Robert Half Canada

You've Got E-mail

Canadian Tech Leaders and Office Workers Say Email Will Continue to Dominate into 2020

TORONTO, July 27, 2017 /CNW/ - While more offices are pushing to go paperless, email inboxes will continue to fill up over the next three years, according to respondents in two surveys recently conducted by Robert Half Technology. Canadian workers and tech leaders, polled separately, agree that email will reign supreme in the workplace.

More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of CIOs and nearly half (48 per cent) of office workers still believe email will be the most common way to communicate internally through 2020. However, for those who do think email is on the way out, instant messaging was the most frequently cited replacement for workers, while execs favoured in-person meetings.

Regardless of their preferred method, when asked which communication channel is most effective for things like planning, strategizing and follow-up, office workers from various industries and roles ranked in-person meetings first. Forty-seven per cent of professionals cited face-to-face gatherings as the most effective method for day-to-day team communication, followed by email (24 per cent), instant messaging (13 per cent) and phone calls (8 per cent). CIOs also favoured in-person meetings (38 per cent) first, followed by email (36 per cent), phone calls (18 per cent) and video conferencing (5 per cent).

Digital Communication: Any Time, Any Where
Although email is expected to remain the most popular form of workplace communication, one in five professionals (20 per cent) surveyed cited instant messaging as their primary channel for communicating with coworkers. One reason may be immediacy: 73 per cent of workers surveyed said they feel more pressure to respond immediately to instant messaging versus email, and 83 per cent expect an immediate response when they send an instant message. Following are some additional findings on how workers view instant messaging:

- **Rules of Engagement:** 35 per cent of professionals said their company has clear rules about how to use its internal messaging platform, like a requirement to update status as "Online," "Busy" or "Away" to keep colleagues informed.
- **Do Not Disturb:** More than half (57 per cent of respondents) have received a message when their status is set to "do not disturb" or "busy," and 38 per cent of those professionals said they were "annoyed" by the intrusion. Professionals 55 and older were less annoyed than their younger colleagues and more likely to send a message when a coworker's status is "busy."
- **Signs of Life:** Most professionals said their primary motivation for staying "online" with their organization's messaging platform was to inform coworkers they are working and available (52 per cent). Other respondents use it to quickly access their colleagues (21 per cent) and talk to fellow employees in real-time (16 per cent).

"Email and IM platforms can be useful tools at work for quick questions and answers, catch-ups and sharing of ideas," said Deborah Bottineau, senior regional manager of Robert Half Technology. "More collaborative and engaging strategy sessions, however, are often best saved for in-person meetings."

Added Bottineau, "Companies should seek guidance from internal IT experts on how to best leverage digital communication tools to enhance rather than hinder their teams' productivity."

About the Research
The surveys were developed by Robert Half Technology and conducted by independent research firms. They include responses from more than 270 CIOs in Canada and more than 400 Canadian workers 18 years or older and employed in office environments.

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