

Overcoming Productivity Problems:

TREND Networks Cable Certifier Survey 2020

Research conducted by TREND Networks recently identified the most common challenges that installation companies faced when certifying cable and what they feel would help them overcome these. In short, installers want to:

- **Save time** throughout the certification process, including set up, testing, and producing reports
- **Solve problems** caused by complicated set-up and incorrectly configured testers that can otherwise result in call backs
- **Improve collaboration** between Field Technicians and Project Managers, so results can be submitted quicker, and jobs billed (and paid) sooner
- **Increase productivity**, ultimately equating to saving money and adding to the bottom line

With productivity so important for those certifying cable, in 2020 TREND Networks conducted additional research into how the right cable certifiers can overcome this challenge.

This paper shares the results of that survey and shows that with the right certifier **installers can increase productivity by 53%**.

About the survey

The survey in April 2020 asked more than 160 users of the TREND Networks LanTEK IV Cable Certifier in the US and Europe what increase in productivity they have experienced with LanTEK IV compared to their previous certifier. Follow up questions then investigated what factors contributed to the user's productivity level, and why.

The majority (64%) of those surveyed had been using a LanTEK IV certifier for between 1 and 6 months and the research included installers certifying cable to serve a number of different industries including Data Cable Installation, Security, System Integration, Data Centre, AV Installation, IT Support and Industrial.

62% of the survey sample had switched from previously using testers from brands such as Softing or Fluke Networks. Of these, **80%** were former users of Fluke DTX or DSX products. The remaining **38%** were first time purchasers or had upgraded their certifier from TREND Networks' previous generation LanTEK certifiers.

The participants in the research were from businesses ranging in size, but on average, installing around 10,000 links per year. The survey also showed that installers employ a total of 13 technicians or 6 teams when testing, on average.

How to increase productivity by up to 53%

It doesn't take an extensive survey to discover that if you can do something faster but at the same, or even better, standard that productivity will increase. Therefore, finding ways to save time on each test is critical for enhancing overall operational efficiency in cable installation companies.

This is especially true for cable installers as not only do two different people have to wait for each test to be completed, but when you have hundreds or thousands of links to test, every extra second quickly adds up.

Therefore, it is no surprise that **74% of respondents to the survey found that the 7 second test time for Cat6A possible with LanTEK IV has a high or very high impact on their productivity.**

Of course, test time varies depending on the class or category of cable being tested and measurements included, so it is very important to note and understand all of these differences.

However, if we consider that the average Technician installs 10,000 links per year, those switching from some other certifiers could save as much as 56 hours of labour per year in test time alone (based on 2 people testing). With an average of 13 technicians or six teams employed when testing, this could add up to a saving of 336 hours across the business. That is the equivalent of having an extra technician for more than 2 months every year, simply as a result of using LanTEK IV to certify cable.

A new way of working

The survey showed that another significant factor contributing to the significant increase in productivity when switching to a LanTEK IV certifier is the VisiLINQ permanent link adapters. Completely unique to TREND Networks, these adapters feature a switch and a status indicator light at the end of the permanent link adapter, making it faster and exponentially easier to test cabling.

Users simply illuminate, plug-in, activate and see results – everything needed to operate the certifiers and verify results is in the palm of the user's hand. Simplifying this process has an understandable impact, with **64% of survey respondents stating that using VisiLINQ has a high or very high impact on their productivity.**

In addition, **55% of those surveyed said that the LanTEK IV's easy to use touchscreen interface had a high or very high impact on their productivity.** This has been designed based on process mapping of customer workflow to reduce the number of inputs required to set up a project to just 15 – with other testers, this can be more than 100. Less inputs not only means quicker set-up, but also reduces the chance of mistakes, ultimately increasing productivity.

Silver linings with TREND AnyWARE Cloud

When LanTEK IV was launched, it was accompanied by a new test management system – TREND AnyWARE Cloud. This software platform, hosted by Microsoft Azure, operates simply and reliably anywhere with a web browser on a tablet or PC, so no time is wasted installing new software onto a desktop and no extra hardware is required. Data storage is also completely free.

But how does this cloud-based test management system support productivity? One important way is the capability around customisable metadata (test & job data) functions. These can significantly decrease the amount of time and steps needed to create projects and test IDs. Users also fed back that side by side comparisons proved simpler with TREND AnyWARE Cloud and that data entry was faster, saving valuable time before testing begins.

These are some of the reasons why **59% of customers said that TREND AnyWARE Cloud had a high or very high impact on their productivity.**

Reducing the risk of errors

From years of research, it was already evident that cable installers were keen to reduce mistakes and errors, especially those resulting in call-backs. These scenarios impact both the efficiency and the profitability of the job, so avoiding errors is vital for more productive operations.

In the survey, **55% of respondents agreed that the pre-configuration features of TREND AnyWARE Cloud had a high or very high impact on their productivity.** This functionality enables Project Managers to pre-configure all project information in the TREND AnyWARE Cloud, ready for Field Technicians to simply download the project to the LanTEK IV.

It ensures consistency across the project (and across different projects), eliminating any mistakes from manual data entry, thereby reducing the chance of having to return to the job site to re-test.

What's more, the process makes it easier and faster for technicians, who simply download the project and start testing as soon as they're on site.

But what if there are issues on site? In the past, if issues couldn't be resolved immediately, then the technician would inevitably have to return to the job site, proving costly and inefficient. Team Viewer on LanTEK IV certifiers provides the solution to this common challenge.

This innovative functionality enables Project Managers, Cable Manufacturers, or TREND Networks Technical Support Engineers to remotely access the tester to provide support and quickly resolve troubleshooting issues. Those using Team Viewer fed back that being able to collaborate and resolve issues as if they are all on the job site together

brings big productivity benefits. **40% of respondents said Team Viewer had a high or very high impact on their productivity.**

The right tools for the job

The customer survey proves that all of the features of LanTEK IV and the TREND AnyWARE Cloud combine to offer significant productivity gains. However, businesses can only be sure to reap the benefit if installers and technicians have access to correctly calibrated, working certifiers with the right accessories for the task in hand.

To ensure productive cable installation operations can keep running without disruption, 31% of respondents agreed that the Sapphire Care Plan for LanTEK IV provides protection from costly unexpected repairs, and 19% confirmed that it has helped them to minimise downtime.

The Sapphire Care Plan includes an extended list of free accessories to help those looking to expand their testing range to include MPTL and other test types and includes a warranty that offers complete protection for key certifier tools. As a result, **one third of those surveyed describe it as good value for money.**

Pinpointing productivity gains

Employee costs, quantity and age of testers, volume of tests per day, test type, label printing and frequency of any issues will all differ between cable installers, so the exact productivity gains from switching to LanTEK IV will always vary depending on the particular business.

That said, our survey confirms that the LanTEK IV cable certifier and TREND AnyWARE Cloud are shown to provide improved ways of working that save time, solve problems, increase collaboration, and, above all, significantly boost productivity with many different types of users.

Contact TREND Networks to request a Cost of Ownership review with our specially developed calculator tool. See the specific benefits switching to LanTEK IV could bring based on real data from your business.

To learn more, visit www.trend-networks.com or email uksales@trend-networks.com

Ends - 1505 Words