
THE MODERN WORKFORCE INSIGHT REPORT

Orchestrated by CDW



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Volume 02

**THE MODERN WORKFORCE
INSIGHT REPORT**

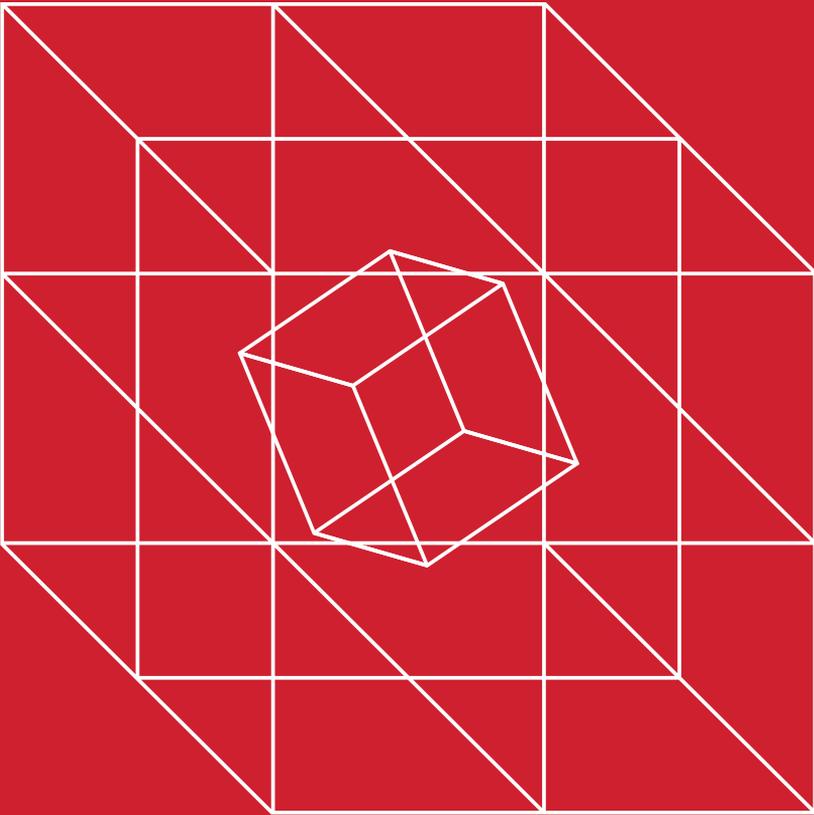
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Volume 02

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BUILDING A MODERN WORKFORCE



How we work and where we work has fundamentally changed. Today, the office isn't just an actual place – instead, it's wherever work happens. At home, from the hotel, on a plane, or anywhere in between – newer technologies have the power to connect us easily and seamlessly from virtually anywhere. It's creating the modern workforce.

The Modern Workforce Insight Report explores how the workforce is evolving. How it's being shaped by both technology and culture, how companies are adapting and some of the challenges – and opportunities – that it presents. We'll shine a light on how the current workspace is equipped to support that workforce and where it's lacking.

The Transforming Workforce

If there is one common denominator that runs through the technology currently shaping the modern workforce, it's user centricity. From collaboration and mobile devices to VDI, new technologies are giving end users the tools and information they need to be more productive both inside and outside of the office. And while maintaining security and control remains critical for IT, with the right planning and proper implementation, organizations can help workers get work done and be more productive in the process, no matter where they are.

Today, the only thing that's constant is change. In fact, the workspace as we currently know it today looks much different than it did just five years ago. And the next workspace iteration is already underway. Here are a few factors shaping it:

1. Rapidly Expanding Connectivity Innovations

Wireless connectivity such as LTE gives workers continuous access to the internet. As a result, they can work from the office, the coffee shop or at home – creating a virtual office space that offers the same applications and tools they need to be successful.

2. Cloud-Based Voice and Videoconferencing

Improved and expanded connectivity has also taken voice and videoconferencing to the cloud, freeing up on-premises IT resources.

3. Affordable Technology

The pace of innovation has driven the cost of workspace technology down while increasing quality. Today, IT has easy access to a wide variety of core technologies.

4. A World of Devices

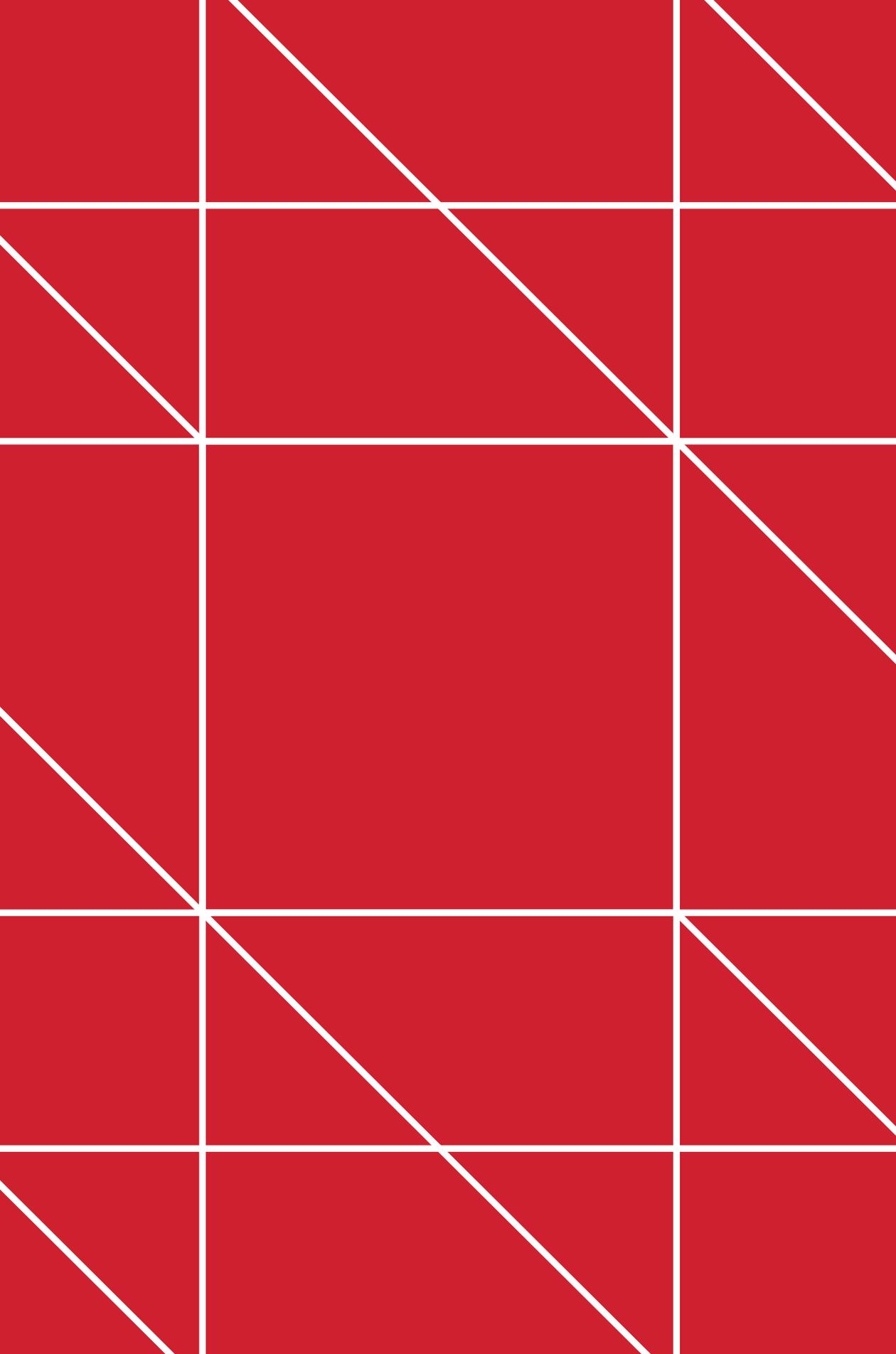
The affordability of and accessibility to a wide variety of devices has given rise to Device as a Service. Now organizations can work with a partner to preconfigure and deploy technology en masse, giving workers immediate access to tools and technology they need while freeing up valuable time and resources.

Keeping Pace with Change

Successfully building and deploying a modern workforce remains a challenge for many organizations. Navigating internal politics, breaking down siloed organizational structures, and finding the right mix of solutions that combine security and flexibility can mitigate the advantages and possibilities that a truly modern workforce offers. Becoming more mobile, agile and productive takes an all-hands, and hands-on, effort that brings organizational goals, user-centric solutions and security together to improve the way users work.

Working directly with IDG, we interviewed hundreds of IT decision-makers and thought leaders across the technology landscape to gain unprecedented insight into the modern workforce. We hope that this research, along with perspectives from industry-leading companies, will help your organization build a strong strategy to maximize productivity and efficiency as you continue to build a modern workforce.

Nathan Coutinho
Director, Digital Workspace Solutions,
CDW



Perspectives

Implementing and unleashing the full power of a connected, dispersed, modern workforce can help organizations turn technology into a competitive advantage. With so many to choose from, and a wide-range of possible benefits that can impact the way workers communicate and collaborate, IT leaders and executives are right to expect more.

But driving value in a way that improves organizational agility, increases productivity, aids decision-making, and sparks idea generation means adopting a holistic strategy that blends new technology into existing systems and empowering adoption. We asked some of the best and brightest minds in the industry to identify some of the biggest trends impacting the modern workforce, and we included their expert perspectives here.

ANYTIME, ANYPLACE: HOW THE MODERN MEETING IS CREATING BETTER CONNECTIONS

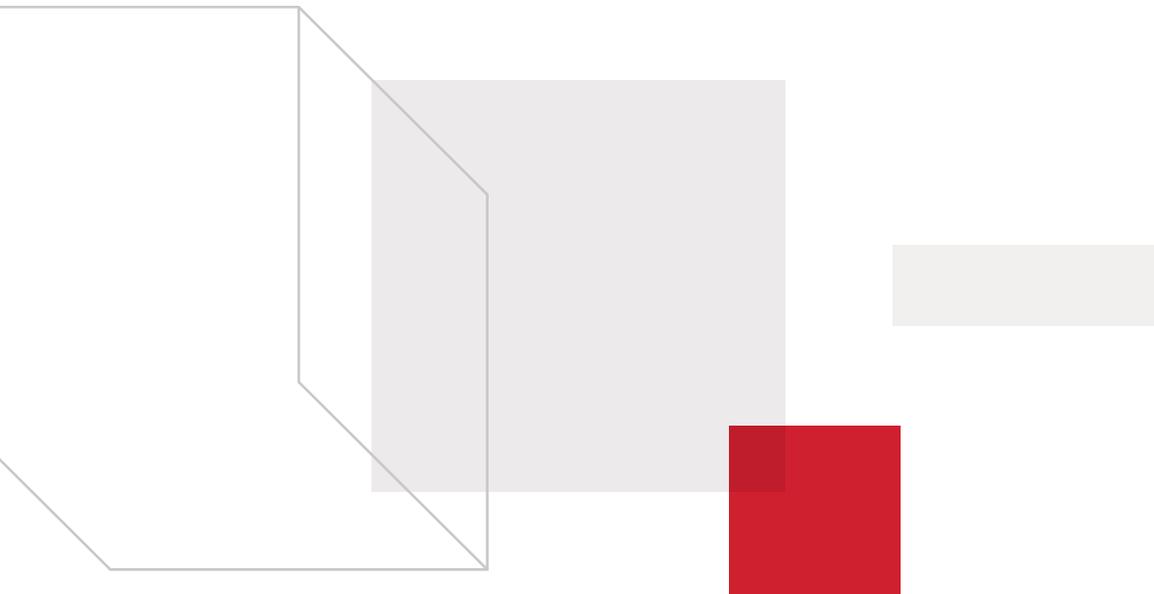
by *Nathan Coutinho*
Director, Digital Workspace Solutions,
CDW

An increasingly mobile workforce has led to a significant change in the way organizations meet. It has given rise to the modern meeting. And with distributed workers across the world or just across town, IT leaders have started to recognize the impact of the modern meeting by integrating videoconferencing capabilities as a key component of their mobile strategy.

Although videoconferencing might have evolved out of necessity, it has become much more than a stop-gap solution. One of the greatest paradoxes

of modern meetings is that despite being more dispersed than ever, teams can actually be more connected. This move toward video collaboration is only going to increase. The modern meeting is also becoming more dynamic. Videoconferencing allows users to include participants with mobile phones, tablets and desktop browsers with a high-quality output, and it lets them present, share and interact with a variety of content in real time.





A number of physical, cultural and economic factors led to the rise of the modern meeting:

Meetings Can Happen Anywhere

Teams aren't just spread across disparate offices today. How they work is fundamentally different. Whether it's from home or a coffee shop, videoconferencing technology means that meetings can virtually happen anywhere. At CDW, every call we make is a video call. It helps our meetings feel more personal, and we feel more connected to our teams.

Technology Is More Accessible

Today it's easier than ever to buy high-end equipment such as cameras, and devices come with incredible cameras built right in. Plus, LTE is giving people everywhere the ability to connect anywhere.

Technology Is Better

The modern meeting is supported by technology that's simpler and more dynamic than ever. Users can share information, pause and start meetings, record, and so much more with solutions that make videoconferencing better, in many ways, than face-to-face interactions.



Work Life Is Fundamentally Different

When we talk about work today, we think less about the office and more about what is being produced. Videoconferencing technology is giving workers the increased ability to produce quality results regardless of surroundings and at a moment's notice.

Turning the Virtual into Reality

To get the most out of the modern meeting, organizations need to successfully integrate and adopt solutions that work well both inside and outside of the office. But integration remains only one of several hurdles to navigate. Organizations must also guide teams through the adoption process with training that dives much deeper than an email or tutorial video. Often, we assume that workers are more tech savvy than they are. Making sure they understand the technology is a critical step.

Additionally, BYOD has introduced a new set of challenges for organizations. Any videoconferencing solution has to work across all devices – even if half of an organization works on Apple, and the other half on PCs. Giving every team member an even playing field, regardless of device or platform, is essential.

The modern meeting has the potential to support the changing way that organizations and workers collaborate. But that's just the start. They're giving workers a greater sense of connection and freedom.

Five Steps to Hosting the Modern Meeting:



1. Survey end users.
Understand the issues they are having and pay attention to the data.



2. Ensure that every endpoint is supported.



3. Choose the right technology based on how your organization works.



4. Test, test and test again. Conduct pilot groups with end users.



5. Deploy your new solution and ensure that it is being adopted throughout your organization.

A PRESCRIPTION FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS

by *Jeremy Edward*
Cloud Solutions Services,
CDW

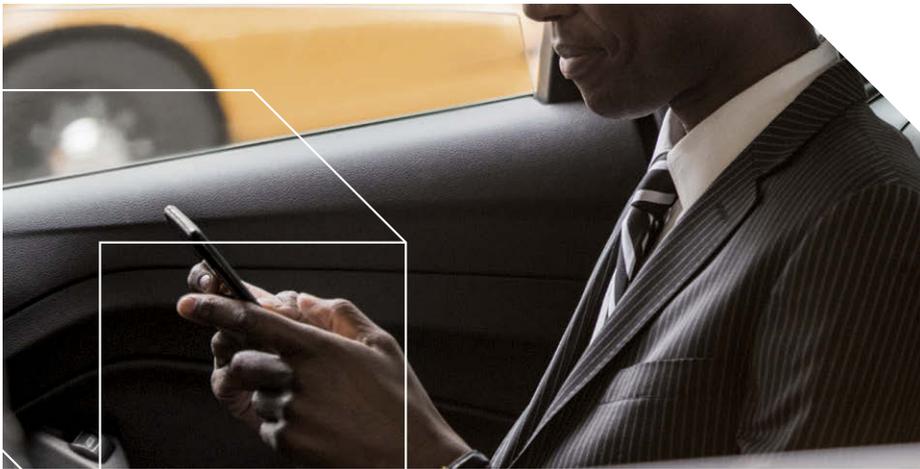
The changing dynamics of IT have given rise to subscription-based “as a service” technology platforms. These platforms offer organizations the flexibility and productivity they need to be successful by improving efficiency without tying up valuable human and capital resources. Additionally, Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms are increasing productivity, empowering mobile workforces and providing them with the tools they need anywhere and at any time. What’s more, IT departments are freed from the responsibility to maintain, support and update applications, allowing their staff to better serve strategic initiatives and organizational goals.

With SaaS, the ability to work more efficiently and stay secure from virtually anywhere is changing the way organizations operate. Traditional barriers are shifting. Instead of long contracts and fixed solutions, organizations today aren’t locked down. They don’t need to wait for their software contracts to expire before pivoting to another product or application, forcing providers to continually deliver superior solutions. It’s a boon for organizations that suddenly have a wealth of best-in-class software options to choose from. With both quality and quantity readily available, training and enabling usage



among employees is more critical, making adoption the new ROI.

While subscription-based models make life simpler for organizations, they aren't always simple to build and implement. This is not just an IT project – organizations, as a whole, need to understand business goals and change legacy behavior. Success means navigating both organizational as well as technological challenges.



Organizational Challenges

From convincing leaders who are reluctant to change, to investing money and time into training employees on a new set of applications, incorporating a subscription-based model into your current environment often takes a well-grounded business case. Any new solutions you choose to implement will also have to work within your current business model and complement your existing technology. And don't forget to account for industry-based compliance standards that might affect potential solutions.

IT Challenges

Incorporating a subscription-based model shouldn't happen in a vacuum. It requires a broad view that takes into account finding the right combination of technology and applications that work well together – including the role any current intellectual property will play. Oversubscription is a fairly common pitfall, something we work closely with ZYLO, a leading SaaS optimization partner, to help solve for. We have found that employees or departments often will buy SaaS to solve similar organizational challenges with different solutions. During a SaaS audit, we frequently find multiple redundant or unused subscriptions. Choose products carefully, and then consolidate and optimize.

To effectively integrate a subscription-based model into your organization, consider following a few critical steps:

- 1. Understand what you currently have and what you need to address existing challenges.**
- 2. Ensure that compliance standards are set.**
- 3. Set benchmark standards to help measure success.**
- 4. Create rollout plans: one for the superuser and one for the general public.**
- 5. Manage and right-size your solutions on a continual basis.**



At CDW, when we work with clients, we always start by understanding their business goals and technical needs. We recommend adopting the same approach within your organization. Take a look at your company's landscape. What are your current challenges? And how can software help you meet those challenges? The cloud can help you achieve success today and well into the future, but it's contingent upon doing your homework, investing time and energy up front, and finding and working with partners you can trust. If your organization can effectively harness the power of the cloud, you'll move faster and be equipped to take on any challenge in the future. Subscription-based models can do a lot of the heavy lifting for you.

COLLABORATION, THE NEW INNOVATION

*by Sean O'Connor
Director, Channels Systems Engineering,
Americas, Polycom*

In today's hypercompetitive landscape, it's easy to lose focus on what's driving innovation: collaboration. People communicating, sharing information and exchanging ideas faster than the competition isn't just good business – it's a matter of survival. More than ever, collaboration is the lifeblood of time to market. If organizations don't use collaboration to innovate, they'll be left in the dust.

This ability to think, adapt and respond at a moment's notice requires giving workers the tools they need, when and where they need them, to deliver on

the increasingly demanding market and organizational expectations.

I've seen this firsthand. Being born and raised in the land of startups, I used to work with organizations with employees spread across not only the U.S., but other parts of the world as well. We couldn't get work done without the ability to work seamlessly across offices. It took a combination of voice and video technologies as well as content sharing. Slack and Box became revelations, making it easier than ever to connect across locations. And I quickly learned that instant collaboration from anywhere



and everywhere was one of our biggest differentiators when it came to success.

Respond, Adapt and Connect

As time to market keeps accelerating, organizations need to make decisions faster and with more precision. Collaboration makes it happen. At Polycom, all our customers recognize this, regardless of vertical. They're relying on voice, content distribution and sharing, and video to get the job done, and these tools are having a big impact on their organizations.

“Collaboration is the lifeblood of time to market. If organizations don’t use collaboration to innovate, they’ll be left in the dust.”

Higher-quality technology is fueling that impact. Collaboration technology today extends beyond typical, expected business benefits and influences society

as a whole. It's letting us do things that we could have never imagined just a few years ago. For example, doctors can diagnose patients over video at a moment's notice. Collaboration like this redefines what's possible.

But perhaps more than anything, collaboration technology helps workers feel like they're part of the team. I often travel for work, and I'm responsible for working with several different offices at once. With collaboration technology, I feel more connected than ever. I know most of my colleagues better because I'm connecting with them daily, regardless of location. And when they finally see me in person, the only thing that shocks them is my height.

The need for collaboration and the technology supporting it has given rise to “as a service” consumption models – a boon for organizations everywhere because it provides the convenience, affordability and efficiency to constantly adjust the applications and tools they need to take on shifting demands.

Collaboration Still Starts with People

We've grown to expect too much out of technology. We want it to miraculously solve all our problems with little-to-no effort on our part. This is a huge red flag when it comes to building and implementing a solution because organizations tend to forget that people remain at the heart of collaboration.

Workers – actual people – are the ones sharing information, exchanging ideas and talking with each other. To be successful, organizations need to better understand their employees' pain points and build technologies that adequately address them.

Take architectural firms, for example. Their true need is quick information sharing. With the right collaboration solution, a process that used to take hours can happen in minutes. Organizations must tailor technology.

Once the people component is solved, organizations still must address executive buy-in. It's critical to involve leadership at the start. Make a strong business case that demonstrates how collaboration makes the organization faster, stronger and more adaptable with use-case scenarios. Luckily, innovation trends are forcing software costs down. The tools available today can be had at price points that more organizations can afford.

With a people-centric approach and a well-founded business plan, organizations will be better poised to implement a collaboration solution that helps them keep pace with the breakneck speed of innovation and seize more opportunities at a moment's notice.



**Developing a Plan for Collaboration
In order to successfully implement collaboration technologies, organizations need to take a multiphase approach.**

1. Understand Your Culture

Discover the specific ways people like to work and their biggest pain points.

2. Identify Simple Fixes

Identify simple ways that technology can help workers be more productive.

3. Add Technology, but Don't Lock Yourself In

Collaboration solutions should be fluid. Don't trap your organization into a single solution. Instead, look for flexibility by taking a three-to-five-year outlook as an end user.



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR A MOBILE WORKFORCE

by Preston Harris
Client Mobility Manager,
CDW

Nothing ever stays the same – if there were ever a mantra to describe how people communicate, that one certainly fits. Where there was once just a conference room or even just a telephone, thanks to advances in technology, coworkers have a plethora of tools at their fingertips, taking the collaborative process from a local to a global initiative.

A Technological and Cultural Evolution

Advances in technology continue to impress and empower organizations and their workforces in new ways. More powerful mobile devices, improved screen sizes and resolutions, better

network connectivity, and the ability to execute more workflows seamlessly are resulting in dramatic improvements to efficiency and productivity.

However, technology isn't evolving in a vacuum. It's also being driven by a cultural shift toward collaboration that is permeating the modern workforce. Take gaming systems, for example. For many, the gaming experience today takes a back seat to the virtual connection and group collaboration that happens in-game across neighborhoods, cities, states or even countries. Organizations are beginning to understand that



workers expect the same type of connectivity at work that they enjoy in their personal lives. When you bring technology and the desire to collaborate together, there's tremendous potential just waiting to be unlocked.

Work Is Always Within Reach

Because applications are being developed for, and performing seamlessly across, multiple operating systems and devices, workers can

easily connect to the information they need to get the job done. They might begin their day on a personal smartphone, work on a business-owned laptop, and end their evenings on a tablet. Organizations that understand and blend personal and work into an effective mobile strategy that embraces a robust BYOD philosophy are seeing results. And companies such as Google, Microsoft and Apple make collaboration and seamless workflows easier than ever with advanced and

“If employees are empowered with the freedom to work anywhere, anytime – and they’re effective at it – that can’t help but create a modern workplace that’s better for everyone.”



continuously updated applications, improved networking through 4G and 5G, and security.

If employees are empowered with the freedom to work anywhere, anytime – and they're effective at it – that can't help but create a modern workplace that's better for everyone. Organizations providing employees with instant access to data from personal devices are enabling them to collaborate from

anywhere and opening up a world of opportunity and increased productivity. Commutes are eliminated. The workplace becomes more engaging. And thanks to advancing technology, organizations can better observe and measure the quality and output of remote workers – a dynamic that increases more trust, adoption and advancement toward a truly mobile workforce.





Implementing a Modern Mobile Solution

Building a modern workforce can often seem daunting. The sheer pace and volume of technological evolution puts many organizations in the position of trying to hit a moving target. With more devices connecting to networks than ever, organizations looking to extend mobile capabilities must also account for implementing advanced security measures and updates.

Once devices and security are in place, organizations face the additional challenge of adoption. Just because a mobile workforce is empowered to use applications doesn't mean it will. Users need to engage with new applications to fully realize any mobile strategy's benefits. Finally, conflicts between IT departments that want productivity and lines of business that want experience can further hinder adoption.

Harnessing the potential of the modern workforce and unlocking all the benefits that come with building and implementing a modern workforce requires a deep understanding of the information workers need to perform effectively. It takes observations, focus groups and a dedication to continually remain interested by both IT and management. Mobility is never defined in the boardroom. True collaboration happens when information and people work in harmony. Therefore, to be successful, any mobile strategy should begin and end with the people it serves. Once human needs are defined, organizations can begin to identify the technology that will meet them in the most productive way possible. And if they can balance both technology and humanity, organizations can effectively turn mobility into a competitive advantage.

How to Implement Stronger Mobile Workspace Solutions

1. Strategically Define Your Goals

Moving from the top down, identify what you want to achieve with your mobile strategy. What are you good at now, and what can you become better at?

2. Identify the Right Information

From IoT and other instruments to analysis, determine what you need to make, gather and build to support your mobile workforce.

3. Act and Respond Quickly

A strong mobile strategy is always adapting to employees' needs and new technologies. Continually monitor based on new information inputs, and never stop innovating.

A BETTER WAY TO WORK: HOW HUMAN-CENTERED TECHNOLOGY IS INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

by Jay Ritchie
Cloud SaaS Solutions Manager,
Microsoft Online Services

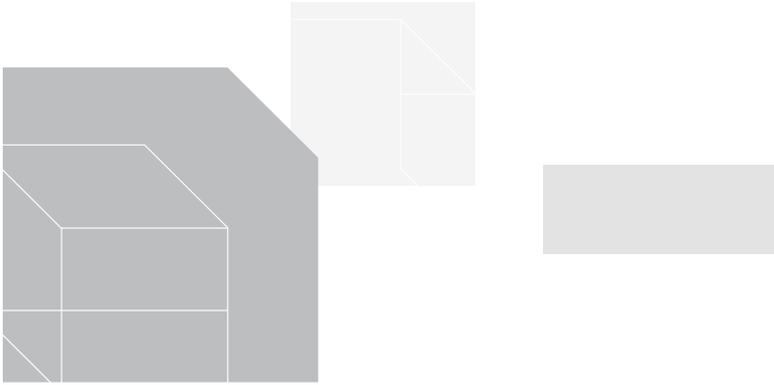
Workplaces continue to redefine themselves at a rapid pace. In order for organizations to stay ahead of increasing demands as well as capabilities, IT decision-makers are equipping workers with access to the best applications and tools available. As a result, the modern mobile workforce has the capability to be more productive, efficient and connected. And this is making the meeting experience more collaborative than ever.

Technology is also changing the definition of productivity tools, which organizations have traditionally regarded as a means to an end. Technology enabled defined

outputs. For example, you used a typewriter to create clearer records, and a calculator to crunch numbers. Today, productivity tools and applications are intertwined, making it easier for us to accomplish our jobs. But they are less task oriented and more geared toward communicating across devices and on the go.

So, what has given way to the rise of these technologies that are reshaping the very way we communicate? Human behavior.





“When it comes to productivity and efficiency in the workplace, we’re not adapting to technology. It’s the other way around.”

We tend to focus on technology's inherent power to change the world, but when it comes to productivity and efficiency in the workplace, we're not adapting to technology. It's the other way around. Today, more than ever, consumer behavior is driving enterprise mobility, productivity, efficiency and real-time collaboration, and there are a few reasons why.

New Technology for a New Generation of Work

As new generations enter the workforce, productivity applications are tailored to their unique work styles. It used to be that people once spent a lot of time composing emails. Before that, they would craft carefully worded memos. Today, people communicate in sound bites – one or two words or maybe a couple of sentences. Productivity tools are changing to facilitate this new way of communicating.

Productivity technology is at the point where multiple tools make it easier for workers to accomplish tasks, share information and communicate seamlessly from anywhere regardless of device or platform.



Today, you can work the way you want with the right tool at the right time. This delivers the flexibility workers want and the productivity that organizations need.

Adapting to Changing Times

While productivity technology has ushered in a new way of working with its accompanying benefits, it's also a headache for IT managers who are accustomed to standardization. They preferred complete control over application and usage because it made responding to issues easier and mitigated misuse. But changing work styles and increased capabilities mean that IT must cede more power to users. In the realm of productivity, less control from corporate IT can unlock more productivity.

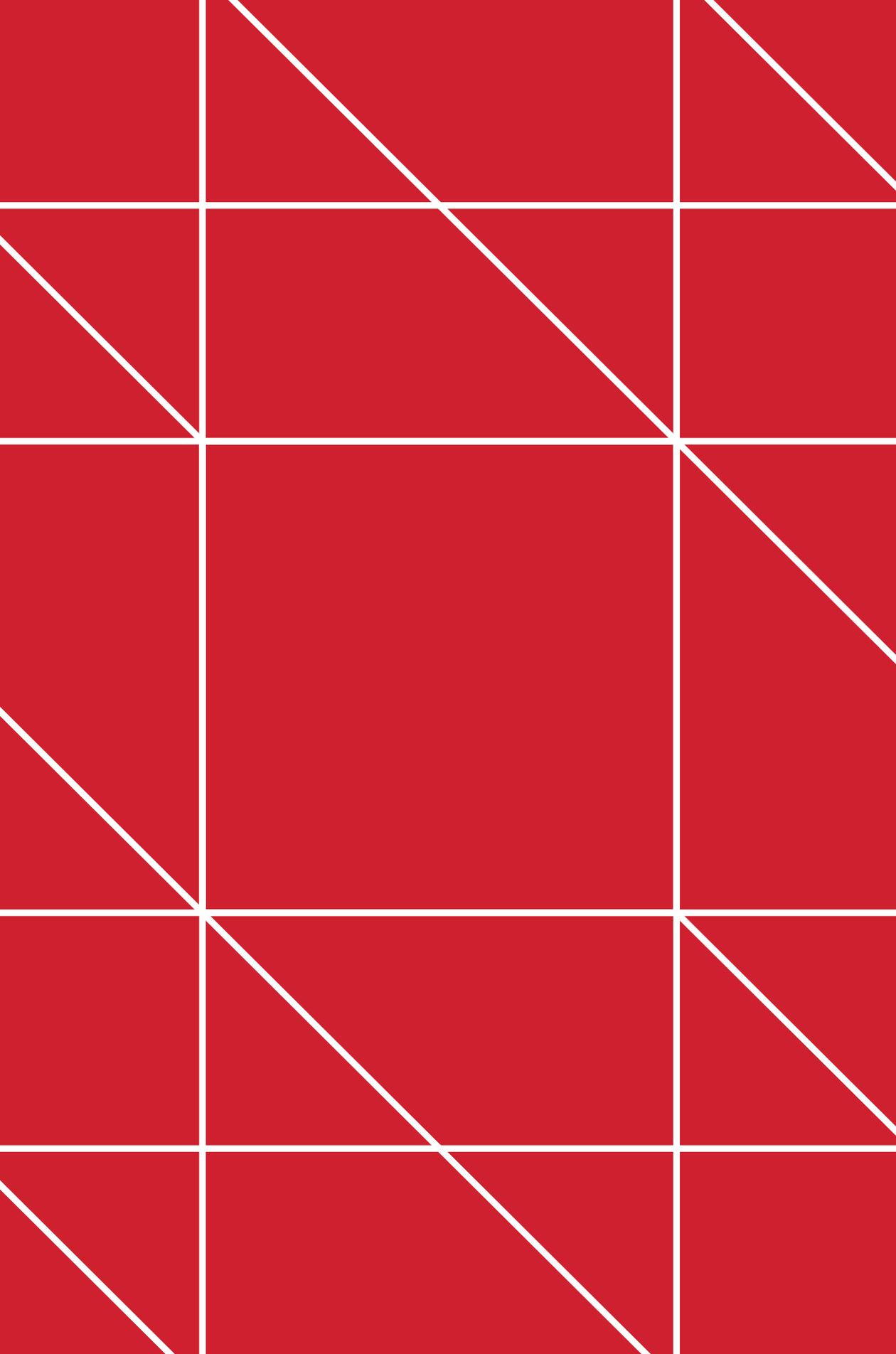
Instead of limiting app usage, IT must pivot its efforts to keeping corporate information safe while monitoring usage and correcting if and when issues arise.

To help maximize productivity technology, IT leaders need to test new applications and develop trainings around the results, so workers know how to best implement and use new technology.

Because productivity technology is, and should be, driven by human behavior, it's critical to put workers first and foremost when building any solution. Talk to them. Gauge their work habits. Find out where there is room for improvement. Then get out of the way. It's hard to give up control, but optimizing capabilities is the end goal, and that can't happen when application usage is inhibited.

Organizations can accomplish more than ever before by building and implementing technology that moves the needle. The key is finding the right solutions that move with their workers. The more adaptable technology becomes to the way we work, the more we'll get out of it.





Key Insights

Over the course of this report, we spoke with over 400 IT leaders about changes occurring within the modern workforce. From new, rapidly expanding technology, to how it's impacting the way organizations connect, communicate and collaborate, their answers provide critical insights into how organizations are both adapting and struggling with changes.

We collected five key findings to help summarize the research. These insights, along with the accompanying report, underscore current modern workforce trends, as well as the challenges organizations face. For the complete research, please refer to the conclusion of this report.

KEY INSIGHT 1

**ORGANIZATIONS ARE
STRUGGLING TO FIND THE
RIGHT MIX OF TECHNOLOGY
SOLUTIONS**



Organizations are committing more IT budgets toward workplace solutions. But despite more investment, they currently struggle to find the right mix of software and services to help workers perform at their peak. And it's a challenge that only increases in proportion to an organization's size.

56% of organizations have increased their workplace solution investments

KEY INSIGHT 2

**DATA ANALYTICS, BETTER
COLLABORATION AND
REDESIGNED PROCESSES
ARE IMPROVING EFFICIENCY**



In order to get more done, and to do it efficiently, organizations are finding that data analytics and increased collaboration are driving greater productivity in the workplace. And perhaps it's not surprising that IT teams have focused on redesigning processes in order to become more efficient.

38% of organizations believe that extracting value from data analytics represents the biggest opportunity to tap into better workplace efficiency

KEY INSIGHT 3

**CUSTOM STILL RULES
WHEN IT COMES TO
DESIGNING AND DEPLOYING
WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS**

Today, most organizations rely on custom-built workplace solutions, software and services – a missed opportunity to take advantage of the cost savings and simplicity of off-the-shelf and as a service solutions. Perhaps, however, businesses still require far more customization than vendors currently offer.



42% of organizations prefer custom-built productivity software

34% prefer off the shelf

19% prefer as a service

KEY INSIGHT 4

**SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
IS KEY TO WORKPLACE
SOLUTION SUCCESS**



IT is responsible for determining technical requirements and solutions. But line of business (LOB) executives are responsible for success measurements. While both parties differ when it comes to responsibility during each stage of the purchasing process, they agree that shared responsibility is critical for success.

58% of IT execs claim responsibility for determining technical requirements

38% of IT execs claim shared responsibility

KEY INSIGHT 5

**ADOPTION AND
INTEGRATION ARE
BIG CHALLENGES**



Business process and legacy integration make migrating a challenge among organizations. Although aligning process with new technology and integrating multiple new solutions with legacy solutions are proving to be significant hurdles, most organizations are taking active steps to promote regular adoption.



50% of respondents are measuring cost savings to determine the success of workplace solution adoption

IN CLOSING

As the pace of growth and innovation continues to accelerate, and as the workforce becomes more dispersed and mobile, organizations are adapting. This is more than a passing trend. It reflects a new way of working that both enables and empowers organizations and their workers to get more done, in more places.

Technology helps connect the modern workforce to critical information, but that's just the start. It's fueling rich collaboration experiences that erase boundaries and traditional borders. And it's helping workforces perform faster and smarter, while transforming the way organizations turn knowledge into insight and action.

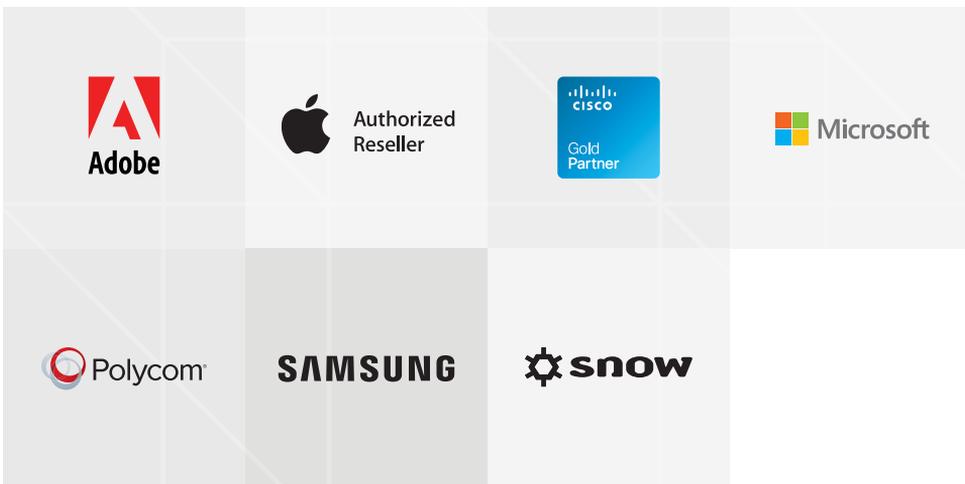
As we interviewed IT leaders from across multiple industries and researched best practices along with challenges, it's clear that as the workforce continues to evolve, organizations must constantly adapt. More solutions and more capabilities mean that driving adoption is just as critical as implementing new technology. To remain connected, IT leaders and executives must extract value from their technologies. The more they can integrate new tools as part of a holistic strategy, the more potential they will realize.

Working with a wide range of companies and partners across different industries to orchestrate and empower the modern workforce gives us a unique insight and perspective into how work will continue to evolve. We are working hard to bring that collective learning together, so it's easy to understand and implement.

For more information, interviews and perspectives, we invite you to visit [CDW.com/modernworkforce](https://www.cdw.com/modernworkforce)

OUR PARTNERS

The valuable time, research, and perspectives that went into making this report would not have been possible without the help of our partners. From assessment to design and deployment, they represent the best and brightest minds in workforce technology.



Get an inside look at
the technology, tips and
insights that are helping
organizations create
and deploy the modern
workforce at
CDW.com/digitalworkspace

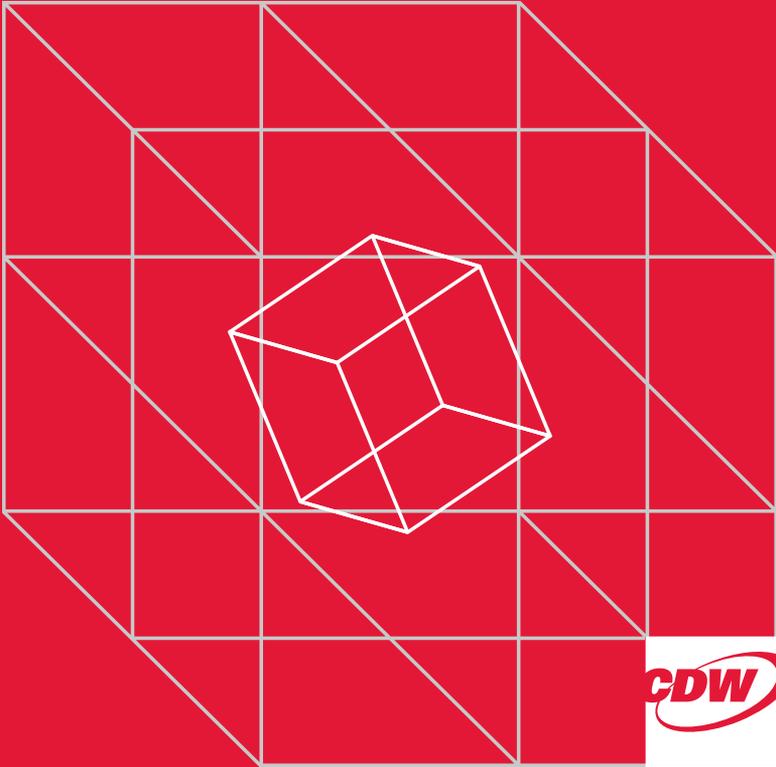




THE MODERN WORKFORCE INSIGHT REPORT

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COMPLETE DATA AND ANALYSIS



Volume 02

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THE MODERN WORKFORCE INSIGHT REPORT

Mobility and real-time collaboration tools are transforming workflows and revolutionizing workspaces. Today's board meetings often occur on immersive, high-resolution telepresence screens versus in a physical office. Healthcare professionals rely more heavily on mobile tablets to track and store patient information than steel filing cabinets. And thanks to group messaging apps, consumers can receive instant answers to their most pressing questions from customer support agents.

Together, these tools promise to boost innovation, improve productivity and deliver greater efficiencies for a happier, better-balanced workforce. But while the benefits are clear, there are challenges to gleaning value from modern workplace solutions. Finding the right combination of tools, assigning responsibility for both product selection and success measurement, driving employee adoption and security of devices, further securing the digital

workspace — they're all obstacles organizations must overcome to find success in the new digital era of work.

Despite the challenges, many companies are "all in." The average number of workplace solutions in use is on the rise, as is IT budget allocation for these tools. That's because organizations are discovering how factors such as deployment methods, third-party partnerships and migration strategies can extract the most sought-after business outcomes from workforce solution investments.

In an effort to assess how organizations are enabling the workforce with powerful solutions and adoption strategies, CDW partnered with IDG Research in January 2018 to survey 400 senior-level IT and non-IT professionals who are involved in the purchasing process for workplace solutions, software and services. (For more details on the study, see Page 22.)

Key Research Findings

The study covered a wide range of topics, from allocating budget to workplace solutions to discovering opportunities for greater efficiency. The following are among the more revelatory findings:

- **The top drivers for workplace solution investment are the same across jobs, roles and company size:** 48% of organizations cite improved employee productivity, 39% say improved process efficiency through automation and 39% cite improved security.
- **The number of workplace solution investments and IT budget allocated to these investments is on the rise:** Organizations have an average of eight workplace solutions; 55% of respondents have increased their IT budget allocated to workplace solutions over the past three years.
- **Assembling the right combination of workplace solutions for peak performance is an issue that only increases with company size:** 41% of respondents find it very challenging to find the right mix of solutions.
- **Data analytics and increased collaboration are perceived as key to unleashing greater efficiency and productivity in the workplace:** 38% of respondents say the biggest opportunity to discover greater productivity within the workforce comes from extracting more value from your data.
- **IT is primarily responsible for determining technical requirements and selecting workplace solutions. However, business leaders outside of IT typically share the responsibility for success measurement:** 41% of respondents say IT executives hold primary responsibility when it comes to determining workplace solution needs. Nearly half – 49% of business leaders hold primary responsibility for success measurement.
- **Driving adoption of modern workplace solutions can be hard:** 39% of respondents find it very challenging to migrate a workforce toward modern workplace solutions.
- **IT organizations are taking significant steps to promote workplace solution adoption:** Efforts include technology integration, identifying performance improvements and cost savings and providing recommendations for relevant technologies and services.
- **More than half of respondents who plan to integrate technologies over the next 12 months will turn to a third party for help:** Organizations are most likely to use an outside source, such as a technology provider, for help with integrating technologies, identifying cost savings and providing staff training.
- **Respondents' top strategies for promoting the adoption of new technology among employees include:** training and education, incentives, product/department champions, executive support/communication and user-friendly solutions.

This report delves into these key findings to determine the workplace solution challenges facing organizations today, and the strategies that enable IT leaders to drive adoption of mobility and collaboration technologies for greater productivity and improved efficiency.

Common Drivers for Workplace Change

Welcome to the digital workplace, where employees demand secure and easy access to everything from email to corporate applications to enterprise documents where and when they want, using whatever device they choose, from any location worldwide.

The benefits are far-reaching. Sales representatives in the field can access customer relationship management systems to answer questions in real time and potentially close more deals. Engineers can use their tablets to snap photos and run mobile apps to record data about factory equipment – in turn preventing manufacturing delays. And IT teams can handle system upgrades and maintenance activities from remote desktops during off-hours for greater business continuity and less user downtime.

At the same time, innovative collaboration tools are helping employees gather and share knowledge regardless of device or location. From immersive telepresence

technology that replicates face-to-face communication virtually, to messaging apps that support real-time information sharing among colleagues, today's collaboration tools are both empowering and connective.

Although use cases for mobile and real-time collaboration tools vary, the enterprise goals are the same: faster, more efficient and secure workflows. According to the IDG survey, respondents cite improved employee productivity (48%), improved process efficiency through automation (39%), and improved security (39%) as the top three drivers for investment in workplace solutions, software and services.

It's easy to understand why. In today's on-demand economy, customers expect speedy and accurate responses and service delivery, anytime, anywhere. To satisfy these demands, employees need instant access to everything from data-rich documents to internal email threads.

Top Drivers for Investment in Workplace Solutions, Software and Services



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

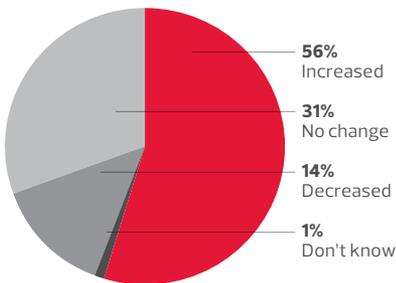
Consider, for example, a sales representative who must provide his client with up-to-the-minute product pricing information while onsite. Rather than call the head office and wait for a response, he can pull up the right information in seconds flat using a mobile app. The digital workspace must deliver on these productivity promises by ensuring that employees have instant access to the real-time data they need, when they need it.

Improved process efficiency through automation is another key driver for greater investment in workplace solutions – and for good reason. Workflow automation tools work by replacing time-consuming manual tasks with automated processes based on predetermined parameters. For instance, a law firm can significantly improve efficiencies by automating the processes of editing, signing and transmitting documents to clients and courts. The result is smoother operations, reduced time, cost savings, less paper work and error reduction.

Security also ranks high among survey respondents as a reason to invest in workplace solutions. Cyberattacks are becoming increasingly advanced as ill-intentioned hackers rely on spoofing, phishing and software vulnerabilities to steal sensitive data and disrupt business operations. Fortunately, digital workspaces can be designed with security in mind – when employees access data from the field, that data never actually resides on the tablet or smartphone itself.

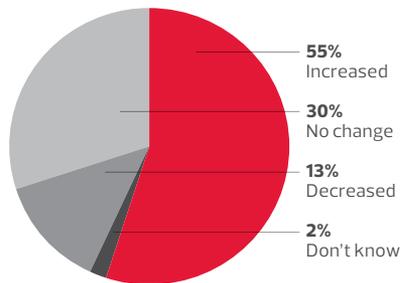
As the real-world benefits of workplace solutions multiply, organizations are not only committing more IT budget to these tools but investing in a greater number of solutions. Survey respondents invest in an average of eight workplace solutions each. More than half – 56% of respondents have increased the number of workplace solution investments over the last three years, while 55% of respondents have increased their IT budget allocated to workplace solutions over the same period.

Change in Number of Workplace Solution Investments – Past 3 Years



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

Change in IT Budget Allocated to Workplace Solutions – Past 3 Years



Increased by 21% on average

Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

The More Solutions, the More Challenges

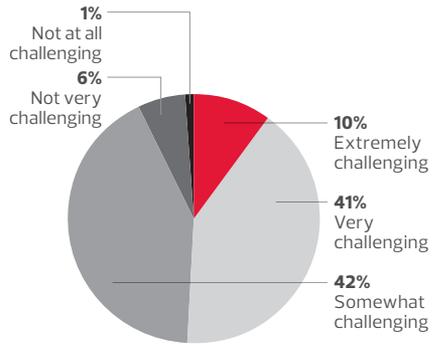
Many organizations are still trying to figure out the right mix of software applications and technologies to enable peak performance.

Forty-one percent of respondents find it very challenging to find the right combination; another 42% of respondents find it somewhat challenging. It's a difficulty that only intensifies with company size: 47% of companies with more than 2,500 employees consider finding the right combination of workplace solutions, software and services a challenge.

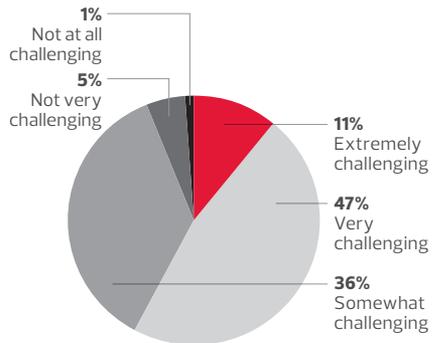
Securing and integrating multiple devices are among the obstacles IT teams must face when finding the right combination of workplace solutions. Today's collaboration apps are built to be used by any device, from smartphones and tablets to a desktop computer. As a result, IT teams must not only select applications with built-in security capabilities, but ones that integrate seamlessly with legacy systems. In other cases, IT must ensure that security techniques, such as identity management, are consistent across applications – or integrate security measures across a wide variety of siloed applications – a difficult feat given that siloed applications often have different sets of data with varying degrees of user provisioning and privacy rules.

Other challenges associated with selecting collaboration tools include controlling costs and creating an engaging end-user experience. However, by striking the right balance, organizations can ensure these workplace solutions deliver a significant return on investment.

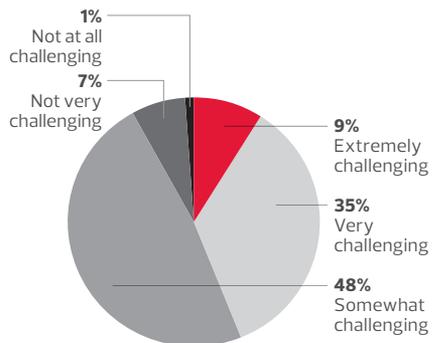
How Challenging Is It to Find the Right Combination of Workplace Solutions to Enable Employees to Find Their Peak Performance?



2,500 Employees or More



Fewer Than 2,500 Employees



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

The Bits and Bytes Behind Highly Productive Teams

There's more to today's workforce than what meets the eye. Behind every IT group, sales team and C-suite lies the potential to increase productivity and efficiency in the workplace.

And the top-rated key to discovering greater productivity and efficiency within a workforce? Data analytics. More than one-third – 38% of survey respondents believe extracting more value from data via analytics can unleash enormous workplace benefits.

Indeed, for years, top organizations have relied on computer algorithms to determine the most effective strategies for hiring, managing and training highly productive team players. Take TIAA for example. After struggling to keep pace with an evolving business environment, the insurance and financial services company deployed a workforce planning and analytics tool for its 13,000-person workforce to better forecast staffing needs.

By building computer models and carefully parsing human resources data, organizations can:

- Identify high-potential employees for promotion
- Conduct cost/benefit analyses of employee training programs
- Monitor employee performance in real time
- Calculate the best compensation strategies
- Maintain a robust talent pipeline

As a result, data analytics solutions can not only help organizations build highly productive teams, but help eliminate the financial costs of

poor hiring decisions while at the same time enhancing employee satisfaction levels.

The Opportunities in Investment

Teamwork is also perceived as critical to workplace excellence. Thirty-seven percent of survey respondents cite enabling collaboration as the biggest opportunity to discover greater workplace productivity and efficiency.

Consider group chat apps, for example. No longer just for sharing short messages, tools such as Microsoft Teams let users share documents, deliver private messages and search conversation threads without having to look up email addresses. Instead, chats are organized into groups to keep the conversation going – and keep workflows uninterrupted. Even stock car racing teams are cottoning on to the benefits of group messaging apps. For example, Hendrick Motorsports uses Microsoft Teams to communicate from on top of the pit box with the fueler down in the pit during heart-pounding races.

Web conferencing and telepresence solutions also drive greater collaboration (and reduce travel expenditures) by connecting disparate teams virtually. Employees can send file attachments, share screens, even bring in a third party for expert input, all in real time.

Today's customers demand fast and easy answers to pressing questions. Collaboration tools, such as instant messaging and social enterprise applications, can help by accelerating information sharing and providing instant access to experts anywhere in the organization, at practically any time, for speedy problem resolution. Easy access to customer feedback, and real-time communication among colleagues, also enable employees to stay productive and think more innovatively.

Another opportunity for workplace productivity perks: new and improved processes. In fact, 34% of survey respondents cite redesigning processes as one of the biggest opportunities to discover greater efficiency and productivity in the workplace. Of these respondents, nearly half, 41% are IT leaders compared to 29% of respondents with non-IT titles.

The explanation for this gap is simple: today's IT teams must carefully oversee the ongoing performance and security of IT infrastructure – a mandate that entails time-consuming and manual activities, such as configuring systems and software. However, by automating server provisioning, configuration management and system monitoring, IT teams can redesign processes for greater productivity, lighter workloads and reduced errors.

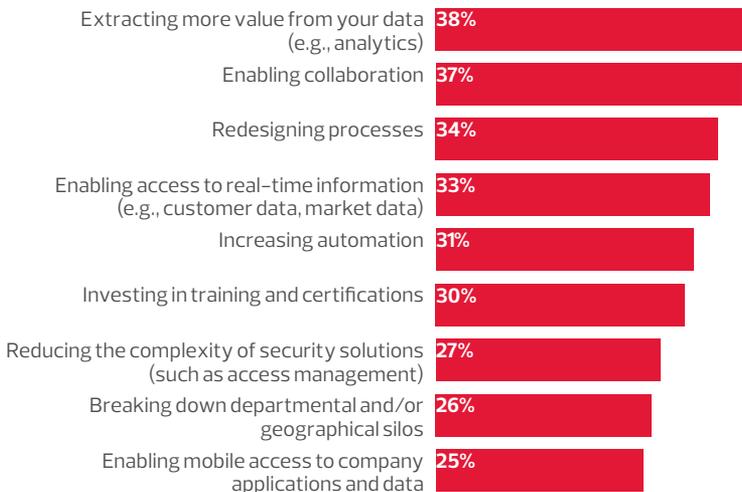
However, opinions on how to unleash greater workplace productivity vary according to

corporate rank. Survey findings indicate that senior business line leaders, such as chief executive officers and vice presidents (37%), are more likely to cite investing in training and certification as the biggest opportunity to discover greater productivity and efficiency compared to director and manager titles (23%). This finding highlights the C-suite's reliance on skills development – not people, processes and technology – to increase employee performance.

The good news: organizations are putting their money where their mouth is. Investment priorities are closely aligned with what most respondents perceive to be the biggest opportunities for improving productivity.

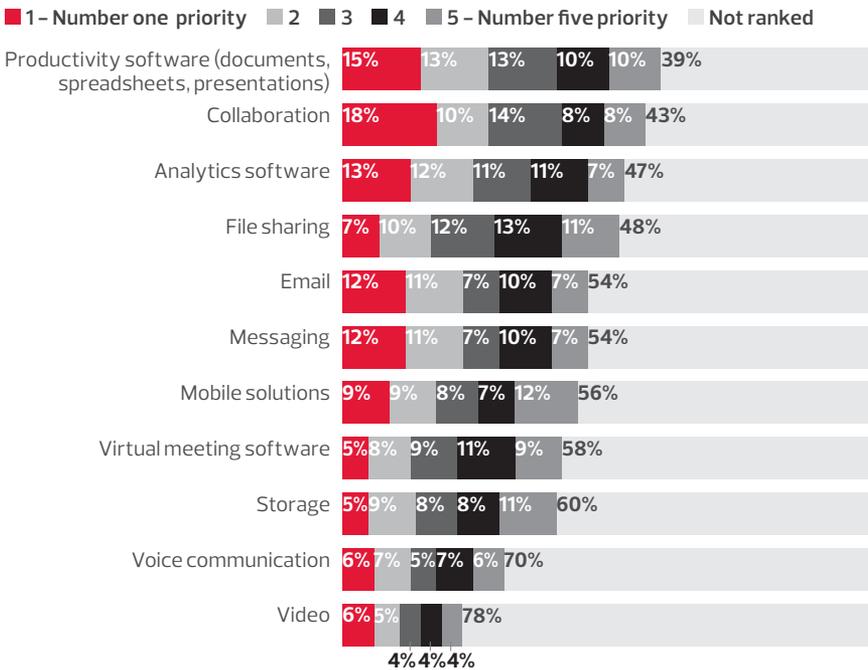
Twenty-eight percent of respondents cite productivity software as a top technology category for investment; 28% point to collaboration software; and 25% opt for analytics software to enable employees to find their peak performance. Interestingly,

How Can CIOs Increase Efficiency and Productivity in the Workplace?



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

Priority of Workplace Solution Investments



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

only 13% of survey respondents regard voice communications as a top priority for improving productivity as an increasing number of employees shift from phones to messaging and videoconferencing solutions to collaborate and share information.

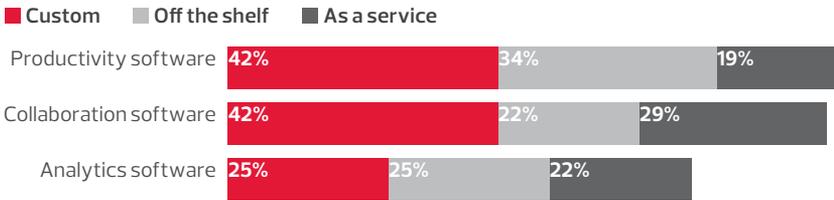
Custom Is King

There is widespread consensus among survey respondents on the types of solutions and services that can drive productivity and efficiency in the workplace. Yet approaches to designing and deploying these tools can vary significantly. The most common strategies include off the shelf, custom built in-house, custom built by a third party and as a service.

Interestingly, most survey respondents prefer deploying custom-built (defined as built in-house or by a third party) workplace solutions, software and services. (See chart on Page 10.)

The appeal of custom-built workplace solutions is easy to understand. Tailored to match an organization's unique business needs and processes, customized tools are more easily integrated with existing infrastructure. They can also help provide a competitive edge. Although off-the-shelf and as-a-service workplace tools can address some specific business needs, they tend to offer generic features and limited functionality compared with their custom counterparts.

Custom-Built Workplace Solutions Are Most Popular



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

Another possible explanation for the popularity of custom solutions: respondents require far more customization and personalization of their workforce tools than vendors are currently able to offer in standard product solutions.

Nevertheless, organizations must carefully consider their unique business needs, technology requirements and budget before deciding on a custom workplace solution. For instance, a custom approach can be a missed opportunity for a smaller company to take advantage of the cost savings of off-the-shelf solutions and/or the ease-of-deployment advantages of an as a service model.

At the same time, building an in-house custom workplace solution requires extensive internal IT resources and considerable budget – a luxury that many of today’s growing organizations don’t have. And designing a custom solution can take months of planning, from assessing IT capacity and establishing a budget to gathering domain knowledge of an organization’s particular industry.

Purpose also plays a critical part in determining deployment preferences for workplace solutions. For example, survey respondents that do opt for an as a service

solution are most likely to do so for collaboration (29%) and storage tools (29%).

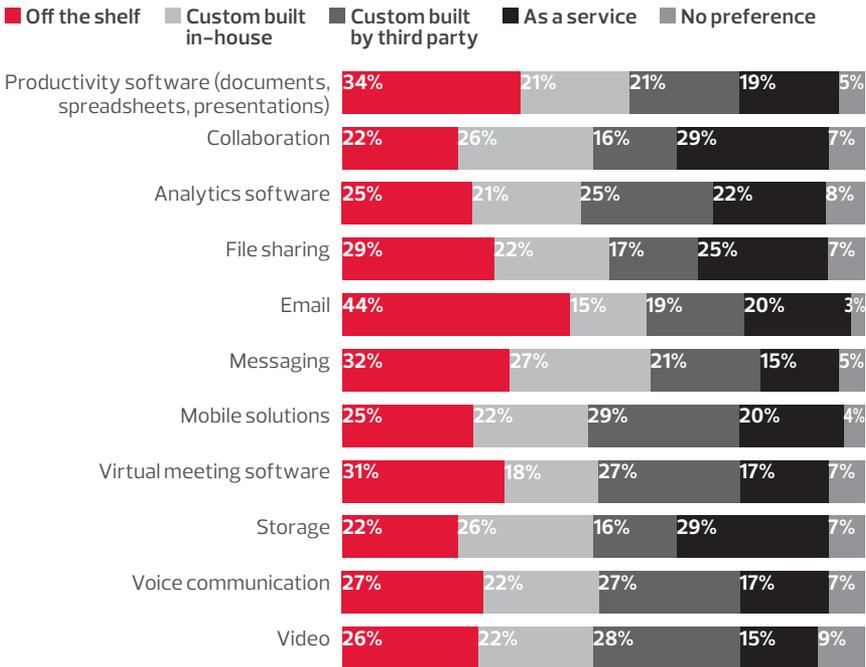
But not all solutions are created equal. For this reason, many organizations choose to cherry-pick their tools from a variety of vendors. However, most survey respondents (69%) prefer to work with a small number of vendors rather than adopt a best-of-breed approach. In fact, only 31% of respondents prefer a best-of-breed strategy and integrate solutions from multiple vendors.

That’s a significant departure from decades of technology tradition. For years, organizations believed that the best way to increase productivity and efficiency in the workplace was to purchase the best-in-class product in each workplace solution category. It was quite common for a single organization to run mobile apps, collaboration tools and productivity platforms, all from different vendors.

Employing IT staff with the expertise to manage such product diversity has become a costly and difficult endeavor. This approach requires significant training to keep teams up to speed on a wide array of constantly changing products. What’s more, of those that do prefer a best-in-class approach, 40% handle integration

Preference When Deploying Workplace Solution Investments

(Among those prioritizing each technology investment)



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

both in-house and with the use of a third-party partner – a preference that allows for greater control but requires significant IT resources to oversee. Complete orchestration of workplace solutions by a third party, however, can significantly reduce training requirements for staff and minimize reliance on costly, dedicated workplace solution IT teams.

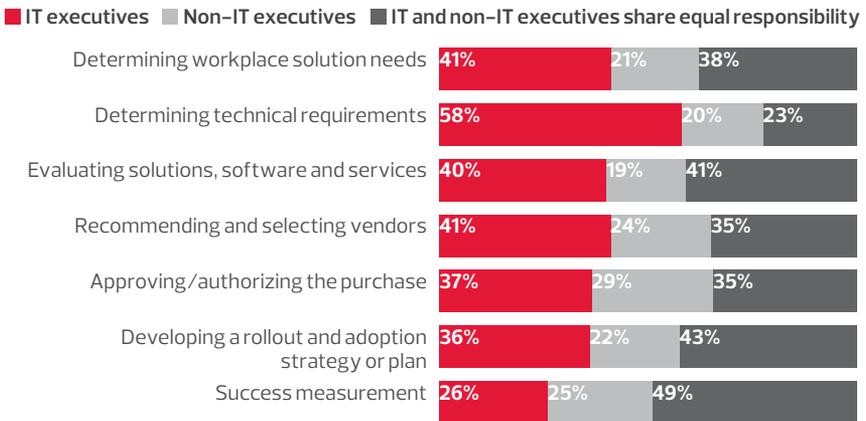
Sharing Responsibility but Differing in Opinion

Purchasing a workplace solution is a lengthy process with multiple stages of activity, from determining what an organization wants to gain from a solution to measuring

its long-term success. Managing each of these stages takes time and considerable resources to reach the right decision and achieve the potential business outcomes.

The good news is, overall, IT teams and non-IT, business leaders are working together to evaluate solutions, approve purchases, and develop an adoption strategy. Nearly half – 41% – of IT executives are responsible for determining workplace solution needs while 38% of respondents say IT executives and non-IT executives share equal responsibility. And 40% of IT executives are responsible for evaluating solutions while 41% share equal responsibility.

Primary Responsibility at Each Stage of the Purchase Process (Workplace Solutions)



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

There are a number of explanations for increased collaboration among IT and line of business (LOB) executives. For one, organizational structures are changing to embrace concepts such as Centers of Excellence, where representatives from human resources, marketing, sales and IT join forces to determine business strategy, establish best practices, solicit end-user input and review processes. The result is widespread accountability for tasks such as selecting technology solutions and approving purchases, as well as a greater sense of ownership over a project's success.

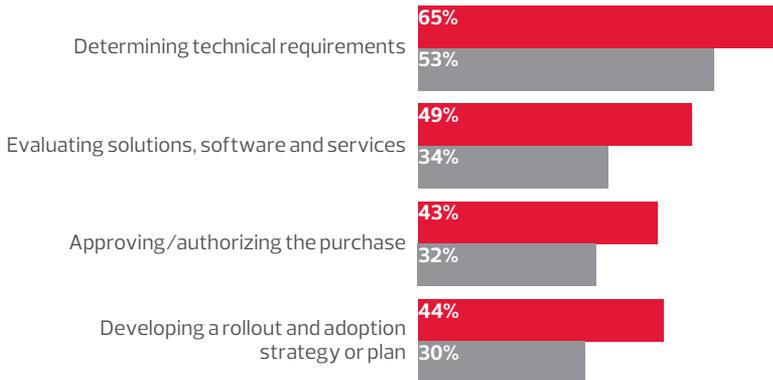
Another factor influencing greater sharing of responsibility are today's evolving roles. IT leaders are no longer relegated to server rooms; instead they are active participants in designing corporate strategy. At the same time, complex technology solutions are becoming increasingly accessible to business line leaders due to innovative features.

Case in point: many sophisticated data analytics tools now include easy-to-understand data visualization capabilities and dashboards. This enables non-IT executives to interpret algorithms without a degree in data science. That's a critical component of any analytics tool, as the ability to visualize and make sense of data becomes "a must-have skill for all managers," according to a *Harvard Business Review* article.

Nevertheless, there are limits to non-IT executives' technical prowess. IT still holds primary responsibility for determining technical needs and selecting workplace solutions: 58% of IT executives are responsible for determining technical requirements while a mere 23% share equal responsibility. Similarly, 41% of IT leaders recommend and select vendors compared with just 35% of IT and business line leaders together.

IT Execs vs. LOB on Responsibility

■ IT executives ■ LOB executives



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

In fact, a deeper dive into survey results reveals that there is also some disagreement among IT and line of business (LOB) executives, a.k.a. non-IT executives, regarding responsibility at each stage of the purchase process. There are four key areas where IT executives are more likely to perceive IT as having primary responsibility (see chart above).

There are a couple of possible explanations for this scenario. First, IT may be overestimating its influence on purchasing processes when it comes to workplace solutions. Second, business line leaders may not be warming up to the idea of making joint decisions with IT as much as IT would like.

From Driving Adoption to Measuring Success

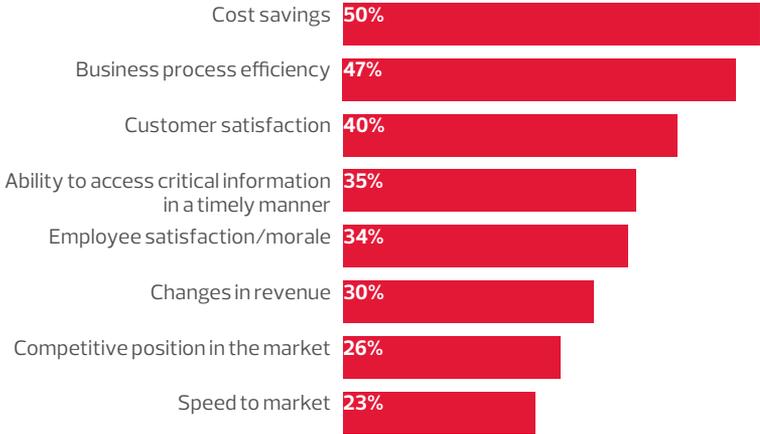
Selecting, purchasing, and deploying workplace solutions requires significant IT and financial resources. To garner C-suite support, organizations must continuously monitor the successful adoption of

productivity apps, collaboration tools and mobile platforms.

Survey respondents are relying on three key metrics to gauge workplace solution adoption. Fifty percent of respondents are measuring "cost savings" – and for good reason. Although the solutions themselves can be expensive, group messaging apps, videoconferencing and cloud technology can significantly reduce costs.

For example, sales representatives can reduce travel expenses by conferring with clients via web conferencing and telepresence tools. Group messaging apps let customer support agents receive real-time assistance from colleagues for faster time-to-resolution and lower cost-per-call rates. And cloud-based collaboration platforms enable employees to work anytime, anywhere – a workplace perk that can boost employee satisfaction and reduce costly churn.

Business Outcomes Measured to Determine Success with Workplace Solution Adoption



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

Nearly half – 47% – of respondents are measuring “business process efficiency” to determine the success of workplace solution adoption. For instance, by automating the process of benefits program enrollment, organizations can ease workloads for human resources executives and reduce manual errors.

And finally, 40% of respondents are measuring “customer satisfaction” to determine the success of workplace solution adoption. Consider, for example, UPS. The courier giant relies on a mobile delivery app to help its employees sort delivery stops by distance and gain map views of delivery locations – capabilities that allow for faster delivery times, especially during peak holiday shopping season. The result is more productive employees and happier customers.

Interestingly, survey respondents who are vice presidents or higher in rank are more likely (46%) to cite customer satisfaction as a metric for workplace solution success than directors or managers (34%). That’s understandable given the C-suite’s constant pursuit of designing excellent customer experiences to build brand, better compete and boost profitability. An excellent example is AGL. The energy company credits a 44% increase in customer acquisition and retention through digital channels in 2017 to its customer experience transformation program.

Another difference of opinion: employee satisfaction/morale is more often cited as a measure of success by non-IT than IT titles (38% vs. 27%). While IT teams look to workplace solutions to ease business processes, LOB leaders are more likely

to appreciate productivity solutions and collaboration tools that help them recruit and retain talent, especially in today's tight labor market.

Speed Bumps on the Drive to Adoption

Not all technologies are eagerly embraced by employees and workforce solutions are no exception. Indeed, 39% of survey respondents say it's very challenging to migrate a workforce toward modern workplace solutions while 46% of respondents say it's somewhat challenging.

Standing in the way of widespread adoption are a number of obstacles. Of those that find migration very challenging, 38% cite making business process changes to align with new technology as a top reason. For example, a group messaging app is likely to increase the speed and frequency of employee communication while reducing reliance on

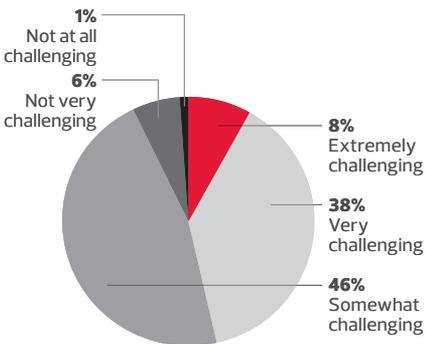
more familiar communication platforms such as email. For this reason, organizations must first explore a solution's impact on an employee's day-to-day activities before selection and deployment.

Migrating a workforce toward modern workplace solutions also requires investment in training and education. Consider, for example, a luxury retail chain that decides to equip its sales associates with tablets, enabling real-time access to customer details, such as purchasing history. However, if these associates aren't taught how to properly use a mobile CRM system, they're likely to become frustrated – a precursor for reduced productivity and/or increased employee turnover.

Another challenge to migrating toward modern workplace solutions: 35% of respondents cite integrating multiple solutions/legacy solutions. In fact, legacy integration is particularly challenging for manufacturing organizations (52%). That's because many manufacturing companies still rely on aging technology, such as enterprise resource planning systems, which are complex and heavily customized.

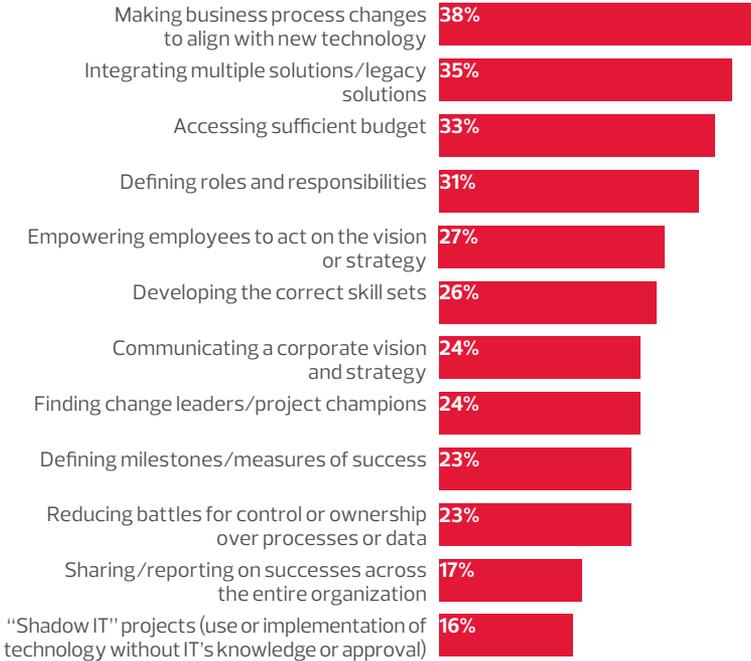
Accessing sufficient budget (33%) is also challenging organizations to drive adoption. These days, mobile apps and file sharing tools must compete against artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics and cloud computing systems for a bigger slice of IT budget. Other hindrances to adoption include defining roles and responsibilities (31%), empowering employees to act on a vision or strategy (27%) and developing the correct skill sets (26%).

Challenge of Migrating Workforce Towards Modern Workplace Solutions



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

Biggest Challenge in Migrating Workforce Toward Modern Workplace Solutions



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

Promotion Strategies

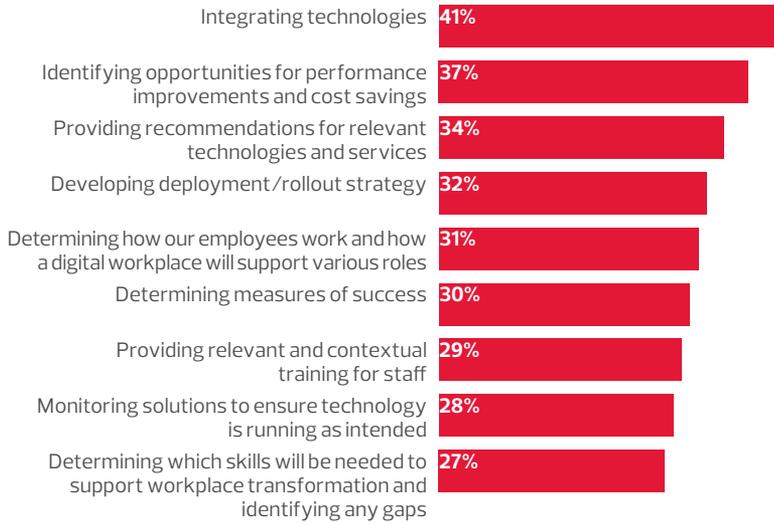
Luckily, organizations are taking active steps to promote greater adoption of workplace solutions. Forty-one percent of respondents are integrating technologies to promote adoption. Proper integration with legacy systems lets organizations take advantage of the extended functionality and capabilities of modern workplace solutions.

Another approach to greater adoption: 37% of survey respondents are identifying opportunities for performance improvements and cost savings. IT teams stand to benefit significantly from workplace

solutions, from automated workflows to providing workers with self-service capabilities. However, better business outcomes, such as greater productivity and reduced costs, are more likely to endear employees, particularly non-IT leaders, to mobile apps and collaboration tools.

Thirty-four percent of survey respondents say providing recommendations for relevant technologies and services also helps promote adoption. And 31% of respondents are driving adoption by determining how employees work and how a digital workplace will support various roles.

Steps Taken or Planned to Promote the Adoption of Modern Workplace Solutions



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

That's a savvy strategy: identifying who is going to use a particular tool and how it'll be incorporated into employee workflows can create excitement around a product. For example, by determining and communicating to sales representatives how a newly deployed web conferencing tool can help them reduce travel time and close more deals, an organization can drive greater widespread adoption.

Voting for a Third Party

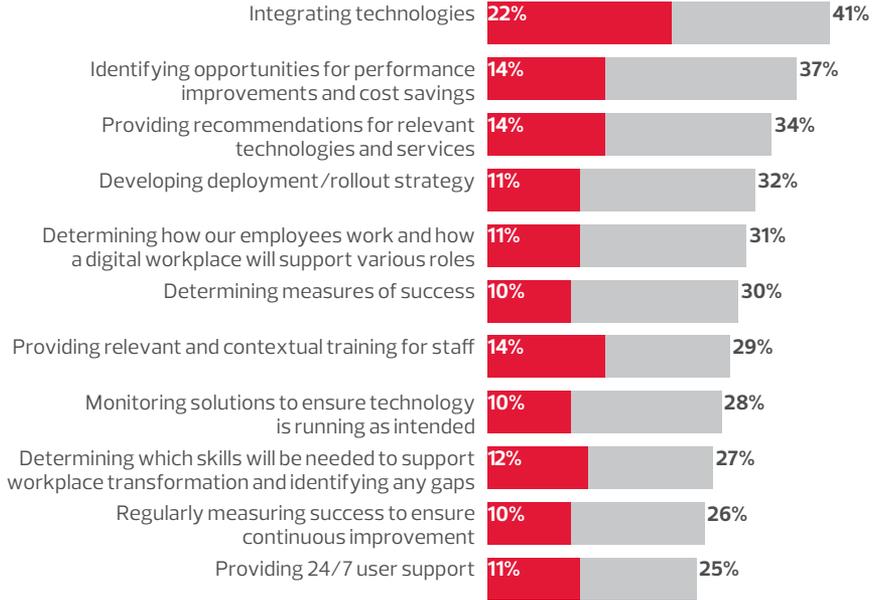
There's an old adage in the technology industry: the easier the end-user experience, the harder the job for IT. But that doesn't have to be the case. Granting managers in the field access to critical data, fostering collaboration with productivity platforms and connecting disparate teams via messaging apps doesn't have to increase or complicate IT workloads.

Rather, third-party partners can play an active role in helping organizations drive greater adoption of workplace solutions. Of those that plan to integrate technologies over the next 12 months, more than half will turn to a third party for help. One-third will seek a third party's assistance to determine measures of success. And nearly half will hire a third party to monitor solutions to ensure technology is running as intended.

The right third-party provider delivers a number of key benefits. For starters, a third party's deep knowledge and years of experience in the areas of mobility, collaboration, security and cloud can ensure long-term adoption of workplace solutions and their proper integration with existing systems. Secondly, many third-party providers enjoy partnerships with industry leaders, enabling their clients to tap into a network of highly certified and experienced professionals.

Turning to Third-Party Partners for Help

■ Likely to turn to a third party



Source: IDG Research in partnership with CDW

End-to-end support is also a critical third-party offering. Workplace solutions can be costly and time-consuming to deploy. However, preliminary steps, such as assessing an organization's current IT environment and determining what it wants to accomplish, can significantly increase the likelihood of success, especially before designing a long-term strategy. Next, a third party can help deploy and implement technology, and assist with the ongoing management of an organization's IT environment and devices for continued success.

Conclusion

There's no turning back the clock – the digital workplace has arrived. With it, employees are discovering new and innovative ways to work that increase productivity and improve business process efficiencies. And change is never easy: our survey findings indicate that many organizations are still determining how to select the right solutions and drive greater tool adoption.

However, there are also clear indications of progress: increased collaboration between business and IT teams, openness to third-party guidance, custom deployments and greater allocation of IT budget to workplace solutions. All of these signs point to a workplace in a transformation fueled by apps and analytics.

LESSONS LEARNED

Modern workplace solutions, software and services promise to boost productivity, improve process efficiencies and reduce communication costs. Yet 39% of IDG survey respondents say it's very challenging to migrate a workforce toward modern workplace solutions while 46% of respondents say it's somewhat challenging.

Obstacles to driving adoption include aligning business processes, system integration and insufficient budget. But unused software is more than a squandering of IT resources. It can also be a drain on IT infrastructure and a potential security threat.

These days, it's not enough to simply deploy a solution. Organizations must actively promote the adoption of new technology among employees to realize a return on their technology investments. Here's how.

1. Educate your employees.

Today's IT leaders work at a frenetic pace, deploying new solutions faster than ever before. So, it's not uncommon for an employee to arrive at work one morning and discover a brand-new collaboration tool on his computer.

But while web conferencing tools and group messaging apps can drive productivity and boost employee morale, they're of little value if employees aren't using them. One way to drive greater adoption is with employee training. Online courses, seminars, mentoring programs – they're all ways to teach employees how to take advantage of a solution's key features and functionalities.

Vendors are also an excellent source of in-depth training on popular products and services. Programs such as Microsoft FastTrack Center and BrainStorm can help employees get on board and using their

new software solutions quickly. Said one survey respondent: "Vendor-supplied training is very relevant to success." A third-party provider can also help organizations find the tools and training available from software vendors.

However, learning the technical nuts and bolts of a workplace solution is only a start. The right training program should also teach employees the value they can reap by making a solution a part of their day-to-day activities.

2. Create powerful incentives for change.

Replacing a tried-and-true solution with an untested alternative is a difficult transition for any employee. Fortunately, the right incentive can get the ball rolling. According to one survey respondent, ways to reward employees can include "incentives in bonus, incentives in pay [and] team incentives."

For example, an organization may hold a competition that pits sales teams against one another to see which team can achieve the highest CRM system login rate in a month. The winning team might receive a celebratory dinner or gift cards.

Publicly championing frequent users and early adopters of new technology can also serve as a strong incentive for greater adoption. A wall-of-fame board in the lobby, a mention in the corporate newsletter, a shout-out at a conference – they're all ways to reward employees for shifting from a legacy system to a new and innovative workplace tool.

3. Appoint a department or product champion.

We're living in an era of crowd-sourced reviews and peer assessments where consumers are more likely to turn to Yelp or Facebook for information than a marketing

brochure. Employees are no different. That's why assigning an internal product champion who spreads the word about use cases for a workplace solution can significantly drive adoption.

Naturally enthusiastic and tech savvy, early adopters of a solution are perfect candidates to teach employees how to integrate a solution into day-to-day procedures of how work gets done. Interactions with employees may range from a mentoring relationship where a product champion meets with a worker on a weekly basis to discuss a product's key features to monthly training sessions where a product champion meets with groups to share best practices. Champions can also serve as front-line support, handling easy questions and heading off unnecessary requests to the help desk.

4. Harness executive support.

An executive team can help create internal buy-in by ensuring employees understand how workplace solutions will help them perform their jobs better and faster. Email messaging, town hall meetings, one-on-one interactions – they're all ways for members of the C-suite to present the business benefits of using workplace tools. Rather than simply emphasize a solution's technical bells and whistles, an executive team can teach a sales associate how a mobile CRM app can close deals faster; show a customer support agent how a group messaging app can increase time-to-resolution rates; and convince field technicians of the productivity gains of switching to a cloud-based platform.

The result is faster and more widespread adoption of workplace solutions. Said one interviewee, the role of an executive is to "[let] people know what's out there and how to use it; and why."

5. Purchase user-friendly solutions.

Today's workplace solutions come with a host of innovative features. But even the most sophisticated solutions can fall flat if they're not intuitive. In fact, complicated solutions can frustrate employees, stalling adoption or limiting the use of a product's key features.

So how do you know if a tool is user-friendly? There are a number of factors to consider. First, a workplace solution must be compatible with existing tools. For instance, a collaboration tool shouldn't add to an employee's workload by requiring her to re-enter or look up information in other systems. Rather, employees want to use solutions that work with the tools they're already familiar and comfortable with. Knowing how an employee will use a workplace tool – and whether it fits with their current toolkit – can ease the adoption process, especially if an employee is engaged in the solution selection and purchasing process from the get-go.

Another litmus test for user-friendliness is accessibility. Workplace solutions should make information easier – not harder – to access with distinct channels, powerful search capabilities and remote access. For example, a retail sales associate using a mobile CRM app should be able to pull up customer purchasing details and order status in seconds.

Solution delivery can also impact user-friendliness. For example, workplace solutions delivered as a service via the cloud ensures they're available on a wide array of devices, maximizing employee mobility while minimizing the IT workloads. The result is a win-win situation: employees are granted more freedom to rely on intuitive tools while organizations reap productivity gains.

However, user-friendliness extends beyond the technical specifications of a solution. Ensuring that a group messaging app, web conferencing system or workplace solution is the right tool, for the right job, for the right employee can also influence ease of use. That's why it's critical organizations carefully evaluate their IT environment before purchasing and deploying a solution. In this instance, a third-party provider with vendor-specific knowledge and experience can help recommend solutions.

Conclusion

Driving adoption of a workplace solution is critical to achieving employee satisfaction, increasing productivity and improving process efficiencies. Fortunately, with these five steps, organizations can execute a smooth migration from aging legacy systems to modern and innovative tools:

1. Educate your employees
2. Create powerful incentives for change
3. Appoint a department or product champion
4. Harness executive support
5. Purchase user-friendly solutions

The best part: these five steps can be applied to any technology deployment, making it easier for IT to build a business case for greater technology investment.

ABOUT THE IDG RESEARCH STUDY

To qualify for the January 2018 IDG Research/CDW survey, The Modern Workforce Insight Report, respondents were required to be involved in the purchase process for workplace solutions, software, and services (e.g., email, text messaging, file sharing, storage, collaboration, virtual meetings, voice communication, etc.).

Qualified respondents work in an IT-related function at the Manager level or above or a non-IT role at the Director level or above, at a company with 250 or more employees.

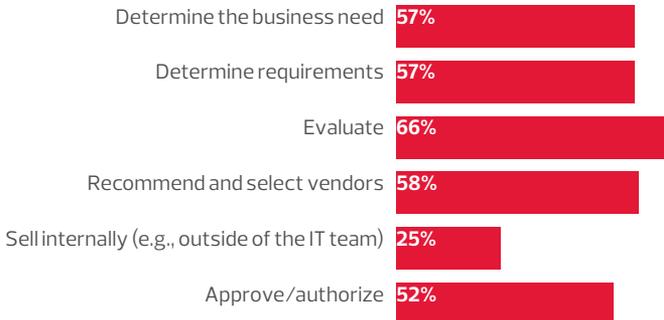
The average company size was 4,815 employees.

Respondent Profile – Job Title and Purchasing Responsibilities

Job Title

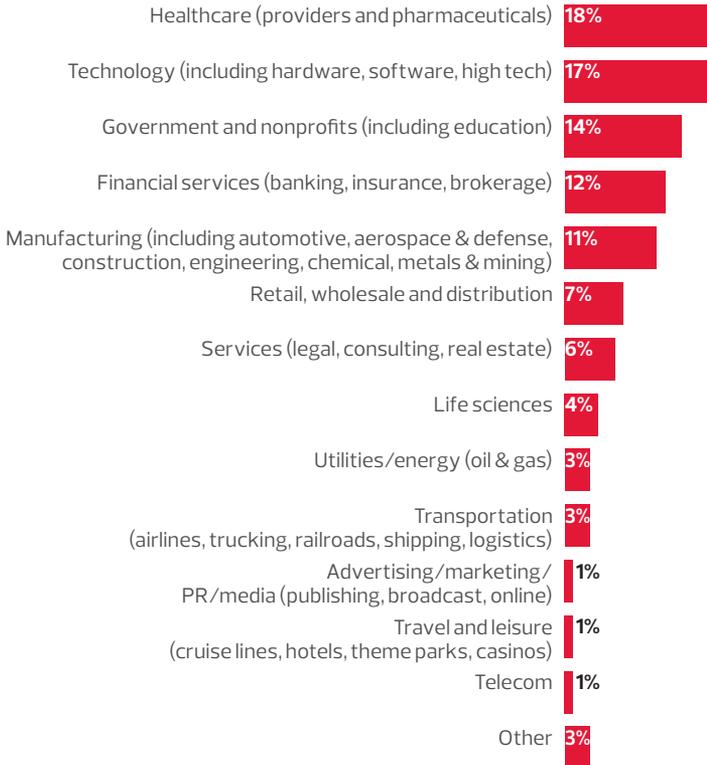
IT-Related (Net)	42%
CIO	3%
CTO	6%
CSO/CISO	1%
Chief Architect	1%
Executive VP/Senior VP/VP	7%
Executive Director/ Managing Director	3%
Director	16%
Manager	5%
Non IT-Related (Net)	58%
CEO/COO/Chairman/President	13%
CFO/Treasurer/Controller	7%
Executive VP/Senior VP/VP/ General Manager	13%
Director	26%

Involvement in the Purchase of Workplace Solutions, Software and Services



Respondent Profile – Industry and Company Size

Top Represented Industries



Company Size

15,000 employees or more	14%
10,000 – 14,999	7%
5,000 – 9,999	9%
2,500 – 4,999	20%
1,000 – 2,499	19%
500 – 999	18%
250 – 499	14%
Fewer than 250	–

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