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2023 Report:

New imperatives for digital employee experience

How technology drives employee satisfaction, retention and productivity

Foreword

In our current hyper-connected era, the digital scaffolding of our workplaces profoundly influences our professional experiences. Technology has woven itself into the fabric of our daily work routines, boosting employee satisfaction, retention and productivity becoming all the more pivotal. This Ivanti report delves deeply into this intricate mesh of Digital Employee Experience (DEX) — its **defining elements, inherent challenges and potent solutions.**

Ivanti's finding that 63% of employees sometimes work remotely isn't surprising but poses an undeniable challenge. Our IT departments, often the unsung heroes, grapple with the gargantuan task of ensuring a seamless digital interface for this dispersed workforce. And while 57% of professionals face regular technological hiccups, a staggering 17% — and twice as many among Gen Z — contemplate bidding adieu to their roles, attributing their discontent to insufficient technological infrastructure.

Defining DEX is a journey, not a destination. We've understood it to be the totality of digital touchpoints and employee encounters. But its implications are vast. Despite acknowledging DEX's significance, **a mere 56% of organizations have ramped up their DEX-specific budgets in 2023.** This reveals an alarming dichotomy: while many concede its importance, few adequately invest in its optimization.

The essence of DEX transcends device health checks. An evolving paradigm witnesses DEX as an all-encompassing organizational ethos — it's about crafting enriching digital journeys, buttressing organizational security and, more profoundly, leveraging technology to avert issues proactively.

Sections 2 and 3 of this report unravel layers of insights. We're prompted to **reconsider our DEX measuring sticks,** moving beyond traditional tech monitoring. Introducing the "DEX Score" — an aggregate metric gauging an employee's digital health — seems a promising leap in this direction. Yet, the narrative is not devoid of concerns, especially for our IT professionals, who grapple with work-induced stress and doubt about AI's rise despite being at the tech forefront.

As we traverse the landscape of service desks in Section 4, the **preference for human touch in IT support** over AI-driven chatbots rings evident. Yet, a drift towards self-reliance in tech troubleshooting, especially among our younger cohorts, beckons us to reconsider our support infrastructures.

A paradigm shift in DEX perception is overdue. A broader perspective, as outlined in Section 5, nudges us to envision DEX beyond mere monitoring. It's about **proactive action, predictive troubleshooting**

and harnessing AI to streamline processes. It's a call to recognize the vastness of DEX — from device wellness to iron-clad security measures. The potential benefits? A decline in helpdesk ticket influx, diminished downtime and heightened employee contentment.

As we stand on the cusp of 2024, a year likely to entrench our reliance on digital interfaces further, **this report serves as a compass** — illuminating areas needing redress, underscoring the urgency to reinvent and, most critically, reminding us of technology's profound influence on our professional sanctums.

Dive in, introspect. It is undoubtedly time to design more fulfilling, collaborative and rewarding digital narratives for our workspaces.

Sabine VanderLinden
CEO & Managing Partner
Alchemy Crew

Introduction

Ivanti's latest research shows 63% of employees work outside a traditional office environment at least part of the time. Ensuring all employees a high-quality digital experience — no matter where or when they work — presents tremendous technical and operational challenges for organizations.

These challenges fall squarely — and disproportionately — on IT teams. They are charged with delivering **consistent, secure experiences,** no matter the work location. And our research shows all that extra effort is taking a toll.
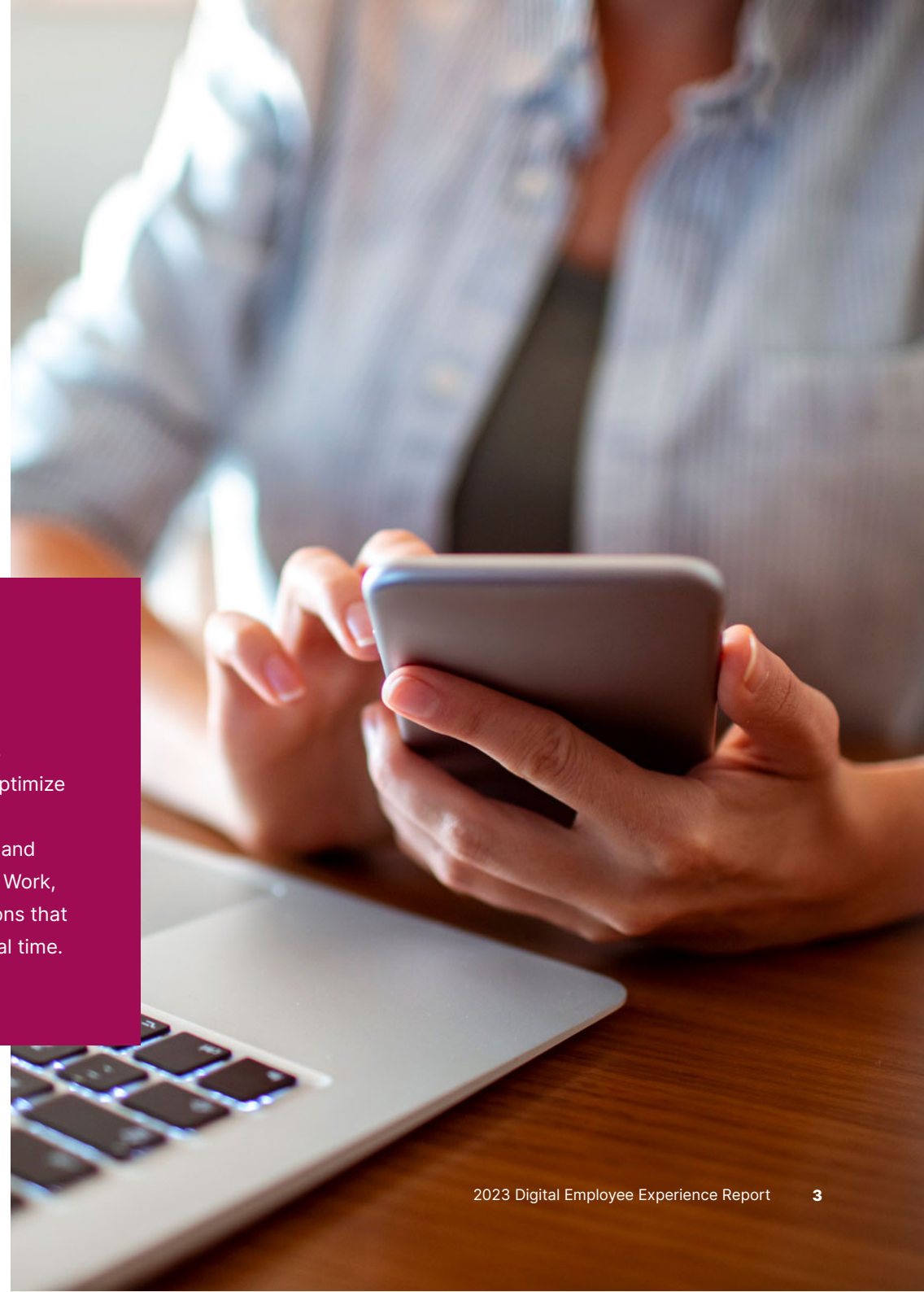
DEX management may offer a solution to this predicament. With the right DEX strategies, tactics and tools, organizations can offer IT teams relief from the substantial burden of supporting Everywhere Work.

Digital employee experience (DEX):

DEX is the total of all the digital touchpoints that employees encounter during the workday and the way employees feel about their organization's digital capabilities.

DEX management:

The strategies, tactics and tools employers use to oversee and optimize digital employee experiences — from the employee platforms and tools that empower Everywhere Work, to behind-the-scenes automations that seamlessly solve problems in real time.

Inside:

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Poor DEX is much more than a tech problem for knowledge workers

57%

report serious friction at least weekly while using workplace technology.

78%

say they could be more productive with different tools.

17%

either have quit due to poor tech or would consider it — and the figure is nearly 2x as high for Gen Z.

61%

say negative technology experiences impact morale.

Ivanti surveyed **7,800 IT professionals, executives and end users** around the world, across a broad range of industries, to gauge their opinions on the current state and future of the digital employee experience (DEX).

Our aim is to understand how organizations think about DEX, **define clear benchmarks for the practice and deliver prescriptive insights** to help organizations improve their DEX practice.

Defining DEX

There's widespread agreement that prioritizing DEX is crucial to managing and securing the modern workplace — but Ivanti's research shows there's little agreement about how to do it best.

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Three in four organizations track DEX and more than half (56%) say they **will have spent more on DEX in 2023 compared to 2022.**

Despite this strong support for DEX, many organizations define it narrowly as software used to monitor the health of devices and, in some cases, proactively solve problems before they impact users. There is a movement afoot to **look at DEX much more broadly.**
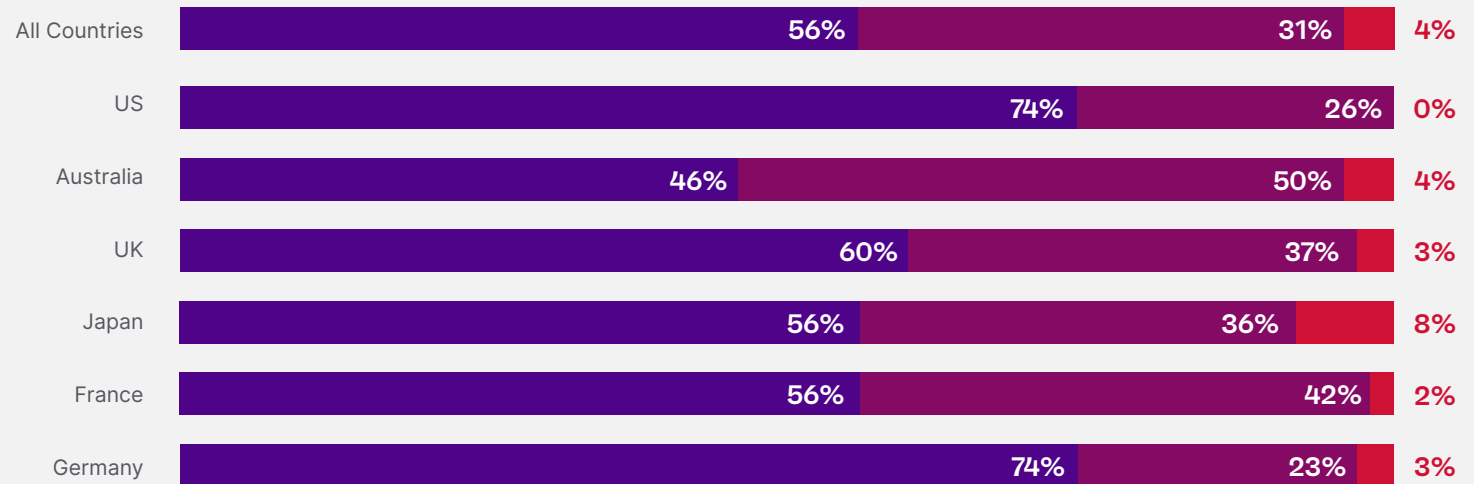
Under a broader understanding, managing DEX means:

✓ Using technology to design satisfying, comfortable and effective digital experiences for employees, regardless of their age, technology skills or place of work.

✓ Delivering experiences that have a positive impact on an organization's security posture.

✓ Moving DEX from a tech purchase to a broad philosophy for supporting employees and improving security at work.

DEX budgets expected to rise in 2024

Q:
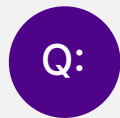
Do you expect your budget for DEX tools & management will increase or decrease in 2024 compared to 2023?

- Increase
- Stay the same
- Decrease

	Increase	Stay the same	Decrease
All Countries	56%	31%	4%
US	74%	26%	0%
Australia	46%	50%	4%
UK	60%	37%	3%
Japan	56%	36%	8%
France	56%	42%	2%
Germany	74%	23%	3%

Over 9 in 10 C-level executives and security professionals we surveyed say DEX can have a powerful, positive impact on security. And 85% agree that poor digital experiences lead employees to use unsafe workarounds. Despite a recognition of its value, DEX still isn't viewed as a critical asset by many. Amongst the surveyed IT professionals...

Overall, 3 in 4 track DEX; significantly fewer do so in healthcare, government

Q: Does your organization/company measure or track digital employee experience?

Healthcare
69% | 26% | 5%

Technology
82% | 10% | 8%

Government
46% | 36% | 17%

Financial services
78% | 13% | 9%

Manufacturing
72% | 21% | 7%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

53%
say DEX is a high priority.

56%
say they don't have a high level of buy-in from the C-suite for DEX initiatives.

52%
say DEX isn't always a consideration when buying new tech.

Delivering high-quality digital experiences is a mindset shift for organizations. The large majority view DEX as a technology play — ensuring that new technology purchases meet employees' needs and expectations and that these tools drive efficiency and security. But best-in-class DEX management is much more than that.

The real DEX opportunity for organizations is to solve problems **before humans are involved** — before an employee encounters friction or opens a helpdesk ticket. To accomplish this, organizations need to study internal processes and systems to understand how AI can wend its way through the organization and transform it. Ivanti's research aims to uncover how organizations manage DEX today and what strategies can transform DEX going forward.

Ivanti's 2023 research aims to understand this tension

The positive:

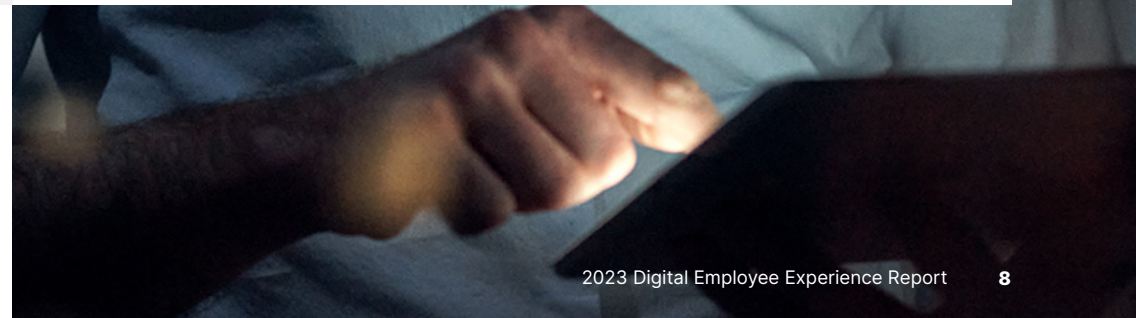A clear belief that DEX is a powerful tool to improve accessibility, employee retention and security.

The negative:

Little agreement about DEX best practices and — for many organizations — a lack of vision for how DEX can transform the organization.
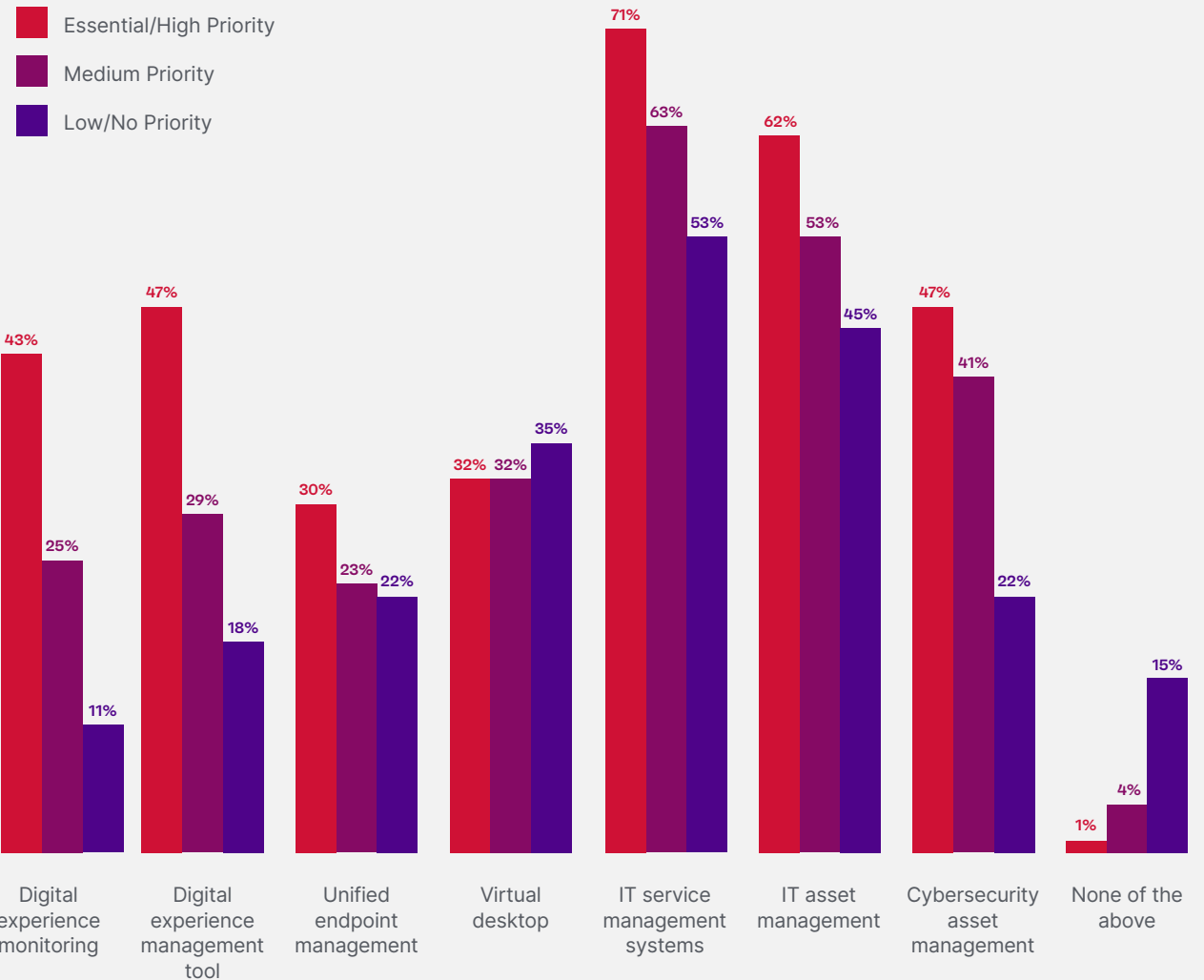
DEX 2024

What is the best way to manage DEX?
We dive into all the details: DEX strategy, measurement, specific applications, and much more.

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To understand DEX best practices, we need to understand what IT professionals are doing today to support digital experiences. Even for security professionals who say DEX is an essential priority, managing DEX using tools like digital experience monitoring, unified endpoint management and IT asset management is remarkably low — meaning that, even as people appreciate the role of DEX, its application is still nascent.

IT asset management systems are the most common tool to manage DEX

Q: Consider all the ways organizations can manage digital employee experience. Which of these does your organization use? (Shown by DEX priority level.)

Legend:
- Essential/High Priority
- Medium Priority
- Low/No Priority

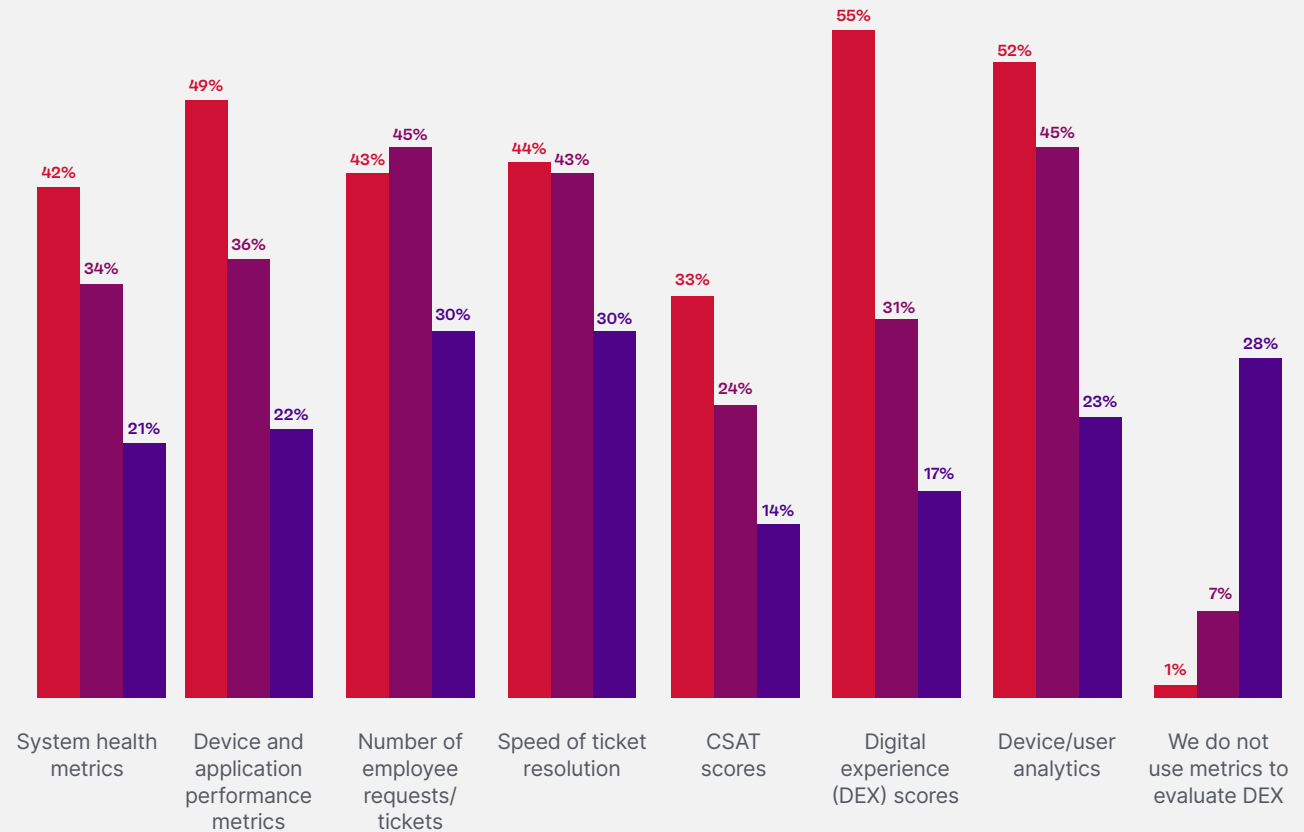| Category	Essential/High Priority	Medium Priority	Low/No Priority
Digital experience monitoring	43%	25%	11%
Digital experience management tool	47%	29%	18%
Unified endpoint management	30%	23%	22%
Virtual desktop	32%	32%	35%
IT service management systems	71%	63%	53%
IT asset management	62%	53%	45%
Cybersecurity asset management	47%	41%	22%
None of the above	1%	4%	15%

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Rarely do organizations use their IT operations or IT management tools to measure or improve DEX. Among those that **do measure DEX performance,** tech monitoring (54%) and surveys (44%) are the most popular methods. When it comes to measuring DEX outcomes, IT professionals we surveyed are most likely to rely on device or user analytics, followed by a number of helpdesk tickets, speed of ticket resolution, and aggregated DEX scores.

For organizations that prioritize DEX, tracking multiple metrics is key

Q: Do you use any of these metrics to track DEX? (Shown by DEX priority level.)

- ■ Essential/High Priority
- ■ Medium Priority
- ■ Low/No Priority

	Essential/High Priority	Medium Priority	Low/No Priority
System health metrics	42%	34%	21%
Device and application performance metrics	49%	36%	22%
Number of employee requests/tickets	43%	45%	30%
Speed of ticket resolution	44%	43%	30%
CSAT scores	33%	24%	14%
Digital experience (DEX) scores	55%	31%	17%
Device/user analytics	52%	45%	23%
We do not use metrics to evaluate DEX	1%	7%	28%

One aspect of DEX is **solving tech problems before they impact the user** and/or business — something called "self-healing." Self-healing can happen in one of two ways:

1 An issue is detected/reported by an IT team member or user and an analyst initiates a self-healing bot.

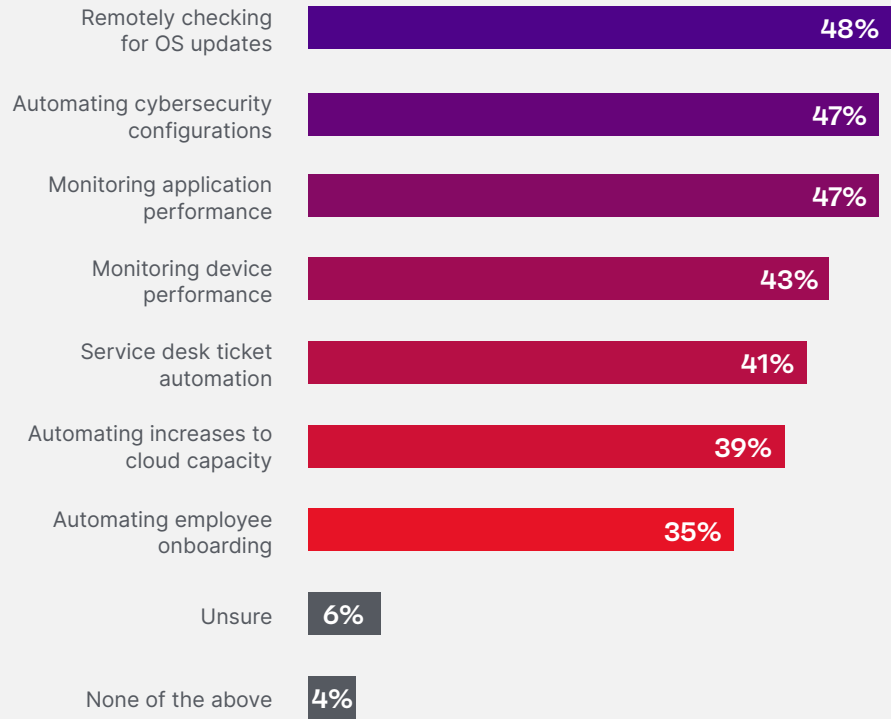**2** The bot itself detects an anomaly and remediates the issue before it impacts the user.

Self-healing is a critical strategy because it reduces the burden of rote, repetitive tasks on the IT team — particularly those related to tech support — and it heads off problems before end users encounter any kind of digital friction.

Slightly more than half (52%) of organizations say they frequently use self-healing technology — though in the US, adoption is significantly higher at 72%.

Automations organizations use to manage DEX

Q: Which of these DEX-related activities does your organization currently do? (Select all that apply.)

Activity	Percentage
Remotely checking for OS updates	48%
Automating cybersecurity configurations	47%
Monitoring application performance	47%
Monitoring device performance	43%
Service desk ticket automation	41%
Automating increases to cloud capacity	39%
Automating employee onboarding	35%
Unsure	6%
None of the above	4%

How do self-healing systems work?

Using remote monitoring and AI-driven bots, self-healing systems resolve IT-related problems proactively. Why wait for a user to complain about a performance issue like application crashes when bots are ready to flag and automatically fix/self-heal those difficulties for you? And best of all, these automatic resolutions are tracked and added to your performance metrics and satisfaction scores.

Self-healing systems collect signals and intervene automatically

| Monitoring	Interventions
Device performance **(e.g., CPU, memory, battery life, disk space)**	■ Identify resource constraints (e.g., protracted login times). ■ Prevent problem areas from recurring by using automated preventive maintenance — e.g., proactively clearing disk space to speed login times.
Application performance **(e.g., crashes, slowdowns)**	■ Identify and heal crashes and hangs. ■ Respond to other indicators of local or SaaS application performance problems such as high latency, or Wi-Fi or DNS resolution issues.
Security issues and vulnerabilities	■ Automate cybersecurity hygiene configurations (e.g., firewall compliance, antivirus protection, disk encryption).
Service interruptions	■ Identify problems before end users report them. ■ Qualify impact/severity of the issues with end users in real time. ■ Use automation to accelerate diagnosis, remediation and service desk interaction.

What is a DEX score?

An individualized DEX score offers organizations a 360-degree view of the health and efficiency of the devices, applications and operating systems an employee uses to perform their job. A higher score indicates better employee experience.

The DEX score allows IT managers to monitor indicators across several key areas such as:
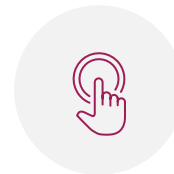
Devices

Device age, processor speed, boot degradation, system failures, warranty, memory and storage.
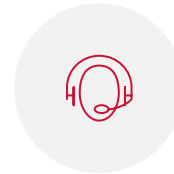
Support

Number of open tickets, priority and urgency.

Applications

Load times, errors and user interactions.

Security

Vulnerability scan data and antimalware versions.

DEX scores are updated automatically every time an inventory scan happens or when there are changes to the tracked indicators. Because the process is automated, managers can identify potential problems and recommend remediation steps to proactively improve end-user experience.

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Hidden impact

IT professionals are straining to meet the demands
of Everywhere Work. Will AI help relieve IT's overwork?
(Hint: IT isn't convinced.)

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DEX is all about end-user experience, but given the disruption to workplace technology over the last five years, we believe it's also important to look at IT professionals' digital experience — after all, they're your employees too!
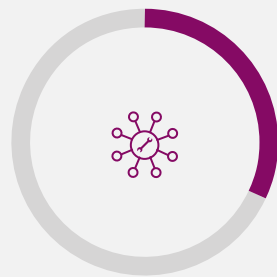
More than 3 in 4 IT professionals we surveyed admit that **work stress is affecting their physical and/or mental health.** And 68% say they feel burned out at work.

IT workers report tech stress

47%

Too many digital notifications

42%

Too many tools
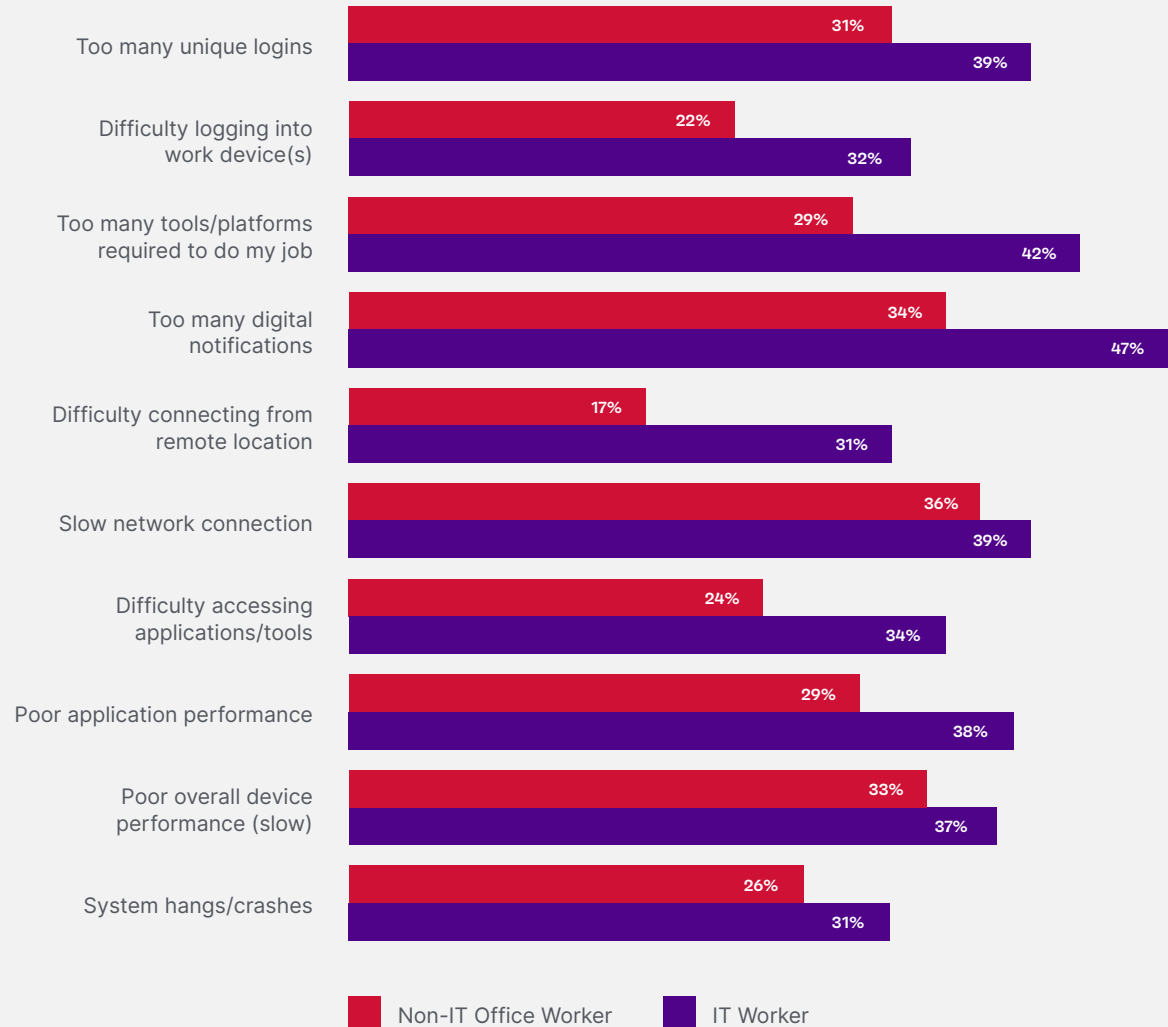
39%

Too many logins

Perhaps most surprising: IT workers are significantly more likely to experience a wide range of technology problems at work compared to other office workers — from too many digital notifications, to too many tools and platforms needed to do their jobs.

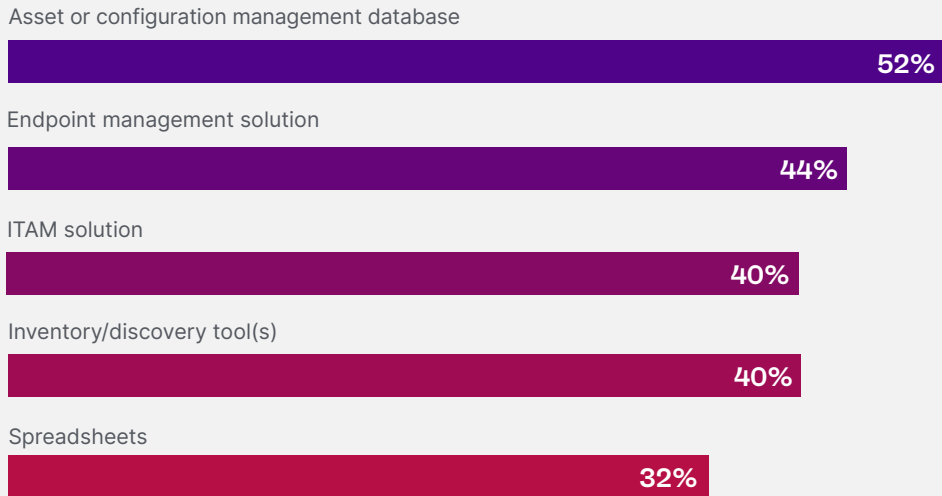# IT workers report high degrees of technology 'friction' at work

Q: Which of these tech problems do you experience at least weekly? (Select all that apply.)

Tech problem	Non-IT Office Worker	IT Worker
Too many unique logins	31%	39%
Difficulty logging into work device(s)	22%	32%
Too many tools/platforms required to do my job	29%	42%
Too many digital notifications	34%	47%
Difficulty connecting from remote location	17%	31%
Slow network connection	36%	39%
Difficulty accessing applications/tools	24%	34%
Poor application performance	29%	38%
Poor overall device performance (slow)	33%	37%
System hangs/crashes	26%	31%

■ Non-IT Office Worker ■ IT Worker

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Database tools are most common to track IT assets

Q: What are you currently using to track IT assets? (Select all that apply.)

Asset or configuration management database
52%

Endpoint management solution
44%

ITAM solution
40%

Inventory/discovery tool(s)
40%

Spreadsheets
32%

21%

of IT professionals say they don't have full and total visibility into which workplace applications employees use.

Plus, IT workers tell us they lack the tools needed to do their jobs effectively. One in five say they **don't have full and total visibility** into which workplace applications employees use. Just 43% use an endpoint management solution to track IT assets, while only 39% use an ITAM solution. (These usage rates are only slightly higher than last year.)[1]

Perhaps because of all these headwinds, IT professionals are using risky shortcuts and workarounds to help them do their jobs.

54%
request to bypass security protocols

35%
open work applications on personal devices

31%
use a personal email account for work communications

30%
store passwords on unauthorized apps or paper

1. In 2022, 42% of IT workers used an endpoint management solution, and 35% used an ITAM solution.

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Why aren't we thinking about DEX in a way that allows IT to reap the benefits as well?
What exactly is the impasse?
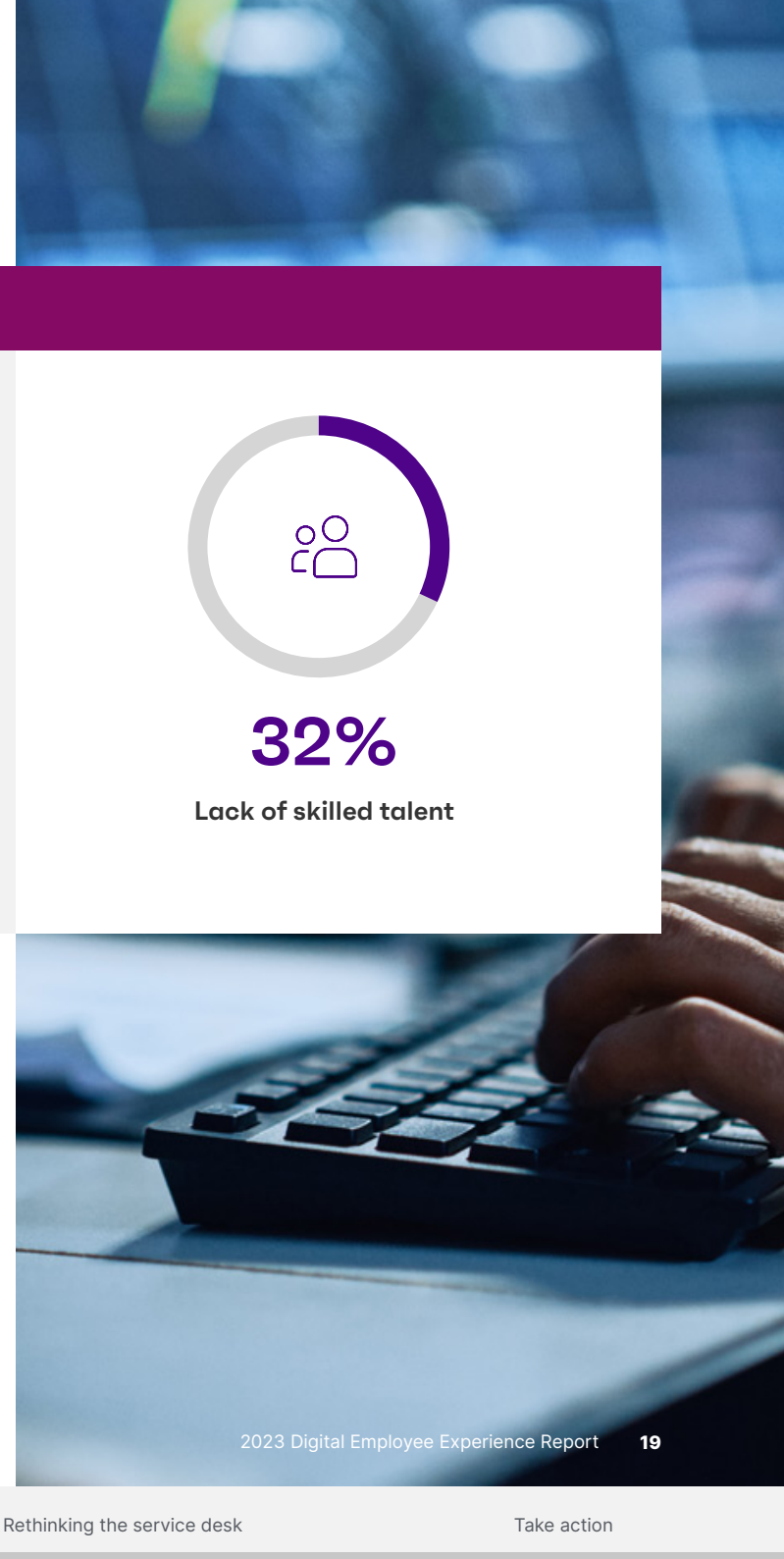
Most common barriers to prioritizing DEX according to IT professionals:

43%
Cost/budget

34%
Complex tech stack

32%
Lack of skilled talent

It's time to acknowledge that the transformation of the workplace — from a physical location to Everywhere Work — has seriously strained IT teams. Among IT workers we surveyed, 85% spend at least part of their week at home, yet 27% say **their tech tools are not as effective when working remotely.** Organizations must ask: Is it true that 1 in 4 members of our critical IT workforce is hobbled when working remotely?

Put plainly: Many IT professionals simply don't believe in the movement they are empowering. Nearly half (47%) say they need to be in the office to be productive — that's **16 points higher** than the share of non-IT office workers who say the same.

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AI to the rescue?

Many believe AI can improve IT productivity … and possibly relieve some of the burden on stressed, overworked employees. (Though, to be fair, much is made of AI's promise, but Ivanti's research finds that just 11% of IT teams are prioritizing AI in 2023.)

Despite all the analyst coverage about the potential of generative AI to be a productivity multiplier, if you speak to IT professionals, you'll find a more conflicted outlook. While many IT workers see the **productivity benefits,** large numbers view generative AI as a serious **threat to their profession.** In fact, IT professionals are nearly 2x more likely to say AI poses a career threat compared to all other knowledge workers.[2]

What it comes down to: IT workers have a strong belief that **AI will help employers more than it will help employees.** Our survey found 56% of IT professionals believe the benefits of AI will accrue more to employers than to employees. Just 7% see a net benefit to employees.

2.   Comparing office workers and IT workers who chose "very concerned" or "extremely concerned" as a reaction to advances in generative IT.

IT workers are stressed by advances in generative AI

Q: How concerned are you about generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Bard and Bing Chat taking your job in the next five years?

Office workers

35%	22%	25%	11%	8%

IT Worker

19%	19%	26%	19%	18%

56%

of IT workers believe AI will help *employers* more than *employees*

■ Not at all concerned

■ Slightly concerned

■ Somewhat concerned

■ Very concerned

■ Extremely concerned

Conflicting outlooks on AI

The positive:

A significant number (29%) think AI will bring a high level of improvement to their productivity and half (50%) say it will automate their mundane and routine work.

The negative:

Many more feel anxious about the impact of AI on their careers. Nearly 2 in 3 (63%) IT workers say they're concerned that generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Bing Chat will take their job in the next five years.

"Executives are excited to figure out how generative AI can transform their organizations and boost productivity, but the team that will execute this transformation isn't fully on board. IT leaders who aren't actively addressing their employees' fears when it comes to AI are doing their already stressed teams a disservice."

Bob Grazioli,
Chief Information Officer, Ivanti

Rethinking the service desk

When it comes to getting help from IT, office workers still favor a human-mediated process — and that preference adds to IT's workload.

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Ivanti asked office workers how they prefer to contact IT for support. **Calling IT** is the most common option — 6 points higher than opening a ticket online. When offered the option of using a chatbot, most office workers still prefer human contact.
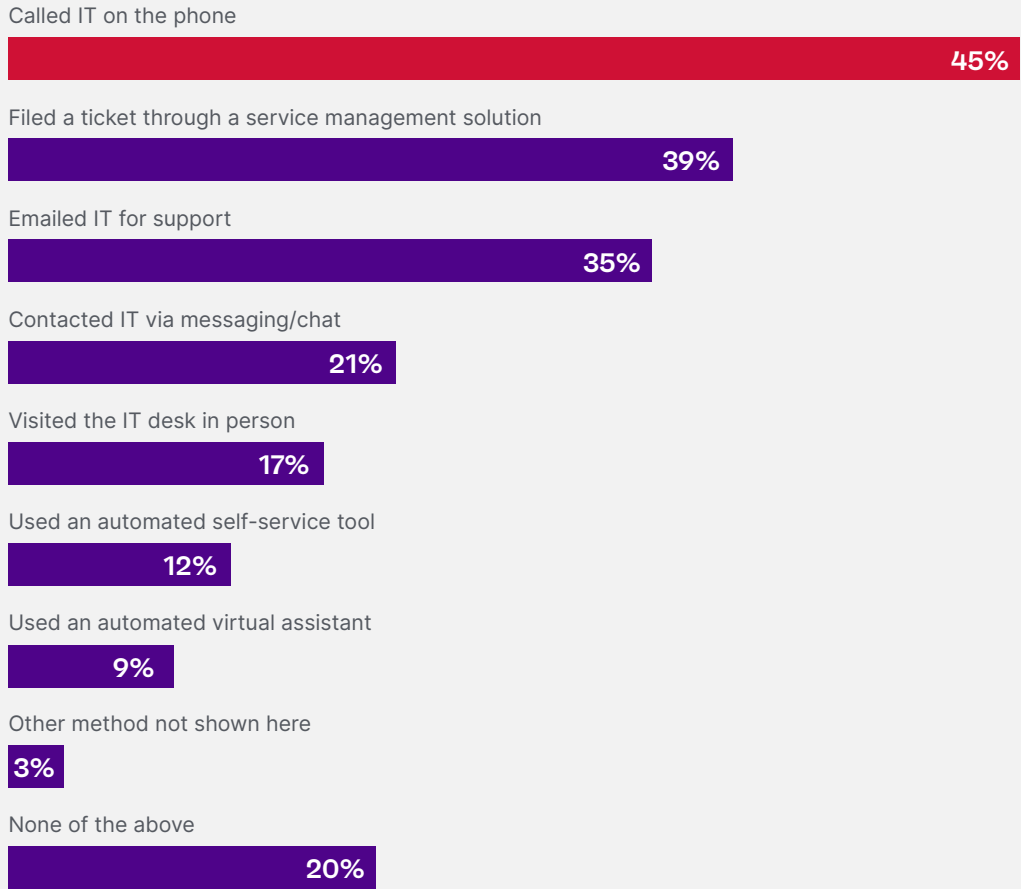
Most office workers prefer a human-mediated process to get IT help. As organizations deploy automations that affect end users, it's important to keep this preference in mind.

Employees are more likely to call for tech support than open a ticket through a service platform

Q: Which of these things have you done to get IT help/support in the last 6 months?

Called IT on the phone
45%

Filed a ticket through a service management solution
39%

Emailed IT for support
35%

Contacted IT via messaging/chat
21%

Visited the IT desk in person
17%

Used an automated self-service tool
12%

Used an automated virtual assistant
9%

Other method not shown here
3%
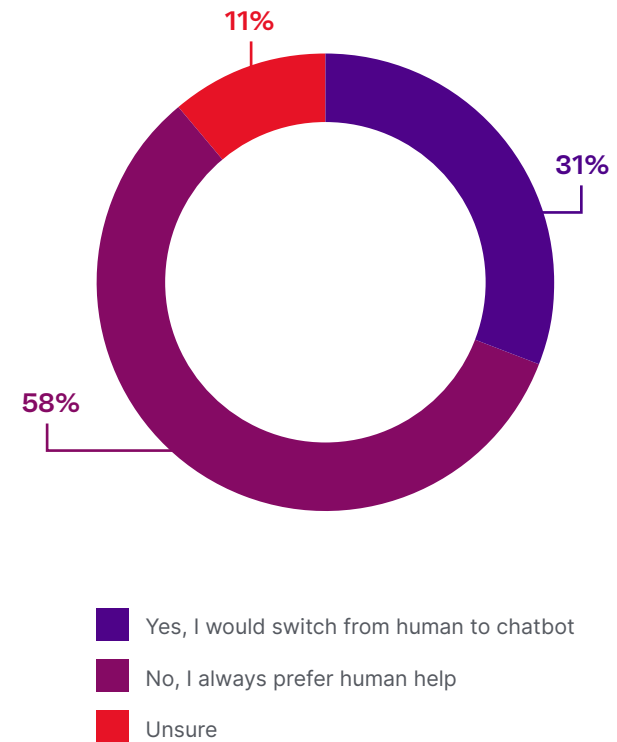
None of the above
20%

Employees prefer speaking to a human over a chatbot...

Q: Sometimes employees can solve their IT problem using a chatbot or digital automation. Is this something you would choose if it was available?

- 7%
- 17%
- 26%
- 50%

■ I would choose a human to solve my IT problem

■ I would choose a chatbot/automation to solve my IT problem

■ No preference

■ Unsure
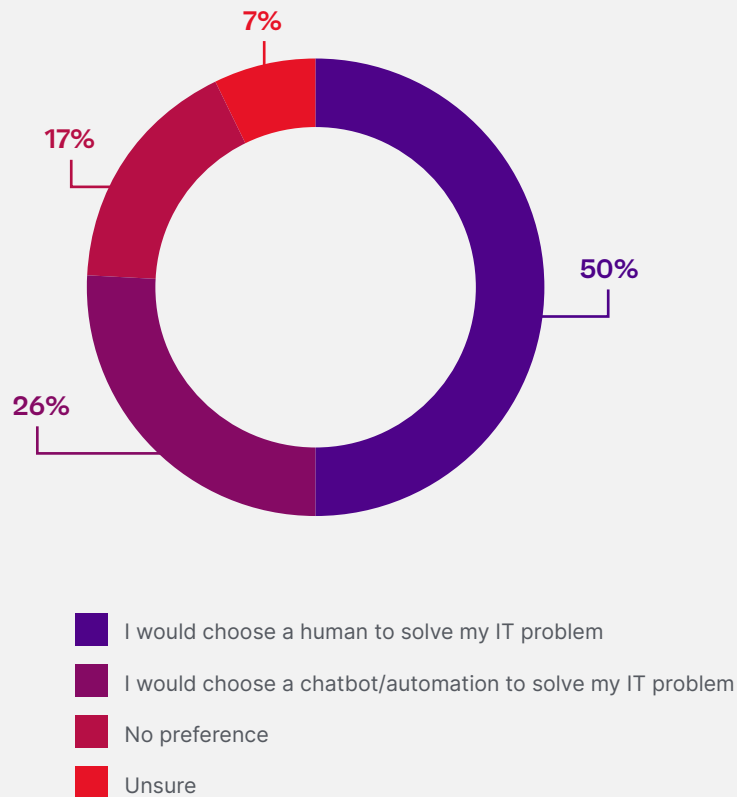
Though some are willing to switch if the chatbot is viewed as helpful

Q: If the chatbot/automation was as helpful as using a human, would that change your mind?

- 11%
- 31%
- 58%

■ Yes, I would switch from human to chatbot

■ No, I always prefer human help

■ Unsure

As organizations push to automate many aspects of the helpdesk, it's useful to think about automation as a "co-pilot" — an assistant to resolve simple tasks (and even more complex ones for those willing to use it), but with a human available and involved for those who prefer it.

Ivanti's research also shows users are nearly as likely to turn first to a co-worker for help (27%) compared to calling the helpdesk (28%) — the second consecutive year our research uncovered a virtual tie between the two.

Employees are nearly as likely to ask a co-worker as file a helpdesk ticket

Q: Considering all the ways you get help with tech, who/what do you typically turn to first?

Call workplace support
28%

Ask a coworker
27%

Research a solution myself
17%

Online chat with workplace support
15%

Company-provided self-service
7%

Consult friend/family
2%

Do nothing / unsure
4%

Office workers are nearly as likely to seek out technical support from a non-IT co-worker as they are from the helpdesk. Why not leverage this by offering more (and higher quality) self-help resources?

On one hand, contacting a non-IT colleague for help means employees are clearly trying to solve their own IT issues without turning to the helpdesk. But this finding also requires caution: With no ticket issued or formal resolution, IT is unaware of the problem and whether it affects a wider number of users.

The data shows there are ways to drive up productivity and efficiency while safeguarding employee experience:

Self-service:

A large portion of office workers want to fix their own problems (if given the right information). This is especially true for the under-40 crowd.

Self-healing:

Many organizations are still not using proactive, self-healing systems. Just over half (52%) are frequently doing this today.

### More than 1 in 4 companies don't offer self-service resources...

Q: Does your company offer resources to help you solve your own IT problems?

14%
26%
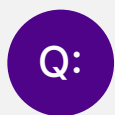60%

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
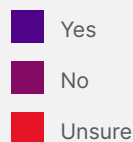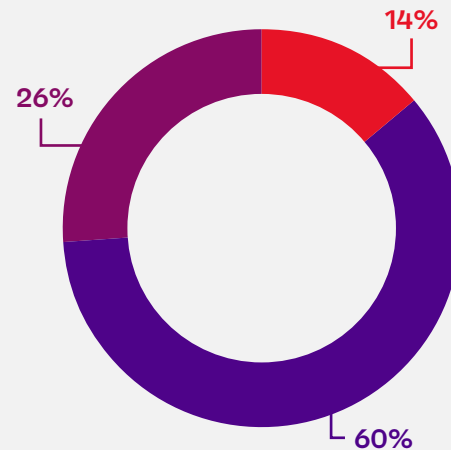
Even though nearly half of office workers prefer to fix their own tech problems when possible

Q: When you have a tech problem at work, do you prefer that someone fix it for you, or give you information to fix it yourself?

19%
33%
48%

- Get information to fix it myself
- Someone fixes my problem
- No preference/Unsure
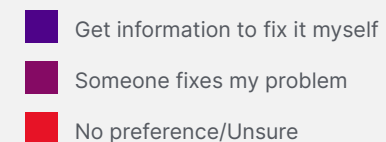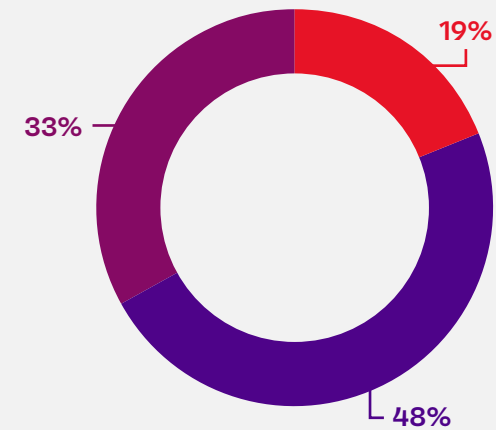
Proactive DEX management

Q: A best practice of DEX management is solving tech problems before they impact the user and/or business. How often does your organization do this?

52%	38%	10%

■ Frequently

■ Sometimes/Occasionally

■ Rarely/Never

Take action

Research-based steps to elevate
DEX (and IT teams) in 2024

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1   Lay the groundwork by developing the framework for a holistic measure of DEX

Even while many organizations claim to prioritize DEX, few are truly measuring digital experience outside of surveys — which offer a snapshot in time but fail to consistently quantify end-user productivity and IT efficiency.

Organizations should **define what excellent DEX looks like** inside their organization, then research the current baseline: What are we currently doing to support DEX? And what does a foundation of tech health look like?

Next, it's time to **choose KPIs** that capture device performance and user satisfaction. With time you can build out more advanced methods, such as evolving from service level agreements (SLAs) that focus on uptime, to experience level agreements (XLAs), which measure user satisfaction with the IT services provided.

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2 Challenge yourself to think bigger

In a world where every employee interaction is mediated by technology, DEX permeates everything — from device monitoring and incident response, to tech provisioning, preventive maintenance and security protocols.

Beyond uptime and user satisfaction (the most common DEX-related issues organizations pay attention to), what about device health, application performance, network access, incident frequency, escalations, security configurations, sentiment analysis and the like?

Let's go even one step further. What if DEX management wasn't just about monitoring? What if it was action-oriented?

An automated DEX management program would include:

Measuring and detecting issues
across a wide network of systems, devices and people.

Generating insights
into the baseline (i.e., historical) health of this environment.

Detecting anomalies and noncompliance,
anticipating errors and predicting downtime.

Fixing potential issues
before they rise to the level of a traditional alert.

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By implementing this type of **action-oriented philosophy**, organizations experience fewer helpdesk tickets, less downtime and higher employee satisfaction.

Auto-Reacting (Today)

Detecting problems in real time and using automation to either self-heal or flag the helpdesk — before the user is aware.

Auto-Predicting (Tomorrow)

Applying deep AI insights across millions of connections (people, systems, devices) to anticipate and fix problems before they happen.

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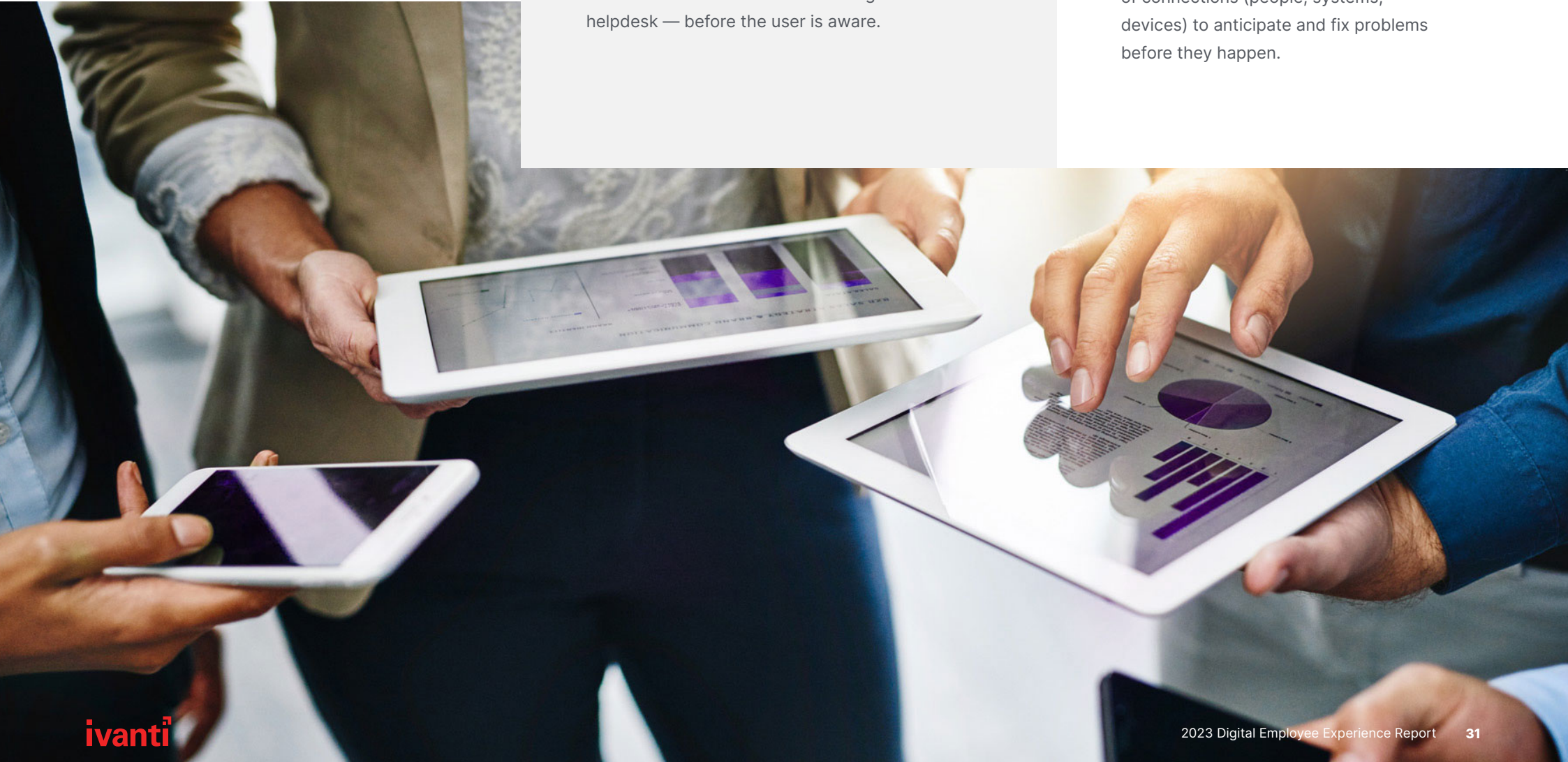
3 Take action

Organizations that want to make advances with DEX should consider investing time and budget in the following areas:

Establish a cross-functional tiger team to identify synergies across departments, and support AI and automation across the organization.

Use AI/automation to shift left and accelerate first-call resolution. Explore how to make service desk analysts more efficient and effective — for example, deploying tools that provide asset insights, contextual device information, patch status, remote troubleshooting and bot-driven automation, such as automated ticket routing.

Implement robust self-service resources. Empower end users to resolve issues without the helpdesk by investing in self-service portals and a continually updated knowledge base. (Remember: 59% of office workers want to use self-service resources.)

Invest in self-healing automation and optimization. Invest in AI and bots that can self-heal problems that arise — and minimize or avoid human interventions. Go one step further: use benchmark DEX data and trendlines to **identify areas for improvement.** Then put a **preventive maintenance plan** in place to minimize known or likely problems. For example:

- Aggregated data may show that a specific device model begins to exhibit problems at the 36-month mark. Plan to replace parts (or the device) before that date.

- Use synthetic testing and simulations to proactively identify issues — even before a system goes live — and identify multiple ways to remediate them.

Collect feedback: Use interactive automation bots to reach out to users and get real-time feedback and insights — including tracking user sentiment.

These types of **predictive cyberhygiene and maintenance actions** minimize downtime, reduce the number of helpdesk tickets and improve user experience.

Methodology

Ivanti surveyed **7,800 executive leaders, IT professionals and office workers** in May and June, 2023. Our goal: To understand how end users interact with and feel about the technologies they use at work, and to investigate best practices for managing DEX in the workplace.

The study was administered by Ravn Research and panelists were recruited by MSI Advanced Customer Insights. Survey results are unweighted. Further details by country are available by request.

Survey sample

Office Workers
6,000

Security Professionals
1,200

Leadership Executives
600

Industry Sectors

12%
Financial services

9%
Retail, e-commerce, wholesale

12%
Government

8%
Education

12%
Manufacturing or processing industry

6%
Professional services

12%
Technology

3%
Telecom

10%
Healthcare

14%
Other

Countries

UK
17%

Germany
17%

France
16%

US
17%

Japan
17%

Australia
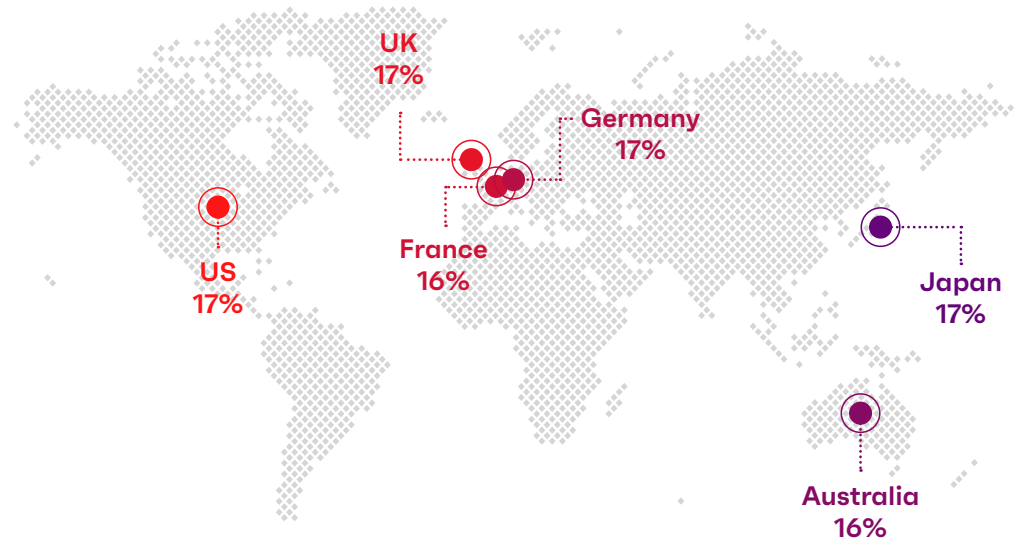16%

2023 Report:

New imperatives for digital employee experience

How technology drives employee satisfaction, retention and productivity

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ivanti.com
1 800 982 2130
sales@ivanti.com