TeamViewer

The Impact of Digital Friction:

Understanding How Dysfunctional Technology Drains Productivity, Performance & People

2025 Report

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Introduction

Understanding the True Impact of Digital Friction at Work

From connectivity mishaps to authentication and hardware failures, everyone experiences moments at work when technology doesn't do what it's supposed to do.

And while these moments of IT dysfunction and digital friction can cause individual frustration for employees, at scale, their impact can ripple across entire organizations.

To understand just how much digital friction disrupts work, TeamViewer conducted a global survey of managers and employees across various industries, company sizes, job functions, and regions. The goal was to quantify how technology issues affect productivity, job satisfaction, and retention — and to examine how organizations can mitigate the problem through smarter IT practices, improved employee trust, and innovative technology like AI.

Ultimately, the report is designed to arm business and IT leaders with practical insights to reduce digital friction and create more seamless, productive, and engaging digital workplaces.

Defining Digital Friction

Digital friction, also known as IT dysfunction, is any type of challenge with workplace technology that prevents an employee from doing their job or doing it efficiently.
This includes situations where IT systems, digital applications and digital devices of any kind – from computers, smartphones and wearables to heavy machinery and medical equipment – fail to operate as intended, causing interruptions or limitations to workflows.

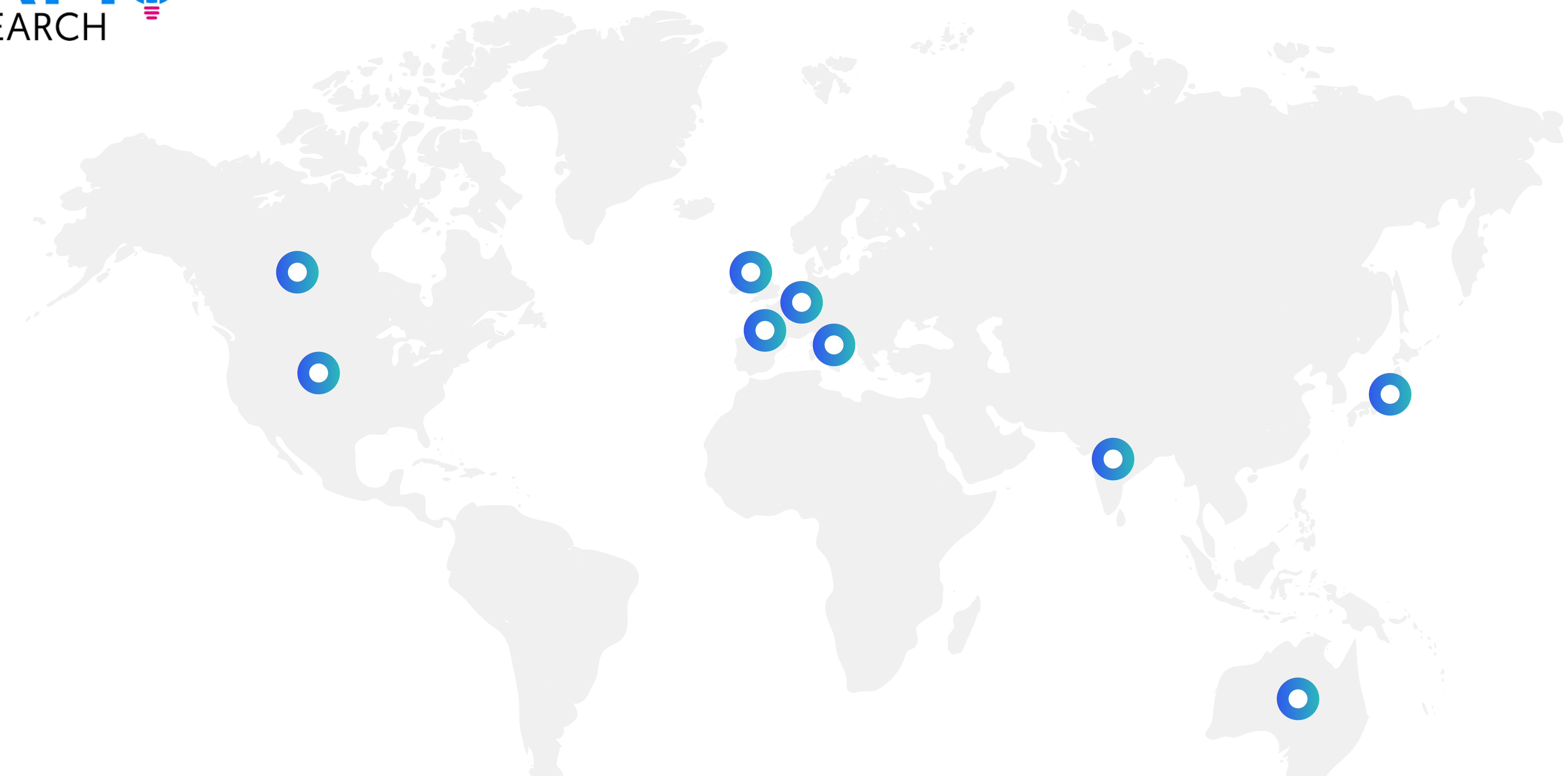
These dysfunctions can occur across all work environments — from office desks and work-from-home setups to industrial floors and field operations.

Methodology

Research methodology

The survey was conducted by Sapio Research in August and September 2025 using an email invitation and online survey. In total, 4,200 managers and employees (50:50 split) across the U.S. (1,000), Australia (400), Canada (400), France (400), Germany (400), India (400), Italy (400), Japan (400), and the U.K. (400) were surveyed.

SAPIO RESEARCH



Canada	U.S.	Germany	U.K.	France
400	1,000	400	400	400

Italy	Australia	Japan	India
400	400	400	400

4,200

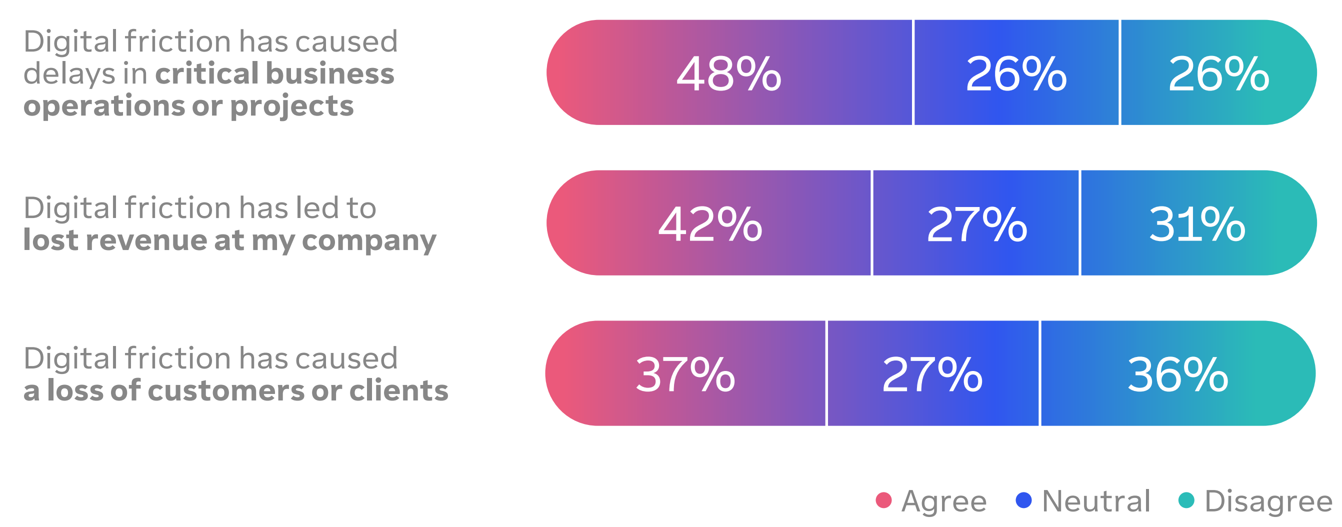
Managers and Employees Surveyed

The Business Impact

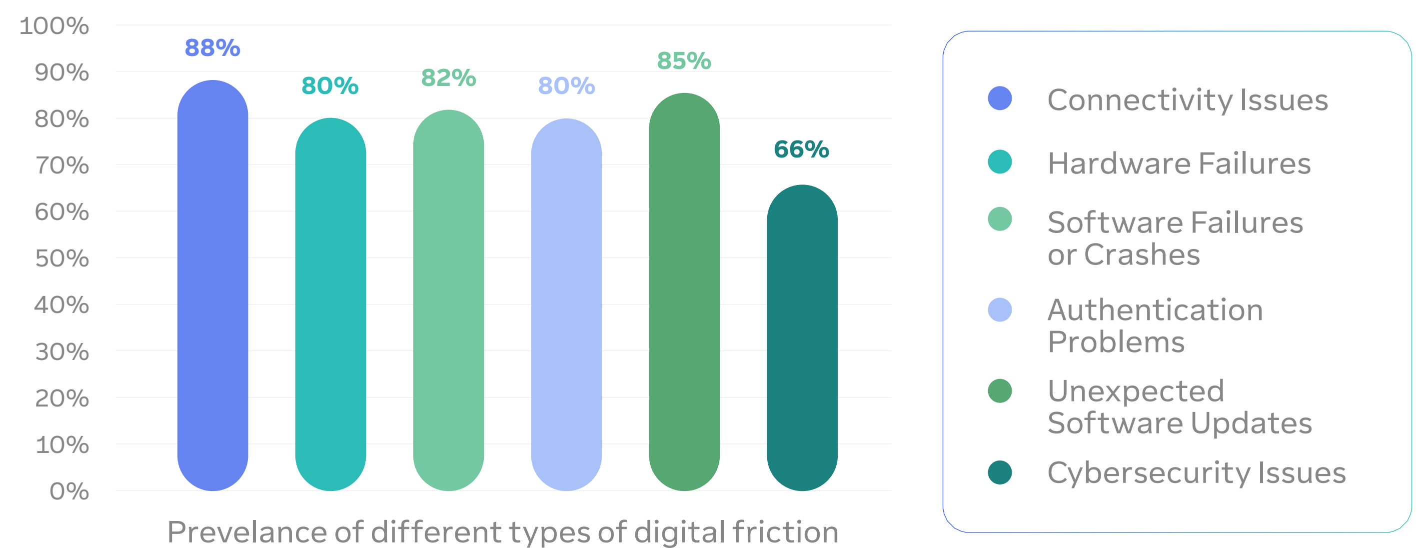
How Digital Friction Undermines Performance and Profitability

Digital friction has become a serious business challenge. From missed deadlines and lost customers to mounting security risks and revenue loss, dysfunctional technology is quietly undermining productivity, performance, and profitability across organizations worldwide. Approximately half (**48%**) of respondents report that digital friction caused delays in critical operations or projects within the last year, while **42%** cite direct revenue loss and **37%** say their organization has lost customers due to IT dysfunction.

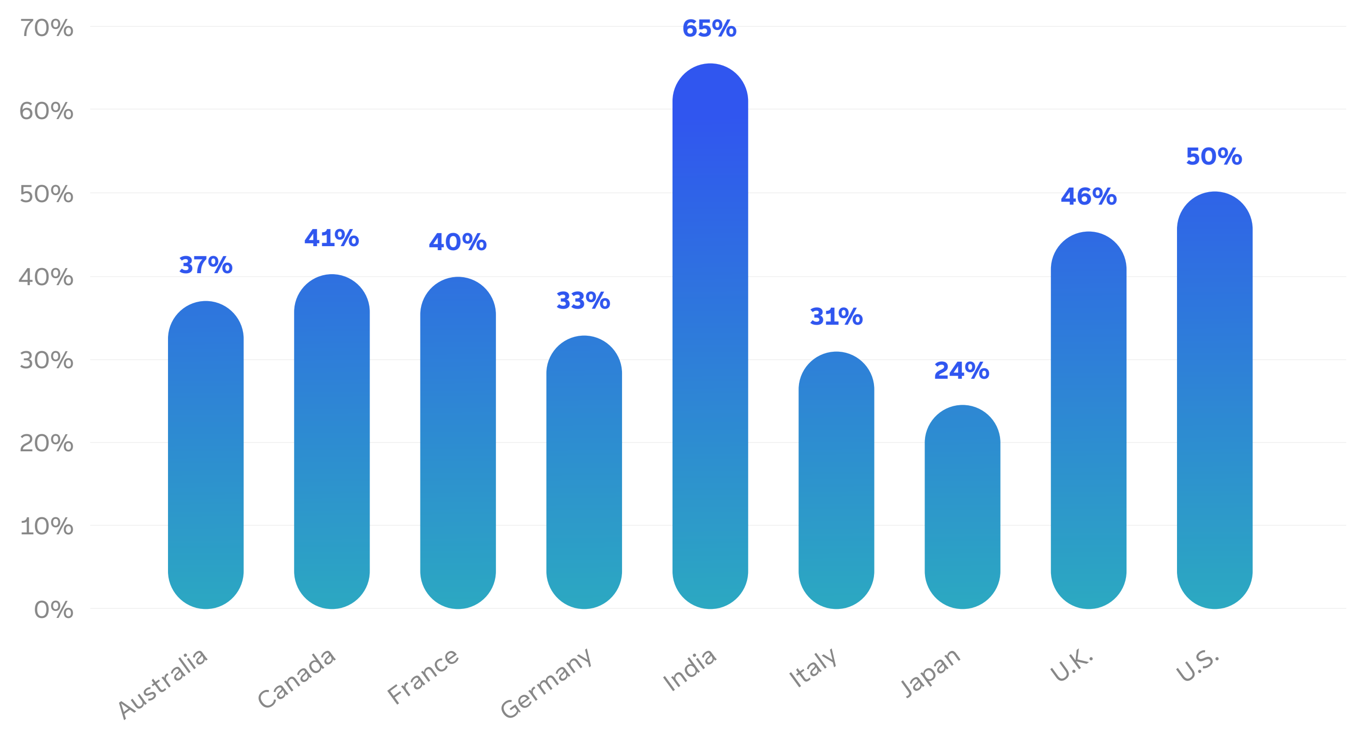
Impact of Digital Friction on Business Outcomes



Type of Digital Friction



Digital Friction Leads to Lost Revenue



This isn't so surprising considering that **36%** of respondents say they have missed an important deadline because of IT dysfunction and **40%** have missed or been late to a critical meeting.

These disruptions often stem from widespread technical issues. In the past year alone:

- **88%** experienced connectivity problems (e.g., server access, video calls, or file sharing) within the last year, with **45%** identifying this as the top productivity killer among common technology issues.
- **82%** faced software crashes across essential tools like CRMs or productivity apps.
- **80%** encountered hardware failures, such as computers, printers or wearables not working properly.
- **80%** also faced authentication problems, including issues with passwords and getting locked out of critical systems.
- **66%** dealt with forced updates, restarts, or cybersecurity incidents such as malware or ransomware.

Andrew Hewitt, VP of Strategic Technology, TeamViewer

"Digital friction might seem like a short-term inconvenience, but over time it erodes an organization's competitive edge," said Andrew Hewitt, VP of Strategic Technology, TeamViewer.

When employees are distracted by constant technical issues, they have less focus and creative energy for innovation. The result is slower projects, higher frustration, and, ultimately, lost differentiation in the market."

The Productivity Paradox

Oliver Steil, CEO, TeamViewer

Digital friction also fuels a measurable loss in productivity. **80% of respondents admit to losing time to dysfunctional IT — an average of 1.3 workdays per month.** India reported the highest figure at **1.9 days**, followed by the U.S. at **1.5 days.** Japan was the only country where workers reported losing less than one day a month to digital friction **(0.79 days).** Only **15%** of respondents expect this to improve next year, while **33%** expect to lose more time to digital friction next year, citing increasing complexity of workplace technology as the primary concern (**32%**).

"Complexity in technology isn't the enemy — it's often the result of innovation," said Oliver Steil, CEO of TeamViewer.

The key is managing that complexity, so it enhances productivity. When tools designed to create efficiency instead cause disruption, it's a signal to look deeper at the underlying processes — not just the technology itself."

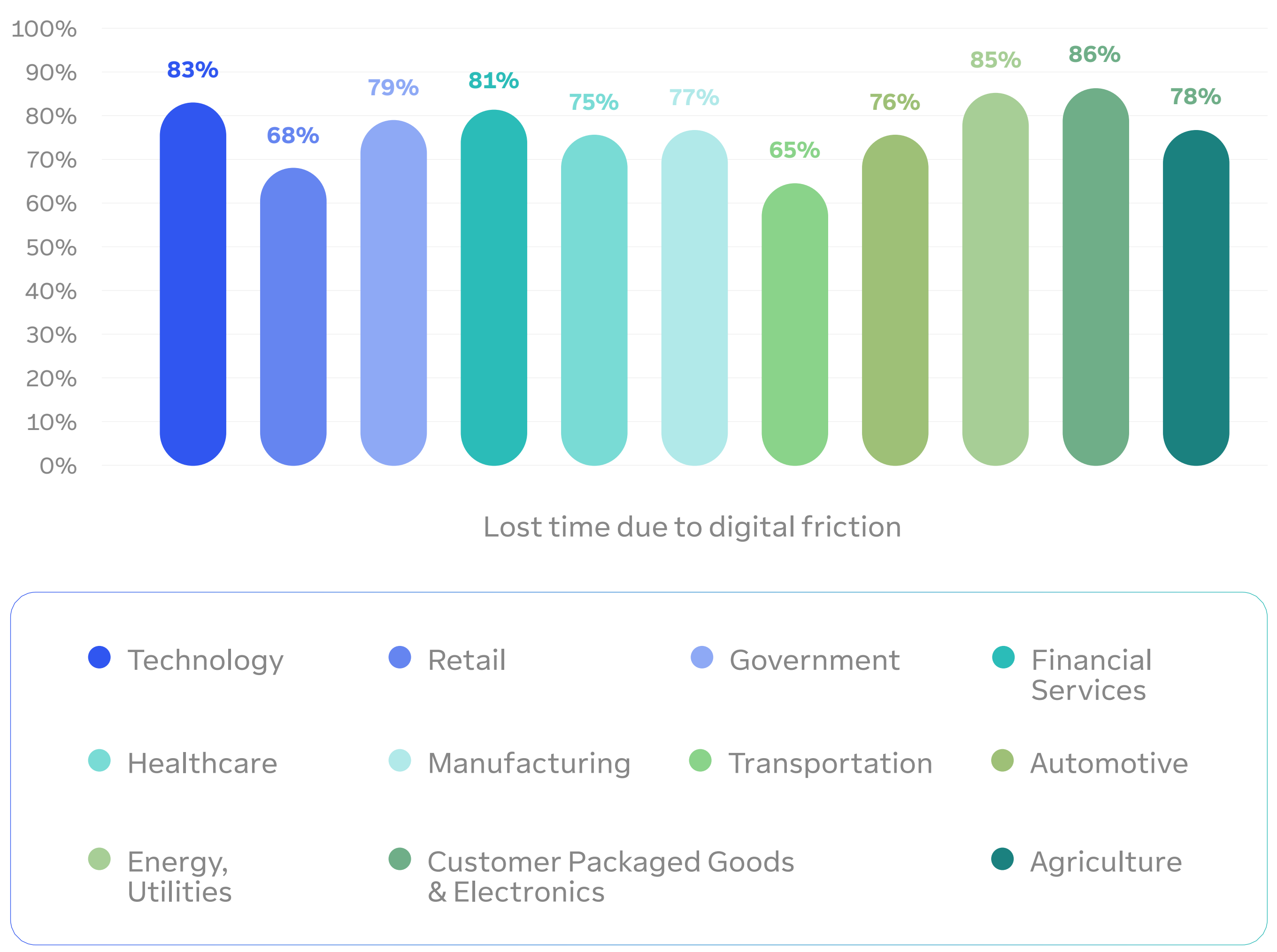
The research shows that time lost to digital friction is a near-universal problem — no industry escapes it entirely. Even in the transportation sector, which reports the lowest impact, **65% of respondents** say they've lost time due to IT dysfunction.

Interestingly, **83% of respondents** in the technology industry reported losing time to digital friction, suggesting that digital maturity does not necessarily equal digital efficiency.

1.3

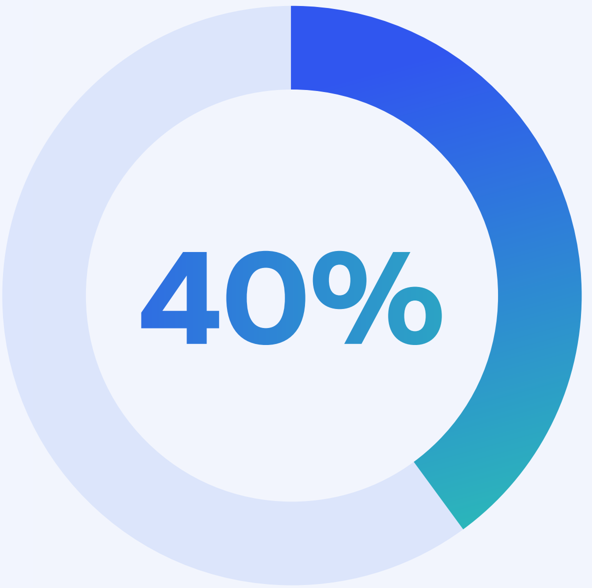
The average number of workdays per month employees lose to digital friction.

Lost Time by Industry



When Workarounds Become Security Risks

In response to persistent IT dysfunction, **40%** of employees admit to using personal devices or applications as workarounds — a figure that jumps to **66%** in India and **51%** in the U.S.



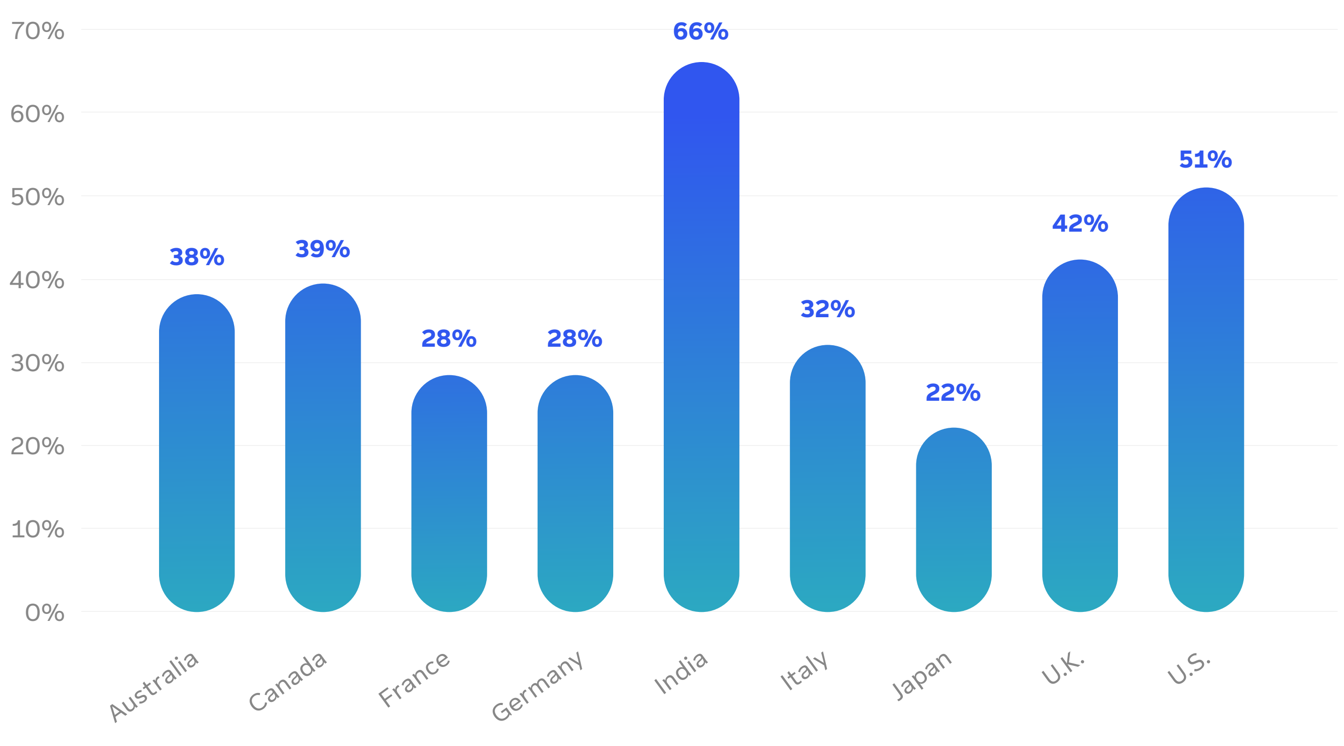
of employees admit to using personal devices or applications as workarounds when workplace technology fails.

These workarounds often lead to Shadow IT, a term that describes when employees use unapproved hardware, software, or cloud services to get their jobs done without the knowledge or oversight of the IT department.

While often born from good intentions — simply wanting to stay productive — Shadow IT introduces serious risks around data security, compliance, and visibility.

Shadow IT

Use of personal device at work.



Jan Bee, Chief Information Security Officer, TeamViewer

"The biggest threat with employees using their own devices is the loss of control," said Jan Bee, Chief Information Security Officer, TeamViewer. "When personal devices access corporate resources, they bypass enterprise protections and open the door to data leaks, phishing, and unauthorized access."

Shadow IT isn't the only concern — Shadow SaaS is an even greater risk. Employees signing up for unapproved tools create visibility gaps that are hard to detect and secure."

The Role of AI in Reducing IT Dysfunction

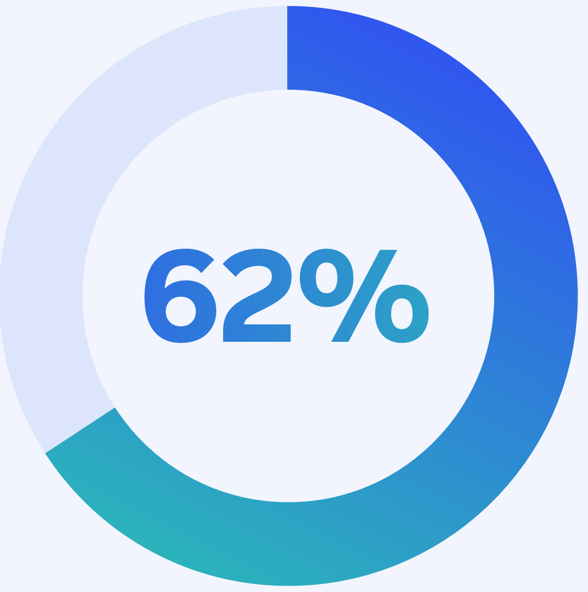
Despite these challenges, optimism exists around the role of AI in minimizing friction. Nearly half (**48%**) believe AI can reduce IT dysfunction within their organization, and **46%** trust AI to resolve technical issues faster than humans.

Half of respondents (**50%**) are open to AI handling basic troubleshooting or password resets — support that especially IT professionals seem to welcome, with **69%** of tech-industry workers in favor. Among respondents who believe they will lose less time to digital friction next year, **39%** foresee AI adoption being a primary driver.

However, **32%** of respondents report that AI solutions they've tried have failed, and knowledge gaps persist: **37%** of Baby Boomers and 29% of Gen X workers don't know what an AI agent is, compared to just **11%** of Gen Z.

Further, **62%** of employees lack confidence that their IT teams are providing them with the latest AI and digital tools.

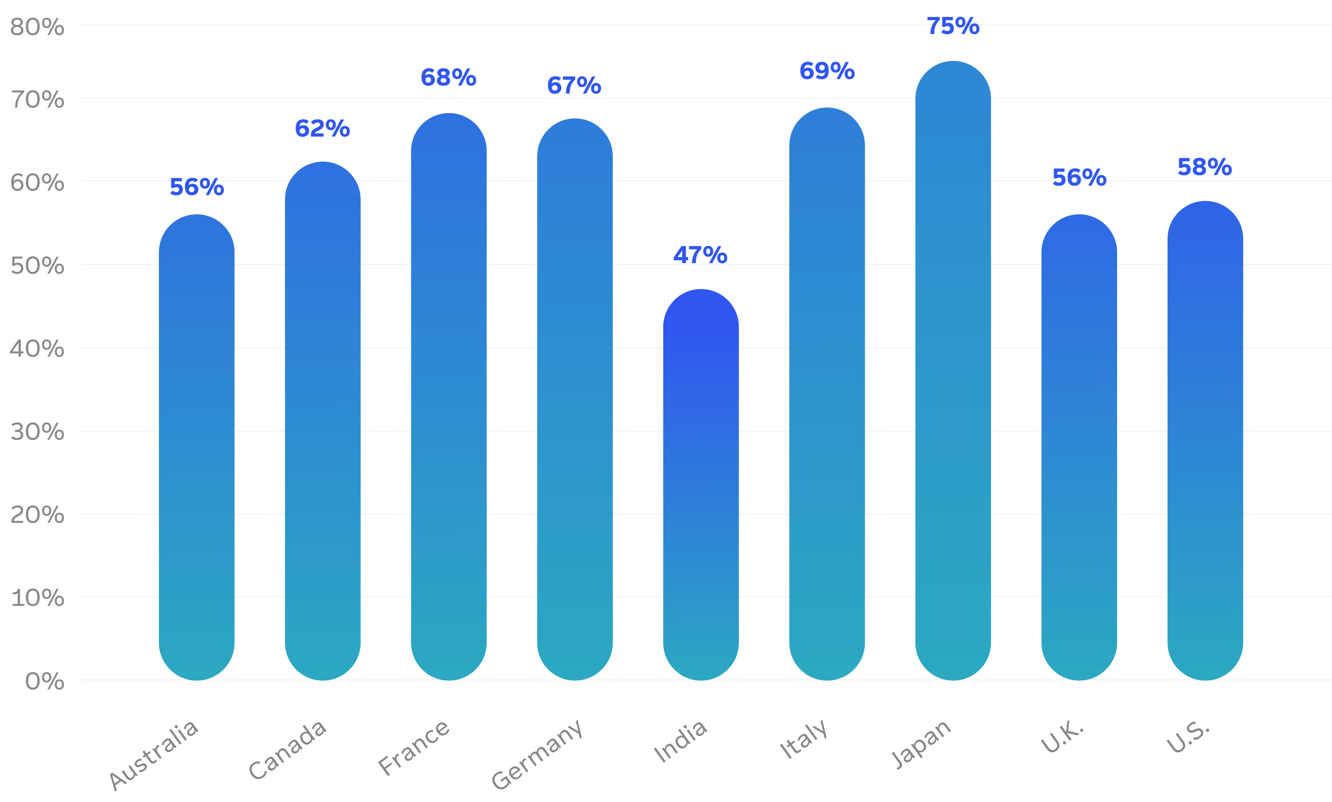
Globally, Japan stands out with three-quarters (75%) of employees believing they do not have access to the latest AI or digital tools.



of employees worry that their IT teams are not providing them with the latest AI and digital tools.

Access to AI & Digital Tools

Do not trust IT teams to give access to latest AI or digital tools.



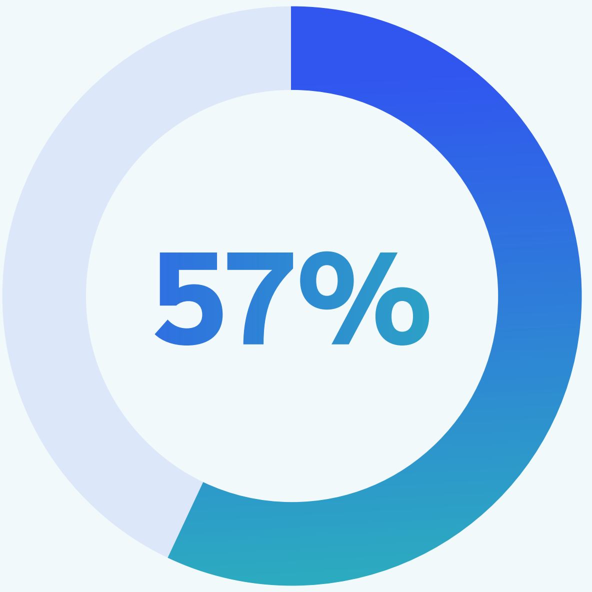
Mei Dent, Chief Product and Technology Officer, TeamViewer

"AI agents are rapidly becoming essential tools for automating knowledge work and reducing digital friction," said Mei Dent, Chief Product & Technology Officer at TeamViewer. "But their success depends on human understanding."

Leaders have a responsibility to close the knowledge gap by setting clear guidelines, encouraging safe experimentation, and helping employees feel confident using AI responsibly. With the right guardrails in place, AI can anticipate issues, prevent disruptions, and help ensure technology works the way people expect it to."

Bridging the Confidence Gap Between Employees and IT

A lack of trust between employees and IT may be compounding the problem. **57%** of workers don't trust their IT team to resolve issues quickly or effectively, and **47%** fear their IT team won't adequately protect personal or work-related data.



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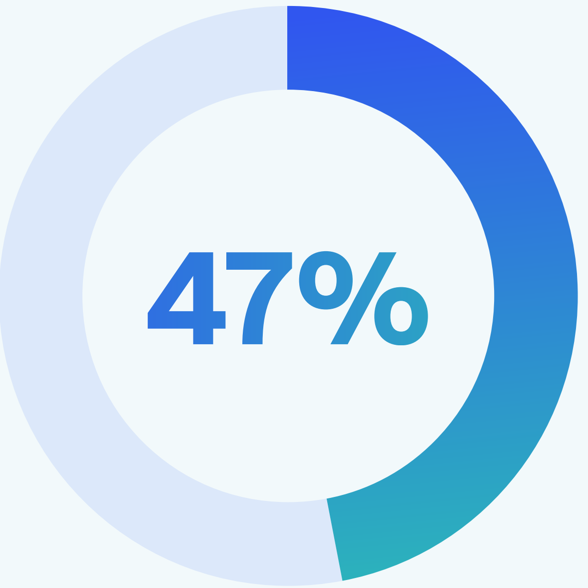


fear their IT team won't adequately protect personal or work-related data.

Mei Dent, Chief Product and Technology Officer, TeamViewer

"Whether it's prioritizing an overwhelming number of IT helpdesk tickets, rolling out unfamiliar new technology, or conducting phishing training exercises that can feel intrusive, employees often see these well-intentioned IT efforts as disruptions to their day-to-day work. It's no surprise, then, that many feel apprehensive toward their IT teams," continued Dent. "However, teams that use AI to create consistency in how IT issues are handled across an organization can regain some of this lost trust by increasing the speed in which issues are resolved and even predicting problems before they happen."

Employees' lack of trust in their IT teams may also come down to the issue of visibility.

Mark Banfield, Chief Revenue Officer, TeamViewer

"The truth is, most employees who are frustrated with technology at work don't bother to submit a ticket or raise an issue," said Mark Banfield, Chief Revenue Officer, TeamViewer. "They suffer in silence until a small problem becomes a big problem and at that point, the damage is done. The employee is unhappy and likely the colleagues or customers they work with feel it too. We call it the iceberg effect, the IT team may only see a handful of tickets related to an issue, but it's not uncommon for those few tickets to be the tip of the iceberg with a much larger problem brewing."

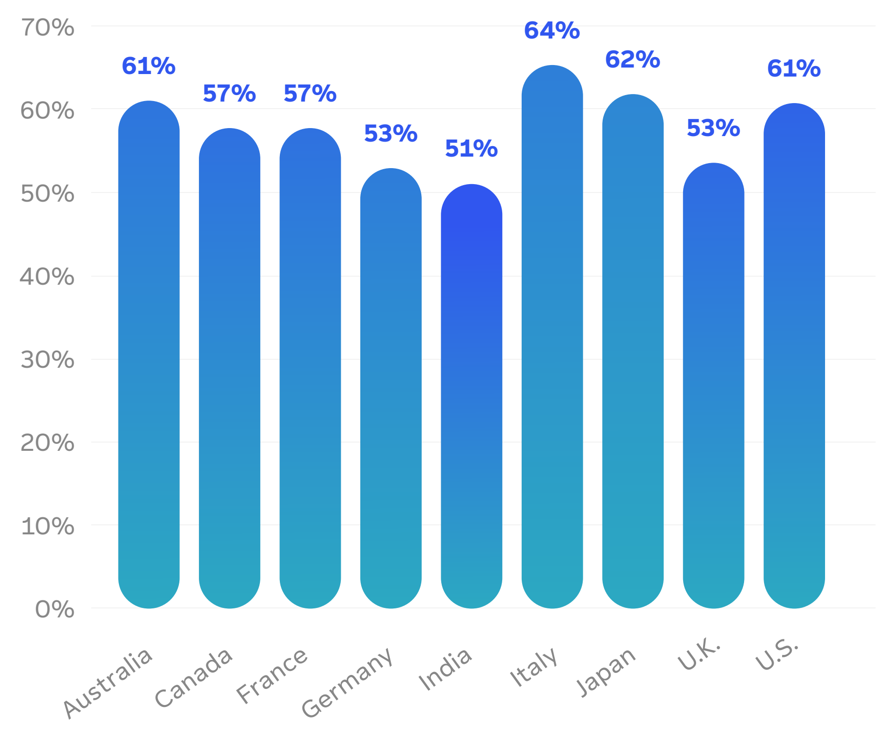
Of course, there's still a great need for IT team support with **54%** of respondents stating they don't feel confident troubleshooting IT issues on their own.

Different Environments, Different Experiences

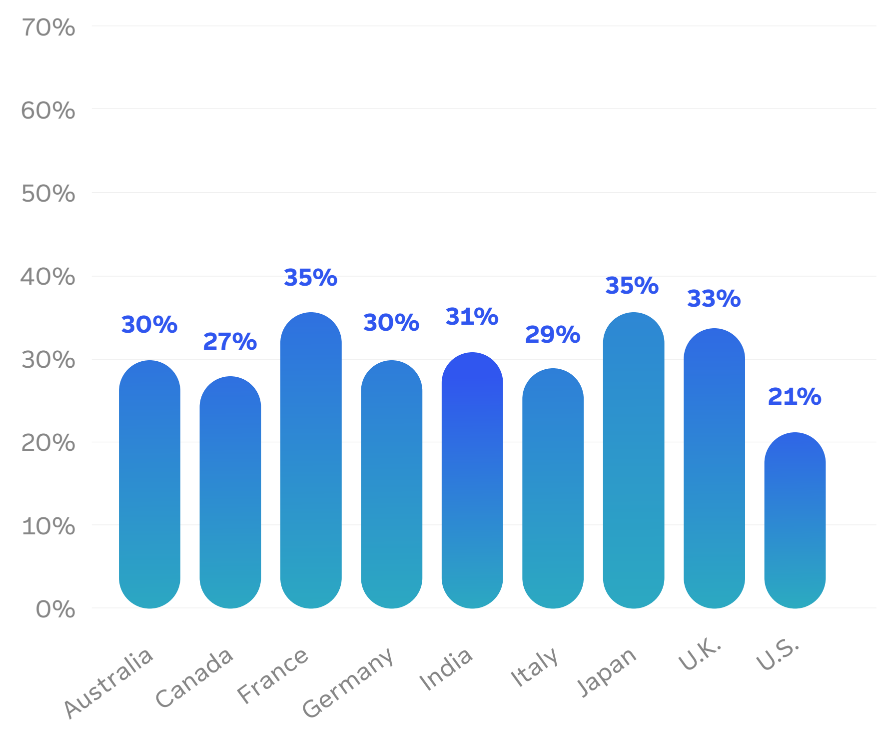
The digital experience varies by work model. **53%** of workers say their organization provides different levels of IT support to in-office versus remote employees. This disparity reflects differing work setups across markets: Italy has the highest share of full-time on-site employees (**64%**), while the U.S. and India each lead in fully remote work (**18%**). Japan and France have the largest percentage of hybrid workforces, at **35%** each.

These distinctions highlight the need for consistent yet versatile IT infrastructure and support policies that adapt to diverse work models — ensuring every employee, regardless of location, can operate without friction.

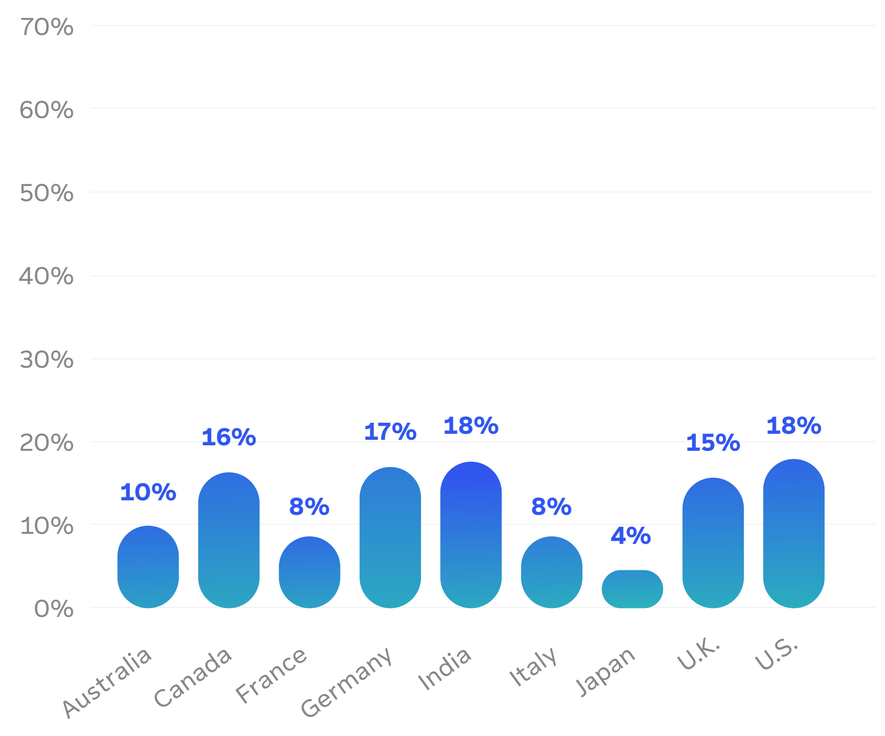
Work Environment: On-site



Work Environment: Hybrid



Work Environment: Remote

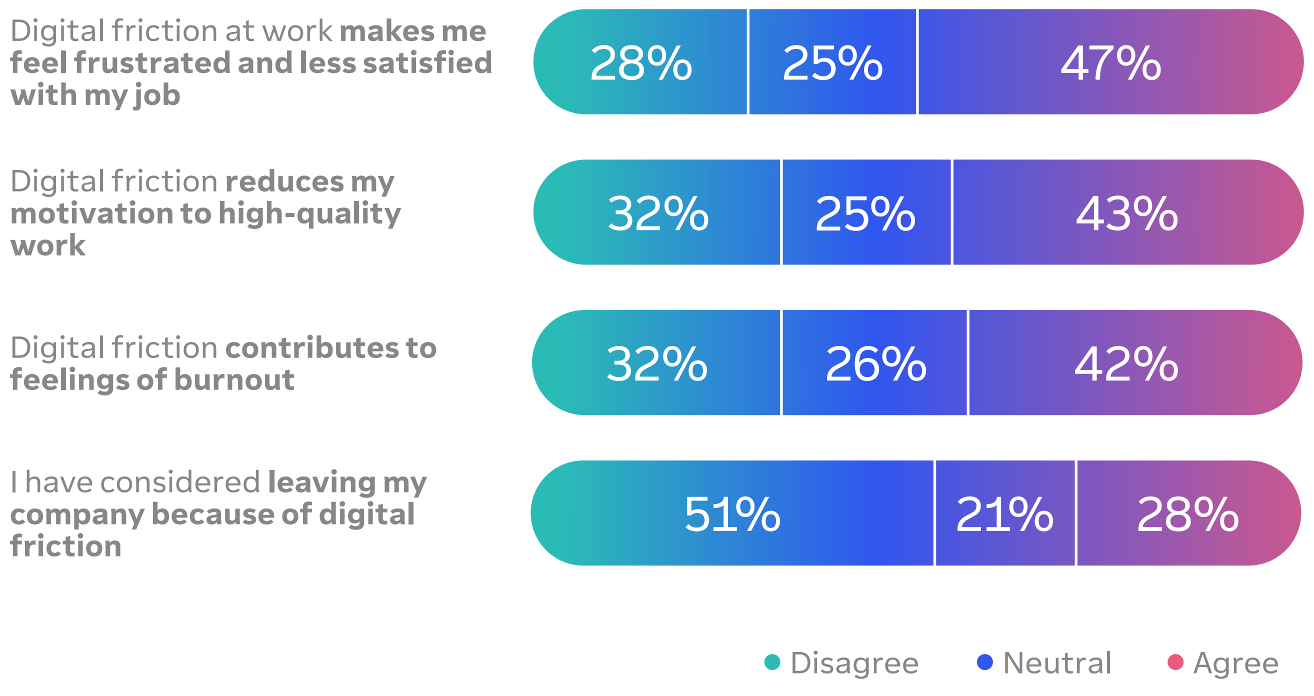


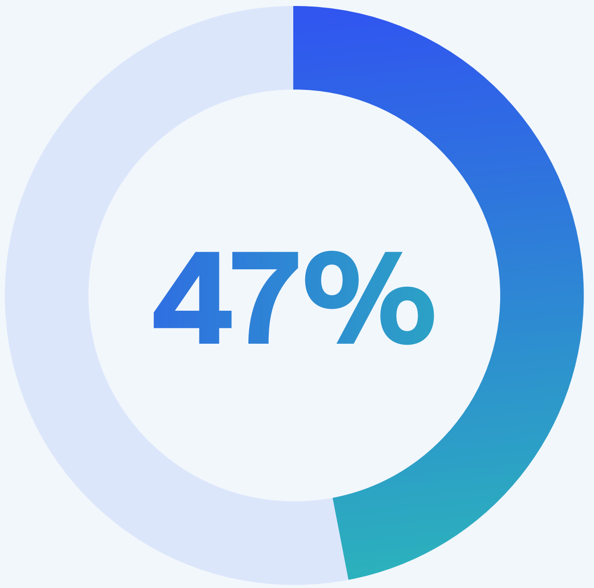
The Human Impact

How Digital Friction Drains Satisfaction and Engagement

Beyond the financial consequences, digital friction carries an equally severe human cost. When everyday technology becomes a source of frustration, it not only interrupts workflows — it chips away at motivation, morale, and the overall employee experience. Nearly half of workers (**47%**) say digital friction makes them frustrated and less satisfied with their jobs, **43%** report decreased motivation, **42%** link it to burnout, and **28%** have considered leaving their company as a direct result of IT dysfunction.

Impact of Digital Friction on Satisfaction and Engagement





of workers say digital friction makes them frustrated and less satisfied with their jobs.

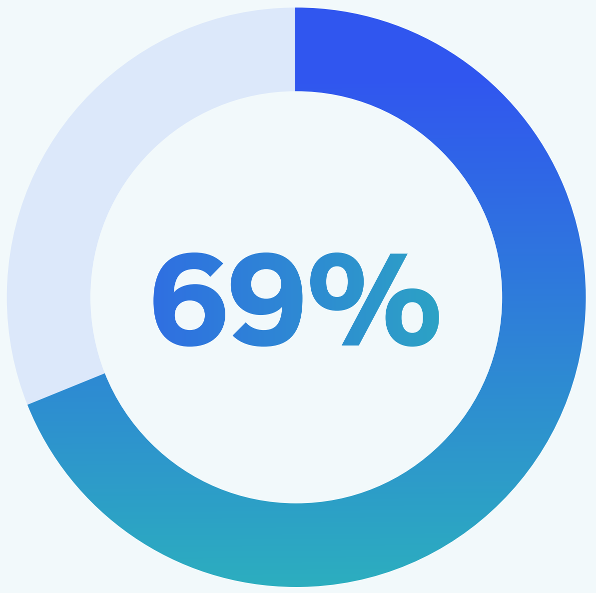
Kai Werner, Chief Human Resources Officer, TeamViewer

“Unhappy employees can permeate an entire organization,” said Kai Werner, Chief Human Resources Officer, TeamViewer. “As these findings show, satisfaction in the modern digital workplace depends heavily on functional IT systems. When those systems fail, culture suffers.”

Imagine you’re making last-minute changes to a presentation and need to connect your laptop to the meeting room screen with just five minutes to go before a critical meeting,” Werner continued. “The connection fails, and instead of using those final moments to prep, you have to spend them troubleshooting your connection issue. By the time it’s resolved, you’ve lost valuable time and confidence walking into the meeting. It’s not just a technical delay, but a disruption to your focus and sense of control. These moments of digital friction have a very real and lasting impact on employee happiness.”

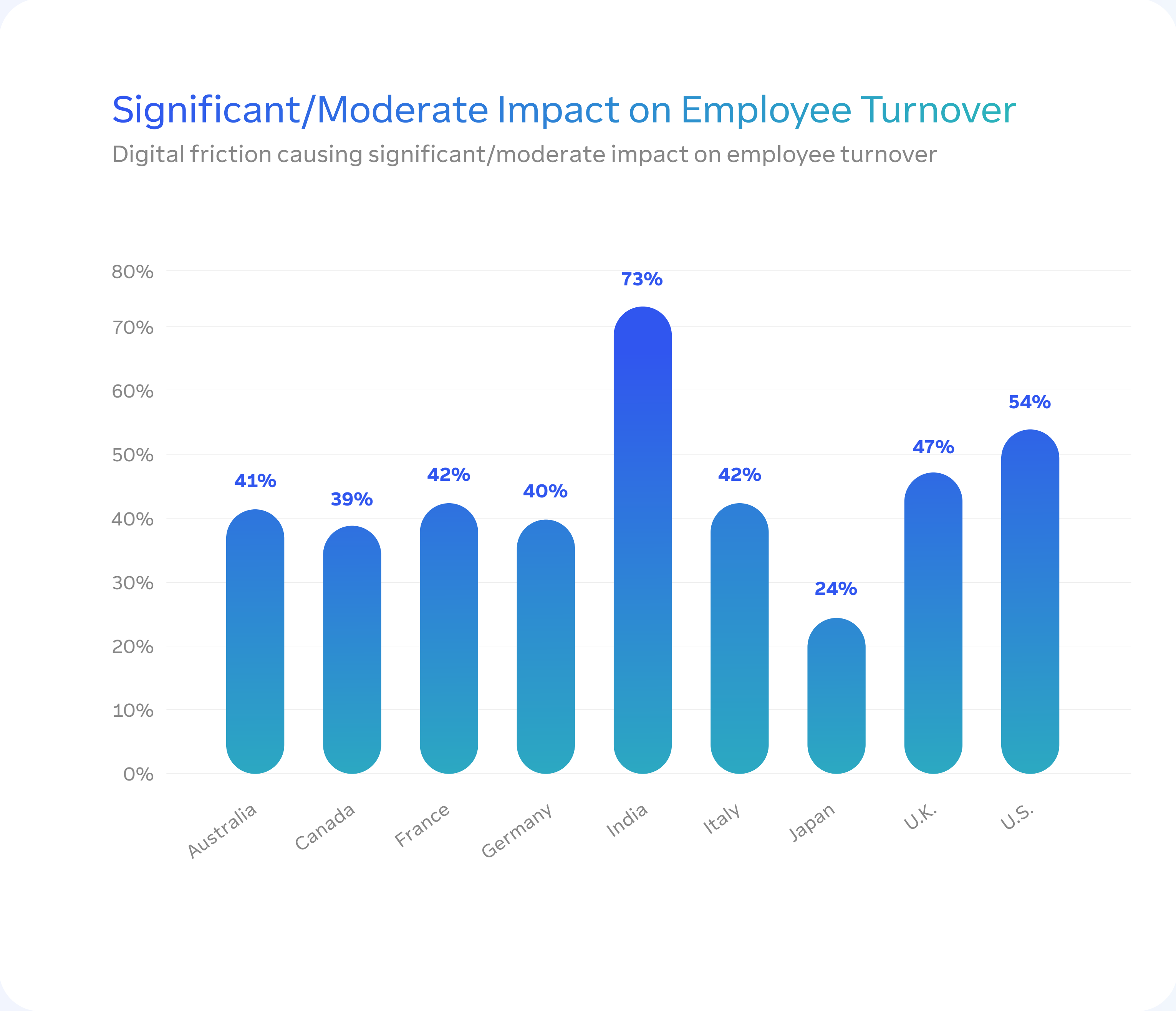
When Digital Friction Drives Talent Away

When technology frustration drives employees away, the financial and cultural toll can be severe. The survey found that **69%** of respondents believe digital friction has contributed to employee turnover within their organization, with **46%** describing the impact as significant or moderate.



of workers believe digital friction has contributed to turnover within their organization.

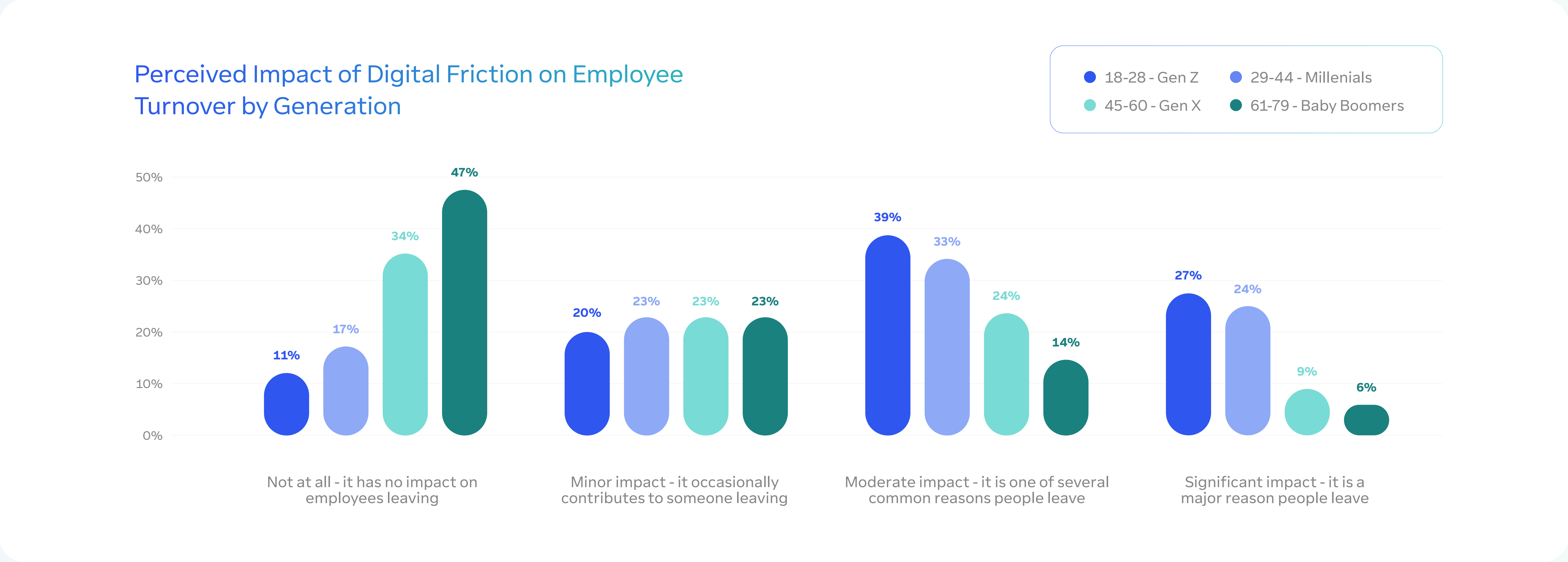
The disconnect between management and staff is striking: **56%** of non-managers say IT dysfunction has a moderate or significant impact on attrition, compared to only **36%** of managers. Similarly, **30%** of all respondents say they’ve lost good colleagues due to IT issues — but the breakdown between managers (**25%**) versus non-managers (**36%**) is telling.



Replacing lost employees is costly and time-consuming: respondents estimate an average of **eight weeks** to fully onboard replacements, with over half (**51%**) saying it takes more than a month and **5%** reporting over six months. It takes the longest to replace employees in Germany and Italy, both reporting an average of over **10 weeks.**

Despite this, nearly a quarter (**23%**) of employees say their organization has done nothing to understand or reduce digital friction. In Japan, that figure rises to **46%**, followed by Canada and Italy at **26%** each.

In India, only 5% of respondents said their employers have done nothing to address digital friction, suggesting companies there recognize the threat and are taking action.

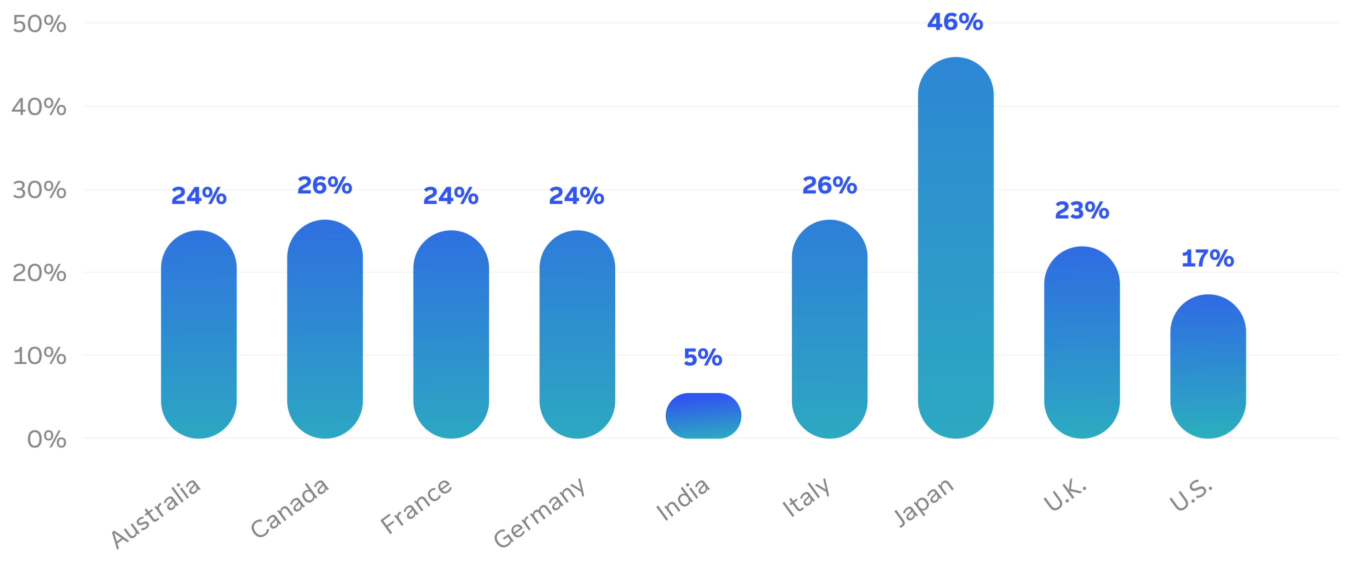


Respondents in **India** were most likely to report digital friction having a moderate to significant impact on employee turnover, at **73%**, followed by the **U.S. at 54%.**

Generational differences deepen this divide. Nearly half (**47%**) of Baby Boomers believe tech frustration has no impact on attrition, while **27%** of Gen Z workers say it has a major effect — suggesting digital natives have higher expectations for seamless, reliable tools.

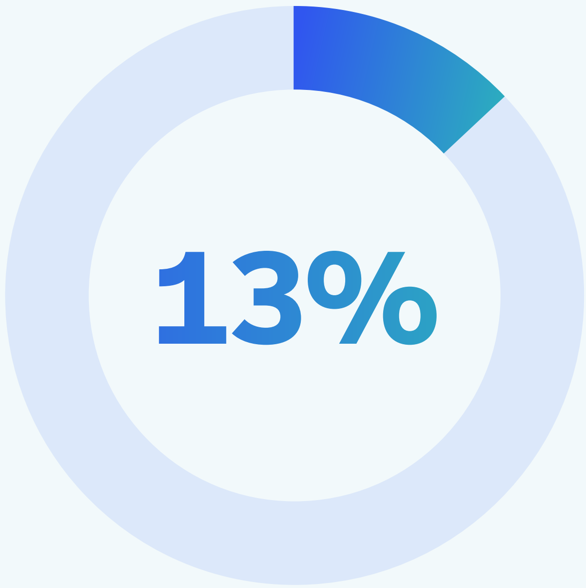
Many Employers Are Not Addressing the Threat

We have not taken any steps to adress digital friction.



The Frustration Is Real

95% of workers admit to some level of frustration caused by workplace technology. Gen Z is the most reactive: **23%** have physically lashed out at a device, **17%** have even posted negative reviews about their employer online, **16%** admit to swearing or yelling, and **13%** have even been brought to tears by IT dysfunction.

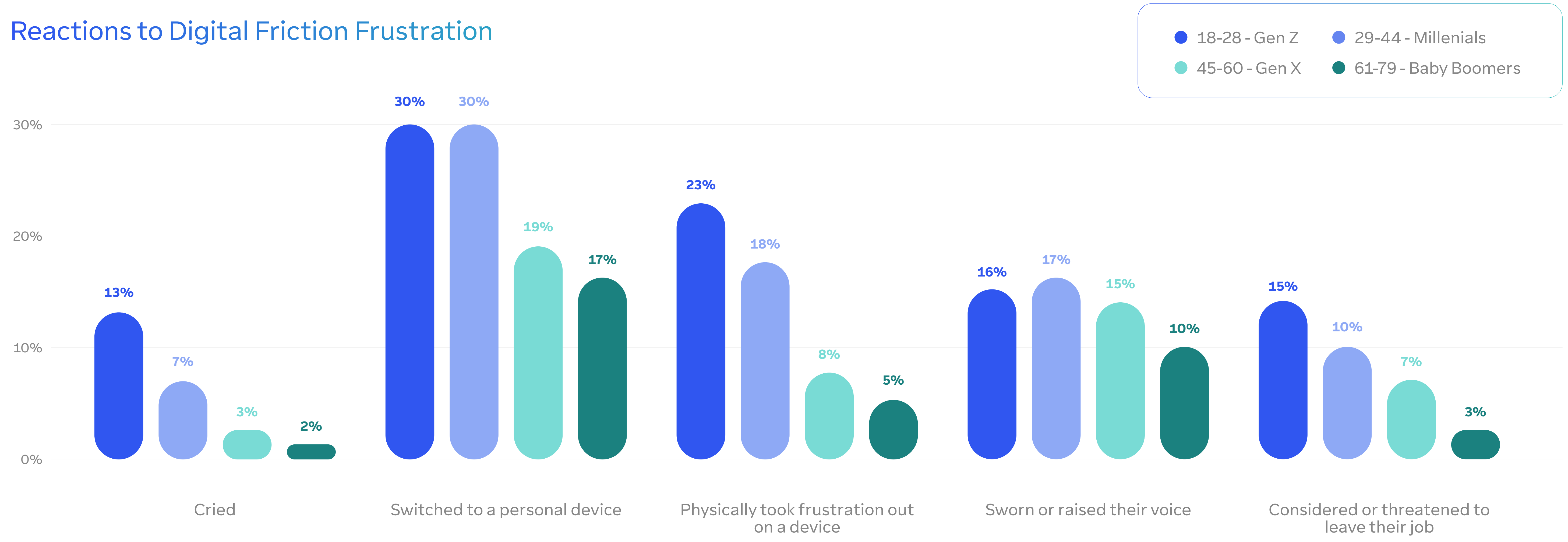


of Gen Z workers have been brought to tears by IT dysfunction.

Kai Werner, Chief Human Resources Officer, TeamViewer

“High-performing employees are often the first to leave when technology holds them back,” added Werner. “They know what a modern workplace should look like. If their digital tools don’t measure up, they’ll find an organization that does.”

Reactions to Digital Friction Frustration



The data shows that workers are placing greater importance on their IT setup. When evaluating new job opportunities, **59%** of respondents consider a strong tech setup important compared to **54%** who consider traditional benefits such as a company car, healthcare, or gym membership important. And **27%** would trade workplace perks like workplace happy hours for reliable technology.

Andrew Hewitt, VP of Strategic Technology, TeamViewer

“Employees are happiest when they feel productive and accomplished at the end of the day,” said Andrew Hewitt, VP of Strategic Technology, TeamViewer.

“When people can’t make progress in their day-to-day work, frustration builds and burnout follows. Great technology might not be a main attractor of talent, but bad technology can certainly play a role in driving it away.”

Generational Divide — Digital Friction Hits Gen Z Hardest

Key Findings

	Gen Z (ages 18-28)	Baby Boomers (ages 61-79)
Workdays lost per month to digital friction	1.5	0.7
Have used personal devices or apps to bypass IT issues (Shadow IT)	52%	22%
Have considered leaving their company due to IT dysfunction	40%	12%
Say tech frustration has *no* impact on attrition	11%	47%
Report no digital friction frustrations at all	2%	12%

In Focus

Gen Z employees, as digital natives, are more than twice as likely as Baby Boomers to lose time or turn to workarounds when technology fails. Their low tolerance for friction reflects lifelong familiarity with seamless digital experiences and high expectations for modern tools. In contrast, Baby Boomers — many of whom remember working with less advanced technology, or even none, see today's IT as an improvement despite its flaws, leading to greater patience and resilience when issues arise.

Management Disconnect — A Gap in Perception and Experience

Key Findings

Key Findings	Employees	Managers
Expect digital friction to worsen next year	44%	23%
Believe IT dysfunction has a moderate to significant impact on turnover	56%	36%
Experienced hardware failures in the past year	58%	42%
Have considered leaving their company due to digital friction	36%	20%

In Focus

The data reveals a perception gap between managers and non-managers in how digital friction impacts their organization. This disconnect may stem from managers lacking visibility into how their technology is performing. It may also show that non-managers are underreporting technology issues to their IT teams. In some cases, like with hardware failures, it could even indicate managers have access to better, more updated technology than their workers. Nonetheless, closing this awareness gap will be critical for leaders aiming to improve both productivity and retention.

Ending the Dysfunction: Practical Steps to Reduce Digital Friction

Ending the Dysfunction: Practical Steps to Reduce Digital Friction

The findings of this report make one thing clear: digital friction is a systemic challenge that touches every aspect of organizational life.

Fortunately, there are actionable ways to identify, prevent, and ultimately reduce its impact — paving the way for a stronger digital employee experience that supports both productivity and satisfaction.

What is the Digital Employee Experience (DEX)?

Employers today can’t think about employee experience without considering the digital aspect. *Digital Employee Experience (DEX)* refers to how employees interact with workplace technology — from devices and apps to connectivity and support systems — and how those interactions shape their ability to do their jobs effectively.

Strong DEX strategies measure, monitor, and optimize these touchpoints to minimize digital friction, boost productivity, and create a more seamless, satisfying work environment.

01

Identify and Measure the Problem

Digital friction can't be fixed if it remains invisible. Many employees quietly work around recurring IT issues or never log support tickets, allowing minor frustrations to grow into major problems. Organizations should encourage open feedback and establish trusted channels for reporting issues beyond the traditional help desk.

At the same time, regular data collection — across devices, applications, and networks — can reveal hidden trends such as recurring authentication failures or system bottlenecks. Measuring both technical performance and employee sentiment provides the complete picture needed for effective action.

02

Equip IT Teams for Success

Reducing digital friction requires empowering your IT teams — the human beings responsible for keeping everything running. Without the right tools, even the most capable IT professionals are forced to react rather than anticipate problems.

Organizations should invest in modern platforms that centralize visibility, automate common fixes, and deliver real-time insights into device and application performance. Agentic AI can amplify these capabilities by automating root-cause analysis, resolving routine issues autonomously, and surfacing proactive recommendations before friction escalates.

The goal is not to replace human expertise but to extend it — giving IT the intelligence, bandwidth, and agility to become a strategic partner in driving productivity and a friction-free **digital employee experience.**

03

Build Trust Between the Business and IT

Trust between employees and IT is essential to creating a workplace where technology empowers rather than frustrates. Leaders can build trust by making the IT team's goals and progress transparent, helping employees view the team as a strategic ally rather than a support function.

Building this two-way trust creates a virtuous cycle: better-equipped IT teams provide smoother digital experiences, which strengthens employee satisfaction — and ultimately reduces friction for everyone.

The Path Forward

Reducing digital friction is an ongoing commitment to building a resilient digital workplace. Organizations that treat technology performance and employee experience as interconnected priorities stand to gain the most — from higher productivity and lower turnover to improved customer satisfaction and stronger financial performance.

Andrew Hewitt, VP of Strategic Technology, TeamViewer

"Reducing digital friction isn't about overhauling everything at once," said Andrew Hewitt, VP of Strategic Technology, TeamViewer.

Leaders should start small — gain visibility into what's actually causing friction, fix the biggest pain points, then scale those improvements through automation and AI. Even incremental progress can make an impact on employee engagement and productivity."

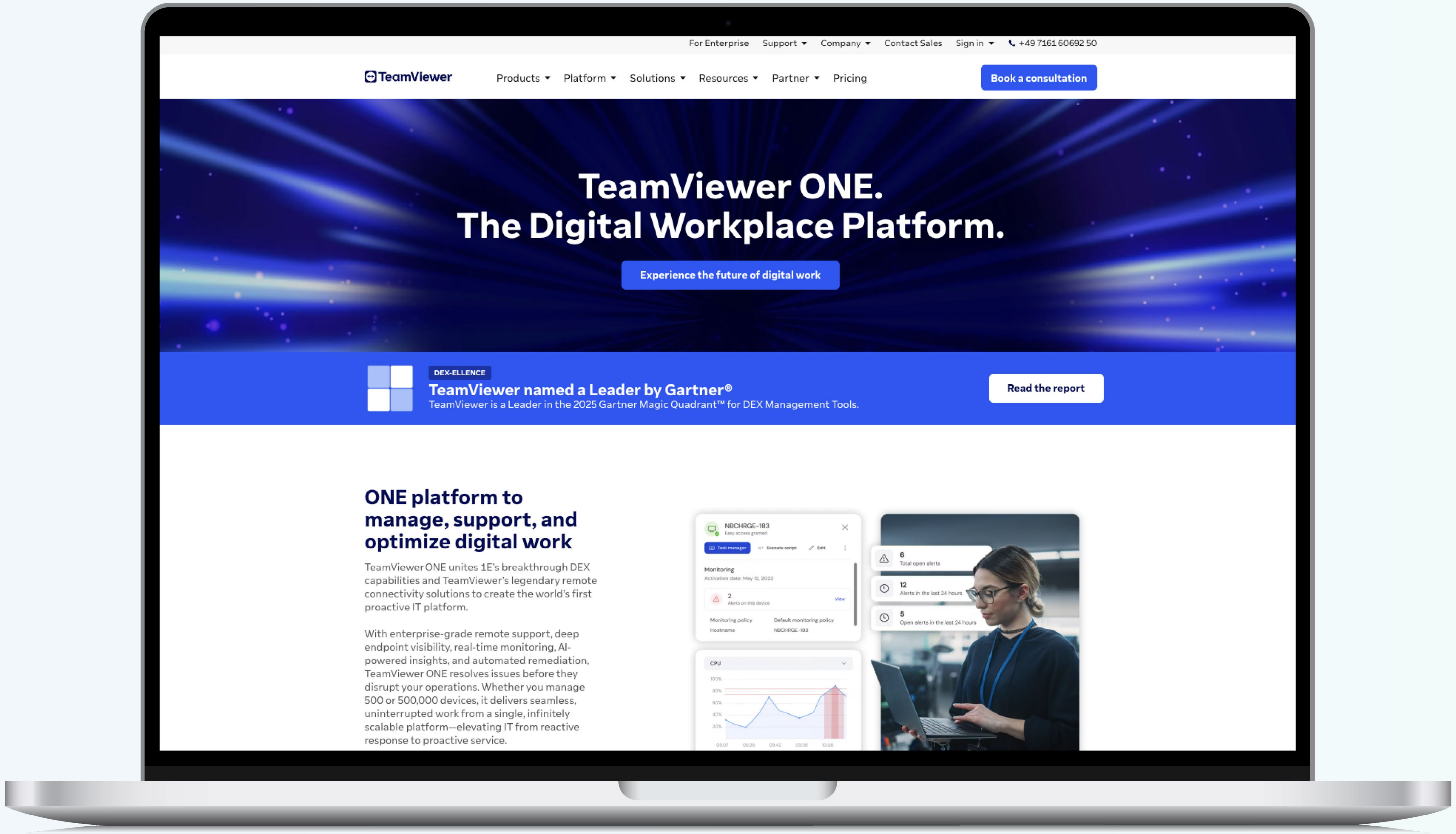
When technology empowers people to do their best work, everyone benefits.

Take Control of Your Digital Workplace with TeamViewer

Addressing digital friction requires more than just visibility; it calls for an intelligent foundation that connects insight with action. TeamViewer ONE provides that foundation by integrating remote connectivity, real-time DEX analytics, and agentic AI into a single platform. TeamViewer AI enables proactive detection, intelligent remediation, and even autonomous resolution of common issues before they escalate into tickets.

The outcome is a smarter, more stable digital ecosystem where every interaction — from device to employee — contributes to long-term operational strength.

Learn more



TeamViewer provides a Digital Workplace platform that connects people with technology – enabling, improving and automating digital processes to make work work better.

In 2005, TeamViewer started with software to connect to computers from anywhere to eliminate travel and enhance productivity. It rapidly became the de facto standard for remote access and support and the preferred solution for hundreds of millions of users across the world to help others with IT issues. Today, more than 645,000 customers across industries rely on TeamViewer to optimize their digital workplaces - from small to medium sized businesses to the world's largest enterprises - empowering both desk-based employees and frontline workers. Organizations use TeamViewer's solutions to prevent and resolve disruptions with digital endpoints of any kind, securely manage complex IT and industrial device landscapes, and enhance processes with augmented reality powered workflows and assistance - leveraging AI and integrating seamlessly with leading tech partners. Against the backdrop of global digital transformation and challenges like shortage of skilled labor, hybrid working, accelerated data analysis and the rise of new technologies, TeamViewer's solutions offer a clear value add by increasing productivity, reducing machine downtime, speeding up talent onboarding, and improving customer and employee satisfaction.

The company is headquartered in Göppingen, Germany, and employs more than 1,900 people globally. In 2024, TeamViewer achieved a revenue of around EUR 671 million. TeamViewer SE (TMV) is listed at Frankfurt Stock Exchange and belongs to the MDAX. Further information can be found at www.teamviewer.com.

www.teamviewer.com

TeamViewer Germany GmbH
Bahnhofsplatz 2
73033 Göppingen
Germany

TeamViewer US Inc.
5741 Rio Vista Dr
Clearwater
FL 33760
USA

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