



Lloyds Bank • Small Business Research Trust

Quarterly

Small

Business

Management

Report

No.2 Vol. 3 1995

Lloyds Bank/Small Business Research Trust

**Quarterly Small Business
Management Report - Vol.3, No.2**

June 1995

ISSN 0968-6444

£15.00

Holidays

**Small Business Research Trust,
School of Management,
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes.
MK7 6AA**

Tel: 0190 865 5831

WEB VERSION: INTRODUCTION

The Lloyds Bank/TSB-sponsored series of small business management reports commenced in 1992, and concluded in 2009. In total, 53 reports were published over a period of 17 years.

Our target audience comprised the owner-managers of independent small businesses, typically employing fewer than 50, and based in mainland UK.

The series originated from a longitudinal study of small business management, undertaken by the Polytechnic of Central London (now University of Westminster), and culminating in: *The Management of Success in 'Growth Corridor' Small Firms*, (Stanworth, Purdy & Kirby, Small Business Research Trust, 1992).

THEMES

The themes were wide-ranging – including such as entrepreneurship, work & stress, employment strategies, and the environment – a full list is shown overleaf.

INSIGHT

In addition to asking questions and supplying the respondents with a range of answer options, the corresponding questionnaire was included as an appendix to each report so that readers would know exactly what questions had been put to respondents.

We also sought qualitative information – in the form of verbatim comments about the key theme – to help elaborate on whatever related challenges respondents felt they were facing at the time.

Finally, the findings are primarily intended to be indicative rather than definitive – partly due to the sample size, which is, on average, 111 for the 2003-09 reports.

PUBLISHING FORMAT

The reports were published in hard copy form, obtainable via subscription. Initially

by the Small Business Research Trust, and from 2003, by the Small Enterprise Research Team (SERTeam), both research charities based at the Open University.

Regrettably, SERTeam ceased operating in 2009, and so in 2010 the authors felt that the more recent reports would find wider interest if they were made freely available in Acrobat format via the Internet – especially with the UK economy set for a protracted journey out of recession, and with the government in turn refocusing on smaller businesses to aid the recovery.

It is worth mentioning that the series commenced as the UK economy emerged from the early 1990s recession.

In 2015, the earlier reports were also converted (1993 to 2003), with the full series made available at Kingston University: <http://business.kingston.ac.uk/sbrc>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION (WWW)

In later years – as the world-wide-web developed and an increasing number of sources of information became more readily available – suggestions for online sources of related material were included.

N.B. For reports 2003 onwards - where successfully validated, the web links (URLs) were enabled in 2009. And in the case of many invalid web links, an alternative was offered, but not where the organisation appeared defunct and an obvious replacement was not traced.

**John Stanworth, Emeritus Professor,
University of Westminster**
<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/business>

**David Purdy, Visiting Fellow,
Kingston University**
<http://business.kingston.ac.uk/sbrc>

© co-authors John Stanworth & David Purdy 2015 (and Graham Bannock for reports 1-19, 1993-97). Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Lloyds Bank/TSB & SBRT
Quarterly Small Business Management Report
ISSN 0968-6444

1993 (Vol.1)

- 1 Surviving The RecessionFebruary 1993
- 2 Using Your TimeJune 1993
- 3 Management Style September 1993
- 4 Financial ManagementDecember 1993

1994 (Vol.2)

- 1 Purchasing March 1994
- 2 Quality Standards & BS 5750June 1994
- 3 Management SuccessionAugust 1994
- 4 Customers & Competitors . November 1994

1995 (Vol.3)

- 1 Information Technology March 1995
- 2 HolidaysJune 1995
- 3 Company VehiclesAugust 1995
- 4 Pricing Policies November 1995

1996 (Vol.4)

- 1 Training March 1996
- 2 A Day In The LifeJune 1996
- 3 Financial Management September 1996
- 4 Tax ComplianceDecember 1996

1997/8 (Vol.5)

- 1 'Europe' & Small Businesses ... March 1997
- 2 Employee RecruitmentJuly 1997
- 3 Information Technology October 1997
- 4 Business Support Agencies .. January 1998

1998/9 (Vol.6)

- 1 Entrepreneurship May 1998
- 2 Work & Stress September 1998
- 3 Employment StrategiesDecember 1998
- 4 Small Firms & The Environment .. Mar 1999

1999/2000 (Vol.7)

- 1 The Impact of HolidaysJune 1999
- 2 Late Payment September 1999
- 3 Management Development .December 1999
- 4 Exit Routes March 2000

2000/01 (Vol.8)

- 1 E-commerceJune 2000
- 2 Sources of Finance September 2000
- 3 Transport & GovernmentDecember 2000
- 4 Government & RegulationsApril 2001

2001/02 (Vol.9)

- 1 Marketing & SalesJuly 2001
- 2 The Human Side of Enterprise Oct 2001
- 3 Health Issues January 2002
- 4 PremisesApril 2002

2002 (Vol.10)

- 1 Networking in BusinessAugust 2002
- 2 The EuroDecember 2002

Lloyds TSB & Research Team
Small Business Management Report
ISSN 1478-7679

- 3 Crime Against Small Firms June 2003

Lloyds TSB & SERTeam
Small Enterprise Research Report
ISSN 1742-9773 No.2 (Vol.1) onwards

2003-04 (Vol.1)

- 1 Small Firms And PoliticsOctober 2003
- 2 Pensions February 2004
- 3 Work-Life Balance July 2004

2004-05 (Vol.2)

- 1 Education & EnterpriseOctober 2004
- 2 Made in Britain February 2005
- 3 Management &
Gender Differences July 2005

2006 (Vol.3)

- 1 Local or Global ?January 2006
- 2 Managing IT May 2006
- 3 Networking in Business September 2006

2006-07 (Vol.4)

- 1 Owner-Manager
Flexible Working December 2006
- 2 The Ageing Workforce April 2007
- 3 Travel & Transportation August 2007

2008-09 (Vol.5)

- 1 The London 2012 Olympic
And Paralympic Games April 2008
- 2 Competition: Small Firms
Under PressureJanuary 2009

WEB VERSION PUBLISHING

<http://business.kingston.ac.uk/sbrc>

Certain content needed to be re-set, e.g., the figures in the earlier editions, but the report body content is intended to be identical to that in the printed original. This web version - an Acrobat document - is derived from the original DTP text and will permit searching.

LIABILITY DISCLAIMER

The information and analysis in each report is offered in good faith. However, neither the publishers, the project sponsors, nor the authors, accept any liability for losses or damages which could arise for those who choose to act upon the information or analysis contained herein. Readers tracing web references are advised to ensure they are adequately protected against virus threats.

HIGHLIGHTS

This is the tenth of a series of small business management reports based on surveys of a panel of small firms, mainly in manufacturing, retail/distribution and business services. The focus of this survey was on **Patterns in Holiday Taking** in small firms. The principal findings were as follows:

- **Benefits of holidays** - Respondents spoke in strong and enthusiastic terms about the benefits of holidays. They saw them as essential in maintaining their own personal health and energy levels, securing relationships with other members of their family and also distancing themselves from their businesses sufficiently to be able to take a longer-term strategic view of events and progress.
- **Business closure for holidays** - Approximately 90% of the businesses in our panel remained open all the year round. Only around 1 in 10 actually had a holiday shut-down period. These were mostly Northern manufacturing firms with the remainder drawn from the retail sector.
- **Annual leave** - Most of our small business owners take between 2 and 4 weeks annual holiday. In the smallest categories of firms with 0-4 and 5-9 employees, 1 in 4 take 2 weeks or less per year compared with only 1 in 10 amongst firms in the larger size categories.
- **Small business owners in retailing take shorter holidays** than their counterparts in manufacturing and business services. For instance, 34% take less than 2 weeks each year, compared with 11% for business services and 13% for manufacturing. Similarly, only 2% of retailers manage to take 5 weeks or more compared to an average of approximately 10% for the other business categories.
- **Longest continuous break** - Substantial differences arose in response to a question probing the longest continuous periods owners spent away from their business on holiday. **The smaller the firm, the shorter the period of continuous break.** Whilst the most frequent response here was between 1-3 weeks, nearly 30% of owners in the 0-4 size category answered only 1-5 days. This figure declined as size category rose until it dropped to just 6% in the 20-49 size category. Similarly, whereas 31% in the 0-4 size category replied 6-10 days, this figure doubled in the larger size categories. Looking at sector differences, 36% of retailers kept all holidays down to 5 days or less compared with just 11% in manufacturing and 15% in business services.
- **Holiday location** - Concerning the taking of holidays in the UK or going abroad, the smallest businesses in our sample, those in the 0-4 employee category, were almost equally divided in their habits with 51% staying in the UK and 46% going abroad. As size of firm increased, the likelihood of respondents going abroad also rose until, in the 20-49 employee category, only 22% remained in the UK.
- Retailers were noticeably less likely than their counterparts in the other sectors to holiday abroad, with 43% remaining in the UK compared with only 26% in the other categories.
- Only 14% of respondents in the South remained in the UK for their holidays compared with 31% in the North and 42% in the Midlands.

continued overleaf...

- **Maintaining contact whilst away** - Respondents were asked whether they maintained telephone contact whilst on holiday or whether they 'just disappeared'. Owners of the smallest firms were the most likely to telephone their firms and the least likely to simply disappear. Retail firm owners were the most likely to phone in, consistent with their being the most likely to have remained in the UK and to have taken the shortest duration breaks.
- **Nature of holiday** - Most respondents looked for 'relaxation' more than 'activity' during their holidays though 64% strove to achieve a mixture of the two.
- **Changes in holiday leave in recent years** - Fifty-five per cent of respondents are taking the same overall holiday leave now as they were five years ago. The exceptions are the smallest businesses (0-4 employees) who are taking less, as are respondents from the retail sector. In the South, 33% are taking **more** holiday leave compared with only 19% taking less.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Figure 1	- Business Shut-Down For Holidays: By Employee Size	7
Figure 2	- Business Shut-Down For Holidays: By Sector	7
Figure 3	- Business Shut-Down For Holidays: By Region.....	8
Figure 4	- Annual Personal Leave: By Employee Size	8
Figure 5	- Annual Personal Leave: By Sector.....	9
Figure 6	- Longest Continuous Leave Period: By Employee Size	10
Figure 7	- Longest Continuous Leave Period: By Sector.....	10
Figure 8	- Location Of Holiday: By Employee Size	11
Figure 9	- Location Of Holiday: By Sector.....	12
Figure 10	- Location Of Holiday: By Region.....	12
Figure 11	- Contact Whilst Away: By Employee Size.....	13
Figure 12	- Contact Whilst Away: By Sector	13
Figure 13	- Nature Of Holiday: By Employee Size	14
Figure 14	- Changing Holiday Leave: By Employee Size.....	14
Figure 15	- Changing Holiday Leave: By Sector.....	15
Figure 16	- Changing Holiday Leave: By Region	15
Figure 17	- Effect Of Absence: By Employee Size	16
Figure 18	- Effect Of Absence: By Sector.....	16
Addendum - Additional Information About Sample		20
Figure 19	- Industrial Sector: By Region	20
Figure 20	- Region: By Employee Size	21
Figure 21	- Industrial Sector: By Employee Size.....	21
Survey Questionnaire.....		Appendix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Small Business Research Trust wishes to thank all responding firms for their time and effort involved in participation in the production of this Management Report.

The Trust acknowledges the help provided by Graham Bannock & Partners Ltd, David Purdy, The Open University and The University of Westminster in designing the survey, processing data and analysing the results.

The Small Business Research Trust is particularly pleased to acknowledge the generous support provided by Lloyds Bank plc in sponsoring the research, analysis and presentation of this report. However, it is important to note that any opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Lloyds Bank plc.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The emphasis of our Quarterly Management Reports is on monitoring the key management problems and practices of smaller business, with an emphasis on survival and success. Accordingly, each issue of the Lloyds Bank/Small Business Research Trust Management Report will address one or more highly topical small business management issues. In this survey we focus on ***patterns in holiday taking***.

Past surveys have covered:

Vol.1 (1993)

No.1 Surviving The Recession

2 Using Your Time

3 Management Style

4 Financial Management

Vol.2 (1994)

1 Purchasing

2 Quality Standards & BS 5750

3 Management Succession

4 Customers & Competitors

Vol.3 (1995)

1 Information Technology

It is planned to cover the following management issues in future:

- Cars/Transport
- Prices
- Health & Safety
- Personnel
- Incentives
- Premises

THE SAMPLE

This report is based on responses received from a panel of some 350 small businesses situated in the Northern, Midland and Southern regions of Britain. Respondents are predominantly small firms with fewer than 50 employees, drawn mainly from the manufacturing, business services, and retail/distribution sectors of the economy. Over half of the participating firms employ fewer than 10 people and over one-third of the firms are less than 5 years old.

RESULTS

The questionnaire completed by sample firms appears at the end of this report as an appendix. This survey was carried out during March/April 1995.

THE HOLIDAY HABITS OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

One of the key long-term issues facing smaller businesses is the health of their owner-manager/s. Some respondents in the current survey were quick to point to the difficulties associated with organising holiday breaks away from their firms:

"The recession has meant that it is less easy to take time off for holidays."

"Most very small firm owner-managers cannot afford the time off for long holidays. Even if they can afford the cost, good cover is often not available."

Other respondents felt that their absence from their firm could actually have favourable outcomes:

"[Going away on holiday]... is enlightening. Those people and departments that don't cope with your absence are intrinsically weak."

"Holidays are crucially important times to recharge the batteries. When we go away [both partners together], they [the staff] nearly always win a big contract while we are away!"

Most talked of the importance of holidays in relaxing and re-energising them:

"A regular break to refresh and regain perspective is of crucial importance to the business."

"I think it is important to take regular breaks as I find personally that, over a period of time, it is easy to lose your 'sharpness' without realising it."

"Holidays are a necessity - the break is essential. All may not be okay when you return but that can be overcome."

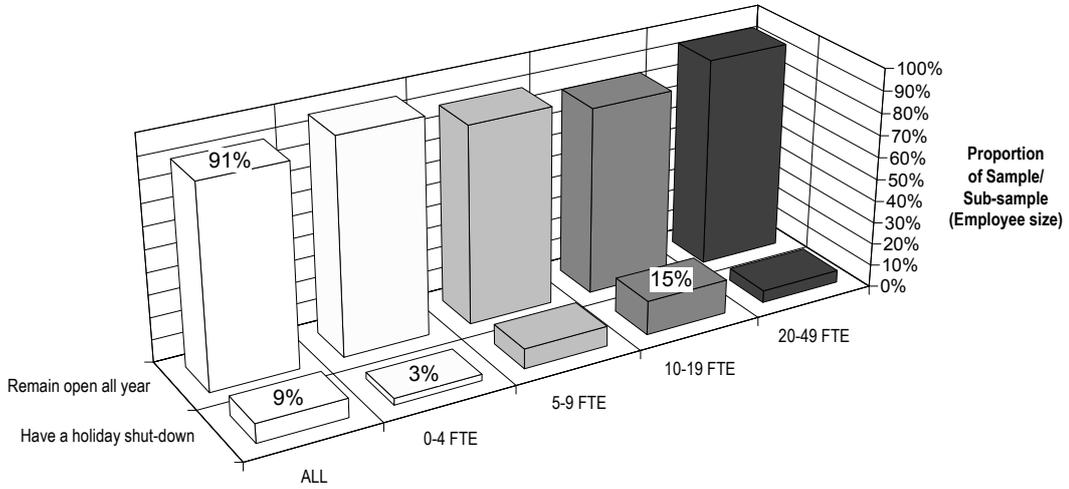
"We feel holidays are important and make sure the staff take their full entitlement."

Whilst most owner-manager respondents said they found holidays very relaxing, on occasions this was not the case:

"Holidays can result in undue stress for owner-managers. Although reliable staff usually see to it that the business runs smoothly whilst the owner is away, the owner's perception of what is actually happening during a period of absence is usually quite different."

Overall, respondents spoke in strong and enthusiastic terms about the benefits of holidays. They saw them as essential in maintaining their own personal health and energy levels, securing relationships with other members of their family and also distancing themselves from their businesses sufficiently to be able to take a longer-term strategic view of events and progress.

**Fig 1 - BUSINESS SHUT-DOWN FOR HOLIDAYS:
BY EMPLOYEE SIZE**

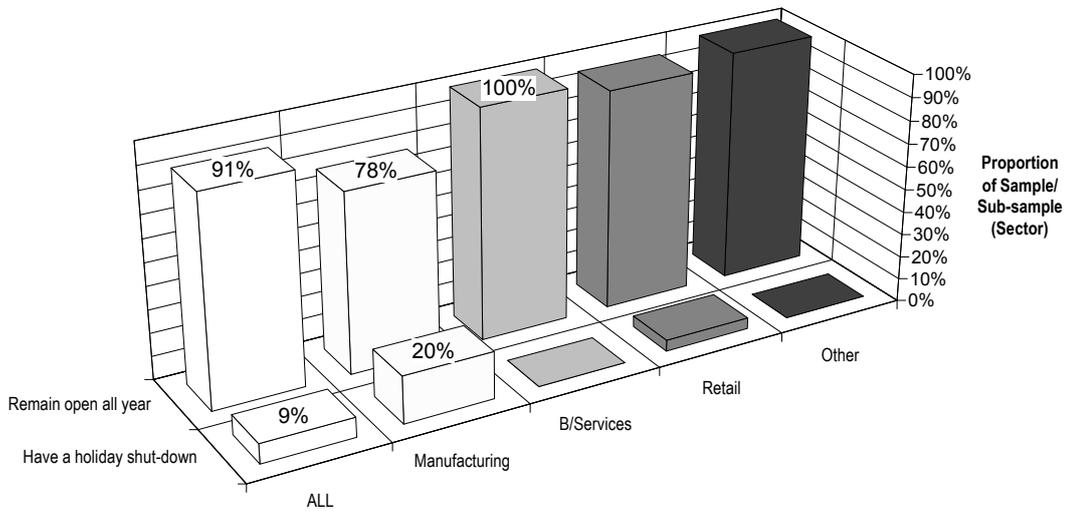


HOLIDAY CLOSURE

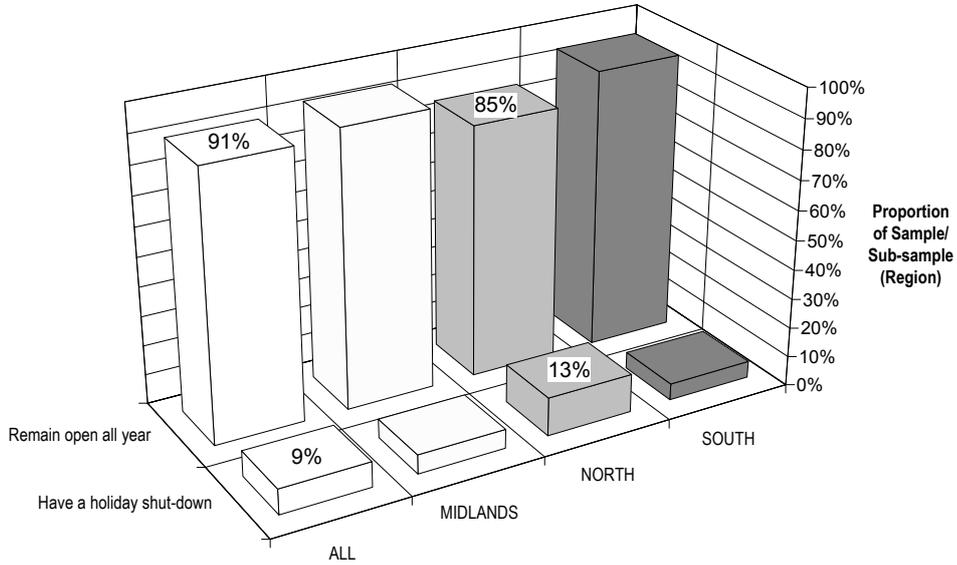
Figure 1 shows that approximately 90% of the businesses in our panel remained open all the year round. Only around 1 in 10 actually had a holiday shut-down period.

Figure 2 and **Figure 3** show that these were mostly Northern manufacturing firms, where this is often a long-standing tradition, with the remainder drawn from the retail sector.

**Fig 2 - BUSINESS SHUT-DOWN FOR HOLIDAYS:
BY SECTOR**



**Fig 3 - BUSINESS SHUT-DOWN FOR HOLIDAYS:
BY REGION**



OVERALL ANNUAL LEAVE

Most of our small business owners take between 2 and 4 weeks annual holiday. **Figure 4** shows that, in the smallest categories of firms, those with 0-4 and 5-9 employees respectively, 1 in 4 take 2

weeks or less per year compared with only 1 in 10 amongst firms in the larger size categories.

Fig 4 - ANNUAL PERSONAL LEAVE: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE

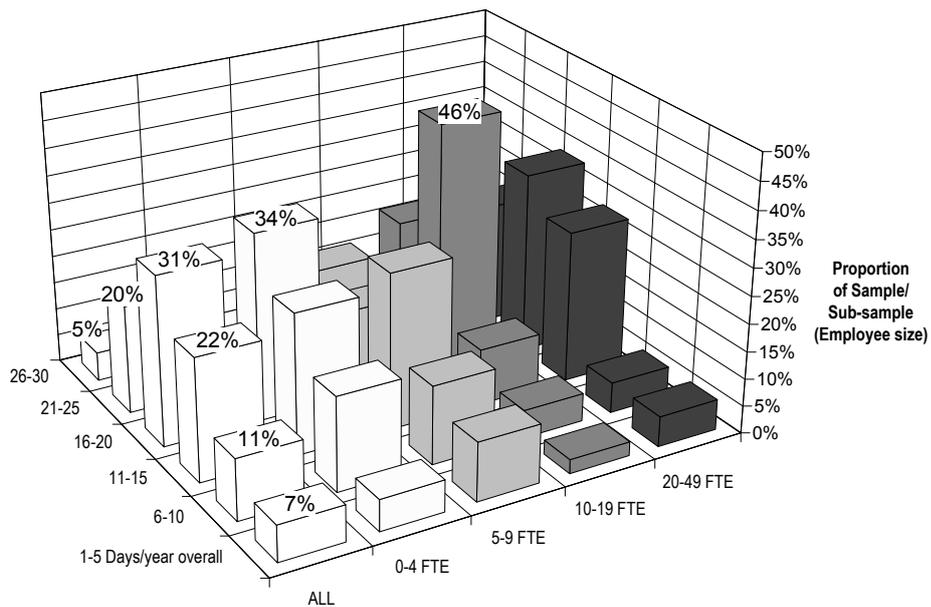


Fig 5 - ANNUAL PERSONAL LEAVE: BY SECTOR

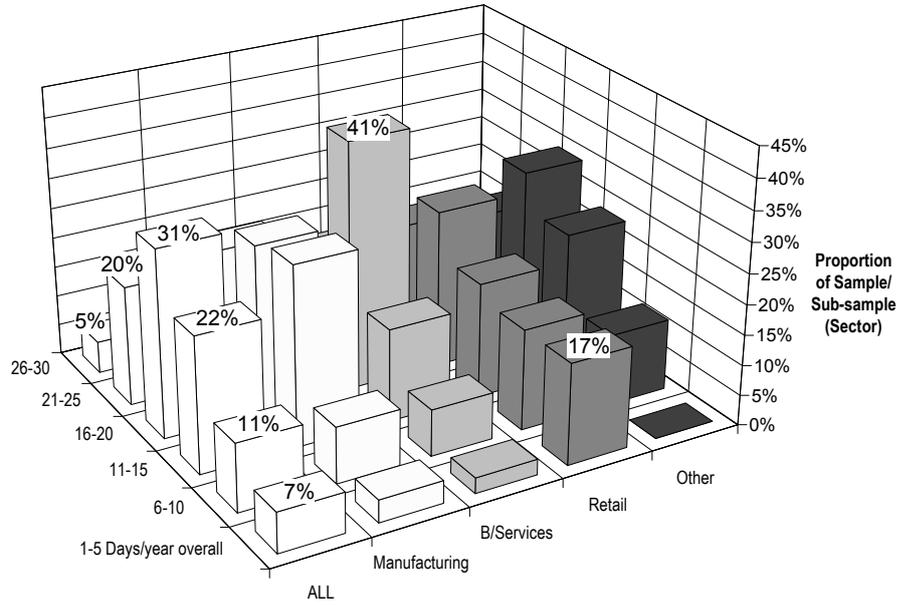
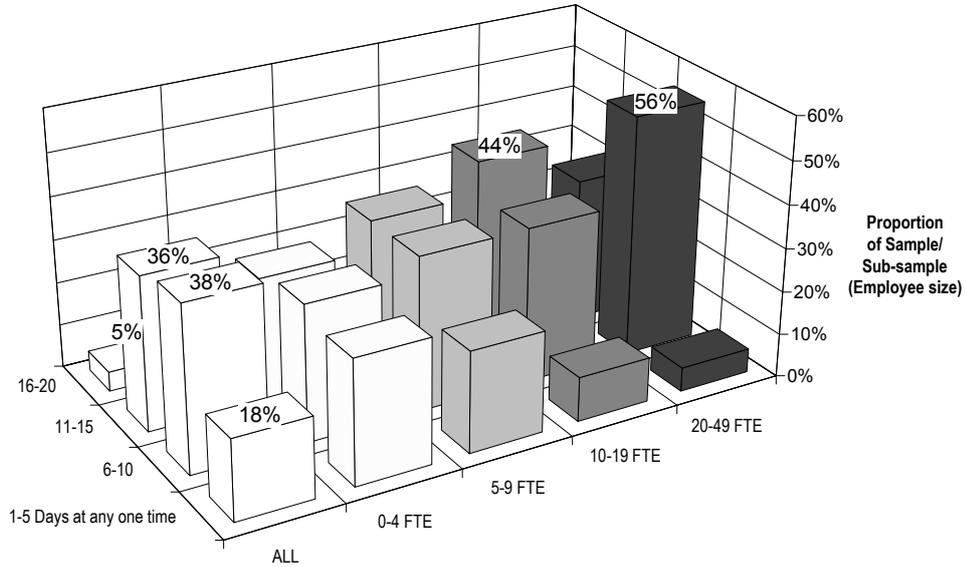


Figure 5 points towards small business owners in retailing taking shorter holidays than their counterparts in manufacturing and business services.

For instance, 34% take less than 2 weeks each year, compared with 11% for business services and 13% for manufacturing. Similarly, only 2% of retailers manage to take 5 weeks or more compared to an average of approximately 10% for the other business categories.

**Fig 6 - LONGEST CONTINUOUS LEAVE PERIOD:
BY EMPLOYEE SIZE**



LONGEST CONTINUOUS LEAVE

Substantial differences arose in response to a question probing the longest continuous periods owners spent away from their business on holiday. **Figure 6** shows that, the smaller the firm, the shorter the period

of continuous break. Whilst the most frequent response here was between 1-3 weeks, nearly 30% of owners in the 0-4 size category answered only 1-5 days. This level declined as size category rose until it dropped to just 6% in the 20-49 size band. Similarly, whereas 31% in the

**Fig 7 - LONGEST CONTINUOUS LEAVE PERIOD:
BY SECTOR**

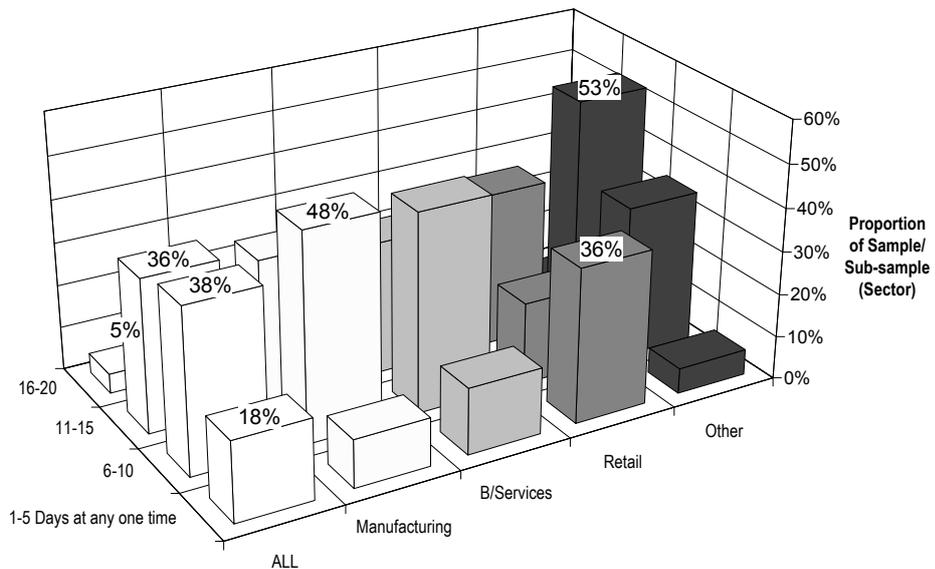
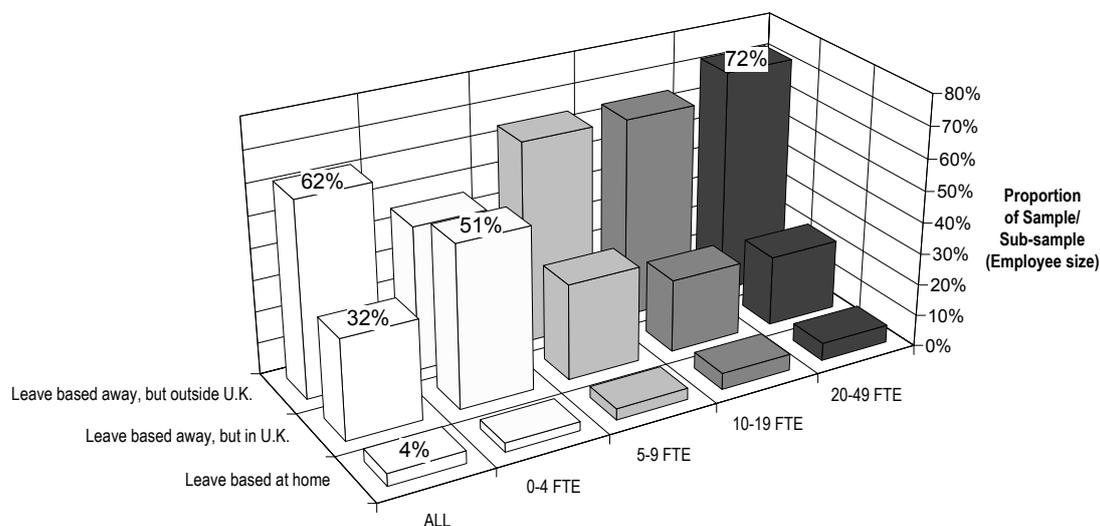


Fig 8 - LOCATION OF HOLIDAY: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE



0-4 size category replied 6-10 days, this level doubled in the larger size bands. **Figure 7** demonstrates that, when looking at sector differences, 36% of retailers kept all holidays down to 5 days or less compared with just 11% in manufacturing and 15% in business services.

HOLIDAY LOCATION

Turning to the issue of taking holidays in the UK or going abroad, the smallest businesses in our sample, those in the 0-4 employee category, were almost equally divided in their habits with 51% staying in the UK and 46% going abroad. As size of firm increased (**Figure 8**), the likelihood of respondents going abroad also rose until, in the 20-49 employee category, only 22% remained in the UK.

Fig 9 - LOCATION OF HOLIDAY: BY SECTOR

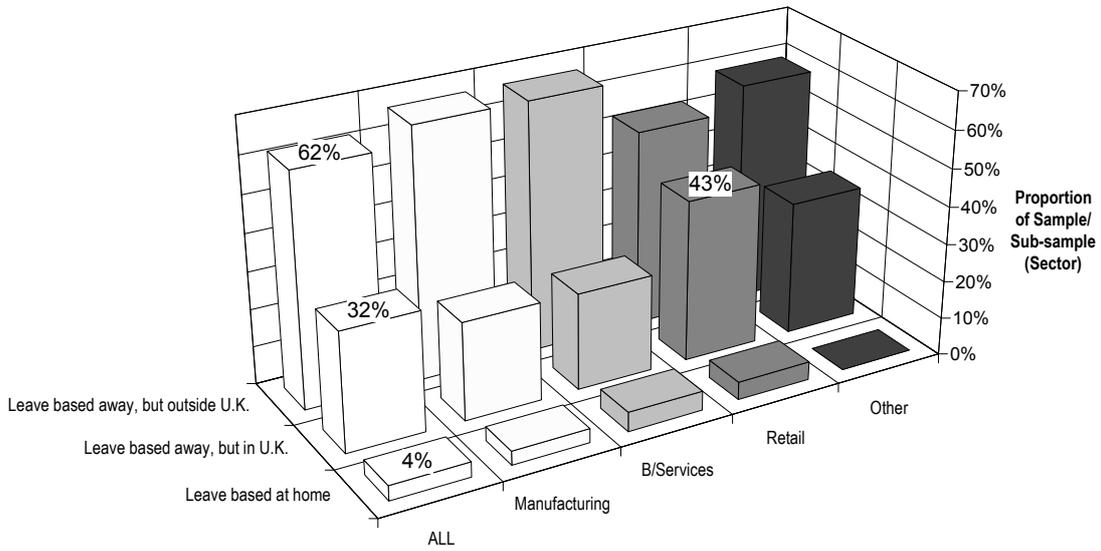


Figure 9 reveals that retailers were noticeably less likely than their counterparts in the other sectors to holiday abroad, with 43% remaining in the UK compared with only 26% in the other categories.

Figure 10 shows that only 14% of respondents in the South remained in the UK for their holidays compared with 31% in the North and 42% in the Midlands.

Fig 10 - LOCATION OF HOLIDAY: BY REGION

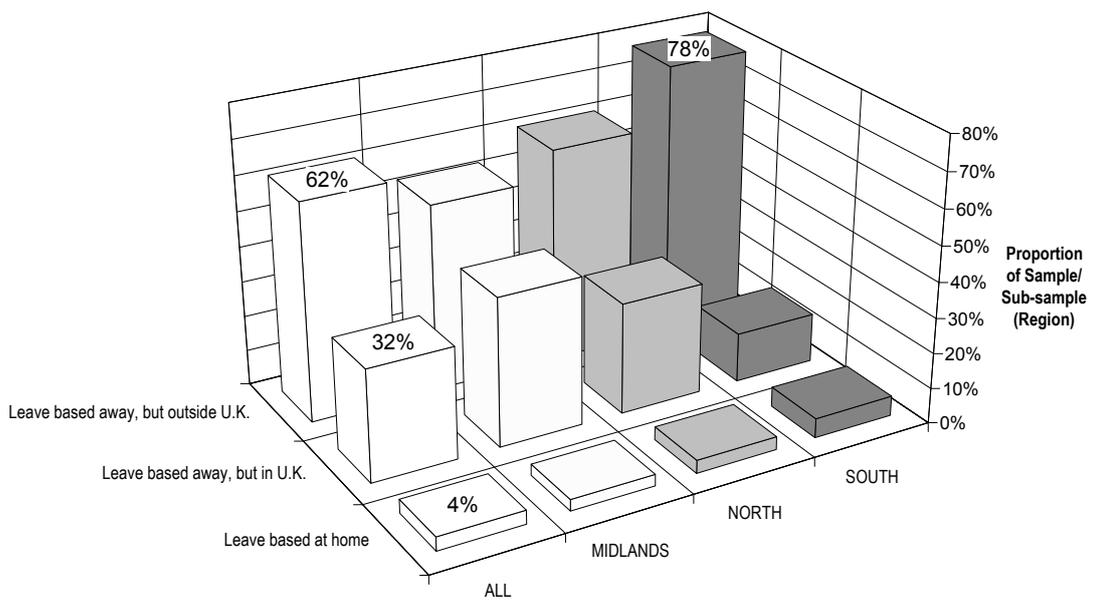
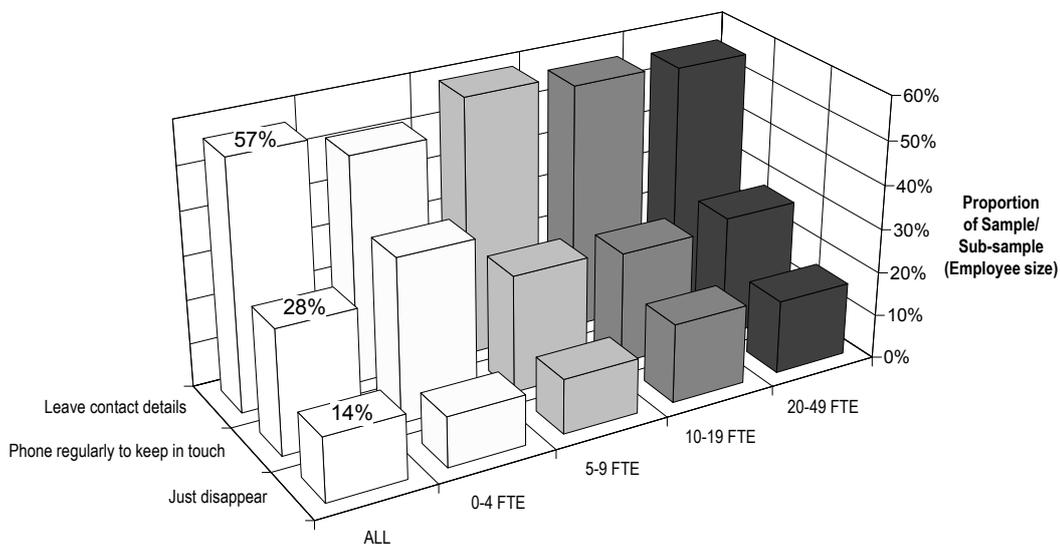


Fig 11 - CONTACT WHILST AWAY: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE



MAINTAINING CONTACT

Respondents were asked whether they maintained telephone contact whilst on holiday or whether they 'just disappeared'. Owners of the smallest firms were the most likely to telephone their firms and

the least likely to simply disappear (**Figure 11**). Retail firm owners were the most likely to keep in contact by telephone (**Figure 12**), consistent with their being the most likely to have remained in the UK and to have taken the shortest duration breaks.

Fig 12 - CONTACT WHILST AWAY: BY SECTOR

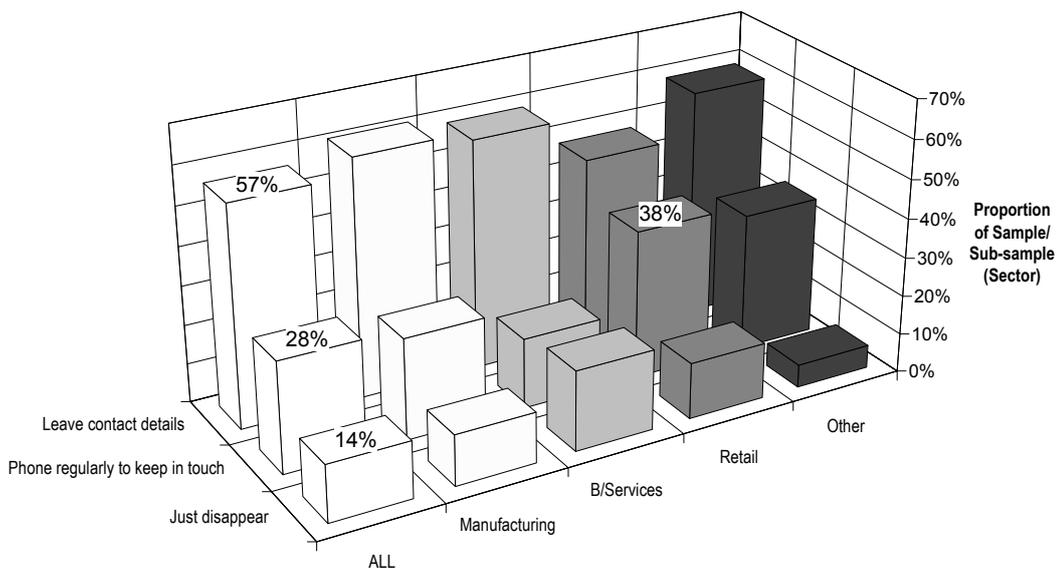
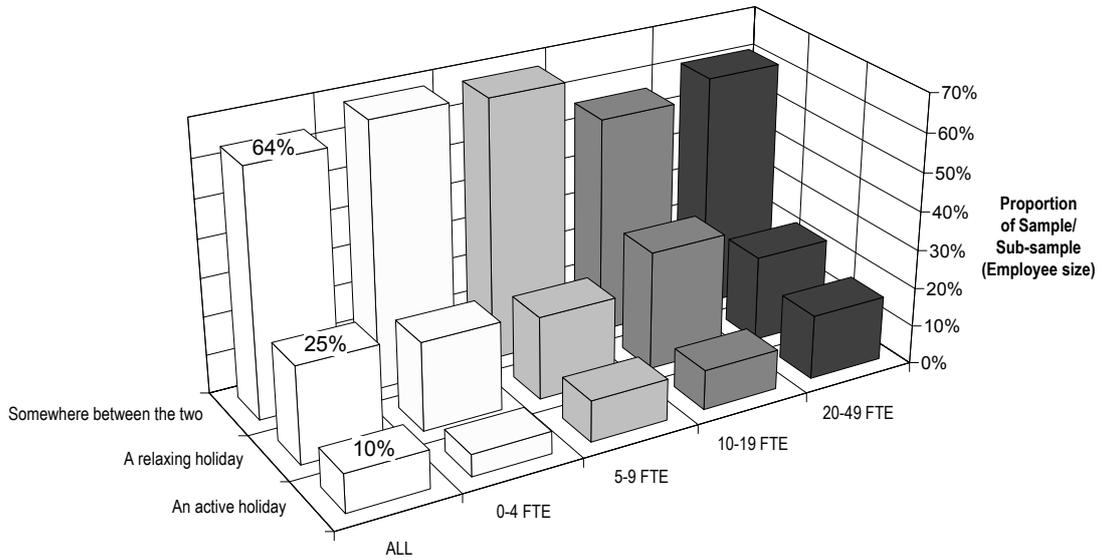


Fig 13 - NATURE OF HOLIDAY: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE



NATURE OF HOLIDAY LEAVE

Most respondents looked for 'relaxation' more than 'activity' during their holidays though 64% strove to achieve a mixture of the two (Figure 13).

CHANGING LENGTH OF HOLIDAYS

Fifty-five per cent of respondents are taking the same length of holidays now as they were five years ago. The exceptions are the smallest businesses (0-4) who are taking less, as are respondents from the

Fig 14 - CHANGING HOLIDAY LEAVE: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE

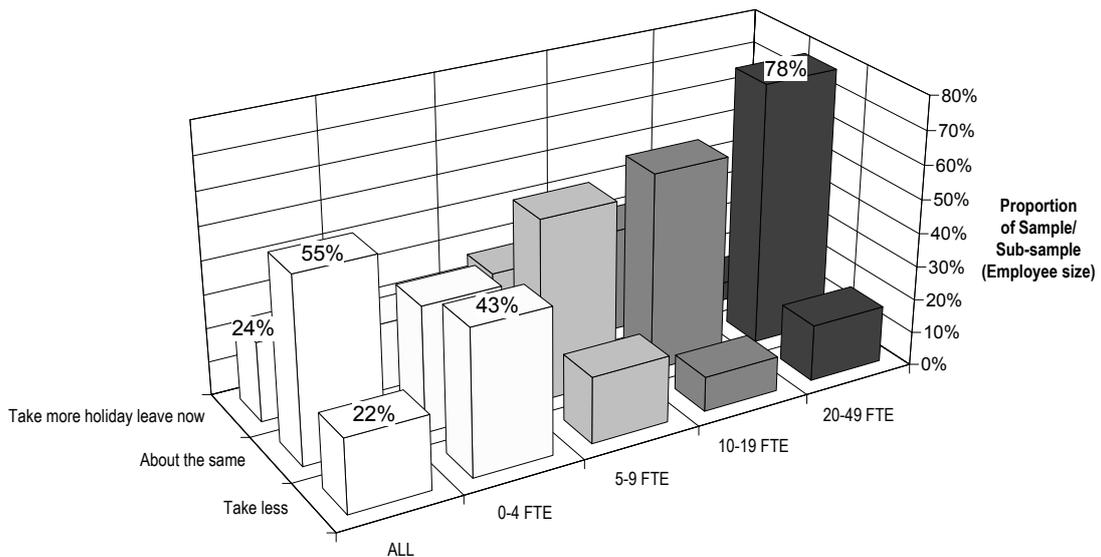
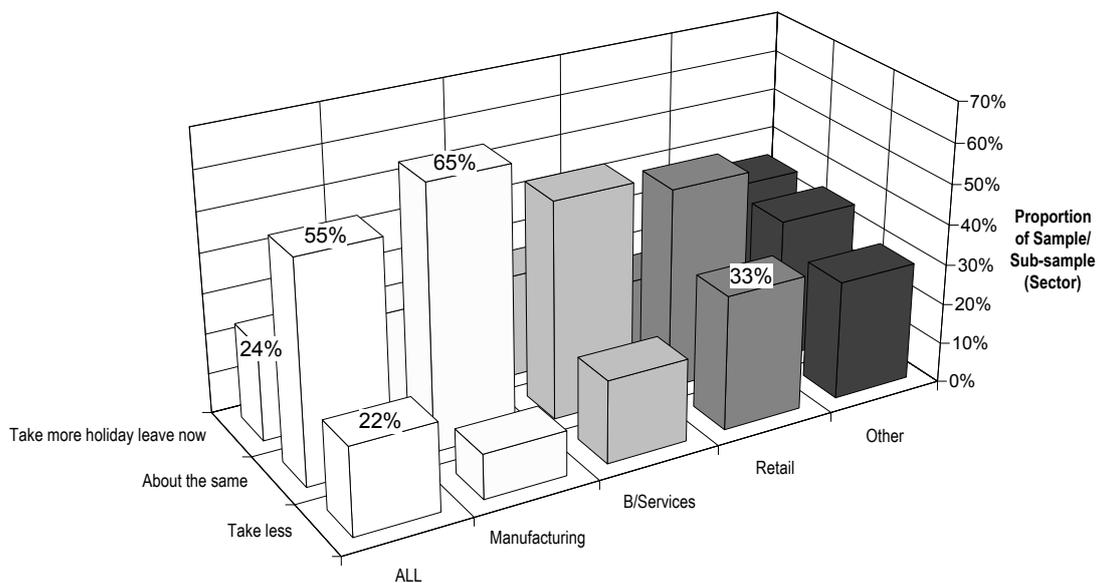


Fig 15 - CHANGING HOLIDAY LEAVE: BY SECTOR



retail sector (Figures 14 and 15). In the South, 33% are taking more holidays compared with only 19% taking less (Figure 16).

DECISION-TAKING & ABSENCE

Figure 17 shows responses to the question of what happens to decision-making when respondents are away on holiday. The smaller the firm, the greater was the likelihood that decision-making

Fig 16 - CHANGING HOLIDAY LEAVE: BY REGION

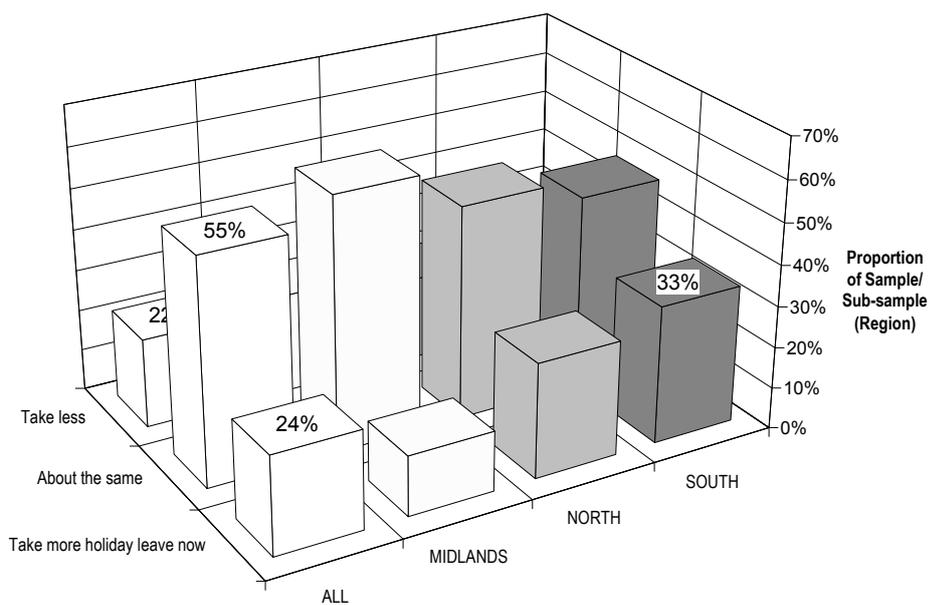
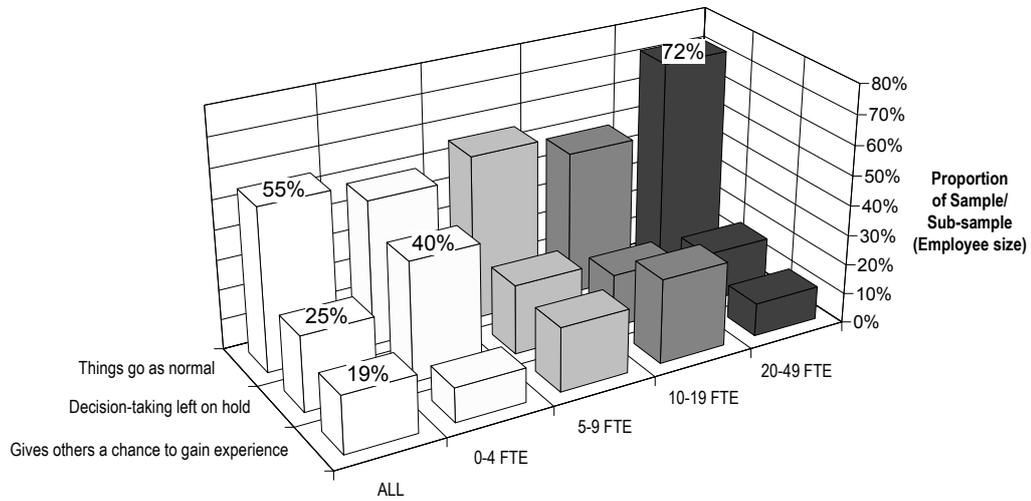


Fig 17 - EFFECT OF ABSENCE: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE



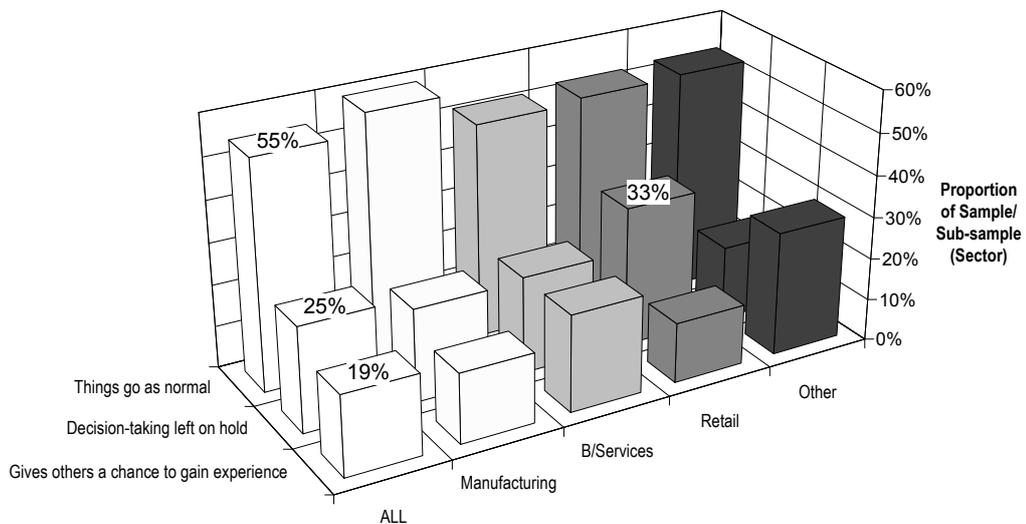
would be 'left on hold' and the smaller was the chance that others would use the chance to gain experience. The larger the firm was, the greater was the chance that things would go on very much as normal.

sectors and reveals business services as the most delegating sector and retailing as the least delegating.

Respondents' comments are shown overleaf, listed by industrial sector.

Finally, **Figure 18** looks at business

Fig 18 - EFFECT OF ABSENCE: BY SECTOR



MANUFACTURING

Clothing Manufacturer	<i>"It's very difficult to close for cash flow - mentally it's better to close. We don't know the best answer as we are very small."</i>
Computer Hardware and Software	<i>"Owner-managers take less holiday than their employees or their non-owner peers. They should take a planned approach - how much do I need to stay healthy and not neglect my family?"</i>
Fabrication, Welding, Machining, Special Purpose Machines	<i>"[We] Have to take them to phase in with school holidays - wife teaches. Would prefer otherwise - my problem."</i>
Machinery for the Tufted Carpet Industry	<i>"[The] Public sector in my experience is in a different world on: 1. Holidays (total and maximum at one time); 2. Acceptable absence %; 3. Flexible working; 4. Early retirement package etc., etc., etc."</i>
Manufacture of Products for Protection and Cleaning of Fabrics	<i>"We feel holidays are important and make sure the staff take their full entitlement."</i>
Manufacturing	<i>"We don't have too much trouble anyway - we are a small company and so we all stagger our holidays - none clash, and it works out well."</i>
Manufacturing Broom Clamps & Holders	<i>"[The] trouble is 'you have to come back'!"</i>
Mechanical Installation and Maintenance Service	<i>"Holidays are a necessity - the break is essential. All may not be OK when you return but that can be overcome."</i>
Metal Fabrication	<i>"Enlightening. Those people/depts. that don't cope with your absence are intrinsically weak."</i>
Modelmaking for T.V. Commercials	<i>"In a small business the cost of a holiday is much greater than the actual cost of the trip. It also includes the loss of one's earnings and [the] cost of any errors which may occur while one is missing."</i>
Photographic Processing and Printing	<i>"Why have 2 holidays in May (Bank Holidays) - why not have one of these in June or July?"</i>
Printing	<i>"Our company operates on a 5 week holiday per year and we feel this is the maximum that [companies] should have."</i>
Products for the Building Industry	<i>"We only take personal leave (week or more) when the factory is also closed. Short leave (2 days) is in the UK or for family visits."</i>
Publishing	<i>"Most very small firm owner/managers cannot afford the time off for long holidays - even if they can afford the cost - good cover is not often available."</i>
Publishing. Trade and Leisure magazines	<i>"A regular break to refresh and regain perspective is of critical importance to the success of the business."</i>
Toys/Educational Products	<i>"I think you have omitted the question of preparation for holidays, i.e. work schedules, paying invoices etc., wages. In a small company, there may be only one authorised 'cheque' signer, for instance. Hence holidays and planning are related."</i>

BUSINESS SERVICES

Accountancy, Audit, Tax & Management Consultancy	<i>"Holidays often result in undue stress for owner-managers. Although reliable staff usually see to it that the business runs smoothly whilst the owner is away, the owner's perception of what is actually happening during a period of absence is usually quite different."</i>
Advertising Agency	<i>"It would be nice to take longer holidays, but as we are a small business this is not practical. We miss out every year - compared to larger companies."</i>
Analytical and Consulting Chemists (Industrial)	<i>"We are taking too many holidays. [The] Retirement age should be reduced rather than increasing holidays (particularly civil service)."</i>
Architect	<i>"Holidays are crucially important times to re-charge the batteries. When we go away (both partners together) they nearly always win a big contract while we were away !"</i>
Architect	<i>"The recession has meant it is less easy to take time off for holidays, and cheaper holidays are essential."</i>
Computer Services and Software for Document Management	<i>"[Holidays are] Very necessary."</i>
Consultant Naval Architects & Marine Engineers	<i>"Shipping is 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. You never turn work away so you grab time off when you can - sometimes you wish you were a civil servant !! But not often."</i>
Consulting Engineers	<i>"[We are a] Partnership - staff [are] fully briefed on course of action; during my absence another partner oversees progress."</i>
Professional Chartered Accountants. Accounting, Audit, Taxation Advice	<i>"[There is a] Need to spread statutory holidays more evenly throughout the year. [The] Trend amongst my staff is to take several short breaks, i.e. long weekends rather than longer holidays."</i>
Public Relations	<i>"After 5 years, I tend to worry less about the business closing down during my absence and therefore don't get too anxious about taking leave."</i>
Recruitment	<i>"I only take holidays if I am actually going away. [I] Therefore take a summer and winter break overseas each year for a complete break."</i>
Sale and Marketing Recruitment	<i>"We take the view that holidays are of vital importance to most staff and allow all staff to take extra time off (unpaid) to increase their holiday periods beyond 4 weeks, irrespective of length of service, once [the] probationary period is completed."</i>
Telephone Marketing and Telephone Sales Company	<i>"I only manage holidays with good planning, delegation and communication with clients and employees. I would normally plan a week prior to taking a short break."</i>
Training Consultancy	<i>"I think it is very important to take regular breaks as I find personally that over a period of time it is easy to lose your 'sharpness' without realising it."</i>

RETAIL AND DISTRIBUTION

Floristry	<i>"The self-employed and small businessmen are generally existing, not living civilised lives, such that social services would not tolerate were we included among the 'low-paid' employed, whose holidays are paid for. For the past three years we have had no holidays as such. We used to take 2 weeks twice a year."</i>
Hardware and Pet Store	<i>"Very small business owners have to take holidays as a necessity. Otherwise a downward spiral of fatigue and a jaded manner will affect business adversely."</i>
Motorcycle Spares, Retail and Wholesale	<i>"[Holiday] Widens your horizons and puts a perspective on numerous issues."</i>
Operating Public Houses	<i>"[Holidays are] A vital part of a hard working executive 'Charge the batteries' and more sun, more golf [sic]."</i>
Specialists in Beds and Pine Furniture	<i>"[I] Feel it is important that everyone should take at least one holiday in the year. [I] Hope that future legislation does not increase annual leave entitlement beyond the current 4 week period plus statutory holidays."</i>
Supplier of Computer Systems for Business	<i>"It has nothing to do with government."</i>

OTHER

Colour Cosmetic Products Manufacturer and Retailer	<i>"Holidays are very important to reduce stress and gain a total rest from day to day activities."</i>
Long Distance and Local Transport	<i>[Respondent recorded 'none' against: Q3, personal leave; Q4, longest holiday period; and Q5, location of personal leave.]</i>
Management Training Courses	<i>"Holidays are essential. Managers should take their full entitlement - if they don't they are poor time managers."</i>
Transport. Sameday/overnight Collection and Delivery of Parcels	<i>"It is important for self-employed people to take at least a week each year in order to recharge and clear the mind. You can think better when away from the day to day problems."</i>
Travel Agency	<i>"As travel agents we place great emphasis in holidays. It is unfortunate that as a rather new company I cannot afford to take as much as I would [like]. Our staff take five weeks."</i>

ADDENDUM - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As an aid to the interpretation of the various figures (histograms), we have included some further information about the firms responding to this survey.

The analyses involve key variables, and **industry sector, region and employee size** are those most frequently used as they are reasonably reliable indicators and less prone to misinterpretation.

Industrial sectors - based on the descriptions supplied by respondents, each firm is coded according to the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC 1980). Firms are then grouped into manufacturing, business services, retail/distribution and 'other' bands.

Regions - firms are also classified according to their physical location, namely, North, Midlands and the South.

Employee size - finally, firms are placed in bands according to the number of employees. Each part-time employee is assumed to be equivalent to 40 per cent

of a full-time employee ('FTE' = full-time equivalent). All of the surveys to date have received only a small number of responses from firms with 50 or more FTE employees. These responses have been **included** in the breakdowns for the sectoral and regional analyses, but have been **excluded** as a '50+FTE' band in the **employee-size** analyses (the 'All' band in each histogram includes all usable responses regardless). This is because a percentage breakdown band based on just two or three firms may not be representative of this size of business.

DISTRIBUTION OF FIRMS

Similar to several previous surveys, the highest concentration is in manufacturing (36 per cent of the sample) compared to business services (26 per cent) - with another 28 per cent in retail/distribution (Figure 19).

Regionally, the bias towards firms engaged in **business services** in the **South** is less than before (31 per cent of the region's respondents, compared to 42 per cent in the survey 6 months previous). **Manufacturing** is the still most

Fig 19 - INDUSTRIAL SECTOR: BY REGION

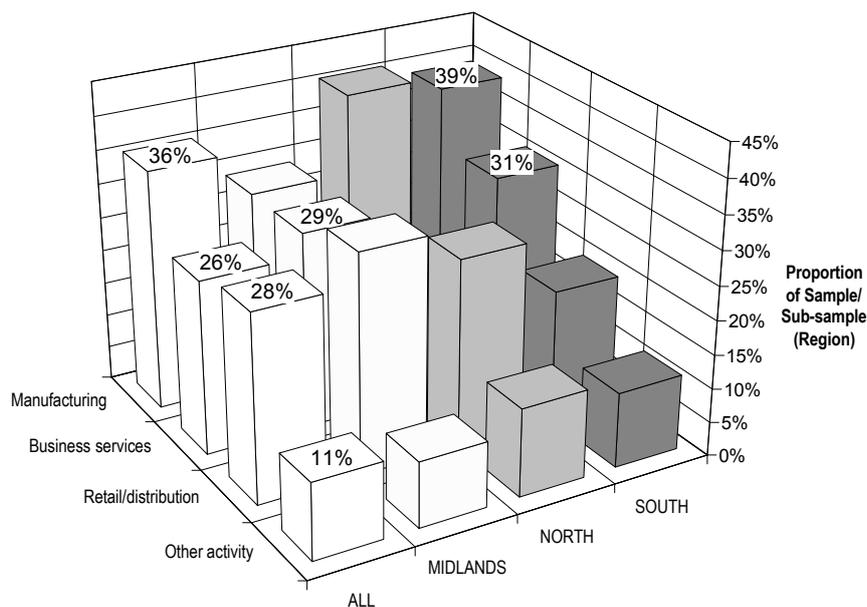
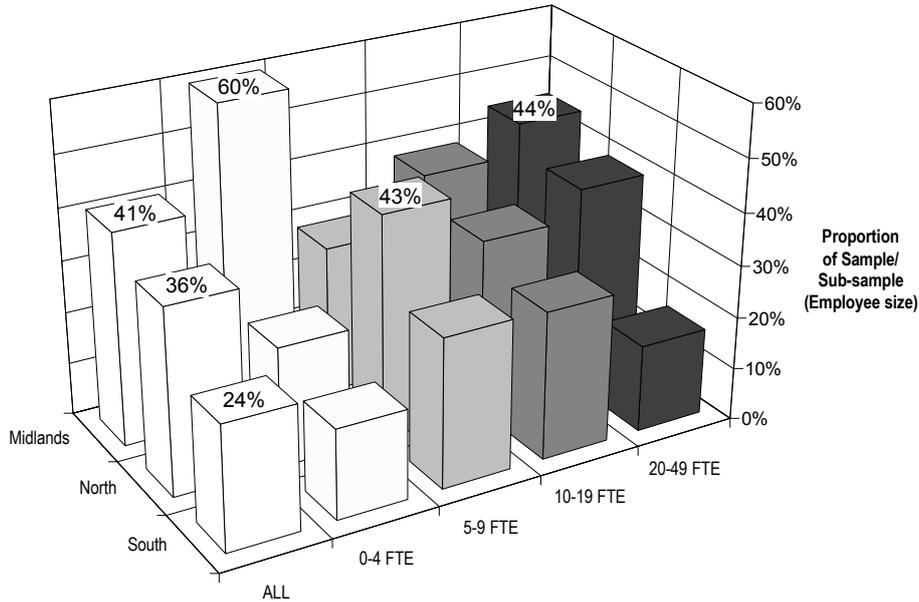


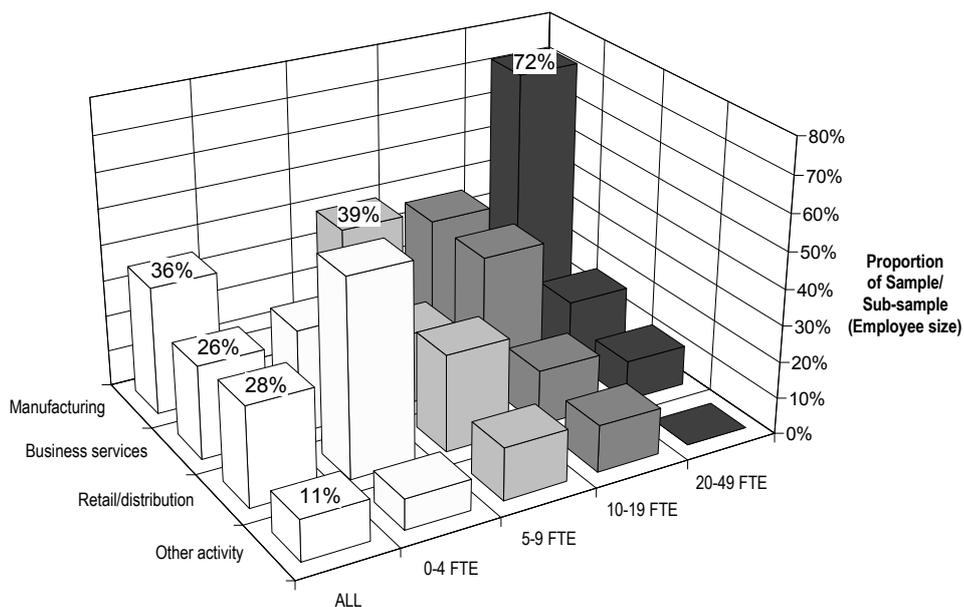
Fig 20 - REGION: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE



predominant sector in the **North**. The sub-sample in the **Midlands** has shifted towards the smallest businesses, containing 60% of the smallest firms in the sample, compared to 37% in the previous survey (see also Figure 20).

Manufacturing firms in the sample tend again to be **larger**, in terms of employees, whereas the **business services** and the firms in **retailing/distribution** tend to have **fewer full-time equivalent employees** (Figure 21).

Fig 21 - INDUSTRIAL SECTOR: BY EMPLOYEE SIZE





This questionnaire will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete - most answers require only a single tick. All information received will be treated in complete confidence. **PLEASE DESPATCH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

MANAGEMENT ISSUE No.9: Holidays

1 How many people work in your business (including yourself) ?
Full-time: _____ :..... A
Part-time (16 hours/wk or less): _____ :..... B

2 Holiday period breaks - Other than for Christmas and statutory days, does your firm:
Just ONE ✓ only
Basically remain open all year round A
OR Have a holiday shut down period..... B

3 Personal leave - How much annual holiday overall do you typically take each year (EXCLUDING weekends and statutory holidays) ?
Just ONE ✓ only
1-5 days a year overall A
6-10 days/year B
11-15 days/year C
16-20 days/year D
21-25 days/year E
26-30 days/year F
31 days/year or more G

4 Personal leave - What is the longest period of holiday you normally take at any one time (EXCLUDING weekends and statutory holidays) ?
Just ONE ✓ only
1-5 days at any one time A
6-10 days B
11-15 days C
16-20 days D
21 days or more E

5 **Personal leave - Is this normally:**

Just ONE ✓ only

- Based at home..... A
- OR** Based away from home, but in the U.K. B
- OR** Based away from home, but outside the U.K. C

6 **Maintaining contact with the business whilst away - Do you:**

Just ONE ✓ only

- Phone regularly to keep in touch A
- OR** Let it be known where you are in case of need B
- OR** Just disappear C

7 **Type of holiday - Typically, do you take:**

Just ONE ✓ only

- By and large an 'active' holiday - e.g. walking, climbing, sailing etc. A
- OR** A completely relaxing holiday - e.g. beach, coach tours etc. B
- OR** A holiday fairly evenly balanced between the two previous options C

8 **Changing length of holiday - Compared to say 5 years ago, do you take:**

Just ONE ✓ only

- MORE holiday leave now A
- OR** About the same holiday leave now B
- OR** LESS holiday leave now..... C

9 **Effect of personal holidays - When you are away, do you feel that:**

Just ONE ✓ only

- It gives others chance to gain experience by doing your job A
- OR** It leaves decision-taking on hold B
- OR** Things go pretty much as normal C

10 **Holidays - If you have any strong views about them, especially if you feel that any aspect is not fully appreciated by important sections of the business community (such as the government help agencies or the financial services), then please comment**

ISSN 0968 6444

Cover design • Simon Head