The Workers’ Experience: Energy

Survey reveals the importance of technology to spur productivity, boost motivation and deepen engagement for Energy industry professionals.
Introduction

The Energy industry, essential to the life and well-being of people in all corners of the world, is being transformed by technology. New drilling methods are yielding oil and gas from a wide variety of sources in unprecedented quantities. Big data for seismic analysis is generating new information about deposits, thanks to artificial intelligence, machine learning and deep learning. Solar and wind technologies, meanwhile, are steadily gaining efficiency from technology improvements.

A broad range of workers, including many skilled specialists, are moving the Energy industry forward in its mission to benefit humanity. This workforce must be engaged and motivated to achieve maximum effectiveness across three vectors:

• Productivity. Faced with tough competitors and tight profit margins in the quest to provide essential commodities and services, Energy companies require all workers to operate at the highest level of efficiency.

• Collaboration. From exploration through production and delivery, workers and industry partners must communicate with one another to optimize processes. Because the energy ecosystem consists of complementary players ranging from facilities construction firms to delivery companies, the rapid and reliable exchange of information, including contracts, is essential.

• Security. Protection of intellectual property, financial data, exploration records and legal documents is critical, as the Energy industry ecosystem depends on the secure exchange of information and strict regulatory compliance.

Technology’s key role

Energy industry workers in their various roles use many different types of technology, and their motivation and engagement are driven by having the right technology for their particular needs. Substandard technology is likely to erode organizational effectiveness as well as worker morale. Technology decision-makers must provide devices and equipment to enable productivity, collaboration and security for workers in four basic persona types:

• Desk-centric workers: Primarily office-based and at a desk. These include executives, accountants, command center operators, commodity market specialists, administrators and support staff.

• Corridor warriors: Both mobile within a corporate building and office-based. These include production specialists, technical experts and refinery workers.

• Remote workers: Primarily at a distant location such as a branch office or production site. These include both business and technical experts, consultants, data scientists and support staff.

• On-the-go pros: Primarily mobile. These include executives, salespeople, inspectors, exploration managers and support technicians.

Although a worker’s persona reflects his or her primary work style, many members of one persona group might have secondary characteristics of
another group. For example, a financial analyst might primarily be a desk-centric worker but could be equipped with a laptop for occasional mobile work. Similarly, an exploration manager might be primarily an on-the-go pro but could also spend a certain amount of time working at a desk in a remote office.

To better understand the experience of workers in the Energy industry, Dell commissioned a survey across five global regions that explores the importance of technology to the overall effectiveness of Energy industry workforces, for productivity, collaboration and security. The survey findings point to these general conclusions:

1. Worker motivation and engagement are keys to productivity.
2. Substandard or inappropriate technology impedes workforce effectiveness.
3. Every worker’s technology needs are different.
4. Security is important but must not thwart workers’ ability to access data and applications.
5. It is essential to provide each worker with a complete technology ecosystem.

Key findings

Personal productivity is paramount in the Energy industry. Workers with widely diverse roles and tasks at Energy companies value technology as a productivity enabler, particularly when coupled with mobility and a flexible workstyle. Poor technology performance negatively affects their ability to contribute to their company. For example:

- 58% say technology can help create a good work-life balance, making them motivated and engaged
- 61% prefer to work for an organization that offers mobility and flexibility.
- 59% say freezes, bugs and glitches negatively affect motivation and engagement.

The responses of workers in the Energy industry run parallel to those of workers in other industries in the survey, although they are generally less pronounced.
Failure to provide Energy professionals with the best technology could spur them to move to competing organizations.

These findings are important, considering that technology is instrumental for many key tasks in an industry that is undergoing transformative change. Energy industry workers understand the importance of technology in their work and can be very discerning with regard to the devices and accessories they use. Top talent for certain roles, such as data scientist, is at a premium. Failure to provide Energy professionals with the best technology could spur them to move to competing organizations.
Personal devices are preferred

Energy workers — especially exploration experts, data scientists and financial analysts — are likely to be tech-savvy. For most types of equipment, they are much more satisfied with personal devices compared to company devices, including laptops, desktops and smart phones. However, for specialized equipment designed for purposes unique to the Energy industry, respondents are more satisfied with company-provided devices. This could indicate companies in the Energy sector are investing in higher quality or more fit-for-purpose specialized equipment — and might not be investing enough in other categories of equipment.

On a scale from 0-10, how satisfied are you with the devices you mentioned previously, when considering work-related activities only?

Percentage shown is very satisfied (9 or 10)

Further, they are more likely to recommend those personal devices. This finding suggests that Energy workers understand their technology needs better than the IT decision-makers at their companies. It also indicates that IT leaders in this field might do better at providing their demanding workforces with equipment that has greater power, enhanced capabilities or greater durability.
On a scale from 0-10, how likely would you be to recommend the following devices to your friends or family for work-related activities only?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device Type</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smart phone/mobile phone</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop PC/WS</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop/mobile WS</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-in-1 devices</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A tested and supported environment

Even though personal devices are favored, 90% of respondents in the Energy field would prefer their organization provide them with a tested and supported ecosystem, including accessories and displays.

Would you prefer that your organization provide you with a tested and supported ecosystem (devices and accessories), rather than seeking out devices yourself?

- Yes: 90%
- No: 10%

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Several related survey findings point to the desire among workers to utilize advanced devices and equipment and to the positive effect of the right ecosystem on their morale and ability to get work done. In addition, the ability to use mobile devices and to work from home when needed are recognized productivity enhancers. For example:

- 58% say mobile devices make employees more productive.
- 57% say cutting-edge and high-performance technology would help them be more productive.
- 54% say having the right technology ecosystem improves their motivation and engagement.
- 50% say being able to work from home helps employees get more done.

High-performance and rugged devices

Many Energy industry professionals require high-performance equipment to perform calculations on the very large amounts of data they handle. In addition, Energy industry professionals perform their work in a broad range of environments, including offices, refineries and field locations. These settings might subject devices to chemicals, dust, heat and cold, as well as possibly rough treatment. Devices and accessories must be durable enough to withstand these conditions.

According to the survey, company-issued devices – whether PCs/workstations, laptop/mobile devices or 2-in-1 devices – may well be high-performance or rugged or both (see chart below).

Rugged vs. high-performance

For all workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device Type</th>
<th>Rugged</th>
<th>High-performance</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company Desktop PC/WS</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Desktop PC/WS</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Laptop/mobile WS</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Laptop/mobile WS</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 2-in-1 devices</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal 2-in-1 devices</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For on-the-go pros, the percentages of devices – particularly personal devices – that are high-performance, rugged, or both, are higher.
36% of Energy professionals sometimes work outside their organization’s security protocol. For the various worker personas, the percentage varies, but for corridor warriors, the percentage is 49% and for on-the-go pros the percentage is 48%. This behavior is cause for concern, considering the potential sensitivity of information that might be shared, such as confidential exploration, production or financial data.

Do you sometimes find it necessary to work outside your organization’s security protocol?

49% of corridor warriors sometimes work outside their organization’s security protocol.
The reason for this activity is simple: Workers seek to be productive and security measures are cumbersome – 59% of all workers say it’s the most effective way to get work done and although the percentages vary, the tendency is widespread across all personas. Many workers say their organization is OK with the practice and a significant percentage say the reason is that getting approval is not worth the trouble (see chart below).

Why do you sometimes work outside your organization’s security protocol?

Many of those who work outside their organization’s security protocol take part in high-risk practices, such as sharing data over a USB key or CD with a third party. Percentages are significant across all personas (see chart below).

How frequently do you typically do the following?

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The right partner makes a big difference

It is important to understand and meet the unique technology needs of every Energy industry worker. The right technology partner, with a complete portfolio of devices – including high-performance desktops, laptops and 2-in-1 devices – can go far to streamline hardware procurement, enabling an Energy organization to efficiently meet its users’ needs for motivation and engagement, and thereby its larger goals for increasing efficiency and output in Energy production.

Take the first step to better understanding the needs of your digital-era workforce today.

Download the complete “Workers’ Experience” report now.

About the survey

To better understand the modern workforce and its technology needs, Dell sponsored a survey of 6,809 respondents. The survey covered five major global areas: North America, Western Europe, Japan, India and Latin America. The survey also covered seven major vertical industries: Education, Healthcare, Media & Entertainment, Technology and R&D, Finance, Manufacturing Logistics & Retail, and Energy. The survey was fielded during the summer of 2018.