People, productivity and the digital workplace

How mobile and collaboration services can boost productivity

Digital Employee Research 2018
Foreword

If I told you there was a straightforward way to boost productivity that didn’t involve lots of new technology, refitting offices or re-organising teams, wouldn’t you want to know more? Well, there is: mobile working and digital collaboration. Our research has found that all that employees need are the right collaboration tools to make them more productive.

Right now, lots of organisations are exploring the possibilities of digital transformation. CEOs want to give their people a more digital experience. It’s a priority in many boardrooms. And according to our research, employees are just as enthusiastic about a more digital, more productive way of working. They know what they need: simple improvements like better connectivity in the office, more joined up collaboration tools, and more efficient business apps and instant messaging. And these tools are relevant for everyone – not just the IT team. They’re important across the board, from HR to property services.

The biggest obstacle to better digital productivity is that IT decision makers are already dealing with a lot. They’re juggling the demands of new digital initiatives, while trying to keep existing systems and processes performing as usual. It’s up to us to make their lives easier with solutions that are simple to use. The good news is that a more digital employee experience isn’t that high-risk in terms of IT. And we’ve already got the mobile and collaboration technologies in place as cloud-based services.

In this paper, we’ll be sharing our research findings and talking about how we can give our employees what they need to be more productive. Although digital transformation may sound daunting, employees are ready to embrace it.

Andrew Small, vice president unified communications and contact centres, BT
Executive summary

Low productivity has long been a problem for government and industry. And boosting it is a priority. But we may be at a turning point – everyone from CEOs to IT decision makers and employees all recognise that mobile and collaboration technologies can help make work more productive. Our latest research confirms that investing in a more digital employee experience can really help boost productivity.

The IT department is certainly keen to make things happen, but needs help. IT decision makers are already managing lots of different things at once – old systems and new projects, moving things into the cloud, protecting the business against new cyber threats – all on top of making sure things run as normal every day. To deliver a more digital employee experience, they’ll need easy access to digital services, as well as help from people with integration expertise, HR teams and other workplace-related services.

The five building blocks to better employee productivity are simple:

1. a more connected, visual workspace
2. easier working and collaboration away from the office
3. corporate apps
4. instant messaging services
5. better devices.

Creating a better employee experience doesn’t need to be challenging or expensive. And the benefits will multiply as people start becoming more productive. It starts with putting people first and helping them make the most of collaboration and digital services. Plus there’s a role for an expert partner who can help the IT team, sharing the load and providing security and integration skills. It’s a great opportunity to explore what digital transformation can deliver.
All about productivity

Productivity matters. It matters to governments, to industry, to families – every single one of us. But at the same time, it has fallen massively across the developed economies since the financial crisis ten years ago.

Both the OECD\(^1\) and IMF\(^2\) warn that weak productivity growth could slow down the rise in global living standards. Others warn it could create social turmoil.\(^3\)

Better productivity, on the other hand, can make us all richer. More productive companies can charge customers lower prices, pay people higher salaries and give investors a better return. And better productivity even increases tax revenues for governments to spend on public services and infrastructure.

That’s why improving productivity is the goal of many digital transformation programmes.

In our 2017 CEO research,\(^4\) business leaders said a more digital experience for employees contributes to productivity, lowering costs and keeping staff.

In Britain, productivity doesn’t seem to be improving. The FT reports that the productivity of the average worker in the UK hasn’t risen for nearly a decade\(^5\). And research by Sage found that over a third of employees\(^6\) admitted that they’re productive for less than 30 hours per week. So boosting productivity is still a big boardroom priority.

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3. [https://www.ft.com/content/3e5b4822-1882-11e7-a53d-df09f373be87](https://www.ft.com/content/3e5b4822-1882-11e7-a53d-df09f373be87)
5. [https://www.ft.com/content/be06e4cc-4a98-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab](https://www.ft.com/content/be06e4cc-4a98-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab)
6. [In the USA, Canada and the UK](https://www.sagepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Why_your_workforce_is_not_working_Sage_People-Research_report.pdf)
Headline finding: a great digital employee experience can boost productivity

The message from our research couldn’t be stronger. If we invest in better digital experiences, we’ll be rewarded with a huge boost to productivity.

It’s a strong upward trend. Today, the majority (nine out of ten) of employees and IT decision makers agree that mobile tools and collaboration services are improving productivity in the workplace - up from six out of ten in 2015. Plus, employees want to be more productive. Eight out of ten say that if they were CEO, boosting productivity would be their priority (up from just 57 per cent in 2015).

Right now, only a quarter of business executives would describe their digital experience at work as ‘excellent’ (compared with 37 per cent of CEOs). But they understand where the gaps are, and what they need to do to work more productively.

9 out of 10 business executives say mobile and collaboration technology has improved productivity in their workplace.

Saying these technologies have improved productivity to a great extent
What’s the hold up?
The overstretched IT department

CEOs want more collaboration in the workplace. Employees want a more digital experience. Better employee productivity is a priority for IT decision makers. The tools are easy to get hold of and easy to put into place. So what’s taking so long? Well, it’s down to the IT departments and whether they can deliver.

Life is tough for IT decision makers (ITDMs) at the moment. They feel misunderstood and under-appreciated. Three quarters say that employees often don’t understand how difficult it is to make IT work effectively (an increase from 67 per cent two years ago). But it’s hardly surprising. IT departments everywhere are under huge pressure to design, pilot and deliver digital transformation projects right across the business. They’re expected to move to the cloud and develop more hybrid networks, keep legacy systems up to scratch, all while defending the organisation against a plague of cyber threats.

Delivering a more digital experience for employees piles on even more demands – like managing hundreds of mobile devices, keeping company data secure, finding the bandwidth for more video traffic, the list goes on. Add in the need to make it all work well together and we’re asking a lot of our IT departments.

IT decision makers have a lot to get done:
• update video conferencing and collaboration services
• develop mobile apps
• get everything to work more seamlessly together
• move to the cloud
• carry on with convergence (merging voice and data networks is still at the planning stage for six out of ten organisations).

If organisations are going to benefit from a better digital employee experience, then the IT team needs simpler solutions. The demands are so big that there’s no way they can do it all themselves. CIOs need expert partners who can help.

Keeping our company data secure has become a bigger priority over the last two years (ITDMs)

Security concerns are the biggest barrier to a better digital experience (ITDMs)

I worry about employees using public social media like Facebook or Twitter – they might leak confidential or sensitive information about the company (ITDMs)

have ever lost or had stolen a mobile, laptop, smartphone or tablet used for work
Productivity in the digital workplace: five building blocks

Business executives understand exactly which technologies and working practices help boost productivity. The research highlighted five building blocks: a workplace designed to support a digital work style, easier working and collaboration outside the office, business apps, instant messaging and the right devices.

1. A digital workspace with great connectivity and better screens

The office needs to evolve to support mobile working in the office and a more collaborative work style. Because in the same way that people now shop both online and in physical stores, they will work outside and in the office. Six in ten say they’re encouraged to work in the office.

Forget about building more meeting rooms. What people really want is better connectivity in the workplace. Nearly two thirds would like better wi-fi and half would like better mobile signal. Employees would also like smarter, more interactive screens so that, for example, they can push a video call or a document from their smartphone to a larger screen so they can share it with their team. Simple upgrades to connectivity and video screens will help employees make the most of what they’ve already got.

If you were the CEO of your organisation, what would you say are the most important priorities for enabling you and your colleagues to work effectively at the office?

- 63% - Better Wi-fi
- 51% - Better mobile phone signal
- 39% - Interactive smart collaboration screens
- 38% - Bigger desktop screens, and more of them
- 38% - Better transport links
- 35% - Recreation area
- 33% - Car parking
- 32% - Video rooms
- 32% - Innovative lighting and furniture
- 29% - Large TV screens with company targets and KPIs
- 28% - More meeting rooms

Business leaders need to consider:

- How do you give employees a consistent digital experience both in and out of the office?
- How can you make sure your corporate network can support the digital connectivity this work style needs?
- What’s your current experience of connecting people in meeting rooms with people in other locations?
2. Easier remote working and collaboration

It needs to be easier for people to do things on mobile devices. Only half of executives say their employer makes it easy for them to work away from the office. They can’t always get to the files they need and feel they’d be more efficient if they could access databases, work on documents and use internal processes while travelling instead of having to return to the office. This is really important – nearly nine in ten people say that if they were CIO, they’d make sure all new systems could be accessed on mobile devices.

How easy is it to use the following services on a mobile device (% saying very easy)

Collaboration needs rethinking beyond the immediate to other teams, departments and countries. Too much time is wasted trying to get hold of people. People want to use the latest collaboration tools but feel let down by colleagues. As many as half of respondents say other people don’t know how to use the tools they have. Employees believe the CIO is responsible for making sure people know how to use the digital services in place. It’s pretty obvious: you can only improve productivity when people use the tools you’ve given them.

91% say CIOs should make sure employees know how to use collaboration tools

1 in 2 employees have collaboration tools, but don’t know how to use them properly (Execs)

Business leaders need to consider:

- How confident are you your mobile networks can keep up with the demands of video and collaboration tools?
- What training programmes are in place to encourage employees to try new technology?
- How well used are your current collaboration tools? How many employees are actively using them each month? Do you know who isn’t using them?
3. Better business apps
Employees want business apps that are easy to use, and work like the apps they use in their personal lives. Email and web browsing aren’t enough. They want to be able to do everything they can do on their work computer on their smartphone instead.

At the moment, it’s difficult to work on the go. Only half of executives can access databases, files and documents via an app or check if a colleague is online or available to speak. Even when it comes to basic tasks like claiming expenses, only four in ten can do that on their mobile.

People want CIOs to prioritise developing apps and making sure they can use all new IT systems from their mobile device. And IT decision makers understand the demand for apps – it’s at number three on their to-do list.

The appetite for apps shows the ‘multiplier’ effect of mobile working – the more you do, the more you want to do. Teams start to rely on it. And from an employer’s point of view, the more people who embrace mobile and digital working, the bigger the impact on productivity.

Business leaders need to consider:
- Which business applications and services do your employees need as mobile versions?
- What’s the best way to roll out, manage and secure business apps?
- How do you balance increased productivity with increased data usage?

4. Instant messaging services
There’s a huge increase in people using instant messaging (IM) at work. Rather than emailing, people are starting to chat via WhatsApp (usage up 44 per cent in two years), Facebook Messenger, Skype and Twitter.

Employees like how they can see if someone is available from their IM status. They find IM an easier way to get in touch with team members in different countries and to approach senior managers. This trend seems to have stemmed from the popularity of messaging services in everyday life.

IM is rated as the second most productive collaboration technology

64% IM makes it easier to communicate across countries

62% IM makes it easier to approach CEOs and senior directors

Business leaders need to consider:
- How can you merge separate messaging services into a single conversation?
- How easily can you message people outside your organisation?
- How easy is it to track and review previous instant messages?
- Are you able to make voice calls to people outside of your organisation from your IM solution?

I’d be more efficient if I could update databases and work on documents while I’m travelling, rather than having to do it at the office (Execs)

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>70%</td>
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If you were (are) the CIO of your organisation, what would your priorities be?

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<th>Priority</th>
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<tr>
<td>Building apps to make it easier for employees to work securely outside the office</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making sure all new IT systems are easy to access from mobile devices</td>
<td>86%</td>
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5. The best devices
When it comes to devices, good enough isn’t really good enough anymore. If you’re serious about giving employees a great digital experience, it’s time to invest in better technology.

Seven out of ten business executives say their personal smartphone is better than the one they are given for work. And with nearly nine in ten executives saying the CIO should update the organisation’s mobile devices, there’s definitely a demand for better phones, tablets and laptops.

For some employees, bring your own device (BYOD) is an option. Lots of organisations have embraced BYOD. They’ve put new strategies in place that are designed to help manage lots of different mobile devices and the cost and security issues that come with them.

Regardless, executives will be pleased to know IT decision makers plan to invest in better devices – in fact, it’s number two on their list of priorities.

Beyond the mobile device, better video devices for video conferencing or group working will also add value to the digital employee experience. More than two thirds of executives would like to be able to use video calling from their desktop and video conferencing from a meeting room.

Business leaders need to consider:
• How do you physically manage hundreds or thousands of devices wherever they are?
• How can you get video devices from different vendors and different platforms to work together?
• How can you use rich collaboration devices to improve the input and output of meetings?
Five ways to kick-start a better digital experience for employees

A better employee experience doesn’t require massive investment or upheaval. Essentially, it’s all about putting people first and helping them make the most of the tools and services you already have.

It’s certainly not a job for the IT department alone.

To deliver a phenomenal user experience, HR, property services and other internal teams need to be involved, too – from figuring out what’s needed, to follow up communications and training.

1. A first step that involves everyone is to help the IT team understand what users want. A third of executives say that the IT department doesn’t regularly ask users how technology can help improve their productivity. One approach is to use ‘personas’ (because it’s too big a challenge to personalise the user experience for every employee).

When you group employees with the same needs and work styles together, it’s easier to understand which collaboration tools and mobility services people need to do their job.

2. Make the most of the cloud – it’s the future of collaboration. Half of IT decision makers already use cloud collaboration technology and 65 per cent have plans to update their IM, video and audio conferencing services. Cloud-based services make it easier to manage users, keep software and features up to date and maintain the right level of cyber defences. No wonder cloud services are IT decision makers’ number one priority for investment.

3. Productivity will only improve when people use the services as part of their everyday work life. So an easy win is to make sure every employee can use the mobile tools and collaboration services they already have. Training will help encourage employees to use the tools and build them into their work lives. And the more people using mobile and collaboration services, the greater the potential boost in productivity.

4. For IT decision makers, security concerns are the biggest barrier to providing a better digital experience for employees, but it seems that employees don’t appreciate the security measures already in place. It’s essential to secure everything – devices, data, apps, network access – but also to educate teams to give them the confidence to use digital tools and services. When employees understand how well mobile and collaboration services are protected, they’ll be more willing to use them.

5. IT departments are juggling too many demands on their time and budget. That’s why finding the right partner can help make the most of their resources and fill in any gaps in skills.

A technology partner with experience in mobile working and employee collaboration can help with lots of different things, from the convergence of legacy voice and data platforms to increasing bandwidth for video services video, and the introduction of new unified services.

Plus, a global technology partner will be able to make life easier for the IT team with more flexible commercial arrangements like pay as you use or long term contracts and a single global price.

Cloud systems are the number one priority for ITDMs who are investing in collaboration and mobile technology is cloud systems

One day cloud will be the usual way to deliver collaboration services

54%

ITDMs 2015

84%

ITDMs 2017

One day cloud will be the usual way to deliver collaboration services
The opportunities for digital transformation can seem overwhelming. Giving employees a great mobile and collaborative experience is a great place to start, with an immediate boost to productivity and a positive impact on staff motivation.

To get there, it’s up to us to make life simpler for the IT team – the people charged with creating and delivering the digital experience. They need more insight into what people want, and cloud solutions, security tools and strategies – as well as more commercial flexibility and support from their global technology partners.

An amazing user experience only comes when we put people – not technology – first. Employees just want the same ease, convenience and flexibility at work that they have in their personal lives.

The easier and more joined up an experience is, the more people will take to this way of working. It’s not a complicated recipe – it’s just about connectivity everywhere, communication/collaboration services, business apps, better devices and some clever integration.

There’s a snowball effect when people really get to grips with mobile and collaboration services in the workplace. The more they do, the more they want to do. And the more they do, the greater the benefit to the business. We know it’s what employees want, so employers should take advantage of the opportunity now. Together, we can use a great digital employee experience to lay the foundations for a productive future.

Last word

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To get there, it’s up to us to make life simpler for the IT team – the people charged with creating and delivering the digital experience. They need more insight into what people want, and cloud solutions, security tools and strategies – as well as more commercial flexibility and support from their global technology partners.

An amazing user experience only comes when we put people – not technology – first. Employees just want the same ease, convenience and flexibility at work that they have in their personal lives.
BT – your partner for the digital transformation journey

The most important technologies for a great digital employee experience - cloud, mobile and secure collaboration services - are well established and available in even remote locations. But old technologies and a fixed infrastructure can make it hard to introduce on-demand, seamless digital services that meet today’s employee expectations.

In our experience, the best results come from putting people first. We can draw on our broad range of technologies, management and service capabilities to develop the right digital experience for every employee, and follow up with an adoption plan to get everyone up to speed.

We were named by Gartner Inc. as a Leader in the September 2017 Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS), Worldwide7. And we’ve kept our Leader position for the second year running.

We can help IT decision makers connect easily and securely to the collaboration applications, data and third party cloud providers they need globally, including Microsoft and Cisco. And we can use all the knowledge and expertise we’ve gained from defending our own network and corporate assets to help you secure your digital employee services.

Mobile working and collaboration technologies are relatively easy to deliver. But where there’s existing infrastructure and old systems it can be a challenge that’s difficult to solve overnight. That’s why we’ve drawn up a roadmap to help you with your transformation journey.

So whether you’re taking small steps or a giant leap, if a more productive employee experience is one of your digital transformation goals, you’ll find we’re the right partner for the road.

7. For this report, Gartner evaluated 15 companies against seven criteria related to their ability to execute, and across eight criteria for their completeness of vision.
Methodology

Research company Davies Hickman Partners interviewed 1,100 business executives and 600 IT decision makers across 11 global markets and nine industry sectors in October and November 2017. Forty one per cent of respondents were aged under 35 and 59 per cent were 35 and over.

This research builds on two earlier studies, The Mobile Multiplier and Digital Dislocation, carried out in 2015 and 2016.

The research, data and views in this report have been prepared in good faith but BT and Davies Hickman Partners do not accept responsibility for any actions or otherwise taken by those acting on the recommendations, advice and content contained in this report.

1,100 business executives and 600 IT decision makers across 11 global markets

Australia
France
Germany
Hong Kong
India
Ireland
Singapore
South Africa
Spain
UK
USA

Sectors
Automotive & Manufacturing 7%
Energy & Resources 5%
Global banking & Financial markets 14%
Healthcare & Life sciences 11%
Media & Business services 6%
Public / Government 14%
Retail, Consumer Goods 19%
Technology 17%
Travel, Transport & Logistics 8%

Gender - global
Male
Female

Main or joint IT decision maker
49% - Main IT Decision Maker
51% - Joint IT Decision Maker

Age
Under 35
Over 35

Employee numbers
36% - 20,000+
20% - 5,000-19,999
20% - 2,000-4,999
24% - 1,000-1,999