

Employee Experience (EX) Benchmark Report 2023

Exploring how AI powered automation is
transforming employee experience

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ABOUT KORE.AI

Kore.ai is a leading provider of advanced AI with a decade of experience in helping enterprises realize business value through the safe and responsible use of AI. The company's innovative platform, no-code tools and solutions are used to deliver end-to-end customer and employee experiences from automated to human assisted and to build generative AI enabled applications. Kore.ai takes an open approach allowing companies to choose what LLMs and infrastructure best meet their business needs. Trusted by over 200 partners and 400 Fortune 2000 companies, Kore.ai helps them navigate their AI strategy. The company has a strong patent portfolio in the AI space and has been recognized as a leader and an innovator by top analysts. Headquartered in Orlando Kore.ai has a network of offices to support customers including in India, the UK, Middle East, Japan, South Korea, and Europe.

Visit www.kore.ai to learn more.

FOREWORD

We're all suffering from application overload, both at work and at home. Faced with a growing number of technology devices, platforms, and communications channels, the way we conduct our day to day lives can be at best confusing and at worst overwhelming.

Dealing with digital distractions, working from different environments, information overload — and the multitude of micro tasks that result from the sheer wealth of devices at our fingertips — can cause a damaging lack of productivity.

Yet there is a way of turning the technology to our advantage. Imagine how transformative having your own digital personal assistant would be, taking care of these small mundane tasks. Allowing you to focus on what matters rather than get tied up dealing with the minutiae.

In this report, we reveal the results of a survey we conducted with over 2,000 desk-based workers in the UK and the US to uncover how they feel about the technology they use at work and the potential for it to do more for them. We explore the frustrations people face daily just trying to get their jobs done, and their experiences with the business applications they use every day.

Do they make their lives easier, as promised, or do they actually add time and complication to the working day?

We will also aim to uncover the specific impact that emerging technology currently has on the way we work and the potential of tools — such as artificial intelligence (AI) and automation — to transform our employee experience. We explore how digital assistants are being used in organizations and how they could be further embedded in the workplace to speed up tasks and simplify workloads.

We also look at the growing potential of digital assistants in the workplace. Solutions such as Siri and Alexa have broken ground in getting people used to voice assistants in the consumer space but the workplace is behind.

Based on our research findings and our experience, we believe it's now time that employees had access to the same technology at work to optimize their productivity and relieve the stress of application overload.

Research methodology

The research was commissioned by Kore.ai and conducted online by global market research firm 3Gem in April and May 2023.

The survey was conducted among 2,000 white collar office workers (people performing professional, desk, managerial, or administrative work). 1,000 respondents in the UK and 1,000 respondents in the US, all working in companies with 50 employees and above.

All figures quoted come from this research unless stated otherwise.

KEY FINDINGS

1

Workplace tech tools aren't making employees' lives easier

Tech tools are causing chaos and confusion rather than simplicity and consistency, with many employees rating tools as average or bad, with the highest frustrations for finance (48%) and HR (45%) tools.

2

The right tools contribute to employee job satisfaction

Employers have a job on their hands to balance their employee's need for stimulation with their desire to keep things simple and manageable. Almost three quarters of employees (71%) say their biggest priority is being challenged at work but even more (76%) value being productive over anything else.

3

Gen Z workforce have higher expectations of workplace technology

Gen Z employees have higher expectations of workplace technology and are more likely to rank the tools they use as average or bad.

4

Mundane tasks are threatening productivity

Despite employees enjoying more stimulating work, their time is often wasted on small and mundane tasks. Two fifths (40%) say they spend over a third of their working day on jobs that could arguably be automated.

5

Time for conversational AI or AI Assisted tools to step in

More than a third of employees (35%) say their only experience of chatbots is in the context of customer service outside of the workplace, while only 15% say they have chatbots at work. Conversational AI has huge potential to simplify and streamline workflows with intelligent digital assistants. Now is a great time for companies to explore this option.

6

The era of the intelligent virtual assistants

In employees' personal lives, using digital assistants such as Siri and Alexa is commonplace, but this has yet to become a mainstay of the workplace. However, with the explosion of ChatGPT and Bard, people are now seeing how AI could support them both at home, and in the work-place, with a fifth currently using ChatGPT to help them at work.

Workplace tech tools aren't making employees' lives easier



There is no doubt that technology is dominating how, when, and at what pace we work. From the connectivity that allows us to work from different locations to the conferencing features that allow us to have almost limitless communication, technology has transformed our working lives.

Yet with more and more solutions emerging to assist us in the workplace, are we at risk of application overload?

Our research shows that on average, workers are using 11 apps to communicate at work and 9 to collaborate with others. Juggling this many different platforms and the reminders, notifications and messages received from each one is a risk to both productivity and wellbeing. With so many programmes to manage, users fall victim to application fatigue, rather than benefiting from the streamlined efficiency that these applications were designed to deliver.

This is precisely where conversational AI emerges as a game-changer. Conversational AI eliminates the need for users to manage multiple applications and reduces the risk of application fatigue. Instead of navigating numerous applications, employees can simply ask their queries or make requests to intelligent virtual assistants, and the conversational AI assistant handles the rest.

Complexity is threatening productivity

And it's not just about volume, but also about how well these old applications perform that threatens productivity levels. Unless these tools are simple to use and work seamlessly and consistently, they

themselves can be the source of daily frustrations for workers.

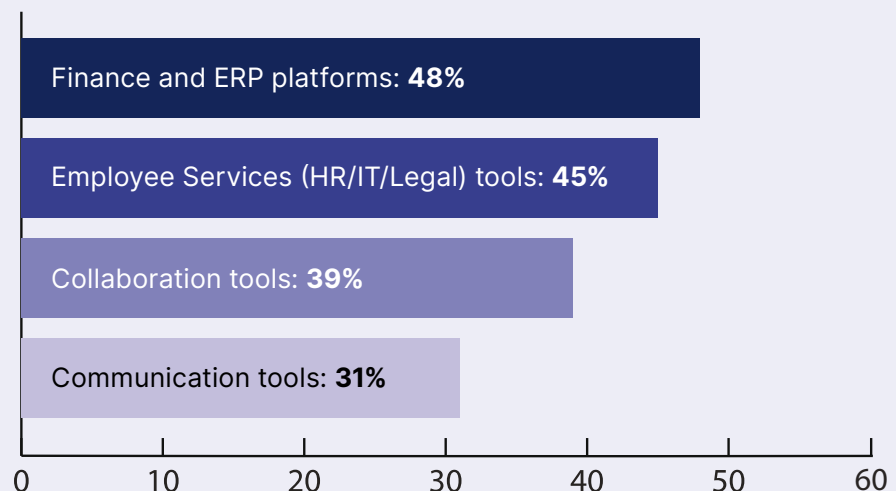
The more specialised tools are, the lower they ranked in terms of ease of use and how much they simplified people's workloads. Almost half (48%), rated finance or ERP platforms as average, bad or very bad by these criteria, closely followed by HR, IT or legal support tools (45%). This is perhaps to be expected, given their specific functionality and that they cover broad and complex subject areas.

We would perhaps expect communication and collaboration tools such as Slack, Teams, Zoom, Outlook and Gmail to be more intuitive and simple to use, as they are generally used for messaging, sharing documents, sending emails, or making calls.

However, this isn't always the case, with (39%) of employees rating collaboration tools as average, bad or very bad and 31% saying the same about communications tools. The fact that one in three users or more is struggling with this supposedly straightforward technology is an indication that more needs to be done to improve ease of use and efficiency.

The threat you didn't see coming:
Daily used tools like HR, IT support systems fall short in ease of use and workload simplification, causing more frustration than productivity.

% of workers ranking tools as average, bad or very bad, in terms of ease of use and how they simplify workloads:



The right tools contribute to employee job satisfaction



Although the way we work has shifted dramatically in recent years in terms of flexible hours and remote working, job satisfaction still remains reliant on a number of core aspects. The leading factor in happiness at work for over three quarters (76%) of respondents was having access to the right tools and technology. The same number (76%) cited knowing they were productive at work to be the most important aspect of being happy in their roles.

Another big consideration for employees is keeping a balance between stimulating and supporting their work. For the majority (71%) of employees, being engaged in challenging and stimulating work was the biggest contributor to job satisfaction. That said, over two thirds of respondents (67%) stated that maintaining a balance between challenging and easy tasks was of most importance to them.

With remote and flexible working now the standard rather than the exception, it's perhaps no surprise that over two thirds (69%) of employees value communications technology above all else. As such, receiving the right support from internal departments (such as IT or HR) is also seen as

a key factor by many employees (69%). Being away from the office and in many cases from colleagues, means that having simple and reliable access to information and resources is vital, along with direct and responsive communications with people who can help.

Workers are giving a clear indication to organizations that they need the right tools and technology to do their jobs and feel productive. It's also evident that employees value a network of support, communication and consistency in order to feel satisfied at work. Personalized, intelligent support is clearly high on the agenda and employers must take this into consideration when reviewing ways they can support their employees better.

76% of respondents consider productivity at work a top priority and a key aspect of job satisfaction.

Most important factors influencing job satisfaction:



Gen Z workforce have higher expectations of workplace technology



While these figures show an interesting picture of what drives job satisfaction among workers overall, the story changes when we put the younger generation under the microscope. Employees aged 18-24 are essentially the future workforce for any major business, so listening to their priorities and concerns is paramount.

It seems that this age group is particularly critical when it comes to assessing how well technology works. When ranking the efficacy and performance of workplace technology, the percentage of those calling the tools they use “bad” or “very bad” rises by (on average) 10% among 18-24 year olds compared to the overall respondent figure.

Almost a fifth of this group (17%) say the HR and collaboration tools they use are “bad” or “very bad” in terms of streamlining and simplifying tasks. And over one in 10 (12%) say the same about IT support tools. It’s clear that current tools are not intelligent enough to provide all the information and/or context needed for Gen Z to feel satisfied or supported.

However, perhaps most interestingly when looking at this group is the driver for their job satisfaction and how it differs from older employees. When asked about knowing they were productive at work — and how much this factored into their job

satisfaction — just over a third (36%) of 18-24 years old claimed this was “very important”. This is compared to the overall figure of 45%, which rises to almost half (49%) in 35-44 year olds.

What we can learn from this is that for the future generation, technology that works and helps them get the job done is far more valuable than a sense of self-productivity.

For these digital natives — who have lived with a multitude of technology all their lives — efficiency and accuracy is favored. The message to organisations is to ensure that workplace technology tools run efficiently and support productivity, rather than being seen as a hindrance. Gen Z wants to work smarter and faster. If organizations don’t keep up with their demands, they will simply jump ship. Having the right technology will be essential for keeping the future workforce happy.

**The Future Workforce Speaks:
Gen Z demands technical
efficiency and accuracy for job
satisfaction.**

Gen Z seeks efficient and accurate workplace technology.

60% say having access to the right tech and tools is a top factor of their job satisfaction

55% say HR platforms they use are “average” to “very bad” and 40% say the same about IT tools

54% rank receiving satisfactory support from IT and HR as a top factor for job satisfaction

50% want basic HR and IT requests (to be automated)

Mundane tasks are threatening productivity



One of the major barriers to both productivity and the employee's desire to complete challenging and stimulating work is the need to complete small, mundane 'microtasks'.

Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents said they spend between 3-4 hours a day on repetitive, manual computer-based actions such as replying to emails, scheduling meetings or searching for documents. That's half of an employee's working day taken up with tasks that could easily be automated. Time that could be better spent elsewhere; in training courses, doing more rewarding work, reducing heavy workload, increasing job satisfaction through reduced stress, for example.

These are all things that could be achieved if organizations leveraged technology built with optimized employee experience in mind.

Of course, these 'microtasks' are vital to process. But due to their stop/start nature and tendency to 'drop in' to a day at short notice, they can easily interrupt the flow of longer and more intellectually demanding or rewarding activities.

Automation is clearly starting to be used throughout organizations with over a third (34%) saying email replies are created automatically, finding information or documents (34%), holiday and other HR requests (36%), and scheduling meetings (39%).

The task most likely to be completed using automation was issuing diary reminders, with almost half (47%) saying this was already automated in their workplace.

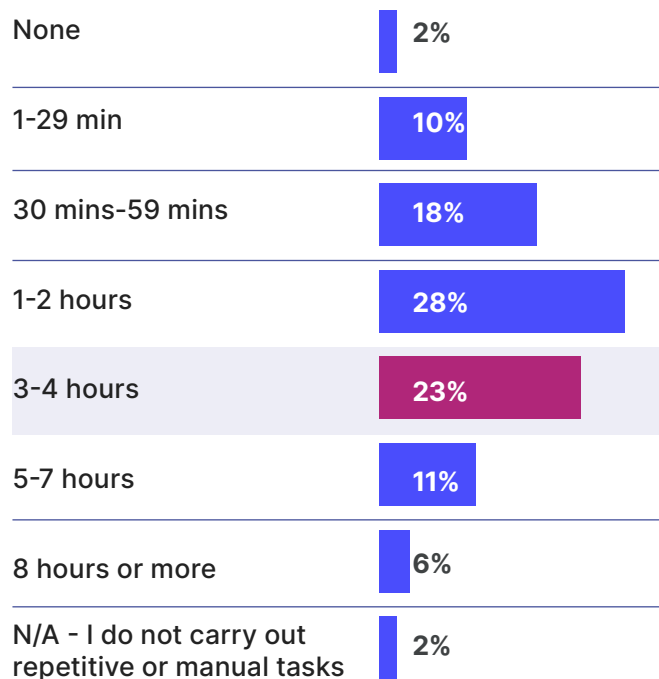
In terms of what people think should be taken off their lists, almost half (47%) say finding information or documents should be automated, with 48% saying the same for writing meeting actions and 47% wanting the task of raising invoices and purchase orders to be automated as well.

However, there are some tasks that are currently being automated which people feel should still be dealt with manually. For example, although almost a quarter (24%) say their company uses automation for legal advice, nearly two fifths (39%) don't agree it should be.

This suggests that employees still want businesses to be cautious around regulated transactions and personal communication. As such, automation should not be considered as a 'blanket' solution for all administrative activities.

Yet, it's evident to see how employees are feeling the pressure with mundane tasks. If technologies, such as Conversational AI (CAI) are embraced to enable greater automation, employees can increase their productivity and bring greater value to an organization.

How much time are you spending on repetitive or manual computer-based tasks at work every day



Time Wasted: Almost a quarter (23%) of employees spend 3-4 hours on mundane tasks.

Time for conversational AI or AI Assisted tools to step in



The benefits of automation are well documented and organisations that haven't yet invested in automation tools for daily work tasks need to catch up, and fast. According to McKinsey, "when coupled with other next-generation digital tools, we estimate that process automation may enable many businesses to reduce operational costs by up to 30 percent within five years."

Though, as we've discussed, choosing the right automation tools in supporting both job satisfaction for employees and productivity for businesses is crucial. And as with incorporating any change, the transition must be carefully planned and expertly managed.

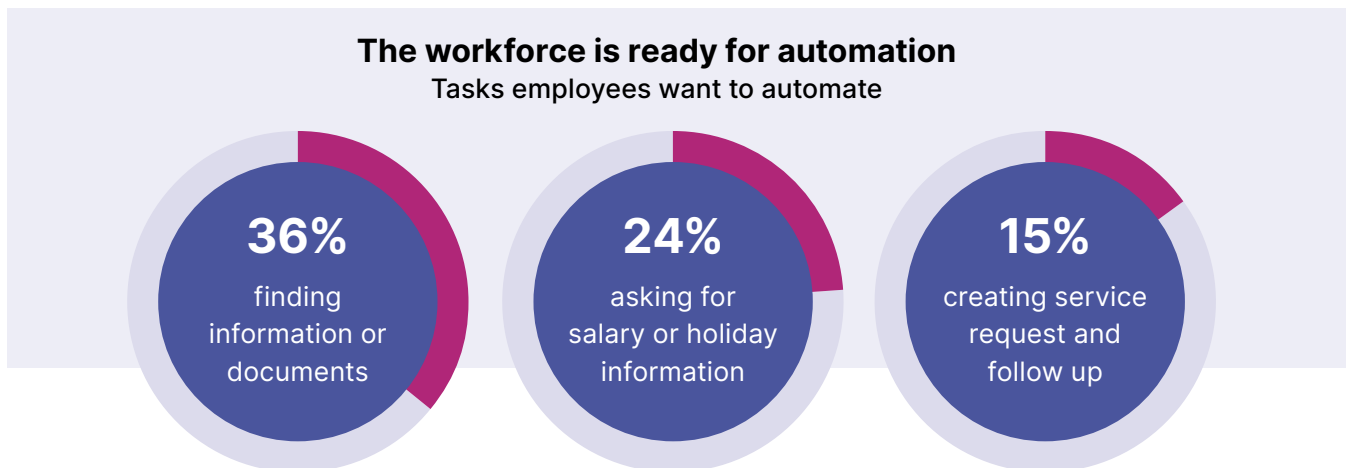
When asked their preferred method of finding answers to HR questions in the workplace, half of respondents (52%) said they use email to find HR queries. a quarter (26%) use messaging systems like slack or teams, while over 1 in 10 (13%) ask a

colleague or the person sitting next to them, which could cause inaccuracies.

The story is similar when we look at how employees get answers to IT queries they have, with almost half (47%) using email. A further 37% pick up the phone and call someone for any questions they have, with 20% going directly to visit the department.

While many employees prefer email or calls to get answers to their HR and IT questions, these methods are slow and inefficient. Many requests are basic and repetitive and could easily be automated, reducing the workload for those working in IT and HR.

There is clearly a big opportunity for internal departments to streamline their service so they can focus on more strategic work and specifically for HR, work to make improvements to the employee experience.



In looking at these figures, it's clear that employees are crying out for automation and to be empowered to get tasks done quickly, efficiently and accurately. Businesses wanting to keep their employees happy and their operations running smoothly need to sit up and take note.

One option that is only just beginning to emerge in the workplace are digital assistants powered by CAI. Over a third of workers (35%) say their only experience with chatbots has been in a customer service setting outside of work, and just 15% say they currently have chatbots at work.

It's therefore crucial to distinguish between a legacy chatbot often used for customer service

solutions, which are simple, menu driven, unintelligent, and inadequate for today's digital environment, and a digital assistant powered by CAI.

CAI overcomes robotic, sometimes frustrating transactions, or people skipping these procedures altogether to speak to a human directly – increasing operational costs immediately. Instead, CAI takes into consideration the complexities of human language such as slang, multiple word meanings and interruptions, and goes beyond linear resolution paths. It also makes the employee experience more dynamic, empowering them with quick answers that otherwise could have taken hours for a response.

The opportunity for organisations to simplify workflows and increase job satisfaction, productivity, and work/life balance is huge. For example, HR tools can connect people to the right resources, and facilitate engaging conversations about pay or diversity and inclusion (D&I) issues. IT chatbots use keywords to find relevant information or speed up the resolution of an issue after a ticket has been raised. These tools allow people to find documents and collaborate with others to boost creativity too.

Intelligent virtual assistants powered by Conversational AI are an emerging trend in the workplace. Organizations that embrace this trend stand to gain significant benefits in the digital era.

To streamline operations and enhance employee support, a Canadian Multinational Energy Distribution Company took the initiative to implement self-service options for its workforce of 15,000 employees. By introducing a conversational AI HR virtual assistant, employees were empowered to seek assistance for their routine inquiries in a seamless and efficient manner.

The implementation yielded impressive results. On average, the virtual assistant successfully answered 900 questions per month, showcasing its ability to address a wide range of employee queries. Moreover, the company achieved an outstanding call containment rate of 90%, indicating that the virtual assistant effectively resolved the majority of employee issues without the need for human intervention. Additionally, the average response time experienced a remarkable reduction of 99%, allowing employees to receive timely and prompt assistance from the virtual assistant.

The era of the intelligent virtual assistants



The growing influence of AI presents both opportunities and challenges for all businesses. Adapting to the digital age — and the advent of AI in particular — requires business leaders to change their mindset and embrace innovation. For them to embrace the digital age they must remain agile, flexible, and willing to test solutions.

Organisations must introduce the right type and amount of AI and automation into their daily practices. Therefore it's vital they know exactly how workers feel that AI could help them in their daily role and their attitudes towards AI in general.

More than one in ten (14%) said they regularly used an AI voice assistant to save time in their home lives, and a fifth (20%) said they'd used ChatGPT AI at work to help them do their job. Almost two in 10 (18%) said that they felt AI would make their job more interesting, and almost a quarter (23%) said they would love their own AI digital assistant at work.

In terms of looking to a future where digital assistants could ease some of the working pressures that employees face, we asked what workers would do if they could save just 20% of their time every day.

Over two fifths (44%) said they would use that time to work a four day week, while a third (33%) said they would make sure they had a better work/life balance. For over a quarter (28%), the time would be best spent re-assigning themselves to other tasks at work, saying they would use it to carry out more strategic and creative tasks. The benefits an organization could reap from this are limitless.

**Embracing the Future:
Almost a quarter (23%) of
employees enthusiastically
await their own AI Digital
Assistant at work.**

A renowned global service provider for information technologies and digital transformation, successfully addressed its HR challenges and improved employee satisfaction through the implementation of a conversational AI-based solution. With a workforce of over 2000 employees, the HR team was facing a significant influx of emails, resulting in a decline in employee experience and increased manual workload.

Utilizing the capabilities of conversational AI led to over 30% reduction in emails received by the HR team and a 50% reduction in the time for end-to-end flows for employees! These outcomes have not only enhanced operational efficiency but have also contributed to an improved work environment and increased employee satisfaction.

Support Bot is Helping Save 100's of Support Hours per Quarter

We've been able to drive significant business value since deploying our Kore.ai built employee support Slack bot. Using the bot, we are saving hundreds of support hours per quarter across multiple business areas (IT, Finance and OR).

Improving employee experience: Five steps to success

To avoid application fatigue, it's vital that the tools employees use are reliable, easy to navigate, and crucially, make their working lives simpler.

For organizations, it's all about the balance of keeping their employees happy and productive, while ensuring they keep up with and embrace AI and technology trends.

Here are our recommendations on how businesses can use the insights from this report to transform employee experience and boost productivity.

1 Embrace AI - it's here to stay:

Embracing new technologies is vital to future-proofing organizations, both in terms of attracting and retaining the next generation of talent, but also building a more robust and efficient business capable of adapting quickly to navigate global change and disruptions. Technologies such as Conversational AI (CAI) are maturing quickly, delivering a multitude of benefits and can ensure a business stays at the forefront of the market and ahead of the competition!

2 Make the experience personal, not painful:

Our report shows us that workers are keen for 'microtasks' to be automated. It's time to deliver personalized, intelligent and conversational support when employees need it, where they need it. Digital assistants, powered by CAI are the perfect solution to empowering employees to feel more supported, confident, and productive at work.

3 Improve employee well-being:

Workplaces are evolving to become more distributed and hybrid. It's important to deliver the necessary support and service no matter where they are in languages and channels they're comfortable with. CAI powered digital assistants can integrate with multiple communication tools and support service delivery in multiple languages. This creates a more inclusive and welcoming workplace for every employee.

4 Reduce tech dependencies:

Embracing new technologies often means huge investments in technical talent and long turn around times. But, that equation has changed. Using intuitive low-code and no-code technologies of today, it's possible for anyone to build and deploy CAI applications without having to write any code. This can help organizations to easily get started with CAI, and to provide ongoing support and maintenance for future requirements without incurring huge costs.

5 Keep it simple:

Voice-enabled assistants are making all sorts of common tasks easier in our personal lives and have even more power to help us at work. Giving employees more time back to enable work/life balance or focus on more career-enhancing tasks organizations will be rewarded with a happier workforce. It's proven that improving the employee experience translates to a better experience for customers, which will in turn deliver better business results.

Explore how you can improve your employee experience using Conversational AI and Generative AI.

[Book a free consultation!](#)

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Conversational AI for customer
and employee experiences

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