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Cliff Saran, managing editor

In Microsoft's latest financial report, CEO Satya Nadella discussed how [Teams was Microsoft's fastest-growing platform](#). The company hopes organisations will move beyond products such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint towards seeing Microsoft as a collaboration platform with software including Skype, Teams and the LinkedIn service.

In a transcript of the earnings call posted on the [Seeking Alpha financial blogging site](#), Nadella said: "There is no question this last fiscal year has been an absolute breakout year for Teams in terms of both product innovation and, most importantly, at-scale deployment and usage. And unlike any other time other than Windows, we've not had this kind of platform effect."

Microsoft's fourth-quarter 2019 results also showed there is demand for new business PCs as companies upgrade to Windows 10. In fact, analyst [Gartner has reported that 63 million PCs](#) were shipped in the second quarter of 2019, up from 62 million in the second quarter of 2018.

“Worldwide PC shipments growth was driven by demand from the [Windows 10 refresh](#) in the business market in the second quarter of 2019,” said Mikako Kitagawa, senior principal analyst at Gartner. “Desktop PC growth was strong, which offset a decline in mobile PC shipments.”

Modernising the desktop user experience offers CIOs and IT departments the opportunity to focus on helping their organisations transform digitally by providing employees with more streamlined and efficient ways to work and collaborate.

In late 2016, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Center for Information Research (MIT Cisir) conducted a study of 281 senior executives. The results, published in MIT’s [Building business value with employee experience](#) report noted that companies with scores in the top quartile of employee experience were twice as innovative as those in the bottom quartile, based on the percentage of revenue from new products and services in the past two years.

“These companies were paving the way for employees to work together effectively and engage with customers in new ways to enhance revenue streams,” wrote MIT Cisir research scientist Kristine Dery and MIT Cisir research associate Ina Sebastian in the report.

But a recent YouGov digital wellbeing study for Avanade, based on a survey of 1,000 employees, found that UK companies are failing to realise the value from

their workplace technology investments. The survey suggested this is due to a lack of consideration of employee experience.

The study found that while 68% of employees react positively to new technologies, only 39% actually use them regularly. Almost two-thirds of employees believe new workplace technologies are being deployed without consideration of their needs, and they feel this is something HR should contribute in partnership with IT.

According to Avanade, rather than empowering employees, the proliferation of new technologies can cause confusion, leading to a lack of adoption. Of those surveyed, only 39% are embracing modern workplace technology such as Slack, Teams, WebEx and Skype, while an overwhelming proportion remain wedded to more dated technology like email (73%). This is preventing businesses from bringing about the productivity gains and improvements in employee experience they expect from their technology investments, Avanade said.

[Another piece of research from Insight](#), based on a survey of 2,000 UK office workers, reported that many firms appear to be struggling to create a digital-first workplace. Insight found that among the people who took part in the survey, workers complained of unintuitive or overly restrictive technology systems and felt they were being left without adequate training. The result is many hours

wasted, productivity challenges, with disengaged and frustrated staff overloaded with information, said Insight.

Avanade believes IT must focus on providing systems that offer a good employee experience.

Stanley Louw, UK and Ireland head of digital innovation at Avanade, said: “We see the workplace as the new frontier for competitive advantage and a driver of sustainable growth. While businesses continue to invest heavily in customer experience (CX), many are still under-investing in employee experience (EX). Considering that employees play a major role in delivering CX, this would appear counterintuitive. Poor EX can also impact engagement, creativity and, ultimately, wellbeing.”

Similarly, Insight’s study found that a lack of engagement and the unavailability of useful, user-friendly technology in organisations is having a negative impact on staff productivity. Respondents said they accept delays or a worse-than-expected outcome on a task or project on average three times a week.

As Windows 7 reaches end of life and organisations upgrade PCs to Windows 10, the challenge for CIOs is how to encourage adoption of cloud-based office productivity tools that support collaboration and new ways of working.

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