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How To Help Employees Feel Less Overwhelmed By New Technology

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In an era when new gadgets, software and tech tools seem to appear daily, it's difficult to resist the temptation to overindulge at the office — especially when these tools promise to make our lives easier. But it's important to recognize when too much of a good thing is actually bad for business.

Unify research found that more than four in 10 users “always or frequently” feel frustrated or overwhelmed by the complexity of disconnected communications technologies, and only about half of respondents experience success in establishing trust and maintaining fluid dialog among team members within today's new “virtualized” landscape. This means an abundance of workplace technology can be more harmful than helpful.

Is technology a friend or foe of productivity?

The general assumption is that technology can help increase productivity in the workplace — and in many cases it does. With apps that aim to help schedule appointments, remind us of tasks, sort files, and manage projects, our daily routines should be more fluid than ever before. So why did productivity rates increase by less than [1 percent](#) last year? [Matt Paulson of infoTECH Spotlight](#) reported that technology could be as much of a distraction as it is an asset.





“Workplace technology has granted employees the tools that they need to integrate multiple devices and screens towards a single unified task, but it’s this multi-device lifestyle that lies at the root of the issue,” Paulson said. “Even though these innovative tools are designed to boost productivity, the fact remains that more devices lead to more distractions.”

More overload, less collaboration

According to [The State of Workplace Productivity Report](#) published by Cornerstone OnDemand, 50 percent of employees said they experience some type of work overload, with 34 percent claiming information overload and 25 percent technology overload. Furthermore, 38 percent of respondents said there isn’t enough collaboration in their workplace.

In a summary of the report’s findings, Cornerstone OnDemand said this new “always-on workplace” is overwhelming employees — particularly millennials.

“Today’s workers are desperate to simplify the chaos, and employers can use these insights to facilitate the new world of work and close the gap between the types of technology organizations provide and what employees truly want in order to stay productive and perform at their very best,” the report said.

Repairing the productivity fracture

With mass amounts of emails coming in, phones beeping with calls and texts, and reminders on calendars popping up at a rapid pace, how do we keep employees productive? Here are three things to consider:

1. Awareness: [Management](#) and upper-level employees should be cognizant of how much technology their teams can handle, and instead of going out and getting all the latest and greatest tools, they have to decipher which ones are the best fit for the company. Engage your employees in the process as well. Honest feedback can help managers build a workplace where everyone can be their most productive self.

2. Support: As companies gather feedback, they should remember to build in systems of support that keep employees motivated. A [recent Forbes article](#) reported on effective management practices that can improve employee productivity and encouraged managers to provide genuine support in a variety of ways.

“Valued support can take many forms: equipment when existing is outdated or inefficient; emotional support in the face of (occasionally) unfair criticism;

flexible support for a reasonable level of work-life balance,” reported Victor Lipman. “Management support in times of need won’t be forgotten; it builds employee goodwill and loyalty.”

3. Training: Whether your organization decides to offer one change in technology or it completely revamps the tools employees use, proper training must be provided. Consider ongoing training as well so employees remain engaged with the latest capabilities of the tools available — and thus, remain more efficient themselves. By ensuring employees know how to use different forms of technology properly, you create a more productive, less frustrating work environment.

Bill Kolbenschlag is a freelance journalist with more than a decade of writing and editing experience. He writes about tech, higher education and social media.

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