

EMPLOYEE
EXPERIENCE

THE NEXT
STAGE OF
EVOLUTION

A REPORT BY



FOREWORD



Despite an increasing emphasis on the importance of employee experience and well-being on business success, a recent Gallup survey showed that a staggering 85% of employees are not engaged in their work

85%

OF EMPLOYEES ARE NOT
ENGAGED IN THEIR WORK

and global productivity is in decline. It seems that despite the hype, there is still insufficient internal investment in building positive, frictionless and engaging experiences at work to mirror the seamless user-centric

experiences – such as booking a cab or ordering our groceries – that we see now in our everyday lives.

Statistical data around employee engagement and productivity is now readily available, however, do businesses really know what action to take, and how to improve the workplace experience of their employees?

Are they taking sufficient steps to understand their current pain points and future expectations, and cater for the requirements of a diverse workforce, to help build engagement, loyalty and satisfaction for years to come?

To find out, Cloudbooking commissioned a survey of 1,000 UK employees to explore these questions in depth. The results reveal a picture of the UK workplace experience

60%

OF EMPLOYEES CLAIM THAT
TECHNOLOGY IS NOT
WORKING AS EXPECTED

which is lagging behind the expectations, preferences and hopes of UK employees. It is a place where nearly 60% of employees claim that technology is not working as expected, thereby hindering productivity, and even overtaking work-life balance.



A DIGITAL FIRST EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Designing a workplace environment where people want to work, is key to creating a stronger talent pipeline, as well as driving competitive advantage, profitability and productivity. Companies that invest most heavily in employee experience are included twice as often in Forbes's list of the World's Most Innovative Companies, according to author Jacob Morgan.



Employee experience in the workplace is often described as an amalgamation of cultural, technological and physical environments, with experts often describing technology transformation as just one third of the efforts required to truly transform employee experience.

However, research conducted by Cloudbooking indicates that the digital piece of the employee experience puzzle is more prominent and important than expected – it is in fact the single most important factor with 90% of UK office workers surveyed claiming efficient technology is important to their overall experience.

Just under 80% of people claimed technology not working properly creates a negative experience at work – more than insufficient space, noisy work colleagues or physical temperature. The conclusion we can draw from this means that if technology isn't living up to employee expectations, their overall experience at work is crucially affected.

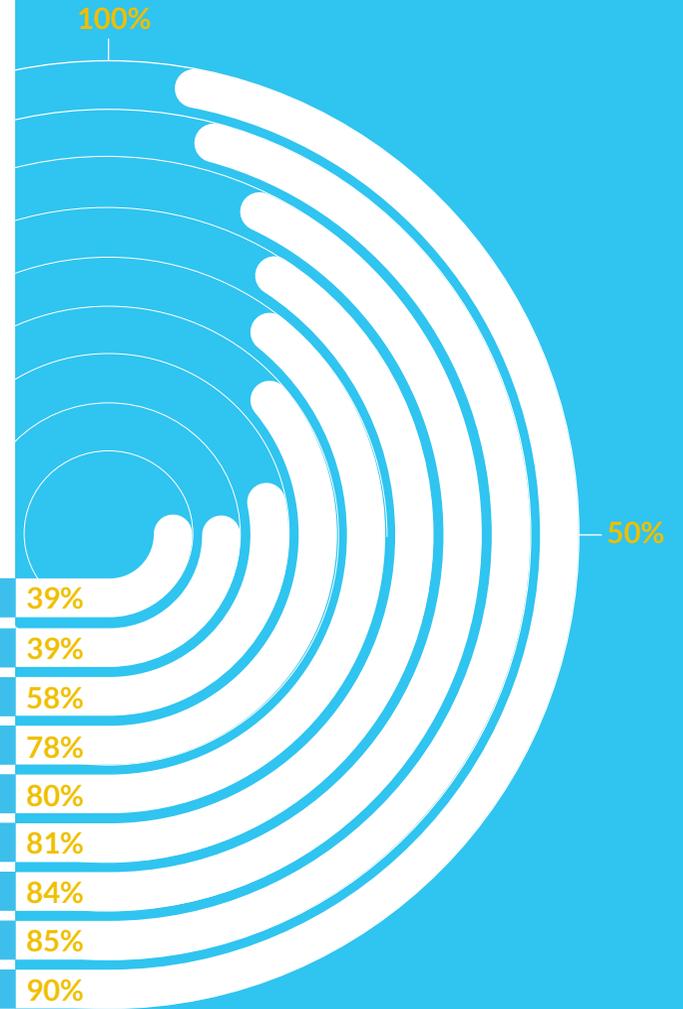
Our survey revealed that fewer than one in ten UK employees are “extremely satisfied” with their workplace experience, indicating there is significant room for employers to improve it by delivering better technological resources.

OF EMPLOYEES CLAIM THEY SPEND TOO MUCH TIME
TRYING TO GET THEIR TECHNOLOGY WORKING

ASPECTS OF EXPERIENCE AT WORK DESCRIBED AS 'VERY IMPORTANT' OR 'IMPORTANT'



Social activities	39%
Having good workplace social activities (e.g yoga...)	39%
Who you sit next to	58%
Flexible working choices (hours/location)	78%
Workplace design	80%
Who you work directly with	81%
Workplace ambience (noise/heat/light)	84%
Personal workspace (e.g desk)	85%
Efficient technology	90%



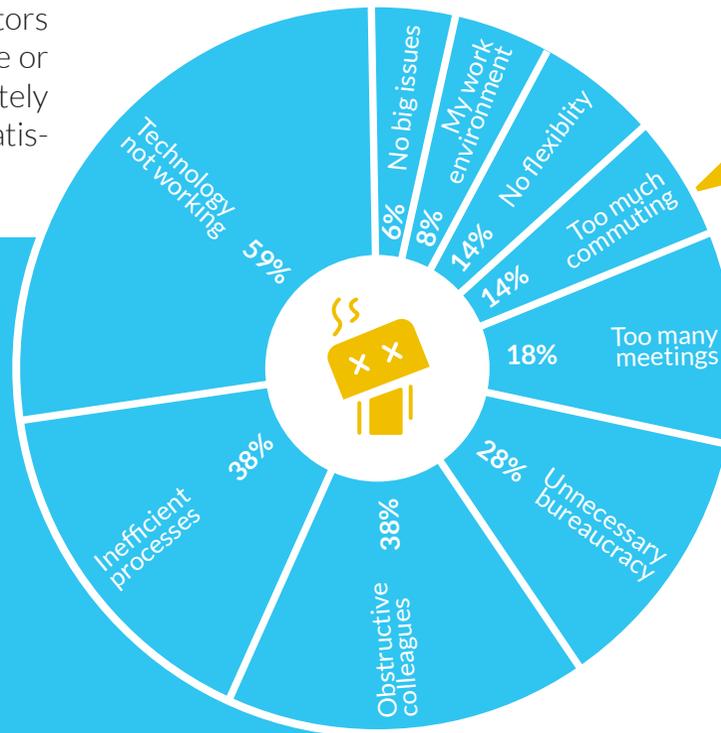
WORKPLACE FRICTION IS A FACT

While technology has been identified as a major influence on overall employee experience, there are a number of other factors which can either enhance the experience or cause frustration and friction, ultimately reducing productivity and employee satisfaction at work.

61%

OF EMPLOYEES WOULD BE HAPPIER GOING TO THE OFFICE EVERY DAY IF THEY HAD A STATE-OF-THE-ART WORK ENVIRONMENT

AN AREA BUSINESSES CONTINUALLY NEED TO INVEST IN TO IMPROVE THE OVERALL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE



WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES THAT PREVENT YOU FROM DOING YOUR JOB PROPERLY (I.E MAKE YOU UNPRODUCTIVE)?

59% of UK employees surveyed claimed that technology not working as expected is one of the biggest issues preventing them from doing their job properly, followed by inefficient processes (38%), obstructive colleagues (38%) and unnecessary bureaucracy (28%).

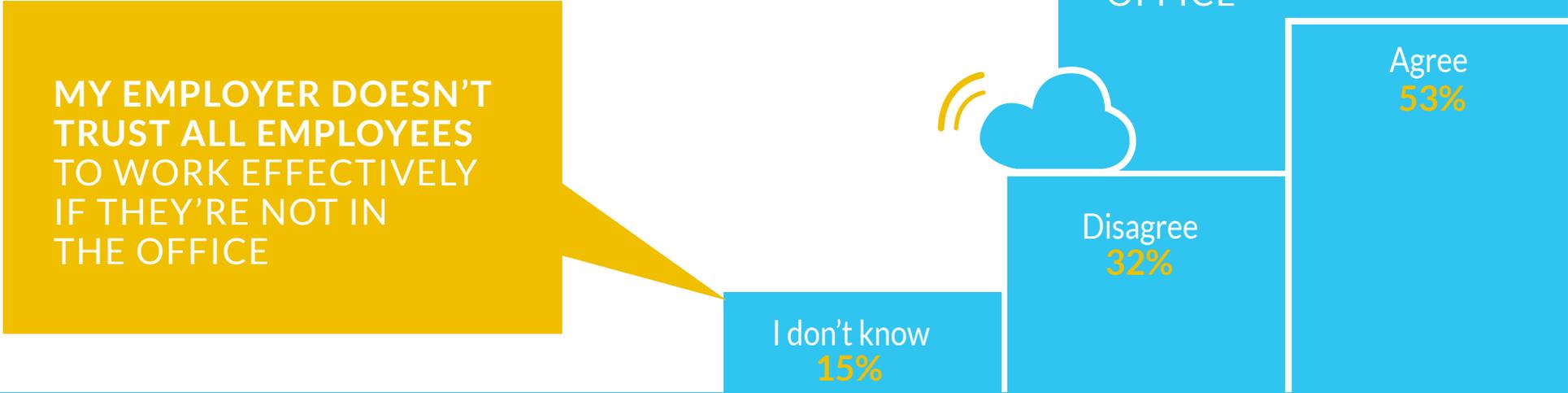
The physical environment has emerged as a common source of friction too. 85% of employees consider the work environment critical to job satisfaction and a lack of space can cause negative experiences for 70% of employees.

THE FLEXIBLE WORKING PARADOX

Large organisations and office-based work are still very much the norm, however business practices are changing, especially with an increased reliance on remote workers and independent freelancers. Providing remote or flexible work options widens the talent pool as well as improving employee satisfaction and performance. Cloudbooking's survey results show that

71% of employees consider 9-5 hours outdated. Furthermore, the ability to choose the location and hours of working is important to 78% of employees. These expectations will become the norm in the future, with 82% believing greater work flexibility will be even more important in five years.

DESPITE THE TREND TOWARDS FLEXIBLE WORKING PRACTICES MORE THAN HALF OF EMPLOYEES STILL THINK THEIR EMPLOYER DISPLAYS A LACK OF TRUST REGARDING EFFECTIVENESS WHEN EMPLOYEES ARE NOT PRESENT IN THE OFFICE



This lack of trust on the part of employers will have to change in the future, as 89% of employees think an important part of a good workplace experience is to be trusted to manage their own schedule to get the job done.

Surprisingly though, the preferred fluidity and flexibility of modern work schedules does not signal the death of the good old office desk. Employees still display a

strong attachment to their own physical workspace. 83% of UK employees consider their personal workspace – their desk and the immediate surroundings – to be important to their overall workplace experience.

Even more, a permanent desk was the most popular feature that employees would include in their ideal workplace.

**5 MOST POPULAR
FEATURES
OF AN IDEAL
WORKPLACE
ENVIRONMENT**

1

PERMANENT
DESK

2

INSPIRING
VIEW OR
SURROUNDINGS

3

PEACE &
QUIET

4

REFRESHMENTS
OF CHOICE

5

CREATIVE &
DYNAMIC
ENVIRONMENT

FROM WORK-LIFE BALANCE TO EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

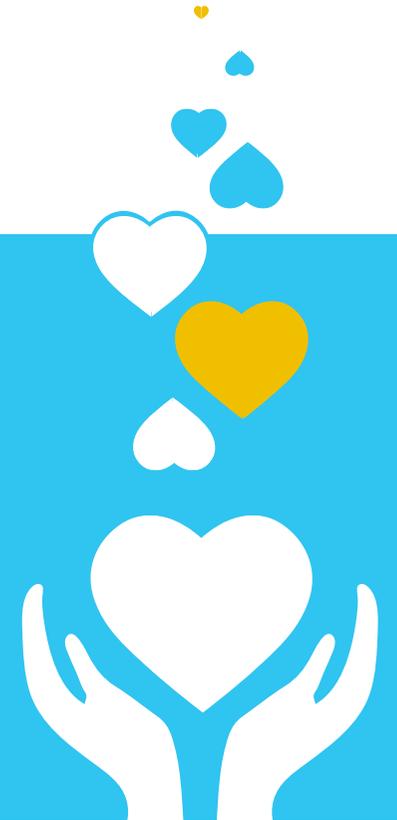
It is well researched that employees who have a better work-life balance often have a greater sense of responsibility, ownership and control of their working life.

With the help of technology, employers can enable employees to balance their work and home commitments to a greater extent than ever before, ultimately achieving an increase in loyalty and job satisfaction.

There is also a clear trend emerging in terms of what employees are looking for whilst at work. According to CIPD, an integrated approach to health and well-being nurtures 'heightened levels of employee engagement while fostering a workforce where people are committed to achieving organisational success.'

Modern-day employees expect organisations to adopt a holistic approach to employee physical health, mental health and good lifestyle choices that go beyond the provision of just work-life balance.

WHILE WORK-LIFE BALANCE IS HIGH ON THE EMPLOYEE AGENDA, PERSONAL WELL-BEING IS BECOMING A KEY PART OF EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE



88%

Employees who regard workplace well-being as an important part of their overall experience

84%

Believe workplace well-being will continue to be important in the next 5 years

81%

Employees who say work-life balance is important to them



60%

THINK THEIR EMPLOYERS CURRENTLY CARE MORE ABOUT COSTS THAN EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING / COMFORT

WE WANT PERSONALISED EXPERIENCES

As consumers we have become accustomed to personalised experiences built around our needs, past behaviour, preferences and location. We want technology to predict our future needs and suggest possible solutions. Going away for the weekend to France?

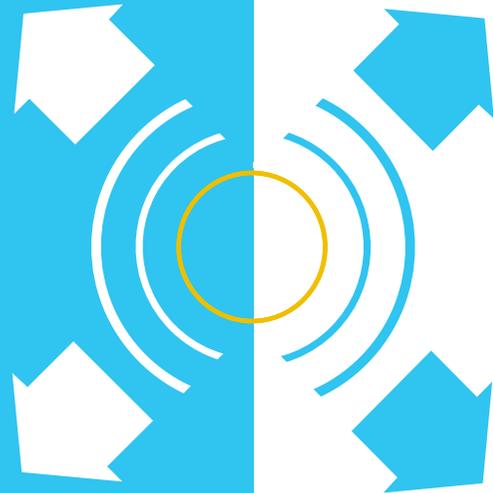
Here is a downloadable map of the old village where you booked your accommodation and some recommended local restaurants.

Why is that not the case in the workplace?

Nearly two thirds of employees surveyed (72%) think employers should offer a more personalised employee experience with greater focus on individual needs. Technology is to play a crucial part in this with 52% of surveyed employees stating technology at work should offer a personalised experience.

52%

AGREE WORKPLACE TECHNOLOGY SHOULD OFFER PERSONALISED EXPERIENCES, SIMILAR TO THE LIKES OF UBER OR GOOGLE



Employees expect their technology, ambience and processes to work in an intuitive way and remove unnecessary manual or repetitive tasks. They are looking for frictionless and seamless experiences, be it when booking annual leave, a meeting room or a journey by the company car service.

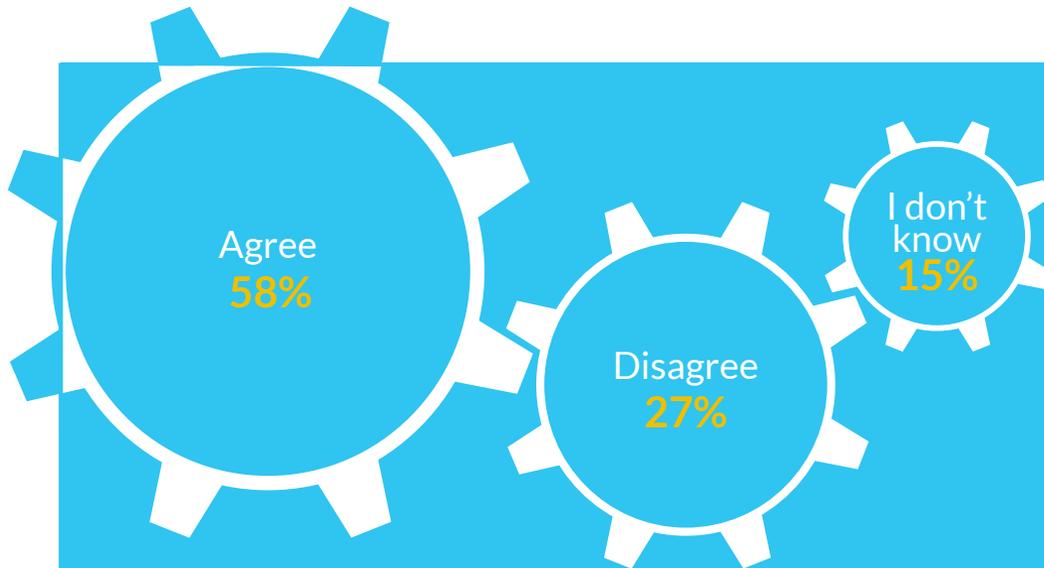
Employees also want their workplace technology to pre-empt requests and suggest next steps based on their individual schedules, whether it is suggesting a convenient coffee shop to take a call you are running late for or anticipating issues they might not foresee.

Personalisation driven by technology will also begin to shape the office ambience,

which 84% of people consider an important aspect of the overall workplace experience.

Natural light and temperature in particular were ranked as the two most important elements of a personal workspace (more important, for example, than the people we sit next to).

**TECHNOLOGY
SHOULD BE
INVISIBLE AND
ACT INTUITIVELY**



Whilst organisations often need to build workspace strategies for IT and environment around a centralised solution, offering employees a personalised workspace based on their daily needs (such as a hot desk) and having the technology to intuitively adjust the ambience for them is set to greatly enhance the experience in the future.

WOULD YOU LIKE A 'WORK ALEXA'?

Marketers are already using artificial intelligence (AI) programmes and chatbots to deliver personalised experiences to customers. But chatbots are also becoming digital co-workers, working alongside humans and participating in the day-to-day activities as team members. A survey carried out by Goldsmiths University London found that employees are 31% more productive when working alongside technology, and businesses that invest in people as well as AI will see improvements in the workforce.

Some predictions say bots will soon take over from apps in the workplace, with 'concierge bots' providing a wide range of services, such as booking a taxi to ensure you make your next meeting in time, informing you of visitors or clients that have entered the building, or even helping to make important calls remotely if stuck in traffic.

CHATBOTS ARE BECOMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EXPERIENCE AT WORK, BUT WHAT DO UK EMPLOYEES REALLY FEEL ABOUT THEM?

Employees of the future will benefit from highly personalised workplace experiences, whilst working alongside and supported by AI throughout their day.

52%

think AI will cause job losses and unemployment

47%

think AI will make their work easier and more efficient in the future

44%

would love to have their own work Alexa or a similar digital assistant

THE MAJORITY OF UK EMPLOYEES ARE EXPECTING AI TO CAUSE JOB LOSSES BUT NEARLY HALF ALSO BELIEVE AI WILL MAKE THEM MORE EFFICIENT IN THE FUTURE AND ARE KEEN TO HAVE A 'WORK ALEXA'

A SOCIAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Technology is one of the dominant forces behind the evolution of the employee experience but it is by no means a digital-only evolution. Experience at work is very much defined by people and it is relationships with colleagues that contribute profoundly to the overall experience. Cloudbooking's survey points to the high impact of direct and close working relationships, as opposed to more general interactions with colleagues in the workplace.

Surprisingly, work-related social activities and outings, such as lunch with colleagues, were only considered important to their workplace experience by 39% of UK employees. Compare that with 88% who place importance on well-being at work, and an image of a mindful, wellness-conscious employee is beginning to emerge.



Whichever way businesses approach the design of inspiring and frictionless experiences for employees, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. They need to empower employees with technology, physical environments and social initiatives that are flexible and can be tailored, where possible, to their individual needs.

Productivity, staff retention, attraction of the best talent and other indicators of business success will follow and enable businesses to thrive in the future.

KEY INSIGHTS FOR BUSINESS

1 Employees are your key customers. Invest in designing employee experience with the same level of attention to detail and expertise as you would approach the creation of your customer experience.

2 Facilitate flexible working schedules and build a seamless technological experience regardless of work location.

3 Wide range of working modes and practices, including ambience and collaborative technology.

4 Your employees will more than likely have personalised, integrated and intuitive technology solutions at home. They don't want to settle for less at work.

5 Foster lifestyle choices that contribute to a healthier work-life balance.

Note on Methodology

In October 2018, Cloudbooking conducted an online survey of 1,000 UK employees who work either full-time or part-time in organisations with over 50 employees and spend at least 50% of their time working in an office environment.

GERRY BRENNAN, CEO, CLOUDBOOKING

“Organisations must view their employees as key customers, not just workers. By changing this perspective, organisations will finally commit resources to designing employee experiences that match customer experiences.

Our research shows that this is what employees nowadays expect – to receive personalised, intuitive, ‘Uber’ experiences at work. They already benefit from seamless consumer technology at home to make their lives easier – now they are looking for the same in the workplace to effectively manage their time, daily tasks and well-being at work. Cloudbooking are focused on working with organisations to better understand their employees and their needs, while also building sustainable and practical solutions that work for the wider business.

By building superior experiences in the workplace with the help of technology, businesses will create diverse workforces with stronger employee engagement, loyalty and productivity.”

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