

# PROFESSIONALS SAY COMPANIES SHOULD ENABLE TODAY'S WORKER WITH CUSTOMIZED INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGIES

*Near Consensus Among Professionals: "Employees Are A  
Company's Biggest Asset" (98%)*

*But Providing Workers With Desktop PC Will Not Suffice, 95%  
Feel It Must Be An Integrated Office Tool To Aid Productivity*



## Ipsos Reid

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## PROFESSIONALS SAY COMPANIES SHOULD ENABLE TODAY'S WORKER WITH CUSTOMIZED INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGIES

*Near Consensus Among Professionals: "Employees Are A Company's  
Biggest Asset" (98%)*

*But Providing Workers With Desktop PC Will Not Suffice, 95% Feel  
It Must Be An Integrated Office Tool To Aid Productivity*

**Toronto, ON** – A new national survey of 1,700 professional Canadians conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of Microsoft, reveals a near consensus within Canada's professional community that "employees are a company's biggest asset" (98%). And therefore most professionals believe that today's companies are compelled to provide their employees with integrated technologies that enable them to maximize their work-place performance:

- 98% agree that "by giving employees the right tools to increase their productivity, businesses can empower employees to reduce costs and increase revenue for their company" (66% strongly agree); and
- 97% agree that "by giving employees the right software, businesses can accelerate the return on their greatest investment – people" (56% strongly agree).

Professional Canadians recognize that today's work environment has changed over the past few years. Most agree that workers need to work in a more collaborative, team-oriented environment.

- Eighty-six percent of professionals agree that "working in teams is more important to business success today than it was five years ago"; and
- 72% say that the amount of time they spend collaborating with colleagues and clients has increased compared to five years ago --on average, professionals are spending 5 hours each day collaborating with colleagues and clients for work.



And three-quarters (73%) agree that “the work-place has evolved to the point where my job no longer happens just at my desk – I am expected to meet the needs of customers even when outside the office, or in transit to a meeting”.

Further, majorities of professionals feel today’s workers are increasingly being called upon to evaluate and decide strategic decisions for their companies (86%), and to be able to effectively communicate these decisions to their colleagues (79%).

When asked to choose from a list of potential barriers which ones they believe are the biggest and most frustrating barriers to being productive and efficient at work, professionals point to a range of issues. Tops on the list is “lack of tools designed to help find what you need easily and quickly, when information resides in different data repositories across the company” (37%).

So, what kind of technologies do professionals feel will enable them to be more productive at work? Certainly there is a strong feeling that simply providing employees with a PC does not suffice, and that to be of real value an employee’s desktop computer “must be an integrated office tool designed to help the employee using it to be more productive” (95%).

When asked to choose from a list which thing they, or those like them, would want from their desktop office software, “ability to share documents within a common workspace”(45%) is rated highest, followed by the “ability to automatically create and update business processes, forms, reports and documents using the latest back-end IT system” (32%).

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for Microsoft and fielded from March 17<sup>th</sup> to March 20<sup>th</sup> 2006. For the survey, a representative sample of 1760 adult “professional” Canadians were interviewed via an on-line survey vehicle. For the purposes of this study, professionals were defined as though Canadians who are employed in work environment where computer access and email are relevant and active components of their job.*



*The sample used in this study has been weighted according to Census data to accurately reflect the population of professional Canadians. With a sample of this size, the aggregate results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 2.3$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had this entire population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within each sub-grouping of the survey population.*

### ***Essentially All Professionals (98%) Agree That “Employees Are A Company’s Biggest Asset”...***

Ninety-eight percent of professional Canadians agree with the statement “employees are a company’s biggest asset” (82% strongly agree with this statement) –only 2% disagree.

### ***And Most Professionals Feel Workers Are Taking Higher Levels Of Responsibility In Making Strategic Decisions For Their Company...***

According to majorities of professionals, today’s workers are increasingly being called upon to evaluate and decide strategic decisions for their companies, and to be able to effectively communicate these decisions to their co-workers.

<u>For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you agree or disagree</u>		
	Total Agree	Strongly Agree
Because companies today are leaner, workers are being asked to take on higher levels of responsibility when it comes to strategic decisions, calculating risks, providing analysis, and developing and running complex projects.	86%	40%
Workers like me need to be able to analyze trends and business data, make strategic decisions that impact business, and communicate complex ideas and programs.	79%	33%

- Those in British Columbia (86%) are the most likely to agree that “workers like me need to be able to analyze trends and business data, make strategic decisions that impact business, and communicate complex ideas and programs”.



***Overall, Today's Work Environment Is Changing For Professionals...  
Eighty-six Percent Feel Working In Teams Is More Important Now  
Than Five Years Ago...***

Eighty-six percent of professionals agree that "working in teams is more important to business success today than it was five years ago" (41% strongly agree). One in seven (14%) disagree with this statement.

- Women are slightly more likely than men to agree with this statement (89% vs. 84% among men).

***And Seven In Ten (72%) Believe They Spend More Time Collaborating  
With Colleagues And Clients Than They Did Five Years Ago...***

Seven in ten feel (72%) say that either the amount of time they spend collaborating with colleagues, partners and clients for work five years ago compared to the amount of time they do so today has increased either "substantially (37%) or "slightly". Just 9% feel the amount of time they spend collaborating has declined over the past 5 years –19% feel the amount of time has not changed.

- Those with an annual household income of \$60,000 or more are the most likely to feel the amount of time spent collaborating has increased (74%).
- Women are more likely than men to feel this amount of time has decreased (11% vs. 8%).

***In Fact, On Average, Professionals Are Spending 5 Hours A Day  
Collaborating With Colleagues Or Clients...***

On average, professionals are spending 5 hours each day collaborating with colleagues, partners and clients for work – in person, or via email and phone.



## ***Most (73%) Believe The Work-Place Has Evolved And Now Exists Outside The Office...***

Three-quarters (73%) agree with the statement that “the work-place has evolved to the point where my job no longer happens just at my desk. I am expected to meet the needs of customers even when outside the office, or in transit to a meeting” (36% strongly agree). Twenty-seven percent disagree with this statement.

- Professionals in Atlantic Canada (84%) are the most likely to agree with this statement, as are those with an annual household income of \$60,000 or more (75%).

## ***Nearly All Agree (95%) That Basic Desktop Software Skills Are A Must In Today's Workplace...***

Nearly all professionals agree that “developed skills in basic desktop software applications such as Word, Excel and Outlook are now considered minimum baseline workplace skills” (62% strongly agree). Five percent disagree with this statement.

## ***Thus, Professionals Believe Companies Should Give Employees The Right Tools In Order To Maximize Efficiency In Today's Work-Place...***

It follows then that nearly all professionals in Canada feel that companies can strongly improve their competitive advantage if they invest in tools that enable their employees to perform their job better in today's work-place. Specifically:

- 98% agree that “by giving employees the right tools to increase their productivity, businesses can empower employees to reduce costs and increase revenue for their company” (66% strongly agree); and
- 97% agree that “by giving employees the right software, businesses can accelerate the return on their greatest investment – people” (56% strongly agree).



## *When It Comes To Specific Technology Features, Most Professionals Administrate Their Scheduling/Correspondence Independently, And Collaborate With Colleagues On Projects...*

Majorities of professionals use technology to manage their work within the new work-place environment. Through technology they are able to manage their schedules and correspondence without the help of an administrative assistant (84%), and they collaborate with their colleagues on different documents and projects, anytime, anywhere (78%).

<u>For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you agree or disagree</u>		
	Total Agree	Strongly Agree
Technology allows me to schedule meetings and manage my correspondence without the help of an administrative assistant.	84%	41%
My colleagues and I use technology to collaborate with teams on different documents and projects any time, anywhere.	78%	35%

## *What Are The Technology Barriers To Productivity At Work?*

When asked to choose from a list of potential barriers which ones they believe are the biggest and most frustrating barriers to being productive and efficient at work, professionals point to a range of issues. Tops on the list is “lack of tools designed to help find what you need easily and quickly, when information resides in different data repositories across the company” (37%).

From a technology perspective, which of the following would you say are the biggest and most frustrating barriers to being productive and efficient at work?	
Lack of tools designed to help find what you need easily and quickly, when information resides in different data repositories across the company.	37%
When you learn about or want to adopt a new tool you are blocked by the IT department due to limitations in your company infrastructure.	34%
Having to cut and paste information from one system/tool to another, instead of it being updated automatically.	33%
Trying to figure out which is the most recent version of a document after numerous edits have been made by different colleagues.	30%
Poor mobility – not having easy access to work information when away from the office, or the ability to manage personal, team and project tasks “on the go”.	29%
No formal system for collaborating with colleagues to create, track, manage and distribute information securely to customers and stakeholders.	25%
None of the above	17%





## *So, What Tools Enable Employees To Work Most Effectively? Over Nine In Ten Professionals Point To Integrated Systems Tools...*

Over nine in ten professionals agree that companies should go beyond providing their employees with technology hardware, and should try to build integrated systems that allow employees to maximize their effectiveness.

<u>For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you agree or disagree</u>		
	Total Agree	Strongly Agree
By itself, a PC is just desktop hardware. To be of real value, it must be an integrated office tool designed to help the employee using it to be more productive.	95%	60%
Having real-time document sharing abilities and team workspaces are effective strategies for building strong teams	94%	46%
To maximize their employees' value, today's businesses should integrate their employees' computer desktop functions with their back-end IT systems, or network, to enable them to be more productive	91%	42%

- Those with an annual household income of \$60,000 or more are the most likely to agree with each of these statements.

## *And When It Comes To What They Want From Their Desktop Software...*

When asked to choose from a list which thing they, or those like them, would want from their desktop office software, "ability to share documents within a common workspace"(45%) is rated highest, followed by the "ability to automatically create and update business processes, forms, reports and documents using the latest back-end IT system" (32%).





<u>From the list below, please rank the top thing information workers, like you, want from their desktop office software?</u>	Ranked First
Ability to share documents within a common workspace, allowing colleagues to check documents in and out and work from one central version while enabling everyone to communicate about the project in real time – whether they are in the office or on the road.	40%
Ability to automatically create and update business processes, forms, reports and documents using the latest back-end IT system, or network, and make the information available through familiar desktop tools.	32%
Ability to control how incoming communications are routed to users (i.e. e-mail, phone, instant messaging, text-messaging, videoconferencing and Web conferencing) based on the system's knowledge of personal preferences, physical location, organizational relationship and topic of communication.	20%
All that's needed is the least expensive basic word processing, presentation and spreadsheet software, even if it's an old, outdated version. It's not necessary for office software to be integrated with other business databases and networks of information.	7%

### *Same Proportions Feel Technology Can Help Them Increase Their Value As Information Workers...*

Over nine in ten professionals feel there are a number of ways that they, as knowledge workers, could increase their value to their company.

<u>Do you believe the value of information workers, like you, would increase if they could do the following?</u>	Yes
Increase impact at work by communicating and presenting ideas and information more effectively	96%
Streamline and automate processes so information flows from one system to another, without the need for repetitive and time-consuming data entry	95%
Benefit from connected technology that allows them to access corporate networks and share documents with teammates from anywhere	93%
Get the business info needed to make informed strategic decisions, without having to wait for the IT department to create custom business intelligence reports	90%

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*For more information on this news release, please contact:*

*Paul Orovan  
Ipsos Reid Public Affairs  
(416) 324-2900*

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