

Analysis of Qualitative Data from  
Supporters' Survey  
Arsenal Supporters' Trust

# Executive Summary

## Aim

KISS Copy was commissioned by the Arsenal Supporters' Trust to analyse the free text responses to a member's survey on manager Arsene Wenger. The aim was to provide an over-arching understanding of the content and sentiment of the comments, so that conclusions are easier to draw.

## Methodology

KISS Copy uses linguistic techniques to turn qualitative data (such as large quantities of free text) into quantitative data, so that the results can be understood and acted upon.

We use a variety of methods in order to achieve this.

- **Sentiment analysis:** Examining the sentiment attached to words used in conjunction with specific keywords.
- **Collocation:** Collocation refers to how words go together or form fixed relationships. Looking at unusually frequent relationships between words demonstrates a link between the two ideas.
- **Corpus linguistics:** We use corpus linguistic techniques such as keywording in order to uncover words that are used more regularly in one set of responses than one might expect.
- **Parts of speech:** Looking at parts of speech (nouns, verbs etc), which are used more prevalently than they are in general communication.

## Principal Findings

Of the 77% of respondents who did not want Arsene Wenger's contract to be renewed, the **main reasons** given included:

- The need for fresh ideas, or a new approach (mentioned in 11% of comments).
- A paucity of leadership and direction (7% of comments).
- A lack of ambition in the current outlook (6% of comments).

By far the most common reason given, however, was simply that the time had come. This sentiment was expressed in 34% of comments.

Despite the sizeable majority of respondents wanting Wenger to go, there was also a large amount of affection for the Arsenal manager.

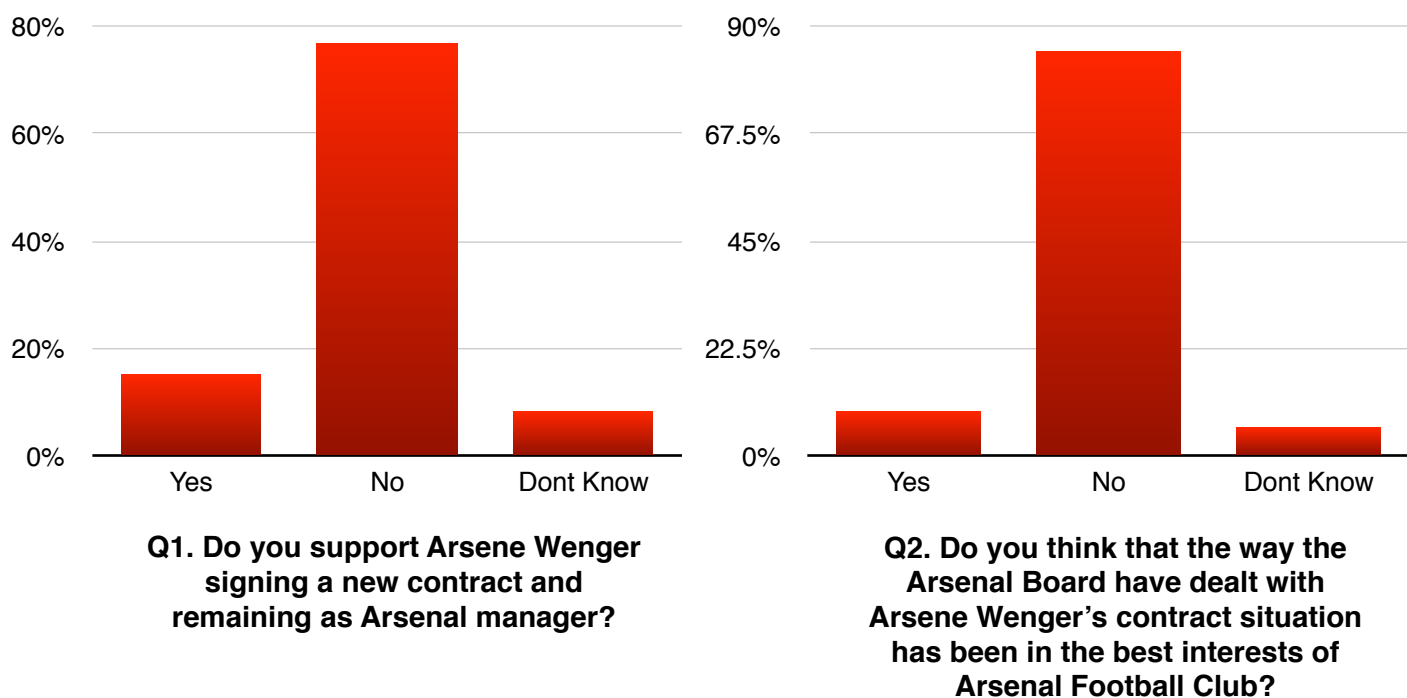
Over half of the respondents who wanted Wenger to step down spoke about his historical legacy as part of their comment. More than a quarter thanked him for his service to the club, and one in six expressed regret in their opinion.

# Background

77% of Arsenal fans polled do not want Arsene Wenger’s contract to be renewed. Just 15% thought that the contract should be renewed.

The Arsenal board’s handling of the situation is slightly less popular than the manager himself: 85% believe that this has been mismanaged.

**Fig 1 & 2: Responses to quantitative questions in the Arsenal Supporters’s Trust survey**



In the course of the survey, respondents were given the option to leave a comment on any aspect of the managerial situation at Arsenal. The response to this option was considerable:

- **81%** of respondents who answered “yes” to Q1 left a comment.
- **88%** of respondents who answered “no” to Q1 left a comment.

## Perception of Arsene Wenger from those who think he should leave

As part of the survey, respondents were encouraged to leave their own thoughts on the Wenger situation. The level of respect for Arsene Wenger, even by those who said he should leave, was notable, and very rare in a survey of this kind.

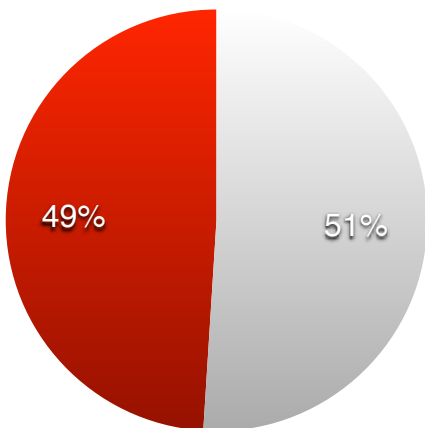
Over half of the respondents left a positive comment about Wenger's historical legacy as part of their comment, as in this example:

*“Arsene has been a fantastic manager and should be allowed to leave with dignity and the best wishes of the club and fans.”*

More than a quarter thanked him for his service to the club, and one in six expressed regret in their opinion.

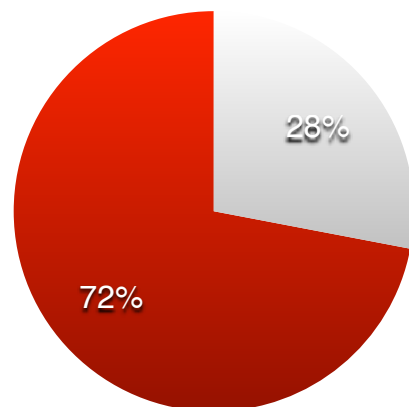
**Fig 3-5: Percentage of respondents who answered NO to Q1, whose comments demonstrated the following elements:**

- Positive Wenger comment
- No positive comment



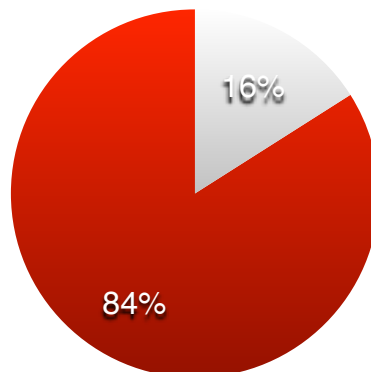
**Fig 3: Respondents who answered NO to Q1, and made a positive comment about Arsene Wenger**

- Thanked Wenger
- Did not thank



**Fig 4: Respondents who answered NO to Q1, and thanked Arsene Wenger**

- Expressed regret
- Did not expressed regret



**Fig 5: Respondents who answered NO to Q1, and expressed regret for this opinion**

## Words used most regularly alongside “Arsene Wenger”

We used collocation to examine the words that are used in conjunction with “Arsene” or “Wenger” more than one would expect, given the overall use of those words. This exercise shows again the level of respect afforded by fans, even the ones that think he should go.

The words most closely connected to Wenger include “great”, “support”, “love”, “respect” and “fantastic”.

**Fig 6: Word cloud showing the words collocating most often with the words “Arsene”, “Wenger” or “AW”**

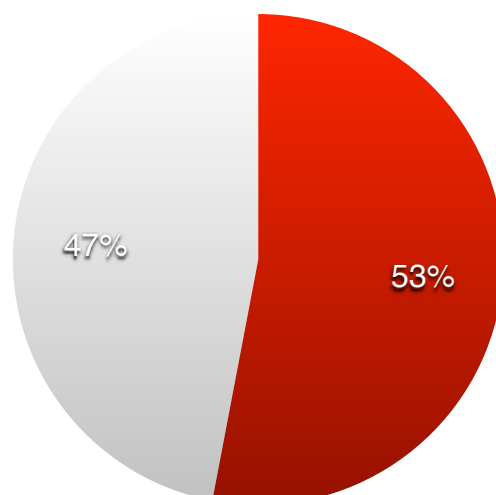


## Balanced - but torn

It is interesting to note the extremely frequent use of coordinating conjunctions designed to unite differing points of view (words like “but”, “however” and “nevertheless”). The majority of comments from those who want Wenger to step down are structured using this part of speech, implying that most fans wanted to make points in favour of more than one side of the argument.

**Fig 7: Percentage of respondents who answered NO to Q1, who used a coordinating conjunction to incorporate differing points of view.**

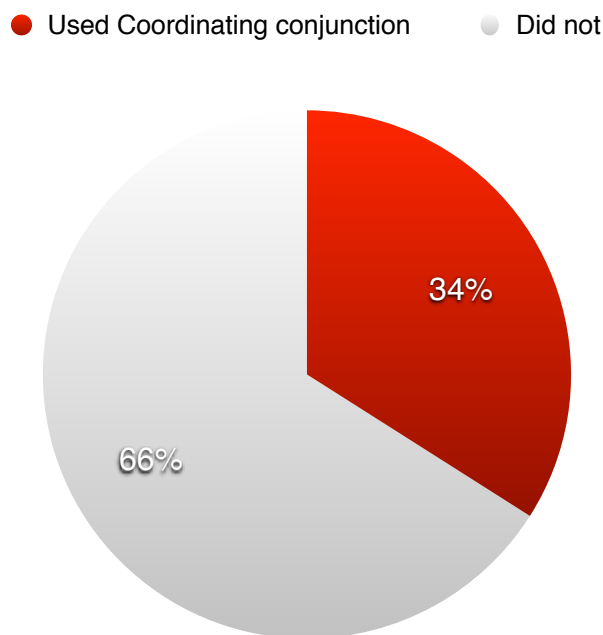
● Used coordinating conjunction    ● Did not



It is also important to note that the same was true for those who wanted Wenger to stay. Over a third of responses from those who answered “yes” to Q1 used a similar structure to their comment, as in this example:

*“I support Arsene but I think the board need to ensure that he still has the support of the players.”*

**Fig 8: Percentage of respondents who answered YES to Q1, who used a coordinating conjunction to incorporate differing points of view.**



We can therefore see an acknowledgement of current issues for those who want Wenger to stay, and an acknowledgement of Wenger’s past achievements from those who want him to go. This willingness to bring up both points of view is unusual in survey responses.

**Less than 3% of fans actually suggested that Arsene Wenger should be fired.** The rest talked mainly about stepping aside, retirement, or a succession plan.

However, there was a clear overall opinion that Wenger’s time was at an end.

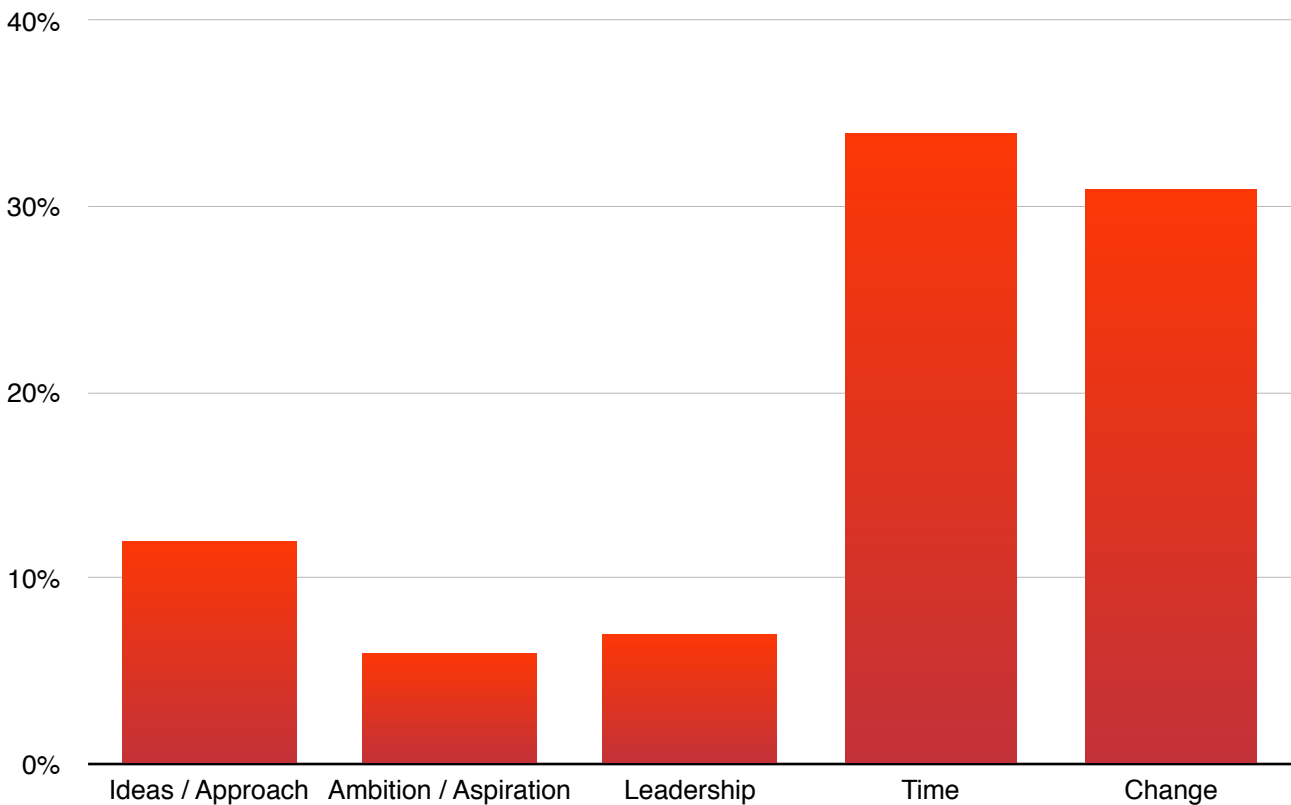
## Perceived problems with the current situation

There were four common reasons that respondents gave for their opinion that Wenger should step down. These were:

- The need for fresh ideas, or a new approach.
- A lack of ambition in the current outlook.
- A paucity of leadership and direction.
- By far the most common reason - simply that the time had come to make a change.

Over a third of respondents suggested that it was time for a change in their comment.

**Fig 9: Common reasons given by respondents who answered NO to Q1, by percentage of respondents who expressed each reason**

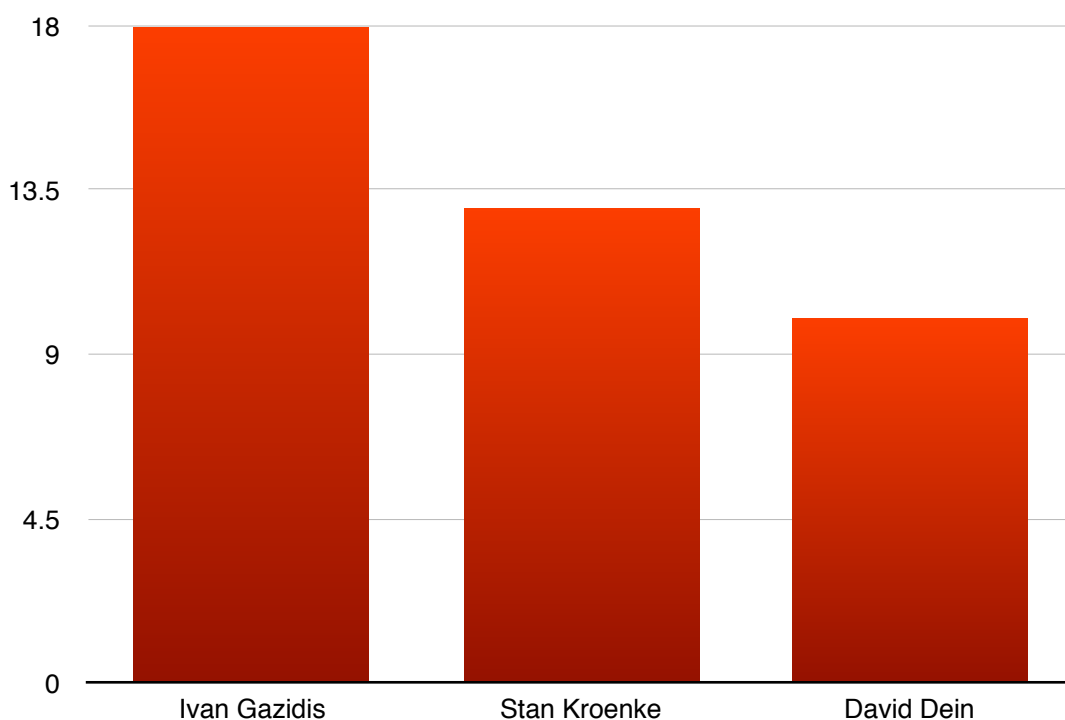


## Mentions of other people

Direct mentions of people in comments (other than Arsene Wenger) were led by Ivan Gazidis and Stan Kroenke, mentioned in 18 comments and 13 comments respectively by those who wanted Wenger removed. Interestingly, David Dein (or “a David Dein type figure”) was mentioned by 10 respondents.

Dein is mentioned positively in every case. Gazidis and Kroenke are mentioned negatively in every case.

**Fig 10: Other people mentioned by respondents, by number of comments which mentioned each one.**



For more information on the methodology used in this report, go to [kisscopy.co.uk/analysis](http://kisscopy.co.uk/analysis)



