



THE NITRO 2020 PRODUCTIVITY REPORT

Workflow Innovation in a Digitized World

How today's workforce can do more with their time, manage complex document processes, and stay satisfied in their jobs.

The Intrinsic Link Between Productivity and Workplace Documents

Boosting productivity has always been a priority for companies, but advances in workplace technology have redefined what that means for employees. We partnered with Qualtrics to conduct a research study of 1,183 full- and part-time knowledge workers (those whose labor is mental rather than physical), in order to unlock the relationship between productivity and the tools that drive it.

This report dives into the state of productivity among respondents today and how improving document workflows with better training and technology can improve it. Read on for steps you can take and how Nitro can help.



PART 1

The State of Workplace Productivity

Today's employee faces high expectations and limited time each day to meet them. Unlike their counterparts before the digital era, they have access to many tools that can increase productivity—but are they being given what they need to do their best work?

Workers are Stressed, but They're Still Working Hard

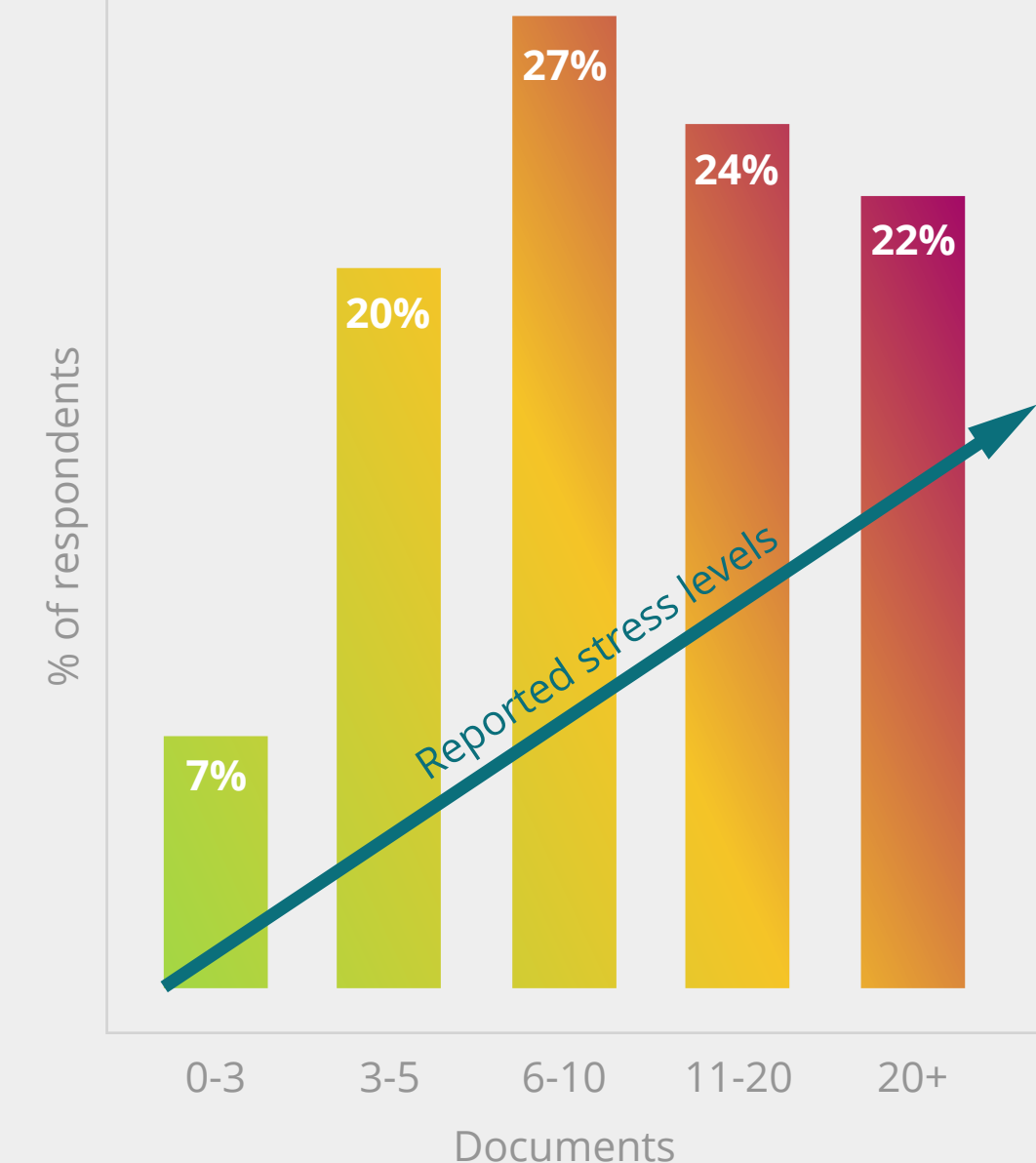
Despite the perceived trend toward better work-life balance, our study found that nearly a quarter of respondents are still putting in more than 40 hours per week. On top of that, 43% of them feel stressed at least very often at work.

That's not to say they're getting the most out of their time—nearly one out of every three respondents feels only somewhat productive or worse at their jobs. That's a full third of an organization not reaching optimal productivity levels, and a huge missed opportunity.

Documents Play a Sizable Role in Their Daily Work Habits

Not surprisingly, nearly all of our respondents said they work with documents daily. Those working with more than ten documents daily reported the highest levels of stress, in part due to repetitive workflows and manual processes like printing, scanning, signing, filing, and mailing.

How many documents do workers deal with each day?



While the majority of workers surveyed (68%) said the way their company handles electronic documents helps increase their productivity, a sizeable 25% said their employers' document-handling processes don't impact their productivity at all. An additional 7% said their productivity is actually *decreased*.

Nearly one third of workers see a missed opportunity for employers to improve productivity through better document handling.

An interesting dynamic emerged from our data: most respondents were generally satisfied with the status quo, using whatever tools they have on hand to get their work done. At the same time, **a whopping 97% of them saw room for improvement** in the way their organizations handle documents. If employers want to see increased productivity, they must be the catalyst to improving workflows, moving to electronic documents wherever they can and eliminating the tedious day-to-day tasks that come with handling information at work.

Stuck in the past: paper still reigns in many companies

Even as we look toward 2020, we found that the majority of respondents still print paper—most of them daily. Employers must address this unproductive and wasteful habit from the top, empowering their teams with easy-to-adopt digital tools.

70% of all respondents print

60% of all respondents scan

50% of all respondents mail physical documents

48% of all respondents sign/approve on paper

PART 2

Rethinking Documents: Digitize, Streamline, and Automate

We know that productivity lags when employees feel stressed and overwhelmed with repetitive, manual tasks at work. In this section, we look at how companies can make process improvements to eliminate those stresses and make better use of employees' time.



3 Top Areas to Improve, According to Workers

In the second part of our study, we asked respondents what they thought employers should do to increase document productivity. They identified the top areas for improvement and offered some compelling reasons to provide them with better digital tools in their daily workflows.

1. Provide Better Training

If you've already invested in electronic document management tools, here's some good news. **42% of respondents said they want more training** on the tools and technologies already available to them. They believe their employers are not seeing maximum ROI on existing solutions because they haven't fully integrated them into their workflows.

2. Automate More Workflows

41% of respondents suggested the implementation of more automated processes and workflows, in spite of many of them previously indicating a dependence on paper-driven processes. We interpret this as another clear sign that employers must initiate improvements to see strong results—**employees want to adapt, but they need to be given the tools.**

3. Integrate and Standardize

Several closely-ranked suggestions from respondents speak to streamlining digital document management. They suggested providing better integration between available tools for editing, signing, and sharing documents, as well as an increased focus on standardizing and documenting processes.

How better document processes benefit employees

The potential benefits workers feel would materialize if their employers improved document processes are both significant and demonstrative of the influential relationship between document processes, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. By making such improvements, knowledge workers said employers could help:

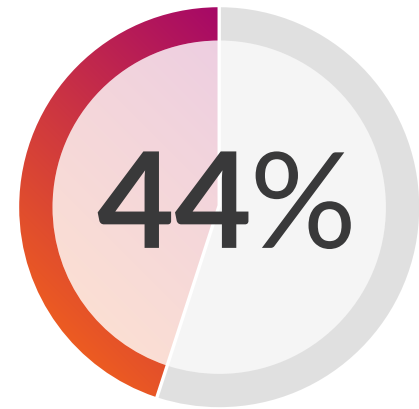
59% Save me time

56% Make it easy to do my job

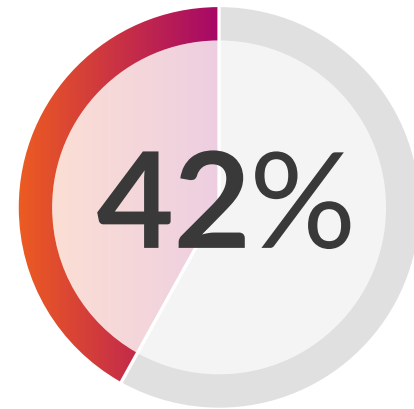
45% Reduce tedious tasks or "busy work"

Overcoming the Barriers to Change

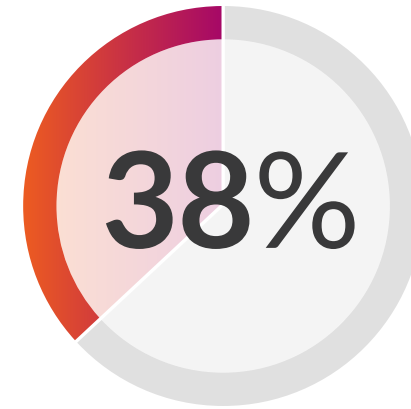
While employees suggested specific improvements to document processes and linked them to various positive outcomes, they also identified barriers preventing their employers from acting. The results pointed heavily toward inaction by leadership—**nearly a third said that management has no awareness of the document challenges users are facing.**



say that **IT is too busy**
with other priorities



say they **lack tools** due to
a limited budget



say they **lack user training**
or support

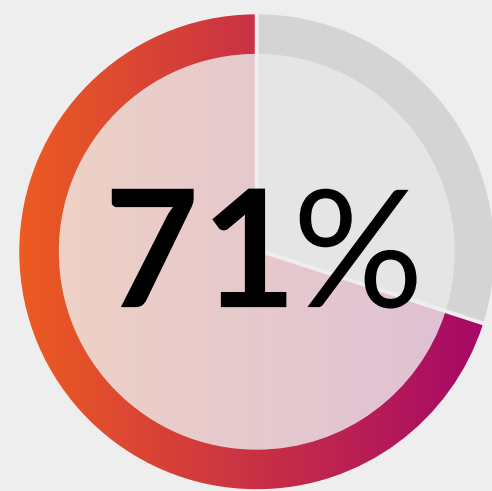
Employers must prioritize improvements to the document workflow to see productivity increases. In the next section, we'll look at how making these changes impacts the greater business and helps companies attract and retain top talent.



PART 3

The Link Between Better Workflows and Business Value

Improving digital document workflows can have a huge impact on employee satisfaction, turnover, and overall productivity across business functions. In this section we'll look at how respondents view their jobs through the lens of workplace productivity and how it impacts KPIs.



of those who feel unproductive expressed the lowest levels of job satisfaction.

Access to Resources Increases Job Satisfaction

Overall, we found that respondents who have access to the resources they need to do their work are more satisfied in their jobs. The less they felt able to get the tools they need to do their day-to-day tasks, the more dissatisfied they felt. This group had clear issues—**72% of those who expressed difficulty finding resources felt moderately productive at best, while 75% of them reported being not at all satisfied with their jobs.**

Greater Productivity Cuts Stress and Improves Sentiment

When employees feel unproductive, they also feel more stressed, less supported, and less able to meet customer needs. Our survey found that **71% of those who feel unproductive expressed the lowest levels of job satisfaction.**

We also found a link between productivity and perceived management support. 78% percent of those who don't feel at all productive also feel the least supported by management, suggesting that lack of productivity can leach into much larger areas of employee satisfaction and lower the positive sentiment they feel toward their leadership team.

Better Document Processes Influence Retention

Our research showed that feelings of productivity and satisfaction with document processes influence the desire to seek new employment. **76% of those who haven't recently looked to change jobs express high levels of productivity** at work. And as we've seen, respondents closely associate the way they handle documents and their day-to-day productivity.

The consequences of employee turnover can be painful, especially for companies competing in spaces where workers expect the best tools and perks. Beyond the productivity gap left when a worker leaves their role, there are impacts to morale and an increased workload for remaining employees. The cost of recruiting and on-boarding new employees is huge—from 50% of the annual salary of an entry-level employee to 125% of a mid-level contributor's salary.

Providing the latest workplace productivity tools can be a competitive advantage. In the final section, we'll take a look at specific ways to digitize and streamline document management.

What Causes Employees to Jump Ship?

If your employees worry about meeting expectations at work, they may seek out new jobs at other companies to fulfill their needs. Here are some findings that suggest better productivity can keep your best talent on board:

92% of **respondents who don't feel productive** at work are extremely likely to have recently explored a job change.

64% of respondents who **aren't satisfied with the way their companies handle documents** are looking to change jobs.

60% of those **not meeting customer needs** are actively looking for a new job.

PART 4

Taking Action with Better Tools for Document Management

You can act on the findings of this study by investing in technology and training for document management. At Nitro, we created a suite of products that streamlines document workflows, eliminate unnecessary printing, lower costs, and lets you work 100% digitally. Read on for where to start improving your workflows.

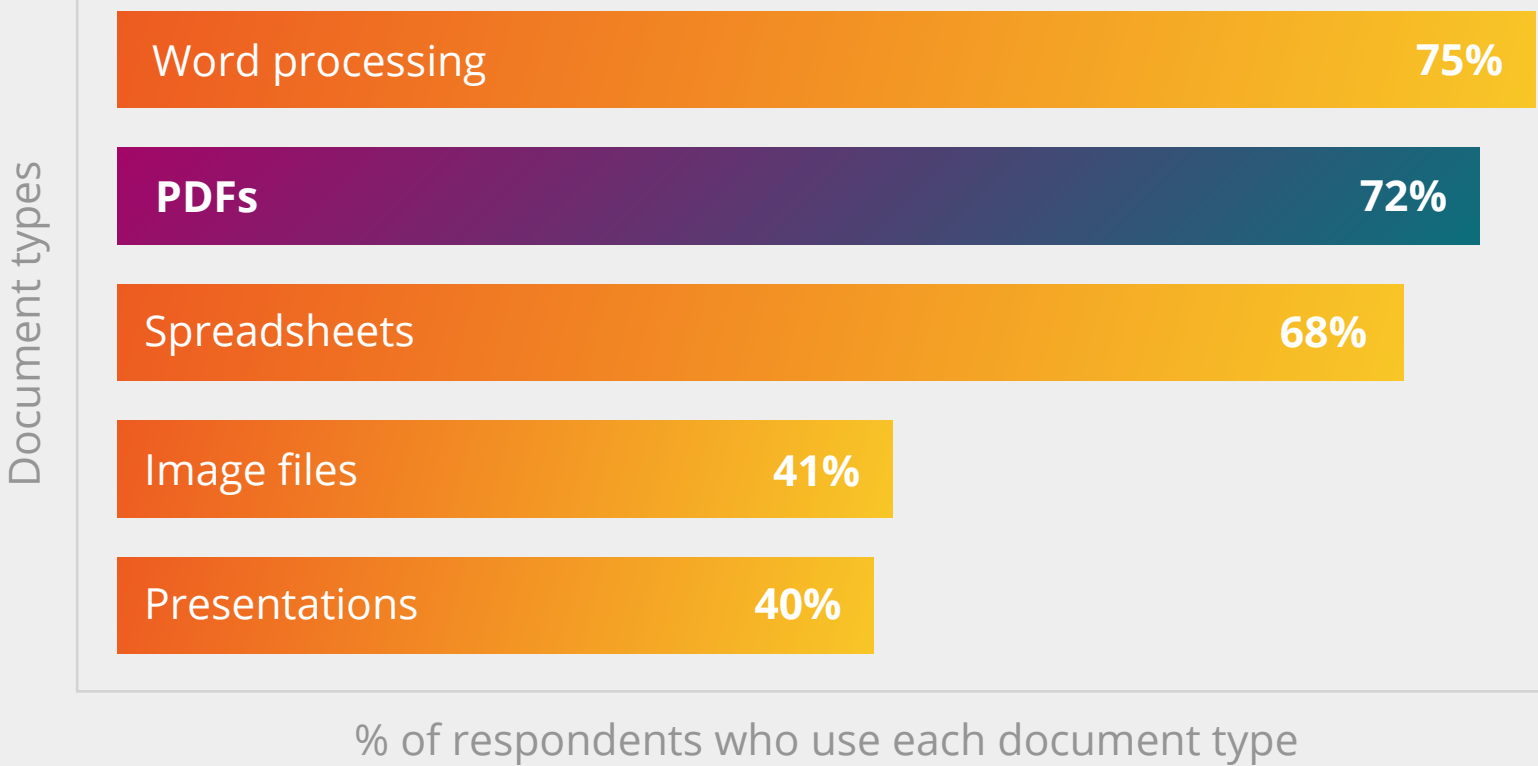


Focus on the PDF First

PDFs nearly tie with word processing docs for the top-used formats among respondents. Of those who work with PDFs, 77% work with them daily, including 63% who work with them multiple times daily.

Why is the PDF so important? It's often the final version of contracts and other key documents that must be signed, stored, and easily searchable by team members later. By improving the process around this often-used format, you can eliminate hours per week of unproductive workflows.

Top 5 File Types Used by Knowledge Workers



Embrace the eSignature

According to our survey, just 12% of knowledge workers use an eSignature solution to handle documents. That means the rest of them are spending time printing, signing, scanning, and resending documents that could be signed in seconds.

Over one third of workers manually sign documents every day—make a plan to digitize in 2020.



Increase ROI, Lower Risk

Nitro offers a productivity solution suite for managing, storing, and sharing PDF documents. Our customers report that they:



Get deals signed faster



Save at least an hour each week of employee time



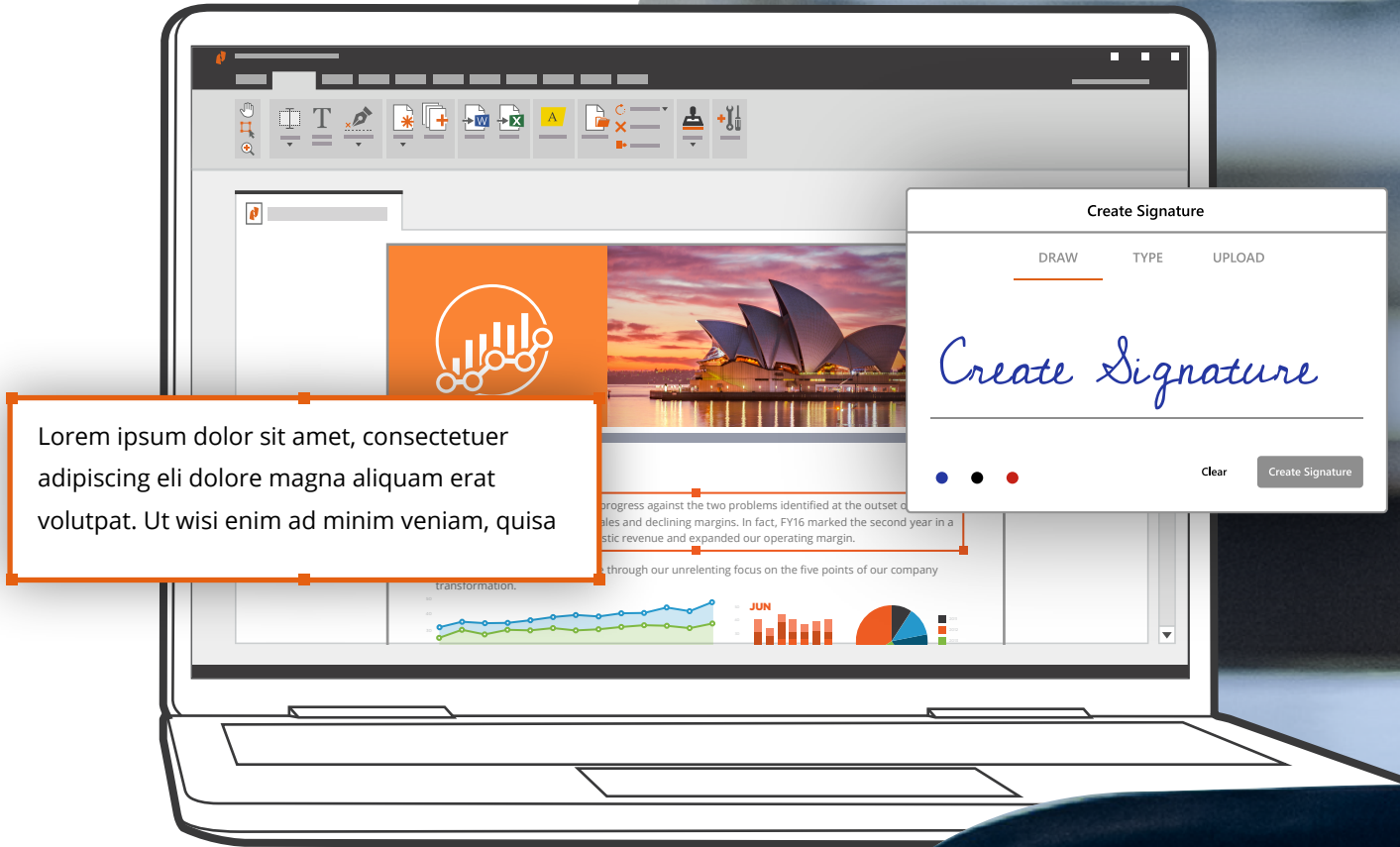
Develop secure document management practices



Improve operational agility

Unleash Productivity with Nitro

Get started on your path to greater productivity by using Nitro to create, edit, convert, and sign your PDFs. Our Productivity Suite offers out-of-the-box document workflows, integrations with your favorite workplace tools, and features for team collaboration in the cloud. **Learn more about Nitro by visiting our resource section.**





About Nitro

Nitro is a global document productivity company. We help organizations of all sizes eliminate paper, accelerate business processes, and drive digital transformation by providing PDF productivity and eSigning for all in a single, affordable solution. Founded in 2005 in Melbourne, Australia, Nitro helps increase efficiency for more than 10,000 businesses globally, including 65% of the 2019 Fortune 500. Nitro headquarters are in San Francisco, with offices in Dublin, London, and Melbourne. Accomplish more with documents and make work more productive at GoNitro.com.

Survey Methodology

The survey reached 1,183 full- or part-time knowledge workers to assess usage behaviors and perceptions of workplace documentation practices. Further, the study provided a deeper understanding of the shortcomings of document processes in business settings today, and their impact on job stress, satisfaction, and productivity.

Markets Included

- US (n = 385)
- UK (n = 386)
- Ireland (n = 105)
- Australia (n = 308)

Response Criteria

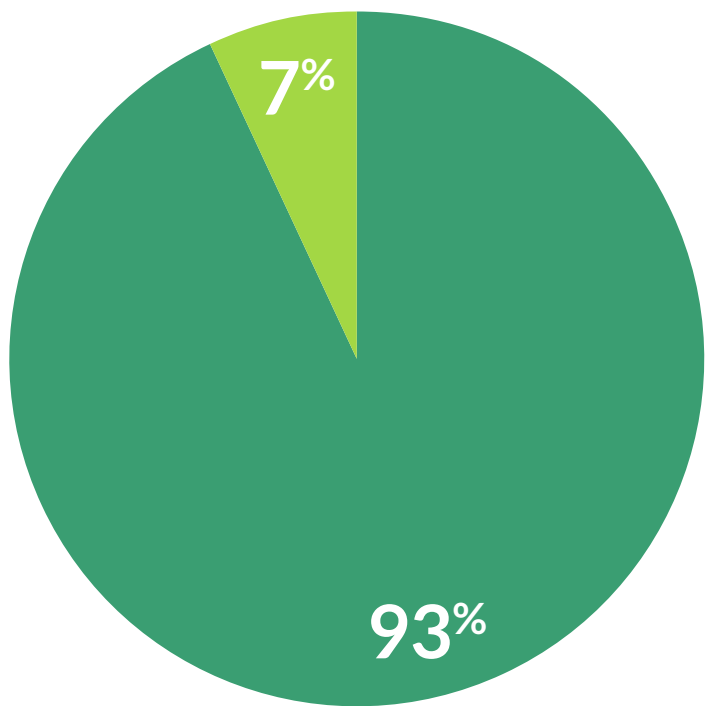
- 18+ years old
- Resident of US, UK, Ireland, or Australia
- Full-time or part-time employees who work with documents on a regular basis

Desired Insights

- Current document processes (type/frequency)
- Workflow efficiency and productivity
- Stress, training, and available resources
- Employee satisfaction and turnover risk
- Satisfaction with document processes

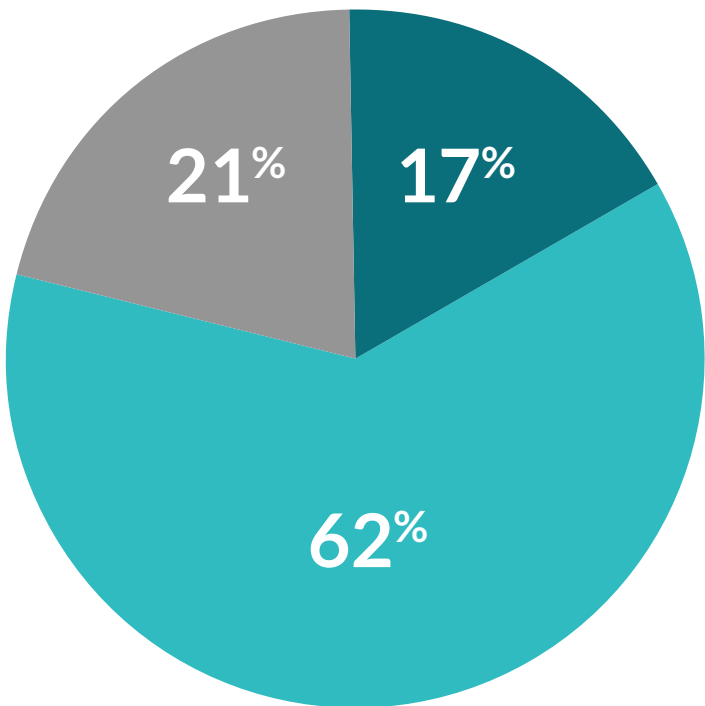
Respondent Demographics

Employment Status



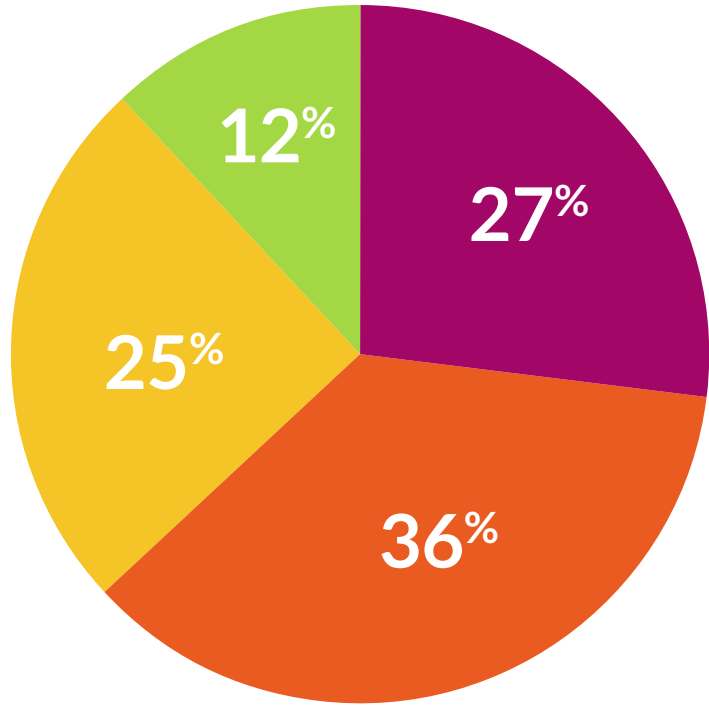
Employed full-time by someone else Employed part-time by someone else

Hours worked weekly



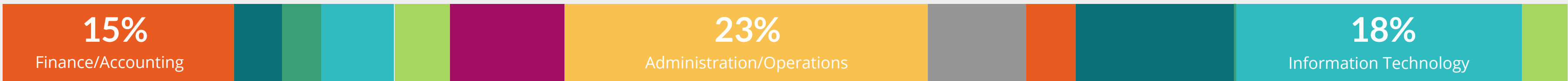
24 - 34 hours 35 - 40 hours More than 40 hours

Daily hours of work on a computer



8+ 7-8 5-6 3-4

Profession



Finance/Accounting Manufacturing Software Engineering/Programming Engineering Legal Human Resources Administration/Operations Sales
Marketing/Communications/PR Customer Support/Account Management Education Information Technology Research/Development

