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Key Elements of a Well-working Computer Environment

Take employee IT experience from good to great!

Let's start with WHY

So why do you care about end-users? What purpose drives all your actions and activities? Have you thought about it?

Have you defined the purpose of end-user IT? Have you written it down?

So, what is it?

Most IT leaders define it something like this:

Our end-user IT aims to provide employees with the best possible digital tools.

But there's a catch.

Most IT leaders I have interviewed about this, and I have interviewed a lot, hadn't thought about the purpose of end-user IT or defined it in advance. When I asked them what it is, they needed time to think about it. It wasn't something that was written down or shared with the team. And further questions revealed that because of that, the actual decisions and actions didn't drive towards this goal.

Don't make that mistake.

Recent Ivanti research revealed that 49% of employees are frustrated by the tech & tools their organization provides. 65% believe they would be more productive if they had better technology at their disposal.

Define and share **the purpose of your end-user IT** with your team.

And another thing. Many use the word 'best' when defining the purpose. It's fine in the context of the purpose, but we'll need to dig deeper to understand what "best" means. Otherwise, "best" tends to mean regardless of costs - and we don't want that, do we?

So, in practice, I like to define the goal as a well-working computer the best an employee can reasonably use, which is easy to maintain, and secure.

The elements of a well-working computer

So, what is a well-working computer?

1. It is correctly sized for the job

It has enough processing power, RAM, and disk space not to slow down when performing day-to-day tasks. And if it is a laptop, the battery is in good condition, not requiring the user to carry a charger all the time.

*Applixure's survey of 1000+ companies' computers found:
45% of 8GB laptops have high memory usage.
This dropped to 4% for laptops with 16GB RAM*

2. It has all the necessary - but only the necessary - software installed

Extra software tends to slow start-up times, make the device less stable, increase the attack surface, require updates and reboots, and increase maintenance, not to mention possible licensing costs. And especially, there shouldn't be unapproved, unbatched, or out-of-support software around.

*The 18 CIS Critical Security Controls / CIS Control 2: Inventory and Control of Software Assets recommends that companies:
"Actively manage (inventory, track, and correct) all software (operating systems and applications) on the network so that only authorized software is installed and can execute, and that unauthorized and unmanaged software is found and prevented from installation or execution."*

3. Both the computer & software environment is well-maintained

It is easier to find and fix problems if there are fewer different combinations. Too many versions of the same software make maintenance and troubleshooting difficult.

The computer should also be secure. Disks encrypted, security software installed and enabled, and they should be used with normal accounts without unnecessary admin rights.

*Applixure's survey of 1000+ companies' computers found:
20% of all devices have disk encryption not enabled &
19% have local admin rights enabled.*

4. It should be used effectively, securely & ecologically

Employees know how to use their PC best for their work at their skill level. Thus, a standard model for all will rarely produce a well-working computer. A technically skilled junior employee would benefit from a better computer, whereas a less experienced senior professional might not.

Employees should not leave their computers on 24/7 unnecessarily: that consumes energy and is not very ecological. In addition, restarting computers on a regular basis ensures that all critical updates are installed – and this keeps computers “clean” for the next use.

And employees should also know good security practices.

Providing the best digital tools does not require the best and most expensive hardware. Many professionals prefer to squeeze a bit more life out of a well-working old PC than to upgrade to a new one earlier, avoiding the extra hassle affecting their productivity.

5. Start building your baseline

To ensure your employees always have well-working computers and software, you need to start monitoring and tracking their performance. We recommend that you choose five things which are important to ensuring a well-working computer. For example, battery degradation or disk encryption not enabled.

Do not try to fix everything at once – that can be overwhelming.

Rather, once you've defined those 5 things, monitor them and take action when issues are detected so you can make sure they are not causing problems in your environment. Once you have those under control, you can add additional items to your baseline.



How well-working are your computers?

A well-working computer gets its job done. Effortlessly. And that defines the best tool. It is lightweight software-wise. Less (unnecessary) software means less strain on the hardware and better performance. It is easier to maintain, and less expensive considering licensing and maintenance. And it is a joy to use.

Do you have well-working computers? Based on our survey of 1000+ companies' computers & software, your computers are probably not working as well as you think. We found:

20% had performance degradation --> end-users experiencing issues

20% had disk encryption not enabled --> increased security risk

12% had end-of-life OS --> maintenance, usage & security issues

Most of these companies thought they had everything under control, and our survey opened their eyes. Are you ready to take a peek to see what you've got?

Applixure can give you a clear picture of the state of your computer & software environment quickly, easily, and inexpensively. Start your free trial today! No credit card needed.

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