



**Office of the State Auditor**

# **Turning VISION into Action**



A Follow-Up to the Review and Assessment  
of the Department of Finance and Management's  
Implementation of Project VISION

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## **Mission Statement**

*The mission of the State Auditor's Office is to be a catalyst for good government by promoting reliable and accurate financial reporting as well as promoting economy, efficiency and effectiveness in State government.*

# Office of the State Auditor

## *A Follow-Up to the Special Review and Assessment of the Department of Finance and Management's Implementation of Project VISION*

### Table of Contents

Message from the Auditor .....	page 3
Introduction .....	page 9
Follow-Up to Findings & Recommendations .....	page 10
Help Desk Issues .....	page 18
VISION User Survey .....	page 19
Objective, Scope & Authority .....	page 47

#### APPENDICES

Appendix A: Copy of Complete VISION User Survey .....	page 49
Appendix B: Department of Finance & Management's Response to Draft Review .....	page 57

## message from the auditor

Vermont's new financial management system, Project VISION<sup>1</sup>, went live on July 1, 2001 under the direction of the Department of Finance and Management. As of June 30, 2002, the State of Vermont had invested \$20,341,376<sup>2</sup> in just three years to plan, purchase, implement and operate the system.

From day one, department staff and the more than 600 VISION operators in 62 business units have struggled with a number of serious but predictable problems. Some of these expected problems were discussed in my Office's first review of Project VISION in June, 2001.<sup>3</sup>

Problems with VISION contribute to daily accounting glitches - where managers simultaneously struggle to fix problems, deal with their fallout, and complete their day-to-day functions. As frustrating as these difficulties are, they are also helping to build the will in State government to rethink the way information technology assets are managed.

There are also very positive signs that VISION challenges are helping to usher in a new era of problem-solving and cooperation among the departments that manage the state's finances.

*Vermont must do more to ensure that its limited resources are used to achieve greater efficiency and improve customer service in State government.*

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<sup>1</sup> VISION: Vermont Integrated Solution for Information and Organizational Needs.

<sup>2</sup> Memo, "Financial Management System Development Fund Report," to House and Senate Appropriations Committees from Robert D. Hofmann, Commissioner, Department of Finance and Management, February 18, 2003. Cost breakdown is as follows: contractual costs: \$17,345,327; salaries, \$1,158,776; supplies, \$52,884; purchased services, \$1,627,832; equipment, \$156,557. Main vendors were PeopleSoft, and Arthur Anderson Consulting.

<sup>3</sup> *Office of the State Auditor's Review of the Department of Finance and Management's Implementation of Project VISION*, June 1, 2001.

## Serious Problems

During the past year, VISION-related problems have alerted state government to potentially serious budgetary and financial risks.

A March 14, 2003 announcement from the Department of Finance and Management revealed that personal income tax collections totaling \$2.88 million were erroneously deposited by the Department of Taxes into a VISION account in July 2001, the first month under the new system. Department staff corrected the error, but neglected to delete the original entry, causing revenues to be overstated throughout the fiscal year.

Though not strictly a VISION error, the State's inability to generate monthly or quarterly financial statements with VISION delayed reconciliation of this, and other accounts, for many months.

Difficulties with the reporting capabilities of VISION delayed the resolution of a serious problem at the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in the Agency of Natural Resources. During fiscal year 2002 the Agency discovered that DEC was facing an unexpected \$4.2 million deficit in its overall \$27 million FY 2002 budget. Switching to VISION hampered the ability of the department's business manager to produce useful analytical budget reports for the various divisions in the department. Managers were unaware of revenue shortfalls and did not reduce expenses in a timely fashion to stay on budget.

After the state's fiscal year closed on June 30, 2002, the State began its annual review of transactions prior to closing each business unit for the fiscal year. This review revealed many problems with VISION entries, especially at the beginning of the fiscal year when VISION went live. As a result, business units were months behind their scheduled closing dates.

Reconciliation of the State's vendor checking account was delayed in the Treasurer's Office due, in part, to difficulties with VISION's automatic reconciliation feature. Complete reconciliation of other State accounts was delayed for a variety of reasons.

*In a follow-up survey of VISION users, more than 70 percent graded the new accounting system at, or below, a C.*

Now, nine months after the close of the fiscal year, the Department of Finance and Management still has not produced completed financial statements for the timely completion of the Federal Single Audit and the General Purpose Financial Statements audit by the required March 31, 2003 deadline.

In all these instances, the State is absorbing additional costs as managers and users put in extra time and effort to rectify problems; the State has also had to pay costs for consultants brought in to help with reconciliations and various VISION problems, such as the year-end closing of all business units.

In fact, our survey of users at the end of the first full fiscal year with VISION revealed that many experienced State employees found their workload increasing due to the demands of the new financial management system. Said one in a typical comment: "Some processes, such as purchase order entry, seem overly complicated and I feel that my workload has increased in VISION when compared to the old system."

Some of the most pressing VISION problems will be best solved by better training, re-engineering business processes, improved reporting functionality and good communication. Improvements in each of these areas are underway, but they will require focused, sustained efforts by a number of departments, managers, and end users.

### **Promising Future**

Vermont has increasingly placed the public's trust - and scarce tax dollars - into a system of wires, software and computers known as Information Technology (I.T.). I.T. investments only pay off with careful design, selection and implementation efforts that must be managed well so a project succeeds.

The new Douglas Administration is taking positive steps to invigorate the function of Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the State. The Administration proposes to create a Department of Information and Innovation (DII) to better guide and manage complex information technology assets and initiatives, whose overall price tag reached nearly \$70 million in FY 2002.

*Vermont's leaders must recognize information technology as a critical asset that is essential to the State's ability to serve the public.*

The Douglas Administration has also announced plans to create a Technology Advisory Board comprised of representatives from the Administration and private, public and academic sectors. Governor Douglas said, "The purpose of the board will be to quickly identify, investigate, and implement I.T. products and services into state government and into the state infrastructure."

Key goals of the Department of Information and Innovation are:

- To oversee design and implementation of enterprise-wide software for all agencies;
- To develop a strategic I.T. policy and strategic online plans; and,
- To create and maintain an inventory for all technology assets.

Some of these goals are discussed in a previous report by this Office, *Wiring Vermont's Future*, issued in March, 2002.

Now that Governor Douglas has adopted a strong new vision for Vermont's information technology assets, his challenge will be to provide the leadership and management to turn that vision into action.

## Findings

VISION holds great potential that will enable managers to provide taxpayers with a better view of how tax dollars are collected, spent and accounted for. After one year of experience with VISION, it is clear the system has not yet reached its potential.

We found that:

1. **VISION users need more training to tap the potential of the new financial management system.** Roughly half of all VISION users say they need more training to perform their jobs satisfactorily.

*VISION holds great potential for managers to provide taxpayers with a better view of how tax dollars are collected, spent and accounted for in the State budget.*

2. **VISION is a powerful system that is not being fully utilized.** More than 76 percent of users say VISION has not made their jobs more efficient and more than 70 percent of our survey respondents give VISION a grade of C or below.
3. **Reporting functions need to be improved.** Almost 40 percent of users said they could not view, create, and/or print the reports they need from VISION.
4. **Security for information systems would be improved with mandated password changes, and formal policies and procedures on system backup and fire protection.**<sup>4</sup> Vermont has not yet installed the PeopleSoft software that forces users to change passwords at prescribed intervals.
5. Some **VISION users expressed a need for additional guidance from VISION management**, although users rate the Help Desk staff as responsive.

We also found that several issues raised in our June 2001 report on the VISION implementation have not been adequately addressed.

## **Recommendations**

This report outlines steps that State government should take to improve the VISION system and help Vermonters realize the potential of our new financial management system:

1. **The Department should create ongoing training courses that match concerns from users.** (We are happy to report that a new training schedule has recently been implemented, covering all key facets of VISION operation.)
2. **The Department should evaluate the need to re-engineer business processes**, and develop a plan to assist departments with implementation of new business practices.

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<sup>4</sup> A report by this Office, *The Road Beyond Risk - Recommendations to Safeguard the Security of Vermont's Financial Information Systems*, issued March 27, 2002, discusses security issues in more depth.



3. **The Department should create a plan to meet the standard, and specialized, reporting requirements of users.**
4. **Basic security for vital information systems must be upgraded** with a renewed emphasis on formal security policies, locks, user names and passwords, firewalls and anti-virus software, among other issues.
5. **The Department should re-empanel the VISION Steering Committee** and empower it to resolve ongoing issues, such as the lack of guidance experienced by some end users.

We hope these primary recommendations, and others contained within the report, will complement what has already been accomplished and serve as a blueprint for enhancing the benefits from the State's investment in VISION.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth M. Ready".

Elizabeth M. Ready  
State Auditor  
April 24, 2003

# introduction

In April 2001, the Office of the State Auditor and KPMG LLP's Risk and Advisory Services practice (KPMG) assessed compliance with the project work plan, budget, implementation schedule, and the readiness of the Department of Finance and Management's Vermont Integrated Solution for Information and Organizational Needs (VISION).

Now that the VISION system is up and running (as of July 2001), and users have had the opportunity to use it for more than one fiscal year, the State Auditor, in conjunction with KPMG, has assessed whether VISION is operating as intended. Some of our most significant observations are as follows:

- Several of the recommendations offered in our initial assessment have not been adequately addressed;
- Some users feel there is a lack of guidance from VISION management to end users;
- More functional reports are needed for VISION. A majority of users say reporting functions need to be improved;
- Users need more training using VISION, especially in developing reports. More than half of all users say they need more training;
- VISION is a very powerful system but is not being utilized efficiently;
- The Help Desk is extremely responsive; and,
- When asked to grade VISION, only 16 percent of those who responded to our survey gave it a favorable assessment (B or better).

## follow-up to findings & recommendations

In April 2001, the Office of the State Auditor assessed the readiness of the Department of Finance and Management's Project VISION. On June 1, 2001 the Office issued a report on the implementation of this system.

In the spring and summer of 2002, the Office conducted a survey of VISION users as part of the initial assessment related to a follow-up review of the June 1, 2001 report.

In the fall of 2002, KPMG's Risk Advisory Services sat down with key Department managers - Margaret Ciechanowicz, Brad Ferland and Nancy Clermont - to follow up on the Office's findings and recommendations in the 2001 report.

The following is a list of the findings and recommendations issued in the 2001 report, with a follow-up observation and, in some cases, a new recommendation.

**Previous Finding 1:** The Department still has critical testing to complete prior to implementation on July 2, 2001.

**Previous Recommendation 1:** The Department should speed up its testing processes and assure that adequate resources are dedicated to testing and necessary software and configuration changes before July 2, 2001.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** According to VISION Management, in the year since VISION has been operational, they have "gotten better in the past year in testing" prior to rolling out system patches or new interfaces (i.e. the Purchasing Module). They also state that interfaces with other systems have improved and that an independent consultant was impressed with the cleanliness of their data.

**New Recommendation 1:** The Department must ensure that critical testing is completed and that adequate resources are dedicated to testing and necessary software and configuration changes prior to rolling out new VISION modules or patches. As has been seen in the rollout of other statewide ERP systems, failure to adequately test systems after an initial implementation (e.g. patches, new modules, etc.) can lead to future performance issues and possible system concerns.

**Previous Finding 2:** Mapping of account codes from FMIS (Financial Management Information System) and Agency financial systems to VISION codes has not been completed and disseminated.

**Previous Recommendation 2:** The Department and all State Agencies should complete a crosswalk that maps Department/Agency FMIS account codes to the new VISION account codes by early June 2001.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management indicated that such a crosswalk had been updated and was posted on the VISION website for about one year.

**New Recommendation 2:** Since VISION has been up and running for some time now, users should be living in the new system and not relying on FMIS or other agency financial systems. It is imperative that users adapt to the new system and that internal business processes have been modified to work efficiently and effectively with VISION. With that said, management should implement procedures to ensure that transactions are recorded on a consistent basis.

**Finding 3:** The application of standardized user roles among Agency staff has not been consistent and is a prerequisite for system security and integrity.

**Recommendation 3:** Responsibility for security decisions needs to be clarified, and consistent application of security practices needs detailed review before July 2, 2001.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management says that Bulletin 3.3 ([www.state.vt.us/fin/Policies/Bulletin3.3DelegationofAuthority.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/fin/Policies/Bulletin3.3DelegationofAuthority.pdf)) issued by the Agency of Administration addresses user roles by tying signature authority to security levels. This bulletin does not specifically address or satisfy the concerns raised in this initial finding.

**New Recommendation 3:** The Department, in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Information Officer, needs to clarify the responsibility for security decisions and ensure the consistent application of security practices enterprise-wide as it relates to VISION.

**Finding 4:** Back-up and recovery planning is incomplete.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department must ensure that back-up and recovery plan testing is completed as soon as possible. Additionally, the Department should provide an independent assessment of all disaster recovery and back-up plans.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management indicated that a back-up and recovery plan was completed in July 2002. An Emergency Preparedness Committee has been established to focus on homeland security plans such as back-up and recovery planning as well as business continuity. Further, there are plans to establish a "hot site" in Barre to host back-ups of all State mission-critical applications.

**New Recommendation 4:** Given the current political climate, we again reiterate the importance of developing and testing a fully functional back-up and recovery plan as soon as possible.

**Finding 5:** Training is not yet adequate.

**Recommendation 5:** Gaps in training should be filled so that users are as comfortable as possible with the system upon implementation. There should also be concrete plans for ongoing training after July 2, 2001.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Though there was initial user training, much of the recent training has been one-on-one performed by Help Desk personnel. Since the initial training classes, there have been no formal classes conducted. Management says they are beginning to develop a training course schedule. From January 2003 through March 2003 approximately 250 end users were trained. Management says there are currently no unmet training requests.

More than 45 percent of the users that responded to the VISION user survey said they need more training to perform their jobs satisfactorily.

**New Recommendation 5:** The Department must continue to support training courses that best match the needs of users, as well as create a "mentor" system that allows current VISION users to train newcomers and existing users, leaving Help Desk personnel to troubleshoot problems.

**Finding 6:** Adequate technical user support is not yet in place.

**Recommendation 6:** Hiring and training of ongoing technical and end user support staff needs to be given high priority.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management says they now have the necessary technical staff, as well as devoted VISION Help Desk personnel to support all VISION users. They currently have 18 staff devoted to HRMS (5) and VISION (13).

**New Recommendation 6:** Attracting, retaining, and training technical support staff should be given high priority and is critical for the success of VISION.

**Finding 7:** Transition planning for project team members is needed.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should create a transition plan identifying when agencies expect staff on loan to the VISION Project staff to return to their home departments. This plan should determine whether sufficient people remain available to the Project, or whether additional staff must be added.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management indicated that the transition was a smooth process.

**New Recommendation 7:** No new recommendation needed.

**Finding 8:** Agencies have not identified how their current business practices will be mapped to the new VISION practices.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should actively work with Agencies to help them identify how their current business practices will map to the VISION system.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management says that business managers are very positive about how their business processes are mapping to the VISION system.

Almost 80 percent of the respondents to the user survey, however, say that VISION has not made their job more efficient. This could lead one to believe that there might be some disconnect between current business practices and the VISION system.

**New Recommendation 8:** To ensure VISION is creating the most efficient and effective use of employees' skills and time, the Department should independently assess whether or not business managers have improved and/or changed business processes to fit within VISION functionality.

**Finding 9:** The Department has not fully specified and communicated many of the changes to documentation procedures that come with VISION.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department needs to establish clear backup documentation requirements that agencies are expected to follow.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management indicated that this was completed prior to the rollout of VISION. Please refer to Finding 8 above.

**New Recommendation 9:** Please refer to new recommendation 8 above.

**Finding 10:** Asset management and inventory procedures are not yet clear and complete.

**Recommendation 10:** The Department should create detailed asset management procedures to be adhered to by all State agencies reporting in VISION. Additional details such as the date the annual inventory must be completed by and repercussions for not completing the inventory should be strongly communicated.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** This policy is not comprehensive and does not address the previous recommendations. In the Department's response in our previous report, they stated that asset management procedures "would be included in the yearly close-out instructions that are produced by Financial Operations and distributed to all Agencies and Departments." Management says that there is now an asset management module, that they are in the process of cleaning up data and that we should refer to Bulletin 1 for asset management procedures. The Agency of Administration issued Bulletin 1 ([www.state.vt.us/fin/Policies/BulletinAssetManagement.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/fin/Policies/BulletinAssetManagement.pdf)), which only addresses the State's asset management policy.

**New Recommendation 10:** The Department has not sufficiently met our previous recommendation. The Department needs to create detailed asset management procedures to be adhered to by all State agencies reporting in VISION. Additional details such as the date the annual inventory must be completed by and repercussions for not completing the inventory should be strongly communicated.

**Finding 11:** VISION user documentation is incomplete.

**Recommendation 11:** The Department should make available comprehensive documentation of all functional areas of the VISION system.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** This documentation can be found on the VISION website and has been recently updated. Management says they will be developing a Listserv list to notify all users when user documentation is further updated. Note, however, that 50 percent of respondents to the survey indicated that they did not have a comprehensive user manual.

**New Recommendation 11:** The Department must complete and disseminate a comprehensive user manual before the close-out activities begin for the current fiscal year. This manual would be enhanced by an updated Listserv and website notification update when new information is added or revised.



**Finding 12:** Reporting requirements are not yet met.

**Recommendation 12:** The Department should create a plan and schedule for meeting both standard reporting requirements and the specialized reporting needs of individual agencies.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** At the time of our follow-up review the Department had not yet complied with our previous recommendation. Management says they are working with reporting vendors (i.e. Crystal Reports) to be able to generate the reports the users need to perform their jobs. The results of our user survey suggest that more than 50 percent of the users would like to be able to create custom reports and that almost 40 percent of the users have problems running standard reports. In August 2002, the Department surveyed users to determine what custom reports they needed, and have since made more than 100 custom reports available online.

**New Recommendation 12:** The Department needs to create a detailed plan to meet both standard reporting requirements and the specialized reporting needs of individual agencies. The Department should continue to survey users to stay current with the custom-reporting needs of business managers across the enterprise.

**Finding 13:** The role and authority of the VISION Steering Committee needs to be clarified.

**Recommendation 13:** The Department should empower the Steering Committee to have a more active role in decision making in the continuing development of VISION.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** The Steering Committee has since been dissolved.

**New Recommendation 13:** The Department should re-empanel the Steering Committee and empower it to resolve ongoing issues, including those outlined in the follow-up survey we conducted.



**Finding 14:** The role of Vermont's CIO needs to be clarified and strengthened.

**Recommendation 14:** The State should provide the CIO with the authority and necessary resources to allow the office to take a more active role in the ongoing development of the VISION system.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** The Department did not address this comment, as it is beyond their control to make changes within the Office of the CIO. However, the new Douglas Administration is taking positive steps to implement this recommendation. Our Office has also called for the State to create an independent I.T. Investment Board comprised of representatives from the Legislature and the public and private sector to advise the CIO and state on new I.T. projects. The Douglas Administration is moving to put that plan in place, too. We applaud these efforts.

**New Recommendation 14:** The Administration should propose, and the General Assembly adopt, a measure to provide the CIO with the authority and necessary resources to allow the office to take a more active role in the ongoing development of the VISION system and other significant State development efforts.



**Finding 15:** The Administration and the Department have not addressed the spending authority problems created by moving to an encumbrance based accounting system.

**Recommendation 15:** The Administration and the Department should plan and prepare for the spending authority problems created by transitioning to an encumbrance based accounting system.

**Auditor's Follow-Up:** Management says that they have been performing Federal budget activities on a cash basis and the general ledger on an accrual basis. They indicated that there were no problems in spending authority in Fiscal Year 2002.

**New Recommendation 15:** We will review the Department's statement during the audit of the State's financial statements.



## help desk issues

**A**lthough the scope of our VISION follow-up review did not include an assessment of the Help Desk, members of the audit team met with Michelle Domingue, the Help Desk manager, as well as the entire Help Desk staff (Charlene Allard, Diane Sholan, and Joan Stewart) to talk about issues that arose during our review. The Help Desk staff come from various State departments/agencies and have extensive experience working with I.T. systems. According to Michelle Domingue, “They probably know VISION better than anyone in the State.”

The Help Desk is staffed from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, excluding weekends and holidays. Each staff member is assigned specific VISION modules and calls to the help desk are assigned accordingly. As the eyes and ears of VISION, some of the biggest issues raised were as follows:

- The Help Desk’s incident-reporting application (Footprints) is primarily used for case management to track open issues and to look up solutions to previously resolved issues; not all calls to the Help Desk are logged. A Help Desk staff member suggested that she only logs 1 percent of the calls she handles. Collectively, the staff says there is not enough time in the day to help users and also log all of the calls received;
- The Help Desk staff indicated that VISION Management could reduce calls to the Help Desk if there was better communication to the end users. For example, if there is a problem with VISION and users are not notified they will call the Help Desk with a problem that the Help Desk already knows about. Additionally, when the issue is resolved, because it is not communicated to end users, users unnecessarily call the Help Desk to see if that issue has been resolved. Because the staff does not have the authority to issue such alerts, they are bound by the direction of Management. They say they could more effectively perform their jobs if there was better communication with VISION end users and they had the authority to notify end users of significant system problems and their resolutions;
- The Help Desk staff say that VISION system performance is sometimes slow and they or the VISION technical staff do not seem to know why; and
- The Help Desk staff says perhaps the biggest problems with VISION, as told to them by end users, are the various reporting limitations and/or the lack of training needed to create reports.

Because the Help Desk staff logs such a small percentage of the calls received, an analysis of the actual logged calls would have been misleading and therefore was not considered for this report.

# vision user survey

The Office of the State Auditor sent out 108 surveys to end users (managers and staff) of VISION throughout various State agencies/departments. Interest was high and 87 users responded to the survey (NOTE: *The survey response from the Agency of Transportation summarized 38 internal responses from various divisions*). Though the results of the survey are not statistical samples, they represent general observations and feedback. The survey was divided into the following sections: user friendliness, user assistance, user training, user security, reporting, and accounting/reconciliation.

Though there are 42 questions on the survey, some respondents chose not to answer certain questions. For other questions, some respondents indicated that a question was not applicable; this should be taken into account when comparing the results of the following charts with the complete survey results in Appendix A. Where applicable, some of the commentary describing the results of a given question accounts for the number of non-responses from respondents.

The results displayed on the following pages should not be construed as a statistical sample but rather as an identification of key issues to be addressed by VISION Management. Included in this report (Appendix A) is the survey, which has been populated with the results in terms of percentages and the number of actual responses.

## User Friendliness

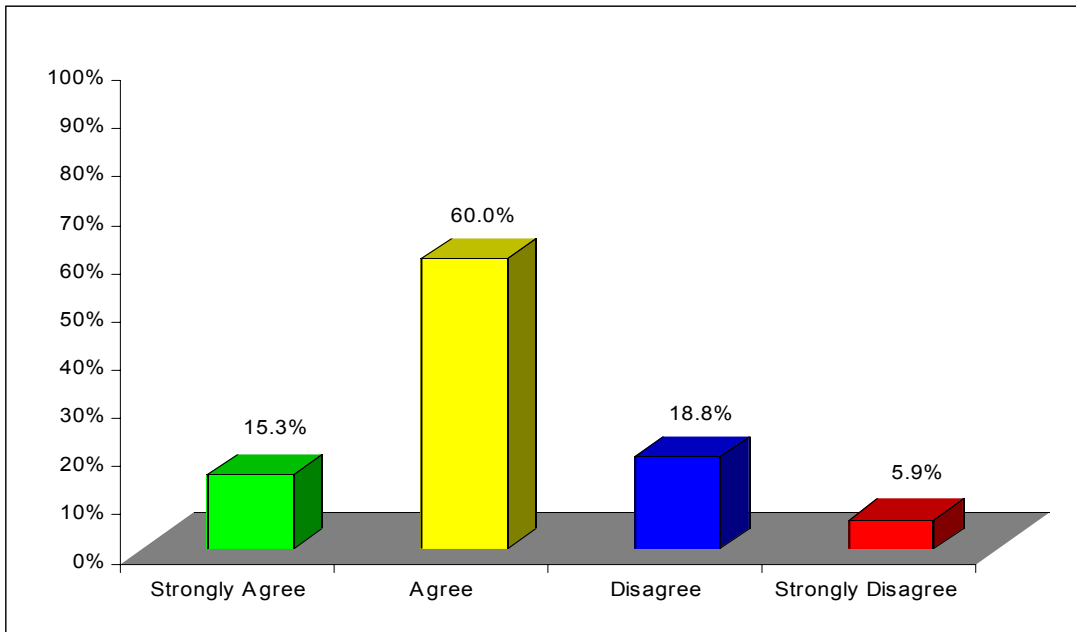
More than 85 percent of the respondents said that VISION processing response times are slow, and more than 86 percent of the respondents disagree with the assertion that VISION has made their job more efficient. Of respondents, 75 percent said they navigate easily through the system. Additionally, 75 percent of the respondents claim that VISION has now increased their workload. Some common themes regarding user friendliness were as follows:

- “The allocation process saves us many hours of entering journals. We believe we are the only agency using this process.”
- “Would like VISION available for more hours, it’s not available before 8 a.m. or on the weekends.”
- “The system response time is very slow and sometimes freezes.”
- “More resources are needed to help end users learn the system.”

Questions 1-13 on the following pages show, with graphical detail, responses with respect to user friendliness of VISION.

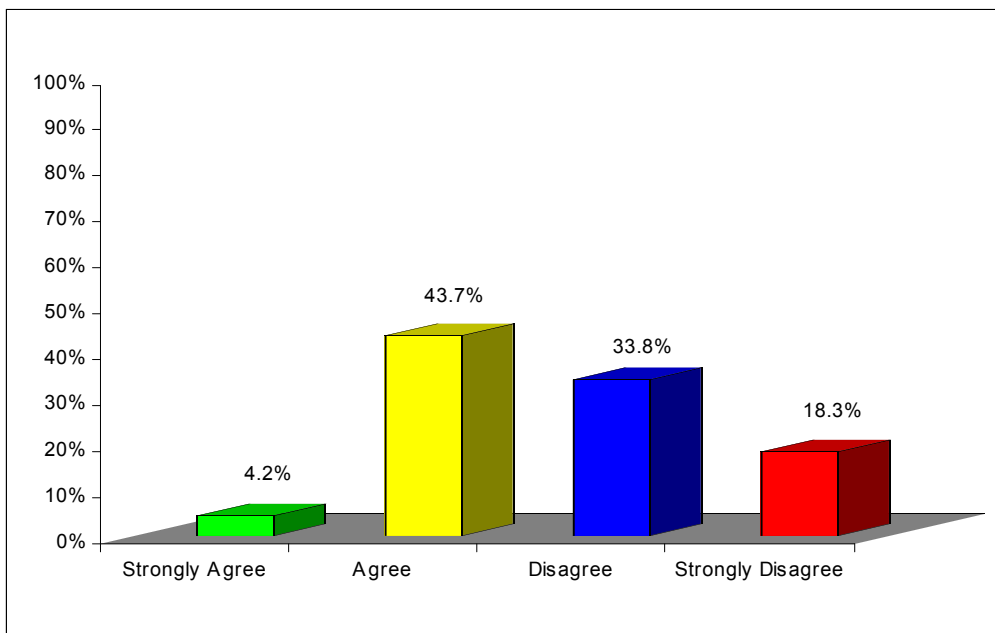
### 1. I usually navigate through VISION easily.

More than 75 percent of survey respondents agreed that they usually navigate through VISION easily. (85 respondents)



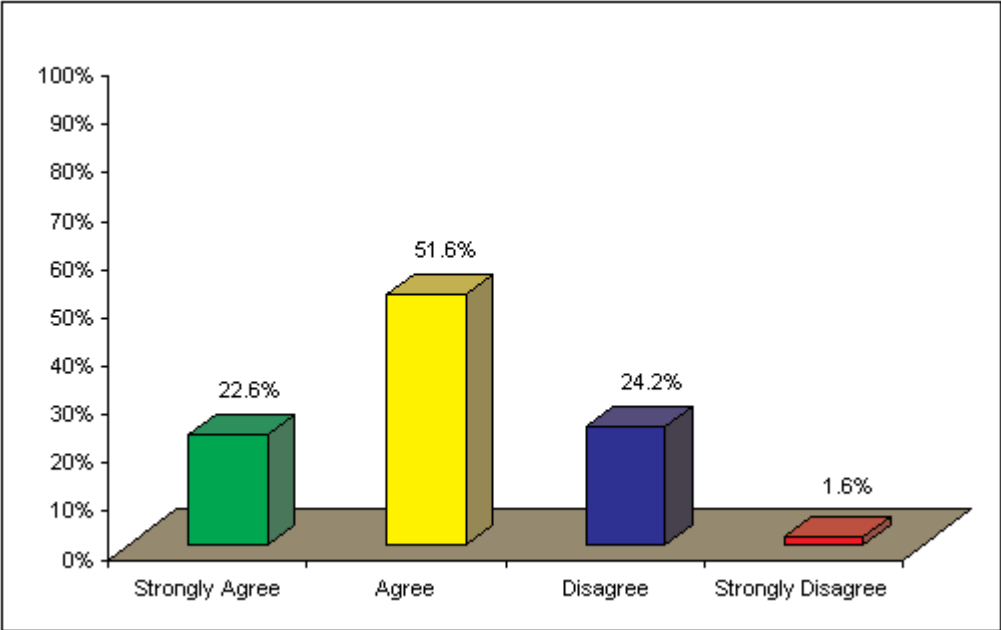
### 2. Most of my business processes were easily integrated into VISION.

48 percent of survey respondents agreed that their business processes were easily integrated into VISION. (71 respondents)



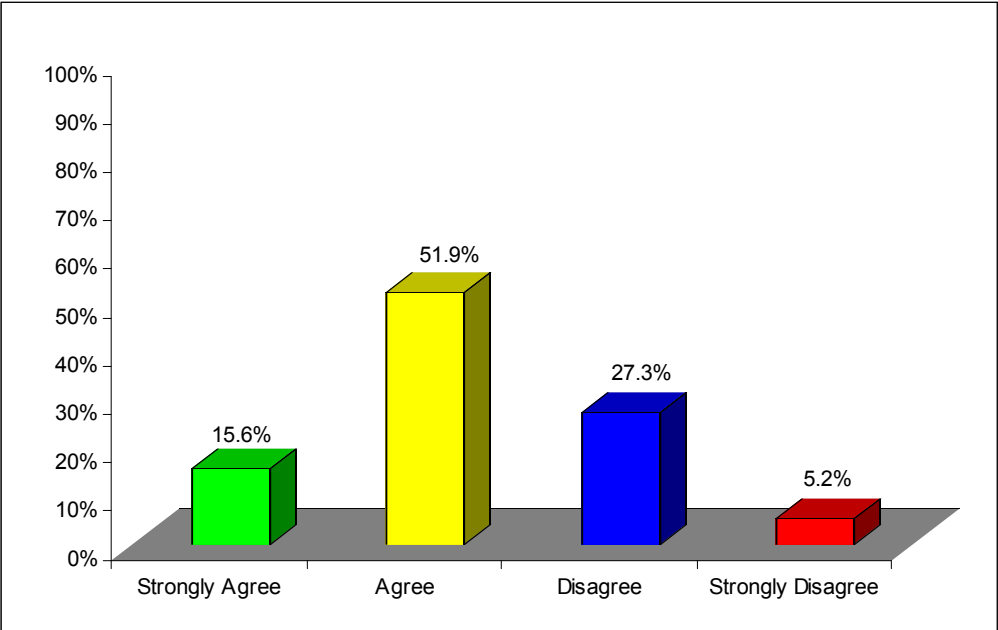
**3. Some of my business processes had to be substantially modified to work with VISION.**

More than 74 percent of survey respondents agreed that some of their business processes had to be substantially modified to work with VISION. (72 respondents)



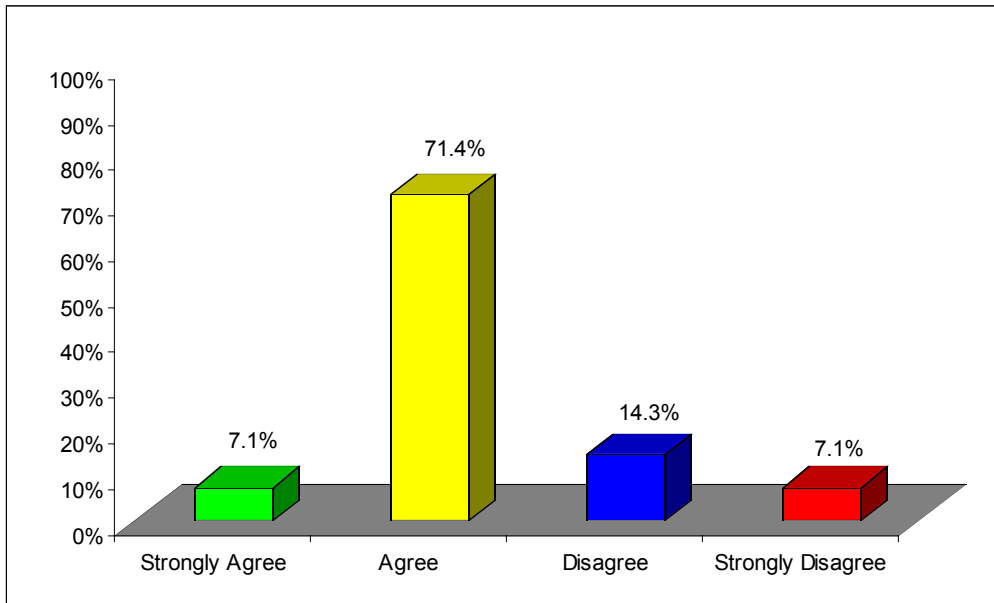
**4. Adequate support is available for me to go to with suggestions or concerns.**

More than 67 percent of survey respondents agreed that support is available for them to go with suggestions or concerns. (77 respondents)



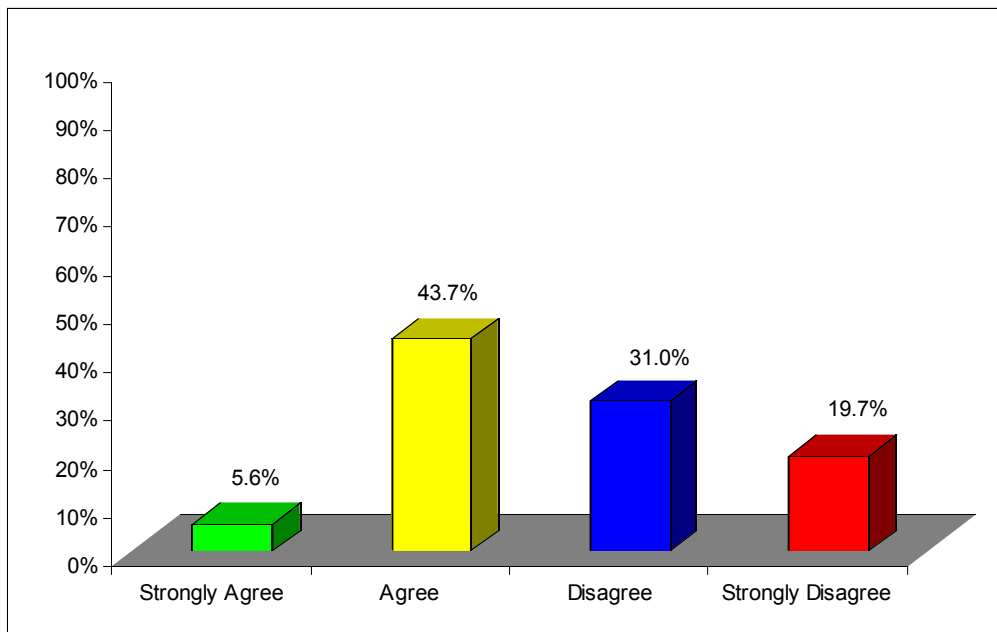
**5. My suggestions or concerns are generally acknowledged, even if they can't be implemented for some reason.**

More than 78 percent of respondents agreed that their suggestions or concerns are generally acknowledged, even if they can't be implemented for some reason. (70 respondents)



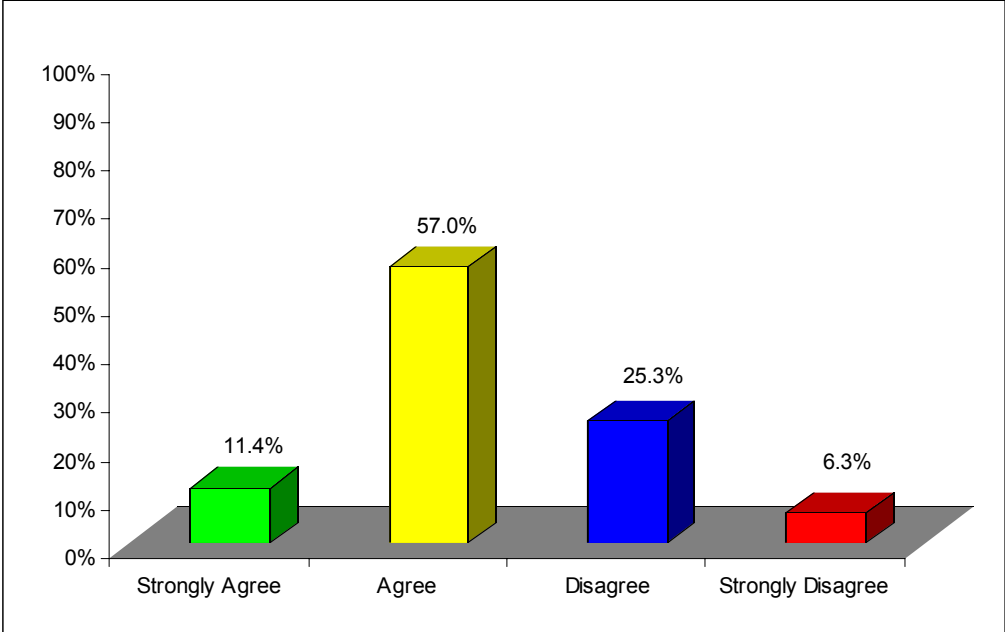
**6. New business processes have been clearly documented and given to me.**

More than 49 percent of survey respondents agreed that new business processes have been clearly documented and given to them. (71 respondents)



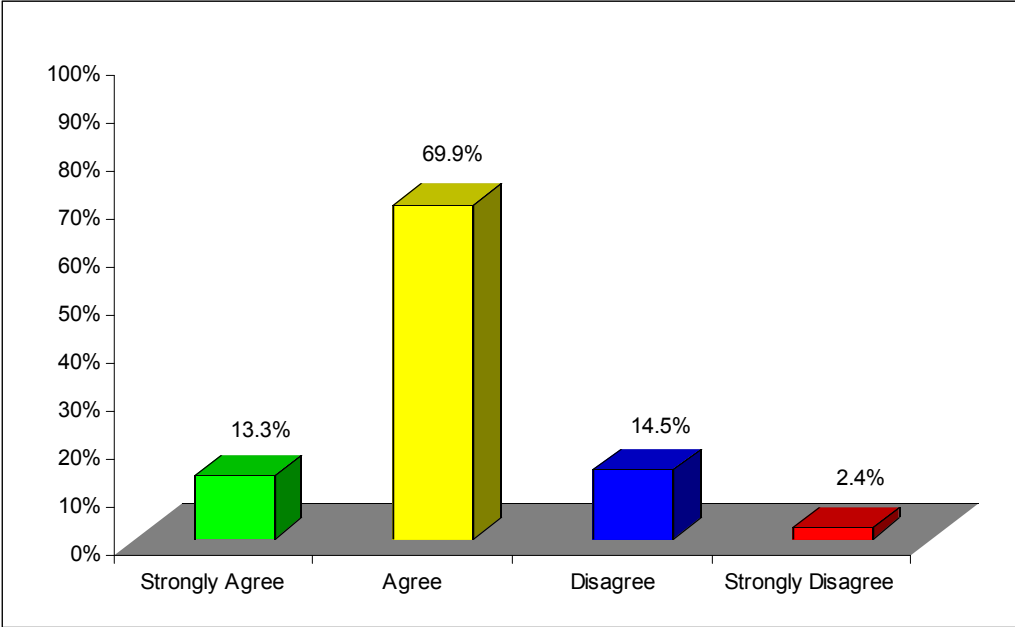
**7. I am able to process transactions with few or no problems.**

More than 68 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that they are able to process transactions with few or no problems. (79 respondents)



**8. VISION is available when I need to use it.**

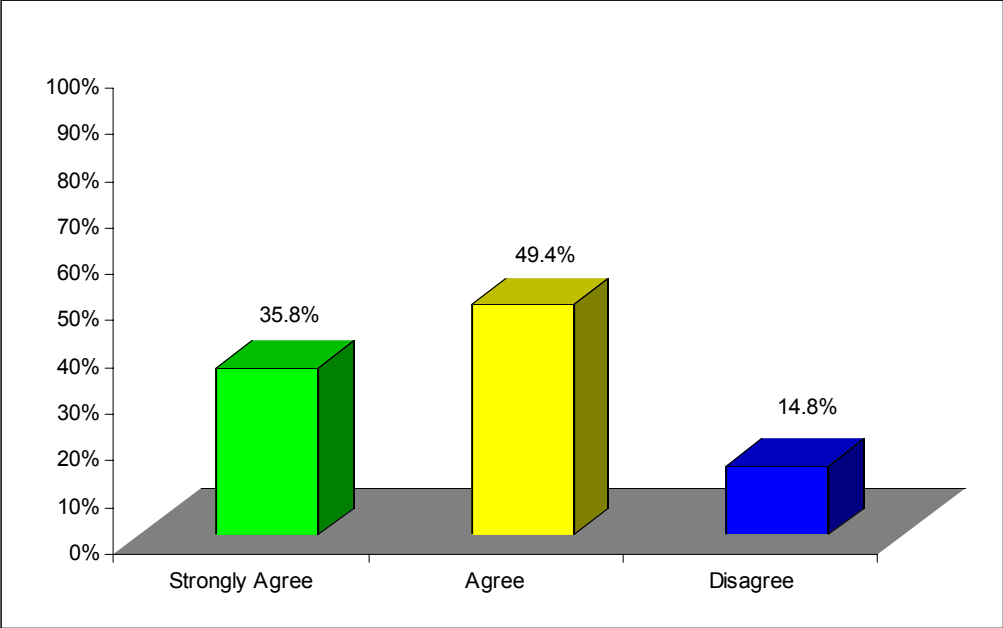
The majority of survey respondents (83 percent) agree that VISION is available when they need to use it. (83 respondents)





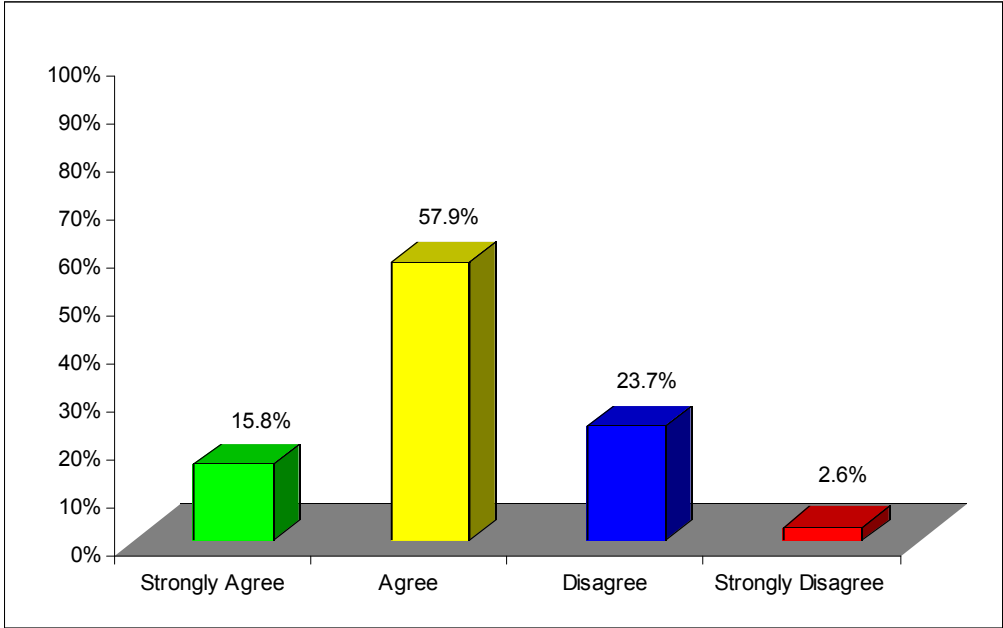
**9. VISION processing response times are slow.**

More than 85 percent of survey respondents agreed with the statement that VISION processing response times are slow. (81 respondents; no one strongly disagreed)



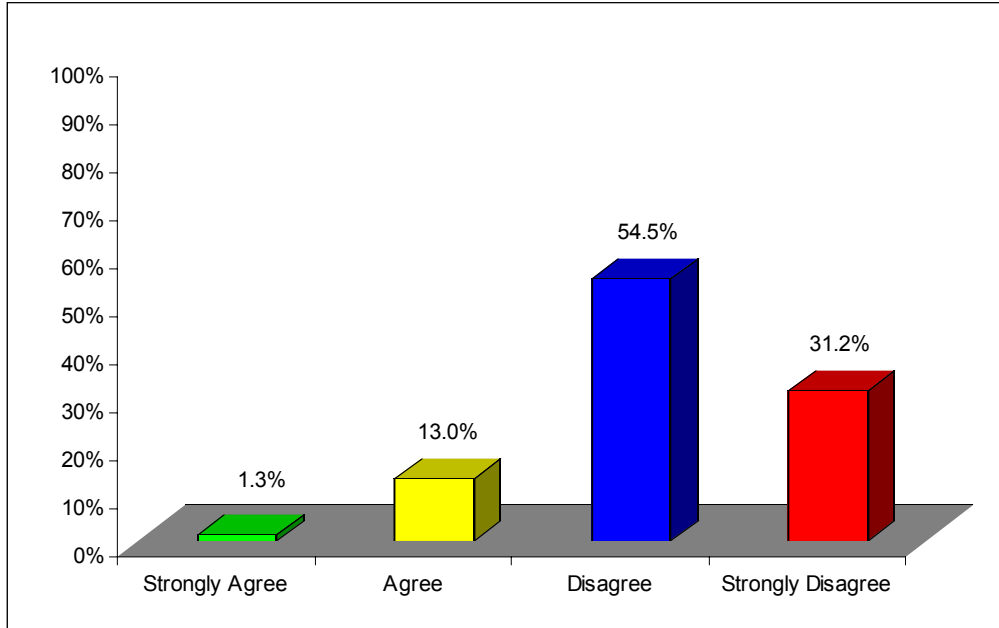
**10. VISION occasionally freezes in the middle of processing.**

Almost 74 percent of survey respondents agree with the statement that VISION occasionally freezes in the middle of processing. (76 respondents)



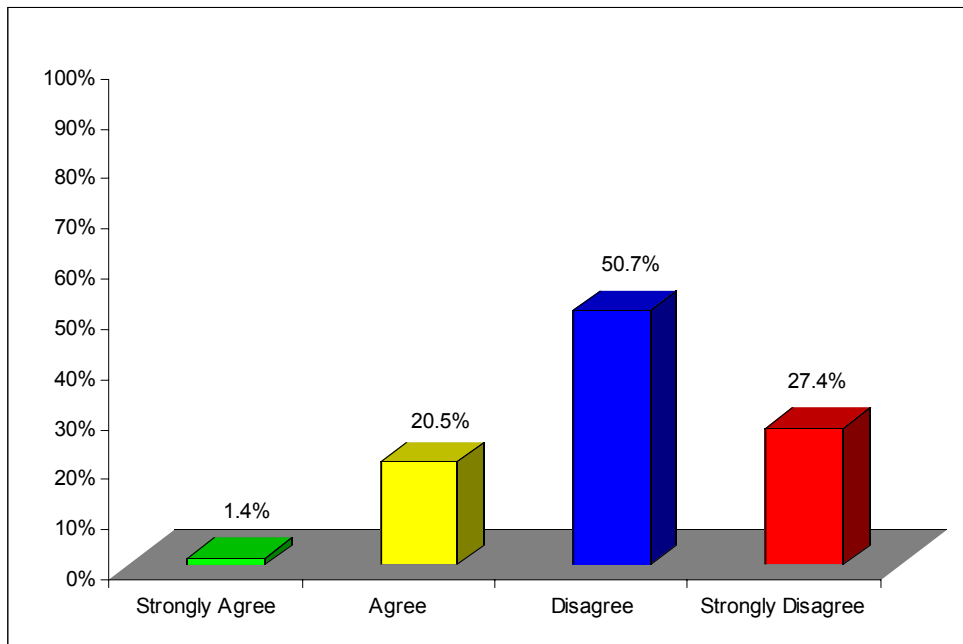
### 11. VISION has made my job more efficient.

The majority of survey respondents (almost 86 percent) indicated that they disagreed with the statement that VISION has made their job more efficient while only 14 percent of respondents agreed with this statement. (77 respondents)



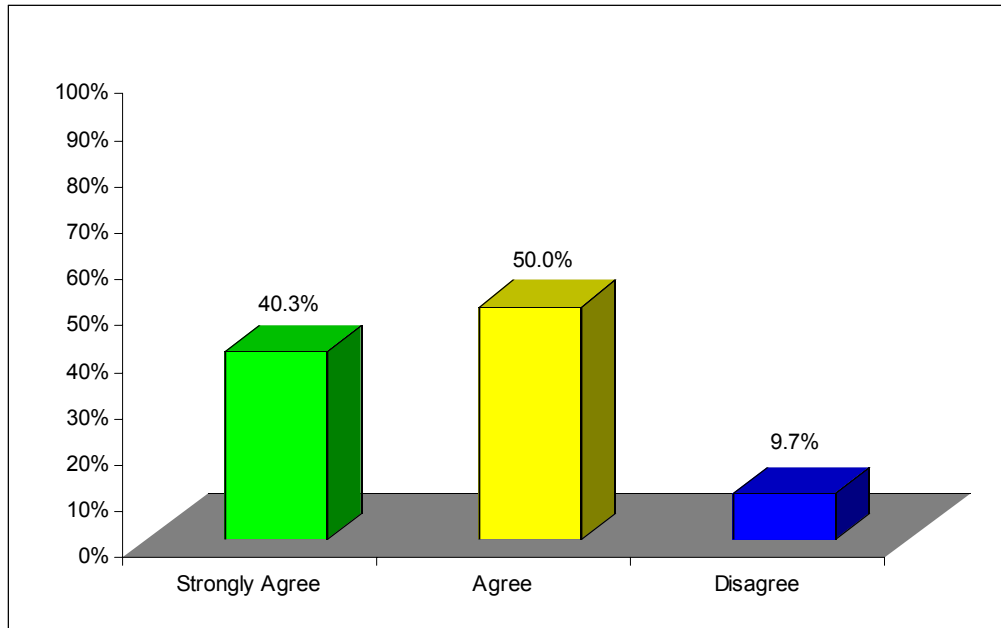
### 12. VISION allows me to do a more effective job.

Only 22 percent of survey respondents agreed that VISION allows them to do a more effective job. (73 respondents)



### 13. VISION has increased my workload.

More than 90 percent of survey respondents agreed with the statement that VISION has increased their workload. (72 respondents; no one strongly disagreed)



## User Assistance

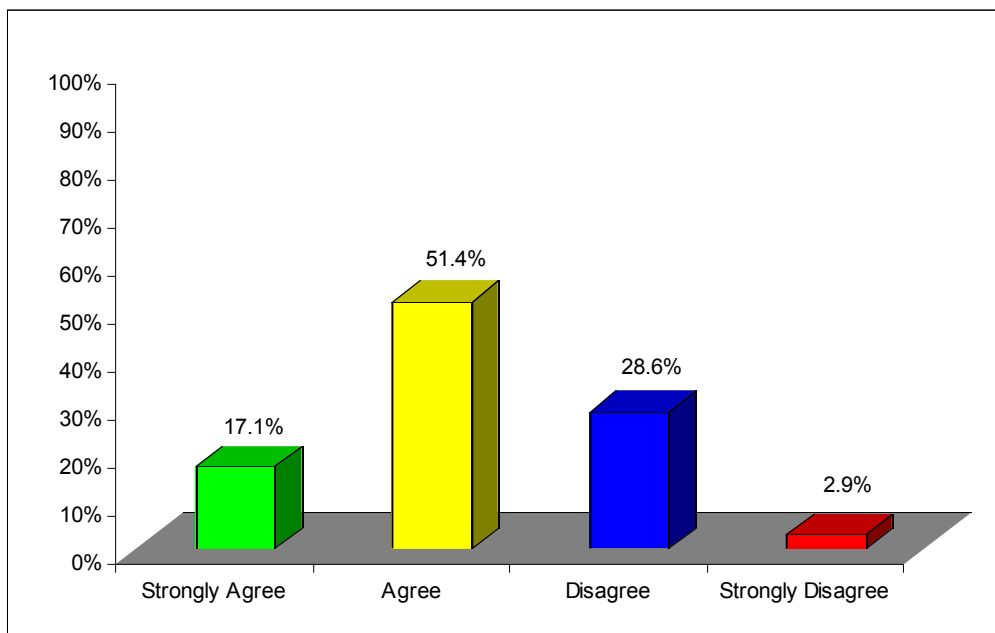
**A**lmost 90 percent of users agreed that VISION Help Desk staff answered and returned their calls promptly. More than half of the respondents said they did not have a comprehensive VISION user manual or flow charts of business processes. Some common themes regarding user assistance were as follows:

- “The VISION Help Desk is doing a great job.”
- “An updated comprehensive user manual is needed and should be sent when they are updated or made available on the VISION website.”
- “The Help Desk is always willing to walk you through a problem.”
- “It seems as if they [VISION Management] are always reacting to a problem, rather than being proactive about it.”

Questions 14-21 on the following pages show, with graphical detail, user responses with respect to user assistance when it comes to VISION.

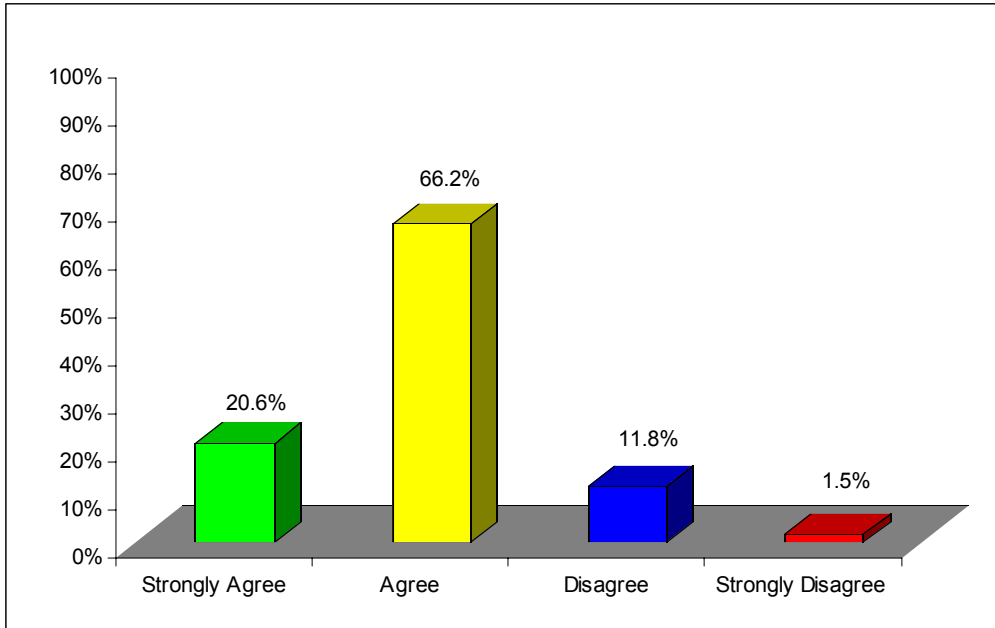
### **14. If I am unsure of the process or have no documentation, I usually ask the Help Desk for support first.**

More than 68 percent of survey respondents indicated that they ask the Help Desk for support first when they are unsure of the process or have no documentation.  
(70 respondents)



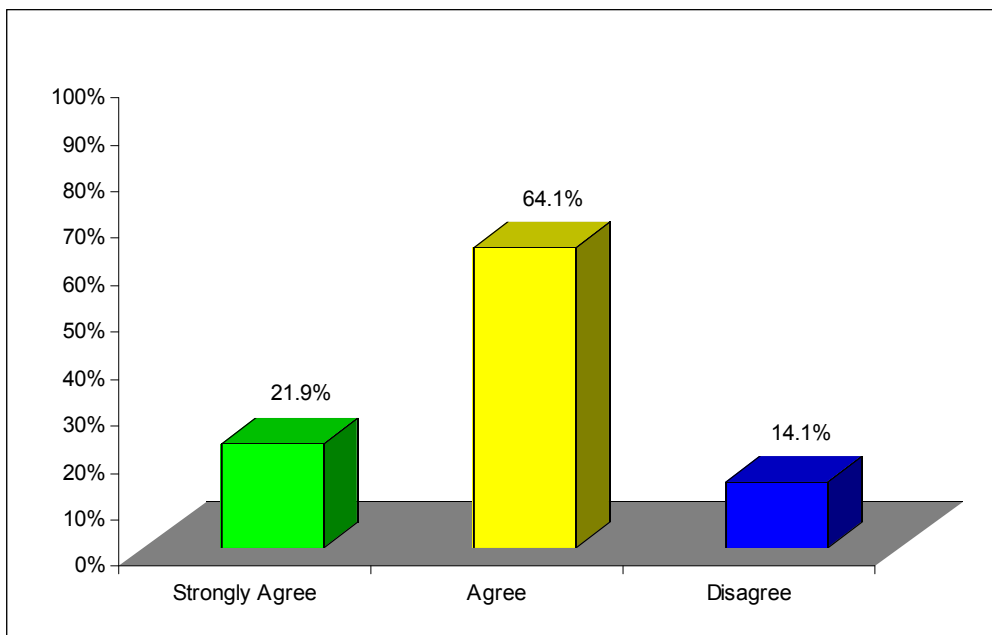
**15. VISION Help Desk answers my questions promptly.**

Almost 87 percent of the survey respondents agreed that the VISION Help Desk answers their questions promptly. (68 respondents)



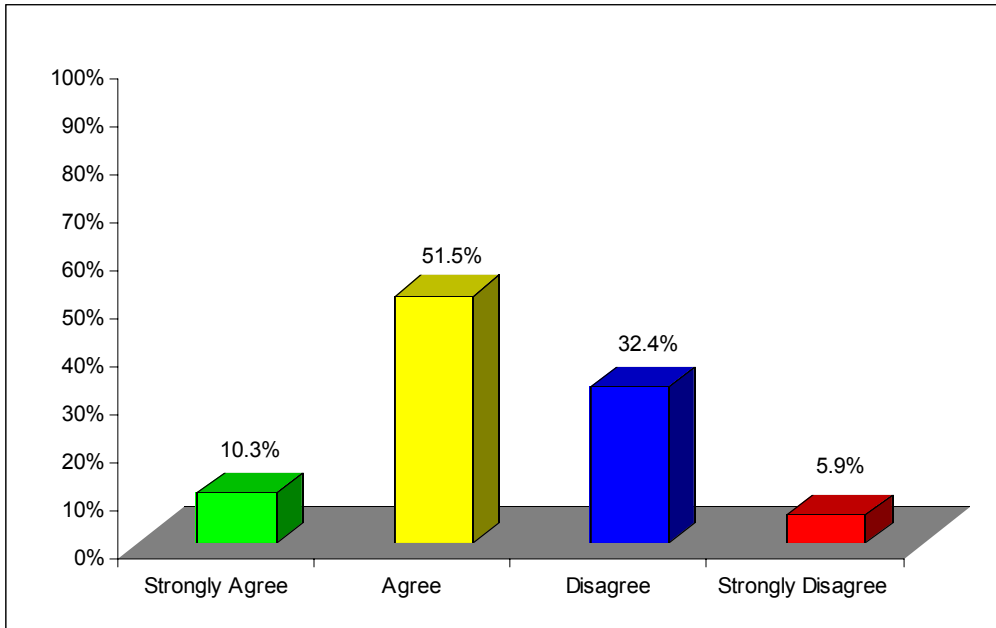
**16. VISION Help Desk staff returns my calls promptly.**

The majority (86 percent) of survey respondents agreed that VISION Help Desk staff returns calls promptly. (64 respondents; no one strongly disagreed)



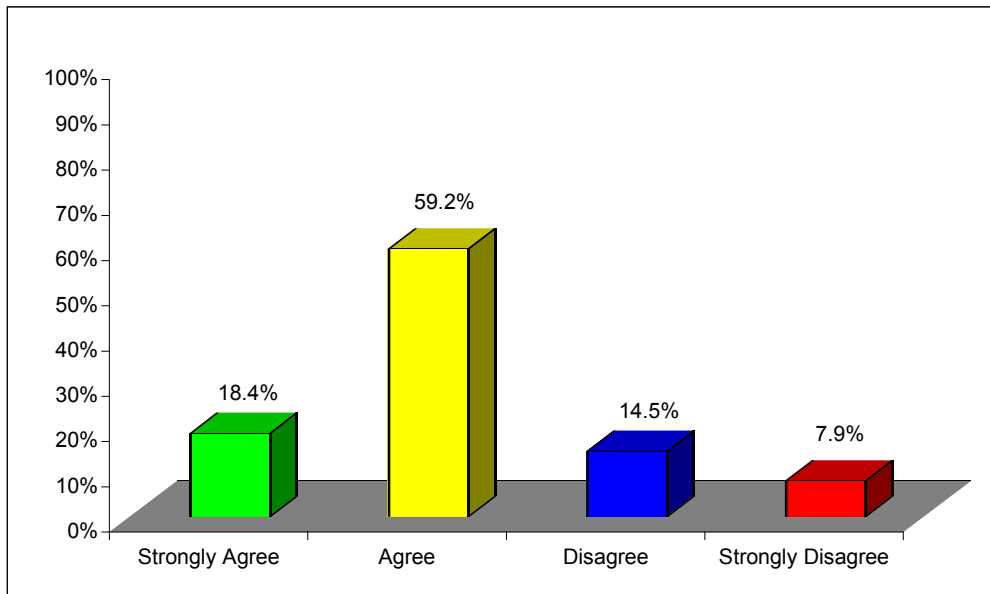
**17. VISION Help Desk staff can answer/resolve all my functional questions.**

Almost 62 percent of the survey respondents agreed that the VISION Help Desk staff can answer/resolve all my functional questions. (68 respondents)



**18. I rely on other staff /colleagues to help answer my VISION questions.**

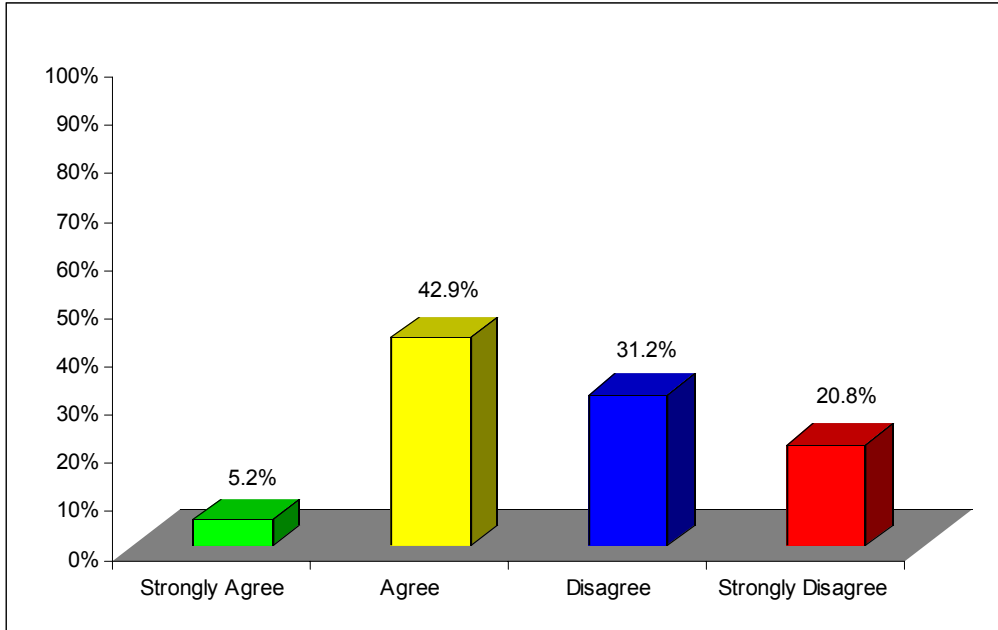
More than 77 percent of survey respondents agreed that they rely on other staff/colleagues to help answer their VISION questions. (76 respondents)



**19. I have access to a comprehensive user manual.**

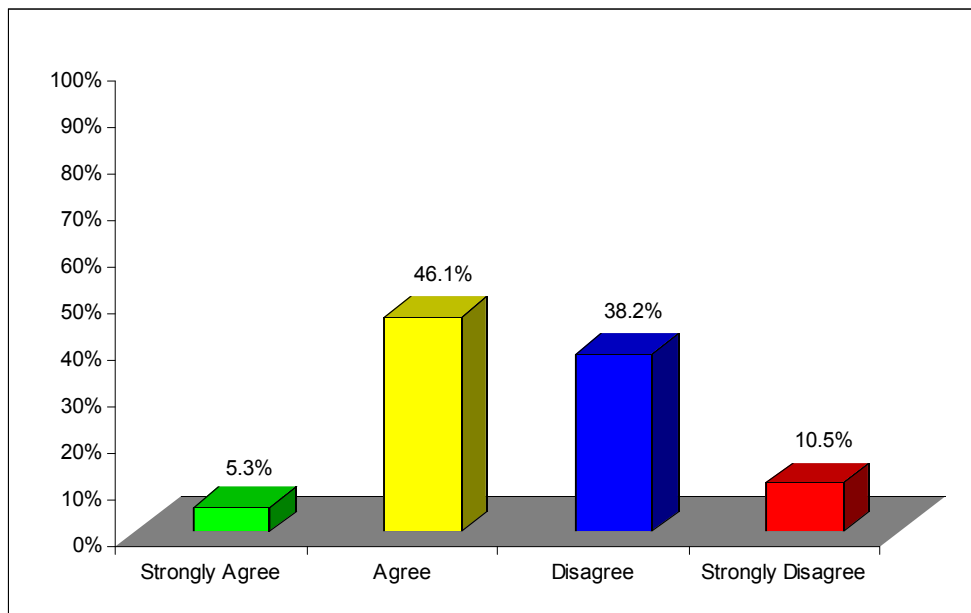
More than half of survey respondents (52 percent) disagreed that they have access to a comprehensive user manual. (77 respondents)

**20. I have quick-reference guides to help me navigate through my business**



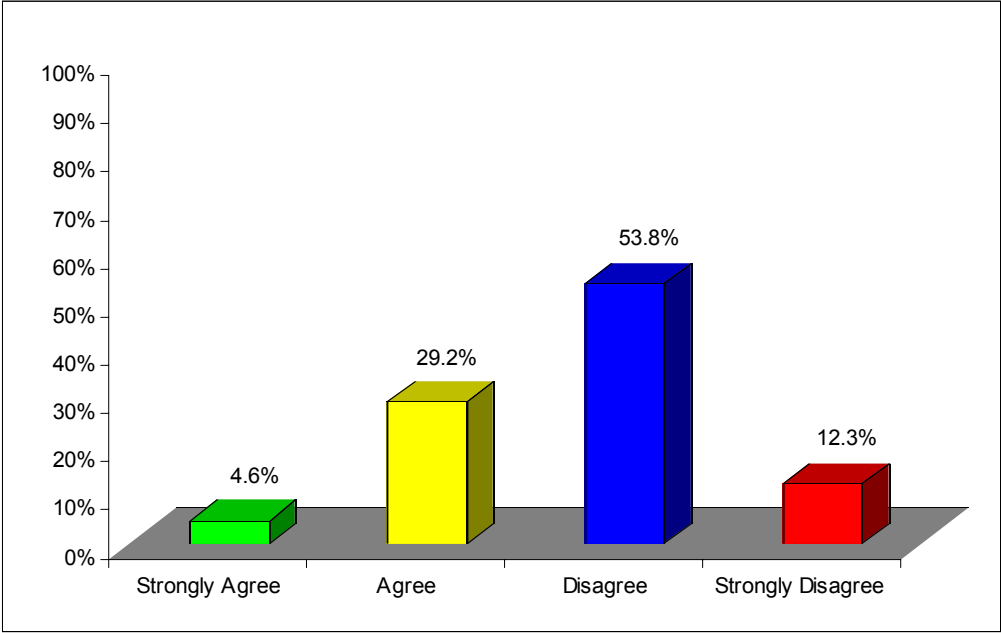
**processes.**

Nearly half of the respondents disagreed that they have quick-reference guides to help them navigate through their business processes. (76 respondents)



**21. Flow charts of VISION business processes are available to help me understand the new processing of transactions.**

More than 66 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that flow charts of VISION business processes are available to help them understand the new processing of transactions. (65 respondents)





## User Training

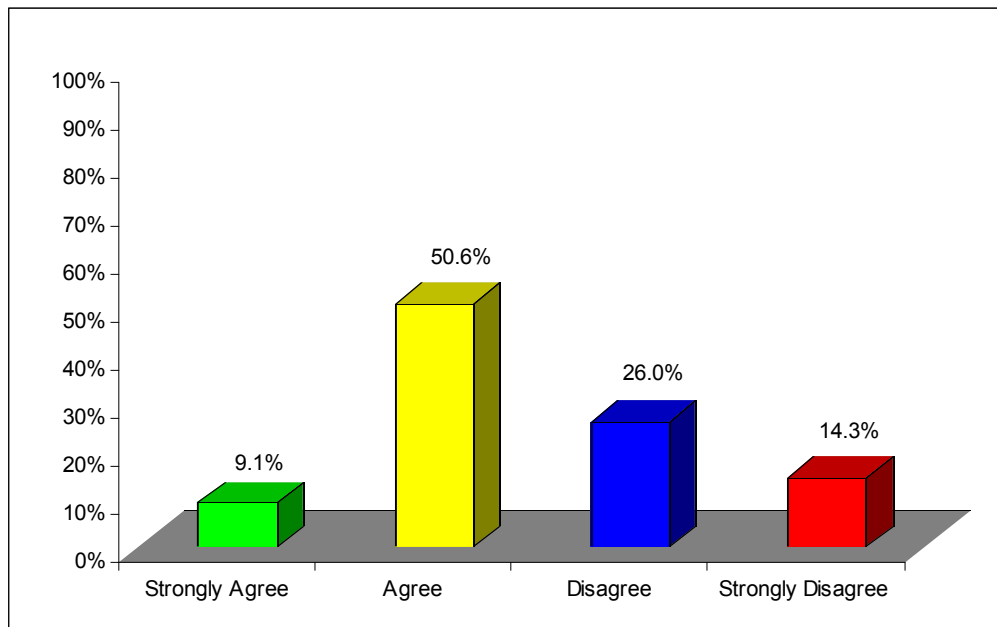
Nearly 60 percent of the respondents said that they need additional training in order to use VISION to perform their jobs satisfactorily. Of respondents, almost 75 percent said they would benefit from additional training to enhance their skills. Some common themes regarding user training were as follows:

- “I would really like some additional training as I don’t think I’m making full use of VISION.”
- “I took the training before I began to use VISION. It would be beneficial to have training now that I have had a chance to actually use the system.”
- “New employees have to learn from current users, training should be available on an ongoing basis.”
- “Reporting, Reporting, Reporting!!”
- “VISION users would benefit greatly from online training where people could move through the training at their own pace on their own schedule.”

Questions 22-25 on the following pages show, with graphical detail, user responses with respect to user training when it comes to VISION.

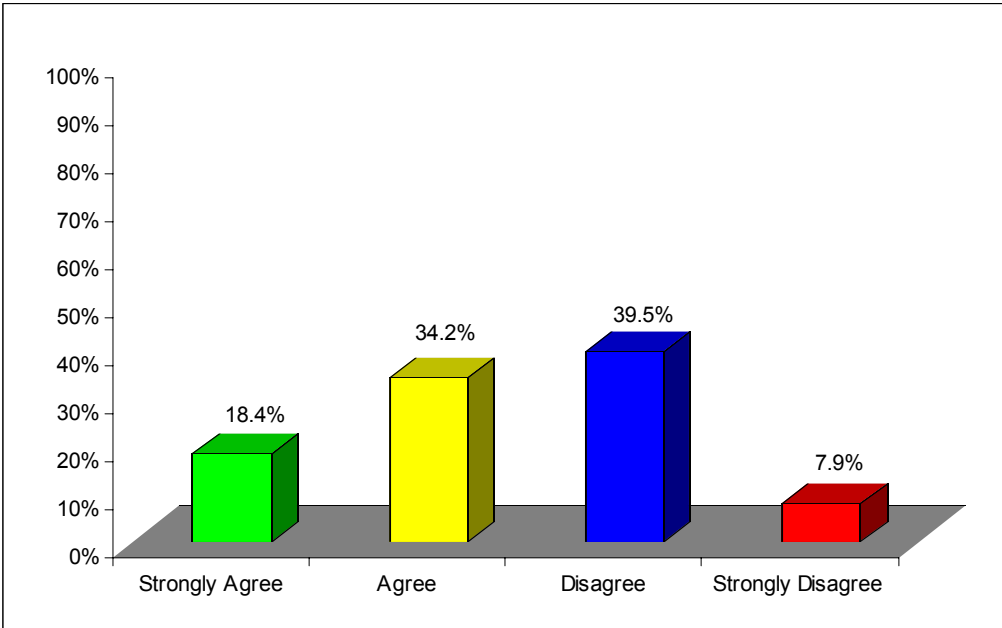
### 22. I can access all VISION information I need to do my job.

Nearly 60 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that they can access all VISION information to do my job. (77 respondents)



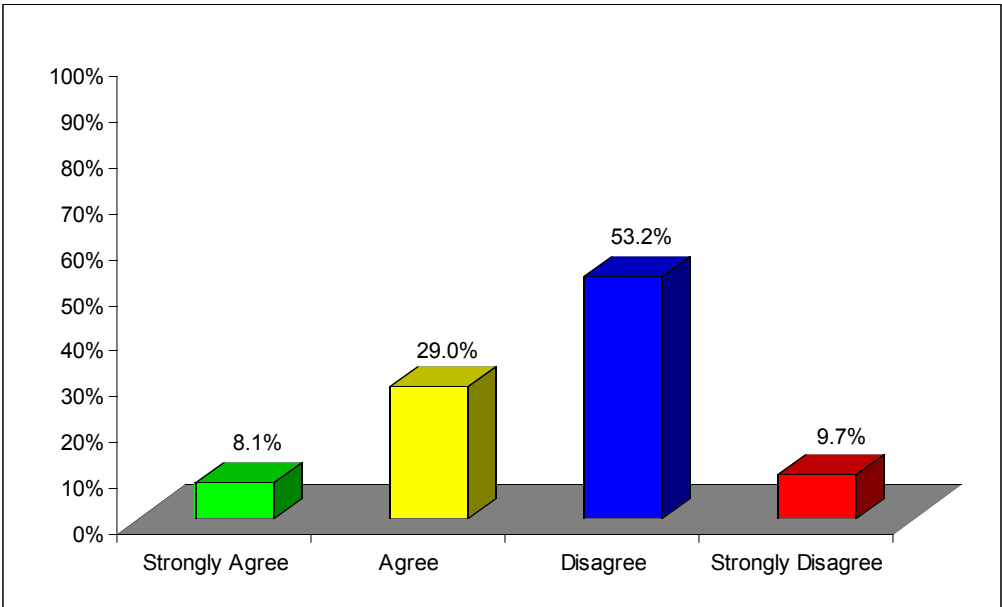
**23. I need additional training to use the system to perform my job satisfactorily.**

More than 52 percent of the respondents agreed that they need additional training to use the system to perform their job satisfactorily. (76 respondents)



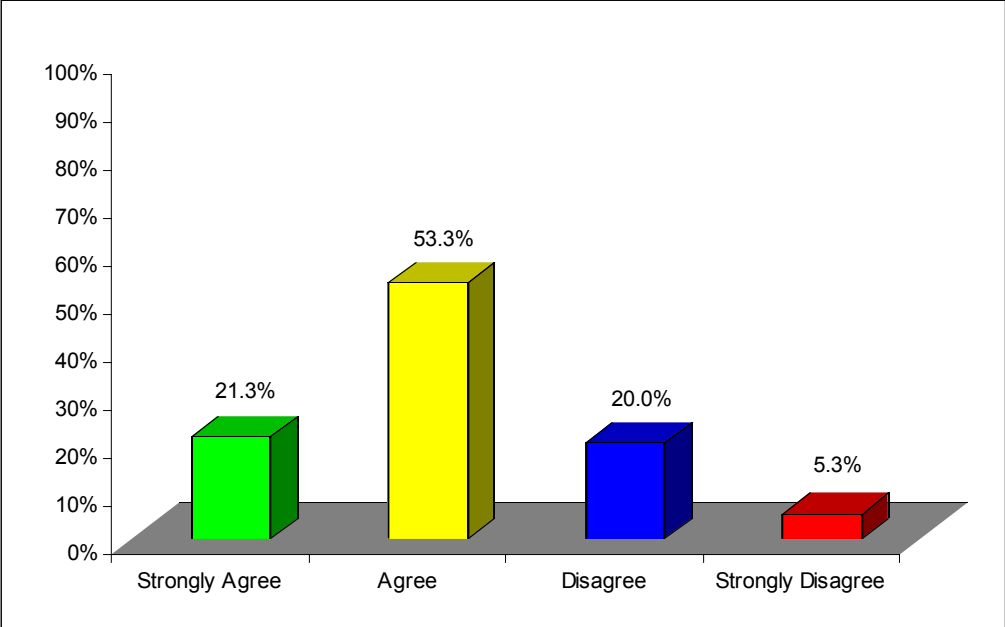
**24. I have requested additional training or assistance on accessing the information I need to do my job.**

Nearly 63 percent of the respondents said they have not requested additional training or assistance on accessing the information they need to do their job. (62 respondents)



**25. I would benefit from additional training to enhance my skills.**

Almost 75 percent of the respondents agreed that they would benefit from additional training to enhance their skills. (75 respondents)



## User Security

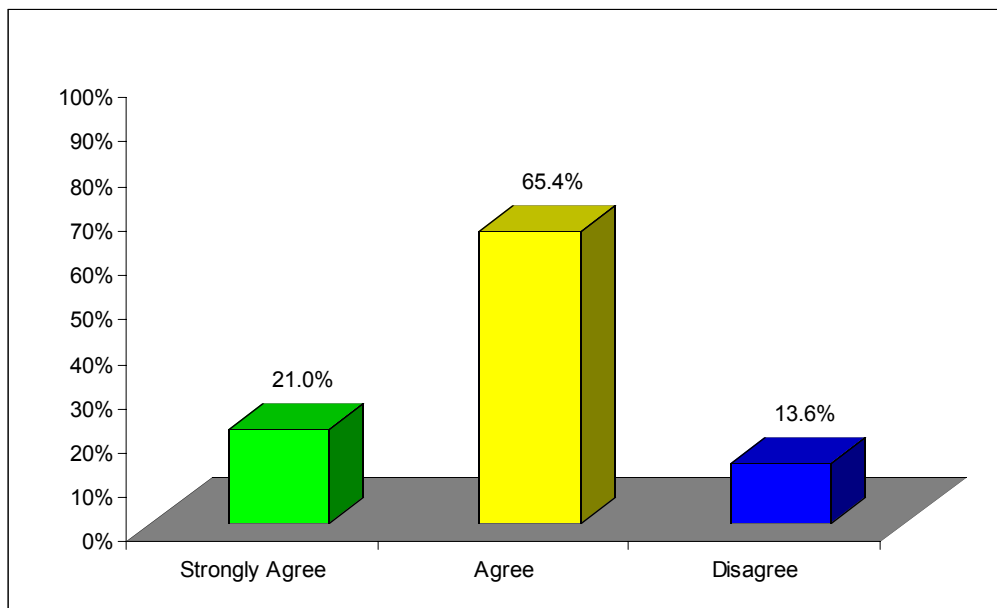
**M**ore than 85 percent of those who responded to the survey say they change their VISION password every 90 days. Roughly 15 percent of users do not know if clear security protocols have been issued. Some common themes regarding user security were as follows:

- “VISION needs to prompt you when it’s time to change your password like every other program in the world does.”
- “I think more people should be given access to certain correction mode operations. If [Financial Operations] does not have the manpower to help us, then we should have access to the correction mode rather than having to go to Montpelier to make corrections; it is highly inefficient.”
- “I am the security officer for my area and I have not received any training for this either.”

Questions 26-29 on the following pages show, with graphical detail, user responses with respect to user security when it comes to VISION.

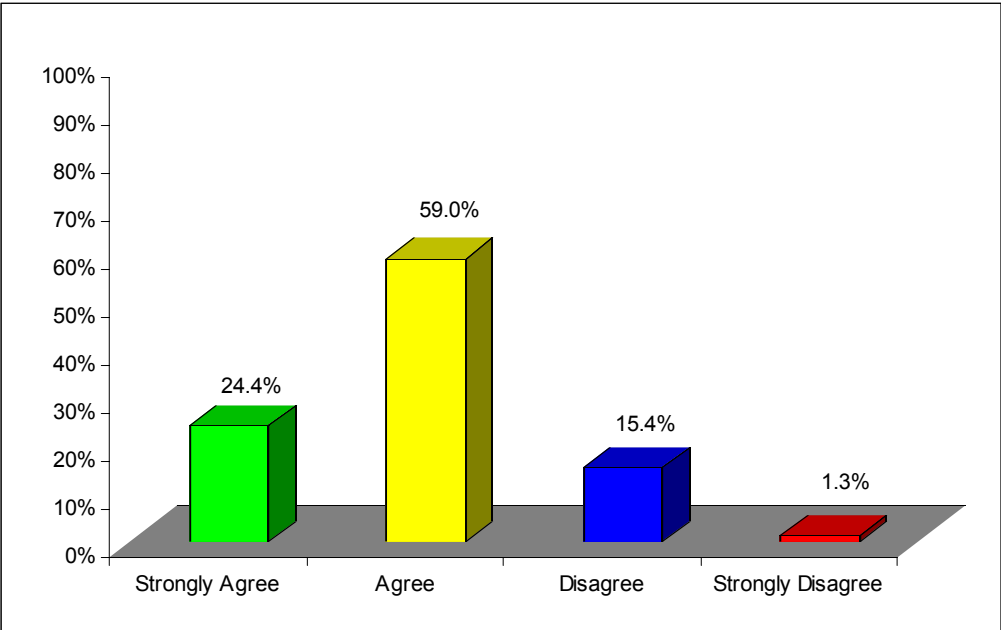
### **26. I change my password to access VISION at least every 90 days.**

The vast majority of survey respondents (more than 86 percent) agreed with the statement that they change their password to access VISION at least every 90 days. (81 respondents; no one strongly disagreed)



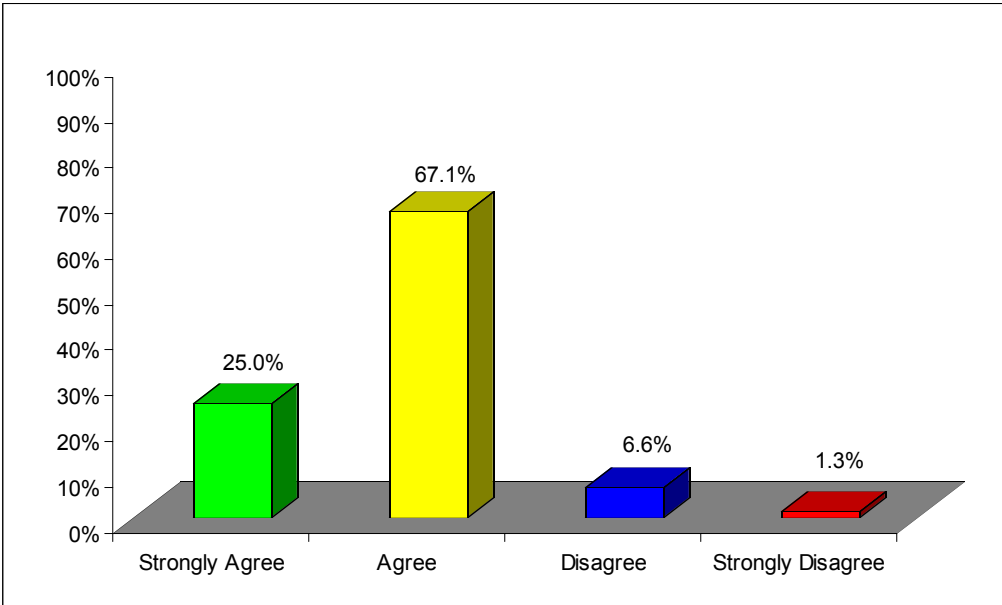
**27. Clear security protocols have been issued and I understand these protocols.**

More than 83 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that clear security protocols have been issued and that they understand these protocols.  
(78 respondents)



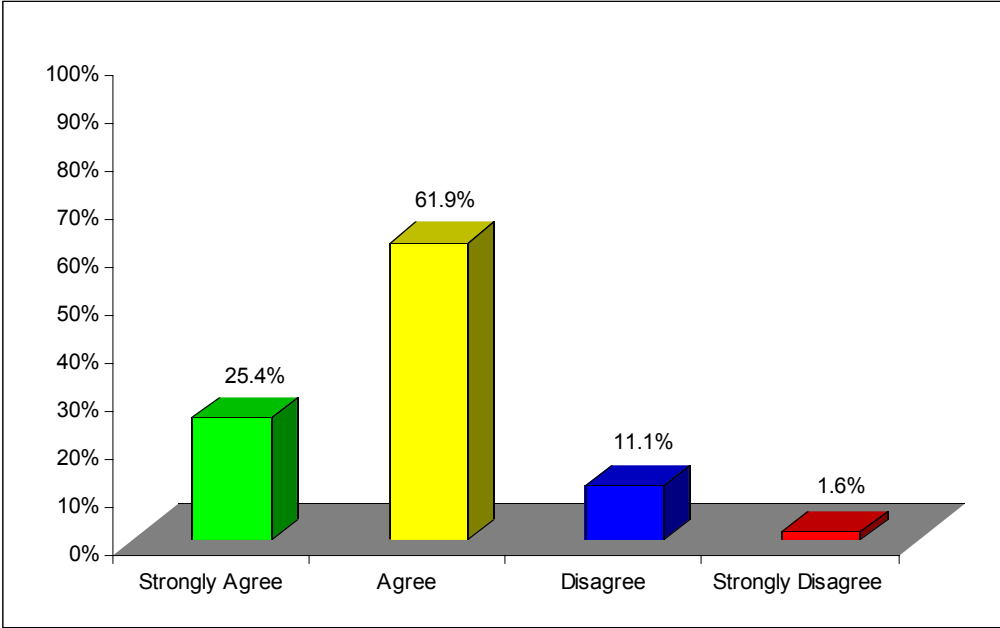
**28. I have been given access only to the areas that are needed for me to satisfactorily perform my job.**

More than 92 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that they had been given access only to the areas that are needed to satisfactorily perform their jobs.  
(76 respondents)



**29. When I have needs outside my access area, I can get prompt assistance from my supervisor or VISION administration.**

More than 87 percent of the respondents agreed that when they have needs outside their access area, they could get prompt assistance from their supervisor or VISION administration. (63 respondents)



## Reporting

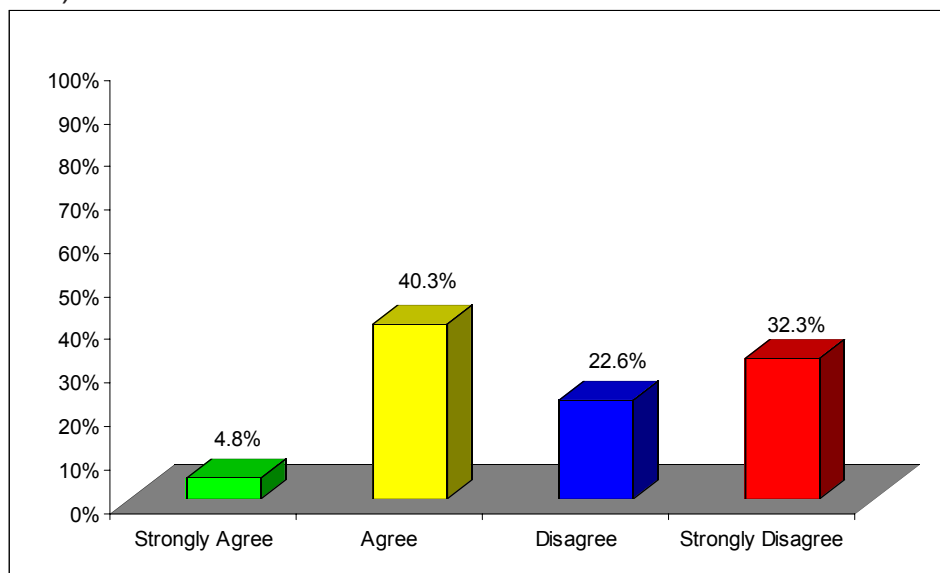
More than half of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they could view, create, and/or print the reports they need from VISION. More than 40 percent of the respondents agreed that running reports was easy. More than 75 percent said they were unsure of VISION reporting capabilities and would like training in developing customized reports. Some common themes regarding reporting were as follows:

- “Reporting has been the biggest failure of VISION.”
- “The reporting aspect of VISION is not meeting the needs of [my] agency.”
- “It is easy to run reports but they are not the reports that you need.”
- “Reports created by VISION are not formatted, we spend many hours formatting our monthly reports once we run them.”
- “I move my reports to Excel because VISION cannot handle my reporting needs.”
- “Training for reporting would be extremely beneficial.”

Questions 30-37 on the following pages show, with graphical detail, user responses with respect to reporting when it comes to VISION.

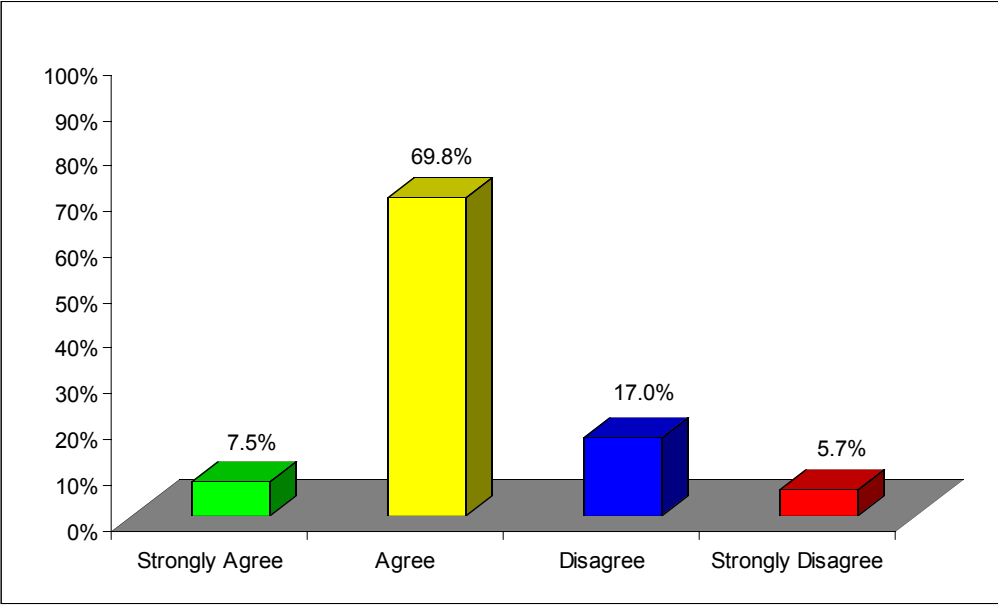
### 30. I can view, create and/or print the reports that I require from VISION.

More than half (55 percent) of respondents disagreed with the statement that they could view, create and/or print the reports that they require from VISION. (62 respondents)



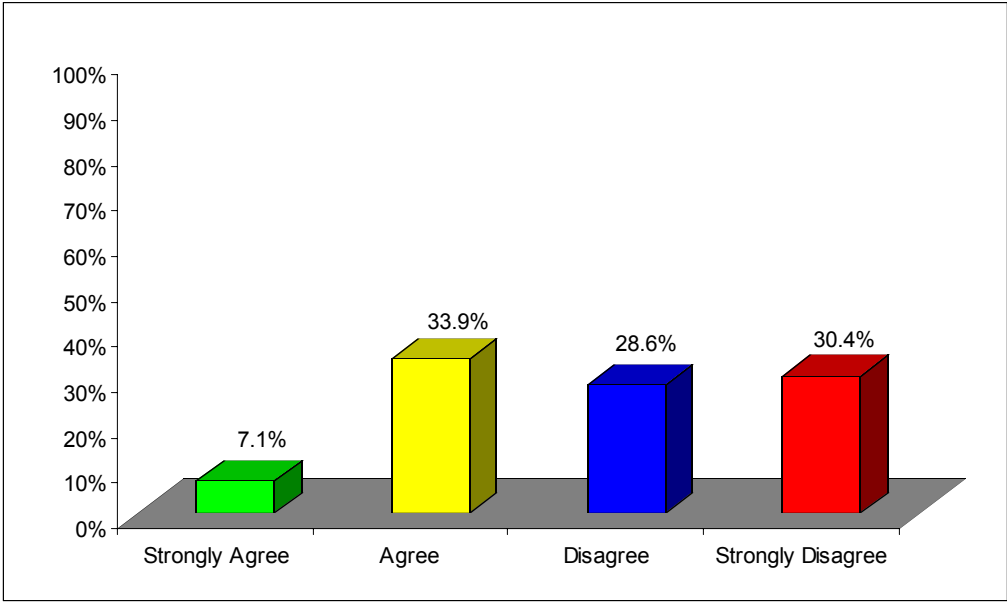
**31. If I can't access the necessary reports, I have requested assistance on how to view, create and/or print the reports.**

More than 77 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that they can't access the necessary reports and have requested assistance on how to view, create and/or print the reports. (53 respondents)



**32. Running reports from VISION is easy.**

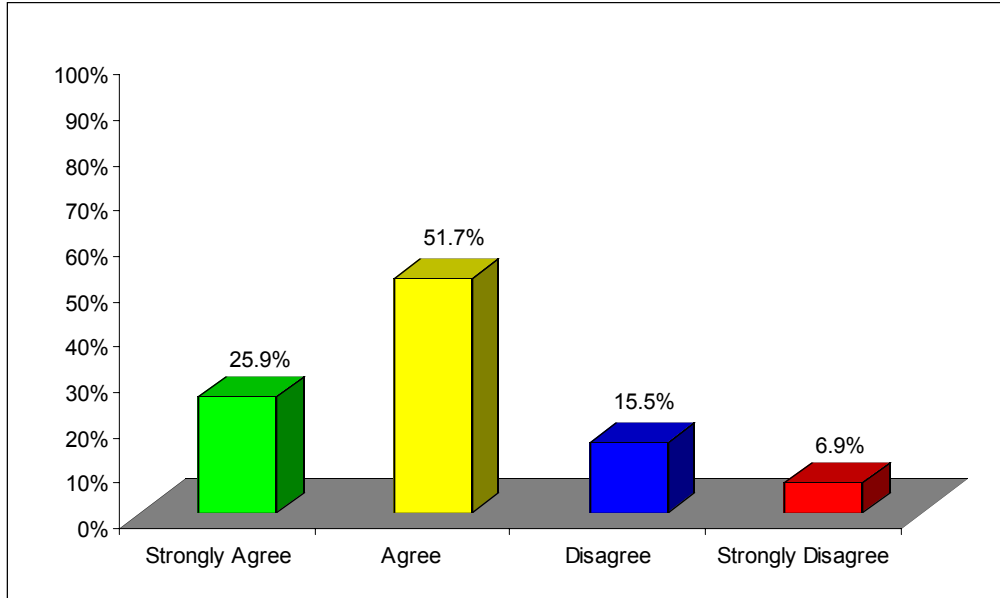
Nearly 60 percent of respondents disagreed that running reports from VISION is easy. (56 respondents)





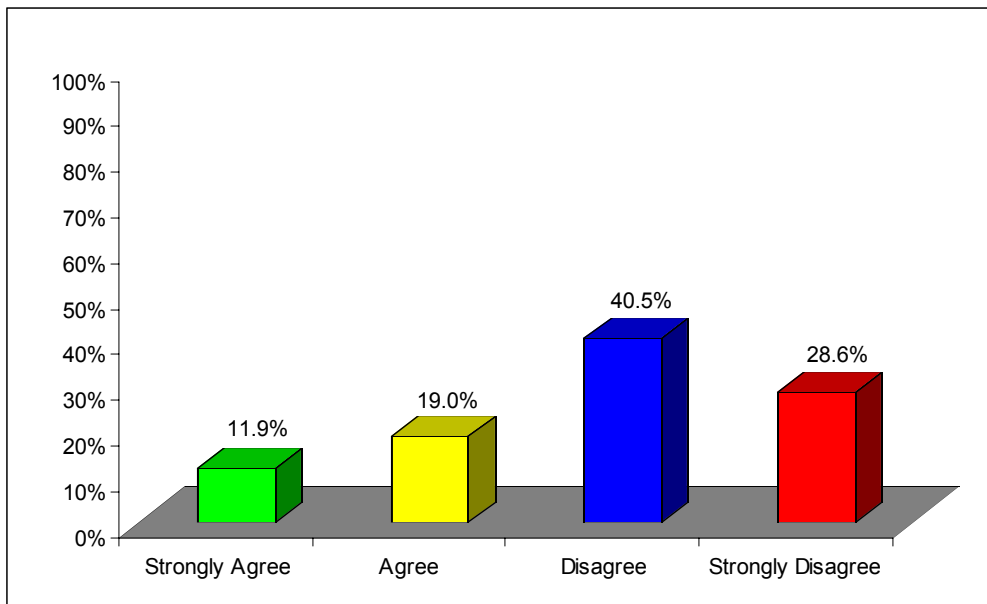
**33. I am unsure of the VISION reporting capabilities.**

More than 77 percent of respondents agreed that they are unsure of VISION's reporting capabilities. (58 respondents)



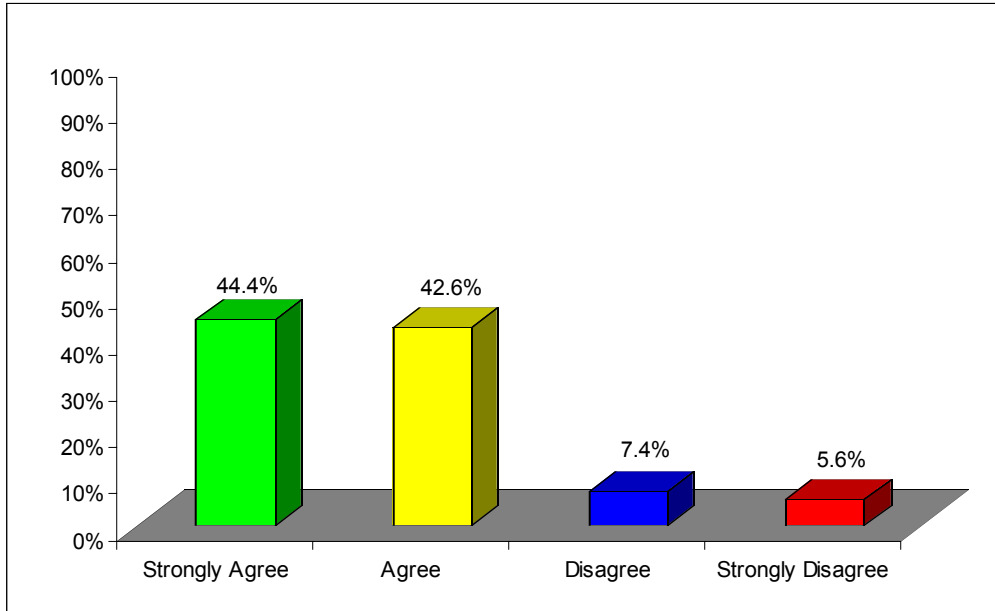
**34. My reporting needs were included in the VISION report development effort.**

More than 69 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that their reporting needs were included in the VISION report development. (42 respondents)



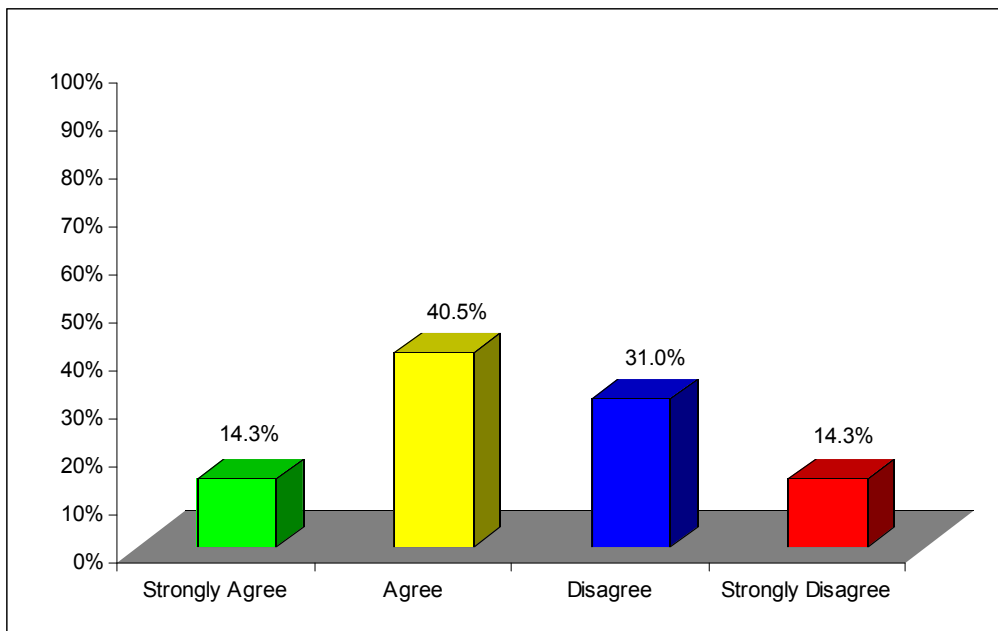
**35. I would like training in developing customized reports.**

The majority of respondents (87 percent) agreed with the statement that they would like training in developing customized reports. (54 respondents)



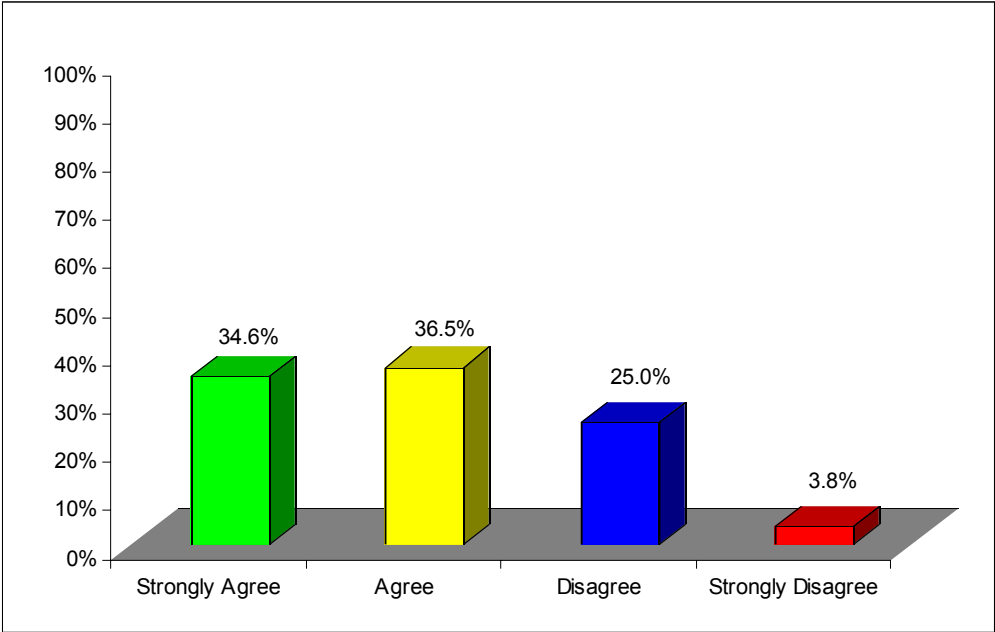
**36. I reconcile VISION reports to related source information.**

Almost 55 percent of respondents agreed that they reconciled VISION reports to related source information. (42 respondents)



**37. I rely on other non-VISION systems' reporting for my financial reporting needs.**

71 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that they rely on other non-VISION systems' reporting for their financial reporting needs. (52 respondents)



## Accounting / Reconciliation

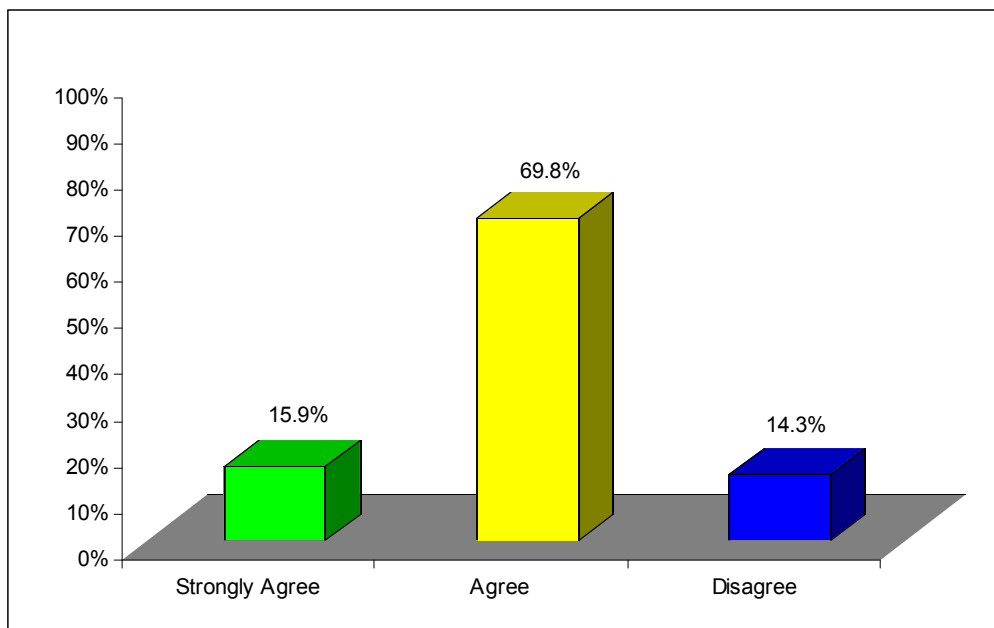
**M**ore than 85 percent of the respondents said they were familiar with the VISION chart of accounts. Forty-six percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that they reconcile the VISION system to related source information on a timely basis. Some common themes regarding accounting/reconciliation were as follows:

- “Finding information on transfers in VISION is very difficult.”
- “Reconciliation between VISION and other systems is a major concern for our agency.”
- “Without official financial reports (similar to the old CDP’s), there is nothing to reconcile data to.”
- “We need to have the periods closed at the end of each month this fiscal year.”

Questions 38-41 on the following pages show, with graphical detail, user responses with respect to accounting/reconciliation when it comes to VISION.

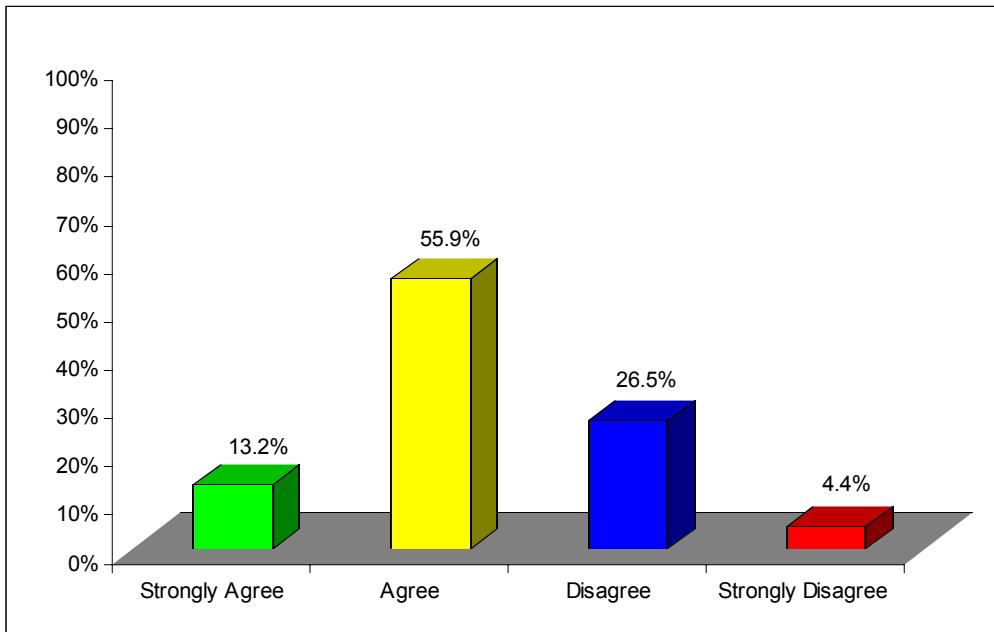
### 38. I am familiar with the VISION chart of accounts.

The majority of respondents (almost 86 percent) agreed with the statement that they are familiar with the VISION chart of accounts. (63 respondents; no one strongly disagreed)



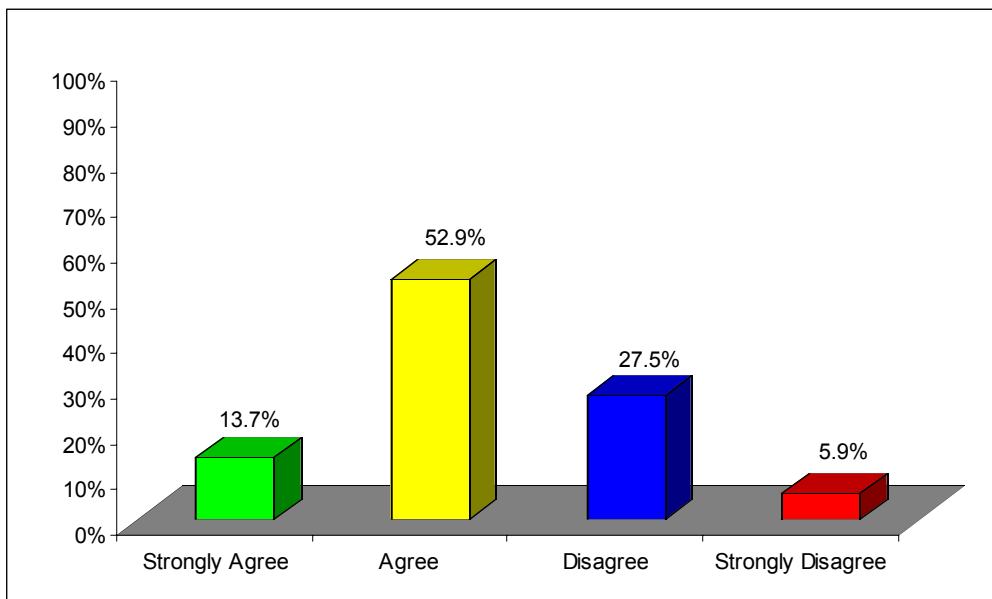
**39. I find it relatively easy to determine what VISION account code to use.**

More than 69 percent of the respondents agreed that it is relatively easy to determine what VISION account code to use. (68 respondents)



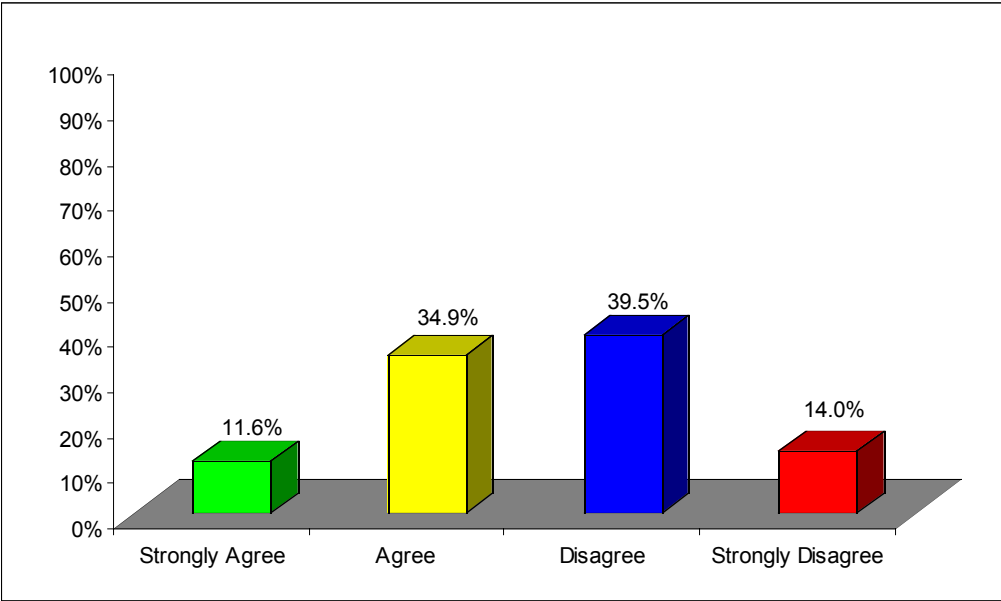
**40. All significant transactions are appropriately reflected in VISION.**

More than 66 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that all significant transactions are appropriately reflected in VISION. (51 respondents)



**41. I reconcile my VISION system to related source information on a timely basis.**

More than 46 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that they reconcile the VISION system to related source information on a timely basis. (43 respondents)

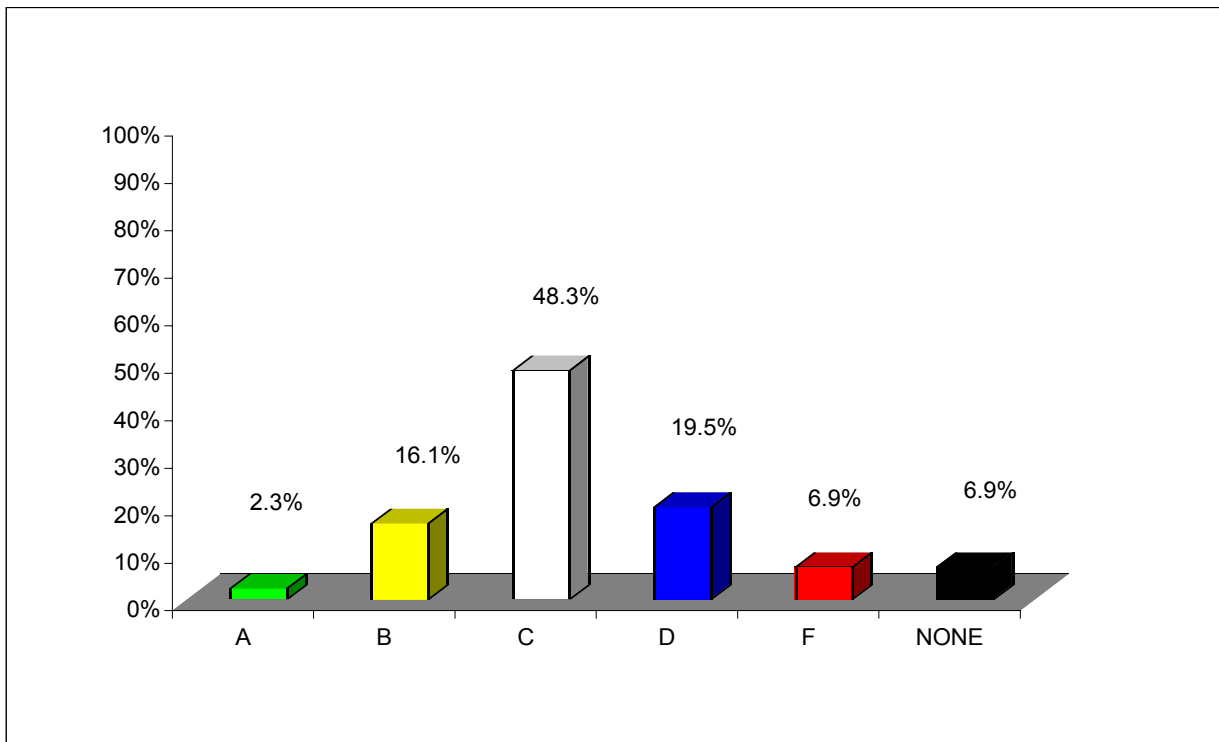


## Overall View

When asked to grade VISION, more than half of the respondents gave the system a C or worse. Only 18 percent of those who responded gave VISION a favorable grade of B or better. Some common themes regarding the overall view of VISION were as follows:

- “VISION is a very powerful tool.”
- “The communication needs to be improved to advise departments when changes or new processes are implemented.”
- “There is very poor user documentation.”
- “I truly believe VISION can give me the information I need on a timely basis, if only more resources were available to train and investigate all the capabilities of the system.”
- “On the positive side, vendors are getting paid. Unfortunately, the problems with reporting, lack of official financial reports from Finance, increased complexity and workload on users, and my perception that the VISION system is under resourced bring the overall score down to just barely passing.”

**42. If I had to give VISION a grade of A, B, C, D or F, at this point, it would be:**



# objective, scope & authority

## **Objective, Scope & Authority**

The Office of the State Auditor, with the assistance of KPMG, has conducted an assessment of VISION to assess whether or not the system is operating as intended.

An assessment differs substantially from an audit conducted in accordance with applicable professional standards. The purpose of an audit is to express an opinion. The purpose of our assessment is to identify findings and observations and to make recommendations so that the reviewed agency or program can better accomplish its mission and more fully comply with laws, regulations, and grant requirements. An assessment relies upon representations of, and information provided by, a variety of state employees. If an audit had been performed, the findings and recommendations might or might not have differed.

This follow-up review was conducted to the State Auditor's authority contained in 32 V.S.A Sec. 163 and Sec. 167, and was performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

## **Methodology**

The methodology involved a review of relevant statutes, regulations, policies, contracts, internal memoranda, and correspondence. It included interviews with numerous state employees involved in VISION development and management. During this assessment, we also performed the following activities:

- Met with key VISION Management to discuss the implementation of the State Auditor's and KPMG's earlier recommended changes to VISION and VISION-related policies;
- Evaluated and assessed the effectiveness of VISION by reviewing Help Desk inquires and logs in order to determine specific issues with respect to the system;
- Met with VISION Help Desk management and staff to discuss common VISION issues, problems, and concerns; and,
- Prepared a VISION user survey, tabulated the results, and presented the findings.





# Appendix A

VISION User Survey - Complete Questions & Results

The Office of the State Auditor sent out 108 surveys to end users (managers and staff) of VISION. In all, 87 users returned the survey (*Note: one response from the Agency of Transportation summarized 38 internal responses from various divisions*). As you will see, there were some questions in which a user said the question was not applicable or just did not respond to a particular question. We have placed the percentages for each question in each of the corresponding boxes below as well as the actual number responses in parentheses.

Hello! Would you help us with an important survey? Last year, the State Auditor released a report about the implementation of Project VISION. This survey is part of a follow-up review of how the transition to VISION is going since the project's July 1, 2001 go-live date. This survey is confidential and anonymous and should be answered as candidly as possible. You don't have to use your name if you don't want to. However, we encourage you to include your name so that we may contact you for further information.

Name: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Agency: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

What percent of your time is spent using VISION? \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for helping out with this survey. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Clasen at (802) 828-2281 Please e-mail your response by August 9, 2002 to [auditor@sao.state.vt.us](mailto:auditor@sao.state.vt.us)

Alternatively, please mail to: Office of the State Auditor  
132 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5101

*This survey is a WORD document. Please note that this form may be completed on your computer. Put an "X" in the box that most closely matches your answer. Then e-mail or send via pink mail to the State Auditor's Office.*

Please check the box that best describes your opinion on the following statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Applicable to My Job
<b>User-friendliness</b>					
1. I usually navigate through VISION easily.	14.9% (13)	58.6% (51)	5.7% (5)	18.4% (16)	1.1% (1)
2. Most of my business processes were easily integrated into VISION.	3.4% (3)	35.6% (31)	14.9% (13)	27.6% (24)	11.5% (10)
3. Some of my business processes had to be substantially modified to work with VISION.	16.1% (14)	36.8% (32)	1.1% (1)	17.2 (15)	18.4% (16)
4. Adequate support is available for me to go to with suggestions or concerns.	13.8% (12)	46.0% (40)	4.6% (4)	24.1 (21)	5.7% (5)

Please check the box that best describes your opinion on the following statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Applicable to My Job
5. My suggestions or concerns are generally acknowledged, even if they can't be implemented for some reason.	5.7% (5)	57.5% (50)	5.7% (5)	11.5% (10)	12.6% (11)
6. New business processes have been clearly documented and given to me.	4.6% (4)	35.6% (31)	16.1% (14)	25.3% (22)	9.2% (8)
7. I am able to process transactions with few or no problems.	10.3% (9)	51.7% (45)	5.7% (5)	23.0% (20)	5.7% (5)
8. VISION is available when I need to use it.	12.6% (11)	66.7% (58)	2.3% (2)	13.8% (12)	1.1% (1)
9. VISION processing response times are slow.	33.3% (29)	46.0% (40)	N/A	13.8% (12)	2.3% (2)
10. VISION occasionally freezes in the middle of processing.	13.8% (12)	50.6% (44)	2.3% (2)	20.7% (18)	5.7% (6)
11. VISION has made my job more efficient.	1.1% (1)	11.5% (10)	27.6% (24)	48.3% (42)	4.6% (4)
12. VISION allows me to do a more effective job.	1.1% (1)	17.2% (15)	23.0% (20)	42.5% (37)	5.7% (5)
13. VISION has increased my workload.	33.3% (29)	41.4% (36)	N/A	8.0% (7)	5.7% (5)
<i>Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions about the user-friendliness of VISION:</i>					
<b>User Assistance</b>					
14. If I am unsure of the process or have no documentation, I usually ask the Help Desk for support first.	13.8% (12)	41.4% (36)	2.3% (2)	23.0% (20)	11.5% (10)
15. VISION Help Desk answers my messages promptly.	16.1% (14)	51.7% (45)	1.1% (1)	9.2% (8)	11.5% (10)

Please check the box that best describes your opinion on the following statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Applicable to My Job
16. VISION Help Desk staff returns my calls promptly.	16.1% (14)	47.1% (41)	N/A	10.3% (9)	13.8% (12)
17. VISION Help Desk staff can answer/resolve all my functional questions.	8.0% (7)	40.2% (35)	4.6% (4)	25.3% (22)	11.5% (10)
18. I rely on other staff /colleagues to help answer my VISION questions.	16.1% (14)	51.7% (45)	6.9% (6)	12.6% (11)	5.7% (5)
19. I have access to a comprehensive user manual.	4.6% (4)	37.9% (33)	18.4% (16)	27.6% (24)	3.4% (3)
20. I have quick-reference guides to help me navigate through my business processes.	4.6% (4)	40.2% (35)	9.2% (8)	33.3% (29)	5.7% (5)
21. Flow charts of VISION business processes are available to help me understand the new processing of transactions.	3.4% (3)	21.8% (19)	9.2% (8)	40.2% (35)	13.8% (12)

*Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions about user assistance:*

<b>User Training</b>					
22. I can access all VISION information I need to do my job.	8.0% (7)	44.8% (39)	12.6% (11)	23.0% (20)	2.3% (2)
23. I need additional training to use the system to perform my job satisfactorily.	16.1% (14)	29.9% (26)	6.9% (6)	34.5% (30)	5.7% (5)
24. I have requested additional training or assistance on accessing the information I need to do my job.	5.7% (5)	20.7% (18)	6.9% (6)	37.9% (33)	13.8% (12)
25. I would benefit from additional training to enhance my skills.	18.4% (16)	46.0% (40)	4.6% (4)	17.2% (15)	5.7% (5)

Please check the box that best describes your opinion on the following statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Applicable to My Job
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*Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions about user training:*

**User Security**

26. I change my password to access VISION at least every 90 days.	19.5% (17)	60.9% (53)	N/A	12.6% (11)	N/A
27. Clear security protocols have been issued and I understand these protocols.	21.8% (19)	52.9% (46)	1.1% (1)	13.8% (12)	2.3% (2)
28. I have been given access only to the areas that are needed for me to satisfactorily perform my job.	21.8% (19)	58.6% (51)	1.1% (1)	5.7% (5)	5.7% (5)
29. When I have needs outside my access area, I can get prompt assistance from my supervisor or VISION administration.	18.4% (16)	44.8% (39)	1.1% (1)	8.0% (7)	17.2% (15)

*Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions about FISION user security:*

**Reporting**

30. I can view, create and/or print the reports that I require from VISION.	3.4% (3)	28.7% (25)	23.0% (20)	16.1% (14)	17.2% (15)
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Please check the box that best describes your opinion on the following statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Applicable to My Job
31. If I can't access the necessary reports, I have requested assistance on how to view, create and/or print the reports.	4.6% (4)	42.5% (37)	3.4% (3)	10.3% (9)	25.3% (22)
32. Running reports from VISION is easy.	4.6% (4)	21.8% (19)	19.5% (17)	18.4% (16)	24.1% (21)
33. I am unsure of the VISION reporting capabilities.	17.2% (15)	34.5% (30)	4.6% (4)	10.3% (9)	21.8% (19)
34. My reporting needs were included in the VISION report development effort.	5.7% (5)	9.2% (8)	13.8% (12)	19.5% (17)	32.2% (28)
35. I would like training in developing customized reports.	27.6% (24)	26.4% (23)	3.4% (3)	4.6% (4)	24.1% (21)
36. I reconcile VISION reports to related source information.	6.9% (6)	19.5% (17)	6.9% (6)	14.9% (13)	32.2% (28)
37. I rely on other non-VISION systems' reporting for my financial reporting needs.	20.7% (18)	21.8% (19)	2.3% (2)	14.9% (13)	23.0% (20)

*Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions about VISION reporting:*

<b>Accounting / Reconciliation</b>					
38. I am familiar with the VISION chart of accounts.	11.5% (10)	50.6% (44)	N/A	10.3% (9)	16.1% (14)
39. I find it relatively easy to determine what VISION account code to use.	10.3% (9)	43.7% (38)	3.4% (3)	20.7% (18)	12.6% (11)

Please check the box that best describes your opinion on the following statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Applicable to My Job
40. All significant transactions are appropriately reflected in VISION	8.0% (7)	31.0% (27)	3.4% (3)	16.1% (14)	23.0% (20)
41. I reconcile my VISION system to related source information on a timely basis.	5.7% (5)	17.2% (15)	6.9% (6)	19.5% (17)	31.0% (27)

*Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions for Accounting/Reconciliation with VISION:*

**Overall View**

Vision Grade	A	B	C	D	F
43. If I had to give VISION a grade of A, B, C, D or F, at this point, it would be _____	2.3% (2)	16.1% (14)	48.3% (42)	19.5% (17)	6.9% (6)

*Please use this space for additional comments on the overall VISION system:*



# Appendix B

Department of Finance & Management's Response to Draft Review

April 14, 2003

Michael J. Clasen  
Deputy State Auditor  
Office of the State Auditor  
132 State Street  
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5101

Dear Michael:

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to comment on your latest report, *Turning VISION into Action*. I have included a few specific comments as an attachment and will comment more generally on your report in this letter.

As your report notes, the installation of this major financial management system was a massive effort in terms of the scope, cost and commitment of staff time. The immediate months after installation saw significant frustration on the part of users and the staff managing the system.

Through training, software modifications, revised business processes and the inevitable benefit of hands-on-experience by users, problems and confusion have diminished. Calls to the help desk have declined by more than 50%, allowing us to become less reactive and to focus on training, outreach and further business process improvements. Clearly we have yet to achieve the full potential of the system; much remains to be done.

Starting as Commissioner during the current legislative session, I have naturally focused primarily on the FY 2003 & 2004 budgets. Nonetheless I am working with my appropriate managers to identify, prioritize and fix outstanding issues with the VISION system. I have, and will continue to welcome specific input from our fellow state employees. We will sincerely consider suggestions and aggressively research identified problems. Since VISION has had a somewhat blemished reputation, I have, however, seen a tendency on the part of some managers to inappropriately attribute self-inflicted errors to VISION. In these cases, after researching the point, we ask that they correct their misstatement.

Michael J. Clasen  
April 14, 2003  
Page 2

I appreciate your efforts last summer to conduct the user survey and compile the results. Clearly the findings show progress (e.g. system up-time, navigation ease, help desk support) as well as areas for further improvement (e.g. perceived benefit to one's job, reporting). In my new role I am fortunate to have some very capable colleagues dedicated to achieving further improvements in this system. The past two years have been difficult and I imagine, at times, discouraging for them. We believe we are on the right path and would welcome a subsequent survey to document the results of our efforts.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Hofmann  
Commissioner

## **Additional Comments**

As a general point the more specific your comments can be (e.g. unmet reporting and training needs) the more actionable they are for us to address. Perhaps in a future survey you could ask an open-ended question for additional detail.

### **Recommendation 1:**

Agree, adequate resources must and will be dedicated to testing any configuration changes prior to rolling them out.

### **Recommendation 2:**

VISION Management feels that end users have made a successful transition to the new chart of accounts structure. It is part of the VISION Operations Section responsibilities to review chart of account coding for accuracy and follow up with departments.

### **Recommendation 3:**

A detailed outline of all security levels within a module was created and provided to Business Managers/Security Officers prior to July 1, 2001. One-on-one training sessions were also conducted with the Business Manager/Security Officers prior to July 1, 2002. A security form is created for each end user by Departmental Security Officer and forwarded to the VISION Statewide Security Officer who reviews each form separately with the Director of Financial Operations for its appropriateness. A new account or revised security level can only be established with the signature approval of the Director of Financial Operations.

### **Recommendation 4:**

Agree that this is an important issue. Migration to the Barre backup site is planned for later this year.

### **Recommendation 5:**

We are encouraged by the high marks survey participants gave to the Helpdesk staff. As user proficiency has increased and help desk calls have decreased these same employees have devoted more time to formal training and smaller help sessions.

We believe that mentoring is a valuable resource that works best when it develops informally among co-workers within an organization. We support the informal system, which is occurring naturally, and expect it will continue to strengthen as time goes by.

### **Recommendation 6:**

Attracting and retaining capable staff is important. As budgets allow, we will work to fill inevitable vacancies with the best available talent.

### **Recommendation 7:**

N/A

**Recommendations 8 & 9:**

The goal of VISION has been to provide the State of Vermont with a true fund accounting system and the ability to produce its Financial Statements in compliance with Governmental Accounting Standards Boards Statement #34. The prior system, which was so familiar to so many employees, was totally inadequate for these new requirements. To achieve these goals end-users are required to enter more information into the system on the front end. It is inevitable that users think that VISION requires more effort than the old system; it does. As a result the State today can produce more detailed & relevant information than ever before. With this said, we will seek to make additional improvements to the efficiency of our business processes.

**Recommendation 10:**

Bulletin 1.0 lays out the asset management policy and general guidelines. The Asset Processing Manual describes the step-by-step procedures for using the VISION system to manage assets including: adding, adjusting, retiring and tracking. The year-end closing instructions include the date the annual inventory needs to be completed and other pertinent information. We believe the policy is good but should be expanded in the general guidelines section to include more detail based on our first year's experience with the system and believe that this would answer the Auditor's recommendation for 'procedures'.

**Recommendation 11:**

We will explore ways to augment the user help/training information in the system and on the web.

**Recommendation 12:**

VISION Management has worked aggressively with departments over the past several months to address any reporting needs. Many new and improved reports have been moved to production based on end user feed back. Management will continue to work with departments to assure VISION reports meet departmental needs.

**Recommendation 13:**

We are considering a few ways to elicit user feedback beyond what we learn from the Help Desk. We are not convinced a regular standing committee is the most efficient way to obtain input. Next month we will convene a group to request specific opinions/questions regarding FY 2003 closeout.

**Recommendation 14:**

The Secretary of Administration arrived at the same conclusion prior to assuming his position. This is one of his key priorities.

**Recommendation 15:**

N/A

To obtain additional copies of this report contact:

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