TREND SURVEY - TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Daniel Björkman
Tel: 0706 21 44 17
daniel.bjorkman@sigmakudos.com

Åsa Hedström
Tel: 0739 40 39 21
asa.hedstrom@novusgroup.se

Trend survey - technical information

Sweden's most extensive survey concerning product information: Technical information is important for enabling the use of today's complex products. The information is judged to be more important in the future. Less than half are today satisfied with how quickly they find the information that they seek.

Each year, with a commission from Sigma Kudos, the Novus research company carries out Sweden's largest survey of what decision-makers and producers of technical information consider to be the trends in technical information. The result of the first survey which was carried out during the Autumn of 2011 shows that over 89% consider that the users need technical information in order to install and use today's complex products. There is a high degree of confidence in the information. Only 9% believe that the users hardly ever solve problems using the information. It is expected that good technical information can contribute to increased product sales. At the same time, only every other user is satisfied with today's technical information. Enhancement of the search facility is at the top of the list of potential improvements.

Background and implementation

Technical information

In this survey the term "technical information" refers to product information that is supplied with technically advanced products. For example, this could be installation manuals, service catalogues, repair instructions and technical descriptions.

Purpose

Sigma Kudos has initiated this survey to create an annual trend study relating to "technical information". The aim is to analyse the trends in technical information and to better understand the needs of the industry.

Implementation

Target group: Decision-makers and/or their co-workers who have responsibility for the production of technical information in manufacturing companies with a turnover exceeding SEK 500 million.

Method

All of the participants have been contacted by telephone. They were offered the option of either being interviewed directly via the telephone or of answering a web questionnaire. 88% were interviewed via the telephone. In total, 146 complete interviews have been carried out and the survey response frequency is 47 %. Gross sample: 354 (A- fall-off, is not included in the target group e.g. incorrect addresses and duplicates: 41) Net sample: 313.

Survey period

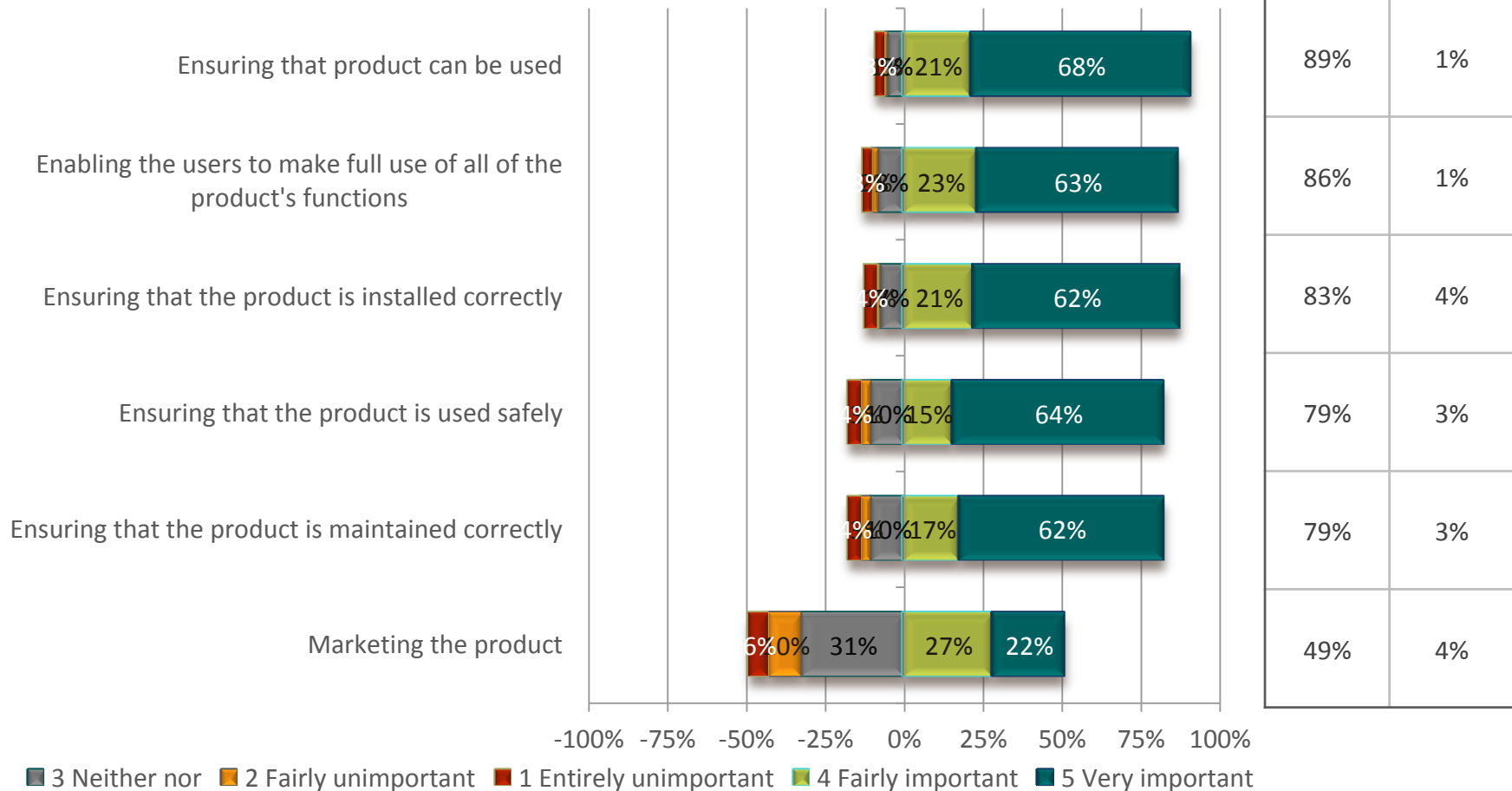The survey was carried out during September and October 2011.

Rights

Result

The need for technical information

Technical information is judged to be most important for product use and less for marketing

Question: How important do you consider the technical information to be for ...?

	Top box	Don't know
Ensuring that product can be used	89%	1%
Enabling the users to make full use of all of the product's functions	86%	1%
Ensuring that the product is installed correctly	83%	4%
Ensuring that the product is used safely	79%	3%
Ensuring that the product is maintained correctly	79%	3%
Marketing the product	49%	4%

Legend: ■ 3 Neither nor ■ 2 Fairly unimportant ■ 1 Entirely unimportant ■ 4 Fairly important ■ 5 Very important

BASE: All (n=146)

6

novus

It is considered that good technical information can increase sales

Question: To what extent can good technical information affect the sale of your products?

Category	Percentage
Does not affect sales at all	5%
Can to a certain extent contribute to increased sales	34%
Can significantly contribute to increased sales	58%
Don't know/no answer	3%

BASE: All (n=146)

novus
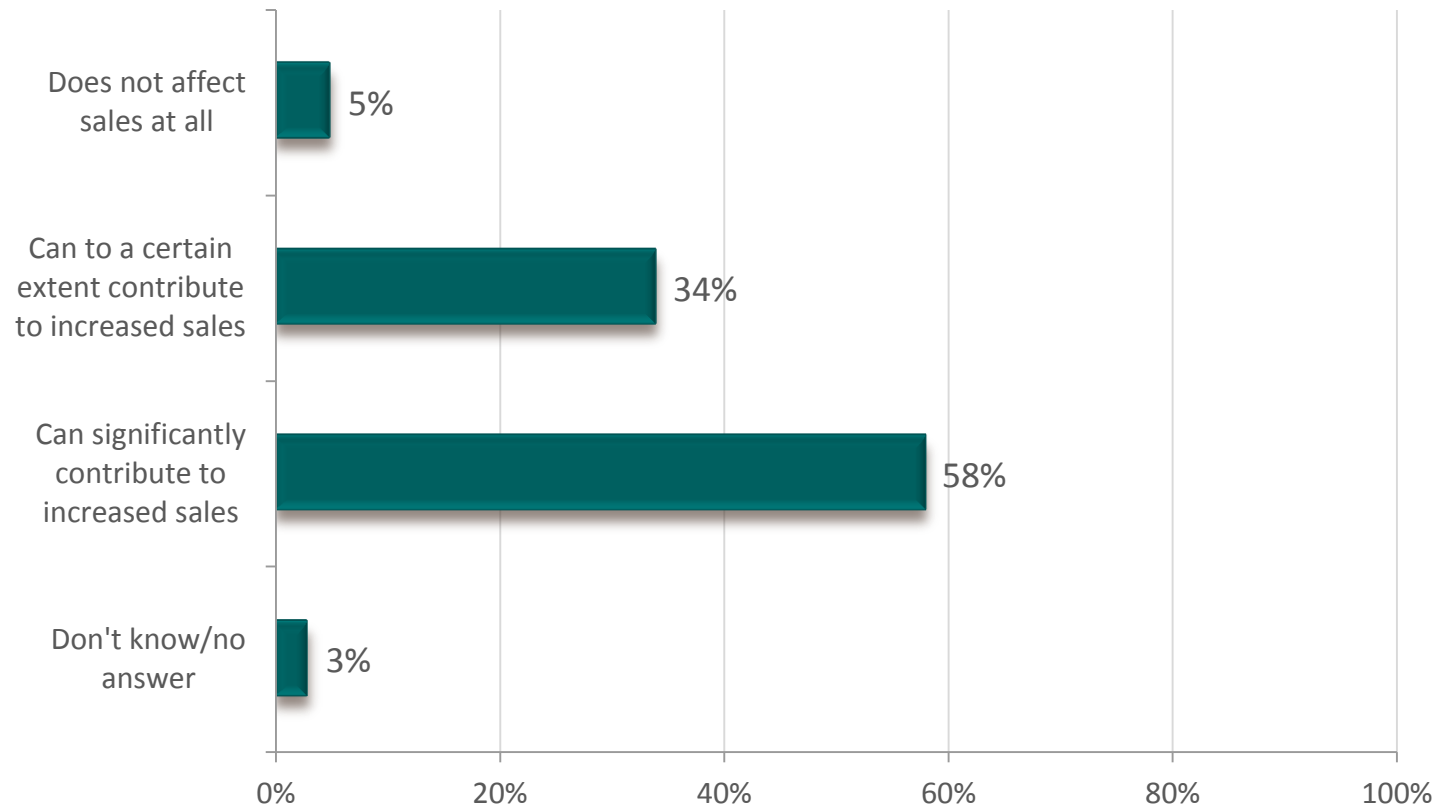
The technical information is expected to become more important

Question: If you think 2-3 years ahead. Do you consider that for your customers the technical information will be...?

Category	Percentage
Much less important	0%
Slightly less important	5%
Unchanged	37%
Slightly more important	33%
A lot more important	24%
Don't know/no answer	1%

BASE: All (n=146)

novus
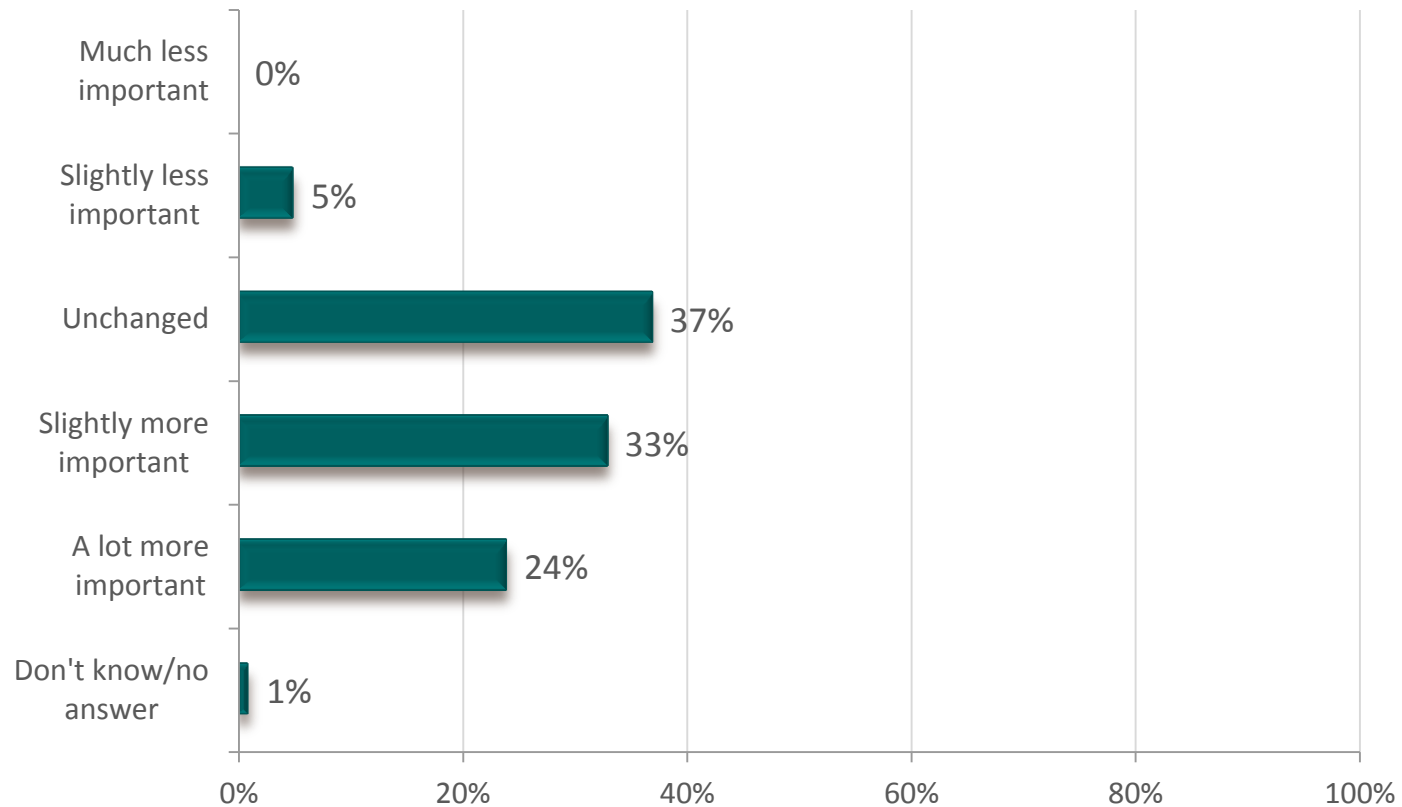
The technical information can be reduced by improvements to the user interface
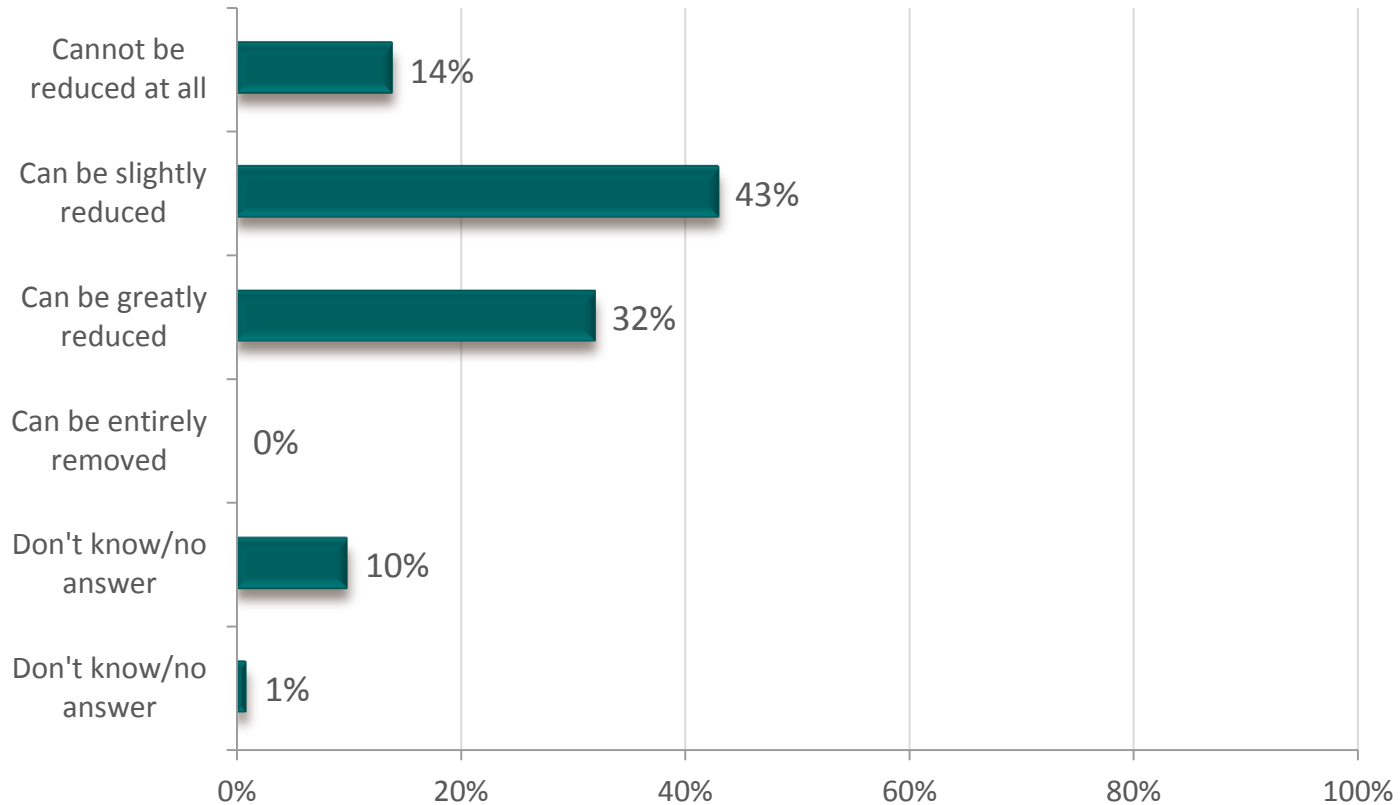
The quality of the information

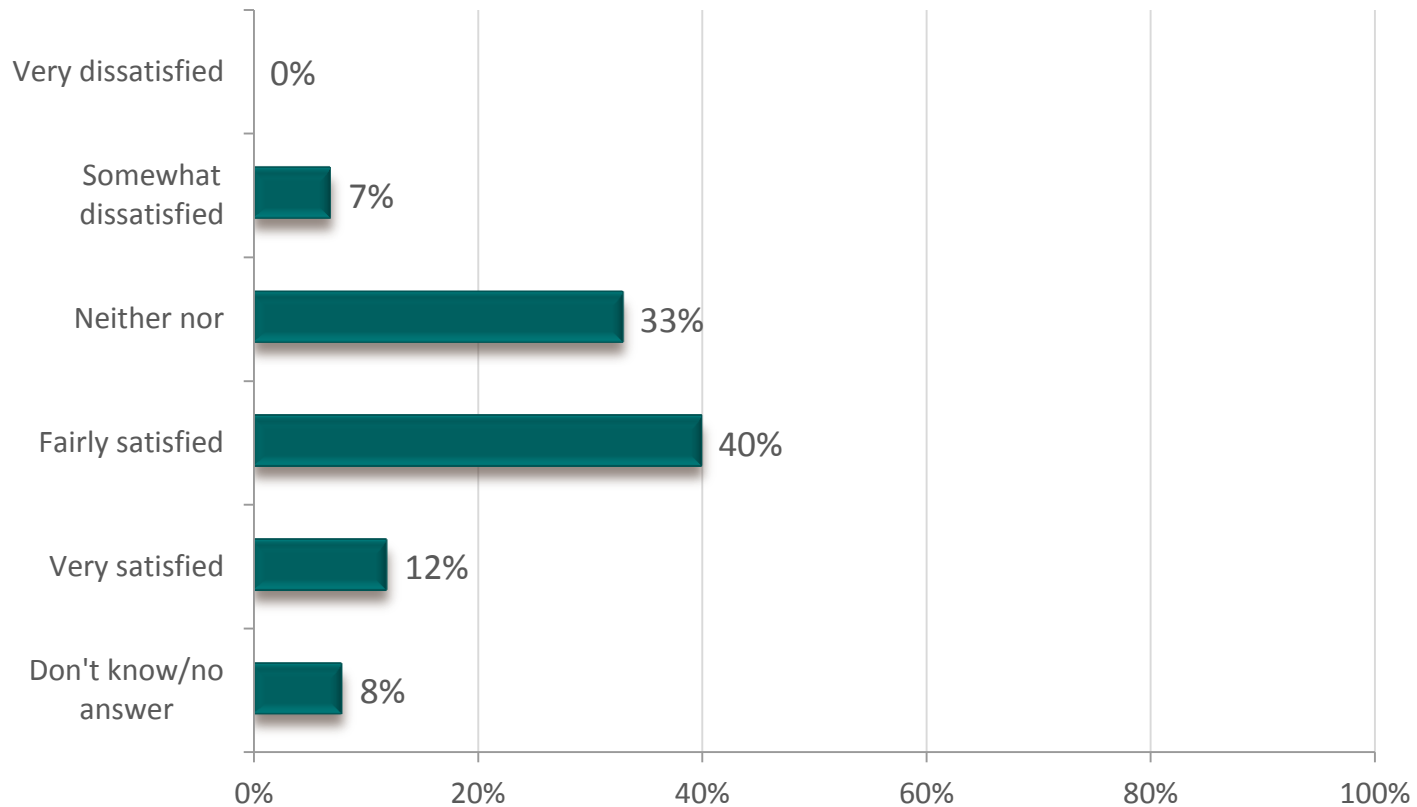# Only every other customer is judged to be satisfied with the technical information

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied do you judge your customers to be with the technical information they receive from you today?

11

novus

Less than half believe that the customers are satisfied with the speed with which they can find what they need in the information

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied do you consider the users to be with the speed with which they can find what they need in your technical information?

Category	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	1%
Somewhat dissatisfied	16%
Neither nor	33%
Fairly satisfied	31%
Very satisfied	10%
Don't know/no answer	10%

BASE: All (n=146)

12

novus
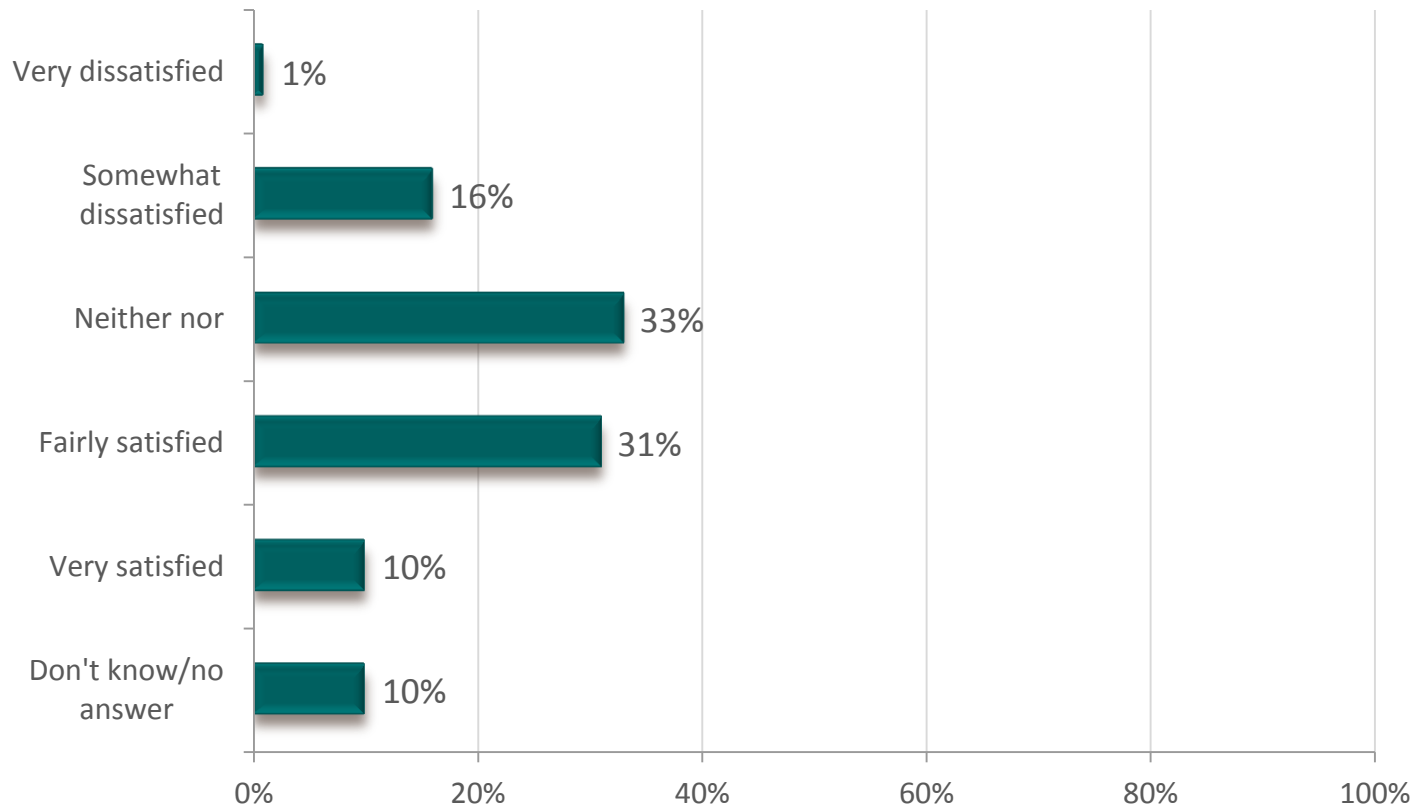
High degree of confidence in the technical information
(Only 9% believe that the customers hardly ever solve problems using the information)

Question: How often do you consider that your customers solve a problem that they have with your product with the help of the technical information?

Category	Percentage
Never/almost never	9%
Sometimes	23%
Often	42%
Nearly always/Always	17%
Don't know/no answer	8%

:::novus
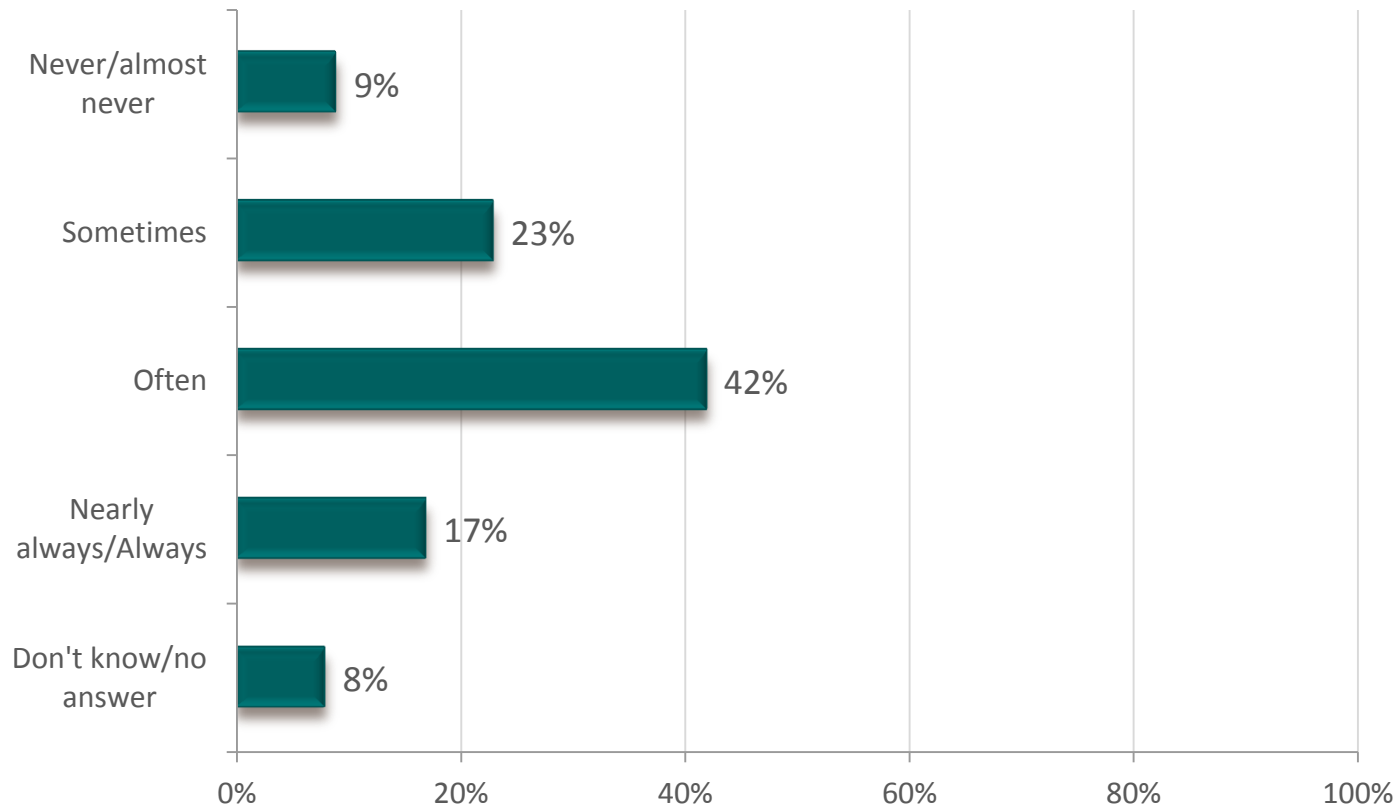
Most believe that their technical information is equal to or better than that of their competitors

Question: How good do you consider your technical information to be in comparison with that of your competitors?

Category	Percentage
Significantly worse than that of the competitors	0%
Slightly worse than that of the competitors	3%
Equivalent to that of the competitors	35%
Slightly better than that of the competitors	33%
Significantly better than that of the competitors	14%
Don't know/no answer	15%

novus
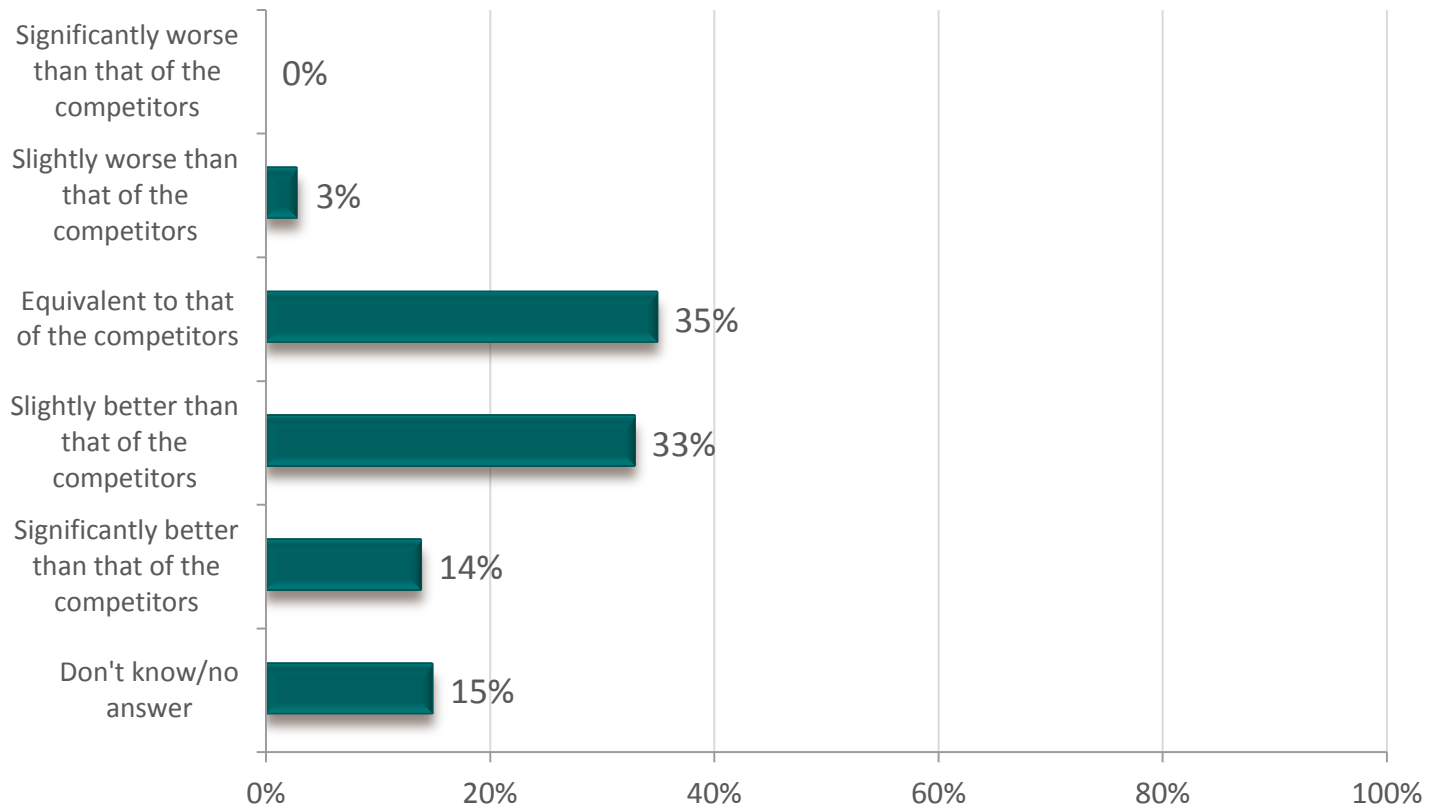
Only 16% consider that they have poor knowledge of the technical information of their competitors

Question: How good or poor knowledge do you consider you have of the technical information of your competitors?

Category	Percentage
Very poor knowledge	4%
Rather poor knowledge	12%
Neither nor	26%
Fairly good knowledge	34%
Very good knowledge	12%
Don't know/no answer	12%

BASE: All (n=146)
15

novus
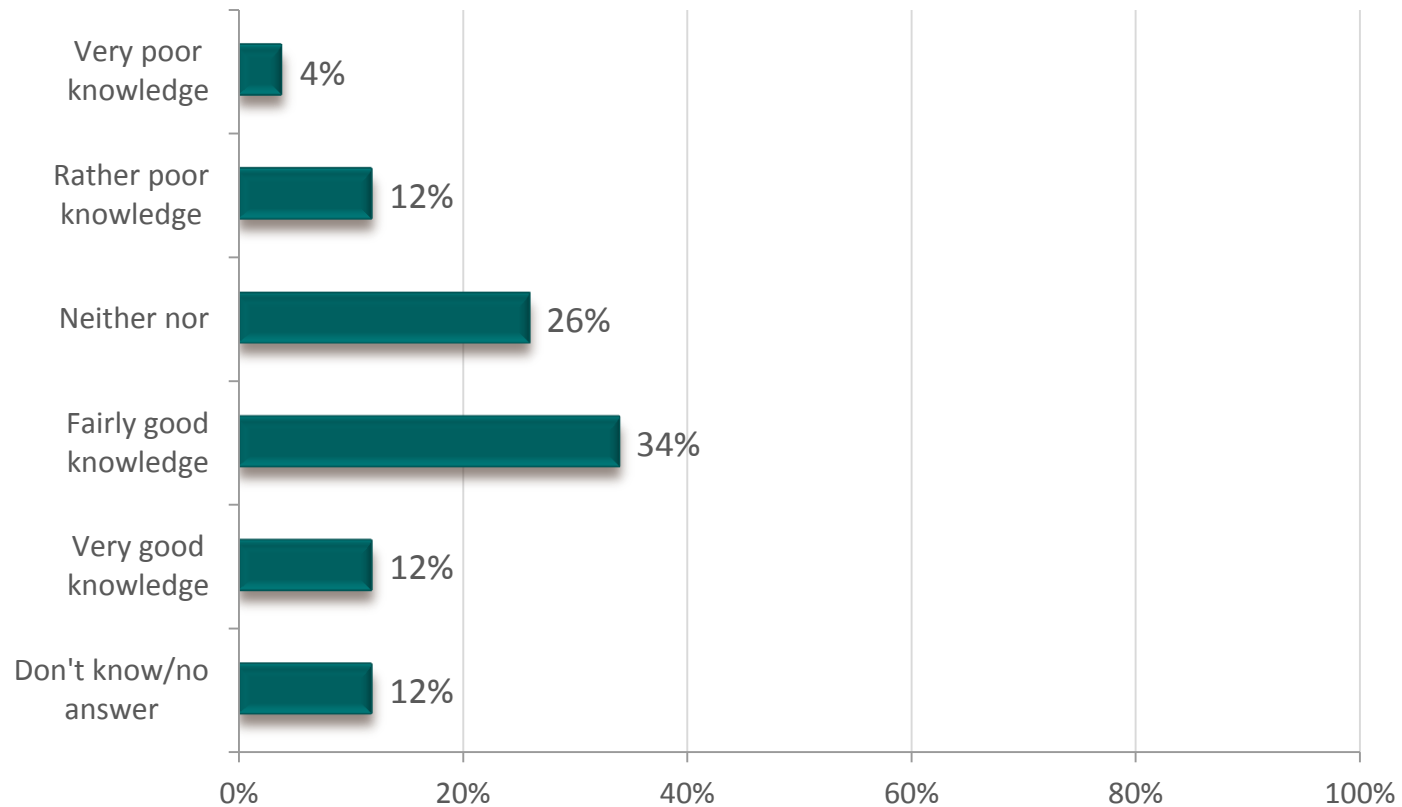
Assessment of how interesting the different media are for customers: Low interest for mobile phone but high for web

Question: How interesting do you consider the following media to be for the distribution of technical information to your customers?

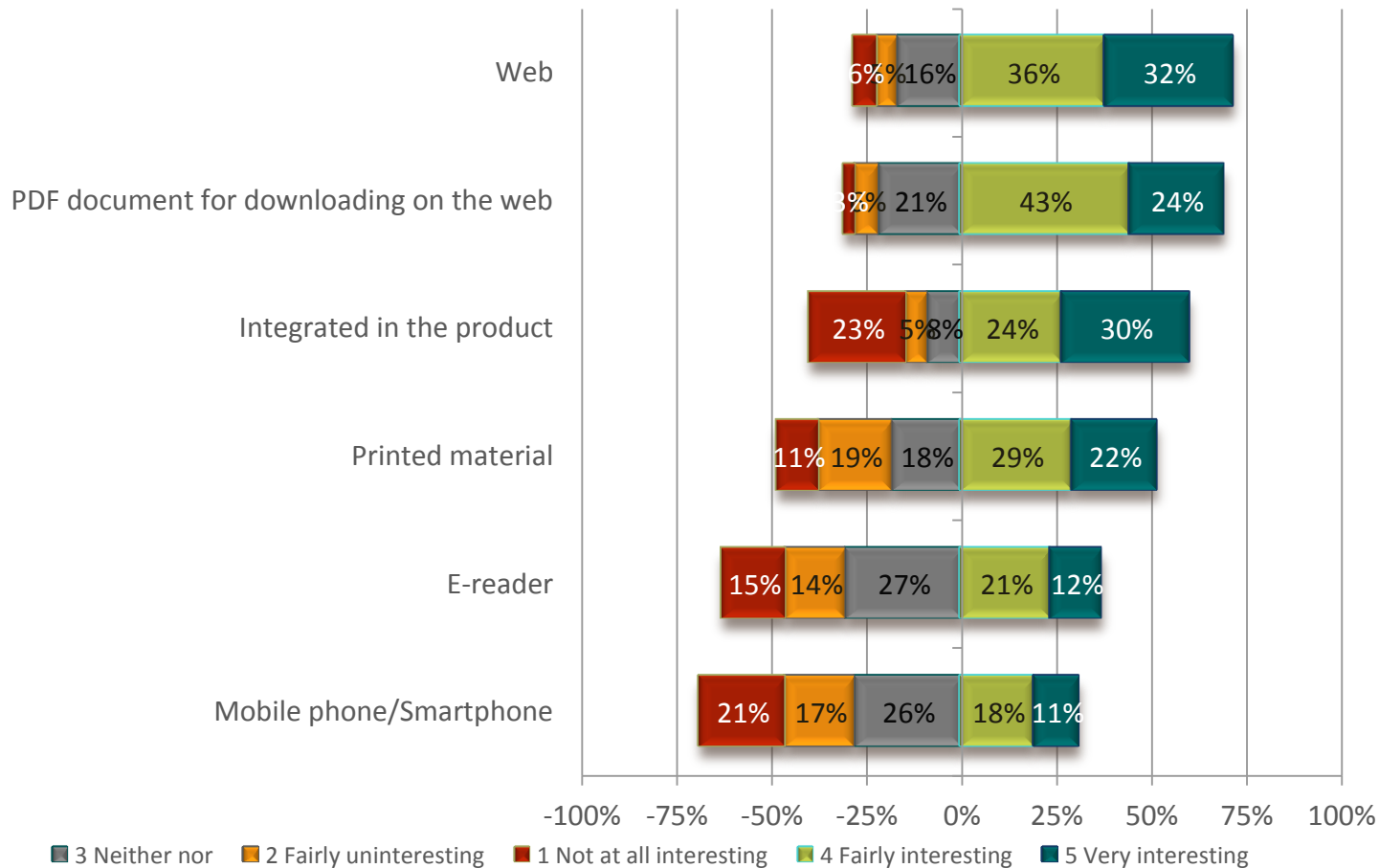|	Top box	Don't know
Web	68%	4%
PDF document for downloading on the web	67%	3%
Integrated in the product	54%	10%
Printed material	51%	1%
E-reader	33%	10%
Mobile phone/Smartphone	29%	6%

Web: 6% 5% 16% 36% 32%
PDF document for downloading on the web: 3% 2% 21% 43% 24%
Integrated in the product: 23% 5% 8% 24% 30%
Printed material: 11% 19% 18% 29% 22%
E-reader: 15% 14% 27% 21% 12%
Mobile phone/Smartphone: 21% 17% 26% 18% 11%

-100% -75% -50% -25% 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

■ 3 Neither nor ■ 2 Fairly uninteresting ■ 1 Not at all interesting ■ 4 Fairly interesting ■ 5 Very interesting

BASE: All (n=146)

novus

Assessment of what changes are of interest to customers: Most importantly an improved search facility; not less information

Question: How interesting do you consider the following changes in your technical information to be for the customers?

	Top box	Don't know
Improved search facility	78%	4%
More images, sound, video (multimedia)	59%	5%
Information delivered via new media/channels	50%	6%
Improved language/translations	46%	5%
Less information	28%	3%

Improved search facility: 5% 1% 10% 33% 45%
More images, sound, video (multimedia): 8% 9% 19% 38% 21%
Information delivered via new media/channels: 14% 8% 22% 29% 21%
Improved language/translations: 11% 12% 26% 30% 16%
Less information: 25% 16% 27% 18% 10%

-100% -75% -50% -25% 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

■ 3 Neither nor ■ 2 Fairly uninteresting ■ 1 Not at all interesting ■ 4 Fairly interesting ■ 5 Very interesting

novus
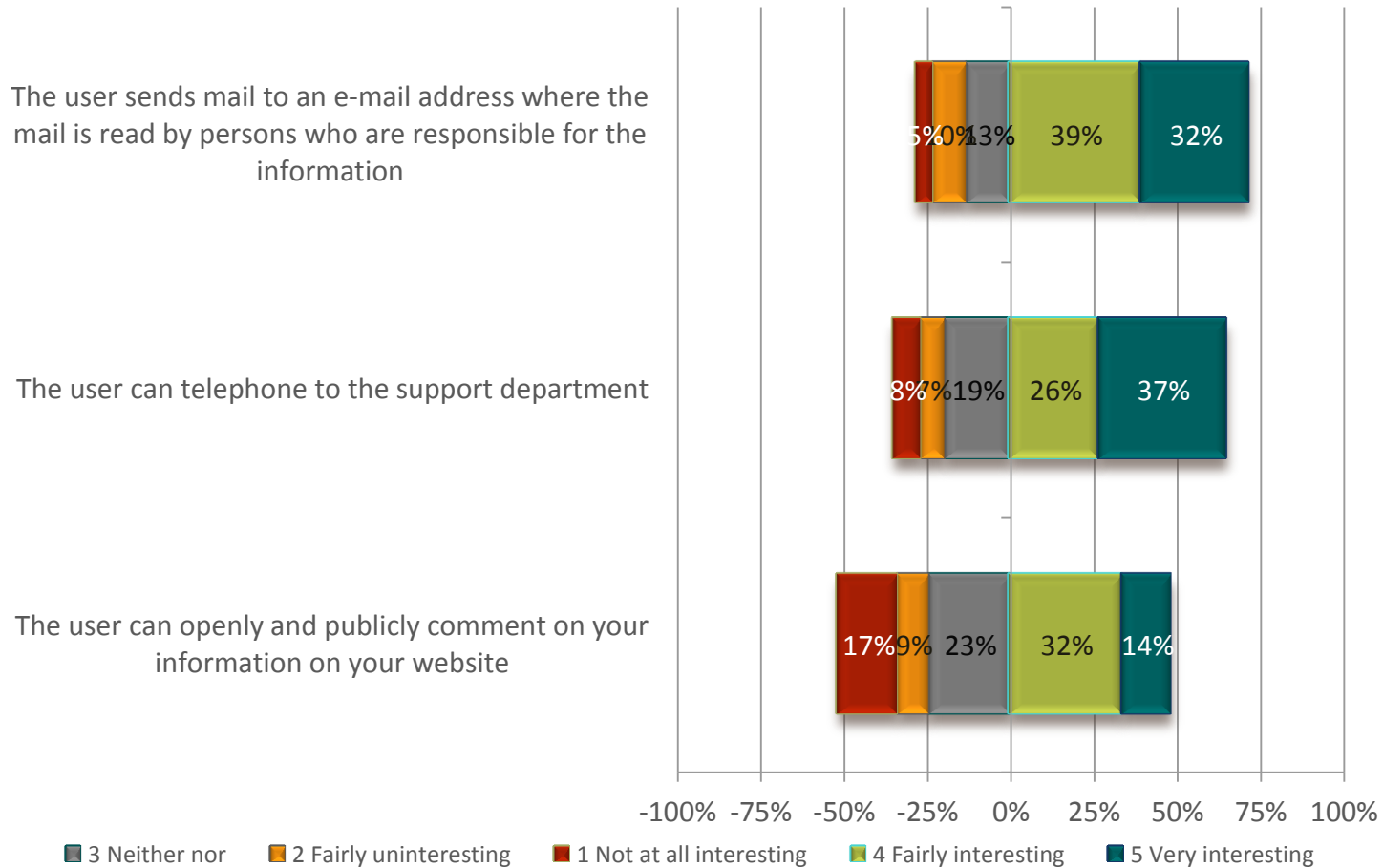
Interaction with customers

18

novus

Less than half are interested in finding out about the opinions of users via public comments on their own website

Question: How interesting do you consider the following methods to be with respect to finding out about the opinions of users concerning you technical information?
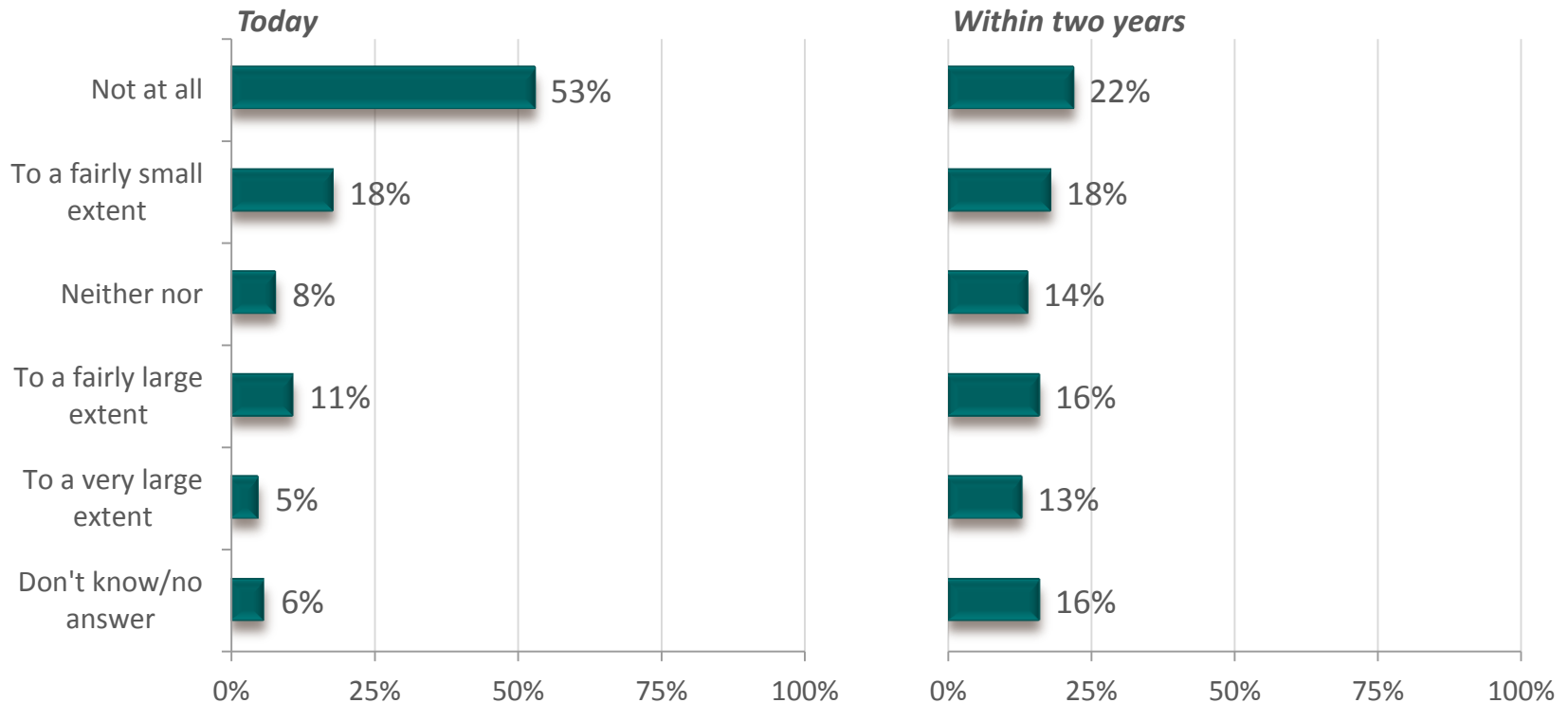

	Top box	Don't know
The user sends mail to an e-mail address where the mail is read by persons who are responsible for the information	71%	6%
The user can telephone to the support department	63%	3%
The user can openly and publicly comment on your information on your website	46%	5%

Chart legend:
- 3 Neither nor
- 2 Fairly uninteresting
- 1 Not at all interesting
- 4 Fairly interesting
- 5 Very interesting

The user sends mail to an e-mail address where the mail is read by persons who are responsible for the information: 5% 0% 13% 39% 32%

The user can telephone to the support department: 8% 7% 19% 26% 37%

The user can openly and publicly comment on your information on your website: 17% 9% 23% 32% 14%

BASE: All (n=146)

19

novus

Increased use of social media in the future as part of the technical information

Question: To what extent do you use social media as a part of the technical information?

Question: To what extent do you consider that within the coming two years you will use social media as a part of the technical information?
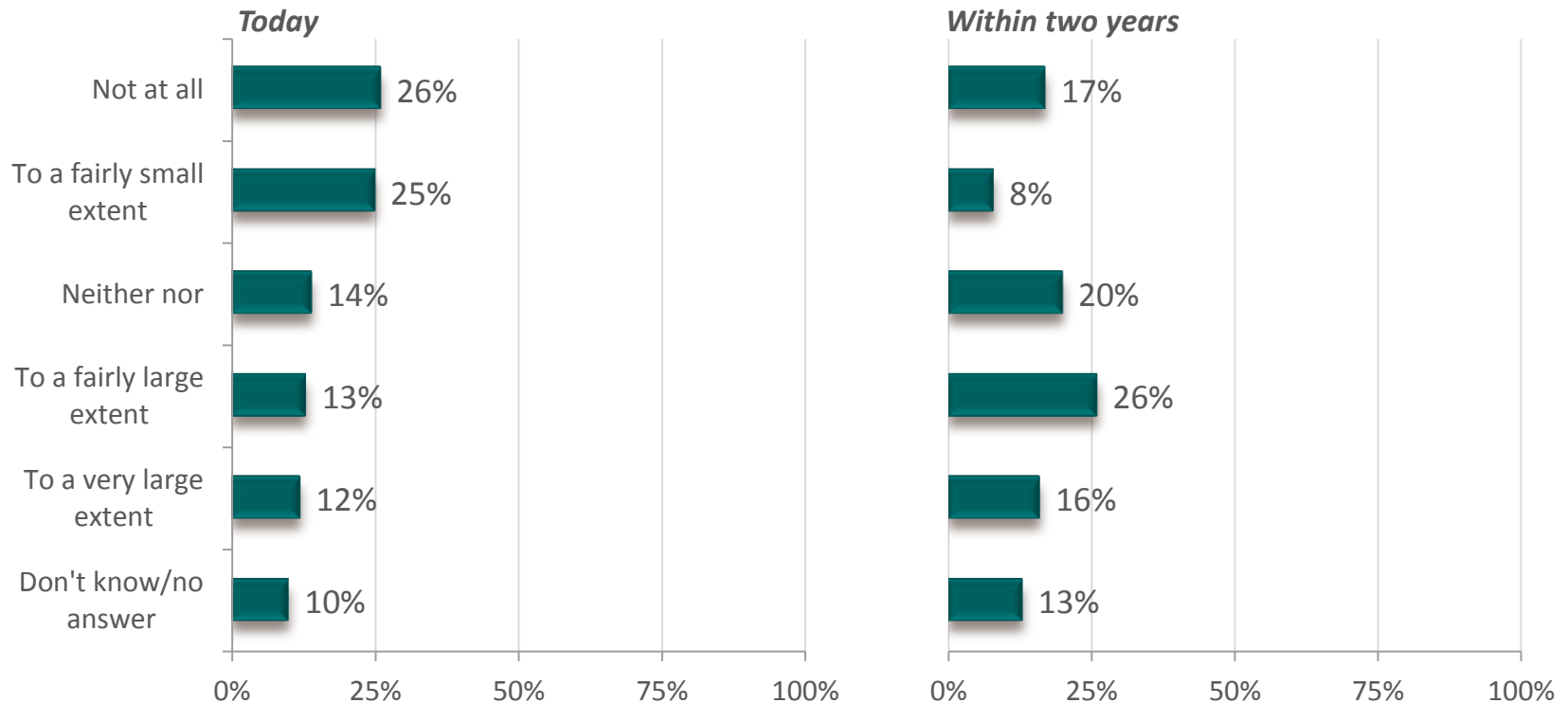
Today

Not at all	53%
To a fairly small extent	18%
Neither nor	8%
To a fairly large extent	11%
To a very large extent	5%
Don't know/no answer	6%

Within two years

Not at all	22%
To a fairly small extent	18%
Neither nor	14%
To a fairly large extent	16%
To a very large extent	13%
Don't know/no answer	16%

BASE: All (n=146)

novus

Belief in increased integration of information in the product

Today

Not at all	26%
To a fairly small extent	25%
Neither nor	14%
To a fairly large extent	13%
To a very large extent	12%
Don't know/no answer	10%

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Within two years

Not at all	17%
To a fairly small extent	8%
Neither nor	20%
To a fairly large extent	26%
To a very large extent	16%
Don't know/no answer	13%

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

BASE: All (n=146)

∷novus

Production of technical information

novus

Potential for increased re-use of information

Question: To what extent would you be able to increase the re-use of information between different products if you had better system support for it?
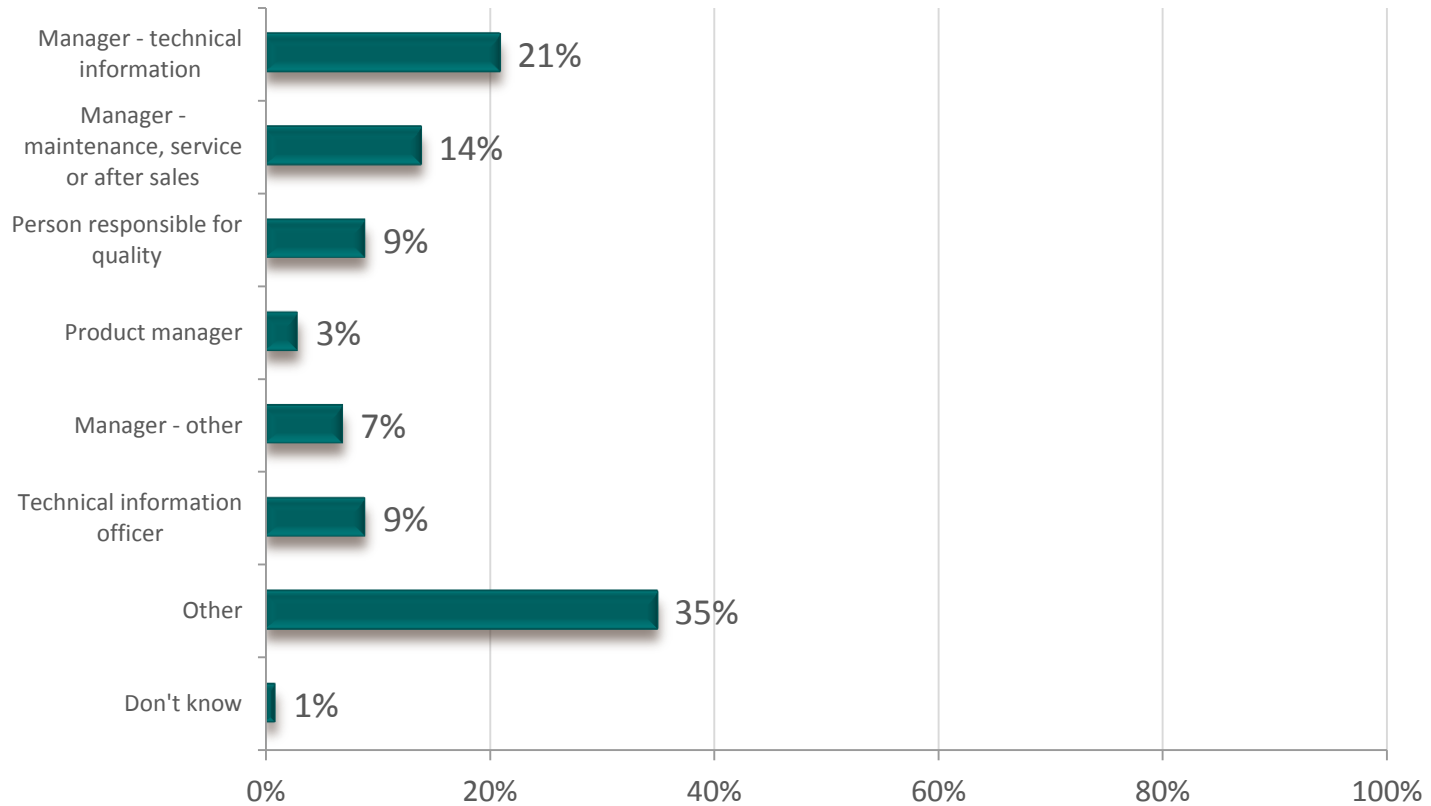

Category	Percentage
Not at all	13%
To a fairly small extent	10%
Neither nor	18%
To a fairly large extent	30%
To a very large extent	18%
Don't know/no answer	11%

BASE: All (n=146)

23

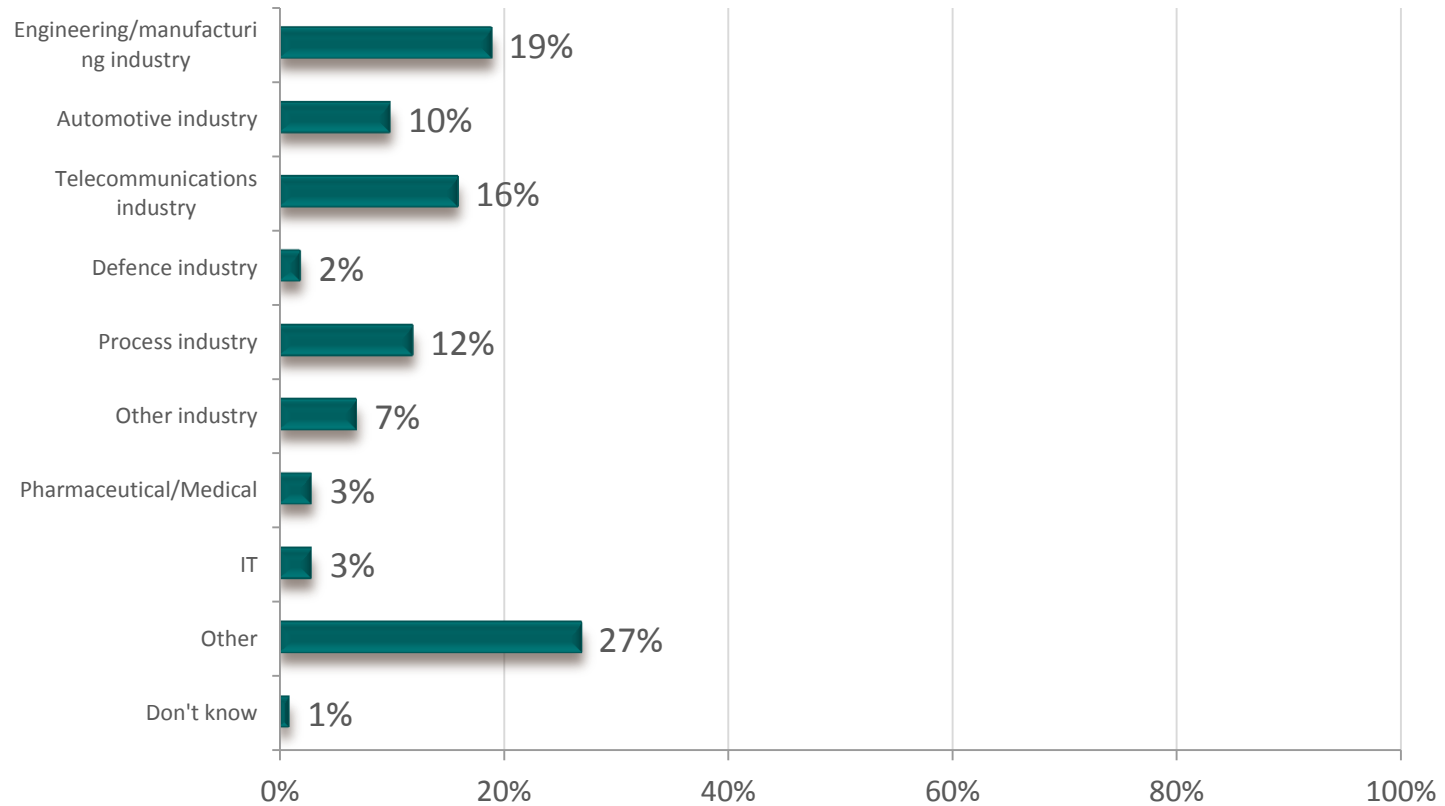novus
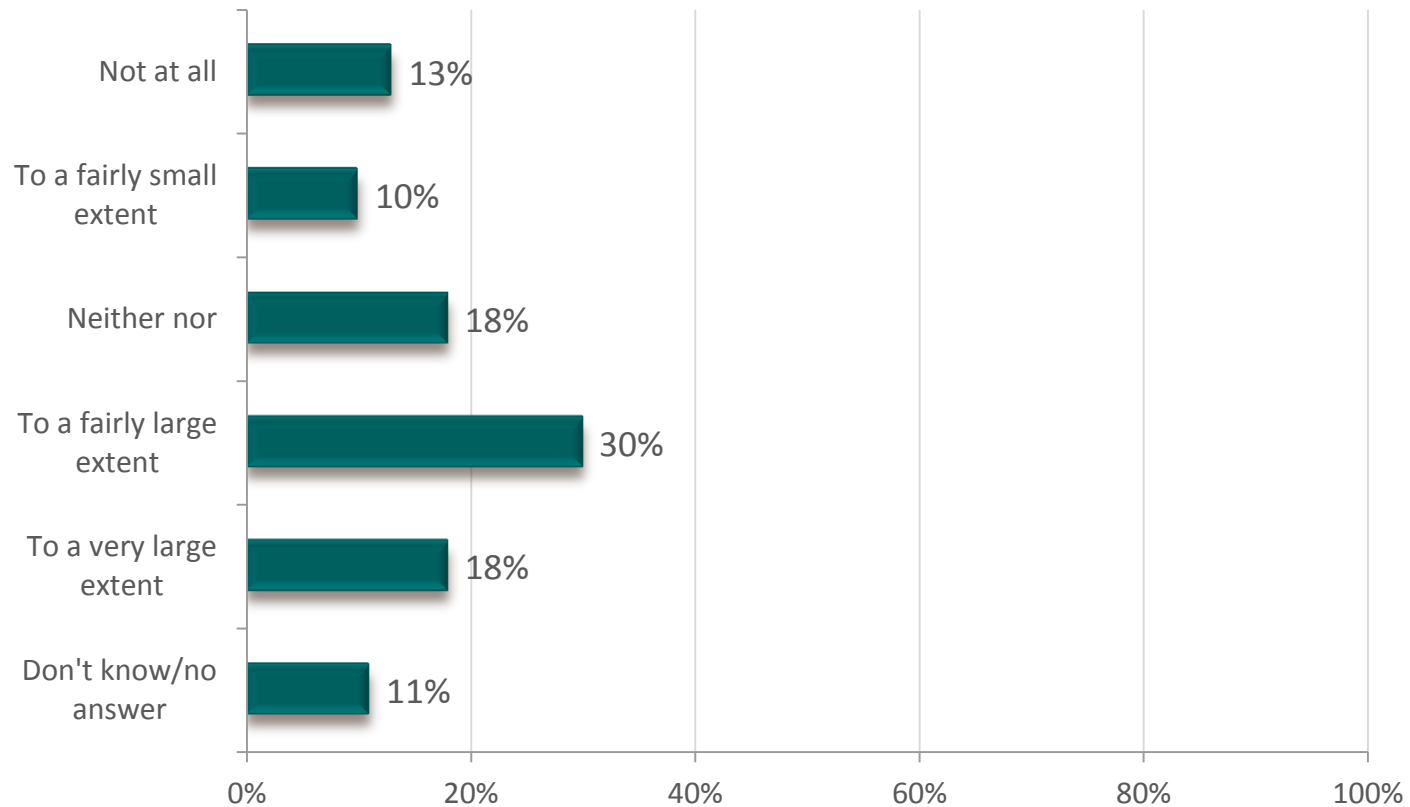
Background

Background information 1

Question: What is your main role in the company?

BASE: All (n=146)

novus

Background information 2

Question: In which industrial sector are you mainly active?

BASE: All (n=146)