

How Technology Improves Workplace Productivity



When the Productivity Task Force met on the topic of technology, it was agreed that the “right” technology can vastly improve an agency’s overall efficiency and performance for client experience, as well as improving employee productivity, communication, collaboration and employee engagement.

Choosing the right technology for your agency and making the right choice can be a difficult task. There are numerous types of software and various tools available today in the insurance industry - you won’t need all of them, just the right ones to suit your agency’s needs.

Here are a few recommendations on how technology can be used to improve your agency’s productivity and how to choose the right technology to enhance your business and meet your goals.

Determine Your Agency’s Needs

Implementing new technology to improve your agency’s overall performance must be a strategic decision. Don’t decide on a whim because it is the newest and shiniest piece of technology. Take the time to determine your agency’s needs, as well as the needs of your clients and employees.

Improving Communication through Technology

Communication is vital, not only to employee’s productivity but to company productivity as well. Agencies could lose \$100,000’s annually due to inefficient communication within the organization. Fortunately, new communication tools and technology can improve employee communication, collaboration and productivity and save your agency a lot of money in the process.

Communication is also vital to the client experience. In today’s world, providing options to clients is key, however, helping them understand what different experiences they will receive from different technologies is also vital. Our industry relies very heavily on email, yet email is not always the most efficient for our employees and clients.

New Technology Requires Training, Education and Empowerment

In most agencies, there are differing levels of tech-savviness when it comes to adopting and adjusting to existing and new technology. However, it is how your employees use the technology that makes a difference. You cannot expect them to understand how everything works or should work right from the start. Introducing and integrating new technology into a company’s business practices and workflows requires planning, time and investment. Forcing employees to instantly adopt to new technology overnight may cause high levels of stress which can lead to disengagement rather than enhanced engagement. Disengagement negatively impacts productivity. A proper training and coaching plan are a must when introducing employees to new or existing technology. A change management model will be critical. Take these factors into account when planning timelines and budget for the introduction of the new technology.

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Measuring Success

Measuring Productivity Using Technology

Measuring productivity using your technology is important, however using separate software is not necessary. Most software that you are already using in your agency provides you with the ability to measure productivity. Agency Management Systems have different ways of measuring production, pipelines, activities and workflows, just to name a few. Other software that you are utilizing in the agency will usually have some kind of dashboard or reporting system. It is recommended to research what type of reports or dashboards are available on the software you are currently using, before adding additional software.

Including Technology in Key Performance Indicators

A key measurement of productivity in our industry is Productivity Margin. We recommend that you take that one step further and include technology in that KPI. We invest in technology to either help us grow or to make us more efficient. We recommend measuring **Lean Productivity Margin** (Revenue minus compensation & easy identifiable benefits & technology).



Lean Productivity Margin

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Productivity Task Force Technology Recommendation

Agency Management Systems – EPIC, AMS360 & Benefit Point were the three systems being utilized by this group. No matter what system you have, it is important to maximize its ability to make the agency more productive.

Marketing & Communication Solutions - Agency Revolution and Pathway. These have built-in integration with most agency management systems, and they help provide efficiencies through renewal reviews, upselling, account development, full e-document delivery, tracks data, emergency alerts for ZIP codes, etc.

Internal Communication – Microsoft Teams is a technology that many agencies are embracing. It enables agencies to minimize other technology and have everything under one umbrella – internal communication, team collaboration, shared files (live documents), video conferencing, voice over internet phone and project management. Most people on the task force that are utilizing this technology have seen a major improvement in their productivity.

Project Management – Monday.com seems to be the technology that most are embracing to help manage projects and strategic initiatives and improve productivity. It can do so much more to help plan, run and track remote work under one platform and also integrates with other popular tools such as Microsoft Teams.

Video Conferencing - Zoom scores highest out of the available video conferencing tools. It is a great way to have productive meetings both internally and externally. With more and more remote workers, hands-down this technology won with this group.

Electronic Signature - E-Signature / Right-Signature. Most members on the task force that are maximizing e-signature are making tremendous strides with productivity and re-deployment of resources.

Texting - has become very popular from a client experience perspective and the two that were recommended were Podium and ZipWhip. The group believed that bringing in another option did not slow productivity down.

Call recording - Blue Butler was most mentioned, but it is recommended that if you are choosing a new phone system, look to have this feature included. Call recording can have a major impact on productivity by reducing the amount of detail in a call, reducing the amount of documents to be signed (e.g. deleted coverage) and an added bonus for quality control and training.

In closing, technology can vastly improve an agency's productivity, employee productivity, engagement, communication and client experience, but only if the right technology is chosen and implemented properly.