

# Is EDI addressing the challenges of 21st century commerce?

New research reveals disparities between EDI user requirements and services delivered by EDI providers



# Contents

INTRODUCTION: Changing times for EDI	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 5 key takeaways	3
Recommendations	4
1. How are your trading partner requirements likely to change?	5
2. What are the reasons for reviewing your current EDI solution?	6
3. What challenges does your organisation currently face with your existing EDI provider?	8
4. What are the biggest obstacles when switching your EDI provider?	10
5. If you could create an ideal EDI solution, what would it look like?	12
APPENDIX: Survey respondents	15

## INTRODUCTION: Changing times for EDI

UK businesses are making fundamental changes to how they manage the essential documentation that enables them to trade with their supply chains.

In research commissioned by EDI specialist Transalis, the vast majority of respondents say they are looking to 'review in the near future' the software they rely on to exchange trading data.

The findings show that EDI providers have a clear opportunity to help companies meet the challenges presented by a fast-developing business environment impacted by Brexit, Covid, rapid technological change and growing competition.

See Appendix on page 15 for a breakdown of respondents.

## About EDI:

EDI, standing for Electronic Data Interchange, underpins global trade through the exchange of essential business documentation such as orders, invoices and other logistical data. EDI ensures products are on supermarket shelves, manufacturing processes run smoothly and the right parcels arrive on time. By eliminating the need for paper documents and automating the whole activity of sharing transaction data, EDI has introduced across-the-board time and cost savings and improved accuracy.

## About Transalis:

Transalis eDI™ solutions support the exchange of trading documentation between systems, companies and countries for greater visibility, transparency and efficiency. Transalis guarantees frictionless migration, meaningful operator training, reliable, ongoing post-sale support and shorter lead-in times for implementation. In addition, Transalis offers a dedicated on-boarding process for trading partners, including those who may lack EDI knowledge themselves.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

## 5 key takeaways

### 42%

of businesses reveal they are expecting to significantly increase the number of trading partners, with 16% outside the UK.

#### **1. Changing face of EDI:**

EDI will have to adapt quickly to help companies cope with a rapidly changing trading environment that is increasingly international. Solutions need to afford visibility and transparency across the entire trading network.

### 99%

of respondents will be reviewing their current EDI solution 'in the near future'.

#### **2. Time to review your EDI solution:**

There is a growing disconnect between companies' requirement for integration and what most EDI providers are offering. The exchange of data and transparency of information needs to be frictionless.

### 34%

cite dissatisfaction with the current provider as the reason why they will be reviewing their EDI solution.

#### **3. EDI vendors not fit for purpose:**

Many respondents said providers were not keeping up with their requests to make rapid and regular updates to their EDI solution to reflect 'on the ground' changes in the trading network. It is critical that EDI providers become more effective in meeting their clients' day-to-day management needs in a timely manner.

### 60%

are under the impression that their current solution is so embedded with their existing EDI provider that it will be difficult to switch.

#### **4. Obstacles to switching:**

Respondents report that EDI is so embedded in their organisation they believe it is virtually impossible to switch to a more suitable provider without affecting 'business as usual' (BAU). This report investigates whether this is a factual reality or a convenient block used by some EDI providers to retain business.

### 39%

of respondents said they wanted to be able to self-manage and control their own EDI processes when asked about their ideal solution.

#### **5. The future of EDI:**

In today's dynamic and integrated business environment, companies are seeking to innovate solutions to provide frictionless self-management of their trading partner network, rather than relying on an EDI provider holding all the cards. Providers that insist on offering a cumbersome managed service are likely to lose competitive advantage in favour of those that provide a more agile self-service SaaS model.

## Recommendations

Research findings show that legacy EDI models - whether managed or on-premise services - are not meeting the needs of today's fast-developing trading environment.

An underperforming EDI service can have wide-ranging implications on the competitiveness and long-term success of a company.

Associated costs include loss of revenue from missed orders, the time it takes to correct errors and inaccuracies, extra order processing and fulfilment time, and lack of transparency and visibility across the broader business environment.

To ensure a new or current EDI provider can meet today's challenges, it is essential to evaluate their capabilities against the following criteria.



### **Service Excellence:**

Evaluate current provider based on SLA performance, and total cost of ownership.



### **Price Certainty:**

Consider EDI providers that provide fixed annual subscription pricing as this provides price certainty and the ability to scale to business needs.

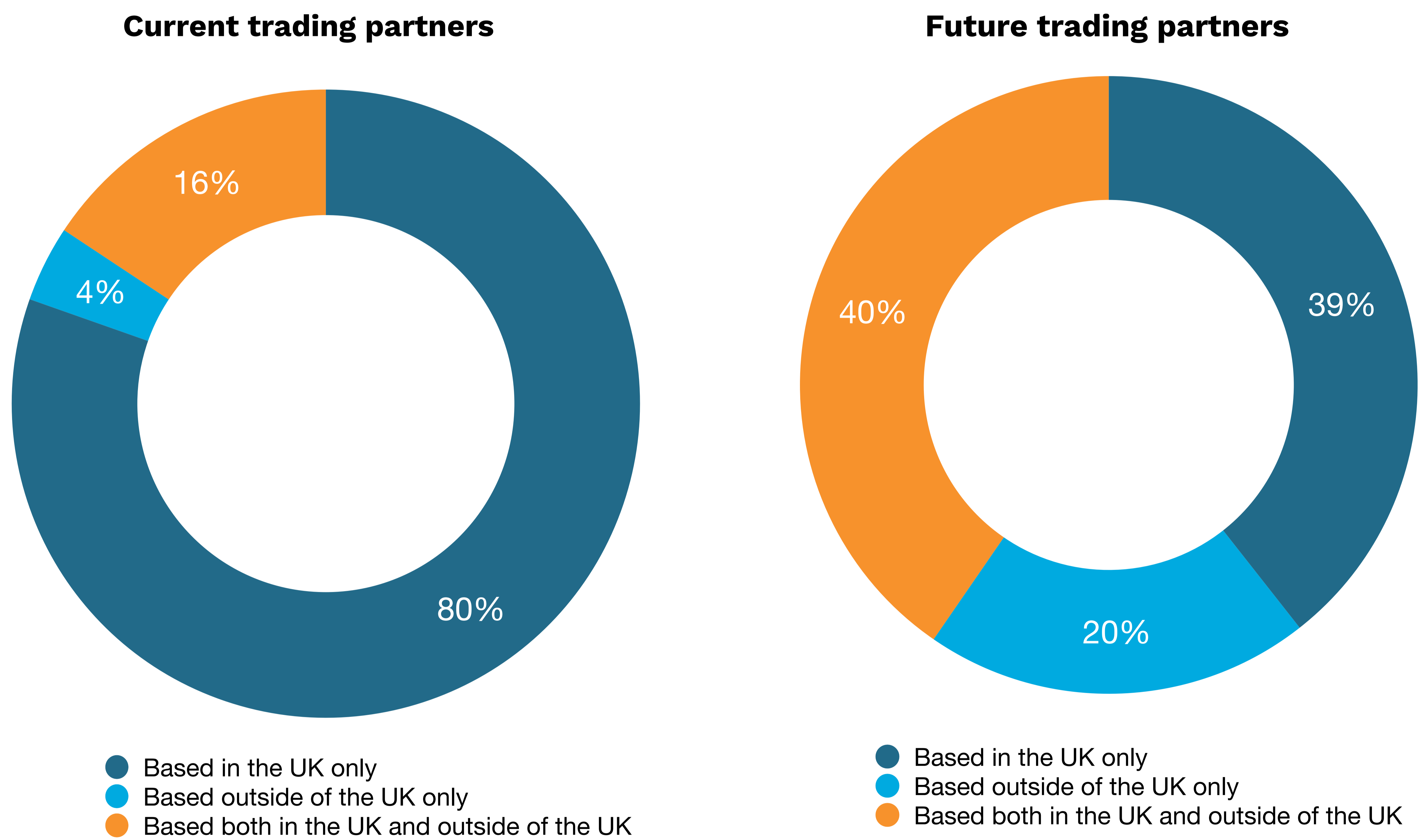


### **Future Proof Technology:**

Talk to potential providers about their technology road map and what benefits it offers for business requirements.

# 1. How are your trading partner requirements likely to change?

The survey indicates that 40% of companies are expecting a significant increase in the number of trading partners they deal with outside the UK.



## Insights

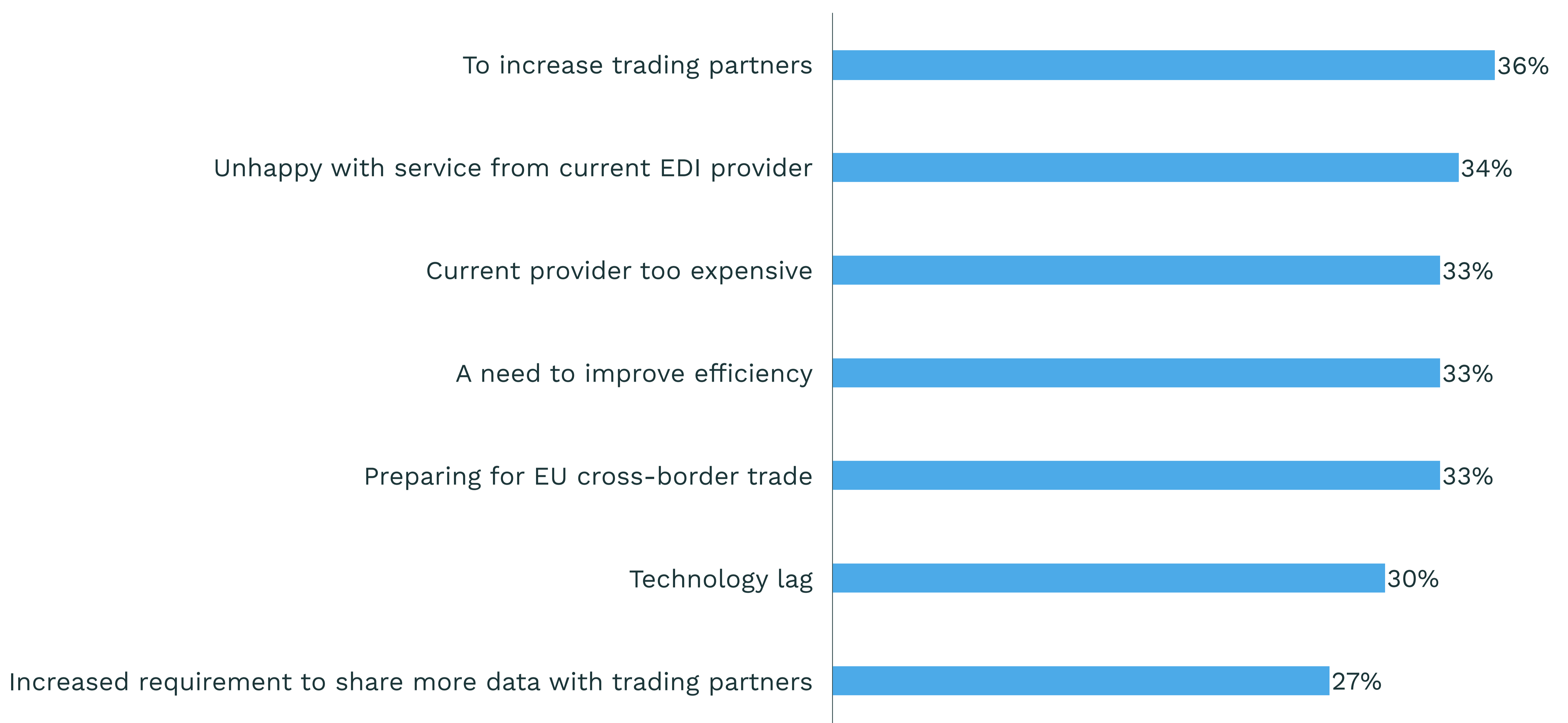
The research shows that businesses recognise they need to adapt their supply networks to survive. Key factors include Brexit, Covid and the shift to online, rather than bricks-and-mortar, retailing. Engaging with more international partners means companies will increasingly have to navigate different territories' localised regulations on import/export duties, real time invoice reporting and other factors that demand system

compatibility. It takes longer to onboard trading partners based outside the UK than those based in the UK only - three months on average as opposed to two - so there is an added focus on achieving process integration as swiftly as possible. Simplicity, ease and better self-management are seen as especially important capabilities among respondents with trading partners both inside and outside the UK.

## 2. What are the reasons for reviewing your current EDI solution?

Findings show that 99% of respondents are planning to review their existing arrangement within an average timeframe of the next five months.

### Reasons cited:



## Insights

Respondents are looking to review their EDI provider for a number of reasons. For some it is because they recognise that automating manual processes will help to reduce operational costs. Some said they were dissatisfied with their current provider and their solution was no longer working efficiently, for example when sharing product catalogues with trading partners.

Given the expected rise in trading partners based outside the UK (see Q1. On page 5), respondents want reassurance that their EDI processes will align with post-Brexit customs declarations, other paperwork for cross-border trading and international standards and regulations.

## Transalis places its customers at the centre of everything it does

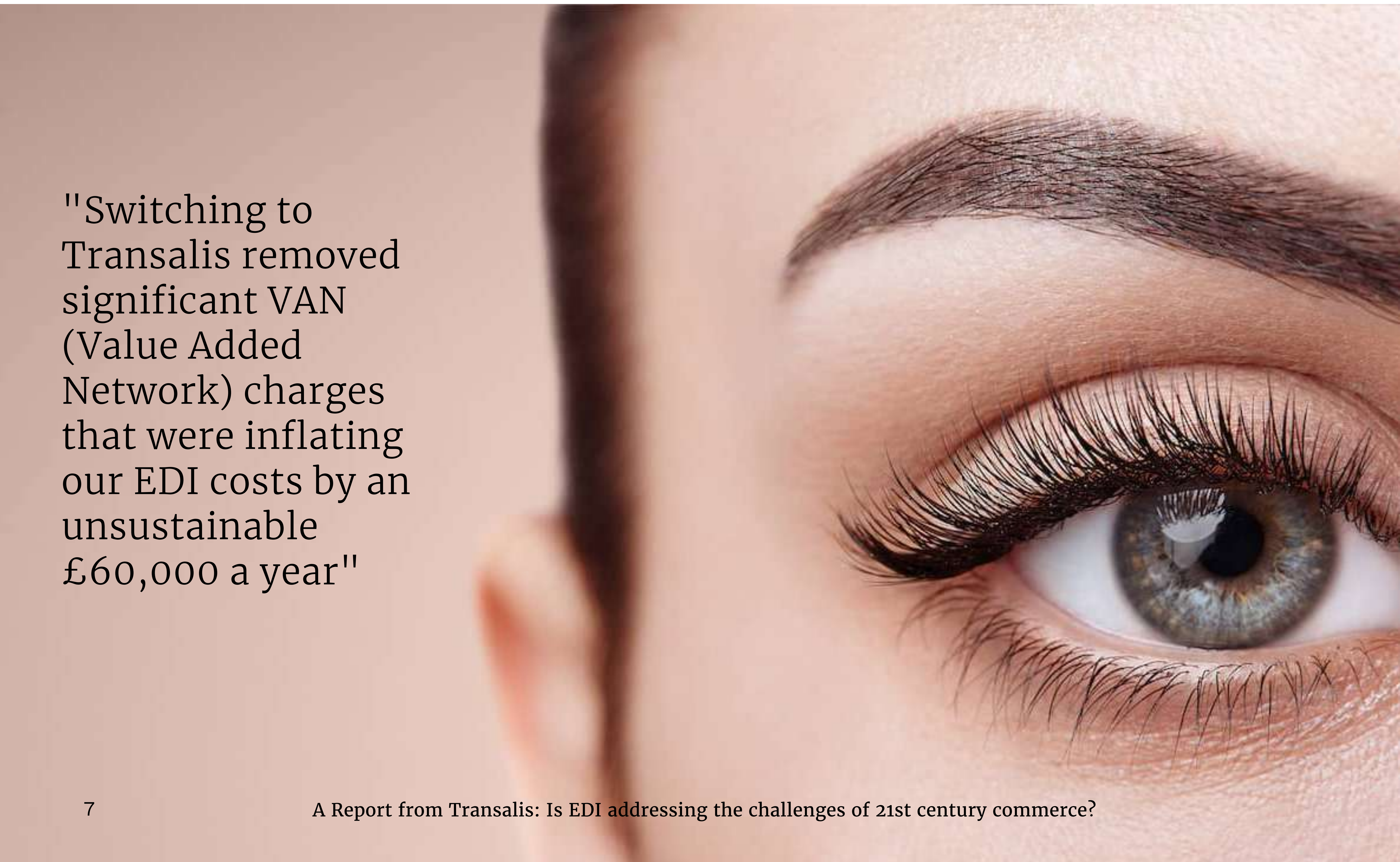
Transalis Customer First approach keeps our customers involved and informed throughout the process, considerably reducing lead times for updates and change requests as well as ensuring fully transparent pricing.

Transalis does not impose VAN (Value Added Network) or other additional charges. Instead, we offer the choice of fixed price solutions that give customers the room to increase their business transactions and onboard new trading partners quickly and at minimal cost.

“Switching to Transalis removed significant VAN (Value Added Network) charges that were inflating our EDI costs by an unsustainable £60,000 a year because of the granular level charges for each character of data sent. Instead, VAN charges were replaced by a straightforward fee for managing the connection that was a tiny fraction of what we had been paying.”

**Chris Wakeham,**  
Head of Global IT at Space NK

[Read the case study](#)

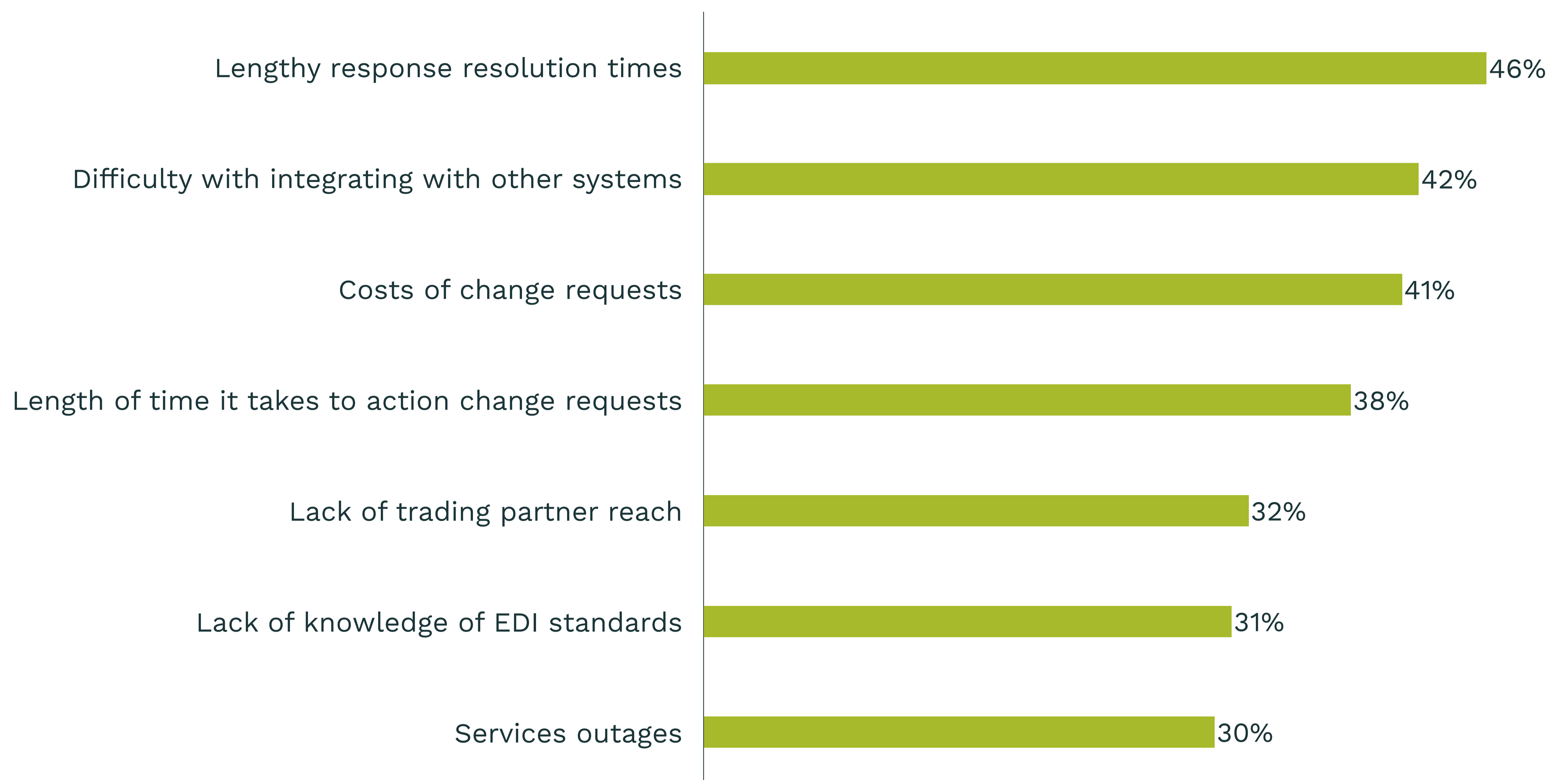


"Switching to Transalis removed significant VAN (Value Added Network) charges that were inflating our EDI costs by an unsustainable £60,000 a year"

### 3. What challenges does your organisation currently face with your existing EDI provider?

The research finds that almost half of all of the businesses interviewed (46%) are unhappy with the time it takes for their provider to respond to issues.

#### Reasons cited:



### Insights

By improving response and resolution times under SLAs and dealing more quickly and cost-effectively with change requests, EDI providers will support greater efficiency in systems integration and provide customers with price certainty. Smoother integration will also minimise the risk of service outages which are often a feature of legacy systems and clearly indicate the system is no longer meeting customer need and should be replaced.

## Transalis single-price integrations

Transalis integrates with all leading ERP, accounting and web store systems with a transparent fixed-price integration model to ensure customers have a full understanding of costs and timeframes involved before the project begins.

A dedicated team of integration experts map your in-house systems with your data sharing requirements, enabling the smooth and frictionless flow of data across multiple systems so you have complete visibility across your entire trading network.

[See our full list of integrations](#)

“We asked Transalis to find us a solution for automating, integrating and validating the data we were receiving. After we explained our issues and concerns, they built, tested and put live an API within ten days or so. They worked with us to understand where any issues were coming from, why any data was failing, and how mistakes could be resolved. They have the development and technical support skills to overcome data accuracy issues.”

**Cerie Paton**  
Head of Business Systems, SMEG

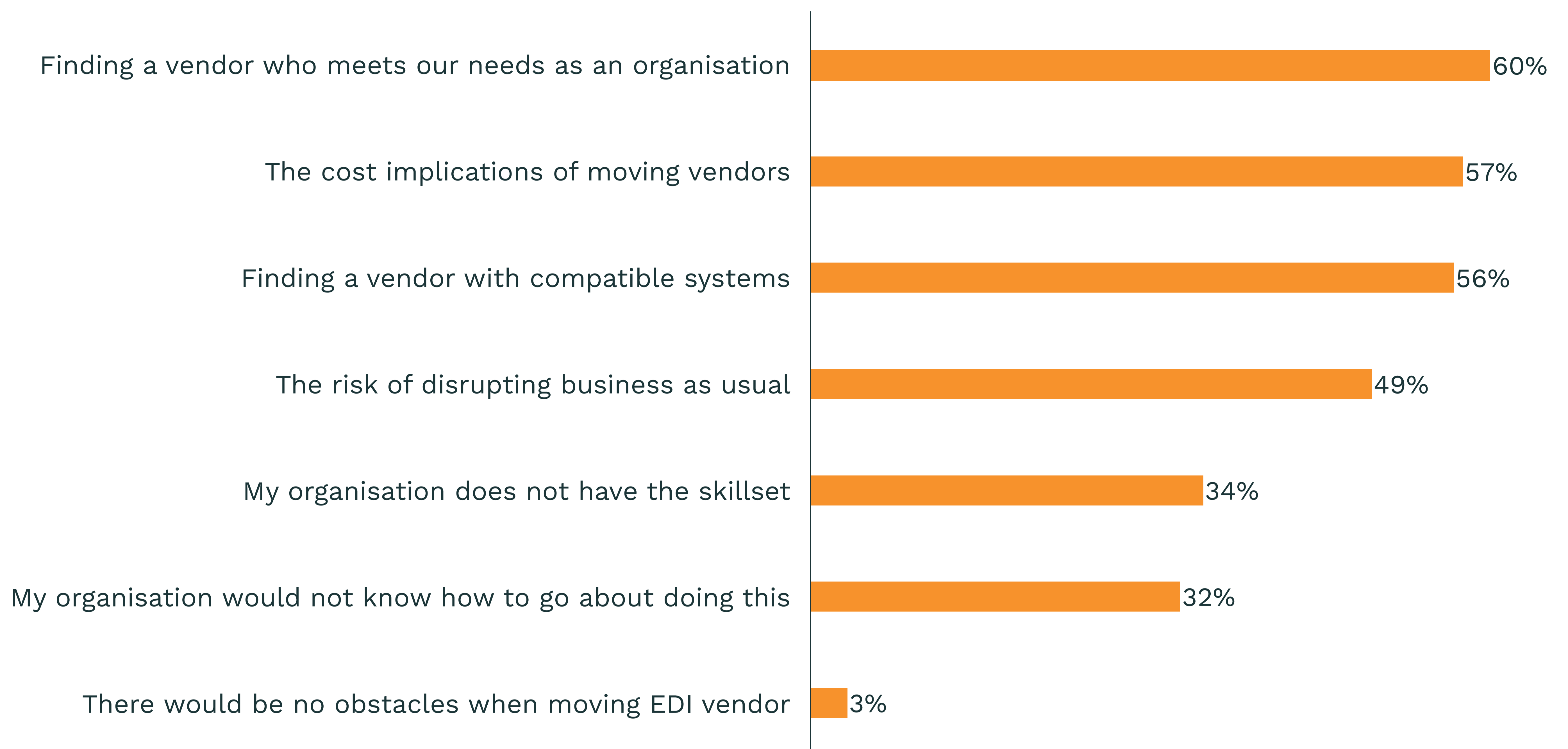
[Read the case study](#)

"Transalis have the development and technical support skills to overcome data accuracy issues."



## 4. What are the biggest obstacles when switching your EDI provider?

While most respondents are thinking about switching providers, the study shows that 60% believe one of the biggest challenges they will face will be finding a vendor who meets their needs as an organisation.



### Insights

Whether intentionally or not, EDI providers have convinced their customers that the costs, difficulties and disruption of moving outweigh the benefits. Respondents have been left believing their existing EDI solution is so embedded they face a major challenge to unravel it and move to another provider.

As a result, many businesses are putting up with second-rate service at extremely high cost, potentially impacting on their ability to stay agile and competitive. EDI providers have an opportunity to improve this situation, helping businesses to expand their networks and grow.

## Transalis eDI™ solutions are ‘easy to buy, simple to switch’

Customers value Transalis eDI™ solutions because they meet business needs and expectations. Unlike many other providers, Transalis does not impose barriers that could disrupt business as usual if a customer ever wanted to switch to another provider.

In our Customer First approach to EDI solutions, Transalis focuses on ensuring an outstanding and meaningful customer experience.


Key elements include price transparency, frictionless migration to maintain BAU, shorter lead-in times for implementation, operator training and reliable, ongoing post-sale support.

“Transalis put their finger on what we knew had been a pain and pinch-point for a number of years. Our contact with them came at exactly the right time as we looked to improve our processes, do some business process engineering and upgrade our EDI solution.

The Transalis platform has made life easier for our customer service team. It really has made a positive difference. We are seeing ROI by having people focused on more value-added activity. Customer ratings and feedback also show we have improved customer satisfaction levels.”

**John Thompson,**  
Integrated Systems Manager, AG Barr

[Read the case study](#)

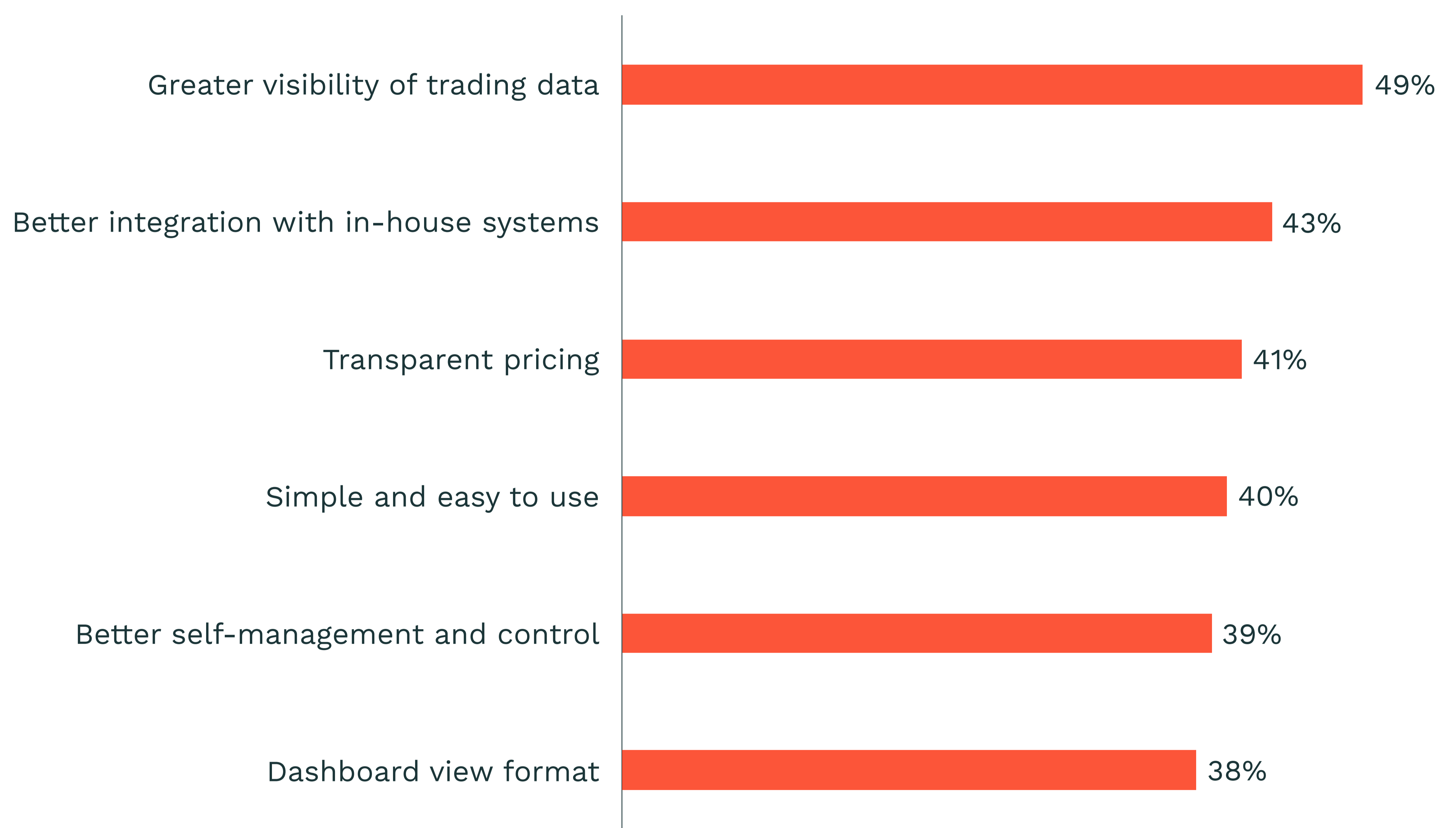


"The Transalis platform has made life easier for our customer service team. We are seeing ROI by having people focused on more value-added activity."

## 5. If you could create an ideal EDI solution, what would it look like?

Half of the respondents to the survey (49%) say EDI vendors should focus on providing their customers with greater visibility of their trading data.

### Reasons cited:



## Insights

The research shows that an ideal EDI solution would offer the ability to visualise and amend multiple linked documents and transactions in a single view. There should be a simple-to-navigate front-end dashboard that anyone involved in processing trading data within the organisation can easily use. If taking data directly into existing systems, the in-house IT team should be provided with a clearly formatted

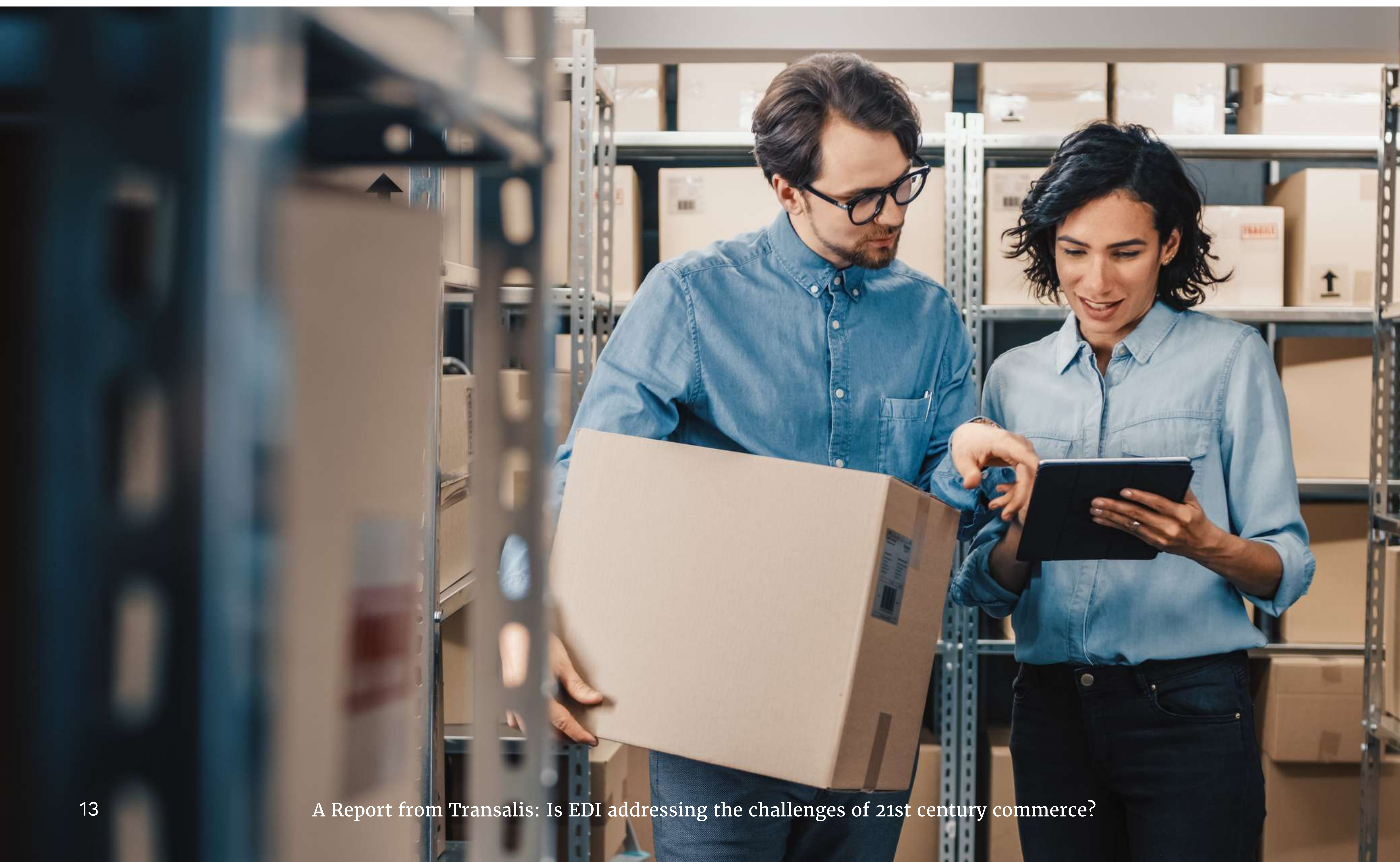
digital file that can be automatically mapped and uploaded. For full integration, an API should pull in information from the EDI platform instantly with no disruption or delays to business as usual operations. Most businesses do not want to get involved with the complex ins and outs of EDI. They just want to enjoy the benefits and rely on the provider to do the heavy lifting.

## Transalis moves towards self-service EDI Solutions

Customers increasingly want the ability to easily and simply configure EDI requirements on the fly. They want to avoid expensive charges and delays in response to actioning urgent requests.

Transalis continues to develop solutions for its EDI SaaS platform to allow more tasks and functions to be incorporated and managed by the customer rather than controlled by the provider.

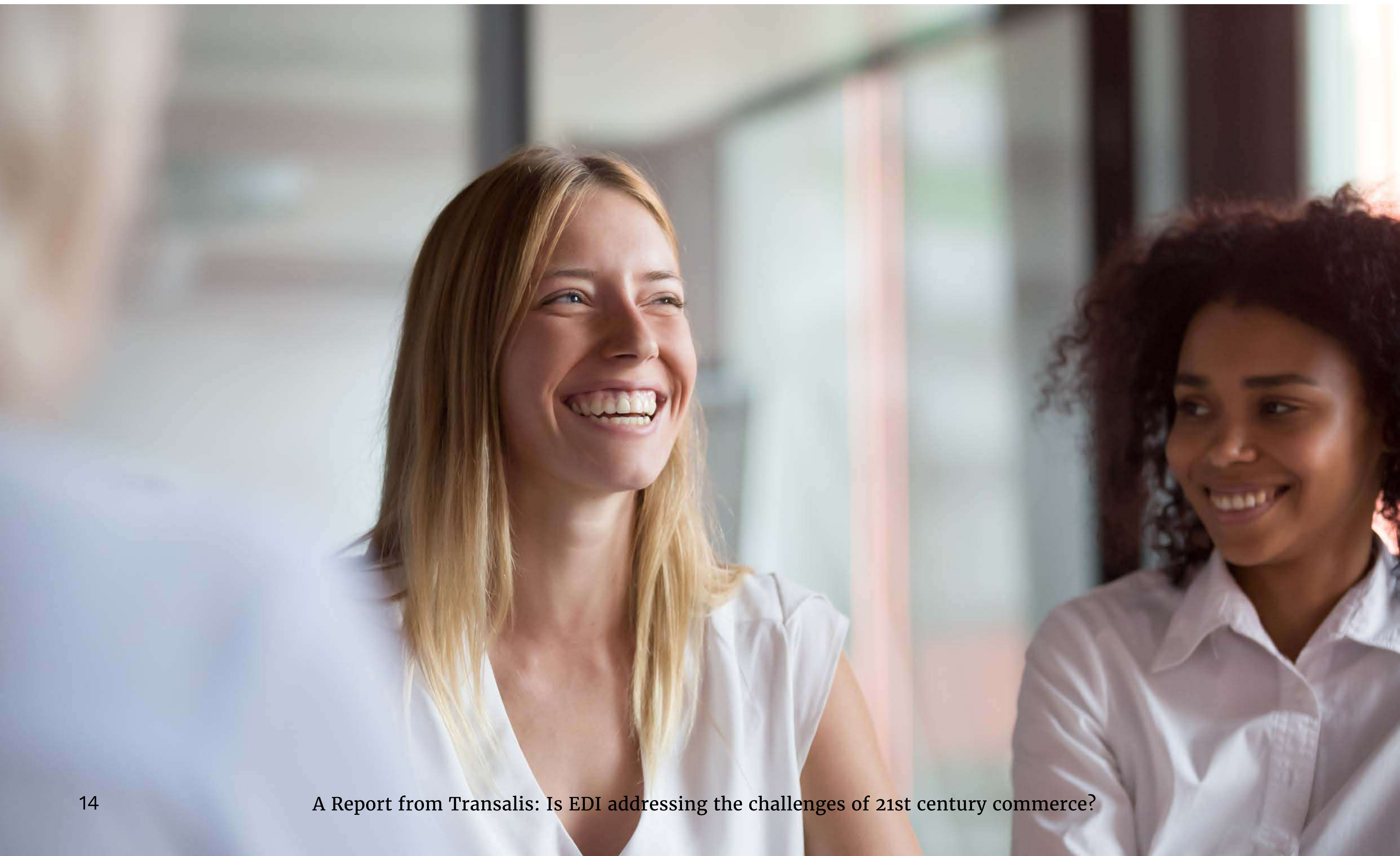
Transalis solutions already provide complete visibility of integrations and trading partners, making it easy for customers to switch, adapt and change.



## Transalis puts its customers first

**Transalis provides an easy to buy, simple to switch approach to EDI. It features:**

- No VAN charges – flexible, transparent fixed-price bundles
- First to provide online payment and automatic set-up of an EDI connection
- Customer reference sites with leading UK brands including Space NK, simplehuman and AG Barr
- Intuitive cloud-based EDI dashboard, supported by help guides and videos
- Dedicated Customer Experience Managers
- End-to-end implementation
- Dedicated onboarding team of experts
- Dedicated teams of integration specialists
- 98% trading partner reach across UK manufacturers, retailers and distributors who trade electronically
- High-scoring customer satisfaction
  - 98% Product Delivery
  - 74% Customer Experience
  - 97% Service Support (CSAT)
  - 99% Ticket Resolution (SLA)

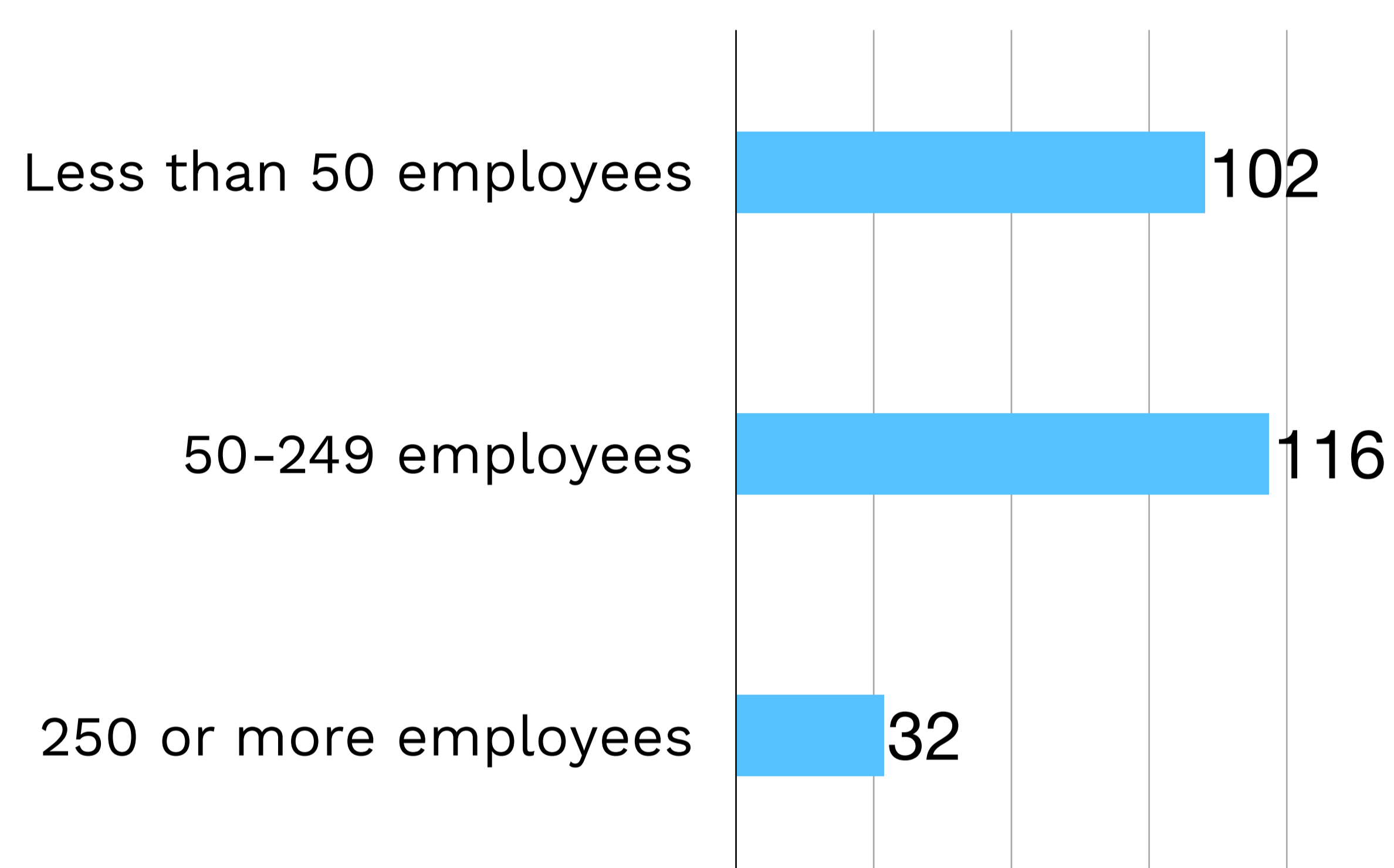


## APPENDIX: Survey respondents

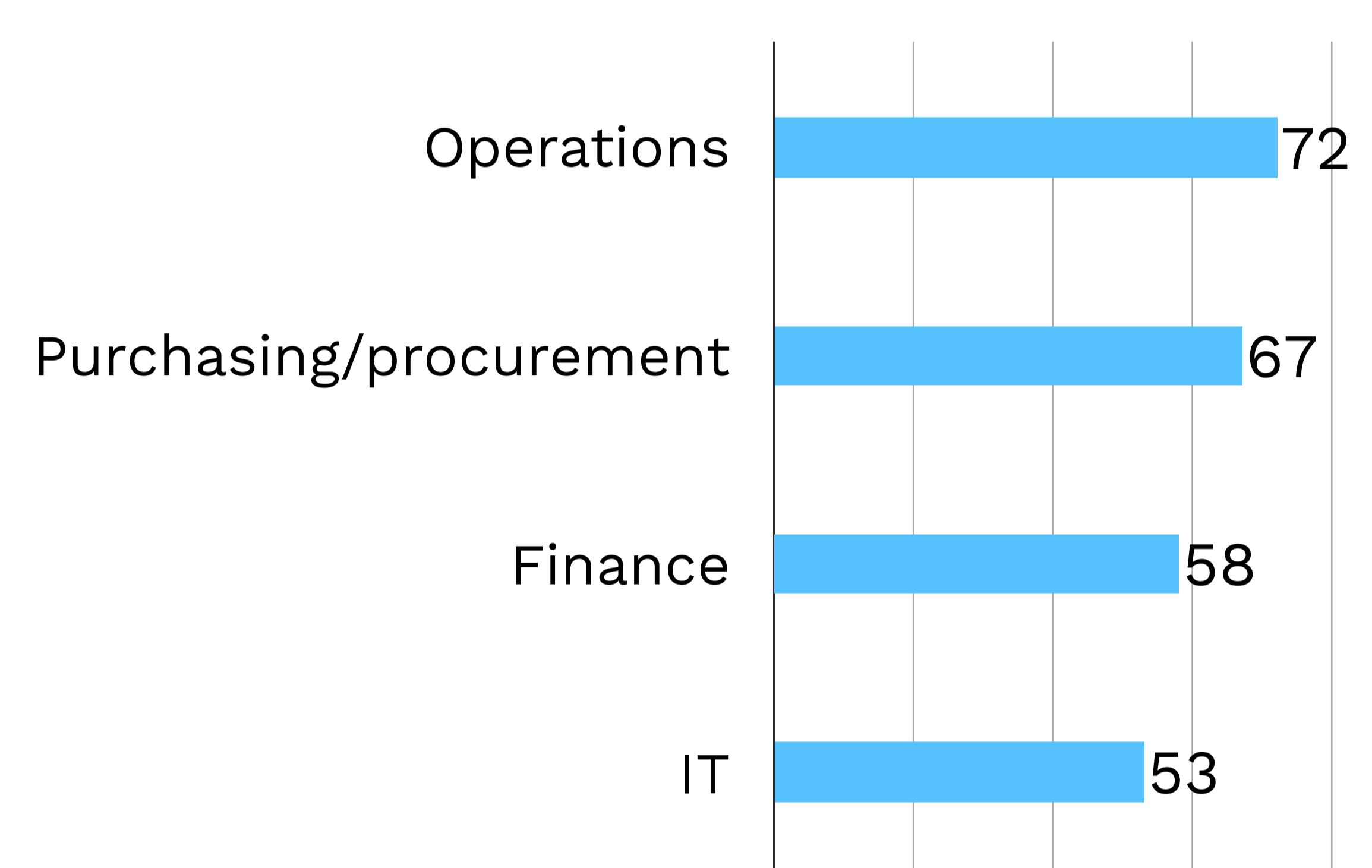
Transalis commissioned an independent, market-leading research company to interview 250 senior decision makers working in operations, procurement, finance and IT for retailers, wholesalers, distributors, transporters, construction and manufacturers.

Respondents are broken down as follows:

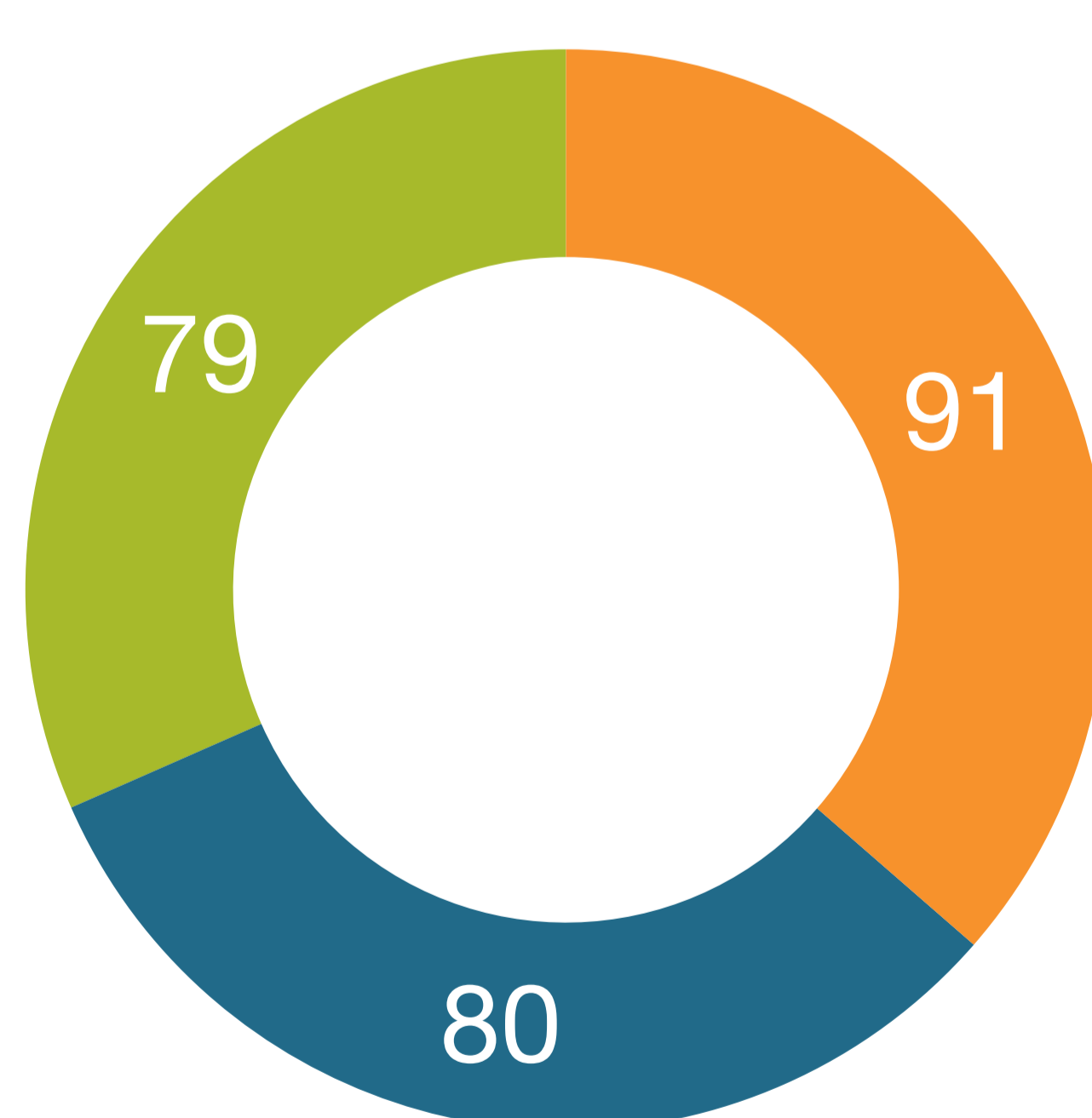
### ...by organisation size



### ...by department

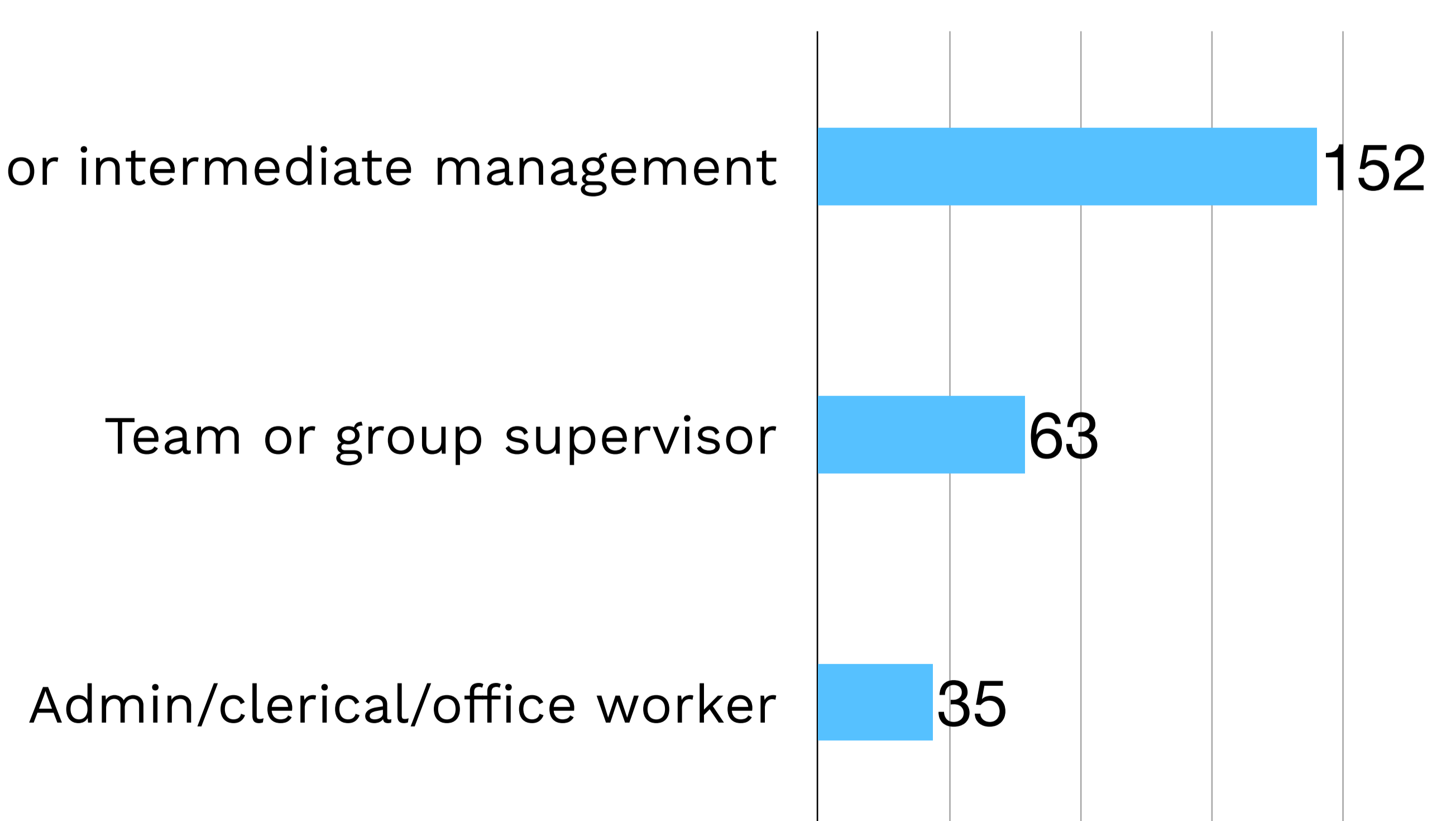


### ...by organisation sector



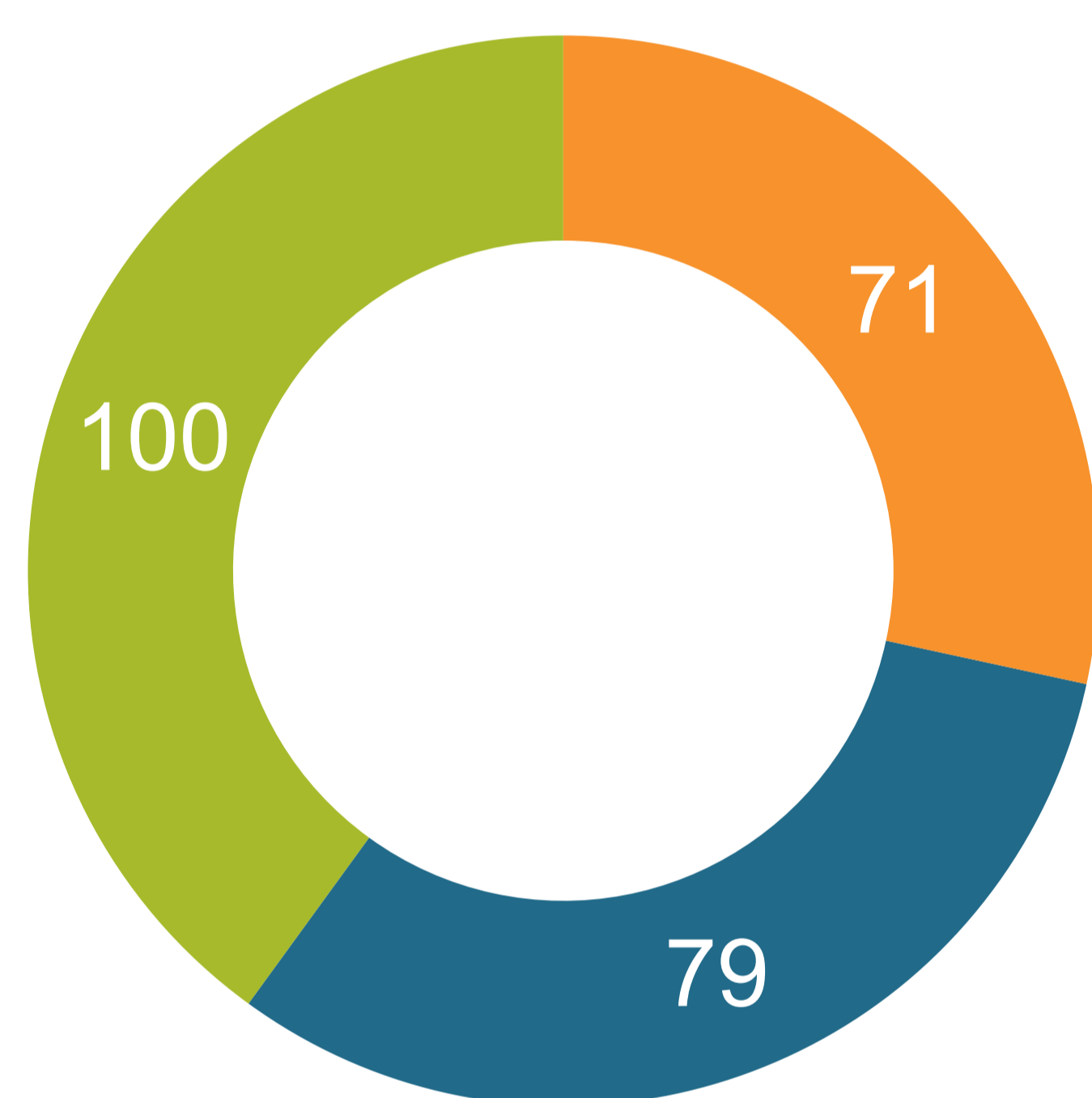
- Retail, wholesale, distribution and transport
- Construction and property
- Manufacturing and production

### ...by position



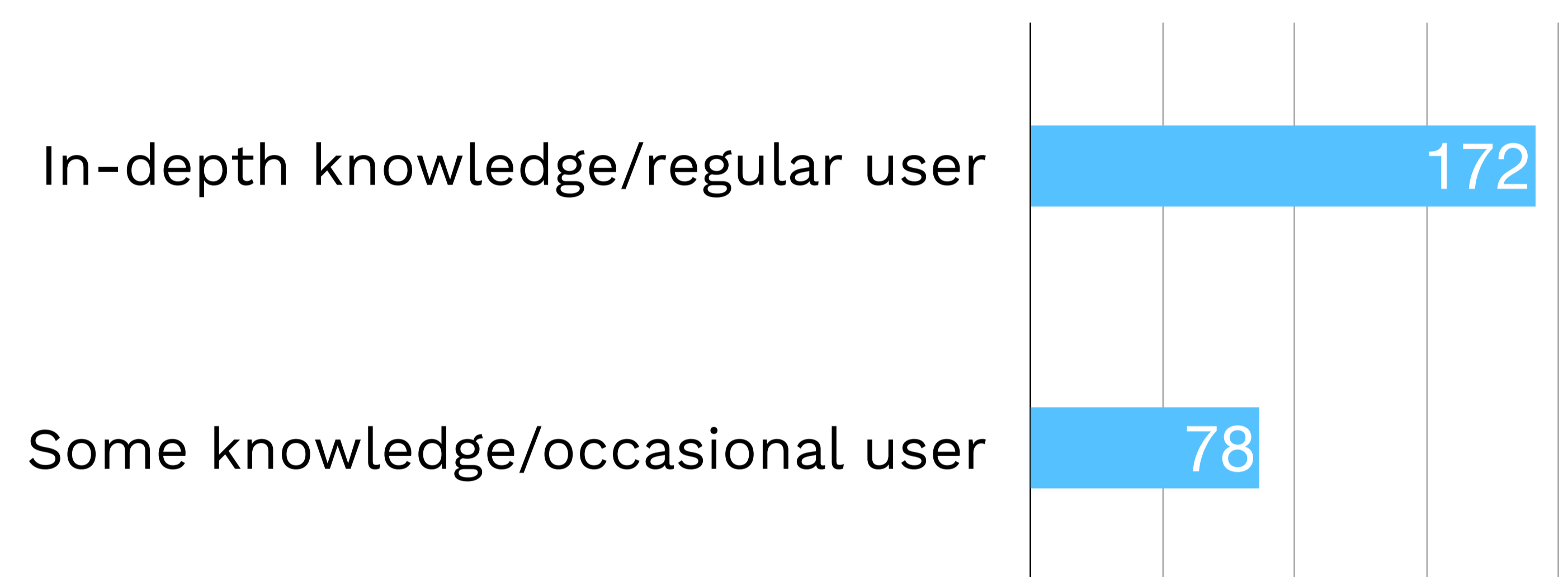
## APPENDIX: Survey respondents

**...by revenue**



- £5 million to £25 million
- £25 million to £50 million
- £50 million to £100 million

**...by level of involvement**





## Contact us:

Talk to us today to reduce the complexity of buying and managing your EDI solution and trading network. Transalis is your dependable credible alternative.

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