

Successful Workforce Transformation Strategy Ensures Business Success

Enabling your workforce with technology is a deliberate strategy to foster high performance and excellence. It begins with understanding that employee experience, customer experience, and revenue growth are decisively linked. Several studies prove that the fewer barriers employees face to getting things done, the happier they will be and the harder they will work at delivering the products and services that keep customers coming back. In other words, to succeed in your business objectives and meet rising customer expectations, you have to invest in workforce technology, now more than ever.

To achieve high productivity in their work, employees need autonomy, mastery, purpose, and “cognitive flow.” Studies show that companies with the most engaged employees enjoy 81% higher customer satisfaction and half the employee replacement cost, and that lower employee replacement cost leads to disproportionate gains in employee productivity and profitability.

Nevertheless, despite the evidence proving that workforce technology investments improve customer experience and revenue growth, enterprise technology decision-makers still see workforce technology primarily as a source of cost, complexity, and security risks — a necessary but troublesome part of their portfolios. It’s an understandable view given rising security threats, ransomware, more consumer technology in the workplace, and steadily rising costs, but it’s also short-sighted.

Business leaders know that to succeed, they need committed and driven employees who understand the value their work delivers to customers and have the right tools to boost their productivity. But attracting and retaining the best talent and keeping them engaged is a growing challenge, forcing many organizations to look to ideal technology partners that can help them manage device life cycles and, more specifically, PC life cycles.

In August 2016, Dell commissioned Forrester Consulting to evaluate some of the key challenges, drivers, and trends that businesses are facing to ensure the ideal workforce experience across Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ). To explore this trend, Forrester conducted a custom study to identify key business priorities, challenges, and methods being adopted across industries. The study included in-depth surveys with 327 senior business and technology executives and workforce computing decision-makers in China, India, Japan, SEA (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines), Korea, and ANZ (Australia, New Zealand) within their organizations.

In order to constantly deliver on your customer expectations; it is critical for your firm to drive technology led workforce transformation which ensures that operational, marketing, sales and customer engagement teams are equipped with suitable devices they need. Organizations must strive to reduce frequent disruptions of cognitive flow for their employees. To have an effective workforce transformation approach, we have identified that there are three important areas you must consider – workforce experience, workforce security and workforce enablement through efficient PC lifecycle management.

Identify What Your Employees Need – Better Workforce Experience Leads to Better Efficiency And Improved Productivity

Of all of the things that global business leaders want to achieve, the most important, according to our study in the APJ region, is improving the experience that customers have when they do business with their company. This is in lines with the Forrester’s Business Technographics® surveys, which show that

improving customer experience is the top global business priority. Our customer experience research demonstrates that the companies that offer better customer experiences grow their revenues four to ten times faster than their competitors do. And companies that are making the most gains in customer experience are investing in employee-facing technologies to do it with. Why? Because they know that customer experience is in their employees' hands. Their people must have access to the technology resources they need to stay fully engaged in their work, wherever they work.

Unfortunately, only a third of these same business leaders in APJ ranked better meeting employee needs as important, which tells us that they don't yet know what customer experience leaders already know: That employee experience and customer experience are inseparable. Several recent studies have shown that companies with happier employees enjoy 80% higher customer satisfaction and half the employee turnover each year. And, that when employee turnover doubles, overall productivity drops by 40% and profitability drops by 28% as the employees that remain struggle to pick up the extra workload.

Only 40% of the business respondents to our survey agreed that their IT department provides them and their teams with the latest devices and technology required to achieve their business objectives, while only 61% of business respondents felt that the existing technology in their organization is sufficient to meet their business goals. A large portion of business leaders are limited and restricted by their enterprise technology environment.

The first step to enabling your workforce with technology is to understand the unique requirements of your employees and to measure your employee experience. Through our research, we found that only 62% of organizations measure the employee experience with technology. When we further probed the organizations that do measure their employee experience, we found that the most common way of measuring employee experience is by conducting passive periodic audits, at 52%. Other more active methods such as using end user experience monitoring tools (34%) and conducting surveys (20%) were far less popular. Clearly, not enough effort is put into understanding the dynamic nature of workforce requirements.

Updated Workforce Technology Reduces Organizational Vulnerabilities

Infrastructure and operations (I&O) leaders facilitate autonomy, productivity, and efficiency of workers through various initiatives of mobility, bring-your-own-device (BYOD) programs, and diverse devices and applications in a complex ecosystem. This involves supporting new delivery models and technologies — an approach that Forrester refers to as agile workforce enablement. The technology your firm's employees use every day is an enormous source of personal innovation and competitive advantage. Yet the overwhelming direction of infrastructure I&O pros over the past decade is one of increasing control and narrowing options for employees, in service to auditors and in fear of risk.

Increasing adoption of diverse business and consumer technology and use of various end user computing and internet-of-things (IoT) devices has made the static security policy obsolete. More often than not, data security policies are a checkbox item rather than a well-thought-out schema. They not only tie in with the current requirements of information security and privacy policy, enforcement, and auditing activities but also accommodate for future dynamic expansion of endpoint hardware and software diversity.

As a result of growing sophistication of security threats, outdated security policies and growing complexity of IT environment, endpoint devices have become increasingly vulnerable, affecting numerous large-scale breaches in organizations across all industries and sizes. For global business leaders, it's not hard to calculate the immediate costs of a security breach that directly impacts their customers. And, in the wake of an attack, it's not hard for security leaders everywhere to convince their boards to give them a few millions

to spend on better security. What no one knows though, is what the impact of these measures will be on employee productivity because it's much harder to see and calculate. The price is higher than you think.

According to our survey, a large chunk of security breaches occur due to internal incidents within the larger ecosystem of the business partner/third-party supplier organization (32%) and within the respondents' own organization (29%), while 30% of security breaches originate from a security breach of an employee's device. Many of these incidents occur due to malicious insiders taking advantage of a flawed "trusted" approach to security, weak identity and access management control, and poor endpoint security and monitoring.

Enable Your Workforce With Adequate Support Throughout The Device Lifecycle

Mobility, bring-your-own-device (BYOD) programs, and an increasingly diverse and complex ecosystem of devices and apps help I&O leaders facilitate autonomy, productivity, and efficiency of workers. Existing workforce enablement policies don't work for companies striving to operate in a customer-obsessed operating model where employees depend on technology to win, serve, and retain customers. Why? Organizations designed most existing employee technology policies for a one-size-fits-all model that had a single PC image and mobile device that employees could use for work. In the context of today's workforce, where employees work from multiple locations, use multiple devices, and use their personal devices, it is a business imperative to listen to the workforce technology requirements more closely to deliver the intended results.

Many workers use the latest devices — and often several devices — to stay connected with the needs of the business, as technology provides more capabilities and access to corporate data. This means that employees expect I&O pros to support all of their devices with the same level of service and ensure that new capabilities are available on all devices. With an increasingly mobile workforce, constant IT support is a challenge within organizations in APJ. Our research revealed that the challenges are due to a skills gap not only in the stage of PC deployment but also through the entire PC life cycle. Moreover, firms are struggling to provide adequate and timely support for their remote workforce, which may lead to friction between IT and the business in APJ firms. IT leaders must strive to find solutions to these challenges within the budgetary constraints they have.

IT organizations have to find a fine balance between managing budgetary constraints, delivering efficient IT support for the entire PC life cycle, and enabling enhanced productivity and workforce experience. It is evident that firms in APJ do not have adequate in-house skills. They end up managing far too many PC lifecycle management vendors, which further drives up costs as firms struggle to manage complex relationships.