Unlocking the power of productivity for Island businesses

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Our chief executive Paul Murphy recently went through the results of this year's Productivity Survey with **Emily Moore** of the Jersey Evening Post and outlined opportunities to drive further growth.



How much time of your working day do you feel is truly productive?

It may sound like a strange question, particularly as most people probably feel as though they never stop, as task after task and email after email demand their attention.

And yet, according to the results of this year's Jersey Business Productivity Survey, which were revealed at the organisation's annual conference last week, almost a quarter of the average day is unproductive, a figure which gives both cause for concern and optimism.

"For the past five years, the responses have shown that 24% of the working day is unproductive," said Jersey Business chief executive Paul Murphy. "If you

consider that most people work around eight hours a day, that means that two hours per person per day are spent unproductively.

“While people’s views of productivity may be subjective, even if you take half that number and say that one hour per person per day is unproductive, with a workforce of 64,680 people working an average of 253 days a year, that means we are losing 16,364,040 hours a year, which shows just how much potential there is to increase productivity.”

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250 businesses contributed to the survey

Delving further into the findings of the survey, which was completed by nearly 250 businesses, Paul said that organisations had identified five key barriers to productivity.

“Competing priorities was the biggest challenge, as people felt they had too much to do,” he said. “This was followed by recruitment and retention of team members, lack of time, culture and process inefficiency. These factors combined show that people feel under pressure because there is more coming at them than there has perhaps even been, both in terms of work and life.

“The most important barrier for me, though, is culture, as the wrong culture can be a huge barrier to improving productivity, and most other barriers are often linked to culture. If you take process inefficiency, for example, this often comes down to ownership, understanding and transparency of processes and making sure that organisations find ways in which processes can be developed, something which revolves around people.”

Saying that the results highlighted an opportunity to “improve our days”, Paul added that this would only be achieved if the barriers were overcome.

“A lot of respondents said that they were wasting time because of disjointed processes and unnecessary extra work,” he said. “While it is difficult to determine exactly what is meant by that, it does show that they are not focused on the task in hand.”



Drivers of success

Despite the barriers, there were some signs of progress within the results, with 47% of respondents saying that they felt as though they were “optimising productivity opportunities”, up from 39% in 2025.

“That increase is very positive, although it still leaves us with a challenge, as 53% of people are not doing this,” he said. “That shows there is still great potential to change and improve, something which survey respondents said could be achieved through new technology, process and people/culture.

Technology should never be the driver, although the survey also showed that 60% of businesses had implemented artificial intelligence in 2026, compared with 43% the year before.”

On the topic of skills, the survey showed that the top three areas in which businesses were investing were industry specifics, leadership and technology, with the focus on leadership training particularly pleasing from Paul’s perspective.

Another area on which businesses were quizzed was strategy, with 19% saying their organisation had a clear productivity strategy in place, and 51% saying they had an “informal approach” to the topic.

“While it is encouraging to see 70% of businesses having some sort of strategy, the goal would be to see more businesses adopting formal strategies,” said Paul. “Critically, though, to develop a strategy, businesses need access to the right tools, and only 42% of respondents said they had that access, so there is a challenge for Jersey Business to provide that support to organisations.”



Interestingly, said Paul, there were three key benefits reported by businesses which had improved their productivity, with 39% of respondents saying that they had gained more time as a result of the changes.

“This just shows that if you overcome the ‘lack of time’ barrier and invest, you will gain more time in the long run,” said Paul. “Meanwhile, 32% said that their customer service had improved, probably because productivity gains had allowed them to serve customers more quickly and efficiently, while 31% said they had seen a reduction of costs. This is really important, as we hear a lot about inflation and rising input costs, so showing that deploying productivity reduces operational costs is a key message.”

Analysing these findings and turning them into actionable points for organisations, Paul said the keys were to set priorities and recruit and retain the right people, while creating a culture and employee value proposition that supported staff, and helped workers to manage their time.

‘‘It is incumbent on all of us – government, industries and businesses – to fund, drive and deliver productivity gains. If we do that, we will see more people saving money and time, becoming more resilient and managing to trade through the difficult conditions which I imagine will continue for some time."

Paul Murphy

CEO Jersey Business



The results were delivered to a packed room of business leaders at the Jersey Business conference in June 2026

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