

Global technology trends shaping the modern workplace

The European and South African findings from the [Dell and Intel Future Workforce Study](#) have been revealed, which identifies the global technology trends shaping the modern workplace. The results show that almost half of employees in these regions believe their current employer is not effectively making use of the latest technology advances.



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The study, conducted by research firm PSB, polled nearly 4,000 full-time employees from small, medium and large businesses in 10 countries. Of those polled in the UK, Germany, France and South Africa, many do not believe that they will be working in a smart office within the next five years and perceived their current workplace technology as lagging behind personal devices on innovation. With the research showing that the influx of new technology is having a significant impact on what workers expect from their employer, workplaces which don't enact these new advances may be left behind.

Technology has already had a huge impact on how we interact in the workplace, with, many employees - most notably a staggering 67% of millennials in South Africa - believing that face-to-face meetings will become obsolete. Innovative technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and virtual reality (VR), could also become vital to the workplace of the near future, affecting how we collaborate and work more efficiently.

"Today's workforce has a growing expectation that their employers integrate the latest technologies seamlessly and securely into their working lives," said Chris Buchanan, client solutions director, Dell South Africa. "Employees have seen first-hand the ways new technologies can help them do their jobs better, and are hungry to use the latest advancements to be more productive. While this may seem daunting to many employers, it's a business-critical opportunity for companies to be at the forefront of the future workplace and enable the future workforce."

Study highlights:

- Regional results show that employees, especially in South Africa (67%) and the UK (47%), feel their **office technology** is not smart enough (compared to 44% of employees worldwide). While workers are ready for businesses to implement the latest technologies to make their offices smarter, with data used to control office temperature, lighting, etc., expectations are mixed on whether it will happen within the next five years.

- Despite the attraction of new technologies, people still prefer in-person **workspace communications**, though they fear this will soon be a thing of the past. 61% of South Africans agree that the growing popularity of remote working, together with improved technology, will lead to face-to-face interactions becoming obsolete.

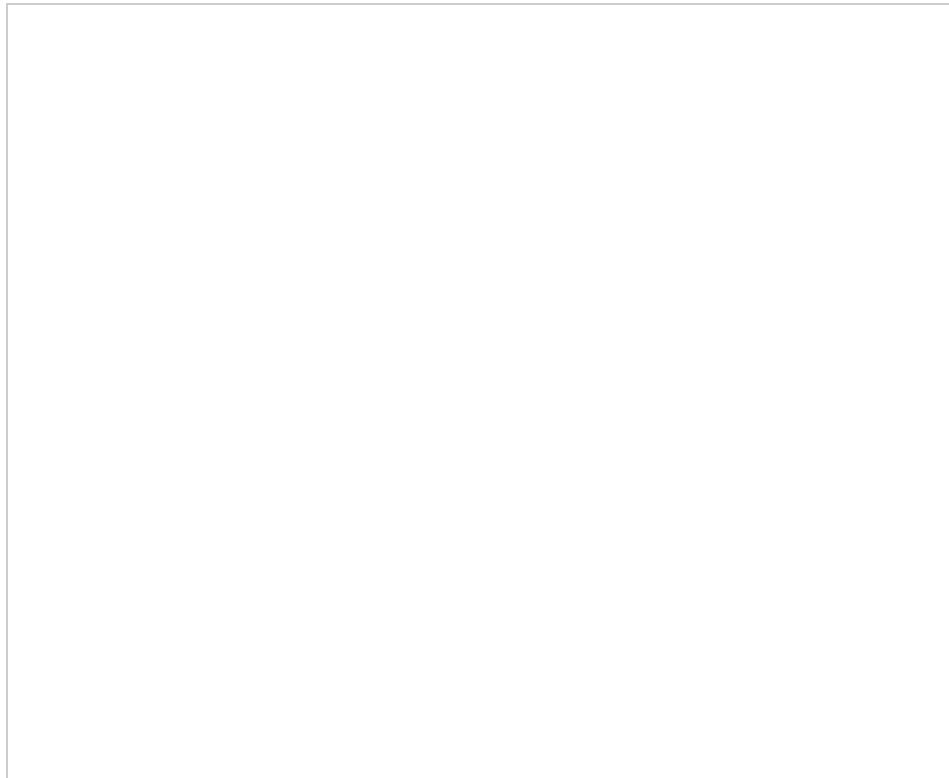
- **Remote working** is increasingly viewed as providing both quality of life and productivity benefits, and technology is seen as an essential enabler. 66% of South Africans who work remotely compared to 50% who work in offices say their job is a core part of their identity. Technology has allowed people to change their lifestyles and, in turn, this has affected their work styles and preferences. With these changes, employers should think about offering more flexible work arrangements to keep up with this evolution to cater to the mobile worker.

Employees are also aware that the advances that allow these new working arrangements to exist will require new **security and infrastructure**; European and South African respondents list advanced security as the single most important technology to be implemented in their workplace.

- **Virtual reality (VR)** and **augmented reality (AR)** innovations could impact the workplace sooner than we think as 61% of employees in South Africa would be willing to use VR/AR in their professional lives. The most frequently cited user cases for the new technologies include training on new skills in realistic virtual environments (25%), problem solving or coming up with new ideas through 3D visualisation (18%) and presenting to clients using immersive technologies (15%). Additionally, over half of employees in South Africa (52%) believe that the introduction of **artificial intelligence (AI)** will make their jobs easier.

- When it comes to acquiring and **retaining talent**, technology matters, especially for millennials in South Africa with 1 in 3 willing to quit their jobs if the technology provided by their employer is substandard. Millennials in South Africa (up to 39% in South Africa) also say that a new job's available technology would affect their decision on whether to take or decline the position.

- South Africans recognise and are attracted to the entrepreneurial spirit of the **sharing economy**. 76% of South Africans will participate in the sharing economy by next year.



[How is work today? The Future Workforce Study](#) from [Dell](#)

Incentive to modernise

"The *Dell and Intel Future Workforce Study* highlights how much the new generations of workers consider technology a key factor in career selection and satisfaction. As much as in the past the work environment was considered key to employee happiness and a factor in productivity, so today technology and work flexibility using such technology are now critical considerations," said Steven Ambrose, CEO of Strategy Worx.

"The quality and sophistication of consumer-focused technology are at such an advanced state and have become so ubiquitous for most users, companies now have no choice but to offer the same or better options to their workforce as a matter of course. Companies that understand this trend and respond to it will hire, retain talent, and succeed, where those that don't will fade and fail."

"The massive changes that are occurring in the workplace are like a tale of two cities; those companies that are modernising, especially with mobility, will attract and retain top talent, those who don't will create employee frustration, lower productivity and employee unhappiness," said Bob Egan, chief analyst, founder, Sepharim Research Group. "The Future Workforce Study discovered that millennials are driving massive changes in how and where work gets done, use multiple devices, and prefer to work away from a traditional office. The result is an important mandate for CIOs to modernise the infrastructure, redefine their security perimeter and device provision strategies."

About the study: Dell and Intel commissioned PSB to conduct the Future Workforce Study with 3,801 full-time employees (work over 35 hours a week) of small, medium and large-sized organizations - distributed across 10 countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Japan, Brazil, China, India, Canada and South Africa) and seven target industries (education, government, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, media & entertainment and retail). The quantitative survey was conducted between 5 April and 3 May 2016.