

ReMAP II: Worldwide Missionary Retention Study & Best Practices

Missions Commission

2/24/2010



WEA Missions Commission Commitments—globally....

- **To provide a place, a forum and services**
- **To serve regional and national mission movements, global networks, mission agencies, missional churches and miss. training programs.**
- **Listening to the global grass roots**
- **Listening to the voices of “mission structures”**
- **Catalysing and connecting church and mission leaders, missionary equippers/trainers**

Focus of ReMAP II

- **Research into Older and Newer Sending Countries (like ReMAP I)--**
 - ◆ **22 nations**
 - ◆ **600 mission agencies**
 - ◆ **40,000 missionaries**
- **Issues related to retention of missionaries**
- **Revealing good agency practices**

Key International Agency Practices

1. **Careful Candidate Selection**
2. **Effective Leadership with**
 - **Good interaction with missionary**
 - **Servant attitude**
 - **Flexible structures**
3. **Provide opportunities for training and development of gifts**
4. **Encourage missionaries to improve ministries and agency's operations**
5. **Changes are not imposed top down**
6. **Utilize insight of their missionaries**
7. **Partnership with other agencies**

ReMAP II: USA Missionary Retention Findings

Overview of Study

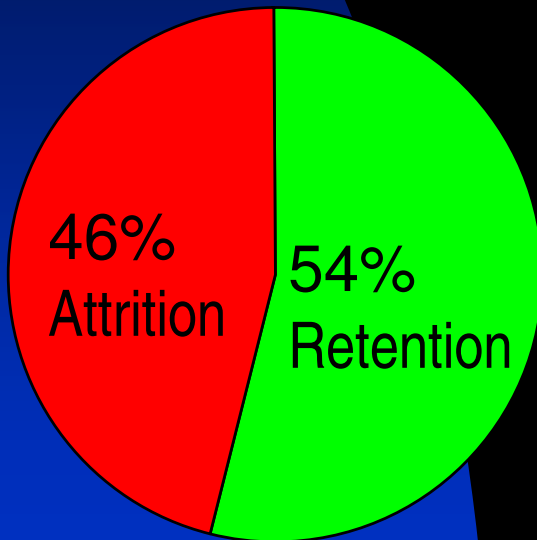
- **Participants:** Leaders from 65 agencies participated in the US study, representing 14,000+ missionaries.
- **Agencies were ranked by rate of retention, from highest to lowest.**
- **These agencies were divided into 3 groups, so that each group had approx the same number of missionaries.**
- **High and low groups had 29 agencies.**
- **The leader's responses of the highest and lowest groups were compared**

General Finding

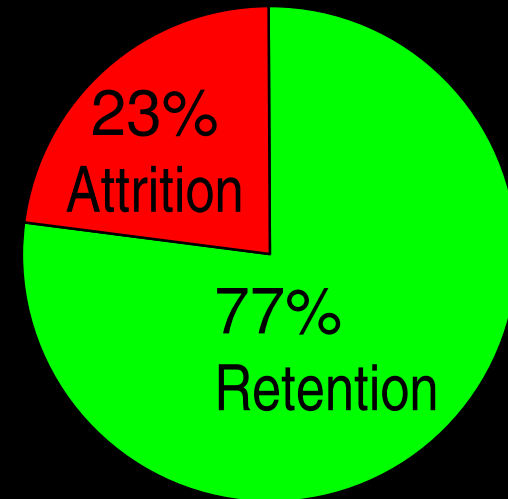
- The average agency keeps 94% of its people each year.
 - ◆ High Retention agency: 97%
 - ◆ Low Retention agency: 91%
- This means that over a 10 year period the average agency
 - **Keeps 54% of its people**
 - **Loses 46% of its people**

Retention Impact: 10 years

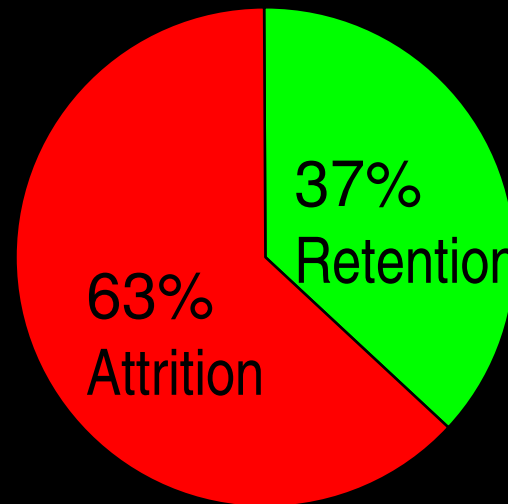
US Average



29 High Retention Agencies



29 Low Retention Agencies



Trend:

Agencies are losing a greater percentage of their missionaries for potentially preventable reasons during the past 20 years.

Since 1981, 50% of the annual departures were for potentially preventable reasons

Examples: Departures

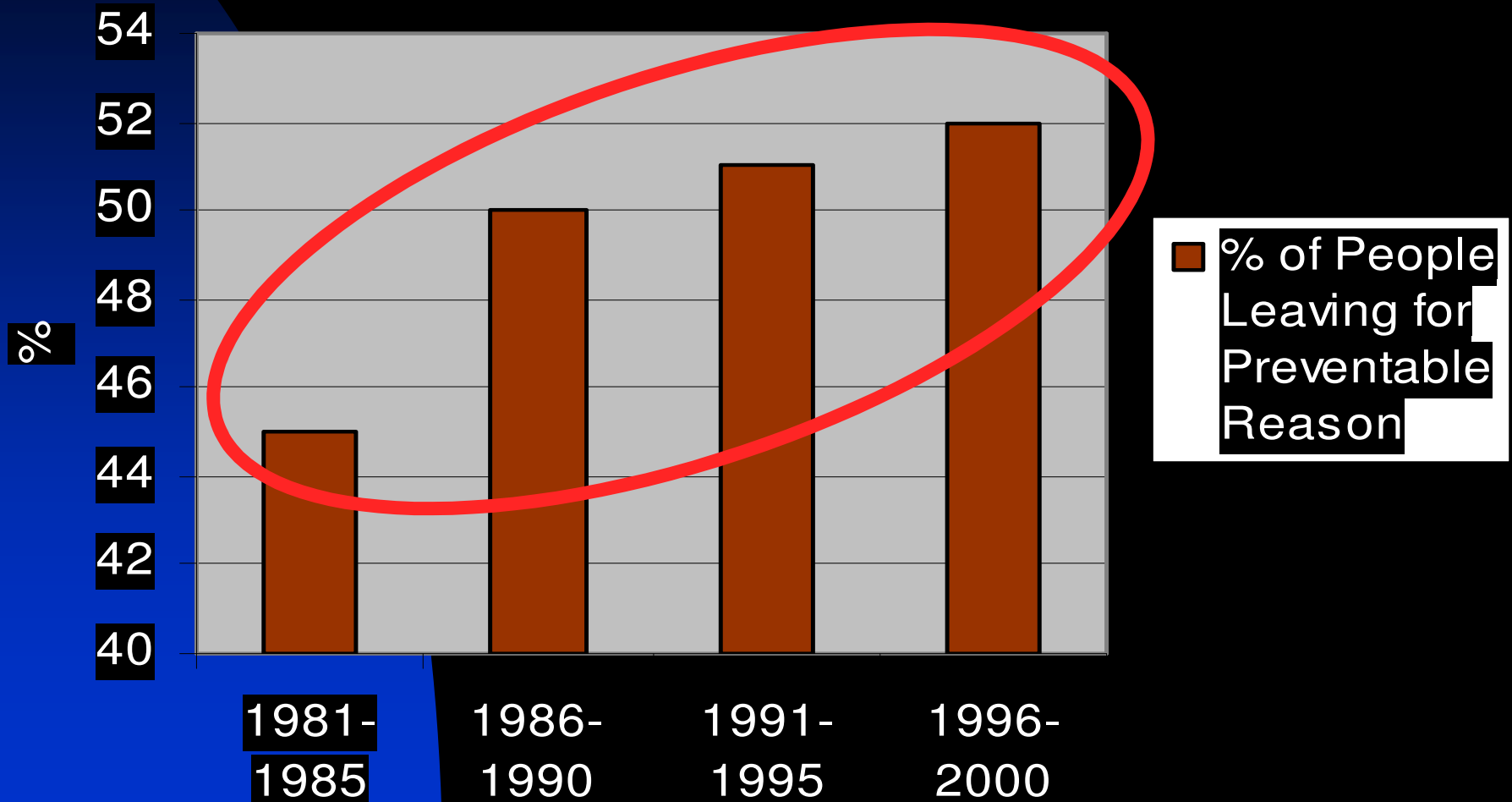
Unpreventable

- Retirement
- Death
- Loss of visa
- Appointment to leadership in agency

Potentially Preventable

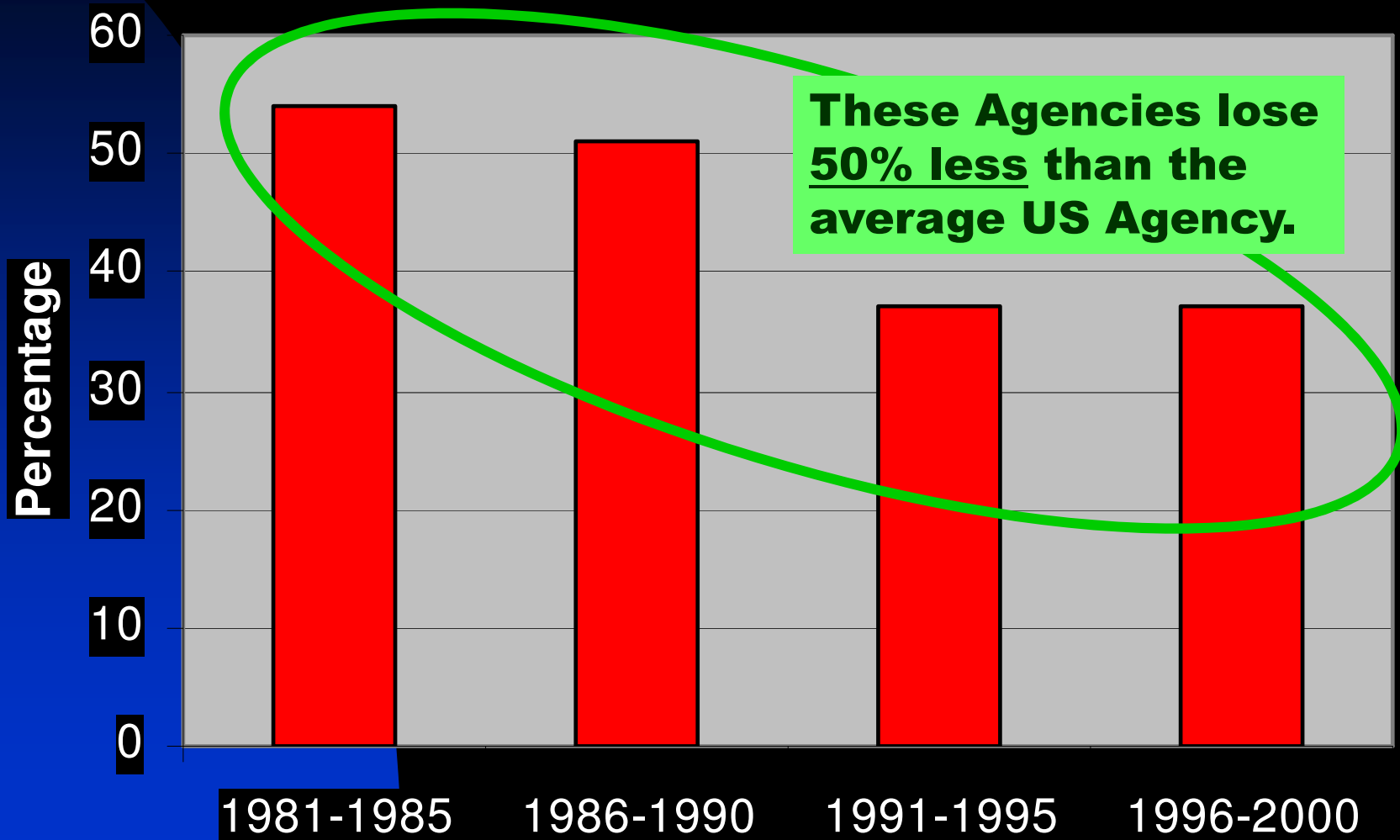
- Work or team related reasons
- Dismissal
- Personal issues
- Agency issues

Percentage of Missionaries Leaving for Potentially Preventable Reasons



**Since 1981: High Retention
Agencies are countering the
general trend.**

High Retention Agencies: Missionaries leaving for Preventable Reasons

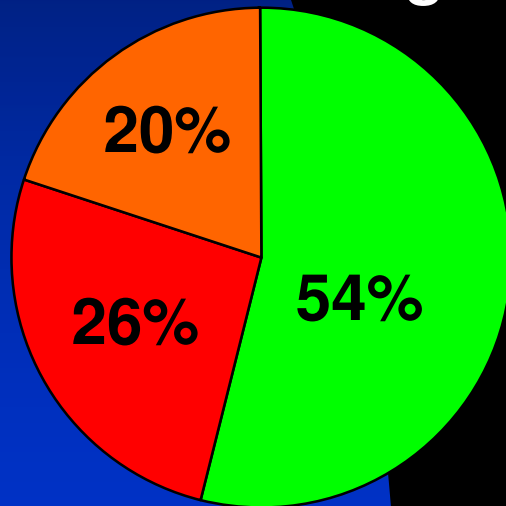


10 Year Attrition:

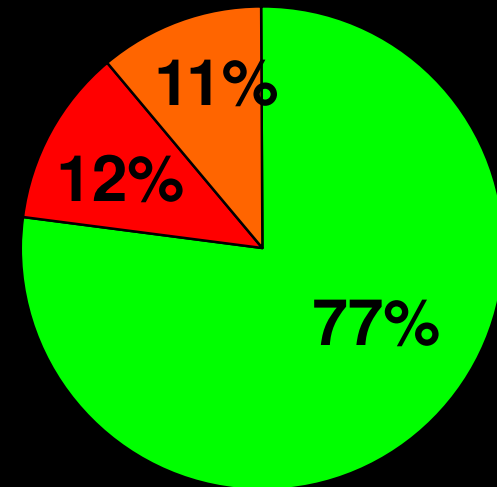
■ Unpreventable

■ Preventable

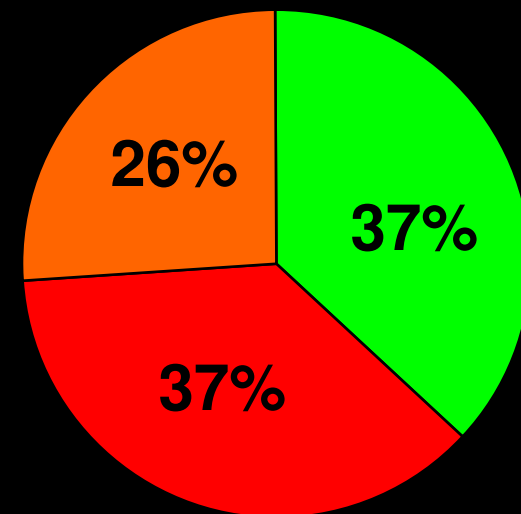
US Average



High Ret. Agencies



Low Ret. Agencies



Impact of Turnover on the Agency: Interview with David Seaton, Retired Mgr Best Practices for Shell Oil Products

- Added cost for recruitment and training
- Loss of synergy, relationships and momentum (3-5 yrs)
- Loss of souls coming to Christ
- Detriment to reputation of agency
- Solution: More cost effective to increase the time and budget for the support, and care of the existing missionary.

**How are these high
retention agencies
countering the trend?**

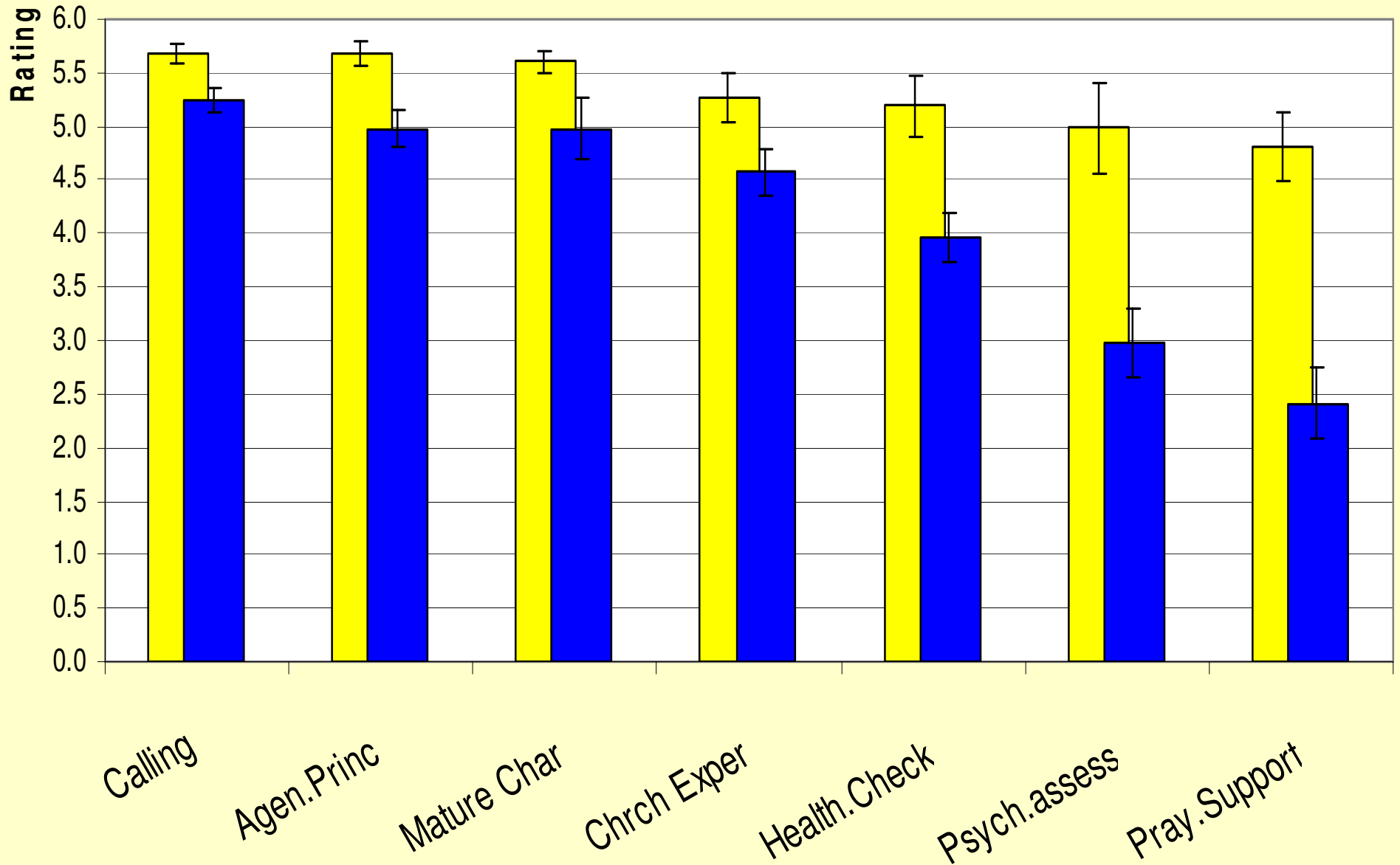
- 1. Greater Importance on Screening**
- 2. Pre-field Training**
- 3. Good Communication Practices**
- 4. Greater Emphasis on Prayer**
- 5. On-going Training Opportunities**
- 6. Care Practices**
- 7. Leadership Practices**

#1

**Greater importance
on screening**

Screening Criteria

High Ret. Ag.
Low Ret. Ag.



#2

Pre-Field Training

- High retention agencies require approximately 3 semesters of formal missiological studies (*vs 1 semester for low retention agencies*)
- High retention agencies spend 5-6 weeks in orientation (*vs 3 weeks for low retention agencies*)

#3 Good Communication

- **Clear communication of plans and job descriptions**
- **Free flow communication to and from leadership**
- **Effective communication between sending base and field**
- **Policies are well understood throughout the mission**

#4

Greater emphasis on Prayer

- Promoted throughout the agency
- Emphasized in Home Office
- Important screening factor

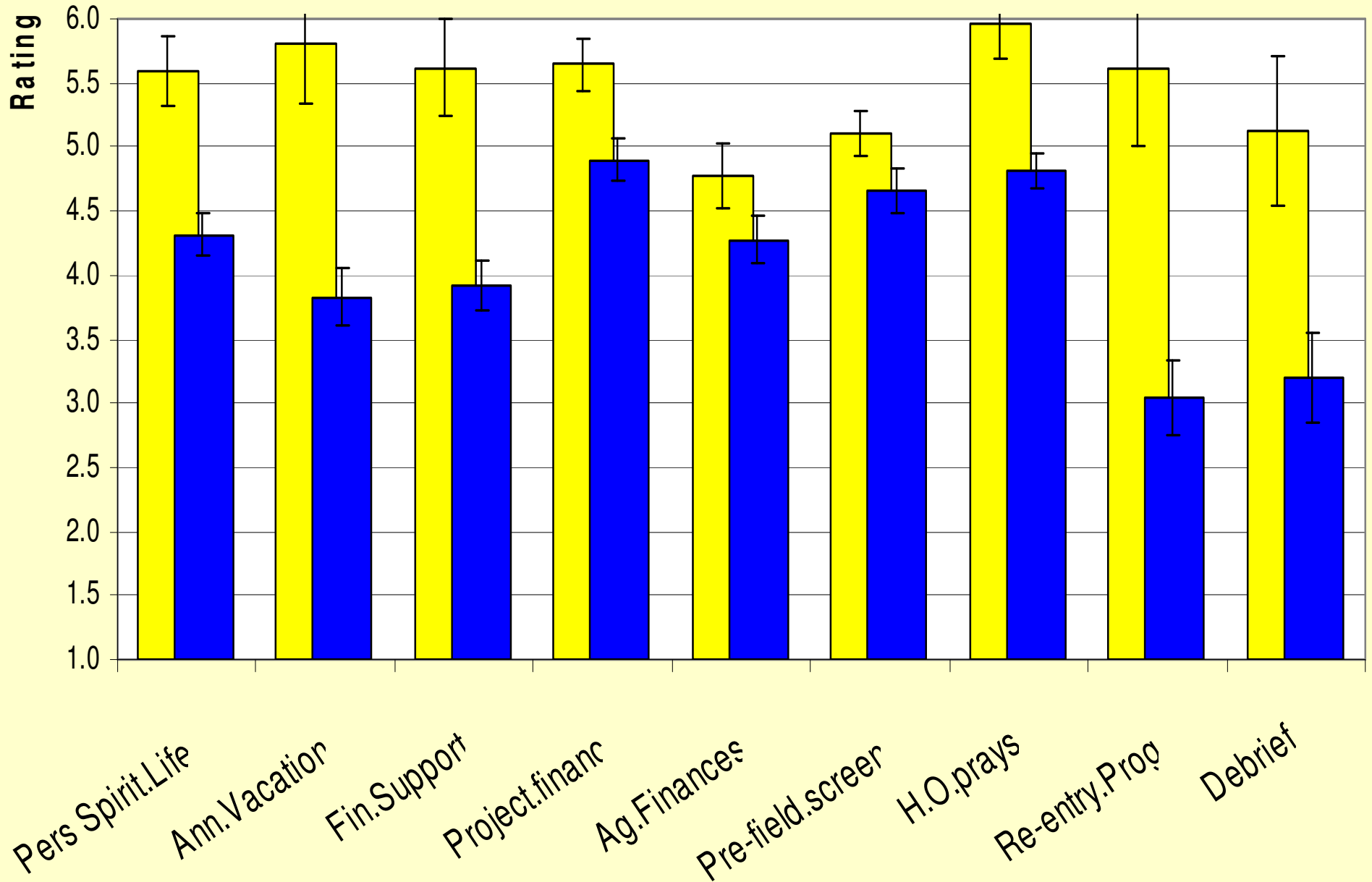
#5

On-going Training

- **Language programs for new missionaries**
- **Opportunities for on-going language and culture learning**
- **Opportunities for development of gifts and skills**

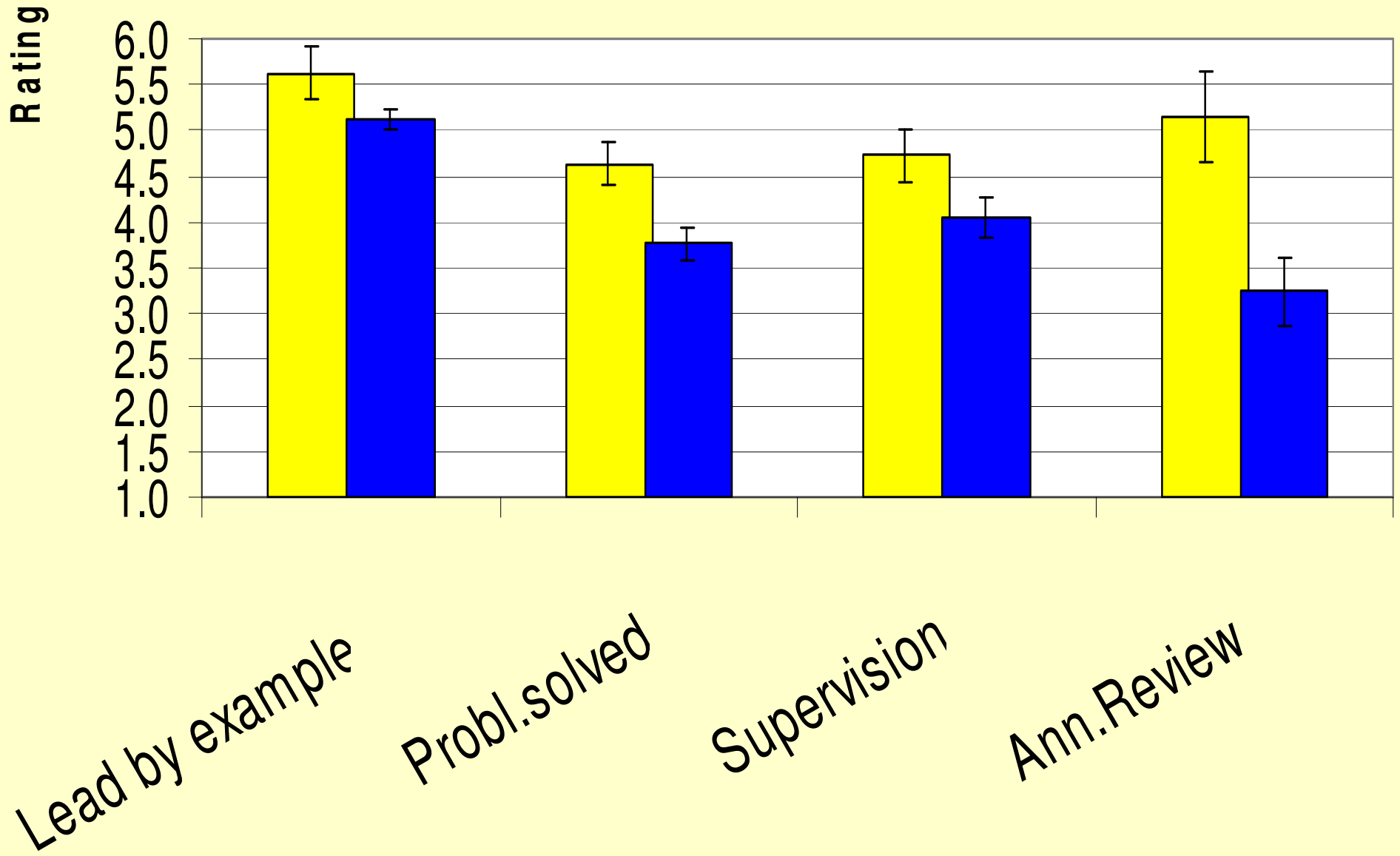
#6 Care Practices

High Ret. Ag.
Low Ret. Ag.



#7 Leadership Practices

High Ret. Ag.
Low Ret. Ag.



Four Factors That MOST CONTRIBUTE to a Missionary's Effectiveness

- Development of good relationship/team.
- Commitment to ministry.
- Effective leadership with good supervision and accountability.
- Clear objectives, goals, and expectations that are agreed upon.

3 Factors That MOST HINDER A Missionary's Effectiveness

- Finances
- Family Issues
- Relationship problems

Strategic Recommendation

A corporate goal: to increase your retention rate each year.

5 Strategic Steps

- These 5 steps are from the book Best Practices in Organizational Development and Change. Some or all of these ideas have already been expressed in your groups.

First Step: Determine the Retention Rate for your Agency

- This retention rate number will give your mission agency a starting point/base line for determining how well you are doing from year to year.

Second Step: Discover your people's needs

- Survey your people
- Informal interviews/Debriefings
- Exit Interviews

Third Step: Design a Plan of Action

- Based on results of the surveys, choose the most strategic issue/s to focus on, which will have the potential of increasing the retention of good missionaries, and reducing turnover.

Fourth Step: Train your Leaders

- Good interpersonal skills in relating to the people
- Good management skills
- How to motivate, encourage and support their people

Fifth Step: System of Accountability

- Is the retention rate gradually increasing from year to year?
- Are the issues being addressed in the action plan (step 3) improving from the missionaries' perspective?
- Are the issues for resignations the same or different?

Resources Available

- **WEAresources.org**
 - Tracking Guide
 - US Report of Findings on Missionary Retention
 - This power point
 - Too Valuable to Lose
 - Worth Keeping guides agencies in self-assessment process of retention correlated best practices.
- **Engage! Global Mapping can survey needs of agency's field staff (gmi.org)**

Wrap Up

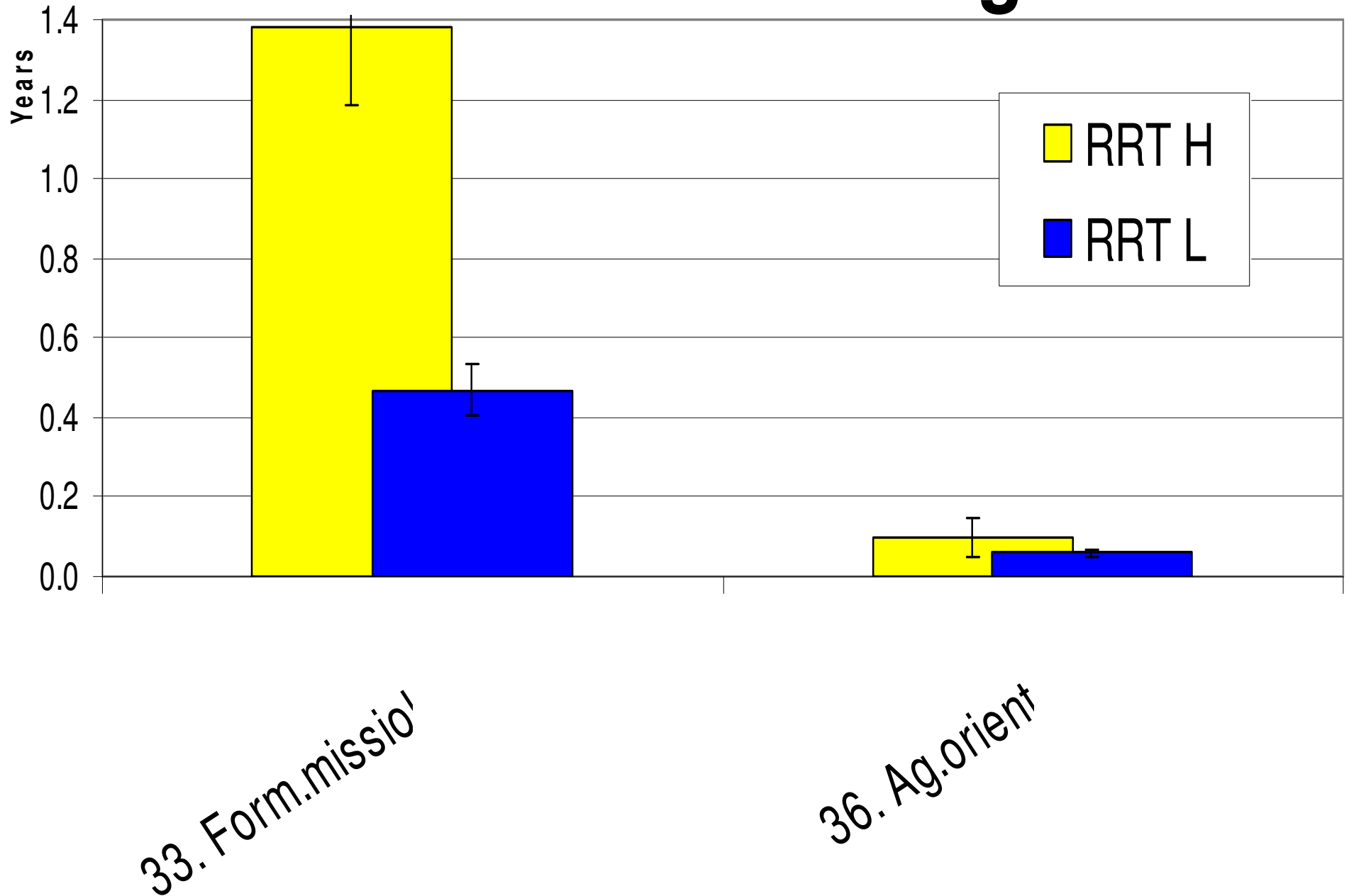
Great Commission requires the retention of missionary personnel with long-term presence.

Following are supplemental charts

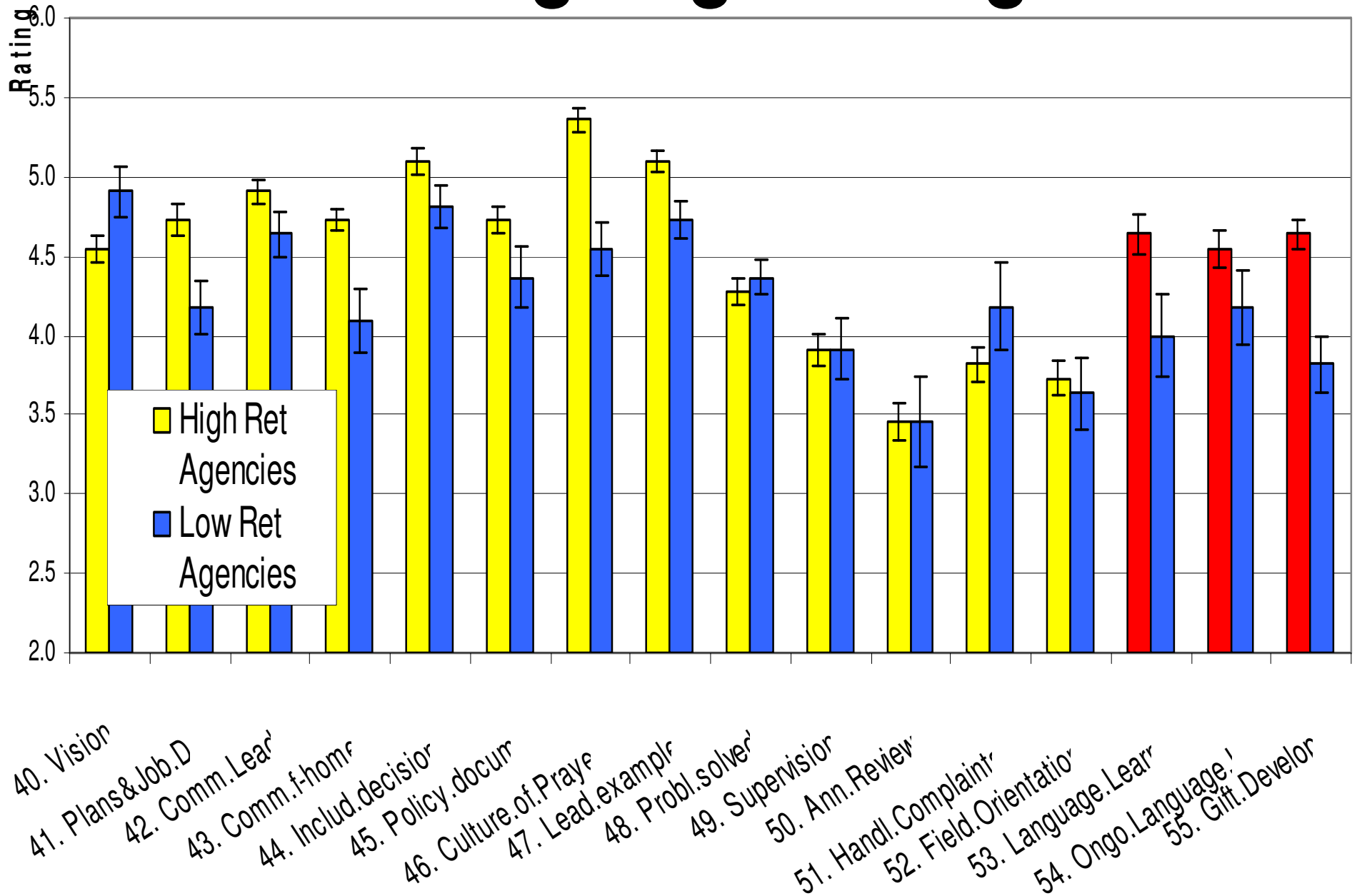
Definitions

- **Retention**: the ability of an agency to keep its people (especially those it wants to keep).
- **Total Retention rate**: the percentage of people an agency keeps each year.
- **Unpreventable Retention rate**: percentage of people retained, after those who left for acceptable reasons.
- **Preventable Retention Rate**: the percentage of people retained in a given year, after those who left for potentially preventable reasons (conflict, dismissal, etc).
- **Best Practices**: those practices, policies, actions and attitudes that promote the retention of good personnel and their effectiveness (fruitfulness).

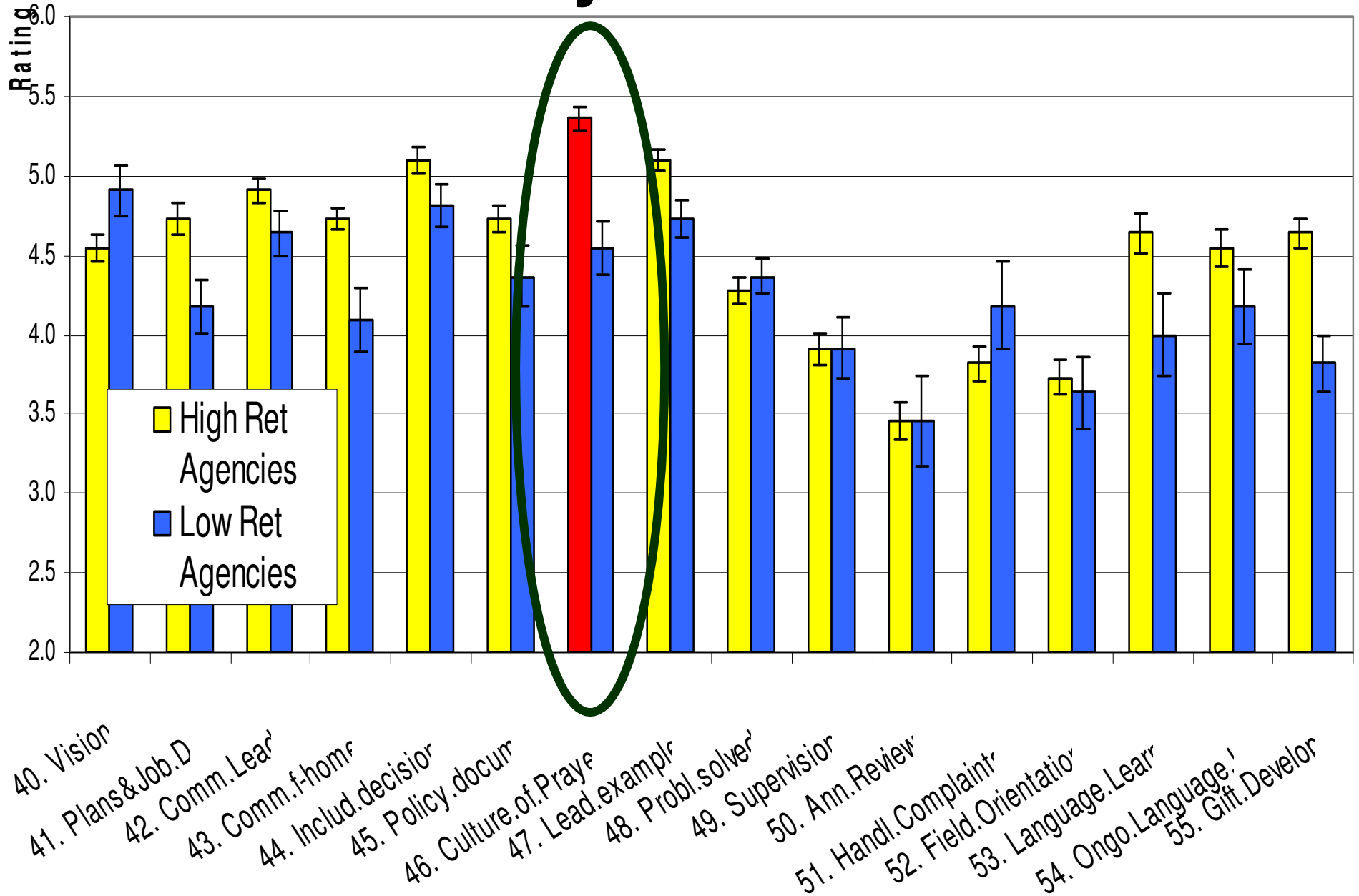
Pre-Field Training



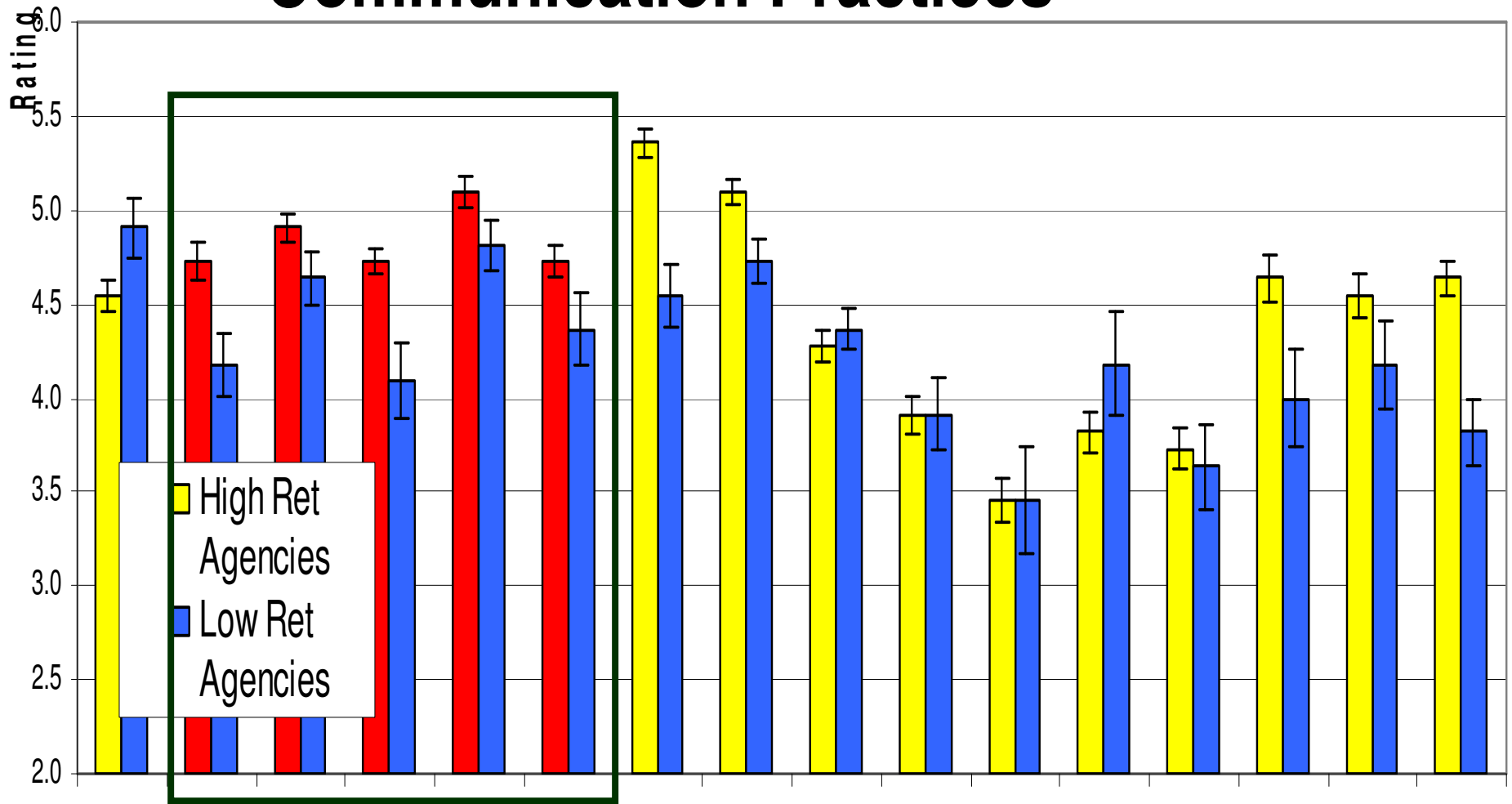
Ongoing training



Prayer



Communication Practices



40. Vision

41. Plans&Job.D

42. Comm.Lear'

43. Comm.f.homr

44. Includ.decisio'

45. Policy.docur

46. Culture.of.Prays

47. Lead.examplr

48. Probl.solver'

49. Supervisor

50. Ann.Review

51. Handl.Complaint'

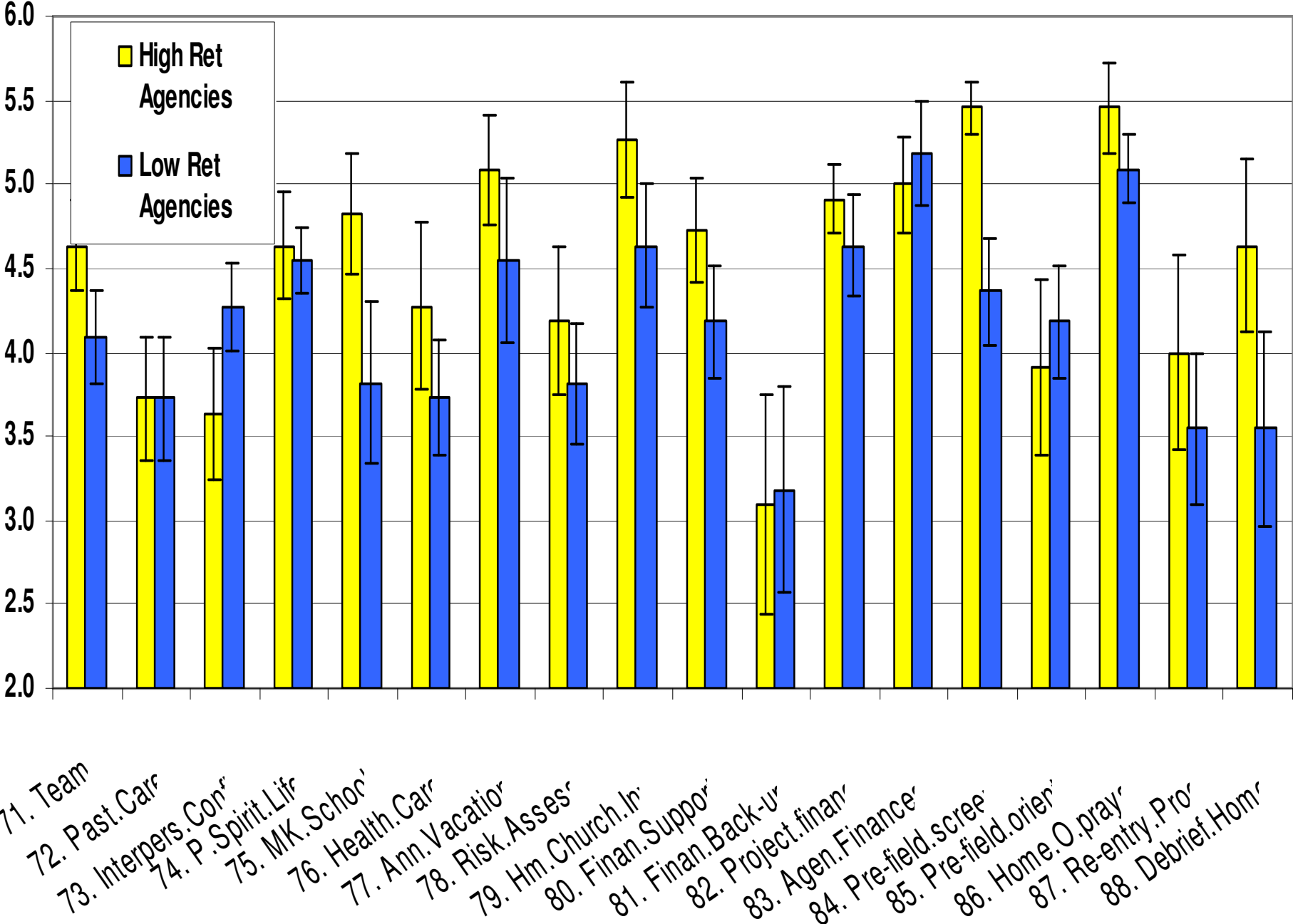
52. Field.Orientatio'

53. Language.Lear'

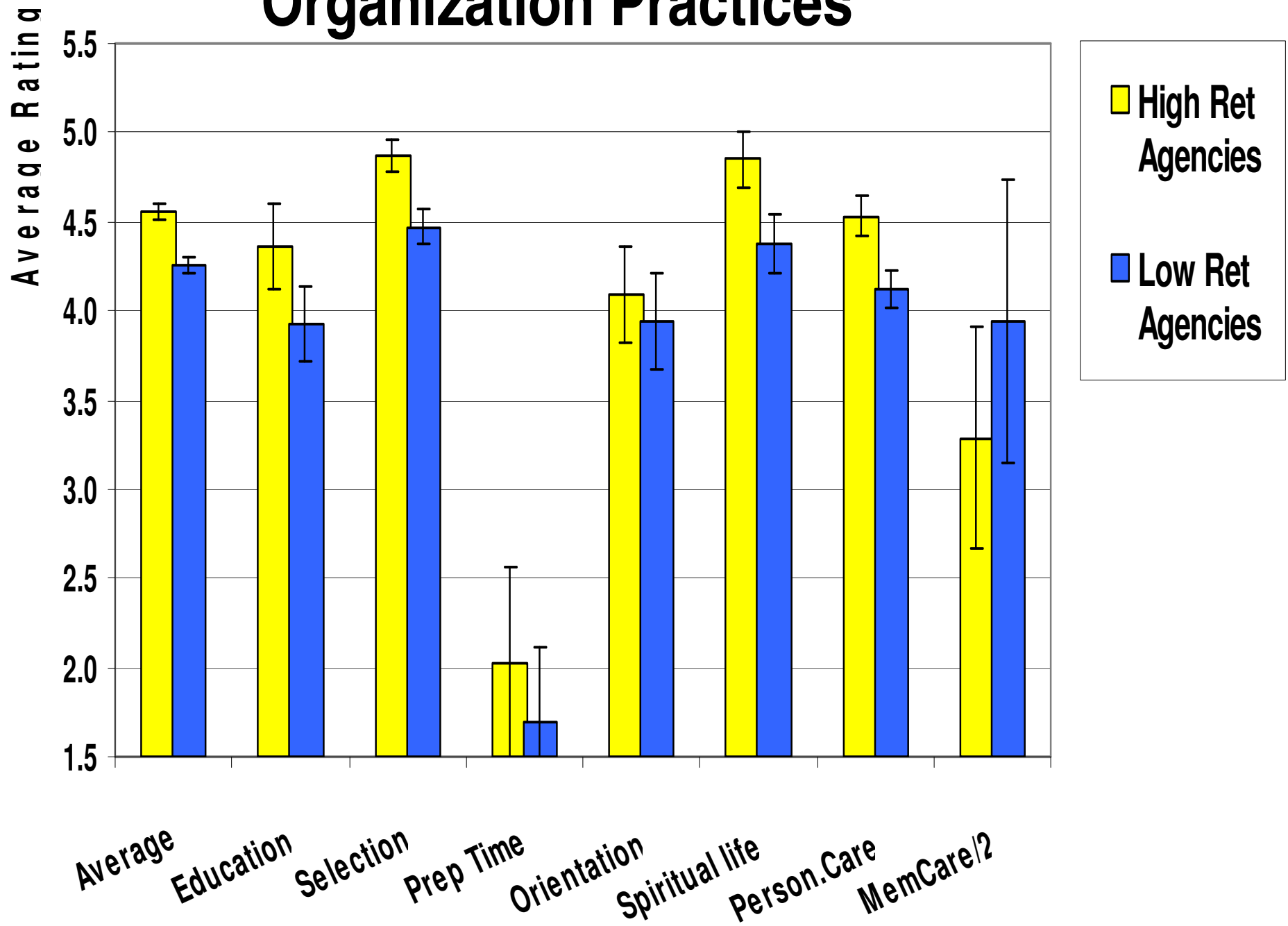
54. Onngo.Language'

55. Gift.Developor

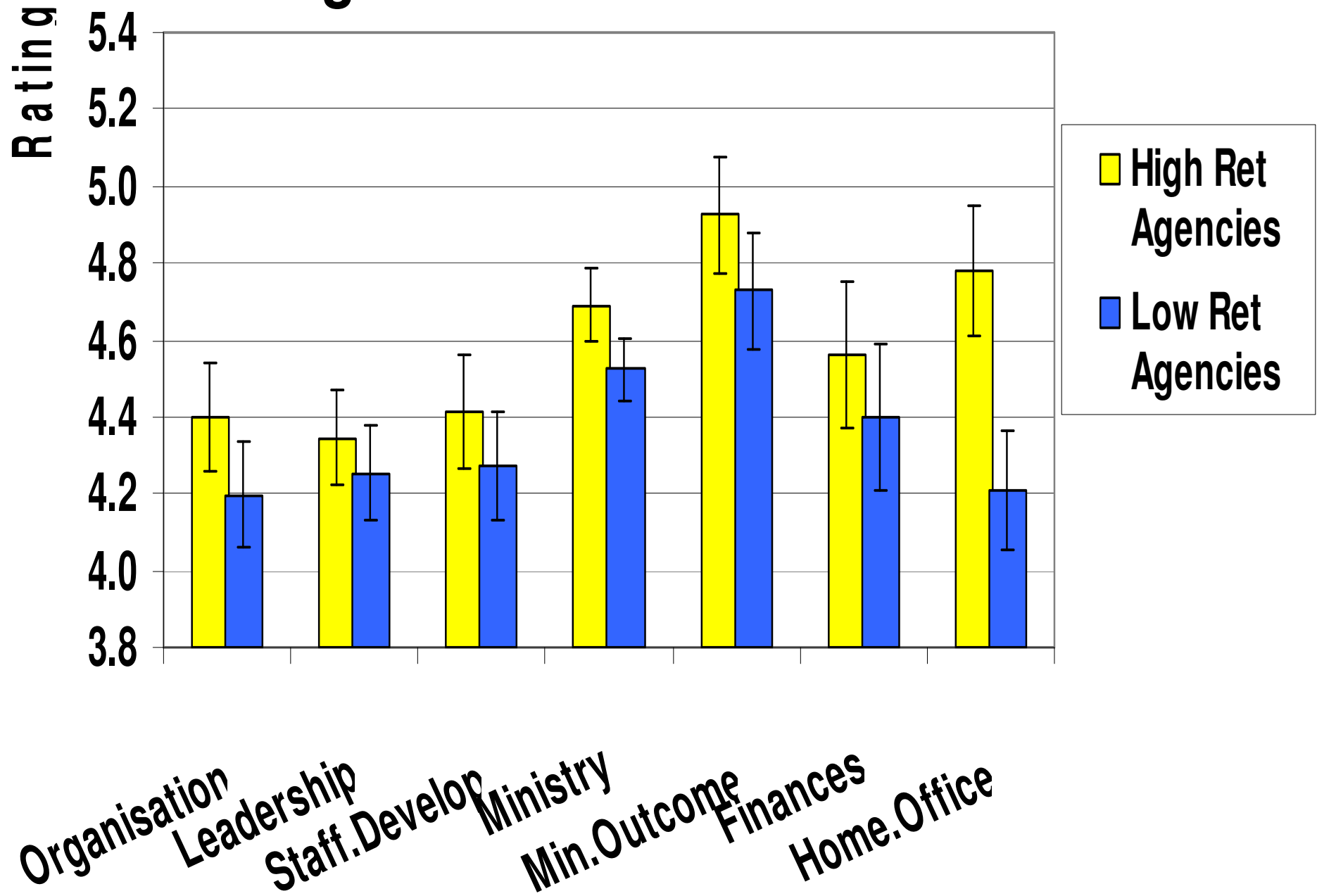
Care Provided



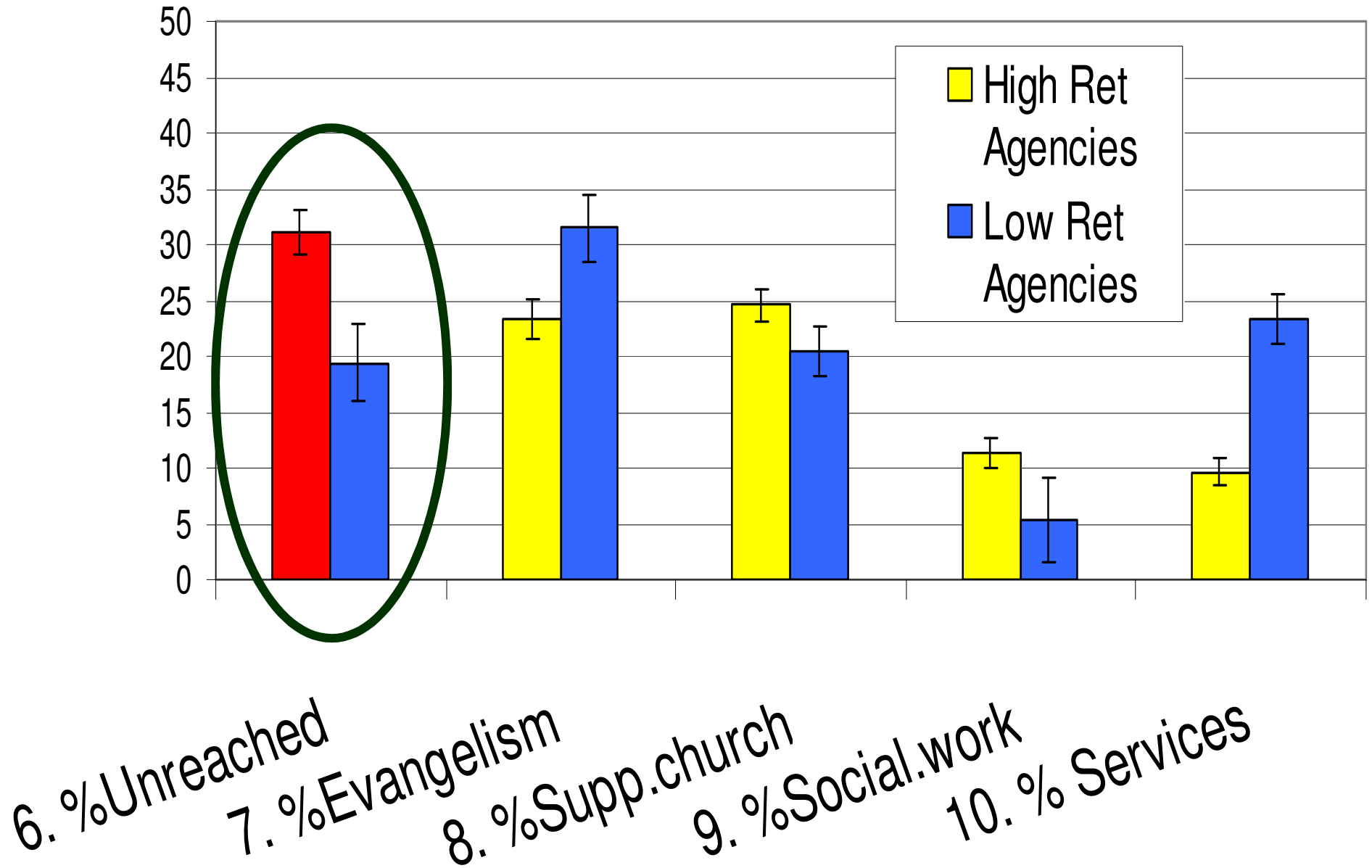
Organization Practices



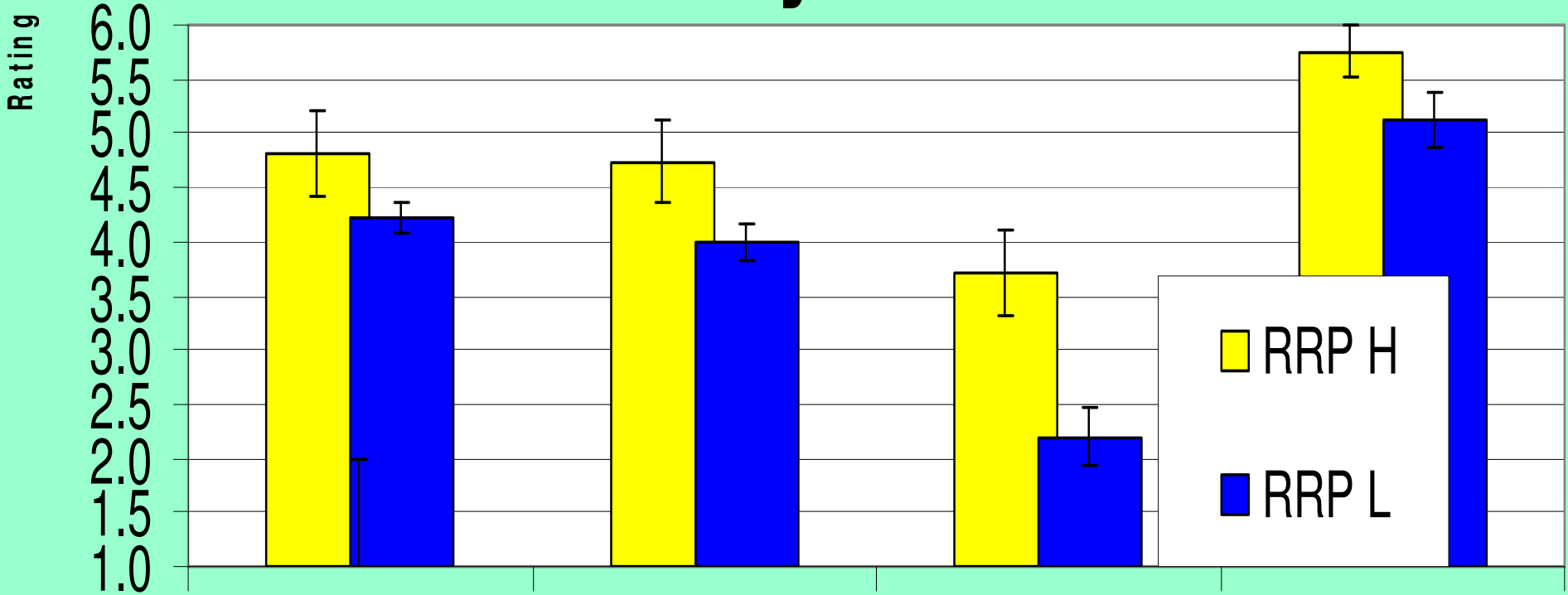
Organizational Values



Allocation of Personnel



Ministry Values



56. Assign.gifts

58. Spirit.Warfare

61. Not.overload

69. Develop.leaders