Creating a Positive Office Culture

August 14, 2018 • 2pm Eastern/11am Pacific

Part of the "Life in Congress" Project by

SHRM
SOCIETY FOR HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

CMF
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Agenda

- About the "Life in Congress" Project

- Defining Organizational Culture

- Creating a Positive, Motivating Office Culture

- Negative or Unproductive Office Cultures

- Q&A

- Conclusion (Evaluation & Additional Resources)

Presenters & Panelists

- Bradford Fitch,
  President & CEO,
  Congressional Management
  Foundation

- Lisa Sherman,
  Chief of Staff,
  Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA),
  *Winner of the Democracy Award
  for "Life in Congress" Workplace
  Environment*

Office of Rep. Susan Davis
Office of Rep. Dave Reichert
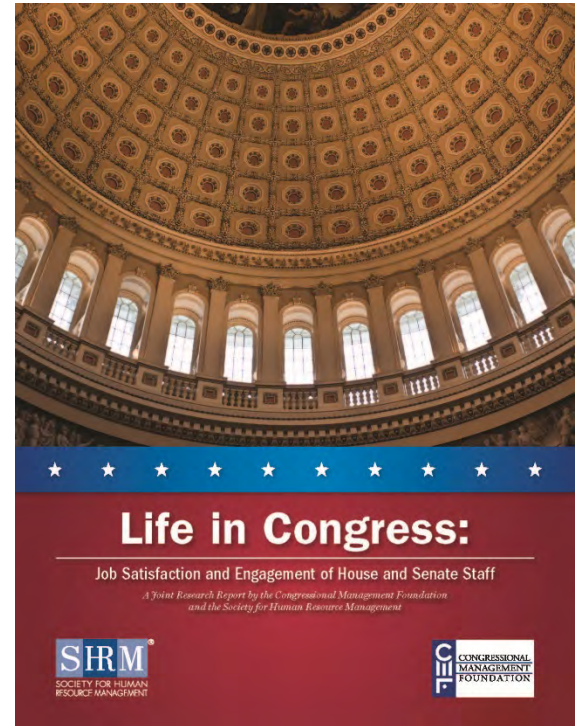
"Life in Congress"

A Research Series
Examining Congress As a Workplace
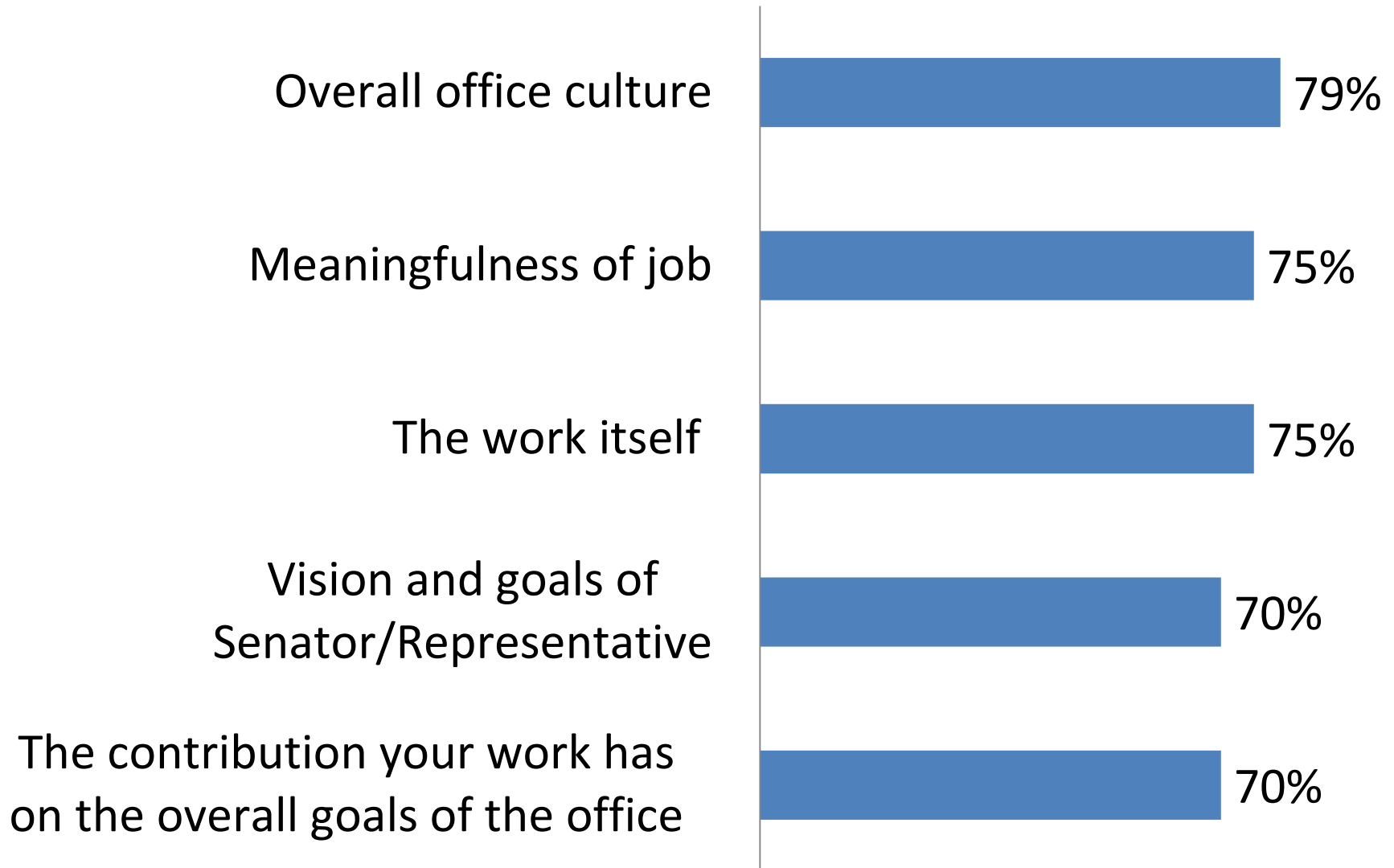
"Life in Congress" Project Goals

1. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Congress

2. Enhance the public's understanding of America's premier democratic institution
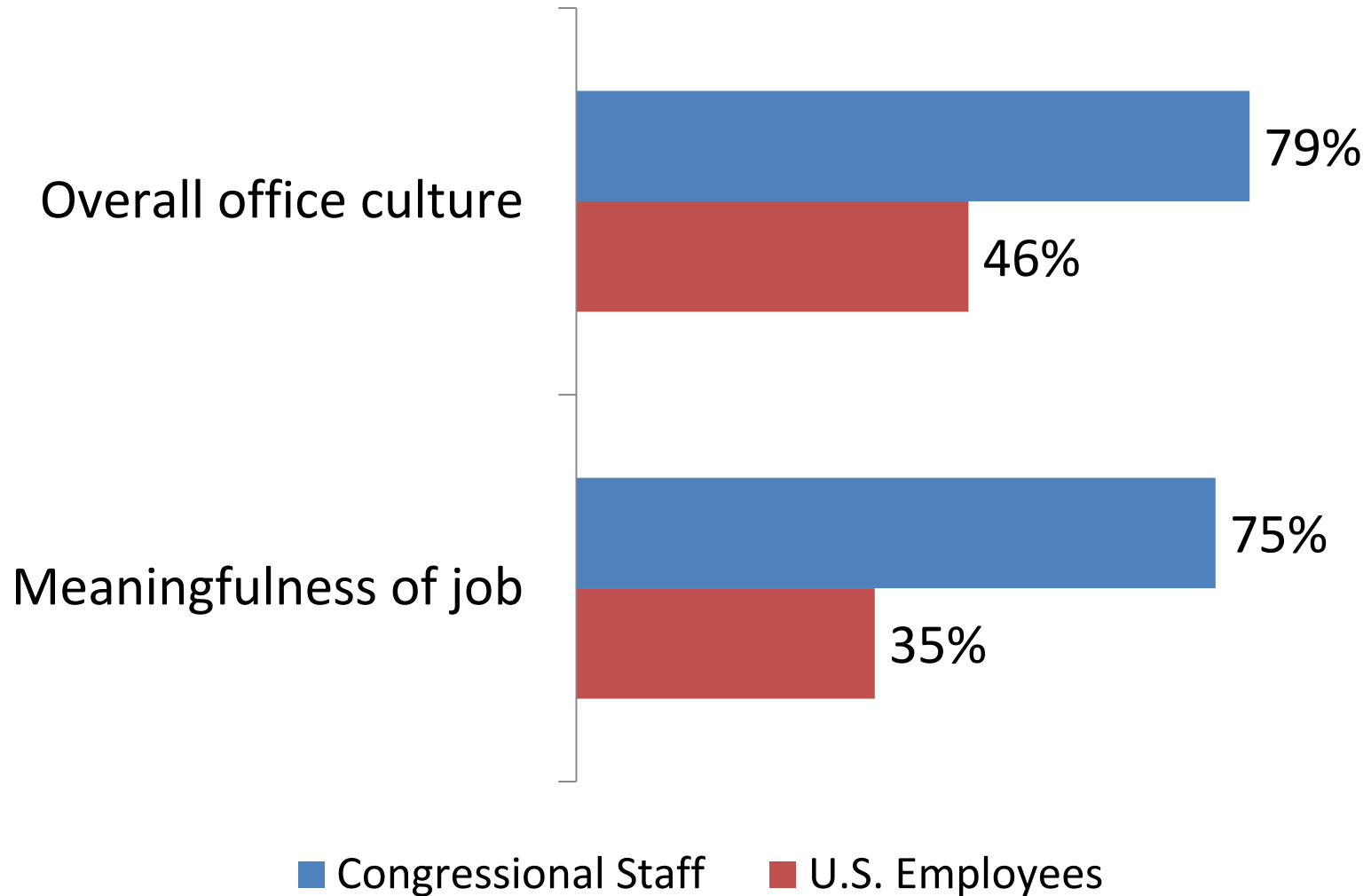
Why a webinar on "office culture"

- *Life in Congress: Job Satisfaction and Engagement of House and Senate Staff*

  - Reveals what congressional staff value most about their workplace

  - Based on a survey of more than 1,400 staffers (House and Senate, D and R, DC and district/state)

  - Compares congressional results to SHRM data on U.S. employees (from various industries and organization sizes)

Life in Congress:
Job Satisfaction and Engagement of House and Senate Staff
A Joint Research Report by the Congressional Management Foundation and the Society for Human Resource Management

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Job Aspects Most Important to Staff

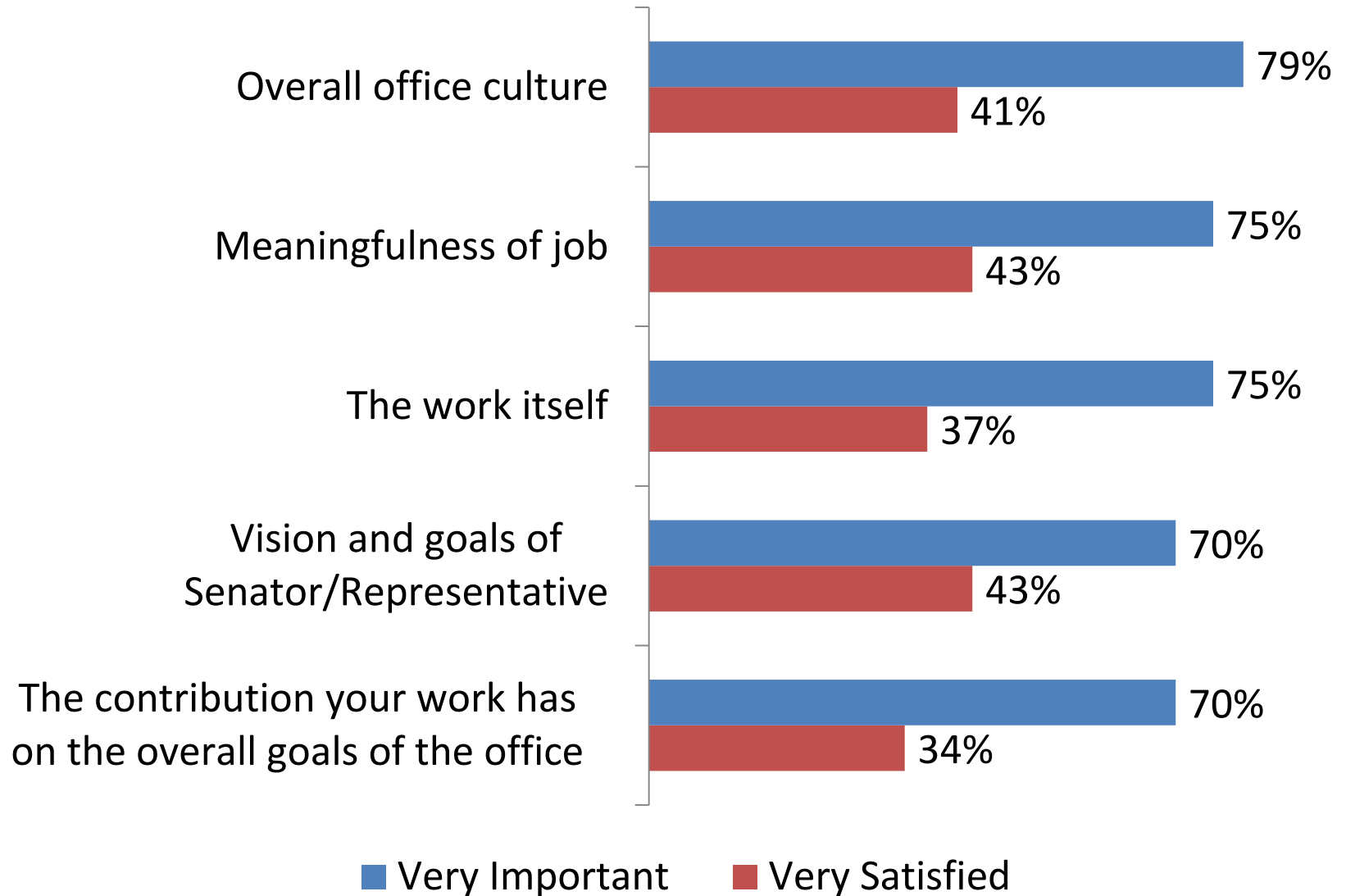| Job Aspect	Percentage
Overall office culture	79%
Meaningfulness of job	75%
The work itself	75%
Vision and goals of Senator/Representative	70%
The contribution your work has on the overall goals of the office	70%

Congress Compared to U.S. Workforce

Tell Us Your Opinion

1. How satisfied are you with your overall office culture (office's reputation, work ethics, values, working conditions, etc.)?

2. How satisfied are you with the meaningfulness of the job (understanding how your job contributes to society as a whole)?

Satisfaction with Most Important Aspects

Aspect	Very Important	Very Satisfied
Overall office culture	79%	41%
Meaningfulness of job	75%	43%
The work itself	75%	37%
Vision and goals of Senator/Representative	70%	43%
The contribution your work has on the overall goals of the office	70%	34%

■ Very Important   ■ Very Satisfied

"Being a truly effective leader requires more than creating a winning vision, making wise decisions, motivating, and empowering the staff. It also requires creating a productive organizational culture."

—Setting Course, Chapter 10,
*"The Member's Role as Leader of the Office"*

What is "organizational culture"?

Every Organization Has a Culture

- A set of **rules** (formal and informal), **values** (positive or negative), **practices or norms** (prescribed and implicit), and **taboos** that define the organization *and* the way it works.

- "Actions speak louder than words" – these are the **real** ground rules
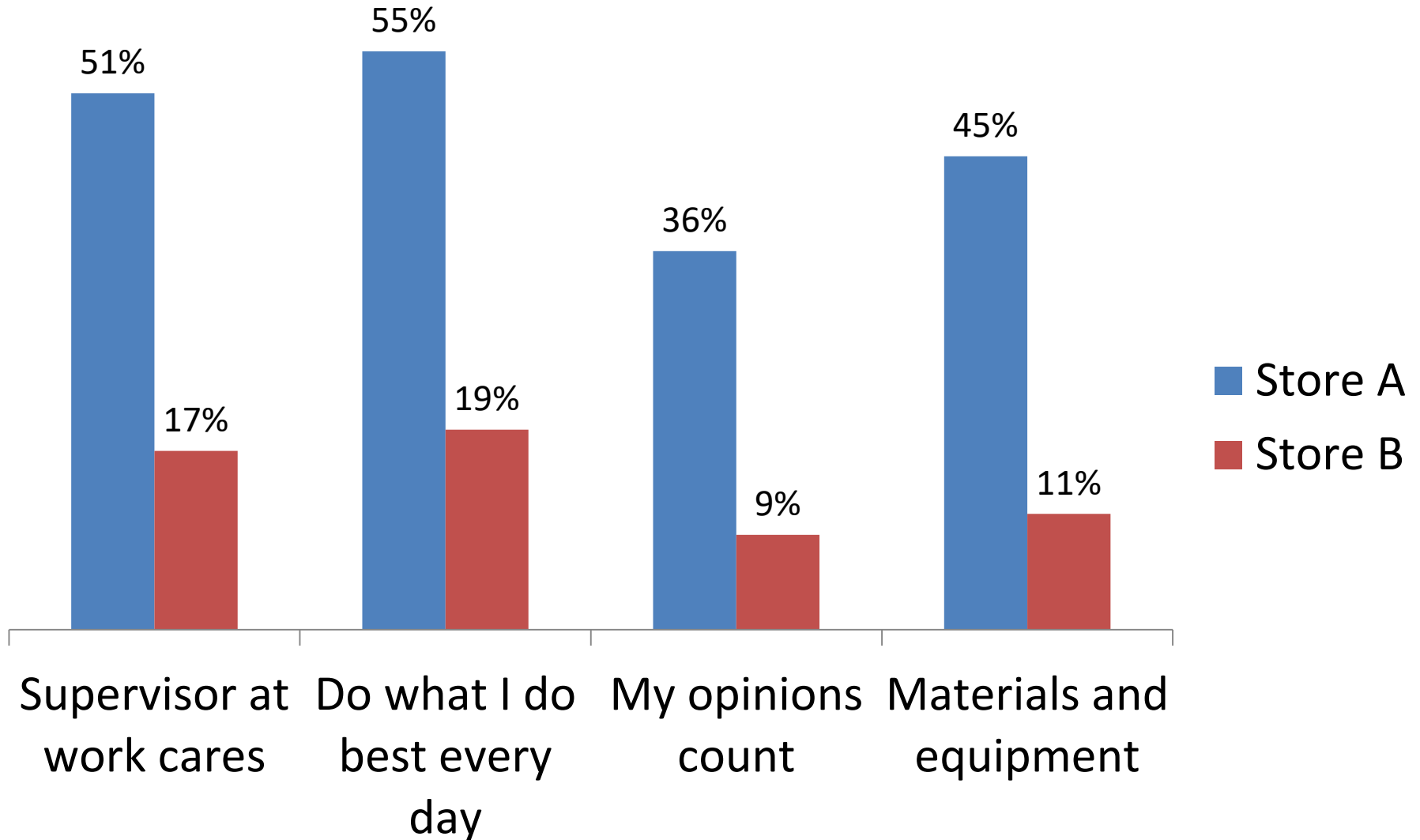
- Culture defines how people work

Power of Culture in Congress
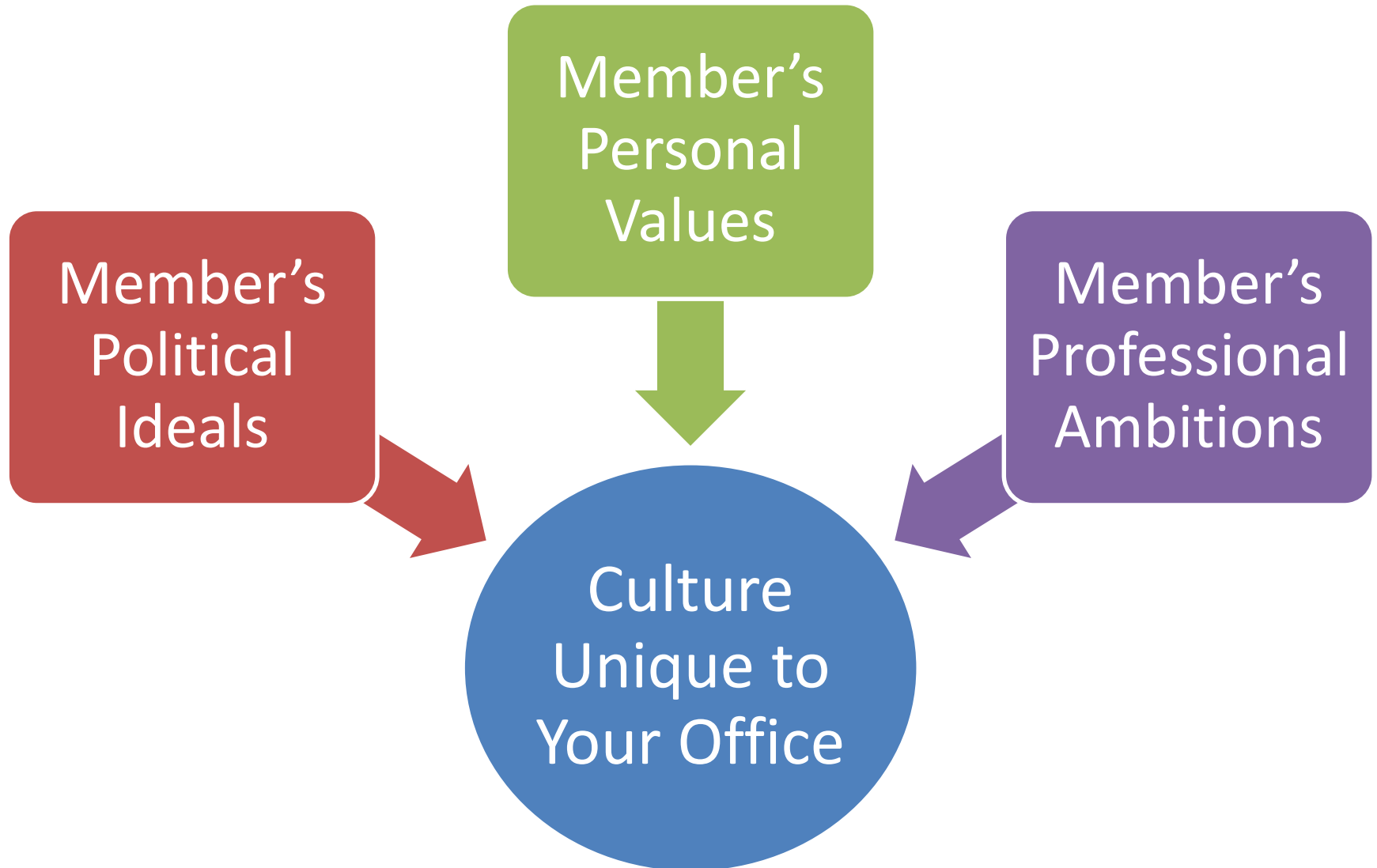
Managers Determine Outcomes

1. Does my supervisor, or someone at work seem to care for me as a person?

2. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?

3. At work, do my opinions seem to count?

4. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?

Managers Determine Outcomes

How do you create a positive, motivating office culture?

Characteristics of Most Productive Offices (Member Focused)

1. The Member has a clear mission and goals, about both what the office should do and how it should do it, which the staff understand and admire.

2. The Member operates day-to-day, in public and private, according to consistent personal values that the staff respect.

3. The Member treats the staff with trust and respect, clearly conveying that they are the Member's most important asset.

Characteristics of Most Productive Offices (Manager Focused)

1. Staff want to do a good job to contribute to the team.

2. The multiple offices feel like parts of one big team.

3. Staff teach and mentor each other eagerly.

4. Staff are excited about reporting their good work to supervisors.

5. Staff share information.

6. Staff are comfortable owning their mistakes.

7. Conflicts and changes are handled smoothly.

Training & Mentoring

1. Explain office culture and office policies—what is valued and why.

2. Make sure new staff know what they're doing by taking the time to explain it.

3. Write clear written manuals.

4. Encourage in-person questions.

5. Explain why each project or duty is important to the team.

6. Create an open non-judgmental supervisor check-in system from the beginning—it can be formal or informal.

Unified Management Team is Critical

Member, Chief of Staff and District Director must be unified in purpose, policy, and procedure!

- Work out managerial differences before presenting decisions to staff.

- Show junior staff that senior staff really like working with each other.

What does a negative or unproductive office culture look like?

4 Characteristics of Negative Culture

1. Fails to display clear, consistent values through action.

2. Promotes mistrust of others, dishonesty or laziness.

3. Puts commitment to personal success ahead of the public good.

4. Treats staff like expendable parts rather than valued and respected partners.

Q&A

Conclusion

Evaluation and Additional Resources

"Life in Congress" Reports

- *Life in Congress: Aligning Work and Life in the U.S. House and Senate*

- *Life in Congress: The Member Perspective*

- *Life in Congress: Job Satisfaction and Engagement of House and Senate Staff*

- *Workflex Toolkit for Congress*

  - » **Next webinar on Sept. 27!**

- *Congressional Benefits & Personnel Practices*
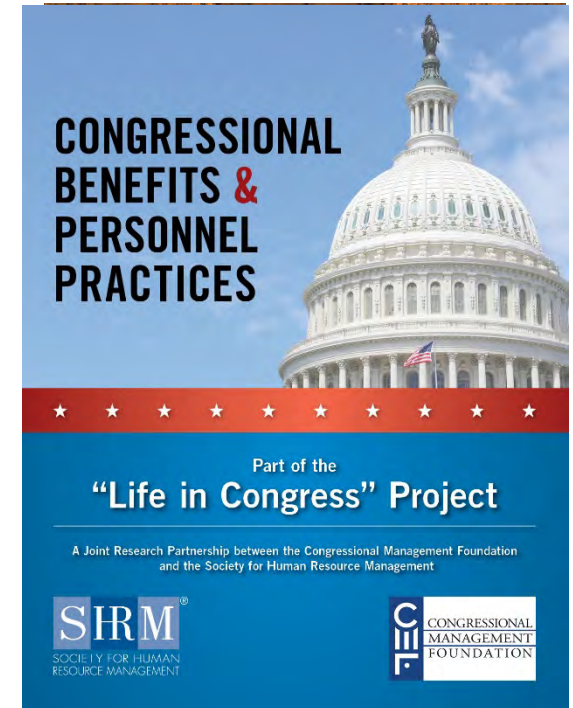
Upcoming Webinars

- "How to Strategically Schedule Your Boss's Time"
  - Aug. 21 from 3:00-3:30pm Eastern
  - Aug. 29 from 12:00-12:30pm Eastern

- "Workflex Toolkit for Congress"
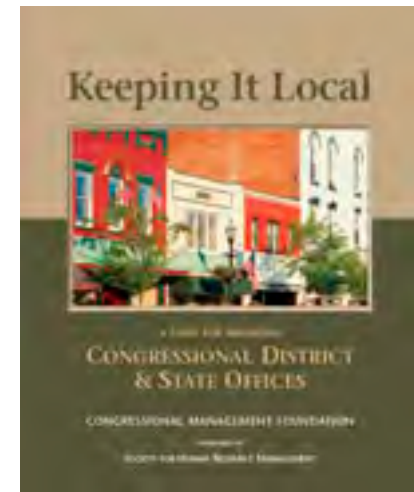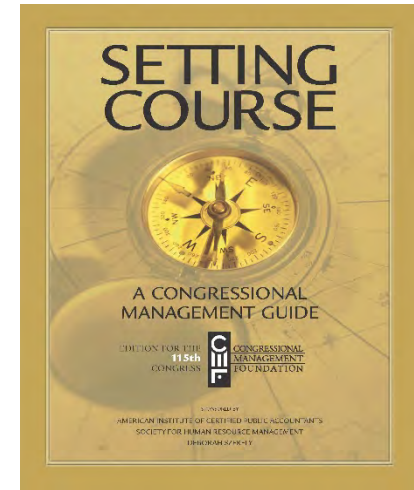 - Sept. 27 from 1:00-2:00pm Eastern (tentative)

Visit **CongressFoundation.org/calendar** to sign up!

District/State Resources

- Visit **CongressFoundation.org/district-state-resources** for downloadable and adaptable:

    - Constituent Service and Casework Manuals

    - Event Checklist

    - Scheduling Forms

    - Sample Job Descriptions

    - Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Complimentary Management Guidebooks

- *Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide*

- *Keeping It Local: A Guide for Congressional District/State Offices*