

Call Centres in Sweden

A description of orientation, human resource practices
and performance in internal and external call centres

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Preface

This study is part of *The Global Call Center Industry Project (GCC)*. A Global Benchmarking Survey of Human Resource Practices and Performance in Call Centers. The project was initiated by Professor Rosemary Batt, ILR School, Cornell University, USA, and Professor Stephen Wood and Dr David Holman, Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, UK. Corresponding studies are being carried out by researchers at a number of universities in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Australia in a total of more than 20 countries, and country reports are being produced. These studies will be brought together in various comparative articles and reports.

This report is the empirical country report from the Swedish company survey. It was published in Swedish in March 2006 and this is a translation of a revised version (Translation by Anne Cahling.) Some comparisons have been introduced with another study of call centres in Sweden. In contrast to the GCC project's surveys aimed at managers, the other study has directed most of its questions to individual call centre workers.

Professor Åke Sandberg, team leader of the MITIOR programme at Arbetslivsinstitutet (the Swedish National Institute for Working Life – NIWL) and the Royal College of Technology (KTH) and its School of Computer Science and Communication, was contacted by his colleague Steven Wood and subsequently initiated and planned the Swedish study, asking Dr Christer Strandberg at Mid Sweden University to lead the empirical work.

Field work was carried out by the Scandinavian Center for Call and Contact Services (SCCCS) in Sveg, under the direction of Marit Hult. The field work was funded by the Swedish Savings Banks Foundation in Jämtland County. Most of the initial analysis was done by Kent Norman, MBA, of Mid Sweden University, and he also drafted a first raw manuscript. His work was funded by Mid Sweden University and KTH. Christer Strandberg, funded by Mid Sweden University and the NIWL, and Åke Sandberg wrote the final report.

Rolf Dalin, a statistician at Mid Sweden University, contributed valuable input during the analysis work and the presentation of the results. We thank him for his efforts. We also thank Allan Toomingas at the NIWL who read and commented upon an earlier version of this report and suggested valuable comparisons with his own call centre project. Finally thanks to Rose, Stephen and David for their competent and friendly way of coordinating the GCC and for stimulating project meetings with the international team. In further publications we intend to introduce comparisons with other countries using our common international data set.

Stockholm and Sundsvall in January 2007

Åke Sandberg and Christer Strandberg

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

1 Background

Rosemary Batt from Cornell University in the US together with Steven Wood and David Holman from Sheffield University in the UK initiated an international study of call centres with the focus on human resource (HR) practices and performance, known as the Global Call Center Industry Project (GCC) (see Holman et al 2007). A joint questionnaire was produced which has been translated and used in those countries that expressed interest in participating in the study. A group of researchers from each respective country has been responsible for their particular study. The intention is to report the studies as separate country studies, as well as within the global study which will make comparisons between the participating countries. The initiators of the GCC wanted to involve countries with differing types of labour relations and attitudes towards personnel employed at call centres. In this context, Scandinavia and Sweden offered an interesting comparison. One particular reason for participating in the project is that there has not yet been a major study of Swedish call centres that focuses on HR practices and performance in a broad perspective.

A project that has partly focused on HR practices in Swedish call centres is “Working conditions and health in a sample of call centres in Sweden”. This project was a cooperative venture between the National Institute for Working Life (Arbetslivsinstitutet), the Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Västernorrland County Council and the Institute for Psychosocial Medicine at Karolinska Institutet. An objective of the project has been to learn more about the situation in call centres in order to support the development of working conditions that contribute to long-term, sustainable employment. The project was conducted and carried out among 28 Swedish call centres 2001-2003, and questionnaires have been answered by 1,200 call centre operators/agents. More in-depth observations, measurements, medical examinations and interviews have been conducted and carried out in 16 companies, involving approximately 160 operators/agents. (Toomingas et al, 2003; Norman, 2005).

2 Some points of departure for the study

Call centres are an activity usually defined as “an organisation whose main purpose is to work with customers over distances, supported by information technology -- mainly computer supported telecommunications” (see e.g. Stoltz & Moberg, 2002, p. 2). Although the telephone is still the primary channel of communication, the trend is towards the use of a number of different communication channels, such as e-mail and the Internet (Strandberg, 2003). A term increasingly used to clarify the transition from one to a number of media or channels of communication is “contact centres”.

Call centres are growing due to several factors. von Otter and Sandberg (2001) based on a collection of articles¹ identify: “lean production and management, outsourcing,

¹ Special issue of *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, vol. 22, No 1, with contributions on call centres in several countries by George Callaghan, Paul Thompson, Philip Taylor, Peter Bain, Ranald Richardson, Vicki Belt, Lutz P Michel and Per Norling. One theme is a growing role of trade unions in humanising call centre practices. As all call centres in the Swedish sample in our study have collective agreements and unions we cannot here make comparisons based on the unionisation dimension, but this may be done in a future comparative study based on the GCC international data set.

economies of scale; new information and communications technology, the Internet, intranets, extranets and so on; regional differences in access to personnel, wage differences and so forth, as well as public support for establishing call centres in regions with employment problems.”

In Sweden and other countries such as the US and the UK, call centres have long been regarded as a sector or an industry consisting of specialised companies. It includes companies that undertake outsourced customer-related service on behalf of another, known as external call centres. Most call centres in Sweden are however internal operations, meaning a department or unit that is part of an organisation with a different primary activity. It is estimated that in Sweden, about 75–80% of all call centre operations are internal.²

Particular public attention to new specialised companies is not unique to the growing call centre activities. We have seen similar attention given to other, new, ICT-related industries. In a study of Internet and multimedia production (interactive media) Augustsson and Sandberg (2004), after first investigating start-up specialised Internet consultants, turned to in-house interactive media activities in Swedish companies and organisations in any sector (from hospitals and public authorities to banks) and they then found that the internal Internet activities had a higher volume than the specialised outsourced ones. They also found that the in-house operations had rather different forms of work organisation, composition of the work force etc. In this report the reader will find that the internal – external dimensions (in-house – outsourced) constitute a key factor to understanding the character of various call centres, work characteristics as well as management practices.

Sometimes, call centres are seen as synonymous with external operations, while internal operations are usually regarded as customer service or customer support. This is not a rule however; there are variations. There are other titles too, such as Information Centre Customer Interaction Centre, Customer Service and Support Centre (see e.g. Strandberg, 2003).

There is also another trend that primarily involves internal operations, namely that customer services are being given greater responsibility for customers and becoming more clearly linked to other departments within the company that handle customer issues (see e.g. Strandberg, 2003). This is bringing us towards a radical shift in operations, towards CRM (Customer Relationship Management). The following definition of a call centre is equivalent to that of CRM:

“A co-ordinated system of people, processes, technologies, strategies that effectively integrates organizational resources and multiple channels of communication to enable customer interactions that create value for the customer and organization” (Cleveland & Minnucchu, 2000, p. 45).

In this study, we wish to examine call centre operations. We thus include internal as well as external activities, and inbound as well as outbound calls. In-house operations are sometimes called internal call centres, and companies that carry out outsourced operations are in the same way called sub-contractor or external call centres. The focus of our study, then, is on the operations, not on whether the

² These figures are based on information from the ISA (Invest in Sweden Agency) in the form of Power Point slides, based on the ISA's own information and information from consultant Philip Cohen and the Call Center Institute.

different parts are internal or external, or whether they should be regarded as a sector. In the following text, we sometimes write “companies” regardless of whether we are referring to external call centre companies or an internal activity that might, in terms of organisation, be a separate company or a department within the parent organisation; in the latter case we sometimes write “call centre units”. In the following we will mostly use the terms internal and external call centres.

As we are running courses and seminars with participants both from internal and external companies we can see that they have different views in several areas. For instance we can see that participants from external companies are more focused on productivity (e.g. minutes per call) than internal companies. This difference has also been noticed in the earlier mentioned study by Toomingas et al (2003). Other differences between internal and external companies have also been identified by Toomingas et al (2003). For instance they have seen that employees in internal companies have more learning opportunities, can participate to a greater extent in planning and developing their own work, and are less absent from work than employees in external companies. Even if there has been a great interest among researchers for the call centre sector, eventual differences between internal and external companies are seldom made explicit. A possible explanation can be, as we pointed out earlier, that it is common to look at call centres as an industry of specialised companies and not as an activity that takes place both in specialised companies and as an in-house service in any type of company in any industry or sector. A recently published article (Walsh & Deery, 2006) supports our view and demonstrates clearly the need to make a clear distinction between internal and external call centres.

A main research question in our study is in what way do in-house, internal call centres differ from external, outsourced call centres when it comes to HR strategies and outcomes?

The *aim* of our study is to describe call centres in Sweden with an emphasis on business orientation, human resource practices and performance when it comes to productivity as well as work and employment conditions, and in so doing specifically look at possible differences between internal and external call centres.

The study covers five key areas with a varying number of sub-areas, which are all outlined in the table of contents above.

3 Design and implementation of the study

Besides being a sector undergoing change, the call centre sector is one that has grown in recent years and is also expected to continue to grow. According to initiated observers, 20,000 people were employed at call centres in Sweden in 1997. Five years later, in 2002, the number of employees in Swedish call centres had grown to around 60,000 at 1,290 call centres. Annual growth is expected to be between 10 and 15% between 2002 and 2007.³

One problem in carrying out this study is that there is no comprehensive register of all these call centres. We had a good idea of the external companies, however, thanks to

³ Op cit.

the database being built up by SCCCS⁴ in Sveg. SCCCS has in the first phase created a complete register of all external companies in Sweden, primarily based on the SNI's business activity code "call centre services".⁵

The internal companies were more problematic however, since these, as described above, are not a separate sector and thus have no business activity code. We have therefore built up a list of internal operations with the help of individuals working as consultants or in various call centre associations and organisations.⁶ This supplementary method is reminiscent of snowball selection. This method is often used where it is very difficult, or impossible, to find a complete framework for selection. "You assume that you know, and can reach, a small portion of the target population. After that, you ask these people to tell you what contacts they have in the same target population, after which you identify and contact the new individuals. The procedure continues like this until you think that you can't reach any more people." (Dahmström, 2000, p.196). The problem with snowball selection is that "you can never say with complete certainty that the framework is complete" (*op.cit.*)

Some companies were sometimes present on more than one list. After removal of these "doubles", we finally obtained a population of 642 call centres. This is equivalent to about half of the number of call centre companies in Sweden, according to the ISA's compilation.

All of these companies were contacted in early 2004 in a telephone call in which we described the project and asked whether they were interested in participating in the study. Of the companies contacted, 347 wanted to participate in the study; this is just over half of all companies contacted.

For internal companies, the questionnaires were sent to the unit manager, or equivalent, for the call centre operations, and for external companies it was sent to the CEO or equivalent. These 347 individuals received the translated Swedish questionnaire with an accompanying letter. They were asked to answer the questions on the basis of the biggest call centre, if the organisation had more than one. The unit of study, in other words, is the workplace.

The respondents were asked to fill in the form and return it, either by letter or by fax. Of these, just under half (149) of the companies answered the questionnaire.

The companies that had not sent in the questionnaire were questioned in the autumn of 2004. Of these, about 40 companies promised to send in the questionnaire and 12 companies did so. This meant that we received a total of 161 answered questionnaires, corresponding to a response frequency of 25%.

After the questionnaire had been translated and distributed and the fieldwork had proceeded halfway, it transpired that the centrally produced questionnaire had been partly reworked. Some of this reworking could be dealt with by adapting the coding schedule, e.g. "tick the box" questions could be recoded to yes or no answers. Some questions had a completely different wording however. The question about average

⁴ SCCCS stands for Swedish Center for Call and Contact Services.

⁵ Telephone service operations (call center activities) in SNI 2002 include customer service associated with technical services on behalf of another, CCs answering inbound calls from customers using Automatic Call Distribution (ACD), Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) or Interactive Voice Response (IVR), call centres with outwardly-oriented business, sales and marketing towards customers. Source: <http://www.scb.se/templates/Listning235024.asp>.

⁶ 5 The following consultancy companies were asked: 4br, Bright verksamhetsutveckling and ISA

salary increase in per cent/full-time employee/year for employees and managers (question C1.1.a) had been changed into a question about the size of the annual salary of a typical employee and manager.

Some of the questions were not precise enough. This applies to the question of “how many calls do your employees handle on average per day” (D 1.1.f) which should have been worded “how many calls does *one* employee handle on average per day”. Even if the question “how many e-mails does each employee receive on average per day from company management” (D1.1 g) is precise enough in our view, it seems that a number of people understood the question to mean all employees. It would, in other words, have been necessary to emphasise here that it applied to *one* employee. The question “what percentage of daily customer calls are received by AVR or similar” (E1) should have been worded “what proportion (in percent) of total daily customer calls are calls without any human contact at all.”

We chose to follow up the answers we had received by asking for answers to these reworded questions. This work was extremely time-consuming. We could note that some respondents had left their jobs and we had to find new people. Additionally, obtaining new information always takes time. Nor were the results particularly good, even although we sent a reminder. Despite this, we have chosen to present the results of these reworded questions, but the results should of course be interpreted with caution.

The response frequency for the different questions is fairly high throughout. One pattern that can be distinguished is that the response frequency is somewhat lower for questions that require information to be gathered from different reports and systems.

4 Generalisability and analysis schedule

A key question is of course the degree to which it is possible to make generalisations from the results, on the basis of the answers received. As outlined previously, there are no reliable statistics about call centres in Sweden in terms of number, growth, different types of call centres etc. According to information from the ISA (Invest in Sweden Agency), it is estimated that the majority of call centres in Sweden, 8 out of 10, are organised internally and that the rest are external operations.⁷ If we look at the distribution of external companies and internal companies in this study – 73% internal, 24% external and 3% mixed, we seem to have achieved a good balance in the responses.

The questionnaire that this study is based on is quite extensive (15 pages) and in many cases a number of different people in the companies had to be involved in providing different pieces of information. This is of course a contributing factor in the fact that the response frequency was not higher than 25%.

Apart from reporting the answers to the various questions, there was an idea in the global GCC project that the answers could be analysed on the basis of sector, geographical market served, strategy and whether the company has internal or external operations.

⁷ ISA, based on information from Datamonitor, Call Center Institute and the call center consultant Philip Cohen.

We have chosen to primarily carry out the analyses on the basis of internal and external operations, where a number of questions show quite large differences in the responses. With regard to sector, the results demonstrate that there are no really dominant sectors. We have chosen to report the responses by sector for some questions however. The geographical market was not of interest in analysing the results of the various questions, since most of the companies work mainly in the Swedish market and only a small number of companies work on the international market. The issue of the companies' strategies is in itself very interesting, but was much too imprecise to be able to be used here and may need to be discussed further in another context.

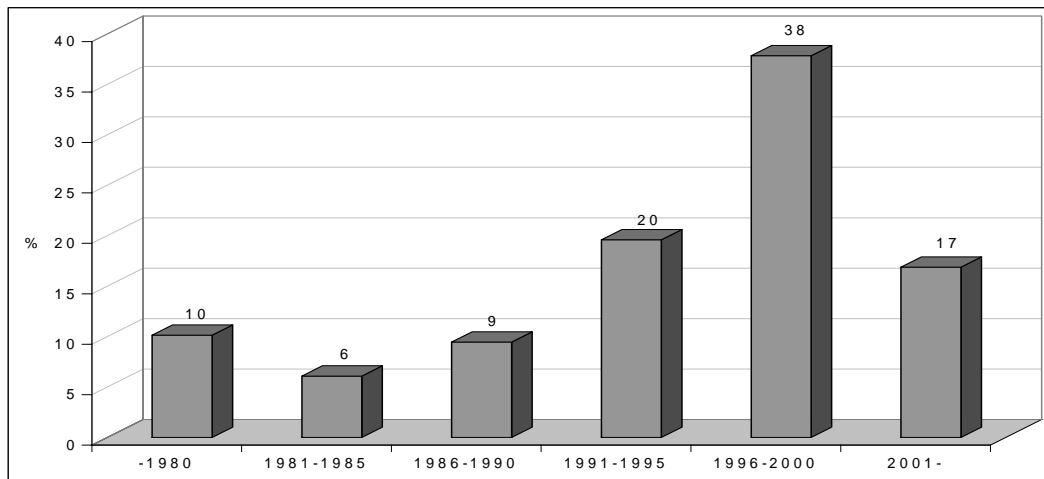
Continuously we are going to compare data with the results from the earlier mentioned project "Working conditions and health in a sample of call centres in Sweden", whenever the questions are comparable. Primarily we make comparisons with the study by Toomingas et al (2003) henceforth named the NIWL-WHCC project. This is perhaps the place to emphasise the fact that whereas in the WHCC project survey questions about work were directed to individual workers/agents, in our study managers answered the questions, so what *we will be reporting is the managements' view of work in the company.*

PART B: THE PARTICIPATING CALL CENTRES IN GENERAL

This section provides a general description of participating call centres in terms of year of establishment, number of call centres in the organisation, and opening hours. It also illustrates organisational affiliation, type of calls, services offered, strategy, geographical market penetrated and sector affiliation.

5 Some basic information

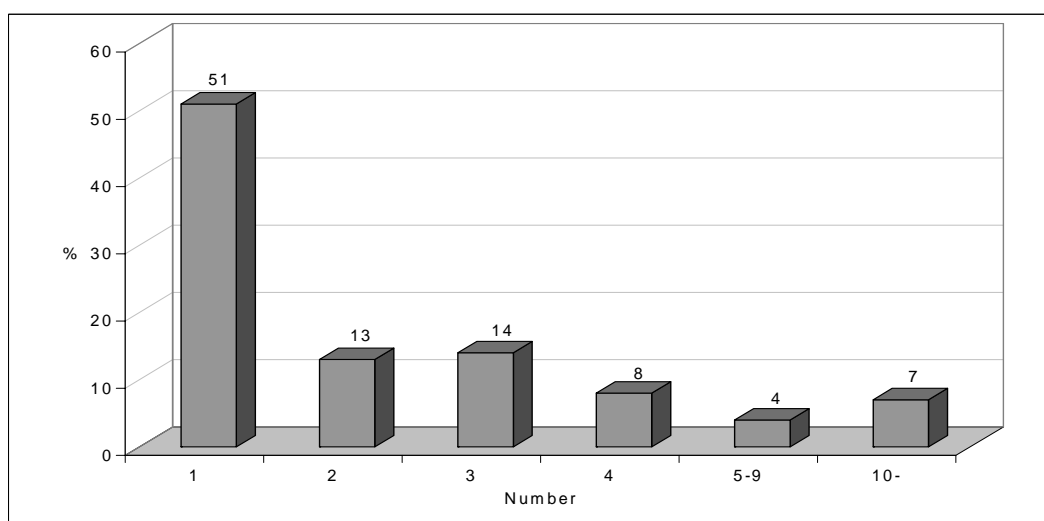
Figure 1: Year of establishment of the call centres (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=148 (A8)

Almost 40% of the call centres that responded were established between 1996 and 2000. Over half were established in 1996 or later. It is possible that the most newly established companies may be underrepresented because they were unknown to our informants at the time we were establishing the population.

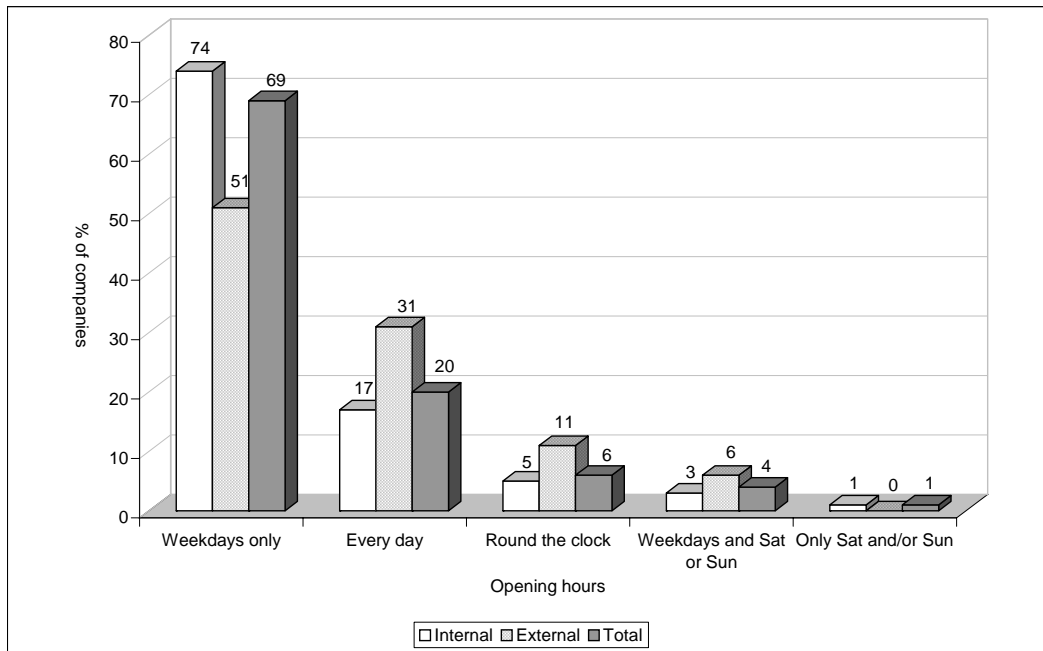
Figure 2: Numbers of call centres in the organisation (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=161 (A6-7)

Most – over half – of the call centres that answered consist of one call centre unit. Fewer than 1 of 3 consist of 2-3 call centre units.

Figure 3: Opening hours among internal and external companies (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=142-160 (B5)

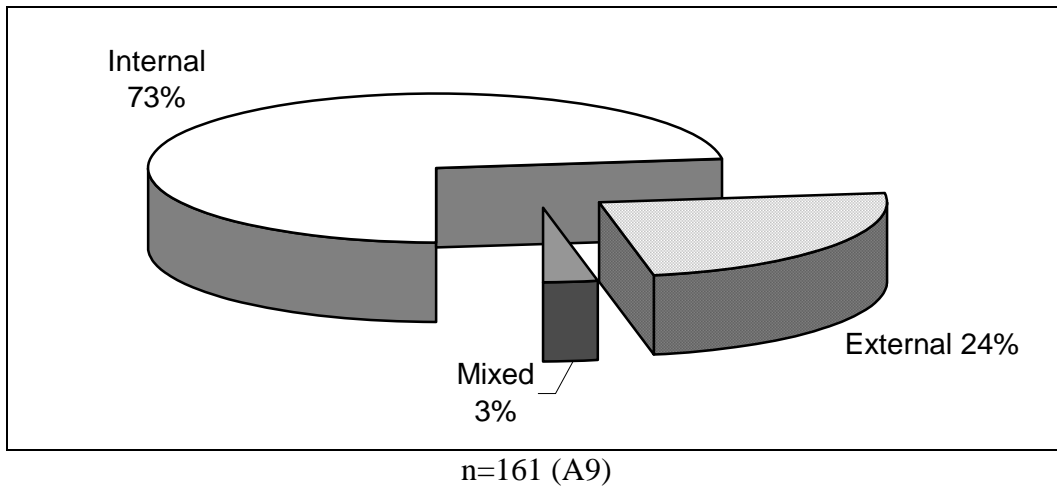
Most companies are only open on weekdays, something which is particularly common among internal companies. A fifth are open 7 days a week and 6 of 100 are open round the clock. From the diagram, we can note that it is more common that external companies are open every day and in some cases around the clock.

The average opening hours on weekdays are 9 hours, which is also the median.

In the NIWL-WHCC study the question about “opening hours” was directed to the agents and consequently the individuals’ working hours, so the results are not quite comparable. But we can see from the NIWL-WHCC study that 61% of the agents work everyday, 1% work weekends and 43% have various working times during a week. Another finding is that it is somewhat more common among the internal operations to work weekdays only.

6 Type of operation

Figure 4: Proportion of companies where the business is internal or carried out on behalf of other customers (external) (per cent)

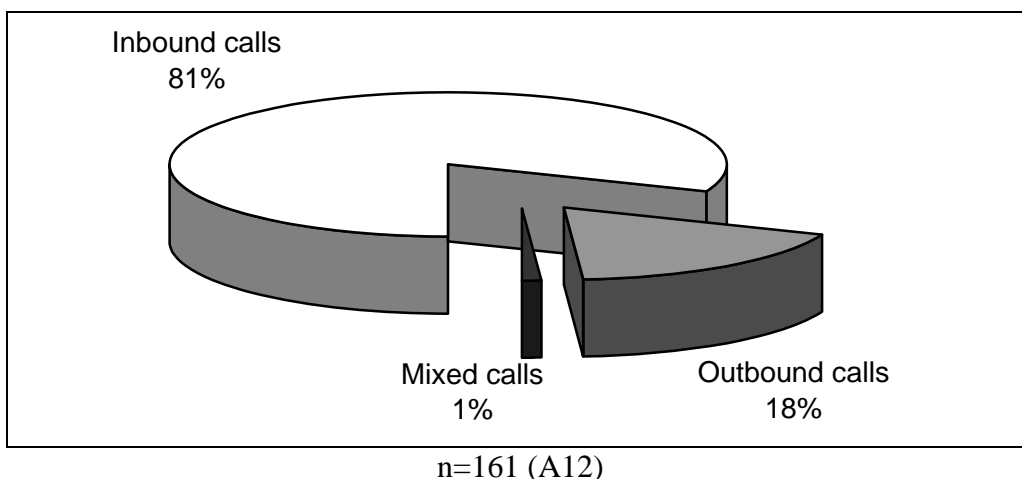


Just under 3/4 of call centres studied are internal operations, while just under a quarter are external companies. Some companies' business is mixed.

Distribution of the companies studied agrees well with the general image of the call centre market in Sweden that we have seen in a number of other contexts, i.e. that the relationship between internal and external companies is 75/25.

In the NIWL-WHCC study the proportions of internal and external call centres were 57% and 43% respectively, i.e. a preponderance of external companies compared with our study. As we pointed out earlier and that is also clear in the NIWL-WHCC report, there are quite big differences in several ways between internal and external companies. Therefore we will primarily highlight results from the NIWL-WHCC whenever these two groups of companies are visible.

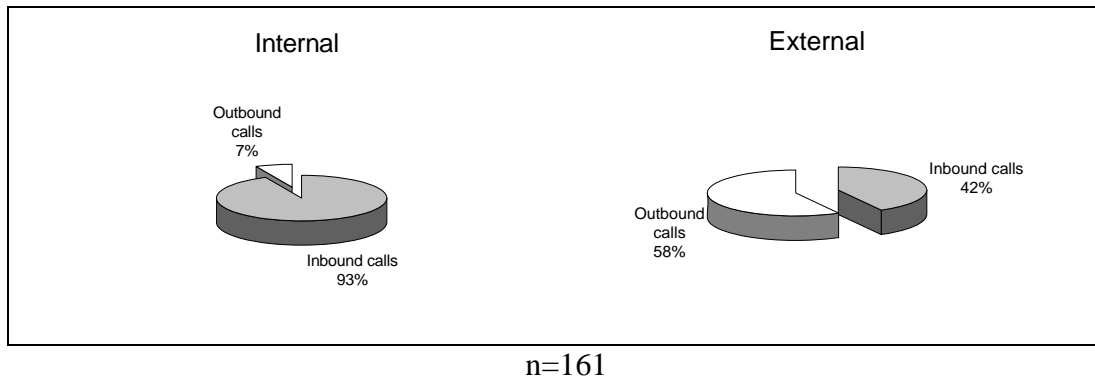
Figure 5: Proportion of call centres with inbound and outbound calls, respectively (per cent)



Eight out of ten companies have mostly inbound calls while just under two out of ten have mostly outbound calls. A small number of companies have said that they mostly have both, which can possibly be interpreted as meaning that they have roughly the same amount of both.

In the NIWL-WHCC study the proportions of inbound and outbound calls were 86% and 14% respectively, i.e. proportions quite similar to the results in our study.

Figure 6: Proportion of companies with mostly inbound and outbound calls, respectively, among internal and external companies (per cent)



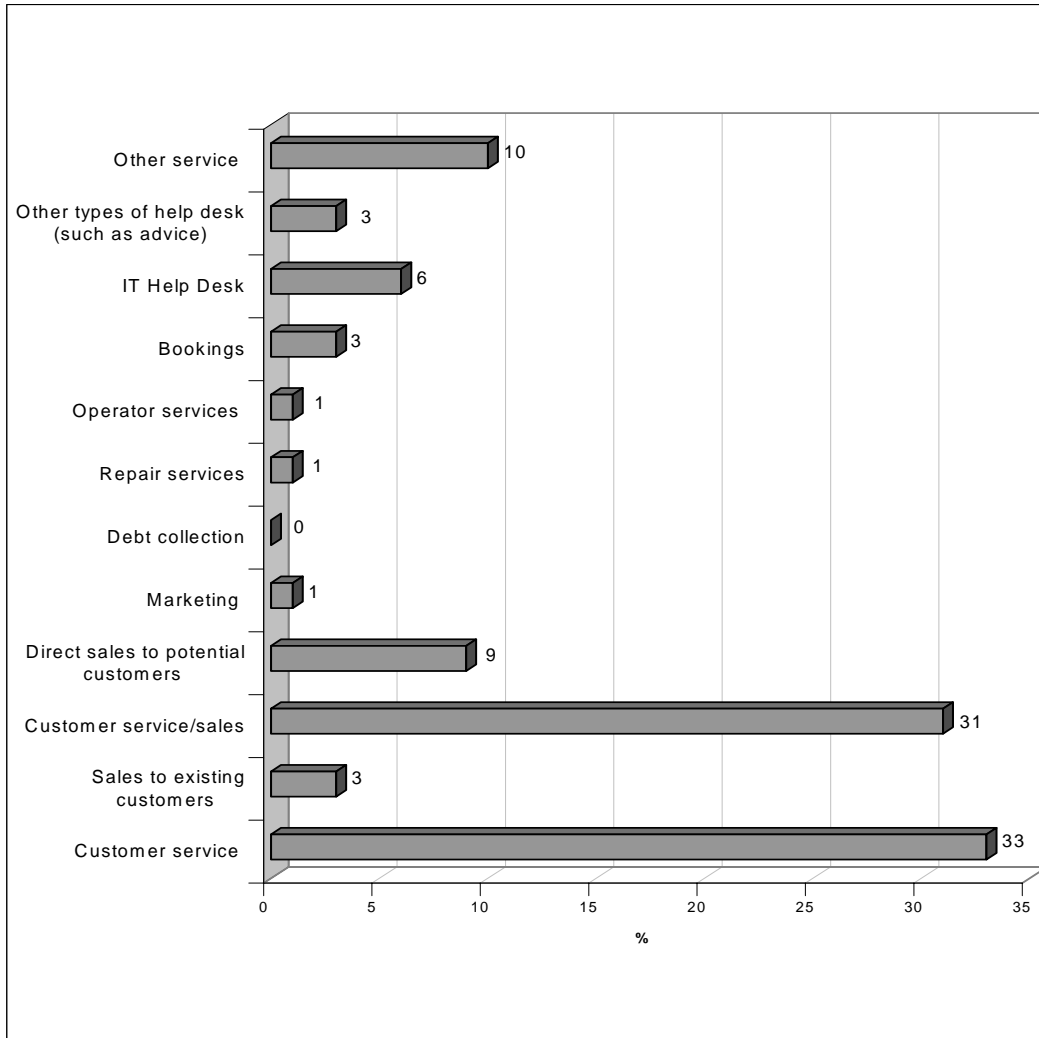
A more detailed analysis of the material demonstrates that more than 90% of the internal companies have mostly inbound calls. For the external companies, the distribution is completely different. Here, less than half have stated that they have mostly inbound calls. This means that the responses from internal call centres to a relatively large degree follow the responses for inbound calls; the opposite applies to external and outbound calls. The differences are clearer however in the case of internal compared to external, so we have chosen to primarily comment on the results on the basis of that distinction. The different corporate and organisational structures of internal and external call centres also make the analysis of differences between them more relevant.

In the NIWL-WHCC study the proportion of companies with inbound and outbound calls among internal and external companies is in one respect different, namely that there are more inbound calls among the external companies than in our study.

7 Orientation of operations

The diagram below demonstrates the primary work activities provided by the call centres.

Figure 7: Primary work activity at the call centre (proportion of companies, per cent)

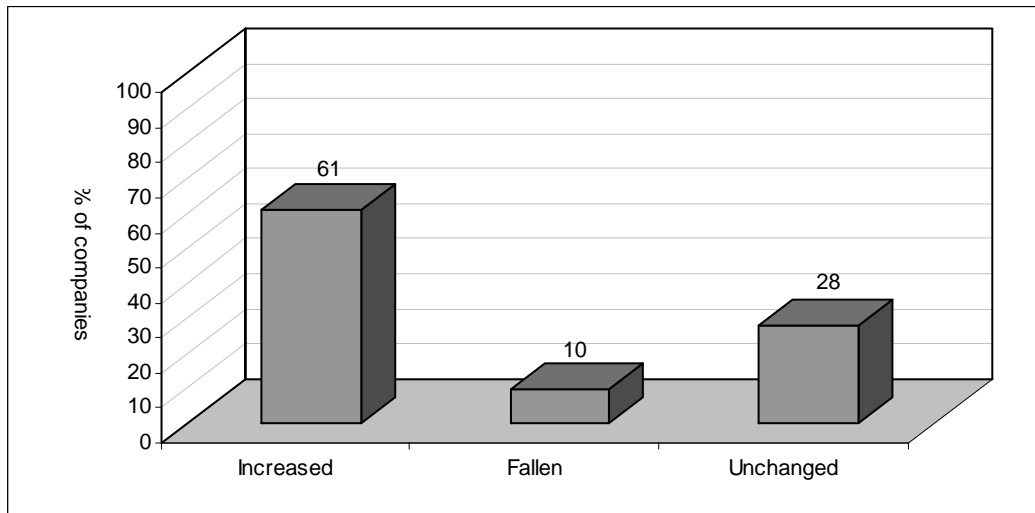


n=161 (A13)

We see here that the most common work activity is either customer service or customer service plus sales. These activities correspond to 33% and 31% respectively, i.e. in total, 2/3 of the companies provide a service, with or without sales activities. Fewer than one in ten have direct sales to customers.

If we had carried out the same measurement a number of years ago, it is not improbable that the proportion of companies focusing on customer service would have been greater, while the number with customer service+sales would have been fewer. In various contexts, we have noted that increasing numbers of call centres carry out sales activities when handling inbound calls. This is also supported by the following diagram.

Figure 8: Changes in sales income over the past 2 years (proportion of companies, per cent)

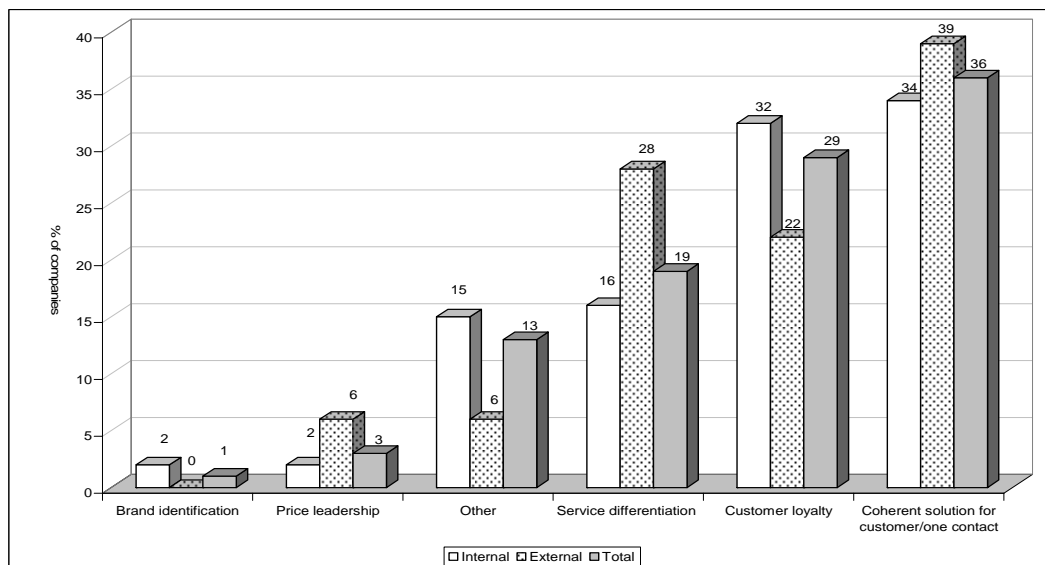


n=143 (D1.3)

Here we can see that most – six companies out of ten – say that their sales have increased over the past two years. Sales remain unchanged for just under three out of ten while only one in ten has had a fall in sales.

The companies were asked to state what they saw as their most important strategy, among 5 alternatives.

Figure 9: Call centre's main strategy in internal and external companies (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=158 (A14)

We see here that the most important main strategy is to provide a comprehensive/coherent solution for the customer (first contact resolution), closely followed by customer loyalty. Two out of ten companies see service differentiation (providing a

unique service) as their main strategy. Price leadership is not a particularly common main strategy among the call centre companies studied.

More than one company in ten has answered “other” to the question of the call centres’ main strategy. In such cases, there is no direct main strategy, but rather different key elements such as quality, satisfied customers, fast and secure service, availability etc., which can be included in a number of the “main strategies” with the exception of price leadership and possibly also brand identification.

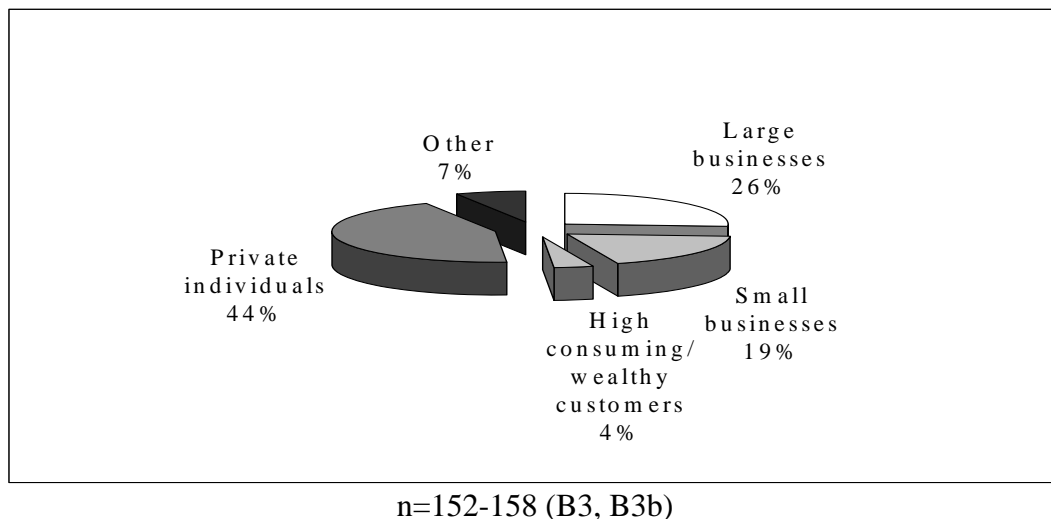
Again we find differences between internal and external call centres. The internal companies to a greater extent think that customer loyalty is the most important strategy compared to the external companies: 32% and 22%, respectively. Service differentiation is more important in the external companies than in the internal companies; 28% and 16%, respectively.

These differences are quite logical. External call centres often work with several clients, while an internal call centre focuses on its in-house customers. Even if a small number of call centres mention that they have price leadership as their main strategy, we can see that this strategy is more common at external call centres. Had we instead asked the call centres if they follow a ‘cost-strategy’ (cf. Porter, 1980) we would probably have seen a greater number mark this strategy compared to price leadership strategy.

Respondents were asked to say which customer segments were served by staff. Most companies, 71%, serve two or more customer segments. No direct trend is visible here; both internal and external companies serve a number of customer segments, and it is not unusual that the companies serve both private and corporate customers.

Companies providing services to several segments were asked to say which segment represents the biggest customer sector. The answer to this question, and the answers from companies that only provide service to one customer segment, are shown in Figure 10.

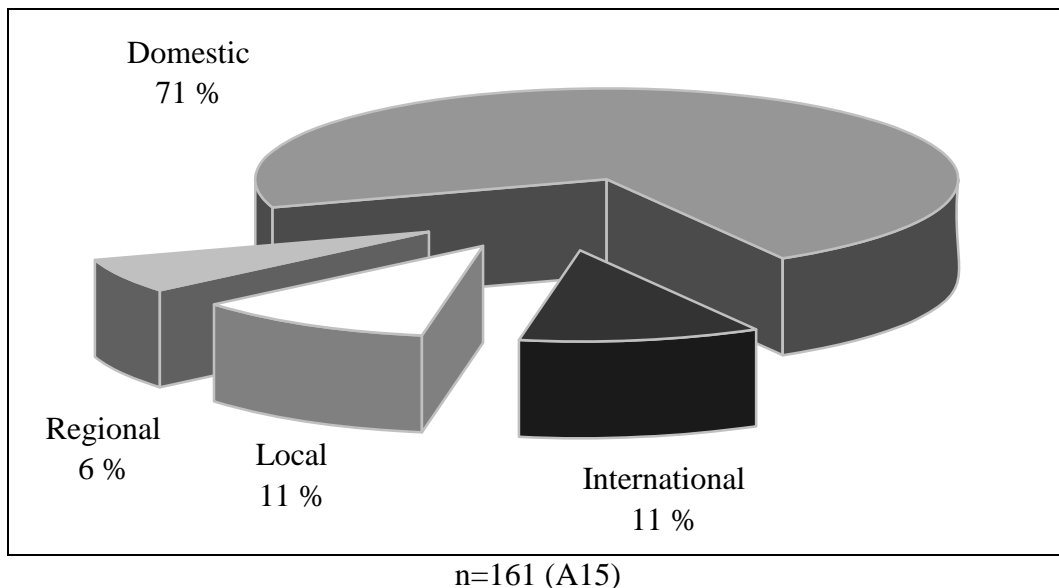
Figure 10: Main customer segment to which the call centres provide service (proportion of companies, per cent)



We can see here that the biggest single customer segment is private individuals. The second biggest customer segment is large businesses followed by small businesses. If we regard large and small businesses as one segment, the segment “businesses” is about the same size as the segment “individuals”. The segment “other”, which is relatively small, primarily contains internal customers, but also retailers, municipalities and county councils. The smallest segment is wealthy customers who are heavy consumers. This segment is not clearly defined however and can thus be understood in different ways, so this result must be interpreted with caution.

The internal companies to a somewhat greater degree provide service to the segment “small businesses” and other segments, while the external companies to a somewhat greater degree provide service to the segment “large businesses”. With respect to the segment “private individuals”, there is no difference between internal and external companies.

Figure 11: Main market of the call centres (proportion of companies, per cent)

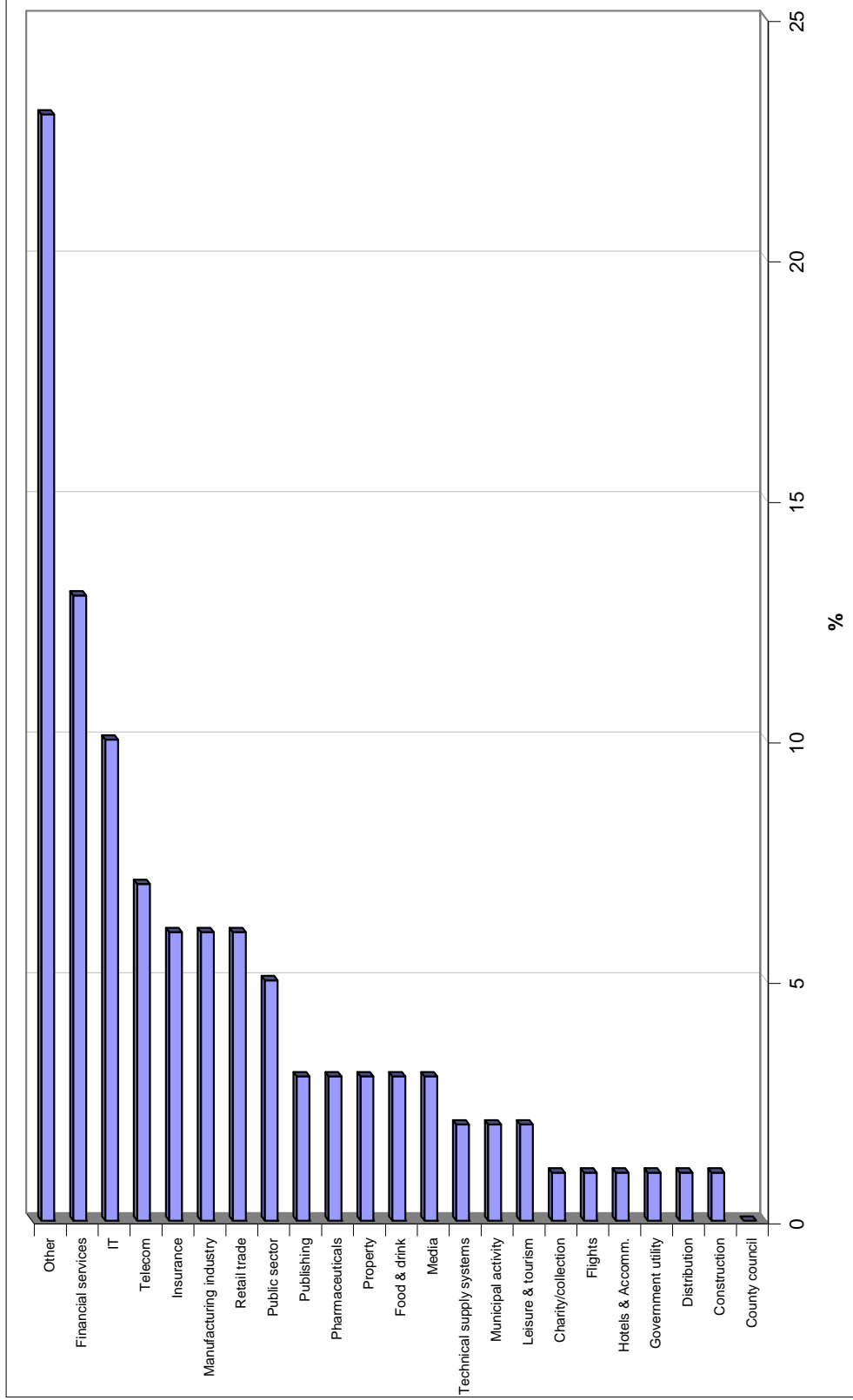


A clear majority of participating call centres see the domestic market as their main one. Only a few companies – 11% – have their emphasis in the international market while 17% have their emphasis in the local or regional market.

With respect to sector, just under 40% of the companies questioned operate in more than one sector. As expected, it is significantly more common for external companies to work in more than one sector than it is for internal companies to do so.

In the questionnaire a list of 22 different sectors were presented. The respondents were asked to mark the sector(s) in which they were working. If they reported more than one sector, they were asked to mark the main sector. The main sector in which the call centres operate is shown in the figure below.

Figure 12: Main sector in which the call centre operates (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=161 (A10)

The diagram shows that a number of different sectors are represented among the companies studied. Those sectors with the most companies are financial services (banking/finance) and IT. Other relatively frequent sectors are telecom, insurance, manufacturing industry, retail and the public sector. A relatively large number – just under one in four – were unable to find their sector in the 22 listed. The more common 'sectors' among these companies include market research (5 companies) energy (5), travel (5), post order (4) and information (4). These 23 companies represent 62% of the group, other sector.

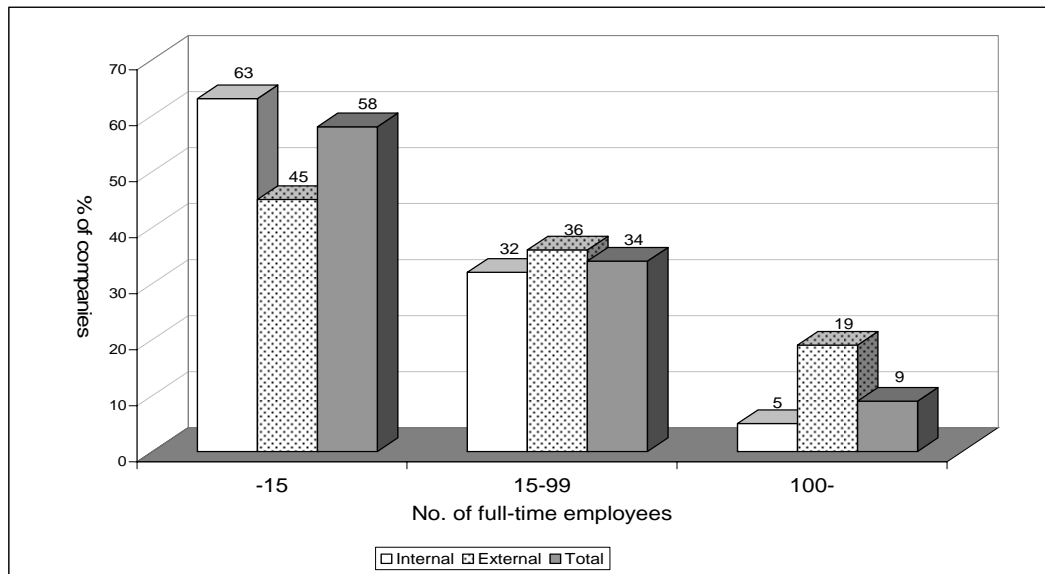
A more detailed analysis of the companies shows that among the internal companies banks form the biggest sector. This is a sector that does not usually outsource its customer services for security reasons. The telecom and IT sectors dominate among the external companies. (It is also very common for banks to keep another IT-related activity in-house, namely interactive media production, i.e. Internet and multimedia design and programming; Augustsson and Sandberg 2004)

PART C: CALL CENTRES AND THEIR PERSONNEL

This section describes the number of current and future employees, the number of employees per group manager/first line manager, periods of employment, staff turnover, absenteeism and the gender and educational background of employees.

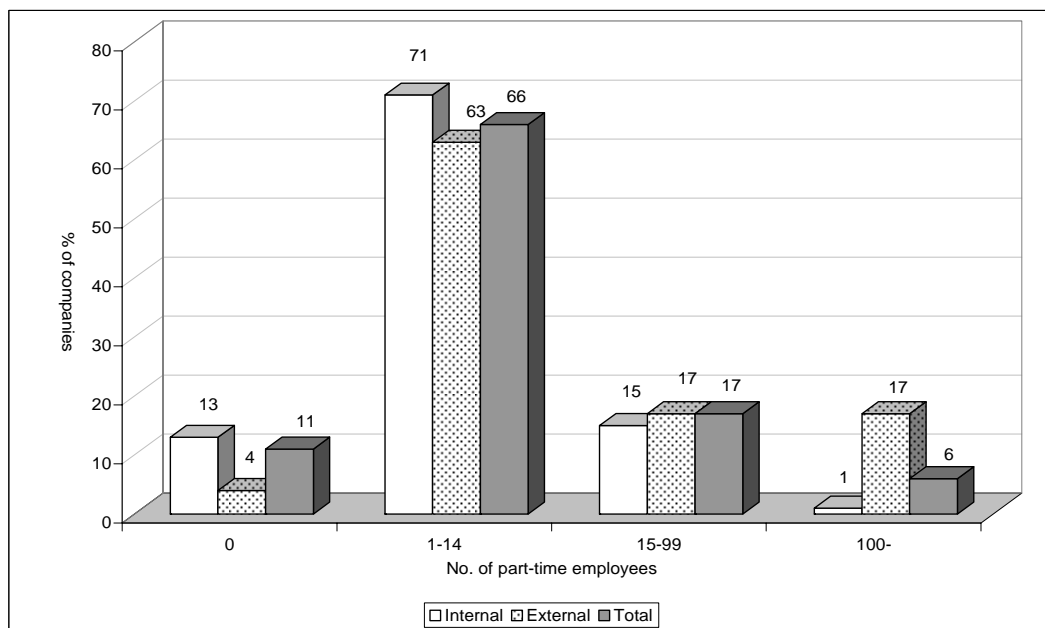
8 Employees

Figure 13: Proportion of full-time employees with customer contact among internal and external companies of different size (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=148 (B1)

Figure 14: Proportion of part-time employees with customer contact among internal and external companies of different size (proportion of companies)



n=106 (B1)

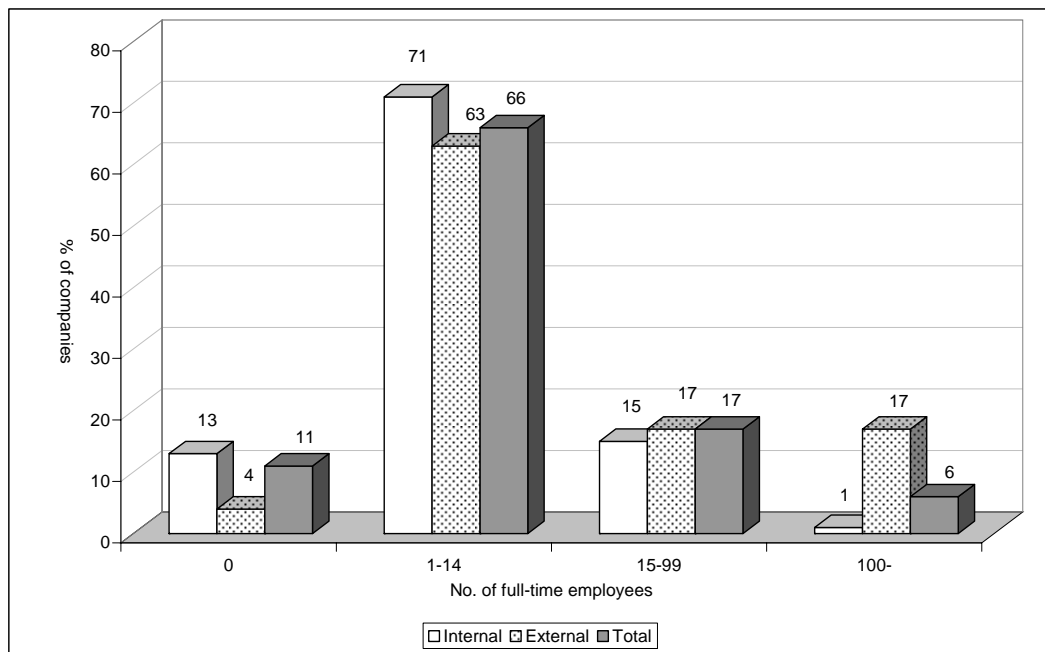
As shown in Figure 13 above, most of the companies are relatively small. Just under six in ten call centres have fewer than 15 full-time employees who have contact with customers, and only 9% are companies with 100 or more full-time employees who have contact with customers. From the diagram, we can also see that the small call centres are primarily internal companies, while the opposite applies to the large ones. The average for the 148 companies is about 35 full-time employees with customer contact.

Most companies – nine out of ten – also have part-time employees, which Figure 14 above shows. On average, these companies have 17 part-time employees who have contact with customers. The diagram above shows that here, too, it is primarily the external companies that are large companies.

Since there is a relatively large fall-off rate here (34%), the above results must be interpreted with caution. A missing answer can be interpreted to mean that they do not have any part-time employees. If we count the missing answers to mean that they do not have any part-time employees, the proportion of companies without part-time employees increases from 11% to 42%.

Personnel plans for next year – in this context, 2005 – are shown in the figure below.

Figure 15: Proportion of call centres (internal and external, respectively) that intend to reduce, maintain or increase their personnel in 2005 (per cent)



n=159 (F7)

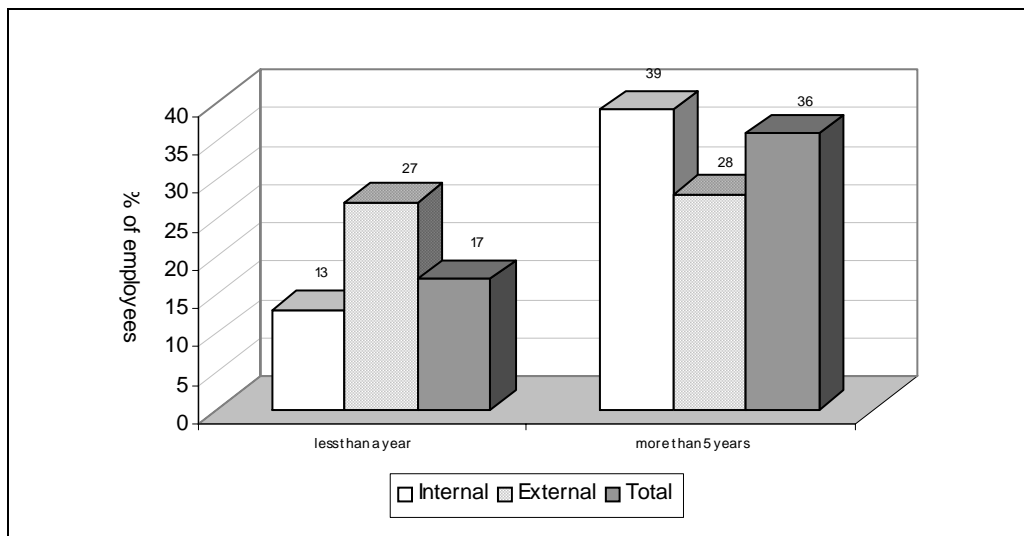
In total, just over half of the call centres do not intend to make any changes in the number of employees in the next year. Only 5% expect to reduce the number of employees and 39% of those asked expect to employ more people in the next year. There is, however, a rather large difference between the external companies and the internal companies. Just under 60% of external companies expect to increase their number of employees, while among internal companies the figure is just under one in three.

If we look at the number of employees with customer contact in relation to how many group managers (coaches) there are, it appears that the external companies on average have 18 employees per employed group manager.

For the internal companies, there are 13 employees with customer contact per employed group manager.

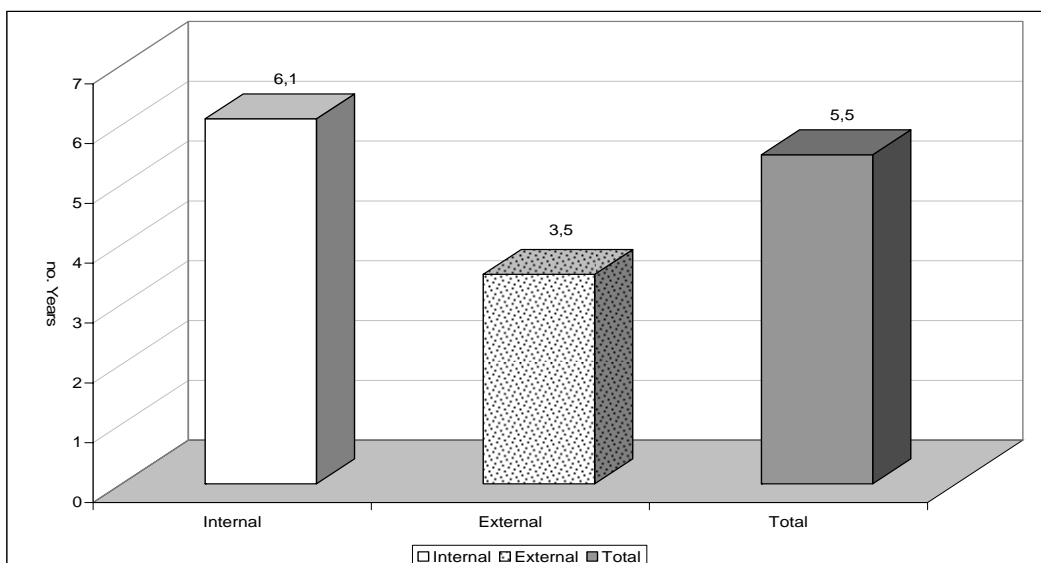
9 Time employed, staff turnover and absenteeism

Figure 16: Average no. of employees per company with a shorter period of employment than one year or more than 5 years, respectively, among internal and external companies (per cent)



n=132 (B10)

Figure 17: Average time employed for employees of internal and external companies (in years)

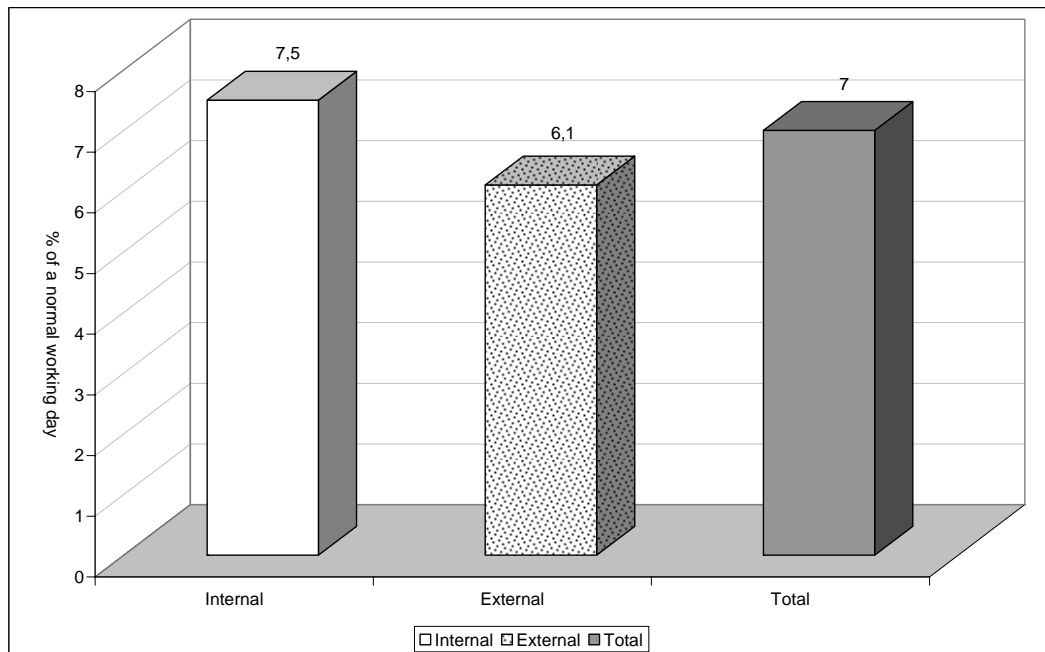


n=139 (B10)

The diagram shows that compared to the internal companies, external companies have employees with a shorter period of employment. We can note, among other things, that 27% of employees in the external companies have been employed for less than a year, compared to 13% for the internal companies, while 39% of the employees in internal companies have been employed for more than 5 years, compared to 28% for the external companies.

In the NIWL-WHCC study the average employee has been employed for 4 years, and the difference between internal and external companies is negligible.

Figure 18: Average unplanned absence per normal working day among internal and external companies (per cent of working hours)



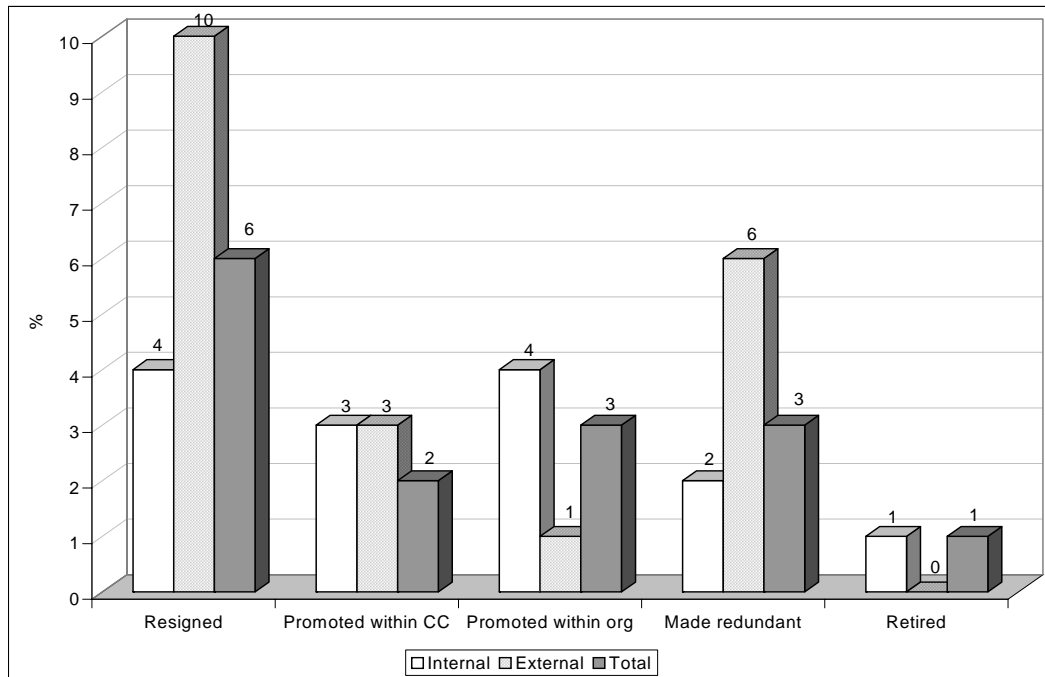
n=135 (B7)

Unplanned absence, which includes all types of absence, but not public holidays or vacations, is on average 7% of a normal working day. The figure is somewhat higher among the internal companies (7.5%) than in the external companies (6.1%).

In the NIWL-WHCC study, absence referred to the latest month and consists of two types of absence; sick leave and vacation/compensatory leave/on leave. If we regard sick leave as the same as unplanned absence, we can see the same pattern as in the NIWL-WHCC study, namely that the unplanned absence is higher among the external companies.

In total, an average of 15% of the personnel have left their jobs of their own volition or because of promotion within and outside the call centre, dismissal or retirement. This staff turnover is lower among the internal companies, an average of 14%, to be compared with an average of 20% for the external companies. How this staff turnover is distributed over the various types of business is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Average staff turnover among existing personnel in internal and external companies (proportion of staff, per cent)

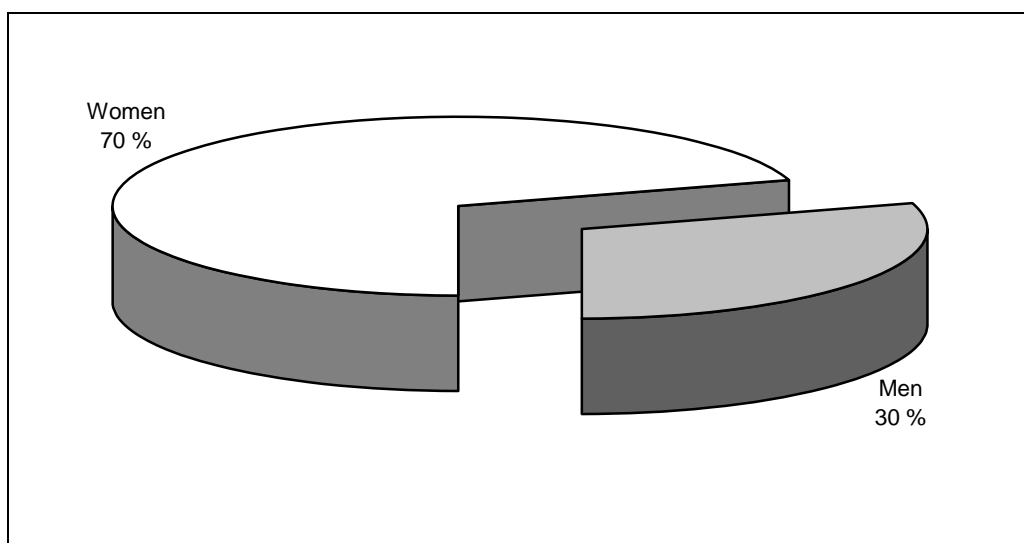


n=128-140 (B9)

We see here that it is much more common among the external companies that employees leave of their own volition or are dismissed, while opportunities for promotion outside the call centre operation but within the organisation are greater in the internal companies.

10 Gender and education

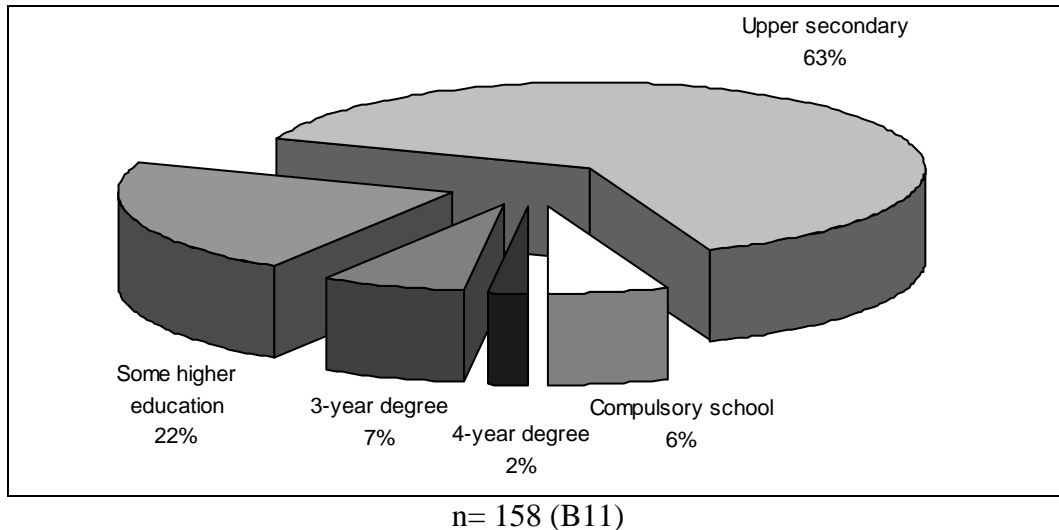
Figure 20: Gender distribution of employees (per cent)



n=158 (B13)

The proportion of women in the companies studied varies from zero to 100%. Only one company employs only men, however, while 14% of the companies consist solely of women. Distributed over all the companies studied, the proportion of women with permanent positions is on average 70%. This study thus confirms the common assumption that call centre operations are a highly female-dominated activity, which also corresponds with the result from the NIWL-WHCC study.

Figure 21: Most common level of employees' education (proportion of companies, per cent)

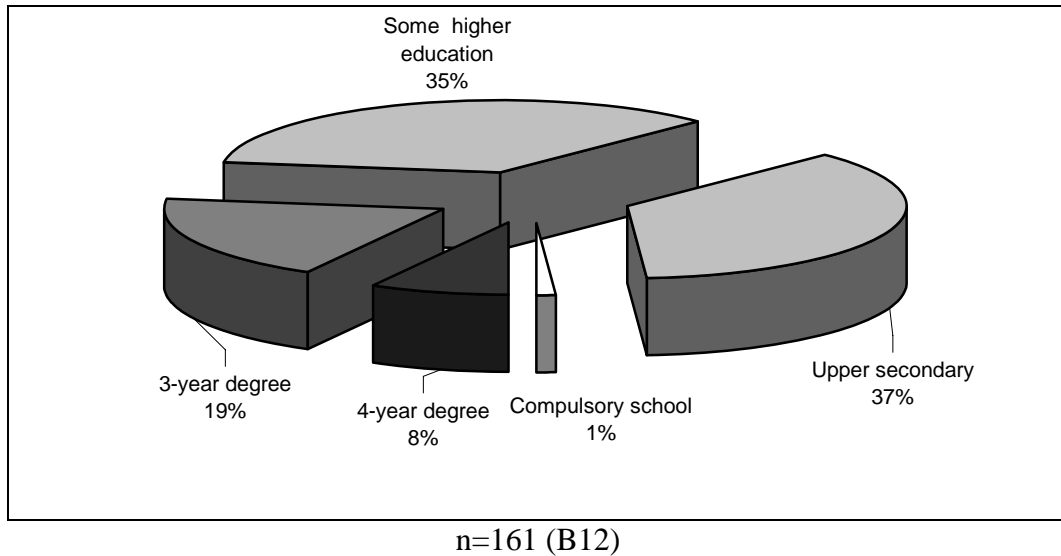


In Figure 21, we can see that just under 2/3 of companies have answered that upper secondary is the most common level of education among their employees. Only 6% (10 companies) have answered that compulsory school is the most common level of education among their employees. It is also interesting to note that 9% have answered that a 3 or 4-year degree is the most common level of education among their employees, and that 2 out of ten companies have some “higher education” as the most common level of education among their employees.

Further analysis demonstrates small differences between internal and external companies regarding common level of employees' education.

The proportion of university education in the NIWL-WHCC study is on average 25%, which is in line with the result from our study. In the NIWL-WHCC study they found that the education level is higher among the internal companies, compared with the external companies.

Figure 22: Most common level of managers' education (proportion of companies, per cent)



The most common level of education for managers in most companies – 6 in 10 – is “some higher education”. The educational level of managers correlates with that of employees,⁸ e.g. in call centres with a higher educational level among the employees, managers also have a higher educational level.

Further analysis demonstrates small differences between internal and external companies regarding common level of managers' education.

The most common level of education does not differ in any significant respects between the external companies and the internal companies for either employees or managers.

⁸ The correlation coefficient is 0.31 (at 0.01 sign).

PART D: HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES

This relatively extensive section deals with the following areas:

- Salary systems
- Training and professional development
- Recruitment, staffing and employment conditions
- Performance assessment
- Design of tasks
- Flexible staffing and temporary employees

11 Salary systems

As apparent from section 3 above, the question of “average salary increase in per cent/full-time employee/year for employees and managers” was supplemented with a question about the average annual salary for a full-time manager and employee, in the follow-up carried out after the questionnaire had been sent. We only received answers from 30 of 161 companies however. Despite this, we have chosen to report the results of this follow-up. The answers must however be interpreted with great caution.

The typical annual salary for a full-time *manager* ranges from SEK 200,000 to SEK 480,000, corresponding to a monthly salary ranging from SEK 17,000 to SEK 40,000. The typical annual salary for a full-time *employee* is SEK 150,000 to SEK 300,000 maximum, corresponding to a monthly salary ranging from SEK 12,500 to SEK 25,000. There is, in other words, a relatively wide range. There are differences in the typical annual salary for a manager and a full-time employee between external and internal companies. For external companies, the typical annual salary for a full-time employee is on average SEK 192,000, to be compared with SEK 235,000 for internal employees. For a full-time manager, the typical annual salary is on average SEK 347,000 for the internal companies and SEK 297,000 for the external companies.

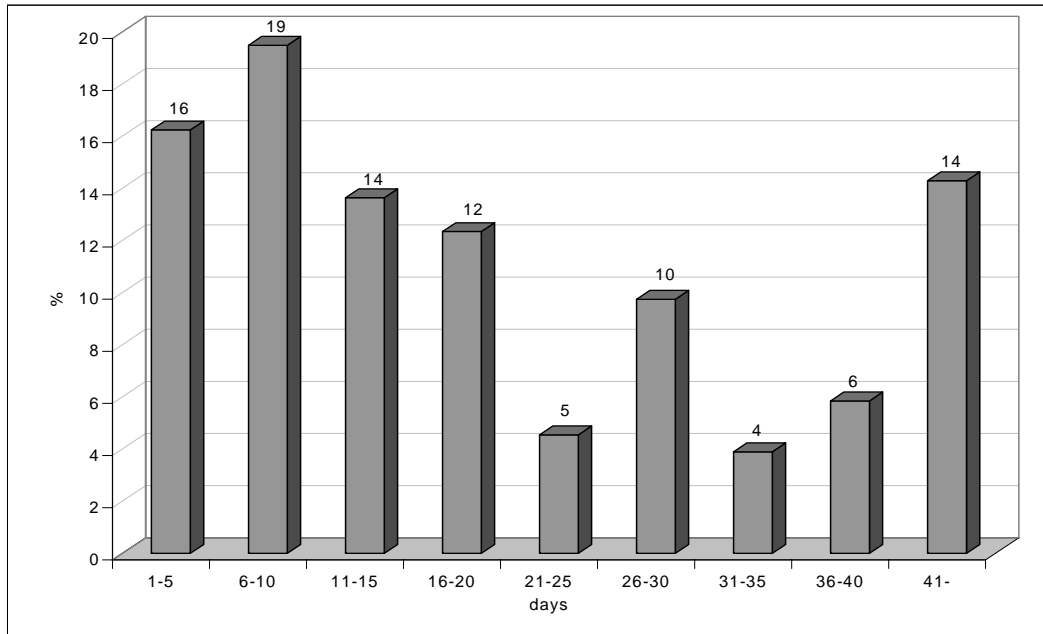
Most companies – just under two-thirds – give some type of individual performance-related pay. There is however a big difference between the internal companies, where as many as 74% do not give individual performance-related pay, while 38% of the external companies do not give individual performance-related pay. Three companies have only performance-related pay; two of these are external companies.

Most companies do not have a salary system with group performance. Among the companies that apply group performance criteria – 22% do so – the performance part of the salary varies between 1 and 100%. In most companies applying group performance criteria, group performance was a maximum of 10% of the gross salary. There is not much difference here between the internal and external companies.

Results regarding the companies' salary systems must be interpreted with some caution however, because the responses on gross pay are based on a small number of companies, and the internal fall-off rate is relatively large for questions relating to performance-related pay (about 30%). The reason for the relatively high internal fall-off can be interpreted to mean that salary is a sensitive issue.

12 Training and professional development

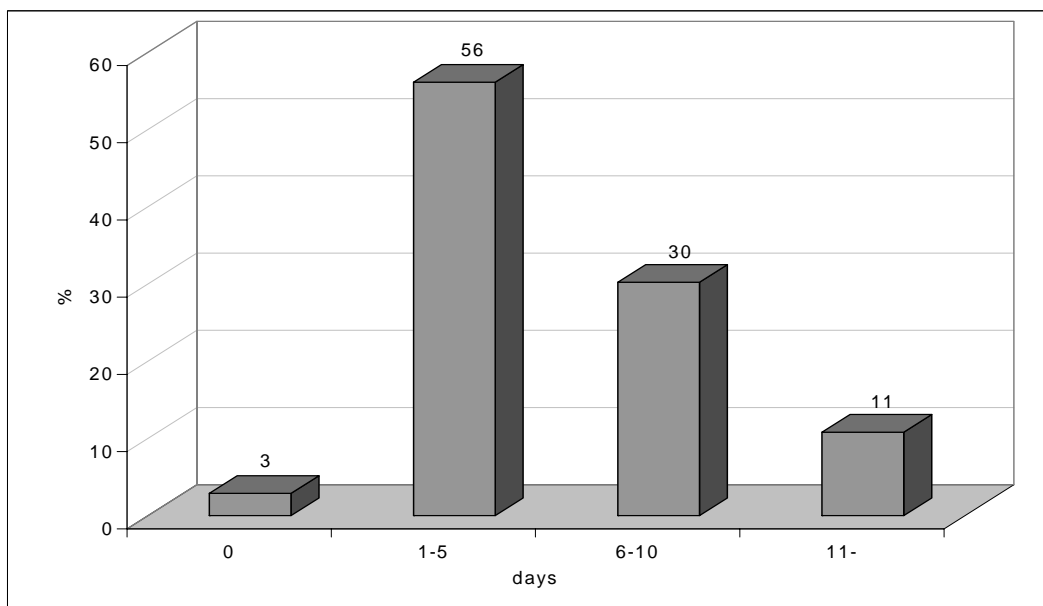
Figure 23: Average length of basic training for new employees during the first year of employment (proportion of companies providing training of various lengths, per cent)



n=154 (C2.1.a)

The basic training provided during the first year of employment, including introduction and practical experience, varies between 1 day and 156 days (i.e. more than 30 weeks). Over six in ten call centres (61%) provide basic training for new employees, lasting from one to 20 days.

Figure 24: Further training on average per year and employee (proportion of companies, per cent)

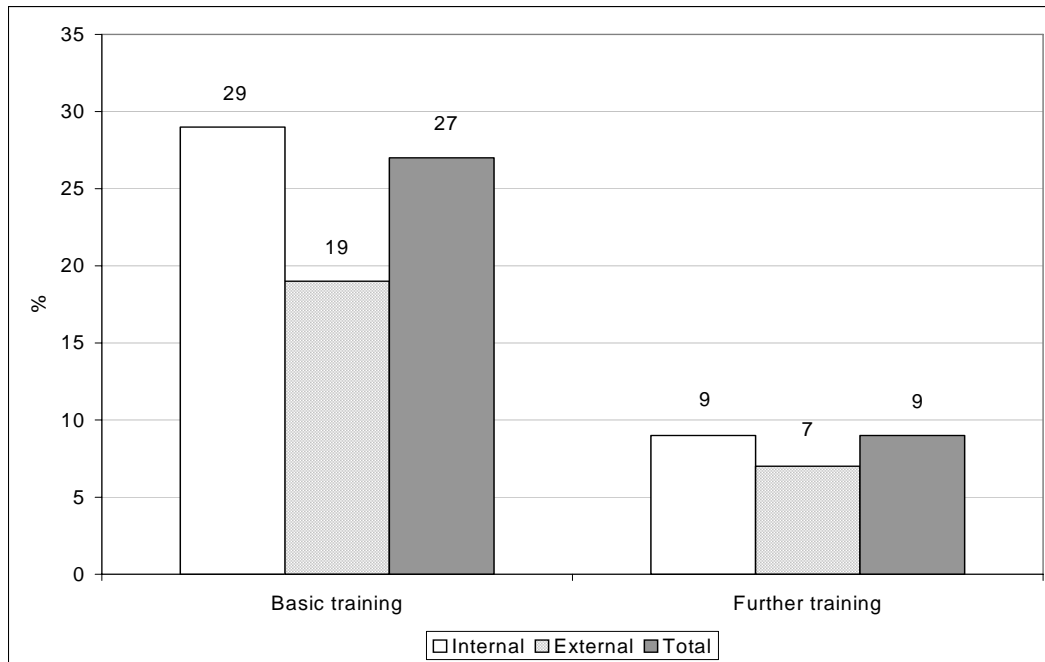


n=140 (C2.1.c)

The amount of post-basic training provided varies between 0 and 50 days per year and employee on average.

As shown in Figure 24, the most common situation is that 1–5 days a year of further training are provided. This is the case in over half of the companies. A few call centres provide no further training at all for their employees, while 4 in 10 companies on average provide 6 days or more.

Figure 25: Summary of the average no. of training days provided to employees among internal and external companies



n=140-154 (C2.1.a,c)

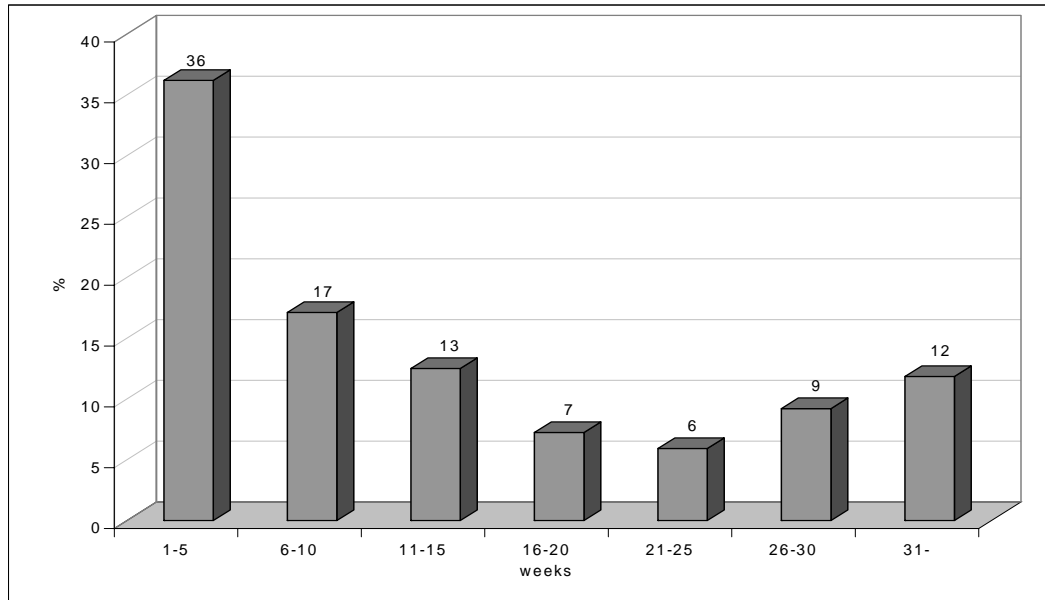
Average basic training provided by the companies is 27 days long. As is also clear from the above diagram, there are relatively large differences between the internal and external companies. The internal companies provide, on average, significantly more basic training than the external companies. There are also differences between different sectors. Companies active in the insurance sector have the longest training period – an average of 48 days of basic training – to be compared to the telecom industry which has the shortest, an average of 12 days.

The average course of further training lasts for nine days, and we can see in the diagram above that the internal call centres have somewhat longer further training periods. There are no major differences between the various sectors. The average course varies between 6 days a year in the public sector and 11 days a year in the insurance sector.

In the NIWL-WHCC study they asked for the number of training days during the last year. On average the agents estimate this to be 8.8 days, i.e. quite similar to the figures in our study. Furthermore the NIWL-WHCC study found a difference between internal and external companies; 7.4 days for external companies and 10.6 days for internal companies, i.e. a bigger difference compared with our study.

The time required for an employee to become qualified to do the work is shown in the figure below.

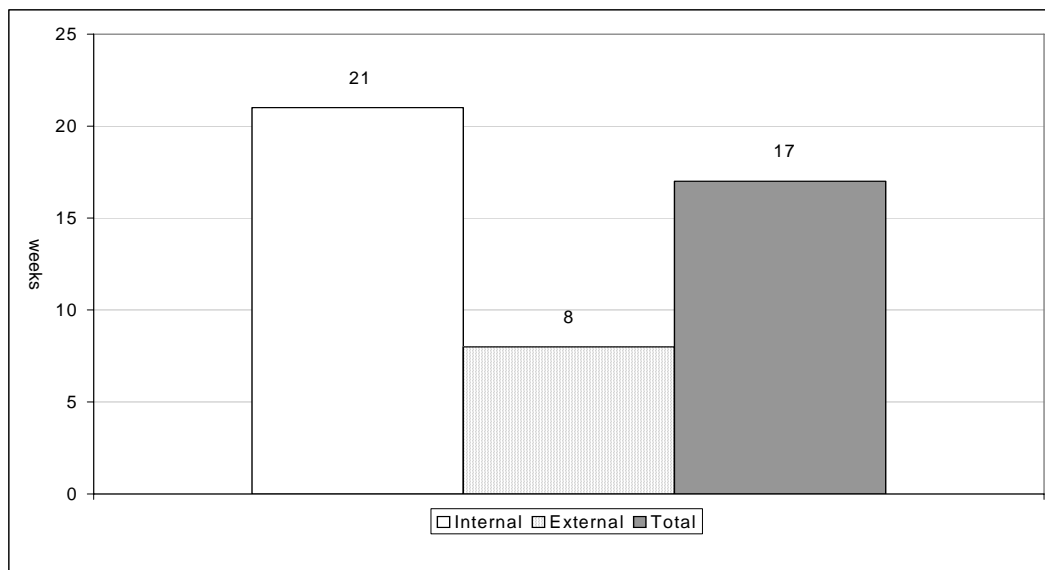
Figure 26: Average number of weeks required for a new employee to become qualified to do the work (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=152 (C2.1.b)

We can see here that the qualifying times vary. Most call centres (36%) need 1–5 weeks for an employee to become qualified for his or her work. The average qualifying time in the companies is 17 weeks, or 85 working days, which roughly corresponds to 30% of the total working hours in one year.

Figure 27: Average time in weeks required for an employee to become qualified

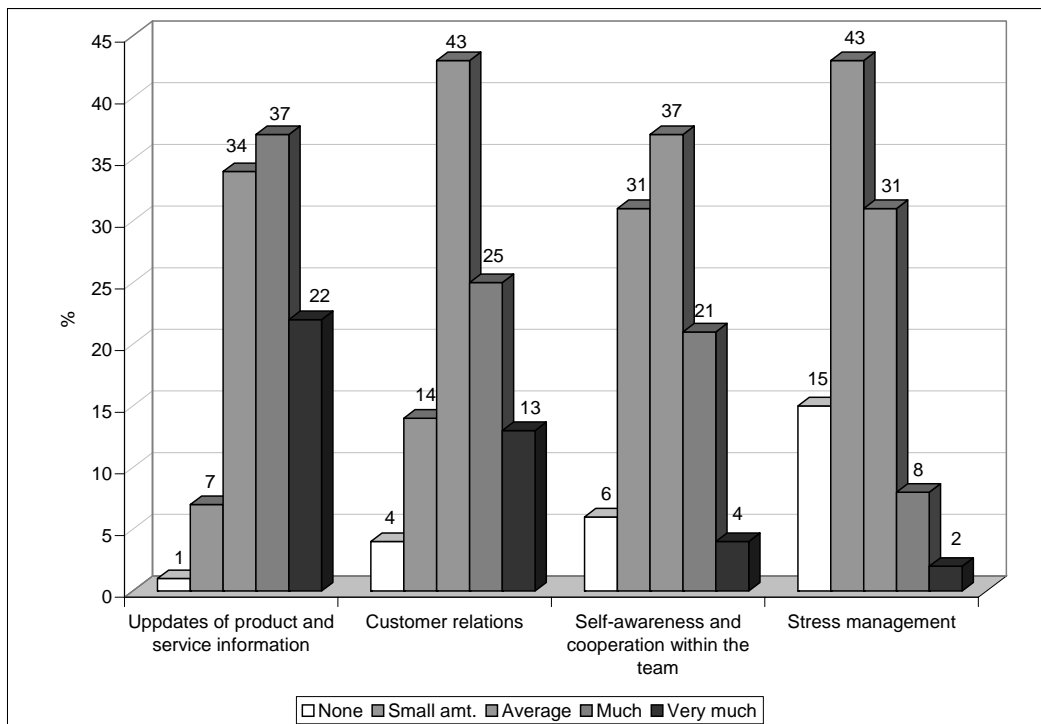


n=152 (C2.1.b)

As is also apparent from Figure 27, there are large differences between internal and external companies with respect to the average time required for an employee to become qualified to do the work. The internal companies need an average of 21 weeks for an employee to become qualified for the work, while the corresponding time for the external companies is 8 weeks. The time also varies between different sectors. The longest qualification periods are in the public sector, with an average of 39 weeks. The shortest time required for an employee to become qualified for the work is in telecom, with an average of 8 weeks.

The following responses were received to the question of how much training is given in information about updates of products and services, customer relations, self-awareness and teamwork as well as stress management.

Figure 28: Extent of training provided to employees in different areas (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=159 (C2.2.a-d)

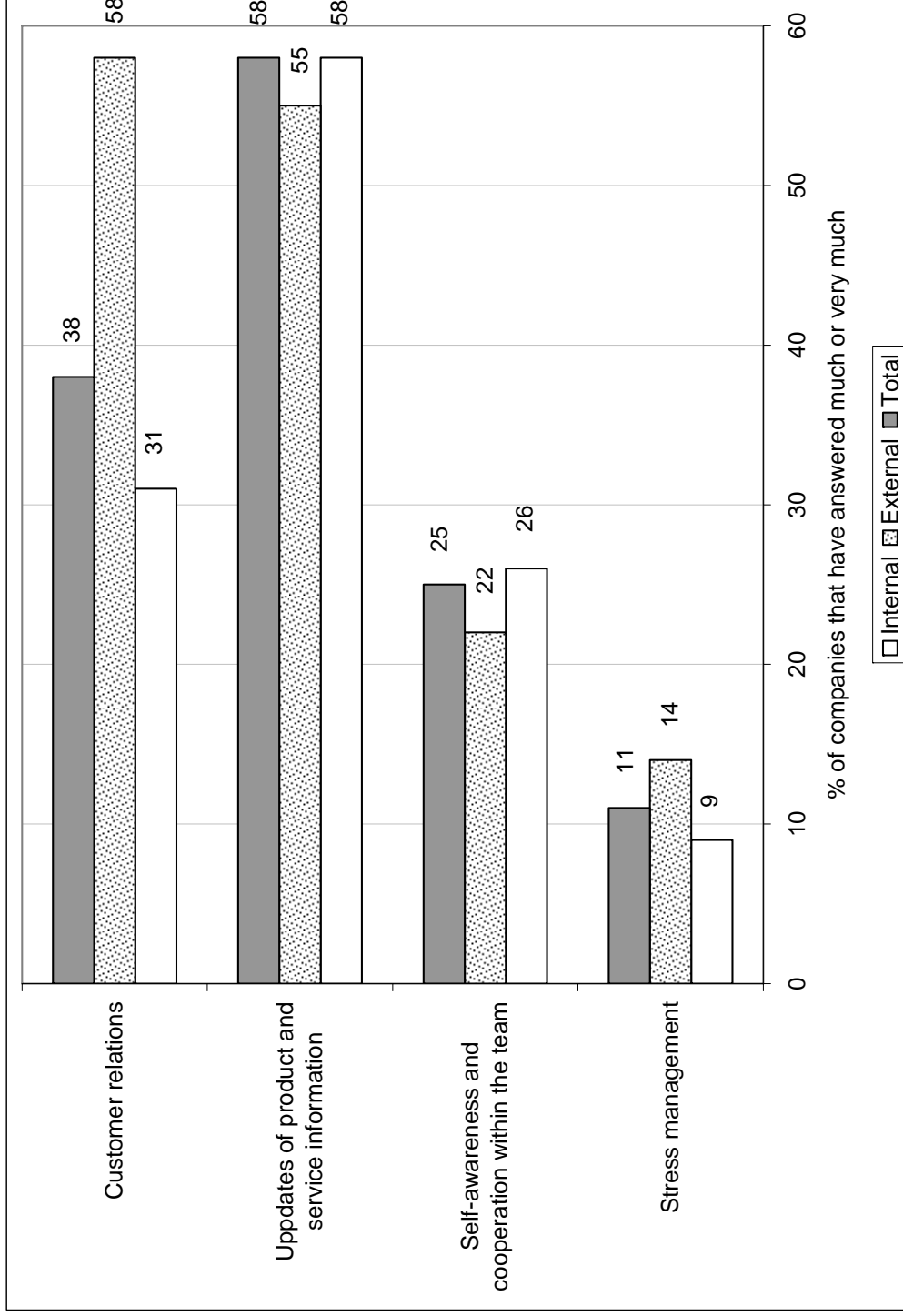
We can see here that the least amount of training is provided in stress management, self-awareness and teamwork, while the most training is provided in information about updates of products and services followed by training in customer relations.

The fact that six out of ten provide much or very much training in updating information about products and services is in line with what was found by Strandberg (2003) in a study of 33 customer services managers' perceptions of the situation and trends in contact centres. That study also highlighted that knowledge of the products is the most important area of skill. The study also showed that it there was broad expectation that knowledge of the product would continue to be the most important area in the future.

The proportion of internal and external companies that provide their employees with much or very much training in the various fields is shown in the following diagram.

~ HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES ~

Figure 29: Internal and external companies that provide employees with much or very much training in various fields (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=159 (C2.2.a-d)

Here, we cannot see any significant differences between the internal and external companies except in one respect, namely training in customer relations. Of the external companies, 58% provide much or very much employee training in customer relations, while the corresponding figure among internal companies is 31%.

There are clear links between the amount of training in the areas self-awareness and teamwork and stress management, and the amount of sickness absence. The 35 companies that have stated in the study that they provide much or very much training in self-awareness and teamwork have an average of 2.7 days lower sickness absence per year and employee than those companies that have provided none, a small amount or an average amount. The same applies to training in stress management. The 16 companies that have provided much or very much have 2.4 days lower sickness absence per year and employee than other companies.

Another study of call centres in Sweden also demonstrates differences between internal and external call centres (Strandberg (2006)⁹ and focused on skills and learning in call centres. Two internal call centres (in the private and public sector) and one external call centre were in focus and qualitative interviews were carried out on different levels in the organisations studied. These case studies reveal that internal call centres spend more resources on training the agents than the external call centres, and they show that internal call centres provide more training in updates of product and service information than the external call centres. All these case study results support our own survey findings.

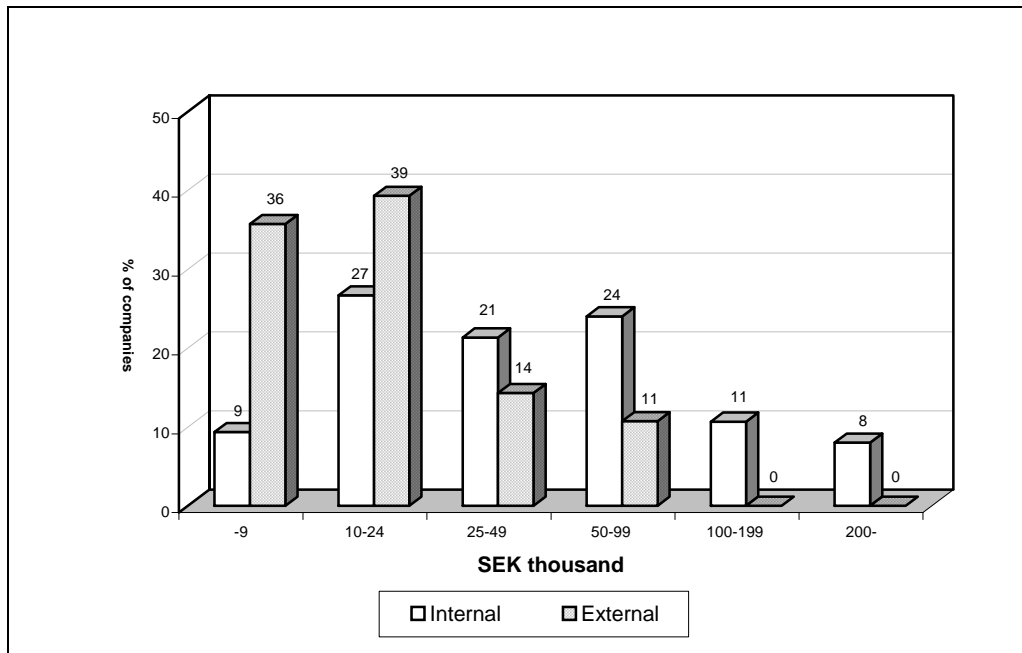
As pointed out earlier, selling has become more and more a key issue in call centres, and we can see from Strandberg's case studies (2006) that internal call centres as well as external call centres provide agents training in selling (This is not asked for in our GCC survey).

⁹ The study is a part of the Leonardo da Vinci project CONTACT (Call Centre Training and Knowledge Transfer The project's aims are twofold; 1) to identify and promote best practice in vocational training where the intention is to upgrade employee skills and produce high added-value jobs 2) to identify and promote best practice in vocational training where the intention is to increase the employment possibilities of disadvantaged groups.

13 Recruitment, staffing and employment conditions

The average cost for recruiting, testing and training a new employee is presented separately for internal and external companies in Figure 30 because there are fairly large differences between these two types of operation.

Figure 30: Average cost of recruiting, testing and training a new employee among internal and external companies (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=113 (C3.1)

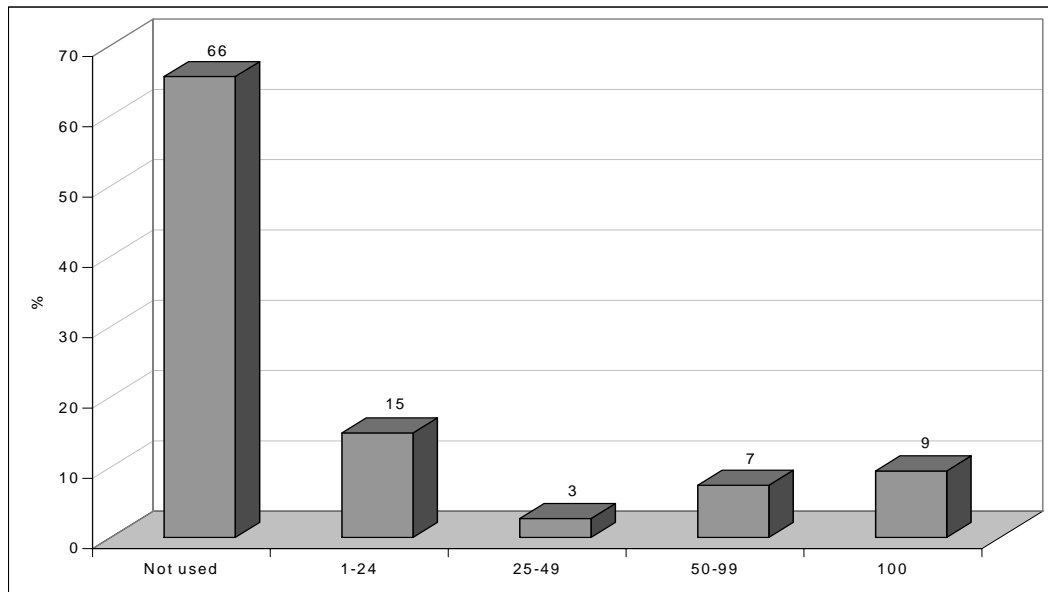
We see here that the internal companies tend to spend more, and have a greater spread of the resources devoted to recruiting, testing and training of new employees, while the external companies have a clear concentration towards lower resources. Among the external companies, three quarters spend SEK 24,000 or less on recruiting, testing and training a new employee, while the corresponding figure for internal companies is one third. The average cost of recruiting, testing and training a new employee is approximately SEK 65,000 for the internal companies and about SEK 15,000 for the external companies.

Resources devoted to recruiting, testing and training new employees differ even more with respect to the sector that the call centres (both internal and external) mainly operate within. Most, on average, is spent by call centres active within the public sector and the insurance industry, about SEK 51,000 and SEK 124,000 respectively. Least, on average, is spent by call centres working in the telecom industry; about SEK 16,000.

The above results are based on 113 out of 161 observations, i.e. the internal non-response is quite high, 30%, so these results should be interpreted with caution. A possible explanation for the quite high internal non-response rate is that the question about costs is sensitive and/or that respondents do not actually know the figures.

Figure 31 shows the prevalence of systematic testing in the selection of employees.

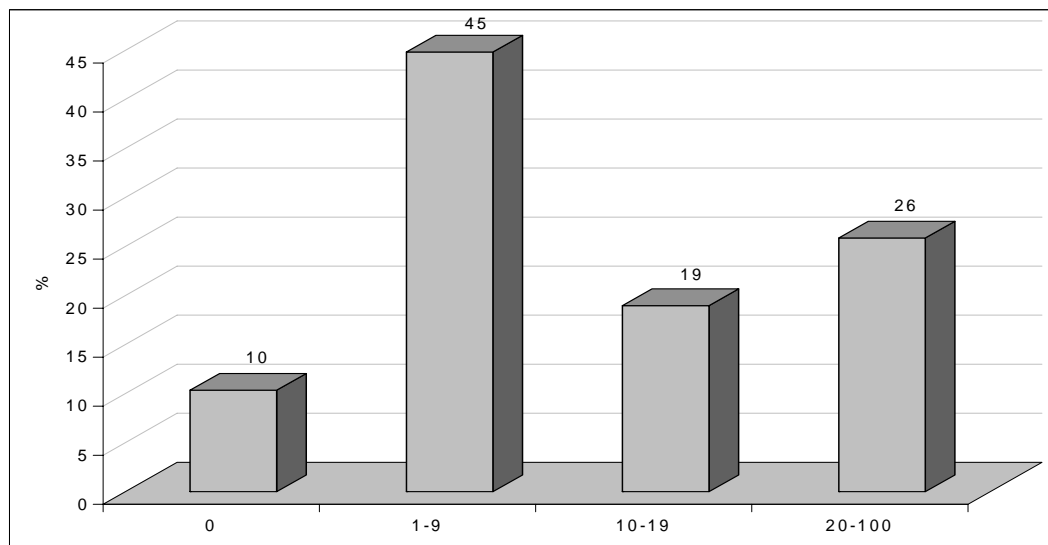
Figure 31: Proportion of employees selected by systematic testing (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=148 (C3.2.a)

We see here that systematic testing in the selection of employees is not particularly widespread. Two thirds of call centres have no systematic tests at all. Although the difference is fairly marginal, systematic tests are slightly more common among the external companies when selecting employees (27%), compared to internal companies (24%).

Figure 32: Proportion of applicants who are given a job (proportion of companies, per cent)

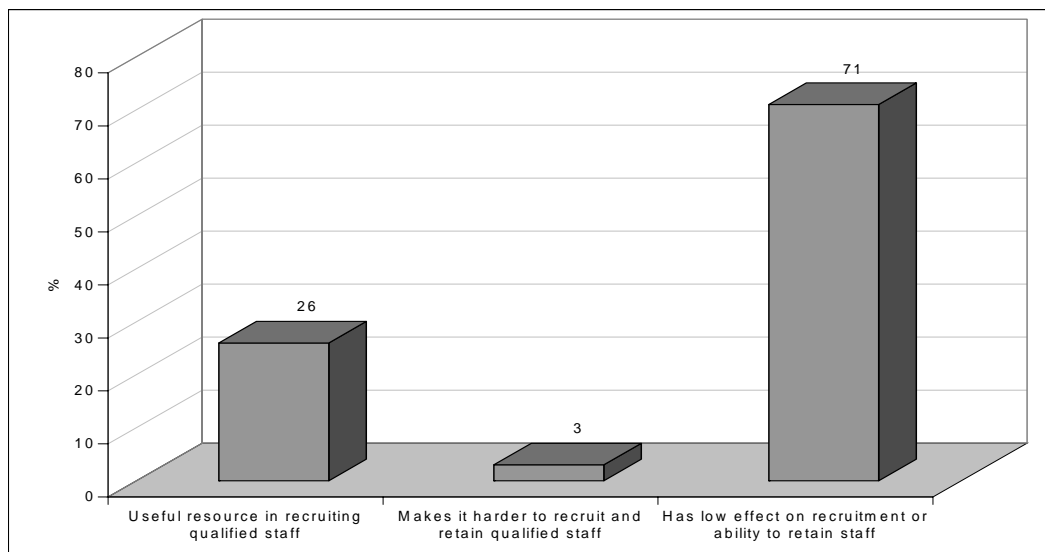


n=116 (C3.2.b)

On the issue of the proportion of applicants given a job, Figure 32 shows that most companies are within the interval 1–9%. On average, 14% get a job and the difference is quite large here between the external companies and the internal companies. Among the external companies, an average of 24% gets a job while the corresponding figure for the internal companies is 11%.

The above results are based on 116 of 161 observations, i.e. the internal non-response rate is quite high, 30%, which is why these results should be interpreted with caution. A possible explanation for the quite high internal non-response rate is that they do not actually know the figures.

Figure 33: How the presence of other call centres in the area affects recruitment and the ability to retain staff (proportion of companies)



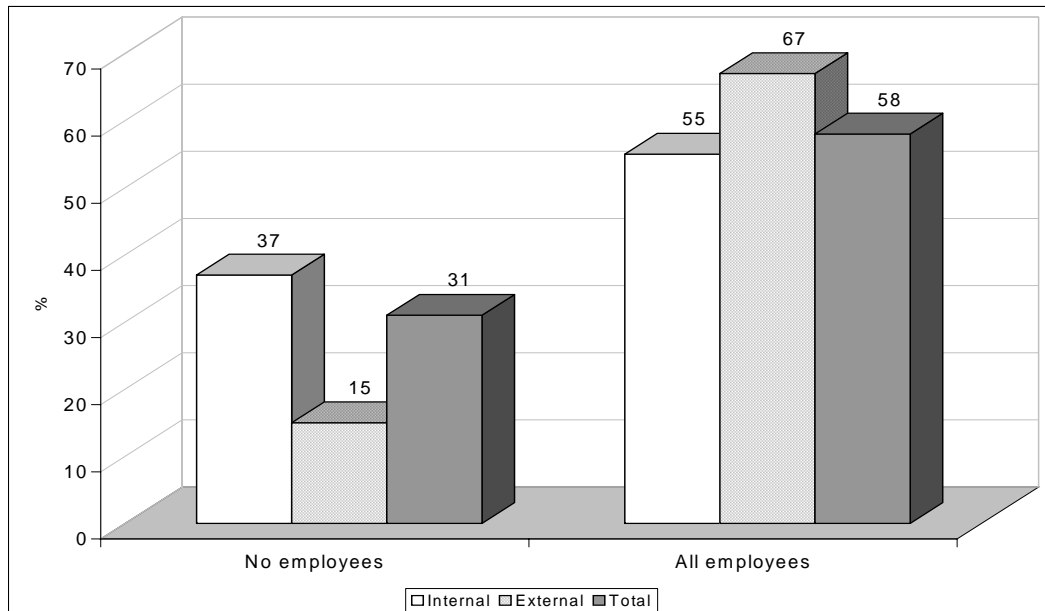
n= 148 (F4)

Here, we can see that seven out of ten have answered that call centres in the nearby area have no effect on recruitment or the ability to retain staff. Over a quarter think that other call centres close by are a valuable resource in recruitment of qualified staff. Only 3% think that the presence of other call centres in the nearby area makes it more difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees.

It would be interesting to compare these results with the density of call centres in the areas where the studied call centres are located. We decided that this would require major resources, so we have chosen not to collect the supplementary information just now.

14 Performance appraisal

Figure 34: Proportion of employees who are regularly assessed in a formal performance appraisal (proportion of companies, per cent)

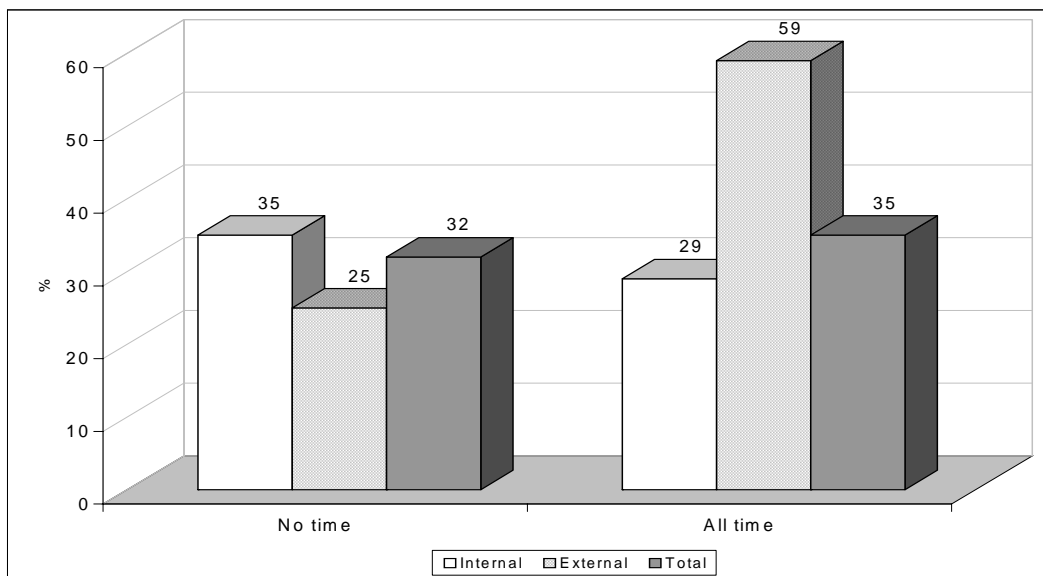


n=145 (C1.3)

If we look more closely at the issue of performance appraisal, we see that it is more common that external companies regularly assess the performance of employees. This can be interpreted to mean that the external companies feel more need to monitor their employees with the aim of achieving set targets. If an external company is to be competitive, it has to be at least as good as, and preferably better than, an internal company.

Measurements commonly used in performance appraisal are often time-related, such as time available to customer, conversation time and time for follow-up work (see e.g. Strandberg, 2005). The questionnaire has a time measurement: average call time, which is reported farther on in the report (Figure 63). There is also a general question: "How much of the employees' time is continually measured?" This can in other words include different sub-activities.

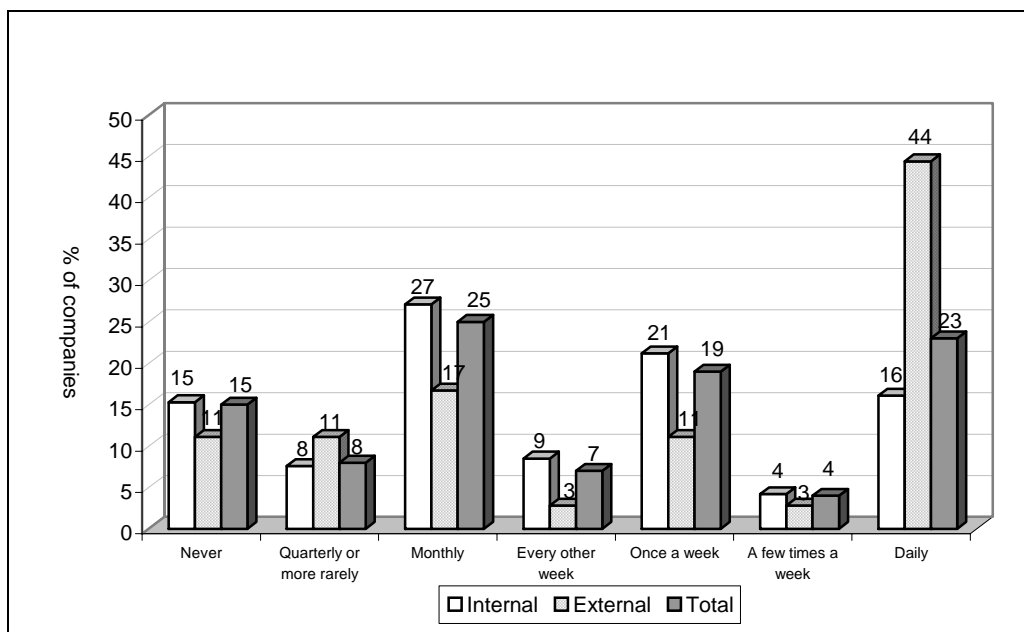
Figure 35: How much employee time is continually measured (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=150 (C4.1)

We see here that just under a third of companies do not measure any employee time at all, while almost as many companies, 35%, continually measure all employee time. The above diagram also shows that significantly more external companies than internal companies continually measure all employee time, a finding that is also confirmed in Strandberg (2006).

Figure 36: How often statistical information is given to employees on their performance (proportion of companies, per cent)



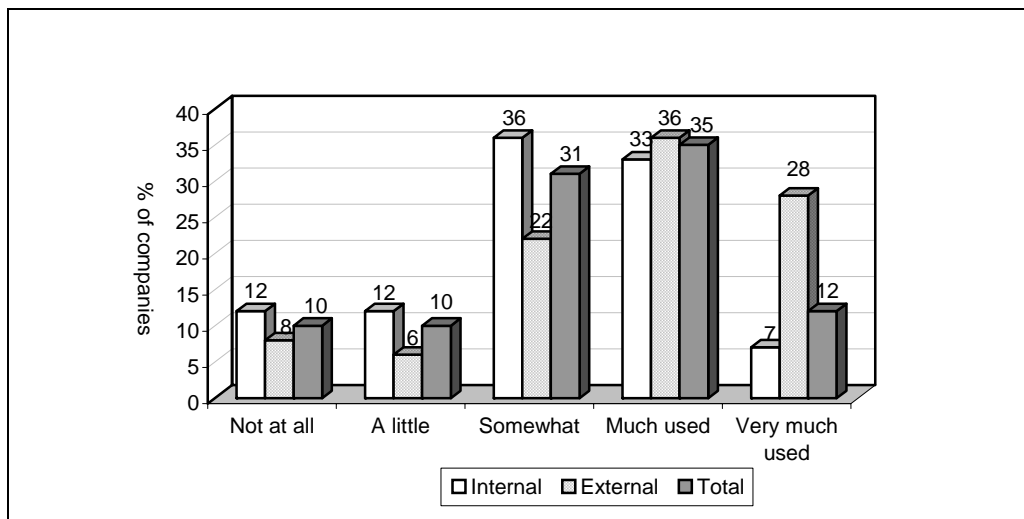
n=159 (C4.2)

Figure 36 shows that there is a spread in how often statistical information is given to employees on their performance, e.g. with respect to the number of calls, length of calls and sales. Some never do so, or do so very seldom, while others do so every day.

There is a big difference between the types of company. It is much more common that external companies provide daily statistical information to employees about their performances – 44% – than is the case among internal companies, 16%.

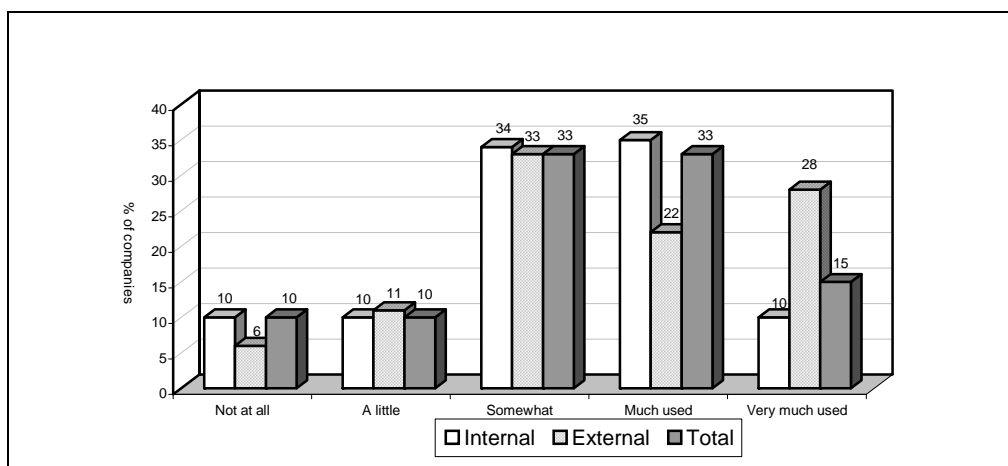
The extent to which information from the performance appraisals has been used to improve employee performance and identify educational needs in employees is shown in Figures 37 and 38 below.

Figure 37: Extent to which information from performance appraisals is used to improve employee performance (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=156 (C4.5a)

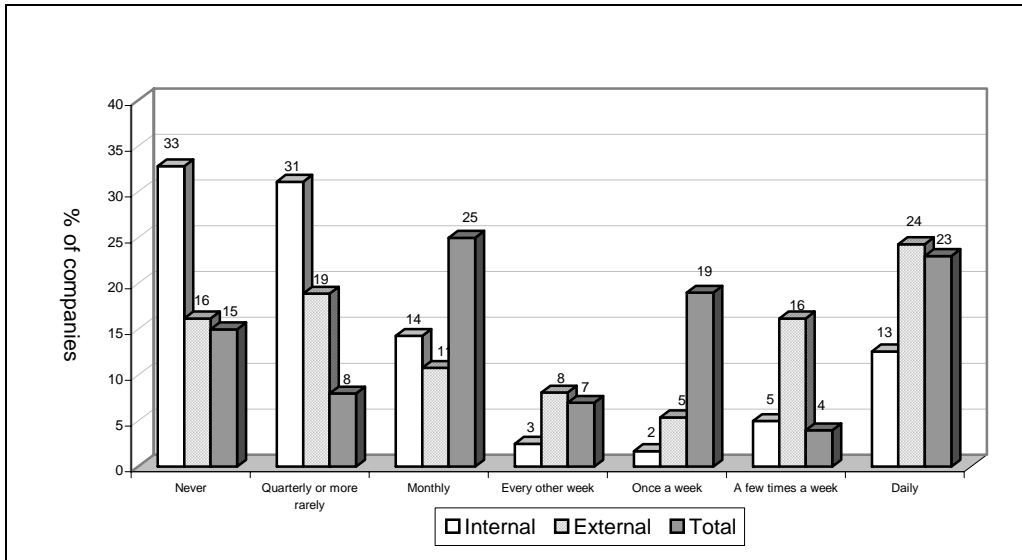
Figure 38: Extent to which information from performance appraisals is used to identify employee training needs (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=157 (C4.5.b)

The two diagrams above show that the external companies use information from performance appraisals to improve employee performance and identify educational needs to a greater extent than internal companies do.

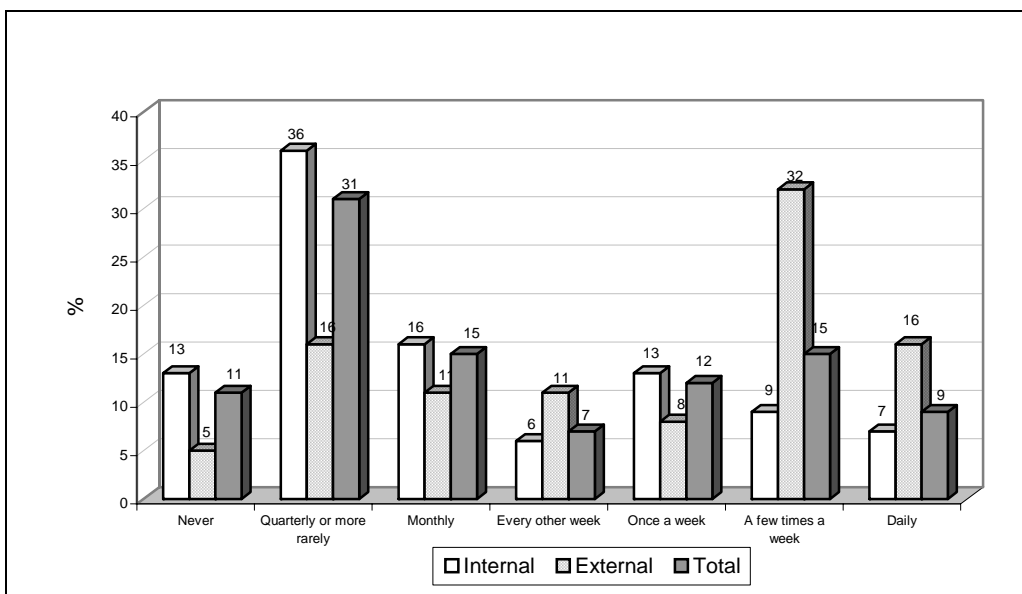
Figure 39: How often supervisors or other staff listen to calls of experienced employees (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=161 (C4.3)

Here, we can see that there is extensive spread among participants but that it is significantly more common in external companies that supervisors or other staff listen to experienced employees' calls.

Figure 40: How often experienced employees are given feedback and coaching from superiors regarding customer relations (proportion of companies, per cent)

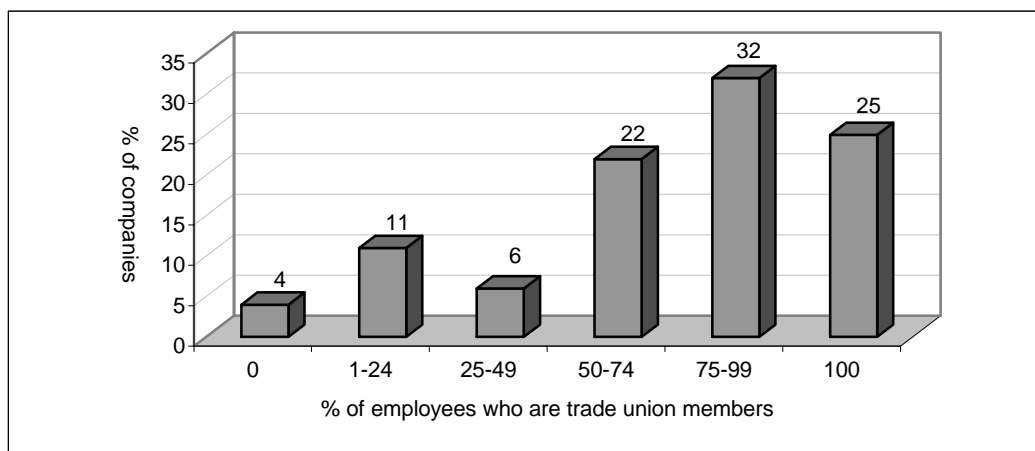


n=160 (C4.4)

Feedback and coaching in customer relations from a superior is also considerably more common among the external companies. When we analyse this in more detail, we see that there is a negative correlation between how often feedback and coaching in customer relations are provided and abandoned rates, i.e. how many customers hang up before their call is answered.¹⁰ More frequent feedback and coaching of employees in customer relations thus show positive covariation with lower abandoned rates.

15 Employees' participation in and influence over tasks and their working situation

Figure 41: Proportion of employees who are members of a trade union (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=143 (C3.3.a)

Here, we see that only 4% of participating companies state that none of their employees belongs to a trade union. In a quarter of all companies, all employees are trade union members. According to management, an average of 70% of employees in the companies studied are members of a trade union; 63% of employees in the external companies are members of a trade union, while the corresponding figure among the internal companies is 73%, i.e. a difference of 10 percentage points.

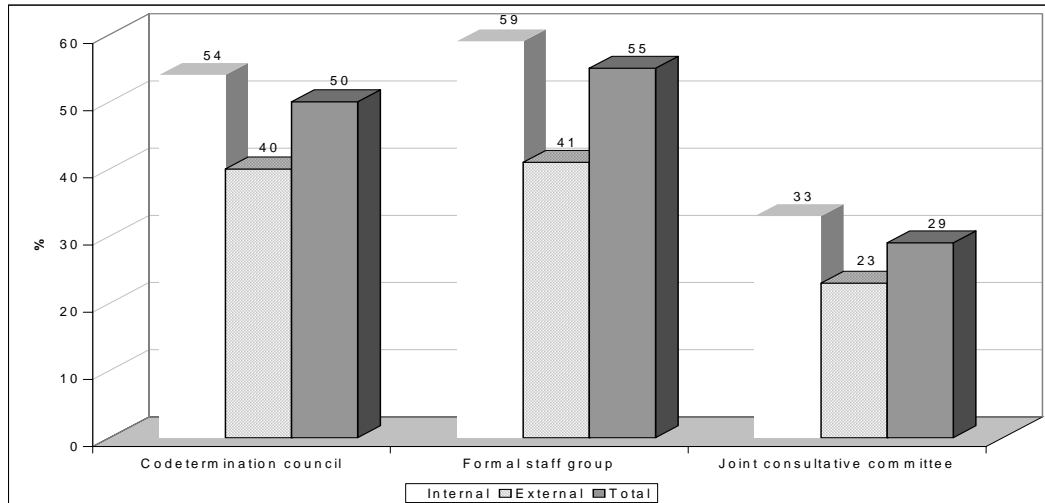
According to the NIWL-WHCC study, average union membership is clearly higher, namely 84%. Internal and external call centres have almost the same percentage of employees who are unionised, but the slight difference is in the opposite direction with 86% membership in external call centres as compared to 82% in internal call centres.

On this point, as well as in the rest of our survey report, it should be remembered that the results we present are based on answers given by managers, so that e.g. the 70% average union membership density is based on managers' estimates, whereas the WHCC study reports answers of individual workers. The difference may be explained by the different methods used, or by differences between the samples in the two studies.

¹⁰ The correlation coefficient is -0.26 (at 0.01 sign).

All managers in our study state that there are collective agreements covering their employees.

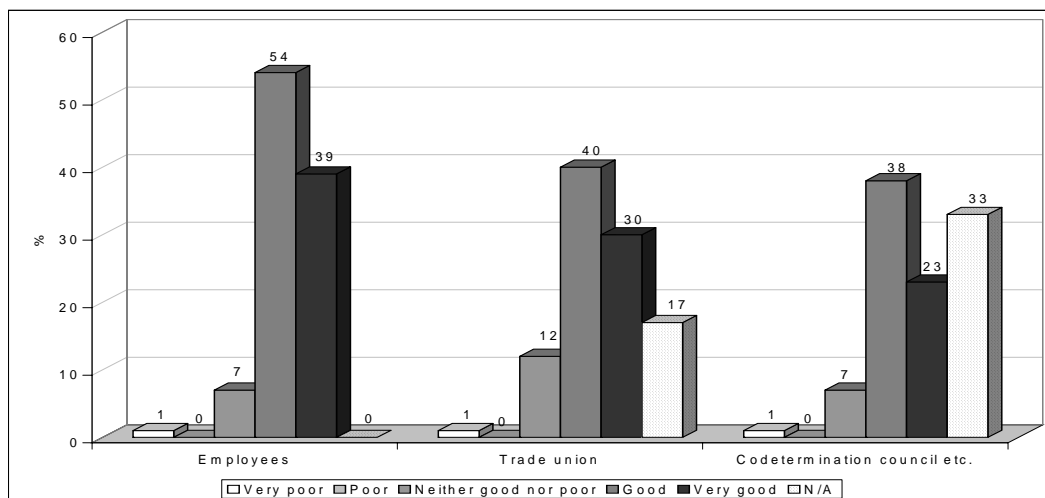
Figure 42: Existence of a codetermination council which covers employees, a formal personnel group for employees or a consultative committee that includes employee representatives (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=155 (C3.4.a-b, C3.5)

Just over half of companies have answered that there is a formal personnel group for employees. About the same number of companies – 50% – have answered that there is a codetermination council for employees. It is not as common that companies have a joint consultative committee that includes an employee representative. Here, just under a third of companies have answered that there is a joint consultative committee. From the figure above we can also see that the different councils/groups are more common among the internal companies than among the external companies.

Figure 43: Management’s relationship with employees, trade unions or codetermination councils, staff associations or equivalent (proportion of companies, per cent)



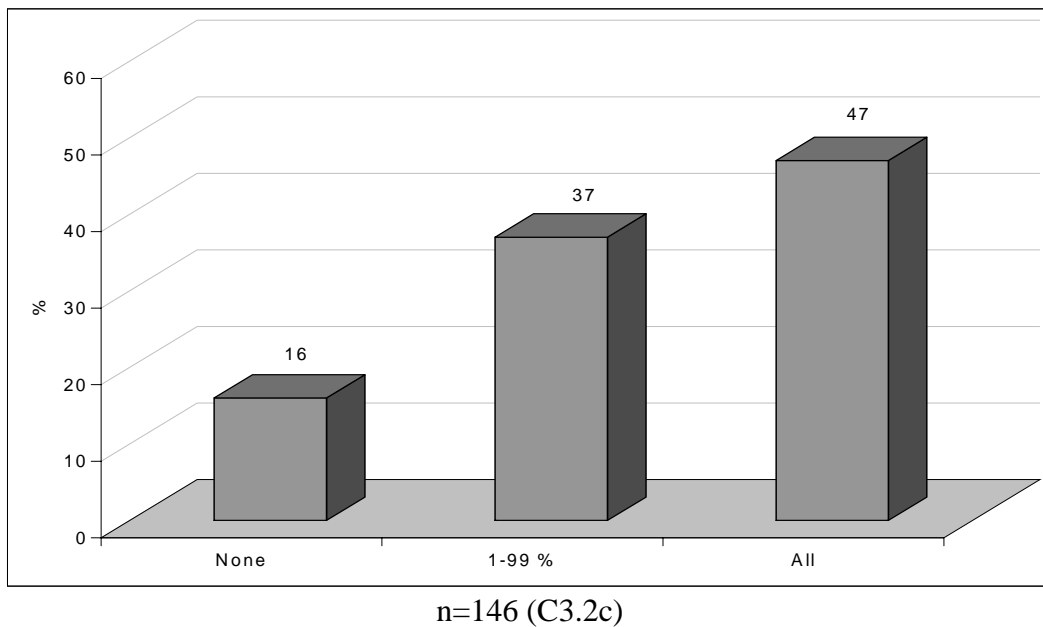
n=154-160 (C3.6-8)

Here, we can see that the vast majority, 93%, think that the relationship between company management and employees is good or very good.

The relationship between company management and trade unions, and the relationship between company management and codetermination councils, staff associations and suchlike is generally good or very good. The question is not applicable for some companies, and this applies above all to codetermination councils, etc., which are lacking in many companies as previously described.

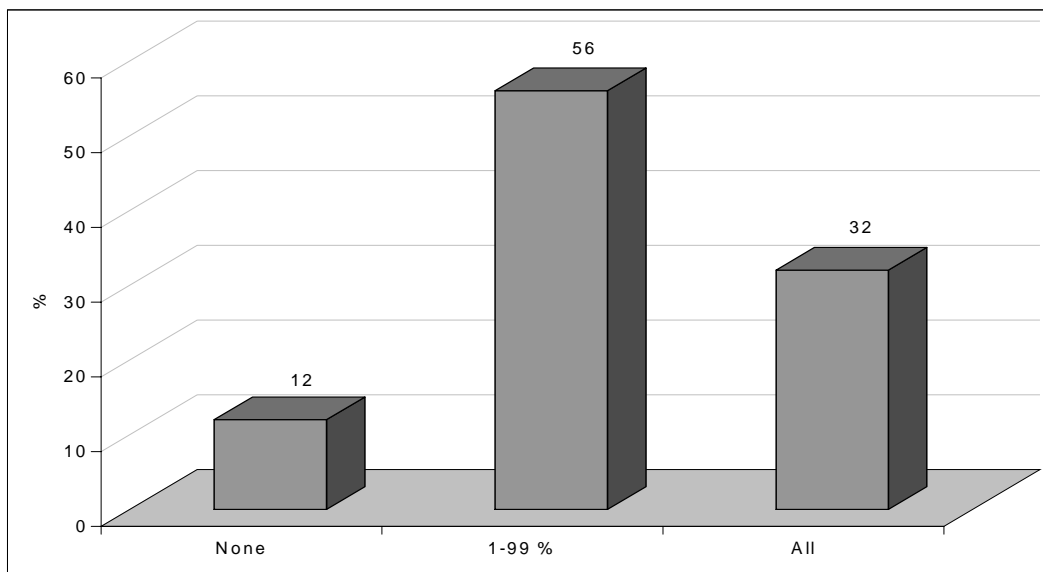
There is always a risk when employers grade their own relationships to various other actors in this way that this grade is higher than it would be if those actors were to grade company management.

Figure 44: Number of employees who work in a team in which employees make their own decisions about tasks, work methods and pace of work (proportion of companies, per cent)



Almost half of the companies have a consistent team organisation where the employees wholly or partly make their own decisions regarding their tasks and pace of work. Sixteen per cent of companies completely lack a team organisation.

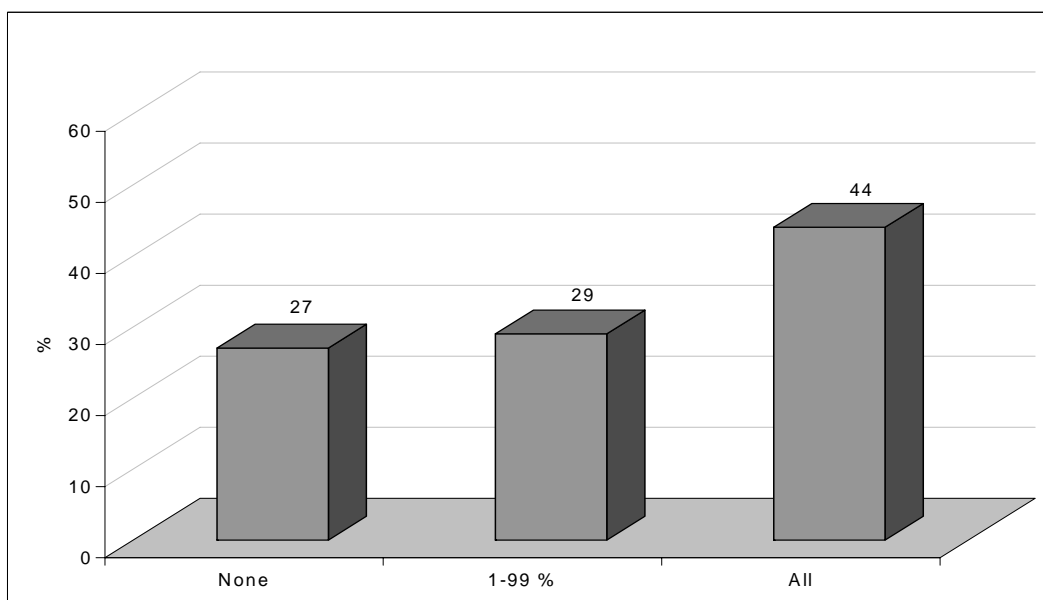
Figure 45: Proportion of employees involved in quality circles or process/product improvement teams (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=147 (C3.2d)

In almost a third of call centres, all employees are involved in quality development or improvement work.

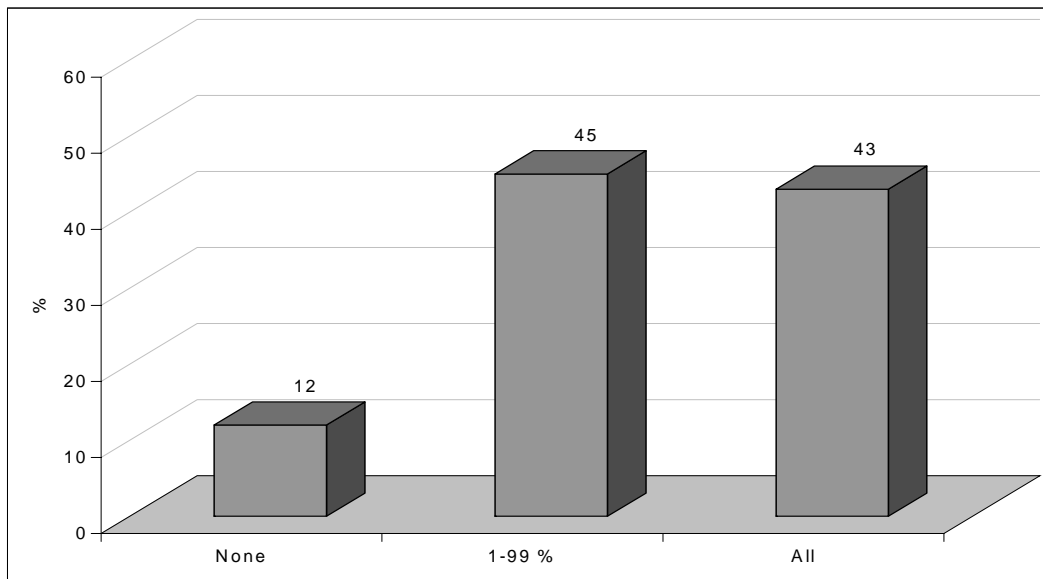
Figure 46: Proportion of companies stating that an employee has the option of flexible work arrangements (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=149 (C3.2e)

In just under half of the companies, all employees are able to have a flexible work situation such as work swap, distance work and flexitime, while just over a quarter of companies do not allow this at all.

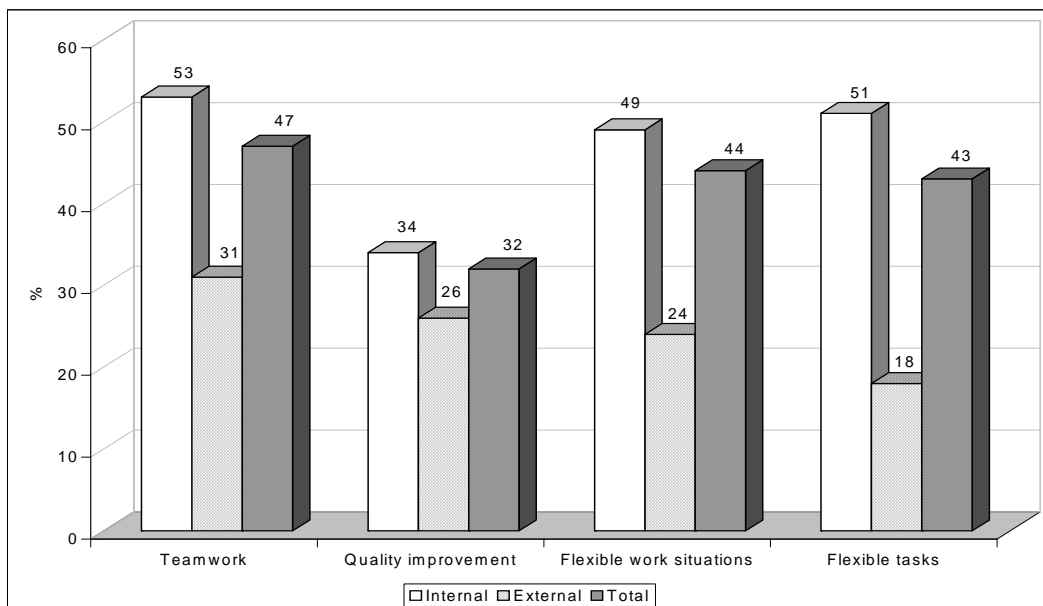
Figure 47: Proportion of companies stating that employees have flexible job descriptions (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=153 (C3.2f)

In just under half of the companies, the view is that all employees have flexible duties, in that there is variation in the work.

Figure 48: Proportion of employees who participate in the design of tasks and work situations in internal and external companies (per cent)



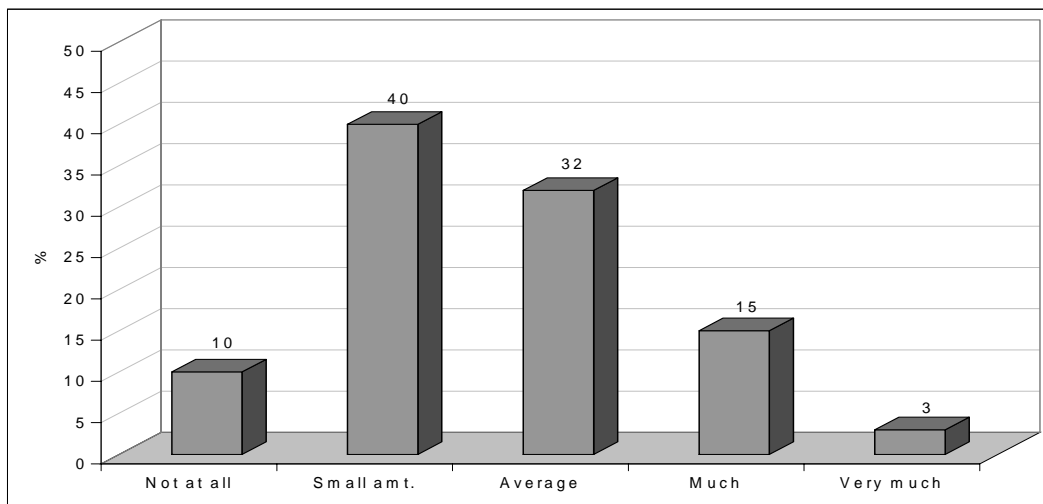
n=146-153 (C3.2c-f)

As is also clear from the above diagram, there are fairly large differences between the internal and external companies. The biggest differences refer to variation in work situation and variation in duties. In the internal companies, an average of half of the companies are assessed as having this flexibility, while the corresponding figure

among external companies is 2 of 10 (24% and 18%). There is a fairly large difference within respect to teamwork as well. Here, half of the employees on average work in teams, while the equivalent figure for external companies is under a third. With respect to employee involvement in quality development or improvement measures, there is no particularly clear difference between the internal and external companies.

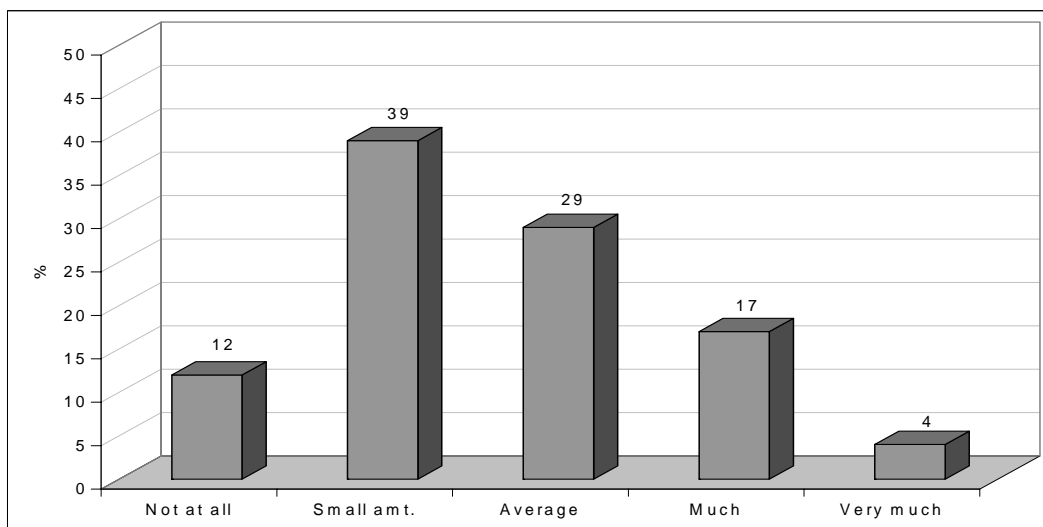
Employees' ability to control their work and the situation is shown in the next ten figures.

Figure 49: Extent to which employees have discretion over the daily work tasks they perform (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=161 (C5.1.a)

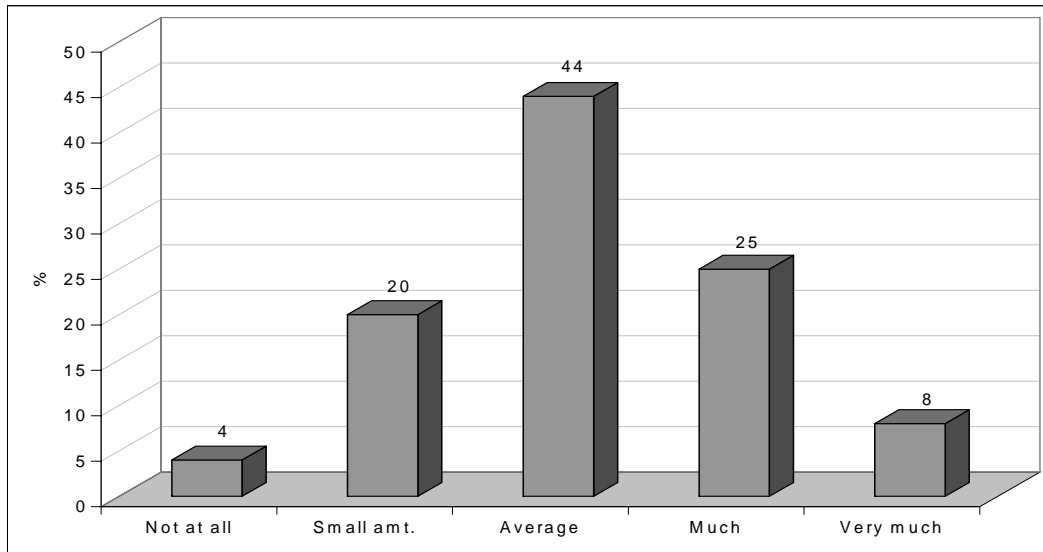
Figure 50: Extent to which employees have discretion over tools, methods or procedures used (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=161 (C5.1.b)

The above two diagrams illustrate that in a majority of companies – over half – employees usually have no, or little, latitude to influence their daily tasks or the equipment, methods or procedures used.

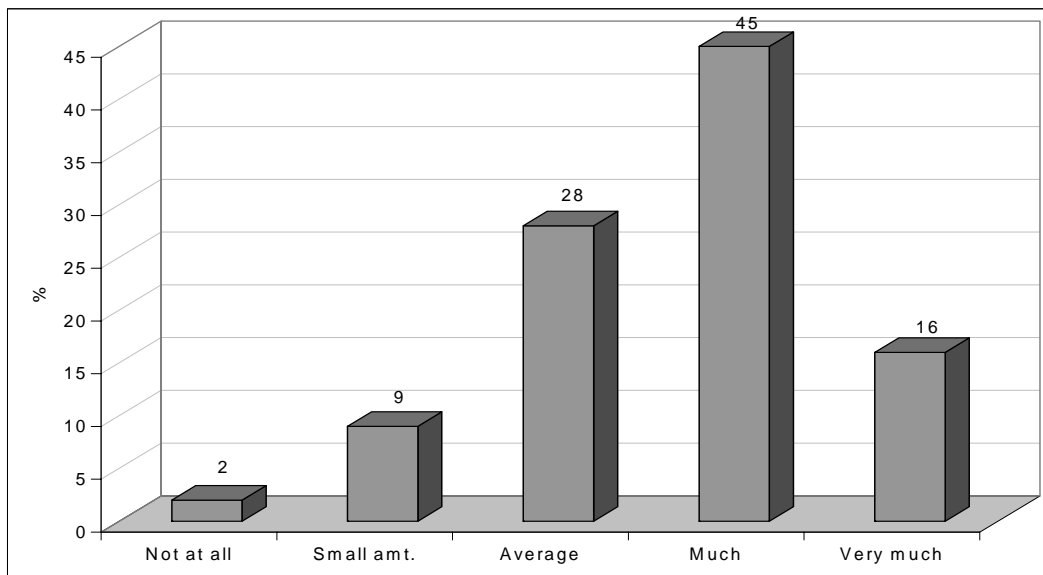
Figure 51: Extent to which employees have discretion over the pace or speed at which they work (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=161 (C5.1.c)

As shown above, the result is relatively normally distributed, with some shift towards much, with respect to the degree to which companies give employees influence over the pace or speed that they work at.

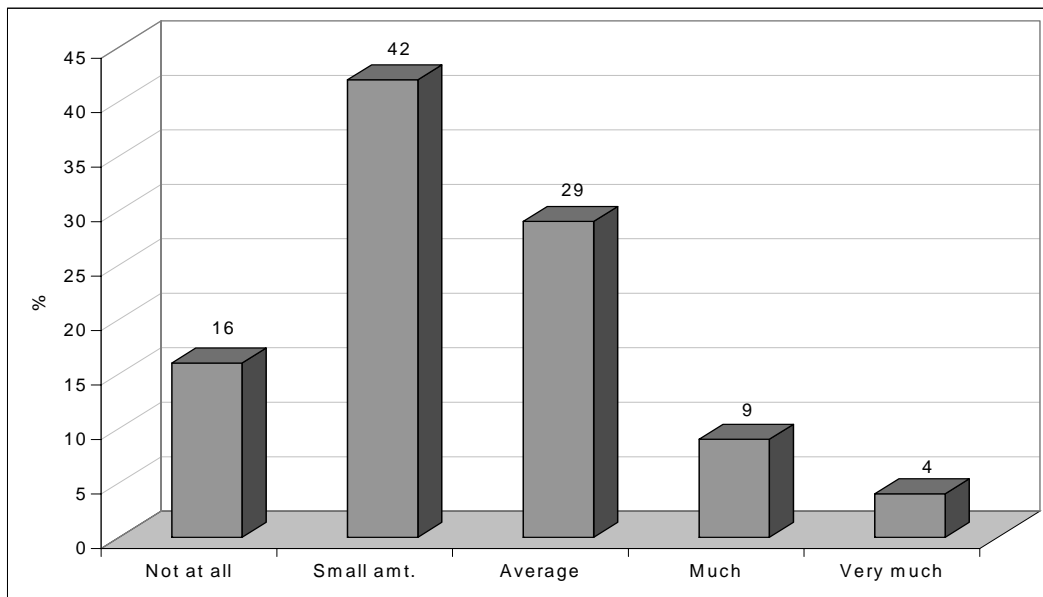
Figure 52: Extent to which employees have discretion over what they say to customers (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=159 (C5.1.d)

Companies give their employees quite a lot of latitude to decide for themselves what to say to customers.

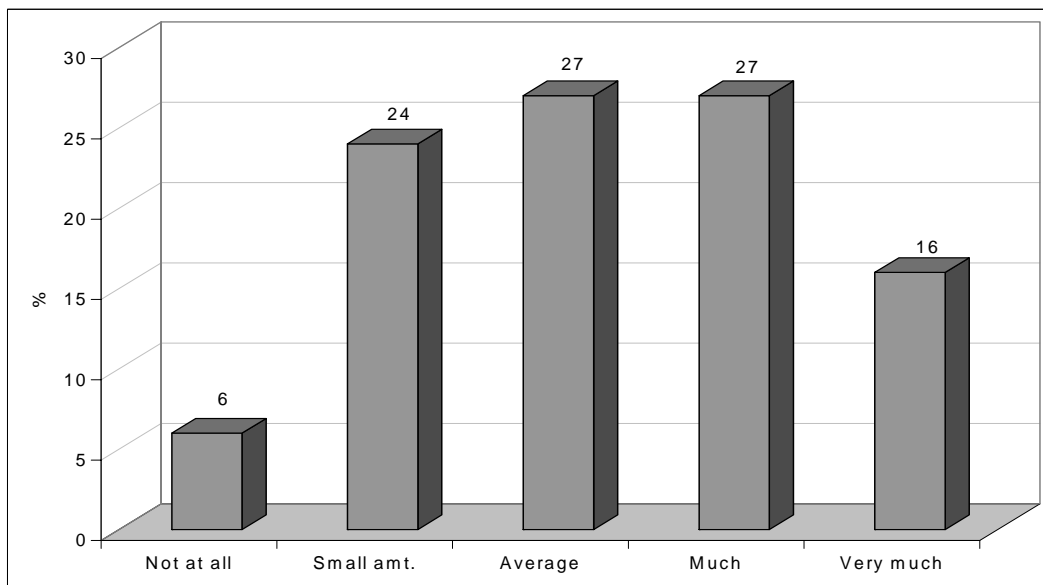
Figure 53: Extent to which employees have discretion over the design and use of new technology (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=160 (C5.1.e)

Almost 6 in 10 companies give their employees small or no latitude at all to influence the design and use of new technology. This is the area in which companies give employees particularly small influence. The result is not in any way surprising because managers/leaders do not have much influence over the design of new technology either (cf. Strandberg, 2003).

Figure 54: Extent to which employees have discretion over setting their daily lunch and break schedule (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=161 (C5.1.f)

We see here that the trend in the responses is towards the middle. However, in just over 4 out of 10 companies, the employees are given much or very much discretion in planning their daily lunch and break schedules.

Figure 55: Extent to which employees have discretion over revising work methods (proportion of companies, per cent)

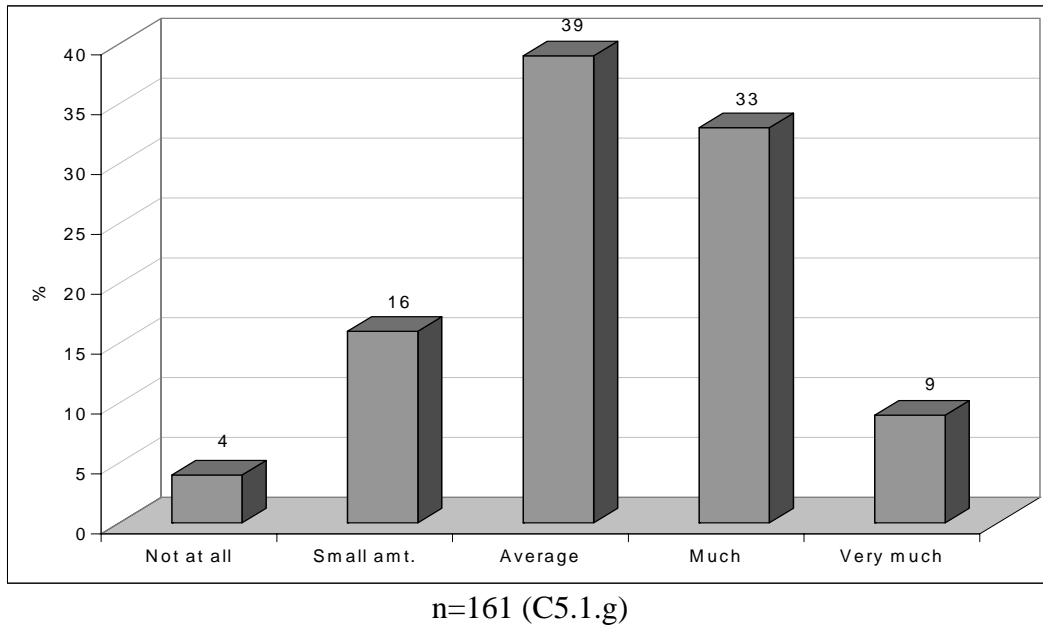
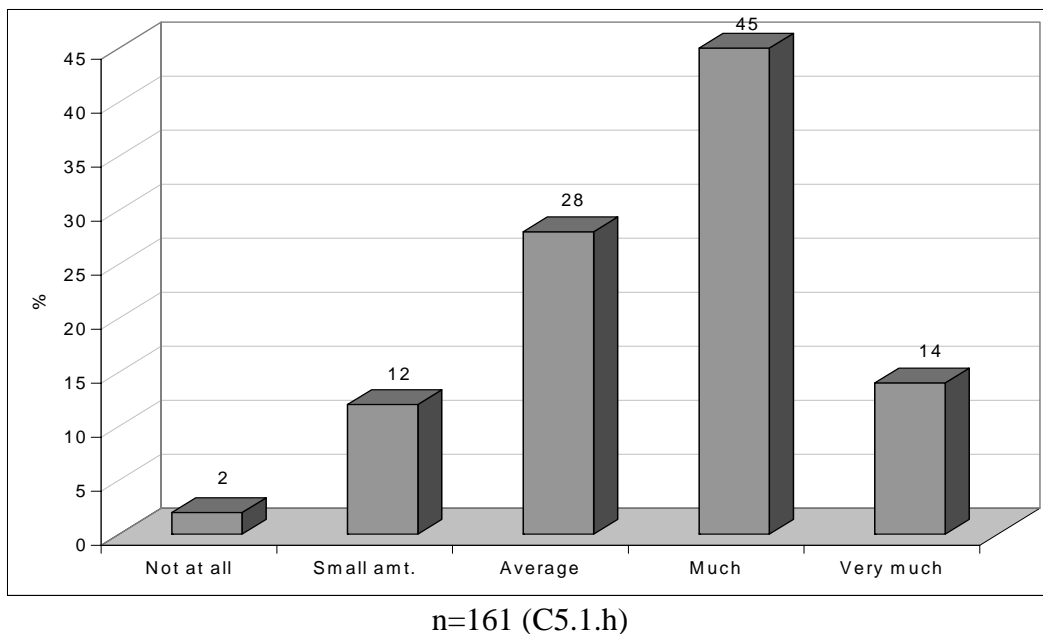
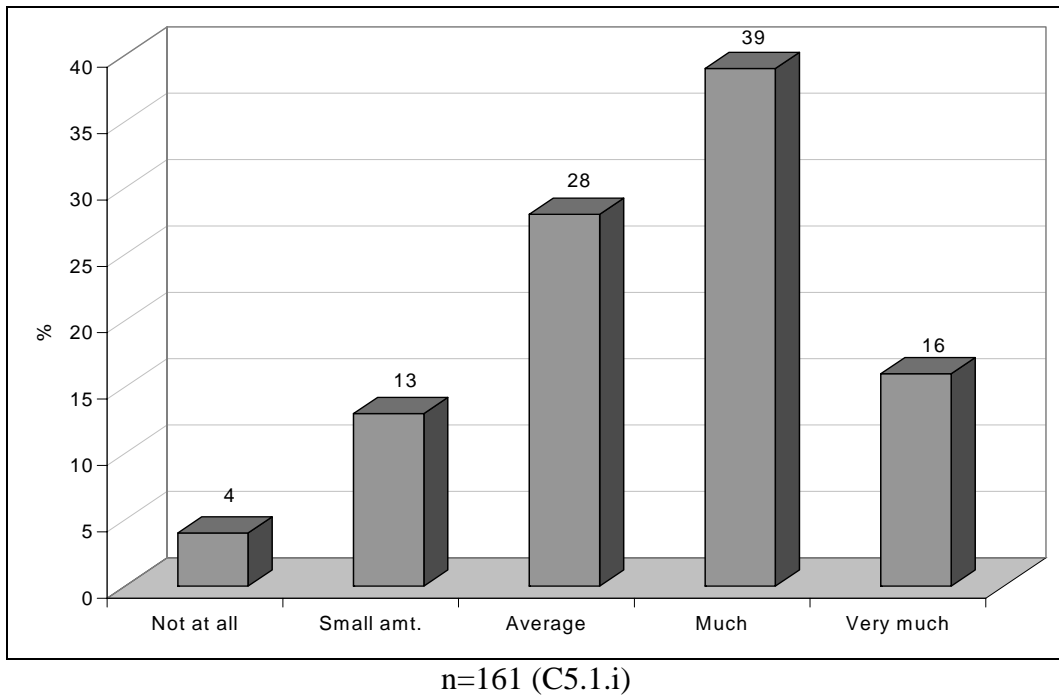


Figure 56: Extent to which employees have discretion over handling additional requests or problems that arise unexpectedly (proportion of companies, per cent)



On the whole, the companies give their employees quite a lot of scope to independently deal with a question over and above the issue at hand.

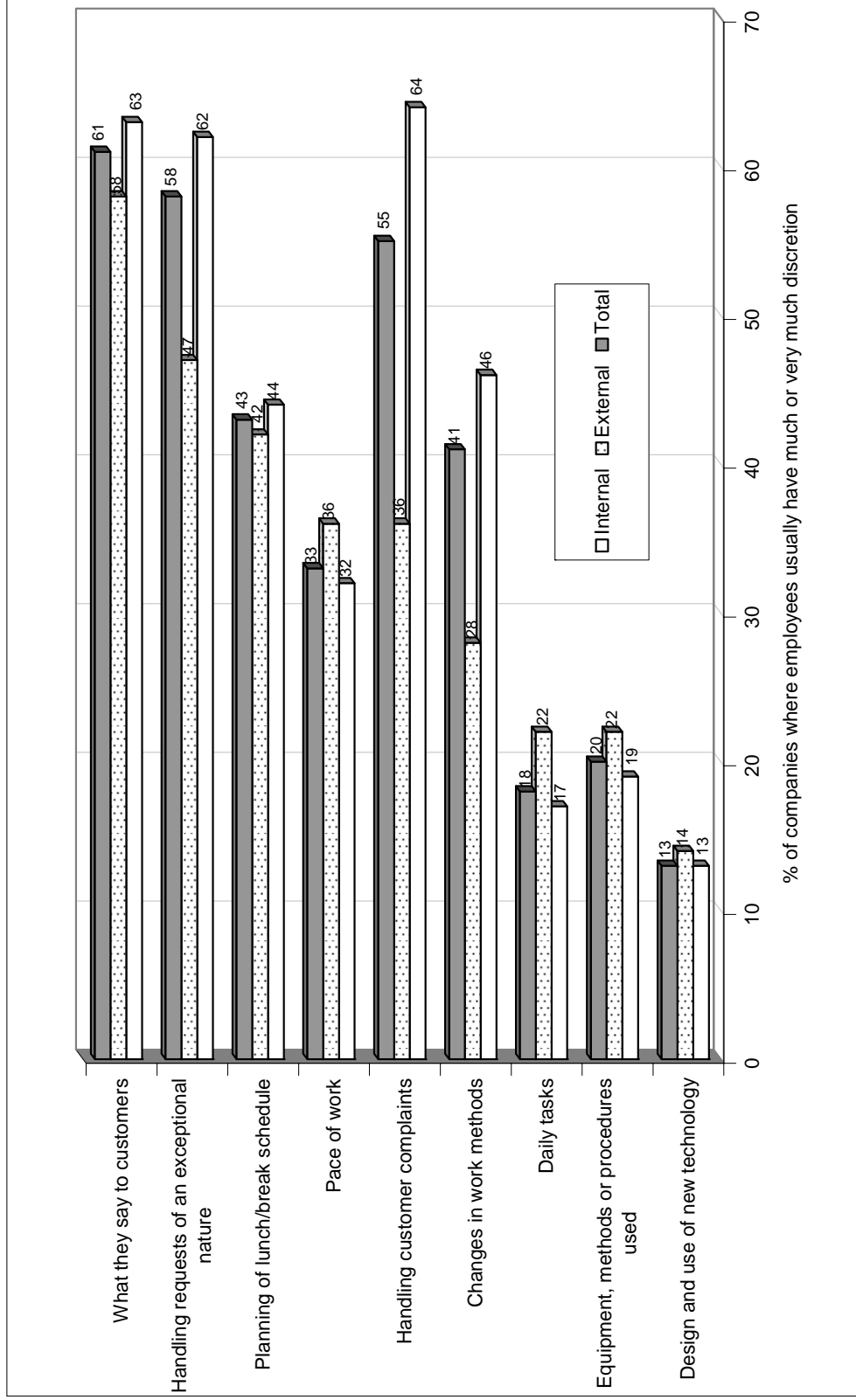
Figure 57: Extent to which employees have discretion over settling customer complaints without referral to a supervisor or other expert (proportion of companies, per cent)



Just over half of the companies give their employees much or very much freedom to deal independently with customer complaints without asking a supervisor or other expert.

In the diagram below, we have highlighted those who have answered much or very much to the above questions for all companies, and for internal and external companies respectively.

Figure 58: Employees who can usually exercise great or very great influence over changes in work methods in internal and external companies (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=159-161 (C5.1.a-i)

The diagram shows that the external companies give their employees somewhat greater freedom with respect to

- Their day-to-day tasks
- The equipment, methods and procedures that they use
- Their pace of work
- Design and use of new technology

Among internal companies, employees are given somewhat greater freedom with respect to:

- What they say to customers
- Planning of their daily lunch and break schedules

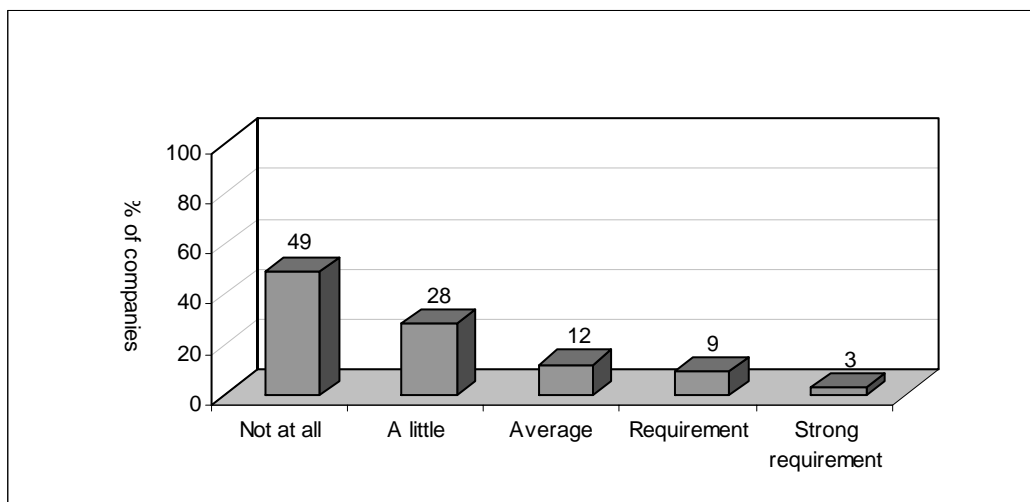
There is a significantly bigger difference with respect to:

- Changes in work methods
- Handling issues over and above the one at hand, or unexpected problems
- Handling customer complaints without referring to a group leader or other expert.

In these cases, the internal companies give their employees much more scope than the external companies do.

In the NIWL-WHCC study a couple of questions were addressed to the agents about what they appreciate most and least, respectively, in their work. Since both the questions and the respondents are different, direct comparisons with our study are not possible. One question is however quite similar in the two studies, namely the possibility of the agents to participate in planning and developing their own work. Both studies indicate that, compared to external call centres, the agents in internal ones have greater discretion in designing their working methods.

Figure 59: Extent to which employees must use a manuscript when talking to a customer (proportion of companies, per cent)



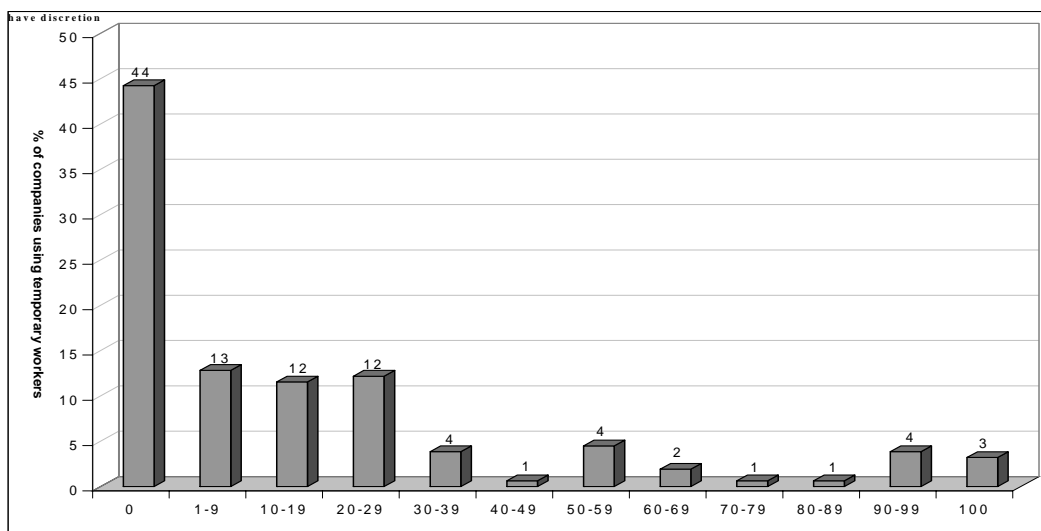
n= 160 (C5.3)

Just under half of the companies state that there are no requirements at all that employees use a manuscript when talking to customers. As expected, manuscripts are more common among companies with external activities. Furthermore, the results show that among the external companies, 20% require to a great or very great extent that employees use a manuscript when talking to customers, while the same figure for internal companies is 6%.

16 Flexible staffing and temporary employees

The proportion of temporary employees among all employees is shown in the figure below.

Figure 60: Proportion of temporary employees among total employees (proportion of companies, per cent)

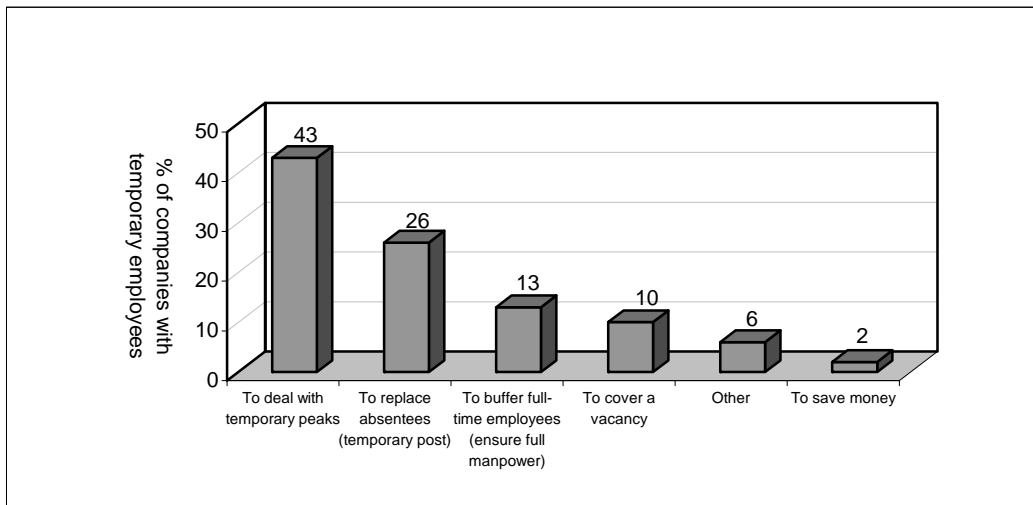


n=156 (C6.1)

We see here that just under half (44%) of the companies asked have no temporary employees at all, which in absolute terms corresponds to 69 companies.

Among those companies that have temporary employees, they typically make up between 1 and 29% of the personnel. Only a few managers say that all employees are there on a temporary basis. In the NIWL-WHCC study however only 1 % of the employees said they were temporary workers.

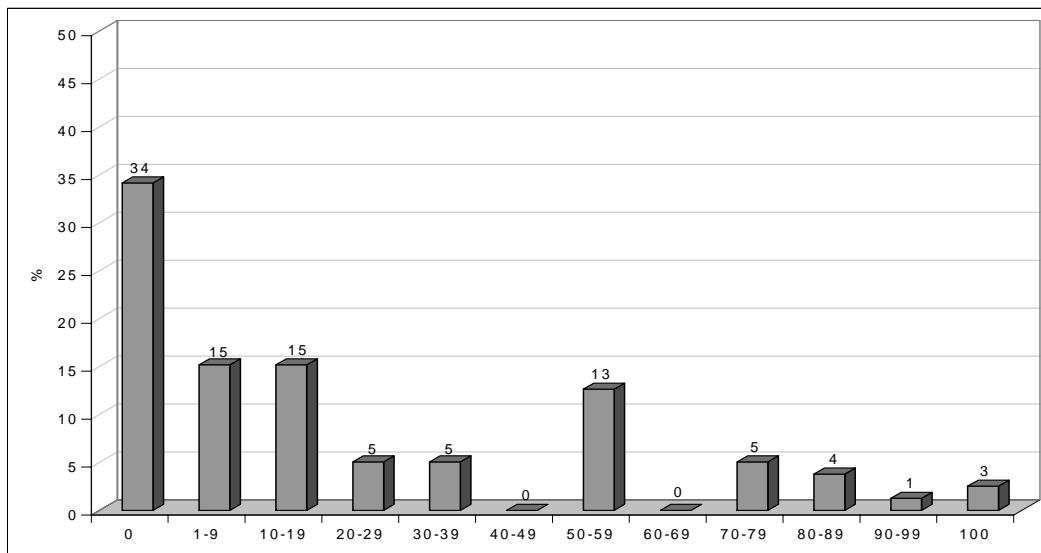
Figure 61: Main reason for using temporary employees (proportion of companies with temporary employees, per cent)



n= 87 (C6.2)

Among the 87 companies that use temporary employees, 43% say that the main reason for using temporary employees is to cope with temporary peaks in the activity. Another relatively common reason is to replace absent personnel. This is given as the main reason by just over a quarter of the companies. Among those who have responded “other reason”, a common reason for using temporary employees is that they simply want to test whether the person in question can achieve the set targets.

Figure 62: Proportion of temporary employees hired as a full-time employees (proportion of companies with temporary employees)



n= 79 (C6.10)

In 1/3 of companies with temporary employees, none have gone on to permanent posts; in 2/3 of such companies fewer than 20% have obtained permanent posts. In a few companies all, or almost all, temps have moved on to permanent jobs.

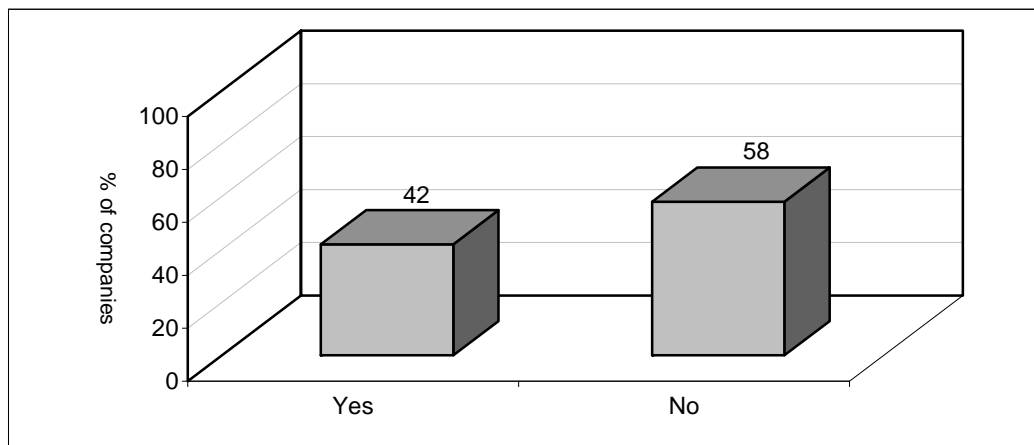
PART E: PERFORMANCE, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND CUSTOMER CONTACTS

Two main areas will be discussed in this section:

- Performance and work procedures
- Customer satisfaction and customer contact

17 Performance and work procedures

Figure 63: Existence of time targets for inbound calls (proportion of companies, per cent)



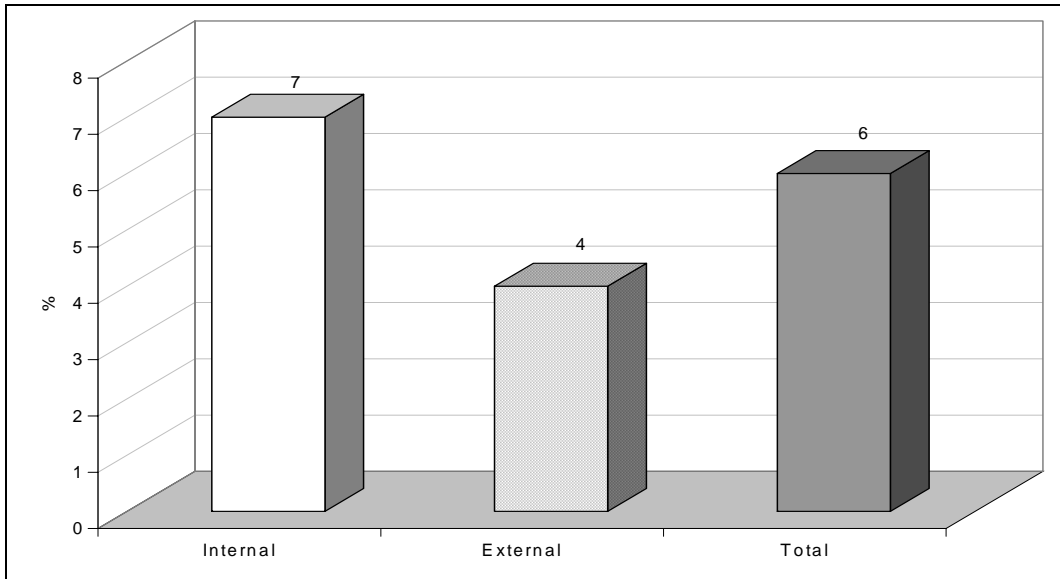
n= 156 (D1.1.a)

Here, we can see that just over 4 in 10 call centres have time targets for inbound calls, e.g. that all calls are to be answered within a certain space of time. The time targets vary between the companies. Some companies have high targets. The most common target is that 80% of calls are to be answered within 20 seconds.

The external companies have set higher targets than the internal companies. On average, the external companies have a target of 92%, to be compared with 84% in the internal companies. With respect to waiting times, the external companies have a more ambitious target, 45 seconds, compared to an average of 55 seconds for the internal companies.

On the issue of what percentage of calls are answered within the set target, the results vary from 0 to 100%, where the average is 80%. This figure is somewhat higher among the external companies (84 %) than in the internal companies (79%).

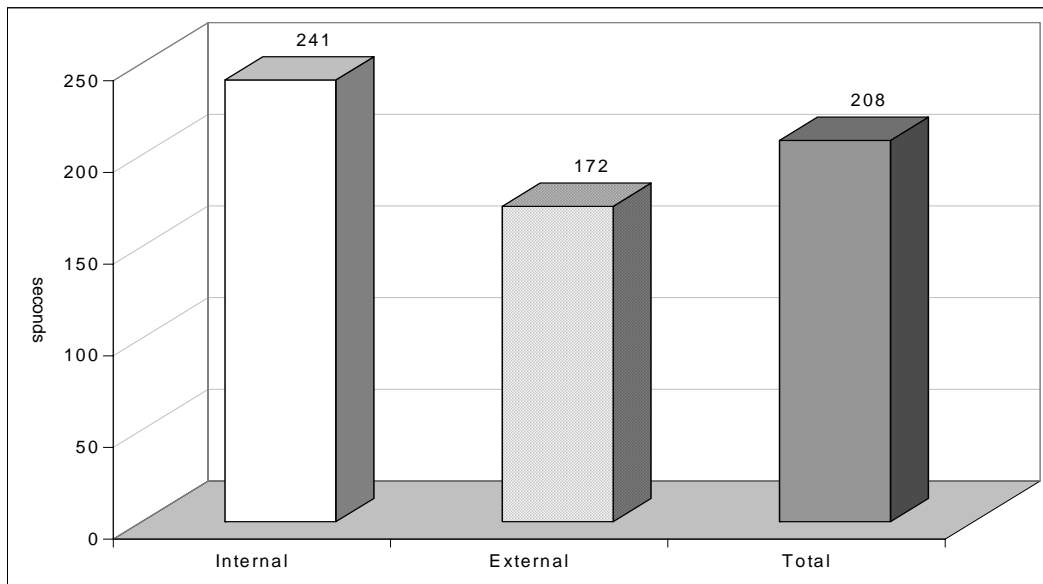
Figure 64: Average number of abandoned calls among internal and external companies (proportion of companies, per cent)



n= 89 (D1.1.c)

The proportion of abandoned calls, meaning that the customer hangs up before the call is answered, varies from 0 to 25%, the average being 6%. Here, too, there is a difference between the external and internal companies. Among the external companies, there is an average of 4% abandoned calls, compared to 7% for the internal companies.

Figure 65: Average duration of a call among internal and external companies (seconds)



n= 132 (D1.1.e)

The average duration of a call per company varies between 18 and 600 seconds. The average for all companies is 208 seconds per call – about 3.5 minutes. The average call time is longer in the internal companies – 241 seconds – compared to 172 seconds for the external companies.

The average call duration in the NIWL-WHCC study was a bit longer, 263 seconds. The average call time for the external companies was 227 seconds, compared with 312 seconds for the internal call centres. So, although call times according to the WHCC study are higher in both groups, if compared with the result of our study, external companies in both studies have shorter call times than internal call centres.

An analysis by sector shows that the average call times for companies working in the banking and public sectors (including municipal operations, state-owned businesses and county councils) are 205 and 207 seconds respectively. In second place among the more dominant sectors are telecom and insurance, with an average duration of 250 and 252 seconds, respectively. In third place is IT with an average duration of 320 seconds. In these sectors, too, there are quite large variations, as is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Call duration in seconds (shortest, average and longest) within 5 different sectors

Sector	Shortest	Average	Longest
Bank	75	205	420
Public	120	207	600
Telecom	30	250	420
Insurance	170	252	600
IT	90	320	600

On average, companies deal with 98 calls per employee and day. There is a big difference here between external and internal companies. On average, the external companies handle 128 calls per employee and day, while the corresponding figure for the internal companies is 90 calls per employee and day. These figures must however be interpreted with some caution, since the material is only based on 37 companies.¹¹

In the NIWL-WHCC study the average number of calls per day was 106, i.e. quite similar to the results in our study. Furthermore the NIWL-WHCC study also shows a big difference between external and internal companies, 143 and 58 calls respectively per day.

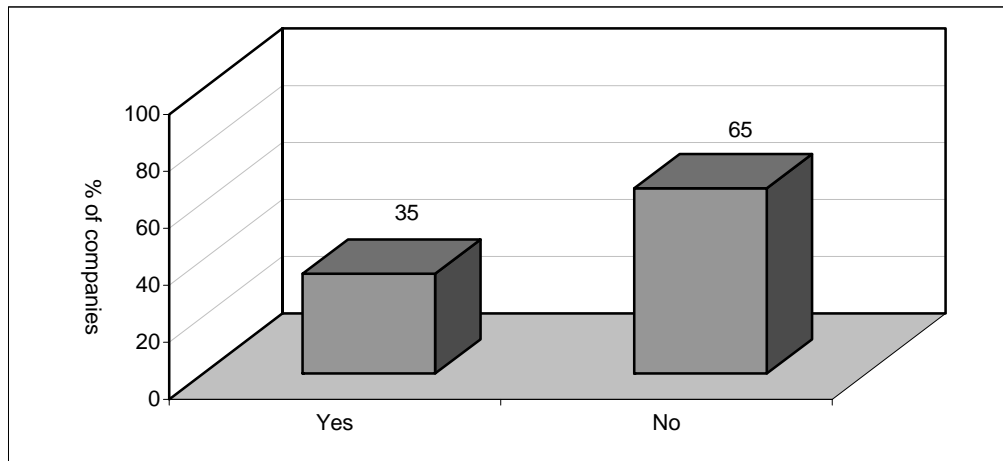
On average, personnel costs including salaries and employer's overheads are 61% of total costs and this applies to both external companies and internal companies. Since salary costs are lower among external companies, this means that total costs are lower for external companies.

¹¹ As mentioned previously, the original question in the questionnaire was too vague, so we chose to follow up this question with the information that it referred to the average number of calls per employee and day.

18 Customer satisfaction and customer contact

This section discusses how call centres measure customer satisfaction and how they deal with customer complaints.

Figure 66: Existence of regular customer surveys (proportion of companies, per cent)

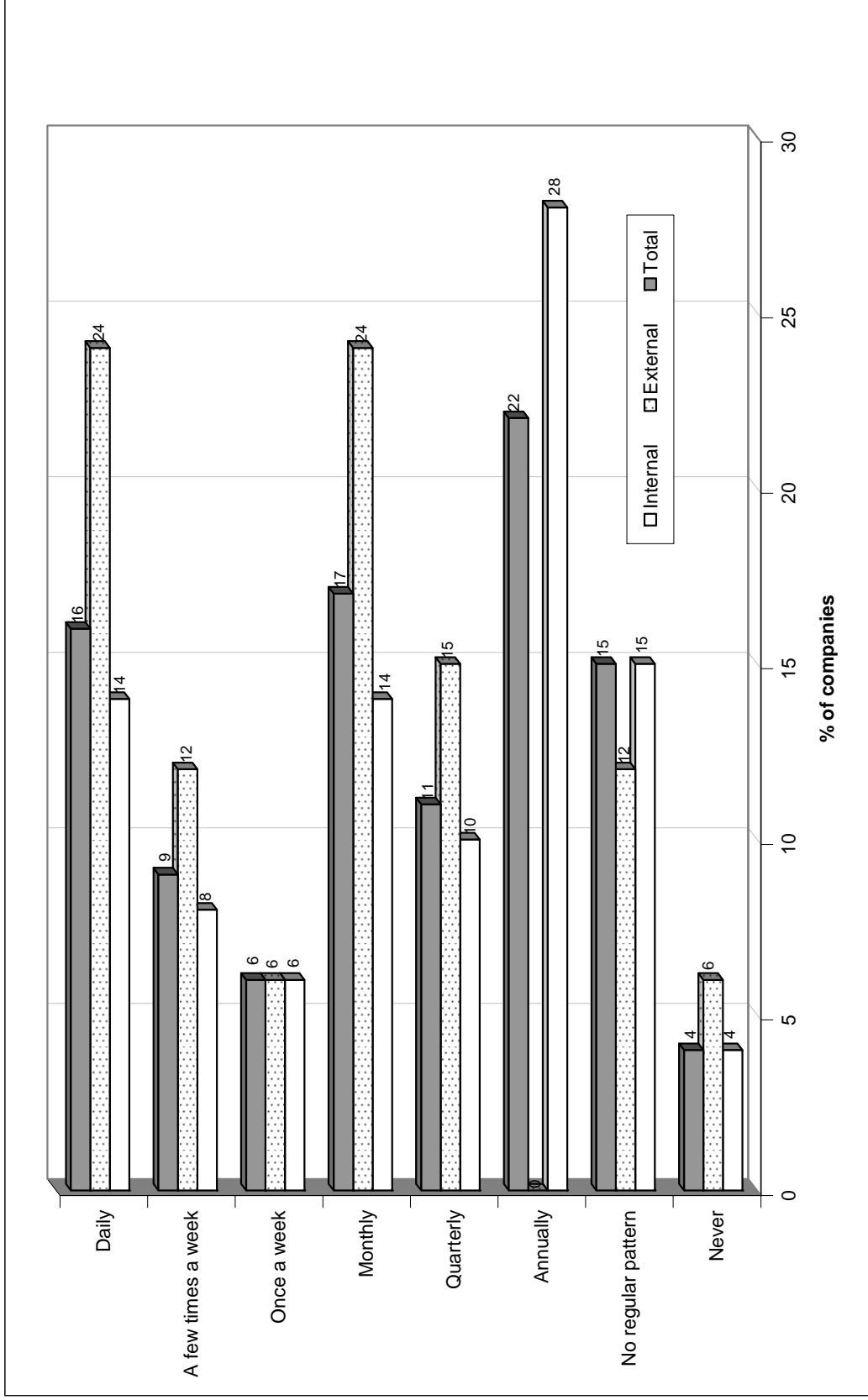


n=157 (D2.1)

Here, we can see that just over a third of call centres carry out regular customer surveys. The proportion is roughly similar for the external and internal companies.

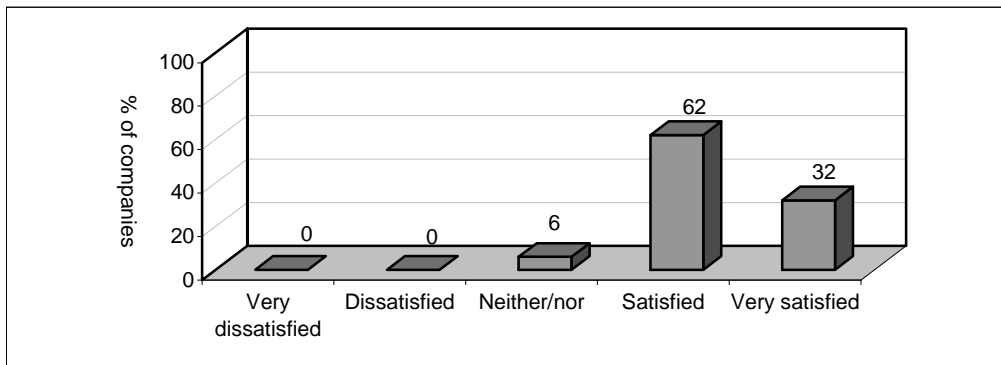
In the figure below we can see that there is a big difference between companies in how often their employees receive customer feedback; 22% let employees see customer feedback once a year, 17% provide it on a monthly basis and 16% let employees see customer feedback on a daily basis. From the diagram, we can also see that the external companies allow their employees to see customer feedback to a greater degree than is the case in the internal companies.

Figure 67: How often employees receive customer feedback (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=149 (D2.2)

Figure 68: Average level in customer satisfaction surveys (proportion of companies, per cent)

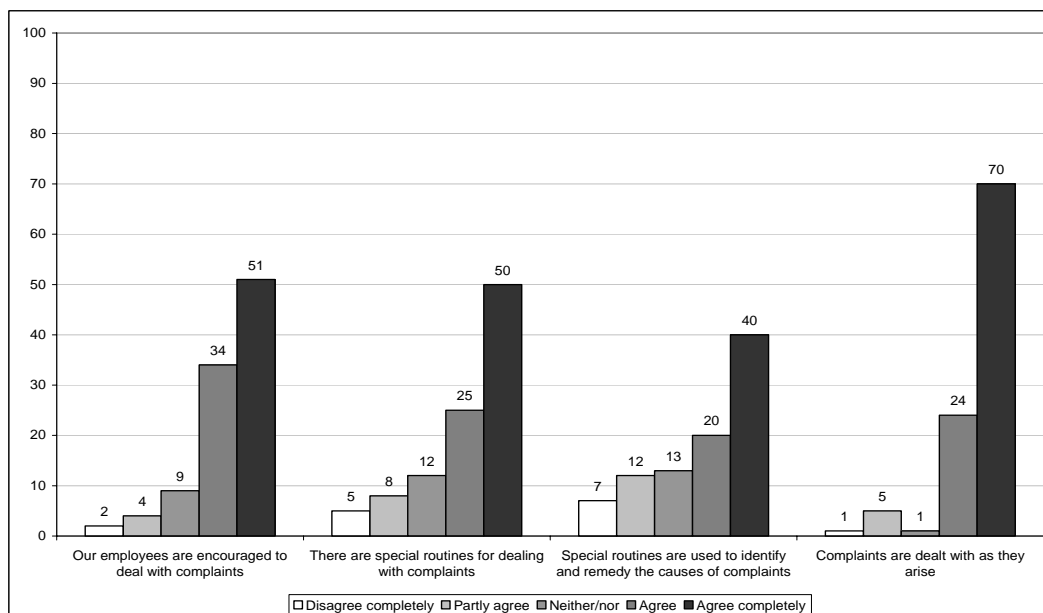


n=144 (D2.3)

Here, we can see that 62% of companies have stated that their average level in customer satisfaction surveys is satisfied. The difference between internal and external is marginal in this case.

Four questions were asked about how customer complaints are handled. The answers to these questions are reported in the figure below.

Figure 69: How complaints are handled (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=154-155 (D2.4a-d)

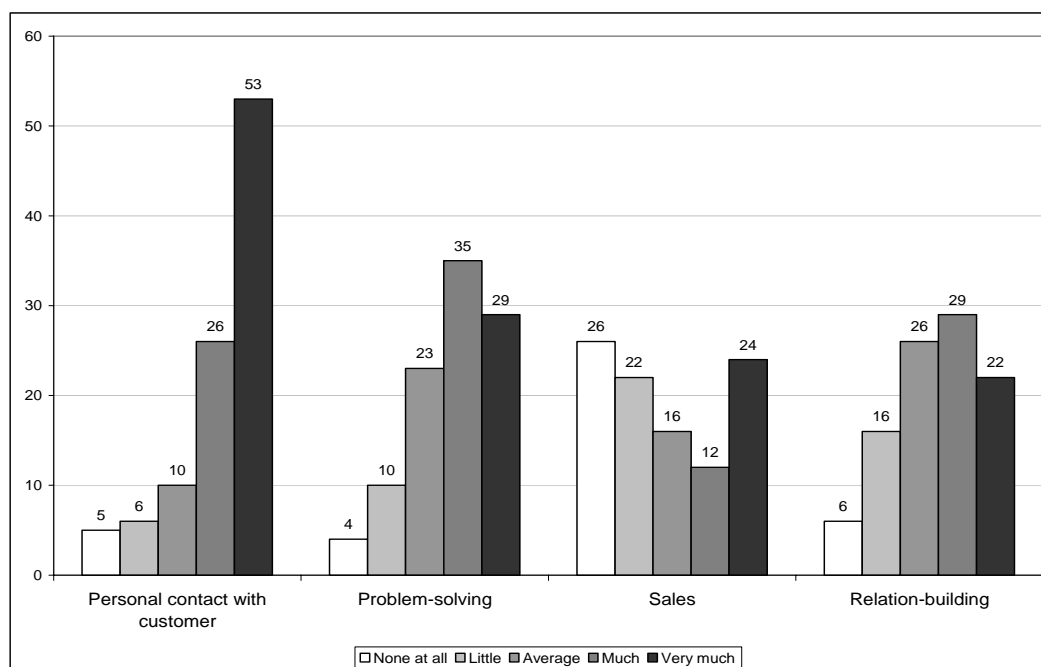
We see here that it is common for complaints to be dealt with as they arise – and this is also something that the supervisors/managers quite extensively encourage their employees to do – and that there are established routines for handling complaints. It is less common that special routines are used to identify and remedy the reasons for the complaints.

There are no great differences between the external companies and the internal companies, except in one respect, namely that the external companies make more use of special routines to identify and remedy the reasons for the complaints.

We find that there is a clear correlation between encouraging employees to deal with complaints and customer satisfaction.¹² This means that those who encourage their employees to deal with customer complaints experience higher customer satisfaction. The other aspects of complaint management also correlate with customer satisfaction but at a lower level of significance.

A customer call can consist of a number of different parameters. Within the framework of this study, four different parameters have been highlighted: sales, personal contact with the customer, problem-solving and relationship building.

Figure 70: Content of customer calls (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=156-158 (D2.5a-d)

We see here that the clearest parameter is personal contact with the customer. Just under 8 of 10 companies think that employees' calls contain much, or very much, personal contact with the customer. The term personal contact can of course be understood in different ways, and is highly subjective. We can also note that the companies see many calls as problem-solving, and that this term, too, can contain a spectrum of different problems that must be solved. Sales are less common, but as discussed previously, increasing numbers of inbound calls are expected to also contain a sales aspect. About half of the companies see the calls as highly or very highly relationship-building.

With respect to personal contact with the customer, there are no major differences between the external and internal companies. On the other hand, the external companies are more sales-oriented and relationship-building than the internal

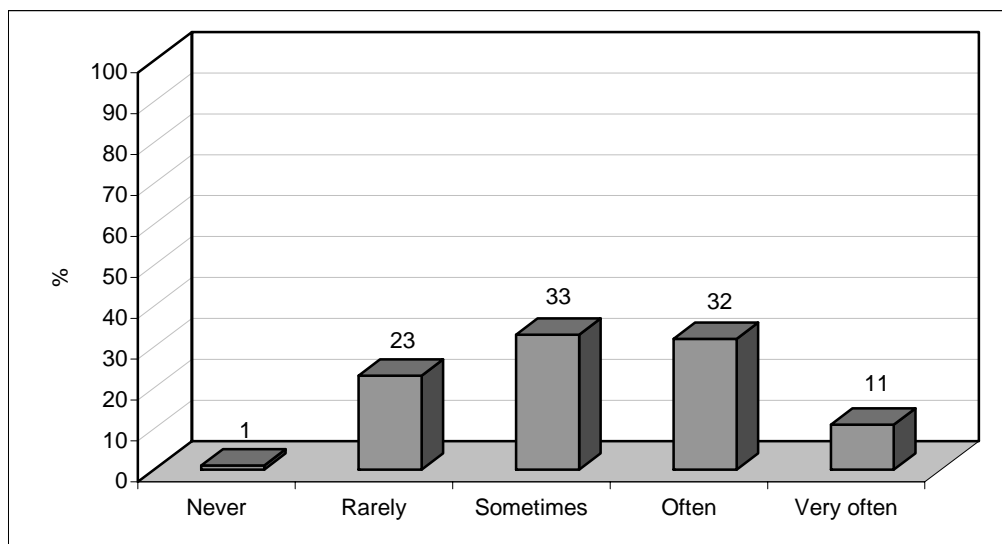
¹² The correlation is 0.29 (at 0.01 sign) which can be seen as high

companies, while the internal companies are more problem-solving than the external companies. One study made argues that problem-solving can be regarded as relationship-building (Strandberg, 2005), which in the light of the above results might mean that there is no great difference between the external companies and the internal companies in this regard.

Our data show that relationship-building is the only call aspect that correlates with customer satisfaction.¹³

The technical system as a rule controls call traffic, and when a number of call centres are linked together, the system directs the call to the person who is “free” to receive the call.

Figure 71: How often individual employees have repeated interactions with the same customer (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=159 (D2.6)

Somewhat surprisingly, we can see here that it is fairly common that individual employees have repeated interactions with the same customer. It is on the other hand not surprising that this is somewhat more common among internal than external companies. Neither is it surprising that smaller call centres give employees more opportunities for repeated interactions with the same customer.¹⁴

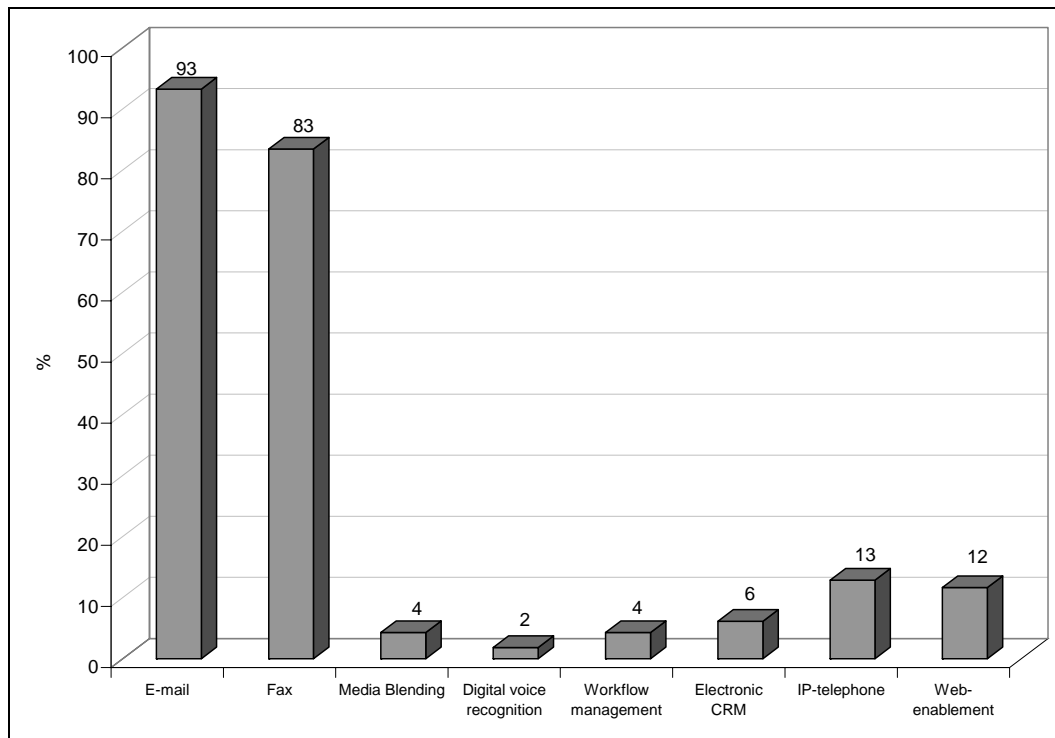
¹³ A correlation of 0.31 (at 0.01 sign) shows that there is a relatively strong statistical link between the level of customer satisfaction and the relationship-building aspect of employee calls

¹⁴ The correlation is -0.31 (at 0.01 sign).

PART F: CALL CENTRE TECHNOLOGY

Question E.1 in the questionnaire read "Roughly how many per cent of daily customer calls are received by automatic voice systems or similar (i.e. without a person being involved)?" This question was later changed in the international project to "How large a proportion of daily customer calls consist of calls without any human contact whatsoever". We chose to follow up this revised question, but only managed to obtain answers from 35 companies. Of these, 17 stated that all calls involve human contact. Among the other companies, 3 companies had a relatively large proportion of calls, 75–82%, without any human contact with customers at all. Otherwise, the proportion of calls without any human contact with customers lay in the 0.5–15% interval. Since the answer to this question is only based on 35 responses, the result is of course to be interpreted with caution.

Figure 72: Use of technical aids to communicate with the customer (proportion of companies, per cent)



n=158-159 (E2.a-h)

Here we can see that e-mail and fax are the most common aids, apart from the telephone, used by employees in most companies to communicate with customers.

PART G: THE COMMUNITY

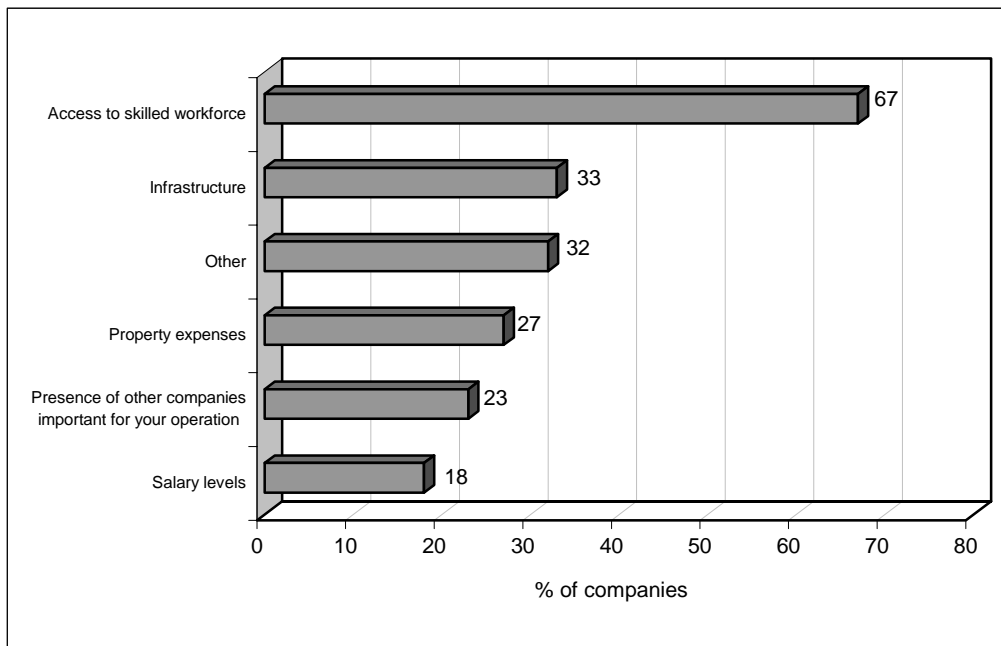
In this section, we look at call centres from the perspective of the community.

Respondents have been asked to answer questions about:

- The importance of various factors in choice of location
- Utilisation of various local and regional assets or resources
- How the presence of other call centres affects recruitment and the ability to retain staff
- Membership of various organisations and associations
- Use of consultants
- Any pressure from various actors/factors to design attractive jobs, have collective agreements with unions and use tried and tested human resources (HR) practices.

19 Local and regional assets

Figure 73: The most important benefit of operating in this location (proportion of companies, per cent)

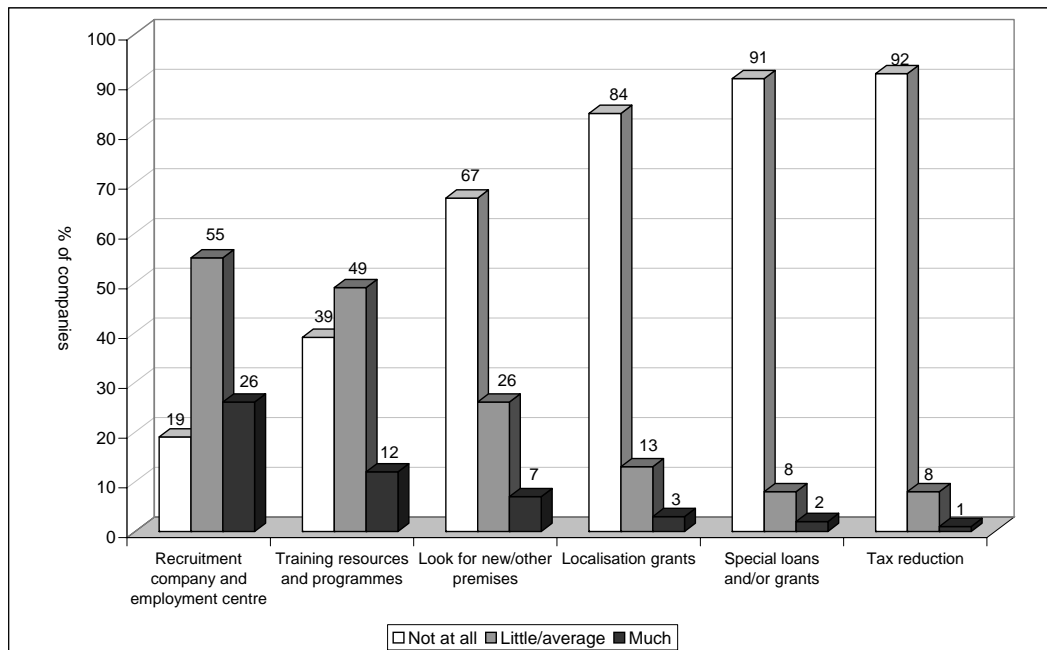


n= 157-158 (F1)

The most important advantage of operating in the specific location is, according to the companies, access to qualified personnel. As many as two thirds have stated this alternative. The answers among the other alternatives are relatively evenly distributed. Salaries are accorded the least importance. As shown in the diagram, a relatively high number of the companies – just under a third – have stated “other” in response to the question of what the biggest advantage is of operating in that location. When asked what “other” is, two responses dominate: proximity to head office and proximity to the market/customers.

Respondents were presented with a choice of six different assets in the question of use of local or regional resources.

Figure 74: Use of local and regional public resources (proportion of companies, per cent)



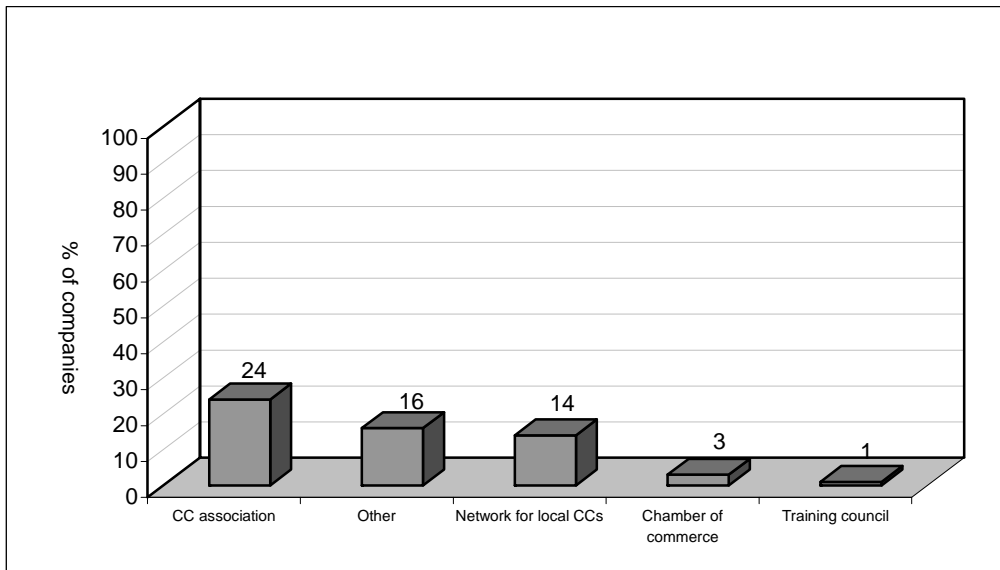
n= 142-156 (F2)

We can see here that it is extremely unusual that companies have made use of special loans and/or grants, tax reduction and location grants in their businesses. Somewhat more frequent, but still rather unusual, is that the respondents have made use of local or regional assets in looking for new/other premises. The local or regional asset that is used most is recruitment companies/employment centres and educational resources and programmes.

A few other results here are that

- 84% of participants have answered that none of their employees has been, or is, in a government-subsidised training programme.
- 39% have answered that none of their employees has worked for another call centre in the proximity.
- 51% of participants have answered that they have employee(s) who is/are currently studying at a higher education institution.

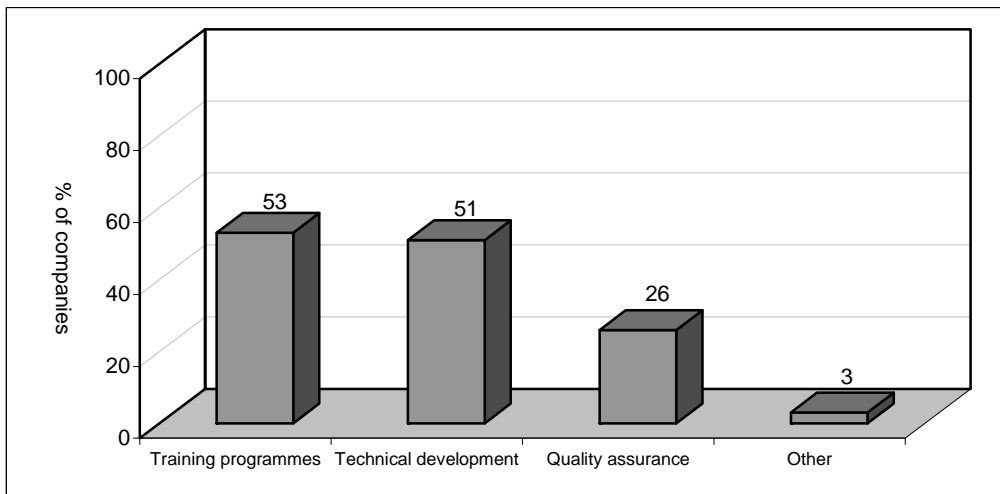
Figure 75: Participation in various types of organisation and network (proportion of companies, per cent)



n= 156 (F.5)

It is not particularly common that the companies studied are members of the organisations or networks they are asked about. It is worth mentioning that the Swedish call centre association mainly consists of external call centres.

Figure 76: Use of consultants (proportion of companies, per cent)



n= 149-152 (F6)

Just over half use consultants for training programmes as well as technical development and further development. A quarter use consultants for quality assurance.

20 External pressures

In this section we look at how various external actors can influence the creation of attractive jobs, collective agreements and use of tried and tested HR practices. The external actors are Government, laws and ordinances, Consultants and technology salespeople, Head office policy, Labour market, Other call centres, Sector organisations and Trade unions. The next table presents the results of questions about the influence of these actors.

Table 2: Pressure from various external actors on various activities (proportion of companies, per cent)

External actors	Activities					
	Creation of attractive jobs		Collective agreements		Use of tried and tested HR practices	
Government, laws and ordinances	Not at all	66 %	Not at all	71 %	Not at all	63 %
	Little/average	24 %	Little/average	16 %	Little/average	27 %
	A lot	12 %	A lot	15 %	A lot	10 %
Consultants and technology salespeople	Not at all	68 %	Not at all	85 %	Not at all	66 %
	Little/average	27 %	Little/average	15 %	Little/average	30 %
	A lot	6 %	A lot	0 %	A lot	4 %
Head office policy	Not at all	52 %	Not at all	73 %	Not at all	55 %
	Little/average	27 %	Little/average	19 %	Little/average	27 %
	A lot	20 %	A lot	8 %	A lot	18 %
The labour market	Not at all	71 %	Not at all	83 %	Not at all	77 %
	Little/average	20 %	Little/average	16 %	Little/average	19 %
	A lot	9 %	A lot	2 %	A lot	4 %
Other call centres	Not at all	80 %	Not at all	91 %	Not at all	88 %
	Little/average	17 %	Little/average	8 %	Little/average	10 %
	A lot	3 %	A lot	6 %	A lot	2 %
Sector organisations	Not at all	78 %	Not at all	88 %	Not at all	86 %
	Little/average	17 %	Little/average	11 %	Little/average	14 %
	A lot	4 %	A lot	1 %	A lot	1 %
Trade unions	Not at all	57 %	Not at all	66 %	Not at all	71 %
	Little/average	31 %	Little/average	21 %	Little/average	22 %
	A lot	13 %	A lot	12 %	A lot	7 %

n=148-155 (F8.1-7)

As a whole the external actors' pressure, as perceived by managements, is low in the design of workplaces, establishment of collective agreements as well as use of tried and tested HR practices. The pressure is especially low from other call centres and from sector organisations for all three activities shown in the table; as was pointed out earlier these results can partly be explained by the fact that only 1 out of 4 call centres is a member of a call centre association and as few as 14% belong to a local network of call centres.

In the table we have marked the squares where 10% or more of the respondents feel that there is a lot of a pressure. The highest pressure comes from head offices – 20% of the companies feel that head office exerts a lot of pressure for creation of attractive

~THE COMMUNITY~

jobs and 18% say that head office puts a lot of pressure on employees to use tried and tested HR practices. The pressure from government, laws and ordinances is also quite high for these two activities. Moreover, 15% of the companies feel that government, laws and ordinances apply a lot pressure when it comes to collective agreements. Trade unions exercise pressure for creation of attractive jobs and collective agreements.

PART H: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

As shown in this study, we have been able to demonstrate that in a number of respects, external, outsourced call centres are different from in-house, internal companies. A consistent feature of the results is that the *external companies* are more performance-oriented than the internal companies. We have been able to say, for example, that the external companies have shorter call times and lower salaries. Furthermore, the external companies are bigger users of performance appraisals, performance measurements and call listening to improve employee performance. On the other hand, external companies have higher staff turnover – at the same time as their costs for recruiting, testing and training a new employee are lower. The *internal companies* invest more in their personnel by giving them more latitude and authority as well as a higher degree of participation in design of their own tasks. The internal companies also invest more in training their personnel, both in introducing their employees and as continuing education. Employees of internal companies also do more problem-solving, while those at external companies are more sales-oriented.

As we pointed out earlier it is not very common for call centre research to have an explicit focus on internal vs. external operations. An exception is the NIWL-WHCC project, with which we have continuously compared data in this report. These comparisons demonstrate to a great extent that the results from our study are in line with the corresponding questions and results from the NIWL-WHCC project (Toomingas et al, 2003; Kerstin Norman, 2005). We have also compared the results with another Swedish study (Strandberg, 2006) and the pattern repeats itself. External companies have more focus on productivity and quantity than internal companies, whereas the latter emphasise employee skill and training.

A couple of international studies however found differences between internal and external call centres. Walsh & Deery (2006) have focused on employees' perceptions of their work situation and work environment. The study was a survey directed at customer service representatives at two sites, one in-house centre and one outsourced, external centre. The results revealed that employees at the outsourced call centre were significantly less satisfied with most aspects of their work. Doellgast (2004) has also noticed a difference between internal and external call centres. The internal call centre was "relying on more bureaucratic, rule-based mechanisms while the second [the external call centre] took an approach that combined normative controls with intensive monitoring and performance measures" (Doellgast, 2004, p. 18)

One interpretation that can be made here is that the external companies apply a more production line oriented view while internal companies apply a more empowerment oriented view, two views identified by Gilmore in his study of call centres in the UK (Gilmore, 2001). According to Gilmore, the production line view is based on a low-cost strategy, transactions, simple routines, a predictable environment and a management style that is based on the idea that the only thing that drives people is money. The empowerment view on the other hand is often based on differentiation, relationships, lack of routines/complex tasks, an unpredictable environment and a management style that is based on the idea that employees have high growth needs, high social needs and strong interpersonal skills.

Batt and Moynihan (2002) have a similar approach. They have outlined three

alternative production models and discuss their applicability to call centre work and management. At the low end there is the classic mass production model while at the high end we find the professional services model. Between the two extremes there is a range of hybrid models that they call mass customisation. The three models are described in terms of goal, technology, skills requirements of jobs and organisation of work. The goal in the classic mass production model is to maximise volume and minimise costs. A combination of mechanisation and Taylorism is used to rationalise the production. The work organisation minimises skill requirements, discretion and job cycle time. Learning is limited to repetition of simple rationalised tasks – ‘practice makes perfect’. HR practices assume that jobs can be designed to be turnover-proof, with workers as easily replaceable parts.

The goal of the professional services model at the opposite end of the spectrum is to provide quality services. The technology is used as a complement to labour. The formal education and specialised skills of employees are high; and the design of work builds on the independent discretion of professional employees who collaborate as needed with other specialists to provide service and are rewarded with high relative pay, benefits and employment security.

Batt and Moynihan call the various hybrids mass customisation models. The goal here is to compete on quality and customisation as well as price. Firms adopt some level of automation and process re-engineering found in mass production models, coupled with some level of attention to service quality and customer loyalty found in the professional service model.

Based on existing research Batt and Moynihan discuss the applicability of these models to call centre management. They emphasise several limitations of existing research on call centre performance and studies of service workplaces generally. One criticism is that most studies capture one or two context-specific outcome measures – such as productivity or quality and the effect on the economy is often based on a single parameter, such as wages. Another criticism is that in order to examine the relationship between quality and efficiency, there is a need to better understand the use of technology and operations management in call centres. Thirdly, analysis of the causal relationships linking management practices to performance needs to move forward.

Finally Batt and Moynihan highlight a need for better understanding of marketing and consumer behaviour in relation to call centres. A question that Miciak and Desmarais (2001) raised in this context is “what is the purpose of a call centre in the modern marketing organisation?” They do not really answer this question directly but say that; “Call centers are changing the way companies communicate with customers and are a strategic asset in delivering exceptional service quality. Companies that focus on customer loyalty are increasingly using their centers to differentiate their product or service offering and drive customer satisfaction.” (p. 351)

Based on our own study, and on other studies referred to, we may perhaps conclude that we seem to see expressions of two very different business models, or two different production models – a with hybrids in between – within call centre activities. One production model focusing on personnel, competence and quality of services and mainly found in internal call centres, and a second model focusing on productivity and quantity and mainly found in external call centres. When we talk about call centres we are therefore talking about very different types of company and different types of work.

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MITIOR

Media, IT and innovation
in organisation and work

MITIOR is a research programme about organisation and work in the IT and media sectors and other operations where IT use is central. The programme looks at the development and design of new IT solutions as well as their use in other industries. One fundamental issue is the possibilities of combining good jobs with effective businesses. The MITIOR programme is currently located at the Department for Work and Health at Arbetslivsinstitutet, Swedish National Institute for Working Life and at KTH, the Royal Institute of Technology and its School for Computer Science and Communication.

Those active in the research group at present (January 2007) include Åke Sandberg (research team leader, professor), Fredrik Augustson (researcher) and Helena Norman (research assistant). Atty Burke, Karin Darin, Tommy Lindkvist, Sanja Magdalenic, Gabriela Maguid and Emma Movitz have been involved previously as research assistants and Anne Lintala as analyst.

Contact

Åke Sandberg, research team leader. Due to the government's decision to close the Arbetslivsinstitutet as of June 30, 2007, the Arbetslivsinstitutet e-mail will be closed down. Alternative addresses are akesan@kth.se or ake.sandberg@gmail.com. There may also for some time be links or contact information on www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se.

Studies within the Mitior Programme

The focus of studies has so far been on the interactive media industry in Sweden and on ICT companies in Kista in northern Stockholm, i.e. companies that *develop* different kinds of IT solutions. In the past 12 months we have been moving into sectors that are intense *users* of ICT and interactive media, focussing on digital journalism and on call centre work. We are also working on a reader in English with Scandinavian perspectives on management in new working life, and we are planning a summary book on development of ICT related work and industry in Sweden.

Interactive Media: Internet and Multimedia

Most of the sub-projects have concerned the development of companies and work in interactive media, i.e. production of Internet and multimedia solutions. Three comprehensive company management questionnaire-based surveys have been conducted and reported on (Sandberg 1998, Sandberg and Augustsson 2002, Augustsson and Sandberg 2004) as has a smaller interview-based survey about social integration (Darin 2003). A survey about work, health and competence directed at employees in 60 interactive media producing companies has been carried out and reported on in 'Net workers' (Sandberg et al 2005a) A new company management survey has been carried out in the same 60 companies, which would allow a two-level analysis (not yet conducted).

IT and Telecom Companies in Kista

A study of ICT companies in Kista was carried out in 2003–2005 with a questionnaire to establishment managements as the empirical tool. A report was first published in Swedish (Sandberg et al 2005b) and a slightly revised and updated version in English was published in

January 2007. It covers the companies' operations, networks, skills and Kista's strengths and weaknesses as a location in which to establish an ICT business. An interview-based study of knowledge sharing and inter-organisational collaboration between firms, local universities and authorities has been conducted; a preliminary report was produced and a revised version is to be published in spring 2007. A series of feedback workshops with the same three groups of actors was carried out (Högberg 2006)

Digital journalism

Case studies of work within digital news journalism and web publishing have been conducted and published (Ekström and Buskqvist 2001, Norman 2005). We are currently planning deeper studies of the development of the work of journalists in media companies on a very competitive media market and with digital tools and channels for publishing. Quality of work and of products/publications is one of the themes.

Call centre work

We participate in *The Global Call Center Industry Project* and a descriptive report of call centres in Sweden has been published in Swedish (Strandberg et al 2006); a revised version in English has also been published (Strandberg & Sandberg 2007).

Integration and Analyses

In addition to the reports from the various empirical sub-studies, the researchers draw up various types of summary and analysis. In the autumn of 2003, SNS förlag published a fourth, revised version of the textbook *Ledning för alla* (Leadership for All). An English language and substantially reworked version of the book is under completion and will have the theme Scandinavian perspectives on management in 'the new working life'. In addition articles and chapters on specific topics such as employability, organisations' purchase of services, and the productive potential of 'good work' were published in books and journals.

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