

## New National Research: Employees Feel Surprisingly Trusted but Inefficiencies Abound in How We Work

**Madison, New Jersey, October 22, 2015**—A surprising 9 out of 10 full-time U.S. employees believe their boss trusts them to get their job done regardless of where and when they do their work. And, while additional data indicates employees have become upbeat about their increasingly flexible workplaces, inefficiencies abound in how workers use technology and communicate, and there is a lack of training and infrastructure available to support flexible work.

These are among the key findings from a national probability telephone survey of 617 full-time employed adults commissioned by [Flex+Strategy Group/Work+Life Fit, Inc.](#) (FSG/WLF) and co-sponsored by [Citrix](#).

“With the growth of telework and open office environments combined with the ongoing introduction of new technology, work life flexibility is naturally embedded in today’s workplaces,” said flexible workplace strategist [Cali Williams Yost](#), CEO, Flex+Strategy Group. “But we’re stuck in the 1990s with outdated work and management practices that, along with lack of training and infrastructure, put recent investments in workplace innovation at risk and could erode the current reservoir of employee goodwill.”

### ***One-Third Telecommute—Mostly Men, but Women Gaining Ground***

Employees were pretty evenly split between where they said they do most of their work. One-third work from a remote location off site, a slight increase from 2013, while 34 percent work in a cube/open office environment and 28 percent in a private office. Men continue to represent the majority of teleworkers—3 out of 5 in 2015, but the percentage of women increased significantly (39%) from (29%) 2013.

### ***We Turn to Technology More than Each Other; Young People Like to Meet More than Boomers***

Nearly 60 percent of respondents use email, word documents or spread sheets “frequently” to update colleagues about work progress and performance. That compares to 55 percent who meet in person and 43 percent who use the phone. Surprisingly, younger people prefer more face-to-face contact. Gen-Y (59%) and Gen-X (58%) were significantly more likely than Boomers (46%) to frequently meet in person to keep others informed. And, in a finding that helps to dispel the notion that teleworkers disconnect from the workplace, those who work remotely were more likely than those who work in a cube/open office to use the phone. Meanwhile, those onsite were more likely to use email, word documents or spreadsheets.

Despite widespread availability of video/web conferencing and project management technologies, frequent use of these tools was in the single digits. Conversely, 8 out of 10 employees have never used project management software and two-thirds have never used video/web conferencing. The survey also found employees were inconsistent in where they saved and stored work across company and personal platforms.

“Businesses have barely tapped what is possible when it comes to leveraging technology to increase productivity, collaboration and work life flexibility,” said Natalie Lambert, Senior Director of Workspace

## 2015 Survey/2

Strategy, Citrix. “We comfortably use collaborative technologies in our personal lives to communicate with family and friends and manage personal information from anywhere.

“But, unfortunately at work we struggle to apply the latest innovations to accomplish the same objectives,” Lambert continued. “This often stems from rigid IT infrastructures that require businesses to put control policies in place whenever they want to securely roll out consumer-like apps on any device. With today’s flexible digital workspace solutions, employees can use technology to stay connected and productive wherever they are, while the employer is ensured that their information is safe. Organizations can transform their business with infrastructure, training and a strategy designed with people and experience in mind.”

### ***Technology Aids Working Flexibly and in Teams but Backlash Noted, Especially Among Men***

Almost 7 out of 10 employees feel the increase in workplace technology has made it easier to collaborate and communicate with colleagues, and more than half of respondents said it has made it easier to work flexibly. But that enthusiasm was tempered by the 28 percent who said the increase in technology has created more work and the nearly one-fourth that noted it feels a “bit like ‘big brother’ is watching you,” with men significantly more likely than women to voice that view.

### ***Training Lacking for Most***

In 2015, almost all full-time U.S. employees had some type of work life flexibility, unchanged from 2013 and 2011. Most of that flexibility is “informal” with 6 out of 10 making occasional changes in how, when and where they work, an increase from 2013. Employees feel increasingly positive with a majority (56%) that noted their employer still has a strong commitment to work life flexibility, up from 46% in 2013. A higher percentage (47%) also received training or guidance to help manage their work life flexibility in 2015, but more than half (52%) remained on their own with no instruction. Further, even though they comprise the majority, those who use flexibility informally received less training than those with formal flexible work arrangements.

“Modernizing the workplace is about more than new floorplans, shiny devices and mobility. Clearly we have an unmet need and a huge opportunity for more widespread training and infrastructure that supports flexible work,” Yost said. “Leaders need to capitalize on the current wave of employee optimism and manage to the good that exists in their organizations in order to truly unlock the potential of their business and people.”

This research is the most recent installment in a biennial series of FSG/WLF studies that have monitored the national progress of issues related to work life flexibility from the individual’s point of view since 2006. The 2015 survey was conducted by ORC International July 9-12 and 16-19 with a margin of error of +/- 4percent. A summary report with additional data and infographic are available at <http://www.worklifefit.com/research>.

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**Media Contact:** Pam Kassner, [pam@superpear.com](mailto:pam@superpear.com), 414-510-1838