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UK employees waste 28 days a year collating, printing and signing documents

Employees call on businesses to step up sustainability measures as they return to the office, finds Adobe

LONDON, UK – 8th September, 2022 – Research released today from Adobe has found that many large UK businesses are failing to make simple changes to their ways of working which could positively impact sustainability practices and save them money in the process. The survey of 1,500 workers, which examined the beliefs and attitudes of employees at large businesses across the UK, further found that employees are collectively losing more than 28 working days each per year on low-value paperwork such as printing, stapling, physically signing and scanning documents. This rises to 43 days per year in financial services businesses, while those in the public sector performed slightly better at 22 days lost per year.

Productivity is not the only thing affected by paper-based practices, due to office costs also being impacted. On average, employees print 450 pages per week, costing businesses an estimated £490 per person. Younger employees are the worst culprits, printing 650 pages per week – costing their employers £718 per year. Despite a reliance on out-of-date practices, some workplaces have introduced changes to become greener, with 34% of employees saying they've been restricted access to a printer, 31% have restricted access to stationary and a quarter having the workplace stationary cupboard removed altogether, and 10% reported the rationing of paper.

On a positive note, most employees (83%) surveyed said a move to hybrid working has helped improve sustainability practices and over half (57%) said their employers have stepped up sustainability goals to attract new talent, as well as to improve workplace culture (33%). Yet there are some hurdles to overcome, as the survey found a quarter (27%) of respondents said sustainability is not one of their company's top priorities and 21% lack clear instruction from their employers on how they can be more sustainable in their roles. Worryingly, nearly a third (31%) are unclear if their company has a sustainability strategy at all.

Employees also reported that the pandemic played an important role in driving sustainability initiatives in their organisations. Thirty seven percent of respondents said the pandemic was the "decisive factor" in their employers adopting more sustainable strategies, and as a result, 31% have also reconsidered their own sustainability impact.

Louise Watkins, Head of Digital Media Enterprise at Adobe UKI, said: "The move to hybrid working for many people has welcomed a greater focus and move to sustainable ways of working, which is a positive shift for everyone and the environment. However, through our research we can see there are some simple steps around the digitisation of workflows and processes that can help businesses and their employees further their efforts. Not only will this minimise the impact on the environment, but it also can boost productivity and save costs – a win-win for everyone."



To read more about how businesses are reducing their impact on the environment – and calculate your estimated environmental savings by avoiding paper use – please visit Adobe’s new [Sustainability Hub](#).

Notes to editors

About the research

Research conducted by Censuswide of 1,512 knowledge workers in organisations of over 1,000 employees between 29th April 2022 and 10th May 2022. Paper printout savings estimated using [Adobe Document Cloud Resource Calculator](#). Number of working days wasted per year estimated based on average number of minutes per week doing tasks.

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