

# Effectiveness on BCM During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Is BCM helpful or unnecessary in the COVID-19 pandemic  
and what are the professional challenges we face?

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Dear experts,

the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 demonstrated the volatile and vulnerable impact an incident can have on the global economy and markets, threatening the very existence of businesses.

As experts in emergency planning, we see the process of business continuity management as a success factor for organisational resilience. By providing an effective response, this process strengthens the resilience of the organisation and minimises business disruptions.

An incident such as the Covid-19 is extremely rare and provides the opportunity to reflect on how effective business continuity management was during the last months coping with the pandemic and what development potential we can profit from. Therefore, we have investigated how helpful business continuity management can be in a pandemic or even if it is unnecessary? What are the challenges we are facing and can we already conclude how to improve our own BCM system?

This anonymous survey was addressed to all those who are concerned, even if only partially, with the topics of business continuity management ("BCM"), crisis management ("CM") and IT service continuity management ("ITSCM") in their own company. The survey examines the effectiveness of BCM in the current pandemic, the challenges and possible development potential. The results, with a focus on professional challenges, serve as a starting point for an interim conclusion and support the improvement of your own BCM system with the help of the experience gained.

Many thanks to all participants answering the questions and enriching our community.

Enjoy reading and discovering interesting facts and inspiration.



**Denis Žiga**  
Manager Business Continuity & Crisis Management

# Summary

## Business Continuity Plans



9 out of 10 implemented BC plans.  
**5 out of 10 only partially.**

## Pandemic Plans



69% implemented pandemic plans.  
**31% do not have a pandemic plan.**

## Potential for Improvement



**8 out of 10** have identified potential for improvement for their BCMS due to the pandemic.

## Awareness



**62% of top management** are currently highly awared to BCM.

## Changes within BCM System

**90 % see the following challenges within their BCM System:**

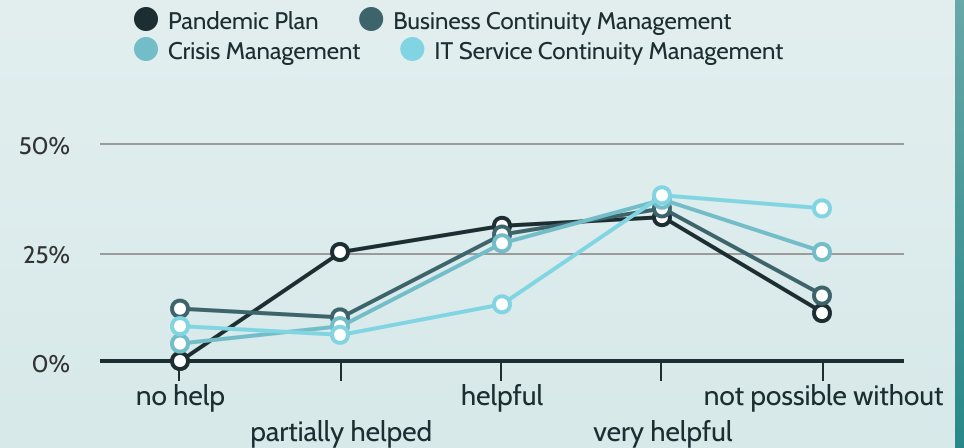
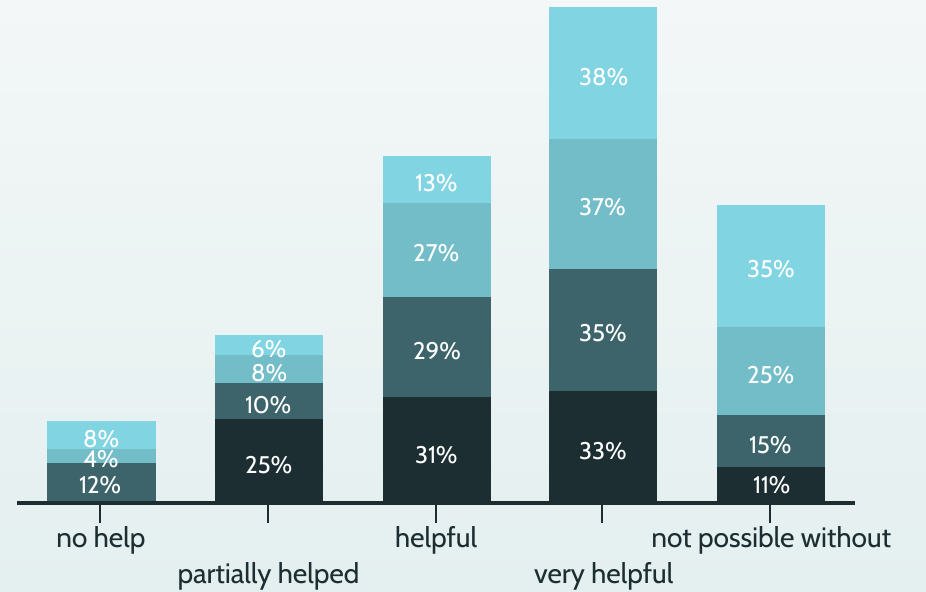
- (1) Intensify training and awareness
- (2) Organisational change
- (3) More acceptance and recognition
- (4) More human resources
- (5) Increase test frequency
- (6) Improve test quality by increasing the complexity of tests

## Future Challenges

**91 % see the following future challenges within their company:**

- (1) 3rd parties must be checked more intensively with regard to BCM
- (2) Business impact analysis must query resources in more detail
- (3) Increased number of events for which BC Plans are only partially applicable
- (4) Testing gains in importance
- (5) Increased demands on the BCM system by top management
- (6) More intensive checks during audits

## Minimised damage through different disciplines



- (1) In total **all disciplines** as well as pandemic plan were **helpful during pandemic.**
- (2) **Pandemic plans did not help as much as the disciplines BCM, CM and ITSCM.**
- (3) **ITSCM and CM** rated as **biggest help** in the pandemic followed by BCM.

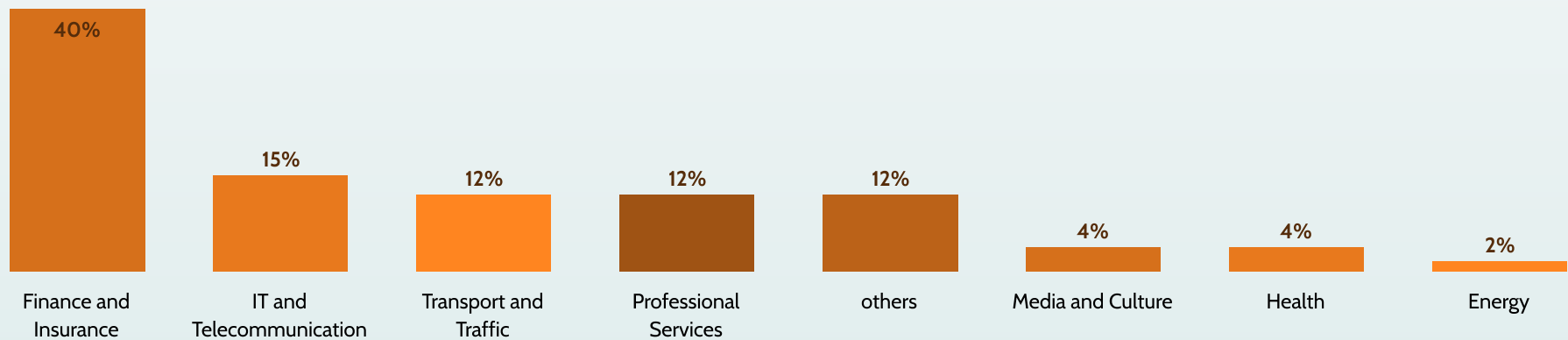
# Group of Participants

Participated Experts

**104 participants and 19 countries**

66 GER and 38 UK, NL, FRA, AUT, CHE, SWE, HUN, ROU, BGR, CZE, TUR, SAU, USA, CAN, AUS, OMN, PHL and IND

Participated Sectors



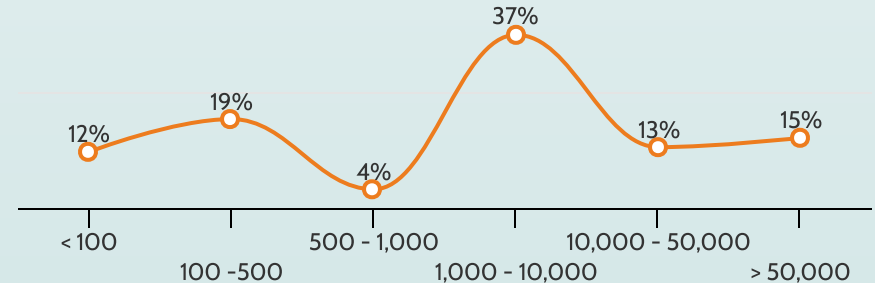
Management Level of Participants



● Top Management ● Middle Management ● Lower Management

**Top Mgmt:** Board of Directors, General Manager or Managing Director  
**Middle Mgmt:** Departmental, Divisional, Plant or Production Management  
**Lower Mgmt:** Team Leader, Specialist or Analyst

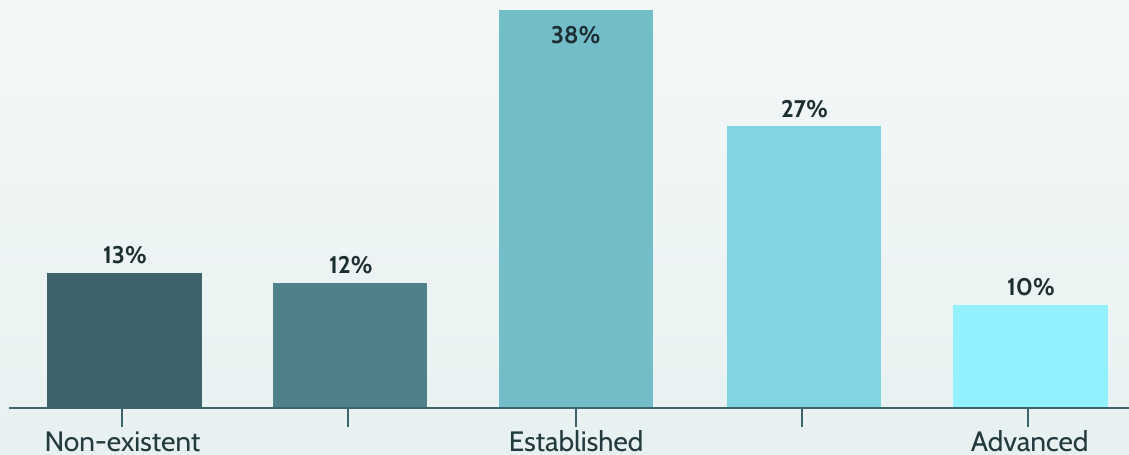
How many people are employed in your company?



**69%** of all respondents **have more than 500 employees** in their company.  
**31%** of all enterprise **have less than 500.**

# Status of Business Continuity Management System

How do you rate the maturity of your BCM System?



75% rated (78 respondents) their own BCMS as established or better.

Description of the levels of maturity\*

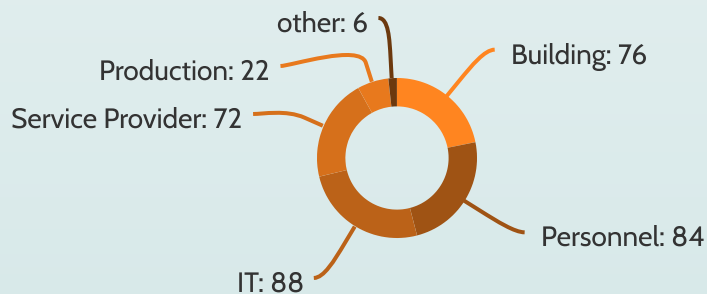
**Non-existent:** BCM is not recognized as strategically important by the sponsor with overall responsibility in top management

**Established:** BCM policy, program and processes are approved and published by the sponsor. Some departments have conducted a business impact analysis and in some cases BC plans have been reviewed.

**Advanced:** All departments have a measurable high level of competence in BCM. Strategy options are defined, approved by the sponsor and successfully tested for all relevant scenarios.

\*The survey asked for five levels of maturity, but only those described above were explained.

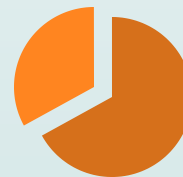
Considered worst-case scenarios



Loss of IT Infrastructure (88 respondents) is the most considered worst-case scenario.

Do you regularly perform tests and exercises?

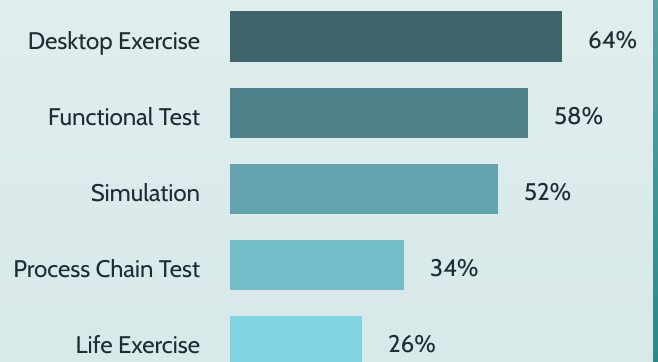
No: 33%



Yes: 67%

Two thirds carry out tests regularly. One third do not carry out tests regularly.

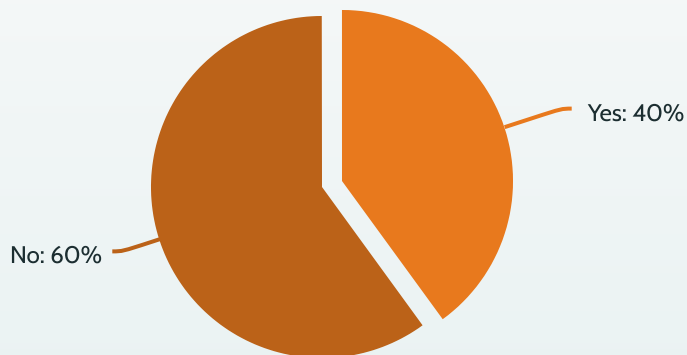
Which tests and exercises have been used to check your BCMS?



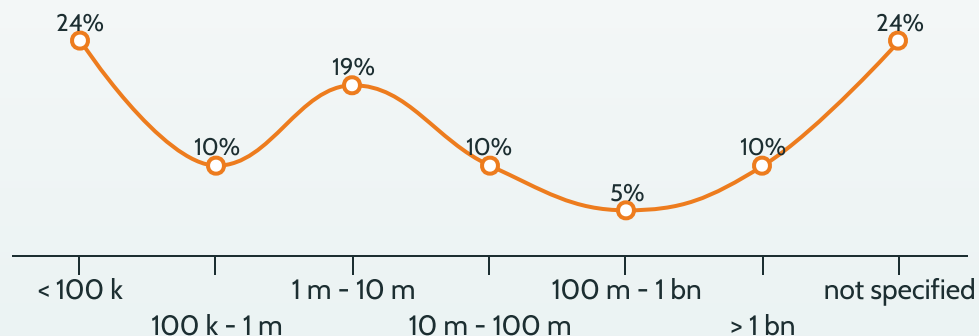
Desktop Exercises are rated as most performed tests. The more extensive live exercises are carried out the least.

# Financial Loss and Restart of Time-Critical Business Processes

Has the pandemic caused any damage?

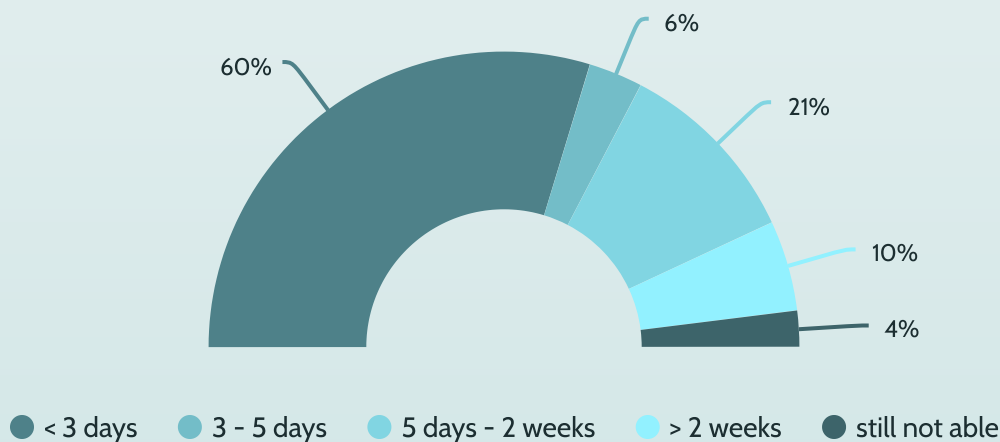


How high do you estimate the damage in €?



Despite the fact that the global economy as a whole is suffering from the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lasting effects threatening its existence are still in place, **only 40% of the participating companies seem to have suffered financial damage**. This is probably due to the fact that travel, retail, health care and many other severely affected companies are in a minority in this statistic. **Banks and insurance companies, which are less affected by the damage, do not seem to feel the impact as strongly as other industries**. In general, financial aspects during a pandemic are difficult to assess because of missing / not adequately available and appropriate measurements as well as a lack of a definition of reasonable key performance indicators.

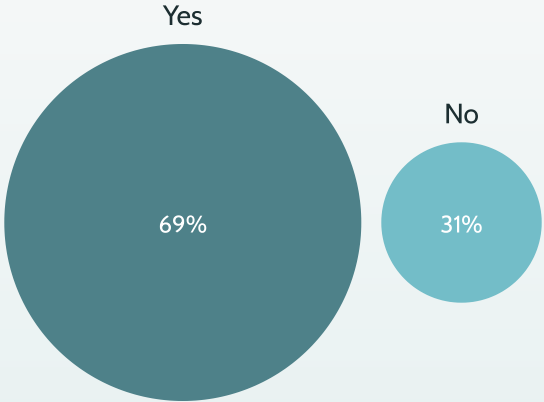
How long did it take to ensure that all employees within the time-critical business processes were able to work remotely?



Around **two-thirds** of all participating companies **have managed to get staff** involved in time-critical business processes **to work remotely within 3 days**.

# Effectiveness of Pandemic Plans and Obstacles

## Implemented pandemic plan



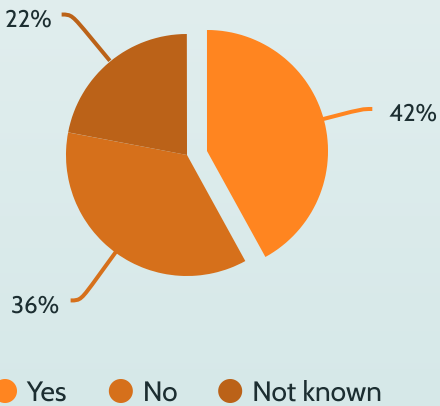
69% have implemented a pandemic plan. 31% do not have a pandemic plan.

## How helpful was your pandemic plan?



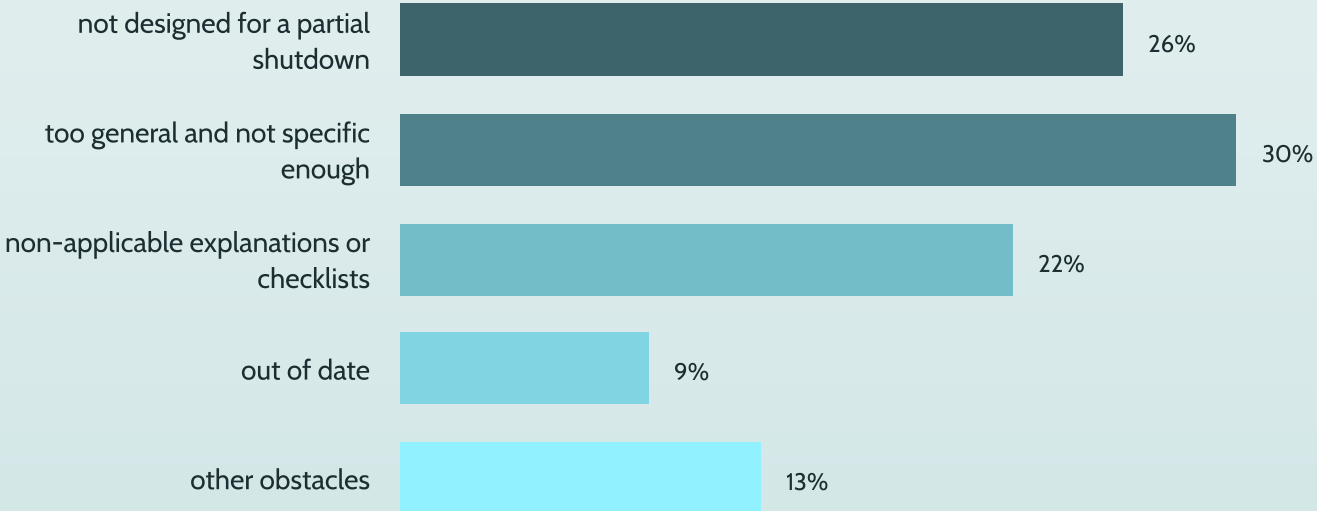
75% of those with a pandemic plan considered the plan to be at least helpful. Nobody considered the pandemic plan to be unnecessary.

## Did you have to overcome obstacles?



42% of all who have a pandemic plan had to overcome obstacles.

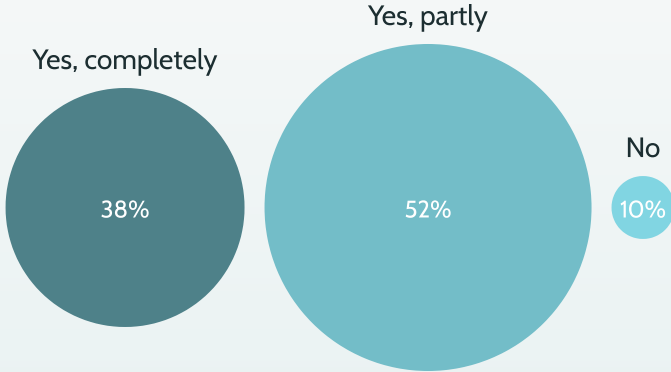
## What obstacles did you face?





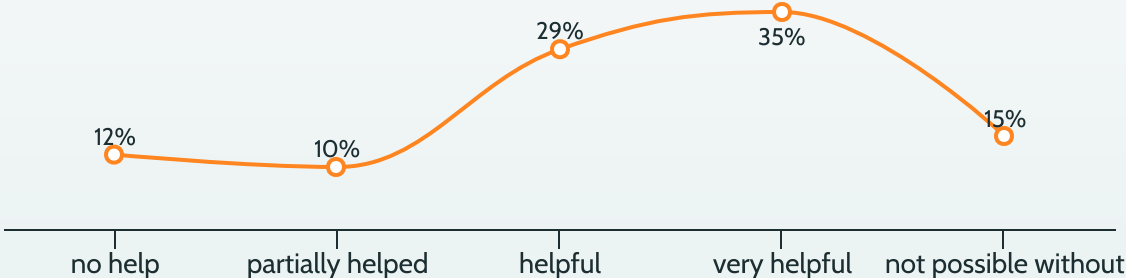
# Effectiveness of Business Continuity Management and Obstacles

Are BC plans implemented in your company?



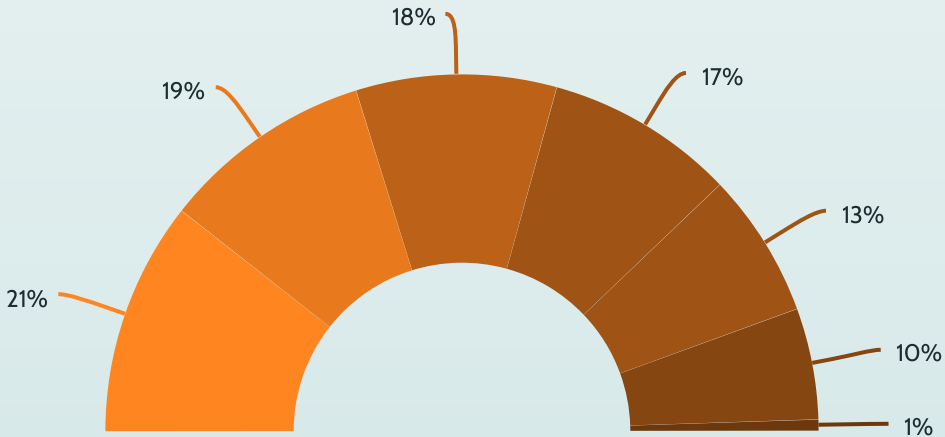
90% of respondents have implemented BC plans. 52% only partially.

How much do you estimate the help from BCM to minimise the damage in your company?



22% considered that BCM was not helpful or helped partially, but more than three quarters saw BCM as at least helpful.

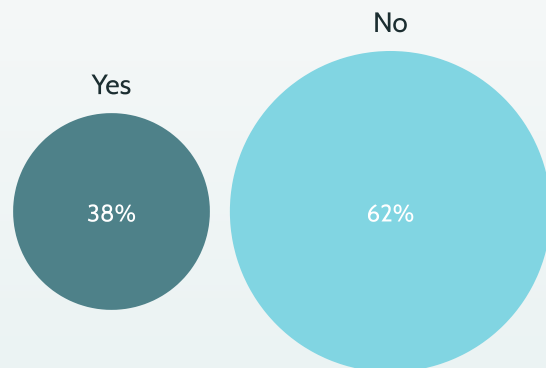
In what ways did BCM help your company during the pandemic?



- Remote working as a strategic option was already prepared company-wide
- BC plans could be partially applied
- Pandemic (or loss of personnel) was considered in a test or exercise
- Helped in other ways
- Required resources were known based on the business impact analysis
- Categorisation of business processes according to time criticality to prioritise measures and resources in the crisis
- Restart times of processes were known due to the business impact analysis

# Effectiveness of Crisis Managements and Obstacles

## Obstacles in crisis management



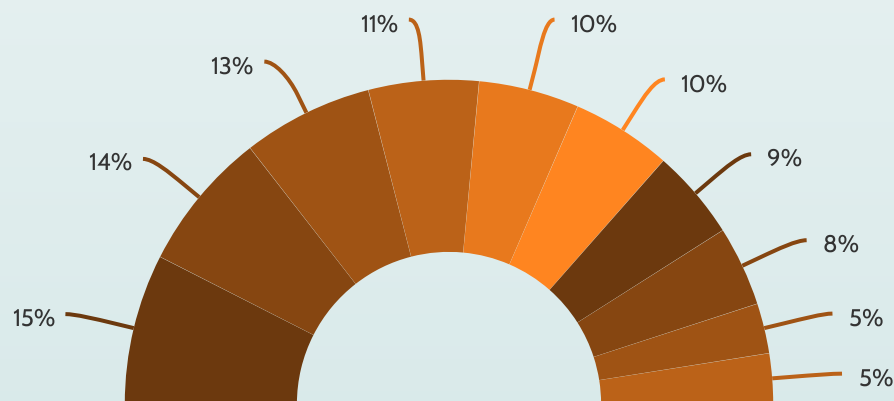
62% have **no obstacles in Crisis Management**. About **4 out of 10** respondents have impediments.

## How much do you estimate the help from crisis management to minimise the damage in your company?



12% considered that **Crisis Management was not helpful or helped partially**, but about **9 out of 10** respondents saw **Crisis Management as at least helpful**.

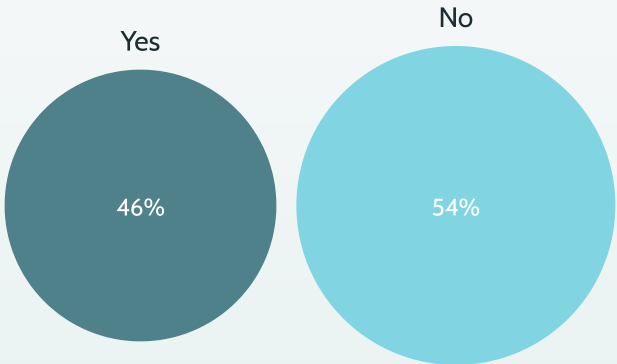
## What obstacles have you faced in crisis management?



- Decision making led to delay
- Crisis organisation (including parts of it) had to be functionally adapted
- Integration and connection of all levels of the crisis organisation was insufficient
- Processes and procedures did not work or only partially worked
- Documentation and / or checklists did not help
- Virtual communication in the crisis was challenging
- Lack of lessons learned (e.g. post-mortem analysis or interim conclusion)
- Lack of visualisation during telephone / video conferences
- Equipment and infrastructure was not designed for virtual meetings
- Other obstacles...

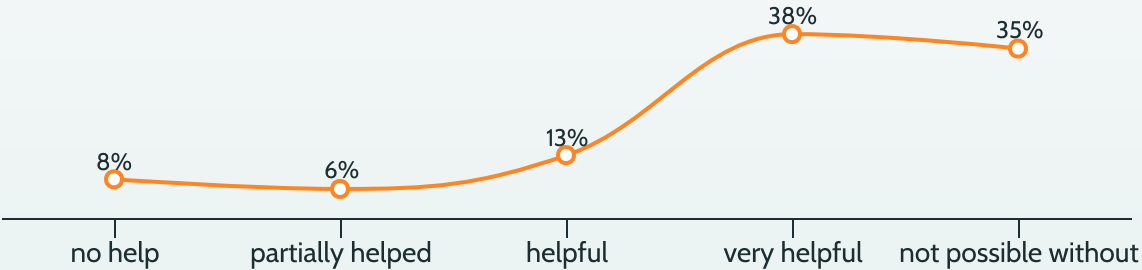
# Effectiveness of IT Service Continuity Management and IT-specific Obstacles

IT-specific obstacles



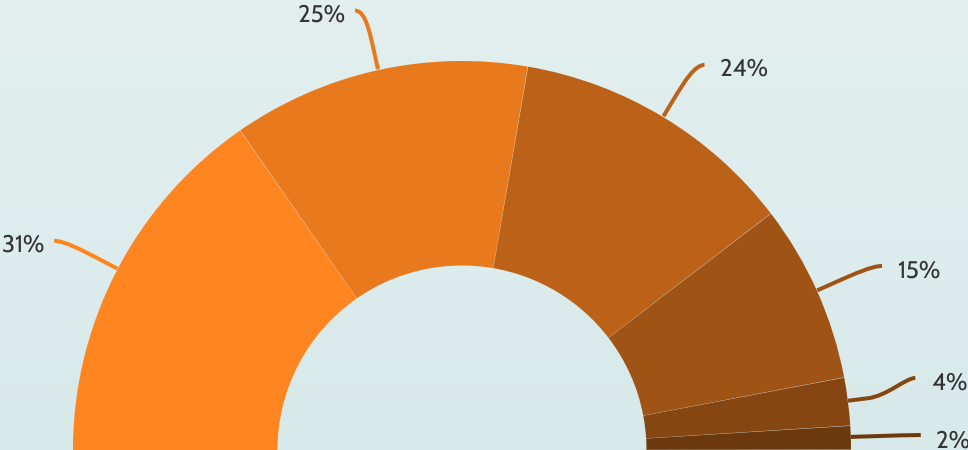
54% have no IT-specific obstacles. About half had to overcome difficulties.

How much do you estimate the help of your IT department and ITSCM to minimise the damage in your company?



14% considered that IT department and ITSCM was not helpful or helped partially, but about 8 out of 10 respondents saw IT and ITSCM as at least helpful.

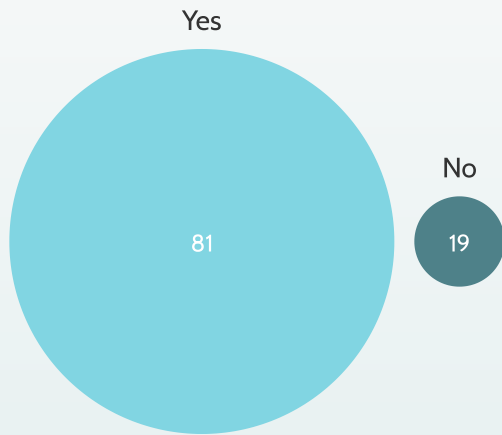
What IT-specific obstacles have you faced?



- Remote access was only available to a limited extent and not for everyone
- Performance for remote access was too low
- IT equipment was insufficient or outdated
- Activities could only be carried out to a limited extent
- Other obstacles...
- IT security gaps have occurred due to remote working

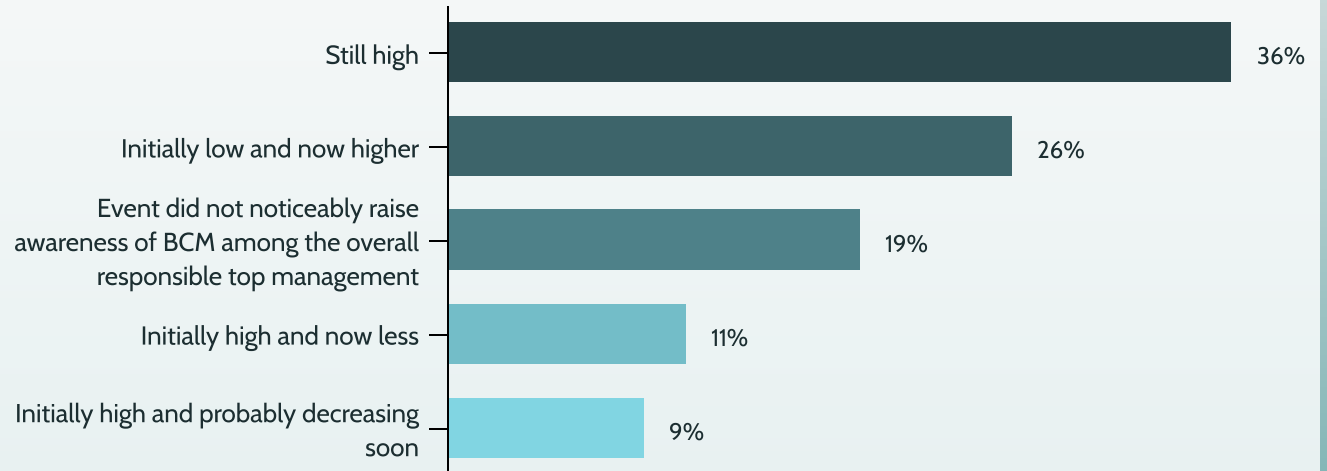
# Future Challenges

## BCMS potential for improvement



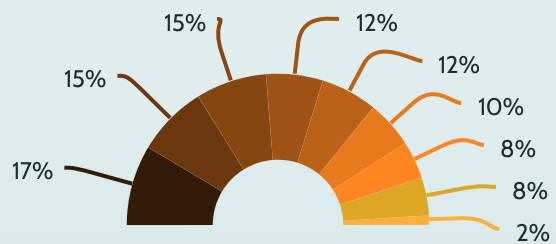
8 out of 10 have identified optimisation potential based on the experiences of the pandemic.

## How aware is the person with overall responsibility (top management) for BCM?



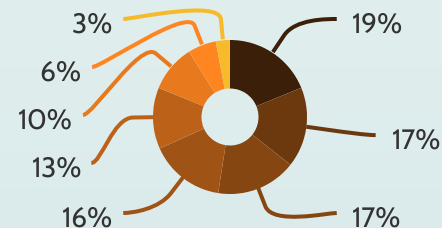
62% of top management are currently highly sensitive to BCM.

## What should your BCM System change in the future due to the pandemic?



- Intensify training and awareness
- More acceptance and recognition
- Increase test frequency
- Improve test quality by increasing the complexity of tests
- More monetary resources
- Other
- Organisational change
- More human resources
- Adapt previous planning practice

## What challenges do you see for the BCM System in your company due to the pandemic?



- Suppliers and service providers must be checked more intensively with regard to BCM
- Business impact analysis must query resources in more detail
- Increase in the number of events for which BC Plans are only partially applicable
- Testing gains in importance
- Increased demands on the BCM system by top management
- More intensive checks during audits
- Certification will be more required in the future
- Other

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