THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE EMPLOYEE:

How Apps Are Elevating The Performance Of Workers And Companies In Europe, Middle East and Africa

New technologies are disrupting virtually every industry in Europe and the rest of the world. Is it therefore any wonder that these same technologies—specifically, business apps—are now disrupting the very management of companies, reshaping responsibilities and driving innovation into the hands of the individual?

Forbes Insights partnered with VMware to learn more about how business apps—defined as employee-centric software utilized by end-users as part of their professional responsibilities—are impacting company performance. We surveyed 2,158 CIOs and end-users, and the findings are highlighted in a new global report, "The Impact of the Digital Workforce."

This EMEA executive summary specifically looks at the impact of business apps on the performance of companies in France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. We focus on the working environment and culture of the employee—characterized here as the "workspace." Following the analysis of the data, we identified three segments within the sample:

- Companies that do not (in the opinions of their end-users) provide employees with the technology they need to do their jobs effectively—*the Traditional Workspace.*

- Companies that provide the applications employees want and need, but don't make them easily accessible—*the Transitioning Workspace.*

- Companies that provide the applications employees want and need, and make them readily accessible anywhere, anytime and on any device—*the Digital Workspace.*

Throughout this executive summary, we'll compare these three groups, and break down the results to show how those in the "digital workspace," or those that strive to be in the digital workspace, outperform the rest. We'll also examine where EMEA companies stand in comparison to the rest of the world when it comes to making these apps readily accessible.

THE EMPOWERED EMPLOYEE

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Business applications, such as collaborative software, project management suites and process automation solutions, are becoming an integral part of the working day of a broad range of employees. As such, these tools are beginning to build a track record of contributions to individual employee performance.

A striking benefit of these apps is the displacement of tedious manual labor with automated workflows. Over 40% of EMEA employees in the Digital Workspace—again, those organizations that make apps available and highly accessible—report that apps have reduced the time spent on manual processes. That's more than three times the impact being experienced in Traditional Workspace companies (Figure 1).

It is also striking that 70% of EMEA Digital Workspace employees report that apps—file sharing and editing programs, video and audio conferencing, shared data bases and the like—are very important in enhancing collaboration within their organizations (Figure 2), compared with about half that number in Traditional Workspace organizations.
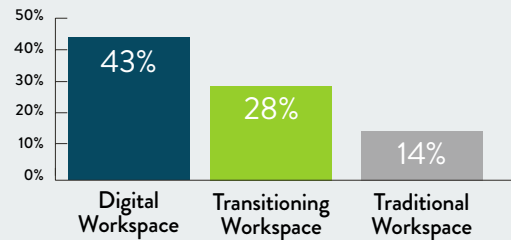
In today's increasingly digital world, agility and speed to market are increasingly prized by companies. Business apps, by putting information at employees' fingertips, by enhancing collaboration, and by providing real-time group communication, are seen to be very important in speeding up decision making in over three-quarters of the EMEA Digital Workspace companies; that's over twice what's found in Traditional Workspace companies (Figure 3).

Perhaps the greatest measure of individual performance is productivity. Fifty-eight percent of employees from EMEA Digital Workspace companies report that apps have increased their personal productivity, versus only 12% of respondents in companies that do not make apps readily accessible (Figure 4).
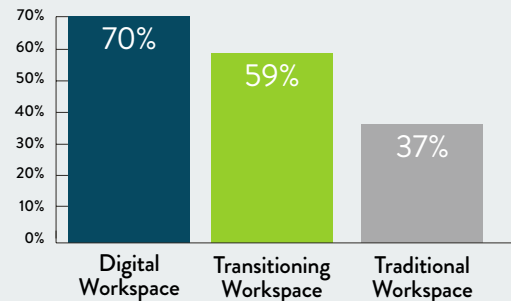
APPS AND MANUAL PROCESSES
Figure 1. Employee business applications have helped reduce the time I spend on manual processes.
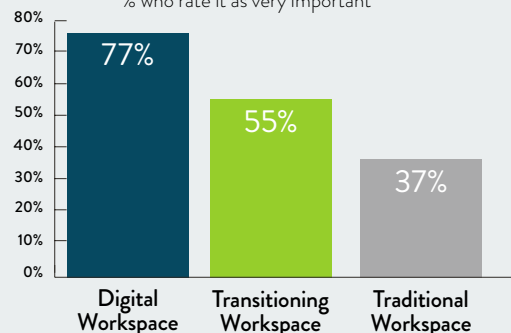% who strongly agree

APPS AND COLLABORATION
Figure 2. Rate the importance of easily accessed apps in increasing collaboration between teams.
% who rate it as very important

TIME SAVED
Figure 3. Rate the importance of easily accessed apps in accelerating decision making.
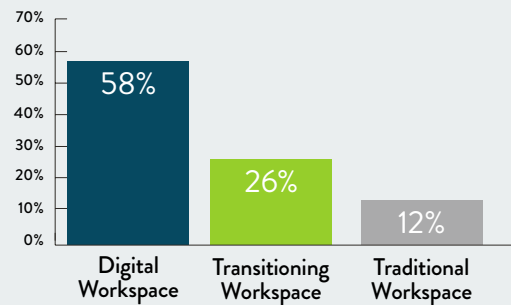% who rate it as very important

"Giving frontline employees the freedom and responsibility to own the decisions that affect their company breaks many of the chains of command," says Duncan Greenwood, vice president, end-user computing, VMware EMEA. "CIOs are, however, clearly recognizing that empowering employees is having a significant, positive impact. The challenge is business leaders need to quickly adapt to this change by fostering an environment where innovation is embraced and new technology adoption can be effectively exploited to transform the company for the better."

APPS AND PRODUCTIVITY
Figure 4. Rate the importance of easily accessed apps in increasing productivity in your company.
% who rate it as very important

Digital Workspace	58%
Transitioning Workspace	26%
Traditional Workspace	12%

THE IMPACT OF THE EMPOWERED WORKFORCE

A marketing manager in Hamburg is relieved of the tedium of inputting numbers. A supply chain director in Gothenburg collaborates with a Milan-based supplier in real time. A VP in London finds her team is making decisions faster. These are the kinds of incremental improvements in the work day that can add up to transformational change within the larger workforce—with the greatest impact reported by companies that make apps available and highly accessible.

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DUNCAN GREENWOOD
VICE PRESIDENT, END-USER COMPUTING,
VMWARE EMEA

For example, 50% of employees in the EMEA Digital Workspace strongly agree that apps have increased employee satisfaction in their organization, versus only 11% in Traditional Workspace companies (Figure 5).

"Apps are a fundamental element to any digital workspace strategy," says Adam Holtby, senior analyst, enterprise mobility and productivity at Ovum. "Democratizing how apps can not only be accessed, but also how they can be created represents a key opportunity for organizations to help facilitate heightened levels of employee productivity, empowerment and satisfaction."

Lufthansa Cargo is just one example of a company leveraging business apps to improve employee satisfaction. A wholly-owned subsidiary of Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Lufthansa Cargo uses an electronic flight bag (EFB) system on board planes, giving crews fast and easy access to aeronautical charts, airport information, route information, weather reports and much more. "The mobile devices enable us to quickly provide employees with updates, new apps and new approaches, saving the company money," says Sven Gartz, captain and head of flight ops IT at Lufthansa Cargo.

Apps are not just improving employee satisfaction, though. Fifty-one percent of EMEA Digital Workspace employees in this survey also report that apps have made their company a more desirable place to work—almost four times more than respondents from Traditional Workspace firms (Figure 6).

As the world becomes more digital, many believe that the morale and commitment of the individual employee is becoming an even more important driver of performance. When apps contribute to a more committed workforce, they ultimately increase company performance.
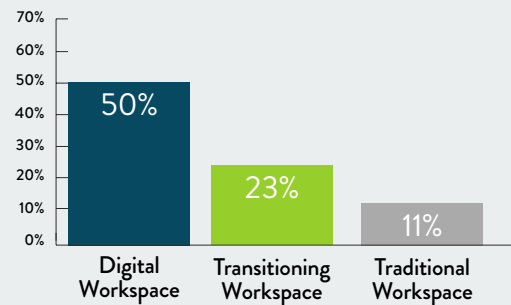
"Business applications and productivity solutions are driving a fundamental transformation in the workforce," says Greenwood. "Making apps highly accessible from any device powers a real difference in performance. While we've been used to 'enterprise-grade apps' being the de facto standard within the workforce, businesses need to consider what the 'workforce-grade app' looks like—that will help drive a fundamental transformation in the individual's workday."

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION
Figure 5. Easily accessed business applications have raised employee satisfaction.
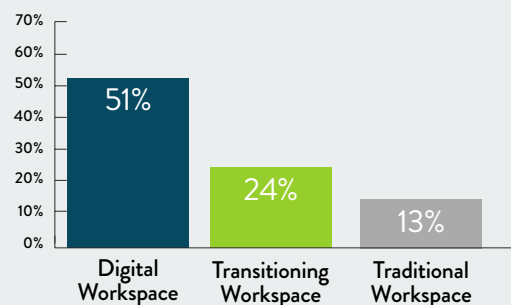% who strongly agree

Digital Workspace	50%
Transitioning Workspace	23%
Traditional Workspace	11%

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION LEVELS
Figure 6. Easily accessed business apps have made our company a more desirable place to work.
% who strongly agree

Digital Workspace	51%
Transitioning Workspace	24%
Traditional Workspace	13%

THE EMPOWERED ENTERPRISE

The impact of empowered employees is not confined to the individual; more empowered employees can translate to a more empowered workforce, which ultimately improves the performance of an entire company. As indicated by our research, there's a strong correlation between the availability/accessibility of apps and a number of enterprise metrics.

For example, global capabilities. Apps have a particularly strong impact on global operations, with almost two-thirds of EMEA Digital Workspace employees surveyed reporting that apps have been very important in helping their companies build their global capabilities (Figure 7).

Business apps are also increasing company revenue. Fifty-five percent of the EMEA Digital Workspace respondents strongly agree that business apps have helped their firm increase revenues—compared with less than one in 10 respondents at companies that do not make apps available and readily accessible (Figure 8).
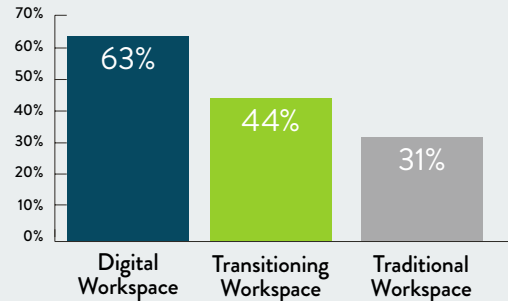
The Forbes Insights/VMware survey respondents also believe that apps can have a very strong impact on reducing costs. Some of these benefits may be highly visible, such as reducing travel expenses or enabling negotiation of reduced supplier costs. Others may be less direct, such as reducing total employee expense on a product launch. In any case, over two-thirds of our EMEA Digital Workspace respondents believe that apps have been very important in reducing enterprise costs (Figure 9).

When combined with apps' positive impact on revenue growth, it's clear apps can have a significant impact on the bottom line.
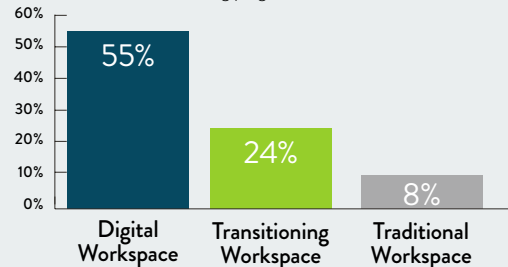
BUILDING GLOBAL CAPABILITIES
Figure 7. How important have business apps been in building your company's global capabilities?
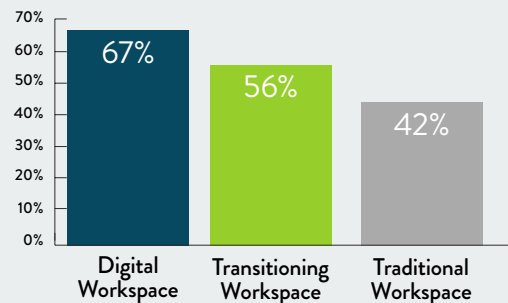% who strongly agree

Digital Workspace	Transitioning Workspace	Traditional Workspace
63%	44%	31%

INCREASING REVENUES
Figure 8. Business applications have helped our company increase revenues.
% who strongly agree

Digital Workspace	Transitioning Workspace	Traditional Workspace
55%	24%	8%

COST REDUCTION
Figure 9. Business applications have helped our company reduce costs.
% who strongly agree

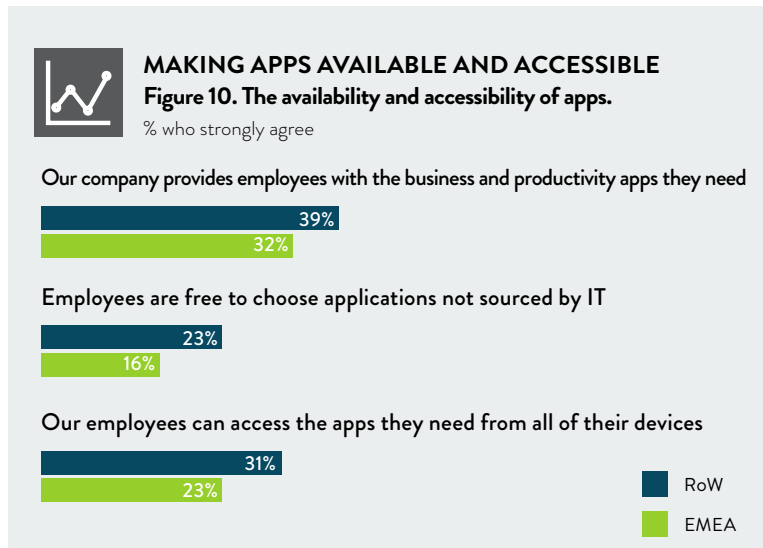| Digital Workspace	Transitioning Workspace	Traditional Workspace
67%	56%	42%

THE APP GAP—EMEA VS. THE REST OF THE WORLD

The EMEA respondents from the Forbes Insights/VMware survey clearly understand, and are seeing, the benefits of making apps readily available and accessible. Yet a comparative analysis with their counterparts in North America and Asia-Pacific (combined here under the category Rest of World,[1] or RoW) shows that EMEA firms lag behind in the deployment and use of apps—a trend that signals untapped potential.

When asked if their company provides employees with the apps they need, 39% of RoW respondents strongly agree that they do, versus 32% of EMEA employees. When asked if their company allows employees to source their own apps, 23% of RoW employees strongly agree that they do, versus only 16% of their EMEA counterparts. And, on the critical question of whether apps are made truly accessible to employees, 31% of RoW employees believe strongly that their companies do so, compared with 23% of those in EMEA (Figure 10).

MAKING APPS AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE
Figure 10. The availability and accessibility of apps.
% who strongly agree

Our company provides employees with the business and productivity apps they need
- 39%
- 32%

Employees are free to choose applications not sourced by IT
- 23%
- 16%

Our employees can access the apps they need from all of their devices
- 31%
- 23%

RoW
EMEA

Markets are becoming more global, and companies are more competitive across borders. Given the contribution that apps can have on the individual, workforce and enterprise levels, a reduced commitment to business apps could put an EMEA company at a competitive disadvantage.

"The EMEA region is like no other," says Greenwood. "With 128 countries and a diverse range of cultures, it faces a number of challenges. Whether that's around a single currency, implications of Brexit or incoming regulation—each country's ability to tackle these are unique at an individual level, as well as combined regional level. Against this backdrop, any company looking to increase its technology adoption across its footprint has to deal with the shortage of skills that we face. Despite the digital agenda being discussed at length in the EU, there is no real concrete plan of how to address this deficit in talent. This will be key if the region is to remain competitive against its neighbours, which could grow to become far more tech-savvy and digitally enabled."

1 Companies surveyed include those in Canada, the U.S., Australia, China, India and Japan.

THE REVOLUTION FROM BELOW

There is more happening here than the simple deployment of new technologies. By placing a higher level of capability in the hands of employees, business apps are disrupting the traditional "command-and-control' management model. The latent potential of the individual employee in innovation and execution is being unleashed, with a direct impact on company performance.

While EMEA companies do lag behind when it comes to making apps readily available and accessible to employees, they have an opportunity to invest more in these technologies and push their businesses forward. No company in EMEA, or the rest of the world for that matter, can afford to ignore business apps. Their short- and long-term impacts are too powerful.

To learn how companies can create an environment that allows employees to innovate and thrive in their digital workspace, read "The High Performance Digital Culture: Empowerment, Trust and the New Equilibrium Between the Employee and IT."

METHODOLOGY

Forbes Insights, in conjunction with VMware, conducted a global survey of 2,158 executives, divided equally between CIOs and cross-functional end-users of business applications and productivity solutions. All respondents were from companies with annual revenue of over $250 million, with average revenue at $4.3 billion. This analysis of 1,107 survey respondents from EMEA includes responses from France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands, Russia, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Respondents represented over 12 industries, with no industry composing more than 20% of the total sample. The survey was conducted from June to August of 2017.

Forbes insights

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