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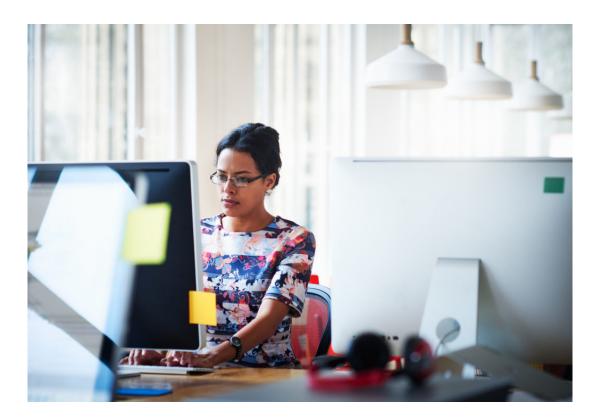
Home & business productivity, Social services

The state of public sector workloads: How admin tasks are affecting professionals today

Nuance Communications

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Few public services could operate as effectively as they do without all the admin work that goes on in the background. But too often, that admin work leads to overstretched and overworked public sector professionals. In our recent survey of more than 100 public sector professionals in Australia, we explored how administration tasks truly affect people in the sector today and identified opportunities for public sector leaders to help relieve the burden on their teams using speech recognition. We've captured some of the highlights below.

After two especially challenging years for public sector organisations, the pressure isn't getting any lighter. Many organisations are still managing the effects of the pandemic, while tackling age-old challenges such as tightened budgets, limited resources, and growing demand from citizens.

Too often, public sector professionals take the growing burden of these sector-wide pressures. In our recent survey of more than 100 professionals in the sector, more than half said they'd taken on extra responsibilities to support their organisation during the pandemic—and 92% also said these new responsibilities had increased their workload.

If public sector organisations are to retain their skilled professionals and boost productivity in their teams

over the next year, they'll need to consider where they can better support their employees in their day-to-day roles.

Admin workloads contribute to public sector stress

Administration tasks are a crucial part of almost every public sector role, helping ensure services run smoothly, teams work efficiently, and public needs are met.

But as demand for public services scales, the administration workload scales with it. More than three quarters of respondents said they'd experienced work-related stress at some point in their careers—and 67% claimed their admin workload contributes to their stress.

Unexpected events like the pandemic and natural disasters only increase these workloads further, often putting huge additional pressure on public sector professionals at short notice. For example, the Australian Public Service Commission reported that the higher demand on its services during the pandemic was largely met through longer hours, less leave, and reliance on proven performers.

Of course, many events like these can't be predicted and solved before they happen. But by addressing some of the challenges in professionals' everyday responsibilities, public sector leaders can equip their teams with the tools they need to respond effectively.

Public sector professionals' typing time is holding them back

One of the biggest workload challenges public sector professionals face is the sheer amount of time spent typing. The survey revealed that 70% of public sector employees spend at least four hours a day typing for work, with 58% spending a further hour or more typing for personal reasons once the workday ends.

Looking more closely at this time spent typing, the survey revealed that report writing took up the most time in public sector professionals' roles, closely followed by internal correspondence. Filling out forms and note taking also made the top five typing tasks.

These tasks can't just be removed from the working day, and over a quarter of public sector professionals reported the struggle to complete them quickly was due to their typing speed. 40% of respondents said their typing speed was either average—at 40 words per minute—or slow.

So with public sector professionals at their typing limits, and workloads showing no signs of slowing down, how can organisation leaders ease the burden on their employees?

Speech recognition offers a solution—but it's misunderstood in the sector

Some forward-thinking public sector organisations are helping their employees spend less time typing with speech recognition solutions, enabling professionals to complete documentation faster using speech-to-text.

However, many public sector organisations have been slow to adopt the technology—mostly due to a lack of experience with professional-grade speech recognition tools. The survey revealed that despite all respondents stating they've used voice-based technologies of some kind professionally, only 13% were using speech recognition where their spoken words appeared on the screen immediately.

In many cases, the reluctance to embrace speech recognition professionally was due to the respondents' previous experience with tools that weren't fit for purpose. In fact, 67% of public sector professionals said the speech recognition tools they've encountered in the past struggled to recognise the specialist terms they use at work.

Public sector leaders do have an opportunity to help their teams complete administration workloads more efficiently and deliver more effective services—but if they're to convince their professionals of speech recognition's potential, they'll need to find the right solution.

Learn how the right speech recognition tool can help

your team

Explore the report to see the complete results from the survey, and understand the administration pressures public sector professionals are facing today.

You'll also get an insight into how professional-grade speech recognition tools like Dragon Professional Anywhere can help your teams reduce their reliance on typing, tackle their admin tasks more efficiently, and focus on delivering standout services to the Australian public.

Tags: Dragon Professional Anywhere, Documentation burden, Government, Citizen experiences

More Information

Read the complete report

Explore how admin workloads are affecting the sector and how you can better support your team throughout their daily responsibilities.

Download