



**Coverdale**



# Study "Operating System for Management and Cooperation"

Background, causal factors and challenges facing the organization

Coverdale Team Management Deutschland GmbH

October 2017

## About Coverdale

Coverdale offers a complete range of diagnostic, consulting and training services in support of the progressive development of management and cooperative competence devoted to making organizations more agile and efficient. After performing a diagnostic analysis of management and cooperation in organizations, we proceed to identify potential steps in the development process, develop individualized programs and implement them in consultation with our clients.

We work in different languages in both national and international contexts, in single organizations, business partnerships or open formats.

In order to make more precise assessments of developments within organizations, we conduct studies at irregular intervals. We then make the resulting findings available to our clients. They are also taken into consideration in our methodological approach, our programs and our interventions.

Further information and the results of other studies are provided at: [www.coverdale.de](http://www.coverdale.de)

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### Colophon

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Contents	
Current status	4
Objectives	4
Design of the study	4
The essentials at a glance	5
The culture of management and cooperation is the most important factor in the process of achieving improvement.	5
Most organizations wait too long	5
What should change?	5
Knowing what you're doing – and why	5
More decisions, more communication, more transparency and less hierarchy	6
Where should an organization begin?	6
Active operating system design generates confidence and strength for the change process.	6
Questions and results	6
Statistics	15

## Current situation

The market and competitive situations facing many organizations have changed significantly. Digitization, globalization, changing expectations of customers, employees and society as well as entirely new organization and production models exert strong pressure from outside on the organization. This requires both people and organizations to change and adapt as quickly as possible, although it is often unclear how and in what direction change should take place. All that is certain is that the business model is in danger of failing if things continue as they are.

We have observed that employees in organizations are becoming more and more aware of the increasing pressure and the corresponding tendency toward blind actionism. Financial pressure to adapt imposes demands for greater efficiency on the organization, and the effort required needed to achieve even minor improvements is not commensurate with the outcome. As a result the whole system tries to accelerate in order to keep up with the pace of change. The sense of ease and lightness disappears for many people and organizations, and people approach the limits of their ability to cope with stress. In many cases, this leads to resignation and paralysis. Many people sense that things cannot continue as they are.

Everyone is talking about the demand for digitization and big data. But that is only one aspect in our view. We are firmly convinced that a new form of interaction is needed to tap people's potentials and generate the sense of lightness and energy that is needed to do so. We believe that it is important to analyze the ways in which people define goals, interact, communicate, make decisions and create added value within the existing organizational system.

## Objectives

The goal of the study is to survey organizations with respect to the current status and future of their operating systems – their internal systems of management and cooperation – for the purposes of ...

- identifying and analyzing current challenges and pressures facing the organization;
- analyzing the factors that have contributed to the "perceived reality" and
- determining the extent to which employees are acquainted with their operating system, how effective it is and how well equipped it is for the future;
- analyzing how improvements and enhanced efficiency can be achieved under the existing pressures and the current pace of change;
- and determining what must be done in order to manage the impending changes effectively.

## Design of the study

The qualitative study is based on a survey of managers, project leaders and experts in HR in organizations in various different business sectors. The interviewees were surveyed on the basis of an interview guide containing both open and closed questions, and the open questions were coded in accordance with recognized methods of empirical research in the social sciences.



## The essentials at a glance

The following section provides a summary of what we regard as the most important findings from the "Operating System for management and cooperation" study.

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### The culture of management and cooperation is the most important factor in the process of achieving improvement

The pace of change has increased significantly. The participants in the survey indicated that they would like to have more support in that context. Nearly all participants regard the management culture, the operating system for management and cooperation, as the most important factor in the process of achieving decisive changes, such as complex transformation processes.

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### Most organizations wait too long

The majority of survey participants stated that their management and cooperation processes are not systematically reviewed. According to the participants, more is invested in new technology than in management and cooperation. Only when the bottom line is negatively affected does executive management react, at which point employees are compelled to submit to change. It would be better, they indicated, to avoid downward trends and let employees become the designers of change – by reviewing the need for transformation of the operating system regularly and actively involving employees in the process.

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### What should change?

Management, cooperation, the error culture, room for inspiration and innovation, a better balance of tension and relaxation instead of constant tension, continuous crisis management and ceaseless high performance – energy and lightness are lacking. All of these wishes are concerned with the ways in which management and cooperation take place within organizations – and with the question of whether a common approach exists at all.

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### Knowing what you're doing – and why

There is a lack of consensus regarding the methods employed in setting goals and coordinating working procedures. The question of meaning is one of the first unresolved issues. Participants indicated with only 5.6 out of 10 possible points that they believe that employees know how their day-to-day work contributes to the overall goals of the organization. Yet that is an important factor when it comes to encouraging employees to assume more responsibility. Expressed somewhat differently: If I don't know where the boat is headed, I won't be able to determine how much muscle power to exert as I row – or whether I might be needed somewhere else.

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### **More decisions, more communication, more transparency, less hierarchy**

The most urgent desire for improvement relates to the key issue of management and cooperation. The participants expressed the desire for more decisions – but at the right points. Reduced hierarchies would help ensure that decisions are made more often at the points at which problems actually arise. This shift should be flanked by a consciously accepted error culture. That requires more communication and transparency. The participants indicated that they would strive first and foremost to improve these success factors – management and cooperation – if they were permitted to make decisions themselves.

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### **Where should an organization begin?**

The participants expressed definite opinions on this matter as well. They wish to work with top management and decision-making circles to bring about a targeted transformation of the common operating system. In support of long-term success, the participants expressed the need for a management personnel development program focused on these success factors.

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### **Active design of the operating system generates confidence and strength for change**

It was gratifying to recognize that the majority of those surveyed still stand behind their organizations. Most participants are still confident that their organizations are acting appropriately and that change will improve the situation. Interviewees from organizations that already review their operating systems at regular intervals and design them actively, look to the future with particularly strong confidence and trust.

## **Questions and results**

N = 68 participants

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**1\_\_ Let's assume that you are a programmer.**

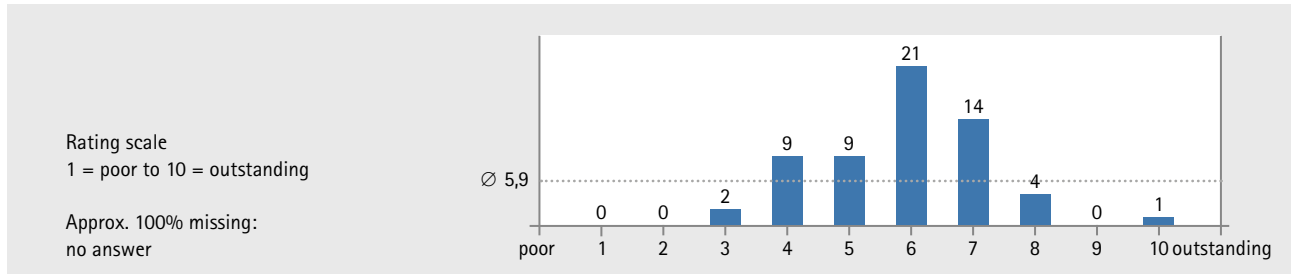
**Which element(s) of your operating systems would you reprogram immediately?**

(Multiple answers are possible.)

Ranking of the most frequent answers:

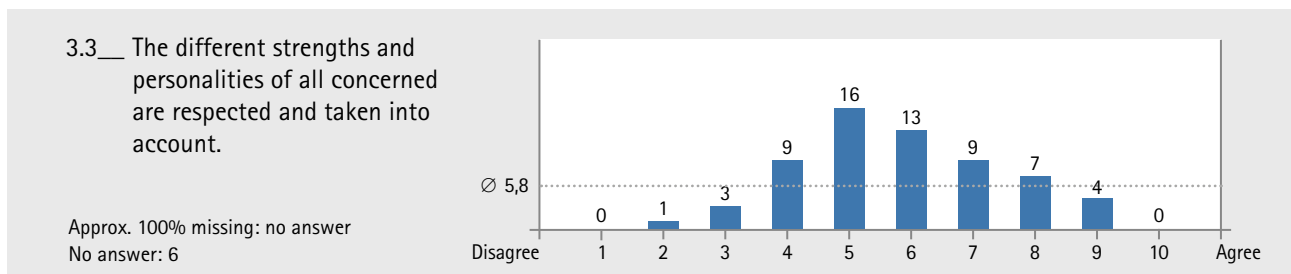
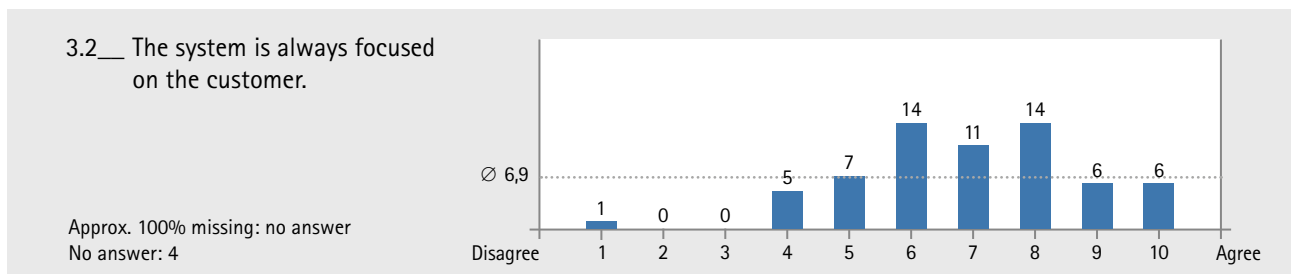
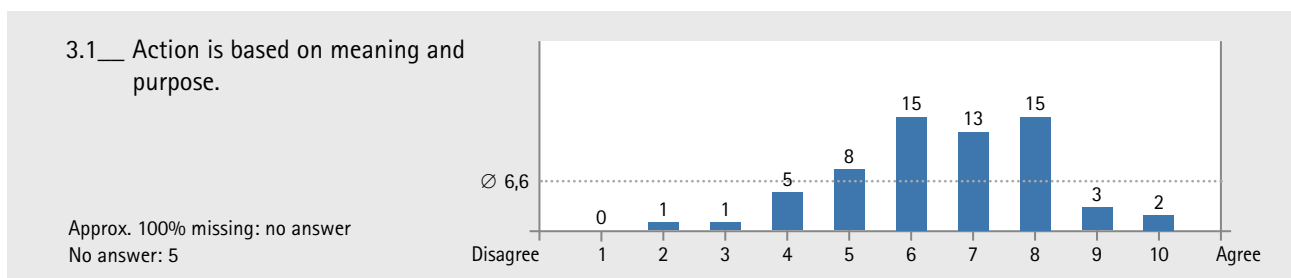
1. The culture of management and cooperation (operating system)
2. Communication and interaction
3. Empowerment/personal responsibility
4. Simplification/more flexible design/adjustment of structures
5. Clarification of strategies and goals
6. Improvement of innovative capacity and the error culture
7. Transparency

## 2\_\_ How would you rate the quality of the operating system for management and cooperation in your organization?



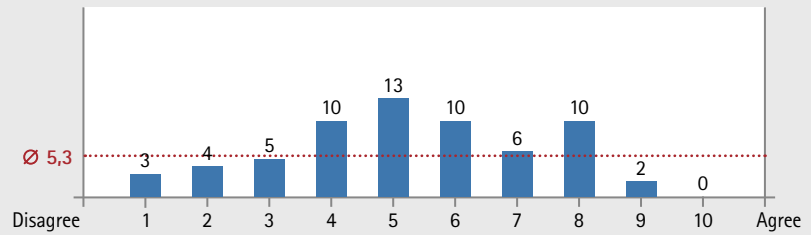
## 3\_\_ How well does it work with regard to the following aspects?

Questions and average ratings:



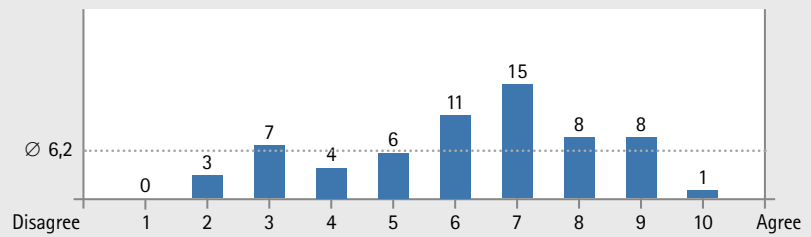
3.4\_\_ There is a standard approach to goal clarification and systematic cooperation.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 5



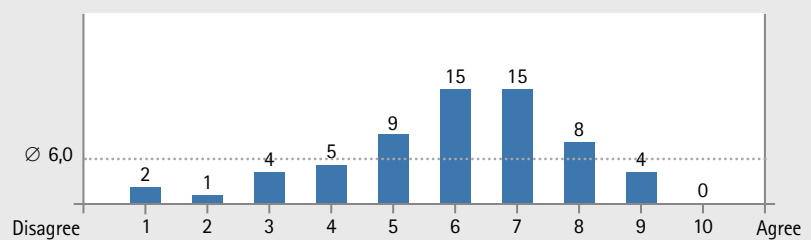
3.5\_\_ Room for decision-making, action and creativity is made available to all employees.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 5



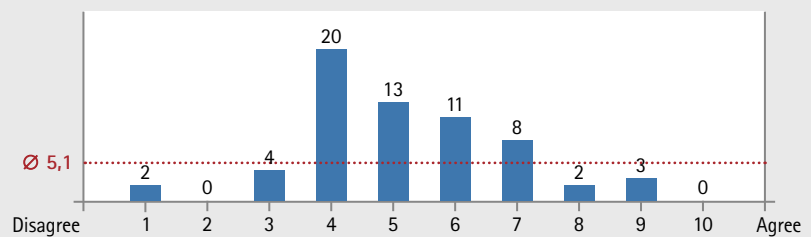
3.6\_\_ Communication is a process in flux.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 5



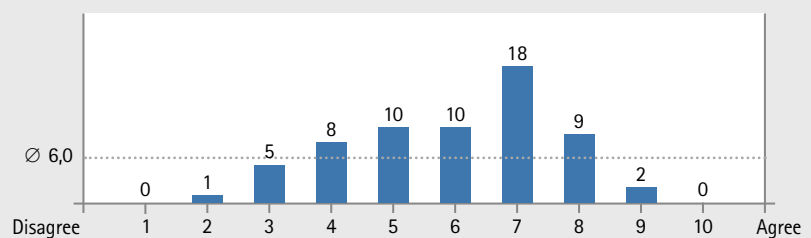
3.7\_\_ There is a well-developed, constructive feedback culture.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 5



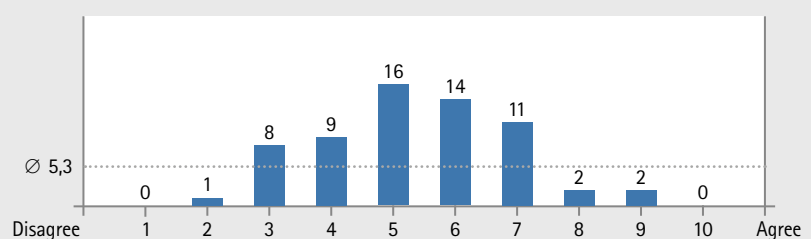
3.8\_\_ There is a management culture.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 5



3.9\_\_ People learn systematically from mistakes.

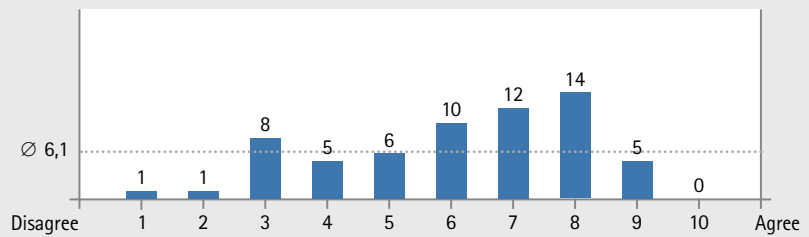
Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 5





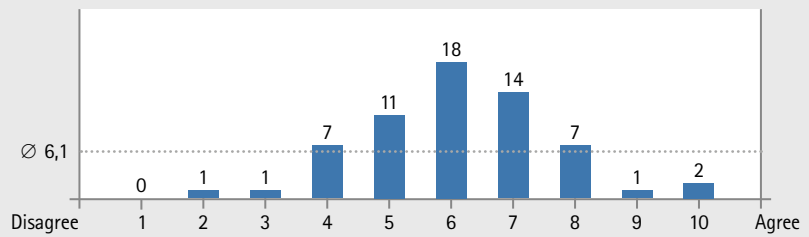
3.10\_ Employees are free to take risks and fail.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 6



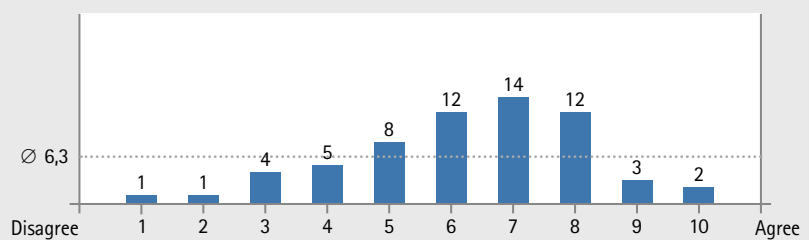
3.11\_ Knowledge is communicated, shared and cultivated.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 6



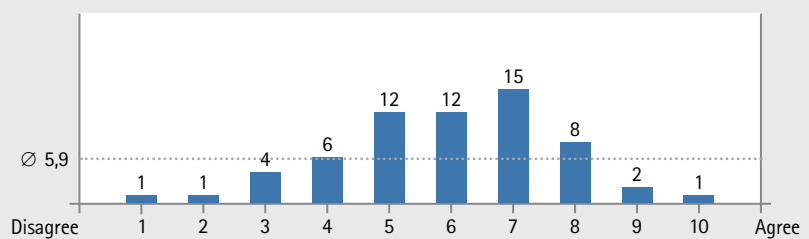
3.12\_ Progressive development and learning are core duties of every employee.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 5



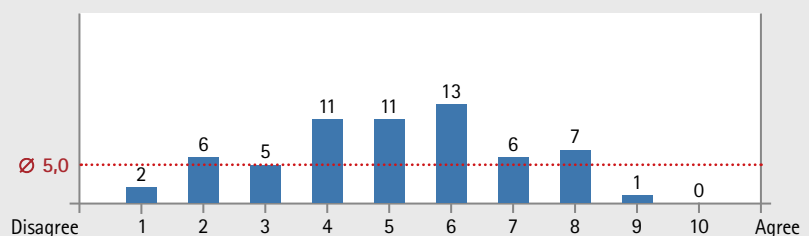
3.13\_ Everyone identifies with the goals of the organization.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 6



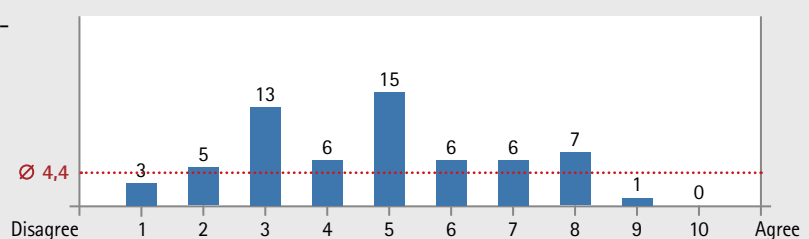
3.14\_ There is sufficient time and space for inspiration and innovation.

Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 6



3.15\_ There is a good, rhythmic balance of tension and relaxation.

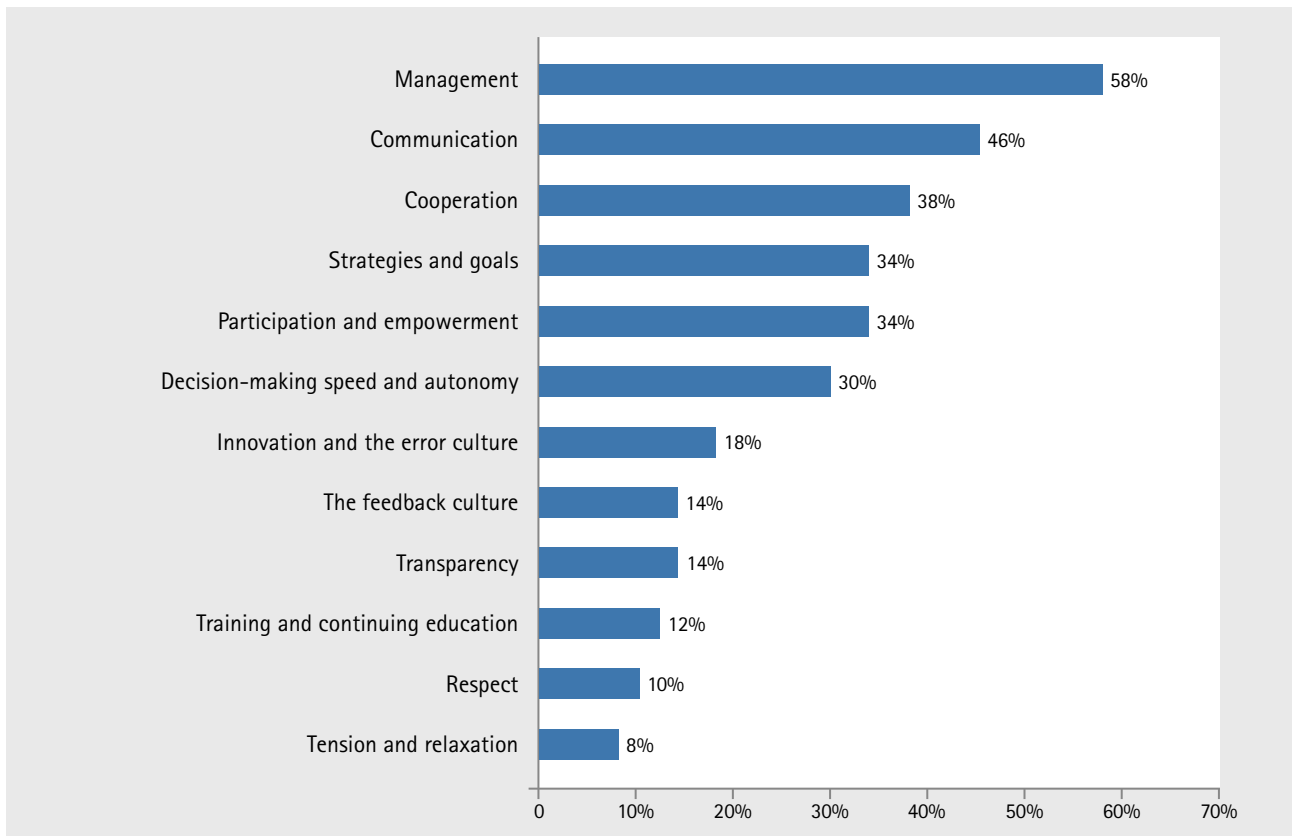
Approx. 100% missing: no answer  
No answer: 6



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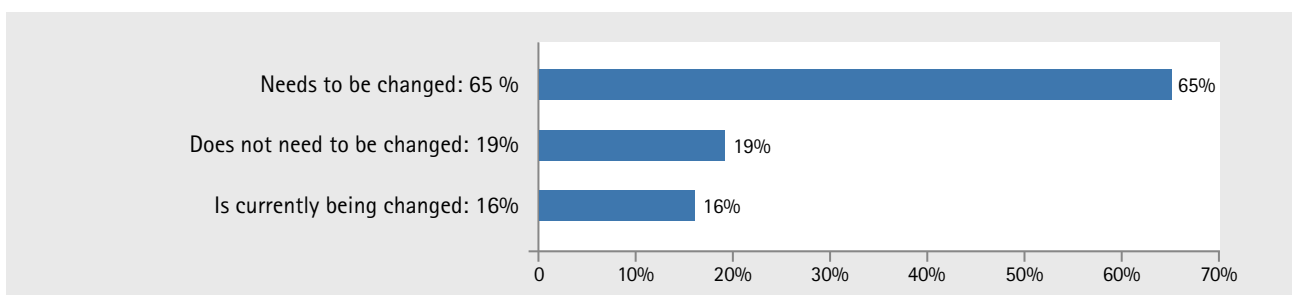
4\_\_ If we could ask employees in your organization, which element(s) of the operating system would they identify as being most in need of further development?

(Multiple answers are possible.)



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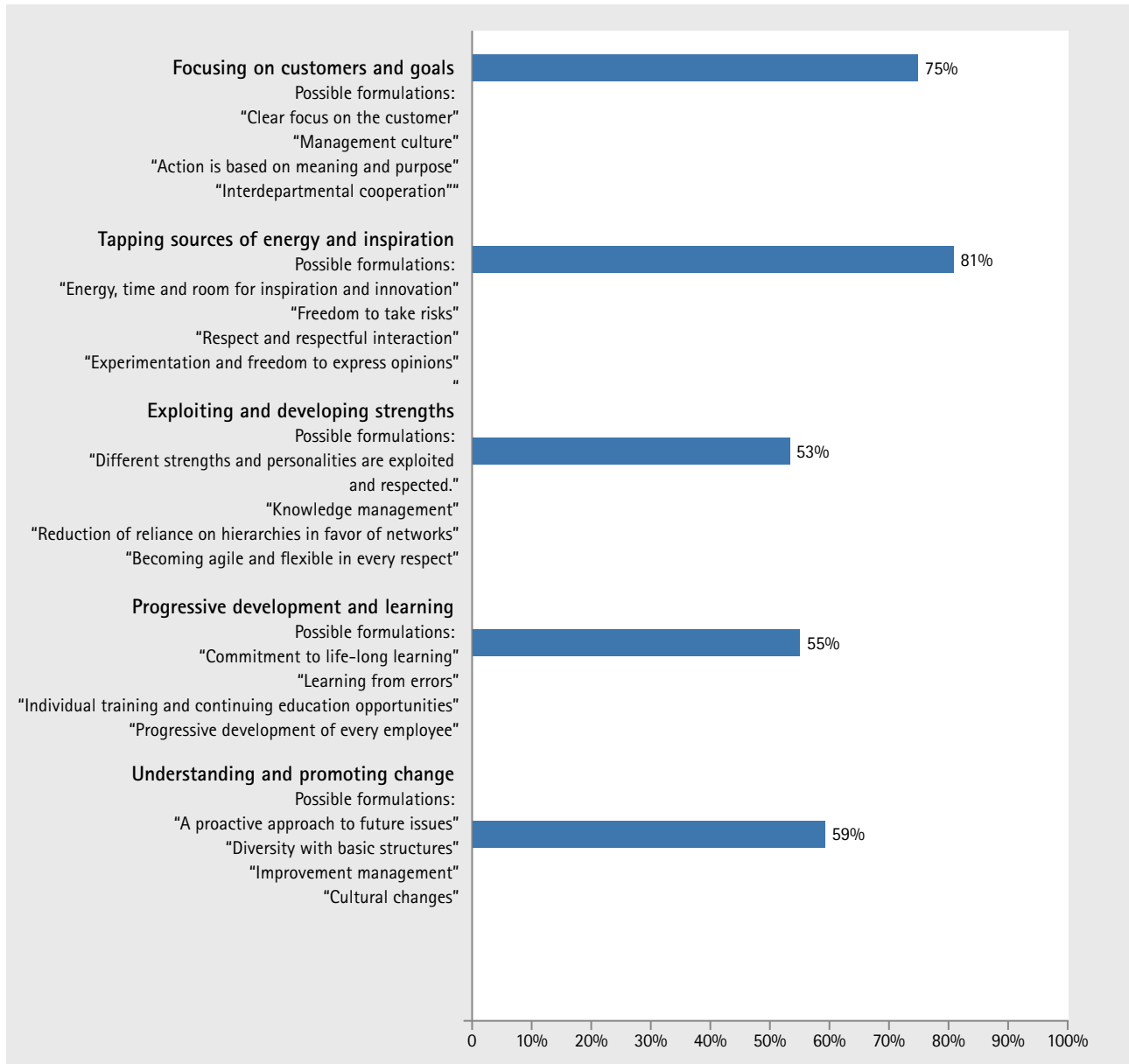
5\_\_ When you look to the future, how would you assess your operating system?





6\_\_ Which elements do you consider especially helpful when it comes to meeting the challenges to come?

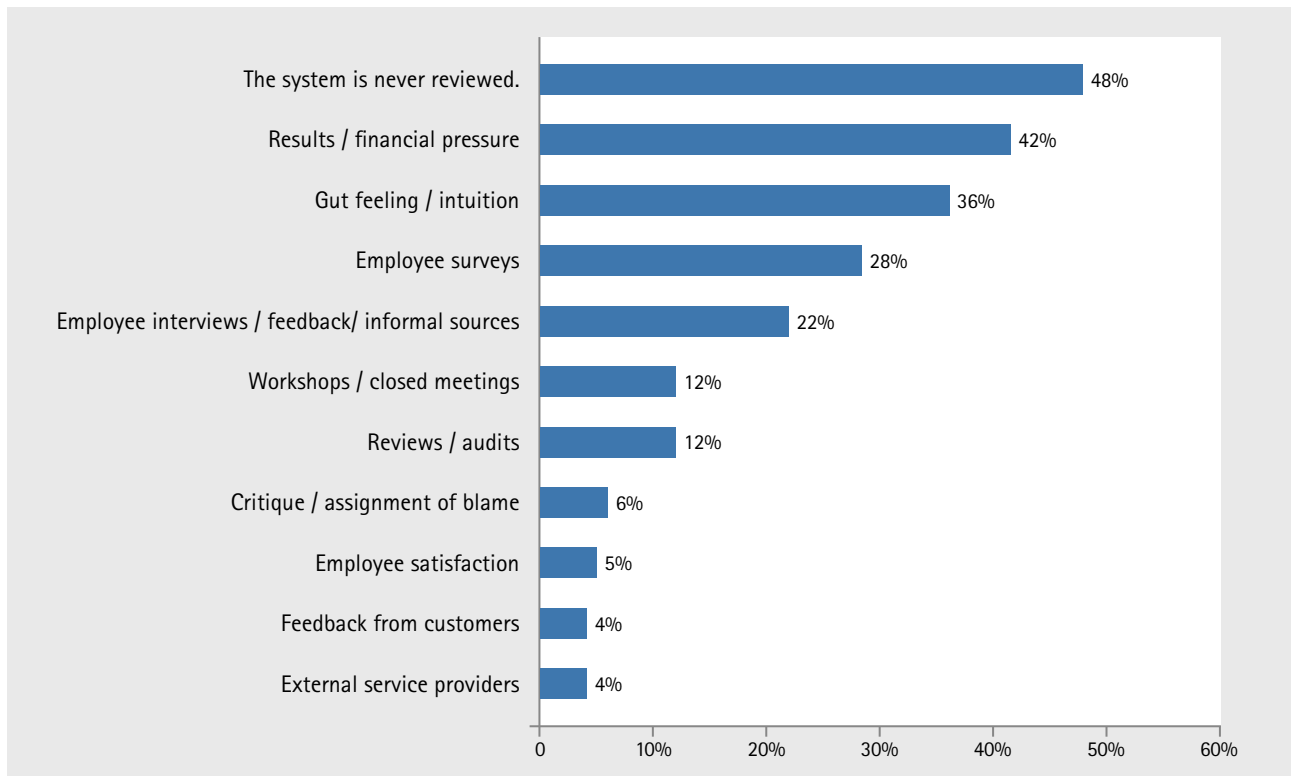
(Multiple answers are possible.)



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7\_\_ How, when and by whom is your operating system reviewed? How can you tell whether the operating system is adequate or not?

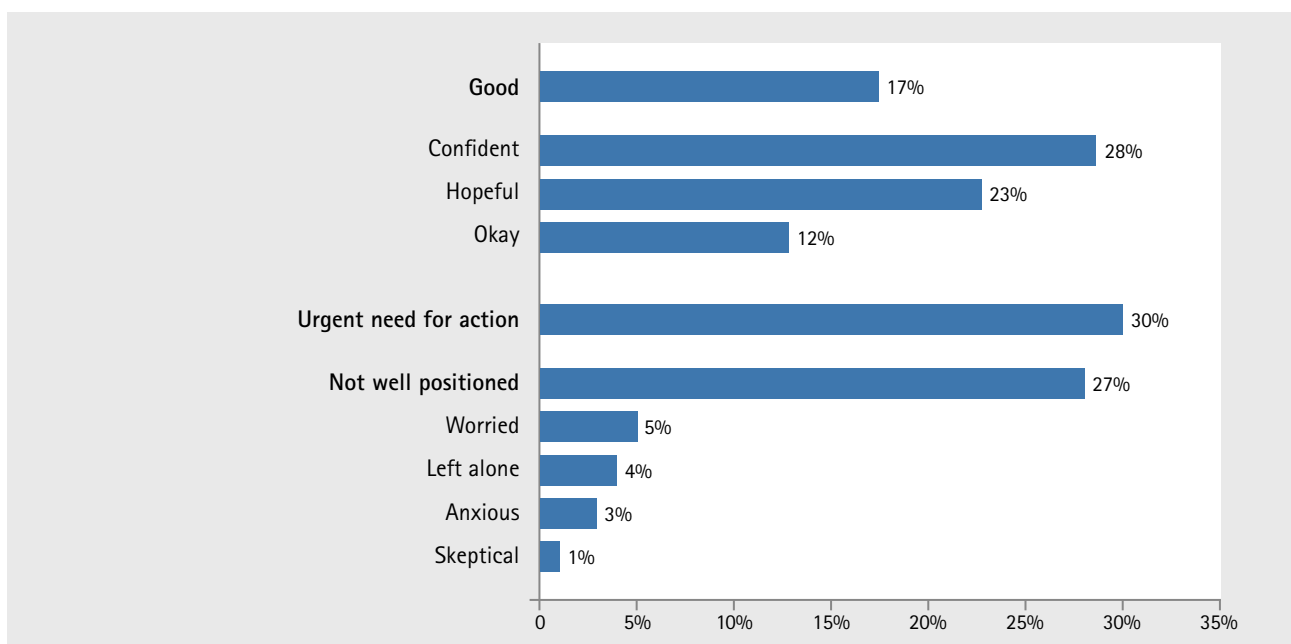
(Multiple answers are possible.)



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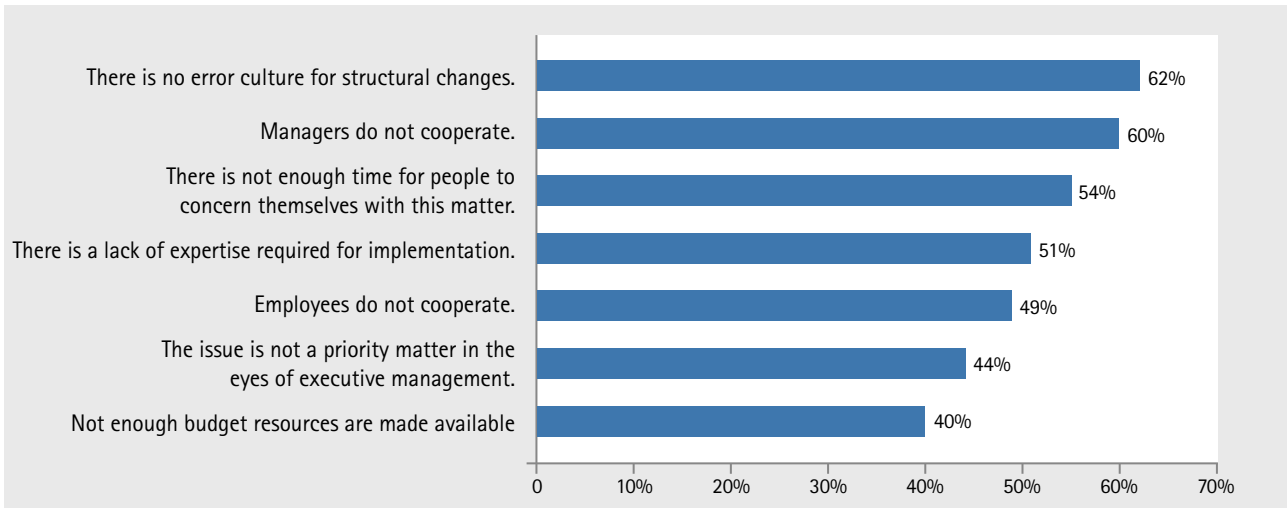
8\_\_ How do you feel about the future when you consider your current operating system?

(Multiple answers are possible.)



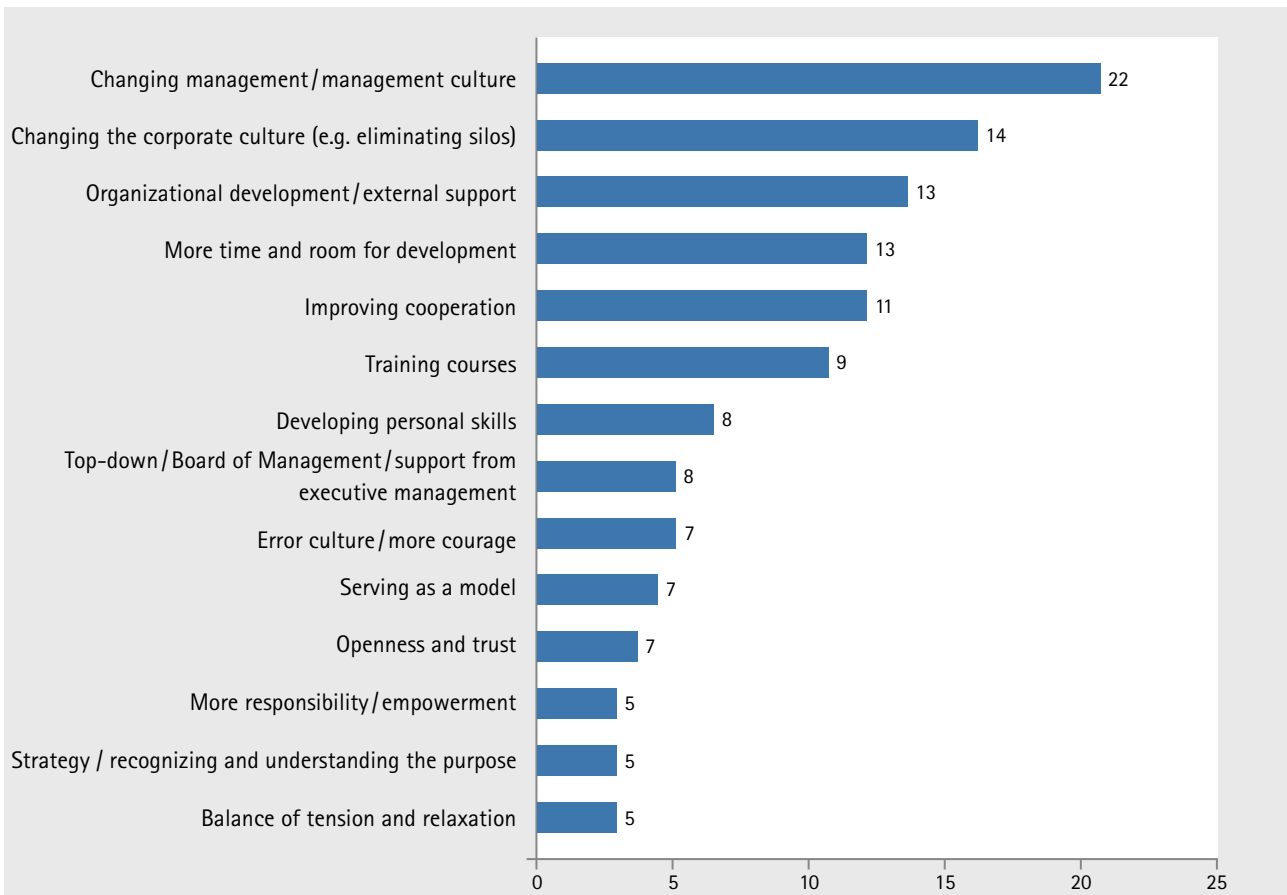
**9\_ What are the biggest obstacles to optimal development of the operating system in your organization?**

(Multiple answers are possible. Approval as a percentage of the given answers)



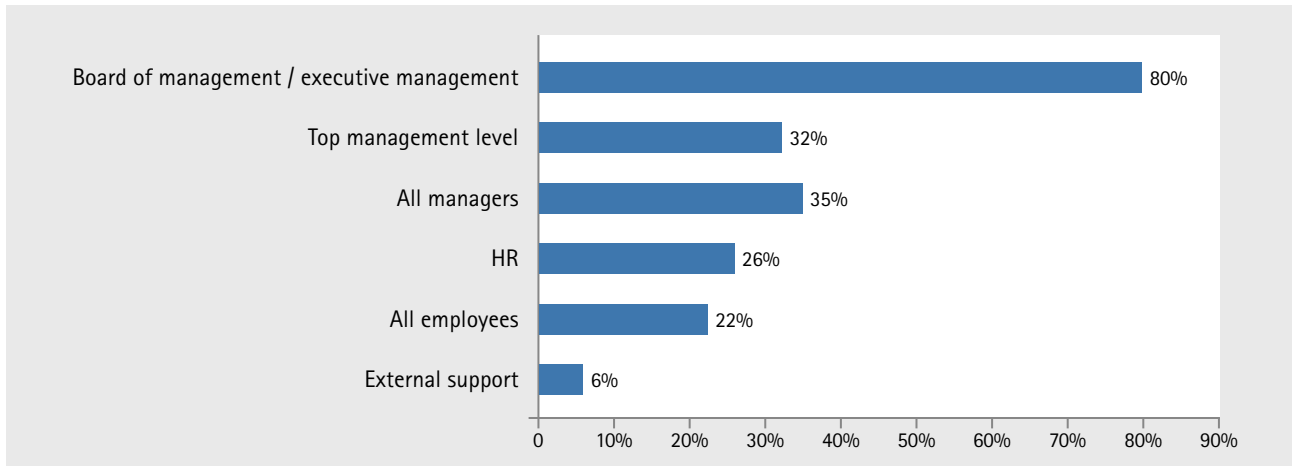
**10\_ What measures can be taken to promote the healthy development of the operating system in your organization? What prerequisites must be met in order to do so?**

(Multiple answers are possible, number of answers)



**11\_ Where should responsibility for the operating system be anchored within your organization?  
Who should be responsible for further development?**

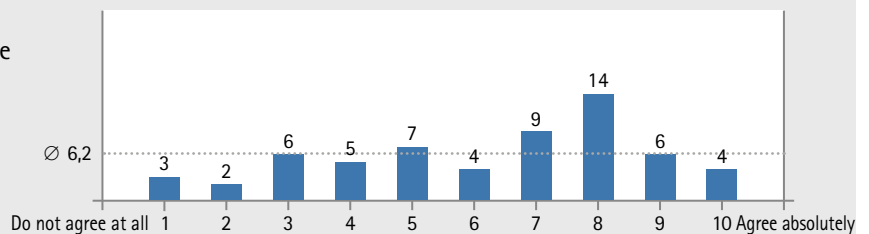
(Multiple answers are possible.)



**12\_ To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

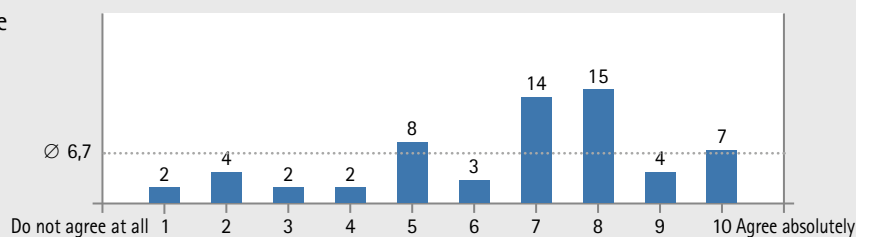
12.1\_ We invest more in new technology than in the progressive development of management and cooperation.

No answer: 8



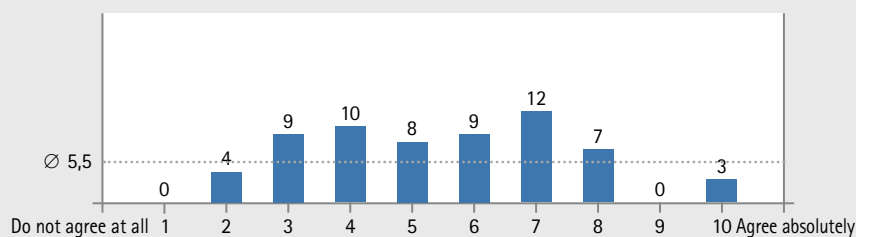
12.2\_ Operating profit is often more important than employee development.

No answer: 7

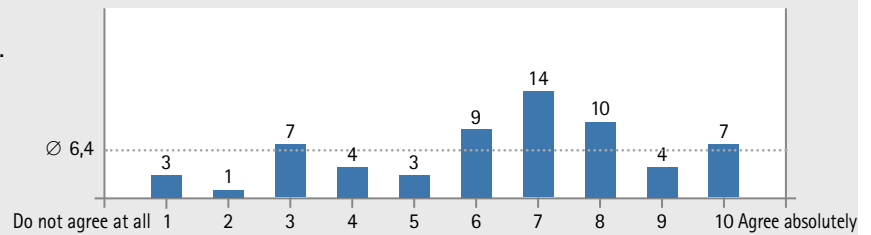


12.3\_ Every employee is aware of his/her contribution to the overall goals of the organization.

No answer: 6

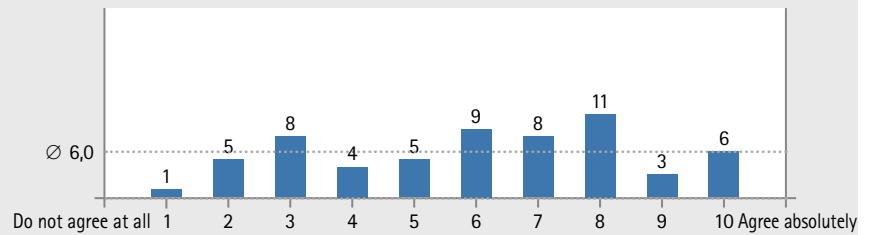


12.4\_ Progressive development is a basic duty of every employee.



No answer: 6

12.5\_ Our operating system is developed systematically on an ongoing basis.



No answer: 8

## Statistics

N = 68 Participants

Size of the organization	Participants in the survey
Less than 250 employees	12
250 to 500 employees	9
500 to 1500 employees	13
1500 to 15000 employees	11
More than 5000 employees	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

Interviewee's position	Participants in the survey
Top management level	27
1st reporting level, depending on the size of the organization (disciplinary)	
Middle management level (disciplinary)	20
Lower management level (disciplinary)	5
Technical manager (e.g. project manager)	5
Expert	4
Staff employee in HR/OD/PD	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>



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