2013 Millennial Workplace Trends Survey

Corporate America Begins to Solve the Millennial Paradox

When the Millennial generation first came to the workforce, they confounded Corporate America. First came the horror stories of helicopter parents attending job interviews. Then Millennials were vilified as tales of their outlandish bravado, lack of respect for authority and affinity for technology made business leaders wonder how they could tame this latest crop of workers. The generation's needs do not remotely resemble that of their predecessors which caused much consternation and chagrin.

What no one seemed to notice is that this type of outrage precedes every generation's rise to power. Whether it be Elvis' devilish dancing, the Flower Power generation's conscientious objections or even Generation X's self-aware malaise, it seems as though new generations' entry into the workforce always creates a stir from the old vanguard. This is because each generation has a common set of human needs – community and communication, in particular – that are uniquely shaped by their life experiences but are unknown to anyone outside of that age group. Millennials are no more spoiled or cantankerous than any other generation; they are just solving their basic needs of community and communication differently than anyone that has come before them.

Efficiency is at the heart of the majority of Millennials' perception gap. For instance, older generations scoff at Millennials' fascination with smart phones but ignore what the technology represents: an efficient means to satisfy community and communication needs. Young people have been raised with technology answering their every beck and call so this type of efficiency is sought after in the real world as well. A Millennial circumventing traditional hierarchy is likely searching for the quickest route to a solution rather than orchestrating a grand-scale mutiny. Companies must accommodate this mission for efficiency to ensure that they are creating a productive environment for their young workers.

Millennials now represent 25% of the workforce, and are shoving aside the policies and expectations that governed their parents and grandparents in favor of a workplace geared towards the efficient fulfillment of their emotional needs, not just financial ones. Smart companies like Apple, Google and Zappos have largely succeeded because of pioneering new business models that appealed to both older and younger generations. Now the gap is closing as more and more companies are equipping their workspaces with all of the tools and processes necessary to attract top young talent. In IdeaPaint's 2013 Millennial Workplace Trends report, we found that the business world has come a long way in making Millennials feel at home and now stand to reap the benefits of the most educated, most connected generation of our lifetime.

Methodology

A recent survey of 600 employed Millennials conducted by online survey services provider Survey Monkey was commissioned by IdeaPaint, the leader and innovator in workplace collaboration technology via its unique dry erase paint that transforms any smooth surface into an erasable canvas. The goal of the survey was to see if modern workplaces were tapping into the potential of their young talent by engaging in more collaborative ideation techniques or if they were leveraging more traditional business models.

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The data from the full report can be found on pages 5-10. Pages 2-4 feature some of the most meaningful highlights from the data.

Trend #1: Millennials Beginning to Find their Groove within Corporate America

One of the underrated attributes of Millennials is their unwavering optimism. This is why 68% of Millennials believe their company is innovative. There is likely some naiveté skewing this data as younger employees work at their first job in their career, but it is encouraging to see young people's belief in the mission and function of their employer. "*Talented People*" and "*Capable Leaders*" were the top reasons why Millennials believe their company is innovative so it is clear that the people part of the equation is being strongly addressed by today's companies.

But managers can only get you so far. The workplace environment has to be warm, open and inviting as well. Most companies are achieving this initiative as evidenced by our data:

- 68% of respondents feel as though they have an equal say during ideation meetings

- 65% agree or strongly agree with the following statement:
  "My company makes it easy for employees at all levels to share great ideas and take them to the next level"

- 61% of respondents answered yes to the following statement
  "I know about the innovation and new ideas percolating at my company."

- 50% said they contributed to the process

- 82% of respondents believe that brainstorming meetings are effective.

Trend #2: Advertising and Tech Companies Get it Right

Advertising and Technology companies were identified as the top industries for engaging Millennials. Both industries have established their appeal among Millennials through their creative and pragmatic sensibilities. Advertising and technology companies have attracted top-tier talent because it provides young people with a creative avenue to pursue professional endeavors. But the work will only get companies so far if they do not create an engaging environment. In PricewaterhouseCoopers report, "*Managing Tomorrow's People,*" Millennials expect to work hard and are drawn to organizations that offer an engaging, comfortable and stimulating atmosphere that creatively blends work and life.

Here are some areas where advertising companies are excelling:

- Roughly 70% of respondents believe their company is innovative because of talented people and innovative leaders.

- 77% of Millennials believe that their company makes it easy for them to share great ideas and take them to the next level.

- Less than 24% cite outdated collaboration practices as to why their company is not innovative – the lowest number across included industries.

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It would be easy for people to cite the technology industry's high rating from Millennials to the generation's fascination with the latest gadgetry. It certainly contributes to the 77% of Millennials that work at technology companies that believe their workplace is innovative. But, as in advertising, businesses within this industry are accommodating Millennials' unique needs. Consider these supporting statistics:

- 92% believe their company is innovative because of talented people.

- Technology was the highest ranked industry that is equipped to handle spontaneous collaboration between colleagues (85%).

- Technology companies are allowing Millennials to play a major part in their ongoing innovation efforts. This is evidenced by 63% of respondents indicating that they contributed to their company's latest product or service.

Trend #3: Education is a Millennial Laggard

As with anything, if there are leaders there must be laggards. Educational institutions received the lowest percentage of Millennial employees who thought their company was innovative (55%). While this score isn't dreadful, the numbers around collaboration begin to tell a difficult story:

- 46% of polled Millennials employed at educational institutions believe their organization is not innovative because of outdated collaboration practices.

- More than half of respondents either do not agree or strongly disagree with the notion that academic institutions make it easy for ideas to be shared and take them to the next level.

- The industry scored the lowest (65%) in using brainstorm meetings as the primary means to generate big ideas. Education institutions place an emphasis on focus work as opposed to more collaborative ideation techniques that are viewed more favorably by Millennials.

- Education's highly regimented structure is hurting its image amongst young workers as well. Only 56% believe that academic institutions were capable of supporting spontaneous collaboration, the lowest of any industry included.

- Hierarchy is also a problem as the industry ranked dead last in engaging Millennials for new ideas within their company (56%).

Trend #4: Surprise! Millennials Prefer Interpersonal Communication over Tech

There is no doubt that Millennials are a tech savvy bunch that love to text, Tweet and practically do everything from their mobile device. However, when you look beyond the "*All they do is stare into their phones*" rhetoric a new trend emerges: Millennials' obsession with efficiency. The on-demand generation has been granted the ability to gain access to anything the like, the moment they want it. This ultra-busy generation places a premium on time and will opt for the clearest road to completion for their work tasks. This is why it was no shock to us that **Millennials prefer interpersonal collaboration techniques to any other method.**

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When asked to describe their ideal collaboration scenario, Millennials identified several key traits:

- 90% prefer in-person meetings over conference calls.

- 74% of respondents prefer to collaborate in small groups to generate big ideas. This satisfies the age group's sense of community but also helps ensure that everyone's ideas are heard within a meeting.

- Despite this need for personal connections, only half of Millennials surveyed believe that their company emphasizes such interactions.

Confused? We aren't. Face-to-face meetings are the best way to get things done. Rather than wasting endless cycles hashing through complex problems in an email thread, employees can simply talk through these items in a fraction of the time. Rather than stuffy, scheduled collaboration sessions, research from furniture maker Knoll shows that Millennials like quick, casual and socially-tinged meetings. Their use of technology in interaction further undermines the importance of lengthy meetings and formal spaces. More so than any other generation, Millennials thoroughly understand the many collaboration options available to them and are choosing the tool that helps them work through a problem the quickest.

Trend #5: Companies Need to Up Their Game to Attract and Retain Millennial Talent

It would be easy for corporations to puff out their chests and think that they have solved the Millennial problem, but there is still significant room for improvement. For one, almost a third of respondents, 32 percent, did not believe their company was innovative. Here are the top reasons why:

- 49% believe poor management is dragging their company down.

- 45% state that the lack or misuse of technology solution is to blame.

- Close to 38% feel that outdated collaboration processes hinder their company's innovation.

There is also a disconnect between companies moving from ideas to action. The key culprit? According to Millennials, the traditional brainstorm meeting. Only a little over half (54 percent) of respondents felt that their company "*has established a simple process to easily convert good ideas from a brainstorm into a productive outcome.*" Brainstorming does have its advantages within specific contexts but are certainly not a "*one-size-fits all*" solution to innovation. In particular, Millennials felt as though these types of meetings "do not give everyone a voice" and "*lack spontaneity.*"

Innovative technologies like IdeaPaint can democratize the ideation process and help companies extract innovation from every corner of the workplace. When everyone is empowered with a marker and room to contribute on an Idea Wall, an unspoken freedom is unleashed within the room. The possibilities are endless and ideas flow naturally as team members generate creative solutions to customer problems that lead to new products and revenue streams.
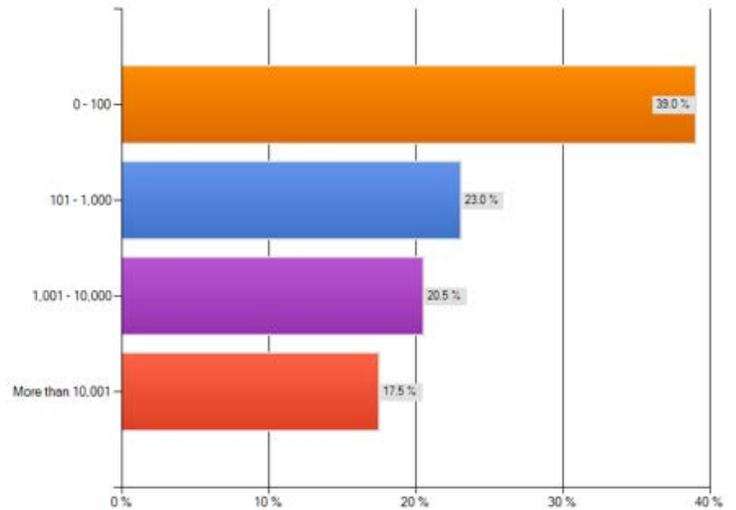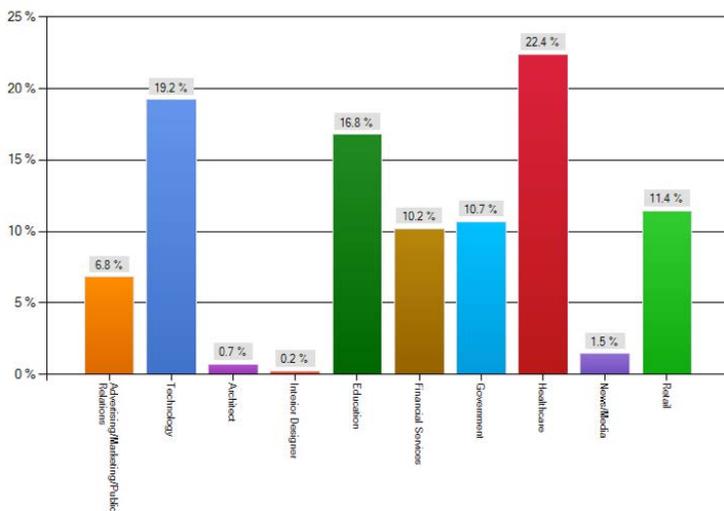
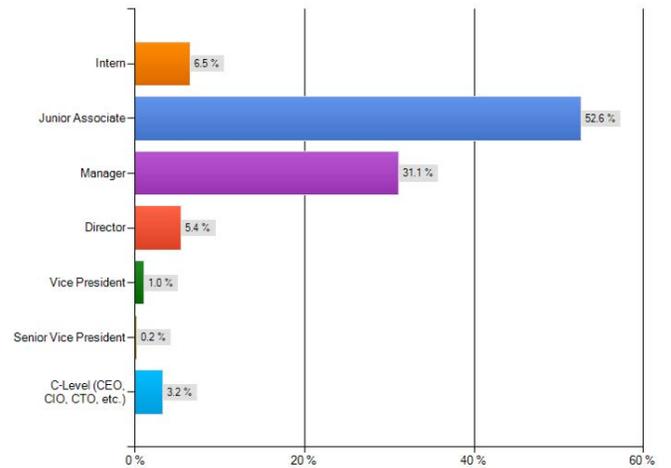# 2013 Millennial Workplace Trends Survey

What is your gender?

Male
Female

46.8 %
53.2 %
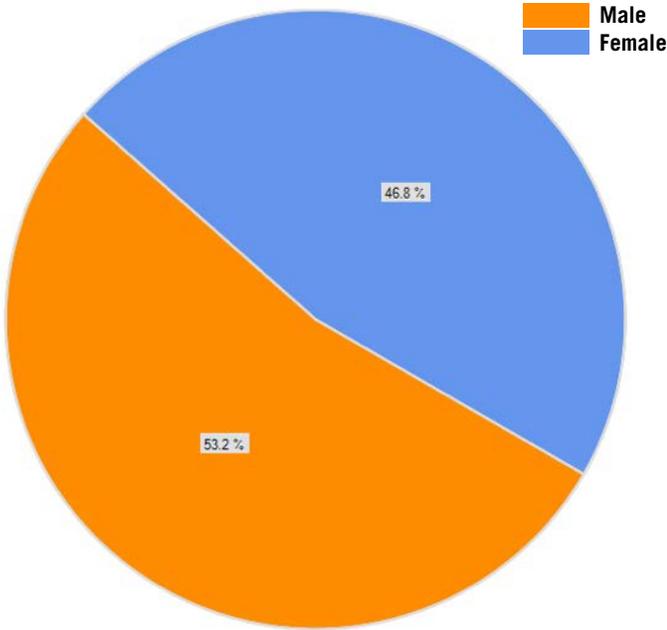
How many employees does your organization have?

0 - 100	39.0 %
101 - 1,000	23.0 %
1,001 - 10,000	20.5 %
More than 10,001	17.5 %

What job title best describes your role in your organization?

Advertising/Marketing/Public Relations — 6.8 %
Technology — 19.2 %
Architect — 0.7 %
Interior Designer — 0.2 %
Education — 16.8 %
Financial Services — 10.2 %
Government — 10.7 %
Healthcare — 22.4 %
News/Media — 1.5 %
Retail — 11.4 %

What is your Industry?

Intern	6.5 %
Junior Associate	52.6 %
Manager	31.1 %
Director	5.4 %
Vice President	1.0 %
Senior Vice President	0.2 %
C-Level (CEO, CIO, CTO, etc.)	3.2 %

Technology   **Advertising / Marketing / PR**
Education
Healthcare
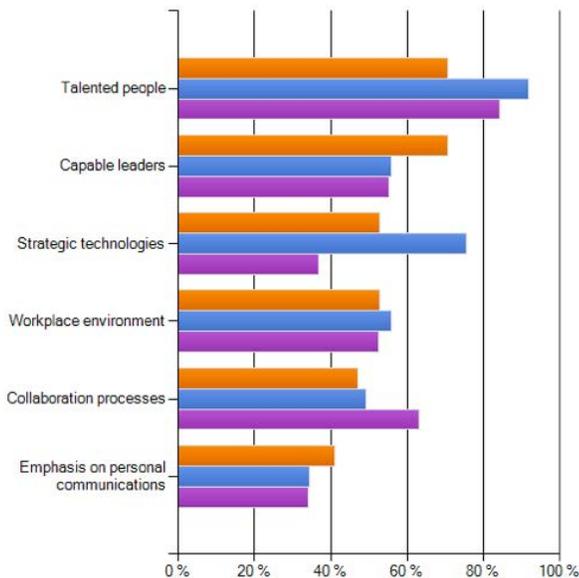
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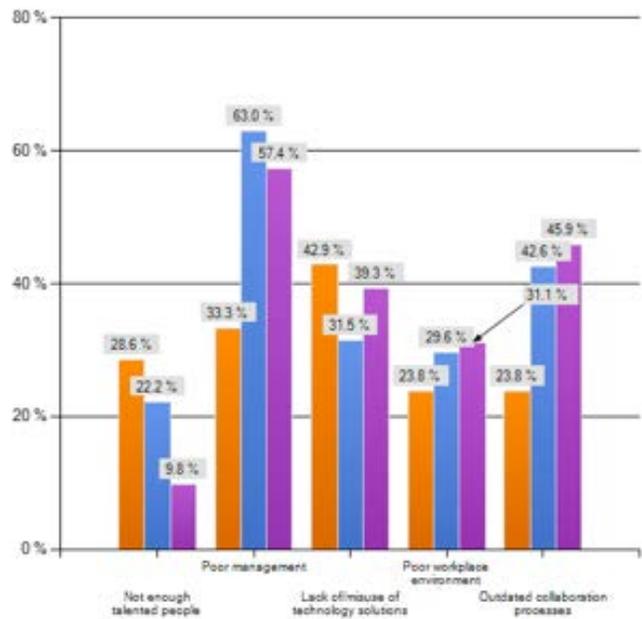**I would characterize employee morale at my company as:**
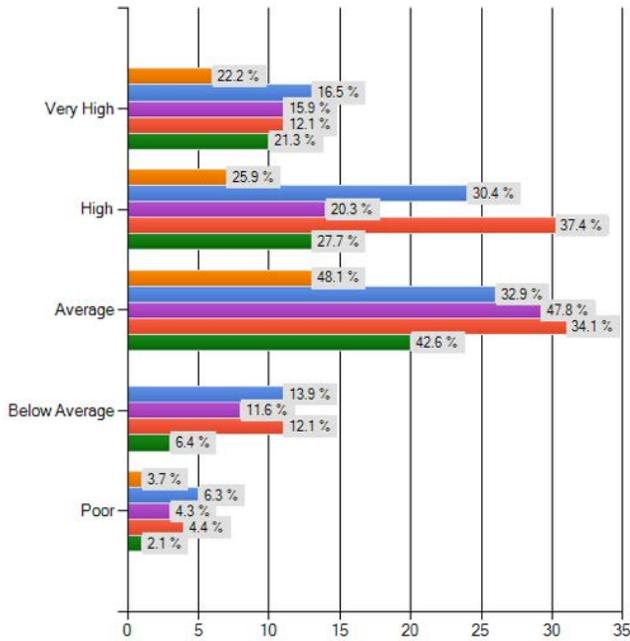
Do you believe that your company is innovative?
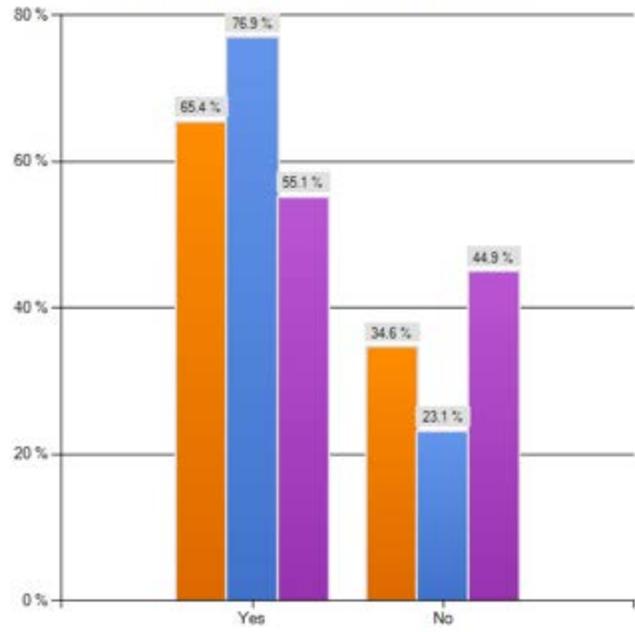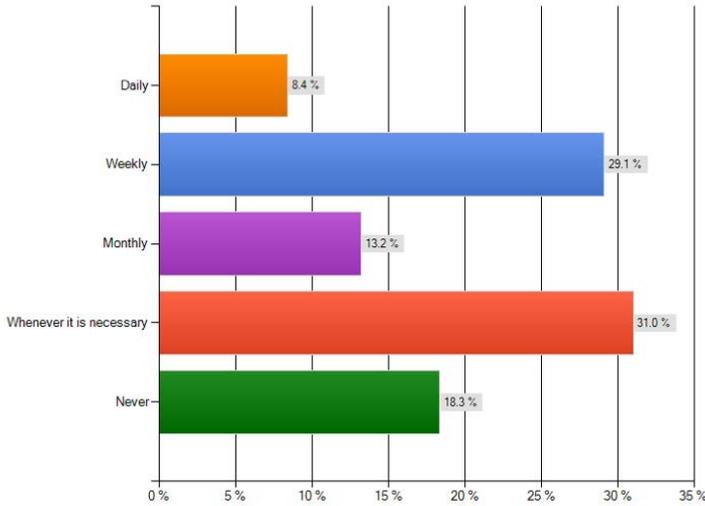

Why do you believe your company is innovative?

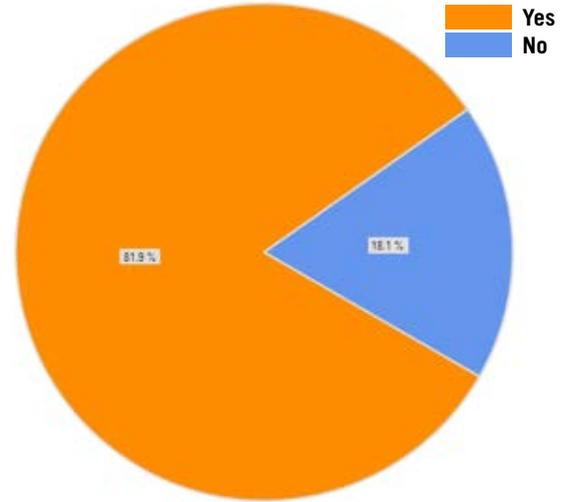**Why don't you believe your company is innovative?**

Legend:
- **Retail** (green)
- **Technology** (blue)
- **Education** (purple)
- **Healthcare** (red)
- **Advertising / Marketing / PR** (orange)

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How often do your teams hold brainstorming meetings?

Daily — 8.4 %
Weekly — 29.1 %
Monthly — 13.2 %
Whenever it is necessary — 31.0 %
Never — 18.3 %

Do you think brainstorming meetings are effective?

Yes — 81.9 %
No — 18.1 %

Why aren't brainstorming meetings effective?

Do not give everyone a voice — 29.2 %
Take too long — 37.5 %
Cannot convert good ideas to excellent deliverables — 63.5 %
Takes Place within a finite time and place — 25.0 %
Too formal — 32.3 %
Lack spontaneity — 35.4 %
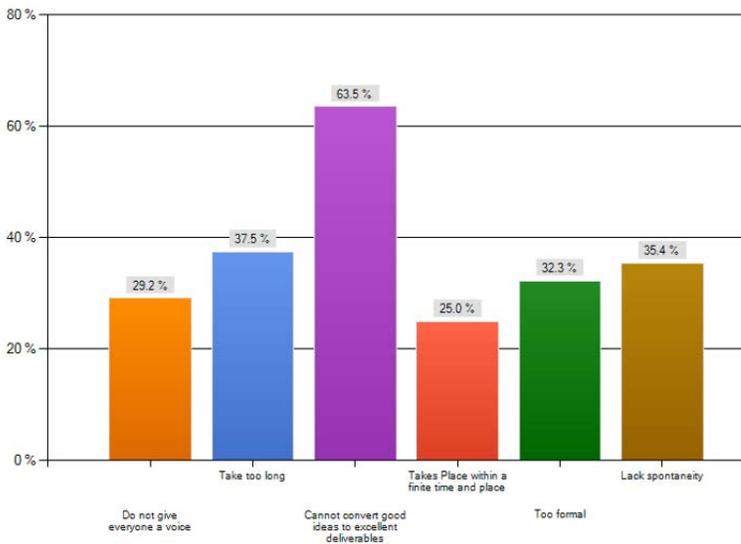
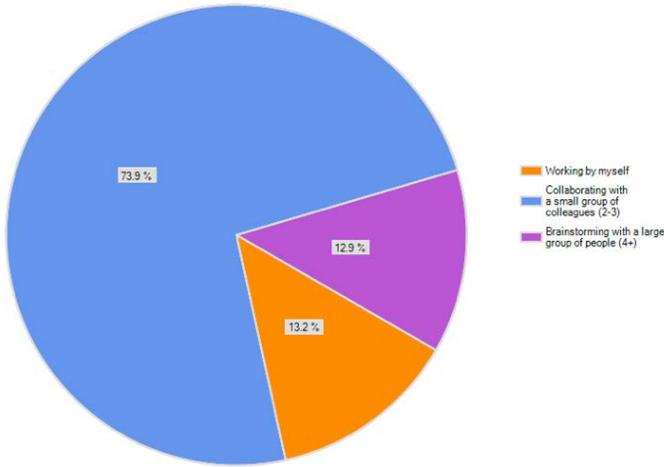**Please state how much you agree with statement:**
"My company primarily relies on brainstorming meetings to generate big ideas."

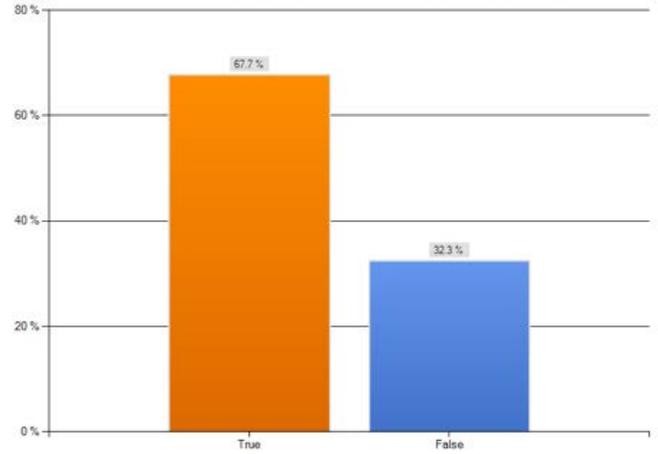Strongly Agree / Agree / Do Not Agree / Strongly Disagree

Retail
Technology
Education
Healthcare
Advertising / Marketing / PR

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Please complete this statement:
"My favorite way to generate big ideas is..."

- Working by myself
- Collaborating with a small group of colleagues (2-3)
- Brainstorming with a large group of people (4+)

73.9 %
12.9 %
13.2 %

True or False:
"I feel as though I have an equal say during ideation meetings."

67.7 %
32.3 %
True
False

True or False
"I prefer In-Person meetings over conference calls."

True
False

90.4 %
9.6 %
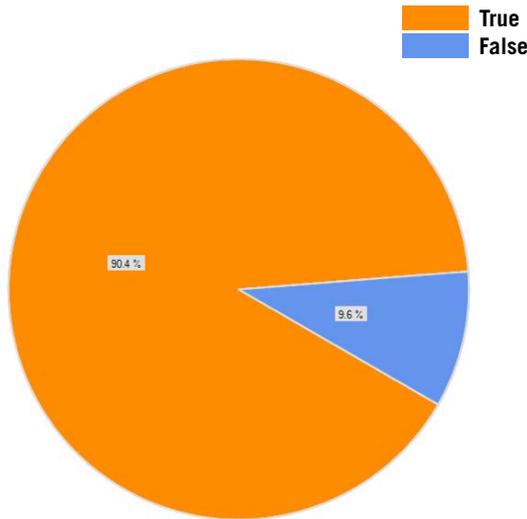
True or False
"My workplace is equipped to enable spontaneous collaboration."

69.2 %
84.9 %
56.1 %
30.8 %
15.1 %
43.9 %
True
False

Technology
Education
Advertising / Marketing / PR

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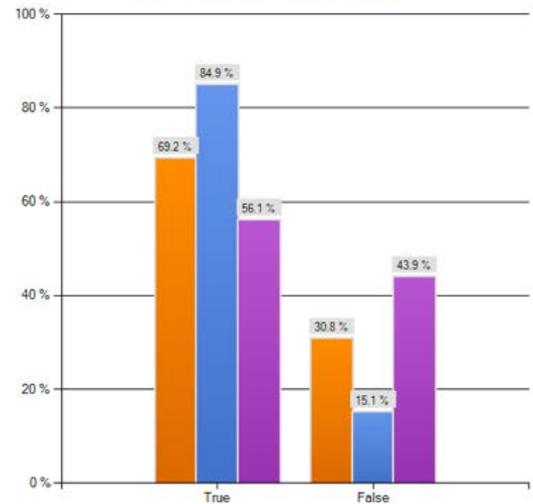
**What percentage of your ideation meetings are planned?**
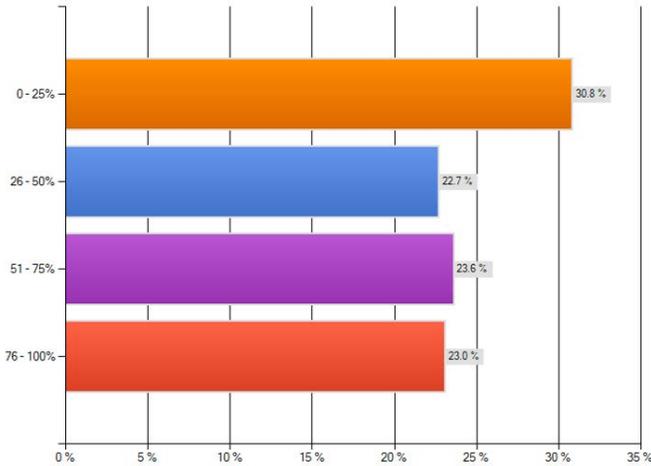
Please state how much you agree with this statement:
"My company has established a simple process to easily convert good ideas from a brainstorm into a productive outcome (i.e. new product, service or process)."
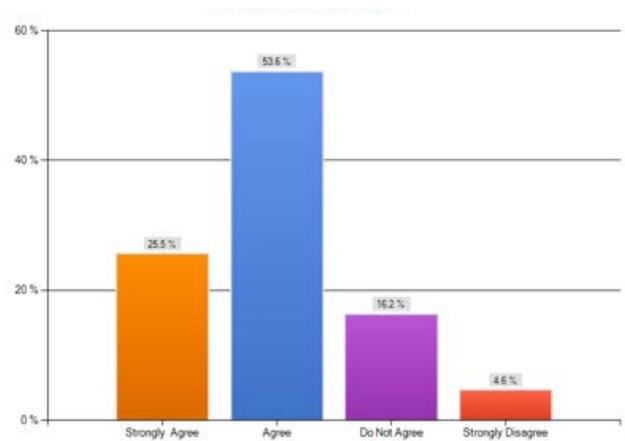

0 - 25% — 30.8 %
26 - 50% — 22.7 %
51 - 75% — 23.6 %
76 - 100% — 23.0 %

Strongly Agree: 23.1 %, 15.1 %, 10.6 %
Agree: 46.2 %, 42.5 %, 27.3 %
Do Not Agree: 47.0 %, 23.1 %, 21.9 %
Strongly Disagree: 20.5 %, 7.7 %, 15.2 %
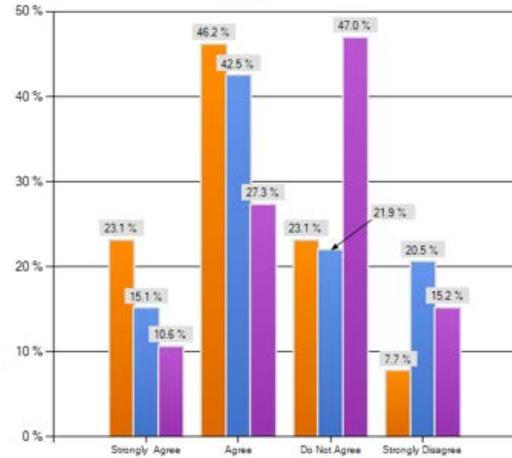
From 0%-100%
"My company is able to turn the following percentage of good ideas into productive outcomes (i.e. new product, service or process)"
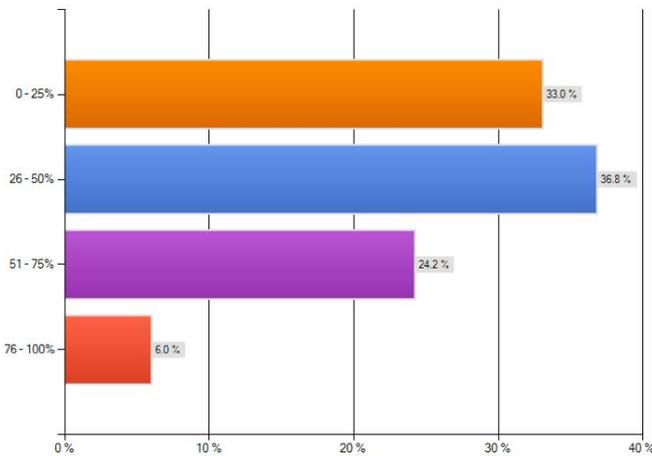
Please state how much you agree with this statement:
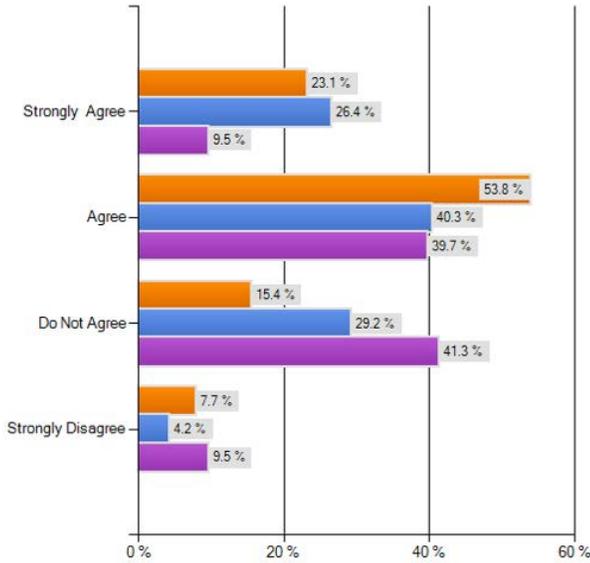"My company emphasizes face-to-face interactions when collaborating."

0 - 25% — 33.0 %
26 - 50% — 36.8 %
51 - 75% — 24.2 %
76 - 100% — 6.0 %

Strongly Agree — 25.5 %
Agree — 53.6 %
Do Not Agree — 16.2 %
Strongly Disagree — 4.6 %

Technology
Education
Healthcare
Advertising / Marketing / PR

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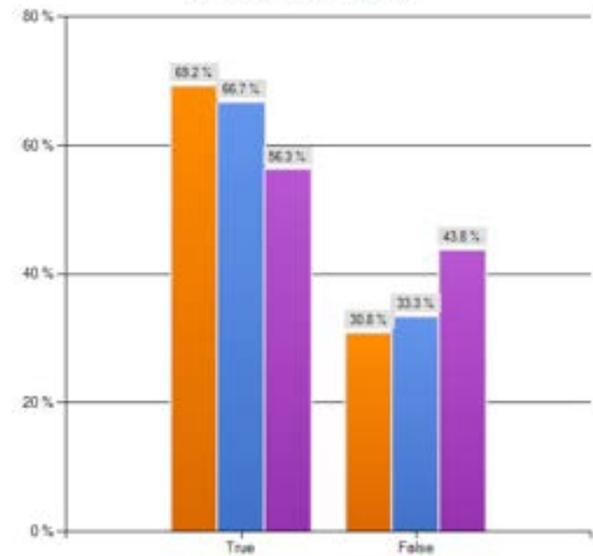
ideapaint™

Please state how much you agree with this statement:
"My company makes it easy for employees at all levels to share great ideas and take them to the next level."
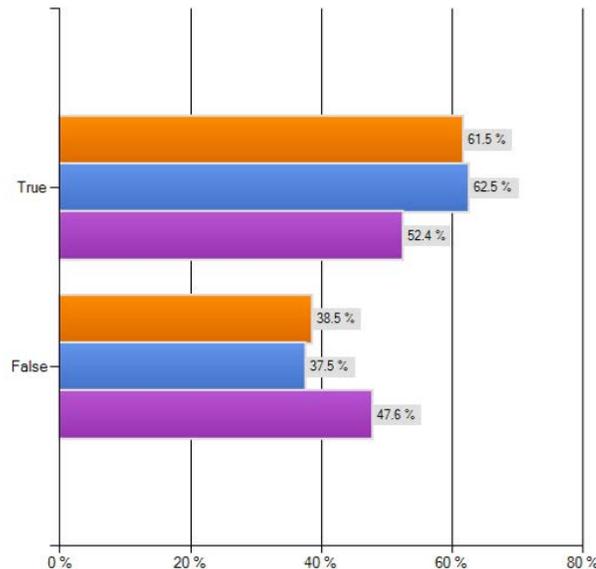

Strongly Agree
- 23.1 %
- 26.4 %
- 9.5 %

Agree
- 53.8 %
- 40.3 %
- 39.7 %

Do Not Agree
- 15.4 %
- 29.2 %
- 41.3 %

Strongly Disagree
- 7.7 %
- 4.2 %
- 9.5 %

True or False:
"I know about the innovation and new ideas percolating at my company."

True
- 69.2 %
- 66.7 %
- 56.3 %

False
- 30.8 %
- 33.3 %
- 43.8 %

True or False:
"The last time my company launched a new product, service or offering, I contributed to the process in some way."

True
- 61.5 %
- 62.5 %
- 52.4 %

False
- 38.5 %
- 37.5 %
- 47.6 %

Technology
Education
Advertising / Marketing / PR