



# Welcome



In today's business world, productivity and employee engagement have never been more important or topical. As employee expectations evolve, businesses are increasingly challenged to meet these expectations while ensuring operational efficiency. Finding the right strategies to strike this balance is key, and that's where this report comes in.

Insights are drawn from the Business Tech State of Play research study with 192 owners and decision makers from businesses with 100-499 employees. The research also surveyed 1,000 Australian businesses with less than 99 employees and 1,000 Australians about their productivity at work and employer choice drivers.

In this report, we'll explore the factors now influencing workplace productivity and employee engagement. Drawing on feedback from business leaders like you, we'll provide ideas to help you invest in your people and ensure you have a productive and engaged workforce that can thrive.

## **Steve Long**

Mid Market Segment Executive,  
Telstra Business

[Business Tech State of Play Research Study](#) →

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Business insights for organisations with 100-499 employees taken from the [Tech State of Play research](#).

**Maintaining and growing productivity is a battle with rising wage pressure and competition regarding hiring. For businesses with 100-499 employees, capacity to grow is a central concern.**

**Business leaders in our research rated ‘finding the right staff’ to be the top concern in their business.**

## Question: Which of these would you say are the biggest concerns in your business right now?

Rank		% mentioning amongst top 5 concerns
1	Finding the right staff.	48%
2	Controlling costs.	43%
3	Improving revenue.	40%
4	Meeting the expectations of our customer in regard to the service we provide.	34%
5	Having the time and capacity to get everything done.	30%
6	Finding new customers.	24%
7	Keeping my business and assets secure from cyber security threats.	24%
8	Improving cash flow.	22%
9	Modernising the business with new technology.	21%
10	Filling gaps in terms of expertise that we need.	20%
11	Understanding our customers better.	19%
12	Finding the time to train staff appropriately.	18%
13	Optimising our existing technology infrastructure.	18%
14	Having a more effective digital presence (including our website).	13%
15	The environmental sustainability of our business.	13%

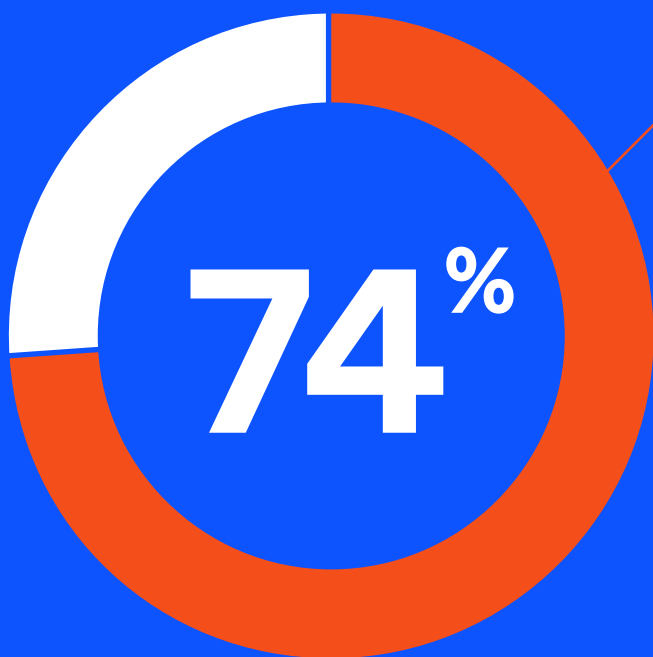
**Beyond financial remuneration, employers also compete on the basis of flexible work policies they offer. It's clear that flexibility matters, and our research found that employees place high value on both flexibility and face-to-face collaboration.**

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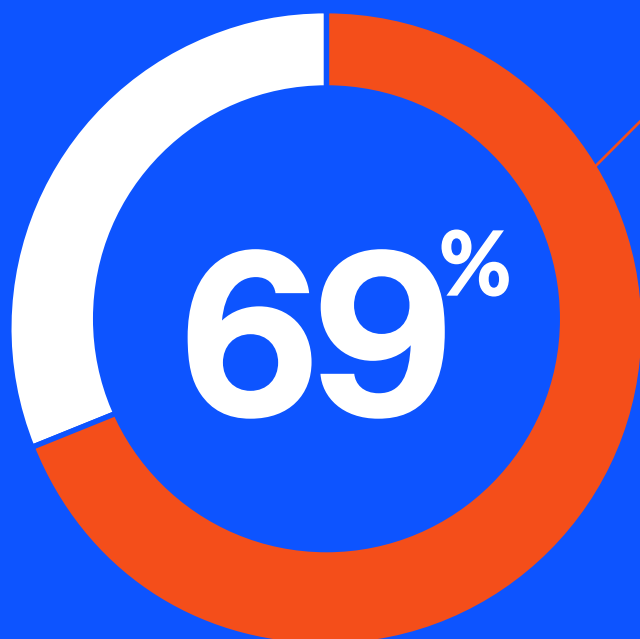
I have some real concerns that if we don't offer flexible working, we won't be able to attract the right talent.

Energy sector IT leader, 100-499 employees

**Flexible working is key. At first glance, the below statistics may appear contradictory, but they highlight the importance of creating a balanced work model that addresses the needs of employees, customers, and broader business objectives.**



**74% of employees surveyed agreed, when looking for a job, I would expect some level of flexible/hybrid working to be an option.**



**69% of employees surveyed agreed having a physical premises to work from is important.**

**We've seen that flexibility is important, but what does that mean in practice?**

**Digging deeper into the specifics, our research shows employees value a range of flexibility types.**

**Allowing employees to optimise their time is the key theme, with the most attractive flex policies anchored in hours and days worked – 57% of employees we surveyed value flexibility of hours worked, and 47% value flexibility of days worked.**

**We also found that more workers prefer remote working on particular days (with 40% valuing this) as distinct from every day (where 32% value this).**



### Question: Which of these do you feel an employer like yours should offer or promote at work?

<b>Flexibility</b>	Flexibility of hours worked in full time role.	57%
	Flexibility of days worked in full time role.	47%
	Additional leave – e.g. volunteer leave, cultural leave.	41%
	Flexibility to work from home/remotely on agreed days but not every day.	40%
	Flexibility to work from home/remotely whenever I choose to.	34%
	Opportunity to work part-time.	30%
	Job/role sharing arrangements.	23%
<b>Training and development</b>	Training to develop new skills.	54%
	Technology/software-specific training.	30%
<b>Wellbeing</b>	A diversity, equity and inclusion policy.	34%
	Access to wellbeing services, such as counselling or psychologists.	27%

Overall, this research suggests that there is no singular standard for the flexibility that your staff may be seeking. To offer effective benefits to attract and retain your employees, it's crucial to understand and align with what they value most.

**Technology leaders will often acknowledge the human side of IT implementation challenges. Particularly noting that staff engagement can be what makes or breaks any technology rollout.**

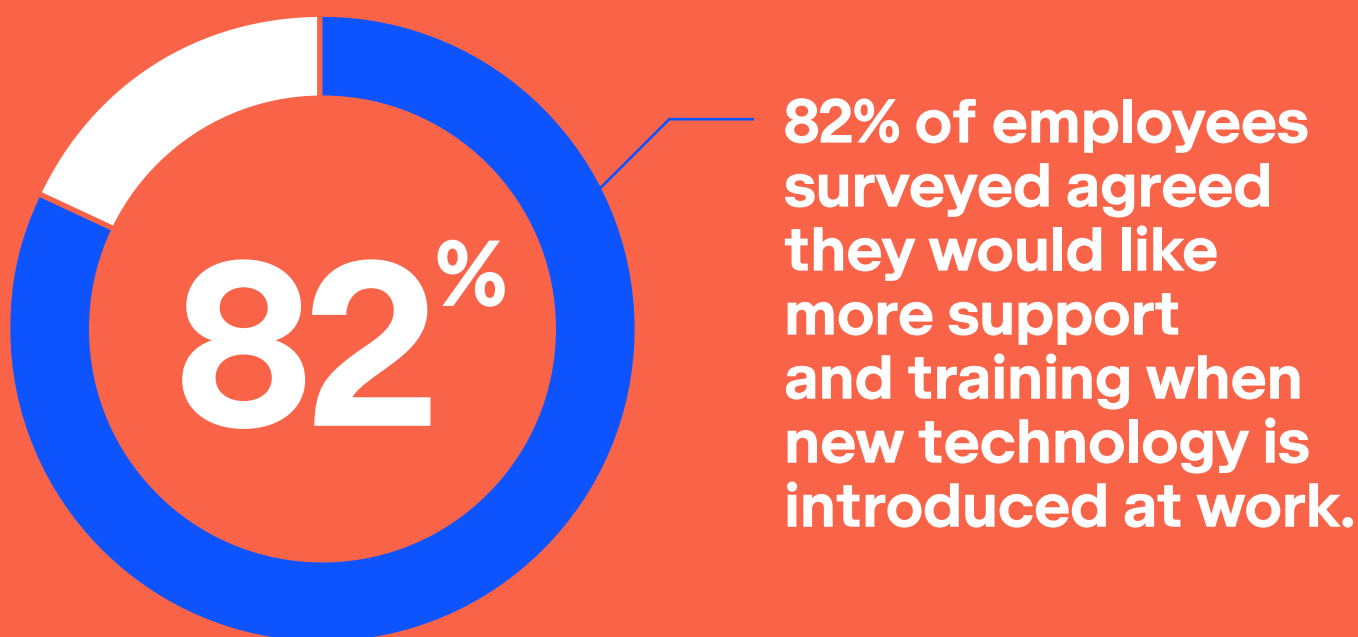
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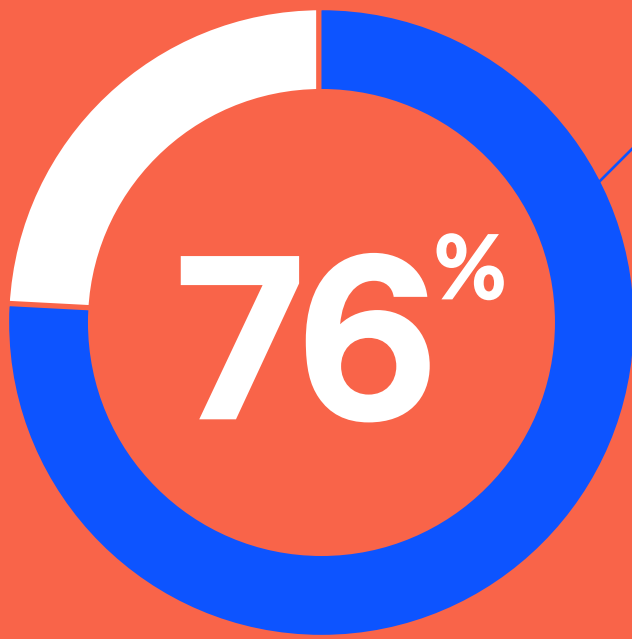
**There's always a technology solution that can help, but it's also about managing the cost, integration with current systems, and upskilling staff so they can use the technology to its full advantage.**

Government sector leader, 110 employees

**Whilst there is a relatively strong employee appetite for training, 4 in 10 employers don't provide opportunities for employees to access training or develop new skills.**

**Most workers are excited to be introduced to new technology at work and acknowledge that training is critical.**





**76% of employees surveyed agreed they are excited to be introduced to new technology at work.**



**56% of businesses surveyed noted that they offer training to develop new skills.**

**Our research shows that employees see digital skills training as a great opportunity, but many also feel they don't have the right support to make the most of it.**

**By tapping into their eagerness and providing better training, leaders can close the gaps and make growth a real advantage for the organisation.**

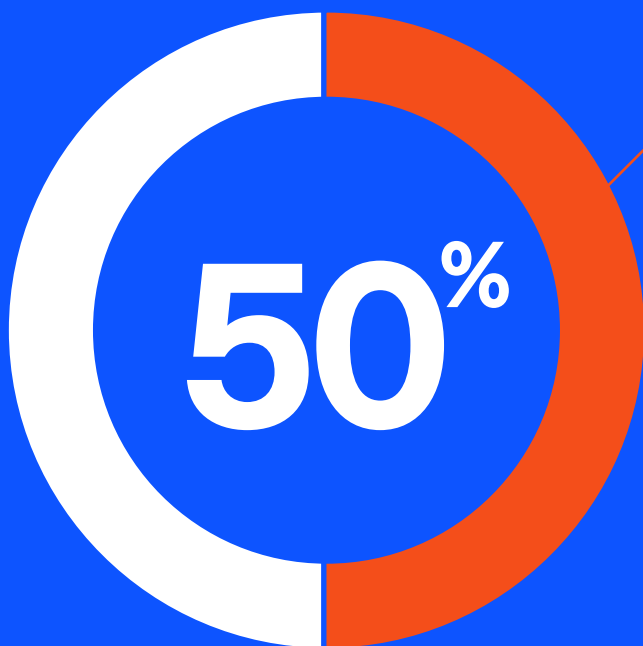
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**Training is the second cornerstone. First you hire the right person and then train them. I'm the kind of manager who puts a lot of effort into training staff properly. Training doesn't make problems disappear, but you can reduce problems dramatically.**

Government sector leader, 110 employees

**Having the right technology infrastructure is crucial for maintaining productivity.**

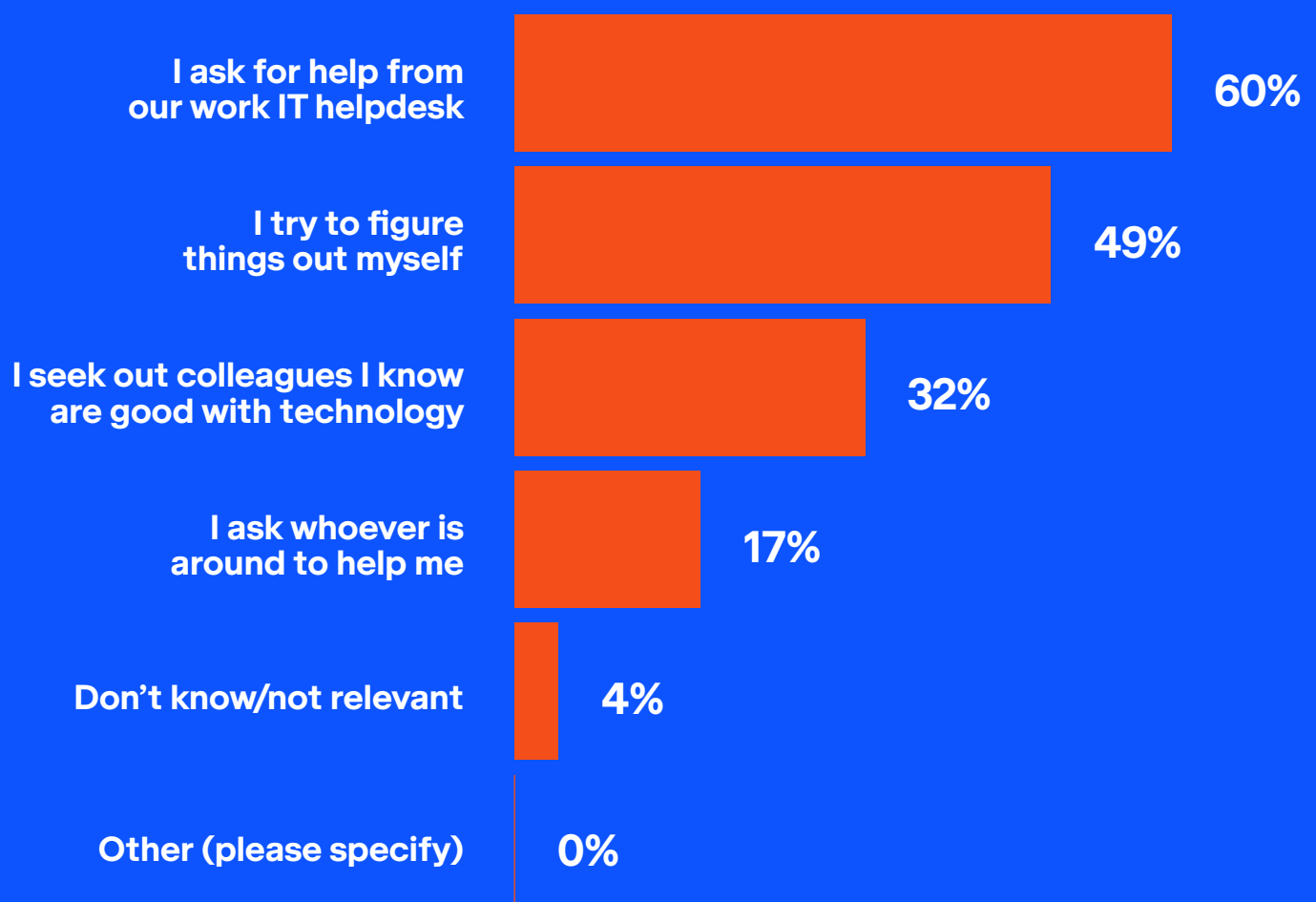
**Our research found that half of employees reported experiencing IT issues at least once a month.**



**50% of employees surveyed lost time to IT issues at least once per month.**

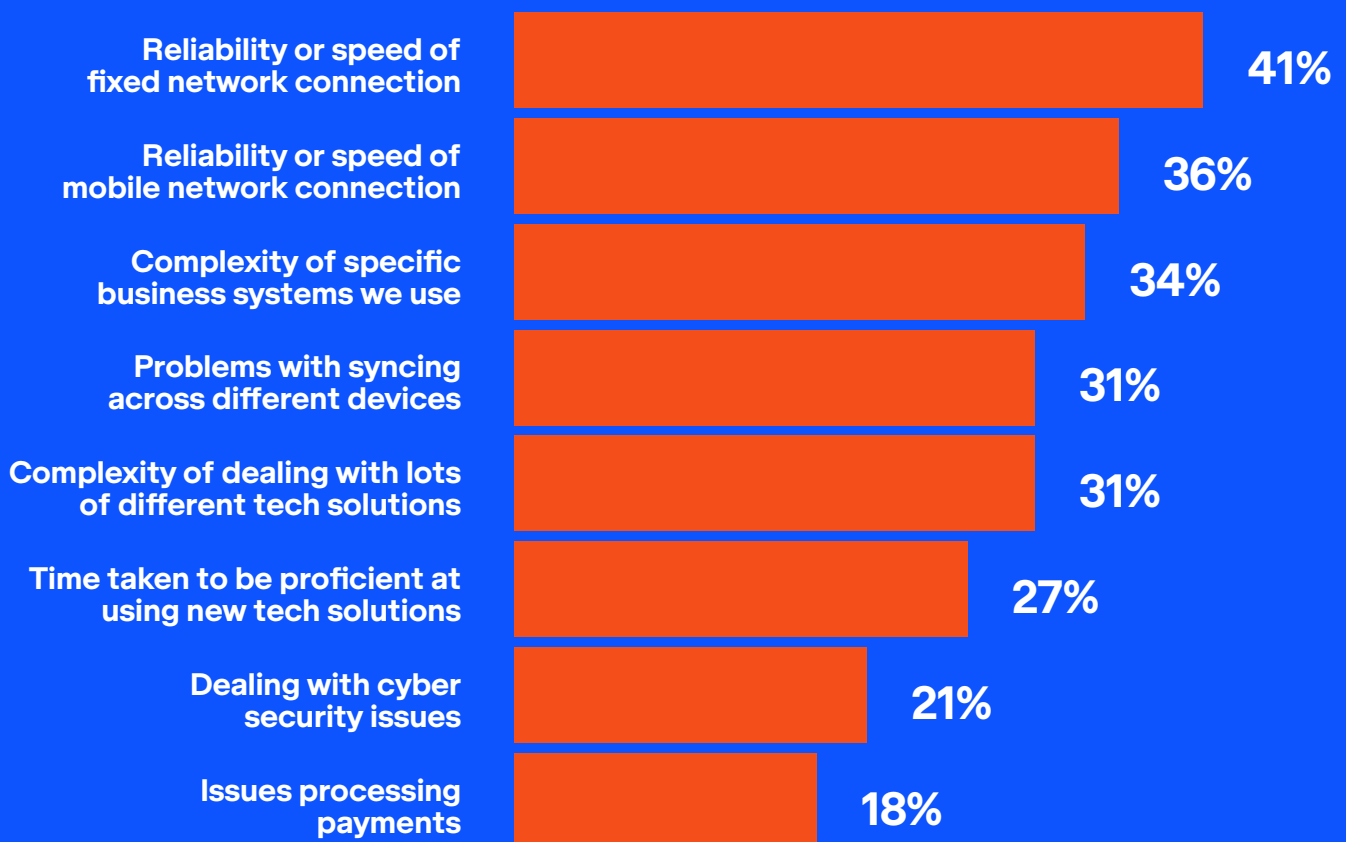
**Many IT issues are hidden from business leaders because staff use informal channels to try and solve them. Consider observing how daily technology use interacts with productivity to better enable peak performance.**

**Question: How would you describe your business' openness to using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the near future?**



**More than ever, employees work from various locations with varied connectivity solutions. In our research, employees told us that connectivity issues top the list of productivity issues.**

**Question: Which of the following are the most common IT issues that impact your productivity?**





**Depending on systems and work types, businesses may have different ‘hidden’ IT issues.**

**Based on our research, connectivity should be high on the list of areas needing attention.**

**With a stronger network and solid IT help, you’ll see fewer interruptions, allowing your employees to stay focused and productive.**

**Businesses expect to be using more technology in the years ahead.**

**Nine in ten expect an increase across at least one aspect of their business.**

**While the research points to customer-facing aspects like CRM and marketing set to have the highest increase, a wide range of benefits are expected to come from increased use of technology.**

### Question: In which of these areas of your business are you planning to increase your use of digital technologies in the next 1-2 years?

Customer relationship management and service	41%
Security	41%
Marketing and promotion	40%
Invoicing and payments	35%
HR and staff management processes	31%
Accounting	26%
Customer bookings and scheduling	25%
Delivery, logistics and transportation	20%
Sales (eCommerce)	19%
Purchasing, inventory and supply chain management	19%
Production processes	18%
Prototyping and innovation (e.g., new product/service development)	17%
None of these	10%

## Question: How do you think technology could help a business like yours achieve your business objectives in the next 1-2 years?

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Reducing human error, streamline processes and create efficiencies.

Health and community services sector leader, 120 employees

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It gives us the ability to market and deliver to a global audience.

Education sector leader, 120 employees

“

Enabling customers to track their account directly would be a great advantage for us and the customer who wants access to information at any time of the day or night.

Finance and insurance sector leader, 200 employees

“

More advertising and greater digital presence.

Hospitality sector leader, 150 employees

“

Using digital data collection and analytics to identify opportunities for new sales.

Wholesale sector leader, 230 employees

“

Reducing the number of systems and increase the integration between systems.

Transport and storage sector leader, 120 employees

“

Automation to create efficiencies to free up human resources for other tasks.

Manufacturing sector leader, 180 employees

**As companies increasingly rely on cloud services, collaboration tools, and other digital platforms, network reliability is as important as ever with 47% of businesses surveyed rating ‘fast, reliable and secure internet’ as a top technology to make a positive impact.**

**Question: Which of these would you say are the biggest concerns in your business right now?**

Rank	Technology	
1	Fast, reliable and secure internet	47%
2	Cyber security solutions	42%
3	Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML)	36%
4	Cloud-based communication services	35%
5	Digital integration and migration services	32%
6	Digital payment technologies	29%
7	Internet of Things (IoT) e.g. smart devices and sensors	21%
8	Chatbots or enhanced live chat features	16%
9	Online marketplaces, aggregators and delivery services	14%
10	Virtual reality (VR)	14%
11	Voice assisted interfaces	9%
12	Augmented reality (AR)	9%

**A business's success depends on its ability to create a work environment that supports productivity, engagement, and flexibility.**

**Adopting the right technology, offering ongoing training, and fostering a hybrid working model can unlock your workforce's potential and position your business for sustainable growth.**

**Telstra is here to provide the guidance and support you need to achieve these goals, helping you navigate the complexities of today's workplace and drive your business forward.**

## Key takeaways

### 1 Consider what flexibility means to your employees and what they value.

Our research highlights many flexible working provisions that workers value and they may not be what a business determines as flexible.

A multifaceted policy, rather than single provisions, is more likely to attract and retain staff. Depending on the workforce, simple adjustments like the flexibility to work a shorter day on-site may be as valued as a 'work from anywhere' policy. Also, consider that what works for some employees may differ to others. So have conversations and understand what they value as important.

### 3 Address hidden productivity issues by improving IT support.

IT issues, particularly those related to network speed and reliability, are more prevalent than many business leaders realise. Investing in business-grade IT solutions with managed services or additional IT support can minimise downtime and ensure a smoother, more efficient work environment. Further, improving network reliability and robust IT support will significantly reduce disruptions and help maximise your employees' output.

### 2 Stand out as an employer by avoiding training gaps.

This research highlighted the gap between the training desired by employees and what is provided by employers. Delivering training that satisfies employees' appetite for new skills and technology domains can not only support productivity but also differentiate your organisation and add competitive advantage.

### 4 Consider future demands from the growing use of technology.

We've seen that most businesses expect their technology use to grow, with increases spanning multiple areas. As businesses continue to rely on more technology, it's clear that existing gaps in support and training need to be addressed.

This makes our recommendations about improving training, support, and connectivity even more urgent. Leaders have a chance to make future work more efficient by improving connectivity and providing the right support as new tech gets rolled out. By addressing the gaps now, leaders can ensure their teams are better prepared to adapt and thrive as new technologies are introduced.

**At Telstra Business, we help protect, grow and empower businesses through our people, partners and solutions, all underpinned by our secure and resilient network.**

### **Helping businesses grow confidently**

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We offer tailored solutions and exceptional support, helping businesses use technology to their advantage to grow with confidence.

Talk to your Territory Manager today about how we can help you build a more flexible and productive workforce, and reduce downtime for your employees, to help your business stay ahead of the competition.

### **A network of global and local technology partners**

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Through best-in-class partnerships with global leaders in technology and an extensive network of local partners, we're able to provide tailored support Australia-wide. Talk to your Territory Manager today, about how we can help your business.



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