



BlueSteps 2010 Executive Work-Life Balance Survey

In April this year BlueSteps.com, the executive career management service of the Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC), surveyed over 800 senior executives worldwide to discover the latest attitudes to work-life balance. (The Economist Intelligence Unit assisted with the development of survey questions.) Of those surveyed, all members of BlueSteps.com, over half reported that they currently do not have a satisfactory work-life balance – the highest dissatisfaction figure recorded since the survey began in 2006.

LOSING THE GRIP ON A HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Employers missing a work-life balance trick

Eighty per cent of executives say that work-life balance is critical in their decision whether to join or remain with an employer, yet 82 per cent report that their company does not have a program in place to improve work-life balance. The results show a clear disconnect between the way in which organisations view work-life balance as compared to the value placed upon it by executives.

Of the 18 per cent of companies offering work-life balance programs, the most common components offered are home working and a flexible daily work schedule - these were also the components voted as highly valuable by respondents (home working by 58% and a flexible schedule by 66%), the least valuable component being sabbaticals.

AESC President, Peter Felix, commented, “The success of any organisation is dependent on those running the show, so healthy and satisfied executives are vital to overall performance. The latest BlueSteps.com results indicate that many organisations are overlooking the fundamental link between a healthy company and “healthy” executives.”

In with the blackberry, out with leisure time

The large majority of respondents (70 per cent) feel that a modern lifestyle, defined by new technology and globalisation, has decreased their leisure time. When working non-traditional hours - on top of a regular day in the office - 73 per cent of senior executives most often find themselves working up until 9pm during the week and 63 per cent working weekends. Only 35 per cent take full advantage of their allotted paid time off (holiday time) each year.

Not only do executives give up their leisure time with 24/7 accessibility to work via the Internet, an astonishing 32 per cent rate their career either as more important, or as important, as their health - raising the question of what constitutes a healthy and productive company culture. If bad health equals bad performance then organisations have a vested interest in promoting a healthy work-life balance. Almost all executives rate their career as more important, or as important, as personal leisure or hobbies.

Promotion not always the road to happiness

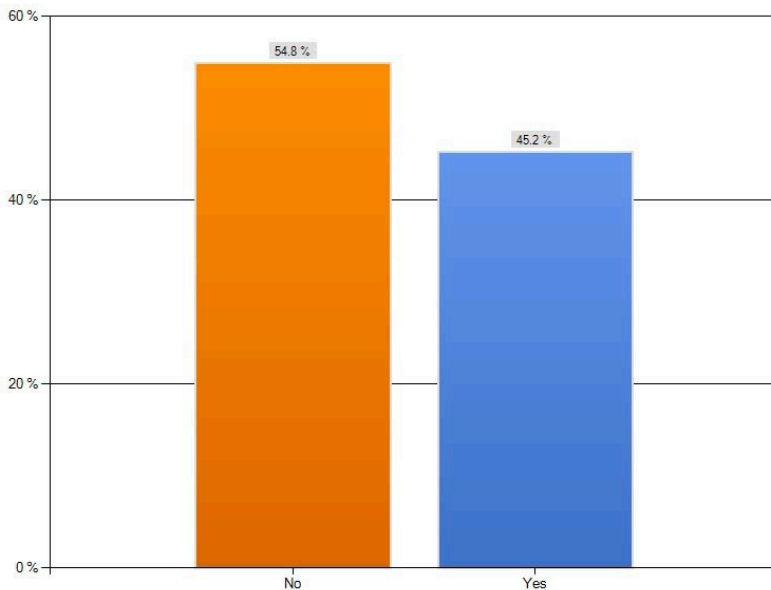
Despite many executives giving up a good work-life balance to meet the requirements of modern professional life, 21 per cent would refuse a promotion if it negatively affected their work-life balance and 50 per cent “might” refuse.

The battle continues between increased earnings versus a well balanced lifestyle with over half rating work-life balance as equally important as increased earnings, while a quarter feel that work-life balance is more important than additional pay.

When asked if they would consider working fewer hours if this meant a proportionate decrease in earnings, two thirds replied that they would not consider this reduction in earnings, even if it meant a better lifestyle.

DATA SUMMARY

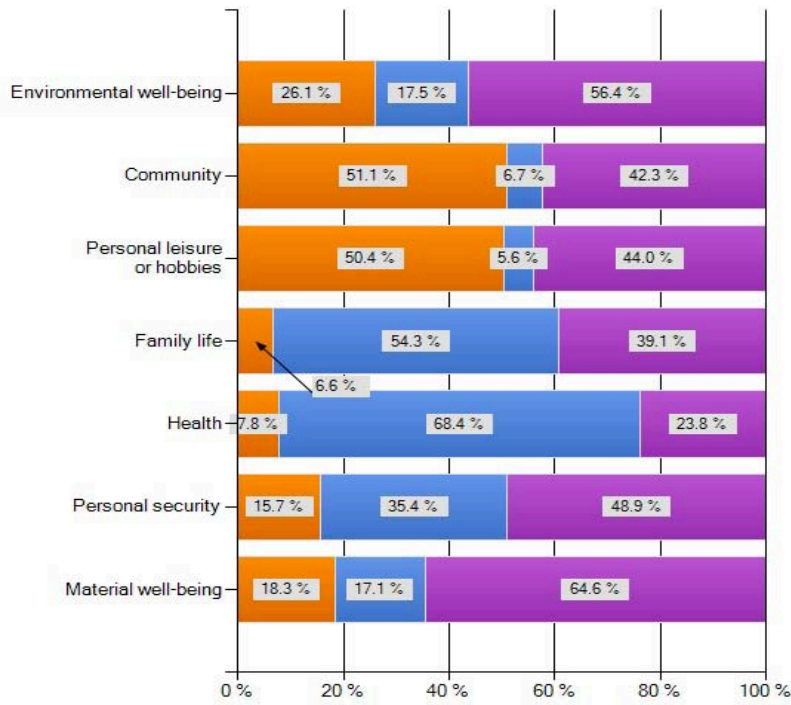
55% of executives surveyed do not have a satisfactory work-life balance



Do you believe you currently have a satisfactory work-life balance?



Career rated as more important than personal leisure or hobbies but less important than family and health

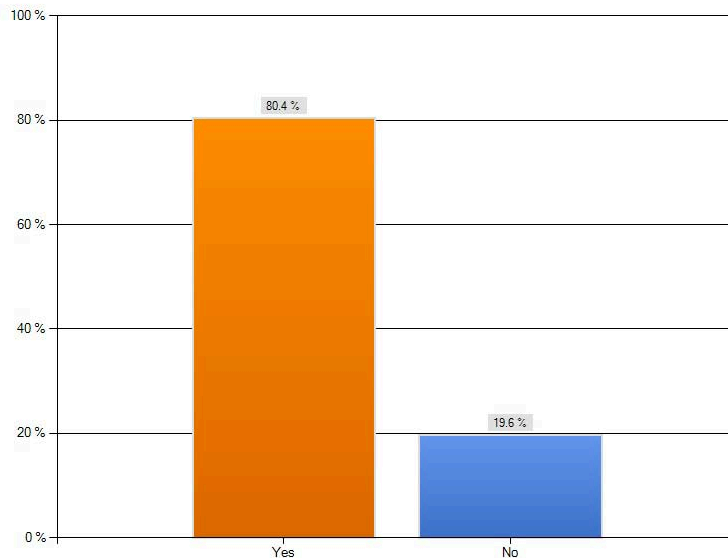


How do you rate the importance of your career compared to the following aspects of your life?

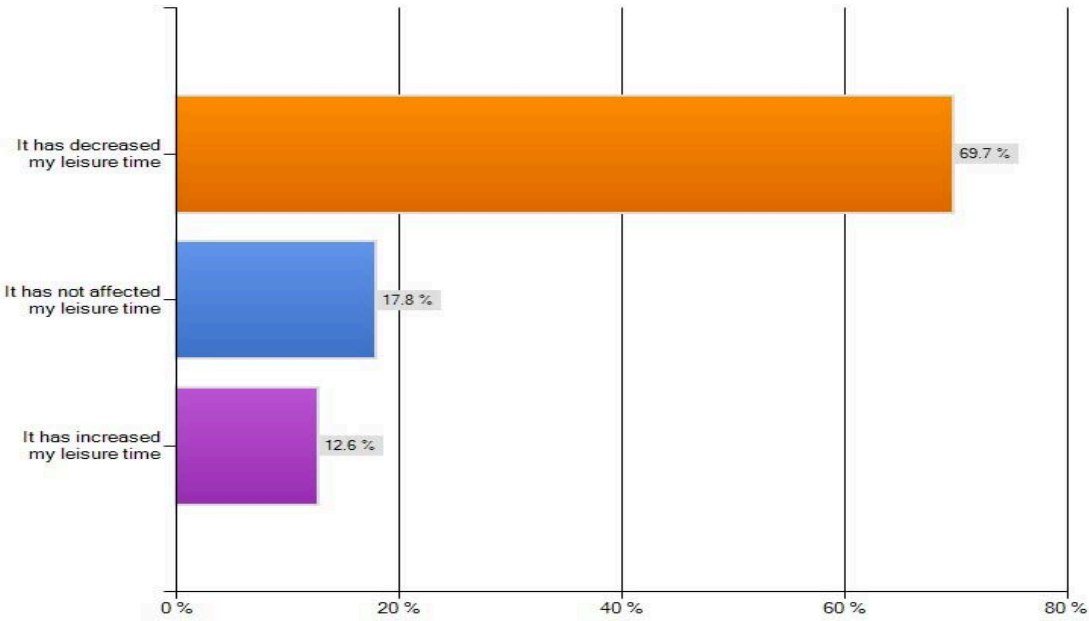
■ Career more important
■ Career less important
■ Career as important

For the majority of executives, work-life balance is critical in their decision whether to join or remain with an employer

Do you view work-life balance considerations as critical in your decision whether to join or remain with an employer?

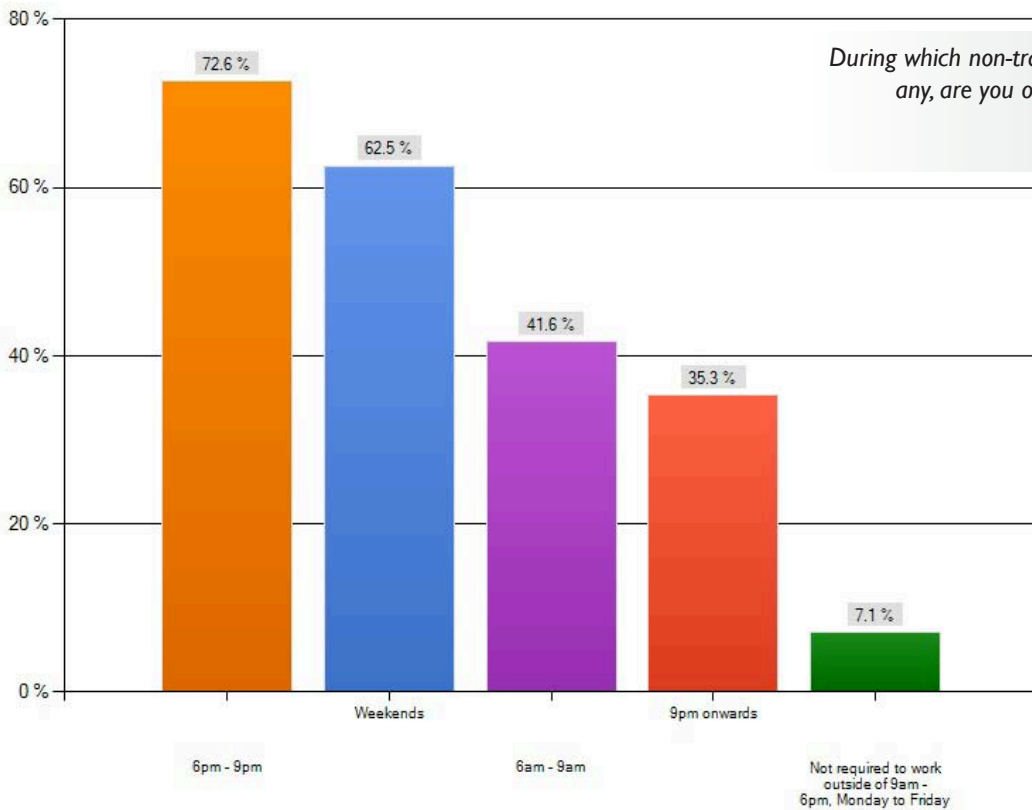


70% believe that a modern lifestyle (e.g. blackberry and internet) has decreased their leisure time



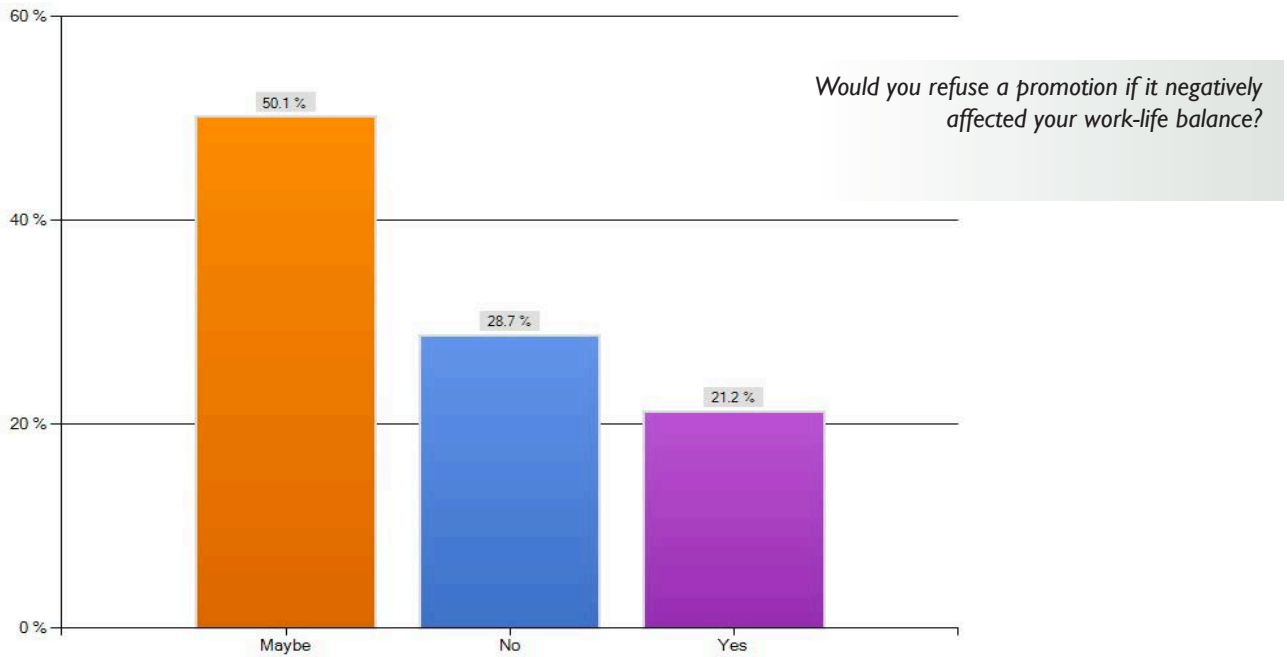
How has a modern lifestyle (e.g. blackberry, mobile phone, internet) affected your leisure time?

73% are often required to work between 6pm and 9pm and 63% are often required to work weekends

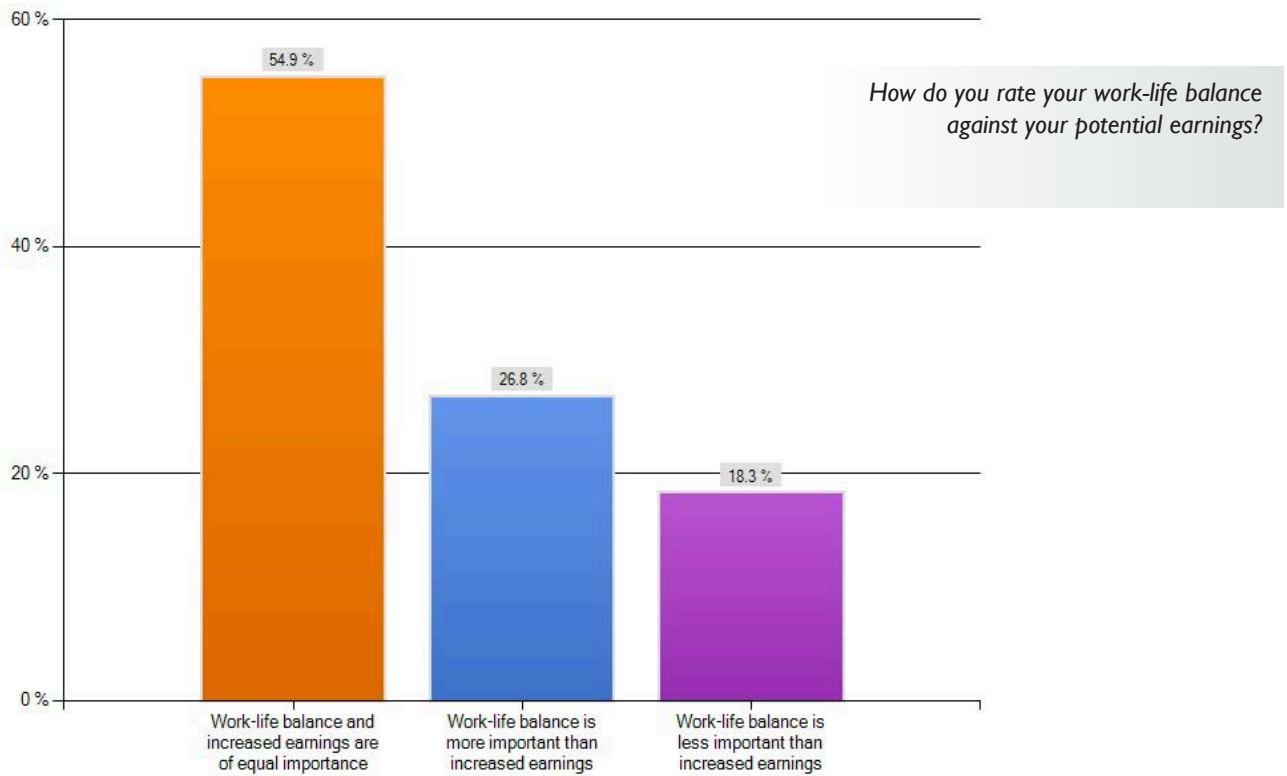


During which non-traditional work hours, if any, are you often required to work?

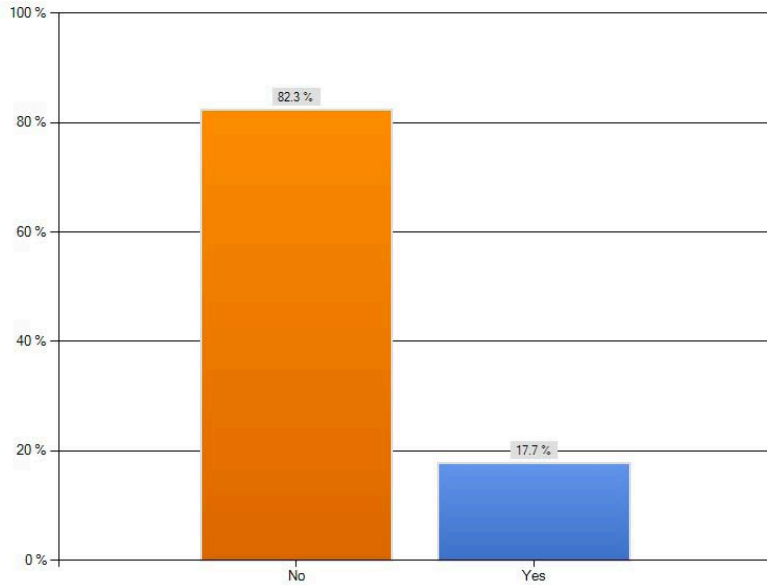
50% might refuse a promotion if it negatively affected their work-life balance



Over half rate work-life balance and increased earnings as equally important

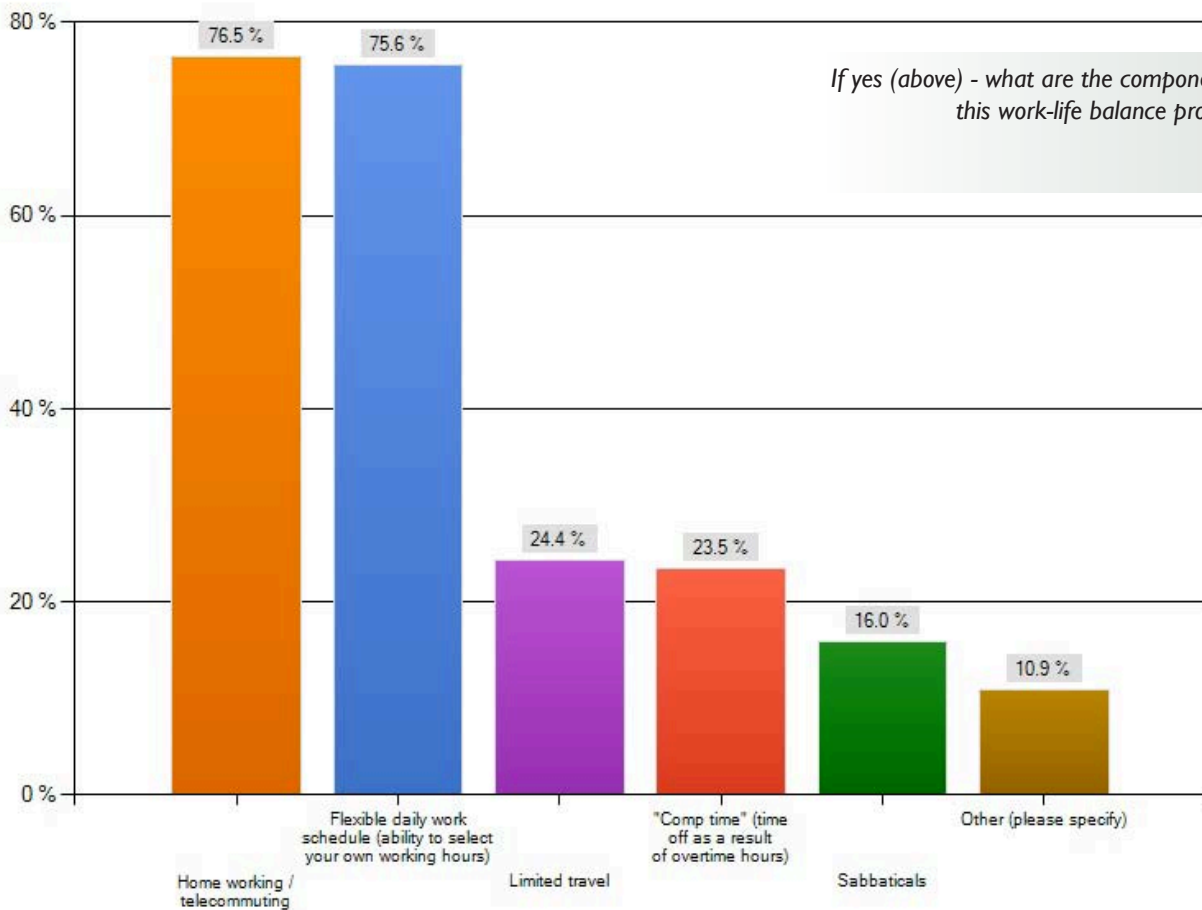


82% of companies do not have a program in place to improve work-life balance



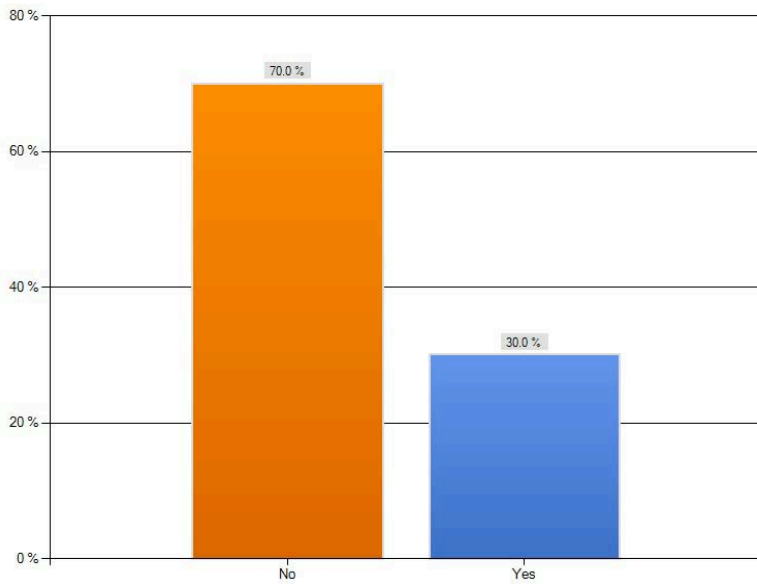
Does your firm have a program to improve work-life balance?

Of the 18% of companies offering work-life balance programs, the key components are home working and a flexible daily work schedule



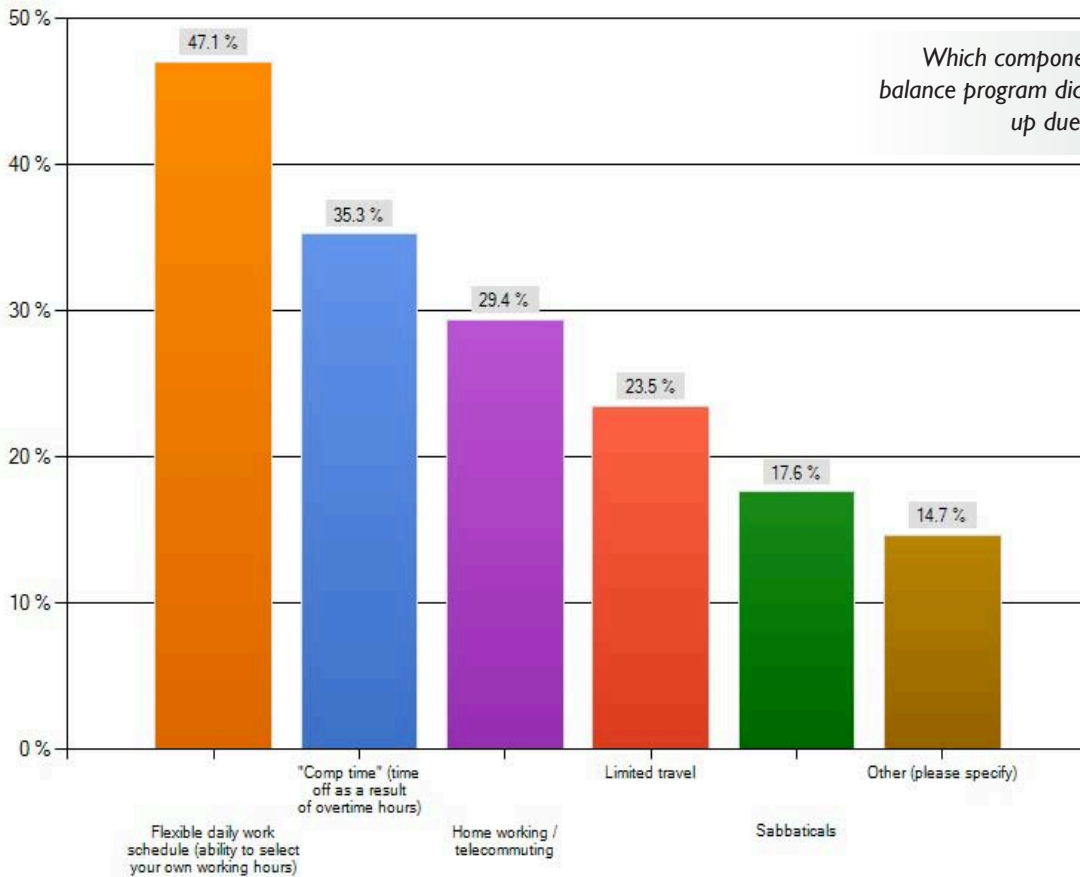
If yes (above) - what are the components of this work-life balance program?

70% of executives surveyed did not have to give up components of a work-life balance program due to the recession



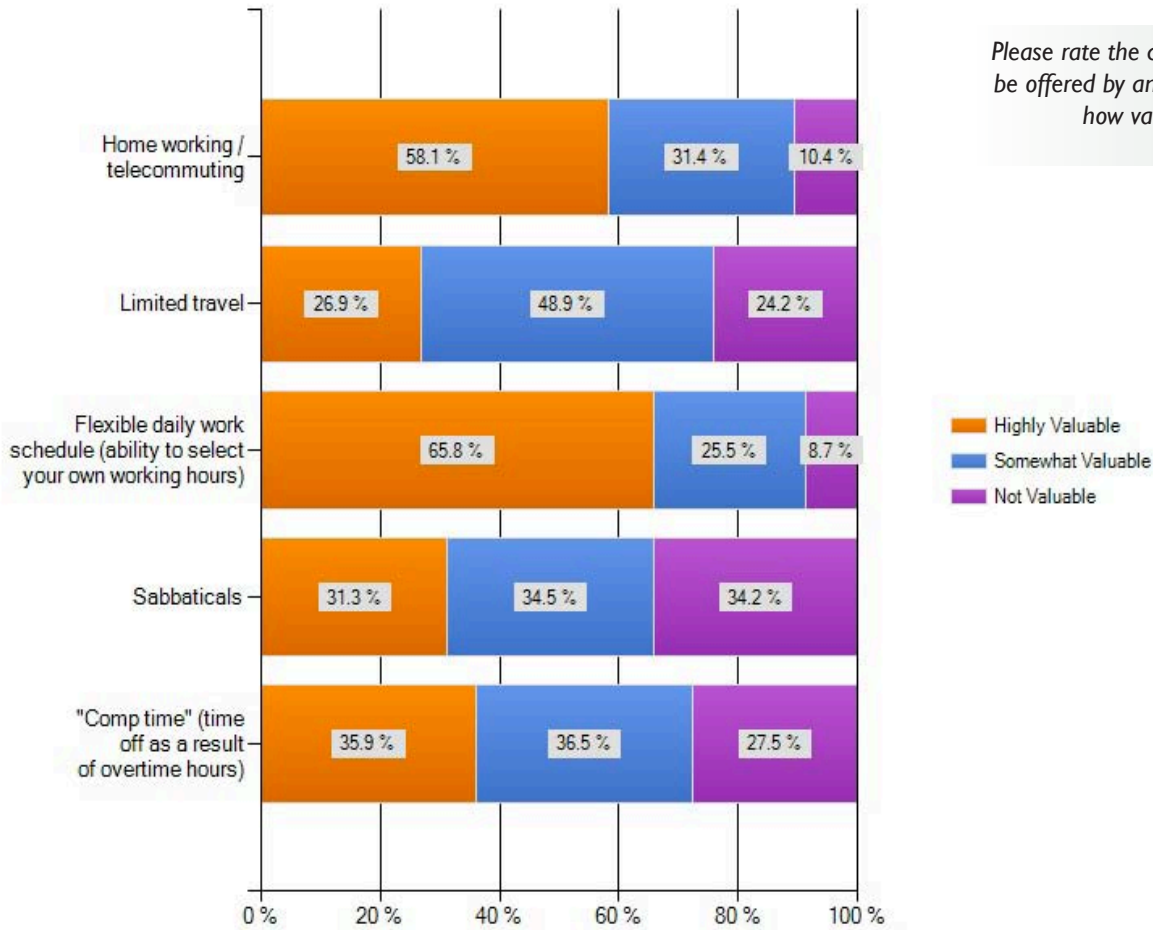
Have you had to give up any components of a work-life balance program due to the recession?

Of the 30% forced to give up components of a work-life balance program due to the recession, a flexible daily work schedule and time off as a result of overtime hours were most commonly given up.

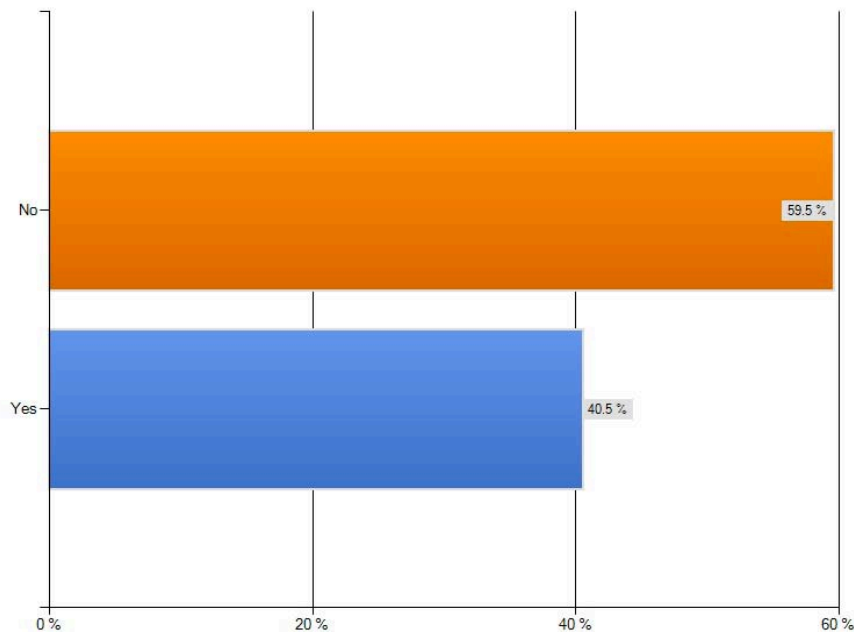


Which components of a work-life balance program did you have to give up due to the recession?

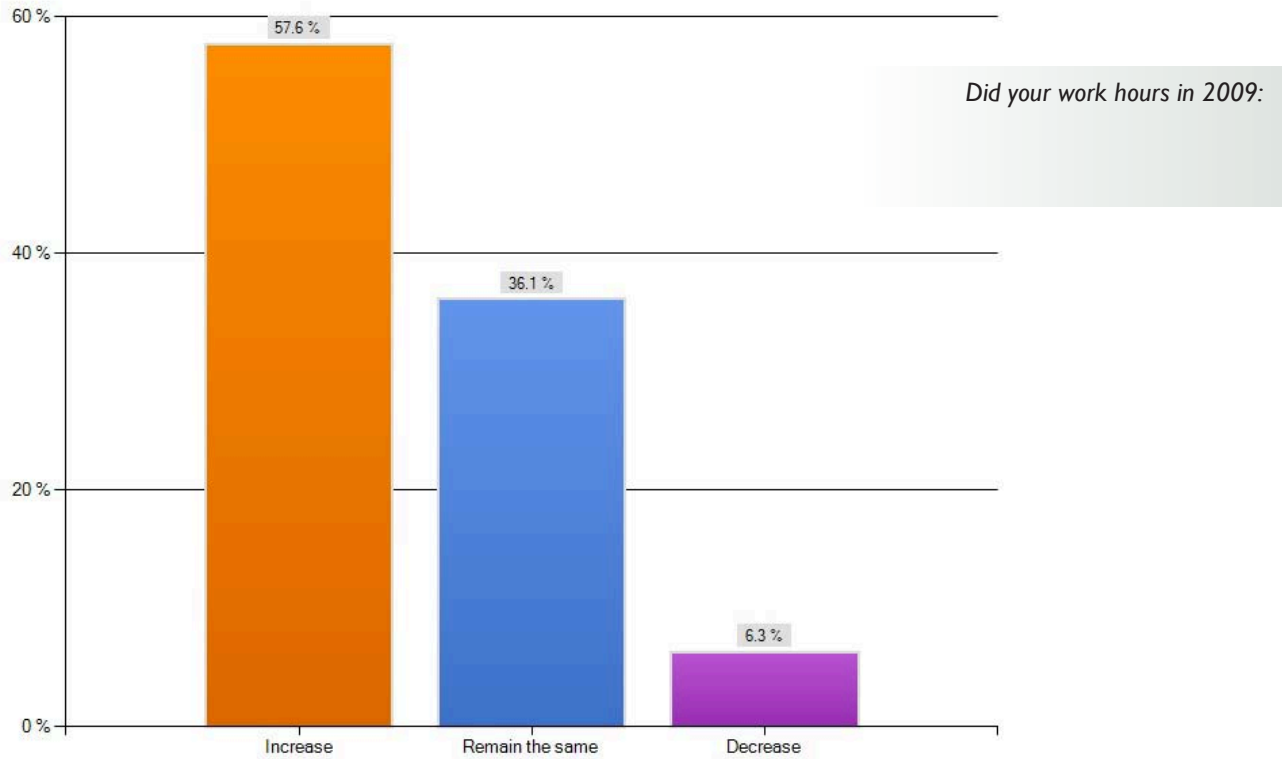
Home working and a flexible daily work schedule rated as highly valuable by the majority of senior executives



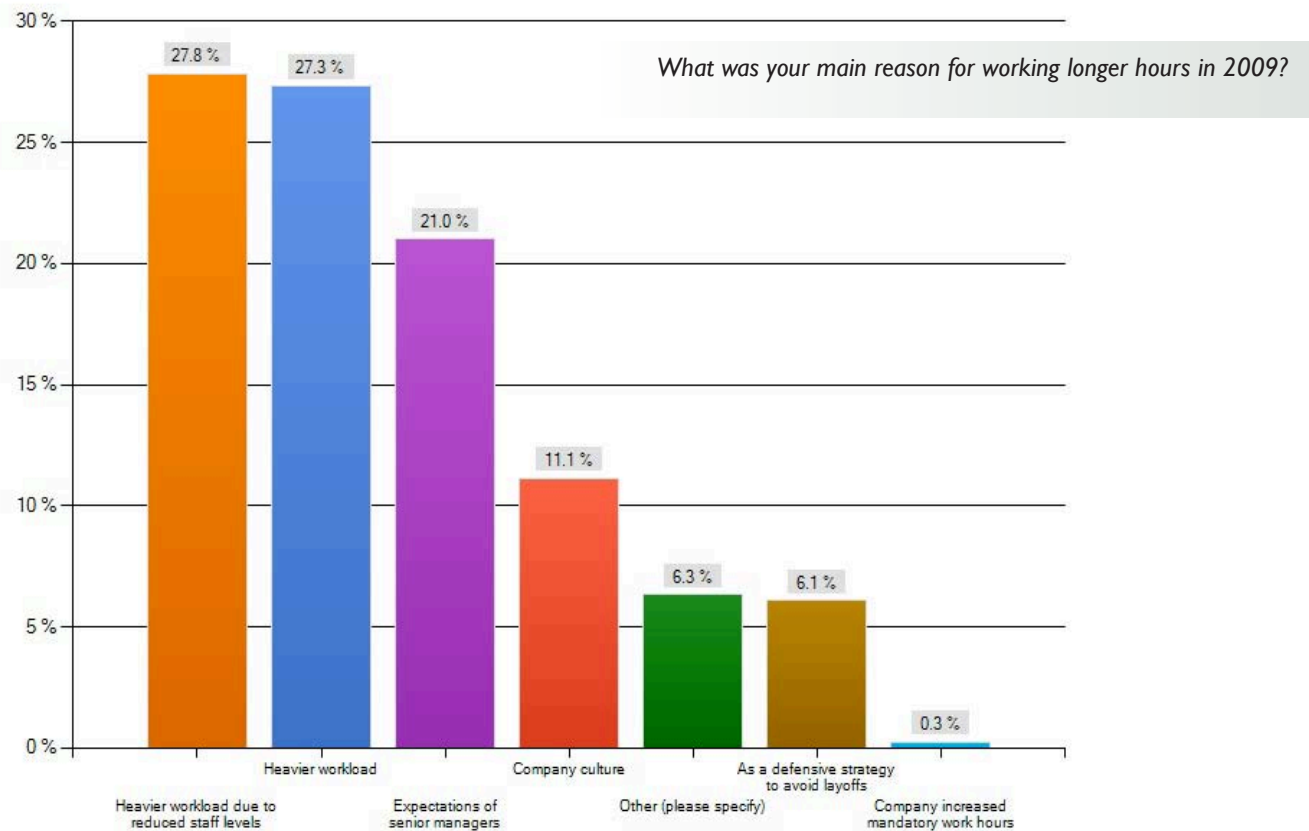
40% took a pay cut during 2009 as a result of the recession



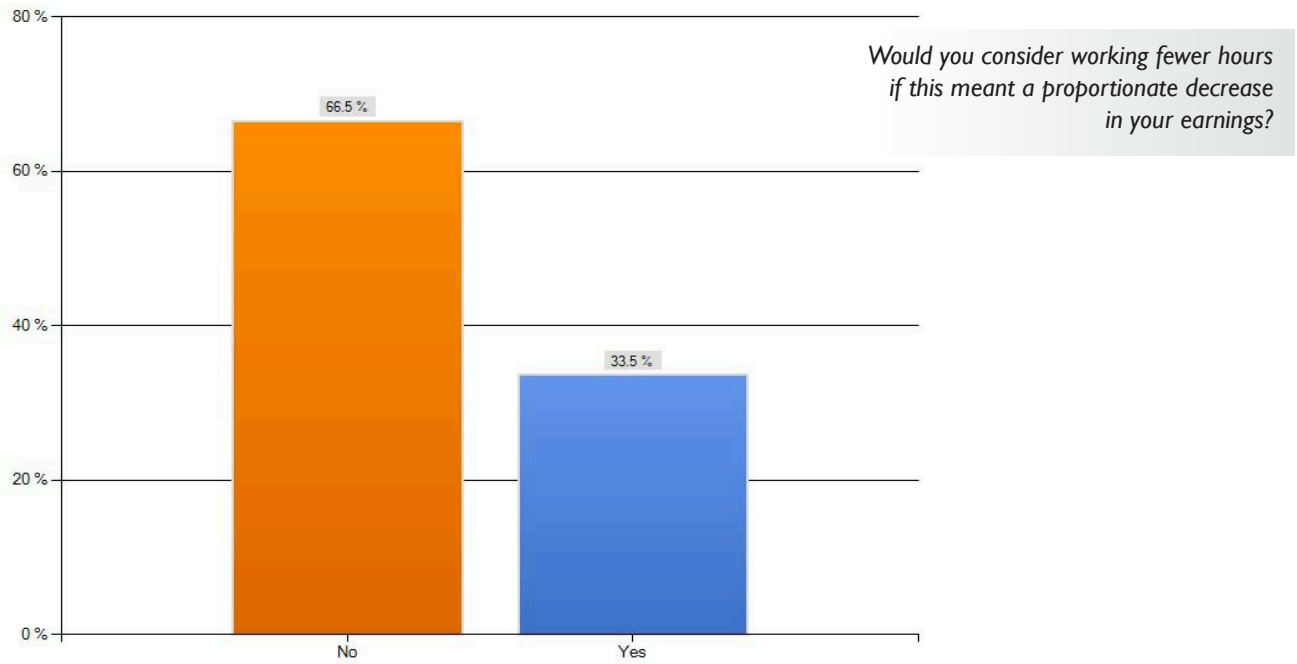
In 2009, 58% of senior executives saw an increase in their working hours



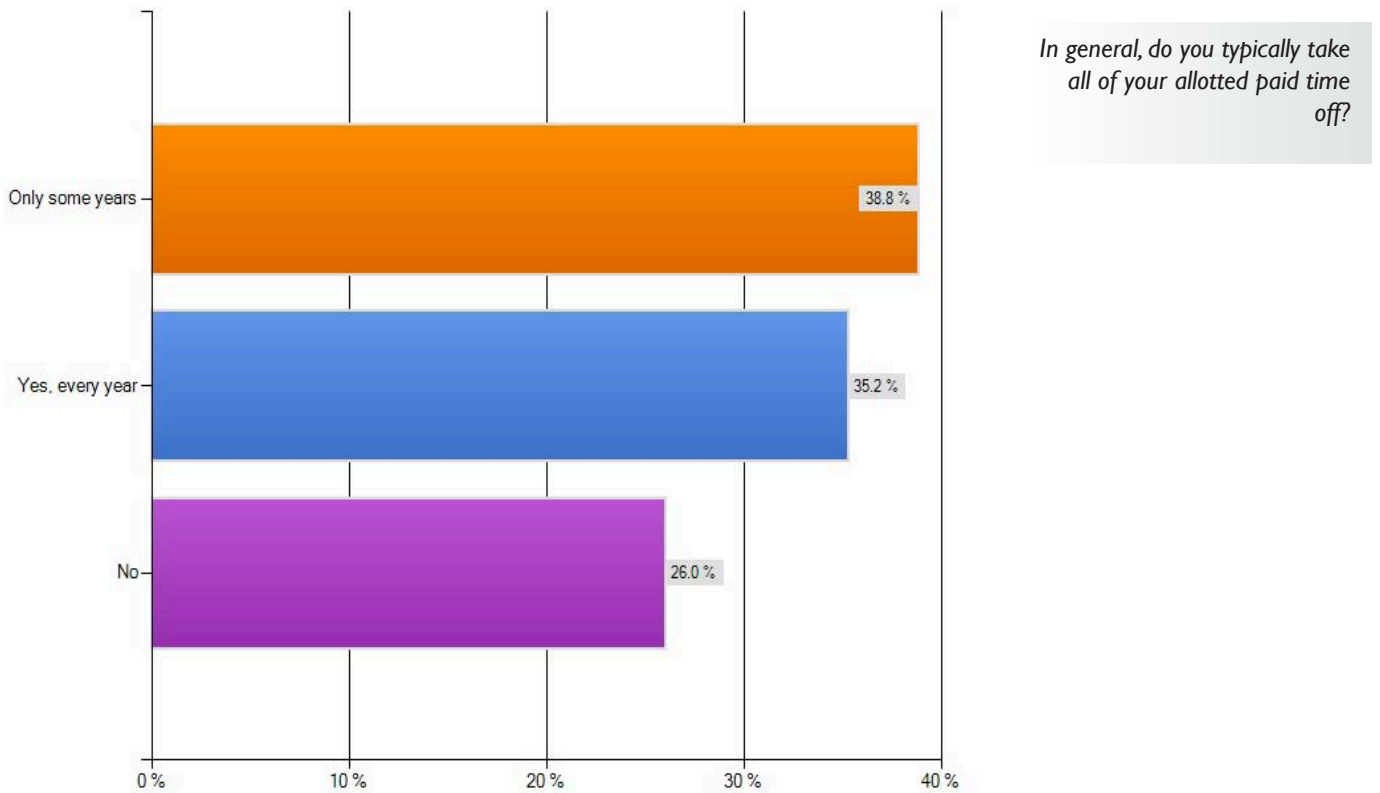
A heavier workload was the main reason for longer working hours in 2009



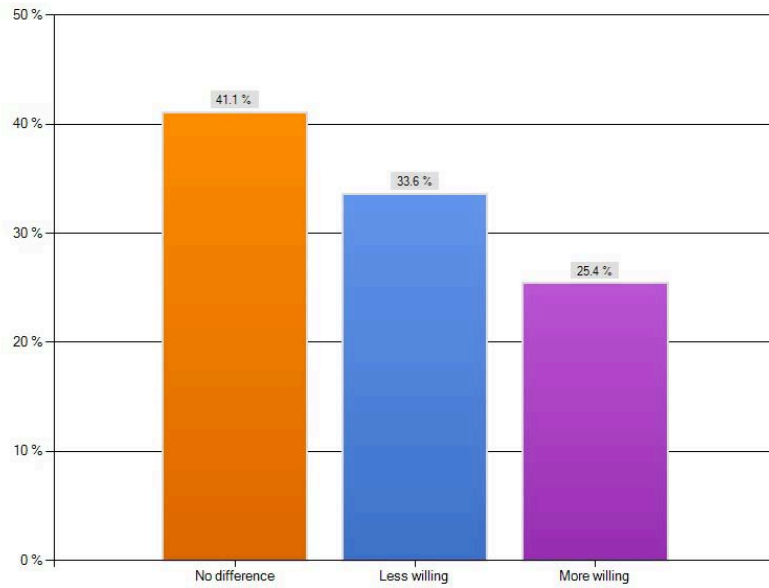
Only 34% of executives would consider working fewer hours if this meant a proportionate decrease in their earnings



Only 35% of executives take advantage of their allotted paid time off every year

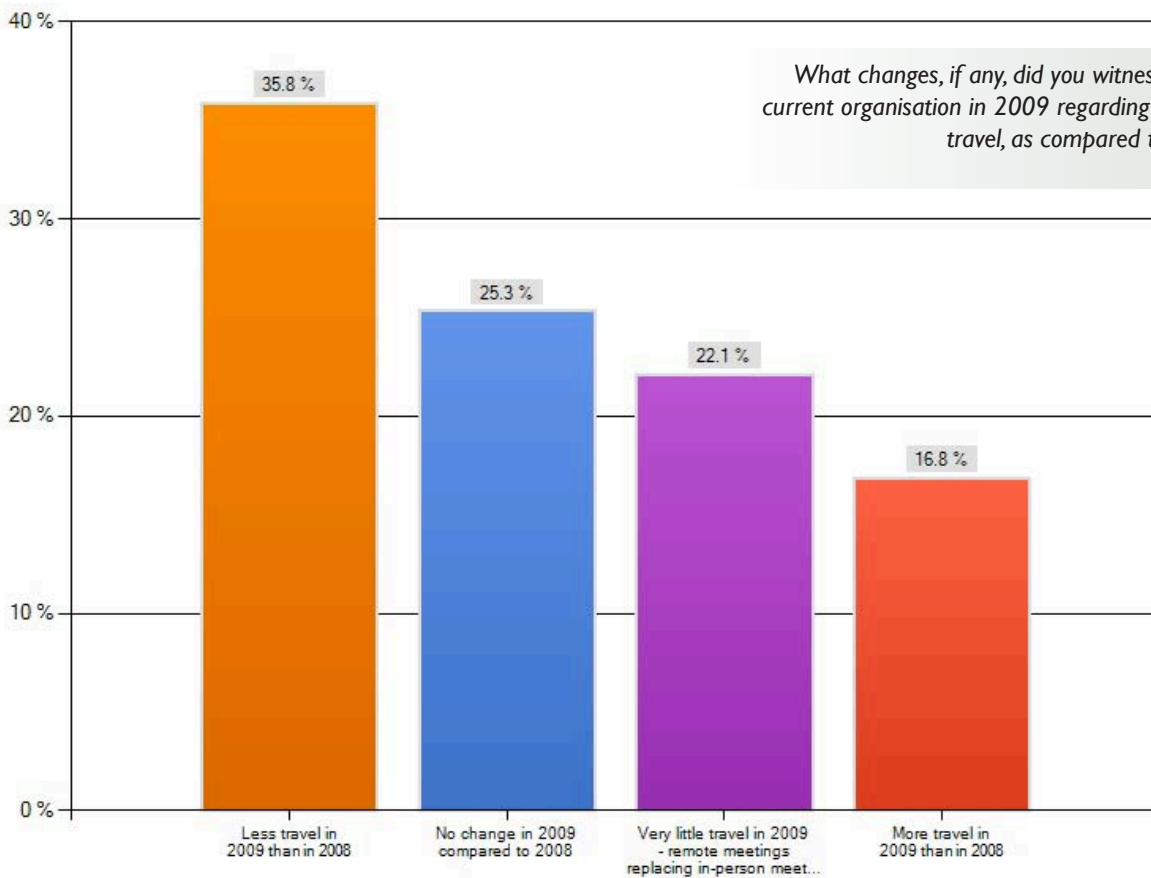


41% say there is no difference in whether or not they are willing to take a new job that involves heavy business travel now, as compared to one year ago - 34% are less willing



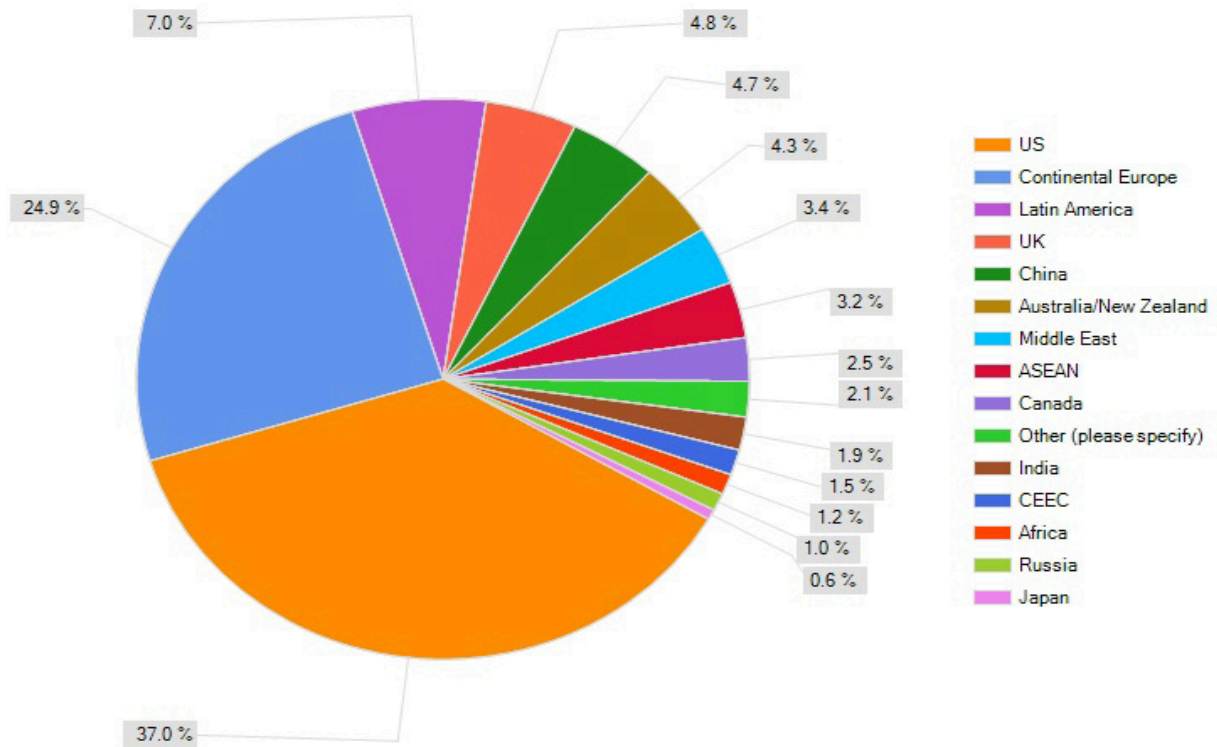
Compared with one year ago, are you more or less willing to take a new job that involves heavy business travel?

Most executives witnessed less business travel in 2009 than in 2008

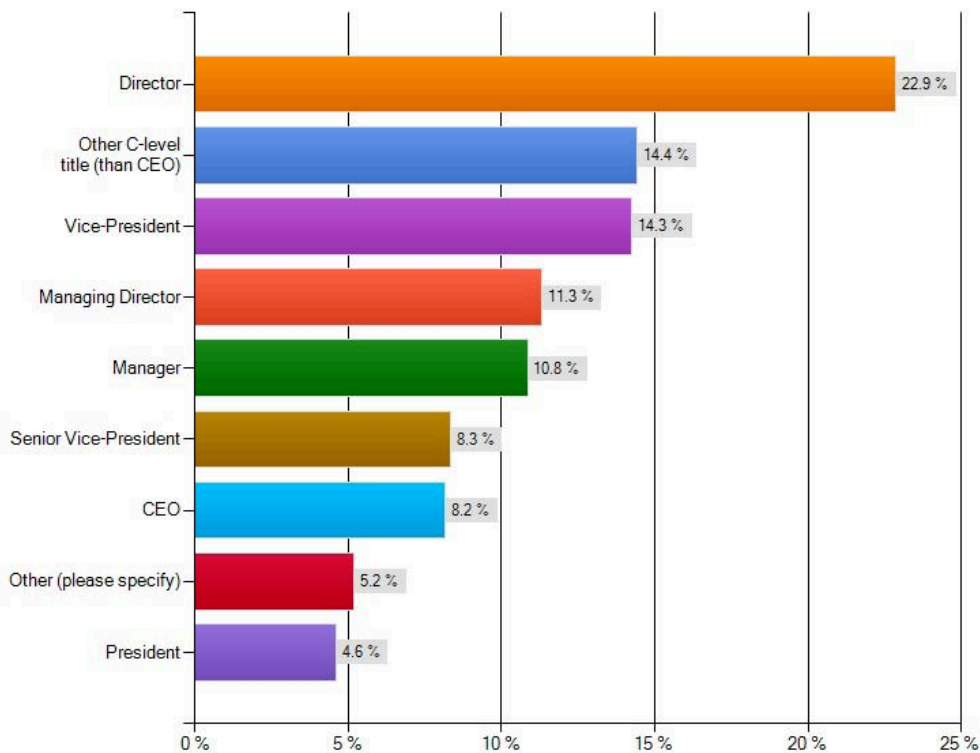


What changes, if any, did you witness in your current organisation in 2009 regarding business travel, as compared to 2008?

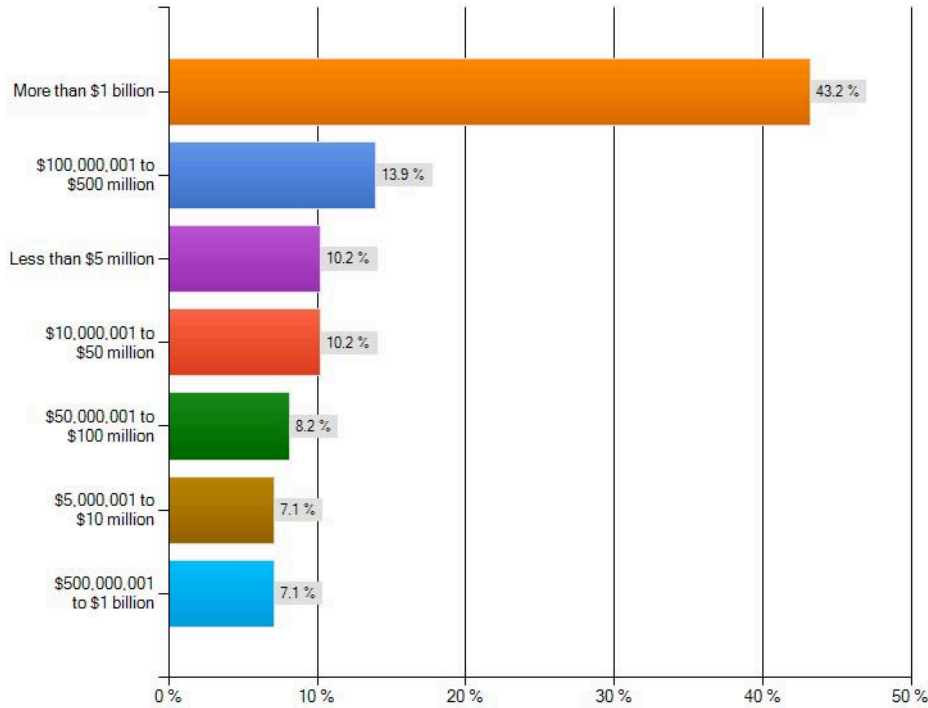
Respondents by region



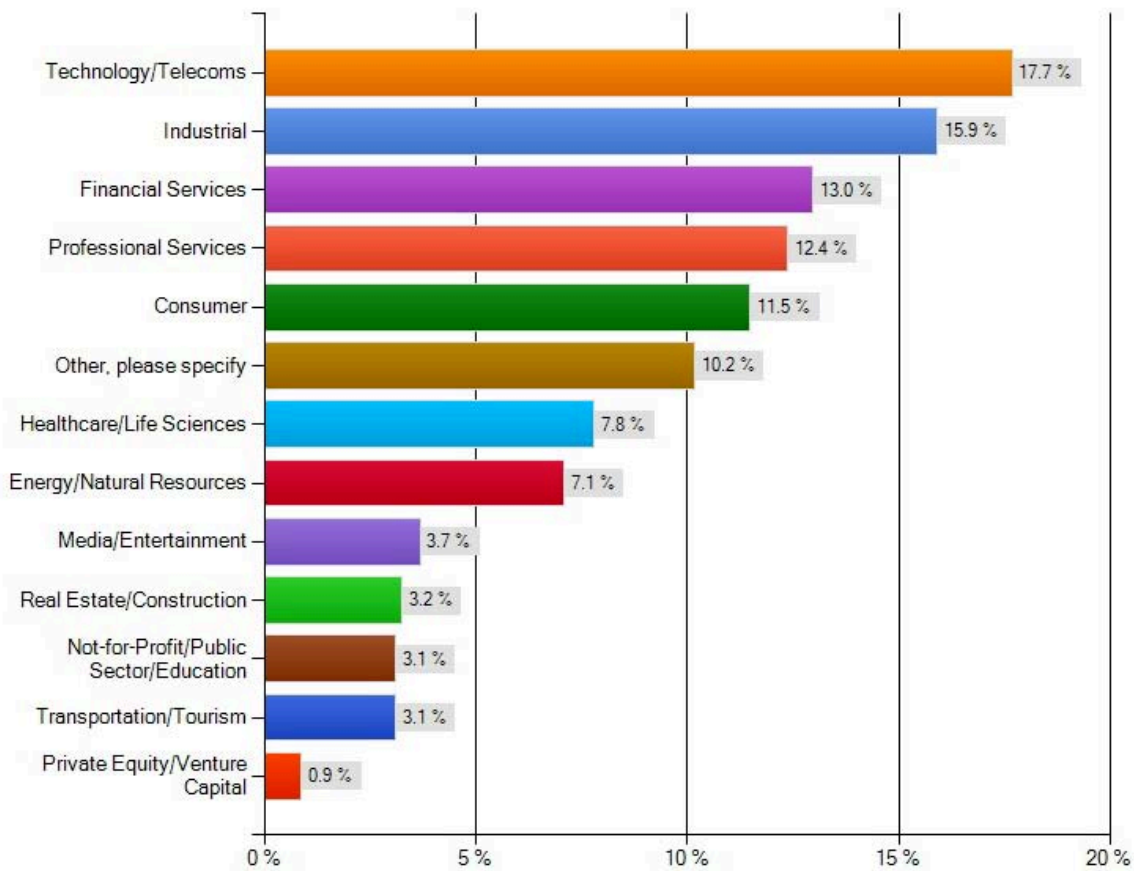
Respondents by position



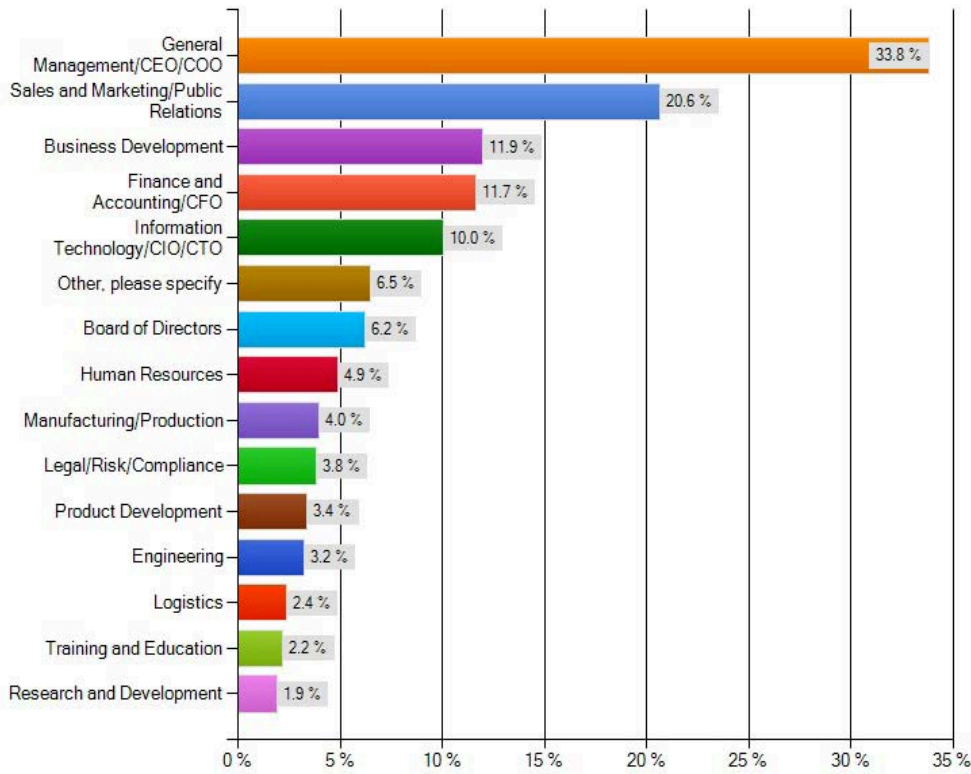
Respondents' company size (by worldwide annual gross sales volume)



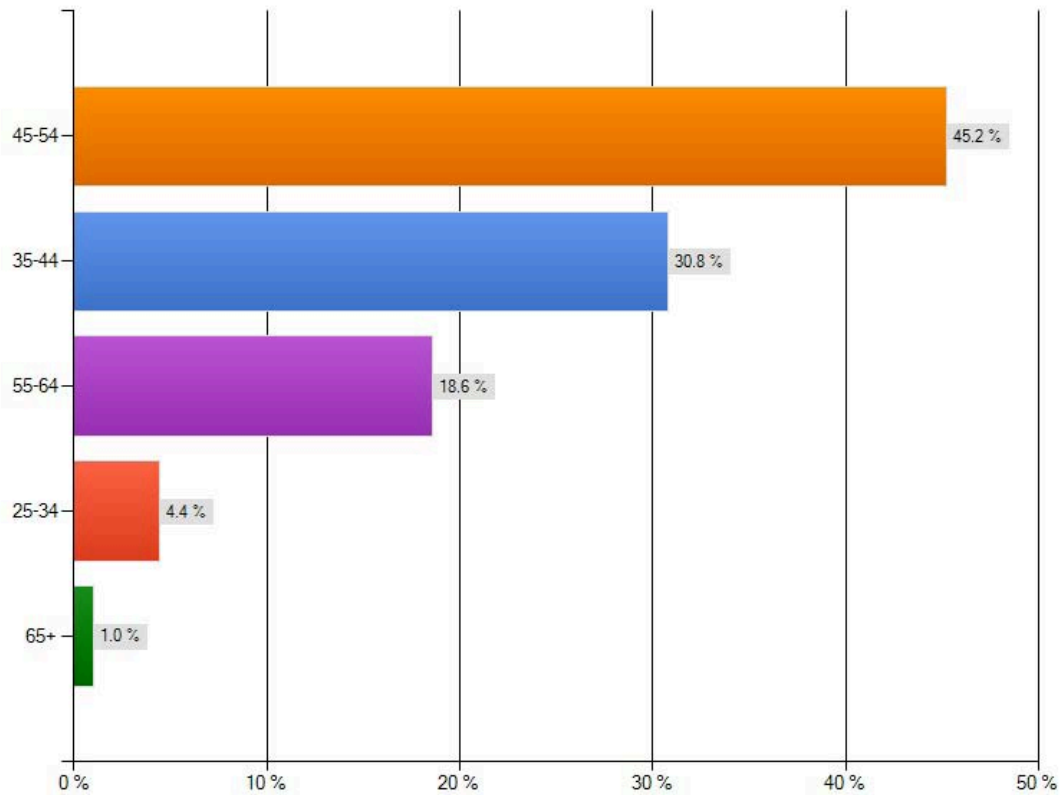
Respondents by industry

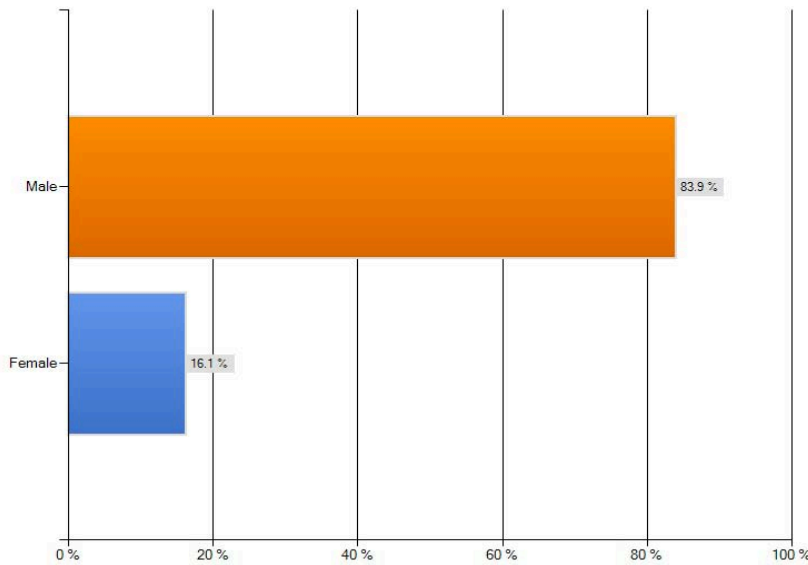


Respondents by function



Respondents by age





Association of Executive Search Consultants

The Worldwide Association for Retained Executive Search Consulting Firms



The **Association of Executive Search Consultants** (AESC) is the worldwide professional association for the retained executive search industry. It promotes the highest professional standards in retained executive search consulting, broadens public understanding of the executive search process, and serves as an advocate for the interests of its member firms.

www.aesc.org

BlueSteps is the AESC's exclusive online global database of senior executives, offering a connection to over 6,000 AESC member executive search professionals worldwide.

www.bluesteps.com

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) is the business intelligence arm and sister company of the Economist. It conducts over 100 surveys per year across a range of business, social and management issues.

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