



Microsoft Healthy Computing Survey – Germany

August 2013

EMPLOYEE PAIN POINTS

German workers are uncomfortable at their desks, but without the tools to address these physical problems.



A new survey by Microsoft finds that today's employers shouldn't just be worried about job satisfaction or employee turnover when they think about managing their staff. A startling majority of the computing workforce* is uncomfortable on at least a daily basis, with current desk setups and office accessories partly to blame. Comfort at the office is a top priority for workers, especially because it will make them better at their jobs and happier in their personal lives. But unfortunately, ergonomic accessories are absent from many workplaces. What's more, workers don't feel that their employers are invested enough in relieving their pain – but they're not making strides of their own to get better either.

**Online survey of Germans who work full-time or part-time and spend at least three hours on their computer for work each day*

PERSISTENT PAIN

Uncomfortable workplaces cause pain, and most workers' desk setups are partly to blame.

1 **Regular Pain.** More than four in five (86%) workers report that they experience discomfort at work. And one in ten (10%) of these workers reveal that this happens to them for at least half of each day, if not more often.

- *Workplace discomfort is more common among 18-34-year-old employees than those who are 35 and older (90% vs. 84%).*

Thinking Ahead. And many of these sufferers are concerned about what this might mean for them in the long run. Over seven in ten (72%) worry more about the impact of work-related aches and pains on their long-term health than simply having to deal with it on a regular basis.

2 **86% of workers are uncomfortable on the job.**



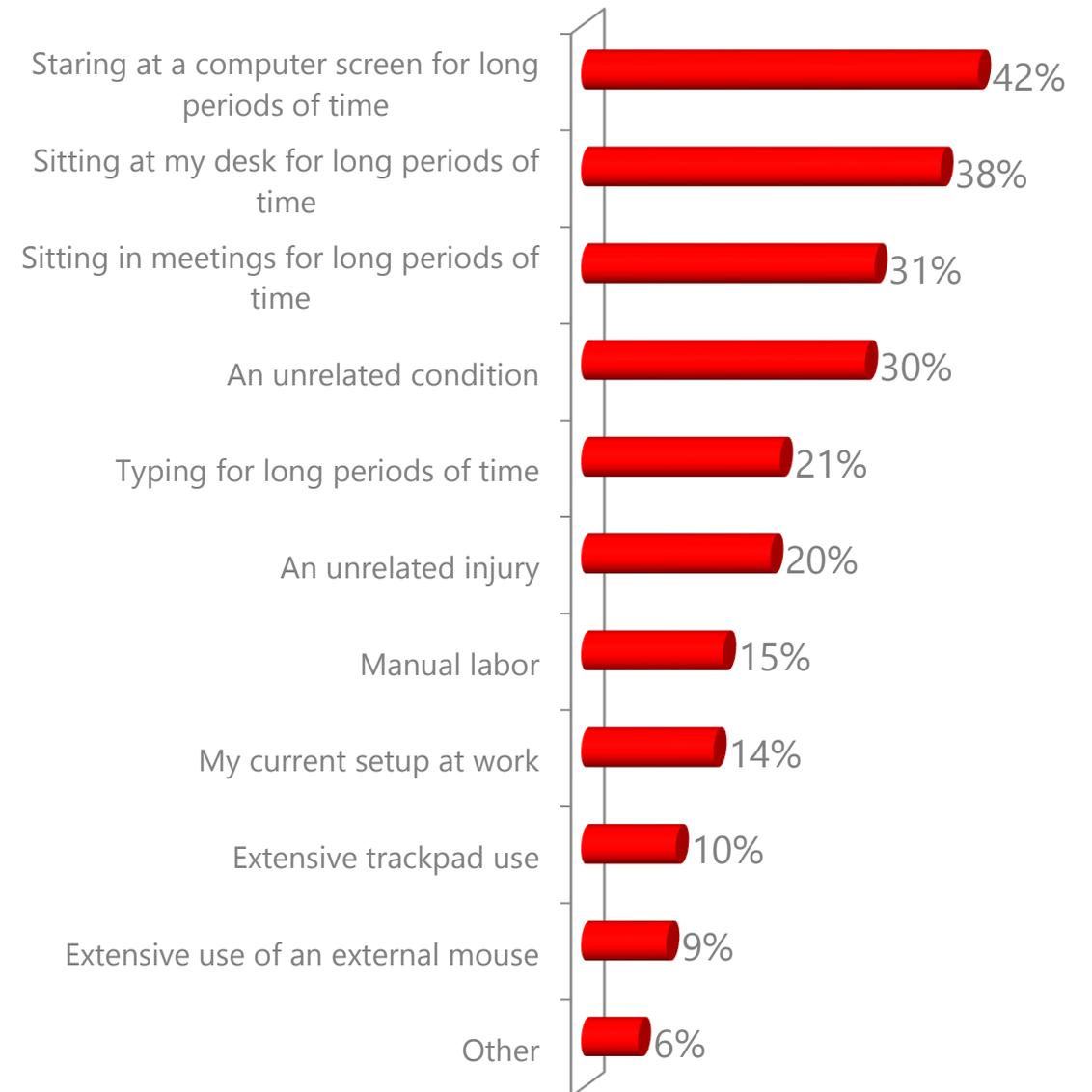
3 Pointing to Pain. Workers cite the top two sources of their physical distress as spending numerous hours sitting at their desks (38%) and staring at computer screens (42%). Other culprits include typing for long periods of time (21%) and continually using an external mouse (9%).

- *More women than men name staring at a computer screen for long periods of time (54% vs. 36%) and spending a lot of time sitting at their desks (44% vs. 34%) as causes of their discomfort.*
- *Typing for extended periods of time is more of a common cause of pain among laptop and tablet users than those with desktops (24% vs. 18%).*

5 Setting Themselves Up for Failure. Almost one in five (14%) workers who encounter this distress at work are apt to blame their current setup at work, such as the accessories they use or how things are arranged on their desks.



4 Sources of discomfort at work*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

6

Not About Time.

Additionally, almost four in ten (38%) say that their discomfort is far more likely to be caused by their current setup at work or the specific office accessories they use than the number of hours spent at the office.



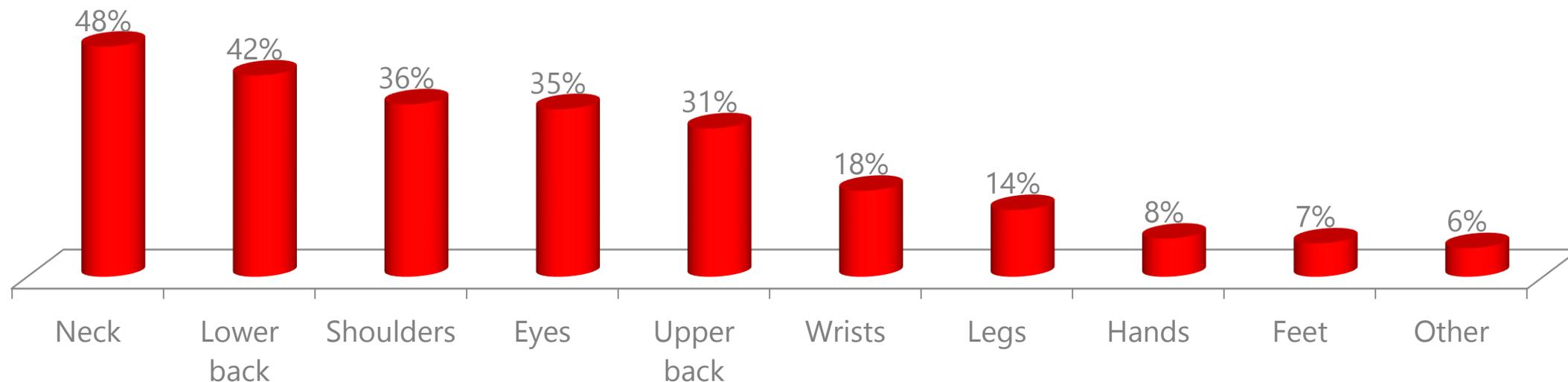
7

Hurting All Over. This may be why many report that their discomfort has impacted the areas that tend to be most affected by a poorly set up desk area: the neck (48%), shoulders (36%), wrists (18%), upper back (31%) and hands (8%).

- Women are more likely than men to report that their work-related discomfort occurs in their neck (55% vs. 44%) and shoulders (41% vs. 33%).
- Desktop users are more apt than laptop and tablet users to encounter such pain in their neck (50% vs. 45%) and upper back (34% vs. 28%).

8

Body parts affected by discomfort at work*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

SEEKING RELIEF

Most employees value comfort at work, and know that it would make them more productive and happier.

1

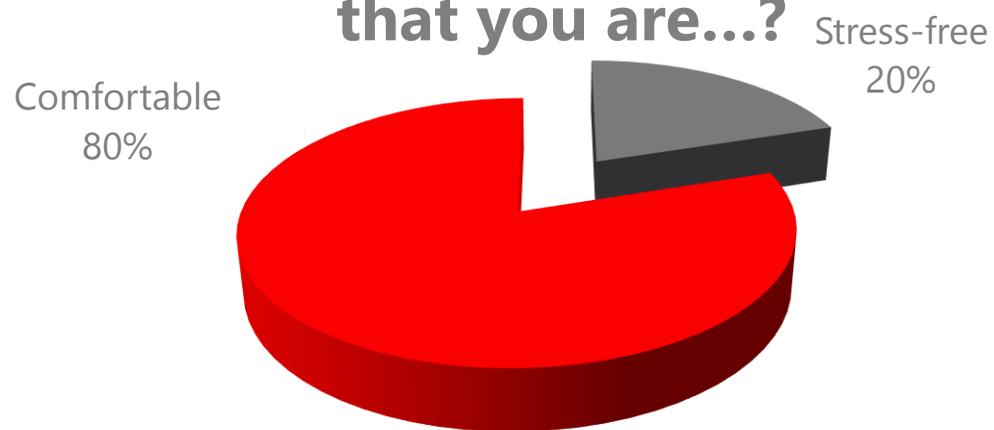
High Priority. There's one thing that German workers value more than peace of mind at the office. Eight in ten (80%) employees – regardless of whether they encounter discomfort on the job now -- admit it's more crucial for them to be comfortable than stress-free at work.

#1 Choice. In fact, just as many (80%) employees would place comfort as a top priority if they were in charge of selecting the office accessories where they work.

- *This sentiment is more common among .35+ workers than those who are 18-34 (83% vs. 76%).*

2

At work, is it more important that you are...?



3

Easy Sacrifices. In fact, three in five (60%) of those who experience discomfort would be quick to give up their company holiday party to be comfortable all of the time. And 35 percent would choose constant comfort over free food at the office.

Pain Relief Over Perks. What's more, almost two in ten (16%) of all workers would prefer comfort at work in place of an office with a window.

- *More 18-34-year-olds than those who are 35+ (21% vs. 13%) would place comfort at work over a window office.*

4

Building Better Employees. Many workers know that more comfort equals more productivity. Almost two in five (38%) employees believe they'd complete most tasks faster if they never felt any work-related pain. Another 14 percent say they would take fewer breaks.

Personal Profit. A more comfortable workspace is likely to yield some benefits outside of the office, too. Over half think they'd have more energy (57%) and feel better when the workday ends (53%). Forty-nine percent might even sleep better.

5

Worth the Investment. This is likely why 40 percent of workers would be willing to chip in some of their own money to ensure constant comfort at work if their employers weren't willing to take care of them in this way. On average, this proactive group would spend 64 euros each month to make this happen – this adds up to more than 700 euros a year!

- *More male than female workers (43% vs. 36%) would be willing to dig into their own pockets for such a personal cause.*
- *To take comfort into their own hands at work, laptop and tablet users would shell out more of their own money than desktop users (80 vs. 45 euros).*

6

If workers were more comfortable on the job...



57% would have more energy



53% would feel better when they get home



49% would sleep better



38% would complete tasks faster than usual

MISSING PIECES

Even though discomfort repeatedly gets in the way of work, ergonomic accessories are being overlooked.

1



Undesirable Effects. Just as more comfort would bring productivity, discomfort is dealing a serious blow to job performance right now. Because they've been uncomfortable at work, around half of workers admit they've been unable to focus (56%) and felt like they weren't doing their best at work (46%).

- *More 35+ workers than their 18-34-year-old counterparts own up to an inability to focus (59% vs. 50%) as a result of their discomfort.*

2

Putting in Fewer Hours. What's more, over one in two (53%) report that they take breaks from their work to deal with their discomfort in the moment; nearly one in four (24%) confess they take longer breaks due to their pain. And 33percent are apt to leave work early when discomfort strikes at the office.

- *Taking breaks to immediately address discomfort is more common among laptop and tablet users than those who use desktops for work (57% vs. 50%).*

3

53% take breaks the moment they feel uncomfortable at work

24% take longer breaks because of discomfort at work



4

Unfortunate Obstacle. Clearly, a lot of time is wasted in the face of discomfort. More than half (57%) say they have difficulty doing their jobs at least once a month for this reason. On average, this lasts for seven hours each month.

- o *Lost time due to discomfort has happened in the last month to more men than women (60% vs. 53%) and more laptop and tablet users than desktop users (61% vs. 54%).*

5

No Support. Yet, more than a quarter (26%) report that not a single ergonomic item can be found at their current workstations. And 35 percent say that outside of their chairs, ergonomic accessories are not present where they work.

Uncomfortable Items. What's more, fewer than one in three are able to say that their external keyboards (31%) or external mice (30%) are ergonomic, or designed to minimize discomfort or fatigue.

6

Which office accessories of yours are ergonomic?

57% Chair



33% Desk



31% Keyboard



30% Mouse



25% Monitor



17% Computer



26% Nothing

ACHING ALONE

Many workers aren't getting the support they expect from their employers.

1

Regular Pain. Perhaps because of the obvious impact of discomfort on efficiency, almost nine in ten (85%) workers believe that their company should be responsible for addressing this issue when it appears, and not the workers themselves.

- *This belief is shared by more desktop users than those who use laptops or tablets for work (89% vs. 81%).*



2

Who is responsible for ensuring employee comfort?

My company
85%



Employees
15%

3 **Not Enough Support.** But unfortunately, fewer than half of workers feel that the company they work for truly care about the health (39%) or comfort (38%) of its employees.

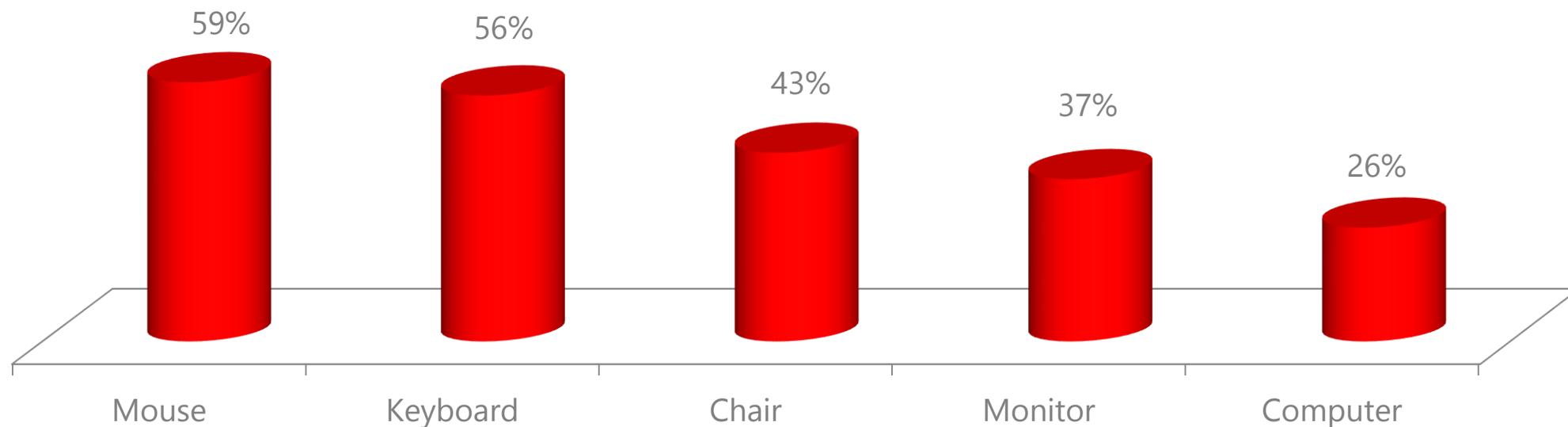
- Fewer employees who use desktops than those who use laptops and tablets feel their employers are invested in their staff's health (36% vs. 42%) or comfort (34% vs. 43%).

Not Enough Support. And almost four in ten (38%) don't think this would change even when they encounter discomfort. They believe instead that they'd be the ones to suggest more comfortable office accessories, and not any of the powers that be – including human resources and IT – or their colleagues.

4 **Unwilling to Ask.** Yet, many workers would feel more comfortable requesting perks like free beverages at work (39%) or more flexible hours (35%) than a new computer (26%) or desk (18%).

Not Consulted. Many employees probably feel this way because the current items they use were simply handed to them. More than half report that their keyboards (54%) and mice (55%) were selected for them without their input.

5 **I would feel comfortable asking my employer for a new...**



SLOW TO ACT

Though they're not always getting the care they want from the powers that be, few employees have taken their comfort into their own hands.

1

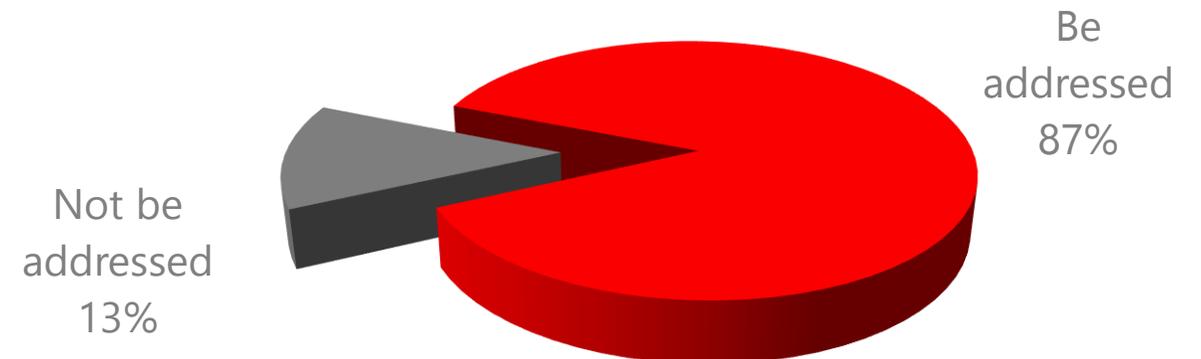
An Issue Worth

Watching. Whether it's a normal occurrence or not, more than eight in ten (87%) workers who have experienced discomfort believe that it should be addressed. And 70 percent of this group sees workplace pain as a standard job hazard.



2

Discomfort at work should...*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

3

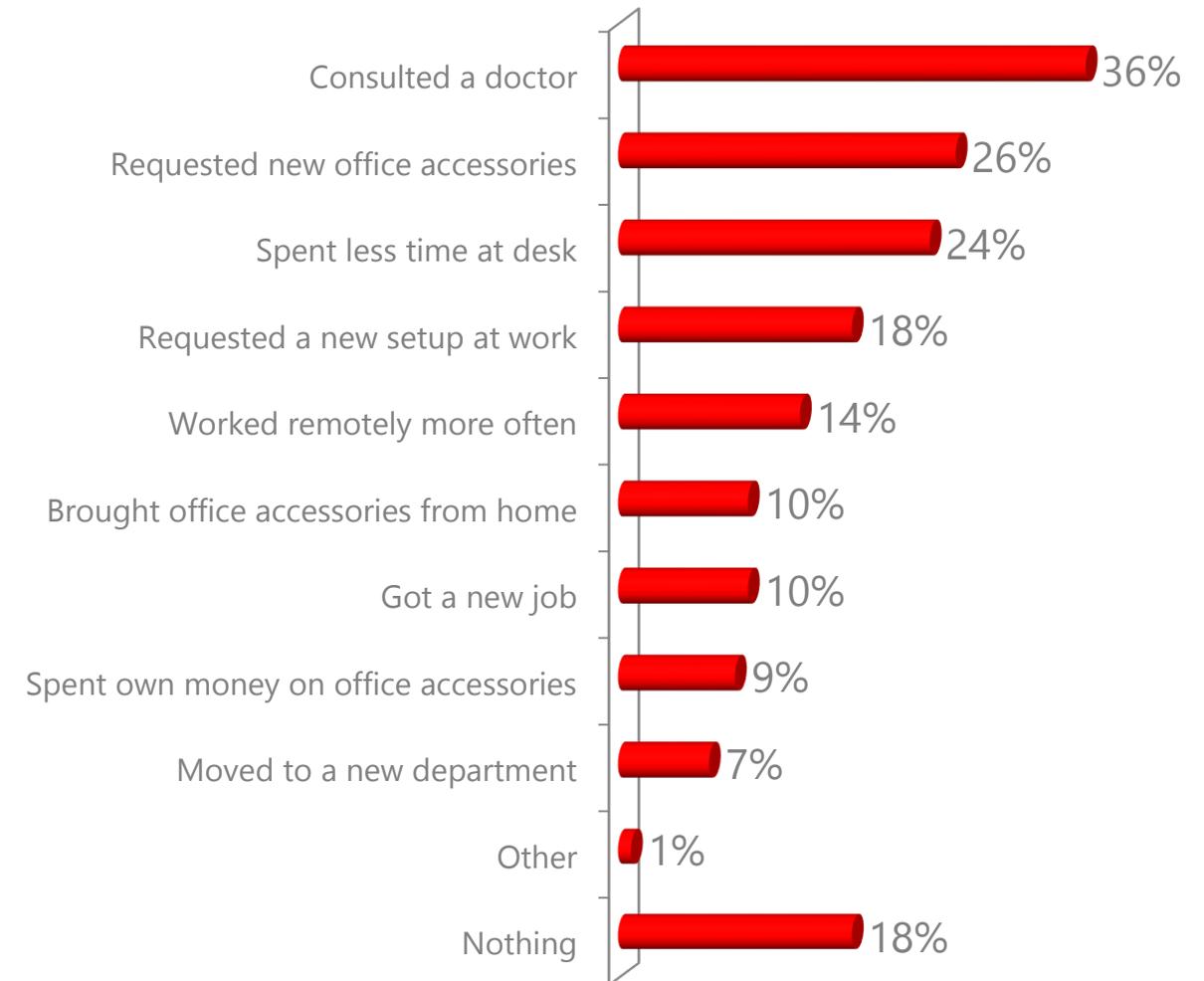
A Reason to Take Action. Three in five (60%) also claim that a moment of pain would motivate them to ask for more accommodating office accessories – more so than even a doctor’s recommendation (55%).

- *Feeling uncomfortable would push more women than men (64% vs. 58%) to put in a request for office accessories to alleviate their pain.*



4

Actions taken to address long-term discomfort at work*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

5

No Follow-Through. Yet, less than three in ten (26%) have requested new office accessories to address their long-term discomfort.

- *Fewer men than women (23% vs. 32%) have taken this simple but important step.*

Lack of Faith. Many of these workers might not be taking the initiative because they don’t think their need will be fulfilled in a timely manner. Only 28 percent would describe their employers as a company that addresses employee requests quickly.

Margin of Error = +/- 4.2 Percent

Sample = 537 German Workers Ages 18 and Over Who Spend at Least 3 Hours a Day on Their Computers for Work

About The Survey The Microsoft PC Accessories Survey was conducted between 11 July and 22 July, 2013 among 530 German workers (full-time and part-time) ages 18 and over who spend at least 3 hours a day on their computers for work, using an email invitation and an online survey.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 4.2 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.

Kelton is a leading global insights firm serving as a partner to more than 100 of the Fortune 500 and thousands of smaller companies and organizations. Utilizing a wide range of customized, innovative research techniques and staff expertise in marketing, branding, PR, media, and business strategy; Kelton helps drive our clients' businesses forward.

For more information about **Kelton** please call 1.888.8.KELTON or visit www.keltonglobal.com.