

# ■ Finding Balance in the Big Bend



An Inside Look at the Pursuit of 'Me Time', Landmarks, Break Rooms, and More...

October 11, 2016

Presented to the  
Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce  
Professional Women's Forum



## Survey of Tallahasseeans

- **Collected:** September 27-30, 2016
- **Sample Size:** 531 Professionals
- **Margin of Error:** +/- 4.25%
- **Goals.... Better Understand:**
  - What contributes to professionals' sense of satisfaction with work-life balance?
  - What keeps people in Tallahassee? What should our town have more of?
  - What unique features define or disrupt the experience of professional women in Tallahassee?

## Hypothesis: Work Life Balance =

- The perception that the “weight” of one’s work life and the “weight” of one’s home life are favorably balanced in relation to one another.



- This doesn’t require that the “weights” are exactly equal, but that for one’s own needs and wants, time/energy spent with each feel well balanced.

## > Let's start with guilt ...

When things get really busy in your life, which of the following do you struggle to find time for in a way that leaves you with a sense of feeling guilty?

Housekeeping such as laundry or yard work

Doing creative projects

Courtesies such as writing thank you cards or condolence cards

Caring for pets

Unstructured time

Time alone / you time

Personal grooming such as getting haircuts, moisturizing or flossing

Religious/spiritual pursuits

Watering/caring for plants

Fun activities with family

Health upkeep such as going for checkups or getting flu shots

Maintaining relationships with friends

Going on dates/romantic activities

# > Who feels more guilty about what?

When things get really busy in your life, which of the following do you struggle to find time for in a way that leaves you with a sense of feeling guilty?

## Women more than Men:

- Housekeeping such as laundry, yard work
- Maintaining relationships with friends
- Doing creative projects
- Time alone / “you time”
- Fun activities with family
- Reading books or learning something new
- Volunteering such as in a classroom or for an organization you care about
- Health upkeep such as going for checkups, getting flu shots
- Courtesies such as writing thank you cards or condolence cards
- Personal grooming such as getting haircuts, moisturizing, flossing
- Religious/spiritual pursuits
- Unstructured time
- Caring for pets
- Watering/caring for plants
- Exercise

## Men more than Women:

- Going on dates or romantic activities

## What might this mean?

- Perhaps female professionals in Tallahassee feel a **greater sense of pressure** than male professionals when it comes to finding time to get things done,  
and/or
- Female professionals feel more guilty about what doesn't get done, **when it doesn't.**
- This isn't the only area where men and women perceive workload or home life differently.
- We'll start with a fun one....





Which of these refrigerators looks more like your own?

“Cluttered”



“Clean”





Which of these refrigerators looks more like your own?

“Cluttered” = 55%



“Clean” = 45%

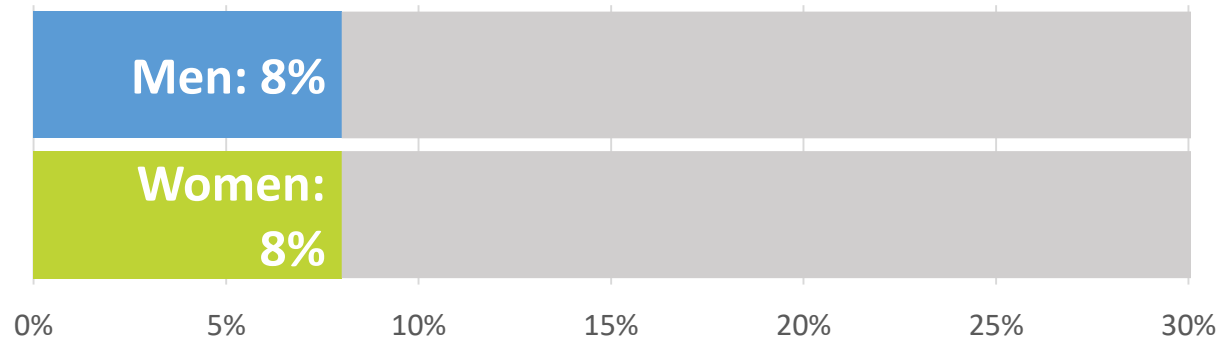


No statistical difference between portions of men and women reporting each

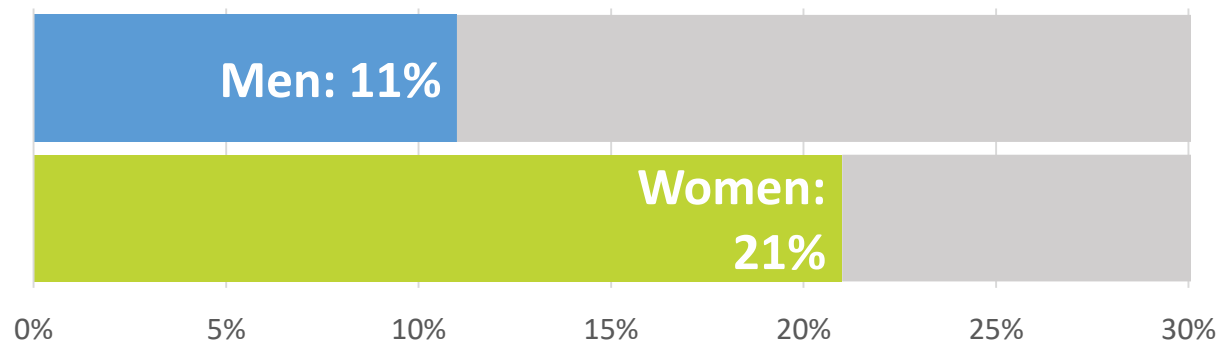


## > But... is that how they like it?

No! I don't like my fridge with a clean front!



No! I don't like my fridge with a cluttered front!



Does not liking how the outside of your fridge looks matter in ANY way beyond how you feel when you walk past your fridge?

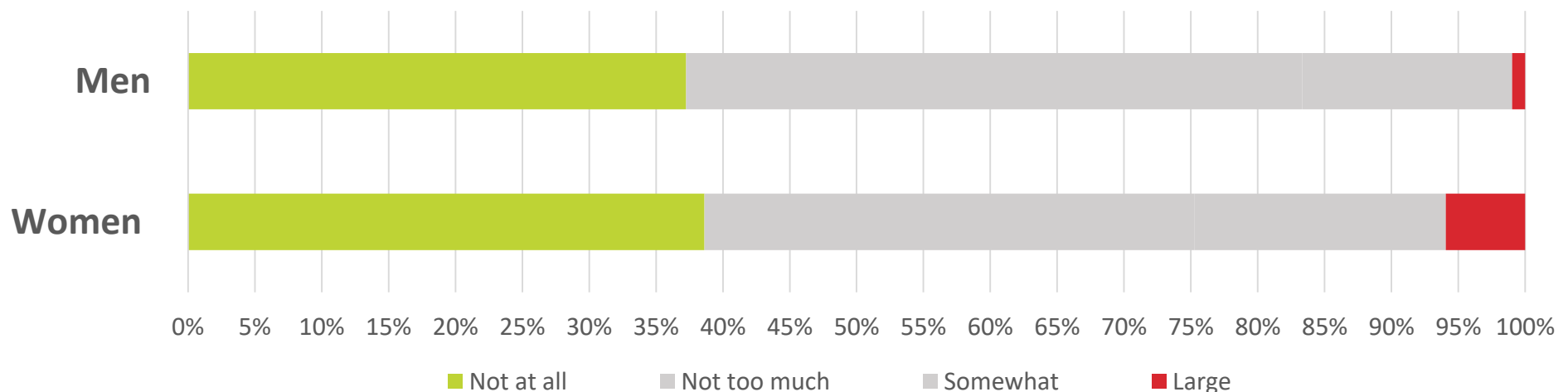
- Maybe so..... And more on that shortly.



Now for something a little more obviously relevant:

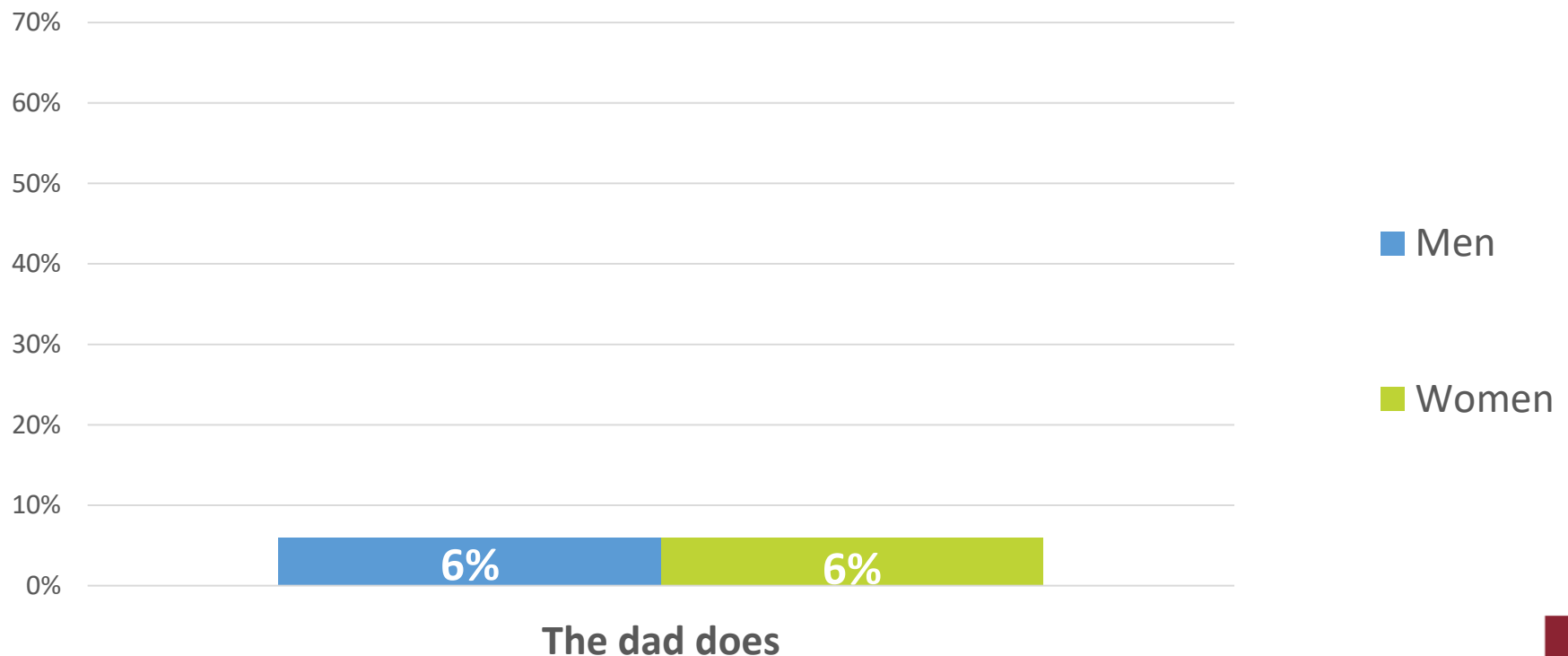
## Divisions of labor...

- ***How much is “who does what” around the house a source of conflict between yourself and your spouse/partner?***
  - Just 38% report that there is strong conflict.
  - Women slightly more likely to report that this is a “large” source of conflict, but no significant difference in portions of men and women who report low-levels of conflict.



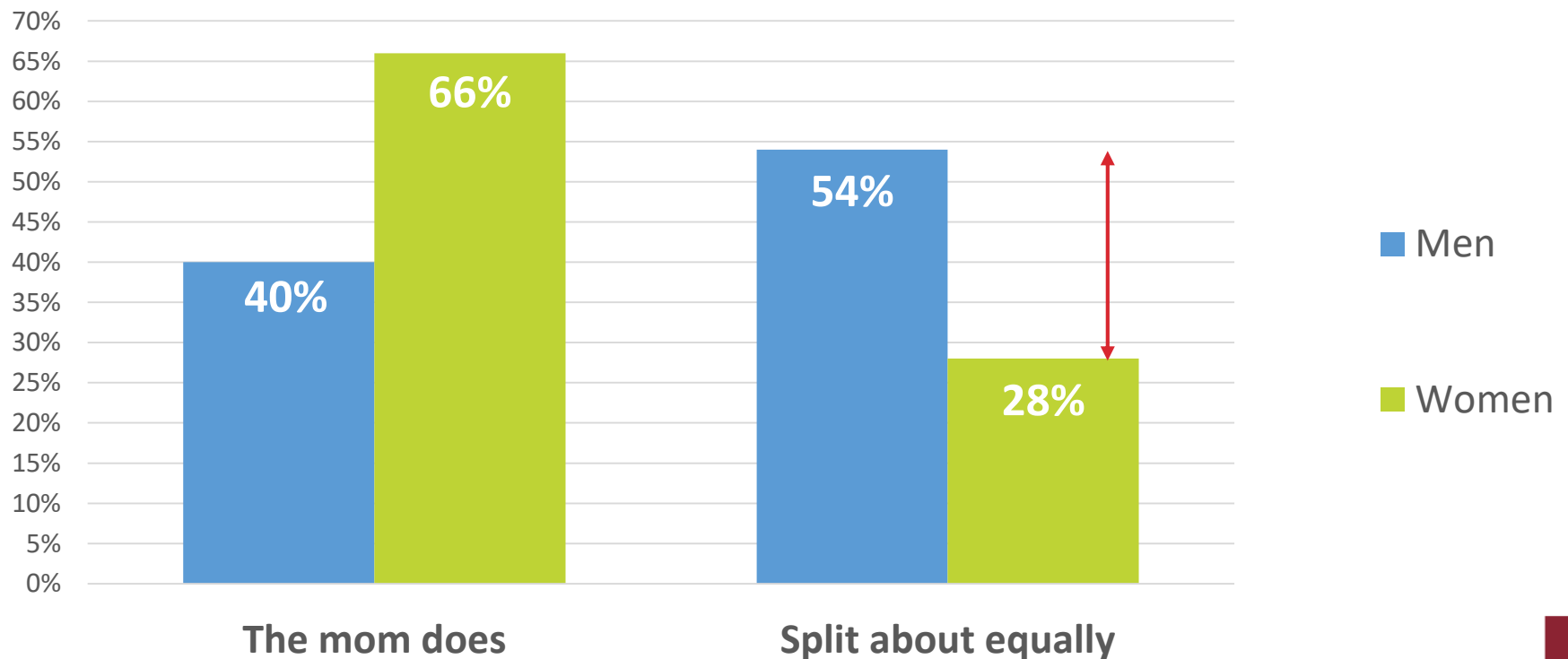
Perhaps this finding accounts for some of that difference:

- ***Who manages the majority of “kid logistics” each week – yourself, the other parent, or split evenly?***



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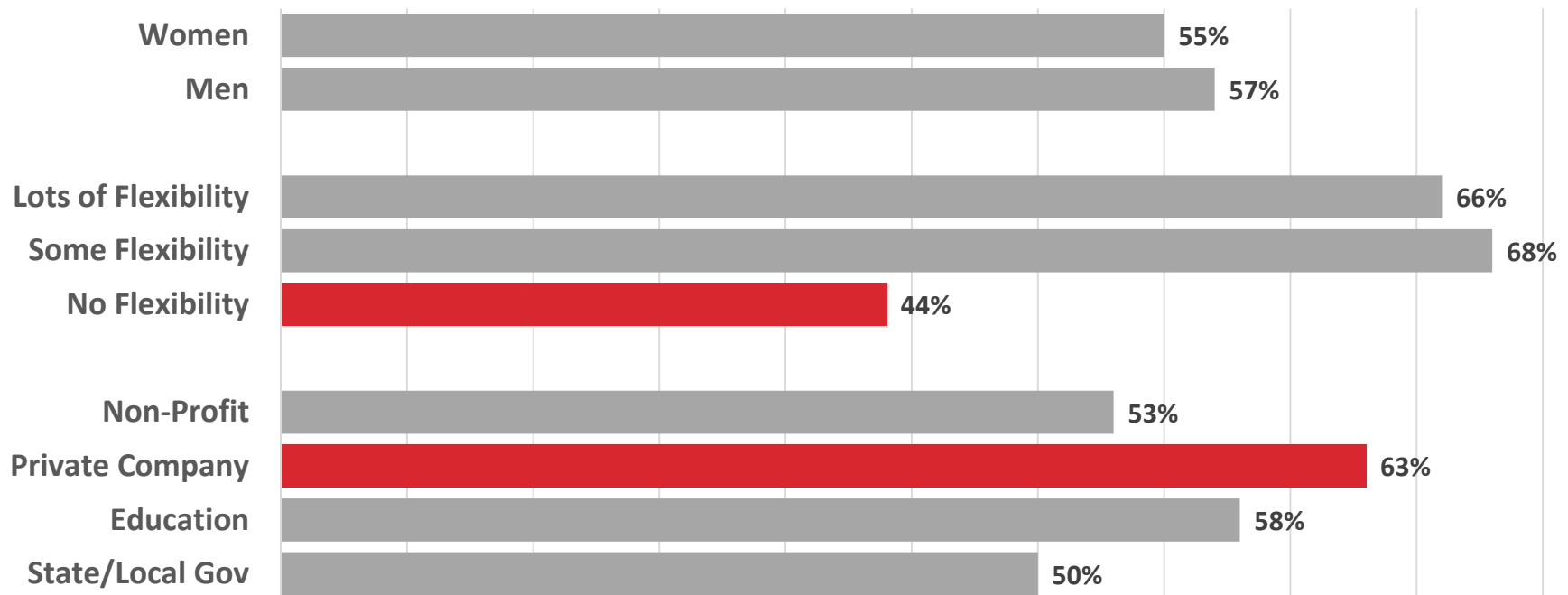
## What do Tallahasseeans think of their workplaces?

- **First, some basic stats.... Type of workplace:**
  - Private company: 41%
  - State or local government: 32%
  - Educational institution (K-12 or College): 14%
  - Non-profit company: 14%
- **What best describes your work week?**
  - Standard hours with limited to no flexibility: 47%
  - Standard hours but with some flexibility: 37%
  - Lots of flexibility (such as ability to work from home or telecommute): 17%



# Percent of employed Tallahasseeans who AGREE with the statement:

## “I love my job” by job characteristics:

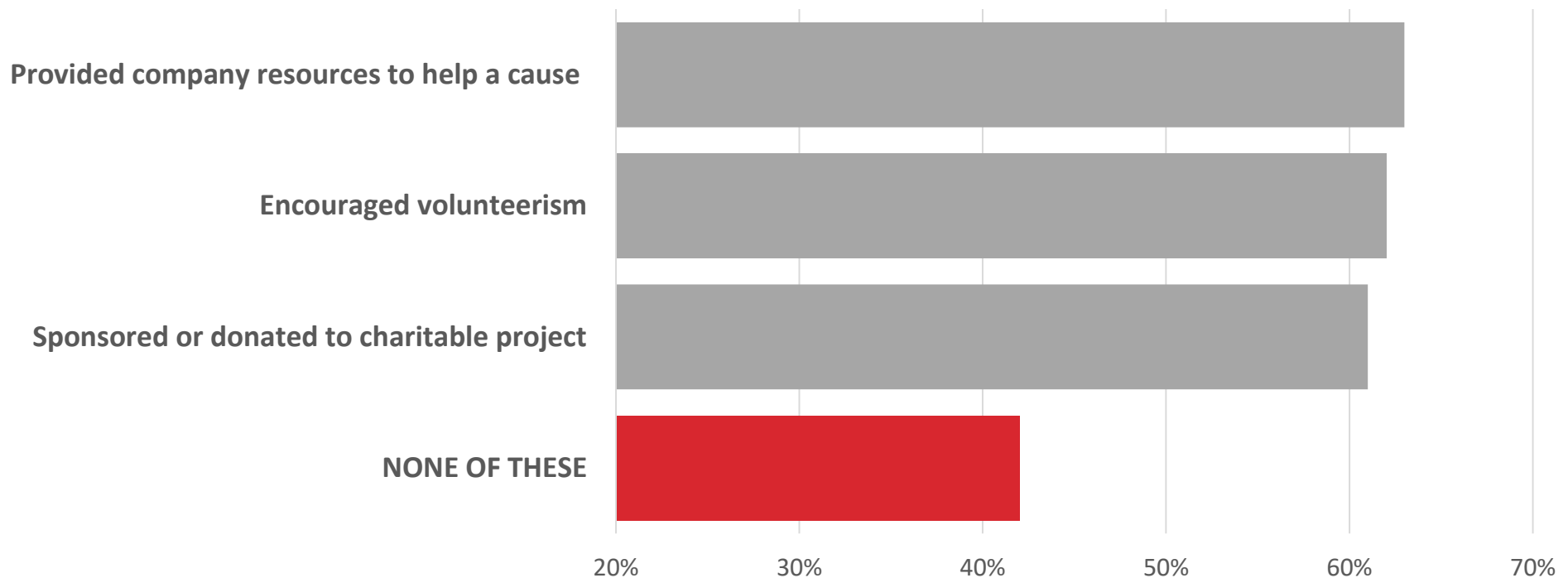


- “Some” and “Lots” of flexibility are statistically tied, both far more likely to love their jobs compared with those who have limited to no flexibility in their hours.
- Private company employees are significantly more likely to love their jobs compared with government and non-profit employees.
- Men and women are statistically tied.



## But it appears that another factor matters as much as or MORE:

“I love my job” by employer’s charitable engagement:



- The charitable engagement of one’s company matters a lot and is one of the strongest predictors of employees loving their jobs.

## The charitable or volunteerism-promoting activity of companies is also significantly associated with:

- % who feel they have a “good balance going between work and life”
- % who report that they “like living in Tallahassee and plan to stay a while”
- % who feel that “Tallahassee is a good place to build a career”
- % who feel that “Tallahassee is a good place to achieve a positive work-life balance”

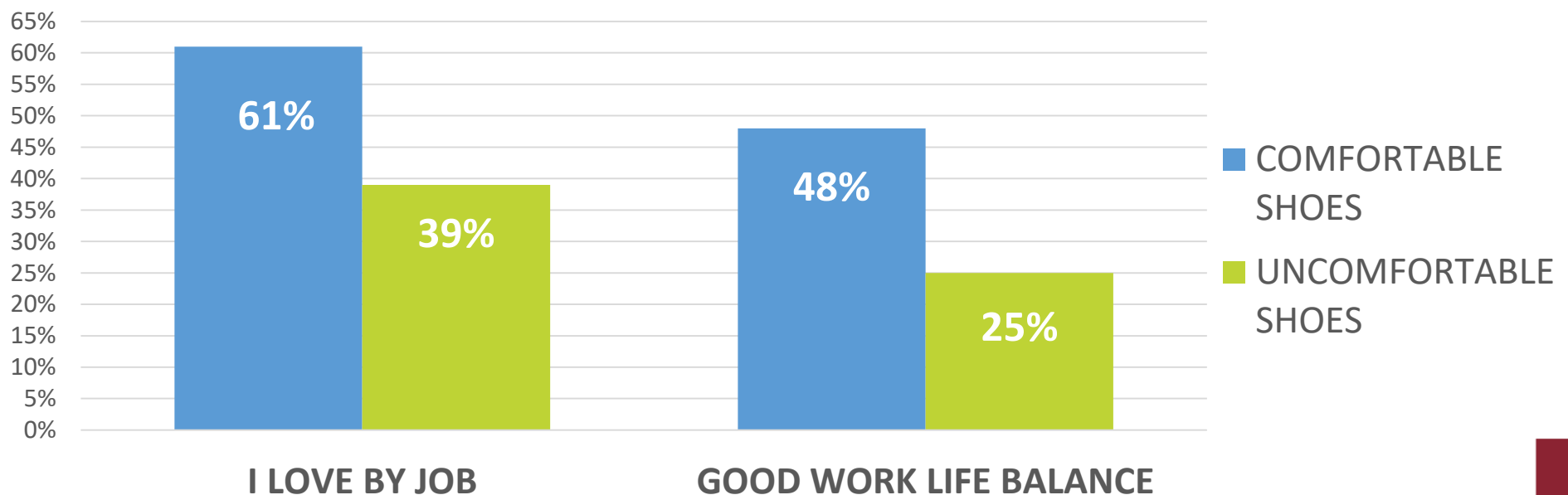
> Let's take a step back ...



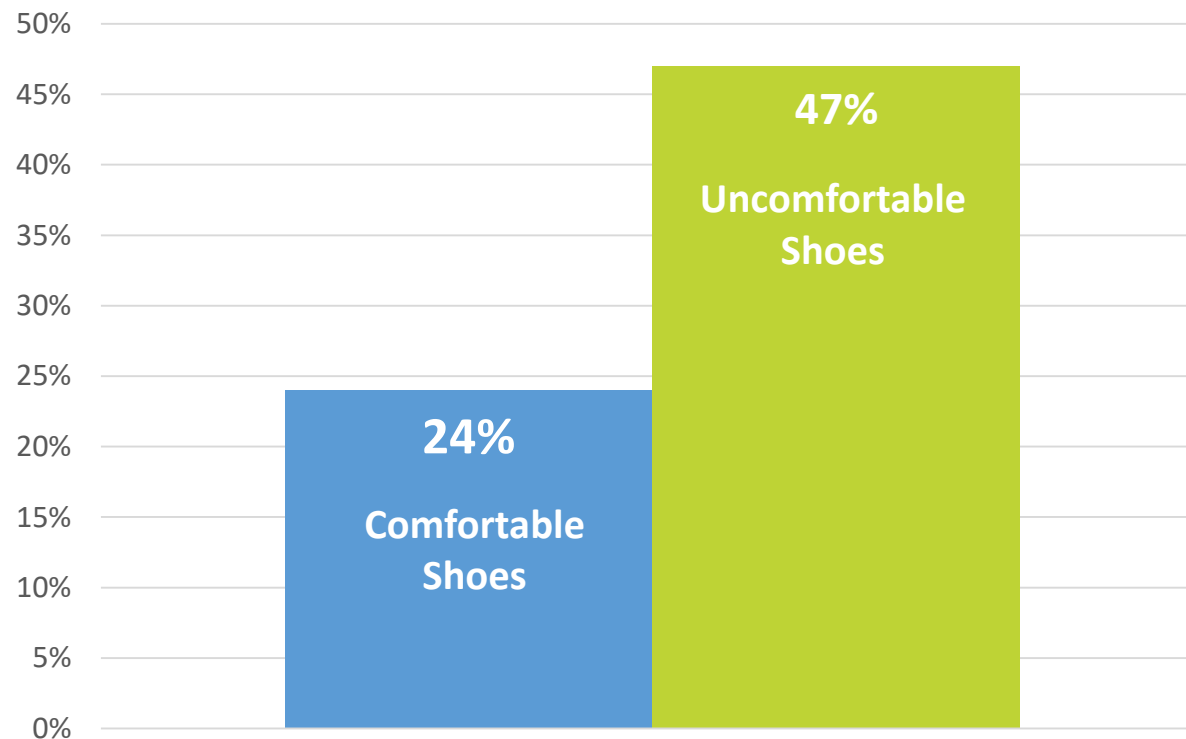


## “I love my job” and work-life balance by shoe situation:

- Tallahasseeans who report that on the average workday their shoes are comfortable also report significantly greater levels of job satisfaction and positive work-life balance.
- While women are **DOUBLE** as likely to report that their weekday shoes are uncomfortable, there are **NO** gender differences in the relationship between uncomfortable shoes and feeling dissatisfied with work/life.



Comfortable shoes are also statistically associated with one's satisfaction living in Tallahassee:



"I feel stuck in Tallahassee and would leave if I could"

## Uncomfortable shoes are also significantly associated with:

- % who report that “when I make lunch plans with a friend, there is a good chance I’ll cancel or postpone at the last moment”
- % who report that most days do NOT go as expected
- % who report NOT liking how the front of their fridge looks

## Correlation is not causation, so...

- We can't assume that wearing uncomfortable shoes CAUSES one to feel trapped in Tallahassee, and...
- Feeling trapped in Tallahassee doesn't force one to wear uncomfortable shoes.
- Therefore:
- What is it about feeling trapped in one's shoes that relates to how one feels about their job, their predictability with lunch plans with friends, the city they live in, their fridge, and so on?



## Something about control over the little things in life...

### It seems that:

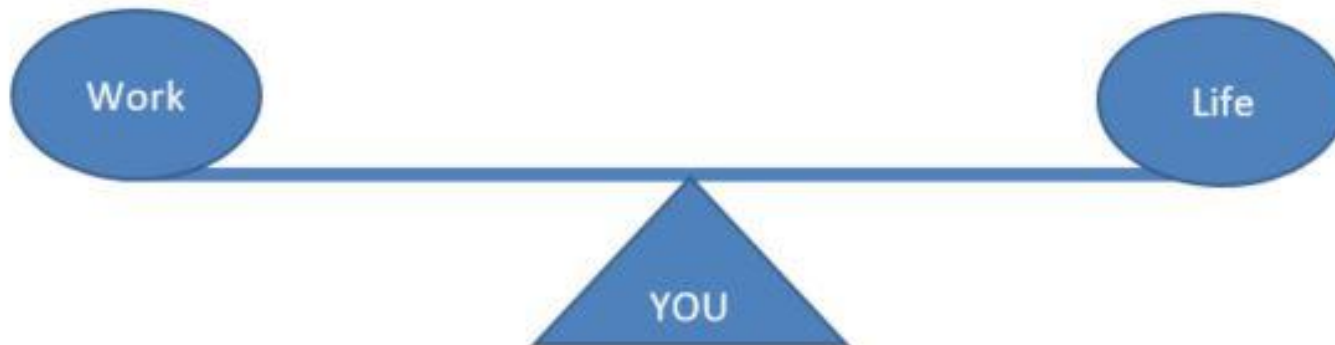
- One's sense of **control** over the little things in life... even as little and easily changeable as one's shoes or the magnets on one's fridge ... is a huge determinant of one's life satisfaction, whether in the home or in one's job.



# A new hypothesis...

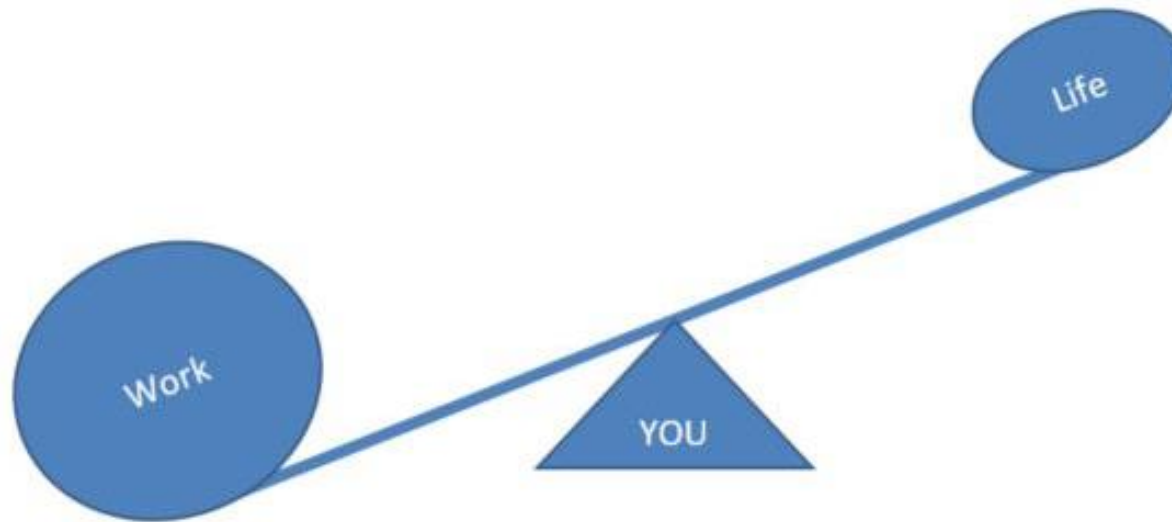
- We began with the hypothesis that work-life balance is a function of how work factors and life factors relate to ONE ANOTHER.
- Perhaps this is isn't quite so.
- Maybe work-life balance is really a function of **within-work balance** and **within-life balance**, more so than a measure of balance **between** the two.
- Here's how that might look...

## > You are the fulcrum.



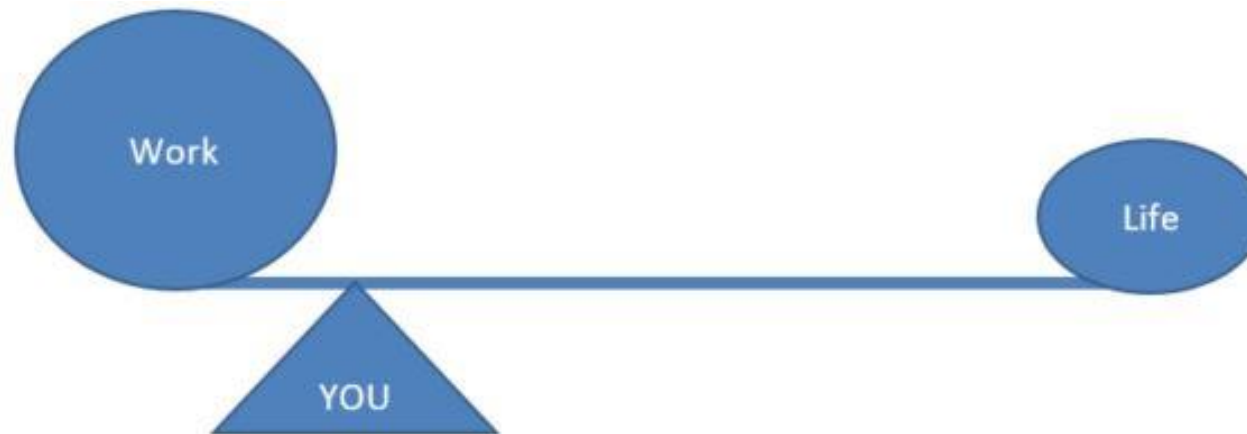
- The sides of the scale are constantly changing weights – new projects at work, a coworker on vacation, a broken appliance at home, a child home sick from school...
- If the center point – the fulcrum – is set in stone and cannot move, the weights alone determine balance.

# > You are the fulcrum.



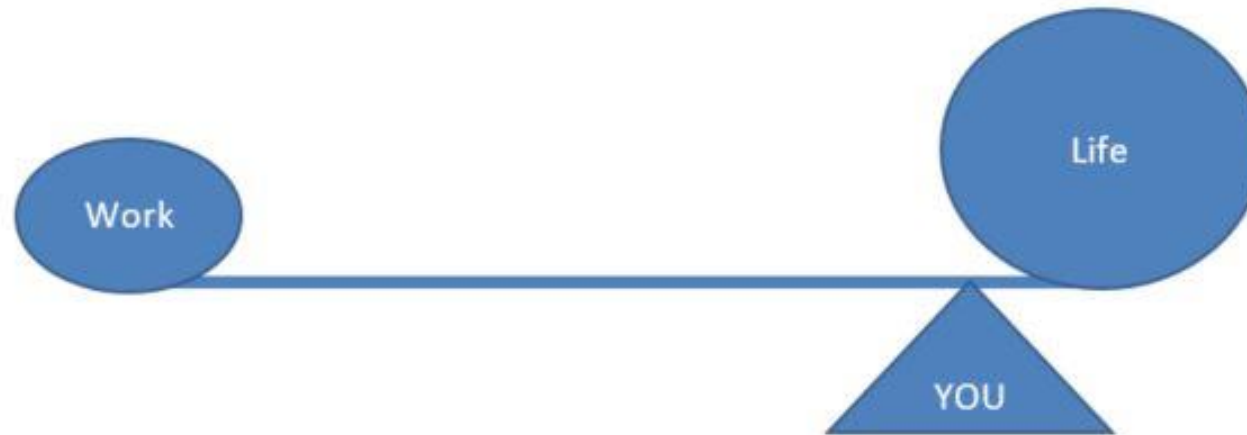
- Like this.

## > You are the fulcrum.



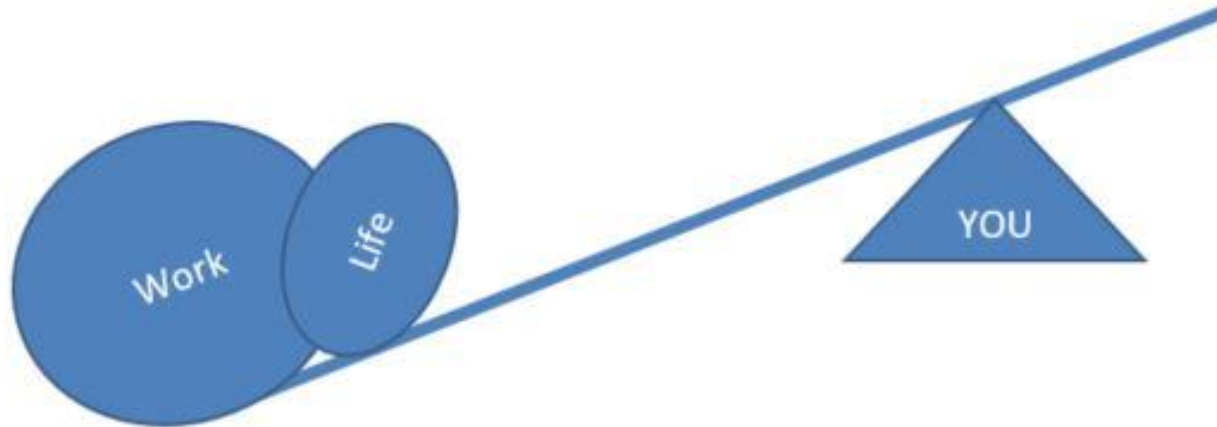
- But if the fulcrum CAN move ... balance can be maintained.

## > You are the fulcrum.



- **Your ability to move your fulcrum depends on within-work balance and/or within-life balance:**
  - Balance WITHIN a home may be having a good division of labor on household activities or kid logistics, or even how tidy one's fridge or living spaces are kept.
  - Balance WITHIN a workplace may be having an employer who offers enough flexibility where you can spend a little time volunteering or taking care of things on the home front without repercussion.

## > You are the fulcrum.

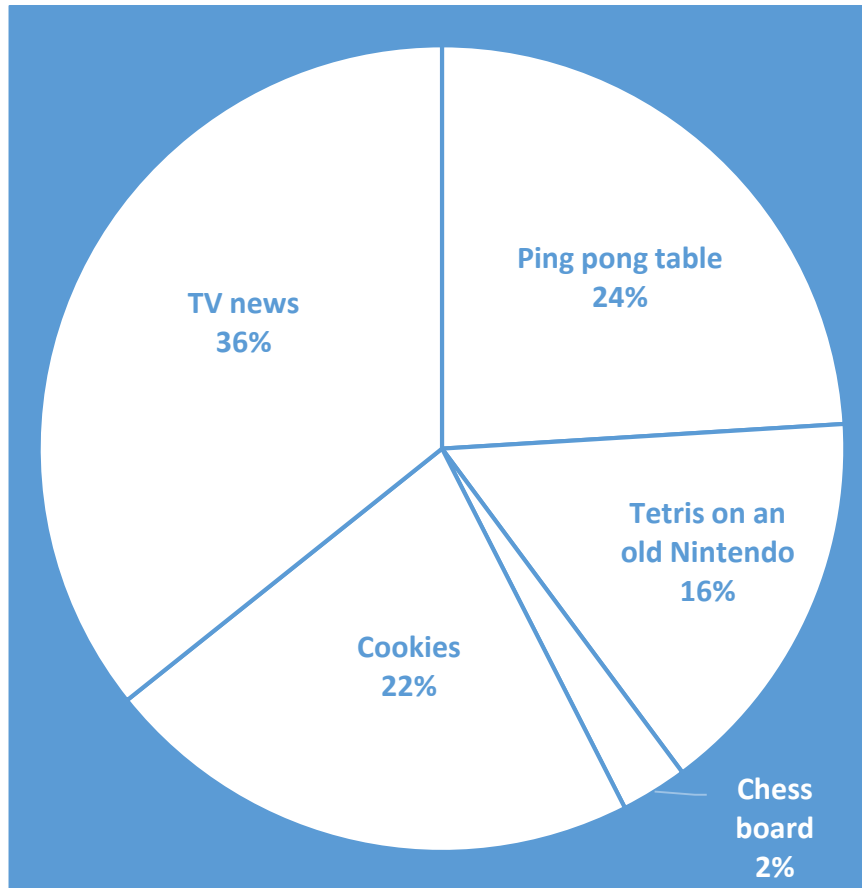


- When the balance within one's home, or within one's workplace is off... that's where dissatisfaction can really take hold.
- (This is also where I am tempted to say that comfortable shoes increase one's comfort to be mobile.... But this is about a feeling far less tangible than being able to dart out to the store on a moment's notice wearing heels. (And a lot of women are perfectly comfortable doing just that.))



# What can Tallahassee employers do to help staff become happier fulcrums?

## “Break Rooms”



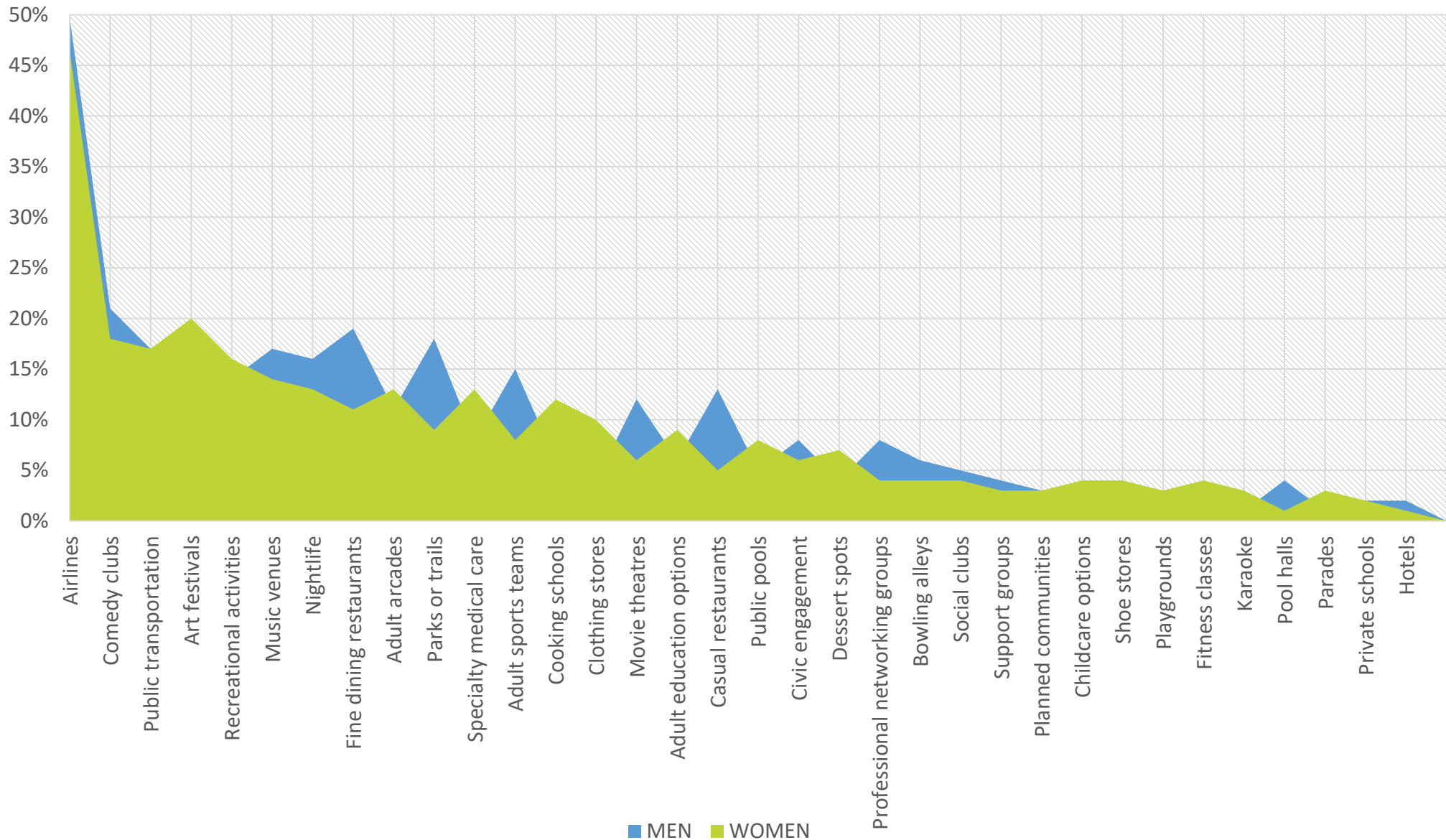
## And some flexibility:

- Consider what types of flexibility may be feasible in your workplace and survey employees to see what options would be most appreciated.
- Consider ways to address within-work balance at times of work overflow.
- Encourage volunteerism and/or consider options for giving within the community, too!



# What can Tallahassee as a city do to attract and retain happy residents?

Of the following, which do you wish Tallahassee had MORE of?

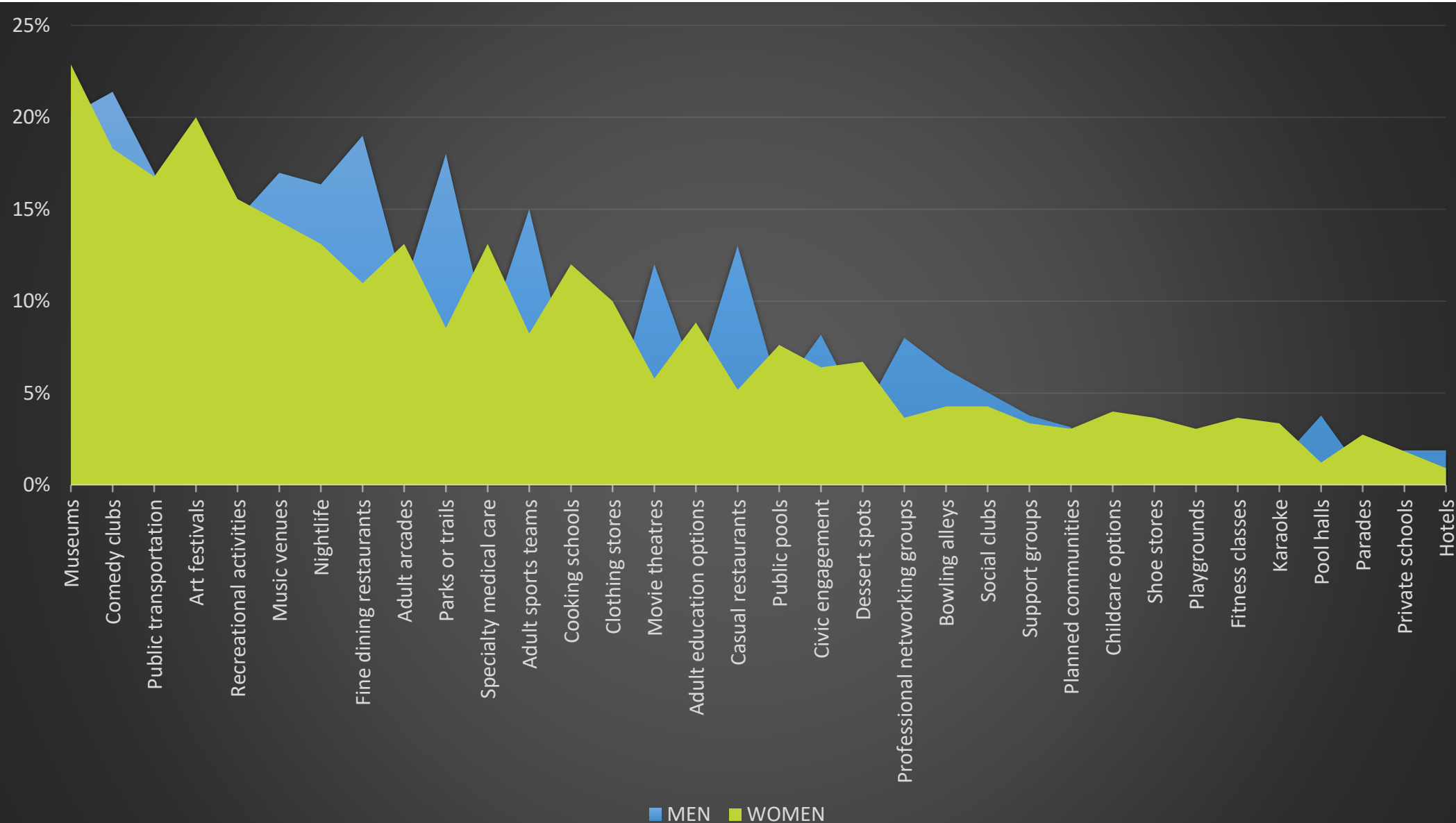






# What can Tallahassee as a city do to attract and retain happy residents?

Let's take airlines out of the running and look again...



## > And finally.... An experiment

- Respondents were randomly presented with 1 of 3 pictures of Tallahassee “landmarks” while being asked about whether they like living in Tallahassee and plan to stay, or if they feel stuck in Tallahassee and would move if they could.
- The pictures weren’t labeled and just appeared in the background.





# “I like Tallahassee and plan to stay for a while”



	Cascades Park	Lake Ella	FSU/Seminoles
ALL	79%	72%	69%
Women	74%	71%	69%
Men	91%	75%	70%
FSU Fans	83%	78%	73%
Gator Fans	79%	72%	53%





***You have brains in your head.***

***You have feet in your shoes.***

***You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.***

***You're on your own, and you know what you know.***

***And you are the one who'll decide where to go.***

***~Theodor Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss***

