A faded, light-colored background image showing four people (three women and one man) in an office environment. They are gathered around a table, looking towards the camera with slight smiles. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid clearly.

Touchpaper Flexible Working (Mobile and Home Workers) Survey

A Discussion Paper

WHITE PAPER

Touchpaper Flexible Working Survey

A recent survey of 100 IT Directors commissioned by IT Business Management software leader Touchpaper provided an insight into the critical issues and priorities they face supporting ever increasing numbers of home and mobile workers.

The findings from the survey, which polled 100 IT directors, suggest that the drive to encourage more flexible patterns of working by Government and employers is being held back by inadequate or inappropriate IT support.

The research found that while the UK's 2.2 million homeworkers*, the immeasurable number of people who work at home on an ad hoc basis in the evenings or at weekends and those who want access to e-mail and other organizational applications when travelling away from home, may expect a more balanced, family friendly or flexible working life, IT challenges cause them wasted hours and extra stress.

Although the actual results differ by industry sector and organization size (see the detailed report tables for more information), there is generally consensus amongst IT Directors on the main issues.

The most pressing problems affecting remote workers according to IT Directors concern security breaches and virus protection, which are cited by 90 per cent and 85 per cent of the sample, respectively. Also high on the list of IT Directors' concerns are the problems caused by executives with mobile devices who lack the technical skills to operate correctly. This was mentioned by 67 per cent of the research sample.

In addition, 54 per cent of company IT directors polled admit that anyone working outside the office would lose valuable time because of IT problems and 72 per cent said that IT departments face a major challenge keeping home and remote workers' PC systems working.

* According to the UK Labour Force Survey, there are 2.2 million teleworkers in the UK. This is people who work at home for at least one day per week

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Approach

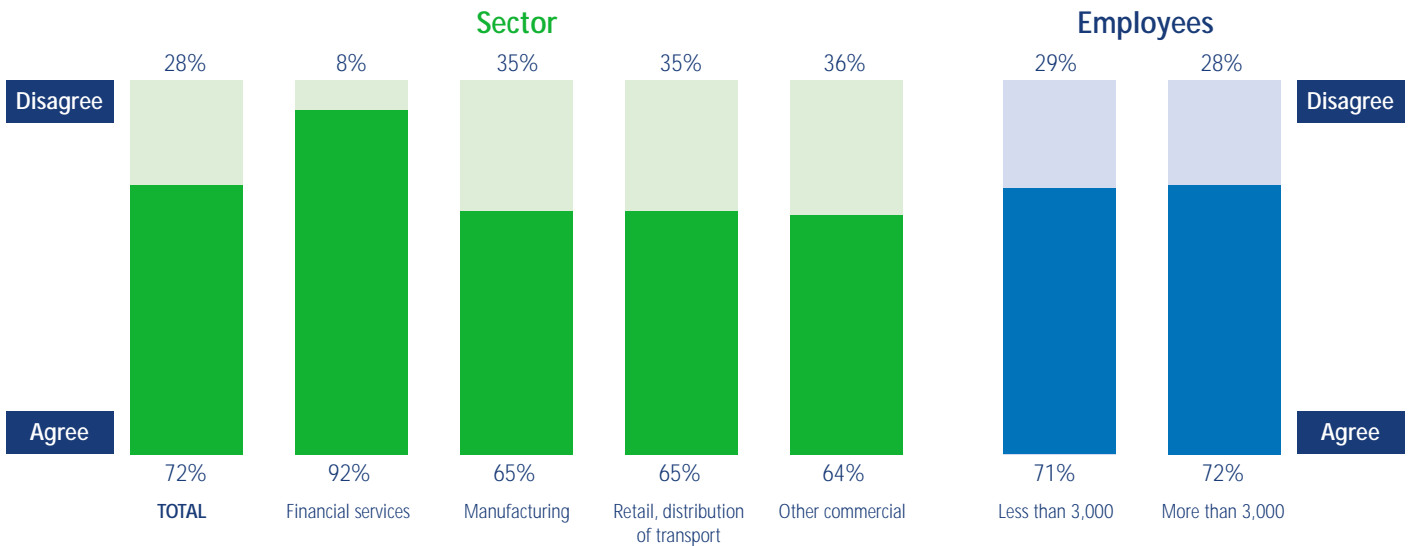
The survey, conducted by telephone, covered a number of different organisation types and industry sectors:

- Financial services
- Manufacturing/ Retail
- Distribution or logistics
- Other commercial

Responses were also split by number of employees: Less than 3,000 / More than 3,000

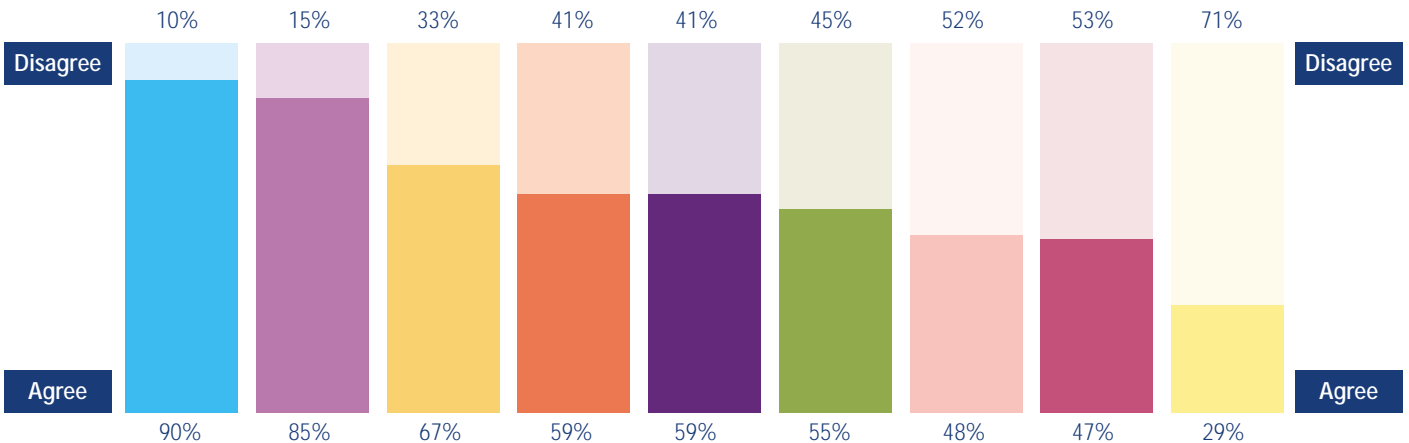
Questions

1) Providing IT support to mobile and home workers is a major challenge for IT departments



2) Supporting home and mobile workers is a challenge for IT departments for the following reasons

Note: This set of questions was tested before the survey to ensure that it covered the main issues faced by the respondents:

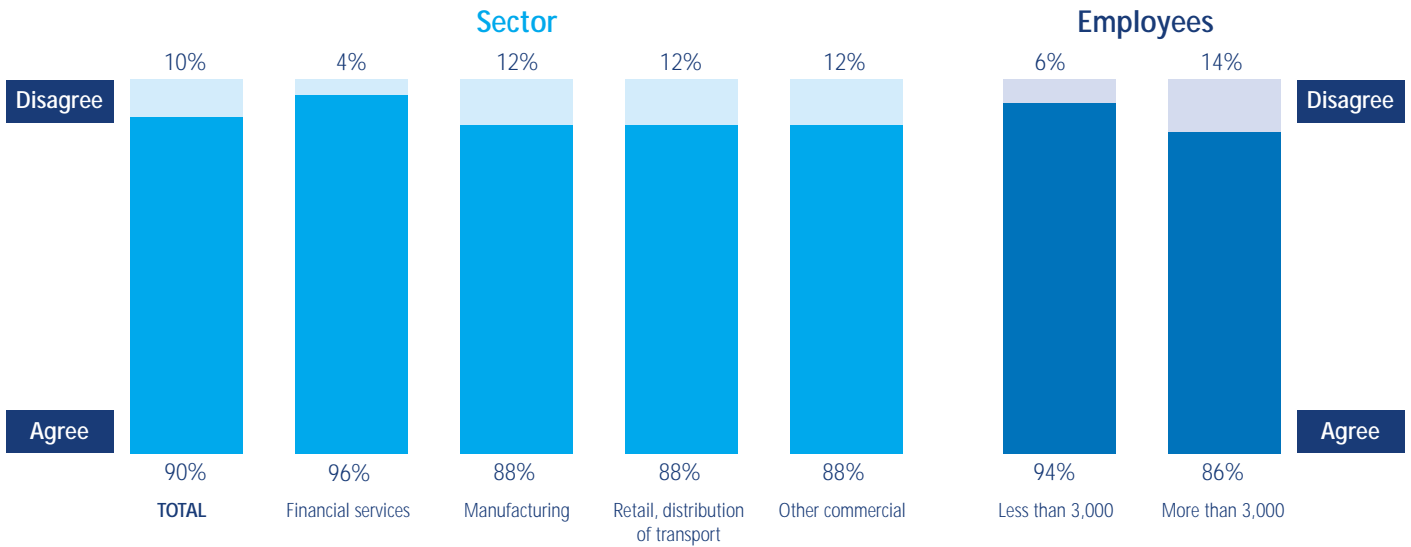


Supporting home and mobile workers is a challenge for IT departments because...

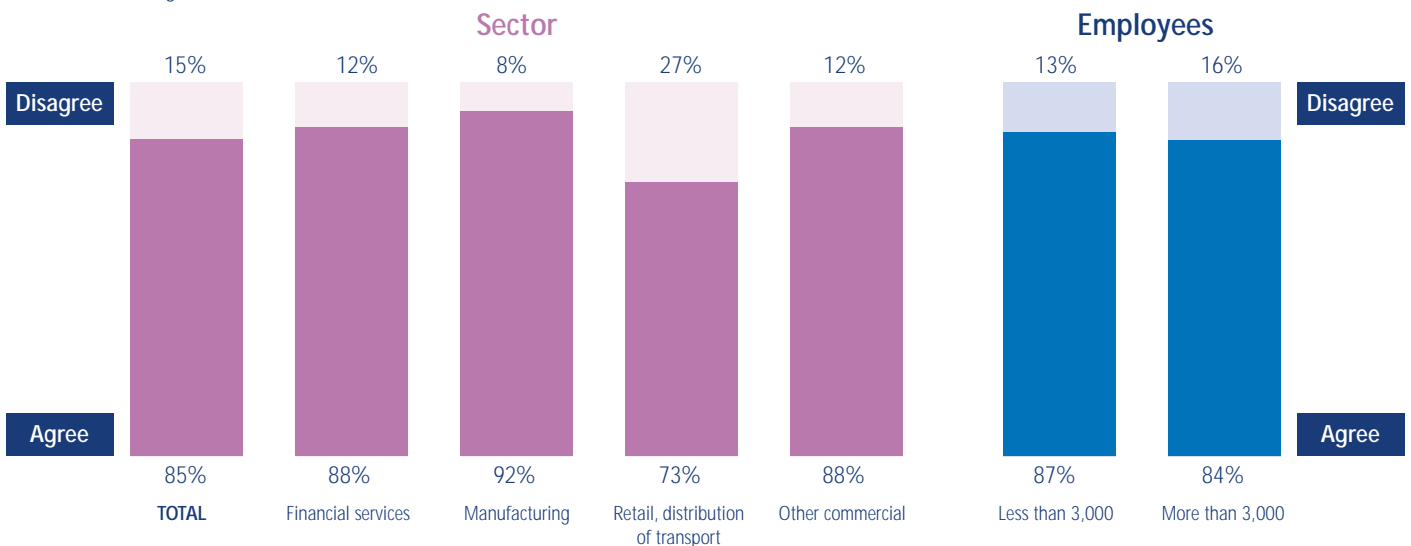
- there is a greater risk of security breaches affecting these workers
- there is a greater risk of virus attack to these workers
- users with advanced mobile devices are not always technology literate and tend to have more problems and therefore need more support than office-based users
- they often have difficulties connecting to the corporate network from hotel rooms and other non-office locations
- it is difficult for the IT department to resolve problems remotely
- they are not in the office so there are added difficulties associated with trying to conduct regular maintenance to IT systems used by these workers
- they are not working in the office so non authorised users (e.g. family and friends) often use and tamper with their IT equipment
- these workers often need to be supported out of office hours
- they are often using hardware and software that is not standard to the company

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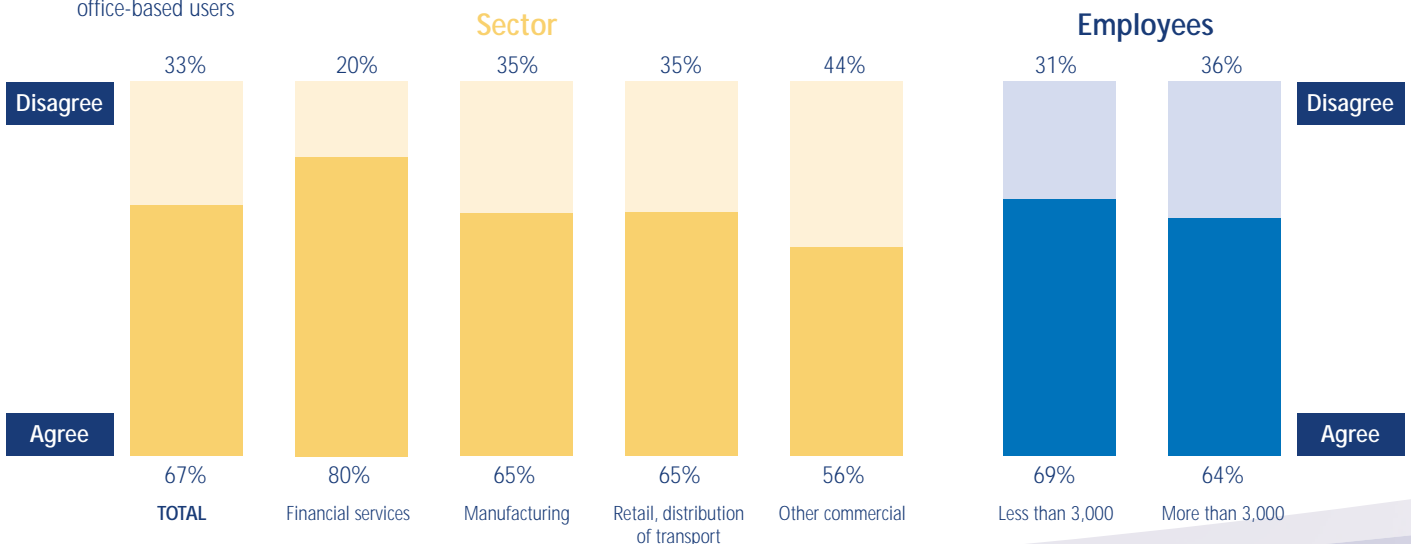
Supporting home and mobile workers is a challenge for IT departments because...
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Supporting home and mobile workers is a challenge for IT departments because...
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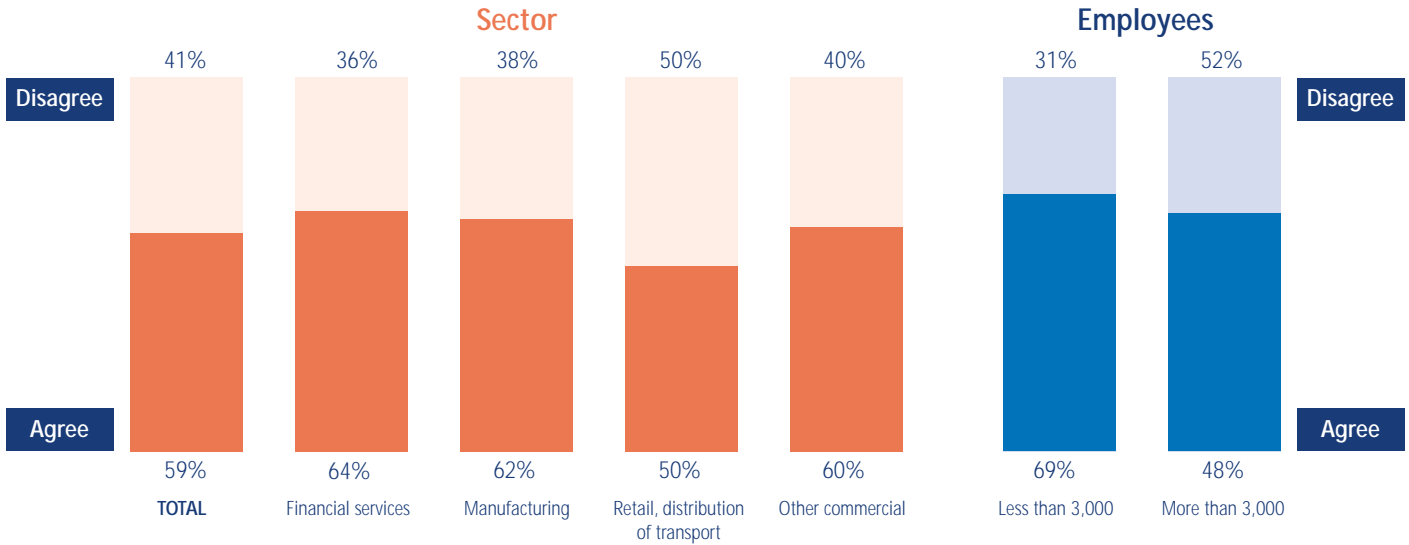


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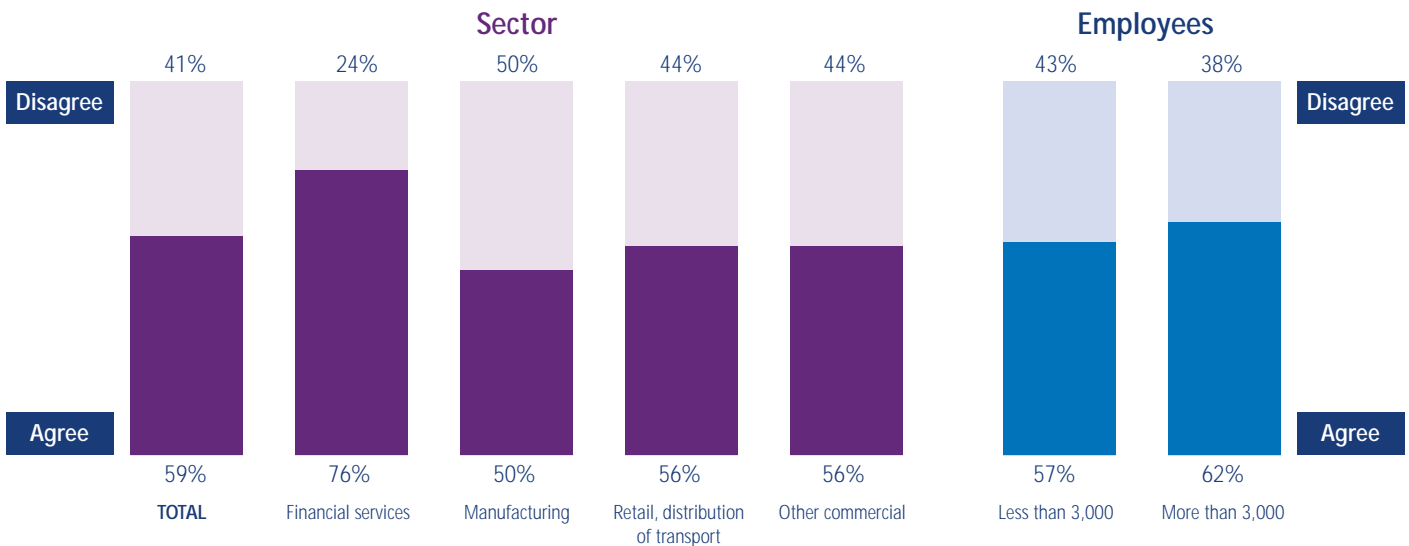
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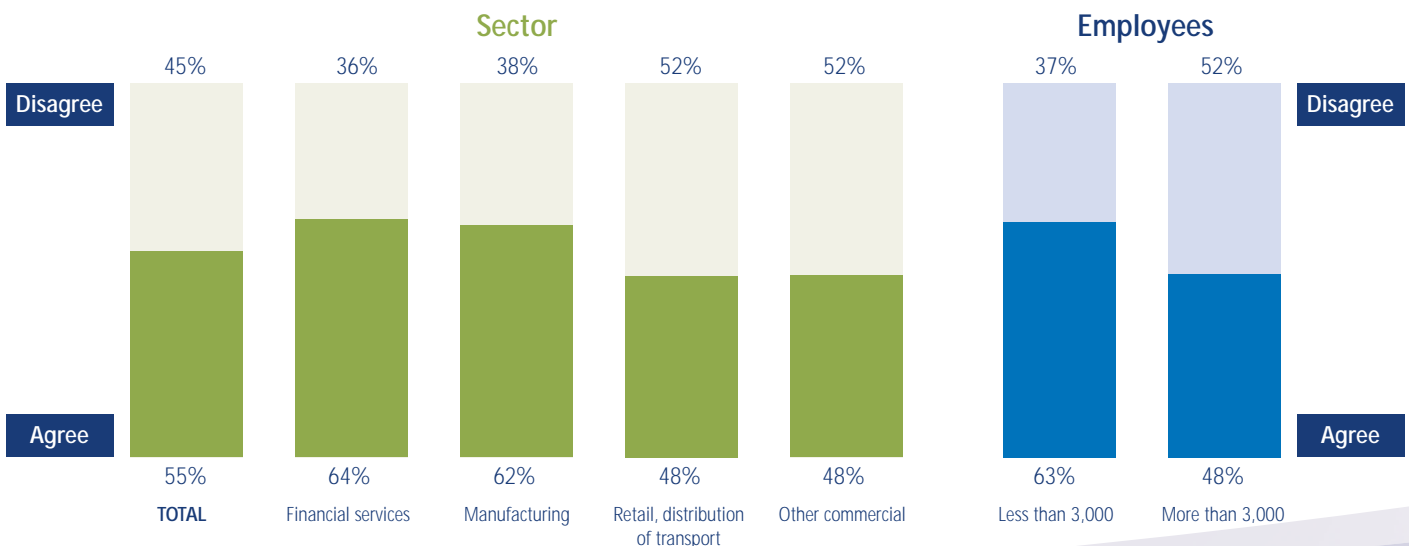
Supporting home and mobile workers is a challenge for IT departments because...

it is difficult for the IT department to resolve problems remotely



Supporting home and mobile workers is a challenge for IT departments because...

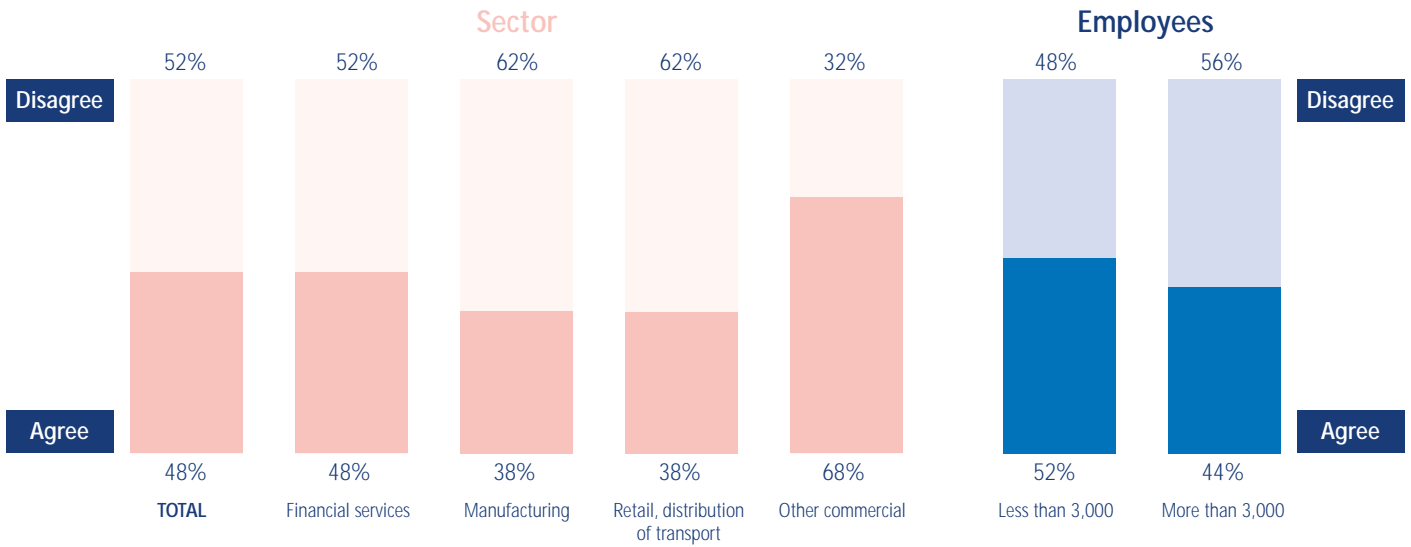
they are not in the office so there are added difficulties associated with trying to conduct regular maintenance to IT systems used by these workers



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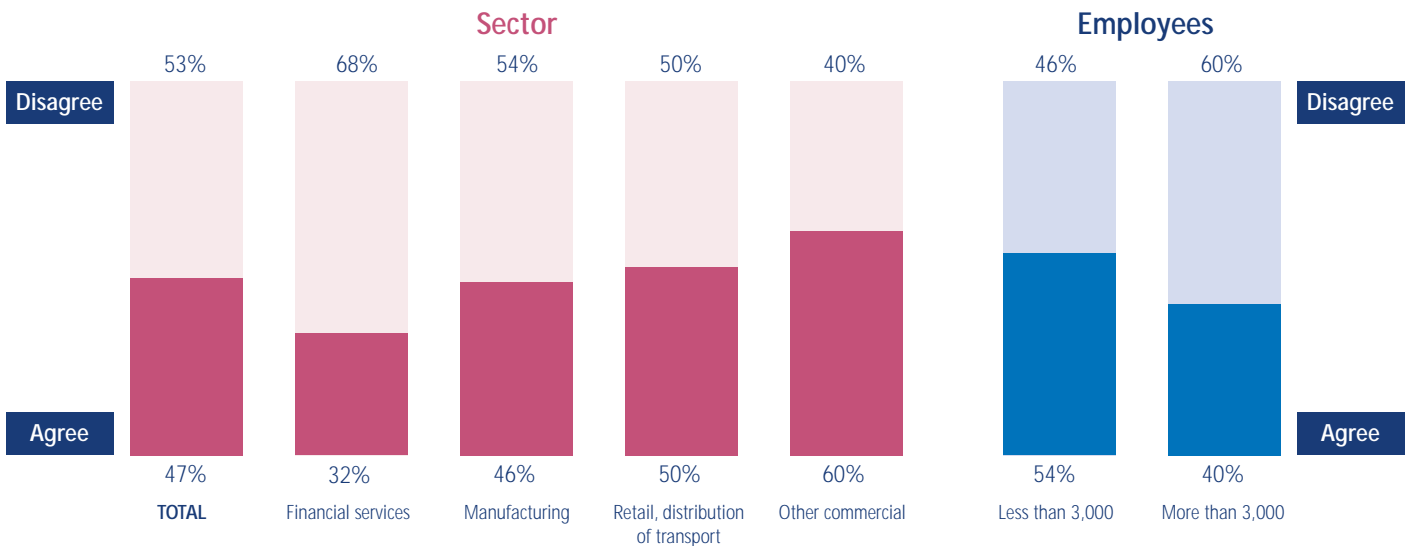
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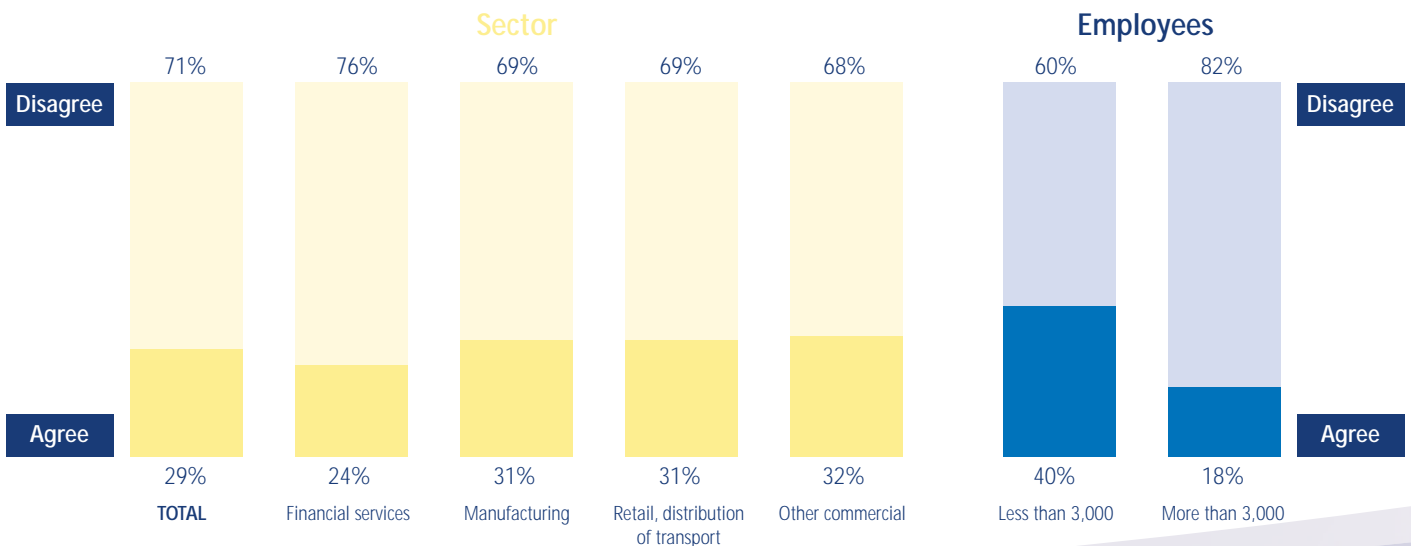
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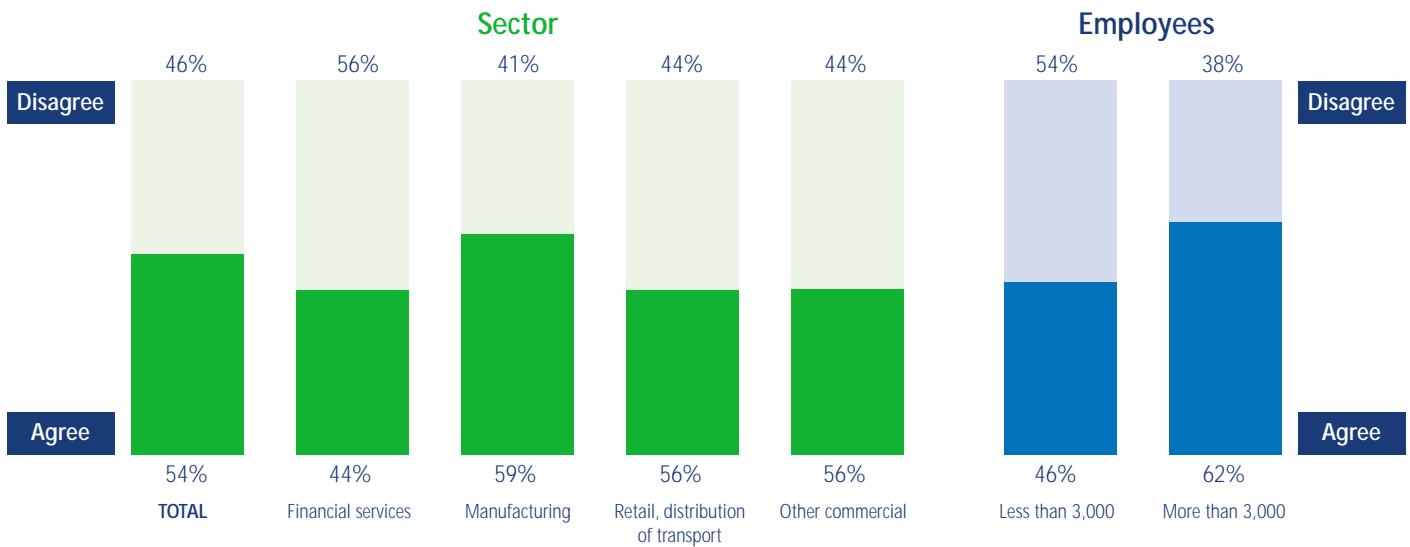
Supporting home and mobile workers is a challenge for IT departments because...

they are often using hardware and software that is not standard to the company



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3) Home and mobile workers are likely to lose work hours because of the extra difficulties involved in providing them with IT support



Conclusion

Working away from the office or at home is not unusual these days but the survey highlighted a number of specific issues that make IT a greater challenge for home and mobile workers. When organizations purchase and implement new technologies, they still need to do more to help people use those technologies productively. Far too many employees across all industry sectors and at all levels of an organization are struggling at home or on the road with technologies that they don't really understand. This in turn, puts even further pressure on technical support departments, to the detriment of core business operations and personal productivity and causes user dissatisfaction and frustration.

Protecting remote workers' systems and organizational applications from security breaches and viruses are also major worries for IT Directors.

There are some simple steps that organizations can take to overcome many of these challenges and concerns. For example, using technology that can remotely fix issues before they cause a problem improves service levels, reduces response time, increases user and analyst productivity and grows user satisfaction.

Providing remote users with the ability to log their own calls, access Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and resolve their problems on-line at any time of day or night or from any location can dramatically reduce the amount of time wasted trying to fix simple issues.

Comprehensive reporting facilities can help identify areas where a high number of queries or issues are received. Using this information to target user and analyst training, produce more detailed FAQs and on-line education, can reduce the number of problems like these and enable people to work more effectively.

Using standard process and software for patch management and security monitoring as well as providing automated vulnerability assessment and remediation enhances security and enables a safer computing environment, regardless of location.

About Touchpaper

With over 20 years of experience across the UK and Europe, the USA and Asia Pacific, Touchpaper is one of the most established and respected international providers of IT Business Management (ITBM) solutions.

Instrumental in redefining the move away from simple help desk products to complete ITBM solutions and services encompassing IT Service Management (ITSM), Customer Service Solutions (CSS) and Systems and Network Management, Touchpaper now has over 1,700 customers around the world, supporting over 3 million users.

Touchpaper's goal is to help its customers deliver efficient, effective and secure IT and customer services through teams that exceed expectations for service and drive operational value through a combination of efficient operating procedures and leading edge technology.

Touchpaper is an HDI (Help Desk Institute) Strategic Partner.

Its headquarters are located in the UK with offices in the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific. For further information please visit our Web site at <http://www.touchpaper.com> or mail intouch@touchpaper.com.

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