

> KEYNOTES FOR OCTOBER 2006 BAB50

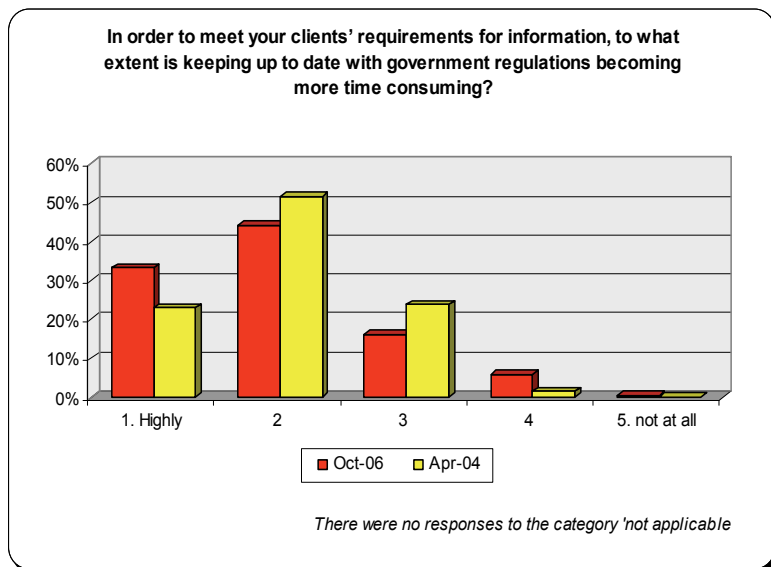
**Regulation — has the move to agreed dates made a difference?  
October's respondents have their say.**

**Regulation updates are taking up more of your time.**

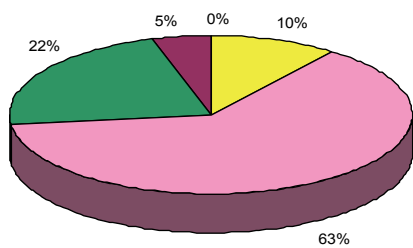
Businesses find that managing any change is time consuming and therefore costly to cope with, and being aware of relevant changes in government regulations is an issue for them.

Business Advisers need to know how current legislation will affect their clients but 77% of respondents to the October UKBAB survey find keeping up to date with government regulations is becoming highly or moderately highly more time consuming. We asked the same question in April 2004, and results were similar:

75% said that it was highly or moderately highly more time consuming.



As far as you are aware, does the increased certainty that this was designed to provide make it easier for businesses to adjust to changes?



- 1. much easier
- 2. easier
- 3. no change
- 4. more difficult
- 5. much more difficult

**Has it helped businesses?**

October has seen the announcement of the latest round of government regulation. Businesses have been assured that government will change business regulations only in certain months of the year, October being one of them. This is intended to provide increased certainty for businesses but 63% of respondents think that it has no impact in terms of certainty for businesses, while only 10% think there is a positive resulting change.

When it comes to whether businesses themselves are responsible for ensuring they are up to date, back in April 2004 85% of UKBAB respondents thought they were, to a high or moderately high extent but that percentage is now down to 73%.



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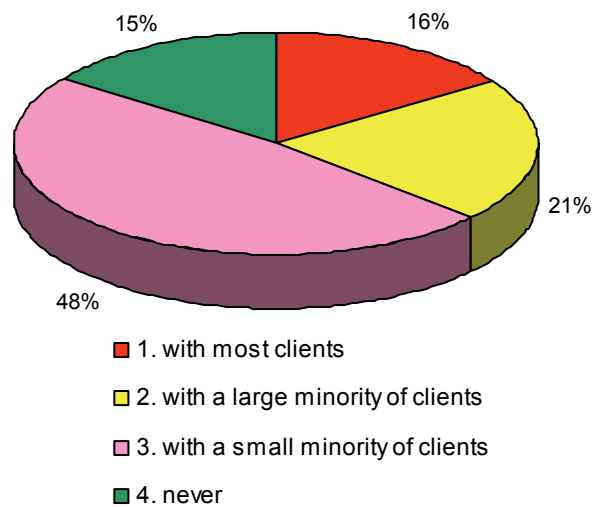
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**Time Management - how much of an issue is it for BAB clients?**

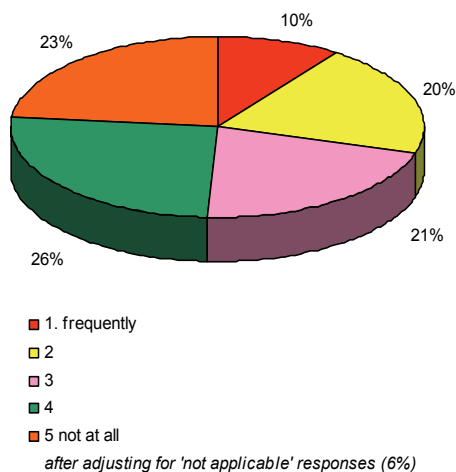
In this month's UK Business Barometer survey, we asked the following question of businesses: "To what extent do you feel the need for multiple suppliers despite the time commitment that this involves?" This is one example of a time management issue. The question put to Business Advisers was "How frequently do you feel the need to provide advice on time management issues such as this?"

16% of respondents find that most clients need this sort of advice, although 21% say that it is only a small minority who require it.

Frequency of advice on time management issues



When discussing training issues, to what extent do clients raise concerns about the literacy and numeracy of staff?



**Is the Literacy and Numeracy of staff a cause for concern amongst clients?**

The national Skills for Life strategy was set up in 2001 in response to the Moser report 'A Fresh Start'. The aim was to help improve the literacy and numeracy achievement of 1.5 million adults by 2007.

The October survey asked panellists to what extent they have encountered concerns amongst their clients about the literacy and numeracy of staff, when discussing training issues. After adjusting for 'not applicable' responses, 30% of respondents have found these topics raised frequently or relatively frequently. At the other end of the scale, 49% have encountered few or no literacy or numeracy training concerns amongst their clients.

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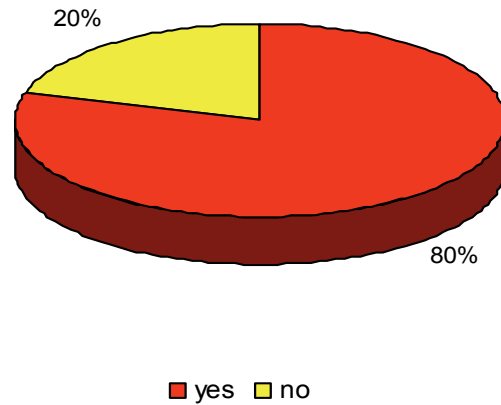
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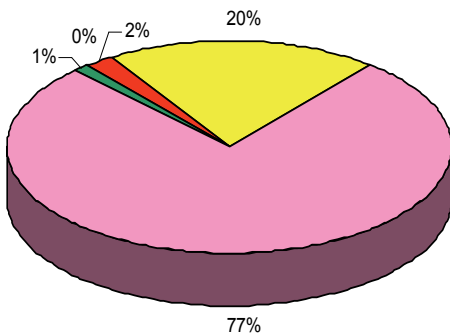
### Would more business involvement make for better course design?

Shadow Chancellor George Osborne unveiled four measures as part of plans to help small businesses. One of these would be to increase the contribution of the business community when designing professional skills courses and qualifications. 80% of respondents believe that such involvement by businesses would result in better courses.

### Do you believe that such involvement by businesses would result in better courses?



### Have you noticed a change in the extent to which your clients barter their skills in return for those of other businesses?



- 1. strongly increasing tendency
- 2. increasing tendency
- 3. no change
- 4. decreasing tendency
- 5. strongly decreasing tendency

### Skills Bartering — a growing trend?

There have been reports that B2B bartering of skills, services and goods is becoming increasingly popular, although the focus for this has been more centered in high inflation countries, where the advantages of contracting in a medium other than money are more obvious. However, 20% of respondents have noticed an increasing tendency amongst their clients to barter their skills in return for those of other businesses.

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## > QUESTIONS FOR OCTOBER 2006 BAB50

- Q1.** In order to meet your clients' requirements for information, to what extent is keeping up to date with government regulations becoming more time consuming?
- Q2.** To what extent do you feel it is clients' responsibility to ensure that they are up to date with changes in government regulations?
- Q3.** When discussing training issues, to what extent do clients raise concerns about the literacy and numeracy of staff?
- Q4.** As far as you are aware, what percentage of your clients has explored the possibility of obtaining R&D tax credits?
- Q5.** In your experience, to what extent does the present employment legislation influence your clients' staffing levels?
- Q6.** How frequently do you feel the need to provide advice on time management issues such as this?
- Q7.** Following on from the August question on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), how receptive, in your opinion, are your clients to the notion of CSR and their actual engagement?
- Q8.** Shadow Chancellor George Osborne unveiled four measures as part of plans to help small businesses. One of these would be to increase the contribution of the business community when designing professional skills courses and qualifications. Do you believe that such involvement by businesses would result in better courses?
- Q9.** Have you noticed a change in the extent to which your clients barter their skills in return for those of other businesses?
- Q10.** Recent research extolled the virtues and value to firms of well structured student work experience placements. Is this an option that you consider when discussing staffing needs with clients?
- Q11.** In your opinion, to what extent do you feel that work experience programmes benefit businesses in practice?
- Q12.** October has seen the announcement of the latest round of government regulation, the second of the twice yearly issuing of new regulations. As far as you are aware, does the increased certainty that the move from the former, ad hoc basis make it easier for businesses to adjust to changes?

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**Greater transparency of business needs as observed by the adviser community**