



Set your people free

How technology can help boost business productivity and employee wellbeing



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When you spend the majority of your waking hours at work, it is only natural to want to be happy about your job. But sometimes the desire to be happy can feel at odds with the need to be productive.

So, is it possible for employees to be happy and productive? Yes it is and plenty of research shows the two things are very much connected. A happy workforce is more productive, while employees who are satisfied with their output are likely to be happier.



According to a Gallup survey:

Engaged employees are 21% more productive.¹

There are plenty of ways you can boost employee happiness and equally there are countless strategies you can follow to boost productivity. So where do you start?

We believe the right technology can pay dividends when it comes to creating a working environment that supports productivity and happiness.

Although technology is certainly not a panacea, it can offer multiple solutions worth exploring. In this e-book, we'll show you how the right technology really can help you create a happier more productive workforce.

90% of decision makers at small and medium businesses in the UK say they find productivity a challenge.²



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Chapter 1:


Employee happiness and productivity - you can't have one without the other

To begin with, let's take a closer look at how productivity and happiness at work are intrinsically linked.

Lots of studies have shown the kind of things that make an employee happy and these invariably include:

- ◉ A sense of accomplishment
- ◉ A good work-life balance
- ◉ Open communication
- ◉ Having clear goals

80% of people would consider turning down a job that doesn't offer flexible working.³



Conversely, there's plenty of research which has shown the aspects of work that make employees stressed and may even lead to poor health and lower productivity. These include:


- 🔗 How much control they have over the work they do
- 🔗 An unmanageable workload
- 🔗 Having the right tools
- 🔗 Worries about finances

Harnessing technology to improve workplace happiness and productivity

So how can technology boost productivity by helping employees realise their potential at work and reignite their passion for what they do?

Technology really comes into its own when it is intuitive to use and is chosen to specifically meet the needs of employees and the business. We know that it is no good simply providing lots of technology without these considerations.

We'll focus on some key areas technology can make a difference to the workplace.



Automation - the key to doing more of the things that matter

Almost any job you can think of is likely to involve a certain amount of repetitive manual tasks. These might be administrative tasks that aren't part of your core work, like [submitting expenses](#), [requesting time off](#), and logging your hours. Add up all the non-core tasks you do each day and it may become clear why you are struggling to find time to do the work you find rewarding.

A [report on the UK's productivity crisis](#) recently found that employees spend 16% of their time on non-core tasks and this increases as organisations grow. Employees at mid-market organisations spend almost twice as much time on non-core tasks compared to those at smaller companies. So, it's not surprising that 94% of the UK's mid-market businesses say they 'need to improve productivity'.

Even if the manual work you are doing is integral to your job, its laborious nature is unlikely to be the best use of your time and brain power. And of course when a human being is doing manual repetitive tasks they are prone to errors. So, whether you are a finance director who needs to close books promptly at the end of each month, or a recruiter looking for the right candidate, automation is worthwhile.

Automation is going mainstream

Research by The University of London shows automation is becoming mainstream and anticipates a 16% increase in 2020.

They found that:

- **38%** of the workers they surveyed use automation to perform some of the tasks in their role
- Automation technology makes organisations **33%** more human because they're not spending time on robotic tasks
- Companies using automation perform 28% better than competitors and are **31%** more productive.⁴




Using technology to automate manual tasks can free up time to focus on the things that matter. Rather than replacing the need to have a human doing a particular job, it can complement and enhance a role. Just think what you and your team could achieve with the extra time.

For example, you could spend more time with patients if you work in healthcare, or dedicate more time to providing higher quality teaching if you are an educator. Even using some of the extra time to simply have a break is worthwhile. Constantly working without a break is counterproductive and can lead to burnout. People who take breaks tend to be more productive. So, go on, don't feel guilty about stepping away from your desk when you feel you need to.



Case studies



Access software has helped numerous caregivers provide better service for their clients by freeing up the time they would normally have spent on manual tasks like completing audits, paperwork and planning staff rotas.

They have experienced many benefits including improved safety, better adherence to compliance requirements and improved CQC inspection ratings.

Most importantly, they have the time to focus on providing better care quality and meeting the personal needs of the people they care for.


[Read more](#)



Chapter 3:

Collaboration - you really can make it a reality

Employers and employees alike often cite collaboration as being important, which is not surprising given the many benefits it can bring to the workplace.



Collaboration doesn't just help build a sense of community, it [fuels innovation](#) and problem solving and you guessed it - it helps increase productivity.

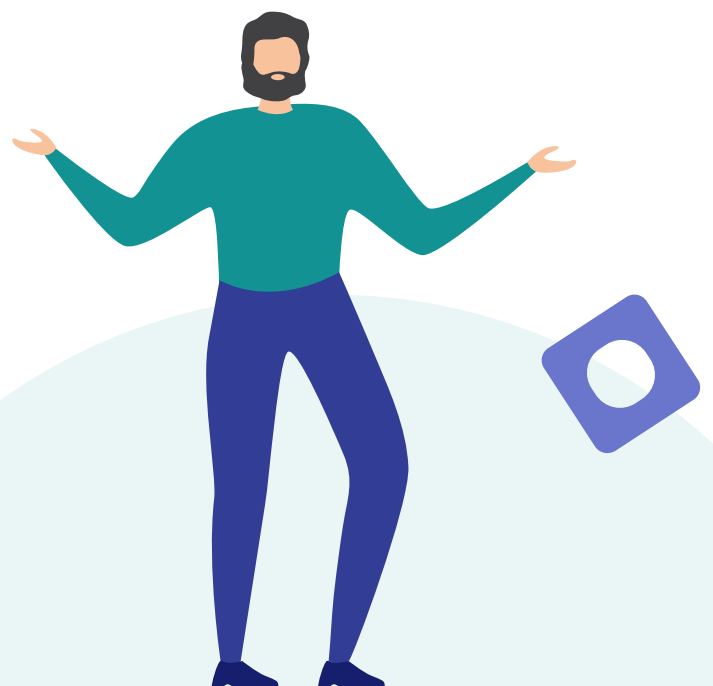
When we work in silos, we don't make use of each other's different skills and various points of view - both of which are vital ingredients for innovation. Pooling resources and expertise also makes it easier to work more flexibly, which can help ease the pressure on individuals.

And all this holds true no matter what sector you work in, whether that's in education, care, construction, hospitality or for a charity. What's more, it's often impossible to do any job without input from other people.

But despite all these benefits, we still don't give collaboration the priority it deserves and often find ourselves reverting to old habits.

Why's this? Part of the problem is poor communication, which is vital to collaboration. Some organisations are also simply not set up in a way that makes it easy to share and collaborate. Information, for example, may be siloed with only one part of the organisation having easy access to it. This can make it difficult to foster relationships based on trust between departments.


By giving everyone access to the same centralised information, various departments are more likely to understand one another and feel part of a larger cross-functional team.



And that's where technology comes in.

- **93%** of workers said they need to access information or insight from colleagues daily or weekly.
- Workers estimate that they spend nearly **20%** of their working week looking for internal information or tracking down colleagues who can help with specific tasks.⁵
- About **75%** of employers rate teamwork and collaboration as very important yet only **18%** of employees get communication evaluations at their performance reviews.⁶
- Workers who are part of a team stick with a task **64%** longer than their solitary peers.⁷
- **60%** of respondents think centralising data in some way could be a solution.⁸

Technology can break down communication barriers by providing one central source of information, stored in the cloud, which everyone can access from anywhere.



This makes it easier for workers to collaborate and feel like they are working towards the same goal. So, rather than having several disparate systems, you are better off integrating your technology. Using a centralised database that is less prone to manual errors also gives employees more confidence in the information they are using.

It also avoids duplicating efforts between teams. For example, it means if someone's personal details are updated by HR, this is instantly reflected in the systems that finance uses too, so they don't end up using incorrect information. Equally, allowing different teams, like sales and marketing, to be able to access information in a [CRM system](#) makes sure everyone has access to the information they need to do their job.

Working from a centralised online system in the cloud can also make it easier to share ideas and speed up work. For example, if you can all dip in to edit a document online you can avoid the back and forth involved in sending emails and you'll instantly be able to see the most up-to-date information. This is just one way technology can be pivotal in improving collaboration.

Workers estimate they spend **28%** of their working week managing e-mail⁹

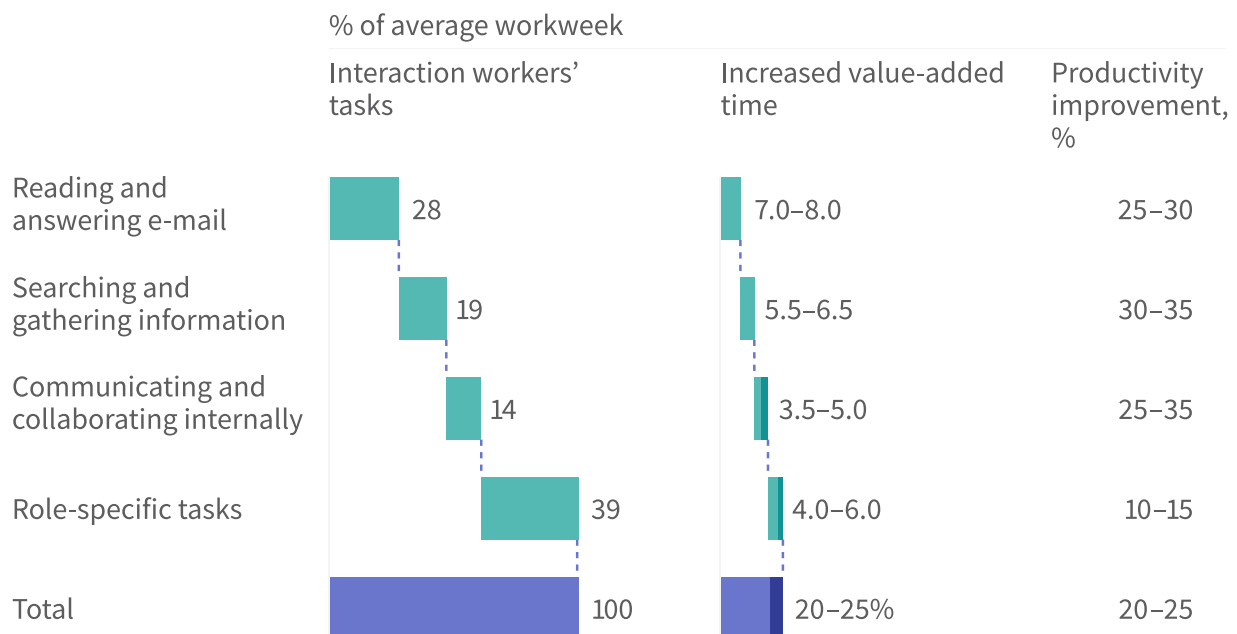
Although more traditional forms of communication like making phone calls, emailing and attending meetings all have their place in the modern workplace they are sometimes not ideal.

Sorting through emails can take up time, while being interrupted by phone calls or a constant stream of meetings can disrupt concentration when you need to focus.

Instead, group chat and instant messaging can be a more effective and less intrusive way to communicate.

For some organisations, adopting such ways of working may feel like a significant cultural shift and can be daunting which is why the technology you choose needs to be simple to use.

How social technology can increase productivity by improving collaboration and communication



Source: International Data Corporation (IDC); McKinsey Global Institute analysis

Using technology like the cloud also frees up people to be able to have a more flexible working schedule that allows them to juggle work and home life.

A 2019 [study by the International Workplace Group \(IWG\)](#) found that 85% of business leaders reported that flexible working has made their business more productive, while 67% said flexibility can improve productivity by at least 20%.

The cloud allows you to work remotely but still have all the information you need, on different devices, irrespective of geographical location. Employees no longer have to be in the same physical space to collaborate. More and more remote corners of the world now have a decent internet connection, so you can use video conferencing to hold virtual meetings.

This also means your talent pool can now extend globally when you are hiring employees and you can be much more savvy about how you structure your business to maximise productivity. Say you need a job done right away and can't find the right person locally, you might be able to hire someone based abroad.

64% of employees would opt for a lower paying job if they could work away from the office.¹⁰

Plus, contrary to what some might believe, working in the cloud can be safer and prevent losing hours of productivity to lost data or system failures. The ability to automatically update software, [disaster recovery](#) and password managers all help make cloud computing secure.

Data - an untapped goldmine

One of the challenges modern day employees often grapple with is the sheer amount of data available.

Processing data can be time consuming and in some cases may be beyond the expertise of some employees. These can leave them feeling overwhelmed and frustrated.

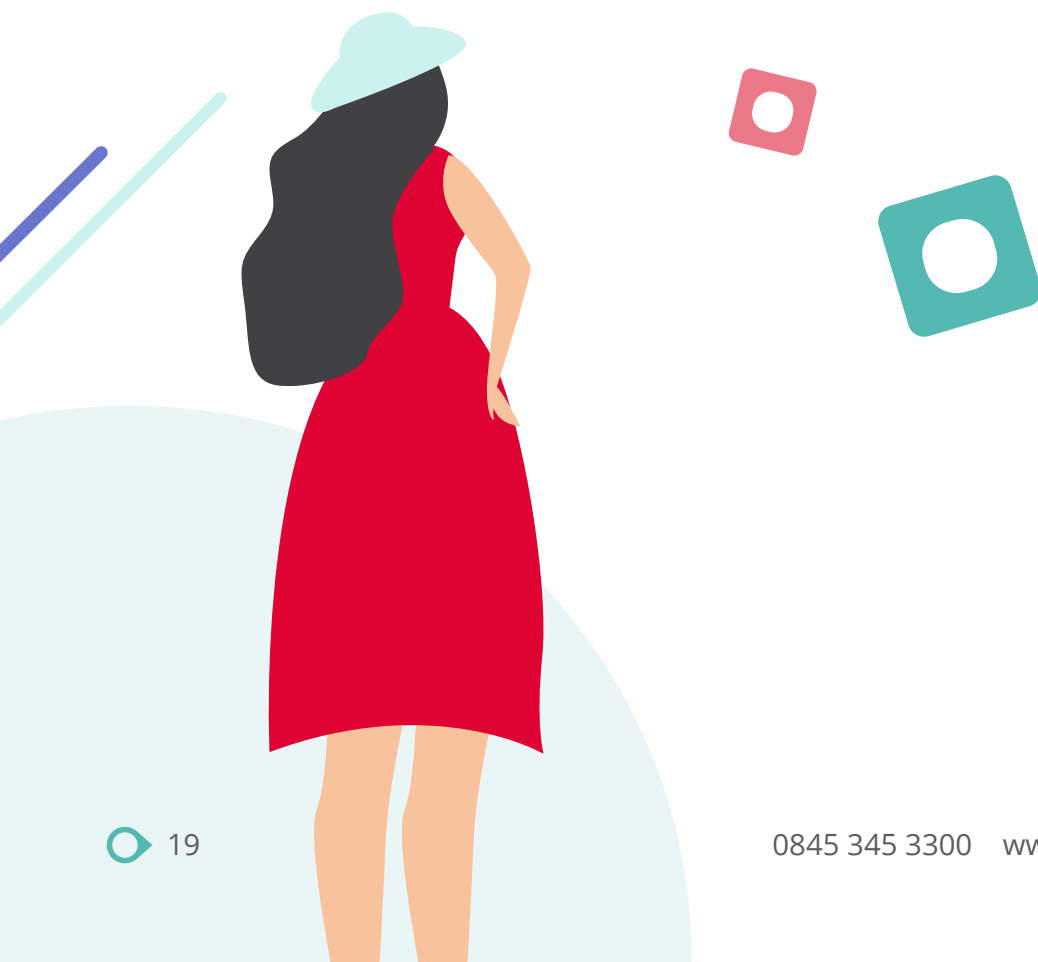
But often technology can significantly ease the burden by sorting and presenting the data in a way that makes it easier to digest. It can carry out analysis too, so even those without the specific data skills can make use of it and gain insights from it.

You can use software to collate data into meaningful reports and present it visually in the form of dashboards. Using data to inform your business decisions means you are less likely to be wrongly influenced by bias, so you can be more confident you are making the right choice.

Data can often reveal insights and pick up on trends you might otherwise miss.

Being able to track data means you can be more strategic about how you run your business. For example, you can set measurable goals and track your progress.

An MIT study found that data driven companies have 4% higher productivity and 6% higher profits.¹¹





Chapter 5:


Financial wellbeing - you can't afford to ignore it

There's no getting away from the fact that the need to earn money makes working a necessity for many of us and worries about our finances are commonplace.

As many as **77%** of UK residents say they are stressed about money. This is particularly the case among young people.

90% of younger workers say their mental health is affected by the cost of living.¹²

Worries about money can make it hard for people to focus and do their best work so employers need to take notice of what they can do in order to minimise their employees' financial worries.




Employers can use technology to make it as easy as possible for employees to manage their finances. So employees don't have to worry about being paid late, or getting paid the wrong amount. This can be difficult if your technology lets you down, which is why investing in payroll software that makes it simple to manage is essential.

Moving to online payslips can also make it easier for employees to view their pay for the current and previous months without the hassle involved in managing paperwork.

You can even take it one step further by being more flexible about when you pay your employees. They don't have to be tied to getting paid on a particular day each month if it doesn't work for them.

Instead, they can choose to be paid early if necessary. If they choose to work additional hours they can get paid immediately. All this helps boost productivity, but also increases staff motivation and retention rates. Technology can allow employers to offer all these benefits to employees without extra administrative burden.



Summary

In summary, we have covered how technology can:

- Automate tasks and free up time to concentrate on more meaningful work
- Create a more communicative and collaborative workplace
- Enable flexible working so people have a better work-life balance
- Make it easier to analyse data and make data-driven decisions
- Help manage finances and therefore ease money worries

The overall impact of this is to boost employee happiness and productivity.

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About the Access Group

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