

Results of Global Remote Working Survey Report for Edge Communiqué

May 2021

The Edge International Global Remote Working Survey

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The Global Remote Working Survey is a survey of the effect on lawyers of remote working, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Survey consists of 24 questions and explores various ways in which remote working has impacted lawyers and other law firm employees.

A data set of 927 lawyers / law firm employees completed the Global Remote Working Survey between 12th December 2020 and 12th February 2021. The results are presented in this Report. Lawyers / law firm employees participated in the survey from a wide range of jurisdictions, including US, Canada, UK, a variety of European jurisdictions, India and Australasia (Q3 – not reported on this report).

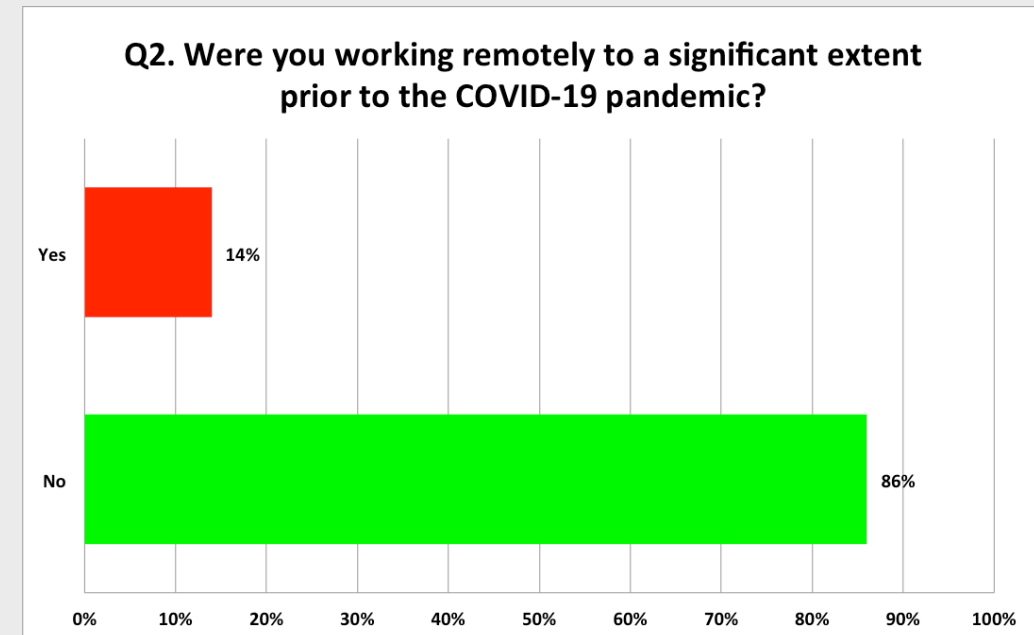
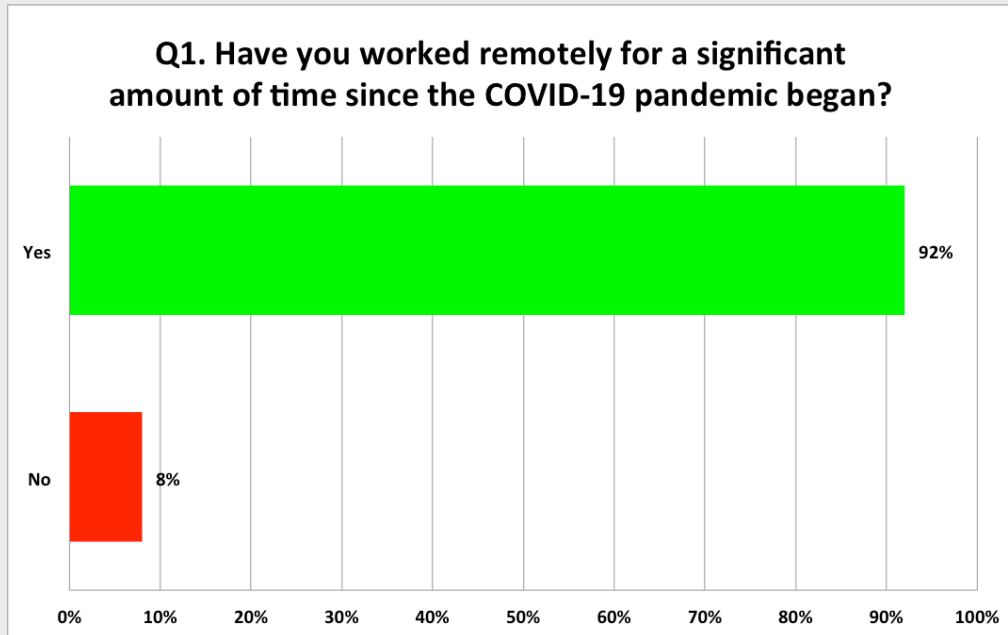
This report consists of two sections:

- Survey Results – Question by Question
- Key Conclusions

Survey Results – Question by Question

Questions 1 & 2

History of Remote Working



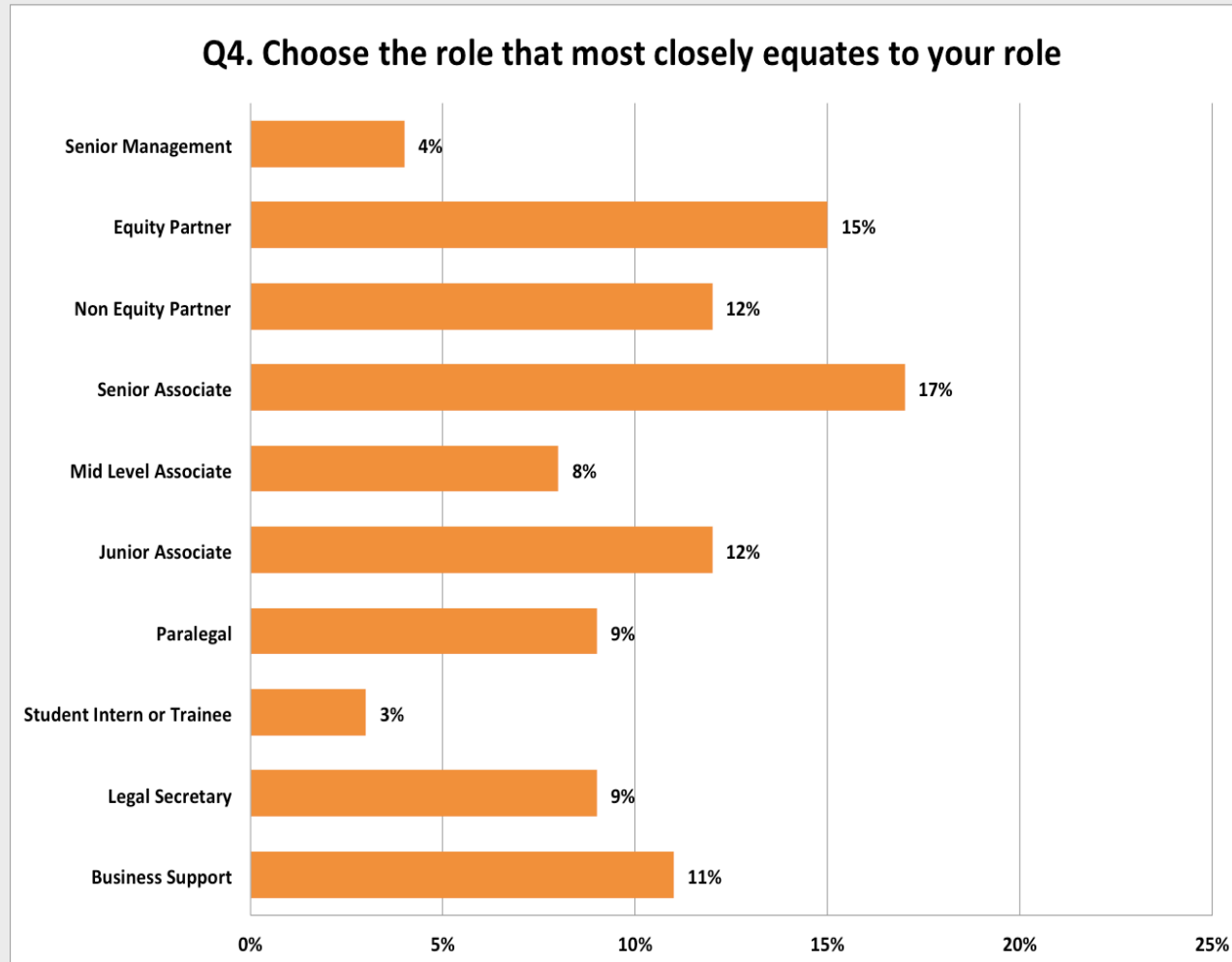
14% of respondents worked remotely to a significant extent prior to the pandemic. The vast majority of those who completed the survey (92%) have worked remotely for a significant amount of time post-pandemic.

Question 4

Respondents' roles



The survey was completed by respondents in a wide range of roles – over a quarter of respondents are partners in their firms



27% of respondents are partners in their firms; a further 4% hold senior management roles in their firms.

37% of respondents are associates in their firms.

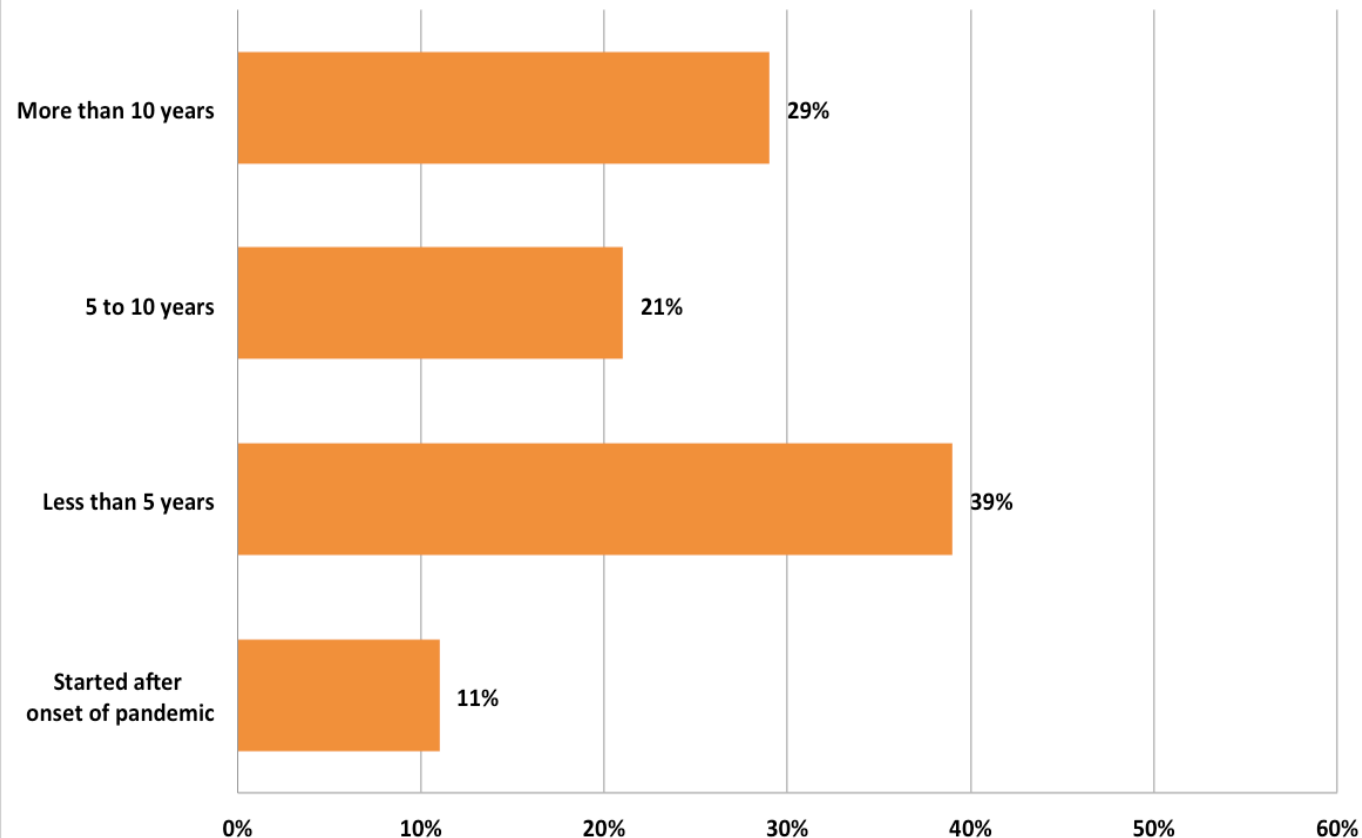
11% of respondents have roles in business support functions.

Question 5

Length of Tenure at Firm



Q5. Choose the option below that best describes how long you have been at the firm



29% of respondents had been at their firm for more than 10 years, 21% for 5 – 10 years and 39% for less than 5 years.

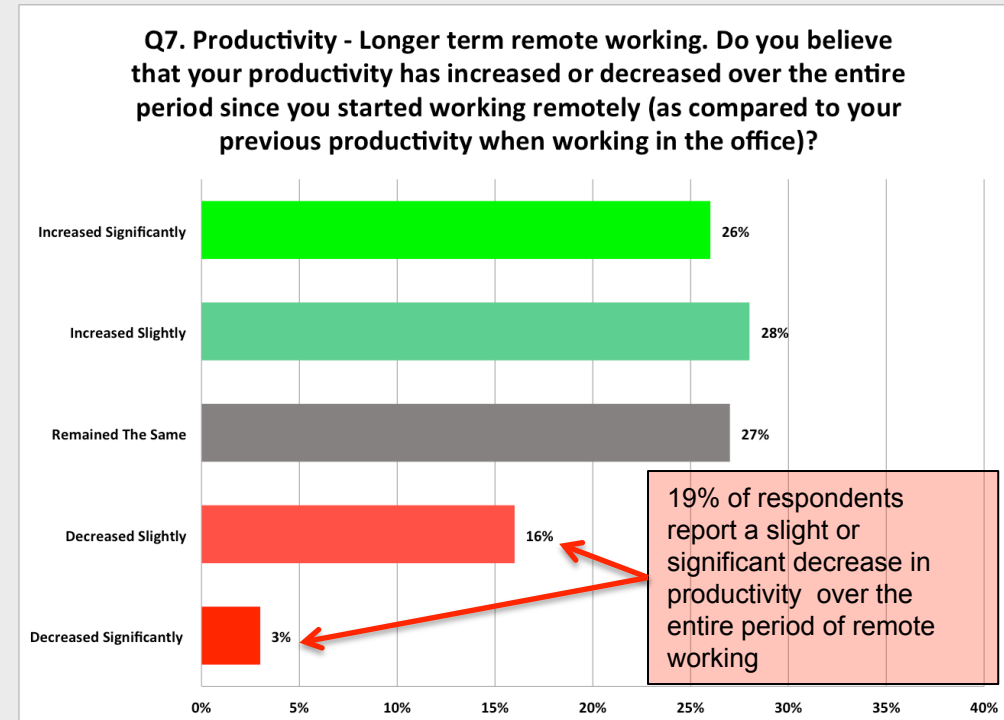
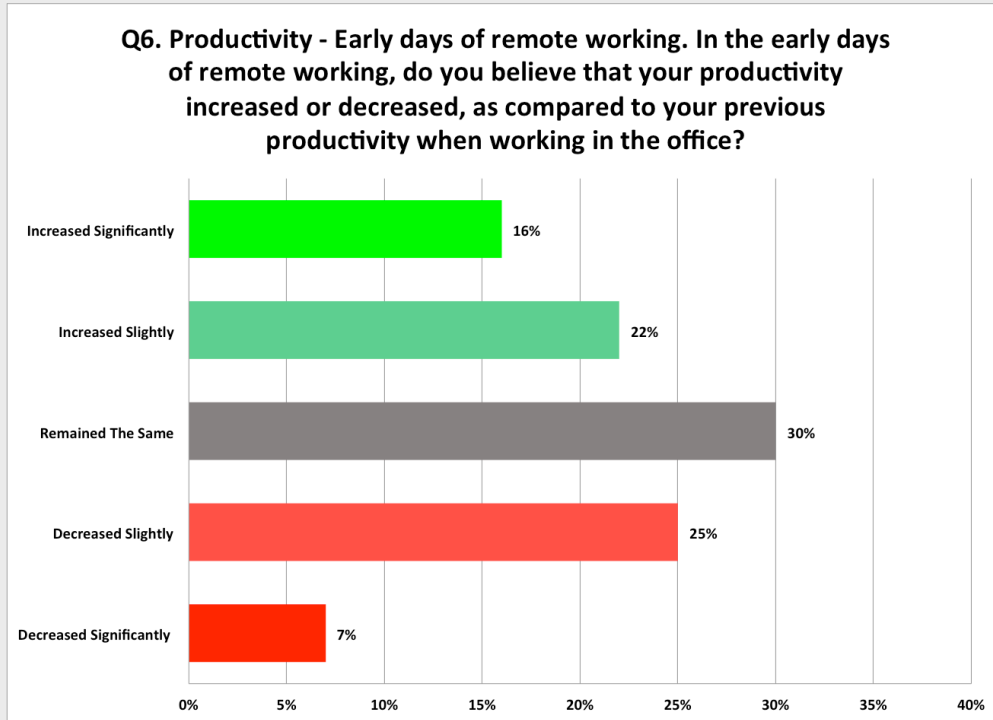
11% of respondents started at their firm after the onset of the pandemic population.

Questions 6 & 7

Productivity



Whilst perceived productivity has held up relatively well while working remotely, a significant minority of respondents report a slight or significant decrease in productivity both in the early days of the remote working and over the entire period



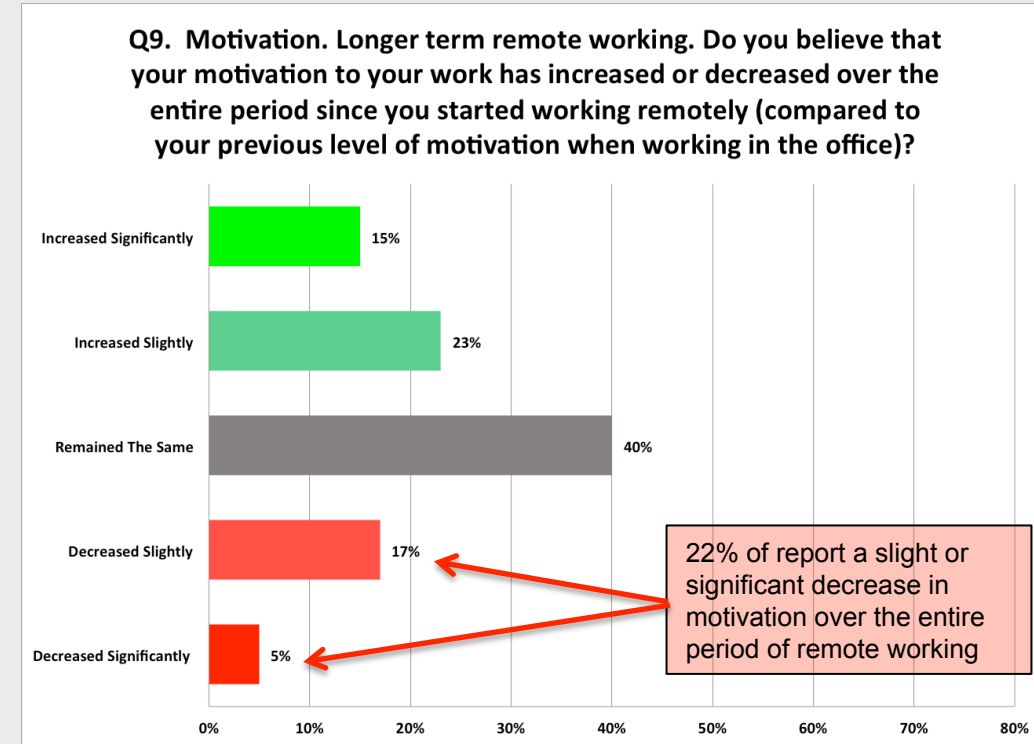
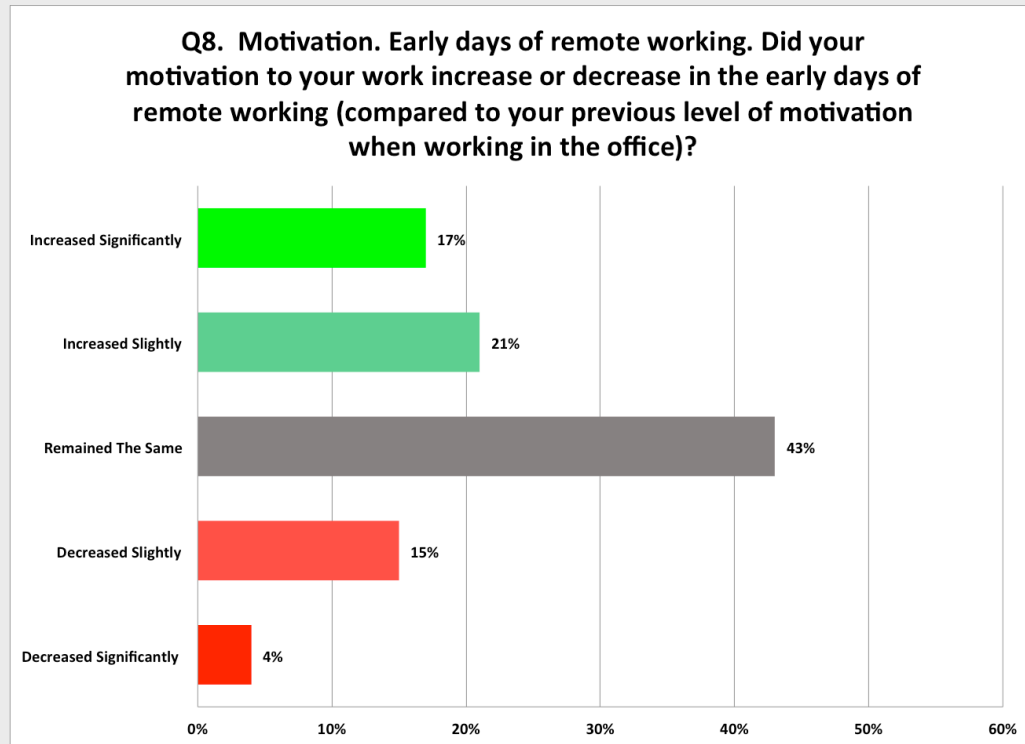
Perceived productivity appears to have held up relatively well while working remotely. 68% of respondents report that in the early days of remote working productivity either remained the same (30%) or increased slightly (22%) or significantly (16%). 81% of respondents report that productivity remained the same or increased over the entire period of remote working (compared to previous productivity when working in the office). A significant minority of respondents report that productivity decreased slightly or significantly, both in the early days of the remote working and over the entire period.

Questions 8 & 9

Motivation



Motivation has similarly held up reasonably well while working remotely



81% of respondents report that motivation either remained the same or increased in the early days of working. Similarly, 78% of respondents report that motivation has remained the same or increased over the entire period of remote working. 15% report a significant increase in motivation over the entire period of remote working and 23% report a slight increase in motivation.

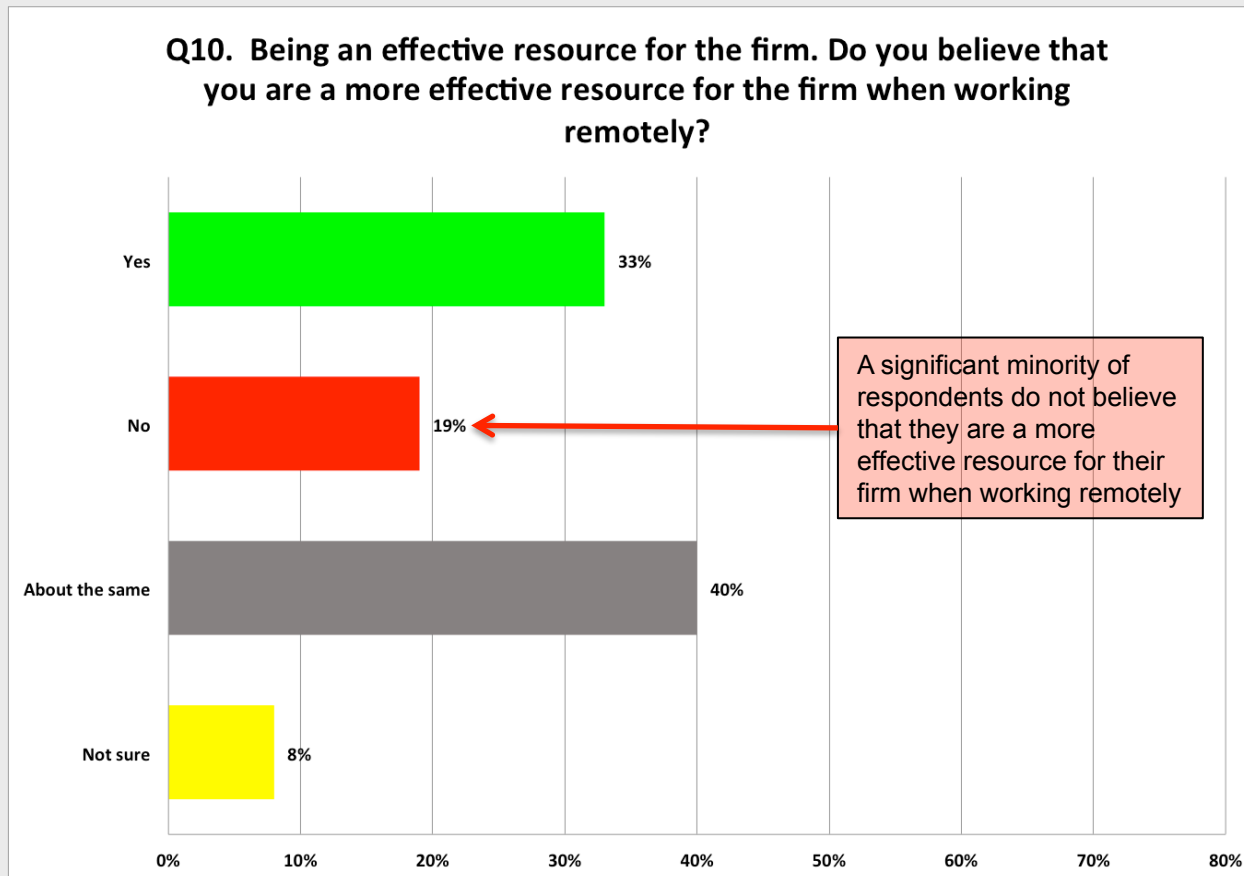
While it seems that motivation has held up reasonably well while working remotely, a significant minority report a decrease in motivation. 17% report a slight decrease in motivation over the entire period and a further 5% report a significant decrease in motivation.

Question 10

Being an Effective Resource for the Firm



The majority of respondents believe that they are as or more effective a resource for the firm when working remotely than when working in the office. A significant minority believe that they are less effective.



40% of respondents believe that their effectiveness as a resource for the firm when working remotely is about the same as when they are working in the office.

A third of respondents believe that they are a more effective resource when working remotely.

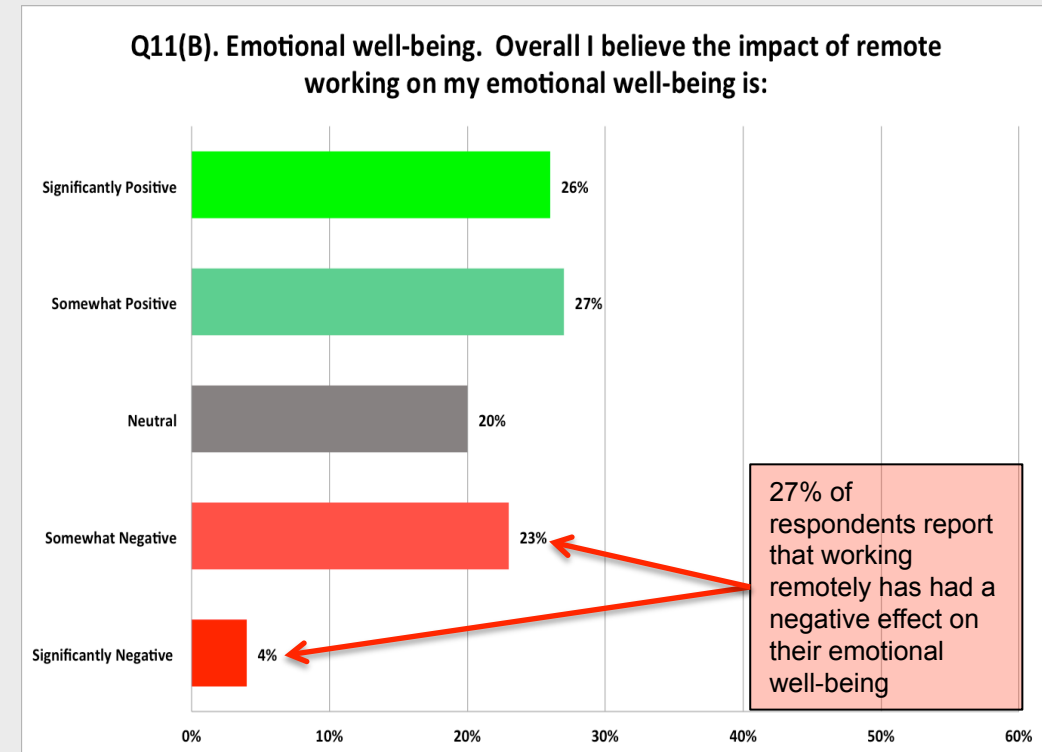
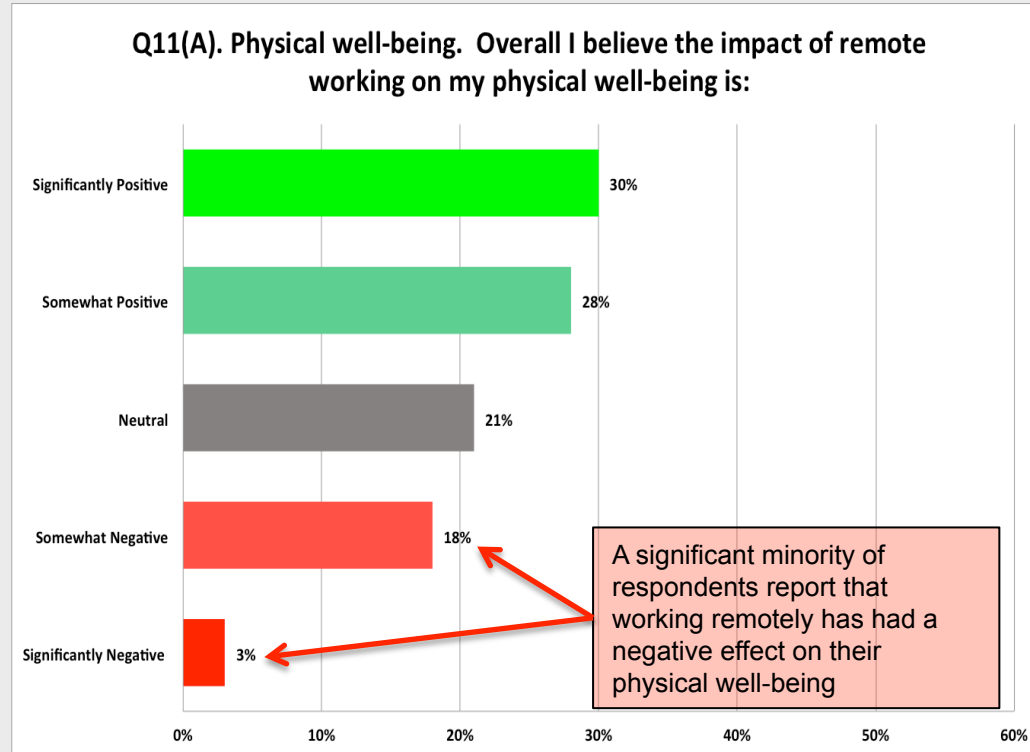
19% of respondents do not believe that they are a more effective resource when working remotely.

Question 11

Physical and Emotional Well-being



Over half of respondents believe that remote working has had a positive impact on their physical and emotional well-being. However, a significant minority believe that it has had a negative impact.



58% of respondents believe that remote working is having a significant or somewhat positive effect on their **physical well-being** (28% somewhat positive; 30% significantly positive). The equivalent figure is 53% in terms of impact on **emotional well-being** (27% somewhat positive; 26% significantly positive).

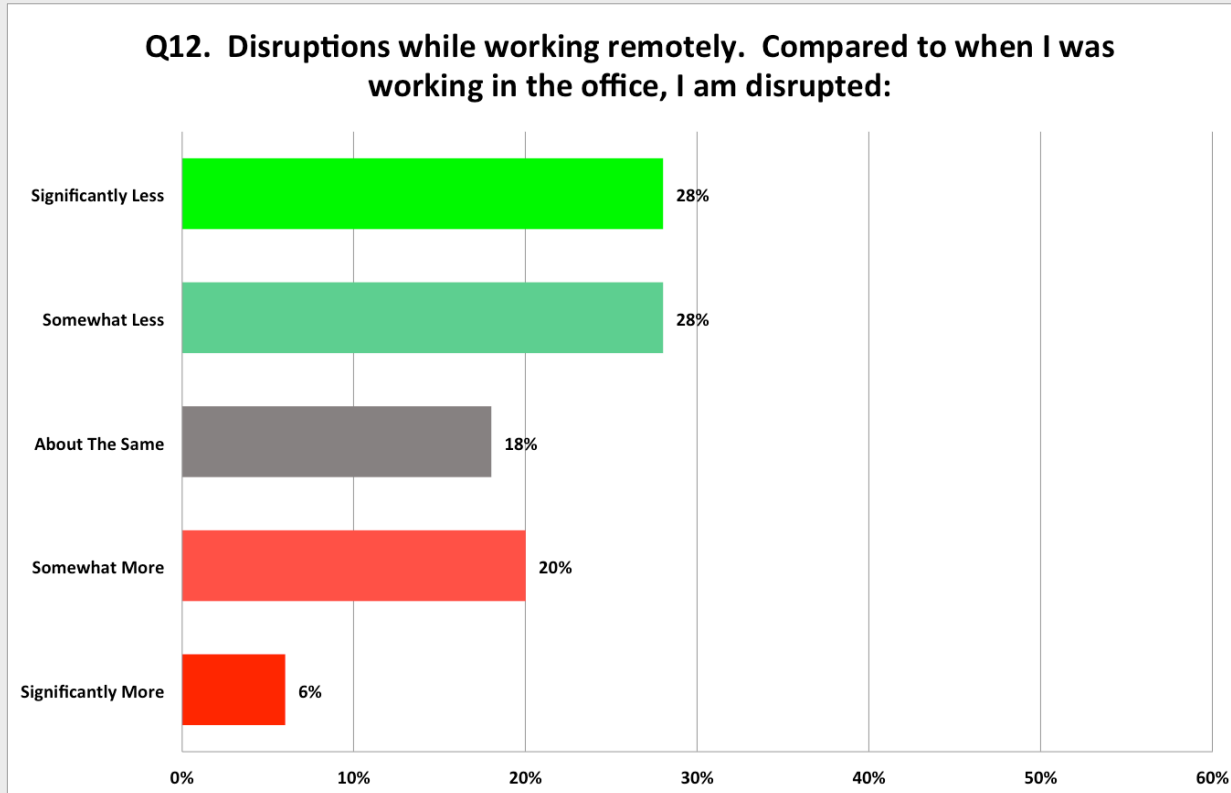
A significant minority of respondents believe that remote working has had a somewhat negative or significantly negative effect on their physical and emotional well-being. 21% of respondents believe that remote working has had either a somewhat negative or significantly negative effect on their **physical well-being** and the equivalent figure is 27% in terms of **emotional well-being**.

Question 12

Disruptions



The majority of respondents experience less disruptions than when they are in the office. However, a significant minority experience a higher level of disruption.



Over half of respondents (58%) experience significantly less or somewhat less disruptions than when they are working in the office. 28% report significantly less disruptions when working remotely.

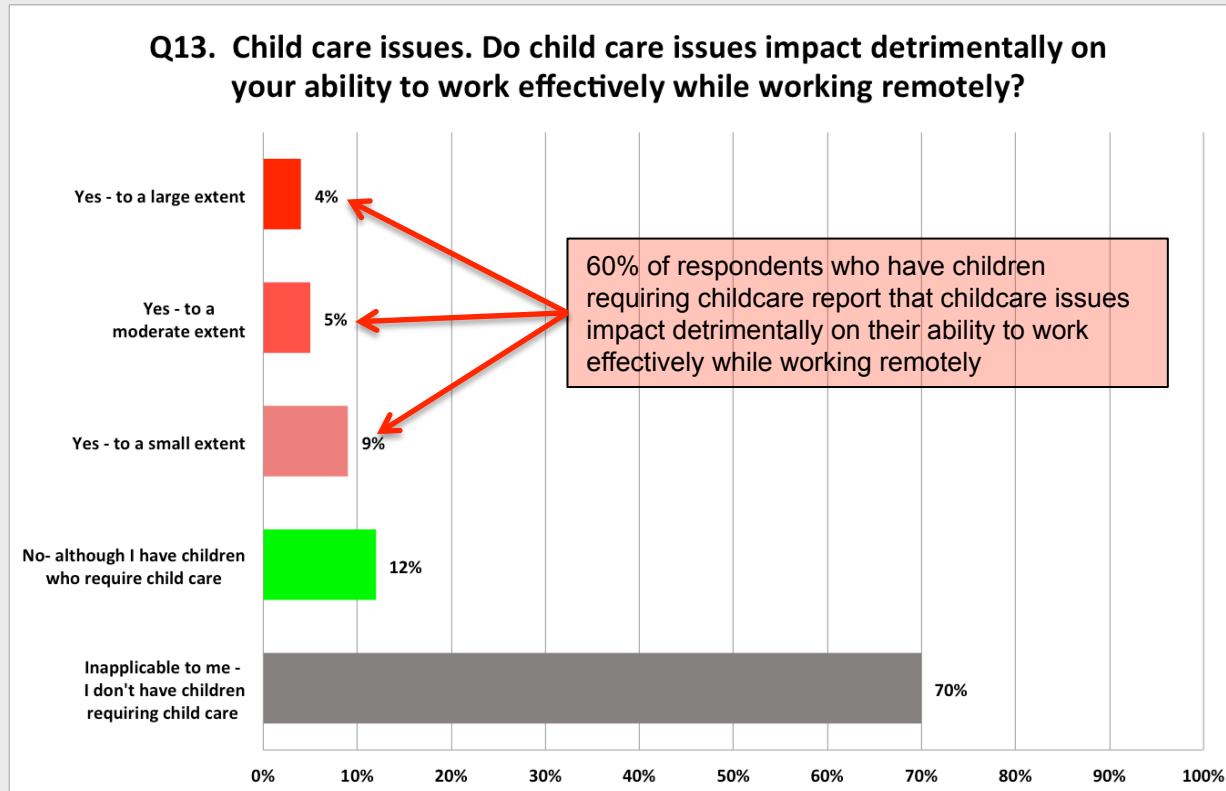
A significant minority experience a higher level of disruption when working remotely – 20% of respondents report somewhat more disruption than when working in the office; 6% report significantly more disruption..

Question 13

Childcare Issues



A very high percentage of respondents who have children requiring child care report that childcare issues impact detrimentally on their ability to work effectively.



70% of respondents do not have children requiring childcare.

Of the 30% that have children requiring childcare, 60% report that child care issues impact detrimentally on their ability to work effectively while working remotely.

Of that 60%:

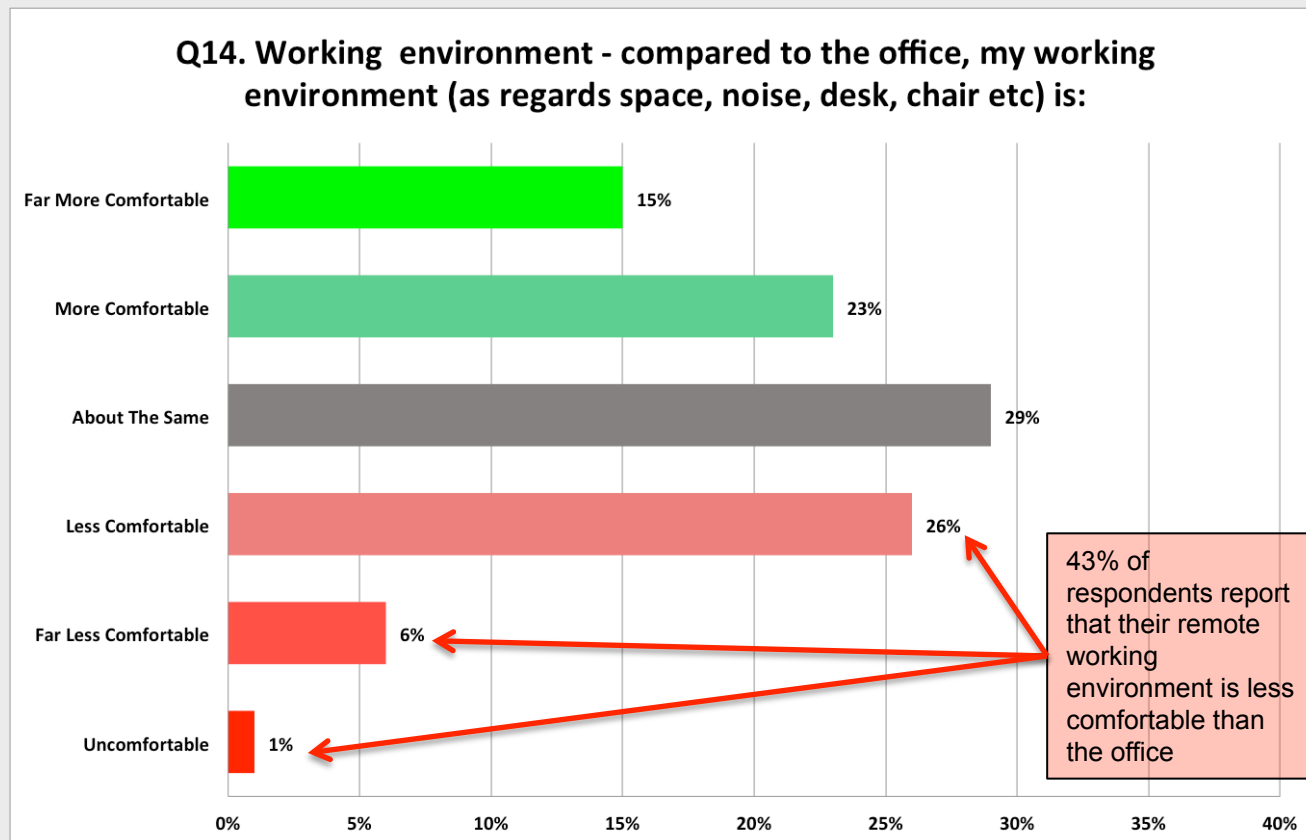
- 22% report that childcare issues impact detrimentally to a large extent on their ability to work remotely
- 28% report that these issues impact detrimentally to a moderate extent
- 50% report that these issues impact detrimentally to a small extent

Question 14

Working Environment



The majority of respondents report that their remote working environment is either about the same or more comfortable than the office. However over 40% report that it is less comfortable, far less comfortable or uncomfortable.



38% of respondents report that their remote working environment is either more comfortable or far more comfortable than the office working environment. A further 29% report that it is about the same.

43% report that the remote working environment is either less comfortable, far less comfortable or uncomfortable.

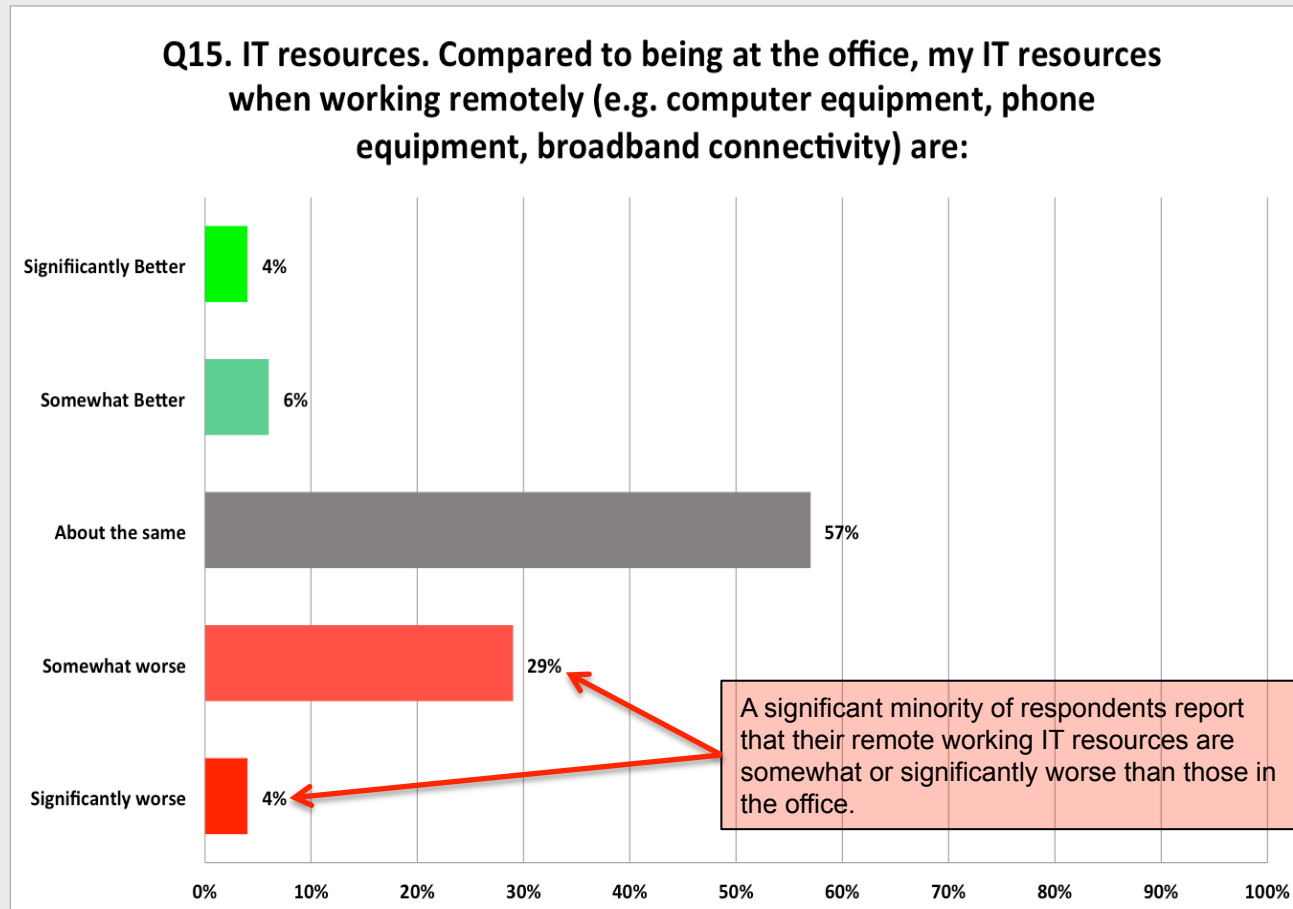
26% report that it is less comfortable, 6% far less comfortable and 1% uncomfortable.

Question 15

IT Resources



Over half of respondents report that their remote working IT resources are either about the same or somewhat better than those in the office. However, a significant minority report that they are somewhat or significantly worse.



57% of respondents report that their remote working IT resources are about the same as those in the office.

5% report that their remote working IT resources are somewhat better than those in the office; a further 4% report that they are significantly better.

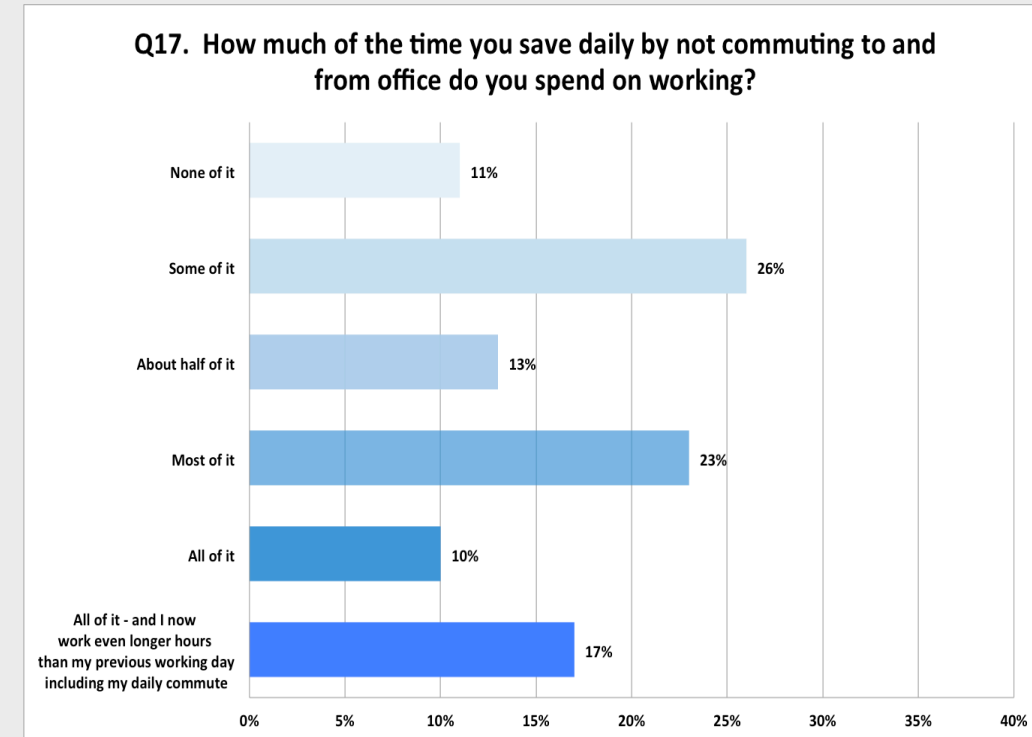
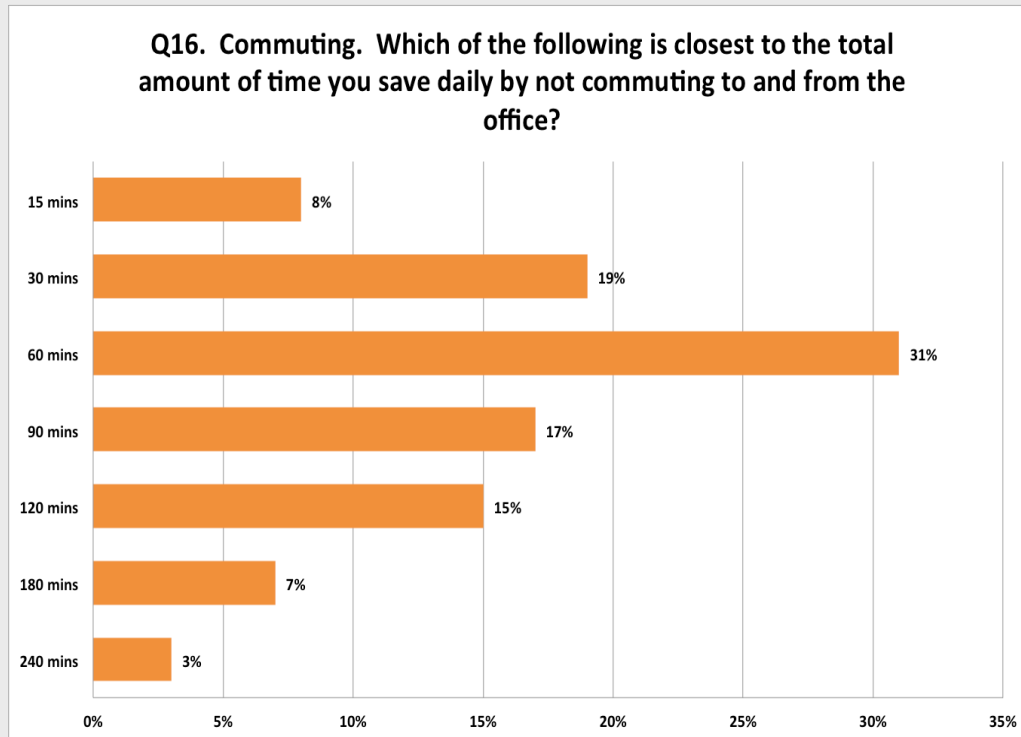
A significant minority report that their remote working IT resources are either somewhat worse (29%) than those in the office or significantly worse (4%).

Questions 16 & 17

Commuting



The vast majority of respondents spend some or all of the time they save daily by not commuting on working. A significant percentage spend all of the time they save on working and work even longer hours than when they were commuting.



75% of respondents have a (return trip) daily commute of less than 90 minutes when working in the office.

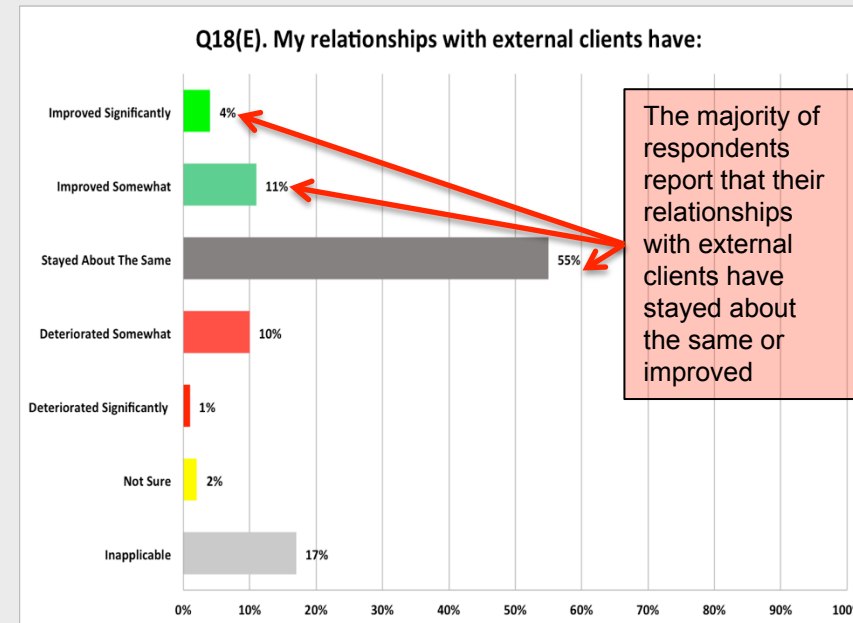
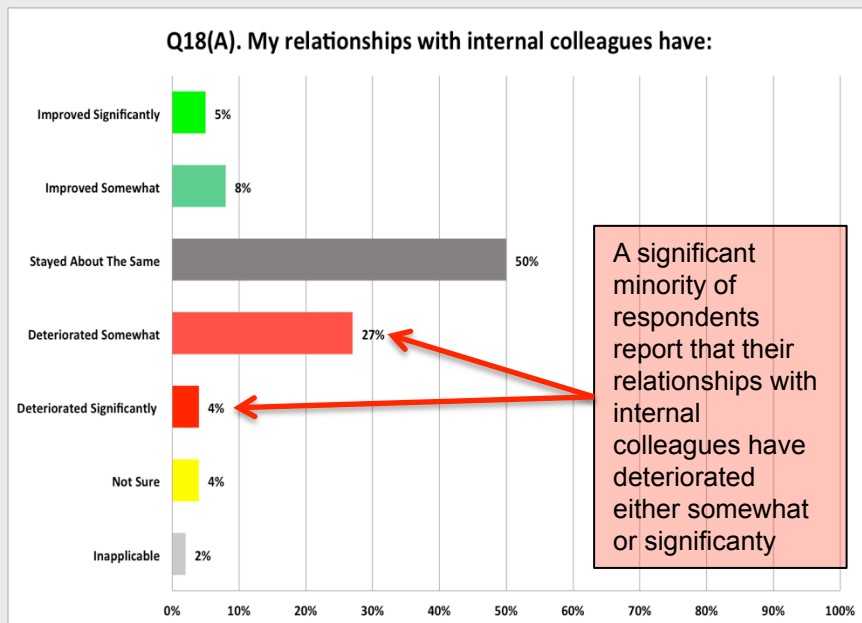
The vast majority (89%) of respondents spend some or all of the time they save daily by not commuting on working. 23% spend most of the time they save working, 10% spend all of it working and 17% spend all of the time they save daily by not commuting working, and now work even longer hours than their previous working day including the daily commute to and from the office.

Questions 18(A) and 18(E)

Relationships with internal colleagues and external clients



Over 50% of respondents believe that their relationships with external clients (where applicable) have stayed about the same or improved somewhat or significantly. A small percentage believe that those relationships have deteriorated somewhat or significantly; a larger percentage believe that relationships with internal colleagues have deteriorated.



53% of respondents believe that their relationships with external clients have stayed about the same and 11% believe that they have improved somewhat. A further 4% believe that they have improved significantly. 10% are concerned that their relationships with external clients have deteriorated somewhat, 1% significantly.

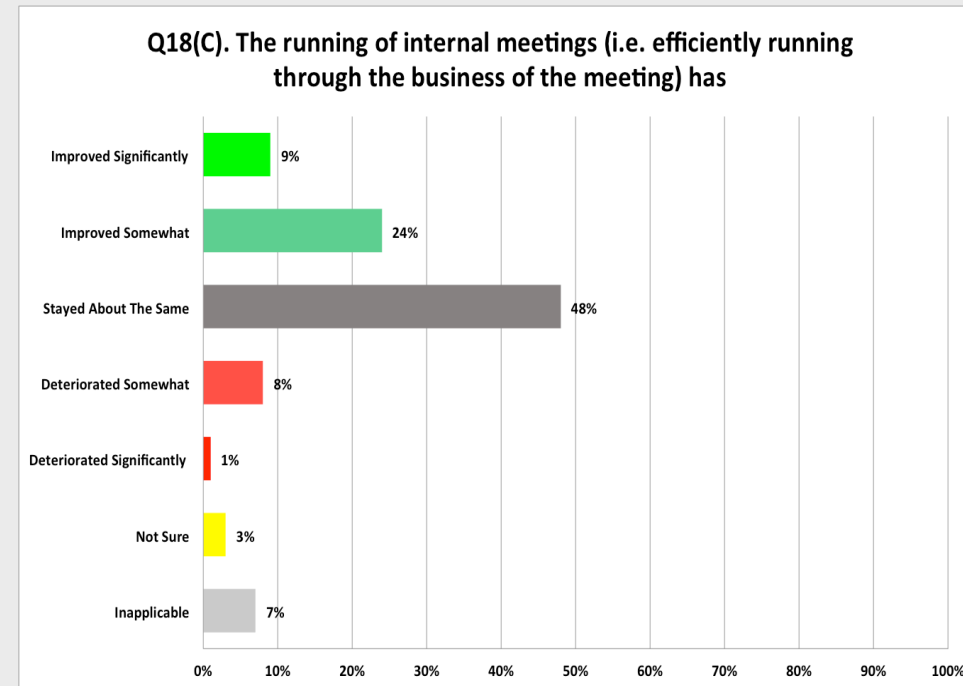
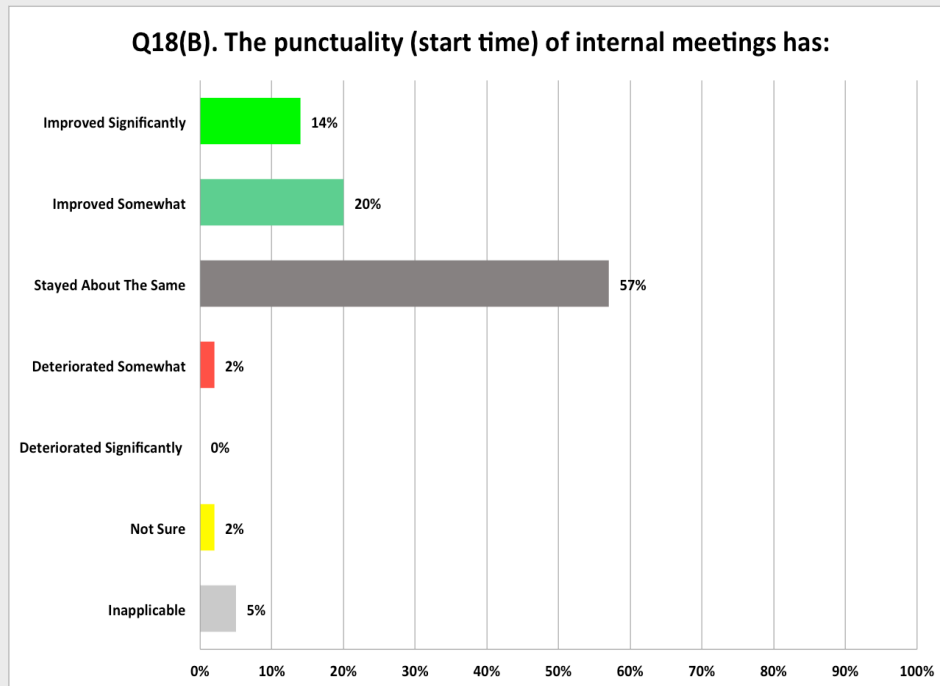
When it comes to relationships with internal colleagues, 50% of respondents believe that their relationships have stayed about the same. 27% believe that they have deteriorated somewhat and 4% believe that they have deteriorated significantly.

Questions 18(B) & 18(C)

Internal Meetings



The overwhelming majority of respondents report that the punctuality of internal meetings has stayed about the same or improved. The overwhelming majority also report that the efficiency of the running of internal meetings has stayed about the same or improved.



20% of respondents report that the punctuality (start time) of internal meetings has improved somewhat, 14% significantly. 57% report that it has stayed about the same and only 4% report that punctuality has deteriorated somewhat.

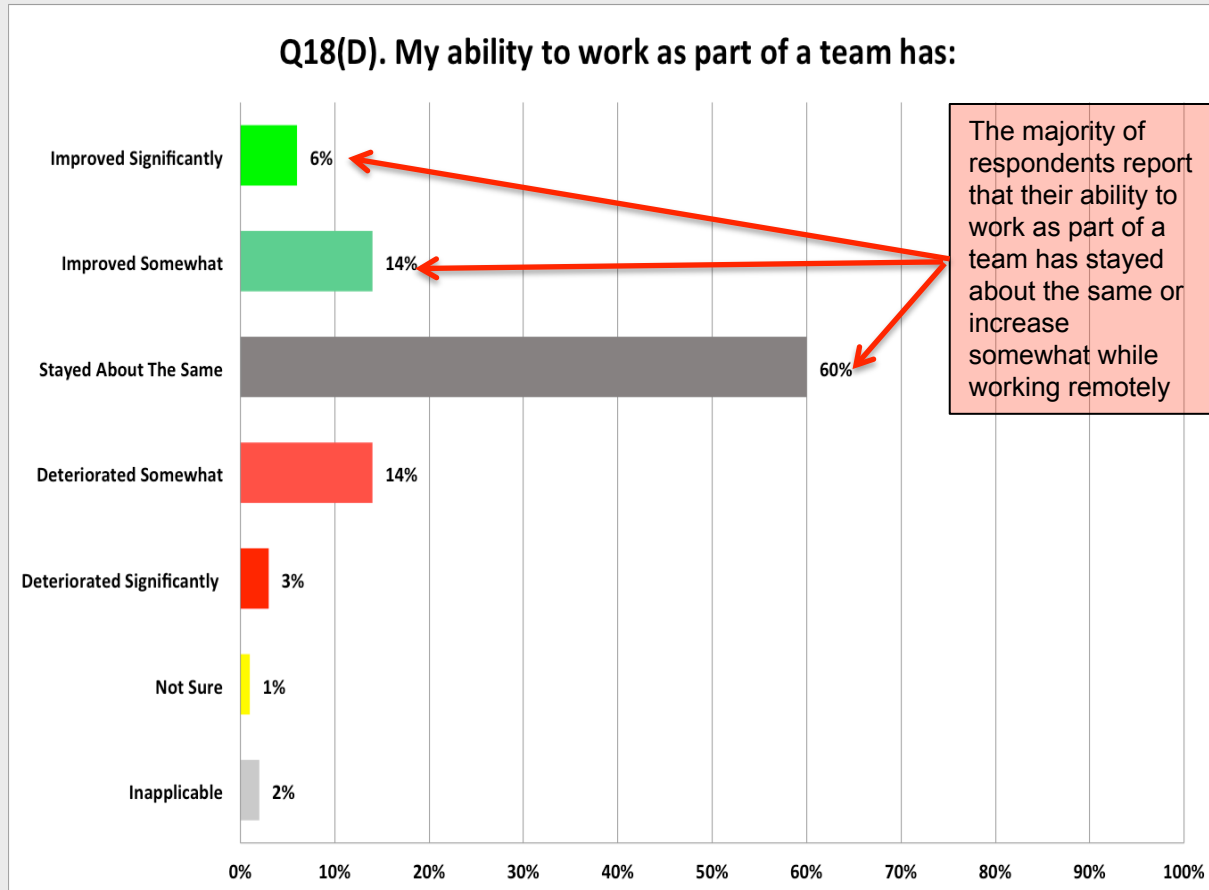
33% of respondents report that the running of internal meetings (efficiently running through the business of the meeting) has improved somewhat or significantly. 48% report that it has stayed about the same. 8% report that it has deteriorated somewhat, 1% significantly.

Question 18(D)

Working as part of a team



The vast majority of respondents report that their ability to work as part of a team has stayed about the same or improved somewhat while working remotely. A significant minority report that it has deteriorated somewhat or significantly.



60% of respondents report that their ability to work as part of a team has stayed about the same while working remotely.

14% of respondents report that their ability to work as part of a team has improved somewhat while working remotely, 6% significantly.

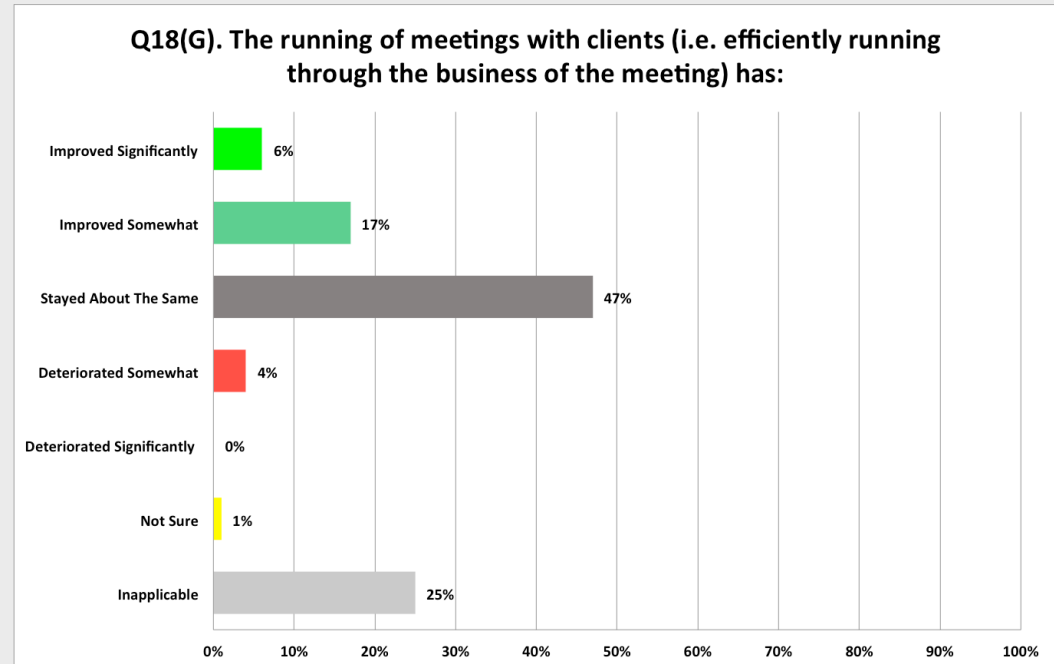
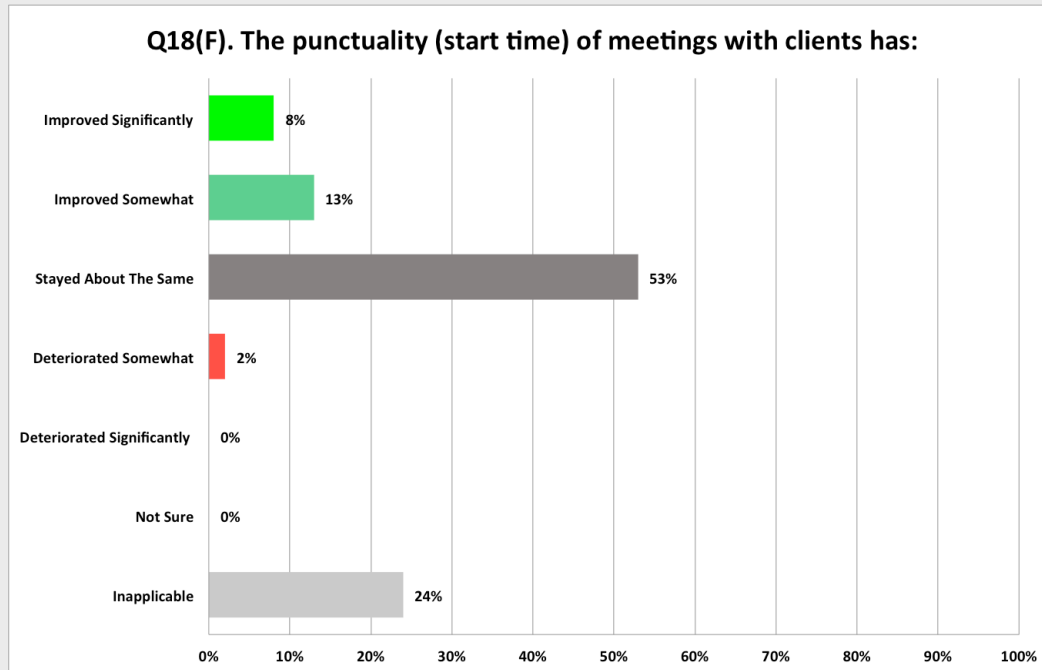
A significant minority report a deterioration in their ability to work as part of a team. 14% report that their ability to work as part of a team has deteriorated somewhat while working remotely, 3% report that it has deteriorated significantly.

Questions 18(F) & (G)

Meetings with Clients



The majority of respondents report that both the punctuality and running of meetings with clients has stayed about the same or improved while working remotely.



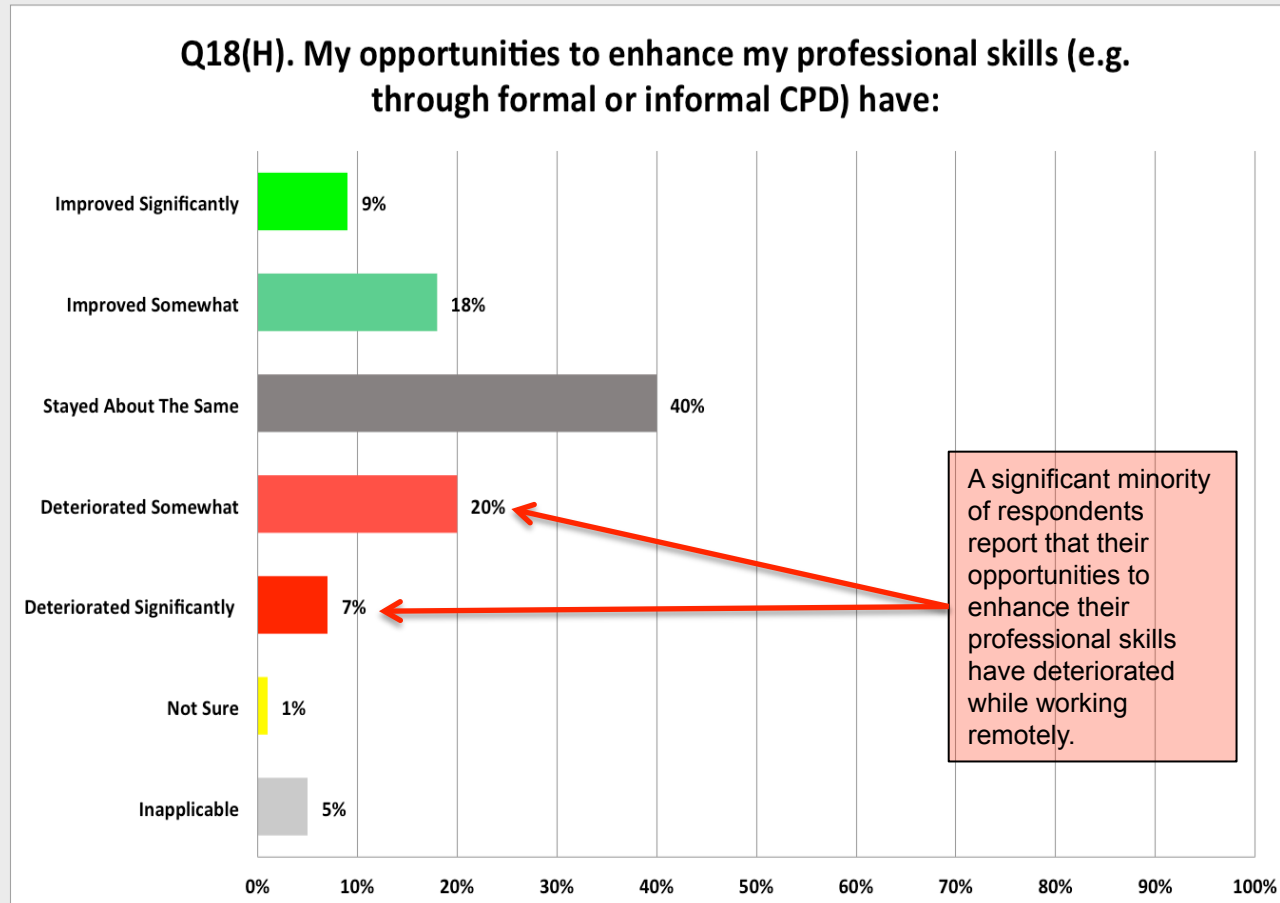
53% of respondents report that the punctuality (start time) of meetings with clients has stayed about the same; 21% report that it has improved either significantly or somewhat. Only 2% report that it has deteriorated somewhat.

47% of respondents report that the running of meetings with clients (efficiently running through the business of the meeting) has stayed about the same. 17% report that it has improved somewhat, 6% significantly. 4% report that it has deteriorated somewhat.

Question 18(H)

Continuing Professional Development

A significant minority of respondents express a concern that their opportunities to enhance their professional skills have deteriorated while working remotely.



20% of respondents report that their opportunities to enhance their professional skills have deteriorated somewhat while working remotely. A further 7% report that these opportunities have deteriorated significantly.

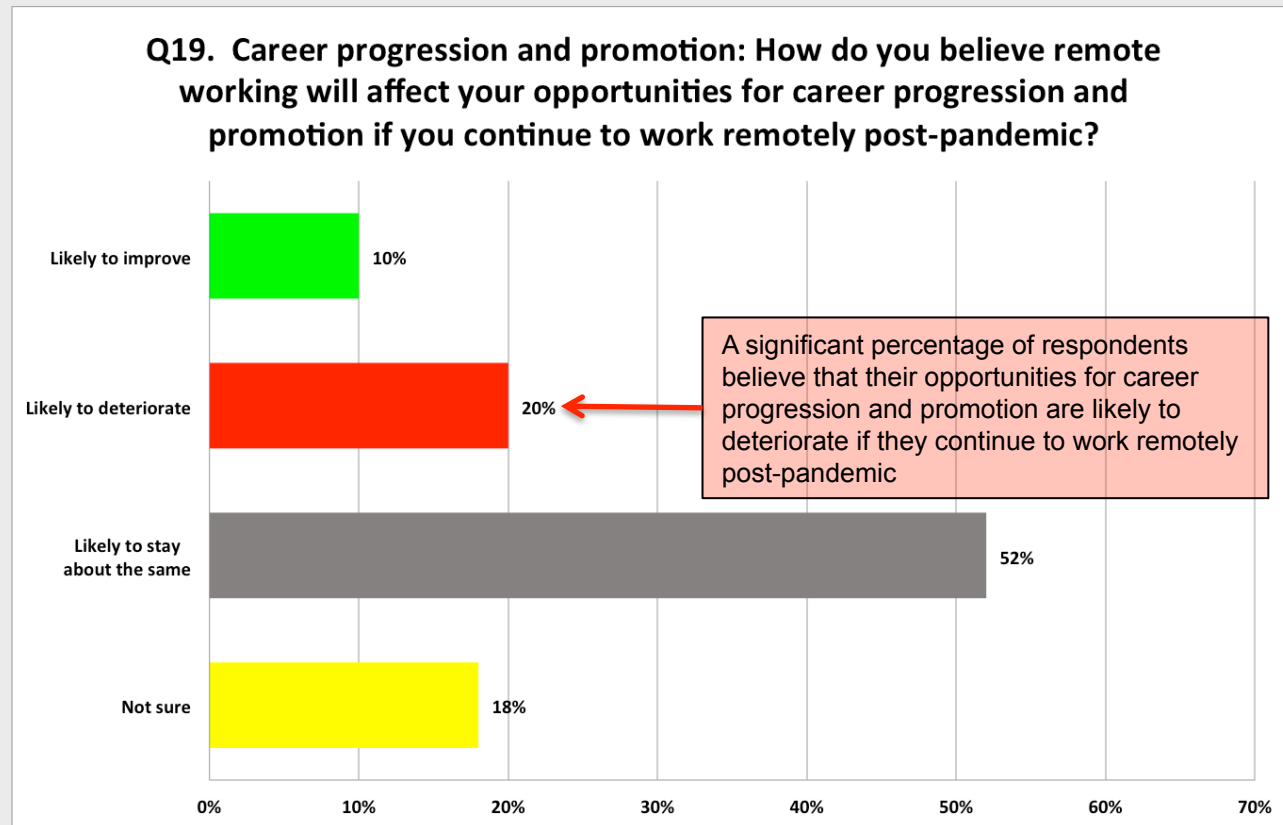
By contrast, 18% of respondents report that their opportunities to enhance their professional skills have improved somewhat while working remotely, a further 9% significantly.

Question 19

Career Progression and Promotion



The majority of respondents believe that their opportunities for career progression and promotion will either stay about the same or improve if they continue to work remotely post-pandemic. However, a significant minority express concern that such opportunities are likely to deteriorate.



52% of respondents believe that their opportunities for career progression and promotion are likely to stay about the same if they continue to work remotely post-pandemic. A further 10% report that their opportunities are likely to improve.

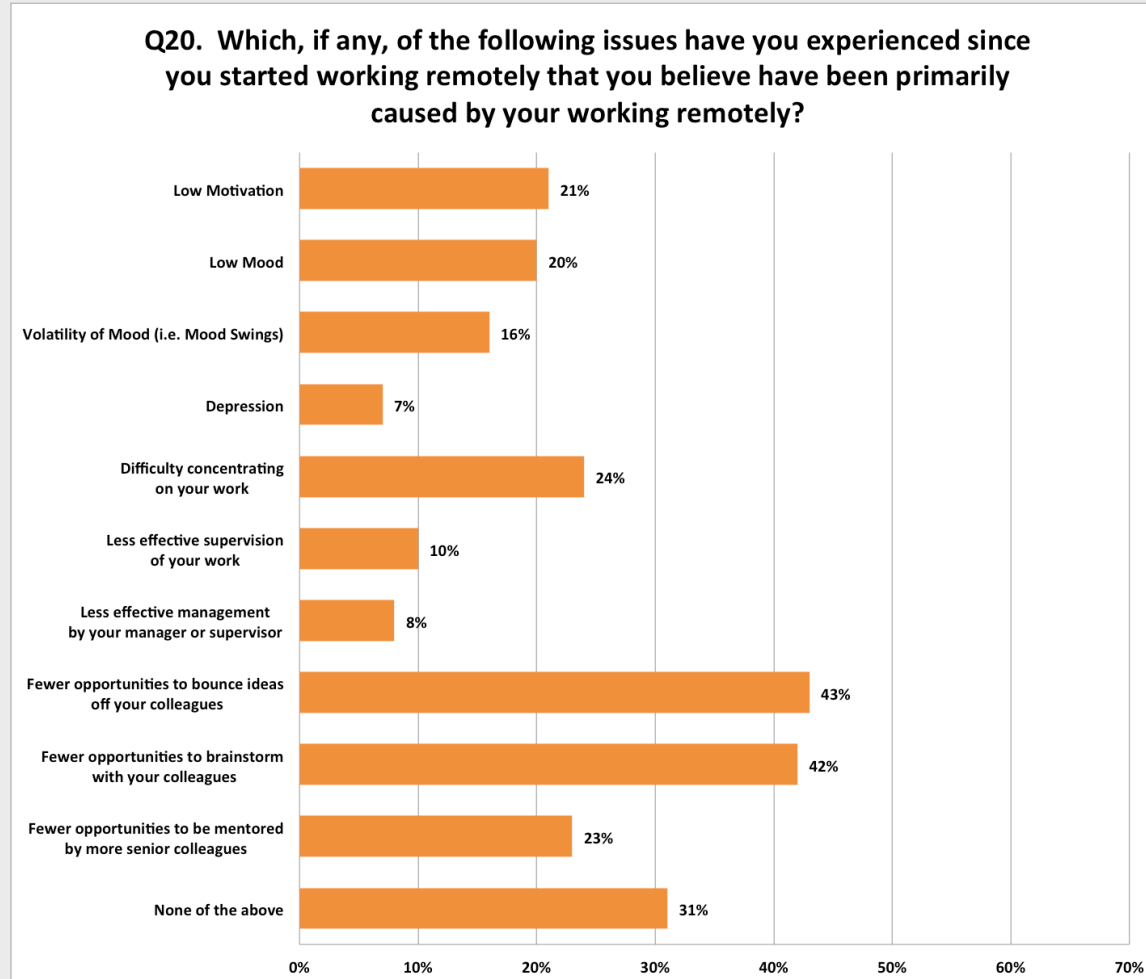
A significant percentage (20%) of respondents believe that their opportunities for career progression and promotion are likely to deteriorate if they continue to work remotely post-pandemic.

Question 20

Negative experiences while working remotely



A significant percentage of respondents report a number of negative experiences while working remotely that they attribute to working remotely



A significant percentage of respondents report a number of negative experiences while working remotely that they attribute to working remotely.

21% report low motivation and 20% low mood. 16% report volatility of mood. 7% report depression. 24% report difficulty concentrating on their work.

Relatively low percentages report less effective supervision of their work (10%) or less effective management by manager / supervisor (8%).

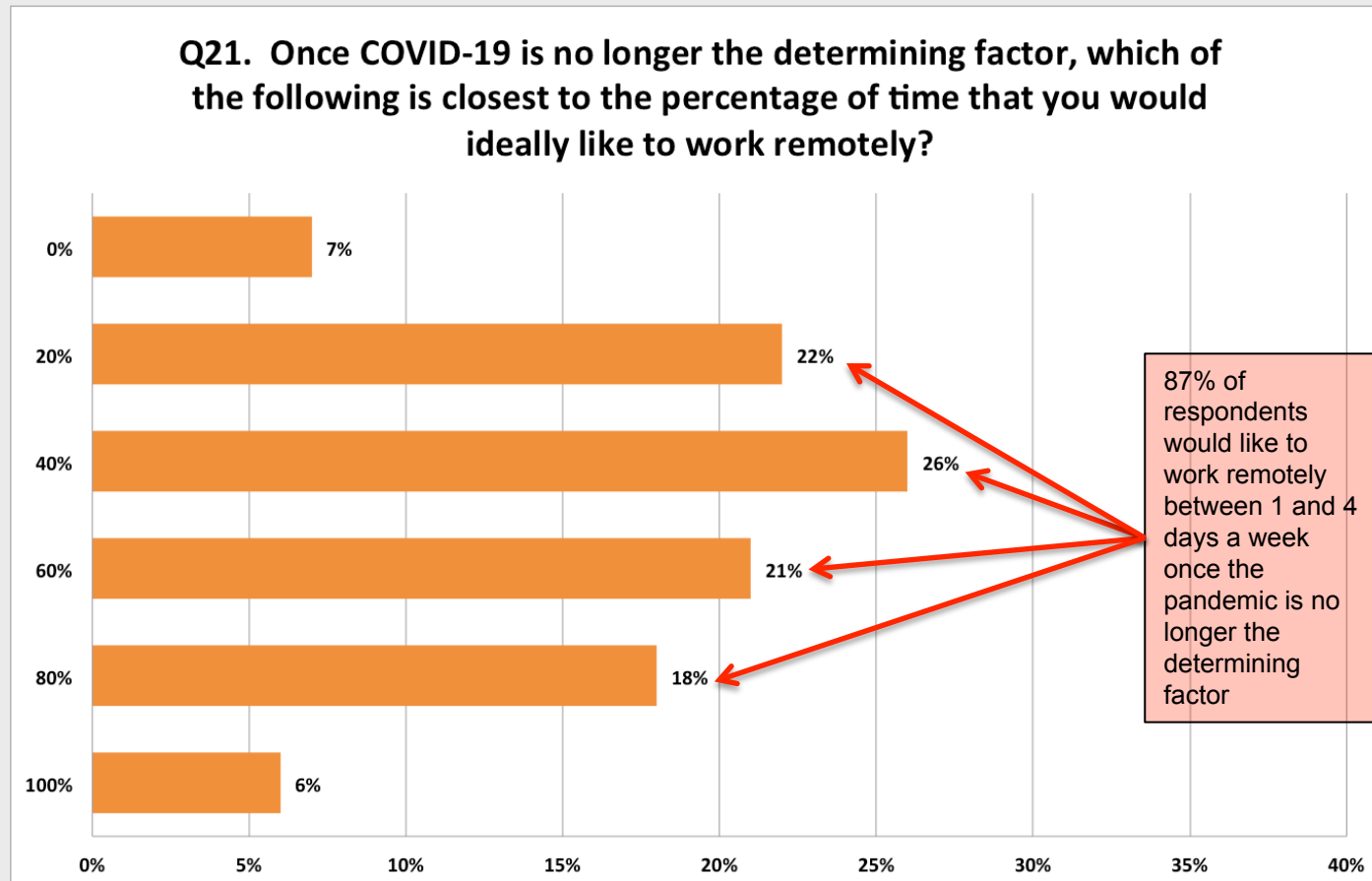
However just over 40% report fewer opportunities to bounce ideas of colleagues and to brainstorm with colleagues. 23% report fewer opportunities to be mentored by more senior colleagues while working remotely.

Question 21

Preferences regarding remote working post-pandemic



The vast majority of respondents would like to work remotely for a significant percentage of their working week post-pandemic.



The vast majority of respondents would like to spend a significant percentage of their working week working remotely, post-pandemic.

22% would like to work remotely 1 day a week, 26% 2 days a week, 21% 3 days a week and 18% 4 days a week.

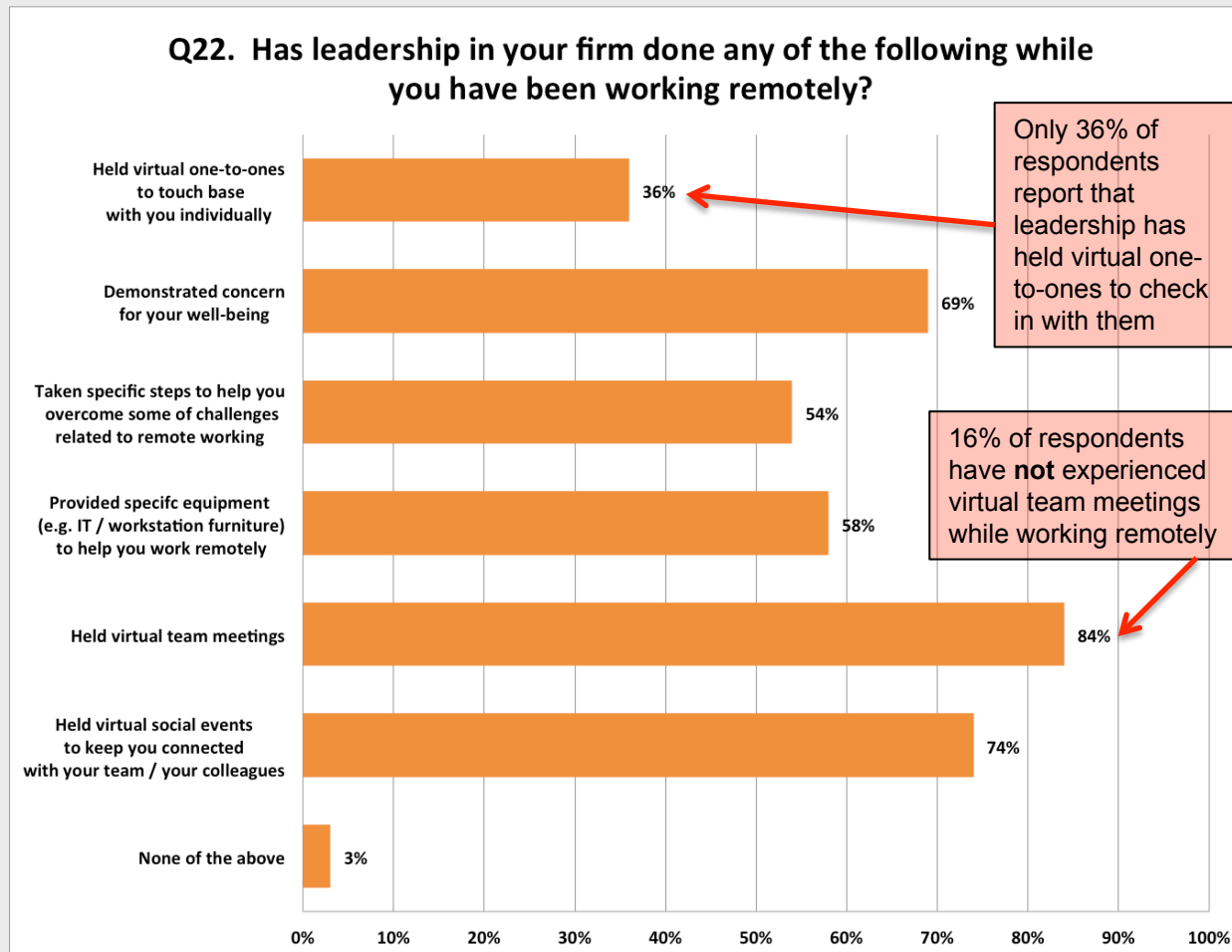
Only 6% express a preference for full-time remote working. 7% express a preference for full-time office working.

Question 22

Leadership actions while working remotely



High percentages of respondents report a range of interactions with leadership while working remotely – however only around one in three respondents have had virtual one-to-ones with leadership



84% of respondents report that leadership has held virtual team meetings and 74% report that leadership has held virtual social events to keep them connected with their team / colleagues. Looked at critically, this means that for 16% of respondents, leadership has not supported them by holding virtual team meetings.

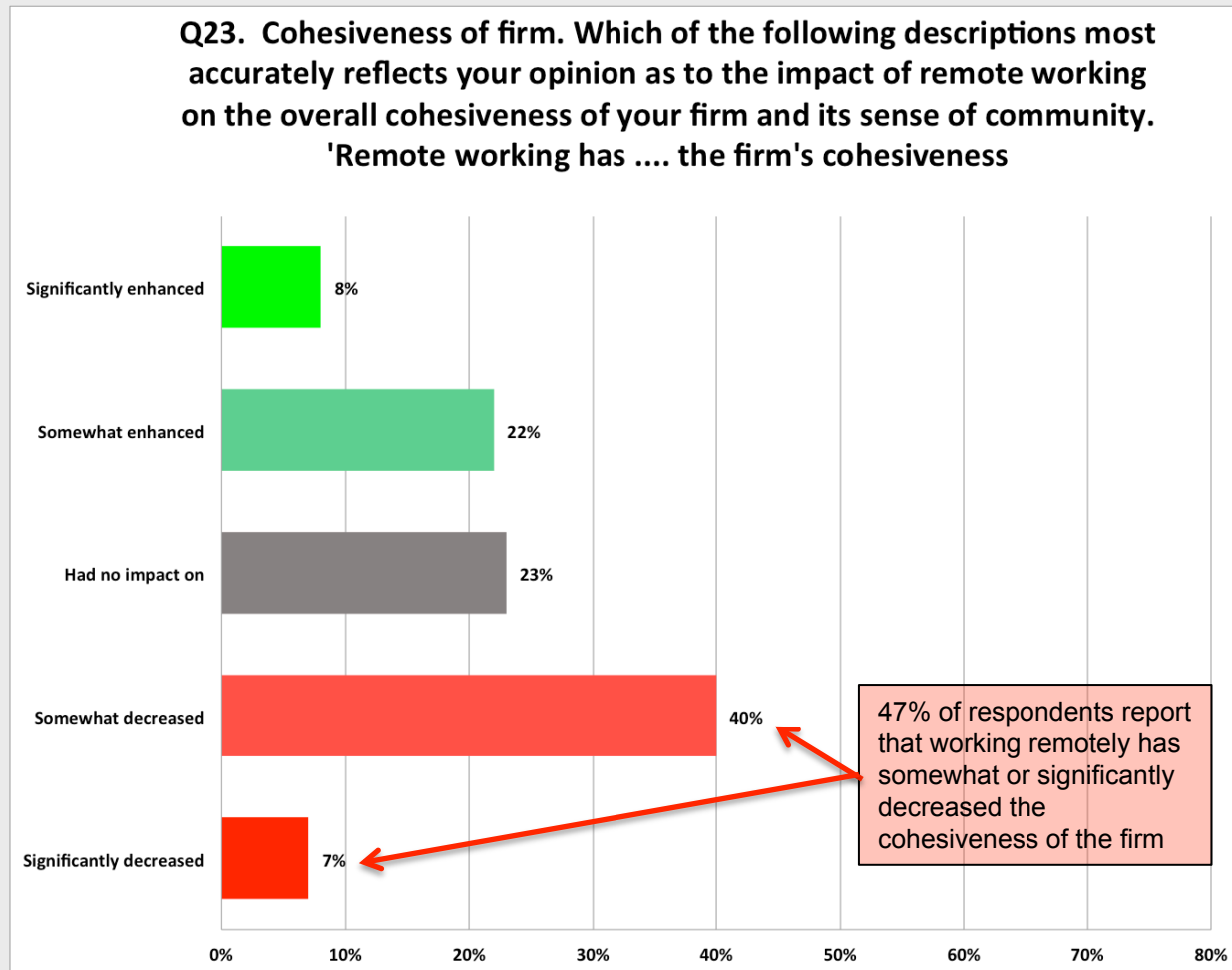
When it comes to individual interactions, only 36% of respondents report that leadership has held virtual one-to-ones with them to touch base with them virtually. However, 69% report that leadership has demonstrated concern for their well-being; 54% report that leadership has taken specific steps to help them overcome some of the challenges related to remote working.

Question 23

Cohesiveness of the Firm



Just over half of respondents report that remote working has had no impact on or enhanced the cohesiveness of the firm. Just under half report that it has somewhat or significantly decreased its cohesiveness.



23% of respondents report that working remotely has had no impact on the cohesiveness of the firm.

22% report that remote working has somewhat enhanced the cohesiveness of the firm and a further 8% report that it has significantly enhanced the cohesiveness of the firm.

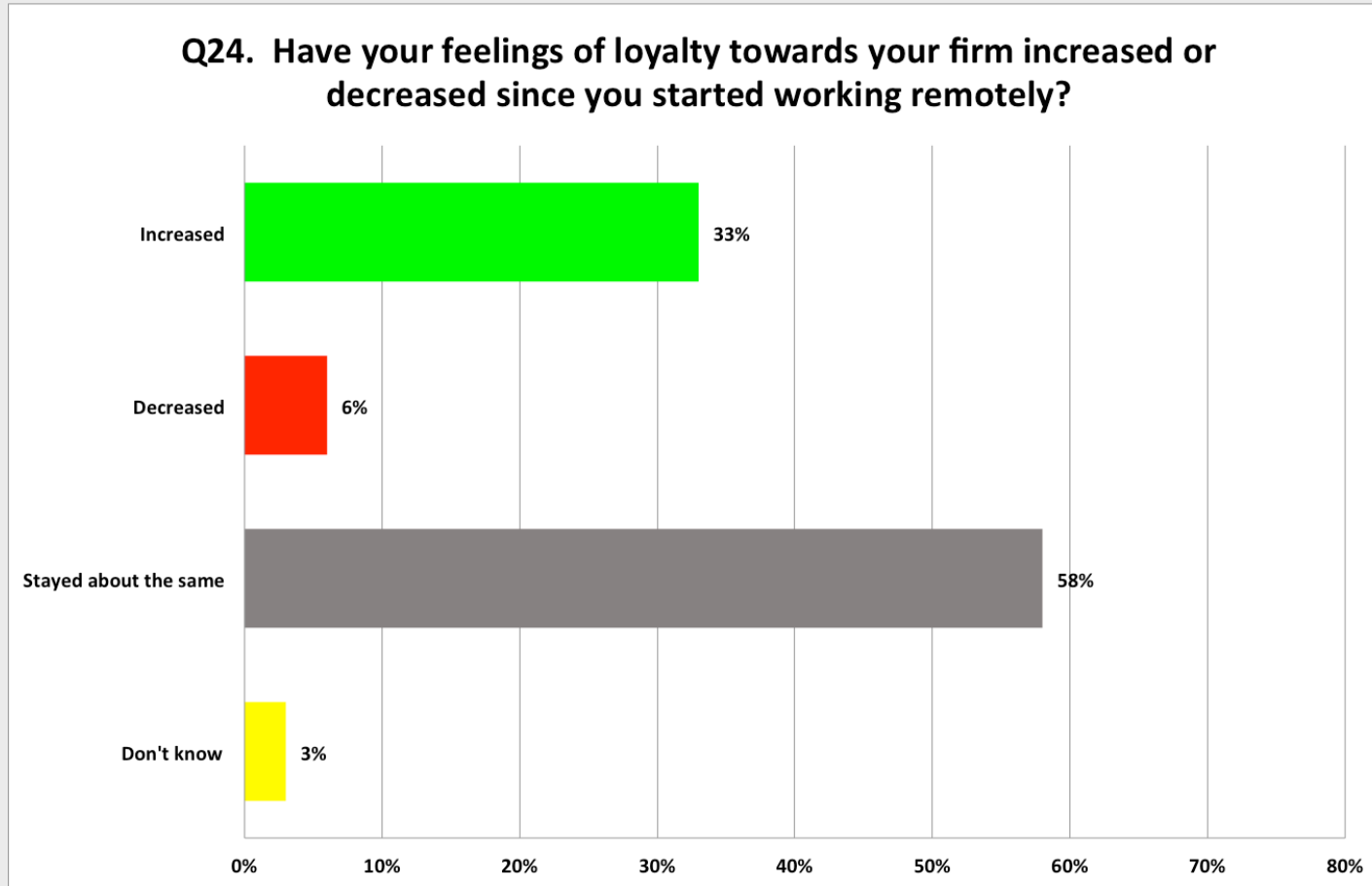
Almost half of respondents report that working remotely has impact negatively on the cohesiveness of the firm – 40% report that it has somewhat decreased its cohesiveness and 7% report that it has significantly decreased its cohesiveness.

Question 24

Feelings of loyalty towards the Firm



The vast majority of respondents report that their feelings of loyalty towards the firm have either stayed about the same or increased since they started working remotely.



58% of respondents report that their feelings of loyalty towards the firm have stayed about the same since they started working remotely. A further 33% report that their feelings of loyalty have increased.

Only 6% of respondents report that their feelings of loyalty have decreased since they started working remotely.