nexthink

# IT's New Mandate:
# The Science of Productivity Report

**PART 2**

## The Experience Silo: HR, IT, and the Digital Workplace

As work becomes fully digital, IT and HR can no longer operate in silos. This report examines how a new "Science of Productivity" is seen as the future of workplace technology.

**SURVEY CONDUCTED BY VANSON BOURNE**

# Introduction

In **Part 1**, we discovered where exactly the EUC market is headed based on candid observations from 1,100 IT leaders, spanning four major markets. The respondents articulated their hopes for a smarter, more efficient workplace, amidst a backdrop of promising, new AI technologies and a renewed focus on digital adoption.

In Part 2, we take a sharper look at the data to answer a deceivingly simple question, who will own the future employee experience? All signs point to a monumental change on the horizon. According to the respondents in our survey, HR and IT—once separate entities— will join forces to create a partnership like we've never seen before.

On paper, the reasons for a merger make a lot of sense. The boundaries between tech support and people management have been dissolving for years. But programmatically, it's less clear how and when this partnership will unfold. What we do know is that HR and IT have their work cut out for them.

That's why, at the end of this report, we'll share some tips and anecdotes based on real customers that've navigated similar terrain and produced positive results.

# Inside This Report

# Not If, When

A significant majority of IT leaders believe the next wave of digital transformation efforts and technologies will trigger the beginning of new departments and teams.

**94% believe that the next wave of digital transformation will see the emergence of new departments within their organizations.**

And underpinning that future will be an HR-IT partnership that many believe could benefit a wide array of critical business topics.

**How likely is it that a merging of the HR and IT departments in your organization would result in the following benefits?**

## 93%

Improved **Employee Productivity**
Improved **Employee Satisfaction**
Higher Rates of **Employee Engagement**
Higher Rates of **Employee Retention**

## 94%

Faster & More Successful **Digital Transformation** Initiatives
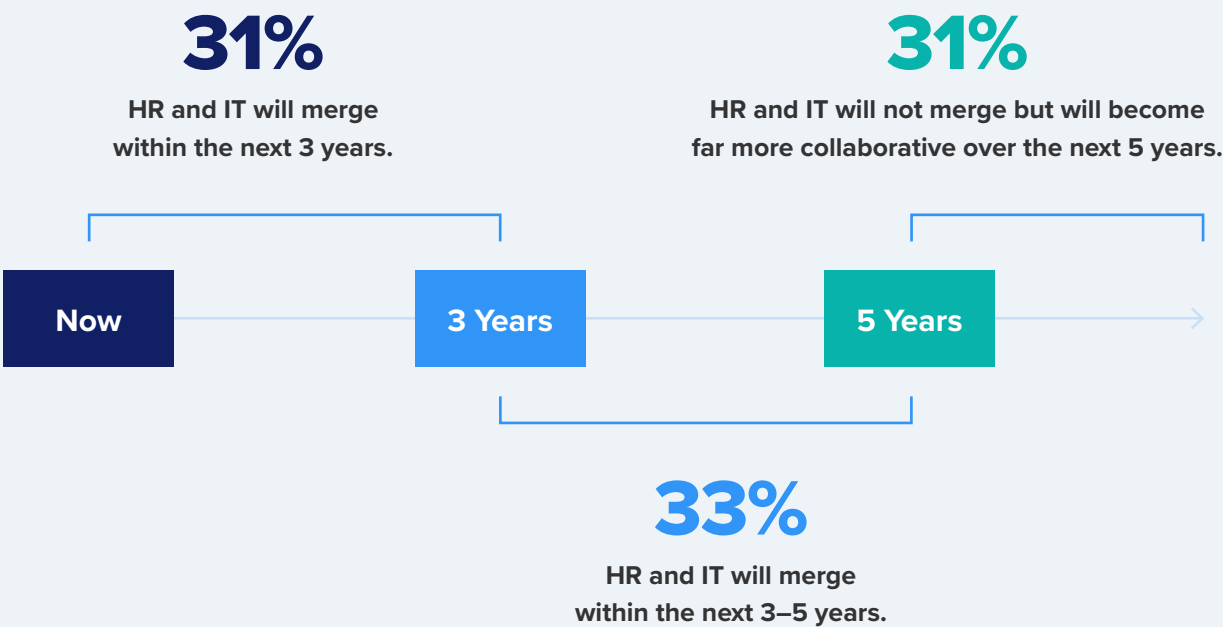More Effective **Adoption** of New Tools & Tech

## 95%

Better **Onboarding** (Faster & Smoother)

So when exactly, do the respondents expect these worlds to join forces?

According to the majority, sometime in the next five years most organizations will have merged their HR and IT departments, both in name and practice. But not everyone agrees. Nearly a third think they'll remain as separate entities, but with the caveat that they'll operate in a more collaborative relationship.

**The HR-IT Department: It's Only a Matter of Time...**

## 31%
**HR and IT will merge within the next 3 years.**

## 31%
**HR and IT will not merge but will become far more collaborative over the next 5 years.**

| Now | 3 Years | 5 Years |

## 33%
**HR and IT will merge within the next 3–5 years.**

In the next chapter, we investigate what responsibilities an HR-IT department might oversee and how those areas play a pivotal role in shaping the digital workplace.

# Beyond Deployment

Respondents cited several areas of responsibility that a joint HR-IT division could target, with 'workplace tech and collaboration tools (like automations and AI)' topping the list.

**Which of the following responsibilities do you think should be owned by a potential IT-HR hybrid department?**

Of 1,100 respondents:

**62%**     **Digital Employee Experience Management**

**49%**     **IT Onboarding / Offboarding**

**69%**     **Workplace Technology & Collaboration Tools, Including Automation & AI**

**61%**     **Employee Digital Training**

**55%**     **Workforce Analytics e.g. Productivity**

Based on these results, it's obvious IT leaders feel they need to focus on digital adoption and onboarding for employees. In **Part 1**, 95% of respondents said that digital dexterity will be essential to their organizational success in the next three years, but only 47% believe their employees are skilled enough to adapt to the impending wave of new technologies (like generative AI).

# The Current System Is Weak

Much of the modern work experience today is spent collaborating via applications and technology systems. The digital heavily influences the personal; in fact, it might be one of the most critical pieces in the overall employee experience. And oddly, in most organizations little information on how employees interact with and view their tech ever gets back to IT support or an HR manager.

But before these two can team up to tackle these topics, they'll need to confront their own issues first.

# HR & IT's Challenges

Much of the survey data underlines a sense of optimism and excitement about the future, but there's also evidence that change won't come easy.

## 98%

Agreed there will be challenges to merging HR and IT functions within their organizations.

## 58%

Say there is (currently) a lack of ownership of new and existing responsibilities.

### Which department is responsible for the following within your organization?

| Department | Employee Satisfaction | Enterprise Productivity | Employee Engagement |
|---|---|---|---|
| HR Alone | 41% | 11% | 39% |
| IT Alone | 15% | 29% | 16% |
| Both HR & IT | 38% | 50% | 38% |

While the data points to the likelihood of a structural merger, there's also evidence of confusion over who owns what around the digital workplace and the Science of Productivity. For example, there is considerable overlap right now between HR and IT when it comes to employee satisfaction, enterprise productivity, and employee engagement.
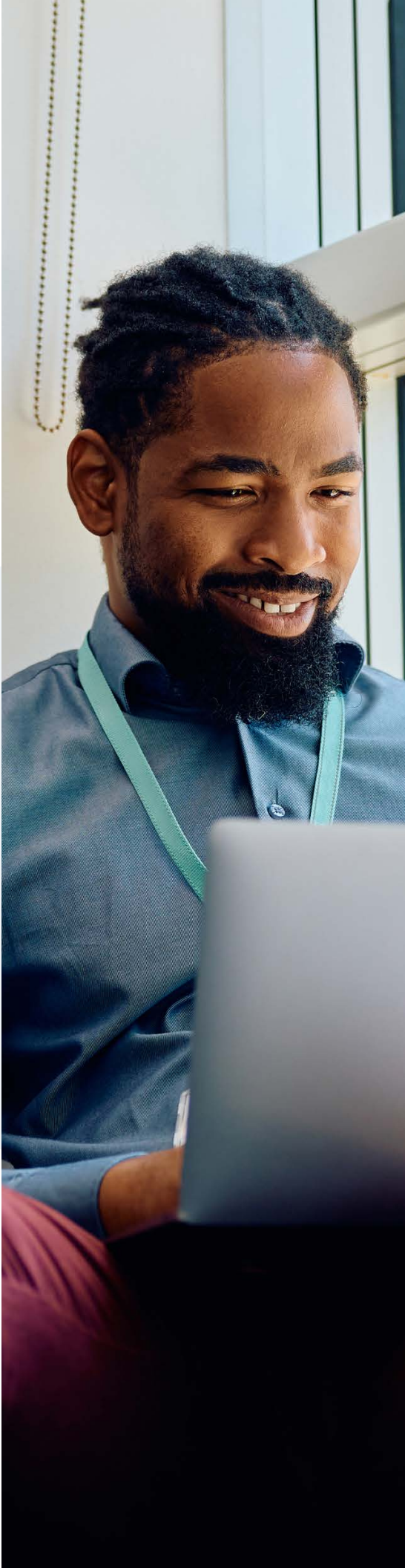
## Why The Confusion?

The prevailing notion is that there is still a bit of a turf war (between HR and IT). HR feels like they own the experience, but it's often from an employee lifecycle perspective of hire to fire. And IT feels like they own the daily productivity experience, but they don't really have insight to human capital management and those types of tools.

And since most organizations today don't have a joint department, business leaders will have to reexamine which teams own what, and determine who is best equipped to expand scope and/or adjust their operational directives.

**What do you believe would be the biggest challenges to merging the HR and IT functions within your organization?**

**58%**

Lack of clear ownership of new and existing responsibilities

**50%**

Poor communication between HR and IT

**49%**

Differing priorities between departments

# Strategic Advice

Let's address each and every one of the questions highlighted in the survey with tactical advice you can apply today.

### Establish Clear Ownership Early

Given that **58%** of respondents cite lack of clear ownership as a major challenge, IT and HR leaders must proactively define and document straight-forward roles. Set up a joint task force to map responsibilities—not only for current digital workflows but for new technologies being introduced (especially AI tools). Clarify ownership of initiatives like onboarding, digital adoption, and collaboration platforms before formal department mergers happen.

### Pilot XLAs Centered on the Employee Journey & DEX

Move beyond SLAs. Advanced IT-HR partnerships should embrace Experience Level Agreements (XLAs) that are tied directly to employee journeys. A good XLA doesn't just say 'how fast is the system?' but 'how easily did the employee accomplish what they needed to do?'. You can start small; pilot an XLA tied to key moments like onboarding or with quarterly task handoffs.

You can also test a smaller cross-functional DEX team tasked solely with improving digital workflows and AI integration into daily work. Use this pilot team to iron out operational wrinkles and gradually scale toward a full HR-IT merger.

"IT not only exists to enable technology to function correctly, but for you to have a positive experience that is transformative for your specific role and needs."

**Mitchel Trychta, Vizient**

### Create Formal Communication Pipelines

Since **50%** of IT leaders identify poor communication as a barrier, don't rely on ad hoc conversations. Build a structured, ongoing communication framework between IT and HR—such as regular joint leadership meetings, integrated project management dashboards, and shared KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) around employee experience metrics.

### Align on Shared Strategic Outcomes

With **49%** citing differing priorities, the key is to reframe goals around what each has in common: employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity. Use digital adoption rates, onboarding speed, AI skill-building participation, and collaboration efficiency as shared success metrics, not IT-only or HR-only goals.

### Invest in Digital Dexterity Programs Now

Since only **47%** of employees, on average, are ready for new technologies, IT should prioritize digital dexterity programs in partnership with HR. Think beyond simple technical training—build internal AI literacy, systems thinking, and automation skill sets, using flexible, gamified learning platforms to boost engagement.

### Invest in a Digital Adoption Platform (DAP)

Gartner defines a digital adoption platform (DAP) as one that over-lays internal applications (e.g., CRM, HRM, ERP) with in-application guided learning, hinting and nudging, and analytics.

A digital adoption solution ensures that employees can effectively use applications with in-app guidance, training, and support to successfully navigate the steps needed to complete a task in an application. This increased app proficiency and usage maximizes application value, reduces risks and frustration, and drives successful digital transformation.

### Use AI to Personalize Onboarding & Learning

Deploy AI to customize onboarding and ongoing learning ex-periences. Smart platforms can assess each employee's tech proficiency and automatically adjust learning modules, helping bridge digital skill gaps faster and more sustainably. You can also leverage in-app process reminders and contextual gui-dance to accelerate the adoption of HR platforms like Workday and Success Factors.

### Champion a Culture of Co-Ownership

Set the cultural tone early: this is not 'IT helping HR' or vice versa. It's everyone building a human-centered, tech-augmented workplace together. Recognize and reward joint initiatives and collaborations that drive digital adoption and employee satisfaction.
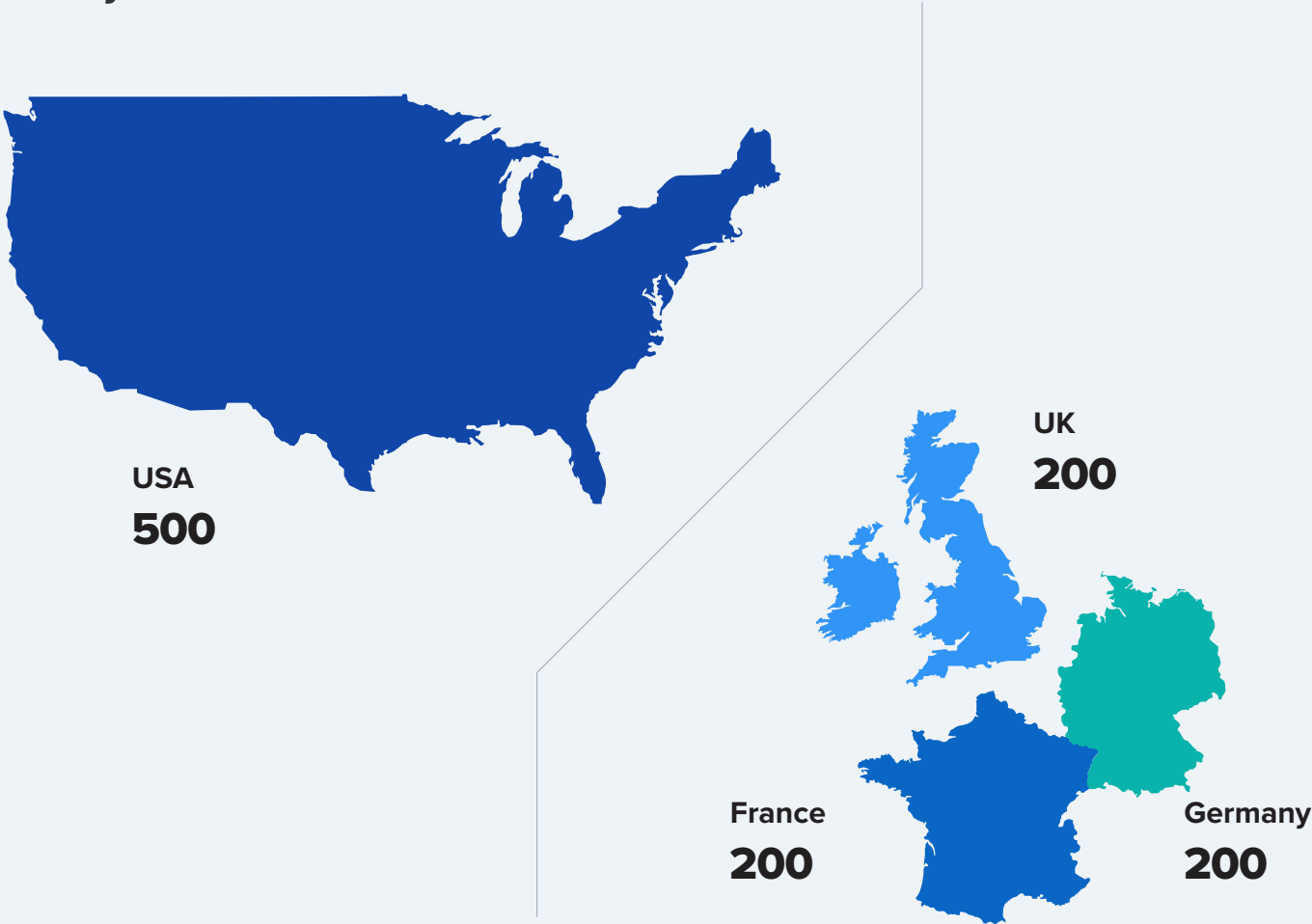
# About the Survey

Teaming up with Vanson Bourne, we interviewed 1,100 Senior IT Decision Makers across four major markets: the UK, the USA, France, and Germany.

Respondents are from organizations of 1,500 employees or more.

## Country

**USA**
**500**

**UK**
**200**

**France**
**200**

**Germany**
**200**

## Position

**217**  Mid-Level Management;
Manager of Team or Silo

**752**  Senior Management; Senior Manager
of Unit, Function, or Department

**131**  Board Member; C-Level

## Organization Size

**416**
1,500–3,499
employees

**350**
3,500–4,999
employees

**334**
5,000 or more
employees

### About Nexthink

Nexthink 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, Nexthink helps IT teams meet the needs of the modern digital workplace.

Have questions about the Nexthink platform?

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