

NEW YORK and LONDON – Jan. 4, 2007 – Middle managers spend more than a quarter of their time searching for information necessary to their jobs, and when they do find it, it is often wrong, according to results of an Accenture (NYSE: ACN) survey released today.

The purpose of the online survey of more than 1,000 middle managers of large companies in the United States and United Kingdom was to uncover wide-ranging insights about the way they gather, use and analyze information.

Among the key findings: Managers spend up to two hours a day searching for information, and more than 50 percent of the information they obtain has no value to them. In addition, only half of all managers believe their companies do a good job in governing information distribution or have established adequate processes to determine what data each part of an organization needs.

Nearly three out of five respondents (59 percent) said that as a consequence of poor information distribution, they miss information that might be valuable to their jobs almost every day because it exists somewhere else in the company and they just can not find it. In addition, 42 percent of respondents said they accidentally use the wrong information at least once a week, and 53 percent said that less than half of the information they receive is valuable.

In addition, 45 percent of respondents said gathering information about what other parts of their company are doing is a big challenge, whereas only 31 percent said that competitor information is hard to get.

More than half (57 percent) of respondents said that having to go to numerous sources to compile information is a difficult aspect of managing information for their jobs. In order to get information about competitors, customers, project responsibility or another department, respondents said they have to go to three different information sources, on average. In addition, 40 percent of respondents said that other parts of the company are not willing to share information, and 36 percent said there is so much information available that it takes a long time to actually find the right piece of data.

“The findings show that companies are failing to get the right information to their employees,” said [Royce Bell](#), CEO of [Accenture Information Management Services](#) (AIMS). “People and organizations cannot keep up with the volume of information produced by technological innovation. Managers in particular are having great difficulty navigating a rapidly expanding sea of information, and the situation is only getting worse.”

Part of the difficulty lies in the way managers are gathering and storing information. For example, the majority of managers in the survey said they store their most valuable information on their computer or individual e-mail accounts, with only 16 percent using a collaborative workplace such as a company’s intranet portal.

“Information is becoming a burden on knowledge workers and will remain so until companies consolidate and streamline the stores and sources of intelligence,” said [Greg Todd](#), an AIMS senior executive. “Doing so will enable them to give back part of the working day to staff, helped by better governance, delivery, integration and the archiving and retention of information.”

The respondents to the survey were drawn from five function areas: customer service, finance and accounting, human resources (HR), information technology (IT), and sales and marketing. While the findings revealed that nearly all respondents are frustrated with managing information, some departments are faring better than others. For instance:

- IT and HR managers are most likely to say that their ability to find the information for their jobs is hindered because there is “too much information” (selected by 42 percent of IT managers and 40 percent of HR managers).
- IT managers are the least likely to feel that the information they receive has value, and they spend the most time trying to find it. IT managers said that, on average, less than half (44 percent) of the information they receive for their job is of value. In addition, nearly half (47 percent) of IT managers – more than any other department – said they spend nearly 30 percent of their work week trying to track down relevant information for their jobs.
- Half (51 percent) of customer service managers — more than managers in any other area — are likely to encounter challenges when trying to obtain information about other parts of the company. In addition, 40 percent of customer service managers — more than those in any other function — said that the most

difficult aspect of managing information for their job is going to numerous sources of information.

- Only 11 percent of finance and accounting managers — less than for any other function — said they believe that their company has invested enough in the right technologies to help them get the information they need, and managers in this area are also the least likely to state that their company does a good job at governing how information gets distributed (selected by only 12 percent of finance and accounting managers). In addition, a greater number of IT and finance managers — 31 percent and 30 percent, respectively — than managers in any other departments said they miss valuable information more than five times a week.
- Sales and marketing managers are the least likely to use new technology to communicate, with only 19 percent using instant messaging, less than any of the other department managers. Use of PDAs by sales and marketing managers is also very low, again at 19 percent, only slightly higher than that of finance and accounting managers (16 percent).

The proliferation of different information sources within organizations was revealed by the survey as the most important reason why managing information is proving difficult. With an ever-increasing amount of information flooding the workplace — from e-mail, instant messaging systems and handheld devices like the Blackberry — the research highlights the extent to which companies must have the right processes to weed out useless data, as well as flagging the information that might be of use to other parts of the organization. The capabilities offered by new and emerging search technologies can help save valuable time and free up the many hours currently wasted every day by the survey respondents.

Methodology

The Web-based survey of 1,009 managers in companies in the United States and United Kingdom with reported annual revenues of more than US\$500 million was fielded in June 2006. All respondents had a title of manager or higher. Quotas were set to ensure that respondents included at least 100 managers from each country in each of the following departments: customer service, finance/accounting, human resources, information technology, and sales/marketing.

About Accenture

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