

The Drivers of Digital Employee Experience (DEX)

1,000 employees reveal their IT experience problems, and we offer 7 proven tips for organizations to act and save their businesses.



Introduction

Since the pandemic the workplace has changed significantly for IT Support and the economic downturn isn't helping. Employees seek flawless digital environments whether working remotely or in the office. And as a result, IT departments have less control over the services they offer. From our prior research, we know that 45% of employees who experience an IT issue will not submit a ticket¹. Instead, they'll either suffer in silence, or waste their own time (or that of their colleagues) trying to find a solution. Businesses are losing time and money with their own tech problems when they can least afford it!

Wouldn't it be helpful if IT Support could know exactly which problems are impacting employees? Since IT managed surveys only tell half the story, we decided to investigate the other half: employees.

Through a combination of diary studies, interviews, and surveys, we collected insights from over 1,000 employees across North America and Europe. In this report, you'll learn about the type of technology issues that impact corporate knowledge workers, and what opportunities are available for IT to remedy this situation.

We hope you find this research useful!



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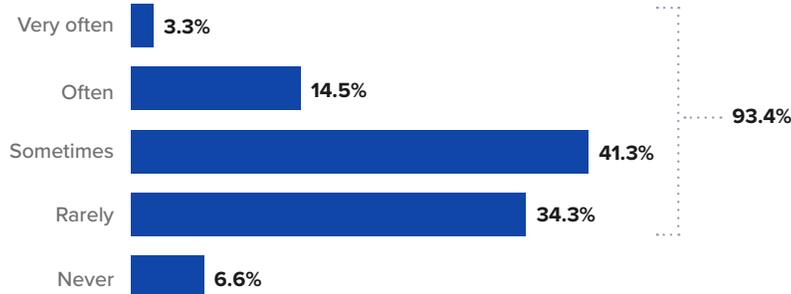
¹ The Experience 2020 Report. <https://www.nextthink.com/resource/experience-2020-report/>

Understanding the Employee Digital Disconnect

Frustrations, Blockers, and Wishes

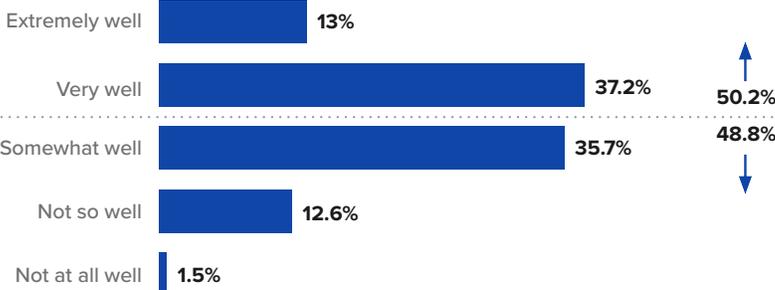
Even if employees have access to more tools than ever before, the pervading narrative isn't a positive one. 93% of respondents said that their tech setup typically impedes productivity in one way or another, and only half felt like it was a strong enough asset for more efficiency. Let that sink in for a moment, workers across North America and Europe are essentially saying "our current tech does more harm than good."

Does technology ever get in the way of your productivity at work?



Technology getting in the way of productivity is the norm. 18% even experience frequent interruptions.

How well does the technology your employer provides support you in being productive?

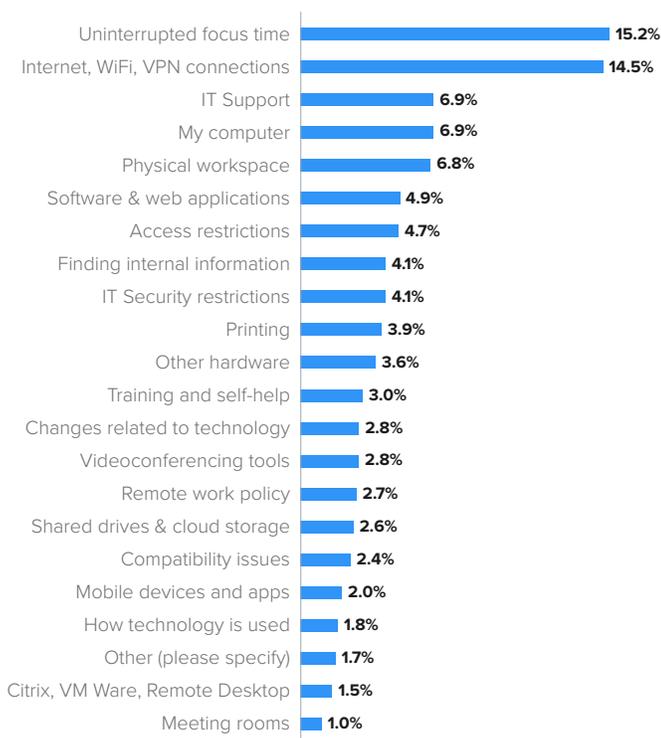


Only half feel like their technology is a strong asset for productivity.

So what *type* of technology problems impede workers from being more productive?

The top issues reported by respondents included connectivity-related problems (internet, wifi, VPN) and work interruptions (in-person and digital).

Which item has the worst effect on your work experience?

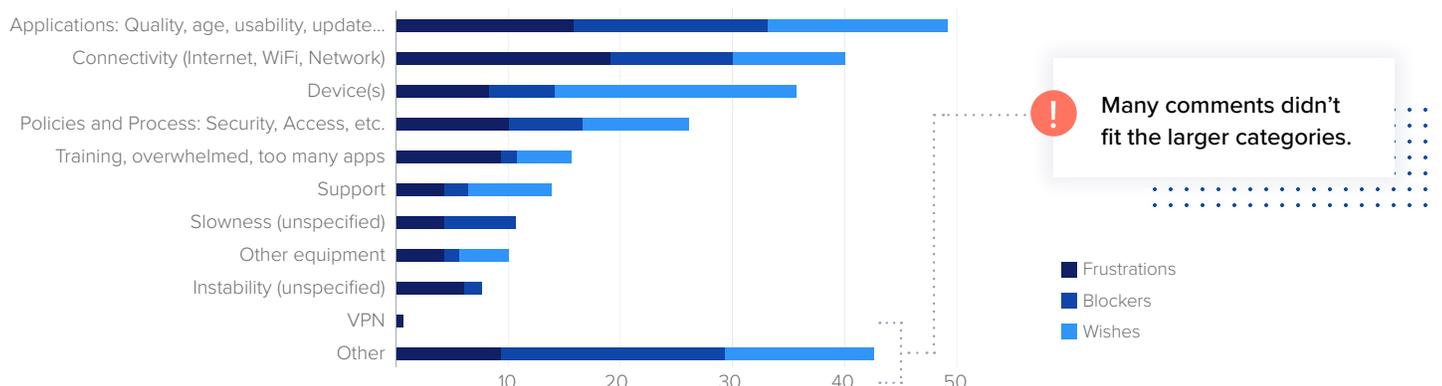


It's important to also acknowledge the breadth and complexity of the remaining tech issues that employees identified. Respondents cited issues ranging from hardware (e.g., screens, audio equipment, etc.) to videoconferencing and mobile apps. And when we investigated further by region (USA vs. Europe) and work style (remote vs. in-office), the results told a similar story and roughly an even split.

We then asked a subgroup several open-ended questions in order to categorize their sentiment by technology *frustrations*, *blockers*, and *wishes*. We discovered that while connectivity and applications once again came out on top, most comments referenced other tech items that were so diverse we couldn't fit them into any larger categories.

This discovery shows how diverse and complex the challenges are that IT has to manage. In other words, pain-points vary a lot between people and they are easy to confirm once they're known, but harder to categorize and solve. The open-ended question format demonstrated just how specific each employee's tech experience was, which helps explain why sometimes IT struggles to respond swiftly and at scale.

Applications and connectivity were foremost pain-points, but respondents' #1 wish was better devices.



What frustrations do you have with your work tech?

“The constant updates and changes in software.”



“The fact that I can work remote but I’m unable to due to security.”



“At times it can be overwhelming to use.”



What blocks your productivity?

“Constant issues with web applications not working correctly.”



“We don’t have permissions to use or download certain applications.”



“Slow response times.”



What do you wish you had from your employer?

“Access to better software.”



“More training and introduction of new technologies.”



“Better devices.”



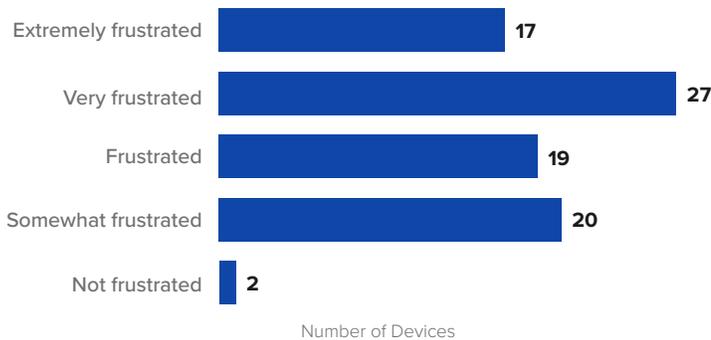
Qualitative data like this filled in part of a story that was missing, but we didn’t stop there. We wanted to understand the role technology plays in our respondents’ professional lives, and how issues impact their job performance and satisfaction. In the next section, we’ll show how tech disruptions, regardless of their duration, can impact employee focus and “flow”, and why so many avoid asking IT for help.

Dear Diary,

Employees Reveal Tech Struggles & Opportunities for IT

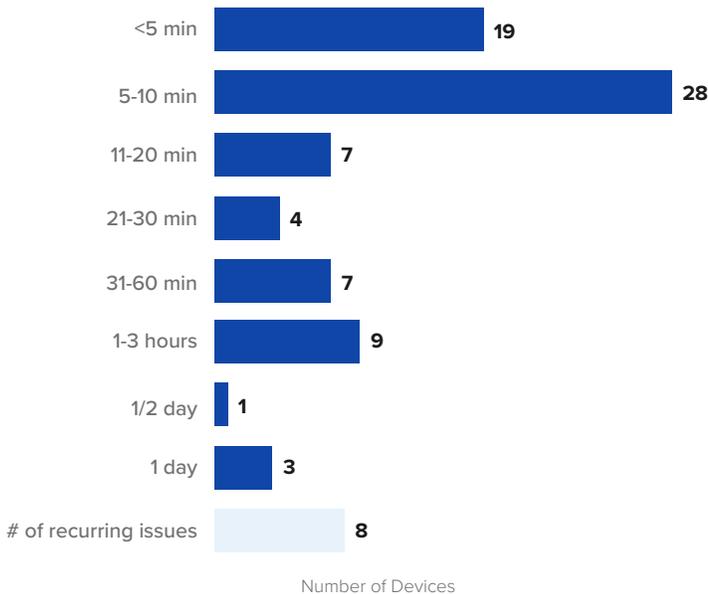
We interviewed a small subgroup of knowledge workers and asked them to record their IT experiences every day for one week. By the end of the week, we had 86 diary entries that painted a vivid experience of what it's like to work with corporate technology today.

Frustrating Ratings



Average: 2.4 = Frustrated

Number of Issues by Time Consumed



Total: ~135 hours



“I lost about 10 minutes, and it ruined my flow for a total of about 45 minutes.”



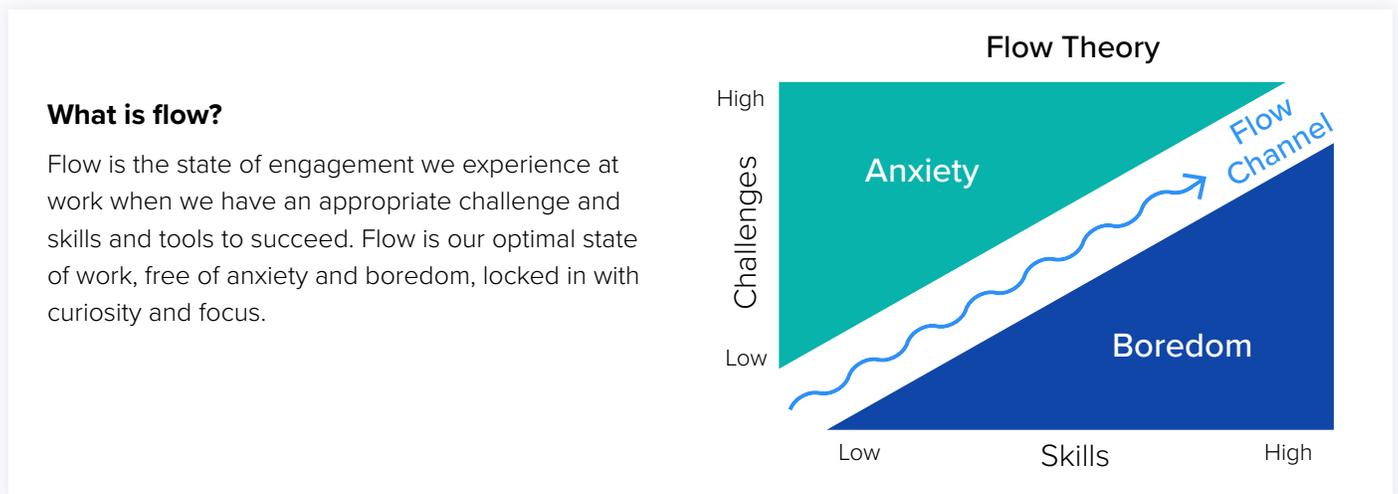
“3 minutes, but it’s 3 minutes. Every. Single. Day.”



“I like that they (IT) can remote access my computer, but I can’t work while they do that.”

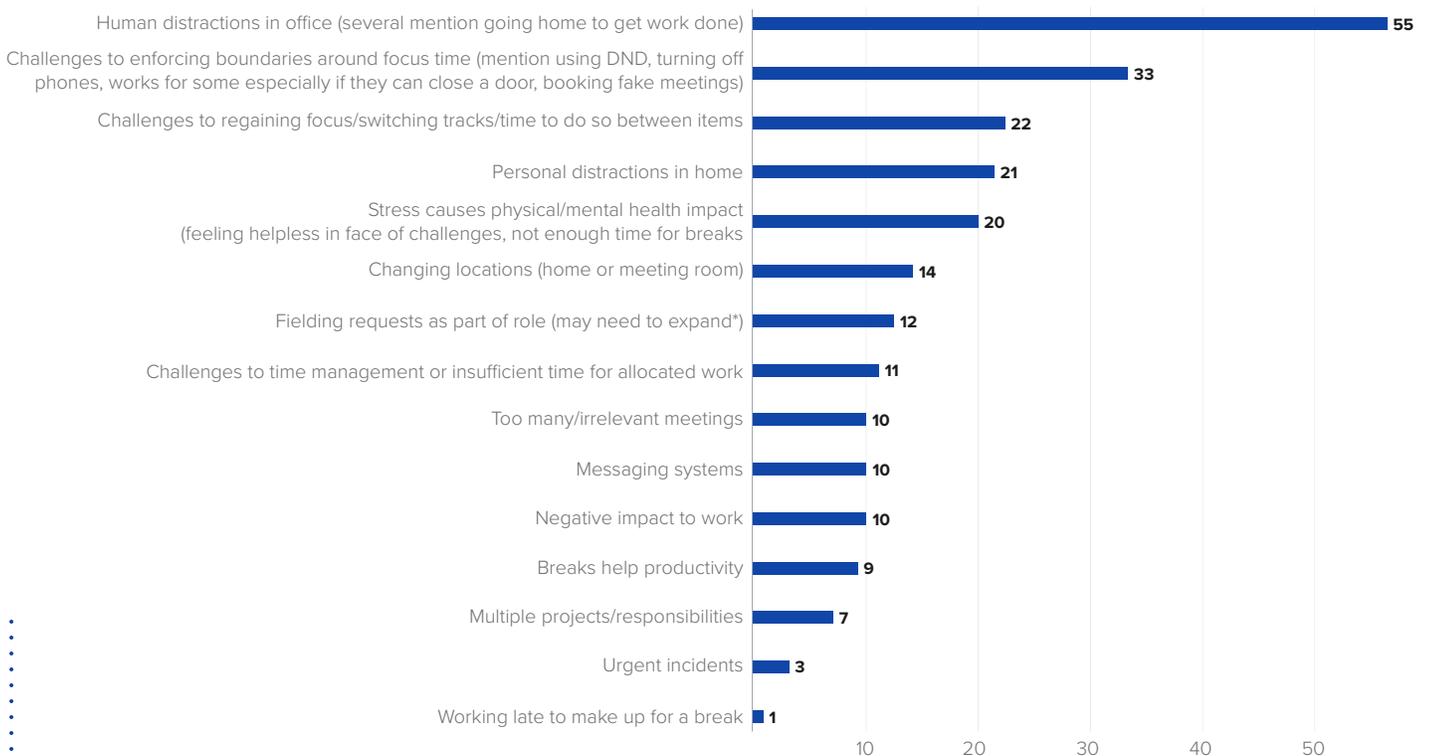
After reviewing the entries, we discovered some interesting takeaways:

1. Employees expressed how even the smallest of disruptions can damage one’s ability to focus and return to a state of flow.



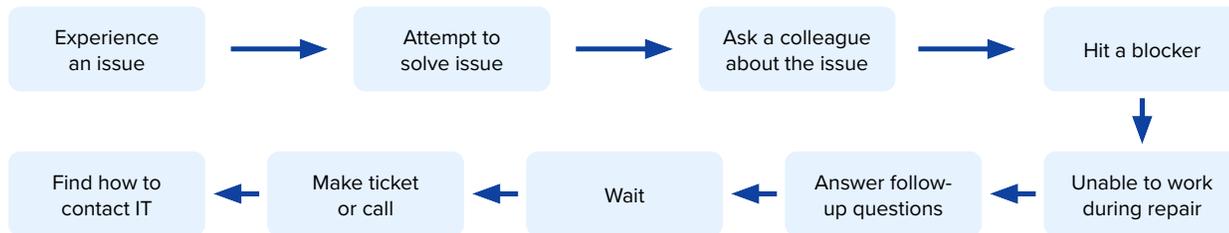
Two of the biggest complaints included human distractions (in-office) and the challenge that comes with enforcing boundaries to protect focus time.

What caused your lack of uninterrupted focus time?



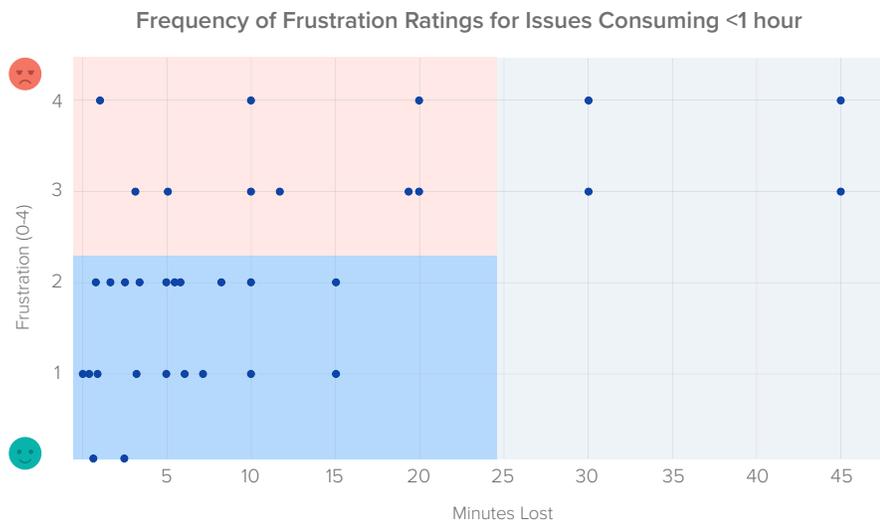
When employees encounter a problem, every individual point of contact with IT thereafter becomes an interruption to their workflow.

Participants cared more about interruptions to flow than time costs



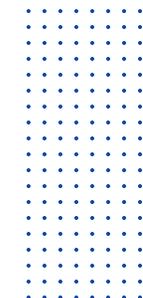
Every individual point of contact is an interruption to flow.

2. Even employees who experienced only short technology delays recorded high frustration ratings. This discovery makes it extra challenging for IT Support: Brief interruptions pass under the radar of IT teams undetected, because they seem insignificant in isolation. But over time, small interruptions amount to great frustration. We demonstrate in the next chapter how to avoid most tickets and incidents in the first place.



3. Employees admitted that they avoid contacting their help desk for a variety of fixable reasons:

- They feared a lengthy support process.
- They didn't know if their tech issue was just them, or if it might be their fault.
- They thought their issue was too minor, despite the frustration they felt.
- They thought that IT couldn't help (e.g. missing functionality in an application).



Can you relate with any of the following diary entries?

Miracle’s setup seems inadequate for her use of heavy apps

Miracle
Data Reporting Analyst

US: GA, Ellenwood | Unknown Industry
31 | 5-10K+
Hybrid | Windows

10 Diary Entries | 8 Unique Issues

Average Work Time Lost

13 (0 min to 160 min)

Average Frustration Rating

Not at all frustrated | Frustrated | Extremely frustrated

“Memory-intensive software overloads my computer.”

I was working in Tableau on my VDI and Tableau started "not responding". I waited for a few minutes and then opened the task manager. I noticed the CPU and Memory percents were high, so I closed a few applications and re-opened Tableau. Later, I was modifying a package in Visual Studio and it stopped responding again.

Daniel “lives with it”, because he doesn’t want to mail in his device

Daniel
Assistant Director of Program Delivery

US: CA, Palo Alto | Higher Education
39 | 1-5K
Hybrid | Mac

7 Diary Entries | 6 Unique Issues

Average Work Time Lost

32 (0 min to 60 min)

Average Frustration Rating

Not at all frustrated | Frustrated | Extremely frustrated

“I don't want to give up my laptop to get support.”

When I have an IT issue, I don't usually try to figure out the root cause or a longer term solution because it's difficult as a remote worker. Doing so would likely entail mailing out my laptop and being set up with an unfamiliar loaner laptop for 1-2 weeks. It's just not worth it.

Chenai can’t do meaningful work without internet and VPN

Chenai
Engineering Project Manager

EU: BE, Ixelles | Construction
29 | 9K
Hybrid | Windows

5 Diary Entries | 5 Unique Issues

Average Work Time Lost

118 (0 min to 160 min)

Average Frustration Rating

Not at all frustrated | Frustrated | Extremely frustrated

“I worked remotely and faced connection challenges.”

I worked remotely today and faced challenges with my internet connection. As a result of this, I could not have a call with my colleague with regards to work. We lost 30 minutes trying to regain our connection.

But not all of the results from our research were negative. In the next section we unpack the positive findings from our study and the opportunities therein for IT Support to flip the current script on their dreary Digital Employee Experience (DEX).

What if...?

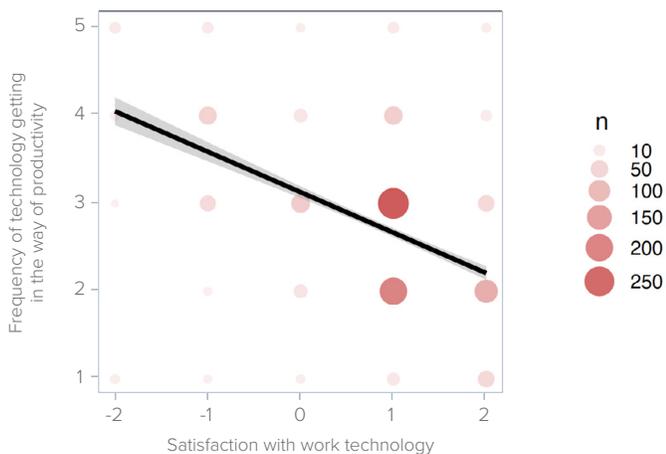
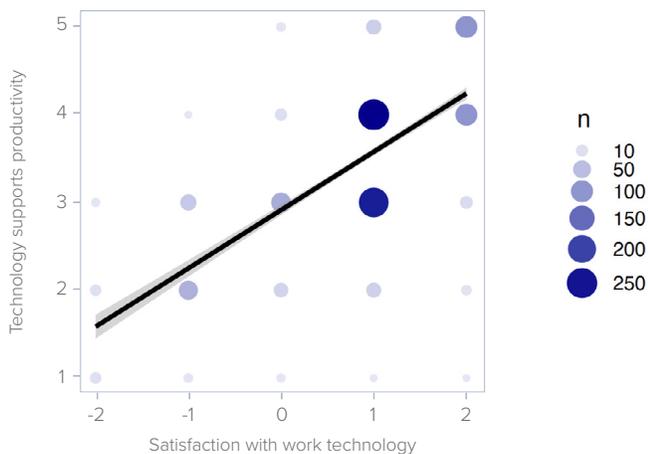
Smart Solutions for a Positive IT Experience & Workflow

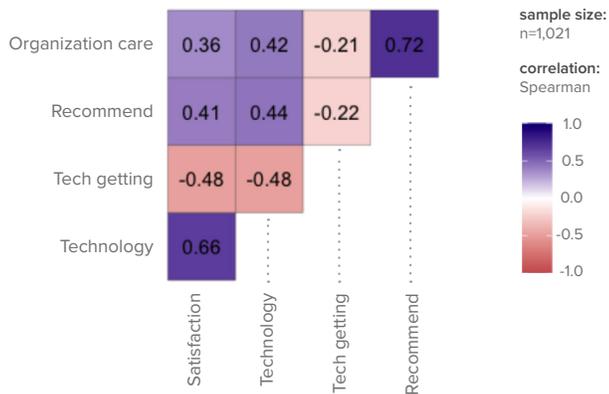
Logically, it follows that a strong Digital Employee Experience begets better ROI and other benefits, but how can we be sure?

We asked employees to score several variables to understand how their digital experience and other parts of their employee experience impact each other.

Using Pearson correlations, we uncovered two interesting findings:

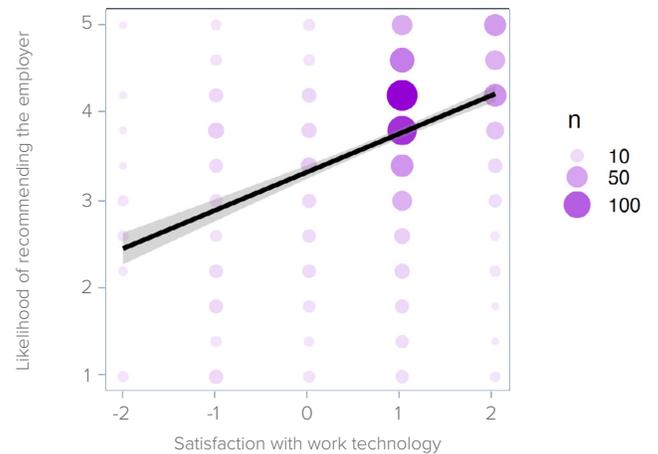
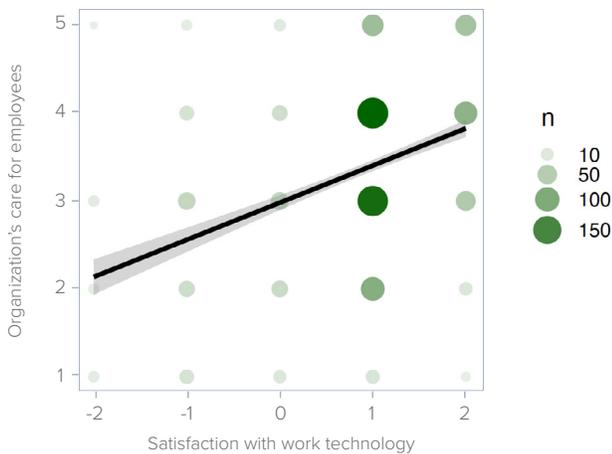
1. The better that technology supports an employee's productivity (e.g., the latest software updates, minimal interruptions, detailed trainings, etc.) the more satisfied that employee felt. Of course, there are other factors outside of technology, that can influence an employee's satisfaction, but generally speaking, the right tech strongly correlates with workplace satisfaction.





X = non-significant at p <0.05 (Adjustment Bonferroni)

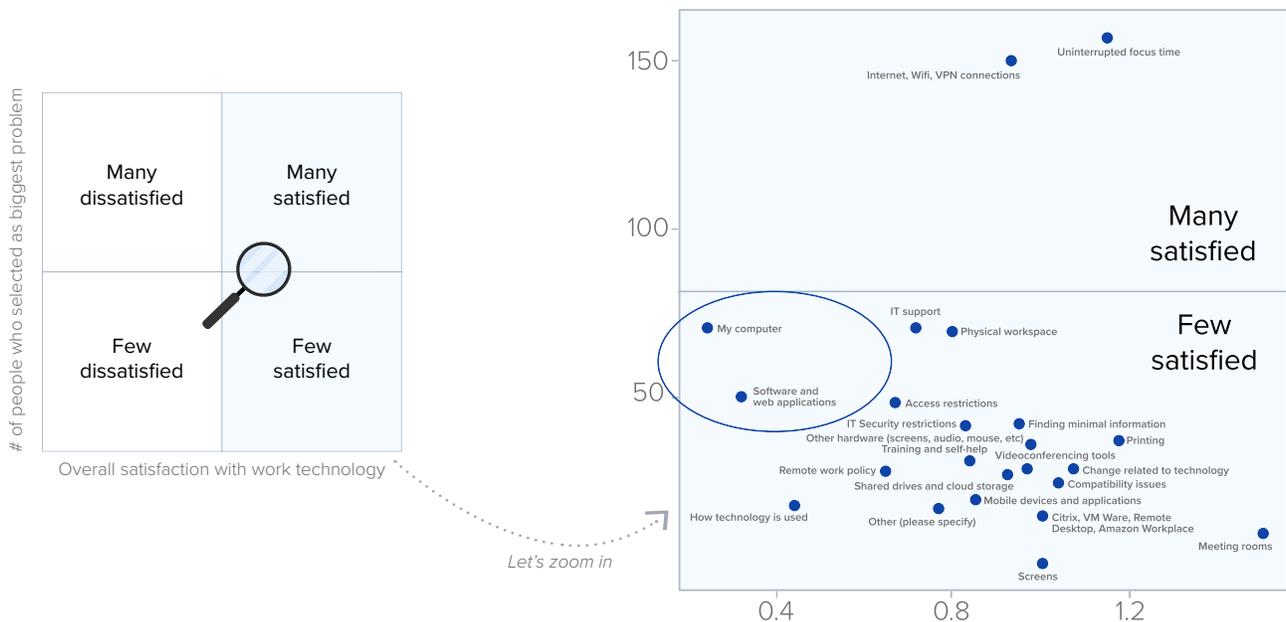
2. In addition, employees who are satisfied with their work technology are more likely to feel cared for and to recommend their employer to job seekers. In other words, your IT Help Desk, influences much more than your company’s tech experience, it plays a massive role in retaining and recruiting talent (and saving money on training new hires only to see them leave a year or two later!).



Diving deeper into the issues that impact employees, we found that ‘interruptions to work’ and ‘connectivity’ were the most frequently cited problems, but ‘devices’ and ‘software applications’ were attributed to the worst overall satisfaction scores. In other words, employees seem willing to tolerate poor focus time and connectivity, but they’re most perturbed with device and software issues.

The truth, of course, is that most IT issues rarely originate and remain in one place. For example, what appears to be a network issue to the employee might manifest itself as such, but IT later discovers that the root cause was actually a memory problem on the device.

Employees who consider their device and apps as biggest problem are least satisfied on average



How can IT help employees?

Knowing that focus time, devices, and connectivity are the main problems users cite, here’s how IT can flip the script with 7 proven tips.

✓ Shh... Focus Time

1) GET PROACTIVE

- Help employees leverage DND practices (do-not-disturb), by promoting calendar blocks and other technology safeguards.

Example: Implement MS Viva and shorten meeting durations by 5 minutes.

- Make “digital self-defense” the norm by pushing it as your default configuration.

Example: Add to your email footer “we support flex-hours, please respond when it is convenient for you.”

2) COLLABORATE WITH DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS/TEAMS

- For any new technology training or software rollout, make sure you partner with the managers of your users so you have buy-in and participants take the lesson seriously.

3) AUTOMATE WISELY

- Give employees the option to resolve issues themselves to avoid having to contact IT with self-help (ex. Click here to fix), self-heal (ex. stealthily fix the issue in the background), or self-service (ex. Learn how to fix this issue).

 **Unbreakable Connectivity**
4) SHARE BEST PRACTICES WITH EMPLOYEES

- Cable vs. WiFi, router placement, hardware options, etc.
- Help remote employees identify and afford the best ISP plans in their area.

5) ANTICIPATE DOWNTIME

- Provide fall back 4G modems.
- Offer rented workspaces during maintenance periods.

 **Revamp and Extend Your Employees' Device Performance**
6) MAKE DATA-BACKED PURCHASE DECISIONS

- Prioritize your device refresh schedule based on reliable hardware performance and employee satisfaction data.
- Factor in cross-industry benchmarks for your hardware decisions.
- Estimate the anticipated support costs for any new hardware purchases.

Example: make sure you don't purchase cheap hardware up front if you'll eventually have to spend more in support costs!

7) ENABLE SMART UPDATES AND MAINTENANCE FEATURES

- Perform background tasks when it is convenient for employees (e.g., when they have a low CPU load).
- Ask employees to reboot their devices when convenient (e.g. before lunch or at the end of the day).



Conclusion

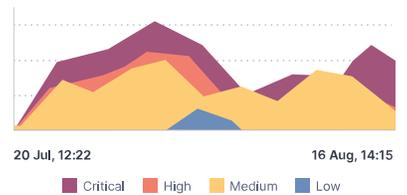
Employees want flexible and reliable tech that allows them to get the job done from anywhere. Our research supports the continued narrative that technology too often stands in the way of employees doing their best work, and they often refrain from asking IT for help despite their frustration. This has to change not just for IT, but for businesses and knowledge workers.

We can do better, and the first step is to understand why and how people experience their workplace technologies in the first place. If you're interested in learning more about employee context and fixing IT enterprise issues, [contact us for a demo](#).



Nexthink Infinity

Alerts Overview



Real-time Alerting

Binary version

"1.2.0.8864" is the Binary version with the highest crash ratio (91%)

Analysis summary

How to fix it

Version	Crashes	Crash ratio
1.2.0.8864	201	91%
1.2.0.4664	12	14%
1.2.0.7161	4	<1%
1.2.0.19260	1	<1%

Diagnostics & Analytics

Remote action

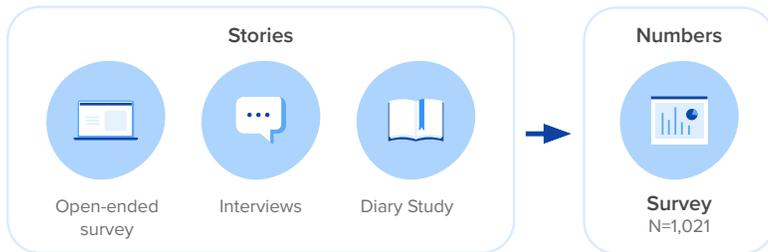
Name	Supported Platforms
Set Power Plan	Windows
Update Teams	Windows
Get Battery Status	Mac OS, Windows
Update VPN	Windows

Execute on 33 devices

Automation & Remediation

About the Data

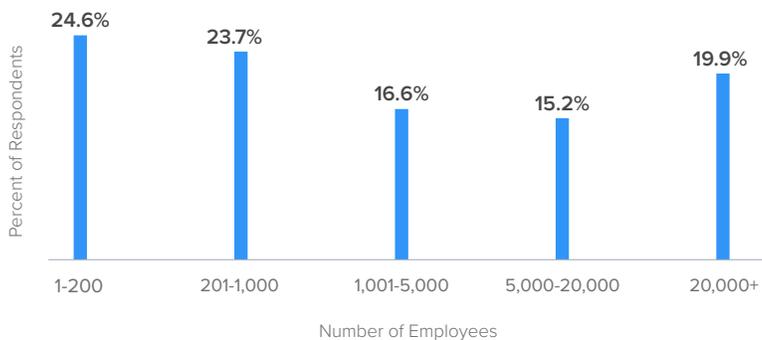
1,000 full time knowledge workers participated in this study from the United States and Europe. Our research was based on a composite of surveys, interviews, and a diary study.



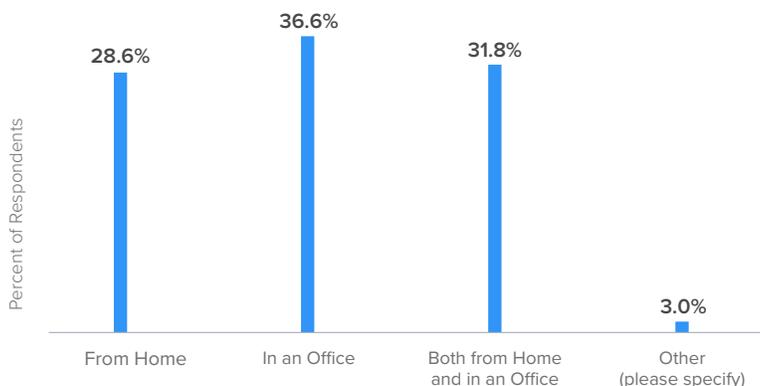
All participants are paid US and EU residents, working over 32h/w using computers

Respondents came from three distinct organization sizes and work locations (with a majority reporting they worked in a hybrid role).

Size of Organization



Where Do You Usually Work?



ABOUT NEXTHINK

Nextthink is the global leader in Digital Employee Experience management. The company's products allow enterprises to create highly productive digital workplaces for their employees by delivering optimal end-user experiences. Through a unique combination of real-time analytics, automation and employee feedback across all endpoints, Nextthink helps IT teams meet the needs of the modern digital workplace.

Have questions about the Nextthink platform?

[CONTACT US](#)