

## A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t

Presented in conjunction with



The IT Service & Technical  
Support Community

# State of the IT Service Desk: Change Management Remains Key

Incident volume continues to rise, as new services are added and changes are continually made to existing services—infrastructure, apps, mobile devices and virtualization. IT support must better leverage service management frameworks, standards and practices to align its offerings with customer needs and business goals to demonstrate the value the IT service desk provides.

**By John Custy**



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S

5	Author's Bio
6	Executive Summary
9	Research Synopsis
10	Incident Volume Still on the Upswing
14	Mobile Devices Demand Attention
18	Support Investments: Who's Buying What?
24	Using Frameworks and Methodologies to Advance Business Goals
29	Security: Are Service Organizations Addressing the Right Risks?
30	Evaluating Enterprise Change Outcomes
32	Service Desk Employment Trends: Not the Prettiest Picture
35	Operational Metrics Measure What Really Matters
39	Customer Satisfaction: Are We Solving Their Problems?
43	Appendix
48	Related Reports: <i>InformationWeek Analytics</i>
49	Related Reports: HDI



T  
A  
B  
L  
E  
O  
F  
C  
O  
N  
T  
E  
N  
T  
S

10	Figure 1: Change in Reported Support Incidents
12	Figure 2: Reasons for Increase in Support Incidents
13	Figure 3: Reasons for Decrease in Support Incidents
15	Figure 4: Support of Company-Owned Mobile Devices and Platforms
16	Figure 5: Support of Personal Mobile Devices and Platforms
17	Figure 6: Access to Company Resources via Mobile Devices
19	Figure 7: Support Tool Investment Plans
21	Figure 8: Factors Impacting Spending Priorities
23	Figure 9: IT Initiatives Impacting the Service Organization
24	Figure 10: Use of Frameworks and Methodologies
27	Figure 11: ITIL Process Implementation
30	Figure 12: Sources of Security-Related Concerns
31	Figure 13: Enterprise Application Rollout Outcome
32	Figure 14: Keys to Rollout Success
33	Figure 15: Support Employment Trends
34	Figure 16: Virtual Support Staff
34	Figure 17: Effectiveness of Virtual Work Environment
35	Figure 18: Top Metrics for the Support Center
36	Figure 19: Meeting Performance Targets
38	Figure 20: Cost Per Incident
39	Figure 21: Frequency of Customer Satisfaction Measurement
40	Figure 22: Customer Satisfaction Rating
41	Figure 23: Change in Customer Satisfaction Rating



T  
A  
B  
L  
E  
O  
F  
  
C  
O  
N  
T  
E  
N  
T  
S

42	Figure 24: IT Support Organization's Performance
43	Figure 25: Job Function
44	Figure 26: Job Title
45	Figure 27: Company Revenue
46	Figure 28: Industry
47	Figure 29: Company Size



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# Executive Summary

**Infrastructure changes, customer satisfaction,** process improvement, service-level achievement, performance management, cost reduction, security... Historically, these topics have dominated IT support managers' day-to-day routines. Traditional IT service and technical support responsibilities and methodologies are on the edge of obsolescence. For example, users are not seeking out the service desk portal for support, they are utilizing blogs, vendor and user online support sites, and social and informal networks; third parties are continuing to provide more resolutions to users. IT support organizations need to continue to reevaluate their service offerings and the impact of these offerings on business goals, and ensure that their services provide value to the business.

In April 2011, *InformationWeek Analytics* and HDI surveyed 1,214 business technology and service management professionals to determine the current state of the IT service desk. Many of the emerging trends identified by respondents are spreading in influence among support organizations that report increasing incident volume as well as those with decreasing incident volume; nevertheless, these trends are not yet the operational norm. And, in keeping with the trends reported in the past three annual *HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Reports*, the rate of increase for incident volume is slowing.

The primary reason for call-volume increases continues to be change-related: new hardware, new mobile devices, new applications, new infrastructure architecture and more customers. Service desks continue to focus on IT-related and process-based metrics versus metrics that demonstrate the value the service desk adds to business processes and how the service desk contributes to the achievement of business goals. Based on the rate of framework and methodology adoption reported by survey respondents, IT support management needs to better understand and leverage service management frameworks, standards and practices to better align service offerings with customer needs.

Twenty-six percent of respondents reported no change in their service desks' incident volumes over the past 12 months. Eleven percent reported a decrease in number of incidents, identifying a more stable infrastructure as the primary reason for that decline. It's likely these organizations also have improved change and release management processes.



# Executive Summary

Self-service tools and practices could also be a major reason some service desks saw a decrease in incident volumes or incident volumes that remained flat compared with the preceding 12 months. Organizations that have added self-service capabilities, however, must be careful not to assume a direct correlation between a decrease in support incidents reported to the service desk and an increase in customer satisfaction, quality or availability of IT services. A decline in support incidents may indicate only that the service desk no longer has visibility into these support incidents or is unable to report on them.

Incident volume trends aside, respondents said their top three financial management priorities are:

- >> Cutting costs (24%);
- >> Enhancing efficiency (20%); and
- >> Enhancing effectiveness (17%).

Yet 58% of service desks don't know what their costs are, according to this study and related HDI research. Not understanding costs means IT support management cannot conduct cost-benefit analyses, determine return on investment or assess value on investment, making support investments more difficult to justify. To more effectively support financial decisions, the service organization's costs must be viewed in relation to business costs overall.

In addition to incident volume and financial management, mobile device support is also a concern for many service desks, with 78% reporting security-related issues as the key concern. Yet only slightly more than 25% of respondents have formal security management processes. With the increase in the number of virtual workers and mobile workers and the bring-your-own-device philosophy, clear security policies are necessary to ensure that decisions are made within the company's risk-tolerance limits.

Service desks also need to better understand their performance and measure it on criteria important to the business. And they need to show the value of their services, including how they've contributed to business goals and increased margins, lowered costs, improved productivity or increased customer satisfaction. In addition to contributing to the achievement of



# Executive Summary

business goals, service desks need to understand their operational performance. More than three of 10 service desks typically do not know their performance for resolution rate (64%), call abandonment (67%), average speed to answer (71%) or first contact resolution (phone, 66%). Not understanding key operational metrics means IT support cannot correctly schedule staff and services or accurately forecast the cost of meeting service levels.

Finally, only 32% of service desks reported an improvement in customer satisfaction, while 43% reported no change and 11% reported a decrease. One possible reason for the decrease could be that the level and type of support delivered by the service desk are focused more sharply on service desk responsiveness than service restoration. When customers call the service desk, it is typically because there is a problem preventing them from getting their work done. Consequently, restoring service and getting customers back to work is a critical variable for maintaining customer satisfaction levels. It is important for the service desk to recognize that customers won't grasp their full value if they can't understand how the service desk contributes to the success of their business units.





Research Synopsis

**Survey Name:** *InformationWeek Analytics/HDI 2011 State of the IT Service Desk Survey*

**Survey Date:** April 2011

**Region:** North America

**Number of Respondents:** 1,214

**Purpose:**

To comprehensively assess the current state of the IT service organization and how it is adapting to trends in self-service, mobile devices, infrastructure architecture, security and more.

**Methodology:**

*InformationWeek Analytics* and HDI surveyed business technology and service management decision-makers at North American companies. The survey was conducted online, and respondents were recruited via an email invitation containing an embedded link to the survey. The email invitation was sent to qualified *InformationWeek* and HDI community members.

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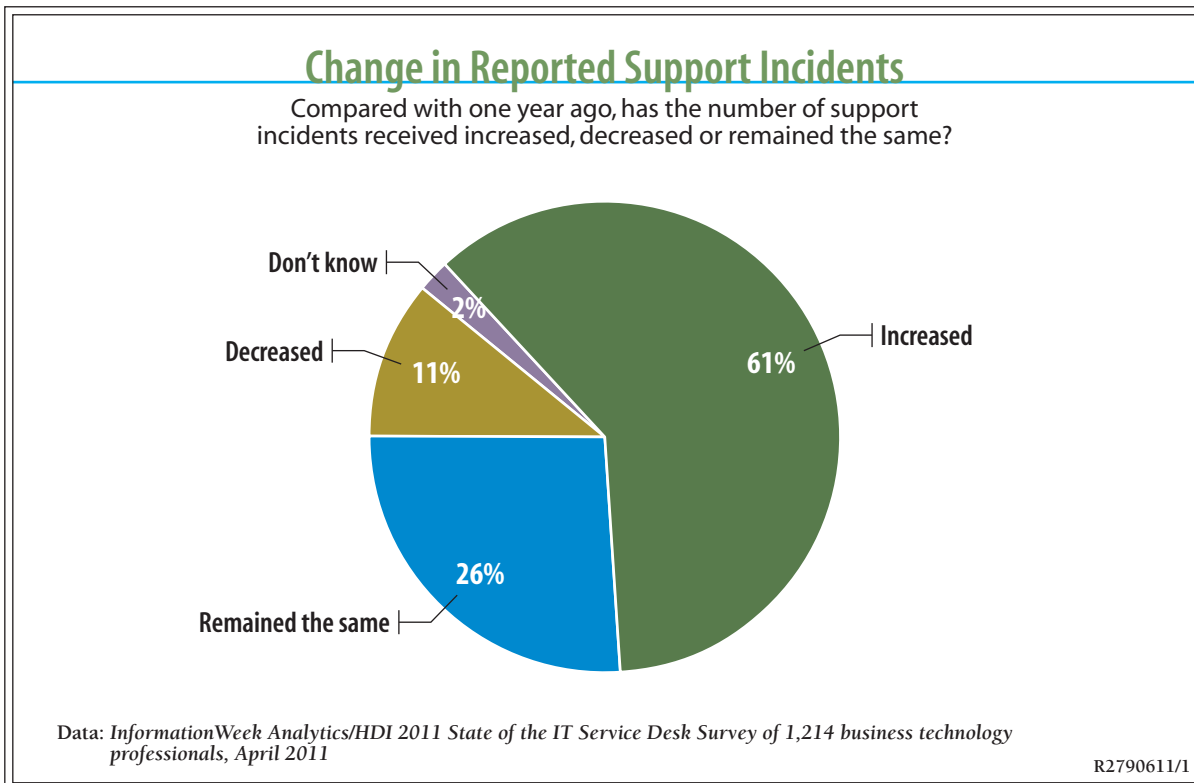


## Incident Volume Still on the Upswing

Regardless of the state of the economy, contact volumes for the service desk continue to increase in most companies. Whether this is due to having more users in new roles, more new staff or more changes implemented, the number of incidents recorded has increased over the previous year for 61% of survey respondents. In the same period, 26% of respondents reported no change in contact volume, and only 11% reported a decrease.

These trends are in line with trends identified in the *HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Reports* since 2008, though the rate of companies reporting increases has been decreasing, from 75% (2008) and 70% (2009) to 67% (2010). The majority of service desks continue to report increases in incident volume year over year. The primary reasons for these increases appear to be both additions and changes—in infrastructure, applications, devices, users and so on—while decreases appear to be the result of a more stable infrastructure and applications, and the competency of the service desk staff and end users.

Figure 1



**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

*InformationWeek Analytics/HDI* survey respondents who reported an increase in volume cited four principal reasons: new equipment, devices and applications (61%); infrastructure changes (51%); an increase in number of customers supported (44%); and an increase in number of applications supported (42%). To remain competitive, businesses will need to continue to make changes to their business processes, and IT will need to continue to update the infrastructure and develop and change applications to support these business requirements.

Almost half (49%) the organizations that reported a decrease in calls attributed the reduction in work primarily to infrastructure changes, indicating a more reliable and stable infrastructure that reduces the number of new and repetitive incidents. For organizations that have adopted a service management framework, this reduction in new incidents also could be due to more disciplined change and release processes that, in turn, result in more stable applications and operating platforms.

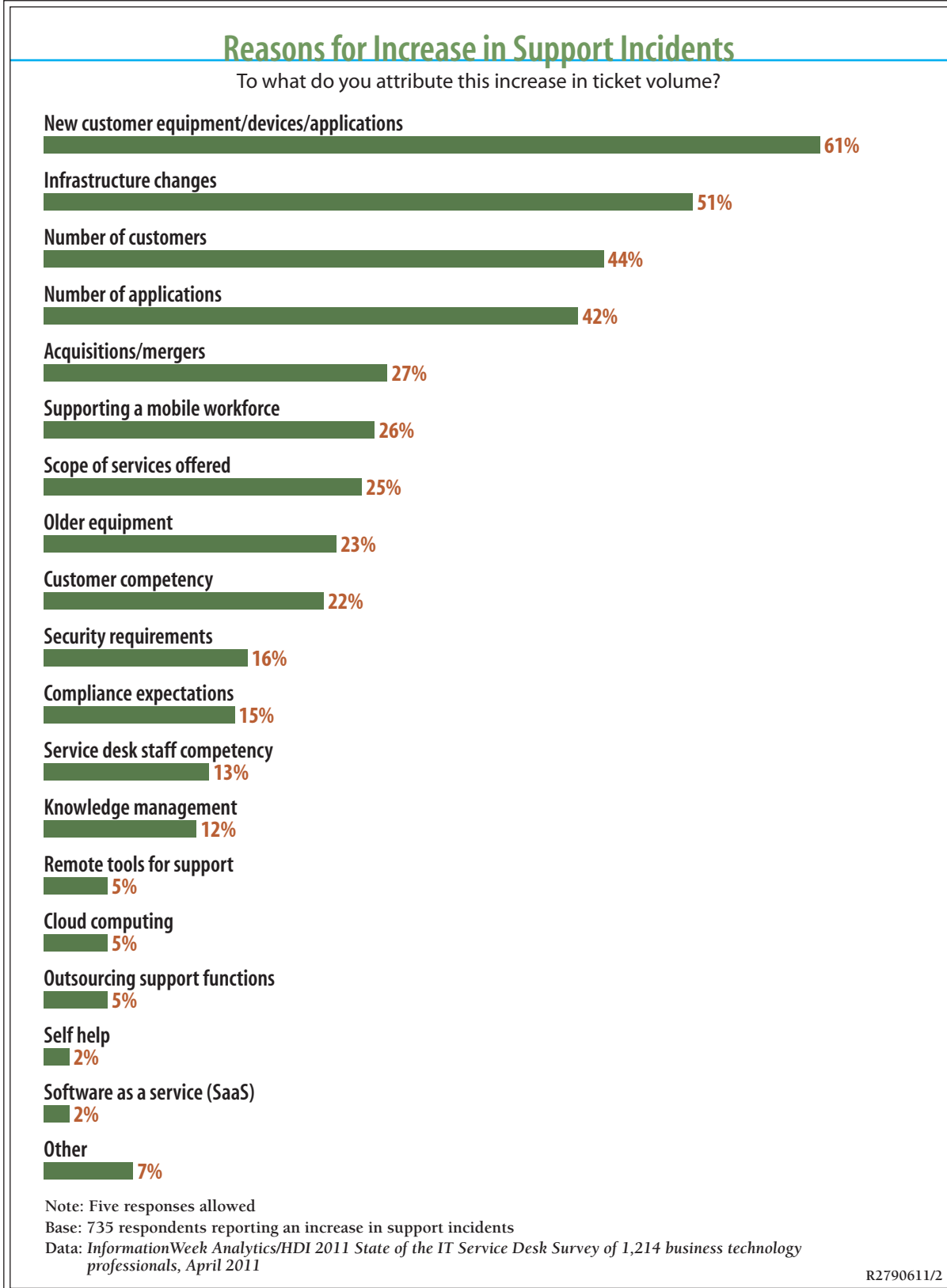
Respondents cited self-service, service desk staff competency and knowledge management as the next three major reasons for the reduction in calls. Thirty-three percent identified self-service as the primary reason for a reduction in incidents, which could be as simple as password resets, move-add-change (MAC) requests or frequently asked questions (FAQs). Knowledge management (32%) was the next reason for the reduction in calls, with the data indicating that both customers and IT staff use knowledge management systems to reduce the number of calls to the service desk, improve resolution time and improve productivity for IT support teams.

In general, many IT service organizations have moved repetitive, administrative and transactional activities (password resets, FAQs, MAC requests and the like) to self-service in order to reduce the direct cost of handling them. The resulting decrease in call volume may reduce the service desk's total costs, but it is unclear if this decrease results in either improved productivity for the service desk and users or a lower cost of doing business. Potentially, it is nothing more than IT support transferring the cost to the business unit, as the users are completing the activities to restore the service themselves, or completing request forms the service desk previously handled for them.

Support organizations need to be careful when reporting and analyzing call reductions attributed to self-service, because these metrics do not necessarily indicate an improvement in overall quality of IT services or a reduction in interruptions to users—they simply suggest that more of these tasks are being addressed through self-service. When making changes, such as



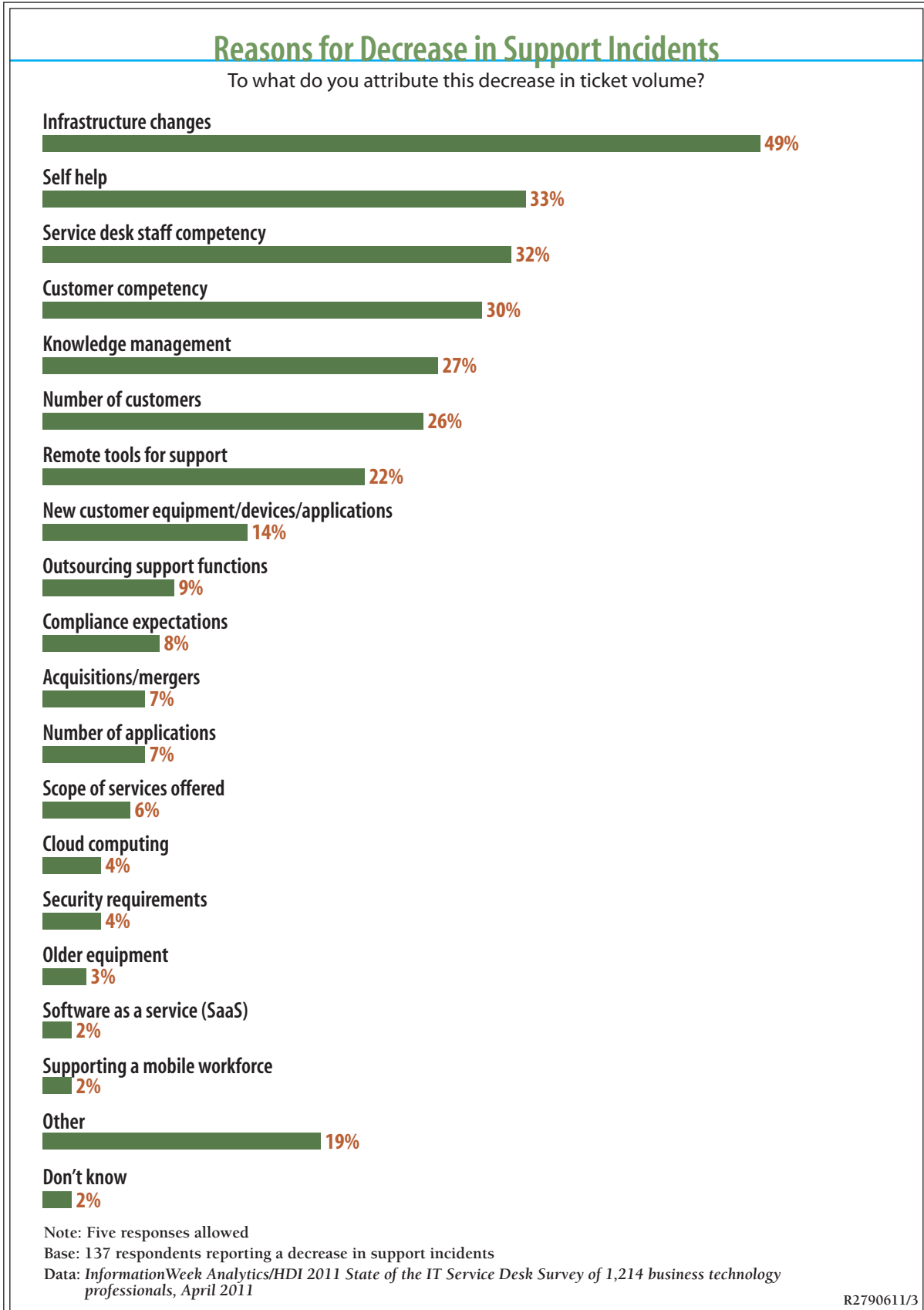
Figure 2





**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

Figure 3





adding self-service as a support channel, service managers need to make the business case and demonstrate how the changes make sense to the business overall, not just IT support.

The reduction in number of customers (27%) and the increase in use of remote tools (26%) were the next two reasons cited for a decrease in number of incidents. Remote tools can be used to improve availability of IT services (infrastructure and applications), enabling resolution of incidents before customers are even aware there's a problem. Remote tools can also improve restoration time, as many desktop-related issues can be resolved much more quickly at the service desk, rather than dispatching a technician, even if a technician is readily available. As with self-service, the support organization needs to ensure that the incidents addressed by remote tools are recorded so availability of services and value of the tools can be accurately reported and qualified.

Only 14% of survey respondents reported a reduction in incidents due to new equipment, devices or applications—61% reported these as reasons for an increase in incidents. Because an increase in incident volume is often the result of changes made by IT to the infrastructure or software applications, service organizations may want to take closer look at how those changes are being implemented. Often, lack of adequate testing and training during these transitions, and having staff in new roles, causes incident volumes to spike. Change and release management processes can significantly reduce the number and impact of incidents introduced by these changes.

Spending is up in 55% of IT organizations, according to the *InformationWeek Analytics Outlook 2011* survey, so we can expect an increase in equipment, devices, applications and infrastructure changes throughout the remainder of this year and into 2012. IT organizations need to focus more on the quality of their change and release management processes to reduce the number of errors introduced by the changes being made in the infrastructure and applications. Problem management is also needed in IT support, not only for major incidents, but also for recurring incidents and resulting downtime, which reduces IT service availability, user productivity and customer satisfaction.

### **Mobile Devices Demand Attention**

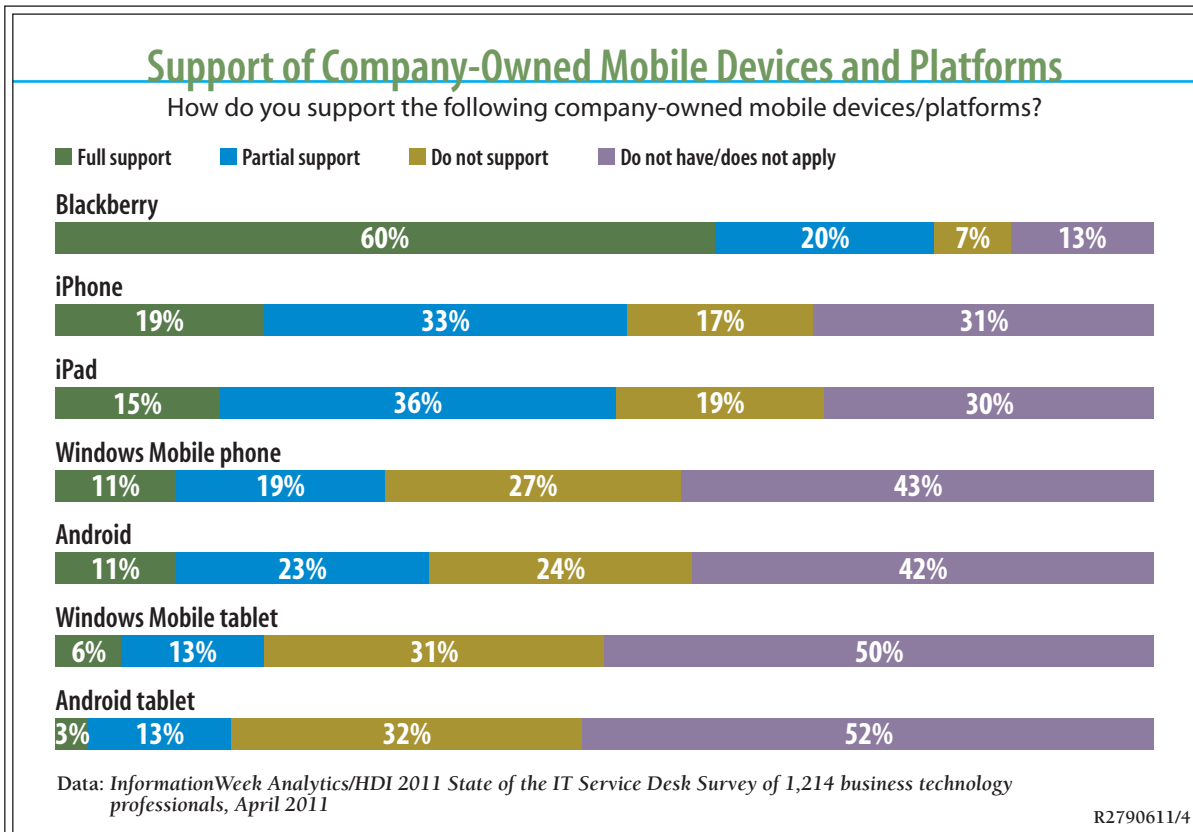
Supporting mobile devices is a security concern for 78% of service desks. According to the November 2010 HDI Research Corner report "Supporting Mobile Devices," 41% of organizations have kept up with demand for support of emerging mobile device technologies, while 49%



struggle to do so. The first major challenge is deciding which devices to support. Forty-five percent of respondents reported that their organizations have policies for supporting mobile devices; 44% reported that their policies are under development and 6% said they have no policies for supporting mobile devices. Those who have policies are able to keep up with their customers' needs, and those whose policies are under development or nonexistent are struggling. Customers will continue to drive the demand for new mobile devices in the near term.

BlackBerrys are the most common company-owned mobile devices supported today, with 60% of survey respondents reporting full support in their companies, and 20% reporting partial support. Nineteen percent of organizations provide full support for iPhones, while 15% provide at least partial support; similarly, 15% provide full support for iPads, and 36% provide

Figure 4



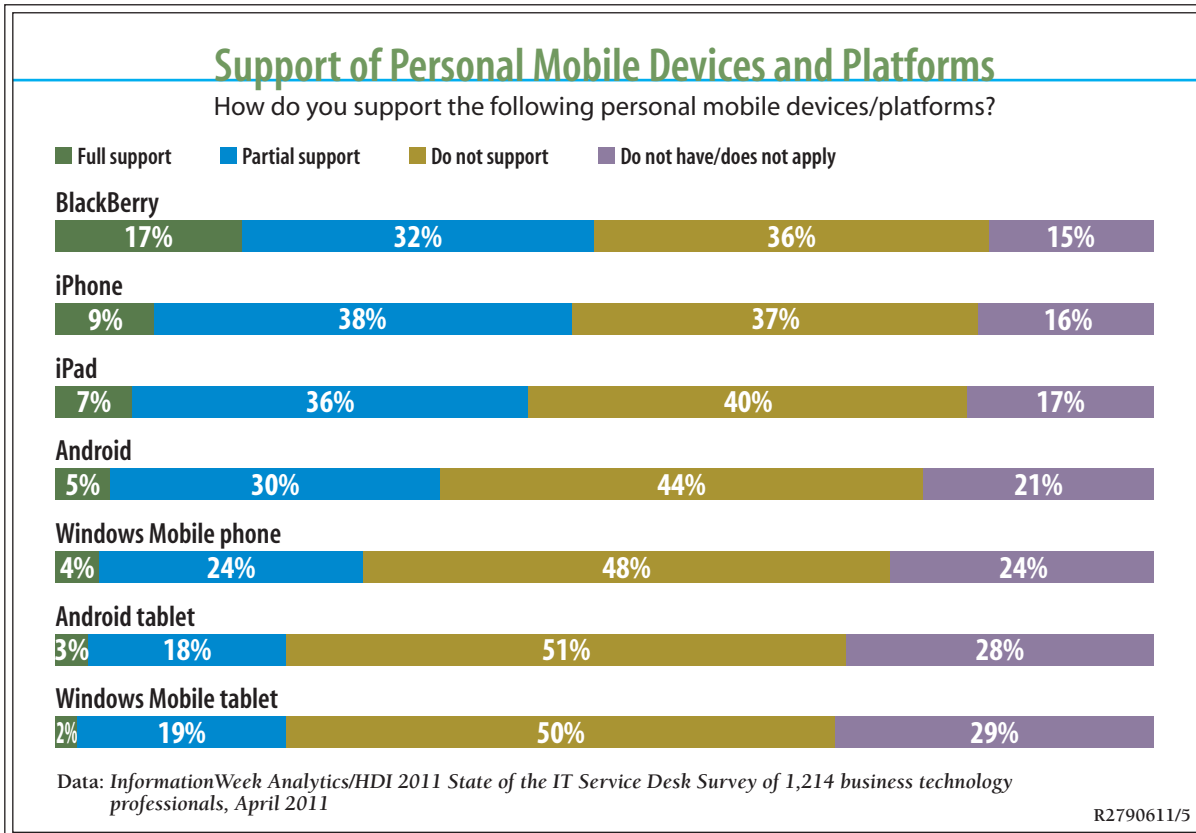


partial support. A little more than half of respondents' organizations provide at least partial support for both iPhones (52%) and iPads (51%).

Meanwhile, 34% of organizations support Android devices, and about 30% support Windows Mobile devices. The number of organizations supporting mobile technology is likely to continue to increase, driven primarily by the need to increase employees' productivity and efficiency by facilitating their ability to connect anytime, anywhere.

One of the challenges associated with mobile device support is that many companies are adopting policies allowing employees to use personal mobile devices to access company resources (and reimbursing them partially or fully). According to HDI's "Supporting Mobile Devices" report, almost one-third of IT service organizations allow this type of access for BlackBerrys (49%), iPhones (47%), iPads (43%) and Android devices (35%).

Figure 5







**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

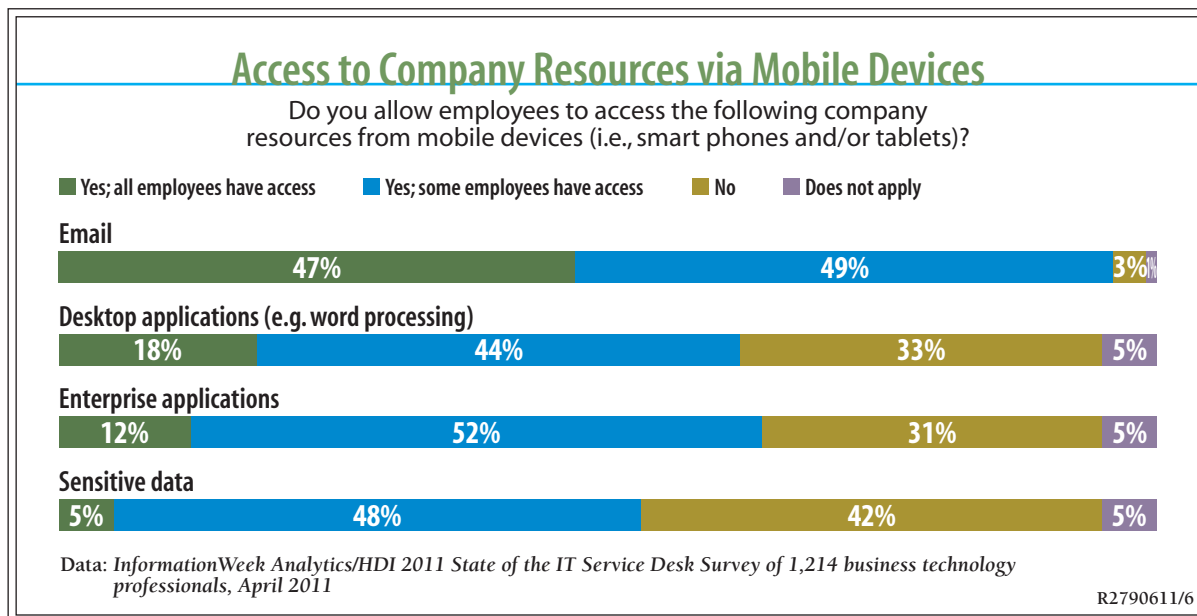


More than one-third of organizations do not support personal BlackBerrys (36%), iPhones (37%) or iPads (40%); 44% do not support personal Android or Windows Mobile (48%) devices. More than half do not currently support Android or Windows Mobile tablets, though it is early in the life cycle of these devices and many organizations are still evaluating the technology. According to the *InformationWeek Analytics Outlook 2011* report, while IT leaders are skeptical of the business use for tablets, business users are highly interested in leveraging tablets for improving business processes and customers are bringing tablets into companies.

We have seen service desks struggle to provide partial or best-effort support for new devices for years, from PC and PDA to remote access and tablet support. The challenge is that there is no good definition of what these terms means. Partial mobile device support often results in full support, but without the training, documentation or escalation plans that would be in place if mobile device support were a formal part of the organization's support services. As a result, partial support typically incurs much higher costs than if the organization fully supported the devices or didn't support them at all.

IT service organizations need the tools to provide cost-effective support for mobile devices, regardless of whether the devices are company owned or personal. This means the service desk

Figure 6





needs standards that identify which devices will be supported and to what extent. Mobile device support also will drive additional investments in security and remote management tools.

Email is the most common service accessible via mobile devices, with more than 95% of companies offering mobile email access to at least some employees; of that 95%, 47% allow email access to all employees and 49% allow it to some employees. Access to other company resources is somewhat limited; almost two-thirds (64%) of companies allow some employees access to enterprise applications, while only 12% grant all employees access to their enterprise applications. Sixty-two percent allow remote access to desktop applications via mobile devices for some employees, while only 18% allow it for all employees. And only 5% let all employees access sensitive data via mobile devices.

Since almost half of all companies allow some employees' access to all resources, it doesn't seem that mobile connectivity itself is the major concern for many support organizations. Rather, it is the lack of clear security policies necessary to protect the enterprise and ensure that mobile device use falls within the organization's boundaries of risk tolerance.

### **Support Investments: Who's Buying What?**

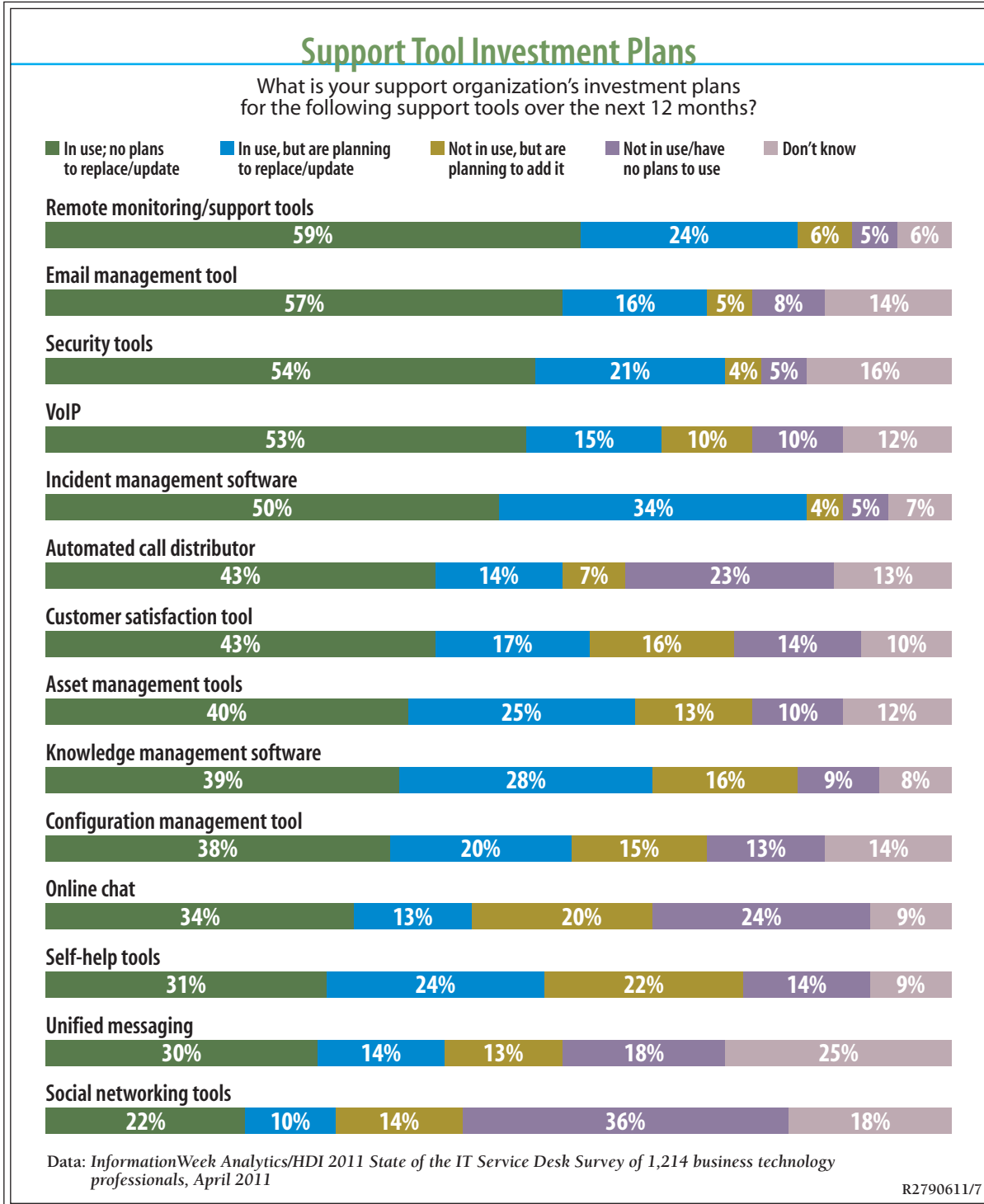
Incident management software tops the list of tools currently in use, with 84% of IT service organizations using some type of incident management software tool, though 34% plan to replace or update their incident management toolsets. This suggests that standalone incident management systems may no longer be meeting the needs of most organizations, which are increasingly adopting service management frameworks. Integrated service management toolsets—with incident, problem, change, release, asset and configuration management; service-level management and service catalogs—are the type of products many organizations require, and these frameworks cannot be practiced effectively without automation. In reality, while organizations may not purchase all the modules initially, they want to know that these additional capabilities are available as needed.

Remote monitoring and tools are used by 83% of support organizations surveyed, with 24% of those organizations planning to update or replace these products. Remote tools are essential for reducing overall desktop support costs and improving overall productivity for both the business users and the service desk. Many companies are realigning their service desks with desktop support, using remote tools to increase availability and reduce downtime for customers while decreasing the overall cost of support for incidents where remote tools are used.



**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

Figure 7



**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

Email management tool utilization is the fourth most adopted support technology, with 73% of service desks using such tools. This use continues to grow, with the highest growth at internal service desks and large organizations (more than 10,000 employees), according to the *2010 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report*. Email management tools range from standalone toolsets to tools that interface with incident management systems to open tickets, identify fixes, resolve tickets and send customer satisfaction surveys.

Seventy-five percent of service desks use security tools. More than half have no changes planned for these toolsets, while 21% plan to update or replace them. Mobile device support requires additional security investments, which may account for some of the planned changes.

Sixty-eight percent of service desks use VoIP technology. In most of those organizations, the primary driver for VoIP appears to be cost reduction, although larger organizations use VoIP services to integrate routing, distribution and call monitoring, all of which add value to the telephony service.

Thirty-nine percent of organizations use knowledge management tools, though 28% of these organizations plan to replace the knowledge management technology they have today. We've seen many companies replace their knowledge management technology too frequently, blaming the tools for failures in their knowledge management programs. Upon closer examination, companies often find that the primary reason for these failure in knowledge managements is lack of process, lack of collaboration and flawed goals. Most have sufficient technology for knowledge management, but they lack the processes to capture, structure and reuse the information they have collected. Any effective knowledge management system should include the people, processes and technology. Too often in IT support, knowledge management systems consist only of the technology.

Self-service tools are used by 55% of responding companies; 31% say they're satisfied with their current self-service tools and 24% are looking to replace their tools. There are significant opportunities here for service desks to reduce costs and improve service levels by investing in self-service tools that enable business processes.

Social networking tools are at the bottom of the investment list, with 22% of companies reporting they have no plans to update and only 10% planning to update or replace their tools. About one-third of the service desks do not have and do not plan to implement social networking

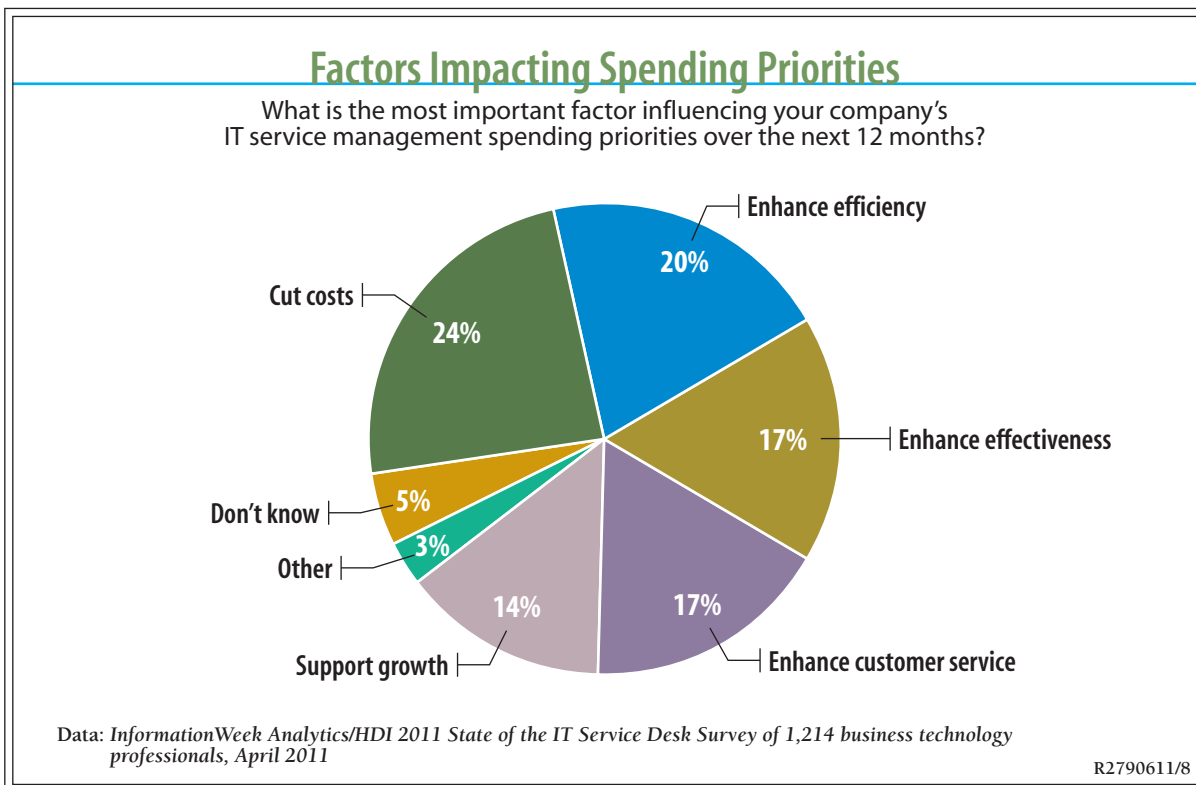


tools. IT support needs to work with the business to determine how to leverage social networking to support customers. This is an opportunity for IT support to show value and provide new, more innovative services for its customers.

The top three factors impacting spending priorities (for 61% of service desks) are related to costs, yet almost 60% of survey respondents don't know their costs. The irony? IT financial management is essential for IT organizations to demonstrate value and show their customers that they provide cost-effective services. If it doesn't understand its costs, IT support cannot justify the investments necessary to provide customer services.

Is the fact that most IT organizations report into the finance department the reason cost reduction (24%) is rated most important in prioritizing support investments, or is IT really trying to cut costs as it realizes customers don't recognize the value of its services? IT organizations need to review the level and type of services they offer to determine whether the services are still

Figure 8



**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

needed, and if the business is willing to continue funding these services. The value is typically more important than costs, though if the value is unknown, the costs typically will be too high.

Enhancing efficiency, identified by 20% of companies as a factor that influences spending priorities, is about increasing productivity, holding overall costs level and reducing unit costs.

Enhancing effectiveness, identified by 17% as a spending priority, is about doing the job right the first time. Together, improving effectiveness and efficiency will make the biggest contribution to the business' bottom line by reducing downtime, improving restoration times and increasing availability of IT services.

Virtualization is a major initiative in many IT organizations. Desktop virtualization should significantly decrease the volume of calls for enterprise desktop issues; however, it could result in an increase in calls for smartphones and other devices, which were previously unable to access enterprise applications. Virtualization should improve the availability of the services and reduce costs, or increase service levels at the same cost. It will also result in additional incidents reported to the service desk: access, security and loss of autonomy or rights. For example, users will need to call the service desk to make changes they could make themselves when they had administrative rights or report peripherals that no longer work due to driver-related issues. The increased reliance on public networks and a more complex environment overall will require a more skilled service desk staff and better remote tools to quickly restore service for these users.

Business intelligence (31%) and real-time data analytics (24%) will impact the service organization as they become more central to the business decision-making process. Analytics will enable the organization to quickly make more informed decisions and automatically update executive dashboards to reflect changes throughout the day. Any interruption to the systems providing these updates will be noticed, and decision-makers will require greater service availability, often on virtual and mobile devices.

More than 30% of survey respondents identified service desk automation as the initiative that will have the greatest impact, as automation should significantly reduce the amount of effort expended documenting calls and performing redundant work, due to lack of true service management toolsets. Software as a service (SaaS, 19%) and telepresence/videoconferencing (18%) were also identified as initiatives that will impact the service desk. These new technologies are expected to increase revenues, reduce costs and improve business agility.

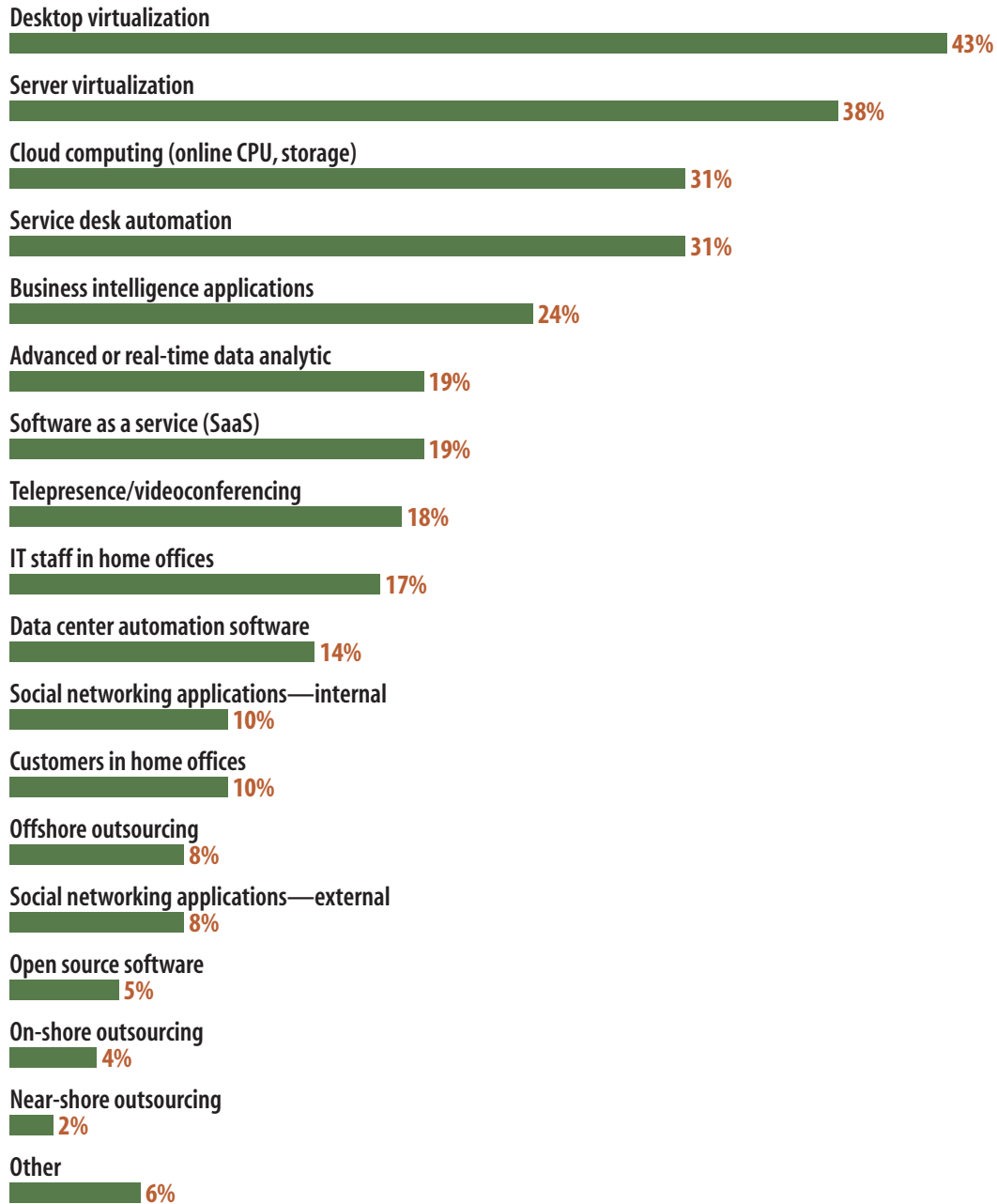


**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

Figure 9

**IT Initiatives Impacting the Service Organization**

Which of the following IT initiatives in your company will have the greatest impact on your service organization over the next 12 months?



Note: Five responses allowed

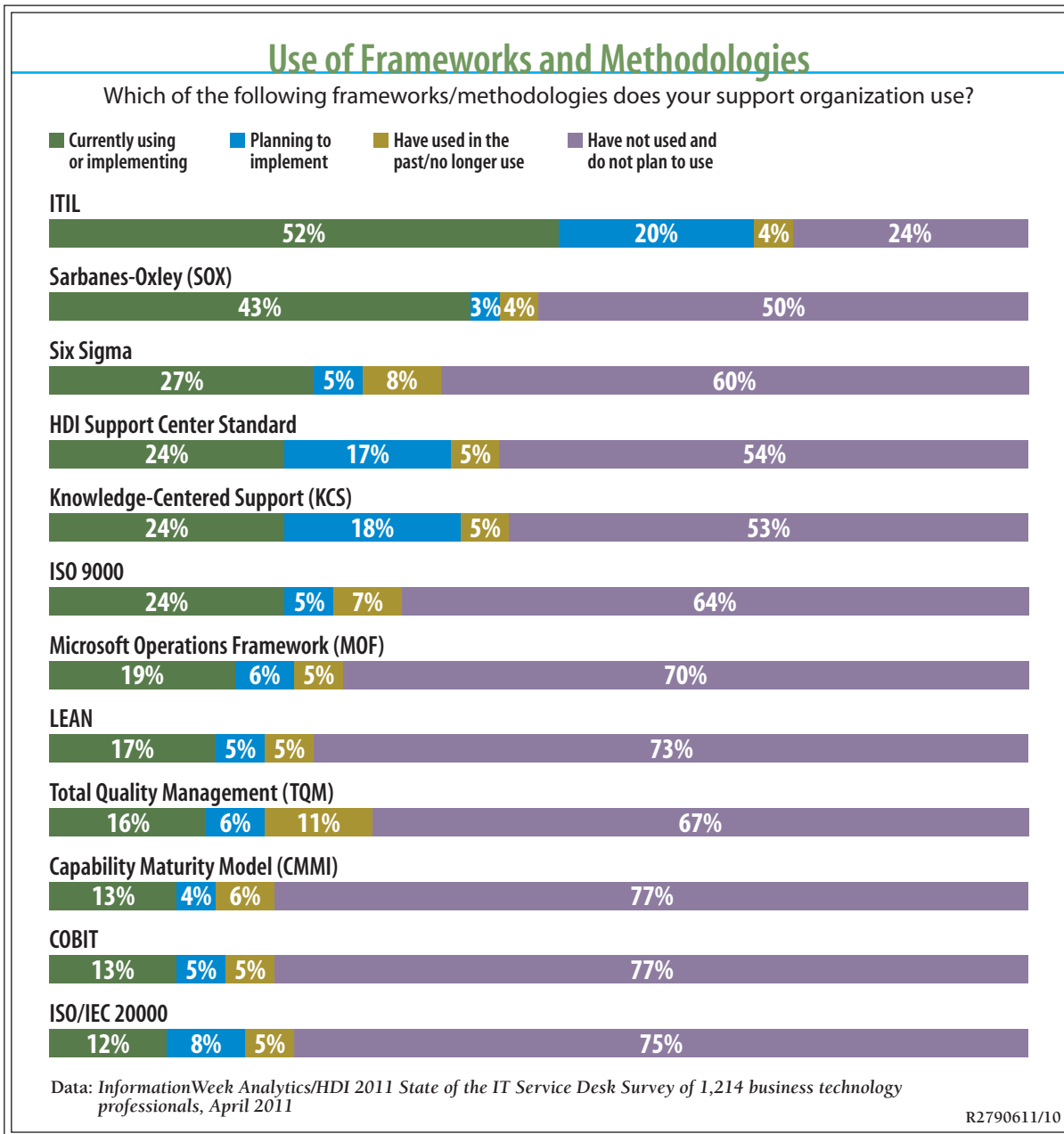
Data: InformationWeek Analytics/HDI 2011 State of the IT Service Desk Survey of 1,214 business technology professionals, April 2011



### Using Frameworks and Methodologies to Advance Business Goals

Service management frameworks, standards and methodologies provide guidance for IT support on balancing business demands and enterprise risk. By sharing these practices, service organizations can measure the performance of the ongoing delivery and support of technology

Figure 10





**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

that is critical to delivering business value, with equal emphasis on minimizing operating costs, meeting business expectations and maximizing user productivity. Think of it as the enterprise resource planning of IT.

The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) is the most common service management framework, with a 52% adoption rate among respondents' IT service organizations. One-quarter of respondents, however, reported that they do not plan to use the ITIL framework at all. Fifty percent said they have no plans to use Sarbanes-Oxley, while 43% said they do follow SOX.

After ITIL and SOX, the two most popular practices are the HDI Support Center Standard (41%) and Knowledge-Centered Support (42%). The widespread adoption of both the HDI Support Center Standard and KCS indicates that these practices have gone mainstream.

HDI provides support center certification and best practices assessments based on the HDI Support Center Standard; the HDI Support Center Standard provides the foundation for service desk improvements based on proven best practices. KCS provides a set of knowledge practices that generate significant returns in productivity, reduce restoration time and increase morale within the service organization, where users understand their roles and are recognized and rewarded for their contributions.

Unfortunate, though not surprising, is the low utilization rate for quality management frameworks: ISO 9000 (24%), Total Quality Management (TQM, 17%), COBIT (13%) and ISO/IEC 20000 (12%). Service organizations either do not understand the value of these quality management frameworks or are unable to communicate that value to customers. IT support organizations need to better understand the value of each framework and be able to identify which of them are most appropriate to help customers achieve their business goals.

While 24% of service organizations reported that they have no plans to use the ITIL framework, 50% to 75% neither have used nor have plans to use any of the other service management frameworks. No single service management framework provides everything an IT service provider needs, and the frameworks are designed to work with each other. For example, SOX works with ITIL change management, KCS provides guidance on incident and problem management, ISO/IEC 9000 on quality management systems and COBIT on linking IT processes to business goals. These standards, frameworks and methodologies all facilitate the delivery of quality services and realization of the IT service provider's value in contributing to the achievement of the business' goals.

**A n a l y t i c s   R e p o r t s**

Only 4% to 6% of service organizations still use any of the frameworks or methodologies listed in the survey except TQM (11%), which indicates that once a framework has been adopted, it continues to be used. Quality framework adoptions are often driven by senior management, so when leadership changes, it is not unusual for quality systems to fall out of favor or simply be replaced.

The key challenge for many service organizations lies in understanding how to take individual components from the various service management standards, frameworks and methodologies and adapt them to their businesses' unique needs. ISO/IEC 20000 is a comprehensive document that identifies not only what service management processes an organization should have, but also the service management system typical organizations need to succeed.

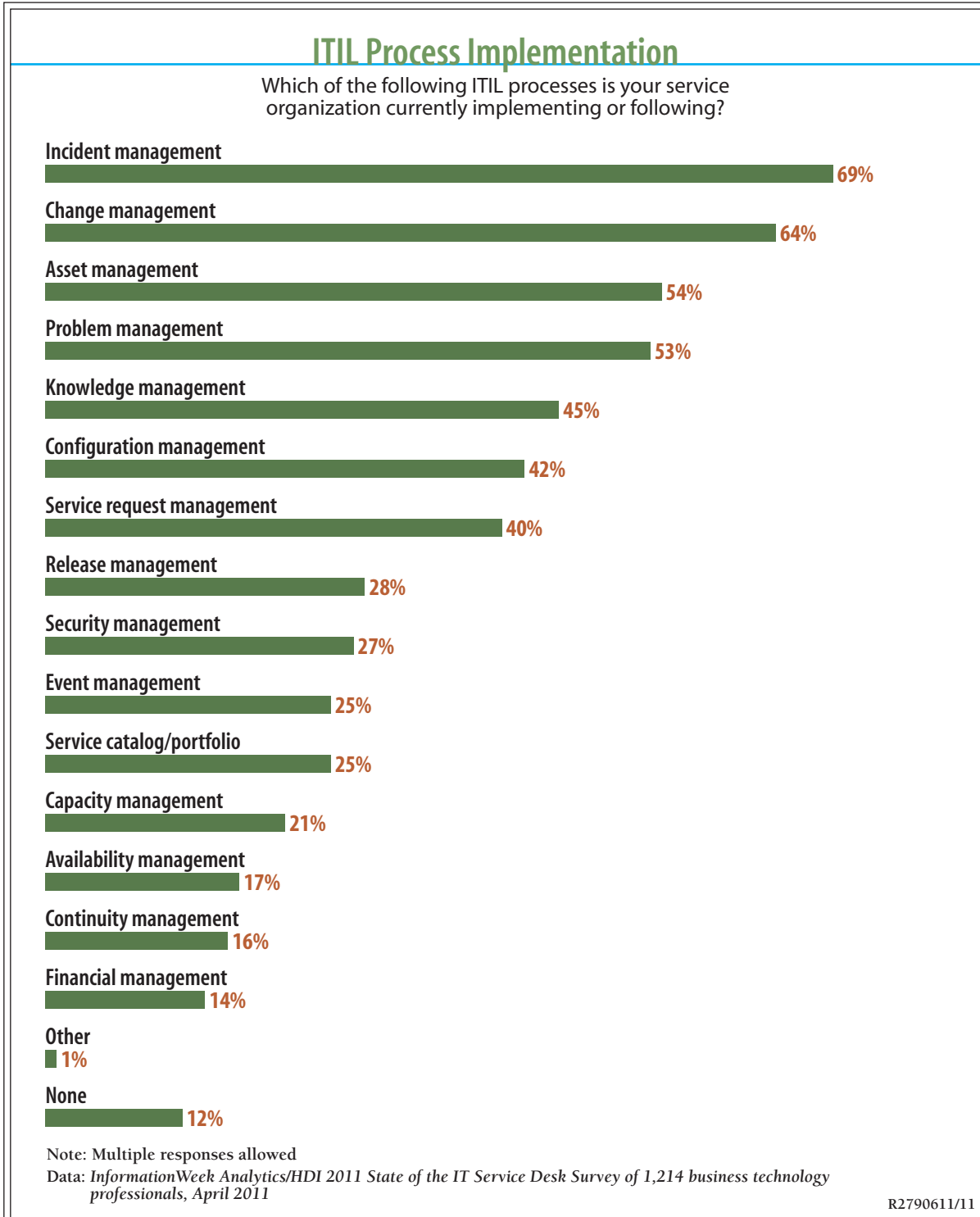
More organizations need to understand and use standards, as these best practices lead to improved results. COBIT, for example, provides significant guidance on how to link IT goals to business goals and demonstrate how the IT service provider delivers business value. Too often organizations view frameworks and methodologies as "certification" programs, and they don't understand how to leverage them to improve business results.

A key characteristic of any successful IT service provider is the focus on process, which allows providers to consistently deliver services at a predictable level of cost and quality. The research results break out three tiers of ITIL process adoption: 53% to 69% of service organizations practice the first tier of processes; 40% to 45% practice the second tier; and 14% to 28% practice the third tier.

In the first tier, incident management, change management, asset management and problem management were identified as the processes most service organizations practice. Incident management (69%) is typically the first ITIL process organizations address, as it can have immediate, short-term benefits for both the service desk and users; however, 30% of IT service organizations don't appear to have any process for handling incidents. Respondents ranked change management (64%) the second most common process, though we've found that many organizations that think they have a change process actually have a release process, according to ITIL terminology. ITIL change management is the authorization and controlled change of service-related configuration items, and release management is about scheduling the change. Asset management (54%) was identified as the third most adopted process, with problem management (53%) coming in fourth.



Figure 11





In the second tier of processes, configuration management (42%) and knowledge management (45%) came in at almost the same level of practice. This is a positive finding, since service asset and configuration management are the core of service knowledge management. The rate of service request management process adoption (40%) indicates that many organizations are still handling service requests within their incident management process, which can result in skewed results when reporting incident restoration time. For example, if an organization is reporting password resets as incidents, the actual restoration time for incidents could be two to three times longer than reported, misstating the real cost to the business.

Only 28% of service organizations have a formal release management process, with the planning, communication, validation, support and testing necessary to ensure that customers are able to successfully use the requested changes. Release management not only protects the live environment, it ensures that the appropriate communication, training and education have been completed before the change is deployed. Release management is critical for customers to realize the value of deployed changes.

Security management process adoption (27%) is low, especially considering that 54% of IT service organizations report using security tools and 21% plan to update or replace their security tools. In the absence of a security policy, how does IT determine the level of security needed? Perhaps this is the reason customers and IT are often in conflict: Customers don't feel that IT service organizations provide value, or they feel IT's security policies hinder their productivity.

Customers need to take responsibility for defining security policies, and IT needs to better understand how to implement these policies with the tools and technology. It is the business that owns the data, and the business needs to be responsible for defining the access requirements, classification and retention policies. IT should work with the business to implement these security policies. How can IT acquire new security tools if it doesn't understand its customers' requirements?

Most IT service organizations have a significant amount of infrastructure—network, applications, services and operations—to monitor activity, and these monitoring tools generate a considerable volume of events: information, warnings and exceptions. Event management is the process, typically automated, that makes sense of these events, so the IT service organization can cost-effectively monitor and subsequently manage the IT service. Only 25% of service desks reported having an event management process. This means companies may not be maximizing the value of their investments in monitoring tools.



Without a process for managing events, IT operations and IT support will typically duplicate efforts, resulting in artificially extended resolution times. To be effective, the service desk must be able to see what is going on in the infrastructure to understand when IT operations is already working an issue and when it needs to report new issues.

Service catalog and portfolio processes ensure the support organization's services are aligned and prioritized to achieve business goals and objectives. However, service catalog/portfolio adoption rates indicate that only 25% of support organizations can identify the services they deliver. This means 75% cannot easily identify the services they deliver, so they can't identify the cost, risk or return of their services or articulate how their services support business goals. It also means the service desk may not be sharply focused on its core services, those that align with its mission statement.

Finally, capacity management (21%) and availability management (17%) both had a higher adoption rate than continuity management (16%). It is frightening to think that 84% of service desks either do not have continuity management processes or are not aware of their continuity management process, which is all about ensuring that IT's continuity plans are based on the business' continuity plans, and that those plans are updated, communicated and tested regularly. IT support management must understand and be aware of IT's service continuity plans and of its roles in the business' overall continuity plan. Lack of understanding increases the likelihood those plans will fail if/when they are needed.

### **Security: Are Service Organizations Addressing the Right Risks?**

As we've discussed, mobile device support (78%) is a leading cause of security concerns. However, though 89% of IT service organizations have developed or are developing security policies, according to HDI's "Supporting Mobile Devices," only 25% have security policies based on best practices. Since mobile device support is being driven by customers, and most security policies are driven by IT, there naturally will be conflicts between service providers and their customers.

The second highest concern for the service desk was global access to company resources (41%). Internal pressure to grant privileges (31%) and external pressures (16%) indicate either a lack of a clear security policy or a security policy that does not meet business needs. In either



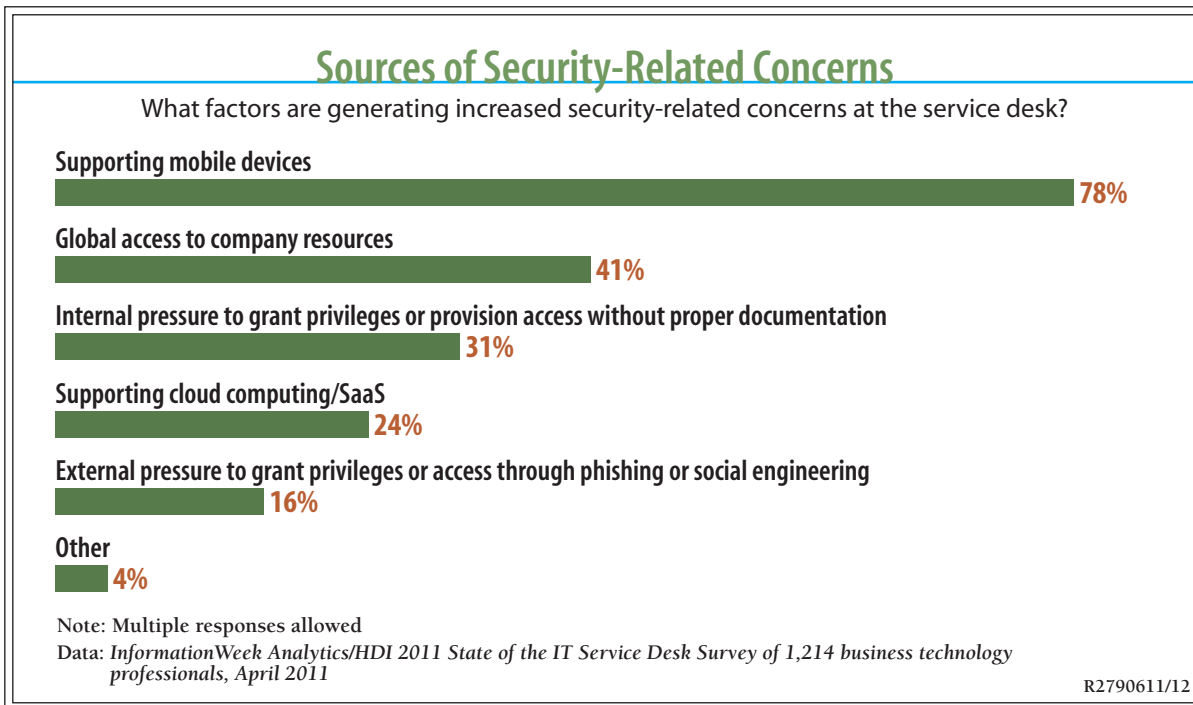
case, the service provider requires a policy that meets business needs, balances access in a timely manner, and protects both the customer’s and service provider’s IP.

Survey respondents rated cloud computing and/or SaaS (24%) the fourth security concern, which may be due to either a lack of understanding of security in the cloud and how it is managed, or a lack of understanding of how the architecture/technology provides the appropriate level of security vis-à-vis the risk-tolerance limits of both the service provider and the customer.

**Evaluating Enterprise Change Outcomes**

Sixty-three percent of respondents report successful enterprise application rollouts, with 35% reporting either partial success or inconclusive success (i.e., it’s too soon to tell). The challenge for many support organizations in determining success is the absence of service acceptance criteria. If more organizations had release management processes, they would have service acceptance criteria, which would get everyone on the service team focused on ensuring that the

Figure 12





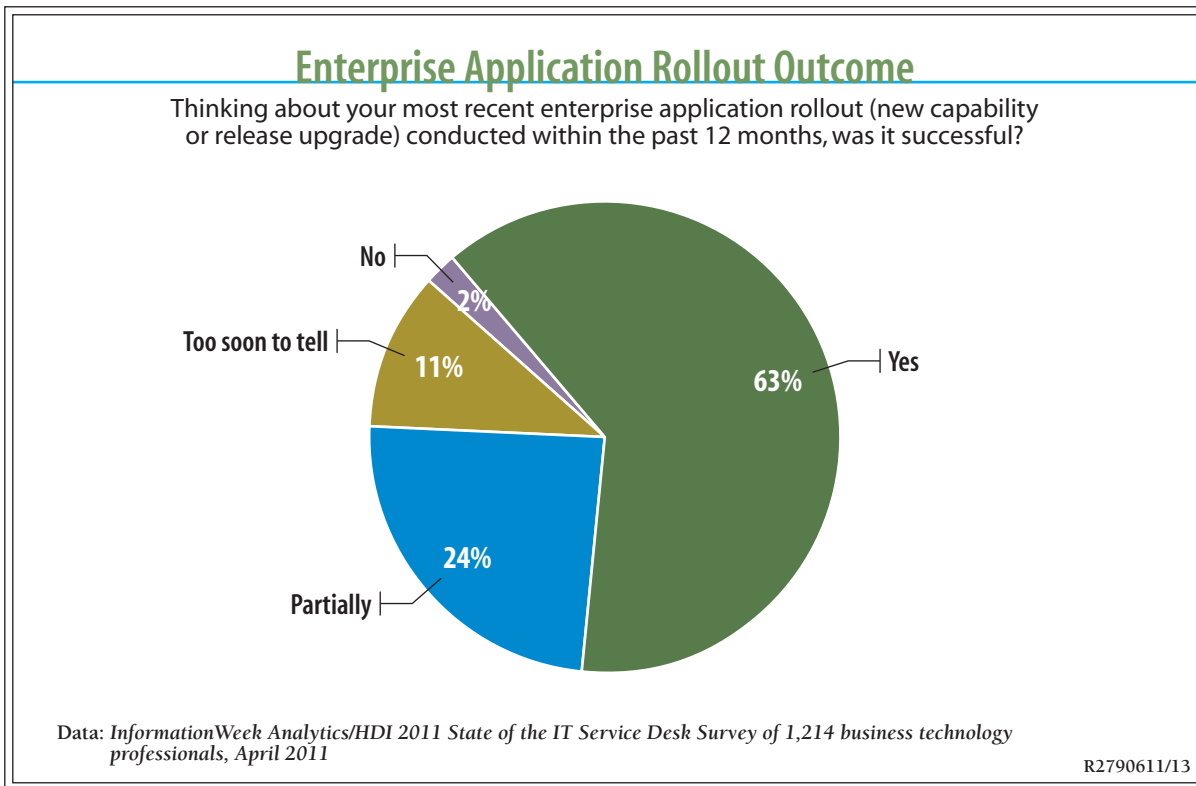
change, when released, met the needs of the business and could be used in the manner for which it was intended: to support business processes.

The two keys to rollout success are the skills of technical staff (77%) and internal communications (72%). This suggests there is a lack of process (change and release management) and the success is based on individual, not necessarily organizational, capabilities.

Intriguingly, 31% of survey respondents attributed the success of their rollouts to flexible project plans and timelines, while 25% attributed their success to a rigid project plan and timeline. An organization's software development life-cycle methodology, culture, type of business and risk-tolerance limits are all factors in determining how well either rigid or flexible schedules will work.

Other factors that contribute to successful rollouts include soft skills (25%), external communications (19%) and additional staffing. Lack of internal communications (54%) and technical skills (42%) both ranked as major reasons for failed implementations.

Figure 13



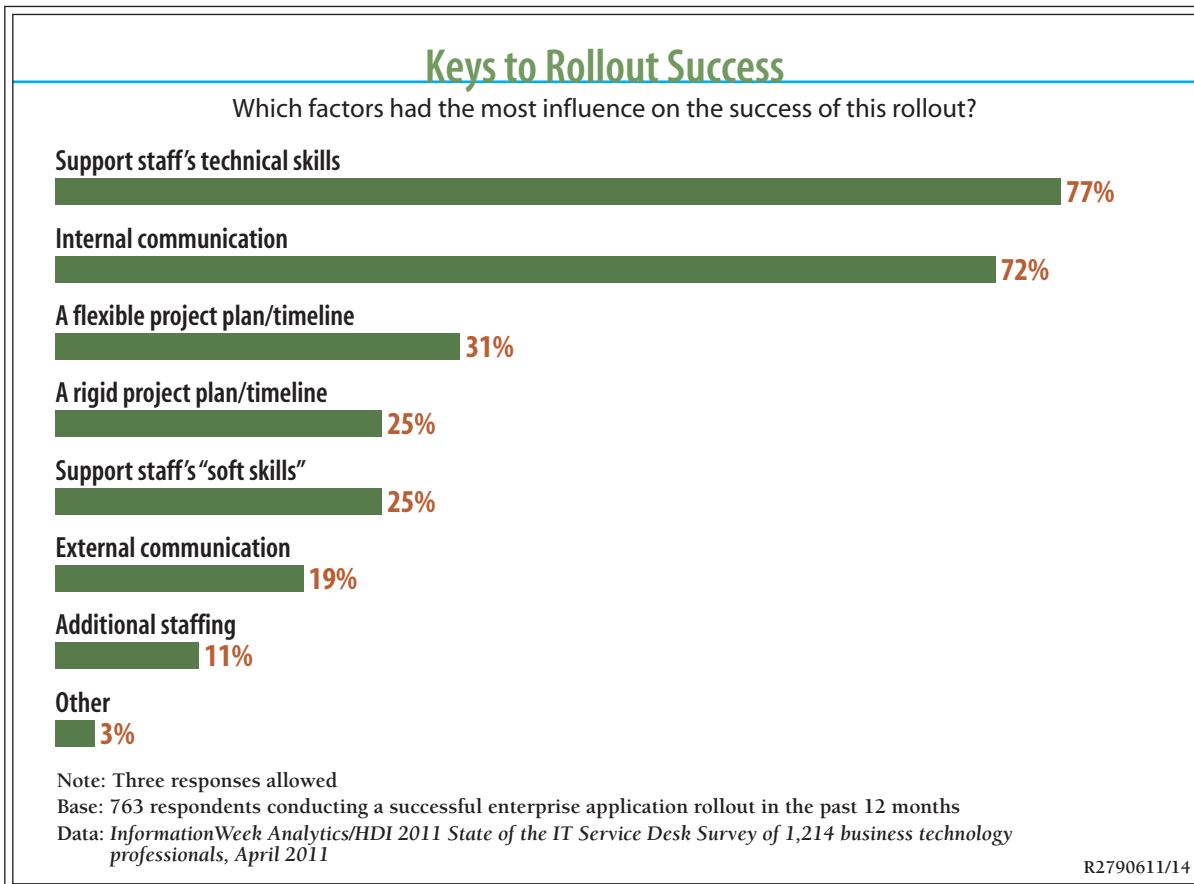


**Service Desk Employment Trends: Not the Prettiest Picture**

Twenty-two percent of *InformationWeek Analytics/HDI* survey respondents reported that their support organizations are increasing staff, while 44% are allowed to fill only vacant (replacement) positions. Twenty-six percent said staffing levels are frozen, with neither layoffs nor hiring on the horizon. Results of the *2010 HDI Support Center Practice & Salary Report* confirm this trend, with the largest percentage of organizations replacing staff only.

With less than a quarter of support organizations increasing staff size, those that reported an increase in incident volume will find it challenging to maintain current performance levels. At least 40% will have an increased workload, with no corresponding increase in staffing. These organizations will need to make process changes and improve infrastructure stability if they want to avoid seeing a decrease in customer satisfaction due to longer response and resolution times.

Figure 14







Seventeen percent of survey respondents reported that teleworking is a major initiative affecting support organizations. Ninety-five percent of organizations that have tried the virtual support environment find it ideal (28%), or at least worth the challenge (67%); only 5% found the challenges outweighed the benefits. However, only 3% of responding support organizations are fully virtual (i.e., all technicians work from home); 4% are fully virtual at least part time; and 13% have at least some technicians who are virtual at all times. And despite the successes reported by those who have tried the virtual support environment, almost 42% of support organizations have no plans to implement virtual work or teleworking.

Managing virtual workers typically requires a mature individual with top-notch management skills. Not everyone can work virtually; some individuals need the structure of the workplace to thrive. Virtual workers do need collaboration tools to remain in contact with their team members so they can share critical information in a timely manner, but for those who can work virtually, there are significant benefits for the individual, the customer and the support organization.

Figure 15

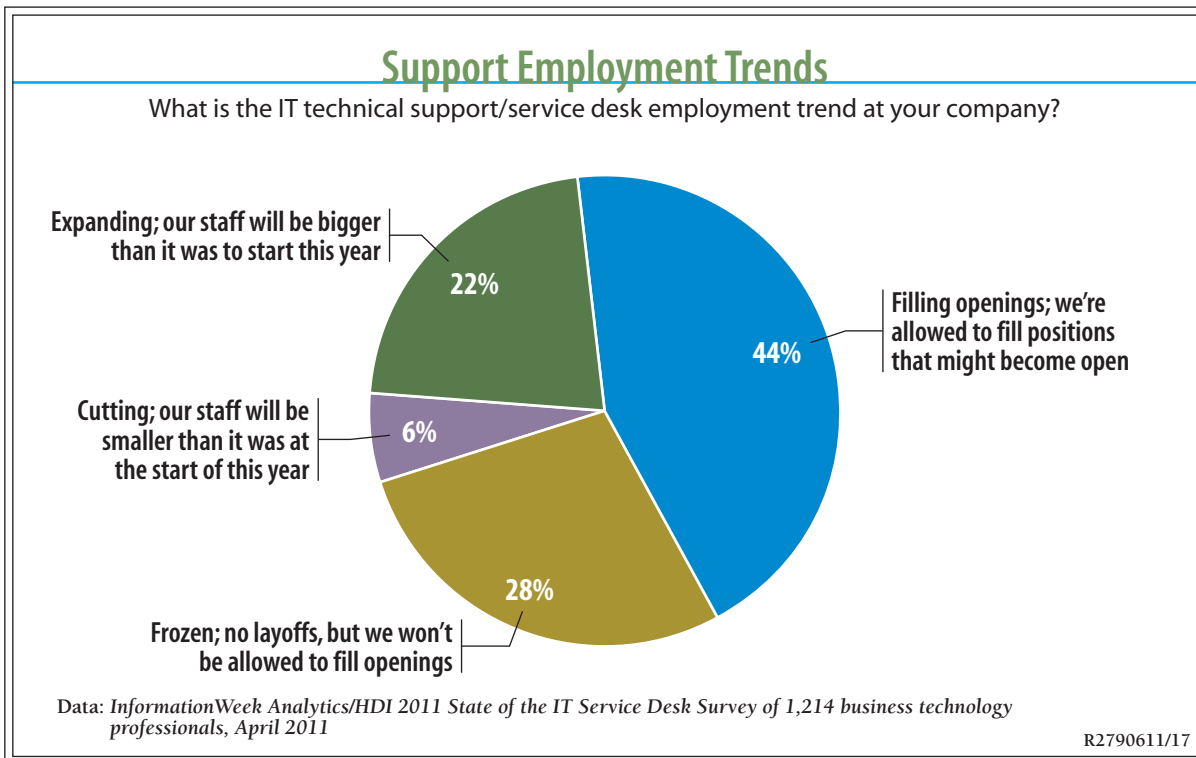




Figure 16

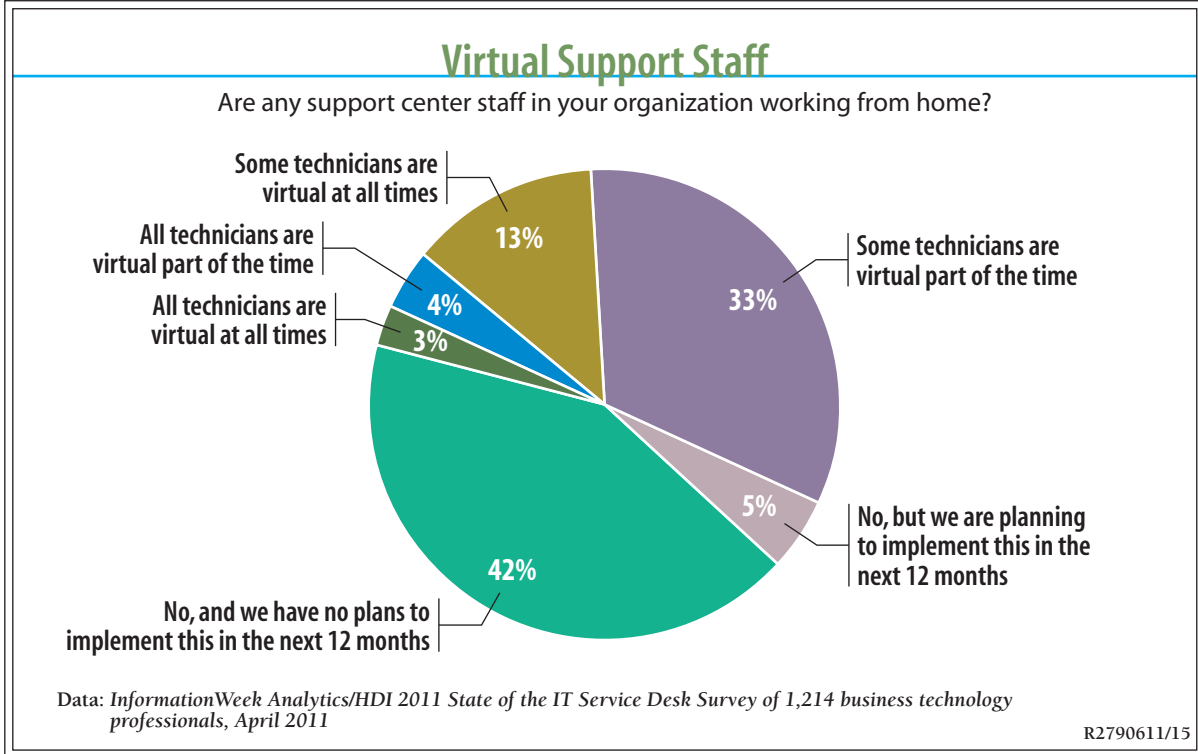
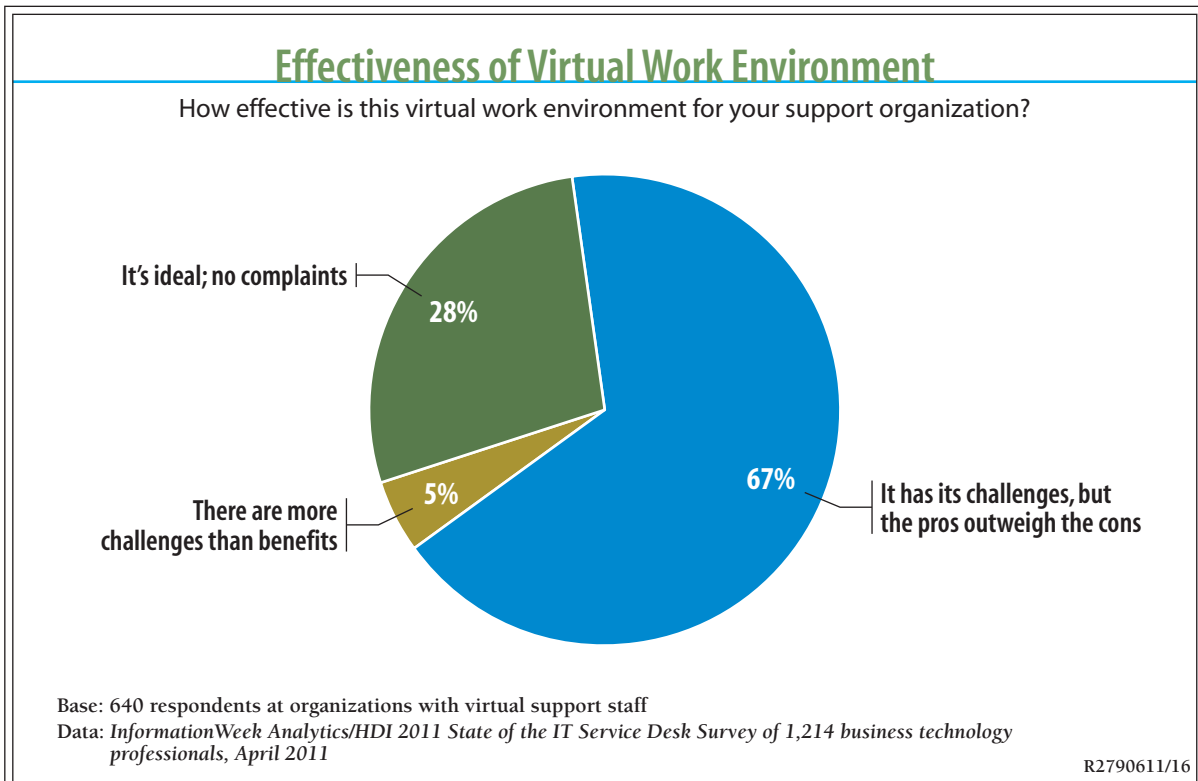


Figure 17



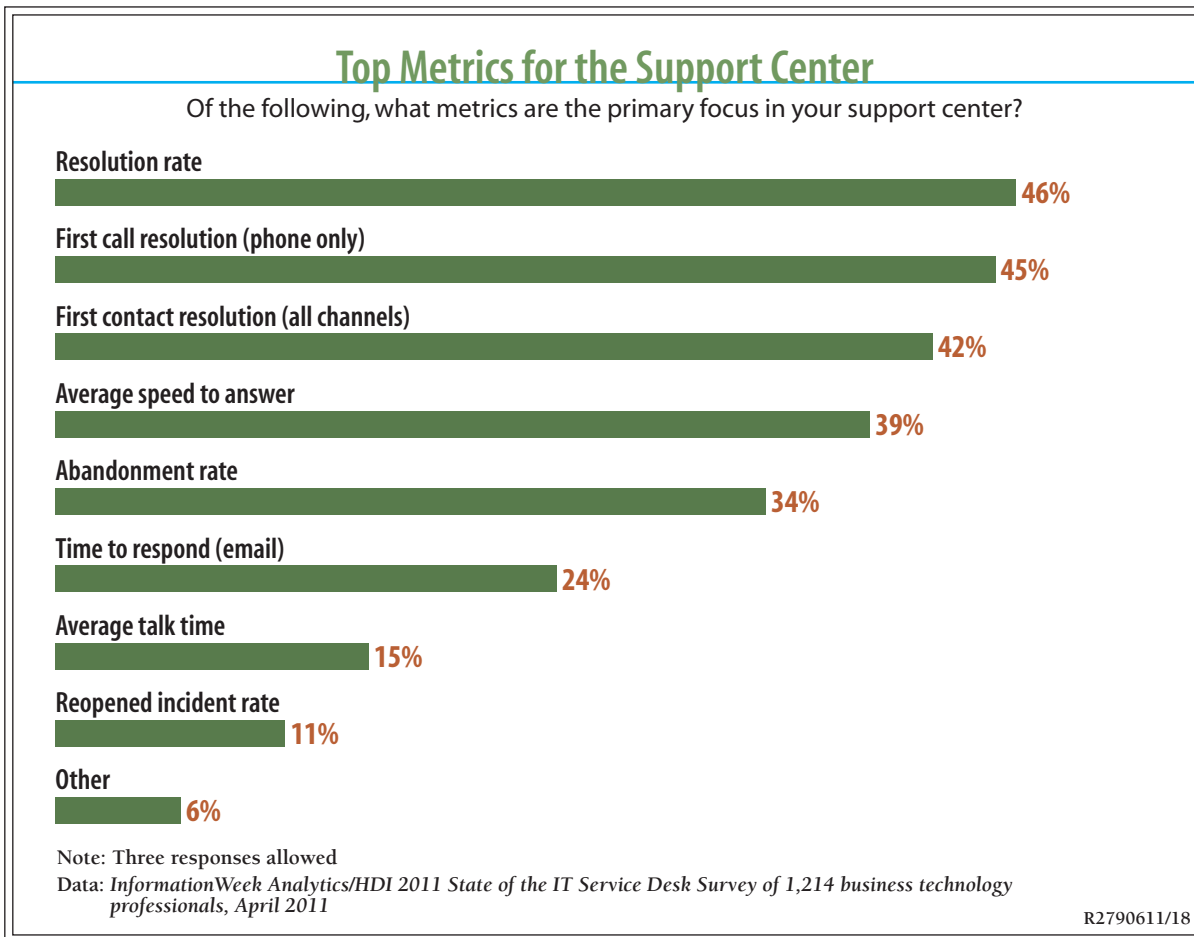


**Operational Metrics: Measure What Really Matters**

Metrics are critical for understanding performance and managing any organization, and most IT support organizations have been measuring and reporting the same metrics for the past five, 10, even 15 years. However, customers are even more dependent on IT services now than they were in the past. The challenge facing service desk managers is that service expectations have changed over time, from answering the phone and resolving basic technical/PC-related issues to responding to business issues and interruptions.

What customers want when they call the service desk is the restoration of service—yet this typically isn't the first metric reported when support organizations communicate their performance.

Figure 18

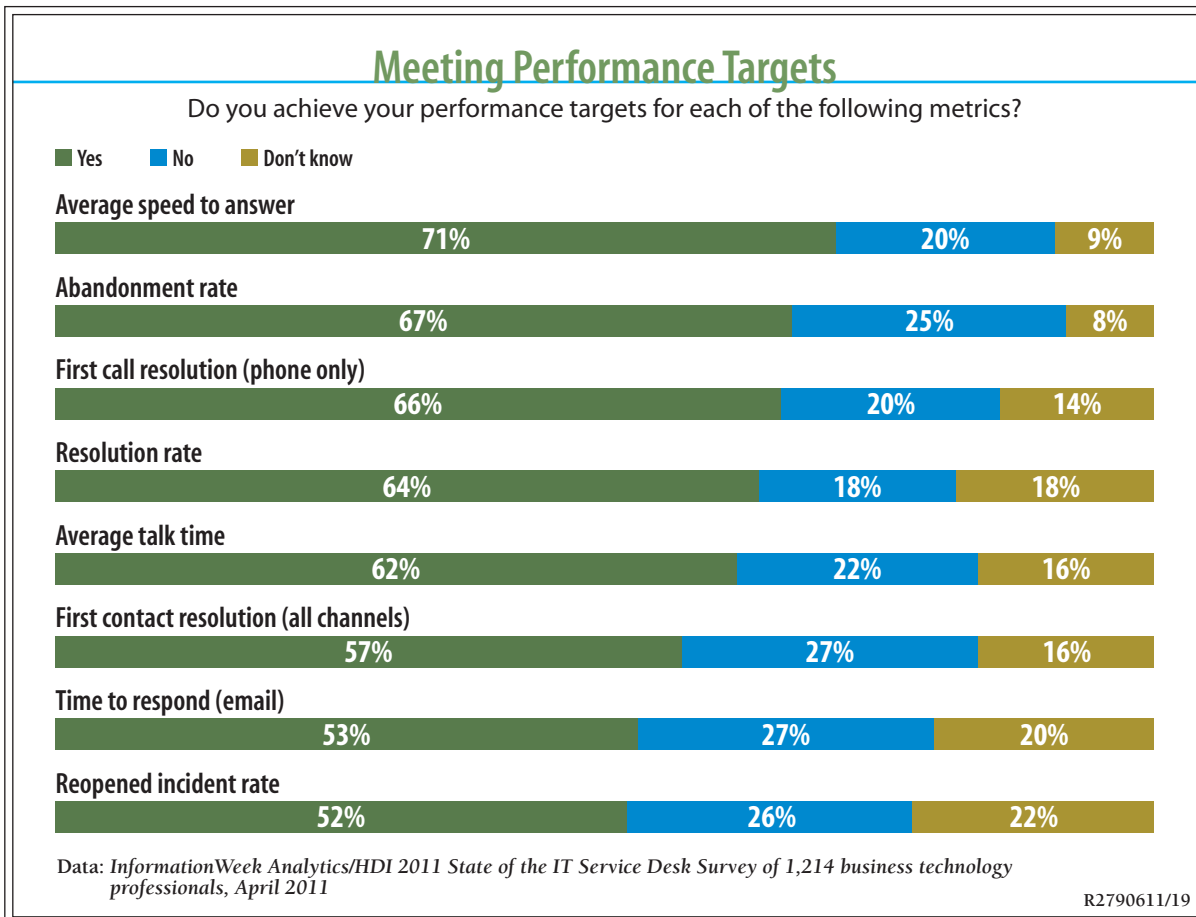




Mean time to restore service (MTRS), or the length of time it took for the customer to be able to get back to work, should be a required key performance indicator for support. This metric should appear in both the service catalog and the service-level agreement. Moreover, support organizations need to measure MTRS not only for the service desk, but also for all Level 2 and Level 3 functions, and they should be able to report on them from the customer’s viewpoint.

Nevertheless, the top three metrics reported in the survey were resolution rate (46%), first call resolution (phone, 45%) and first contact resolution (all channels, 42%). This means more than 50% of support organizations don’t know their overall resolution or first contact/call resolution rates. If the first call/contact resolution metric is one of the most misunderstood and

Figure 19





misused, when compared with the complexity of work, it is an indicator of the support organization's knowledge and capabilities.

The typical phone metrics used by support organizations are average speed to answer (39%) and abandonment rate (34%). Sixty percent of organizations don't know how long it takes their customers to reach them, and more than 50% don't know their resolution rates. Only 34% know how long it takes to reply to an email, and only 15% know their average talk time. Just 11% measure reopen rate, which is an important quality metric that speaks to the effectiveness of the incident management process. All these operational metrics are required for developing a staffing plan and schedules, and are necessary for calculating a service desk's unit costs. Without this basic operational performance data, how can service desk managers staff, train or determine the skills their staffs need?

The rate at which support organizations met (or failed to meet) their performance targets is surprising: 71% for average speed to answer, 67% for abandonment rate, 66% for first call resolution (phone), 64% for resolution rate and 62% for average talk time. Essentially, support organizations are meeting their performance targets 75% to 80% of the time, but 10% to 15% of them don't know if they are meeting their performance targets.

Support organizations met their performance targets for first contact resolution (all channels) 57% of the time, 53% of the time for time to respond to email requests and 52% for reopen rates. However, this means almost 50% of the time, they did not meet or do not know if they met their targets for these three metrics.

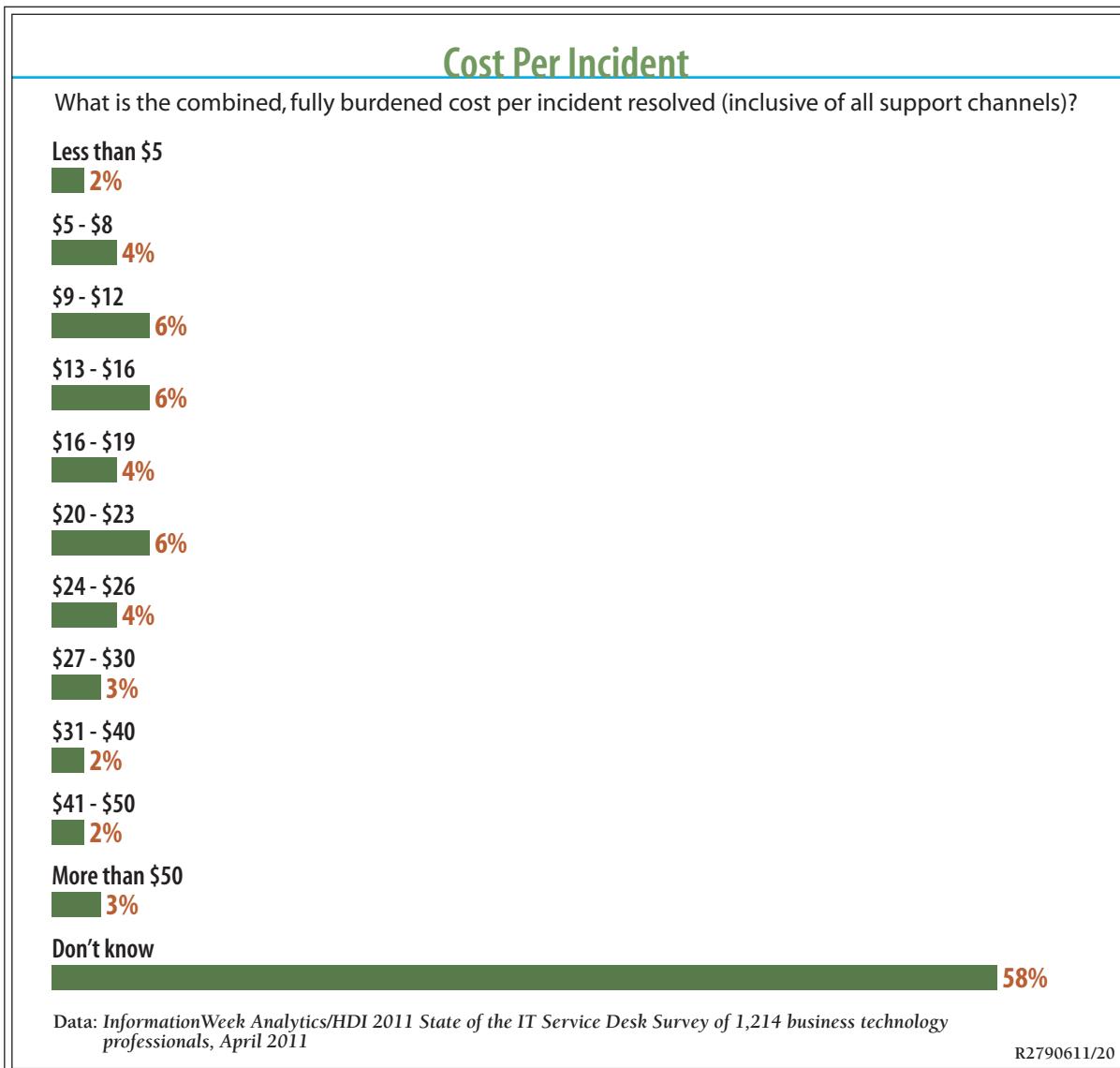
If support organizations don't understand their performance or are only meeting their targets half the time, it is understandable that customers would be unhappy with IT support. Service desk managers need to understand their organizations' capabilities (level of performance that can reasonably be achieved), their staff performance levels and how well their services meet their customers' requirements. Performance metrics enable managers to develop improvement plans and set goals the organization is capable of achieving. In addition, without this information, IT support management cannot calculate the cost of achieving the level of support the business has requested.

Fifty-eight percent of support organizations do not know how much each incident costs, which explains a lot about some common service desk issues. First, service desks don't know how effective or efficient they are compared with best practices. Second, since they don't understand



their costs, they cannot perform cost-benefit analysis or calculate return on investment and value on investment, which are necessary to justify support investments. This means that not only do support organizations and their customers not know what they are getting, but they also don't know what any services cost or how resources are allocated, which undermines the business' confidence in the support organization.

Figure 20



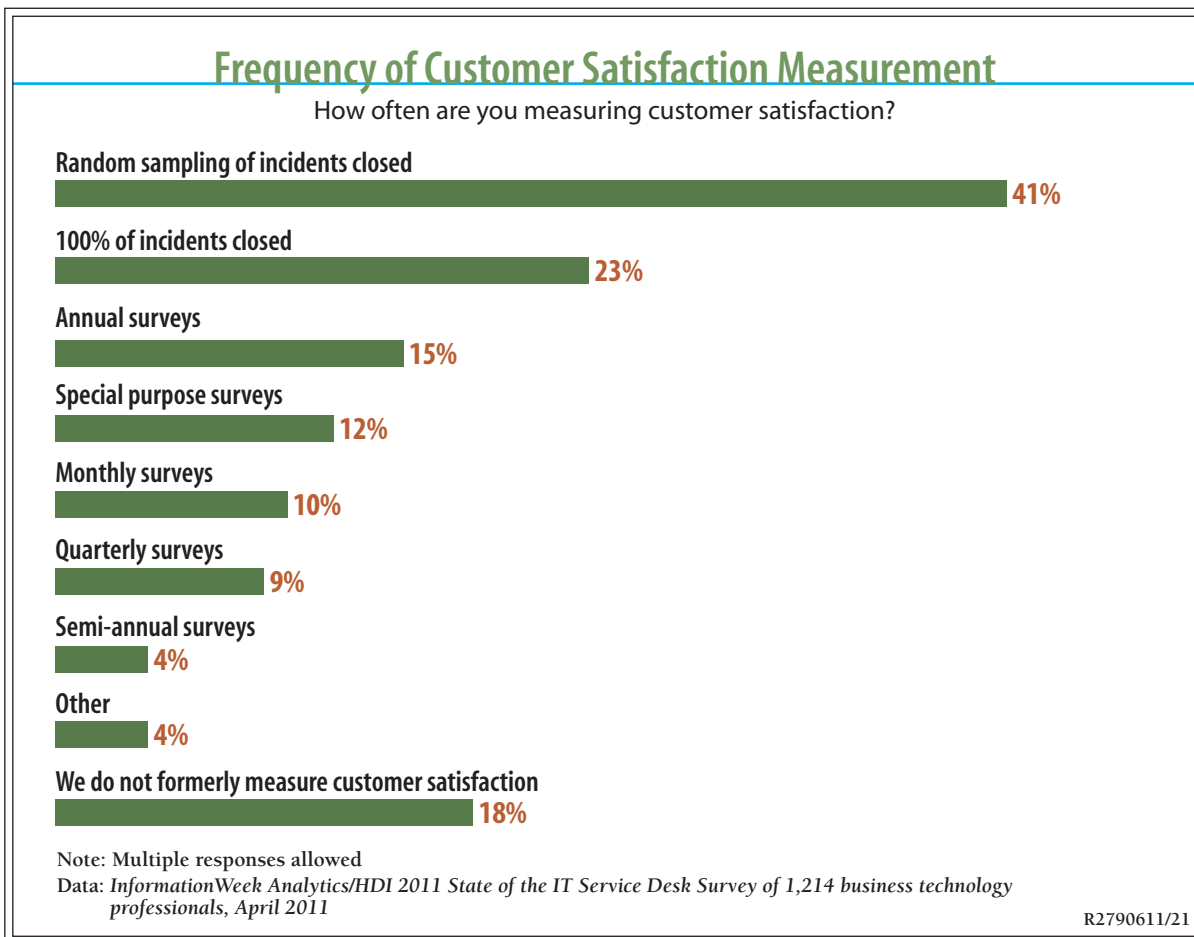


IT support management teams need to adopt financial management processes that will help them understand their costs and the value of the services they provide. Without solid financial management processes, the business cannot develop a positive relationship with its customers.

**Customer Satisfaction: Are We Solving Their Problems?**

Sixty-four percent of support organizations routinely measure customer satisfaction. Almost one-quarter (23%) send surveys on all closed incidents, 41% randomly select closed incidents and send surveys, and 10% survey on a monthly basis. Just more than one-third (36%) conduct surveys at various frequencies: quarterly (9%), semiannually (4%) and annually (15%).

Figure 21





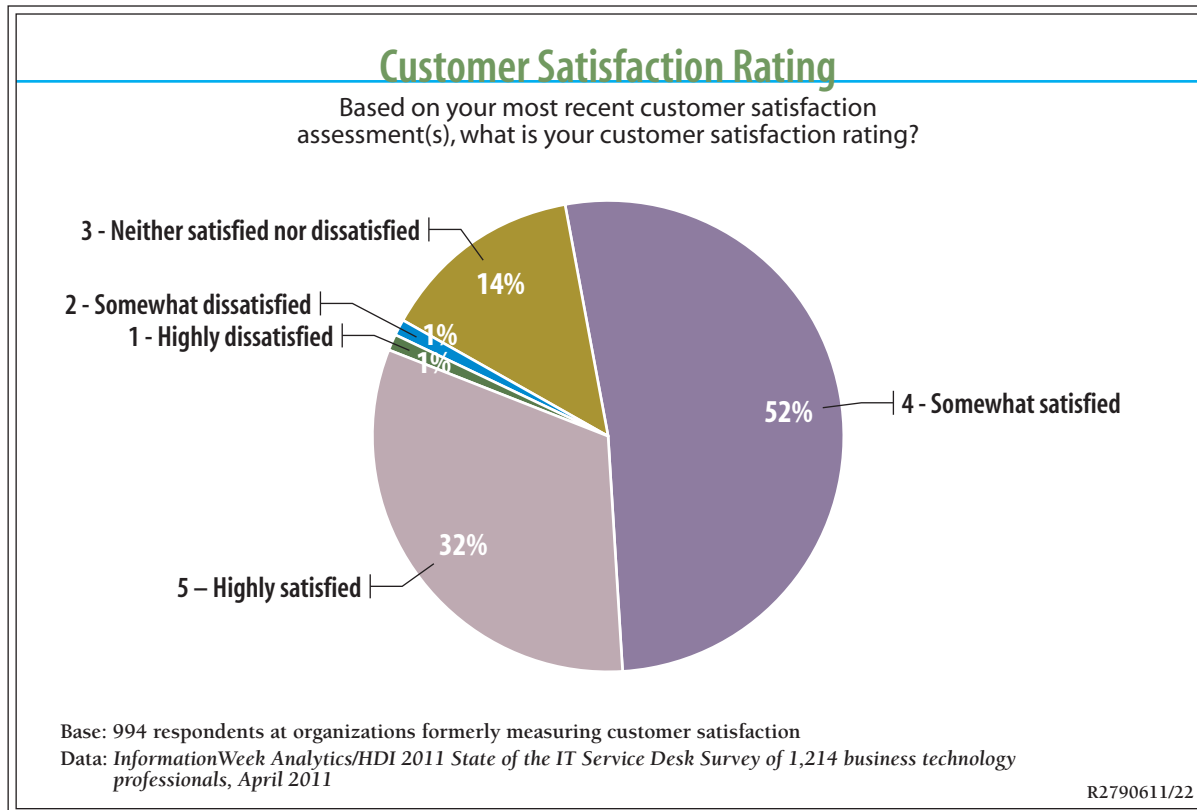
Analytics Reports



Twelve percent conduct special-purpose surveys, as needed. These periodic surveys are typically more about the relationship between the business and IT than the customer's satisfaction with the handling of a specific incident. The bottom line on customer satisfaction surveys is that almost two-thirds of support organizations measure satisfaction with the service desk regarding incidents and one-third measure overall satisfaction with the level and type of services provided. The results of these surveys reinforce the trends identified by the 2010 HDI *Support Center Practices & Salary Report*.

Almost one-third (32%) of support organizations reported that their customers are “highly satisfied” with their service desk(s); more than half (52%) are “somewhat satisfied”; 14% are “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”; only 2% reported being “somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.” For the “somewhat satisfied” customers, even though service desks miss their performance

Figure 22





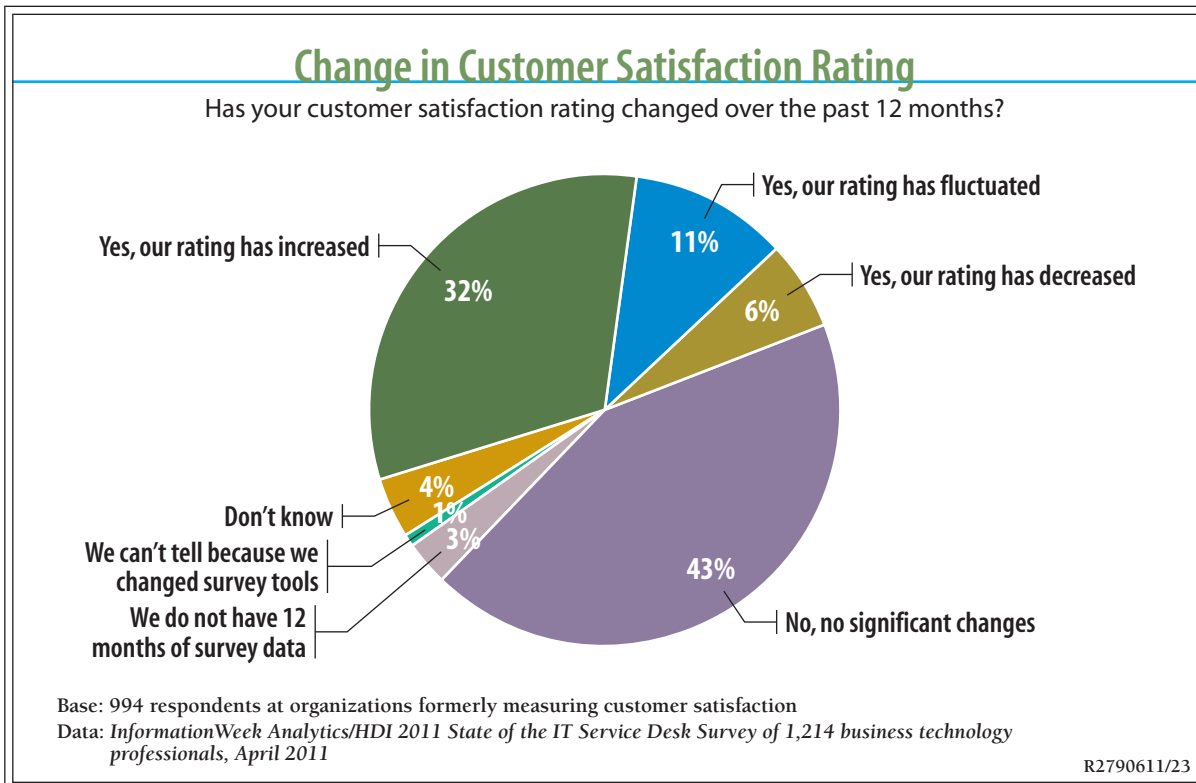


targets 30% to 50% of the time, there is a helpful, service-oriented support desk to assist them when they call for help, which improves the customer’s view of the organization.

The customer satisfaction rating has improved for 32% of support organizations, fluctuated for 11%, and decreased for 6%. Forty-three percent of support organizations saw no change in customer satisfaction. There are many possible explanations for this, from customers being more tolerant due to cost reductions across the company to improvements in the overall service being provided.

Support organizations rated themselves highest (4 or 5) on accessibility to customers (77%), ability to quickly address issues as they arise (75%) and accurate resolution (73%). The three top-rated areas are accessibility to customers (37%), ability to quickly address issues (27%) and ability to accurately resolve issues as they arise (20%). What customers want most is quick and accurate resolution, yet service desks still measure themselves as if response time is

Figure 23





the most important factor in their success. People’s behaviors are driven by what is measured, and as long as service desks continue to prioritize response time over resolution, there will be a disconnect between the customer’s view of the support organization and the organization’s view of itself.

The two areas where support organizations scored lowest are reducing cost/maintaining low cost and delivering new, innovative services to the business. Since most service desks identified in this survey don’t know what their costs are, they really don’t know if they are delivering cost-effective services, if the cost of their services is increasing or decreasing, or what the value is for the services they deliver. Without a service catalog/portfolio, they also can’t understand where customers are using their services or how many resources are being allocated to business units and services, and therefore they can’t understand the value of their services to the business.

This isn’t a question of how hard the IT support staff works, but rather where its efforts are focused and whether services are aligned with business goals. Response measures activity, resolution measures results. And, bottom line, customers want results from their IT service providers.

Figure 24

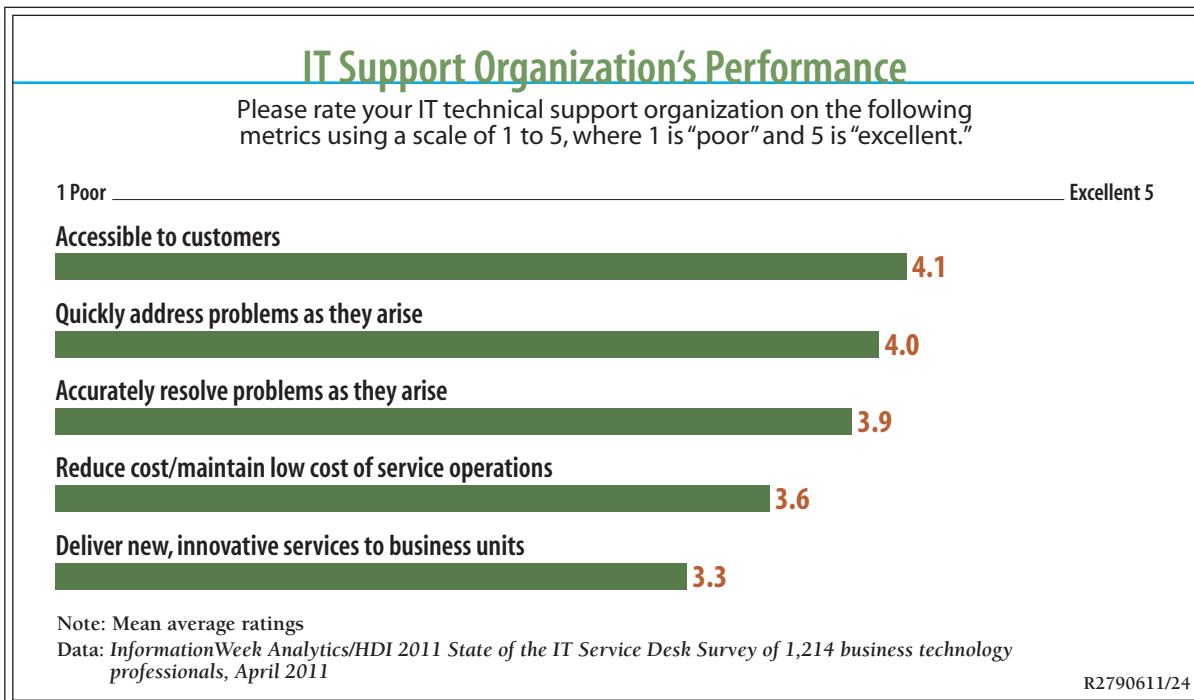




Figure 25

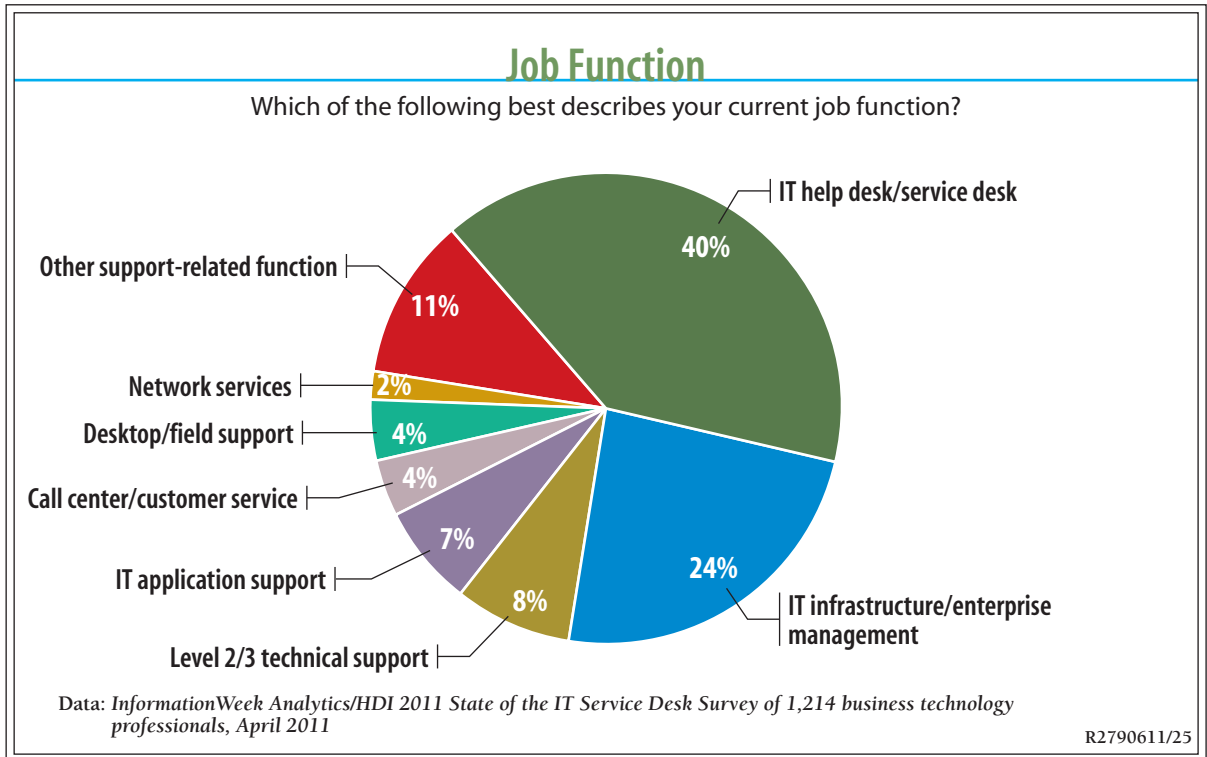




Figure 26

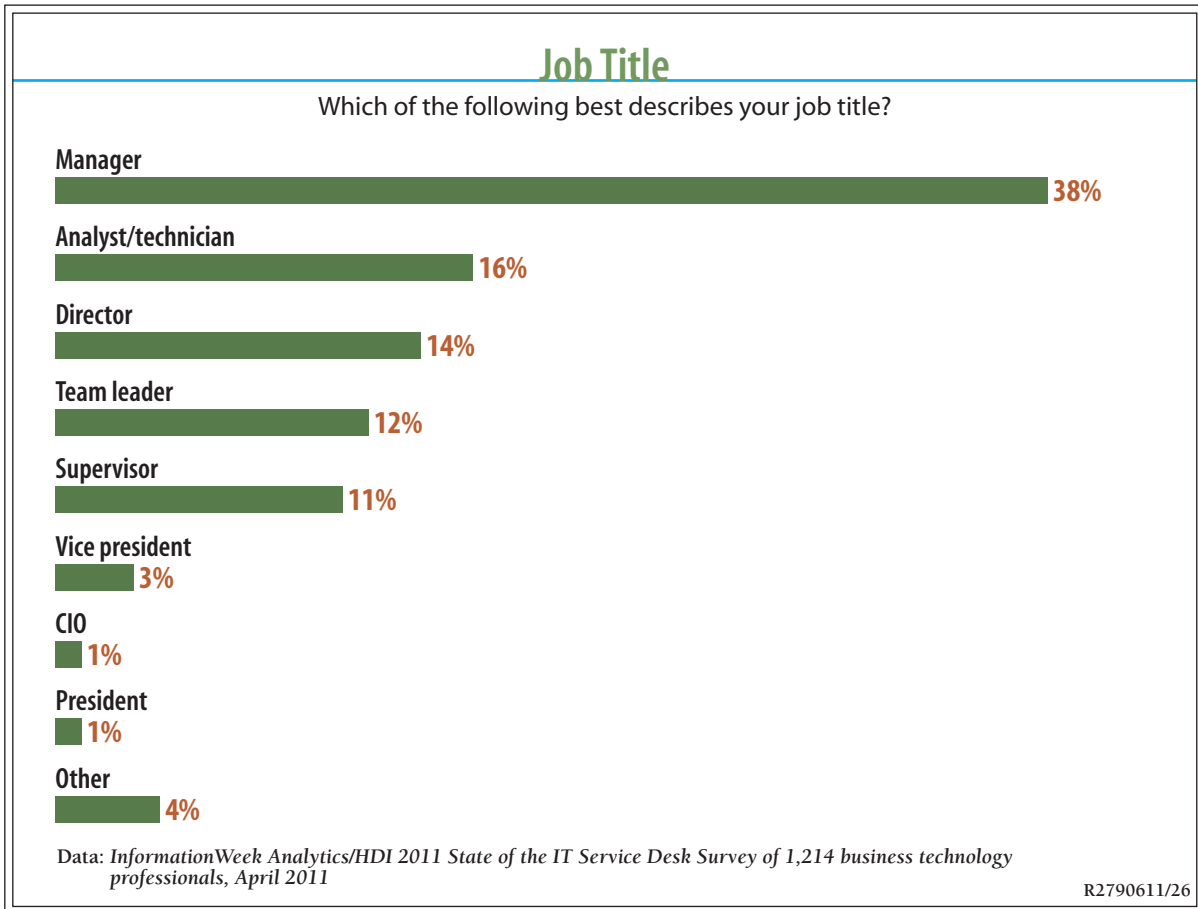




Figure 27

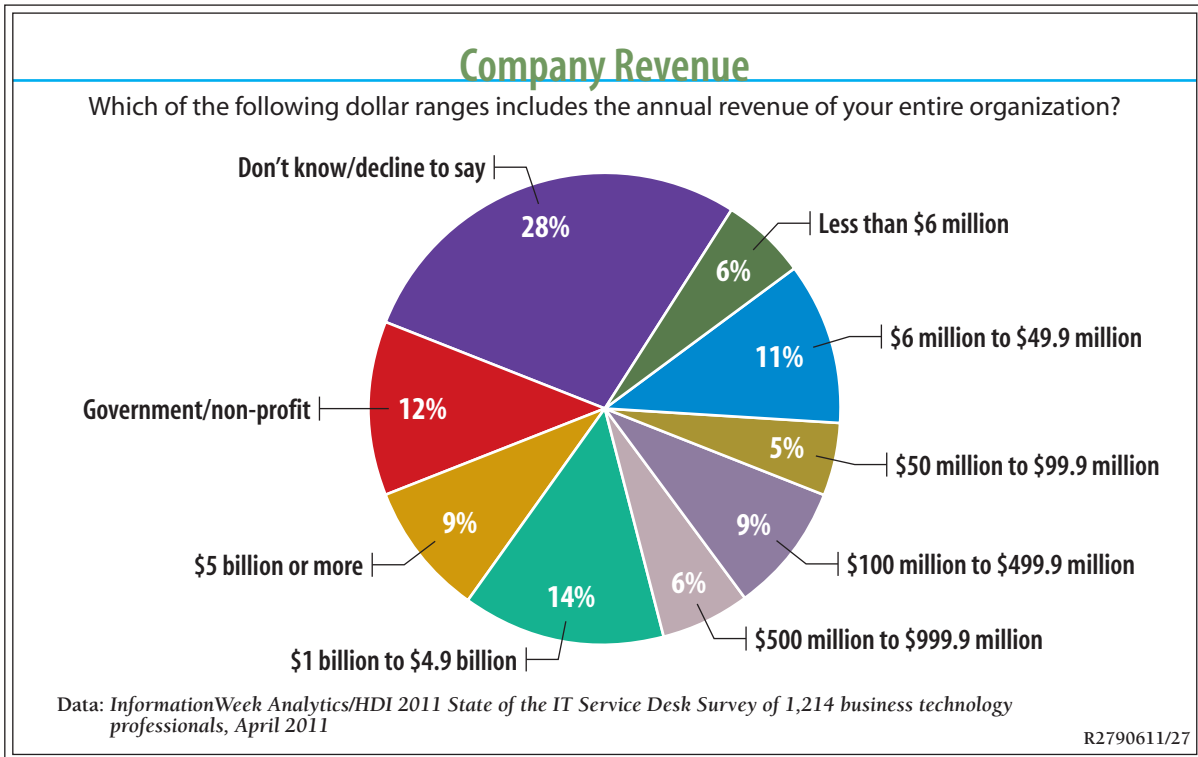




Figure 28

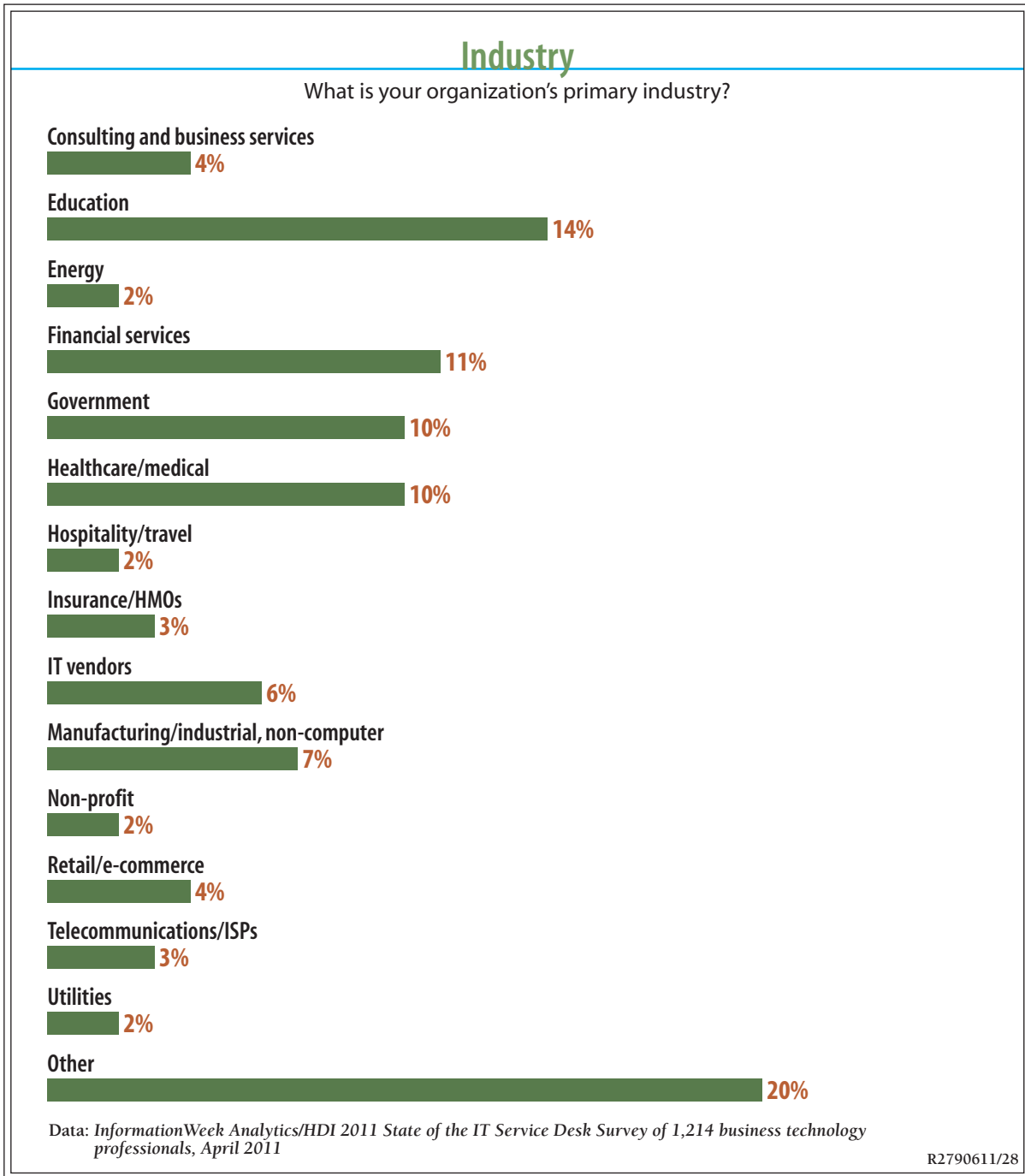
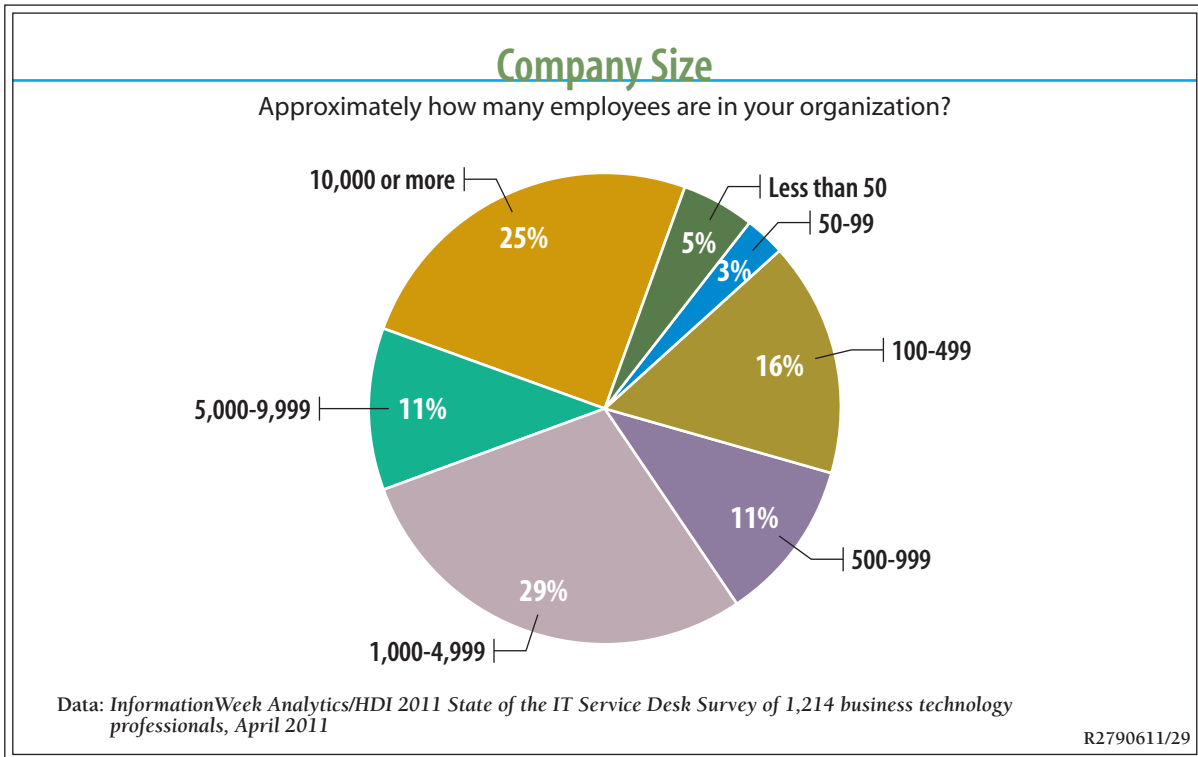




Figure 29





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