

Elevate Your Application Experience

Optimizing costs and productivity while speeding application adoption



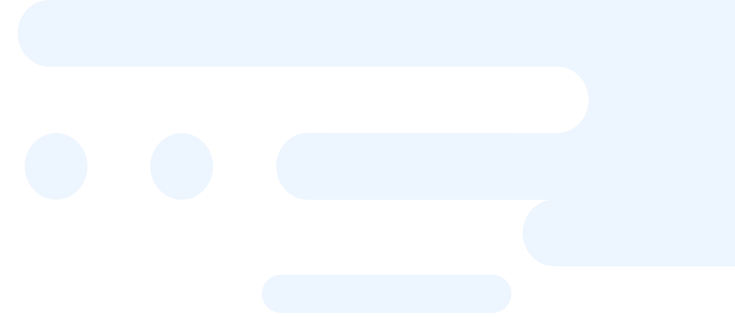
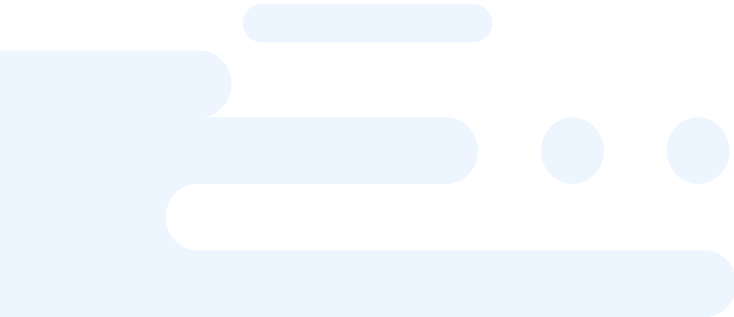


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The Exploding Number of Applications for IT to Manage

With the average organization already using hundreds or thousands of desktop local applications, costs are already high for IT to ensure employee productivity. Now, add the ever-increasing adoption of web and SaaS applications across every business function, and the cost and complexity of managing the IT environment explodes.

Investments in SaaS applications for collaboration, project management, ERP, HCM, video conferencing, email, CRM, identity management, security, and many others, continue to rapidly increase. In many cases this is driven by an effort to reduce the heavy cost associated with managing local applications by migrating to SaaS.

A [survey](#) by Blissfully found the typical 1,000+ person company using an average 288 different SaaS applications across the business.

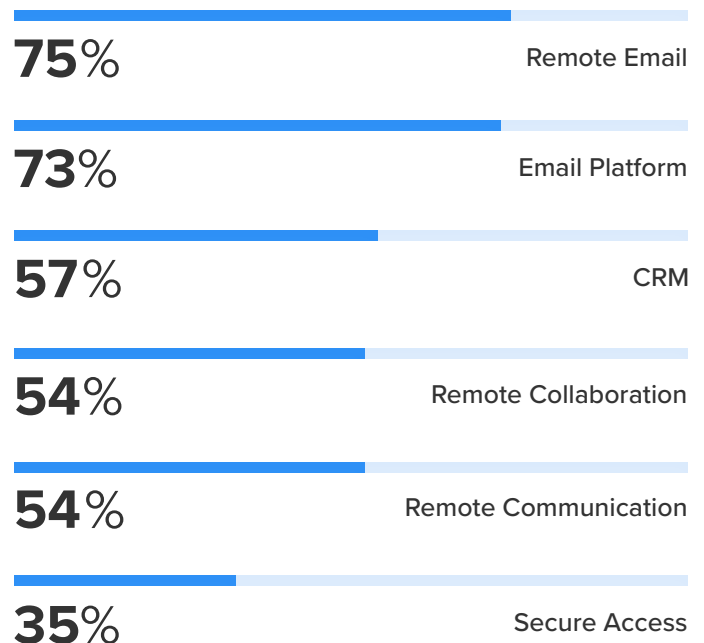
The combination of a global pandemic, the hybrid work environment that directly resulted, and now a global economic slowdown are having a seismic impact on IT departments and the employees they enable and support. Flexible work practices mean that employees rely on technology more than ever to get their jobs done. The massive challenge of managing existing local applications hasn't gone away, requiring IT teams to evolve and embrace a comprehensive approach to support the increasingly hybrid application experience of every employee across **all** applications.

During the pandemic-driven shift to hybrid work, employees saw the increased availability of experience-optimized websites designed to delight their needs as digital consumers – with “buy online, pick up in store” as one example. When making buying decisions, people naturally gravitated toward progressive companies that delivered more intuitive, personalized, and convenient digital experiences.

In short, consumer expectations have been rising significantly. But there is a catch.

These consumers are also your *employees*. And as their expectations for a modern consumer experience have grown, their expectations for the digital workplace have grown as well. Not unreasonably, employees now have the same expectation for an intuitive, personalized, and pleasant digital experience in their work environments. They expect a highly responsive, intuitive, and delightful experience when using all business applications - not just the desktop - but also web and SaaS.

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



Does Application Performance Management (APM) Offer IT Relief?

Digital Transformation and Custom Applications

Digital transformation has been a key driver behind the increasing adoption of SaaS applications as well as continuous application development and delivery models for custom, customer-facing applications. This reality was further cemented during the pandemic when companies scrambled to create new online digital storefronts and services. Application performance, as measured by reliability and responsiveness, is foundational to a positive customer experience. If applications (web sites) are down, or slow, the experience is, at best, frustrating and at worst, leads to abandonment.

APM is Designed for Customer-Facing Custom Applications

APM solutions have adapted with the evolution of DevOps approaches and technologies to meet ever-expanding requirements. Early APM products were designed solely to help developers write better code. They used highly invasive code profiling that significantly degraded performance, so they were never used in production monitoring. In addition, they could not be used with commercial packaged applications, because companies using those applications did not have access to the code either to instrument or modify it.

Today, APM products add run-time instrumentation to the application code server-side (where the custom applications run) to measure how the application is performing on behalf of users. This delivers fine-grained monitoring of the customer experience using custom applications, without requiring any requirement on the end-user. Some APM solutions also add Real User Monitoring (RUM) to measure user interactions with web applications.

So, Why Can't APM Manage All Applications for IT?

As with on-device local packaged applications (executable binaries) before them, SaaS applications are a “black box” that cannot be externally instrumented (there is no access to the code). External monitoring APIs are typically limited to simplistic, global views of the status and availability of a customer's instance of the application itself, with no visibility into the experiences of individual application users. Even if such visibility were available, IT would still be unable to remediate local and SaaS application problems because they do not “own the code.” While it is possible for IT to instrument employee desktops running custom applications using APM tools, they are prohibitively expensive to be used ubiquitously; typically targeted at only the most business-critical customer-facing and revenue-generating applications.

In addition, local, custom applications and SaaS applications used by employees share a need for performance and reliability monitoring. However, they diverge in how that monitoring can be accomplished technically.

And while custom applications can be monitored by APM solutions from the server side, APM has never offered a solution for packaged local applications. The rapid growth of SaaS has resulted in increased complexity and costs for IT to monitor and manage employee experience for all applications.

THE REAL REQUIREMENT

IT clearly needs a single method and approach to cost-effective management and optimization of the employee experience across all types of applications

EVERY EMPLOYEE'S EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Local and SaaS applications are typically licensed on a per-user basis. The cost is justified by the value of the business tasks enabled by the application and associated with the employee's productivity using the application. Therefore, all employees using any given application are equally important - otherwise - why pay for a user license? In turn, experience monitoring and management must cover the application use of all employees – regardless of application type.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE GOES WELL BEYOND JUST APPLICATIONS AND THEIR PERFORMANCE

Although applications are critical to an employee's digital experience, they are far from the only driver of that experience. There are so many potential causes of employee technology issues that have nothing to do with browser interactions with an application server. Local applications suffer from versioning incompatibilities, crashing binaries, invalid permissions, etc. Whether device configurations, hardware drivers, memory and CPU, network connections, VPN, proxy servers, and many more - the list is enormous. All must be collected and analyzed together for IT to have the complete perspective on employee experience needed to rapidly identify and cost-effectively resolve the cause of any issue. For example, while it might initially appear there is an obvious issue with a SaaS application, the true cause might lie with a device configuration, proxy server, desktop configuration, or other non-application-related factors.

When it comes to troubleshooting employee technology issues or monitoring their experience across all applications, APM is simply not the right solution. IT needs a single employee, endpoint, and **ALL** application-centric approach.



Critical Employee Experience Requirements – More Than Just Performance

For IT and application owners who need to optimize their employees' total experience, there are three critical requirements beyond monitoring all application's performance.

Proactive Remediation

To improve employees' experience using local, SaaS, and web applications, you need to be able to proactively remediate issues. For example, you might discover that using a specific browser version over VPN leads to a significant problem. With proactive remediation, you can automatically request all employees using that specific browser / VPN combination to upgrade their browser before they too experience the issue. As a result, the first employee to experience an issue can also be the last one to experience it – significantly reducing tickets and costs.

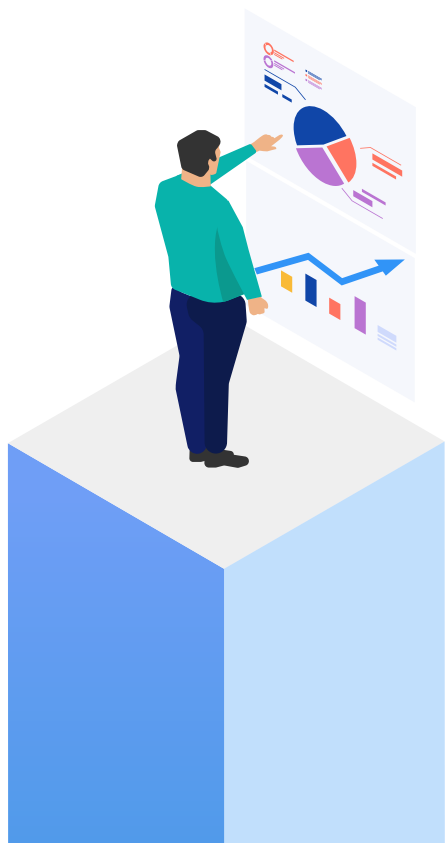
Adoption Monitoring

SaaS applications are a significant investment. The roll-out of a SaaS application is therefore a critical project requiring careful monitoring and management to assure successful adoption and use. These projects need to be informed by data that answers questions such as:

- How do we ensure [usage and licensing](#) are accurately aligned?
- How many employees are using the application regularly?
- Which employees are using or not using it regularly – and why?
- Are there common attributes of employees using it regularly and fully versus those not doing so? For example, location, device, or network connection?

This comprehensive, real-time understanding of application use can reveal which aspects and uses of applications are helping employees get their jobs done and which are being avoided because they are cumbersome or unintuitive. Based on this insight, IT can educate employees about how to best use the application to accomplish frequent and critical tasks, highlight additional training resources available to them, and/or make changes to application configurations, workflows, and policies to improve ease of use.

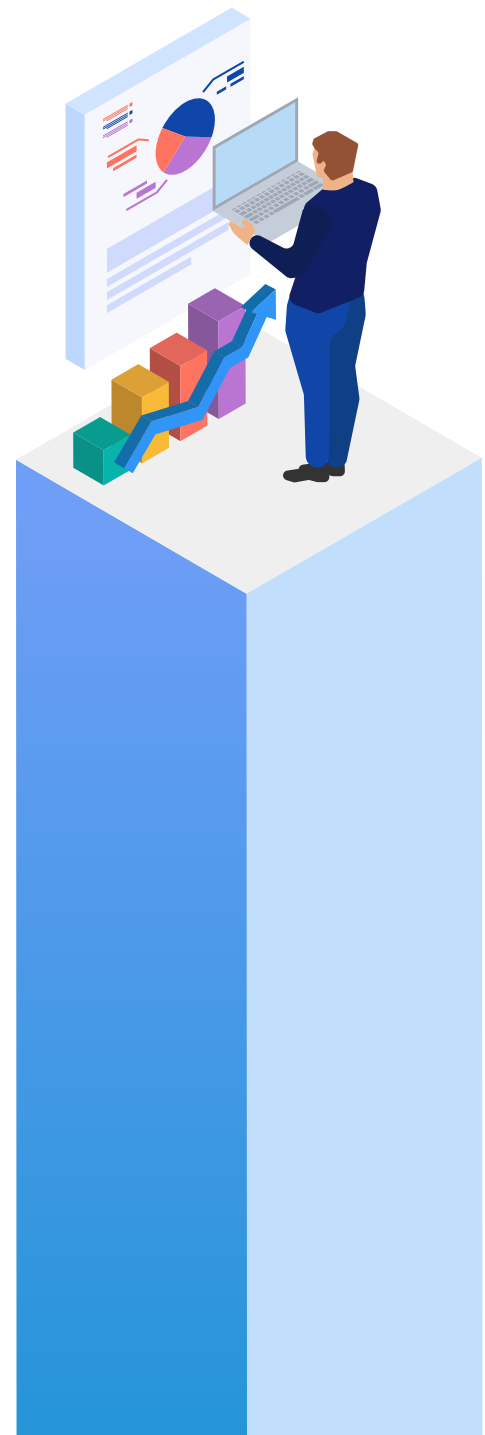
And remember, all these same requirements apply equally to the plethora of existing local applications.



Sentiment Measurement

Employee sentiment is another dimension of experience, resulting from how responsive, available, and easy to use the application is for the employee. Because employees spend considerable time using their applications throughout the day, there is little tolerance for slow or frustrating applications. When employer-provided applications let them down, employees sometimes go rogue, electing to simply adopt their own preferred SaaS application for, say, document sharing or messaging – violating corporate policies and potentially increasing security and compliance risks as well as IT costs.

Continuously measuring employee sentiment helps reveal unreported issues across the full context of an application's reliability, performance, and employee usage. This holistic understanding of the employee experience can be used to drive proactive self-help and awareness campaigns.



It is More Than Just Technology

Organizations are dramatically increasing their investments in SaaS applications to reduce operating costs, achieve new business capabilities, and improve organizational productivity. Application or service owners are typically responsible for full product management of these applications to ensure productivity and ROI across the investment lifecycle: application selection, deployment, ongoing usage, and productivity.

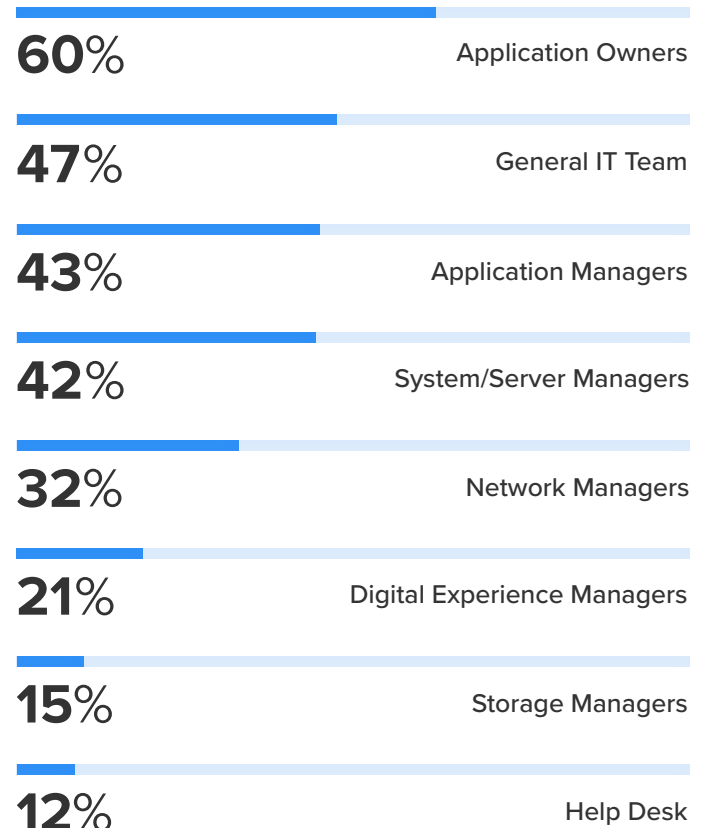
However, unlike custom applications, where the application or service owner is typically tightly aligned to a dedicated DevOps team, most SaaS applications are organizationally managed separately from traditional IT operations teams. And local applications are typically managed by end-user computing teams who are usually aligned closely with IT.

While local applications are being augmented, or even replaced, by SaaS applications, both remain critical to employees getting their work done and are continuously used by all employees. SaaS applications in particular span a wide array of technologies with complex relationships and interactions. As a result, IT and application owners need a comprehensive, shared, and real-time view of all aspects of employee experience with **all** applications: reliability, performance, usage, adoption, and sentiment.

For example, application owners have a huge interest in understanding how SaaS applications are being adopted and increasing that adoption if it is falling short of goals. Migrating to Office365 to reduce ongoing license and support costs is critical for application owners. They need to demonstrate the achievement of the projected business case for the application. At the same time, IT is responsible for monitoring and managing the reliability and performance of all applications supporting the workforce.

Consider a situation where the adoption and use of an application has not met targets. It might be due to a fundamental issue with the application itself, or it might simply be due to how workflows were customized for the organization's use. In the latter case, the application owner would need to understand how users are experiencing the application workflow via metrics on usage, sentiment, and performance. Armed with this insight, the owner could experiment with new workflows and continually improve the use of the application via real-time feedback and adoption monitoring.

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



Unlocking the True Potential of All Your Applications

With web and SaaS applications joining local applications as a vital and growing element of the digital workplace, organizations need to invest in a monitoring solution that continually improves the performance, adoption, and usability of all applications.

To achieve this, focus on measuring each employee's experience across four key dimensions:

- **Reliability** – all aspects of each application and associated technologies are available to all employees who need them when they need them
- **Performance** – the critical measure for web and SaaS applications is that the performance of websites, key pages, and individual transactional steps across the application meets expectations for responsiveness. For local applications, critical performance metrics include application start time, freezes, crashes, resource issues, etc.
- **Usage** – the relevant features and workflows of the application, provide a natural and intuitive experience for employees. Usage visibility identifies areas of cost savings for every application regardless of type
- **Sentiment** – employees are satisfied with their productivity using applications, their use is issue free, and their experience a pleasant one

Only Nexthink delivers the clarity IT needs across these four key dimensions to cost-effectively unlock the true potential of all applications and free your employees and business to thrive in an environment of constant change, hybrid work, and digital transformation.





Contact us today to see what Nexthink Application Experience can do for you.

ABOUT NEXTHINK APPLICATION EXPERIENCE

Nexthink Application Experience delivers comprehensive visibility into employee adoption of – and experience with – all applications. Real-time monitoring ensures employee-centric proactive management of experience. AI-driven diagnostics and automation enhance troubleshooting and ensure employee productivity – preventing many issues before employees experience them. Complete full context understanding of sentiment accelerates user adoption. Nexthink empowers you to simultaneously increase satisfaction and productivity, while tightly aligning licensing costs with actual usage needs.

Want to find out more?