

Nexthink Pulse Report

EXPLORING IT'S DIGITAL EXPERIENCE
CHALLENGES DURING THE PANDEMIC



Introduction

By Jon Cairns, VP, Technical Services at Nextthink

From the data center to its end-points, IT represents the nervous system for any enterprise. They can impact an employee’s work experience and productivity, or their company’s ability to retain staff, satisfy customers and increase profits.



But since the pandemic, IT has been thrust into unfamiliar territory. Many technology leaders have been asked to deliver flawless digital work experiences for employees in new, work-from-anywhere (WFA) models. And though technology executives are focused on improving their employees’ digital lives, they’re also facing a number of challenges—many of which are the same we recorded during the onset of the pandemic and before. In 2021, these challenges will only escalate as remote work continues.

Teaming up with Pulse.QA, an independent market research firm located in Silicon Valley, we surveyed 142 enterprise technology executives to uncover how IT is handling their Digital Employee Experience (DEX), what problems still persist, and where their focus is for 2021.

The data reveals the growing importance of DEX, but also shows a troubling trend: IT still largely views its services differently from how employees experience them. It is our belief that these findings shed light on the current situation and will inspire IT teams to improve the ways their technology services are received.



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IT's Experience Problem



“The majority of employees now require the digital experience to be the only experience as we are working from home.”

Software Sector,
C-Suite Executive,
North America

96% of technology leaders report that providing a strong Digital Employee Experience (DEX) is a top priority.¹

Since the beginning of 2020, the IT leaders we polled have taken a steady interest in DEX. For many, shifting employees to a remote work or hybrid setup in the spring and sustaining that model, has placed significant stress on IT collaboration tools like Zoom & MS Teams, as well as VPN and virtualization services.

Do you agree that DEX is essential to your IT department?

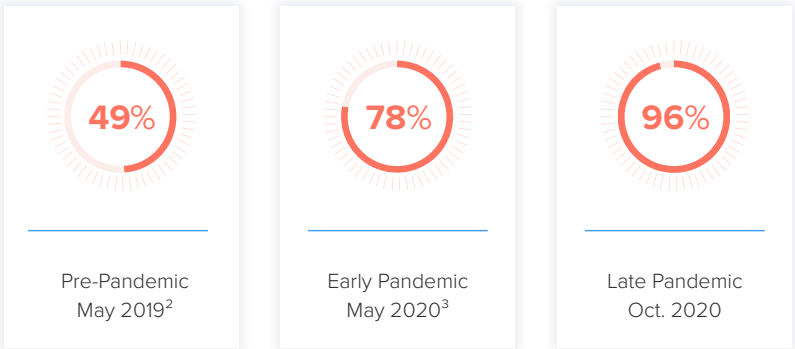


Figure 1

About the data:

Pre-pandemic & early-pandemic data was taken from an earlier survey done with Vanson Bourne and Nextthink, which targeted 300 enterprise technology leaders in the US (200) and UK (100) from companies with +1k employees, and a variety of industry sectors.

Late pandemic data was taken from this Pulse report during September – October 2020, which surveyed 142 technology executives in North America & EMEA from companies with +1k employees, and a variety of industry sectors.

¹ Referring to Figure 1 on Page 3
² Referring to 'The Experience 2020 Report'
³ Referring to 'The World of Work Rests on The Shoulders of IT' infographic

If you had a tool that could automatically measure employee engagement, do you think you could more strategically improve their digital experience?

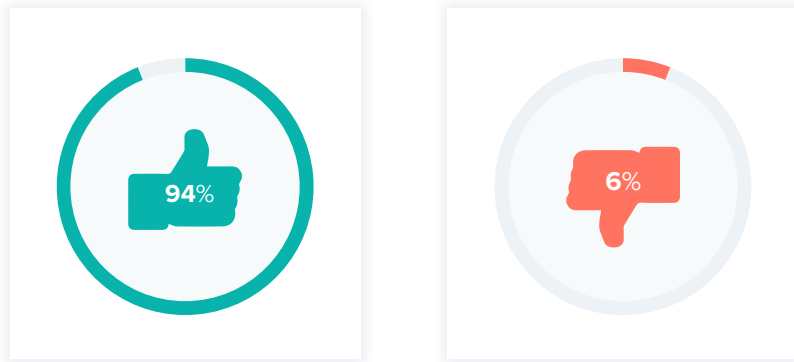


Figure 2.1

About the data:

As these executives look to improve their employees' digital experience, 94% admit they would benefit from a software solution that could automatically measure engagement.

Though 96% of the technology executives we polled agree that DEX is essential to their department¹, more than 1/3 (34%) rely on manual methods to collect experience information and nearly half (46%) don't measure their employees' digital experience at all.⁴

“ABN AMRO has long had quite a special focus on employee experience in general. Its philosophy is that a happy, productive workforce will inevitably improve customer experience, and works hard to create this.”



Jelmer Berendsen
Enablement Lead, Digital Workplace, ABN AMRO

Does your organization currently measure your employees' overall digital experience?

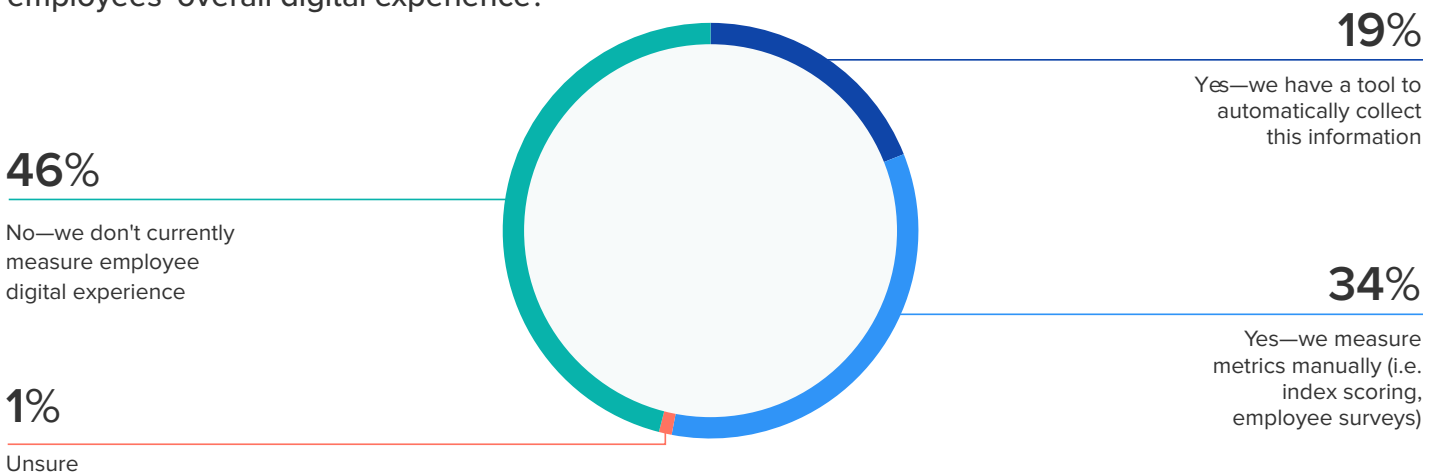


Figure 2.2

¹ Referring to Figure 1 on Page 3
⁴ Referring to Figure 2.2 on Page 4

Ticket & Call Volume Surge

We learned in the early days of the pandemic that many IT leaders were struggling to manage their increased ticket volume, but now we know just how many tickets and calls have come into the average help desk.

Back in May 2020, we discovered that 43% of IT leaders cited increasing support tickets as their biggest challenge since the start of the pandemic.³ Since then, 70% of tech leaders we polled said their ticket and call volume continue to spike, with a majority of those reporting increases up to 50%.⁵

To what extent has IT ticket and call volume increased since the mass work-from-home transition?

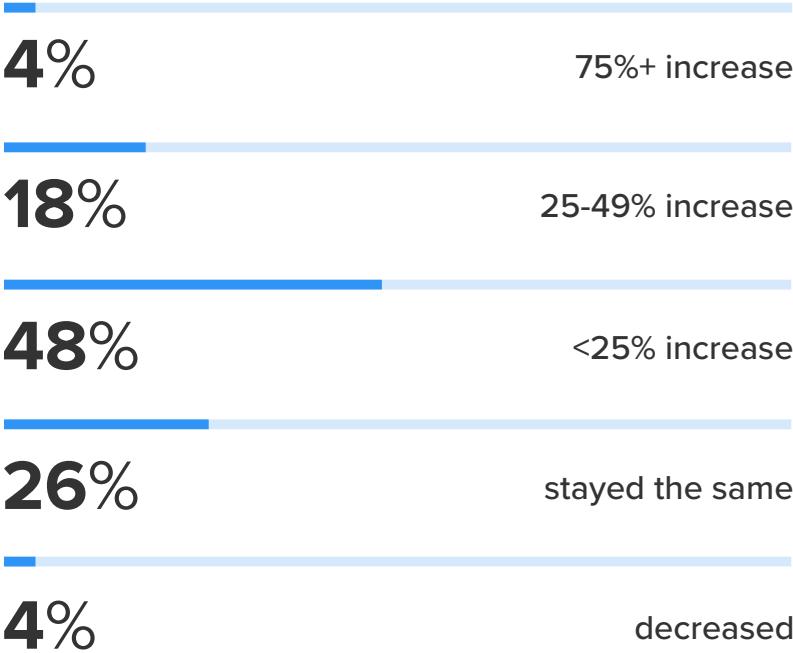
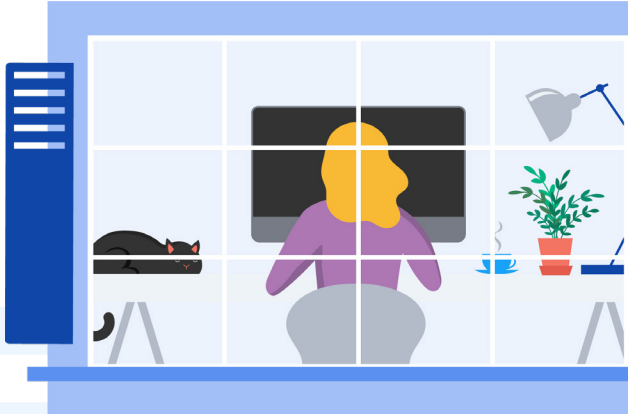
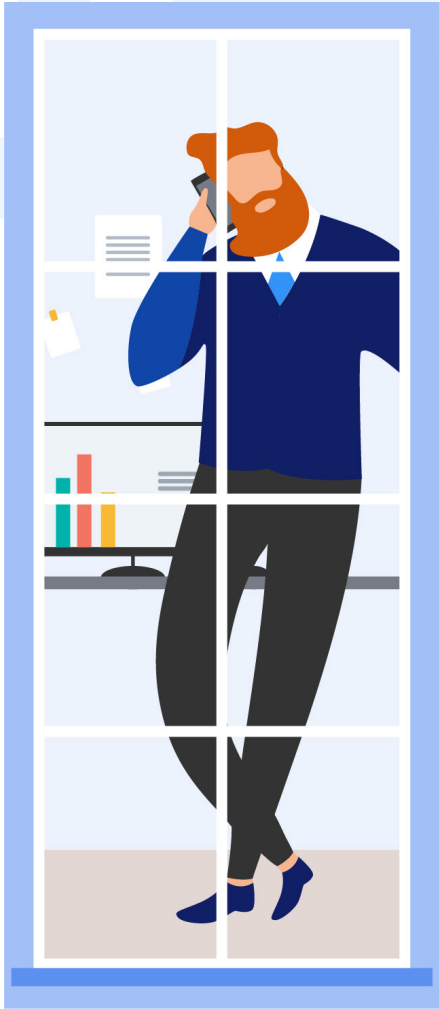


Figure 3

³ Referring to 'The World of Work Rests on The Shoulders of IT' infographic
⁵ Comparing data from previous report and data in Figure 3 on Page 5.





“When a user called with a problem, we were able to find their device and see a graphical timeline of their issues. This helped us get to the bottom of any number of crashes, high CPU usage issues, disk space problems, and connectivity difficulties.”



Matt Hall

Assistant Director of IT,
Bournemouth University

Which technology issues have been most frequently reported by employees since the start of the crisis?

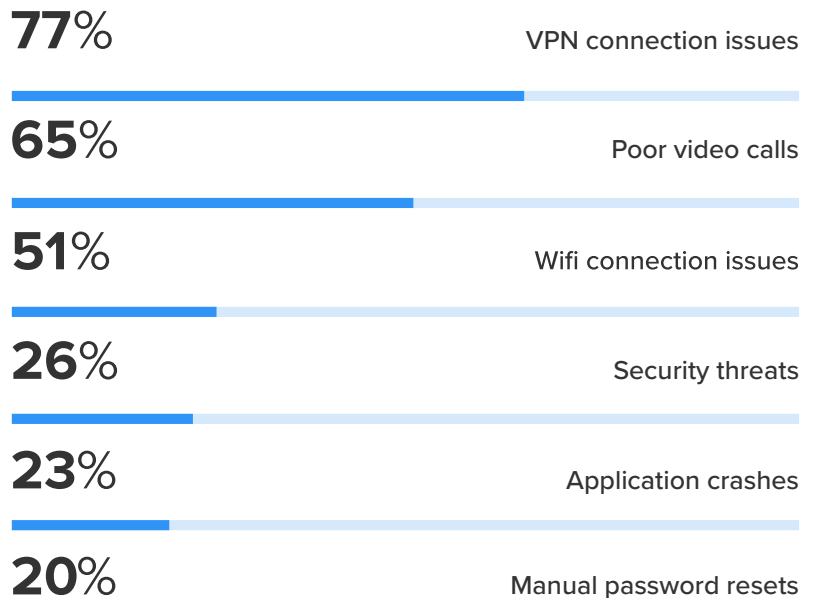


Figure 4

The top IT challenges reported by employees overwhelmingly point to VPN connection issues, poor video calls and Wi-Fi connection.⁶

[But there's more to this story...](#)

Note that the technology issues above are what employees have **reported** since the pandemic started. We know, however, that there is more to the story. Back in early 2020, we also polled 2,000 senior IT leaders and 1,000 digital workers across North America and Europe.² We discovered that:

- Employees report roughly half of the technology issues (55%) they face. Which means **people tolerate 45%** of IT disruptions. In many cases, the Help Desk isn't even aware of these problems!
- Employees suffer around **100 IT interruptions** a year.
- With each interruption lasting **28 minutes on average**, this adds up to almost **40 hours of lost productivity per employee per year**.
- For a company of 10,000 employees, this equates to costs of \$500,000 per week or **\$25 million per year!**

² Referring to 'The Experience 2020 Report'

⁶ Referring to Figure 4 on Page 6.



IT's Confidence Issues

“Engagement and inclusion [with employees] is paramount—these capabilities need to work for anyone and anywhere.”

Financial Services Sector,
C-Suite Executive,
North America



The technology executives we polled report feeling confident they can address certain IT components like VPN performance and Productivity & Collaboration tools (i.e. video calls), even though people frequently report problems in those areas.

Which 3 IT components are you most confident your IT team can address?

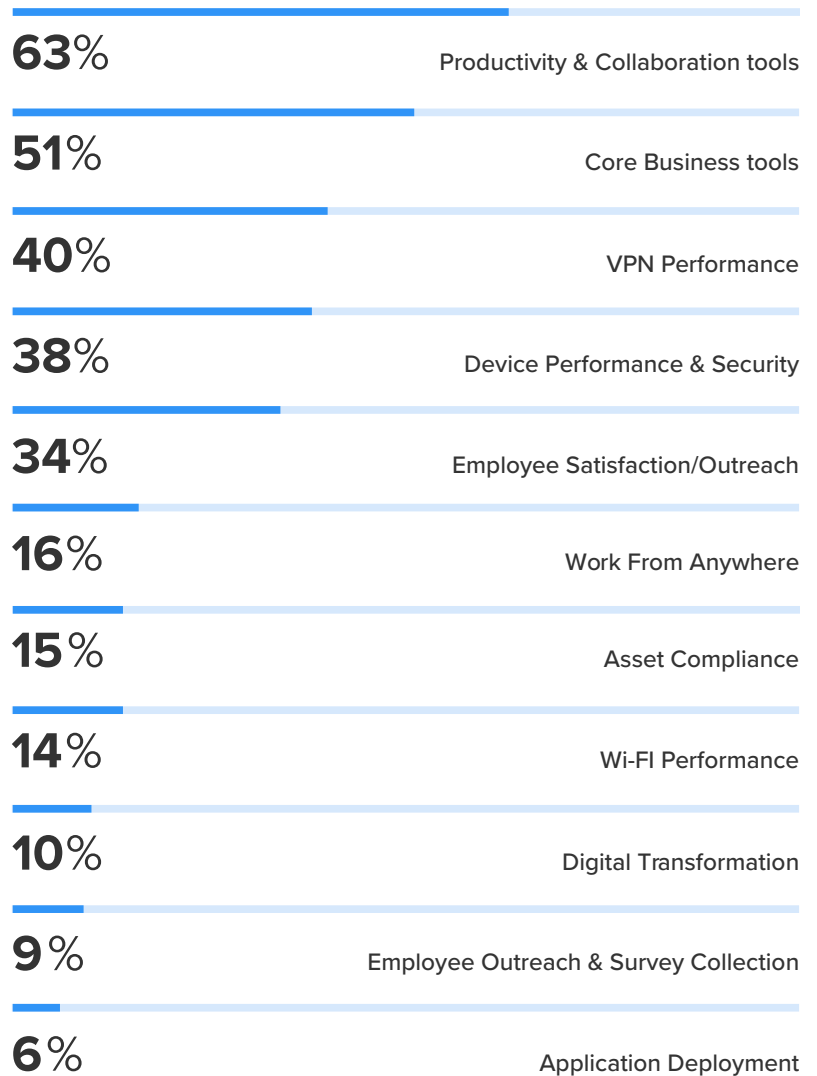


Figure 5



IT's confidence in its ability to innovate is diminishing...

We know from our research back in the beginning of the pandemic (May 2020) that only half (56%) of IT leaders felt confident accurately measuring the impact of new technology rollouts in a remote work or work anywhere setup.³ Looking at the data above for Digital Transformation (11%) and Application Deployment (6%), technology leaders now are less confident in their ability to properly manage those areas.⁷

One possible reason?

Most IT departments lack effective employee outreach and tools to collect meaningful feedback. Employees rarely answer traditional email and html surveys, that's why our customers opt for Nexthink's Engage product which garners 85% response rates on average.

³ Referring to 'The World of Work Rests on The Shoulders of IT' infographic

⁷ Figure 5 on Page 7.

“The need for frictionless [employee] collaboration is now critical with tools to enable white boarding and ideation.”

Healthcare Sector,
C-Suite Executive,
North America

2021 & Beyond

WHERE ARE IT LEADERS FOCUSING?

As remote work continues, which challenges do you anticipate will impact your organization most in 2021 and beyond?

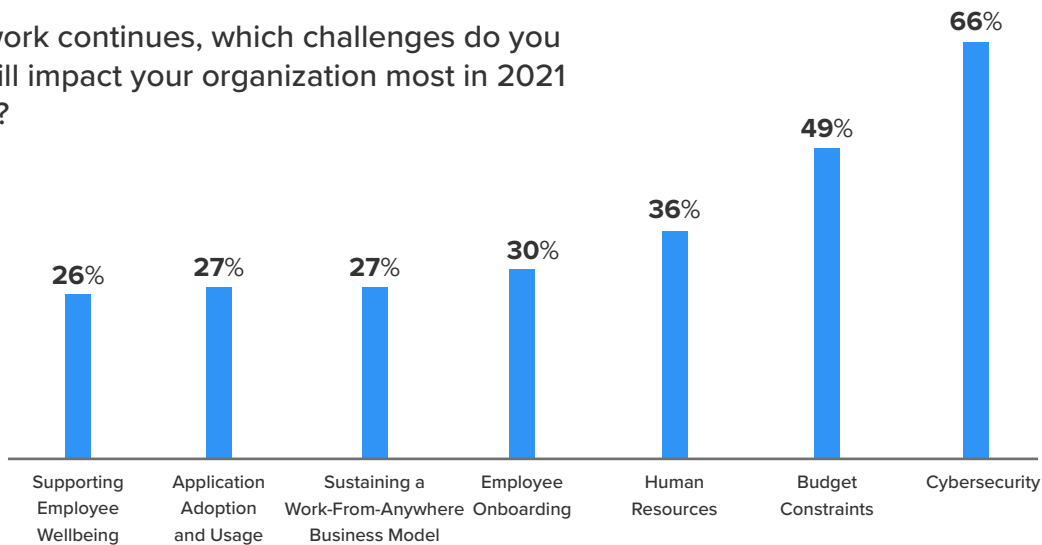


Figure 6

Over the next year, as teams continue to work remotely, technology executives anticipate that cybersecurity will pose the biggest challenge to their organizations.⁸

This answer is not that surprising—millions of in-office workers connecting remotely for the foreseeable future will likely pose significant hardware and software security issues—but **the rest of the data revealed something rather unusual.**

Executives predict a diverse and widespread number of IT challenges over the next 12 months.⁸

- **Roughly 1 in 3 IT leaders anticipate challenges with:** resources (head count); supporting employee wellbeing; and employee onboarding.⁸
- **Approximately 1 in 4 IT leaders anticipate problems with:** application adoption & usage; new tech rollouts (beta-testing); problem identification; and sustaining their WFA model.⁸

From our research, one point has emerged over and over again: Digital Employee Experience is a crucial part of the future of work, and IT leaders are keen to put people at the center of their services.



⁸ Referring to Figure 6 on Page 9.

About the Survey

142 technology executives were interviewed during September 22 – October 13, 2020, split in the following ways:

Respondent Region

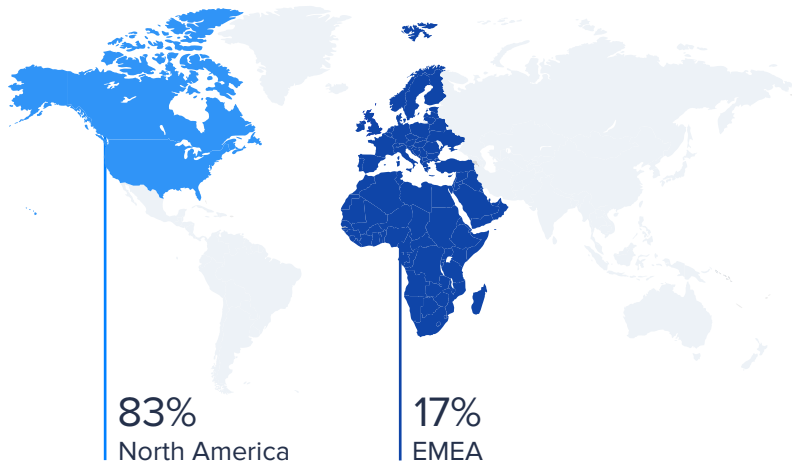


Figure 7.1

Respondent Company Size

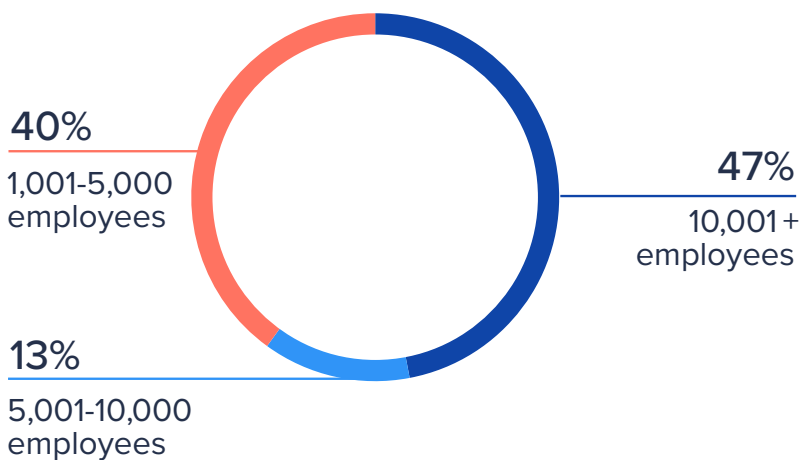


Figure 7.2



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 Nextthink Experience?

[CONTACT US](#)