Harvard Business Review
ANALYTIC SERVICES

Pulse Survey

THE CONNECTED WORKFORCE

Maximizing Productivity, Creativity, and Profitability

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The modern workforce of today looks nothing like it did 10 years ago. Not only is there a surge in mobile and remote workers, but productivity, collaboration, even profitability now hinge on the productive use of technology like never before.

For CIOs and IT pros alike, the boon of tech-savvy and dispersed workers with an ever increasing expectation of what technology should do for them presents a daunting challenge: How do you manage, secure, and budget for increasingly complex environments while also ensuring frictionless, collaborative work experiences?

To win, IT departments must play a more strategic role in growing the business. Supporting the business is important. But aligning IT to strategic direction and transforming the business are essential. CIOs who figure out how to embrace new ways of connecting and empowering their employees are seeing business outcomes that include both cost savings and employee retention, which produces superior market positions.

We asked Harvard Business Review Analytic Services to help tell a more complete story of the connected workforce through the voices of IT executives—the ones who are weathering technology's unprecedented effect on their systems, staff, end users, and culture.

Through these anecdotes and data, we hope your organization can form a more intentional approach to end-user computing and collaboration technologies—and feel invigorated by a workplace powered by technology and sustained by people empowered to work smarter.

DAVID MAYER

VICE PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER, CONNECTED WORKFORCE

INSIGHT

THE CONNECTED WORKFORCE

Maximizing Productivity, Creativity, and Profitability

Collaboration has long been the lifeblood of productivity and creativity in the workplace. With precious few exceptions, humans have always been able to accomplish more together than they can on their own.

Today, advances in technology have elevated enterprise-level collaboration to high science. At leading organizations, employees are able to connect with coworkers and key external partners when and where they wish—and with the data, software applications, and other digital resources they need, in real time—to work together with a high degree of efficiency.

But that isn't happening at every organization. For some, the promise of a seamlessly connected and collaborative workforce hasn't been fully realized. To find out how great the disparity is between those who are winning on these fronts and those who are lagging—and to uncover opportunities to close the gap—Harvard Business Review Analytic Services recently polled more than 200 business executives, managers, and consultants about their experiences at their own organizations.

At a high level, the findings are encouraging. More than nine in 10 survey respondents say their end-user computing systems and technology have led to productivity improvements within their organizations, including 54% who say their technology has helped "to a great extent." Nearly two-thirds of respondents—62%—also say they're getting good value from their investments in technology, although that number is skewed by those who claim their technology has enabled high levels of collaboration among their workforce. Eighty-two percent of that group say they're getting good value from their technology investments, versus only 41% of those who aren't seeing high levels of collaboration.

Success hasn't been even on all fronts, then. In fact, nearly four in 10 survey respondents say their technology is making it harder, not easier, for their employees to work quickly. The same number say their technology makes it difficult or time-consuming for employees to access core business data or applications without enlisting the help of someone from IT or finance. A third add that their technology makes it harder to collaborate. And while roughly two-thirds say their current systems are helping them improve products and services and reduce costs, only about one-third say their technology is helping drive key business outcomes like attracting and retaining customers or growing revenue, and only 29% say their technology is helping improve profit margins. FIGURE 1

HIGHLIGHTS:

9 in 10
SURVEY RESPONDENTS SAY THEIR END-USER COMPUTING SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE LED TO PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS.

54%
SAY THEIR TECHNOLOGY HAS HELPED "TO A GREAT EXTENT."

FIGURE 1

WHERE TECHNOLOGY SHORTFALLS ARE HINDERING COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY

In what areas do your organization's current end-user computing systems and technology, including devices, most hinder your company's competitiveness and productivity? [SELECT UP TO 3]

SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

COMPANIES THAT ARE HIGHLY CONNECTED ARE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO REPORT A FAVORABLE MARKET POSITION RELATIVE TO THEIR PEERS.

Other findings from our survey suggest just how dangerous these shortcomings may be for organizations struggling to create a connected workforce—one in which employees are equipped with the technologies and services they need to be collaborative and productive. Companies that are highly connected, for example, are more than twice as likely to report a favorable market position relative to their peers: 57%, versus just 27% of companies with poor connectivity. Meanwhile, companies that are highly connected also tend to be growing faster. Forty percent of that group say their revenue grew more than 10% over the past two years, versus only 29% of those that are poorly connected.

What's keeping some of the laggards in this area from realizing all that today's advanced technologies have to offer? A third of survey respondents say their technology is outdated, with more than half blaming budget constraints. Four in 10 also complain that their legacy on-premises systems don't mesh easily with new technology, and three in 10 add that their IT departments are too busy supporting those legacy systems to introduce new technology. For some, the pace of change is simply overwhelming, too. As one survey respondent noted, it's moving "faster than we can keep up."

The Importance of Connectivity and Collaboration

How important is a connected workforce? Companies that do it well are more likely to say it's helping them compete in important areas such as attracting and retaining customers, improving products and services, growing revenues, and growing profit margins. FIGURE 2

Highly connected companies also are more than twice as likely as those with low connectivity to report a superior market position relative to their competitors (57% vs. 27%), and to have grown their revenue by more than 10% over thepast two years (40% vs. 29%). FIGURE 3

Still, at a time when consumers around the world are accustomed to instantaneous communication—24-hour news channels, abundant social media platforms, mobile technology at their fingertips—only 43% of survey respondents say the computing systems and other technologies they use at work make it easy to collaborate with coworkers and external business partners, while a third say their technology is actually making that activity difficult.

Not surprisingly, the more advanced that survey respondents rate their organization's technology, the more likely they are to say it is easy for their colleagues to connect and collaborate. At Illumina Inc., a San Diego, California-based life sciences company with more than 5,500 employees worldwide, collaboration is considered a core value, says chief information officer Norm Fjeldheim. "Our products are very complex, so it takes many different skills to bring a product to the market, sell it, and teach customers to use it," he explains. "At many companies, and certainly ours, it's extremely rare for anything to get done without collaboration."

One of the key benefits of a connected and collaborative workforce, Fjeldheim adds, is that it helps the enterprise operate at speed. "Enabling people to work together—to more easily and effectively share information—improves our time to market," he explains. "It also means that we get feedback from our customers faster, so we can make improvements and get new features into our products faster. We really can't exist—we can't produce the products we produce—without everybody working together very, very effectively."

Jim DuBois, a 25-year veteran of Microsoft Corp. who served as the company's chief information officer from January 2014 through September 2017 and now works as a venture capital advisor, makes a similar case. "Especially the way the world operates today at an accelerated pace of change, a connected workforce in which people can learn from each other and from customers and partners faster is going

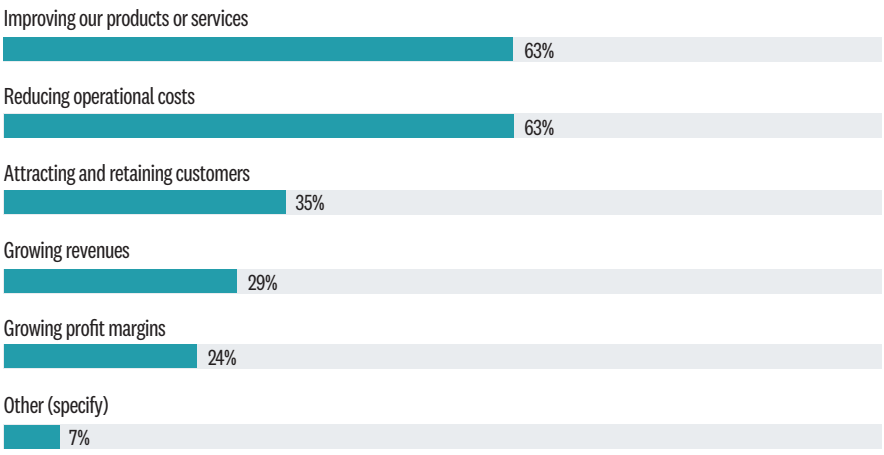
KEY FINDINGS

- More than nine in 10 survey respondents say their end-user computing systems and technology have led to productivity improvements within their organizations, including 54% who say their technology has helped "to a great extent." But …
- Nearly four in 10 survey respondents say their systems make it harder, not easier, for their employees to work quickly.
- Nearly four in 10 survey respondents say their technology makes it difficult or time-consuming for employees to access core business data or applications without enlisting the help of someone from IT or finance.
- A third of survey respondents say their technology actually makes it harder, not easier, to collaborate.
- Only about a third of respondents say their technology is helping drive key business outcomes like attracting and retaining customers, growing revenue, or improving profit margins.
- Companies with a high degree of connectivity are more than twice as likely to report a better market position than their peers.
- Forty percent of highly connected companies say their revenue grew more than 10% over the past two years, versus only 29% of those with poor connectivity.
- Diving deeper into the survey results shows how important a connected, collaborative workforce is, and also offers clues to how companies struggling to create a connected workforce can begin to do better.

FIGURE 2

WHERE TECHNOLOGY IS—AND IS NOT—HELPING COMPANIES COMPETE

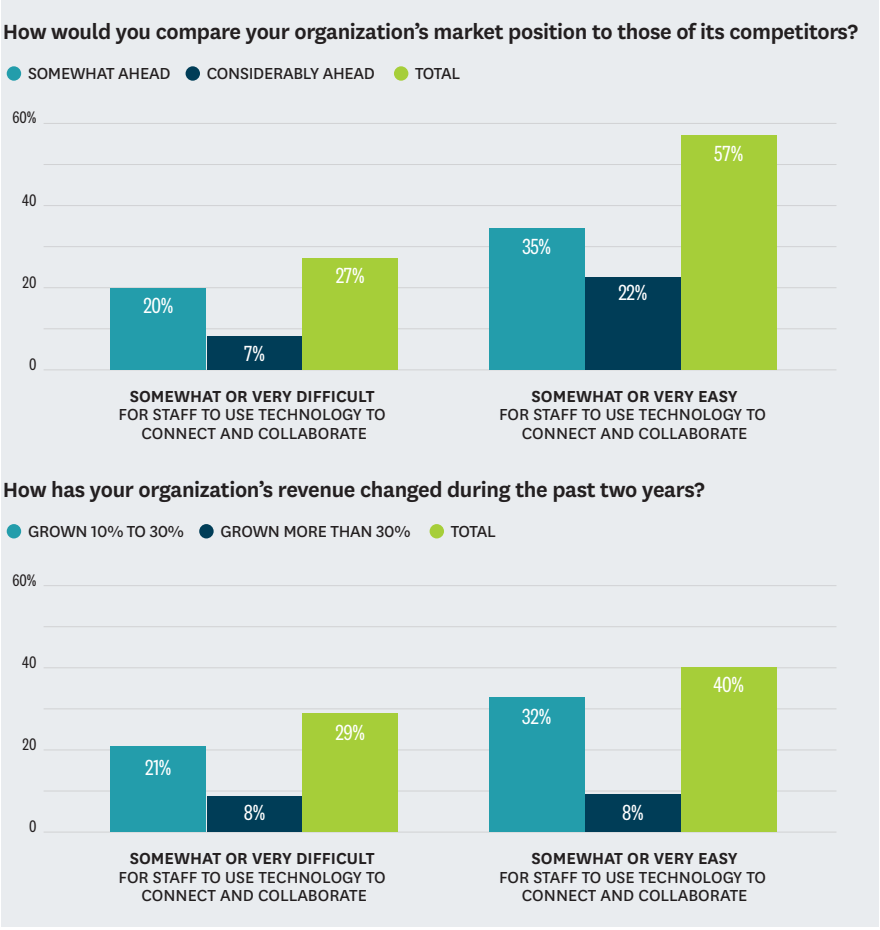
In what areas do your organization's end-user computing systems and technology, including devices, contribute most to your organization's ability to compete? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]



SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

FIGURE 3

A CONNECTED WORKFORCE CAN HELP DRIVE MARKET POSITION AND REVENUE



SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

to be a differentiating point," DuBois says. "That ability to stay connected, to communicate quickly and easily, is going to help companies compete at the pace they need to. Companies that don't have that capability are more likely to be disrupted."

Unfortunately, many organizations are lagging in this area. While nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) say their systems facilitate working remotely, and 61% say their systems facilitate collaboration, only 40% say their systems allow employees to work at speed. And workers shackled to technology that slows them down are workers who aren't being used optimally.

A connected workforce isn't just about collaboration between employees, of course; it's also about connecting people with the data and analytics they need to be productive and to cater to customers. "If I'm in sales and have all the customer information I need when I need it, I can better prepare and act more confidently in the eyes of my customer when we meet," says Michael Golz, chief information officer for SAP America Inc., the U.S. subsidiary of German enterprise software company SAP SE. "This means I need access to enterprise applications in a very intuitive way. If your frontline employees don't have that, they will forgo a lot of the knowledge and insight they could bring to customer interactions."

"People make the biggest difference," says Golz. "Focusing on their productivity and their experience is deeply important."

The Correlation Between Technology and Connectivity

Building a connected workforce starts with a commitment to collaboration, of course—to building a culture that promotes and rewards it. But to a large degree, that culture is enabled by technology. Indeed, survey results indicate that people associate advanced technology with connectivity, collaboration, and productivity. Among survey respondents who say their organizations are highly connected, for example, 70% say their technology contributes to that, versus just 40% of those who report low levels of connectivity.

The survey also shows that the speed at which technology enables people to work is important to creating a connected workforce—reinforcing Fjeldheim's observation that speed and collaboration go hand in hand. Among those who say their technology allows employees to work at speed, 51% report a high degree of connectivity, while only 29% report a low degree of connectivity—a strong argument for making sure that organizations stay reasonably current with their tech. That includes hardware, of course, but

perhaps more importantly today, when so many applications run in the cloud, it also includes their operating systems and applications.

"It can be expensive to go through the process of updating to the latest version of the operating system your organization is working on, but personally I haven't found that to be a good enough excuse not to do it," says Fjeldheim. "If you don't stay current, you start bumping up against instances where the apps you want to run aren't supported. Conversely, you gain big improvements in security by staying current. You also give users the look and feel and new capabilities they're accustomed to seeing in consumer applications, which is important to the user experience. At Illumina, our CEO wants us to provide a good employee experience, and he sees technology as a key component of that."

In addition to hindering productivity and creativity, lagging too far behind the technology curve can be costly, both in terms of what companies spend directly on technology and what they lose in IT efficiency. "Within our IT shop at Microsoft, we had fewer issues for our people to deal with when we stayed current on our operating system, so it reduced our costs," DuBois says. "It was simply easier to do upgrades when we hadn't fallen multiple versions behind. Catching up when you lag behind is more expensive."

Challenges to Using Technology to Create a Productive, Connected Workforce

The new survey suggests that outdated hardware may be a barrier to creating a connected and productive workforce in some instances, too. More than a third of survey respondents say their computing systems and related technology are behind the technology curve, with 29% ranking their systems as somewhat outdated and 5% scoring them highly outdated.

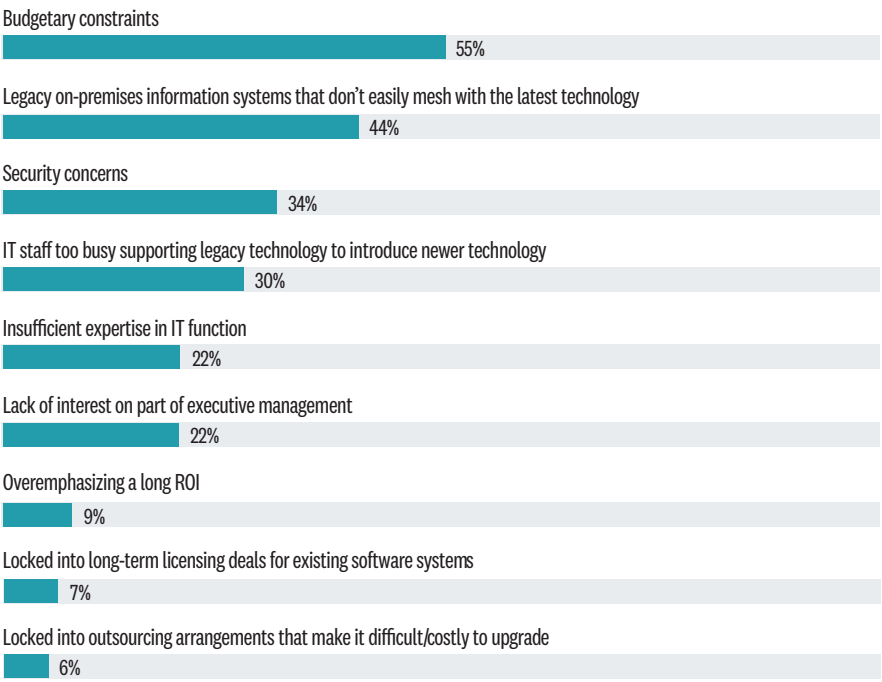
When asked to identify the primary hurdles to equipping employees with the best-available technology to support their work and productivity, 55% of survey respondents cite budgetary constraints, which outranks any other issue. The next most common complaints are legacy on-premises information systems that don't easily mesh with new technology (44%) and security concerns (34%). Nearly a third of survey respondents (30%) also say IT is too busy supporting legacy information systems to introduce new technology. FIGURE 4

Asked specifically what the key barriers are to using technology to connect and collaborate, survey respondents cite other issues, though some undoubtedly have their roots in budget constraints. Heading the list: disparate information systems across the organization (cited by 44% of survey respondents), followed by a lack of training and education for

FIGURE 4

BARRIERS TO EQUIPPING EMPLOYEES WITH PRODUCTIVITY TECHNOLOGY

What are the primary hurdles to making sure your organization's employees are equipped with the best-available technology to support their work and productivity? [SELECT UP TO 3]



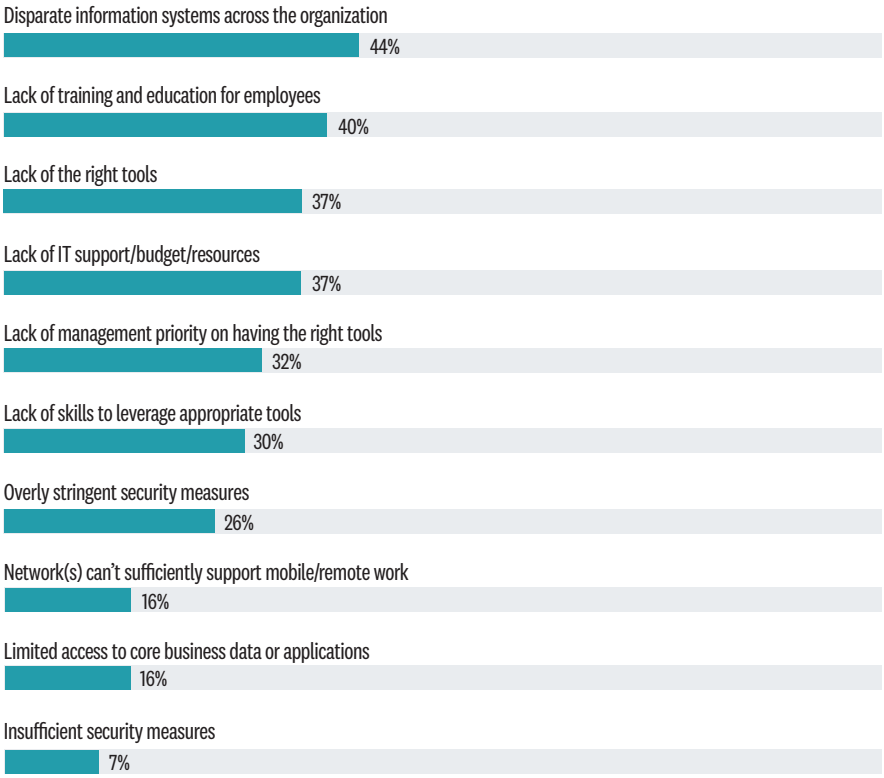
SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

OUTDATED HARDWARE MAY BE A BARRIER TO CREATING A CONNECTED AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE.

FIGURE 5

BARRIERS TO EQUIPPING EMPLOYEES WITH PRODUCTIVITY TECHNOLOGY

What keeps employees from using technology to connect and collaborate? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]



SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

employees (40%). In addition, 37% list a lack of IT support, budget or resources, and lack of the right tools. FIGURE 5

To be sure, costs are an issue for any discretionary business investment. "No IT department is able to do everything on their list," says DuBois. "They're always having to prioritize. Today, the big digital transformations that companies are going through are getting the priority, so some of the end-user computing things are struggling to get priority."

To some degree, of course, the growing use of cloud-based platforms has minimized the need for raw computing horsepower, at least at the on-premises level. "With cloud and web-based systems and applications, the requirements on the actual end-user equipment go down," says SAP's Golz. "Everything is going mobile, and you don't need a lot of those conventional desktop PCs that take a lot of power and sophistication. With cloud apps, you can run entirely mobile or use a thin-client model." More important than computing horsepower, Golz argues, is the user interface, the user experience, and the operating system on which users are working. "That's where we focus most of our attention," he says. "For example, we make sure we only have two generations of any operating system running at any given time—the latest generation, and the one we're decommissioning."

The vast majority of survey respondents (92%) say they're already using both on-premises and cloud-based computing systems, and they project that figure will hit 94% within the next two years.

The Link Between Technology and Attracting and Retaining Talent

Where technology shortfalls are hindering companies today, they could do so to an even greater extent tomorrow. A stunning 51% of survey respondents say that outdated or inadequate office technology is impeding their organization's ability to retain employees with high-value skills and experience. And 58% say the state of a company's technology is factoring into decisions by job candidates about where they want to work. FIGURE 6 These problems are even worse at companies where the workforce isn't highly connected today: Among those with low connectivity, 72% strongly agree that having outdated technology is making it harder to retain employees with high-value skills and experience, versus only 33% of those with high connectivity. FIGURE 7

While much ink has been spilled over how important workplace technology is to younger workers, Fjeldheim argues that it cuts across age groups, at least at highly technical organizations like Illumina. "We have very sophisticated employees

in all age groups and at all levels who are technologically savvy," he says. "They're expecting good tools and good technology, and consumer-grade services and user experiences."

The survey results show that beyond wanting current technology, employees also want more control over it. They want more freedom to choose their own devices (cited by 50% of survey respondents), and more flexibility to set up and install software and devices on their own (cited by 45%).

Even more broadly, 63% of survey respondents say their employees want more ability to access critical knowledge and data on their own. Right now, that's more the exception than the rule. Only 59% of survey respondents say their systems let workers access core business data or apps without help from IT or finance, meaning that four in 10 do not.

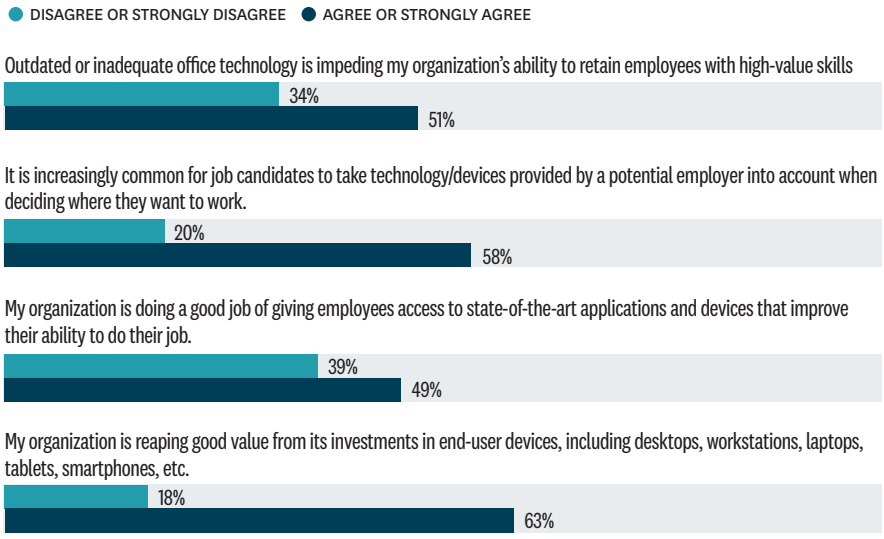
Providing that sort of control can be a real boost to productivity, though, which is why SAP has expended considerable effort on making sure its people have access to the information they need when and where they want it. "The big shift for us came with the introduction of the iPad in 2010," recalls Golz. "With a tablet, people looking to do work on a mobile device suddenly had more screen real estate and a beautiful user experience to work with. So, we gave our executives access to our data analytics and online forecasting systems on mobile devices, pulling data directly from our business systems."

The results, he says, were eye-opening. "As our executives and employees began to use these tools and make them part of the regular work environment, they began to get value out of our business systems in a way they hadn't in the past." Specifically, the company saw greater use of its business systems once end users didn't have to wait for specialists to put together reports for them. "Giving people direct access to the data in your core systems, and to responsive applications that allow people to do analytics right on the front end, really changes the way people interact with

FIGURE 6

INADEQUATE OFFICE TECHNOLOGY MAKES IT HARDER TO ATTRACT, RETAIN TALENT

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

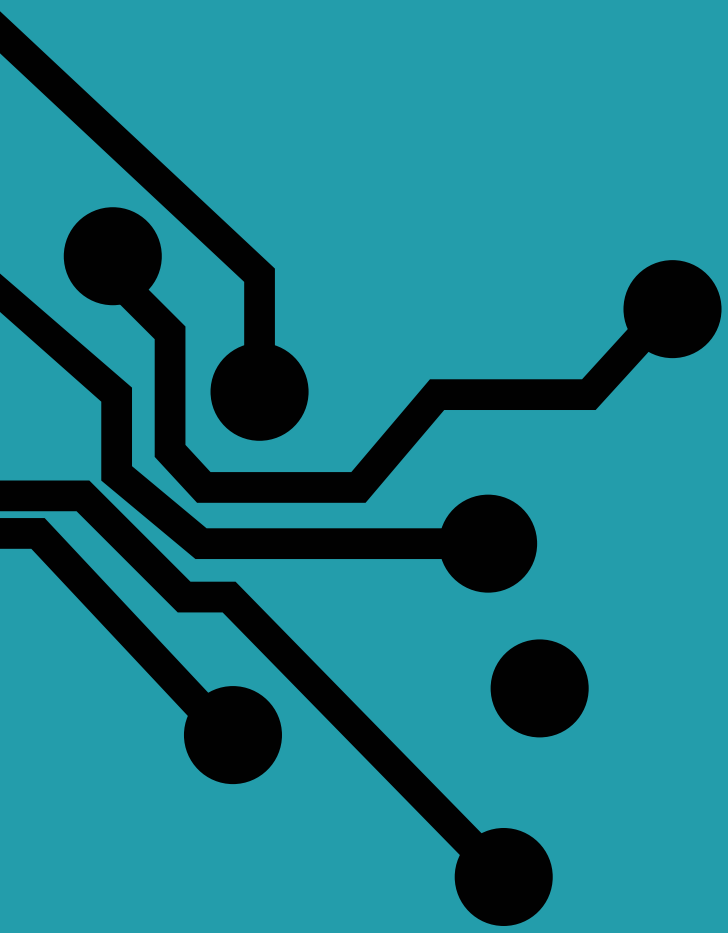


SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

How Collaboration Supports a Sales Team at Microsoft

Collaboration can go a long way toward making businesses more efficient and responsive to their customers. Consider the problem faced a little over a year ago by the sales team for Microsoft Corp.'s cloud computing service, Azure. At the time, the company was releasing new Azure capabilities so quickly—practically on a daily basis—that many sales personnel were having trouble keeping up with them. "We were missing opportunities with customers because the sales force wasn't connected enough with the product teams on what was changing and what was available," recalls Jim DuBois, who until late last year was Microsoft's chief information officer. To help, the company encouraged salespeople who were best at keeping up with the changing technology to begin recording customer success stories in their customer relationship management system. Then, Microsoft's IT team worked with Microsoft product teams to build a relatively simple artificial intelligence engine that would combine product release data with Microsoft Dynamics CRM opportunity data to suggest new sales opportunities to salespeople globally, based on where the few salespeople who were able to keep up were already seeing traction. IT also integrated an instant messaging service—Skype for Business—with the CRM system, making it easy for sales personnel to ask questions of, and share information with, their colleagues, and to quickly review questions that had already been asked and answered by others. "To this day this is a system that learns from new opportunities and becomes more and more valuable as it fine-tunes itself," DuBois says.

COMPANIES THAT ALREADY ENJOY HIGH LEVELS OF CONNECTIVITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO INTRODUCE MORE SELF-SERVICE AND AUTOMATION FEATURES IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.



analytics, how they find the answers to the questions that they have, and their ability to collaborate," Golz says.

It also ensures that everybody's using the same data, always current, which has an impact on productivity. "It's had a massive impact on productivity and accountability," Golz says. "It's taken lag time and latency out of our business processes. Best of all, all these things are possible today with standard applications and mobile tools and analytics."

Some organizations seem to be getting that message. The most common undertakings companies plan in the next two years to improve collaboration, productivity and/or security are migrating or updating legacy applications to cloud-based platforms, introducing more self-service and automation features, and investing in a digital initiative or modern management road map. Nearly a third also plan to invest in training their workforce on the use of collaboration tools. FIGURE 8 Notably, companies that already enjoy high levels of connectivity are more likely to introduce more self-service and automation features in the next two years, and to switch to a subscription-based model for networks, systems, and technology (12%, vs. 4% of companies that don't have high levels of connectivity).

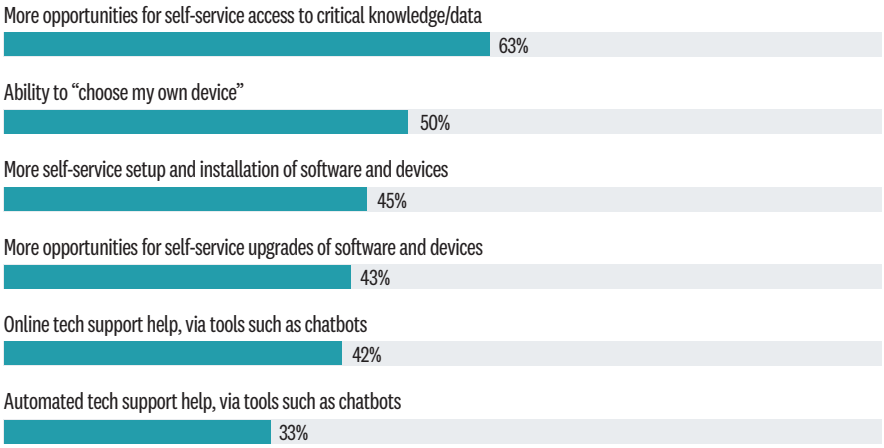
Golz suggests that anything companies can do to make the employee experience better is likely to pay dividends.

"The single biggest thing we observe, especially with the younger people we hire, is that they're looking for a purpose in what they're doing, and they want to know that their company cares about them as individuals," he says. "To that last point, you can easily imagine them asking, 'Well, if you care about me, then why do we have these antiquated systems,' or 'Why is it so hard to work here, why is it so complicated?' They want to know why they are here and what we are doing on a bigger scale, and then they want to know if we have the tools they need to be productive and make a contribution to that purpose."

FIGURE 7

EMPLOYEES WANT MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR TECHNOLOGY

What types of capabilities do employees want from your organization's technology and IT support? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

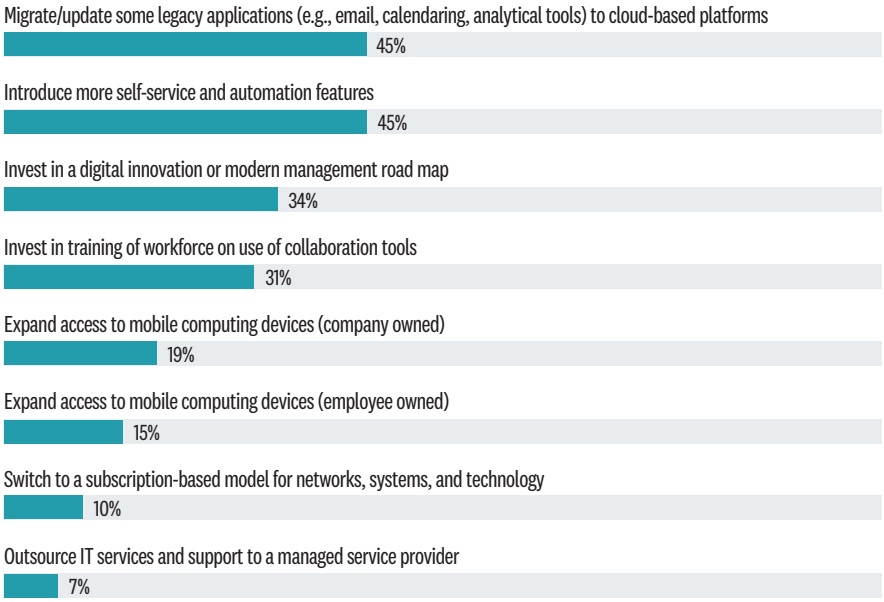


SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

FIGURE 8

WHERE COMPANIES PLAN TO INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS

Which of the following does your organization plan to do in the next two years to improve collaboration, productivity, and/or security in your organization? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

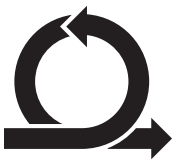


SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ANALYTIC SERVICES SURVEY, MARCH 2018

Technology Improves Collaboration at Life Sciences Company

Life sciences company Illumina Inc. puts a premium on giving employees the tools they need to work efficiently and effectively, with a heavy emphasis on enabling collaboration. Over the past few years, says Illumina chief information officer Norm Fjeldheim, the company has entirely revamped its internal intranet to create a more search-driven, employee-centric employee portal. The company also has begun using the collaboration tool WorkPlace by Facebook, which Fjeldheim calls a "huge hit because it lets employees collaborate the way they do in their personal lives and ensures that data is secure. It's our data, in our environment, not commingled with anybody else's," he notes. Just one area where all this has been helpful, he says, is in making it easier for new hires to quickly access information that's been disseminated to employees in the past. "We've made information available and structured in a way not for the people that are disseminating it, but for the people that are consuming the information," he asserts.

Illumina also has adopted the file-sharing tool Box and has been rolling out improved videoconferencing technology across the company. "We now have employees spending millions of minutes a year videoconferencing to connect and hold virtual meetings, rather than coming together physically in some fashion, which is always challenging when you're a global company," Fjeldheim says. Illumina also has begun deemphasizing individual workspaces in its facilities and creating more spaces earmarked for collaboration. As a result, he says, "We now see people forming up in ways that they didn't previously. Marrying what we did on the IT side with the new workspace strategy has been well-received from senior management all the way down to the folks on the manufacturing floor."



I.T. DEPARTMENTS NEED TO BE AGILE IN THEIR PLANNING, WITH A BACKLOG OF PROJECTS READY TO BE EXECUTED BUT WITH CONSTANT PRIORITIZING OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES.

Getting Going: What Companies Can Do to Create a More Connected Workforce

For companies that are behind the curve in leveraging technology to create a connected workforce, the findings from the survey—and the experience of the high-profile IT executives interviewed for this report—suggest a number of steps to be taken.

Align your IT structure with your business. At some organizations, a centralized IT structure may make sense. At larger enterprises, decentralization may work better. At Microsoft, for example, DuBois says the IT organization is aligned with the company's business and success metrics, with distinct IT teams for each functional area like manufacturing, finance, human resources, and sales and marketing. "Each of those teams has its own priority list, program managers, and developers to work with their respective business partners," says DuBois. "Because they're aligned directly with those business partners, with the same measure for success, they can work very closely with them and gain a lot of business knowledge that helps them become more effective business partners. It's a good model that removes layers of communication to help anywhere they are asking IT to keep up the pace." DuBois also argues that IT departments need to be agile in their planning, with a backlog of projects ready to be executed but with constant prioritizing of the most important ones. As one survey respondent noted, "Poor IT planning makes internal users apprehensive to work with new products."

Prioritize business problems and solutions over technologies. Machine learning, to pluck a random example, may be a wonderful technology. But it makes little sense to invest hard in machine learning unless you've identified a problem that could be solved with it. That said, some people in the organization—certainly some in IT—need to stay abreast of what's happening on the technology front so they're ready to move when the need

arises. "Part of my job is to anticipate the needs of the business and invest, but not overinvest, so that the IT organization will be ready when the business needs us to be ready with new technologies," says Fjeldheim. "It's a little bit of the old Wayne Gretzky quote: 'Skate to where the puck's going to be.'"

Focus on simplicity—and self-service—for end users. As one survey respondent noted, "cumbersome enterprisewide processes that don't allow access to productivity tools" can be a drag on collaboration and productivity. Put another way, the easier it is for employees to use technology, especially if they don't have to ask for help each time, the more likely they are to use it and reap its benefits. SAP sends IT staff and UX specialists into the workspaces of their non-IT colleagues, and to accompany those colleagues on the road, to identify and address barriers to working with the company's information systems—from remote log-on to everyday use.

Include end users on implementation teams. "No matter what the application is, we always have end users as part of our implementation teams," says SAP's Golz. "We want their feedback, and always look for ways to improve the user experience while we do the implementation."

Consider greater use of cloud services. Moving to the cloud "solves a lot of questions around end-user support, automated upgrades, independence from location, access to data and files, and communication," Golz says. "It also can help open your business systems to self-service and direct analytical access by end users."

Minimize limitations on access to critical applications and data for employees working remotely. One survey respondent noted that in her organization, which operates throughout the state in which it's located, "the amazing tools and protocols we are dependent upon for coordinating our work do not work on the mountains or in the deserts." That sounds like a technical issue, but in some cases, organizations purposefully limit access to technology and information off-premises due to security concerns. With today's technology, that's often not necessary. Nor should using tools remotely be cumbersome. Among other things, Golz recommends that companies have a single sign-on for their business systems. "Once you're authenticated on your device, you should have the ability to access everything—all the resources and systems you have authorizations for—without having to log on one more time," he says.

Be flexible on the use of nonsupported technology, but manage employee expectations. Although many organizations have long fought against people using applications or devices not supported by their IT departments, DuBois contends that allowing their use can actually be good for both efficiency and security. At Microsoft, he notes, employees are allowed to get and use any device they want, although IT tries to make it easier for them to buy those it supports, and makes it clear that employees will be responsible for support on their own, and may not have access to all secure data, if they go outside the standards. For many younger employees accustomed to using technology that way in their personal lives, he says, this isn't a big deal. "It's a matter of setting expectations and allowing users to decide for themselves what would make them most productive without adding extra costs or security issues for us from an IT perspective," DuBois says.

PRIORITIZE BUSINESS PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS OVER TECHNOLOGIES.

METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANT PROFILE

A total of 241 respondents drawn from the HBR U.S.-based audience of readers (magazine/newsletter readers, customers, HBR.org users) completed the survey.

SIZE OF ORGANIZATION

ALL RESPONDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS HAD 500 EMPLOYEES OR MORE.

48% 10,000 OR MORE EMPLOYEES

11% 5,000-9,999 EMPLOYEES

41% 500-4,999 EMPLOYEES

SENIORITY

17% EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT/ BOARD MEMBERS

39% SENIOR MANAGEMENT

30% MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

14% OTHER GRADES

KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS

18% TECHNOLOGY

14% HEALTH CARE/ PHARMA/LIFE SCIENCES

11% BUSINESS/ PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OR CONSULTING

10% each BANKING/ FINANCIAL SERVICES, MANUFACTURING/ EDUCATION

8% GOVERNMENT/ NONPROFIT

OTHER SECTORS WERE REPRESENTED BY 5% OR LESS EACH

JOB FUNCTION

16% GENERAL/EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

11% IT

10% SALES/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/ CUSTOMER SERVICE

7% MARKETING/PR/ COMMUNICATIONS AND HR/TRAINING

6% FINANCE/RISK

OTHER FUNCTIONS WERE REPRESENTED BY 5% OR LESS EACH

Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

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CONTACT US

hbranalyticservices@hbr.org