

Press release

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Inetum's second digital flow survey shows an acceleration in digital transition, a convergence of benefits between management and staff, a focus on data, and environmental concerns that are becoming a priority.

The challenges of digitalisation are now widely shared and have become part of everyday practices. Active employees and managers see digital uses as a tool for collective performance, provided that it closely matches their needs and can adapt to ongoing change. Digitalisation processes in companies have sped up during the health crisis, allowing them to adapt fast or catch up for those who have been lagging. Digital transition today must be addressed as a whole to make it a leverage of positive impact on all of society. Digital technology is starting to be seen as a real driver of sustainable environmental transition according to Inetum's 2021 digital flow survey conducted by the CSA Institute.

Conducted on behalf of Inetum (formerly Gfi), a summary of the results of the second digital flow survey has just been published. This annual poll that is carried out in collaboration with the CSA Institute monitors the development of digitalisation issues in companies, both from the point of view of employees and of managers. Today, in an era after digital transformation, there is a clear need to adapt continuously to new demands and uses. This opens numerous opportunities for turning digital technology into a leverage of positive impact for organisations. Based on the survey, Inetum as a leader in digital services and solutions in Europe wants to identify its digital needs in order to address the current and future needs of organisations even more effectively.

Summary of the results of the 2021 digital Flow survey: "What are the challenges of digitalisation in companies for managers and staff?"

Digitalisation has been speeding up since 2020

The 2020 poll confirmed that digital uses now occupy a central place in the day-to-day lives of manager and employee populations, but the latest edition shows an acceleration in this digitalisation process in companies. **Employees are becoming increasingly familiar with the concept of digitalisation.** 78% of them – 8% more than in 2020 – today recognise what digitalisation concretely covers in their daily activities. Nearly a third (8% up) have a very good idea of it. This growing awareness is strongly driven by an increase in the number of people who know a lot about these issues – a sign of appropriation and upskilling regarding everyday digital solutions at work.

What's more, more than one employee out of two (55%) does not think that their company is "behind" in digitalisation (4% up).

The impact of digitalisation on companies' business is also emerging as a dominant notion. Although 79% of company managers and 71% of employees consider that their activity has been impacted, some distinctions can be noted:

- **98% of the managers of mid-cap and large enterprises (more than 250 employees) say that they have been impacted, and even strongly so for 79% of them.**
- Among employees, 80% of executives have been impacted, and 42% strongly so, but only a small majority of blue-collar workers (60%, of which 21% strongly).

The rise in digital transformation in companies is also confirmed from one year to the next, with a general trend towards implementing dedicated strategic plans. **More than 80% of companies have launched digitalisation programmes, and 100% of those with more than 250 employees**, with the primary objective being to adapt to developments in their markets, and for 35%, to address the new needs of their customers.

Regarding obstacles, the first is stabilising, namely the cost of digitalisation which is referred to by a minority of managers (43%, up by 3%). Reticence among employees, which is mentioned secondly (29%, down by 2%), and in particular the lack of user support for employees (14%, down by 11%), is receding. This shows a wider adoption of digital uses – or a stronger perceived capacity to adopt new digital uses – in the professional world according to company managers.

Digital as a tool for adaptation and performance in 2021

As was seen last year, digitalisation continues first of all to offer benefits in terms of **adaptation to meet customers' expectations more effectively – this is the n°1 benefit for company managers (78%) and n°2 for active employees (67%)**.

Managers rate the benefit of digitalisation at 45% for optimising customer relations, 27% to improve communication, and 24% to manage production chains and logistics more efficiently. It is therefore **a definite leverage for business for company managers**.

Employees' and managers' opinions converge on the benefits of digitalisation in companies to give staff more autonomy (68% and 71% respectively), improve working conditions (65% and 68%), and increase collaboration between teams (64% and 69%). Digital solutions therefore also address the **challenges of human resource management in organisations as a driver of individual and collective performance**.

In terms of expectations, managers believe that **to promote digitalisation, digital tools must be adapted to the needs of the workers (81%) and to the needs of the company (79%)**. Compared to 2020, the sharing of vision and challenges to promote digital transition in organisations seem to be accomplished according to managers, since there is a 15% drop in citing this as a concern (54% in 2021 compared to 69% in 2020).

On the other hand, **while more than 72% of managers understand how data can be used, only 28% of them say that they have already put such a project in place**. The level of penetration however rises to 45% for companies with more than 250 employees (mid-cap and large enterprises).

Digital and environmental transition

While digitalisation is seen as generating positive impacts, the link between digital transition and sustainable environmental transition is becoming a reality for nearly 50% of all managers. One out of two in fact say that they have been able to reduce their company's environmental footprint through the development of new technologies and digital uses. **An even greater number of employees (58%) see the positive impact of digital uses on the environment, and 68% of them believe that digital solutions make the company more responsible.**

The majority of employees and managers agree on the areas in which digitalisation and the development of new technologies today have reduced the environmental footprint of companies and their activities – work organisation (69% for managers, 57% for employees), products and services offered (59%, 57%), and energy consumption in general (55%, 56%). In this regard, **75% of industry in general agrees that digital solutions have reduced their energy consumption.**

These results should be seen in the light of the overall progress in CSR strategies in companies. **For the time being, eco-friendly practices are the main CSR actions that are spontaneously mentioned by managers** (32% waste management, 49% resource saving). Managers need support to **understand, master and co-develop suitable solutions to establish a link between their company's environmental transition and digital uses.**

Raising awareness and training employees in these matters come to the fore as a strong driver to develop a shared consciousness of responsible digital uses and encourage new practices.

Says Inetum CEO Vincent Rouaix: "The survey confirms that amidst an unprecedented transformation of uses brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the digitalisation of activities has become the cornerstone of everyday reality for managers and employees alike. Inetum works daily alongside its clients to ensure the positive impact of this ongoing digital flow that must now be harnessed and controlled. To turn digitalisation into a driver of companies' societal impact, we must facilitate the development of tangible, agile and sustainable solutions and give impetus to a collective movement to make digital technology one of the levers of success in environmental transition."

Inetum's digital flow survey is a unique endeavour to reveal how two distinct and complementary populations perceive these challenges, and to monitor the development of these perceptions from year to year. The CSA Institute helps Inetum to identify the challenges of digital transition in organisations.

Survey methodology – two representative samples interviewed

- **1,003 active employees** in France, aged 18 and above, constituted by quota (gender, age, SPC, region and type of agglomeration), who answered a questionnaire of about 10 minutes on line from 20 September to 8 October 2021);
- **251 managers of companies** with more than 10 employees, in a sample constituted by quota (sector, size of staff, and location), adjusted according to the number of employees, who answered a questionnaire of about 10 minutes by telephone from 20 September to 8 October 2021.

About Inetum, Positive digital flow:

Inetum is an agile IT services company that provides digital services and solutions, and a global group that helps companies and institutions to get the most out of digital flow. In a context of perpetual movement, where needs and usages are constantly being reinvented, the Inetum group is committed towards all these players to innovate, continue to adapt, and stay ahead. With its multi-expert profile, Inetum offers its clients a unique combination of proximity, a sectorial organisation, and solutions of industrial quality. Operating in more than 26 countries, the Group has nearly 27,000 employees and in 2020 generated revenues of €1.966 billion.

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