

**Topic:**  
CAD/CAM Market  
Statistics

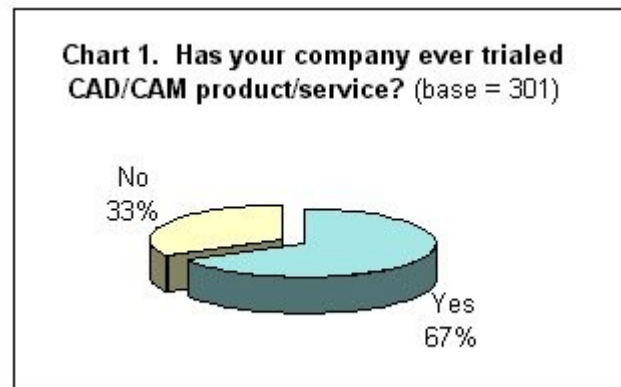
## How willing are European CAD/CAM Users to trial new products?

*iCAD is produced by Business Advantage, a B2B research, business development and marketing consulting practice operating in the global IT, Digital and Telecommunication sectors.*

Convincing CAD/CAM users that switching to an alternative application or new technology is worth the effort is a constant challenge to vendors and their supply chain. Getting potential customers to trial their products is a tried and trusted method of achieving this, ranging from Unigraphics' mass targeting in its Solid Edge Origin programme, to the increasingly frequent offers to download software over the Internet. But how willing are CAD/CAM users to trial new products, and what support or incentives do they need to do so? To find out, we interviewed 301 UK CAD/CAM users from a cross-section of sectors, as well as a selection of French and German users.

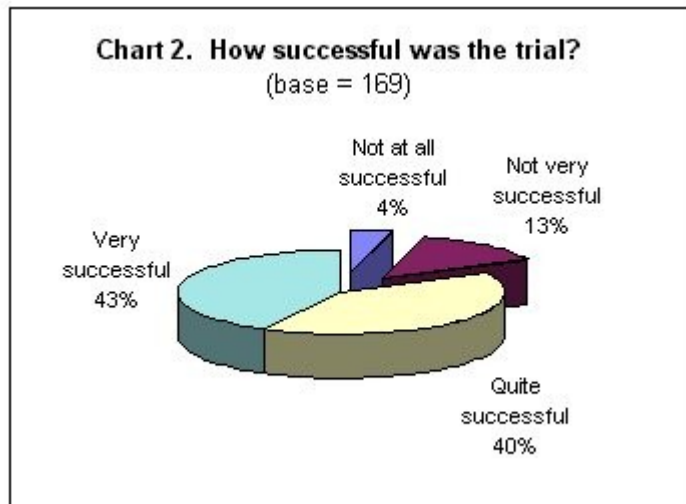
### Trying experience

**Our survey showed that two thirds of companies have trialed CAD/CAM products to assess their suitability for their business (Chart 1).** For the one third who have not, a lack of time and sufficient levels of satisfaction with current products were the main reasons given.



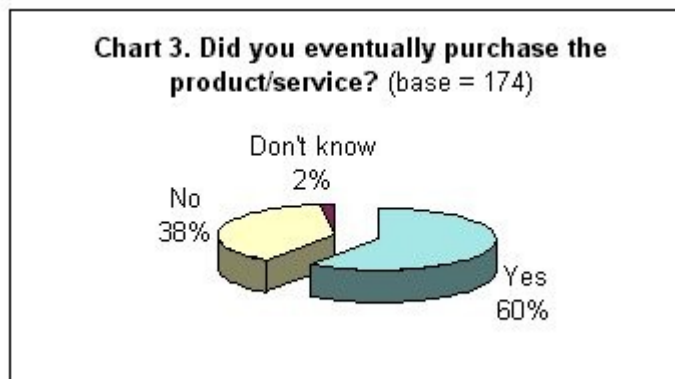
### Was it worth it?

**The vast majority of those who have trialed software, eight out of ten, rated their experience of trialing as either quite or very successful (Chart 2).** The remaining fifth found their trial to be either not very, or not at all successful. Not surprisingly, these eight out of ten CAD/CAM users consider that offering trials is a good method to encourage them to consider new/alternative products and technologies. For many, trialing products is an integral part of the purchasing decision making process. The CAD Manager at a large French mechanical engineering business said: *"It is essential to try before buying; software is expensive, and we have to be absolutely certain it meets our business needs before purchasing."*



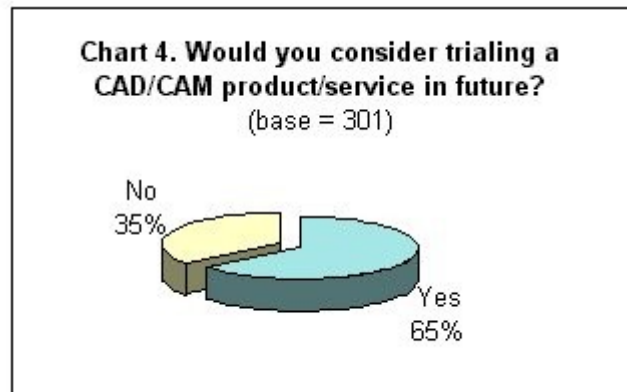
### The crucial question

What proportion of these trials resulted in a purchase? **An impressive 60% of companies bought the software they trialed** after testing it out, leaving 40% who decided against (*Chart 3*).



## The future

**Two thirds of CAD/CAM users would consider trialing in future**, leaving a third who say they will not entertain the idea (*Chart 4*). While some of those reluctant to trial products are those companies that have tried this unsuccessfully in the past, the majority are likely to represent a mindset that feels content with their current applications, feel no need to proactively seek new solutions and have yet to experience external pressures that can force a change to be made.



## Are you sure?

We asked the one third of CAD/CAM users who will not consider trialing whether they would be more likely to consider the offer of a trial if they were paid to do so. Only 10% said they would be much more likely to consider it, while two thirds said it would make no difference to their decision. However businesses with less than fifty staff showed significantly more willingness to trial for a financial incentive.

## You want paying too?

**Of the two thirds who will consider trialing in future, four out of five would not expect any kind of financial incentive to do so.** While very few would expect some form of payment (around 8%), 15% said they might do so depending on the nature of the trial. These respondents are likely to be considering the scenario of being approached by a supplier to test a new product, rather than being in the position of actively seeking one.

## How else can we persuade you?

What other methods could suppliers use to persuade potential customers to trial their products? Reassuringly for suppliers, **over a third of those in favour of trialing did not identify any extra incentives that might sway their decision.** Suggestions made ranged from the lone French architect who thought a free holiday might encourage him to trial a product, to the 10% who identified a personal demonstration as a persuasive factor.

## We need help!

We asked those who would consider trialing an alternative or new CAD/CAM product in the future what sort of support they would expect during the trial. Respondents suggested multiple services in some cases so the figures to the right contain some degree of overlap, but they still give a good indication that the vast majority of companies expect to have a high degree of support on-hand in return for their own investment in time.

### What sort of support do you expect during a trial?

No support expected	7%
24 hour support	3%
On-site support	10%
Total support overall	13%
Training	18%
Helpdesk	23%
Good technical support	55%
(BASE = 193)	

A German geographic/geological consulting company told us:

*"I'd expect every possible support if I trialed a product, and then some more! If the reseller wants me to buy, he has to work for it."*

## Comment

Chris Turner, Managing Director of Business Advantage, comments: *"Suppliers to any given market need to balance the degree of support that new users of their product need during a trial (also considering the support that users perceive they will need), with the investment in providing this support and the revenue derived from the product."*

*"Often the decision to trial a new product will be the culmination of research into the need for such a product, as few businesses will have the time or inclination to try out new solutions unless they have identified such a need. We know from our research that in the UK one in ten CAD/CAM user sites are planning to invest in additional CAD/CAM hardware, software or related services in the next 12 months (see [issue 1](#) of *iCAD*). Persuading the vast majority who are not considering a purchase will therefore require highly effective marketing to break through perceptions about difficulty of use, cost, or relevance to their business."*

*“If there is a surprising element of this research, it is that one third of CAD/CAM users said they will not consider the offer of a trial in future. Only 16% of our sample expressed the view that trialing is not a very good way of considering the benefits of new/alternative products. There would therefore appear to be around 15% of businesses that simply do not envisage changing their product development processes. Tough nuts to crack indeed, and ones that may only respond to the threat of extinction through pressure from competitors and/or customers, rather than to the overtures of suppliers.”*

What aspect of CAD/CAM users' attitudes and intentions would you like to see investigated in future issues of *iCAD*? E-mail [David Eaton](mailto:David.Eaton@business-advantage.com) with your suggestions.

Do you need to know more about the attitudes and activities of your potential customers and competitors in an overseas market? Business Advantage's multi-lingual research team can provide the solution. Visit our [market research services](#) page for more information, or contact David Eaton on +44 (0)1689 873636.

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