



# 2016 Industry Trends Survey Findings



## OVERVIEW

*Every year InterSpec Inc. conducts an industry status survey to provide a few insights into the current project specification management processes in the AEC Industry. In this year's survey we found a few nuggets of information that we all should be aware of and excited about. Though the level of concern about errors and omissions stay consistent from year to year, a more systematic approach is being used to improve the status quo. An increase in the use of BIM based applications and integrated data migration seems to be the trend.*

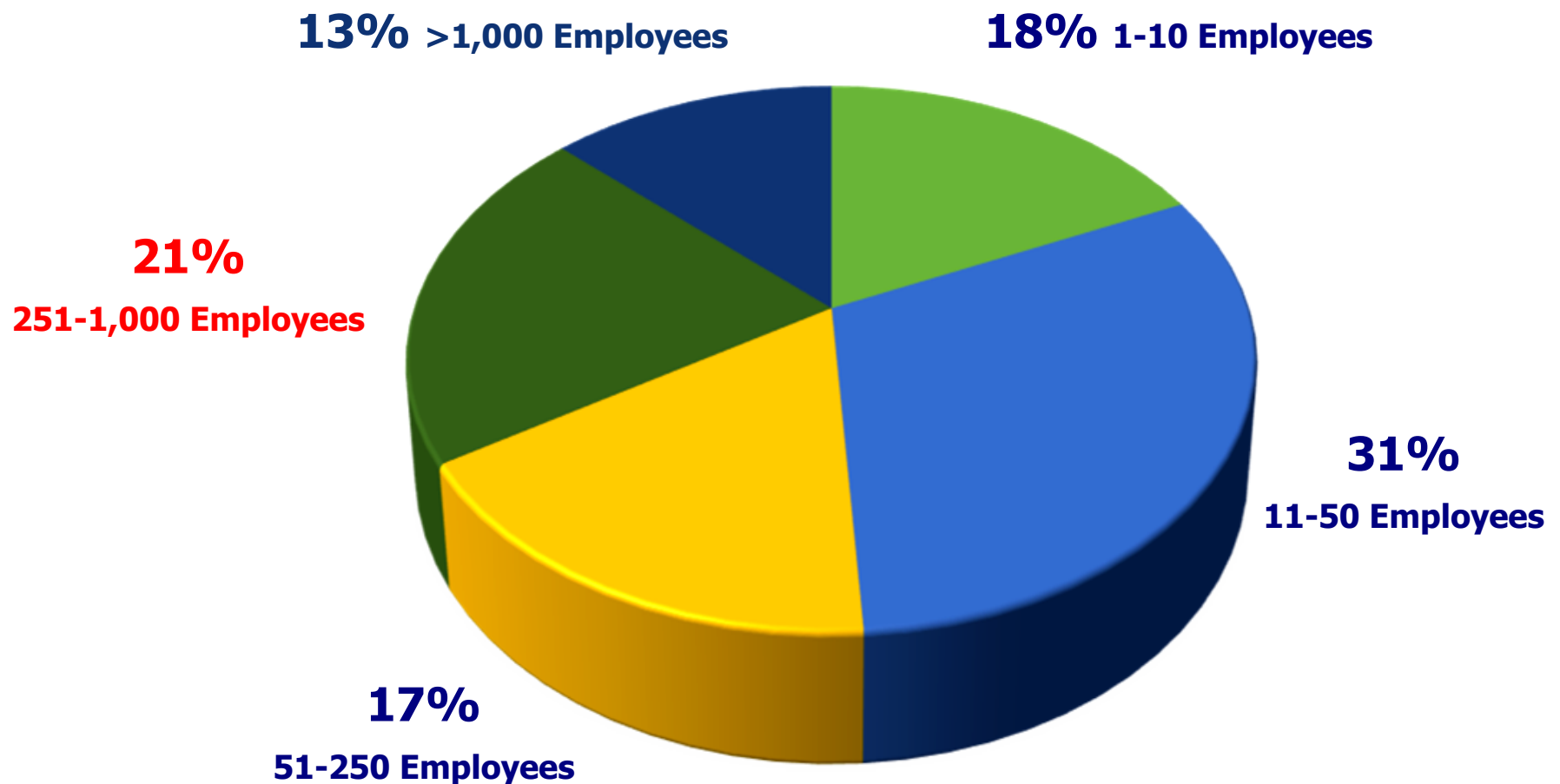
## SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Survey participants were professional from a variety of businesses. The industries they practice in are divided as follows:



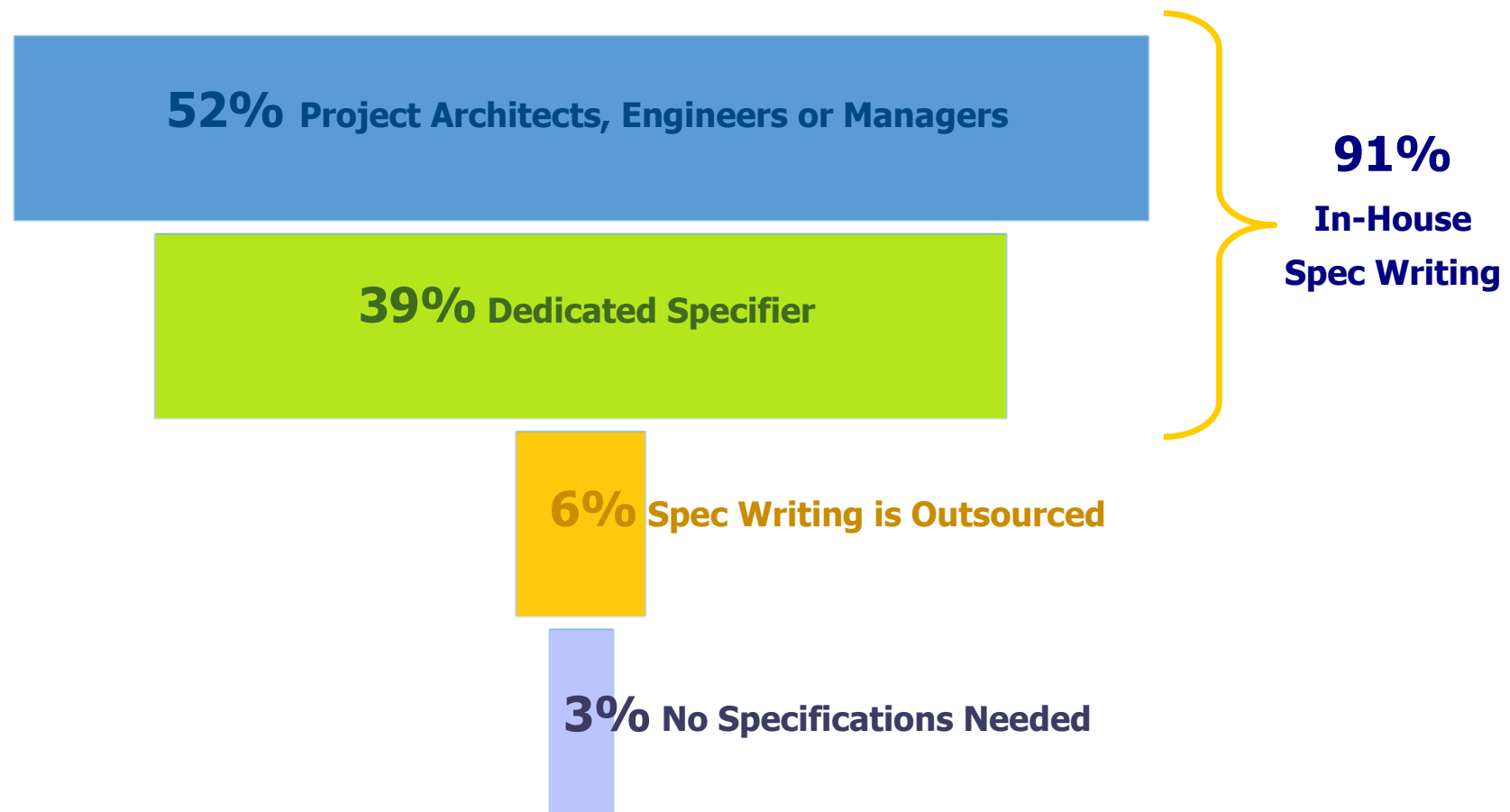
## FIRM SIZE

Similar to 2015's results, this year's respondents were from firm sizes divided by the following numbers of employees:



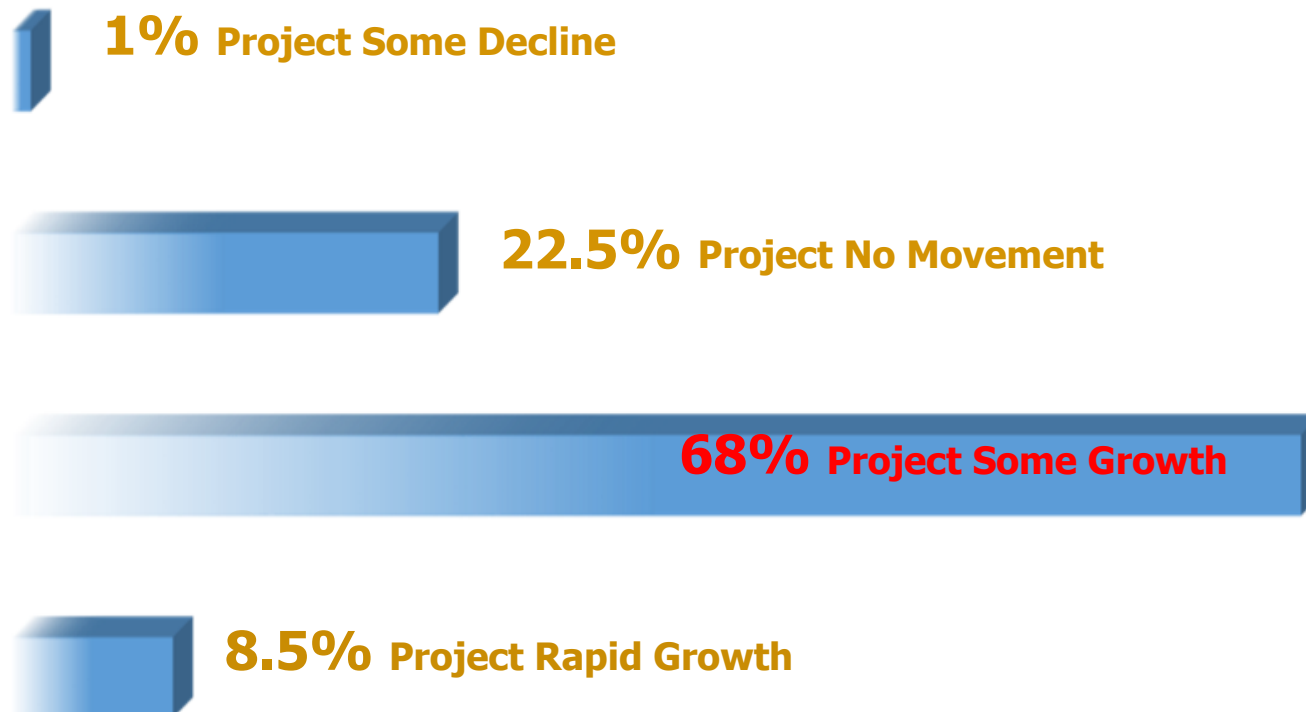
## SPECIFICATION WRITERS

Consistent with last years findings, the majority of respondents reported their firms are written in-house. This year's specific breakdown of who write project specifications is as follows:



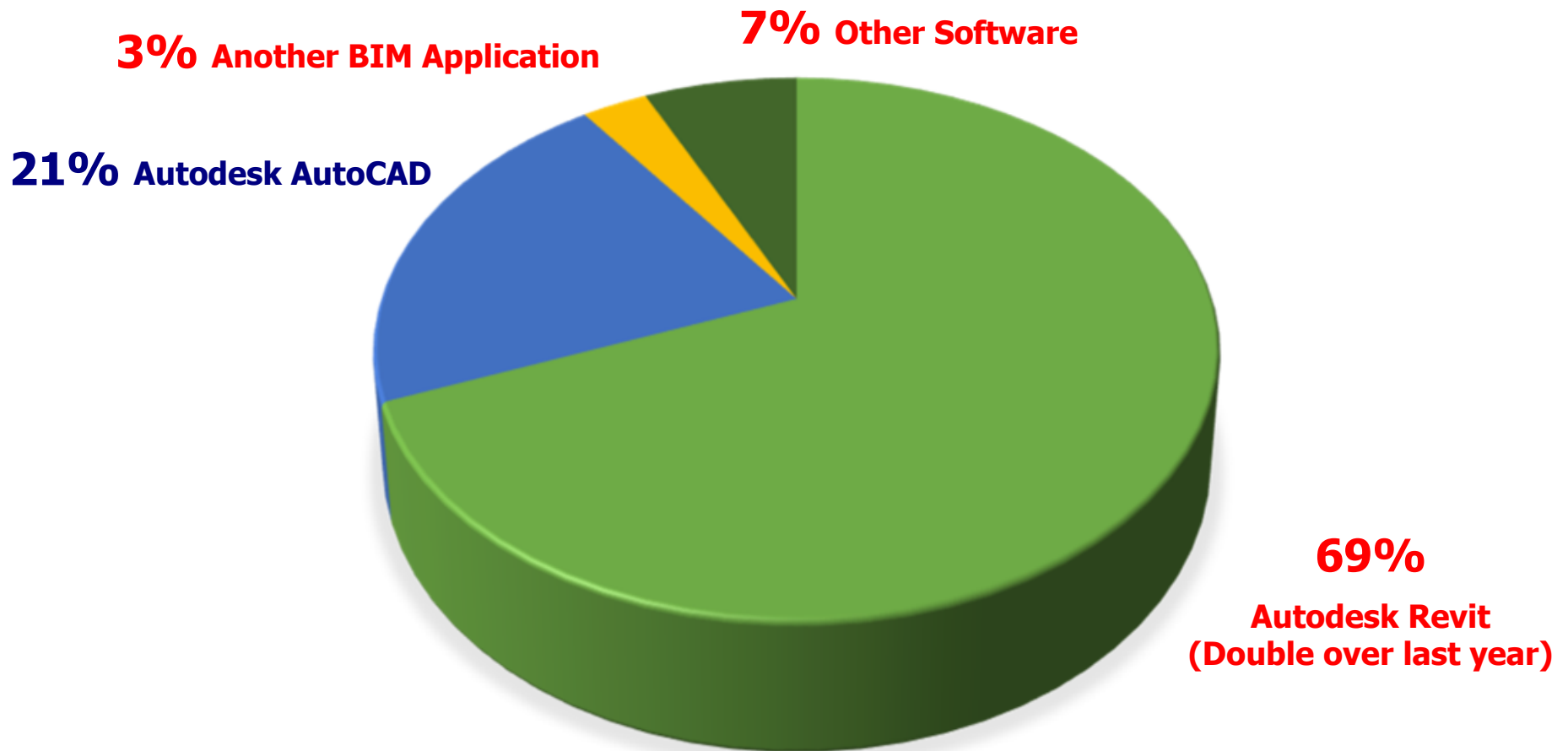
## FIRM GROWTH

While the majority of firms expect some growth, fortunately no firms reported a rapid decline. The following details the expected growth through the next 12 months for respondents and are similar to last years expectations for growth:



## TECHNOLOGY

The number of respondents using Revit more than doubled this year from 32% of respondents to 69%. Respondents using AutoCAD were similar but those designing in another BIM application dropped dramatically from 21% to 3%. As well, those designing in "other software" dropped from 20% in 2015 to only 7% in this year's survey. This year's breakdown is as follows:



**69%**  
**Autodesk Revit**  
**(Double over last year)**

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## SPECIFICATION GUIDES

Respondents shared using an average of 2 sources for their specification documents.

These included, in order of popularity:

- 1. Office Masters based on AIA MasterSpec**
- 2. AIA MasterSpec libraries**
- 3. The firm's custom Office Master**
- 4. Re-using previously written project manuals**
- 5. Government Masters**
- 6. Country specific masters**

With one exception, the popularity of the items on this list have not changed from last year. The exception: "Office masters based on AIA MasterSpec" swapped placed with "AIA MasterSpec libraries" as the number 1 selected specification guide used by respondents.

## SPEC WRITING IN THE DESIGN PROCESS

In this year's survey, respondents were asked a new question: "When does your firm begin to generate specifications for a project?" The responses break down as follows:





## CHALLENGES OF SPEC WRITING

**61%** of respondents agree

**Ensuring that building products are still current is a challenge.**

This is a slight increase from last year's results: **56%**.

**48%** of respondents agree

**Problems occur due to reusing old specs.**

This is similar to the **45%** of respondents from last year.

**48%** of respondents agree

**Specs are written last minute.**

**48%** of respondents agree

**Formatting of the final document is time consuming.**

This is an increase from **30%** of 2015's respondents.

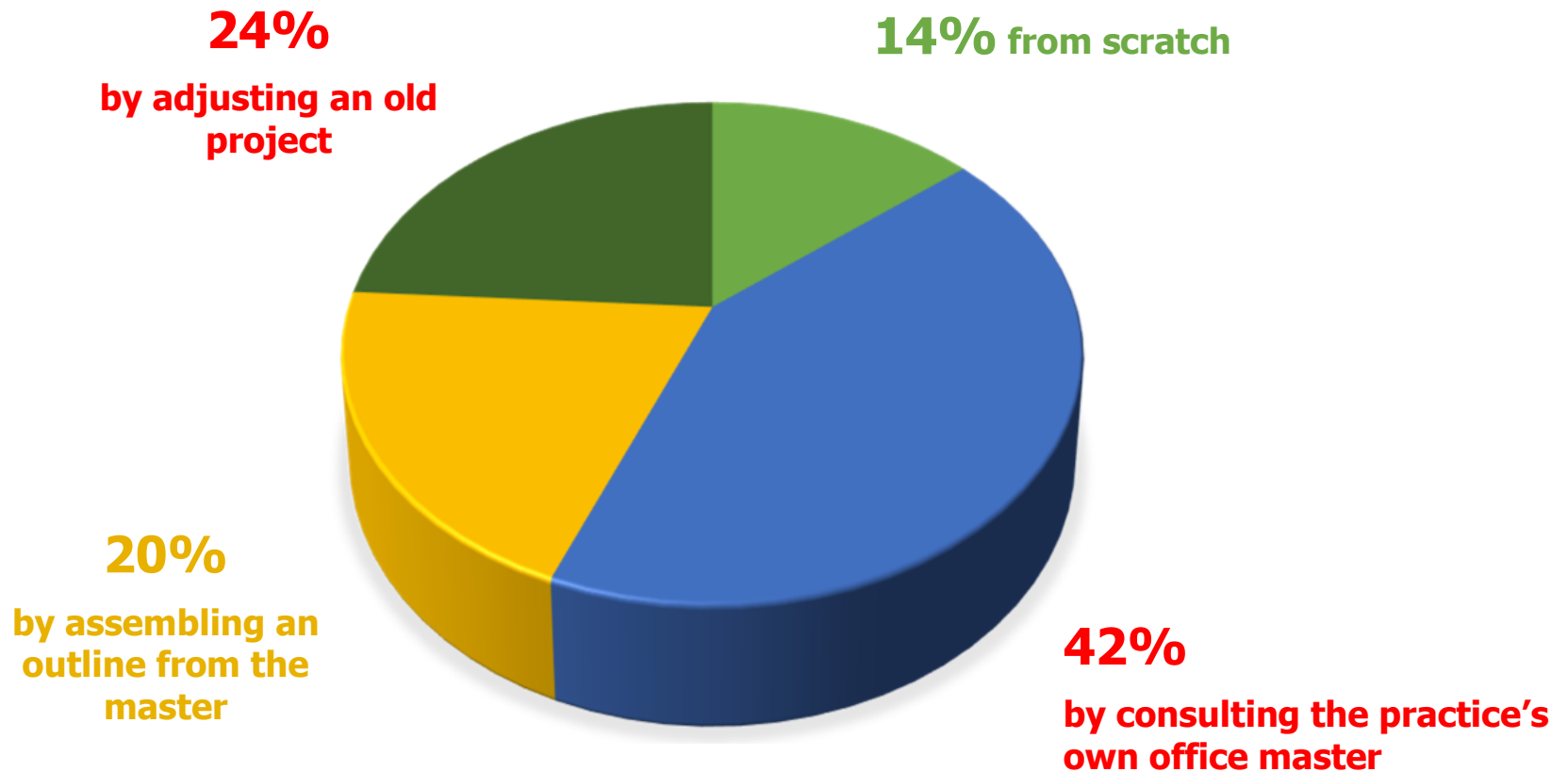
**44%** of respondents agree

**There is a lack of consistency in managing specs.**

This an increase to the **23%** of respondents in agreement last year.

## STARTING THE SPEC WRITING PROCESS

This year respondents reported that they normally start their specifying process...



## SUMMARY

- *More Architects surveyed this year with a trend towards larger firms generally lead by a growth through M&A strategy.*
- *A Small increase in the number of project architects writing specs verses a dedicated staff although the number staff members writing the specs remains the same, the number of projects have almost doubled. The conclusion is that more work is required by the same number resources resulting in increase in the errors and omissions caused by too short a time frame for developing concise and accurate specification,*
- *A substantial increase in the use of Revit is leading to better work flows and movement of project data eliminating duplication of effort and data transfer from one process or application to the next.*
- *Standardized office masters are increasing to address lack of consistency and to increase efficiencies.*
- *Current building product data and omissions due to using old specs is still the biggest concern yet 25% of those surveyed still use old specs as a starting point. This is a significant contrast to a large jump in the use of office masters.*

Thank you to all our colleagues in the A/E/C industry who helped bring this information together by participating in the survey.