

Two-thirds of European SMBs are yet to fully optimise their business for hybrid working, as they highlight security and remote IT support as key investment priorities for the next year

- **New Dynabook research shows almost half of European SMBs are losing at least 12 working days a year per employee to IT downtime**
- **Cyber security, cloud-based solutions and remote IT support are among the top IT investment priorities across Europe**
- **IT spend is on the rise with 44% of SMBs revealing they are benefitting from an increased IT budget this year**

7 September 2022, Neuss, Germany – Dynabook Europe GmbH today reveals the results of its new research, 'An SMB Guide to Making Hybrid Working Permanent', which shows that many European SMBs are still grappling to overcome the challenges of hybrid working, with two-thirds (67 per cent) yet to fully optimise their IT solutions for this. The research, commissioned by Dynabook in partnership with Walnut Unlimited, surveyed 1,202 IT decision-makers at small and midsize businesses (SMBs) across the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium and Italy.

The study also indicates that IT budgets are generally on the rise across the region. This is most notable in the UK, where 54 per cent of SMBs revealed they have a higher IT budget this year compared to last year. Almost half (48 per cent) of SMBs in France revealed increased budgets, closely followed by 46 per cent of those in Spain. Meanwhile only 22 per cent of respondents reported a decrease in their IT budget. Subsequently the top three areas of priority for IT investment in the next 12 months include cybersecurity infrastructure (46 per cent), cloud-based solutions (46 per cent) and remote IT support/assistance (44 per cent). Equipping employees with devices is also a popular investment priority (40 per cent).

"It is evident from our research that businesses are operating within a more complex IT environment than ever before, as hybrid working continues to present security, productivity and reliability challenges for Europe's SMBs", said Damian Jaume, President, Dynabook Europe GmbH. "While there is no one-size fits all approach, it's clear that budgets need to stretch far and wide as we navigate challenging economic times. It's essential that SMBs prioritise investing in and deploying dependable, cost-effective and secure technologies as they aim to make the hybrid shift permanent."

Eliminating IT downtime

For SMBs, transitioning from a traditional office setting to a hybrid working model has presented many operational challenges, with reducing IT downtime revealed to be a leading challenge for just over half (51 per cent) of respondents. Almost half of European SMBs are losing at least seven hours a month



per employee to IT downtime – equal to 12 days per year – with only 16 per cent believing they have completely sufficient IT resource to support their workforce. For those who said they have insufficient resource, what they most commonly lack is personnel – 36 per cent indicated they don't have enough IT security staff, while 34 per cent say the same for broader IT staff.

It's therefore no surprise to see SMBs turning towards more affordable and reliable technology solutions, which can simplify IT management while maintaining security and productivity throughout the workforce. Devices are at the heart of this, with 64 per cent of SMBs considering purchasing decisions around laptops to be more important now than before the pandemic. Equally, emerging technologies like Virtual Desktop Infrastructures (VDIs) (55 per cent) and edge computing solutions (52 per cent) rank highly in this category given their ability to deliver a highly secure yet productive remote environment for employees.

Security remains a major priority

Last but not least, security remains a major priority as businesses contend with a constantly evolving cyber threat landscape. The research found that 45 per cent of SMBs considered security to be the most challenging element of IT to manage during the pandemic. This is divided between network security (24 per cent) and device security (21 per cent), highlighting the necessity for security to underpin every element of the IT infrastructure, from the network core through to the hardware in employees' hands.

To download the full report, please visit: <https://emea.dynabook.com/secure/generic/blogs-smb-making-hybrid-permanent/>

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