WORKTIME RESEARCH 2026

COMPUTER USAGE STATISTICS: A GLOBAL STUDY 2026

The breakdown of employee computer time per country, company size, and management style

Explore interactive data online

NON-INVASIVE MONITORING

WORKTIME

26+ YEARS

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ABOUT THE WORKTIME RESEARCH 2024-2025 STUDY

This research shows how employees actually spend their time at work, on computers, where most modern work takes place, covering the years **2024-2025**.

The data reflects **computer-based activity only.** Offline work such as meetings, calls, or paperwork is **not included** in this report and will be covered in a separate study.

The study is conducted by **WorkTime**, a non-invasive employee monitoring software trusted by organizations worldwide for over **26 years**.

We measure several key categories: **active time**, **productive time**, **unproductive time**, and **idle time** (when computers are on but not used). The report also identifies the **top unproductive websites** and **applications**, analyzed **by country** and by **company size**.

Additionally, the research examines **three types of managerial engagement**, highly engaged, moderately engaged, and low engaged managers, and how each correlates with employee performance patterns.

Study period
January 2024 - December 2025

Countries analyzed
Australia, Canada, India, South Africa, UK, USA

Data source
WorkTime customers across multiple industries

Data safety
100% anonymized and privacy-compliant

Global reach
4,000 companies
11,000 employees

KEY CATEGORIES

This study focuses on three main types of computer time: **active**, **unproductive**, and **idle**. Together, they show how computer work hours are truly distributed in 2024–2025.

Active time

Periods when employees actively use their computers: typing, moving the mouse, or switching between work applications. Includes both **productive** and **unproductive** activity.

Productive time

Time spent on work-related websites or applications.

Unproductive time

Time spent on non-work-related websites or applications, such as entertainment or social media, as defined by each organization.

Idle time

When computers remain on but unused: no keyboard or mouse activity is detected. Reflects breaks, meetings, or downtime away from the screen.

These three categories form the foundation of this research, providing a clear and measurable view of how employee time is spent at work.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

#1

YouTube
unproductive website globally

#1

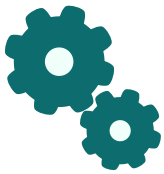
WhatsApp
unproductive application globally

#48%

Idle time
when computers are on but not is use

#52%

Active time
when employees actively use their computers



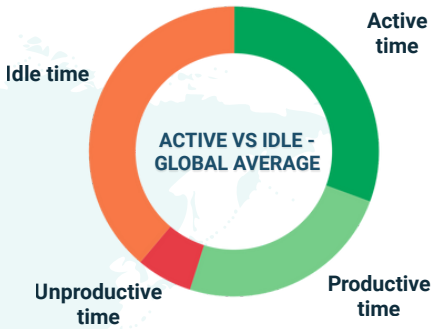
#49%

Productive time
when employees actively work with productive apps and websites

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Globally, an average working day is divided as follows:

- Active time: **52%**
- Productive time: **49%**
- Unproductive time: **3%**
- Idle time: **48%**



Employees actively use their computers for **52%** of the working day on average. This active time is split into **49%** spent on **productive activities** and **3%** on **unproductive activities**.

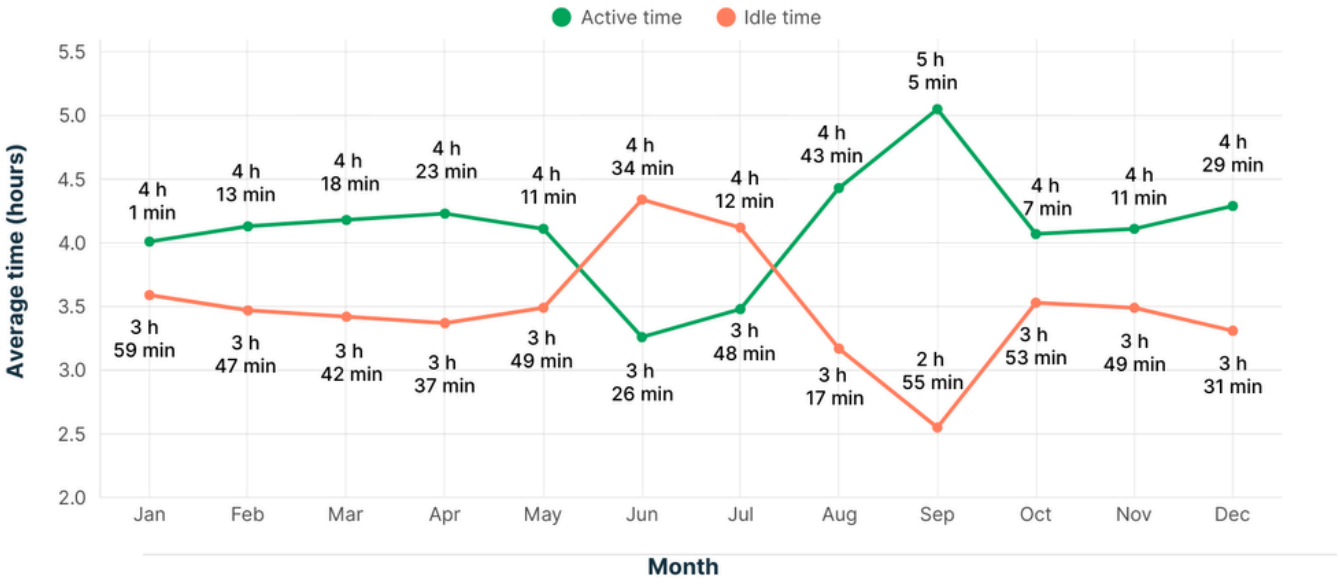
On average, **48%** of the working day is spent with computers on but not in use, known as **idle time**. This idle time may include breaks, offline meetings, or other on-computer-based activities.

Active/idle per month (average per employee)

This chart illustrates the average active and idle time for employees over an average month during **2024–2025**.

Overall, **active time** remains fairly consistent throughout the year, with a slight dip in **December**. Employees tend to be more active in **October**, **November**, and **January**, with **October** being the most active month.

Active vs idle time per month (average per employee/day, 2024-2025)



Active/idle per day (average per employee)

This chart shows the average working day across the week, with **Friday** being the least active day on average during **2024–2025**.

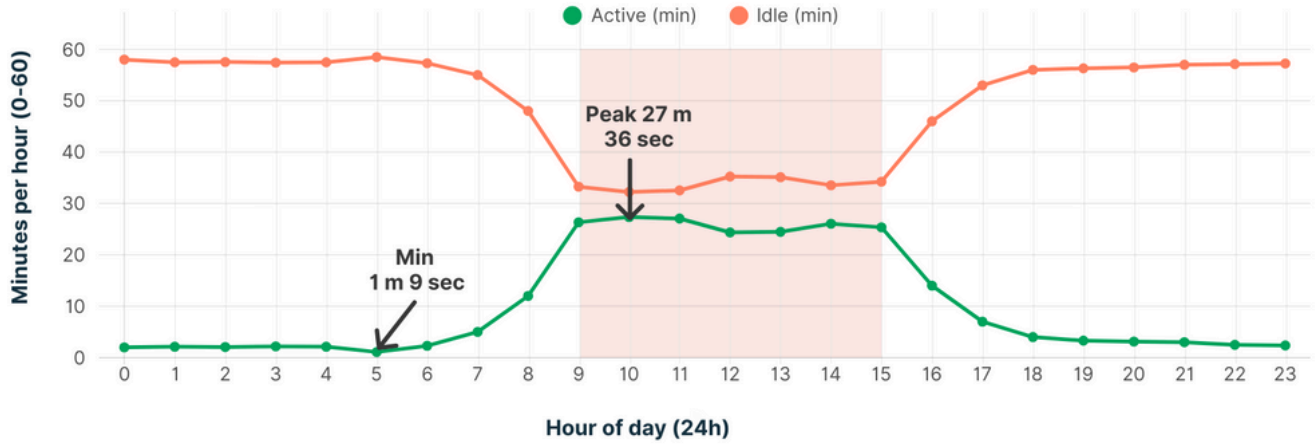
Tuesday and **Wednesday** are almost identical in terms of activity, while **Monday** and **Thursday** are also nearly equal in terms of employee engagement.

	Mon (avg 24-25)	Tue (avg 24-25)	Wed (avg 24-25)	Thu (avg 24-25)	Fri (avg 24-25)
Avg per employee per working day (hours)	4 h 05 min	4 h 09 min	4 h 08 min	4 h 04 min	3 h 41 min

Active/idle per hour (average per employee)

This chart illustrates the **average active and idle time per employee, per hour,** based on an average working day during **2024–2025**.

Peak activity hours: employees are most active between **9 AM and 3 PM** on average.



Top 30 unproductive applications and websites worldwide

TOP 30 APPLICATIONS

1. WhatsApp
2. Spotify
3. Discord
4. Slack
5. Skype
6. Solitaire
7. VLC media player
8. World of Warcraft
9. Roblox Game Client
10. bplus
11. Microsoft Teams
12. VALORANT
13. Windows Media Player
14. Telegram
15. Webex
16. ScreenClippingHost
17. Riot Client
18. Hearthstone
19. Photos
20. TikTok
21. Netflix
22. YouTube (app)
23. Snapchat
24. Steam
25. Epic Games Launcher
26. Facebook Messenger
27. Apple Music
28. iTunes
29. Twitch
30. Audible

TOP 30 WEBSITES

1. youtube.com
2. mail.google.com
3. facebook.com
4. msn.com
5. amazon.com
6. linkedin.com
7. app.qbo.intuit.com
8. outlook.live.com
9. netflix.com
10. web.whatsapp.com
11. yahoo.com
12. nytimes.com
13. meet.google.com
14. mail.yahoo.com
15. cnn.com
16. bbc.co.uk
17. reddit.com
18. instagram.com
19. zillow.com
20. worldofsolitaire.com
21. chess.com
22. discord.com
23. espn.com
24. tiktok.com
25. twitch.tv
26. pinterest.com
27. ebay.com
28. dailymail.co.uk
29. espn.com
30. imdb.com

PER COUNTRY

Rank	Australia	Canada	India	South Africa	UK	USA
Idle	57%	47%	43%	30%	58%	51%
Active	43%	53%	57%	70%	42%	49%
Unproductive	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%

Top unproductive applications

	Australia	Canada	India	South Africa	UK	USA
#1	WhatsApp	Discord	WhatsApp	WhatsApp	WhatsApp	Slack
#2	Spotify	Roblox	Solitaire	Spotify	Spotify	Solitaire
#3	Photos	Spotify	Upwork	Windows Media Player	Windows Media Player	Spotify
#4	Windows Media Player	Solitaire	Spotify	Solitaire	VLC media player	World of Warcraft
#5	Roblox	WhatsApp	VLC media player	VLC media player	Solitaire	VLC media player

WORKTIME®

Top unproductive websites

	Australia	Canada	India	South Africa	UK	USA
#1	mahjong-game.com	youtube.com	youtube.com	youtube.com	youtube.com	youtube.com
#2	youtube.com	facebook.com	web.whatsapp.com	facebook.com	bbc.co.uk	amazon.com
#3	news.com.au	amazon.in	amazon.in	netflix.com	facebook.com	facebook.com
#4	msn.com	netflix.com	irctc.co.in	chess.com	dailymail.co.uk	nytimes.com
#5	kixeye.com	spotify.com	news.google.com	spotify.com	ebay.co.uko.uk	cnn.com

Key insight

YouTube is the leading unproductive website globally. YouTube ranks as the **#1 unproductive site** in five out of six countries, making it the most common source of digital distraction during work hours.

PER COMPANY SIZE

	Employees			
Rank	**1-50**	**51–200**	**201–1000**	**1000+**
Idle	30%	46%	50%	54%
Active	67%	51%	46%	42%
Unproductive	3%	3%	3%	4%

Top unproductive applications

	1-50	51–200	201–1000	1000+
#1	WhatsApp	WhatsApp	WhatsApp	WhatsApp
#2	Discord	Spotify	Upwork	VLC media player
#3	Slack	World of Warcraft	Telegram	Solitaire
#4	Messages	VALORANT	Spotify	Spotify
#5	Spotify	Roblox	Windows Media Player	Windows Media Player

Top unproductive websites

	1-50	51–200	201–1000	1000+
#1	youtube.com	youtube.com	youtube.com	youtube.com
#2	facebook.com	facebook.com	linkedin.com	msn.com
#3	msn.com	msn.com	msn.com	amazon.in
#4	linkedin.com	amazon.in	worldofsolitaire.com	nytimes.com
#5	amazon.in	netflix.com	facebook.com	facebook.com

Key insight

Growth doesn't equal productivity: active time steadily declines as companies scale, hitting its lowest point in large enterprises.

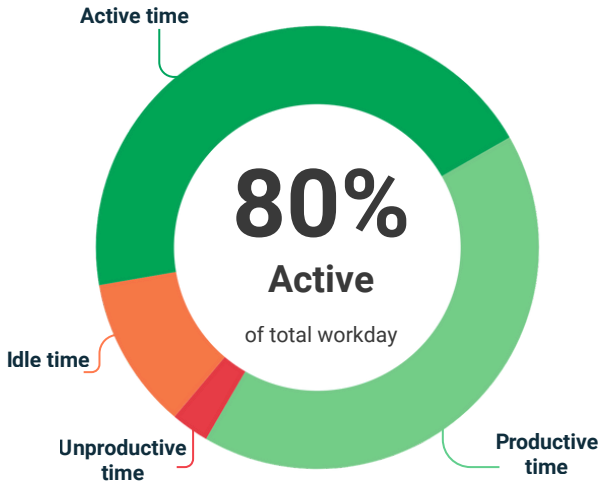
PER MANAGEMENT STYLE

As the research shows, an average office employee using computers is active for about **44%** of the working day. However, these numbers can vary significantly depending on management style and how managers leverage employee monitoring to optimize productivity and engagement.

Highly engaged managers

Highly engaged managers view productivity monitoring reports as a powerful tool for both communication and continuous improvement. Rather than just analyzing the numbers, these managers actively share the reports with their teams, discussing performance on a regular basis.

The diagram below illustrates the **results achieved by a highly engaged manager**.



This company shows performance results way above average because of the manager being highly involved with the team and actively shares performance reports:

- Active time: **80%** (5 h 40 min per employee on average)
- Productive time: **75%**
- Unproductive time: **5%**
- Idle time: **20%**

Employees in this team actively use their computers for **80%** of the working day on average. This active time is split into **75%** spent on **productive activities** and **5%** on **unproductive activities**.

On average, **20%** of the working day is spent with computers on but not in use, known as **idle time**. This idle time may include breaks, offline meetings, or other on-computer-based activities.

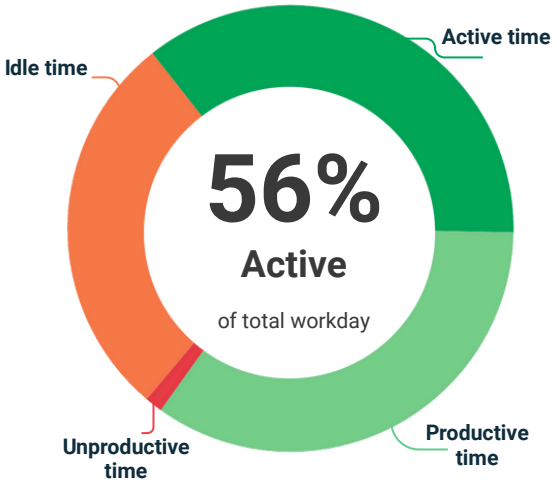
Moderately engaged managers

Moderately engaged managers might regularly review productivity reports but rarely discuss the results with their teams. In many cases, employees are given access to their own reports to self-assess performance.

The diagram below illustrates the results achieved by a moderately engaged manager.

This company shows performance results way above average because of the manager being highly involved with the team and actively shares performance reports:

- Active time: **56%** (4 h 30 min per employee on average)
- Productive time: **54%**
- Unproductive time: **2%**
- Idle time: **44%**



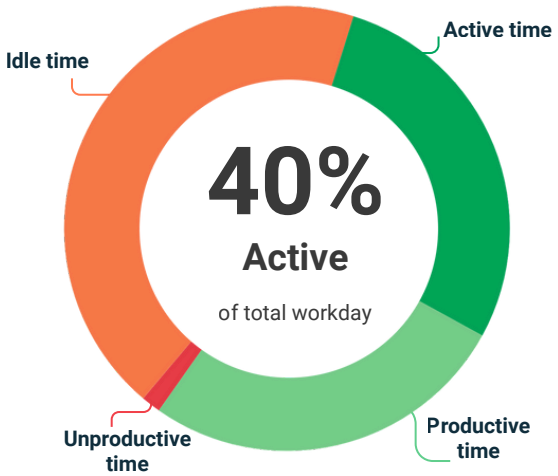
Employees in this team actively use their computers for **56%** of the working day on average. This active time is split into **54%** spent on **productive activities** and **2%** on **unproductive activities**.

On average, **44%** of the working day is spent with computers on but not in use, known as **idle time**. This idle time may include breaks, offline meetings, or other on-computer-based activities.

Minimally engaged managers

Minimally engaged managers may occasionally review productivity reports but seldom discuss the findings with their teams. Instead, they tend to focus on identifying negative trends and addressing issues only when performance problems arise. In such environments, employees typically do not have access to their own reports for self-assessment.

The diagram below illustrates the results achieved by a minimally engaged manager.



- Active time: **40%** (3 h per employee on average)
- Productive time: **38%**
- Unproductive time: **2%**
- Idle time: **62%**

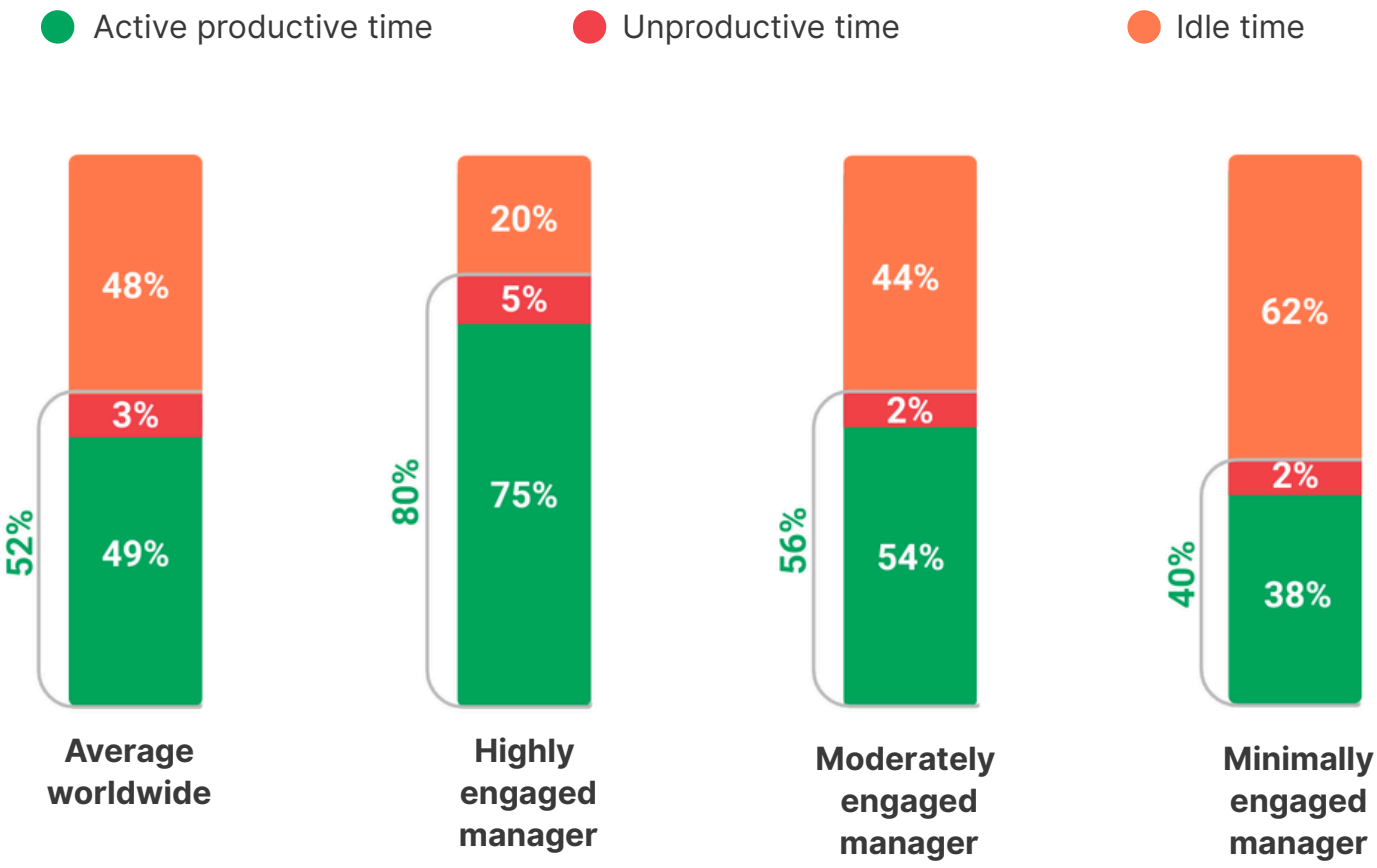
This company shows performance results way above average because of the manager being highly involved with the team and actively shares performance reports:

Employees in this team actively use their computers for **40%** of the working day on average. This active time is split into **38%** spent on **productive activities** and **2%** on **unproductive activities**.

On average, **62%** of the working day is spent with computers on but not in use, known as **idle time**. This idle time may include breaks, offline meetings, or other on-computer-based activities.

Comparison

As this chart demonstrates, the more engaged a manager is, the more they communicate with their team. As a result, the team tends to show higher active productive time.



CASE STUDIES

Remote productivity jumped by 46%

Read more

Employee performance boosted

Read more

Productivity lifted to 95%

Read more

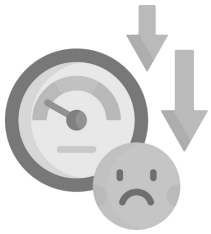
Work-from-home productivity jumped from 30-40% to 86%

+46%
EXCELLENT BOOST!

Country: UK-Japan

Industry: Banking

Size: 170 employees



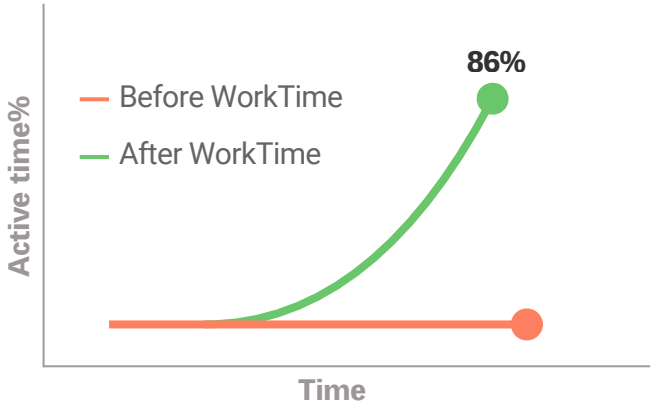
The challenge: After switching to remote work during COVID, the bank's customer service productivity and response times dropped. Unlike in the office, managers couldn't tell if employees were truly active or just away from their computers.

The solution: WorkTime computer active time monitoring software.

GDPR UK: The company uses the WorkTime On-premise edition to ensure GDPR compliance in the UK.

The results: Employee computer active time increased instantly from 30-40% to 86%!

WorkTime boosted active time from 40% to 86% - with full privacy and GDPR compliance.



Why it worked: Privacy-respecting, non-invasive monitoring; GDPR-compliant; active vs. idle time reports.

From struggling to thriving: WorkTime lifted productivity to 95%

+45%
EXCELLENT BOOST!

Country: South Africa

Industry: Telecommunications

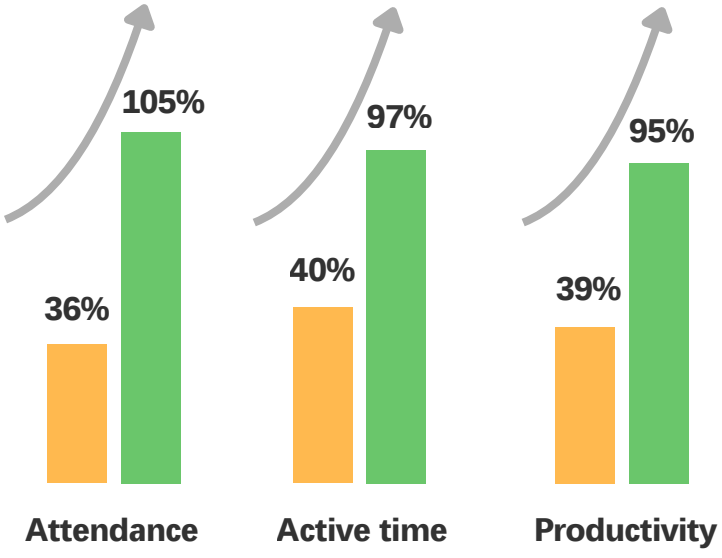
Size: 20+ employees

The challenge: Employees getting disengaged and the management gets overloaded.

The solution: WorkTime Cloud

The results: The initial productivity percentage was about 40%, and now it reaches 95%! Clear KPIs provided by WorkTime are keeping employees engaged, and overall employee performance is now very high. Problematic team members are now more visible, and each team member is very clear about the KPI expectations.

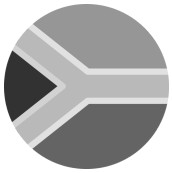
2+ yeas of success! This telecommunication company doubled its performance!



Why it worked: Non-invasive, feature-rich, great tool for employee engagement.

PRODUCTIVITY & RESPONSIBILITY BOOSTED!

WorkTime boosts accountability and performance month by month



Country: South Africa

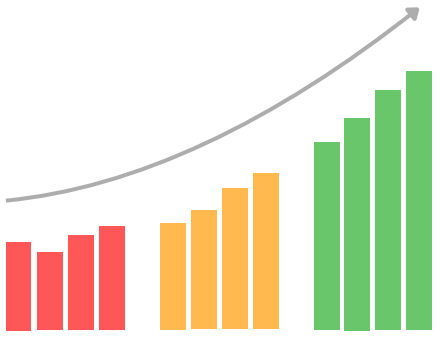
Industry: Financial services

Size: 200 employees

The challenge: Management wanted to boost employee responsibility, ensure remote work was genuine, and verify overtime claims.

The solution: WorkTime Cloud

The results: According to IT manager Karin R., since implementation, there has been a monthly increase in productivity. Staff can now manage themselves and take responsibility for their own productivity.



WorkTime drove monthly productivity growth by empowering employees with their own reports.

Why it worked: Easy setup, accurate data, and employee access to reports.

PRACTICAL INSIGHTS

Manager's quick checklist

- [x] Clearly share your performance expectations with the team.
- [x] Review productivity reports regularly - automate weekly delivery.
- [x] Allow employees to view their own reports to encourage self-awareness.
- [x] Discuss results openly: celebrate achievements, address issues together.
- [x] Keep monitoring focused on business outcomes, not personal control.
- [x] Encourage constructive feedback and team-driven improvements.
- [x] Revisit goals monthly and adjust based on data trends.
- [x] Track changes over time - use reports to see what works and what doesn't.
- [x] Ensure employees understand why monitoring exists - build trust.

Tips for effective use

- Schedule short monthly reviews - 15–20 minutes are enough to stay aligned.
- Visualize trends - use charts from WorkTime reports during discussions.
- Balance data and empathy - numbers show patterns, not the whole story.
- Involve your team - transparency increases motivation and accountability.
- Reflect on engagement - consistent idle or unproductive time can signal overload, not laziness.

Mini-Template:
how to set up a corporate time management policy

1. Define the purpose

Explain why the policy exists.

Example:
"The goal of this policy is to improve time efficiency, transparency, and teamwork through privacy-first productivity insights."

2. Clarify what is monitored

Specify the data types and boundaries.

Example:
"Only computer-based work activity is analyzed. No personal or private data (such as screenshots, emails, or messages) is collected."

3. Set clear expectations

Outline how employees and managers should use time data.

Example:
"Reports are reviewed weekly to identify workflow improvements, not to control individuals."

4. Define access and transparency

Describe who can view reports.

Example:
"Managers receive team-level reports; employees have access to their own data for self-assessment."

5. Establish review frequency

Set a routine for reviewing time reports.

Example:
"Weekly summaries and quarterly performance reviews are recommended."

6. Address communication standards

Encourage open discussion of results.

Example:
"Managers are expected to discuss productivity trends in regular team meetings."

7. Ensure compliance and privacy

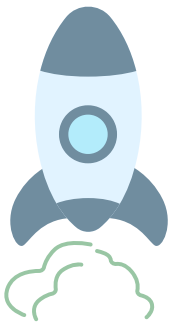
Add a compliance statement.

Example:
"This policy complies with GDPR, HIPAA, and other applicable privacy regulations. All data is anonymized where possible."

8. Keep It positive and business-focused

Close with a guiding principle.

Example:
"The purpose of time monitoring is to optimize workflows and support employees - not to penalize them."



ABOUT WORKTIME

Who we are

We are a productivity monitoring software company with a strong focus on **employee privacy** and **data protection**.
We call our approach **socially responsible**, **green employee monitoring** - because productivity insights should never come at the cost of trust.

With over **25 years of expertise**, WorkTime has been at the forefront of ethical monitoring practices, helping organizations worldwide improve efficiency without invading privacy.

About the product

WorkTime® employee monitoring software and service is the flagship product of **NesterSoft Inc.**, headquartered in **Canada**.

Launched in **1998**, WorkTime remains the **only non-invasive ("Green") employee monitoring solution** dedicated solely to productivity analysis. It ensures **transparent, privacy-respectful monitoring** designed for today's hybrid and remote workplaces.

Compliance and security

WorkTime operates in full alignment with major global privacy standards:

- **HIPAA-safe mode** for healthcare organizations
- **GDPR-safe mode** for the EU and UK
- **POPIA**, **PIPEDA**, and the **Australian Privacy Act**
- **GLBA-safe mode** for financial organizations

Every feature is built to help organizations stay compliant while maintaining employee trust.

WORKTIME®

www.worktime.com

Privacy policy

All research data is anonymized, aggregated, and processed in accordance with applicable privacy laws, including GDPR and other regional regulations.

Research methodology

This research is based on anonymized, aggregated computer activity data collected through the WorkTime platform during 2024–2025.

How to cite

When referencing this research, please cite as: WorkTime research 2026: Computer usage statistics: a global study (2024–2025).

Media contact

For quotes, data clarifications, or interview requests:

info@worktime.com
WorkTime research team

Global active time stands at 52%, with WhatsApp and YouTube identified as the leading unproductive applications.

Data indicates that activity levels decrease as company size increases and are significantly influenced by management style.