

CIOs seeing improved staff retention and financial benefits from flexible working but more opportunities exist to improve customer service, says new research from Vodafone UK

- Improved employee engagement and productivity are top benefits of flexible working and are high ranking business priorities for CIOs.
- Improving customer service is the highest business priority for CIOs, but is only eighth in the list of perceived benefits achieved from mobile working.
- Nearly half of corporate and public sector workers say they are not provided with any communication tools to enable remote or flexible working.
- 39% of CIOs view enabling flexible working for the majority as a priority and a third say they are now thinking seriously about investing in unified communications solutions.

New research by Vodafone UK says CIOs agree the performance of their people and processes has improved by embracing new ways of working and mobile technologies. The majority of CIOs surveyed are already seeing how mobile and flexible working can give them a competitive edge, the research also uncovered.

Benefits of flexible working versus business priorities

Topping the list of benefits are improved efficiency, enhanced workforce engagement and improved staff retention. It is not just staff that have benefited – there have been financial gains, too. Reduced costs and improved revenues feature highly on the list of successes named by CIOs.

Encouragingly, the successes of new ways of working largely fit with CIOs' top business priorities for the year – with reducing operating costs and increasing employee productivity coming in joint second on the priority list for CIOs.

However, it appears that there has been more difficulty in achieving CIOs highest business priority for the year. Over 70 per cent of CIOs say that 'improving customer service' is their most important objective in a post-recession economy – but this features only eighth in the list of perceived benefits achieved, showing that CIOs and organisations could do more with mobile and flexible working.

How flexible working can improve customer service

The successes in staff retention, employee engagement and productivity through mobile working are likely to have a longer term impact on customer service. An engaged, customer-focused and responsive workforce will have a greater understanding of their customers' needs and be able to deliver a faster and more effective service.

For 39% of CIOs, enabling flexible working for the majority is a priority. There is still work to be done here, however, as the research uncovered that nearly half (47%) of corporate and public sector workers say they are not currently provided with any mobile working tools, such as a smartphone, laptop or secure remote access.

"Embracing new ways of working is absolutely about enabling employees to work on the move, but it is also about making systems more flexible and agile across whole organisations," according to Jeni Mundy, Chief Technology Officer, Vodafone UK.

“Using new technologies, such as unified communications, can not only help CIOs give their organisation a competitive edge but also help shift customer service further up the list of benefits CIOs are seeing from embracing new ways of working.”

How unified communications can help

A third of CIOs are looking to implement a unified communications solution in their organisation, which will in turn provide opportunities to use communications to directly improve customer interactions. This could be anything from a UC contact centre solution which routes calls to the right person first time, or the ability for a customer to talk to the person they need first time using only one number, regardless of whether that person is in the office or out and about.

Read the full ‘Living the Dream?’ Vodafone report at: [vodafone-central.com/resources/pdfs/whitepapers/living the dream report 2010.pdf](http://vodafone-central.com/resources/pdfs/whitepapers/living_the_dream_report_2010.pdf)

Ends

Notes to editors:

About the research

Survey conducted in June 2010 amongst 210 CIOs in 500 employee (+) organisations in the public and private sectors, alongside more than 1200 employees in 500 employee (+) organisations. The survey was carried out online by Opinion Matters. All research conducted adheres to the MRS Codes of Conduct 2010.