

DETROIT INNOVATION INSIGHTS

URBAN INNOVATION EXCHANGE

DATA DRIVEN DETROIT 
A Michigan Nonprofit Association Affiliate



UIX Initiative



- Inform, engage & advance Detroit's growing innovation movement
- Document, survey & understand the ecosystem
- 300+ innovators & 100+ impact projects
- Small-scale, place-based projects

2012-3

1

**Innovation in Detroit
is rooted in place.**

2

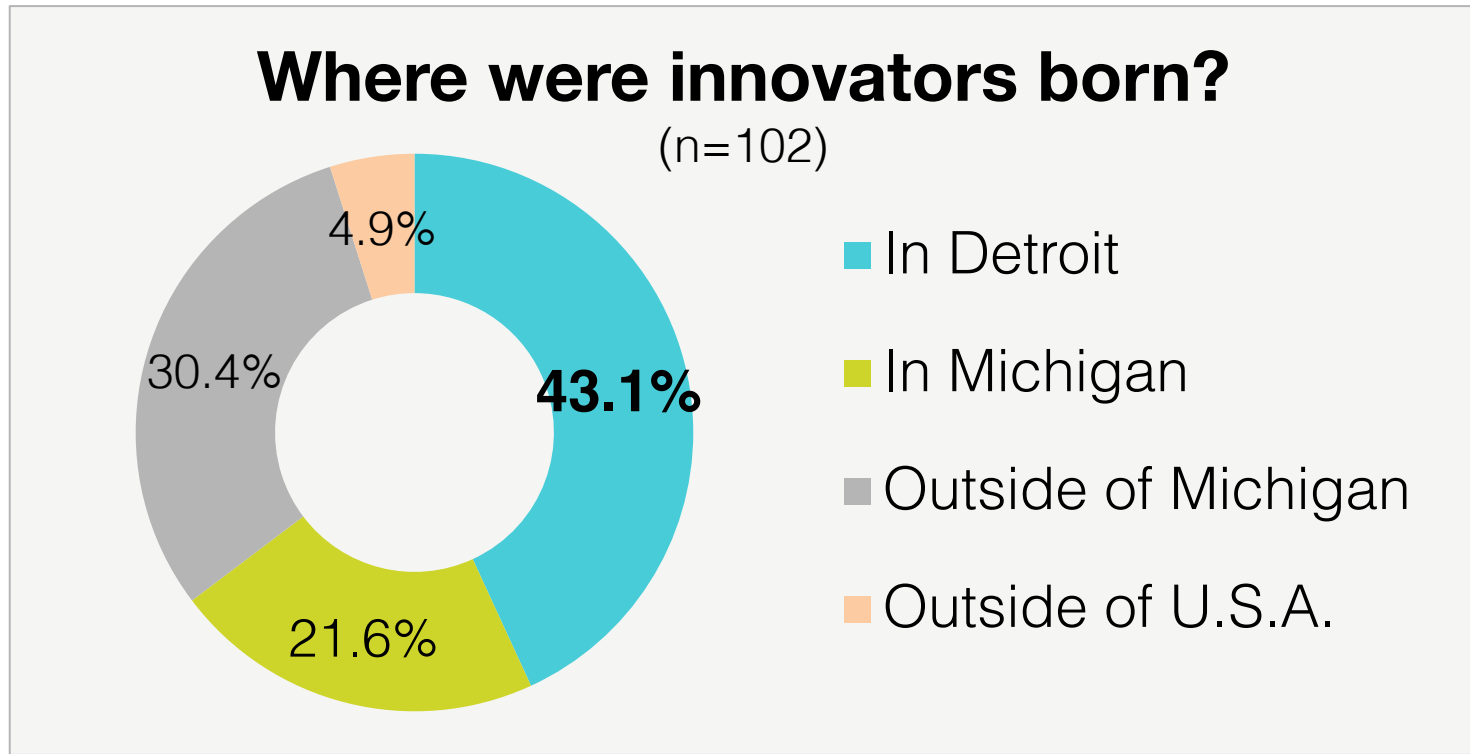
**Networking & building
relationships are an innovator's
most essential skill sets.**

3

Innovators are social people!

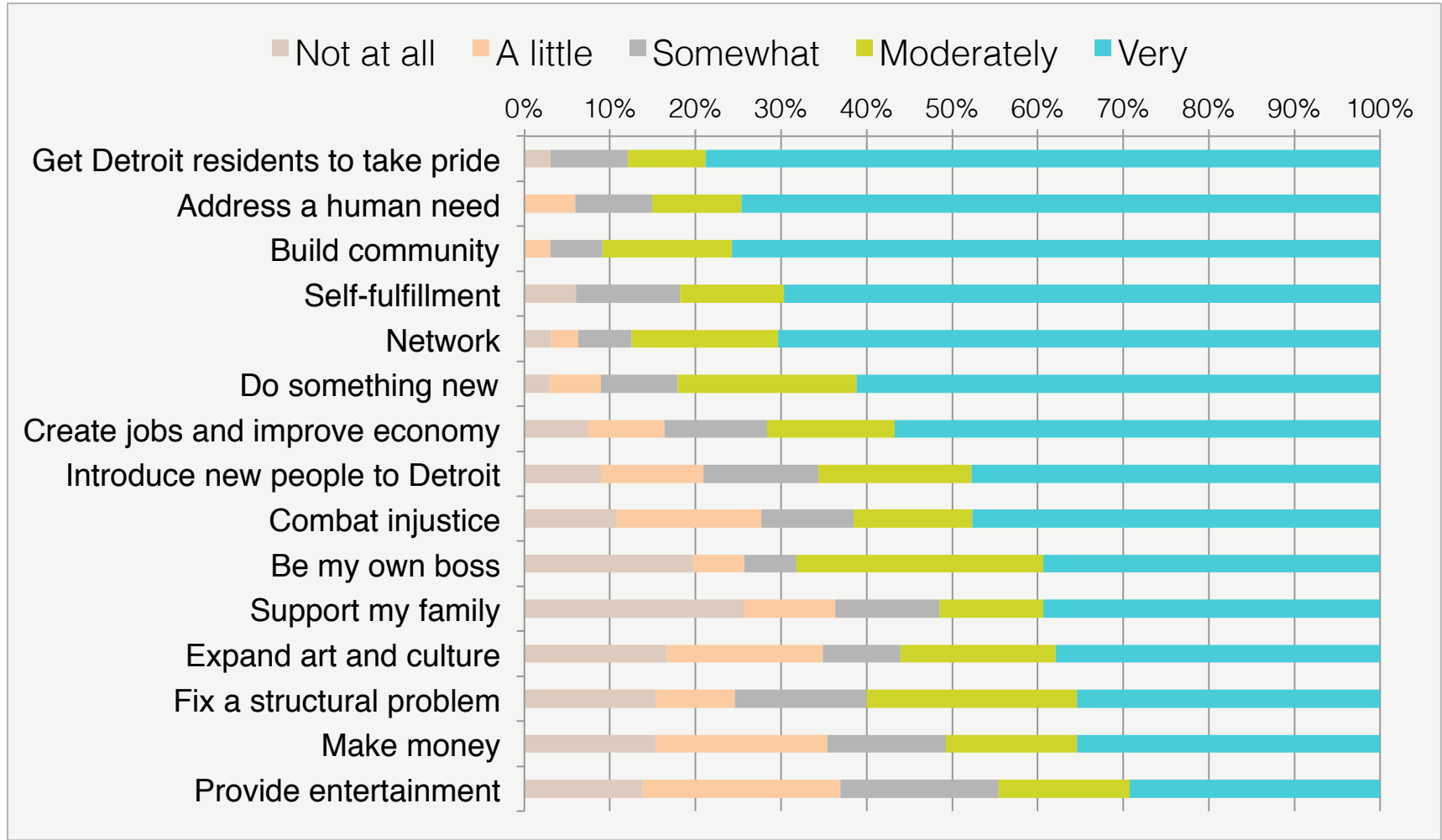
1

Innovation in Detroit is rooted in place.



How important is it to do the following through your project?

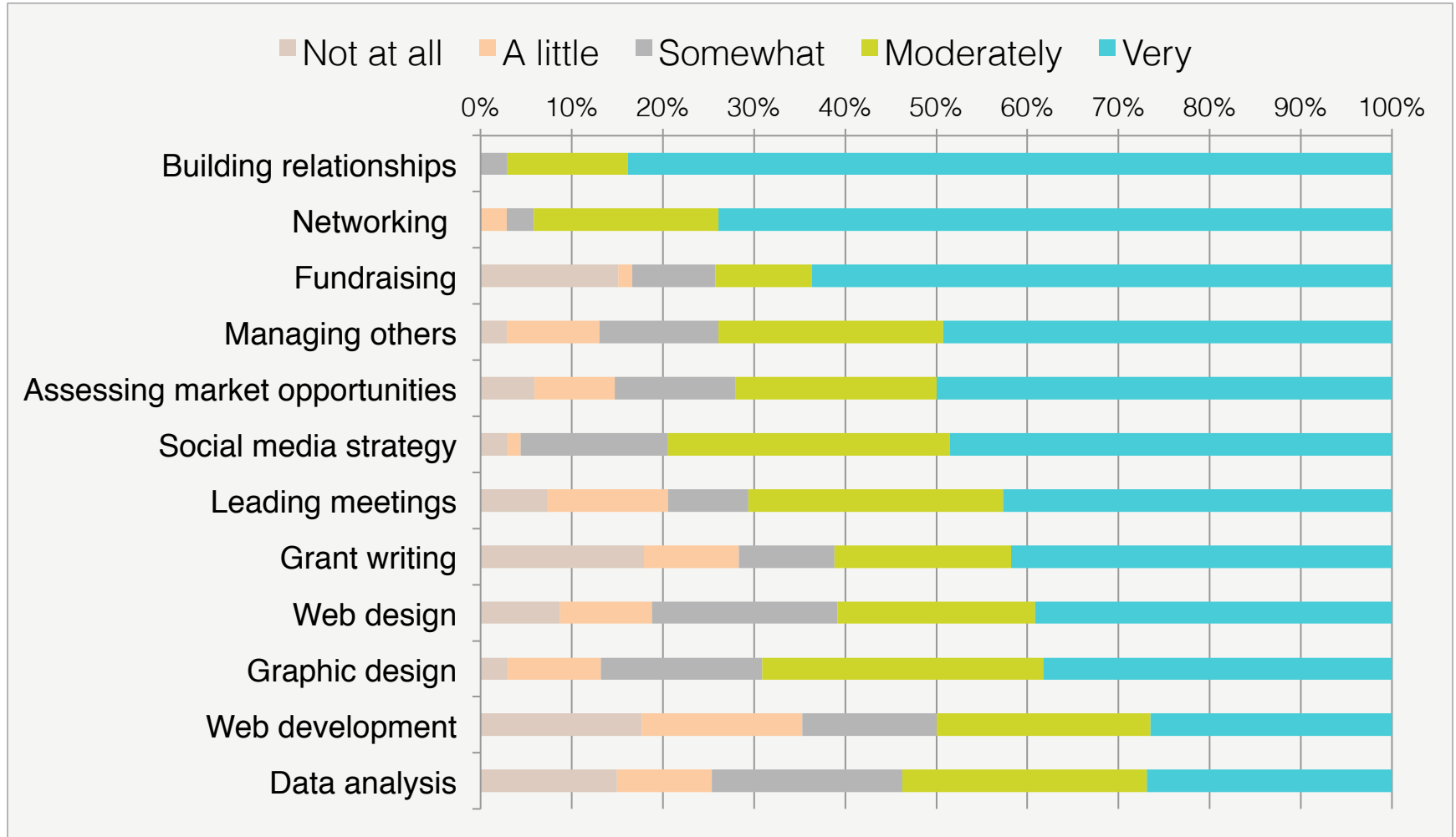
(n=75)



2

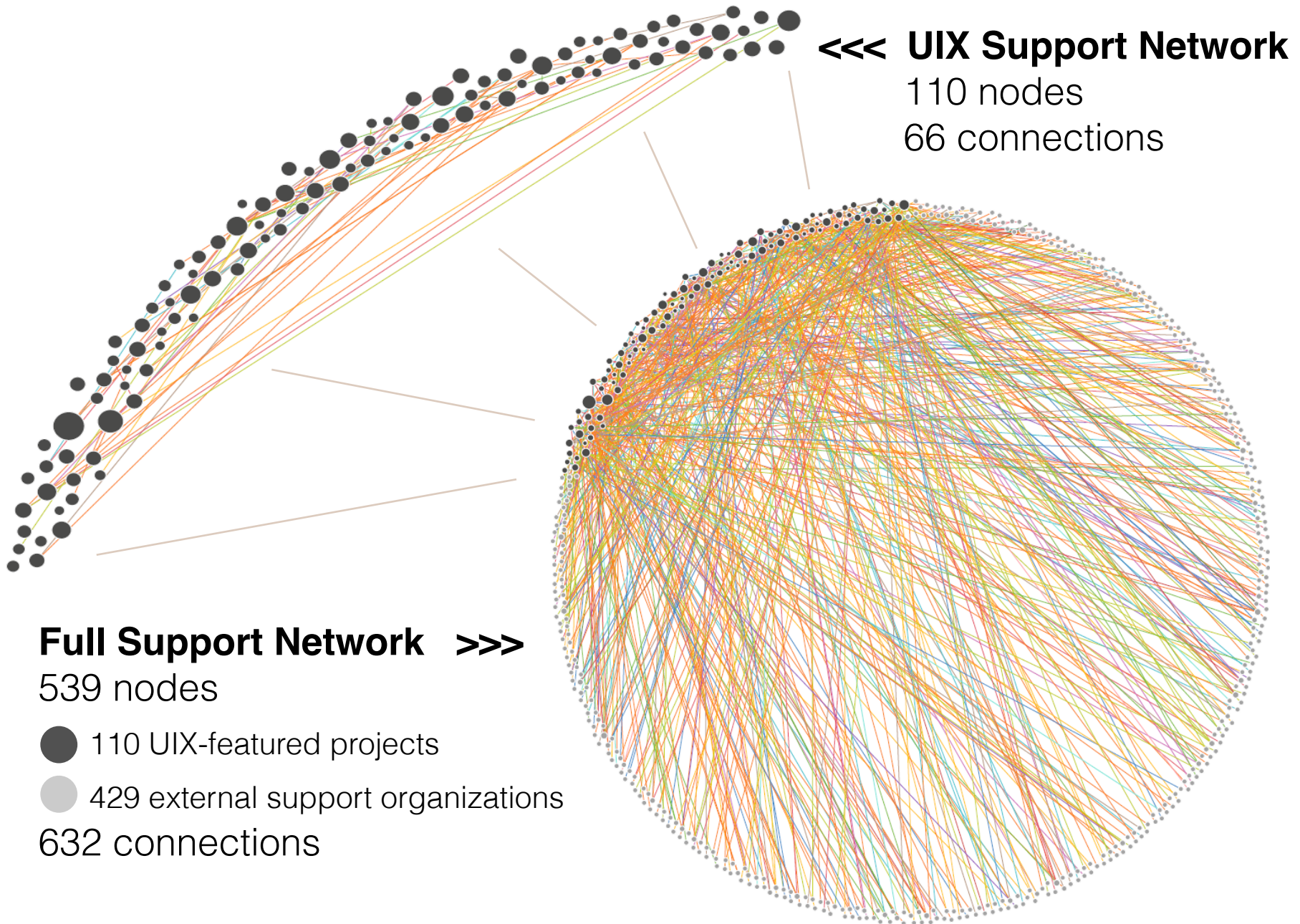
Networking & building relationships are an innovator's most essential skill sets.

How important are the following **skill sets** to your success?



3

Innovators are social people!



2014

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1

**Innovators start somewhere,
formal details come later.**

Which best describes the **space** you operate from?

(n=75)

65.2%

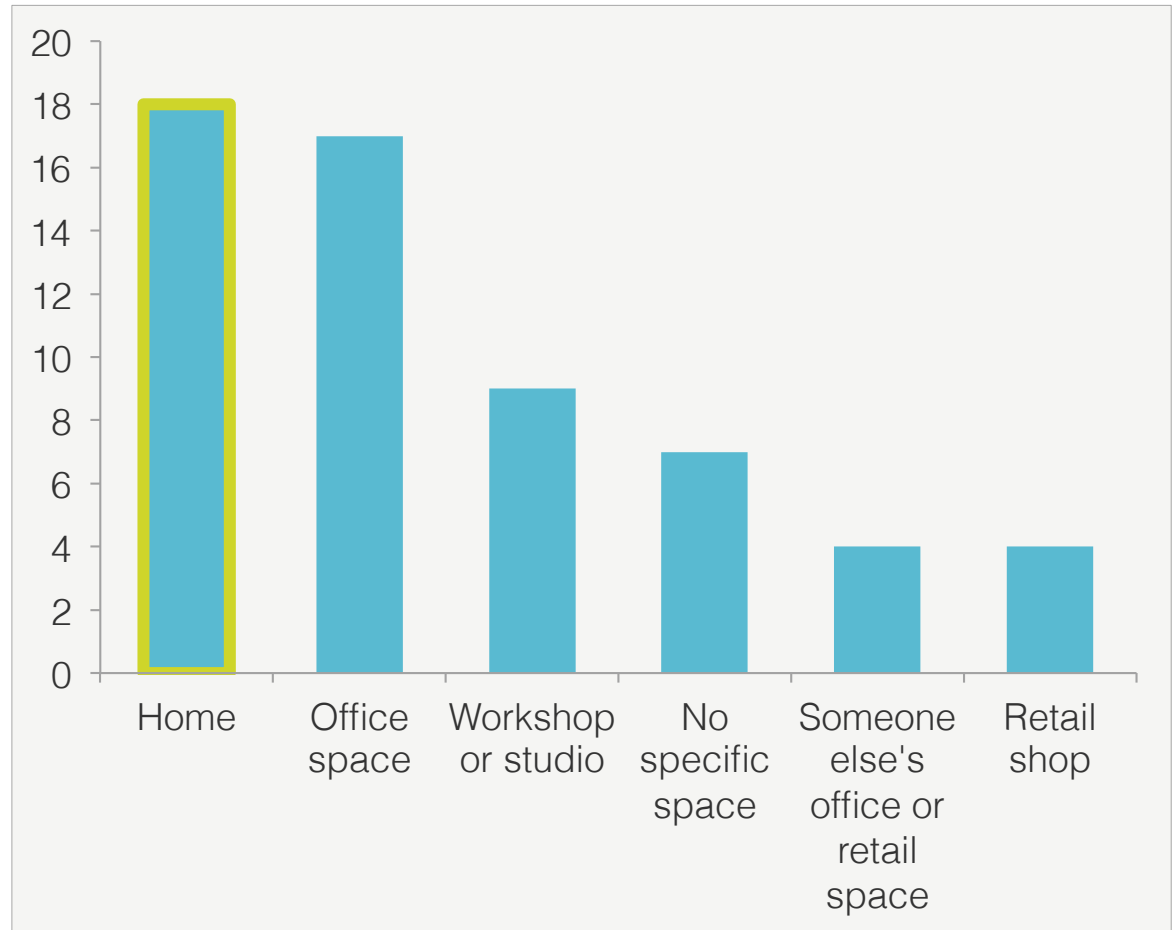
of project spaces
are open to the
public

55.7%

of project spaces
have regular and
set hours

62.4%

of innovators pay
monthly rent for
their space





ANDY DIDOROSI
Detroit Bus Company
Founded 2012

“We started this thing with really like no idea how to deliver what it is we were trying to do. And I think that was a strength and a weakness. And we have maintained that sort of enthusiasm... but now with **more focus. We know now what we can do and what we can’t do.”**

“We’re really in a stability mode rather than a growth mode right now. And for us to grow, we have to review the context as well as our funding and see where we can contribute the most.”



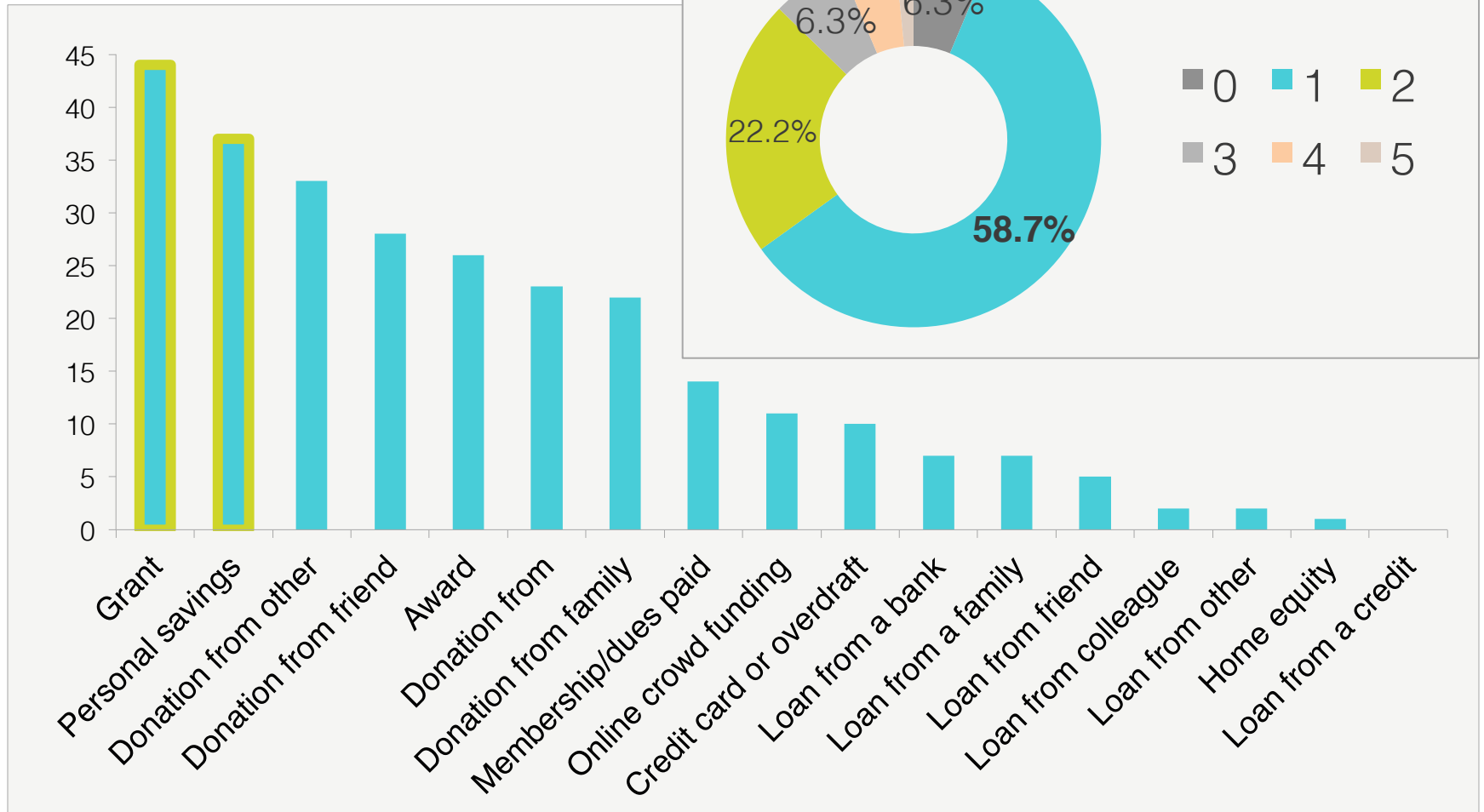
KAMI POTHUKUCHI
SEED Wayne
Founded 2008

2

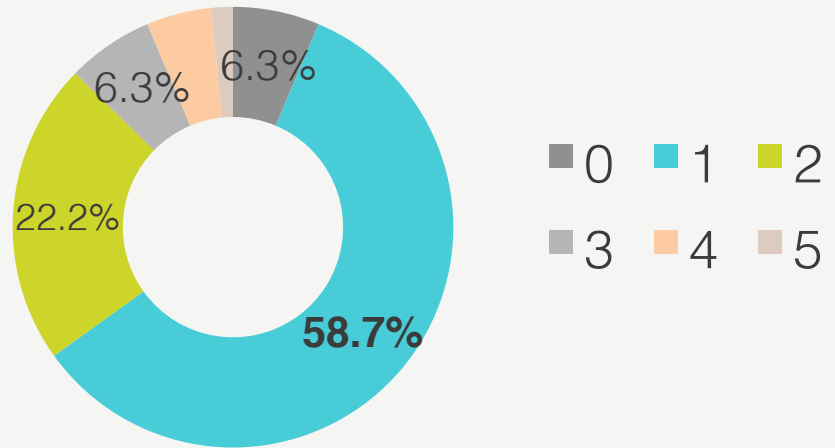
**Money can't rival
their passion,
but that doesn't mean
innovators don't need it.**

What funding sources have you used for your project? (n=75)

(n=75)



How many paid jobs do you have? (n=75)





DEVITA DAVISON
Detroit Kitchen Connect
Founded 2013

“No, I don’t feel secure. I’m not sure if Detroit Kitchen Connect will exist in the way it exists now in three years, four years, five years. It is very vulnerable to grant funding, it is not a sustainable program on its own.”

Q



**Where do you need to
build capacity in order
to keep working towards
your vision?**

“We’re dealing with a different kind of reward that’s not financial and it lasts for a certain amount of time. But we’re getting to that point where we have to compensate and the money has to come in. Then we can really engage people in feeling ownership over it.”



NOAM KIMELMAN
Fresh Corner Café
Founded 2010



AUDRA CARSON
De-tread
Founded 2007

“I want to be able to focus on De-tread full-time. So the goal is to be able to transition, but to transition in a way that doesn’t cost me hardship. And I want to bring people along with me. So until I can do that, I’m in this holding pattern.”

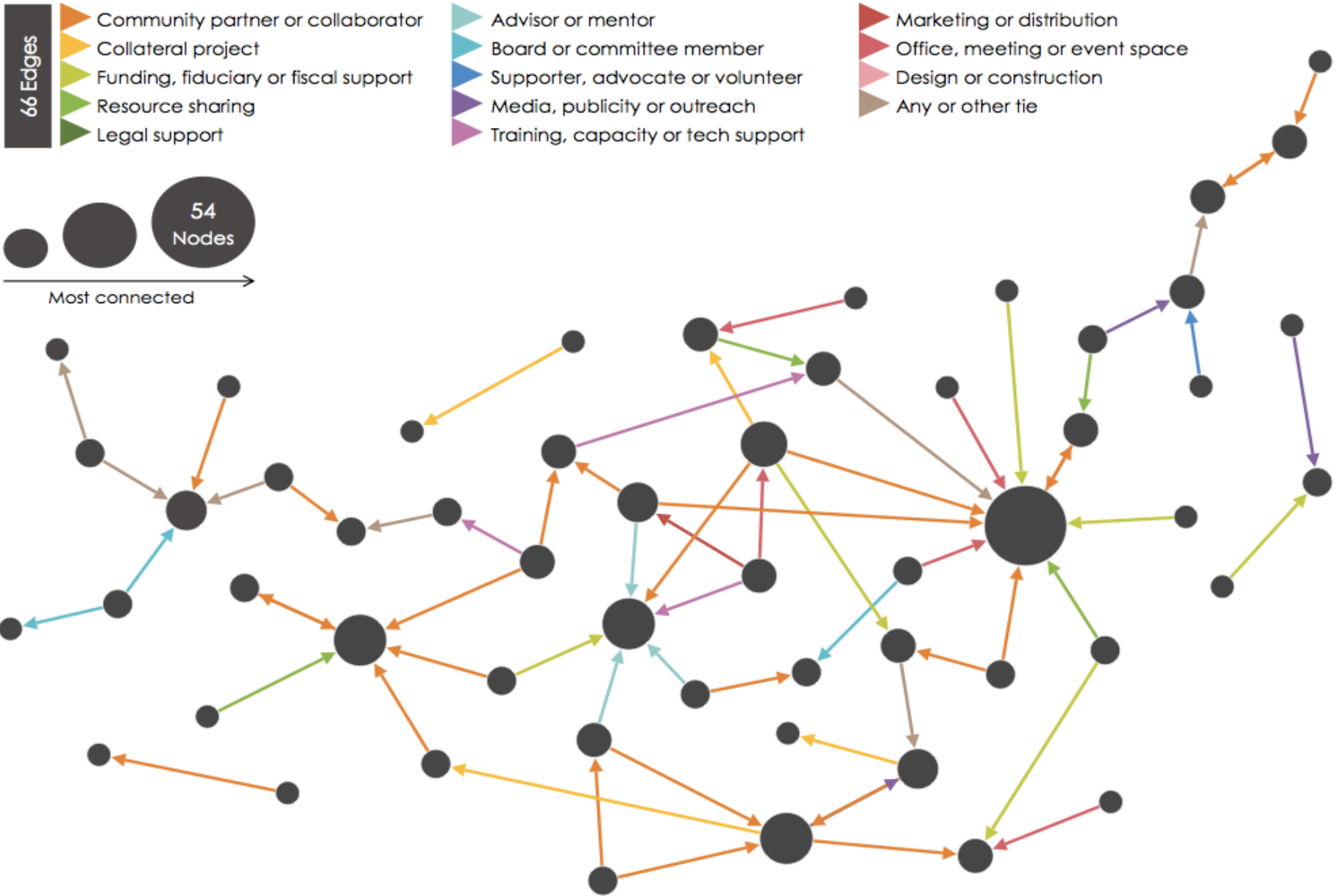
3

**Innovators want to
talk less and do more.**

**“You still have to hustle,
you still have to make
all the coffees and it’s
a lot of work. But if a
person can’t help you,
they can connect you
with someone that can.
And I’ve been really
grateful for that.”**



AMY PETERSON
Rebel Nell
Founded 2013



A large, white, outline-style letter 'Q' is positioned on the left side of the slide. To its right are two small white squares stacked vertically, serving as bullet points for the question.

**How has your project
and your role **changed**
since you've started?**



AMY KAHERL
Detroit SOUP
Founded 2010

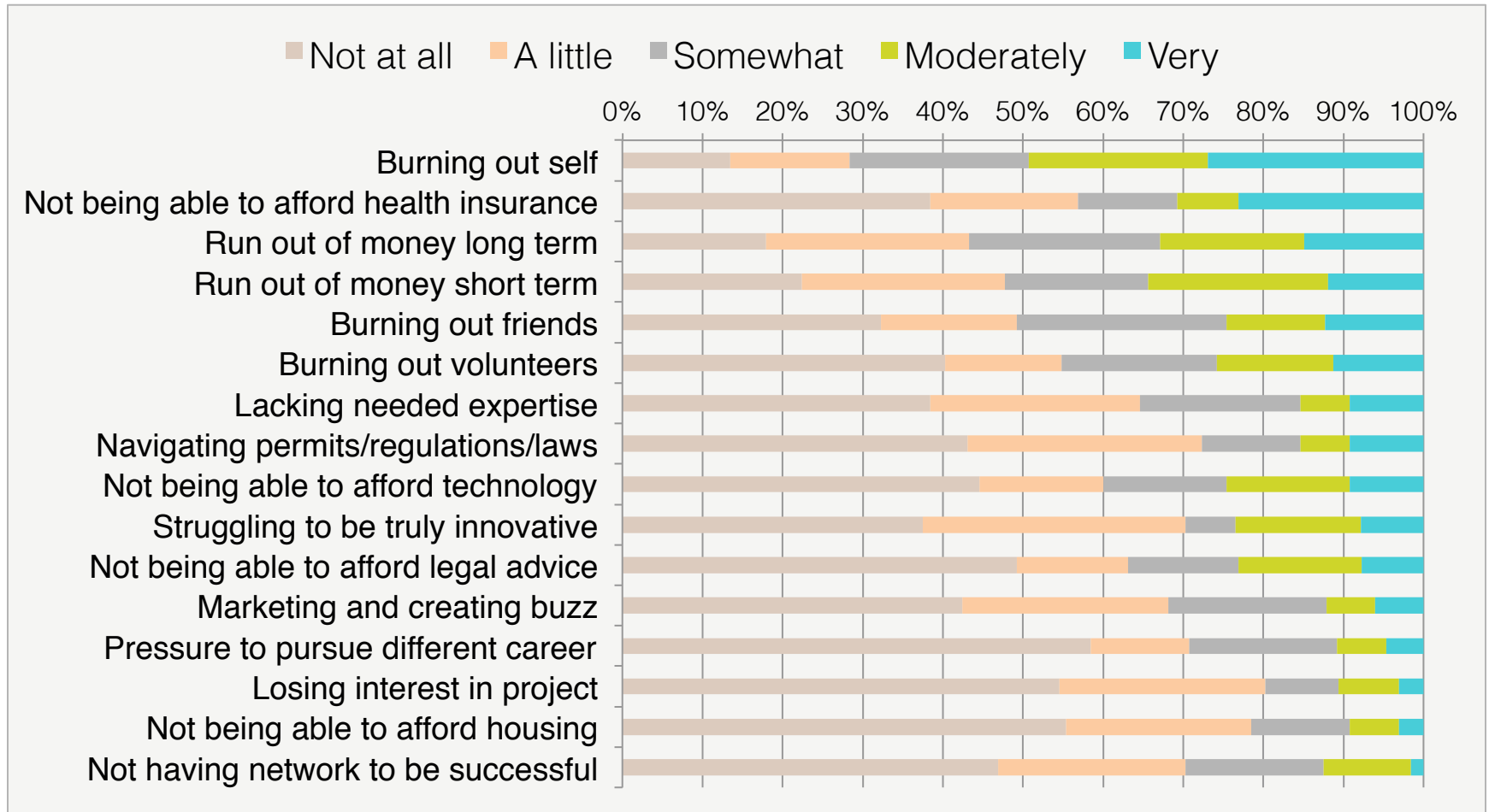
“I stopped doing Detroit SOUP about six months ago, and I started selling SOUP. I haven’t done any work. I’ve got to sell the project, I’ve got to sell the program.”

4

**Innovators are
vulnerable to burnout.**

How concerned are you about the following?

(n=75)





PHIL COOLEY
Ponyride
Founded 2011

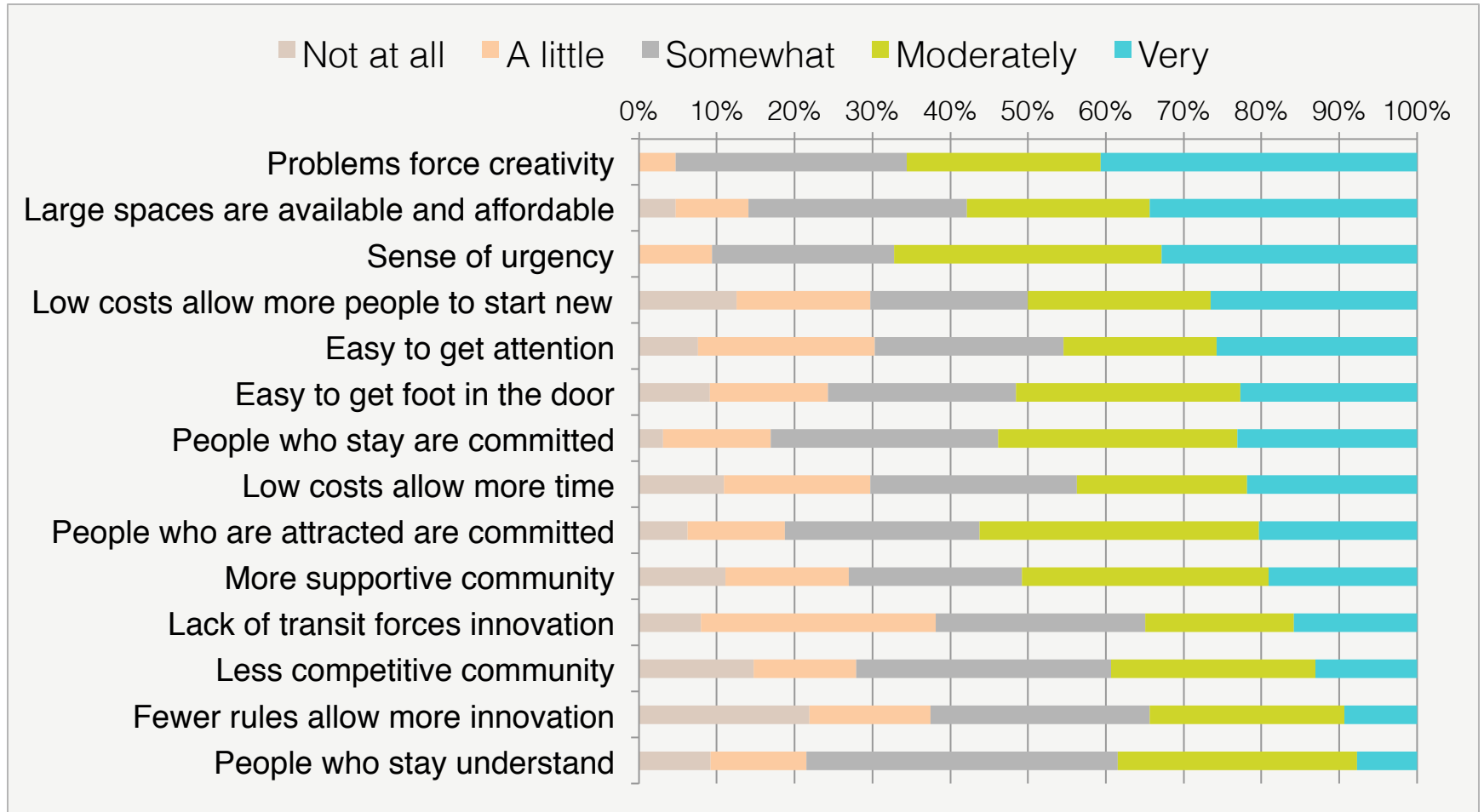
“It’s been a lot about trusting the vision and the process. You have to be **adaptive. Because the reality is that, yes, we are failing right in the midst of the process. And if you aren’t [adaptive], if you get too stubborn on this path, it only gets worse. And the reality is that **needs change** for individuals and for communities.”**

5

**Innovation in Detroit
is affordable now,
but how can it
stay accessible?**

There are many opinions of why Detroit is conducive to innovation. How accurately do these reflect your opinion of the environment?

(n=75)





MARK COVINGTON
Georgia Street Community Collective
Founded 2008

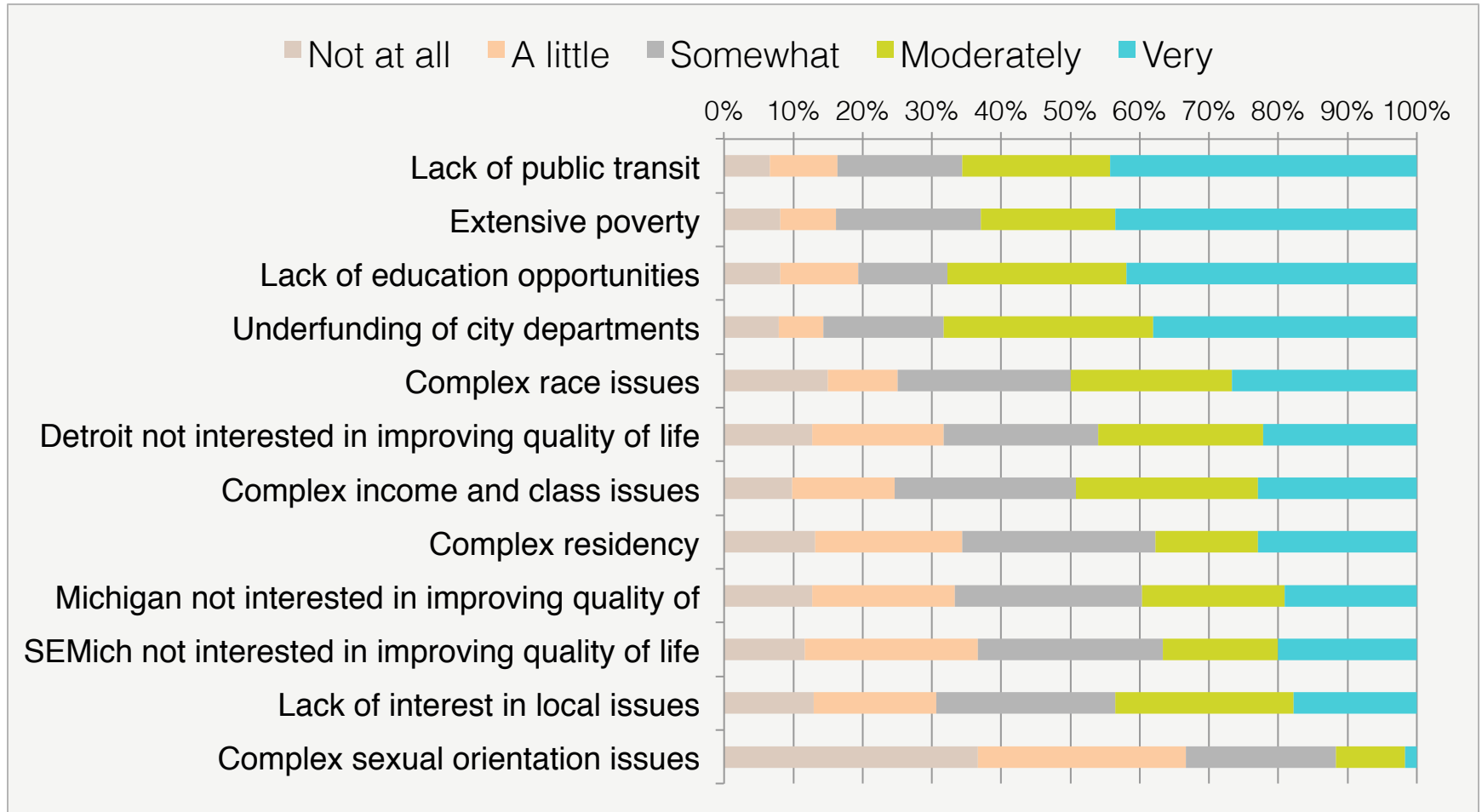
**“I’ve been here all my life.
This is my city, and even
now, we need to start
doing things to make
our city better.**

So don’t give up.

**And don’t make it about
money. For yourself,
I mean. If it’s a passion,
go for it and don’t let
anyone tell you that you
can’t do it.”**

**There are many opinions of why Detroit can be a barrier to innovation.
How accurately do these reflect your opinion of the environment?**

(n=75)



Q



**Do you have any
advice for aspiring
innovators in Detroit?**

“Don’t go out with this competitive mindset. Go out with the mindset that you want to **exchange ideas with other people. If you go out with a competitive mindset, you won’t last here because people pick that up and they start to shoo you away. Go out with the mindset that you’re going to **add value**, but also receive something. It’s an exchange, it really is.”**



DELPHIA SIMMONS
Thrive Detroit
Founded 2011



JAY RAYFORD
Social Sushi Detroit
Founded 2012

“When I talk to kids, I always say, “Yo, get out of Detroit and just come back.” You know what I mean? I just think that there’s nothing more powerful than a **well-traveled **Detroiter.**”**

MOVING FORWARD

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1 Innovators start somewhere,
formal details come later.

2 Money can't rival their passion,
but that doesn't mean innovators don't need it.

3 Innovators want to talk less and do more.

4 Innovators are vulnerable to burn out.

5 Innovation in Detroit is affordable now,
but how can it stay accessible?

THANK YOU

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