



**ENABLING MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS -  
THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS**

**A Research Report from Attunity**

**April 2007**

## Table of Contents

Executive Overview .....	3
Key Findings.....	4
Implications of the key findings .....	6
Research Methodology .....	8
The Effectiveness of Senior Managers is Constrained .....	9
Senior Managers Feel Maxed-Out.....	11
Organizations are not enabling key infrastructure to ensure effective management .....	12
Conclusion.....	18
About Attunity .....	19

## Executive Overview

---

In January 2007, Attunity Inc. commissioned the London-based research company Loudhouse to carry out a research survey of senior business managers across both the United Kingdom and United States. The purpose of the research was to analyze how these business managers viewed their daily workloads and patterns, and whether those activities were conducive and effective in driving the overall competitiveness and growth of their company. The research sampled 400 senior business managers from large organizations, across the two geographies, 200 from each country.

The results generally show agreement on the issues from both sides of the Atlantic, with strong agreement on several key findings. For example, the research showed that most senior business managers spend over a quarter of their working week (on average around 11 hours) simply gathering, compiling and massaging information in order to make decisions and take actions, an activity felt to be frustrating at best. The majority felt that it was not possible to dedicate enough time to what they regarded as the most important decisions and activities. In fact, over two-thirds of them felt overly reactive and ineffective due to overwork and shifting priorities, and felt that the overall competitiveness of their company suffered as a result.

The research highlights fundamental challenges that adversely affect managers being able to do what they were hired to do. For example, organizations speak to the importance of creating flexible and agile businesses, but this research indicates that most senior managers do not feel that this 'agile workplace' exists today in their organizations.

The good news is that senior managers do acknowledge the value that such a workplace would have for them individually, and collectively, by elevating the effectiveness of participatory working and collaboration with other managers. While technology over the last twenty years has focused on driving efficiencies, cutting costs and automating repetitive processes, there has been little to no help for businesses most highly valuable and highly paid workers to carry out the more tacit, collaborative, experience-driven activities within the organization. This research finds that most senior managers believe this is where the most significant business benefits can now be gained.

## Key Findings

---

Senior business managers are hired for their ability to manage the 'non-routine', such as resolving problems, managing issues, monitoring important business functions, and driving change. They typically represent the most valuable and highly compensated workers within an organization, yet the research findings indicate a high level of frustration among them. Specifically, the findings of the survey highlighted the following:

1. Managers feel frustrated and constrained in their ability to focus on the key issues of their business
2. Managers feel stretched; reacting to issues and changing priorities throughout their day and week, which de-focuses them
3. Organizations are not enabling key infrastructure to increase and ensure management's effectiveness

Supporting statistics of these three key findings are detailed below:

### ***Ability to focus on key issues is constrained***

- o 52% of managers complain about having insufficient time to focus on key issues when asked to select their top 3 frustrations/challenges with management
- o An inordinate amount of time is being spent by highly valued and highly paid employees to gather, collate and massage data versus analyzing it and acting on it; UK managers spend an average of 11 hours per week; US managers spend an average of 12 hours per week; nearly 30% of the work week
- o 30% of US managers spend over 20 hours a week gathering, compiling and reviewing information and 31% indicated one of their top frustrations was sourcing accurate, complete and reliable information
- o 50% of managers think they spend more time than they should handling information

### ***Managers feel maxed out; reacting to issues and changing priorities throughout their day and week***

- o Uncertainty is the only certainty – 90% of the managers agreed that things happen in the day that are exceptional, unplanned or unexpected
- o 81% say working priorities often change through the course of the week
- o 46% of respondents indicate their companies have no best practice in place to manage the unexpected while 63% agree that better managing the unplanned and unexpected events can improve competitiveness
- o 45% of managers complain about being reactive rather than proactive
- o 33% of managers complain about an inability to change quickly
- o 59% are dissatisfied or neutral in ranking how well their company recognizes and resolves issues
- o 66% are dissatisfied or neutral in ranking how well their company adjusts the course quickly and effectively

***Organizations are not enabling key infrastructure to increase and ensure management's effectiveness***

- Respondents generally agree that technology is an enabler to their being more effective in their roles; 84% agree that email helps their ability to manage the unexpected/unplanned activities within a day; 71% agree the intranet helps their ability to manage the unexpected/unplanned activities within a day
- An organization's structure and culture are viewed as the two biggest hindrances to increasing the effectiveness of managers in managing the unplanned, unexpected activities that represent the majority of their roles. Only 53% felt that organizational structure helped their ability to manage the unexpected and only 51% agreed that culture helped in this area – these were the two lowest scores in the rankings.
- Respondents generally felt that their organization is not providing the support required to achieve an environment that supports collaboration, knowledge sharing and flexibility. Only 24% had cross department teams in place or workgroups to promote better knowledge sharing
- Nearly a third of the managers expressed frustration with the lack of collaboration in their company

## Implications of the key findings

---

While the above statistics are interesting, the next logical question after reading a list of statistics is to ask “So, who cares?” What are the implications of senior level management’s frustration with today’s workplace?

Let’s start first with a technical view. The technical innovations over the past decade have dramatically changed how and where we work. Our workplace is no longer confined to an office. In fact, our workplace is less defined by physical surroundings and more defined by technical connectivity that enables work to happen just about anywhere. As managers, we can now work anywhere there is a wireless connection. The implications of where we work and how we work create new challenges for organizations and its managers in working effectively. Enabling an effective workplace when fewer employees are socially interacting on a regular basis creates a new set of challenges for organizations to address.

Until very recently, technology has largely focused on driving efficiencies within organizations; focused primarily on repeatable processes that can be systematized to save time and costs. Our world has largely been focused on achieving efficiencies by automating repeatable tasks and processes. While there have been dramatic improvements in company’s costs structures with such applications as ERP and document management solutions, there have not been marked improvements in the effectiveness of organizations. On the surface, this is not surprising as the wave of automating and systemizing repeatable processes has not delivered great benefit to managers. The research would indicate the time is now for organizations to focus on their highly valuable and highly paid employees. Most would agree that what could be automated and outsourced and systemized has been done. Now organizations should move to the other side of the equation and focus on driving effectiveness. After all, it is through their management that organizations can truly attain a sustainable competitive advantage that is not easily replicated by implementing a packaged application.

Managers are hired to leverage their expertise and apply past experience and knowledge to make decisions that drive an organization forward. One could argue that technology has exacerbated their ability to do this, as it is now easier than ever to deliver more and more data for them to try and assimilate, analyze and interpret. It is an interesting dynamic to think how technology is helping managers (in the form of emails and the intranet), yet at the same time also being a primary contributor to management’s frustration. Technical improvements have enabled more data to be accessed quicker so managers find themselves drowning in data and bombarded by information sources 24 by 7. It is therefore of little surprise that managers are frustrated and feel ‘maxed out’. Many yearn for the good old days when there were dead cell spots and you could meet someone for coffee and leave your laptop in the car for 30 minutes. Organizations that focus on implementing technologies that are tightly aligned with the needs of their managers will likely reap great benefits.

How can organizations increase the satisfaction of their most critical of assets, namely their management team? The research indicates the important role that an organization’s culture and organizational structure have on enabling a more effective workplace in the future. The respondents agree that increasing their own effectiveness would increase the competitive standing of their organization. So why

aren't more organizations investing in efforts to support their managers and truly enable a more effective workplace?

Clearly there are no simple solutions to driving effectiveness. Many organizations stumble on defining the term "effectiveness" and how they would measure it within their organization. However, most would agree that it is some combination (or product) of efficiency AND direction or focus. After all what is the point of being highly efficient at doing the wrong thing? It appears that management is finding it increasingly difficult to maintain direction and focus due to the constraints imposed by the overload of information and changing priorities.

The research results also highlight that the majority of business leaders view knowledge sharing and collaboration as important factors in driving an organization's competitiveness. Yet, most agreed their organizations speak to the importance of such initiatives, but were only scratching the surface. It seems like a great opportunity for leading organizations to take advantage of emerging technologies to work with their management teams to create a more collaborative workplace with actionable information (really) accessible.

An astounding finding from this research is the amount of time spent gathering and compiling information -- nearly 30% of a manager's time per week on average. This statistic is disturbing given the amount of money that has been invested in business intelligence (BI) solutions, data warehouses, portals, dashboards etc. Is actionable information still the Holy Grail? Why is so much time being spent on gathering information when the respondents were largely senior managers who were initially hired to assess, act and monitor not gather, collate and decipher? It is discouraging to think that the returns on such large investments have clearly not benefited managers. Organizations that can deliver reliable and truly actionable information to their managers will gain 25-30% of their manager's week! Companies that eliminate the noise and the distractions of the mundane activities causing management frustration will not only see an increase in satisfaction, but productivity and effectiveness will also increase by enabling them to work on the key business issues that they are unable to get to today.

## Research Methodology

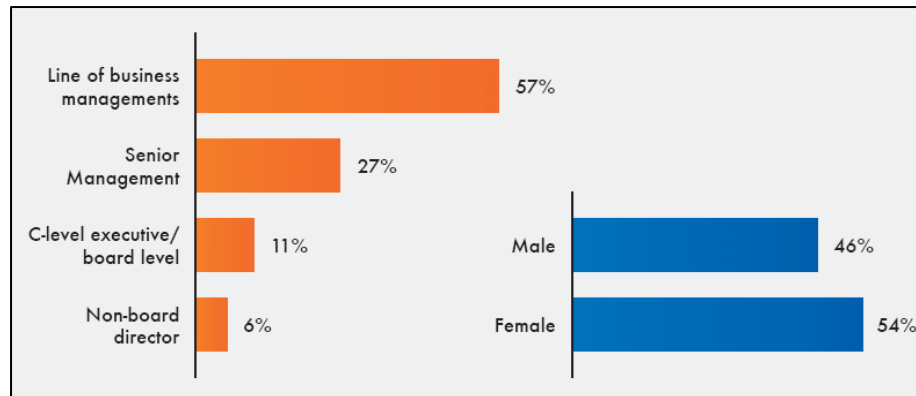
---

In January 2007, Attunity commissioned the research company Loudhouse to investigate how senior business managers view their organizations' effectiveness, daily workload and their general working environment to see what impact this has on a company's overall competitiveness and growth moving forward.

The research sampled 400 senior business managers and was conducted via the internet in the United Kingdom and the United States, with 200 respondents in each country. Respondents were asked to answer 15 questions on a range of topics centered on how they perform their daily business activities, and what they thought were the main barriers to completing them. Respondents all came from companies with 500 employees or more.

Responses were consistent across male and female managers, in both the UK and US, and encouragingly the research found that managers in the both countries faced similar issues when it came to performing the daily functions of their job.

Below is a breakout of the 400 respondents by role and by gender:



This document provides the detailed background of the research, organizing it into the three main findings, and finishing with the conclusion.

## The Effectiveness of Senior Managers is Constrained

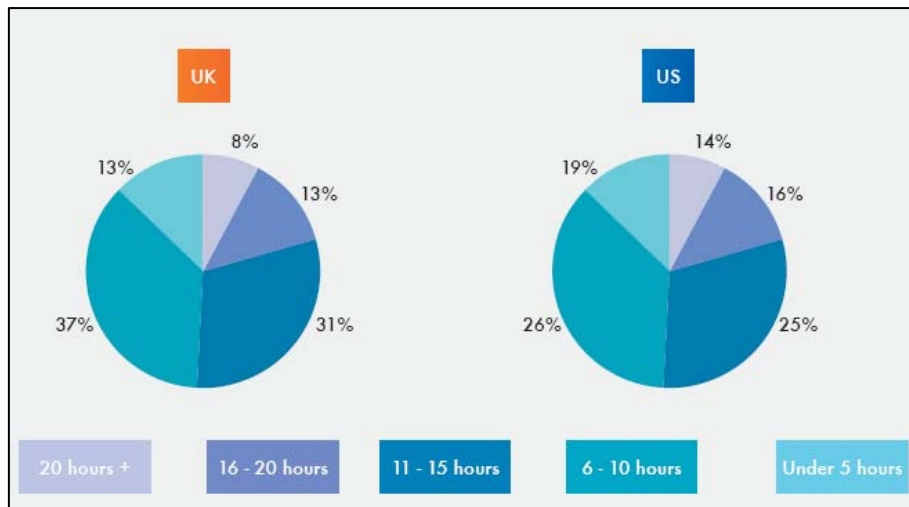
### The information time trap

#### Managers are frustrated they don't have the time to focus on key issues

Managers essentially feel their effectiveness is constrained. The constraints appear mainly to be time restrictions as their days are consumed by tasks that appear more menial than the role they were initially hired to perform. Specifically, the research uncovered that managers are spending a significant portion of their days and work weeks gathering, compiling and reviewing information. There is a misalignment of actual management activities versus the intended role of management. This adversely impacts the organization as their leaders are spending an inordinate amount of time gathering information rather than assessing it and acting on it to drive the organization forward. With so much investment in data warehouses, business intelligence (BI) solutions, and portals, what is driving the need for managers, including senior level managers, to spend at least 30% of their week gathering data?

The research results as indicated below highlight that UK managers spend an average of 11 hours a week, and US managers spend 12 hours a week, preparing and gathering information. This equates to 25-30% of the working week or 78 days over the year.

#### Q. How many hours a week would you say is spent by gathering, compiling and reviewing information to complete your management activities.



Significantly, 50% of managers think that they spend more time than they should handling information (56% UK, 47% US). Nearly a third (30%) of US managers spend over 20 hours a week gathering, compiling and reviewing information just to complete their management activities.

Looking in more detail, 71% of those spending under 5 hours a week preparing information think this is acceptable, compared to just 28% of those spending more than 20 hours. Business managers complain that they have insufficient time to focus on key issues and that they are reactive rather than proactive. A third also complains

about their company's inability to change quickly and a lack of collaboration in their workplace.

Together, IT and business have a great opportunity to give back more than a day per week to their highly valued employees, their management. This time could be better utilized for managers to spend on the key business issues that they were hired to focus on, but today feel there is little time available to do so. With the apparent misalignment of intended responsibilities versus actual activities performed, one wonders who is more frustrated: the highly skilled manager consumed with mundane tasks or the company paying the high salary? There is so much written about actionable information for management, these research results make you wonder if anyone is really delivering on that promise.

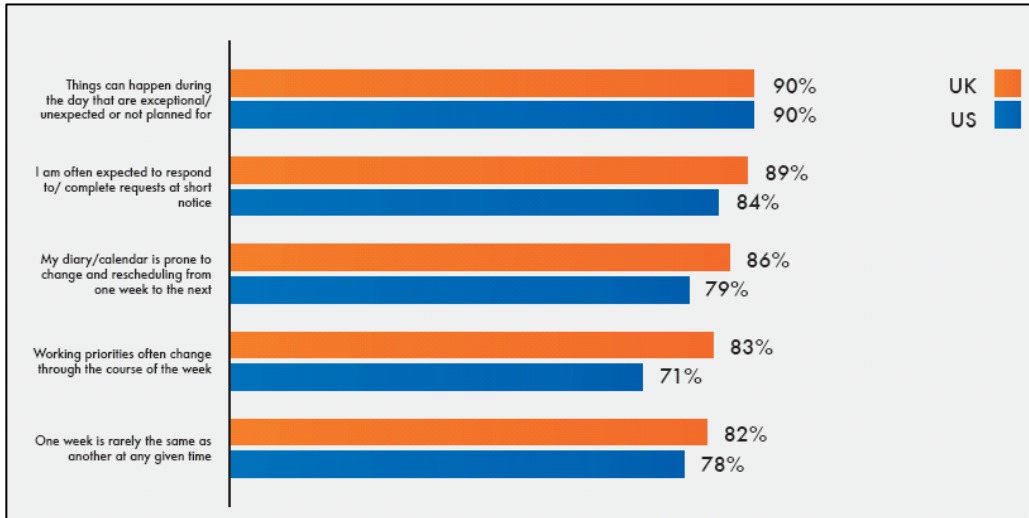
## Senior Managers Feel Maxed-Out

### Expect the unexpected

**Managers are stretched; largely reacting to a constantly changing set of priorities and objectives**

One of the biggest problems that business leaders in both the UK and US face is that their working lives are full of uncertainty. No matter how much they plan their working days/weeks, the vast majority (as indicated by the table below) have to respond at short notice to requests they receive, have to work around last-minute rescheduling, and often find that their working priorities are constantly shifting. It appears the only certainty is uncertainty.

### Q. Please state your level of agreement with the following statements?



Managers by definition do not operate in a highly predictable work environment. While meetings are scheduled and priorities are set, by nature, a manager's day and week is largely unpredictable. The research confirmed this scenario in that almost two-thirds of business leaders (65% in the UK, 61% in the US) accept that better managing unplanned/unexpected events can improve competitiveness, which in itself is not eye opening. What is noteworthy is the opportunity organizations have to enable their management to be better equipped to shift from a frustrating, reactive mode to anticipating issues and unplanned events and being able to proactively assess and manage the situation.

With 6 in 10 managers believing that current productivity measures fail to meet expectation and almost half stating that there is no best practice for managing the unexpected in their organization, the question of how do you better manage the unexpected becomes more important especially for industries that are largely dominated by non-routine events.

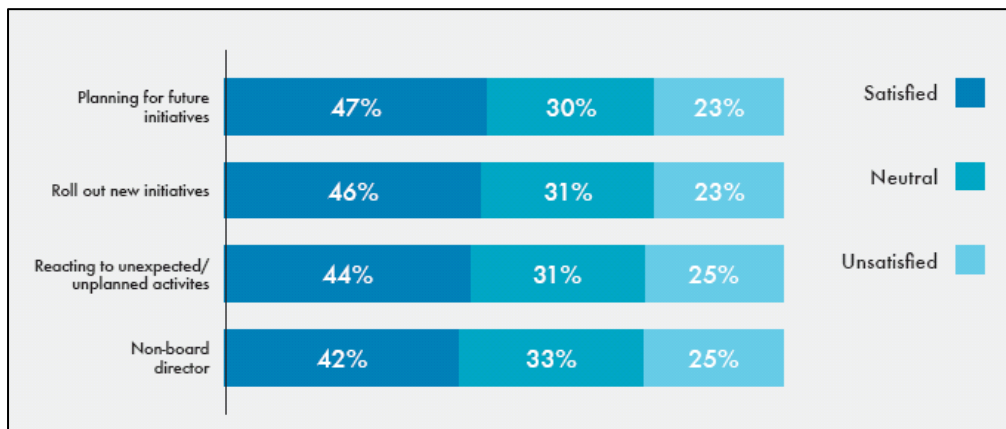
## Organizations are not enabling key infrastructure to ensure effective management

Several of the questions in the survey focused on ascertaining select information about the organization itself. The questions were designed to learn more about the organizational structure, how work gets done (teams versus individuals) and insight into how new important initiatives are planned and executed. The research sought to better understand technologies and approaches adopted to better support management's ability to proactively manage and quickly respond to market and economic conditions and ultimately drive the organization forward.

### *Highs & lows of management*

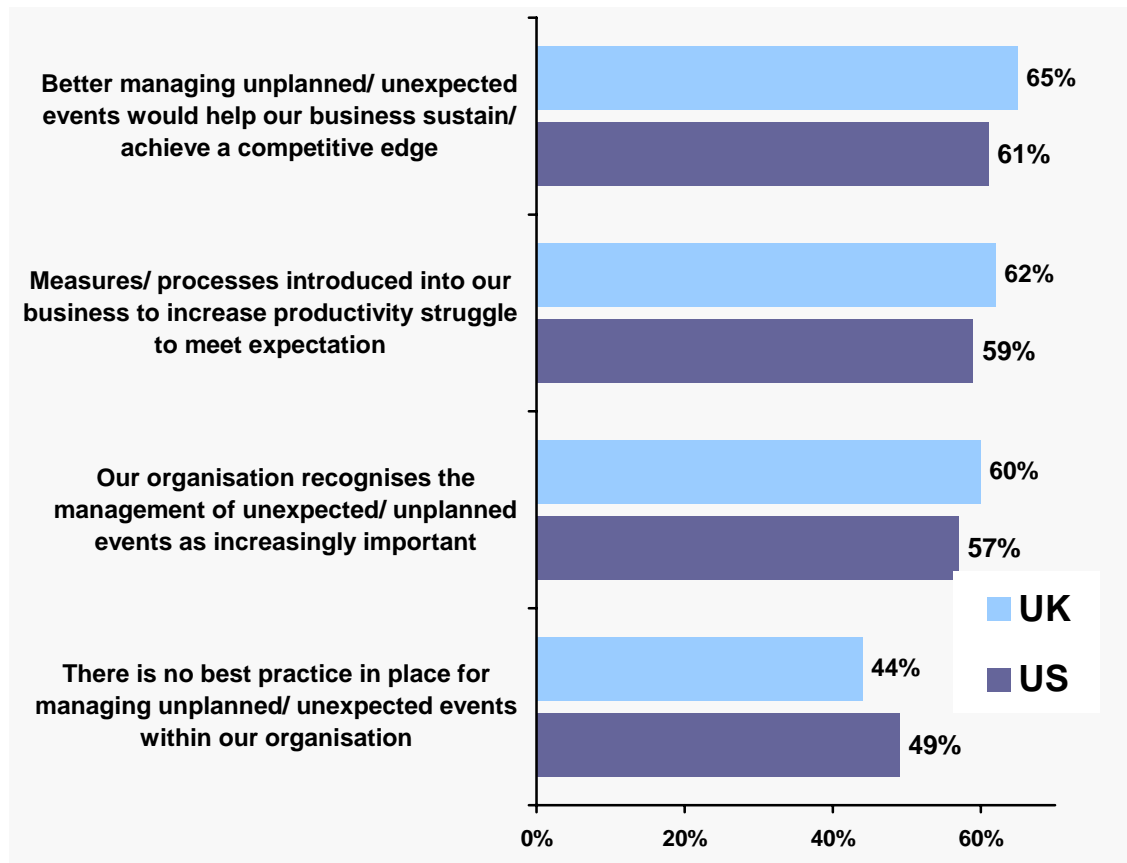
One of the areas the research investigated is how companies plan for new initiatives within their organization and how managers view the effectiveness of executing new initiatives. A section of the survey specifically asked about the respondent's organization to gain insight into how they viewed its effectiveness in reacting to unexpected and unplanned activities.

#### **Q. How satisfied are you that your business manages the following?**



With all of the above categories achieving less than 50% satisfaction, business leaders expressed dissatisfaction with organizational effectiveness. What is noteworthy is that these results corresponded to the two thirds of participants who agreed that by better managing the unexpected there would be a direct contribution to company competitiveness. (See following chart) So while the respondents did not feel that their company was particularly effective at it (56% neutral or dissatisfied to reacting to unexpected/unplanned activities), senior managers in both the UK and US agree that better managing the unplanned and unexpected would have a positive impact on their company's competitive positioning.

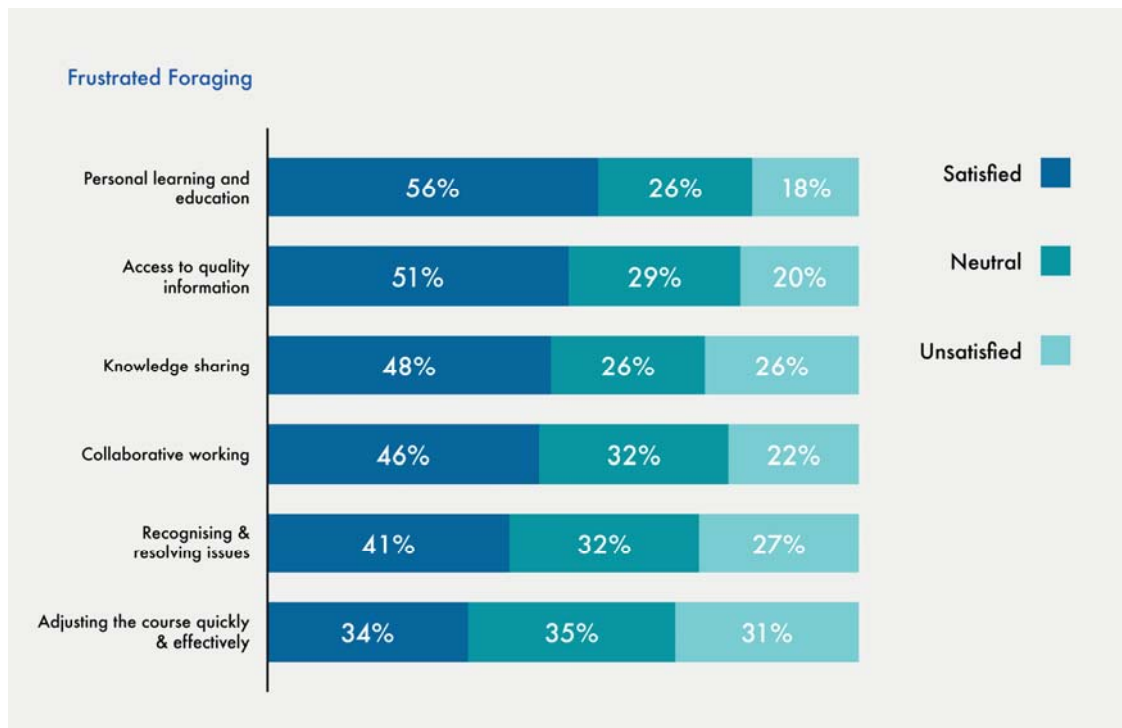
**Q. Please state your level of agreement with the following statements.**



As the above chart indicates, respondents largely agreed that better managing the unplanned events would contribute to achieving a sustainable competitive advantage, yet they indicated there was no best practice in place in their organization to manage such out of the ordinary, non-routine events. Furthermore, the above chart indicates that companies acknowledge the ability to manage the unexpected as increasingly important, despite the current lack of solid practices in place to address that capability.

Common business school thought and teachings focus on “thinking outside the box”, the importance of being creative, agile and flexible in reacting to market conditions and competitive movements. These survey results indicate a potential competitive disadvantage for large organizations as their managers rated their own companies as not being effective in adjusting the course quickly (66% neutral or dissatisfied) and not being particularly adept at recognizing and resolving issues (59% neutral or dissatisfied). Additionally as the chart below indicates, the majority of senior managers are neutral or dissatisfied with how their company provides access to quality information, supports knowledge sharing and enables a collaborative working environment.

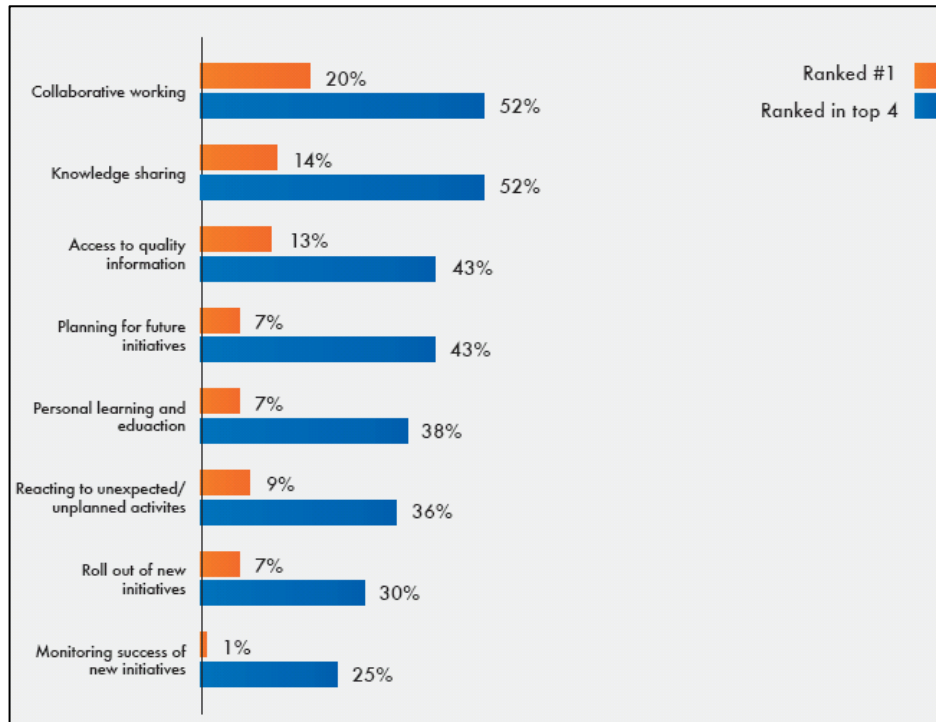
**Q. Rate your level of satisfaction with how well your company executes the following:**



The survey results indicate that large organizations who are more agile in being able to react to market opportunities and to shift gears more quickly would have a competitive advantage to those that are slower to react and make decisions to adjust their course.

Given the role that managers directly play in creating and maintaining a competitive advantage, the survey was designed to identify which particular activities were believed to contribute more to creating a competitive advantage. As the results below indicate, collaborative working and knowledge sharing were ranked as having the biggest impact, yet satisfaction with collaborative working, is relatively low (just 46% - see chart above). The contrast of the responses in the chart above and the chart below is very telling. These two charts highlight the critical gaps that the respondents see in their own organization's effectiveness to create and sustain a competitive advantage.

**Q. Please rate the top 4 activities that you believe are the most effective in creating competitive advantage?**



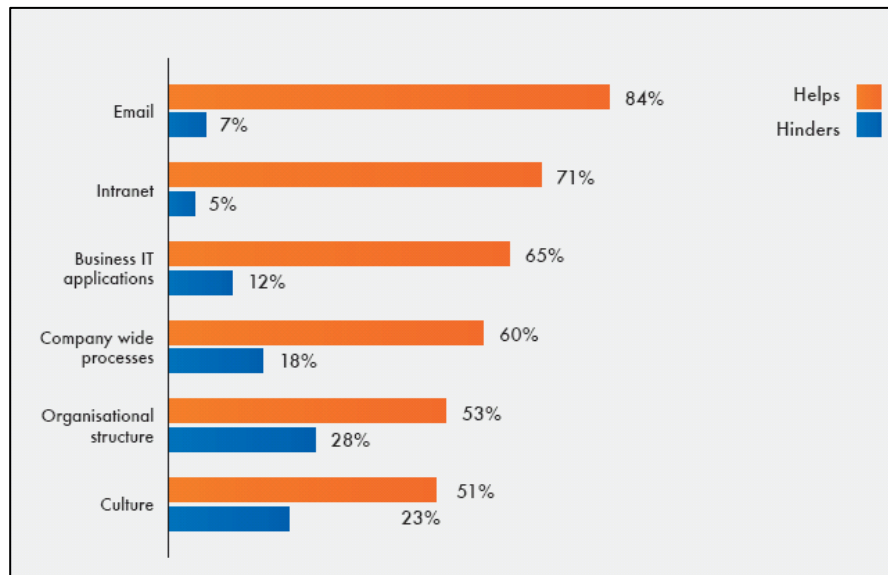
As the research results highlight, business leaders see collaboration as important to their organization, but they also feel that their companies are only scratching the surface in delivering a truly collaborative working environment that enables effective knowledge sharing. While the marketplace appears to be loaded with software applications that aim to enable collaboration and knowledge sharing with solutions and portals, the fact is that many business organizations are still struggling to effectively enable a collaborative workplace.

Today there needs to be a focus on developing and delivering flexible and highly configurable tools that support and reflect the highly *un*-structured ways in which most important business decisions are made – decisions based on unpredicted (or unpredictable) events, *ad hoc* meetings or alliances and even good old gut feel. Instead of giving people endlessly rehashed ways of looking at structured data and dozens of applications to switch between and manage, companies require context-driven ways of actually *working*, not just analyzing. As highlighted, senior managers rated their companies poorly in terms of their ability to operate flexibly in terms of recognizing and resolving issues effectively (59% neutral or dissatisfied) and being able to adjust the course quickly and effectively (66% neutral or dissatisfied).

**Technology and business culture  
Help or hindrance?**

Business leaders were asked how elements such as technology and culture in the workplace can either help or hinder the quest for better managing of the unplanned and unexpected events that represent the majority of a manager’s work week. As the graph below details, technology such as email and intranets are seen as key enablers of change and uncertainty.

**Q. Please rate the following in terms of how they help or hinders your ability to manage unexpected/ unplanned activities?**



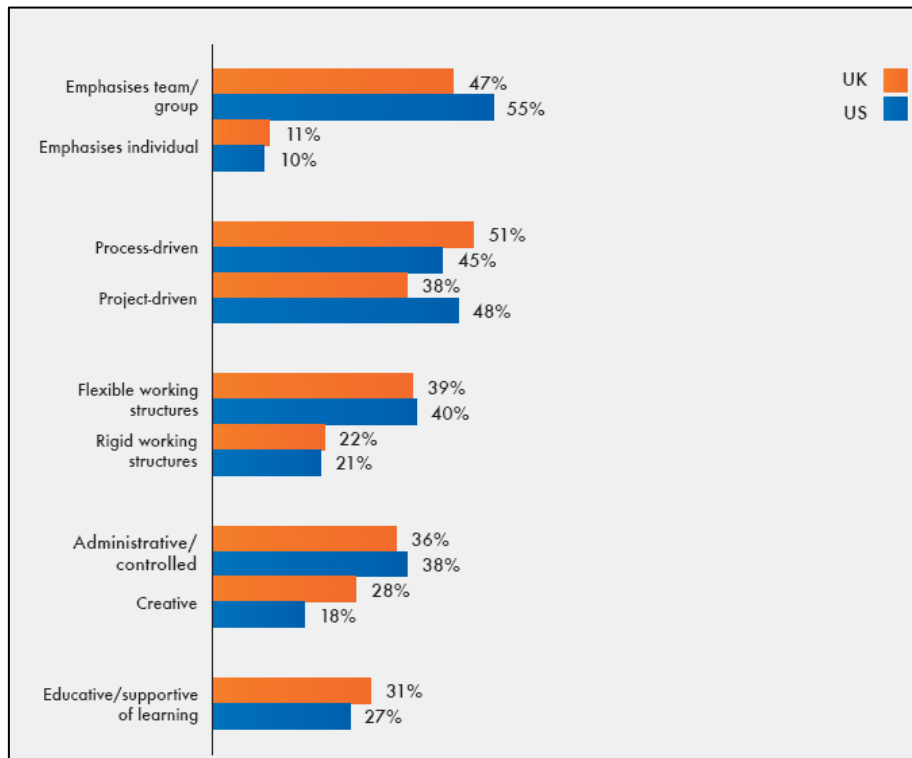
The research points to the fact that while email and intranets are the most influential tools that we use in our day-to-day working life, most businesses are not facilitating the most effective means of using these.

Businesses today, like consumers, live in an ‘on-demand’ world in that we want everything immediately. However the current tools that we possess do not empower proactive working.

Not surprisingly, organizational structure and culture are viewed as the biggest hindrances to managing unexpected/unplanned activities in both the UK and US.

The graph below highlights an interesting discord when specifically looking at a team environment. It shows us that a company’s creativity is stifled simply because organizations are more process and project based with a greater emphasis on team possibly at an expense of the individual, possibly due to the burden of unplanned activities that need to be managed.

**Q. Please select three attributes that you think best define the way your business operates?**



It seems that technology can help manage unexpected activities, but currently it is not in tune with business culture nor the day to day activities which we all face.

## Conclusion

---

What then is technology really for? For decades, IT vendors have been selling software technology in particular on the premise that it makes workers more efficient and productive, that it can help streamline business processes and above all else, that it can make companies more competitive. This may well have been true for the 'early adopters' of specific technologies, but now we have returned more or less to parity with competition. Certainly overall productivity has generally improved, and transactions-based business processes have become more manageable. However, given that software applications have now had the longer term leveling-effect of making best-practices, now the standard practices, companies are really no more competitive than they ever were in the past. Software technology has created a new kind of playing field – one on which the acquisition of that technology has become merely about reaching parity with competitors, not outmaneuvering them.

Today, organizations are increasingly discovering that there are many kinds of business problems which technology alone simply cannot solve. Many tools are routinely paraded as groundbreaking new tools for changing the way businesses run, but none of them address the most fundamental issue affecting organizations: the fact that the key information and knowledge that drives competitive edge is not held in structured databases or processes, but within the people who actually run the business. It is people-driven activities, not process-driven ones, which define the future long-term success of an organization – and to date IT has achieved precious little in helping their effective execution.

The unexpected and in some respects un-structured nature of these activities, presents a challenge for both IT and the business. What is clear from this research, however, is that harnessing the right information faster, will free up the business management to execute on the activities they believe are the most important, and in a more effective way. What is also clear is that technology should play a stronger role in focusing their activities on the most important priorities; sifting through less important demands that can clutter their day. And finally, it is apparent that if long-term business growth and value is important, then facilitating more meaningful, contextual, collaborative discussion and tapping the collective experience of the organization, is the winning formula.

## About Attunity

---

Building on nearly 20 years of history delivering data integration solutions, Attunity (NASDAQ: ATTU) is leading the innovative and fast growing Workplace Applications space with its flagship product Attunity InFocus. Attunity InFocus is designed to dramatically enhance the effectiveness of business managers at all levels to focus their judgment, experience and knowledge on resolving business problems, exceptions and issues that tend to dominate their day.

With successful deployments at thousands of organizations worldwide, Attunity provides enterprise-class software directly and indirectly through a number of strategic and OEM agreements with global-class partners such as HP, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, Business Objects and Cognos.

Headquartered in Boston, Attunity serves its customers via offices in North America, Europe, Middle East, China and Australia, and through a network of local partners. For more information, please visit us at [www.attunity.com](http://www.attunity.com)

### **Worldwide and North American headquarters**

70 Blanchard Road  
Burlington, MA 01803  
USA  
Tel: +1 (781) 213-5200  
[www@attunity.com](mailto:www@attunity.com)