Employee Choice Programs

Surveying the prevalence and importance
of offering employees technology choice

Survey Results

- Who's Offering Choice
- Mac or PC
- Mobile Device of Choice
- Generation Gap in Technology Choice
- Choice Programs Matter in Business
- The Future of Choice Programs

Choice Program Considerations

- What IT Should Consider When Implementing a Choice Program

Final Takeaways

- Freedom to be Productive

2016 Employee Choice Program Survey

The Jamf Employee Choice Survey uncovers trends associated with employee technology choice programs in the workplace. A choice program is when an organization gives its employees the option to choose among brands of computer hardware and/or mobile devices for work. A device choice program can include employer-owned devices, bring your own device (BYOD), or both.

This survey—conducted in February 2016—is based on the responses of 480 executives, managers, and IT professionals from small, medium, and large organizations around the world.

Executive Summary

Regardless of the size of the organization, companies are increasingly offering employees choice in their technology devices. Driven by ease of use, Apple devices lead the way as the preferred devices.

When choosing a device, age is a factor. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 54 overwhelmingly choose Apple, while people who are 55+ feel more comfortable with Windows.

Choice programs are more than a passing fad, with most survey participants saying technology choice programs should become standard in business.

Who's Offering Choice?

The majority of companies offer employees a computer and/or mobile device choice, illustrating that choice programs are becoming commonplace in the modern business landscape.

61% Offer choice

39% Don't offer choice
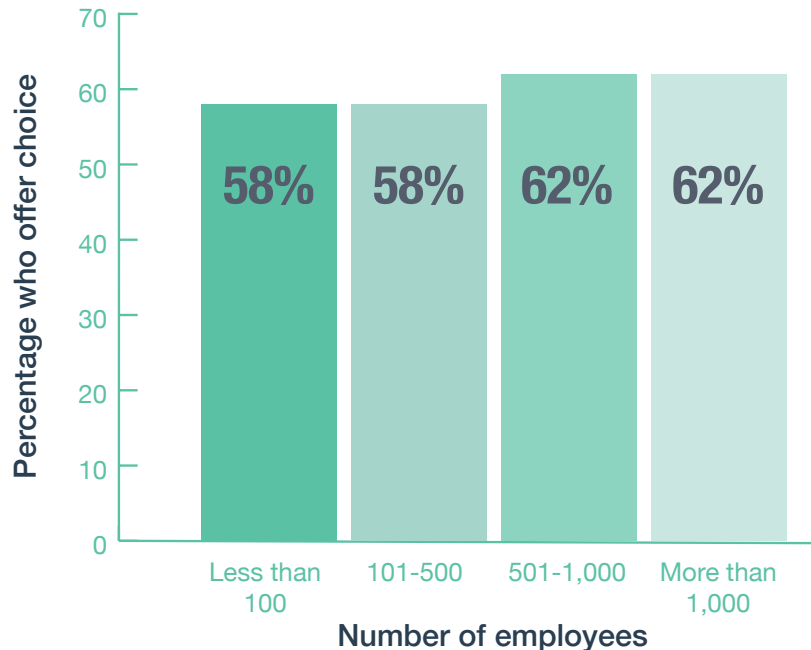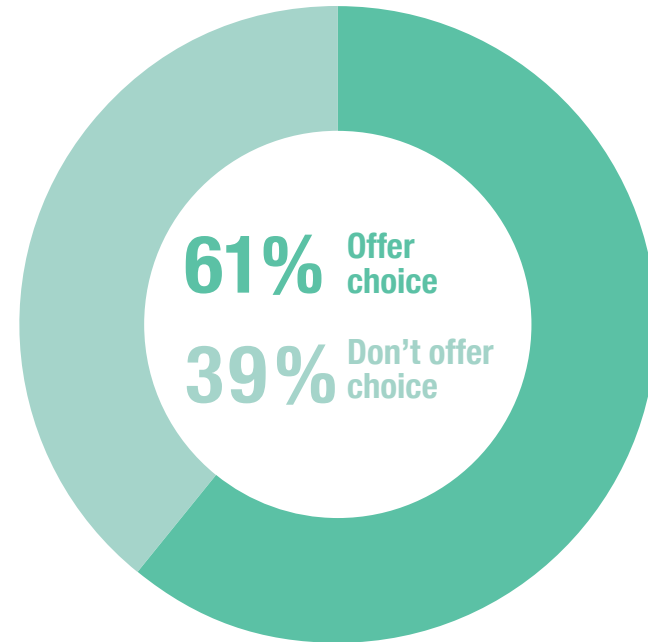
Companies of All Sizes Offer Choice

Regardless of size, organizations around the world are providing employees with access to the computer and/or mobile device that they feel most comfortable with and that helps them be more productive at work.

58% — Less than 100
58% — 101-500
62% — 501-1,000
62% — More than 1,000

Percentage who offer choice

Number of employees

Mac or PC?

Three out of four employees choose Mac over their Windows counterpart, confirming reports that Apple adoption is increasing in the enterprise.

Mac 75%

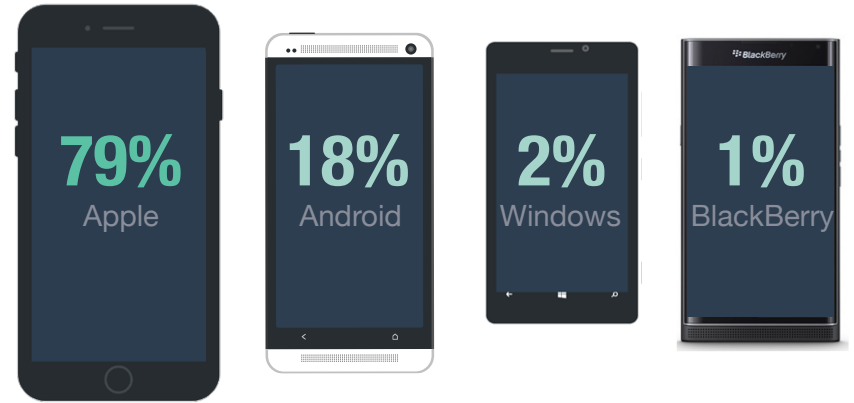**Windows 25%**
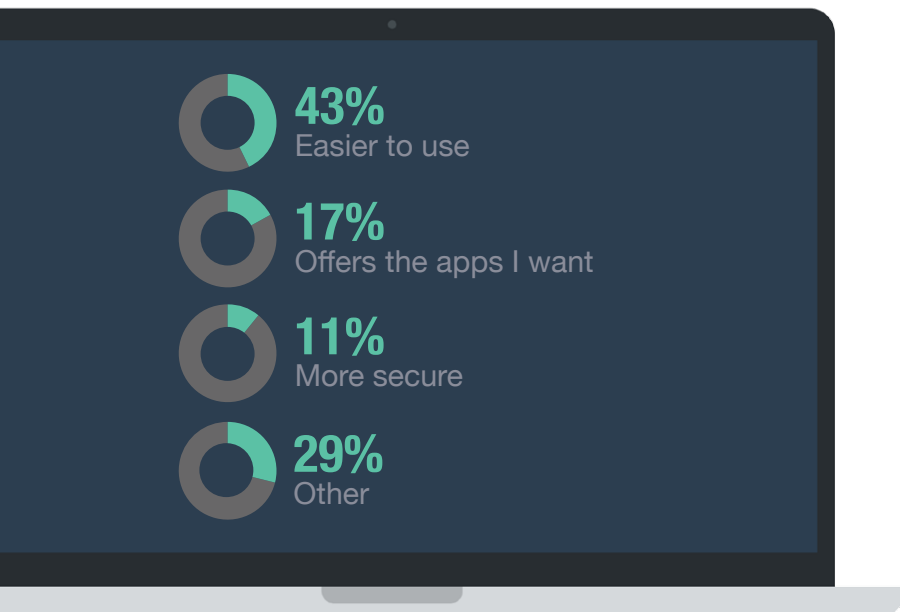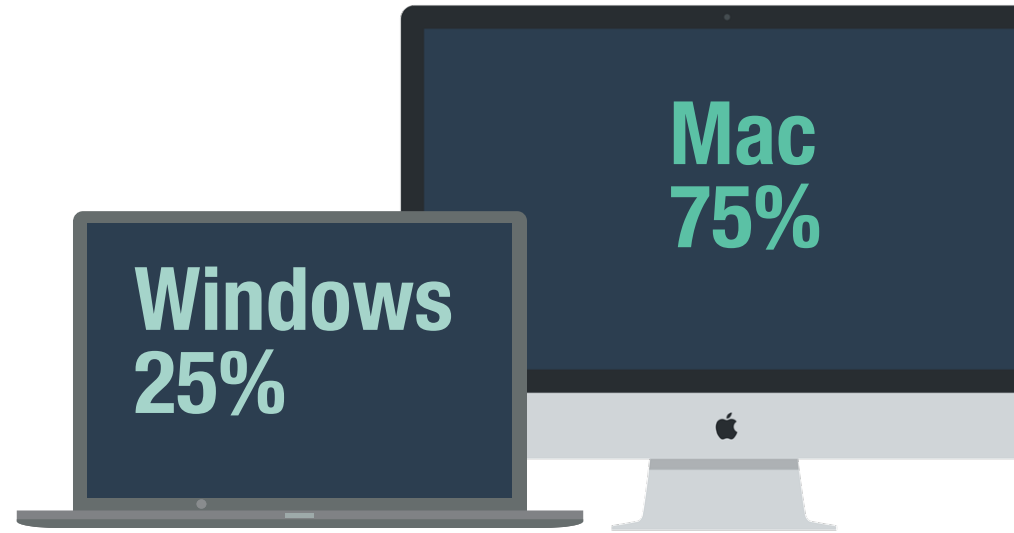
Why do Employees Choose Mac?

Consistent with the 2015 Jamf Apple Trends Survey, employees choose Mac because it is easier to use, offers the applications they want and need to be productive, and is the more secure computer for protecting personal and professional data.

"Other" was designated by 29 percent of respondents, which included reasons such as reliability, cool factor, and all of the above.

43%
Easier to use

17%
Offers the apps I want

11%
More secure

29%
Other

Read survey

Mobile Device of Choice

Employees want the same user-friendly experience at work that they experience at home, which is why iOS is the mobile operating system of choice for employees. With 4 out of 5 employees choosing Apple, employers would be remiss not to offer the iOS platform.

79%
Apple

18%
Android

2%
Windows

1%
BlackBerry

41%
Easier to use

27%
Offers the apps I want

16%
More secure

16%
Other

Why do Employees Choose iOS?

Similar to Mac and again consistent with the 2015 Jamf Apple Trends Survey, employees choose iOS because it is easier to use, has the apps they want and need, and is more secure compared to other platforms.
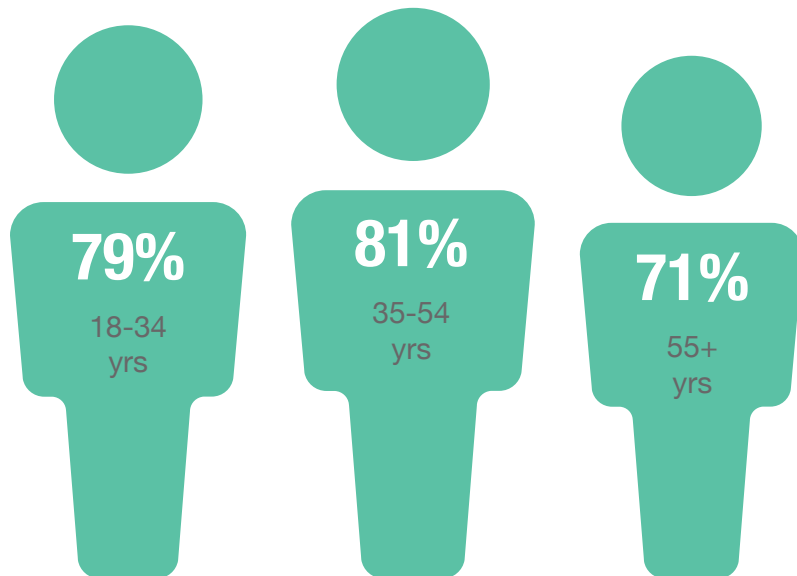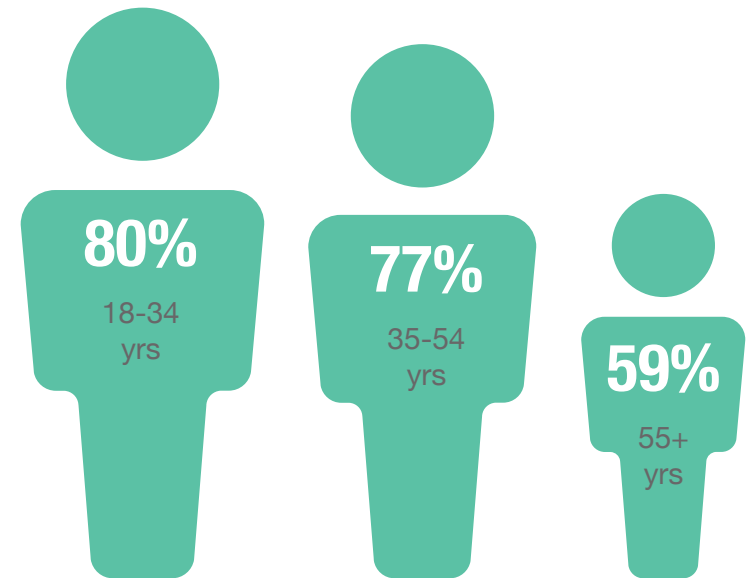
Read survey
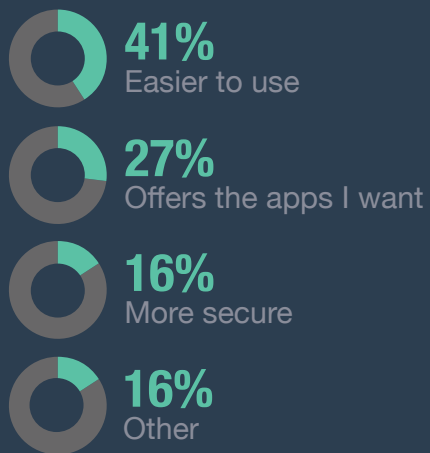
Generation Gap: Who's Choosing Mac?

Survey results show that employees who are 55+ are more comfortable with Windows compared to 18-54 year-olds, who prefer Mac computers.

This points to continued growth of Mac in business, as the share of Millennials increases in the workforce.

80%
18-34 yrs

77%
35-54 yrs

59%
55+ yrs

Generation Gap: Who's Choosing iOS?

Age played less of a factor when employees were given a mobile device choice. iOS is so intuitive that it is preferred by employees of all ages.

79%
18-34 yrs

81%
35-54 yrs

71%
55+ yrs

Do Choice Programs Matter in Business?

The vast majority of employees believe choice programs are important to the well being of an organization.

Yes 73%
No 27%
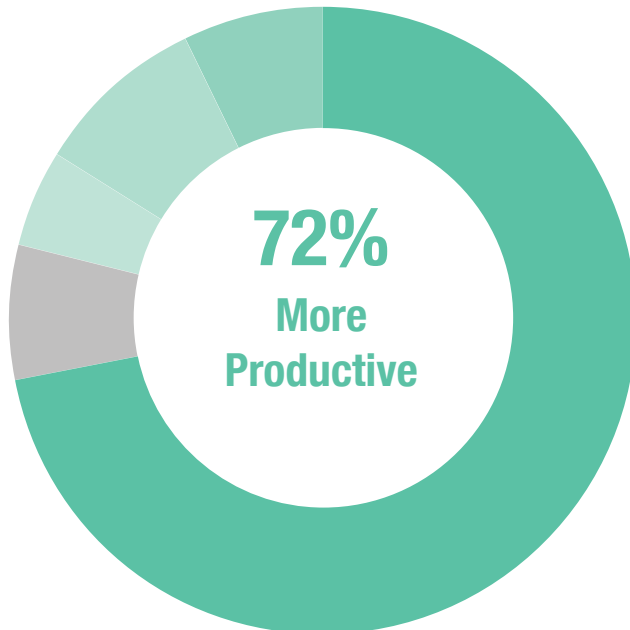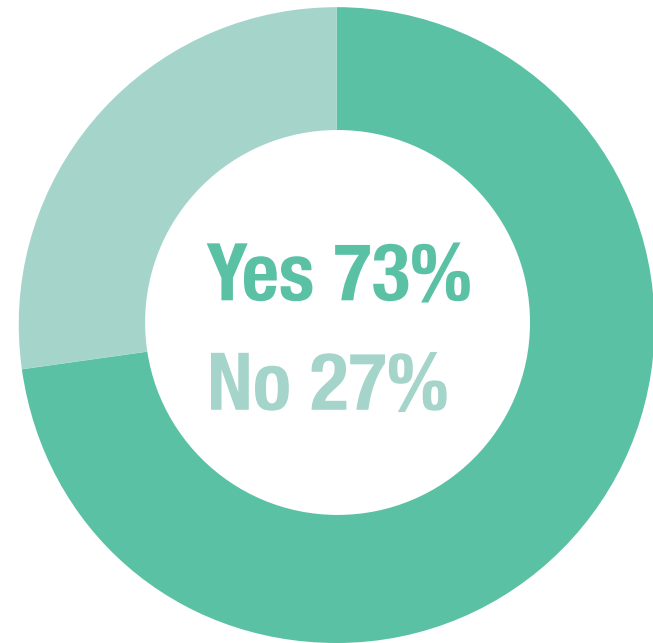
Value of Choice

72%
More Productive

When employees are given the technology they want, employers are rewarded with appreciative employees who are more productive and generate creative work. With employees happy and productive, organizations can more easily retain top talent and achieve company goals.
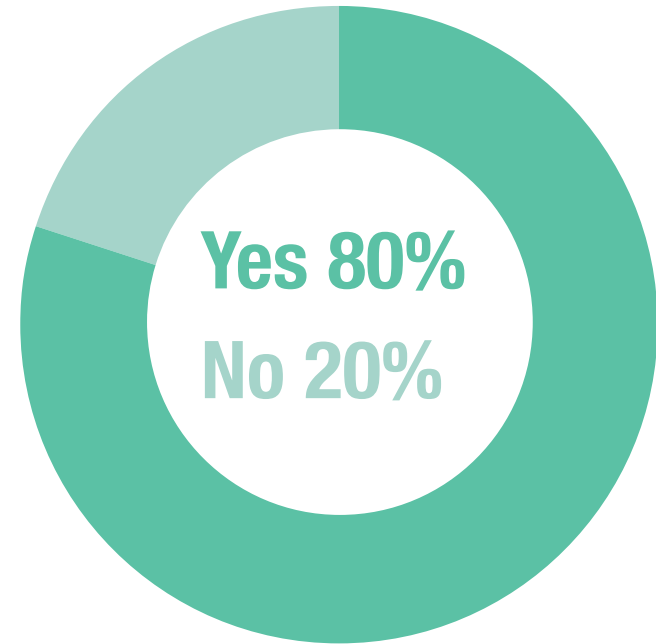
7%
Employer values my opinion

7%
Don't value choice programs

5%
I am more creative

9%
Other

The Future of Choice Programs

Eighty percent of survey participants believe offering employees a choice in technology is more than just a fad and should become standard operating procedure in business.

Yes 80%
No 20%

70%
Give employees the right to choose

30%
Give employees any computer/device

What Employees Lacking Choice Say

Nearly 3 out of every 4 employees who are not currently being offered device choice say their organization should adapt with the changing technology culture and give them the device that best empowers them to do their job.

This finding points to anticipated growth in choice programs in the years ahead.

Considerations for Employee Choice Programs

As the data indicates, employee choice programs are no longer niche initiatives in Silicon Valley or creative agencies. Executives, IT, and employees alike are influencing business practices, as they push to use the devices that they are most comfortable with for work. Case in point, IBM famously implemented a Mac@IBM program in 2015, giving staff the choice between a PC or Mac for their work device.

But, choice is not simply a Mac versus PC debate. Today's workforce is mobile, and now more than ever before, mobility platforms require a seat at the table when contemplating which devices will be supported. With all this to consider, organizations are left wondering where to begin and what needs to be thought through when offering employees device choice.

Mac@IBM Program

Implementing a choice program

To help in your journey from consideration to implementation, we spoke to employee choice program experts to determine what businesses and their IT departments need to know prior to offering an employee choice program.

1 App Compatibility

2 Support Model

3 Hardware Cost

4 Support & User Training

5 Security Standards

App Compatibility

Whether you're supporting Mac, iOS, Windows, or Android, there are certain software or apps that work better—or may only work—on a specific platform. While major software providers offer cross-platform versions, that may not be the case with all programs.

It will be difficult to offer employee choice if IT and/or employees don't have a full understanding of which apps or tools are available on each platform. With apps essential to day-to-day productivity, organizations cannot afford to realize after the fact that some of their employees are not able to do their work. To avoid this situation, you should compile a list of the resources that employees depend on most and ensure that if a resource is not available on one particular platform, that there is at least a comparable app available on the other.

Once implementation of choice is imminent, you should set up a testing environment for devices that will be supported to ensure all tools work as expected. It is also recommended that employees are informed of which productivity resources and apps

will be available to them on a particular device. This is a proactive way to eliminate the 8:00 a.m., Monday morning knock on your door saying, "I can't do my job with this device."
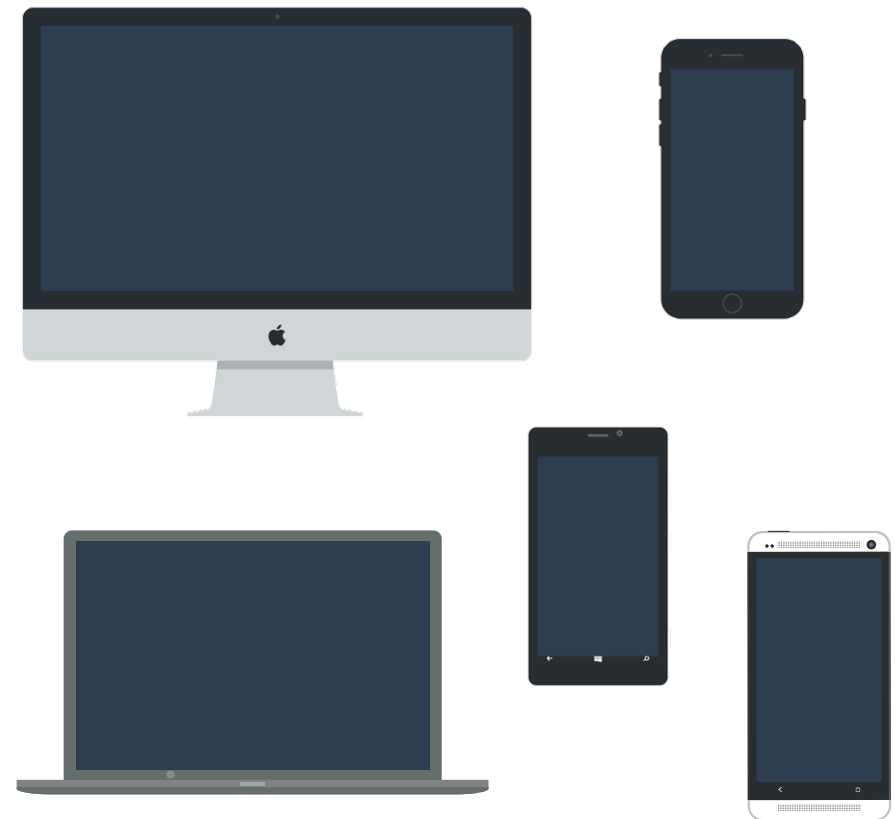
Support Model

Regardless of the technology offered, you and your IT staff need to select management platforms to deploy, secure, and inventory devices. With management tools in place, devices are enrolled directly into management, ensuring they are configured in a consistent manner and no one is circumventing IT's policies. Ideally, best-of-breed management solutions are implemented. For example, the Jamf Pro is a leading solution for Mac and iOS platforms, while System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) with InTune is optimal for Windows and Android. This approach maximizes tool value and enhances the user experience.

If infrastructure is an issue, you may consider hosting your management platform in the cloud. Cloud solutions assist with getting files and assets to employees that are spread across the country or world. An organization and their management solution would handle the inventory, deployment, and security of the devices in their environment, and the cloud services would address all of the infrastructure—saving you the time and cost of hosting your management solution.

Hardware Cost

IBM has once and for all debunked the myth that Apple is too expensive to support and offer employees. As part of their Mac@IBM program, IBM is seeing tremendous return on every Mac deployed, with IBM's Fletcher Previn even going so far as to say, "Every Mac that we buy is making and saving money." Apple CFO, Luca Maestri, added that IBM is reporting a savings of $270 for every Mac that is selected over a traditional PC. These savings

are the result of reduced support costs and better residual value. IBM reported that only 5 percent of Mac users call the help desk for assistance, compared to 40 percent of PC users. This demonstrates that while upfront costs are certainly a consideration, it is the total cost of ownership and employee satisfaction that are the true yardsticks for offering choice.

Support & User Training

It is no secret that IT is often schooled on and more comfortable with one platform over another. Therefore, the key to choice program success is ensuring your IT team is both up to speed and comfortable deploying and supporting the platforms your organization will offer. When bringing in a management solution, ensure your provider is able to train your IT staff. A timeline should be established and followed to get everyone trained and skilled in the needed areas as quickly as possible.

The same principle applies to employees. Most individuals are more comfortable with one platform over another. When given the choice, they may choose to stick with what they know, but some will try something they think is better. To ensure a smooth transition, consider a short period where employees essentially have access to both their old and new work devices. This will ensure they gain confidence with their new device and eliminate downtime while they overcome the learning curve. For new device training, empower users with access to device information and a forum for knowledge sharing such as a company Wiki site.

Security Standards

The best way to secure your devices and data is to ensure your computers and mobile devices are up to date with the latest software. Leaving software updates solely in the hands of users can cause vulnerabilities. While some employees fully grasp how to update their device and do it immediately, others may not, opening their device and data up to malicious attacks.

Be open with your device management provider. Together, you can put systems in place that ensure devices and software remain current, and that your organization remains both safe and in compliance.

Freedom to be Productive

With the employee choice programs firmly knocking at the door of organizations around the world, now is the time for executive decision makers and IT leaders to address the overwhelming demand for the right to choose one's technology.

Whether perceived as easier to use, offers the apps they need, or is the device one is most comfortable with, employees are productive, creative, and happy when they have the device of their choosing. Organizations will in turn see a greater amount of quality work and earn the admiration of their staff.

By taking the appropriate steps to implement a choice program successfully, your business can be at the forefront of this trend and lead the way business is done.

Start a choice program today