

COVID-19 Supplier Relationships: July 2020





Supplier visits to Wholesalers: EDA Survey July 2020

Introduction

This survey was carried out by the EDA in July 2020 and distributed via email to EDA's electrical wholesaler member network of 1900 branches. It received responses from 170 branch/outlet managers.

The survey was undertaken in response to concerns from manufacturer supplying the electrical wholesaler about the future role of their sales forces many of whom were on furlough. Would they be welcome in the wholesalers' branches and under what circumstances? They believed that generating demand was key as was face-to-face contact in order to introduce new products.

With April as the nadir of market activity, July was the third month of growth to almost normal levels of sales with some wholesaler respondents reporting higher activity than in 2019. However, many wholesalers and manufacturers felt that this activity was based on pent-up demand and completions rather than new project starts.

This survey poses questions about the type of visit that wholesalers will accept, sales, merchandising, training sessions, and if they are ready for them now or in the future. It asks practical questions about where visits will be held, what PPE is required and suggests alternatives to a face-to-face visit.

The traditional pop-in when in the area, milk-round type visit is likely to be a thing of the past with forward planning, use of new platforms and appointments essential.

Highlights

Over 55% percent of wholesalers will accept sales visits today but almost 23% will wait until Q3 and beyond.

Training sessions with suppliers are less important for the wholesaler than sales and merchandising visits.

Wholesalers can now be reached via Zoom, Teams and other platforms.

Appointments are essential.

50% of wholesalers have a designated room for external visitors but many are asking suppliers to think outside the box with ideas such as gazebos in carparks.

Wholesalers are undecided about keeping records to support the Government's Track & Trace initiative.

The sector is very people-orientated and there is an evident desire to continue nurturing the supply chain relationships by supporting manufacturer sales representatives wherever possible.

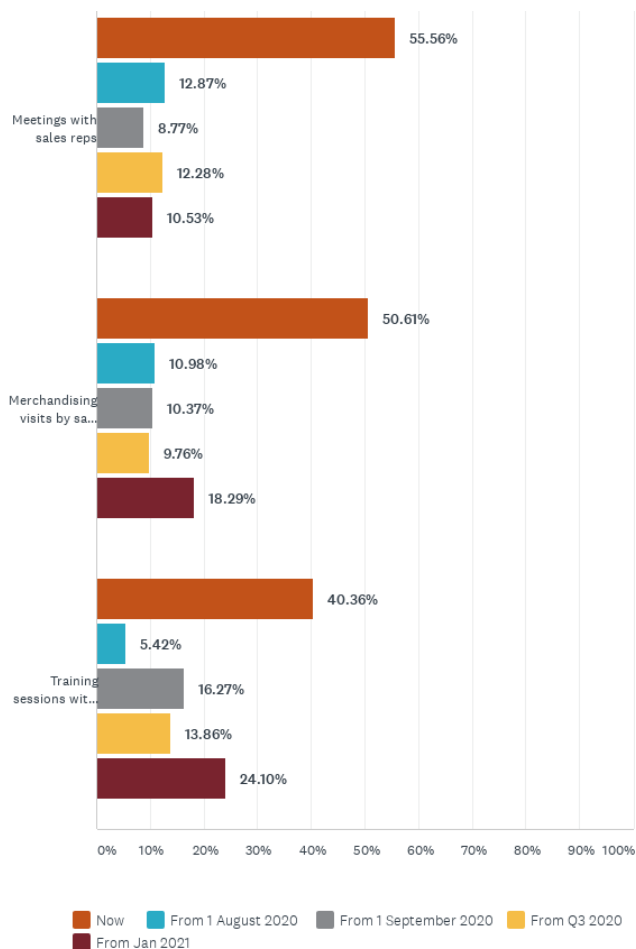
Regarding PPE, many will supply hand sanitiser but would expect a visitor to bring their own face mask. A few expect visitors to bring all their own PPE and hand sanitiser, and some expect face visors and gloves to be worn.

There is clear need for a new 'blended' approach to selling combining online and face-to-face elements in any sales approach. The EDA has reacted by offering a one-day virtual sales course to train sales forces in how to adapt their strategy incorporating new platforms. This has had considerable success with all course dates sold out.

SURVEY COVID-19 Supplier Relationships: July 2020



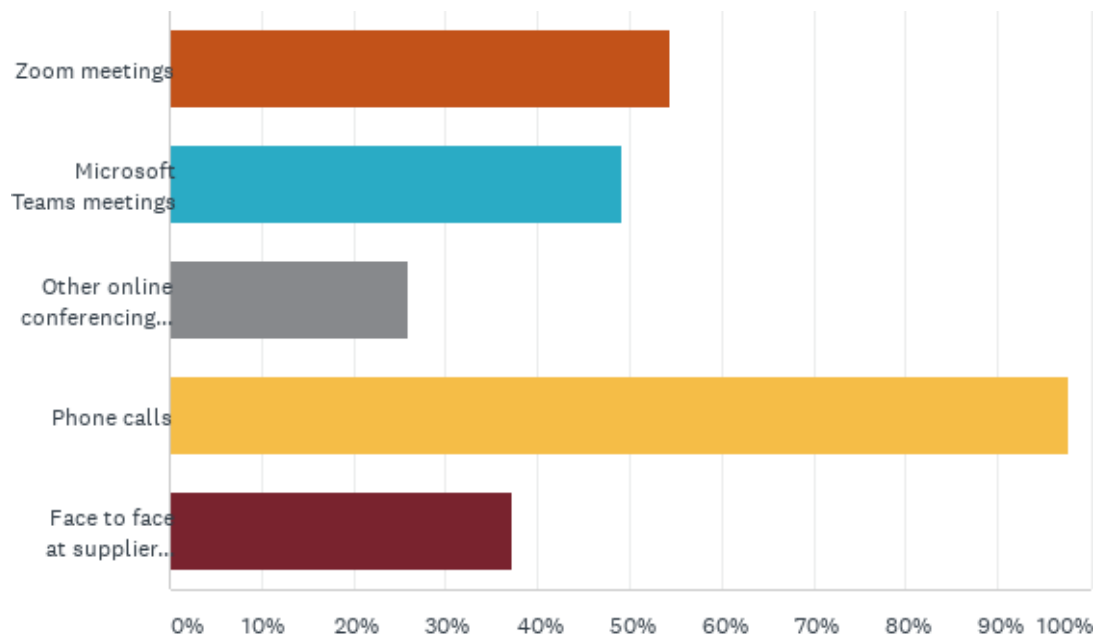
Q1: Which of the following face to face meetings with supplier representatives can you accommodate at your premises and when?



	NOW	FROM 1 AUGUST 2020	FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2020	FROM Q3 2020	FROM JAN 2021	TOTAL
Meetings with sales reps	55.56% 95	12.87% 22	8.77% 15	12.28% 21	10.53% 18	171
Merchandising visits by sales reps	50.61% 83	10.98% 18	10.37% 17	9.76% 16	18.29% 30	164
Training sessions with suppliers	40.36% 67	5.42% 9	16.27% 27	13.86% 23	24.10% 40	166



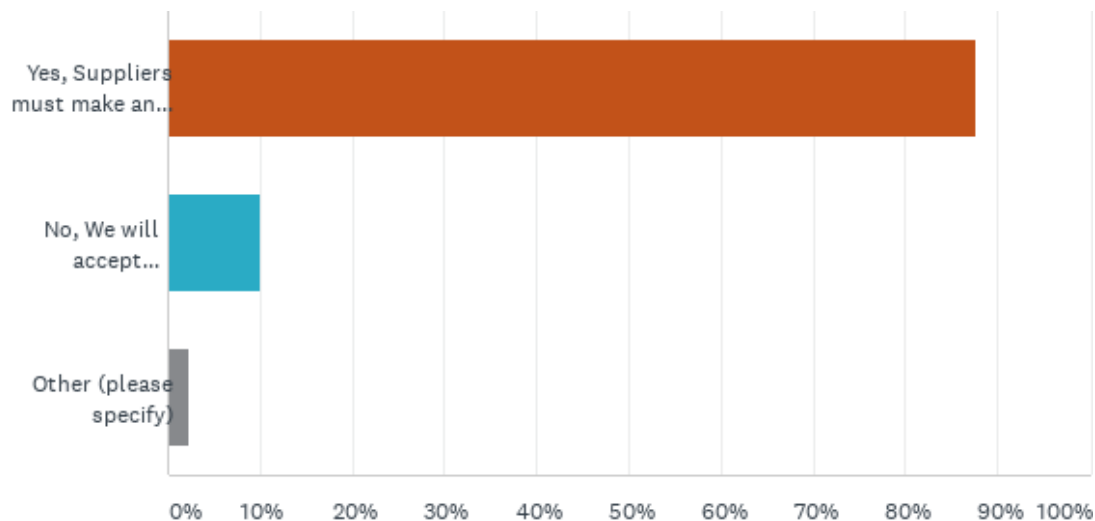
Q2: What other communication channels are you able to offer your supplier representatives?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Zoom meetings	54.44%	92
Microsoft Teams meetings	49.11%	83
Other online conferencing or webinar platforms	26.04%	44
Phone calls	97.63%	165
Face to face at supplier premises	37.28	63
TOTAL	169	



Q3: Supplier representatives must make an appointment to visit your premises.



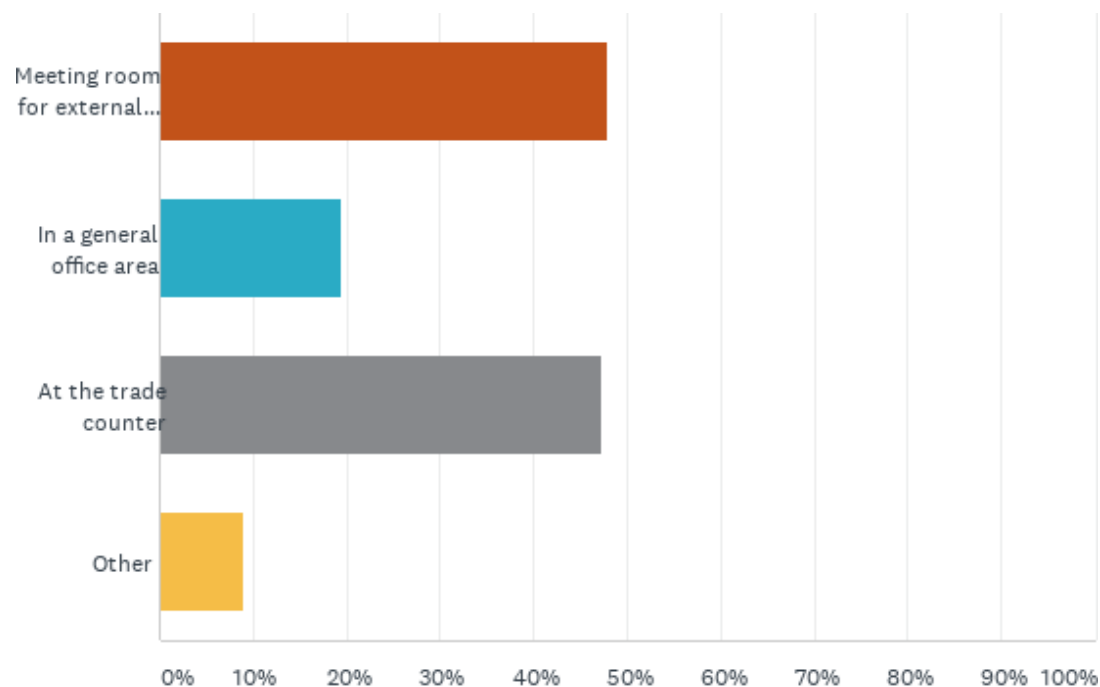
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes, Suppliers must make an appointment	87.72% 150
No, We will accept unscheduled visits	9.94% 17
Other (please specify)	2.34% 4
TOTAL	171

Additional Comments:

- We will not be having any face to face meetings for some time.
- Suppliers have always been required to make appointments.
- We will actively discourage visits by supplier representatives throughout the rest of 2020. Only essential visits can be planned.
- We will accept unscheduled visits, however they will only be allowed to be at the counter area without an appointment. We would recommend calling prior to visits for specific reasons, but we would give the same advice prior to this pandemic. Planning is essential!



Q4: How will you accommodate external visitors on your premises?



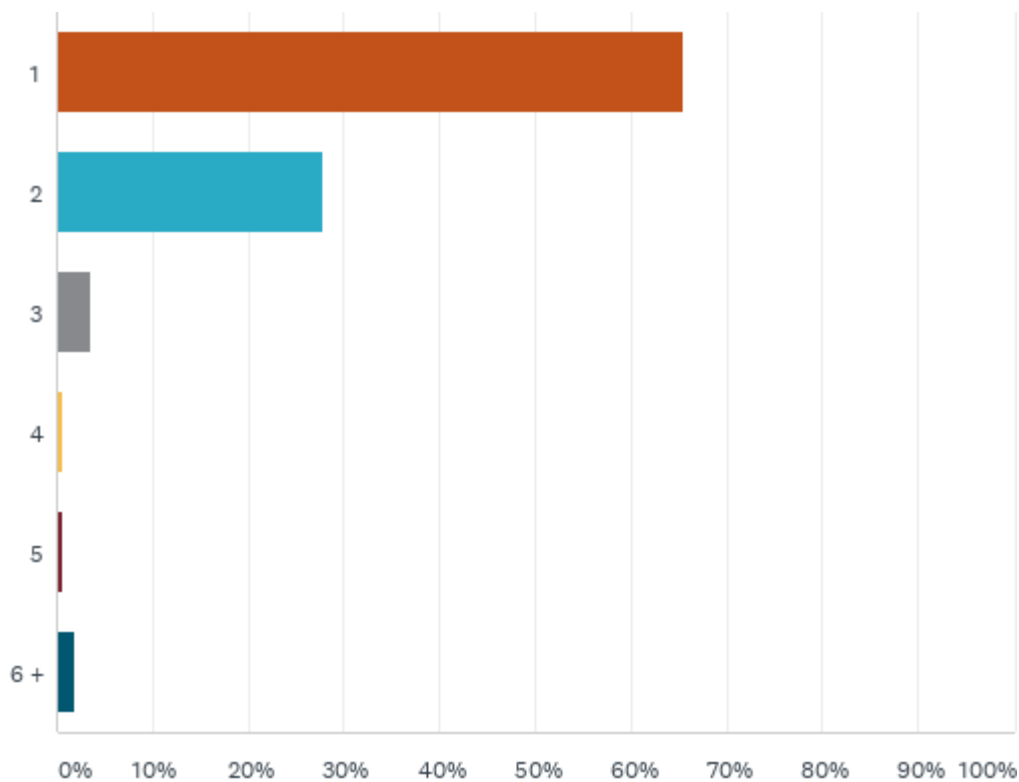
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Meeting room for external visitors	47.88% 79
In a general office area	19.39% 32
At the trade counter	47.27% 78
Other	9.09% 15
TOTAL	165

Additional comments:

- Utilising managers office. For any 'breakfast morning' style events, we have encouraged manufacturers to think outside the box, for example, a gazebo to in the car park. Canned drinks, and chocolate instead of breakfast.
- Meetings in the car park.
- Will vary from head office and branch to branch
- We have a meeting room suitably distanced and apart from the main office.
- Outside the building at present.
- Not yet decided.
- No visits from suppliers are not allowed, unless essential, this will remain in place until Covid passes. Essential meetings can be held at the counter which has suitable screening but this limits our customer access so is a last resort. Counter is 1 customer and 1 member of staff.
- Manager's office
- We have a few meeting rooms that we can use and that suppliers or customers can use. All rooms have all they need to be compliant with government regulations.
- Café nearby.
- Store area if the trade counter is busy.
- No visitors allowed access at the moment. All meetings are held outside.



Q5: Maximum number of supplier representatives you can accommodate at once.

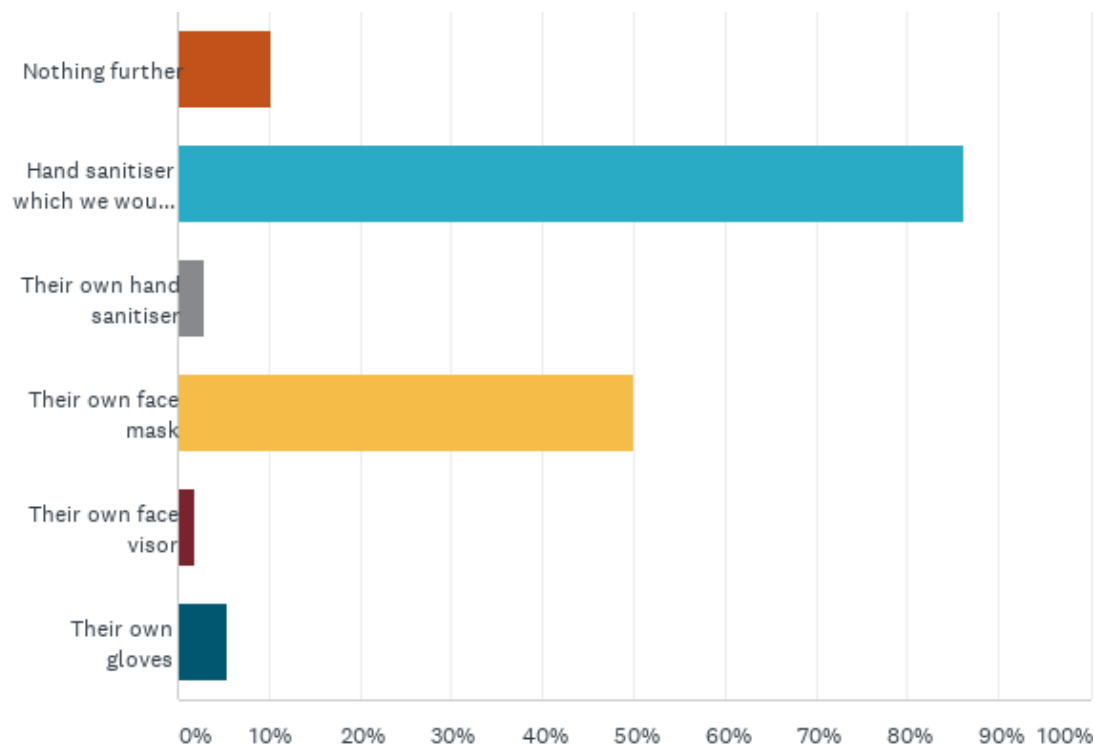


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1	65.45% 108
2	27.88% 46
3	3.64% 6
4	0.61% 1
5	0.61% 1
6 +	1.82% 3
TOTAL	165

SURVEY COVID-19 Supplier Relationships: July 2020



Q6: In addition to social distancing rules, what additional measures and PPE do you require meeting with external visitors at your premises?



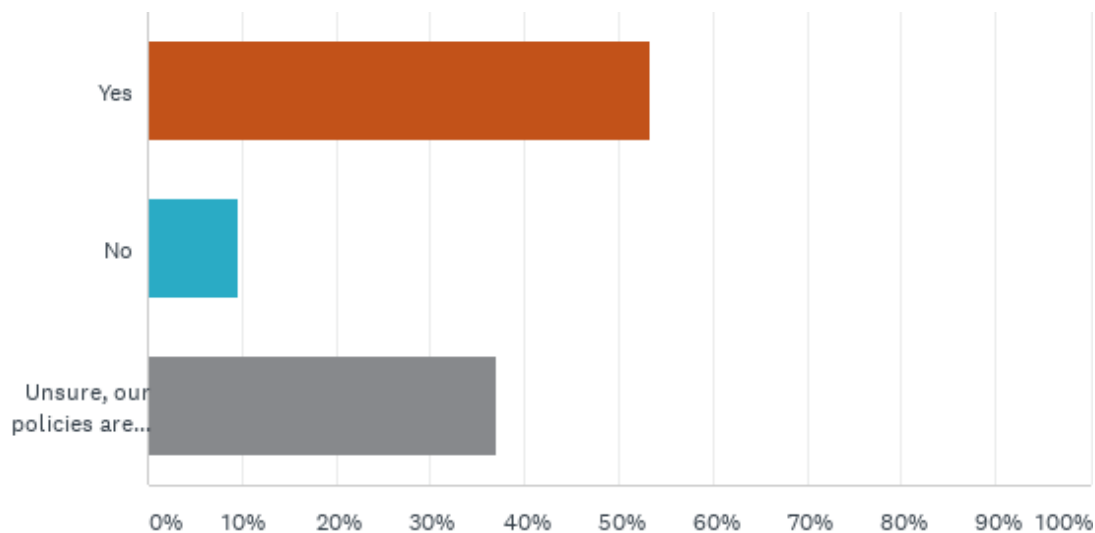
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Nothing further	10.24% 17
Hand sanitiser which we would supply	86.14% 143
Their own hand sanitiser	3.01% 5
Their own face mask	50.00% 83
Their own face visor	1.81% 3
Their own gloves	5.42% 9
TOTAL	166

Additional comments:

- We have screens covering our trade counter.
- As long as they are sensible and keep their distance, no PPE will be required.
- As long as we can maintain social distancing, we are happy for suppliers to come without a mask. And we are happy if they prefer to wear masks, we want everyone to feel safe during their visit.



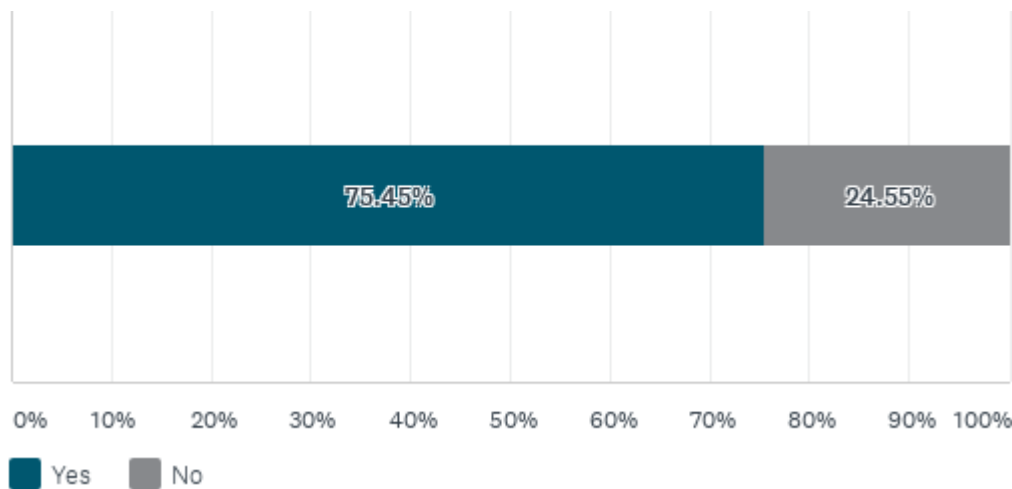
Q7: Will you use the Government's Track and Trace procedure to keep a log of contact details for those attending meetings at your premises?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	53.29% 89
No	9.58% 16
Unsure, our policies are undefined	37.13% 62
TOTAL	167



Q8: Are you aware of the EDA's document 'Practical Guidance for Electrical Wholesale Branches - COVID-19 and Social Distancing'?

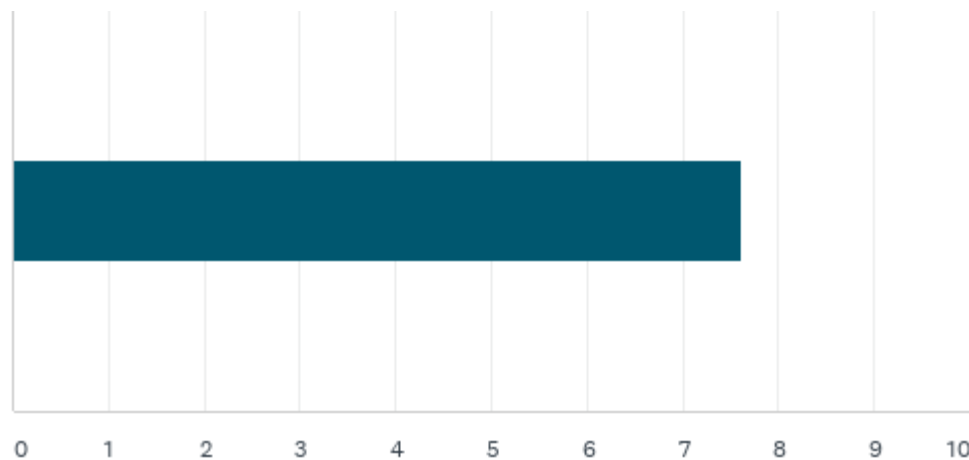


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.45%	126
No	24.55%	41
TOTAL		167

SURVEY COVID-19 Supplier Relationships: July 2020



Q9: How useful did you find 'Practical Guidance for Electrical Wholesale Branches', with 10 being extremely useful?

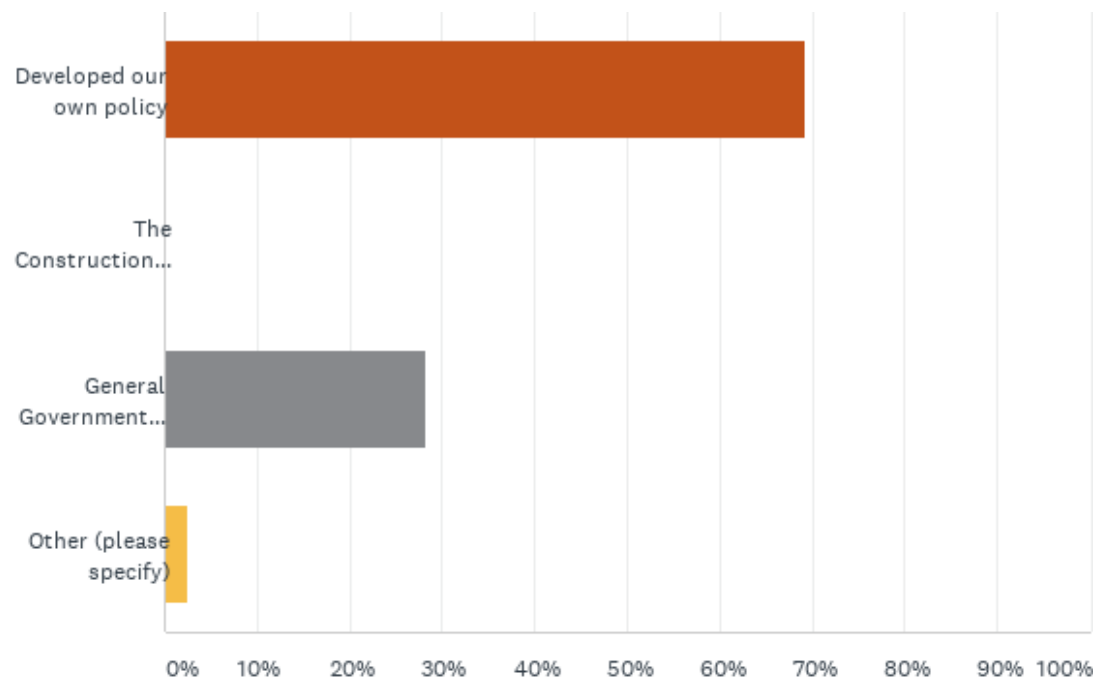


AVERAGE NUMBER	RESPONSES
8	125

SURVEY COVID-19 Supplier Relationships: July 2020



Q10: Which resources have you used to keep staff, customers and suppliers safe during COVID-19?



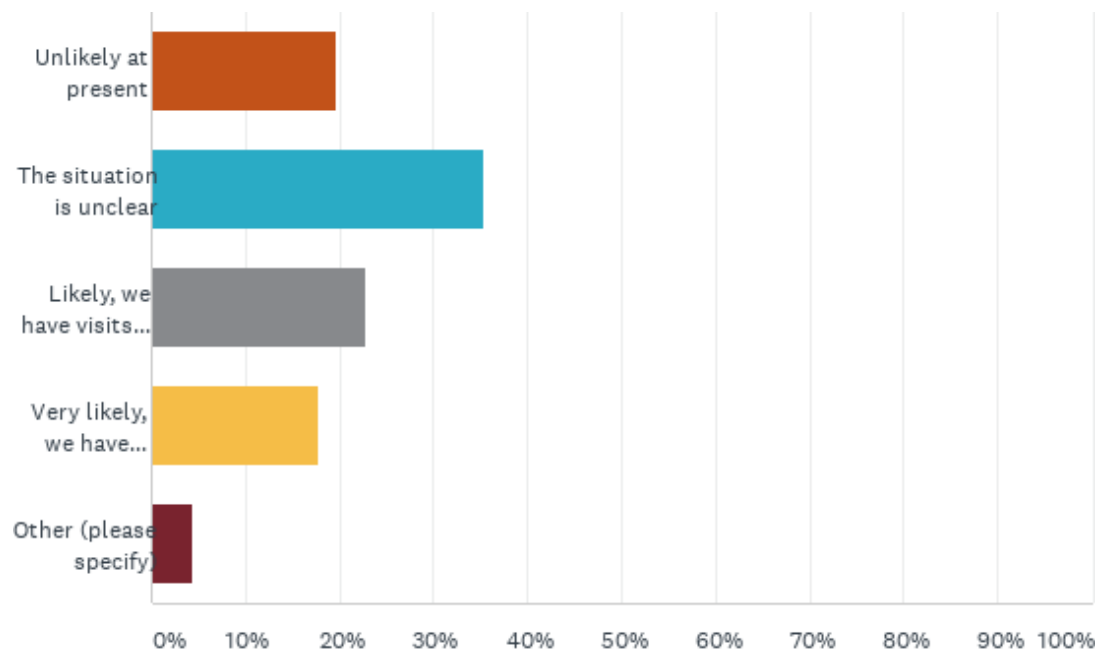
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Developed our own policy	69.23% 27
The Construction Leadership Council's (CLC) Site Operating Procedures	0.00% 0
General Government advice	28.21% 11
Other	2.56% 1
TOTAL	39

Additional comments:

- We have followed Head Office Policy.



Q11: Based on experience, what is the likelihood of your installer/contractor customers agreeing to a visit from you?



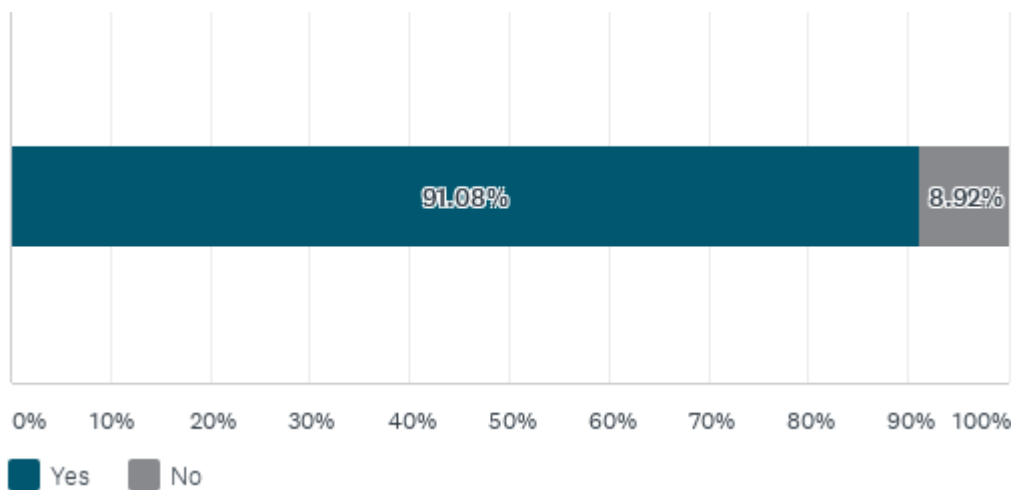
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Unlikely at present	19.62% 31
The situation is unclear	35.44% 56
Likely, we have visits planned	22.78% 36
Very likely, we have recently made visits to our customers	17.72% 28
Other	4.43% 7
TOTAL	158

Additional comments:

- N/A
- Do not visit them
- Likely - we have no visits planned as yet as we are not back to full staff but we have been asked when we will begin visits.
- We aim to respect the wishes of our customers and their employers.
- N/A



Q12: Would you agree to visit an end users' premises? Assuming that social distancing measures are in place



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.08%	143
No	8.92%	14
TOTAL		157



COVID-19 Supplier Relationships: July 2020

Further Comments

Virtual Meetings

- The majority of our future meetings will be via Teams

Safety

- Safety and time constraints are the two main issues with the current situation in regards to seeing suppliers.
- At the moment our short term procedures are changing in line with current social distancing rules. Once the situation has calmed down towards the end of this year, hopefully things will start to return to some form of normality.
- We will adhere to all government guidelines and advice.
- We must all work together to provide a safe working environment for all to help us as we all work to recover from this.

Vaccine

- This will all change with the arrival of a vaccine.

Face to face

- Only necessary and purposeful supplier meetings need to be held in person. We will not be encouraging the "milk round" supplier visits.



SURVEY COVID-19 Supplier Relationships: July 2020