

# BUILDING A LEAN, MEAN, DIGITAL MACHINE

How businesses can truly  
make the most of the growing  
digital workspace



# INTRODUCTION

Digital has become a dominant part of our everyday lives. The majority of us look at a smartphone screen at least a few times a day; much of our evening entertainment is provided by video streaming services; and there are few professions left that don't rely on computers in one way or another to get the job done.

Technology's impact on our working lives has been profound, making the digitally driven workspace a prominent characteristic of the professional realm. It's brought us innovations like flexible working, it's helped us to streamline internal processes, and it's made many of us rethink our approach to efficiency.

Despite its evident benefits and almost limitless potential, questions remain as to just how well we're making use of digital in the workplace. What are the barriers standing in the way of large-scale, organisation-wide change? Are new technologies not being used in the right way? Is there a need for an evolution in the mindset of business decision-makers and the employees in their care?

To answer these questions, we - in partnership with VMware - commissioned a research project to get us into the minds of those in charge of the growing digital workspace. By examining the current state of play, the benefits of digital workspace solutions and the associated challenges that they pose, we hope to demonstrate that digital success relies not just on the tech itself, but on the way it is managed and optimised within the organisation as part of a process of sustained, long-term change.

This intelligence paper will explore these issues in detail and sets out to comment on the following:

## 1 A TRUE DIGITAL WORKSPACE: FACT OR FICTION?

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## 2 A CASE IN POINT: FLEXIBLE WORKING

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## 3 BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

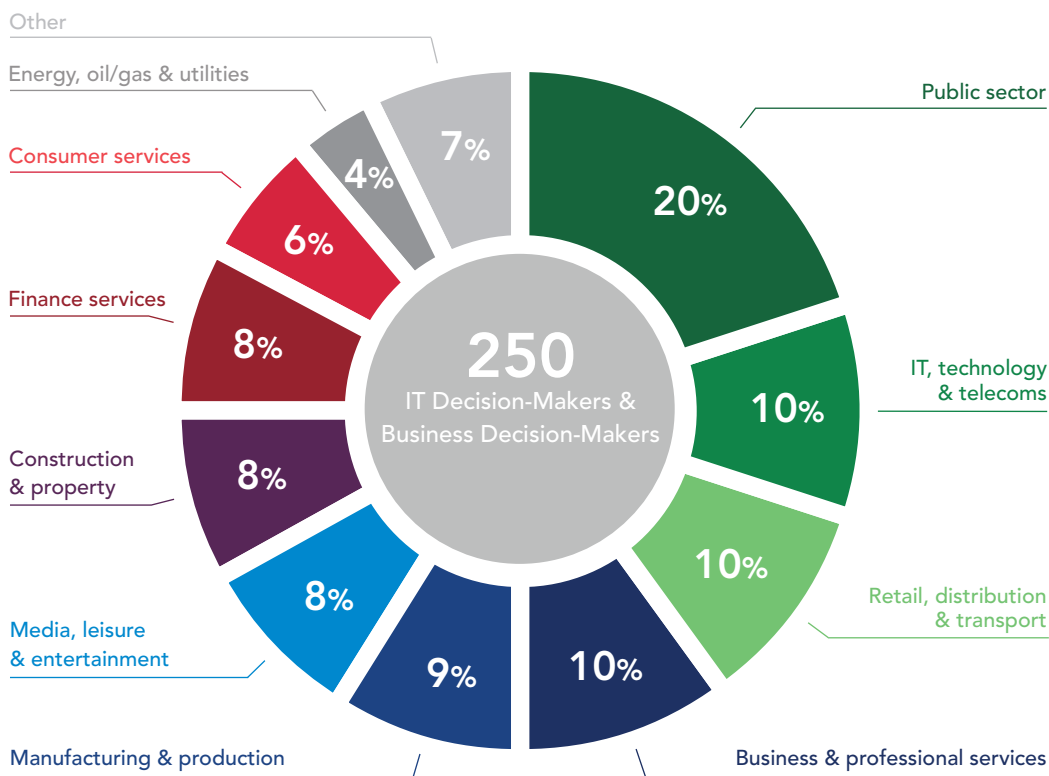
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## 4 MANAGE YOUR SOFTWARE, MANAGE THE DIGITAL WORKSPACE

# METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

For this report, SoftwareONE commissioned market research firm Vanson Bourne to interview 250 IT and business decision-makers (ITDMs and BDMs) from a variety of UK organisations with at least 500 employees. Respondents were taken from both the public and private sectors and a number of different industries, including financial services, retail, manufacturing, media and energy.

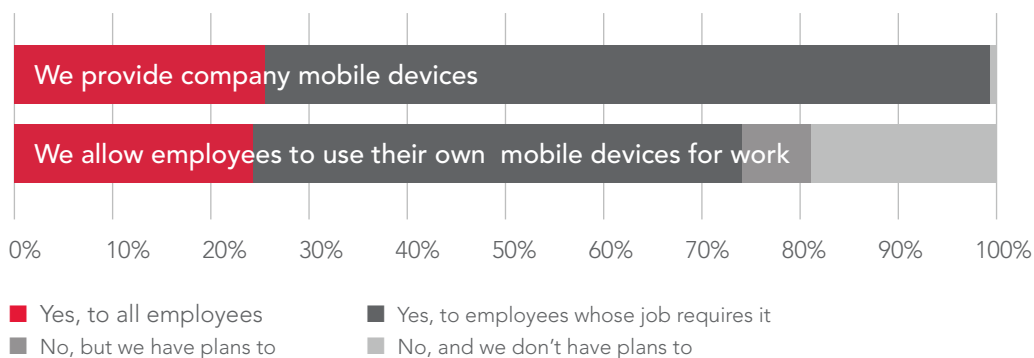
They were asked a series of questions about their organisation's digital preparedness, in order to get an idea of how the digital workspace is developing and what needs to be done to elevate it to the next level.



# 1/ A TRUE DIGITAL WORKSPACE: FACT OR FICTION?

## THE PREVALENCE OF MOBILE

What is your organisation's approach when it comes to employees and mobile device technology?



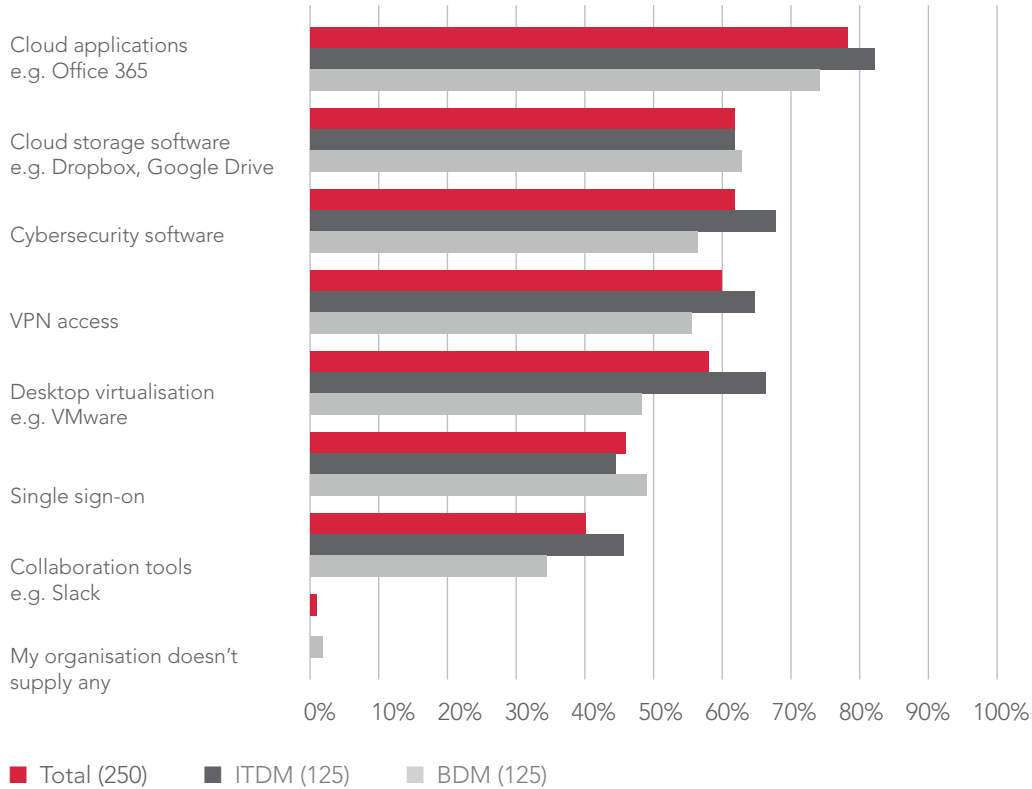
When it comes to mobile devices, almost all organisations polled (99 per cent) provide company mobile devices to at least some members of staff, and are more likely to give them to those whose job specifically requires it (73 per cent) rather than distribute them en masse (26 per cent). Alongside this, 73 per cent allow employees to use their own devices in some capacity, although just over a quarter (26 per cent) don't permit this, with 18 per cent having no plans to change their policy.

### KEY INSIGHTS

While this presents a bit of a mixed bag as concerns bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policies and providing employees with company-sanctioned mobiles, one thing becomes clear from this: there are a lot of devices being used within the organisation's network, which the IT department has to subsequently work out how to track, control and manage. BYOD has a fairly strong foothold, but the remaining scepticism about it points to a number of lingering security concerns which will need to be tackled in the long run.

## DIGITAL TECH IN PLACE

Which of the following digital technology solutions/software does your organisation provide to employees?



The above graphic shows that almost all (99 per cent) of respondents' organisations supply digital technology solutions or software to their employees. In general, digital is well embedded within businesses, with cloud productivity applications like Office 365 leading the way (78 per cent), followed by cloud storage applications and cybersecurity software (both 62 per cent). However, some tech which can be instrumental in powering the digital workspace hasn't quite hit the mainstream, such as collaboration tools like Slack (cited by 40 per cent of the overall sample).

There are also some interesting differences between IT decision-makers and business decision-makers here. On the whole, ITDMs are more likely to acknowledge the presence of digital technology solutions than BDMs. While this is due in large part to the fact that ITDMs are the ones who implement the solutions so are naturally more aware of them, there's also the point to be made that BDMs are unaware of how to use these solutions to their full potential.

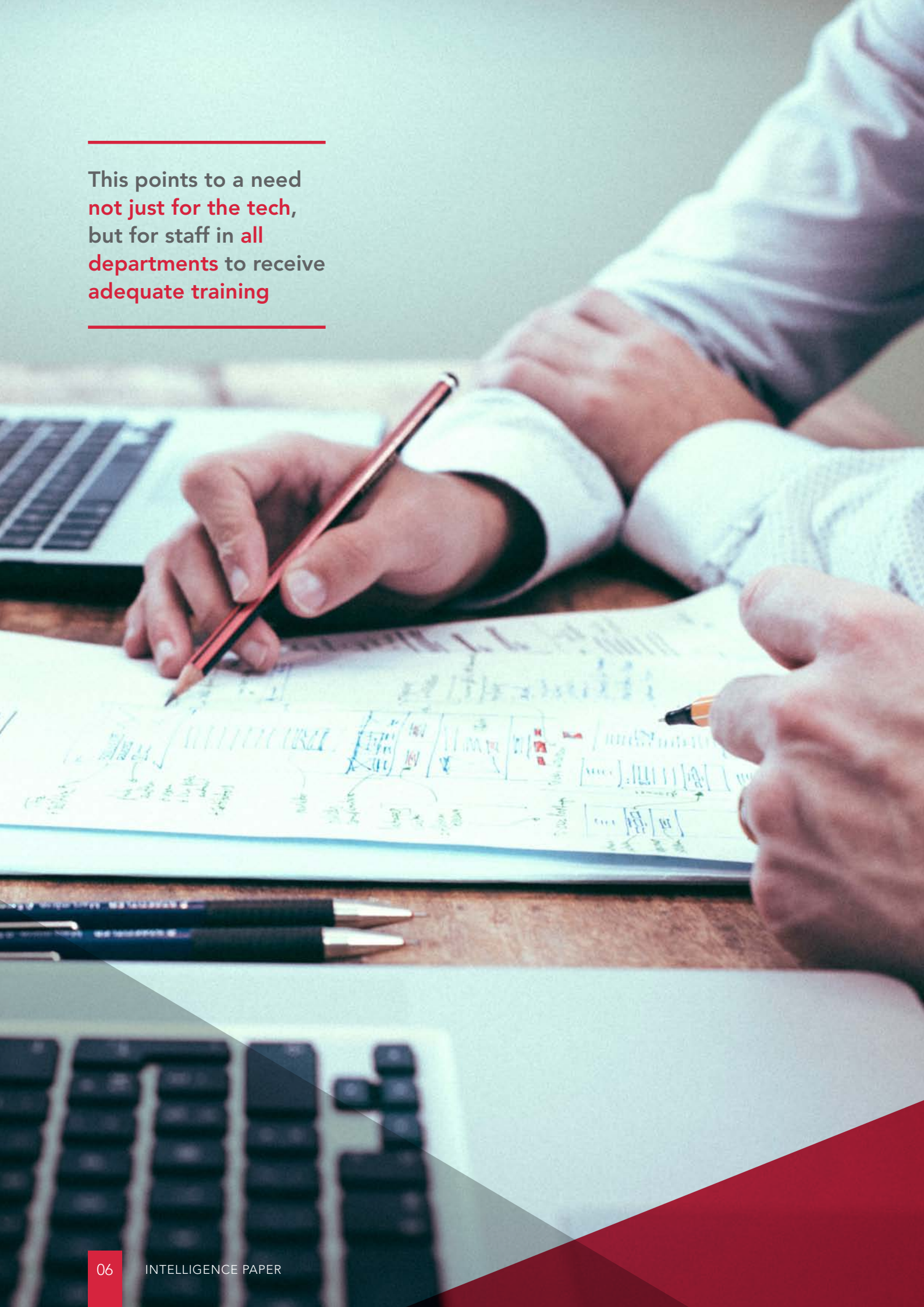
### KEY INSIGHTS

From this, the possibility emerges that in many organisations, IT may have already implemented digital solutions like desktop virtualisation or collaboration tools, but that employees don't have the requisite skills or knowledge to use them, or even be aware that they are there. This points to a need not just for the tech, but for staff in all departments to receive adequate training in how to use it, and to be equipped to manage and develop the company's digital capabilities in the long term.

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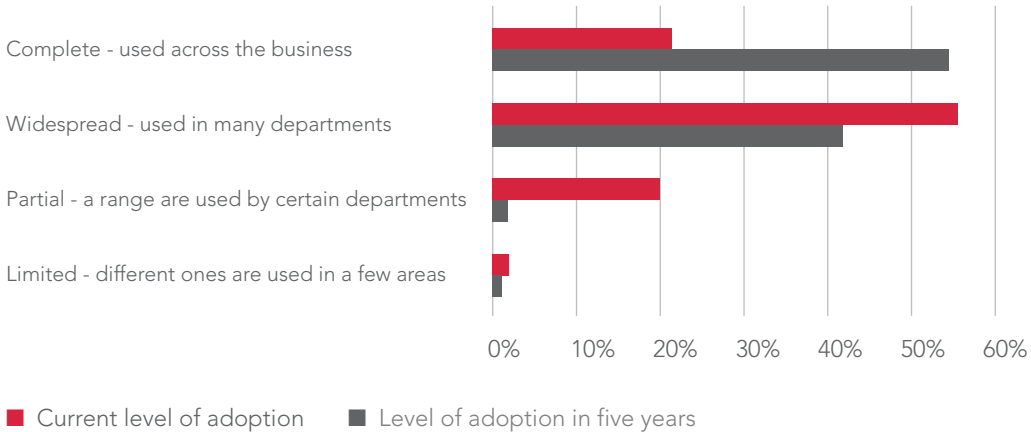
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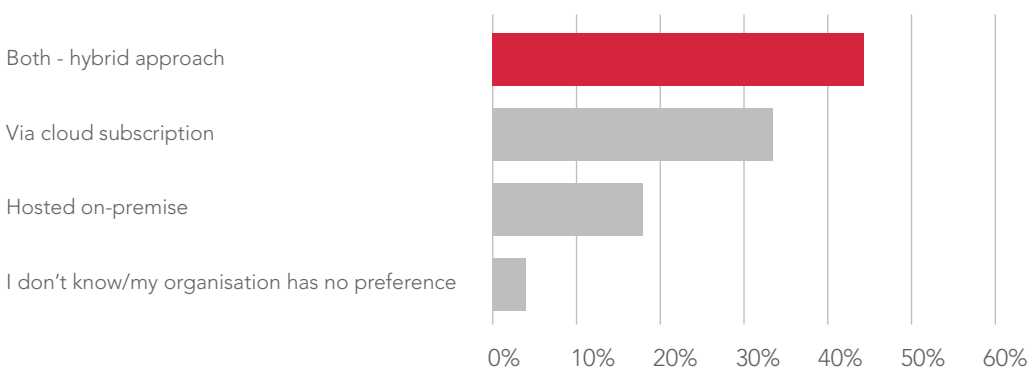
## LEVELS OF ADOPTION

What's your current level of adoption of digital workplace solutions/ technologies that provide access to apps, systems and data in your organisation? And, where do you envisage that level in five years?



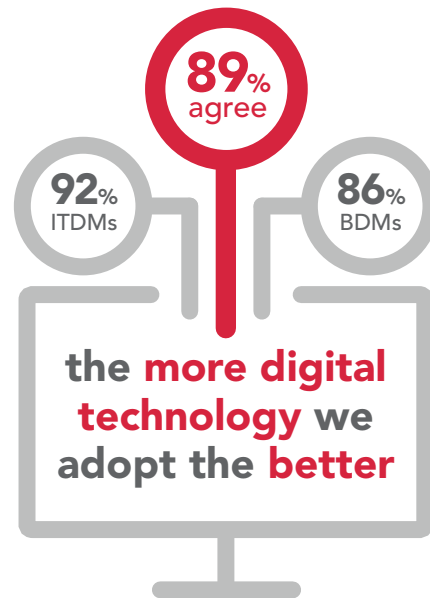
Despite the evident presence of digital solutions, there's still some way to go before they become fully assimilated into the business. Just a fifth (21 per cent) of respondents said that digital workspace tech is completely integrated, with this figure estimated to rise to 54 per cent in the next five years. This seems like a long time to achieve this level of integration, and underlines how lengthy the process is for many businesses. With the right guidance in the implementation and management of digital tech, this process can be shortened.

## What is your organisation's preference for deploying digital workplace solutions?



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the below statement?

*“In my opinion, the more digital technology my organisation adopts, the better”*



As far as deploying digital workspace solutions is concerned, over four in ten (44 per cent) said that they prefer a hybrid approach, combining both cloud-based and on-premise implementations. This makes sense for many organisations, as a hybrid setup means they can enjoy freedom of choice when taking on new tech.

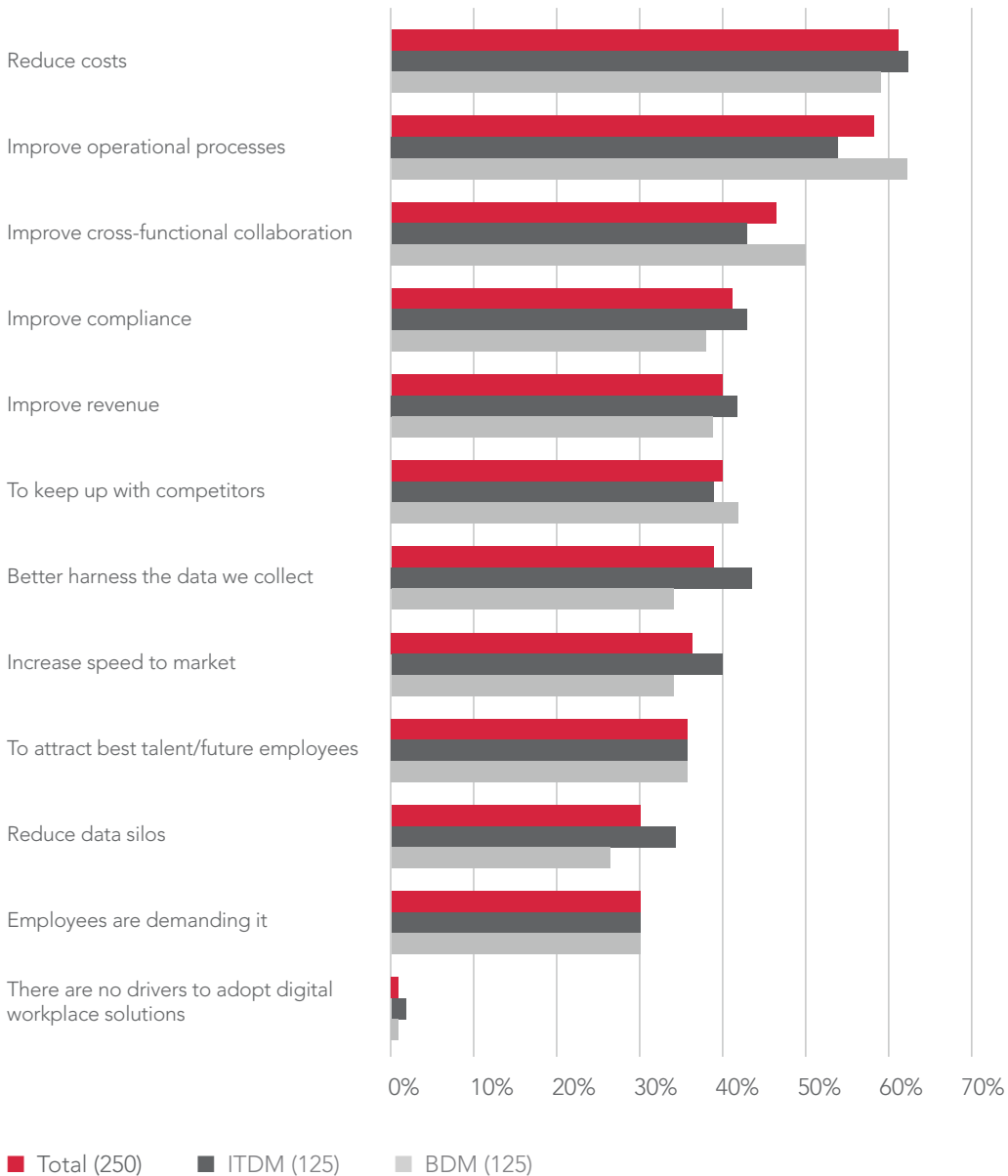
That said, building a combination of both cloud and on-premise solutions into an organisation's IT estate is a tough ask, and takes time and effort if it is to be done properly. Businesses need the means to effectively manage software and applications across a range of environments, as well as the specific skills needed to make the most of a hybrid environment.

One thing's for certain here though: the overwhelming majority (89 per cent, rising to 92 per cent for ITDMs) believe that the company will be in better shape the more new tech it takes on. This provides some cause for optimism, as it's clear that leaders outside the IT department are recognising the benefits of digital tech.



## THE BIG DRIVERS

What are the main drivers for your organisation to implement digital workplace solutions?



The motivations for taking on digital workspace solutions are numerous, with popular drivers including reductions in costs (61 per cent of the main sample) and an improvement in operational processes (58 per cent), with improvements to cross-functional collaboration not far behind (47 per cent). Essentially, businesses are aware of their need to streamline processes and increase efficiency and are looking to act on this.

Perhaps the most interesting detail to note here is the clear differences between the thinking of ITDMs and BDMs. ITDMs are notably more likely to be concerned with cost reduction, compliance, increasing revenue, better harnessing data and increasing speed to market. In contrast, BDMs show a stronger interest in improving operational processes and making collaboration easier across the organisation.

Again, the fact that there are differences in the views of ITDMs and BDMs underlines their varying priorities and how they see the goals of the business. Better awareness of each other's drivers for digital tech and better alignment of priorities could go a long way towards ensuring everyone's needs are met.

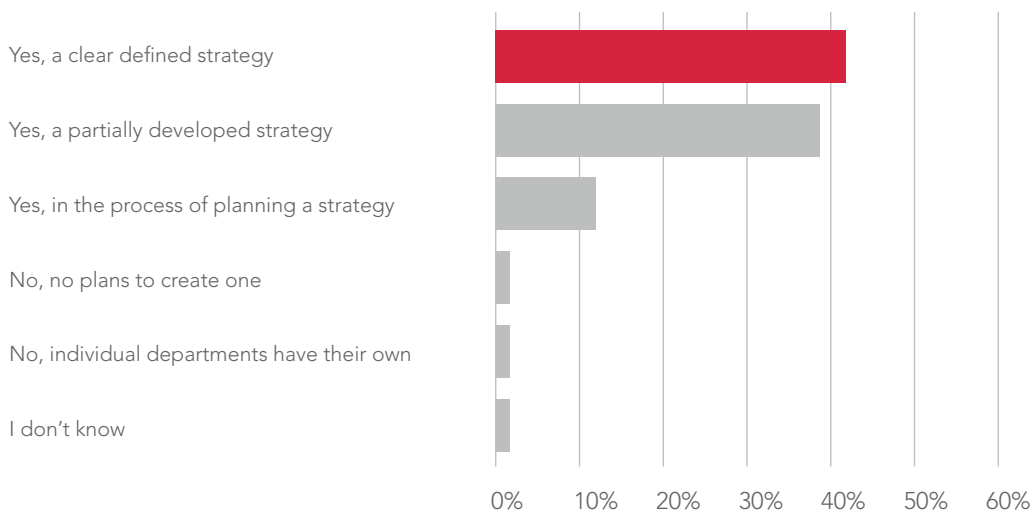
Moreover, any investment in new tech will require some upfront cost, and any teething issues have to be considered as part of this. Once new solutions have bedded in and people have learned how to use them effectively, they can start to deliver their intended benefits. But it appears that many of these teething problems still exist: as we've shown earlier, most organisations still haven't reached complete adoption and many don't expect to be there within five years.

It's also interesting to note the difference between the proportion of respondents who named improving cross-functional collaboration as a driver (47 per cent) and the fact that collaboration tools rank as the least commonly adopted digital workspace solutions.

**KEY INSIGHTS:** These difficulties and disparities again emphasise the need for businesses to have tools in place that help them manage their array of digital technologies, in a way that enables them to constantly monitor adoption and performance and evaluate how well they're helping to fulfil the goals of the entire business.

## NO SUCCESS WITHOUT STRATEGY

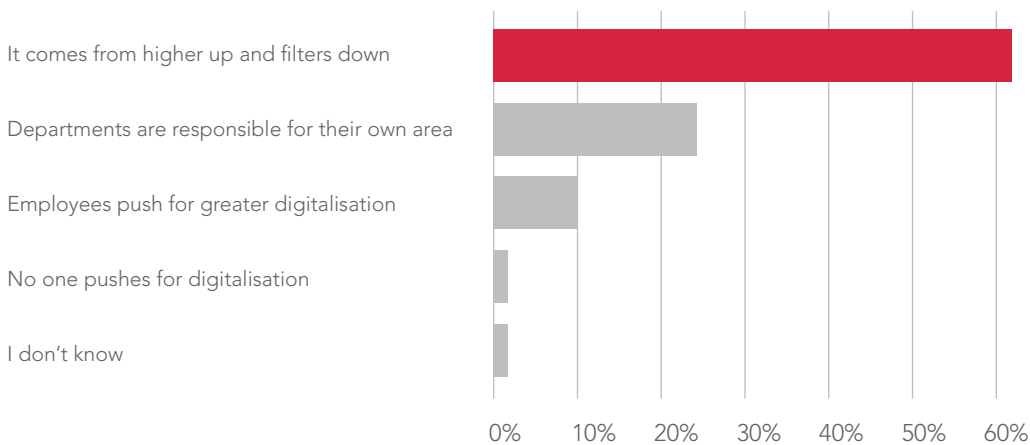
Does your organisation have a company-wide strategy for adopting digital workplace solutions?



When it comes to something as far-reaching as digital tech, you'd expect that a well-planned, unified strategy around its implementation would be essential. However, as the above graphic shows, fewer than half of organisations (42 per cent) have a clearly defined strategy in place, with over half (51 per cent) having a strategy that is only in its early phases of planning or roll-out.

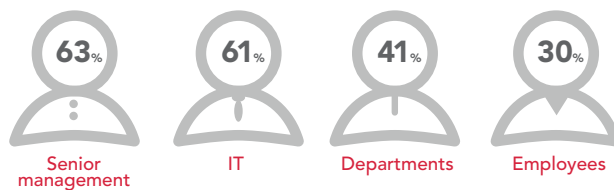
These figures come despite the fact that almost all companies are using digital workspace tech to some degree. This lack of strategic clarity inhibits the impact of the solutions, with businesses choosing to deploy them as and when the need arises, rather than with a wider strategy in mind.

### Which of the following statements most closely describes the push for 'digitalisation' in your organisation?



So who exactly is it who's pushing for the adoption of digital workspace tech? According to more than six in ten respondents (62 per cent), digitalisation is being driven from higher up in the organisation before filtering down, which is encouraging as it indicates that there's support for change at the highest level.

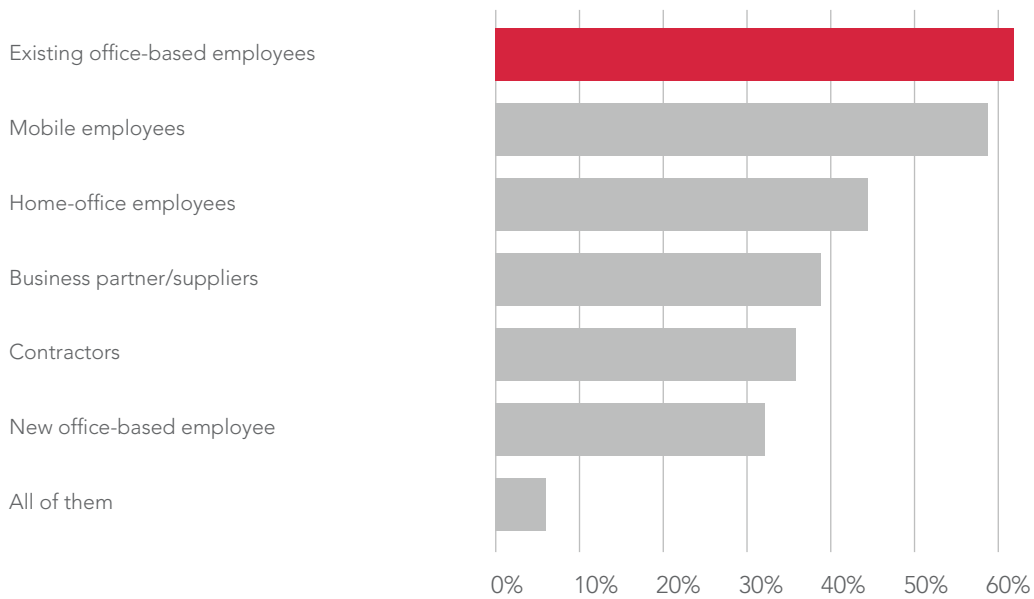
### Who is pushing for greater digitalisation in your organisation?



These charts corroborate the above point by revealing that 63 per cent of respondents feel that digital evolution is being promoted by the most senior personnel. However, what they also show is that there's a strong push for this technology not just from key decision-makers and those in the IT department, but also from three in ten general employees.

Of the employees who are pushing for increased digitalisation, 62 per cent said that it's coming from existing office-based employees, but there's also a strong desire amongst other employees, including mobile workers (59 per cent) and those who are new to the company (32 per cent). This underlines the importance of providing a digital experience that caters to both new recruits and seasoned veterans, and everything in between.

## Which particular employees are pushing for greater digitalisation in your organisation?



All of this is summed up in the finding that 85 per cent of respondents agreed that employees are increasingly demanding a workplace experience that is similar to what they expect as a consumer, such as speed and convenience of access. This represents a significant step change from five years ago.

### KEY INSIGHTS

Employees are pushing hard for change, and it's not just those at the top who are demanding it. With so many different needs to cater to, it's paramount that the drive towards digital is built on the bedrock of a well-planned strategy. This should take into account the requirements of everyone at the business: senior managers and board members might seem to be the ones pushing hardest for digitalisation, but this is often due to the pressure they are getting from their employees anyway.



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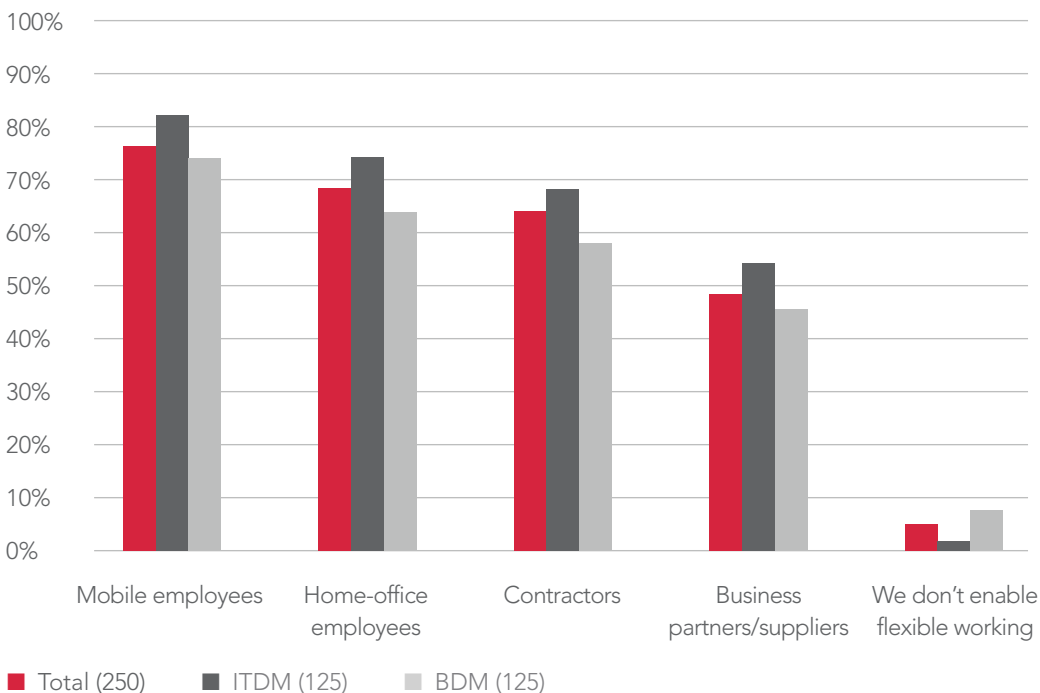
## 2/ A CASE IN POINT: FLEXIBLE WORKING

For many of us, our working lives are no longer defined by a journey to the office every day before heading home in the evening. Flexible working policies are common in many modern businesses, and it is equally common for workers to expect that the option to work remotely or on the move be available to them when they start a new job.

By examining the prevalence of flexible working and employee attitudes towards it, we can learn a little more about the state of play regarding digital technology.

### PREVALENCE

Does your organisation support any of the following employees by enabling flexible working (e.g. hot desking, remote working, mobile access)?



Overall, almost all (95 per cent) of the respondents said their organisation allows flexible working, which is a positive in terms of forward-thinking working practices. Such a policy benefits a wide range of employees, including mobile workers (cited by 77 per cent), those based at home (69 per cent), contractors (63 per cent) and business partners and suppliers (49 per cent).

Once again, there are some differences between ITDMs and BDMs here, with ITDMs more likely to recognise support for flexible working for all groups. Due to their operating outside the realm of IT, BDMs may simply be less aware of flexible working options, making them less likely to mention them.

A key question raised from all of this is whether these employees are given the tools to make flexible working a real success, and whether they are given the support they need to make effective use of these tools.



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**Are employees given the tools to make flexible working a real success, and are they given the support they need to make effective use of these tools**

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## SATISFACTION

How satisfied are your employees with the current digital technology and capabilities of your organisation?



According to the above chart, only 21 per cent of employees are extremely satisfied with their company's digital capabilities, with three in ten (30 per cent) recognising clear areas for improvement. Decision-makers in IT are generally more likely than their business-focused colleagues to say that their employees are satisfied, which points to a disconnect between the IT department and the rest of the organisation, and a general lack of awareness amongst IT leaders of how digital tech is perceived.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the below statement?

*"My organisation could make it more seamless for employees to work from different locations"*







On top of all this, a large majority (85 per cent) agree that improvements could be made in order to facilitate more seamless remote working.

## KEY INSIGHTS

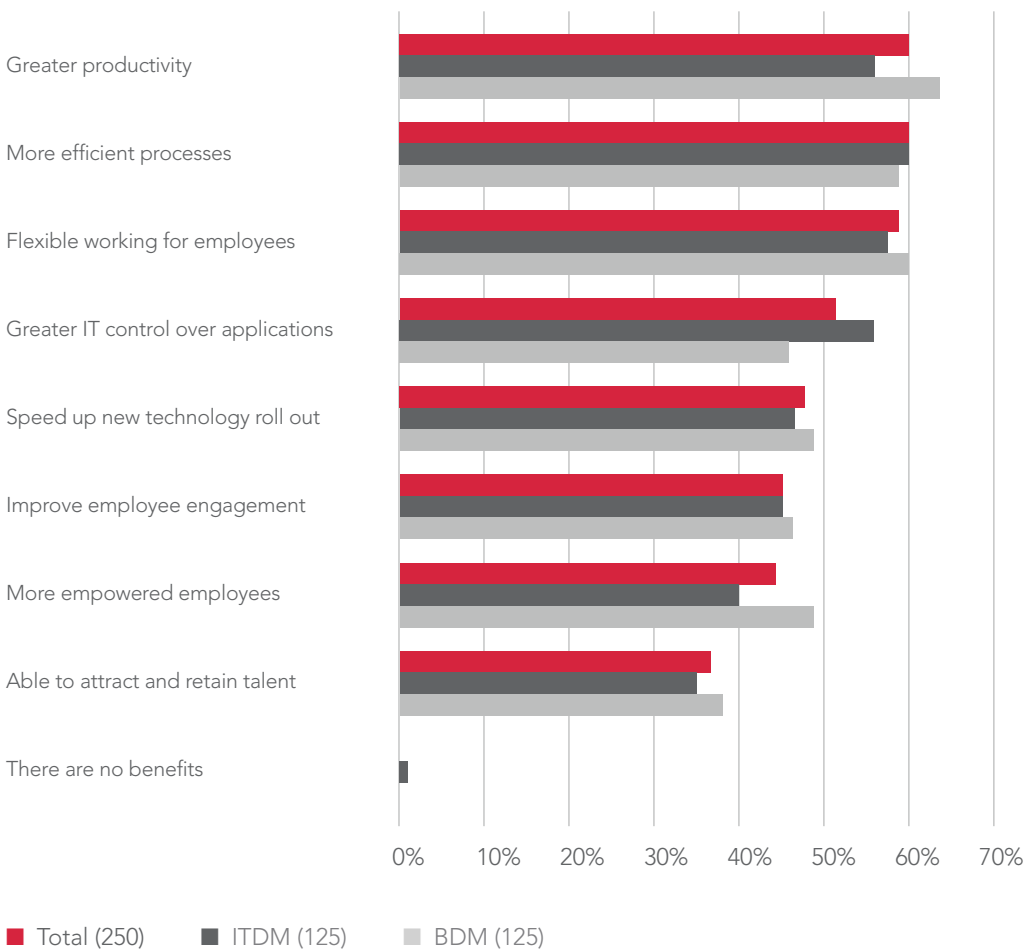
Flexible working provides a good barometer with which the success of digital technology can be measured. What this data has shown is that while flexible working is commonplace, there is still much to be done to optimise it, ensuring that it leads both to high productivity and sustained employee satisfaction. Employees clearly like the idea and are on board with it, but there is still progress to be made in many areas. Once again, this is where having the ability to manage and administer a broad range of software from one place – even if people are working remotely – will yield a huge number of advantages.

# 3/ BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

We might know more now about what drives businesses to adopt digital workspace tech, but what about the benefits that employees get from having them, and the hurdles standing in the way of wider adoption?

## THE BIG BENEFITS

What benefits has your organisation experienced/expect to experience from the adoption of digital workplace solutions?



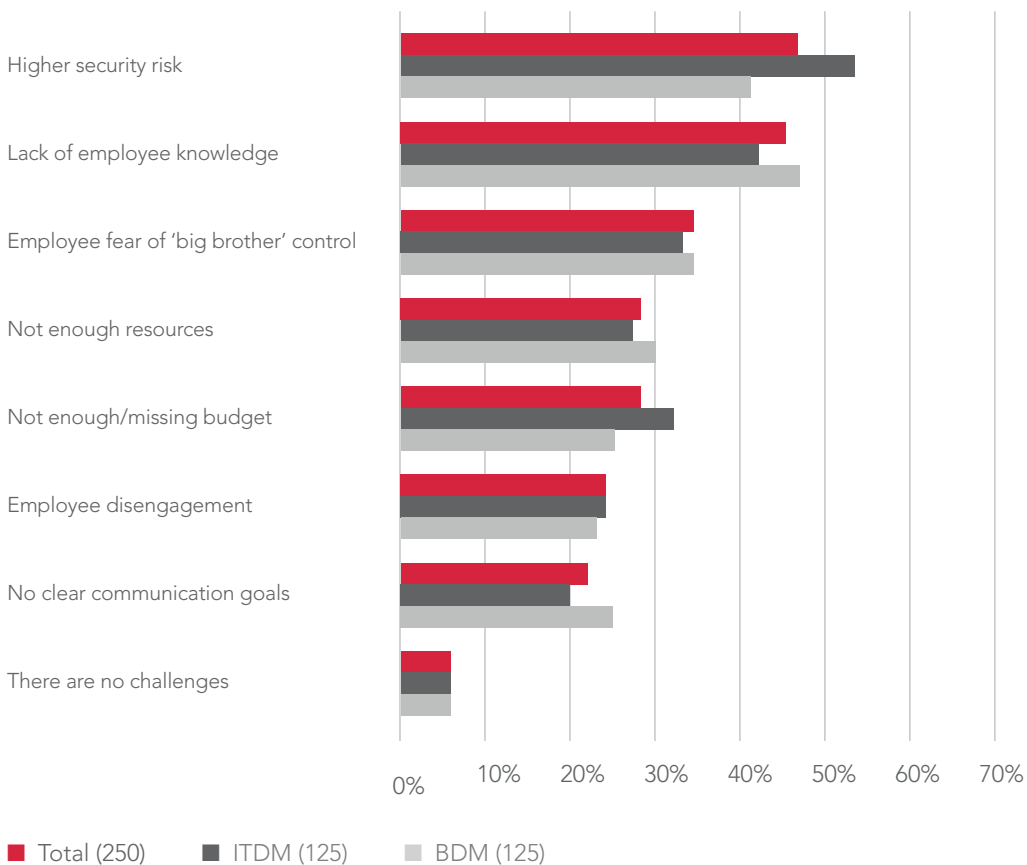
Almost all respondents (99 per cent) see at least some kind of advantage from adopting digital workspace solutions, with the most commonly cited benefits including greater productivity (60 per cent), more efficient processes (60 per cent) and flexible working for employees (59 per cent). All of these are likely to have a positive impact on bottom line in the long run, so the potential of technology – if it is implemented in the right way – is clear.

The differences in thought between ITDMs and BDMs here are indicative of the differing perspectives of both camps. Understandably, IT is more concerned about having greater control over applications and eliminating or reducing instances of shadow IT, whereas business leaders are interested in using digital workspace tech to empower their employees and increase productivity.

Priorities will always vary between these two very different areas of the business to some extent, but there are also rewards to be reaped if organisations work hard to break down barriers between departments and align their goals with one another more effectively.

## THE LEADING CHALLENGES

What challenges has your organisation experienced/expect to experience from the adoption of digital workplace solutions?



When asked about the challenges they face when adopting digital workspace solutions, increased security risks is the most commonly cited (47 per cent, rising to 53 per cent amongst ITDMs). This is to be expected given the wide range of different solutions being used, often across a large spread of devices, not all of which is kept within the confines of the company's firewall.

Close behind is a lack of knowledge amongst employees in implementing and using these new solutions (45 per cent, rising to 47 per cent for BDMs). The message from this is clear: if you don't give employees the training and guidance required to become experts in new tech, it will simply be left to gather dust and you'll see little or no benefit.

A third of respondents (34 per cent) said that employees fear that digital tech helps create a 'big brother' scenario in which leadership uses the tech to monitor workers' every move. This highlights the need to get buy-in from everyone at the business if these solutions are to be a success.

Finally, a third of ITDMs (33 per cent) mentioned a lack of budget as being a key challenge. The desire to implement these new solutions might be there, but whether they have the budget to make things happen is another matter entirely. Digital workspace tech can deliver significant operational cost savings through fewer overheads, but ultimately, IT still needs to have the budget to introduce them in the first place.

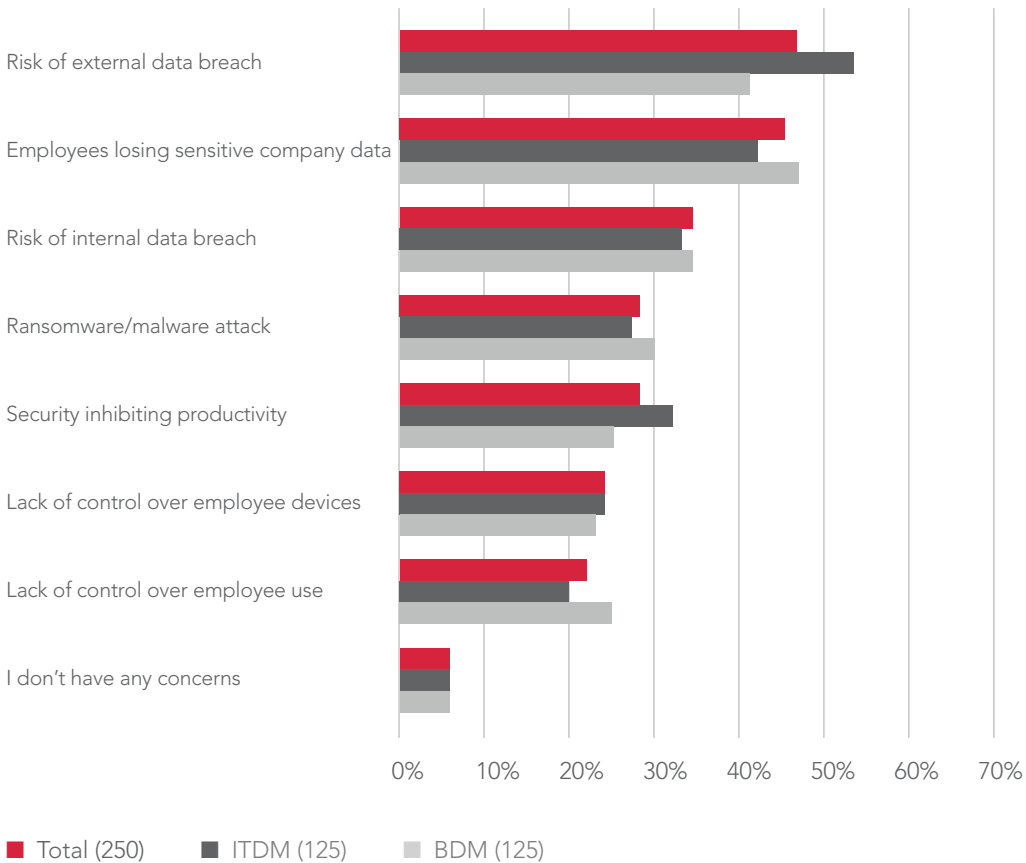
## KEY INSIGHTS

The challenges hampering further adoption of digital workspace technology are wide-ranging, covering security, financial hurdles and an overall lack of strategy in bringing these solutions into the business and winning the hearts and minds of employees. Having a solid plan in place is crucial, meaning organisations need to take the time to work out how to build new solutions into their current IT estate, as well as work closely with employees to address their apprehensions and reduce their reluctance to adopt new ways of working.

Alongside all of this, IT staff need to be given the ability to manage this technology efficiently and with minimal hassle, in a way that helps them to keep tabs on any potential security risks, while ensuring that budgets can be kept in check through the optimisation of new technology.

## SECURITY WORRIES

What specific security concerns do you have with regards to the adoption of digital workplace solutions?



Given how concerns around security were cited by so many respondents, it makes sense to examine this area in a little more detail. An overwhelming majority (93 per cent) have specific security concerns around the adoption of digital workspace solutions, with 56 per cent mentioning the risk of an external data breach.

While threats from the outside are very much front of mind, what this data also shows is that dangers from within are playing on the minds of decision-makers, especially those in the IT department. Just short of half (45 per cent) of total respondents said new digital workspace solutions might increase the risk of employees losing sensitive customer data, with the same proportion (45 per cent) fearing a higher risk of internal data breaches (rising to 50 per cent amongst ITDMs).

In a similar vein, a third of ITDMs (33 per cent) are concerned about a lack of control or insight over employee devices, again highlighting the challenge of managing BYOD policies and a proliferation of so many devices in the workplace.

## KEY INSIGHTS

The threat of external data breaches is more or less a given in today's world, so companies should be doing everything in their power to mitigate this risk. However, in a large number of data breach cases, human error is to blame for a hacking attempt being successful – think an unwitting employee clicking a malicious link in an email or sharing sensitive data using an unsanctioned device.

What businesses need to do here is reduce the impact of human error by focusing closely on structured, consistent education for employees, which should form a key pillar of any digital workspace technology strategy. At the same time, organisations, should make sure that they're covering all the bases by investing in technology and management software that has security at its heart. There's no catch-all solution, but any attempts to address security concerns should focus closely on people as well as tech.

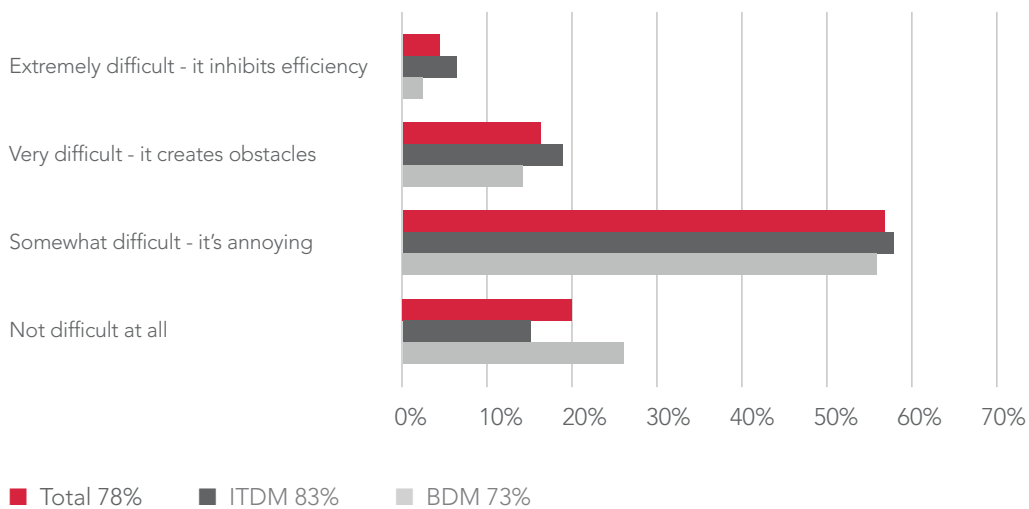
## SECURITY + CONVENIENCE = DIGITAL HARMONY

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the below statement?

*“Security is very important, but it must also meet the needs of our employees to allow them to work more effectively and seamlessly”*



## How difficult do employees find it to use the digital security tools in place in your organisation?



When asked about the need to balance convenience and ease of use with security, nine in ten respondents (90 per cent) acknowledged the critical importance of security, but also the need for it to enable employees to carry out their jobs effectively and seamlessly. Security might be crucial, but convenience is also king.

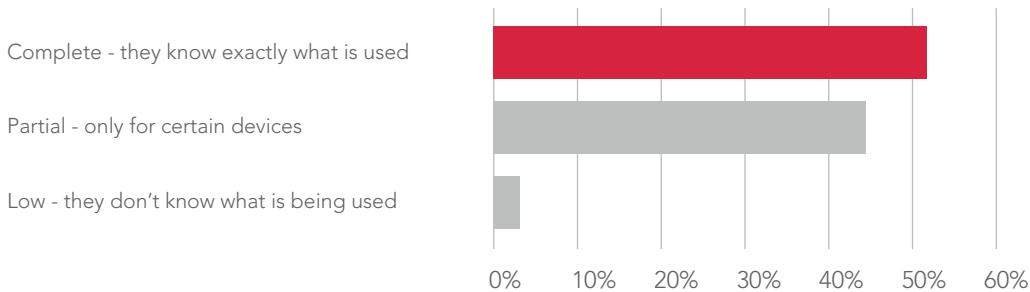
Despite this recognition, difficulties in using digital security tools appear to be commonplace. Almost eight in ten respondents (78 per cent) said that employees experience at least some degree of difficulty, rising to 83 per cent when considering the views of ITDMs only – a telling stat given that IT staff are the ones most likely to know the ins and outs of these security tools and the challenges that employees may have with them. Around one in five (21 per cent) said that workers find it either very difficult or extremely difficult to use this technology without it affecting their productivity.

### KEY INSIGHTS

Security should never be sacrificed in the pursuit of a seamless employee experience, but it's unwise to accept difficulties in using security tools as the norm. Any new security software should be closely analysed and monitored before, during and after implementation to make it sure isn't having too much of an adverse effect on the way employees do their jobs. This can be achieved, at least in part, by having the capability to manage software – security-related or otherwise – from a single location.

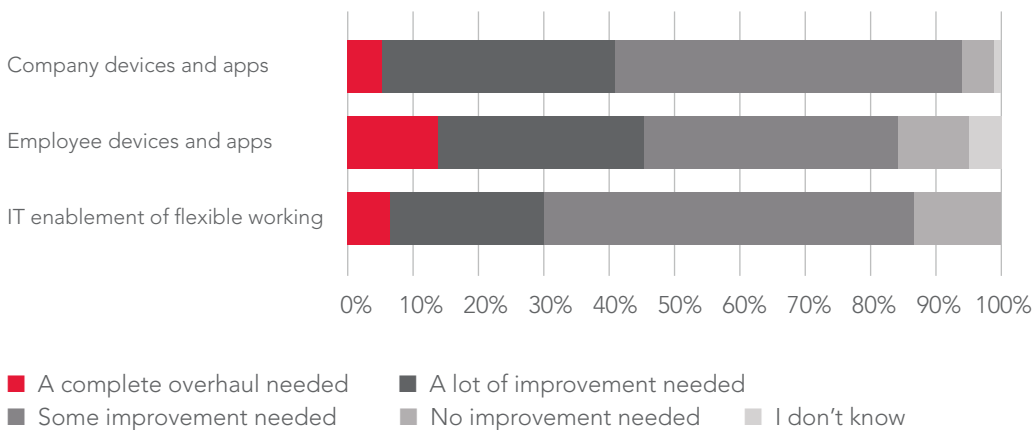
## VISIBILITY AND IMPROVEMENT

What level of control/visibility does your organisation’s IT department have over devices, applications and systems that employees use?



To gain a sense of control over such a large number of devices and digital technologies, the IT department needs to have as much visibility as possible of the devices, applications and systems being used by employees. As the above chart shows, there’s still plenty more to be done in this area. Just half of respondents (52 per cent) said that their organisation has complete visibility of what is being used by workers, with 44 per cent only having partial visibility – meaning that they are currently unable to keep an eye on all devices, applications and systems.

In your opinion, which areas require improvement in terms of the IT department’s capabilities and control over the digital technologies that are in use?





As far as specific areas for improvement in visibility and control are concerned, respondents are almost unanimous in their views that progress needs to be made more or less across the board. 94 per cent said at least some improvement needs to be made to support with company-owned devices and applications; 83 per cent felt that control over BYOD and BYOA (bring-your-own-application) practices needs to be stepped up; and 88 per cent said that stronger control by IT of flexible working processes was needed.

## KEY INSIGHTS

Despite the fact that a large amount of digital tech has already been introduced and schemes such as BYOD are very much in full flow, there's still a significant amount for organisations to do before they gain complete control over the many applications and devices being used. Watertight security and full visibility of digital tools can only be achieved if the IT department is endowed with the ability to bring about these improvements, which means that they need software that can monitor areas such as application usage, process management and important BYOD-related procedures such as staff on-boarding and off-boarding.

# 4/ MANAGE YOUR SOFTWARE, MANAGE THE DIGITAL WORKSPACE

The challenges posed by the burgeoning digital workspace are numerous, but that doesn't mean they are insurmountable. When implemented in the right way, the benefits of digital tools are clear to see, so making the most of this potential should be a priority for any organisation.

This research has shown that the challenges that businesses are facing are due largely to the sheer number of devices, applications and processes being used across the organisation – whether these challenges relate to security, visibility for the IT department or problems with maintaining employee efficiency.

With all of this in mind, it's important that companies are able to consolidate the management of software and devices into a single place. By unifying various assets such as applications, data repositories, usage reports and software licences and administering from one location, IT teams can gain that much-coveted visibility of what is going on across the business. Taking steps to re-engage with external IT suppliers is an effective way of working out how to do this.

Finally, any attempts to consolidate the management of digital software can only work if they are part of a detailed underlying strategy which emphasises making the very most of the digital workspace. This research has shown that defined strategies are still not as commonplace as they should be and that there is a clear disconnect between ITDMs and BDMs in this area. Remedying this issue requires leaders both inside and outside the IT department to work more closely together to establish common goals, and formulate an approach which tackles issues related to security and control in the long term, but also holds the opinions of employees and what's best for the wider business in high regard.

Effectively, it's about close collaboration, forward planning and gaining stakeholder agreement. If all of this can be brought together, building the digital workplace of the future will become a formality.



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## SoftwareONE

41-47 Hartfield Road  
Wimbledon SW19 3RQ  
+44 (0)20 3530 0270  
info.uk@softwareone.com



[www.softwareone.com](http://www.softwareone.com)

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