

Happiness Company: Research reveals flexibility and tech will help SMEs win in 2024

New research from Slack reveals that boosting productivity with technology and combating remote work challenges will be top priority for SMEs next year.

Growth comes in many different ways.

Let's focus on the obvious; growth is essential to a company's survival. A company that stagnates or deteriorates is doomed to crash.

Then why do so many (too many) companies do not have the same mindset regarding their workforce?

Stagnation is one's worst enemy. Alike water, stagnating can be a source of hazards and illnesses. It has been proven that happy people are on average 20% more productive and provide better work.

Same goes for entrepreneurs and CEOs. When hearing the famous quote "With great power comes great responsibility", some might misunderstand it as "With great power you must carry all responsibilities". This idea results in creating a vicious circle of workaholism and stress, which sometimes seems impossible to get out of.

One must understand that a healthy business requires healthy people. To boost

productivity, we must care about human growth as much as we care about technological progress.

Embracing flexibility

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt laid out plans to unlock growth and boost productivity in this year's Autumn Statement. New research from productivity platform Slack has shown that these targets high on the priorities for UK small businesses. 1 in 3 SMEs recognise flexibility to embrace new ways of working as their biggest business opportunity in 2024.

SMEs are keen to also implement new technologies after both employees and employers struggled with loneliness and ineffective remote working set-up in this year.

“My advice to business owners this Small Business Saturday is to look at their current set-up and evaluate if they have the right infrastructure in place to not only work in a more productive way, but to keep teams aligned. This comes down to having the right platform which connects the right teammates with the right information – whether via their colleagues or apps – to get work done. Without doubt a happier workforce is a more productive workforce – and getting this right will help small businesses thrive in the year ahead.” says Chris Mills, Slack’s Head of Customer Success, EMEA

A call for change

Despite the cost-of-living crisis and inflation, many SMEs go into the New Year confident. 28% said that their financial stability and cashflow had improved in 2023, while 24% said employee engagement and well-being was the most improved area.

The findings also show that a quarter of SMEs are prepared to shift the way they work in order to be successful in 2024, with over a quarter of small business owners calling communication and collaboration within teams vital.

Many SMEs are now calling on staff to experiment with new tech. The objective is to save time and costs and embrace transparent and collaborative communication. When it comes to communication, internal communications were identified as the most important employee skill for SMEs going into next year, followed by teamwork and external communication.

Another challenge to many UK small businesses is the increased energy and operational costs, followed by recruitment and talent retention and supply chain disruptions.

Meanwhile, 80% of SME owners believe small businesses are crucial to the UK economy.

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