

Trends in the Connected Financial Close



BLACKLINE

Summary Results | September 2020



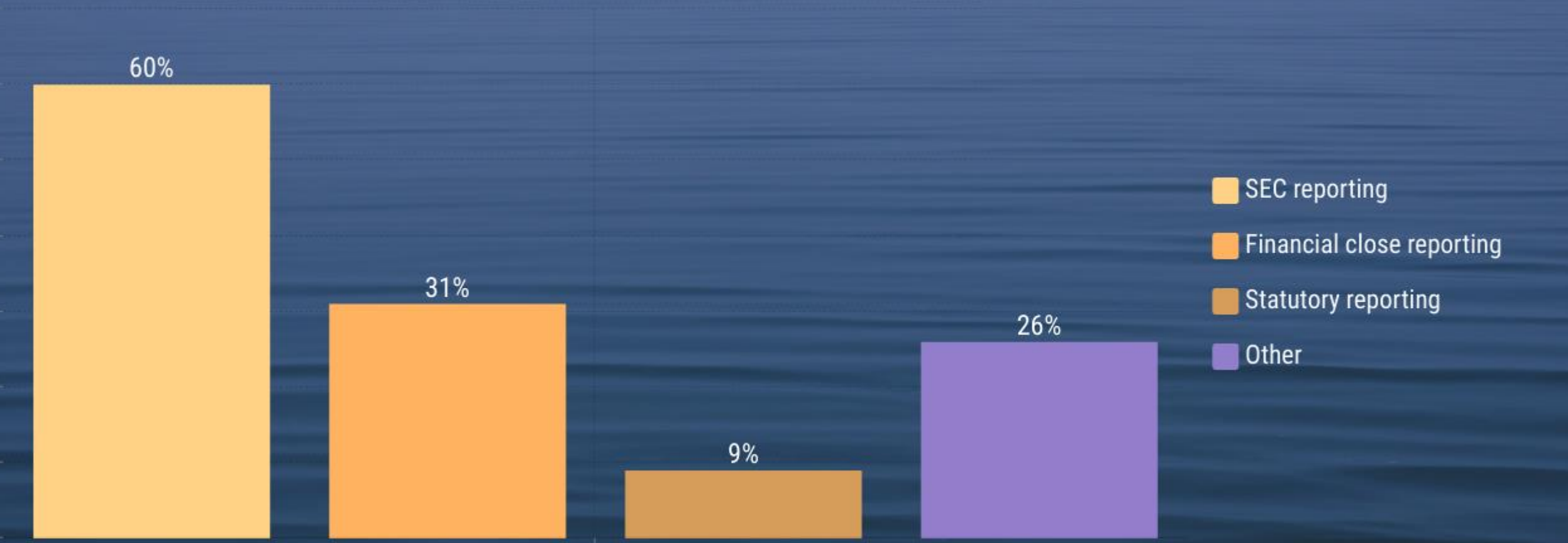
EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Accounting teams are increasingly pressed to manage the financial close process faster and more accurately, often in spite of the tools available to them. What tools are organizations using today, and how are they overcoming the challenges those tools and inherent processes create?

This survey asks respondents to report:

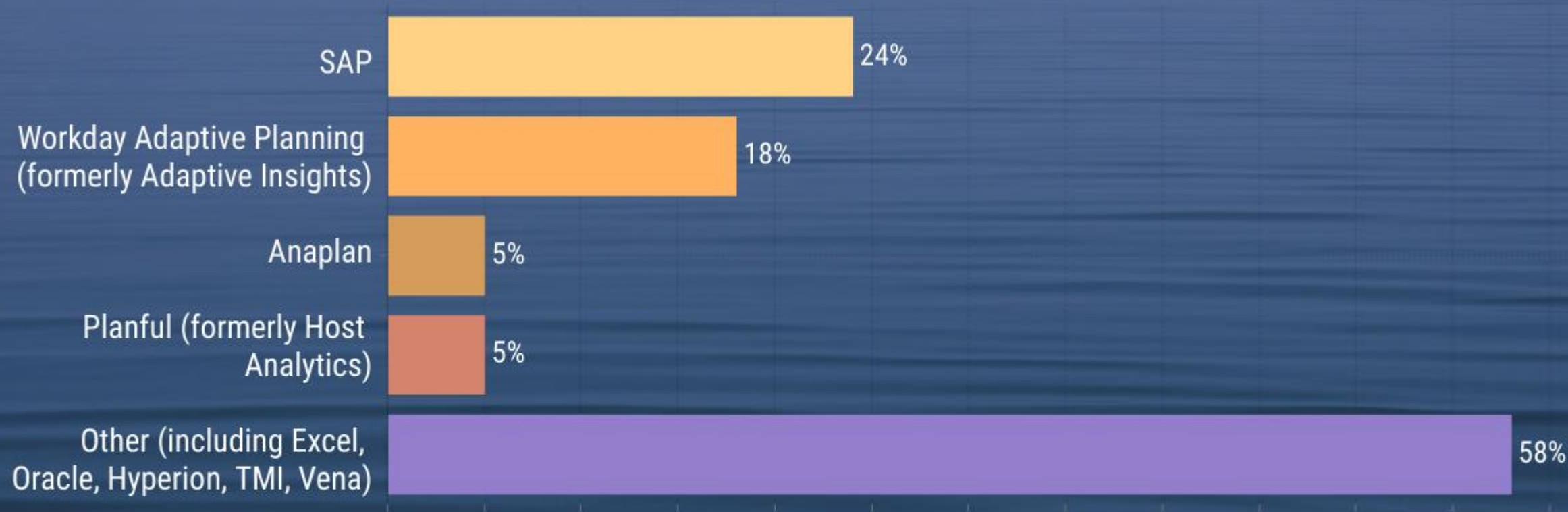
- What tools and systems are in place to support their accounting and finance processes?
- What are the most challenging aspects of those processes?
- What takes too much time? Causes the most organizational headaches?
- Are improvements on the horizon? In what timeframe?

How do you use Workiva's solutions?



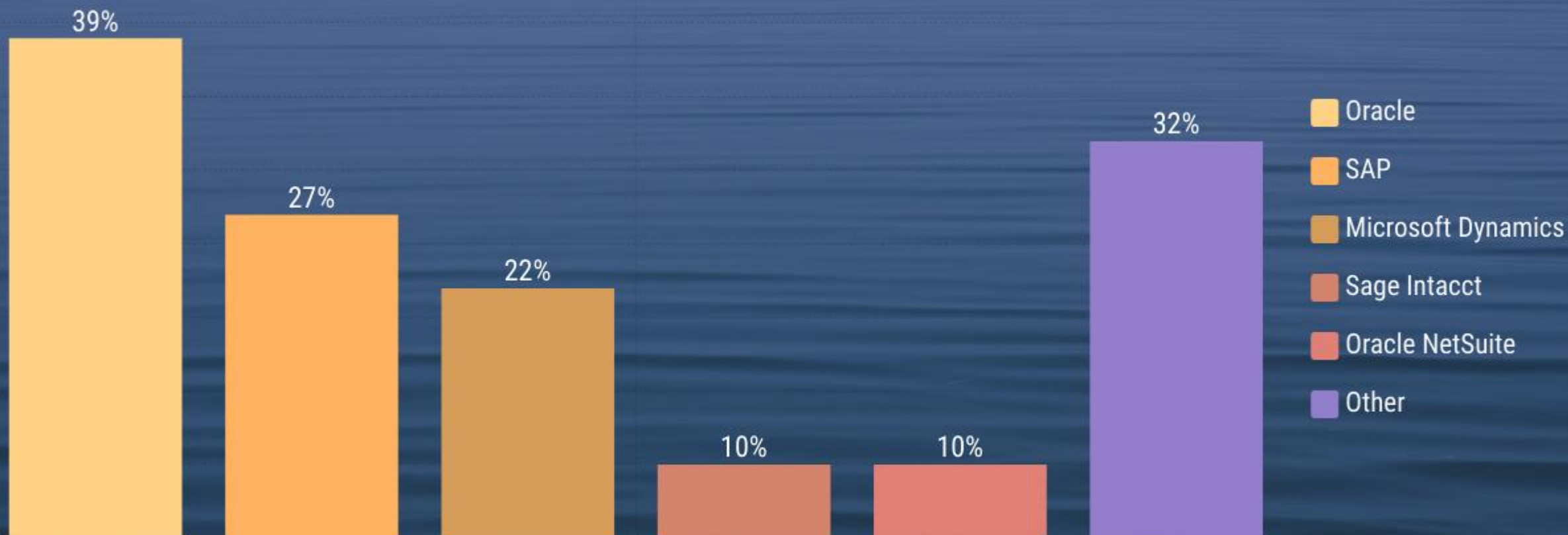
60% of those surveyed use Workviva solutions for SEC reporting. About half as many use Workviva solutions for financial close reporting, and a small number (9%) use it for statutory reporting.

Do you use any other tools for planning, consolidation, and reporting?



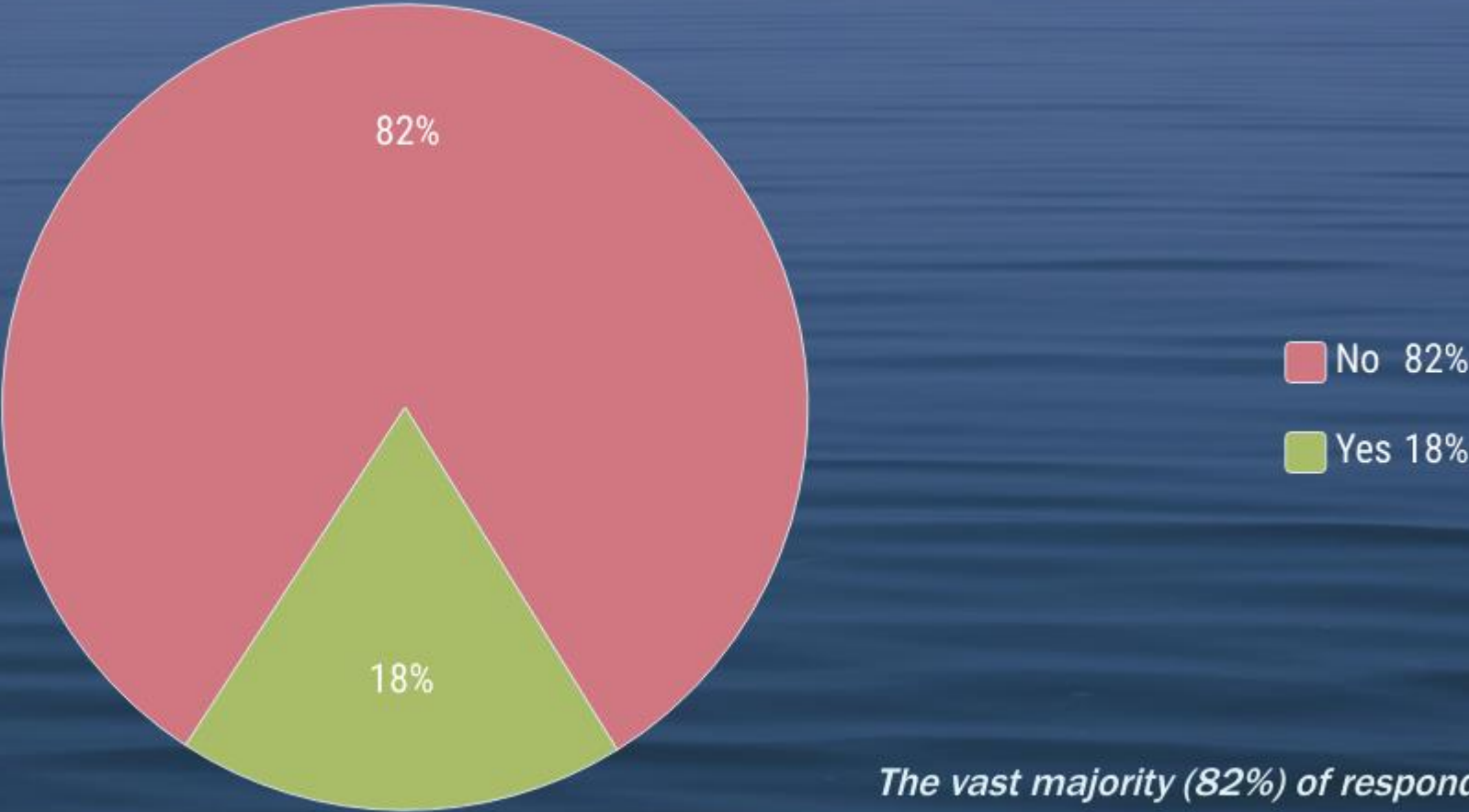
Responders use a wide variety of planning, consolidation, and reporting tools, including SAP (used by 24%), Workday Adaptive Planning (18%), Anaplan and Planful (5% each). In the crowded "Other" category, Excel is cited most often.

Which ERP provider(s) do you work with?



With 39% of respondents identifying it as their ERP provider, Oracle leads the list of providers, outpolling SAP (27%), Microsoft Dynamics (22%) and several others.

Besides your ERP solution(s) or Excel, do you use any other solution for close management?



The vast majority (82%) of respondents rely on their ERP and Excel to manage the close process.

How challenging are the following aspects of your accounting and finance processes?

Financial close visibility

Uneven workflows

Financial data accuracy

Unclear ownership

Timeliness

Work quality

Manual activities

Audits

Process inconsistency



A major challenge?



An occasional challenge?



Not a challenge?

*Survey participants rated the degree to which nine different areas of their accounting and finance processes are challenging.
The results are on the next slide.*

How challenging?



A major challenge?

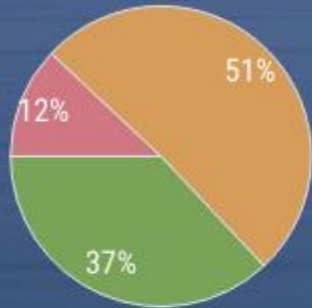


An occasional challenge?

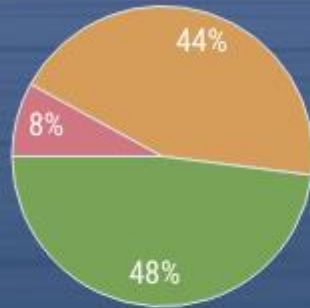


Not a challenge?

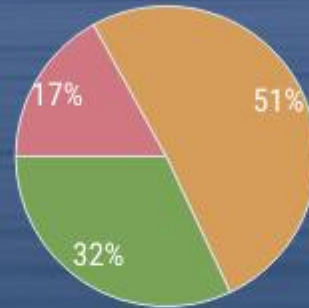
Financial close visibility



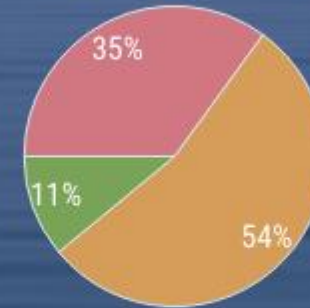
Financial data accuracy



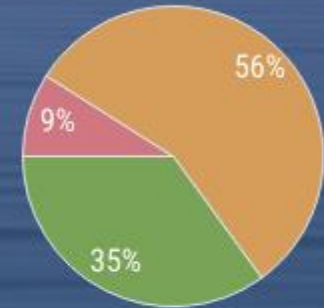
Timeliness



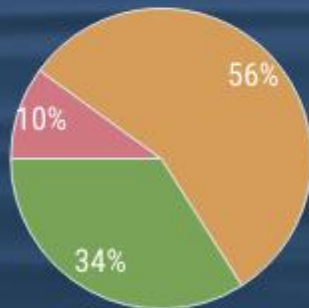
Manual activities



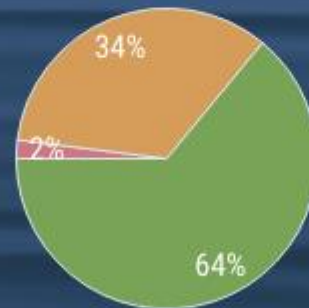
Process inconsistency



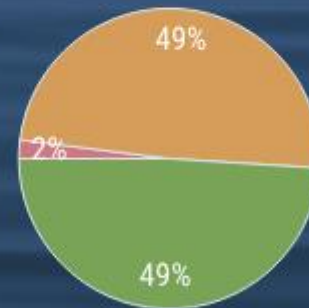
Uneven workflows



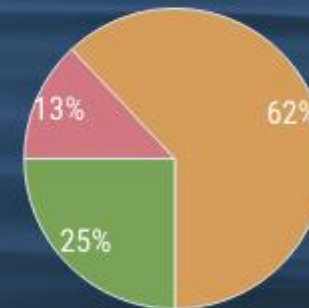
Unclear ownership



Work quality

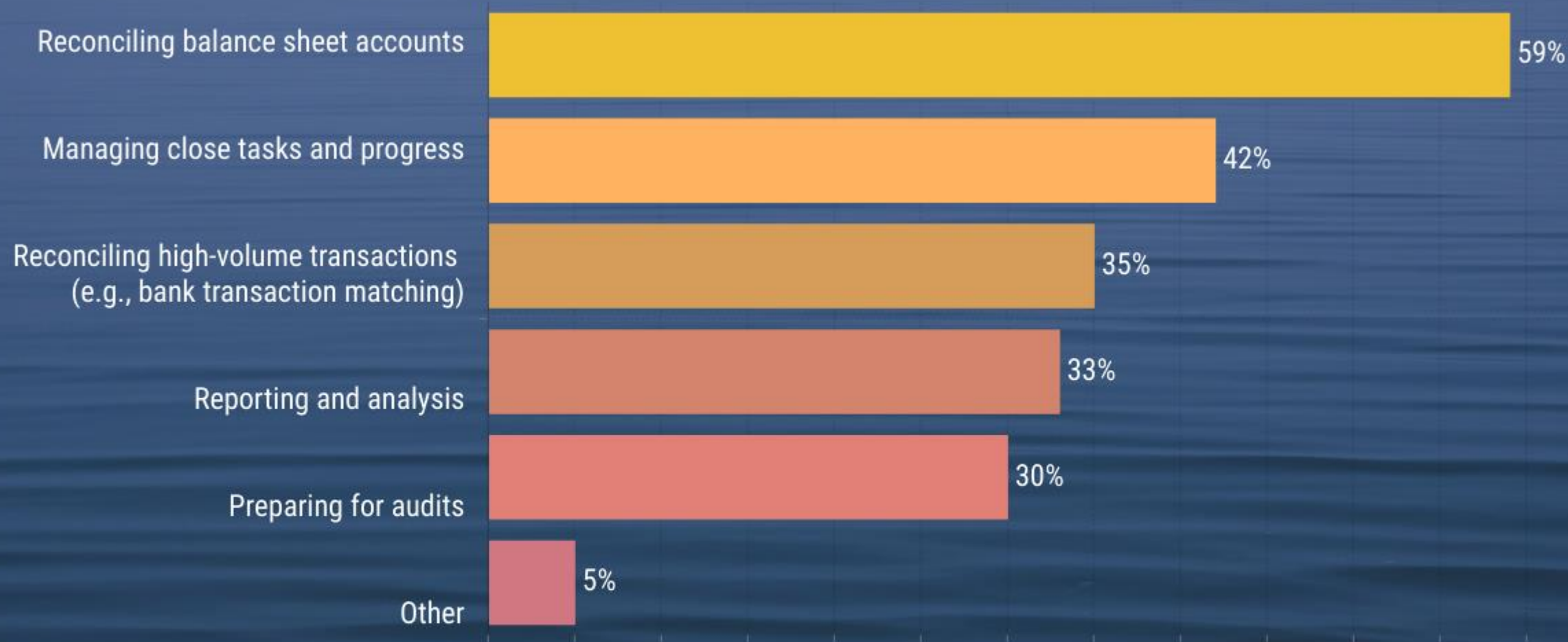


Audits



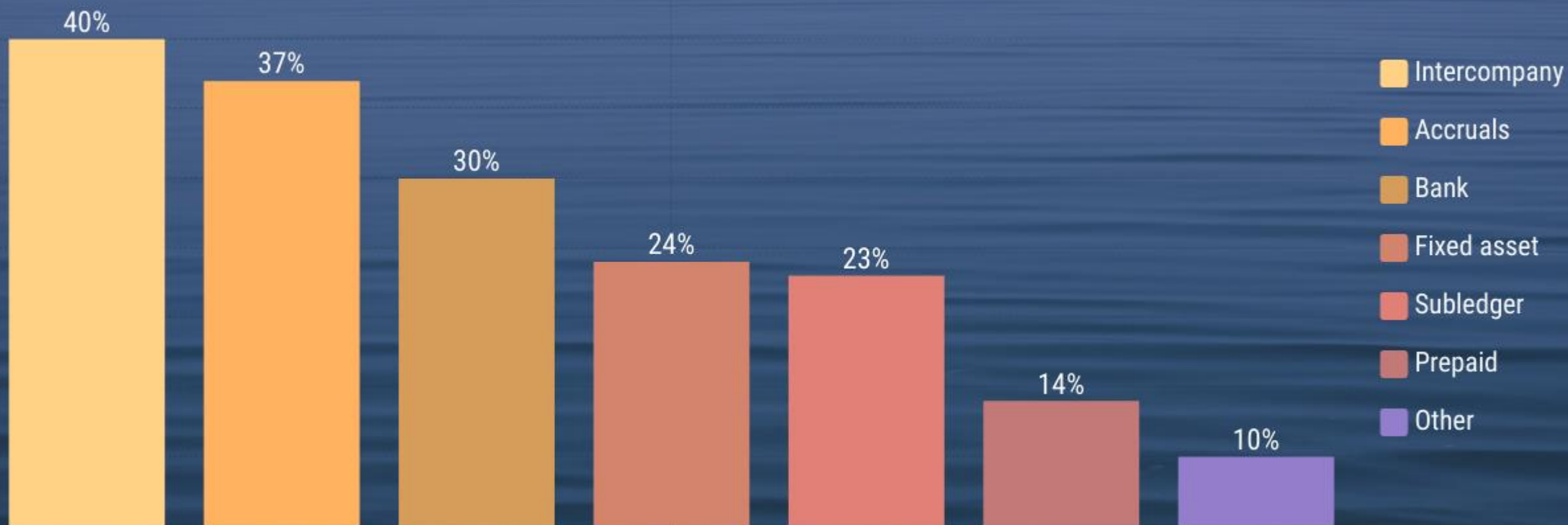
35% of responders identified manual activities as a major challenge, more than any other aspect of the accounting and financial process. The area of process rated least problematic is unclear ownership, with nearly two thirds (64%) saying it is not a challenge.

Which processes take more time and resources than they should?



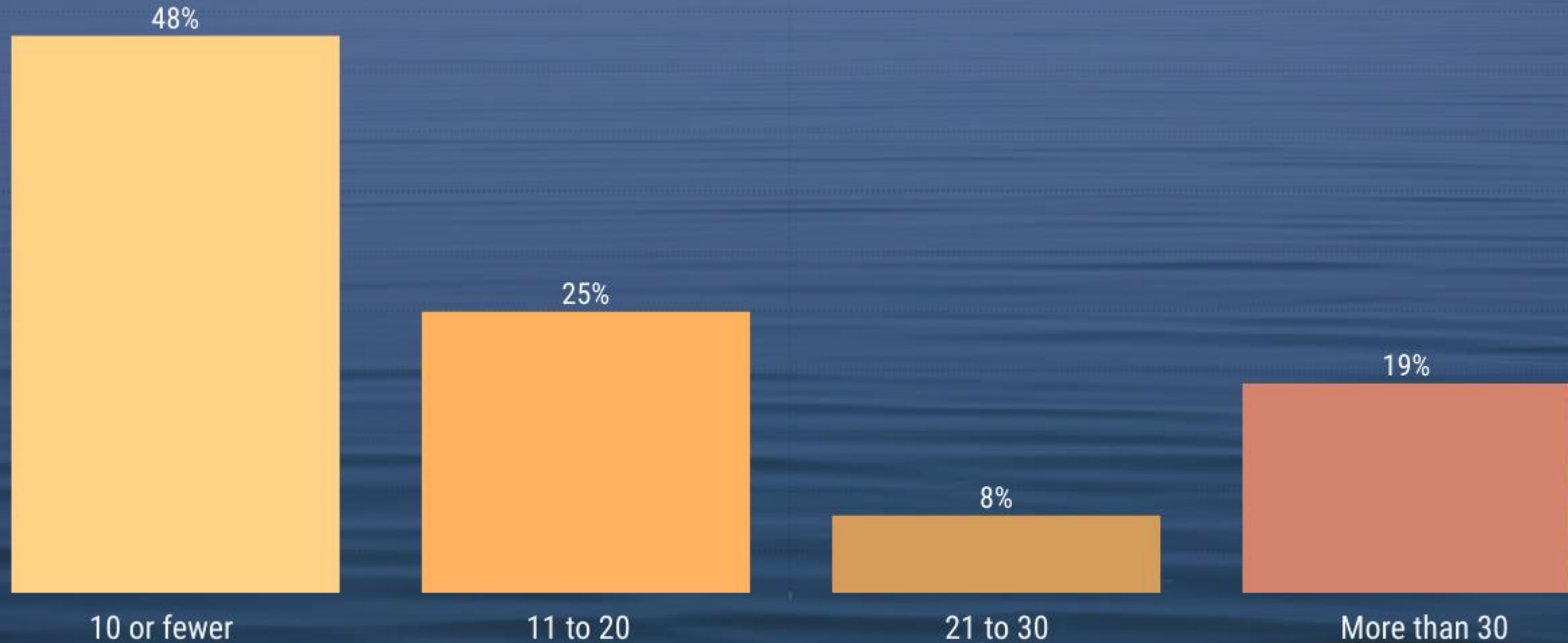
Balance sheet account reconciliations are more time-consuming than they need to be, say 59% of respondents. Other tasks that a third or more say could use efficiency or automation measures are managing close (42%), reconciling high-volume transactions (35%), and reporting and analysis (33%).

Which types of reconciliations cause organizational headaches?



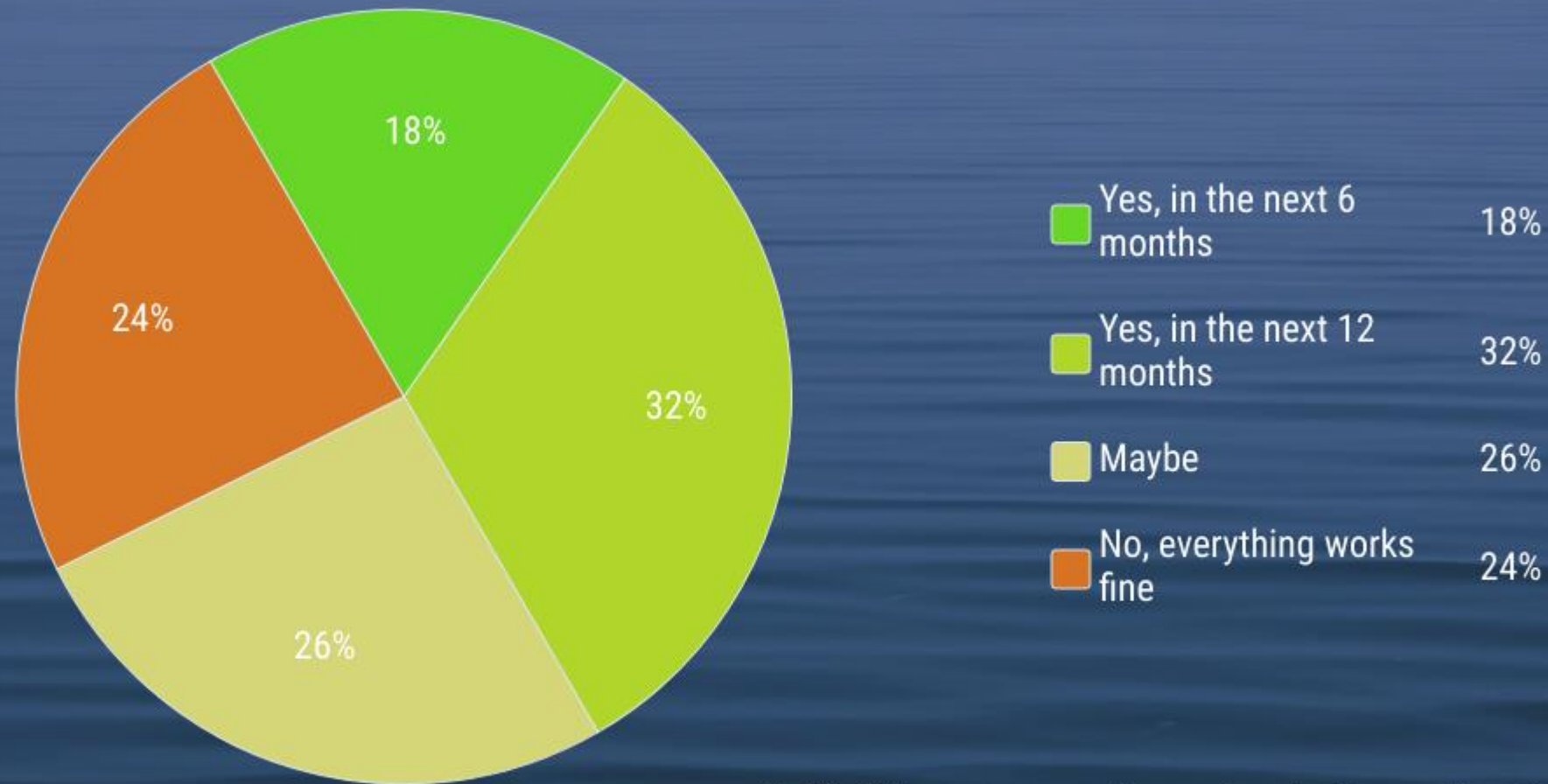
The type of reconciliation most commonly at the center of organizational stress is intercompany, cited by 40% of respondents. Not far behind among headache-inducing reconciliations is accruals (say 37%), and bank reconciliations (30%).

How many accountants are involved in your financial close processes?



Nearly half of respondents involve 10 or fewer accountants in the financial close process, but 19% use more than 30.

Are you considering making improvements to your financial close processes?



Half of those surveyed are stepping toward an improved financial close process within the next twelve months, and 26% say improvement plans are a solid "maybe".



BlackLine is a leading provider of solutions for financial close management, accounting automation, and inter-company governance. Partnering with Workiva, BlackLine delivers an integrated record-to-record process that helps accounting teams close with complete and accurate results.

[Learn more at Blackline.com](https://blackline.com)