



The "From Europe  
with Love" edition

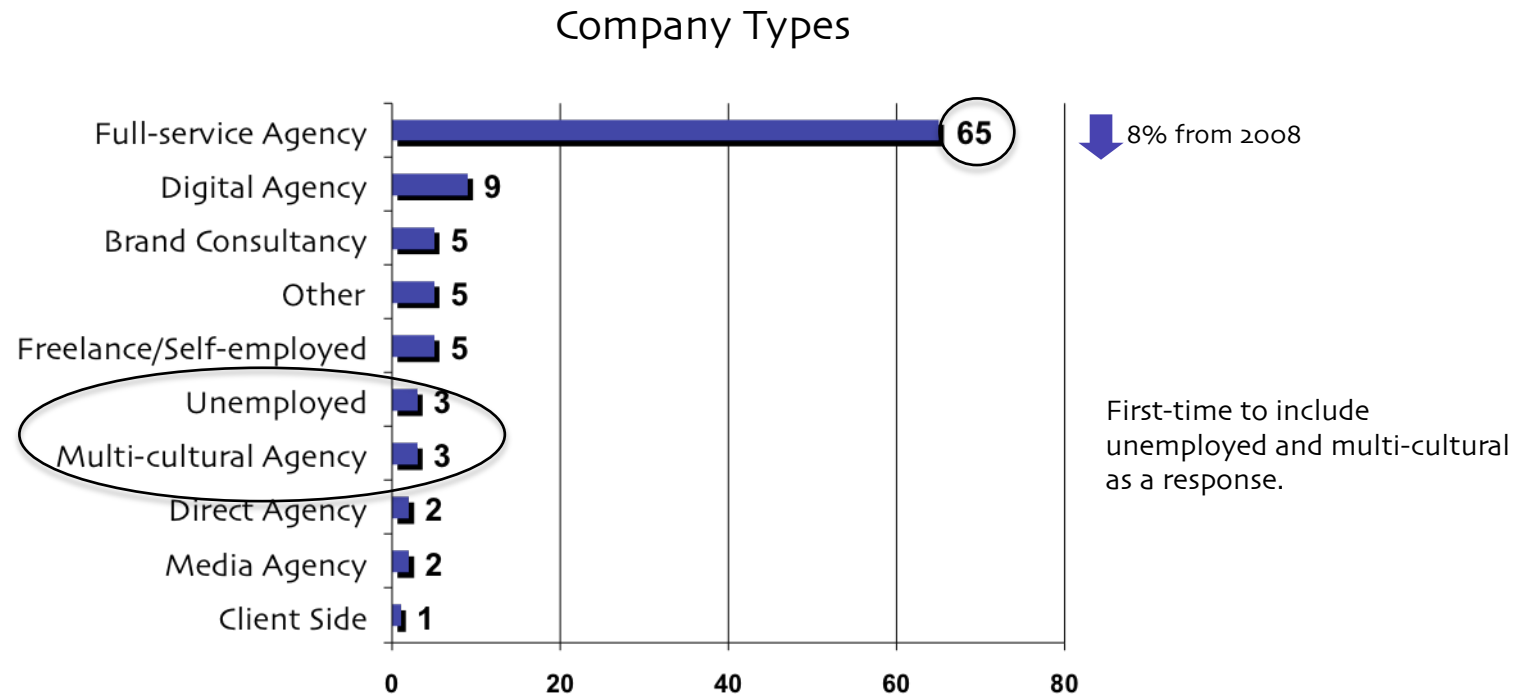
Account Planning Survey Results

August 2009

# The 411

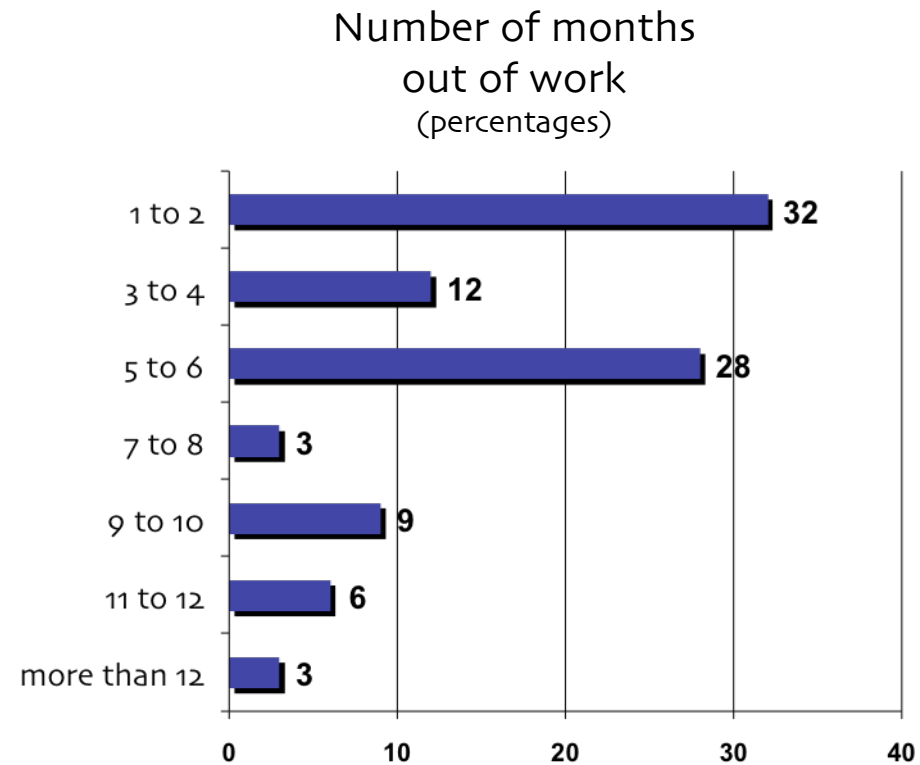
- Fifth year to conduct the planning survey.
- Called upon planners to participate and pass on the survey.
- Bloggers again helped spread the word. Twitter really kicked in this year.
- Topics included the now usual suspects like salary, experience and satisfaction, along with this year's special questions around digital and connection planners, state of the economy, what skills you need to get promoted and most respected planner.
- 1217 completed surveys (compared to 798 last year) from April 24 – June 12.
  - 53% Men/47% Women overall participated
    - 44% Men/56% Women in the US
    - 60% Men/40% Women outside US
  - 532 from the USA/ 685 from Outside the USA
    - Compared to last year: 461 from USA/337 from outside USA
- Numbers don't always add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

# Where do we work? (in percentages)



\*Note for non-USA folks: multi-cultural agencies are in the US creating content that more specifically target Latino, African American or Asian audiences

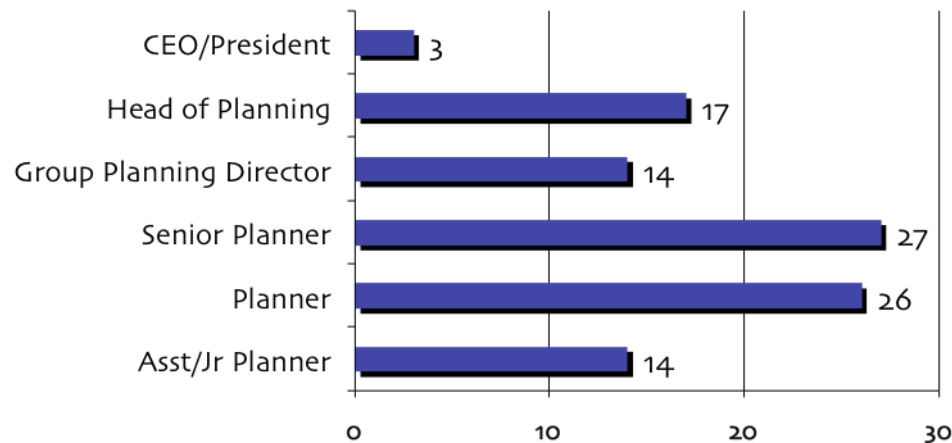
## Those hardest hit



I was pretty surprised that only 3% are out of work – that's still 31 real people, half in the US and half overseas. But compared with US stats of 18% blue collar unemployment and 5% for white collar, planners seem to be fairing better than average. Their general consensus is that things are moving slowly and they are not very optimistic in the short-term, especially those not wanting to move. What can we do for our fellow planner friends? Have you met someone for an informational meeting recently? Can you make the time? When jobs do open up, we always need to fill them quickly so why not?

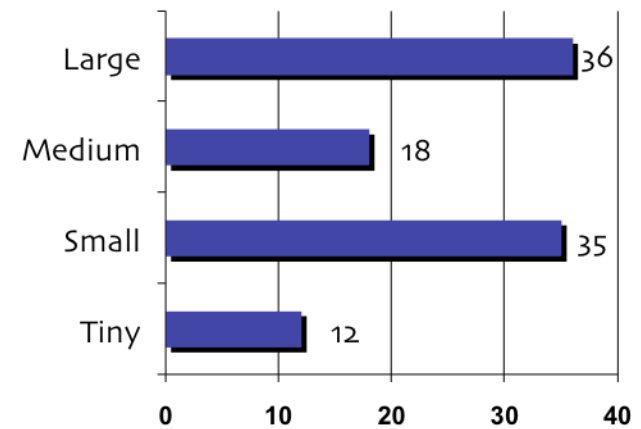
# Some overview info (in percentages)

## Participants by Title



Does anyone have access to some industry averages? I couldn't find any. How representative is this sample?

## Agency Type

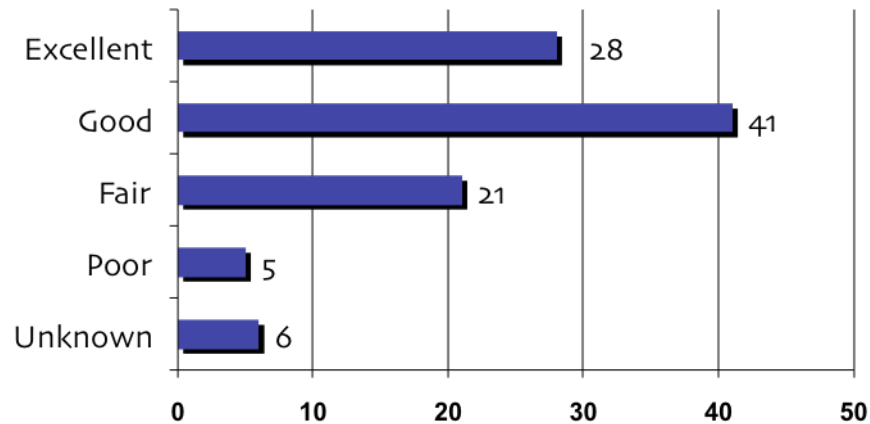


Only 11% of international folks work at a "medium" sized shop.

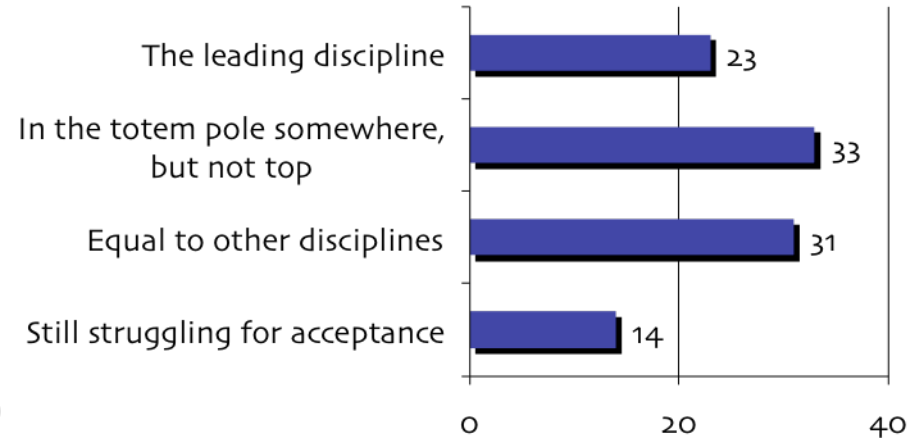
This is also the first year to include "Tiny" as a choice – All CEO/Presidents picked this option showing they've started their own businesses by themselves or with a few employees

# Some overview info cont. (in percentages)

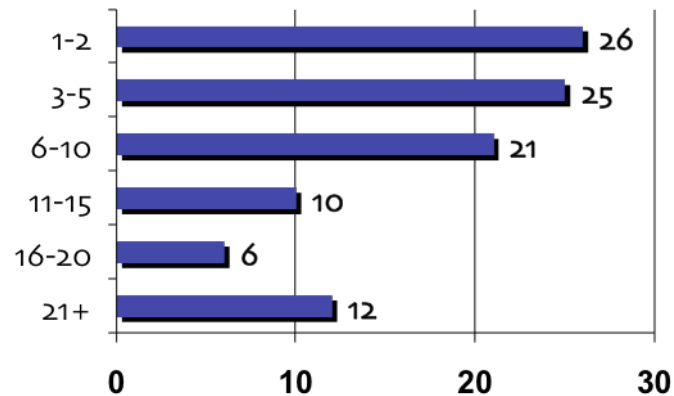
What would you say is your company's reputation in the industry?



How is planning perceived at your company?

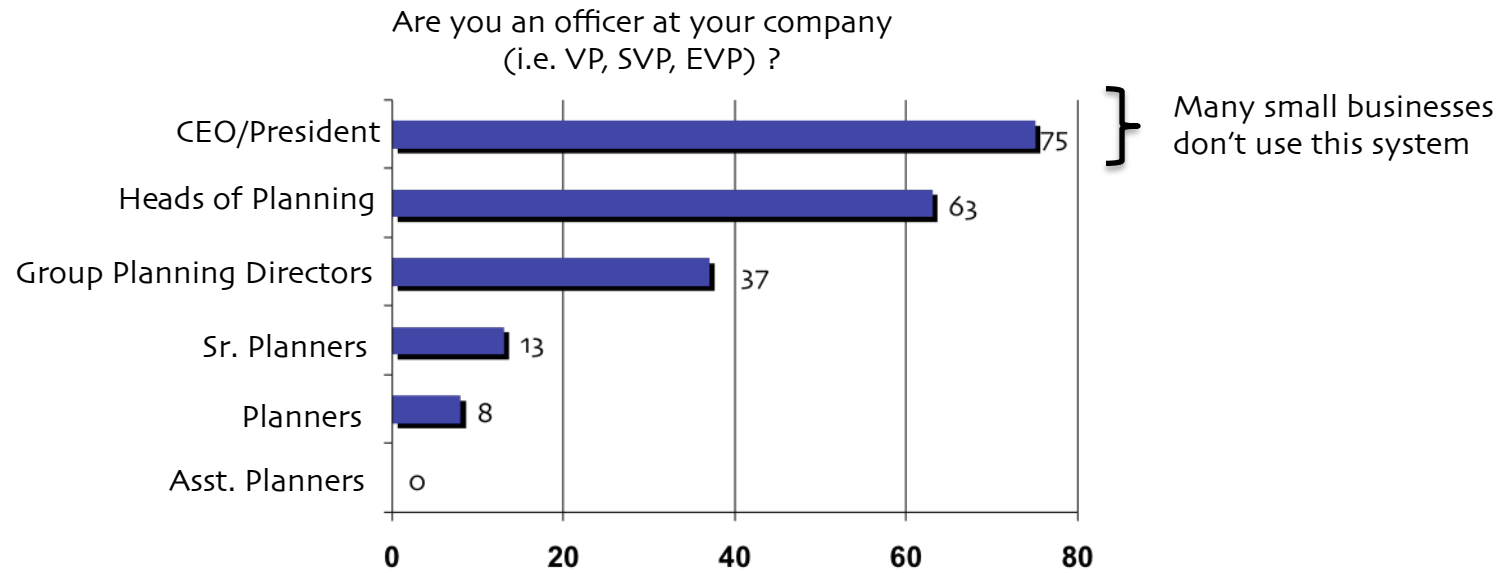


Size of Department at office location

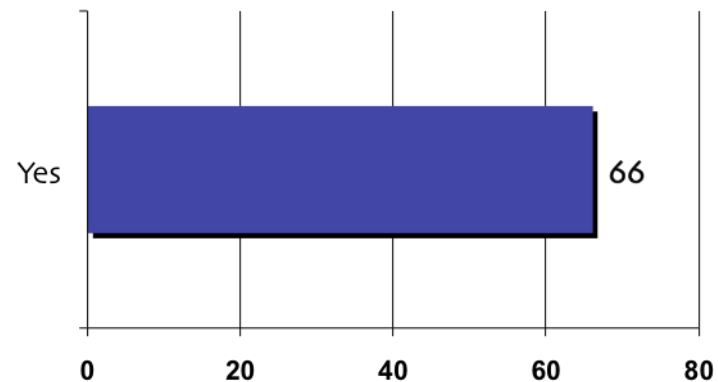


Among planners from Full-service shops, only 14% selected "Leading Discipline"

# Officers and management (in percentages)



Is the Head of Planning at your company part of the executive committee (i.e. top management)?



## Are we using recruiters?

Answered "Yes" to Used a recruiter to get my current job.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Used a recruiter (USA)	41%	30%	24%	28%
Used a recruiter (outside USA)	N/A	25%	24%	14%

As the number of respondents rise, these numbers become more and more accurate, but I was surprised to see it drop so sharply outside the US this year.



# Movin' on up

This year I asked the 206 planning directors to help us tease out the differences in skills between levels. So in a series of three questions they were asked what skills they would need to see to promote an assistant planner to a planner (or what they would look for in a planner hire), a planner to a senior planner (or hire), and a senior planner to a group planning director (or hire).

The answers alluded to mystical rites of passage... I wish! More an understanding of what career progression feels like if not pinning down one concrete answer. I encourage you to read through their answers.

I really like a comment I found on Richard Huntington's Adliterate from Tony.com that seems to articulate the progression well:

"I guess its really about making sure that you are working on the business that values what you are good at, at an agency that you are good at by telegraphing what you are good and bad at.

Because one's career as a planner probably goes in three parts>

Part 1) gaining your craft skills. this is when you have to make sure that you are passable at all the planning skills from data analysis to presentation.

Part 2) making your name. this is when you get to understand your own planning style and because you are in the right place on the right business your career explodes.

Part 3) running the show. When you kinda have to be good at everything again because you look after all the agency's business and though you can be selective in who gets your efforts you still have to talk a good game across the piece."

# Digital Planners

About 100 people who took the survey describe themselves as digital planners. To the vast majority of them, they are simply taking similar skills and applying them to new media. The difference often is in who drives the overall brand strategy. That generally is the responsibility of the above the line agency. This also means less strategic research that the digital folks get to steer.

“As a digital planner, I like to think what I do in the digital space isn’t any different, at least in approach. I consider a planners job to understand the intersection of culture, business and creativity - and I strive for that across the board... On a down note, not being AOR means not having full control over your client brands, which has been a bit of a mental shift (and struggle) for me.”

Digital planners are also teaching their clients a lot about technology. But money is swinging their way as TV and print budgets are shifted to digital.

This question prompted several people to identify themselves as integrated planners, confident that they are working across the spectrum.

“I’m not one, but I consider digital in every strategy I work on. I no longer see the point of uniquely ‘digital’ planners.”

# Connection Planners

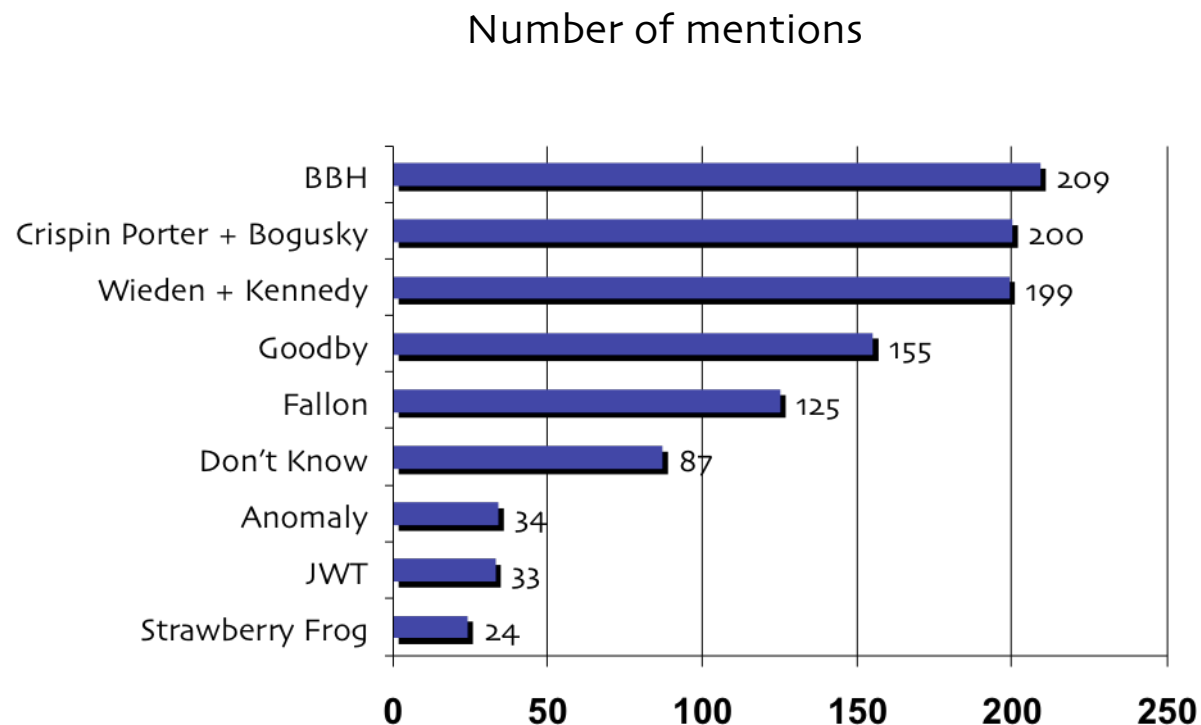
Only a handful of people identify themselves as connection or context planners. They talk about finding insights to reach the right person and defining the target more sharply. There seems to be a lot of overlap with media strategy.

“I am a connections planner or what my agency calls a “context” planner. We do everything that an account planner does (consumer understanding, insight development, applied strategic thinking, ideation, facilitation, etc.) but focused on the development of great connections/media strategies and ideas as opposed to creative campaigns and ideas.”

I identified with the majority of folks who had some vague notion of connection with the media strategy. Seems a bit like what we heard (or read) about when planners first came on the scene. Creative would happen without planners, we just hope an extra pair of hands make it better. Now I think connection planners are an extra pair of hands on the media front.

Finally, there was quite a bit of confusion on this one, with people taking a pass with “I don’t know.” This area is just not as established.

# Which one agency has the best planning department?



Very close call between BBH, CPB and WK. Several “new to the survey” mentions garnered a vote or two and made me curious to know more: Zeus Jones (great blog), Sunshine (India?), Scholz & Friends (doing cool stuff Europe, HQ in Germany), Brooklyn Brothers (London and NY; love the philosophy on the site), Bullet (Brazilian promotion agency) and Prophet (McKinsey-like, curious to know what you’re doing there). I’m familiar with some but have only cursory knowledge. Any planners from these shops want to point us to commentary on what you’re doing or guest blog for me?

\*Note: Strawberry Frog Amsterdam has split off and is now Amsterdam Worldwide

# Of all the planning directors out there, who would you most like to be your boss? Or if you are the boss, who is the most respected planning director in your opinion?

## A NOTE

Lots and lots of people said they don't know or there is no one. A couple of people didn't like the question and refused to play.

Interestingly, there's no one person we all idolize, though Russell Davies and Jon Steel come close with lots of mentions from around the world.

## USA

By far, Gareth Kay of Modernista! was mentioned the most and was the only person to reach double digits in the US. And besides Russell and Jon, Colin Drummond at CPB (I must agree here – you should all want to work with him!), Faris Yakob at McCann, and Aki Spicer at Fallon each had a handful of mentions.

## UK

Jon Steel and Russell still have this island locked down, but Richard Huntington from Saatchi and Saatchi may be next in line for the thrown.

## BRAZIL

Our planejador friends were much more likely to have an opinion here where Ken Fujioka of JWT and Ulisses Zamboni of SantaClaraNitro got gobs of mentions. Pedro Cruz from Agencia Africa appears to be a rising star.

## ALL IN TOTAL

When I look at all 1217 responses at once, Jon and Russell support bolsters and so too does Richard Huntington. But a couple others begin to pop including Guy Murphy who is the worldwide planning director at JWT based in London as well as Emma Cook, president of BBH in London.

# Salary results - USA

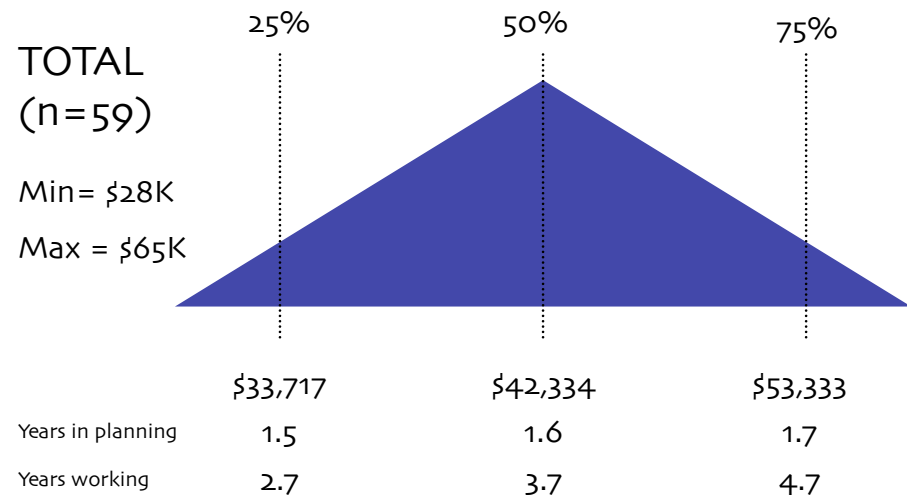
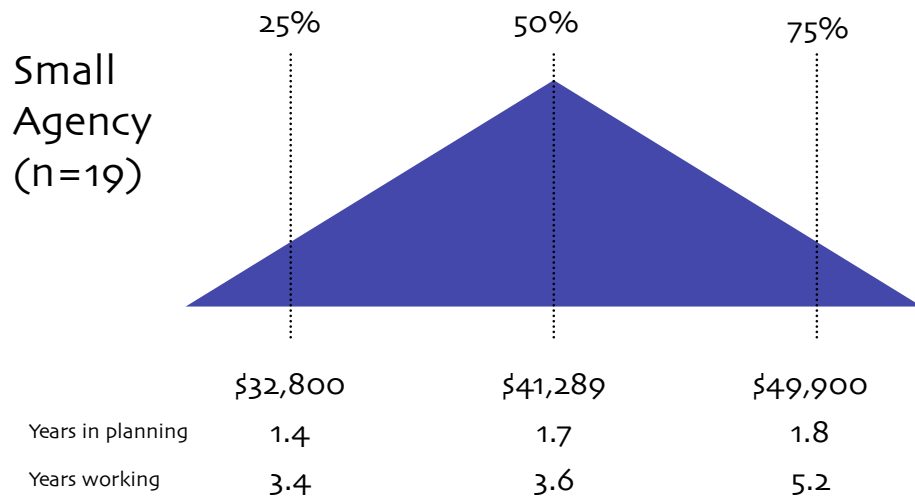
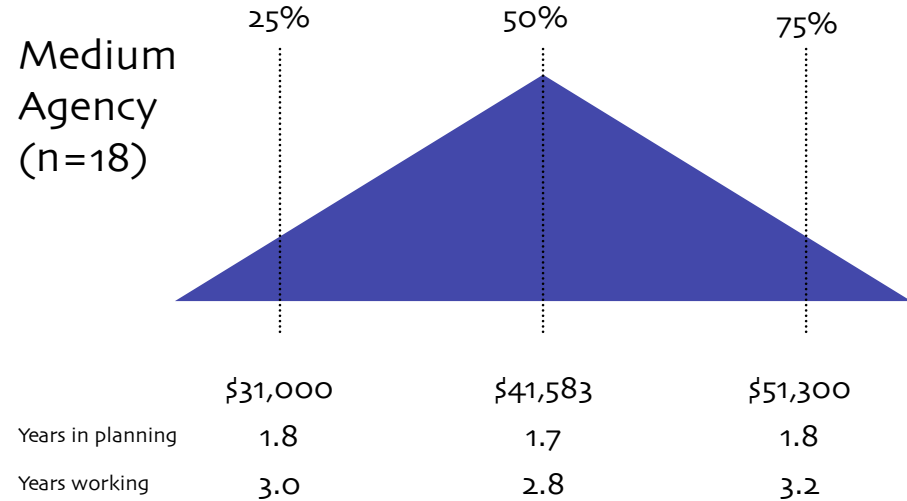
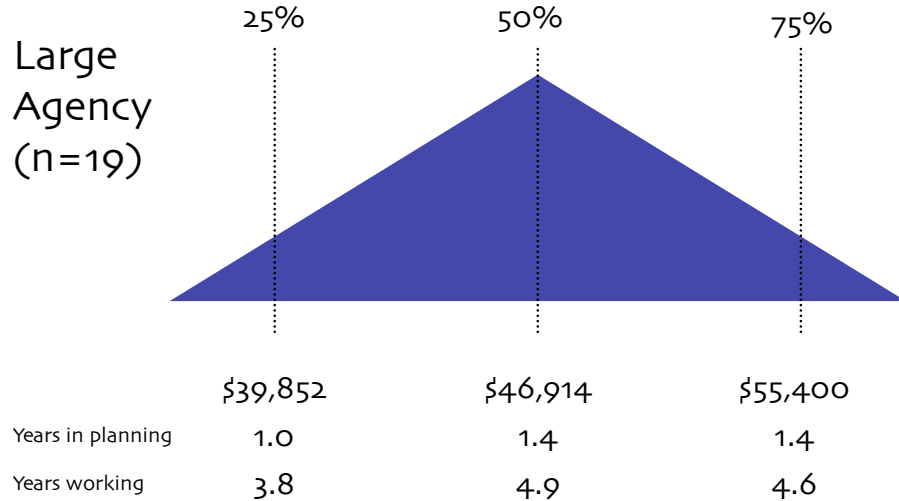
532 Americans participated – anyone who didn't give their salary is excluded in this section

## Key to reading salary info

- Salaries are shown as bell curves (ok, bell triangles) – with the mean as well as the 75th and 25th percentile.
  - For example, when you see a number listed under 75%, this is the average of the upper quarter of the set, the number under 50% is the average for the whole set, and the number under 25% is the average for the bottom quarter of the set.
- Past years' averages are in the upper right corner.
- This year I asked people to describe their company as tiny, small, medium or large. Tiny and Small have been added together except for the CEO/Partner level due to numbers.
- Absolute minimum and maximum salaries are shown next to the "total" curves.
- This year I also asked people if they are unemployed. Their most recent salaries are taken into consideration in the TOTAL portion for the level, but since they aren't with a company right now, they are not included in small, medium or large.

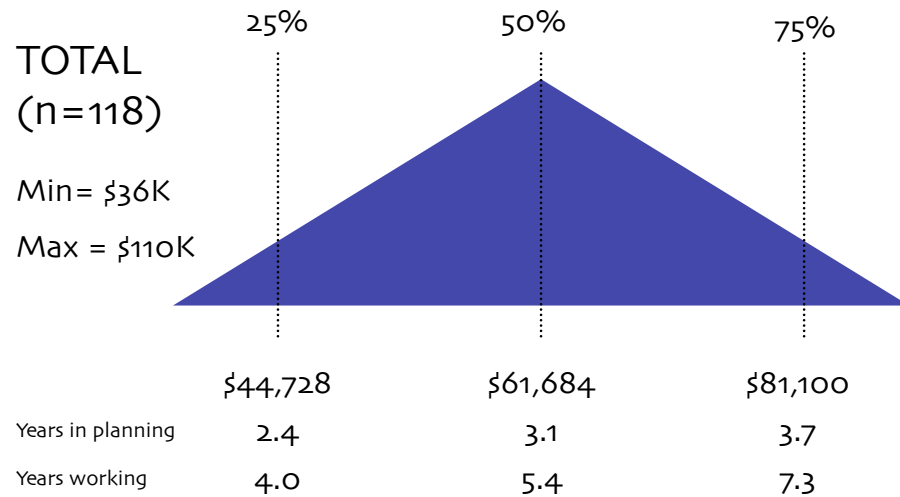
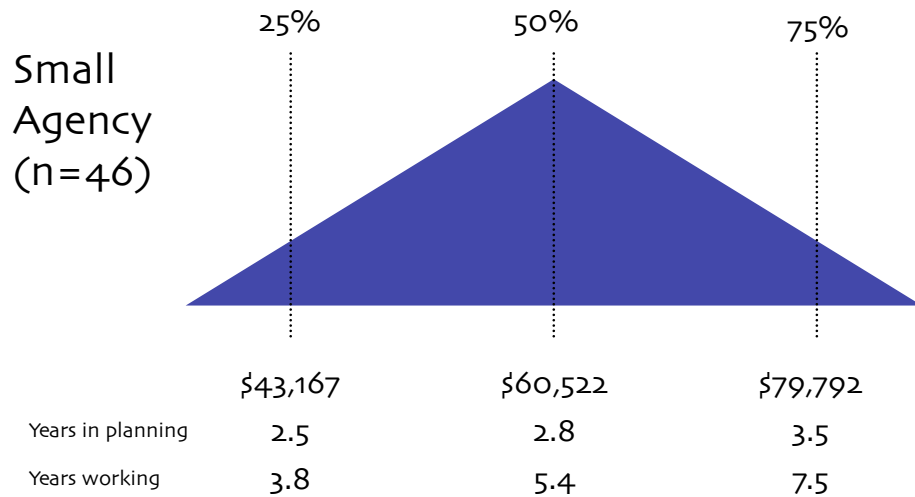
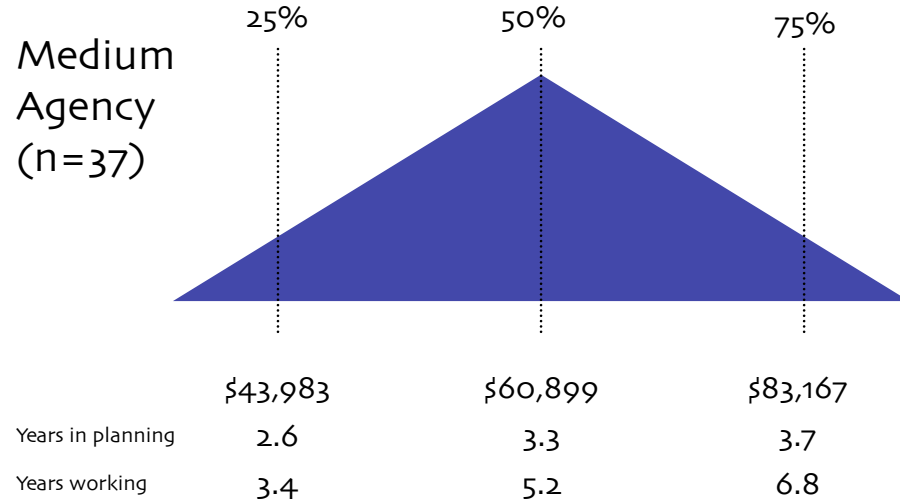
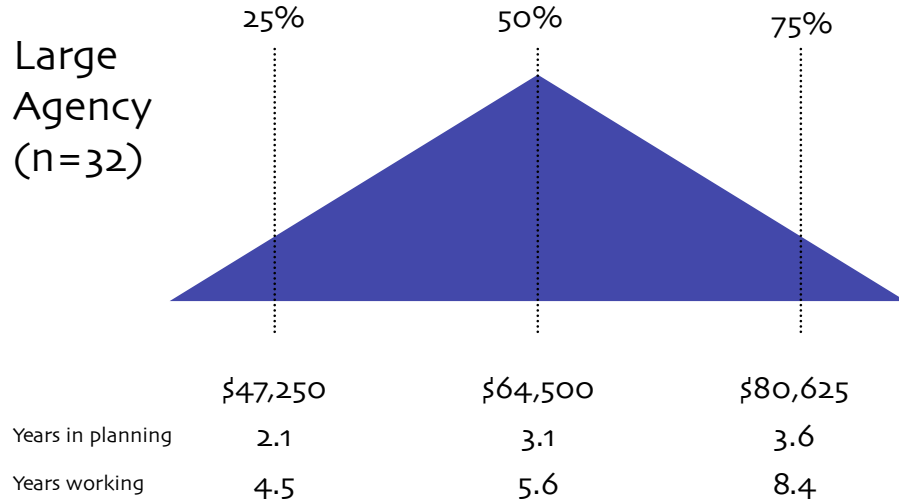
# Asst. Planner results - USA

	2005 Avg.	2006 Avg.	2007 Avg.	2008 Avg.
	\$39,580	\$39,067	\$38,219	\$43,036
Years in planning	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.6
Years working	3.5	3.4	2.7	3.3



# Planner results - USA

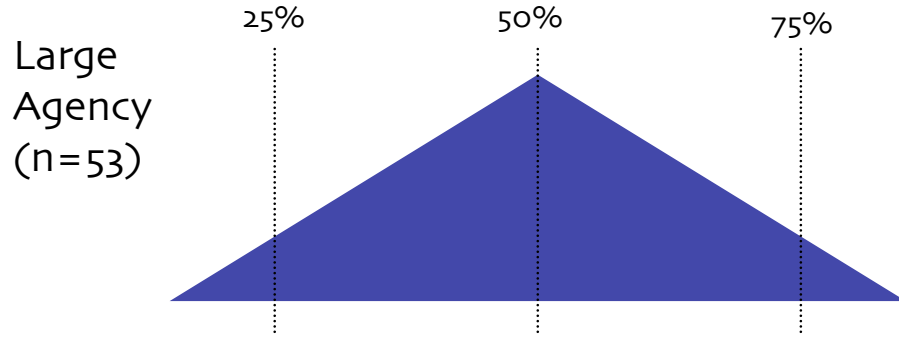
	2005 Avg.	2006 Avg.	2007 Avg.	2008 Avg.
Years in planning	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.6
Years working	5.8	5.5	4.9	5.3



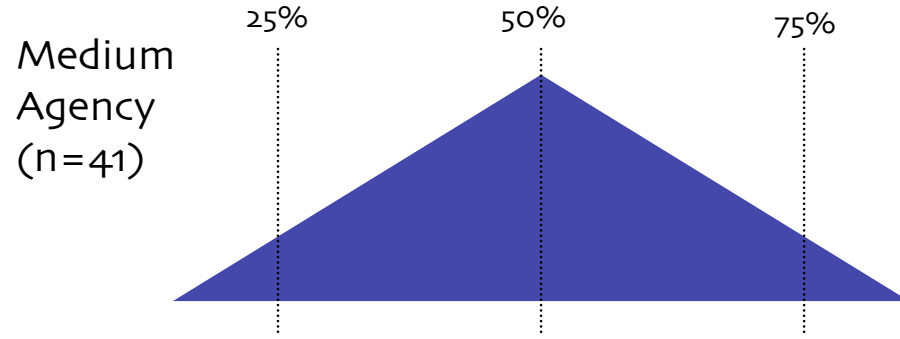


# Senior Planner results - USA

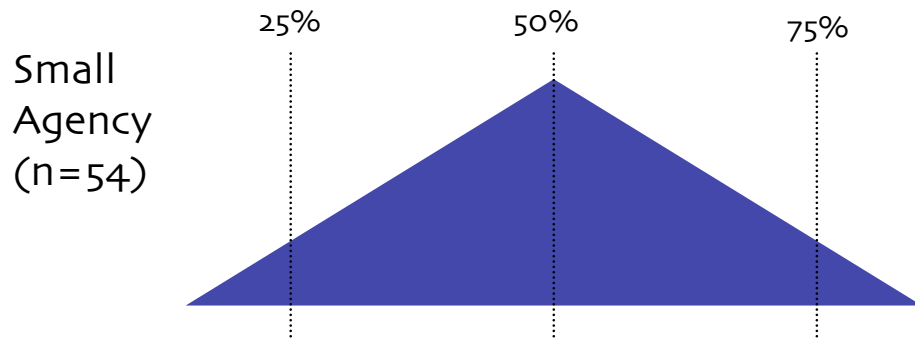
	2005 Avg.	2006 Avg.	2007 Avg.	2008 Avg.
Years in planning	5.3	5.9	6.0	5.9
Years working	9.5	9.9	9.7	9.8



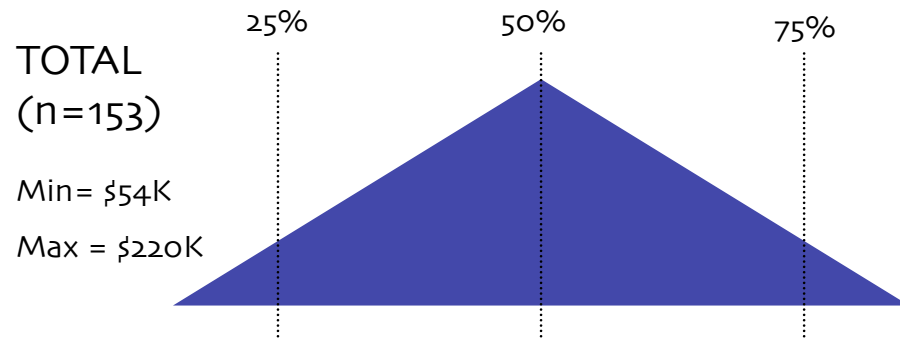
	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$71,792	\$111,075	\$162,615
Years in planning	4.8	5.8	8.2
Years working	8.5	10.0	13.1



	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$70,355	\$97,928	\$134,270
Years in planning	3.8	5.6	7.7
Years working	5.2	9.0	11.8



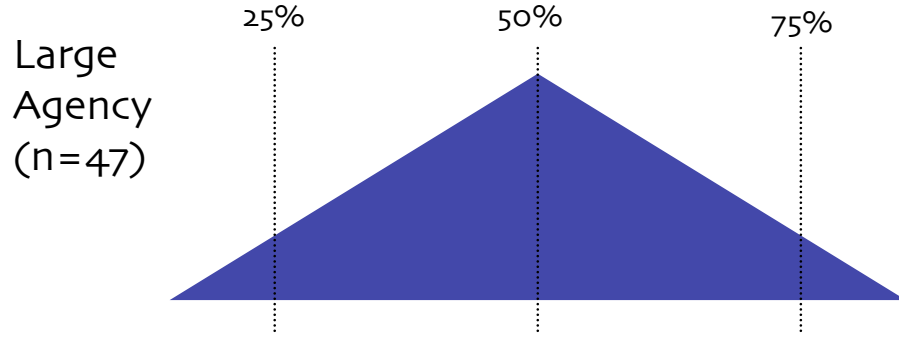
	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$67,950	\$95,936	\$135,179
Years in planning	6.0	6.1	6.9
Years working	6.5	10.3	14.5



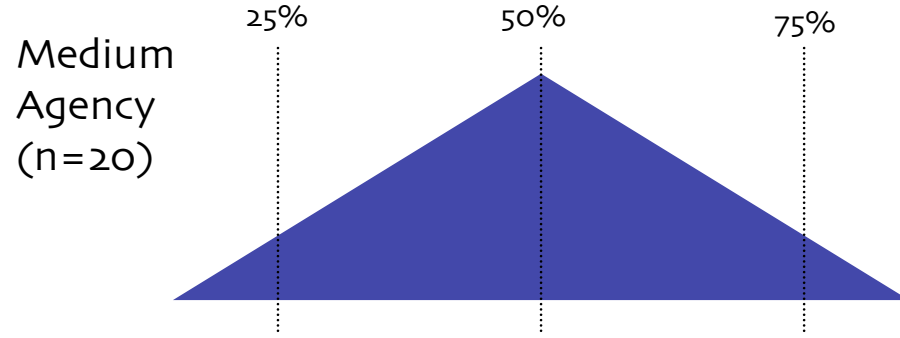
	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$69,207	\$101,154	\$147,816
Years in planning	5.0	5.9	7.3
Years working	7.1	9.8	13.1

# Group Planning Director results - USA

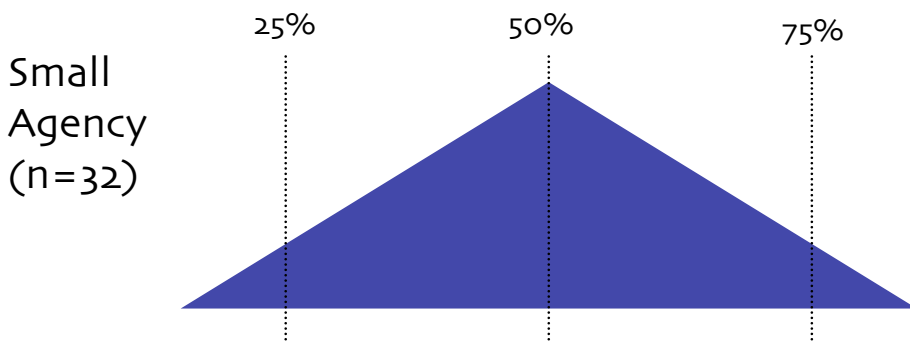
	2005 Avg.	2006 Avg.	2007 Avg.	2008 Avg.
Years in planning	8.6	9.9	9.7	9.2
Years working	12.0	13.7	14.2	14.7



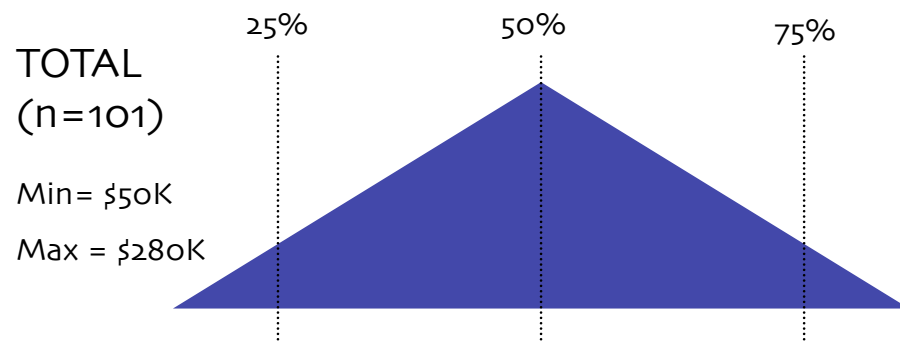
	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$109,917	\$177,832	\$250,833
Years in planning	8.3	10.3	12.7
Years working	12.2	15.1	18.8



	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$105,800	\$170,200	\$246,000
Years in planning	8.0	9.7	9.2
Years working	13.0	15.2	16.6



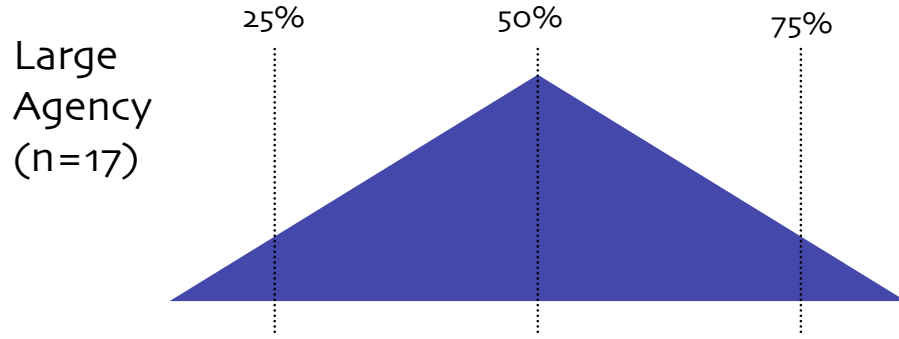
	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$99,875	\$148,344	\$195,000
Years in planning	6.9	9.4	11.5
Years working	13.6	13.8	14.6



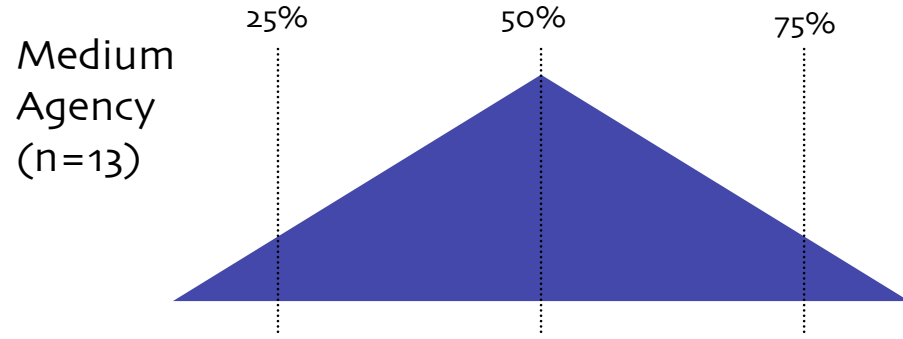
	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$104,720	\$166,546	\$237,040
Years in planning	7.7	9.8	12.1
Years working	13.0	14.5	16.8

# Head of Planning results - USA

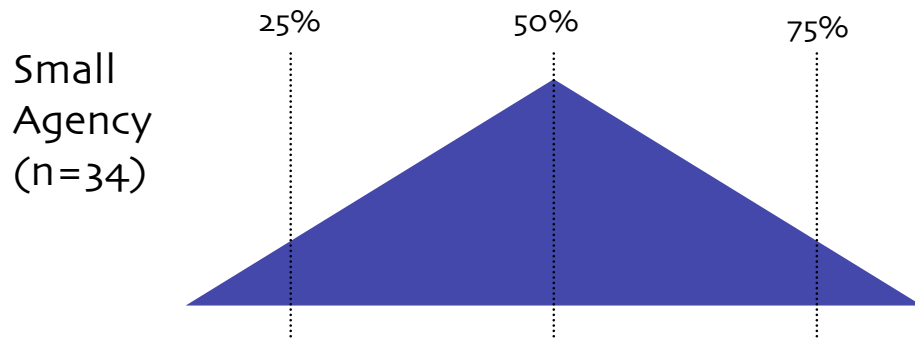
	2005 Avg.	2006 Avg.	2007 Avg.	2008 Avg.
Years in planning	\$159,091	\$172,188	\$167,421	\$181,159
Years working	9.6	11.1	9.3	10.3
	14.0	15.3	15.8	15.9



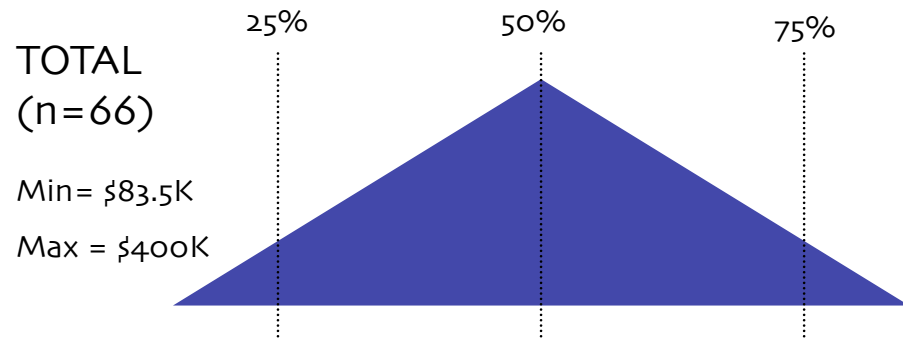
	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$128,375	\$223,676	\$293,750
Years in planning	8.0	10.5	13.3
Years working	11.3	16.2	18.0



	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$126,000	\$211,000	\$336,667
Years in planning	5.7	10.7	17
Years working	13.3	17.3	22.3



	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$100,556	\$172,912	\$274,444
Years in planning	8.9	11.1	13.4
Years working	14.1	17.2	18.4



	25%	50%	75%
Salary	\$109,735	\$197,643	\$287,000
Years in planning	8.8	11.0	14.3
Years working	14.9	17.2	19.7

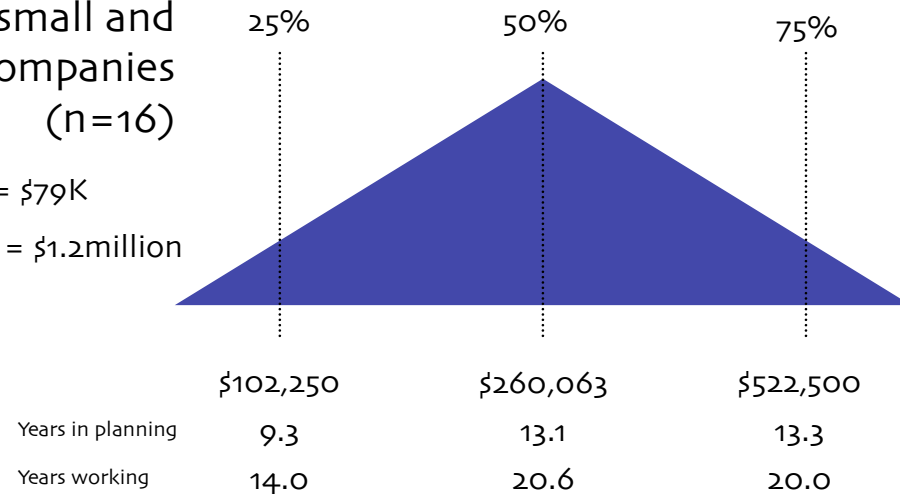
# CEO/President results - USA

First year we've had enough respondents at this level

TOTAL – All in small and tiny companies (n=16)

Min= \$79K

Max = \$1.2million



## General salary thoughts - USA

- Though a few of us have taken pay cuts, overall salaries are steady or rising. Truman Bewely said in his book *Why Wages Don't Fall in a Recession* that the savings from cuts rarely outweighs the dent in workers' morale. Here's hoping.
- This is the first year that a group hasn't grown in number of respondents – number of Planner level respondents fell from 130 to 118. Does that mean there are less out there?

# Salary results - International

- We had 685 completed surveys from the rest of the world – for the first time surpassing the US total where the survey (and I) started
- There was a huge increase from Brazil (up from 38 people last year) with strong increases from Germany and Spain.

Argentina	16	Dom. Rep.	1	Malaysia	5	Spain	57
Australia	8	Ecuador	1	Mexico	28	Sweden	7
Belgium	6	France	16	Netherlands	19	Switzerland	2
Brazil	220	Finland	1	New Zealand	1	Thailand	1
Bulgaria	1	Germany	64	Norway	3	UAE	2
Canada	15	India	19	Peru	1	UK	104
Chile	1	Indonesia	1	Philippines	3	Venezuela	1
China	7	Israel	1	Portugal	7	LatAm	1
Columbia	7	Italy	13	Romania	14	Asia	5
Croatia	1	Japan	2	Russia	1	Middle East	3
Denmark	2	Latvia	1	Singapore	9	Did not specify	5

## Salary results - International

To use myself as an example, you might be interested to know some of the differences between the US and my current position in the Netherlands.

First, I'm paid in Euros once per month – generally, in the US we're paid twice per month.

In May, I'm paid 8% of my annual salary as a vacation bonus (unheard of in the US).

Then in December I'm paid a "13<sup>th</sup> month" as a guaranteed bonus (also not common in the US – the most I've received is a 3% Christmas bonus there). Separating the payments like this seems to be a nudge to get you to spend money on holidays/vacations.

As an ex-pat, the Netherlands offers what they call Knowledge Migrants (that's me!) a 30% tax ruling that we can apply for. I've received this as well as all the ex-pats I know though it's not guaranteed. This means I do not pay tax on the first 30% of my income. I figure I will pay about 30% of my total income in taxes here. My Dutch colleagues pay closer to 40-45%. In the US I was paying just under 20% of my total income in taxes. You begin to see why we don't have universal health care in the US and what it might cost to do the job.

Finally, we have approximately 8 bank holidays like Christmas, New Year's Day, and Easter Monday, and we receive 25 vacation days. We have to use 4 of those days added to bank holidays to make 4-day weekends. We chose when to take the other 21 days. In the US, I typically received 11 bank holidays and 15 vacation days.

## Salary results – International cont.

Remember, the key to reading the salary info:

- Salaries are shown as bell curves (ok, bell triangles) – with the mean as well as the 75th and 25th percentile.
  - For example, when you see a number listed under 75%, this is the average of the upper quarter of the set, the number under 50% is the average for the whole set, and the number under 25% is the average for the bottom quarter of the set.
- Most of the time, there aren't enough people to break out by company size. Absolute minimum and maximum salaries are shown next to the "total" curves.
- For Germany and Spain, I've shown some ranges and averages to give us an idea of what they make, but there aren't enough yet to break out by company size.
- I also write numbers the "American" way – 1,000.00 is one thousand to me whereas you'd likely think of it as 1.000,00. Sorry.



# Salary results – Brazil

Some challenges with the responses from Brazil:

- Brazilians really think of their salaries as per month – luckily some noted “per month” – even though I asked for total annual salary, but many I had to guess.

- To help me guess, I found out that the legal minimum wage is R\$465 per month, or R\$5,580 per year. Several people claiming to be assistant planners said they made very near this amount. I reached out to a few folks from Brazil who thought these were likely interns saying they are assistant planners or planners.

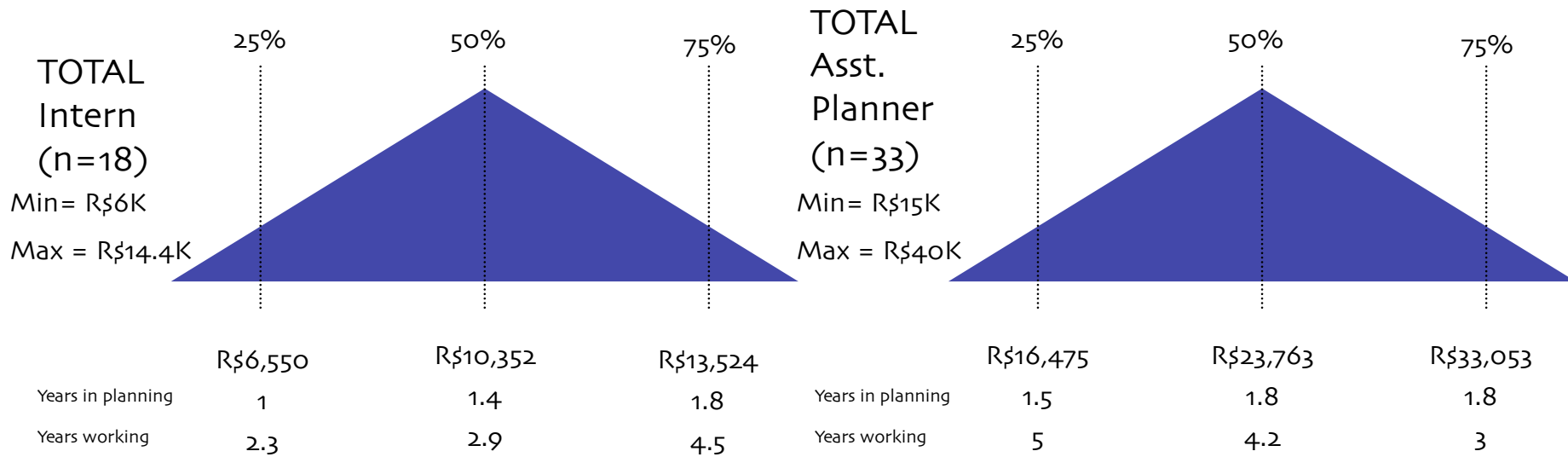
- A recruiter I spoke with there says many agencies have recently started planning departments and that she’d expect salaries to vary widely, though she guessed these averages based on placements she’s made:

- Asst: R\$2,500 per month (R\$30K per year)
- Planner: R\$7,000 per month (R\$84K per year)
- Senior: R\$11,000 per month (R\$132K per year)
- GPD: R\$18,000 per month (R\$216K per year)
- HOP: R\$30,000 per month (R\$360K per year)

- There are two options in Brazil – become a full-time employee and receive a 13<sup>th</sup> month like I do in Holland plus 1/3 of their salary as a holiday bonus and 30 days including weekends of vacation (sweet!) OR it is possible to be hired as a contractor and receive all or none of this. Perhaps some people didn’t add up everything.

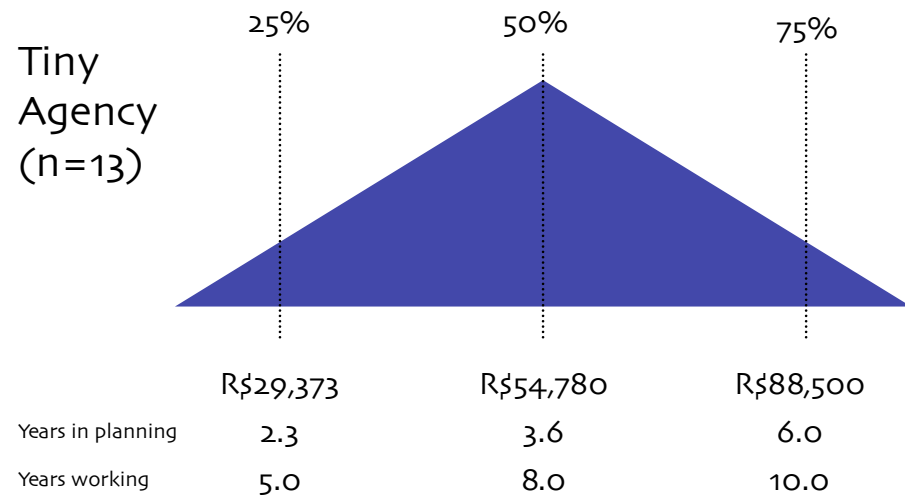
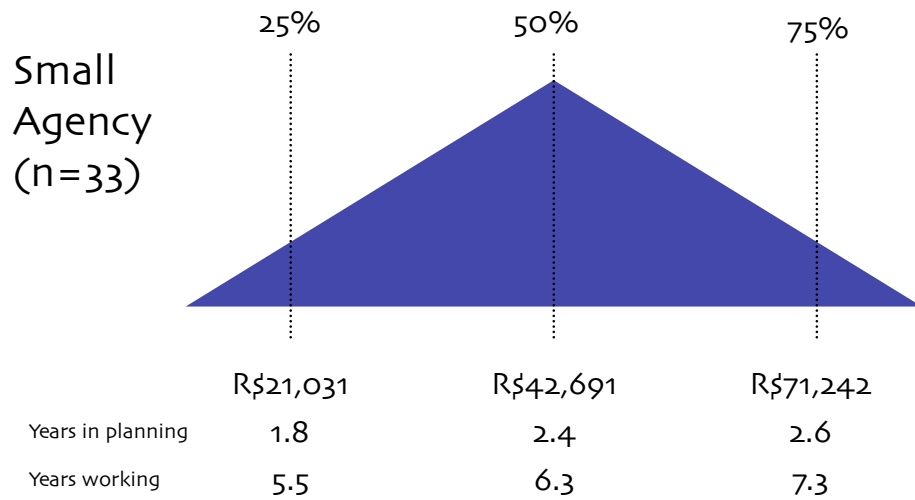
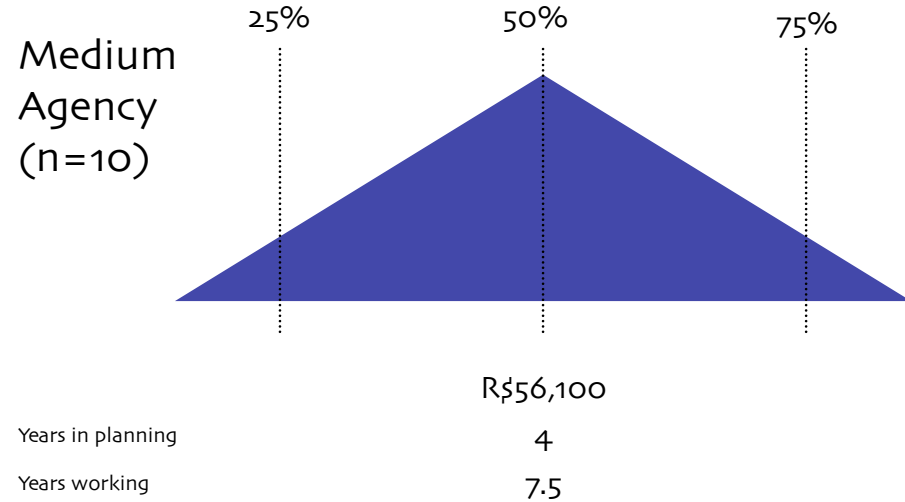
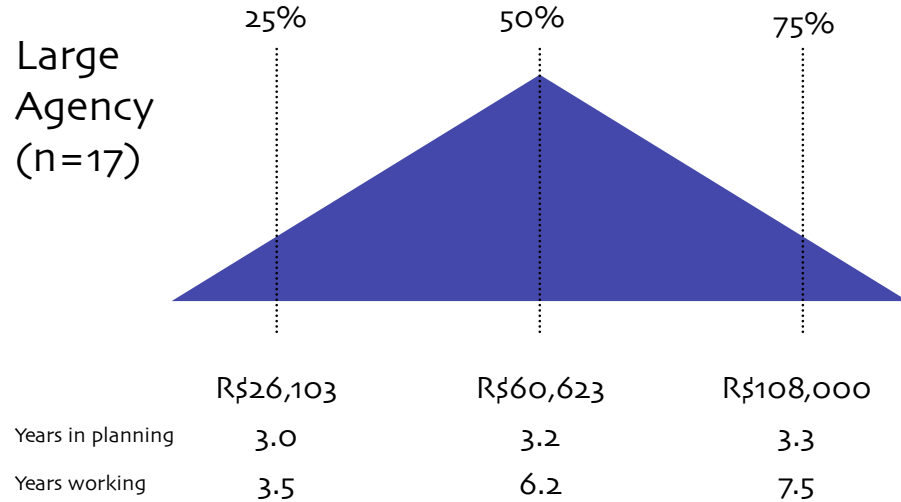
- Based on this information, I arbitrarily labeled 18 people with annual salaries less than R\$15,000 per year as interns. Please email me if you are truly a full-time, salaried assistant planner or planner making in the R\$6,000-15,000 per year range and help me understand your situation. I’ll write about it on the blog.

# Intern and Assistant Planner results – Brazil (remember – this is \$R *per year*)

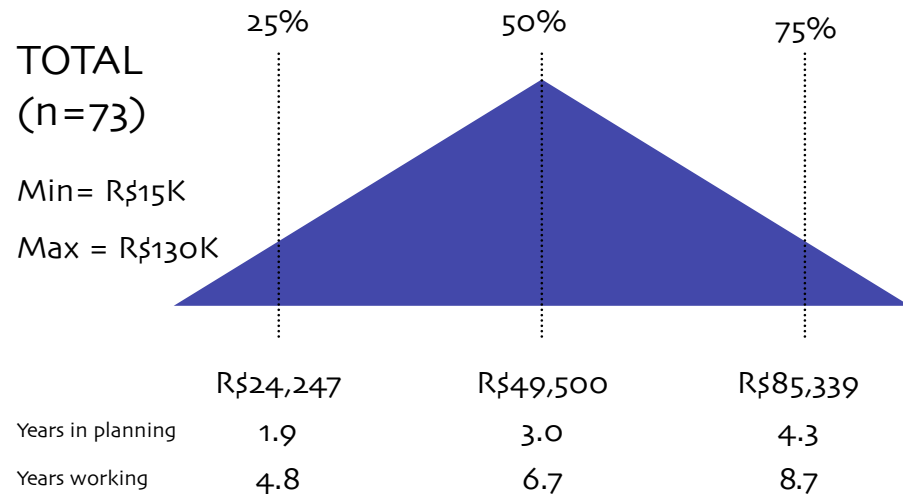


I created an intern group because these salaries seem to be too low

# Planner results - Brazil



# Planner results – Brazil cont.



Note: Here too, I had 2 people say they are a planner level making less than R\$15K – I put these in the intern group. Plus 11 people are making less than R\$30K but I left them in. Are you really at the planner level?

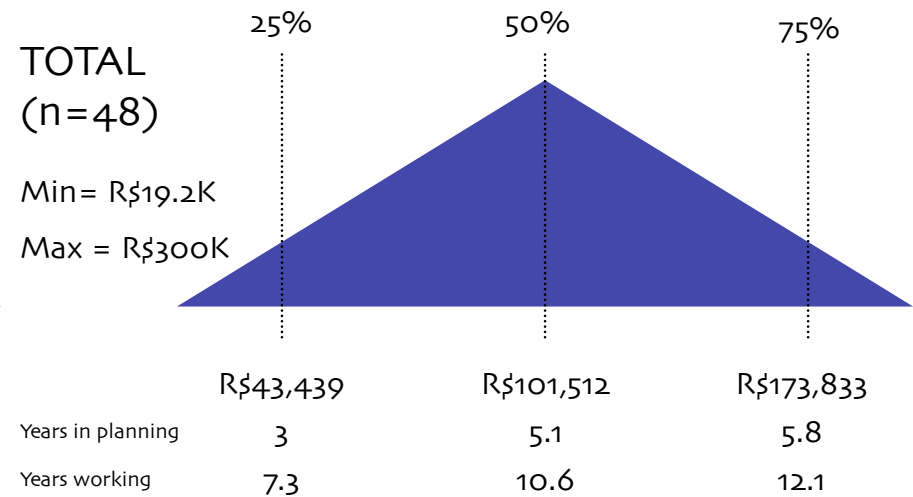
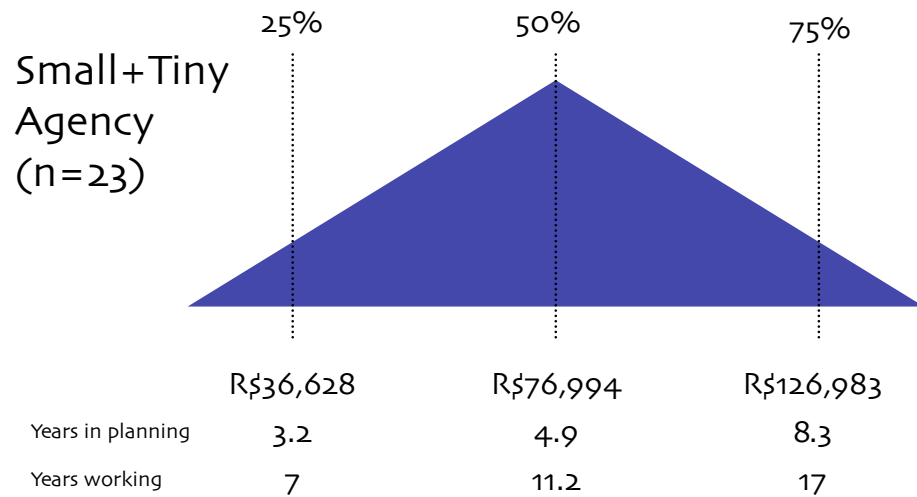
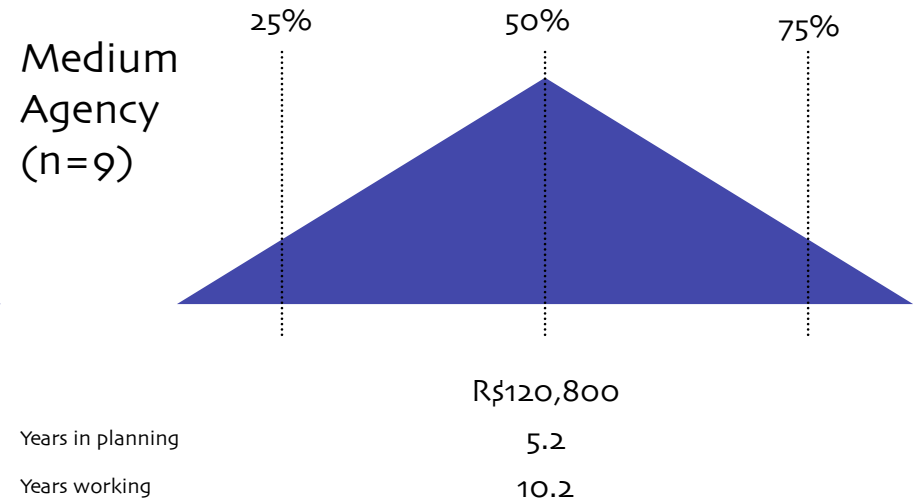
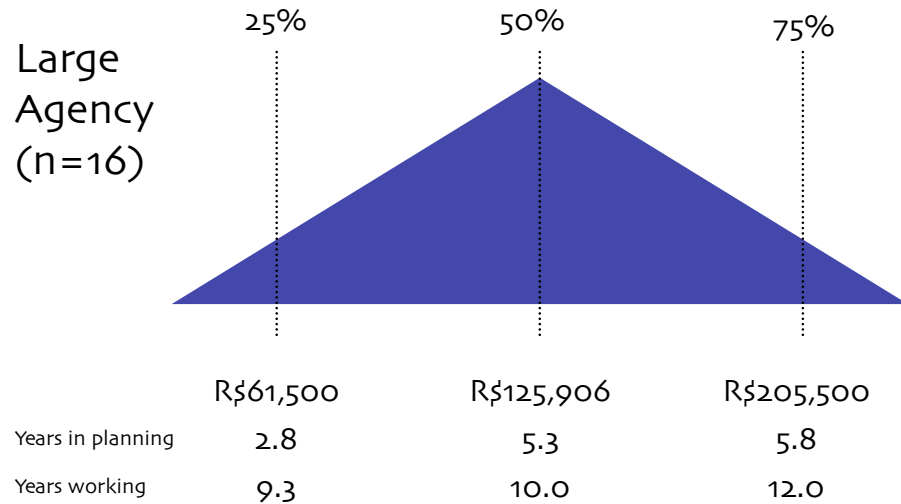
A few people are paid in US dollars, Euros or Pounds. I converted these amounts based on these exchange rates:

$$1 \text{ USD} = \text{R}\$1.8$$

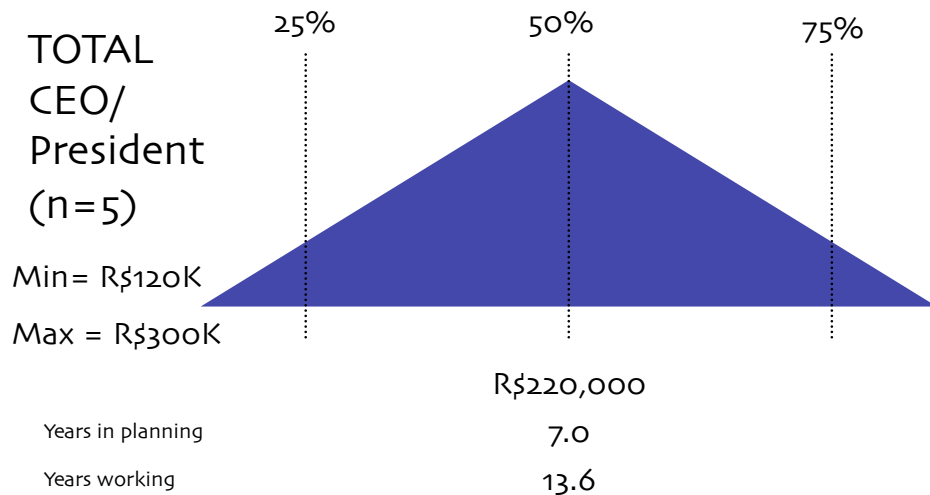
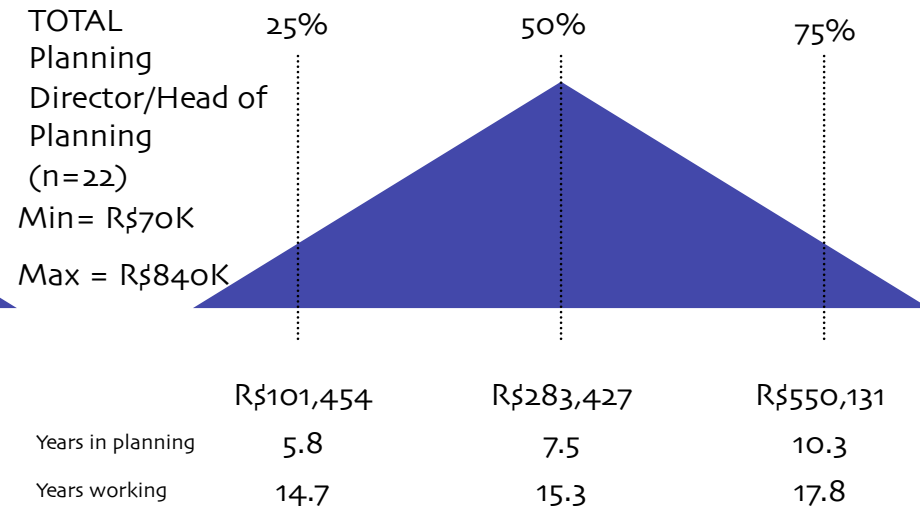
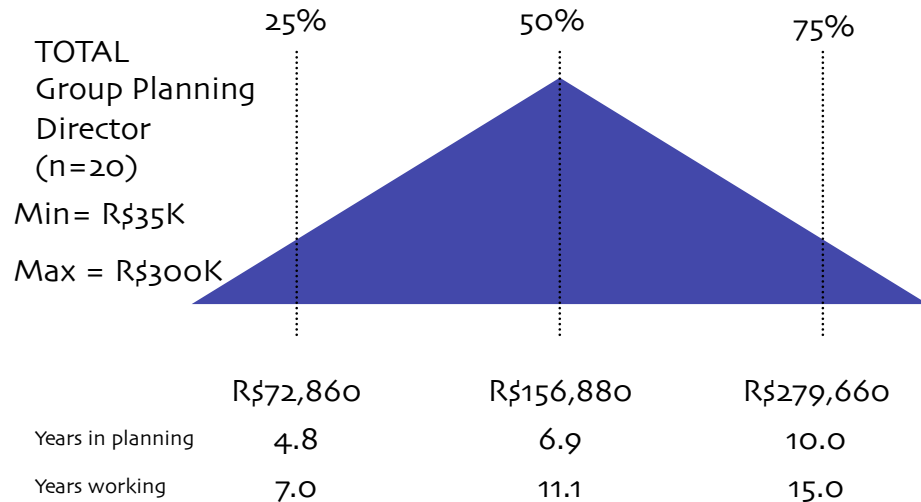
$$1 \text{ Euro} = \text{R}\$2.6$$

$$1 \text{ Pound} = \text{R}\$3.0$$

# Senior Planner results - Brazil



# Group Planning Director, Head of Planning, and CEO results - Brazil



Note: I had to make some guesses on whether you told me your monthly salary or yearly – hope I guessed right.

Again, I converted a few salaries based on these conversion rates:

1 USD = R\$1.8

1 Euro = R\$2.6

1 Pound = R\$3.0

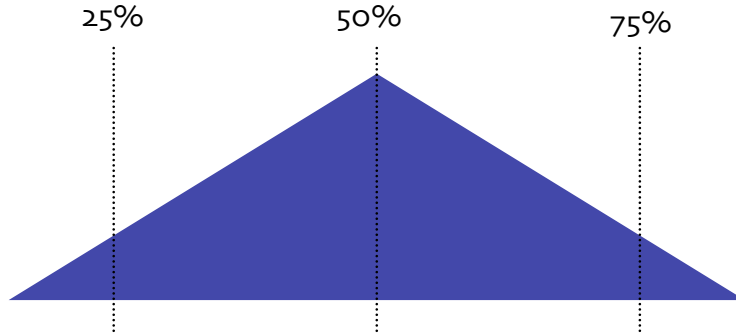
## Salary results – UK

OK, UK, it's your turn.

I did not link back to last year's numbers because they were so different from this year. Last year I asked everyone to convert to US dollars and I don't think everyone did. This year we're starting fresh and using pounds.

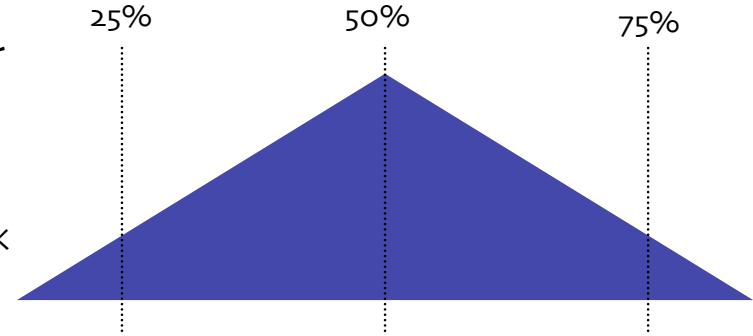
# Salary results – UK

Asst.  
Planner  
(n=9)  
Min = £15K  
Max = £33K



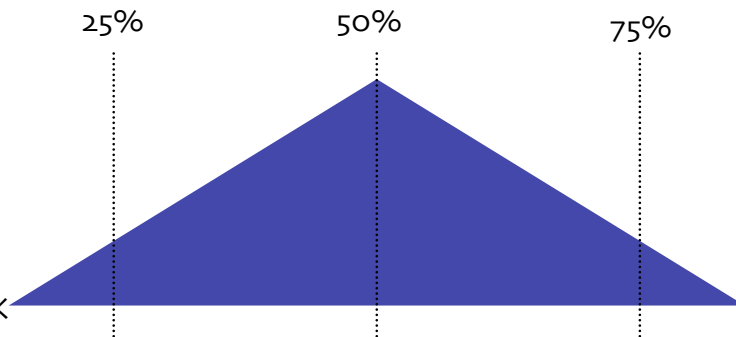
	25%	50%	75%
Years in planning		1.6	
Years working		2.8	

Planner  
(n=25)  
Min = £25K  
Max = £54K



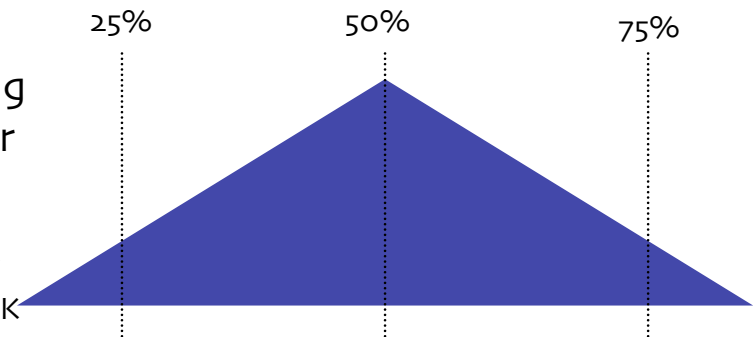
	25%	50%	75%
Years in planning		3.2	3.7
Years working		4.9	8.8

Senior  
Planner  
(n=31)  
Min = £30K  
Max = £100K



	25%	50%	75%
Years in planning	4.1	5.3	7.0
Years working	7.8	9.5	12.9

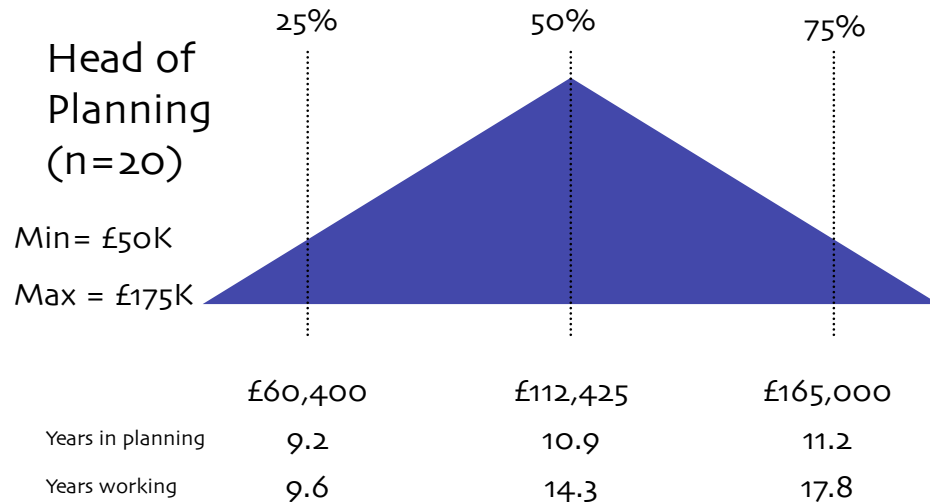
Group  
Planning  
Director  
(n=14)  
Min = £60K  
Max = £110K



	25%	50%	75%
Years in planning	5.6	9.9	11.3
Years working	11.3	17.7	22.5



## Salary results – UK cont.



CEO/  
President –  
too few to  
share info  
(n=2)

Thoughts on the UK:  
With 101 people providing their salaries across all levels, these numbers are still pretty directional. But they do align very closely with the US at the moment with an exchange rate of \$1.66 to £1.

## Salary results – Germany

	Asst. Planner (n=20)	Planner (n=18)	Sr. Planner (n=13)	Group Planning Director (n=1)	Head of Planning (n=10)	CEO/ President (n=1)
Minimum salary	€24,000	€28,800	€45,000	-	€70,000	-
Maximum salary	€36,000	€50,000	€80,000	-	€190,000	-
Average Salary	€29,337	€38,324	€61,523	-	€109,122	-
Avg. years in planning	1.6	3.3	5.3	-	10.8	-
Avg. years working	3.2	5.4	9.4	-	13.2	-

# Salary results – Spain

	Asst. Planner (n=5)	Planner (n=14)	Sr. Planner (n=13)	Group Planning Director (n=3)	Head of Planning (n=17)	CEO/ President (n=2)
Minimum salary	€13,000	€25,600	€30,000	€47,000	€30,000	-
Maximum salary	€60,000	€40,000	€80,000	€80,000	€160,000	-
Average Salary	€30,400	€31,815	€52,369	€66,333	€81,344	€110,000
Avg. years in planning	1.1	2.9	5.2	8.7	8.3	19.5
Avg. years working	4.7	6.6	11.2	10	15.1	24.5



€13K seems to be too low – there were 3 salaries under €25K – are these interns or part-time? Or does Spain really pay this poorly?

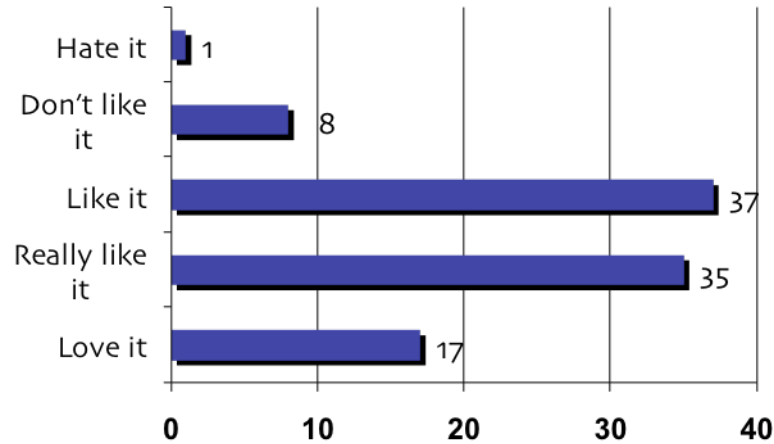
## Bank Holidays and Vacation Comparison (averages)

	USA	Brazil	UK	Germany	Spain
Bank holidays	10.1	8.2	7.8	7.1	8.8
Vacation days	15.5	26.2	24.0	25	24.1

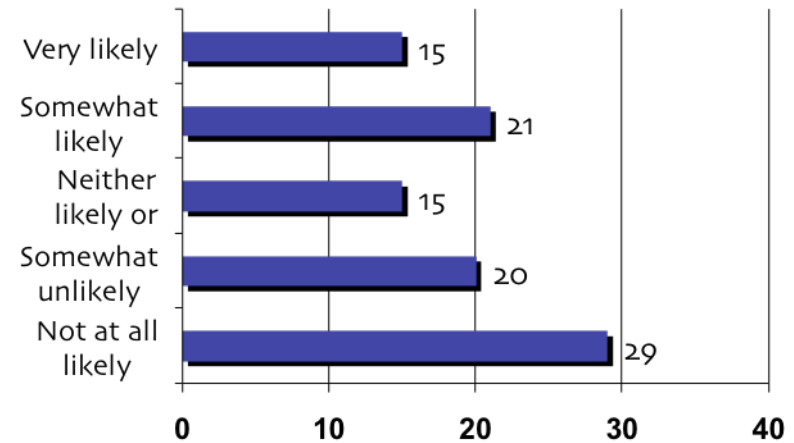
I think we all knew this, but here it is in black and white to see. You essentially get two more weeks of life per year outside of the US. What's that worth to you?

# How do we feel about our jobs? (in percentages)

## How much do you like your current job?



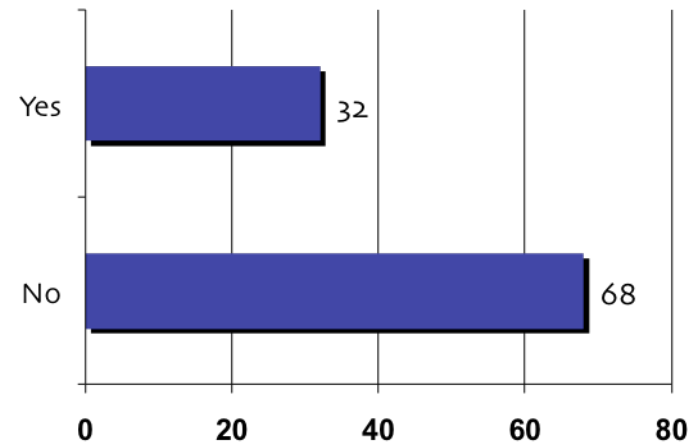
## How likely are you to change jobs this year?



How much we like our jobs is back in line with previous years ("don't like" was a little higher last year).

And we're pretty good at estimating our own turnover. 36% say they'll likely move this year, compared to 39% last year. And for the first time, I've asked if we actually *did* move. 32% followed through and changed jobs. I found some stats that say turnover for Professional and Business Services in the US is around 28% compared to Food Service at 56%. So job-wise we're a little sluttier than other white collar jobs, but not as much as waitresses.

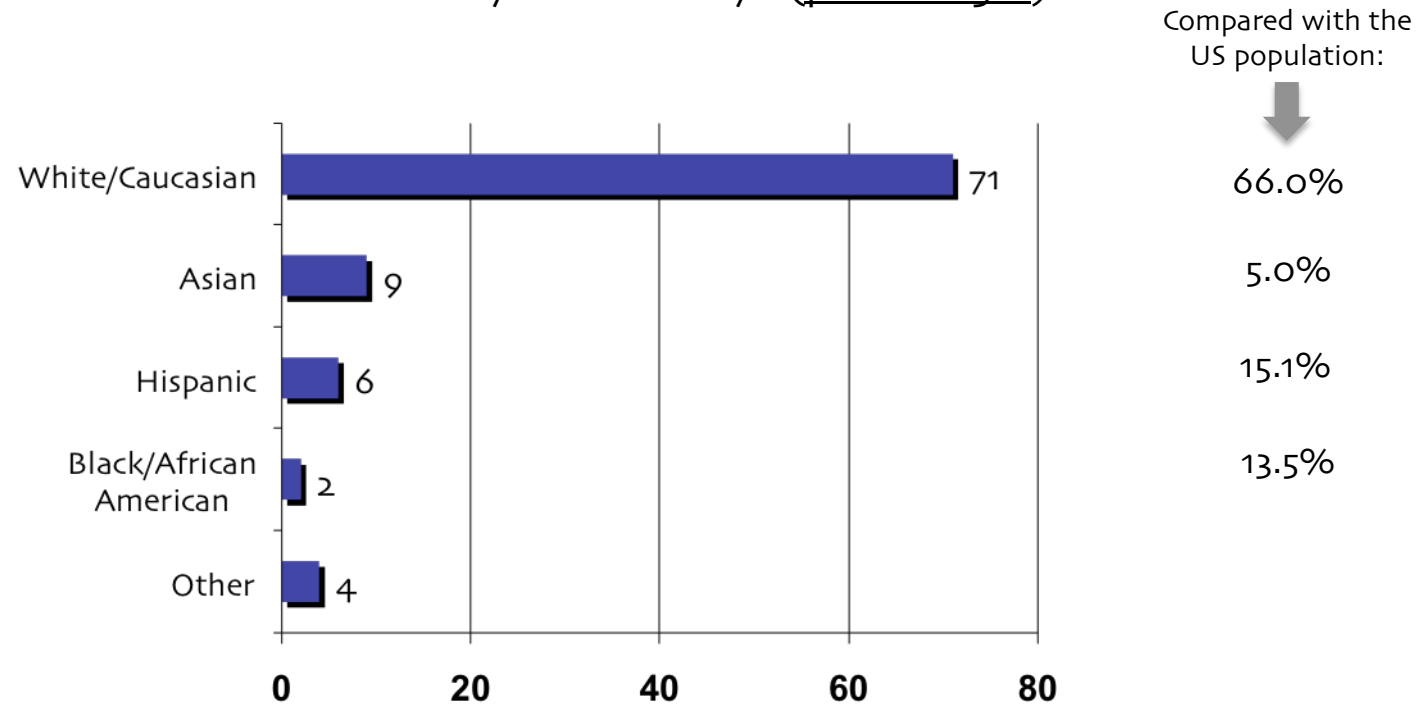
## Have you changed jobs in the past 12 months?



Turnover stats: <http://www.nobscot.com/survey/index.cfm>

# Personal info - USA

Which best describes your ethnicity? (percentages)



This is why diversity recruiting programs in the US are still a good idea.

## Demos by title – all (percentages)

It appears that female planners and senior planners aren't having kids as soon as their male colleagues

	Asst. Planners (n=168)			Planners (n=321)			Sr. Planners (n=325)		
Male	42			46			53		
Female	58			54			47		
Have kids at home	Male 1.4	Avg 1.8	Female 2	Male 8.7	Avg 5.9	Female 3.5	Male 26.2	Avg 23.1	Female 19.6
No kids at home	98			94			77		

	Group Planning Directors (n=165)			Head of Planning (n=206)			CEO (n=32)		
Male	51			74			63		
Female	49			26			37		
Have kids at home	Male 35.7	Avg 37.6	Female 39.5	Male 52	Avg 51.5	Female 50	Male 40	Avg 40.6	Female 41.7
No kids at home	62			48			59		

## Closing thoughts

The survey has gotten too long. Many of you pointed that out in your suggestions, and I saw your point when it was time to do the analysis! You'll see that some analysis isn't here. I'm going to let it live on in my blog in the fall and winter. I'll be posting some additional things there so stay tuned.

I've also decided that it could be better as a team project rather than just little ol' me. I'd like to find two people who would like to join in this project. The perks? Well, I know I got my job in Amsterdam because of the contacts I had made through this survey. I've had rich and rewarding conversations with lots of planners that has furthered my thinking about what we do. And I guess it keeps my math skills sharp. As I think this has the most benefit for younger folks, I'm making it a competition. Make a one minute video why you want to be on the Survey Team, post it on youtube and send me the link. Due date September 30, 2009.



## Closing thoughts

Many of you were cut off when you ran out of space in the “suggestions for next year” question. Please come to the blog and discuss. Everyone’s ideas are welcome. I truly love getting to know more and more people through the survey. That has been the most rewarding part of doing this each year. So please contact me:

<http://illchangeyourlife.wordpress.com>

[hklefevre@gmail.com](mailto:hklefevre@gmail.com)

Follow me on Twitter: [hklefevre](#)

And I’m happy to pass along notes between contacts on LinkedIn, so please connect with me

Finally, many thanks to my quality control team: Ana Luiza Santos, Alex Wipperfurth, Alexandre Galliotto, Cameron Maddux, Cathy Molenda, Daniel De Tomazo, Davi Cosso, Franziska Luh, and Gareth Kay.