

A recent survey by Dynamic Markets, commissioned by Google, has asked over 3,500 employees in European SMEs* about their working practices, both now and how they see these changing in the future.

The importance of teamwork

89% of SME employees work as part of a team, and collectively 61% of people feel teamwork shortens the time it takes to complete projects and tasks. In fact, the time it takes to complete a project is shortened by an average of 40%.

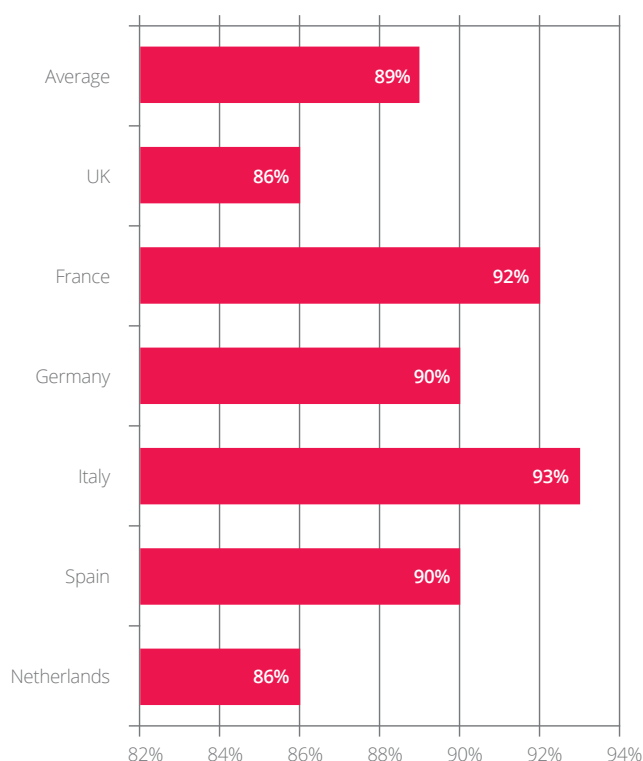
Among those who work as part of a team 76% find some element of teamwork frustrating - the main issues are:

- Getting everyone in one place at the same time to discuss things together - 40%
- Others being slow in answering questions - 29%
- Remote workers being slow to respond/ difficult to contact - 18%

The research also shows that more people in the larger SMEs with 10+ employees find teamwork frustrating, and the same is true for those whose organisations are spread across multiple sites and / or international offices;

more of the younger employees (aged 34 or below) also feel this way.

Percentage of people who work in a team



Question asked: In your experience, by what percentage do you feel teamwork shortens the time it takes to complete projects and tasks?

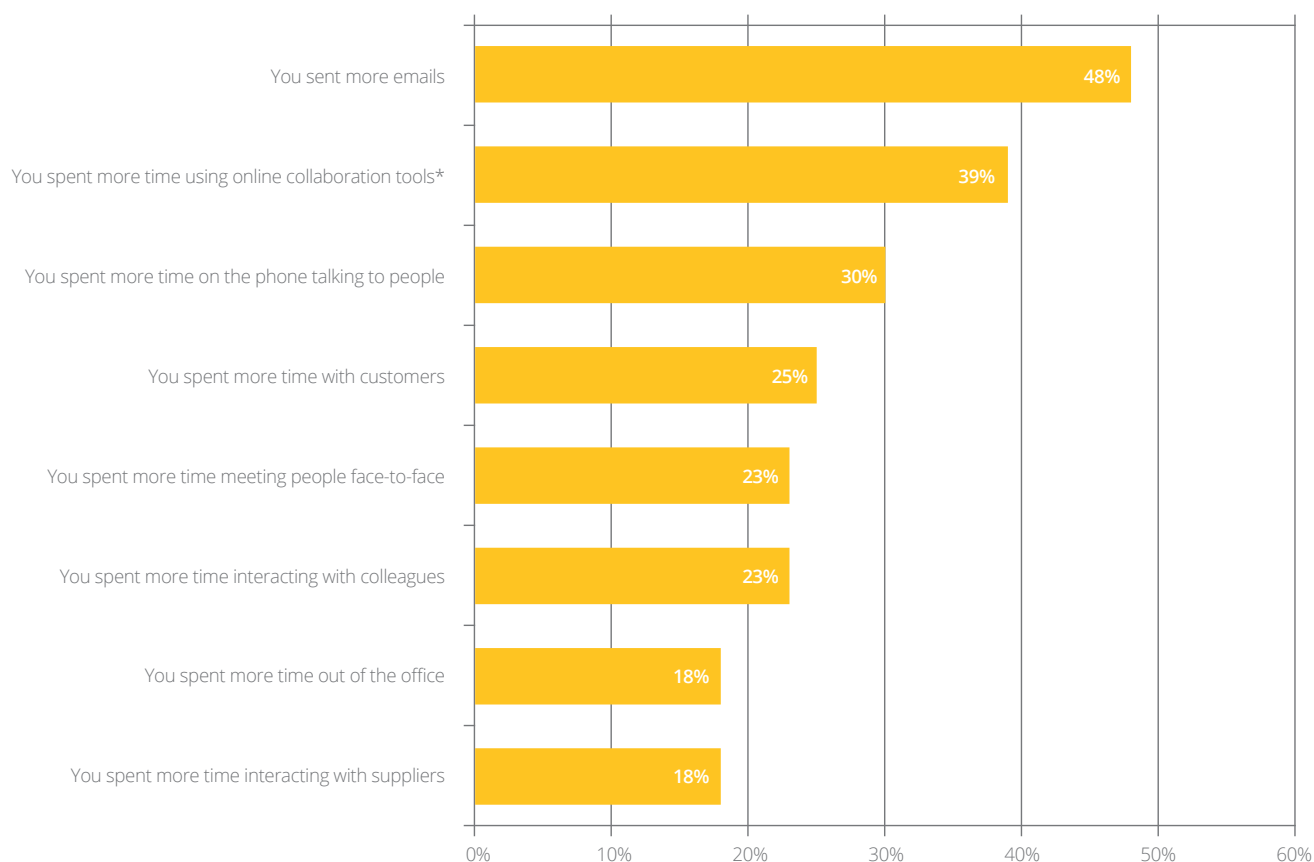
	Average	UK	France	Germany	Italy	Spain	Netherlands
Percentage (%)	39.80%	38.40%	37.10%	30.10%	51.40%	43.50%	28.60%

The impact of a tough economy?

While 71% admitted working life was harder in 2012 compared to 2011, the majority (55%) say that team dynamics changed for the better, with teamwork strengthening and enabling projects and tasks to be completed faster.

Interaction more generally also increased in response to the pressures of 2012. Nearly a half (48%) of those surveyed increased their use of email, the phone (30%) and face-to-face meetings (23%) from 2011 to 2012. Collaborative technology, such as online video chat, instant messaging and shared online documents also started to play a more central role with a third of businesses (39%) using online collaborative tools more often.

Question asked: Compared to 2011, in which of the following ways did your own working practices change during 2012?



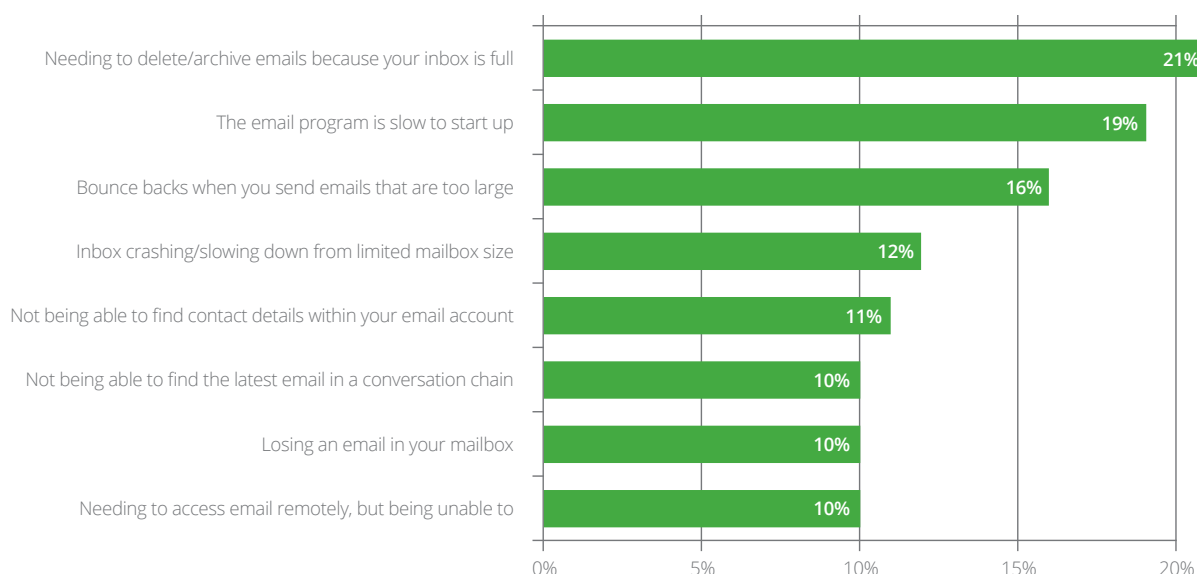
Productivity challenges

The way people interact and the tools they have to perform common tasks can have a significant impact on productivity:

Email

The use of email has increased in 2012 and looks set to continue in 2013. Yet 54% of SMB employees encounter problems on a weekly basis when using email for work. Indeed, 36% of employees across Europe encounter mailbox 'size' issues of one sort or another, the most common being the need to delete / archive emails because their inbox is full (21%); indeed, this is the most common weekly email problem overall.

Question asked: When you are using email for work, which of the following happens on a weekly basis?



Getting people together

68% of SMB employees have to arrange face-to-face meetings on average more than once a week. This can be a time consuming process taking, on average, 1 hour 20 minutes to check everyone's availability and propose a date/time. Workers in larger SMEs with 20+ employees tend to arrange meetings more often.

Getting information together

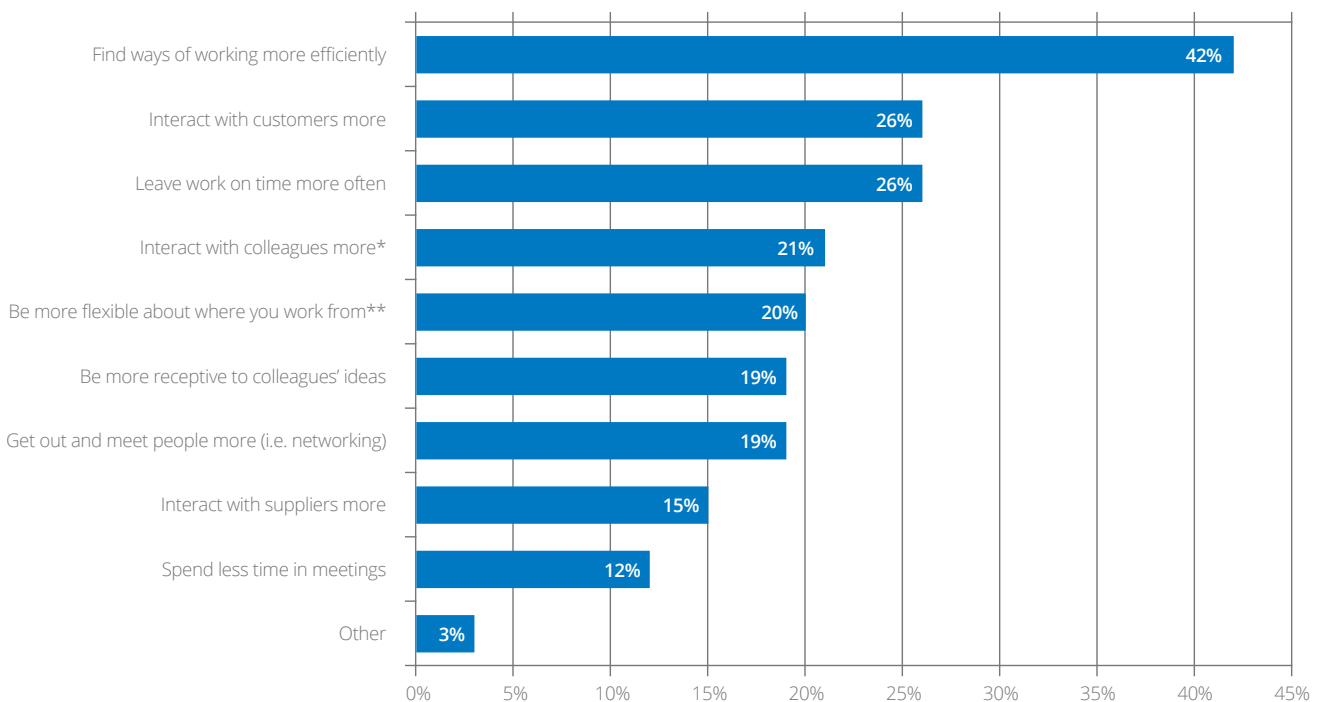
One common task team members have to perform is to collate feedback from various people into one master document and a significant 1 in 2 (55%) have to do this an average of 7 times per month (i.e. almost twice a week). Also, more people working in SMBs with multiple sites and / or international offices have to perform this task.

Looking to 2013

80% of SME employees have made some sort of work-related New Year's resolution for 2013. Their top five workplace resolutions for 2013 are:

- Find ways of working more efficiently - 42%
- Interact with customers more - 26%
- Leave work on time more often - 26%
- Interact with colleagues more - 21%
- Be more flexible about where you work from (e.g. home, other offices etc) - 20%

Question asked: For you personally, which of the following will be New Year's resolutions at work in 2013?



Resolutions aside, three-quarters of employees think that their working lives will change even further in 2013, predicting that:

- They will have more meetings with customers, suppliers and internal meetings (43%)
- Working at home or working on the move will become more common (36%)
- Longer working hours will become more frequent (33%)

Now more than ever employees need an IT solution that helps them collaborate effectively and productively, whether they're at their desks or off-site.

* i.e. through email, phone, other technologies, face-to-face meetings

** e.g. home, other offices, etc

Source: Dynamic Markets Report: Teamwork under pressure in European SMEs, January 2013