



EBOOK

# The Gulf Between Enterprise Search, IT and Business in the Digital Workplace

Displaying 1-10 of more than 400 results that demonstrate how your approach to search is probably wrong

Presented by  sinequa™

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Although the Great Resignation began in early 2021, it didn't end there — millions of workers continue to quit their jobs month after month. Employees often cite a host of reasons why they're leaving their current job, but one reason in particular — not having the tools to do their best work — is within the IT department's ability to improve and fix. If workers can't do their best work they're going to leave — and your company can't afford the institutional knowledge loss that comes with high turnover. You and the IT professionals on your team should examine the areas that are causing challenges for employees — areas such as enterprise search.

Enterprise search is crucial to an optimized employee experience. When employees can find the right information they need at the right time, they're better able to do their jobs and more likely to stay where they're working. Employees are constantly called upon to find information quickly and easily, but far too often they can't. This leads to employee frustration and can contribute to employee attrition if not addressed.

Yet search itself is a complicated technology with millions of variables to consider. Information is being integrated from multiple sources — and sometimes multiple languages — in many different formats. Metadata might be nonexistent, things often aren't tagged and there may be multiple versions of basically the same asset with little way of knowing which is the right version. Also, people want to search in natural language, which wasn't possible until recently. These days; however, AI, machine learning and deep learning models can provide that natural language search, which helps greatly.

In summer 2022, Sinequa (in partnership with CMSWire) commissioned two surveys: one targeting high-value business users and the other aimed at IT professionals. Both surveys solicited responses from enterprise organizations with 10,000 or more employees. We sought to understand what these two groups thought about enterprise search and how their opinions differ.

As it turns out, their opinions differ quite greatly.



## Demographics in Brief<sup>1</sup>

More than 400 responses roughly divided between director-level IT professionals and business users.

More than

400

responses from users working in organizations with more than 10,000 employees.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for full demographics information.



## Key Findings

- There are major perception differences between IT professionals and business users regarding enterprise search, particularly around what's considered critical information
- There's also misalignment on the ease of finding information using enterprise search
- Fixing the challenges of enterprise search will take objective alignment between IT professionals and business users and a reframing toward relevance and culture improvements



## Exploring the Disconnect between Business Users and IT Professionals

*“What aggravates most about enterprise search is the feeling like I’m wasting my time on something that should be very simple.”*

— Contract management respondent in pharmaceuticals, survey open comments

With each passing day, companies and their employees are generating millions of terabytes of knowledge as they work toward completing business objectives. The amount of data that’s created and consumed worldwide each day is expected to nearly double in the next three years, [from 97 to 181 zettabytes](#). Information is one of the most valuable things companies have at their disposal, but only if it’s accessible. And our surveys suggest that this isn’t always the case.

The amount of knowledge being created each day demands new ways to manage, store and make available the information employees need to know to best do their jobs. According to CMSWire’s most recent [State of the Digital Workplace](#) report, 95% of survey respondents consider knowledge management an important digital workplace technology. Knowledge can be found almost anywhere — in a text document, buried in a communications channel or embedded in a video chat. The tricky part of knowledge management is ensuring that information can be found, no matter its form or where it lives.

Yet while nearly everyone believes knowledge management is important, how each of the two groups interact with knowledge management and their purposes lead them to experience it differently. Particularly, there’s a mismatch in the perception of ‘information retrieval as a cornerstone for any powerful and well-adopted digital workplace.’ Business users approach information almost with a microscope — they seek access to detailed and precise information that serves their very unique needs. On the other hand, IT professionals tend to approach information almost through a telescope — large and wide images that give a broader picture. This perception difference is a primary roadblock to optimizing enterprise search and developing a great knowledge management strategy.

### It’s a matter of perception

We see this perception disconnect when examining what specific information businesses users and IT professionals consider more important. By large margins, IT professionals and business users see things differently. For business users, the most critically important pieces of information they search for are customer information, solutions to issues and business information. For IT professionals, they consider corporate and external information more important. Customer information and learning and development information are the only areas where IT professionals and business users see eye to eye (Figure 1, page 6).

What kinds of information do users typically search for at their organizations?

Information type	IT professionals' perception	Business user actual needs	Percentage gap between business and IT
Corporate information	69%	38%	-31%
External information	53%	32%	-21%
Business information	61%	48%	-13%
Customer information	64%	60%	-4%
Learning and development information	36%	38%	2%
Solutions to issues	42%	53%	11%

Figure 1

These differences in perception are one of the main reasons enterprise search isn’t optimized. If IT professionals deprioritize solutions in favor of ensuring corporate information is readily available, then there’s a greater-than-average chance that business users may not find the answers they need every time. And if they can’t find answers, business users can’t do their jobs effectively, risking rework, lost sales and frustrated employees.

One thing is clear: business users and IT professionals need to get more aligned around knowledge management. It’s not enough that knowledge is created; it must be readily available. From our survey, 71% of business users say ease of access to information is critically important to a successful digital workplace. To accomplish this, IT professionals need to better connect problems to solutions. Corporate and external information should be table stakes, but are less important to business users’ search efforts than finding answers.

“Knowledge is power. Knowledge shared is power multiplied.”

— Robert Boyce, historian



# The Ease of Search (Or Lack Thereof)

*“Enterprise search frustrates me when I know the information is out there, but I can’t seem to find the proper combination of keywords to bring up my results in a search.”*

— Customer support respondent in technology

Let’s imagine for a minute that organizations are capturing and storing every piece of information they create. How easy is it for users to find the right information at the right time? Can users find information in recorded video calls? Chat messages? In languages other than English? Is information indexed properly? Enterprise search makes it easy to uncover the needle in the proverbial haystack. However, much like the perception vs. reality is quite different for business users and IT professionals about the importance of different types of information, these two groups also disagree on how easy it is to find different kinds of information at the moment of need.

According to survey respondents from CMSWire’s State of the Digital Workplace report, enterprise search isn’t yet optimized. Here’s a sobering statistic. When asked about the effectiveness of enterprise search, only a third of respondents say their tools are working well, while slightly less than half call their enterprise search tools merely satisfactory. Further, 20% say their tools need work (Figure 2).

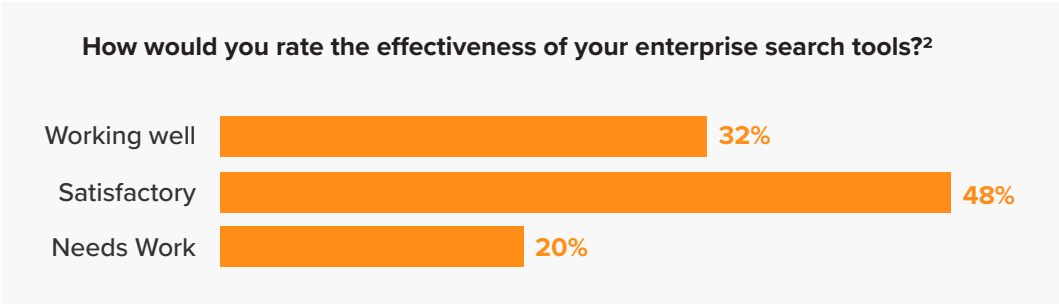


Figure 2



But just because the tools aren’t optimized doesn’t negate the need to find the right information. What happens then? This lack of optimization can have a huge impact on business users’ daily tasks. Business users need to perform advanced searches more often than IT professionals think they do — which speaks to search’s outsized impact on employee experience (Figure 3).

<sup>2</sup> Source: 2022 State of the Digital Workplace survey, CMSWire.

### How often do you need to perform advanced searches in your job?<sup>3</sup>

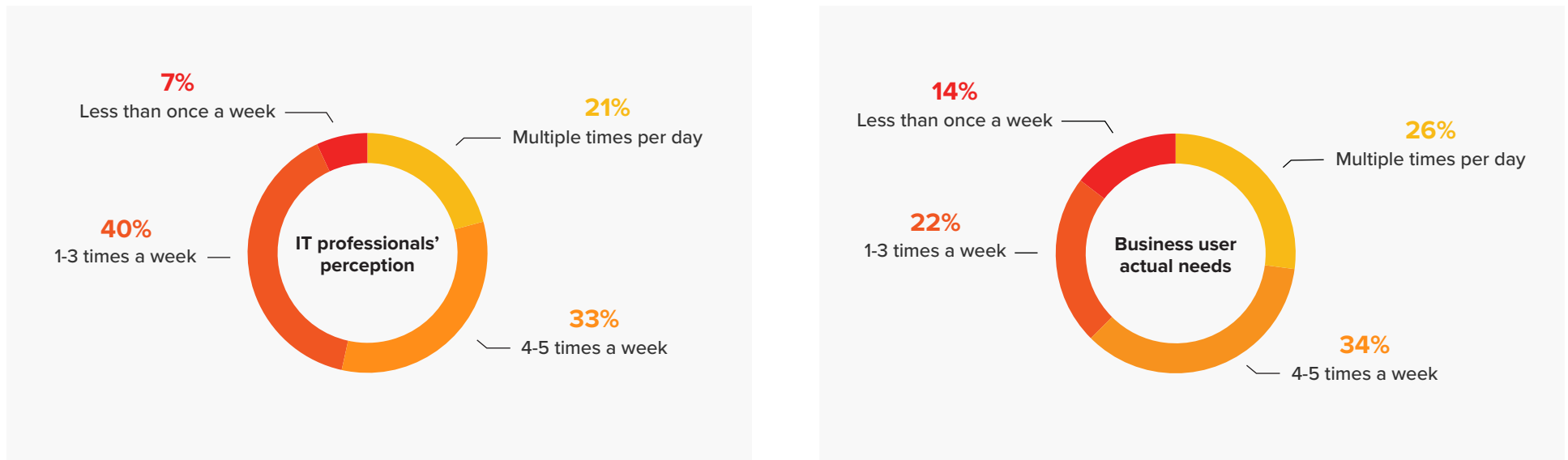


Figure 3

## So you can't find the information you need — what happens now?

We've already seen how business users frequently search for solutions to issues. When business users need answers to their questions, they'll try to search for answers on their own — either on or offline. But what happens when they don't find the info they need? Often, the challenge of finding the right answers leads to a lot of wasted time — not just their own, but potentially the time of their colleagues, supervisors and Subject Matter Experts.

The survey tells us that when they need answers business users will often ask everyone **except** IT. When business users can't find the information they need through enterprise search they ask a colleague, look for an expert or post the question to an internal chat board. Tellingly, only a quarter of business users will call the help desk (Figure 4). This might explain why IT seems to think search is better than it is. No calls means no problems...right?

<sup>3</sup> As defined in the survey, advanced search includes queries with multiple terms, multiple sources of information and the ability to identify patterns and make connections between pieces of information.



What do you do when you can't find the information you need using enterprise search? (business users)

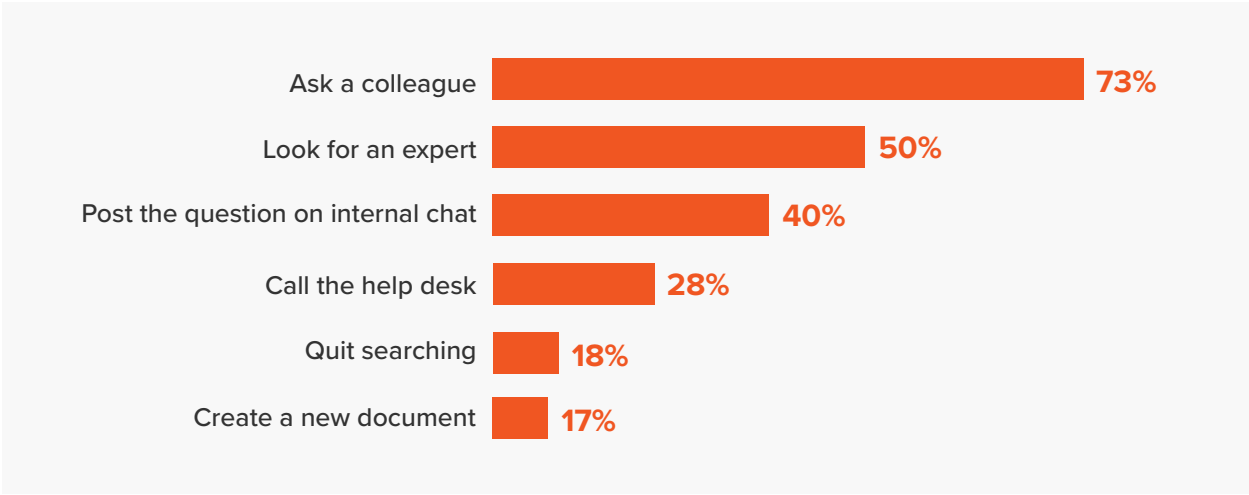


Figure 4

It's interesting that nearly one in five business users quit searching if they don't find what they're looking for, because this happens more often than you might think. A third of business users (33%) say they **never** find the information they were searching for often, frequently or all the time. Given the sheer number of times many business users search for things daily, this adds up to a number of frustrating experiences.

Beyond frustration, there are very real consequences to not finding the right information at the right time. Business users identify a host of challenges that come from being unable to find pertinent information, from rework to project delays (Figure 5). Indirectly, this can lead to disengaged employees and ultimately contribute to increased attrition rates, if business users don't feel supported in their efforts to do their best work.



Impacts experienced due to the deficiencies in search (business users)

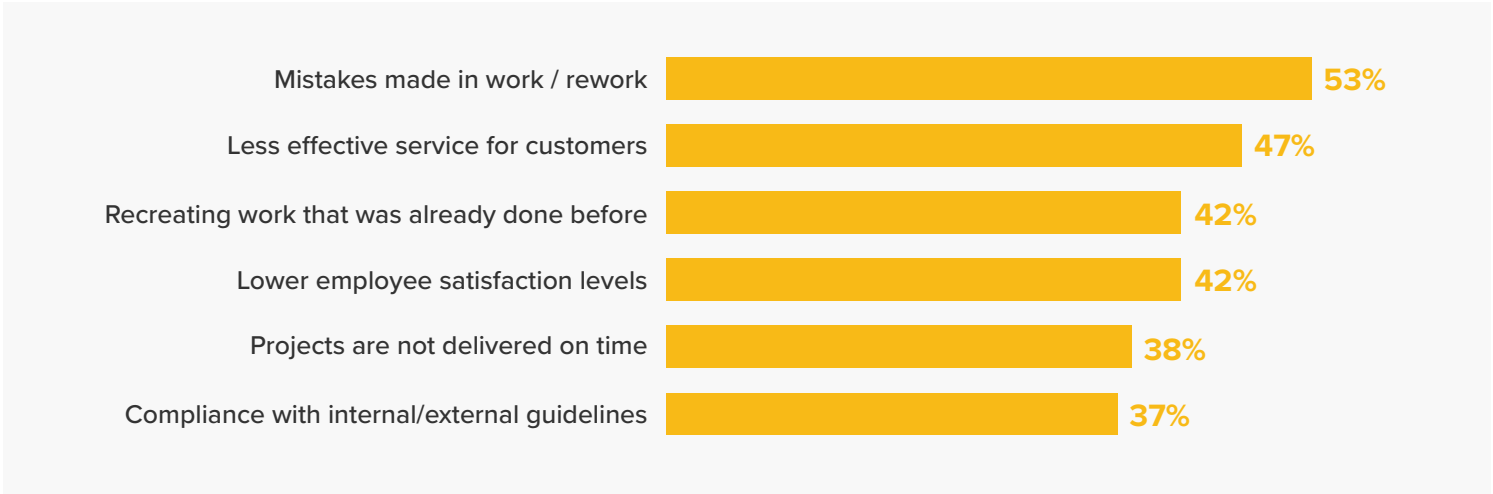


Figure 5

How can IT professionals avoid these challenges? Besides creating more perception alignment on the critical nature of enterprise search, IT professionals need to examine the tools they already use and see how they can be improved. Often, this will mean needing to make more of a business case for enterprise search.







IT professionals shouldn't rely on feedback loops or incoming support tickets to know where the pain points are — often, frustration isn't voiced this way.

## Making the Case for Enterprise Search

*“Too often, when I try and find what I’m looking for it sends me to something totally different. The amount of applications being open continuously just to find out a few things is absolutely miserable.”*

— Supply chain respondent in biotech

What will it take to build the case for enterprise search? As a part of the digital workplace where business users spend a fair amount of time in, the effects of a poor enterprise search function have an outside impact on the employee experience. Business users need to collaborate better beyond their teams, they need answers to their challenges and they need search capabilities that go beyond the basics to incorporate advanced search functions. Enterprise search needs to be used and useful, which demands a program that’s user friendly, capable of advanced functions and responsive to user needs. Making the business case starts by recognizing the importance of this piece of technology. Once that’s done, IT professionals can turn their attention to optimization.

## Optimizing enterprise search

Once you’ve made the business case for enterprise search, the next step is to optimize it and make it better for business users.

With many business users conducting advanced search functions multiple times a day, they need enterprise search that can handle such tasks. Increasing the knowledge about the ability to search in multiple languages might help enterprise organizations with global divisions and teams. Among business user respondents, 41% currently don’t have the ability to search in multiple languages at their organizations. Other possible improvements include searching through non-text assets (images, video) and improving results relevance (Figure 6).

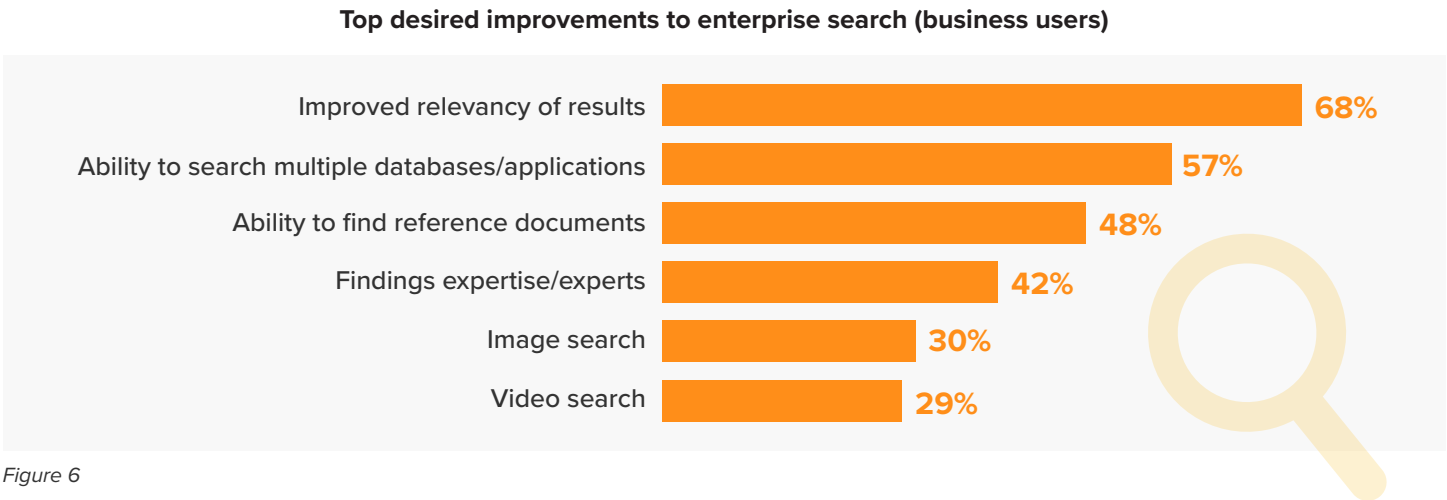


Figure 6



Digging further into desired improvements, business users want their enterprise search to be able to return results through a host of different formats. With information collected in video, audio, text and more, your enterprise search technology should be able to recognize and retrieve this data (Figure 7).

My organization’s current enterprise search function doesn’t return results from these formats, but I wish it did (business users)

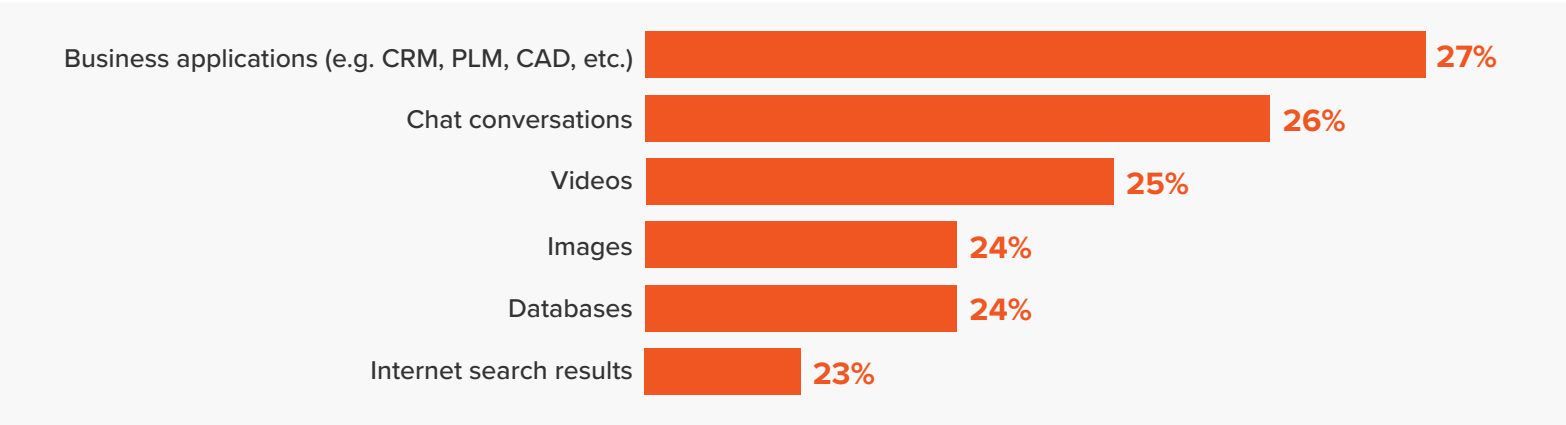


Figure 7

The next step is to align your motivations with those of your business users. Without alignment, there will continue to be a disconnect between your IT teams and end users. As Figure 8 shows, IT professionals and business users aren’t as far off from each other as one might expect, although there’s always room for improvement.

Motivations to improve digital workplace environment

Motivation	IT professionals	Business users
Increase collaboration	57%	49%
Improve communication	55%	49%
Facilitate innovation	54%	31%
Increase access to knowledge	52%	62%
Increase efficiency	48%	58%

*“Information can’t be found that is necessary to do my job.”*

— Customer support respondent in semiconductors

Figure 8

## Conclusion

Global conditions over the past three years have caused video conferencing tools to explode in use. Although they contain a great deal of knowledge, their information is often siloed and inaccessible unless searching directly within the application (and sometimes not accessible even then). There's an opportunity to turn today's digital collaboration tools into the hub for any digital workplace that can provide an end-to-end experience. By working together with key communication vendors, enterprise search platforms can unify these tools and make the knowledge they contain searchable and findable.

In an age where companies continue to feel the effects of the Great Resignation, companies need all the help they can get to retain top employees and keep institutional knowledge in house. Since enterprise search is something business users need and use all the time, IT professionals have a vested interest in making sure this crucial piece of technology is optimized for all users in their organization.

It's time for leadership to get involved and make enterprise search a priority. Only 48% of business users think their leadership is aware they have a search problem, but the disconnect on these surveys makes it clear that there are challenges here. By aligning IT professionals' perceptions of what enterprise search is used for vs. what business users' actual use cases, companies will be better positioned to optimize this critical technology, get information working for them, and improve employee satisfaction, rather than sitting in a siloed system.

# Appendix

## Demographics<sup>4</sup>

Name of survey  
Knowledge and Information Retrieval in a Modern Digital Workplace

Number of respondents  
206

Respondent level  
Director: 43%  
Vice president: 26%  
C-suite/Owner: 30%

Employee size  
10,000-49,999: 80%  
50,000+: 20%

Represented industries<sup>5</sup>  
Technology: 40%  
Heavy manufacturing: 21%  
Automotive: 14%  
Energy: 6%

Respondent departments  
Information technology (IT): 100%

Name of survey  
Enterprise Search for Modern Workplace

Number of respondents  
208

Employee size  
10,000-49,999: 47%  
50,000+: 53%

Represented departments<sup>6</sup>  
Customer support: 34%  
Engineering: 18%  
Sales and marketing: 17%  
Supply chain: 15%  
Contract management: 9%

Represented industries<sup>7</sup>  
Automotive: 32%  
Pharmaceuticals: 15%  
Transportation: 13%  
Heavy manufacturing: 10%  
Aerospace and defense: 9%  
Automotive: 7%  
Energy: 6%

<sup>4</sup> Numbers may not total 100% due to rounding.  
<sup>5</sup> All other industries make up less than 5% of respondents.

<sup>6</sup> All other departments make up less than 5% of respondents.  
<sup>7</sup> All other industries make up less than 5% of respondents.



## About

### Sinequa

Sinequa's Search Cloud brings organizations of all sizes the most complete enterprise search ever. Customers employ Search Cloud to connect all content (both text and data), derive meaning, learn from user interactions, and present information in context. This solves content chaos and informs employees through a single, secure interface. They get the knowledge, expertise, and insights needed to make informed decisions and do more, faster. Sinequa helps these organizations accelerate innovation, reduce rework, foster collaboration, ensure compliance, and increase productivity. For more information visit [www.sinequa.com](http://www.sinequa.com).

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Our obsessions: next generation digital customer experiences, navigating the r/evolution of work and advancing enterprise learning.

