



Collaboration Unleashed: Research Study

Empowering individuals to work together from anywhere

softchoice

Fall 2017

Introduction

Collaboration is critical to the growth and advancement of all organizations.

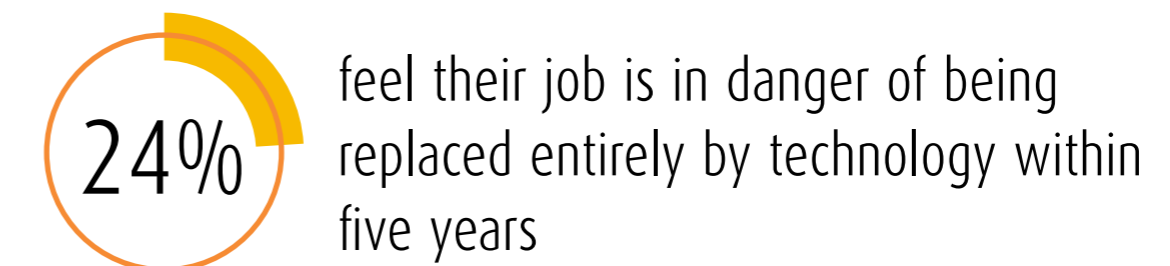
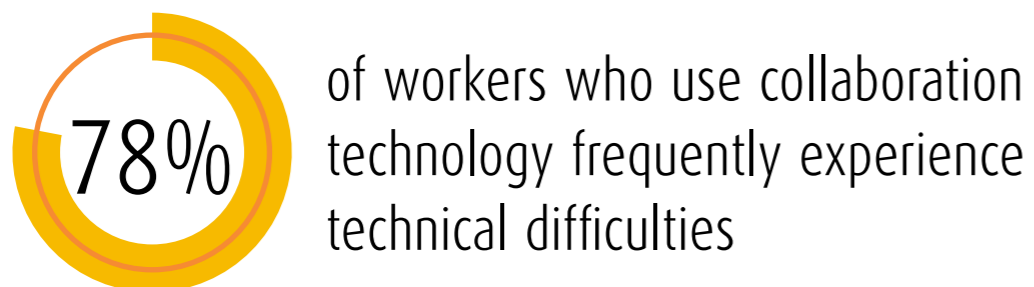
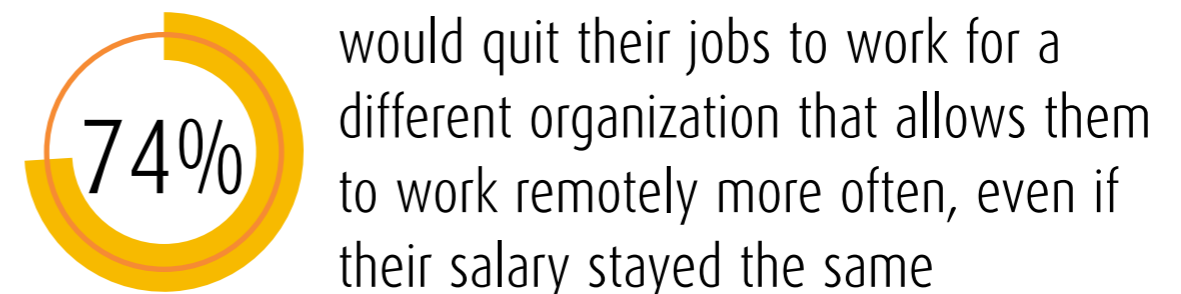
Bringing individuals together with varying disciplines, perspectives and experience generates fresh thinking and innovative results. It benefits the business when employees learn from one another by bringing their collective knowledge to bear on a single goal.

Collaboration technology, when applied right, enhances the productivity of the group, and creates better connectivity among collaborators regardless of geography. As technology continues to enhance and integrate how we collaborate, office employees increasingly demand the freedom to collaborate from wherever and whenever they do their best work.

Softchoice, a leading North American IT solution and managed service provider, commissioned a study to explore trends in employee productivity and collaboration, including the use of office automation tools, remote work flexibility, and how well organizations equip their people with the technology they need to be productive.

One thousand full-time North American office workers, who use a computer or mobile device for the majority of their workday, were surveyed.

Study Highlights



Section 1: Collaboration



Collaboration

Noun / col•lab•o•ra•tion /

A joint effort of multiple individuals or work groups to accomplish a task or project. Within an organization, collaboration typically involves the ability of two or more people to view and contribute to documents or other content over a network.

Almost all North American office workers rely on collaboration:

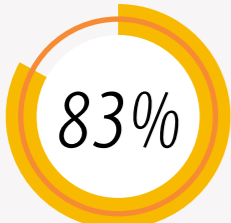
 94% need to collaborate with others to fulfill their job duties

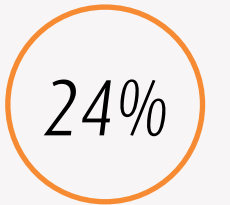
 37% are “very dependent” on collaboration

 50% spend at least 10 hours per week collaborating with others

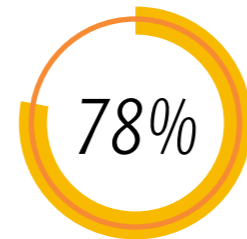
 25% spend at least 20 hours per week collaborating with others

Most office workers use technology to facilitate collaboration:

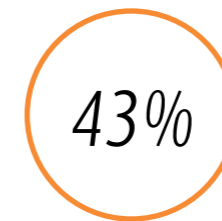
 83% use technology to collaborate with others who are not physically in the same room or office

 24% “often” or “always” have a remote participant in meetings

Among office workers who rely on collaboration technology, however, 3-in-4 run into frequent technical difficulties that impact the collaborative experience:



“frequently” experience technical difficulties

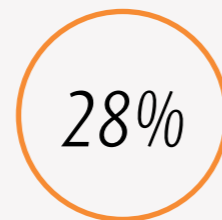


take at least five minutes to get the collaboration session started

Technical difficulties experienced by employees in the last month alone:



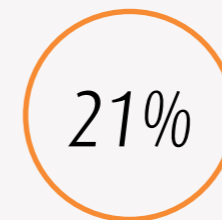
someone had trouble joining the meeting



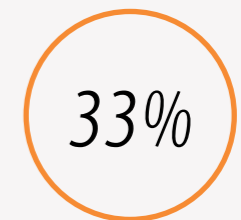
someone got dropped from the meeting



the meeting had connection quality issues



someone had trouble executing a feature (ie. screen sharing)



other delays and technical difficulties

In addition to technical problems detracting from collaboration, most office workers feel the business does a poor job understanding their business needs BEFORE technology is implemented:

IT engagement by business size:



Small (50-250 employees)



Mid-size (251-1,000 employees)



Enterprise (1,001+ employees)

Employees who don't have a say in technology decisions:

- Overall **57%**
- Small **52%**
- Mid-size **51%**
- Enterprise **68%**

Employees who don't get consulted after a new technology is implemented:

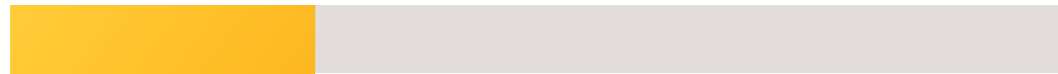
- Overall **39%**
- Small **36%**
- Mid-size **33%**
- Enterprise **47%**

Employees who don't have a say in technology decisions, but wish they did:

- Overall **27%**
- Small **26%**
- Mid-size **24%**
- Enterprise **31%**

Even if the technology does work, too many office workers receive inadequate training on the features and functionality of collaboration tools:

29% get little or no training on new technology



28% get 30 minutes to an hour



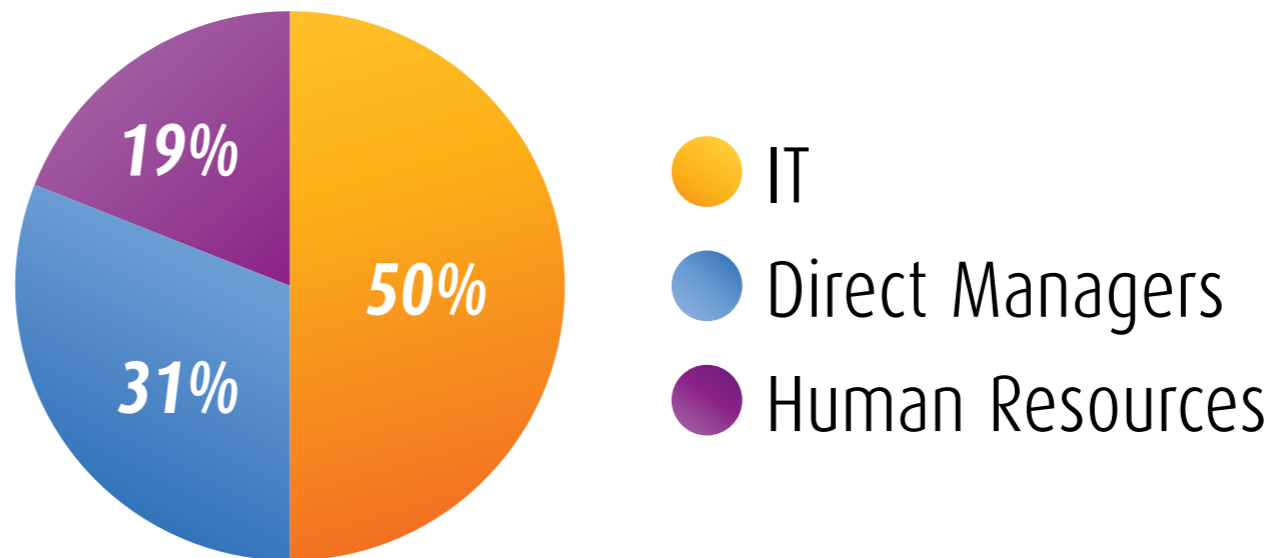
22% get 1-3 hours



15% get 3+ hours



According to office workers, who is most responsible for technology training and adoption?



Whether it's inadequate technology, training or consultation, most office workers admit to bringing their personal devices in to work to complete tasks:



55% of North American office workers have brought a personal device into the office to use instead of a similar device provided by their employer.

What was the reason?



- **37%** "My personal device is better suited for a specific task"
- **30%** "I am more efficient working on my device"
- **14%** "My work device is outdated"
- **11%** "I used an app my employer does not provide"
- **8%** "I used an app that is better than the one my employer provides"



Section 2: Mobility

Mobility

Noun / mo • bil • i • ty /

The trend toward a shift in work habits, with more employees working out of the office and using mobile devices and cloud services to perform business tasks.

Most office workers expect to be provided with technology that enables them to work away from the office. At best, half are issued the tools to make it happen.

85% say it's important their organization provides the technology support to work from home

What collaboration-enabling devices do employers provide?

Employer issued devices:

55.3% Laptops

19% Tablets

31% Smartphones

What collaboration-enabling applications do employers provide?

50% Instant Messaging

41% Remote Desktops

28% Unified Messaging

49% Videoconferencing

37% Screen Sharing

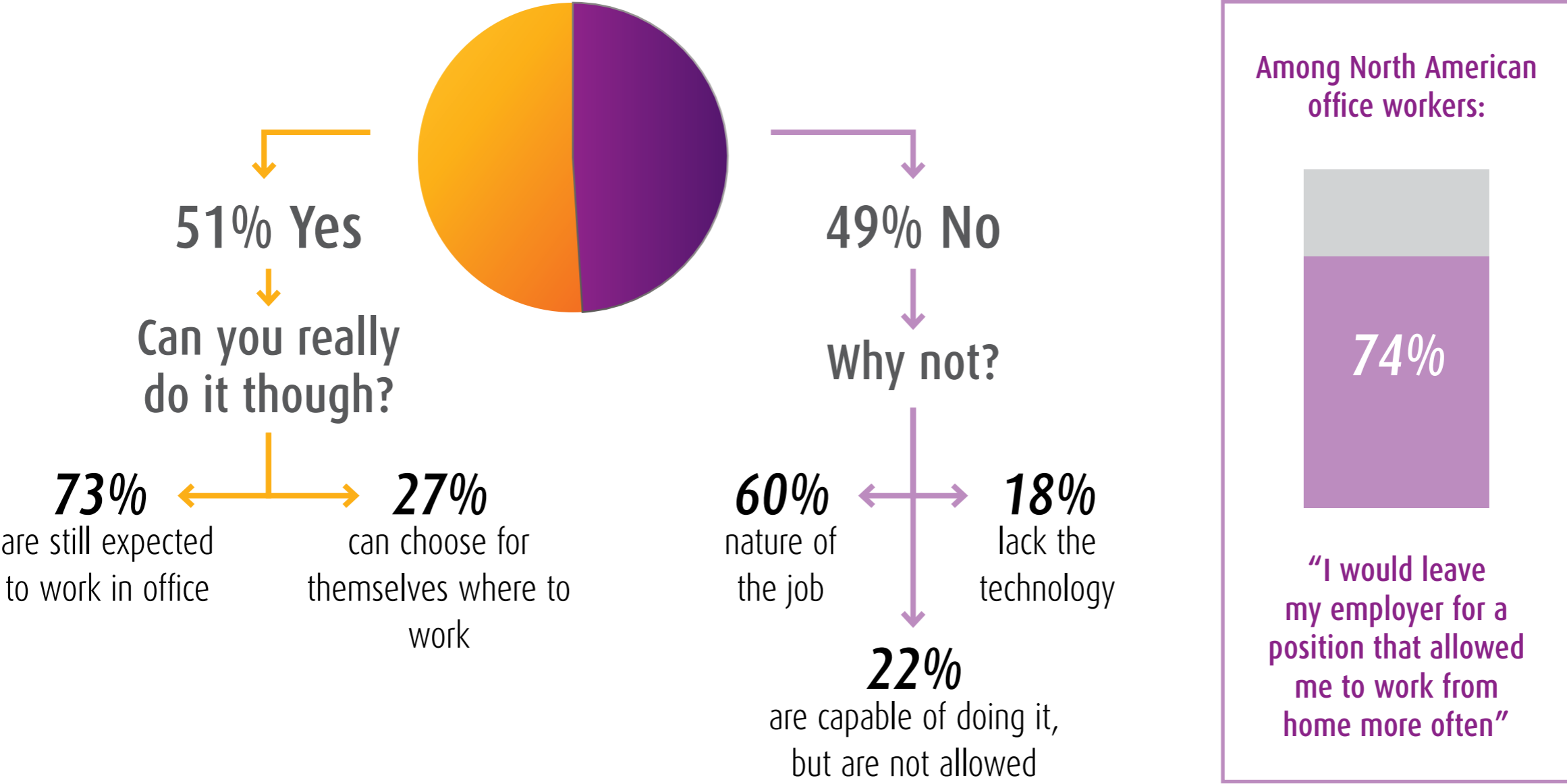
15% Internal Social Media

46% Teleconferencing

34% Software-based Phone

Since so few workers are supplied with the right technology, it makes sense that so few are allowed to work from home:

“Does your employer allow you to work from home on occasion?”





Section 3: Automation

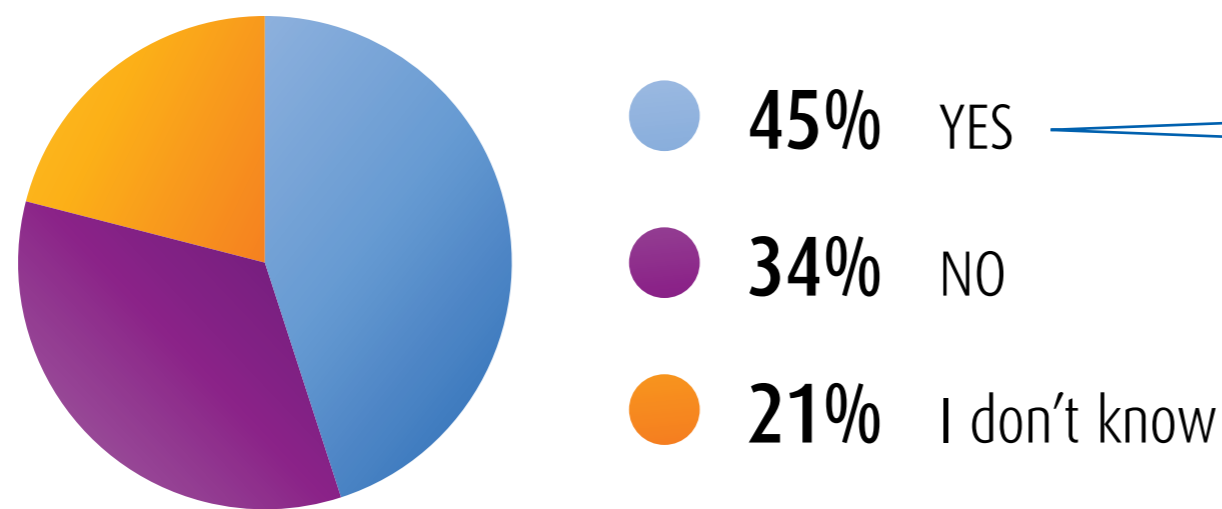
Automation

noun \ au • to • ma • tion \

The practice of substituting technology for human labor to perform specific tasks or jobs. The term today generally applies to cases in which the technology being deployed replaces knowledge-based tasks or positions, rather than merely replacing manual processes.

Common examples of office automation include leveraging information technology to perform routine processes such as scheduling, payroll, data filing and storage, correspondence, and customer support.

About half of North American office workers leverage some form of office automation to enhance business productivity:



Among those that have it, **69%** of employees say automation has positively impacted their productivity

Generally, North American office workers are split on how much office automation will improve business productivity:

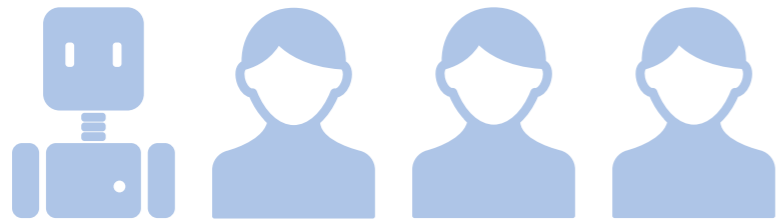
Do you feel automation will allow you to do your jobs more quickly or effectively?



Do you feel automation will take mundane tasks off your plate?



Fear of being replaced by technology is moving from the factory floor to the corporate office:



1-in-4 office workers (**24 percent**) are worried their job will be replaced entirely by technology within five years.

Which jobs do they feel are most at risk?



Accounting



Sales



Administration



Human Resources



IT



User Persona: The Millennial Office Worker



Millennials are now the largest demographic in the workforce, and growing. Understanding what is important to them is crucial for organizations to attract and retain top talent.

Millennials are ahead of the curve

	Millennials (ages 18-35)	Overall
Uses technology to collaborate with others	86%	83%
Believes their employer should equip them with technology to work remotely	88%	85%
Would quit their job for greater autonomy over where and when they work	77%	74%
Worry their job will be replaced by technology within five years	27%	24%

Generation gaps:

Compared to Baby Boomers, **Millennials are 2x more likely to feel:**

- More productive working at home
- Better equipped to work at home than the office
- Their employer-issued work device is outdated

Conclusions



#1 Collaboration is about people, not technology

Too often organizations treat collaboration projects as technology projects, not business projects.

Most organizations have different collaboration systems that exist in technology silos. The end result is a degraded experience for employees. Before deciding on a technology solution, organizations must first understand how employees work and interact – and how technology can remove barriers to collaboration and support them in achieving their business goals. Understanding employee needs ahead of the implementation will ensure the new technology is integrated into the existing IT architecture in a meaningful way that will drive adoption.



#2 Train and maintain

The technology needs to work and employees need to know how it works.

Employees become disenfranchised with technology if it doesn't work the way it should. Too many office workers experience technical difficulties with collaboration technology on a monthly basis. The IT team has to make sure technology works when employees need it.

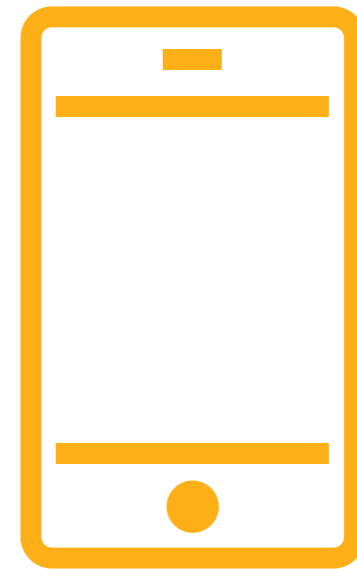
Employees also become disenfranchised if they don't see the productivity benefit of using collaboration technology. While North American office workers mostly put of the onus for training and adoption on their IT department, managers are also responsible to help their direct reports understand how the technology directly benefits them in their specific role. Before organizations embark on implementing a new business productivity tool, they must first establish stakeholder support across the business, and develop a communication plan to drive adoption.



#3 Mobile access is table stakes, not a perk

Most office workers expect their employers to provide technology that allows them to work from anywhere.

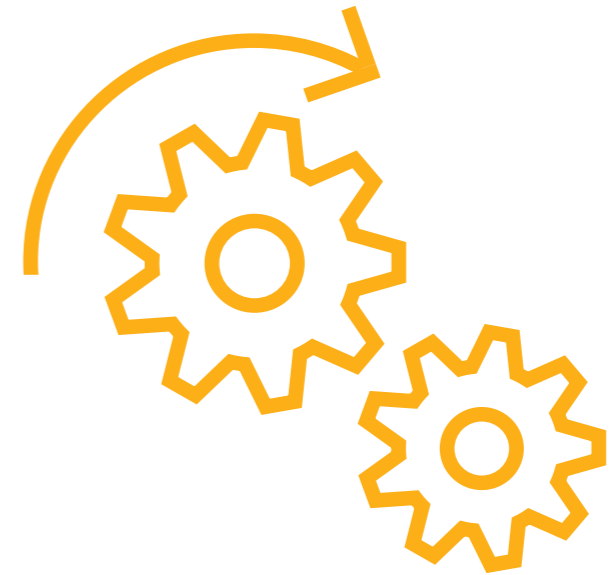
It has never been more challenging, but also more important, for organizations to deliver what employees want. As more organizations turn to mobile devices over desktops, and embrace cloud and collaboration technology, office workers rightly expect more flexibility over their rigid nine-to-five office workday. Organizations that enable a mobile workforce will have an easier time recruiting top talent and retaining their employees for the long term.



#4 Automation is not the apocalypse for office workers

Automation is not the boogeyman that some make it out to be.

While one-in-four office workers are scared they will be replaced by technology within five years, using technology to automate dull and routine tasks gives employees more time to focus on important tasks that drive business results.





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