The Ultimate Office Suite Study

How companies work with Office

empower

nielsen

Hidden pitfalls, unforeseen opportunities: How companies become stronger with Office

B2B Study by the Nielsen Company and empower Corporation

No other software defines how we work as comprehensively as Microsoft Office. Whether tech start-up or traditional company, marketing department or management, classic office or home office: wherever people work, Office applications play a key role. The most-used software in any office has shaped our working processes and practices. To a large extent Office improves them. But while Office supports us, it also takes up a large part of our working day.

At empower®, our mission is to empower people around the world to work more easily, consistently, and efficiently with Office - so they can be their best and win back time for what really drives them.

To find out exactly how companies in the USA work with Office, we commissioned market research specialist Nielsen to conduct a comprehensive Office study. Central questions focussed on how people work in Office, how they create and edit documents, and to what extent. In addition, identifying "time wasters" – inefficient workflows –

helps eliminate them. Another focus for the study was corporate design. People often send documents or emails to external parties, so Office plays a role in the company's presentation to the outside world. The importance of corporate design in every document and email should not be underestimated; MS Office documents can strengthen or undermine a brand. The study provides surprising insights into compliance with corporate design in Office documents and how to ensure consistent brand communication.

The study's design

Respondents:
1,030 employees, all of whom spend 50% or more of their time on a computer

Companies:
At least 50 employees, headquarters in the USA

Methodology:
Online survey with structured questionnaire, 50 questions

Survey period:
May 2020

Industry focus:

- Automotive
- Consulting Services
- Consumer Goods
- Energy
- Finances
- Industry
- IT
- Pharma/Chemistry
- Logistics

Results at a glance

Success factors with MS Office - how can people work even better in their most important productivity applications?

A typical corporate employee uses MS Office 26 hours a week. On average, they create 9 documents and send 68 emails per week. Office has an enormous impact on our productivity and the quality of our daily work life. The Office Suite Study sets out decisive starting points for how to use Office more effectively.

Clear time wasters identified

Working efficiently in Office faces one main obstacle: 34% - more than a third of the time working with Office- gets wasted on formatting tasks. As a result, every employee loses nine hours a week on average that they could use more productively for content creation. In addition, they endure frustrating searches for templates, documents, and reusable content. Diagrams, charts, and graphs consume inordinate amounts of time.

26
hours
per week in MS Office

34%
wasted on
formatting

52%
Corporate Design
compliance

Potential for improvement in corporate design compliance

Most employees are familiar with their company's corporate design and spend a lot of time formatting documents accordingly. Nevertheless, almost every second document and more than one in ten emails miss the mark on design compliance. That corresponds to 225 documents and 422 emails per employee per year that do not comply with design guidelines - a major loss for brand communication.

Solutions to the problem

The two major problems in office applications – time wastage and inconsistency - can disappear with the right tools and without having to change entire workflows or the company's IT.

Existing content and templates should reside in a **central location** so all employees enjoy direct access to up-to-date and design-compliant content and design elements.

Employees should have **tools that make it easier to format documents and create diagrams** more quickly.

Corporate design rules should integrate directly into Office applications so people can find them when they need them.

If automation takes these points into account, Office productivity can increase by almost a quarter. A company with 1,000 employees can save over 297,440 hours per year (out of a total of 1.35 million hours per year that they work in Office).

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80%
market share of
MS Office in the USA
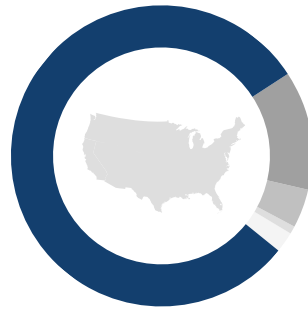
- 13% Google Docs
- 4% Apple iWork
- 1% Libre Office
- 2% Others

Output per week per employee working with the application

3 presentations   **5 documents**   **4 spreadsheets**   **119 emails**

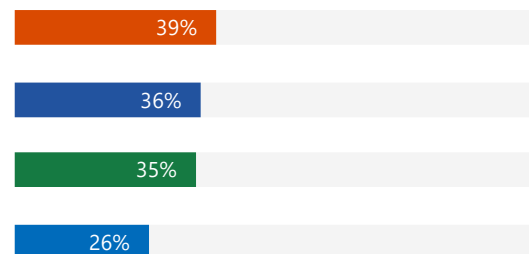
26 h
an employee works on average per week
with Office

34%
of time working with office an employee
spent on formatting on average

93%
need for automation

Most of all respondents rate their need for
automation as high. Only 7% think they do
not need automation.

Time spent with formatting per Office application

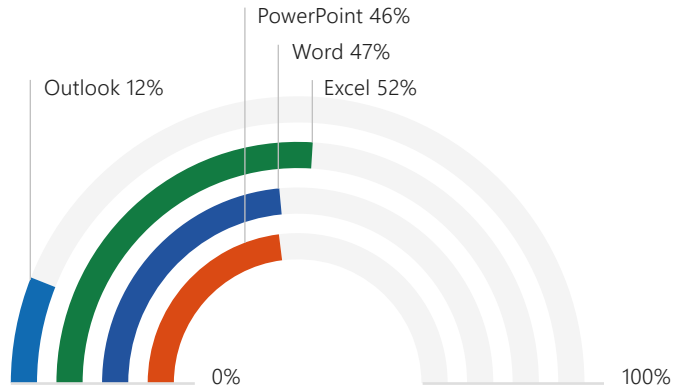|	
39%	
36%	
35%	
26%	

49%
of those surveyed also regularly work online with Office applications.

- presentations
- documents
- spreadsheets
- emails

Documents that are not compliant with corporate design

48%

Almost every second document is not brand compliant.

Outlook 12%
PowerPoint 46%
Word 47%
Excel 52%

0%   100%

Employees who work with Office applications
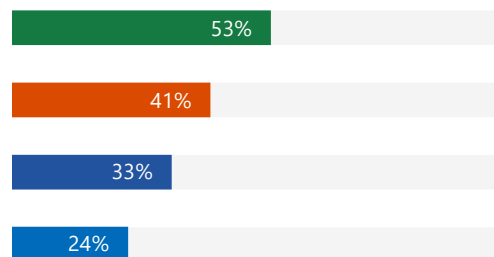
52%

87%

72%

57%

Average working hours per week per Office application

7 h

9 h

9 h

10 h
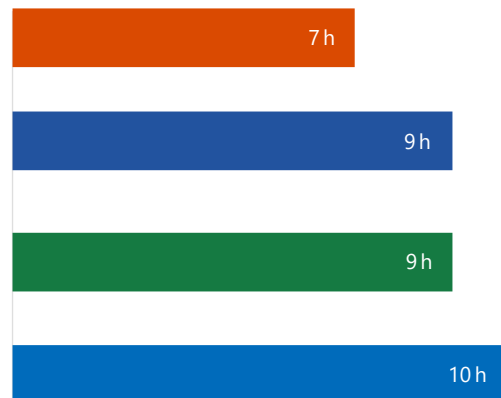
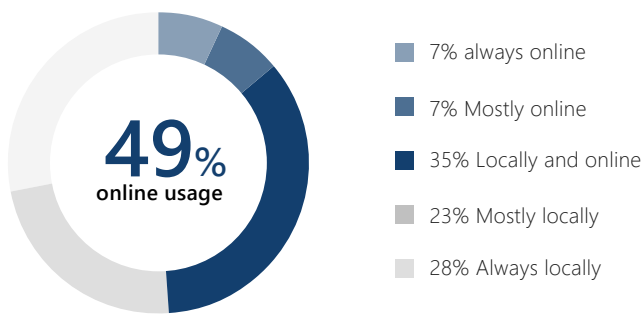## Need for training for all Office applications

76%

of those surveyed would like training for the Office applications

53%

41%

33%

24%

- presentations
- documents
- spreadsheets
- emails

Microsoft Office, the undisputed market leader

Whether writing a letter or preparing a balance sheet, presenting a new product or writing a simple email, Office applications are the preferred tools and leave alternatives like Google Docs far behind.

49% online usage

- 7% always online
- 7% Mostly online
- 35% Locally and online
- 23% Mostly locally
- 28% Always locally

Online Office gains traction

People increasingly use web applications on a variety of devices. In the period covered by the study in May 2020, 49% of those surveyed stated that they work online with MS Office applications.
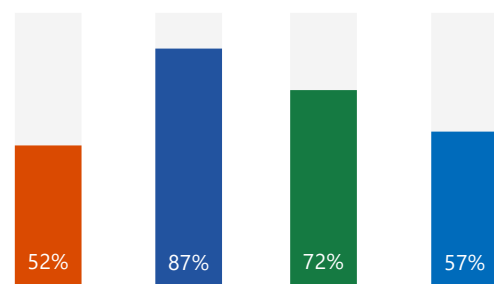
Office is at home in every office

All respondents use at least one of the four main applications. Almost all of them work with Word, a large proportion with Excel and over half with Outlook and PowerPoint.

Market shares of Office applications

80% MS-Office

- 13% Google Docs
- 4% Apple iWork
- 1% LibreOffice
- 2% Other
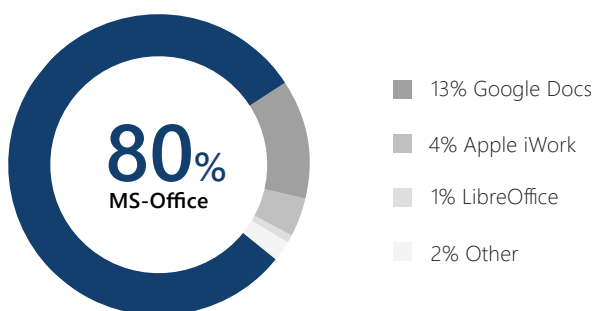
Respondents using Office application

- 52%
- 87%
- 72%
- 57%

■ presentations   ■ documents   ■ spreadsheets   ■ emails

Working with Office

Most employees consider Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook as constant companions. Nevertheless, the figures for MS Office time and productivity are astonishing. They emphasize the importance of closely examining how people actually work in Office to identify optimizations.

More than 50% of working time in MS Office per week

Almost every task in everyday office involves at least one of the MS Office applications. As soon as a computer is turned on, an Office program usually runs. In fact, people use each of the four applications an average of 7 to 10 hours per week, and spend more than half their total working time in Office.

7 h	9 h	9 h	10 h

Working time in MS Office per week
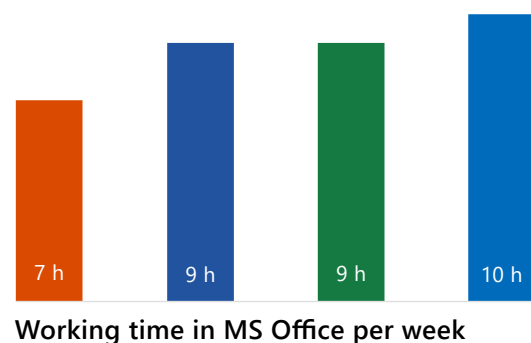
Number of created documents and mails

The quantitative output with Office is remarkable. On average, people send 119 Outlook emails every week, 37 of them mobile. In addition, they average 5 Word documents, 3 PowerPoint presentations, and 4 Excel sheets per week. Obviously, even small stumbling blocks and suboptimal processes can significantly impact everyone's working life.

Output per week per employee working with the application

3 presentations	5 documents	4 spreadsheets	119 emails

■ presentations   ■ documents   ■ spreadsheets   ■ emails

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Hidden time wasters

Complicated data models, elaborate reporting, complex subject areas: working well with Office requires careful concentration and often lots of time. It makes good business sense to identify and eliminate potential time wasters.
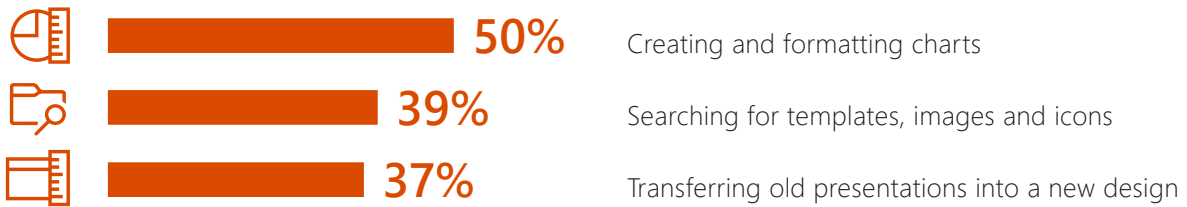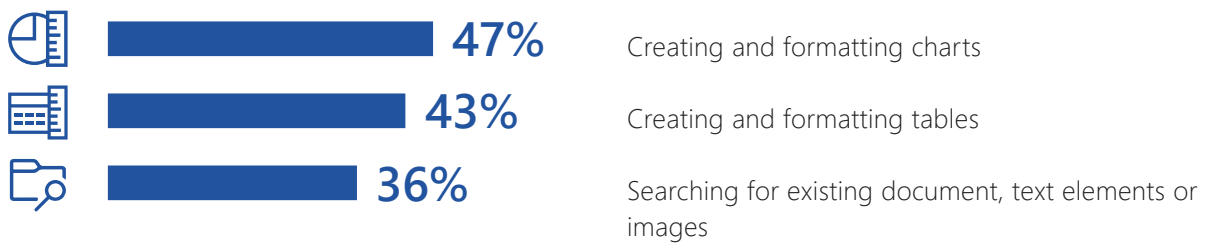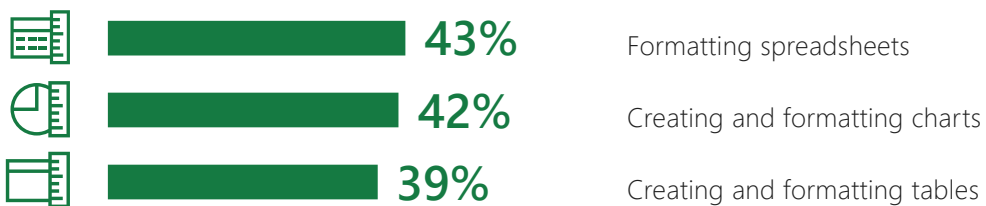
Formatting

Searching for elements

The biggest time wasters in PowerPoint

50% Creating and formatting charts

39% Searching for templates, images and icons

37% Transferring old presentations into a new design

The biggest time wasters in Word

47% Creating and formatting charts

43% Creating and formatting tables

36% Searching for existing document, text elements or images

The biggest time wasters in Excel

43% Formatting spreadsheets

42% Creating and formatting charts

39% Creating and formatting tables

The biggest time wasters in Outlook

36% Searching for existing emails and text templates

33% Other

25% Creating and formatting charts

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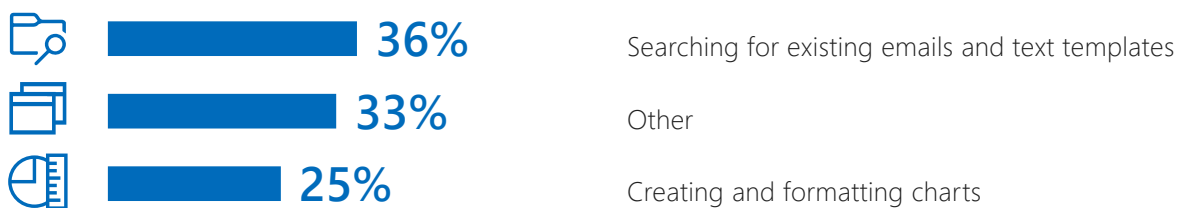
34%
formatting time

9 hours, more than a working day per week, on average an employee spends on formatting in all office applications.

Productivity enemy #1: Formatting

The study reveals the most impactful issue that reduces efficiency and productivity across all industries, fields of activity, and levels of professionalization: 34% of time spent in Office is lost on formatting tasks. An average office worker spends 9 hours a week adjusting fonts, selecting colors, standardizing spacing, etc. In those 9 hours, no content has been formulated, no sentence written, no email sent. People lose more than a whole working day every week to manual formatting. This time waster has great potential for optimization.
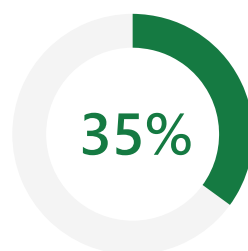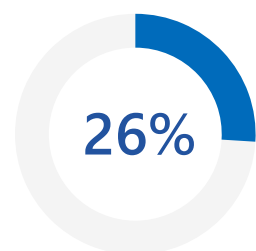
Time spent with formatting per Office application
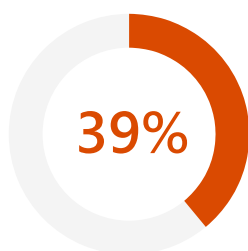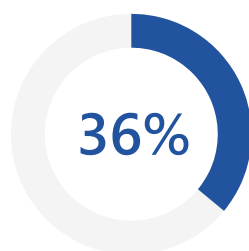
39%	36%	35%	26%
PowerPoint	Word	Excel	Outlook

42%
existing content

On average, 42% of documents are created based on an existing document and 29% of emails are based on an existing template.

Time consuming search

42% of documents are based on existing content and 29% of emails are created using a template. Rarely documts are created from scratch, so a second big time guzzler comes into play: searching for elements and files. Slides, Templates, images, and icons are often not stored centrally, and the latest versions of documents can be hard to find. Companies face serious consequences when people use out-of-date content and waste time trying to find it.

Documents that are created based on existing documents

32%	45%	45%	29%
presentations	documents	spreadsheets	emails

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Corporate design:
MS Office as brand ambassador

Every document and every email serves as an ambassador for the company. Logo placement, fonts and colors, layout - all these factors contribute to brand image, and to the value of the company.

External brand communication

Most Office documents do not remain solely internal at most companies. Almost 90% of those surveyed said that they send documents to external parties, 69% regularly. That highlights the importance of good, uniform design in public-facing work product.

69%
of employees regularly share documents
to external parties

17%
of employees rarely share
documents to external parties

14%
of employees never share
documents to external parties

Design often inconsistent

Most people understand the importance of design guidelines. Almost all respondents said that compliance with corporate design is important to them, and more than a half of all respondents feel that it is very important. So it comes as a surprise that the study shows widespread failures in actual compliance: almost every second document and one third of all emails from smartphones do not comply with corporate design.
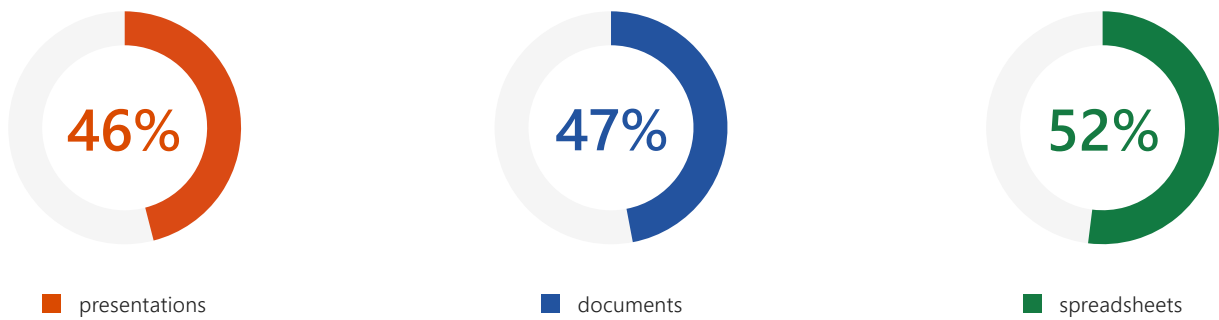
Familiarity with corporate design guidelines

73%

Perceived relevance of corporate design

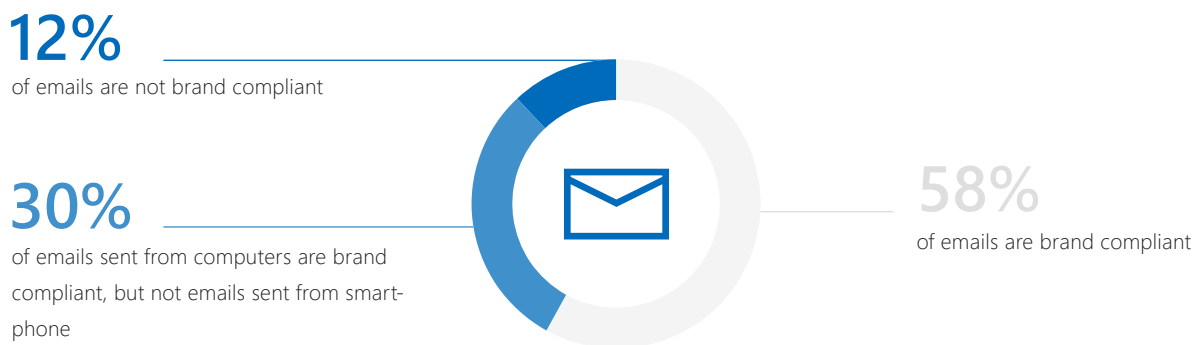**98%** of respondents said that the compliance with corporate design is important to them.

Need for action in brand communication

The sobering conclusion: About 40% of all documents convey a bad brand image to the outside world - even though employees understand the issue and spend many precious hours on formatting tasks.

Documents that are not compliant with corporate design

46%

■ presentations

47%

■ documents

52%

■ spreadsheets

Compliance with corporate design of emails

12%
of emails are not brand compliant

30%
of emails sent from computers are brand compliant, but not emails sent from smart-phone

58%
of emails are brand compliant
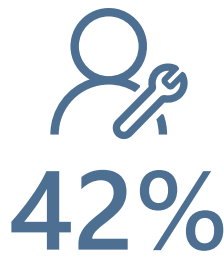
48%
of documents are not brand compliant

86%
of documents are externally shared
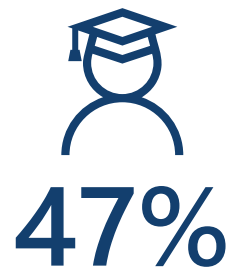
Eagerness to use Office even better

The study shows that employees would like to optimize their daily work with Office. They need continuous skills improvement through trainings and the assistance of automation integrated in Office.
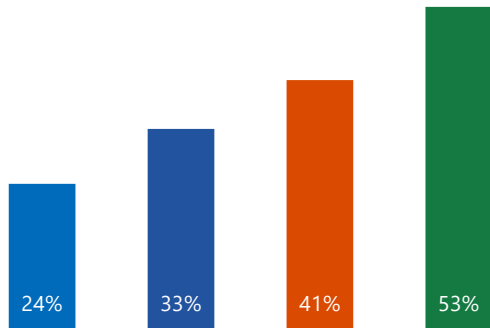
9%
Beginner

42%
Intermediate

47%
Expert

Training needed per Office application

24%	33%	41%	53%

- ■ Outlook
- ■ Word
- ■ PowerPoint
- ■ Excel

Need for automation in MS Office

35%	43%	15%	7%

- ■ High
- ■ Medium
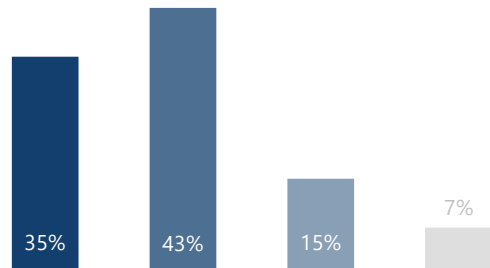- ■ Low
- ■ None

76%
## need for training

93%
need for automation

Training in high demand

42% of those surveyed stated that they had advanced knowledge in using Office, almost half classified themselves as experts, and only a small proportion as beginners. Nevertheless, most want to improve their knowledge and skills: 76% of those surveyed would like additional training in Office applications.
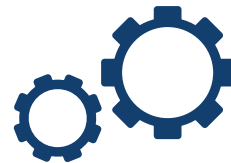
High demand for automation

Our previous Office study from 2014 showed that 35% of work with Office applications consists of repetitive activities. That is an important finding, because many of these tasks could be made easier or even completed automatically. In fact, employees express a strong desire for automation: almost 88% of those surveyed rated the need as high or medium.

Results and solutions

The US Office Study makes one thing clear: Every company needs to examine how its people use Office, because it has a major impact on the company's overall success. Two key points stand out:

- Formatting tasks are the biggest time wasters.
- Compliance with corporate design often fails.

The empower® suite supports you in counteracting these problems. empower® enhances Office as true productivity asset: a powerful tool that streamlines complex work with just a few clicks and automates recurring tasks. As an alternative to costly and time-consuming training in native MS Office functionality, empower® integrates seamlessly with Office and makes it more intuitive and user-friendly:

easy

A company-wide library makes all up-to-date slides, templates, and signatures available within Office itself.

efficient

With numerous productivity tools, automation, and template libraries, empower® saves at least 22% of time working in Office.

brand compliant

Improve compliance with design guidelines by more than 50% by integrating the company's style guide directly into Office, along with design checks that verify compliance.

What our customers say about working with empower®

We asked customers in different industries that had between 500 to more than 50,000 employees representing 200,000 users about their experience with empower®.

Our customers, without exception, agree that empower® helps them improve performance by enabling them to create presentations/documents faster, to have more time for content development and to convince with more professional presentations/documents.

More compliance with corporate design

25%
Many presentations (>50-75%) are more brand compliant thanks to empower®.

27%
Some presentations (>25-50%) are more brand compliant thanks to empower®.

49%
Almost all presentations are more brand compliant thanks to empower® (>75-100%).

Increased productivity

27%
10-20% time saving when using empower®.

73%
20-30% time saving when using empower®.

+50%
more brand compliance

+22%
increased productivity

empower