

**Organizational Survey
Miami-Dade County Government
Preliminary Analysis**

**Prepared by
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**Florida International University
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July 1998

Organizational Survey

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Preliminary Analysis

This narrative provides some background and context on the development of the questionnaire, identifies and analyzes some of the most significant findings and provides indications of what the results might require in terms of interventions. The study was conducted at the request of the Mayor and County Manager. The request emerged out of an ongoing effort to better understand the current state of the management environment in the county government and to help prepare Miami-Dade County for the challenges of the 21st Century.

The goal of this project was to help provide a data foundation for ongoing organizational development efforts to enhance the organizational climate and performance of the Miami-Dade County government. The specific objects were to: 1) determine areas of organizational strengths that could be used to support ongoing developmental efforts; 2) identify potential areas for improvement .

The questionnaire was designed by Professors Ronald Berkman and Ralph Lewis, aided by a team of consultants from the University, private sector and county government who reviewed the instrument and initiated considerable revision. In the design process, the team reviewed questionnaires employed by other municipal, state and federal government agencies as well as questionnaires used in the private sector to assess management and performance related factors. The final instrument included 43 Likert-scale multiple choice questions and an opportunity for respondents to write-in responses to three questions. The multiple choice questions focused on three major areas of interest:

- 1) the overall health of Miami-Dade government - particularly management practices that are generally viewed as being important for setting, the direction and climate for high performance organizations (questions 1-12);
- 2) the state of the respondents division or department (questions 13-29). Specific organizational factors included: a) organizational communications, b) a sense of empowerment on the part of managers, c) staffing adequacy, competence the personnel system, d) perceptions of the potential for future improvements
- 3) assessments of the potential obstacles to positive organizational change.

The three open ended questions were:

1. Please briefly describe the three most significant barriers you face in fulfilling your mission and creating a healthy working administrative and managerial environment.
2. If you had the discretion and authority to do so, what are the three most important changes you would make in county government to improve management and effectiveness?
3. Other comments.

Participants in the study included all: Department Directors; Assistant Directors; Division Heads; and other management. Participants were asked to come to terminal 12 at the Port of Miami to respond to the questionnaire. All responses were confidential. To help maintain confidentiality the only identifiers used on the questionnaire were "years of service" and title. Thus, there are disaggregations of data at the division or department level. The turnout of respondents was overwhelming. Of the 475 managers who were informed of the date and time to appear to complete the e, 417 or 88% appeared. Responses to each of the multiple-choice questions are reported at the end of the analysis. Questions that are shaded are those in which there are statistically significant differences in responses based on either the position of the respondent (department director, division head etc.) or the years of service. The differences are noted on footnotes at the bottom of each section and then illustrated in graphs appearing after all the tabulations.

Section 1: Overview of County Operations.

Questions 1-12 ask the respondents a series of questions concerning the overall operations of county government. Questions in this sequence are widely used to determine how managers in an organization rate the operations of the entire organization and involve factors that impact organizational performance. In fact, these factors may be viewed as indicators of "best practice." Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which the specified condition/practice exists in Miami-Dade County government (1=very high degree; 2=high degree, 3=some degree, 4=low degree, 5=never). The more respondents selected very high degree or high degree the higher the assessment of the Miami-Dade government's use of "best practices." At the other extreme, the more respondents selected low degree or never the lower the assessment of the government's use of "best practices."

The analysis of responses to this section reveals there is no area in which the majority of the respondents indicate that "best practices" are being employed to a "very high" or

"high" degree. In fact, only two management factors received a positive response from more than 25% of the respondents:

Question 8: To what degree does your department develop teams, train teams, and encourage teamwork - 36% very high degree or high degree.

Question 3: To what degree does top management make planning an integrated part of the organizational routine/culture - 26% very high degree or high degree.

It should be noted that responses to both of these factors also reflect strong differences in the perceptions of the respondents. In terms of question 8, 34% of the respondents give negative assessments of the county's performance in the area of teams. In terms of question 3, 30% of the respondents gave a negative assessment.

Only three other management factors received positive assessments from 20% or more of the respondents: 1) encourage technical innovation (Q 7 - 23%); 2) use citizen feedback (Q 4 - 21%); 3) conduct operational audits (Q 9 - 20%). But in all three areas 33% or more of the respondents gave negative assessments - low degree or never.

This section reveals that the respondents believe that there are significant problems in the planning and operations of county government. In fact, no management practice received less than a 30% negative assessment. The most serious assessments of deficiencies (50% or more low degree or never) involve cross-department planning the development and communication of an organizational mission.

Question 10: To what degree does Miami-Dade County create planning teams that bridge departmental boundaries - 68% low degree or never.

Question 11: To what degree has Miami-Dade county developed and communicated an appropriate mission statement - 59% low degree or never.

Two other areas also received negative assessments from almost a majority of the respondents.

Question 5: To what degree does Miami-Dade County give every employee the knowledge and skills needed to do their job and to take part in the quality improvement process - 48% low degree or never.

Question 12: To what degree is innovation encouraged and rewarded - 48% low degree or never.

Finally, it should be noted that there is little internal disagreement concerning the management areas receiving the highest levels of negative assessments. In fact, all of the

four areas identified above received positive assessments from less than 15% of the respondents.

From an organizational and management standpoint deficiencies in any of the four areas identified above are important - particularly because of the changing environment in which modern organizations must operate. Mission statements help clarify organizational purpose and thus helps provide direction for organizational members. Cross-department planning creates an awareness of the inter-dependencies between departments that ultimately helps improve organizational processes and the quality of services provided. Having a well trained workforce and the ability to innovate will be increasingly important in the competitive environment of the 21st century.

Section 2: Departmental Assessments

This section explores perceptions of resources and practices within respective departments within the county and the interface between departmental and countywide operations (questions 13-29). Specific organizational factors included in the analysis are: 1) organizational communications, 2) a sense of empowerment on the part of managers, 3) staffing adequacy, competence; and the personnel system; and 4) perceptions of the potential for future improvements.

A. Organizational Communications

Questions 16, 17 and 29 deal with the issue of organizational communications. This an important aspect of an organizations climate for at least three reasons: 1) to transmit a sense of organizational purpose and direction; 3) to provide members with a sense of involvement; 3) to provide a means for the exchange of information concerning organizational performance.

Overall, the responses to this serious of questions are were positive. In terms of communications with Directors, 78% of the respondents agreed with the statement "communication with my director is good (question 16). In fact, 35% strongly agreed with this statement. A majority of the respondents (52%) also agreed with the statement "communication with the County manger's office is good" (question 17). It should be noted, however, that only 8% of the respondents indicated strong agreement with this statement.

Trust in an important aspect of meaningful communications and because of this respondents were asked to indicate their level of belief when receiving information from a number of critical actors in their environment. In general, the results indicate that the further respondents are from direct administrative contact with the source the less likely they are to believe and the more likely they are to disbelieve the information provided:

	Always Believe or Usually Believe	Believe Half the Time	Seldom Believe or Never Believe
Supervisor	78%	17%	6%
Department Director	78%	17%	5%
County Manager	70%	21%	9%
the Mayor	51%	31%	18%
County Commission	27%	36%	36%
Local News Media	20%	48%	33%

B. Managerial Empowerment

The ability for managers to have both the responsibility and the authority to make and implement decisions and to direct the activities of their employees is a critical determinant of organizational performance. Questions in this section address this issue from three perspectives. Questions 15, 20 and 22 directly deal with the respondents sense of empowerment within the organization. Questions 27 and 28 deal with their sense of their ability to influence the budget process. Questions 21, 23, and 24 focus on the respondents sense of a professional environment that minimizes "political" influence.

Organizational Empowerment (Questions 15, 20 and 22)

In general terms, almost a majority (49%) of the managers in Miami-Dade County felt empowered to manage their department/division and only 18% gave negative responses to this question (Q 22). Respondents were equally divided when asked to agree or disagree with the statement, "I am allowed to make my own personnel appointments" (question 15) - 48% strongly agreed or agreed and 52% strongly disagreed or disagreed. It should be noted however, 29 % of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement and a total of 52% disagreed with it. A majority of respondents agreed (53%) that senior management support disciplinary decisions.

Influencing the Budget Process (Questions 27 and 28)

The second area of management empowerment involved the ability to influence the budget process and respondents' assessments were essentially equally divided:

	Always Often	Sometimes	Rarely Never
Q. 27: recommendations adequately considered	28%	37%	35%
Q. 28: views considered	39%	34%	27%

Professionalism and Political Influences (Questions 21, 23, 24)

The empowerment area of greatest concern to Miami-Dade County managers is the issue of professionalism and political influences. Respondents were asked to answer three questions in this area. When asked to agree (or disagree) with the statement, **There is a clear and consistent separation of the political and administrative functions of Miami-Dade government**, 91% of the respondents (Q 21). In fact, 69% of the respondents "strongly disagree" with the statement.

When asked, **Lobbyists influence the professional decision making process**, 72% of the respondents indicate "always" or "often" (Q 24). In addition, 28% of the respondents indicated that they "always" or "often" have **feared administrative or political retaliation for actions as a community employee** (Q 23).

C. Staffing and the Personnel System

The people who work in an organization are critical to the long-term performance of the organization. Four questions were focused on this issue.

Staffing Competency and Adequacy (Questions 13 and 14)

The majority (67%) of respondents disagreed with the felt that they, did not have **the appropriate number of competent staff to carry out their responsibilities** (Q 13). In fact, 35% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Similar results emerged when they were asked to agree (or disagree) with the statement **I have appropriately trained and experienced staff to carry out my responsibilities** - 59% either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" (Q 14).

The Personnel System (Questions 18 and 19)

Respondents were also asked to questions that focused on their assessments of the effectiveness of the County's personnel system. Responses to both of these questions indicate a negative assessment of the personnel system. When asked to agree (or disagree) with the statement **The County's personnel system rewards good employees** 82 percent of the respondents disagreed (Q 18). Moreover, 49% of the respondents "strongly" disagreed with the statement. The negative assessment was even stronger when respondents were asked to agree (or disagree) with the statement **The County's personnel system weeds out bad or marginal employees** (Q 19). In this case, 95% of the respondents gave a negative assessment and 71% strongly disagreed with the statement.

D. Potential for Improvement

The managers were also asked two questions concerning their assessments of the prospects for future improvements in the climate and performance of Miami-Dade County government - questions 24 and 25 asked respondents to assess the prospects for problem area improvements in their departments and the County. In this case, respondents were divided in terms of their assessments.

	Optimistic	Uncertain	Pessimistic
Q 24: problems in my department will improve	20%	36%	24%
Q 25: problems in the County government will improve	18%	38%	44%

It should be noted that respondents were more optimistic about improvements related to their own departments (closer to their control) about the potential for improvements in the County. This pattern is support by the fact that in their responses to question 25, department directors were significantly more likely than assistant directors, division heads, and other management to indicate that problem areas in their department would improve in the near future.

Section 3: Barriers to Improvement

The third section of the questionnaire focused on potential barriers to positive organizational change. The specific items selected for inclusion in this section were derived from a number of sources including surveys conducted by other city governments and NASA. Specifically, respondents were presented with 14 items and asked to rate each item on the following criteria: not a problem, a minor problem, problem, a major problem. These items are presented below in the rank order in which respondents felt they were a major problem. The second column percentage of respondents who identified the factor as a problem or a major problem.

The ranking of the items by the percent of respondents who identified it as a problem or major problem are similar to their ranking in column one. The value of column two is that it demonstrates that a majority of the respondents believe that all but two of these factors are barriers to future improvement for Miami-Dade County government.

Question	A Major Problem		Problem	
	Rank	%	%	Rank
34. Political interference	1	58	82	2
35. Overly bureaucratic	2	53	84	1
31. Financial resources	3	46	78	3
38. Organizational instability	4	39	70	5.5
36. Lack of teamwork between organizational units	5	37	74	4
42. Poor service supplier performance within the organization	6	30	58	10.5
39. Poor communication regarding specific goals & objectives	7	23	70	5.5
30. Skilled personnel	8	22	58	10.5
32. Physical resources - materials, etc.	9.5	20	60	9
37. Limited opportunities for education, & training - self-development	9.5	20	49	12
33. Employee involvement in decision making	11.5	19	62	7
43. Poor performance by outside vendors	11.5	19	46	13
40. Lack of responsiveness to staff suggestions	13	16	61	8
41. Absenteeism in your department	14	11	29	14

As shown above there are two factors that a majority of the respondents felt were a major barriers to improvement for Miami-Dade County government: 34) **political interference in our operations**; and 35) **Overly bureaucratic laws, systems & practices**. When these results are combined with the responses of managers who viewed these as problems over 80% of the Miami-Dade County managers are concerned about these two factors as barriers to improvement.

Respondents ranked **financial resources** as the third most important problem. Concern about financial resources is not unusual. In fact, in many cases it might have been identified as the most important problem.

The fourth and fifth ranked barriers were: 38) **organizational instability** and 36) **lack of teamwork between organizational units** - both in terms of being viewed as a "major problem" and when combined with individuals who view them as "problems."

In many ways the organizational factors identified as problems reflect the assessments of the Miami-Dade government reported in Sections 1 and 2. For example, In response to Question 8, **to what degree does your department develop teams, train teams, and encourage teamwork**, 64% of the respondents answered: some degree, low degree, or never. And, the responses to questions 21, 23, and 24 indicated a concern over political interference in the operations of the County government.

The ranking of the items by the percent of respondents who identified it as a problem or major problem (column two) are similar to their ranking in column one. The primary value of column two is that it demonstrates that a majority of the respondents believe that all but two of these organizational factors are barriers to future improvement for Miami-Dade County government. However, at last one additional potential barrier to improvement should be noted because 70% of the respondents identified it as a problem - **poor communications regarding specific goals and objectives**. This is an important factor because communications concerning mission and goals help establish the potential for improvements in organizational climate and performance.

Attachment - Survey Questions and Bar Charts

Management Survey - Miami-Dade County

College Of Urban and Public Affairs

Florida International University

(Sample Size N = 412)

Question 1 - Position	%	Question 2 - Number of years employed by County	%
1. Department Director	9%	1. 0 - 5 years	7%
2. Assistant Director	21	2. 6 - 10 years	17
3. Division Head	43	3. 11 - 15 years	17
4. Other Management	27	4. 16 - 20 years	23
		5. 21 years or more	36

(1=very high degree, 2=high degree, 3=some degree, 4=low degree, 5=never)

	1	2	3	4	5
3. To what degree does top management make planning an integrated part of the organizational routine/culture?	6%	20%	44%	27%	3%
4. To what degree does Miami-Dade County use citizen feedback for identifying problems and designing and planning improvements?	3	18	45	35	0
5. To what degree does Miami-Dade County give every employee the knowledge and skills needed to do their job and to take part in the quality improvement process?	1	12	39	43	5
6. To what degree does Miami-Dade County use data as the basis for identifying problems and reaching decisions?	1	14	43	37	4
7. To what degree does Miami-Dade County encourage technological innovation?	2	21	44	30	3
8. To what degree does your department develop teams, train teams, and encourage teamwork?	11	25	30	27	7
9. To what degree does Miami-Dade County conduct operational audits of major internal processes?	3	17	41	33	5
10. To what degree does Miami-Dade County create planning teams that bridge departmental boundaries?	1	4	27	48	20
11. To what degree has Miami-Dade County developed and communicated an appropriate mission statement?	3	10	27	34	25
12. To what degree is innovation encouraged and rewarded?	2	12	38	38	9

Notes: Shaded questions indicate that there were significant mean differences ($p < .05$) among managers based on their *position held* (Question 1) or the *number of years they were employed by the County* (Question 2):

Question 7 - Managers employed by the County for 6-10 years were significantly less likely than those employed for a greater number of years to indicate that Miami-Dade County encouraged technological innovation.

Question 8 - Department directors were significantly more likely than assistant directors, division heads, and other management to indicate that their department developed teams, trained teams, and encouraged teamwork.

(1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=disagree, 4=strongly disagree)

	1	2	3	4
13. I have the appropriate number of competent staff to carry out my responsibilities.	7%	25%	32%	35%
14. I have the appropriately trained and experienced staff to carry out my responsibilities.	9	33	34	25
15. I am allowed to make my own personnel appointments.	16	32	23	29
16. Communication with my Director is good.	35	38	15	12
17. Communication with the County Manager's office is good.	8	44	29	19
18. The County's personnel system rewards good employees.	1	14	36	49
19. The County's personnel system weeds out bad or marginal employees.	0	5	24	71
20. Disciplinary actions are supported by senior management.	8	45	33	15
21. There is a clear and consistent separation of the political and administrative functions of Miami-Dade government.	1	8	22	69
Notes: Shaded questions indicate that there were significant mean differences ($p < .05$) among managers based on their <i>position held</i> (Question 1) or the <i>number of years they were employed by the County</i> (Question 2):				
Question 15 - Department directors were significantly more likely than assistant directors to indicate that they were allowed to make their own personnel appointments.				

(1=always, 2=often, 3=sometimes, 4=rarely, 5=never)

	1	2	3	4	5
22. Do you feel empowered to manage your department/division?	13%	36%	33%	14%	4%
23. Have you feared administrative or political retaliation for your actions as a community employee?	13	25	36	20	5
24. Lobbyists influence the professional decision making process.	30	42	17	6	5
25. Problem areas in my department will improve in the near future.	7	23	36	26	8
26. Problem areas in county government will improve in the near future.	2	16	38	34	10
27. Do you feel your recommendations are adequately considered in the budgetary decision making process?	6	23	37	26	9
28. My views are considered in setting budget priorities for my division/department.	11	28	34	19	8
Notes: Shaded questions indicate that there were significant mean differences ($p < .05$) among managers based on their <i>position held</i> (Question 1) or the <i>number of years they were employed by the County</i> (Question 2):					
Question 24 - Managers employed by the County for 0-5 years were significantly more likely than those employed for 11-15 years to indicate that lobbyists influenced the professional decision making process.					
Question 25 - Department directors were significantly more likely than assistant directors, division heads, and other management to indicate that problem areas in their department would improve in the near future.					
Question 28 - Department directors were significantly more likely than division heads and other management to indicate that their views were considered in setting budget priorities for their division/department.					

(1=I can always believe it, 2=I can usually believe it, 3=I can believe it about half the time, 4=I seldom believe it, 5=I never believe it)

	1	2	3	4	5
29. When I receive information from:					
-- my supervisor	39%	39%	17%	4%	2%
-- the Department Director	42	36	17	3	2
-- the County Manager	23	47	21	8	1
-- the County Commissioner	7	20	36	28	8
-- the Mayor	12	39	31	14	4
-- the Local News Media	3	17	48	21	11

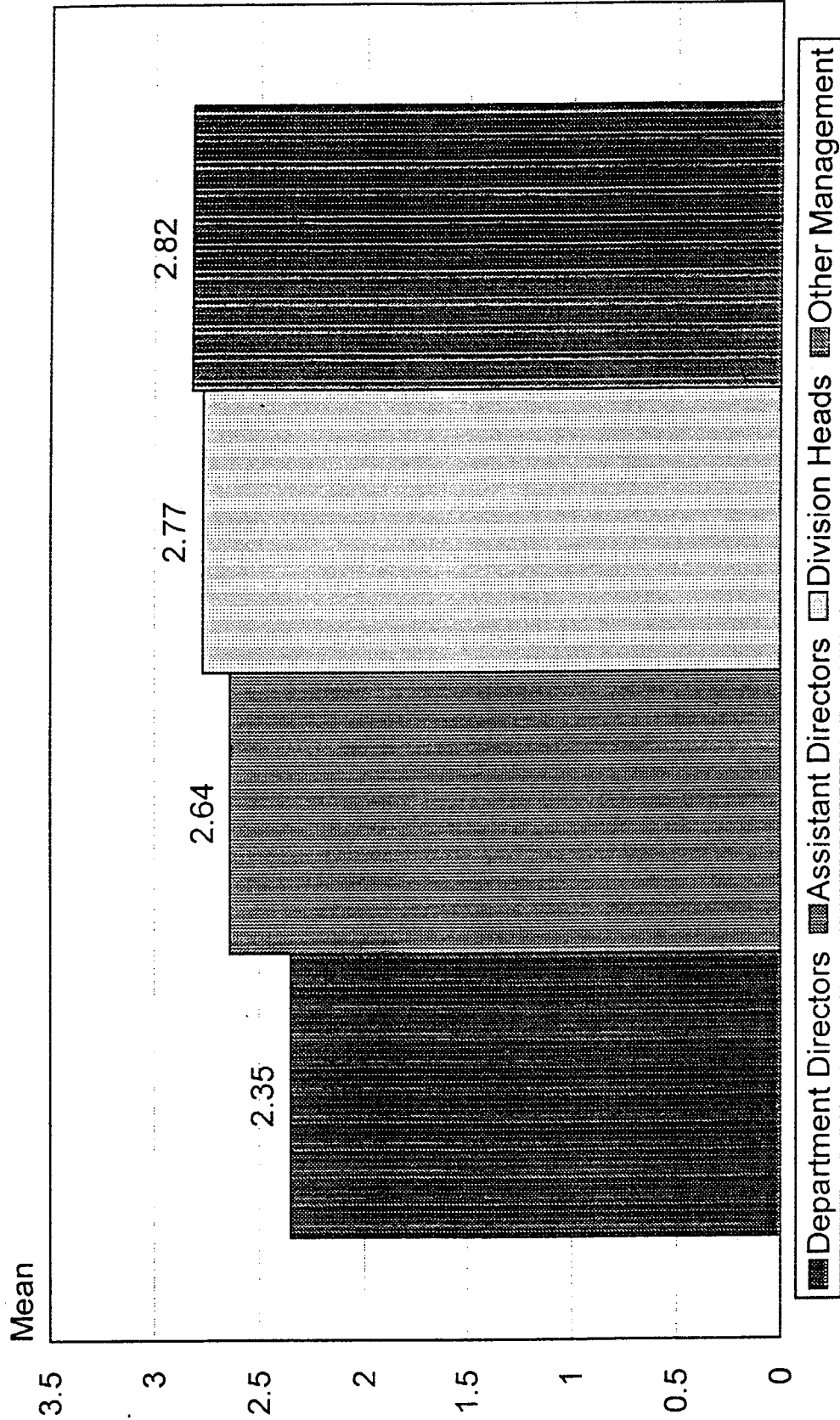
(1=not a problem, 2=a minor problem, 3=problem, 4=a major problem)

	1	2	3	4
30. Skilled personnel.	7%	35%	36%	22%
31. Financial resources.	6	16	32	46
32. Physical resources - materials equipment, etc.	7	33	40	20
33. Employee involvement in decision making.	9	29	43	19
34. Political interference in our operations.	4	14	24	58
35. Overly bureaucratic laws, systems & practices.	3	13	31	53
36. Lack of teamwork between organizational units.	3	23	37	37
37. Limited opportunities for education & training - self-development.	17	34	29	20
38. Organizational instability.	7	23	31	39
39. Poor communication regarding specific county goals and objectives.	6	25	47	23
40. Lack of responsiveness to staff suggestions to solve problems or benefit from opportunities.	5	34	45	16
41. Absenteeism in your department.	35	35	18	11
42. Poor performance by service supplier departments within the county government that hinder you from achieving job requirements.	11	30	28	30
43. Poor performance by outside vendors that hinder you from achieving job requirements.	15	39	27	19
Notes: Shaded questions indicate that there were significant mean differences ($p < .05$) among managers based on their <i>position held</i> (Question 1) or the <i>number of years they were employed by the County</i> (Question 2):				
<u>Question 33</u> - Department directors were significantly more likely than other management to indicate that employees were involved in decision making.				

Question 33

Employee involvement in decision making.

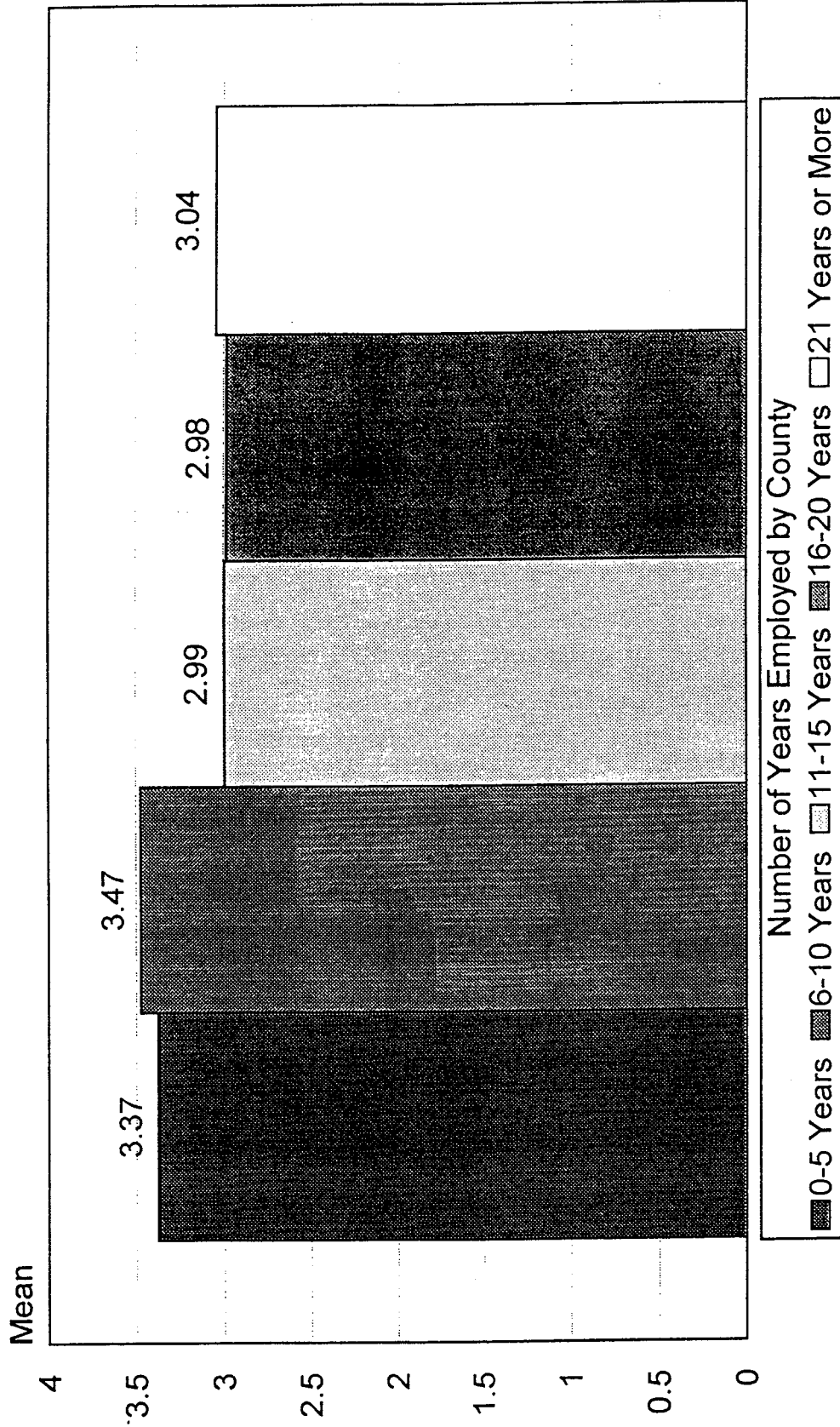
(1=not a problem, 2=a minor problem, 3=a major problem, 4=a major problem)



Note: Department directors were significantly more likely than other management to indicate that employees were involved in decision making.

Question 7

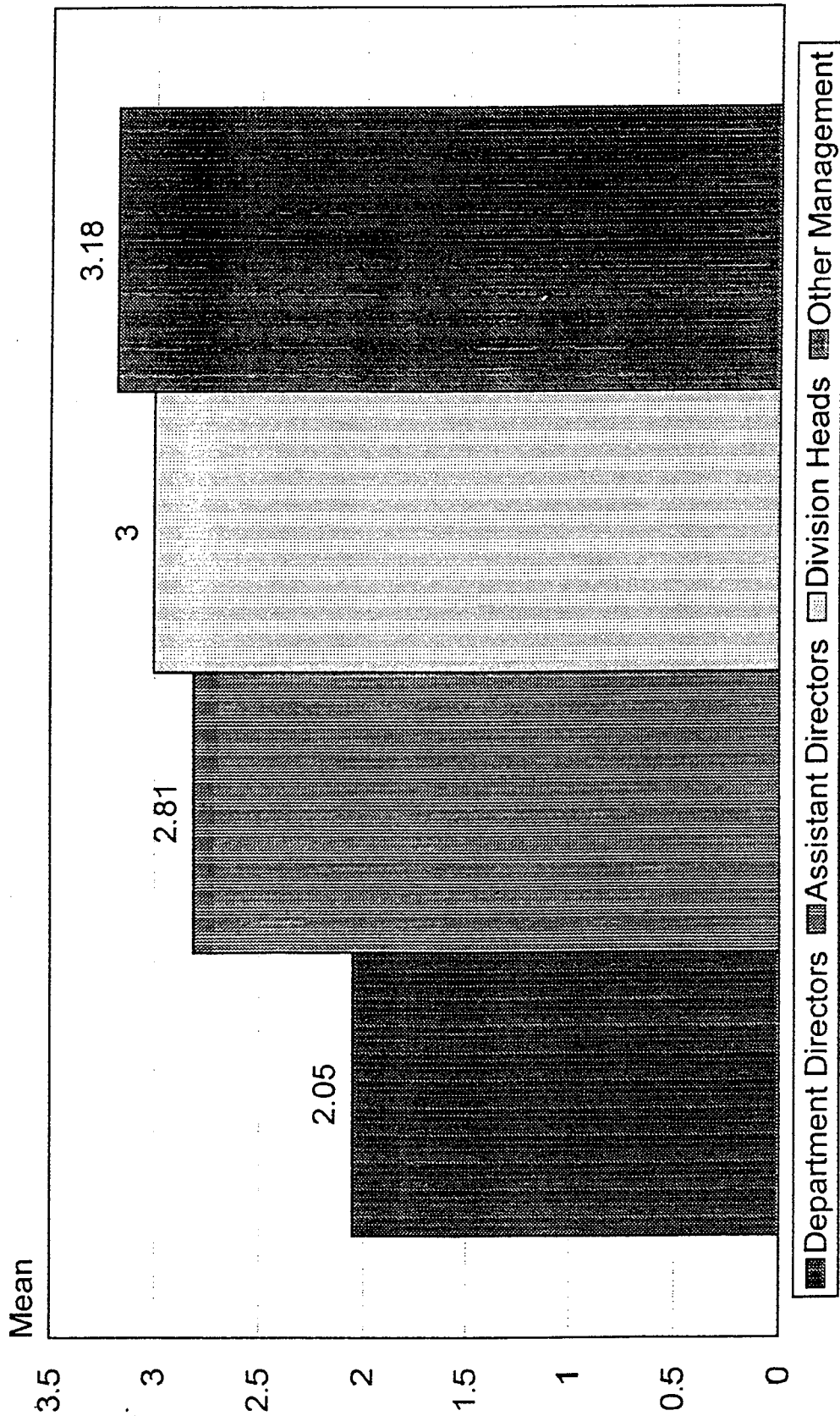
To what degree does Miami-Dade County encourage technological innovation?
(1=very high degree, 2=some degree, 3=low degree, 4=never)



Note: Managers employed by the County for 6-10 years were significantly less likely than those employed for a greater number of years to indicate that Miami-Dade County encouraged technological innovation.

Question 8

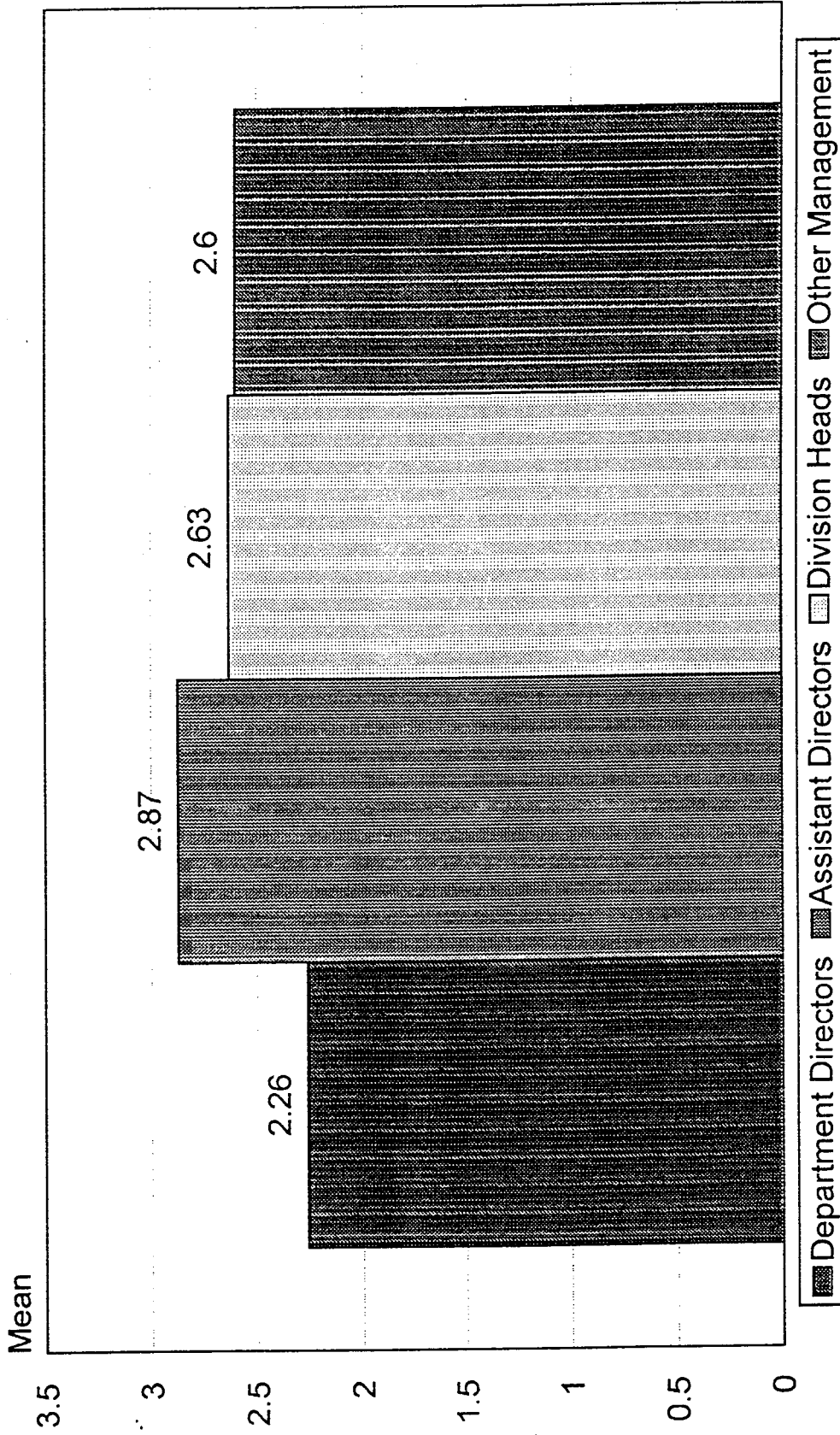
To what degree does your department develop teams, train teams, and encourage teamwork?
(1=very high degree, 2=high degree, 3=some degree, 4=low degree, 5=never)



Note: Department directors were significantly more likely than assistant directors, division heads, and other management to indicate that their department developed teams, trained teams, and encouraged teamwork.

Question 15

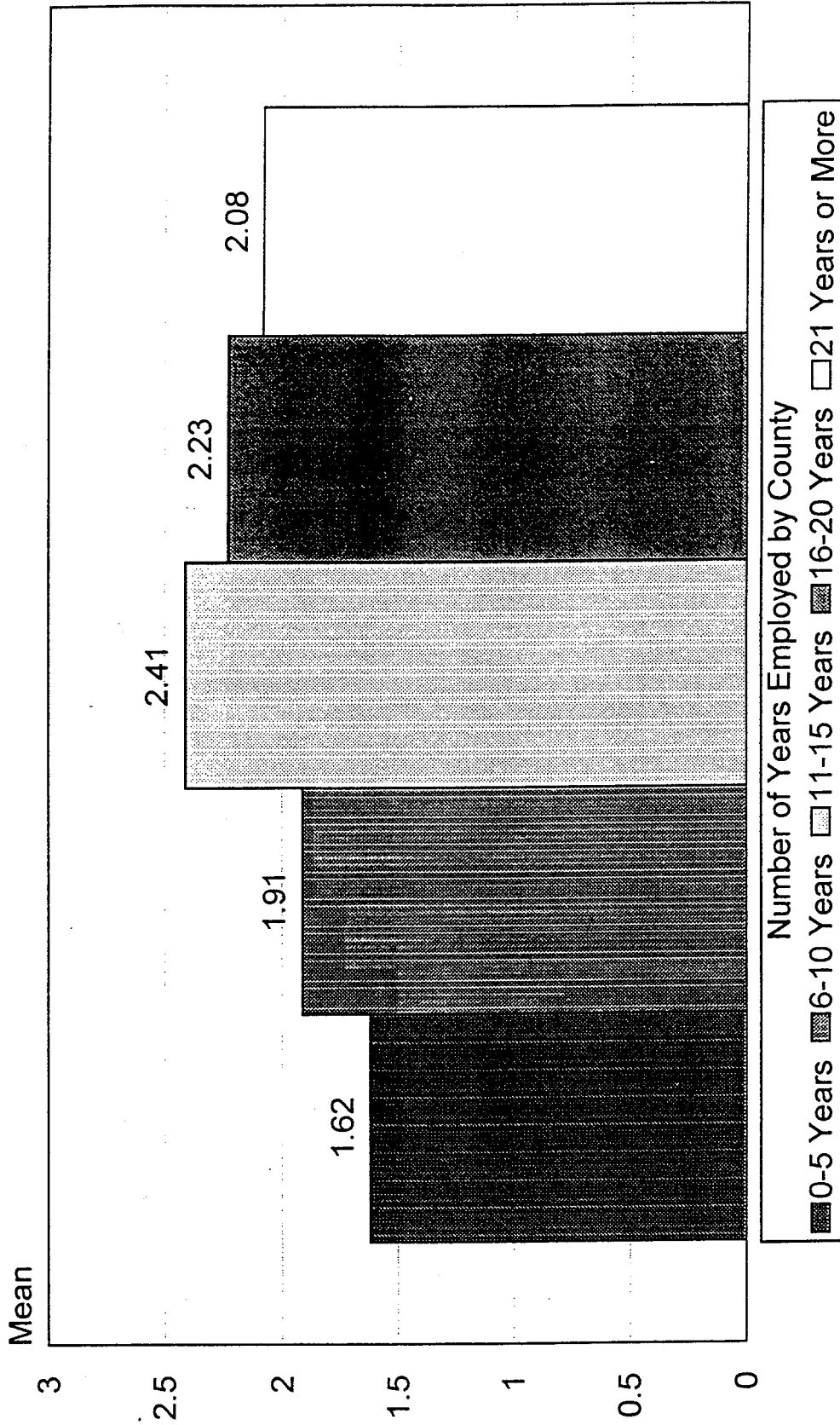
I am allowed to make my own personnel appointments.
(1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=disagree, 4=strongly disagree)



Note: Department directors were significantly more likely than assistant directors to indicate that they were allowed to make their own personnel appointments.

Question 24

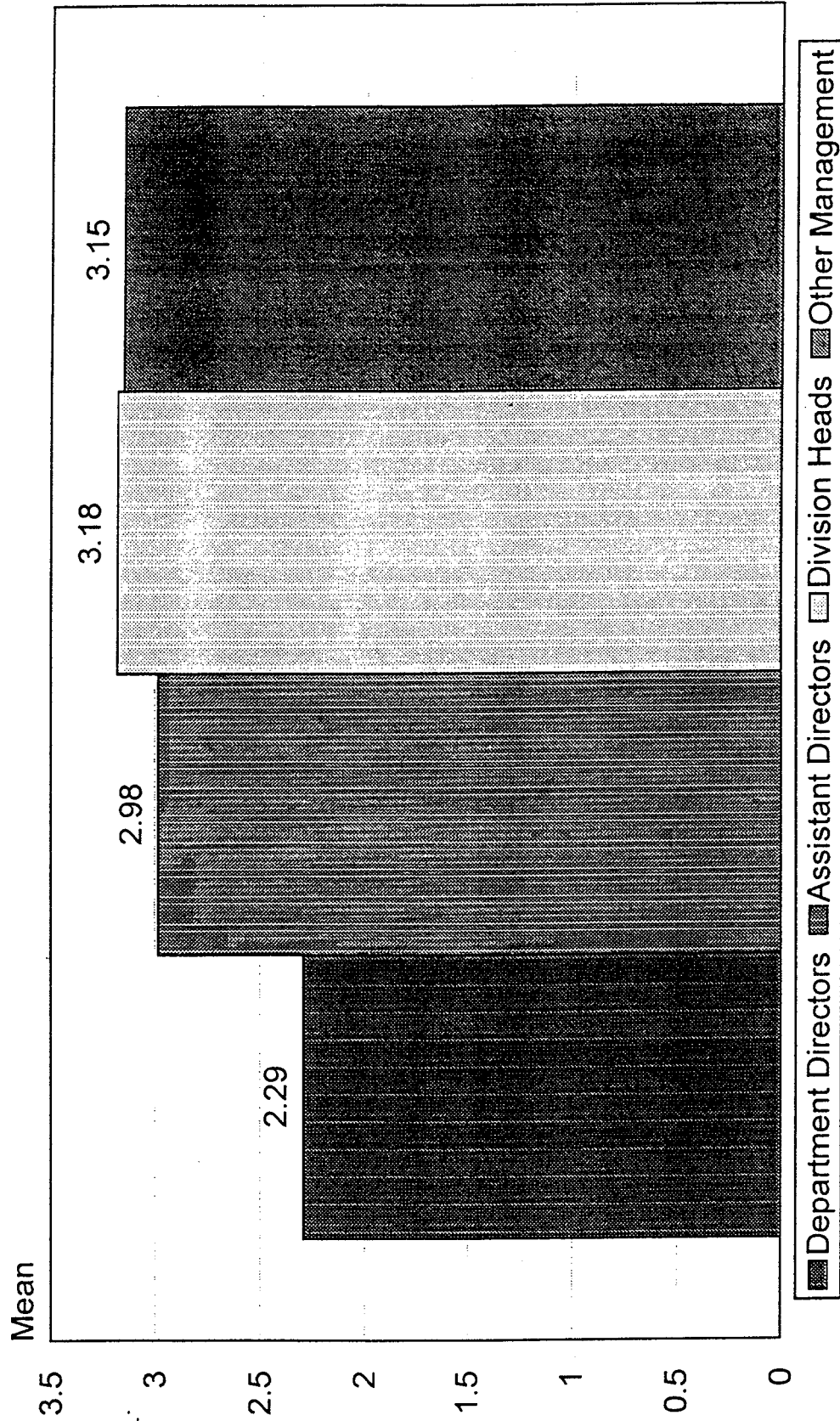
Lobbyists influence the professional decision making process.
(1=always, 2=often, 3=sometimes, 4=rarely, 5=never)



Note: Managers employed by the County for 0-5 years were significantly more likely than those employed for 11-15 years to indicate that lobbyists influenced the professional decision making process.

Question 25

Problem areas in my department will improve in the near future.
(1=always, 2=often, 3=sometimes, 4=rarely, 5=never)



Note: Department directors were significantly more likely than assistant directors, division heads, and other management to indicate that problem areas in their department would improve in the near future.

Dade survey adds fuel to anti-lobby fire

LOBBYISTS, FROM 1A

I have been saying for awhile now, that we need to regulate the lobbying of our professional staff," said Commissioner Miguel Diaz de la Portilla, the sponsor of one of the proposed reforms.

Diaz de la Portilla wants to ban lobbying on all contracts before County Manager Merrett Stierheim makes his recommendation on who should get the job.

For some contracts, the ban would apply even after a recommendation is made.

Currently, lobbyists are free to contact staff or commissioners to discuss business unless the commission specifically imposes a "cone of silence" around a contract.

"We should be sure the information we get from staff represents their best independent judgment and that it isn't influenced by third parties," Diaz de la Portilla said.

Dade Mayor Alex Penelas, who also is pushing for lobbying reforms, said he wasn't surprised by the survey results, which reflect the views of 417 of the county's top 475 administrators.

Addressing concerns

"I pretty much anticipated that that was going to be the answer — that they felt that politics and lobbying was influencing the process," he said.

Penelas said the findings support his decision to hire Stierheim, a respected former county manager, for the top job at County Hall. The commission endorsed the decision Tuesday.

But the mayor said more needs to be done.

"We need to let directors run their departments," Penelas said.

Lobbyists may be to blame for some of the political interference

WHAT THE BUREAUCRATS THINK

More than 400 top Miami-Dade County bureaucrats gathered at the Port of Miami on June 1 to complete a survey designed by FIU professors Ronald Berkman and Ralph Lewis. All responses were confidential. Managers were asked to identify problems at County Hall and respond to specific statements. Here are some of those statements and the responses.

1. Political interference in our operations.

■ A major problem: 58 percent.

■ A problem: 24 percent.

■ A minor problem: 14 percent.

■ Not a problem: 4 percent.

2. There is a clear and consistent separation of the political and administrative functions of Miami-Dade government.

■ Strongly Disagree: 69 percent.

■ Disagree: 22 percent.

■ Agree: 8 percent.

■ Strongly Agree: 1 percent.

3. Lobbyists influence the professional decision making process.

■ Always: 30 percent.

■ Often: 42 percent.

■ Sometimes: 17 percent.

■ Rarely: 6 percent.

■ Never: 5 percent.

cited by managers, but insiders say they aren't the only culprits. Commissioners also interfere in the process, according to current and former county employees.

Stierheim acknowledged the issue when asked to comment on the survey.

"This is an area that has to be handled delicately," he said. "This doesn't mean a commissioner can't call a department director. Conversely, it doesn't mean a commissioner can direct departmental business."

Stierheim welcomed the survey, saying the results pinpoint what's wrong with county government. "It is going to be extremely valuable," he said. "My task here is quite obviously to reinvigorate the administration."

Bleak picture painted

That task won't be easy, judging by the survey. The results paint a bleak picture of the county's \$4 billion government.

"Respondents believe that there are significant problems in the planning and operations of county government," the survey found.

And the outlook for change is not very bright, either.

When asked whether the prob-

lems in county government would improve, only 18 percent of the managers who took part in the survey expressed optimism.

But the most dramatic findings came in the arena of politics. Political interference was identified as the No. 1 barrier to improving government.

Although the survey did not identify the source of that interference, private companies that are seeking county business routinely hire high-priced lawyers and lobbyists to represent their interests at County Hall.

The survey suggests that many County Hall bureaucrats believe those lobbyists wield too much power. Whether true or not, the perception itself represents a problem, said lawyer and lobbyist Jorge Luis Lopez.

"What we are attempting to do on behalf of clients might be misconstrued as meddling in the process. Certainly that's not the intention. But if there is that sense within the ranks, then I think we need to correct it," Lopez said.

"The trend of these numbers clearly should give everyone some pause. We may be playing by the rules and others may not. We all want a level playing field."

Simpson lawyers seek reversal of civil case verdict

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Attorneys for O.J. Simpson have submitted a brief to a state Court of Appeal seeking a reversal of last year's \$33.5 million wrongful death verdict in the deaths of his former

wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and Ronald Goldman.

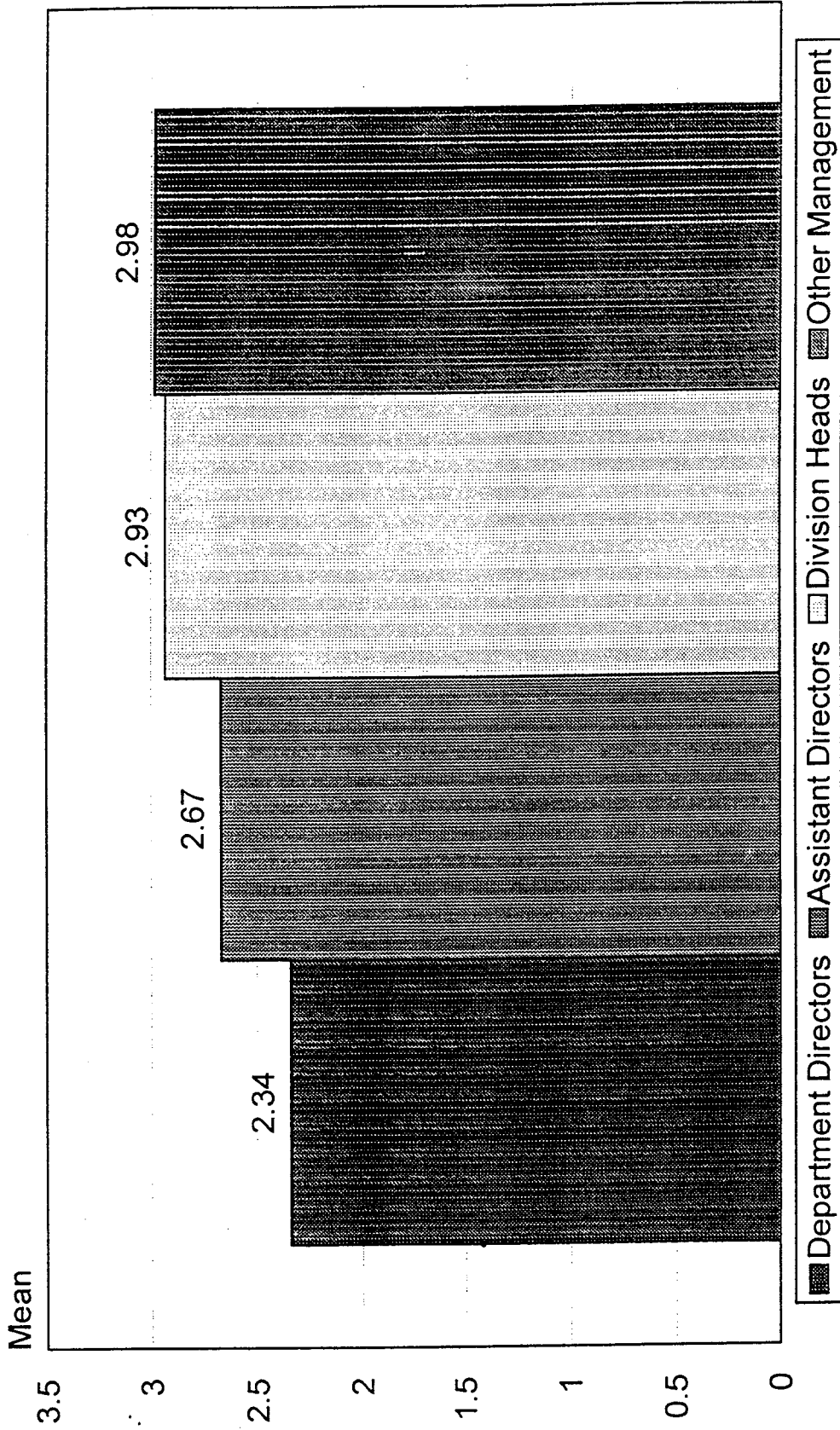
The Second District Court of Appeal must determine whether Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Hiroshi Fujisaki erred in his handling of the civil

case.

In the 96-page brief, Simpson attorneys Robert C. Baker and Daniel Patrick Leonard argue that the civil trial was "fundamentally tainted by several evidentiary rulings by the trial court."

Question 28

My views are considered in setting budget priorities for my division/department.
(1=always, 2=often, 3=sometimes, 4=rarely, 5=never)



Note: Department directors were significantly more likely than division heads and other management to indicate that their views were considered in setting budget priorities for their division/department.

PLEASE SEE ABORTIONS, 8A

Dade survey adds fuel to anti-lobby fire

By **DON FINEFROCK**
Herald Staff Writer

Lobbyists — the hired guns who represent private clients before government agencies — are a potent force at Miami-Dade County Hall, where bureaucrats say they influence most or all of the decisions they make.

In a survey conducted by Florida International University, three of four top county managers said lobbyists significantly influence their decisions about contracts, zoning issues and other government matters.

More than half also said political interference represents a "major problem" at County Hall.

The survey, conducted June 1 and made public this week, could fuel the push for lobbyist reform inside County Hall.

The County Commission agreed Tuesday to consider two proposals aimed at curbing the power and influence of lobbyists. More than 170 lobbyists are registered to represent clients on various issues at County Hall.

"The survey results prove what

PLEASE SEE LOBBYISTS, 23A