

The Culture of Speech in Greece

We Speak, but Do We Communicate?

Nationwide Survey
Results
2026





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*The survey was conducted on behalf of Applause Summit 2026.
The findings were presented on Saturday, May 9, at the theater of Pierce College in Agia Paraskevi,
in the presence of leading speakers from Greece and abroad, along with an impressive
participation of young people, students, and market professionals from various industries.*

Online interviews via the YouGov panel

Structured questionnaire

Population: Men & Women 18+ Nationwide

Representative sample: 1,008 people.

Conducted: April 2026

Focus Bari is YouGov's Affiliate Partner in Greece (www.yougov.com)



What we believe about communication

The way we speak shapes our public image

"The way someone speaks..."

%

It affects the first impression we form

88

9 3

It is important because I understand their feelings

87

12 2

It influences my opinion of their character

80

17 3

■ I strongly agree/agree

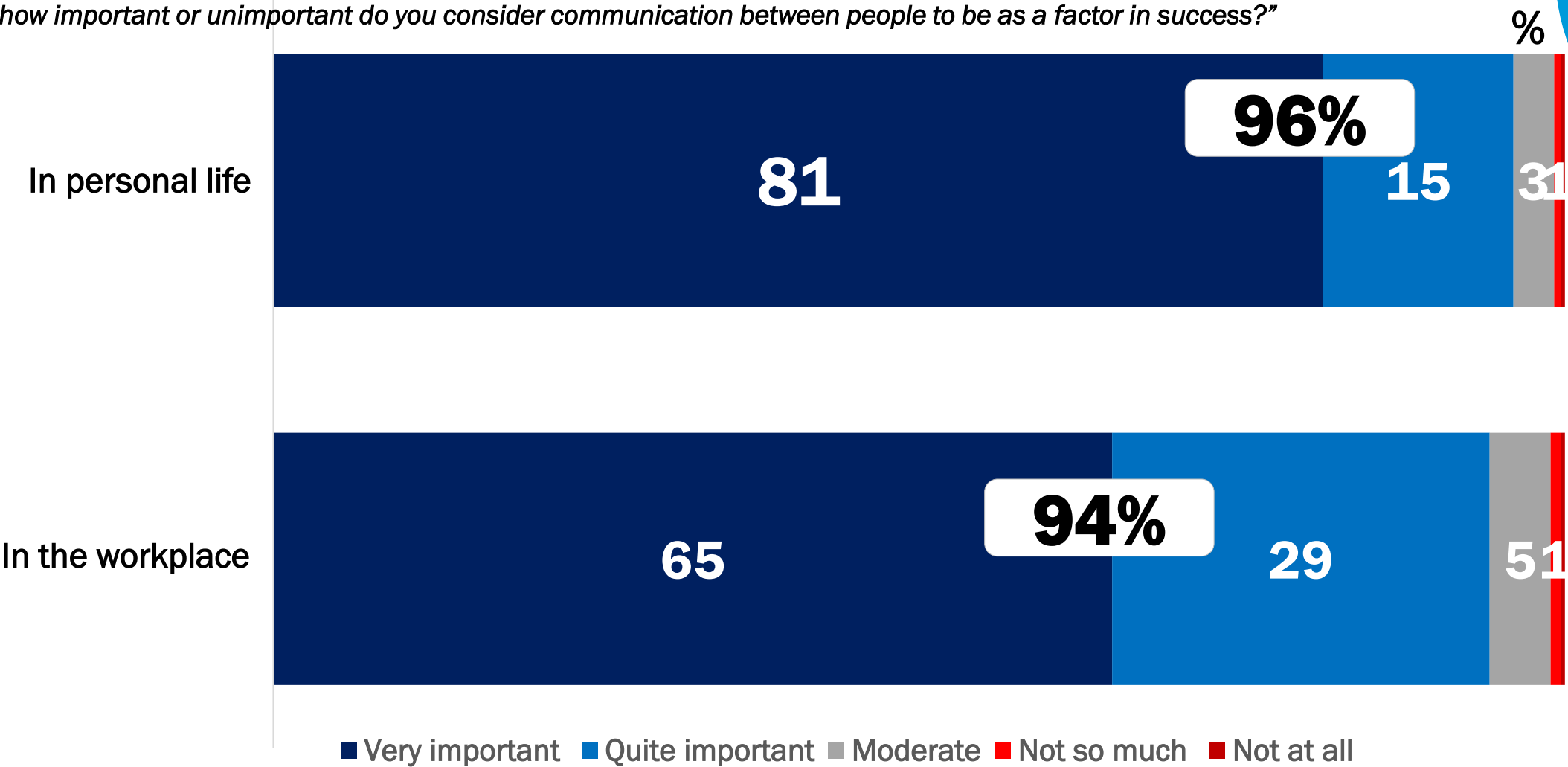
■ Neither agree nor disagree

■ I strongly disagree/disagree

Base: Total-n=1008

Communication, the cornerstone of success

“Overall, how important or unimportant do you consider communication between people to be as a factor in success?”



Base: Total-n=1008

Beyond words:

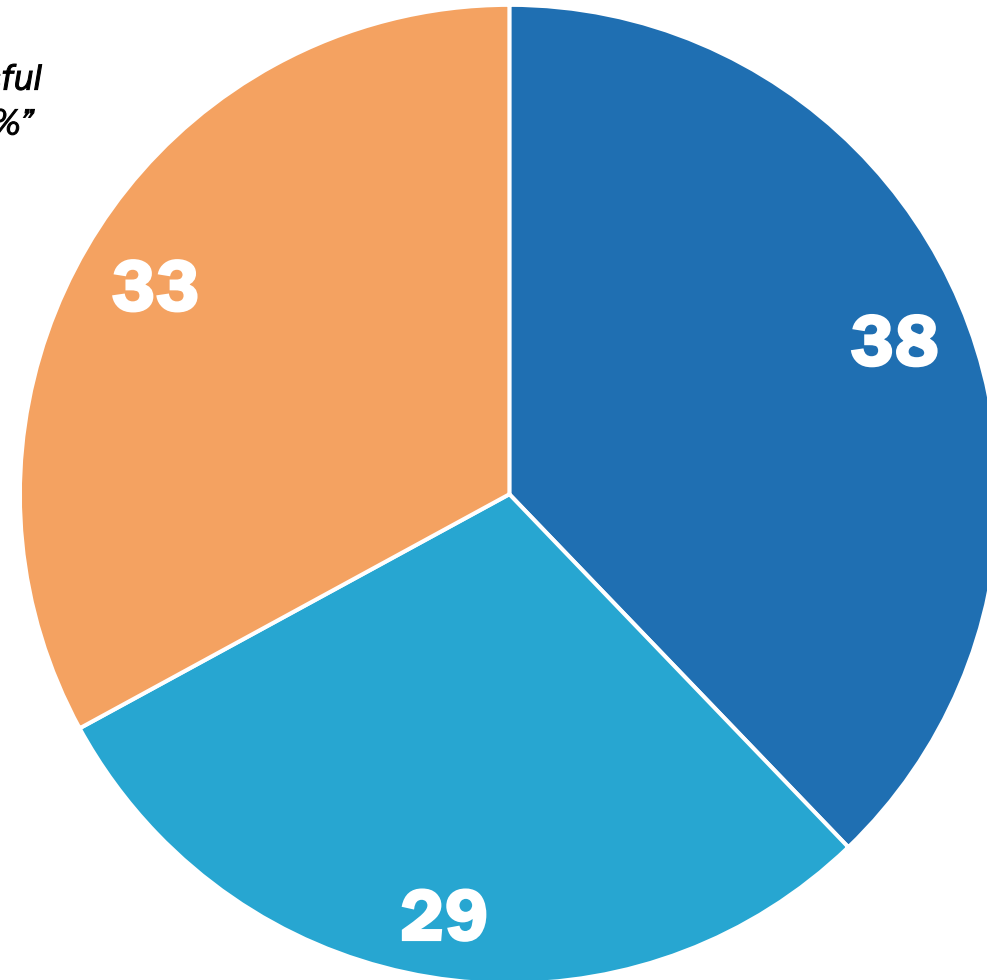
emotion and nonverbal communication shape the impact

“To what extent do you think each of the following contributes to successful communication? Assign a percentage to each—the total should be 100%”

Verbal content:
Vocabulary, words

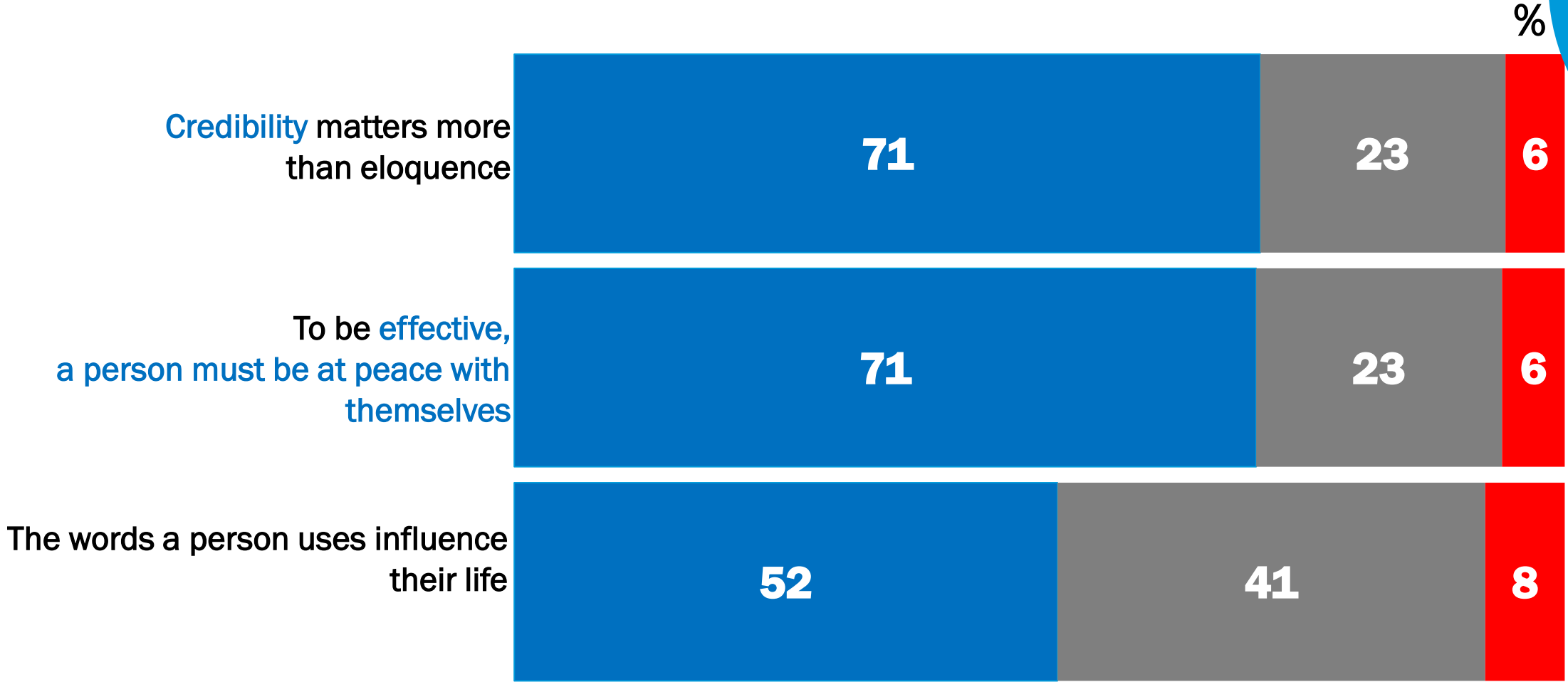
Nonverbal communication
Voice, tone, timbre, body language, facial expressions, clothing, presence

Emotion, energy, intention



Base: Total-n=1008

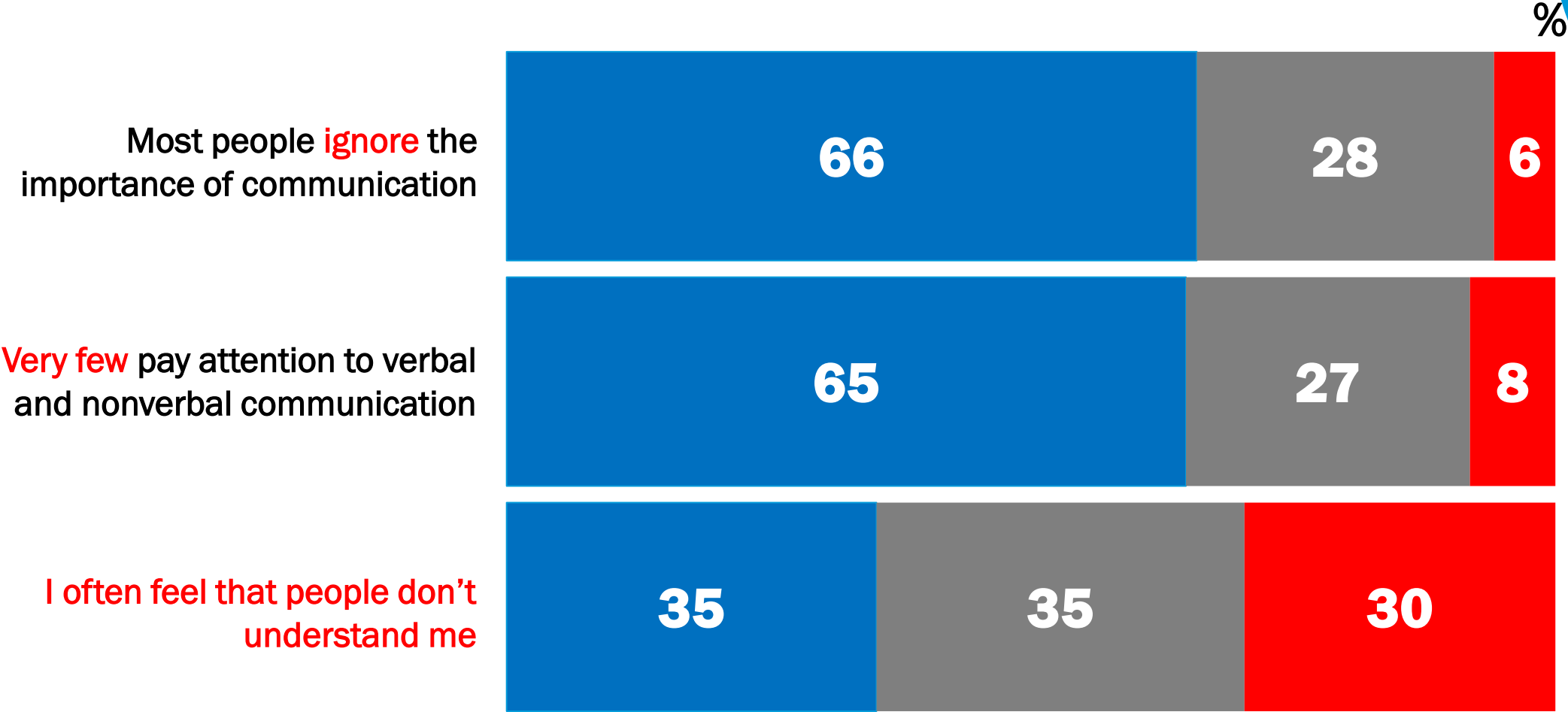
Ultimately, communication is a connection built on trust and authenticity



Base: Total-n=1008

■ I strongly agree/agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ I strongly disagree/disagree

Greeks feel that communication and understanding should not be taken for granted



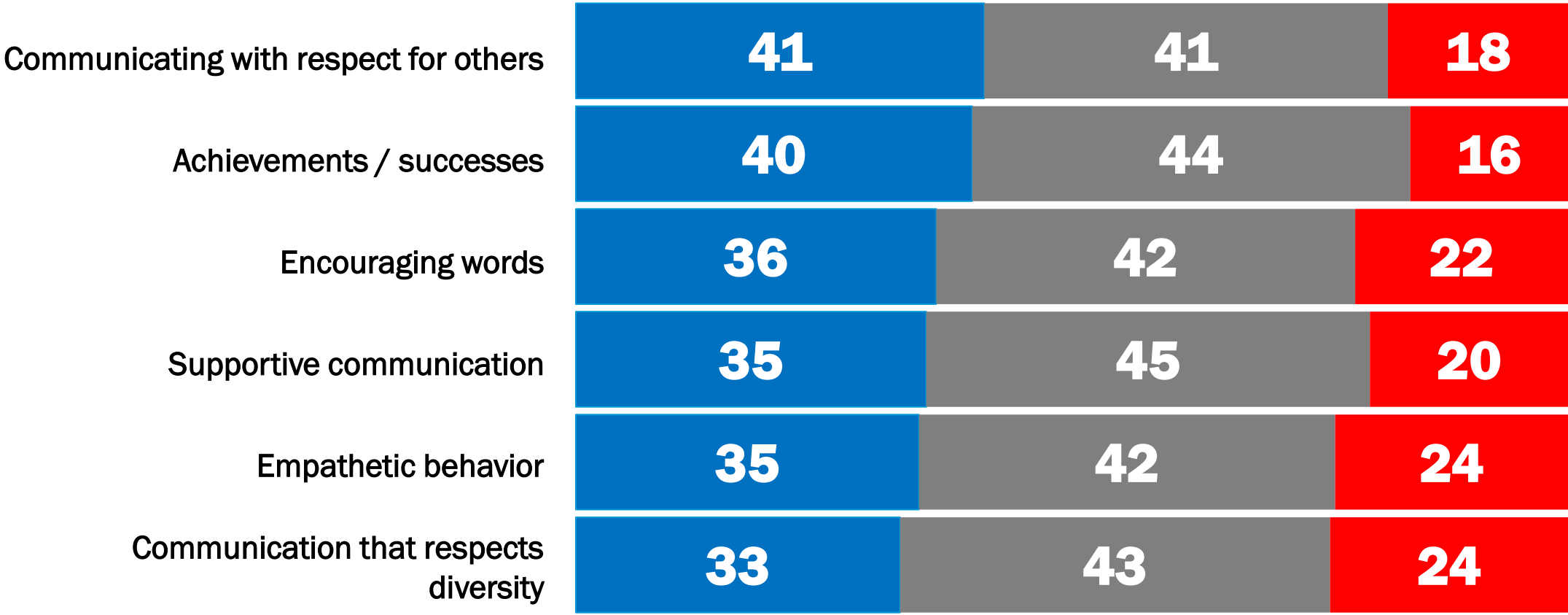
Base: Total-n=1008

■ I strongly agree/agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ I strongly disagree/disagree

In everyday life, respect and empathy **are not** always a given

"How often do you hear or observe the following in your daily life..."

%



Base: Total-n=1008

■ Very often/often ■ Sometimes ■ Never/rarely

On the other hand, negative behaviors dominate

“How often do you hear or observe the following in your daily life...”

%

Grumbling, pessimism & complaints



Negativity, scandals, and disasters

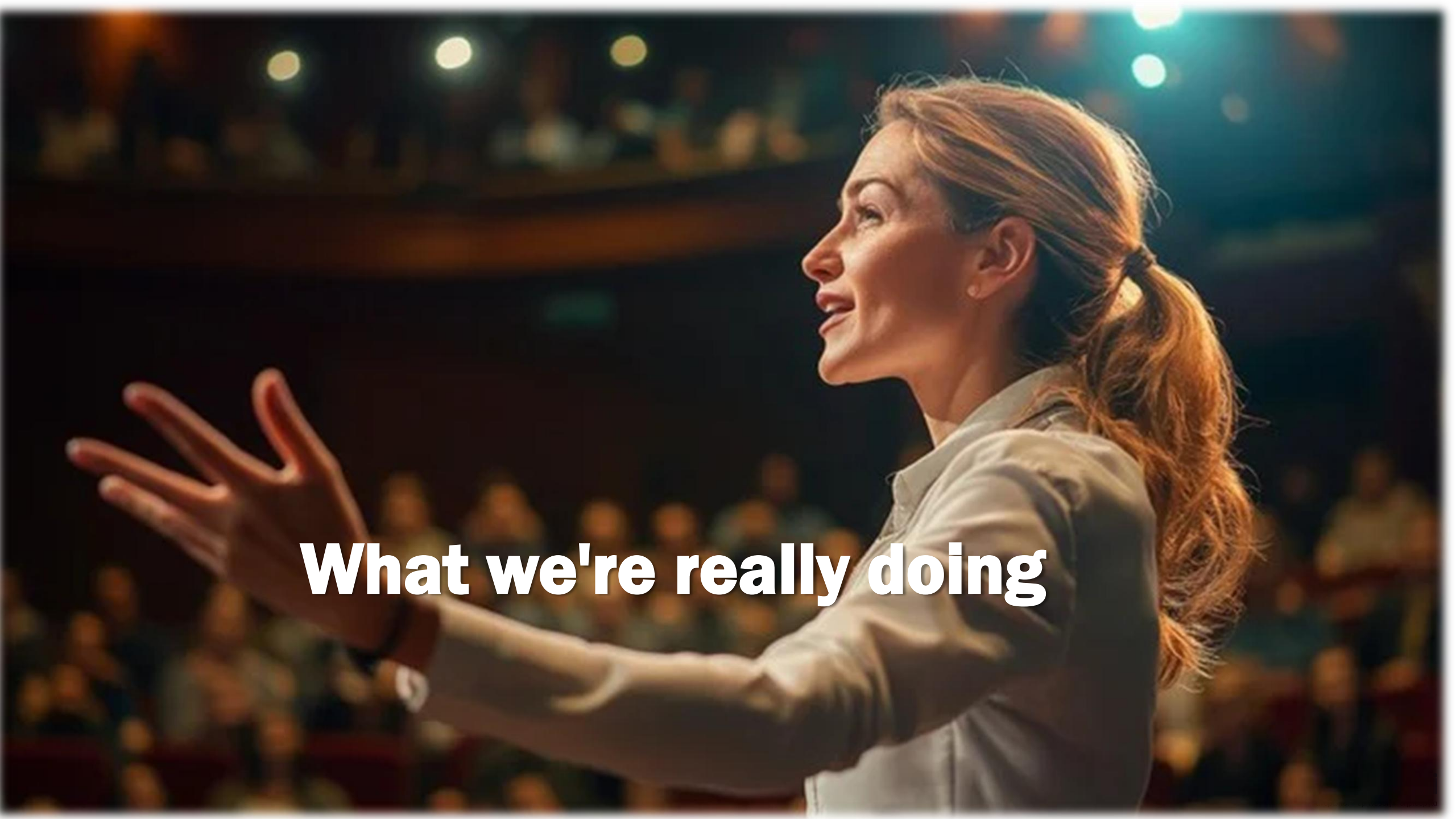


Gossip & malicious criticism



■ Very often/often ■ Sometimes ■ Never/rarely

Base: Total-n=1008



What we're really doing

Public speaking is not optional

It has become an essential professional skill

“How important do you consider public speaking skills to be for every professional?”

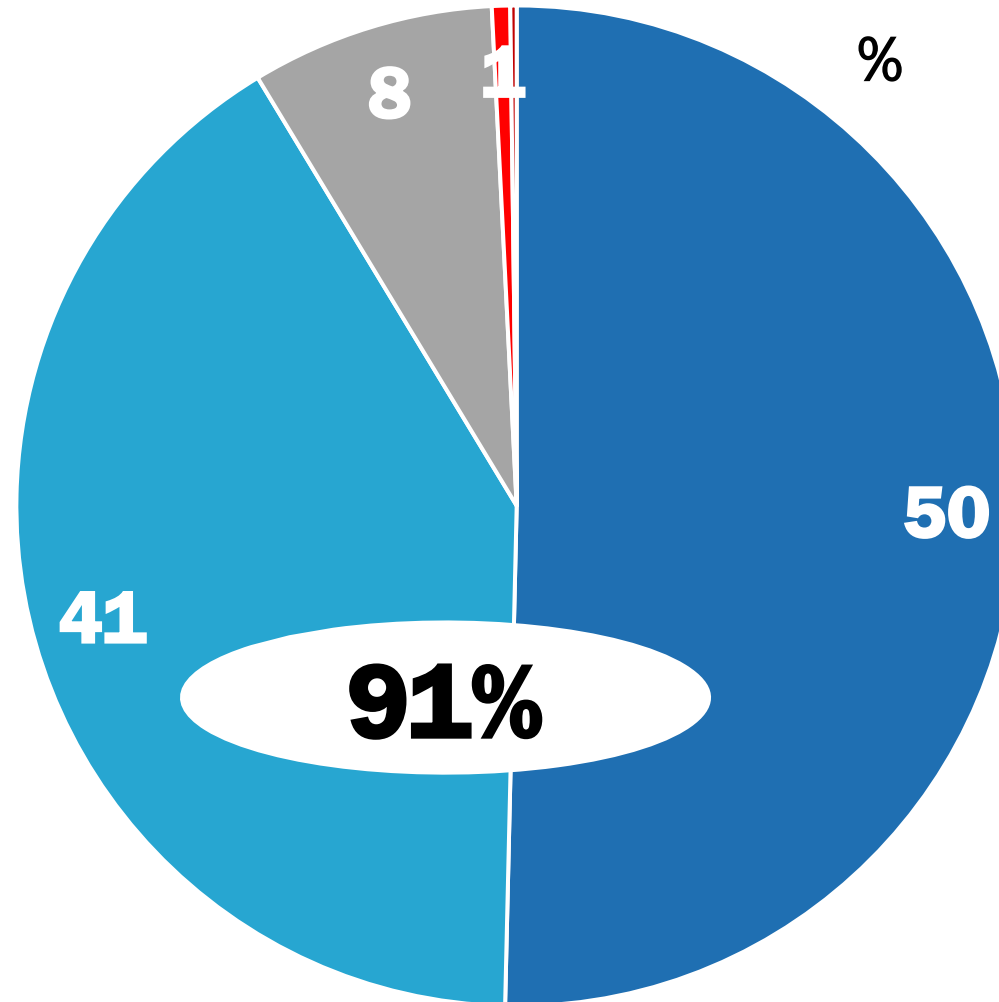
Very important

Quite important

Moderately important

Not very important

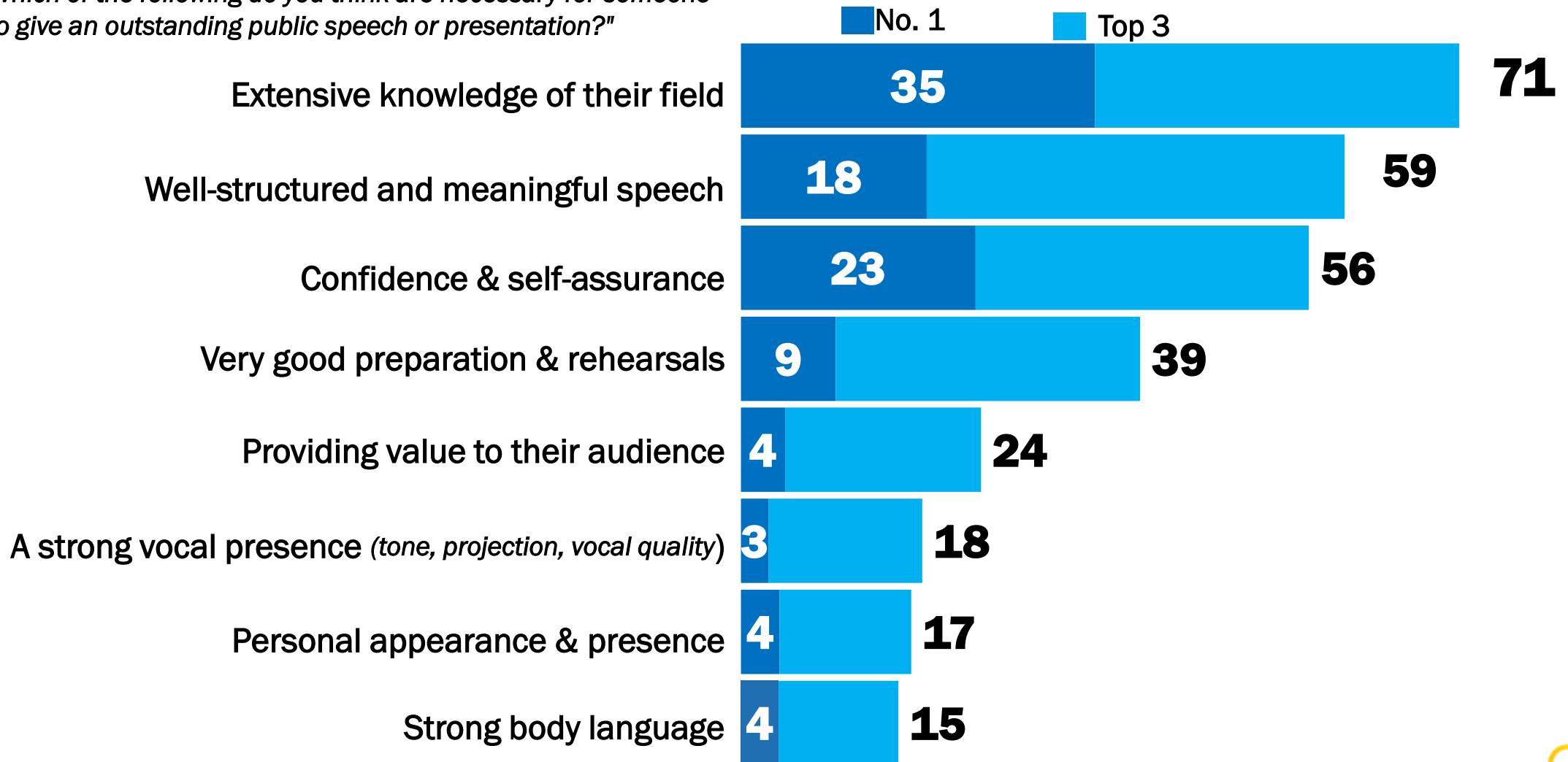
Not at all important



Base: Total-n=1008

The success of a presentation starts with expertise; structure and confidence come next

"Which of the following do you think are necessary for someone to give an outstanding public speech or presentation?"

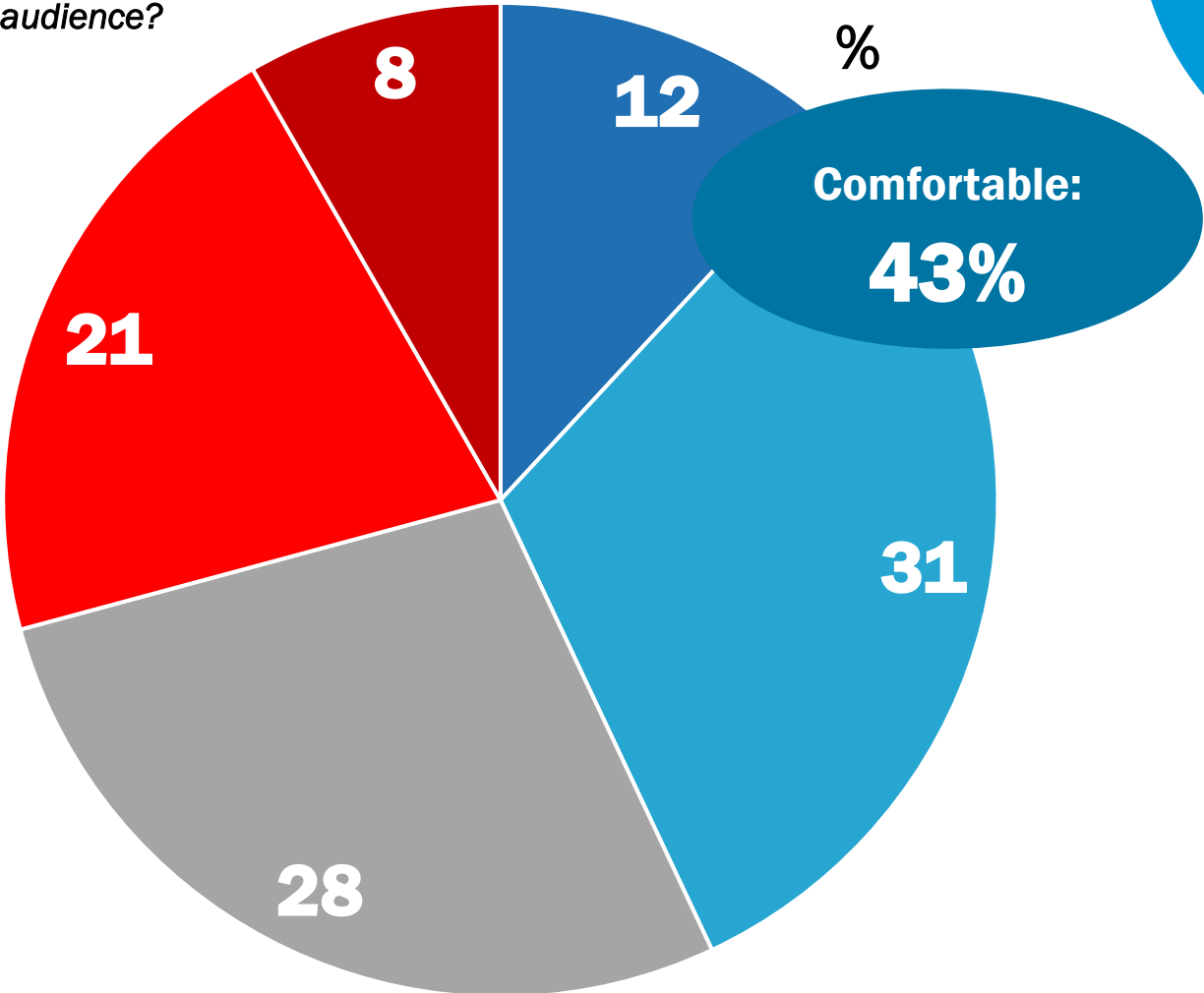


Public speaking remains a challenge for Greeks

2 out of 5 feel comfortable talking publicly

“How do you personally feel when you have to speak in front of an audience?”

- Very comfortable
- Quite comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Quite nervous
- Very nervous

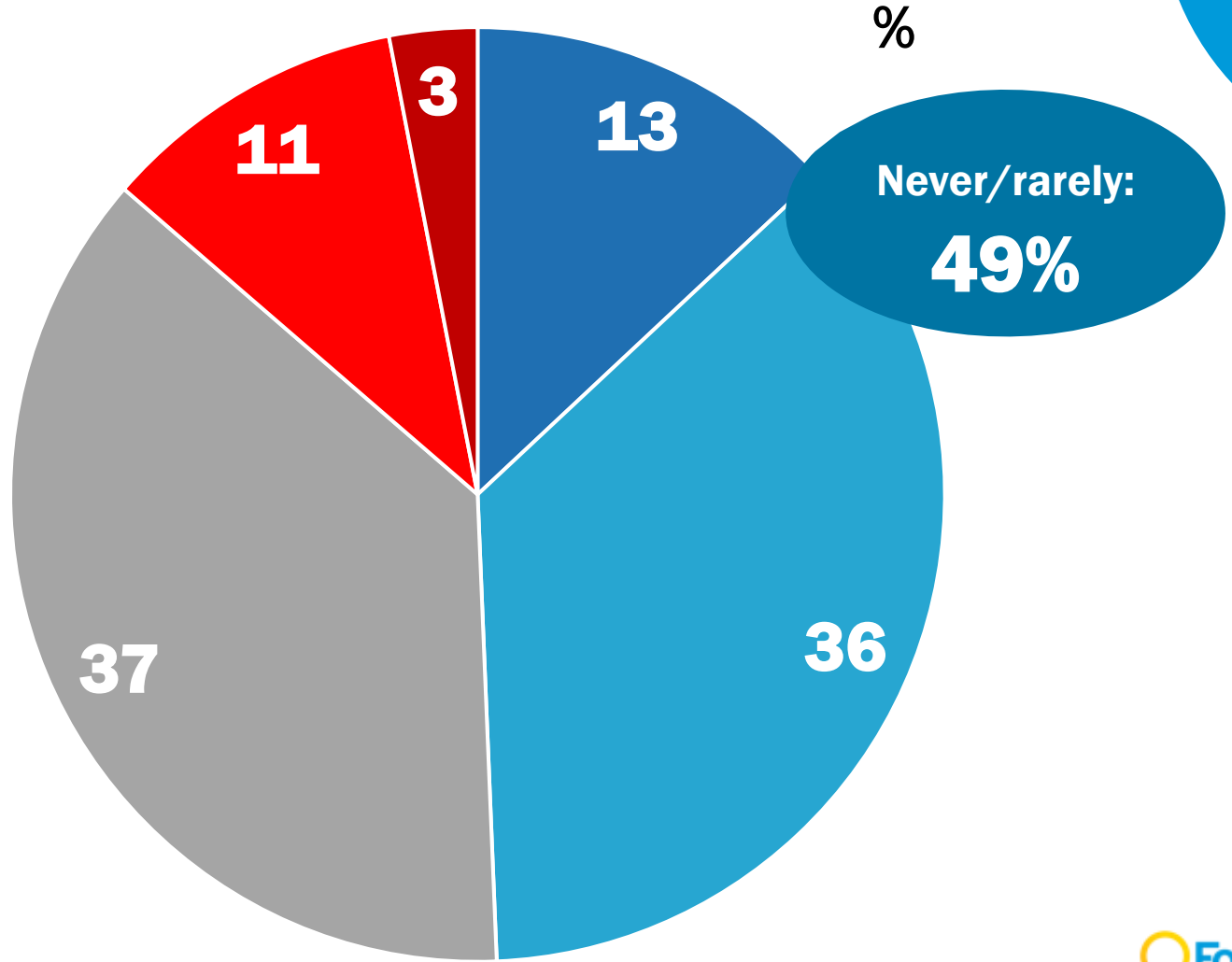


Base: Total-n=1008

Self-confidence is not a given for everyone; fear and hesitation still exist. **1 in 2 comfortably expresses their opinion**

“How often do you avoid expressing your opinion because of fear or embarrassment?”

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

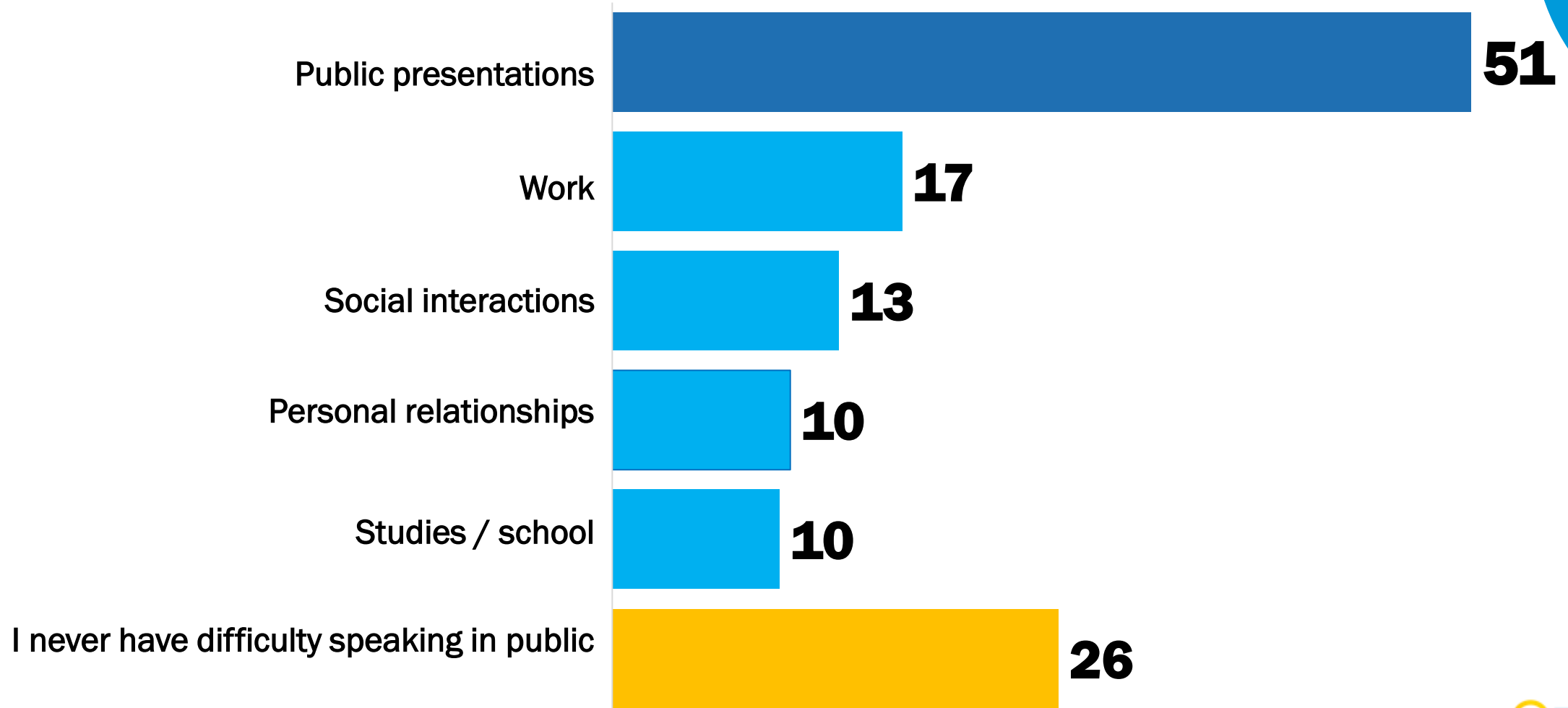


Base: Total-n=1008

High exposure is the main barrier to communication

Only 1 in 4 feels psychologically safe speaking in public

"In which settings do you find it most difficult to speak publicly and communicate in general?"

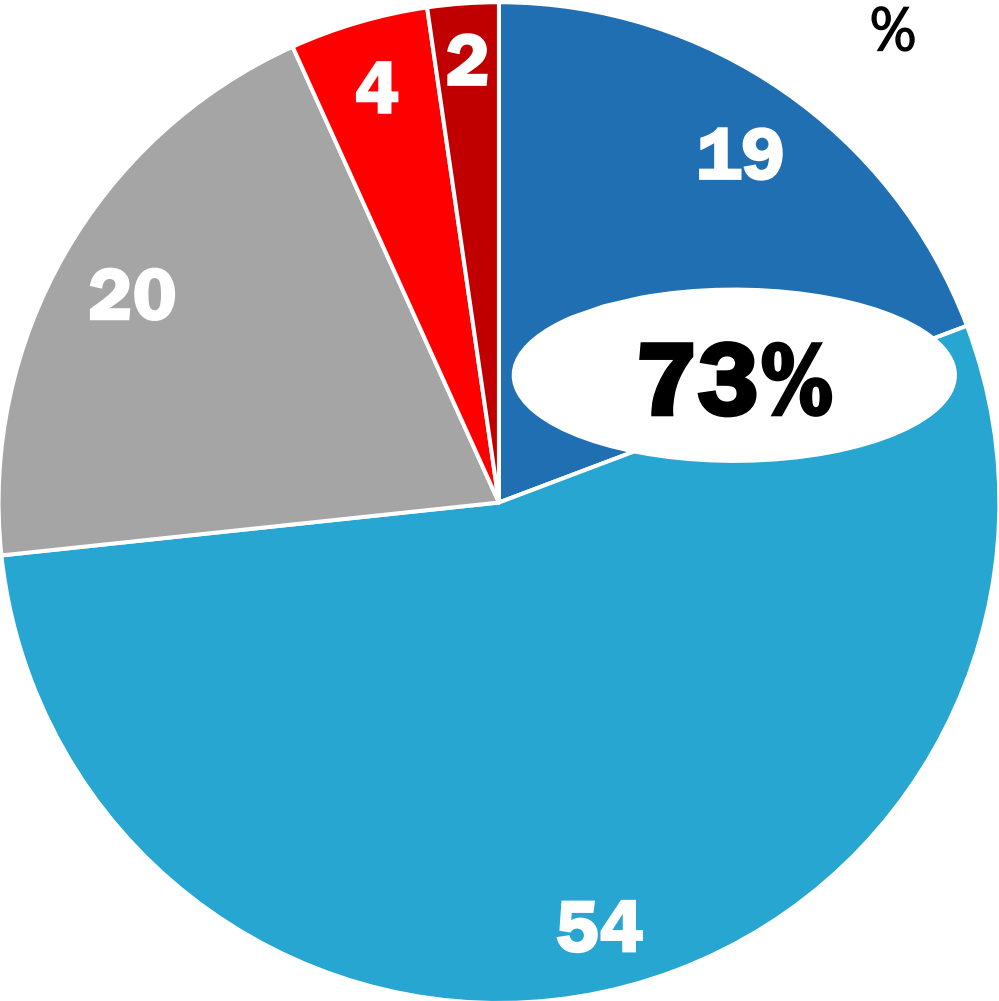


Base: Total-n=1008

Communication goes beyond words, 3 out of 4 focus on the nonverbal dimension

“When speaking with someone, how consciously do you pay attention to their tone of voice and body language?”

- A great deal
- Quite a lot
- Moderately
- A little
- Not at all



Base: Total-n=1008

The gap between perception and action is clear

%

As the years go by, our language becomes poorer in vocabulary

72

18

10

Most people do not speak with empathy and respect

69

24

7

Most people understand the importance of good verbal communication

22

36

42

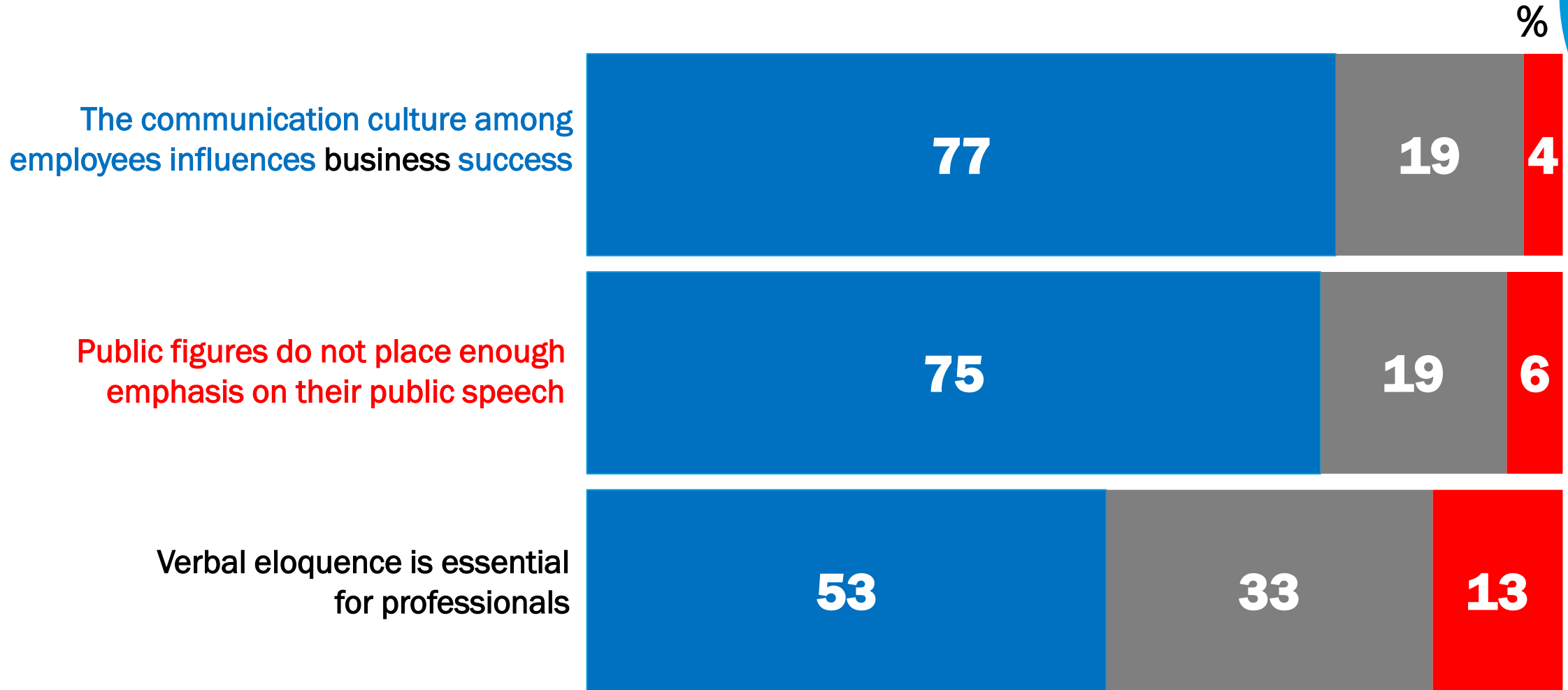
■ I strongly agree/agree

■ Neither agree nor disagree

■ I strongly disagree/disagree

Base: Total-n=1008

Communication is key to success



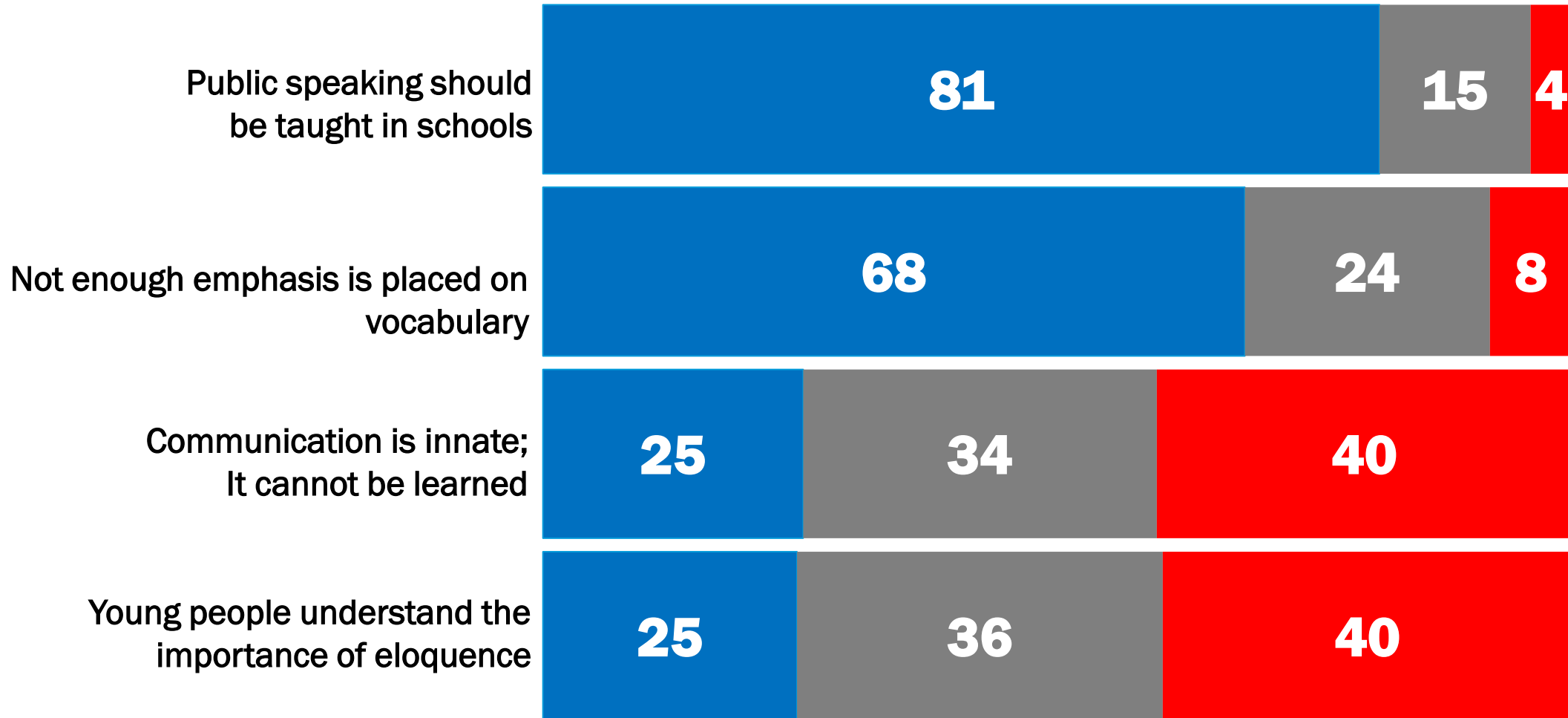
Base: Total-n=1008

■ I strongly agree/agree

■ Neither agree nor disagree

■ I strongly disagree/disagree

Communication is a skill that can be developed!



Base: Total-n=1008

■ I strongly agree/agree

■ Neither agree nor disagree

■ I strongly disagree/disagree



#2 Key Learning

Public speaking is recognized as a critical skill, with knowledge and structure as its foundations—confidence comes second.

However, it is not a given: only 2 out of 5 feel comfortable speaking in public, with exposure being the main obstacle. At the same time, communication goes beyond words.

But in practice, there is a clear gap: we do not develop speech as much as we should.

**The voice of the
public**

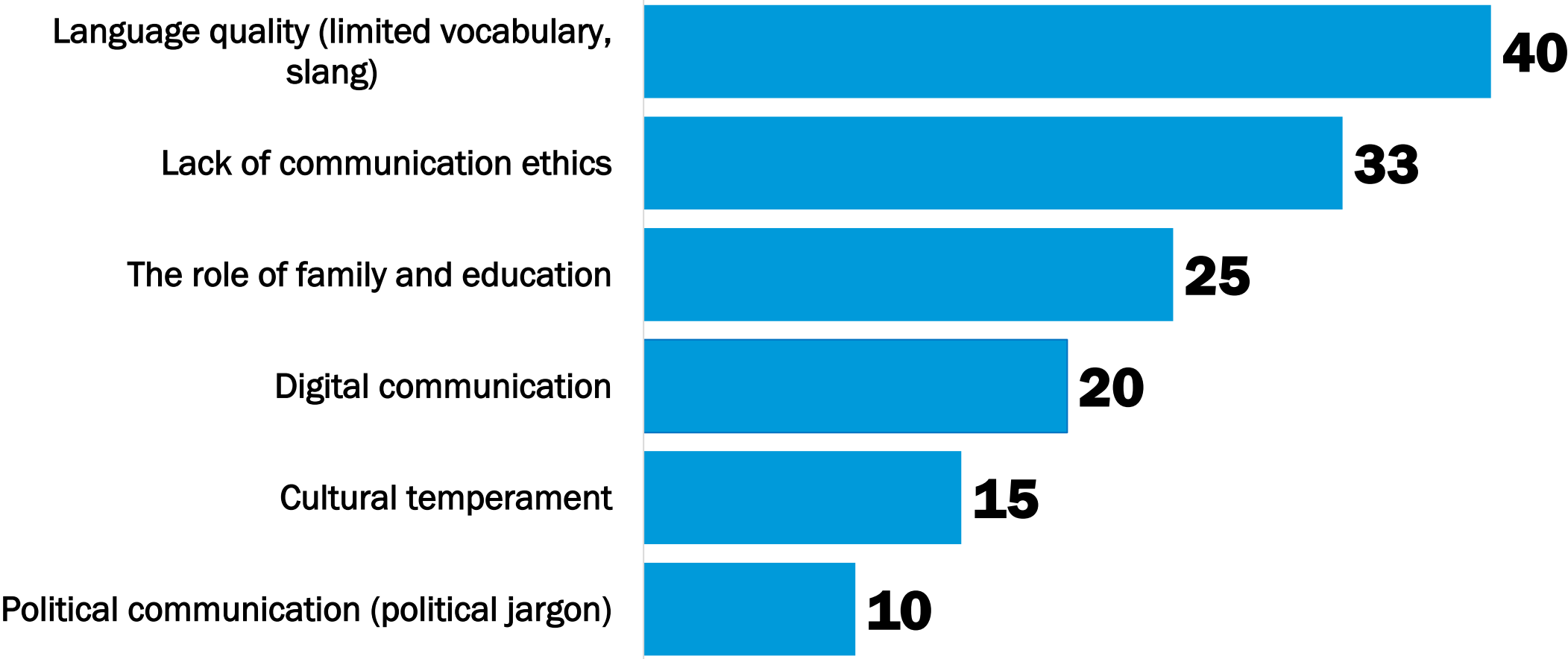
**1,008
responses**

*What they told us about the
problems, attitudes, and
future of public discourse*

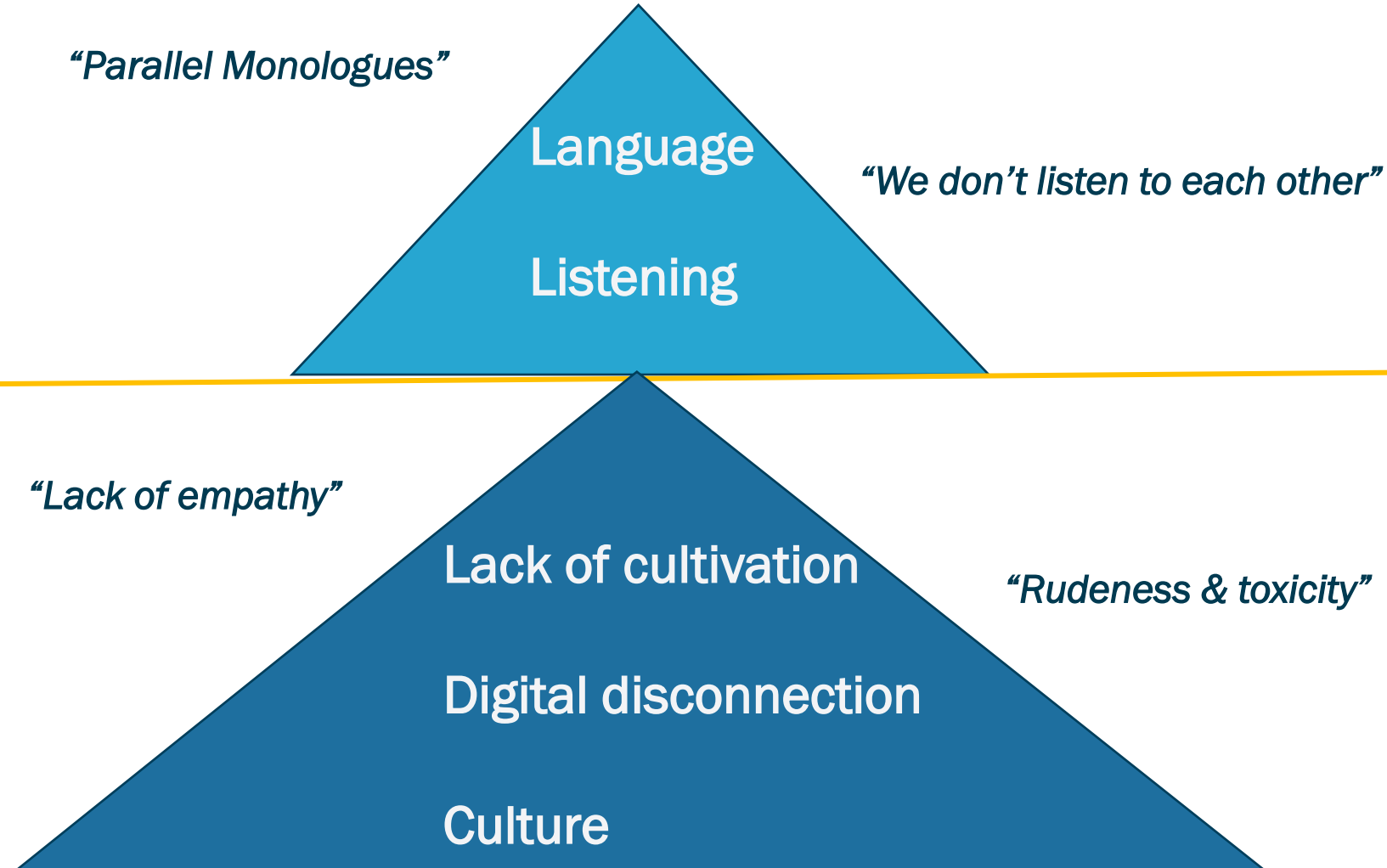


The anatomy of contemporary discourse in Greece

What Influences Modern Public Discourse



The iceberg of communication in Greece



What Actually Happens in Communication

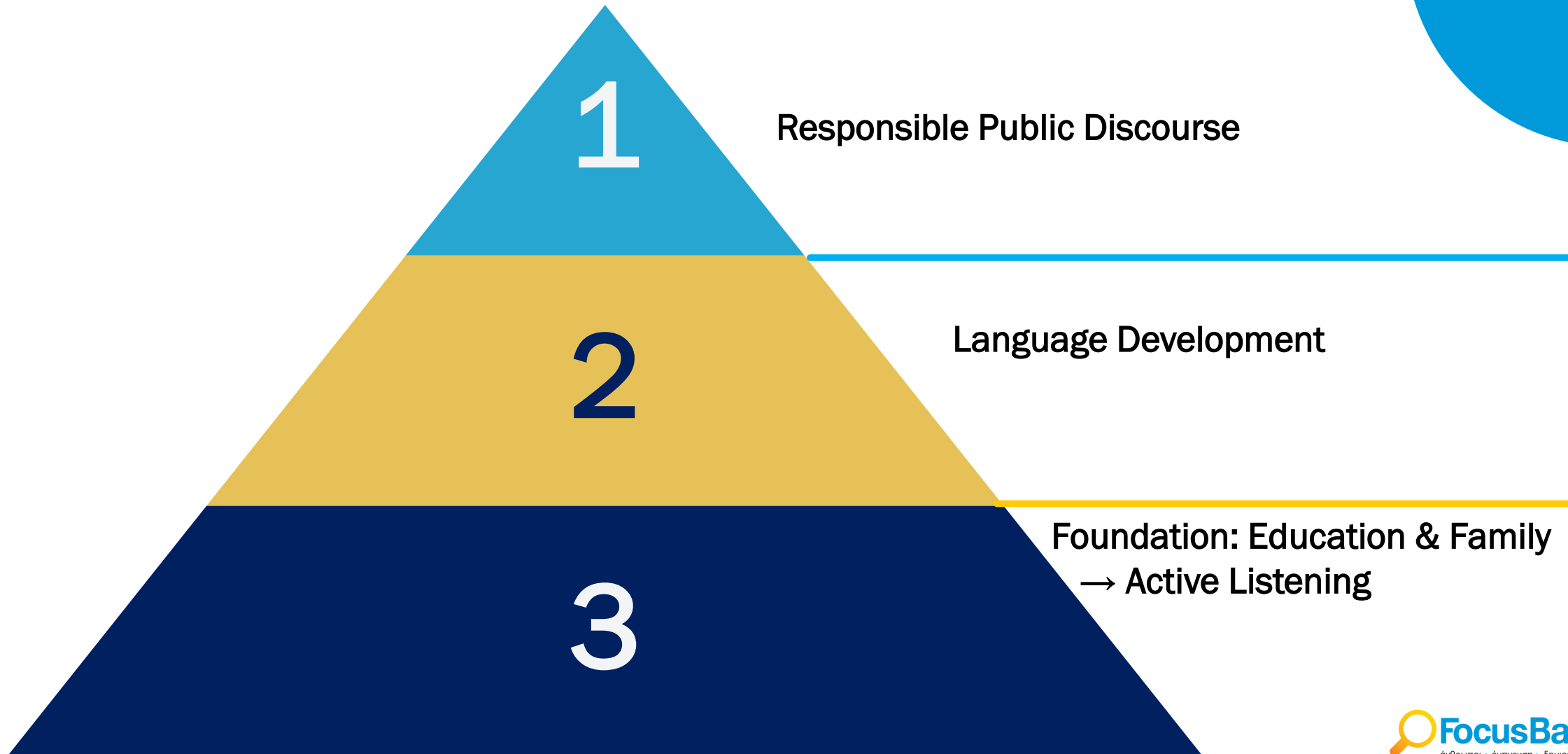
We speak with fewer words

We listen less

We connect with each other less

“We listen to respond, not to understand”

How Communication Can Be Rebuilt



Spontaneous reflections on communication today

There is little awareness of the importance of developing effective communication from an early age

Communication between people has been limited due to workloads and the internet

Over the years and across generations, our language has become poorer

There is a noticeable lack of respect and empathy, combined with poor language use

Communication often prioritizes image over substance

People struggle to express their feelings

Public discourse almost always lacks sincerity and genuine emotion

Face-to-face communication has largely been replaced by written interaction on social media

Public discourse in Greece is quite toxic

Spontaneous suggestions for better communication

Spoken communication in Greece has a unique intensity and vibrancy that is hard to find elsewhere

Oral communication among Greeks has been a fundamental element of social and cultural life from antiquity to the present day

Spoken language should be direct, honest, and respectful toward the listener

Politeness and respectful communication are very important for personal and professional relationships

Confidence in speaking and stress management could be cultivated through school

We should support the Greek language and limit the use of foreign words

Public speaking can be developed through education and presentations

Our language is particularly rich in vocabulary and expressions

It is important to understand the meaning of words and adapt speech to the audience



The Big Picture

A striking paradox:

***While communication is considered the foundation of success,
in practice, it is often marked by distance and difficulty.***

A gap in everyday life:

Negativity, lack of empathy, and “parallel monologues”

Beyond words:

Emotion and nonverbal behavior prevail—credibility matters more than eloquence.

What’s missing:

Systematic cultivation of speech from an early age

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Thank you!

Want more info? Ask xenia@focus.gr

