

A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



Mobility, performance and engagement

How CIOs can contribute to business performance by shaping the employee experience



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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Mobile technology presents chief information officers (CIOs) with an opportunity to improve their business performance by shaping their organisation's employee experience. Providing a positive employee experience helps companies boost performance by improving employee engagement and attracting new talent. Mobile technology makes a considerable contribution to the employee experience as it supports new ways of working that employees increasingly value. CIOs can therefore contribute to business performance by shaping their organisation's employee experience. Based on a global survey of over 1,800 workers, this research report offers guidance on how they can shape their mobile strategies to support an engaging experience.

Workers who say their employers use mobile technology well are typically more productive, creative, satisfied and loyal. Survey respondents who describe their employers as mobile "pioneers" give themselves significantly higher scores for every measure of engagement and performance than workers who say their employer's use of mobile is "bad": the difference in the score is 16% higher for productivity, 18% for creativity, 23% for satisfaction and 21% for loyalty. This measure also reveals some policies and practices that are more commonly adopted by highly rated organisations, including offering IT support for employee-owned mobile devices and permitting the use of mobile communication apps such as WhatsApp for work purposes.

CIOs seeking to boost employee productivity should pursue mobile strategies that support the ability to work anywhere at any time. The study divides a mobile-enabled employee experience into five dimensions and examines how each one relates to employee performance and engagement. Survey respondents consider the ability to work from any place at any time as the dimension that has the greatest impact on both their productivity and job satisfaction. Companies which are rated highly for this dimension are more likely to offer remote-working policies and IT support for employee-owned devices. If CIOs wish to boost creativity or loyalty, meanwhile, they should focus on using mobile technology as a platform for collaboration.

Early technology adopters score highly for each measure of performance and engagement—but they are also more demanding. While there are few differences between respondents in different age groups, early technology adopters emerge as a distinct demographic group within the workforce. Workers who adopt technology before their peers score themselves highly for productivity, satisfaction, creativity and loyalty, but they also have more exacting standards. CIOs would be advised to address the concerns of this group of workers, as their requirements today are likely to be mainstream concerns in future.

The impact of mobile technology on the employee experience offers IT leaders an opportunity to engage more deeply with other functions, especially HR. This study shows

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that CIOs have an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their organisation's performance and the lives of its workers by shaping the employee experience. IT leaders should grasp this opportunity, but it should be done within the context of the organisation's overall employee-focused strategy. Mobile strategy should therefore be a point of engagement between IT and other functions, in particular HR leadership.

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

Mobility, performance and engagement is an Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report sponsored by Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company. It draws on a multinational study of 1,865 full-time employees in nine countries—Australia, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, the UAE, the UK and the US—conducted in March 2016. The respondents, who represent a range of ages and an even gender split, work in healthcare, finance, legal, retail, education, government and the telecommunications industry.

The EIU polled respondents on how different characteristics of a working environment impact their employee experience, defined in terms of business outcomes with four desirable attributes: productivity, creativity, satisfaction and loyalty. To examine the contribution these characteristics make to these attributes, we benchmarked organisations' approach to technology with questions about employee performance. For this, we used a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the worst and 10 the best. The study also explores employees' perspectives regarding the different dimensions of employee experience to which technology contributes and determines employees' attitudes towards technology. The results were tested for statistical significance at a 95% confidence level.

The EIU would like to thank the following interviewees for their input:

- Mark Williamson, partner, KPMG
- Holger Reisinger, senior vice president and head of the New Ways of Working Initiative,
   Jabra
- Kevin Melton, sales and marketing director, Axa PPP International

The report was written by Stephen Pritchard and edited by Pete Swabey. Ana Berenguer was the lead analyst.

## INTRODUCTION

"A company is only as good as the people it keeps," according to Mary Kay Ash, entrepreneur and founder of the US cosmetics company that bears her name. This may be self-evident, but the way in which companies think about people—how to attract the best ones and how to get the most out of them—is constantly evolving.

Two key themes frame the current thinking. The first is "employee engagement", which describes the extent to which employees are personally motivated to help their company achieve its aims. According to Aon Hewitt, a consultancy, a 5% increase in employee engagement in one year is associated with a 3% increase in revenue growth in the next. A study published by Harvard Business Review in 2012 found that 74% of senior executives consider employee engagement to be "very important" to achieving organisational success.<sup>2</sup>

The second concept is "employee experience". Related to the idea of customer experience, which describes the quality of interactions between a business and its customers, employee experience is a measure of the subjective quality of the environment that an employer creates for its workforce.

Companies are beginning to see the employee experience as a way to boost performance by improving engagement among current workers and increasing their ability to attract new talent. In 2015 room-booking app Airbnb replaced its HR division with an employee-experience function and appointed a chief employee experience officer. In 2016 the company topped employer-rating website Glassdoor.com's annual list of the 50 best places to work—a major boon in Silicon Valley's cutthroat war for talent.

The employee experience has many facets, including a company's culture, the way it recognises and rewards achievement, and how it develops its employees. But there are also more tangible components, such as the daily working practices that a company encourages and enables for its employees.

Technology, and mobile in particular, plays a crucial role in the latter. The smartphone revolution has unshackled work from the desktop. It has made working practices, such as remote and mobile working, more widespread and has consequently altered employees' expectations as to how, when and where they can work.

CIOs therefore play a significant role in shaping their company's employee experience. This gives them an opportunity to make an active contribution to their company's performance. But while most companies acknowledge the significance of mobile technology, few know how to use it strategically to create an effective employee experience. "In most companies that I know of, the employee experience just kind of happens," wrote customer-experience consultant Kerry Bodine in 2012.<sup>3</sup>

http://www.aon.com/attachments/human-capital-consulting/2015-Trends-in-Global-Employee-Engagement-Report.pdf

https://hbr.org/resources/ pdfs/comm/achievers/hbr\_achievers\_ report\_sep13.pdf

http://blogs.forrester.com/kerry\_bodine/12-11-02-designing\_the\_employee\_experience

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This study, conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit and sponsored by Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, provides valuable insight into how CIOs can tailor their mobile strategies to support an effective and engaging employee experience.

Based on a global survey of over 1,800 employees from a range of industries, the study identifies the mobile strategies that employees rate as highly effective. It defines five dimensions of a mobile-enabled employee experience and establishes how they contribute to four facets of employee engagement that contribute to business performance: productivity, creativity, satisfaction and loyalty.

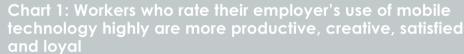
As a crucial component of employee experience, mobile technology offers CIOs an opportunity to make a significant contribution to both the lives of their organisation's workforce and its strategic aims. This study offers guidance for CIOs as they set priorities for their mobile strategies.

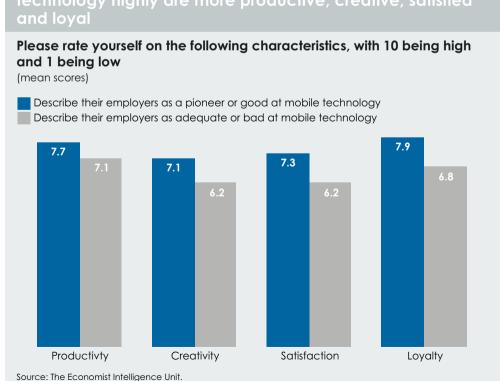
# 1. THE BENEFITS OF GETTING MOBILE RIGHT

Companies which use mobile technology effectively have more engaged employees, according to the testimony of 1,865 workers surveyed by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

The survey asked respondents to describe their employers' approach to mobile technology. It reveals that just under half (48%) are positive in their assessment, with 11% saying their employer is a pioneer and 37% saying it makes good use of mobile technology. The largest group (42%) say their employer is adequate, and 8% say it is bad (2% do not know).

In order to assess the impact of mobile technology on employee-focused business outcomes, the study concentrated on four desirable attributes that indicate an effective and engaging employee experience—productivity, creativity, satisfaction and loyalty—and survey respondents were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1-10 for each attribute, where 1 is the worst and 10 the best.



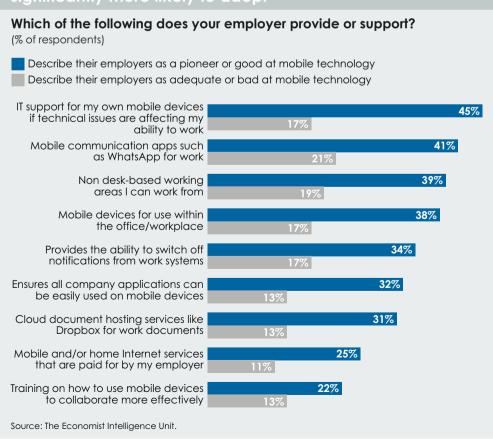


The most straightforward demonstration of the contribution of mobile technology to business outcomes is that respondents who say their employers are either "good" or "a pioneer" at using mobile technology give themselves, on average, a significantly higher score for each attribute than those who do not (see chart 1). They score themselves 7% higher for productivity, 9% higher for creativity, 11% higher for satisfaction and 11% higher for loyalty, all statistically significant to a 95% confidence level.

The differences between the two extremes of the scale—ie, between respondents who rate their employers as mobile pioneers and those who rate them as bad—are even stronger: 16% for productivity, 18% for creativity, 23% for satisfaction and 21% for loyalty.

The study also asked respondents to rate their employer for organisational attributes, including work-life balance, promoting creativity and innovation, and attracting talented employees. Again, companies whose approach to mobile is rated as effective by their employees perform better for each characteristic: they are rated 17% higher for their ability to attract talented employees, 15% higher for getting the best out of employees, and 14% higher for enabling creativity and innovation—all significant differences.

Chart 2: The practices and policies that companies whose employees rate them highly for mobile-technology use are significantly more likely to adopt



Although correlation does not prove causation, the findings imply strongly that the effective use of mobile technology is an important component of a positive employee experience.

So what do companies which are rated as "good" or "a pioneer" by their employees do differently to their peers? The study reveals that there are a number of policies and practices that are significantly more common among highly rated organisations.

Chief among these is offering technical support for employee-owned mobile devices if technical issues are affecting their ability to work. Nearly half (45%) of organisations which are rated highly offer this support, compared with just 17% of those which are not (see chart 2).

Some IT departments may regard this as beyond their remit, but this statistic shows that IT leaders who are concerned with the employee experience should consider the extra investment required to provide first-line support for employee-owned devices. "You need to make sure people have the right technology and are using it in the right working environment, and that they have the support needed to work that way," explains Mark Williamson, a partner at business advisory firm KPMG.

Other mobile policies and practices that are more commonly adopted by highly rated companies include allowing employees to use mobile communication apps such as WhatsApp for work, providing non-desk-based working areas (41% versus 21%), and supplying mobile devices for use within the office or workplace (38% versus 17%).

These findings provide some overall guidance on what employees consider to be an effective use of mobile technology. But by digging into some of the dimensions that make up an engaging employee experience, this study also reveals how CIOs can tailor their mobile strategies to specific employee-focused objectives.

# THE MOBILE WORKING EXPERIENCE AROUND THE WORLD

The survey on which this report is based includes respondents from across the globe, and as such reveals some national differences in business adoption of mobile technologies and in employee attitudes.

For example, one in three Japanese respondents identify the ability to collaborate effectively as having the greatest impact on their productivity, compared with 21% globally. Respondents from Australia and New Zealand are more likely than any others to identify quick and easy access to information as a key factor driving their productivity (53% versus 42% globally).

Only in the UK do over 50% of respondents agree that they are more productive when they work from home, while France tops the list for agreement with the statement that mobile technology has made it harder to find a work-life balance. Singapore is the most mobile-friendly country included in the study. Respondents from the city-state are the most likely to own a tablet that they use for work, for example. And they are most likely to agree that mobile technology makes them more productive.

Singaporean respondents also rate their employers highly for mobile-technology use. Six out of ten describe their employers as being a "pioneer" or "good at using mobile technology", more than in any other country. Two-thirds of Singaporean employers (66%) support

the use of mobile chat applications such as WhatsApp for work purposes, and 40% ensure that all company documents can be accessed on mobile devices, leading the world on both fronts.

In some areas, however, Singaporean firms are eclipsed by Western companies. For example, 56% of UK respondents say their employer supports digital collaboration tools that work on mobile devices such as Slack or GChat, compared with just 36% in Singapore. And 37% of US companies support voice- or video-collaboration tools that work on mobile, compared with 33% in Singapore.

A mobile-technology strategy should be sensitive to the needs of employees, and global organisations should pay close attention to regional differences such as these. However, there are some notable findings that differ little between regions. For example, in eight of the countries surveyed respondents choose the ability to work from any location at any time as the most important productivity driver. The exception is the UK, where this option is topped by the ability to access information easily by just 1%.

Unlike some previous waves of IT innovation, the mobile revolution is a truly global phenomenon. The details may differ, but employees in all cultures evidently value the impact it has on the way they work.

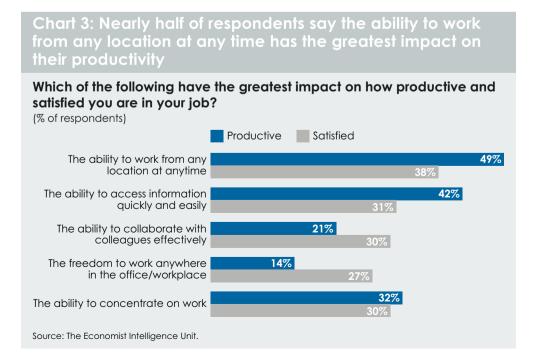
# 2. BOOSTING PERFORMANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Productivity is the employee attribute that most obviously falls within the IT department's remit. As so much of a typical employee's workload relies on IT systems, the role of IT in supporting productivity has long been recognised. It is also one of most direct ways in which IT contributes to overall business performance, as more productive employees mean more profitable and effective organisations.

As revealed in the previous section, respondents who say their employer is either a "pioneer" or "good" at mobile use score themselves 7% higher for productivity than those who do not. But for CIOs keen to understand how they can boost employee productivity through their mobile strategies, this study provides some more detailed insight.

The EIU survey defines five dimensions of the employee experience to which mobile technology contributes:

- Working from any location at any time
- Accessing information quickly and easily
- Collaborating effectively
- Working anywhere in the office / workplace
- Concentrating on work



Respondents were asked to choose which dimensions made the most significant contribution to their productivity, creativity, satisfaction and loyalty to their employer. They were permitted to choose up to two dimensions for each attribute.

When it comes to productivity, the most common answer is the ability to work from any location at any time (see chart 3).

This finding is corroborated by the fact that respondents who rate their employers highly for supporting the ability to work from any location give themselves an average productivity score of 8.0 out of ten—10% higher than those who do not.

Evidently, employees see the ability to work where and when they wish as the key to unlocking their productivity. At least two factors help to explain this. The first is that mobile devices have opened up what was previously "dead time" in a worker's day. "Think about downtime at the airport or on the train—there's not much dead time now," says Kevin Melton, sales and marketing director at medical insurance provider Axa PPP International. "You always have access to an iPad, and especially in Asia, to Wi-Fi."

The second is that both remote working and flexible hours allow employees to manage their own time more effectively. An employee's life or work responsibilities may mean that the best time for them to focus on a particular task is at home at 6 am, for example.

"Work has to happen on people's terms," says Holger Reisinger, senior vice president and head of the New Ways of Working Initiative at audio technology company Jabra. "We need to offer as diverse a choice as possible. I want it to be personal to me, to be more productive. The more you try to control that, the more you risk people being turned off work."

The ability to work from any location, at any time, is also the dimension most closely associated with employee satisfaction. This may reflect the increased control that remote or flexible working can give employees over their lives.

To boost productivity, therefore, CIOs should focus on mobile strategies that support the ability to work anywhere and at any time. Effective practices and policies can be determined by looking at those that are more commonly adopted by companies whose employees rate them highly for supporting productivity. These include a flexible work policy that allows employees to work outside office hours, which is adopted by 54% of employees who rate their employers highly for supporting their productivity versus 17% of those who do not, as well as IT support for employee-owned mobile devices (45% versus 21%).

#### **Creativity and loyalty**

Creativity is less likely to appear on a CIO's agenda than productivity, as workers' creativity is not usually seen as a function of the technology they use. However, innovation is highly prized in modern business, and CIOs should be mindful of the impact

of their technology strategies on the creativity of the workforce. Similarly, few if any CIOs are held accountable for the loyalty of their organisation's employees, but the ability to retain talented staff is a core capability for any business.

Collaboration is the key to an employee experience that fosters both creativity and loyalty. Survey respondents are most likely to identify the ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues as having the greatest impact on their creativity (38%) and their loyalty to their employer (33%) (see chart 4).



The relationship between collaboration and creativity is the subject of ongoing research. Keith Sawyer, a researcher and the author of *Group Genius*, highlights examples ranging from jazz to open-source software development to demonstrate the role of collaboration in many forms of creativity<sup>4</sup>.

Others, such as Susan Cain, the author of a recent book on introverts, argue that highly creative people often prefer to work alone. However, many employees evidently feel that sharing ideas with others helps spur their own creative impulse.

The link between collaboration and loyalty is less discussed, but it stands to reason that people who have productive relationships with their colleagues may feel a stronger emotional attachment to the organisation as a whole.

So what type of mobile practices and policies help to support a collaborative employee experience? The clearest distinction between companies whose employees rate them highly for supporting collaboration and those whose do not is that the former are significantly more likely to encourage employees to use mobile devices to collaborate (41% versus 26%).

Keith Sawyer, Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration, Basic Books, March 2008.

Susan Cain, Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking, Crown Publishing Group, January 2014.

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Another significant differentiator between the two groups is that 39% of highly rated companies provide their employees with voice- and video-collaboration tools such as Google Hangouts or Skype for use on mobile devices, compared with 26% of other firms.

CIOs seeking to boost the creativity and loyalty of their workforce should employ practices such as these that establish mobile technology as a platform for collaboration.

# 3. KEEPING UP WITH EARLY ADOPTERS

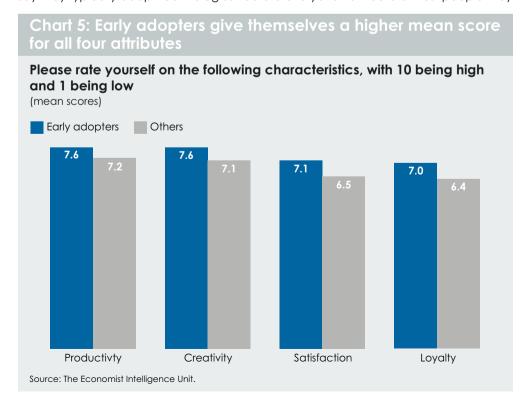
By canvassing employees' views on mobile technology, this study reveals the preferences and perspectives of different groups within the workforce. This could prove useful for IT leaders as they design a mobile experience for their current employee base—or for the workers they hope to attract in future.

One factor commonly associated with differing attitudes towards technology is age. However, in this study a respondent's age was not found to be a significant determinant of how mobile technology impacts their performance and engagement.

While there are a handful of differences between the three age groups included in the study (18-35, 36-50 and 51-65)—the oldest group give themselves higher scores on both productivity and loyalty to their employers, for example—there are many more points of agreement, such as the fact that the oldest age group is just as likely to agree that mobile technology makes them more productive (60%) as the youngest (61%).

Clearer distinctions can be seen between respondents who consider themselves to be early adopters of technology and those who do not.

When asked to describe their personal approach to technology, 43% of respondents say they typically adopt technologies "before everyone" or "before most people they



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know". These early adopters rate all five dimensions of the mobile employee experience as more important to them personally than other respondents. And it stands to reason: workers who are enthusiastic about technology value the working practices that it enables.

This is also reflected in the fact that they are more likely to report that mobile technology makes them more productive (72% of early adopters agree with this statement, compared with 50% of other respondents); more satisfied (59% versus 48%); more creative (52% versus 40%); and more loyal to their employer (44% versus 31%). They also give themselves a higher mean score for each of these attributes (see chart 5).

If they are to be believed, then, early adopters are desirable employees. However, they are also more demanding. Four out of ten say they would never work for a company that did not allow them to use their own mobile devices for work, compared with just 22% of other employees.

And far from being unquestioning technology acolytes, early adopters are in fact more sceptical: 49% are concerned that using their own mobile devices for work might give their employer access to private information about them, compared with 41% of other respondents. They are also more likely to say that mobile technology has made it harder to find a work-life balance (47% versus 41%), and that they are often distracted from work by their mobile devices (37% versus 25%).

Not only are early adopters more valuable employees (by their own testimony), but the views they hold today may well become the majority view in future as mobile technology becomes more widespread.

CIOs would therefore be well advised to take note of and address these concerns. Indeed, this is just one of the ways in which IT leaders should be engaging with their colleagues in HR, who define and implement their organisation's employee-focused objectives as they shape their mobile technology strategies.

# CONCLUSION

This study establishes a link between the employee experience that companies create and the performance and engagement of their staff. This offers CIOs a valuable opportunity to contribute to business performance by shaping that experience.

It reveals the following practical tips:

- Offering employees IT support for the mobile devices they own is a defining characteristic of highly rated employers and should therefore be included in mobile strategies aimed at improving overall engagement.
- The most effective way to support productivity through mobile technology is to implement policies and practices that allow employees to work wherever and whenever they wish.
- Employees see collaboration as the key to creativity and company loyalty, so CIOs seeking to boost these attributes should pursue strategies that establish mobile technology as a platform for collaboration.
- CIOs should address the concerns of early adopters, such as privacy and work-life balance, as they are desirable employees and their views may well be mainstream opinion in future.

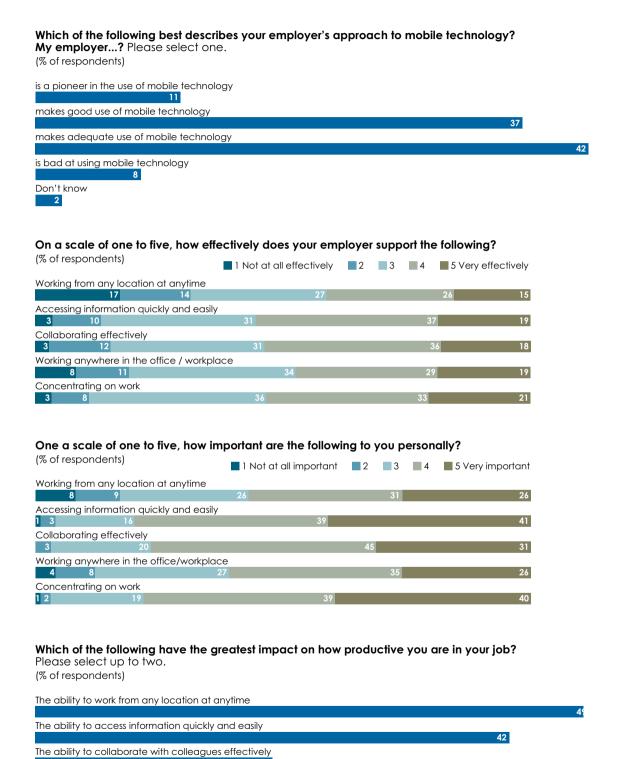
The usual target outcomes of IT initiatives are efficiency and cost optimisation. But as this study shows, CIOs have an opportunity to make a more meaningful contribution, both to their organisation's performance and to its workers' lives, by shaping the employee experience.

CIOs should relish that opportunity—but it is not one they should attempt to grasp in isolation. It is not up to the IT department to decide the employee-centric objectives of the organisation. The mobile working environment is just one component of the overall employee experience, and any attempt to use mobile technology to influence that experience should be made in consultation with other departments, especially the HR function, as it defines and implements an organisation's employee-focused strategy.

But that, again, is an opportunity—an opportunity for IT to engage with a peer function to help address its strategic aims. If IT leaders are not already involved in a conversation with other functions about the employee experience, then the concepts defined in this report could provide a useful starting point.

## **APPENDIX**

Which of the following best describes your attitude towards adopting technology? Please select one. (% of respondents) I adopt new technologies before everyone I know I adopt new technologies before most people I know I adopt technology at the same time as most other people I know I adopt new technologies after most other people I know I resist new technologies for as long as possible Which of the following do you own and/or use for work? For each device type, please select all options that apply (% of respondents) ■ Laptop ■ Smartphone ■ Tablet ■ Wearable device eg, Fitbit, smartwatch, etc ■ Desktop computer I own one or more for personal use I own one or more that I use for work 26 21 83 9 My employer has given me one or more to use for work 29 21 81 I do not own or use one How often, if at all, do you work remotely (e.g. at home or while travelling)? Please select one. (% of respondents) I work remotely full time I work remotely twice or more per week I work remotely once per week I work remotely a few times a month I work remotely a few times a year I never work remotely

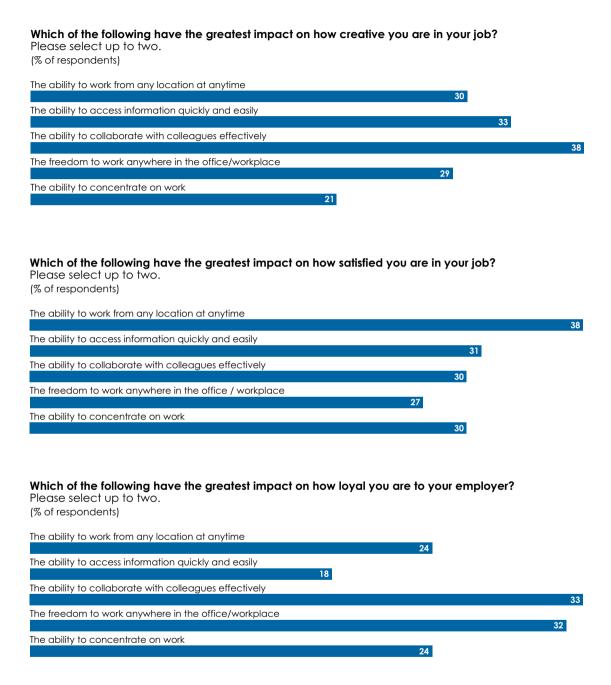


The ability to concentrate on work

The freedom to work anywhere in the office/workplace

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33

Which of the following would have greatest impact on whether you would accept a job from a prospective employer? Please select up to two. (% respondents)



Which of the following does your employer provide you in order to work in any location and at any time? Please select all that apply.

(% of respondents)

Access to work emails and/or documents from mobile devices

72

Training on how to use mobile devices more effectively for work

17

If support for my own mobile devices if technical issues are affecting my ability to work

31

Cloud document hosting services like Dropbox for work documents

21

A flexible work policy that allows me to working outside traditional work hours

35

Mobile and/or home Internet services that are paid for by my employer

18

Other (please specify)

None of the above

7

Don't know

2

Which of the following does your employer provide for you to access information quickly and easily? Please select all that apply.

(% of respondents)

Access to all company documents and information from mobile devices

Access to all company applications from mobile devices

Ensures all company documents can be easily found through mobile devices

29

Ensures all company applications can be easily used on mobile devices

22

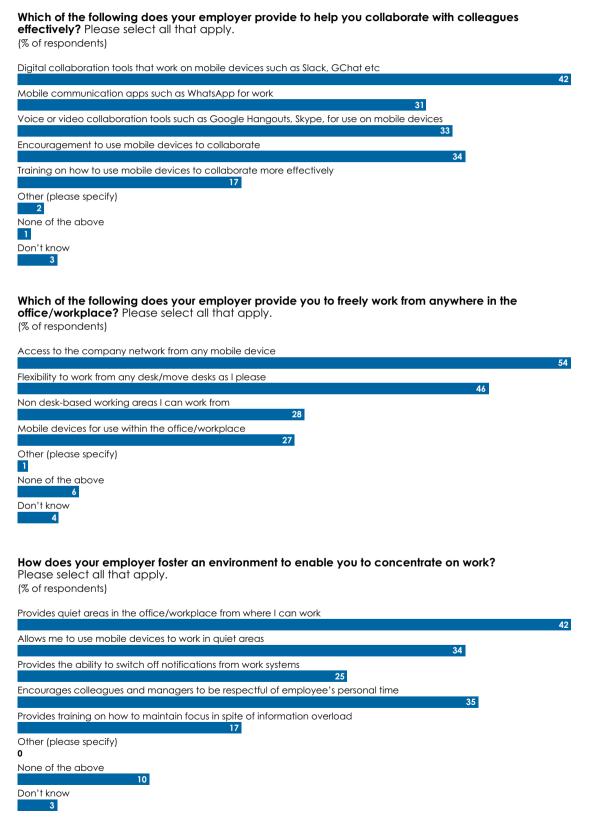
Other (please specify)

2

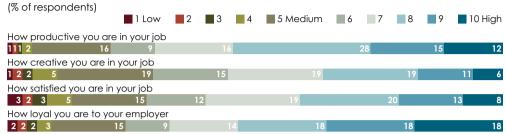
None of the above

4

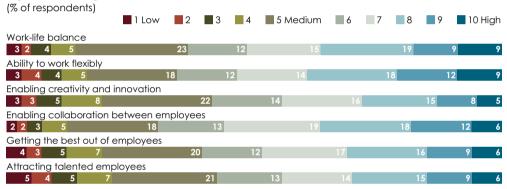
Don't know



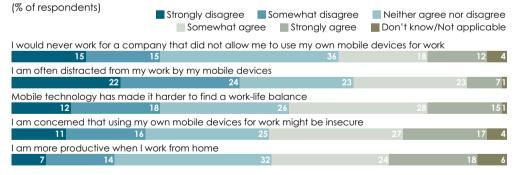
#### Please rate yourself on the following characteristics, with 10 being high and 1 being low



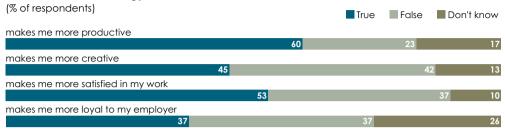
# Please rank your employer and workplace on the following characteristics, with 10 being high and 1 being low.



#### To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



## With respect to your use of mobile devices for work, are the following statements true or false? Mobile technology....?



#### What is your current age?

(% of respondents)



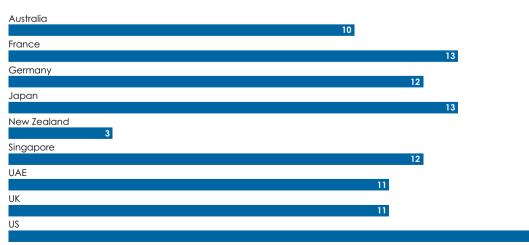
#### What is your gender?

(% of respondents)

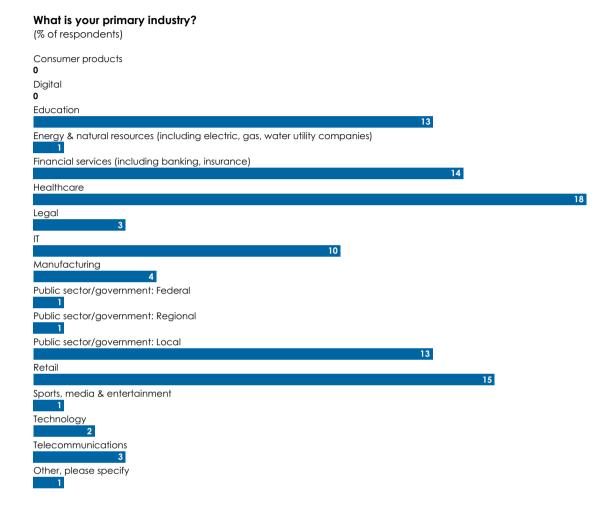


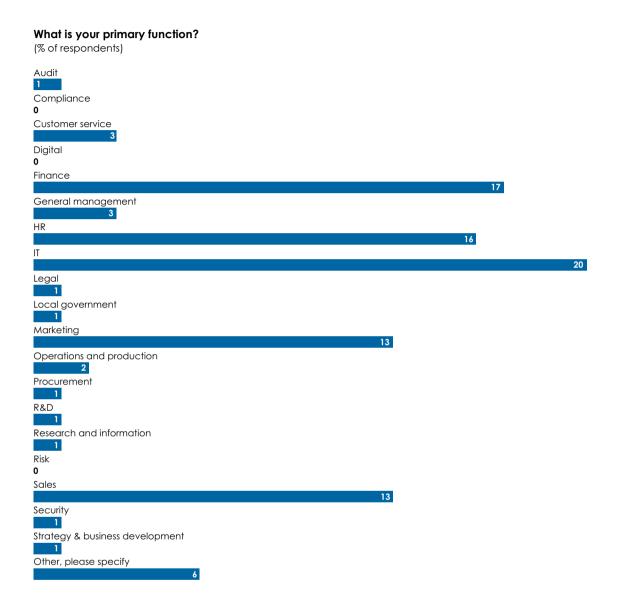
#### In which country are you personally located?

(% of respondents)



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