



**Pay Review Software
Survey Report**



Introduction

We are always looking for ways to improve your business' most import processes. With this survey, we are focusing on the annual pay review.

Pay reviews are an intensive process. They need lots of data, detailed management, and a collaboration of your entire business. That's why we wanted to know what you're using and how you rated it. Because the quality of the software you entrust this process to is crucial.

Using the information we've gathered, we hope to design and tailor our products to better suit your needs. And the results we got weren't always what we expected.



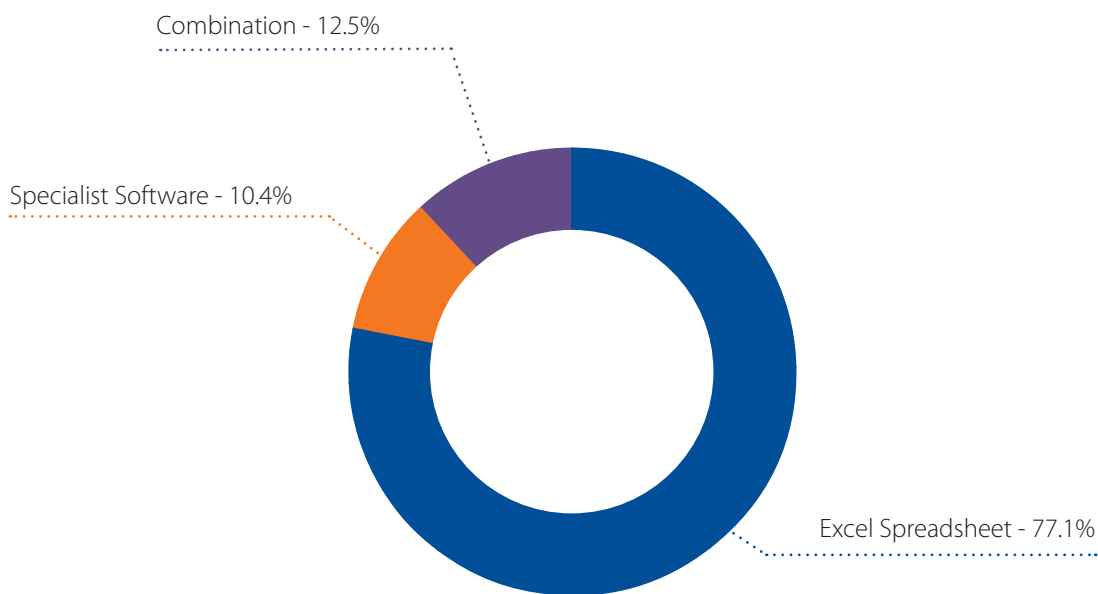
Pay reviews are an intensive process. They need lots of data, detailed management, and a collaboration of your entire business."

Get in touch today to discuss your individual needs:

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Participation

The survey was open for a reasonably short duration of 14 days. Despite that, we achieved an impressive response rate of 48. We took this as an indication of how important this issue is to companies at the moment.



As you can see, **most companies are using Excel** to perform their pay reviews.

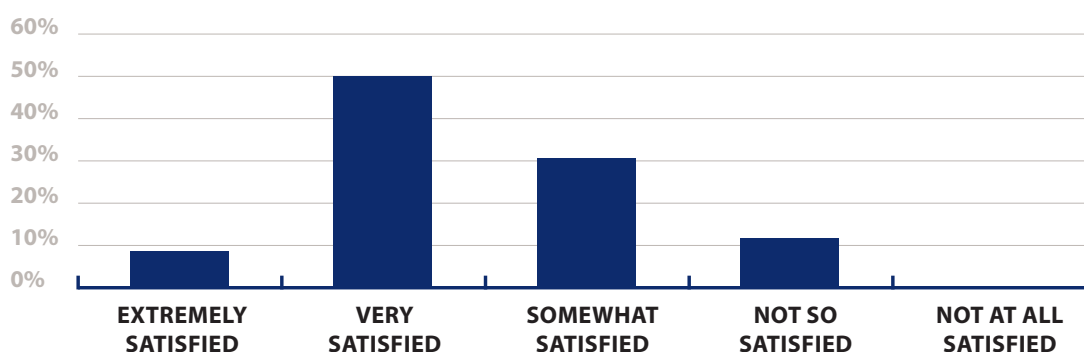
This is in line with what we expected. Dedicated software is still somewhat of a niche product. A lot of businesses also see it as too expensive or not a priority. This sentiment was reflected in a number of the comments made in the survey.

It is also interesting to see that over half of those using dedicated software still use Excel in some capacity.

A fault on our behalf is that we didn't ask exactly what Excel was being used for in these cases. However, we would posit that it would be either be for data importing or custom reporting.

Excel: Key Takeaways

MOST POSITIVE RESPONSE - DATA HANDLING

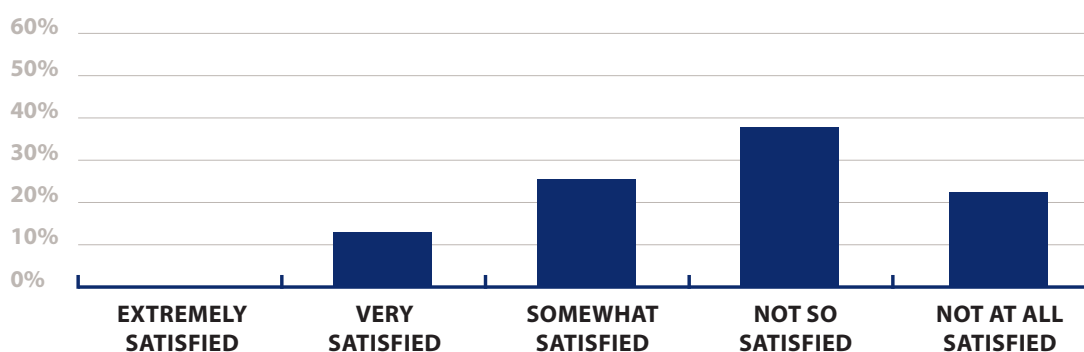


Participants were happiest with Excel's ability to **handle large data sets**. Nearly **60 per cent** rated this as **'very satisfied' or above**.

We thought this might be the opposite. Excel has historically suffered performance issues when dealing with larger data sets.

These results could reflect Microsoft addressing these issues or that the survey participants weren't using data sets of a size that would cause problems.

MOST NEGATIVE RESPONSE - CHANGE TRACKING



Excel's **change tracking** was the worst rated feature. **61 per cent** of participants rated this as **'not so satisfied' or below**.

This makes sense. Though Excel has change tracking, it has some drawbacks. Firstly, the user needs to share the workbook; doing this disables key features such as data validation and conditional formatting. Secondly, it requires extra steps to create a centralised list of all the changes.

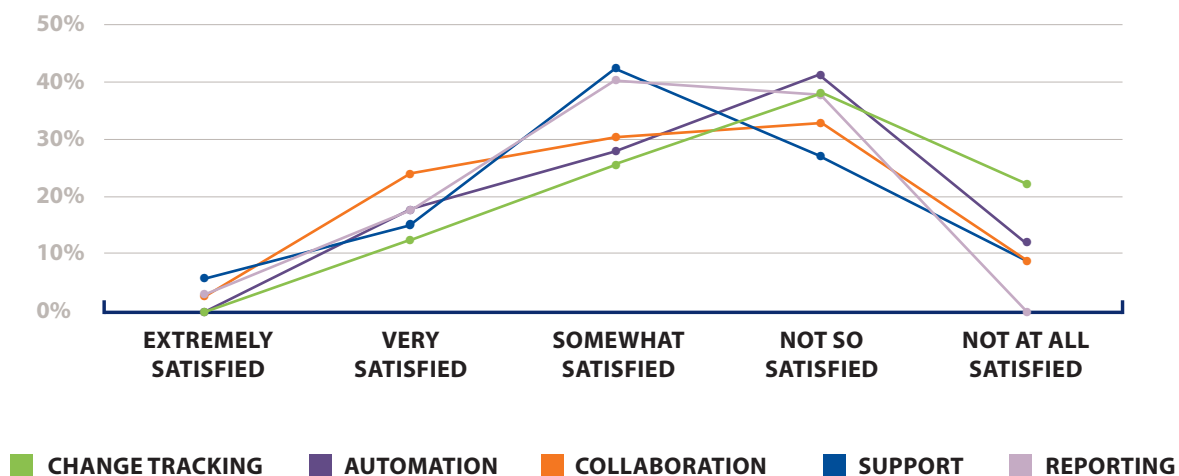
What can Excel improve?

Along with change tracking, there were a few other clear areas that left participants unsatisfied.

Not far behind were Excel's **automation capabilities**, with **53 per cent** of respondents answering **'not so satisfied' or lower**. If we consider the nature of the pay review process, it's clear to see why. It can involve sending hundreds of spreadsheets to the relevant managers. You then have to collate the data manually. Excel's formulas offer a lot of opportunity for automation, but it can do nothing to overcome this challenge.

The next highest area of dissatisfaction is **collaboration** with **42 per cent** scoring it **'not so satisfied' or lower**. We mentioned on the previous page how sharing a workbook disables important features. So this may contribute to the score. Microsoft has been working on this recently, though. But the newer 'live collaboration' features require a subscription to Office 365. Some respondents expressed satisfactory collaboration when using third-party products such as Sherespace.

Other areas that saw less than satisfactory responses were software support and reporting abilities. These both saw more than a third of respondents rating them not so satisfied or lower, with most of the other votes landing in 'somewhat satisfied'.



53%

of respondents were **'not so satisfied' or lower** with Excel's **automation** capabilities.



What are Excel's strengths?

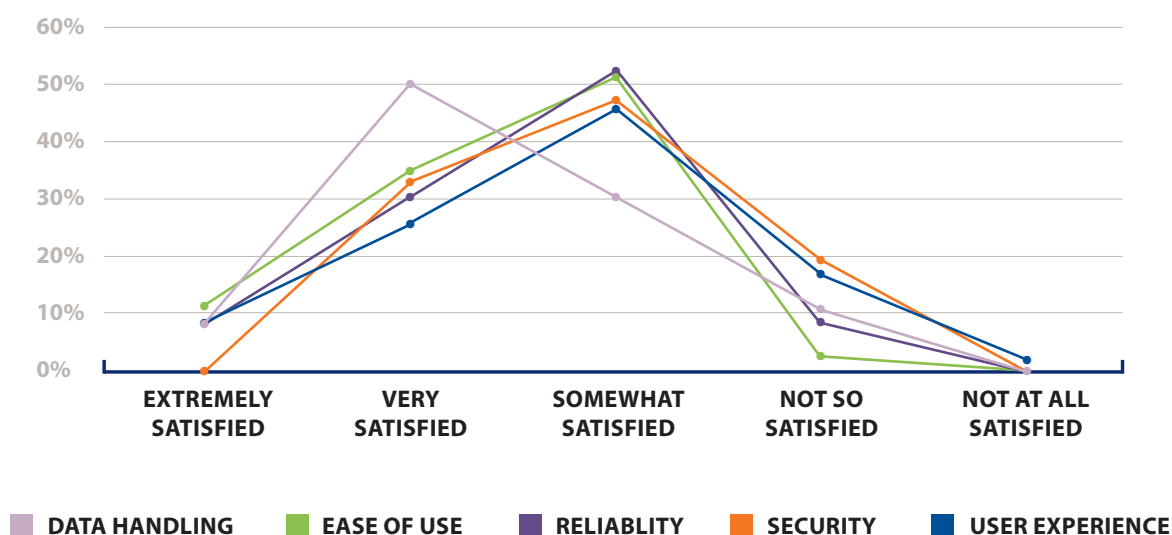
Excel saw better scores in several areas. We have already mentioned its ability to **handle large data sets** and this was by far the highest scoring area. Coming up next was Excel's **ease of use**. This saw **45 per cent** of respondents selecting **'very satisfied' or higher**. This makes sense. The software has significant complex capabilities, especially if you use VBA. But at its core, it is simple to create a basic spreadsheet and use some standard formulas.

Excel's **reliability** also saw a positive score with **38 per cent** of responses at **'very satisfied' or higher**. Unless you code something wrong or overload it with data, Excel is a stable piece of software. Having said this, 52 per cent of responses were only 'somewhat satisfied'. This may reflect that it's not up to the pay review demands that some companies need.

Rounding out the more positive areas were Excel's security and its ability to offer a consistent user experience. This result was surprising to us. Excel's security amounts to the ability to password protect a document. It does not require these passwords to be complex enough to be secure, and there is no two-factor authentication. The security of Excel would fail the security demands of most cloud software offerings. Businesses then often share these spreadsheets by email, which only compounds the issue.

Excel's user experience can also vary depending on how the spreadsheet has been setup. Although you can lock worksheets, which at least prevents end users changing too much of the design.

It is interesting to note that even for these more positive responses, they still mostly peak around 'somewhat satisfied'. You can also clearly see how easily data handling excelled against every other area.



58%

of respondents were **'very satisfied' or higher** with Excel's **data handling** capabilities.



A summary of other software

Around 22 per cent of survey participants used dedicated software, either on its own or in combination with Excel.

The following software products were mentioned*:

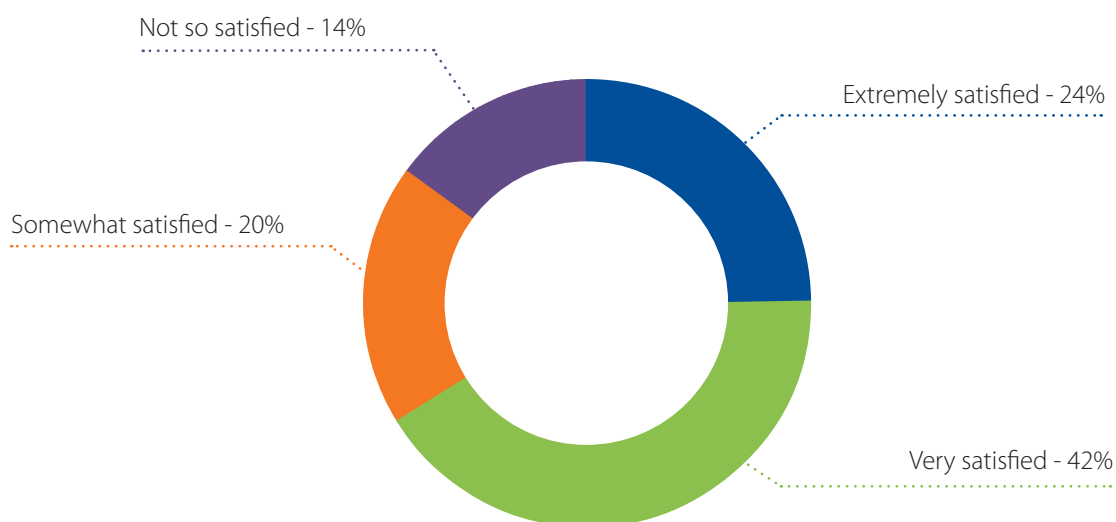
- Workday (the most popular with five mentions)
- Curo
- Cascade
- SD Worx
- Zellis Compensate

* Please note that we did not include customers who are using our own pay review software offering in this survey.

In general, customers using dedicated software rated their experiences in each area much higher than those using Excel. This is likely because Excel is a great product, but it is not designed specifically with the pay review process in mind. Using a tool designed for the exact task you need is always going to be better than a more general use product. Look and feel, security and value for money all saw strong results for dedicated software.

Interestingly, those using a combination of dedicated software and Excel also tended to rate Excel higher than those using Excel alone. This could be because they use Excel less or for simpler tasks. As a result, they don't run into as many frustrations as regular users.

The below chart shows the accumulative percentages for all the questions. As you can see, 66 per cent of answers for all questions were 'very satisfied' or above when it came to users of external software.



Look and feel, security and **value for money** all saw strong results for dedicated software.

Closing thoughts

That concludes this report. Thank you for reading and participating in the survey. We hope that you found the results insightful.

For Excel, we saw feature ratings peaking around 'somewhat satisfied', with some 'not so satisfied'. This remained the case even for those features that achieved higher ratings. We believe this supports the view that Excel isn't the best tool for the pay review process.

Yet despite this, we saw a general sentiment of businesses not being willing to upgrade. The main prohibiting factor appears to be cost. One way to change this would be to have data that quantified the time and money saved as being worth the initial cost.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the results with us, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

Get in touch today to discuss
your individual needs:

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