How productive are Jersey businesses?

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Recently we asked businesses in Jersey a range of questions relating to productivity. We wanted to understand what productivity means to organisations here so we can help to improve individual businesses and overall productivity in Jersey.

We received 349 responses, which were then whittled down to 217 cleaned and quality checked data sets, from a range of established and new businesses from 15 different sectors. Our respondents included a mix of owner/founders, CEOs, senior managers, supervisors and team leaders.

Why does productivity matter?

For us, productivity improvement is about growing a business and the people within it, removing waste and freeing up time for more rewarding and

impactful work. It maximises business gains both directly, through improved efficiency and increased quality of product and service, and indirectly. Productivity gives people a sense of purpose, enables businesses to retain and develop the best talent and creates an empowering culture which encourages people to make a difference.

Productivity matters because if a business isn't evolving, it is effectively moving backwards. It Is at risk of being overtaken by those that are more agile, adapting and embracing new innovations. By focusing on productivity, businesses enable their people to do more valuable and meaningful work, thereby retaining engaged and motivated talent.

One day per week wasted

Our research showed that 70% of our respondents said that up to 25% of their working day was unproductive. That equates to more than one day per week. Despite this, 79% perceive their employees to be engaged and motivated, with four in five saying that employees are actively encouraged to challenge and change processes to improve efficiency.

While senior leaders believe employees are encouraged to make change, then why are improvement projects not being undertaken? People tend to know where the waste is within their work, but there seems to be a lack of shared understanding when it comes to where the empowerment to initiate change lies.

Intent and actions are not always aligned

93% of respondents agreed with the statement "customers are at the heart of everything we do". Yet almost half (47%) said that they rarely or never gather customer feedback.

In a similar vein, 77% told us that they focused on innovation, but less than half (49%) said that they thought their organisation was optimising opportunities to increase productivity. There seems to be a disconnect between intent and action - perhaps in part because so much time during the working week is spent on unproductive tasks.

How can businesses improve productivity?

When discussing barriers to productivity, the most common answer given was

time. Other barriers included lack of skills and resource, company culture, lack of automation and lack of investment. So, how can these be overcome?

Automation can improve efficiency and free up time for employees to spend doing more valuable work. Just 25% of respondents told us that their processes were fully automated, suggesting that businesses are yet to realise the opportunities automation offers. That being said, organisations should steer clear of thinking automation or expensive software is the panacea to productive working - a poor process remains a poor process whether automated or not.

When asking for productivity top tips, the highest recommendation in our research was that communication is key. Senior leaders must create open channels for feedback from employees and customers, and must act upon feedback. Crucially, if leaders want the responsibility for change to be shared among employees, the empowerment should be properly communicated and reinforced amongst their teams.

Our Business Improvement Programme can help businesses to increase productivity by identifying and eliminating waste. For more information on our productivity research, click here.