

Information Technology: Does the board understand the importance of IT yet?

A survey to investigate the changing role of the IT manager in the UK, Germany and Benelux across the retail, banking, insurance and automotive market sectors.

By Synstar International, a leading pan-European provider of IT and Business Availability Services

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1.0 Overview of results

The majority of IT managers/directors have mainly operational roles (56%). However, over the last two years, 60% claim to be moving towards a more strategic role. IT managers in Germany have shown the most progress in moving towards a strategic role, compared to just 51% in the UK.

In most companies (77%), the IT department is consulted on the IT implications of board level business decisions. Those with a more strategic role are more likely to be consulted (87%).

The majority (96%) of IT managers enjoy their jobs either most or all of the time.

62% disagreed with the statement “the board frequently makes decisions about the business without consideration of the IT implications”. Benelux and Germany were most likely to disagree with the statement (72% and 62% respectively).

The IT literacy of board directors is perceived as average by the majority (40%) of respondents. In Germany more than a quarter (28%) rated board IT literacy as poor or very poor, compared to 18% in Benelux and 19% in the UK.

In most organisations (64%), the IT department is not represented on the board. Almost half don't ever see themselves progressing to board level. Only in Benelux do the majority of companies have an IT manager/director on the board. Only 12% of IT managers/directors in Germany sit on the board.

The reasons why IT managers/directors are rarely on the board are as follows: “IT is not valued or understood” (22%), “the department is viewed as peripheral to the business” (22%), “IT managers lack the education, background and interpersonal skills to progress to board level” (18%).

The most widely known European directives are the e-commerce directive (62%) and the working time directive (50%). Germany has the highest awareness of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive (58%) compared to the other countries (24% in the UK and 28% in Benelux). Although there was a high awareness of some of the directives, half (49%) of respondents were not involved in policy and/or system creation of such directives.

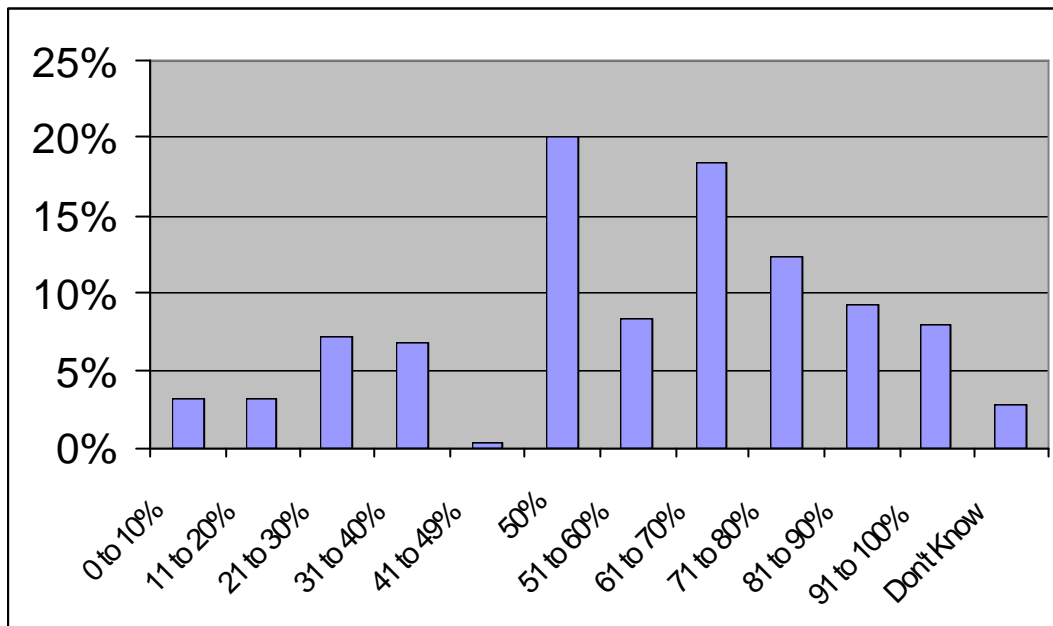
Nearly all of the respondents feel happy in their job (97% enjoy their job and 94% feel valued). 86% are either as stressed or more stressed than they were in the previous year.

54% do not expect to change their current position in the next two years.

2.0 Question 1a: What percentage of your role is operational?

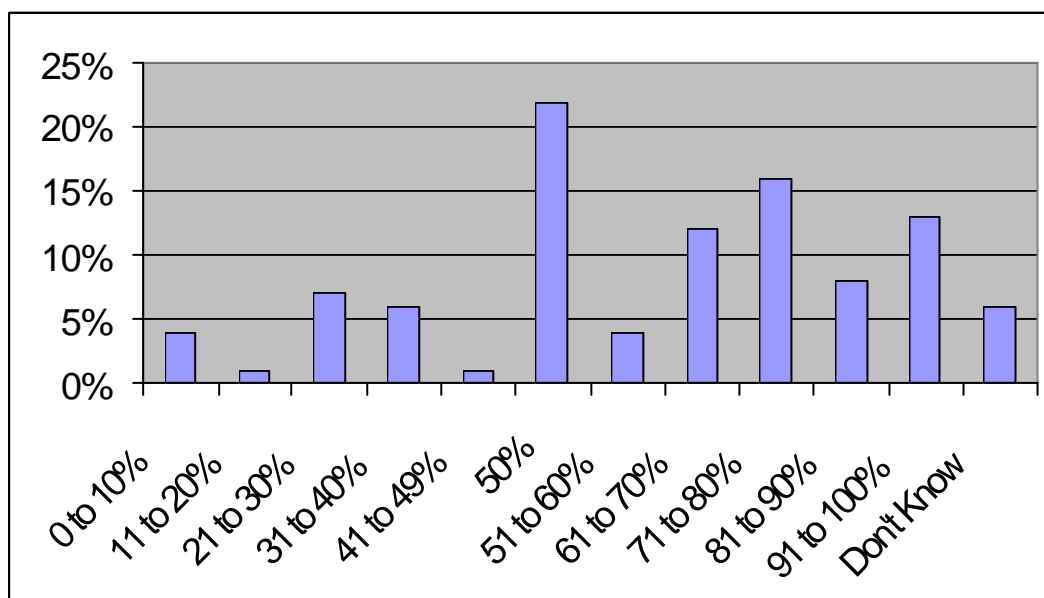
Overall, 56% of IT managers/directors questioned have mainly operational roles.

Base: All

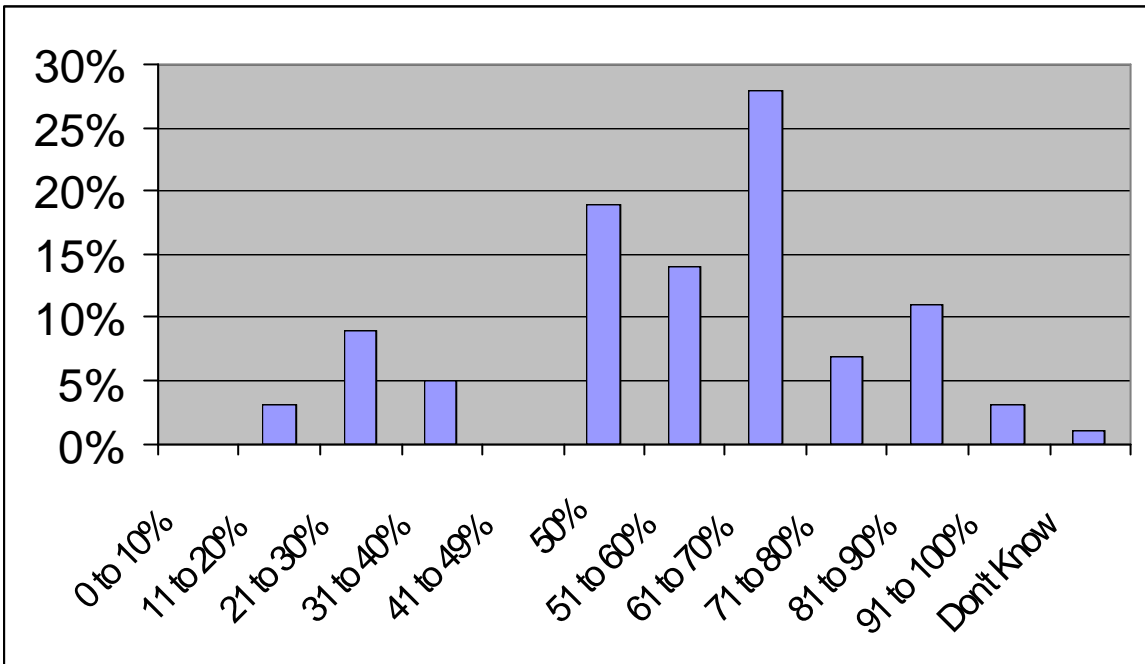


The UK has the least number of IT managers/directors in mainly operational roles (56%). Germany follows with 63% while Benelux lags behind in the pledge to become more strategic with almost three quarters (68%) of IT managers/directors still in predominantly operational roles.

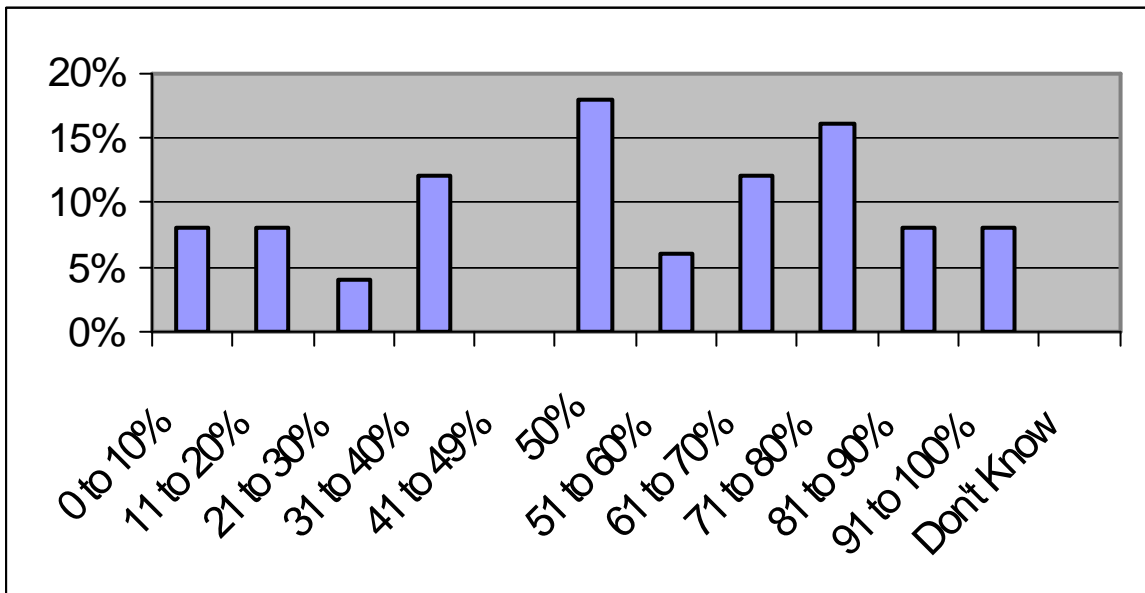
Base: UK



Base: Germany

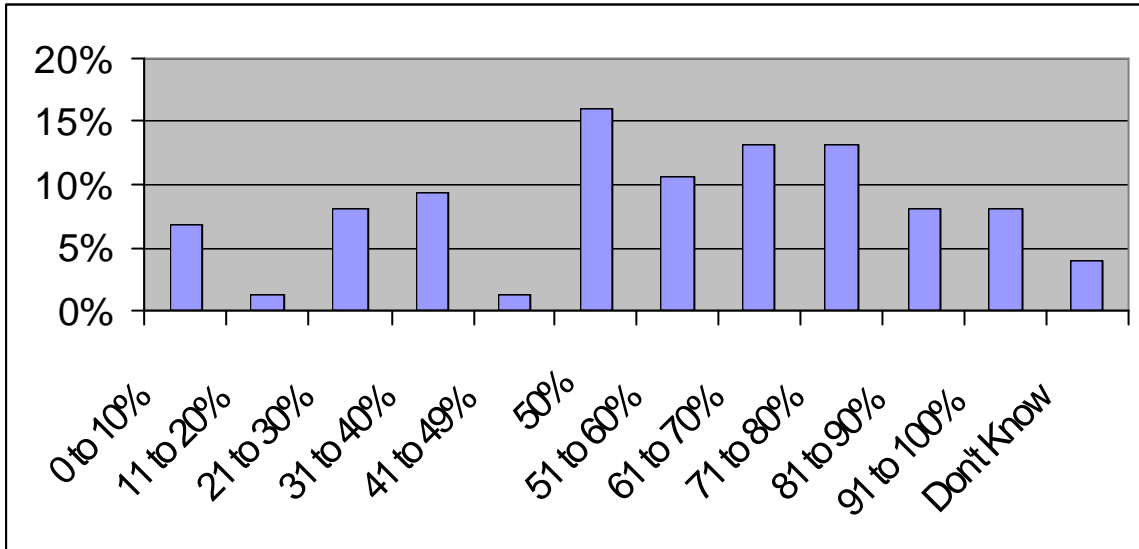


Base: Benelux

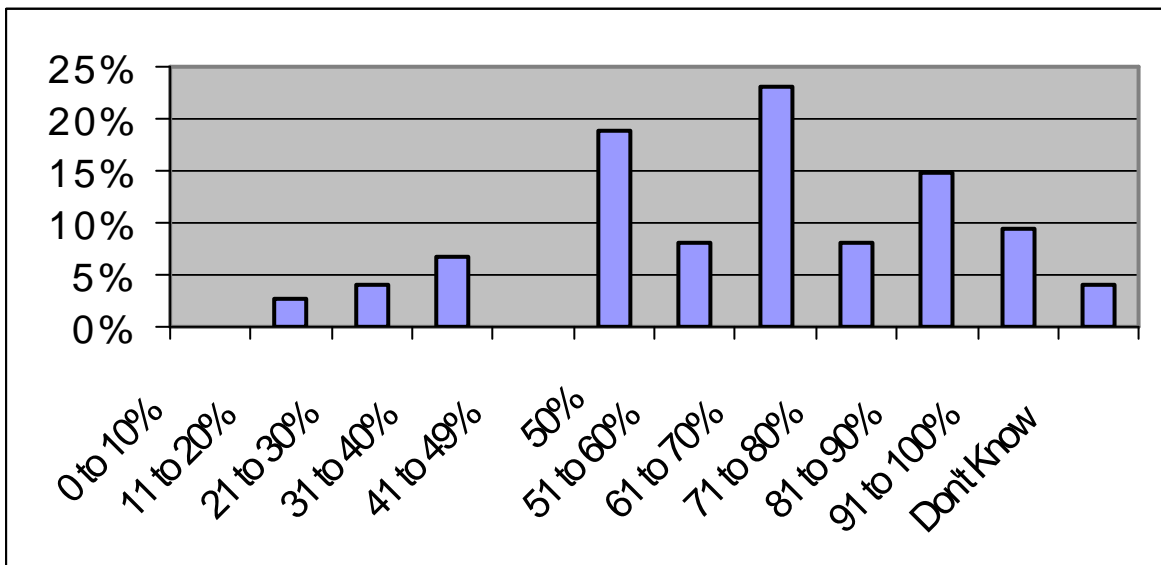


The retail industry has the most IT managers/directors in operational roles (69%). 55% and 51% of IT managers/directors in the insurance and automotive sectors, respectively have mainly operational roles. It is the banking industry that seems to lead the way with only 43% of those surveyed in mainly operational roles.

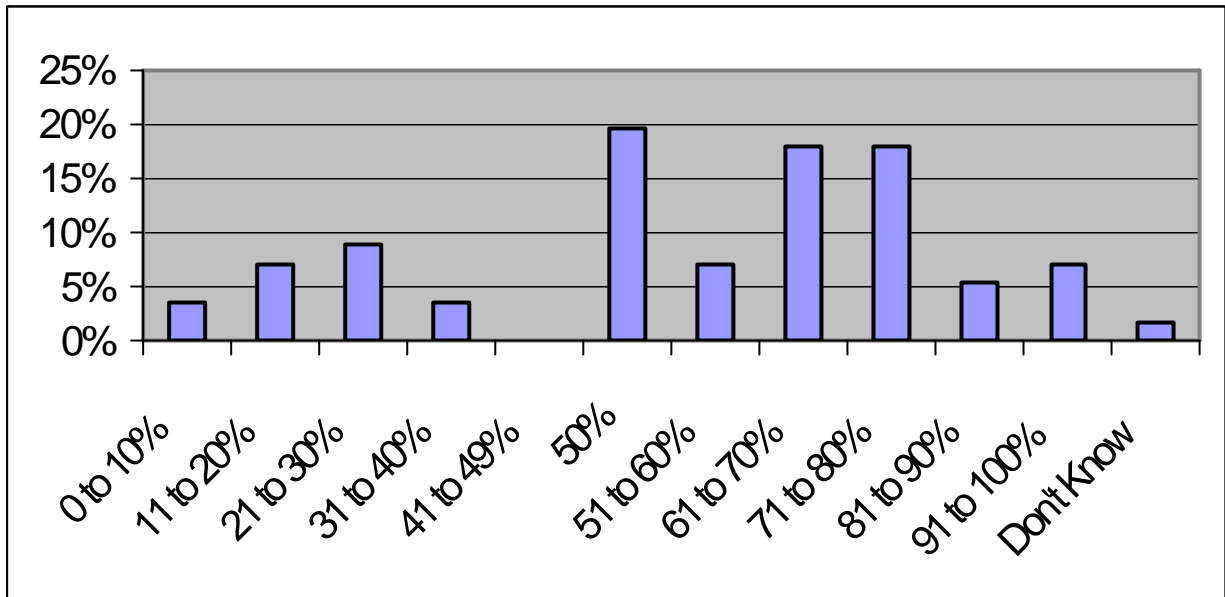
Base: Retail



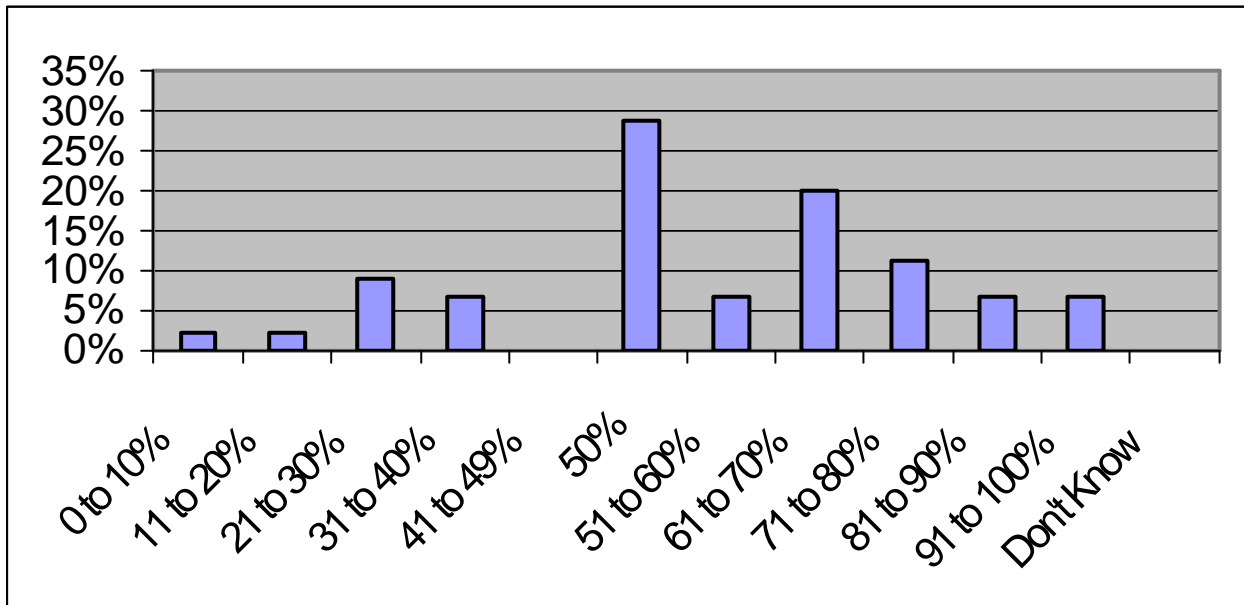
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



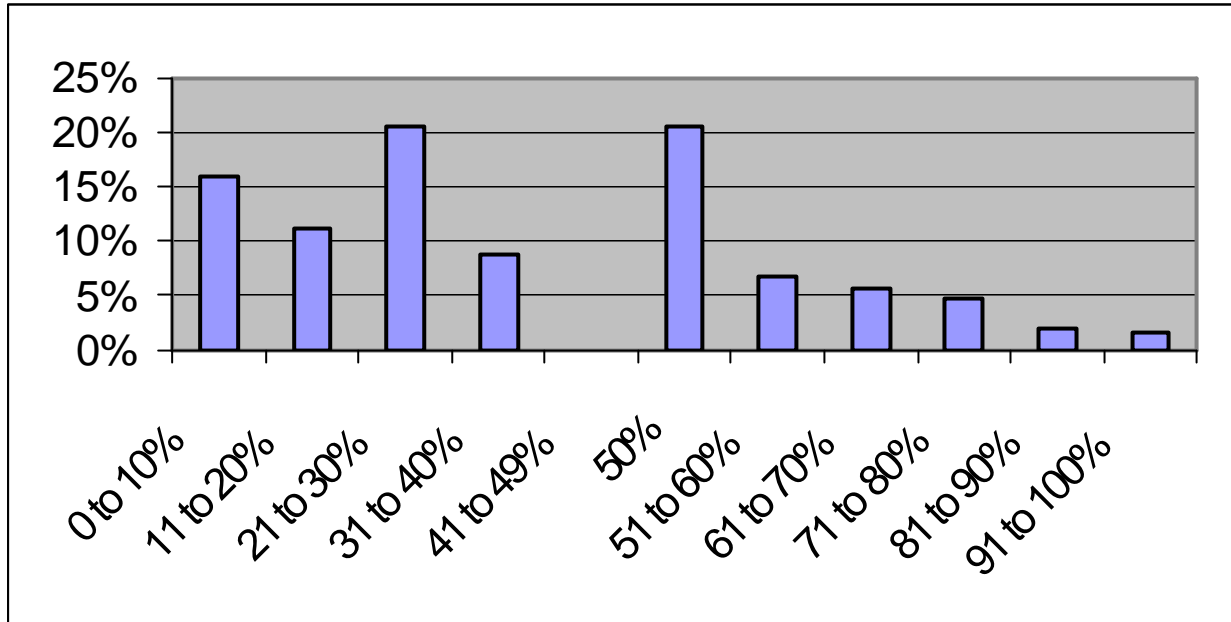
Base: Automotive



3.0 Question 1b: What percentage of your role is strategic?

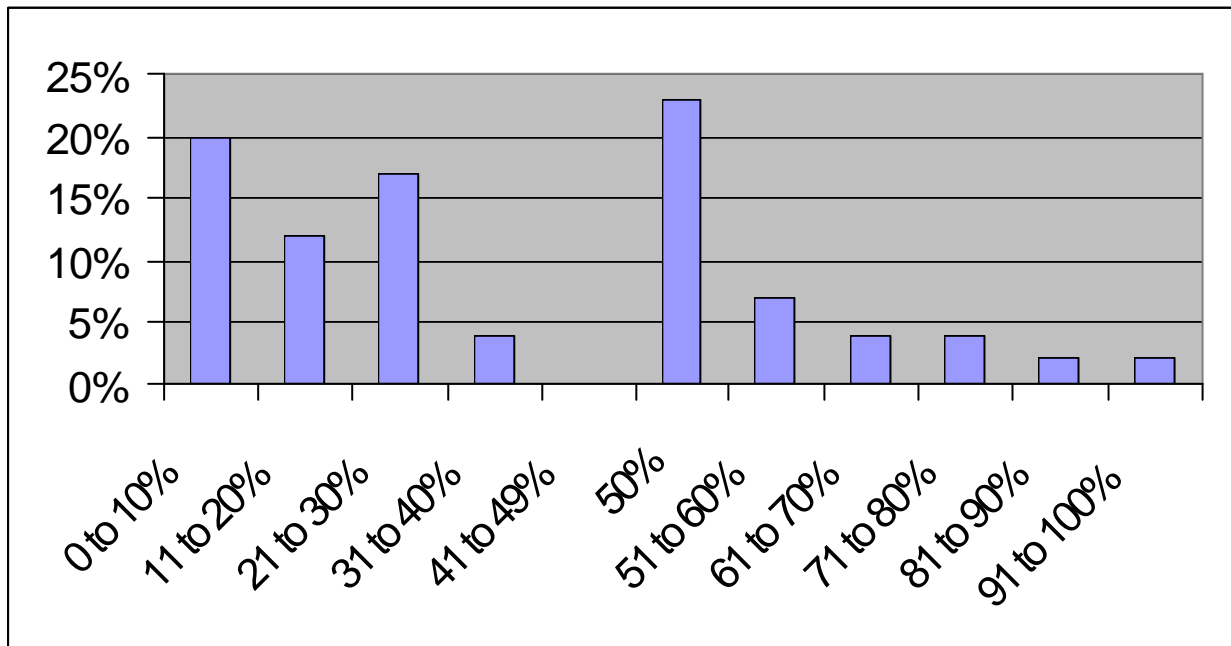
Overall, 41% of IT managers/directors have a mainly strategic role.

Base: All

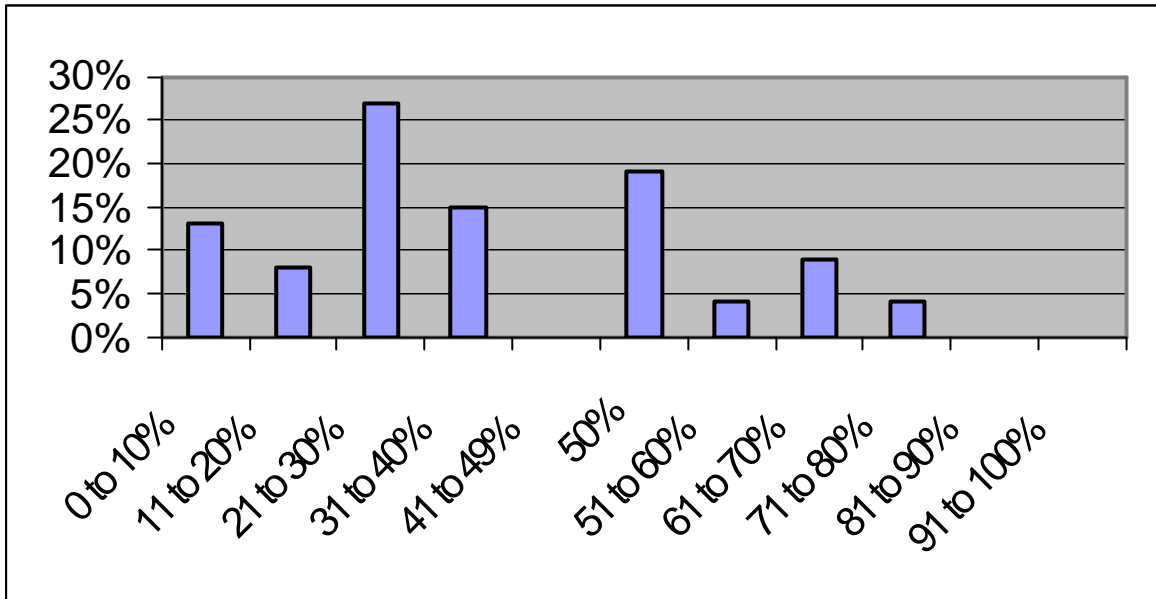


Reflecting the previous responses, 42% of IT managers/directors in the UK have predominantly strategic roles, followed by Germany (36%) and Benelux (32%).

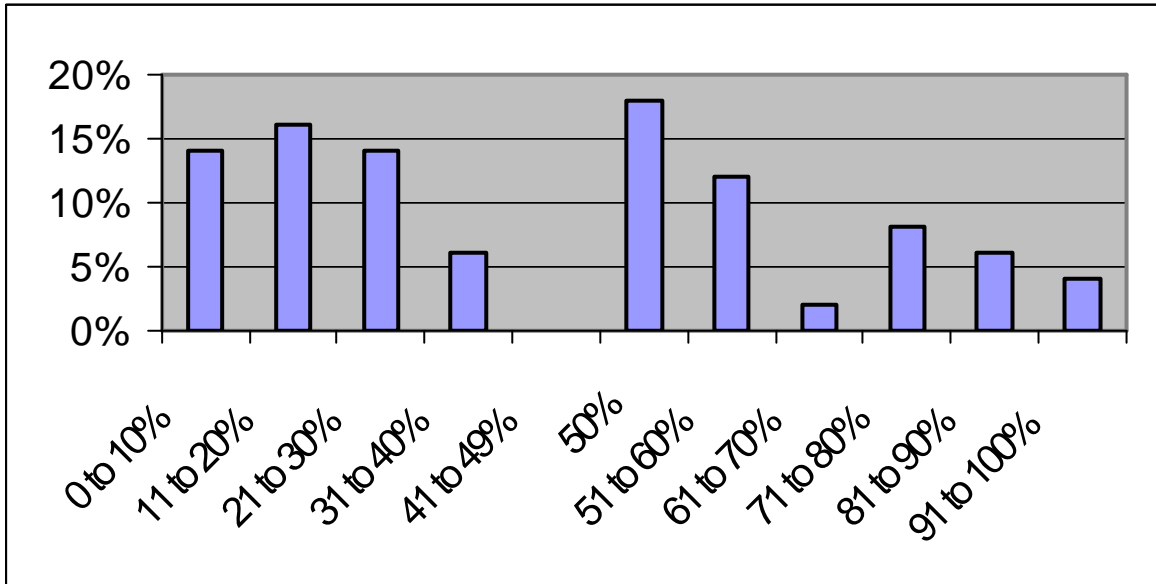
Base: UK



Base Germany

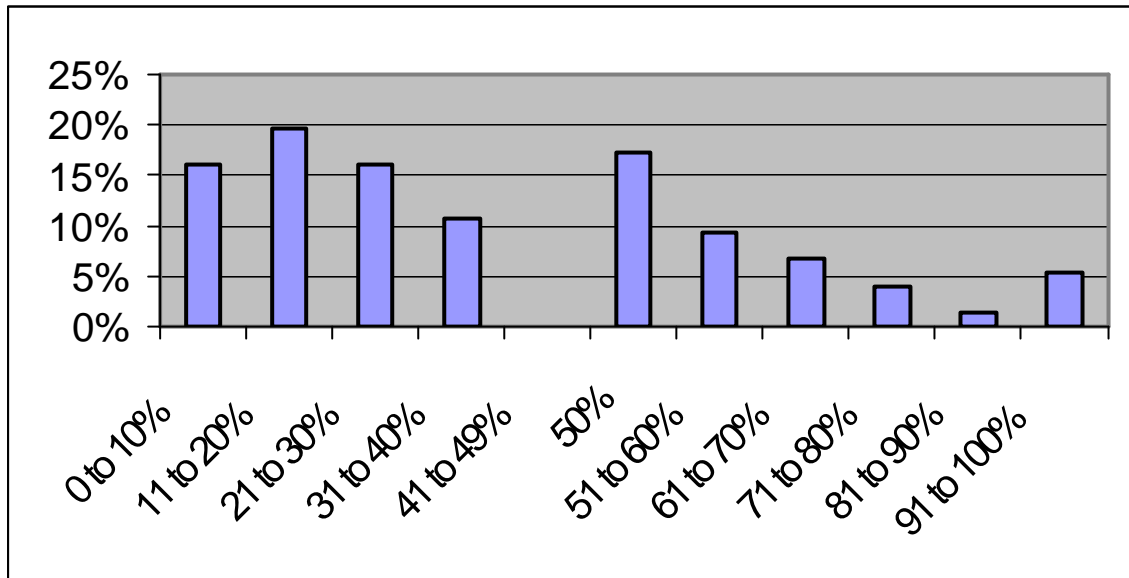


Base: Benelux

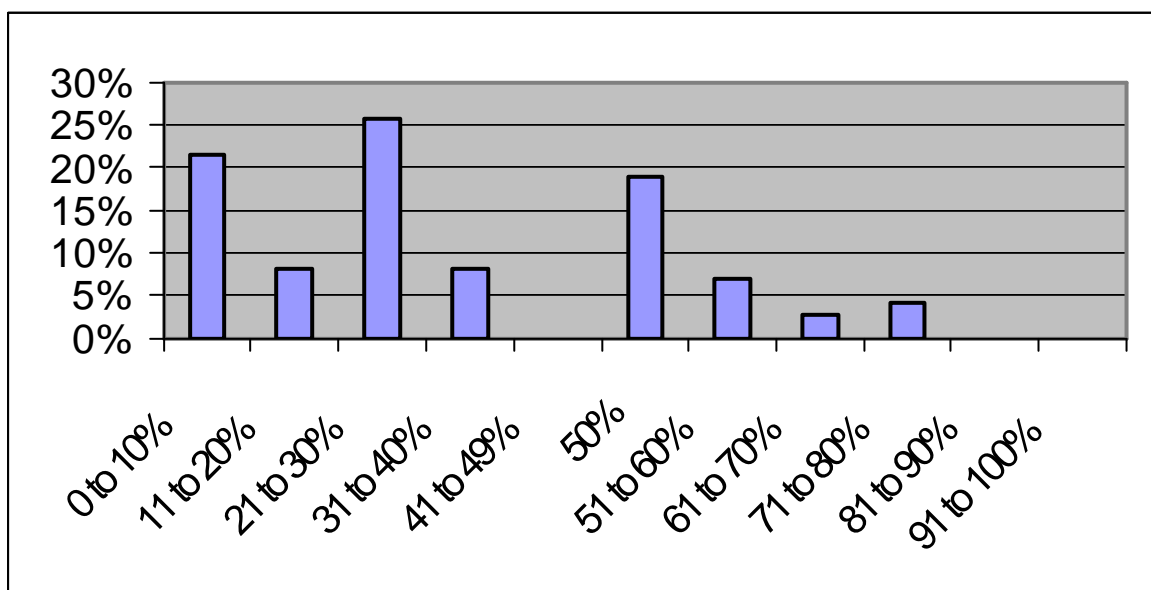


The retail sector appears to be lagging behind with only 26% of IT managers/directors having a mainly strategic role. The automotive industry leads the way with almost half (49%) of respondents playing predominantly strategic roles. 33% of IT managers/directors in the banking industry have mainly strategic roles and 43% in the insurance sector.

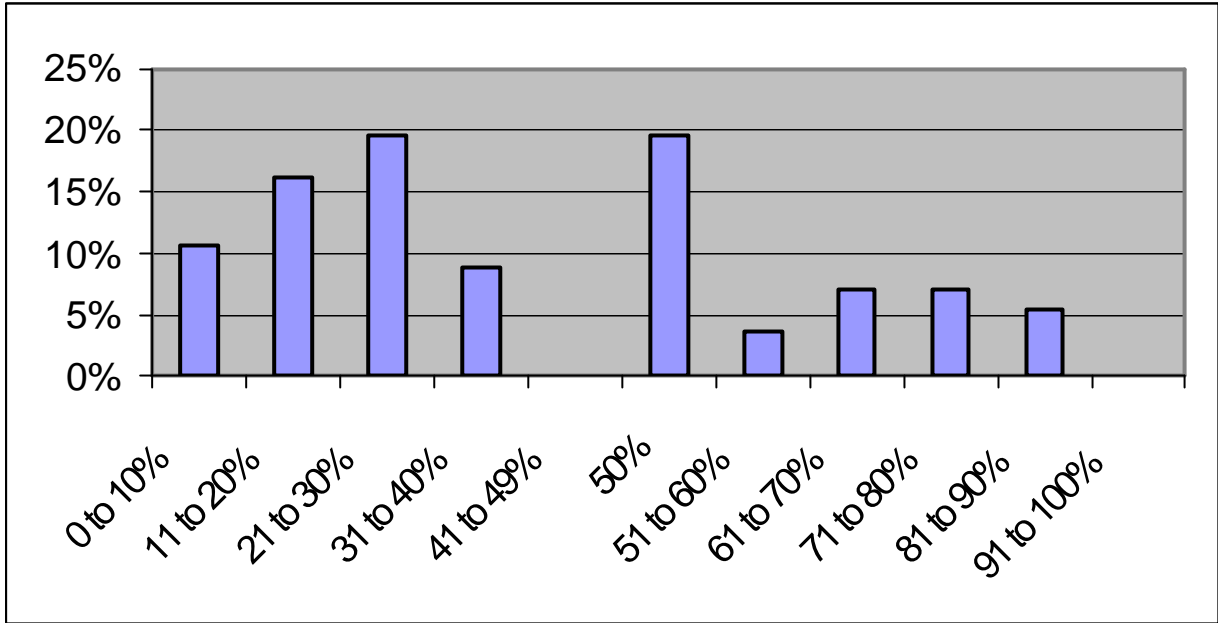
Base: Retail



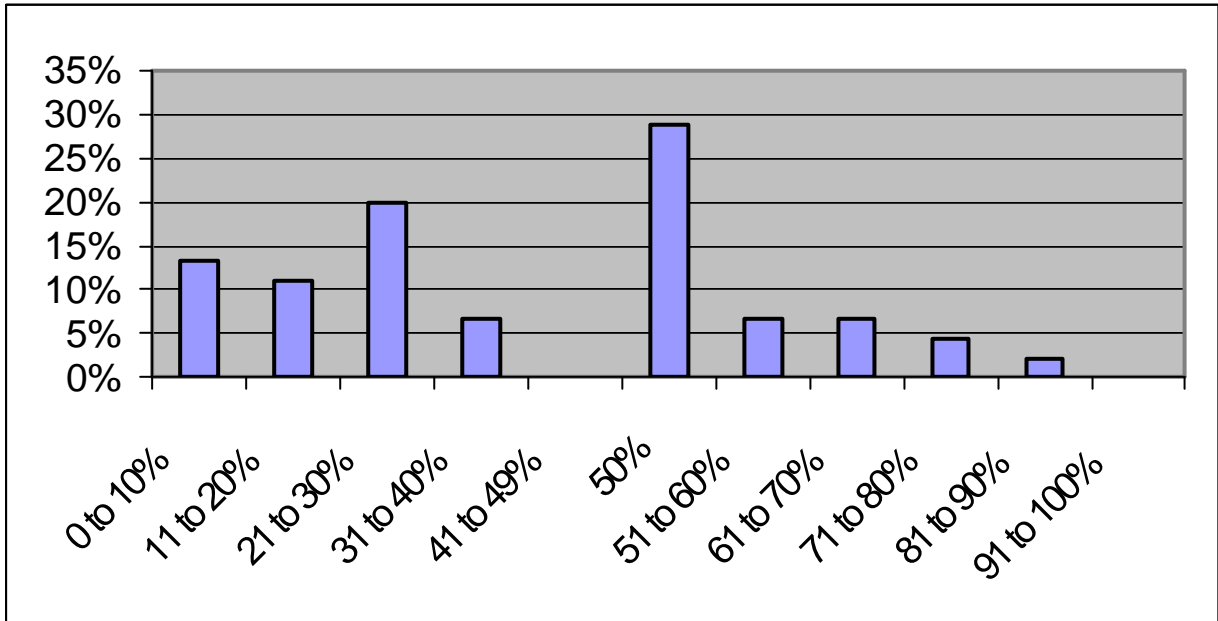
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



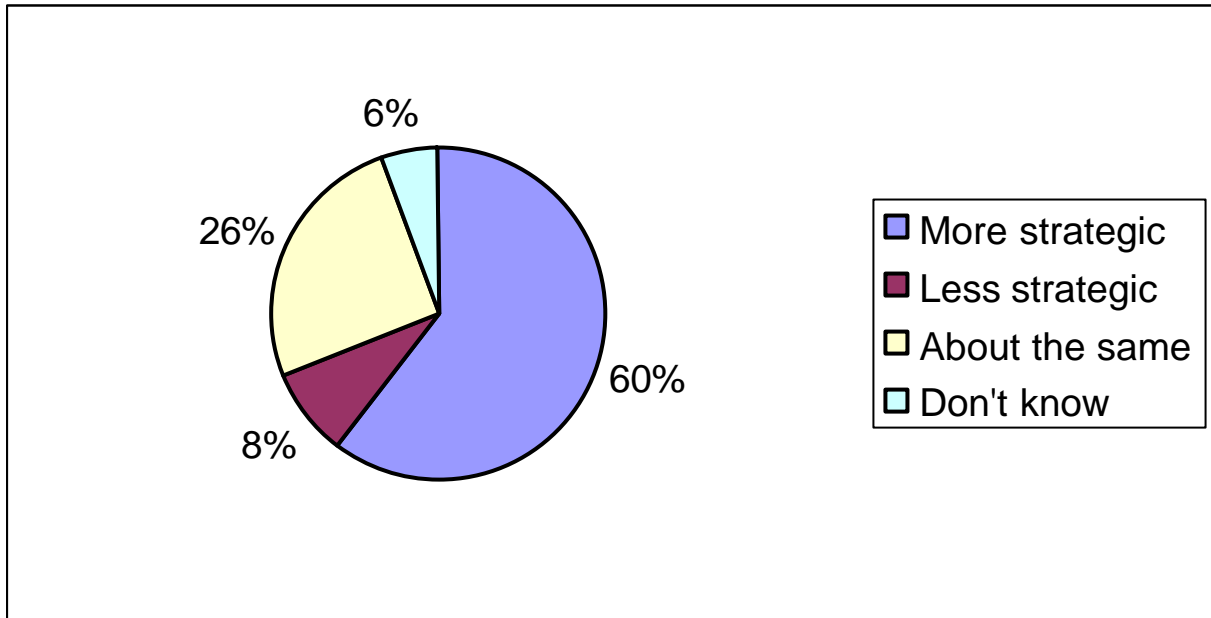
Base: Automotive



4.0 Has your role become more or less strategic over the last two years?

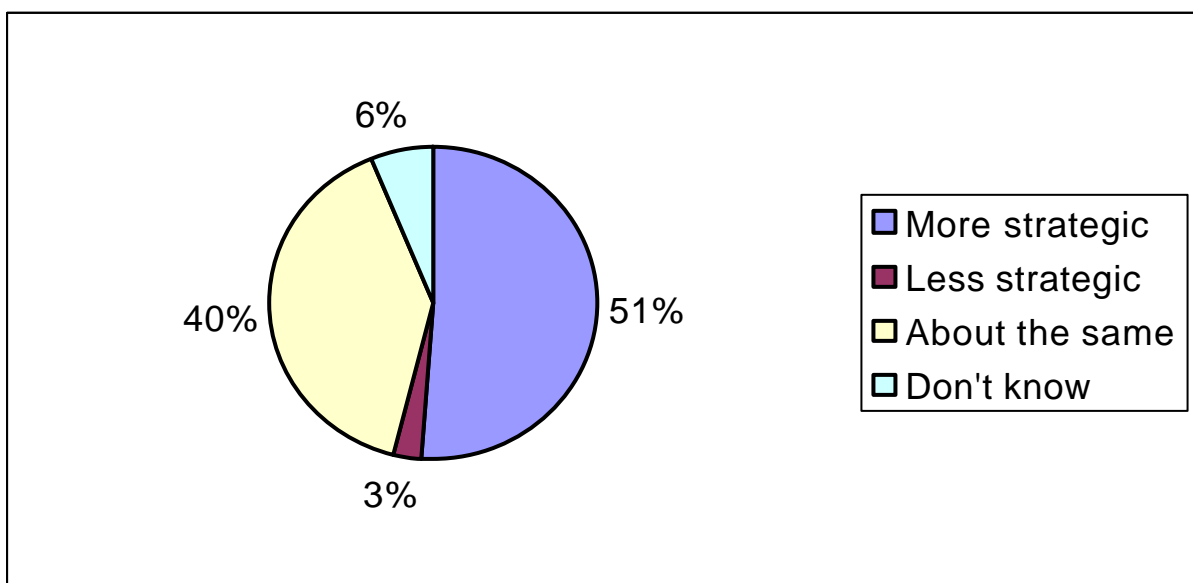
Overall, the majority (60%) of IT managers/directors say that their role has become more strategic over the last 2 years.

Base: All

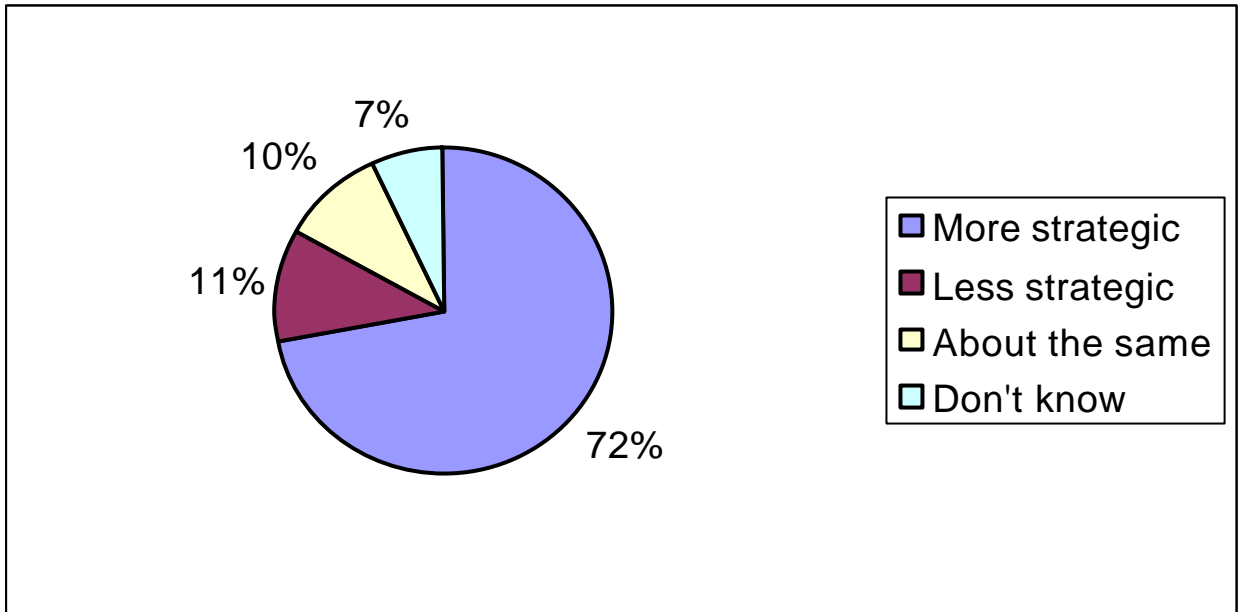


Although these findings are encouraging, Germany has made the most significant progress – 72% of IT managers/directors have become more strategic over the last two years, followed by 56% in Benelux. IT managers/directors in the UK are the slowest to move towards a more strategic role (51%).

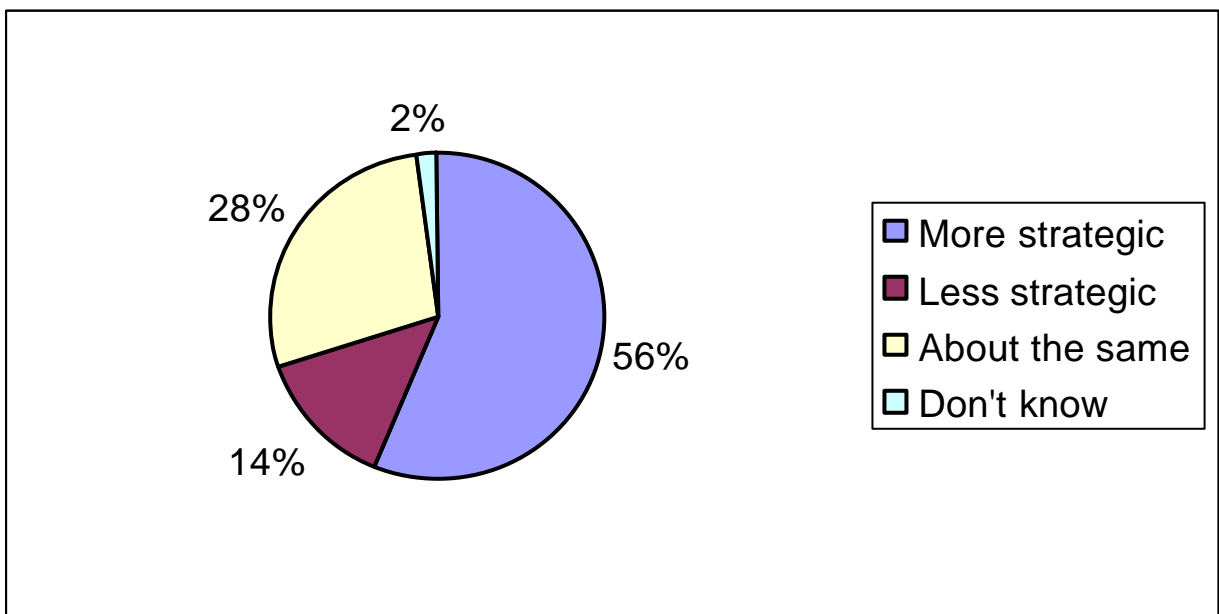
Base: UK



Base: Germany

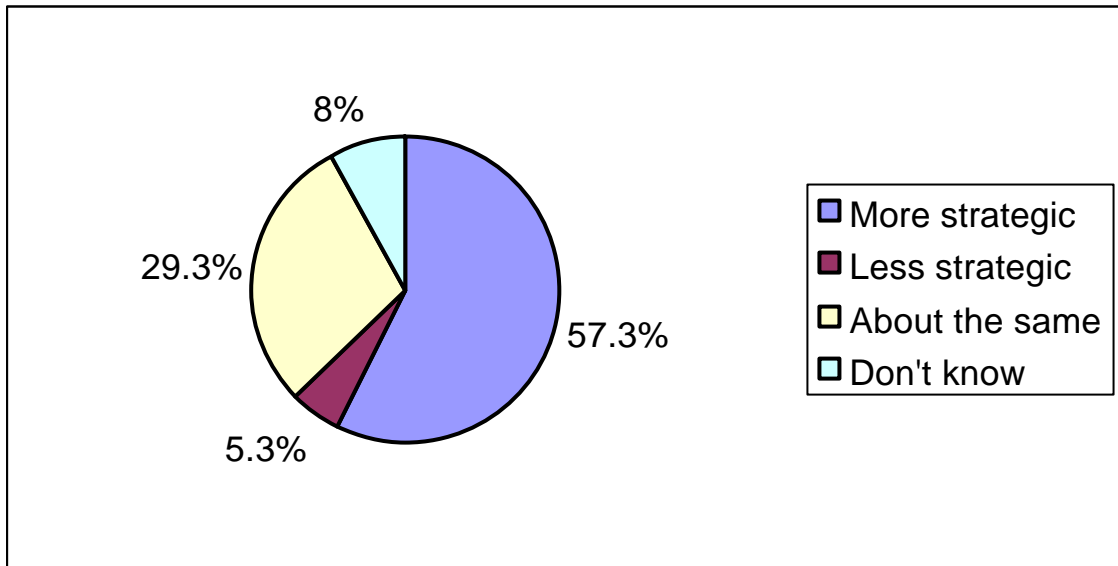


Base: Benelux

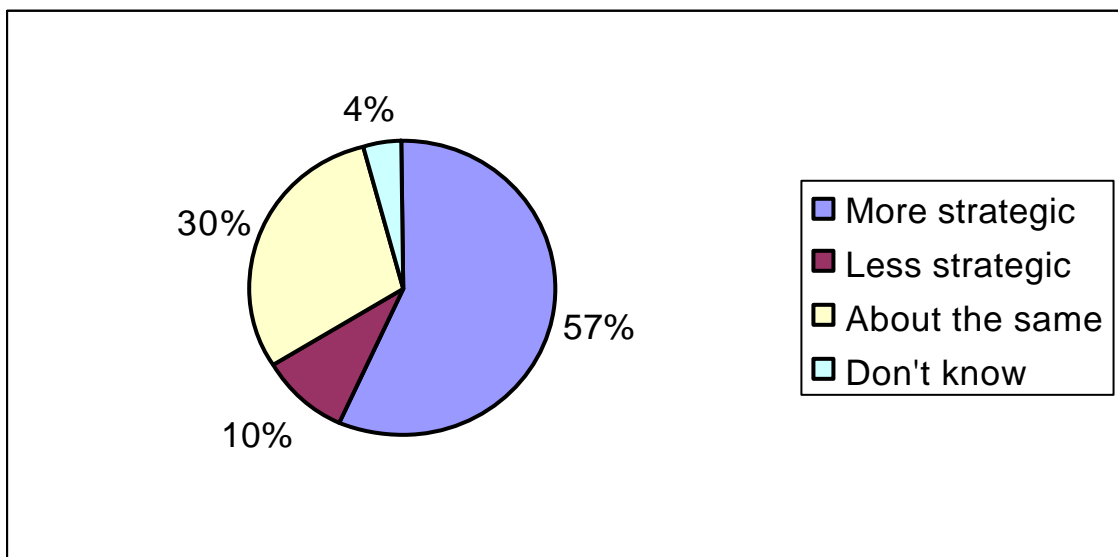


The retail sector is lagging behind once again – along with banking. 57% of IT managers/directors in both sectors say that their role has become more strategic over the last two years. The insurance industry has made the most progress (68%) followed by the automotive sector (62%).

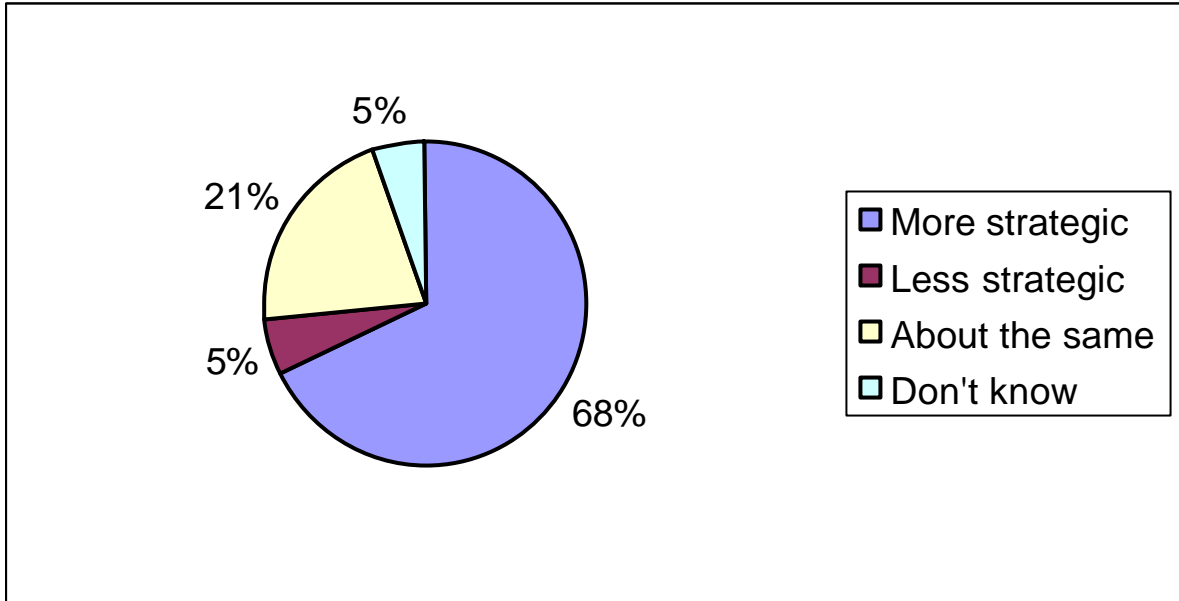
Base: Retail



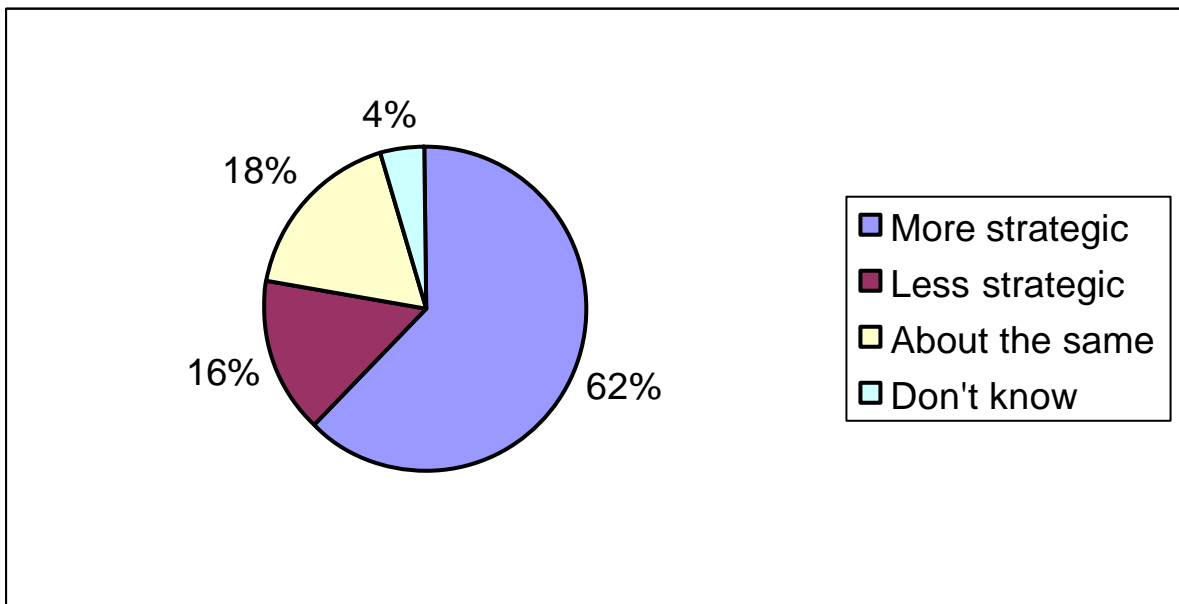
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



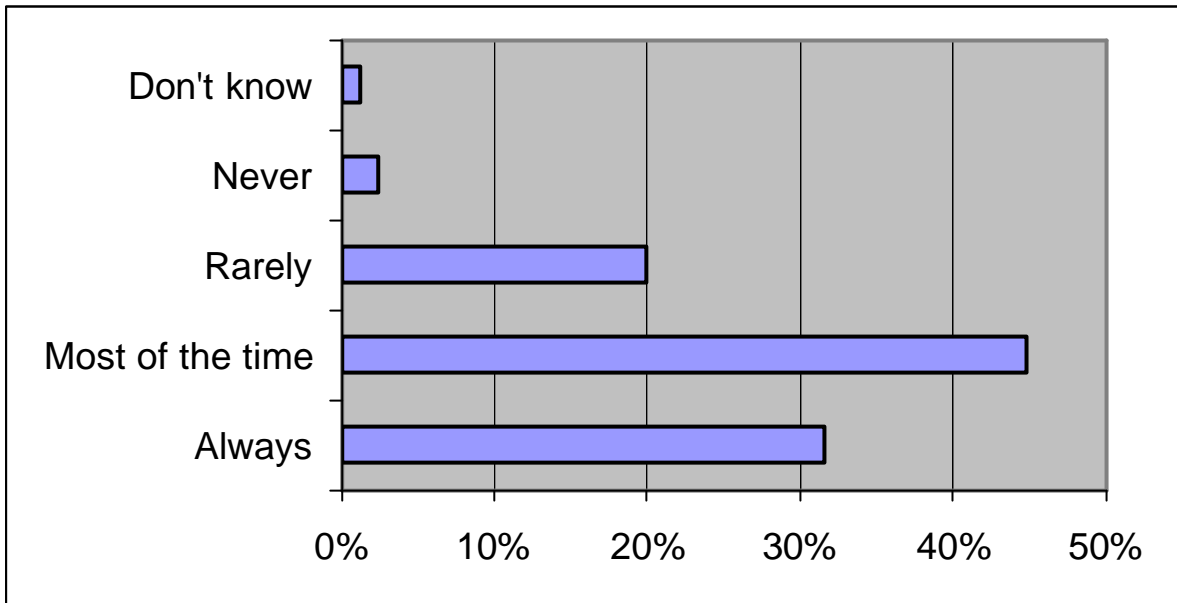
Base: Automotive



5.0 How often are you consulted on the IT implications of board level business decisions?

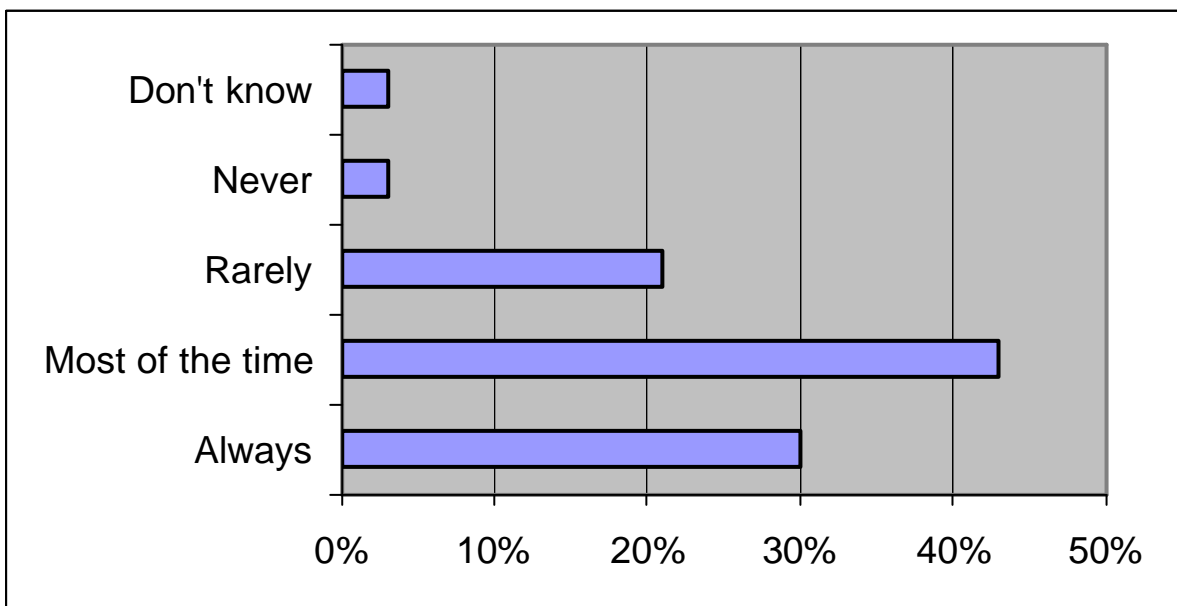
Overall, 76% of IT managers/directors are consulted on the IT implications of board level business decisions, leaving 22% who are rarely or never consulted.

Base: All

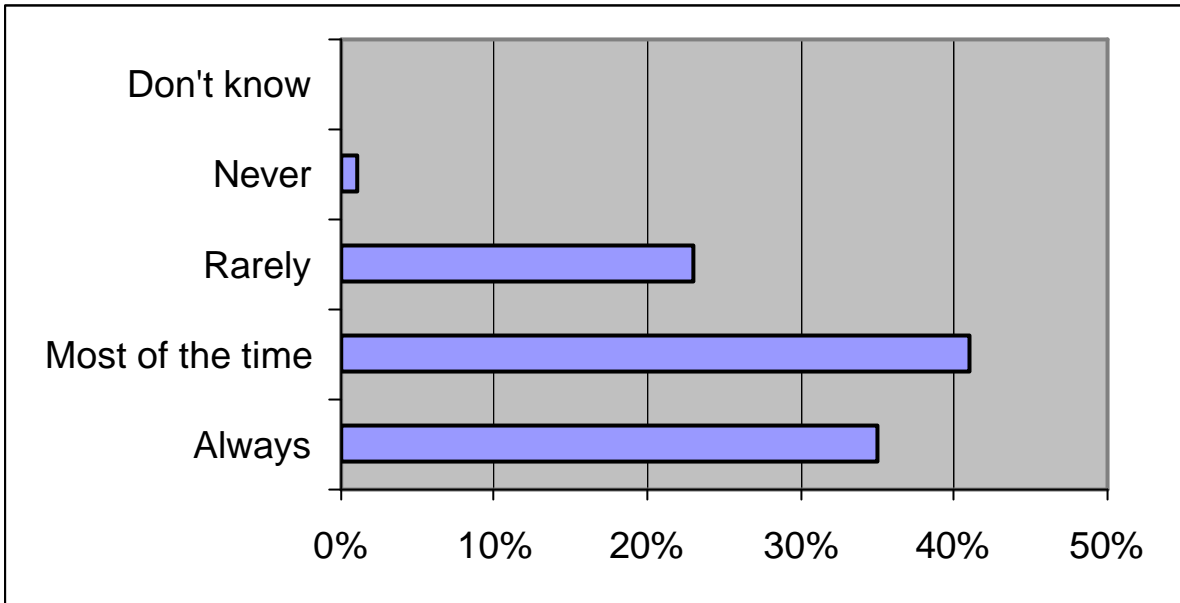


IT managers/directors in the UK are not consulted as much as those in Germany and Benelux. Only 73% are consulted in the UK compared to 76% in Germany. 84% of IT managers/directors in Benelux are consulted on the IT implications of board level business decisions.

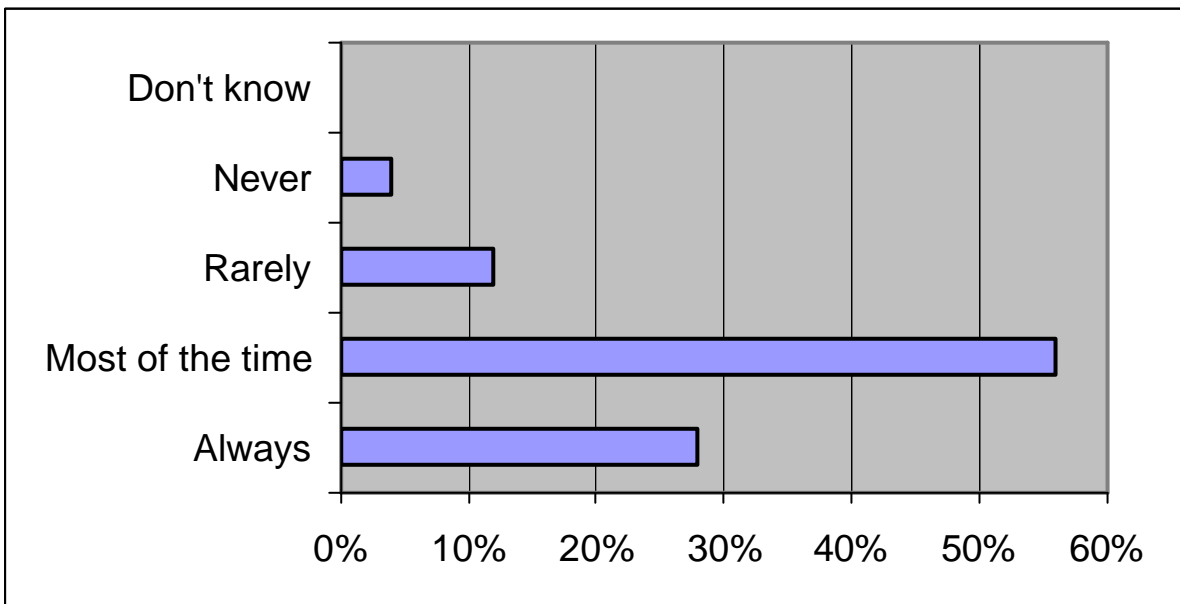
Base: UK



Base: Germany

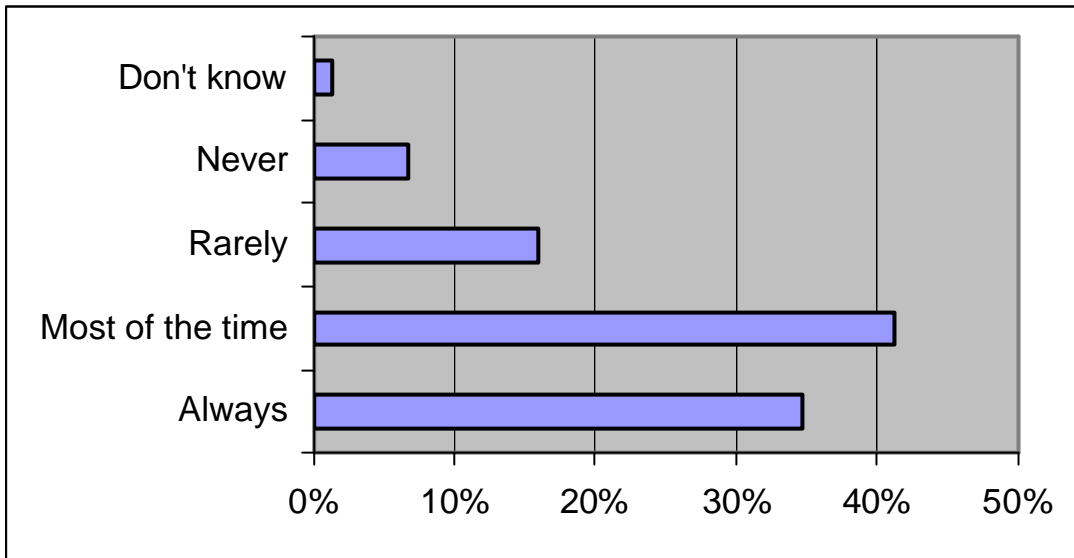


Base: Benelux

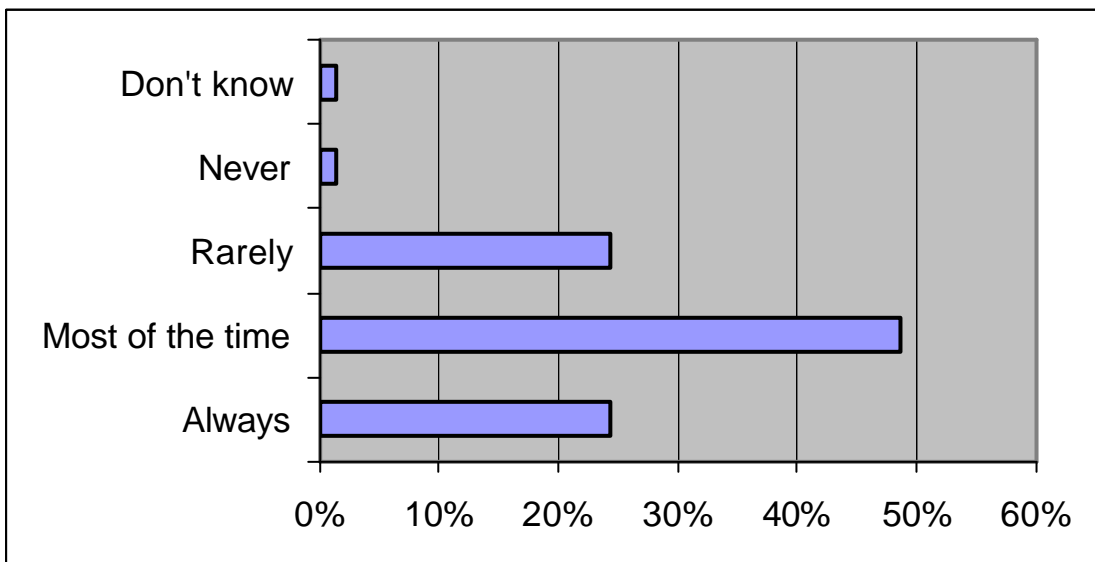


The insurance sector leads the way in this area – 82% of IT managers/directors are consulted on board level business decisions, compared to 76% in retail, 73% in banking and 76% in automotive.

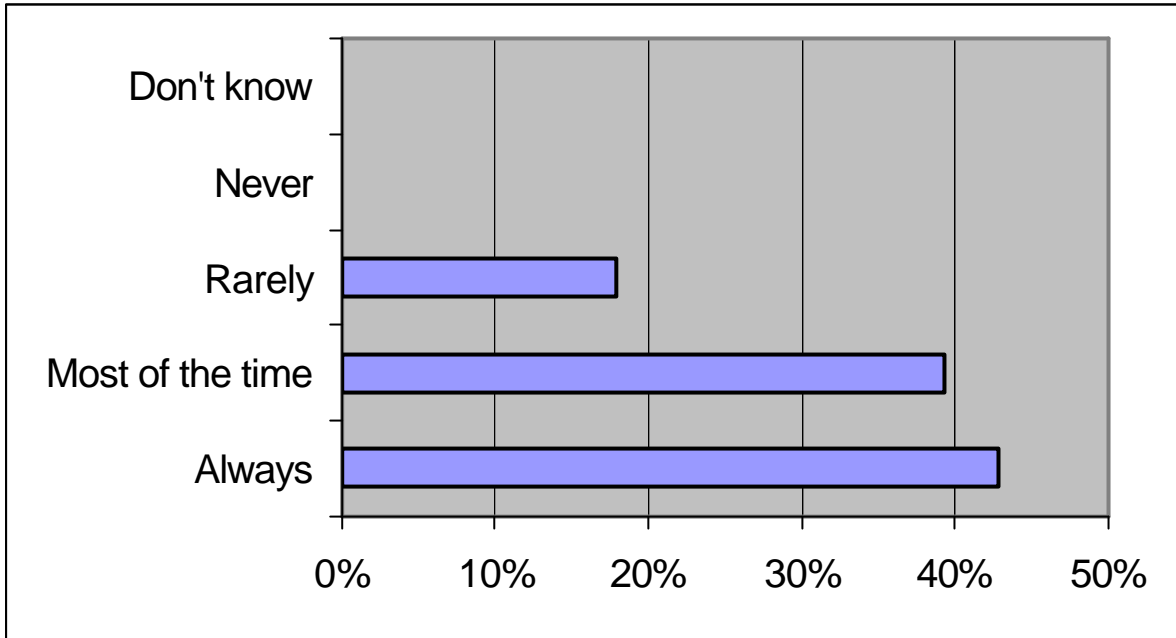
Base: Retail



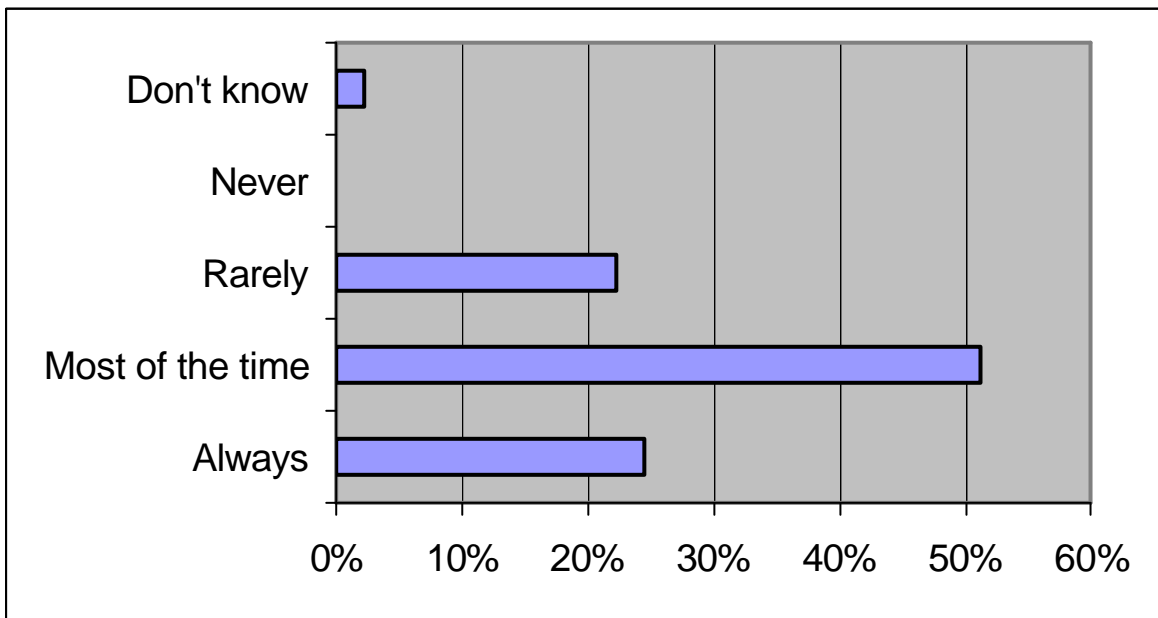
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



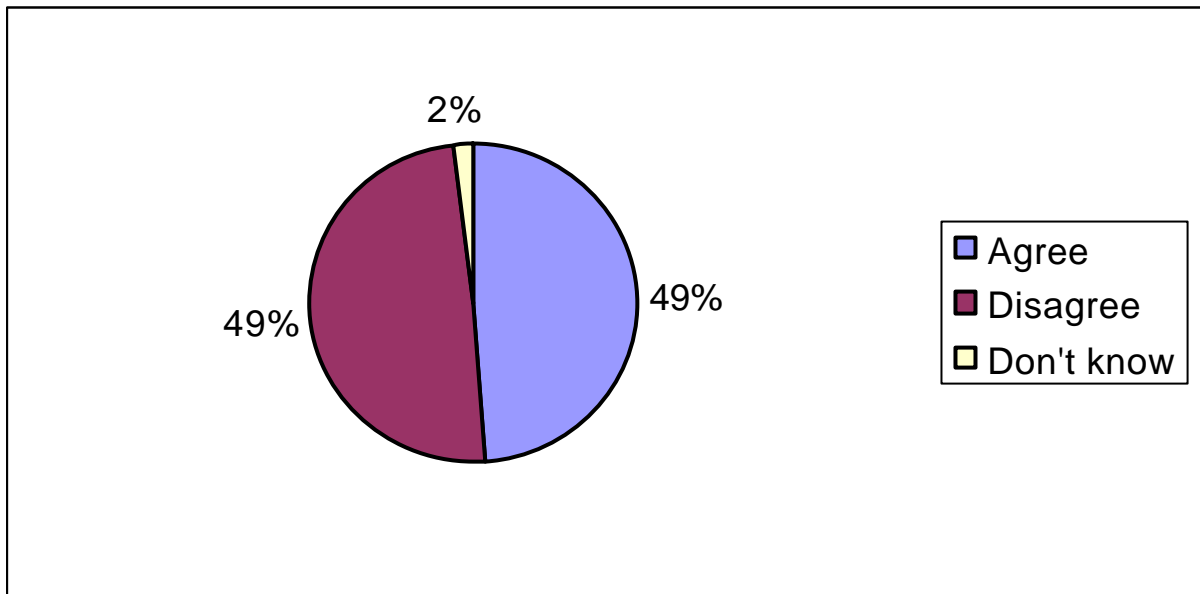
Base: Automotive



6.0 "Too much of my time is spent on mundane tasks that I would rather outsource" Agree/disagree?

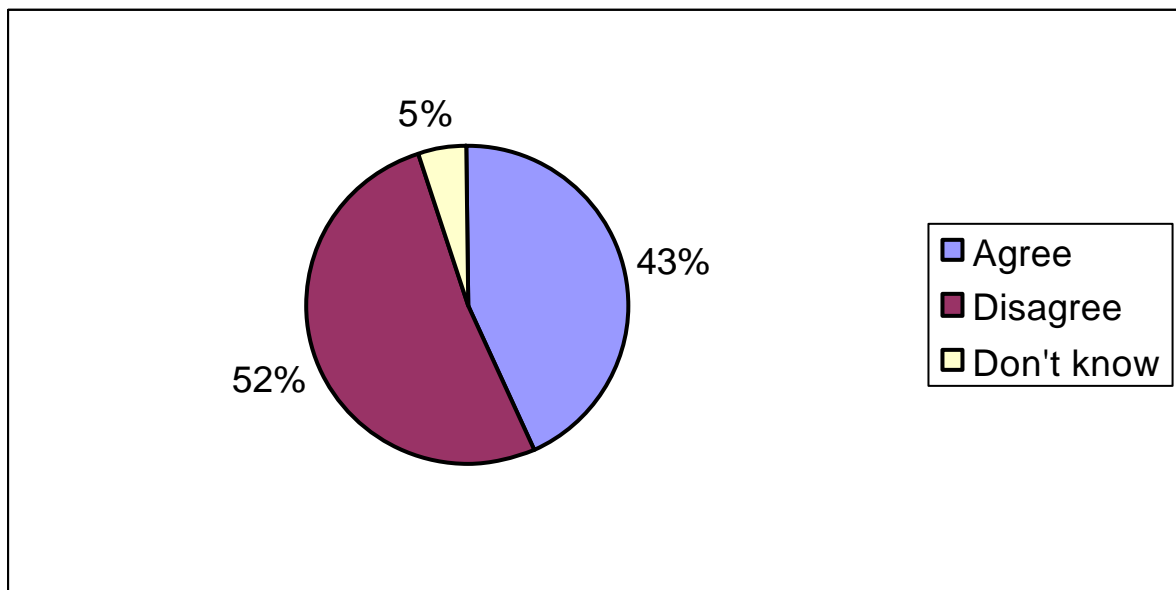
Overall, almost half (49%) of IT managers/directors would like to outsource more operational/mundane activity.

Base: All

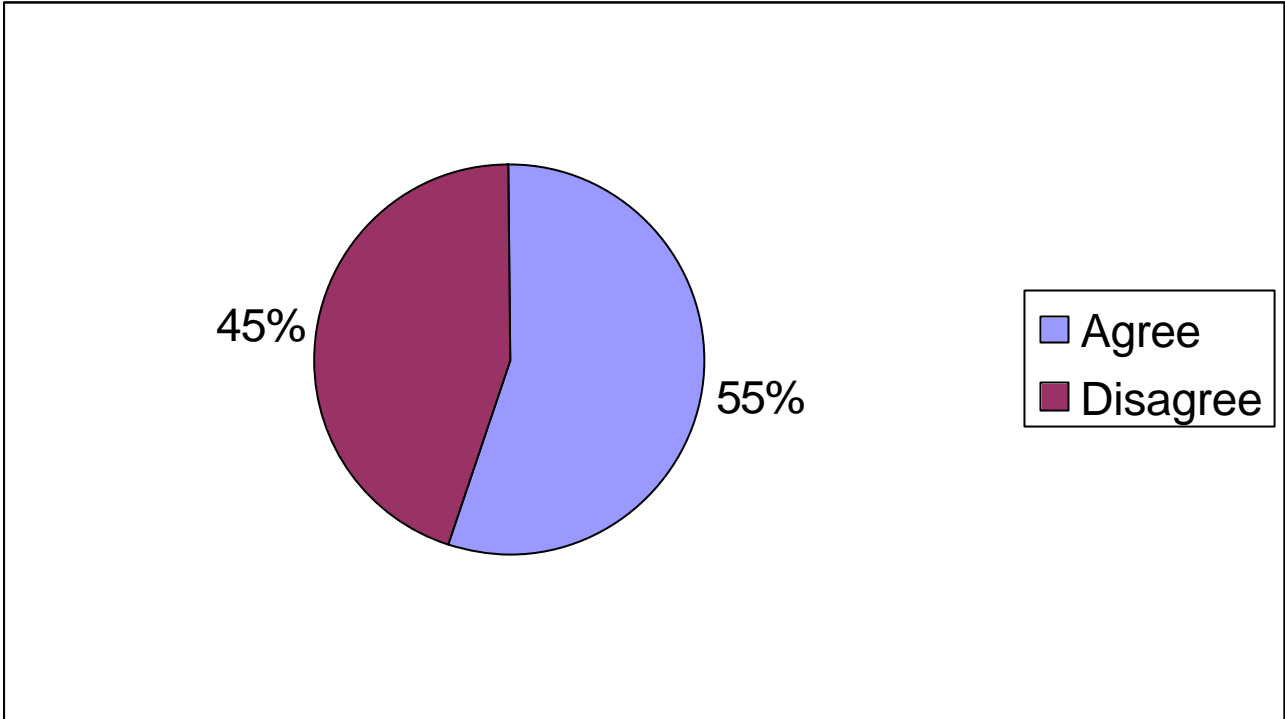


The UK seems to be less inclined to outsource 'mundane' activity than its European counterparts – only 43% would like to outsource more, compared to 48% in Benelux and 55% in Germany.

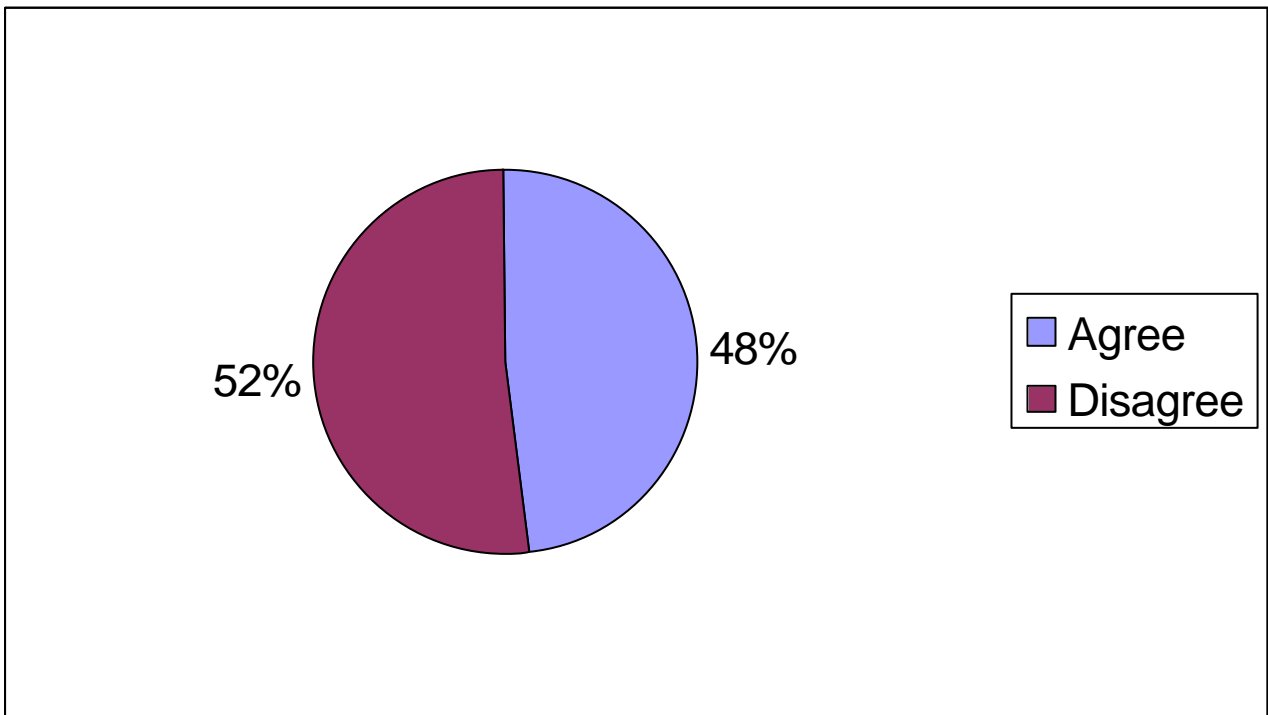
Base: UK



Base: Germany

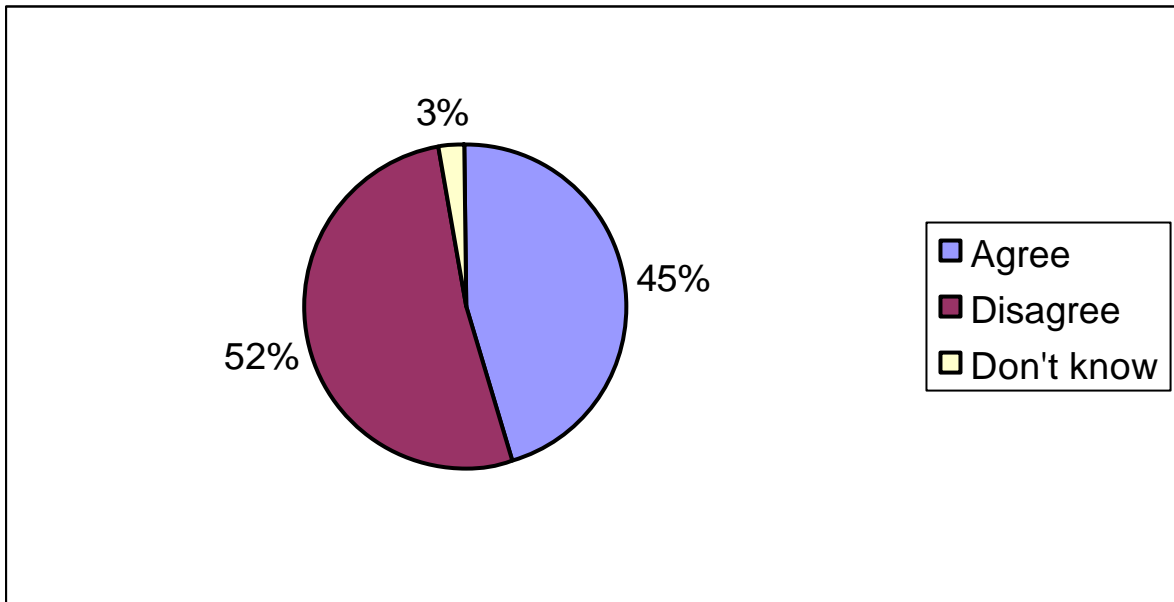


Base: Benelux

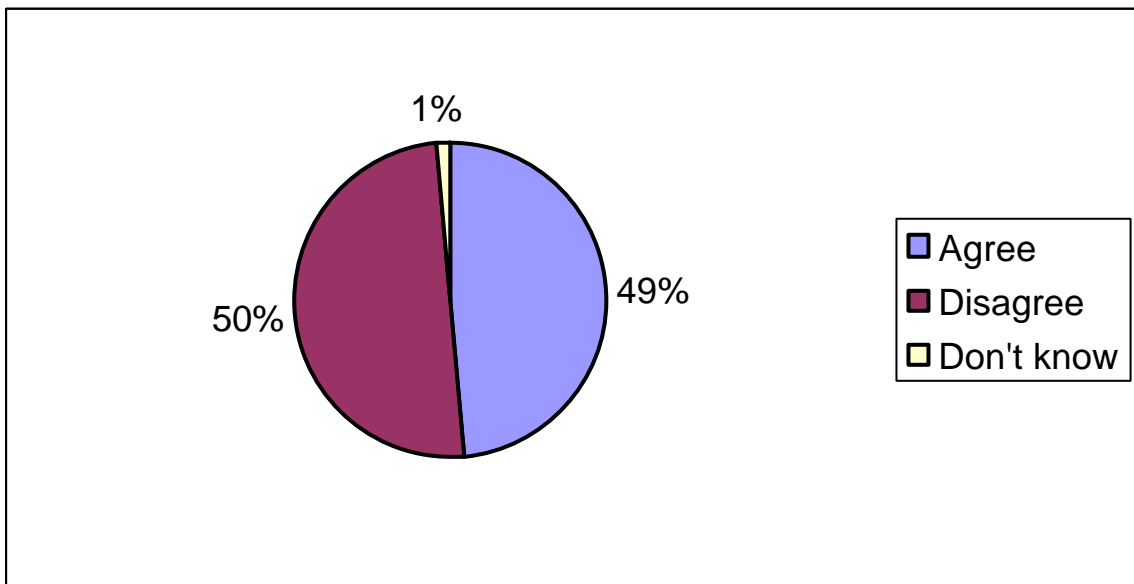


The automotive industry is way ahead of other industry sectors when it comes to outsourcing. The majority (62%) would like to outsource more, whereas IT managers/directors in the banking (49%), insurance (43%) and retail (45%) sectors appear to want more control over all activity.

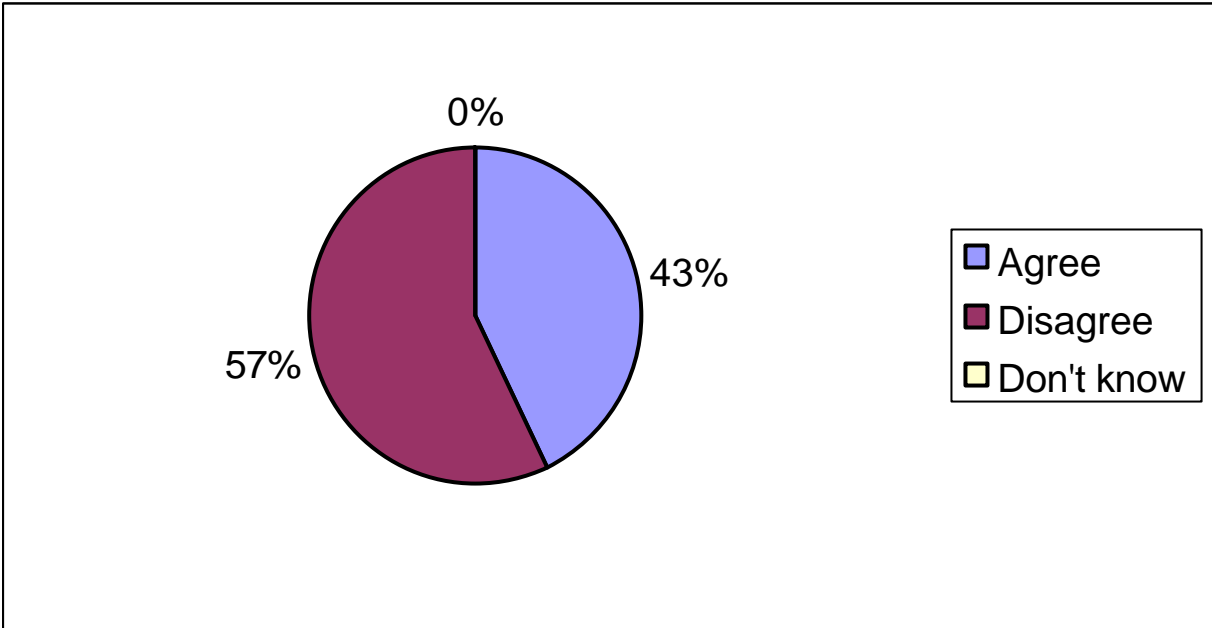
Base: Retail



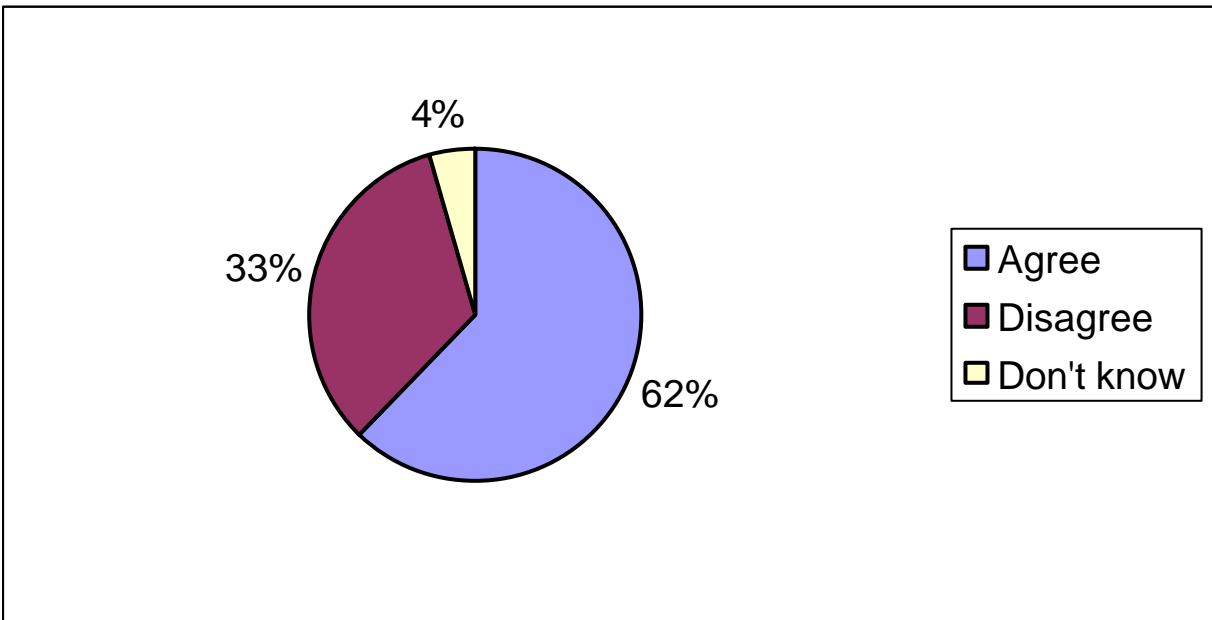
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



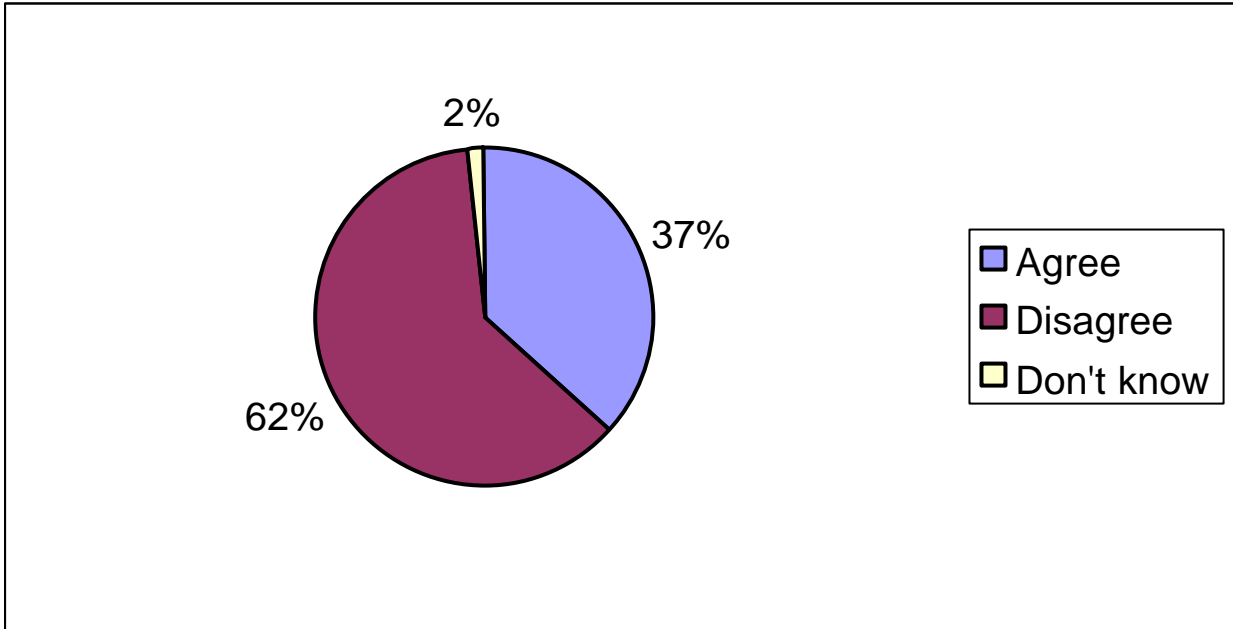
Base: Automotive



7.0 "The board makes decisions without considering the IT implications"
Agree/disagree?

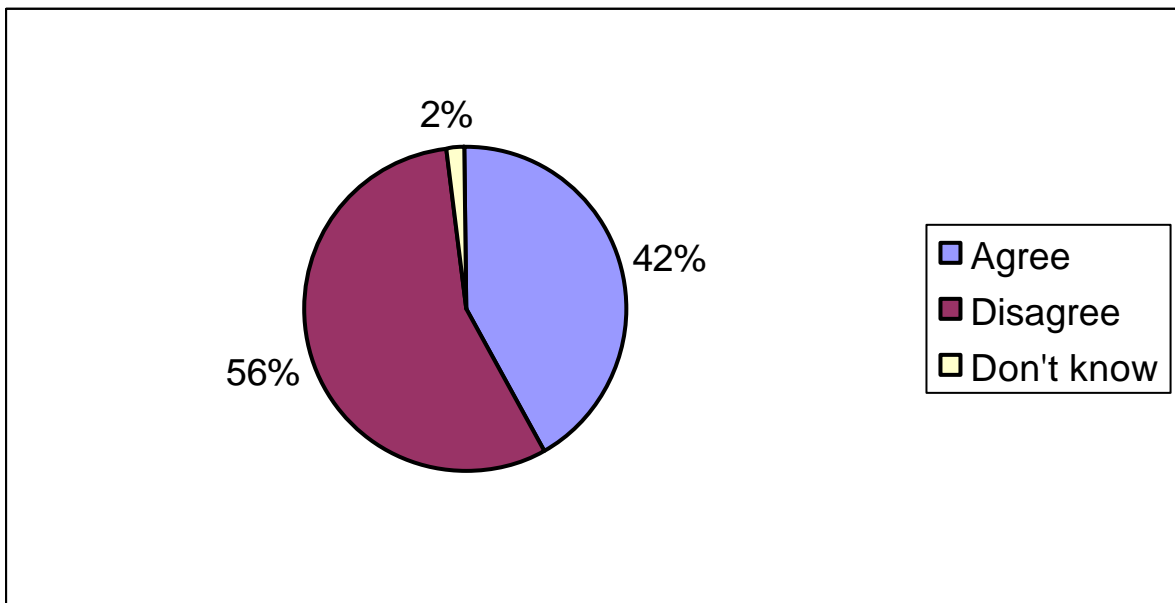
Over a third (37%) of IT managers/directors say that the board makes decisions without considering the IT implications.

Base: All

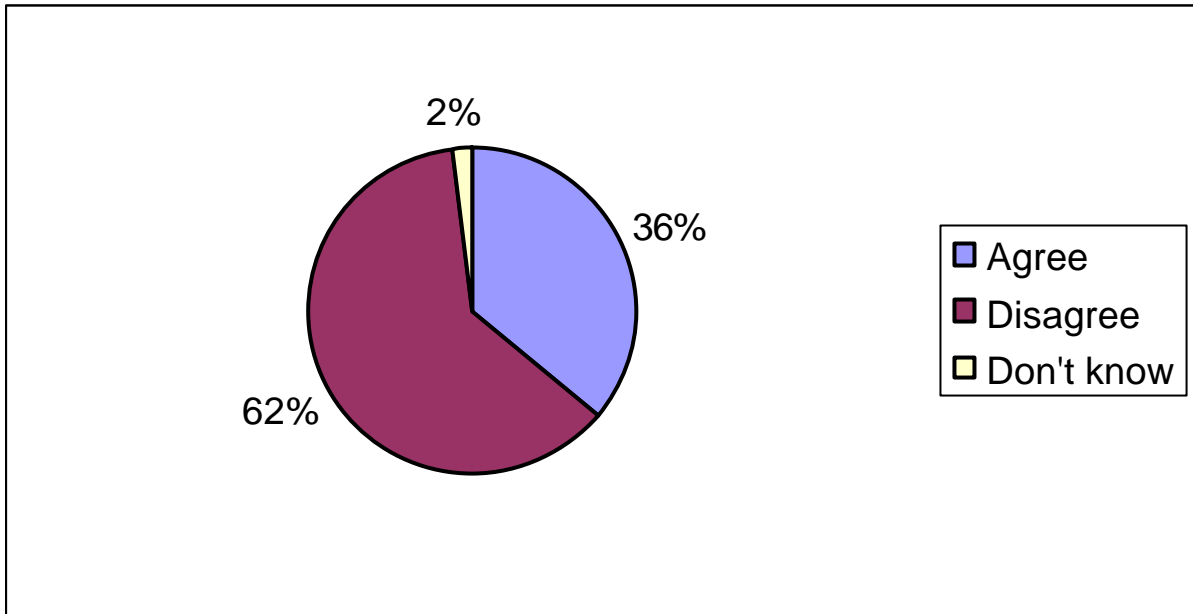


UK boards are the worst culprits - 42% of IT managers/directors say that the board makes decisions without considering the IT implications. Only 28% in Benelux make this claim, compared with 36% in Germany.

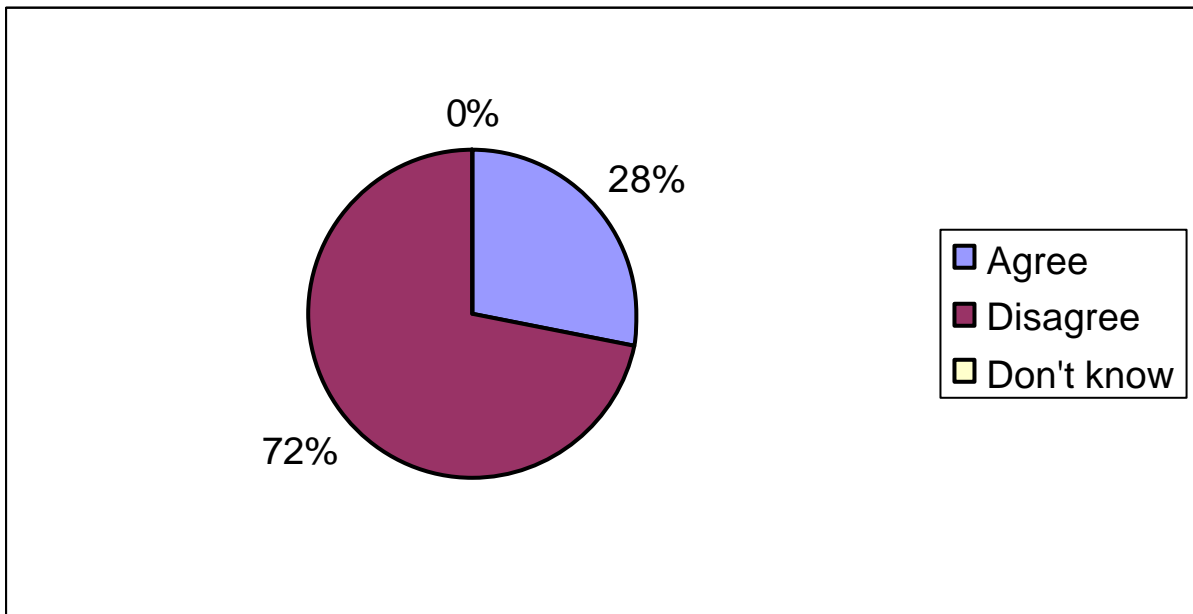
Base: UK



Base: Germany

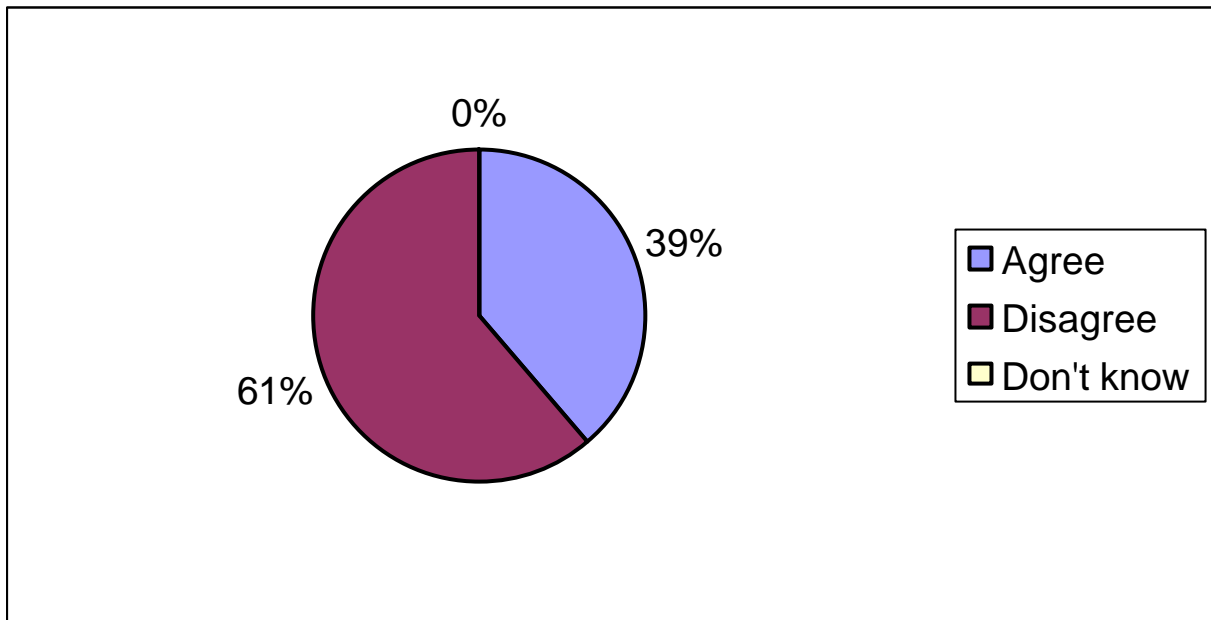


Base: Benelux

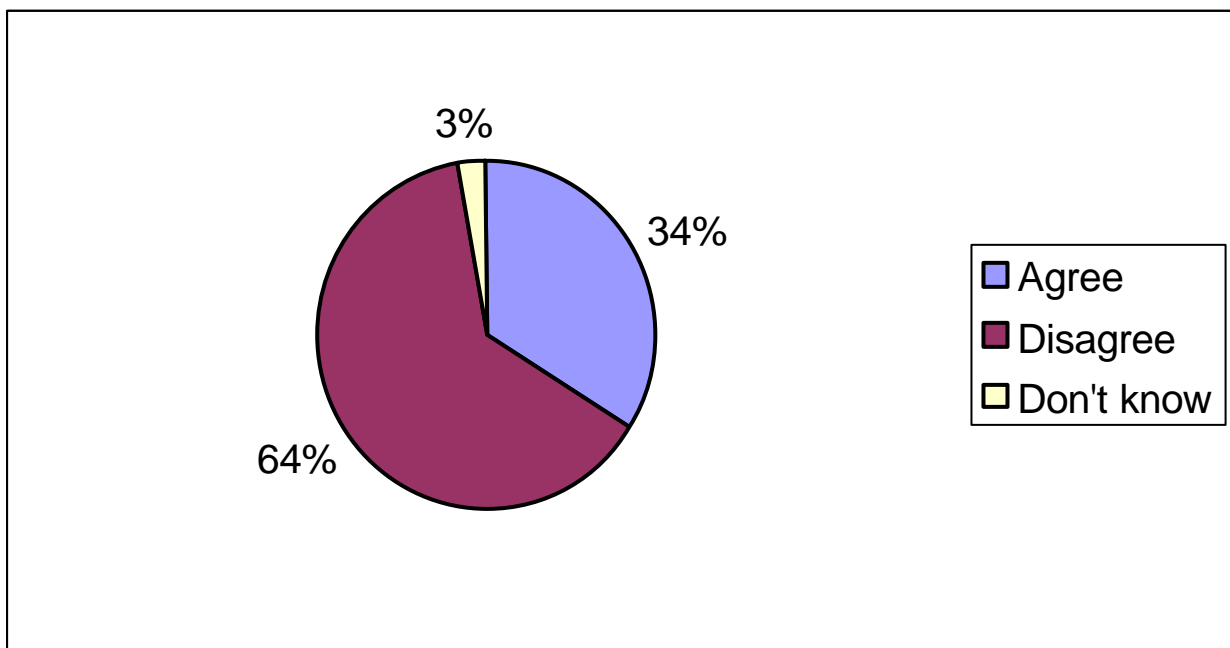


40% of IT managers/directors in the automotive sector say that the board makes decisions without considering the IT implications. This is followed by the retail (39%), insurance (36%) and banking (34%) industries.

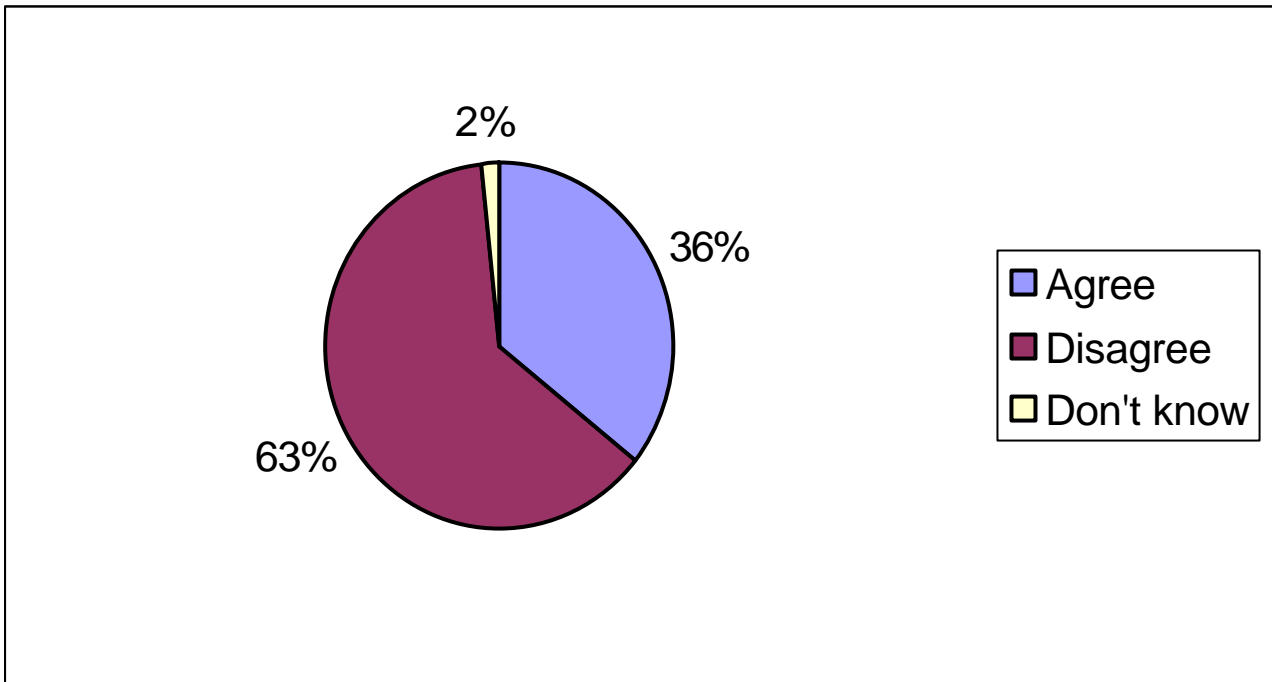
Base: Retail



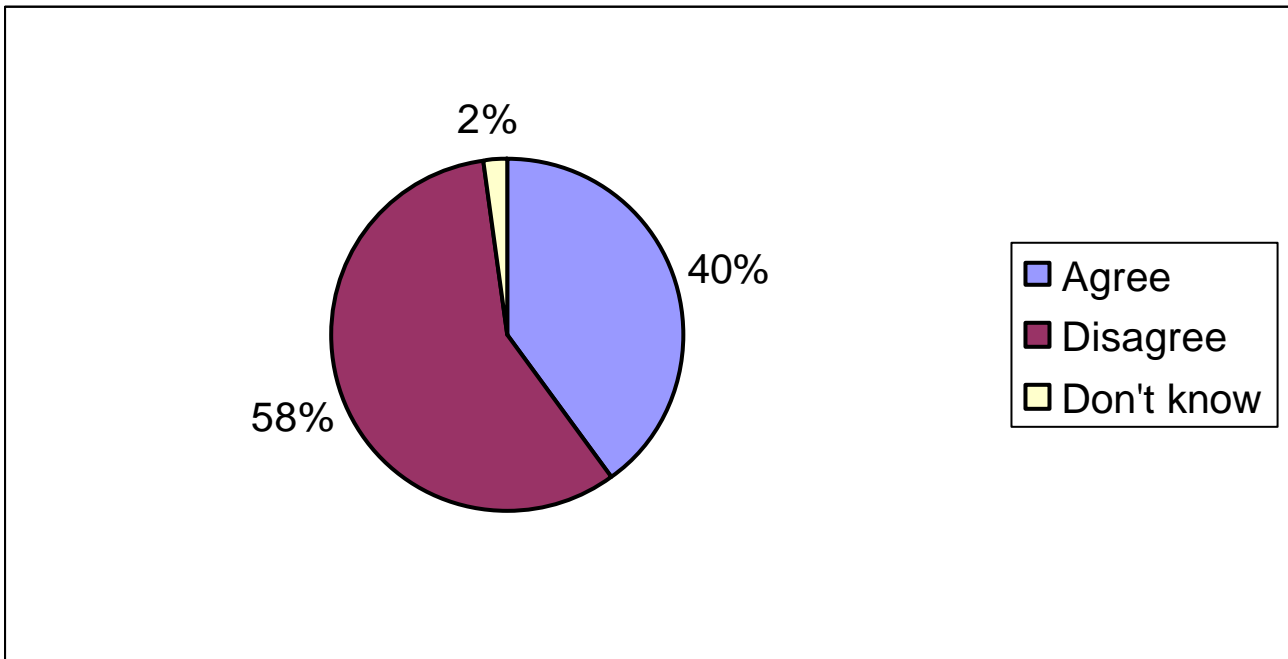
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



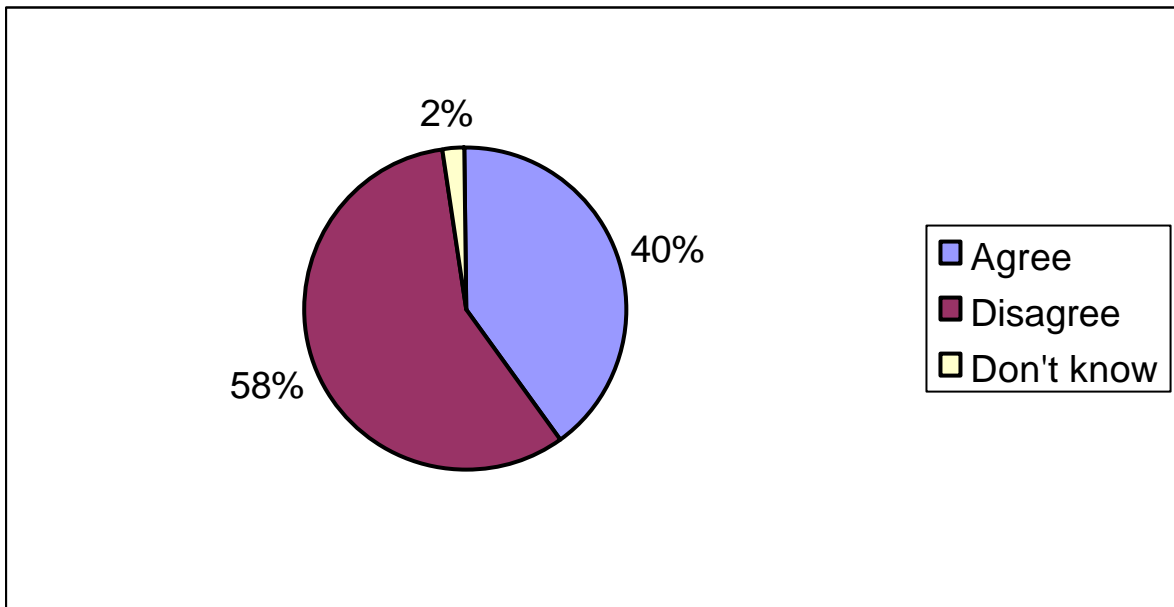
Base: Automotive



8.0 What is the average IT literacy of your company's board of directors?

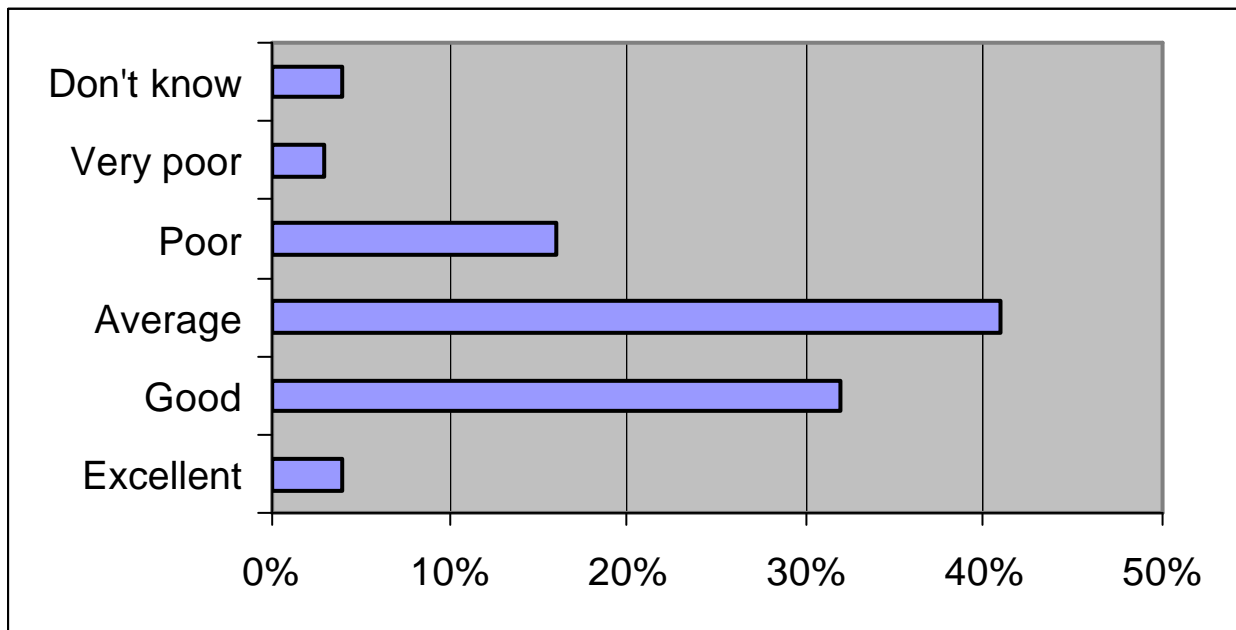
Overall, only 4% of IT managers/directors say that the IT literacy of their board is excellent. 30% describe it as good, 40% say it is average, 18% say it is poor and 5% say that it is very poor.

Base: All

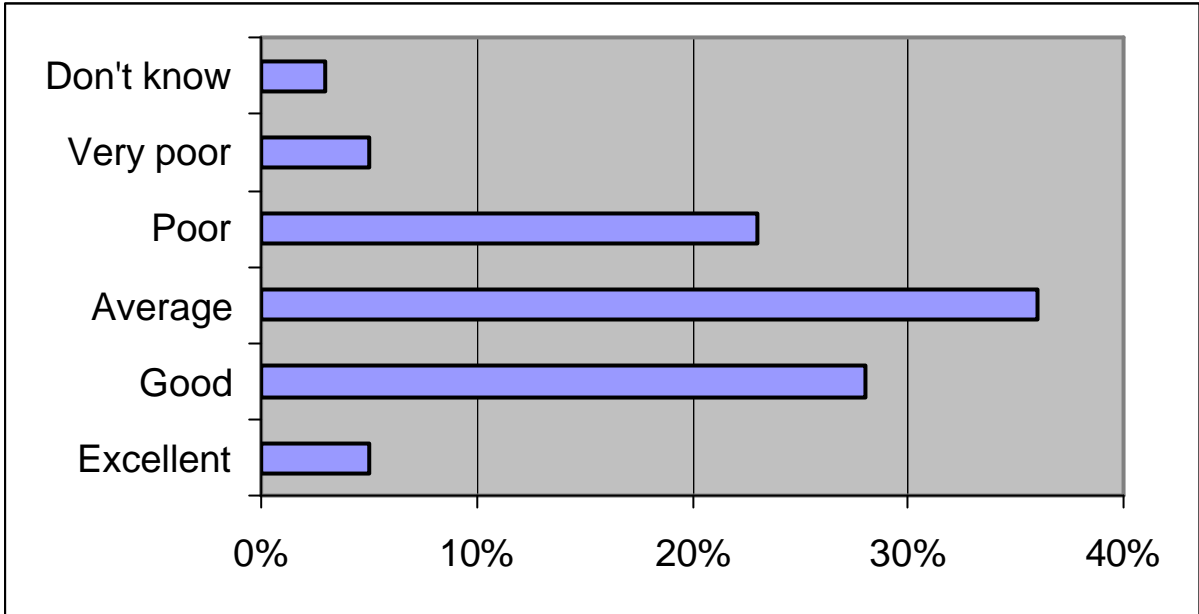


Boards in the UK have the best IT literacy with 36% describing it as either good or excellent, compared with Germany (33%) and Benelux (32%)

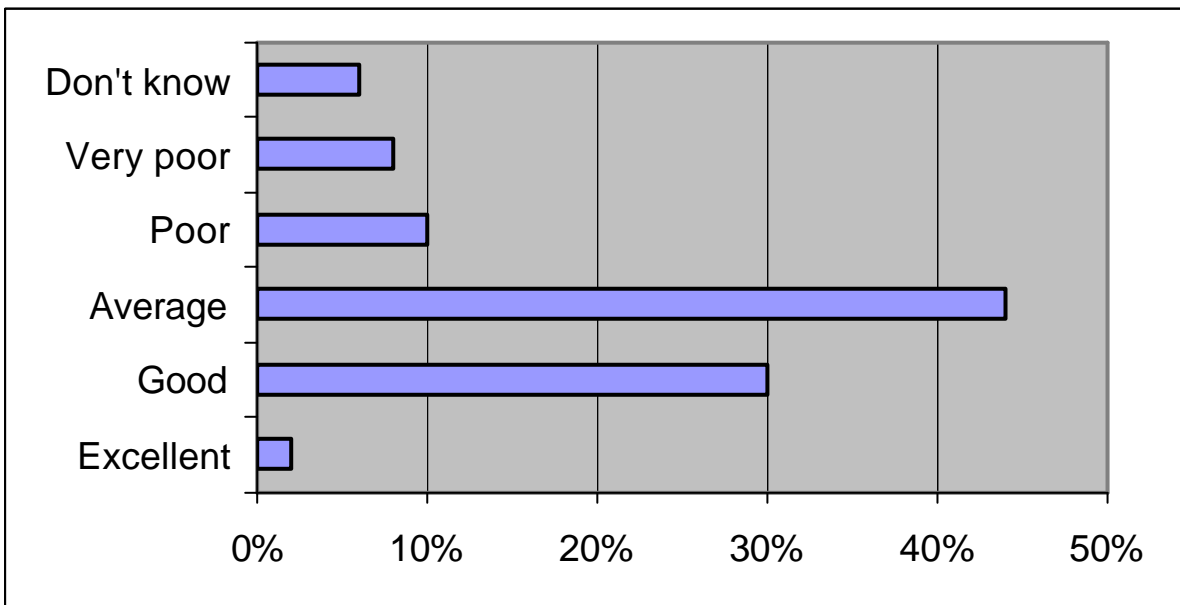
Base: UK



Base: Germany

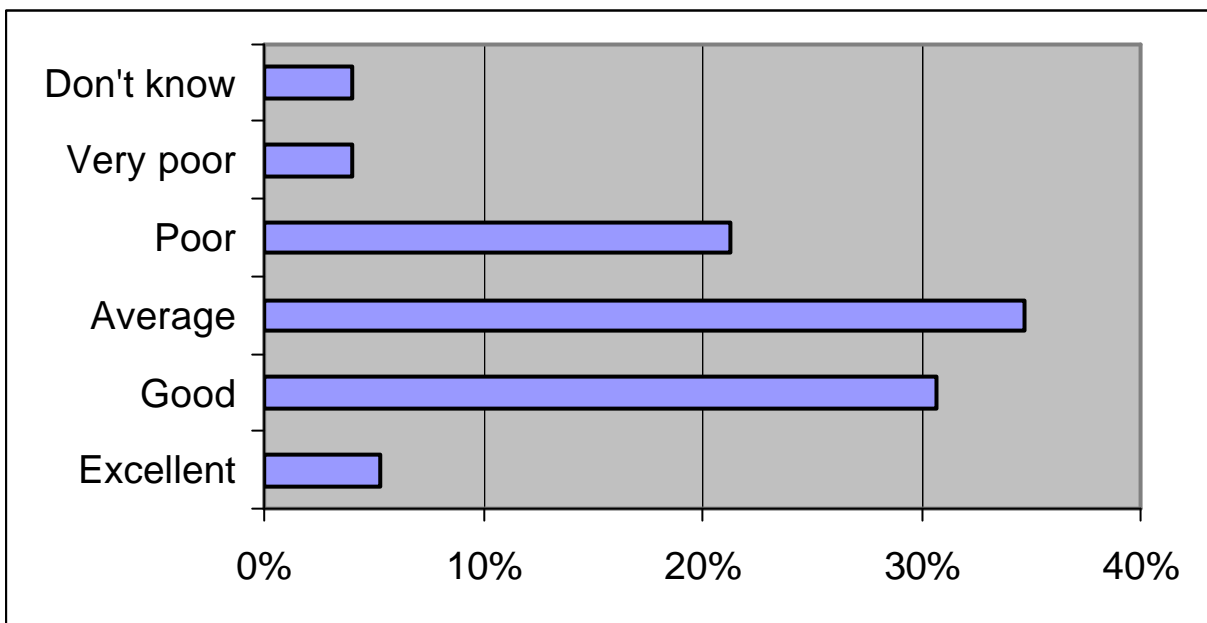


Base: Benelux

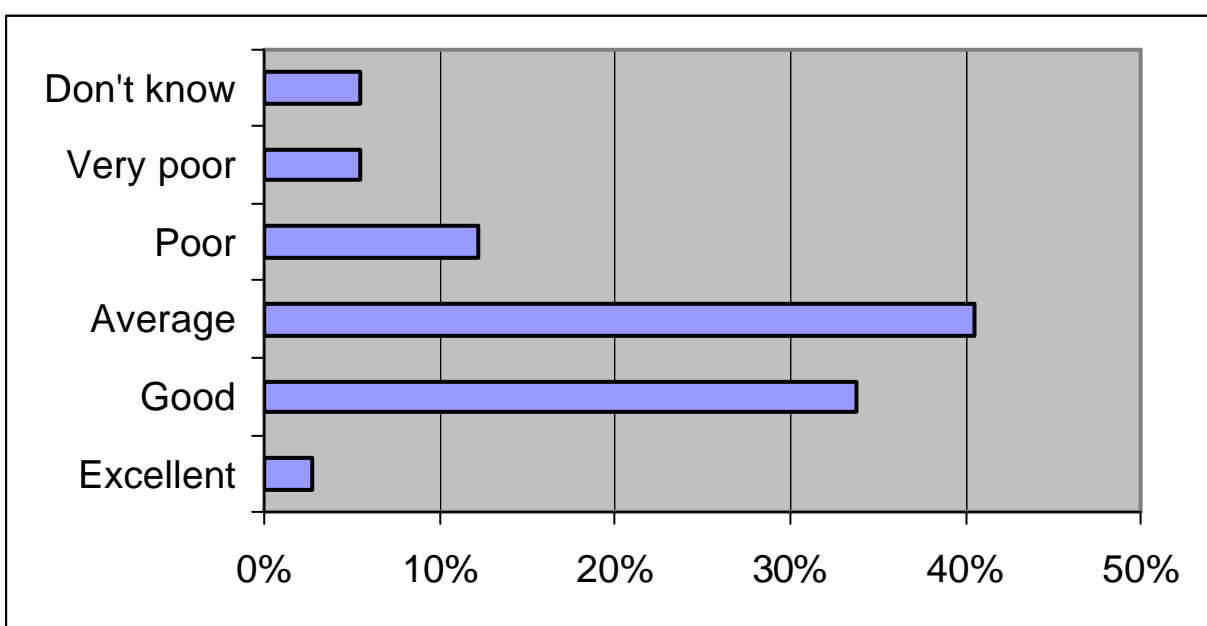


Less than a third (29%) of boards in the insurance sector have either good or excellent IT literacy, according to IT managers/directors. However, 37% in the banking industry state that their board's IT literacy is good or excellent. Retail and automotive sectors follow with 36% and 43% of IT managers/directors respectively stating the board's IT literacy as good or excellent.

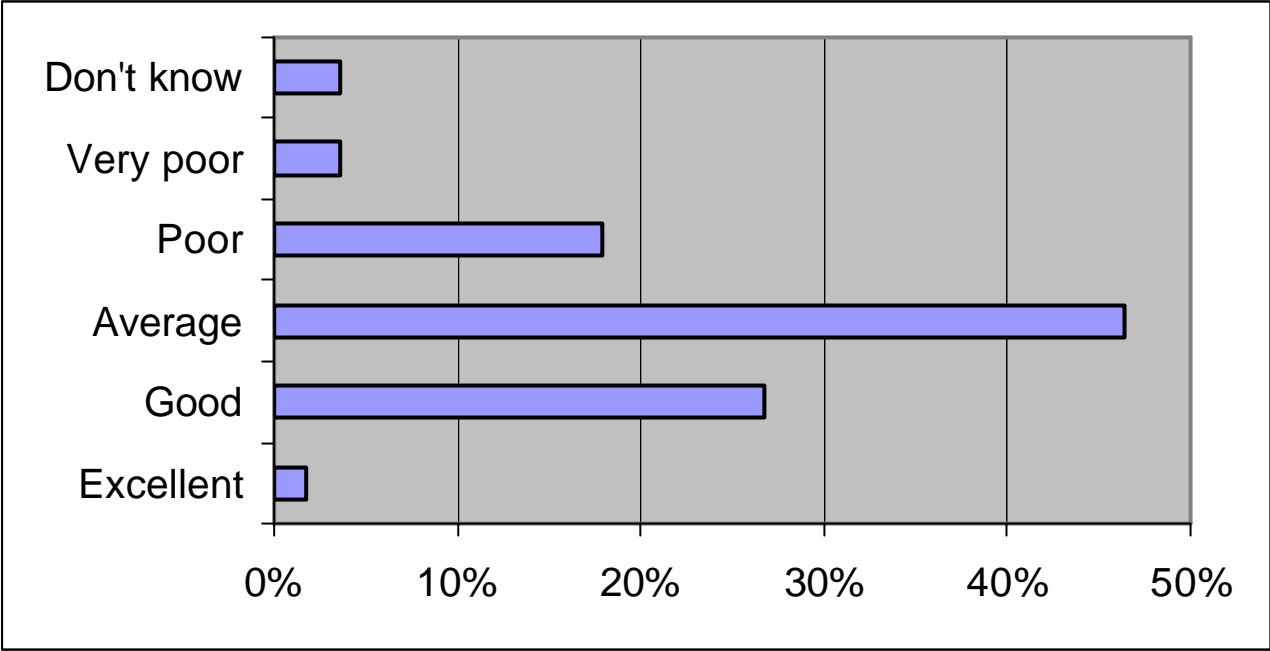
Base: Retail



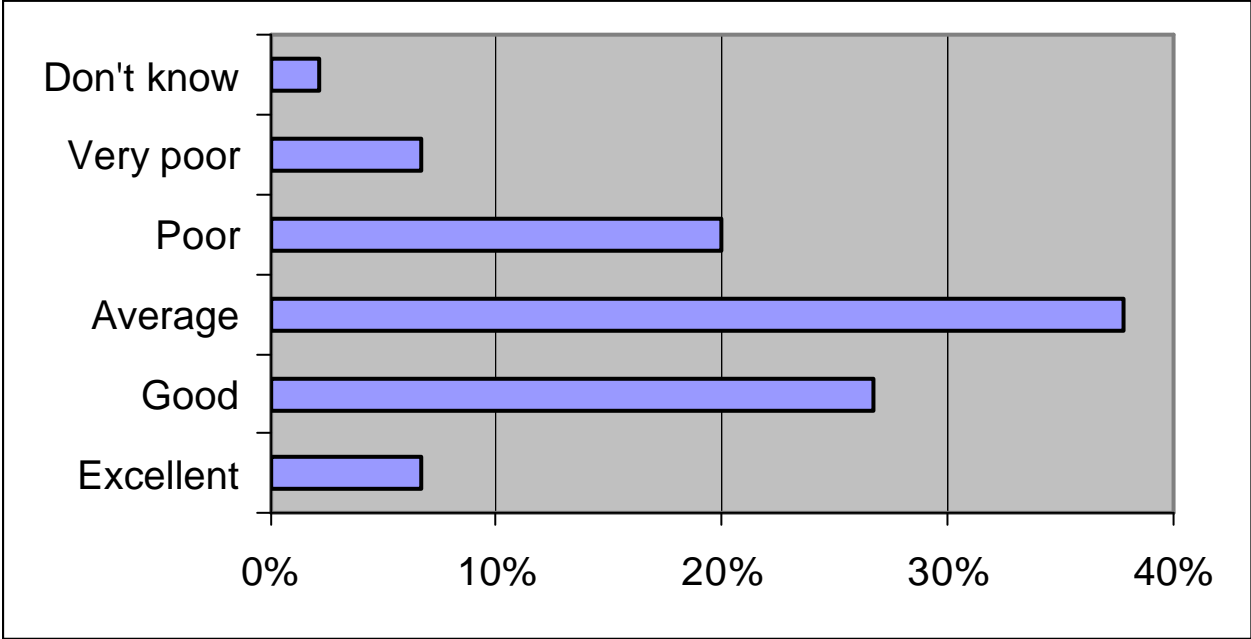
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



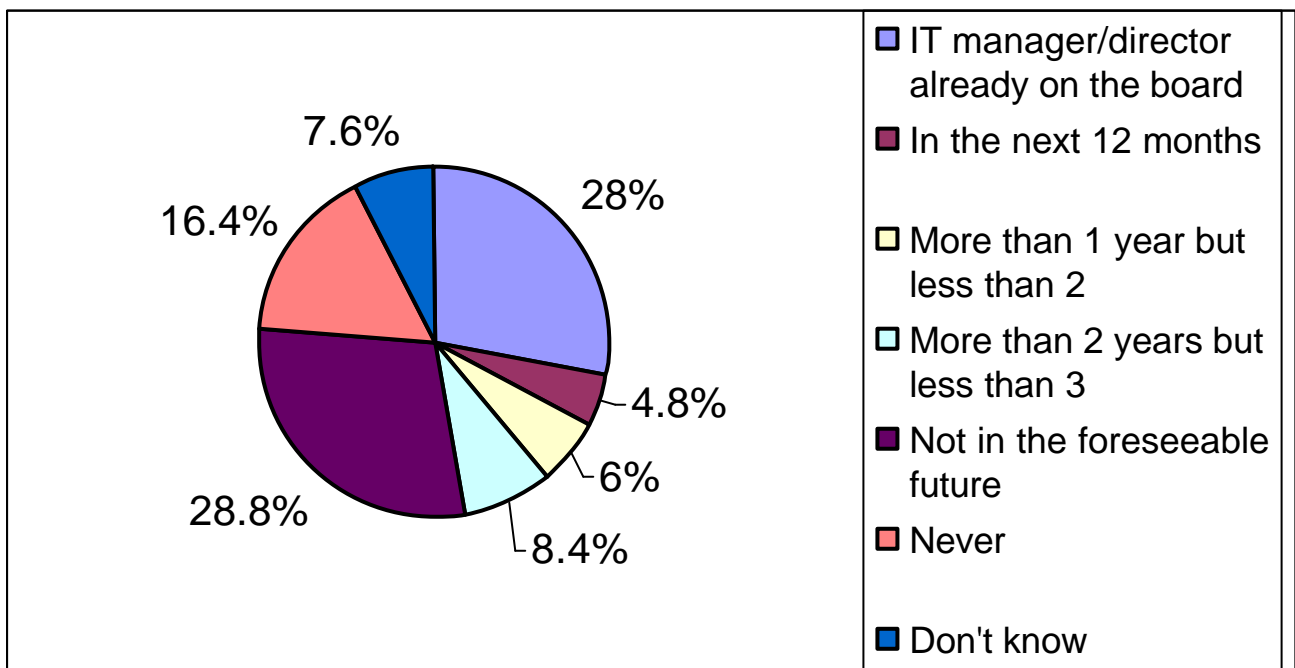
Base: Automotive



9.0 How long will it be before an IT manager or director has a place on the board?

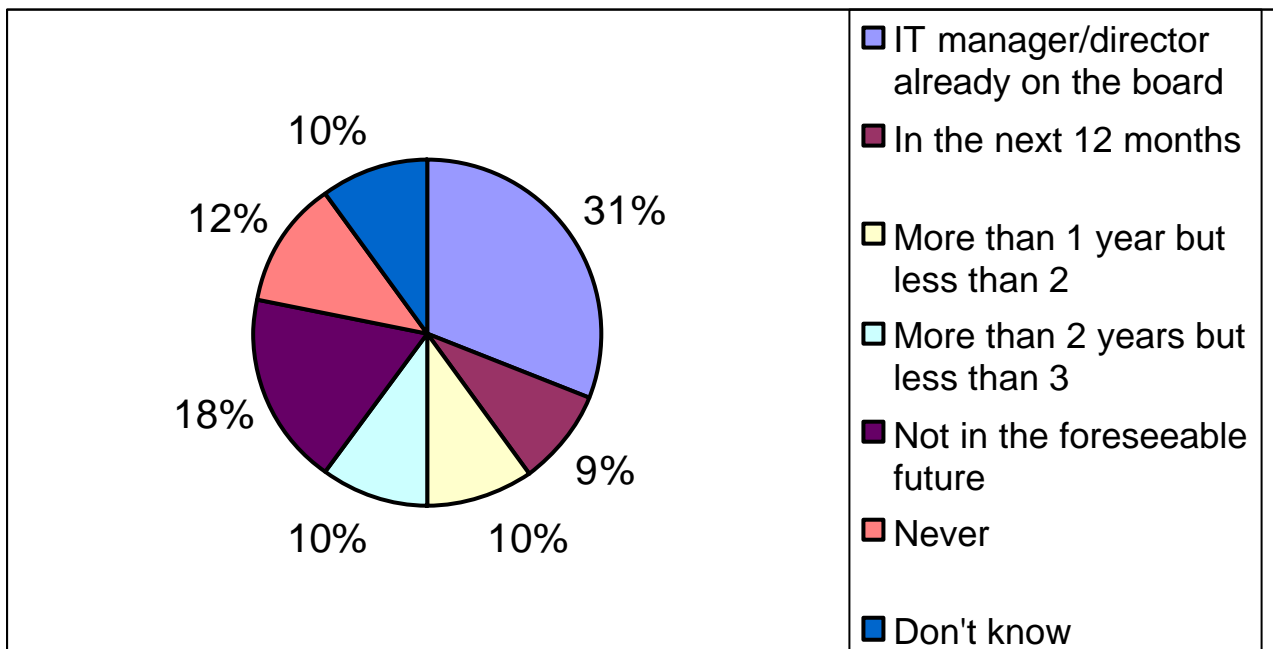
Overall, responses to this question were very mixed. 28% already sit on the board. However, almost half (45%) could not see themselves having a place on the board.

Base: All

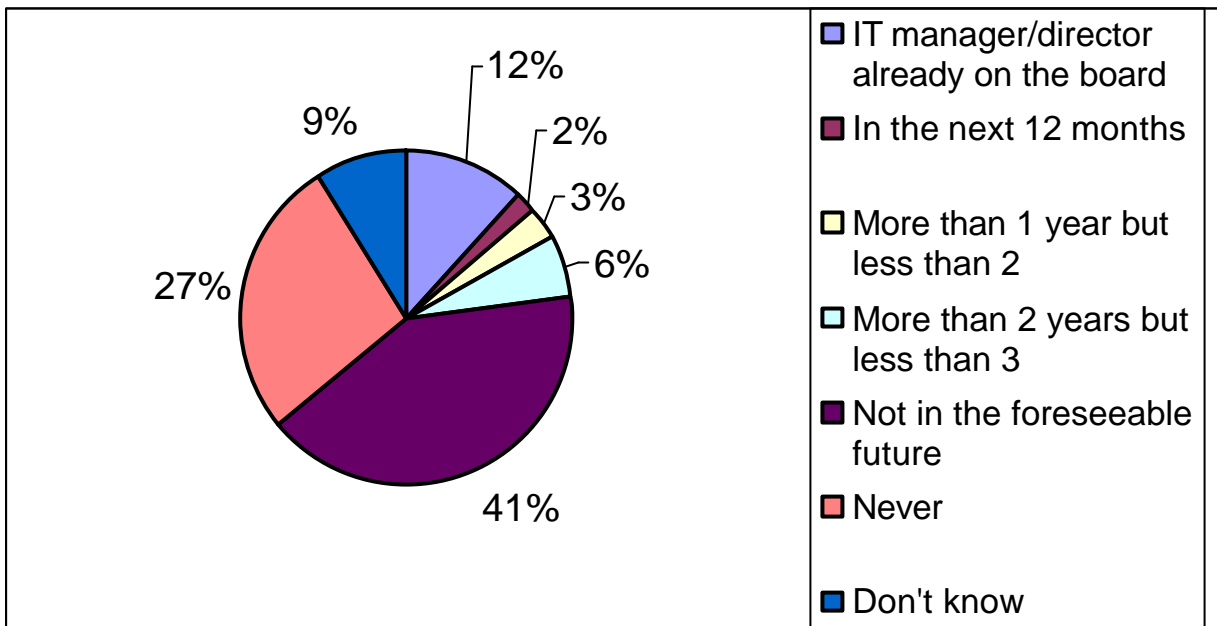


Over half of IT managers/directors in Benelux already have a place on the board, compared with 31% in the UK and only 12% in Germany. In the UK and Benelux just under a third (30%) of IT managers could not see themselves progressing to the board. This figure rises drastically for German IT managers - 68% could not see themselves having a place on the board.

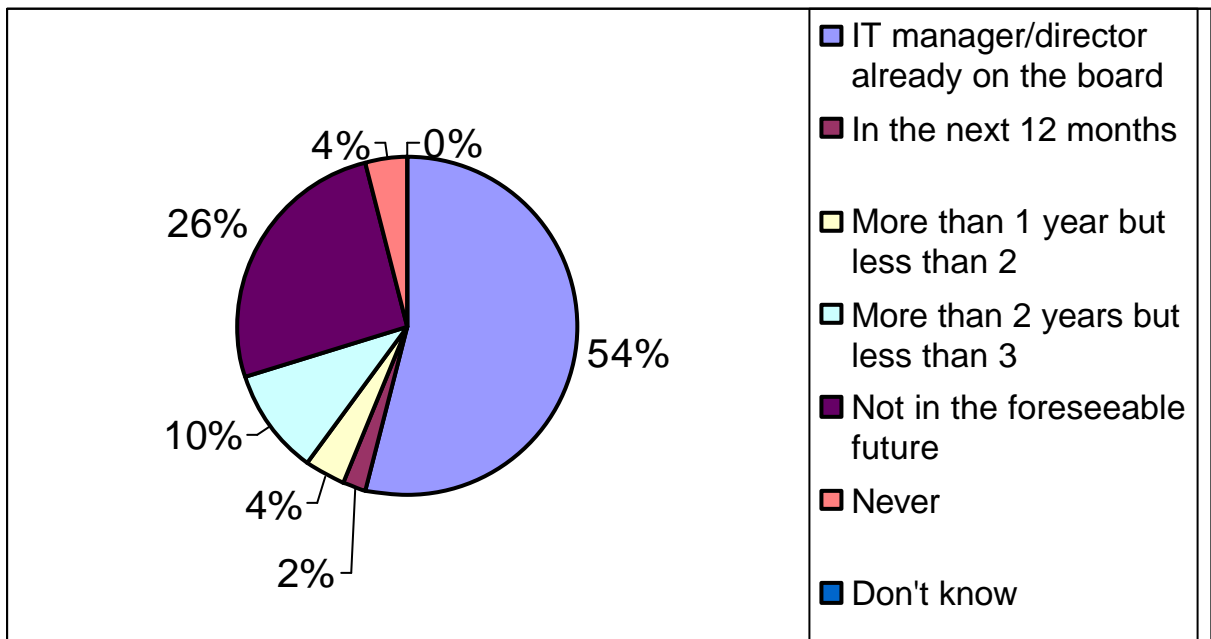
Base: UK



Base: Germany

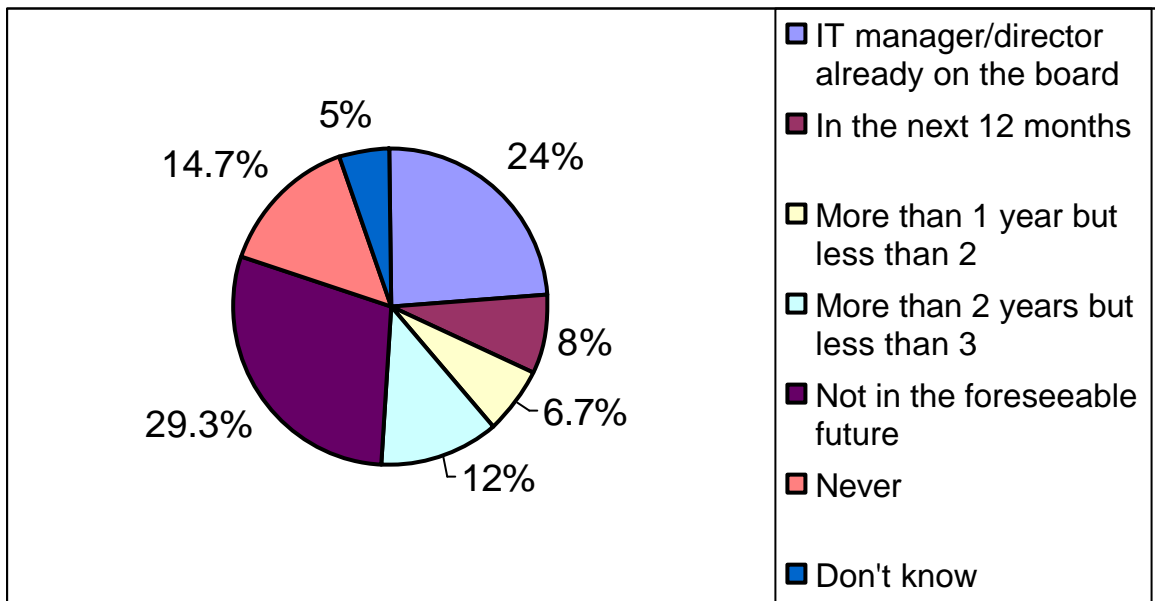


Base: Benelux

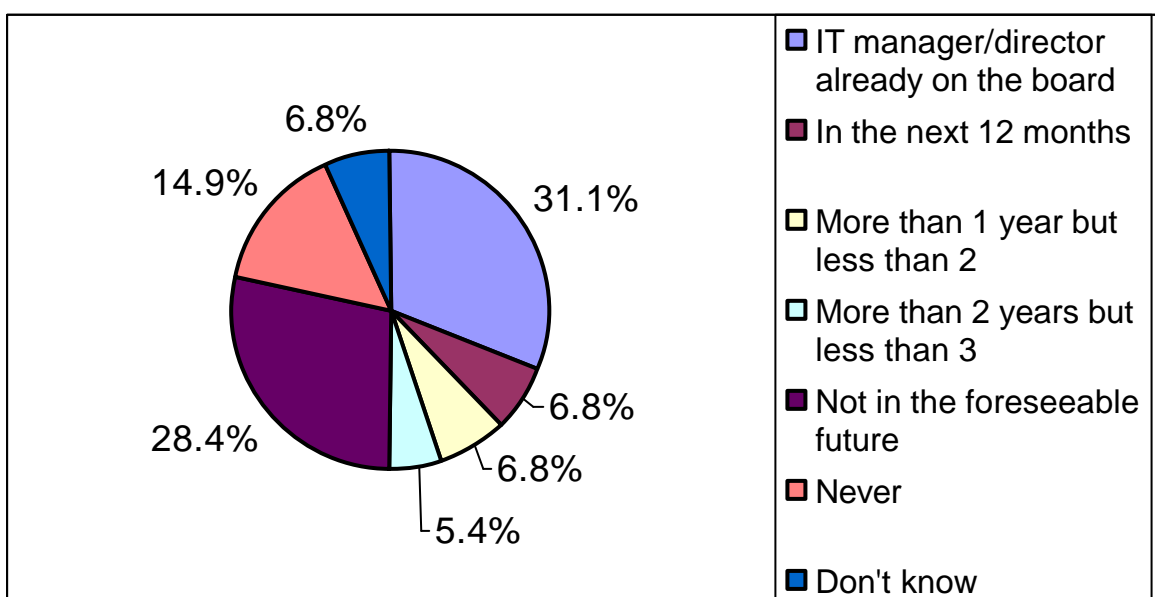


Just under a quarter of IT managers in the retail and automotive sectors sit on the board. This figure is higher in the banking and insurance sectors (31% and 32% respectively). Almost half (44%) in the retail sector cannot see themselves with a place on the board, compared with 43% in the banking and insurance sectors and 53% in the automotive sector.

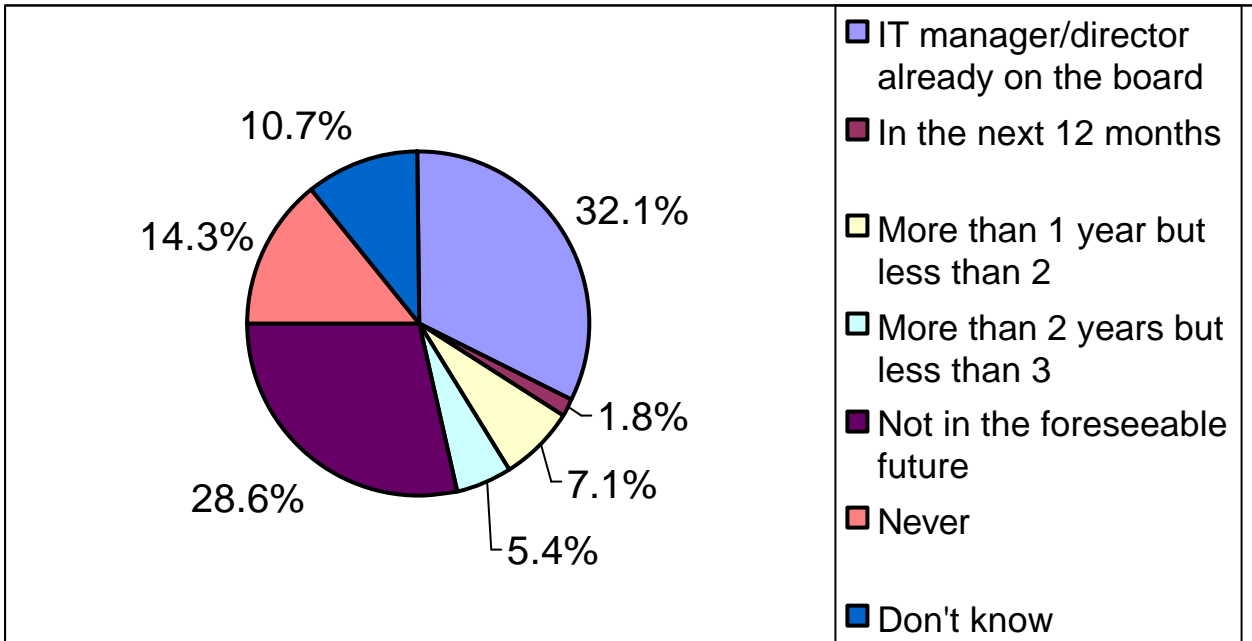
Base: Retail



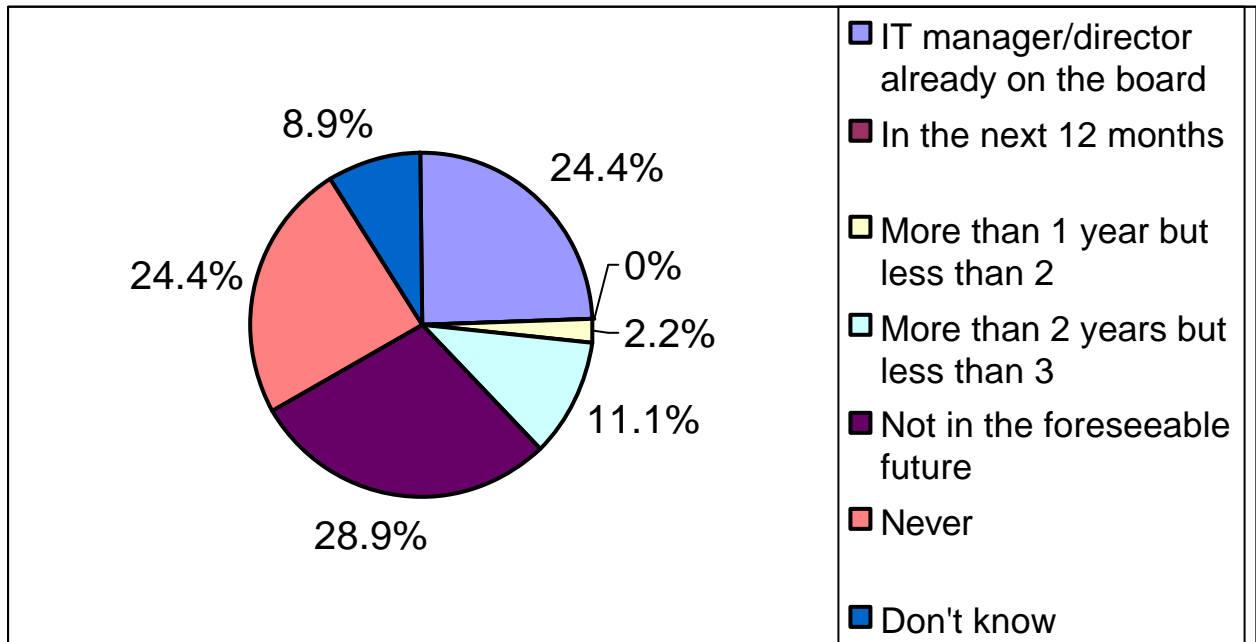
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



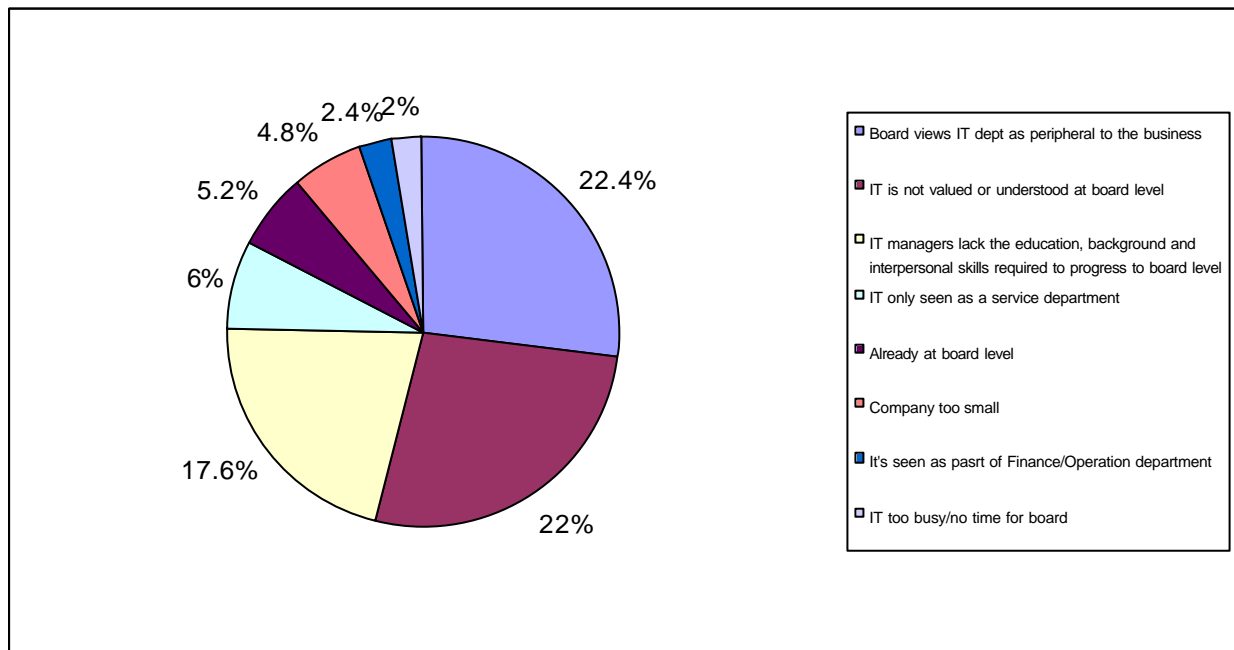
Base: Benelux



10.0 Reasons why IT managers/directors are rarely on the board.

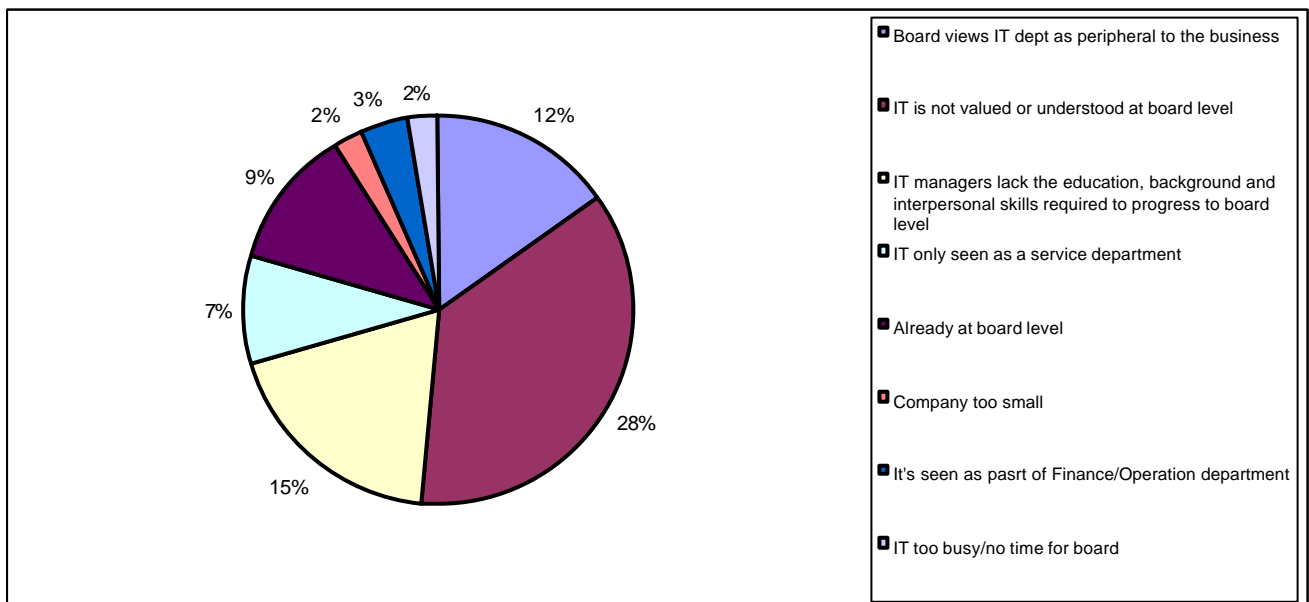
Overall, IT managers/directors feel that the main reasons they are not on the board are: the board views the IT department as peripheral to the business (22%), IT is not valued or understood at board level (22%) and IT managers lack the education, background and interpersonal skills required to progress to board level (18%).

Base: All

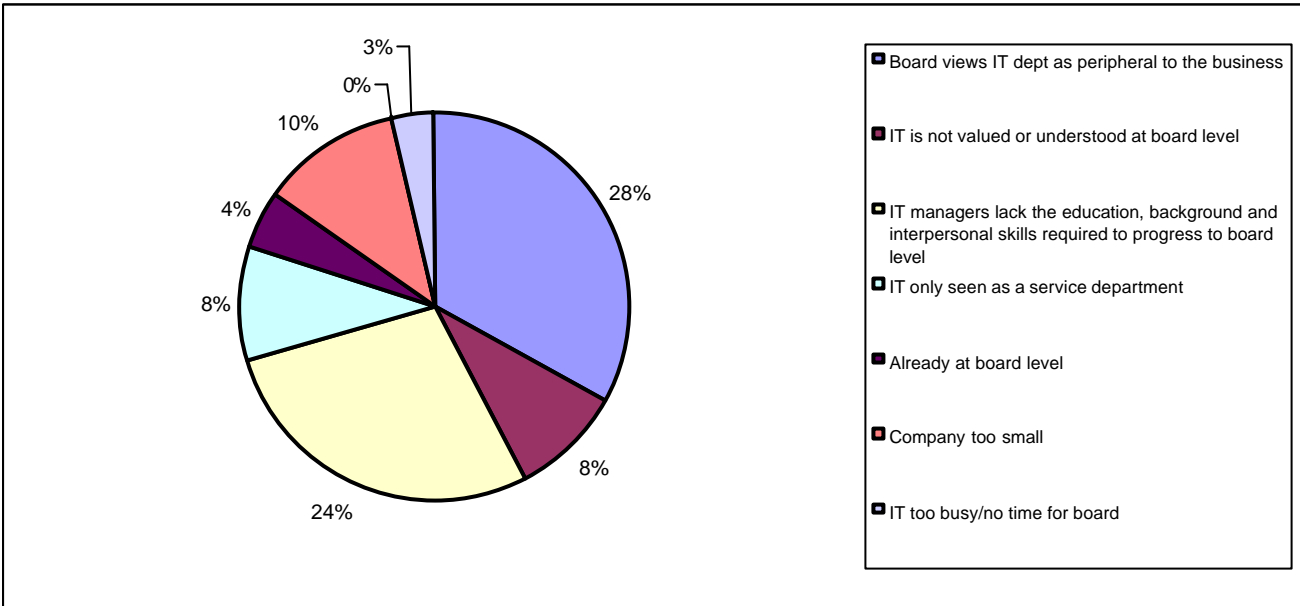


In the UK, only 12% of respondents feel that the board views the IT department as peripheral to the business, compared with 28% in Germany and 32% in Benelux. 28% of IT managers/directors in the UK feel that IT is not valued or understood at board level, compared with just 8% in Germany and 38% in Benelux. 24% of IT managers in Germany feel that IT managers lack the education, background and interpersonal skills required to progress to board level, compared with 15% in the UK and only 10% in Benelux.

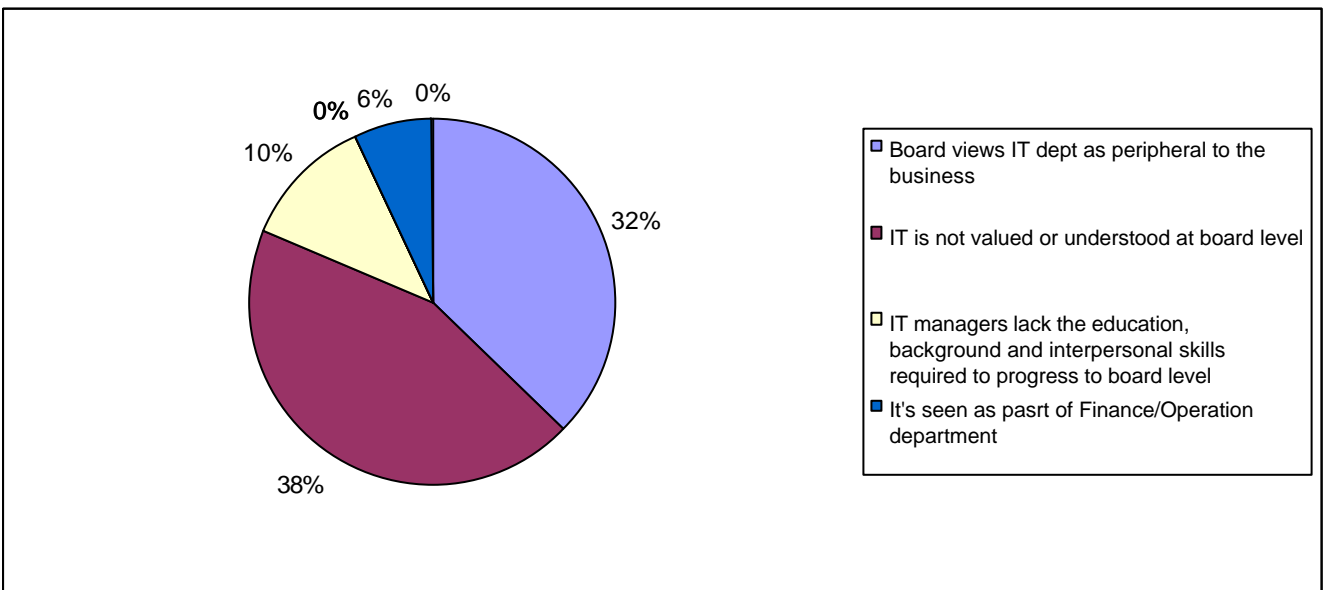
Base: UK



Base: Germany

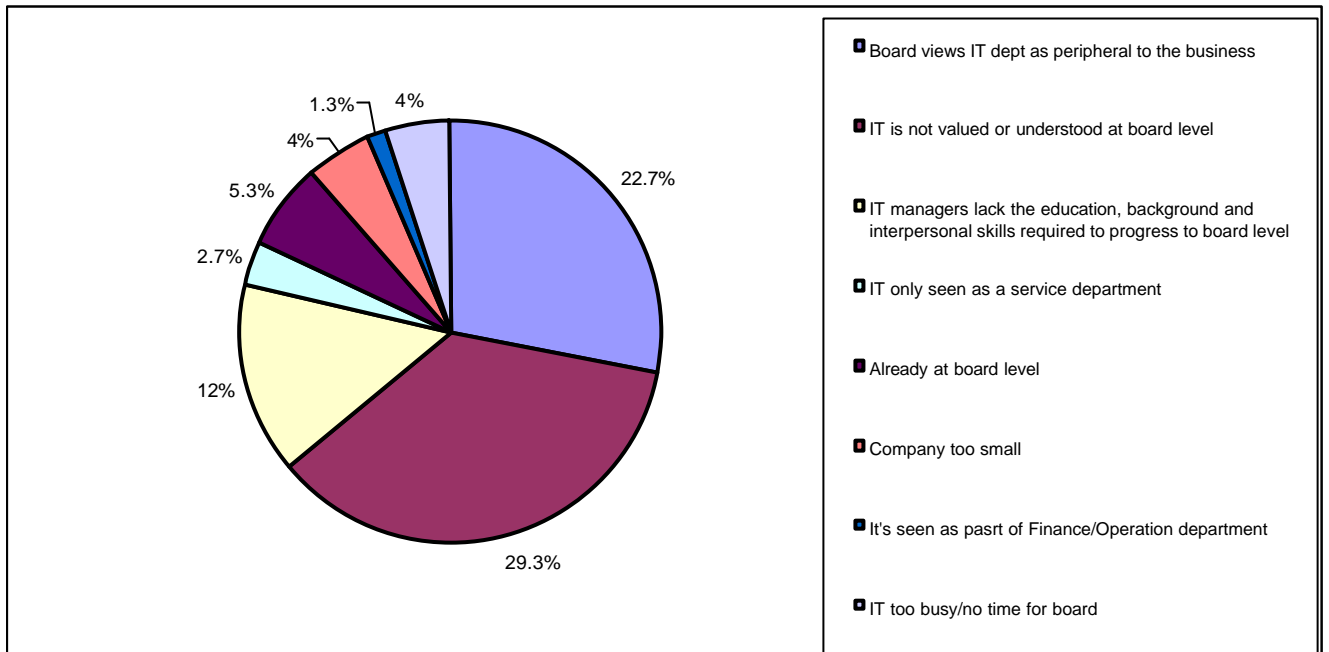


Base: Benelux

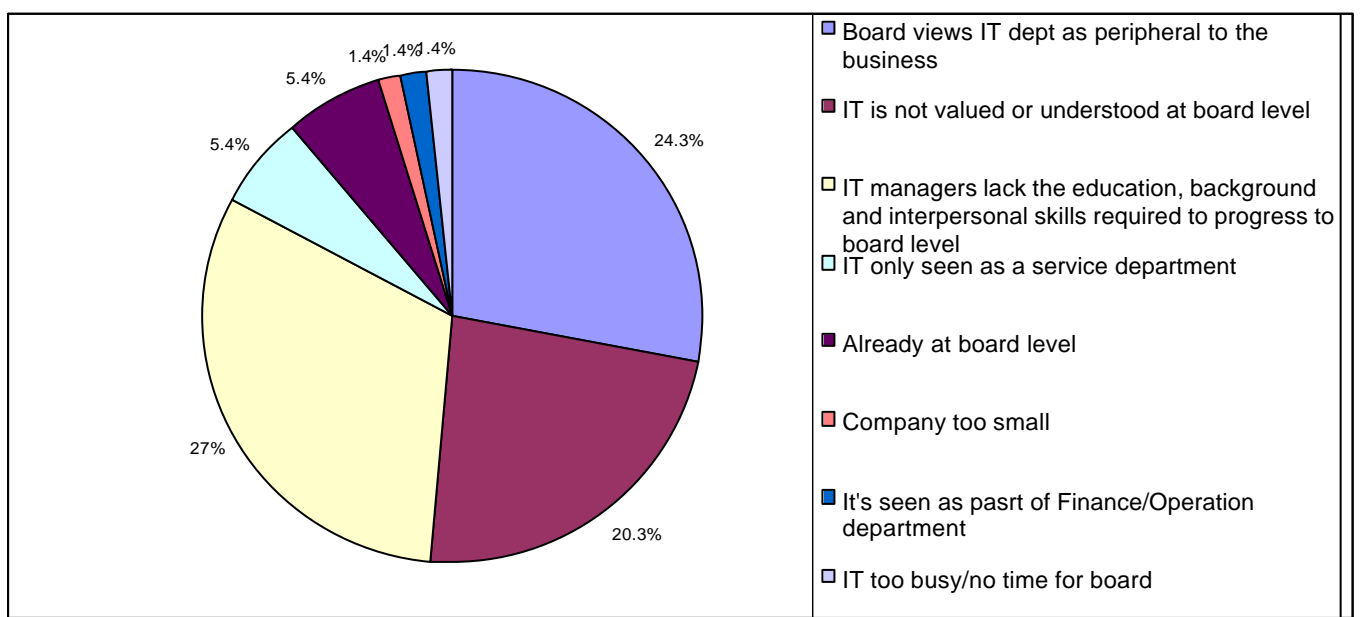


Just under a quarter of IT managers/directors in the retail, banking and insurance sectors say that the board views IT as being peripheral to the business. Only 18% of respondents in the automotive sector say this is true. Almost a third (29%) of IT managers in the retail industry say that IT is not valued or understood at board level, compared with 20% in the banking and automotive sectors and 16% in the insurance sector. 14% of respondents in the insurance sector say that IT is viewed merely as a service department. 14% of respondents in the insurance sector say that IT is viewed merely as a service department.

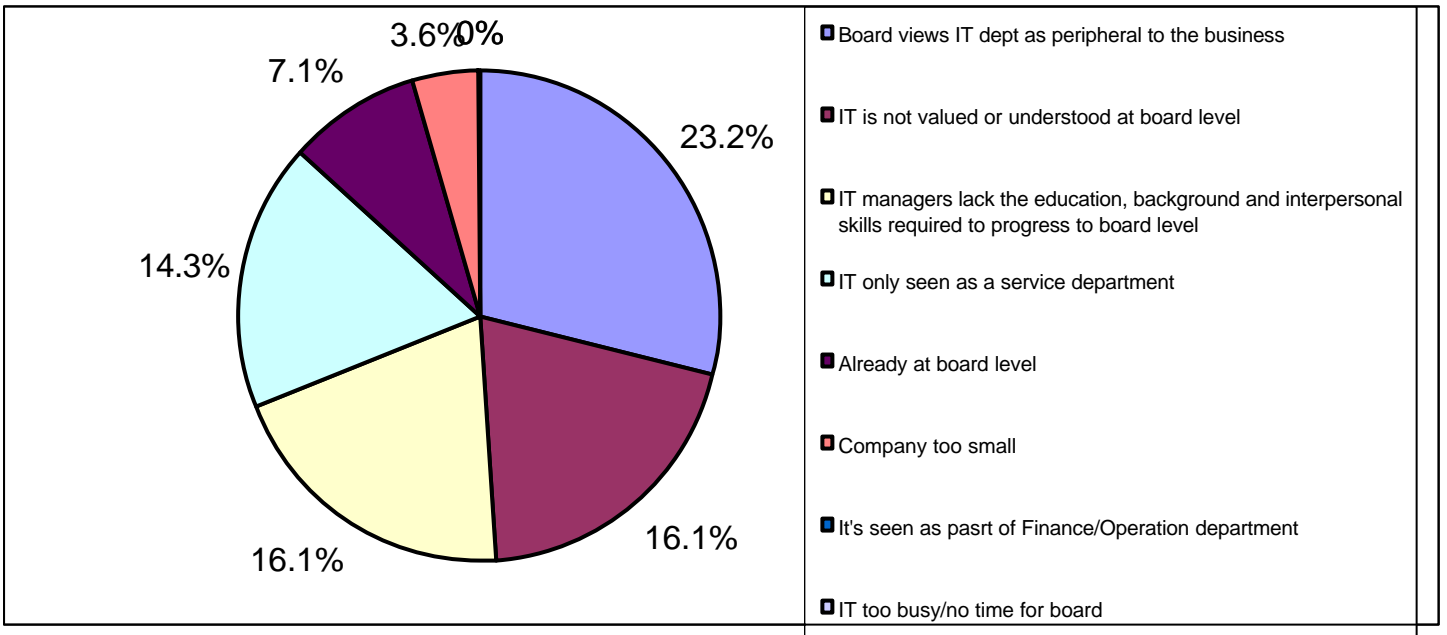
Base: Retail



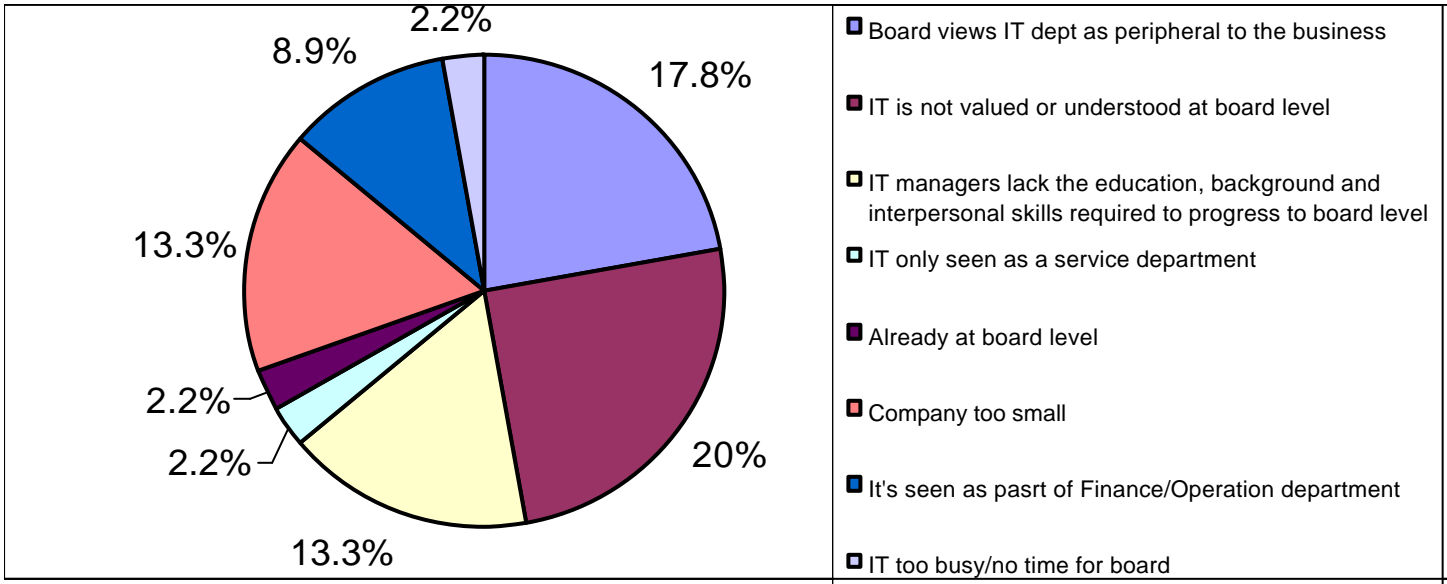
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



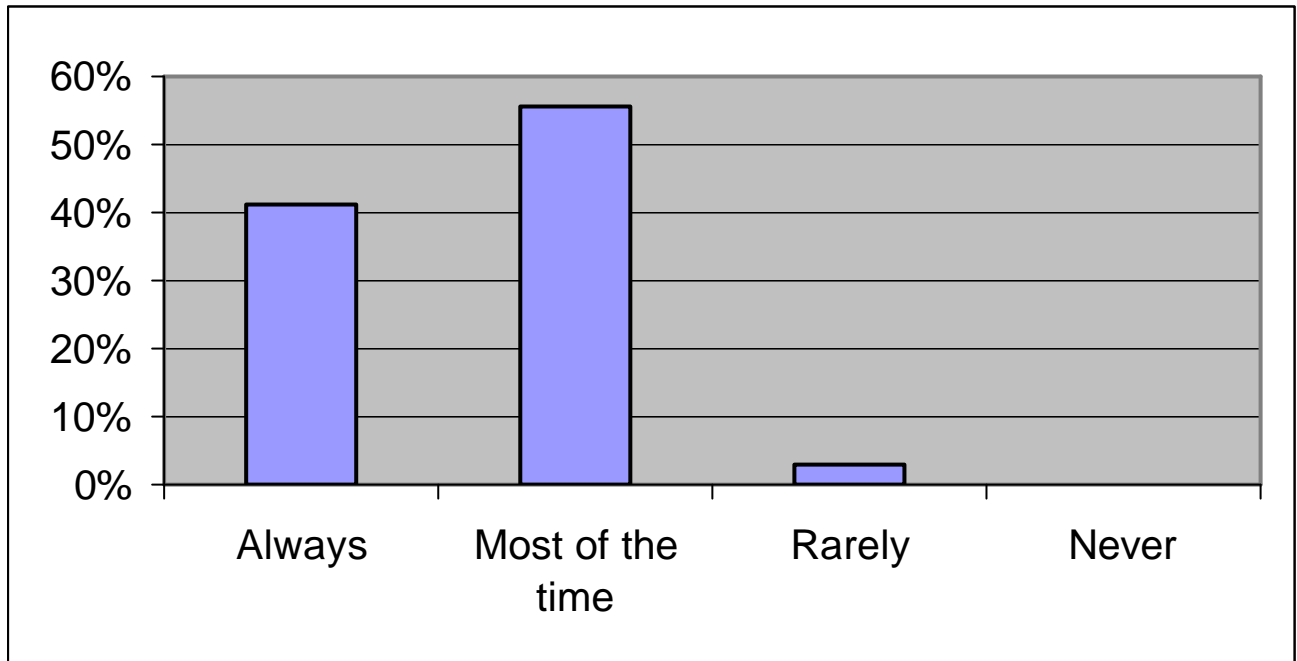
Base: automotive



11.0 Do you enjoy your job?

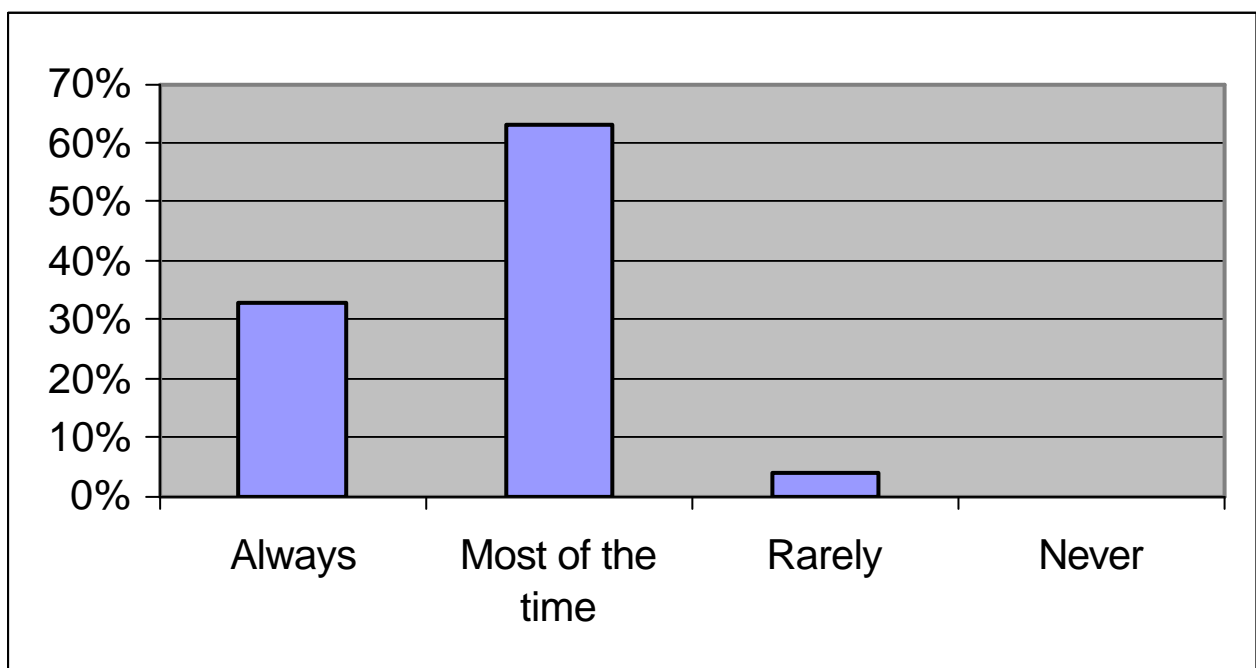
Overall, the vast majority of IT managers/directors enjoy their job. 41% enjoy their job all of the time and 56% enjoy their job most of the time.

Base: All

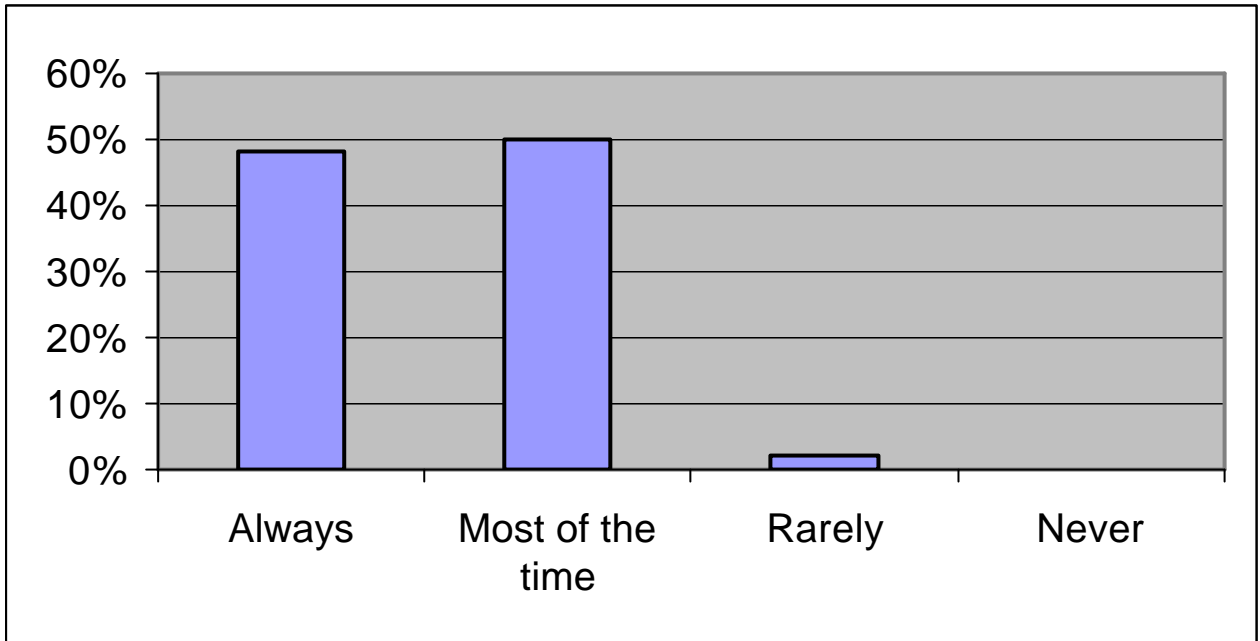


IT managers/directors in Germany are happiest in their jobs with 98% saying that they enjoy their jobs all or most of the time. For both the UK and Benelux, this figure is 96%.

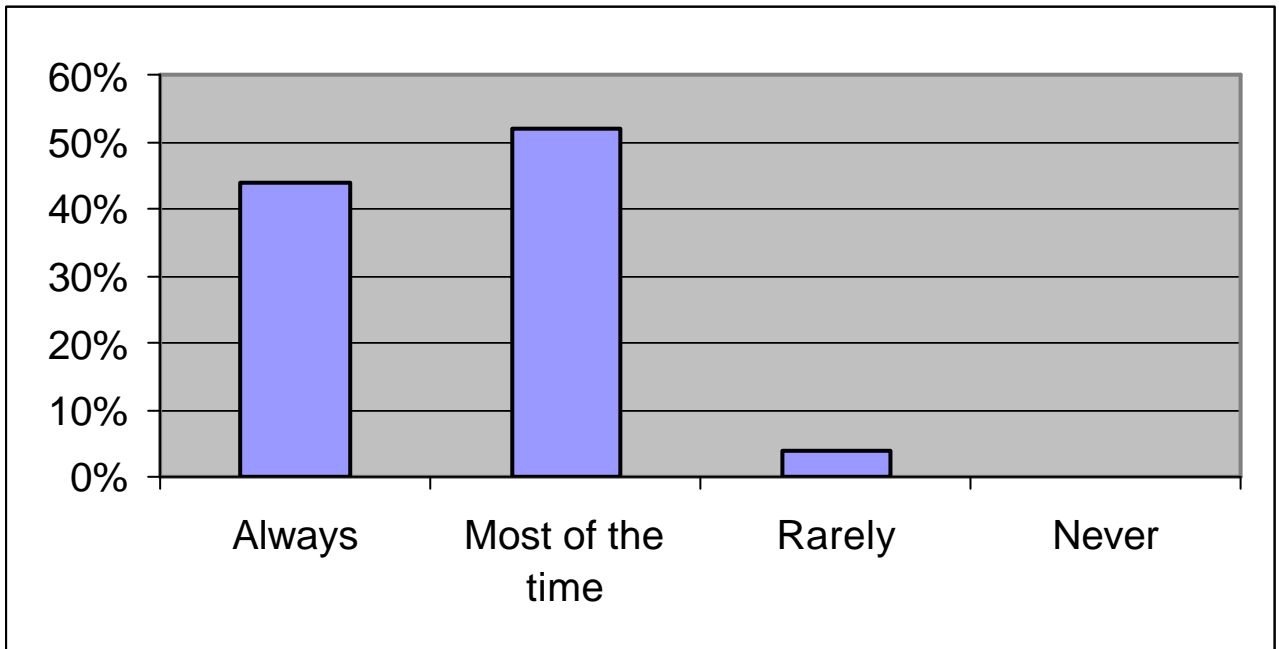
Base: UK



Base: Germany

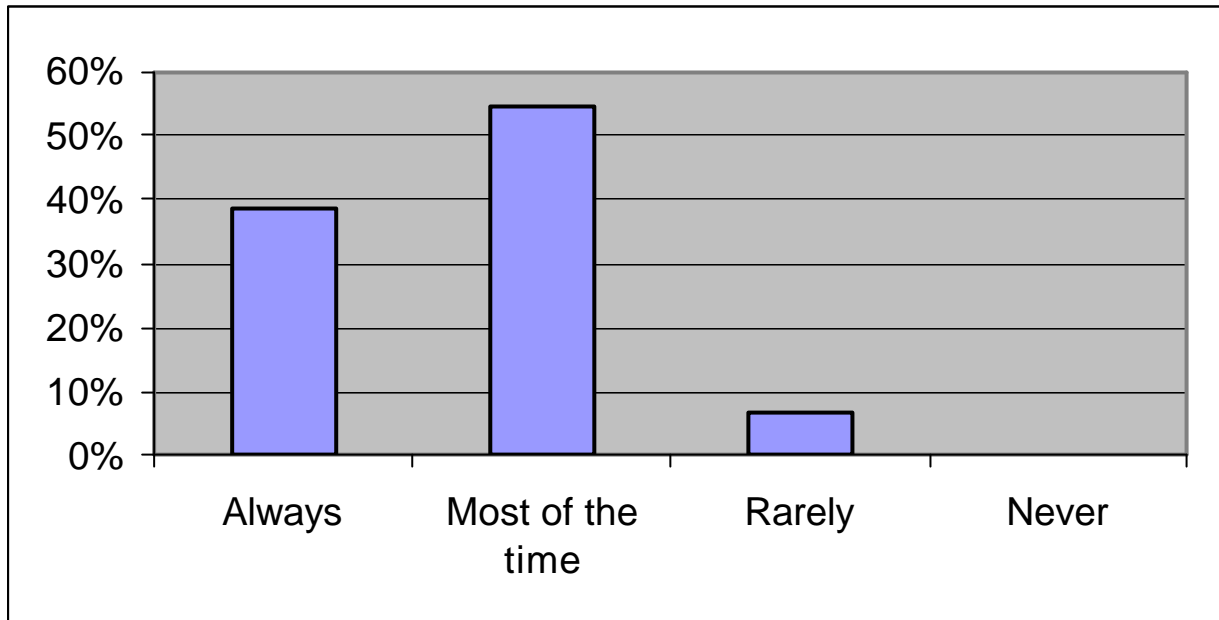


Base: Benelux

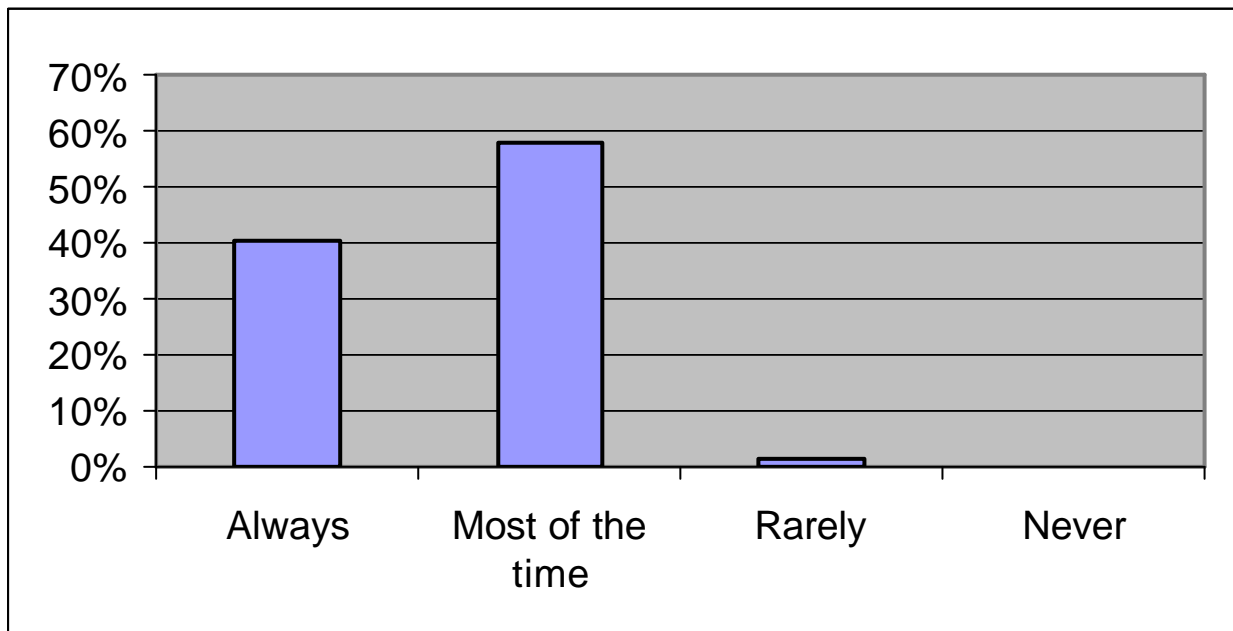


The automotive sector seems to be the best industry to work in – 100% of IT managers/directors enjoy their job most or all of the time. 99% of respondents in the banking sector are happy in their jobs, compared with 96% in the insurance industry and 94% in the retail industry.

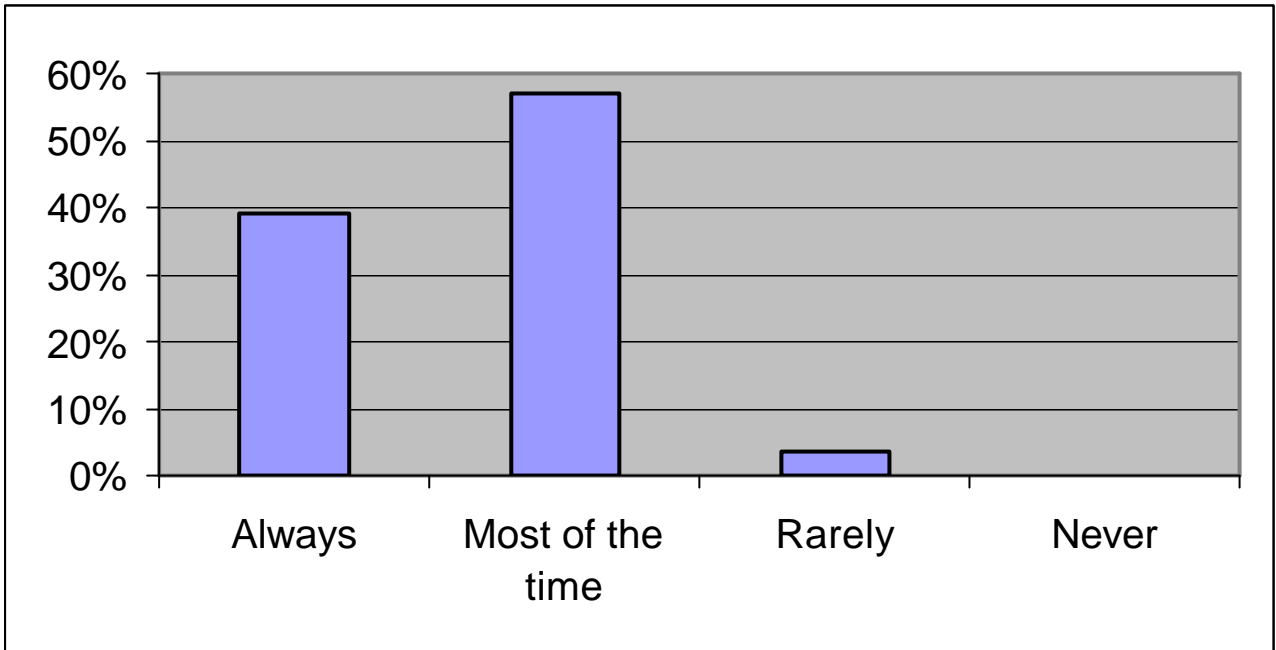
Base: Retail



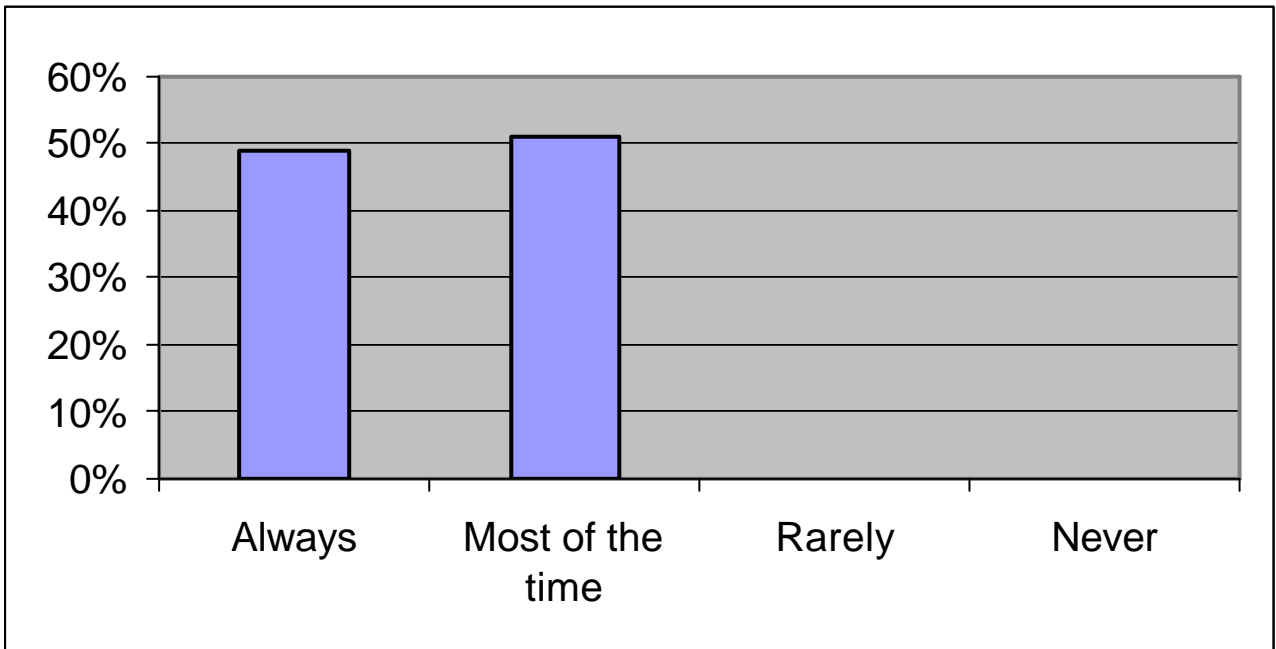
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



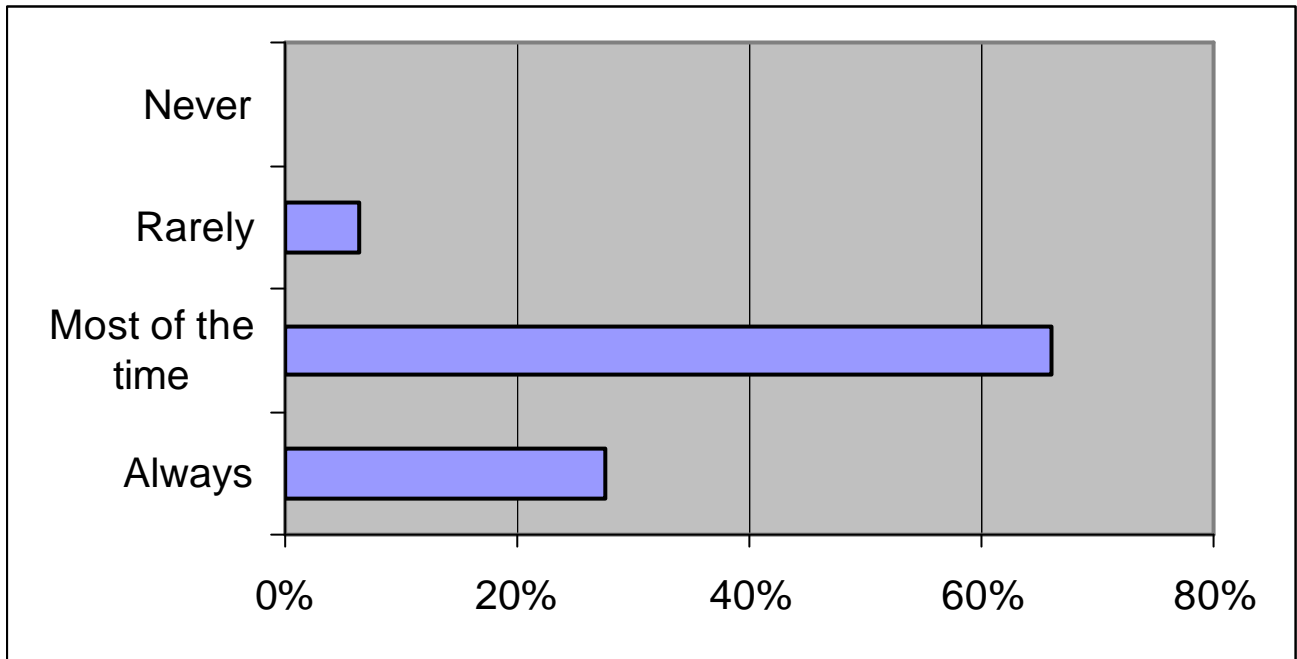
Base: Automotive



12.0 On the whole, do you feel valued at work?

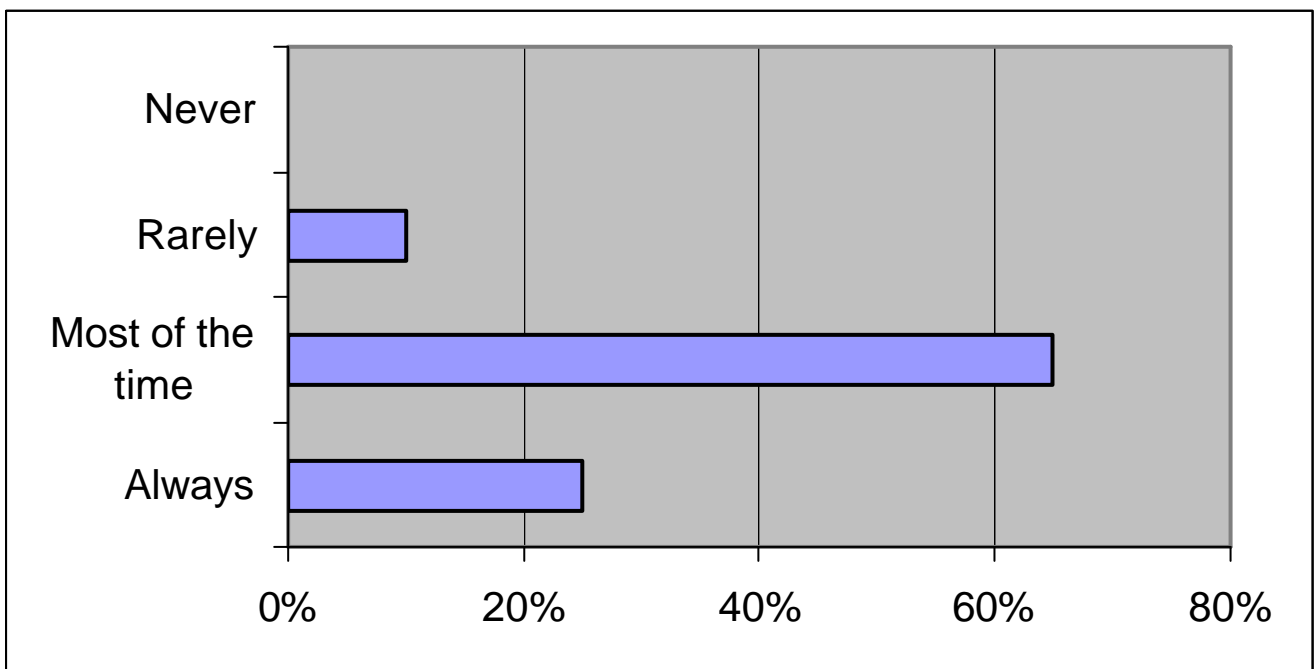
It seems that IT managers/directors do feel valued at work – 94% say that they feel valued all or most of the time.

Base: All

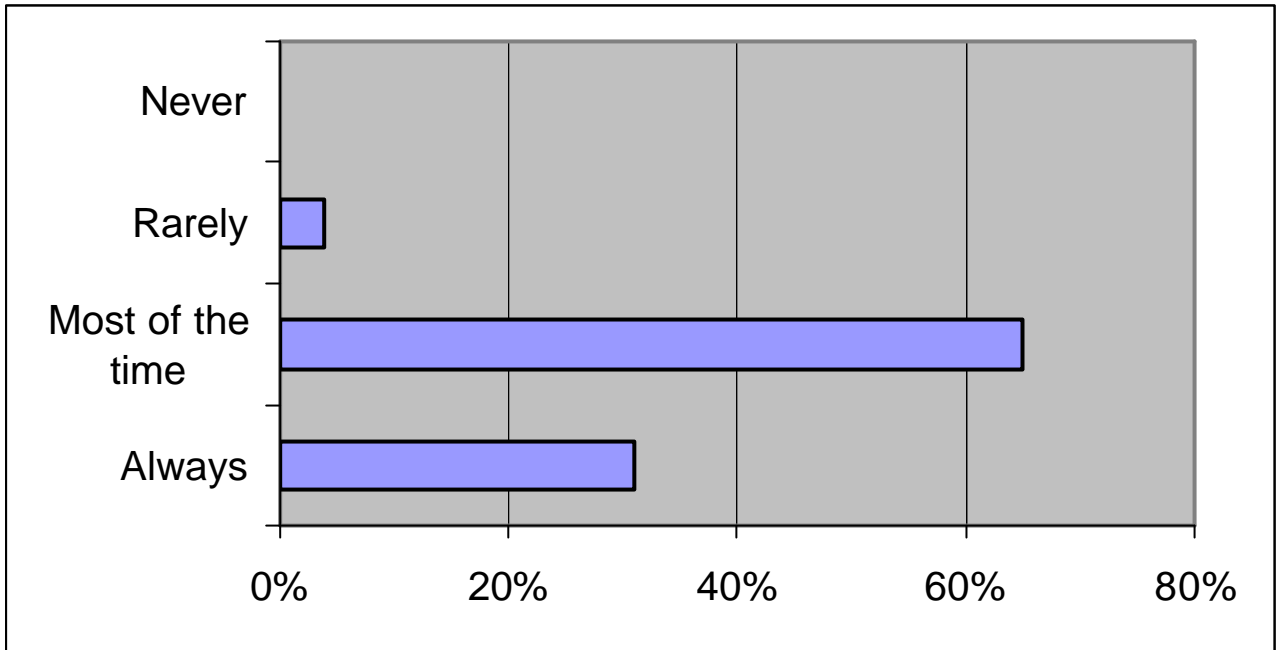


IT managers/directors in the UK feel the least valued in their jobs (90%), compared to their European counterparts. 96% in both Benelux and Germany feel valued all or most of the time in their jobs.

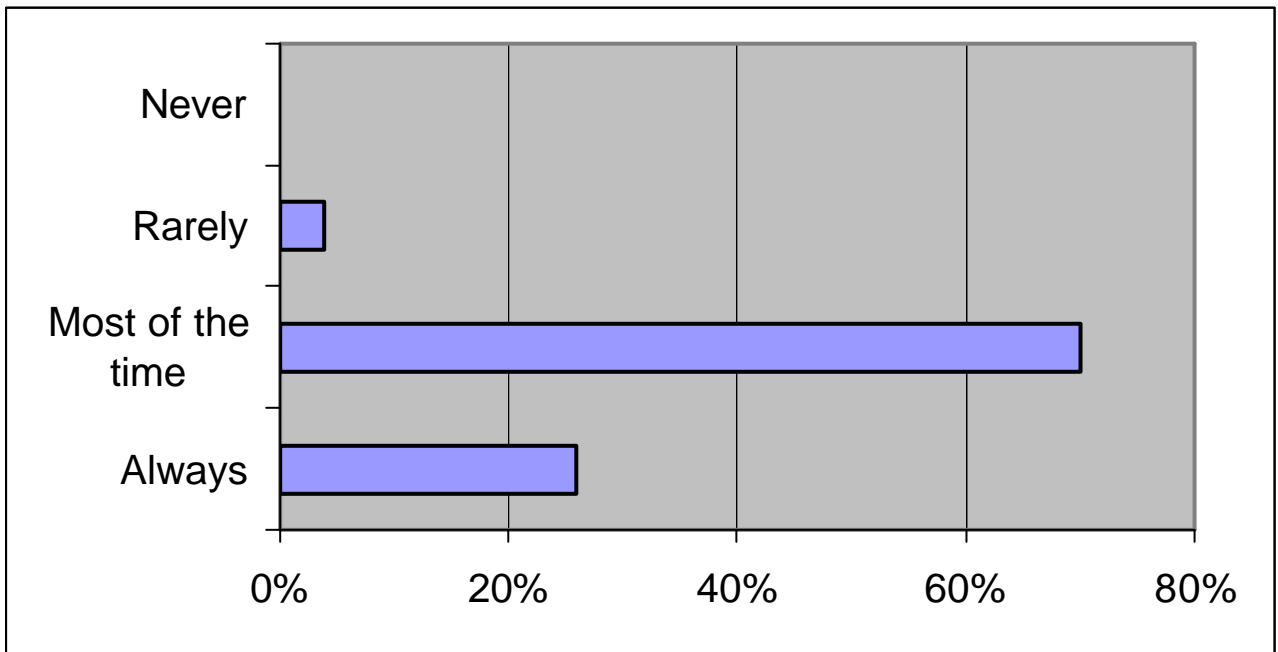
Base: UK



Base: Germany

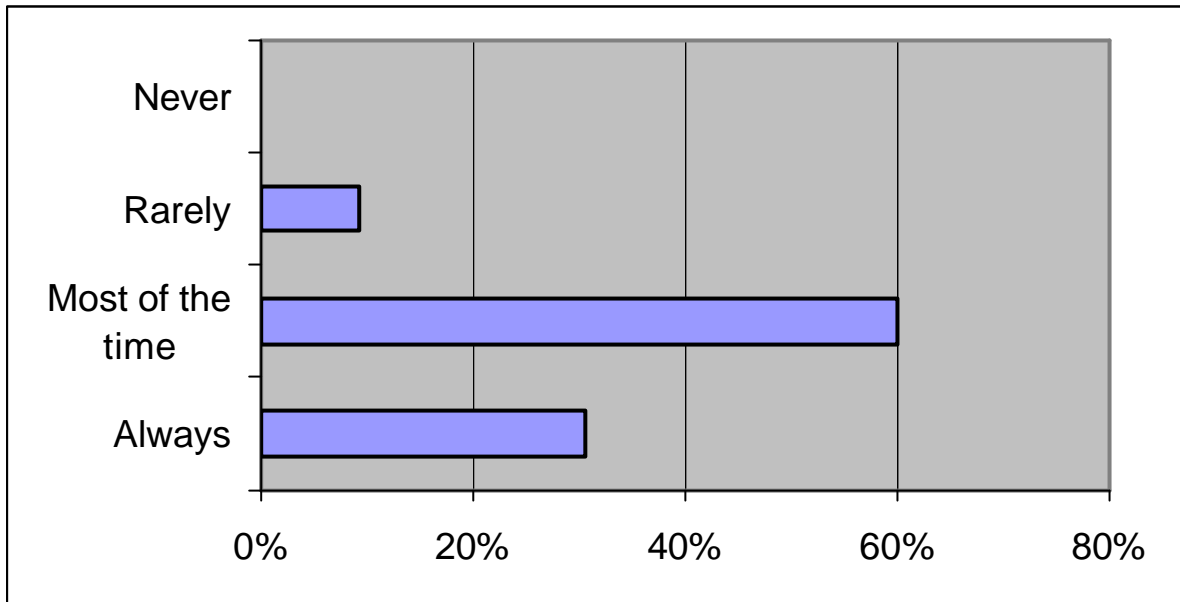


Base: Benelux

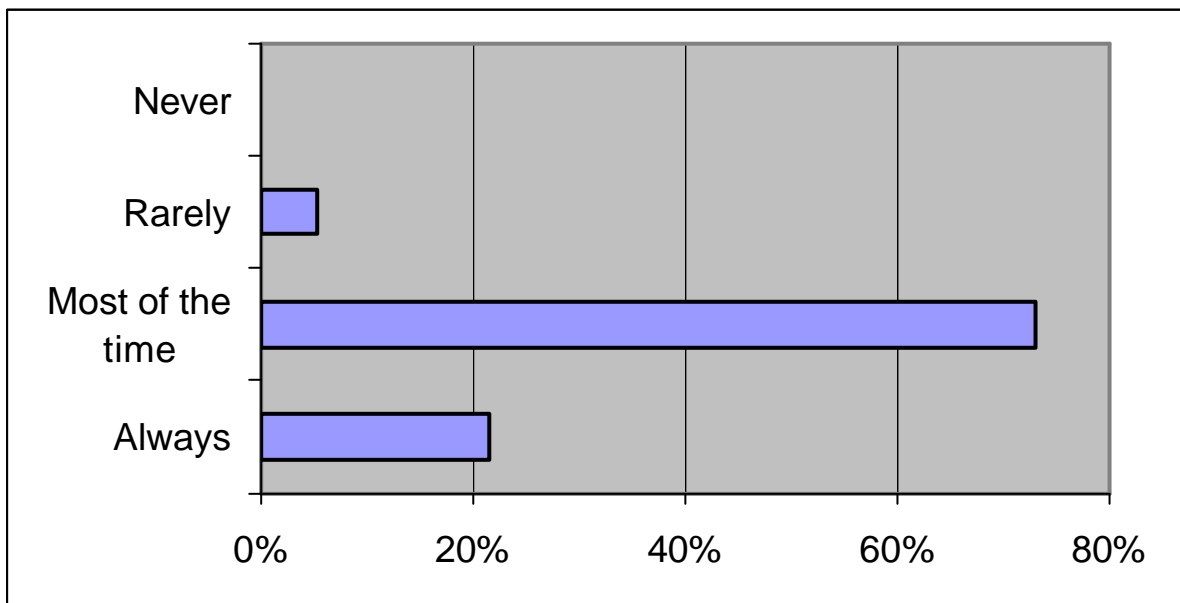


The automotive industry seems to be the best sector for IT managers to work in. Not only do 100% enjoy their jobs, 97% feel valued either all or most of the time. IT managers in the retail industry feel valued the least (91%) compared with the banking (95%) and insurance (93%) market sectors.

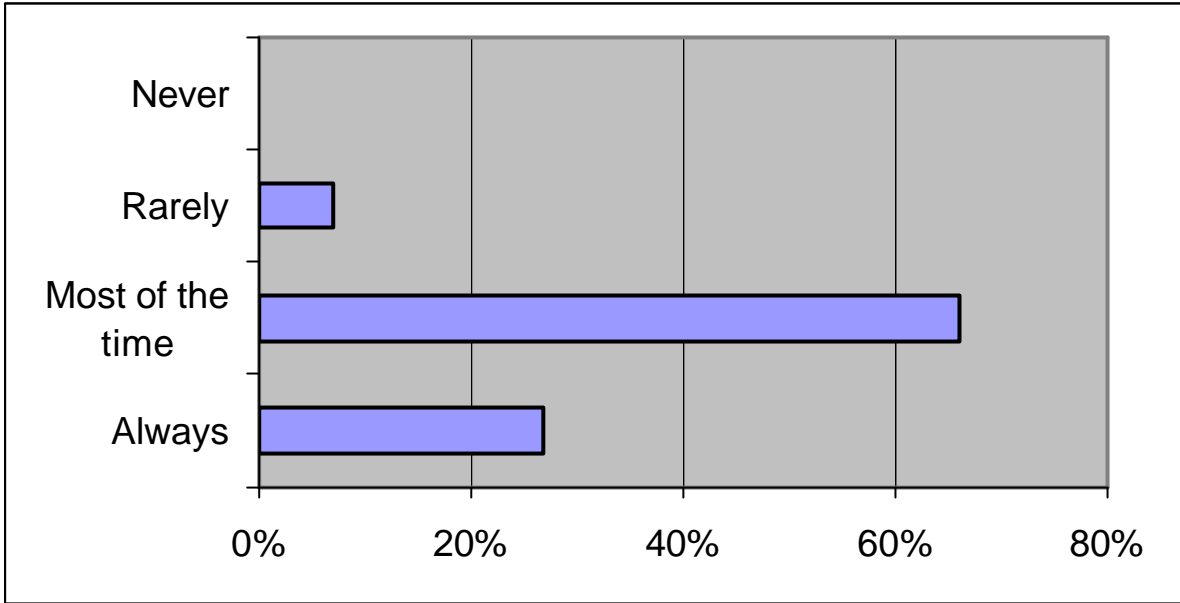
Base: Retail



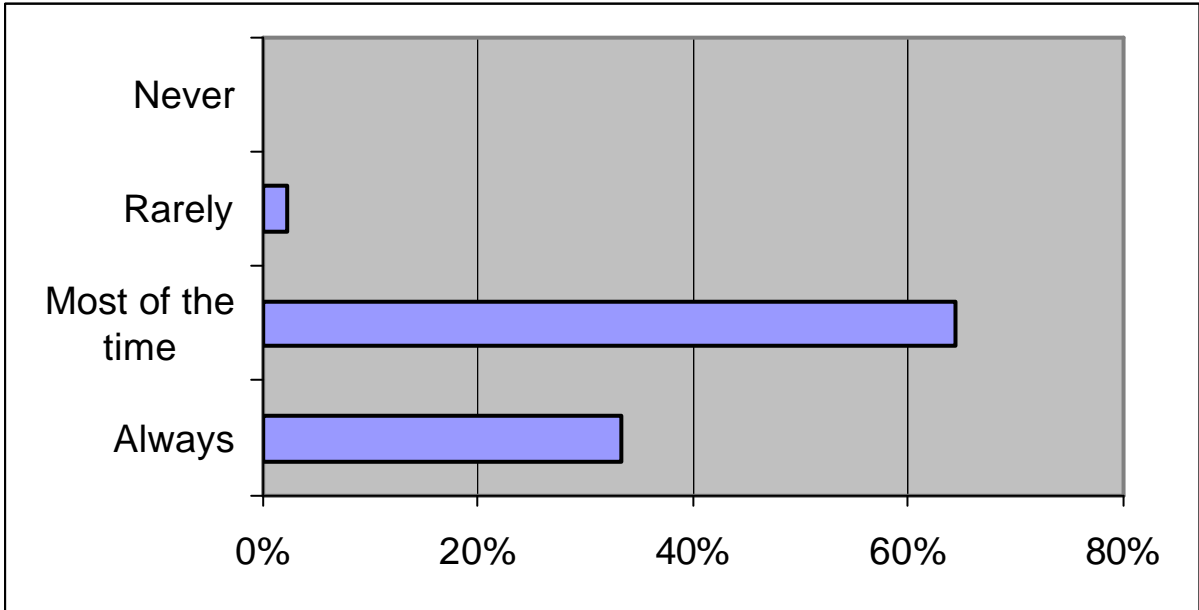
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



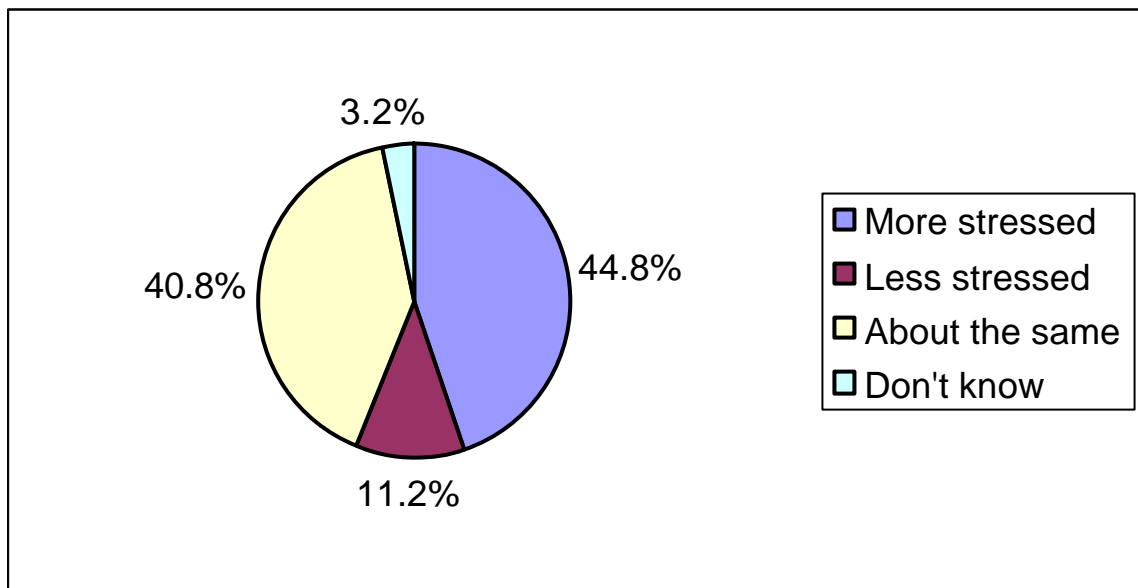
Base: Automotive



13.0 Are you more or less stressed at work than you were one year ago?

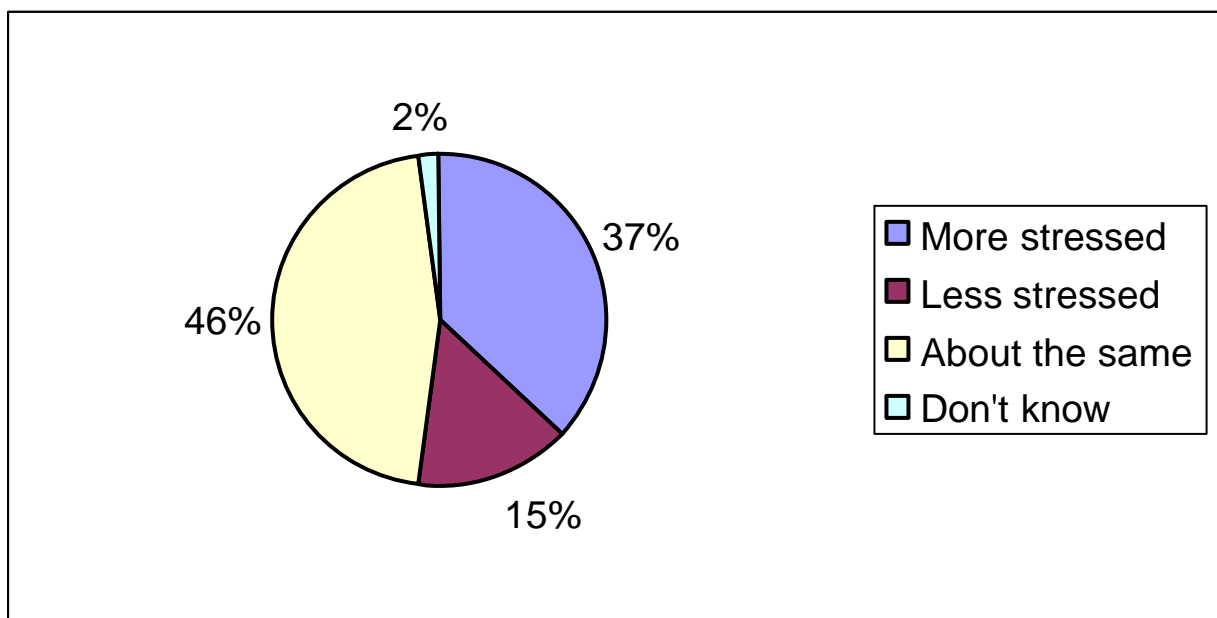
Almost half (45%) of IT managers/directors are more stressed at work than they were one year ago. 40% claim that their stress levels are about the same as they were a year ago and 11% say they are less stressed.

Base: All

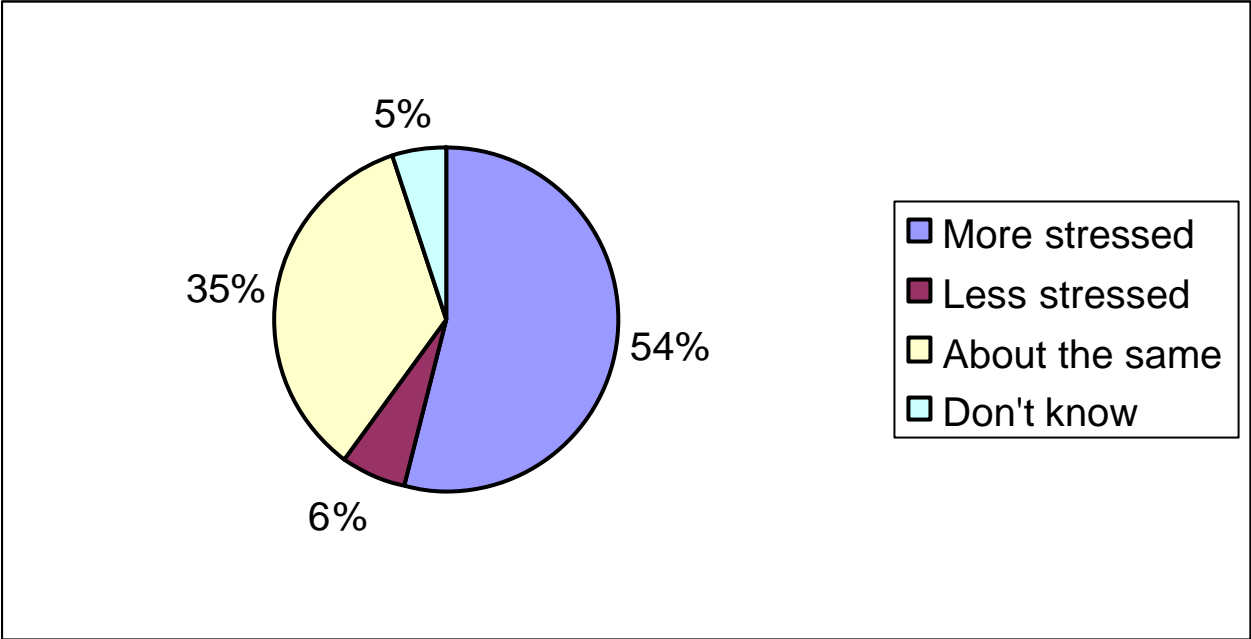


Germany is the most stressful of the countries surveyed for IT managers to work – over half (54%) say they are more stressed than they were one year ago. In the UK, 37% of respondents are more stressed, whereas 15% are less stressed and 46% are 'about the same'. 84% of IT managers in Benelux are either as stressed or more stressed than they were one year ago.

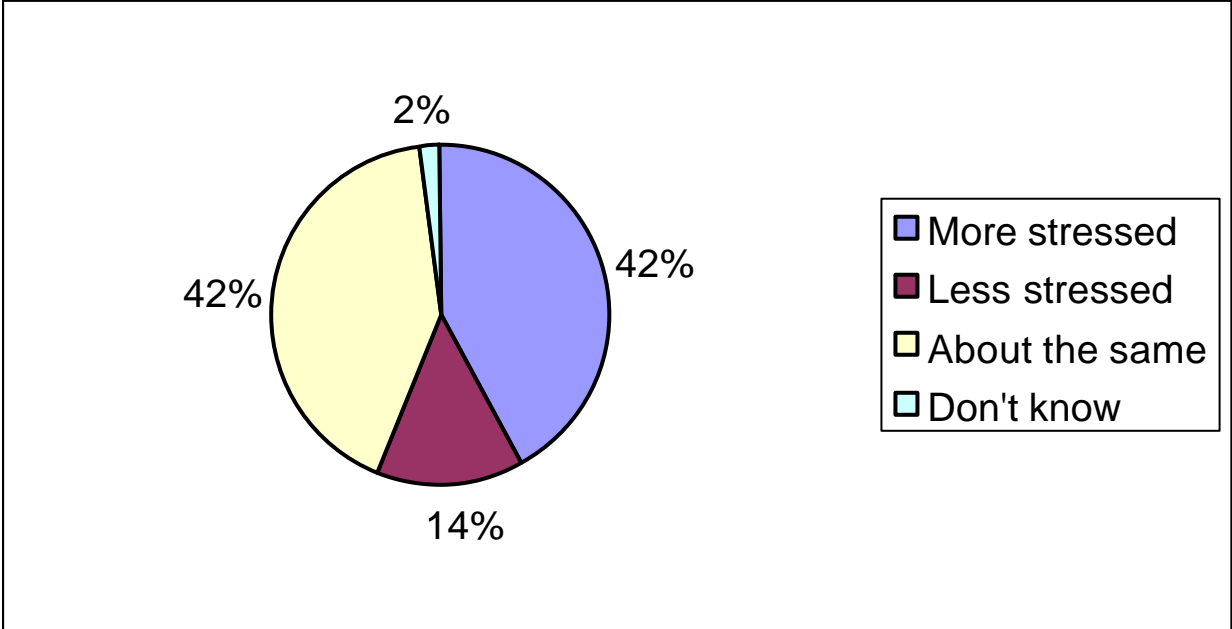
Base: UK



Base: Germany

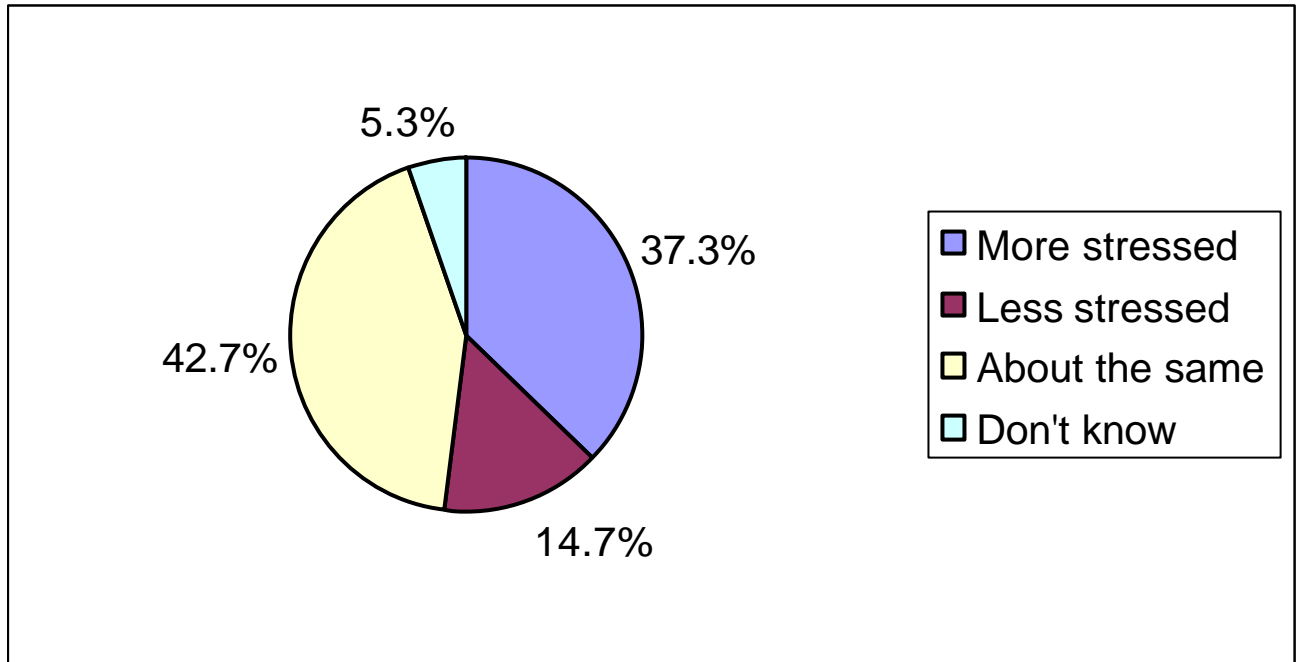


Base: Benelux

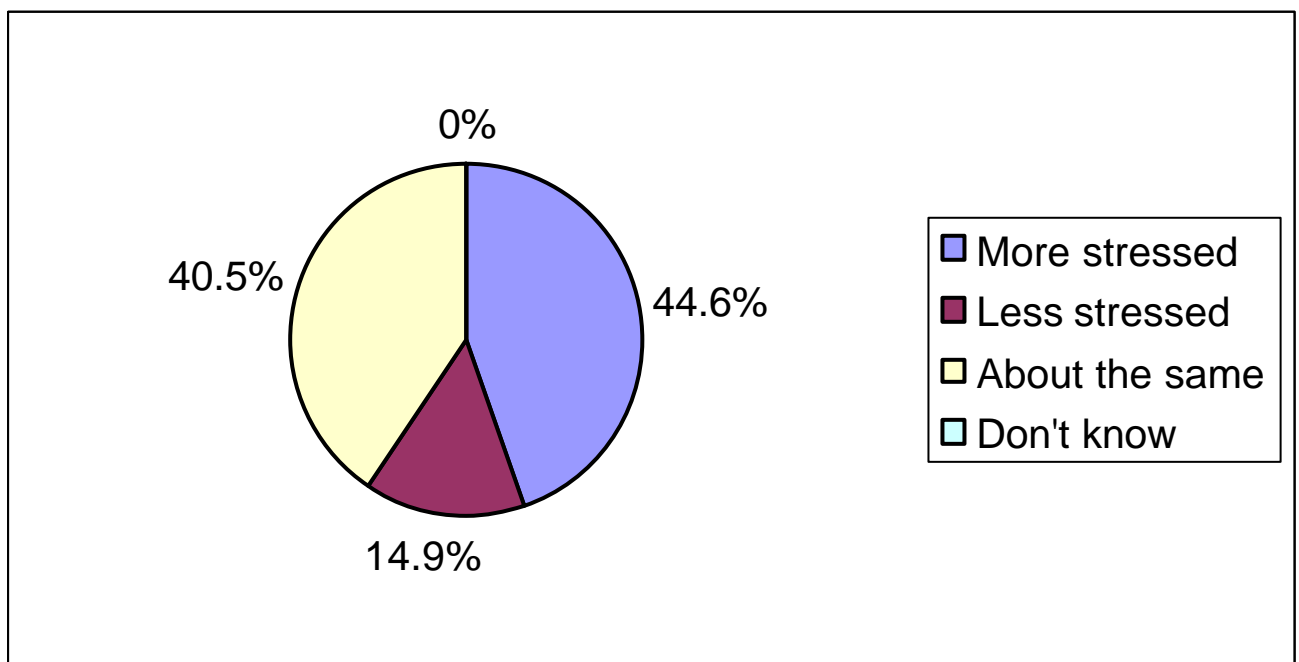


Despite the apparent levels of job satisfaction in the automotive sector, 58% of IT managers/directors in this industry are more stressed than they were a year ago. 45% in both the banking and insurance industries say that they are more stressed and just over a third (37%) in the retail sector are more stressed than they were last year.

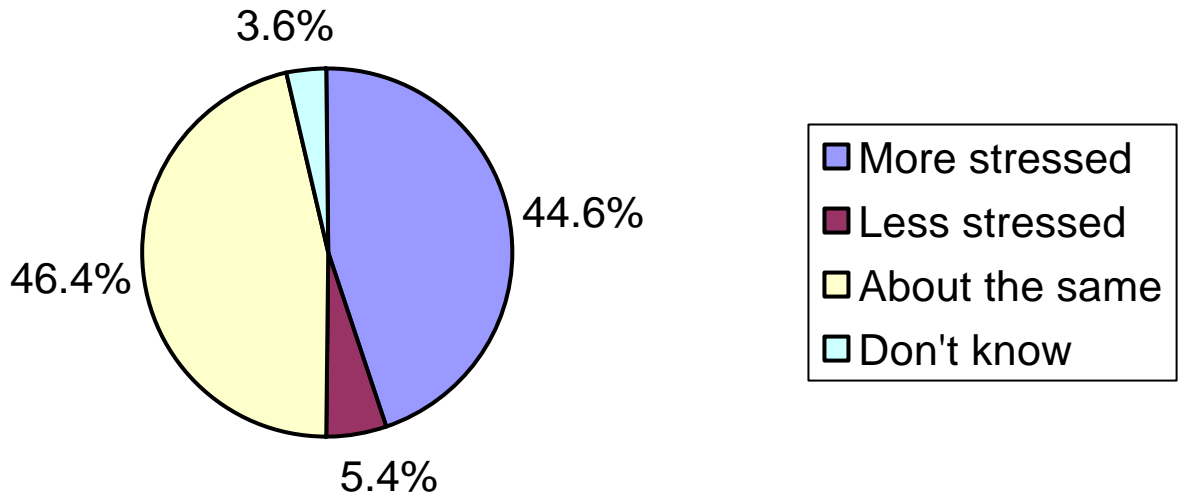
Base: Retail



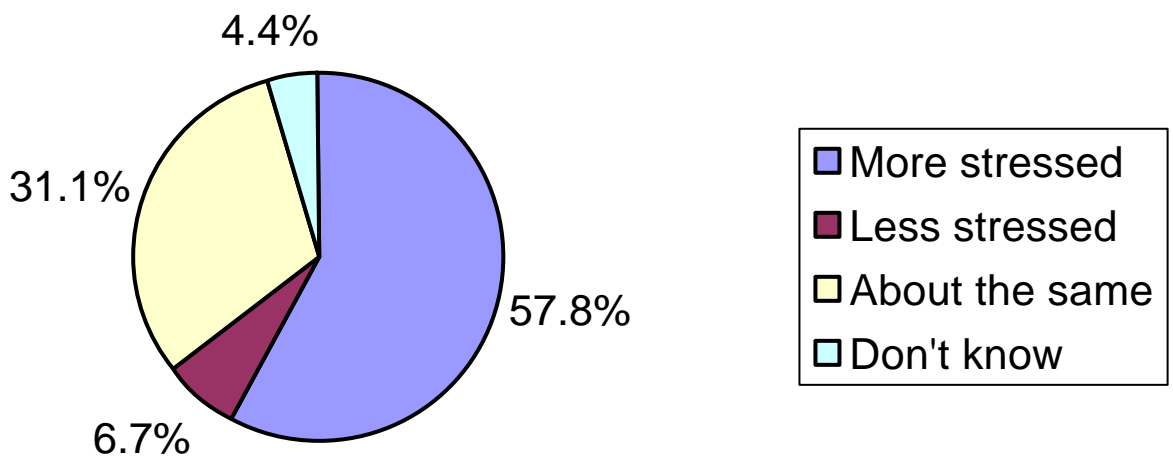
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



Base: Automotive

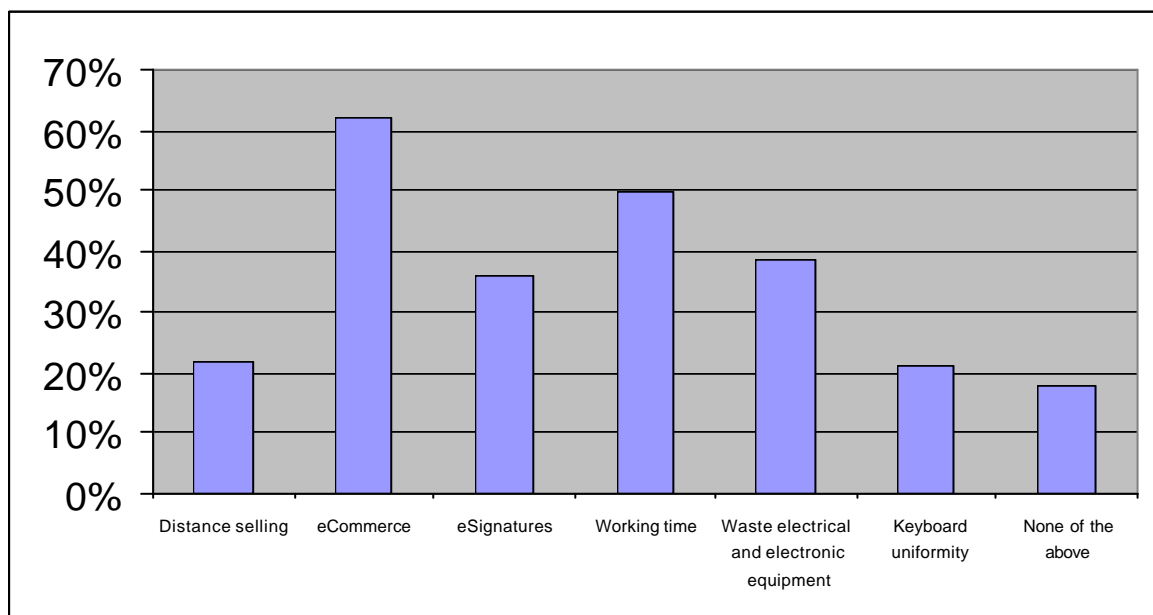


14.0 Which European directives are you aware of?

Overall, the majority (62%) of IT managers/directors have heard of the e-commerce directive, however, only a minority have heard of the direct selling directive (22%), e-signatures (36%), working time (50%), waste electrical and electronic equipment (38%) and 'keyboard uniformity' (21%). 18% of respondents haven't heard of any of these directives.

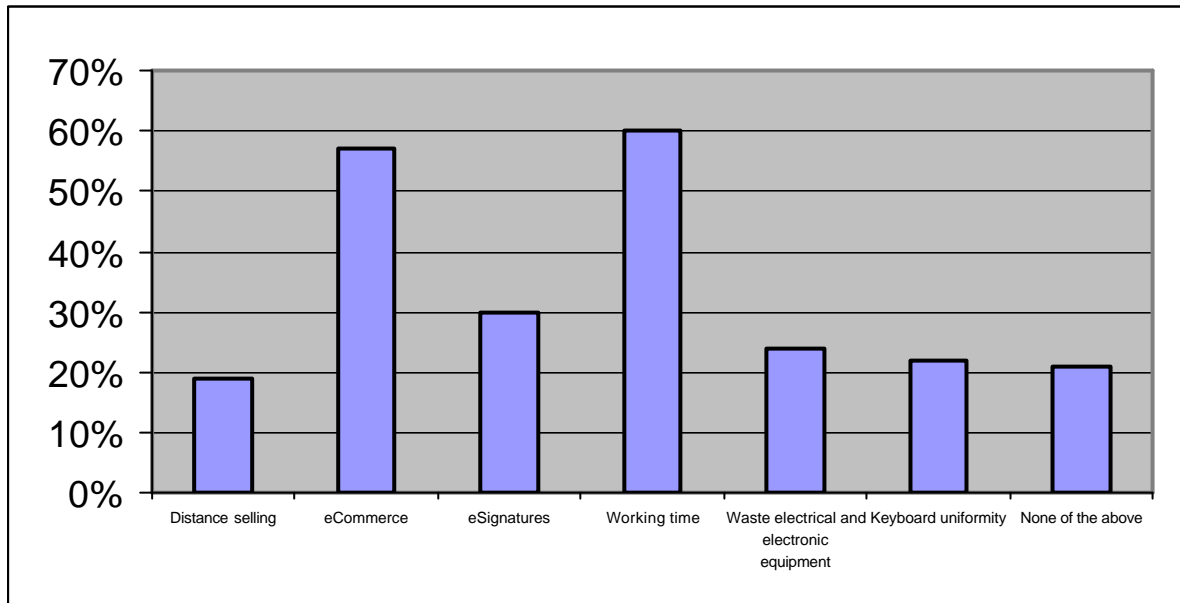
It should be noted that 'keyboard uniformity' isn't a European directive (it is fabricated directive to assess the validity of responses), however, 21% of IT managers/directors claimed to have heard of this non-existent directive.

Base: All

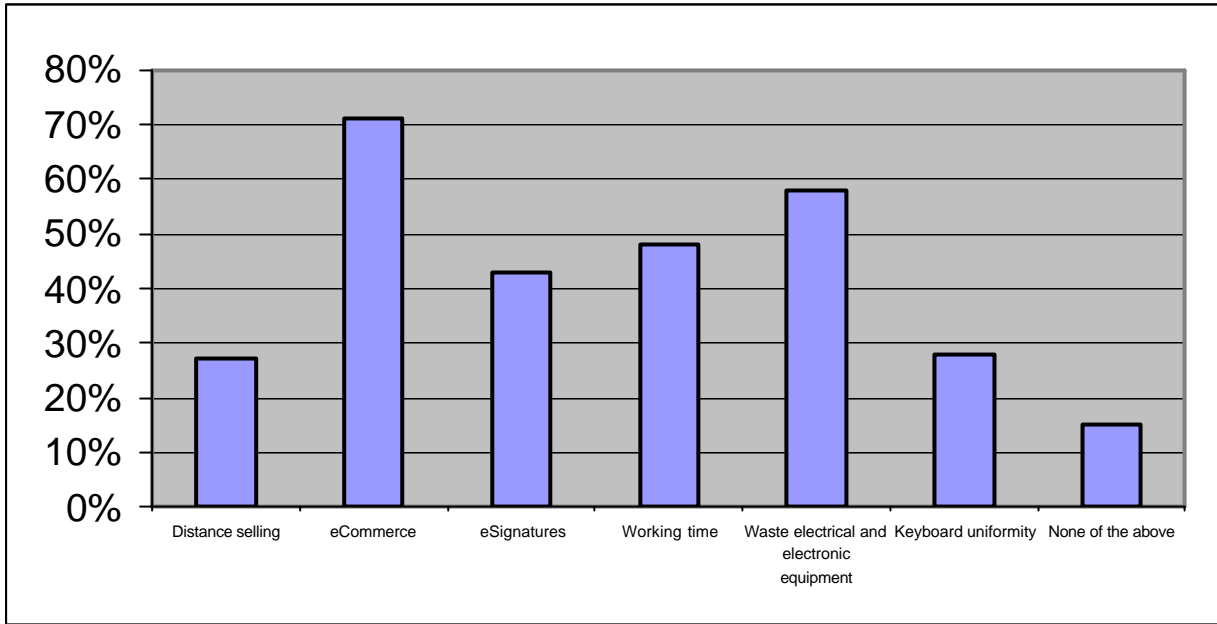


IT managers/directors in the UK appear to have the worst knowledge of European directives - 21% say they haven't heard of any of those listed. Germany's awareness is highest with only 15% saying that they are not aware of any of the listed directives, compared to 18% in Benelux.

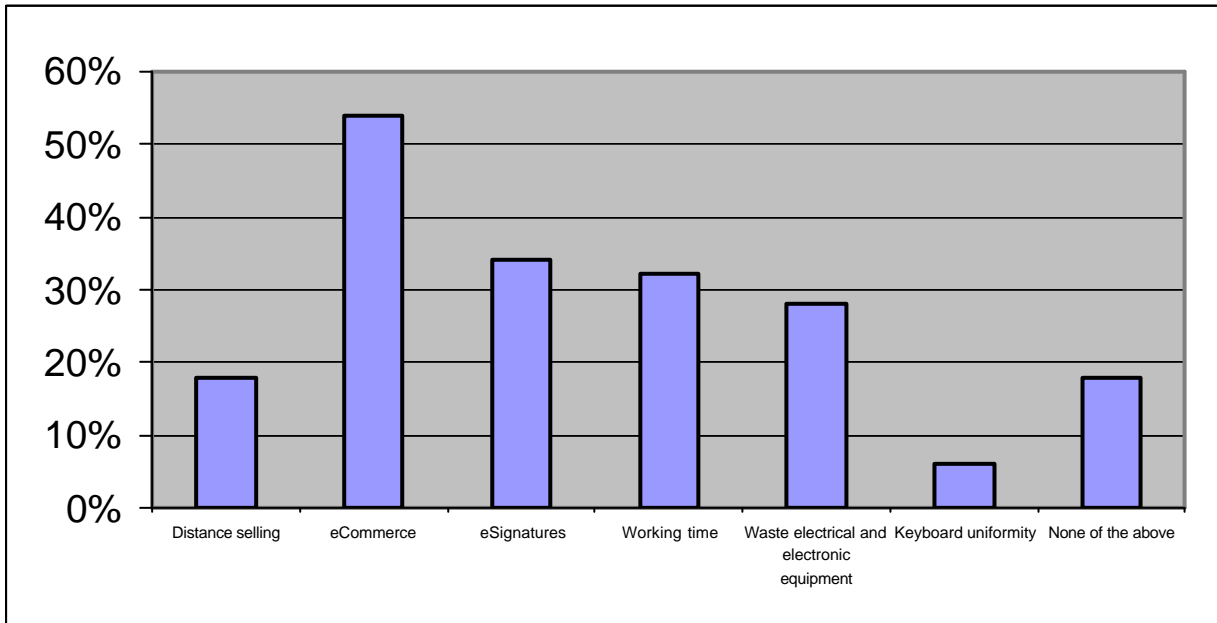
Base: UK



Base: Germany

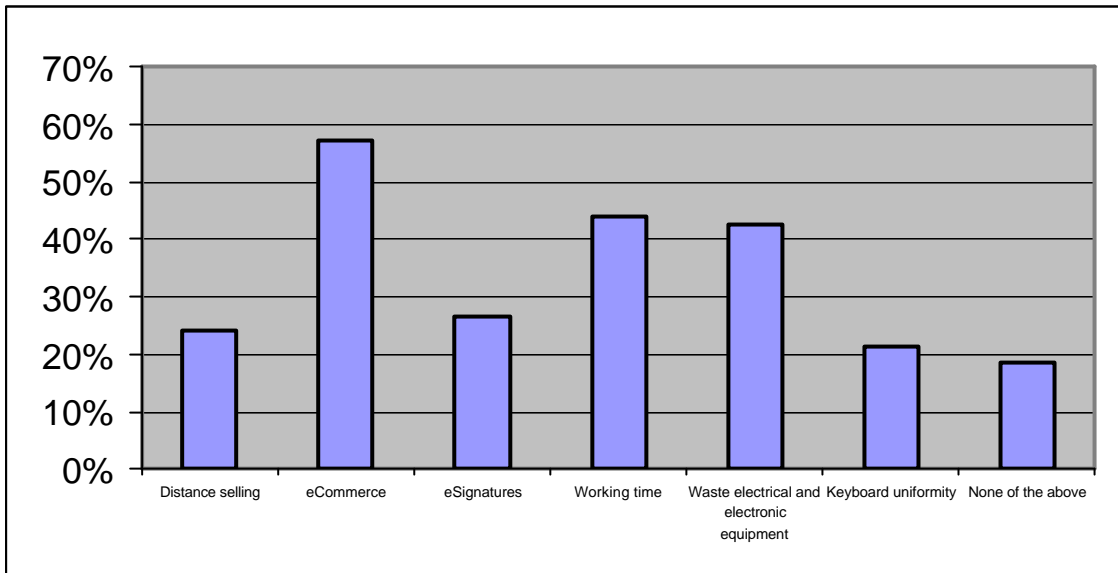


Base: Benelux

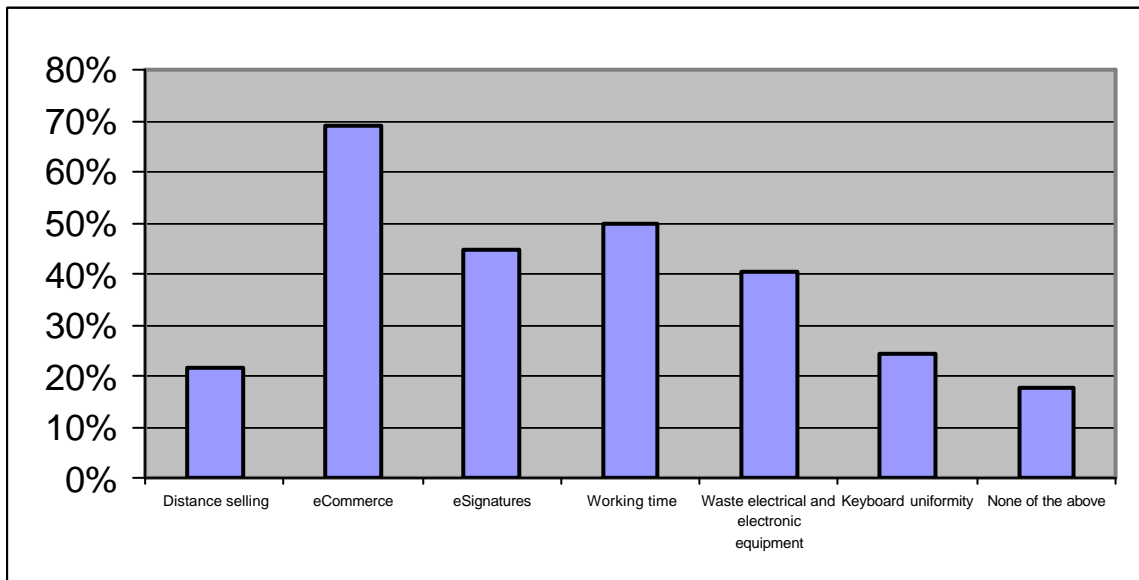


The automotive industries' IT managers have the worst knowledge of European directives – 20% haven't heard of any of those listed. The same figure for the retail sector is 19%, compared with banking (18%) and insurance (17%).

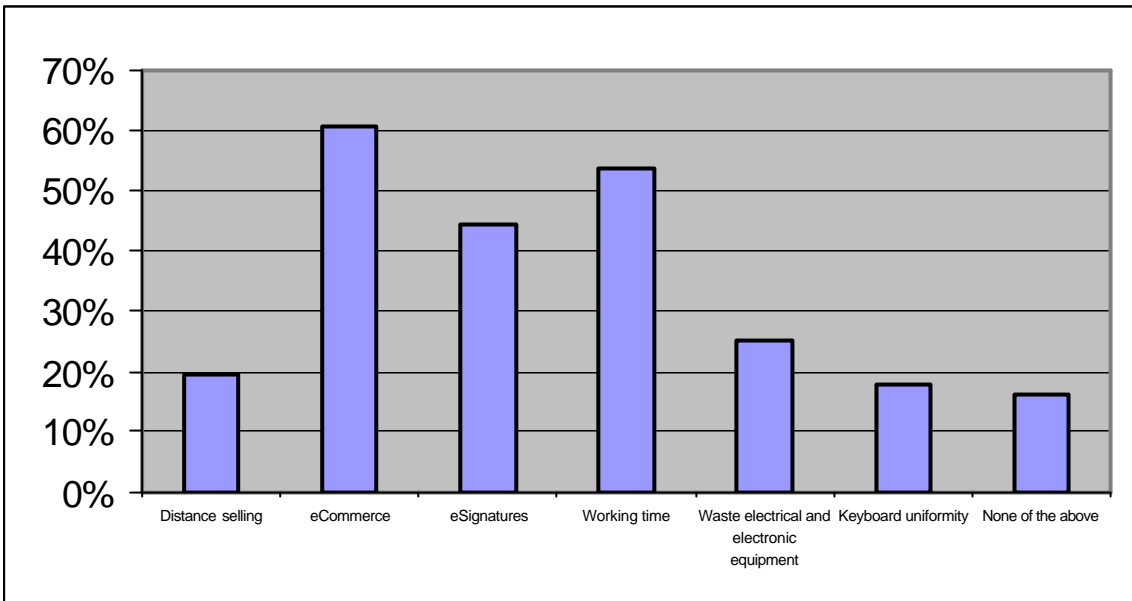
Base: Retail



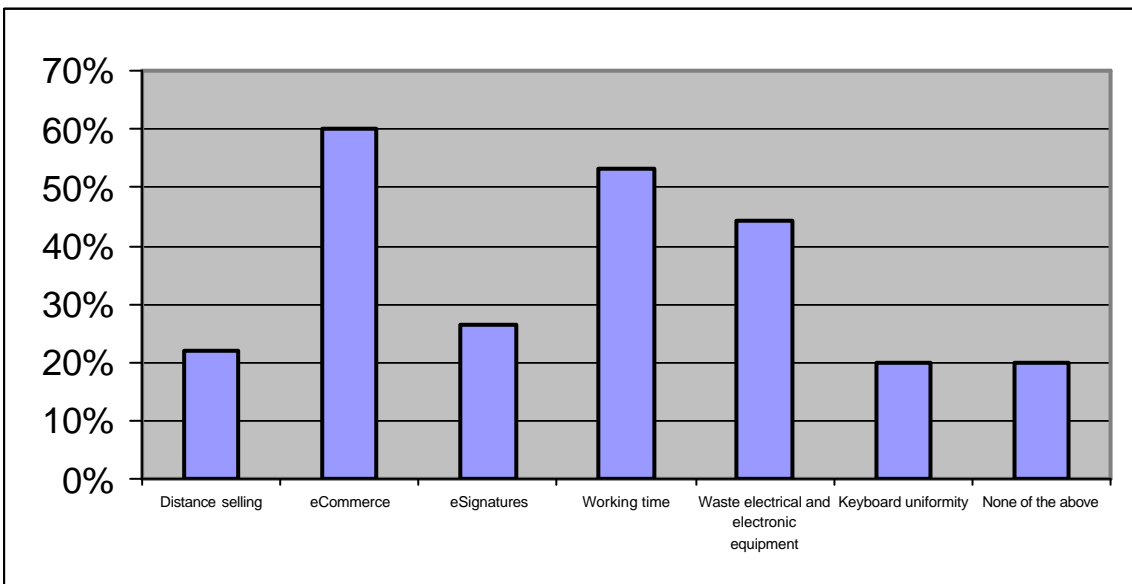
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



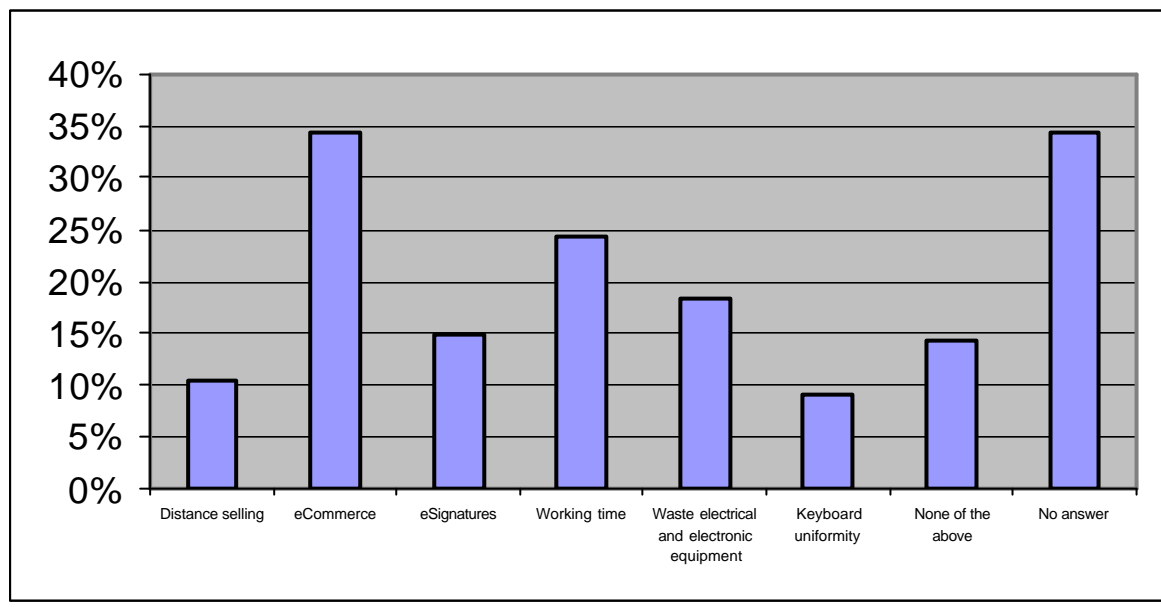
Base: Automotive



15.0 Which European directives have involved you in policy and/or systems creation?

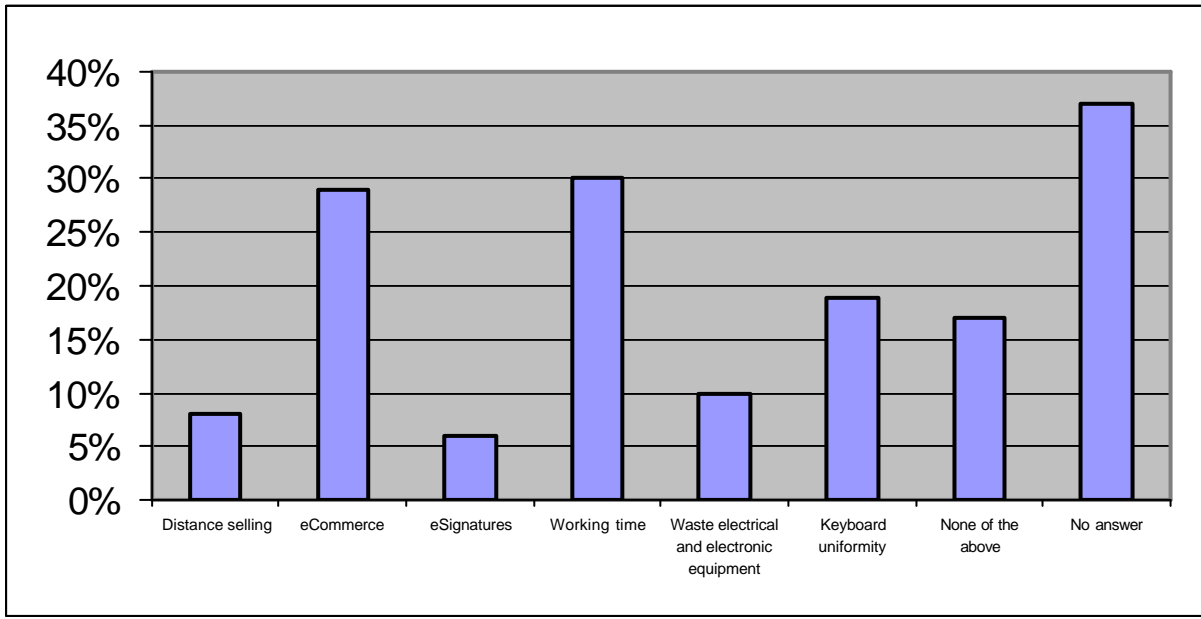
Overall, 14% of IT managers/directors in Europe haven't been involved in policy and/or systems creation for any of the listed European directives. A minority have been involved in the distance selling directive (10%), e-commerce directive (34%), e-signatures directive (15%), working time directive (24%), waste electrical and electronic equipment directive (18%) and 'keyboard uniformity' directive' (9%).

Base: All

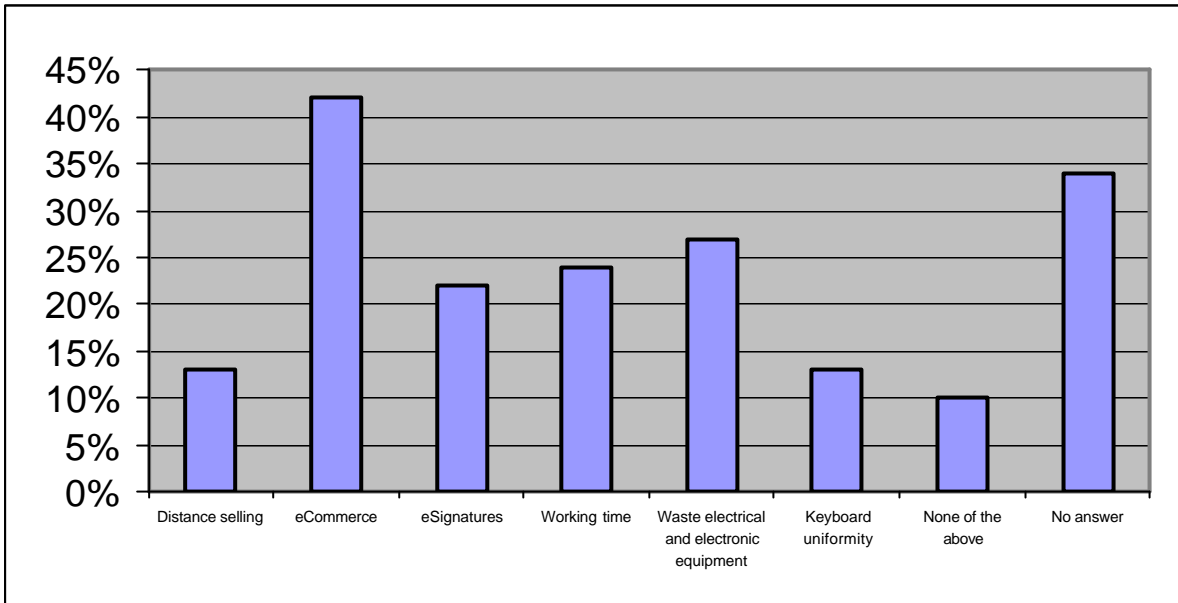


IT managers/directors in Germany have been the most involved in policy and/or systems creation for the listed directives. Only 10% haven't been involved with any at all, compared with 17% in the UK and 18% in Benelux.

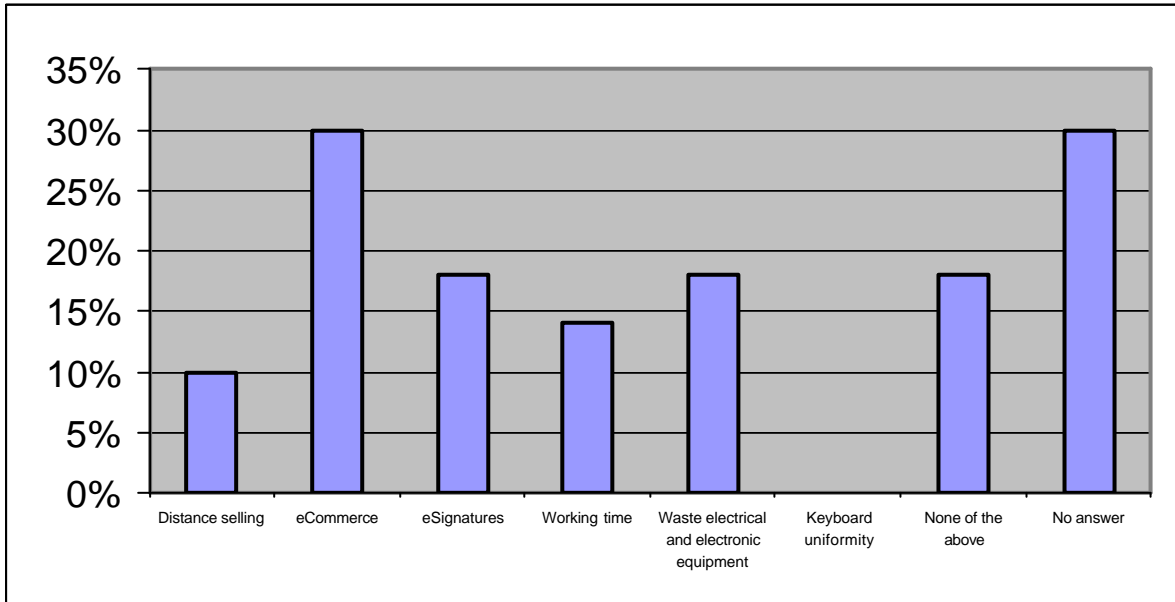
Base: UK



Base: Germany

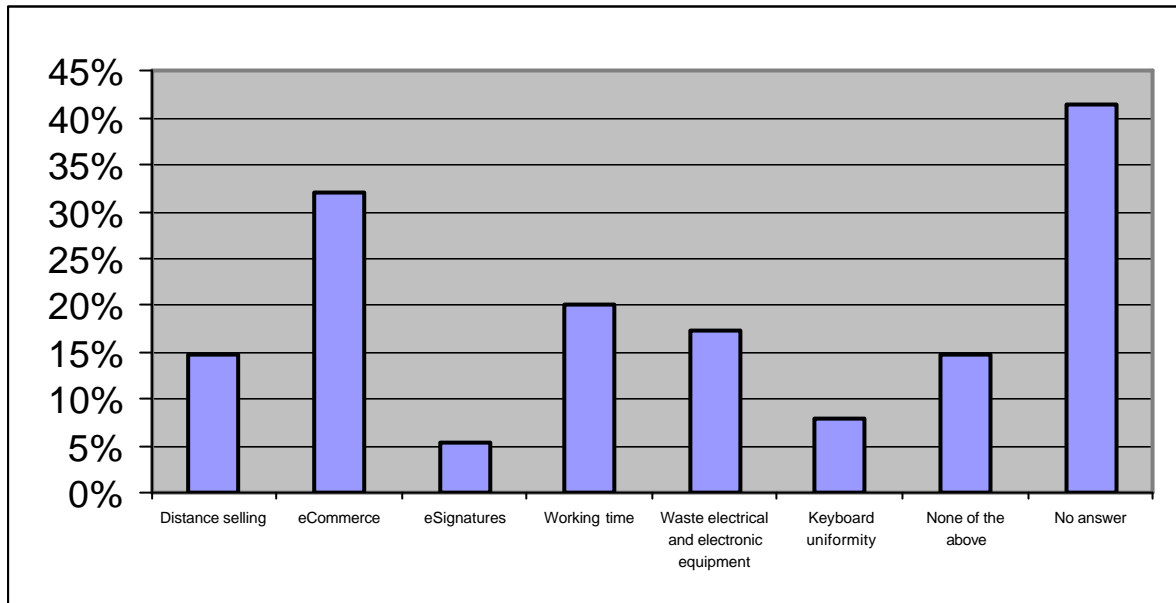


Base: Benelux

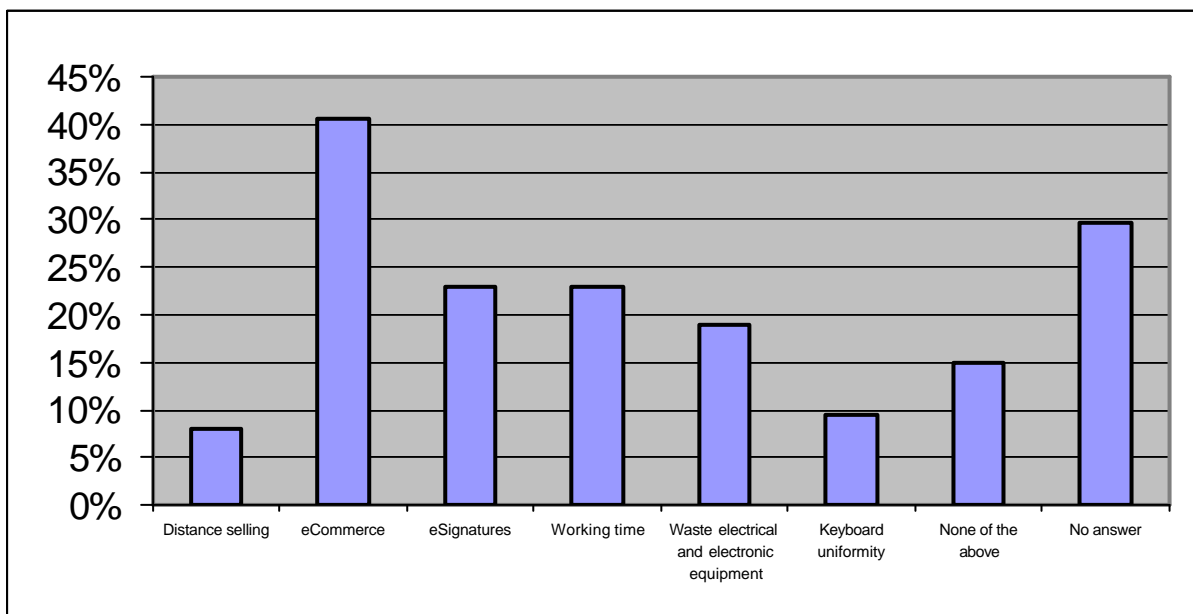


18% of IT managers in the automotive sector say that they haven't been involved in policy and/or systems creation for any of the listed directives. IT managers in the insurance sector appear to have been most involved with policy/systems creation – only 11% haven't had any involvement. This figure is 15% for both the banking and retail sectors.

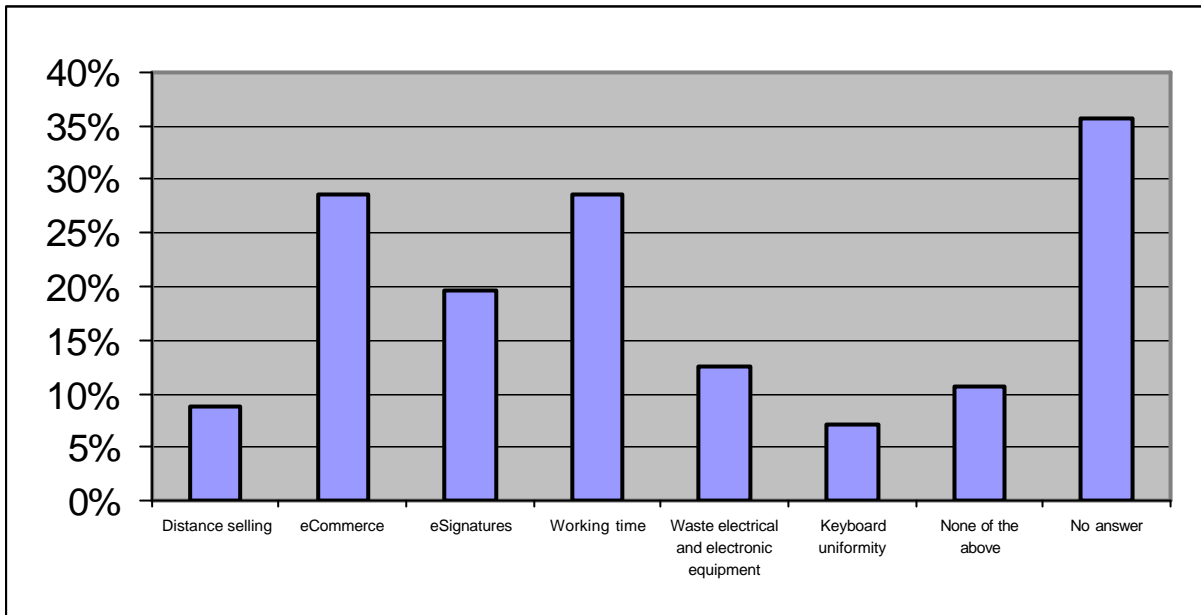
Base: Retail



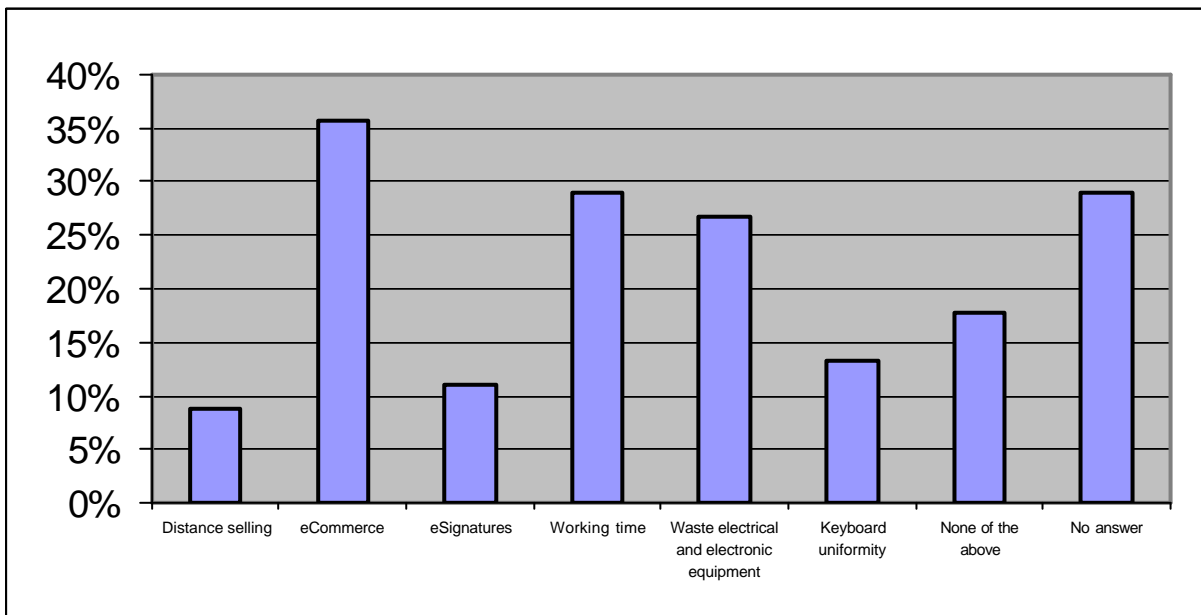
Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



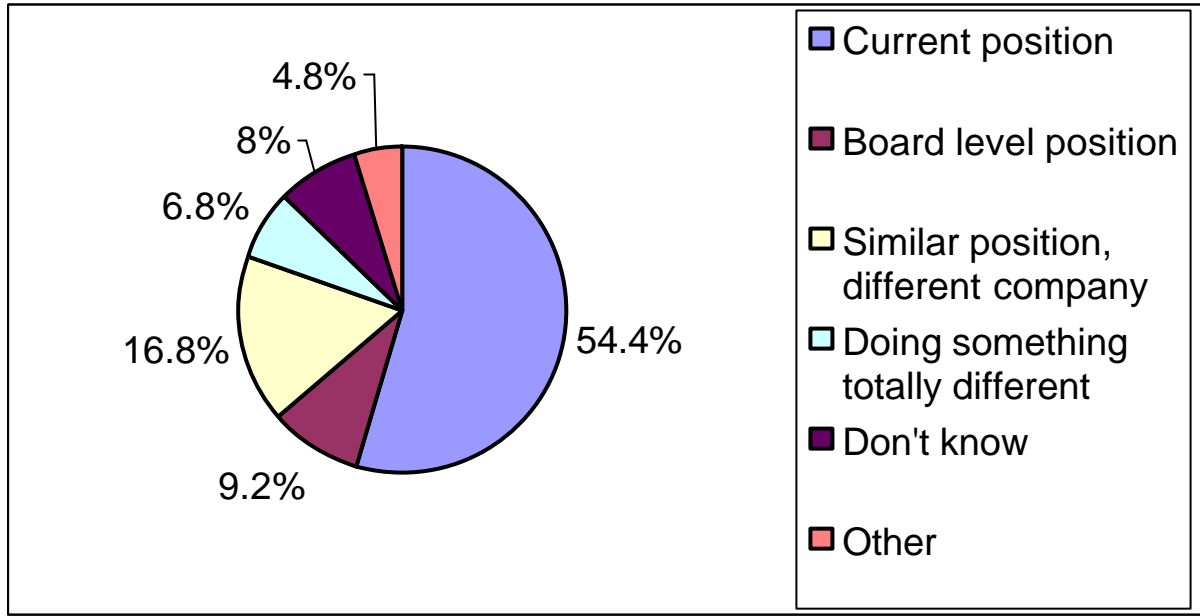
Base: Automotive



16.0 Where do you see yourself in two years' time?

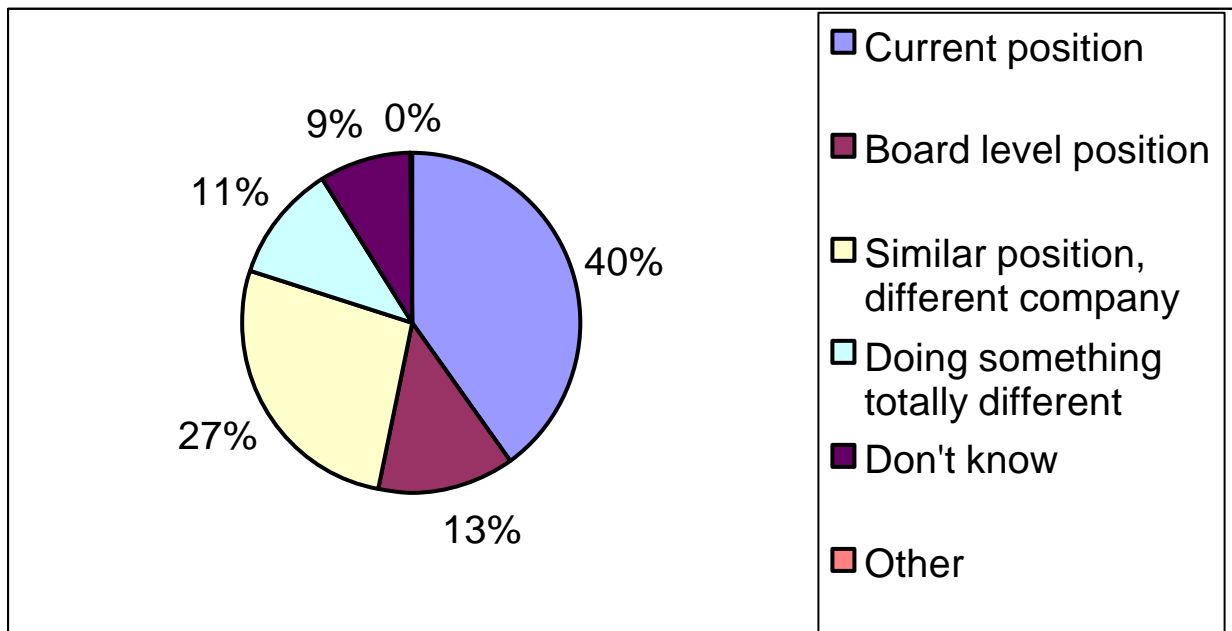
Over half (54%) of respondents have no plans to leave their current position within the next two years. 9% of IT managers see themselves on the board and 17% plan to move to a similar position in a different company.

Base: All

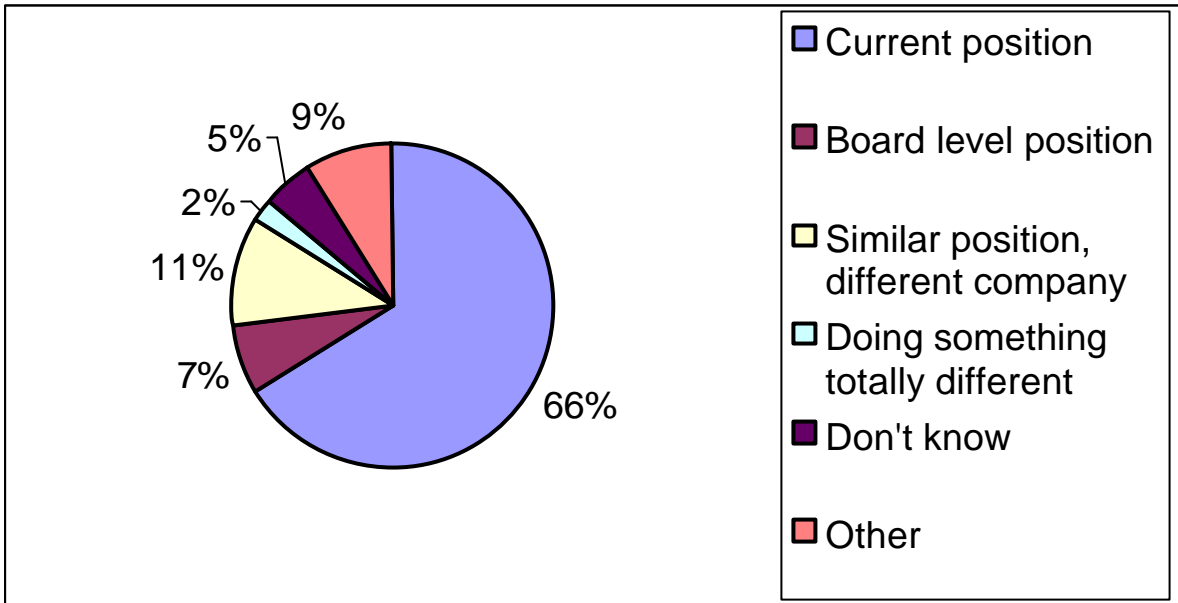


IT managers in Germany and Benelux appear to be the most content in their jobs – 66% and 60% respectively have no plans to leave their current position, compared to 40% in the UK.

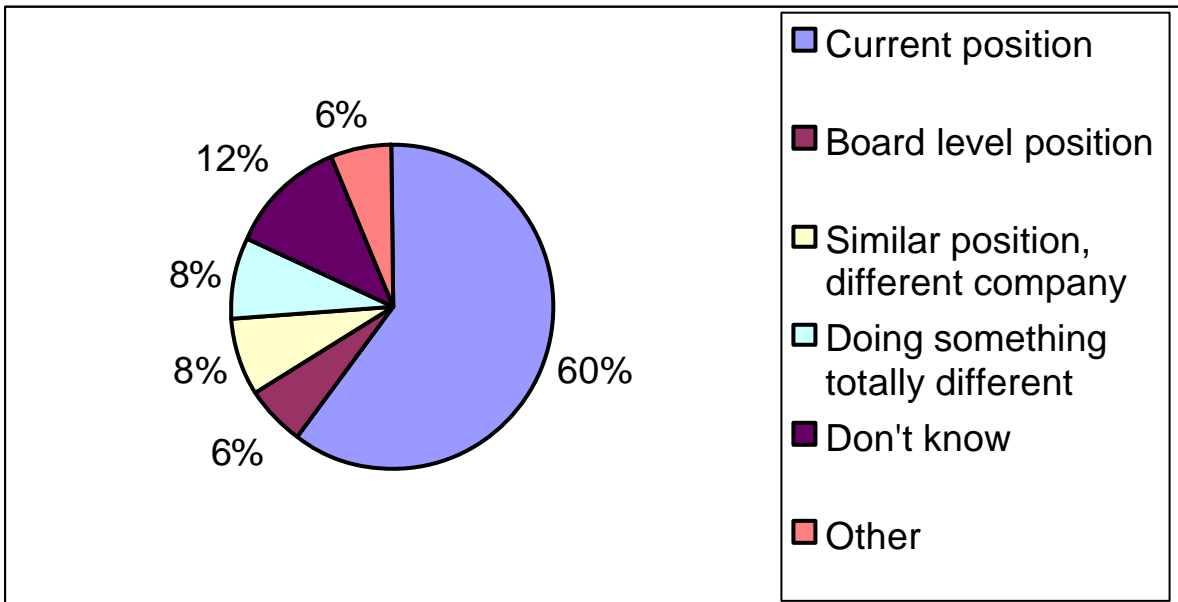
Base: UK



Base: Germany

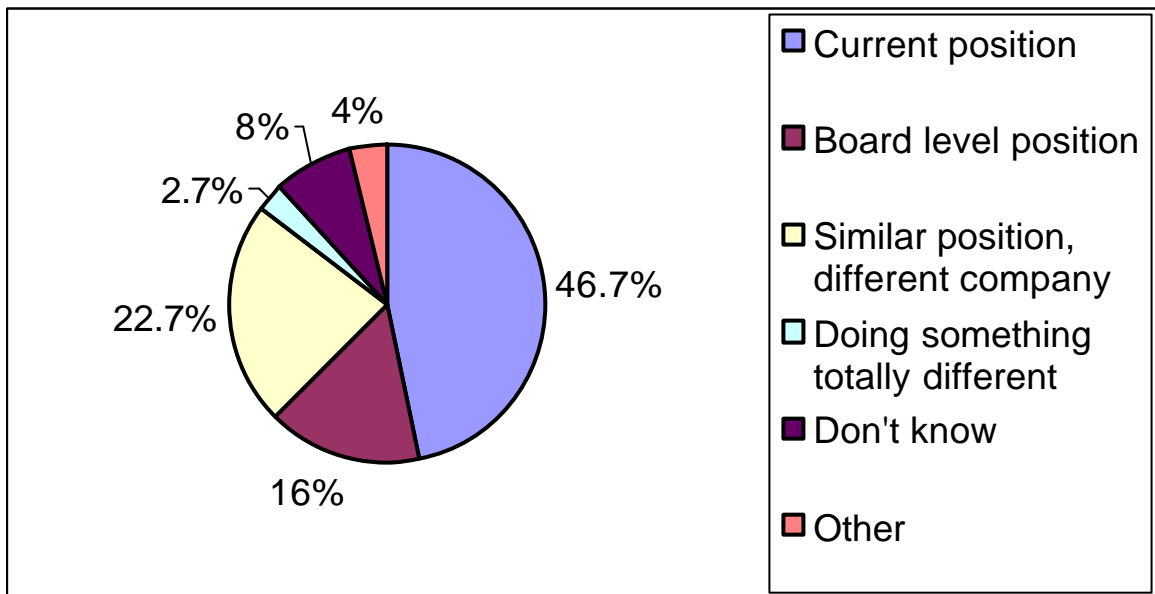


Base: Benelux

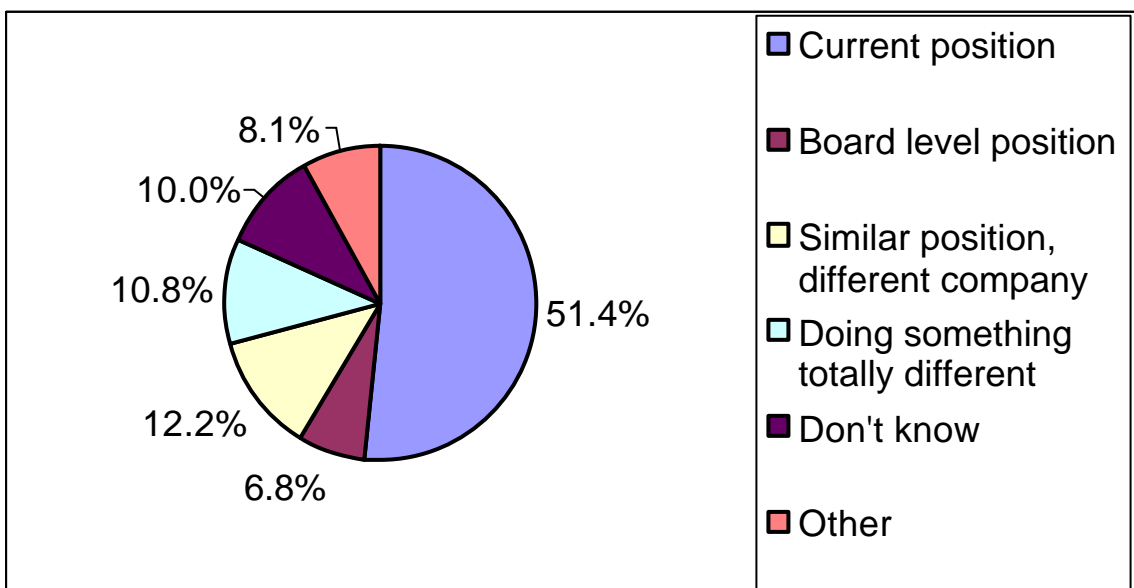


The insurance industry's IT manager seems to be most content in his/her job – 63% have no plans to leave their current position within the next two years. Respondents in the automotive sector are also fairly content – 62% see themselves in the same position in two years' time. Although 47% have no plans to leave their current position, 23% of IT managers/directors in the retail sector plan to move to a similar position with a different company within the next two years. Just over half (51%) of respondents in the banking sector see themselves in their current position in two years' time.

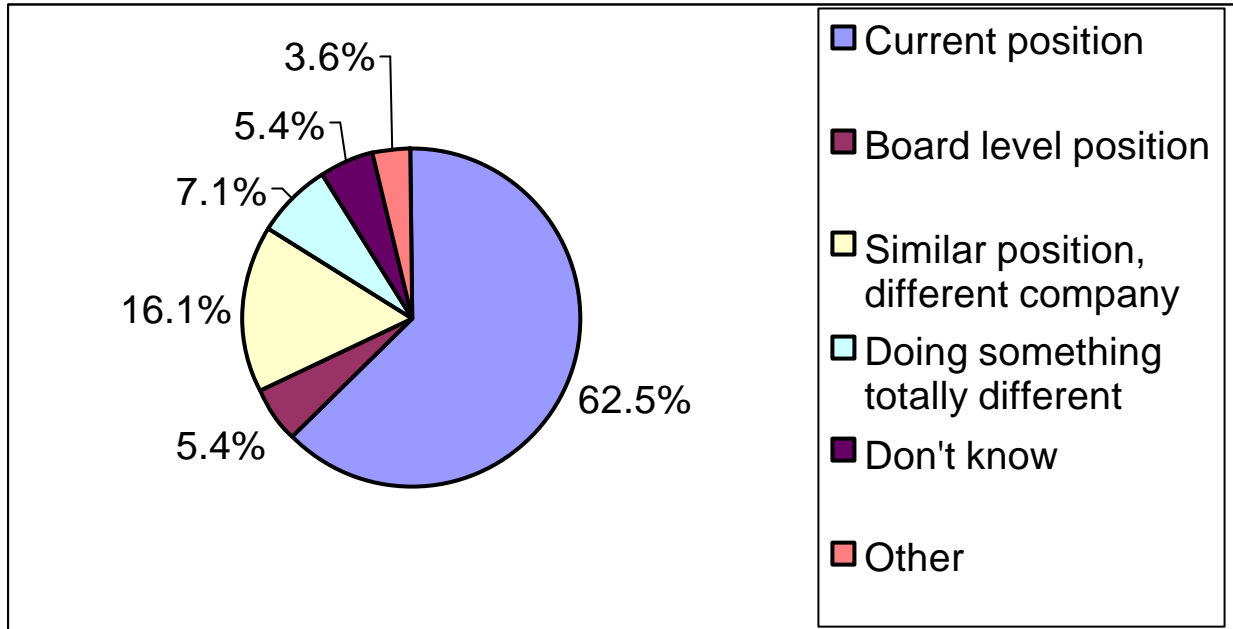
Base: Retail



Base: Banking



Base: Insurance



Base: Automotive

