

The Application Management Gap

Technology executives reveal that management of web applications is becoming more complex, and that success needs to be measured across multiple dimensions.



Introduction

Quick – think of the first thing that comes to mind:

- *How many web applications do you depend on to get your job done?*
- *Which of your business applications could you live without?*
- *When was the last time IT asked you for your opinion?*

These are simple questions that can prompt complicated answers.

Where an employee works is less important now, but there is an unspoken expectation that IT deliver flawless digital work environments, regardless of location. There is a delicate balancing act that comes with managing a suite of critical web applications for remote and hybrid employees.

Your laptop is now your office. Your applications are your proverbial toolbelt. Without those applications working well, you cannot be productive.

However, the latest Nexthink survey of IT executives reveals that for IT to deliver flawless work experiences to employees, they need to face some real challenges around how they manage web applications.

On behalf of Nexthink, independent market research firm Pulse QA surveyed enterprise technology executives to understand how IT teams manage their employees’ application experience, what problems persist, and how they measure success.

We hope the findings will inspire IT teams to seek practical ways to improve how their web applications are experienced by employees – so that those employees and the business as a whole can thrive.



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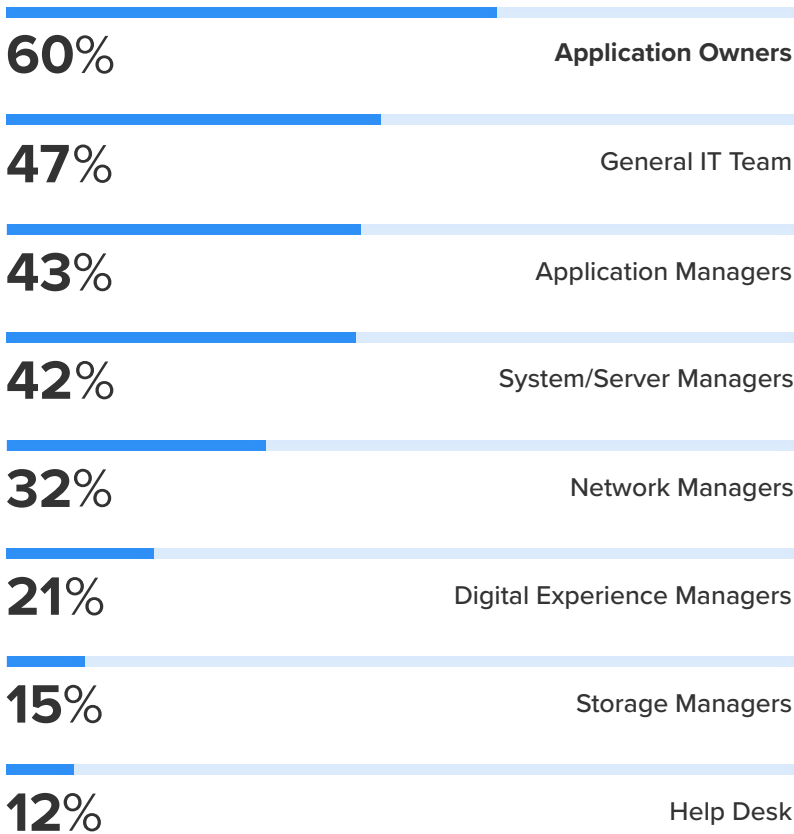
Who Owns Web Applications?

EVERYONE IT SEEMS...



IT no longer owns the complete application portfolio. In fact, the study shows there is not just one internal ownership model for web applications. Different domains within IT, and across the business, are now taking responsibility for the rollout and ongoing management of applications.

Who in your organization is responsible for the rollout, delivery, and experience of your web applications for your end users?



So, the responsibility to deliver success for web applications is not clear-cut. With multiple teams now playing a role and having to work together cross-functionally, the landscape is more complex. This is important to remember as we look at the survey's findings regarding the scope and scale of web application usage and how success is measured.

What is Web Application ‘Success’?

DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK...

Here is the mindset behind most web application performance checks:

“Is the app running?” Check. But does that mean everything is fine? Not so fast.

IT is under mounting pressure to help deliver business value to the organization. The days of merely “keeping the lights on” are gone – IT must now be seen to drive service adoption and usage, to help drive return on investment, and to ensure that employees are satisfied, engaged, and productive.

These multiple goals are reflected in the survey. It found a wide range of success metrics being reported by IT executives.

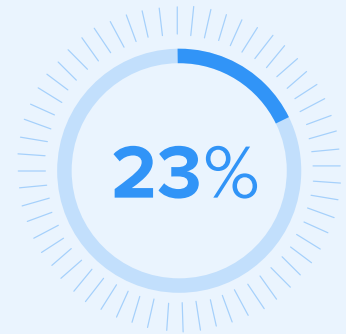
The survey also discovered that IT teams within different industries are measuring success differently.

For example, IT leaders from the software industry said their teams place greater emphasis on an application’s “effectiveness at solving use cases.”

Leaders from the finance & banking sector place relatively more emphasis on “feature usage.” And respondents from the healthcare sector were more interested in “ease of use.”

No matter what the industry, IT now requires visibility across multiple dimensions. In addition to overseeing application performance and reliability, they must also monitor application adoption and how applications are being used to deliver value to the organization. IT needs to gain this visibility at scale across hundreds of applications.

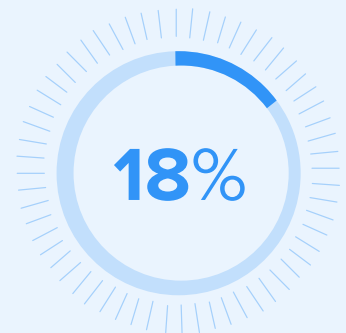
Which 3 of the following metrics are most critical to generating ROI from your web application implementations?



Application Uptime



Adoption Rate

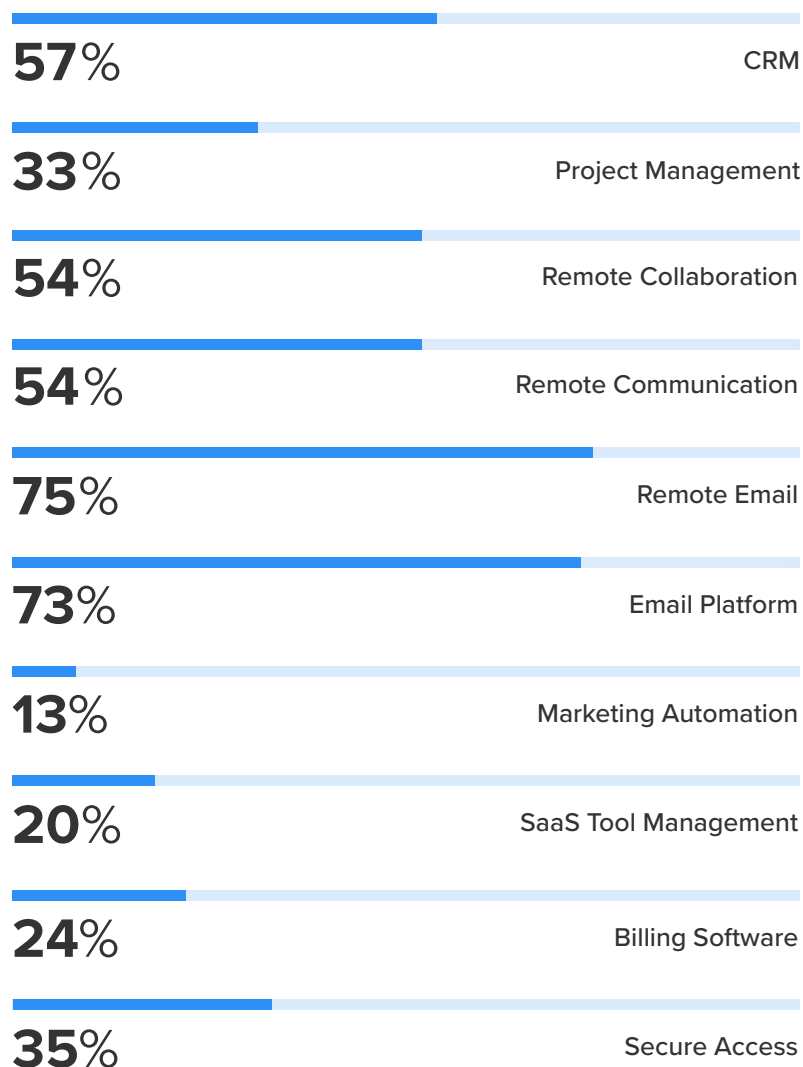


Effectiveness At Solving Use Cases

Many, Many Applications. But Only Half of the Story?

Organizations rely on a wide range of applications to support everything from video conferencing to project management, from CRM to billing software. Obviously, collaboration tools like Teams and Zoom have a higher profile than ever before, but a single employee will typically rely on dozens of different applications each day in their work environment.

What are the 5 web applications that, if they became unavailable or experienced downtime, would most significantly impact your organization's productivity and revenue?

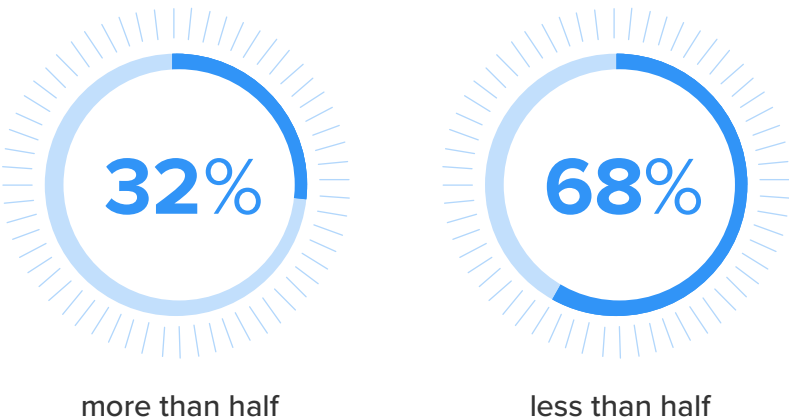


It is clear that the success of web applications is no longer just the concern of the IT department. Every part of the business is now relying on these applications to support employees and to drive departmental value and business impact.

Enterprise leaders must ensure that they can provide visibility of application performance to multiple stakeholders – not just monitor the performance of a small number of key IT-orientated applications.

However, the survey suggests that this might not be happening in practice. The majority of IT executives (68%) revealed they monitor less than half of their web applications for performance and availability.

How many of your commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) web applications are monitored today for performance and availability?



How many of your employee-facing web business applications are comprehensively and actively managed to ensure optimal end user experience?



Visibility of application performance and availability is the starting point for proactive management across the enterprise. If IT are blind to over half their application portfolio, they will have no foundation on which to actively build a quality employee experience around the usage of these applications.

This is borne out in the survey, with the vast majority of IT executives (83%) admitting to actively managing less than half of their employee-facing web applications.

This should be a major concern for IT. They are faced with potentially hundreds of applications within the workplace. Yet they do not have sufficient visibility of these applications to manage them proactively, or to optimize the experience of employees as they use these applications.

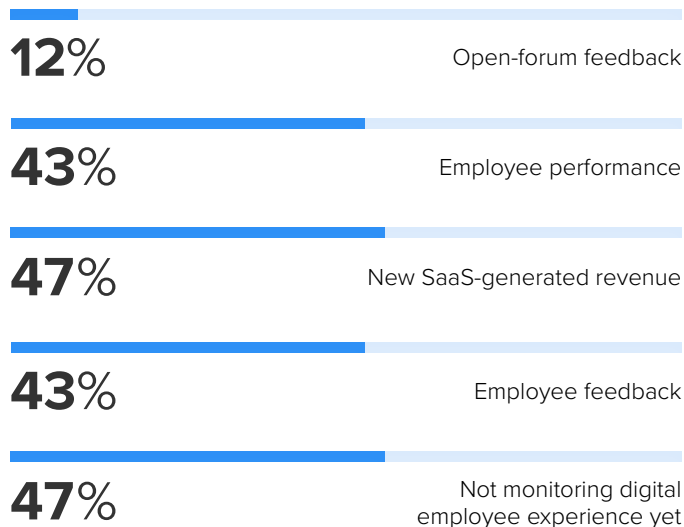
A One-Way Conversation with Employees

With the need for flexible work practices continuing to grow, collecting reliable, continuous employee feedback has become even more important for IT departments. Employee feedback becomes truly valuable when it is collected on an ongoing basis, and when employees are asked for their feedback in a timely and relevant fashion.

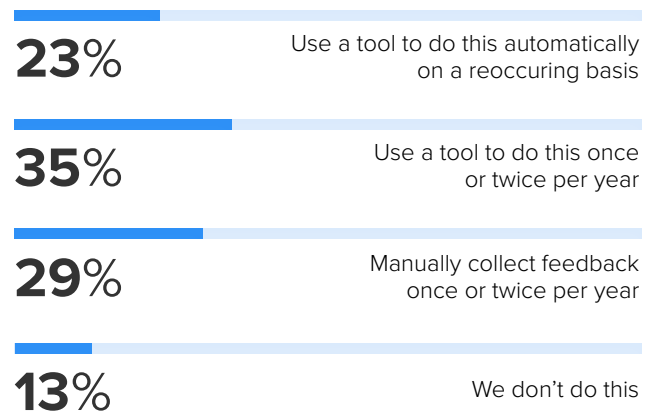
Of the technology executives surveyed who collect employee feedback on their web applications, only a small portion (23%) do so on a recurring, automated basis.

The majority (64%) collect employee feedback only once or twice per year, and roughly a third of these (29%) do this with a manual process. Shockingly, 13% of the leaders polled admit their teams do not collect employee feedback at all!

How does your organization measure employee satisfaction with your web applications?



How would you best describe the method through which your organization collects user feedback and measure their satisfaction with your COTS web applications?



We have seen earlier that IT leaders require visibility of web applications across multiple dimensions, and that application adoption and usage is now considered central across different industry verticals. Without ongoing feedback from employees on their experience with different applications, IT are lacking a key component of the overall story and face a significant challenge to enabling proactive management of web applications across the enterprise.

Summary

Web applications are a vital and growing element of the digital workplace. IT faces some significant challenges in ensuring that these applications continue to drive employee satisfaction, productivity and bottom-line impact.

There are many different stakeholders responsible for ensuring the success of web applications. With multiple teams now playing a role and having to work together cross-functionally, the landscape is more complex.

IT now requires visibility of web applications across multiple dimensions. In addition to overseeing application performance and reliability, they must also monitor application adoption and how applications are being used to deliver value to the organization. IT needs to determine how to gain this visibility at scale across hundreds of applications.

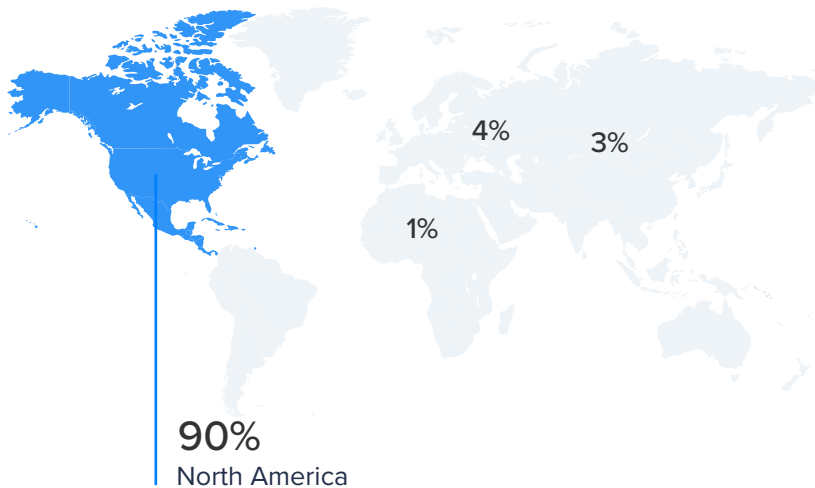
And when we consider the importance of employee sentiment in understanding application adoption, ease of use, and overall employee experience, it is clear many IT organizations have a significant gap in their web management strategy.



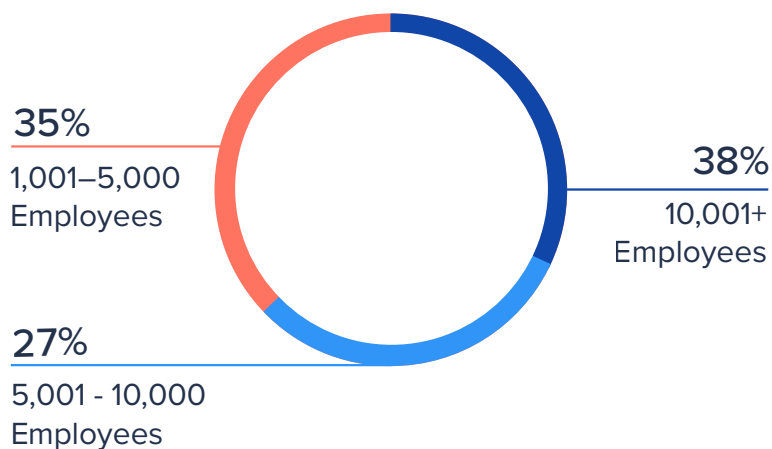
About the Survey

100 leading technology executives were interviewed during February 2021, split in the following ways:

Respondent Region



Respondent Company Size



ABOUT NEXTHINK

Nexthink is the global leader in Digital Employee Experience Management. The company's products allow enterprises to create highly productive digital workplaces for their employees by delivering optimal end-user experiences. Through a unique combination of real-time analytics, automation and employee feedback across all endpoints, Nexthink helps IT teams meet the needs of the modern digital workplace.

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