Get Started With A Modern Employee Technology Experience

Steps To Modernize To A PC Lifecycle Management Process To Help Employees Win, Serve, And Retain Customers

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Introduction

It's odd to call anything good news right now. The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down. No one currently alive has experienced anything like it. However, this shock is forcing civilians and businesses to march rapidly into what has become the new normal, or in other words, the future of work. A critical tool that can aid in navigating the future of work is the employee experience (EX). Just as the age of the customer empowered consumers, today's personal technology empowers employees to connect their personal values to corporate values. It helps build employee empathy and engagement and leads to high-level business outcomes such as retention of talent and brand advocacy.

In January 2020, Dell commissioned Forrester Consulting to explore how organizations can improve their employees' experiences. Forrester conducted an online survey with two sets of groups: 3,103 information workers to understand employee sentiment on their experience, and 1,275 IT decision makers to identify the steps being taken to improve those experiences. Our study yielded several results:

KEY FINDINGS

› **Flexibility, choice, and ease are all attributes that can boost EX.** An effective EX strategy involves both enabling employees to work from anywhere (giving them that choice) and making it easy for them to access the resources they need to complete their tasks.

› **Providing a great technology experience for employees starts with a concentrated approach to hardware acquisition.** Firms looking to be the best at delivering great EX must live up to the commercial experience that employees have as consumers. The quality of EX directly impacts workforce productivity and employee engagement, and it all starts with technology.

› **Modern PC lifecycle management is the gateway to excellent EX.** Firms can take very specific steps in modernizing their employees' experience, from empowering different procurement teams to procure the right devices to enabling desktop support, which would result in IT teams spending fewer hours on device configuration.

Technology experience (TX) is a critical component in driving great EX.

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Activators Of EX That Inspire, Empower, And Enable Employees

Even before the pandemic brought the world to its knees, employees were already working at semi-efficient levels with their choice of mobile device. In some cases, there was no longer any need to "punch the clock." Instead, some employees are able to complete their tasks inside and out of the office, during and after business hours, and everything in between.

Advances in mobile and cloud technology mean that employees can work easily from anywhere without impacting their productivity. Forrester's research found that companies that have flexible working policies that include remote working have an average NPS of 48 points higher than companies that don't.[1] In other words, any technology that enables distributed working is key to having a good EX going forward.

The time has come for businesses to retire their ineffective EX practices and develop a way that will attract, retain, and cultivate the modern worker. Leading organizations know that delivering consistently great experience matters in the age of the always-on business. When looking toward the identifiers of excellent EX, the technological experience of employees plays a pivotal role in shaping their experiences. We identified three major activators of great TX:

› **Flexibility — technology that enables choice.** Organizations can improve EX by implementing technologies that allow employees to work from anywhere, on any device, and with any app. Employees need to choose from purpose-specific devices to complete their daily tasks, which is why 66% of respondents said they require newer PCs with more processing power, whilst having more freedom to choose the device they need for everyday work (60%). The agility ethos is like jazz: It's improvisational, and it allows employees the flexibility to solve tomorrow's unanticipated problems in a way that enables their personal decision making.

› **Integration — ecosystems that are all encompassing.** An ecosystem that consists of the right devices, accessories, increased mobility, and automation significantly impacts productivity, which results in EX that is elevated. Nineteen percent of respondents said that providing them with the latest peripherals, like monitors, digital pens, and headsets, will improve and develop their skillsets. In addition to PC choice, 59% of survey respondents said they would like more freedom to choose the mobile device and mobile applications they use for everyday work — it's not just the PC that's important, it's everything they need to be successful.

› **Ease — task critical information made easily available.** This is where applications play a foundational role in ensuring productive TX. It offers a dynamic network of environments where employees will feel activated in their role by digital resources, i.e., delivering a diverse mix of apps anywhere, on any device. This includes access to software-as-a-service (SaaS), web, mobile, and virtual apps. The key is that all of these apps are delivered in a consolidated way, via self-service access. Curating a set of technologies that enables timely and safe access to the right apps will enable employees to access the information they need. Respondents said it would be useful if they can find the documents they need easily (67%); access to work files from home (64%); and task-critical information while on the go (63%).
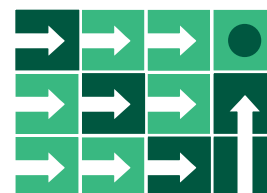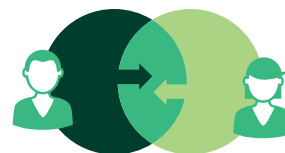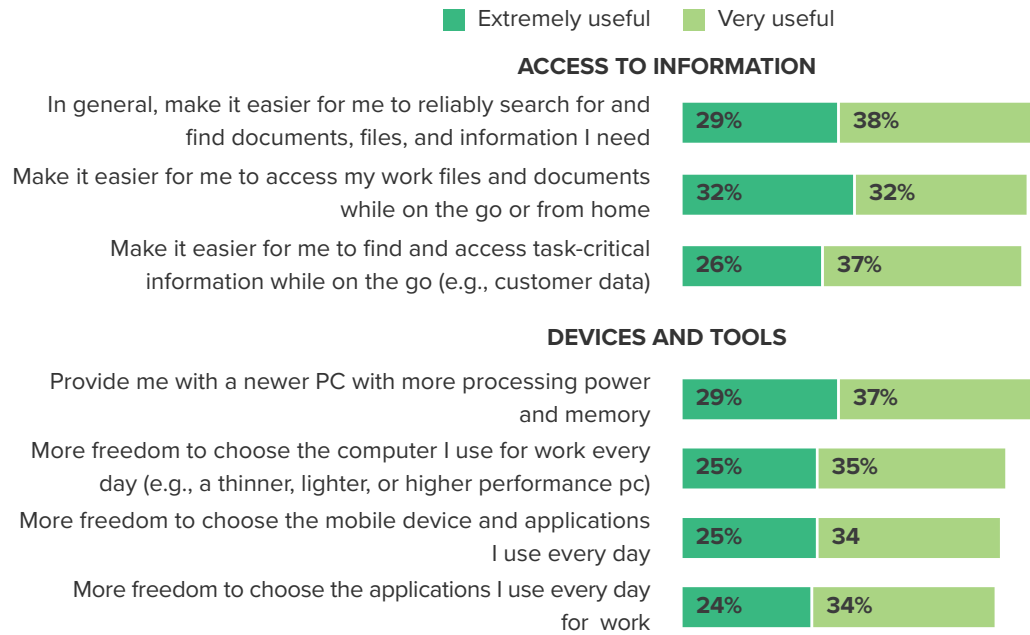
Figure 1

"In this question, we want you to imagine how some things might make your work life better. On a scale of 1 to 5, assuming you could have any of the following technical capabilities in your work environment, how useful would each of them be in helping you be more effective?"

■ Extremely useful   ■ Very useful

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

In general, make it easier for me to reliably search for and find documents, files, and information I need
29% | **38%**

Make it easier for me to access my work files and documents while on the go or from home
32% | **32%**

Make it easier for me to find and access task-critical information while on the go (e.g., customer data)
26% | **37%**

DEVICES AND TOOLS

Provide me with a newer PC with more processing power and memory
29% | **37%**

More freedom to choose the computer I use for work every day (e.g., a thinner, lighter, or higher performance pc)
25% | **35%**

More freedom to choose the mobile device and applications I use every day
25% | **34**

More freedom to choose the applications I use every day for work
**24%** | **34%**

Base: 3,103 information workers who work in an organization with more than 1,000 employees across the globe
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Dell, January 2020

Yet, developing a leading EX practice requires more. Business leaders need to be aware of and defy the conventional practices that have become outdated. The modern business world doesn't need aged concepts qualifying what is and isn't considered progress. Today's information workers thrive in a dynamic setting where they can feel empowered, enabled, and inspired through an ecosystem that is available and ready with a seamless digital workspace.

Deliver Excellent TX By Modernizing PCLM

To provide a more flexible, holistic, and easy technology experience, organizations need to modernize the PC lifecycle management (PCLM) processes that underly employee-facing technologies. Forrester has identified four stages of this journey. Organizations must move through each stage in order to advance and successfully improve their technology experience. Each stage has varying degrees of flexibility, automation, and support from the organization. We classify maturity in the following four stages:

OK: IT makes assumptions about what users want and only allows them to select up to three configurations to tick boxes, leaving the users to take care of the ecosystem. This usually goes hand-in-hand with traditional PC management and standardization to manage complexity. Both mobile and PC experiences are disconnected.

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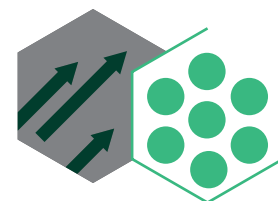
Good: Surveys allow the business to get feedback on the technology experience. The organization is starting to embrace some elements of modern management, but it typically has separate processes for PC and mobile management. Users have some self-service capabilities for applications, but they still rely on IT for some complex scripting, etc.

Better: The ideal state is when IT proactively collects data on users' needs rather than just feedback. IT is therefore able to identify bottlenecks to address them during its next deployment. The organizations include more device form factors and configurations, and PCLM is automated from deployment to retirement. Digital workspaces make it easy to move from one device to another, and they also fully enable employees with self-service.

Best: IT is completely proactive, solving bottlenecks and improving poor experiences before they happen. IT suggestions are based on insights of what the best model and configuration may be, recommending and implementing new technologies whilst also expanding the ecosystem. The digital workspace is self-serving, and it is not limited to core applications. Users and the business do not have to buy directly online, or from a vendor, because IT has built and leveraged insight to know what is best for the user before they themselves know. IT develops a separate team to manage experience exclusively.

BE THE BEST WITH A CONCENTRATED APPROACH

The best enterprise TX is characterized by flexibility, integration, and ease. This could mean equipping employees with powerful, more secure PCs to allow them to take advantage of different work environments. A workforce experience that doesn't live up to the commercial experience can cause a great deal of frustration, contributing to a poor overall work experience. And that's a huge problem, because the quality of EX directly impacts workforce productivity and employee engagement.
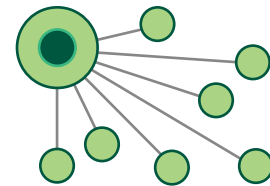
Ultimately, the workforce experience *can* be improved, as can employee productivity and engagement. Of course, there are unique requirements that are specific to an industry or organization size, but, on a broader scale, one major area that leaders can immediately address is hardware experiences. Technology leaders who devote the same level of focus to EX as they do to their employees' hardware and technology experiences is taking a monumental step in enabling their workforce's overall experience. Firms that are classified as "OK," "Good," or "Better" must focus on a specific aspect — in this case, PCLM focuses on the hardware or technology experience.

This is further reinforced in Forrester's EX research, which has revealed that businesses that provide their employees with a hardware-centric approach drive creativity, productivity, and efficiency.[2] In fact, respondents acknowledge the broader impact of hardware because it (see Figure 2):

› **Fosters collaboration.** Information workers today find it difficult to effectively connect with colleagues and uncover the information needed to get their daily tasks completed. New technology only works well when it's embedded into or changes and improves how individuals and teams work. Collaborative working starts with finding ways to support preexisting processes. Only then can technology be used to improve and generate new workflows and processes. Seventy-one percent of information workers said it's very important or important to be able to collaborate. And to collaborate effectively, employees need the right tools and devices.

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Figure 2

"How important are each of the following items for your organization?"

Base: 3,103 information workers who work in an organization with more than 1,000 employees across the globe
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Dell, January 2020

› **Improves device choice.** Today's workers are broad and varied with different roles and responsibilities. EX is significantly improved by device form factors, performance, and connectivity, and 71% of employees recognize this as an important factor that contributes to great EX.

› **Enables mobility.** COVID-19 has proven that we live in unprecedented times, forcing organizations to enable their employees to work from the comfort of their homes. That means firms have to enable their employees and ensure they have the right tools, devices, and ecosystems to support them. In fact, in the Forrester research report, "The Future Of Enterprise Mobility," it was found that employees who have readily adopted mobile tools are more likely to have a positive view of working for a company. This is further reinforced with 66% of survey respondents who identify mobility as a very important or important factor for their work experience.
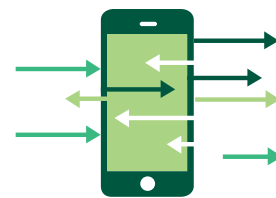
Key Steps To Enabling A Modern Technology Experience

Digital technology dramatically alters the balance of power between customers, employees, and companies. This isn't about adopting a top-down view or letting the technology determine your strategy. Instead, it's about turning your company into an adaptive enterprise that continually flexes, evolves, and pivots in response to rapidly changing demands from the world of work. It's difficult to get to the "Better" or "Best" stage without hiring 20 extra staff and committing lots of financial resources. So, how do you get the benefits of a modern tech experience without all the added costs? You can do this by investing and overhauling the PC lifecycle management.

Driving great EX requires you to refocus your PCLM efforts and begin working differently with your end user computing teams. Make the following groups more efficient with the following modern PCLM approaches (see Figure 3):

> **Empower desktop support to spend fewer hours on configuration.**
Zero-touch deployment lowers the overall cost of device and software
ownership so that new employees can immediately get to work on
their first day. It also means that when a device breaks, less time is
spent waiting around for a replacement device. Implementing zero-
touch capabilities (45%) ensures that IT does not need to spend
time configuring, deploying, and securing devices with minimal
infrastructure management. The automated process reduces the
possibility of errors when manually configuring devices, and it saves
time. Additional benefits are as follows:

  - Faster installation and deployment.

  - Better quality assurance.

  - Simplification of processes.

> **Inspire end user computing (EUC) architects to embrace cloud-based
PC management architectures.** Leveraging modern management
agents (42%) normally includes all infrastructure pieces involved with
modernizing the PC infrastructure, including:

  - **Device enrollments.** Enabling modern management of endpoints
    enables you to automatically configure, provision, and distribute
    applications upon device enrollment. That's because modern
    management agents rely on user data stored in the cloud, enabling
    instant configuration upon the establishment of user identity.

  - **Policy configuration.** Apply MDM-based policies to operating system
    endpoints and apply specific group policy objectives (GPOs) from
    the management platform.[4] Modernizing with these policies will
    support mobile workers because they are not being required to join
    the organization's domain, meaning that the latest features can be
    pushed out faster and easier. It also creates a similar experience as
    the mobile device enrollment, i.e., it reduces complexity for the user.

  - **Patch management modernization.** Defining the approvals for
    updates should be done automatically. Leverage the OS-as-a-
    service (OSaaS) framework to create and update distribution rings
    for OS-specific patches. This ensures that employees have all the
    up-to-date features and that they are never needlessly locked out of
    their accounts for having out-of-date operating systems or third-party
    applications on their devices.

  - **Application rationalization.** Get application teams to rationalize their
    app projects by delivering applications from different sources and
    identifying which should be kept, enrolled, retired, or replaced. This
    process will undoubtedly expose applications that don't fit the needs
    of employees and will also force you to invest in tools that better
    enable their productivity. Additionally, consider rewriting apps to run
    in HTML5, unifying their access for the user and limiting confusion.
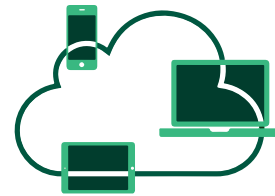
› **Enable support specialists to proactively address the end user experience.** End user experience management is critical, but most firms don't do it well. As the importance of improving EX grows, more companies are interested in developing an end user experience management strategy that enables them to better understand how the technology they deploy enables employees to accomplish their most important work. The following are reasons for why this is true:

- A better experience is provided to employees.

- Disruption to employee productivity is reduced.

- Valuable feedback can be collected at this point from improving experience in later iterations.

› **Empower procurement teams to provide flexible device purchasing options.** Moving into the "Best" category will require you to rethink how you purchase devices. It's not enough to simply buy devices every four years. You need flexibility to provide the latest and greatest devices at the right time, according to employee needs. New PC-as-a-service (PCaaS) models can help you do that by enabling:

- The business to choose its own devices.

- Employees to choose from a select list of devices.

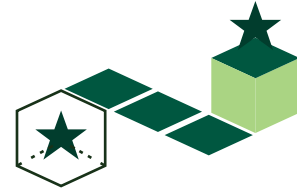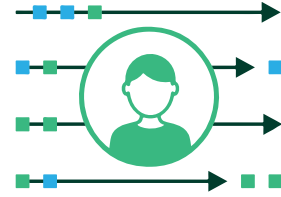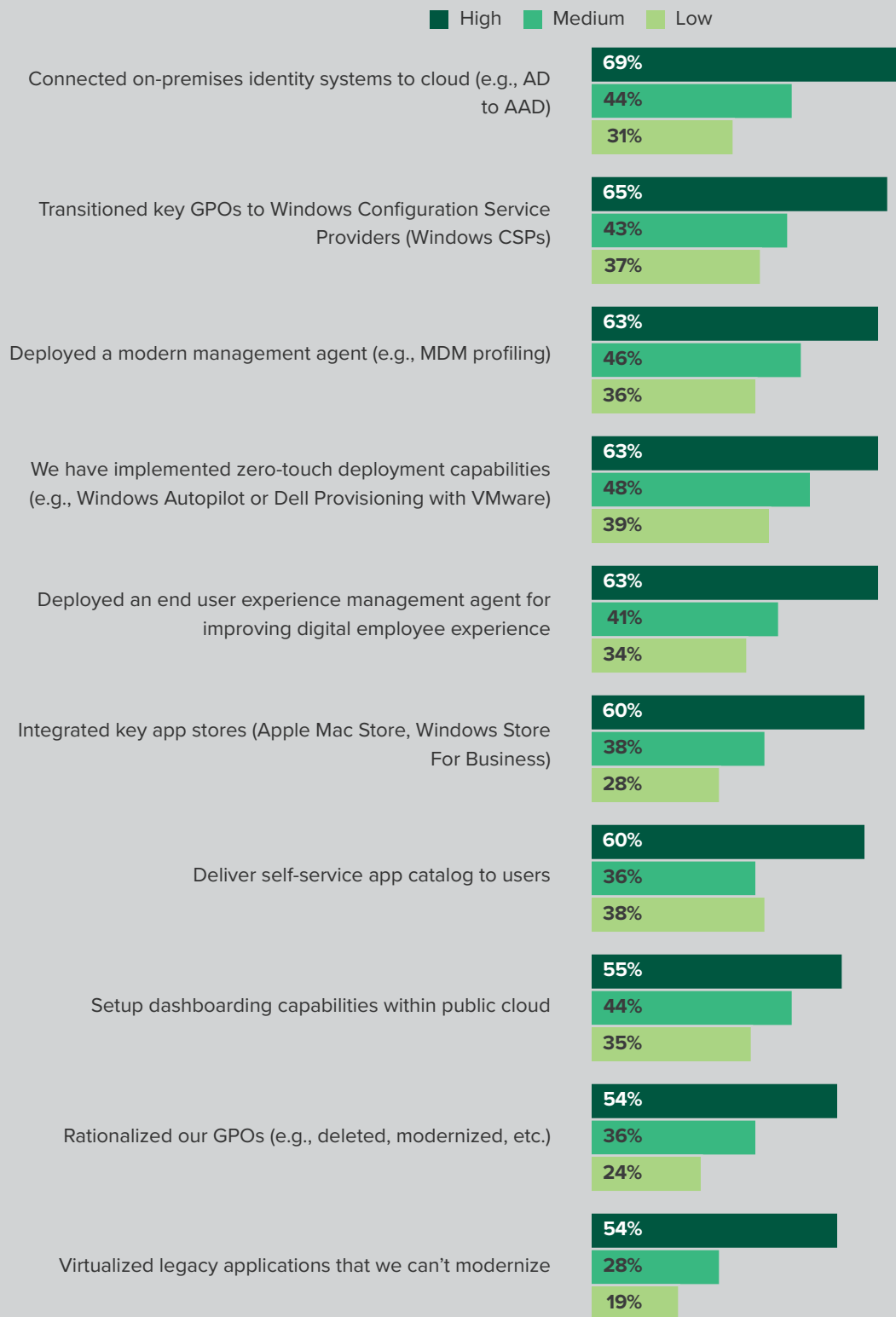- Employees to get access to a device quickly if their current one breaks.

Figure 3

"What technology-related steps have you taken to modernize PC lifecycle management?" (Select all that apply)

■ High ■ Medium ■ Low

Connected on-premises identity systems to cloud (e.g., AD to AAD)
- 69%
- 44%
- 31%

Transitioned key GPOs to Windows Configuration Service Providers (Windows CSPs)
- 65%
- 43%
- 37%

Deployed a modern management agent (e.g., MDM profiling)
- 63%
- 46%
- 36%

We have implemented zero-touch deployment capabilities (e.g., Windows Autopilot or Dell Provisioning with VMware)
- 63%
- 48%
- 39%

Deployed an end user experience management agent for improving digital employee experience
- 63%
- 41%
- 34%

Integrated key app stores (Apple Mac Store, Windows Store For Business)
- 60%
- 38%
- 28%

Deliver self-service app catalog to users
- 60%
- 36%
- 38%

Setup dashboarding capabilities within public cloud
- 55%
- 44%
- 35%

Rationalized our GPOs (e.g., deleted, modernized, etc.)
- 54%
- 36%
- 24%

Virtualized legacy applications that we can't modernize
- 54%
- 28%
- 19%

Base: 1,275 IT directors or above, with knowledge of desktop infrastructure environments and provisioning of devices at their firm
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Dell, January 2020

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Key Recommendations

Employees want to make progress in their everyday tasks, and it's the job of IT decision makers job to enable them to do that. As you think about your hardware investments to improve the employee technology experience, don't forget about the broader ecosystem that enables you to improve that hardware experience in the first place:

Play close attention to identity and access management (IAM). Delivering a device directly to the user on its first day is much easier if your organization stores user identities in the cloud, rather than on-premises. It also enables seamless access to applications, improves OS updates, and allows IT to automate without requiring the user to follow a manual or VPN into a system for configuration.

Leverage a mix of capex- and opex-purchased devices. Lead times for device deliveries are still relevant, especially in certain geographies. If you want to ensure that you have a device to give an employee in the event of a breakdown, counter these supply chain issues by using capex devices to quickly swap out devices that break. Use opex devices to increase refresh rates and empower more self-service selection.

Designate a separate team devoted to digital experience. Deploying the technology is just one step. You also need a team of two to three individuals that can actively monitor, measure, and optimize the experience of devices over time, leveraging both quantitative and qualitative techniques. These teams should work agnostically across all employee-facing technology teams, including desktop, mobile, applications, collaboration, and virtual desktop teams.
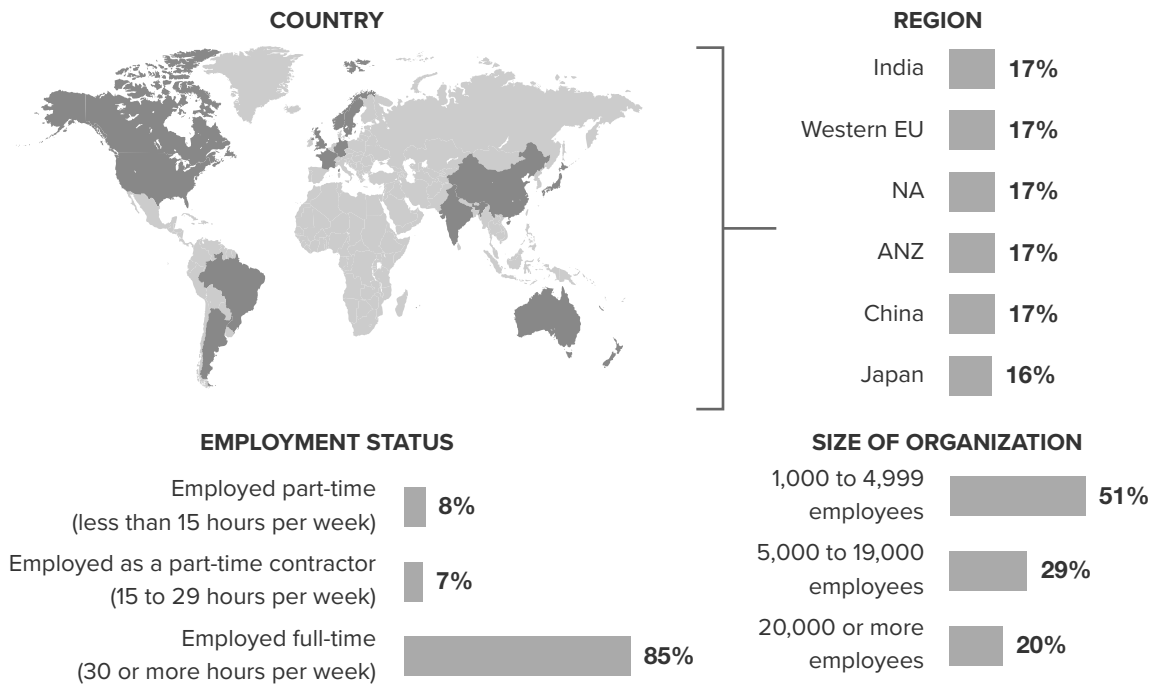
Empower the business to have a stake in technology enablement. The business often knows best what employees need to be successful in their respective roles. Leverage their expertise and empower them with a share of purchasing power as you move toward your modern technology experience strategy. This might mean giving sales organizations more latitude to purchase lighter, more mobile hardware to support the needs of their traveling workforce, for example.

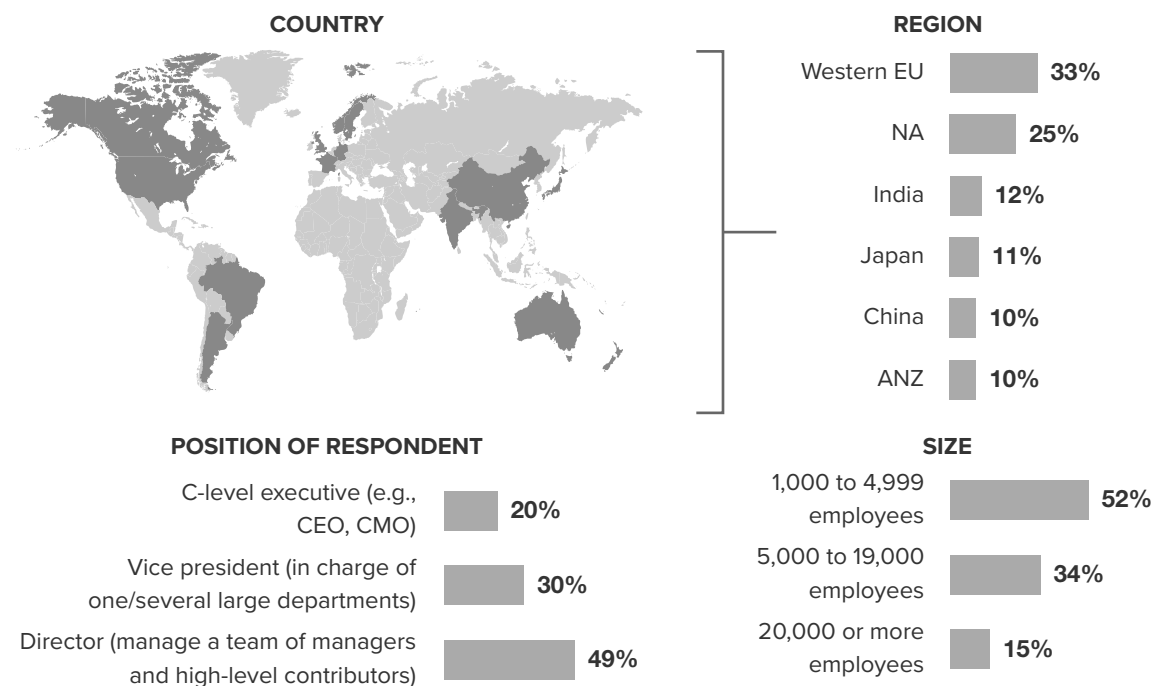**FORRESTER**®

Appendix A: Methodology

In this study, Forrester conducted an online EX survey of 3,103 global respondents to evaluate employee sentiments on their overall experience, level of engagement, level of burnout, and areas of improvement. Survey participants included information workers from various industries. Additionally, Forrester also conducted an online survey with 1,275 IT respondents with knowledge of desktop infrastructure environments and device provisioning at their firm. The study began in January 2020 and was completed in June 2020.

Appendix B: Demographics/Data

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE (EX)

COUNTRY

REGION

India	17%
Western EU	17%
NA	17%
ANZ	17%
China	17%
Japan	16%

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employed part-time (less than 15 hours per week)	8%
Employed as a part-time contractor (15 to 29 hours per week)	7%
Employed full-time (30 or more hours per week)	85%

SIZE OF ORGANIZATION

1,000 to 4,999 employees	51%
5,000 to 19,000 employees	29%
20,000 or more employees	20%

Base: 3,103 information workers who work in an organization with more than 1,000 employees across the globe
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Dell, January 2020

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MPCLM

COUNTRY

REGION

Western EU	33%
NA	25%
India	12%
Japan	11%
China	10%
ANZ	10%

POSITION OF RESPONDENT

C-level executive (e.g., CEO, CMO)	20%
Vice president (in charge of one/several large departments)	30%
Director (manage a team of managers and high-level contributors)	49%

SIZE

1,000 to 4,999 employees	52%
5,000 to 19,000 employees	34%
20,000 or more employees	15%

Base: 1,275 IT directors or above, with knowledge of desktop infrastructure environments and provisioning of devices at their firm
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Dell, January 2020

Appendix C: Endnotes

[1] Source: Net Promoter and NPS are registered service marks, and Net Promoter Score is a service mark, of Bain & Company, Inc., Satmetrix Systems, Inc., and Fred Reichheld; "Follow Four Imperatives To Improve The Remote Worker Experience," Forrester Research, Inc., July 6, 2020.

[2] Source: "Forrester's EX Index A Deeper Look At The Data, March 4, 2020.

[3] Source: "The Future Of Enterprise Mobility," Forrester Research, Inc., August 11, 2017.

[4] MDM: mobile device management.

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