


Priming a New Era of Digital Wellness

A working guide to supporting
workplace productivity, innovation,
and engagement through tech

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01

Introduction

01. INTRODUCTION

Much of the world first encountered Apple's Macintosh computer in a famous 1984 commercial in which a futuristic renegade represents the Macintosh as the antidote to drones in lockstep. The ad conveyed the promise of the best technology: the ability to set you free to innovate and do your best work. And, in many ways, this has been realized: We have easy access to tools that help us think, create, cross borders, and connect to each other.

At its worst though, technology has evolved to make us feel more like the drones than the renegade, forcing us to serve it instead of the other way around. This sentiment is relatable to any worker who feels anxiety at an after-hours phone notification or at the realization that they've spent a day performing the tech tasks of their job rather than doing the work itself.

Our current state of affairs begs the question:

How do we leverage workplace technology to empower us rather than overwhelm us?

It's a critical moment to consider this question. At the time of writing this report—late 2019—an imminent talent shortage looms. Currently 7.3 million job openings exist in the US, with only 6.5 million people seeking employment, rendering workers freer to leave their jobs if their needs aren't being met by their employers.

Workplace technology is poised to be the force that supports employees' efforts to maximize productivity and innovation, and leaders are taking notice: A recent DJI study¹ found that 81% of executive respondents envision their employee experience strategy

being completely or significantly transformed by technology over the next five years. For company leaders, now is the time to take a step back from the hyper-connected day-to-day responsibilities to assess:

What do your teams require from their tech, and what do you stand to gain by meeting their expectations?

Or conversely, what does your company stand to lose by continuing on with business as usual?

Our research can serve as a first step in this evaluation. Based on the premise that an influx of choice and distraction has broken our relationship with technology at the office, and that people now expect more from their enterprise software, we surveyed global end-users about tech trends and their implications in the contemporary workplace experience.

Our research uncovered sentiments about tech's role in supporting an engaged workplace, specifically through a new way of thinking: digital wellness.

These insights are especially salient in light of more distributed workforces and new expectations of employers to institute policies supporting healthy work. This report also offers leaders insights into workers' expectations of their tech, as well as guidance on building a happier workforce.

¹<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>



02

**How technology
underpins the
modern workplace
experience**

02. HOW TECHNOLOGY UNDERPINS THE MODERN WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

The best user experience design is one that's invisible to the user. The same is true for workplace tech, with the research demonstrating that people expect it to function efficiently, effectively, and unobtrusively. It must function so that we can function and provide the foundation of the most efficient workdays.

The strength of this foundation is a key element of the modern **workplace experience (WX)²—the aggregate manifestation of a workplace's digital and physical spaces, processes, and culture.** Among a list of factors shaping WX perceptions, our study's respondents ranked “access to effective technology” fifth, closely behind salary, leadership, flexible work arrangements, and office culture (Figure 2.1).

Technology is increasingly the primary medium for how work gets done and is thus a critical determinant of how well people can do their work. The World Economic Forum refers to our current age of tech-enabled work as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by tech permeating all business objectives, with “companies seeking to harness new and emerging technologies to reach higher levels of efficiency of production and consumption, expand into new markets, and compete on new products for a global consumer base composed increasingly of digital natives.”³

Simply put, when tech works, employees benefit: 90% of our respondents who cited having access to good tech reported having good productivity.

2.1

Rank the following factors from most important to least important in their ability to create a workplace environment that allows you to do your best work.

Salary/compensation

19.8%

Leadership/management

18.8%

Flexible work arrangements

14.5%

Office culture/company mission or purpose

13.1%

Access to effective technology to get your work done

12.4%

Skills training

12.1%

Wellness programs (e.g. gym memberships, mindfulness sessions)

4.8%

Office design or perks (e.g. free lunch, beer on tap)

4.5%

02. HOW TECHNOLOGY UNDERPINS THE MODERN WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

2.2

What's the quality of your tech at work: good, average, or poor? And on a typical workday, how would you rate your productivity and ability to complete tasks efficiently?

More than 90% of respondents who have access to "good" tech at work report being productive



■ Good productivity

Only 38% of respondents who have access to "average" tech at work report being productive



■ Average productivity

Only 12% of respondents who have access to "poor" tech at work report being productive



■ Poor productivity

02. HOW TECHNOLOGY UNDERPINS THE MODERN WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

The research also reveals a hierarchy of WX priorities that might be surprising to leaders: Office perks like free food are nice-to-haves but are not as important as giving people the technology to get their work done effectively (Figure 2.1).

Sure, the ping pong table helps foster community, but it could fold up without much consequence to the broader business. **Technology, on the other hand, is integrated into all work and underpins all of WX. If it falters, it's significantly more difficult to get work done.**

In addition, participants' prioritization of flexibility and connection to a corporate mission (ranked fourth amongst WX factors, Figure 2.3) are examples of tech's less obvious influence. A messaging platform, for example, can help employees work from anywhere and establish a virtual representation of a corporate culture, helping remote employees feel in sync with their company and its values.

However, while tech is a critical foundation of WX, not all technology is created equal in the eyes of users. Our research identified three foundational attributes that users think of as table stakes in their ability to do their jobs: **speed, ease of use, and reliability.**

The prominence of these factors reflects the state of work today. Trends like a distributed workforce mean that reliability is critical: A user might live hundreds of miles from his company's tech support, so temperamental technology would be more disruptive to him than to a colleague who works in the same office as the IT desk.

Ease of use, on the other hand, might be critical to teams navigating an influx of new software. Leveraging a wider array of tools requires that they're intuitive to learn and easy to use. And lastly, the need

for speed is compounded by the entire workforce's reliance on tech. If a company of 3,000 employees uses a productivity tool that has a one-minute lag in startup time, those minutes in aggregate mean significant businesses hours lost, and an accompanying effect on the bottom line.

While Figure 2.3 illustrates the values of end-users, it's clear from Figure 2.4 that these non-negotiables also directly improve productivity in the workplace, so employers would be wise to meet their employees' expectations.

“For me, just ease of use is number one, absolutely... no one wants to use something counterintuitive.”

—Adrian S.
communications director, China

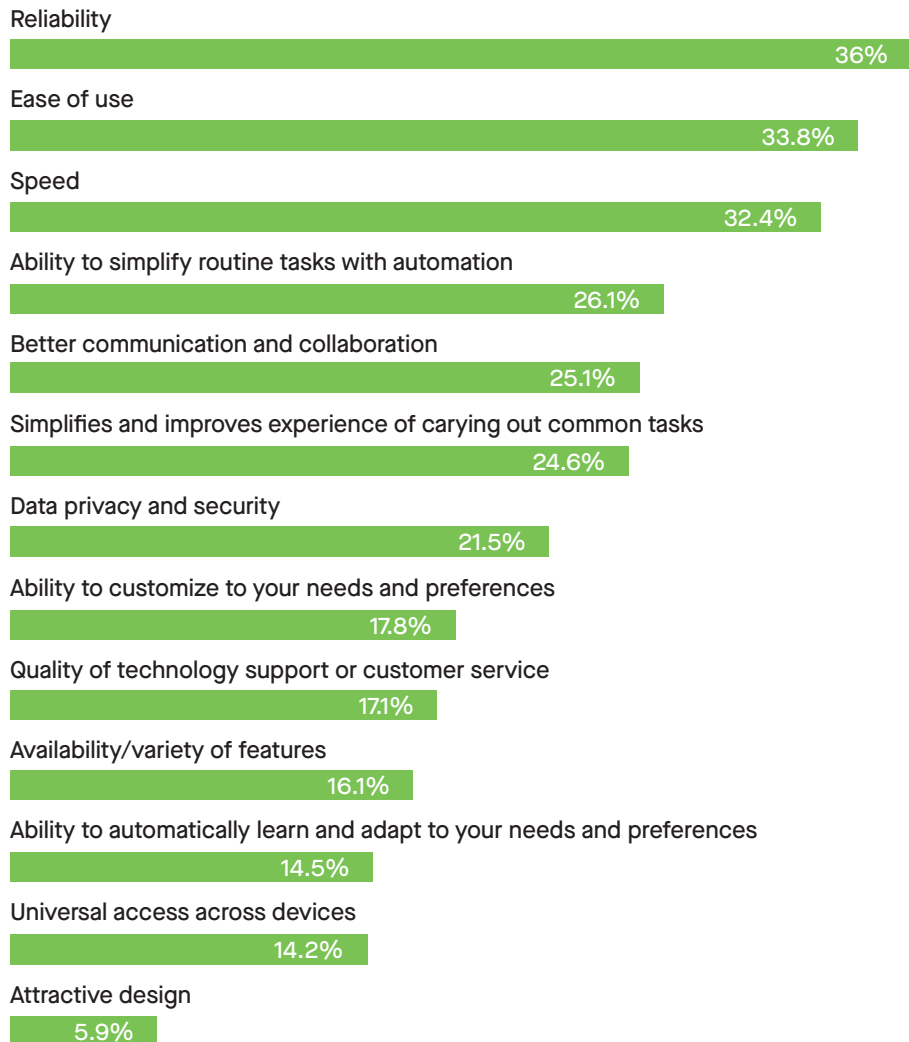
²<https://sponsored.qz.com/citrix/syllabus/index.html>

³http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf

02. HOW TECHNOLOGY UNDERPINS THE MODERN WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

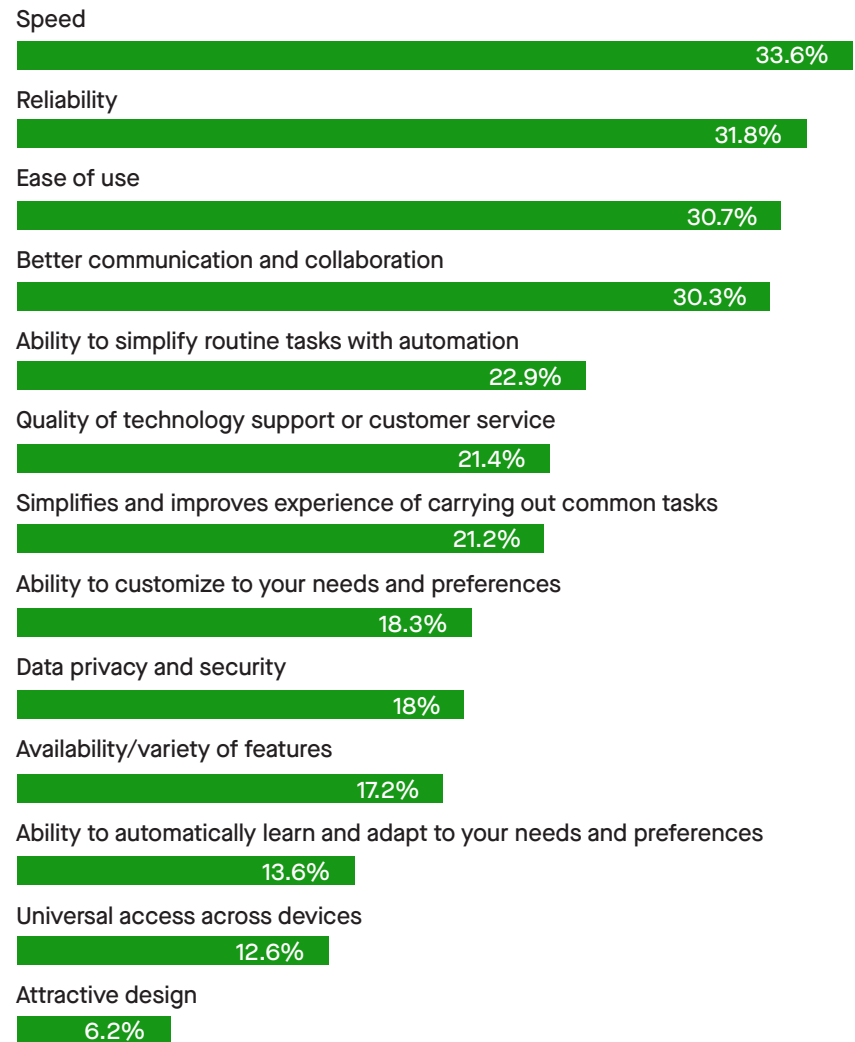
2.3

Below is a list of common attributes that measure the overall value of technology. Considering your workplace technologies, please select the three attributes you think are most important.



2.4

Which of the following workplace technology attributes are most likely to improve your ability to be productive in the workplace? Please select up to three.





03

**Why your digital
wellness requires
engaged leaders
and the right tools**

03. WHY DIGITAL WELLNESS REQUIRES ENGAGED LEADERS AND THE RIGHT TOOLS

If these non-negotiables represent the baseline of what tech needs to provide users, digital wellness represents technology's full potential. Defined as **tech's ideal state in which it works in harmony with users' physical and mental health**, digital wellness will help users achieve their goals as easily as possible.

However, for many of our respondents, digital wellness seems to be more of an aspirational state than a reality. The research revealed a few common complaints about the worst consequences of tech adoption:

- **Productivity distractions** from the constant pings to focused work time
- **Perpetual connectivity**, such as the aforementioned after-hours disruptions
- **Decision fatigue** from an overwhelming array of tools and systems

For example, productivity is hindered when apps add time and effort to processes that should be simple. And the emotional wellbeing of teams might be compromised by the constant notifications built into many tools today, as articulated in an oft-cited 2008 UC Irvine study that found that “after only 20 minutes of interrupted performance, people reported significantly higher stress, frustration, workload, effort, and pressure.”⁴

“A negative thing in technology is that people think you’re always online and available for them.”

—Leandro S.
lawyer, Brazil

03. WHY DIGITAL WELLNESS REQUIRES ENGAGED LEADERS AND THE RIGHT TOOLS

Wellbeing also suffers on account of the “always on” mentality that’s plaguing many companies. Glorifying late nights and skipped lunches is a sign that a company’s culture is headed in the wrong direction, according to the 67% of research respondents who believe being “always on” has a significant negative impact on their health and wellbeing.

Decision fatigue is familiar to anyone who has been tasked with choosing software for a company or team. The proliferation of business apps is ultimately beneficial, but not without challenges: At the time of writing, the global market for small and medium-sized enterprise productivity software is forecasted to grow at 16.5% CAGR in the next six years.⁵ It’s becoming increasingly difficult to choose from so many options.

All three of these factors add up to a complex business landscape that’s taking its toll on workers: A 2018 Gallup poll⁶ shows that about two-thirds of workers experience burnout, and these employees are more likely to take sick days, have low confidence, and look for new jobs. Perpetual connectivity can rob workers of precious time to recharge their minds—not to mention their technology.

“I think work/life balance is becoming harder because technology makes it easier for everyone to find where we are and what we are doing. It’s become more difficult because some people might have a bigger tolerance on what work can mean in their lives.”

—Ralph T.
managing partner, Brazil

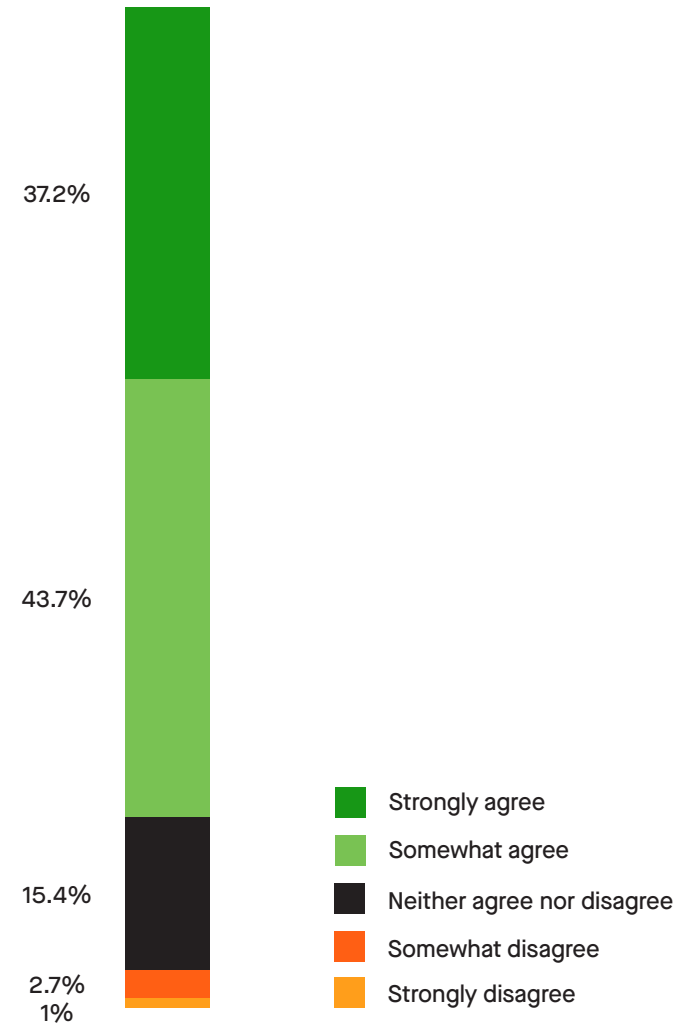
03. WHY DIGITAL WELLNESS REQUIRES ENGAGED LEADERS AND THE RIGHT TOOLS

When we consider how much people depend on technology to get work done, it's no wonder that there's been a wave of backlash in response to our attachment to it. There's a cultural dialogue that says we spend too much time with it—and as a result can spend too much time working. Although remedies like digital detoxes have become more mainstream, there's no escaping technology's pull—we need it.

In order to make sense of this tension, employers must understand how technology can service people and their work, without burning them out, an expectation confirmed by the 81% of research respondents who believe that decreasing burnout should be a top priority for employers.

3.1

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Decreasing burnout resulting from chronic workplace stress should be a top priority for employers?



O3. WHY DIGITAL WELLNESS REQUIRES ENGAGED LEADERS AND THE RIGHT TOOLS

HOW TECH CAN SUPPORT DIGITAL WELLNESS

The new pressure on employers to establish policies promoting work/life balance puts the role of technology at the fore. Whereas in the past managers could identify employees at risk of burnout simply by seeing who's still at the office late at night, flexible hours and telecommuting have rendered this anecdotal dataset incomplete. This information is more quickly gleaned by the time stamp of an email or an active status in a messaging app.

Employee or management responses can only do so much; **technology itself also needs to foster workplace wellness**, ideally without sacrificing security or connectivity in the process.

To do this right, the research shows that workplace tech needs to **simplify work** so that it can be done more efficiently, without the software itself requiring menial, time-consuming tasks. When technology processes take up more time than the work employees were hired to do, it makes workers unproductive and ultimately less satisfied.

Leaders should take notice when choosing which tools to adopt: When asked what's most important when new technologies are introduced, 83.9% noted they simply want them to be easy to use.

Three attributes emerged that can guide tech decisions toward digital wellness:

- **Productivity:** Technology that sets app controls for scheduling, blocking times, and silencing notifications.
- **Mobility:** Technology that enables greater flexibility for employees to work securely when and where they need and to log out of personal devices outside of work hours.
- **Automation:** Technology that automates administrative tasks and optimizes workflows.



**Workplace tech
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done more efficiently.**

03. DIGITAL WELLNESS AND THE EMPLOYER

Automation, in particular, is poised to foster a more frictionless work experience. On average, our respondents report spending more than four hours a day on “administrative tasks” and “searching for needed information,” and three out of four of them believe that a top priority for employers should be decreasing the amount of daily, repetitive tasks to free up their time for creativity and innovation.

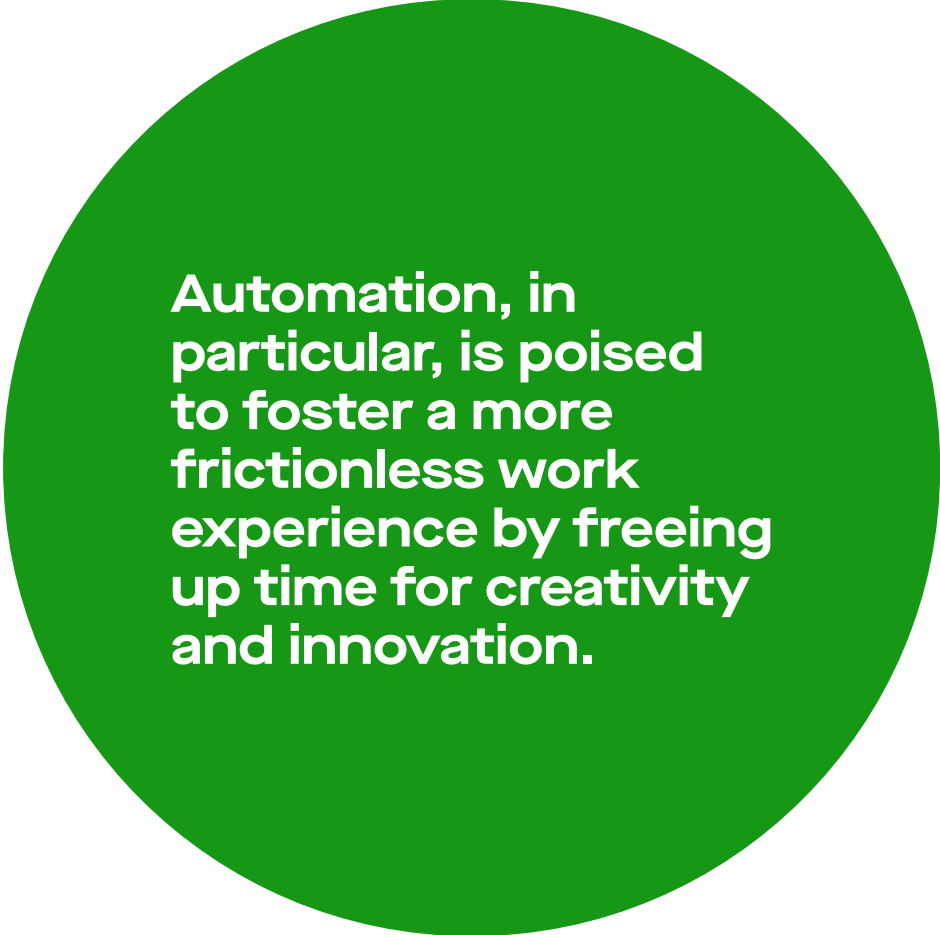
Policies that empower employees to say no to tasks that could be automated will help them feel more in control of their days and able to refocus on more complex and interesting work. Employers should also encourage employees to identify areas of the business ripe for automation.

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN LEVERAGE TECH TO SUPPORT DIGITAL WELLNESS

With 84.6% of respondents identifying better work/life balance as essential to job satisfaction, and 80% agreeing that it's leadership's responsibility to positively influence this balance, managerial duties must evolve to include fostering a healthier workplace and tailoring their approach to the needs of specific groups.

For example, some respondents identified flexible work arrangements as more important than policies that help them fully unplug, whereas others want more agency over when they take that downtime.

Overall, the research indicates that digital wellness is no longer a “nice-to-have” in today's workplace. To stay competitive, companies must consider the wellbeing of their people and select technology that works in service of this.



Automation, in particular, is poised to foster a more frictionless work experience by freeing up time for creativity and innovation.

⁴<https://www.ics.uci.edu/~gmark/chi08-mark.pdf>

⁵<https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2019/08/31/1909345/0/en/Productivity-Software-Market-to-grow-at-16-5-CAGR-to-hit-96-36-Bn-by-2025-Insights-On-Top-Trends-Opportunities-Challenges-Growth-Inhibitors-and-Technological-Advancements-Adroit-Ma.html>

⁶<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/237059/employee-burnout-part-main-causes.aspx>

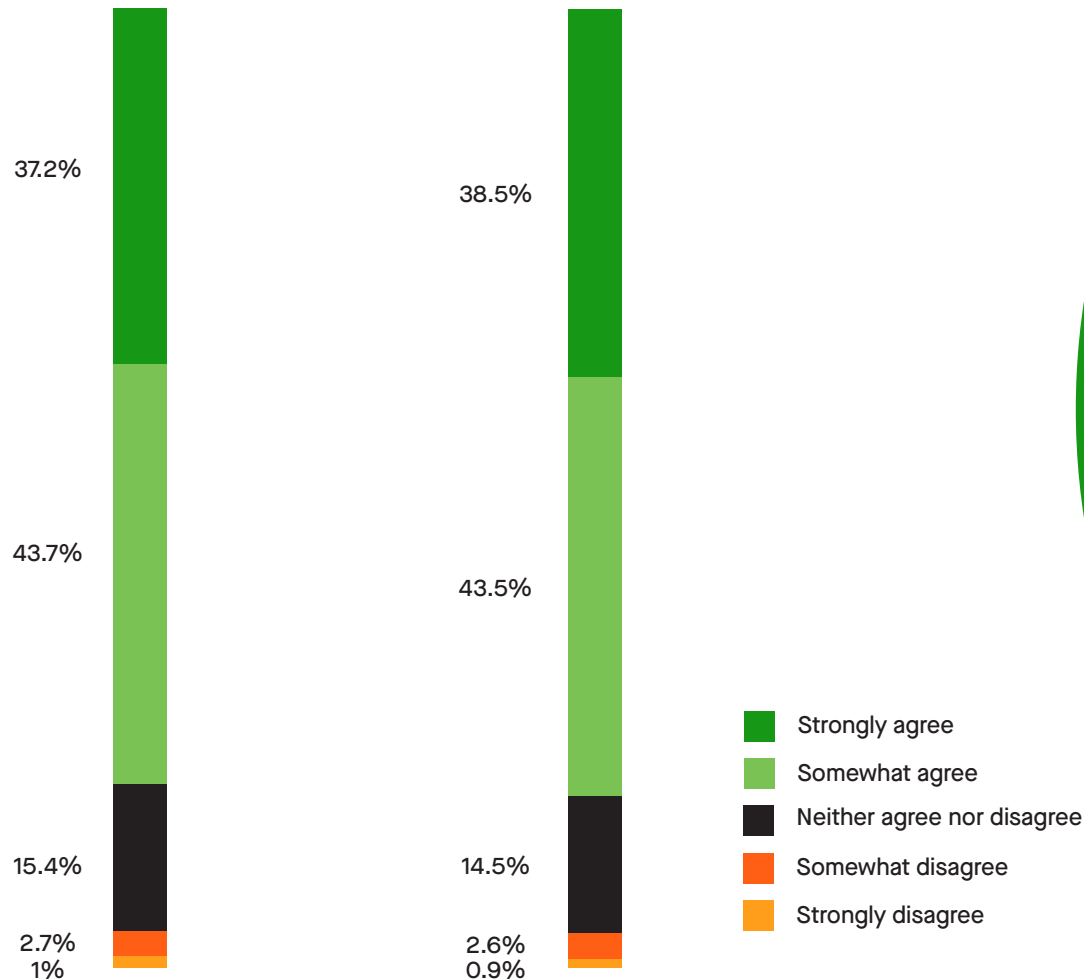
03. WHY DIGITAL WELLNESS REQUIRES ENGAGED LEADERS AND THE RIGHT TOOLS

3.2

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Decreasing burnout resulting from chronic workplace stress should be a top priority for employers.

Employers have a responsibility to enact flexible workplace policies that allow for better work/life balance regardless of age, gender, or life stage.



“Work is life, and life is work, and we always talk about work even in personal life. I think everyone should try to understand their proper balance and work for it.”

—Ralph T.
managing partner, Brazil



04

**How your tech
decision-makers can
unlock creativity
and productivity**

04. HOW YOUR TECH DECISION-MAKERS CAN UNLOCK CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Ultimately, digital wellness should set the conditions for maximizing productivity and innovation. But the research suggests that companies are thinking about these imperatives too narrowly and that a more tech-focused lens would be, well... more productive.

Respondents ranked “a positive impact on productivity” as one of the top two attributes to evaluate new tools, and 92% of respondents reporting a very good technology experience also reported having a good level of productivity.

How? Because it frees them to work on the most high-value work, they widely report (Figure 2.2). The research also tells us that **technology is a primary enabler of end users’ innovation and creativity**—more so than having creative thinking spaces or mindfulness programs.

About 77% of respondents also say that greater flexibility with their work schedule would help them innovate and be more creative in the workplace. Thus, technology that supports this flexibility shouldn’t be seen as merely an employee perk but rather as critical business imperative akin to offering employees meeting rooms with whiteboard walls and a stipend to attend a relevant conference.

“[My employees will say] ‘I don’t want to have to sit in my office from nine to five. I want to have technology and an objective. And if I have errands to run for my personal life, I can do that, because I know what I have to do get done for work.’”

—Russ I.
robotics engineer, Japan

04. HOW YOUR TECH DECISION-MAKERS CAN UNLOCK CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

The “best” technology depends on whom you ask. Some interviewees talked about valuing analog tools (e.g. pen and paper journaling or group whiteboard sessions) for hyper creative thinking. These participants also talked about the potential to build on these tried-and-true tools with advances like AR and VR.

Respondents also sorted technologies into the camps of “productivity” or “innovation.” AR and VR, for example, are not viewed as having a significant impact on productivity even though they top the list of technologies that could have a positive impact on innovation. Likewise, respondents see “customizable software” as a tool that enhances productivity (63%) rather than innovation (37%).

This gap suggests that **IT decision-makers should think carefully about the specific objectives for their technology and select accordingly.** As the critical arbiters of investment and resourcing, they not only decide which technologies are implemented but also for whom and for what purpose.

The leaders who can successfully execute the deployment of these emerging technologies—by considering the needs of their end-users—might be rewarded with unlocked creativity and innovation across their organizations.

4.1

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements pertaining to your ability to innovate and be creative in the workplace?

Having access to the best workplace technologies



Having encouragement/support from senior leadership and management



Having greater flexibility in my work schedule



Having access to workplace technology training



Having tools to automate mundane/tedious tasks



Having access to creative-thinking space



Having access to mindfulness and well-being spaces

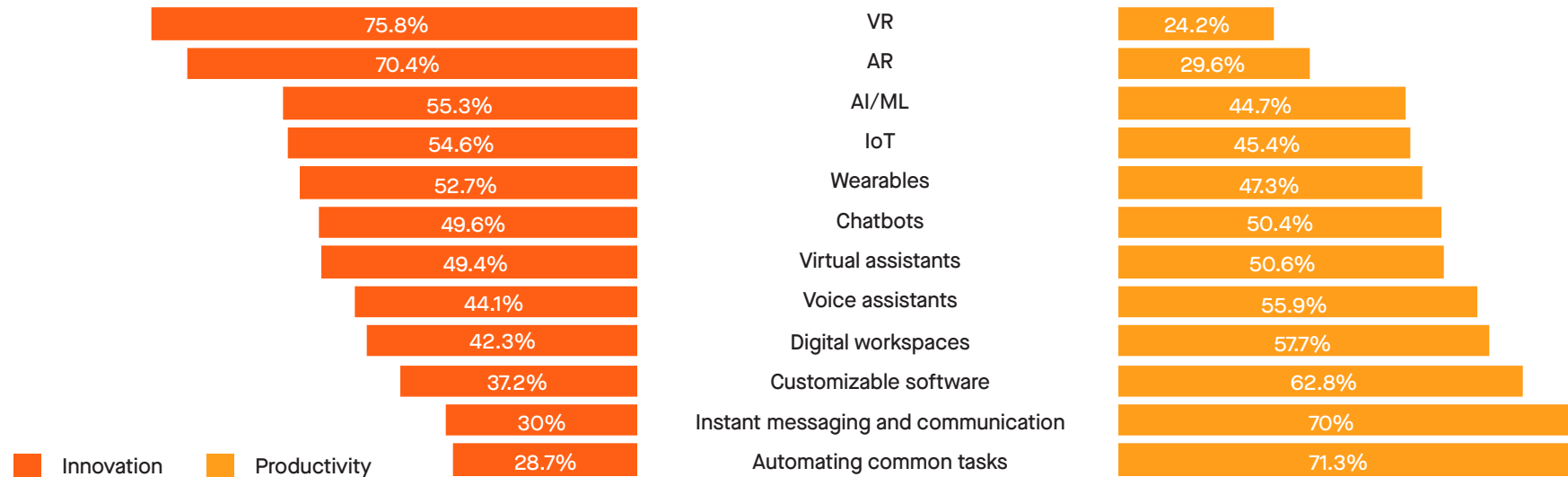


Agree Neutral Disagree

04. HOW YOUR TECH DECISION-MAKERS CAN UNLOCK CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

4.2

Below is a list of emerging technologies. Considering your typical workday, select whether you believe the technology will have a bigger positive impact on your creativity/innovation or on your productivity.



“When working remotely or collaborating with other studios, everyone loses the ability to pass on physical things and must sit on the same side of the table. Analog play helps solve problems, so AR may facilitate that thinking.”

—Momo E.
designer, China



05

**How today's tech
choices influence
your long-term
competitive advantage**

05. HOW TODAY'S TECH CHOICES INFLUENCE YOUR LONG-TERM COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The research makes clear that thoughtful choices around technology can yield plenty of benefits—both obvious (the productivity gains represented by the 90% of respondents who cited having access to good tech also reporting good productivity) and unanticipated (75.6% of respondents cite good technology as having a positive impact on work/life balance).

It's up to tech decision-makers to leverage these opportunities. And, with 53.4% of respondents reporting that their organizations could do a better job of providing access to more effective technology, it's likely that you could be giving your team more. This gap between employee expectations and employer capabilities represents **whitespace that smart employers will fill in to their advantage.**

Here are the key considerations all IT decisions should keep in mind:

- **Get the table stakes right for your tech.**
First and foremost, employers must ensure that technology is meeting non-negotiable basic needs—the trinity of ease-of-use, speed, and reliability. Any strategy, no matter how well-resourced, researched, or rolled out, will fail if it doesn't pass this test.
- **Foster digital wellness to harness your tech's full potential.**
Both the tech tools themselves and management's integration of them should bolster employee wellness. For example, finding ways to automate low-value tasks can help with productivity and burnout, while adopting tools and policies that respect offline hours can help employees navigate "always on" expectations.
- **Ensure your strategy leverages tech's future.**
The most future-proofed leaders will make efforts to understand their employees' individualized and org-wide tech needs and be best positioned to implement cutting-edge tools like AI and VR to better empower their workforce.


A majority of respondents reported that their companies could do better at providing more effective technology, so it's likely you could be giving your team more.

05. HOW TODAY'S TECH CHOICES INFLUENCE YOUR LONG-TERM COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

In its most advanced application, technology can be seen as an extension of our humanity rather than in opposition to it. As Anna, a Brazilian founder in the education field, articulates, cellphones “effectively work as an extension of our ears, our hands, our eyes, and, of course, our brain.”

This is true of all the tools that function like workplace hubs. Technology should be viewed as expanding our wingspans rather than fencing us in, enhancing workers rather than replacing them.

This research offers a good first step to building that foundation—strong and largely invisible—and to setting the stage for greater advancements. Let's leverage the technology we use everyday to help us create an empowered, productive, and satisfied workforce ready to do its best work.



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06

About the research


06. ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Citrix partnered with Quartz Insights to conduct and analyze this 2019 research. Our partnership is built on a shared interest in the lives of today's workers.

Citrix designs digital workplace solutions with the end-user in mind and understands the business advantage of employee empowerment through technology. Likewise, Quartz is a global business news organization that's well-versed in reporting on the changing demands of the workforce and the evolving tech landscape.

For this research collaboration, the Quartz Insights team conducted 21 in-depth interviews across seven international markets. Following these interviews, it surveyed 1,055 people across demographics including country, industry, seniority, age, gender, and company size.

Our research participants are referenced as "respondents" throughout this report, and the next page details the breakdown of our sample set.

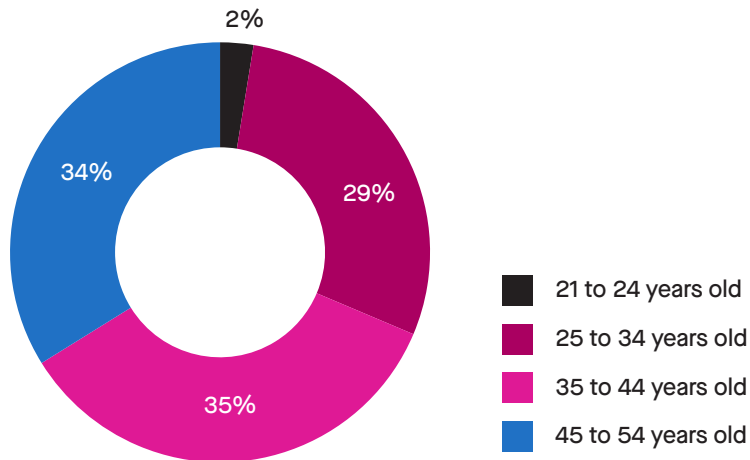


Our research partnership is built on a shared interest in the lives of today's workers.

06. ABOUT THE RESEARCH

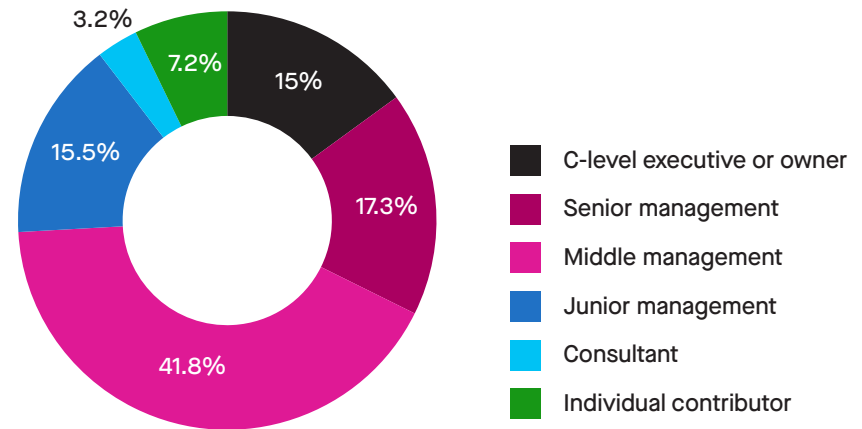
6.1

What is your age?



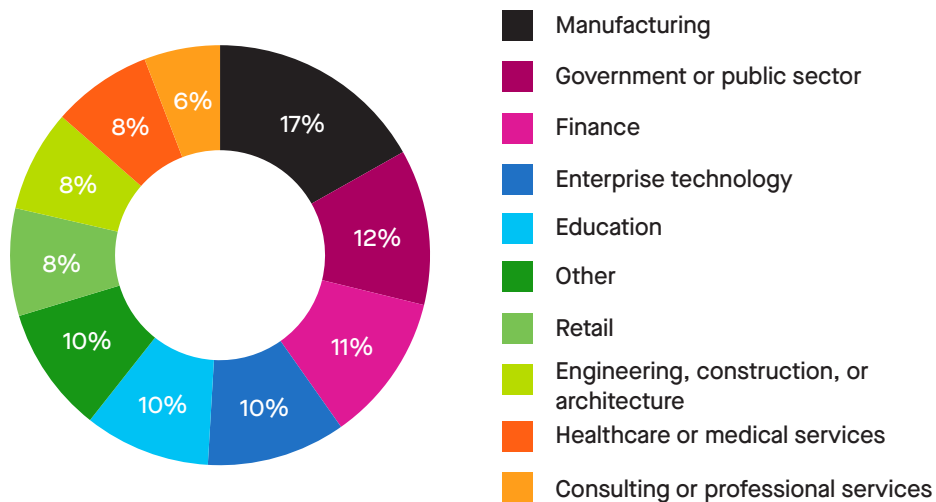
6.2

Which of the following best describes your position in the organization you work for?



6.3

Which of the following best describes the industry sector your employer belongs to?



6.4

In which country do you primarily reside?

