



SHRM Survey Findings: Social Networking Websites and Recruiting/Selection



Key Findings: Recruiting Job Candidates

- **Organizations are increasingly using social networking sites for recruiting.** More than three-quarters (77%) of organizations reported using social networking sites to recruit potential job candidates, an increase from 56% in 2011 and 34% in 2008.
 - Publicly and privately owned for-profit organizations are more likely than nonprofit and government organizations, and nonprofit organizations are more likely than government organizations, to use social networking sites to recruit potential job candidates.
- **Why do organizations use social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates?** The majority (80%) say the primary reason is the ability to recruit passive job candidates who might not otherwise apply or be contacted by the organization.
 - Compared with 2008 and 2011 data, organizations are increasingly using social networking websites to target candidates with a specific set of skills (69%), to increase employer brand and recognition (67%), and to allow potential candidates to easily contact their organization about employment (57%).
- **What are the reasons that organizations decide NOT to use social networking sites for recruitment?** About one-half of organizations are concerned with legal risks or discovering information about protected characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender, religious affiliation) (52%) or do not have enough HR staff time to use this recruiting method (48%). One out of four (26%) cite questions about the accuracy of the information on social networking websites.
 - Government organizations are more likely than nonprofit organizations to have concerns about legal risks/discovering information about protected characteristics.

Key Findings: Recruiting Job Candidates

- **LinkedIn is the most commonly used site for recruitment.** Of those organizations that use social networking sites for recruitment, the vast majority (94%) use LinkedIn. This is followed by Facebook (54%), Twitter (39%) and professional or association social networking sites other than SHRM Connect (29%). Less than 10% of organizations use other sites like Google+, YouTube, SHRM Connect, Pinterest and Foursquare.
 - Publicly owned for-profit organizations are more likely than nonprofit and government organizations to use LinkedIn to recruit potential job candidates.
- **What job levels do HR professionals typically target when recruiting via social networking websites?** Nonmanagement salaried (87%) and management (e.g., directors, managers) (80%) positions are the most commonly targeted job levels. About one-half (48%) of organizations target nonmanagement hourly employees, and 41% target executive/upper management positions (e.g., CEO, CFO).
- **What methods do organizations use to recruit potential job candidates using social networking websites?** Organizations use social networking sites to search for passive job candidates (71%), create interest in jobs by posting useful information or contributing to discussion (68%), search for active job candidates (66%), and create a group or page for the organization to post information and career opportunities (59%).

Key Findings: Screening Job Candidates

- **Do organizations use social networking websites or online search engines to screen job candidates?** About two-thirds of organizations have never used or no longer use social networking websites (69%) or online search engines (65%) to screen job candidates. Twenty percent currently use social networking websites for screening, and 28% use online search engines. Twelve percent plan to use social networking websites to screen job candidates, and 7% plan to start using online search engines for screening.
- **Why do organizations NOT use social networking websites for screening job candidates?** Three-quarters (74%) of organizations are concerned with legal risks or discovering information about protected characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender, religious affiliation). Sixty-three percent say the information from these sites may not be relevant to a candidate's work-related potential or performance, and 61% think the information may not be relevant to whether the candidate is a good fit for the organization.
- **How often do organizations use online search engines to screen job candidates?** For organizations that use online search engines to screen job candidates, about one-half frequently or always screen for nonmanagement salaried positions (50%), management positions (49%) and executive/upper management positions (47%). Fewer organizations (39%) frequently or always screen candidates for nonmanagement hourly positions using online search engines.

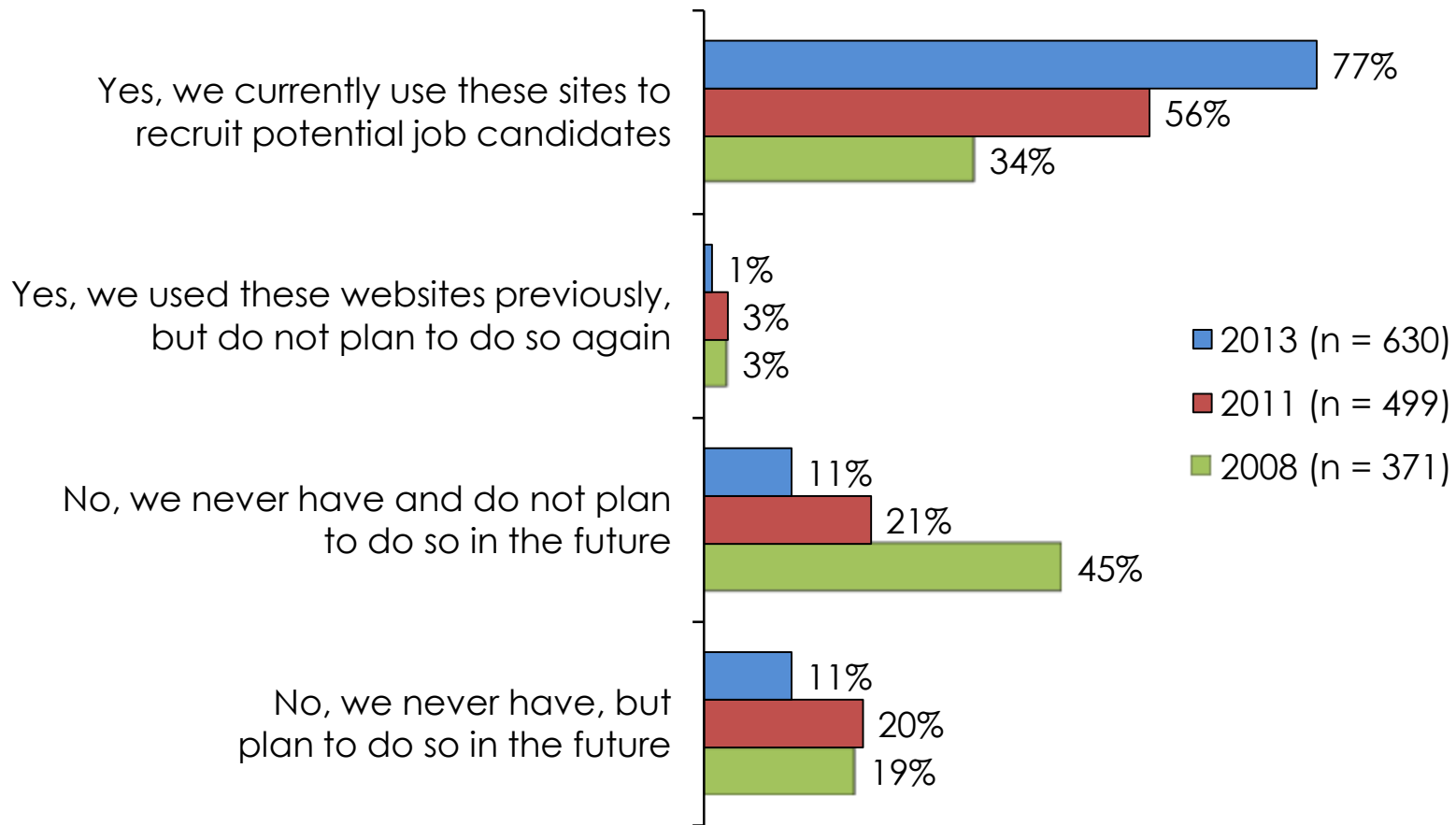
- **LinkedIn is the most commonly used social networking site for screening job candidates.** Of those organizations that use social networking sites for screening, a large majority (92%) use LinkedIn. This is followed by Facebook (58%), Twitter (31%), Google+ (25%), and professional or association social networking sites other than SHRM Connect (14%). Less than 10% of organizations use other sites like YouTube, Pinterest, MySpace, Foursquare and SHRM Connect.
 - Compared with 2011 data, more organizations are using LinkedIn, Twitter and professional or association social networking sites for screening job candidates, and fewer are using Facebook and MySpace.
- **Do organizations have a policy regarding the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates?** More than one-half (57%) of organizations do not have a formal or informal policy with regards to screening candidates via social networking websites. Of organizations that have a formal or informal policy, 21% prohibit the use of these sites and 21% allow the use of these sites.
 - Privately owned for-profit and government organizations are more likely than publicly owned for-profit organizations to have no formal or informal policy.
 - Of those organizations that currently do not have a formal policy, 28% plan to implement one within the next 12 months.

What do these findings mean for the HR profession?

- **Using social networking websites for recruiting could give HR professionals a competitive advantage in attracting talent.** Many HR professionals are using social networking websites as a tool to recruit passive job candidates who might not otherwise apply or be contacted by the organization. Another frequently cited reason for using social networking websites is to recruit for positions that require certain skills.
- **HR professionals could benefit from using social networking websites to increase brand recognition and generate interest in their organization.** Many HR professionals are posting useful information to websites and contributing to discussions as an indirect means of recruitment.
- **Organizations may want to consider whether they need policies related to recruiting and screening job candidates via social networking websites.** Over the past five years, a growing number of HR professionals have been using social networking websites for recruitment. In addition, about one-quarter of organizations use online search engines or social networking websites to screen job candidates. Yet, more than one-half of organizations do not currently have a policy regarding the use of social networking websites for screening job candidates. The primary reasons HR professionals cite for not using social networking websites for recruitment and screening are the legal risks, the lack of the job-relatedness of much of the information found online, privacy concerns, and the lack of verifiable data.

Using Social Networking Websites for *Recruiting* Job Candidates

Has your organization ever used social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates, or does your organization plan to do so in the future?



Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Respondents who answered "don't know" were excluded from this analysis.

Comparisons by organization sector

- Publicly owned for-profit and privately owned for-profit organizations are more likely than nonprofit and government organizations to use social networking sites to recruit potential job candidates.
- Nonprofit organizations are more likely than government organizations to use social networking sites to recruit potential job candidates.

Comparisons by organization sector

Publicly owned for-profit (87%) Privately owned for-profit (84%)	>	Nonprofit (69%) Government (48%)
Nonprofit (69%)	>	Government (48%)

Note: Only statistically significant differences are shown.

Reasons for Using Social Networking Websites for Recruiting	2008 (n = 125)	2011 (n = 277)	2013 (n = 485)
To be able to recruit passive job candidates who might not otherwise apply or be contacted by the organization	69%	84%	80%
To be able to target job candidates with a very specific set of skills	38%	52%	69%
To increase employer brand and recognition	35%	60%	67%
To allow potential job candidates to easily contact the organization about employment	29%	47%	57%
It is less expensive than other methods of recruiting job candidates	--	67%	56%
To be able to target a specific job level to recruit or contact (e.g., entry level, managers, executives)	40%	54%	55%
To be able to target a specific geographic region in which to recruit job candidates	31%	44%	45%

Note: Excludes respondents who indicated their organization currently does not use social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates. Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

Reasons Organizations Are Using Social Networking Websites for Staffing or Recruiting (continued)

Reasons for Using Social Networking Websites for Recruiting (continued)	2008 (n = 125)	2011 (n = 277)	2013 (n = 485)
To be able to identify potential job candidates in other geographic regions	--	39%	41%
It results in more qualified job candidates relative to the amount of time and effort invested	27%	36%	40%
To be able to effectively disseminate job- and organization-related information	18%	33%	34%
To create an online community focused on the organization	18%	36%	33%
It results in a large quantity of job candidates relative to the amount of time and effort invested	20%	29%	29%
It enables us to better target traditionally underrepresented groups (e.g., women, minorities, veterans, people with disabilities)	--	22%	24%
Other	3%	3%	1%

Note: Excludes respondents who indicated their organization currently does not use social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates. Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

Reasons Organizations Are NOT Using Social Networking Websites for Staffing or Recruiting

Reasons for NOT Using Social Networking Websites for Recruiting	2011 (n = 259)	2013 (n = 143)
Concerns about legal risks/discovering information about protected characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender, religious affiliation)	53%	52%
Not enough HR staff time to use this recruiting method in addition to others	43%	48%
Questions about the veracity of the information contained on social networking websites	27%	26%
Lack of knowledge or skills to recruit using this method among HR staff	17%	16%
Social networking websites do not have job candidates at the job level that the organization is targeting	11%	15%
Smaller quantity of job candidates relative to the amount of time and effort invested	7%	12%
Less qualified job candidates relative to the amount of time and effort invested	5%	8%
Other	24%	12%

Note: Excludes respondents who indicated their organization currently uses social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates. Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

Comparisons by organization sector

- Government organizations are more likely than nonprofit organizations to have concerns about legal risks/discovering information about protected characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender, religious affiliation).

**Comparisons by organization sector:
Concerns about legal risks/discovering information about protected characteristics**

Government (74%)

>

Nonprofit (34%)

Note: Only statistically significant differences are shown.

Social Networking Websites Used for Recruitment	2011	2013
LinkedIn	95%	94%
Facebook	58%	54%
Twitter	42%	39%
Professional or association social networking site other than SHRM Connect	23%	29%
Google+	*	8%
YouTube	*	8%
SHRM Connect	6%	5%
Pinterest	*	4%
Foursquare	1%	1%
MySpace	3%	0%
Second Life	1%	0%
Other	6%	2%

Note: (2013 n = 484; 2011 n= 277). Excludes respondents who indicated their organization currently does not use social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates. Total does not equal 100% due to multiple response options. An asterisk (*) indicates this response option was not available in 2011.

Comparisons by organization sector

- Publicly owned for-profit organizations are more likely than nonprofit and government organizations to use LinkedIn to recruit potential job candidates.

Comparisons by organization sector: LinkedIn

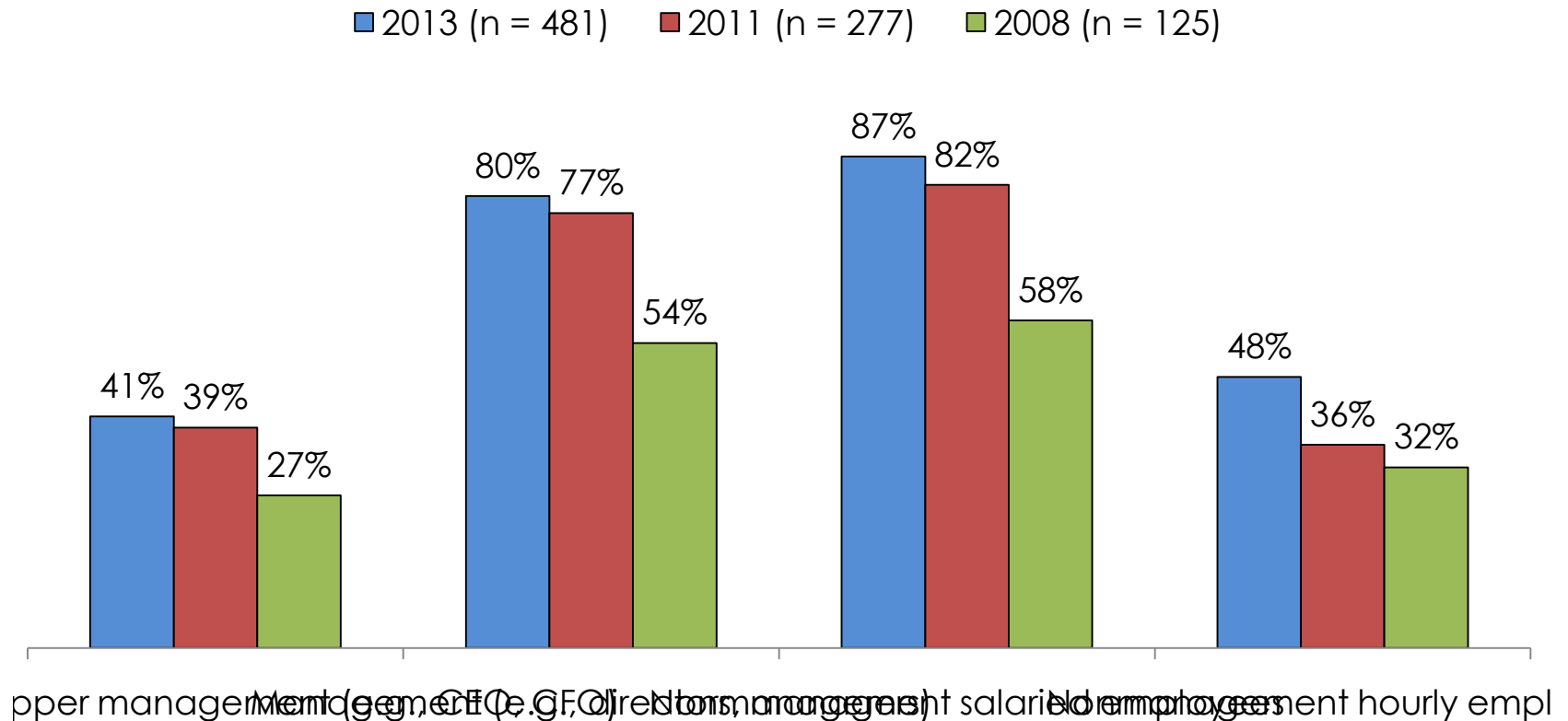
Publicly owned for-profit (99%)

>

Nonprofit (88%)
Government (86%)

Note: Only statistically significant differences are shown.

Targeted Job Levels Organizations Are Attempting to Fill When Using Social Networking Websites



Note: Excludes respondents who indicated their organization currently does not use social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates. Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple response options. Respondents who answered "don't know" were excluded from this analysis.

Comparisons by organization sector

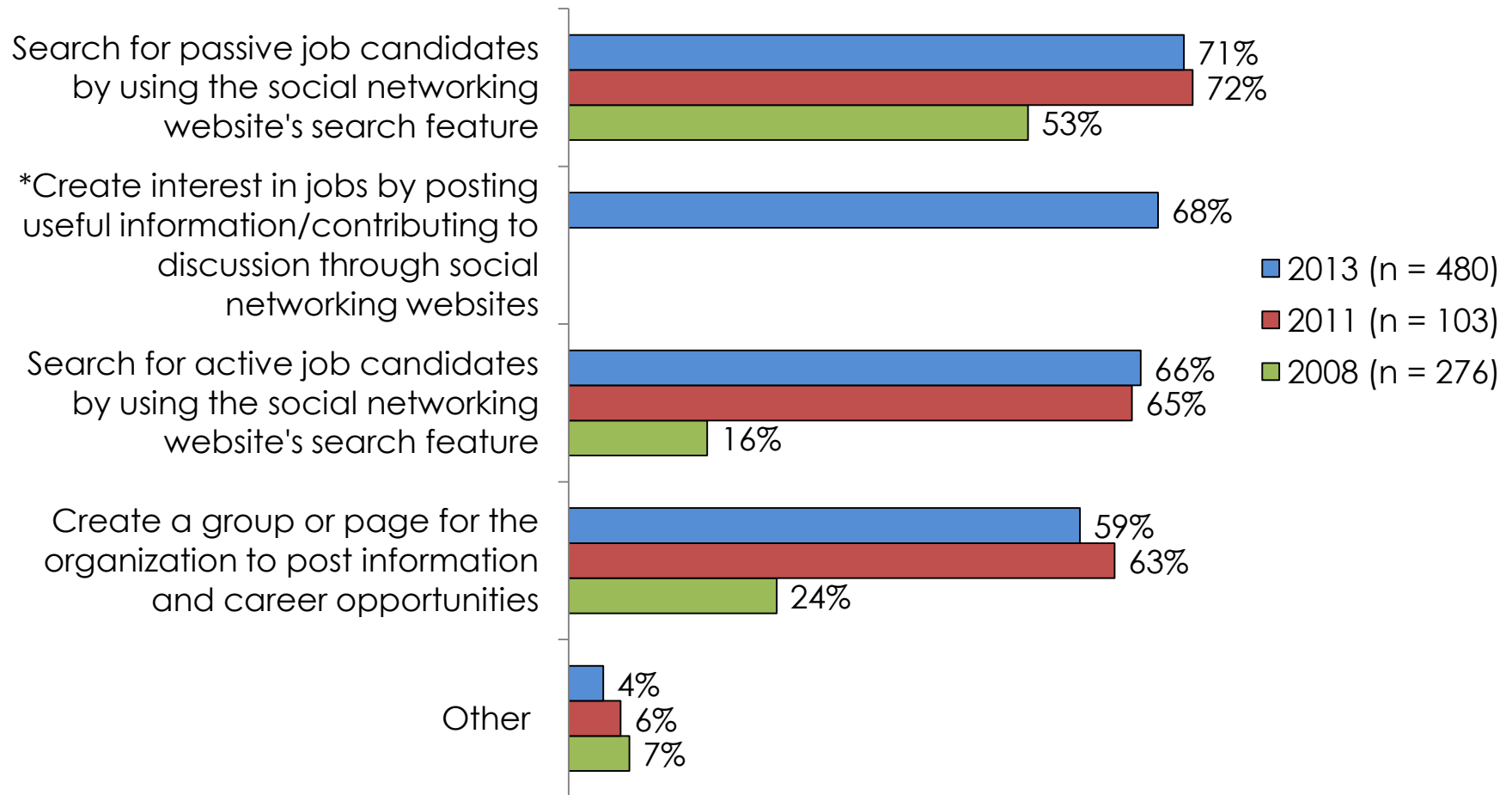
- Publicly owned for-profit and privately owned for-profit organizations are more likely than government organizations to target nonmanagement salaried employees when using social networking sites to recruit potential job candidates.

Comparisons by organization sector: Nonmanagement salaried employees

Publicly owned for-profit (89%) Privately owned for-profit (91%)	>	Government (66%)
---------------------------------------------------------------------	---	------------------

Note: Only statistically significant differences are shown.

How Do Organizations Recruit Potential Job Candidates Using Social Networking Websites?



Note: Excludes respondents who indicated their organization currently does not use social networking websites to recruit potential job candidates. Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple response options. An asterisk (*) indicates this response option was not available in 2011.

Comparisons by organization sector

- Publicly owned for-profit and privately owned for-profit organizations are more likely than nonprofit and government organizations to search for passive job candidates by using the social networking website's search feature.

Comparisons by organization sector: Search for passive job candidates by using the social networking website's search feature

Publicly owned for-profit (79%) Privately owned for-profit (80%)	>	Nonprofit (55%) Government (41%)
---------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

- Publicly owned for-profit and privately owned for-profit organizations are more likely than nonprofit organizations to create interest in jobs by posting useful information or contributing to discussion through social networking websites.

Comparisons by organization sector: Create interest in jobs by posting useful information or contributing to discussion

Publicly owned for-profit (75%) Privately owned for-profit (73%)	>	Nonprofit (55%)
---------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----------------

- Privately owned for-profit organizations are more likely than nonprofit and government organizations to search for active job candidates by using the social networking website's search feature.

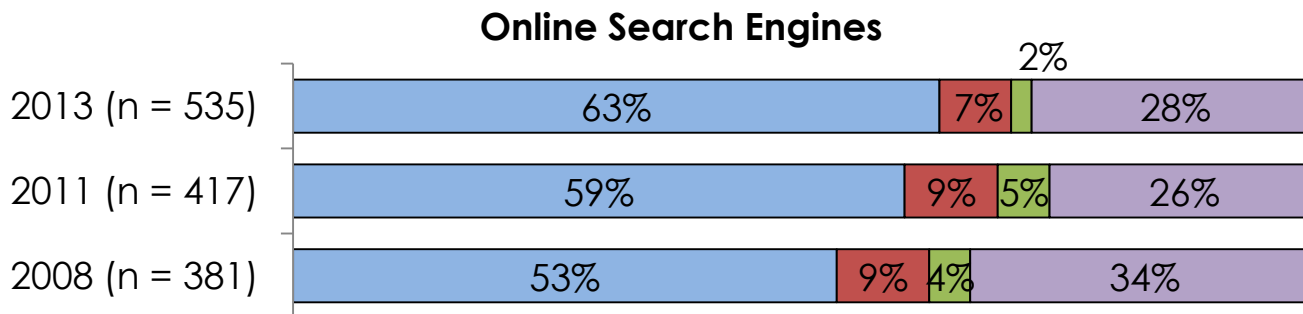
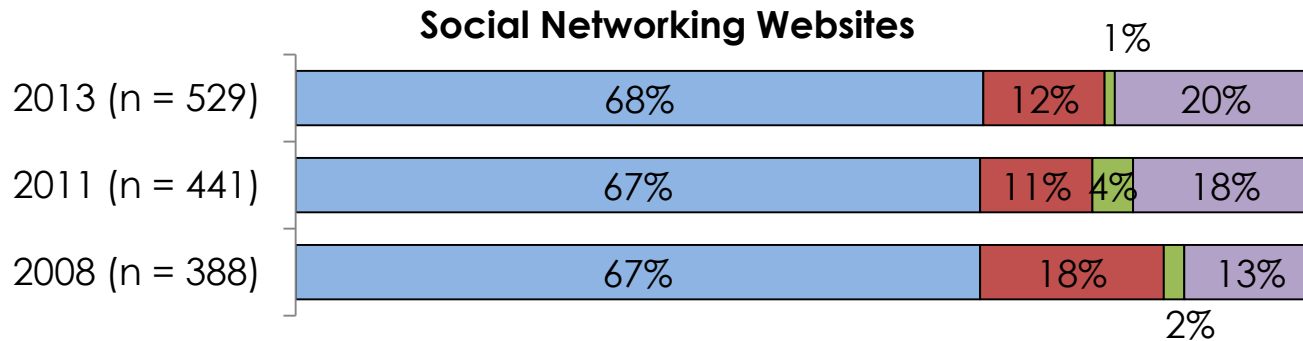
Comparisons by organization sector: Search for active job candidates by using the social networking website's search feature

Privately owned for-profit (76%)	>	Nonprofit (53%) Government (48%)
----------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

Note: Only statistically significant differences are shown.

Using Social Networking Websites for *Screening* Job Candidates

Has your organization used social networking websites or online search engines to screen job candidates at any point in the hiring process, or does it plan to do so?



- No, we have never used this method and do not plan to do so
- No, we never have, but plan to
- Yes, we used them previously, but do not plan to do so again
- Yes, we currently use this online tool to screen job candidates

Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding. Respondents who answered "don't know" were excluded from these analyses.

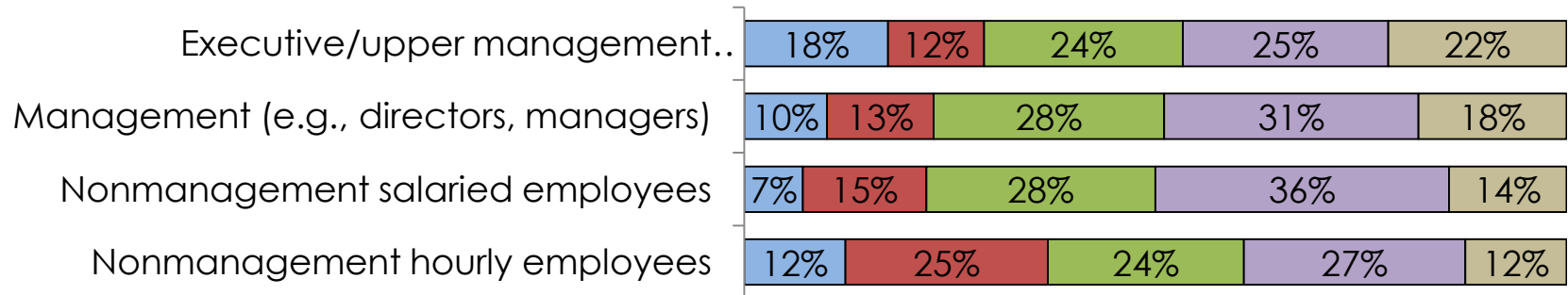
Why does your organization NOT use social networking websites to screen job candidates?

Reasons for NOT Using Social Networking Websites for Screening	2008 (n = 337)	2011 (n = 461)	2013 (n = 406)
Concern about legal risks/discovering information about protected characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender, religious affiliation)	54%	66%	74%
Information about job candidates taken from these sites may not be relevant to their work-related potential or performance	36%	45%	63%
Information about job candidates taken from these sites may not be relevant to whether they are a good fit for the organization	26%	33%	61%
Concerns about invading the privacy of job candidates	40%	33%	48%
Inability to verify with confidence the information from an applicant's social networking page	43%	48%	47%
Not all job candidates have information on social networking sites	*	34%	43%
It takes too much time and effort in relation to information gained	19%	17%	18%
Job candidates might be less likely to apply if they knew the organization screened job candidates in this manner	9%	7%	11%
Other	16%	8%	6%

Note: Only organizations that do not use social networking websites to screen job candidates were asked this question. Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple response options. An asterisk () indicates response option was not available in 2008.*

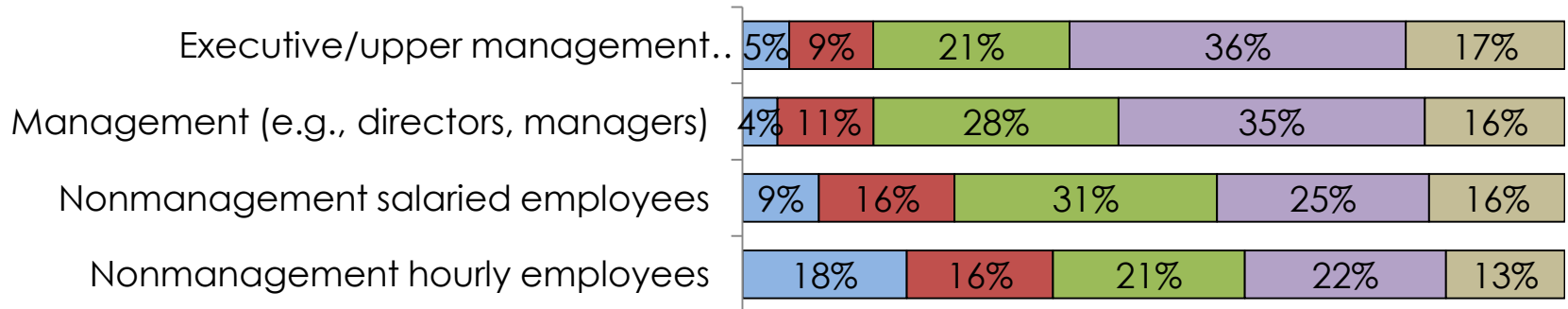
How often do organizations use online search engines to screen job candidates at any point in the hiring process for the targeted job levels?

2013



n = 120-140

2011

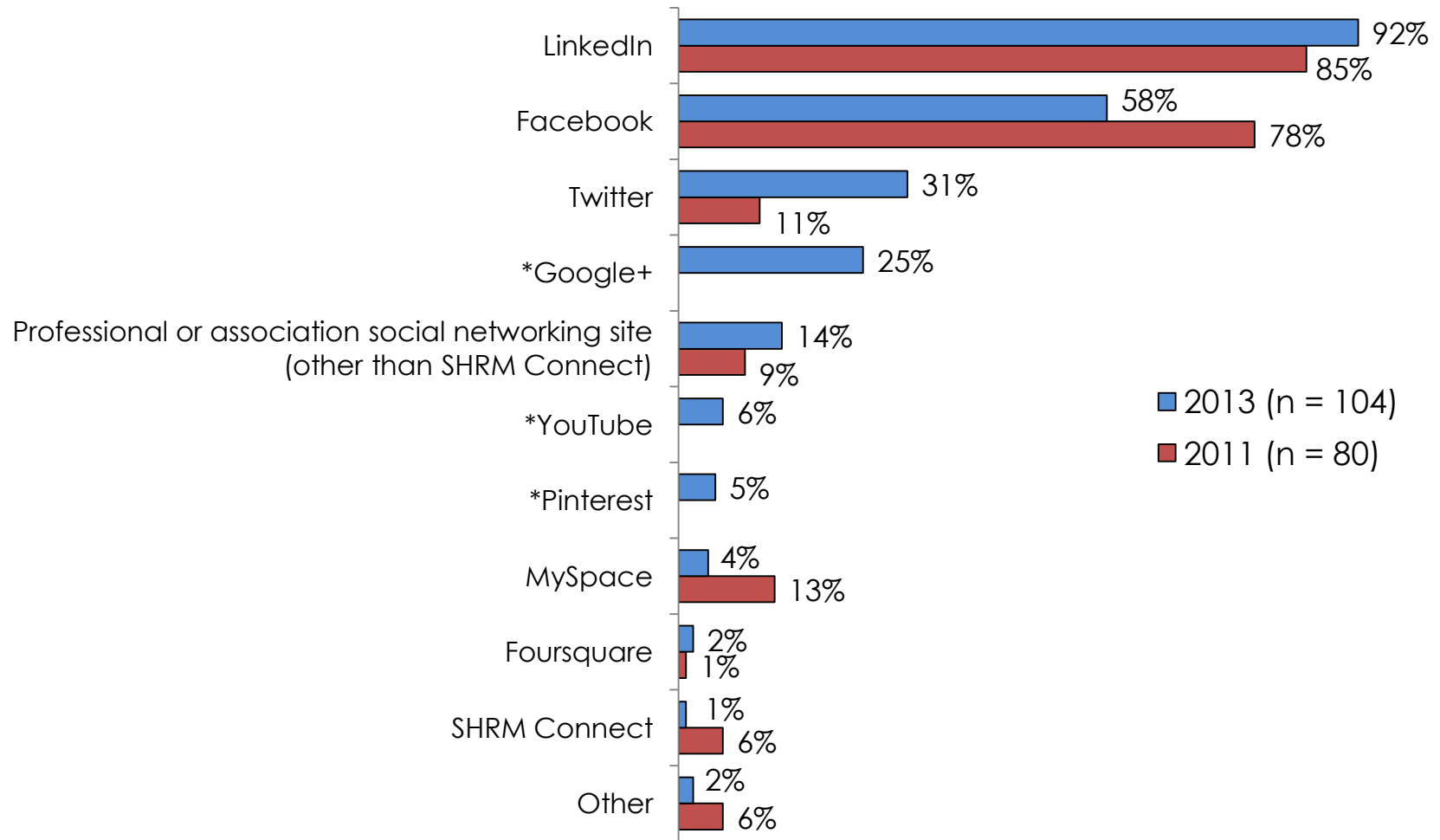


n = 110

■ Never
 ■ Seldom
 ■ Occasionally
 ■ Frequently
 ■ Always

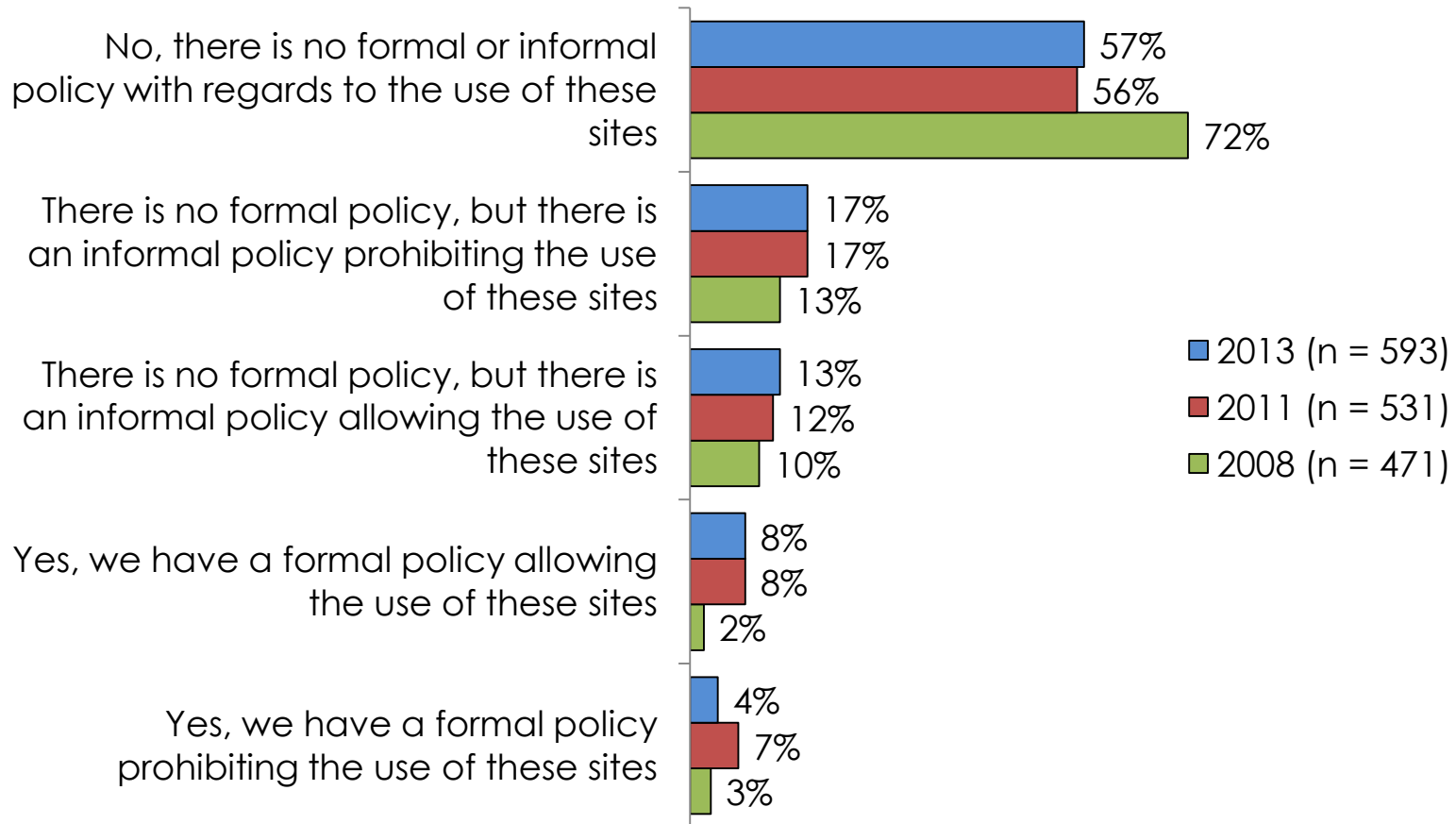
Note: Only organizations that use online search engines to screen job candidates at any point in the hiring process were asked this question. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Respondents who answered "don't know" were excluded from this analysis.

The Most Common Social Networking Websites Organizations Use to Screen Job Candidates



Note: Only organizations that use social networking websites to screen job candidates were asked this question. Total does not equal 100% due to multiple response options. An asterisk (*) indicates this response option was not available in 2011. "Second life" is not reported because no respondents selected this option.

Does your organization currently have a formal or an informal policy regarding the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates?



Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Respondents who answered "don't know" were excluded from this analysis.

Does your organization currently have a formal or an informal policy regarding the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates?

Comparisons by organization staff size

- Organizations with 1 to 499 employees are more likely than organizations with 2,500 to 24,999 employees to have no formal or informal policy with regards to the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates.

Comparisons by organization staff size: No formal or informal policy with regards to the use of these sites

1 to 99 employees (72%)	>	2,500 to 24,999 employees (47%)
100 to 499 employees (68%)		

- Organizations with 25,000 or more employees are more likely than organizations with 1 to 99 employees to have an Informal policy prohibiting the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates.

Comparisons by organization staff size: Informal policy prohibiting the use of these sites

25,000 or more employees (31%)	>	1 to 99 employees (7%)
--------------------------------	---	------------------------

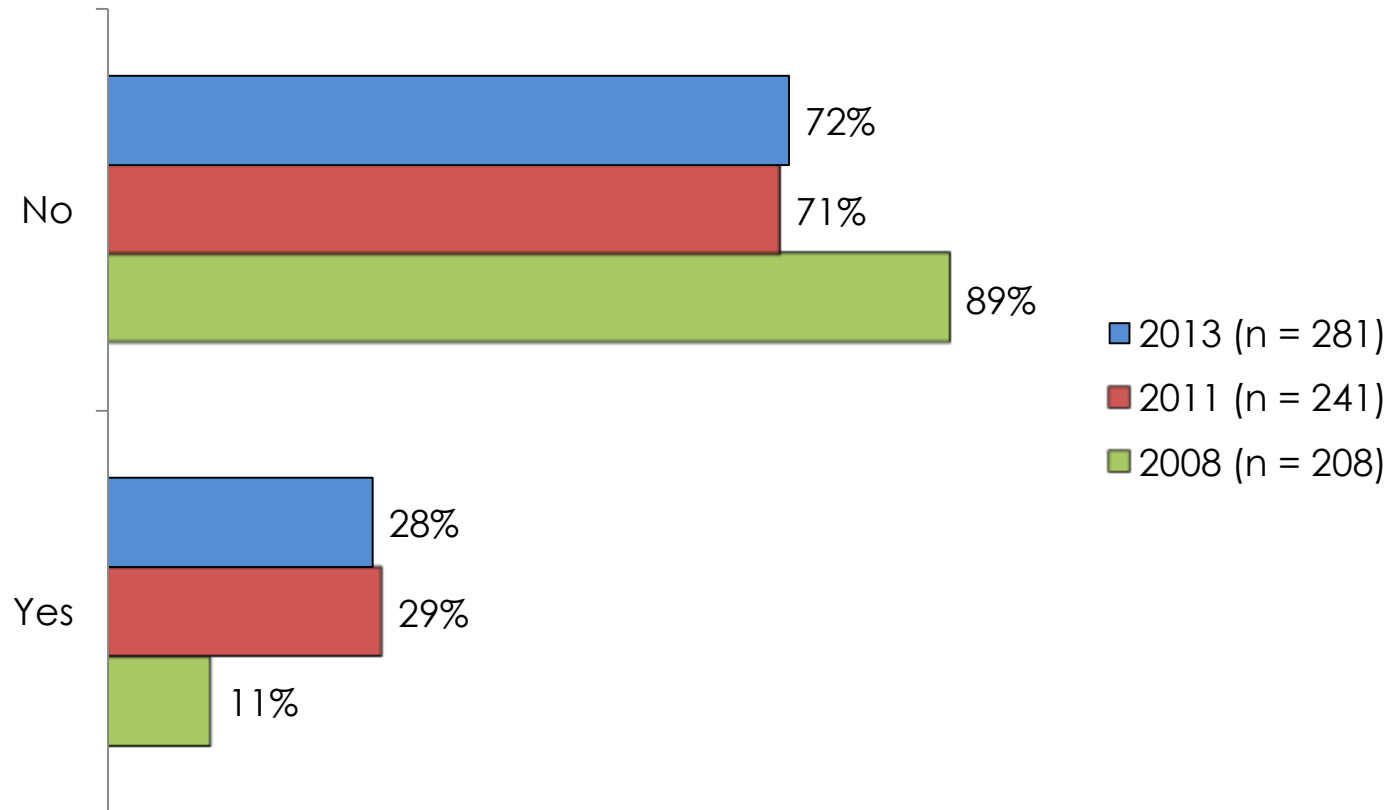
Comparisons by organization sector

- Privately owned for-profit and government organizations are more likely than publicly owned for-profit organizations to have no formal or informal policy with regards to use of social networking websites to screen job candidates.

Comparisons by organization sector: No formal or informal policy with regards to the use of these sites

Privately owned for-profit (61%)	>	Publicly owned for-profit (44%)
Government (71%)		

Does your organization plan to implement a formal policy regarding the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates within the next 12 months?



Note: Only organizations that do not currently have a formal policy regarding the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates were asked this question. Respondents who answered "don't know" were excluded from this analysis.

Demographics

Demographics: Organization Industry

Industry	Percentage
Health care, social assistance (e.g., hospitals, clinics, doctor's offices, in-home care, nursing homes)	17%
Services—professional, scientific, technical, legal, engineering	14%
Financial services (e.g., banking)	9%
Government/public administration—federal, state/local, tribal	8%
Educational services/education (e.g., universities, schools)	7%
Manufacturing—other (not auto)	7%
Construction, mining, oil and gas	4%
Consulting	4%
Retail/wholesale trade	4%
High-tech	3%
Insurance	3%
Transportation, warehousing (e.g., distribution)	3%

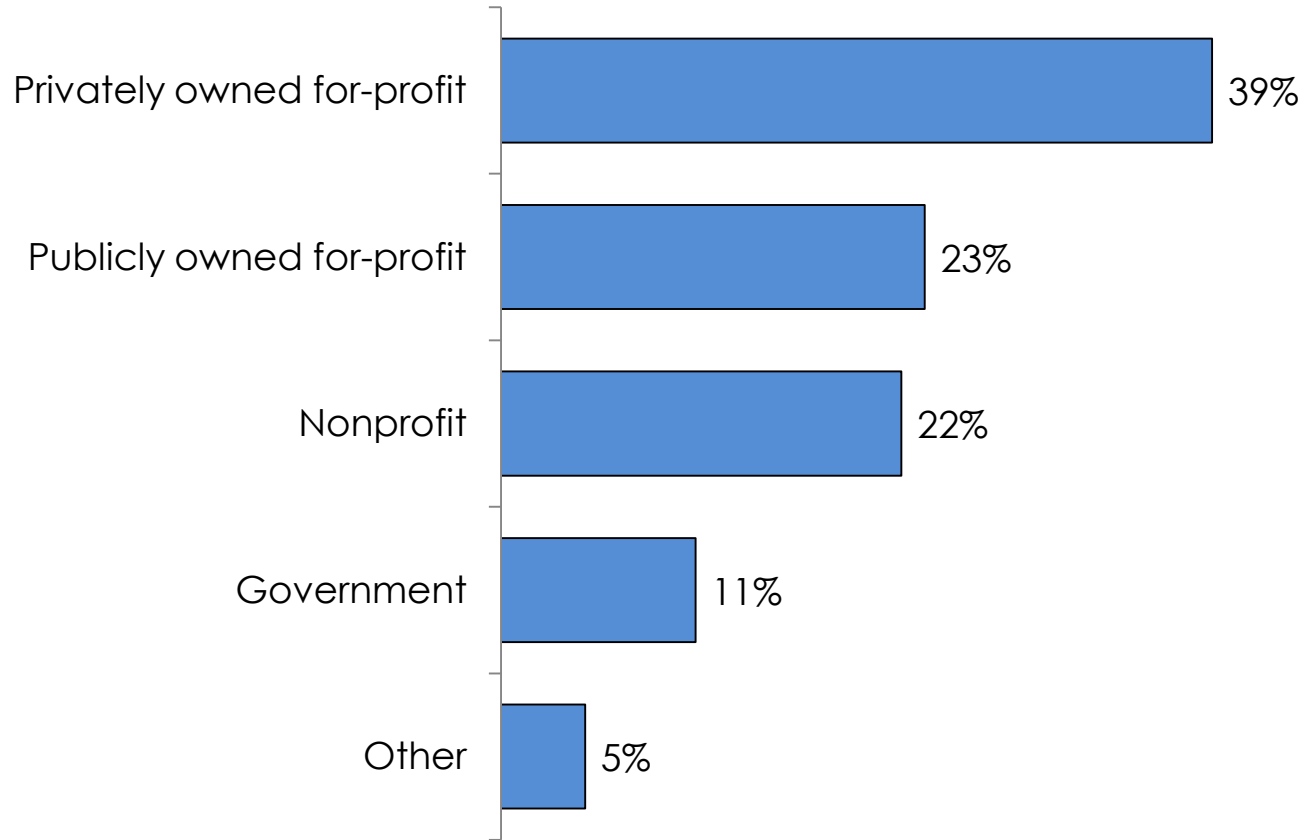
Note: n = 629. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Demographics: Organization Industry (continued)

Industry	Percentage
Arts, entertainment, recreation	2%
Other services (e.g., other nonprofit, church/religious organizations)	2%
Utilities	2%
Biotech	1%
Manufacturing—auto/auto-related	1%
Pharmaceutical	1%
Publishing, broadcasting, other media	1%
Services—accommodation, food and drinking places	1%
Telecommunications	1%
Association—professional/trade	<1%
Real estate, rental, leasing	<1%
Other	3%

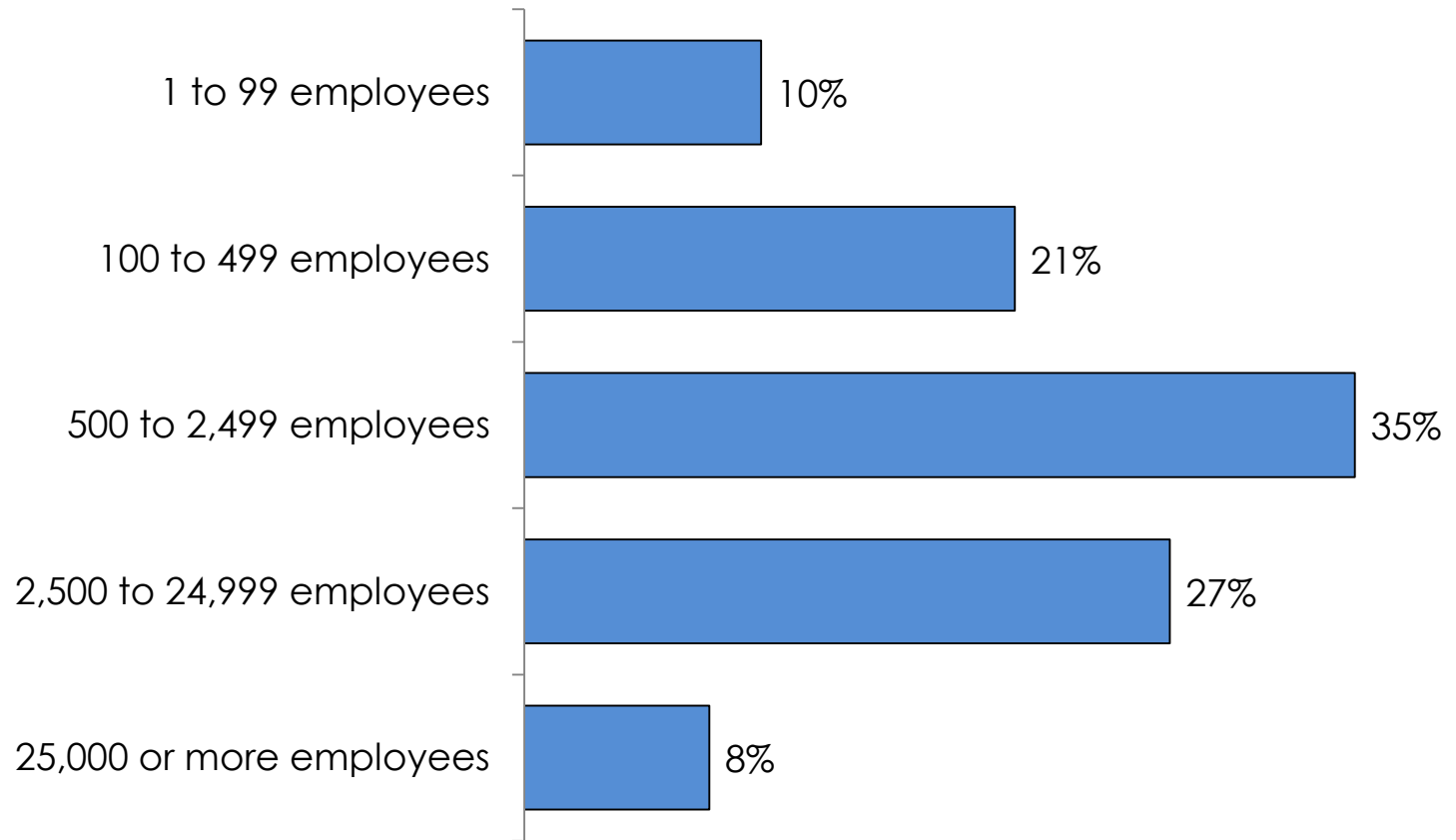
Note: n = 629. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Demographics: Organization Sector



n = 625

Demographics: Organization Staff Size



Note: n = 555. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Does your organization have U.S.-based operations (business units) only, or does it operate multinationally?

U.S.-based operations only	70%
Multinational operations	30%

n = 638

Are any of your employees at your work location unionized (under a collective bargaining agreement)?

Yes	20%
No	80%

n = 619

Is your organization a single-unit organization or a multi-unit organization?

Single-unit organization: An organization in which the location and the organization are one and the same	26%
Multi-unit organization: An organization that has more than one location	74%

n = 629

For multi-unit organizations, are HR policies and practices determined by the multi-unit headquarters, by each work location or by both?

Multi-unit headquarters determines HR policies and practices	51%
Each work location determines HR policies and practices	3%
A combination of both the work location and the multi-unit headquarters determines HR policies and practices	46%

n = 478

Survey Methodology

- Response rate = 19%
- 651 HR professionals from a randomly selected sample of SHRM's membership with the job function of recruiting/staffing participated in this survey
- Margin of error +/-4%
- Survey fielded February 25-March 8, 2013
- 2011 data taken from *SHRM Poll: Social Networking Websites and Identifying Potential Job Candidates* and *SHRM Survey Findings: The Use of Social Networking Websites and Online Search Engines in Screening Job Candidates* (fielded December, 2010-February, 2011)
- 2008 data taken from *SHRM Staffing Research: Online Technologies and Their Impact on Recruitment Strategies* (fielded July-September, 2008)

- For more survey/poll findings, visit www.shrm.org/surveys
- For more information about SHRM's Customized Research Services, visit www.shrm.org/customizedresearch
- Follow us on Twitter [@SHRM_Research](https://twitter.com/SHRM_Research)

Project leader:

Tanya Mulvey, survey research analyst, SHRM Research

Project contributors:

Alexander Alonso, Ph.D., SPHR, vice president, SHRM Research
Evren Esen, manager, Survey Research Center, SHRM Research

Copy editor:

Katya Scanlan, SHRM Knowledge Center