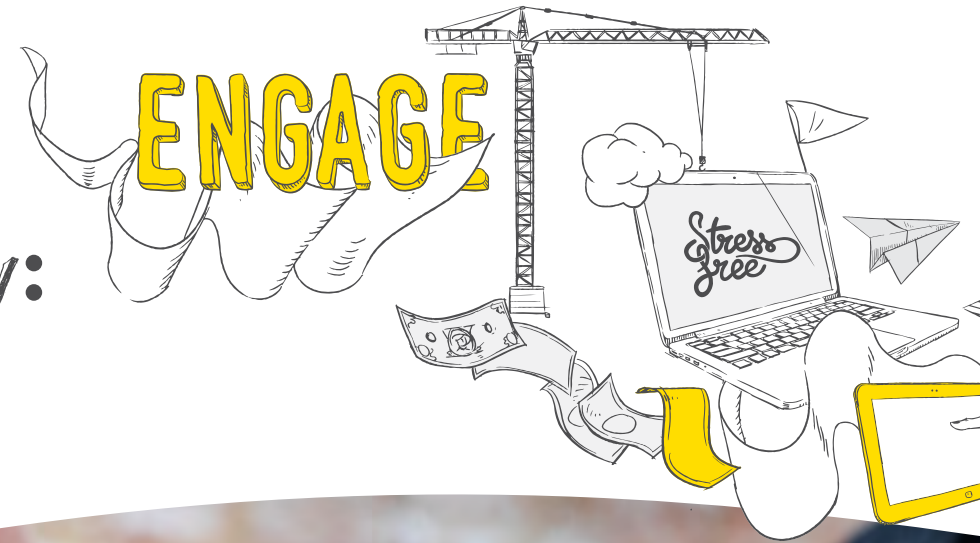# ClickShare

the meeting stress test study:

The business impact of technology induced meeting stress

ENGAGE

Stress Free

Introduction

Everday stress

Everyone has felt that pang of panic that sets in when you're stood up about to present your killer idea to your boss and you just can't get the technology with your well-rehearsed presentation to work.

Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental and emotional responses. The human body is designed to experience stress and react to it.1 It can be a positive thing, keeping you alert to avoid danger. However at the wrong time, this heightened level of stress can have a negative impact on performance. Removing or reducing this factor from a situation can allow individuals and teams to perform better.

The study

Barco, a global technology company that designs and develops networked visualization products, wanted to investigate this meeting technology stress dynamic further. The company commissioned a comprehensive study to analyse the stress of getting a meeting right when it came to incorporating technology. This was broken down into a quantitative, international survey looking at the issues and peoples beliefs, and a 'live' experiment, providing emotional data on what happens to individuals in such situations. Here, emotional stress levels were calculated by measuring electrodermal activity (EDA - the variation of the electrical properties of the skin in response to sweat secretion), heart rate and self-reporting.

The quantitative study gathered responses from 1,000 office workers who run or present at, or attend meetings from across the markets of the UK, France, Germany and the USA. The respondents represented an equal split of age ranges from 18 to 55 years and over, and equal numbers males and females.

The emotional experiment took place at the Sussex Innovation Centre, in the UK. Twenty-seven participants who worked in offices and give presentations at least once a month, were split down into groups of three or four. Each was then asked to deliver an unseen presentation. Once in an easy session and then a technically difficult session.
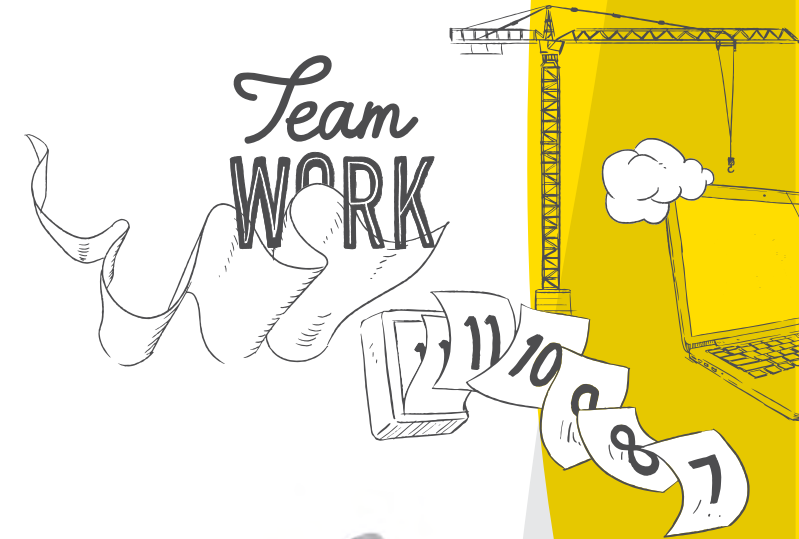
[1] WebMD

The results

The stress potential

Office workers spend a significant amount of time in meetings that could be potentially stressful environments. The majority (59%) of office worker respondents attend meetings at least a few times a week. Around nine in ten (89%) run or present at meetings with close to half (47%) doing so every day or a few times a week.

The vast majority (94%) of respondents say technology is used and plays a significant part in the meetings they attend, opening up multiple areas that could potentially go wrong. Around half or more say projectors (62%) or video conferencing software (53%) is used and around four in ten (39%) say a type of plug in is used (e.g. cable to connect a laptop). A quarter (25%) are already using wireless screen sharing technology from their own device in meetings.

Add to this, that the majority of respondents find various elements of meeting participation stressful – be it organising (84%), preparing for (84%), running (84%) or presenting (82%) in a meeting. Technology is a key component of this anxiety creation.

Close to nine in ten respondents experience technology-related stress about meetings.

87%

This technology induced anxiety takes many forms, with close to nine in ten experiencing it. This can include worrying about making sure everyone is able to connect (32%), connecting to a meeting room's technology (28%) or incompatible technology (28%), while three in ten are concerned about technology failure, and one in five (21%) worry about sharing content or screens during meetings.

It seems people have the right to be nervous about such glitches, as the frequency of them is often a regular reality for many. Over half often experience issues with sharing content or screens (58%) or making sure everyone is able to connect (51%). Four in ten (40%) often experience incompatible technology.
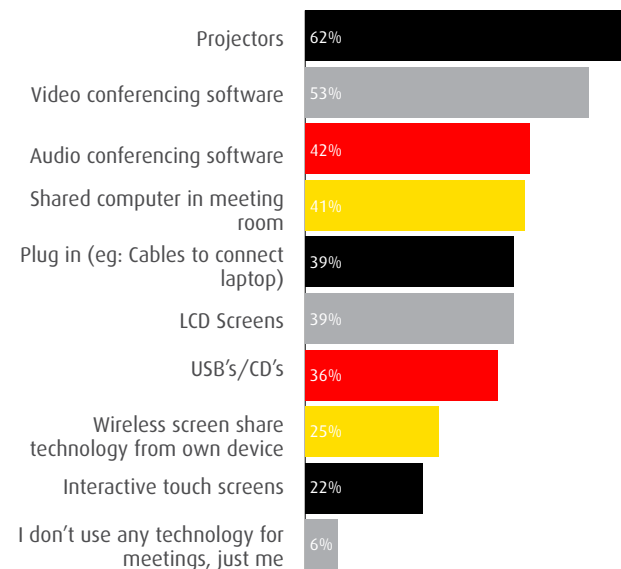
Technology	%
Projectors	62%
Video conferencing software	53%
Audio conferencing software	42%
Shared computer in meeting room	41%
Plug in (eg: Cables to connect laptop)	39%
LCD Screens	39%
USB's/CD's	36%
Wireless screen share technology from own device	25%
Interactive touch screens	22%
I don't use any technology for meetings, just me	6%

Figure 1: At the meetings you attend, which types of technology are used?

This technology induced anxiety takes many forms:

32% worry about making sure everyone is able to connect

28% get stressed about connecting to a meeting room's technology

3 IN 10 are concerned about technology failure

1 IN 5 worry about sharing content or screens during meetings

28% are concerned about incompatible technology

The results

The live reality of stress

These results were echoed in the live experiment, where every single person experienced higher peak stress levels during the meeting with technology difficulties compared to the easier meeting. Overall, people were 46% more stressed on average during these meetings compared to the more straight-forward meetings where technology worked well. Their average peak heart rate with technical challenges reached 179 bpm – the average resting heart rate is 60-100 bpm.

When it came to the presentation parts of the meeting, stress levels rose further, with 78% of people having higher stress levels in the technology problem sessions. The most stressful situations had to do with getting information up on a screen or projector. When trying to connect a device to the screen, stress levels rose to 62% higher than the average stress level measured for the participants. Looking for missing wires or trying to connect wires resulted in stress levels 42% higher than the meeting average, while computer problems (such as switching from one device to another) were followed by 24% higher stress levels. Connecting a clicker to a laptop (or switching the clicker from one laptop to another) resulted in stress levels 12% higher than average.

The business impact

Both pieces of research had shown that technology issues caused stress levels to rise – but what was the business impact of this stress?

On average, meetings involving the respondents start 6 minutes late, with technology issues having an impact on meeting schedules. For around a third (31%) this is due to attendees struggling with technology and one in six (16%) say problems with adaptors in order to connect.

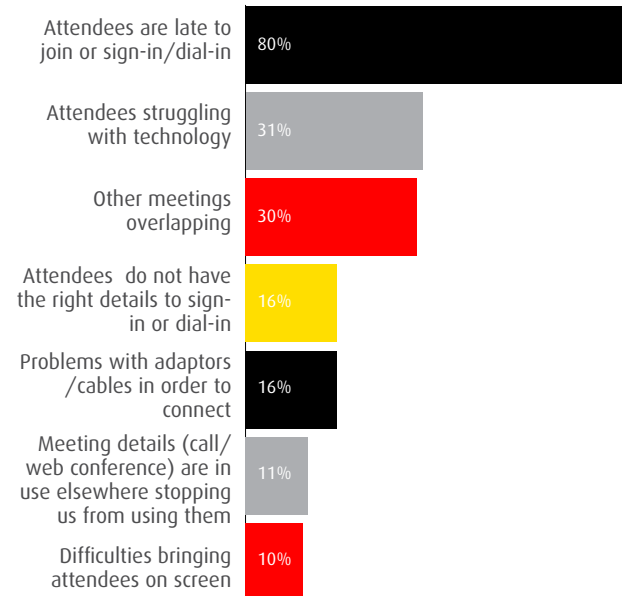|	
Attendees are late to join or sign-in/dial-in	80%
Attendees struggling with technology	31%
Other meetings overlapping	30%
Attendees do not have the right details to sign-in or dial-in	16%
Problems with adaptors /cables in order to connect	16%
Meeting details (call/ web conference) are in use elsewhere stopping us from using them	11%
Difficulties bringing attendees on screen	10%

Figure 2: 'What are the main causes of delays to meetings starting on time?'

The vast majority of respondents who have experienced technology-related meeting stress say it has caused wider impacts.

93%

The results

Technology related meeting stress has a wide impact for business users:

70% say technology failures create frustrations, which can lead to a loss of credibility for the speaker or brand.

55% Over half report inefficiencies or time wasting.

OVER 1/3 Over a third say it creates attendee anger.

33% have issues with key people being unable to participate due to technology problems.

24% Almost a quarter have missed deadlines.

1 IN 10 have even missed out on personal opportunities.

12% have lost business as a result of technology issues.

Of respondents who run or present at meetings, almost nine in ten (88%) have taken actions to try and prevent technology issues. Such actions impact upon the individual and also potentially the wider organisation when it comes to productivity and efficiency.

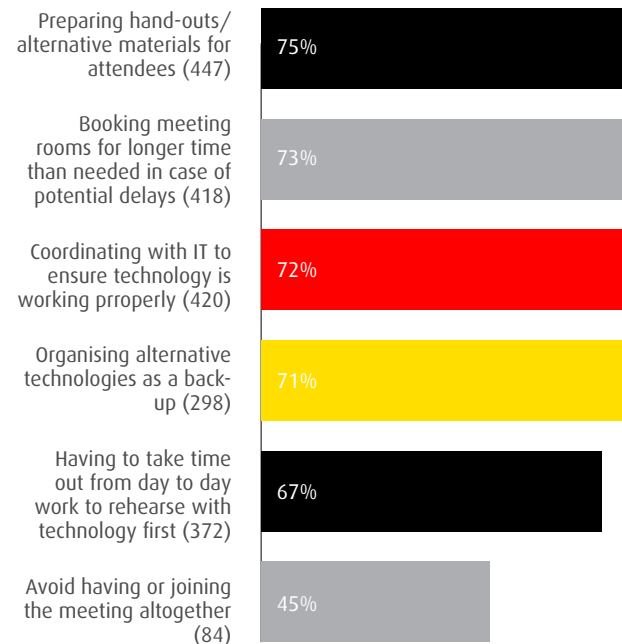|	
Preparing hand-outs/ alternative materials for attendees (447)	75%
Booking meeting rooms for longer time than needed in case of potential delays (418)	73%
Coordinating with IT to ensure technology is working prroperly (420)	72%
Organising alternative technologies as a back-up (298)	71%
Having to take time out from day to day work to rehearse with technology first (372)	67%
Avoid having or joining the meeting altogether (84)	45%

Figure 3: Analysis of respondents who take preventative actions to prevent technology issues in meetings.

Around half have prepared hand-outs (50%), coordinated with IT (47%) or booked meeting rooms for longer than needed (47%). Just over four in ten (42%) have had to take time out from day to day work to rehearse with the technology, and around one in ten (9%) have even avoided the meeting altogether.

Yet when these things do go wrong, workers then have to try and fix the problem, creating further issues, loss of face or at the very least reduced productivity. Three in ten (29%) respondents who run or present at meetings would give up with the technology in use if problems arose during a meeting. Two thirds (66%) would try to fix the problem themselves and around half would either call IT support (50%) or ask a colleague for help (47%). Close to one in six (15%) would postpone the meeting altogether.

The quality impact

When tested in the live experiment, the business impact was felt in the quality of the output from participants, in addition to time wasting and frustration already identified.

Even though the meetings with tech issues took 36% longer on average, people spent 24% less time preparing their presentation (looking through their notes, discussing the content with others, etc.). In other words, meetings took longer and were less efficient when technical problems occurred.

When rated by someone watching the presentations, participants looked 6% more stressed in their

The results

presentation when this followed a set-up with technology issues, while the quality of their presentation was rated as slightly better overall when their set-up had gone smoothly.

In sessions during which technical problems occurred, participants found it 29% more difficult to prepare for the presentation. They felt 29% more stressed and 10% more nervous during the presentation itself.

Technology issues also took the focus of participants away from the important content of the presentation and what message they were trying to communicate, as the focus was on the equipment.

Managing technology challenges

The majority (82%) of respondents agree that technology should make meetings easier. Around half believe that their organisation should invest in better technology for meetings (53%) and say that technology frequently causes problems (50%).

However, when it came to doing something about it, the majority (74%) of respondents believe that their organisation could take meeting room technology more seriously, with close to a third (32%) reporting that their organisation does not have the right technology in place to facilitate meetings.

If organisations could improve technology use within the meeting environment, the productivity benefits would be significant for business. 86% believe that improving meeting room technology would lead to an increase in productivity. When used well, technology is seen as something that can help with meeting stress and thus drive productivity, primarily by making participation and interaction easier, faster and less complex.

In contrast, a range of barriers are faced by organisations when it comes to adoption, but only the minority (10%) say it is due to a reluctance from the workforce. Over four in ten (44%) say it is not seen as a business priority and a third (33%) report a lack of budget.

If organisations were more aware of the potential productivity benefits that better technology could create they may be more willing to prioritise budget and resources towards it.
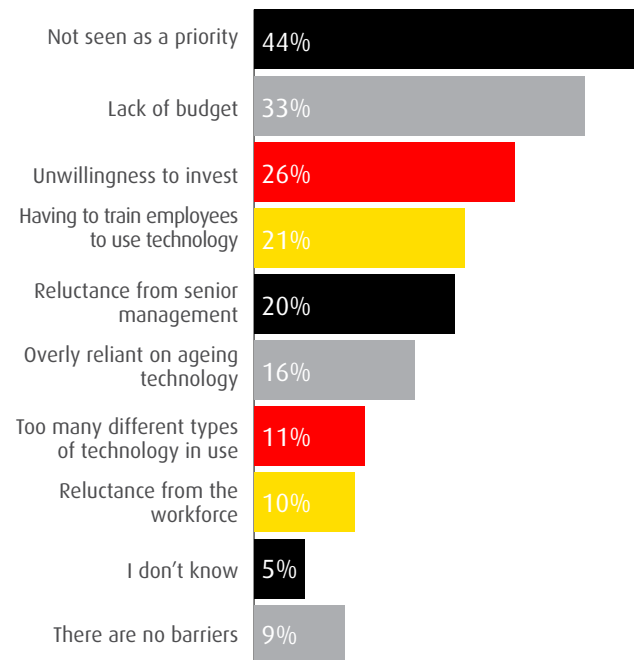

Figure 4: 'In your opinion, what is preventing your organisation from improving the technology it provides for meetings?'

How technology capabilities can help:

- 9 in 10 feel that different technology capabilities could help in some way with technology stress in meetings

- 44% want technology that is wireless with no cables to connect

- Technology that works with the touch of a button is seen by over half (51%) as something that would completely help with stress-free meetings

- Being able to quickly and easily change presenters would help 37%

- Easy conferencing with colleagues from different locations would help 40%.

- Being able to share from any device would benefit 44%

International concerns

UK

**The most stressful situation in the UK was making sure everyone could connect**

On average in the UK meetings begin 6 minutes late, with over a third (34%) being due to attendees struggling with technology. For 56%, technology frequently causes problems in meetings, while 83% believe technology should make meetings easier.

The most stressful situation in the UK was making sure everyone could connect (33%), nearly a third (29%) became stressed by the thought of an unexpected technology failure or having incompatible technology (28%), while a quarter (26%) worried about connecting to a meeting room's technology.

To prevent technology issues in meetings, 54% book meeting rooms for a longer time than needed in case of potential delays, and avoid joining the meeting altogether (13%), the highest in the study.

When it comes to business impact, 15% had lost a business or sale due to technology failure in meetings and a quarter miss deadlines.

If technology in meetings was smoother, 91% believe productive would increase, but rectifying problems is not a priority for their business (43%).
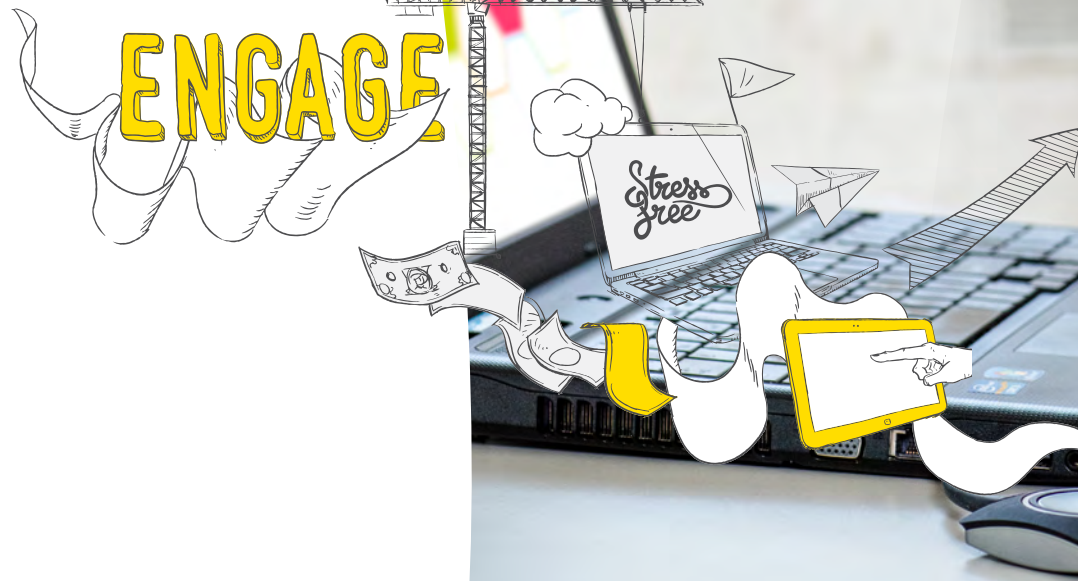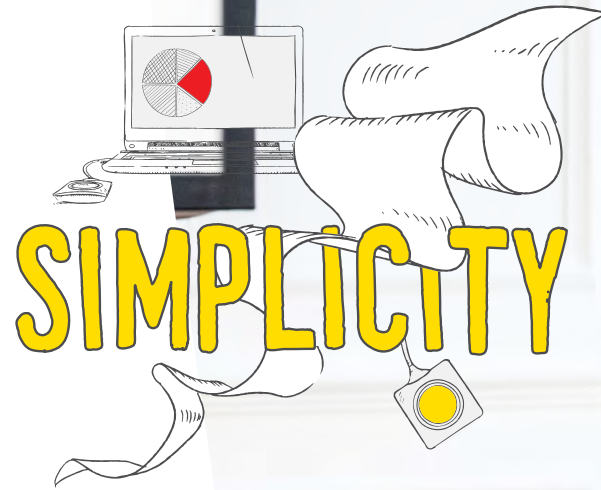
International concerns

France

42% say technology concerns have led to a meeting being cancelled

Technology frequently causes problems in French meetings (52%), with meetings running between 5 to 15 minutes late for 17% of French respondents, with a third (31%) of attendees struggling with technology.

The thought of an unexpected technology failure or issue is the biggest single concern (36%), with connecting to a meeting room's technology (e.g. having the correct cables, adapters, knowing how to switch it on or connect) worrying over third (31%).

Nearly a quarter (23%) missed personal opportunities due to technology meeting issues (e.g. job promotions) - the highest of all countries, with most (64%) experiencing timewasting, and 42% saying technology concerns have led to a meeting being cancelled.

81% believe smoother use of technology in meetings would result in increased productive. However, a reluctance by senior management (27%) is preventing organisations from improving the technology it provides for meetings, with a lack of budget being the biggest factor (41%).

International concerns

Germany

86% believe better meeting technology would increase productivity

Nearly a third (27%) of German respondent attendees struggle with technology causing them to join or start meetings late. 45% of respondents say technology frequently causes problems in meetings. This is less than the other markets of the UK, France and the US. That said, 80% believe technology should make meetings easier.

From a technology point of view, incompatible technology (e.g. PC and Mac or mobile devices) made meetings stressful for the most German respondents (34%). 31% stressed about the thought of an unexpected technology failure or issue, 23% on connecting to a meeting room's technology , and 21% on sharing content or screens during meetings using technology.

For German respondents the biggest business impact of technology meeting failure was decreased morale (48%), attendee anger and frustration (43%), time wasting (35%) and missed deadlines (34%).

86% believe better meeting technology would increase productivity, and 43% say their organisation should invest in better technology for meetings.

International concerns

USA

The US, experiences the highest levels of inefficiencies or time wasting of the countries surveyed at 61%

A third (32%) struggle with meeting room technology, with 37% of American respondents worrying about the thought of an unexpected technology failure or issue. Nearly half (49%) take time out from day to day work to 'rehearse' with technology first, and a third (32%) cancel or postpone a meeting as a result of technology challenges.

Stressful technology meeting situations include, making sure everyone is able to connect or dial-in (34%), getting both video and audio functionality to work (31%), using meeting conference technology (30%), incompatible technology (23%), and sharing content or screens during meetings using technology (21%).

The US, experiences the highest levels of inefficiencies or time wasting (61%) of the countries surveyed. 39% say technology meeting issues mean key people are unable to participate actively, causing attendee anger or frustration (40%) and a lack of understanding of the meeting topic (24%). Nearly three- quarters (73%) of American's surveyed will try to fix the problem first, before calling in IT (57%).

49% feel technology frequently causes problems in meetings, while 88% believe productivity would improve if it were better, and over half (54%) think their organisation should invest in better technology for meetings.

Conclusion

If you have to present, you need to be able to communicate well to make your point. This isn't just your words but everything about your presentation in a meeting. When technology goes wrong it can impact not only your communication but your focus, your feelings, and your behaviour – you get stressed out, you get angry and you get frustrated. All of these elements and the perception people have of you, influences your productivity.

With 87% of respondents experiencing technology-related stress about meetings, this is something that is having a big impact within organisations, with the vast majority (93%) of respondents who have experienced technology-related meeting stress saying it has caused wider business impacts.

If people are not working productively in meetings, then it means businesses are not being productive and potentially are losing revenue.

Respondents believe that improving meeting room technology would lead to an increase in productivity, with different more simple technology capabilities helping to make things more straight forward and stress-free.

The challenge for businesses is to realise the importance of something that occurs in every meeting room every day, and how if meeting room technology was taken more seriously by businesses they could increase their productivity and bottom line.

About the meeting stress test

The International Study

Barco ClickShare commissioned research house Vanson Bourne in March 2016 to interview 1,000 office workers who run or present at, or attend meetings from across the markets of the UK, France, Germany and the USA (250 in each market). The respondents represented an equal split of age ranges from 18 to 55 years and over, and equal numbers of males and females (500 each).

The Live Experiment

The emotional experiment took place at the Sussex Innovation Centre, at Sussex University in the UK. Twenty-seven participants who worked in offices and give presentations at least once a month, were split down into groups of 3 or 4. Each was then asked to deliver an unseen presentation. Once in an easy session and then a technically difficult session.

Each group was given information for a presentation they were about to give to a university professor, and asked to prepare this presentation. This included deciding who would present what, getting to know the information and setting up the equipment. After their preparation time, the 'professor' (a plant who pretended to be a university professor and also rated each person's presentation) entered the room and the group started their presentation. Each group went through this process (preparing the presentation and presenting) twice, in two different sessions - an easy session and a technically difficult session.

About Barco

Barco, a global technology company, designs and develops networked visualization products for the Entertainment, Enterprise and Healthcare markets.

About Barco ClickShare

ClickShare wireless presentation systems. The easiest way to share big ideas and watch them grow. Plug into user-friendliness. With ClickShare, you can simply share what's on your laptop or mobile device, on a presentation screen. With a single click, you transform a meeting into a complete sharing experience, bringing ideas, people and content together. No cables, no set-up, no waiting to join in.

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#Tech #Stress

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