



SDN ∞

SERVICE DESIGN NETWORK



Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on the Service Design Community

Executive Summary

The **COVID-19** outbreak has levelled a devastating blow to businesses, governments and communities across the world. As organisations grapple with the effects of this ongoing pandemic, **the Service Design Network** felt it critical to reach out to the service design community to better understand their experiences, as we all look ahead towards an uncertain future. What are leaders' primary concerns, what changes do they see to their businesses and what strategies are they implementing to stabilise their organisations are a few of the questions this **global survey (conducted from April 21-28)** looked to answer.

Close to **100 respondents** participated in this study, sharing their perspectives and activities as they manage through this crisis. The SDN, in turn, will use this knowledge to better inform our project work and thereby develop the right opportunities that support the community now and long into the future.

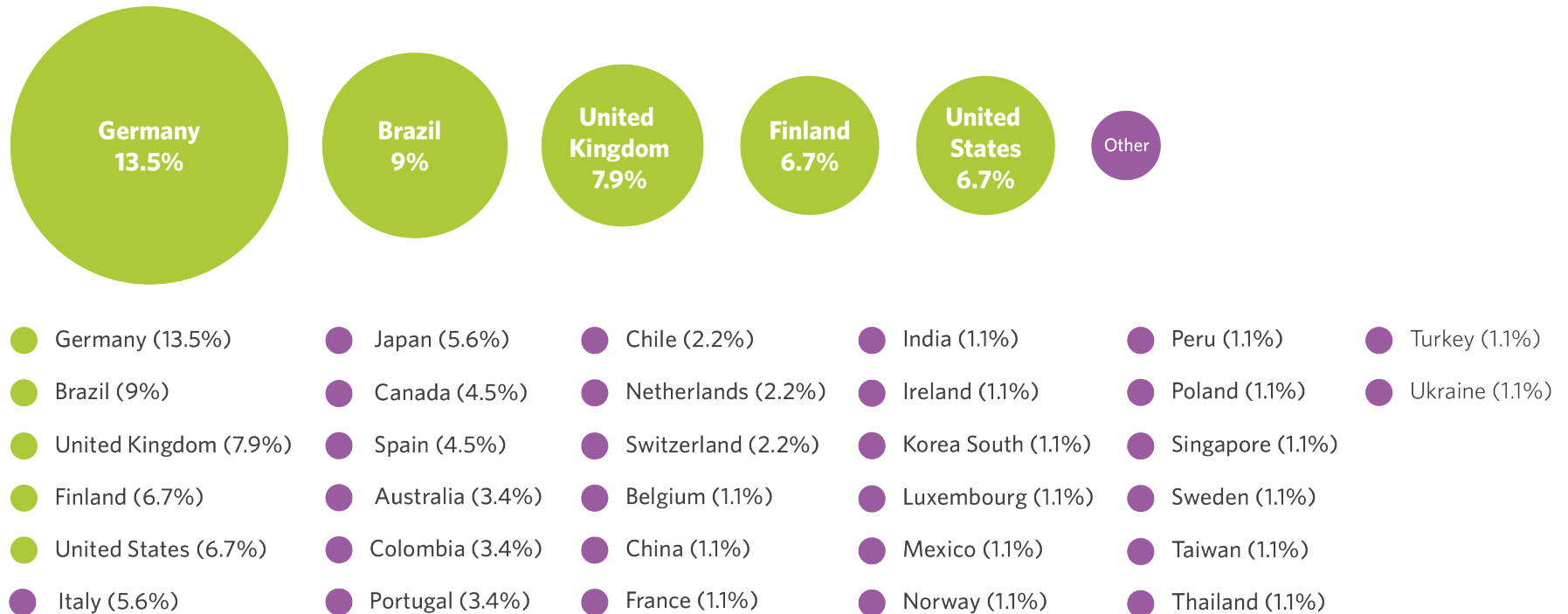
General Respondents Statistics

- Twenty-five countries are represented by this survey
- Close to 45% of respondents work within the private sector/agency consultancy category
- The largest sector of respondents hail from organisations that employ a maximum of 10 employees at their location
- Over 50% indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has harmed their business
- Close to 45% of respondents anticipate their business to improve in the second half of the year

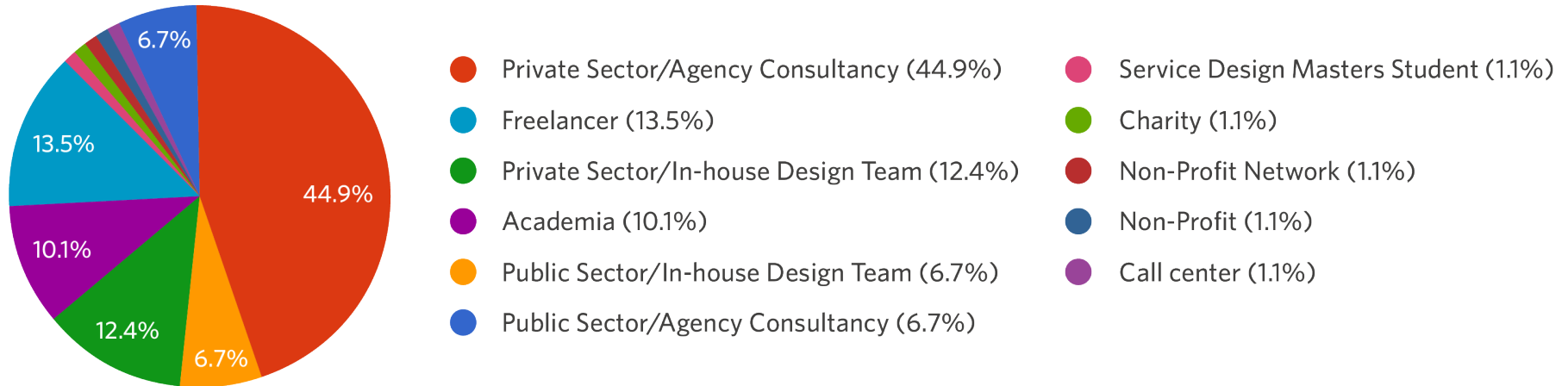
Key Findings

- Loss of project work, lack of acquisition of new projects and unpaid invoices were the leading changes seen to businesses
- Contingency measures that organisations have already taken or plan to take to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis include the suspension of investments, scaling back business and reducing staff
- Long-term strategies being employed to stabilise business for the future s include reducing costs and diversifying into new areas of business
- Over 50% of respondents believe that outside of financial assistance that community exchange is the best support organisations can receive to help manage the potential challenges ahead

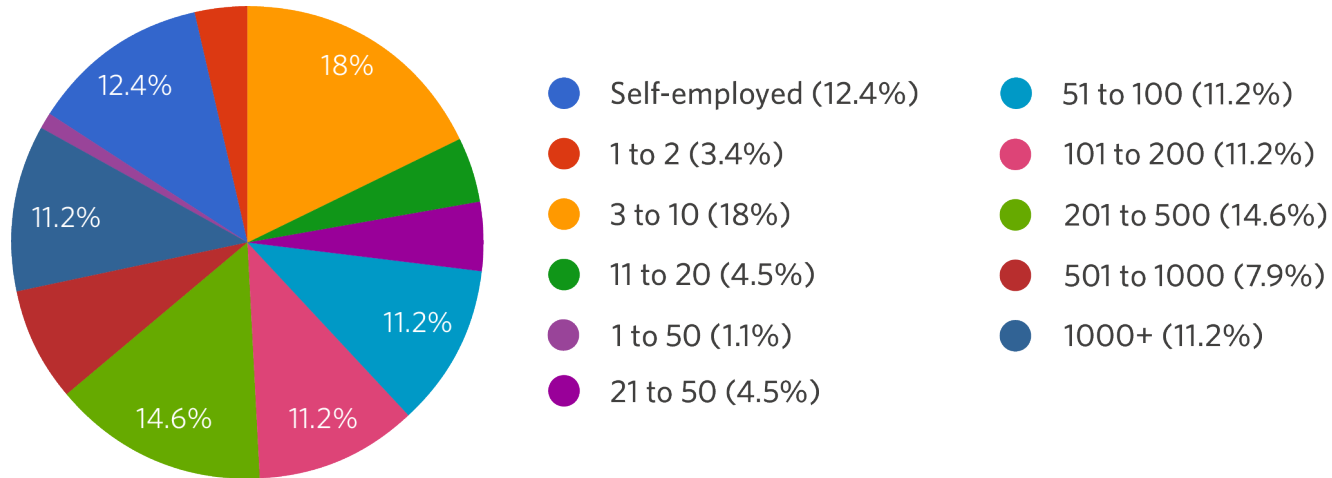
Where is your organisation located?



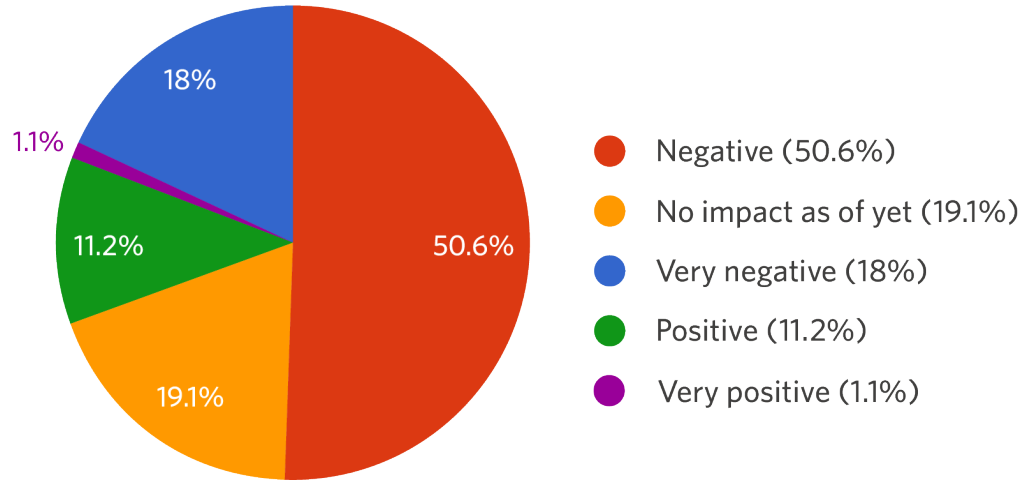
What type of organization do you work for?



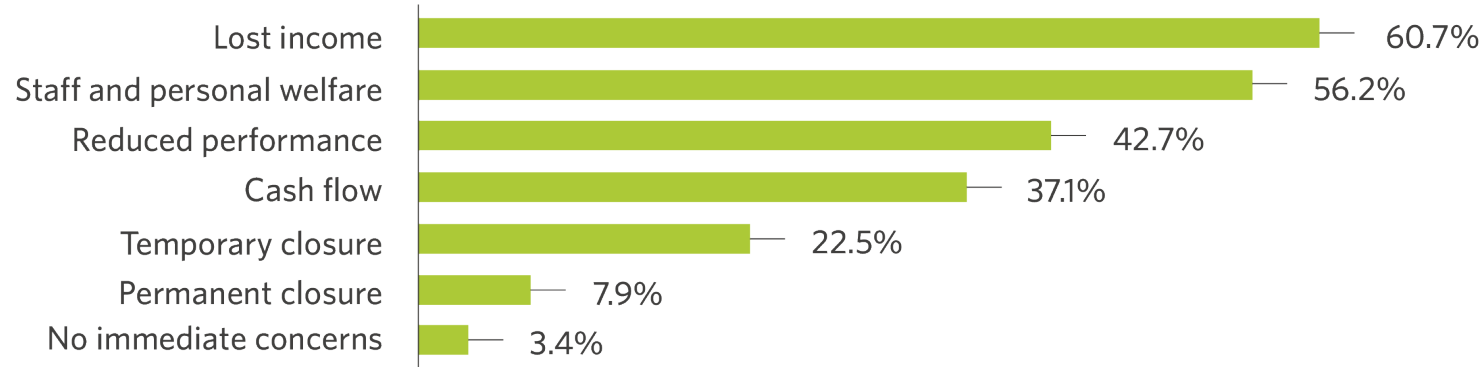
How many people are employed by at your location?



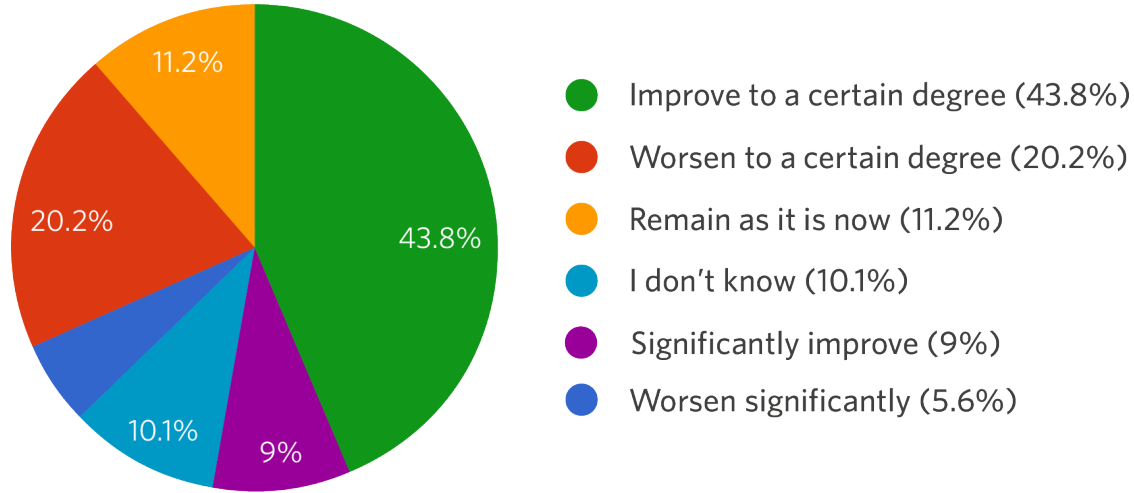
What impact does COVID-19 have on your organization?



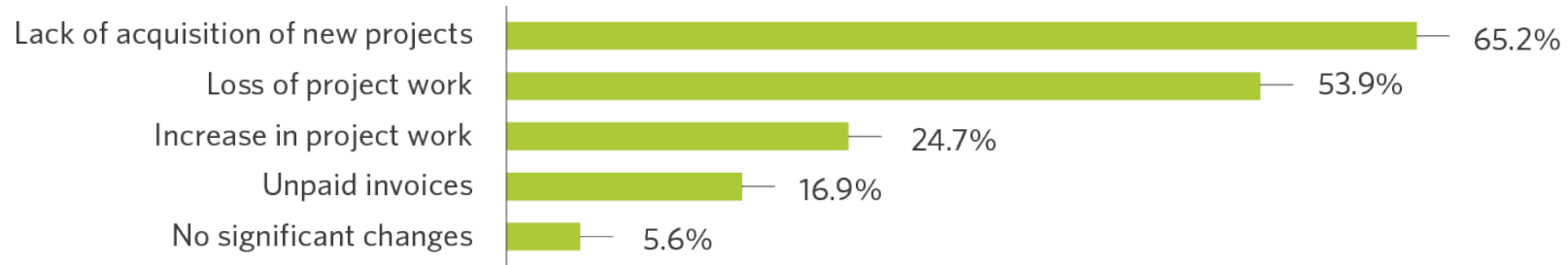
Which of the following is of major concern to you right now?



To what extent do you expect your situation to change in the second half of the year?



What changes have you observed in your organization's performance?



Other answers:

- Changes to project processes and delivery (1.1%)
- Material increase in team management (1.1%)
- Keep distance learning (1.1%)
- Change of focus from face to face to remote channels (1.1%)
- Increased sales and projects (1.1%)
- Reduced working hours (1.1%)
- Increased insecurity and distrust for management (1.1%)
- Increased effort in daily communication (1.1%)
- Pivots in priority and forced adoption of new technology (1.1%)
- Challenges to collaborate (1.1%)
- Less private conversations (1.1%)
- None (1.1%)

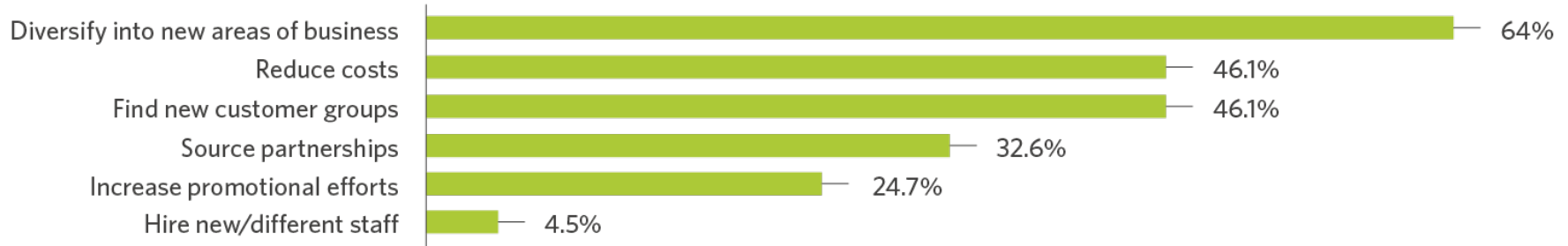
What measures has your organization already taken or is planning to take to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis?



Other answers:

- I don't know (2.2%)
- Homeoffice (2.2%)
- Focus on learning and personal development (1.1%)
- Temporary salary decrease program (1.1%)
- Virtual solutions (1.1%)
- Working on a phased return to the university (1.1%)
- Help and support the big companies of our corporation (1.1%)
- Increase new business efforts (1.1%)
- Spend time reading, planning, blogging and researching (1.1%)
- Online studying (1.1%)
- Reduce everyone's salary (1.1%)
- Extra skills in audiovisual (1.1%)
- More resources on remote channels (1.1%)
- Force employees to take full vacations now (1.1%)
- More activity on content marketing (1.1%)
- Training for staff and user research (1.1%)
- Reduce salaries (1.1%)
- Bank loan (1.1%)
- Double down on helping humans (1.1%)

What type of long-term strategies are you employing to ensure the future outlook of your organisation?



Other answers:

- Do my work as well as I can (2.2%)
- More blended learning and online tools (1.1%)
- Again, double down on helping/supporting humans (via our retail associates and customers) (1.1%)
- Test new technologies (1.1%)
- Transdisciplinary actions, including government along the projects (1.1%)
- Creating new offerings (1.1%)



Highlights: Community Perspective

Please use this space to elaborate more on your long-term strategic plans.

I'm also looking to focus on education as I think that will remain an interesting area to be in, even if commercial projects are affected by an economic downturn

We just moved into a new area of business, we might now fall back to the market that we know to get through this unpredictable period.

My plan (don't know if I can name this already a strategy) is to reframe the needs of the clients and end customers to have an idea of future value creation. Right now I am in exchange /discussion with service designers around the globe to discuss which branches will stay safe or even have now to invest more in innovation.

We are launching new products in our consultancy services in order to attract new customers. Also doing a life circle client strategy to reinvent our commercial approach. And the most important, design our internal cultural strategies to make our team stronger.

Beyond financial assistance, what type of support would help you to manage the potential challenges ahead?



Other answers:

- Help with finding work (1.1%)
- Child care (1.1%)
- Management should show face (1.1%)
- None (3.3)

Please use this space to identify anything the SDN can do to support you.

SDN could form some sort of a task force to develop strategies for SD to tackle the crisis, both the economic and public health

Online events for sharing stories, experiences, and celebrate successes. To keep up motivation.

Exchange with the community, Build a network to discuss the future and brainstorm opportunities for the future. Network (team) of freelancers for acquisition of projects in the field of healthcare and government in Germany. The challenges I am facing now are too big to solve them alone as a freelancer.

Collecting ideas on how to start and run full-remote project. // Ideas on how the SD industry is going and how we should change.

Show us new success cases of Service Design related with the actual situation

Connecting buyers and service providers virtually in a more facilitated manner beyond what happens in LinkedIn.

Do you see any unique opportunities for service design to play a role in either mitigating the adverse effect of this crisis or assisting in the recovery and creating a better future?

In this crisis it's crucial for businesses to come up with new ways of fulfilling customer needs, therefore they need to understand what those needs are, where service design can help.

Yes, huge, redesign peoples lives, their habits, communities. New normal will need the help of designers in adopting to what will come after COVID-19

Absolutely in multiple areas! Now more than ever we need to stick together, be best friends with customers, and use our knowledge to find new revenue streams, new collaboration models, new partnerships, and new services.

We have the tools to analyse complex problems. We just processes in place. Without strong collaborations with government and NGOs, global organisations I think we are stuck in our little SD bubble.

Absolutely, looking at these individual situations end-to-end will help identify friction and areas of opportunity, while aligning teams and stakeholders to execute.

Birgit Mager

SDN | PRESIDENT

