



NEWS RELEASE

Cisco Survey Indicates Adding a Virtual Assistant May Be the Key to Happiness at Work

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SAN JOSE, CA -- (Marketwired) -- 11/14/17 -- A Cisco (NASDAQ: CSCO) study shows that people around the world are ready to work alongside virtual teammates. In fact, adding a virtual teammate just might make workers happier.

We surveyed workers in 10 countries.¹ We wanted to know how people feel about advanced technologies in the workplace. This comes on the heels of our recent announcement of Cisco Spark™ Assistant, the world's first enterprise-ready voice assistant for meetings; read more about that [here](#).

Key themes and findings

The 52-question survey produced lots of intriguing data points. For instance, 94 percent said they dread meetings, yet 45 percent of innovators said they spend more than half the day in meetings. Clearly, anything we can do to make meetings more enjoyable will be a game changer.

Four primary themes predominated. They are:

- **We are optimistic.** Most people think that technology advances will lead to more jobs, *not* mass unemployment. Plus they think that machines will free us from boring tasks and give us more time to focus on the bigger picture.

Supporting findings:

- Almost all workers (95 percent) said they believe AI can improve work tasks such as scheduling meetings, taking notes, or typing documents and emails.
 - Six in 10 workers expressed optimism, saying they believe technology advances will lead to more jobs.
 - When asked how a virtual assistant would benefit their team, more than half said it would increase productivity (57 percent) and focus (51 percent).
- **We are OK with machines being part of the team.** Bots as co-workers? Bring it on. Across the

board, people indicated they are OK with machines being part of the team.

Supporting findings:

- Six in 10 people said they want AI to do drudge work such as scheduling meetings and taking notes. Perhaps surprisingly, 39 percent of people who said they don't trust AI indicated they would gladly hand over their least favorite tasks to AI.
 - More than half the people we surveyed said they have a human assistant at work; 82 percent of them said they would be more productive if they also had a virtual assistant. When asked how satisfied they were at work, half the people with human assistants said they were very satisfied. Only 32 percent of those with no human assistants said they were very satisfied. This suggests that giving workers virtual assistants could boost job satisfaction and even happiness.
 - We described a scenario in which a bot would attend a meeting, discern the topics discussed, and offer its analysis. Nine in 10 people expressed interest in or excitement about the idea. Very few said they were "terrified" or not interested.
 - We asked how they would feel if "the next time you walk into your office, your computer recognizes you, knows that you have a call starting soon, asks you: 'Would you like me to join you to your call now?' and then takes the action (assuming you say yes)." Fewer than 1 in 10 described it as "creepy" or "disturbing." The rest chose terms such as "productive," "cool," "smart," "savvy," or "awesome."
 - Eight in 10 people said they want bots to take an active role in conference calls by learning to tell the difference between a barking dog and the presenter and then removing noise.
 - Sixty-two percent of all workers expect talking to virtual assistants will eventually fully replace typing; 3 in 10 expect we'll toss the keyboards in the next five years.
- **Personality, age, and even interest in the iPhone X and Star Trek fandom influence AI opinions.** Factors that influence how you feel about having machines as teammates include your age, your Meyers-Briggs type, and even how much you love Captain Kirk.

Supporting findings:

- Seven in 10 people who said they are trusting and enjoy new things (extroverts) thought advanced technology will create more jobs than it eliminates. Fifty-four percent of those who said they are cautious and crave routine (introverts) thought AI would result in mass unemployment.
 - Nearly 10 percent of introverts think AI is "disturbing" versus just 5 percent of extroverts.
 - Star Trek and Star Wars fans are more excited about advanced technologies than nonfans; 78 percent of fans said they are "super excited" about the possibility AI could help them perform better at work, compared with 68 percent of nonfans.
 - Desire for a "virtual assistant" was highest among those who said they would buy the iPhone X as soon as it went on sale (67 percent vs. 35 percent those who are in no rush to buy the new iPhone X).
- **Data privacy matters.** Despite the excitement, people have concerns.

Supporting findings:

- Sixty-five percent of survey respondents said security was a key concern for them.
- People who said they would not use Google Assistant or Alexa at work cited data privacy and security concerns as the top two reasons (42 percent of responders).

"Like the people who responded to this survey, I am optimistic about the prospects that AI will make our work lives better," said Rowan Trollope, SVP and GM, Applications Group, Cisco. "Working in an AI-enhanced company means we'll have more opportunity to succeed, and more flexibility to do the work

we find rewarding."

Additional Resources

- Read Rowan Trollope's blog post, [Team AI is Not Personal AI](#).
- Read Rowan Trollope's blog post, [The Five Levels of Meeting AI](#).
- Read more about the survey in this [white paper](#).

¹ We surveyed 2,270 white-collar workers in the United States, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, India, and China.

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