

Scalable Software –
Digital Experience Report 2021

Exploring the reality of hybrid working for employees

Scalable⁷





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Introduction:

The supercharged hybrid shift



The world of work has undergone its biggest transformation in decades. The emergence of the global pandemic saw an almost overnight move to remote working for millions around the world.

From the initial rush to enable fully remote working, we are now seeing the emergence of the hybrid working model. This mix of office and homeworking is becoming the standard; Gartner finds that more than 80% of global business leaders plan to allow hybrid working post-pandemic.¹ In addition, the pandemic is estimated to have fast-tracked digital transformation by at least seven years.² This means employees are having to get used to the new technology that comes with a “work anywhere” culture, and a more digitalized approach to doing business.

Amid all this change, it’s generally been accepted that employees have quickly become expert users of technology like videoconferencing and instant messaging. But the true impact of the hybrid shift on employees’ experience of work and on their ability to be successful has yet to be fully explored. Given how much of hybrid working is facilitated by digital technologies, it is critical that employers have a view into digital experience.

This report addresses the current gap in knowledge. It presents the results from an independent survey commissioned by Scalable Software of 2,000 hybrid workers. The findings show that substandard experiences are wasting considerable amounts of employees’ time, costing businesses money, and impacting wellbeing. The report also explores how employees can influence the outcomes of digital projects.

Finally, the report covers the steps employers must take to understand how their workforce is faring, including the adoption of workforce analytics. In the new reality of hybrid working, the onus is on IT departments to accurately monitor employee experiences and on HR departments to assess the effect on wellbeing. Without granular insights into the day-to-day realities for workers, organizations cannot measure the impact of hybrid working on either employees or the organization, nor take steps to optimize the experience. Becoming data-driven will be critical.

¹ Gartner, [Gartner Survey Reveals 82% of Company Leaders Plan to Allow Employees to Work Remotely Some of the Time](#), July 14, 2020

² McKinsey & Company, [How COVID-19 has pushed companies over the technology tipping point](#), October 5, 2020

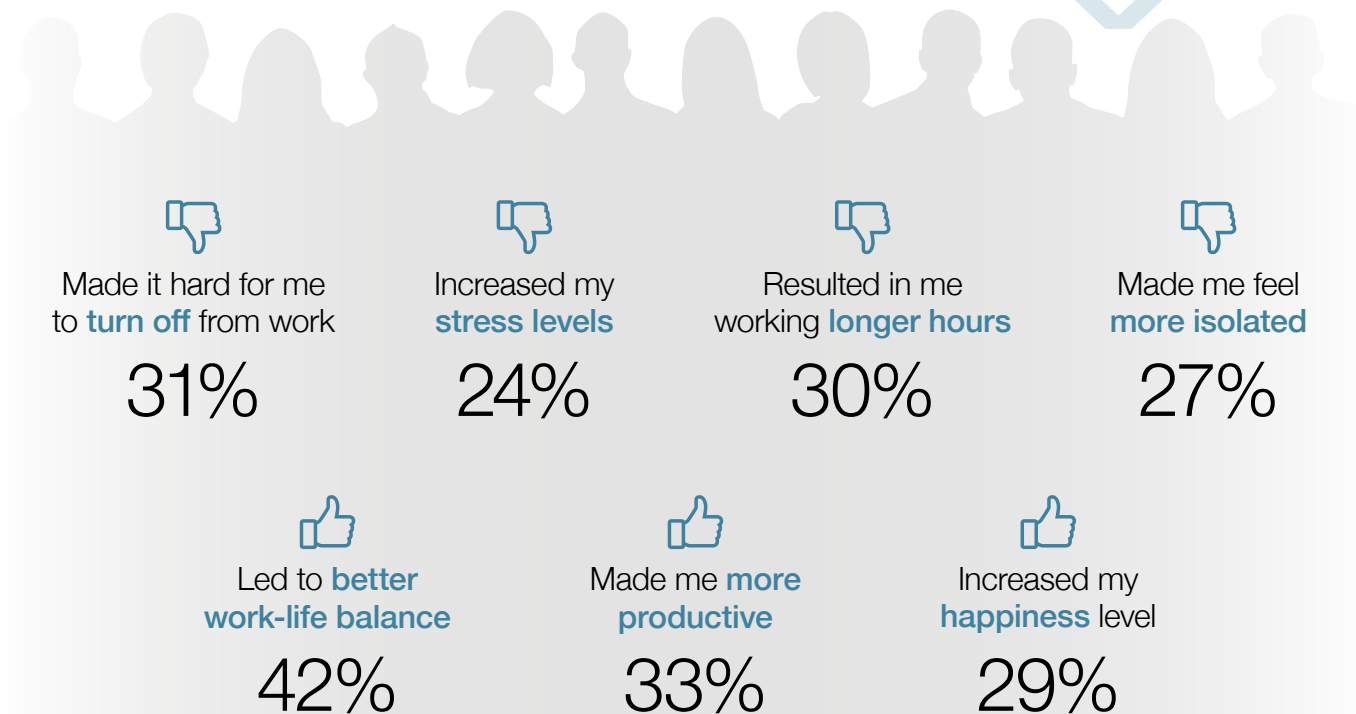
The reality of hybrid working:

Better work-life balance but challenges with tech

Whether it's the absence of commute or being able to take the dog for a walk at lunchtime, hybrid working offers the promise of a better work-life balance. However, the "mission creep" of work into home life can have a detrimental effect on wellbeing.

The research found that 42% of respondents say hybrid working has led to a better work-life balance, and a third (33%) say it has made them more productive. At the same time, many are experiencing the downsides. The most frequently cited negative effects were finding it hard to turn off from work (31%) and working longer hours (30%). Both findings were slightly higher among respondents in the financial sector, at 39% and 42% respectively. ▶

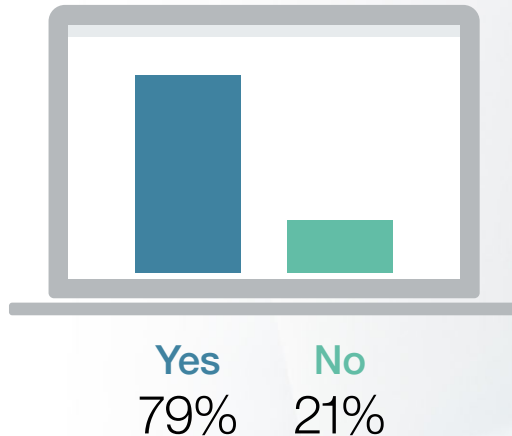
What impact has hybrid working had on your wellbeing?



Hybrid working relies on digital technology to enable an easy transition between home and office. There are a multitude of possible fail points and areas of friction along the way. Such as non-performant systems and faulty hardware, or being unable to access systems or information. More than three quarters (79%) of survey respondents say it's more difficult to do their job when working from home because of tech challenges.

Spotting and rectifying technology or wellbeing issues is harder when the workforce is dispersed. Organizations need a new lens through which to measure the impact of hybrid working. Workforce analytics tools can deliver this information and bridge the gap between IT and HR – those responsible for delivering workplace technology and those responsible for ensuring employee wellbeing.

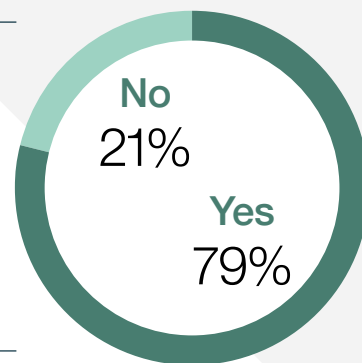
Is it more difficult to do your job when working from home because you don't have access to all the technology you need, or you can't access certain applications or data?



Digital experience: Employers aware of importance but yet to make improvements

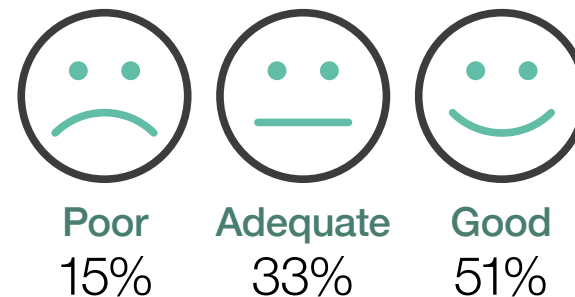
As organizations accept hybrid working as the norm, they have become more aware of the impact of the digital experience. Overall, 79% of survey respondents say their employer has realized they need to pay more attention to the digital experience and employee wellbeing in a hybrid working model. This was higher in IT and telecoms businesses (90%), but lower in healthcare (69%) and legal (72%) organizations.

Do you think your employer has realized they need to pay more attention to digital experience and employee wellbeing in a hybrid working model?



Yet, despite this awareness, only 1 in 2 (51%) employees report a good digital experience at work.

How would you rate the digital experience your employer provides to you?



There is clearly much room for improvement. Ensuring a seamless digital journey, wherever employees choose to work from, is key. But giving people access to technology is only the first step in becoming a digitally agile organization where hybrid workers thrive. Organizations must take steps that enable them to measure and quantify how technology is used and what the impact is on the user experience.

Business impact:

Significant time and money wasted due to poor digital experience

What this current state of play adds up to for organizations is a considerable amount of lost time and money because the digital experience isn't up to scratch. The research found that hybrid workers waste an average of 3.38 hours a week because their employer hasn't provided the right technology to do their job. Moreover, an additional 3.58 hours are wasted because employees are struggling with technology that simply doesn't work, runs slowly, or because of poor design and inefficient workflow. This means that in total, poor digital experiences waste almost seven hours (6.96) each week of hybrid workers' time. ▶



Hybrid workers
waste 3.38 hours per week due to a lack of technology

Hybrid workers
waste 3.58 hours per week due to technology that doesn't work

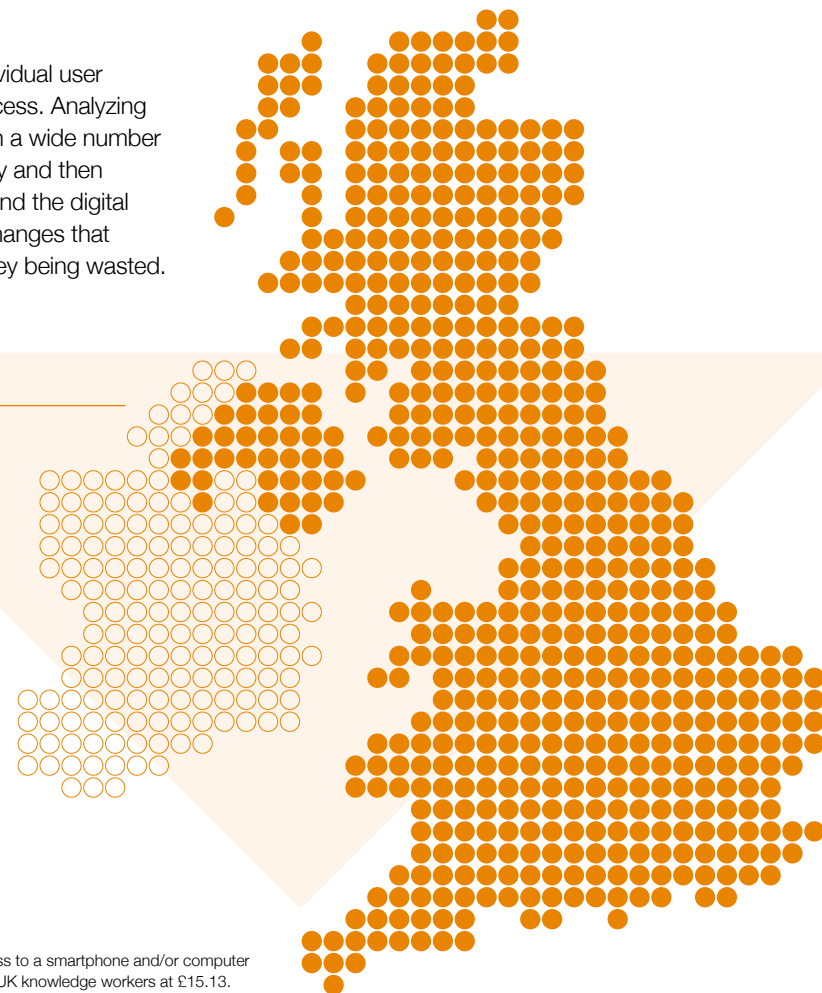
In total, hybrid workers
waste 6.96 hours per week due to a poor digital experience



This wasted time equates to a significant amount of money. UK PLC is losing £2.1bn each year due to the impact of poor digital experience on the productivity of employees.³ This is clearly not sustainable. IT and HR leaders must act now to cut out this waste and reduce the impact of poor digital experience on employees and on the business.

Workforce analytics offers deep visibility into individual user experiences to identify potential blockers to success. Analyzing the experience of workers at a granular level with a wide number of data points, allows HR and IT teams to identify and then remove barriers. When businesses can understand the digital journey of employees in detail, they can make changes that optimize the experience and stop time and money being wasted.

UK PLC is losing **£2.1bn**
in productivity each year due
to the impact of poor digital
experience



³ Based on statistics from Office for National Statistics, Scalable Software calculated the number of UK knowledge workers (those whose work depends to some extent on access to a smartphone and/or computer – e.g., managers & directors, professional and associated professional occupations, administrative and secretarial occupations) as 20,161,900, and the average hourly pay for UK knowledge workers at £15.13.

www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/aps168/reports/employment-by-occupation?compare=K02000001

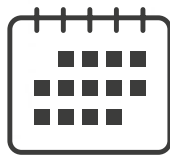
www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2020

Burnout risk:

How digital experience affects employee wellbeing

In addition to the negative outcomes of poor digital experience on the business, there is an equally catastrophic impact on employee wellbeing. Bad digital experiences can make routine work tasks take longer. Not having access to the right technology, poorly designed workflows, or a lack of user-friendly applications, all add time to tasks. The result is that hybrid workers are forced to work an extra 2.2 weeks a year because of poor digital experiences. ►

Poor digital experiences force hybrid workers to work:



2.2
extra weeks
a year



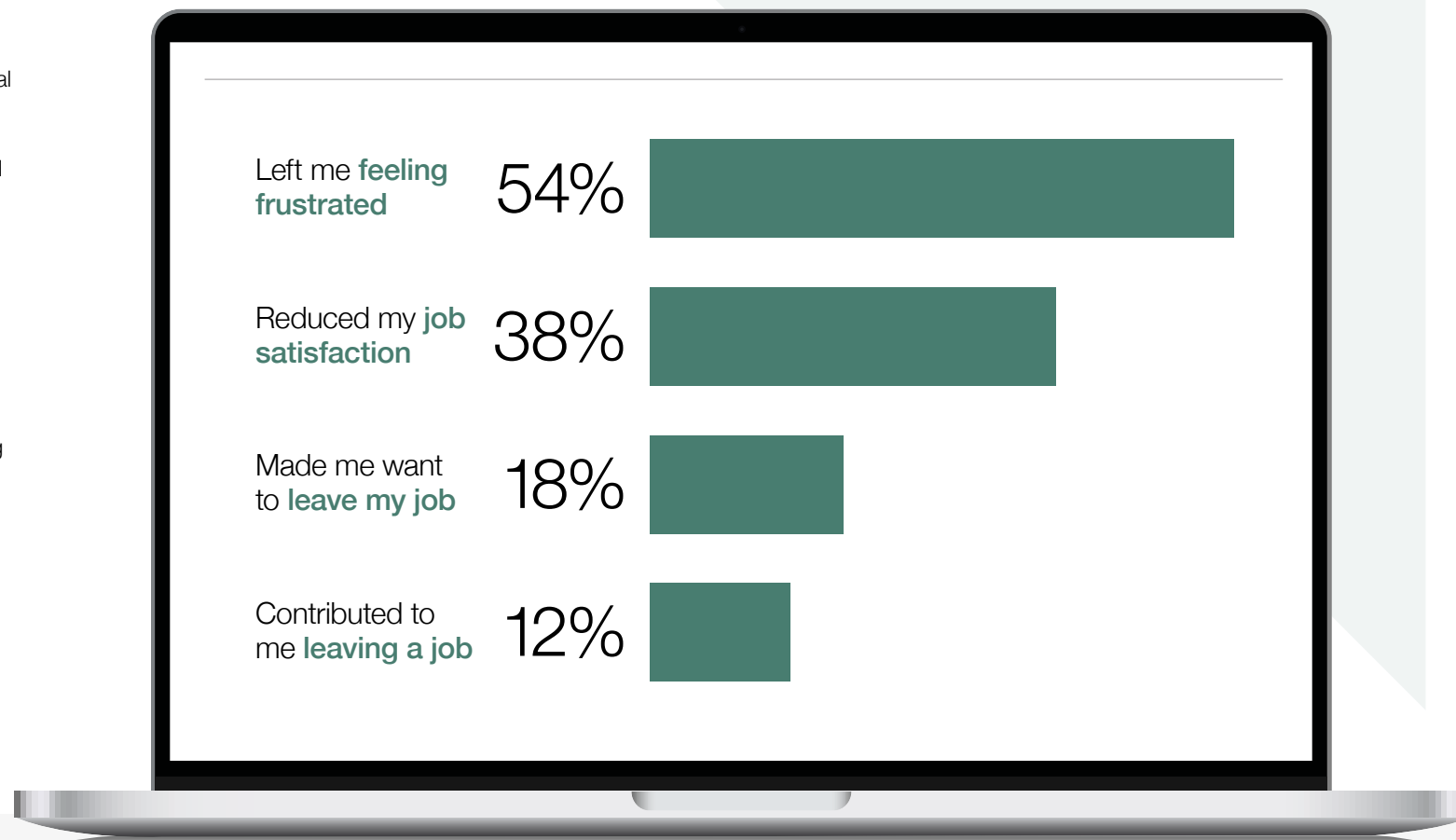
1.83
extra hours
a week



What impact has a poor digital experience had on you as an employee?

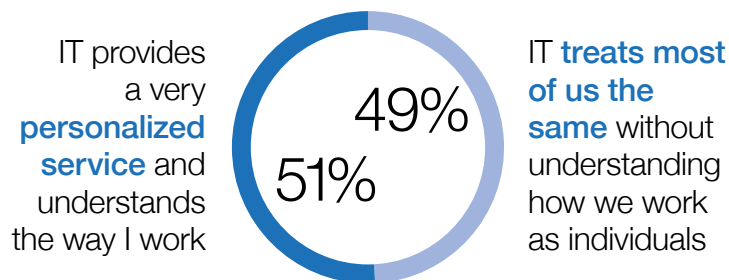
The clear risk here is that longer hours lead to burnout as well as reducing job satisfaction. It's not surprising that more than half of survey respondents (54%) say poor digital experiences have left them feeling frustrated and 38% report reduced job satisfaction. There is also a knock-on effect on retention; almost a third (30%) say a substandard digital experience has either made them want to leave a job or has contributed to them leaving a job.

It is up to employers to take steps that preserve the benefits of hybrid working while protecting and retaining staff. HR teams need to be able to carry out regular checks on distributed workers' wellbeing, which is a challenge when they cannot observe an employee in person. The solution is for IT to gather data points that measure wellbeing through workplace analytics – including work patterns and out of hours working. This equips HR teams to spot those at risk of burnout and take early action. Providing such insights through analytics blends technology with human empathy, so organizations can get a true understanding of employee wellbeing.



Digital transformation: Failure to engage employees reduces uptake of new tech

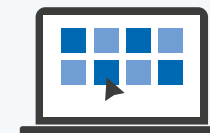
The shift to hybrid working has relied on IT departments in the main. Skilled IT teams have proved indispensable, enabling many organizations to keep operating smoothly despite the challenges they've faced. However, IT can still do more when it comes to providing for employees. Respondents to the survey are split on whether their organization's IT department really understands their individual needs.



A consequence of which is that digital transformation efforts, which have been massively accelerated due to the increase in hybrid working over the last 18 months, are not always paying off. The results show that when technology doesn't fit the needs of employees, they unwittingly thwart digital transformation projects. Almost a third (32%) of respondents felt existing tech was already better than new deployments, and more than a fifth (23%) say the user experience isn't good enough.

IT teams need data that allows them to assess which new tools have been adopted and how they are being used, across different locations and roles. These insights can be used to create campaigns that promote uptake and adoption. This not only maximizes ROI on new investments, it also arms HR teams with data that lets them spot individuals that need more help. Whether that's directing them to self-service help, or P2P resources and knowledgebases, or arranging more dedicated training.

In the last two years – workers have avoided using new tools/apps and services for multiple reasons:



Already had other **similar tools or services** that were better
32%



The **user experience** was not good enough
23%



They were **too hard to use**
17%



Hadn't received **sufficient training**
17%

Conclusion:

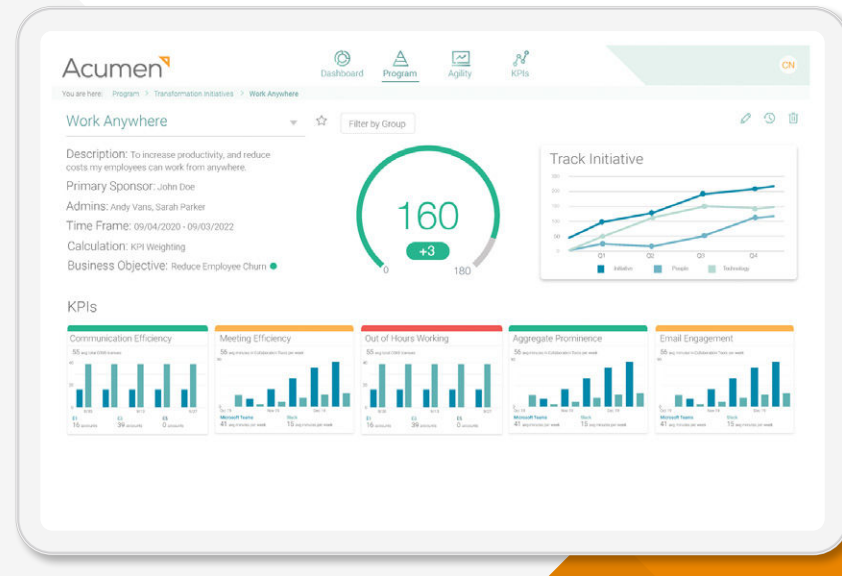
Measure, optimize and transform the hybrid experience

The hybrid work model is here to stay. The responsibility for understanding the implications of this hybrid shift on the success and wellbeing of employees now rests on organizations themselves.

In today's data-driven world, organizations are already monitoring and measuring the user experiences of customers. They are also investing in digital initiatives to create intuitive, seamless customer interactions. Yet, most do not place equal emphasis on the experiences of their employees. This must change. Demotivated employees, stuck with clunky technology that slows them down and causes stress, as well as increases the burden on technical support, are far more likely to leave an organization.

Organizations need comprehensive, granular and intelligent workforce analytics tools that are not just another layer of technology, but give them a real-time business lens through which they can measure, optimize

and transform the hybrid experience. Measurement requires a tailored approach to triangulate experience. This includes gathering data from physical technology assets like a laptop or tablet, to the software on that device, to being able to understand an individual's working pattern and how they interact with colleagues, technology, and systems.



Acumen

Scalable Software's workplace analytics platform, Acumen, enables organizations to measure, optimize and transform the employee experience. Acumen collates and distils data across all technology infrastructure to deliver insights to IT and HR leaders. Armed with deep understanding of how people and systems are interacting in a hybrid model, organizations can protect employee wellbeing, optimize the digital experience, and boost employee success.

As hybrid working becomes a mainstay of 21st Century life, it's time for a new approach. Without sophisticated workforce analytics, organizations cannot improve employee success or protect their wellbeing.

About the survey

This research was commissioned by Scalable Software and conducted by independent research company, Coleman Parkes. Fieldwork was conducted in July 2021. Respondents consist of 2,000 UK hybrid workers who use some type of IT in their work, in companies of between 500 – 2,000 employees.

About Scalable...

Founded in 2008, Scalable Software delivers comprehensive, granular and intelligent analytics tools that give organisations a real-time business lens to improve digital agility and empower employees to thrive. Its workplace analytics platform, Acumen, enables organisations to measure, optimise and transform the employee experience.

Acumen collates and distils data using agent and agentless discovery from across an organisation's technology infrastructure. Using a blend of digital KPIs and metrics, insights are delivered to leadership, IT and HR teams, giving them deep visibility into how the hybrid working model is performing. Armed with this knowledge, organisations can drive digital agility – by protecting employee wellbeing, optimising the digital experience, boosting employee success, and reducing complexity and cost.

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AUGUST 2021