

The ERA

**Executive Research
Survey 2019**

Results



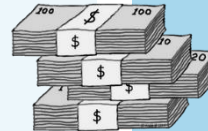
The ERA carried out this survey among its membership early in 2019. In total 39 research professionals responded to the survey. The findings are summarised in this report.



The services offered most widely are full research or search process to candidate shortlist. Market Mapping and Competitor Intelligence are also offered.

Most participants charge clients on a day rate or fixed price basis.

Only 15% charge a percentage of a placed candidate's salary or remuneration.



There is a very wide range of day rates charged – from £130 to £2000. Those surveyed were asked what was their minimum rate and the average of these was £429.

Of those who commented, over 70% say Brexit has not yet had an impact on business. However, there is evidence that EU-based candidates are increasingly nervous about considering a move to the UK



Major changes in the last five years are reduced timescales for projects and the increased use for search of a range of social media platforms including LinkedIn.

51% of respondents have a database, 49% do not.

The biggest challenges impacting business are ever more demanding clients and the rise of in-house teams, coupled with demands on research providers resources (time and resource).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the nature of those surveyed, the ERA emerged as the most used source of information for research professionals.

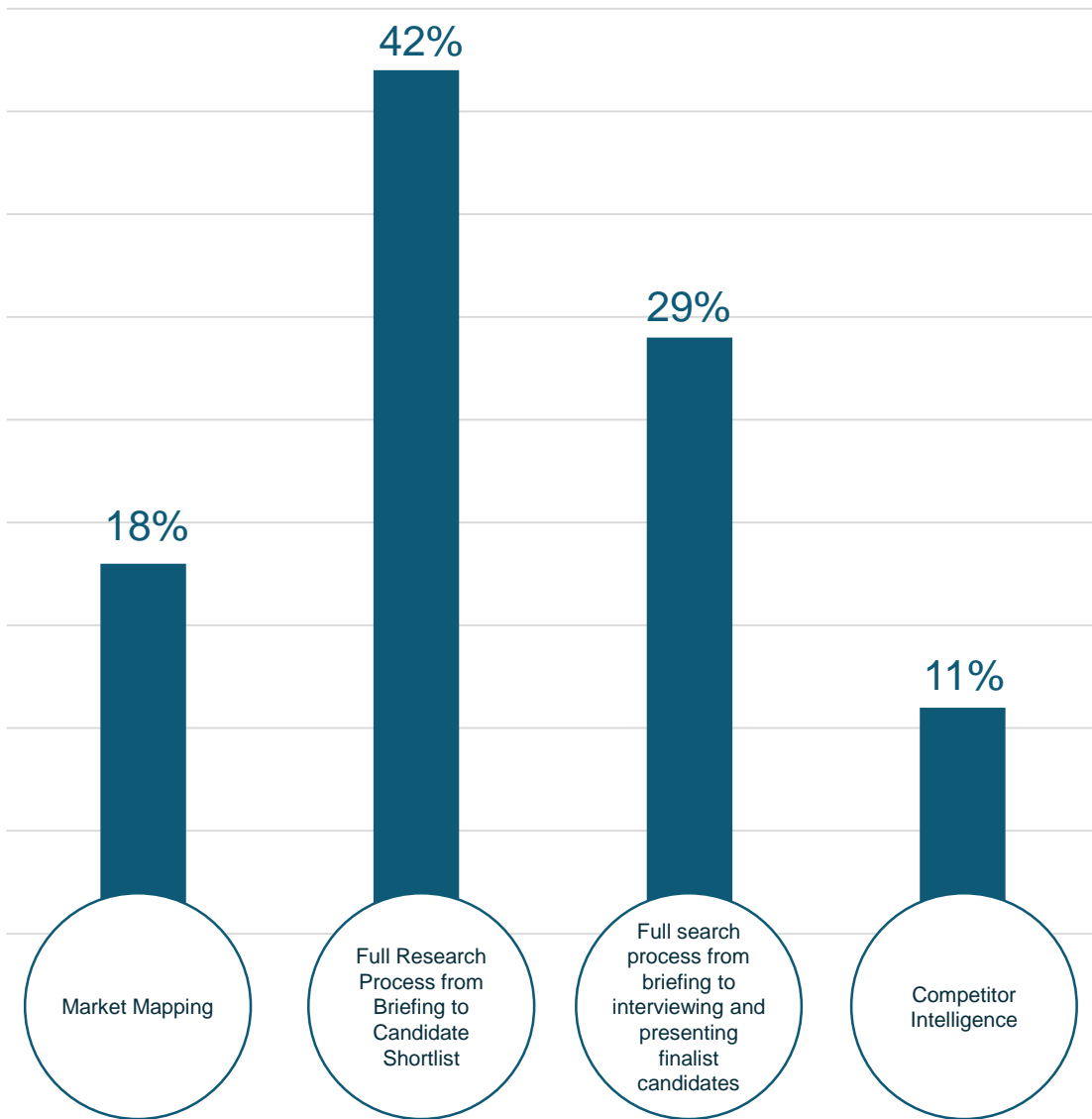


The ERA is the Global Forum for Talent Intelligence and Insight professionals.

<https://theera.org>



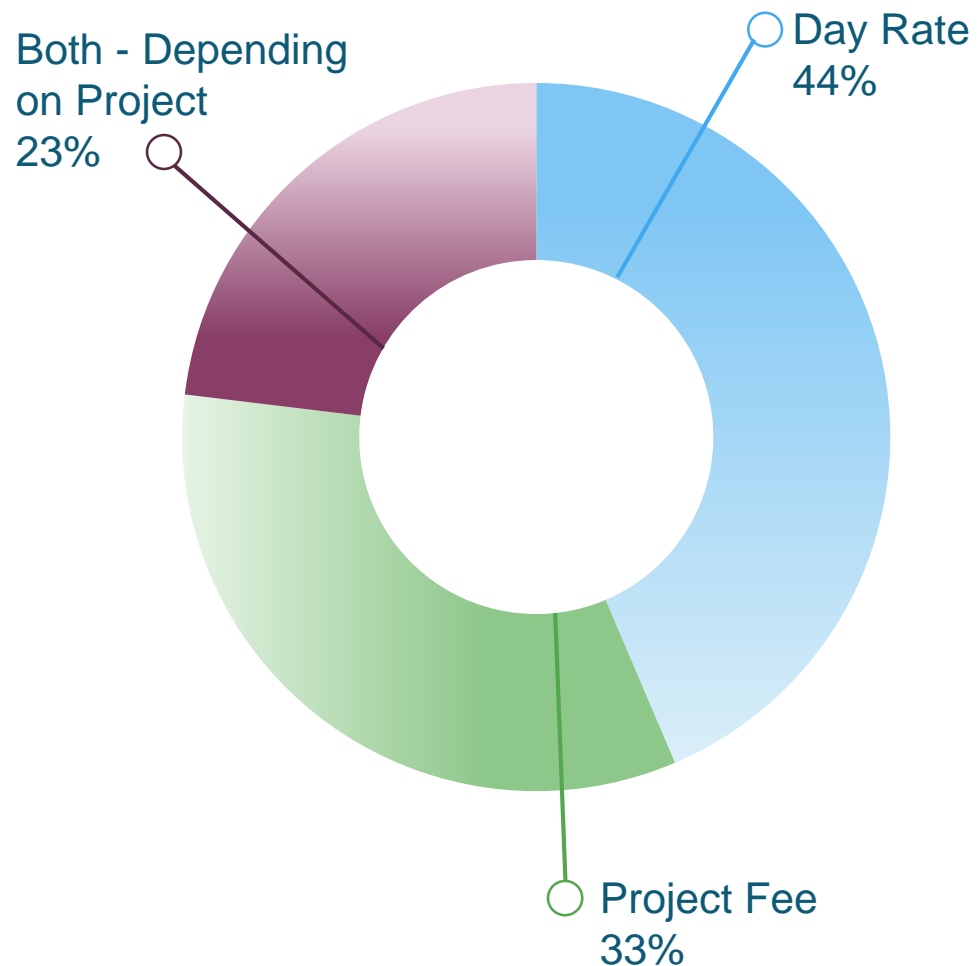
SERVICES OFFERED



Also Mentioned

Mentioned Twice			
Client Satisfaction Surveys	Salary Surveys or Benchmarking		
Mentioned once			
Assessments	Career Counselling	Coaching	Best Practice Consulting
Insights	Leadership Development	Learning and Development	Panel Interviews
	Talent Pipelining	Training	

How do Research providers charge for services?



Do you charge a percentage of compensation?



If so what is the percentage? (six responses)

25%	25%	30%
30% of first year's full cash compensation	Variable, if applicable	Typically a fixed research fee, offset with search fee if appointment made (20% cash basic or total comp)

Do you charge more for international searches?



If you ask for an upfront payment, how much typically is required and when do you charge for it? (12 responses)

€2,000 up front	£400-£2,000 plus VAT up front	We would extend the search time period	€2,000 upon signing of contract	Occasionally I charge more for international esp if utilising language skills	1/3 at start
Same fee but expense the flights/accommodation for interviews	Yes - at start of project - typically 50%	Some times as for £500 preparation fee for Learning and Development projects. Charge phone calls on international projects.	Don't really do international - but would always charge for overseas phone calls	Negotiable	2 days at the start

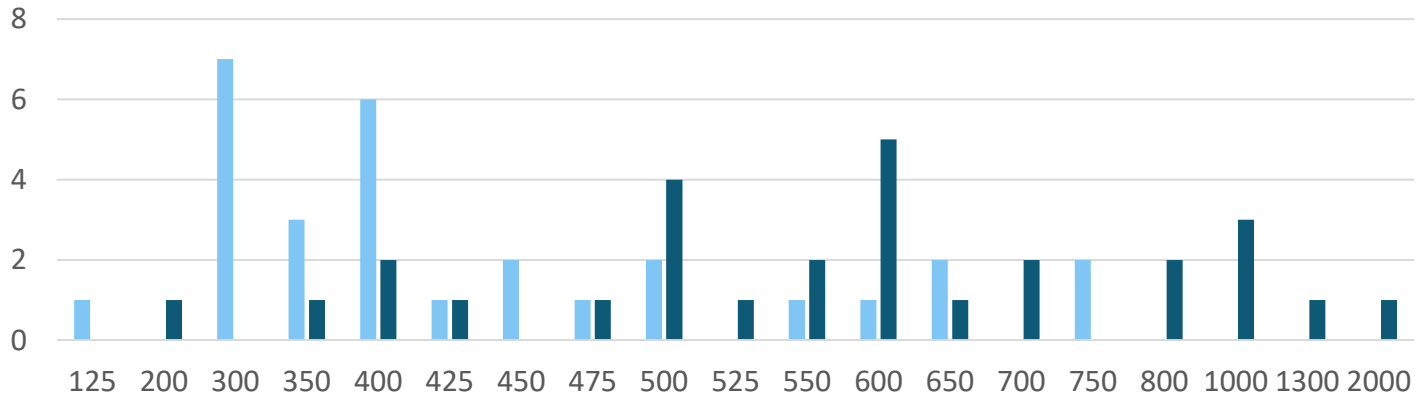
Do you offer discount for repeat business?



Average Day Rates

Average of all Minimum Day Rates **£429** | Average of all Maximum Day Rates **£658**

■ Minimum Day Rate by Frequency ■ Maximum Day Rate by Frequency



Full table of responses

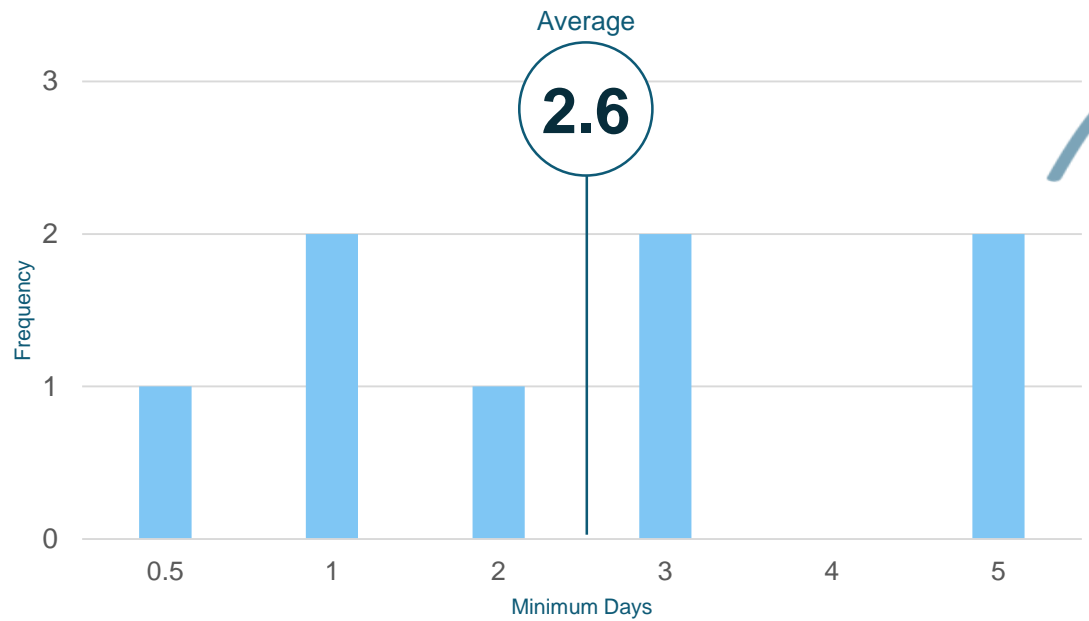
Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	
130	200	400	600	Freelance
300	350	400	800	Research Firm
300	400	430	430	Freelance
300	480	450	600	Research Firm
300	500	450	650	Research Firm
300	600	475	700	Freelance
300	600	500	500	Research Firm
300	600	500	1000	Research Firm
345	690	550	550	Freelance
350	400	600	800	Research Firm
350	550	650	860	Freelance
400	400	650	1300	Research Firm
400	500	750	1000	Research Firm
400	500	750	2000	Search Firm
400	520			Research Firm

MINIMUM DAYS WORKED

Do you have a minimum number of days you would work?



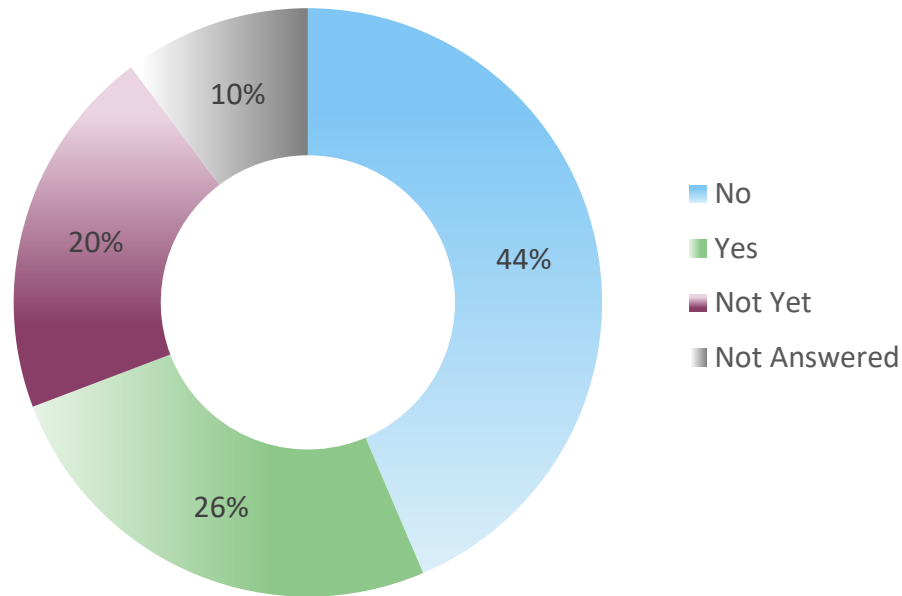
If yes what is the minimum number of days you would work on a project?



All of those charging a day rate said between 0.5 and 5 days if they required a minimum. There were two additional responses saying at least 20-30 days at a minimum, and both of these respondents charged by project fees:

- “For a piece of search work we require a four week window and believe that six days over that period is average of research time. The interviewing process is additional to this.”
- “30.”

Has Brexit Affected your Search/Research Business?



No, we work in the public sector and they have to keep working.	We are constantly aware of it as are our clients. We have not noticed a downturn in international clients which might have been a possibility.
We lost some of our UK clients due to uncertainty.	Some of European clients (Germany) have not had as much work in the UK as previously.
Yes re decision making re starting research projects and attracting European candidates into UK roles.	Yes - less certainty from clients.
Yes, candidates not wanting to move from Europe to UK for work.	Yes as candidates in Europe are reluctant to relocate.
Slightly slower.	Slightly, some candidates and clients waiting to see what happens, others moving quickly beforehand.
We are still conducting the same amount of projects but have additionally undertaken feasibility studies for international businesses wanting to relocate the operation outside the UK.	Some reluctance from EU mainland candidates to consider relocating their families to the UK. Where the role is internationally focused some clients have offered contracts from their offices in Benelux Region - but it has proved more difficult to persuade candidates to relocate to the UK over the past 18 months.
General slowdown in the economy. For international searches, particularly in Europe, candidates don't want to move. And anyone who needs to relocate for a post is not considering this as house prices have stalled.	Not to date but I do have some European clients so it may do so in the future. It has affected candidate willingness to move to the UK.
Not really but we are sure it will.	Not currently but who knows when we reach the outcome.

Thinking about advancements in technology, social media etc do you think deliverables have changed over the last 5 years?



Responses have been broadly categorised as follows:

Shorter Timescales
Working methods
Client Expectations
Market Intelligence
Other

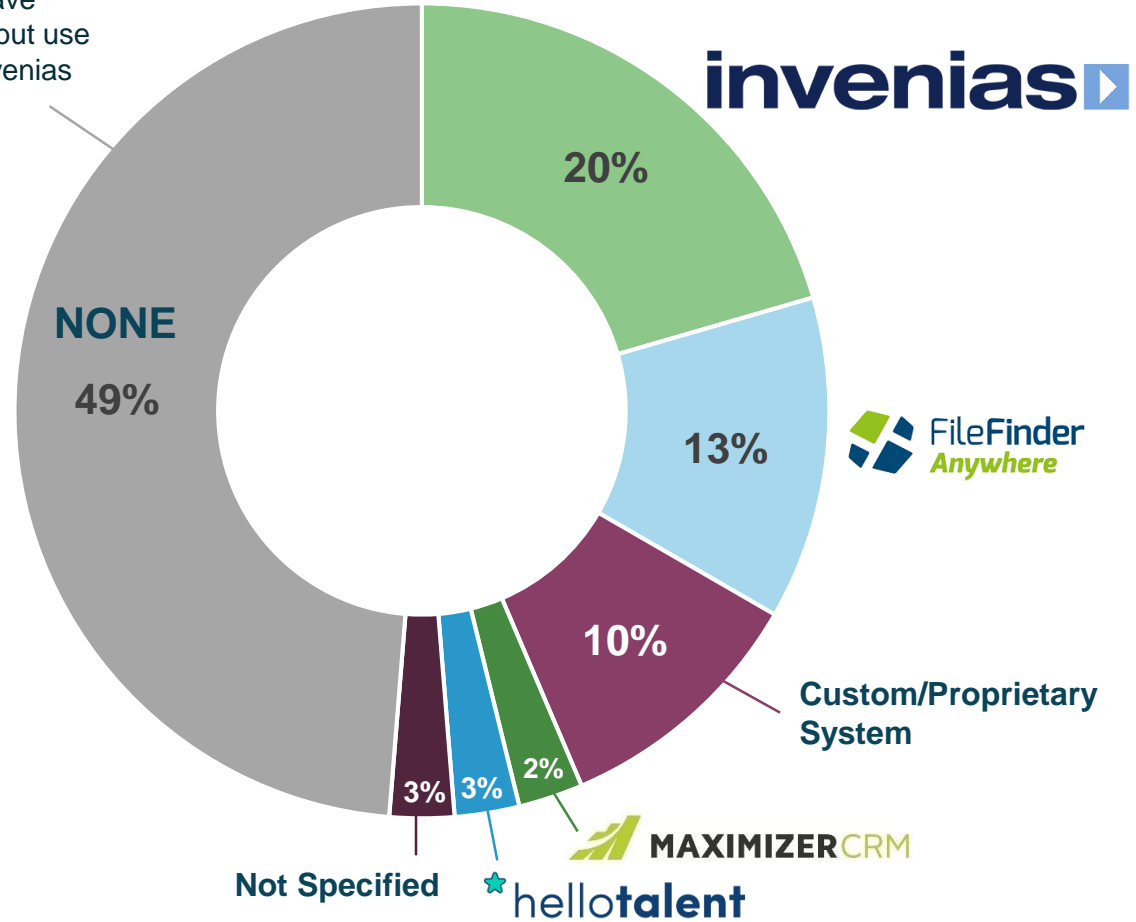
Almost half (48%) mention that they are now expected to be able to deliver results more quickly.

Six mention that the way candidates are sourced has changed – with social media much more information is available online.

Clients expect quicker service and wider reach	Shorter timescales
Probably clients think you can deliver quicker with what's available. Especially with technology.	Time from taking brief to presenting shortlist is now much shorter
Quicker and more comprehensive work is required	Clients expect to get a result more quickly as do we.
Timelines shorter. Full suite of research tools being neglected.	Expected to do it even faster
Results expected faster	Mainly in terms of speed of deliverables.
Clients expect quicker service though the decision processes on the corporate side take longer.	Expectations have increased and time scales have reduced
Expectation for quicker delivery. Many firms just database or LinkedIn trawling.	What does change is the tools we are using - e.g. contacting people via DM or Twitter.
Clients understand what is on the SM profiles, no more need for "old skool" resumes.	Far more available in terms of online profiles for desk research.
The way talent is sourced, contacted and the output/reports clients expect.	It is expected that a researcher is able to find out a lot about a candidate before contacting the candidate, through LinkedIn, web searches etc.
More sources of information.	Clients are more demanding and less loyal than they were
Clients want less information more quickly. They like client portals (e.g. via Invenias) and quick reports but still want the insight and judgement on candidates. Some want short video interviews to help screen candidates. I use skype quite a lot for interviews.	Clients assume it must be easier with linked in etc. and feel they can be even more demanding and specific than ever!
It is about market intelligence and not just about finding people.	When anyone can find people due to social media, we focus on the quality of the information, the market trends, the advocating piece and the support given to candidates during and post placement.
Better report presentation and graphics.	Pay has risen, especially in the US
MNCs have their own sourcing team predominantly based in China (lower cost cities like Suzhou which is near to Shanghai for example), India and Philippines. They are trained to find candidates through sourcing channels like LinkedIn. Even if the candidate is not visible on LinkedIn, a good Trainer Sourcer would be able to find that elusive candidate by eliciting the right questions from a referral angle. In addition Agency Recruiters and their Researchers can too leverage on LinkedIn as a platform. Increasingly the talent mapping landscape is facing challenges from both in-house talent acquisition team and also agency Recruiters who know how to leverage on social media platform recruitment.	

Do you have a Database, if yes which?

2 said they do not have their own Database but use clients' access to Invenias and Filefinder





Do you offer a client portal?



If yes, what is your client's feedback on using the portal?

"We use Hellotalent, they love it."

"Not very good."

"They are never used as much as the clients say they will. Some concerns re security, mean less take up."

"Give the client individuality."

"The clients of my client who uses Invenias do like the portal."

"Very positive. Gives them access real time to searches. We can add information into the portal e.g. documents which means that the data remains with us and protects our clients from a GDPR compliance point of view. Clients can also interact with us via the portal giving feedback as the search progresses."

As a researcher do you have access to your client's portal?



Do you conduct client satisfaction surveys?



If yes, do you do them yourself or via a 3rd party?

"Myself."

"No."

"Directly."

"No -we do them in house."

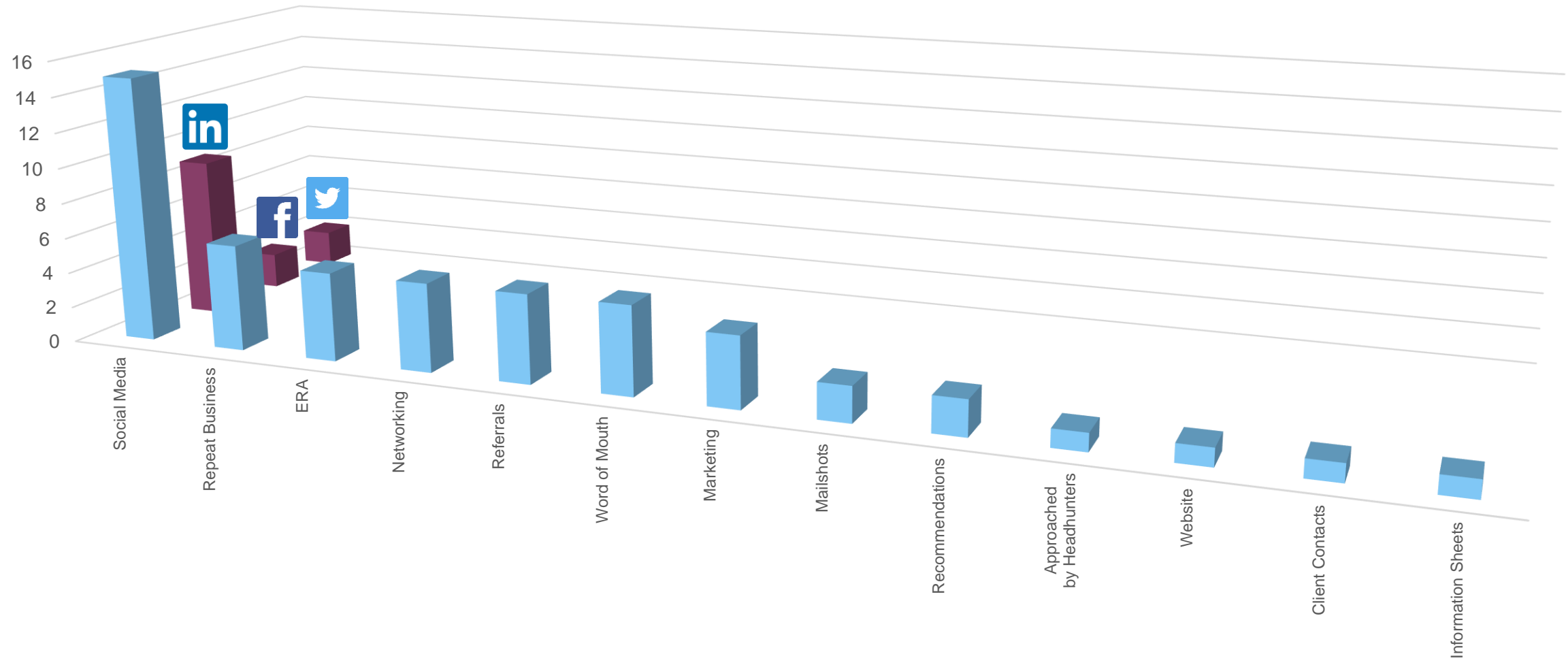
"We conduct them."

"Survey Monkey."

"I am the third party for a major international search firm and a Tech boutique search firm."

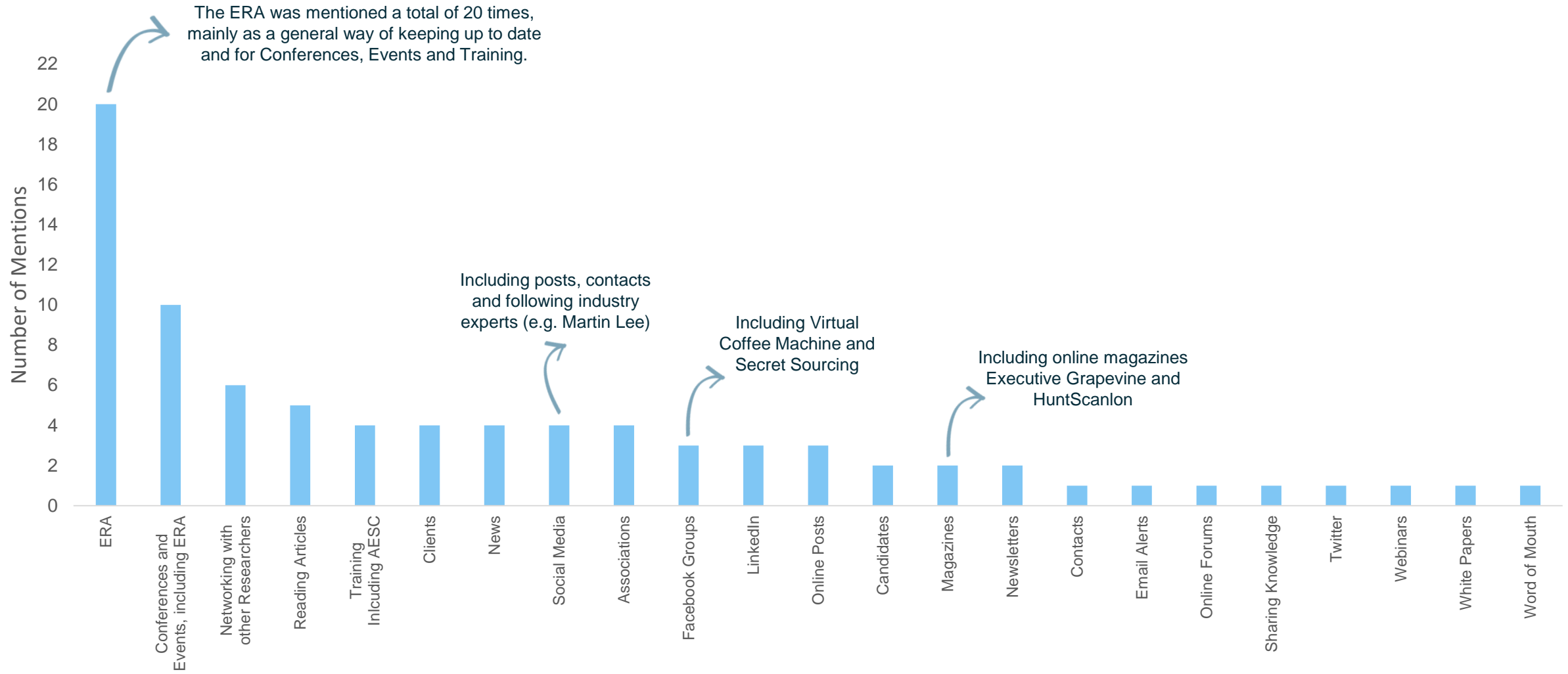
What tools do you use to promote your business?

Do you have a website?





How do you keep up to date with developments in the profession?



What are the biggest challenges you face in your business?

Top Challenges

26% said Clients were an issue

Either due to higher expectations or the rise of in-house sourcing and recruitment teams.

26% said Workflow was an issue

Either time and resource management or balancing upcoming work to avoid a 'feast or famine' situation.

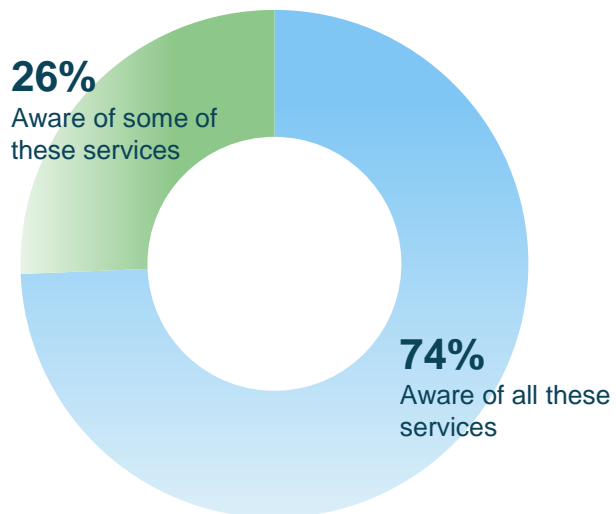
Other

Other challenges that were mentioned more than once include difficulty hiring good researchers, pricing being set too low, keeping up with technology, and difficulty finding and contacting candidates.

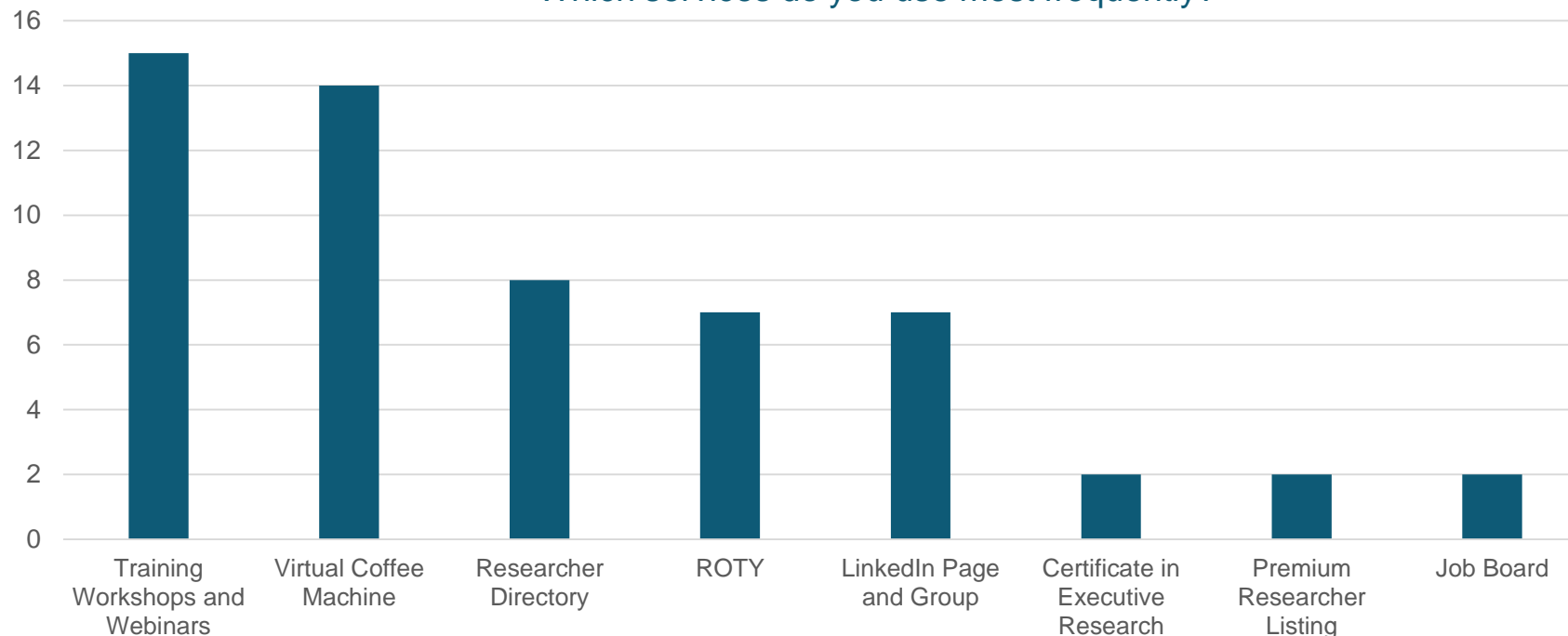
No research business development on my part, shrinking business due to rise in house recruiting and to rise in competition	Clients trying to recruit themselves solely using LinkedIn	Time	Immediacy of work/ difficult to plan workload beyond a couple of weeks.	Delivering a shortlist of more than two very suitable candidates .	Keeping up with business development	The impending closure of the high street and working with retail / consumer clients. Brexit. Hiring the right people for our business
Keeping up with technology	There are peak times where lots of business comes in, and quieter times, where there's not that much going on.	Managing workload!	Engaging candidates by telephone.	Competition from 'cheaper' sources and the creation of more in-house research teams	Prefer not to say, as I will only represent a small area of the business as a whole.	Competing against the internal efforts of clients who think everybody can fill a role via LinkedIn.
Managing capacity for a busy partner team.	Time and management of client expectations	Making direct contact by phone with candidates is more tricky due to headhunters being such a known phenomenon now.	Slow client decision making. Competition from inexpensive research providers especially sitting in India. When dealing with corporates up to 60-90 days before payment which impacts cash flow significantly.	Brexit. Over reliance on LinkedIn - clients still think that it is accurate but it is not.	Saying No and trying to do less.	Keeping up to date with new technology
Resource/time management & project flow .	Getting good researchers .	In-house talent acquisition teams.	Headhunters not wanting to pay a fair amount for an excellent service	Diversifying client base - have one very big client. I want to move to more end clients rather than supporting Executive Search companies. Find the fees too low for search support services	Clients	Change of landscape. Loss of blue-chip assignments due to in-house recruitment of corporates, aging and retirement of clients., motivation.
As an Asia start-up (in my case), it's about branding and get visibility . I would love to collaborate with other Executive Research agencies to explore joint collaboration effort.	Shortage of quality candidates	Consistent work flow .	Companies always trying to cut back their external research requirement costs.	Not becoming too reliant on one client Balancing the pipeline - tendency to feast or famine .	Competition from other organisations - non committal candidates.	

AWARENESS OF ERA SERVICES

Are you aware of all the services the ERA offer?



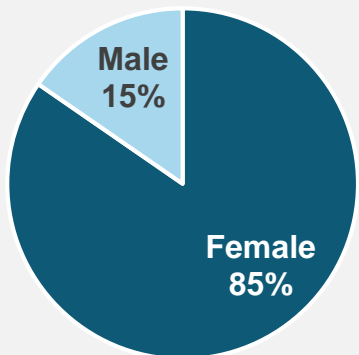
Which services do you use most frequently?



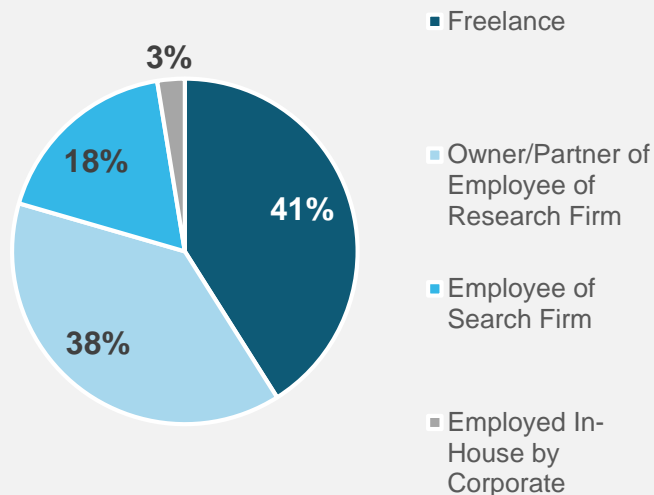
Would you like the ERA to offer anything else?

More webinars on research techniques.	Continued training events.	Conference outside London for a change? If members unable to attend Conference notes/useful insights from presenters/meeting to be shared.	Would like the profession to become accredited so would like the ERA to tackle ways we can improve this.	More management orientated workshops.
More webinars throughout the year.	Would like to see more online trainings - I live in Holland.	Possibly encourage some tie up or collaboration with a talent mapping agency as mine in Asia. Or have a newsletter monthly email alert announcing new member joining the association etc.	Keep on doing what you are doing!	More tailored made workshops/webinars which will help me do my job as well as I can.

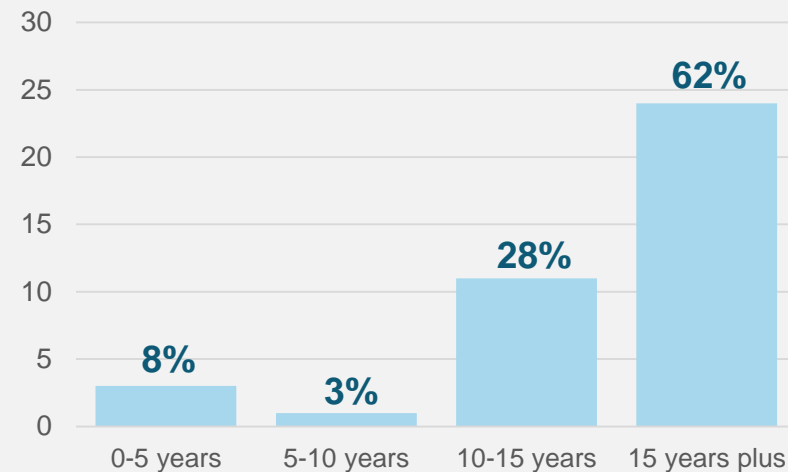
Gender



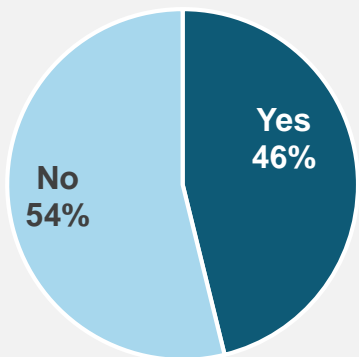
Type of Research Provider



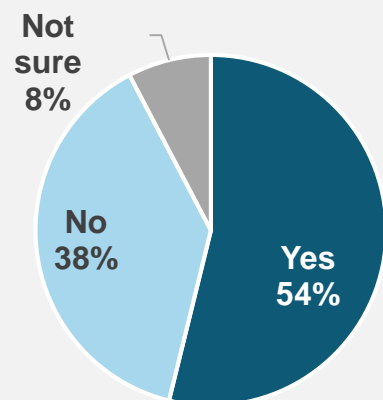
Years in Search/Research



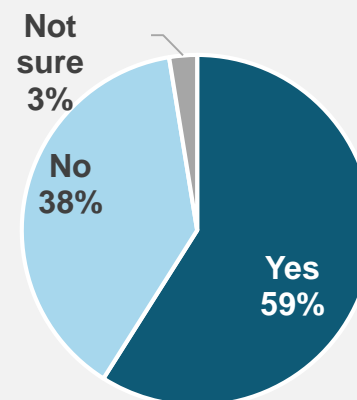
Sector Specialism



ICO Registered



Business Insured



Insurance covers GDPR breaches

