



**INSIGHT REPORT**

# **State of the CX Profession, 2017**

**SIXTH ANNUAL STUDY OF 200+ CX PROFESSIONALS,  
INCLUDING COMPENSATION STUDY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To understand the mindset and roles of customer experience professionals today, we surveyed 237 CX professionals and then compared their responses to similar studies we've conducted over the previous five years. We asked them how their CX efforts impacted their organization last year and about their plans for the coming year. This report also includes a compensation study, which is based on the 158 respondents who agreed to participate. Here are some highlights from the research:

- Eighty-four percent of respondents say that their customer experience efforts have had a positive business impact in 2016.
- Ninety-nine percent think that customer experience is a great profession to be in, the highest level we've seen in the six years we've been doing the study.
- Eighty percent think that customer experience will be more important for their companies in 2017 than it was in 2016, compared to the 3% who think it will be less important.
- Forty-nine percent expect to see an increase in their customer experience staffing levels this year – a higher percentage than we've seen in previous years.
- Respondents plan to increase their spending most on voice of the customer software and text analytics.
- Respondents plan to increase their focus most on Web experiences and customer insights and analysis.
- The total amount of compensation in our study ranges from \$93,000 for mid-level individual contributors to \$239,000 for CX executives.

## THE LIFE OF A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROFESSIONAL, CIRCA 2017

Great customer experience (CX) doesn't happen by accident; it happens through the efforts of dedicated CX professionals who work hard to help their organization succeed. To understand the mindset and roles of these professionals, we surveyed 237 CX professionals from different geographic regions, different positions within organizations, and from companies of different sizes (see Figure 1). Although this is the sixth year we've conducted this research, we focused most of our analysis on the most recent three years of data.<sup>1</sup> These CX professionals feel that:

- **Their efforts have a very positive impact.** Eighty-four percent of respondents report that their CX efforts had a positive impact on their company's business results in

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<sup>1</sup> See the Temkin Group report, "The State of the CX Profession" (February 2016). Although we have data for the previous six years, most of the charts in this report only include three years of data. This makes it easier to highlight recent changes.

2016. Forty-nine percent of respondents say that their efforts in 2016 had a moderately or significantly positive impact on their company, (see Figure 2).

- **Customer experience is a great profession.** Ninety-nine percent of those surveyed agree with the statement, “Customer experience is a great profession to be in,” which is the highest level we’ve seen since we started the study six years ago (see Figure 3). The percentage who agree with the statement, “My company appreciates CX professionals like me,” on the other hand, has decreased slightly from 81% in last year’s study to 80% this year.
- **They are very satisfied with their roles, but less with their opportunities.** Ninety-three percent of CX professionals are satisfied with the people they work with, which is about the same percentage as the previous two years (see Figure 4). And while 91% are satisfied with the content of their job, only 62% are satisfied with the opportunities for professional advancement.
- **They remain unlikely to look for new jobs.** Only 10% of CX professionals are very likely to look for a new job inside their organization, and 19% are very likely to look for something outside their company (see Figure 5). The number of respondents who are likely to look for a new job has dropped a few percentage-points from last year.
- **VoC remains most common CX responsibility.** Seventy-seven percent of CX professionals say that a voice of the customer (VoC) program is one of their key responsibilities (see Figure 6). Every year we have done this research, VoC programs have been the most common activity for CX professionals. Since last year, *training and coaching* (+5 points) have increased the most, while *liaison across organizations* (-8 points) and *change management* (-7 points) dropped the most.

## **CX Professionals Have More on Their Plates in 2017**

We asked our respondents about their CX plans for the upcoming year and found that:

- **CX continues to increase in importance.** Eighty percent of respondents believe that CX improvements will be more important to their firm in the upcoming year than they were in the past year, while only 3% think that CX improvements will be less important (see Figure 7).
- **CX staffing is growing.** More than 15 times more companies plan on increasing CX staffing this year than plan on decreasing staffing (49% compared to 3%).
- **CX spending is growing, even more.** Sixty-nine percent of companies expect to spend more on CX in 2017 than they did in 2016, whereas only 3% expect to spend less (see Figure 8). This positive spending momentum is higher for 2017 than it was for 2016.
- **Analytics spending is on the rise.** We asked respondents how much money their organization plans to spend on eight different types of CX technology in the coming year and found that companies expect to spend significantly more on each technology than expect to spend less. This gap between the percentage of companies expecting spending increases and those expending spending decreases is especially notable when it comes to *voice of the customer software* and *text analytics vendors*.

- **Web experiences remain the most important.** We examined the 2017 priorities for seven interaction experiences and found that companies plan to increase focus on all the experiences except for *social media experience*. Eighty-two percent of companies plan on putting more effort into improving their *web experience*, making it the most popular area for improvement for the fifth year in a row (see Figure 9). The next two most popular areas are *mobile experiences* (72%) and *cross-channel experiences* (68%).
- **Customer insights and analytics is the top CX activity.** Seventy-eight percent of respondents' companies plan on putting more effort into customer insights and analytics, putting it at the top of the list. It is also the activity that increased the most from last year (see Figure 10).

## CX PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION STUDY

As part of this year's survey, we asked respondents to participate in our third annual compensation study. We analyzed responses across five categories of professionals: mid-level individual contributors, senior-level individual contributors, leaders of small group (less than 16 individuals), leaders of large groups (16 or more individuals), and executives.<sup>2</sup> While the sample sizes for each of these groups is relatively small, we believe that the insights are still representative of the profession at large and therefore contain valuable content for CX professionals to review.<sup>3</sup> We have also compiled information about the experience and educational levels of the different groups.

Here's what we found (see Figures 11 and 12):

- **Mid-level individual contributors' average salary: \$93,000.** The mid-level individual contributors who took the survey have an average base salary of \$71,000 and an average bonus of \$11,000.
- **Senior-level individual contributors' average salary: \$110,000.** The senior-level individual contributors have an average base salary of \$93,000 and an average bonus of \$17,000.
- **Leaders of small groups' average salary: \$142,000.** CX professionals who lead teams of less than 16 people have an average base salary of \$118,000 and an average bonus of \$24,000.
- **Leaders of large groups' average salary: \$177,000.** CX professionals who lead teams of 16 people or more have an average base salary of \$134,000 and an average bonus of \$43,000.
- **Executives' average salary: \$239,000.** The CX executives have the largest compensation packages—an average base salary of \$180,000 and an average bonus of \$59,000.

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<sup>2</sup> We did not include any entry-level CX professionals in the compensation study.

<sup>3</sup> The sample sizes for each of the groups are as follows: mid-level individual contributors (21), senior-level individual contributors (39), leaders of small groups (58), leaders of large groups (26), and executives (14). Since these sample sizes are relatively small, they may not portray an accurate picture of the overall market. However, we believe that the insights are still representative of CX professionals at large organizations – at least in North America and Western Europe – and therefore represent valuable content for CX professionals to review. Given the low sample sizes, we do not provide a direct comparison with the results from previous years.

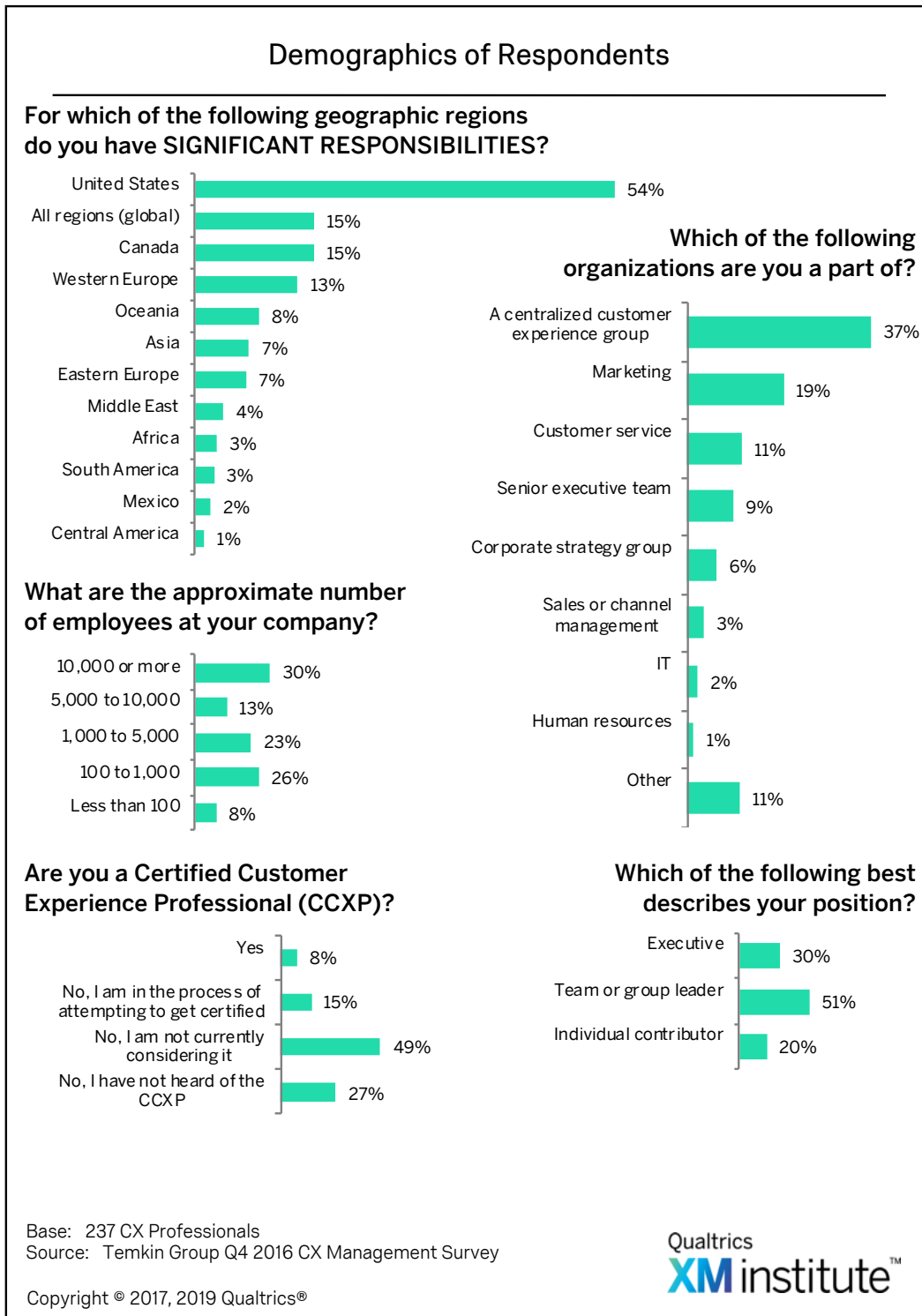


Figure 1

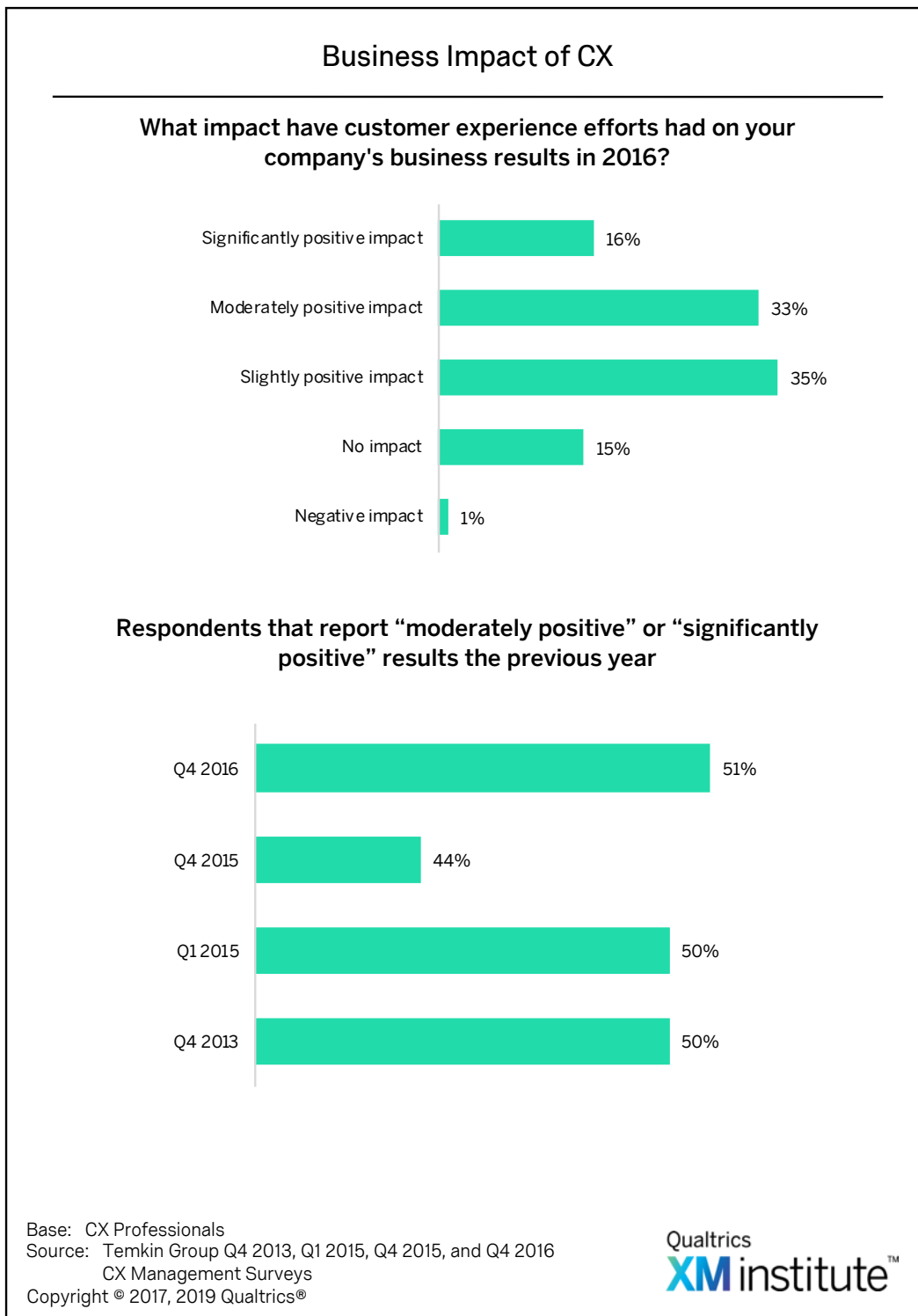


Figure 2

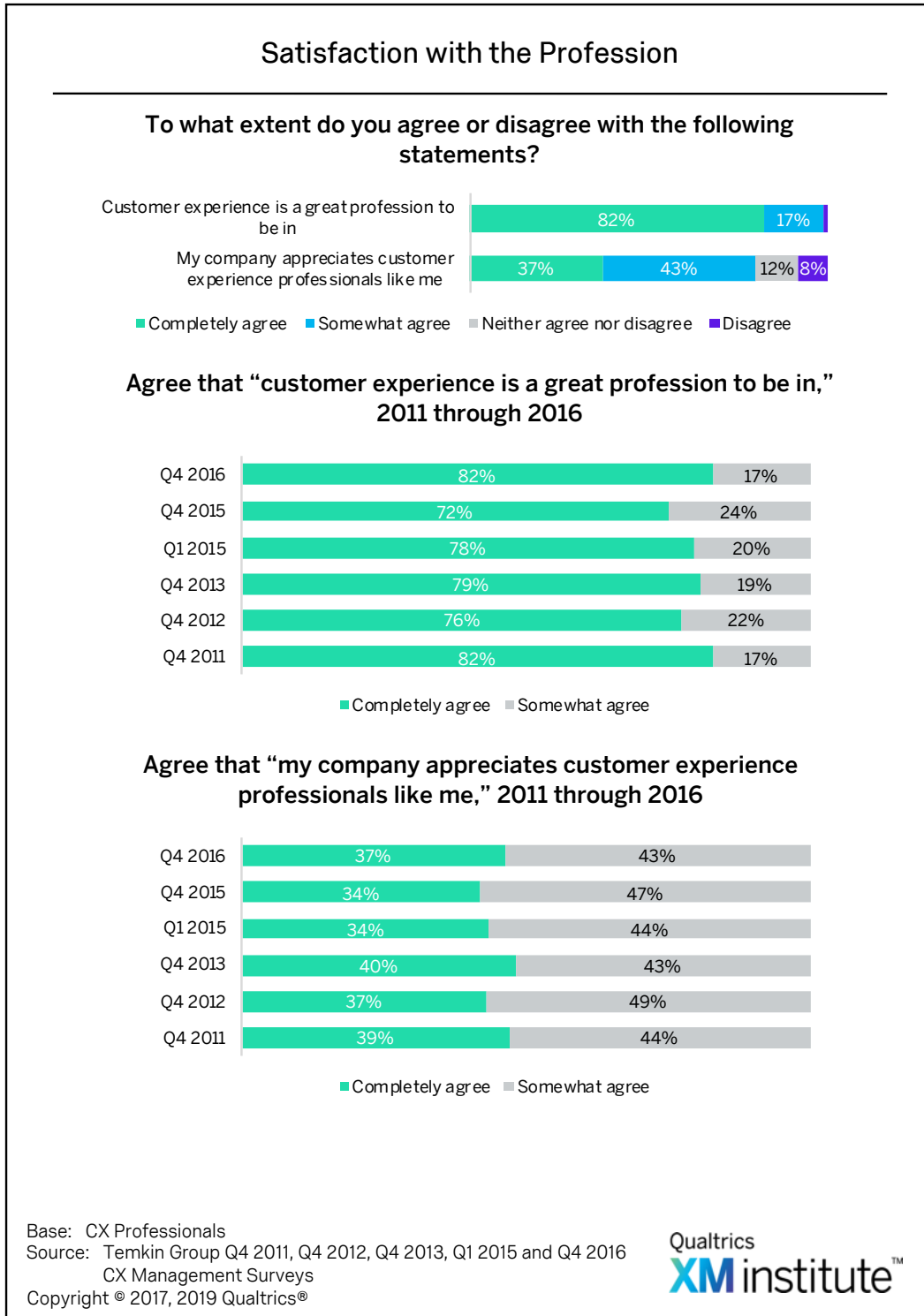


Figure 3

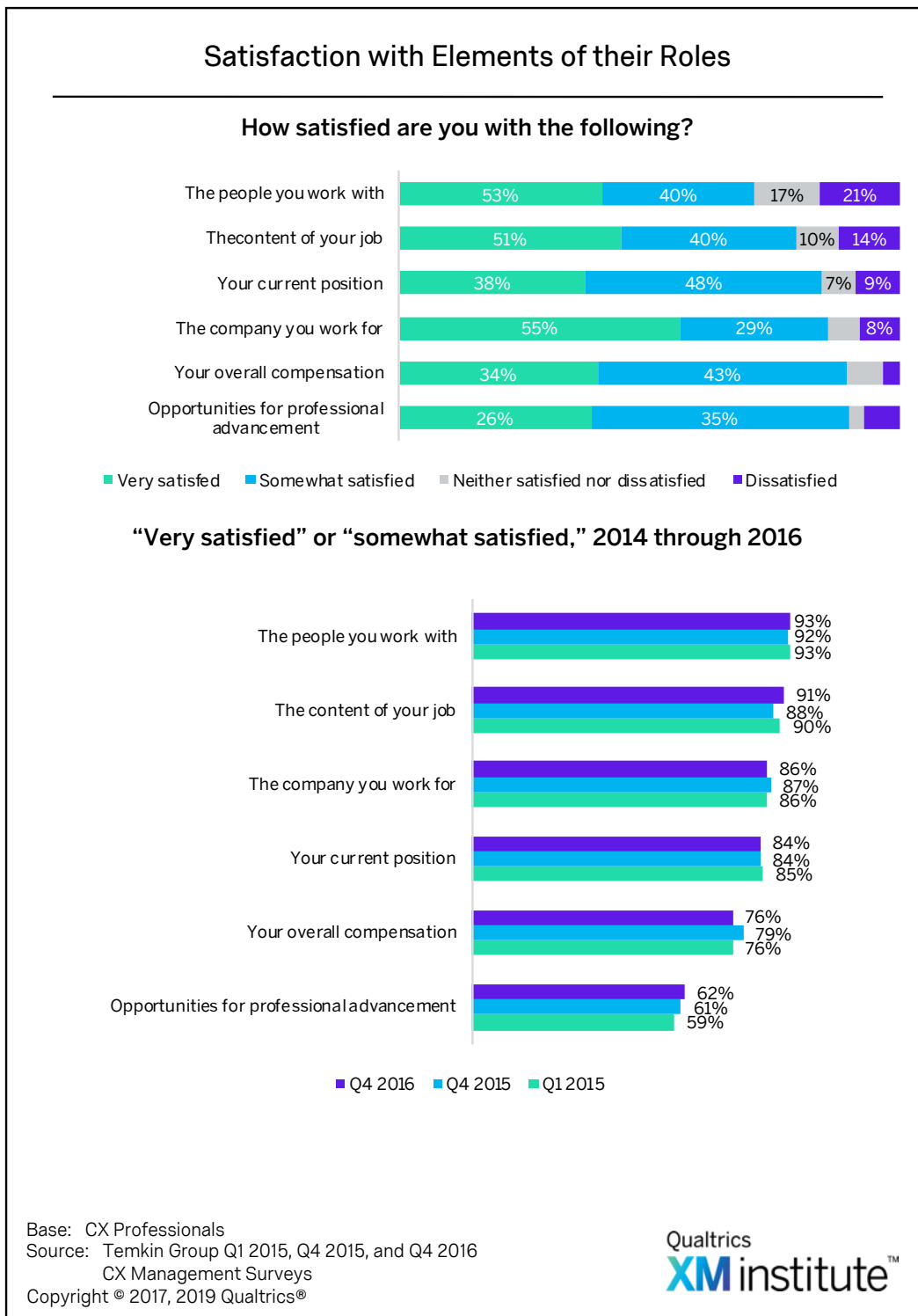


Figure 4



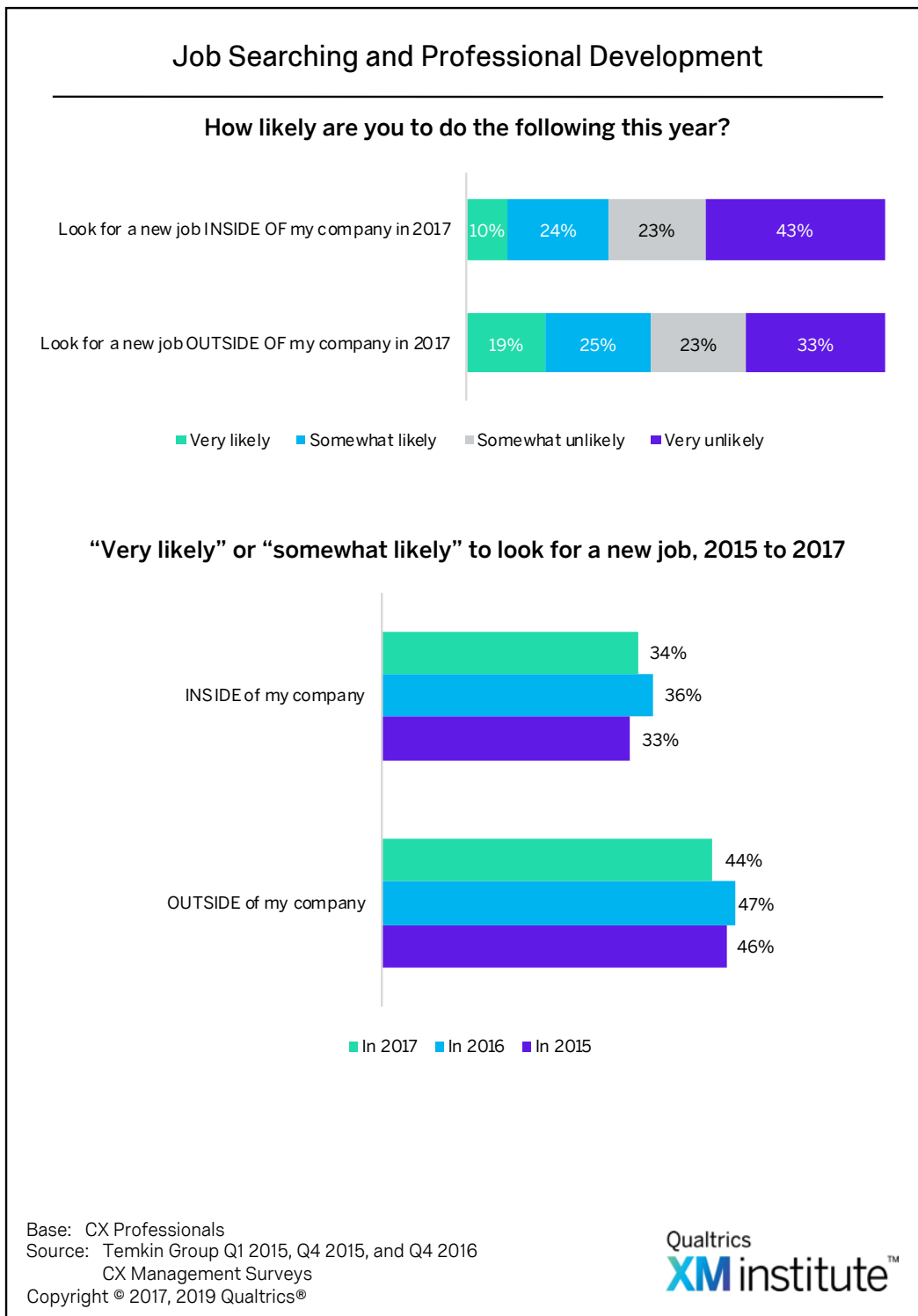


Figure 5

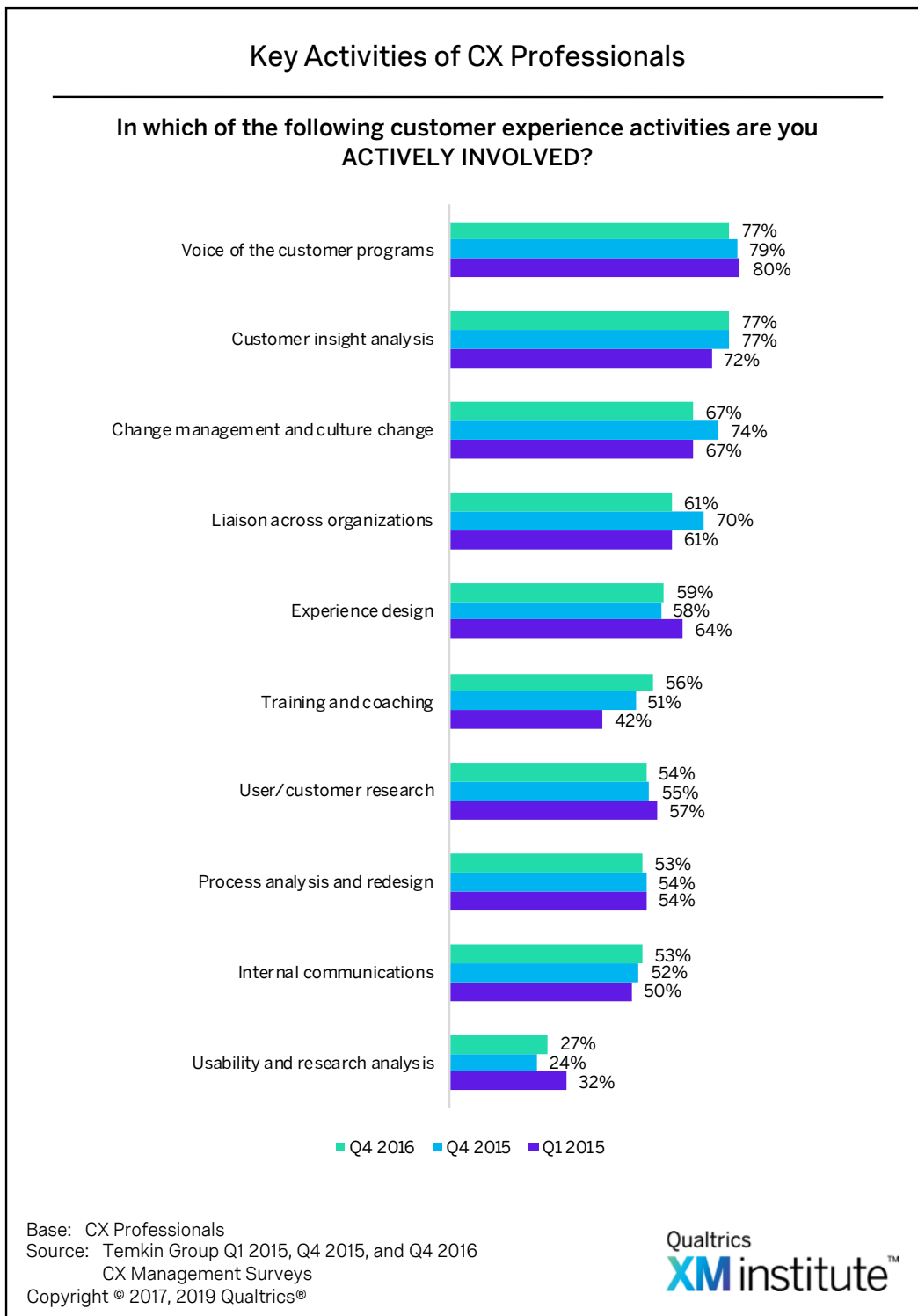


Figure 6

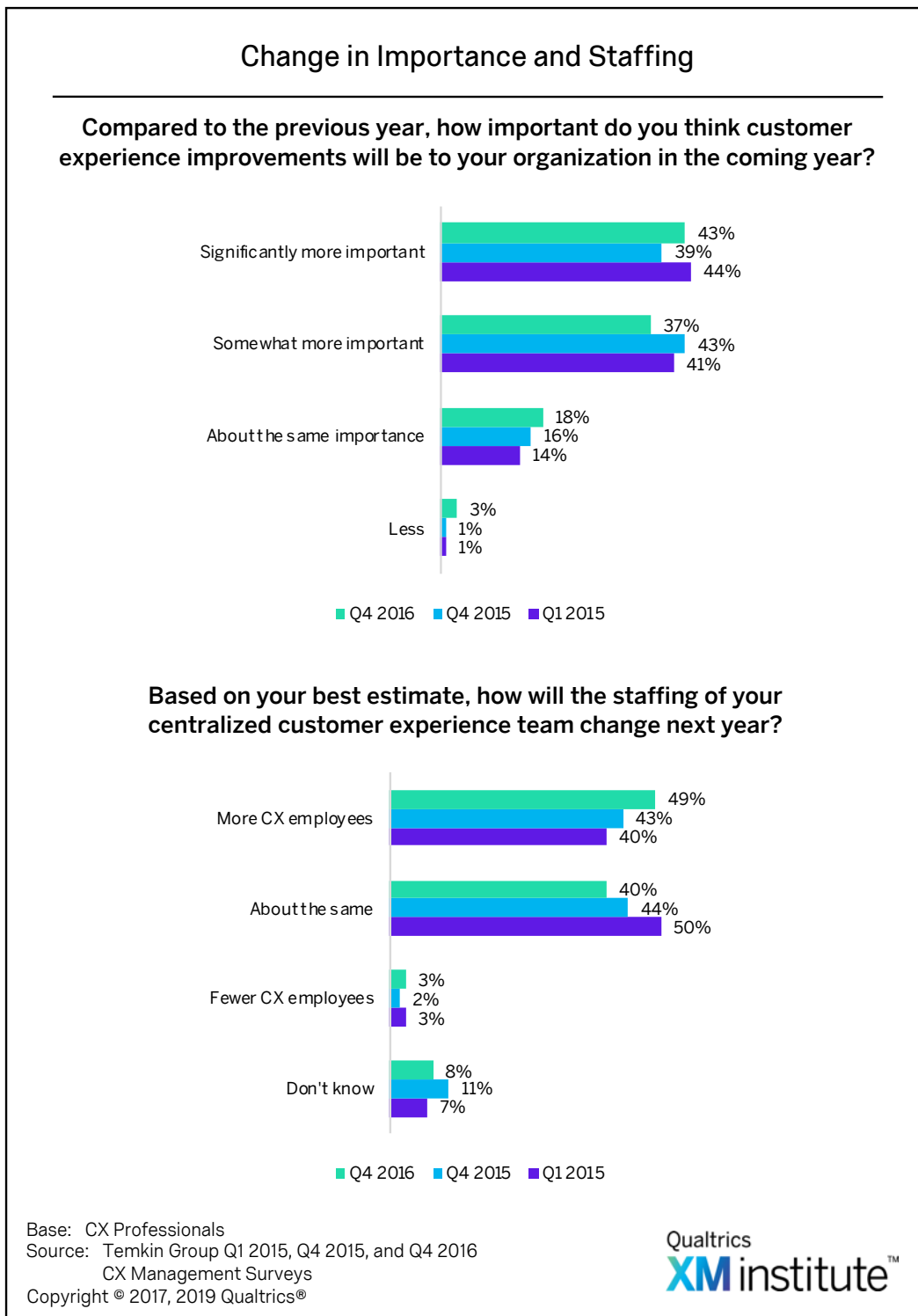


Figure 7

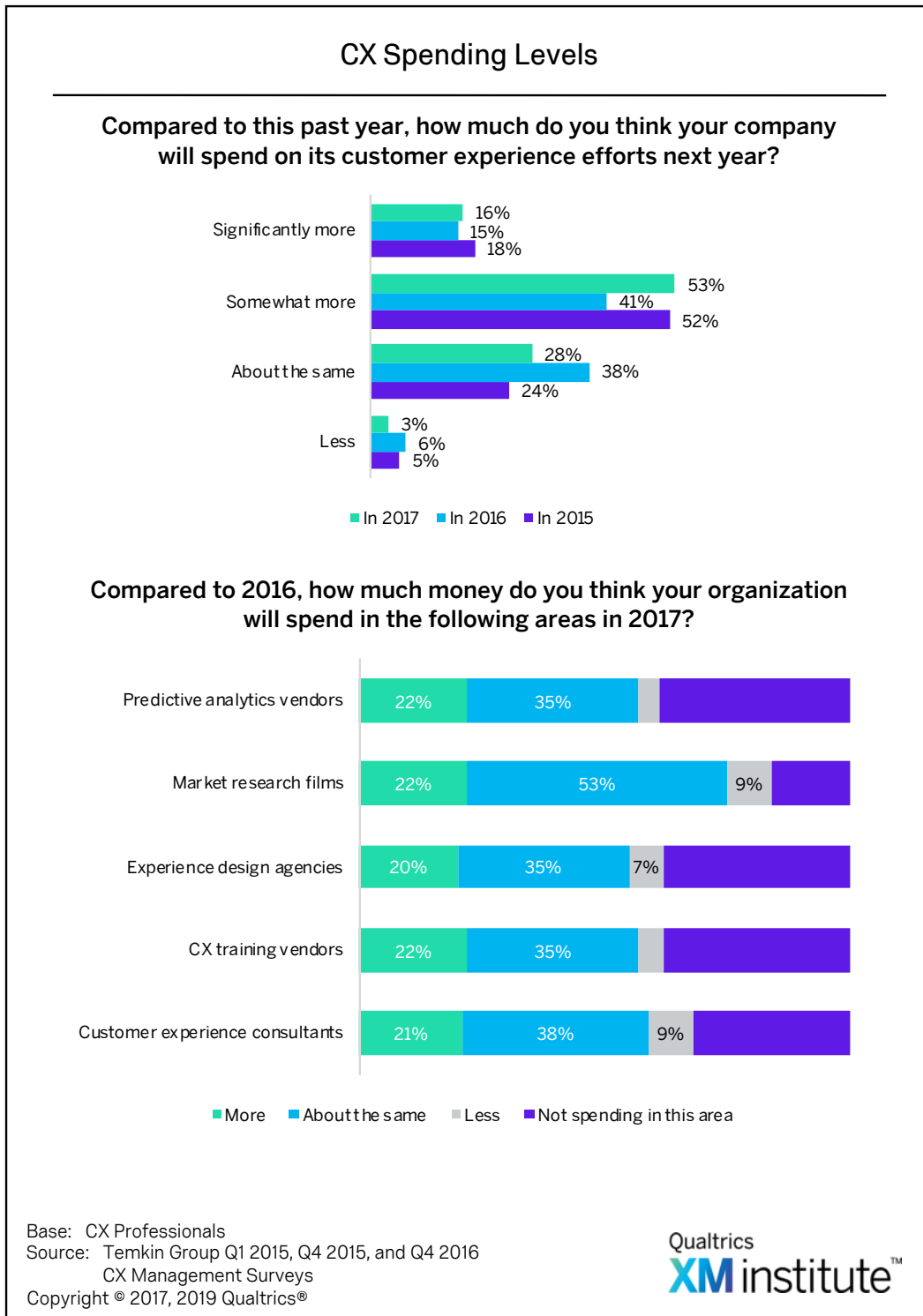


Figure 8

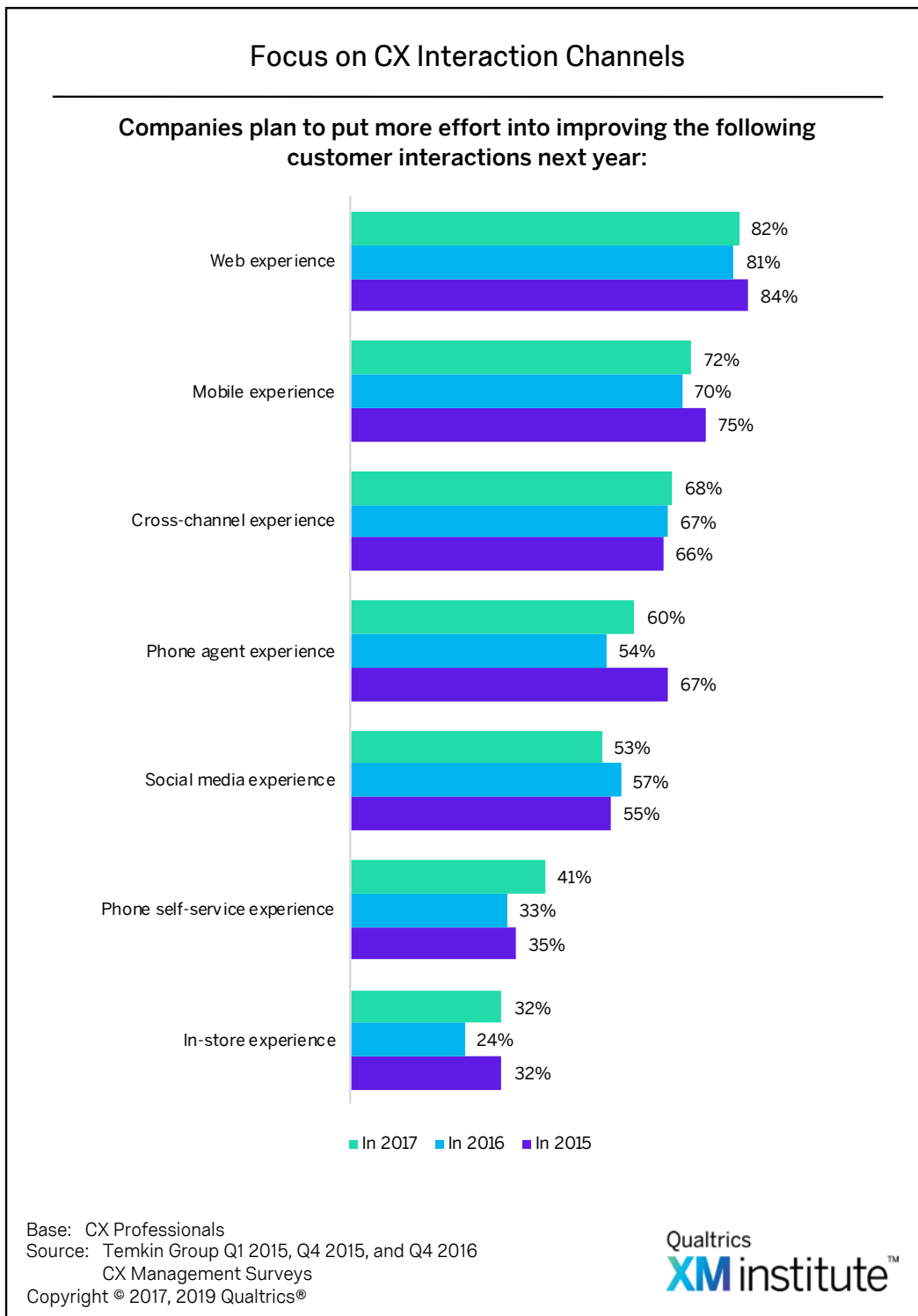


Figure 9

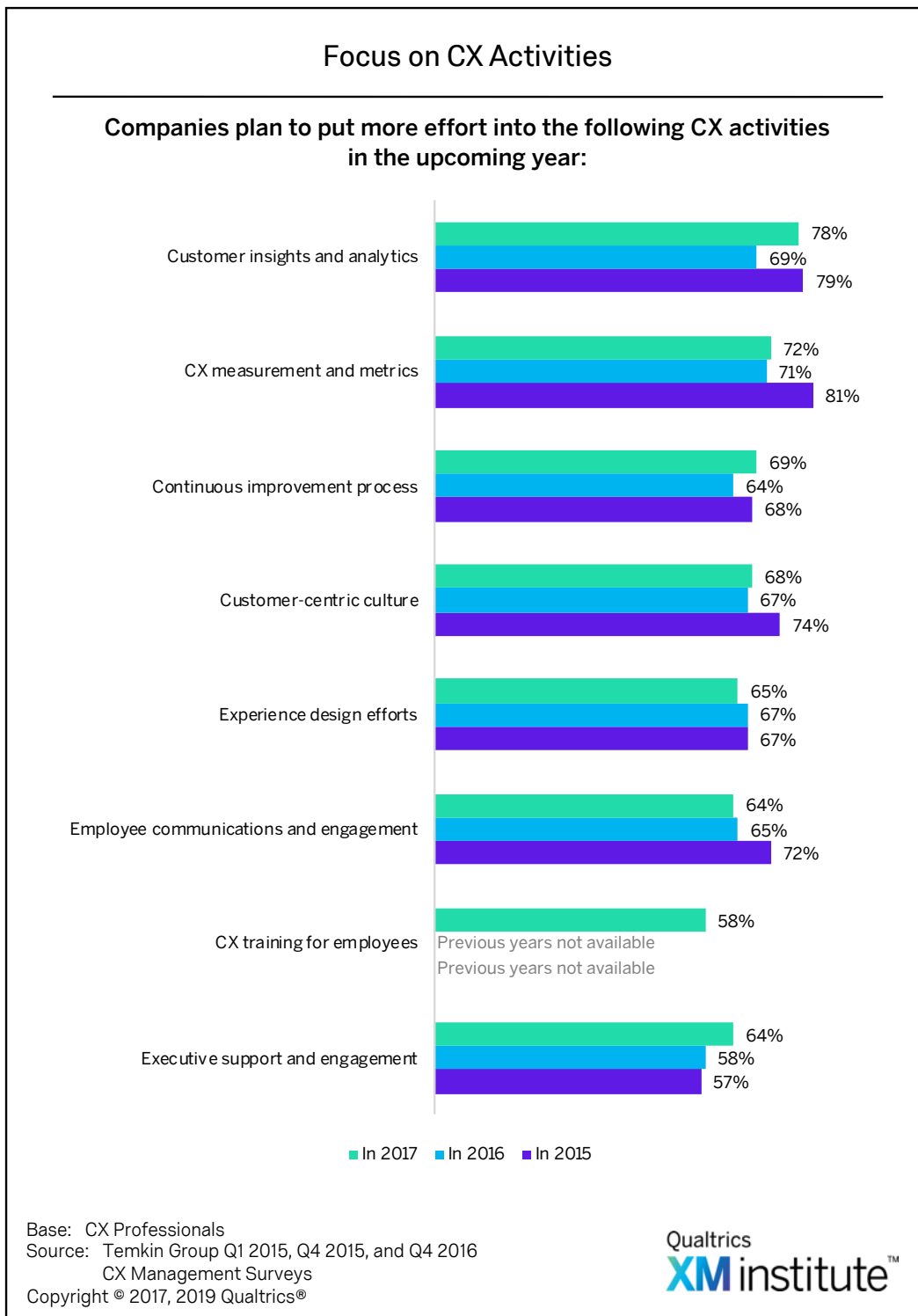


Figure 10

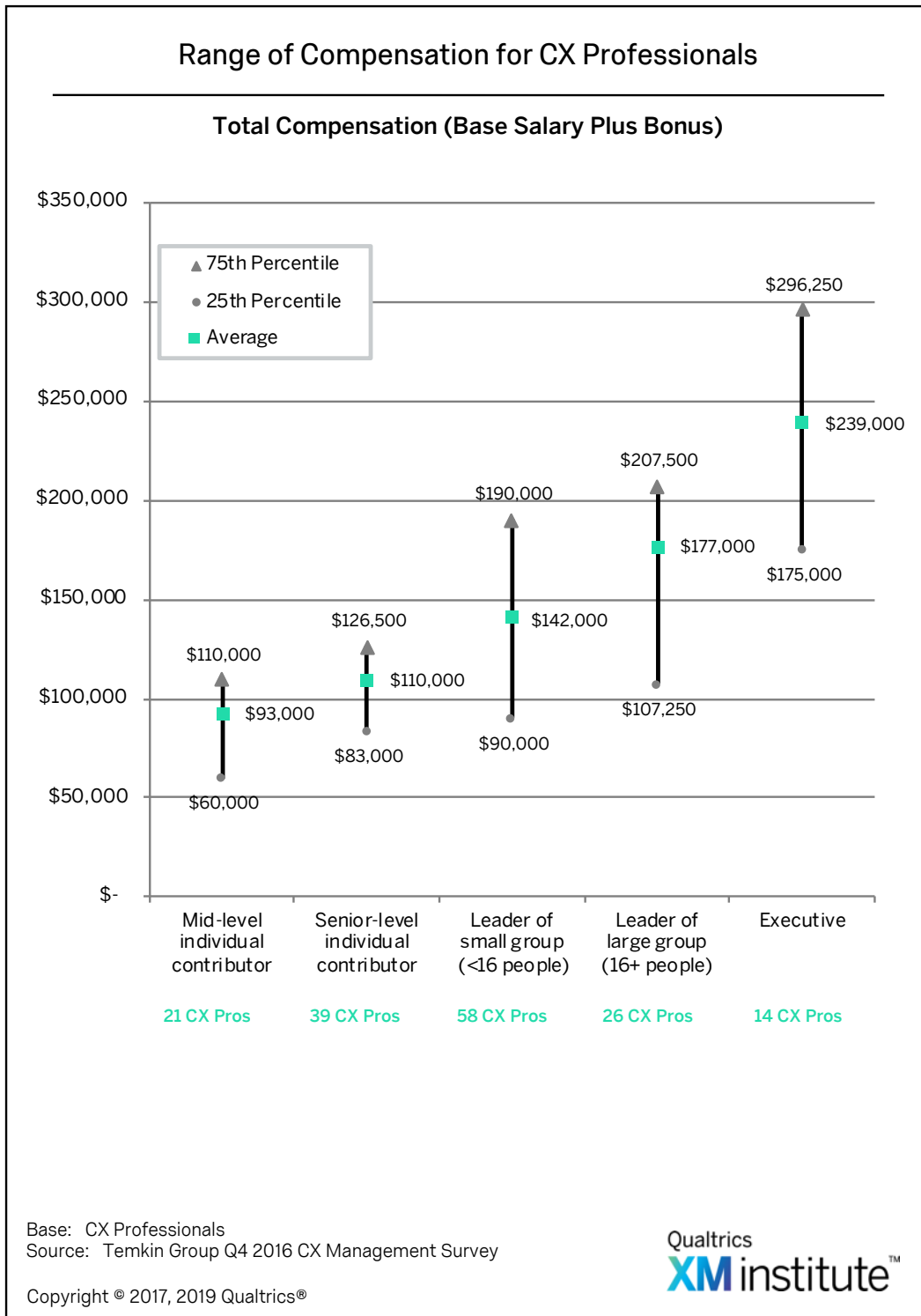


Figure 11

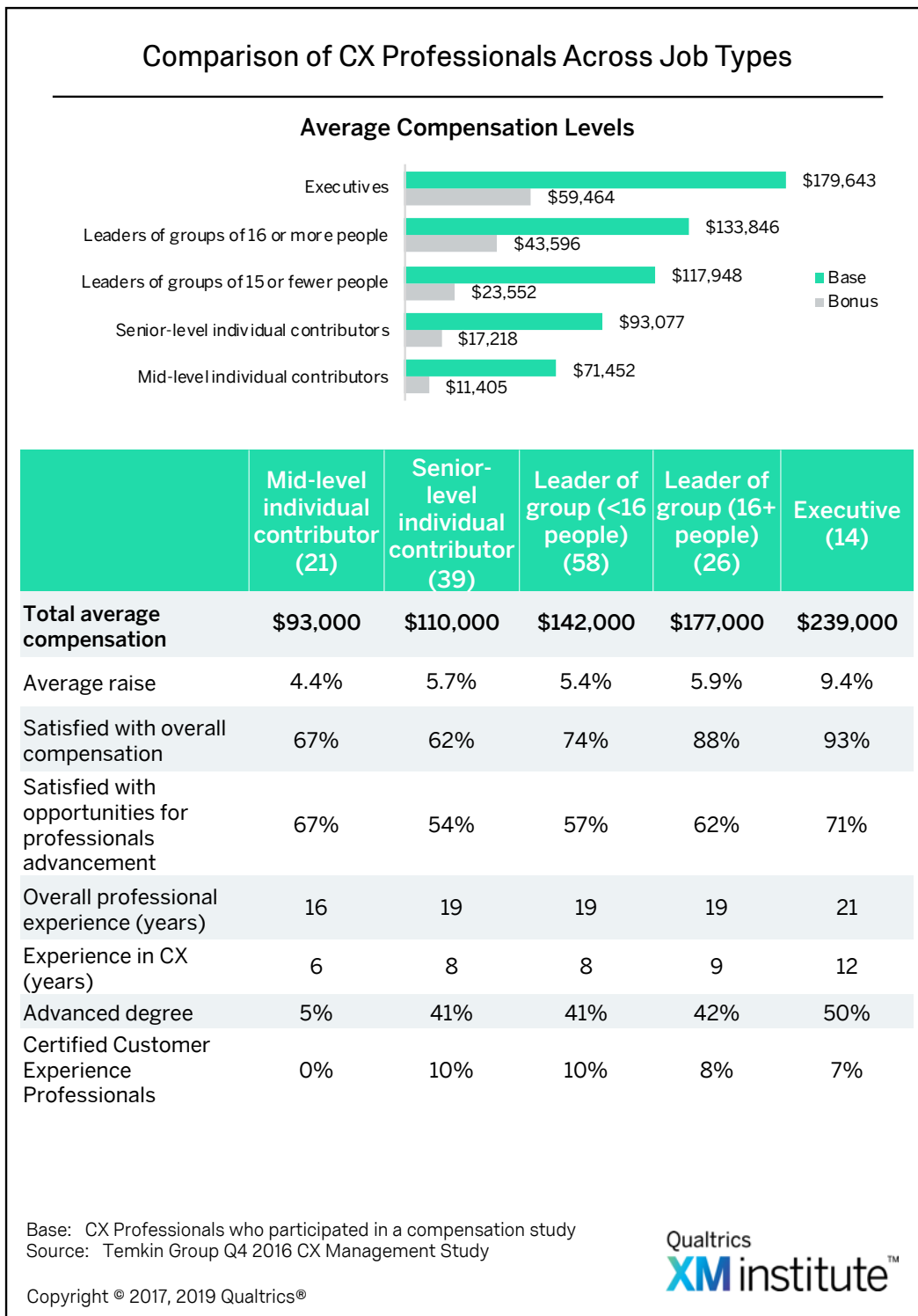


Figure 12