

THE STATE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PROFESSION 2019

The State of the Sustainability Profession Survey 2019

The Sustainability University foundation conducted their second survey on Dutch sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) professionals to map the state of this profession in the Netherlands. In this exploratory research, 112 sustainability professionals responded to the survey. Although the need to embed sustainability in business is bigger than ever, when compared with last year's results, the embedding of sustainability or CSR hardly improved. In this report the term CSR is used to describe all sustainability and social responsibility related themes, both inside the company as in the supply chain.

The professionals

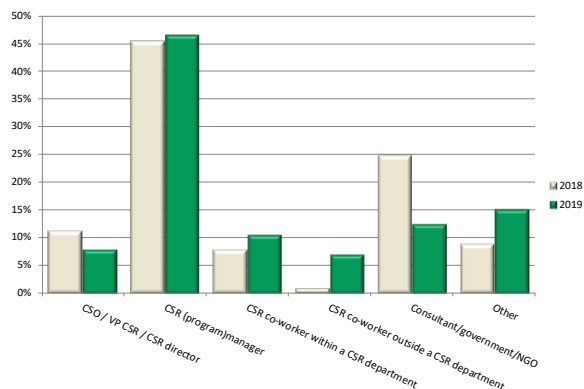
The majority of the respondents are working in large (multi)national companies with over 250 employees (74%) as a CSO/CSR director/CSR manager (54%) or a CSR coworker/projectmanager (18%). They are highly educated (73% holds a master's degree) and 54% have more than 5 years of working experience.

Compared with last year there is a slight change in qualifications an individual holds in sustainability/CSR. This year 22% of respondents held a master's degree in the discipline, compared to 16% last year. However, 32% did not hold any qualifications (22% in 2018). Therefore, we still see room for improvement in education preparing individuals for this profession.

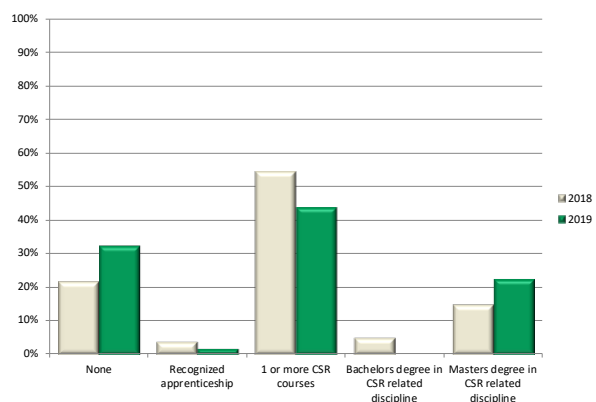
The organizations

The CSR professional works close to the CEO. 90% of the respondents reports directly to the CEO (25%) or with 1-2 employees in between. It is still a lonely job. 47% doesn't have a team and 41% has a small team up to 5 people. Last year this was comparable. The respondents are spread over different sectors and compared with last year there were more professionals in industry and retail.

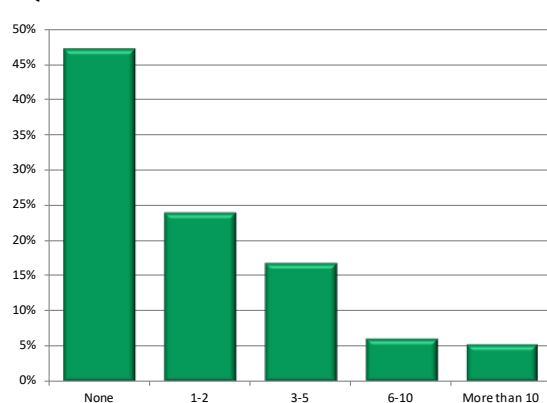
Q: WHAT TYPE OF CSR/SUSTAINABILITY PROFESSIONAL ARE YOU?



Q: WHAT CSR QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU HOLD?

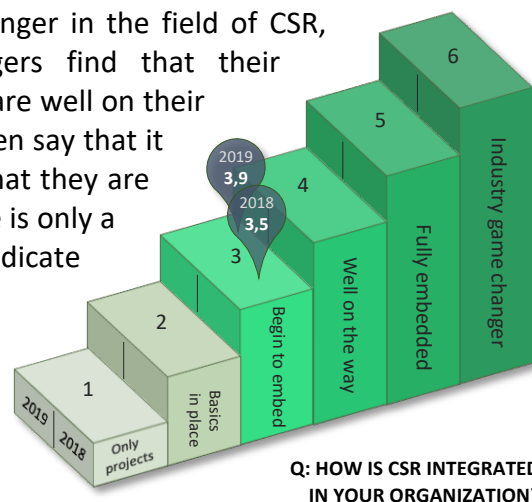


Q: HOW MANY PEOPLE REPORT DIRECTLY TO YOU?

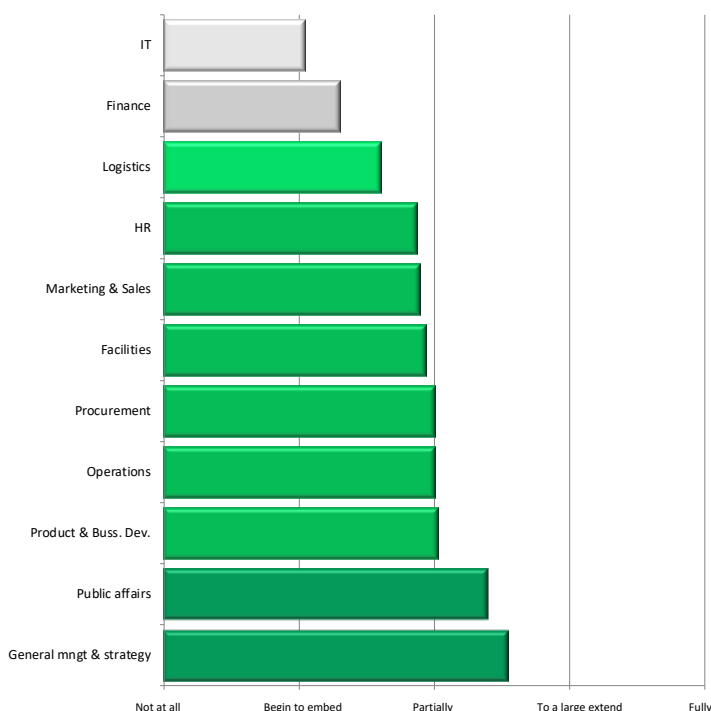


Corporate Social Responsibility integration in organizations

On the ladder from no CSR to being a game changer in the field of CSR, organizations differ greatly. Most CSR managers find that their organizations have begun to embed CSR (33%) or are well on their way towards fully embedding CSR (27%). Some even say that it is fully embedded in their organization (10%) or that they are front runners in their field (18%). On average there is only a slight increase compared to last year, what might indicate that embedding is stagnating.



Q: IN YOUR OPINION TO WHAT EXTENT IS CSR EMBEDDED IN THE FOLLOWING PROCESSES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?



Q: HOW IS CSR INTEGRATED IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Zooming in on the business processes there is a big difference in integration of CSR. Embedding CSR in general management, strategy and public affairs is further developed, according to the CSR manager. IT and finance however have low CSR integration.

This is an area of concern as finance is a very important process in determining future investments and looking into societal business cases and business models.

The roles and competencies of a CSR professional

In the book 'MVO doe je ZO' [seven different roles for CSR managers](#) are identified and described: The Networker, the Strategist, the Coordinator and Initiator, the Stimulator and Connector, the Mentor, the Innovation, and the Monitor.

The [eight competencies for CSR managers](#) identified are described as: Foresight thinking, Systems thinking, Instrumental Thinking, Management and Entrepreneurship, Interpersonal Skills and three CSR Supportive Characteristics and Attitudes.

When determining what roles respondents spend the largest portion of their time on, there was not much difference with last year. The Coordinator and Initiator role asks most of their time (34%) and secondly Stimulator and Connector (22%). When compared to the roles respondents would prefer to spend their time on, as last year, Strategist ranked by far the highest role in which respondents wished to spend their time on (47%). While the preference is to spend a lot less time on the role Stimulator and Connector (11%).

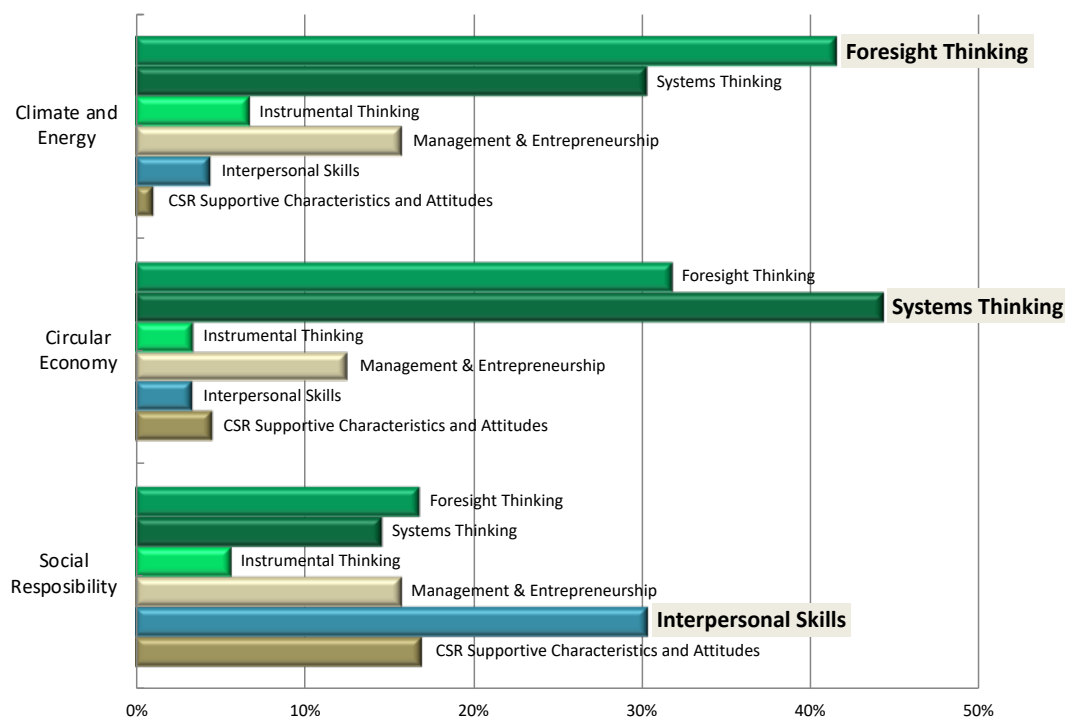
Topics and Competencies

This year the survey was expanded to research what, according to the CSR professional, the most important roles and competencies are to be effective in specific very important sustainability themes such as Climate and Energy Transition, Social Responsibility and Circular Economy.

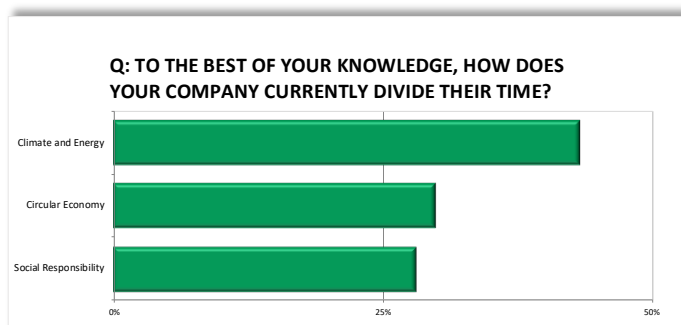
If it comes to competencies, it was found that respondents believe every topic asks for a different dominant competency to be effective. Foresight thinking (42%) is the most important competency for Climate and Energy transition, System thinking (44%) for Circular Economy while Interpersonal skills (30%) were deemed most important for Social Responsibility.

The Sustainability University has started a research project, supported by the Goldschmeding Foundation, about [Circular Economy competencies](#) to determine what competencies companies need to develop to accelerate the Circular Economy.

Q: IN GENERAL, WHICH COMPETENCIES ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE FIELDS OF ENERGY TRANSITION, CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?



Another interesting finding was the time spend on the three different sustainability themes. Companies spend most of their time on Climate and Energy transition and less on Circular Economy and Social Responsibility. This might be explained by a longer history of putting

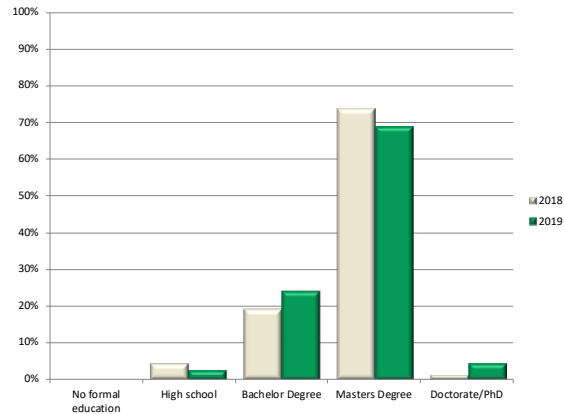


Energy transition on the agenda, but it is also plausible that the transition towards Circular Economy is more complex because of the system change that is necessary. Circular Economy requires that almost all employees within and around the company need to change their behavior and way of working.

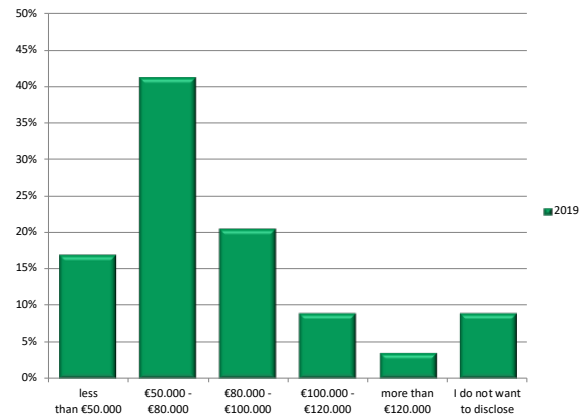
ANNEX SURVEY STATE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PROFESSION 2019

Part 1. Profile of the sustainability professional

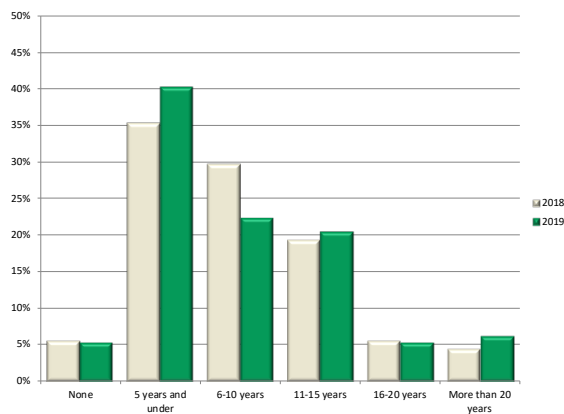
Q: WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE COMPLETED?



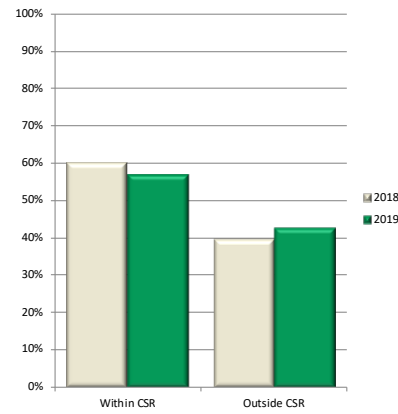
Q: IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION, WHAT IS YOUR RANGE OF BASE ANNUAL PAY?



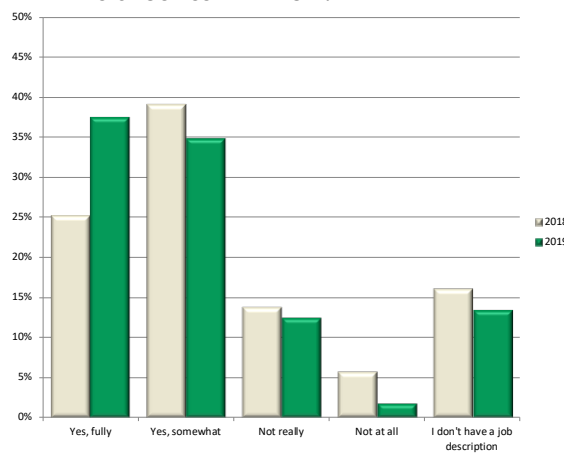
Q: HOW MANY YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE WITH CSR?



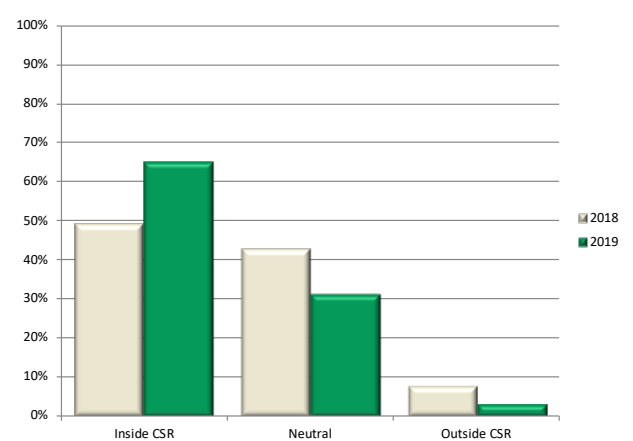
Q: YOUR PREVIOUS JOB WAS ...



Q: DO YOU THINK YOUR CURRENT JOB DESCRIPTION REFLECTS YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

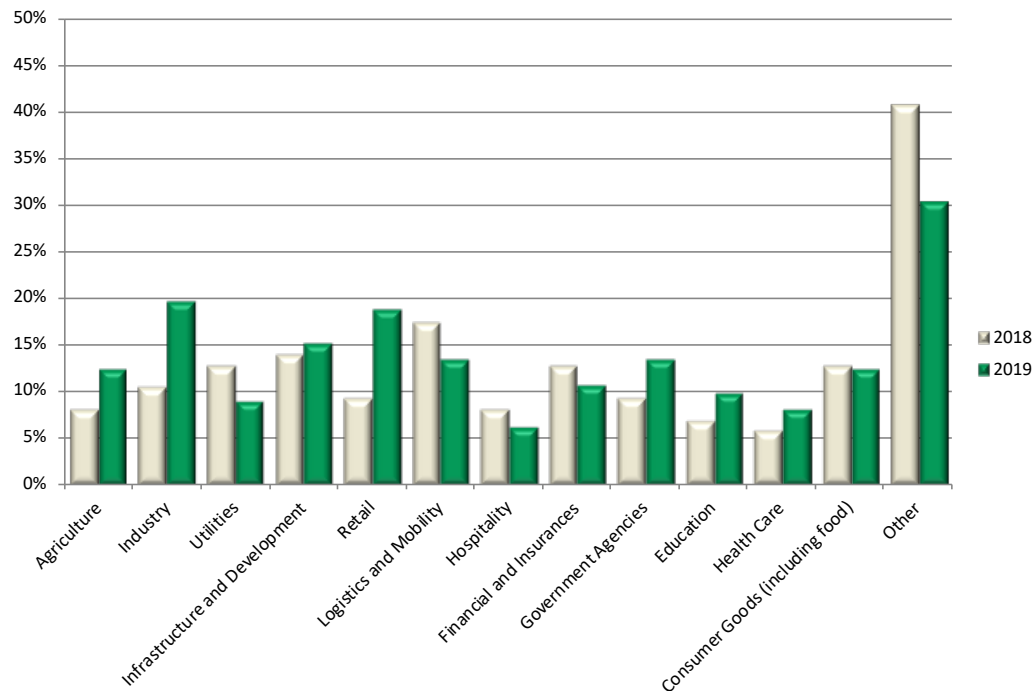


Q: INDICATE HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOUR CAREER DEVELOP FURTHER?

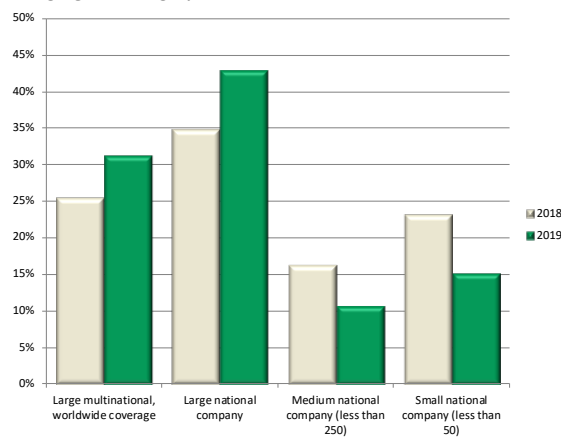


Part 2. Organizational profile

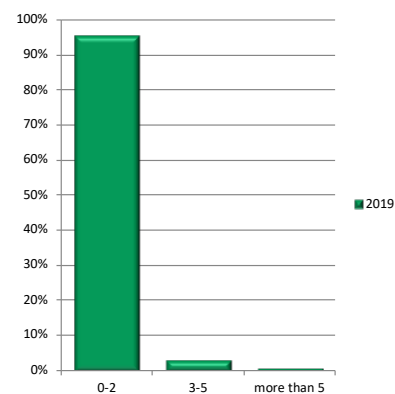
Q: WHAT SECTOR DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION WORK IN?



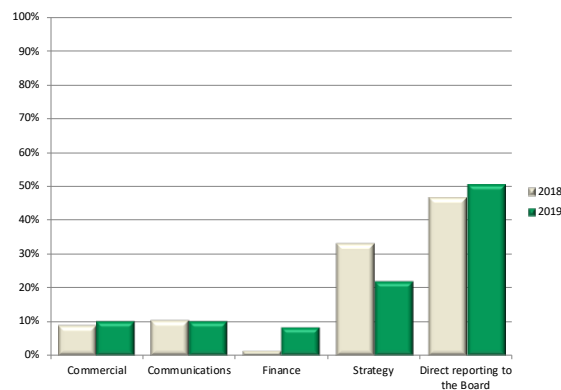
Q: WHAT WOULD BEST DESCRIBE THE SIZE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?



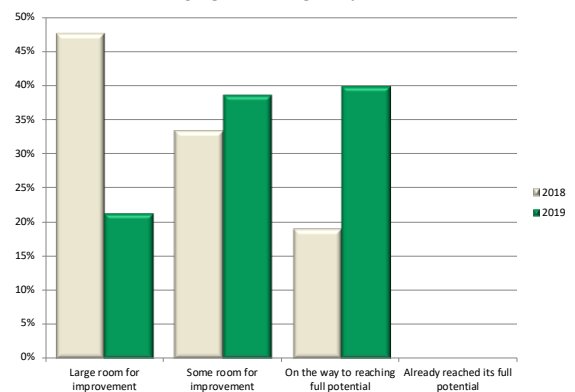
Q: HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE THERE BETWEEN THE CSR MANAGER AND THE CEO?



Q: WHAT DEPARTMENT IN YOUR COMPANY IS CSR ALLOCATED TO?

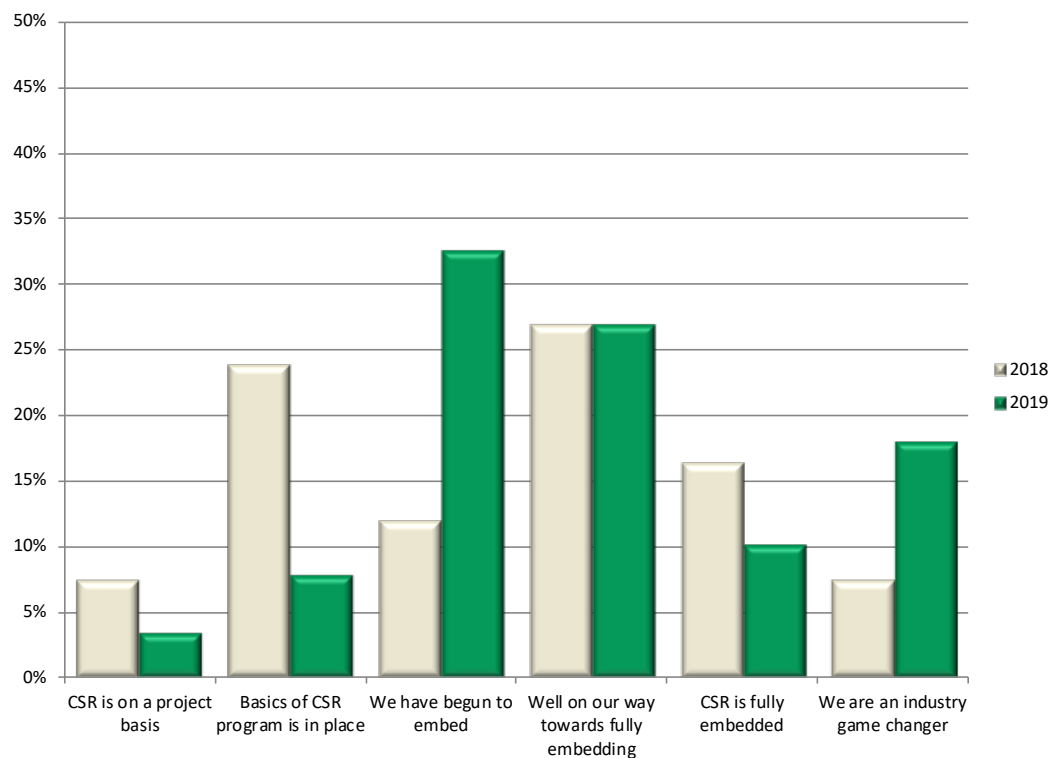


Q: MY ORGANIZATION CONTRIBUTES TO THE UN SDG'S TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WORLD?

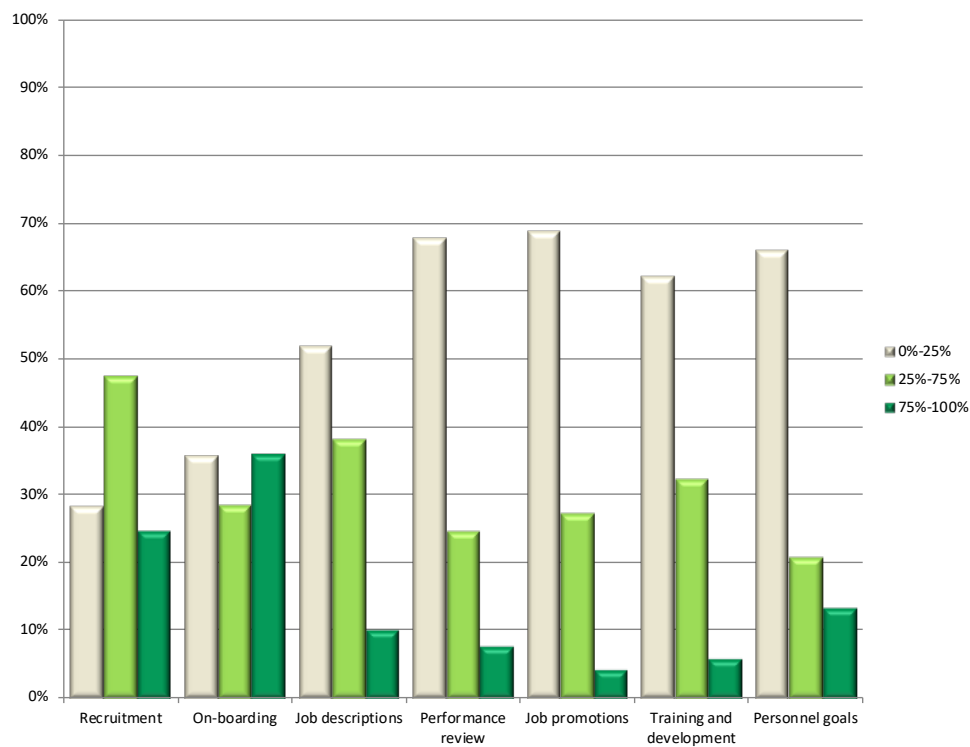


Part 3. CSR integration

Q: HOW WOULD YOU SAY CSR/SUSTAINABILITY IS INTEGRATED WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

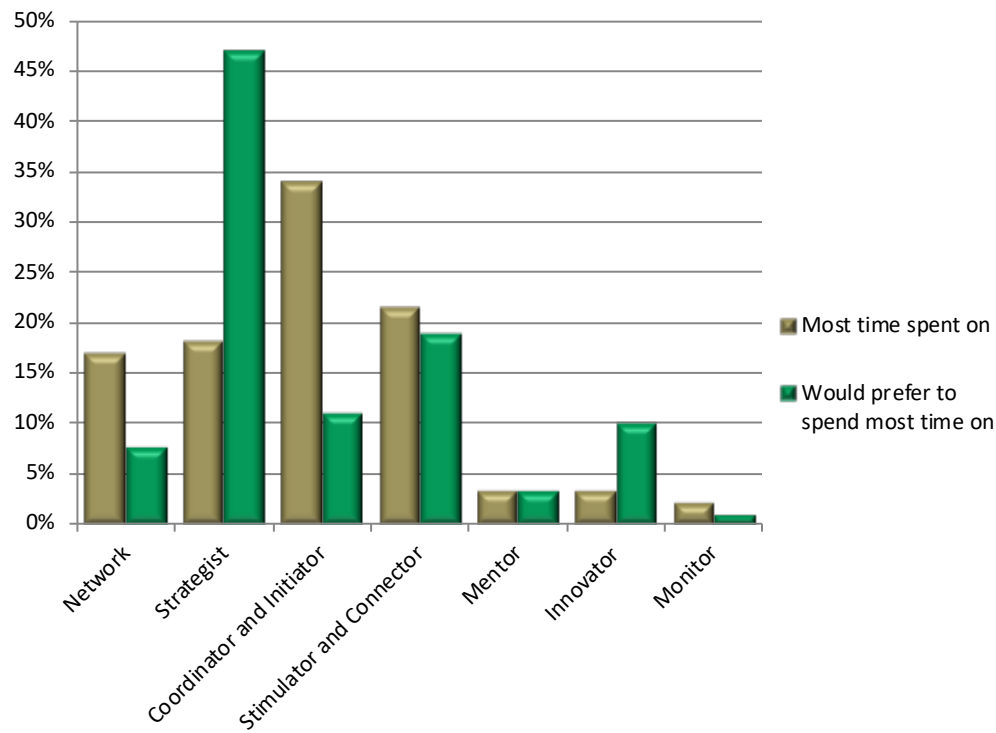


Q: IN YOUR OPINION TO WHAT DEGREE IS CSR EMBEDDED IN HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITIES?

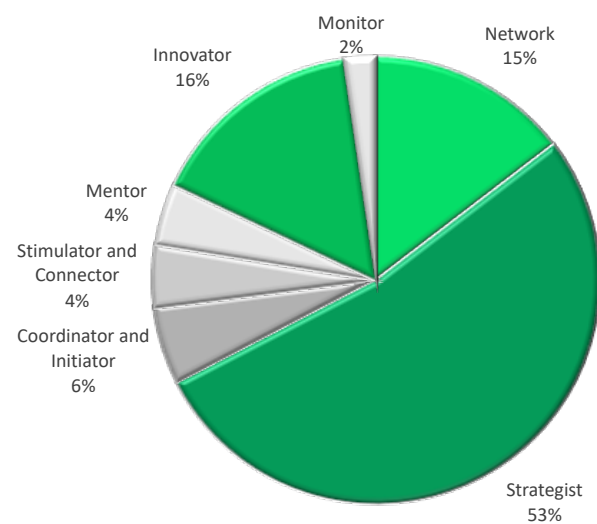


Part 4. The 7 roles of the CSR professional

Q: WHAT ROLE DO YOU SPEND MOST TIME ON AND WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERRED TIME USE?



Q: WHAT IS THE ROLE YOU WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP YOURSELF FURTHER IN?



Q: IN GENERAL, WHICH ROLES IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE FIELDS CLIMATE & ENERGY TRANSITION, CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

