



## IMAGE OF THE GAME

PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS SURVEY REPORT  
30 SEPTEMBER 2009



## **RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION IMAGE OF THE GAME PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS SURVEY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This document presents the findings of the Rugby Football Union's opinion survey to Professional Players.

This report includes 129 responses.

**RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**  
**IMAGE OF THE GAME PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS SURVEY**

**RESPONDENTS**

Sample size: 129

**PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

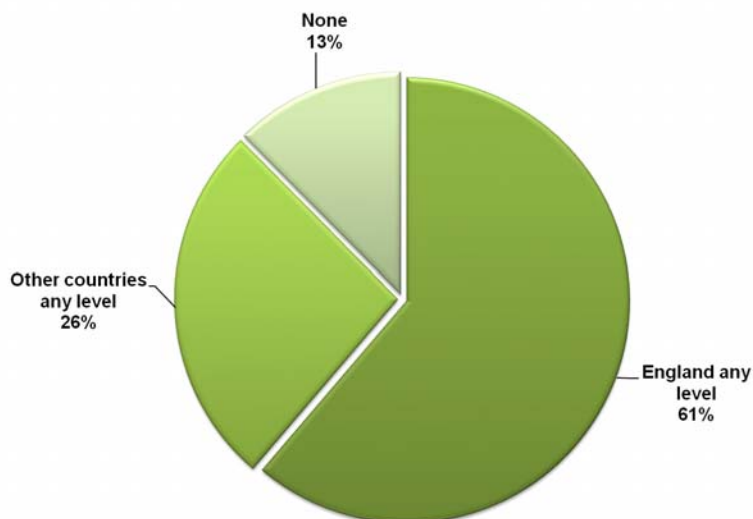
Number of years as a professional player ranged between one and 14 years.

Positions on the field represented:

7	wing	10	hooker
fullback	7	WING/FULLBACK	Wing
scrum half	CENTRE	9	scrum half
Hooker	12, 13	15	back row
Tight Head Prop	BACKROW	6	back row/second row
hooker	Lock	FLANKER	BACK ROW
PROP	Lock	prop	hooker
7	centre	LOCK	prop
utility back	9	12/13	Winger
scrum half	PROP	centre	second row
Scrum Half	HOOKER	Lock	back row
2nd Row	Flanker	7	Fly-half
forwards	2	lock	wing
scrum half	Backrow	Fly-Half	scrum half
fukl back	7	flyhalf	2nd row
Backrow	15	Back Row	fullback
lock	HOOKER	Backrow	LOCK
9	Prop	Prop	12
second row	9	LOCK	scrum half
fly half	Lock	5	back row
4 or 5	Back Row	Prop	back row
2nd row	backrow/lock	Lock	back
Hooker	hooker	prop	Scrum Half
10	15	prop	

**Representative honours**

England any level	79
Other countries any level	34
None	16
	129

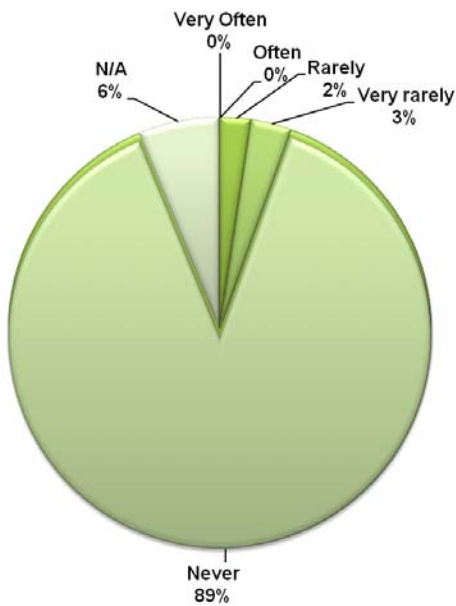


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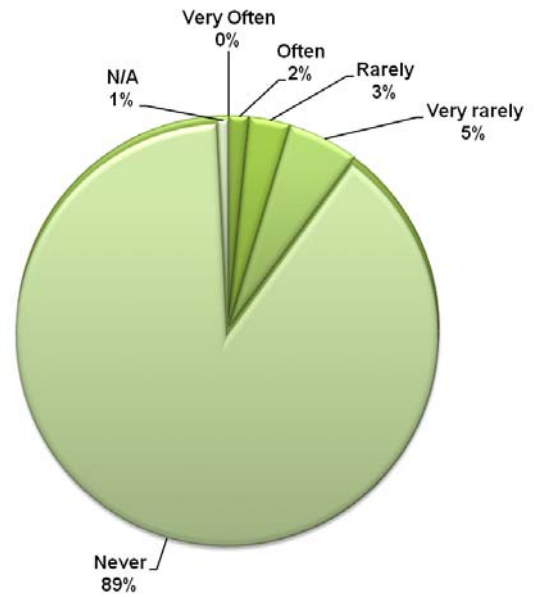
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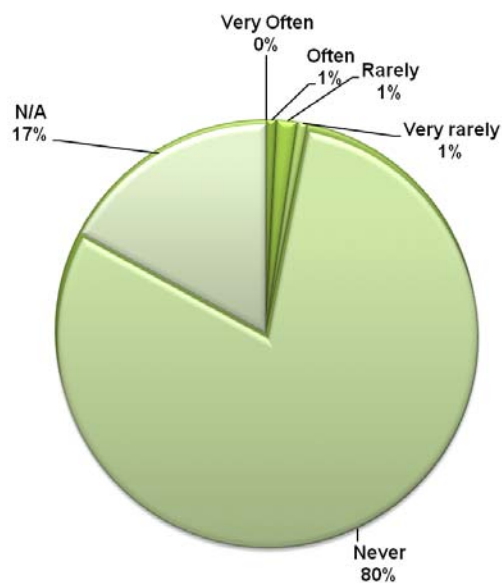
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**PREMIERSHIP & EUROPEAN CUP MATCHES**



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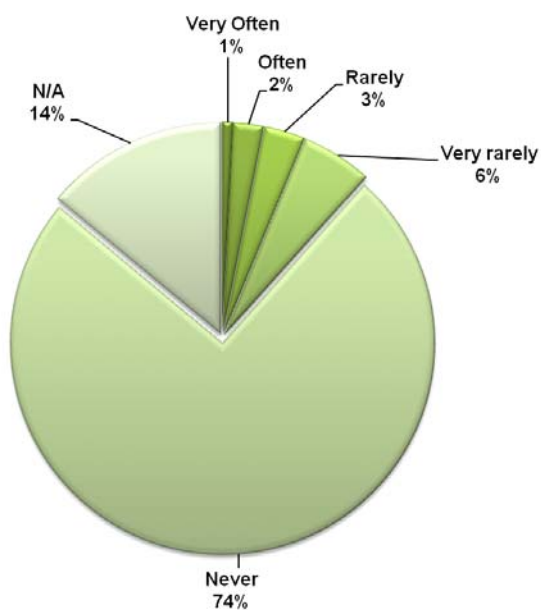


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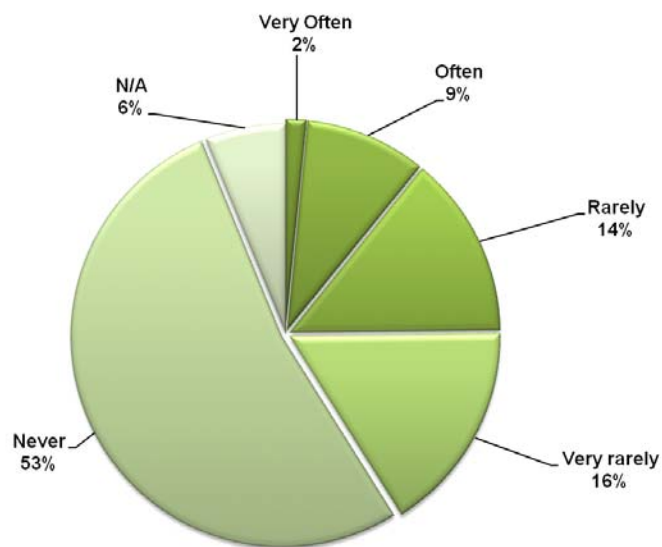
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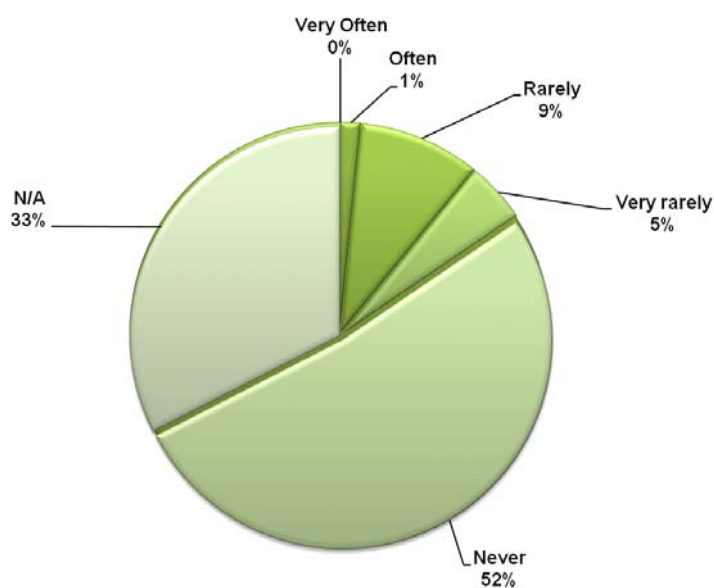
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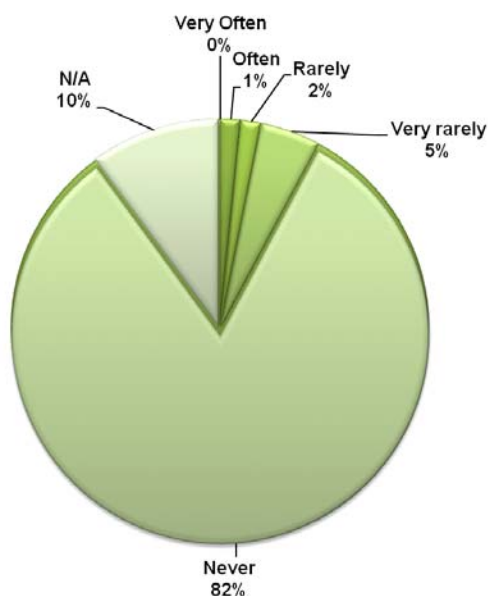


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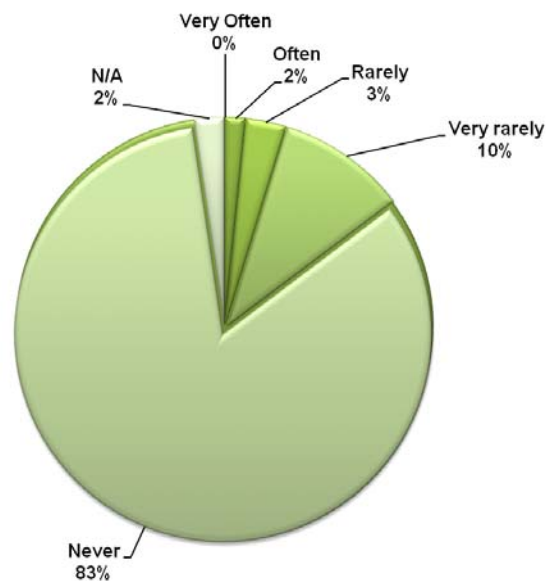
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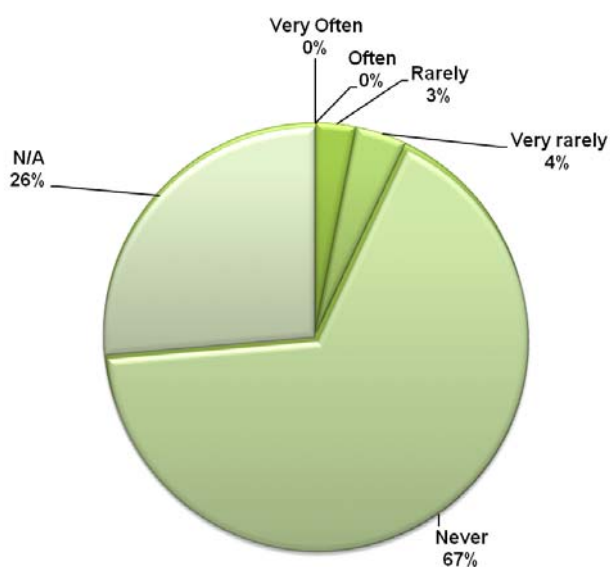
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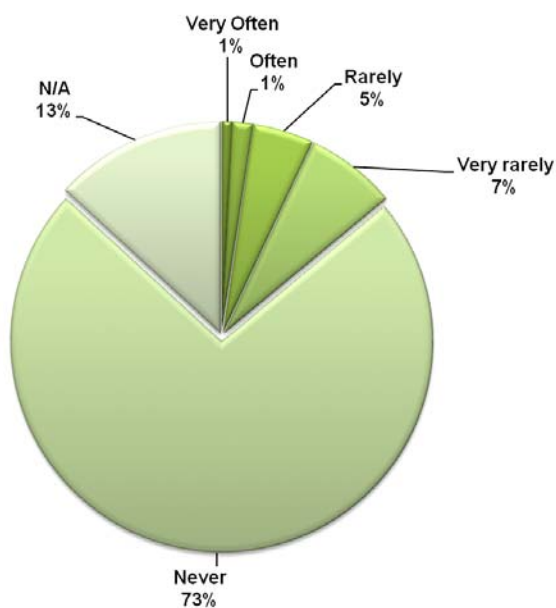


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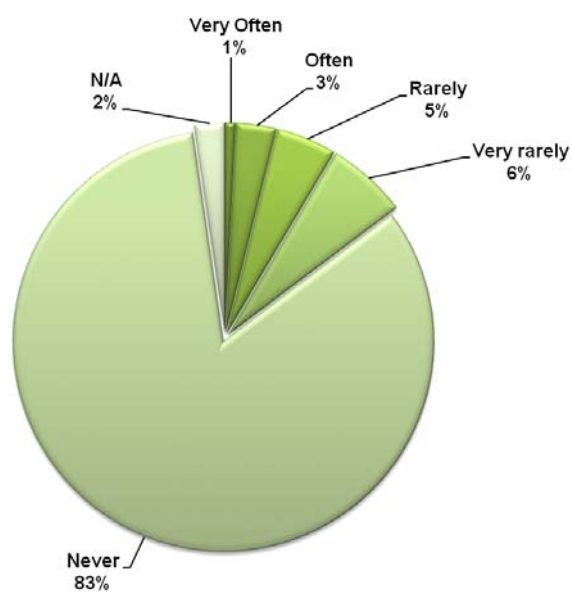
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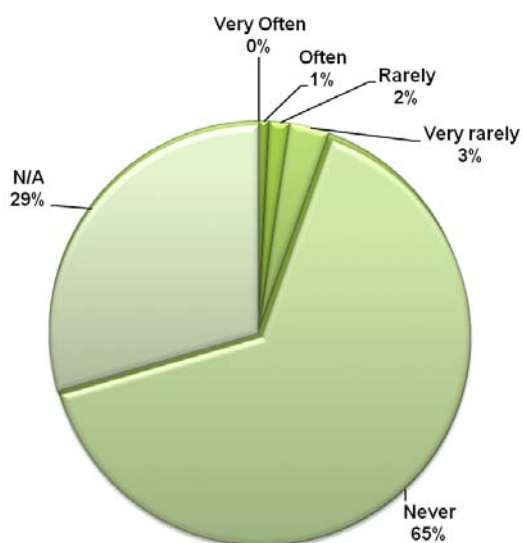
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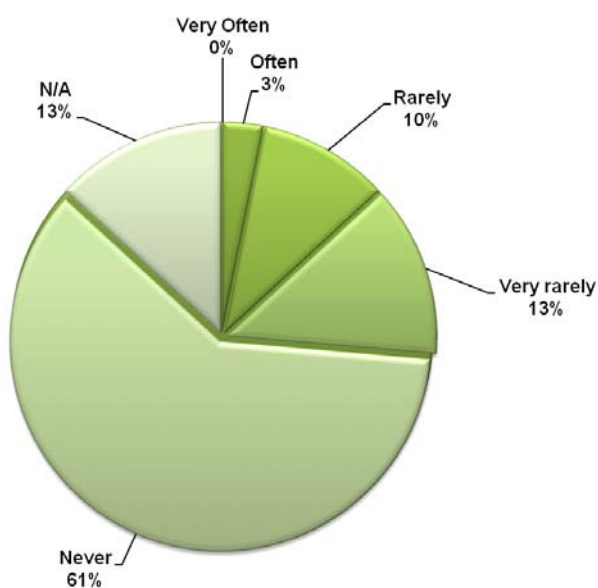


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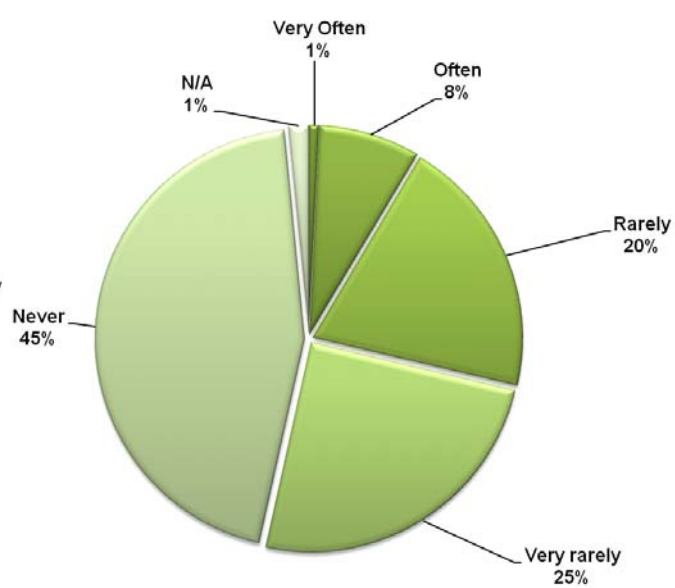
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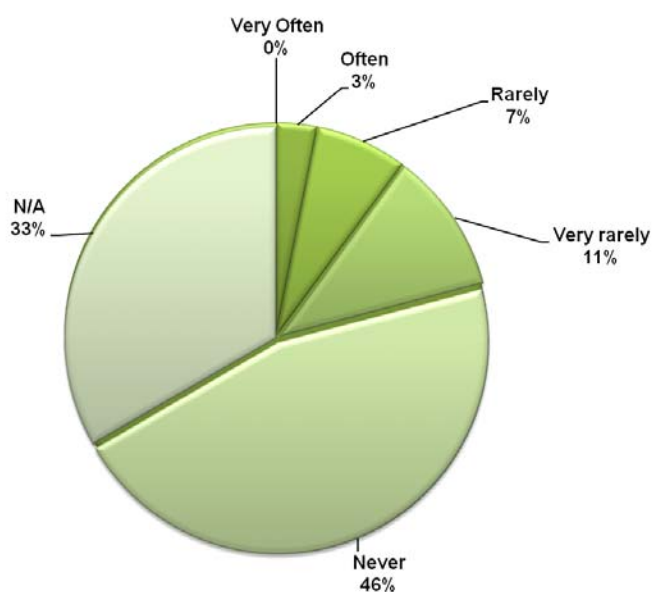
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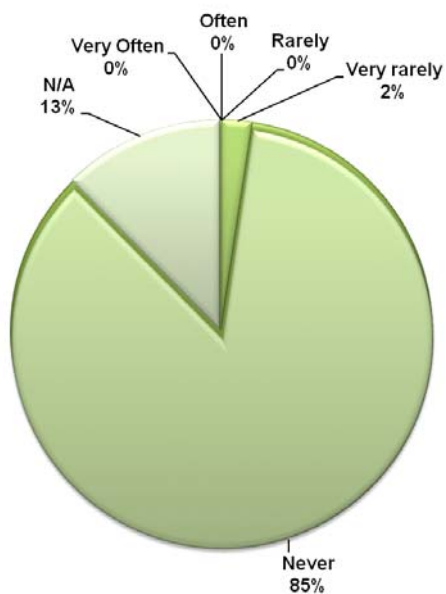


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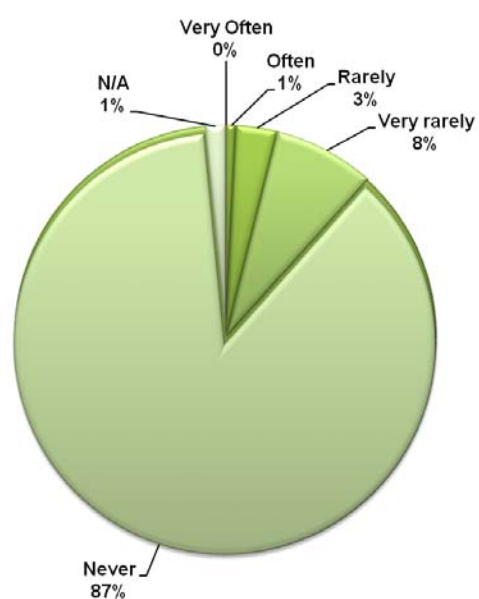
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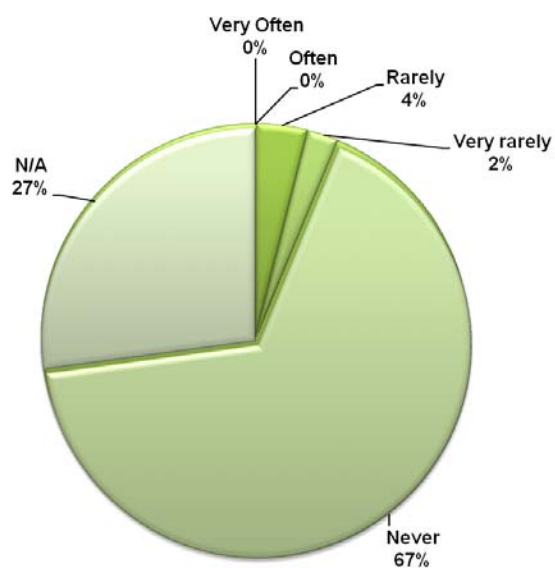
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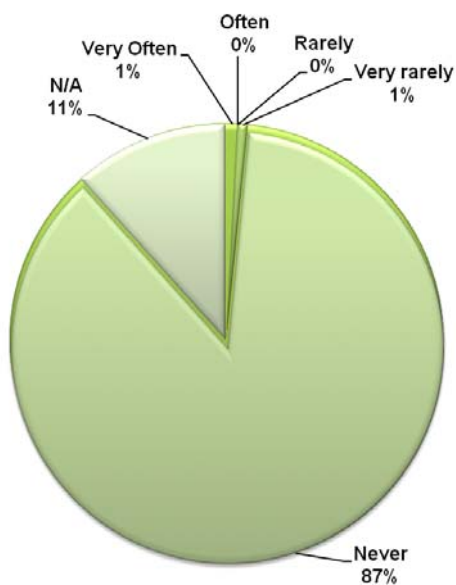


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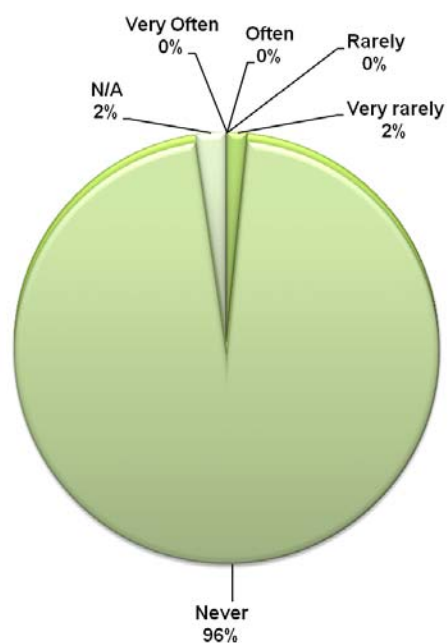
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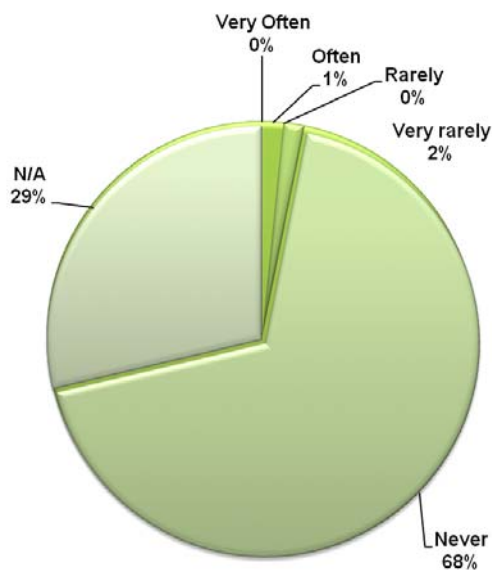
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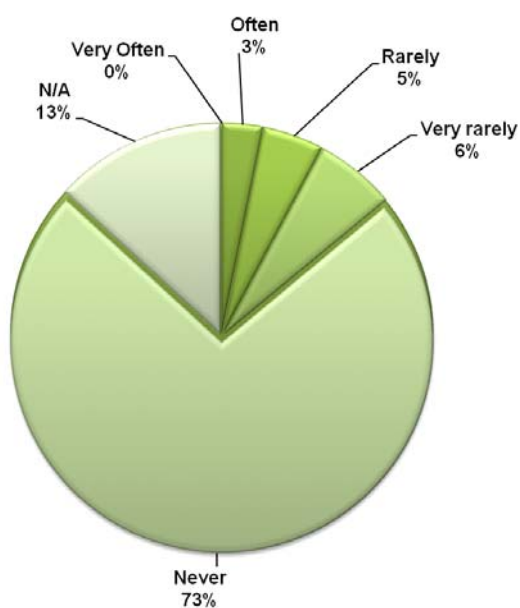


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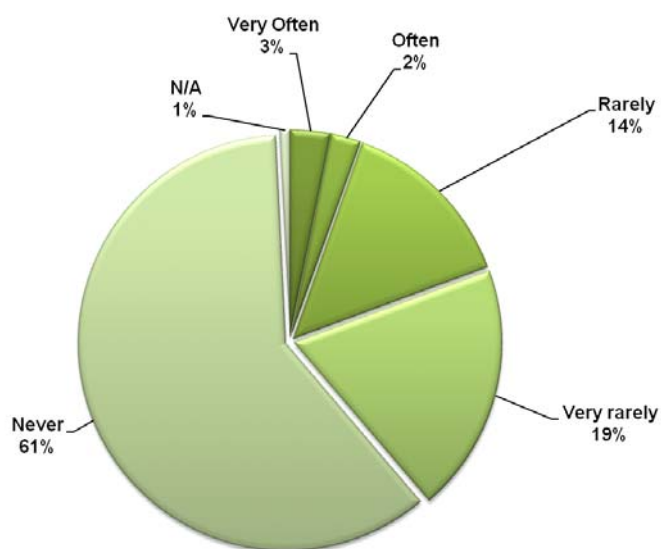
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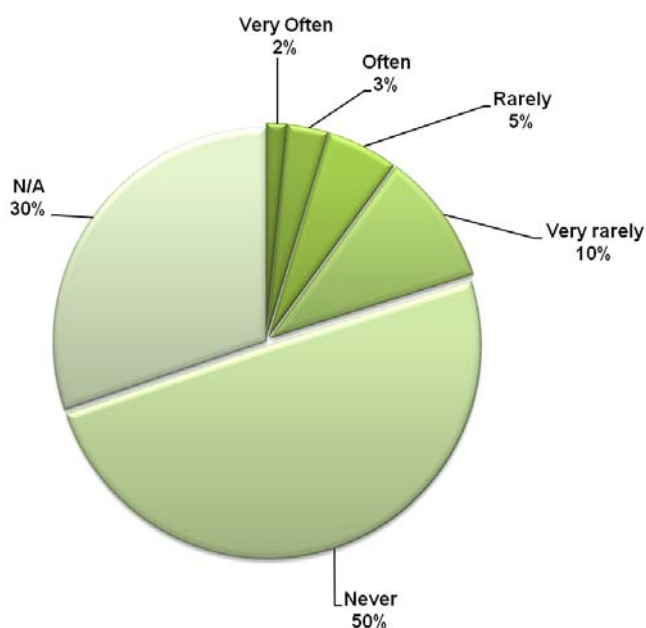
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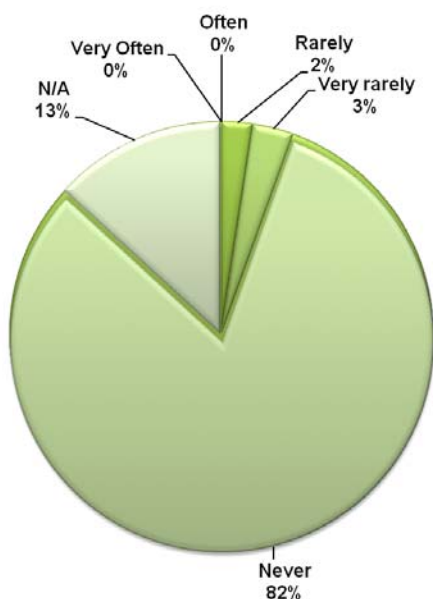


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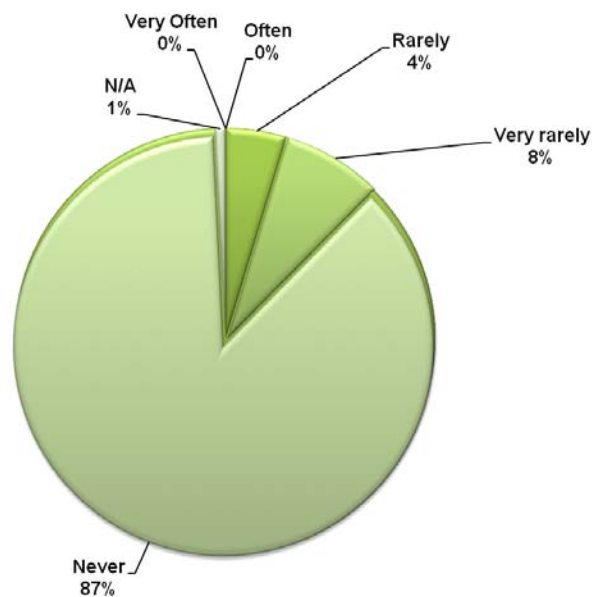
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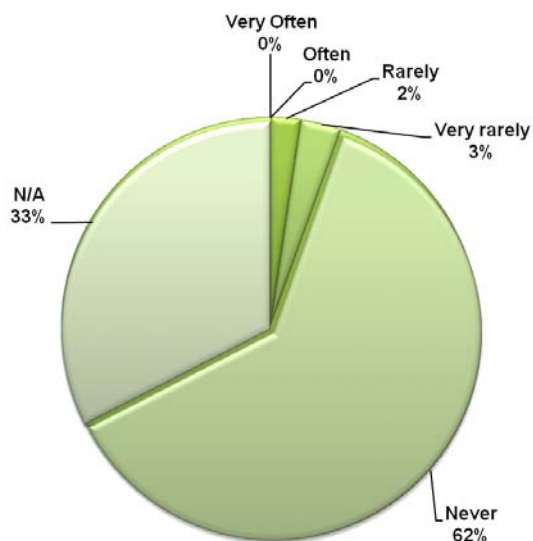
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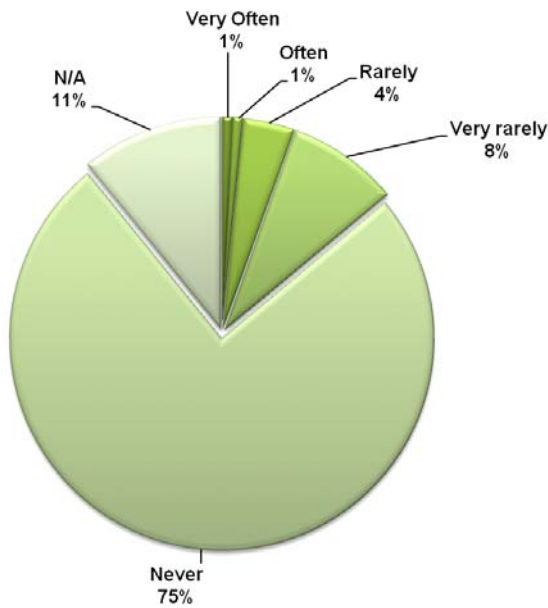


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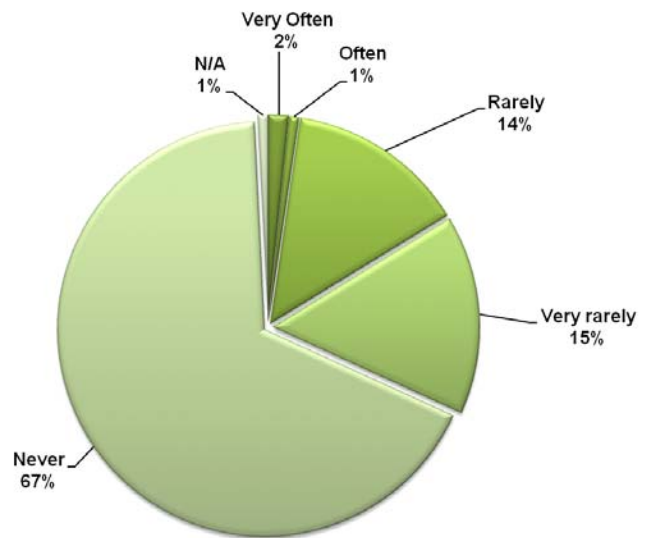
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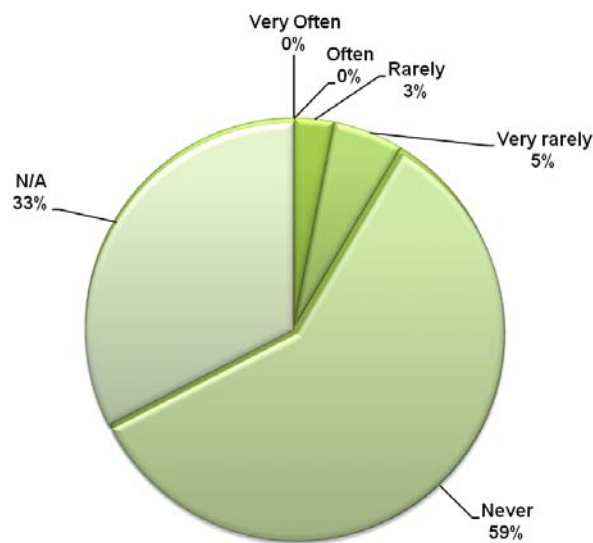
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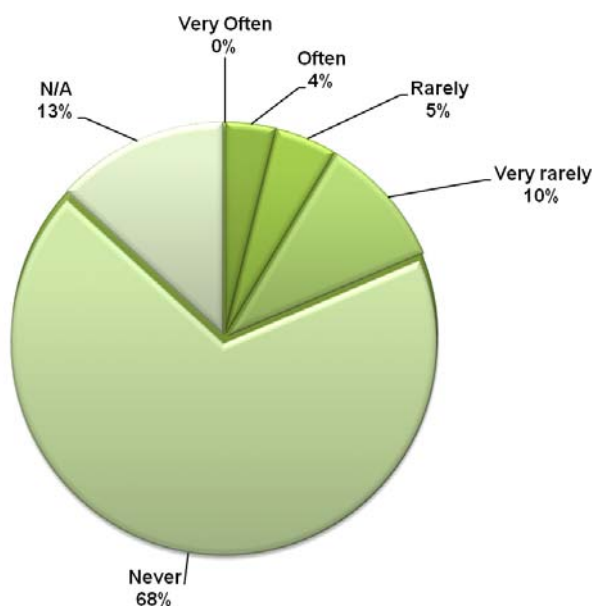


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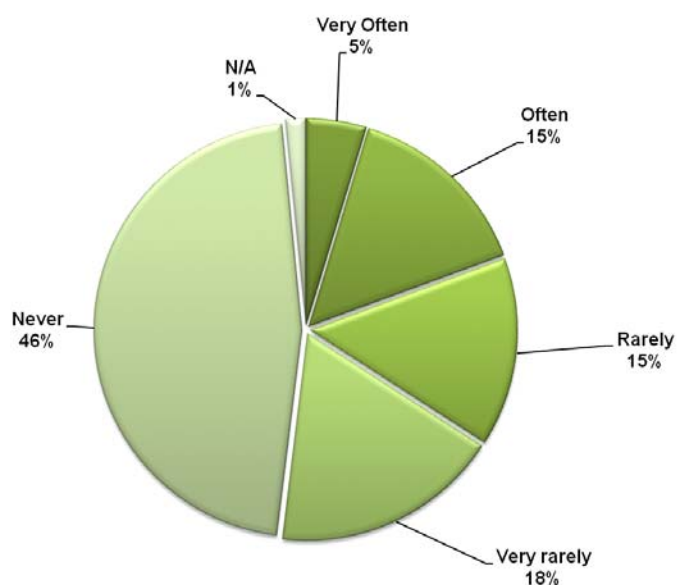
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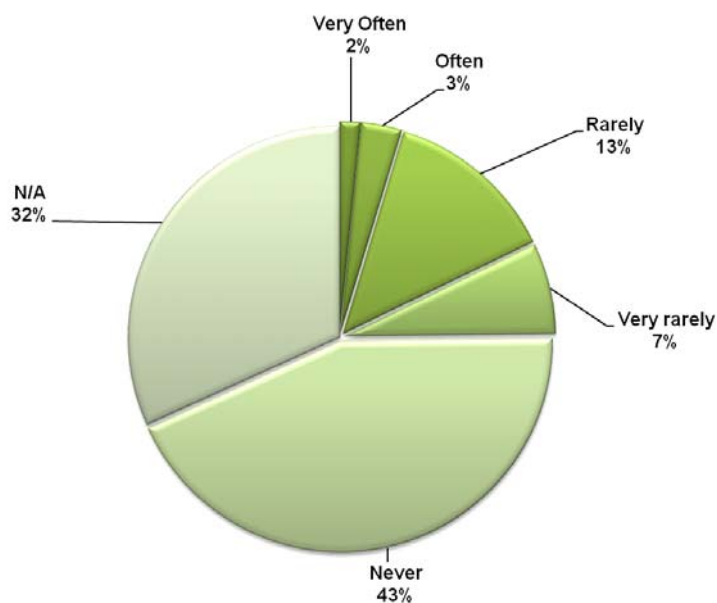
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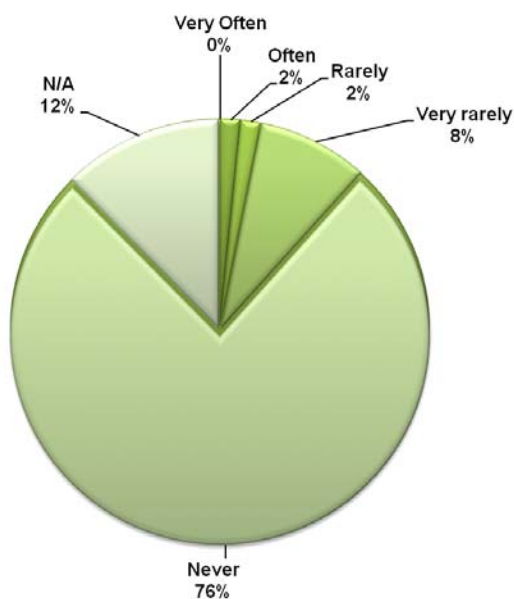


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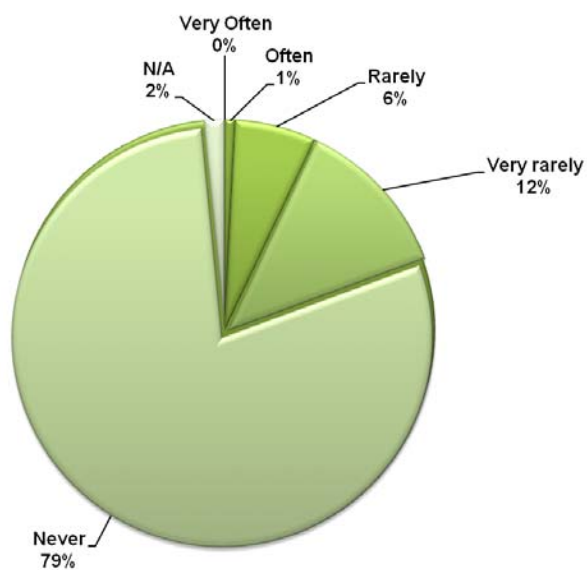
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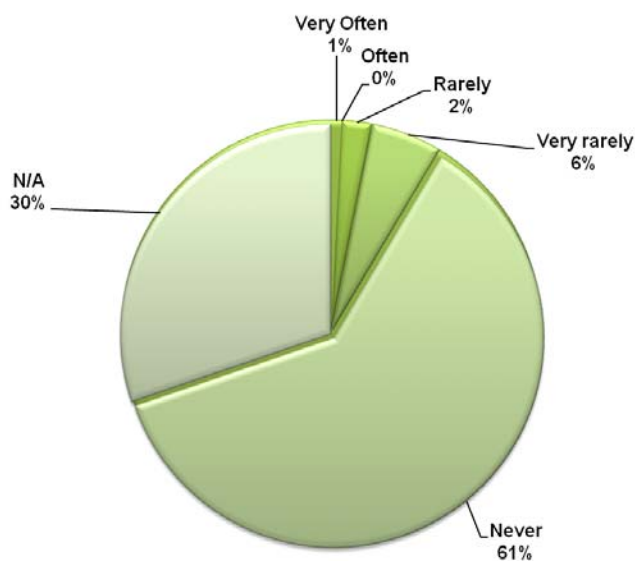
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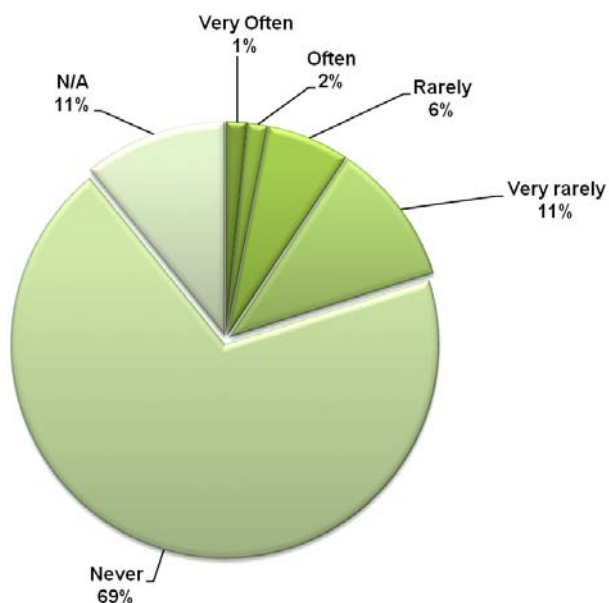


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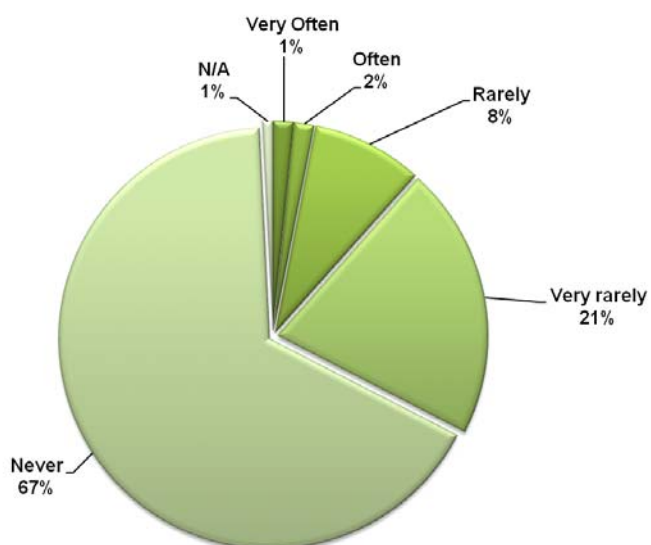
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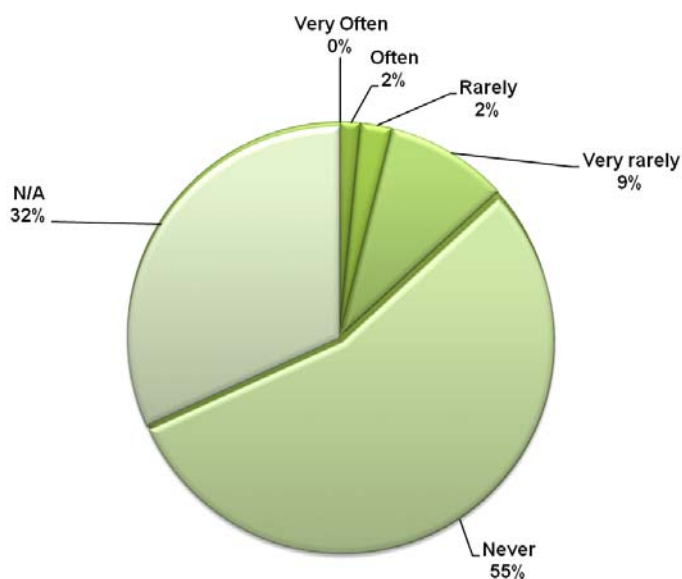
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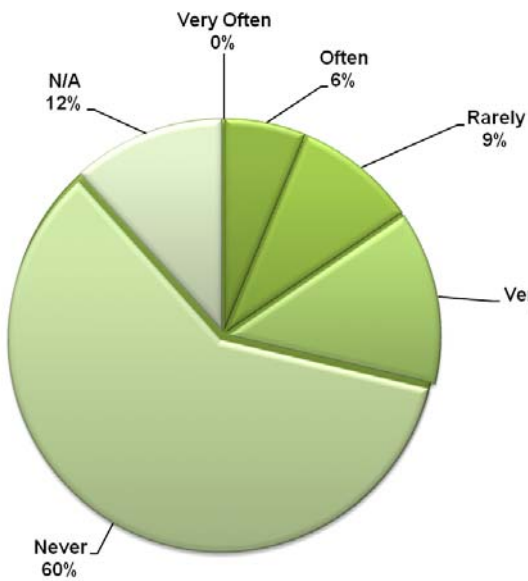


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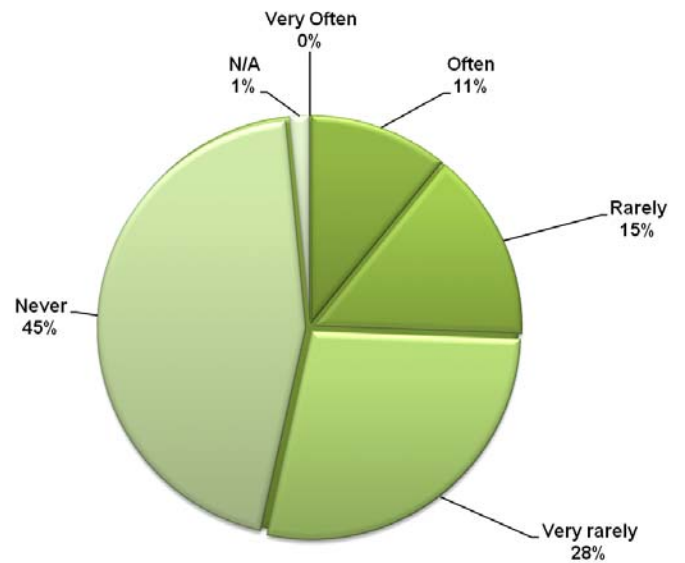
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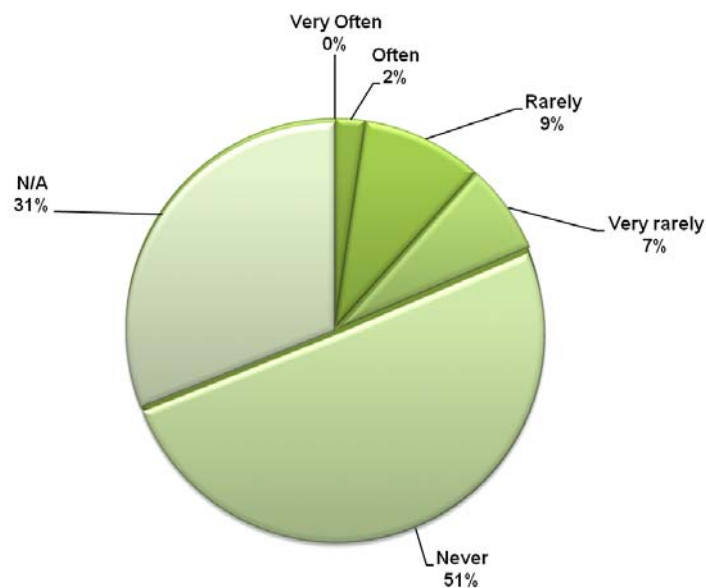
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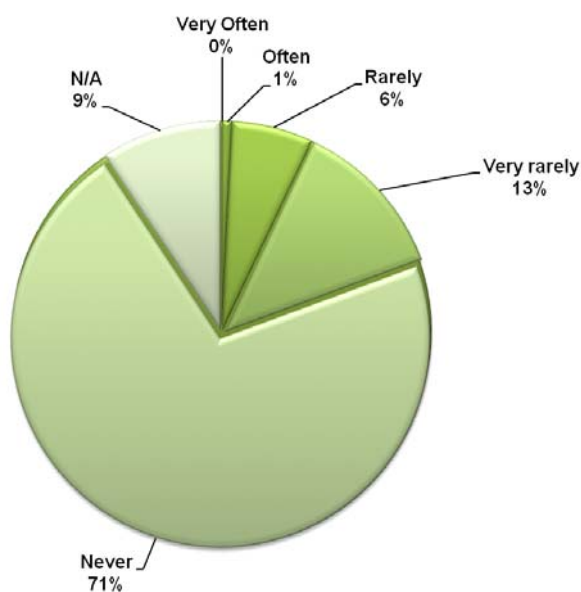


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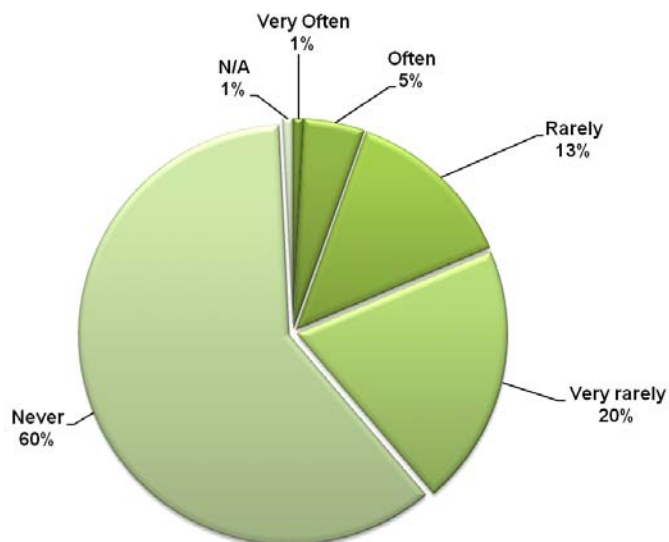
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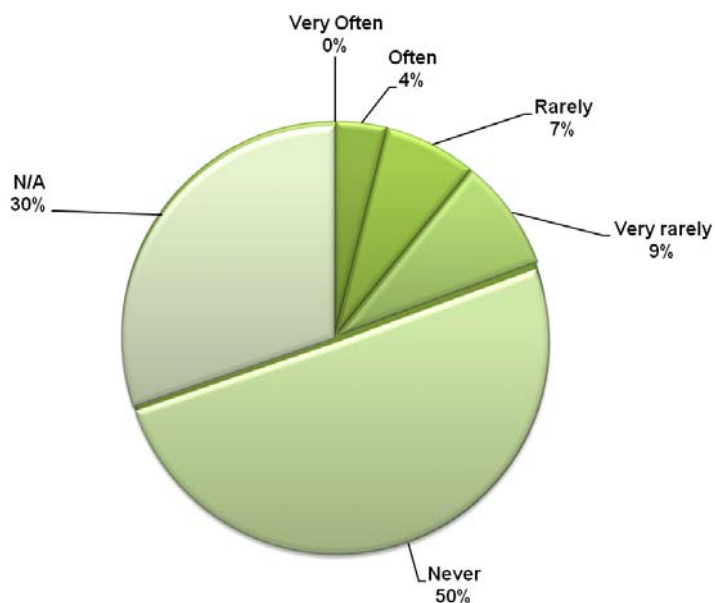
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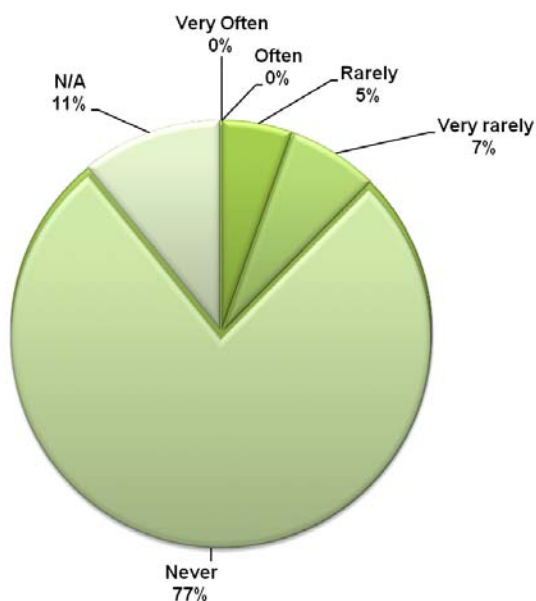


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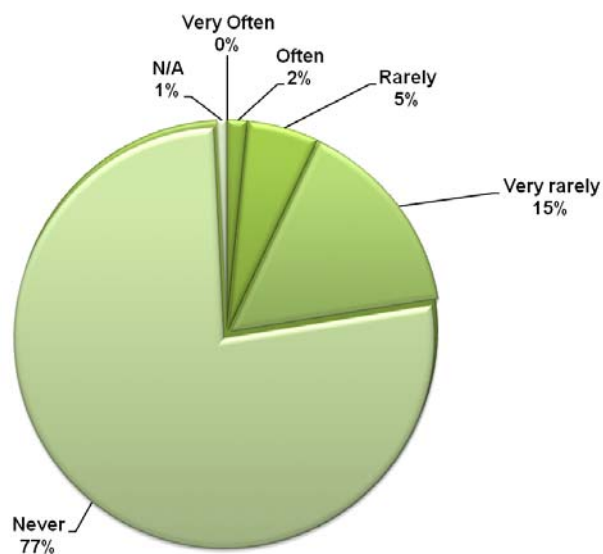
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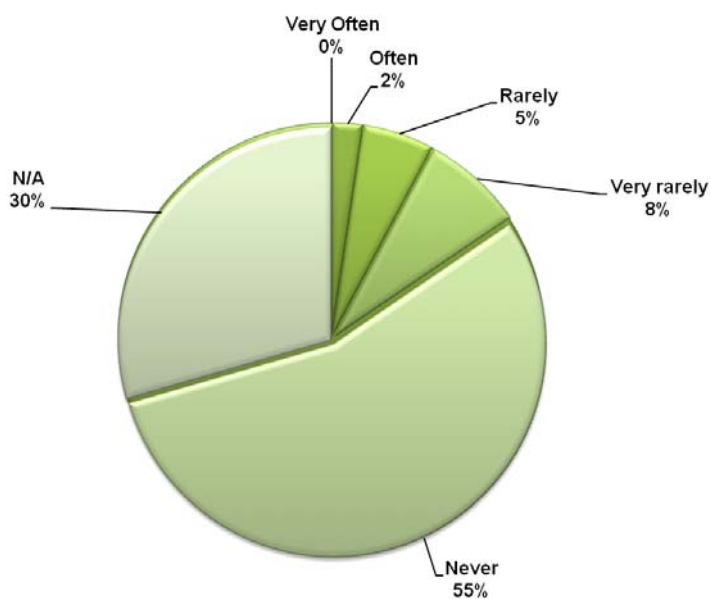
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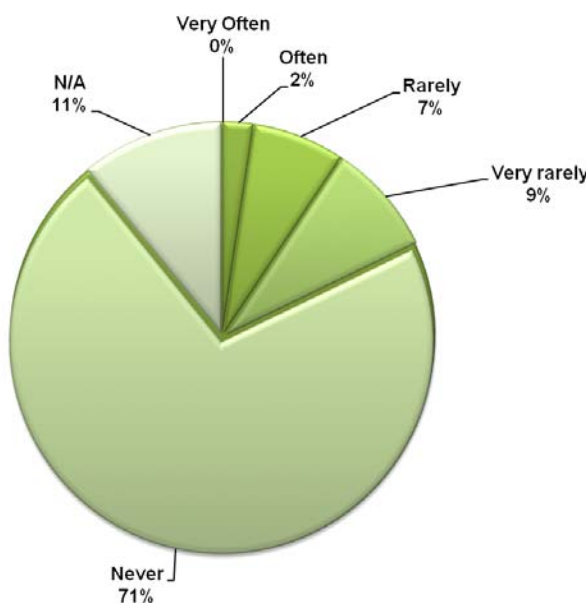


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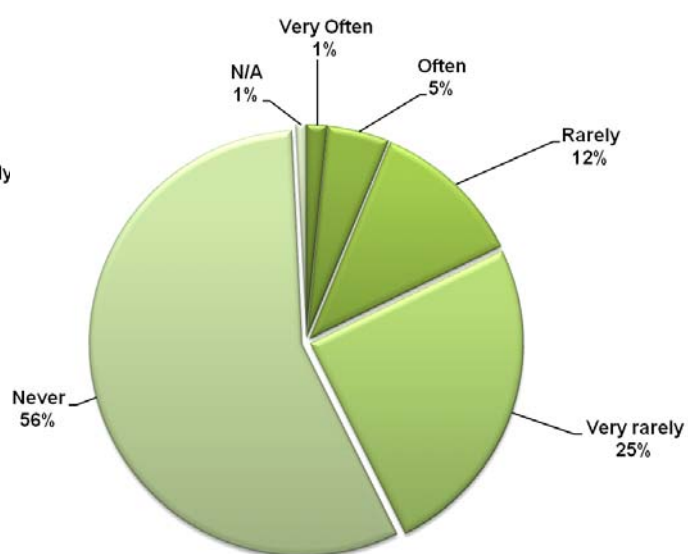
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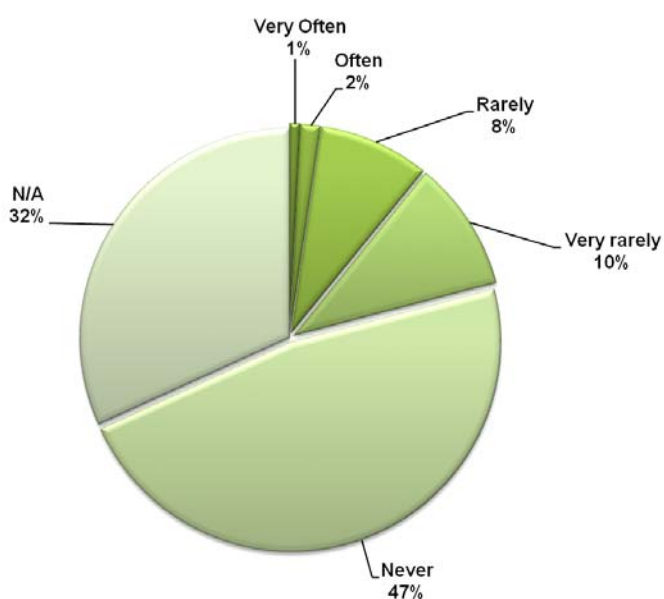
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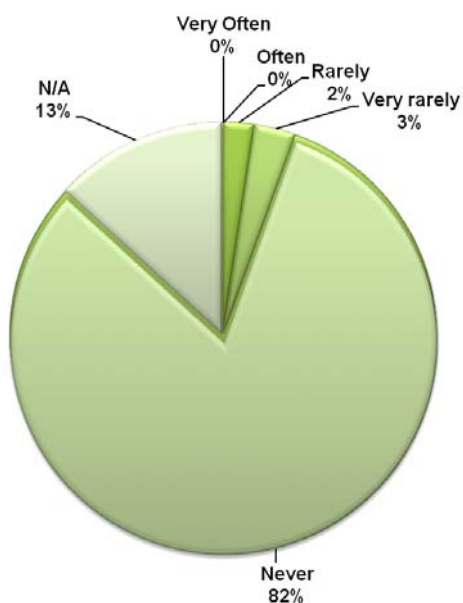


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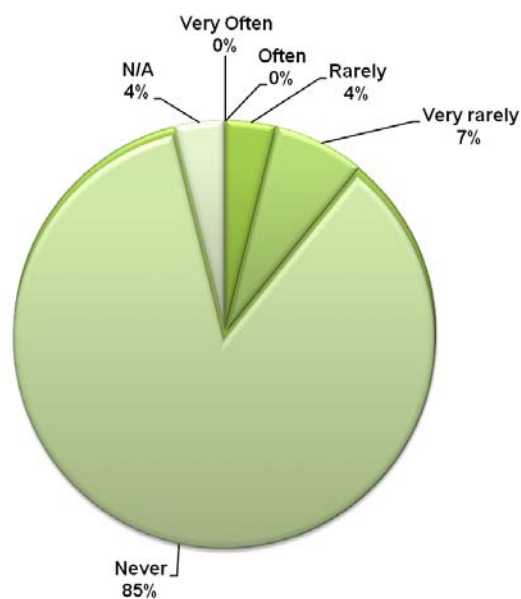
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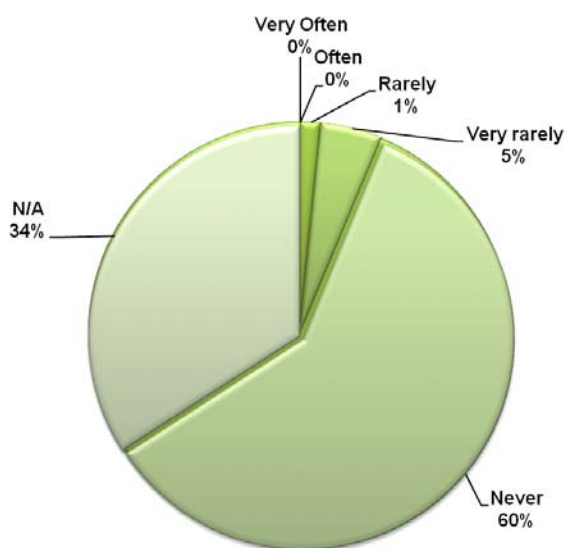
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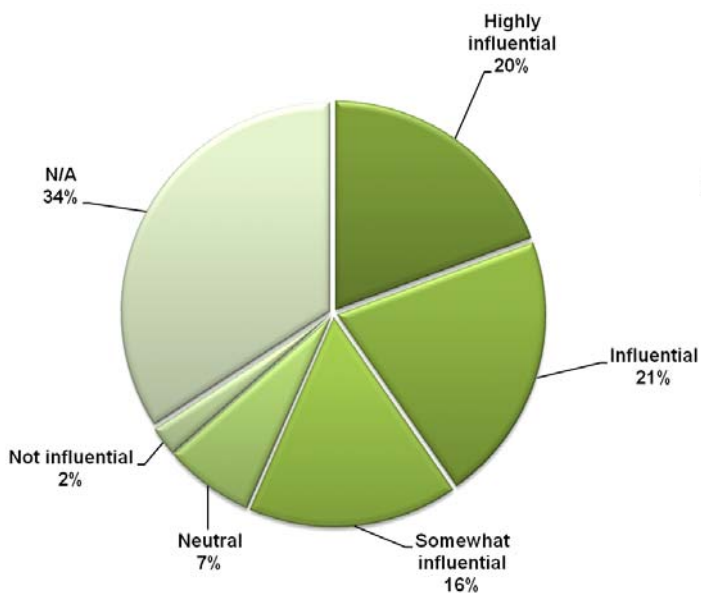
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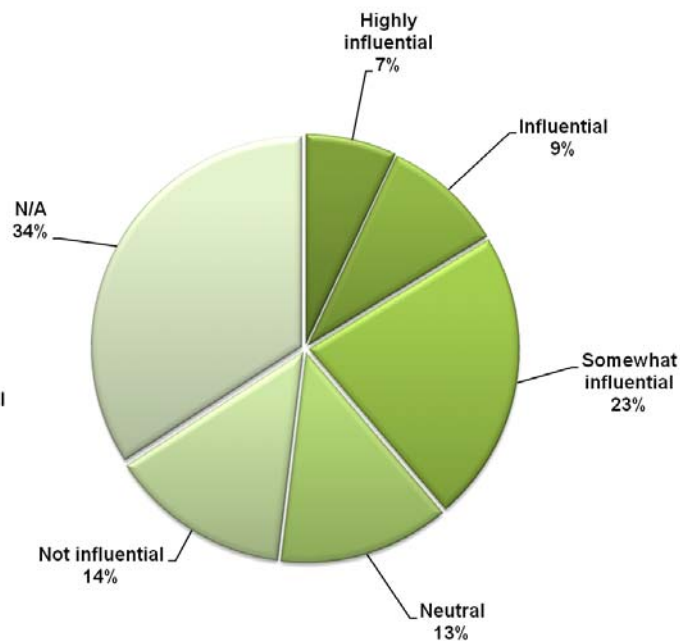
**QUESTION 3:**

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, what was it, in your view, that led players to becoming involved in Inappropriate Practices and/or Behaviours?

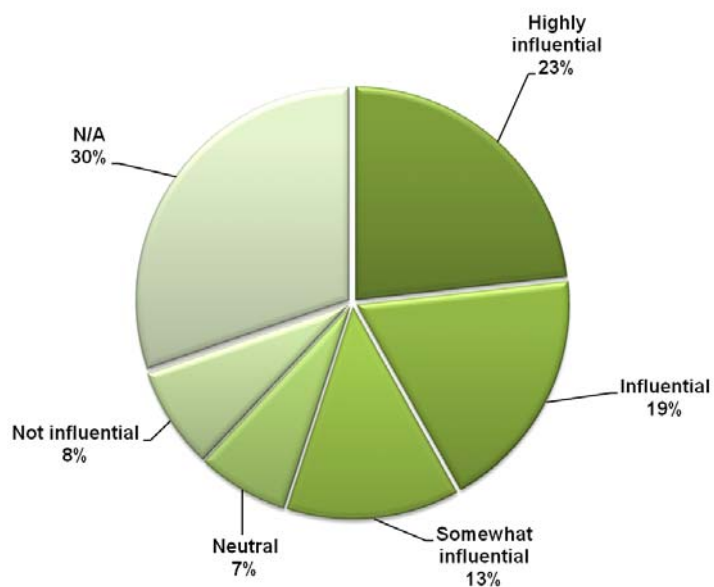
**DESIRE TO WIN**



**PEER PRESSURE**



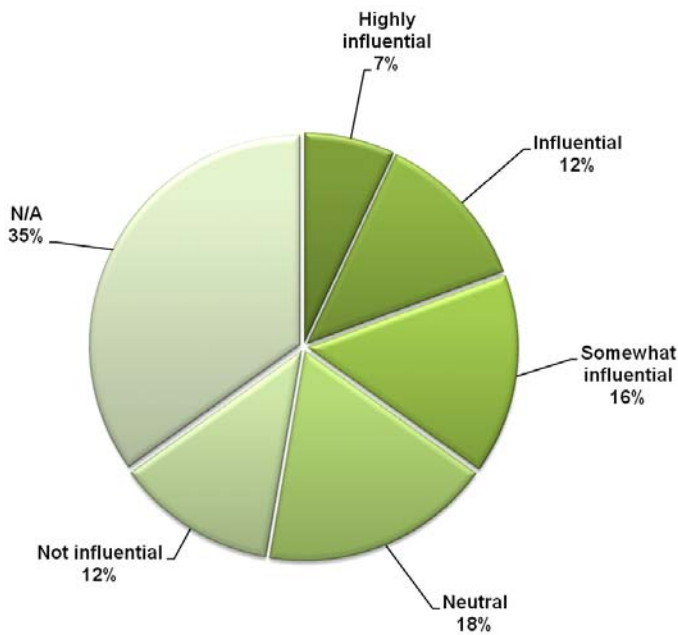
**INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RUGBY,  
 COACHING STAFF**



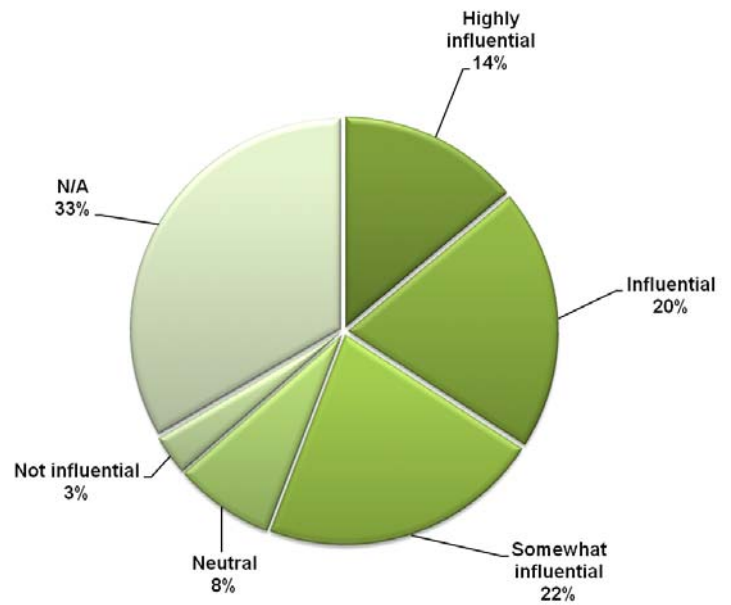
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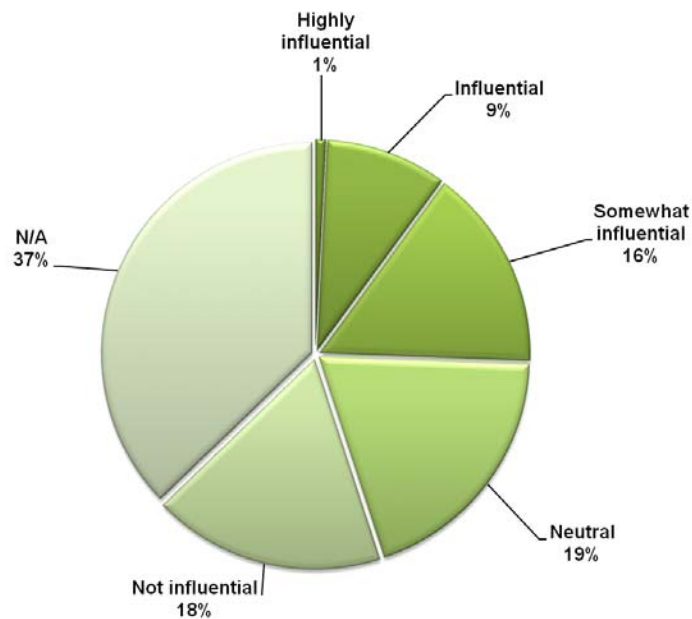
INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE MEDICAL STAFF OR PHYSIOS



COMMITMENT TO THE CLUB OR TEAM



IT WAS THE 'RIGHT THING TO DO'



**QUESTION 3: OTHER (Open responses)**

**If you answered yes to any of the above questions, what was it, in your view, that led players to becoming involved in Inappropriate Practices and/or Behaviours?**

Two open responses in total

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1 Life style and company outside of rugby!

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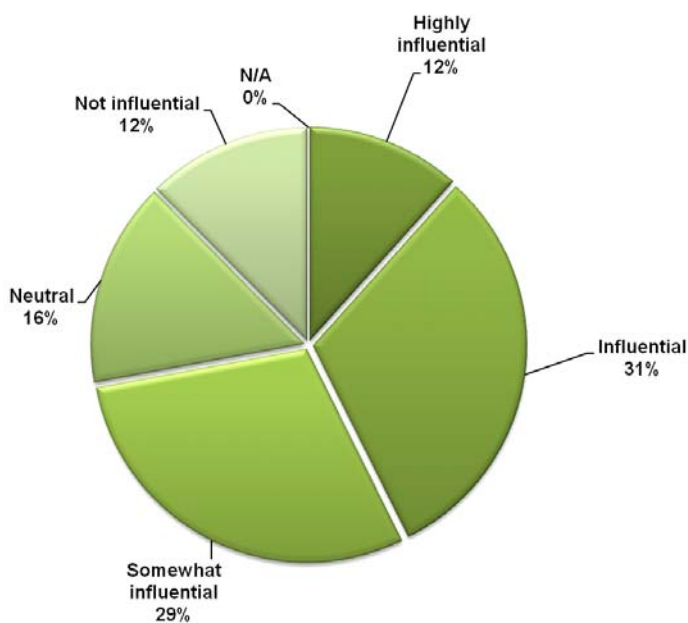
2 I believe that players may have taken pain killing injections where the risk of further injury is minimal, with the majority of the pressure coming from the players own desire to take to the field and be a working part of his team.

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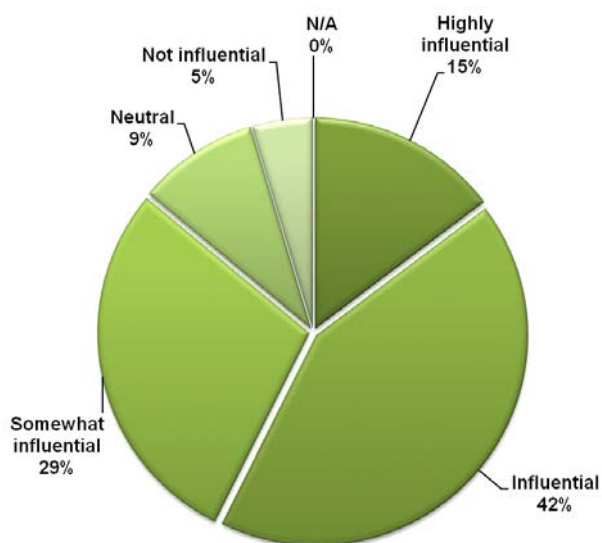
**QUESTION 4:**

**In your opinion what would help ensure that the activities outlined above are less likely to happen again?**

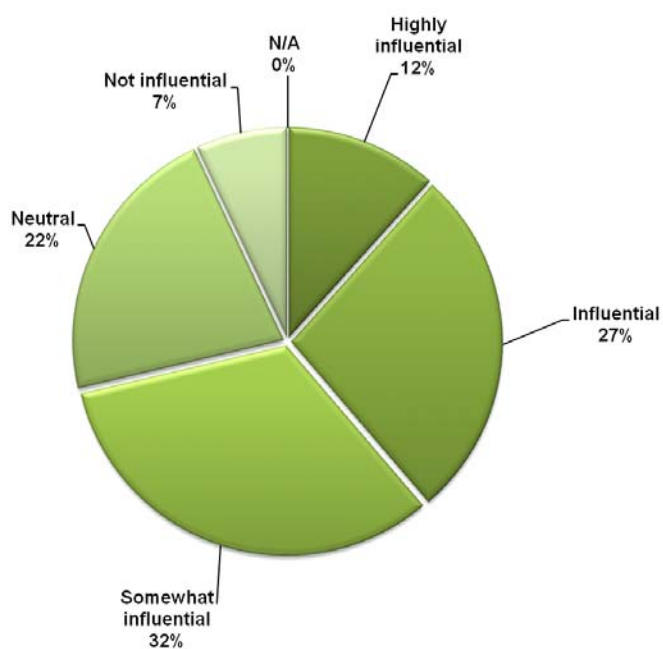
**CHANGES TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE GAME**



**TOUGHER DISCIPLINARY SENTENCES**



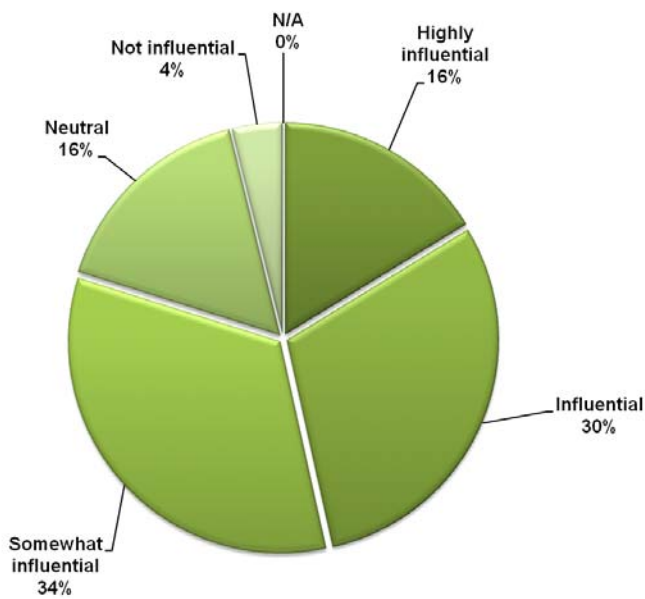
**MORE EDUCATION ON THE DANGERS OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**



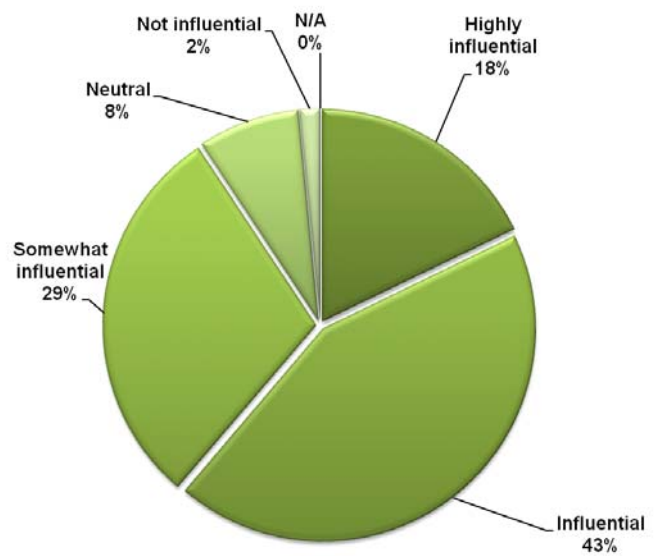
**QUESTION 4:**

**In your opinion what would help ensure that the activities outlined above are less likely to happen again?**

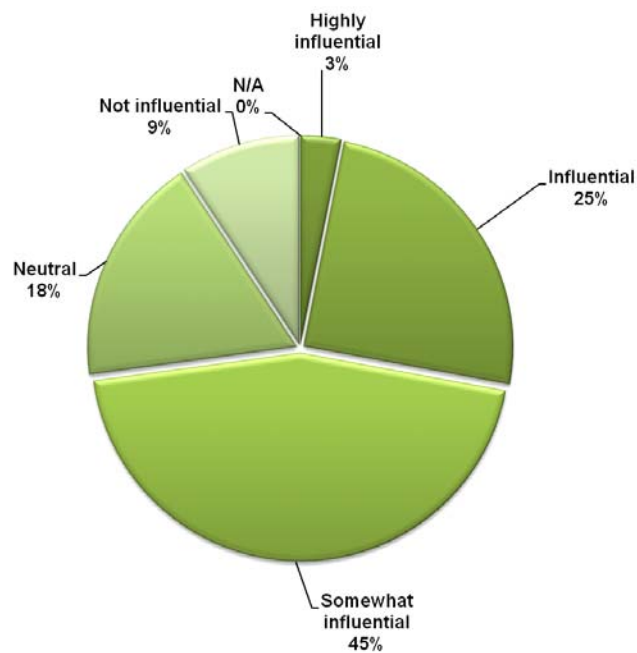
**MORE EDUCATION ON THE MEDICAL  
IMPACT OF THESE ACTIONS**



**SENIOR PLAYER STRUCTURES IN CLUBS TO  
PROVIDE MENTORING**



**WHISTLE BLOWING POLICIES TO GIVE PLAYERS THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE ISSUES OF CONCERN**



**QUESTION 4: OTHER (Open responses)**

**In your opinion what would help ensure that the activities outlined above are less likely to happen again?**

Five open responses in total.

- 
- 1 A fair system of citing/punishment. The differences in length of bans given for very similar offences are at times ridiculous.
- 
- 2 I feel that the PRA can help if given chance to get more involved
- 
- 3 A compulsory camp to educate first year players on what the expectation is when you become a professional rugby player.
- 
- 4 PEER PRACTICE FROM SENIOR PLAYERS
- 
- 5 examples have been made of some already, hopefully that will go along way to deterring people.
-

### QUESTION 5: (OPEN RESPONSES)

Are there any other actions, issues or solutions you think the Task Group should consider in its attempt to rebuild the Image of the Game?

#### 18 open responses in total

- 1 I have been the player representative to the PRA for worcester the past 2 years, and feel they can play a vital role in protecting and improving the current image of the game. I think educating players in their social responsibility is very important, an
- 2 Players welfare needs to be considered more, Directors of Rugby and medical staff work along side one and another to pressurise players to play when injured and further damage can be done. I have experienced this first hand and as a result of being force
- 3 everyone teated fairly and equal regulations to everyone fair equality
- 4 Issues concerning recreational drugs were known for some time by many within the game (at least to me and people around me). Nothing was done to rectify this problem before it came to the surface. Now the whole game has been tarnished as a result. Somewhe
- 5 consistent sanctions for foul play more regular and stringent drug testing
- 6 Where a player's name has come to the groups attention, whether it be rumour or fact, make this player aware that their name is being linked, rightly or wrongly, with the allegation. I believe this would have an immediate impact on the players behavior, i
- 7 I think some of the questions were poorly written. Why would someone take a recreational drug for performance enhancement ?? I have also heard of issues/problems at other clubs not involving mine but all the questions seemed to be about 'my team.' I feel
- 8 Restructure the whole guinness and european competition... Boys are probably getting mentally fatigued with the length of the competition and looking for their own ways of freshening up...!!!
- 9 There has been a large focus in the media about negative issues within the game, yet there is a huge amount of good work done by the clubs, PRA and the RFU and perhaps more publicity of this work would immediately help the games image.
- 10 try talking to schools and educating kids while they are younger, therefore being more educated at a youg age and less likely to take part if they know the conciquences from a younger age.
- 11 education at younger age levels (eg. school representative competitions)on the use of drugs and alcohol and the consequences of their use.
- 12 Senior players at each club should set the culture. IF THEY THEMSELVES SET BAD EXAMPLES THE YOUNGER PLAYERS WILL SEE THIS AND THINK IT IS EXCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR.
- 13 The RFU should look at helping all players understand their roles and responsibilities. The PRA should be supported and allowed to help all players.
- 14 -stricter guidelines, more and obvious rules advised by physio's ect...
- 15 less games and more time off.....
- 16 rolling subs like in League in my opinion would stop teams trying to curate unfair advantage with fake injuries. As it would allow teams to bring players off and on as a tactical weapon.
- 17 lifetime ban on anyone taking serious illegal or performance enhancing drugs.

- 18 The only issue that i have experienced in 13 years of pro rugby, is the 'shift work' policy in the front row which i felt had almost become common practice at all clubs and also very acceptable considering the work load put on the front row. This will be eradicated with an additional front row player on the bench. A good rule. Players taking pain killing injections before playing big games i can 100% say is the chose of the player and not coaches or medical team. Players desire to play in big games is huge and only the player takes those decisions. Fake blood has never taken place at the two clubs i have played at. I do not know any player to have taken steroids. Compared to friends outside of rugby taking of recreational drugs is at such a tiny level, and only ever done in the off season i believe. I still believe rugby players compared to other sports are tremedous role models in society.