STATE OF INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION REPORT | OCTOBER 2021

The Impact of Document Challenges, No-Code, and AI Skills in the Enterprise

ABBYY 2021 Digital Transformation Survey Results

ABBYY

Survey methodology

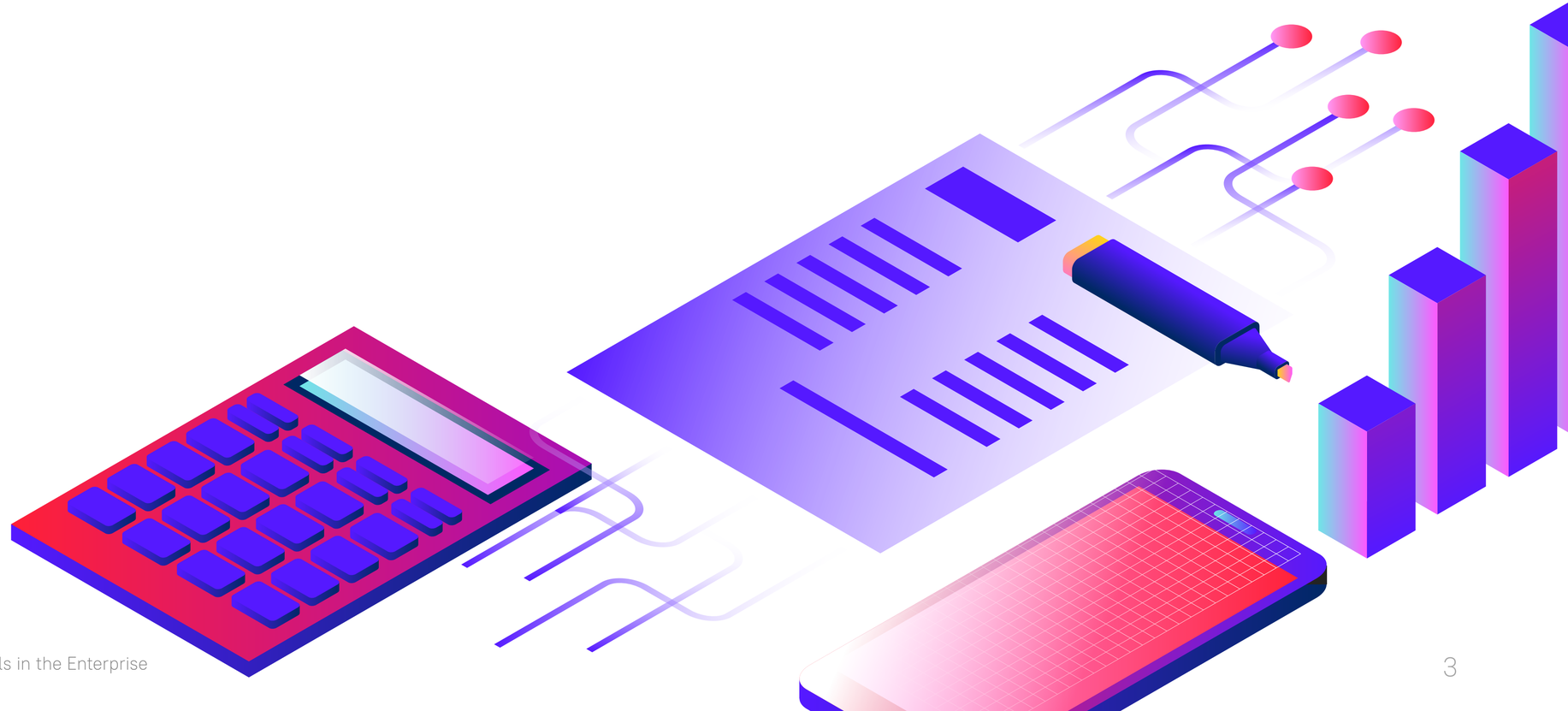
This survey was conducted by Sapio Research in September and October 2021, and sponsored by ABBYY. The survey was conducted among 5,025 office workers across the UK, US, France, Germany, and Japan in organizations with 500+ employees about the impact of data in documents, the daily challenges, and the role software and automation technologies play.

Table of contents

Key findings and analysis.....4

Overview of global respondents.....30

About ABBYY.....34



Key findings and analysis

There is a clear need for better access to data.

Six in ten respondents state they cannot easily access the information they need within documents to complete their job.

A key finding is that middle managers are more likely to be more hands-on when it comes to the documents they need to use, whereas c-levels and directors are not as comfortable with the operational aspect of the role.

Training for Intelligent Document Processing (IDP) is required.

Respondents noted that it takes several weeks and sometimes months to train machine learning models to process documents they work with on a daily basis. Additionally, 39% said they are required to be certified to use their company's IDP platforms, while 22% wish they were certified to be able to help the software be more accurate. There is an opportunity here for more easy-to-use, drag-and-drop IDP software.

Time constraints are the biggest barrier.

The biggest roadblocks identified by most respondents were: it requires a lot of time and data to train current IDP platforms; legacy platforms are not fast enough and have a complicated deployment process. The short-term impact of having to take time to train document processing is likely one of the driving reasons behind a mixed approach to handling data (both manual and automated handling).

People want the benefits of no-code artificial intelligence (AI) for processing documents.

The biggest benefit of using AI drag-and-drop software and skills identified is allowing respondents to focus on more creative, value-add tasks. In addition, empowering them to find new opportunities to automate documents, save costs, and improve customer responsiveness have also been highlighted as benefits.

There is a strong desire to use AI document processing software and skills

Respondents complained that the top reasons fueling their desire for more modern no-code platforms are that legacy platforms are not fast enough, are complicated to deploy, and do not capture, extract, or classify the content they need.

According to the survey, 72% of employees would be willing to **use no-code, drag-and-drop AI skills software that can automatically understand the content and context of new documents without their assistance.**

Especially in the current climate of "The Great Resignation," investing in the right document AI solutions will empower employees to **work on more fulfilling and creative tasks**, help make better decisons faster, enable them to **feel excited and engaged about their workplace, and improve the customer experience.**

Q1. Software that automatically understands the content and context of data from documents like an experienced and skilled worker would:

- Make their lives easier (52%).
- 36% said it would help make better decisions faster.
- 32% said it would enable them to work on higher value projects and another 32% said it would improve their customer experience.

The apparent message here is that the benefits have been identified clearly across all levels of organizations.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Make my job easier	52%	60%	53%	50%	56%	42%
Help me make better decisions faster	36%	48%	36%	23%	34%	39%
Enable me to work on higher value projects	32%	46%	34%	23%	26%	30%
Improve the customer experience	32%	49%	33%	29%	26%	21%
I don’t know how it will help me	8%	4%	7%	13%	7%	9%
We don’t have software that understands data from documents	4%	3%	3%	5%	4%	5%

Q2. I would be willing to use an easy drag-and-drop software to train and understand the content and context of documents I use for downstream processes:

- 72% of respondents said “yes” to the question and 19% were not sure.
- While the average of respondents who said “yes” across industries was 72%, IT and Logistics reported 81% and Financial Services 79%.
- Average of 71% across all departments, but has a higher percentage across IT (82%) and Operations (74%)

This received a positive response across all levels, industries, and departments: the desire to try and use such a software is very high.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Yes	72%	80%	72%	68%	69%	68%
No	9%	6%	10%	11%	8%	11%
Not sure	19%	13%	18%	20%	23%	21%

Q3. Access to a library of drag-and-drop AI “skills” that have the ability to understand and process a specific document would allow employees to:

- Work on other, more creative tasks (41%)
- Another 41% said it would **alleviate manual data entry.**
- 32% said that it would **empower them to find new opportunities to automate documents.**
- 44% of the Manufacturing and Supply Chain industries also believe having the software would allow more time for more creative tasks, while 47% of the Manufacturing industry believes it would alleviate manual data entry.

Allowing employees to work on more creative tasks and alleviating manual data entry are clear winners of this category.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Allow me to spend more time on other, possibly more creative, work tasks	41%	52%	43%	37%	41%	30%
Alleviate me from manual data entry	41%	44%	39%	39%	40%	41%
Empower me to find new opportunities to automate documents	32%	41%	30%	28%	30%	31%
Relieve me from relying on IT	29%	37%	36%	25%	25%	21%
Add more complex documents on the fly	25%	32%	21%	18%	28%	27%
Other	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%

Q4. If your department had an intelligent automation tool with access to AI “skills” that could automate all types of documents, what impact would it have?

- 37% of respondents said it would allow them to **save time on automating new types of document process**.
- 33% identified this as a **cost-saver** for the organization.
- 32% said that it would **make it easier to add new documents.**
- 29% responded that it would **empower/upskill employees.**
- 42% of the IT/Tech and Supply Chain industries also believe having the software would save time, while 37% of the Manufacturing industry believes it would save costs for the organization.

The previous question proves that having such a system can save both time and costs, while allowing for more creative work and making the process easier in the future.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Save us time to automate new types of document processes	37%	45%	39%	34%	41%	26%
Save/reduce costs for the organization	33%	42%	37%	21%	34%	31%
Make adding new documents to process in our systems easier	32%	44%	32%	26%	32%	28%
Allow me to be more responsive to customers	31%	42%	33%	30%	25%	25%
Empower/upskill employees	29%	41%	31%	20%	23%	27%
Remove latency from the process	25%	31%	20%	26%	19%	31%
It would have no impact	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%	4%
Not sure	8%	6%	8%	11%	8%	9%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Q5. Do you think you would benefit from a marketplace filled with drag-and-drop “skills” to make document processing easier?

- 55% of respondents said it would be **worth trying**. Those respondents are spread across all hierarchical levels.
- 29% respondents said they **need more information**.
- 16% said that it would **not be of interest** to them.

There was positive perception about the system and openness to try it. It was also very positive to see the consistency across both industries and departments, which indicates a need and desire for the software.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
It would be worth trying	55%	58%	53%	49%	60%	52%
I need more information	29%	31%	30%	29%	24%	29%
It would not be of interest to me	16%	10%	17%	20%	15%	18%
Other	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%

Q6. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “I know there is data I need within the document I regularly use to complete my job, but I can’t always get easy access to it?”

- 36% of respondents agreed with the statement and 25% strongly agreed.
- 79% of those who strongly agreed are occupying director or c-level roles, and 80% of those who agreed with the statement are in junior or senior management roles.

This indicates that middle managers are more likely to be more hands-on when it comes to the documents they need to use, whereas c-levels and directors are not as comfortable with the operational aspect of the role.

- An average of 63% of those who agree or strongly agree are operating in Transportation, Supply Chain, Construction, and Insurance.

This indicates that these industries are the ones that should be prioritized, as the need to improve is greater here.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Strongly agree	25%	29%	26%	21%	23%	27%
Agree	36%	32%	38%	36%	35%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%	19%	17%	20%	20%	21%
Disagree	14%	15%	14%	16%	15%	11%
Strongly disagree	5%	4%	4%	7%	7%	3%

Q7. What causes you to not be able to access data within the documents you work with?

- The key challenge caused by not having easy access to the data is the **delay in completing the process** (48%), **manual handling of the documents and process** (34%), and also **errors and exceptions** expected to occur (31%).
- Across all industries, particularly across IT, Healthcare, Financial Services, and Retail, delays caused by not having easy access to data is the biggest problem.

This indicates that ease of access to data is critical across businesses and not having it is a problem affecting all levels and all industries.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Delays in completing the process	48%	54%	55%	45%	46%	38%
More manual handling of the document and process	34%	39%	31%	29%	33%	38%
Errors and exceptions to occur	31%	35%	34%	32%	28%	28%
Bad customer experience	20%	28%	25%	19%	15%	13%
Poor business decisions	19%	21%	20%	19%	12%	22%
None, there is no negative impact that I am aware of	15%	16%	12%	14%	18%	15%

Q8. On average, how much time do you spend trying to find, understand, and process data in documents more easily on a weekly basis?

- Across all the industries mentioned in the question, the consensus is that 1-4 hours per week are spent on this task (an average of 41% of respondents across all sectors).
- Senior managers and director/c-level respondents are those who spend 5-8 hours per week on this, whereas junior managers and below spend 1-4 hours.

This shows that having better training and skills to work with data and processes can save up to 8 hours per week for a senior level leader and up to 4 hours for an individual contributor.

On average, across all respondents, utilizing a more efficient system could save up to 10.75 days per year*.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Less than one hour	27%	18%	25%	35%	26%	30%
1-4 hours	41%	39%	39%	41%	44%	41%
5-8 hours	24%	31%	27%	19%	25%	19%
1-2 days	5%	7%	6%	3%	4%	5%
2+ days	3%	5%	3%	2%	2%	4%

*calculation based on 47 working weeks and an average of 5.5 hours saved per week

Q9. How does your organization currently extract data from documents and input it into business applications? (i.e., CRM, ERP, BPM, RPA, etc.)

- 47% of respondents say that they use a combination of automation and manual entry.
- Additionally, there is a small difference between those who say their company digitizes incoming documents (36%) and those who manually look at the data (34%).
- Senior-level managers, directors, and c-level respondents cited that it was a combination of automation and that the company is digitizing incoming documents.
- Industries with the highest rates of combined data are Financial Services and Supply Chain (51%), followed by IT/Tech (49%), and Retail and Government (47%).
- Roles in Sales, IT, Ops, and Administration use the most of the combined data approach and Legal teams use the least.

This shows there is still a lot of room to grow the digitization of data across the majority of industries.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Combination of automation and manual entry	47%	56%	48%	41%	45%	44%
Company digitizes incoming documents and automates putting the information into a business application	36%	40%	29%	41%	37%	30%
I manually look at data from a document and input it into a business application	34%	37%	37%	28%	34%	36%
Other	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%

Q10. Do you feel like you need to be trained or certified to use Intelligent Document Processing / OCR (the software that captures and digitizes enterprise content, no matter which channel it comes from)?

- 39% of respondents said yes to this question and another 22% said they wish they were. The leading country that said yes was the US, and 58% of them said they need to be trained. In France, only 23% of respondents said yes.
- The largest proportion of respondents who want to get trained are **senior managers or director/c-level employees**.

- On average, 49% of those who said yes are across the Financial Services, Construction, IT/Tech, and Telecommunications industries.
- The most negative response to the question came from the Government sector (31%).

There is a very clear need for training according to the respondents, particularly among those in senior management positions and above.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Yes	39%	58%	44%	23%	35%	35%
No	22%	15%	21%	33%	26%	16%
I wish I was	22%	13%	16%	26%	24%	32%
I don’t think it’s necessary	8%	7%	9%	11%	8%	6%
Not part of my role	8%	7%	10%	7%	6%	12%

Q10a. Why do you say YES? / Q10b. Why do you say NO?

Answered YES

The overarching message for 67% of those who responded “yes” was that it was a required training for their role. Most countries had a high response rate on this, but the lowest on the list were Japan and France.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
I was required to be trained for my role	67%	71%	73%	61%	69%	55%
It took me several weeks/months	23%	20%	20%	29%	25%	26%
I self-learned by watching online videos	5%	5%	4%	6%	2%	10%
It was a cumbersome process and took 1+ years	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	8%

Answered NO

The overarching message for 69% of those who responded “no” was that the training was not required for their job responsibilities. The US and Germany had the highest respondents for this, and UK and Japan rated lowest.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
It isn’t required for my job responsibilities	69%	74%	61%	78%	76%	43%
It was not available	19%	16%	21%	12%	15%	41%
It was too costly	12%	11%	17%	10%	9%	16%

Q11. In my experience, the time it takes to train new documents to be automated for business processes takes:

- 20% of respondents said **it takes weeks** to train the machine learning models, and 19% said **it takes days.**
- 16% said the process is **done by another department** and 12% said they **wished there was a software** that would automatically train new documents without assistance.
- On average, only 9% of employees across all hierarchical levels think this **is easy to do**.
- 47% of those in IT departments think the process takes days/weeks, while the rest of the departments' perception is very different and uneven.

This is another question that reveals the need for understanding processes across all different levels and structures in organizations.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Takes days to train the machine learning models	19%	26%	18%	20%	15%	16%
Takes weeks to train the machine learning models	20%	22%	20%	19%	21%	18%
Takes months to train the machine learning models	14%	13%	13%	14%	14%	15%
Takes years to train the machine learning models	6%	5%	7%	6%	6%	8%
I wish there was software that automatically trained new documents without my assistance	12%	11%	11%	9%	13%	14%
Requires outside consultants/ professional services to support me/ my company	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Is done by another department within my company	16%	12%	19%	17%	16%	14%
Is easy to do	9%	8%	7%	11%	10%	7%

Q11a. Which other department within the company is it done by?/ Q11b. What factor made it easy?

Which other department is it done by?

The overarching message for 51% of respondents was that the IT department was doing it.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
IT	51%	38%	50%	54%	57%	54%
Administration	17%	26%	16%	14%	16%	14%
Other	13%	10%	14%	11%	11%	16%
Operations	9%	14%	13%	8%	7%	3%
Human Resources	6%	6%	4%	8%	4%	7%
Sales & Marketing	3%	6%	2%	2%	4%	3%
Financial Services	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

What factor made it easy?

The two most popular responses for this question were: “Platform is easy to use” (44%) and “we have simple documents” (36%).

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Platform is easy to use	44%	45%	47%	43%	44%	41%
We have simple documents	36%	20%	41%	46%	36%	32%
We have a high level of support	18%	31%	12%	10%	18%	23%
Other	2%	4%	-	1%	2%	4%

Q12. In my experience working with our current document processing platform, what is its ease or complexity?

The clear roadblocks identified by most respondents were: **Requires a lot of time and data to be trained on the current platform** (28%), is **not fast enough** (24%), and has a **complicated deployment process** (22%). The short-term impact of having to put time in for training is likely one of the driving reasons behind a mixed approach to handling data (both manual and automated handling).

The **Financial Services and IT/Tech industries** are most similar in that they both said the platform requires a lot of time and data to be trained, it's not fast enough, and has a complicated deployment process. **Other industries are more balanced** in that they agreed that all of the reasons listed are challenging.

	Global	US	UK	France	Germany	Japan
Requires a lot of time and data to be trained	28%	35%	28%	26%	25%	24%
Is not fast enough	24%	24%	25%	20%	25%	24%
Has a complicated deployment process	22%	26%	20%	19%	21%	24%
Does not capture, extract and/or classify all the content I need	18%	23%	18%	11%	20%	20%
Makes it difficult to add new document fields	18%	23%	19%	15%	16%	18%
Is not accurate enough	16%	14%	16%	15%	17%	20%
Is faultless	10%	10%	7%	13%	12%	5%
I'm not familiar with our document processing platform	11%	10%	12%	11%	8%	13%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Overview of global respondents

Company Size

36% of respondents operate in organizations of 5,000+ employees and 34% in organizations with 500-999 employees.

Seniority

33% are individual contributors (non-managerial level such as analysts, administrators), 24% junior managers, and only 6% director or c-level.

Industries

Top industries covered by respondents were Healthcare, Government, Financial Services, and IT/Tech – totaling to 49% of respondents.

Departments

36% of respondents are part of Administration/IT departments, while 24% are a part of Operations or Sales.

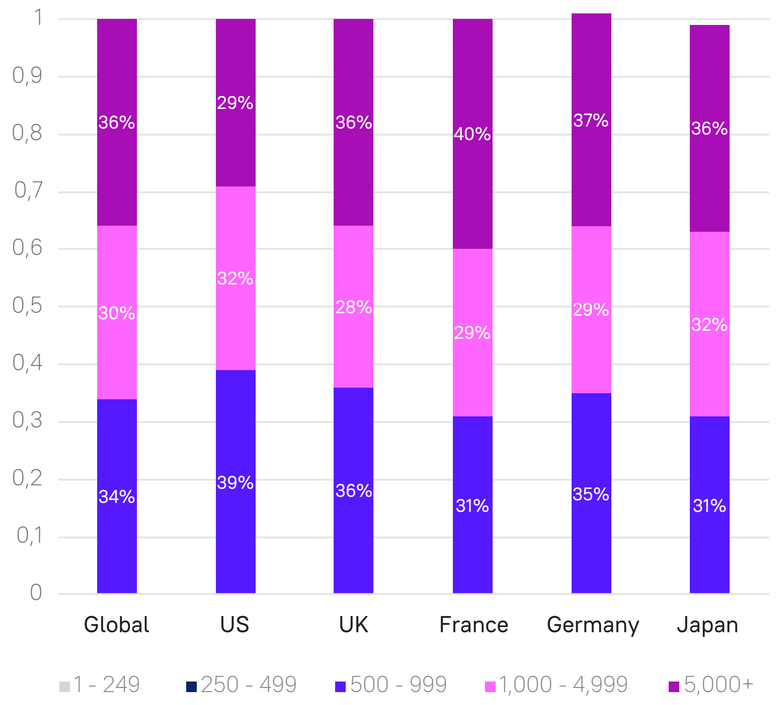
Devices

100% of respondents use a laptop or computer to do their work.

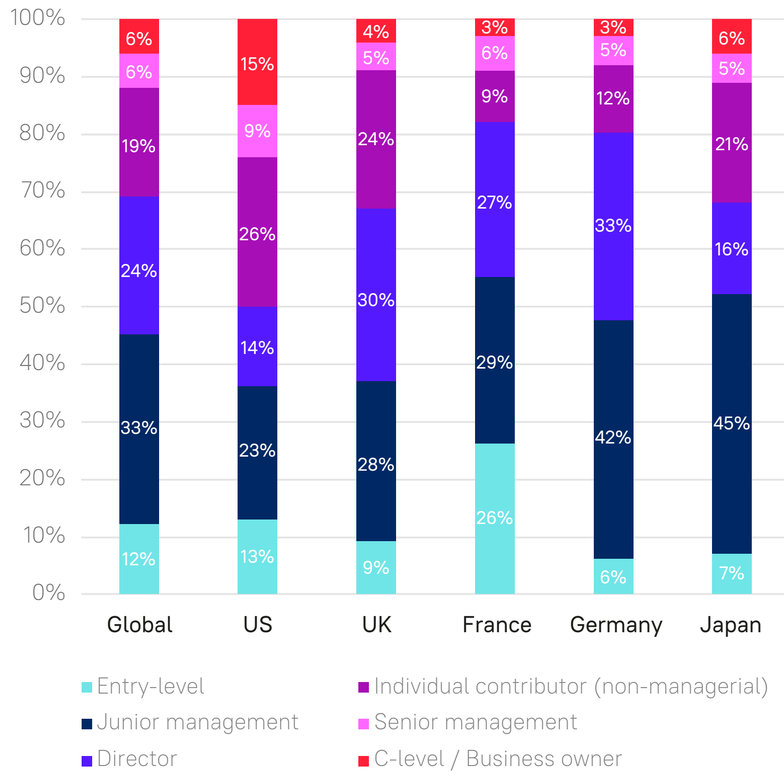
Data & Documents

100% of respondents saw the content of the documents they work with as necessary for them to complete their job.

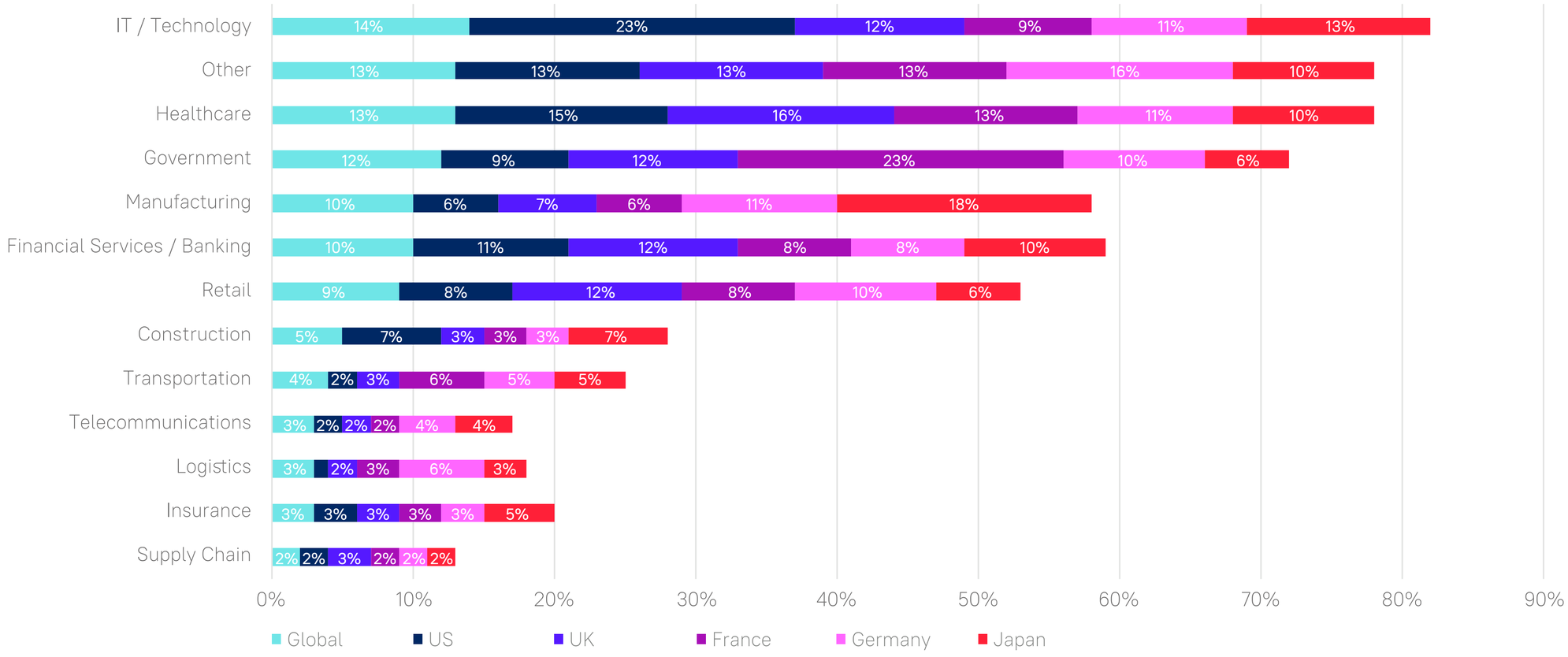
How many employees are there within your organization?



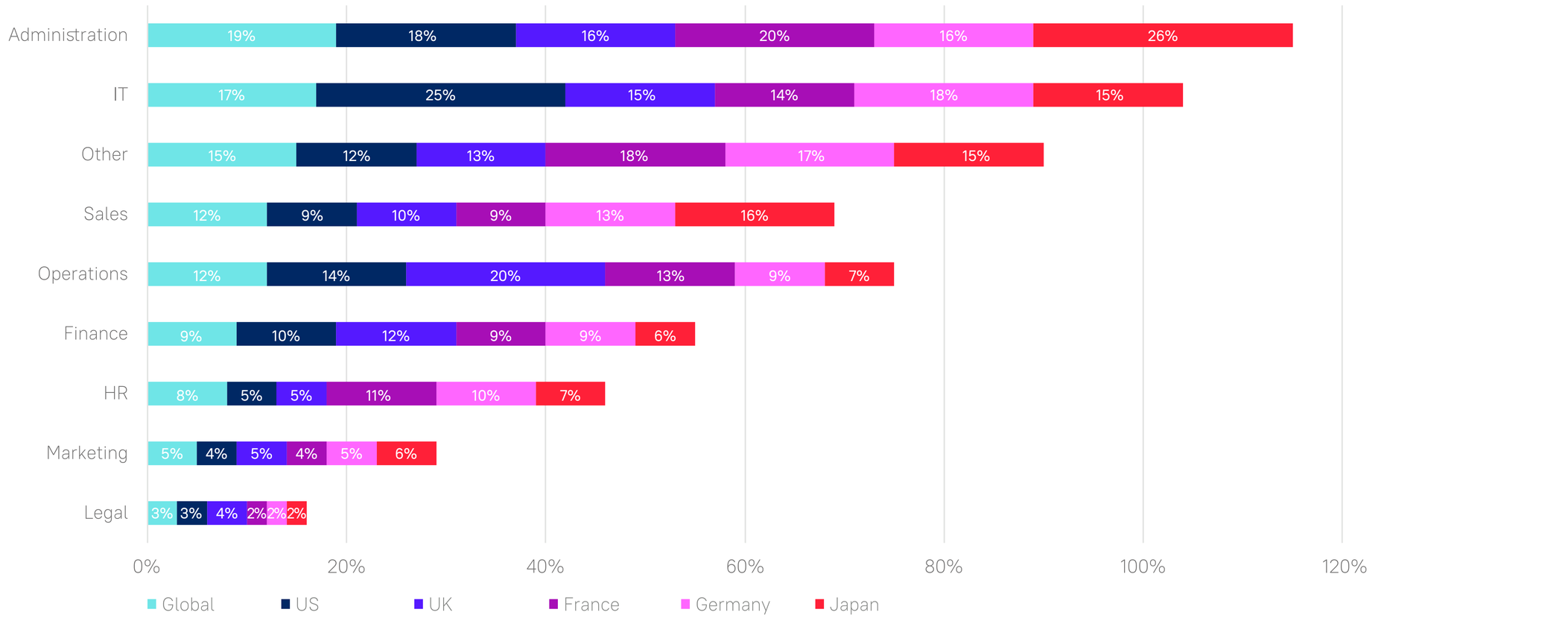
Which of the following best describes your role?



Which of the following best describes your industry?



Which department do you work within your organization?



About ABBYY

ABBYY empowers organizations to gain a complete understanding of their business processes and the content that fuels them with its Digital Intelligence platform. ABBYY technologies are used by more than 5,000 companies, including many of the Fortune 500, and are recognized for their leadership in Intelligent Document Processing (IDP) and Process Discovery & Mining for driving significant impact where it matters most: customer experience, effectiveness, profitability, and competitive advantage. ABBYY is a global company with offices in 14 countries.

ABBYY Vantage

ABBYY Vantage is a comprehensive platform that applies AI to understand your documents in a fast and simple way. Vantage makes today's digital worker and processes smarter by delivering skills that read, understand, and extract insights from documents, helping enterprises accelerate digital transformation.

ABBYY Marketplace

The ABBYY Marketplace provides a rich collection of document skills, connectors, and assets, which enhance and extend the ABBYY Vantage platform and accelerate the digital transformation and automation initiatives of enterprises of any size, industry, and geography. Skills developed both by ABBYY and by the ABBYY partner network cover various document types, use cases, and languages and can be either fully trained and ready to go, or a framework, providing the basis for customers to adjust to specific requirements and train their own document skills.

For more information, visit www.abbyy.com/company/about-us and follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

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