2013 Financial Services IT Availability and Business Continuity Benchmark Survey

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Executive Summary

This benchmark survey presents service availability metrics and related corporate practices that allow business continuity, disaster recovery, and IT specialists to compare their organization's performance and practices to their peers.

The results presented here are based on responses from 55 professionals from financial services organizations collected through an online survey.

Some of the key findings of the survey include:

- **Most organizations have commendable service availability goals for mission-critical systems:** 89% have an availability goal of >99.76% (less than 22 hours of downtime a year), 67% have a goal of higher than 99.91% availability (less than 8 hours of downtime a year), and 25% have a goal of 99.99% availability (less than one hour of downtime a year).

- At the same time, financial services organizations are among the worst-performing sectors in terms of service availability. **41% of the organizations surveyed did not meet their own service availability goals for mission-critical systems in 2012.**

- Less than half the organizations (42%) conduct a complete disaster recovery test annually or more often, and **as many as 26% don't ever conduct a complete test.** Organizations with high confidence in disaster recovery testing are 57% more likely to conduct such a test once every six months or more often.

- 73% of the respondents run some mission-critical applications in a private cloud environment, while 30% run such applications in the public cloud. At the same time, **just about half of these organizations (51%) have a disaster recovery solution for their cloud systems** and **37% have no process in place to test the reliability of their private cloud systems.**
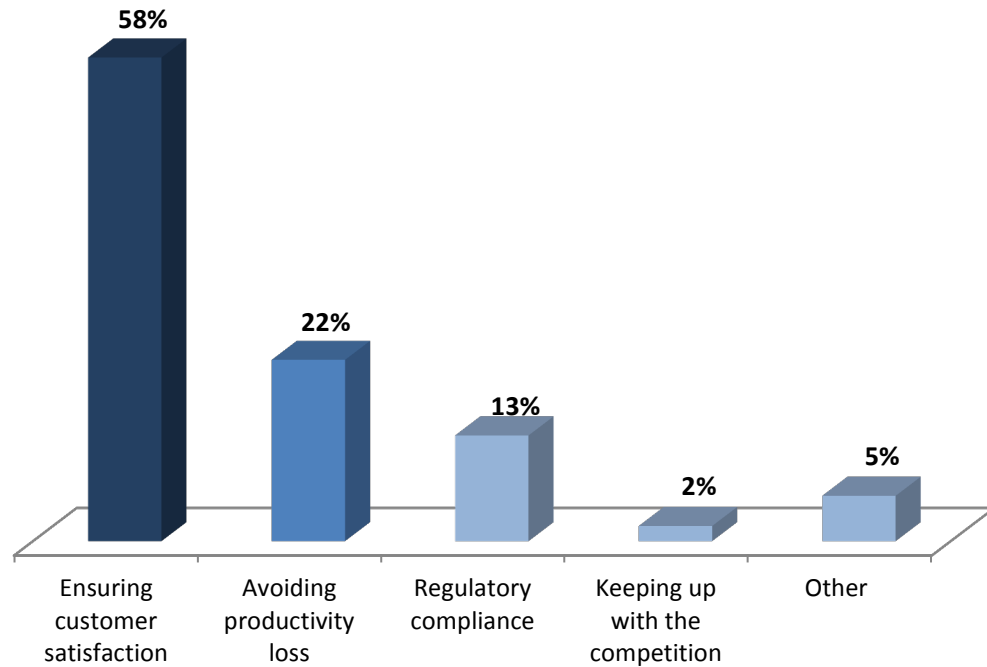
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What Drives Service Availability Goals?

Ensuring customer satisfaction is the most common business driver for service availability goals, cited by 58% of the respondents.
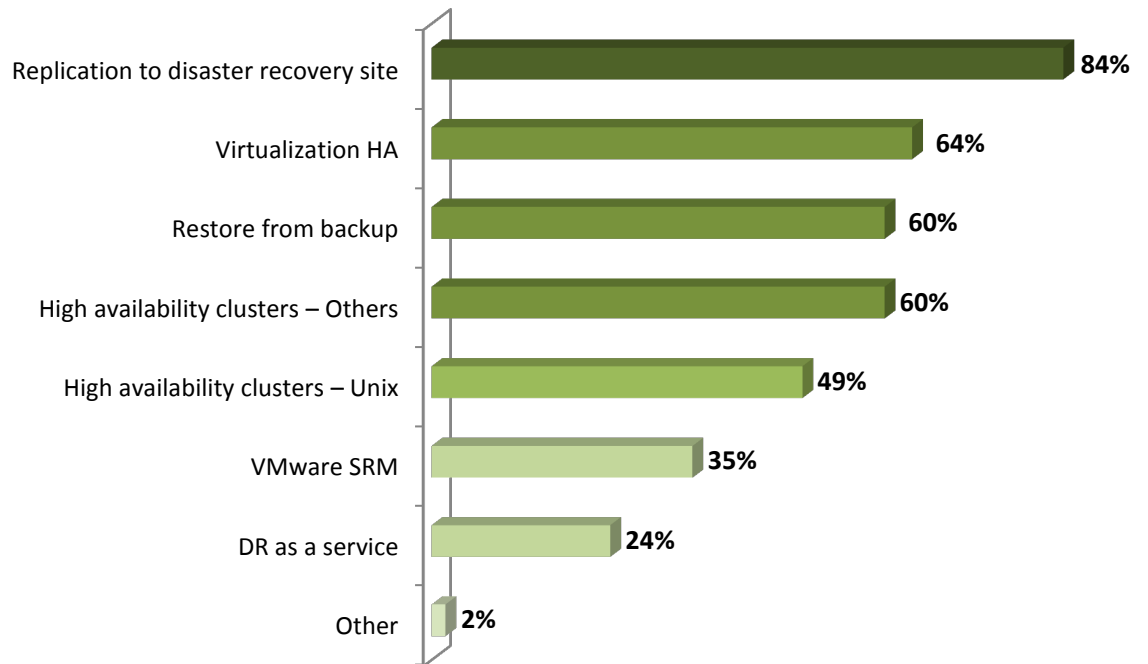
Avoiding productivity loss was mentioned by just less than a quarter (22%) of respondents.

58%

22%

13%

2%

5%

Ensuring customer satisfaction

Avoiding productivity loss

Regulatory compliance

Keeping up with the competition

Other

Strategies and Tools to Ensure Service Availability

The most common strategy for ensuring service availability is replication to a disaster recovery site, mentioned by the vast majority (84%) of respondents.

Virtualization HA and restore from backup were mentioned by just shy of two-thirds of the respondents (64% and 60% respectively).

Replication to disaster recovery site — 84%

Virtualization HA — 64%

Restore from backup — 60%

High availability clusters – Others — 60%

High availability clusters – Unix — 49%

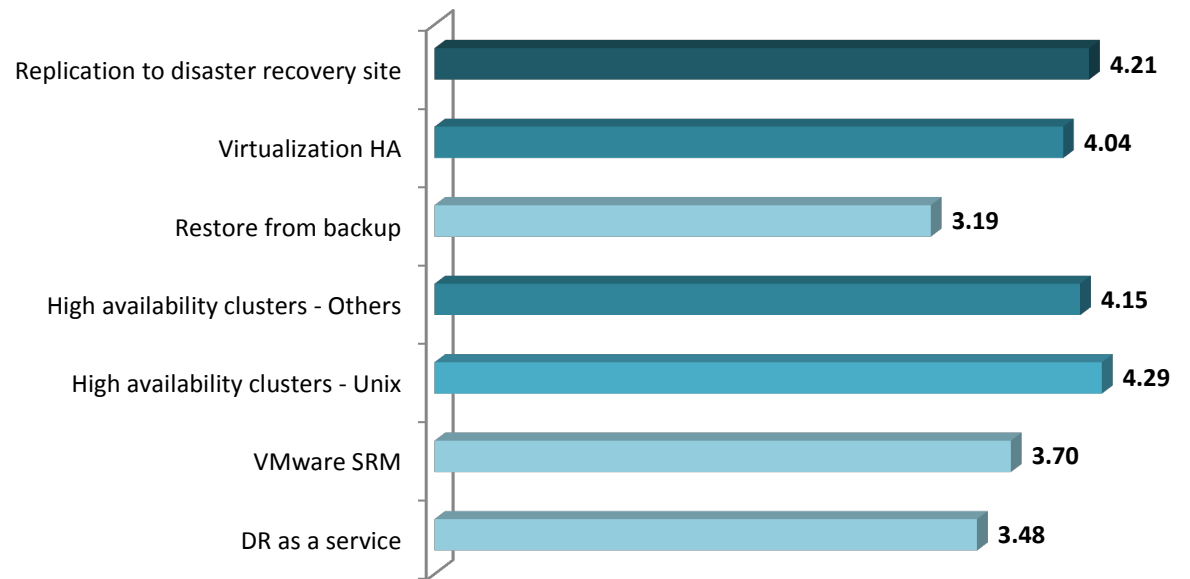VMware SRM — 35%

DR as a service — 24%

Other — 2%

Respondents could select more than one option, results add up to more than 100%.

How Effective Are these Strategies and Tools?

According the survey results, high availability clusters is the most effective strategy for ensuring service availability.

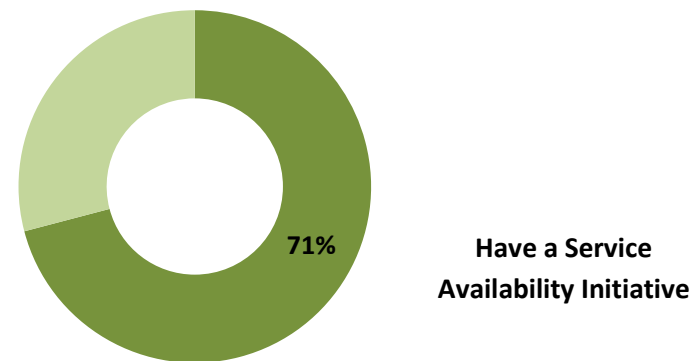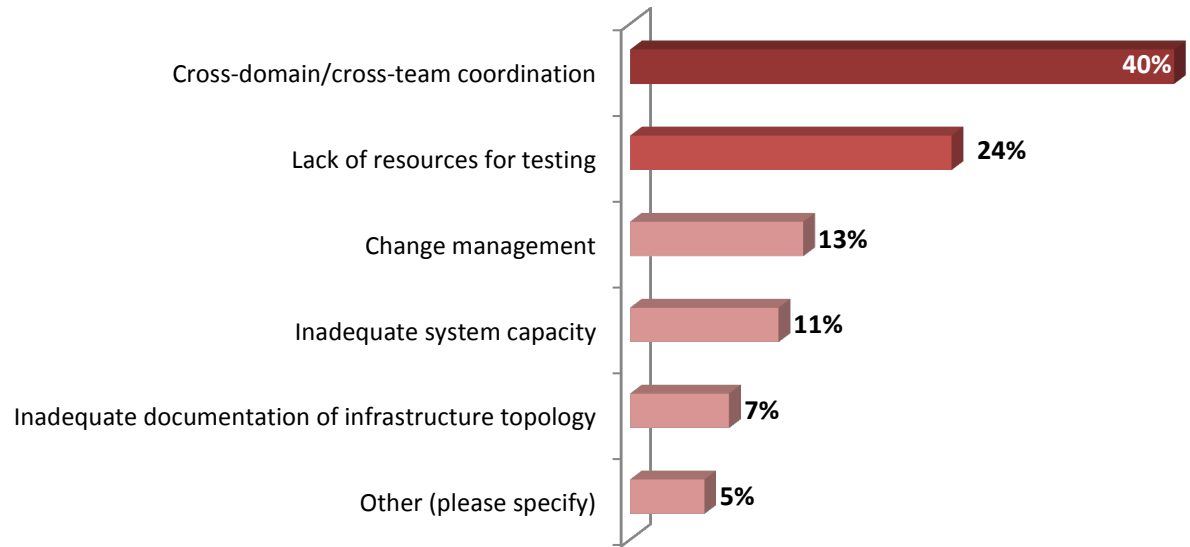Restore from backup, although a popular strategy, is viewed as less effective than high availability clusters and virtualization.

Strategy	Score
Replication to disaster recovery site	4.21
Virtualization HA	4.04
Restore from backup	3.19
High availability clusters - Others	4.15
High availability clusters - Unix	4.29
VMware SRM	3.70
DR as a service	3.48

Top challenges in Ensuring Service Availability

When asked to rate the top challenge for ensuring service availability, **over a third of the respondents (40%) mentioned cross-domain and cross-team coordination**. Close to a quarter (24%) cited lack of resources for testing.

**Over two third of the respondents (71%) indicated they have initiatives for improving service availability management in 2013.**

Cross-domain/cross-team coordination — 40%
Lack of resources for testing — 24%
Change management — 13%
Inadequate system capacity — 11%
Inadequate documentation of infrastructure topology — 7%
Other (please specify) — 5%

71%

Have a Service Availability Initiative

Service Availability Goals

The vast majority of the organizations (88%) have a service availability goal of over 99.76% (less than 22 hours of downtime a year) for mission critical systems.

Over two thirds of the organizations (68%) have a goal of higher than 99.91% availability (less than 8 hours of downtime a year), and **25% have a goal of 99.99% availability (less than one hour of downtime a year).**

25%	43%	20%	7%	5%
> 99.99% (less than one hour of downtime a year)	99.91-99.99% (less than 8 hours of downtime a year)	99.76-99.90% (less than 22 hours of downtime a year)	99.50-99.75% (less than 44 hours of downtime a year)	99.50>
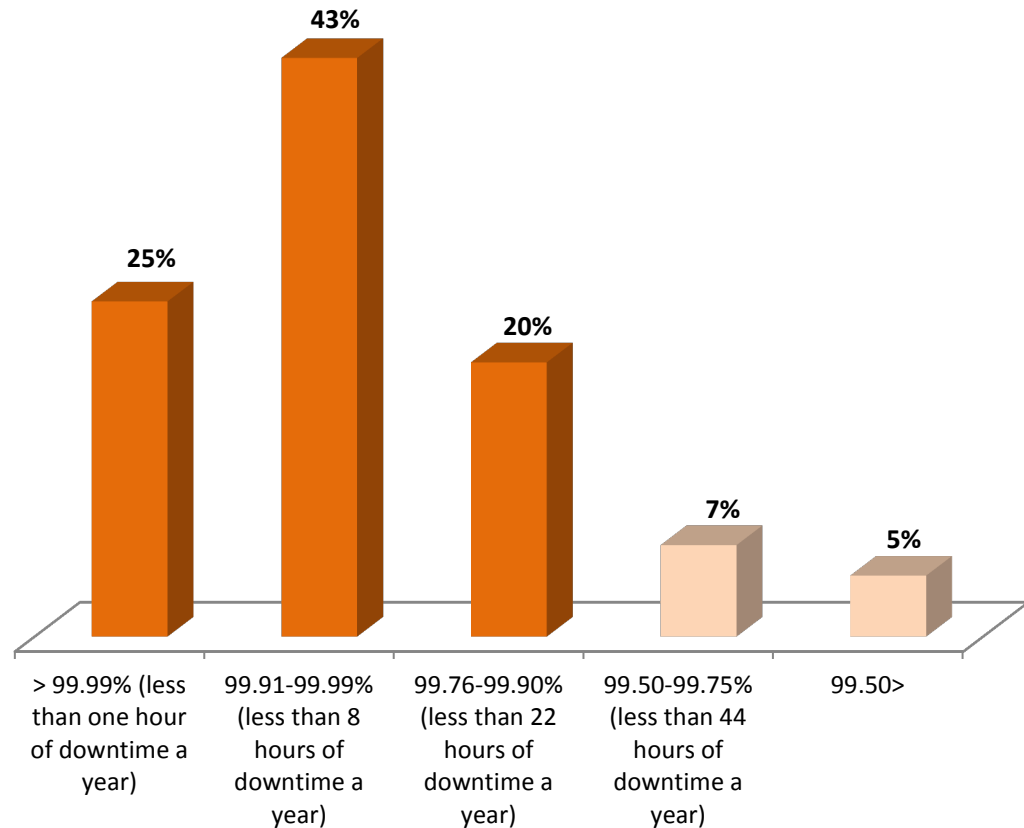
Service Availability: The Reality

By their own account, over a third of the organizations surveyed (41%) did not meet their service availability goals for mission-critical systems in 2012.

Organizations with higher services availability goals had lower rates of achieving their goals.

Met goal — 59%
Did not meet goal — 41%

Service Availability Goals (Mission-Critical Systems)

Did not meet goal: 99.99%< = 64%, 99.91-99.99% = 44%, 99.76-99.90% = 11%, 99.50-99.75% = 33%
Met goal: 99.99%< = 36%, 99.91-99.99% = 56%, 99.76-99.90% = 89%, 99.50-99.75% = 67%
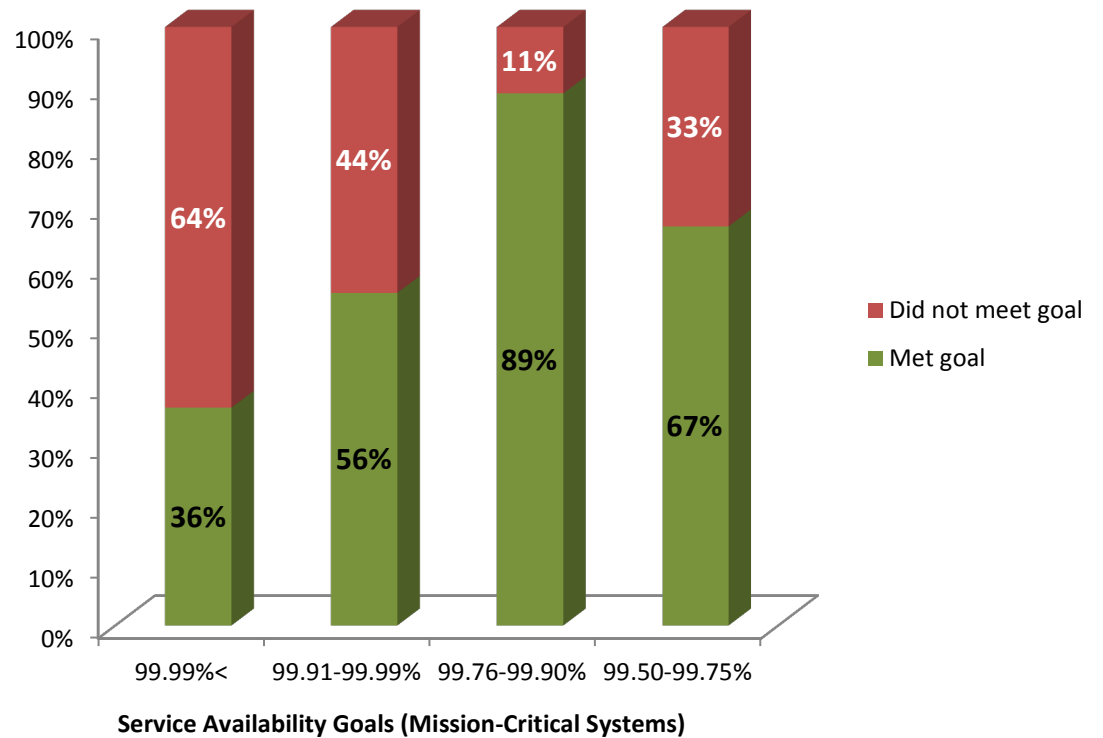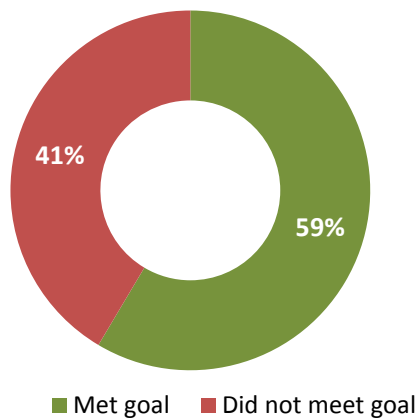
What Were the Causes for Outages?

Hardware failures and human error were the most common reason for system outage, cited by 63% and 56% of the respondents respectively.

Other leading causes include application error (53%), upgrades & migrations (49%) and power outages (37%).

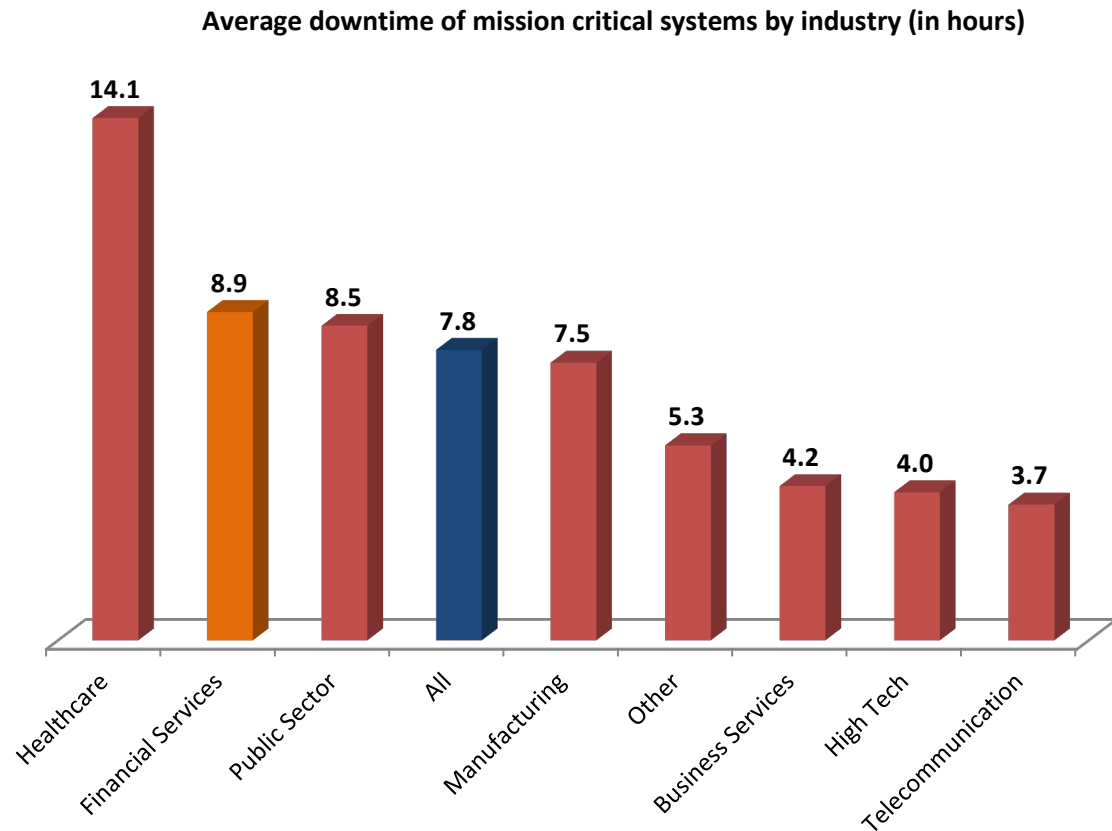| Cause	Percentage
Hardware failure	63%
Human error	56%
Application error	53%
System upgrades & migrations	49%
Power outages	37%
Unknown	14%
Cyber attacks	9%
Other	2%
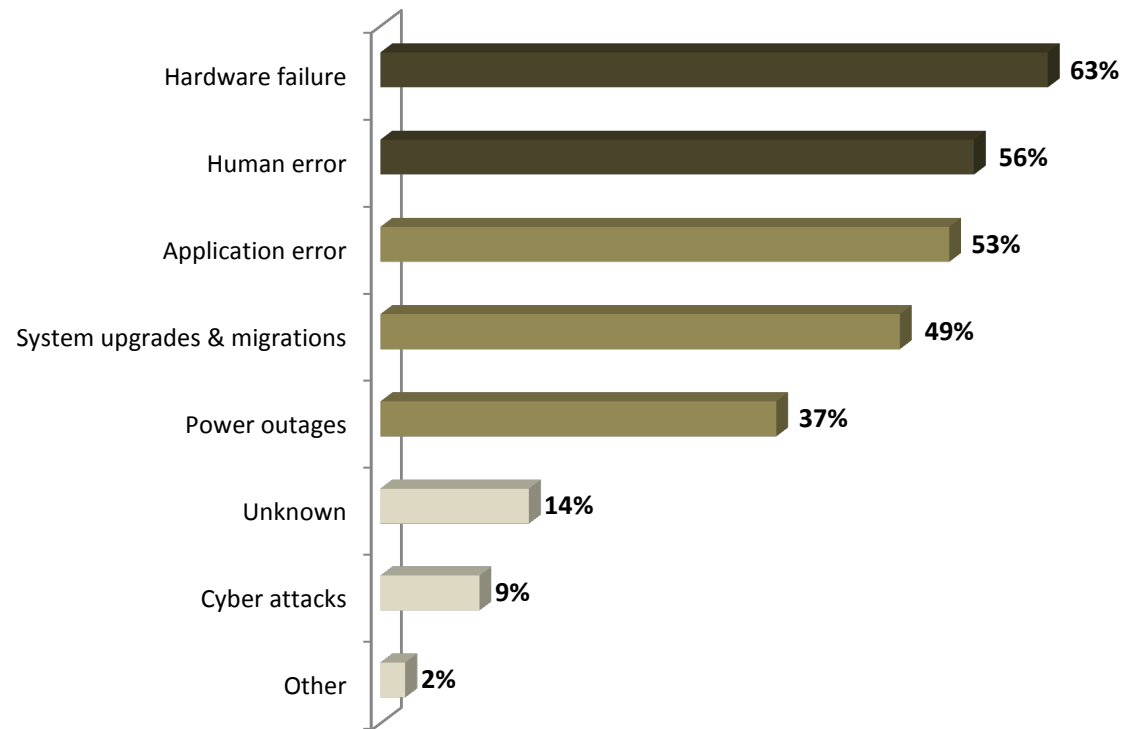
Multiple answers per respondent, results add up to more than 100%

How Do Financial Services Organizations Compare to Other Sectors?

The average downtime reported for mission-critical systems across all industries was 7.8 hours for the year.

Financial services organizations are among the worst-performing sectors (8.9 hours), second only to healthcare organizations.

The lowest average downtime was reported by respondents from the telecommunication industry (3.7 hours for the year), followed by high-tech (4.0) and business services organizations (4.2).

Average downtime of mission critical systems by industry (in hours)

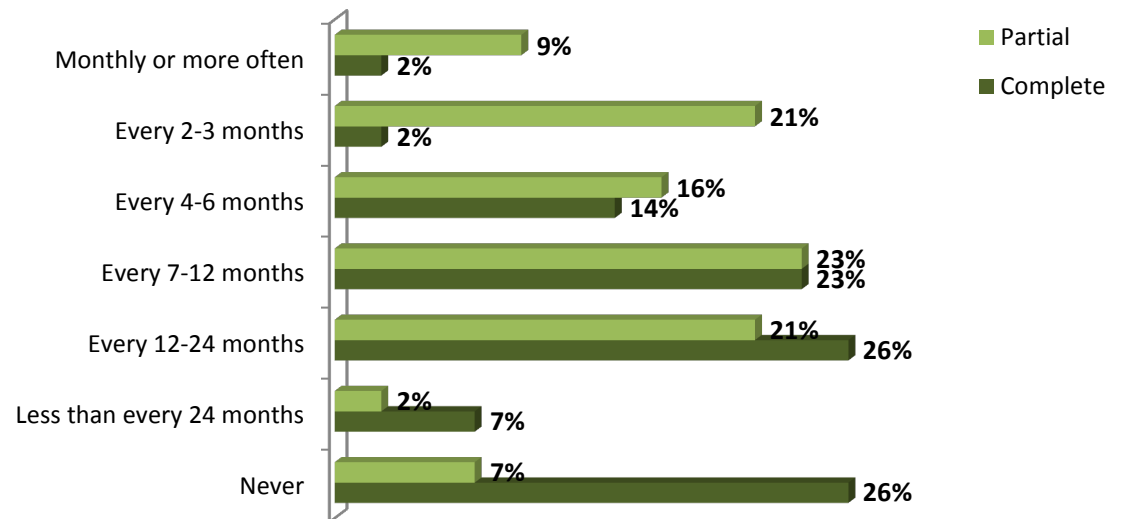| Industry	Hours
Healthcare	14.1
Financial Services	8.9
Public Sector	8.5
All	7.8
Manufacturing	7.5
Other	5.3
Business Services	4.2
High Tech	4.0
Telecommunication	3.7

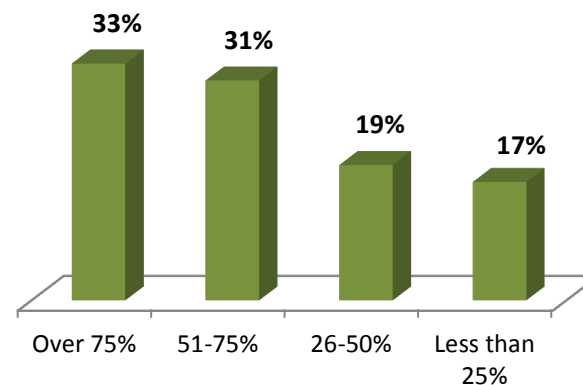# How Often Does Disaster Recovery Testing Take Place?

Most organizations surveyed (69%) conduct a partial disaster recovery test at least once a year.

At the same time, less than half the organizations (41%) conduct a complete test annually or more often, and **as many as 26% don't ever conduct a complete test.**

Partial tests cover over three-quarters of the business services footprint in 33% of the organizations and over half of the business services in 64% of the organizations surveyed.


	Partial	Complete
Monthly or more often	9%	2%
Every 2-3 months	21%	2%
Every 4-6 months	16%	14%
Every 7-12 months	23%	23%
Every 12-24 months	21%	26%
Less than every 24 months	2%	7%
Never	7%	26%

Multiple answers per respondent, results add up to more than 100%

Over 75%	51-75%	26-50%	Less than 25%
33%	31%	19%	17%

What Are the Top Challenges in Disaster Recovery Testing?

Lack of resources for testing is the top challenge to disaster recovery testing, cited by 64%, followed by risk to service availability (45%) and inadequate documentation of disaster recovery components and topology (38%).


Lack of resources for testing — 64%

Risk to service availability — 45%

Inadequate documentation of disaster recovery components and topology — 38%

Inadequate system capacity — 10%

Other — 10%
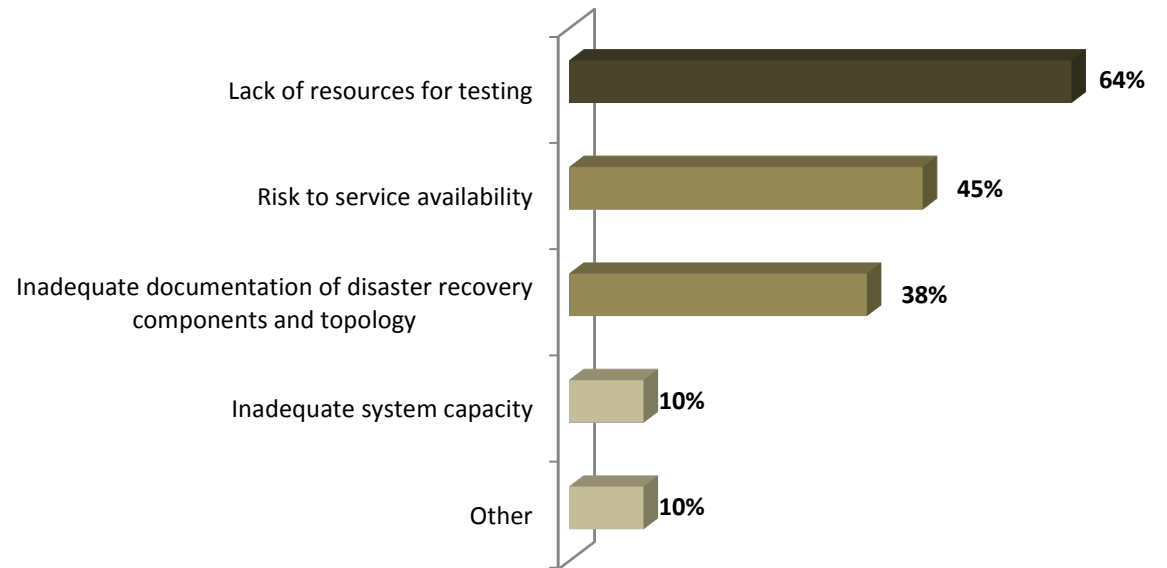
Multiple answers per respondent, results add up to more than 100%

Confidence in Disaster Recovery Testing

A third of the respondents (33%) have high level of confidence in the completeness and accuracy of disaster recovery testing.
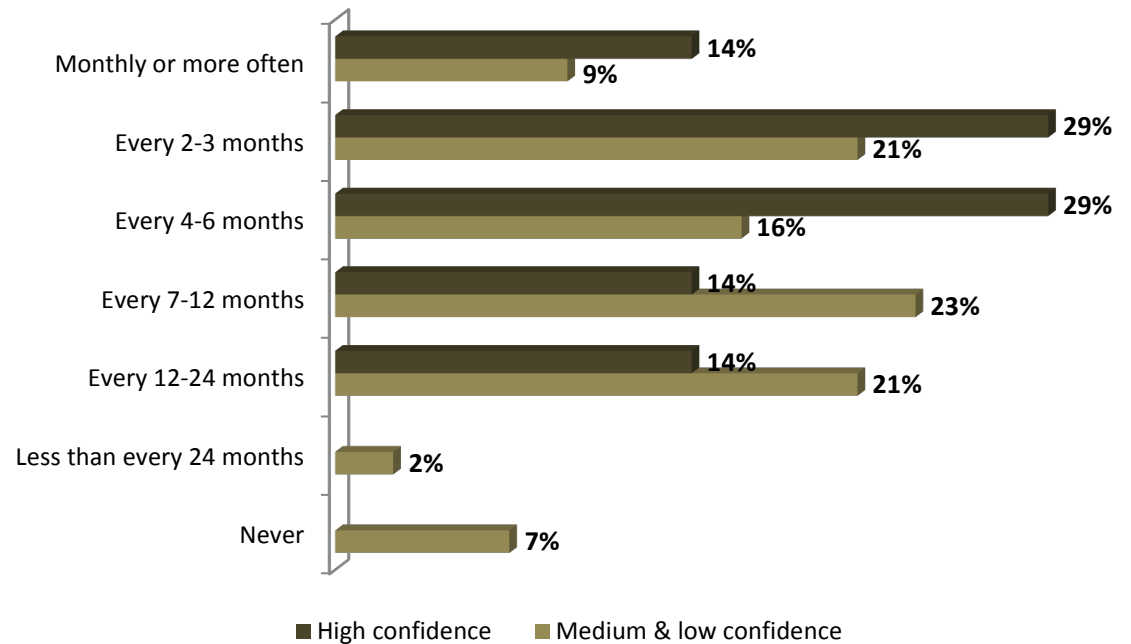
Close to two thirds of the survey respondents (63%) describe their confidence as medium, while 5% have low confidence in their testing.
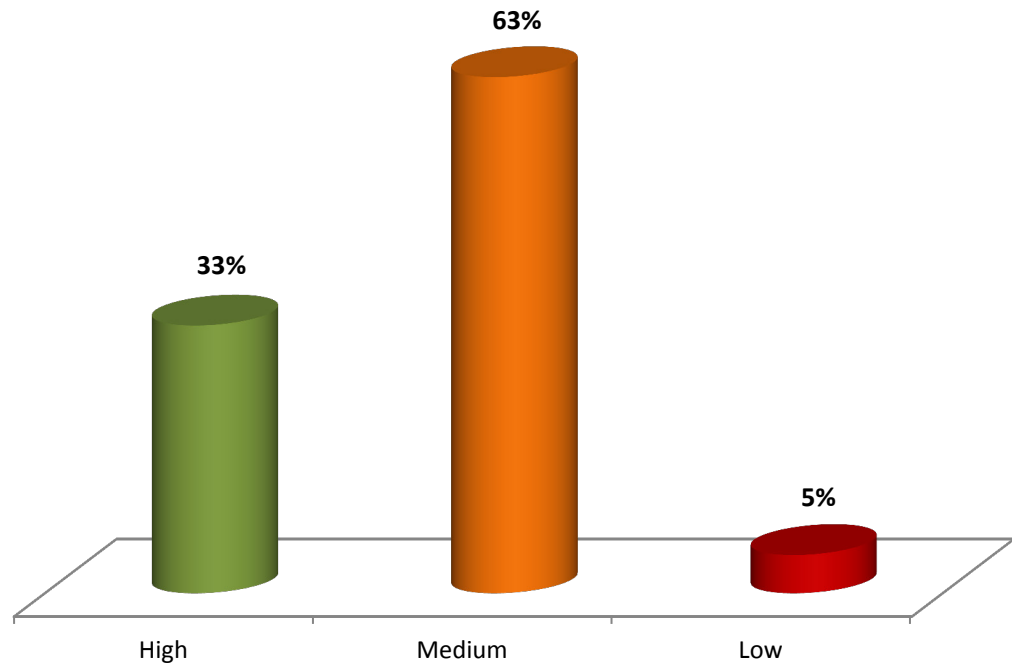
Organizations with High Confidence in Disaster Recovery Testing Conduct Testing More Often

Close to three-quarters (72%) of organizations with high confidence in disaster recovery testing conduct a partial test every six months or more often.

Only 46% of organizations with medium and low confidence in disaster recovery testing conduct a partial test once every six months.

Chart data:

Frequency	High confidence	Medium & low confidence
Monthly or more often	14%	9%
Every 2-3 months	29%	21%
Every 4-6 months	29%	16%
Every 7-12 months	14%	23%
Every 12-24 months	14%	21%
Less than every 24 months		2%
Never		7%

■ High confidence   ■ Medium & low confidence
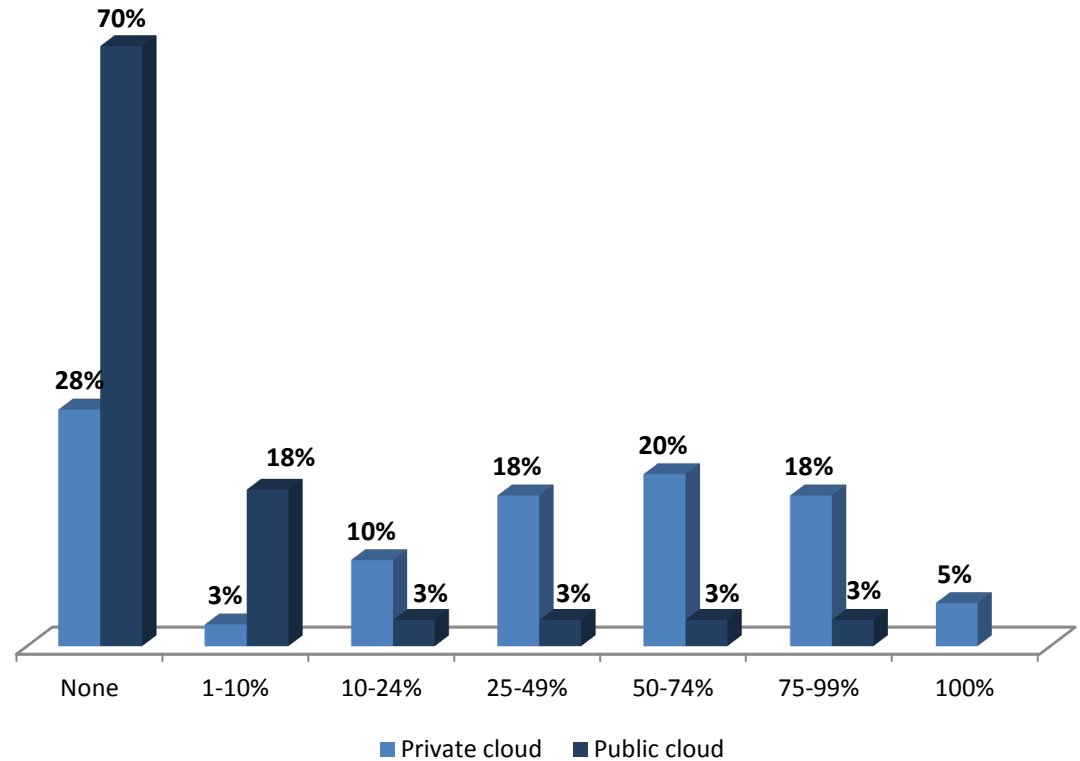
Disaster Recovery / Failover Capacity

Only 14% of the organizations surveyed have adequate disaster recovery capacity, while just less than a third of the organizations (30%) have less than 75% of the required capacity.
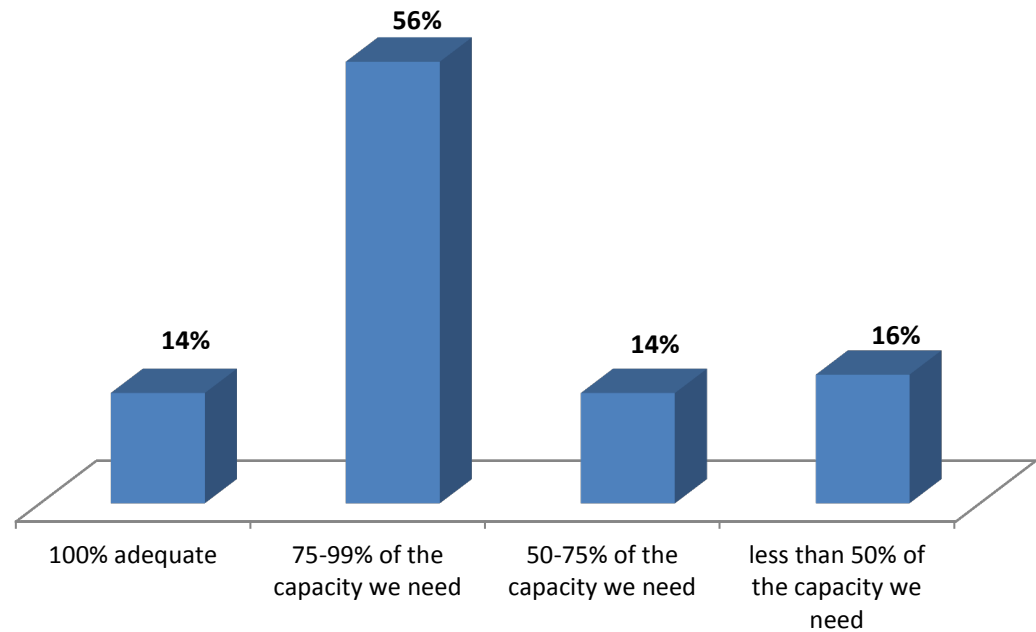
Mission-critical in the Cloud

73% of the survey respondents run at least some mission-critical applications in a private cloud environment, while just less than a third (30%) run such applications in the public cloud.
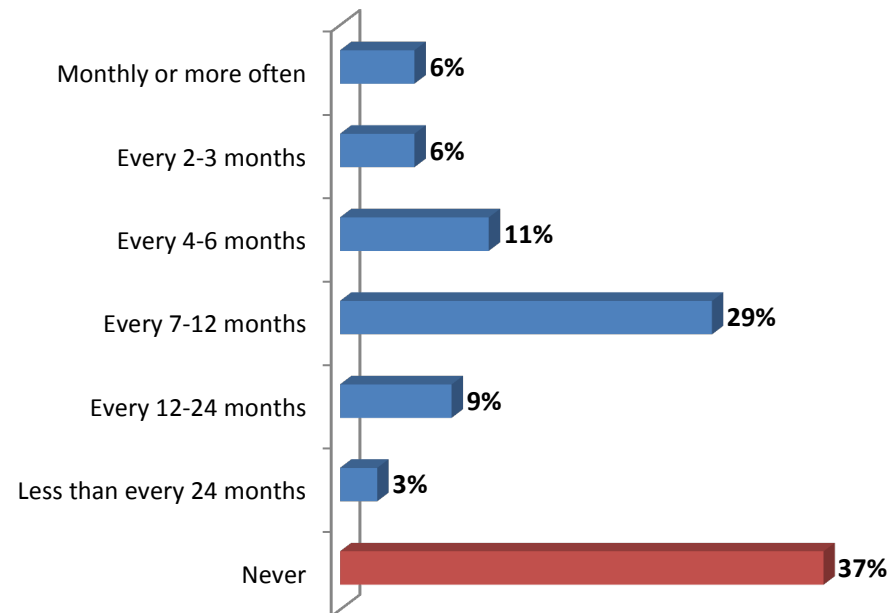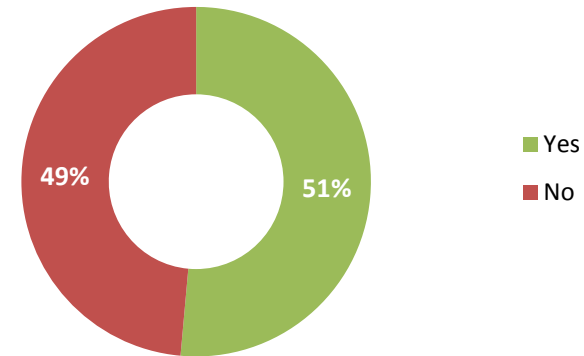
As many as 43% of the organizations run more than half of their mission-critical applications in the private cloud, while only 9% do so in the public cloud.

Legend: Private cloud, Public cloud

	None	1-10%	10-24%	25-49%	50-74%	75-99%	100%
Private cloud	28%	3%	10%	18%	20%	18%	5%
Public cloud	70%	18%	3%	3%	3%	3%	

Private Cloud Disaster Recovery and Availability Testing

Just over a half (51%) of respondents have a disaster recovery solution in place for their private cloud systems.

Just over a half of organizations surveyed (52%) test their private cloud availability at least once a year, and 37% of them never conduct such a test.


Legend: ■ Yes ■ No

49% / 51%

Private cloud availability testing frequency:
- Monthly or more often: 6%
- Every 2-3 months: 6%
- Every 4-6 months: 11%
- Every 7-12 months: 29%
- Every 12-24 months: 9%
- Less than every 24 months: 3%
- Never: 37%

Disaster Recovery and high Availability for Cloud Applications

Over a quarter of the respondents (28%) describe their disaster recovery and high availability capabilities for the cloud below the level of those capabilities for the rest of their systems.

19% describe their cloud capabilities as better than those for the rest of their systems.

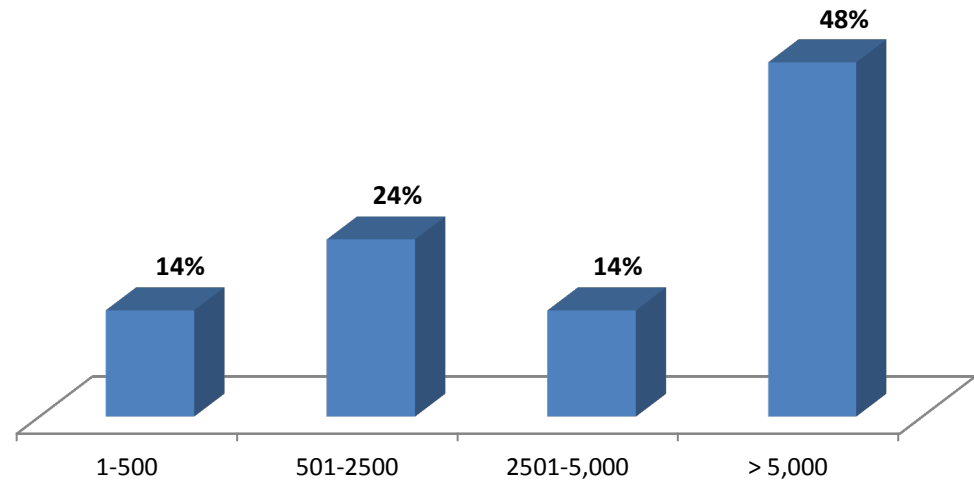Not at the level of these capabilities for the rest of our systems
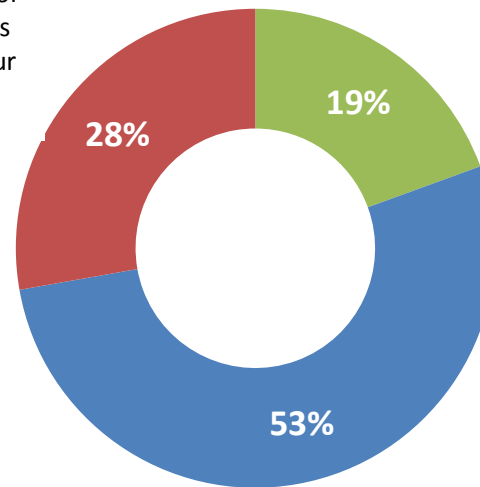
Better than the capabilities we have for the rest of our systems

28%

19%

53%

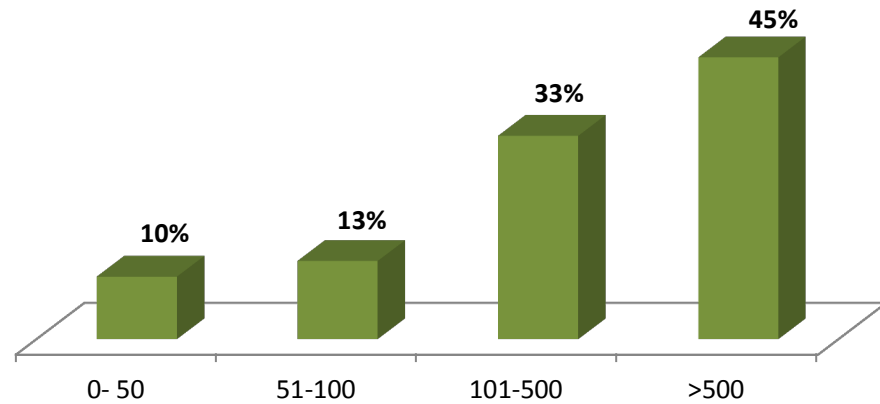On par with these capabilities for the rest of our systems

Respondent Demographics

48% of the survey respondents come from organizations of 5,000 or more employees and 45% have more than 500 servers in their data center.

Number of Employees

1-500	501-2500	2501-5,000	> 5,000
14%	24%	14%	48%

Number of Servers

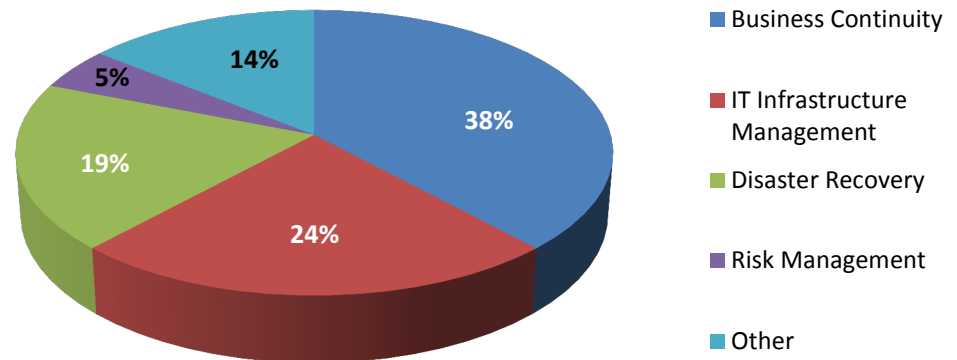| 0- 50	51-100	101-500	>500
10%	13%	33%	45%

Respondent Demographics (cont.)

Over a third of the respondents (38%) are in business continuity roles, 24% are in IT infrastructure management roles and another 19% in disaster recovery roles.

Legend:
- Business Continuity
- IT Infrastructure Management
- Disaster Recovery
- Risk Management
- Other

Pie chart values: 38%, 24%, 19%, 5%, 14%

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- Get actionable recommendations that will help you eliminate availability risks before they impact your business

100% of the companies that have performed the assessment uncovered vulnerabilities that were previously undetected!

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About Continuity Software

Continuity Software is a leading provider of Service Availability Management solutions.

Our software helps many of the world's largest organizations mitigate downtime and data loss risks by monitoring production and remote replication environments to detect hidden vulnerabilities and gaps.

Using our solutions, you will be confident your service availability and data protection goals can be met on a consistent basis.

For more information

Website: www.continuitysoftware.com
Email: info@continuitysoftware.com
Tel: 1-888-782-8170 or +1-646.216.8628

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