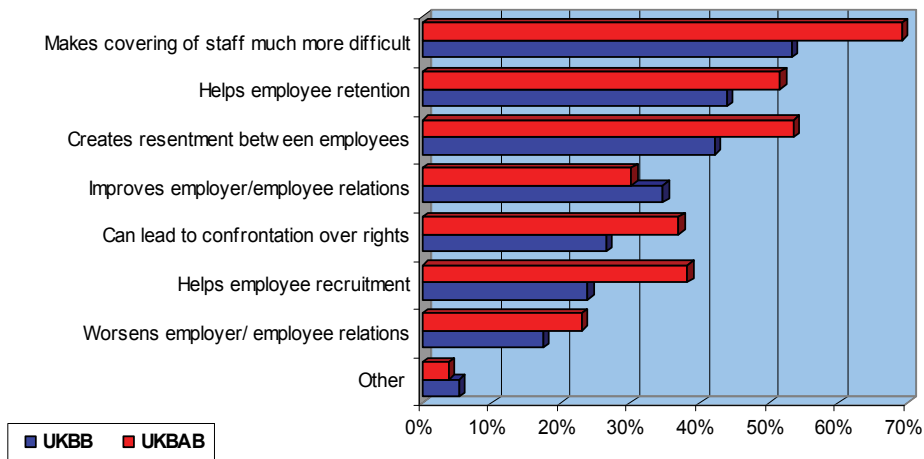


UKBB panel split on value of family friendly policies

All major political parties have recently advocated increasing Family-friendly policies for the workplace, but cautionary views have been expressed by some organisations representing smaller businesses. Many respondents to the November survey do not see it as entirely bad news – although 53% said that staff cover is made much more difficult, 44% felt that employee retention is helped. On the other hand, 42% think it increases resentment between employees while 35% say it improves employer/employee relationships. Respondents were invited to select more than one choice of response, and, after adjusting for 'not applicable' responses, 47% selected either all or mostly negative responses, while 37% selected all or mostly positive responses. 14% were evenly balanced between positive and negative responses.

What effect do you think 'Family friendly' policies have on employee behaviour?



after adjusting for 'not applicable' responses: UKBB 19% and UKBAB 5%

The Panellist's view

“I think that a family friendly approach whilst necessary these days blurs the employer/employee relationship. Employees think of you more of a 'friend' than an employer and tend to take advantage. Whenever there's a 'family' problem employees seem to assume that they can just take time off and tell you about it on the day. If you complain they think that you're the one being unreasonable. It's very difficult for a small business with only a couple of employees.”

Advisers return a more negative response

The same question was asked in the parallel survey of business advisers. The finding from that survey was more negative, with 58% selecting either all or mostly negative responses, while 32% selected all or mostly positive responses. 11% were evenly balanced between positive and negative responses.

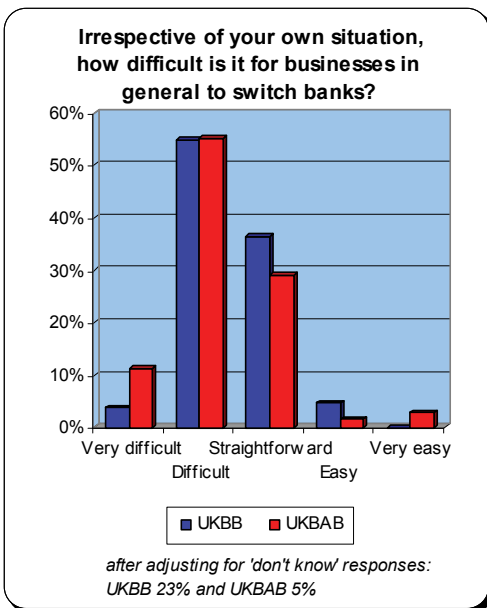
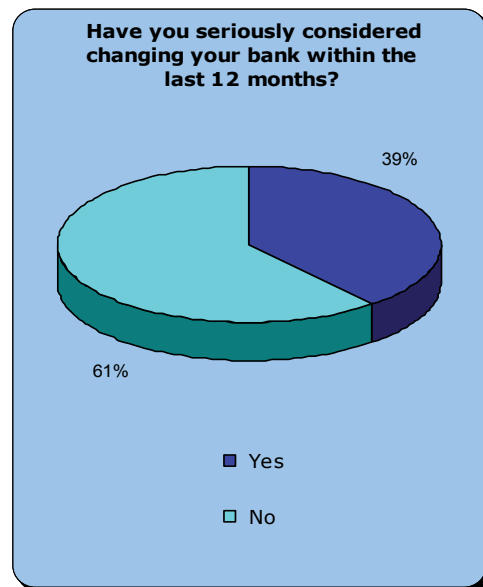
> KEYNOTES FROM NOVEMBER 2006 - BB102

Changing banks - an update on opinions from three years ago

The improvement of access to finance for smaller business was one of the seven core themes set out in government's strategic framework for small businesses, published in December 2002 and addressed as recently as the 2006 Budget Report. This month's UKBB survey focused on the ease of changing banks.

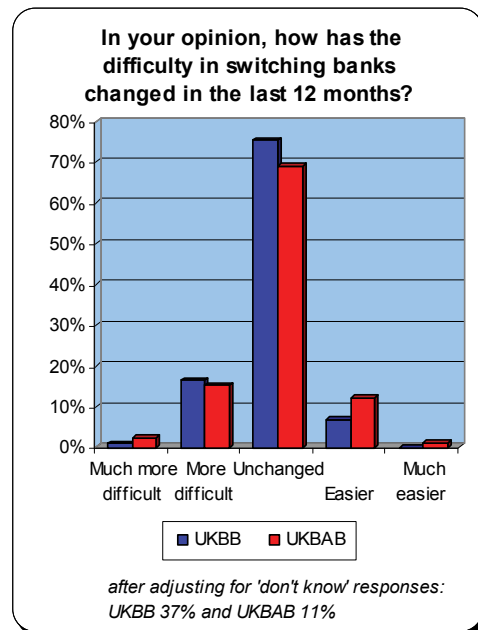
39% of respondents to the survey seriously considered changing their bank during the last 12 months, not significantly different from the level found when this question was asked a year ago.

59% of respondents believe it is difficult or very difficult for businesses in general to switch banks, compared to 71% in November 2003. 75% think that the difficulty in switching banks has not changed over the last 12 months, compared to 71% in November 2003.



It's not getting better - so say the advisers.

The same questions were asked in the parallel survey of business advisers, the UKBAB. 67% of responding business advisers believe it is difficult or very difficult for businesses in general to switch banks, while 69% of them think that the difficulty in switching banks has not changed over the last 12 months.

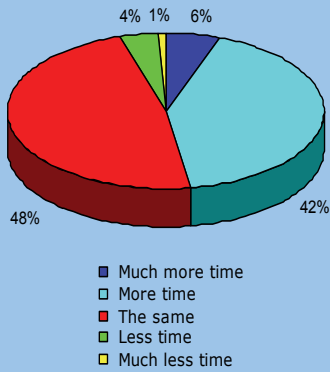


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> KEYNOTES FROM NOVEMBER 2006 - BB102

Wider email access leading to increased hours for many.

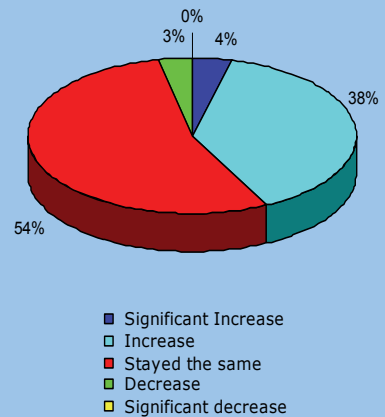
Are you spending more time dealing with constantly arising communications at the expense of more strategic business concerns?



Now that advances in technology mean that email can be accessed at anytime anywhere, it is very easy to become constantly reactive to incoming email and maybe distracted from higher priority concerns.

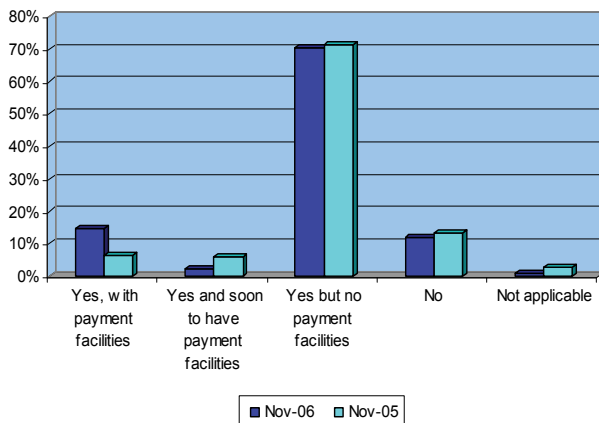
Although 48% of respondents are spending the same amount of time dealing with communications, another 48% find that they spend more time or much more time dealing with constantly arising communications at the expense of more strategic business concerns. 42% say that this wider access to email has meant that they are putting in increased or significantly increased hours into their businesses.

How has such email access affected the number of hours you put into your business?



Websites - more firms adding payment facilities.

Does your business have a website?



after adjusting for 'not applicable' responses: UKBB 1.5% and UKBAB 2.2%

A year ago the UKBB survey asked if panellists' businesses had a website, and the question was repeated this month. The major change over the year has been the increase in the percentage of those who have a website with payment facilities, from 7% in November 2005 to 15%. Other changes are less significant.

> THE QUESTIONS - NOVEMBER 2006 - BB102

Q1. Compared to this time last year, is your cash flow position:

Much more favourable/Much less favourable

Q2. Government recently announced that road pricing and congestion charge pilots are to be extended to areas outside London, to what extent would road charging affect your business?

Q3. What effect do you think 'Family friendly' policies have on employee behaviour?

Q4. Have you seriously considered changing your bank within the last 12 months?

Q5. Irrespective of your own situation, how difficult is it for businesses in general to switch banks?

Q6. In your opinion, how has the difficulty in switching banks changed in the last 12 months?

Q7. Now that advances in technology mean that email can be accessed at anytime anywhere, are you, if you have such access, spending more time dealing with constantly arising communications at the expense of more strategic business concerns?

Q8. How has such email access affected the number of hours you put into your business?

Q9. Does your business have a website?

Q10. To what extent do you feel that running/managing a business is a fulfilling and satisfying way of life?

Q11. Do you think that running a business is more stressful now than it was five years ago?

Q12. With the festive season approaching and, given the potential liability of employers for incidents arising from alcohol they provide for employees at work functions, do you provide alcoholic drinks on such occasions?

Click here to view the complete set of results for this and for previous surveys: www.ukbb.ac/UI/surveys.aspx

About the respondents:

In the November 2006 survey 135 respondents were drawn with the following population characteristics:

Sector			
Production & Manufacturing	Distribution	Services	Total
27.4%	8.1%	64.4%	100.0%

Turnover (£)			
< 1 M	1M-3M	>3M	Total
70.4%	16.3%	13.3%	100.0%

Number of Full-time Employees					
1-10	11-20	21-50	51-100	100+	Total
60.7%	25.9%	6.7%	3.0%	3.7%	100.0%

UKBB: Benchmarking key issues for smaller businesses

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