TeleWare

INFORMATION RECALL:
THE SECRET WEAPON YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

SUMMARY

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THE SECRET WEAPON YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

Based on original research conducted by TeleWare, this paper explores employees' experiences of information overload, how it impacts their working lives and what they need to help them be most effective they can be in the workplace.

A significant number of employees are wasting time during the working day, attempting to resolve an issue when they have forgotten valuable information. They also say that missing important deadlines or letting their colleagues down are further consequences of poor information recall.

The paper also provides practical and reliable solutions for businesses of any size who are experiencing drops in productivity due to information overload.

- **Uncover unique insights into the recall abilities of the modern workforce**

- **Explore the dramatic impact of information recall on business performance**

- **Discover how improving employee recall can unleash growth potential**

❝ *Information recall is impacting performance at an individual and at a business level. With more data than ever before employees are struggling to deal with the impact on their working lives.*

***Firms need to deal with this challenge urgently to avoid data breaches, employee error and losing ground to competitors.* ❞**

Mark Elwood,
Marketing Director, TeleWare
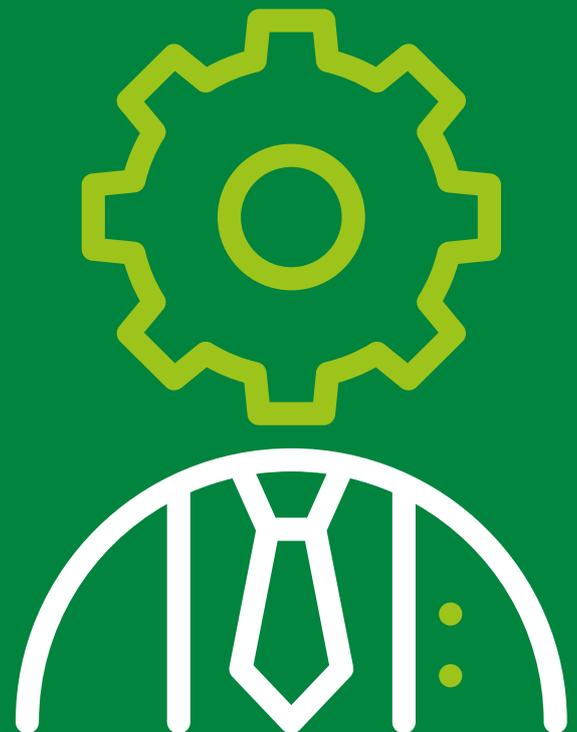
"Memory... is the diary we all carry about with us "

Or so said Oscar Wilde. What he didn't know at the time was that this would become especially true in the workplace. Here, the masses of information we receive and process everyday needs to not only be stored away in our mental diary, but also recalled at critical times.

"Information explosion" is so commonplace these days that it is a noun in the Oxford English Dictionary. Described as 'a rapid increase in the amount of information available, (now) especially because of the increased use, availability, and sophistication of information technology.' Whilst technology is responsible for the information overload we are exposed to, it also plays an important role in helping us to manage and recall this information when we need it.

The day-to-day explosion of information and data available to businesses has changed the working landscape and led to the creation of thousands of new job functions and responsibilities. Customer facing employees are responsible for dealing with issues, feedback and managing relationships. Having a process to capture and store customer data at source is critical for quality control and ensuring customer needs are met. Operational employees are often dealing with information across different departments and territories. A process to gather and collate data to then make business decisions from is therefore vital. At the same time, legal and compliance professionals need a bulletproof process in place to ensure key regulatory and compliance obligations are met.

This paper explores employees' experiences of information overload. How it has impacted their working lives and what they need to help them be most effective in the workplace. A significant number of employees talk about wasting a lot of the working day attempting to resolve an issue when they have forgotten valuable information, missing important deadlines or letting their colleagues down. Towards the end of the paper are some realistic and reliable solutions for businesses of any size who are experiencing drops in productivity due to information overload.

Not only offering solutions, we also hope this paper raises some interesting discussion points for the boardroom and reassures people that they're not alone in information recall related faux pas!

Steve Haworth, CEO, TeleWare

PRODUCTIVITY PITFALL

The impact of information overload has been studied extensively in the US. In 2010, Basex estimated that US workers lose 25% of their day to information overload. Based on this, the total cost of information overload to the US economy was estimated to be $997 billion.

Whilst there isn't a similar cost to put against information overload in the UK, it is causing productivity issues amongst UK businesses of all shapes and sizes. In addition, with the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) coming into force on 25th May 2018, businesses are having to get to grips with knowing what data they store, where it is stored and being able to access it upon request at any given moment.

In order to understand the scale of the situation, TeleWare commissioned independent research by 3Gem Research & Insights to explore employees' experiences and sentiment. A survey of 2,000 UK employees, from all industries, age groups and regions, was conducted with respondents presented with five multiple choice questions related to their experiences with information overload and recall in the workplace.

The largest majority of the respondents were aged between 35-44. The biggest regions of the survey were South East, London and North West. The most prominent sectors were professional and communications services, healthcare and pharmaceutical, retail and financial services.

The Forgetting Curve

With so much information being captured in the workplace every single day, it's impossible for all of it to be retained. Hermann Ebbinghaus is credited with creating The Forgetting Curve, in which he discovered an exponential nature of forgetting. According to Ebbinghaus' findings, just 25% of information is retained after two days and memory decline occurs just minutes after instruction in some instances.

When considering what information is most often forgotten in the workplace, almost half (46%) of employees in the survey had forgotten a password for their work computer, phone or tablet.

46%
A password for my work computer/phone/tablet

30%
Where I have saved an important document

24%
Important customer information

24%
An important deadline

Whilst some of these may appear to simply be minor annoyances, when combined together the hit on productivity – and consequently the bottom line - can be significant.

THE EFFECTS OF INFORMATION OVERLOAD
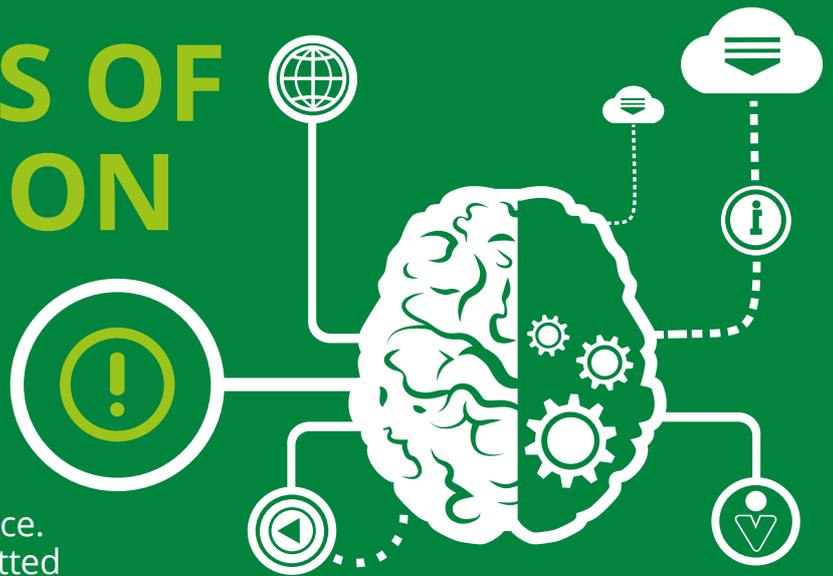
The survey revealed that significant employee frustrations stem from misplacing information in the workplace. Over a third (36%) of employees admitted they have wasted a lot of the working day attempting to resolve an issue when they have forgotten valuable information. A similar number (34%) explained that forgetting information has led them to deal ineffectively with customers, suppliers or clients. Whilst around a quarter have missed important deadlines (26%) or let their colleagues down (25%) due to not having the necessary information front of mind.

Based on this, unsurprisingly all employees agreed that there are business benefits to be had if employees could record and recall information more effectively. These included:

Better customer service
52%
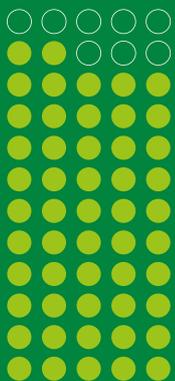
Improved employee productivity
48%

Increased quality of work
42%

Businesses need to sit up and take note of what's happening and what they're missing out on.
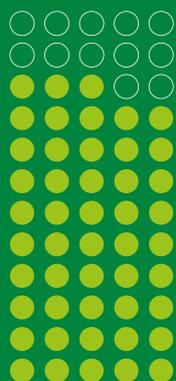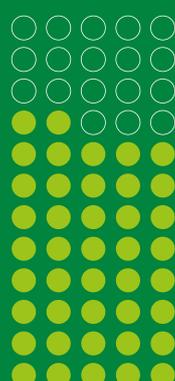
OSTRICHES & MAGPIES

According to the CBI (Confederation of British Industry), the workplace is made up of 'Ostriches' and 'Magpies'. 'Magpies' are those that pick up tested technology innovations from outside their business that are proven to lift productivity, whilst 'ostriches' stick to what they know. In turn, 'ostriches' have productivity levels typically below that of the UK average (which is already abysmally low, when compared to other G7 peers).

The CBI believes a key factor in the UK's slow productivity growth is the unwillingness of 70% of employers to adopt new technology available. Those that do – the 'magpies' – have shown major improvement in both productivity and profitability.

TeleWare's survey wholly aligns to this thinking. More than 90% of respondents across all industries agreed that an ability to record and recall information more effectively would help improve their performance at work. Mainly, through improved employee productivity (48%) and increased quality of work (42%). With individual performance an important criterion for business outcomes and success, it is crucial that this is addressed.

Encouragingly, four in ten (41%) employees have a communication recording system in place to capture, record and retrieve information in the workplace. Of those that don't, over a quarter of employees (28%) wish their workplace did.

Thankfully, due to the continued development in communications technology, solutions do exist to help businesses – for businesses of all sizes, set-ups, geographies - to address this black hole of productivity. There just needs to be more magpies to take advantage of new technology.

59%
Have **NO** communication recording system in place

41%
Have a communication recording system in place

INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES

Productivity challenges brought about by information overload are not confined to any one industry, with all industries reporting their own specific challenges.

Time is being wasted, industry wide, by employees not recording and recalling information effectively. Customers, clients and suppliers are not being dealt with effectively across healthcare & pharmaceutical (34%), financial services (34%), professional & communications services (34%) construction (27%) or automotive, transport & distribution (25%). That said, employees across all industries are in agreement of the benefits they could enjoy if they had an ability to record and recall information more effectively.

34% Healthcare & Pharmaceutical

34% Financial Services

34% Professional & Communications Services

27% Construction

25% Automotive, transport & distribution

Financial services

The finance sector is facing a multitude of challenges right now. The new European directive, MiFID II, has hit at the same time as Brexit preparation and has required firms to overhaul significant areas of their operations, staffing and technology. Whilst this presents challenges, there are also huge opportunities to make general business improvements.

Employees in financial services agree that if they could record and recall information more effectively, this would benefit the business by:

- Improved customer experience (58%)
- Better customer service (55%)
- Improved employee productivity (54%)
- Increased collaboration across the business (36%)

In addition, businesses now have regulatory obligations with regard to recording and storing information. Article 16 of MiFID II requires all communication that is linked to a trade deal to be captured and stored for up to seven years. This affects, and is therefore a priority area, for many areas of finance. Independent financial advisors (IFAs), for example, are looking to call recording technology to ensure they can comply with regulation like MiFID II. Such technology allows them to not only be compliant, but be more flexible, accurate and efficient in their business as the recordings are stored in the cloud.

60% of employees in financial services said their company has a process in place to capture, record and consequently retrieve information relating to business communications. Unfortunately, this is 40% less than the total number needing to have such a process in place to be compliant. Firms that don't comply with MiFID II risk a maximum fine of €5 million or up to 10% of annual turnover.

Automotive, transport & distribution

Automotive, transport and distribution are all industries in the midst of digital disruption. Employees therefore not only have to guarantee their productivity but also defend themselves against the ever-growing threat of robots and automation. What technology will struggle to replace though is the human touch.

Customer service appears high up the pecking order in terms of priorities and concerns of employees in these industries. A quarter (25%) admitted to not dealing effectively with customers, clients or suppliers due to being unable to record and recall information quickly and effectively. Over a quarter (27%) therefore admitted they wished their company had a business communications recording process in place, with 50% believing that better customer service would be the biggest benefit of employees being able to record and recall information more effectively.

Professional & communication services

Professional services are largely regulated by national governments and professional bodies. Regulation can relate to everything from rates charged to organisational structure and number of entrants in a profession.

With billing by the hour very common in professional services, there is little room for inefficiencies. It is therefore no surprise that 94% of employees believe an ability to record and recall information quicker and easier would help improve their performance at work.

In reality, nearly two fifths (39%) of respondents have wasted a lot of time during the day attempting to record and recall information. More than a third (34%) admitted they have not dealt effectively with customers, clients or suppliers, and a further three in ten (30%) also admitted they have missed important deadlines due to inefficiencies in information recall.

In such a highly structured and regulated industry, it's very surprising to note that less than half (47%) of employees said their company has a process in place to capture, record and consequently retrieve information relating to business communications. Almost three in ten (29%) wish they did.

Retail

Retail is the biggest sector in the EU non-financial business economy in terms of number of enterprises and persons employed. It is also arguably the industry which has been most disrupted by technology. Bricks and mortar stores are constantly battling for survival, proving they can still compete against behemoths like Amazon and eBay. Retail managers are therefore under pressure at a time when they need to incorporate a number of different sales channels and a growing number of fulfilment options. With many employees in the sector on the front line in customer facing roles, how they gather and use information can be crucial to making a sale and encouraging repeat custom.

Customers are the heartbeat of any retail business. Despite this, retail managers should be be aware that over a third (36%) of the retail employees in the survey admitted they have not dealt effectively with customers, clients or suppliers due to being unable to record and recall information effectively. A quarter (25%) had forgotten important customer information whilst just over a fifth (21%) had forgotten where they had saved an important document. It's unsurprising that better customer service (62%) and improved customer experience (50%) are the two biggest perceived benefits of employees being able to record and recall information more effectively.

Healthcare & pharmaceutical

Pharmaceutical businesses operate in one of the world's most regulated environments. With lives at stake, patient outcomes are of utmost importance and in the UK, the healthcare industry is overseen by both the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Department of Health (DoH).

Technology is frequently used in treatment and care, but there is a constant need to improve how it can be used in supporting services — particularly communications. By providing a platform with high quality and reliable communications, the NHS and private sector could help improve patient experience and outcomes whilst also reducing cost through greater efficiencies.

Unfortunately, the TeleWare survey reveals just 46% of employees in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries work at businesses which have a process in place to capture, record and consequently retrieve information relating to communications.

Increasing numbers of NHS employees are operating in a digital capacity using mobile voice, SMS, video consultations and Skype for Business. Recording this information is therefore beginning to play an increasing role in operational and patient care capacities. That said, this technology can also be used more for playback and auditing purposes in order to drive up standards.

Employees believe that if their company's employees could record and recall information more effectively, this would benefit the business through:

• Better customer service (53%)
• Improved customer experience (43%)
• Improved employee productivity (42%)
• Increased quality of work (41%)

LESSONS TO BE LEARNT

Throughout this research, it has become more and more apparent that businesses across multiple industries are failing to operate at maximum effectiveness due to employees being unable to deal with the sheer volume of information they have to recall. We have explored the impact that poor productivity can have on a business, with customers most often bearing the brunt of this.

In the current climate of information explosion, it's clear that businesses of all sizes and sectors can benefit from more sophisticated ways of monitoring and recalling information. Our research also reveals that employees are crying out for solutions to help them do so. As highlighted by the CBI, businesses need to leave behind the 'ostrich' mentality and instead become 'magpies'. Businesses should turn to readily available technology to tackle productivity pitfalls, which ironically have in part been created by too much technology and information in the workplace.

Furthermore, whilst it's encouraging that so many businesses do offer tools to monitor and record information within the office, it's not clear if these tools exist away from the workplace. The growth of remote and mobile working, and flexibility from Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), means employees often find themselves unprepared for important business meetings and calls if caught off guard outside of the office. In these instances, employees are therefore unequipped to record information.

As identified by employees in this paper, there are significant business benefits to be had for businesses that get this right:

Customer service

Over half (52%) of employees believe better customer service would come off the back of employees being able to record and recall information more effectively

Employee productivity

Almost half (48%) believe employees would be more productive if they could record and recall information more effectively

Quality of work

42% believe that the quality of employees' work would increase along with the ability to record and recall information more effectively

REGULATORY OBSTACLES

Whilst this paper has explored the need to improve recall of information, to reap the many benefits on offer, we have not addressed the practicalities and legalities of storing information in the first place.

Changes in the workplace brought about by automation and the continued move towards mobile and flexible working require new approaches in respect of information handling. Before putting in place new information capture and recall tools, businesses need to be aware of existing and upcoming regulatory demands.

As this paper has explored, different industries all face their own individual requirements. However, 25th May 2018 will see GDPR enforced which will significantly impact how businesses across all industries can handle and store data.

GDPR supports an individual's right to privacy. It stipulates that consent for the storage of personal data must be freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous. Personal data should only be kept for as long as necessary.

This is of paramount importance to any business handling personal data – be that employee, customer, client, supplier – which means that no business is unaffected.

INTRODUCING RE:CALL

To help employees tackle the ever increasing challenges with information overload and recall, TeleWare has brought to market a new app – Re:Call.

Re:Call provides a simple and reliable solution to record and replay mobile voice and SMS communications; whether it's for regulatory compliance, training or for improving customer experience. The Re:Call app sits alongside the mobile device's native dialler and can be accessed by the user for any calls and SMS messages that need to be recorded. Recordings are stored securely in the cloud and are immediately available for retrieval and replay via a web-based portal.

As well as giving employees a tool to capture and recall communication information on the go, wherever they are in the world, Re:Call was designed with GDPR in mind. With the choice to separate business and personal calls, recording some calls and not others, employees and employers can ensure they are compliant when they need to be. Whilst not impacting employees' privacy rights.

Re:Call is just one of the ways in which TeleWare is helping businesses to route and record their communications more effectively. With tools designed to addresses fundamental customer experience and business productivity challenges.

If you'd like to speak to one of our specialists about your business communications needs, please contact us on:

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www.teleware.com
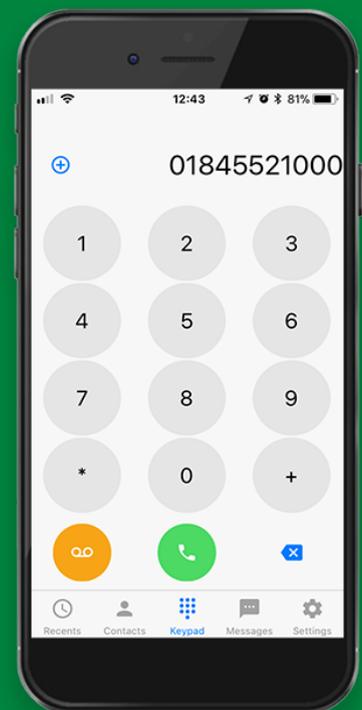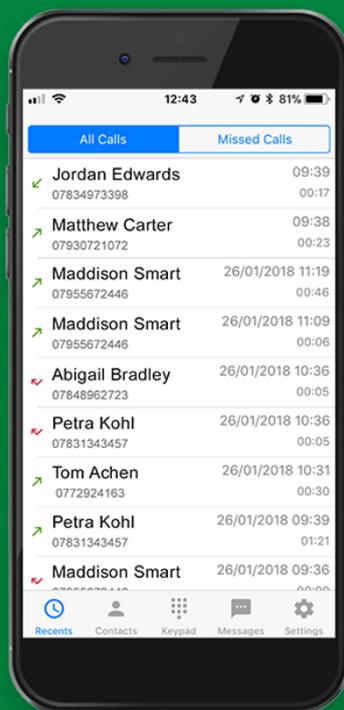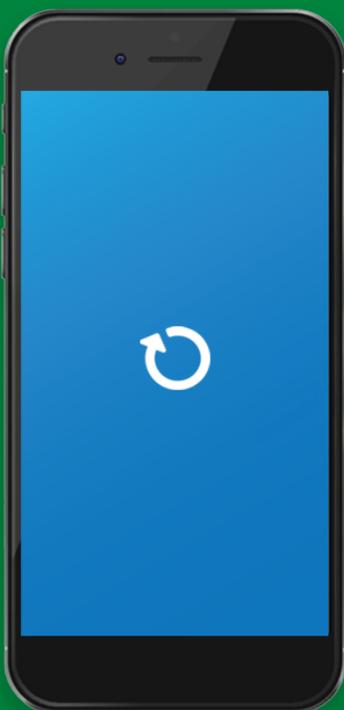
TeleWare

ABOUT TELEWARE

TeleWare, a Microsoft Gold Partner in multiple disciplines, has been a leading communications technology business for over 25 years. Its customers include some of the world's leading multinational and local financial and professional services, IT, manufacturing, retail, health and public sector organisations. Today, TeleWare technology is used by three out of five FTSE 100 Banks.

TeleWare has created single numbering solutions, pioneered cloud based recording solutions and is the worlds' leading provider of SIM based compliant mobile recording. This helps businesses meet regulatory and governance requirements. TeleWare's ability to help businesses route their communications more effectively addresses fundamental customer experience and business productivity challenges.

With innovation at its core, TeleWare designs and builds its own software products in-house. TeleWare's innovation resulted in 2 recent Microsoft world firsts. By routing, recording and analysing a call through the Azure platform in real time and in a fully compliant environment, it created a paradigm shift in cloud platform capabilities. A month later TeleWare did this again, being the first to migrate all fixed line operations to Azure. These world firsts have been confirmed by Microsoft.

If you'd like to speak to one of our specialists, please contact us on:

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