Perception management: The key to employee experience

A whitepaper from Lenovo

Lenovo recommends Windows 10 Pro for business.
Introduction

Time. It’s the one thing people never seem to have enough of, which is no surprise when you consider how many distractions we deal with every day.

We’re constantly connected via business and personal devices. Always contactable. Always interruptible. Plus, we’re working from home and on the move a lot more, with all the disruptions that go with that.

Employee productivity and talent retention have long been at the top of the agenda for SMBs, but while many have made extensive efforts to improve these, efforts somehow fall short. The result? An unhappy workforce that feels burnt out, tired, and unproductive.

In this whitepaper, we’ll discuss:

- understanding and addressing the needs of a modern workforce
- differences in employee and employer perceptions
- the essential role technology plays in improving EX (employee experience)
- key ways to improve EX—and therefore productivity and retention
The changing workplace

The way we work, and where, has completely transformed in recent years. Today’s workplace isn’t confined to an office anymore. Many organizations have shifted to a largely remote workforce and this trend is only going to continue.

However, teams still need to come together to ideate and create. Businesses need to support their teams in this work, so that they feel satisfied and productive.

There’s more to productivity than creating a distraction-free, high focus environment. SMBs also need to understand how to enable employees in the evolving workplace and prepare for future growth, instead of getting stuck in the past. It’s crucial to understand the needs and workstyles of the new workforce, so we can address their productivity and EX challenges.
The new workforce

Today’s workforce contains multiple generations, which can be challenging when you want to bring teams together to aspire towards a common goal. Currently, Gen X, Millennials (Gen Y) and Gen Z employees are all co-working in the modern workplace.

For SMBs who want to satisfy and retain the new workforce, it’s important to first understand their needs, aspirations and priorities.

Let’s dive into the workstyles of Millennial and Gen Z workers in particular, as they make up 59% of today’s workforce, and will increase to 75% by 2025.¹

**MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES:**
The fastest growing segment in the workforce, Millennials are finding that the evolving workplace they live in requires them to collaborate with others as an everyday part of their job.

Without the right tools, Millennials find their productivity under threat.

- 93% of Millennials own a smartphone.²
- 49% believe new technologies will augment their jobs.³
- 71% say that how much an organization embraces technology influences where they decide to work.⁴

**GEN Z EMPLOYEES:**
Like their predecessors, Gen Z workers also are motivated by flexible schedules and having access to the latest technology.

- 38% view work-life balance as a top priority.⁵
- 90% want some form of human element in their work and team interactions.⁵
- 65% are motivated by salary.⁶
- 74% are dissatisfied with their workplace technology.⁷

This new workforce is looking to get the most out of their jobs regardless of where they work from. For them, achieving maximum productivity and satisfaction at work is a driving force. So, what does productivity mean for the modern workforce?
Defining productivity for the modern workforce

Productive employees are happy employees, so if you want to enhance employee productivity—job satisfaction is a must.

Often, when employees don’t achieve all the work they set out to do in their day, they build a perception in their minds that they are not productive enough. This affects their morale and satisfaction with their jobs.

According to a global Forrester research report conducted in July 2019, wherever employees reported low satisfaction at work, they also reported low productivity.

When employees are more satisfied at work, this improves perception about the value they add to their organization. It is therefore important for organizations to go beyond creating a conducive work atmosphere for employees and reshape the employee experience.

Employees in South Korea (50%), Mexico (54%), and Taiwan (56%) report the lowest level of productivity among all countries surveyed.

South Korea: 50%
Mexico: 54%
Taiwan: 56%

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Worldwide

This chart compares employee satisfaction ratings with their productivity by country.

Windows 10

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Smarter technology for all
Asia Pacific

This chart compares employee satisfaction ratings with their productivity by country.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Employee Satisfaction</th>
<th>Employee Productivity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>66%</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>67%</td>
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The Americas

This chart compares employee satisfaction ratings with their productivity by country.

Employee satisfaction
Employee productivity

Mexico: 63%
Chile: 72%
United States: 67%

Perception management | The key to employee experience
Employee experience: It’s not all yoga and free breakfasts

Employee experience cannot be enhanced by just offering freebies like food or fitness classes. Though these are perceived positively, these perks don’t matter as much if you don’t give employees the right tools to do their jobs efficiently.

So think holistically and prioritize:

Flexible and remote working:

82% of employees have used flexible and remote working options.9

Rapid technological change:

1/3 of employees worldwide feel their job is harder than it should be due to outdated processes and technology.10

Focus on collaboration:

35% of employees who collaborate, stick to a task 64% longer than solitary employees, and feel more engaged.11

If you want to keep your employees happy, it’s important to first understand what they want and need in their work lives, and what’s holding them back from feeling accomplished.

Windows 10

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Most employees’ needs are quite uncomplicated. They want to do their jobs to the best of their ability, to feel productive, and believe that their work is meaningful. This can create enriching employee experiences too.

This is particularly true of Gen Zs and Millennials, who make up the bulk of the workforce. Unfortunately, achieving this isn’t so easy, especially in SMBs, where employees juggle multiple roles, projects, and tasks, with more distractions and not enough productivity.

Those who regularly switch between tasks tend to perform worse than those that don’t.\textsuperscript{12}

The average time a worker loses per day re-focusing when switching between tasks.\textsuperscript{13}

The time it takes to return to the original task after engaging in two or more intervening activities.\textsuperscript{14}

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Ironically, hyper-connectivity on multiple channels and a culture of ‘rapid response’ to colleagues and customers often leaves employees unable to focus on their actual work.

This often results in them having to play catch-up, compromising other aspects of their lives:

- 51% of small business owners don’t have time to focus on themselves.15
- 28% of ‘new workforce’ (vs 21% of older generations) feel they are frequently burnt out at work.16

So, the primary responsibility of employers is to try to reduce the distractions to ensure a productive work environment.

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Digital distractions, endless meetings, and overwhelming change efforts distract employees from their work, and sap their cognitive capacity.

Finding flow in the typical workplace

Finding flow in the ideal workplace

Helping employees focus on making progress on their most important work tasks is what employee experience is all about.

Source: Forrester report, Introducing The Employee Experience Index
EX perception: The disconnect between employer and employee

There has long been a disconnect between how employers and employees rate themselves on EX. Employers often overrate themselves with positive EX rating, compared to what their employee's actually experience.

Most countries show a gap of EX perception between SMB device buyers and users. The gap between how device buyers perceive employee satisfaction and actual employee satisfaction in Indonesia and Singapore. Of employers consider employee experience a high priority, but they don’t necessarily know how to go about fixing it.

However, many don’t realize that technology can be a key driver of employee experience.

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How technology can improve productivity, employee perception and EX

Workplace technology plays a crucial role in workforce productivity and employee experience.

Taking productive employees out of their ‘flow’ harms EX, and device issues rank in the top 3 of daily distractions for more than 1/3 of employees.

When employees have access to the right technology, it helps them work with more focus and efficiency. This helps them become more productive and save time in their day.

And when your employees are more productive, it’s easier for them to see the purpose in what they’re doing—improving their satisfaction and perception of your brand.

- More than 2/3 of unproductive employees are not satisfied with their device usage or IT support they get™
- More than 65% of productive employees are satisfied with their device and IT support™

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Simply put: technology has the capability to make employees see the purpose in what they’re doing and change how they think and innovate at their jobs.

Which of the following are the main reasons of distraction at work for you?

Base: 813 device users at small and medium enterprises in 15 countries.

* Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Lenovo, July 2019
This chart demonstrates the satisfaction level indicated by employees and the perceived employee satisfaction level indicated by their employer (device buyer) by country.
Asia Pacific

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- France: Employees 62%, Device buyer 51%
- Italy: Employees 70%, Device buyer 65%
- Russia: Employees 75%, Device buyer 85%
- Germany: Employees 74%, Device buyer 67%
- United Kingdom: Employees 77%

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The Americas

This chart demonstrates the satisfaction level indicated by employees and the perceived employee satisfaction level indicated by their employer (device buyer) by country.

- **Mexico**: 88% satisfaction level for employees, 63% for device buyer
- **Chile**: 79% satisfaction level for employees, 65% for device buyer
- **United States**: 96% satisfaction level for employees, 67% for device buyer

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Given that time plays a crucial role in driving perceptions, every minute you are able to save your employees will have a significant impact on their experience. Technology that gives your employees the gift of time will go a long way in building their satisfaction. Empowering them to do more in their day may even drive a better work-life balance and enable better talent retention and productivity.

A good example is the Lenovo ThinkBook Plus i. The e-ink display on the top cover provides additional screen space to enable you to better focus on the tasks at hand. You can write notes, or sketch out ideas, instantly converting it to text and image files for sharing. All this, without even having to open your laptop. Enhance your work without compromising on any features you would expect.

Powered by the Intel® Core™ processor and running on Windows 10 Pro—the most powerful Windows yet, Lenovo ThinkBook Plus i is the latest innovation in our range of reliable, robust and secure devices. Give users the speed and freedom they need to collaborate and perform at their best.
Learn more about other Lenovo products

Ideal for small and medium businesses, discover more about the Lenovo range that can best suit your employees.

The built for business Intel vPro® platform and Windows Operating System on ThinkPad devices deliver the performance, security features, manageability and stability that users need and want. This native, integrated, no compromise platform provides the latest PC platform technologies in one validated solution. It is optimized for managed IT environments and continually evolving based on the real world needs of employees, IT, and business decision makers.

- Business class performance for a great user experience
- Built-in hardware-based security feature
- Modern remote manageability
- Business-class stability and reliability

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Conclusion

Although these are uncertain times, as we settle into our new normal, SMBs have an opportunity to shape success for the future. By managing our workforce’s perceptions, and embracing the right technology, we can raise productivity, enhance employee experience, and help people find real purpose in their work.

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