

Planting Digital Seeds for the Future

A UK & IRELAND PERSPECTIVE

How will the ICT decisions that businesses relied on during the pandemic serve them in the long term? And how can they now act with hindsight to drive future sustainability?



Enterprise response to the pandemic in the UK and Ireland:

81% of respondents in the UK & Ireland invested part of their ICT budget on expedient purchases and fixes that would serve them no long-term strategic value.

43% brought forward strategic ICT plans - including collaborative and cloud technology - to deal with the pandemic.

31% quickly pivoted their business and overhauled their ICT as a result of the pandemic.

13% of respondents made more effective use of technology that they already owned.



For 69% the pandemic has accelerated their long-term ICT strategy so they're in a better position than before

The pandemic delivered significant challenges to businesses

Whilst **44%** experienced greater technology efficiencies, they now require people-based processes to catch up

40% required greater employee training/education to meet the new operational demands

32% say finding time to take stock to review and understand where the business is and the direction they need to take next is a challenge



Businesses in the UK & Ireland rated the following concerns in order of importance:

1

Addressing the scarcity of talent and digital dexterity

2

Enabling multiple and competing business outcomes

3

Redesigning work for a hybrid model



A lesson in every crisis

The pandemic gave some businesses the chance to gain valuable lessons for the future



54% said that there are huge efficiency gains to be had compared to the processes they had in place before the pandemic

This finding was most prevalent in retail (80%), HR (75%), government/public sector (63%) and telecoms (60%) sectors and for larger enterprises of 1001-5000 employees (70%)



52% said that there was a need for greater collaboration from the business to make better ICT decisions

This rose to 61% of small companies and for certain business sectors; healthcare (80%), accounting (67%) and construction (67%)



38% of respondents discovered they'd left themselves open to potential security vulnerabilities by poor remote working practices

This was more prominent in IT (46%) and manufacturing (44%) and in medium size companies (50%)



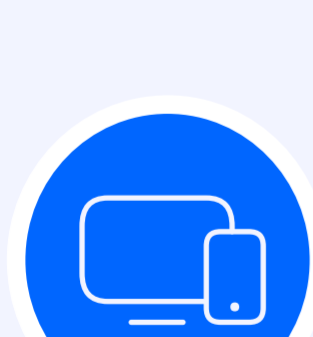
15% found they'd made poor ICT decisions prior to the pandemic

Yet, this finding was more distinguishable in retail (41%), healthcare (40%), engineering (36%) and automotive (29%)



30% found they were not utilising the tools they already had access to

This finding increased in sectors such as retail (60%), government and public sector (50%), accounting (44%) and hospitality (43%)



20% realized that you can't rely on old processes and new technology; the two need to change in tandem

Certain sectors rated this higher such as government and public sector (63%), hospitality (43%), banking (29%) and IT (29%)

Next Steps

For businesses in the recovery phase of the pandemic, the strategy should be less about using technology to fight fires and much more about planting 'digital' seeds for the future.

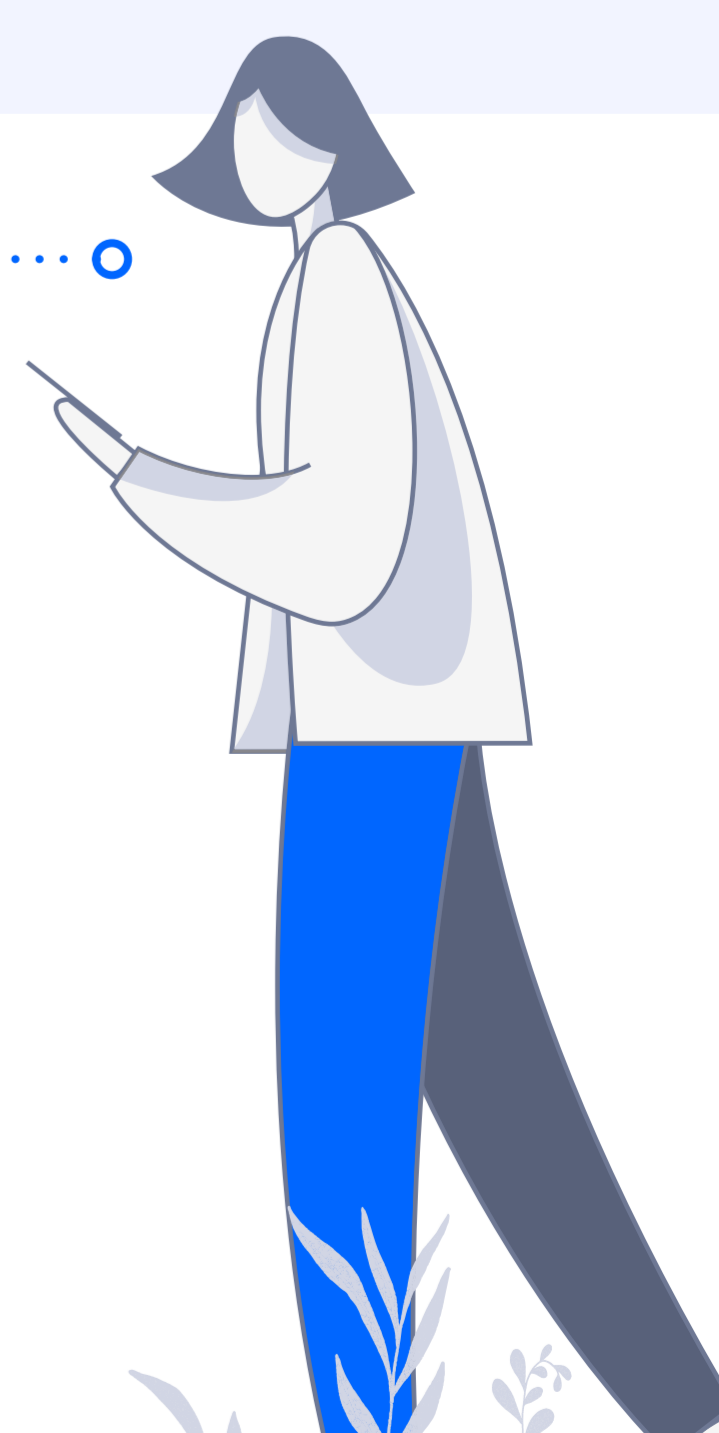
For example:

Consider the application of technology holistically across the whole organization.

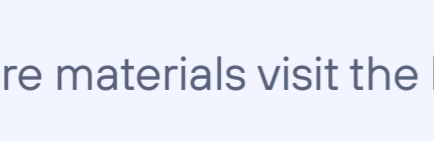
Identify where your skills shortages exist by creating an inventory of the skills that your employees already have and highlight any shortfalls.

Make sure that the right people are using the right technology, but also consider that there may be a reluctance from employees to embrace new technology.

View training as an ongoing initiative to make sure that the benefits of a digital solution are ingrained among teams and business divisions.



For more materials visit the [Planting Digital Seeds website](#)



*This research of 210 IT professionals in the UK and Ireland, aged eighteen and over, was conducted by Perspectus Global on behalf of Telefónica Tech during December 2021. The survey respondents work in a range of ICT job roles across small, medium and large enterprises and MNCs, with 55% being of Management to Board level, and all respondents declared that they are either the sole decision maker (63%) or have influence over the IT decision making (37%) for their business.

**The percentage figures in this report are presented as rounded numbers rather than with decimals. For example, 19.3% would be recorded as 19%.

*** When referring to size of business we define a micro business as ten employees or fewer, an SME as 11-100 employees, a mid-sized business as 101-1000 employees, a large business as 1001-5000 and a large enterprise as 5000 or more employees.