Boyadzhieva, Assoc. AIA
- Juliet Chun, Assoc. AIA

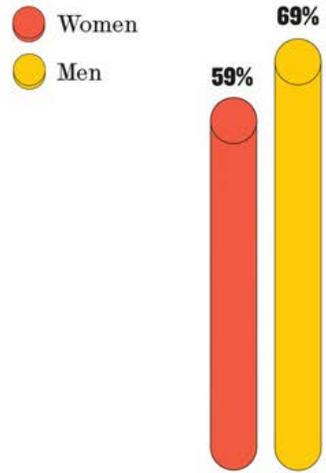
# Course / Learning Objectives

- Learn to identify key struggles that young designers face as they enter the architecture profession, such as self-confidence, motivation, engagement, negotiation, and work-life balance.
- Evaluate issues that revolve around gender equity at various phases of one's career from a young designer entering the profession to an established leader.
- Build the skills necessary to recognize opportunities, seek challenges, and initiate ideas and activities at the workplace in order to help jumpstart young designers' careers.
- Understand how to build a culture of equity and balance to allow for the full potential of employees to evolve.



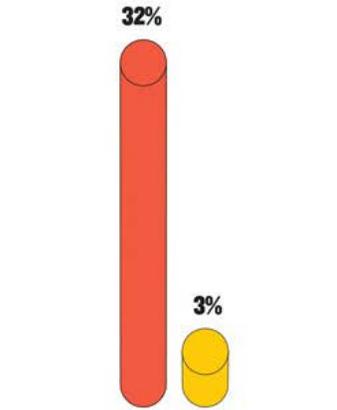






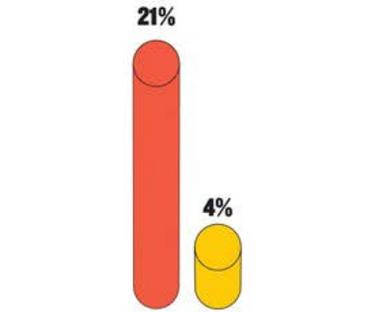
**HAVE A GOOD WORK/LIFE BALANCE**

A good work-life balance is, for many, unachievable or comes at considerable cost



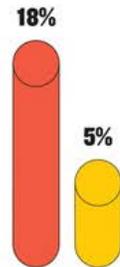
**EXPERIENCED SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAST YEAR**

Sexual discrimination is mainly, but not exclusively, perpetrated by men



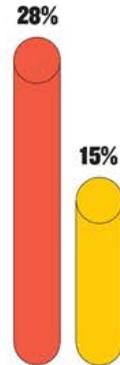
**EXPERIENCED DIRECT DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAST YEAR**

Discrimination includes being ignored, undermined or given impossible tasks to do



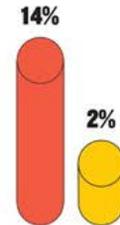
**EXPERIENCED INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAST YEAR**

Discrimination often takes the form of 'banter' that is considered harmless but is, in fact, humiliating



**EXPERIENCED BULLYING IN THE PAST YEAR**

Discrimination is most likely to be perpetrated by an individual's boss or bosses



**EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE PAST YEAR**

Many women feel there is little they can do to effectively address sexual harassment

# what about our generation locally?



**GIRL UNINTERRUPTED**

**Let's bridge the gap between young  
women designers and experienced  
leaders in the architecture profession.**

**1 | SURVEY**

**2 | CONVERSATIONS**

**3 | MANUAL**

## 1 GENERAL INFO

Let's get started!

press ENTER

1 → What is your work title? \*

A Intern

B Designer

C Architect

D Associate

E Project Manager

F Other

# 1 | SURVEY

2 → How many years of experience do you have? \*

A 0-2

B 3-5

**1 GENERAL INFO**

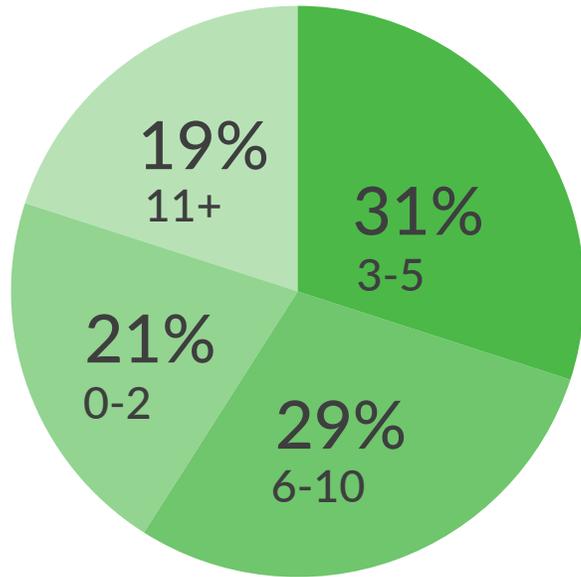
**2. NEGOTIATION & SELF-CONFIDENCE**

**3. CAREER GROWTH**

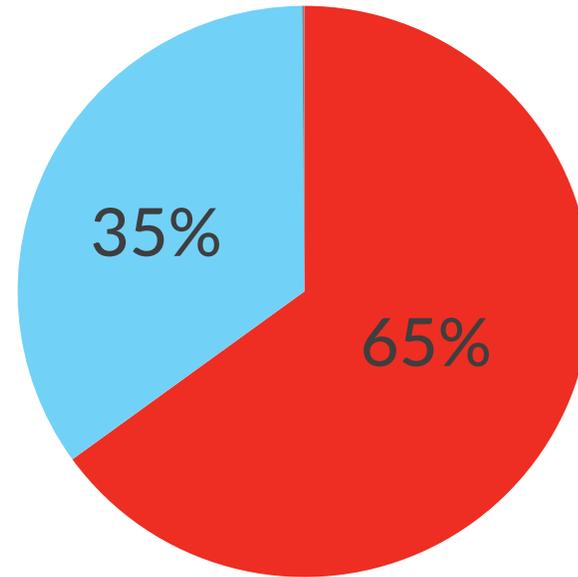
**4. WORK-LIFE BALANCE**



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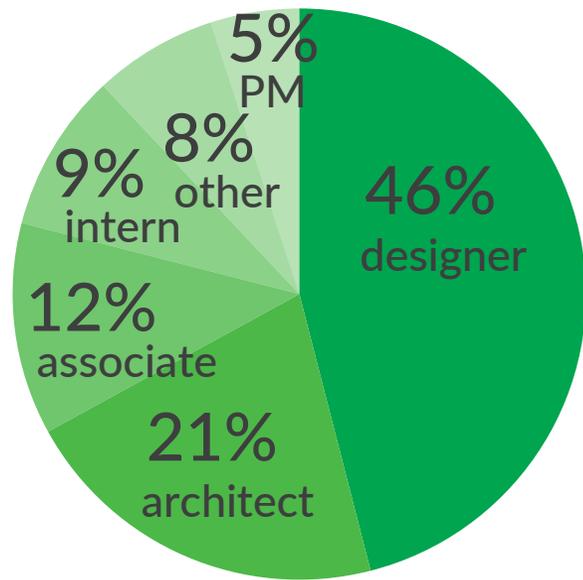


years of experience

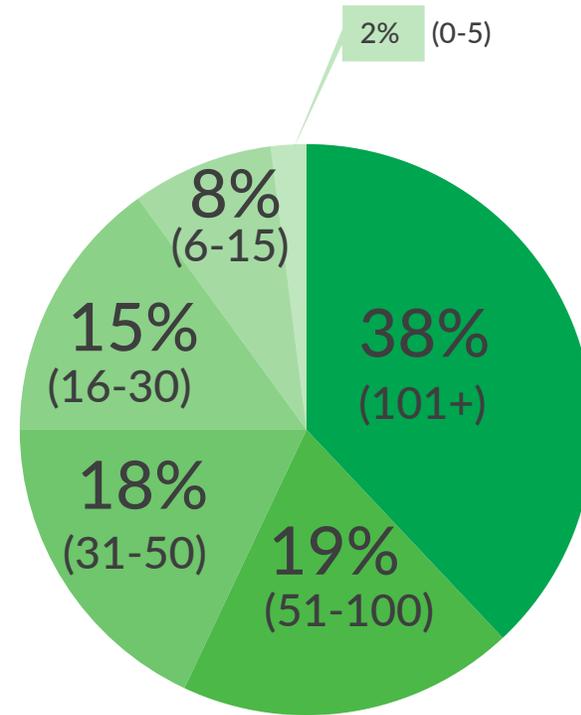


gender

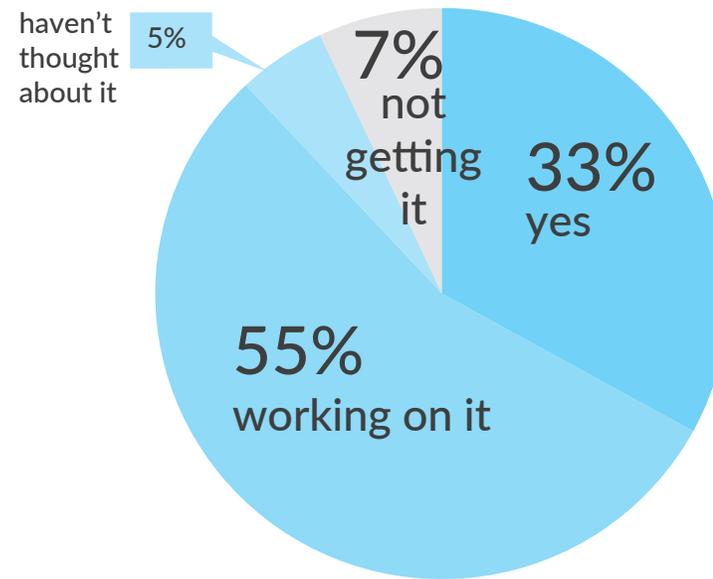
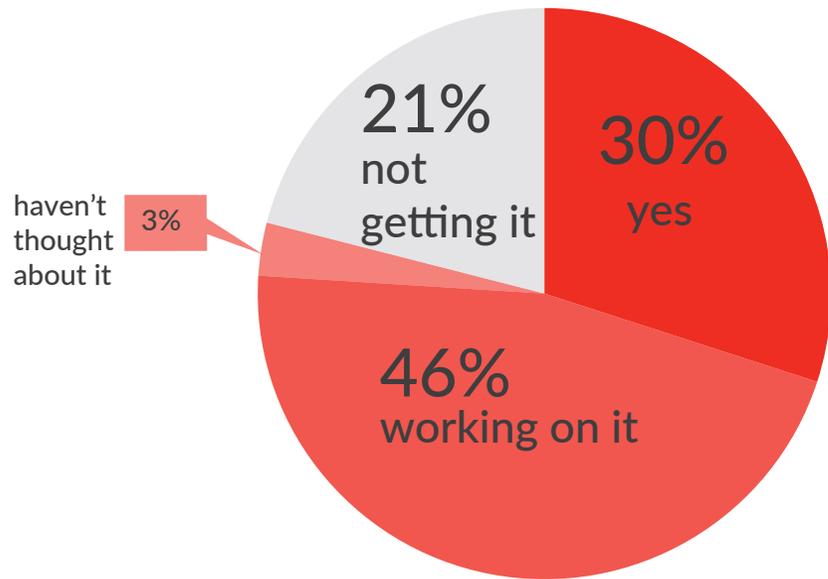
female  
male



work title

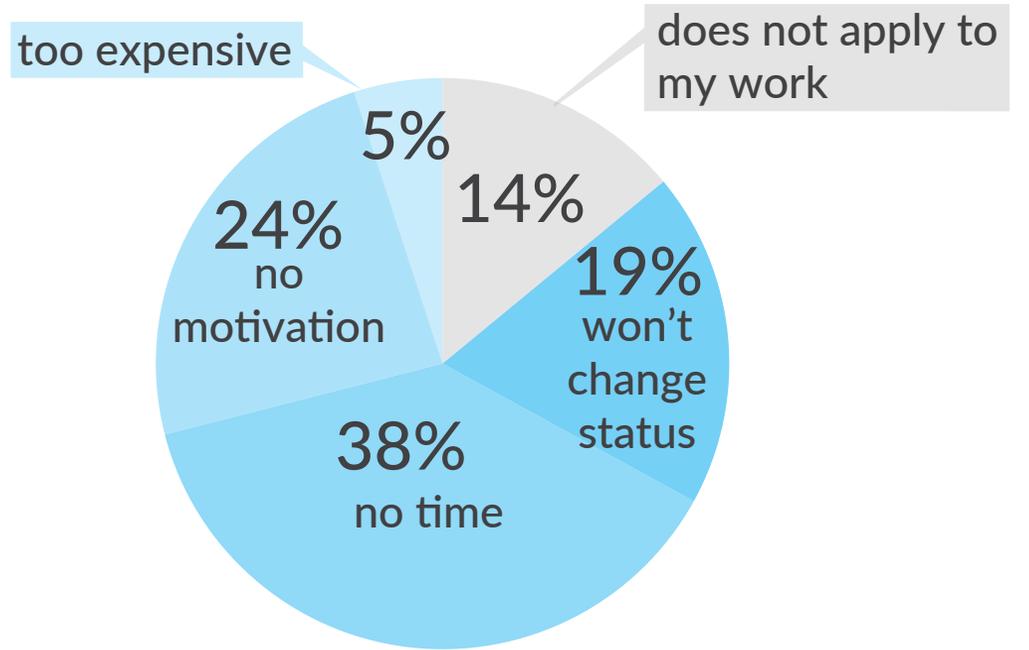
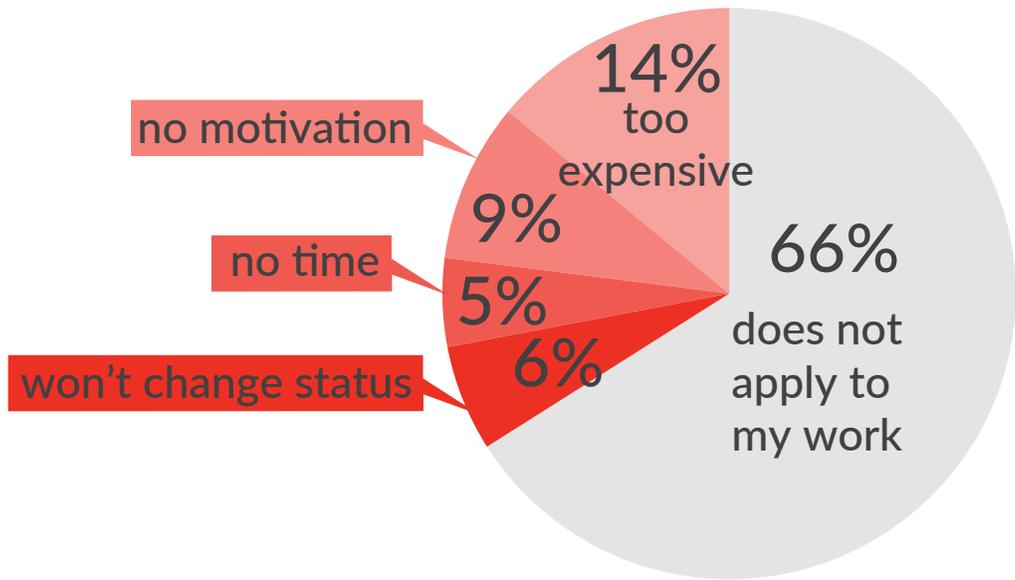


firm size



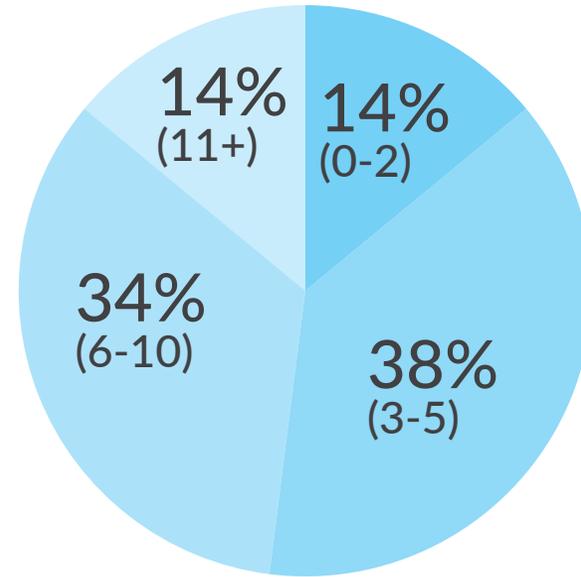
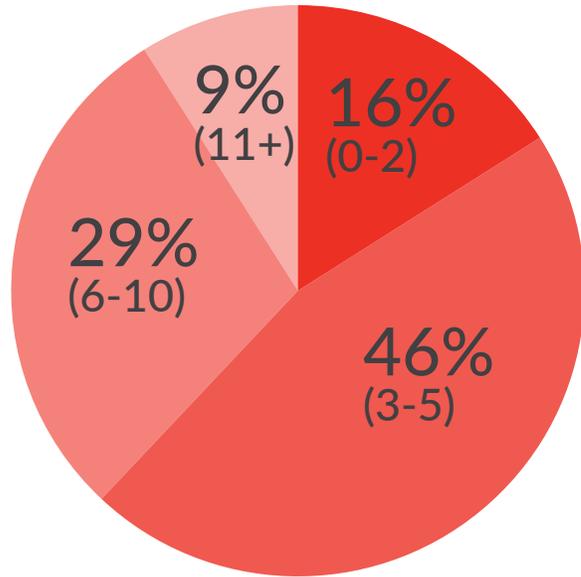
are you licensed?

female  
male



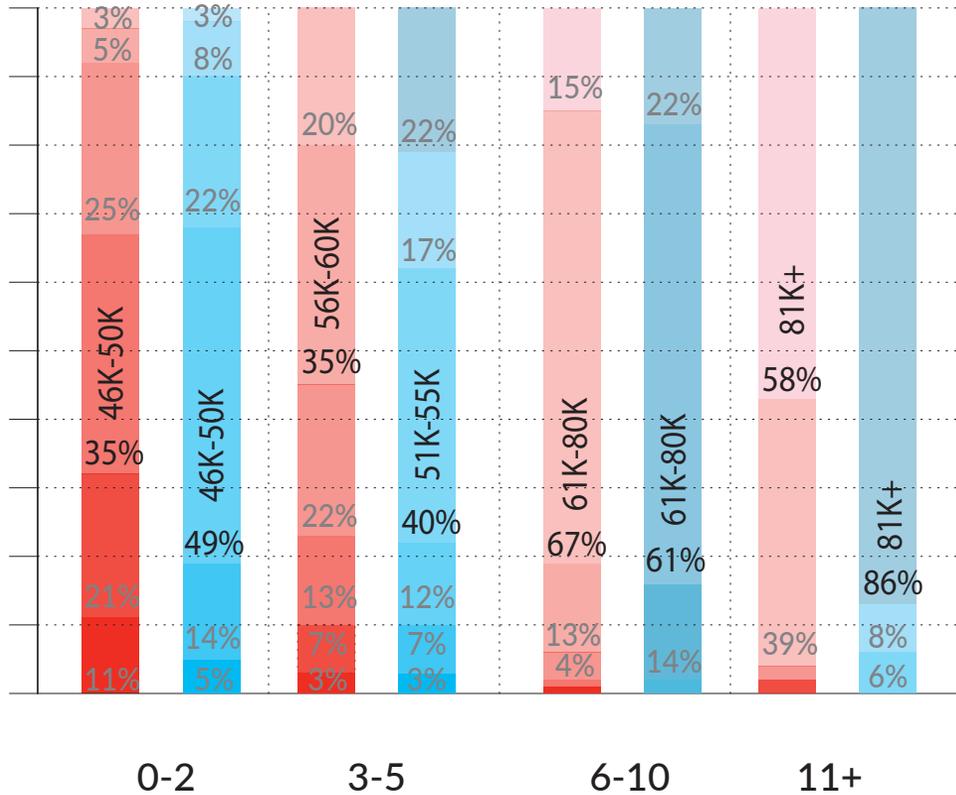
if you are not planning on getting licensed, why not?

female  
male

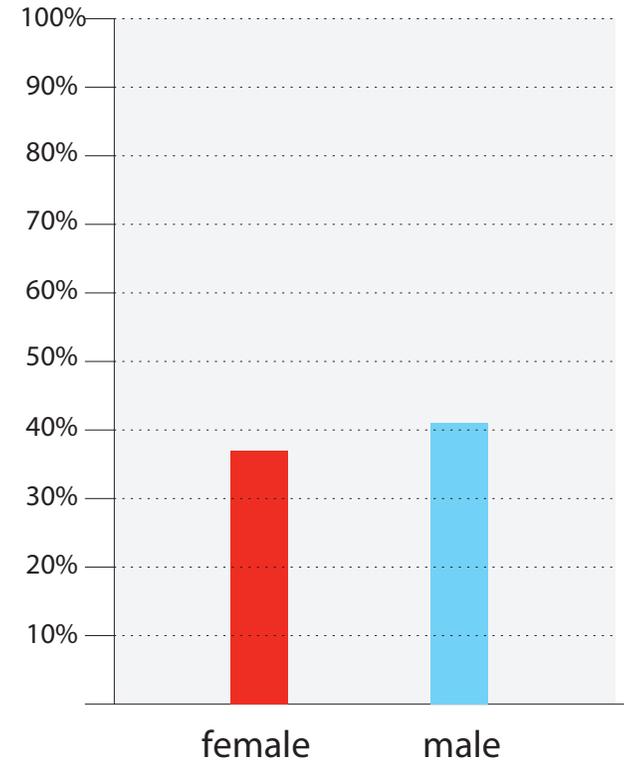


if you are, how long did it take?

female  
male

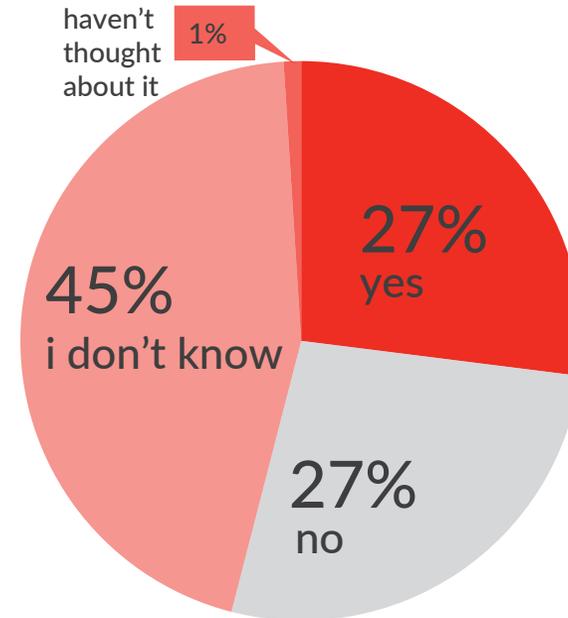
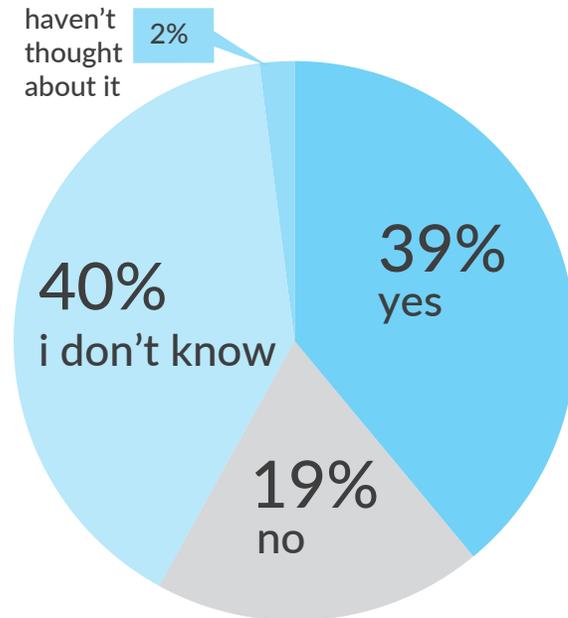


salary



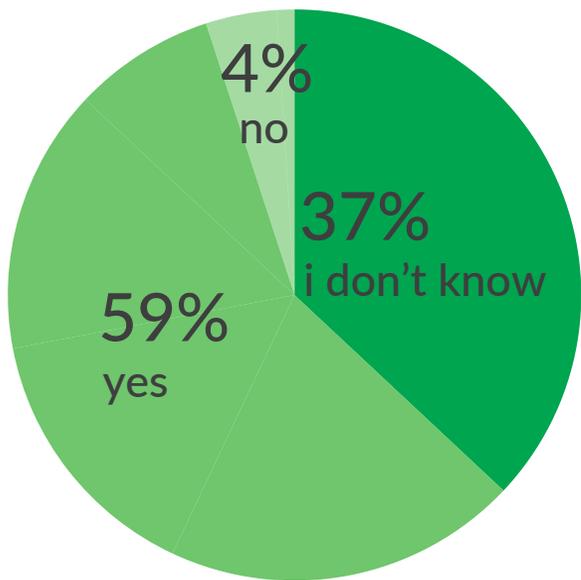
how do you feel about your salary?

female  
male

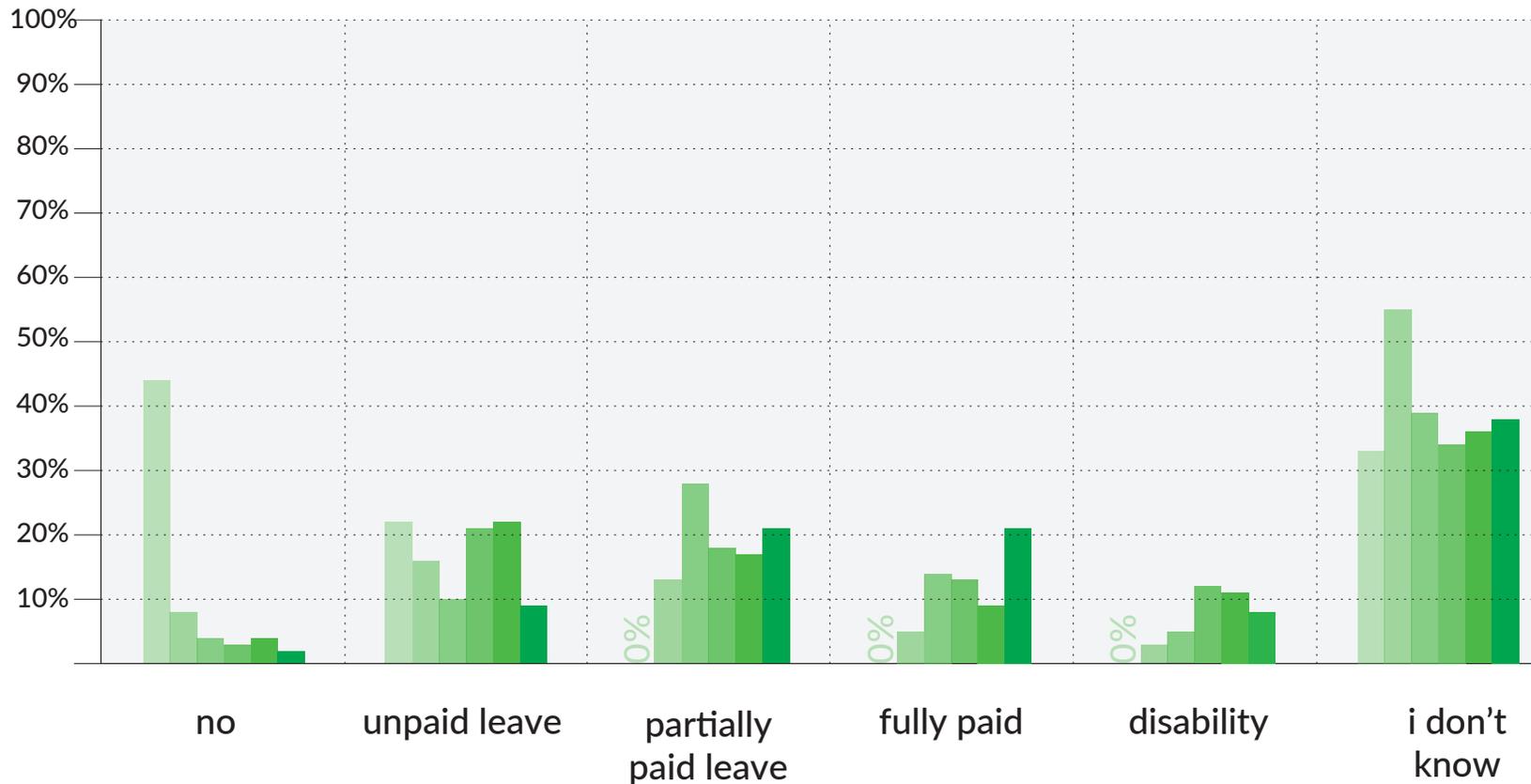


do you believe your office has pay equity?

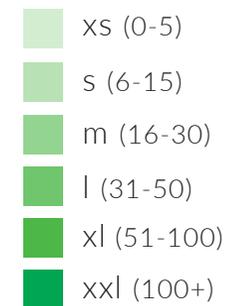
female  
male

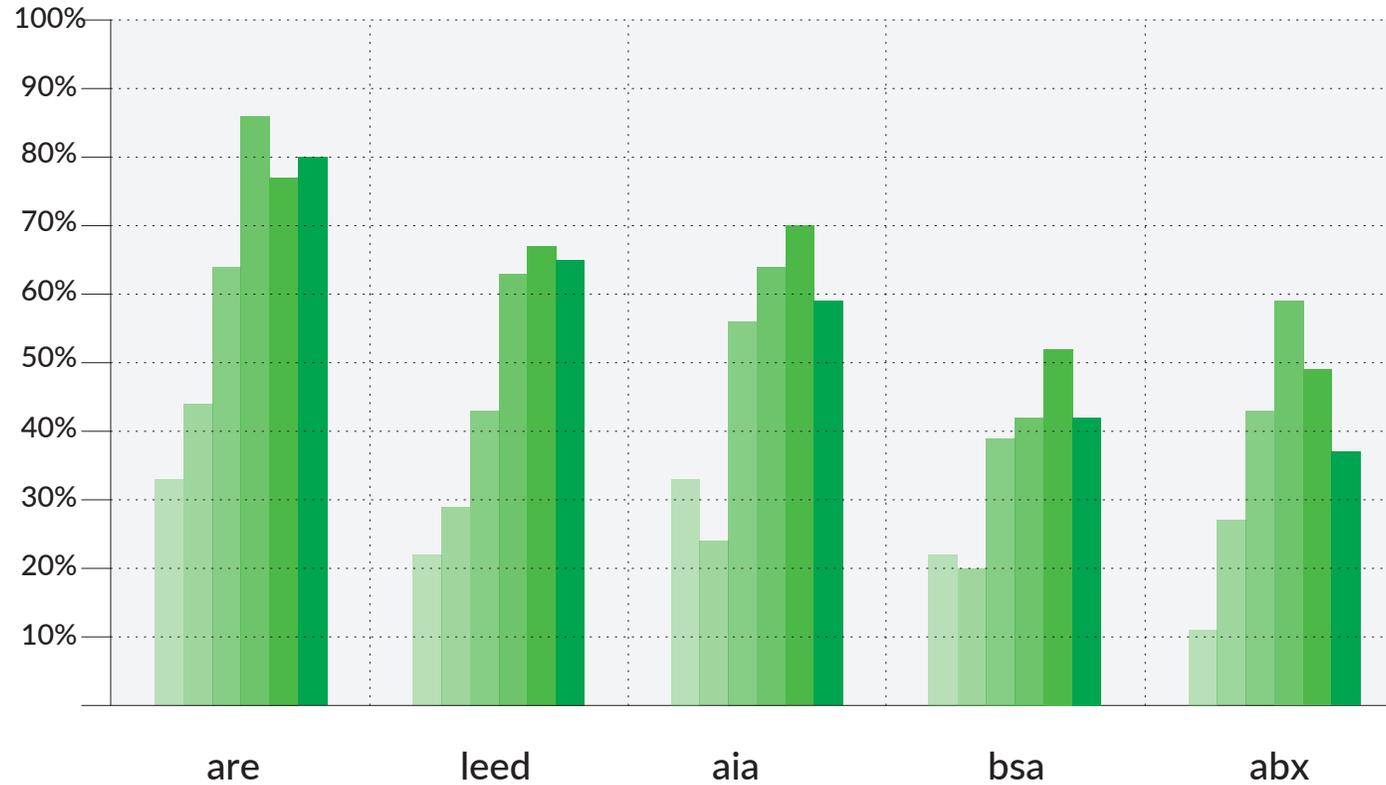


does your office offer parental leave?



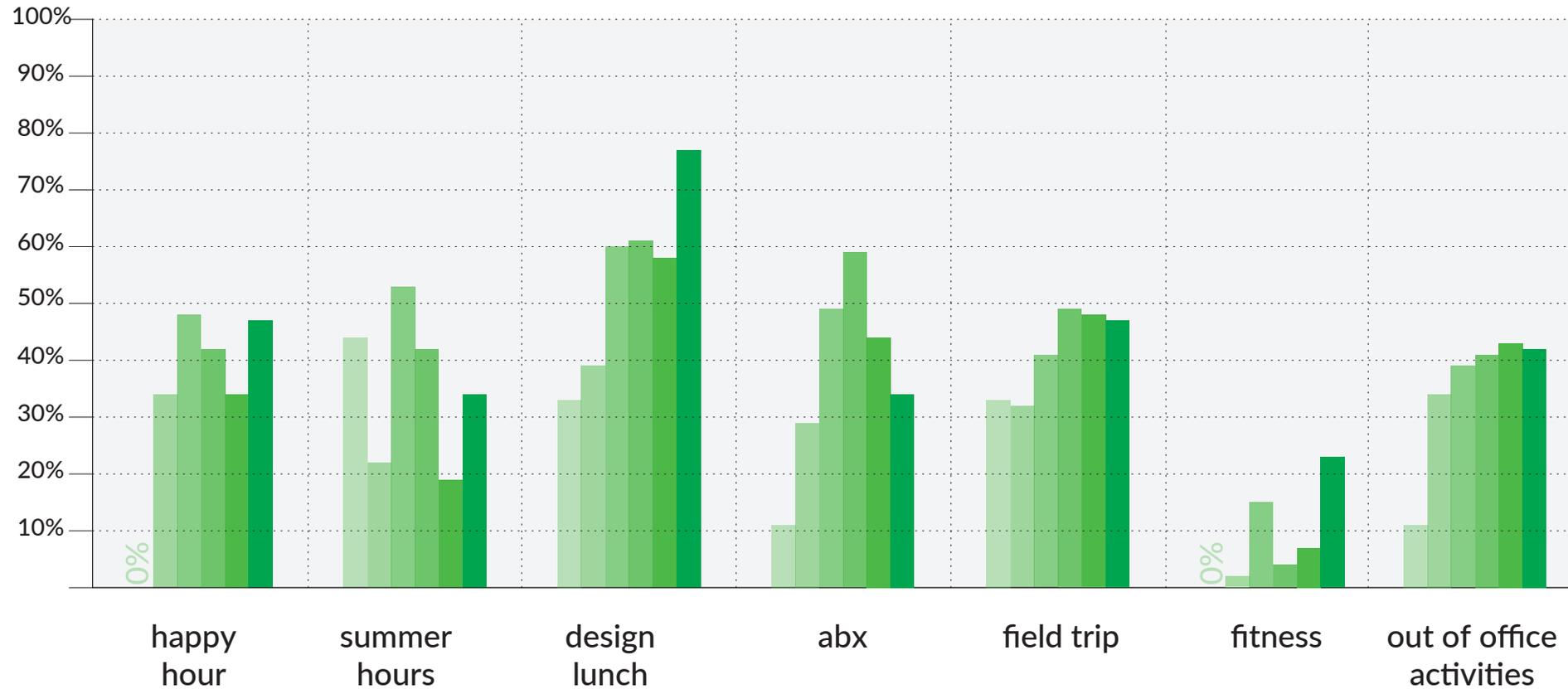
what does your office offer?





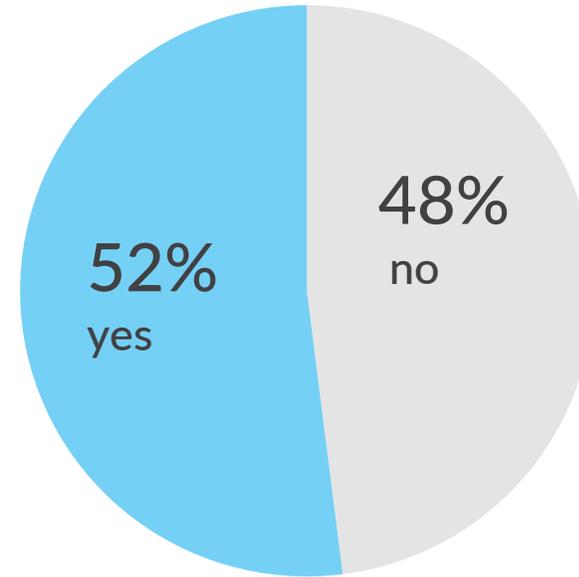
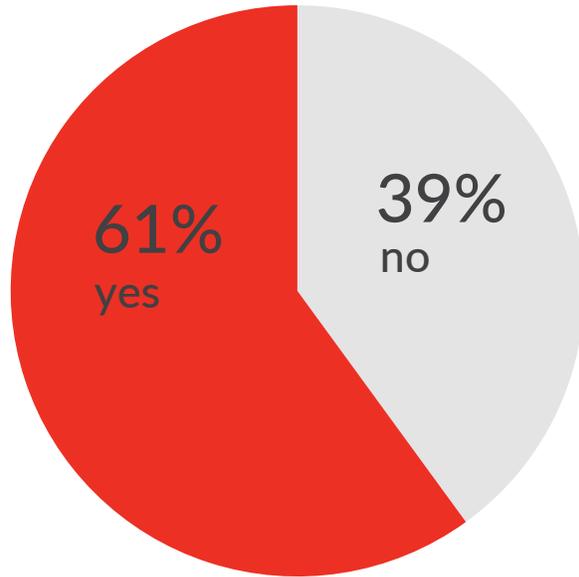
what fees does your office cover?

- xs (0-5)
- s (6-15)
- m (16-30)
- l (31-50)
- xl (51-100)
- xxl (100+)



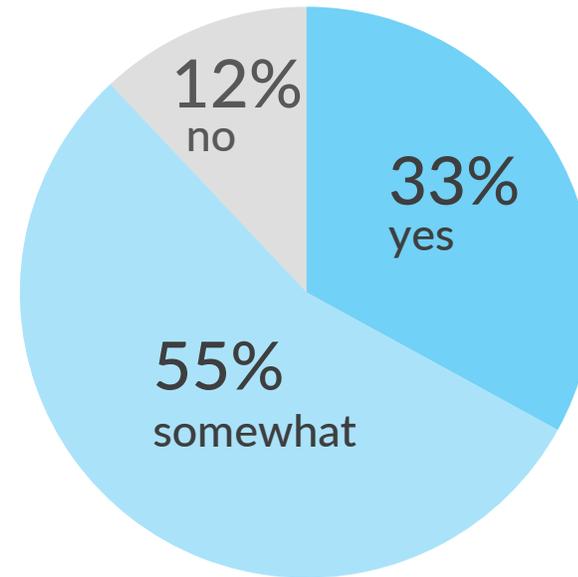
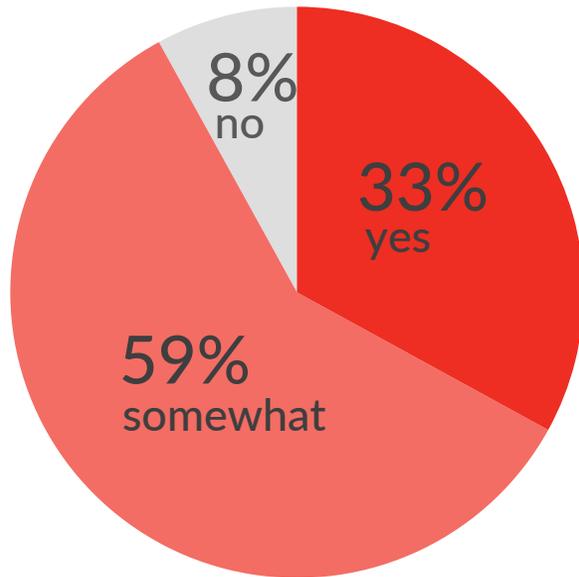
what office perks do you get?

- xs (0-5)
- s (6-15)
- m (16-30)
- l (31-50)
- xl (51-100)
- xxl (100+)



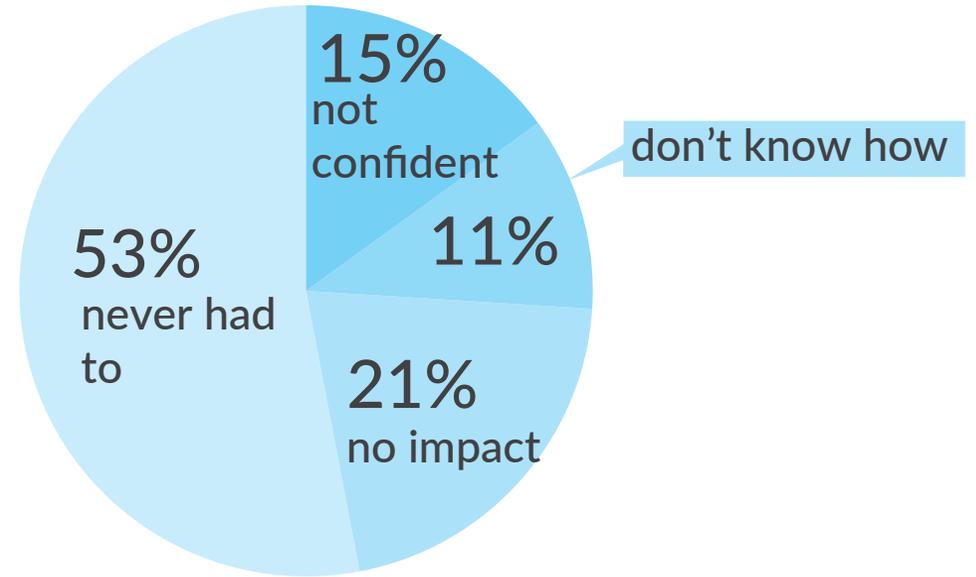
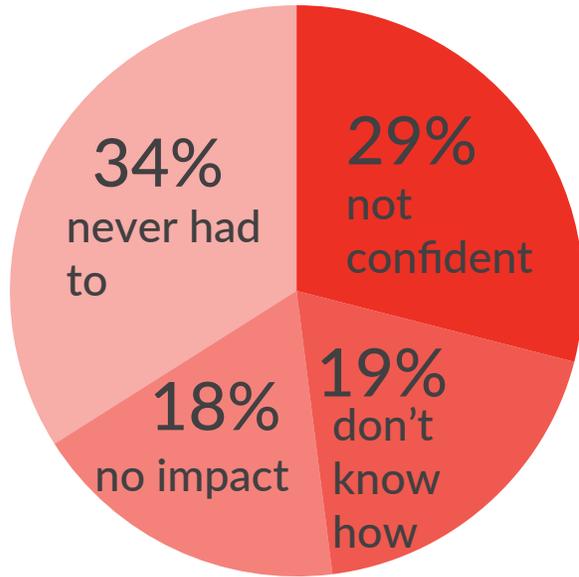
have you negotiated?

female  
male



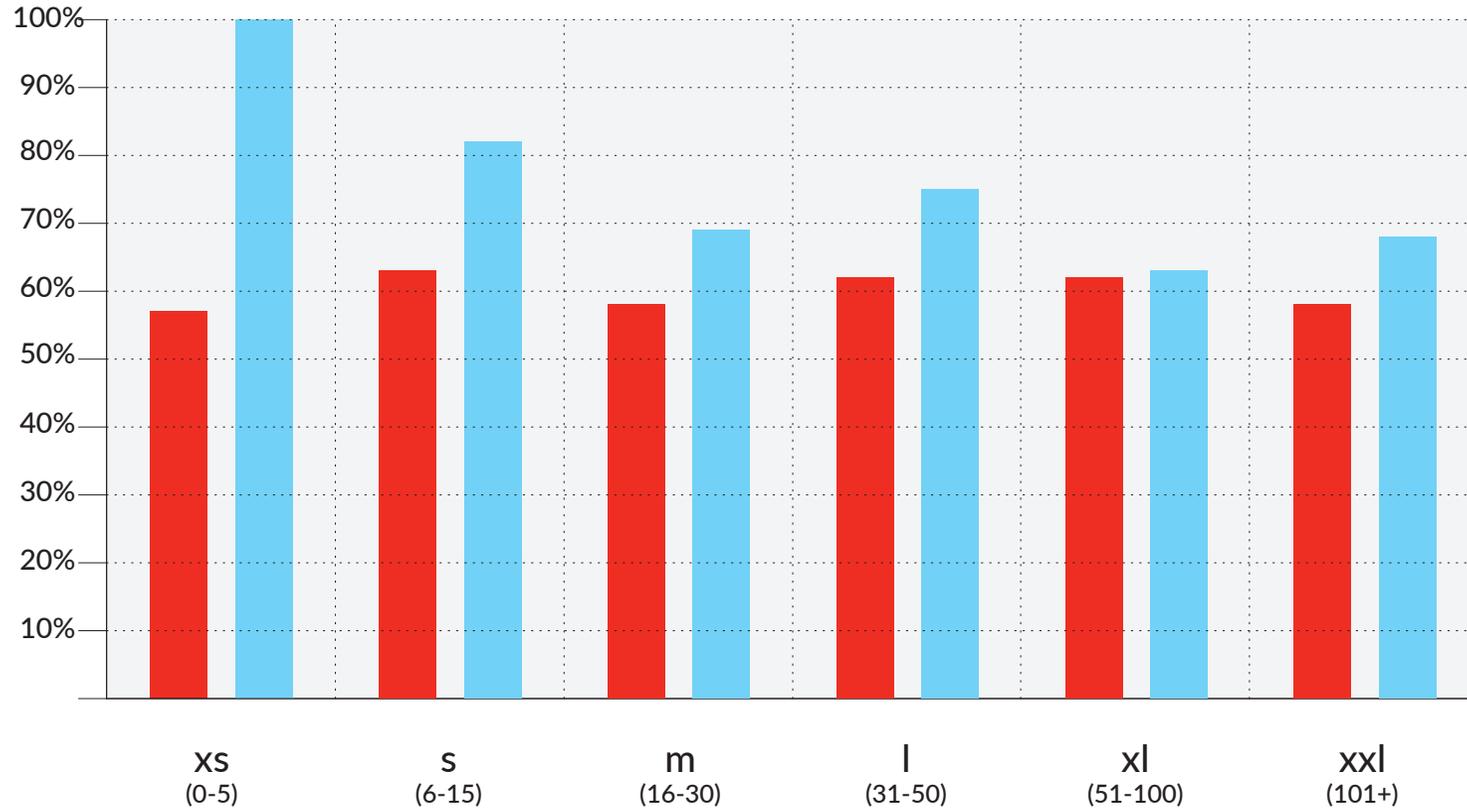
**if you have negotiated, did you get what you wanted?**

female  
male



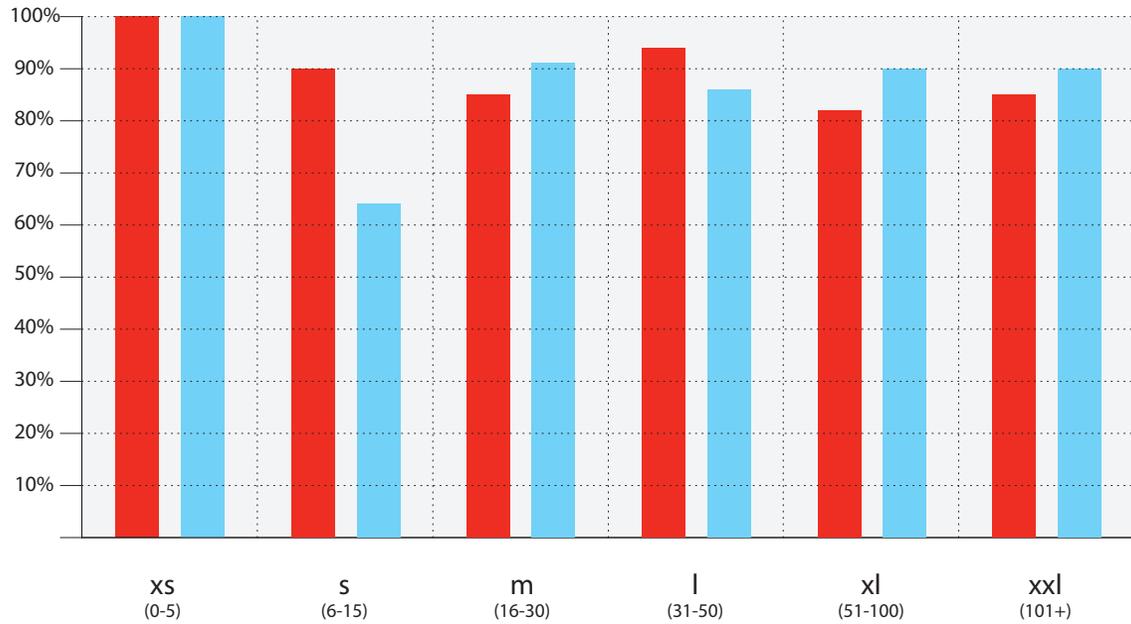
if you have not negotiated, why not?

female  
male

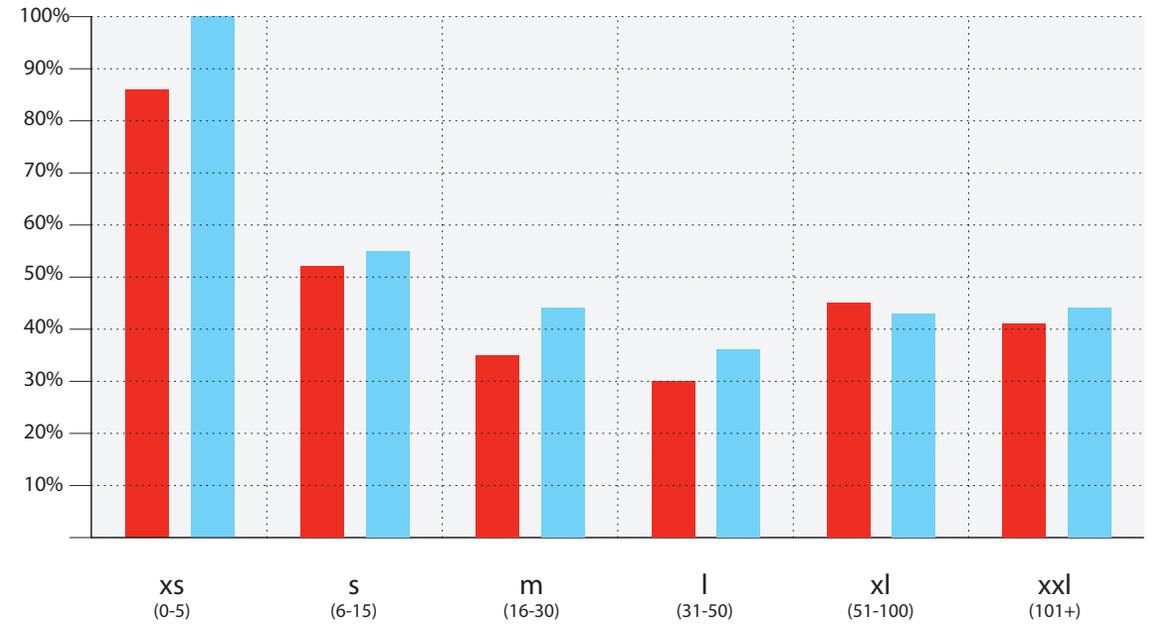


how often do you feel challenged?

female  
male

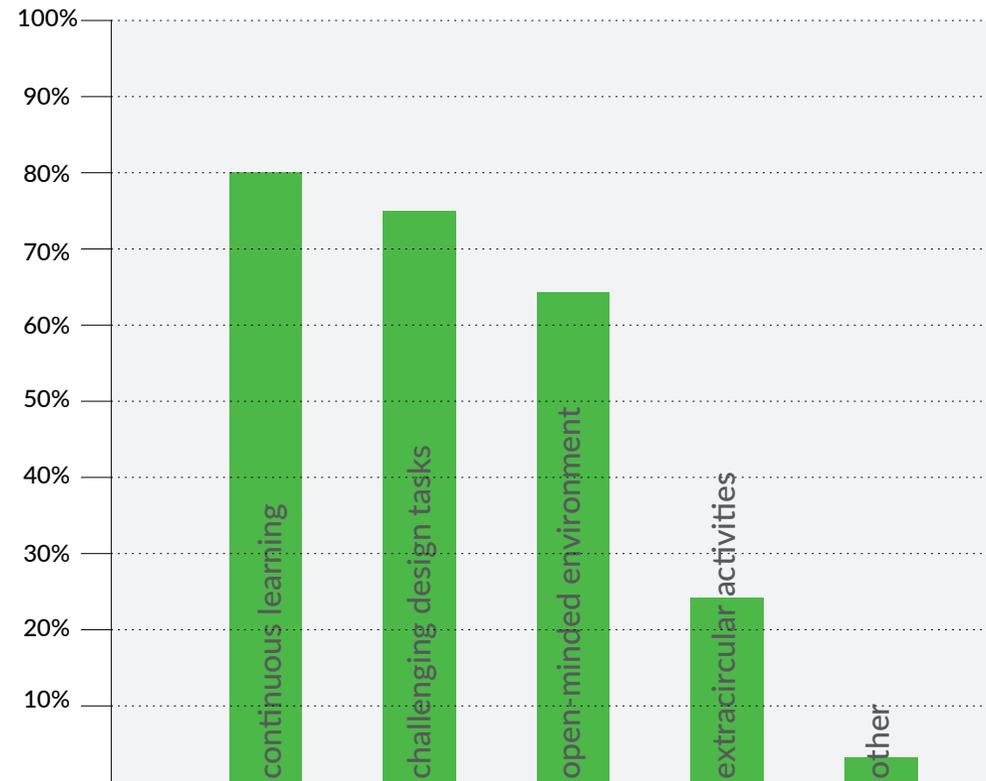


how do you feel about asking questions?

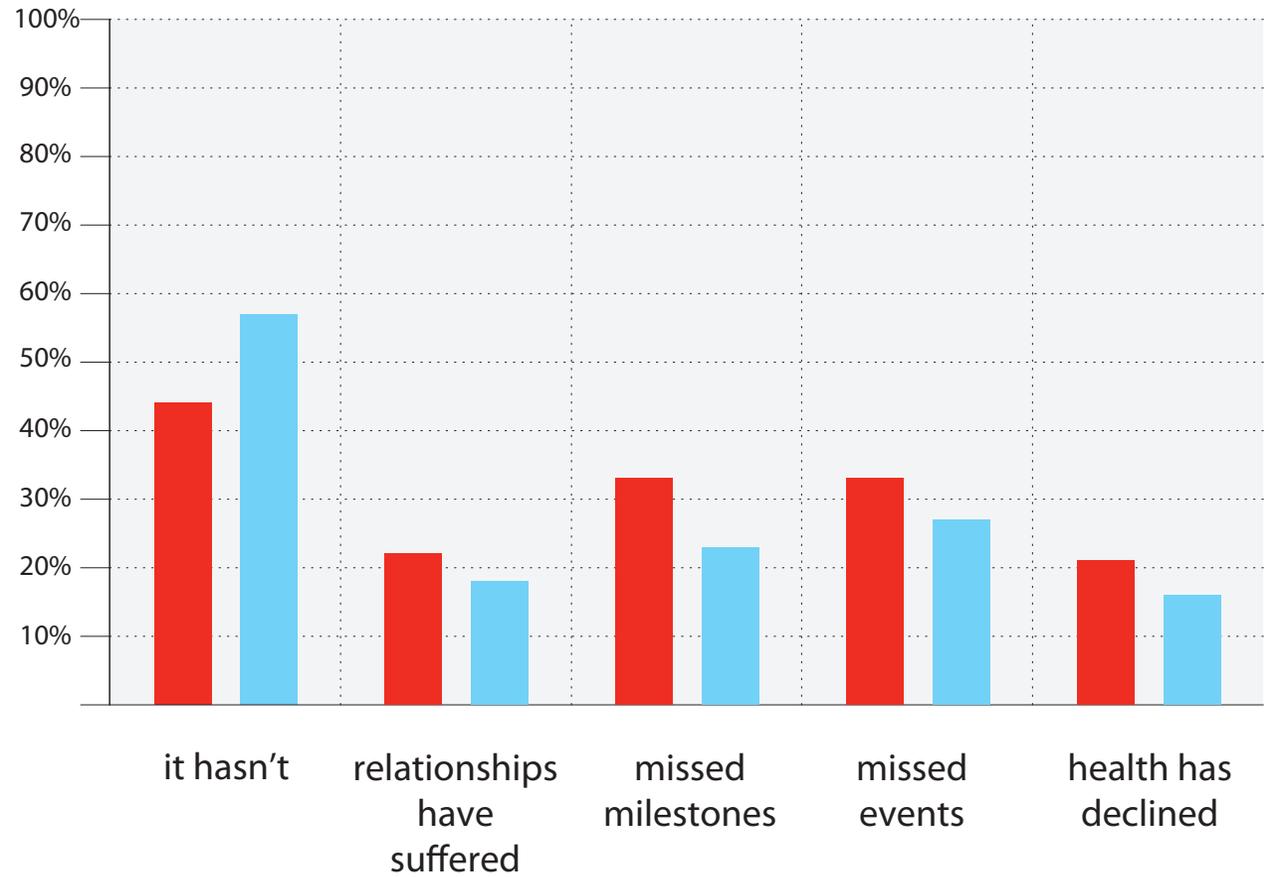


how frequently do you initiate ideas at the work place?

female  
male

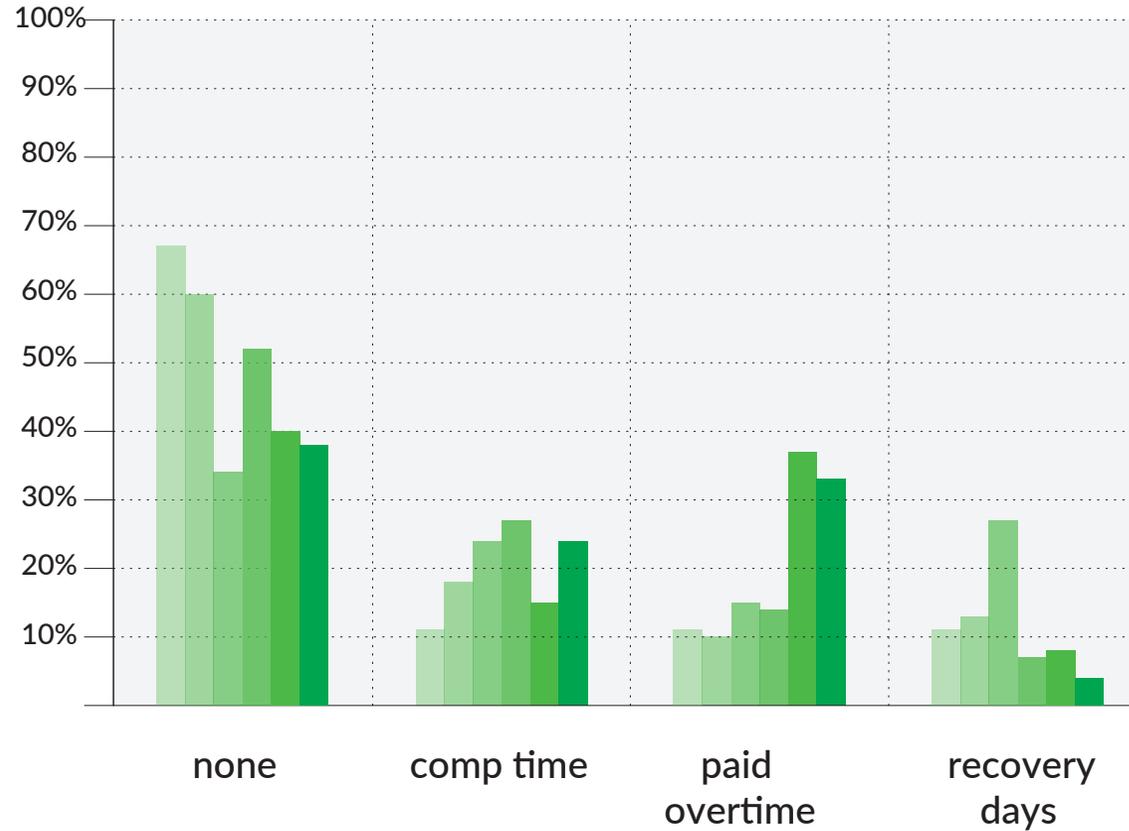


what motivates you?



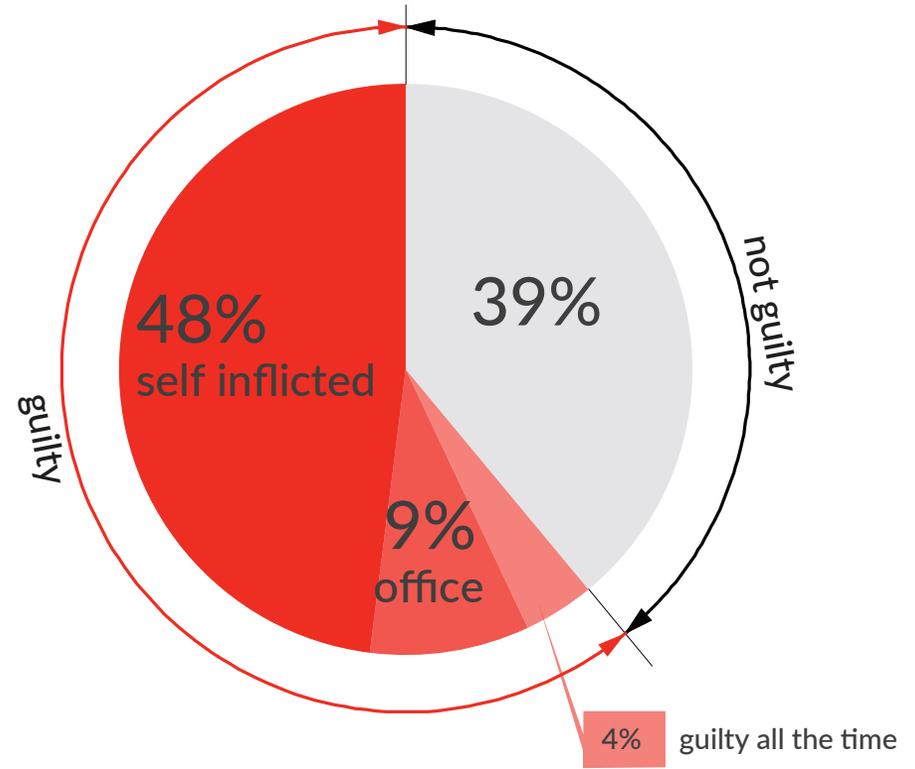
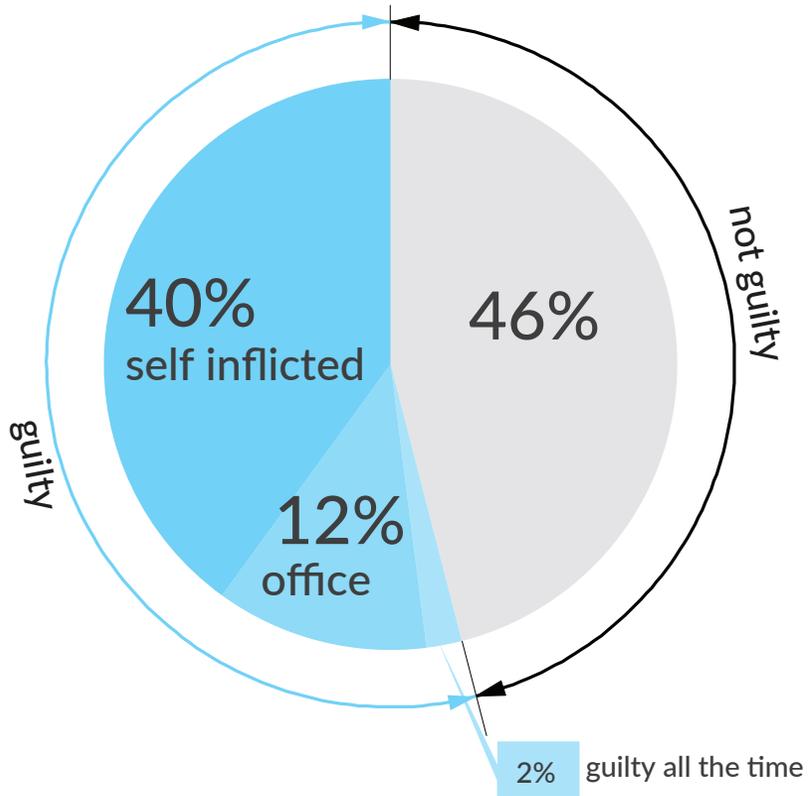
**has your personal life been affected?**

female  
male



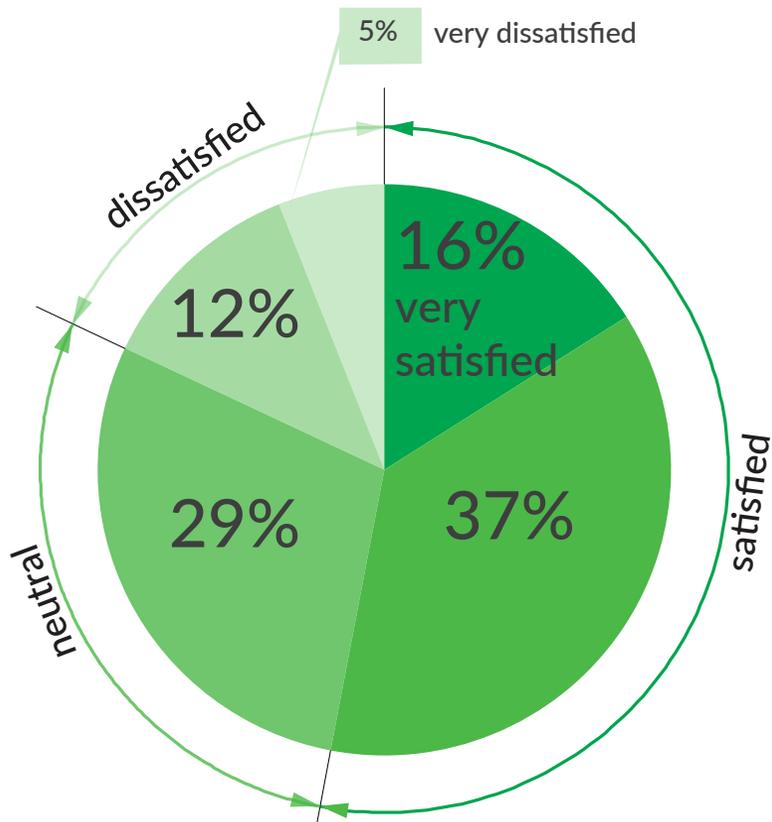
**what over time benefits does your office offer?**

- xs (0-5)
- s (6-15)
- m (16-30)
- l (31-50)
- xl (51-100)
- xxl (100+)

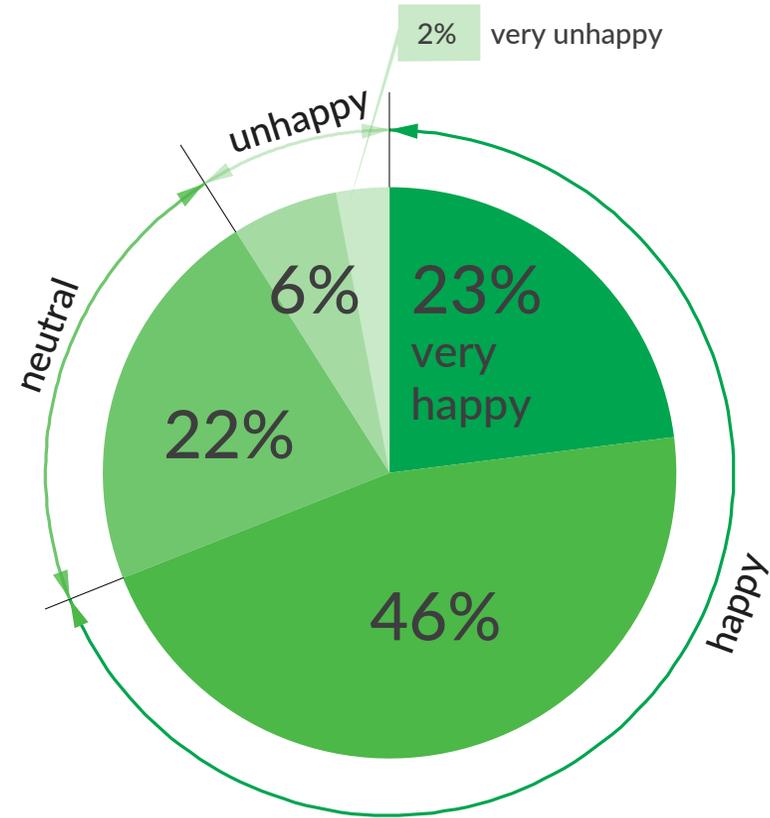


how do you feel taking time off?

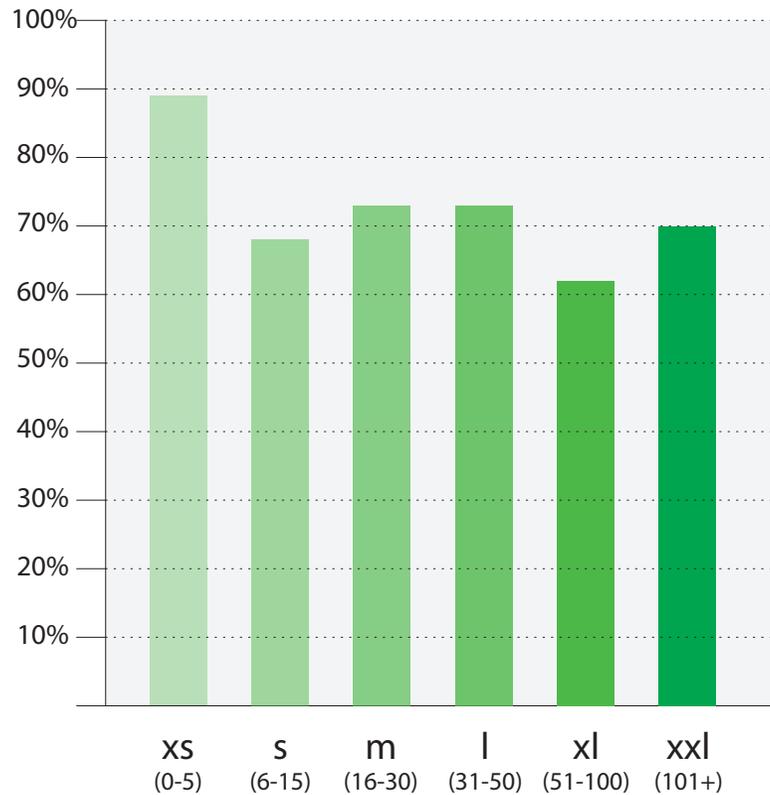
female  
male



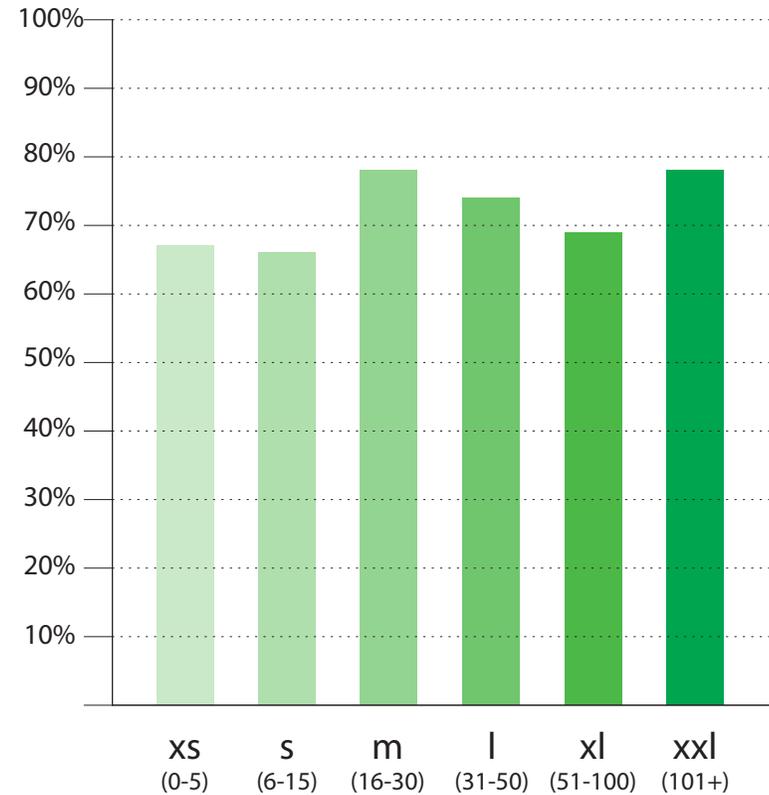
how do you feel about your work/life balance?



how do you feel about your work place?



**how do you feel about your work place?**



**how likely are you to recommend your work place to others?**

My firm suffers from a **lack of female design leadership**. There are plenty of individuals who should be in design leadership, but aren't. Having to leave early to take care of children seems to hold them back, as they can't work the 60+ hours a week to be taken seriously. My office is friendly enough, but as a vocal, outspoken women I've been talked over in many meetings. **I want to succeed here**, but I can't imagine that happening here once I have children. They are supportive of taking care of families, but you won't see big promotions typically if you are your child's primary caregiver, as many women are. **I've considered leaving the profession if I can't get the balance I want.**

Designer, female, 6-10 years of experience

**Pursuing a license is not my highest priority** as family + children are the priority. For them to have my full attention outside of work allows me to have better work/life balance. **Pursuing ARE exams would inflict higher stress level that's not necessary in this stage of our growing family.** Knowing that there are many other opportunities in the design and construction industry, **you don't need an architect license to be successful**, although it's nice to have.

Designer, male, 6-10 years of experience



# 2 | CONVERSATIONS



# ON BEING A WOMAN IN ARCHITECTURE

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

SELF-AWARENESS

MOTHERHOOD

(DIS)ADVANTAGES



A lot of your ability to be a leader is your ability to be a rainmaker. **It is hard to be a rainmaker if your clients don't see you as their peer...** Men have to be not only open minded but fight their own natural tendencies to be around people like themselves in order to bring more women in. That is a tall order to ask of anybody. It is a leap to understand that **a good team is a diverse team** with different people thinking different ways... **If we face this barrier as women and we are half the population, think of minority groups who don't even have that advantage.**

**Diversity leads is a strength! (Laura Wernick)**



When ABA's work is attributed to a woman, I find that uneasy. First, my belief is that the work speaks for itself. **It is important for women to be aligned with important, visible, and engaging work.** There are numerous examples of leaders and extraordinary visionaries, who have had either discrimination or many of their own self-inflicted challenges, and ultimately all those things are set in a certain space because their contribution is so extraordinary. What I am saying to women is **be known for your work**...If I start to put myself into the assumption that there is discrimination and it is holding us back as a firm, I would spend all my day trying to deal with it. (Ann Beha)



I always had an **issue with self-confidence** - meaning I had none. Yet architecture requires a level of self-confidence...

There were times that I would feel **bruised by criticism of being bossy or aggressive**, convinced that a male colleague would not have the same critique. I continue to struggle with that balance, trying to defend something that I really care about without coming off as imperious. (Katie Faulkner)



One of our male project managers said that **his definition of success was that he provides for his family.** That made me do some soul-searching since **for me success was to be the emotional center of my family while I also lived up to my potential as an architect.** It was challenging and exhausting... Men and women come to the world with those differences built into their DNA and I think society and the world of work still doesn't accept the fact that women need different things for our success. If we start to feel that the balance is off and that work is taking too much time, we will back off work...

**We should not be penalized for that! (Tamara Roy)**



There were other moments in which, for government contracts, **the participation of women on a team was an advantage.** We always thought that might help to get to the table but certainly was not decisive factor. We did encounter some resistance among competition, who felt that we were unfairly advantaged and I often replied, **“Maybe it sometimes levels the field, but certainly never puts us ahead.”** We always felt as though we had to prove ourselves extra capable, and I think that that reality still exists. (Andrea Leers)

# ON POLICY CHANGE

INCLUSIVITY

FLEXIBILITY

EDUCATION GAPS

VALUE OF DESIGN



Diversity in architecture has always been important. **We can't serve the world without having the world look more like us.** Architecture may be a luxury in terms of equity... One thing would be to strengthen the bachelor of architecture programs and support them in that mission... **we should look ourselves at what we can be doing.** (Jane Weinzapfel)



**The harder things are when you experience something that doesn't align with your values.** When a client is sexist or inappropriate or doesn't like a certain employee for a reason that you kind of sense is that they are narrow-minded. How do you have that conversation with them? As leader it is more important for me to say what their characteristics are and their talents are and help the client understand what that person brings to the table. For me, **it is important not to be a bystander.** How do you prepare yourself for handling such situations as a professional? **Start the conversation. Your power is your voice. (Carole Wedge)**



When we started SAAM, we wanted to **push the envelope on the whole idea of flexibility and that's when we looked at unlimited vacation.** The reality is, we are all really blending our personal and work lives... **Everyone has life issues to balance,** whether it's children, aging parents, or other commitments. Unlimited vacation goes hand in hand with the flexibility because it is all about maintaining **responsibility and ownership of the work.** (Diana Nicklaus)



I really don't like the **architect-as-workaholic ethos**, which starts in school. I'm a **well-rounded person**, I like to play sports, I like movies, books - but I haven't been able to do nearly as much of all that as I wish, because of the culture of **single-focus. (Kelley Banks)**



**Childbirth is a temporary thing.** You are going to take parental leave (women and men) and then you are going to come back.

If you are good at what you do, **it is actually going to make you better because you will become even more organized and efficient...** But it is not just about having families, kids, or aging parents. You just want to have a life. You don't want to be in the office all the time. You want to travel; you want to do other things. Having **a well-rounded life** and trying to figure out how architecture firms can support that helps women, men, minorities succeed and thrive. (Tamara Roy)



**Education -- there is a very large difference in the level of professional training at different design schools... some of the faculty members are not registered and the students do not seem to have a thorough understanding of natural processes...**

**I love the idea of students having the latitude to explore their creativity, but feedback should be grounded in practice and realism so that they can learn the skills they need to be hired.**

**Professional education is expensive. Students deserve to begin to learn what they need to know in the workplace. (Nina Brown)**



My frustrations are that **we are providing a service which is not always respected or thought to be of significant value.** Architects are not always valued despite the extent of education that is required and the care and passion that people bring to their work. Unlike other professions, the construction industry has slipped in production and efficiencies over the last 30-40 years. We are in a very old fashioned industry where things are highly defined and regulated, and we need to somehow burst out... We have to **embed design value in our education and understand that design is integral to moving ahead as a society.** (Laura Wernick)

# ON TIPS

**MENTORSHIP & SPONSORSHIP**

**DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE**

**OPEN DIALOGUE & TRUST**

**SOCIAL IMPACT**



To clarify, **a mentor** is someone that may or may not be a colleague, who can **share their own experience, give advice, and point one in the direction of opportunities**. A **sponsor** can actually **create those opportunities**. That is probably someone you work with because they are in a position to advocate for your advancement and understand exactly what value you bring to the table. It is someone who really wants to bring you up the ladder with them. (Diana Nicklaus)



Due to advances in technology, social media, and the early successes of emerging professionals in other industries, **young professionals in architecture feel like anything is possible and they are in a rush for leadership...** for me, architecture is about building in layers and processes. I encourage emerging professionals to give themselves time to develop a good foundation... As an emerging professional, your **goal is to learn in order to develop the experience to guide the future of your career.** I am still learning every day and I do not expect to ever stop learning. Take your time, have ambition, but look for leadership opportunities... (Natasha Espada)



Make sure they (admin) know how to give a good interview and have **a two-way conversation**. They need to understand how to dig a little bit deeper and truly engage candidates... I think that it is important to **understand your employees and what drives them**. Every 18 months, for example, we do an employee survey across the firm. It is a **strategic communication technique** and we are able to take a temperature on how we are doing with certain initiatives, culture, communication, mentoring, professional development opportunities etc. Mentorship and recognition are always huge for individuals. (Aimee Hughes)



I am really hopeful about this young generation... **There is a sense of human contribution not only artistic exploration.** I recognize that you are enabled with the skills of being digital natives and that gives you a lot of facility and agility... I am very hopeful that this generation is going to work to make life better, make places more beautiful, make environments healthier... I was educated to see **architecture as a great balancing act - that design be useful, that it be valuable, that it be sound, and that it be beautiful.** I see that balance returning in your generation and I am delighted.

**(Andrea Leers)**

how do  
people feel  
at work?



how do you feel about asking questions?

# 3 | MANUAL



how frequently do you initiate ideas at the  
work place?

everyone feels  
comfortable asking  
questions

except at xs and s  
size offices, less than  
60% of people are not  
comfortable initiating

designer



leader

■ female  
■ male

SURVEY RESULTS 21

# FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Consider job interviews as a 2-way conversation.

Understand the overall offer of an office.

designer



leader

# FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

**Be clear about roles and responsibilities.**

**Be upfront and clear about office expectations.**

designer



**leader**

# OFFICE POLICIES

**Read and understand office policies and manuals.**

**Don't be afraid to talk to others.**

**designer**



**leader**

## OFFICE POLICIES

**Analyze office policies and make them clear to all employees periodically.  
Create regular 2-way conversations to help build a relationship of mutual respect  
and understanding.**

designer



leader

# EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT

Know nation-wide statistics.

Don't be a bystander.

designer



leader

# EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT

**Know nation-wide statistics.**

**Reflect on the make-up and diversity of the office at all levels.**

**Understand the difference between equality and equity.**

designer



leader

# CAREER GROWTH

**Ask for opportunities to develop various skills.**

**Join local AIA groups and committees.**

**Create networks for mentors and sponsors.**

**Ask for diversity of design related tasks.**

**Set times for self-reflection.**

**designer**



**leader**

## CAREER GROWTH

**Offer opportunities for continuous learning and exchange of ideas within the firm.**

**Allow emerging professionals to participate in not just project related items, but firm related items.**

**Offer equal opportunities for all to participate in diverse design tasks.**

**Offer regular performance reviews at the work place.**

designer



leader

# FIRM CULTURE

Ask more questions.

Initiate ideas

designer

leader



# FIRM CULTURE

Show appreciation and give credit to all.  
Give opportunities for equitable office socializing.

designer



leader

# THANK YOU!

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