

Hutt City Council Customer Service Centre Survey December 2006



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Background

- This survey is a repeat of the ACNielsen customer satisfaction assessments conducted in 1999 and replicated annually from 2000 to 2006.
- In 2006, the data collection was carried out by Hutt City Council mainly as a self-completion survey, with some interviewer-assisted responses.
- This document is the write up of the results of the 2006 survey with comparisons to the ACNielsen findings for the previous years as relevant.



METHODOLOGY

- The 2006 survey consisted of interviews with 201 customers who had visited one or more of the four customer service desks--reception, approvals, engineering, or payments.
- The questionnaire used is the same questionnaire from the earlier ACNielsen surveys with very minor modifications. Two researchers handed out the questionnaire to visitors as they left the Council building for them to complete, but interviewed some respondents when time allowed. Data collection was managed by Hutt City Council and processing and reporting carried out by HJ Plus.
- This report contains comparisons with the earlier surveys. The sample sizes in 2006 and 2005 are comparable to the 2002 and 2001 surveys. However, the 2003 survey only consisted of 93 respondents and the 2004 increased slightly to 150 respondents. This is compared with 274 in 2002, and 304 in 2001. Comparisons with the 2003 and 2004 results are less reliable because of the much smaller sample sizes in those two years.



Executive Summary

- As in 2005, the 2006 results of the survey show a relatively satisfactory performance by the various Hutt City Council Customer Service desks.
- With respect to service attributes, respondents gave the highest performance ratings for quality of staff attributes and physical environment attributes.
- A comparison with previous years shows a consistent improvement over the 2004 results but still a drop in percentage ratings from those of 2003. The 2006 results show mostly similar results to the 2005 results, which had shown a mostly consistent improvement over ratings in 2002 and 2001.
- The higher performance in 2003 is perhaps a function of the much smaller sample size of this survey, less than half of the 2005 sample, and a third of the 2001 sample. The lower the sample, the higher the variability in the results and the higher the margin of error.
- It is therefore more appropriate to compare the higher sample sizes of 2006/2005 and 2002/2001.



Executive Summary

In 2006, as in 2005, Hutt City Council's customers are most likely to agree that the Council:

- Has staff who are always courteous with customers (91%)
- Has signage that is clear and easy to find where to go to make a payment or apply for a building consent to make enquiries (90%)
- Has staff who act in a professional way (90%)
- Has staff who are always easy to approach for assistance (88%)
- Has staff who have the knowledge to answer customer queries (85%)
- Shows a sincere interest in solving customers' problems (84%).



Executive Summary

In 2006, Hutt City Council customers are least likely to agree that:

- When it promises to do something by a certain time that it will do it by that time (65% in 2006, 68% in 2005)
- Has staff who are prepared to go the extra mile (67% in 2006, 74% in 2005)
- Has staff who are easy to contact (70% in 2006, 76% in 2005)
- Customers can feel confident that correct changes to their records will be made the first time (71% in 2006, 73% in 2005)
- Has staff who can be relied upon to keep customers informed when necessary (74% in 2006, 71% in 2005)

Although the 2006 results differ slightly from those of 2005, the changes in ratings are not statistically significant for the two samples and can be considered comparable with no real change in the level of service experienced.



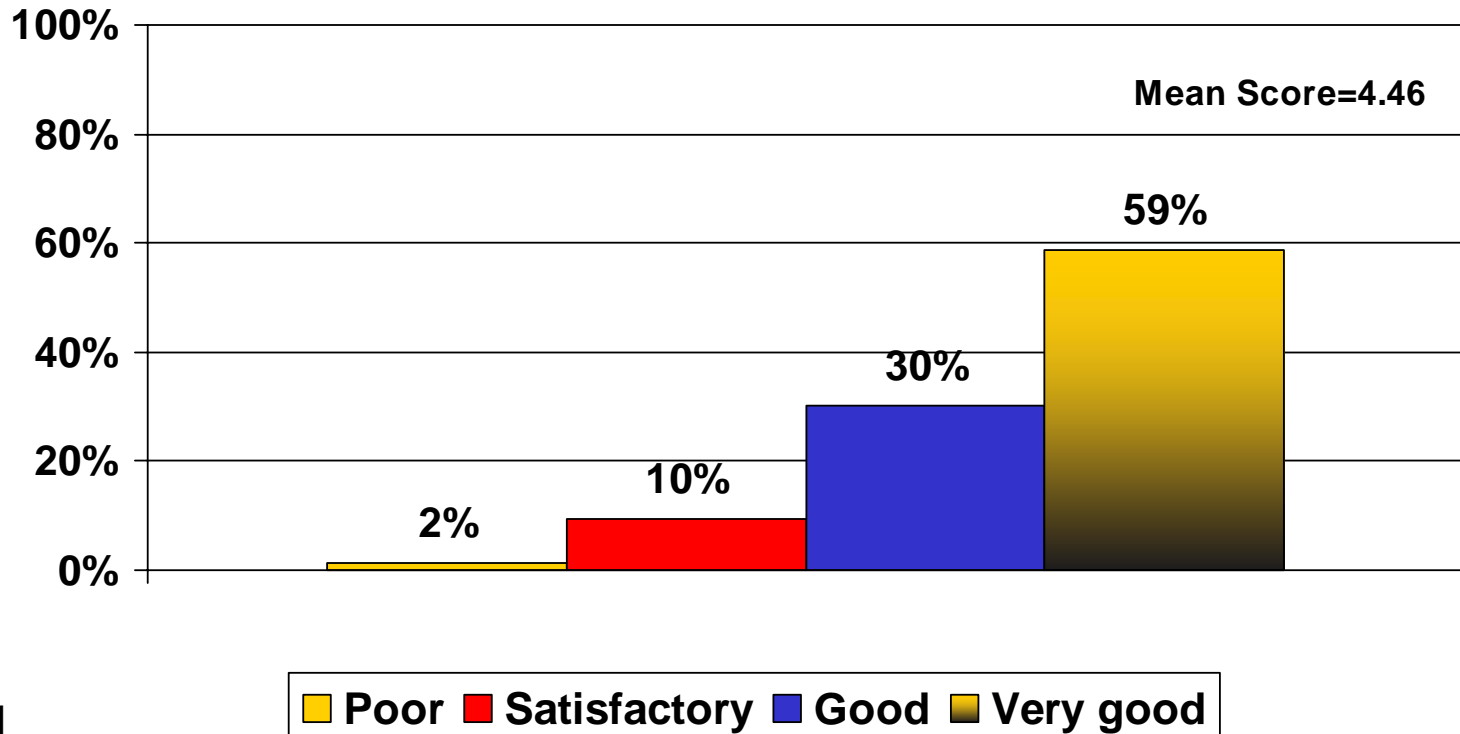
Detailed Results



Overall Satisfaction Levels

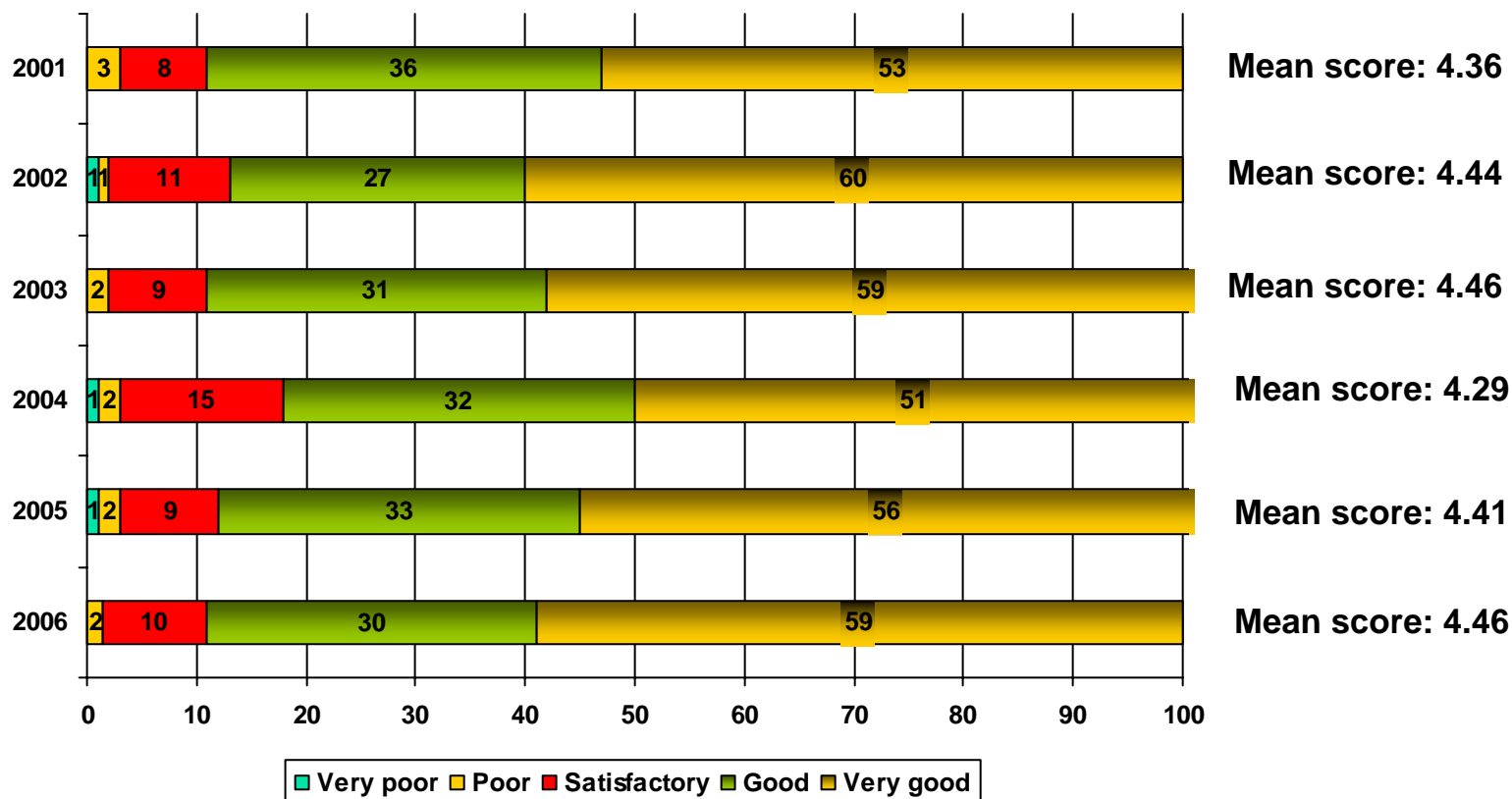
- As in the previous surveys, respondents were asked to rate their **overall** opinion of Hutt City Council's standard of customer service using a 5 point scale ranging from very good (5) to very poor (1).

Overall 2006 Satisfaction Levels



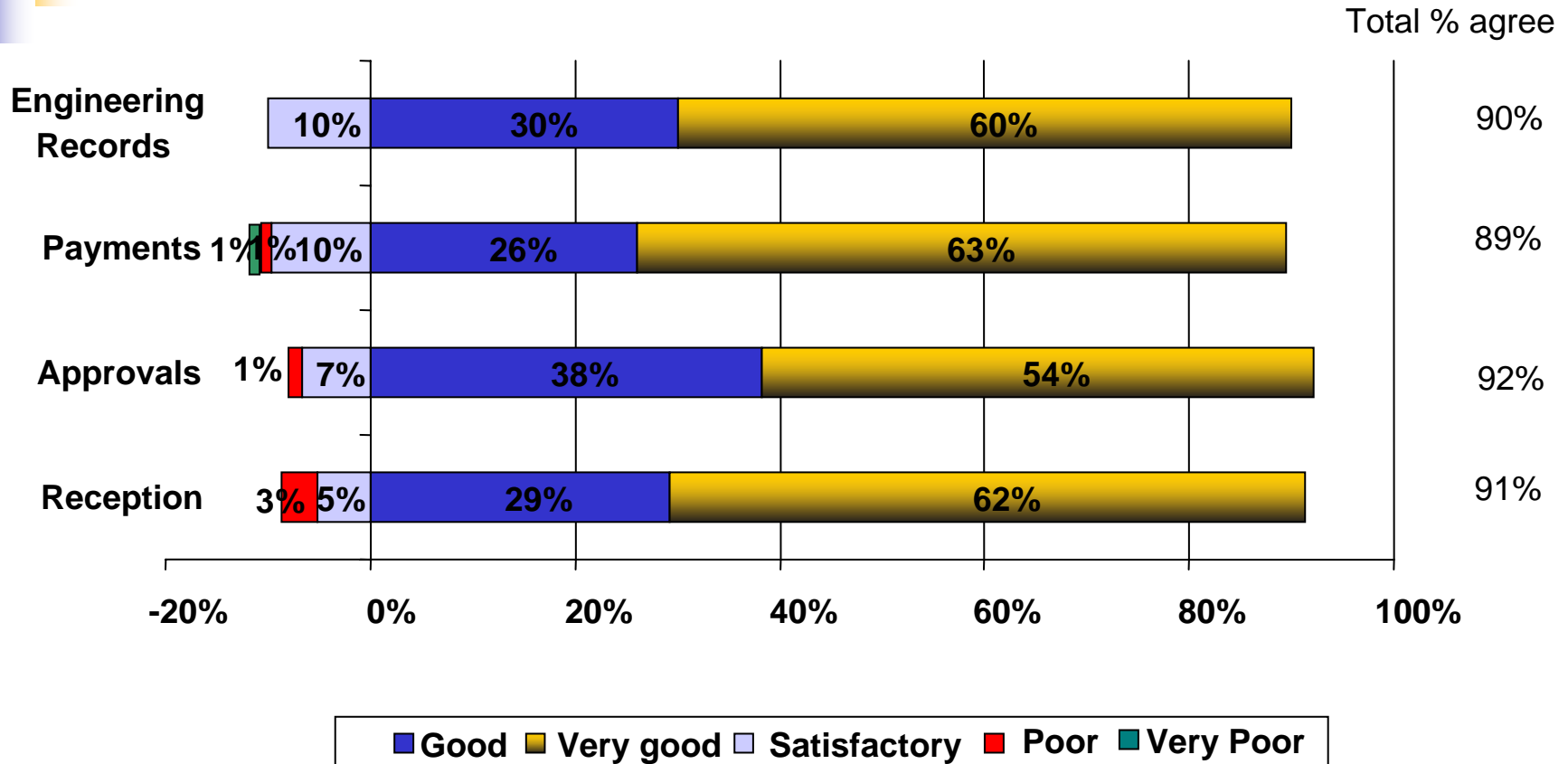
The 2006 are almost identical to the 2005 results. As in previous years, Hutt City Council Customer Service Centre visitors were predominantly positive about the overall standard of customer service, with 88% rating it as 'very good' or 'good'. Only 2% gave an overall rating of 'poor' to the service they experienced. A mean score of 4.46 out of 5 translates to an average overall rating of 89%, compared to the rating of 88% in 2005.

Comparison of 2006 Satisfaction Levels With Previous Five Years



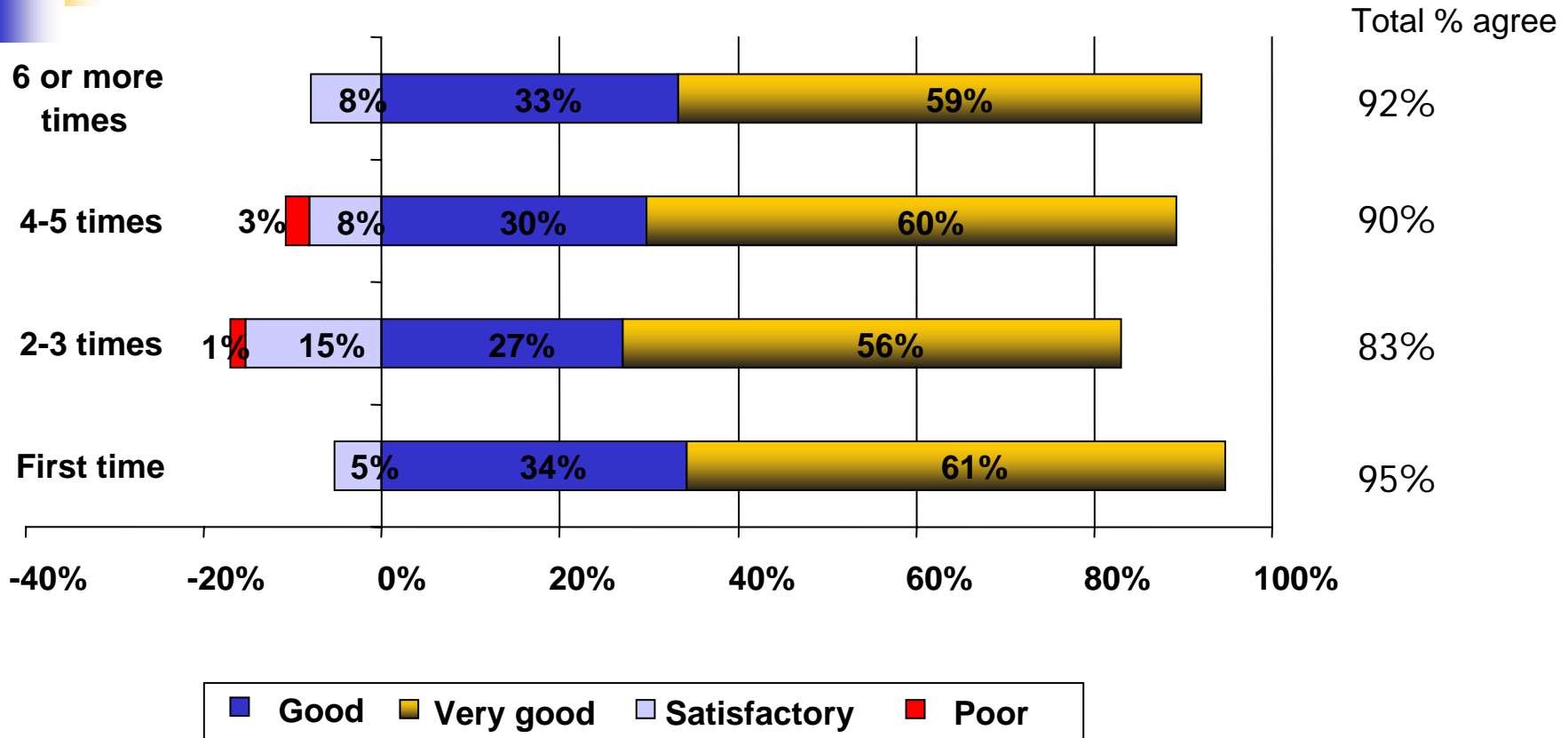
When the past years are compared with the 2006 overall satisfaction levels, the chart above shows that 2003 and 2006 had the highest levels of overall satisfaction, an improvement over all the other years. The percentage of “very good” in 2006 ratings was higher or equal to all the other years except 2002. When “good” and “very good” are combined, the 2003 results are the highest. However the differences between years are not statistically significant.

Overall Opinion Of Service By Service Desk Visited



Although the numbers visiting some desks are much smaller than others, the chart above shows all the desks visited had “good” or “very good” ratings by approximately 90% of visitors to each desk. These ratings are very similar to those of 2005.

Overall Opinion of Service By Number Of Times Visited Council



First time visitors were most likely to be positive about their visit as shown by the 95% who gave a “good” or “very good” rating. However, the differences between the ratings by number of times visiting are not statistically significant.



Triggers for Positive Rating

Main Triggers for positive perceptions (Very good or Good) (n=178, 89%)

- Friendly, polite and helpful
- Staff courteous and cooperative
- Staff are efficient and helpful
- Fast, prompt service
- Staff cheerful and smiling
- Prompt and knowledgeable direction to appropriate department
- Able to answer questions without referring to someone else.
- Professional service.

The above reasons are almost identical to those mentioned in 2005



Reasons For Dissatisfaction

The three respondents in 2006 who gave “poor” as their overall rating for the service they received cited the following reasons for their dissatisfaction:

- I had to wait for ages before I was seen to. The poor lady was flat out doing ten things at once including emailing parents of children who had come in after school. I didn't get her undivided attention as she was still doing ten things while talking to me. Her co-workers were also asking her things. She did her best, but a more professional attitude needs applying to the staff.
- Code of compliance for my building taking almost two months without giving any reason or contact. People at the counter provide different opinions if the same question is asked of two people.
- Was recently told by reception staff member that liquor licence application is OK for BYO, but this was wrong, the licence comes from the police department and it is not "automatic". Reception should not handle such matters as it could have lead to quite a problem.



Proposed Solution/Suggestions

Respondents gave the following suggestions to how service might be improved.

- Longer opening hours
- Open on Saturdays
- A barcode scanner can make payments quicker.
- Increase staffing at counters
- Rates book could be on counter for self service.
- Should be able to track service enquiry more readily.
- Better website—could provide more information as do other Councils, e.g. Hastings (district plan, aerial photos, proposed motorways, future plans, etc).
- Bigger facilities for viewing microfilms.
- Quicker turn around on building consents.
- After hours reports of road hazards not easily available.
- Make tickets cheaper
- Correlate parking passes with registrations database so an occasional non-placement of monthly parking pass does not result in a fine. Customer to provide vehicle registration when purchasing the pass.

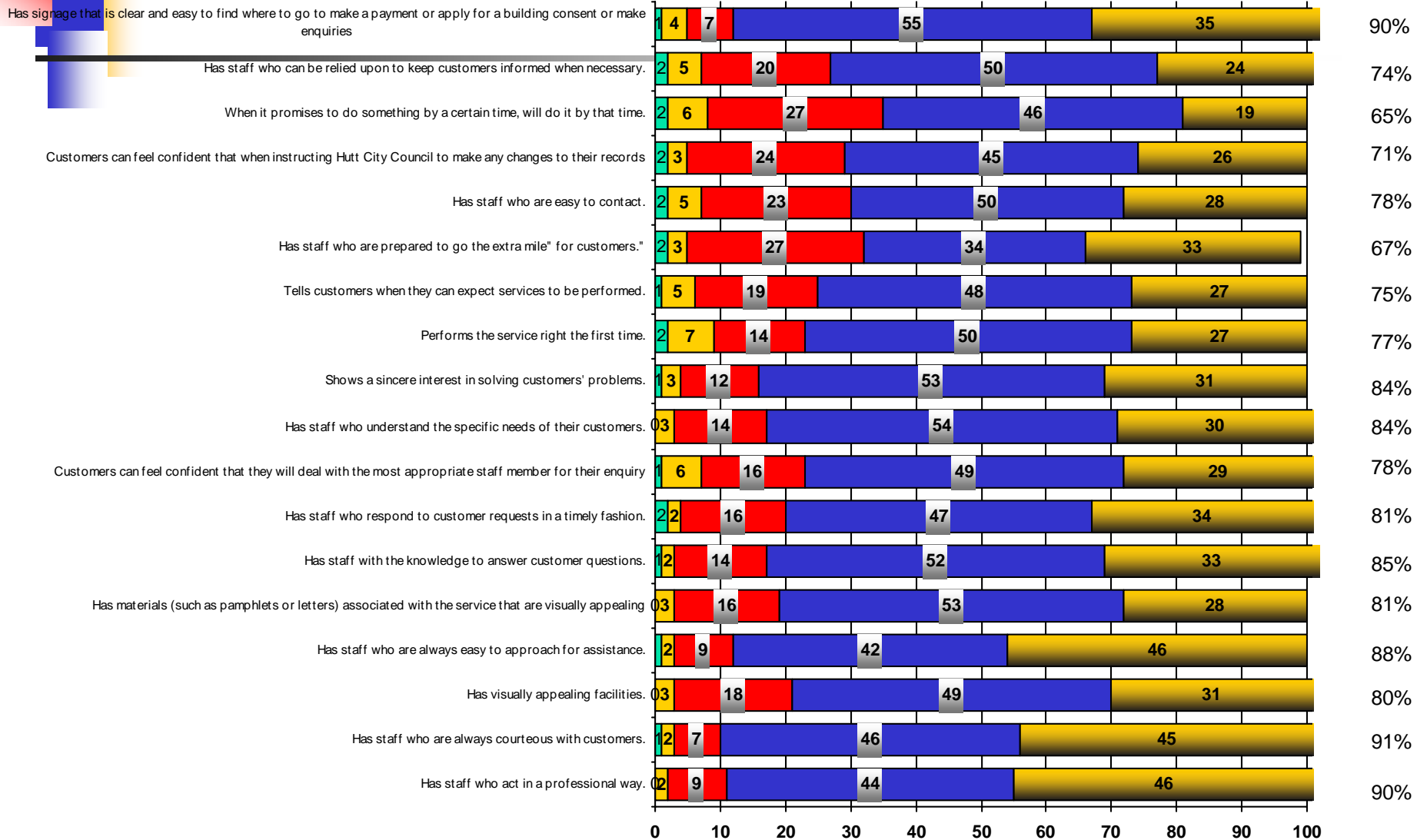


Proposed Solution/Suggestions (continued)

- More parking areas for schools.
- Allow dogs in Eastbourne village.
- Ensure internal communications are in order. Have received written documentation from one party and email communication for another party in the same section, both were for the same building consent.
- Computer links for Terraview and Engineering/hard detail records
- A simple sign on the customer service centre desk directing customers would make directions clearer and save staff having to repeat themselves.
- Charging for looking at internal records is ridiculous.
- Put building files on the internet with credit card access.
- Online services to save coming in.
- Help with completing bar application licenses to avoid messy responses and mistakes.
- Unify views of team leaders and front-line staff to avoid problems.
- improve signage, larger waiting area for building consents.
- Cleaning street gutter of leaves so they do not block up.

Rating of Service Attributes

Total % agree



Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither/Nor Agree Strongly Agree



Issues Needing Attention

	Percent Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Performs the service right the first time.	9%
When it promises to do something by a certain time, will do it by that time.	8%
Customers can feel confident that they will deal with the most appropriate staff member for their enquiry	7%
Has staff who can be relied upon to keep customers informed when necessary.	7%
Has staff who are easy to contact.	7%
Has staff who are prepared to go the "extra mile" for customers.	6%
Tells customers when they can expect services to be performed.	6%
Customers can feel confident that when instructing Hutt City Council to make any changes to their records	5%

Of all the items, only the above statements had 5% or more respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating dissatisfaction with the service. These results are very similar to those shown in 2005.



Service Dimensions

- To maintain comparability with the ACNielsen results, the following slides show the 2006 ratings for the statements grouped according to five service dimensions:

Reliability

Responsiveness

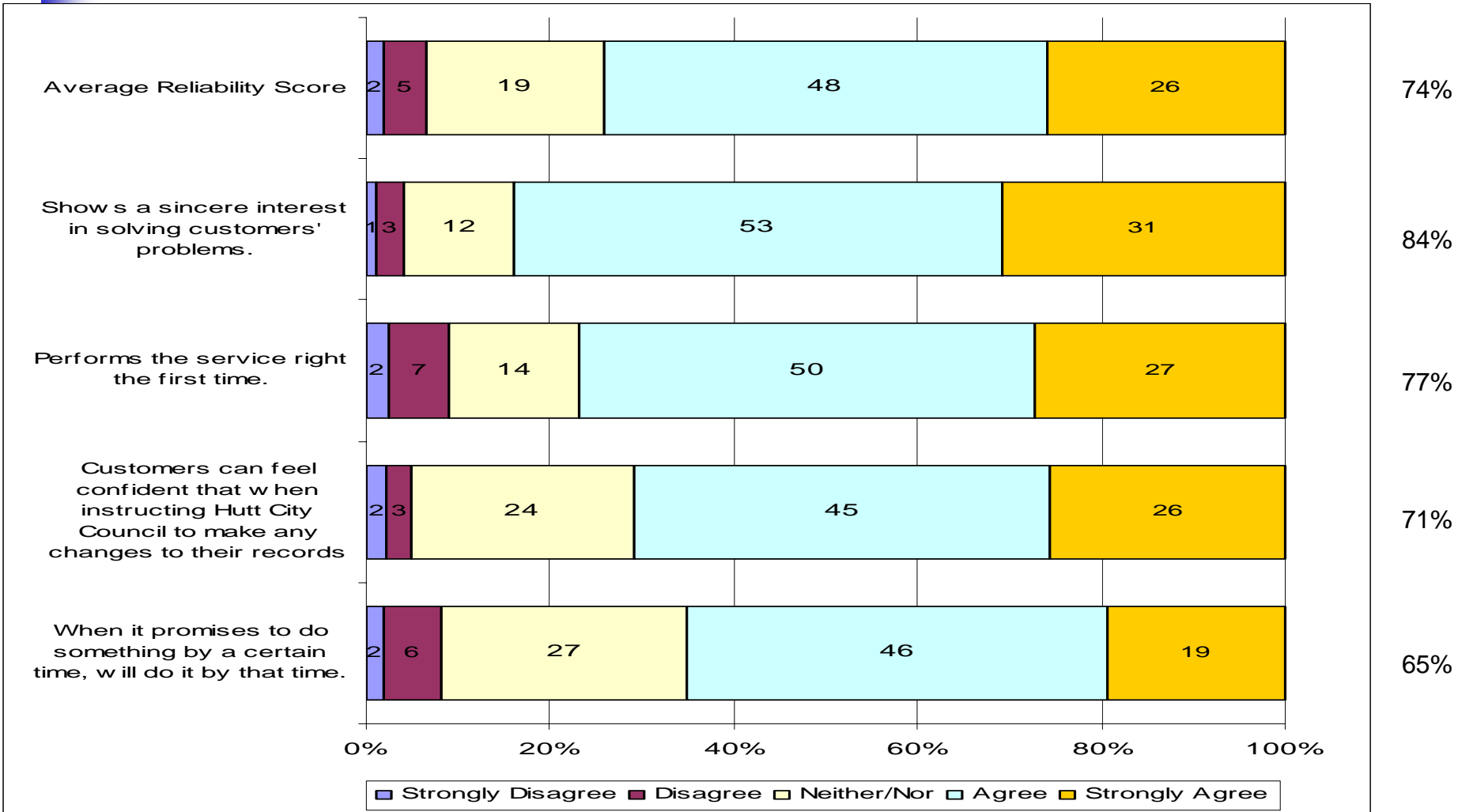
Assurance

Empathy

Tangibles

Reliability Dimensions

Total % agree

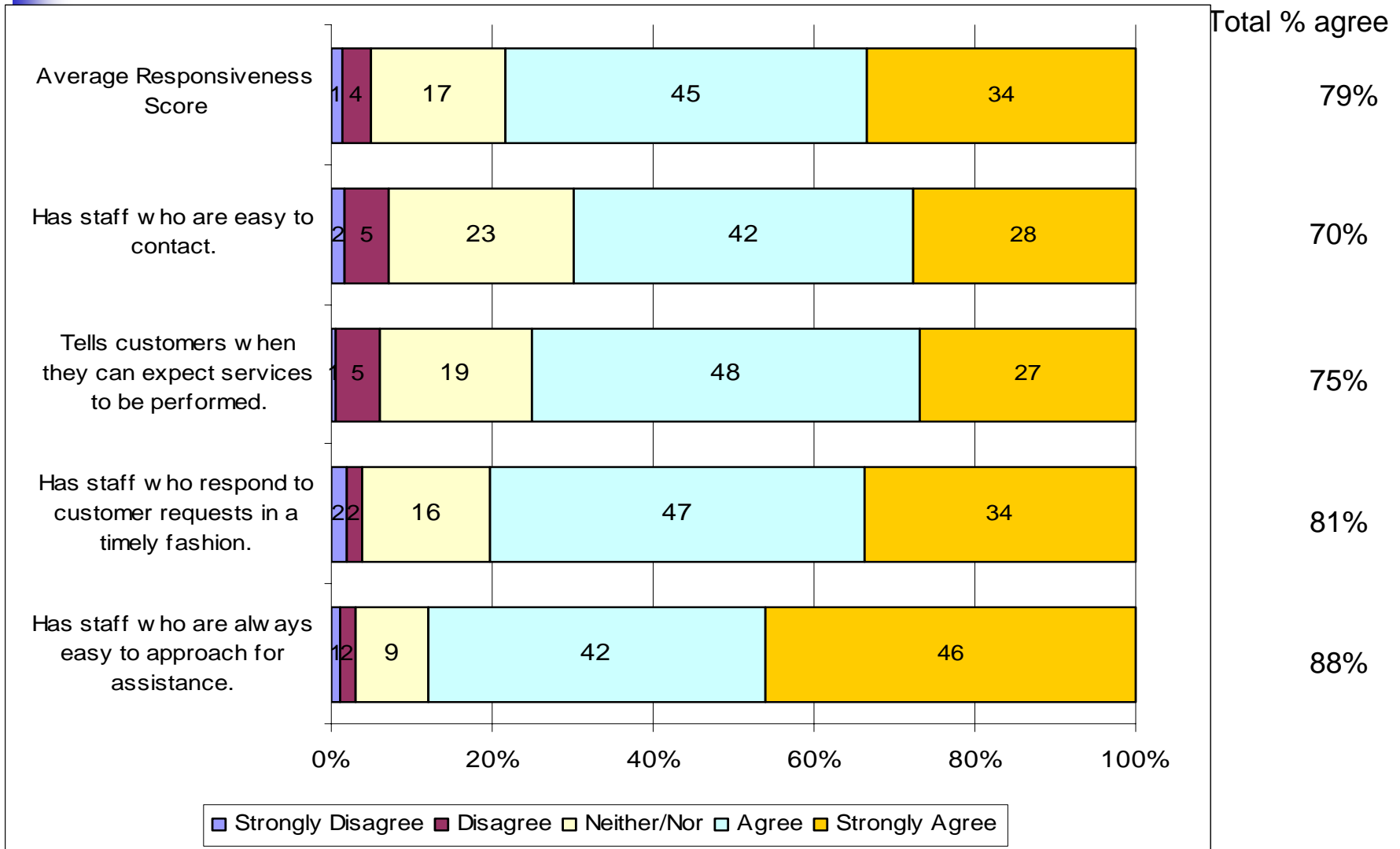




Reliability Dimensions

- The overall average level of satisfaction (74% in 2006 who agree or strongly agree) with the reliability dimensions has remained identical to 2005. The 2005 overall average level of satisfaction with the reliability dimensions (74%) generally slightly decreased from the 2003 levels (83%), but increased considerably over the 2004 level of only 66%.
- Compared with 2005 there were no statistically significant increases or decreases in the percent of customers who agreed or disagreed with any of the reliability dimension statements. This means that the service level on this dimension has remained constant over the past year.

Responsiveness Dimensions

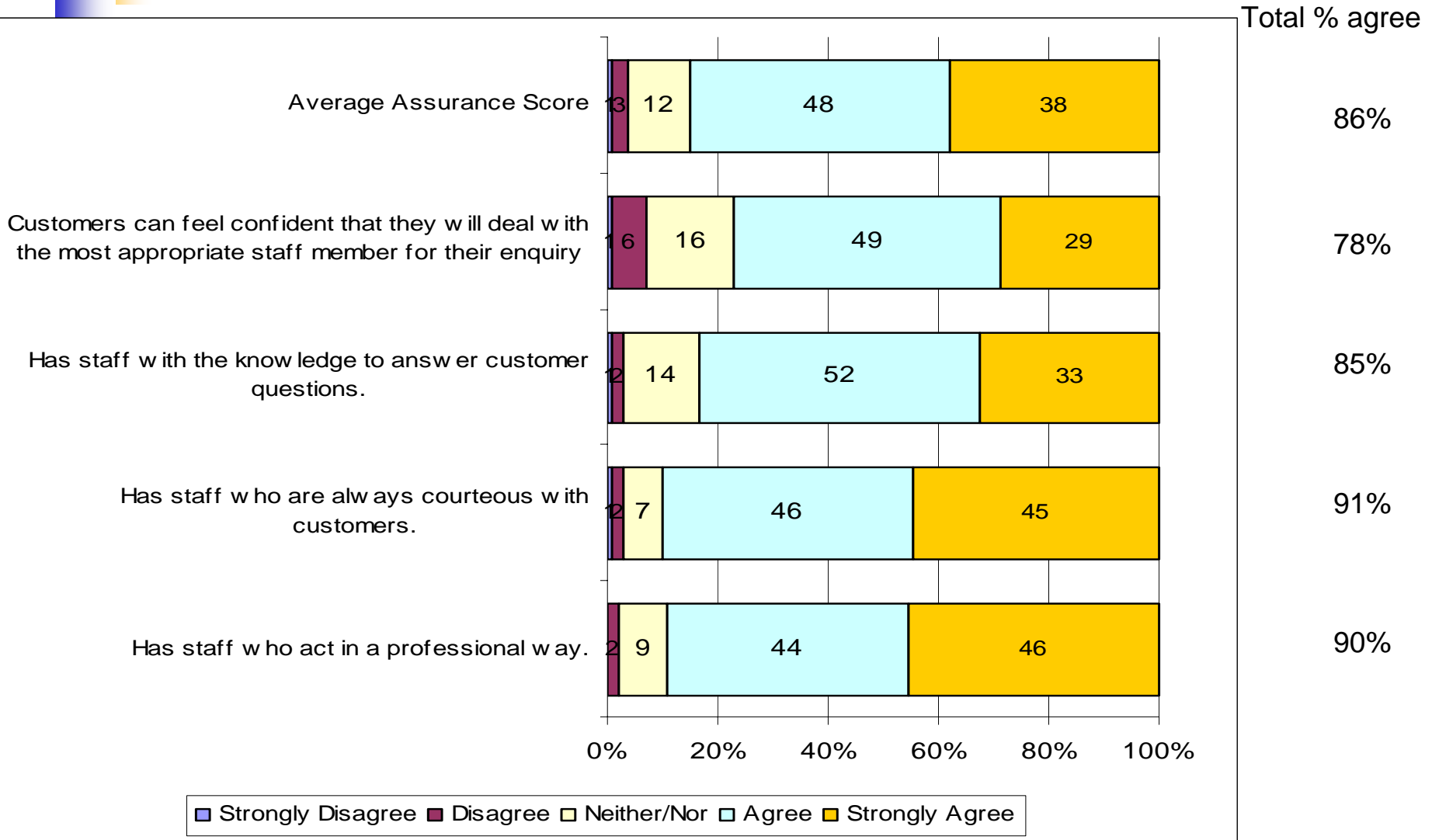




Responsiveness Dimensions

- The level of satisfaction with the responsiveness dimensions also remained almost constant compared with 2005 (79% in 2006 versus 80% in 2005).
- As in 2005, the highest score on the responsiveness dimension in 2006 was related to “has staff who are always easy to approach for assistance” (88% in 2006, and 90% in 2005).
- Comparisons with previous years show that the level of satisfaction with the responsiveness dimensions had increased in 2005 and 2006 over the 2004 levels (79% and 80% in 2006 and 2005 respectively versus 76% in 2004). However, the 2003 levels were somewhat higher at an average score of 88%, but comparable to those of 79% in 2002 and 82% in 2001.

Assurance Dimensions



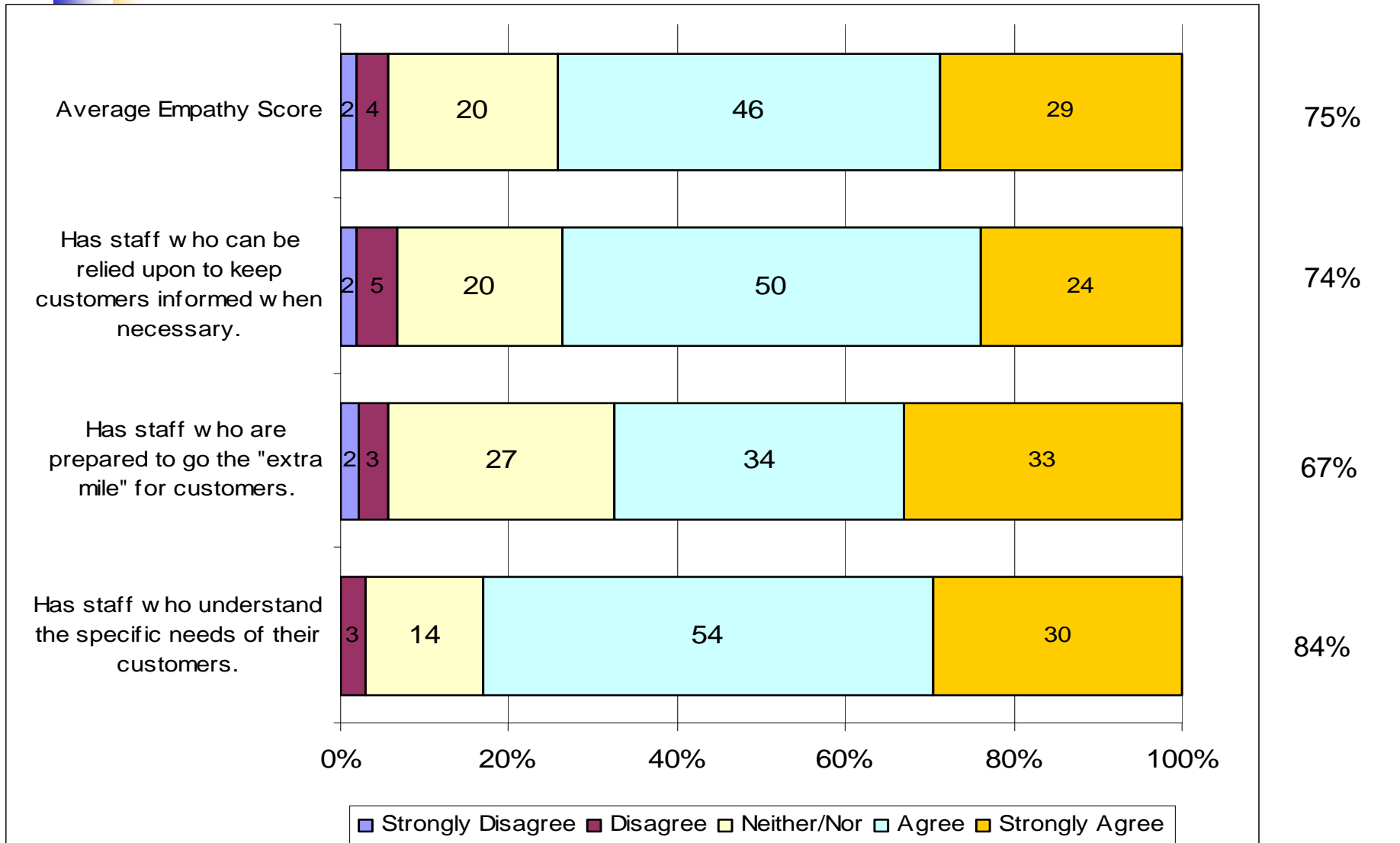


Assurance Dimensions

- The level of satisfaction with the assurance dimensions continues to be much higher than for the reliability and responsiveness dimensions in 2006, particularly for aspects of staff professionalism and courteousness (90% and 91% agreement respectively).
- The average overall assurance score is 86% compared with only 79% for responsiveness, and 74% for reliability.
- In comparison with previous years, the 2006 results are very similar to the 2005 results with no statistically significant movements. In terms of actual percentages, the 2005 results show a slight increase over 2004 (88% versus 85% in 2004) but still slightly lower than the 92% of 2003 but comparable or sometimes higher than the results for 2002 and 2001.

Empathy Dimensions

Total % agree



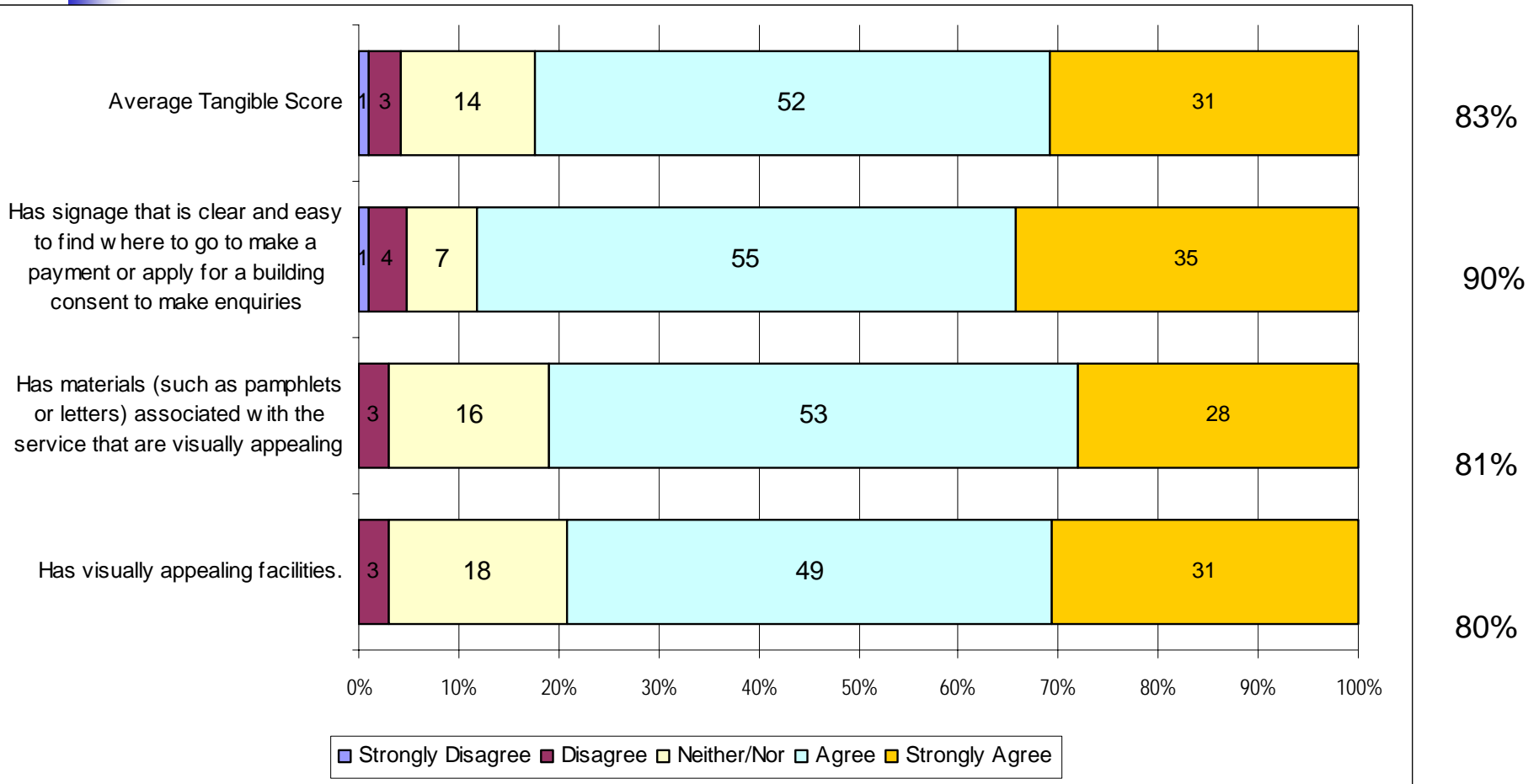


Empathy Dimensions

- Compared with 2005, the average score on empathy dimensions has remained at 75% agree/strongly agree.
- In 2006, the highest score among the empathy related statements was 84% for “staff who understand the specific needs of their customers”. This attribute scored 82% in 2005, but the change is not statistically significant.
- Conversely, the lowest score in 2006 was for “staff who are prepared to go the extra mile for customers” that achieved only a rating of 67% who agree/strongly agree with this statement, a slight drop compared to the 73% in 2005 but still not a statistically significant change.

Tangible Dimensions

Total % agree





Tangible Dimensions

- Customer Service Centres continue to be doing very well in the area of tangible dimensions.
- While the original two statements relating to tangible dimensions received almost equal ratings, the newly introduced clarity of signage statement received a much higher score of 91% in 2006.
- Compared with previous years, the average rating of tangible dimensions was 83% in 2006, 86% in 2005, 89% in 2004, 80% in 2002 and 83% in 2001. In 2003, however, the average satisfaction with tangible dimensions was significantly higher at 95%. This difference is one of the few statistically significant differences in the results between years.

Summary Scores

Total % agree

Overall average score for reliability

2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006

Overall average score for empathy

2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006

Overall average score for responsiveness

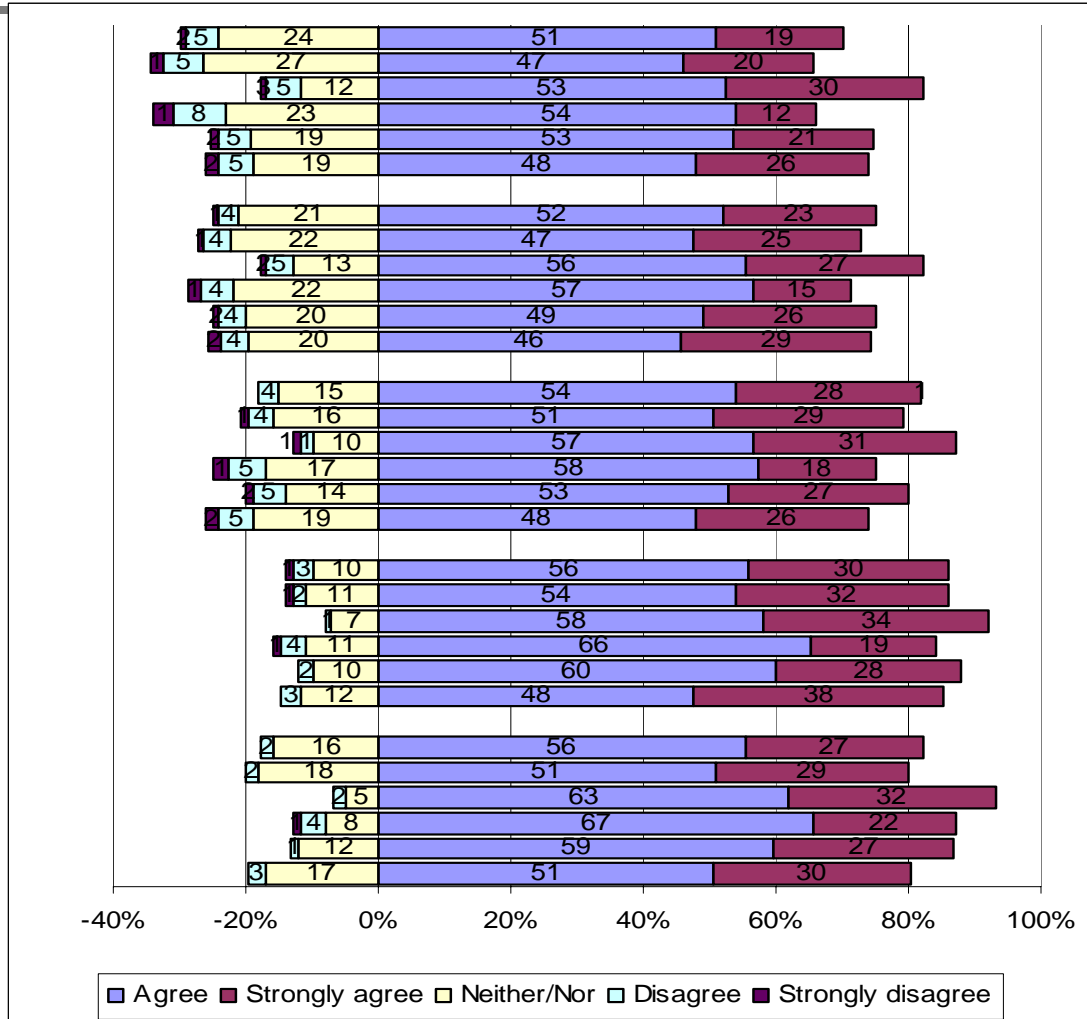
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006

Overall average score for assurance

2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006

Overall average score for tangibles

2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006





Comparison of Summary Scores

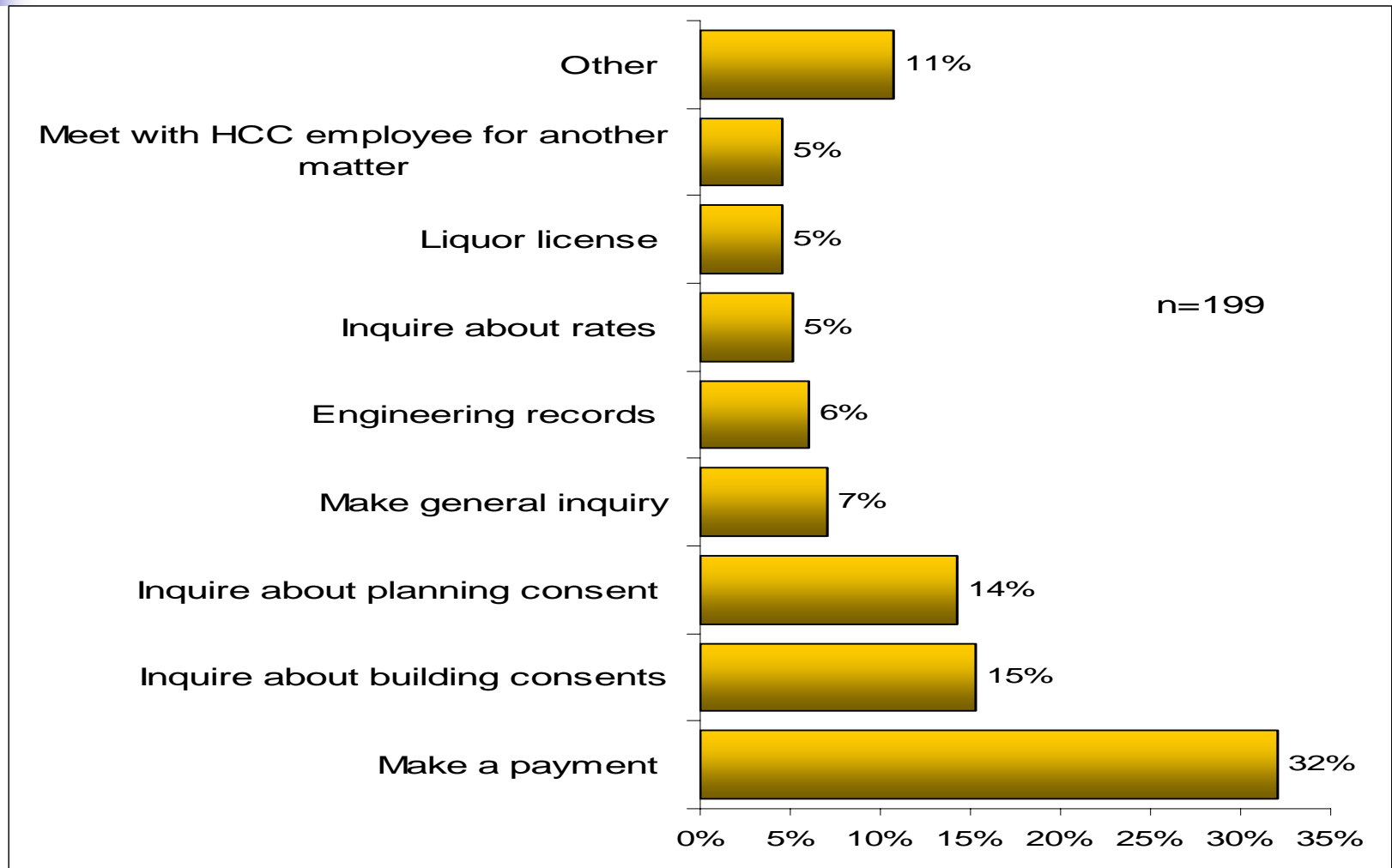
- When summary scores are examined, as in 2005, the 2006 results show the highest ratings for the assurance dimensions followed by the tangible dimensions.
- This is consistent with the 2004, 2003 and 2001 findings.
- This means that Council has a strong workforce and a physically appealing work environment.
- In comparison with previous years, the 2006 and the 2005 results are highest on the reliability and empathy dimensions if the 2003 results are not included in the comparisons.



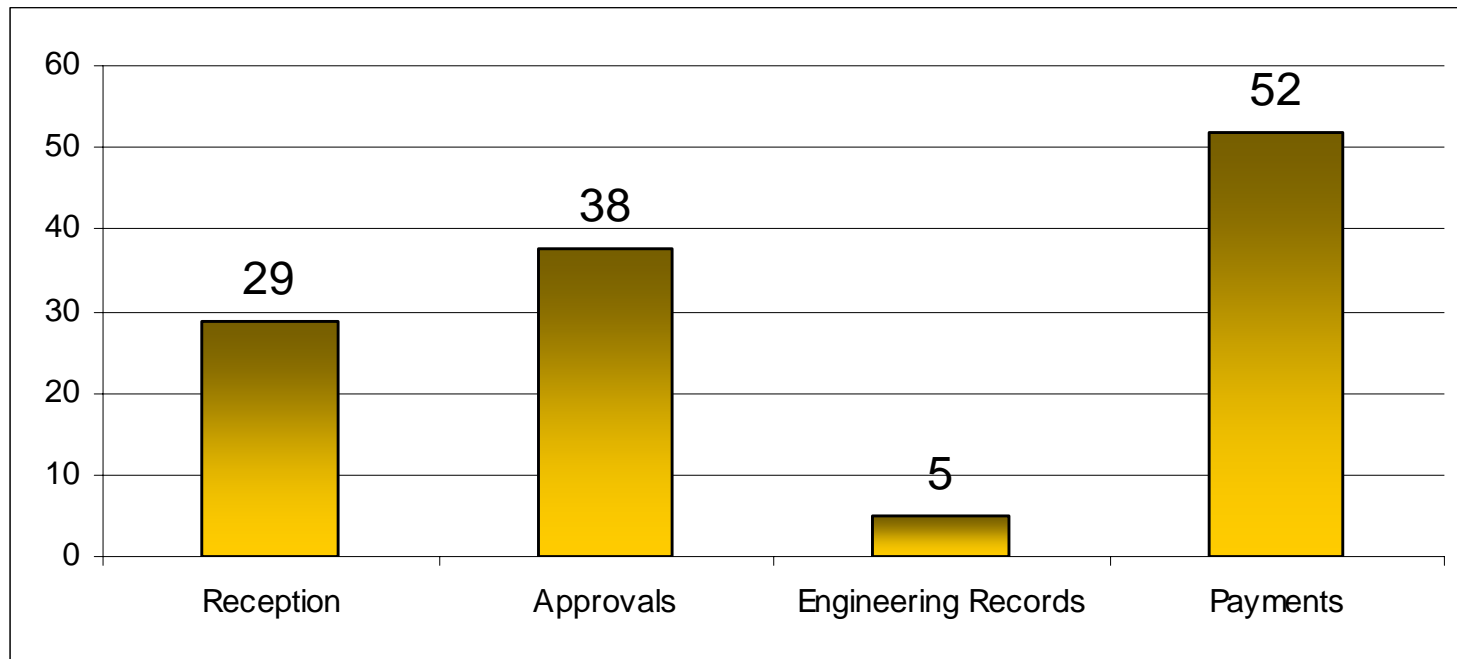
Demographics

- The following slides show the various demographic characteristics of the respondents to the 2006 survey.

Reason For Council Visit

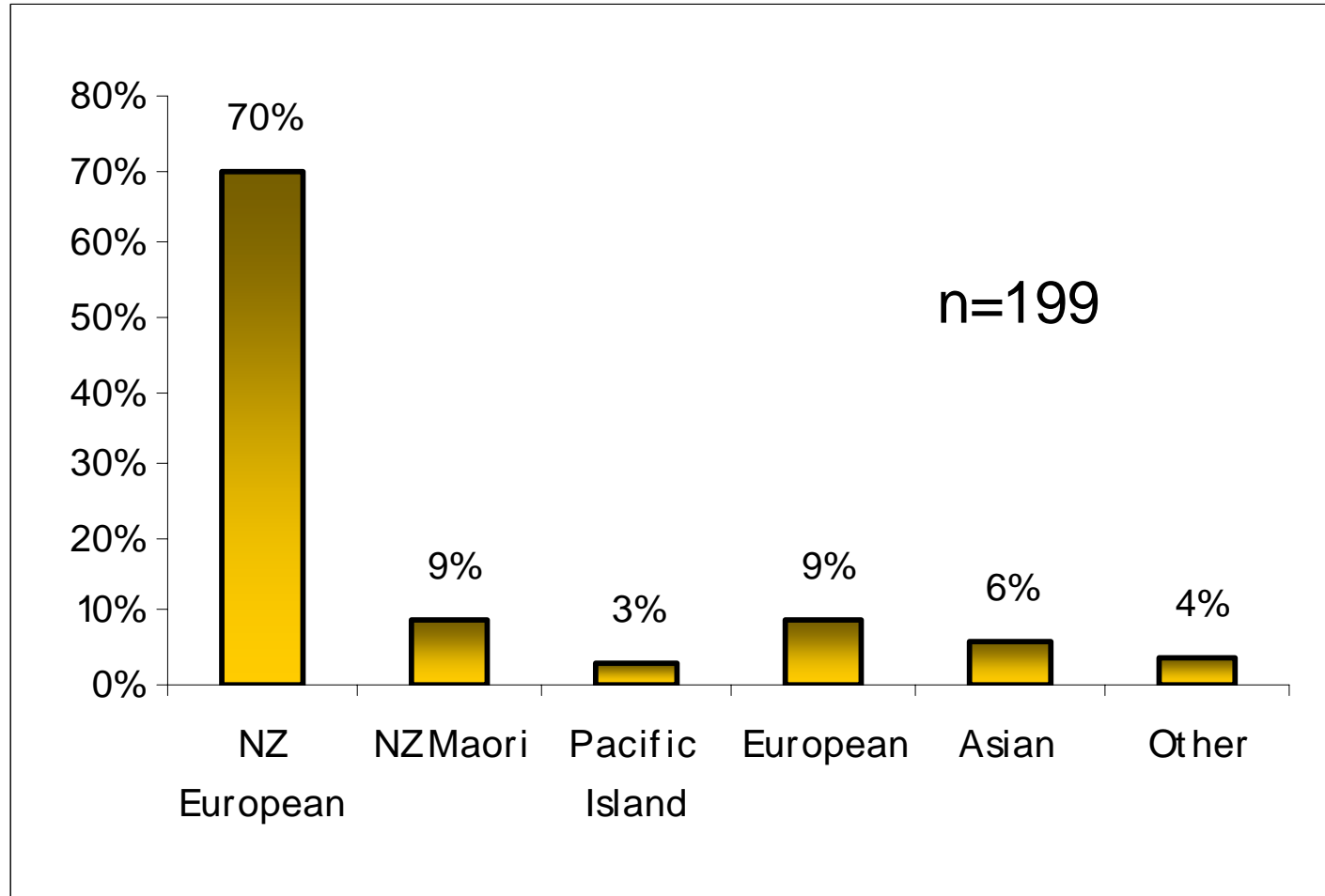


Service Desk Visited

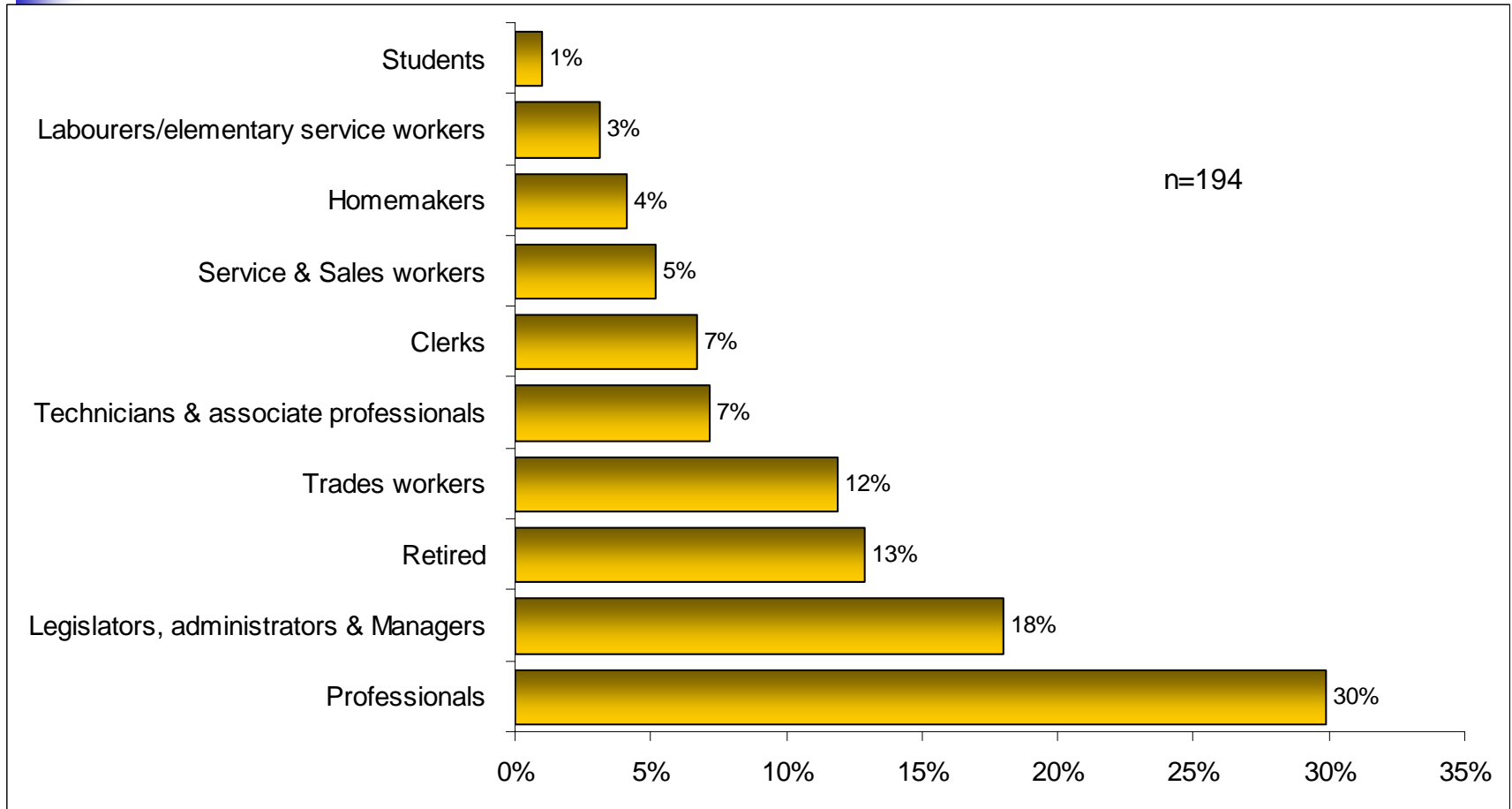


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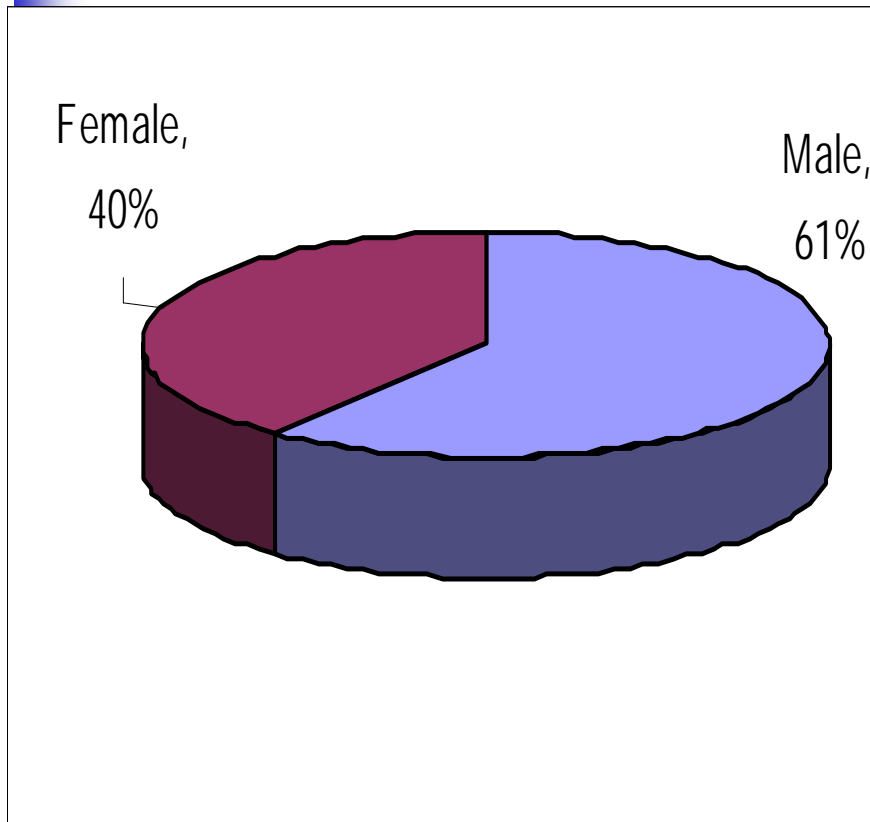
Respondent Ethnicity



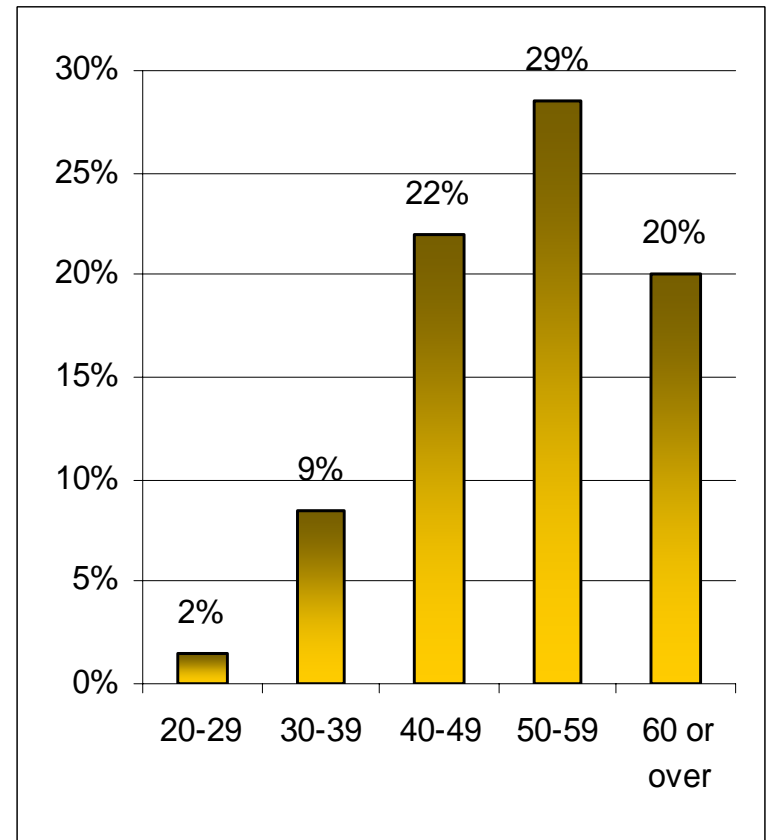
Respondent Profession



Respondent Gender And Age



Almost two thirds of the respondents to the survey were male.



The largest number of respondents were aged 50-59.