QUADRANT STRATEGIES

Google Workspace vs. O365
Impact on Business

Picking a productivity software suite for a company is no longer as simple a choice as it used to be. Microsoft Office, once the only option, is now competing against several alternatives, most prominently Google Workspace*. Microsoft and Google each make a number of claims about how its product can improve the way a company operates.

Google commissioned Quadrant Strategies to examine and compare the effects of both softwares on the companies that use them—and not by lining up the feature sets of the two suites—by listening to what users say in companies using one of the suites compared to what users say in companies using the other suite; and doing that in a quantitative survey that would give us statistical confidence in any differences we found.

To make sure we were getting an apples-to-apples comparison, we carefully balanced the two groups of respondents: those using only Microsoft Office 365, and those using Google Workspace. The goal was to make sure the groups had the same profile across all characteristics that could influence the results—same company size profile, same industry vertical profile, same country profile, same age profile of the respondents, same ratio of managers to non-managers, and same job function and department within their companies. We wanted to filter out every confounding factor, in order to leave the only explanation for any differences as the productivity suites. A detailed look at the profiles of the survey respondents is contained in Appendix A.
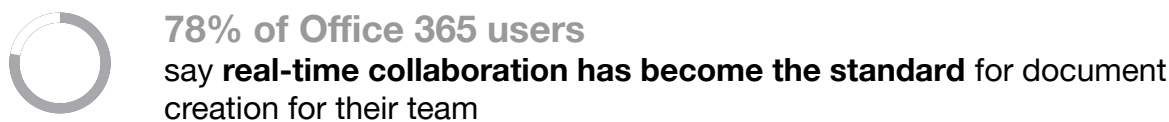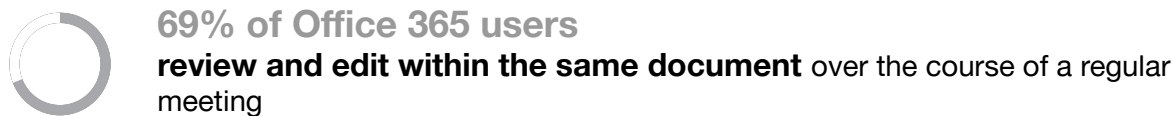
We then asked the respondents the same set of questions, and compared the results. The questions covered their sense of how well they individually, their teams, and their companies, do in the following areas:

(1) **Collaboration**

(2) **Communication**

(3) **Satisfaction with IT Departments**

(4) **Mobility**

(5) **Access to Information**

(6) **Culture**

(7) **The Bottom Line**

The results are set forth in the following report.

*In 2020, Google rebranded their workplace collaboration tool, renaming it from G Suite to Google Workspace. When this study was conducted, Google Workspace was called G Suite. Microsoft is in the process of rebranding as well, changing their name from Office 365 to Microsoft 365. We will use the names Google Workspace and Office 365 (O365) throughout this report.

"*Cracking the Code on Collaboration*," the feature story of the Harvard Business Review's December 2019 edition, highlights issues with feedback, delegation, and openness as consistent roadblocks to fruitful collaboration in today's companies. To improve collaboration, it is important to make progress on these subsidiary challenges as well. **Our study found that while both suites have a positive impact in the area of collaboration, Google Workspace consistently drove bigger impacts, and sometimes by a sizable margin.** The cumulative impact of these Google Workspace advantages is a company culture and workstyle in which people work together more, and better.

84% of Google Workspace users **review and edit within the same document** over the course of a regular meeting

69% of Office 365 users **review and edit within the same document** over the course of a regular meeting

92% of Google Workspace users say **real-time collaboration has become the standard** for document creation for their team

78% of Office 365 users say **real-time collaboration has become the standard** for document creation for their team

95% of Google Workspace users are able to **easily work with multiple people in the same document**

84% of Office 365 users are able to **easily work with multiple people in the same document**

Feedback is Easier with Google Workspace
It is easy to get people on my team to provide feedback on documents, Showing % Strongly agree
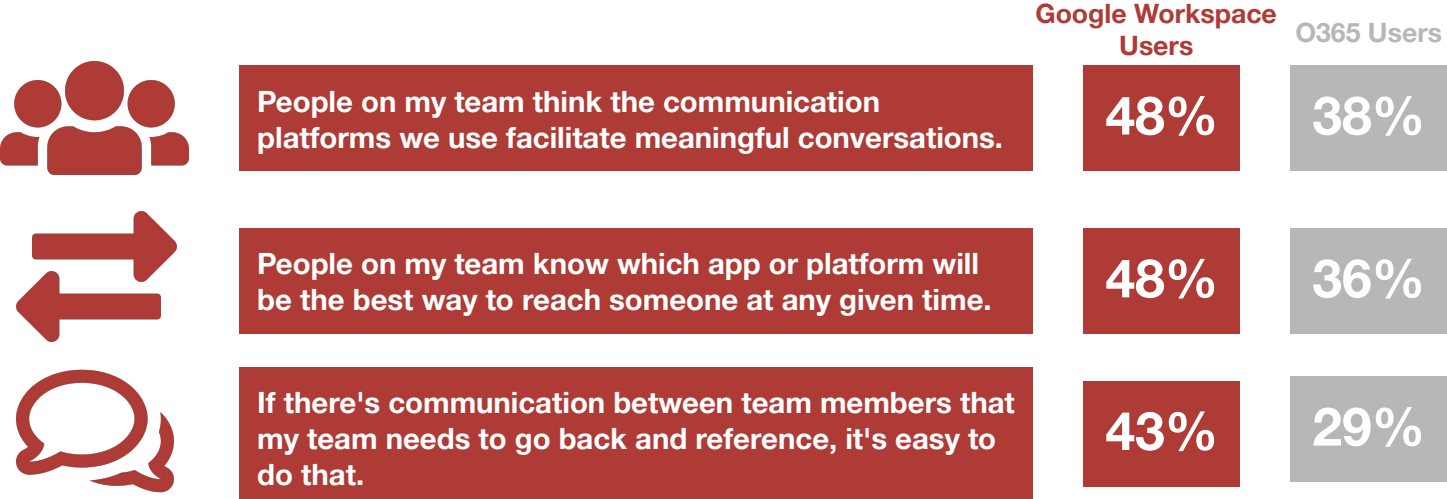
■ Google Workspace   ■ O365

50%

38%

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that the remote workforce has exploded in the past 10 years, with the number of non-self-employed people who work from home at least half-time increasing by 91%. The days of walking down the hall to get a colleague's input are long gone. Feedback and documents need to flow quickly and easily between colleagues. Meetings need to connect team-members seamlessly across cities and continents.

Much of the burden of facilitating communication in today's dynamic digital workspace falls on the productivity suite. **In this critical area of company productivity, Google Workspace outpaced Office 365 by large margins. For Google Workspace users, communication was more seamless; it was easier to keep people on the same page; and even the nature of their communications was richer.**

Communication on Google Workspace vs. Office O365
*Showing % Strongly agree with each statement below*

	Google Workspace Users	O365 Users
People on my team think the communication platforms we use facilitate meaningful conversations.	48%	38%
People on my team know which app or platform will be the best way to reach someone at any given time.	48%	36%
If there's communication between team members that my team needs to go back and reference, it's easy to do that.	43%	29%

The Use of Video Conferencing in the Office

Use of Video
When you're having a call on a video conferencing platform with other people just from your team, how many people use video on average? Showing % Video for "Most," or "Nearly everyone"
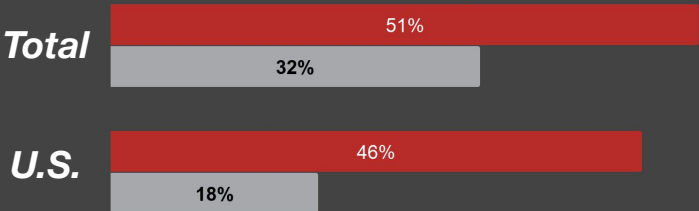
- Google Workspace
- O365

Google Workspace: 55%
O365: 43%
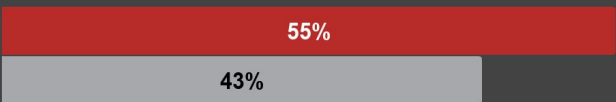
People on Video
For a meeting that does not take place in person, does your team typically use a video call or voice call? Showing % Video

- Google Workspace
- O365

Total — Google Workspace: 51%, O365: 32%
U.S. — Google Workspace: 46%, O365: 18%

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When it comes to picking a productivity suite, it's not just the end users that matter. The IT departments matter a lot. Our findings show that moving people to Google Workspace is easier than moving them to Office 365.

Comfortable Using Software
How long did it take your team to feel comfortable using [Google Workspace/Office 365]?
Showing % comfortable after less than 1 month, less than 3 months

- Google Workspace
- O365

77%
66%
52%
39%

1 month or less   3 months or less
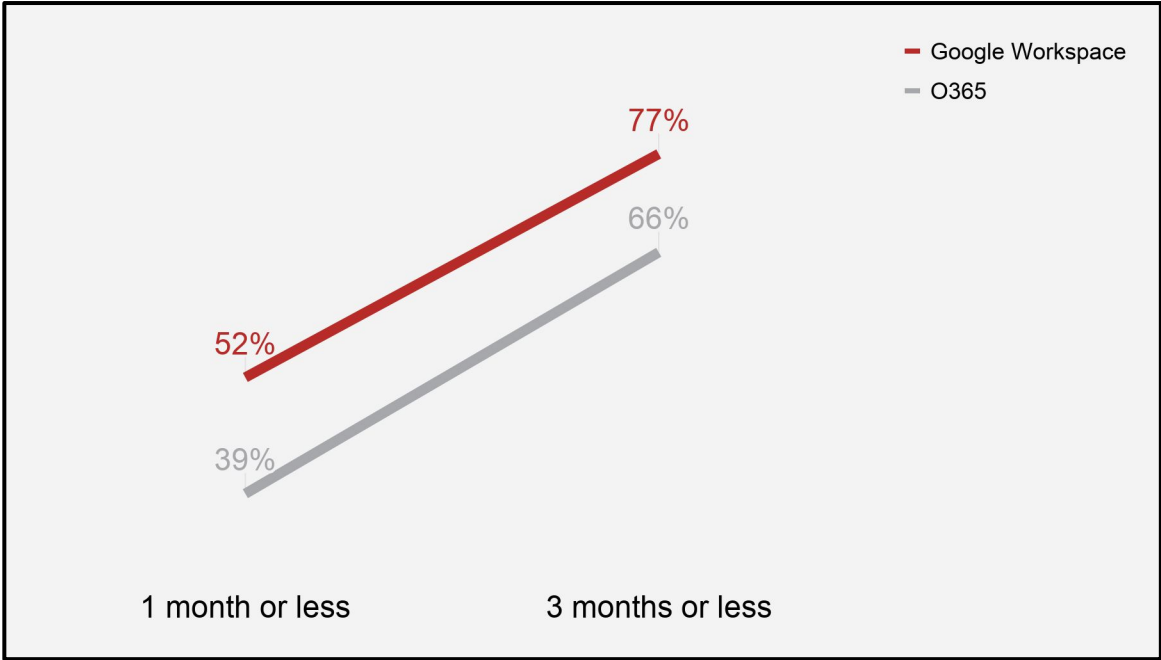
People in companies large and small using Google Workspace think more highly of their IT departments. It's the classic virtuous circle.

IT Department Performance
How would you rate your IT department's performance on making your team more productive? Showing % 5/5, "Very good"

Google Workspace   O365

Total
44%
30%

**Large Companies**
50%
30%

Small Companies
39%
23%
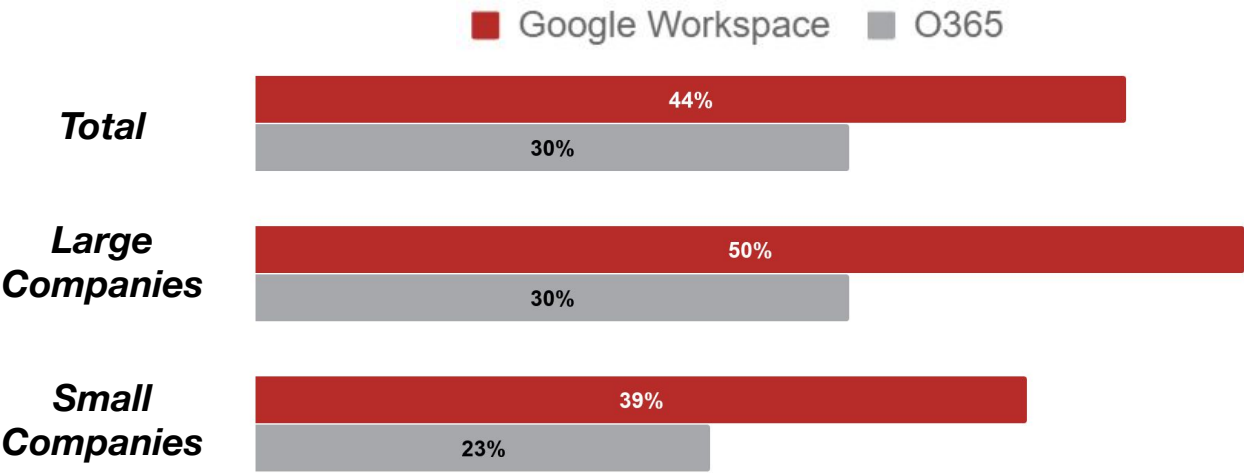
According to a report from *The Economist*'s Intelligence Unit, employees who use mobile technology are typically more productive, creative, satisfied, and loyal. The 2016 study concludes that the "ability to work anywhere at any time" has a strong impact on workers' productivity and job satisfaction.

The data shows that Google Workspace delivers a more seamless and robust mobile working experience than Office 365. Google Workspace users are more frequent mobile workers, and also complete more tasks via mobile than their Office 365 counterparts.

76% of Google Workspace users work on mobile often, compared to **61% of O365 users.** This impact extends to a range of tasks:

| Mobile Tasks	Google Workspace	O365	Δ
Edit spreadsheets or documents	54%	32%	**+22%**
Edit documents	47%	28%	**+19%**
Edit spreadsheets	35%	19%	**+16%**
Review documents	59%	43%	**+16%**
Review spreadsheets	45%	27%	**+18%**
Provide feedback to another employee	47%	31%	**+16%**
Schedule meetings	51%	38%	**+13%**
Participate in meetings	39%	29%	**+10%**
Reply to email	76%	73%	**+3%**
Check email	80%	79%	**+1%**
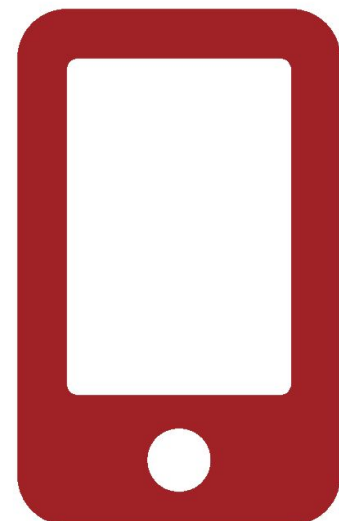
With the monumental amount of information in today's companies, fragmented information storage, and unintentional barriers to information access, silos seem inevitable, and problematic. Critical information often gets stuck with one individual, or one team, and never finds it way to other people who really need it. But our survey found that Google Workspace, more effectively than Office 365, breaks down or through silos that impede effectiveness.

45% of Google Workspace users

say silos are a problem at their company

58% of O365 users

say silos are a problem at their company
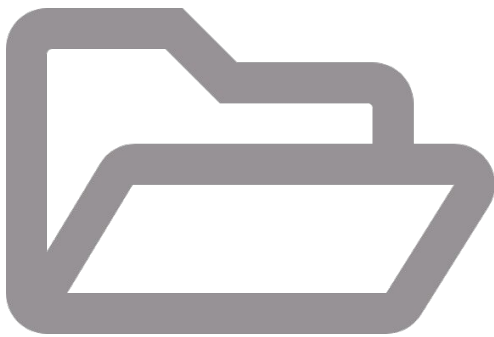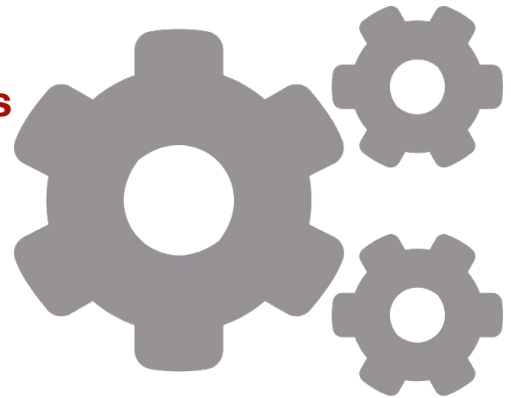
85% of Google Workspace users

say Google Workspace helps to break down silos that impede effectiveness

74% of O365 users

say O365 helps to break down silos that impede effectiveness

Of people who have switched to Google Workspace or O365 in their tenure, **78%** of those who've added on Google Workspace say it's **easier to find information since they've adopted it**. 66% of those who have adopted O365 say it's easier to find information.

As the Harvard Business Review outlined in its February 2018 article "The Culture Factor," culture serves as one of the "primary levers" in achieving organizational success. Technology, in turn, is a critical lever in organizational culture. Forbes' 2017 article "How Technology Impacts Workplace Culture" points out that technology can help break down hierarchical barriers by facilitating communication between employees at different levels within a company, and that technology, in enabling more remote work, helps bridge demographic, cultural, and geography diversity gaps in the workforce. While software is unlikely to change culture on its own merit, on a litany of critical culture metrics, individuals in organizations using Google Workspace rated their workplaces higher than people in Office 365 organizations.

| Of Google Workspace users...		Of O365 users...
60%	Strongly agree that their team works very well together	49%
59%	strongly agree they plan to stay at their company long-term	51%
56%	strongly agree they would recommend their workplace to a friend	47%
56%	are very satisfied with their jobs	44%
53%	strongly agree their teams like their company	43%
50%	strongly agree they look forward to coming to work in the morning	38%

The bottom line is that Google Workspace beats out Office 365 across the range of critical factors companies care about. But what about the two key metrics that every company today cares about most: *Innovative* and *Productive.* If Google Workspace is truly having the impacts all the other metrics discussed above indicate, it should be winning on these two foundational, bottom-line metrics as well.
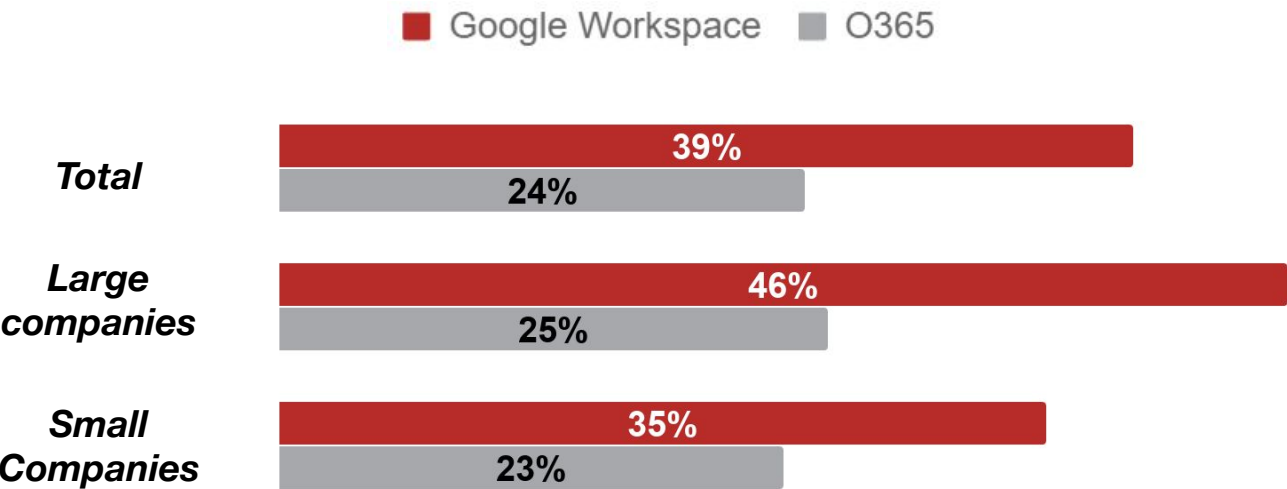
Innovative
Since you adopted Google Workspace [Office 365] your team has become: Showing % More innovative

■ Google Workspace   ■ O365

Total
75%
55%

Large companies
76%
44%

Small Companies
74%
63%
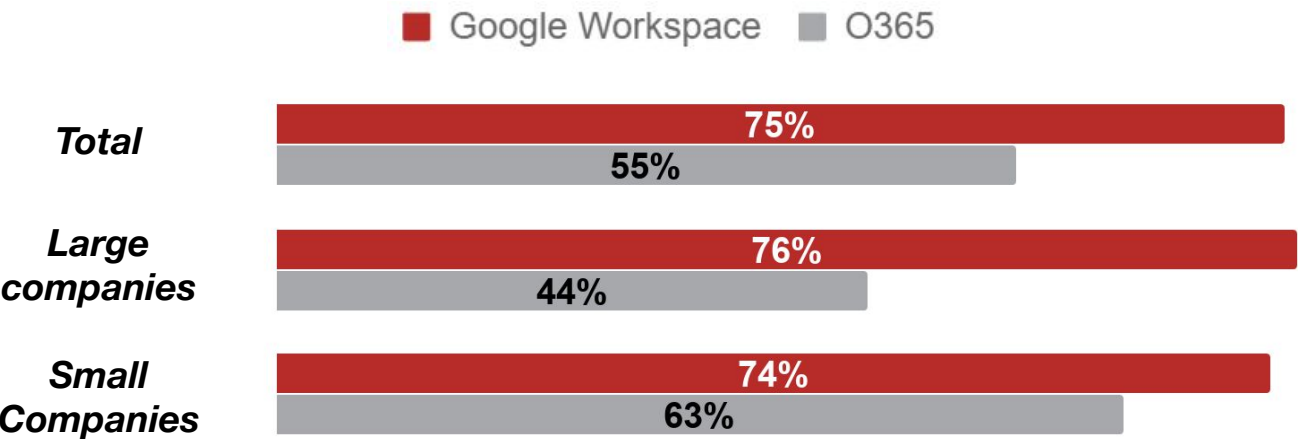
Productive
How would you rate your team's productivity on a scale of 1-5? Showing % 5/5, "Very productive"

■ Google Workspace   ■ O365

Total
39%
24%

Large companies
46%
25%

Small Companies
35%
23%

Outcomes for Users Age 55+

In most companies, senior leadership tends to be older, and they can often act as a handbrake on technological progress. Understanding how this older cohort will react to the different productivity suites is a critical consideration.

Among users age 55+...

63% strongly agree that their team can get and track feedback on their work
Compared to just 26% of O365 users 55+

69% strongly agree that their team can always access the most recent version of a document
Compared to just 35% of O365 users 55+

59% strongly agree that their team has easy access to the information they need to make a decision
Just 35% O365 users 55+ say the same thing

Outcomes for Large Companies

Software solutions in large companies often present special challenges because of more complex cultural, organizational, and IT environments. Google Workspace and Office 365 performed quite differently among users in the largest companies.

Among users at large companies...

68% of Google Workspace users say they **enjoy work more** since adopting Google Workspace
Only 30% of their O365 counterparts say the same

76% of Google Workspace users say their company has **become more innovative** since adopting Google Workspace
Only 44% of their O365 counterparts said the same

41% of Google Workspace users say Google Workspace has had a **significantly positive impact** on the way they work
Only 18% of their O365 counterparts said the same

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This study was commissioned by Google and conducted by Quadrant Strategies. We surveyed 750 desk workers across four countries during October 2019 as the basis of this report. In total, participants answered 79 questions. In 2020, Google rebranded their workplace collaboration tool, renaming it from G Suite to Google Workspace. Microsoft is in the process of rebranding as well, changing their name from Office 365 to Microsoft 365.

We matched the two halves of the sample across a broad range of characteristics, outlined in the table below, in order to ensure that sample differences were not driving the results. With a 95% confidence interval, the margin of error is ±5.01% for Google Workspace users and ±5.12% for Office 365 users.

Category		Google Workspace Users	O365 Users
Company size	Small (5-99 employees)	25%	18%
	Medium (100-999 employees)	37%	35%
	Large (1,000+ employees)	37%	47%
Manager	Manager	78%	73%
	Non-manager	21%	27%
	Other	1%	0%
Age	18-24	5%	2%
	25 to 34	33%	28%
	35 to 44	29%	30%
	45 to 54	20%	24%
	55 to 64	11%	14%
	65+	2%	3%
Industry	Manufacturing	18%	26%
	White Collar	18%	18%
	Technology	16%	20%
	Education	11%	5%
	Government	6%	7%
	Healthcare	11%	11%
	Retail	12%	6%
	Other	7%	7%
Department	Administration	15%	11%
	Management	18%	15%
	Operations	17%	19%
	Finance	13%	11%
	Client Services	13%	8%
	Sales	9%	6%
	IT	23%	25%
	Research	4%	3%
	Legal	3%	2%
	Human Resources	11%	8%
	Marketing or Public Relations	6%	4%
	Engineering	6%	7%
	Other	9%	6%
Country	US	N=188	N=187
	Italy	N=65	N=55
	France	N=64	N=62
	UK	N=66	N=63

In each group, we identified people as switchers if they had moved from a prior productivity suite to either Office 365 or Google Workspace in their tenure at their company. 70% (267 respondents) of our Google Workspace users and 80% (292 respondents) of the Office 365 users met this criterion of *switcher,* and were asked the questions covering their experience of switching. For questions related to switchers, the margin of error with a 95% confidence interval is ±6.00% for Google Workspace switchers and ±5.74% for Office 365 switchers.

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About Quadrant Strategies

Quadrant Strategies is a research-driven consultancy that works with Fortune 100 companies, major NGOs, and issue advocacy groups. Our specialty is helping companies and organizations take on their toughest brand and reputation challenges.

Quadrant was founded on a very clear principle: clients facing critical challenges need strategic advice, not just data, to make the right decisions. Our partners have advised over half of the Fortune 50 companies, on some of the highest profile corporate and public affairs issues of the last two decades.

Quadrant was founded in 2015 by Billy Mann and Scott Siff, who combined have over thirty-five years of experience running market research projects for companies around the globe. The two of them helped run the prominent WPP market research firm Penn Schoen Berland (Billy as President and Scott as Vice Chair), before they left to found their own firm. Since its founding, Quadrant has consistently grown each year at a rate that far eclipses the industry overall.