

# Making it Work: Managing Successful Maternity Leave Career Transitions



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# The Partners



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# Maternity Leave

- inclusive of maternity, parental and adoption leave as well as any extended care and nurturing leave following the birth or adoption of a child.



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# The Need

- Women account for approximately **50%** the workforce
- **58%** — Proportion of female postsecondary graduates in 2012
- Working women who become mothers, **90%** take a maternity leave
- Women impact the bottom line



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# The Gap

- Limited Canadian resources
- Some resources on topics, such as EI, work-life balance, breastfeeding
- Lack of diversity in existing resources
- Employer perspective



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# The Project

- Ethics review
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Survey
- Resource guide and webinar development
- Project presentation at Cannexus 2016



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# The Outcomes

- Guidebooks: Making it Work! Managing successful maternity leave transitions
- Webinars
- One for employees and one for employers
- Self-directed



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# The Employees

- Adoptive mothers
- First time mothers > 40
- Young mothers < 25
- Immigrant mothers, < 5 years in Canada
- Aboriginal mothers



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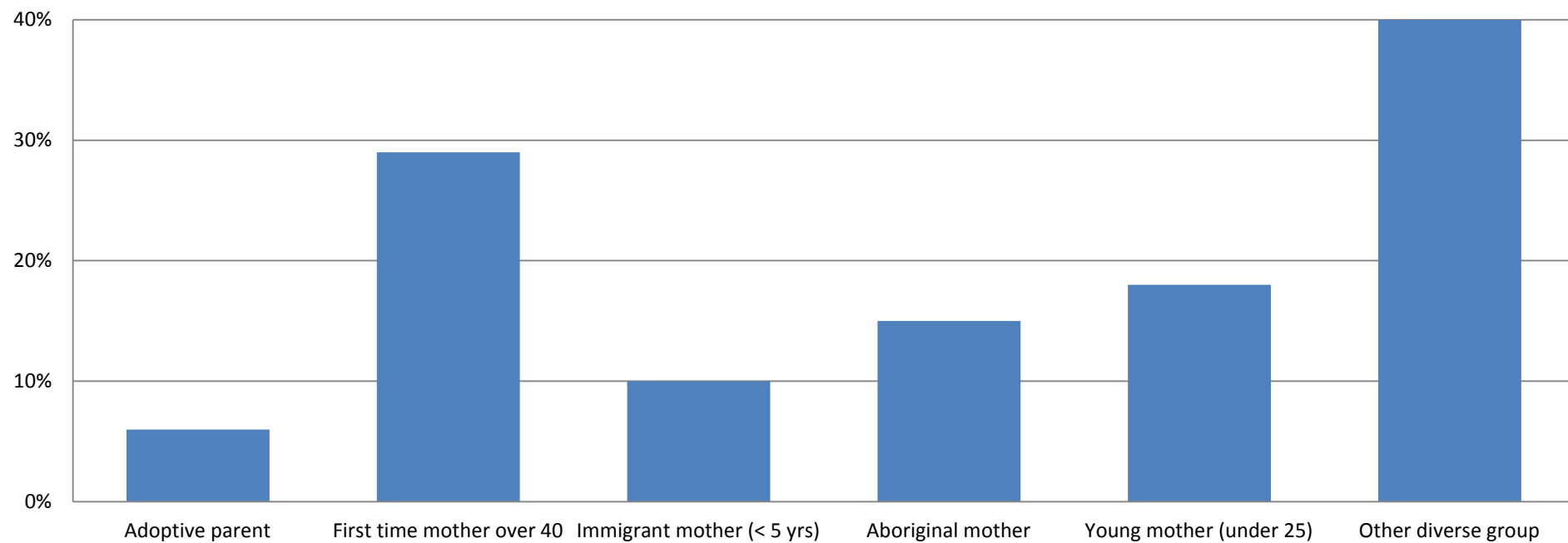


# Reactions to Maternity Leave?



# Employees

Do you identify with any of the following diverse groups?



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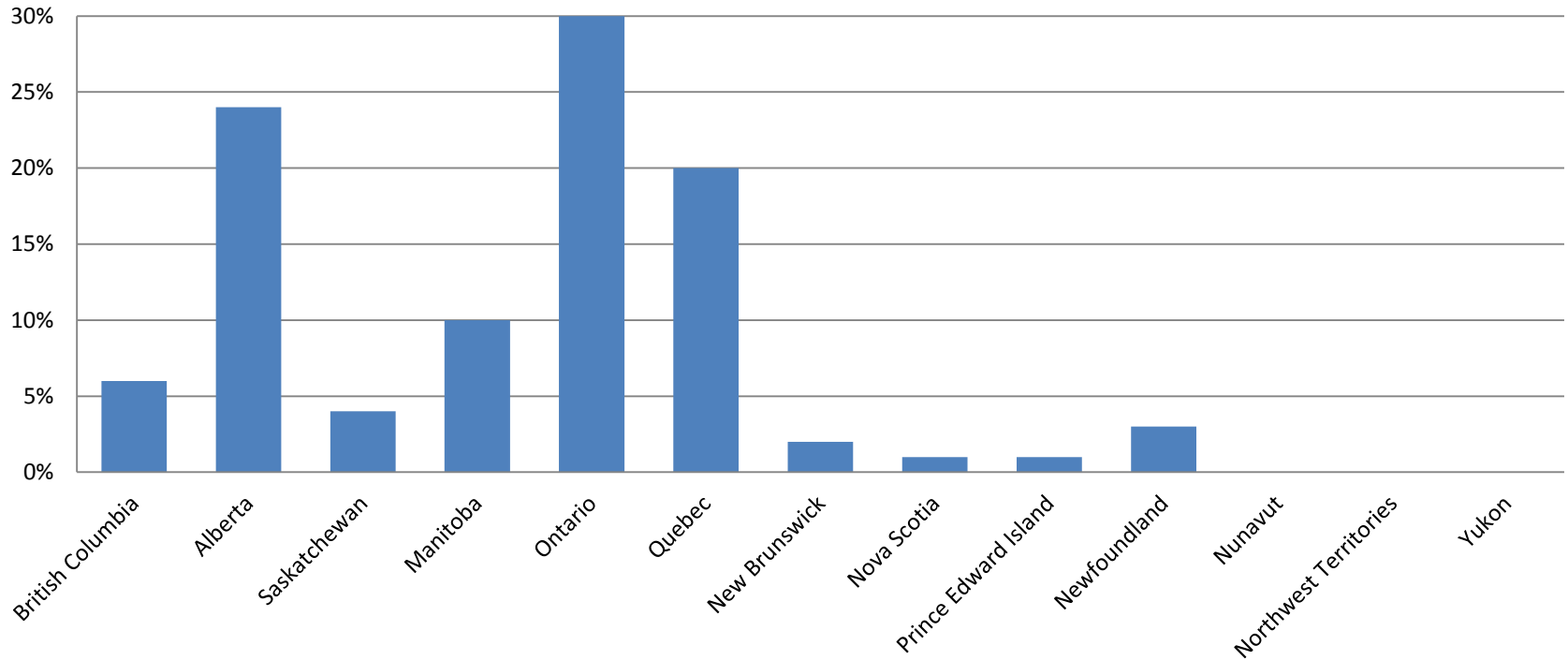
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# Employees by Location

Where in Canada are you located?



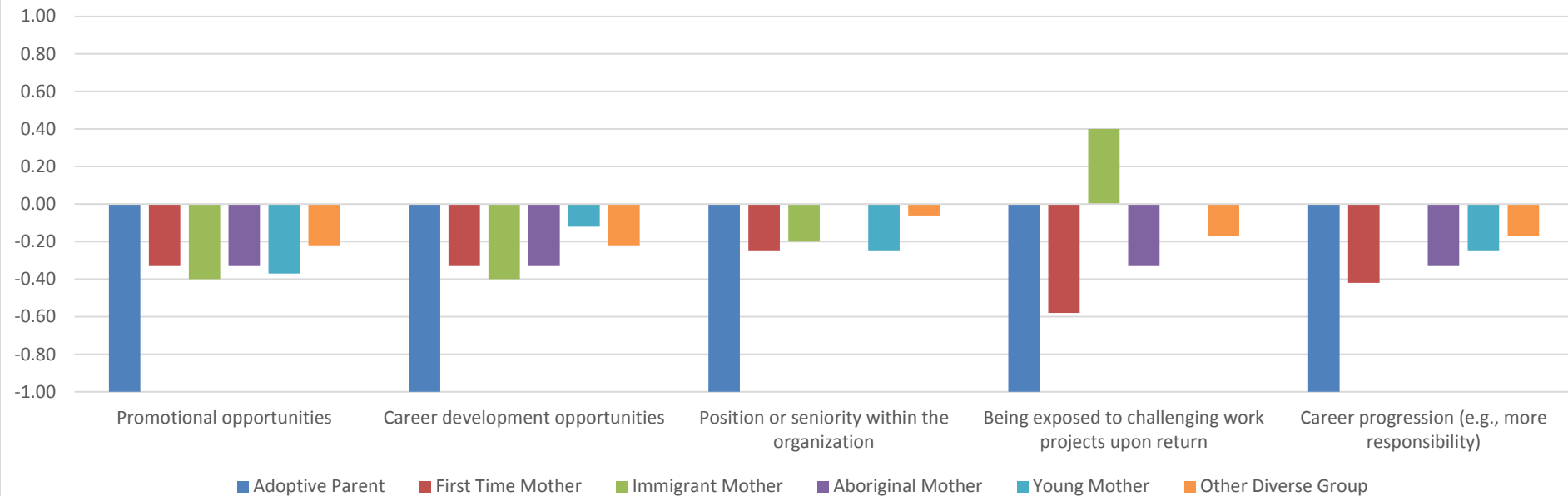
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# Employees By Diverse Group

What impact does maternity leave have on the following aspects of women's careers within your organization?



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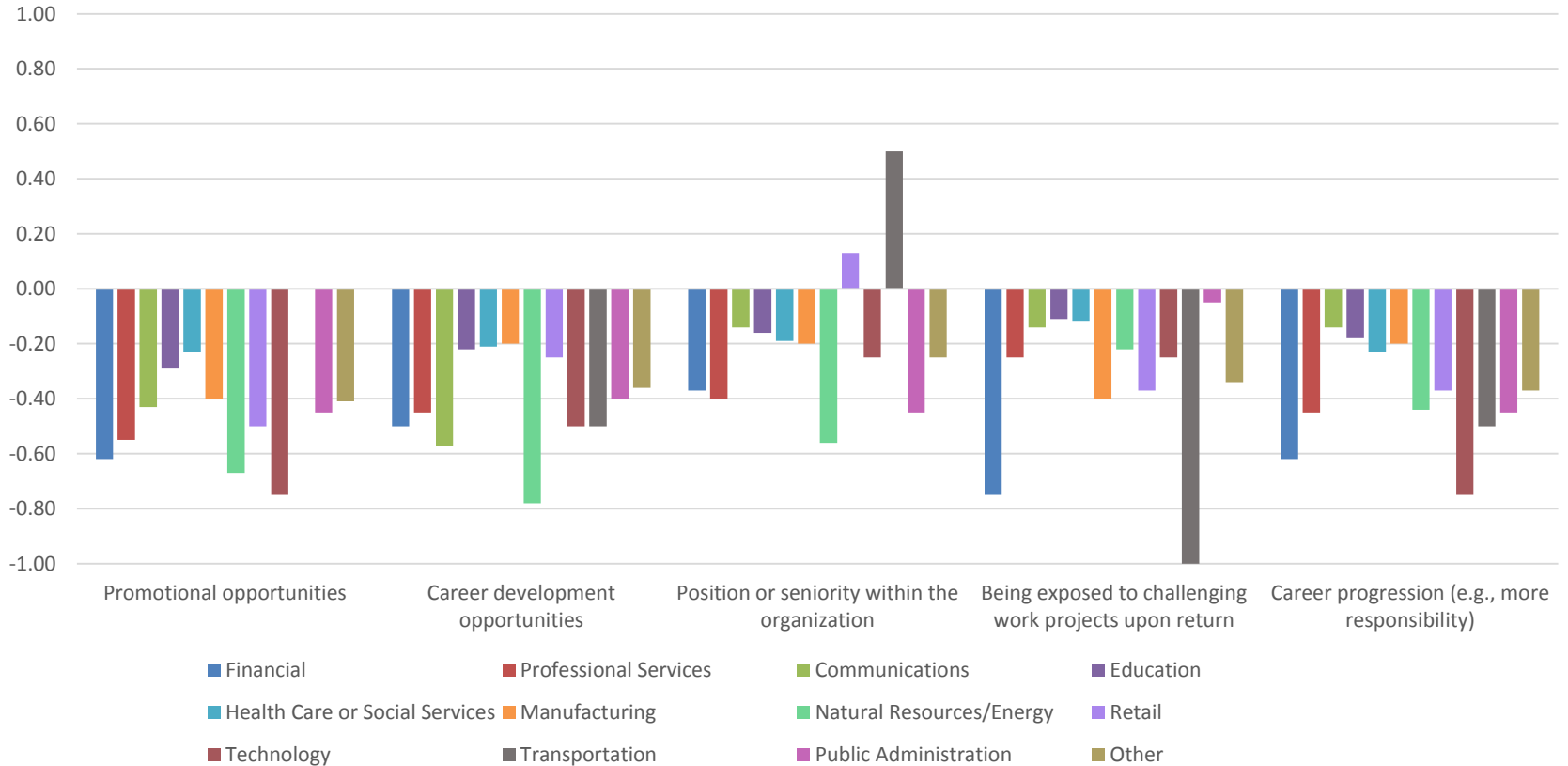
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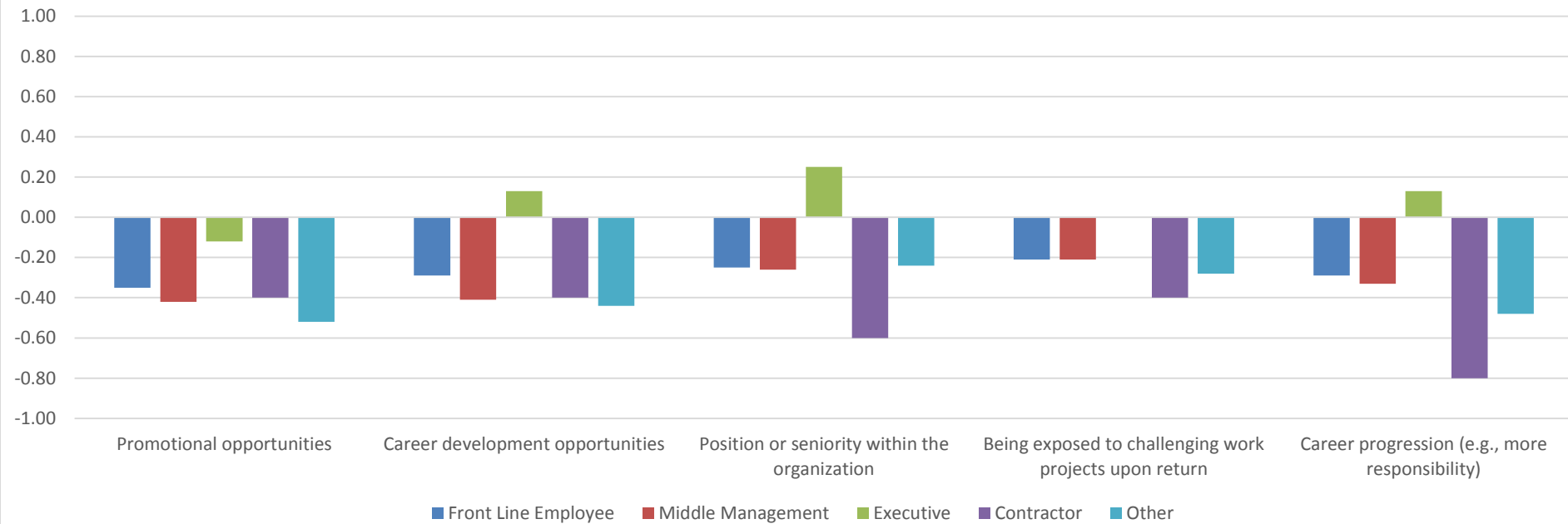
# Employees By Industry

What impact does maternity leave have on the following aspects of women's careers within your organization?



# Employees By Position

What impact does maternity leave have on the following aspects of women's careers within your organization?

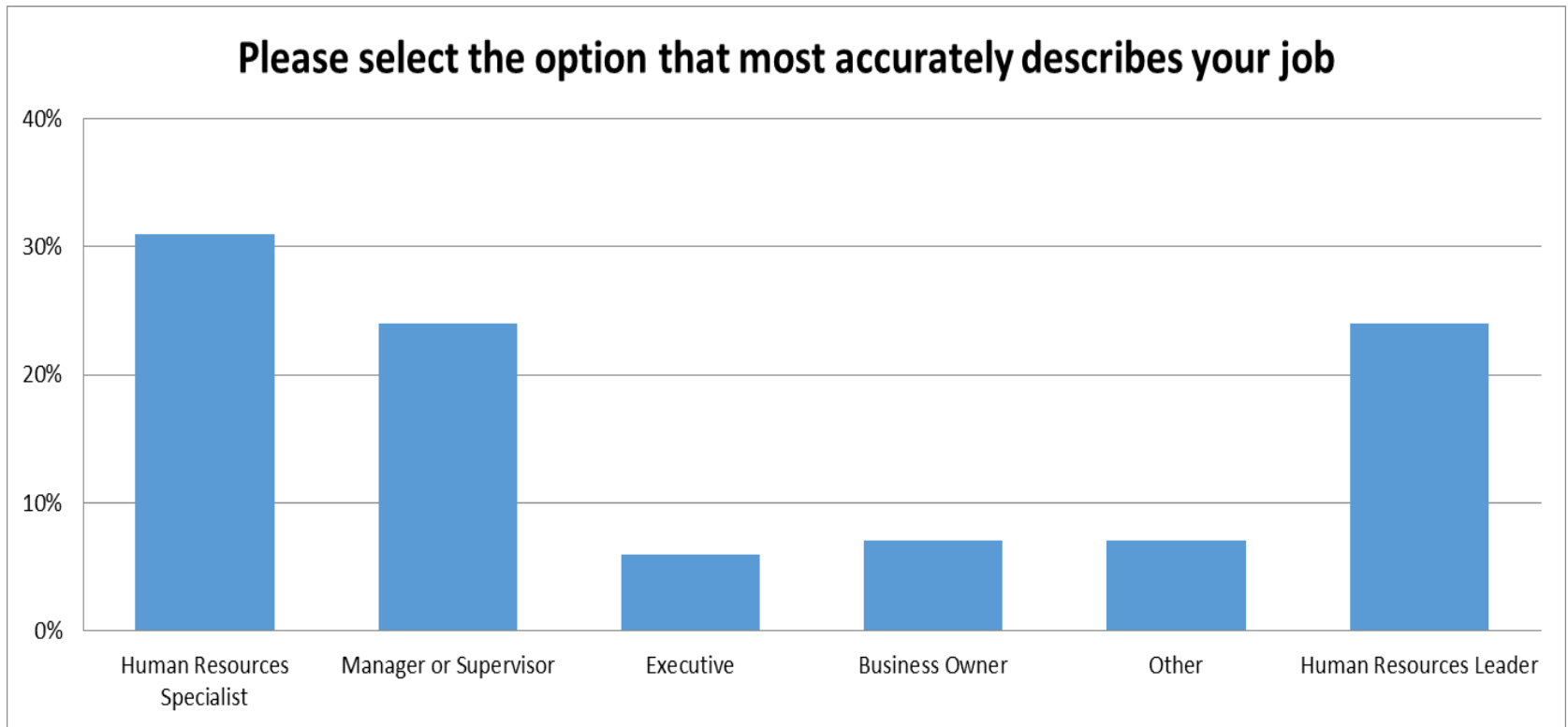


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# Employers by Position



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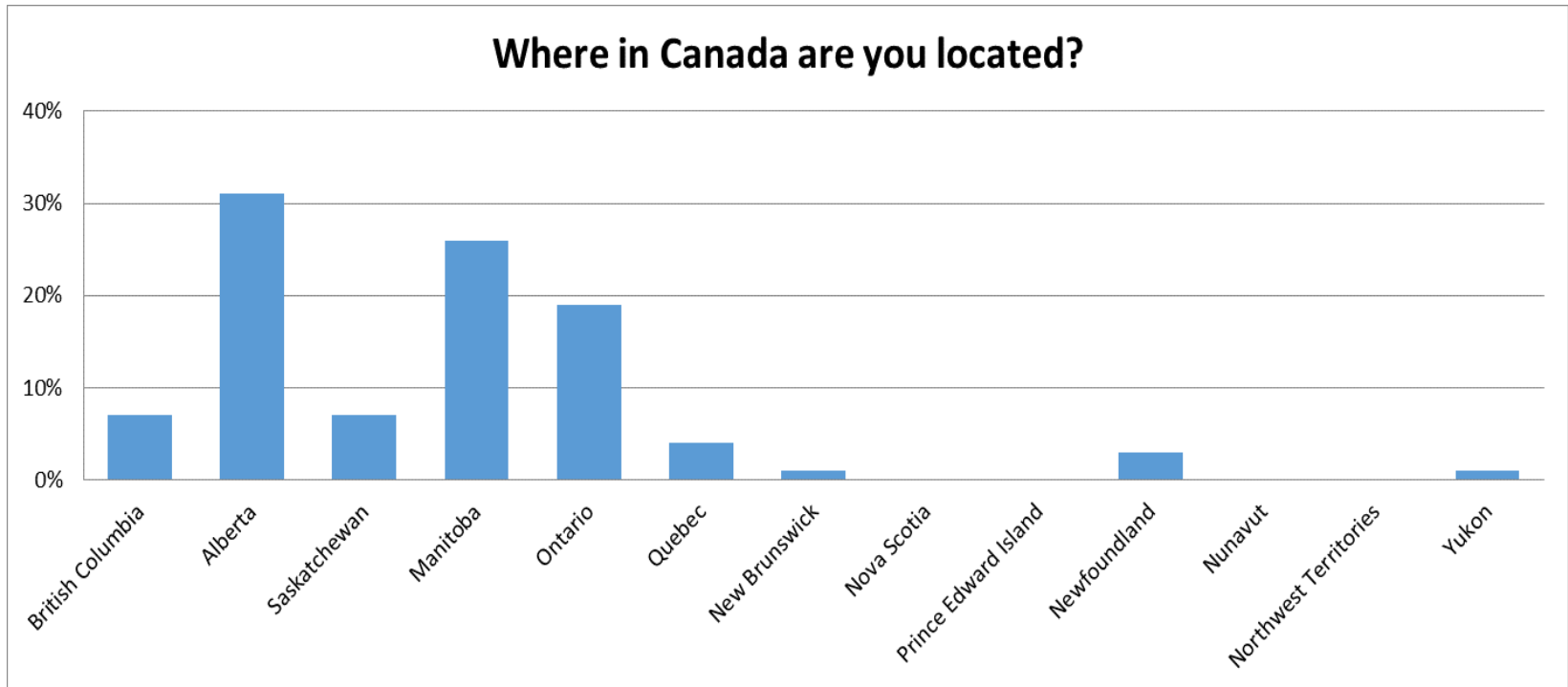
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# Employers by Location

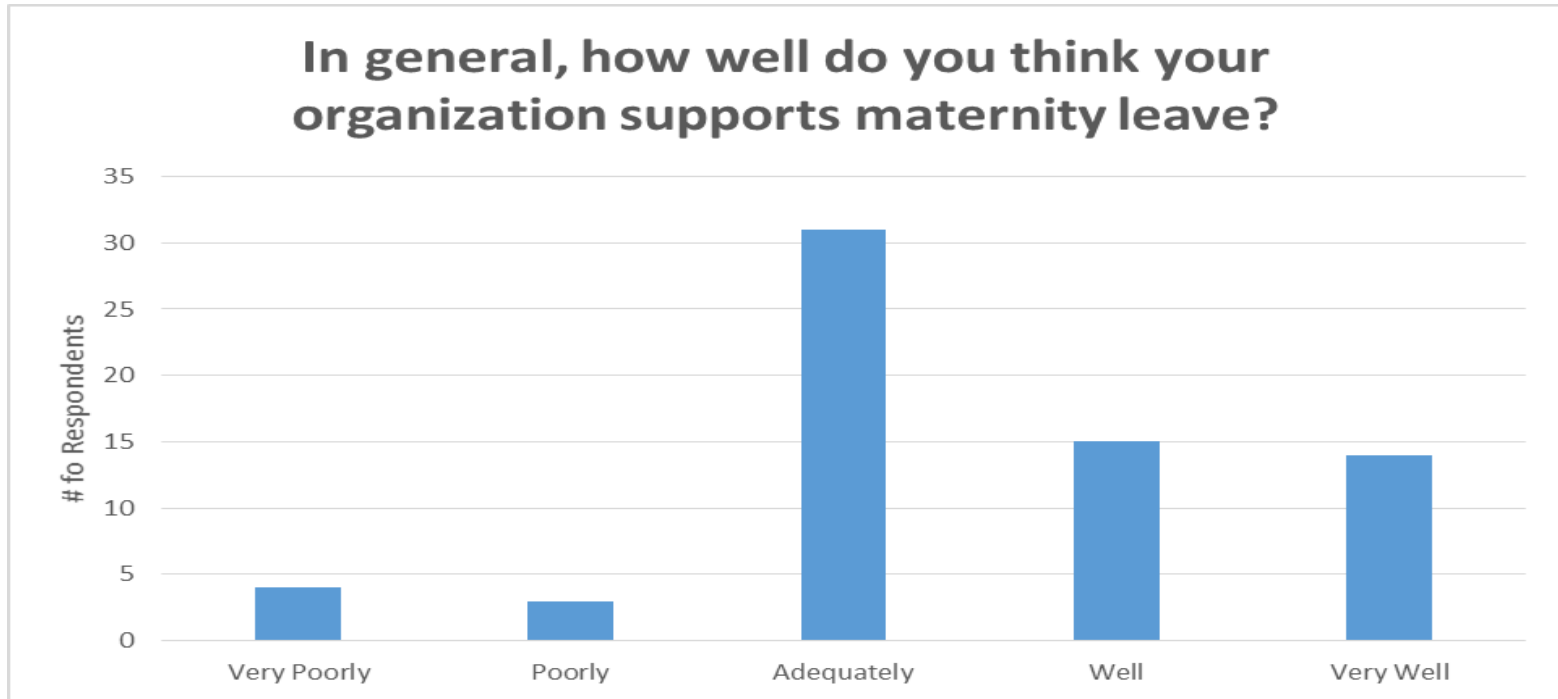


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# Employers



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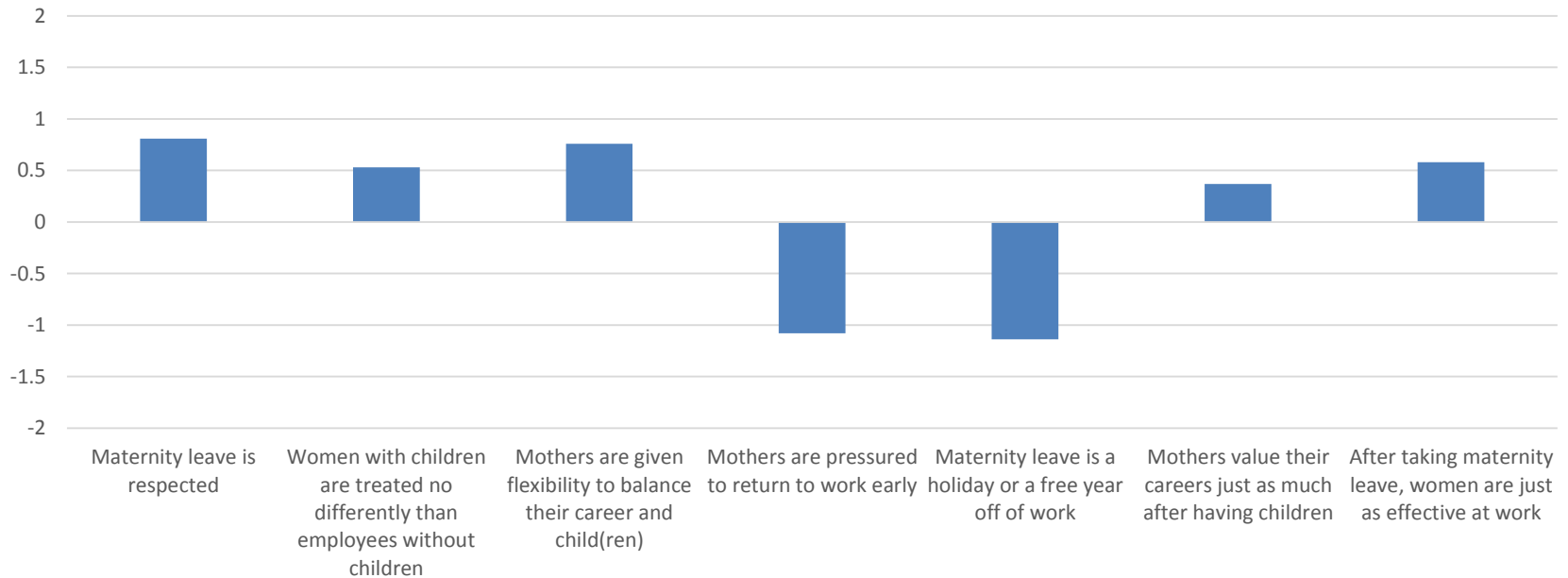
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# Employers

To what extent do you agree that the following perceptions about mothers and maternity leave are present within your organization?



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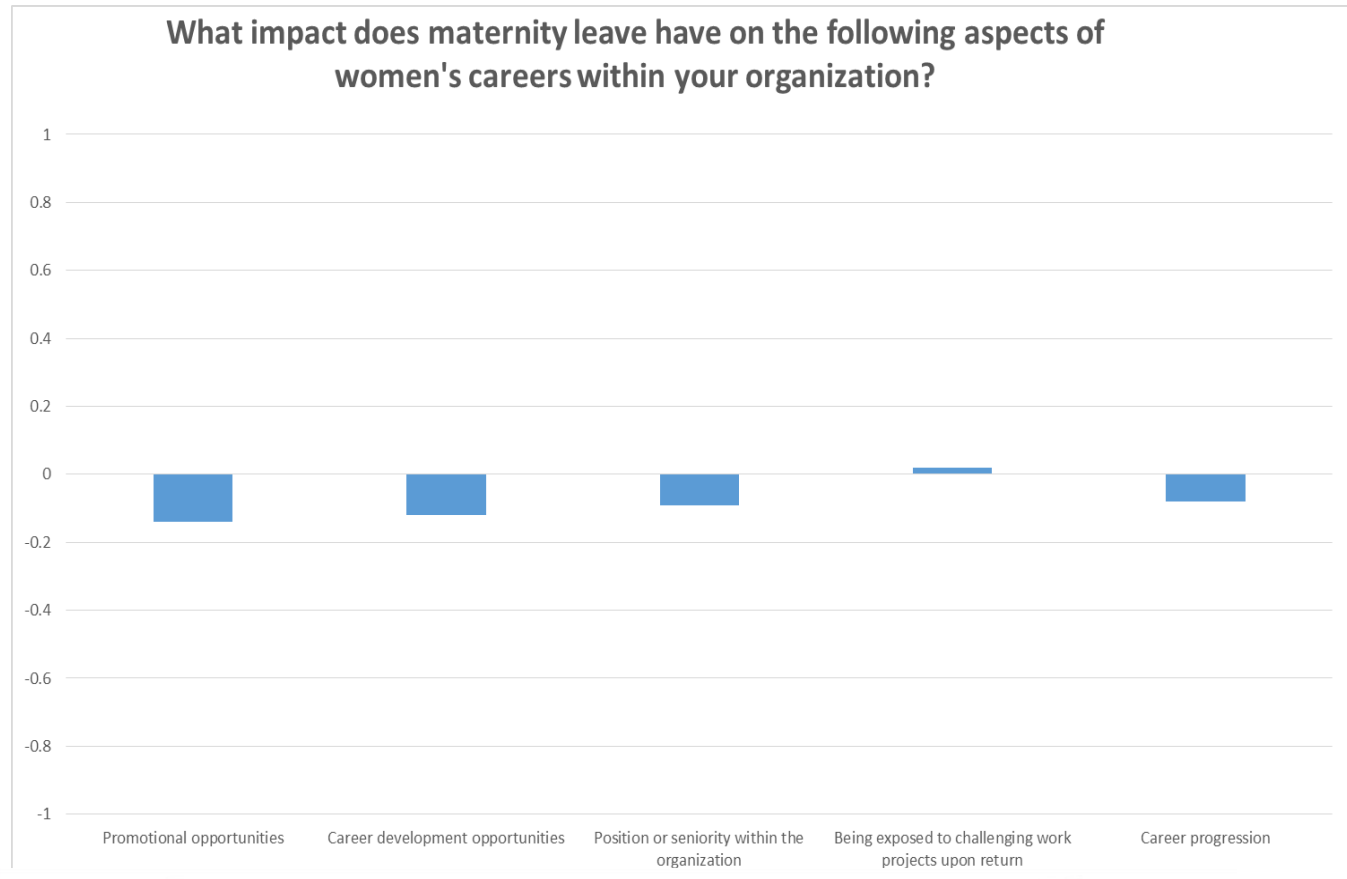
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# Impact of Mat Leave on Employees



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# Quotes From The Employees

- *Going on maternity leave is still considered "career suicide" in my industry.*
- *I think people, in general, are looking for work/life balance. Mothers are just one group among many*
- *These assumptions...have been by far the worst part about coming back to work.*
- *Returning from my maternity leave I was ignored....I felt like an afterthought that nobody cares about.*
- *My work organization is very open and flexible towards this issue. I have flexible hours and the possibility to work from home one day a week, which is very helpful.*



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# Quotes From The Employees

- *At best, I felt that I had returned to a placeholder position with an empty title, but certainly not as the contributing, valued member of the team I had been previously and was eager to be again. I'm confident my organization would never treat a new employee like this; I felt very much like a second-rate citizen.*
- *A woman is never more judged personally and professionally as she is when she becomes a mother.*
- *My organization has a collective agreement that supports breastfeeding mothers, allowing them to leave work to breastfeed.*



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# Quotes From The Employers

- *If organizations just switched their approach and philosophy on maternity leave, they would be able to reap the rewards.*
- *It's a real entanglement of power, personalities, and stakeholders.*
- *If we just classified it as a government legislated leave and treated it as such (like sabbaticals), then expectations around career development becomes much more clear, people on maternity leave need to be treated just as women are treated on any other leave to reduce negative stigma associated with career progression for women on mat leave.*



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# Quotes From The Employers

- *It actually pays to have employees on leave because those who replace the women on leave are paid less; they have fewer holidays, benefits, etc. There are also vacant positions that I don't have to pay and can be used for another project or someone additional to help on another project where they may be needed*
- *So much of how a maternity leave unfolds depends on the individual manager (no matter how good/supportive the policies are)*



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# Strategies to Support Clients Through Maternity Leave Career Transition

- Validate and support
- Process the emotion
- Discuss identity
- Take stock
- Challenge beliefs and assumptions
- Define career success



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# Strategies for Employers

- Explore biases
- Avoid assumptions
- Facilitate career dialogues
- Understand success
- Communication plan
- Soft return
- Re-onboard



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# Other Strategies?



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# Thank You!

For project updates, please visit:

<http://calgarycareercounselling.com/managing-successful-maternity-leave-career-transitions/>



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