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Technology and engagement in the workplace.

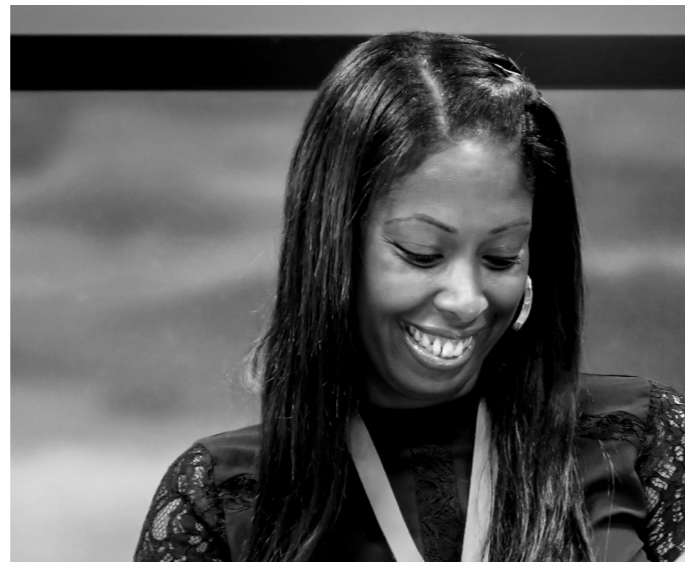
The causative correlation between poor IT performance and talent morale, performance and retention

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70% of workers said that the sheer volume of communications they could now access made it more difficult to get their work done

CITE research of 2,000 workers across a range of industries in the US, UK, and Australia (2018)



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Accenture research

Littlefish!

Engaged IT Services



Technology and engagement in the workplace: the causative correlation between poor IT performance and talent morale, performance and retention

Foreword by Emma Maraio, Business Psychologist & Head of Talent at Littlefish

Looking after employees is vital for any business.

It matters hugely and from a range of different perspectives, from the duty of care which any employer naturally owes to their staff to the overwhelming business case for creating an environment in which employees are happy and healthy.

Getting this right involves a combination of attitude and technology:

- **The attitude** is one which says that employee health is an issue which matters at every level of an organisation, with this approach being reflected in ways which are highly visible throughout, and demonstrably effective.
- **Technology** which is used in the right way – not to overwhelm, which is often the case with new systems, platforms and devices, but to support the human beings delivering the processes and help to create a framework within which the right work/life balance can be struck.

For many years, of course, discussions of health and wellbeing in the workplace focused solely on the risk of physical injury or ailment. Looking after your employees meant instigating policies designed to minimise the risk of conditions such as

vibration white finger and hearing loss, injuries caused by accidents with heavy industrial machinery or the kind of problems, such as degraded eye sight and repetitive strain injury, which result from the poorly managed use of IT equipment.

This is no longer the case. Whilst these issues still clearly matter, it's pretty much universally accepted that they are important.

The railing against health and safety measures often heard emanating from certain sections of the UK population (or at least those purporting to speak on behalf of that population) tends to ignore the fact that working in the vast majority of occupations is now immeasurably safer than it was a few decades ago.

As a rule of thumb it's usually safe to assume that those who spend the most time complaining that health and safety measures are nothing but interfering red tape aren't the same people who have those measures to thank for the fact that they'll be finishing the working day fit and well and still in one piece.

Anyone working in the construction industry in the UK today, for example, is benefitting from the fact that the number of fatal accidents in the sector is currently

less than a quarter of the rate seen in 2000-2001¹, something which simply wouldn't have happened without a more stringent attitude toward health and safety regulations.

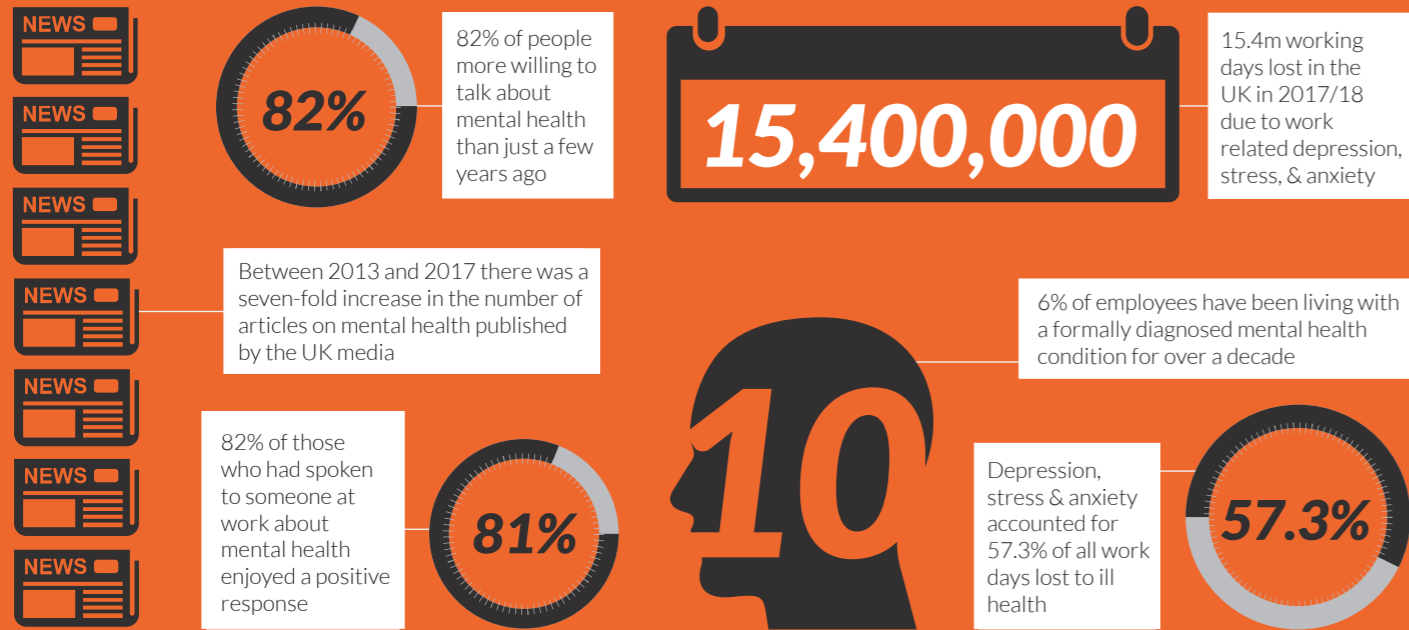
By way of contrast, the issue of the mental health of employees is still one which sometimes struggles to be placed front and centre, where it needs to be.

On the one hand, great strides have been made in recent years, particularly with regard to removing the stigma which all too often attaches itself to discussions of mental health.

On the other, the day when telling your line manager that you're finding it hard to cope with the stress and anxiety you feel is as simple as explaining that you've sprained your ankle is still some way off.

In this report we discuss the roles technology, and the services designed to support it, have in the workplace, and the impact these can have on employees wellbeing and mental health.

We hope you enjoy reading it and welcome your feedback via our social media channels.



The Positive Signs

It's possible to find straws in the wind suggesting that attitudes to mental health are definitely moving in the right direction.

Between 2013 and 2017, for example, there was a seven-fold increase in the number of articles on mental health that were published by the UK media².

Research carried out by professional services specialists Accenture in November 2018 found, after speaking to more than 2,000 workers, that 82% of respondents were now more willing to talk about their own mental health issues than they would have been just a few years ago. In addition to this, 81% of those who had spoken to someone at work about mental health enjoyed a positive response, characterised by understanding and kindness.

Those people who felt that their employers took an approachable and supportive attitude toward mental health found that this meant they were less stressed, more confident and felt 'less isolated'.

Those who did feel able to open up about their mental health described their feelings of relief, and felt that speaking at work was the first step toward getting the help they needed elsewhere³.

And the bad news

This is all clearly good news, but it's only one side of the story, and the unfortunate truth is that a slew of surveys, studies and papers examining employers attitudes – mainly in the UK but also from other parts of the world – show that there is still a huge distance to travel when it comes to treating employees mental health with the same care traditionally reserved for their physical health.

The quickly evolving nature of the workplace in the digital and post digital age means that a whole new set of challenges to mental wellbeing are emerging, from the danger of feeling overwhelmed by data, mobile devices and the 'always-on' nature of the modern workplace, to the seemingly perennial problem of equipment and systems not being up to the task expected of them.

No matter what the precise details are, the onus is on any responsible employer to think very carefully about two things:

- The environment in which they expect their employees to work, and the efficiency and availability of the systems and processes they put in place for that work. Providing the right tools and support is the key to helping employees deal with the rapidly changing nature of the modern workplace without feeling the kind of stress that leads to mental health issues.

- The way in which they respond to any mental health problems which arise, making it easier for employees to flag issues before they turn into major problems for both the individual and the wider business.

How big is the problem?

It's possible that the figures are skewed slightly by the gradual erosion of the mental health stigma, but there's simply no escaping the fact that issues such as work-related anxiety and stress are having more of an impact on the UK workforce than ever before.

The 2018 Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 'Health and safety at work' report found, for the first time ever, that more than half of all the working days lost through ill health in the UK during 2017/18 were lost because of work related depression, stress and anxiety.

The total time lost in this way came to 15.4 million working days, up from 12.5 million the year before. This represents 57.3% of all of the days lost through ill health⁴.

This rise in the incidence of mental health related illness is mirrored in the Mental Health at Work 2018 report published by Business in the Community (BITC)⁵.

The report paints a compelling picture of a landscape in which the profile of mental health is higher than it's ever been, but in which it is clear that a great deal of progress remains to be made.

Amongst the most striking statistics gathered by the BITC report were the following:

- 61% of employees have had mental health issues caused by work, or in which work was a related factor
- 6% of employees have been living with a condition that has

been formally diagnosed for over a decade

- At some point in their life, 33% of the UK workforce have been diagnosed as formally having a mental health condition
- 54% of employees generally feel comfortable discussing mental health issues while at work, but at the same time...
- ...only 16% felt they could reveal a mental health issue to their manager

This last statistic is indicative of the fact that the size of the problem hasn't always been matched by the speed and effectiveness of the response:

- 11% of employees who did reveal a mental health issue at work later found themselves being disciplined, demoted or dismissed
- 64% of managers admit to having prioritised the interests of the organisation over the wellbeing of employees
- 30% of managers admitted that the workplace had neither services nor facilities in place to help with wellbeing and mental health

The same discouraging picture was painted in the Accenture November 2018 survey⁶ cited above, with only 27% of respondents saying they'd seen a positive change in the way employees at their workplace felt able to talk openly about mental health, and just 20% reporting an improvement in the workplace training offered to help them cope with their own mental health challenges.

In an acknowledgement of the scale of the problem, the government set up an independent review in 2017, looking into 'how employers can better support the mental health of all people currently in employment including those with mental health problems or poor well-being to remain in and thrive through work.' It's not perhaps the most elegantly phrased objective, but it definitely represents a step in the right direction.

Known as the Stevenson/Farmer review, and with the official title 'Thriving at work', the results were published in October 2017⁷, and included striking details of the cost which poor mental health imposes on society as a whole, as well as on those individuals effected.

The annual cost to UK employers was given as being between £33 billion and £42

billion, with more than 50% of this amount deriving from poor productivity caused by what is referred to as 'presenteeism' – the phenomenon of workers being present in the workplace but less productive due to poor mental health.

At the same time the cost to the government in general was given as £24 billion to £27 billion, but even this figure pales into insignificance when compared to the cost that poor mental health imposes on the economy as a whole, which Stevenson/Farmer put at between £74 billion and £99 billion.

While the review identified what were characterised as 'green shoots' signifying a shift in attitudes amongst employers, the overall picture was still fairly bleak.

Of the top 100 companies in the UK, only 11 included details of any initiatives to support the mental health of their employees as part of their annual reports.

At the same time, just 39% had frameworks set up for the support of employees with common mental health problems, while 80% of employers themselves claimed there were no cases of employers revealing a mental health condition.

This figure is perhaps not so surprising when put into perspective by the fact that only 24% of managers, according to the Stevenson/Farmer review, had received any kind of training covering mental health at work.

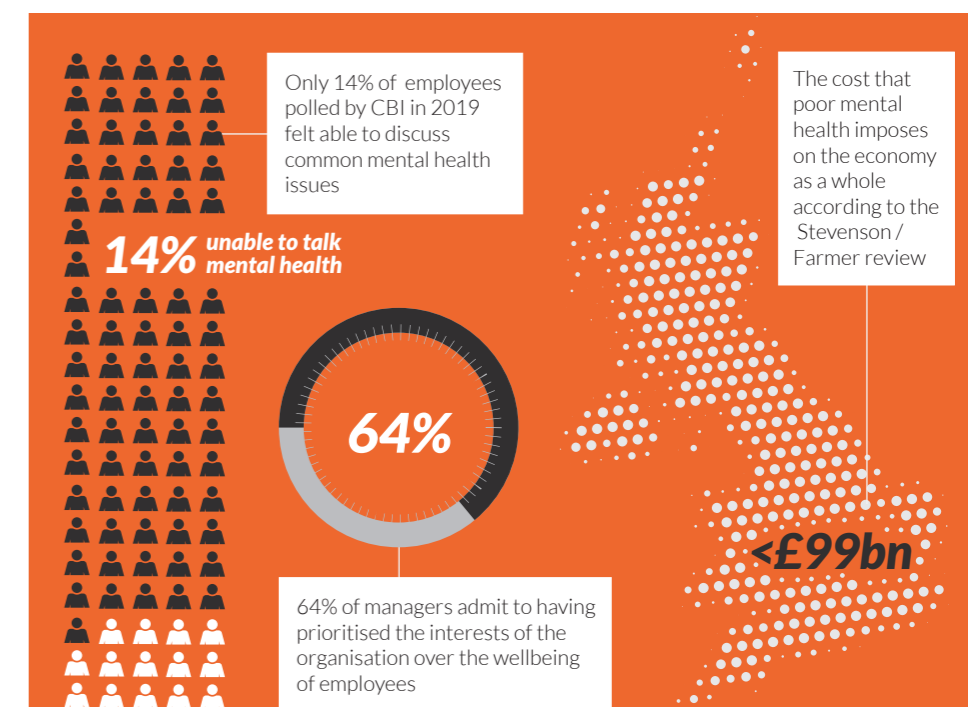
It's to be hoped that a piece of work like the Stevenson/Farmer review, which listed no fewer than forty direct recommendations

for the government and employers, will help to foster change.

The most recent statistics available, however, taken from a survey carried out by OnePoll on behalf of the CBI and timed to coincide with the May 2019 launch of Mental Health Awareness Week, highlighted the disparity that still exists between workplace attitudes to mental and physical health⁸:

- 90% of employers would feel unable to talk about eating disorders or self-harming
- People find it easier to talk to their manager about diarrhoea than about depression – to put this in perspective, diarrhoea 'scored' 29% compared to 26% for depression
- 42% of employees feel comfortable talking about common physical complaints, but only 14% felt able to discuss common mental health issues
- Only 10% of employees would feel comfortable talking about topics like psychosis, postnatal depression, self-harm, eating disorders and schizophrenia
- 40% of employees said they'd feel able to discuss a condition like cancer with their manager, but only 12% would feel the same about bipolar disorder

While the figures for mental health are shocking in their own right, it's probably worth considering the fact that only 4 in 10 people would feel able to discuss something



as serious as cancer with their manager.

The reasons which might lie behind this are similar to those which have led, over the years, to discussions of mental health in the workplace being seen as taboo – a lack of joined up thinking, poor policy frameworks and, most strikingly, insufficient training of the relevant line managers.

A survey of UK HR managers⁹ found that 71% said their business had no policies in place for communicating with and managing employees with a cancer diagnosis.

Amongst smaller firms this figure rose to 81%.

When survivors of cancer return to the workplace the picture is even worse – 61% of HR managers admitted having no policies in place, almost half felt that line managers were ill-prepared to manage employees with cancer and 13% admitted to not being prepared at all.

In organisations with more than 10,000 employees, 53% of those surveyed felt that managers were unprepared to deal with the situation. This is cancer, and not mental health, but it demonstrates how even a highly 'visible' condition can lead to problems in the workplace if the well-being of employees isn't placed at the forefront of managerial thinking.

Taken as a whole, the statistics gathered in recent years paint a picture of an issue which is larger than was previously thought, with more people, more workplaces and more businesses being impacted than had been assumed.

The fact that this has been recognised at governmental level is clearly a positive step, but the very latest figures point to an environment in which acceptance of mental health in the workplace as a valid topic for discussion is still in its earliest stages.

The negative impact of this squeamishness in the face of mental health issues is multi-faceted.

First and foremost, of course, it has a hugely detrimental effect on the day to day life – both in work and out – of those individuals having to cope with mental health issues.

The Accenture report cited above found that 57% of respondents felt that the fact that they didn't feel free to discuss their mental health issues at work had led to them feeling isolated, stressed and lacking in confidence.

In addition to the damage caused to individuals by the prevailing culture, any modern organisation that employs people has to take into account the commercial impact of paying due care and attention to mental health in the workplace.

As well as the negative feelings already described, the respondents to the Accenture survey¹⁰ made it plain that a lack of openness regarding mental health issues would also lead to them being less productive.

This lack of productivity is the 'presenteeism' highlighted in the Stevenson/Farmer review, and it symbolises the point in the mental health at work Venn diagram at which personal well-being crosses over with good business sense.

As well as highlighting a lack of productivity, respondents clearly signalled that working for an organisation with a supportive attitude toward mental health issues would impact hugely on the standard of work being delivered.



Companies from the FTSE 100 which prioritised employee mental health and well-being are seen to outperform the rest of the FTSE 100 by 10%



Organisations with a supportive attitude towards mental health issues would also be twice as likely to say that they love their jobs



60% of employees would feel more motivated in work, and more likely to recommend their employer to others if action had been taken to support the mental health of employees

Not only would the employees be more likely to know how to seek help for their issues, and to find it easy to talk about mental health, they would also be twice as likely to say that they love their jobs (66% compared to 31%) and more likely to stay with their current employer for the next twelve months at least (94% compared to 81%).

Given the boost to the bottom line which is delivered when employee morale is high, not to mention the onerous cost of recruiting, training and on boarding new members of staff on a regular basis, this shows that the right approach can deliver on the balance sheet as well as in the personal and working lives of employees.

Direct Returns

This is a fact which was underlined by research carried out by mental health charity MIND¹¹. They found that 60% of employees would feel more motivated in work, and more likely to recommend their employer to others if action had been taken to support the mental health of employees.

On a larger scale, companies from the FTSE 100 which prioritised employee mental health and well-being are seen to outperform the rest of the FTSE 100 by 10%¹².

Perhaps the best illustration of the simple business sense of taking action was contained in a report in the Lancet, which examined a study of the Australian Fire Service. The study found that running a manager mental health training programme led to a notable reduction in work related sickness absence, and that the direct

return on investment this delivered was £9.98 for each £1 spent on the training¹³.

Top Down

A 2019 report from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the professional body for HR and people development, examined both the scale of the problem of work-related mental health issues and the positive steps which some of the UK's best known organisations had taken to deal with the problem.

In particular, they highlighted the way in which a top down approach to the issue was the most likely to reap dividends; in simple terms, if employees believe their managers, from the highest level down, are actively and enthusiastically engaged with the issues, they are more likely to feel supported.

While the good news in the report included the fact that 61% of respondents felt that employee wellbeing had found a place on the agenda of their senior leaders (up from 55% last year), only a third felt that a focus on mental wellbeing was being reflected in the behaviour and actions of those senior leaders. The percentage of those who felt

that the prevailing management style was a cause of stress had risen in the past 12 months from 32% to 43%.

Although the wider societal taboo around mental health issues may be on the decline, the report found that only 9% of organisations had taken the step of creating a standalone mental health policy for employees, while a third more had included mental health provision within another policy and one in five were currently actively developing a mental health policy.

Similarly, less than 50% of organisations provided mental health training - for managers to support members of staff, for staff to build their own levels of wellbeing and resilience, or for the provision of mental health first-aiders.

This was against a backdrop of an increase in work related stress absences in almost two fifths of organisations, while only a third of those who had noticed this increase in the previous 12 months had taken any steps to reduce stress in the workplace.

Of course, a certain disjunction is always likely to be visible between the aspirations of management and the perception of employees. Accordingly, less than half of the

employees reporting that their organisation is taking action to deal with stress in the workplace felt that the steps taken were effective, while a damning one in six felt that the steps taken were actively ineffective¹⁴.

Getting it Right

The CBI's 'Front of Mind: Prioritising Workplace Health and Wellbeing Report' (2018), highlighted many of the factors already mentioned, included the cost of poor mental health to the wider economy and the fact that, since the average person spends 90,000 hours at work over their lifetime, the culture of that workplace is bound to have a huge impact on their health and wellbeing.

The report also found that 69% of the public said that the factor which most impacted on their trust in a business was how that business treated its employees.

When this factor was taken into account alongside the cost of covering employee absences and lower levels of productivity, the CBI reported that every £1 invested in boosting mental health in the workplace produced an average return of £4.20¹⁵.

Case Studies

The positive results achieved by initiatives such as those highlighted below demonstrate the importance which workplace culture has on the mental health and well-being of employees.

Moreover, when contrasted with the less than positive attitudes often identified in the CIPD report referenced earlier – with management giving lip service to mental health provision, while employees felt that the steps taken were somewhat less than genuinely effective – they clearly underline the importance of any action being delivered across every level of an organisation and with buy in from senior managers down.

The more visible and committed this buy-in is, the more supported employees will feel.

BAE Systems

BAE launched a mental health awareness programme in 2016, headed up by Steve Fogg, Managing Director of the UK Shared Services sector of the business.

Since that time, more than 1,300 employees, from senior leaders to the most junior members of staff, have accessed the scheme. A central part of the success of the scheme, and of the general approach taken to mental health at BAE, was the involvement of a senior manager such as Steve Fogg in designing and delivering the programme.

The programme is intended to give BAE employees a better understanding of their own mental health and the wellbeing of others, and involves input from a business psychologist and employee participation in drama-based learning. Each interactive session is introduced by Steve Fogg, something which underlines the commitment of BAE and its management to good mental health.

Unilever

Unilever is an international consumer goods company which employs 7,000 people in the UK. Since 2013 they have been working with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), to deliver Mental Health First Aid training to employees.

This was a course of action prompted by the fact that mental health had been identified as the main reason for employees to access private medical insurance. Since 2013, the company has trained half of its line managers and 250 members of staff, using courses ranging from half a day to two days. The concept is based on the idea of physical first-aiders, and volunteer employees across Unilever sites now make up 'Time to Talk' teams offering support to anyone experiencing mental health problems.

In addition to the MHFA training, Unilever encourages senior leaders to share personal stories about mental health and runs an Employee Assistance Programme which provides round the clock access to advice and trained counsellors.

Channel 4

The broadcaster Channel 4 has worked to raise awareness of mental health in the workplace since 2015.

The input from the top of the organisation comes in the person of Chief Commercial Officer Jonathan Allan, who is the Executive



Sponsor of any activities designed to improve mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

These activities included signing the Time to Change pledge. Time to Change is an initiative which encourages employers to commit to changing the way in which society as a whole thinks and acts with regards to mental health, and to ensuring that any employees facing mental health problems feel properly supported.

Signing the pledge involves drawing up an action plan designed to get employees talking more openly about mental health issues, and this action plan has to be approved by Time to Change before an organisation is accepted. To date, more than 900 employers across England have signed the pledge.

The approach taken by Channel 4 varies between high impact initiatives during periods such as Mental Health Awareness Week and less visible on-going activity. The latter takes the form of consistent communication around the workplace, utilising tools such as 'memo of the day' on the staff intranet and posters in public spaces.

Panasonic UK

Panasonic UK, part of the global Panasonic brand, has placed health and wellbeing at the centre of its people strategy since 2015.

The main thrust of the strategy has been to enable employees to intervene at the earliest possible stage in any health challenges they face.

Delivery of this involves interactive e-learning on awareness of mental health issues, and line managers in particular are given specific learning designed to enable them to recognise the signs of stress and mental health issues amongst the teams they are responsible for.

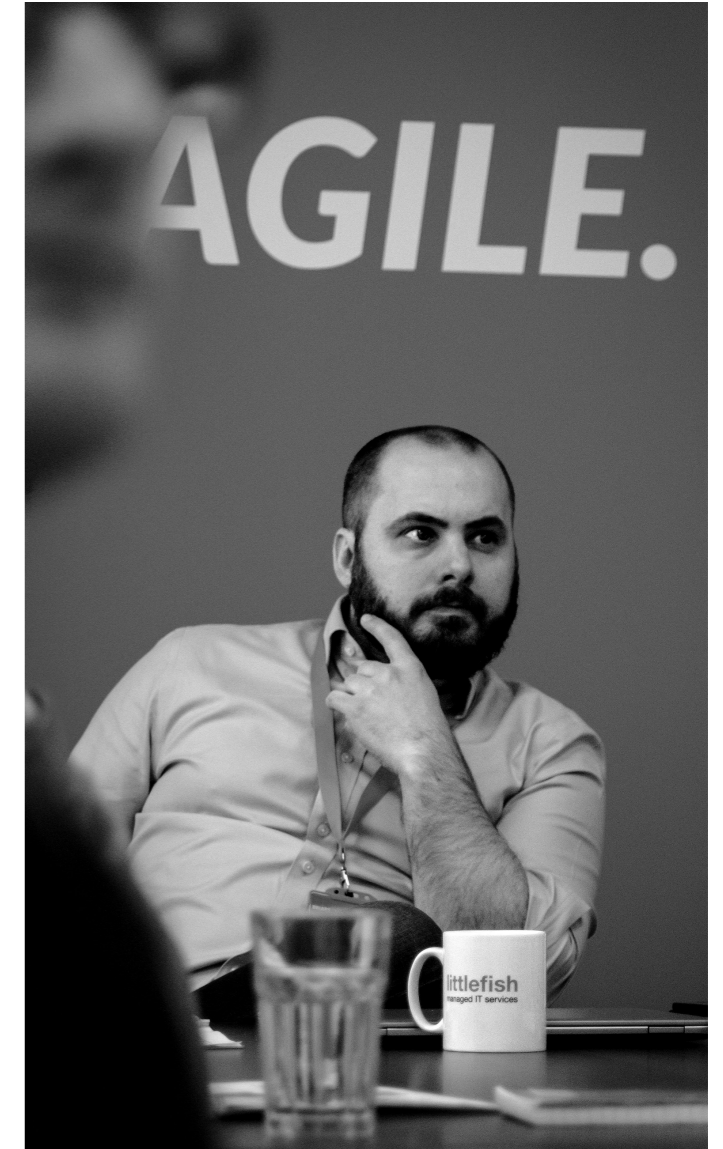
In conjunction with managers being given the information needed to point employees in the direction of internal and external support systems, this raising of awareness has seen sickness and absences related to stress and mental health decline significantly over the past 3 years.

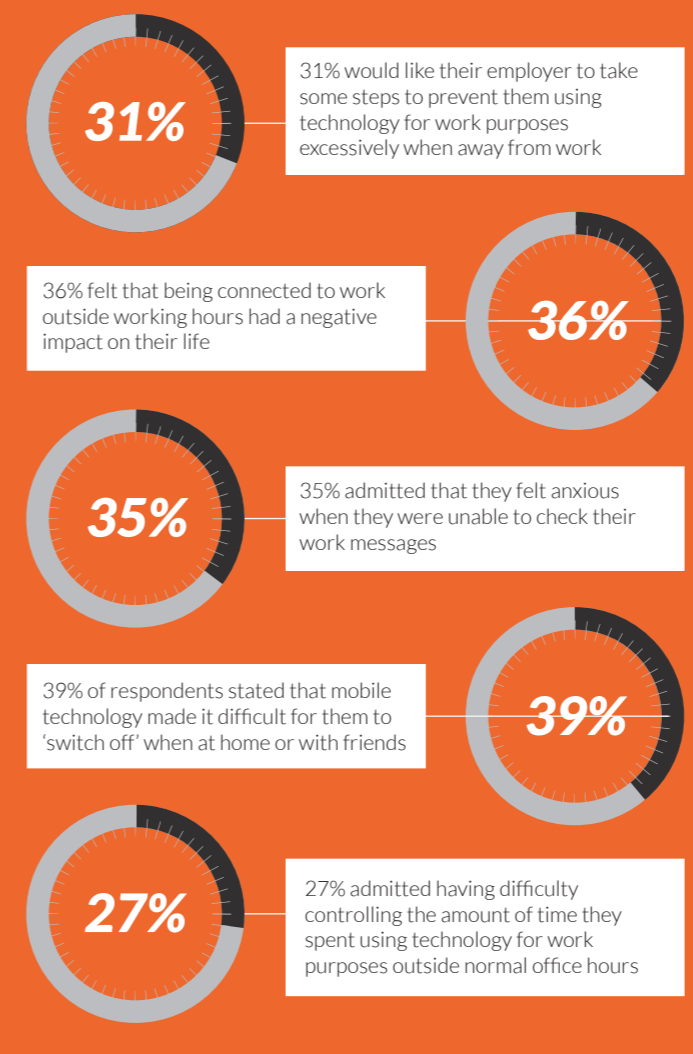
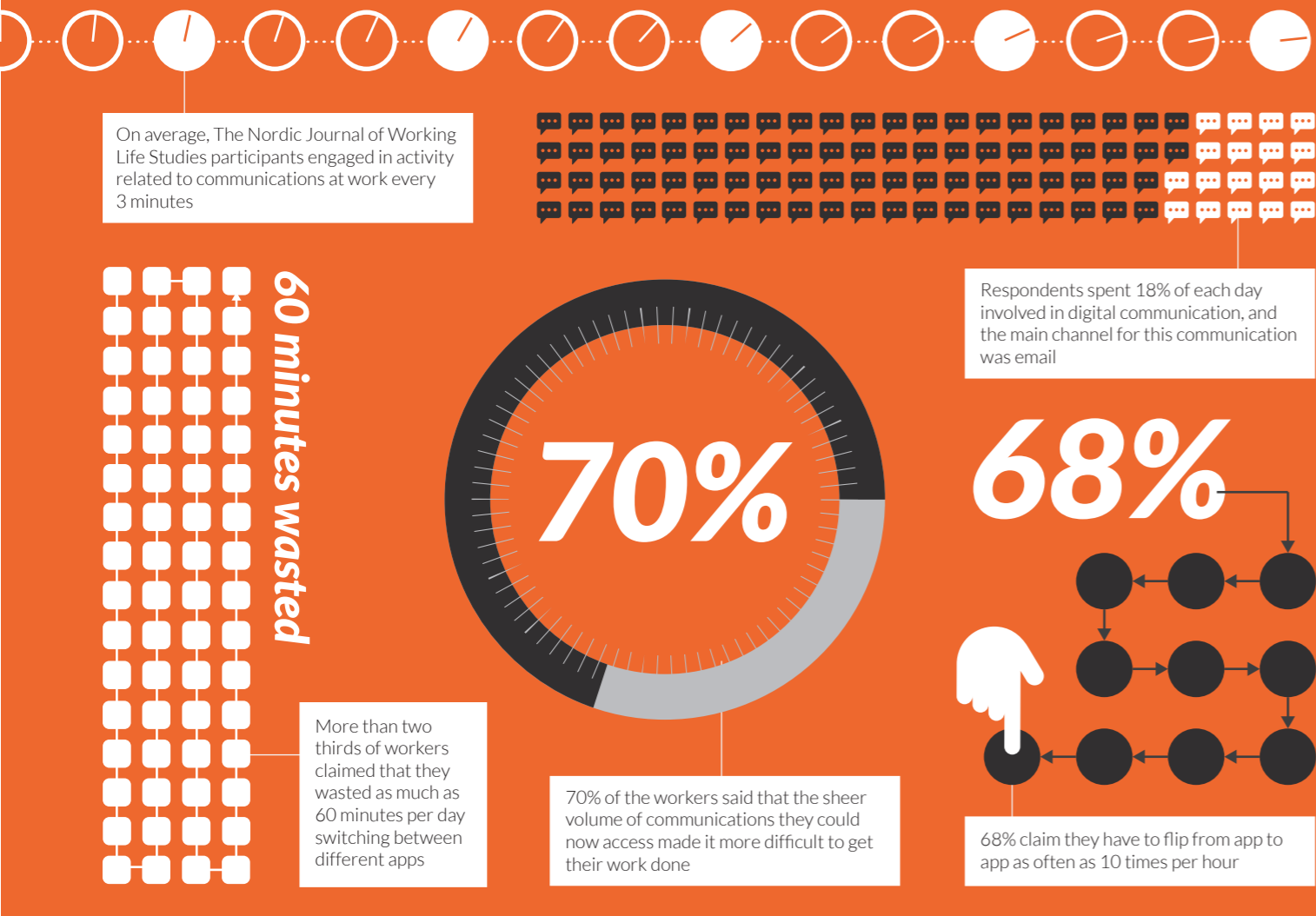
Other initiatives offered by Panasonic UK include lunchtime sessions on mindfulness and sleep improvement.



69% of the public said that the factor which most impacted on their trust in a business was how that business treated its employees

The CBI's 'Front of Mind: Prioritising Workplace Health and Wellbeing Report' (2018)





Those last two statistics encapsulate the challenge of integrating IT technology into the workplace rather neatly – if the technology isn't replaced and updated with newer technology it won't be up to the task, but if employees aren't supported properly through the introduction of that newer technology, the stress and anxiety they feel will simply increase.

A smaller study by First Psychology Scotland¹⁹ looked into the way that the introduction of technology into the workplace had led to some employees blurring the line between work and the rest of their life.

The technology in question was the kind of mobile technology which enables employees to – for example – check their email whenever and wherever they way to:

- 39% of respondents stated that the technology made it difficult for them to 'switch off' when at home or with friends
- 36% felt that being connected to work outside working hours had a negative impact on their life
- 35% admitted that they felt anxious when they were unable to check their work messages
- 27% admitted having difficulty controlling the amount of time they spent using technology for work purposes outside normal office hours
- 31% would like their employer to take some steps to prevent them using technology for work purposes excessively when away from work.

The Bank Workers Charity (BWC) specialises in supporting the health and wellbeing of the banking community in the UK, but the findings of their 2019 report 'At the crossroads - The need for a digital rebalance'²⁰ are applicable to any modern digital workplace.

IT and Stress

Further study, in the UK and globally, indicates that workplace culture, while vital, is only a part of the picture. In the post-digital age, in which an ever-growing percentage of employees find themselves expected to be accessible via a range of devices at almost all times and in almost all places, technology has come to play an ever more important role in both creating and minimising workplace stress.

The Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies¹⁶, an international scientific journal on working life, examines workplace issues which are universal in scope and subject matter.

Although the research is based primarily in countries like Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, the journal is written in English, and invites contributions from international sources.

It should also be noted that the Stevenson/Farmer Review, quoting figures from the 2016 Global Workforce Happiness Index, stated that countries like Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland were all placed in the top 10 of the index, and that

the Nordic countries in general boast a workplace culture which encourages employee autonomy and job satisfaction.

Research published by the journal in 2018 looked at existing knowledge of the impact of the digital workplace and combined this with a raft of primary research based on discussions and activity logs provided by a range of workers involved in IT based digital working environments.

The findings included the fact that respondents spent 18% of each day involved in digital communication, and that the main channel for this communication was email. On average, the participants engaged in activity related to communications at work every 3 minutes.

One of the key factors raised in the report was the frequent demand for employees to adapt to the use of new digital tools in the workplace. The discussion around this uptake of new technology centred around two issues, both of them problematic:

- The inadequate nature of the training given whenever a new technology was introduced

- The fact that new digital tools almost always led to an increase in the workload of employees

One of the points raised was that the instructions and technical training needed were often available within an organisation, but that the time required to take advantage of these resources was not allotted.

This led to employees taking the training at the expense of their normal workday tasks, something which left them feeling stressed and even guilty.

The other major issue around digital technology in the workplace detailed in the research was the occurrence of technical problems, which curtailed the communication upon which the workplace was dependent.

The delays caused by technical problems with the likes of platforms and applications almost always led to an increased workload, even after the technical issue had been resolved, and could also impede communication with clients, degrade customer service and, in some cases, lead to negative and confrontational interaction

with clients.

One final issue was that many digital tools, even when functioning properly, were not felt to be very user-friendly.

The authors of the report stated that all of this – with reference to earlier studies on the use of IT in the workplace – was likely to create stress in employees.

It should be remembered that these issues were being raised by employees in the Nordic region, a part of the world renowned for excellent health and social care provision in general and an emphasis on good working conditions.

If IT and Digital provision in the workplace is a driver of stress in these optimal circumstances, then anything less than total concentration on creating and delivering the very best IT systems is bound to have a detrimental impact on the mental health and wellbeing of employees¹⁷.

In a survey of 3,000 workers carried out across Europe by Wrike, project management software providers, it emerged that 33% of UK workers had taken the step of looking for a new job thanks to frustrations with 'operational inefficiencies', and 29% felt disengaged from their role. Of those looking for a job elsewhere, 81% reported experiencing rising levels of stress.

When asked to give reasons for these frustrations, 38% cited having to use slow or out-dated technology, while 34% said that changes to processes, or the introduction of entirely new processes, led to feelings of anxiety¹⁸.

The report looked at the demands which the proliferation of digital technology places on employees, and in particular the impact of 'digital overload'. It quoted a University of Michigan study which found that the kind of multi-tasking which digital technology encourages can reduce productivity by 40%, while also being associated with higher stress levels and poor concentration.

Elsewhere there was confirmation of the work/life dysfunction outlined in the Psychology Scotland study.

According to research by the Henley Business School, 61% of managers found that technology made it harder for them to switch off from work, with more than half admitting to checking email outside working hours. Perhaps most strikingly, the managers concerned felt that the constant interruptions which are a feature of multi-platform digital technology actually negate the gains in productivity which mobile devices are intended to deliver.

A January 2018 survey by CITE Research of 2,000 workers across a range of industries in the US, UK, and Australia backed up the impression that badly delivered and supported IT can have an even more harmful effect than out-dated IT²¹.

A figure of 70% of the workers said that the sheer volume of communications they could now access made it more difficult to get their work done.

More than two thirds claimed that they wasted as much as 60 minutes per day switching between different apps, with 68% claiming they have to flip from app to app as often as 10 times per hour.

A quick calculation reveals that, in the case of these workers, 32 days per year are being lost simply switching between a number of apps which were doubtless introduced – somewhat ironically – with the intention of boosting productivity.

Some businesses have been quicker than others to act on the information overload which the careless introduction of digital technology can lead to.

In 2012, Volkswagen switched off emails outside working hours, while in 2014 Daimler in Germany offered workers the option of having any emails they receive while they are on holiday deleted, with the sender being redirected to another recipient. The result of this policy was that workers returned to work to find themselves facing the extremely un-stressful sight of an entirely empty email inbox.

In 2018, telecommunications giant Orange stated that:

“Respect for the private life and the right to switch off are considered to be fundamental rights at Orange. It is a matter of protecting employees from intrusive practices (such as email, SMS or instant messaging services) at any time of the day or night, over the weekend, during days off or during training courses”

The deputy chairman of Porsche’s supervisory board instigated a policy of any emails sent to employees between 7pm and 6am being returned to senders, while similar policies have been announced by BMX, AXA 12 and French energy company Orano.

In 2017 this kind of policy was enshrined in law by the French government, which introduced the ‘right to disconnect’, instructing companies to set out hours during which employees should neither send nor respond to work-based emails²².

A Double-Edged Sword

Of course, while technology in the workplace may help to generate employee stress it can also be used to reduce those stress levels and create a more open attitude toward mental health in general.

The CBI Front of Mind report looked at the way in which forward thinking companies can harness the power of technological solutions such as wearable technology to create the framework for this open attitude.

At the time the report was published there were already over 318,000 health apps available globally, with 200 more arriving in

the market place every single day. The UK represents the biggest global market for wearable technology, and health and fitness trackers are at the forefront of this trend, making up 53% of the market.

In the US some organisations have already started introducing health apps in the workplace, and amongst those that have, 12% saw a return of \$2 to \$3 on every dollar spent, while for 3% that figure rose to between \$5 and \$7.45.

In 2016 companies around the globe gave out 202m wearable devices to their employees, and this figure is expected to rise to 500m by 2021.

Further studies referenced in the CBI report found that wearable devices in the workplace had led to a 10% increase in employee productivity, and research carried out by Accenture found that 77% of employees feel workers should take proactive steps to manage their mental health.

The same study identified 65% of workers stating they were positive about using technology to manage their mental and physical health, with 39% already having used some form of technology to manage or improve their mental wellbeing²³.

IT and the Workplace

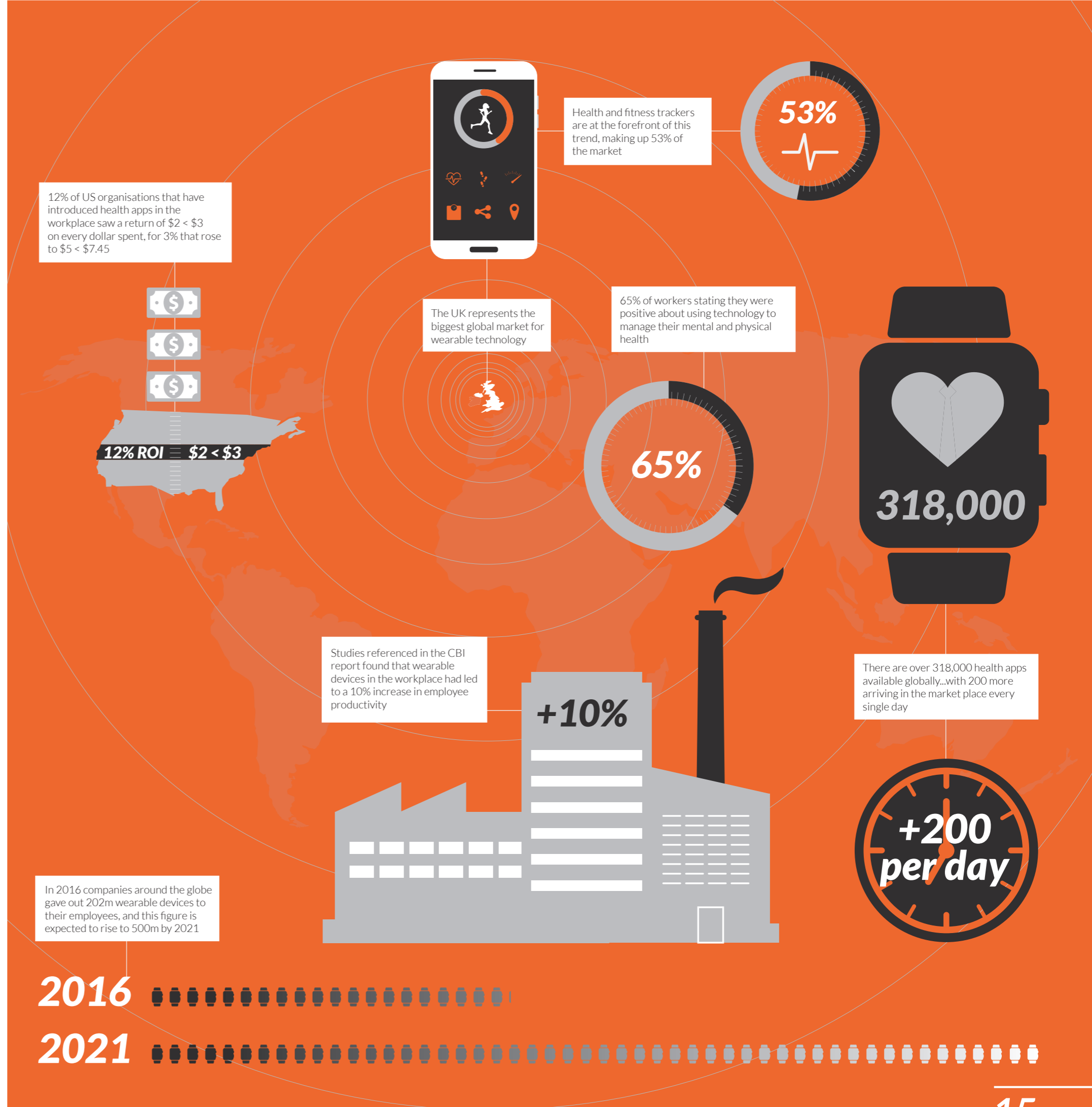
The growing use of health apps in the workplace is just one example of how technology can be used to relieve rather than create stress.

We’ve seen that poor mental health is costing individuals, organisations and the wider UK economy billions of pounds every year, with individual businesses taking the brunt of that hit.

Taking every step possible to alleviate the stress caused by the workplace is not only the right thing to do, it is a sensible business move, separating the most successful and trusted companies from the rest, cutting absences, presenteeism and the cost of replacing unhappy staff, and driving up productivity and profit levels.

Leaving aside the kind of steps outlined already – from top down openness around mental health issues to the use of interactive training and the introduction of mental health first-aiders – the best and in some ways most obvious means of using technology to support mental health and wellbeing in the workplace is to design and install the very best IT solutions.

This means working with the people tasked with using that IT to ensure that the



£742m

The UK wide cost of internet downtime during 2018 deriving from lost productivity and extra overtime, calculated by Beaming and mathematicians at Imperial College London

resources to:

- Increase the pace of product innovation and cut the time to market
- Automate costly and time consuming manual tasks and processes²⁴

Another study – entitled 'The digital workplace: Think, share, do Transform your employee experience' - looking into the use of IT to create a truly digital workplace, was produced by leading professional services provider Deloitte, who pulled together a wide range of existing research to highlight the benefits of digital transformation.

One particular point of interest is the fact that the report places particular emphasis on the way in which the right IT provision and digital transformation can play a huge role in building and maintaining staff morale. It found, for example, that 64% of employees would take a lower paying job if the systems were in place to allow them to work away from the office.

Other figures highlighted by the report included the fact that the provision of strong online social networks leads to organisations being 7% more productive, and that organisations which installed internal social media tools and platforms saw a median rise in employee satisfaction of 20%.

The impact which all of this has on employee engagement has an almost direct correlation in the figures given for employee retention. Put simply, engaged employees are 87% more likely to stay with an organisation²⁵.

The Cost of Not Engaging With IT Provision

We'll soon see what impact poor IT provision can have on metrics such as staff morale, employee engagement and productivity, but it's useful to look at the direct, bottom line cost of not investing in the IT a modern organisation needs.

Research carried out by Gartner found that technical faults leading to IT related downtime cost the average business £4,300 per minute or £258,000 per hour. That's the direct cost, but the productivity which is lost due to any downtime also has to be factored in, and this runs at an average of 545 hours across all members of staff at a business annually²⁶.

Internet service provider Beaming worked with mathematicians at Imperial College London to calculate the UK wide cost of internet downtime during 2018.

Although the average of 16 hours downtime per business may sound relatively low over the course of a whole year, the cumulative effect was a cost to the UK of £742m deriving from lost productivity and extra overtime²⁷.

The Real World Impact

As recently as May 2017 an interruption to the IT systems used by British Airways left members of staff unable to check passengers in for their flights. Although caused by a power outage in a west London data centre, the interruption – which only lasted for 15 minutes – impacted on systems in 70 countries and caused issues for an estimated 75,000 passengers.

The immediate cost of this was £150m in compensation, and while the longer term reputational damage is more difficult to quantify, the first sign was the fact that the share value of British Airways parent company International Airlines Group (IAG) had dropped by 4% in value by the Tuesday after the weekend when the incident occurred²⁸.

Staff Morale and Business Success

All of which brings us to the issue of staff morale, IT provision and business success, and the ways in which these three factors are directly intertwined for any modern organisation.

We've seen the impact that poor IT can have on a business in general terms, and also the way in which the shift to a digital workplace has been something of a double edged sword.

On the one hand, the truly digitally transformed workplace is best positioned to meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities of the 21st century. On the other, new systems, platforms and applications, if not introduced into the workplace in the right manner – with a particular emphasis on user-friendliness, sufficient staff training and successful adoption – can lead to workplace stress and the kind of mental health issues that prevent the very business success that IT systems and platforms are introduced to engender.

It might be tempting to assume that everyone who works for your organisation is fully engaged, but studies have repeatedly shown that this is not necessarily the case. A study carried out by Gallup found that only 17% of UK employees feel fully engaged with their job, and that dealing with this disengagement could boost productivity in the UK by between £50-£70 billion annually²⁹.

Another Gallup study, across 34 different countries and dealing with 49 industries, compared the top 25% of organisations which had fully engaged employees with the bottom 25% whose employees were the least engaged, and found that the former were outperforming the latter in a range of categories:

- 10% higher customer ratings
- 22% higher profitability
- 21% higher productivity
- 25% < 65% lower employee turnover
- 37% less absenteeism³⁰

Digital transformation experts Nintex dug deeper into the issue with a January 2018 report which looked at the way in which what they referred to as 'broken company processes' impacted upon the

management of the systems is as efficient, user friendly and stress free as possible.

Before analysing the role which good IT has to play in keeping employee morale high – and the countervailing impact on stress, mental health and productivity of poor IT provision – it's useful to look at the wider importance of IT provision for any modern business.

We'll begin with the results of a survey of senior IT leaders undertaken by DELL EMC in 2017, working with the Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG), in which information on the readiness of 1,000 global companies to embrace digital transformation was gathered and used to create the ESG 2017 IT Transformation Maturity Curve.

Having gathered the data, the study itself broke the companies down into four distinct groups:

1. Legacy – failing to embrace the principles of digital transformation – 12% of those surveyed
2. Emerging – progressing toward IT transformation without yet deploying many data centre technologies – 41% of those surveyed
3. Evolving – committed to IT transformation and deploying a moderate degree of data centre technologies and IT delivery methods – 42% of those surveyed
4. Transformed – furthest along the journey toward IT transformation – 5% of

those surveyed

The headline figure was that 95% of respondents felt that their organisations were in danger of being left behind in terms of IT transformation by an elite 5%. In addition to this, 71% agreed that, without IT transformation, they will not be competitive in the future.

It has to be remembered that these are not opinions foisted on businesses by IT providers keen to provide services, but rather the evaluation offered by the IT leaders of those companies themselves.

Of those companies which are fully embracing IT transformation, 96% managed to exceed their revenue targets in the previous 12 months, which helps to explain why companies which are already 'IT transformed' were seven times more likely to regard IT as a driver of profit rather than a cost centre, and something to differentiate them from the competition.

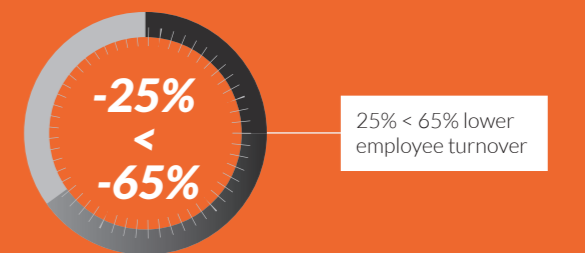
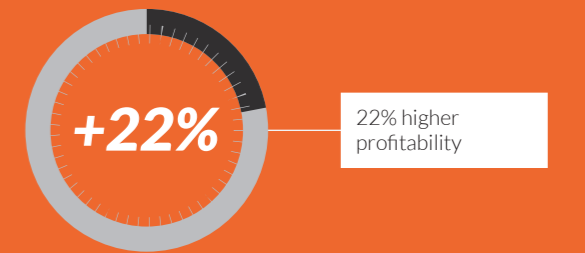
These companies also felt that they were in a 'strong' or 'very strong' position to compete and succeed in their chosen field over the next few years.

Perhaps the key to the positive impact of effective IT transformation lies in the fact that the most advanced organisations are eight times more likely to describe the relationship between IT provision and the rest of the business as highly cooperative.

This degree of cooperation meant that the organisations were able to use their IT

IT LEADER. *FUTURE THINKING.*

25% Most Engaged



25% Least Engaged



workplace morale and engagement of 1,000 employees from all sectors across the US³¹.

Of the employees covered by the report who identified as actively seeking a new job, 86% said that broken processes within their current company had prompted this decision, and that for 72% of this group the broken processes in question centred on workplace IT.

Even amongst those employees who were happy with their current job, 58% stated that their employers' IT processes were failing.

As an overall total, 62% of respondents had observed IT processes within their organisations which were not fit for purpose, with 67% feeling that this was stopping them working to their full potential.

The most commonly observed IT issues were as follows:

- Technology troubleshooting – 59%
- Equipment onboarding for new employees – 43%
- Having to request a new computer or other device – 42%
- Troubleshooting malfunctioning apps – 36%
- Password resets – 23%

The IT department within the average organisation is, according to this report, simply not up to the task in hand.

Of those respondents who raised the issue of broken IT processes, just 16% felt that their in-house IT department handled service requests very promptly.

More than 25%, on the other hand, felt that their IT department was either 'not very prompt' or 'not actually prompt at all'.

Across the rest of the report, technology troubleshooting was the workplace process regarded as being the most 'broken'.

This was seen as covering issues such as onboarding and admin functions but was a particular problem as far as IT provision was concerned, with employees tending to blame the IT workers in their organisation and attempt to engage in their own IT activities – so called 'shadow IT' - with consequent negative impacts on productivity, security and collaboration between departments³².

The degree to which shadow IT is becoming a default reaction to poor IT provision was highlighted in separate studies carried out by the research and advisory firm Gartner and Everest Group, management consultant and research experts.

The studies found that at least 50% of the IT spending taking place in large enterprises was happening outside the control of the IT department.

A separate Cisco survey of CIOs uncovered the degree to which this unregulated IT spending was taking place without their knowledge.

The CIOs in question estimated that their organisations were running an average of 51 cloud services. In reality the number was 730.

The same study found that companies were running between 17 and 20 times more cloud applications than the in-house IT team estimated³³.

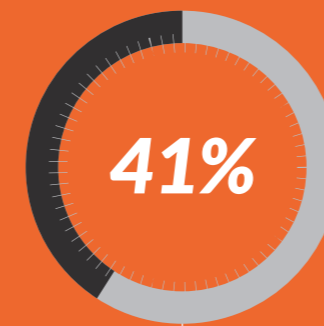
Figures like these were what prompted Gartner, in a list of security predictions published in 2016, to claim that a third of the successful attacks suffered by businesses in the year 2020 would take place on their shadow IT resources³⁴.

Another survey of 3,000 professionals in Europe, the US and the Asia Pacific regions, carried out by Snow Software, found that 76% had accessed content on a work device without clearance from the IT department. 41% of employees had used apps without the approval of the IT team, with 25% of entry level employees doing so compared to 57% of VPs and C-suite executives, 51% of whom had also used personal apps on work devices.

Perhaps most surprisingly, only 7% of the management-level employees felt that using work devices in an unauthorised manner was likely to cause any problematic



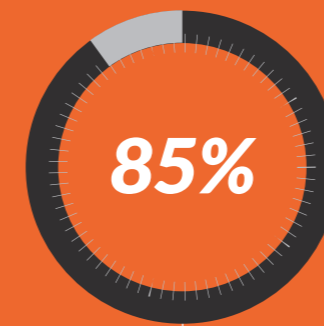
A Cisco survey of CIOs uncovering the extent of unauthorised IT spending found that they estimated their organisations were running 51 cloud applications, when in reality they were running 730



41% of employees have used apps without the approval of the IT team



By 2020 1 in 3 successful cyber attacks on businesses will take place on shadow IT resources

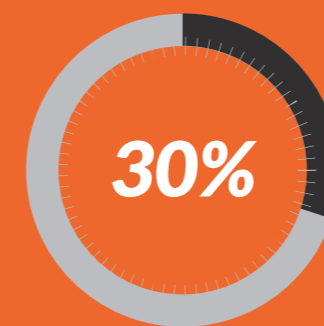


85% of employees admitted to accessing work files on their personal devices



32%

32% claimed getting permission from the IT department slowed down their processes and impacted deadlines



30% admitted to using personal devices to access customer data and information belonging to other employees

business issues. An even larger majority of employees admitted using their own personal devices to access work files and applications – 85% - and even more shocking to anyone with an interest in IT security is the fact that 30% owned up to having used their own devices to access customer data and information belonging to other employees.

In an echo of the findings detailed in the Nintex report, the employees who were busy working with shadow IT regarded the official in-house IT team as being more of an impediment than a help. 27% admitted that getting permission from the IT department was 'frustrating', while 32% claimed it slowed down their work processes and impacted on deadlines³⁵.

If these statistics aren't enough to set security conscious alarm bells ringing then consider the fact that a Microsoft report into the phenomenon of shadow IT stated that the average business makes use of no fewer than 1,181 separate cloud services, but that 61% of these won't be detected by the IT department³⁶.

A Harris Poll survey of US workers, meanwhile, found that 40% thought that their workplace IT department was simply too busy to deal with the issues they presented quickly enough. As a result, almost 70% turned to the use of tools which were either free or available online, and which weren't licensed by their IT department.

In addition to this, more than half of the respondents felt that their organisation spent too much time dealing with processes such as expenses, approvals and document management, rather than dealing with the day to day business of the organisation³⁷.

Clearly, when the department created with the sole aim of maximising the impact and usefulness of the IT systems in a business is regarded in this way and simply bypassed, something has gone seriously wrong.

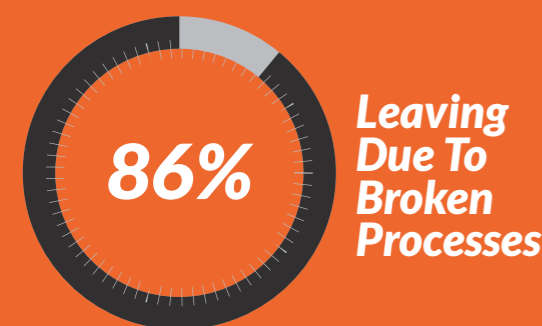
What makes this an issue of such urgency is the impact it is likely to have on the morale of employees and, with it, the work which they deliver.

A survey of 2,000 customer facing and customer support employees in the US, UK, and Australia by CITE Research, uncovered the frustration that these employees feel when communication technologies in particular, refuse to deliver: 75% stated that communications technologies which hinder productivity make them unhappy at work and more likely to be rude to co-workers, friends and family.

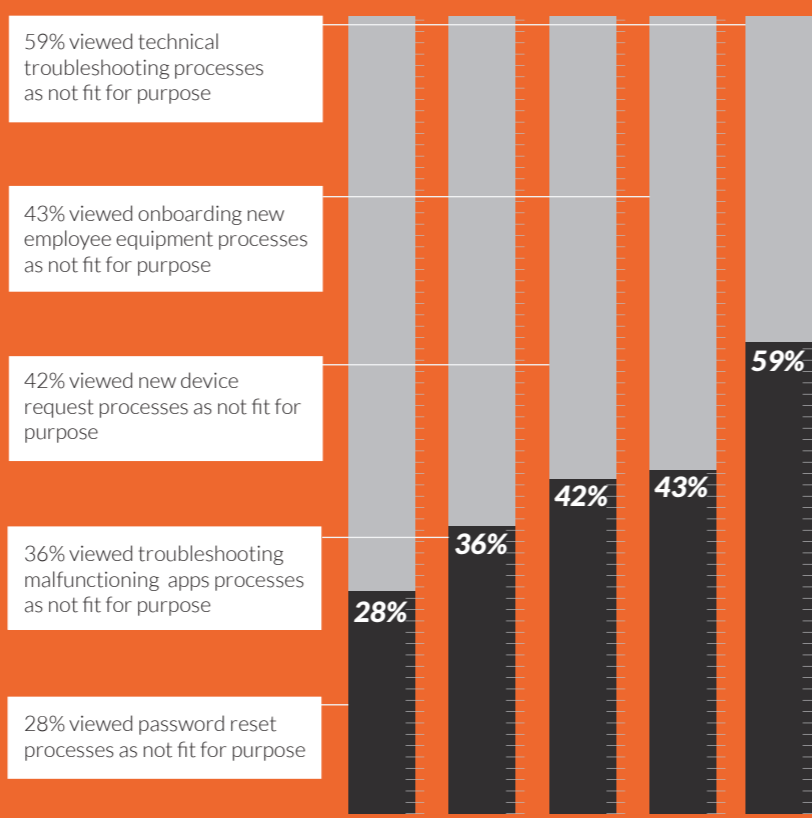
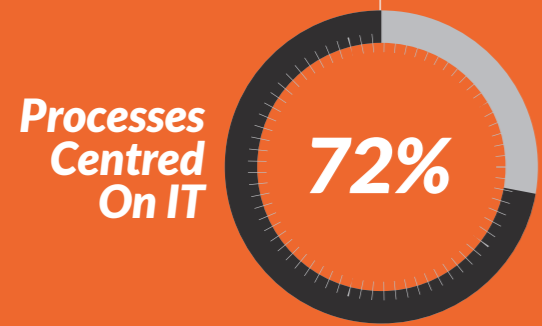
90% of employees felt that disjointed communications technologies had a negative effect on workflow, job satisfaction and, ultimately, customer satisfaction and the bottom line of a business³⁸.

In the UK, a survey carried out by electronics company Samsung looked at the key issues given by employees as 'workplace irritations' and found that, alongside traditional complaints such as co-workers being messy eaters or distracting with their complaints, the biggest workplace problem was issues with technology. 92% said that problems such as slow internet provision and crashing computers were not only annoying, but resulted in them losing an average of 22 minutes each working day. For 10% of respondents, these frustrations with technology were so great that they led to the employee moving to another job³⁹.

It's possible that the organisation you work for or even run has been impacted by any or all of the issues detailed above, either from time to time or fairly regularly. In the first instance, the effect this has on your business – from staff morale and wellbeing to productivity and profits – means that issues of this kind shouldn't simply be accepted as being an unavoidable part of running any



86% of employees actively seeking a new job said that broken processes within their current company had prompted this decision, and for 72% of this group the broken processes in question centred on workplace IT





modern business.

The more an organisation can do to streamline and maximise IT processes, the less problems of this kind will arise, leaving employees and managers free to concentrate on the actual work of running the organisation and delivering value.

One of the clearest issues to emerge from any hands-on, real world interaction with employees struggling to cope with IT which isn't working as it should, is the fact that support is of even more importance than technology.

Too often, the assumption is that the latest IT platforms, processes and software will magically result in more efficient working practices, but the truth is that employees who aren't fully supported in the use of that IT will suffer from the kind of stress and low morale this report has detailed.

Time and again, the IT department of a business is viewed as not being fit for purpose by the very employees who should be able to turn to it. The experience of Littlefish is that our customers, more than anything else, value the support of our team whenever issues do arise.

The following quotes from our Starfish customer feedback data demonstrate how the right support, delivered in a timely manner, can stop the kind of stress that eats at the morale of a business before it has a

chance to take hold.

When dealing with large scale issues such as the impact of mental health on the UK economy, or the stigma surrounding illness in the workplace, it can be easy to lose sight of the human beings who make up the statistics.

The issues these customers presented range from transition from one system to another, to lost data or a simple glitch, but each customer response outlines the value of a first rate support system:

"I have been without a laptop for a week, I have been unable to complete work directed by court and will have to explain myself and face the music. I struggled to set my laptop up and my stress levels were going off the scale. Kevin was helpful, polite and above all else nothing was too much trouble for him he has certainly helped to get me back on track."

"I lost access to the majority of my notebooks in One Note. These I use daily to track my work, but also keep notes of meetings - I refer to them constantly. When I contacted Littlefish to report the majority of them were missing on 07/02, Dave took responsibility for the problem investigating what was wrong until the issue was solved on 12/02. I am extremely grateful for his help. Our new IT systems are great but when they go wrong, it makes working very difficult. Without

staff like Dave to resolve issues, we would effectively be lost."

"VPN issues are one of our major bug bears, and Mo was brilliant working with me and a 3rd party resolving this. It took almost a week, and a lot of effort, but hopefully the learning will lead to a much more efficient process avoiding lengthy downtime and inconvenience for our staff. Spreading that knowledge to the rest of the pod will be key."

"Omar was very helpful and made every effort to investigate restoring my lost P Drive which had several months of documents and work stored in it making me very stressed. My P Drive has been restored thanks to his commitment to resolving my problem. Also I appreciated the constant feedback following the chat session, this communication flow made me feel confident that the folder would possibly be restored with the documents and this was the case."

"Graham has had to overcome multiple obstacles with the Skype for Business Uninstall Test Package; non response from stakeholders, device & build incompatibility issues, user profile discrepancies. Despite this he has gone out of his way, with a cheery approach, to find ways round the problems to still achieve an excellent end product."

Too often, the assumption is that the latest IT platforms, processes and software will magically result in more efficient working practices



Everything covered in this report – from the pain and isolation felt by individual employees to the billions lost to the wider economy – can be distilled to a few simple but highly effective principles:

Realise that the mental health of your employees is simultaneously a business matter and a duty of care issue.

The two are sometimes viewed as being in competition with each other – hence the management-led pressure detailed above – while the truth is that looking after your employees means boosting your bottom line.

Treat the mental health and well-being of your employees as seriously as their physical health and safety.

Make sure that this attitude is transmitted clearly throughout your business, in the form of initiatives and information which those employees regard as effective.

Make sure that your employees are equipped with the technology needed to do their job properly.

Work with those employees to ensure that the platforms, apps and other IT tools you put in place are effective and user friendly. Make reporting problems quick and simple, and ensure that the response to those problems is fit for purpose.

Back the right technology up with support which is available and sympathetic.

The stress caused by digital overload is almost entirely down to employees not being sufficiently supported in using the digital technology that is a prerequisite to them doing their jobs. All too

often, a high degree of computer literacy is assumed, when the constantly evolving nature of the digital workplace makes this a deeply unsafe assumption.

If that technical know-how is 'on tap', then employees won't succumb to the kind of stress that can all too quickly become overwhelming.



About Littlefish

Littlefish is a multi award-winning Managed IT Services Provider that is growing significantly through tangibly delivering on our promises of enhanced user experience, improved customer satisfaction and achieving authentic business value. We've disrupted the mid-market and enterprise marketplace, and become an established and superior alternative to the 'usual suspect', £multi-billion managed service providers and IT outsourcing giants.

We deliver our services 24/7/365 to tens of thousands of users globally, for a wide variety of organisations, spanning both the private and public sectors and including Palladium, XPS Pensions Group, Signet Group, NSK, PDSA, Farrow & Ball, National Audit Office, The Houses of Parliament, Cafcass and Historic England.

With multilingual capability we deliver native language support in English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese and Italian.

Through significant investment in enterprise-grade processes and tools, and the recruitment of teams with enterprise level experience, we ensure that our customers consistently receive a market-leading service that is independently verified as world class.

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