nexthink

The 2022 Digital Employee Experience Career Capital Report

IT careers in Digital Employee Experience (DEX)
are booming. Start charting your path today.

Key Findings

Digital Employee Experience is starting to influence everything IT teams do

- 94% of the IT professionals in our survey agreed that the roles and responsibilities of their job have moved away from simply provisioning IT equipment and is now focused more on providing solutions which promote employee collaboration and productivity since the COVID-19 pandemic.

- On average, IT professionals spend a quarter of their day on tasks directly relating to DEX, a third on strategy (including sustainability), and the remaining on day-to-day, traditional IT tasks (software development, responding to tickets, etc.).

- Pre-pandemic, only 16% would say IT was largely responsible for the workplace. But in five years' time, 45% expect IT to be largely responsible.

This high-priority work comes with high salaries

- Average DEX salary (all countries surveyed): $114,832.

- 38% difference between industry average and our data's average.

The sweet spot for in-demand DEX roles

- We found that on average, company size, company revenue, industry, and age have the highest correlation to most salaries.

DEX workers are aiming for top IT roles

- 38% of respondents were promoted internally (based on merit) for their recent job, similar to last year's report. In addition, nearly a quarter (24%) of DEX respondents report they were recruited externally.
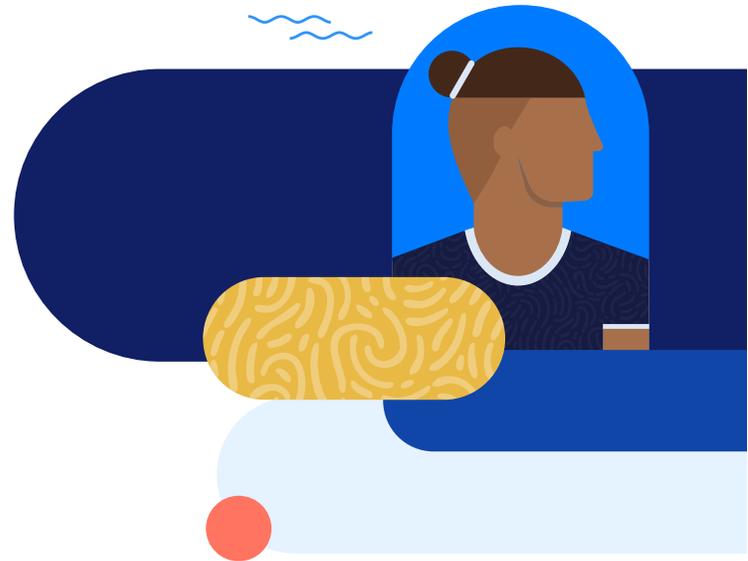
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Introduction

Last year's inaugural report demonstrated that a significant number of IT professionals are shifting towards Digital Employee Experience (DEX) related career paths.

The demand for this line of work is growing and the compensation for DEX focused professionals continually outperforms that of other middle to upper management IT roles.

Gartner® reports that by 2025, 50% of IT organizations will have established a digital employee experience strategy team and management tool, which is a major increase from 5% in 2021.

As you'll see in the report, this group of IT professionals hold different job titles and work in a variety of industries, but they all share one thing in common: an endless obsession to improve the Digital Employee Experience (DEX).

These experience-focused IT professionals possess the perfect blend of technical and communication skills that's so critical in the modern workplace. These professionals see the big picture and understand nuance, and they're able to approach problems from a new perspective: the employee's.

Yassine Zaied
Chief Strategy Officer,
Nexthink

What can you do with this report?

We hope this report will help many audiences: IT pros seeking career advice and perspective; HR leaders looking to hire and retain the right talent; and C-Suite leaders who want to foster a productive, employee-centric work culture.

"We live increasingly in a knowledge and service economy, where your ability to learn, your ability to be creative, and your ability to solve problems depends on crowding out distractions and being able to lock into those flow moments."

Adam Grant

Organizational Psychologist at Wharton, New York Times Bestselling Author, and Host of the TED podcast WorkLife.

Front and Center:

The Emerging Role of Digital Employee Experience in IT

Experience-led projects have surged since the pandemic. The events that unfolded in 2020 had a profound impact on the proportion of DEX-specific roles and responsibilities within IT departments. Respondents reported that demand remains high for IT projects that are centered around improving remote and hybrid digital work experiences.

Employee-Experience Related Work Continues to Grow

94% of the IT professionals in our survey agreed that the roles and responsibilities of their job have moved away from simply provisioning IT equipment and is now focused more on providing solutions which promote employee collaboration and productivity since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even before the pandemic though, IT roles were changing.

In fact, 99% of respondents have seen new tasks come into their role in the past five years, including developing working from home practices and training (41%), supporting employee communication platforms (39%) and developing sustainability projects and policies (48%).

On average, IT professionals spend a quarter of their day on tasks directly relating to DEX, a third on strategy (including sustainability), and the remaining on day-to-day, traditional IT tasks (software development, responding to tickets, etc.).

What proportion of your working day do you currently spend doing the following tasks in the following timeframes?

DEX Tasks
24%

Strategic Tasks
33%

Keeping the lights on
40%

KEY

DEX tasks: working from home practices, supporting employee communications platforms, customizing digital work setups.

Strategic tasks: collaborating with HR, Green IT projects, future IT strategies, developing other organizational policies.

Keeping the lights on: software development, upgrading IT infrastructure, troubleshooting and ad-hoc requests, other areas.

As Workplaces Become More Virtual, IT Professionals Adapt

—

Additionally, as respondents expect the workplace to become less physical and more virtual, they also expect IT to play a bigger part in managing it.

Pre-pandemic, only 16% would say IT was largely responsible for the workplace. But in five years' time, 45% expect IT to be largely responsible. Right now, the biggest proportion (58%) believe that HR and IT are responsible for the workplace in equal measure.

As the typical workplace has moved away from physical locations to a virtual environment, the responsibility of managing it has moved (or is expected to move) from HR to IT.

Pre-Pandemic (2019)
| 42% | 42% | 16% |

Currently (2022)
| 14% | 58% | 29% |

In five years' time (2027)
| 7% | 49% | 45% |

——— KEY ———

■ Largely HR   ■ A combination of HR and IT   ■ Largely IT
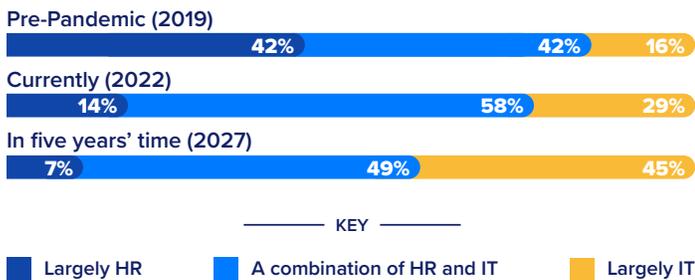
In fact, almost all respondents (98%) believe that the IT department plays an important or critical role in facilitating a successful workplace flow in their organisation.

What role do you think the IT department plays in facilitating a successful workplace flow in your organization?

98%
IT plays a critical or important role

2%
Not Very Important Role

42%
Critical Role

56%
Important Role
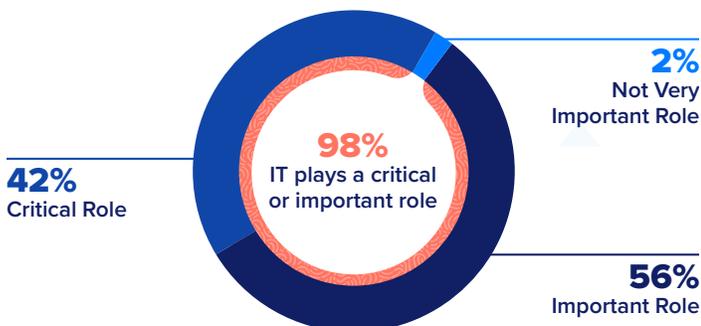
Pre-pandemic, 55% of IT professionals would have defined a workplace as a brick-and-mortar building, with only 5% considering it to be mainly virtual.

Right now, only 14% consider a workplace to be brick-and-mortar, with 61% considering it to be a combination of brick-and-mortar buildings and virtual working, utilising technology to tie the two together.

In five years' time, only 8% think a workplace will be brick-and-mortar with 48% who expect it to be mainly virtual with technological infrastructure that allows employees to work and collaborate from anywhere in the world.

Since COVID-19, there is an accelerated push towards a virtual workplace, which looks set to stay, and even increase, over the next five years.

Pre-Pandemic (2019)
| 55% | 40% | 5% |

Currently (2022)
| 14% | 61% | 25% |

In five years' time (2027)
| 8% | 44% | 48% |

——— KEY ———

■ In-Person   ■ Hybrid   ■ Remote
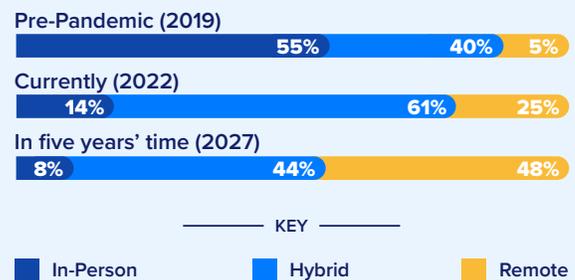
"You need to have people in place in the right roles to understand the right things to understand the right problems"

Geoffrey Wright
Global Solutions Owner, Mondelēz International

Examining Global Salaries in Digital Employee Experience

Digital Employee Experience professionals often earn considerably more than the average IT salary. We examined salaries across 4 countries: The United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and France. In many instances, DEX positions **out earned traditional IT roles by 50% or more in average salary.**

Salary & Demand for Digital Employee Experience Professionals Outpaces Industry Averages

On average, survey respondents reported an average salary of $114,832 across the United Kingdom, United States, Germany and France.

$108,975
USA AVG.

$116,318
FRANCE AVG.

$114,832
GLOBAL AVERAGE

$134,464
GERMANY AVG.

$105,176
UK AVG.
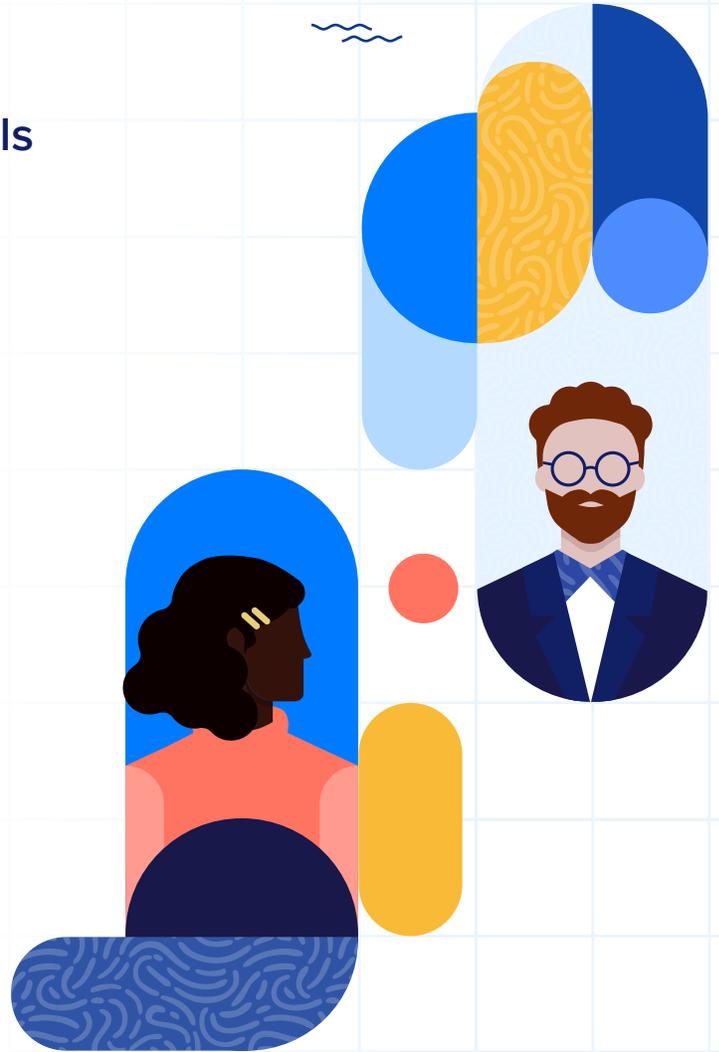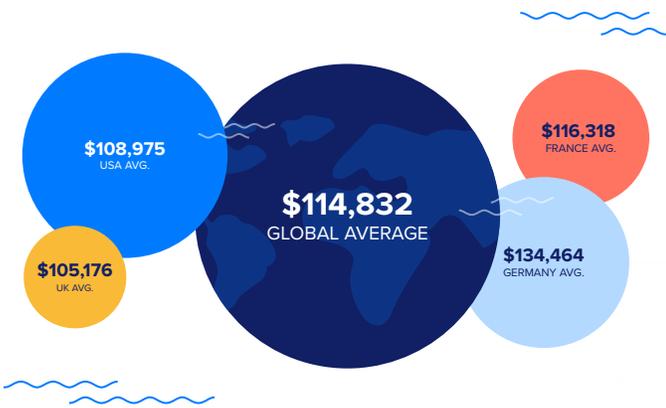
Biggest Salary Increases for DEX workers compared to the industry average*

Refer to 'About This Report' section for more information on the Payscale Comparisons and Salary Conversions below.

+38%
Senior Technical

+40%
IT Team Lead

+59%
IT Manager

+111%
Junior Software Engineer
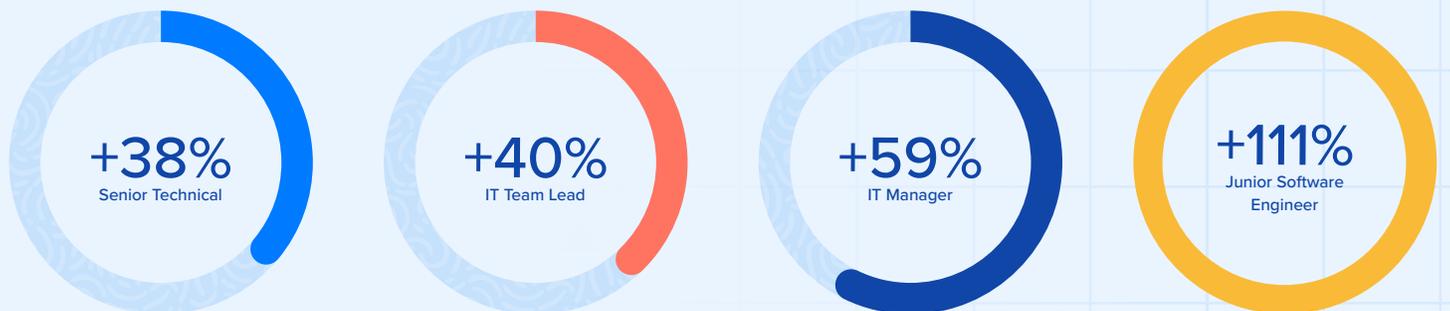
"Anything getting in the way of a positive user experience needs to be challenged, whether that's leaders, technology, strategy, anything that is ripe for action and positive improvement."

Ben Whitter
Founder & Chief Experience Officer at HEX Organization and one of the world's leading management thinkers

The Sweet Spot:
What Factors Impact Digital Employee Experience Salaries?

—

We noticed the highest average DEX salaries typically depend on company size, revenue, industry, and respondent age. In this section we pinpoint exactly who earns what.

There are Four Key Factors that Seem to Impact Digital Employee Experience Salaries

1. COMPANY SIZE

On average, respondents from companies with 3,000 – 4,999 staff earn more than smaller and larger companies.

1,000 - 2,999 employees
$114,792

3,000 - 4,999 employees
$125,483

5,000 or more employees
$111,093

2. ANNUAL REVENUE

DEX professionals in companies with global annual revenues between $250 million – $500 million earn more than professionals from other company revenue levels (minus the four outliers in the +$50 billion range). Interestingly, DEX professionals at companies with an annual revenue of $1 billion - $5 billion earned the least on average.

$100 million - $250 million
$113,915

$250 million - $500 million
$121,367

$500 million - $1 billion
$112,535

$1 billion - $5 billion
$111,716

$5 billion - $10 billion
$116,119

$10 billion - $50 billion
$118,074

**More than $50 billion** *Note: this range includes only four respondents.*
$136,500

3. AGE

The highest average DEX earners are typically 35-44 years old ($118,987), although we did record 17 respondents aged 65-74 that averaged $125,448. As shown in the previous section, the average junior to middle management DEX salary can earn around 50% higher than its non-DEX equivalent.

4. INDUSTRY

What industry you work in could determine the type of salary you receive. For example, DEX professionals who work in Business and Professional Services earn about 35% more than their DEX peers in Healthcare ($128,404 vs. $94,948).

Business and Professional Services
$128,404

Healthcare (Private and Public)
$94,948

Construction and Property
$116,993

Consumer Services
$127,135

Energy, Oil/Gas, and Utilities
$108,534

Financial Services
$108,106

IT, Technology, and Telecoms
$122,802

Manufacturing and Production
$118,073

Media, Leisure and Entertainment
$110,365

Public Sector
$115,425

Retail, Distribution, and Transport
$115,080

Other Commercial Sectors
$90,122

"During our first meeting together with the Digital Workplace department, our employee experience team wrote down overarching values that we felt were most important to us: employee happiness came out top."

Madelon Kors
Customer & Digital Experience Specialist, ABN AMRO Bank N.V.

The People Behind Digital Employee Experience:
Diving Deeper into Salary Data

As respondents move along in their DEX careers, many report sizeable pay increases, especially for those that are able to move into top leadership roles. We highlight some of the common career moves DEX professionals make.

The Majority of Professionals in Digital Employee Experience Continue to Advance via Internal Promotion

—

How do Digital Employee Experience professionals typically move up the corporate ladder? Most professionals report that internal promotion is a common route in the DEX career field, but we have seen an uptick in external recruitment this year which makes sense considering the hot job market.

38% of respondents were promoted internally (based on merit) for their recent job, while nearly a quarter (24%) came into their role via external hiring.

What was your career path from your previous role?

41%
38%

38%
Promoted Internally
(Based on Merit)

21%
24%

24%
Recruited Externally

25%
23%

23%
Applied internally for
more senior position

14%
14%

14%
From Higher
Education
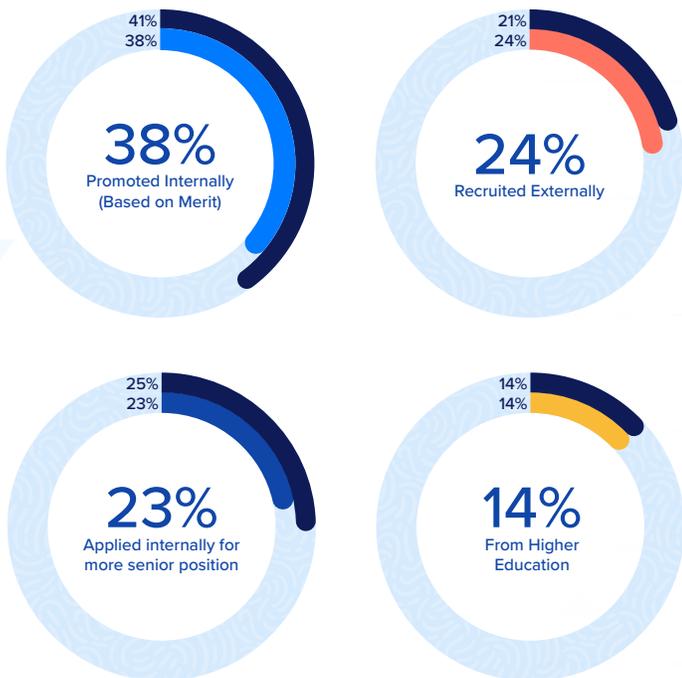
— KEY —   ▮ 2022   ▮ 2021
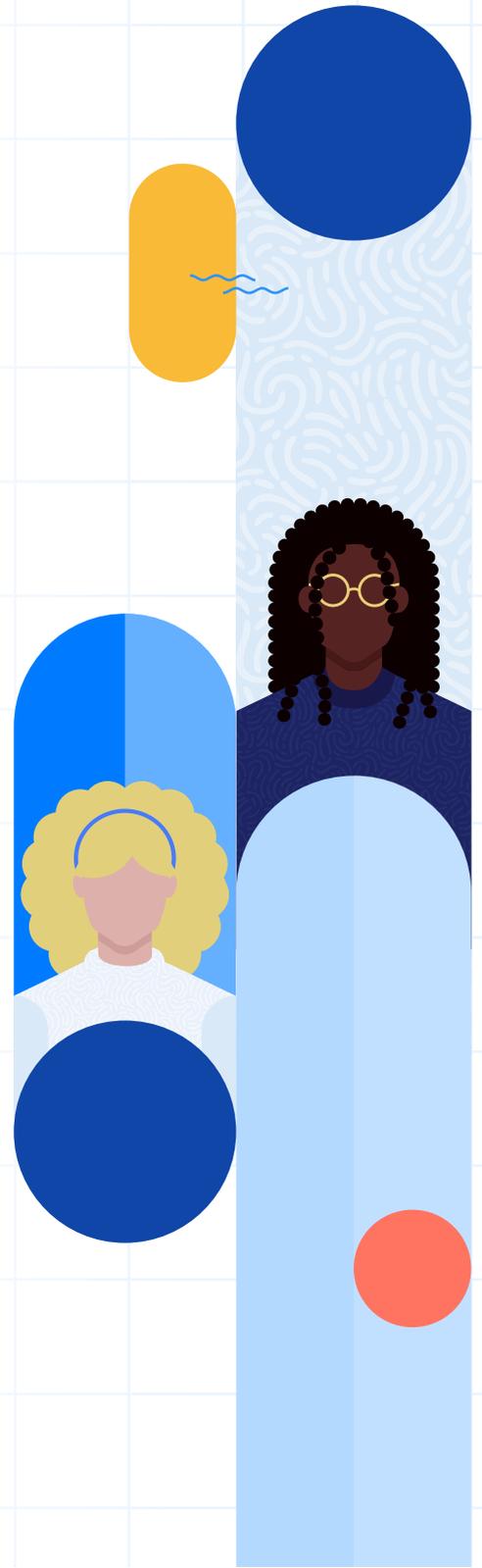
Digital Employee Experience Workers are Driven and Ambitious

On average, 65% of respondents have spent 2-5 years in their current role.

Less than 1 year
3%

1 year
4%

2 years
16%

3 years
19%

4 years
15%

5 years
15%

6 years
8%

7 years
6%

8 years
4%

9 years
3%

10 or more years
8%
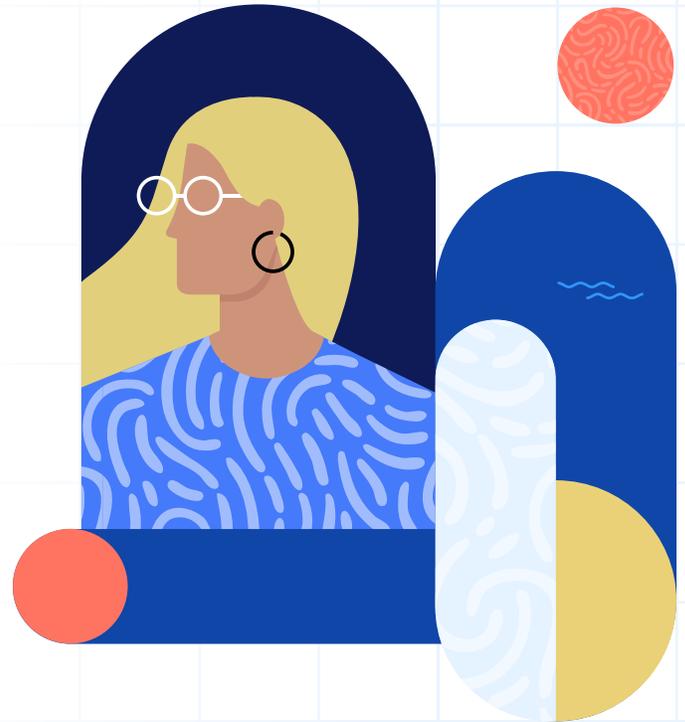
Top 4 Ways Digital Employee Experience Professionals are Different from the Rest of IT

- **Employee-Centric -** DEX professionals always approach problems from the perspective of the employee

- **Proactive Mindset -** DEX professionals always look for ways to prevent IT issues from impacting employees

- **Continuous Improvement -** DEX professionals never settle for "good enough," they always look to improve user experiences

- **Experience Metric-Obsessed -** DEX professionals know how to combine the right technical metrics and the right employee sentiment to make informed decisions about their users and IT services

"An employee-first mindset is more than just a catchphrase, it should be part of your team's identity and reputation—something we at Flutter Entertainment are proud to claim."

Teodor Olteanu
Senior Delivery Manager, Flutter Entertainment Plc

About this Report

Digital Employee Experience is an emerging career path that is well supported by both IT and non-IT executive leaders.

We cast a net far and wide across 4 major markets to help us better understand this unique career path in IT.

About this Report

In order to participate in our study, survey respondents had to meet the following criteria:

- **Involvement in DEX –** respondents must work within Information Technology and demonstrate at least some involvement in DEX-related work.

- **Company Revenue –** respondents must work in a company with at least $100M in annual revenue.

- **Company Size –** respondents must come from a company with at least 1,000 employees.

- **Age –** only respondents aged 18-75 years old could participate.

After passing the criteria above, we asked participants to identify where they fell within certain salary ranges and several ordinal and nominal categories. Salary ranges are expressed in U.S. dollars, including those for international respondents. We did not adjust for variations in labor costs across different geographies. On graphs, each salary-range bar has a percentage figure — that's the percentage of respondents whose earnings fall within that salary range.

When reviewing this report, it's important to remember that geographic differentials can play a huge part in how salaries fall within these ranges.

PAY SCALE COMPARISONS AND SALARY CONVERSIONS

All salary averages research done on payscale.com.
Currency conversions as of 28th April 2022 (£1: $1.24, €1: $1.05)

Title	UK	France	Germany	US	Avg.
CIO	£100,000 ($124,304)	€102,409 ($107,777)	€144,416 ($151,985)	$168,620	$138,172
IT Director	£88,530 ($110,000)	€91,942 ($96,761)	€107,869 ($113,522)	$122,363	$110,661
IT Manager	£44,293 ($55,058)	€54,721 ($57,589)	€72,721 ($76,532)	$89,124	$69,576
IT Team Leader	£39,840 ($49,568)	€53,264 ($56,056)	€71,414 ($75,157)	$89,747	$67,632
Senior Software Engineer/ Developer/Programmer	£49,710 ($61,859)	€51,106 ($53,655)	€63,190 ($66,341)	$109,047	$72,726
Junior Software Engineer	£24,900 ($30,986)	€34,316 ($36,027)	€42,336 ($44,447)	$63,454	$43,729

Who Took this Survey?

During March and April 2022, independent research firm, Vanson Bourne, interviewed 1,000 respondents who identified themselves as working in IT and in specific DEX-related job functions.

Respondents came from several different IT domains and were spread across multiple industries.

These participants came from companies of 3 distinct employee sizes and from 4 key markets.

RESPONDENT INDUSTRY SECTOR

IT, Technology, and Telecoms
199

Retail, Distribution, and Transport
105

Financial Services
106

Manufacturing and Production
98

Construction and Property
84

Public Sector
69

Energy, Oil/Gas, and Utilities
84

Business and Professions Services
75

Media, Leisure and Entertainment
43

Healthcare (Public and Private)
49

RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN

1,000 Digital Employee Experience Professionals

RESPONDENT COUNTRY

200 France

200 United Kingdom

200 Germany

400 United States

RESPONDENT POSITION LEVEL

500 Level One (Senior Management and Leadership)

500 Level Two (Technical Roles and Mid-Management)

RESPONDENT COMPANY SIZE

323 1,000 - 2,999 employees

500 5,000 or more employees

177 3,000 - 4,999 employees
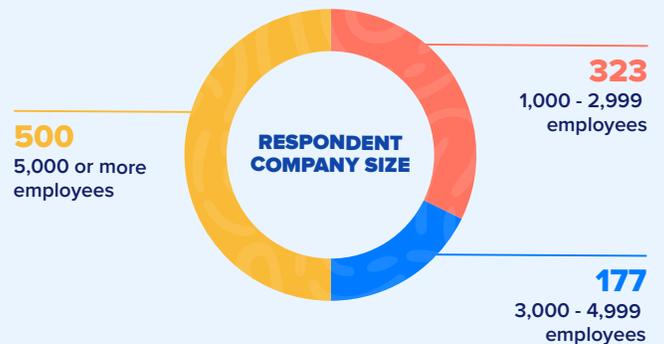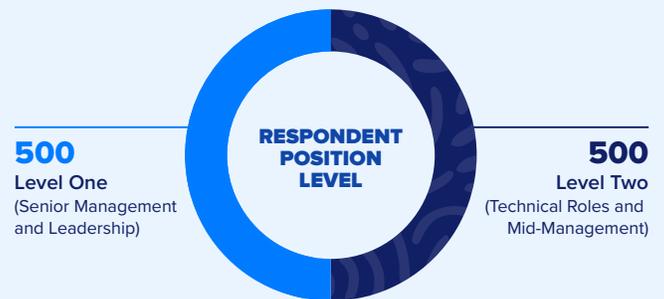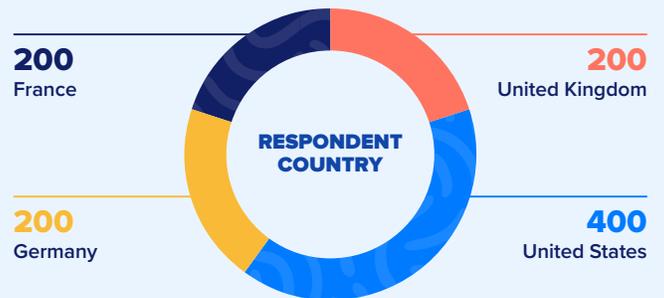
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Check out the latest jobs below.

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