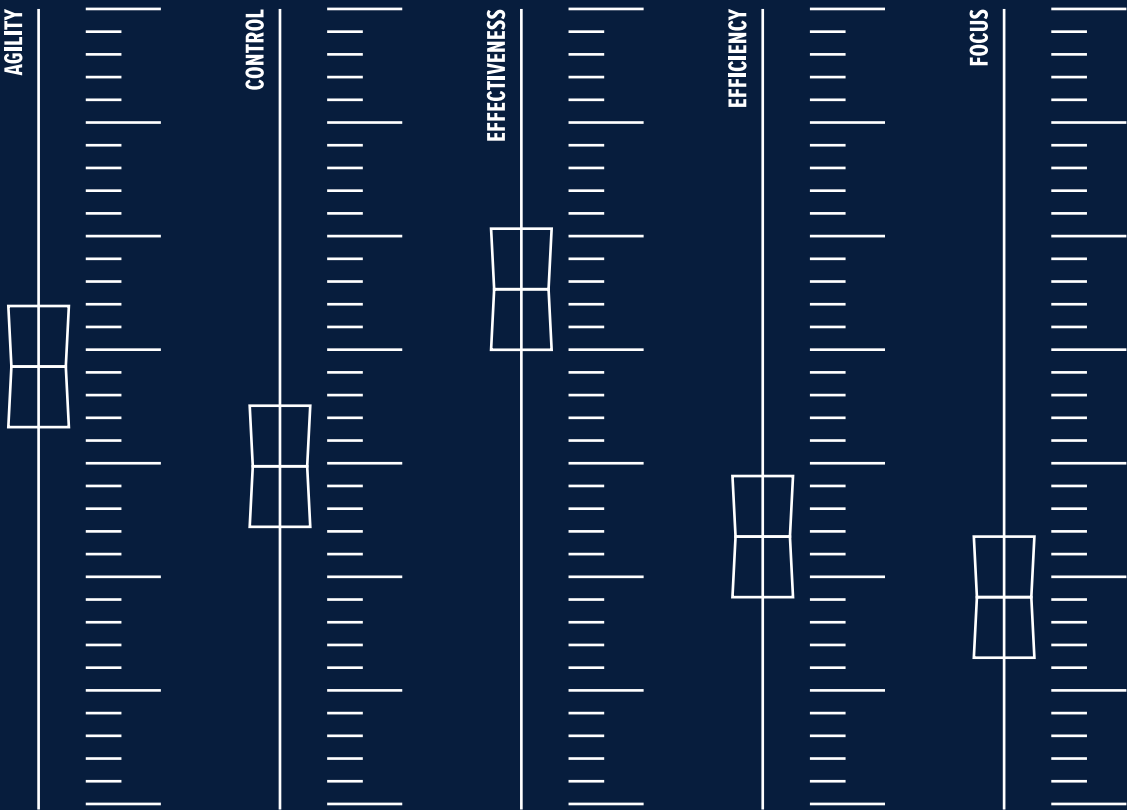


PERFORMANCE TRACKER FOR OPERATIONS

Financial Services



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Transformation initiatives often flop—not because organizations aren’t investing in digital tools, but because the execution part is lacking.

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Foreword



IAN CARTER
HEAD OF INSIGHT & INNOVATION, ACTIVEOPS

Welcome to the latest edition of the OpsTracker – the ActiveOps Performance Tracker for Operations – designed for Executives leading operations in financial services and business outsourcers.

After finishing last year in a stronger position than where they started, all regions continued that momentum across the opening six months of the year. The pace, however, varied in the second quarter—hinting at possible challenges ahead for the rest of 2025.

The UK & Ireland and Australia & New Zealand saw strong acceleration in Q2. In contrast, North America’s early-year surge slowed, likely held back by uncertainty following Donald Trump’s early-April tariff announcements.

Given this unsettled environment, organizations across all regions will likely face planning challenges in the months ahead. Trade tensions and tariff uncertainty are already weighing on economic activity, making it essential for operations leaders to anticipate workload shifts and ensure they have the right resources in place.

This is a theme we explore in this issue of the OpsTracker, with many organizations continuing to struggle to translate their huge investment in tech and digitalization into improved operational performance.

In his Op-Ed, ActiveOps Executive Chair, Richard Jeffery, shines a spotlight on why transformation initiatives often

flop—not because organizations aren’t investing in digital tools, but because the execution part is lacking. In many cases, data remains fragmented, and organizations continue to rely on outdated processes, thinking they can merely add a layer of automation on top.

Also in this issue, Bhavesh Vaghela, CMO at ActiveOps, recalls his recent Ops Game Changers podcast with CIBC Mellon’s Chief Client Officer Richard Anton and why organizations need to reframe the meaning of operational excellence by putting people and purpose at the center of their transformation efforts.

Lesley Lawrence, Managing Director Canada at ActiveOps shares her opinion on Canada’s productivity problem, why the issue may not be as negative as some of the numbers say and why operations hold the key.

Finally, Stuart Pugh, Chief Product Officer at ActiveOps, revisits the British & Irish Lions’ recent success in Australia and draws parallels between optimizing human performance in sports and service operations through the use of data-driven Decision Intelligence.

We hope the insights in this issue can help you along on your journey to achieving operational excellence. Thank you for reading, and we look forward to continuing the conversation next time.

Executive Summary

Organizations globally are pouring millions of dollars into business transformation programs, but all too frequently those projects run aground and end up being shelved. As ActiveOps Executive Chair Richard Jeffery notes in this issue of OpsTracker, businesses may invest in tech tools but often fall into the trap of thinking “digital = done.”

In many cases, there is a lack of integration, which means insights are unconnected. This is critical because if ops leaders cannot monitor what is going on with any clarity in a timely manner, the risk of something going wrong is high. Ultimately, the need to fix any issues might only become visible after it's too late to prevent them, which can be costly for the business reputation and bottom line.

To tackle this, organizations need to invest in advanced technology that uses data and analytics in a connected way to show how their business is operating in real time, ensuring there is a robust early warning system in place so organizations can address problems before they escalate. This can help ops leaders, and their operations improve control levels and make faster, more informed operational decisions.

In this latest edition of the Performance Tracker for Operations we review OpsIndex data for the first half of the year and look ahead at the opportunities and challenges that ops leaders will likely face for the remainder of 2025.

The OpsIndex aggregates the data of thousands of operations functions worldwide to analyze how organizations are running their operations according to five key metrics – agility, control, effectiveness, efficiency, and focus – giving an overall score.

The UK and Ireland OpsIndex rose to 56.4 in Q2 from 55 at the end of last year, driven by gains in agility, control and effectiveness in the second quarter. North America also gained significantly in the first half of the year, rising to 60.7 from 57.4 in Q4 last year, albeit most of those gains were recorded in the first quarter ahead of US President Donald Trump's tariff announcements. Australia and New Zealand completed a clean sweep of first half performance gains, rising to 62.1 from 59.4 at the end of 2024.

TRENDS TO WATCH



ORGANIZATIONS TO FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY GAINS

Efficiency levels stalled in the UK & Ireland, fell in North America, and only marginally grew in Australia & New Zealand—highlighting the challenge of unlocking extra capacity and improving productivity. This stems partly from underinvestment in automation, leaving staff with unnecessary manual tasks. More organizations are recognizing the need to invest in automation the right way, so that ops workers can free up time to focus on more complex work, helping boost efficiency levels.

AI INVESTMENT IS GOING TO RAMP UP

Advances in AI are going to reshape the operations function. A report from the World Economic Forum earlier this year highlighted that healthcare and banking have the highest potential for AI automation, with financial services firms already spending \$35 billion on AI back in 2023¹¹—a number that is expected to grow further as the tech matures and use cases increase. With ops leaders looking for ways to boost efficiency, AI technology can help streamline processes but also generate actionable, timely insights that can aid smarter and speedier decision-making, helping organizations unlock the next tier of performance gains.

DATA-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION IS KEY

The reason many transformation programs fail is because organizations often don't have the operational insights and Decision Intelligence tools, they need to track how changes are impacting the business in real time. By investing in advanced tech and data, ops leaders can monitor transformation efforts at every step in the process — from identifying the right opportunities to assessing the results. This will ensure any changes do not adversely impact on how the business is operating, giving them the opportunity to pause and adjust direction if needed.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE MEANS CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING

Striving for operational excellence is always top of mind for ops leaders, but the challenge is often trying to define what it really means for their organization. At its core, it is about a disciplined commitment to reviewing and refining processes, ensuring operating models remain efficient, productive, and fit for purpose. Transformation should be seen as a continuous cycle of improvement that is driven by the goal of working more effectively, not just cutting costs.

REIMAGINING OPERATIONS WITH PEOPLE AND PURPOSE

While tech and automation can help streamline workflows, people remain at the heart of service operations. CIBC Mellon's Chief Client Officer Richard Anton stresses the importance of empowering employees to innovate and adopt new ways of working. Successful change is framed as a long-term journey where wellbeing, development, and purpose are critical success factors. When organizations recognize and reward ideas beyond financial savings, staff are more engaged and invested—leading to stronger outcomes for both people and the business.

SPOTLIGHT

RICHARD JEFFERY
EXECUTIVE CHAIR, ACTIVEOPS



Digital Doesn't Mean Done: The Operational Failure Behind SLA Breaches

Despite spending billions on AI, automation, and digital transformation, banks and insurers around the world are still falling short of delivering on their most basic promises. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are missed. Customers are left waiting. Regulators are losing patience. And yet, the industry has never had more tools, or more data, at its disposal.

Globally, enforcement actions against banks and insurers have surged. In the U.S., regulators handed out over \$4.6 billion in financial penalties last year, largely for failings in AML and transaction monitoring, according to Fenergo.^[2] In the UK, SteelEye data shows FCA fines grew by 230% year over year, while in Australia, enforcement is rising in lockstep with growing scrutiny on how claims are handled and SLAs are measured.^[3] Thailand is now mandating that insurers publicly disclose their SLA timeframes. These statistics are more than just headlines. They signal that regulators are no longer satisfied with good intentions. They want control, transparency and evidence that financial firms can deliver predictably and equitably.

This paradox is one of the biggest themes we see in this edition of the OpsTracker. Across North America, Canada, EMEA, and APAC, financial institutions are continuing to experience breakdowns in service, compliance failures, and operational misfires. The intent is there. The investment is real. But the outcomes aren't keeping up.

Here's why these challenges persist, and how organizations could address them.

Tech isn't the Issue - execution is

What we're seeing isn't a failure of innovation. It's a failure of integration. Data is fragmented. Automation is layered on top of broken processes. Compliance is retrofitted, not embedded. And critically, many organizations are still measuring time and volume only, not effort—missing early indicators of where things will go wrong. It's also a cultural challenge. SLA ownership is often unclear. Risk, compliance, ops, and tech teams aren't pulling together. And many transformation initiatives fall into the trap of thinking "digital = done".

The impact across markets

The breakdown plays out differently depending on the region. In the U.S., for example, onboarding delays, fraud detection gaps, and claims resolution failures continue to draw regulatory fire, while in Canada, regulatory authorities have flagged gaps in timeliness and transparency across both banking complaints handling and insurance claim turnarounds—highlighting a growing expectation for end-to-end SLA accountability.

In EMEA, GDPR compliance and cross-border claims visibility are under the microscope. And in APAC, operational maturity is uneven, and institutions are being pressed to demonstrate SLA performance in more transparent and customer-focused ways. Yet, regardless of location, the root cause is the same: a lack of connected control and accountability.

“

Organizations need to get better at making operational decisions—early, intelligently, and with confidence.

”

What needs to change

Organizations need to get better at making operational decisions—early, intelligently, and with confidence. The problem isn't lack of data; it's that the data doesn't come together in a way that enables real-time, cross-functional action.

Too often, the focus is on output volume and task-based metrics, when what's needed is a view of operational effort. Without understanding how much effort is required to meet service-level obligations, teams are left reacting after the damage is already done. This is where many transformation programs fall short: not in intent, but in foresight. What's missing is an early warning system, a way to predict where SLAs will be breached, and to act before performance deteriorates.

Technology has a key role to play here, particularly when it's used to combine AI-driven forecasting with human insight and accountability.

In practice, this means using data not just to understand what has happened, but to anticipate trends and act proactively. The goal is to combine insights from past performance with forward-looking analysis to enable better operational decisions.

Where we go from here

This reflection is not just a critique, it's part of a wider conversation across the industry. It's a call to focus on the basics and the hard operational questions that matter most: Are we in control of what's happening in real time? Do we know when we're about to miss a promise? Are we holding ourselves accountable for fixing it before it's too late?

The challenge may not be the tools themselves, but how organizations bring them together in practice. With the right set of connected data, the proper visibility, and the right mindset—we can answer yes.

Operational resilience and accountability are no longer optional. They are the measures by which regulators, customers, and boards will judge success and the firms that connect foresight with execution will set the new benchmark for operational excellence.

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OpsIndex Performance Across Regions

UK & IRELAND



The UK and Ireland's OpsIndex score improved in the first half of the year, rising to 56.4 from 55 at the end of last year and above where it was at this stage in the calendar 12 months ago (55.7). Those gains were driven by performance in the second quarter, with agility, control and effectiveness levels all trending upwards. Productivity remains a drag, however, and is an area for ops leaders to focus on given the broader operating backdrop of slower growth and rising inflation expectations that could weigh on demand, potentially resulting in overcapacity and too much idle time for workers.

NORTH AMERICA



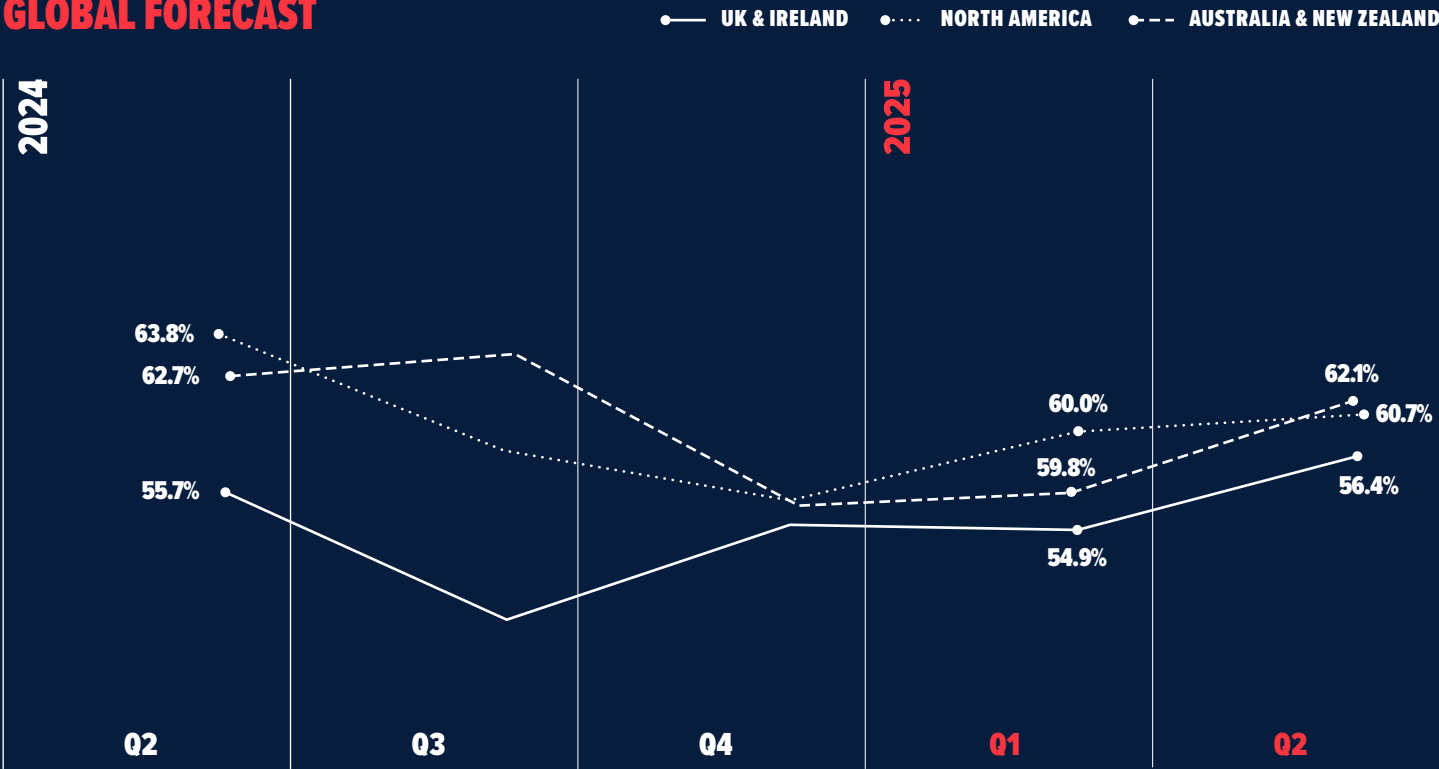
North America's OpsIndex score was sharply higher during the first six months of the year, rising to 60.7 from 57.4 at the end of last year. In contrast to the UK and Ireland, those performance gains were mostly racked up in the opening quarter (rising to 60), pushed higher by improved efficiency and work out per paid hour levels. All of that came before US President Donald Trump announced a deluge of tariffs in April, which has resulted in increased economic uncertainty and planning challenges for businesses. With the path ahead unclear, ops leaders need to ensure agility and control levels are optimized to manage any sudden shifts in workloads given the evolving tariff environment.

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



The Australia and New Zealand region saw its OpsIndex score continue to increase during the first half of the year, rising to 62.1 from 59.4 at the end of 2024—albeit remaining slightly below where it was this point last year (62.7). Like the UK and Ireland, much of that performance was achieved during the second quarter, supported by improvements in control, efficiency and focus levels. And like the UK and Ireland, that has come against the backdrop of weak economic prospects in both Australia and New Zealand. With volumes likely to be harder to predict in the coming months, ops leaders may need to focus on agility levels (which are lower than all other regions).

GLOBAL FORECAST



UK & Ireland



The UK and Ireland saw its OpsIndex score rise over the first half of the year, driven by stronger performance in the second quarter—jumping to 56.2 from 55 at the end of last year.

Those gains over the first half of the year have been supported by improved agility, control and effectiveness levels, though it is coming against a backdrop of slow economic growth in the country. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut its UK growth forecast for this year to 1.1% from 1.6% at its last estimate amid the fallout from US tariffs, inflationary pressures and higher borrowing costs.^[4] This is likely to have reduced inbound work volumes, which may have made it easier for ops teams to keep on top of work in progress—and may explain the challenges around efficiency, focus and work out per paid hour if ops teams are over-resourced.

Productivity in the UK more broadly remains sluggish, with private sector productivity dropping below pre-pandemic and pre-financial crisis levels last year, according to the Office for National Statistics, partly due to a lack of investment in capital spending and skills. The UK is weak compared to other countries, with GDP per hour worked about a fifth less than the US, OECD data shows. With the economic outlook subdued and companies feeling the pinch from tax rises in April, inbound work volumes are likely to be lower, meaning ops leaders may need to rethink how teams are resourced to ensure work is executed efficiently in the months ahead.

AGILITY – is higher quarter on quarter (QoQ) but broadly flat year on year (YoY), continuing the steady progress made since the third quarter of 2024 as organizations improve their ability to align resources to meet demand.

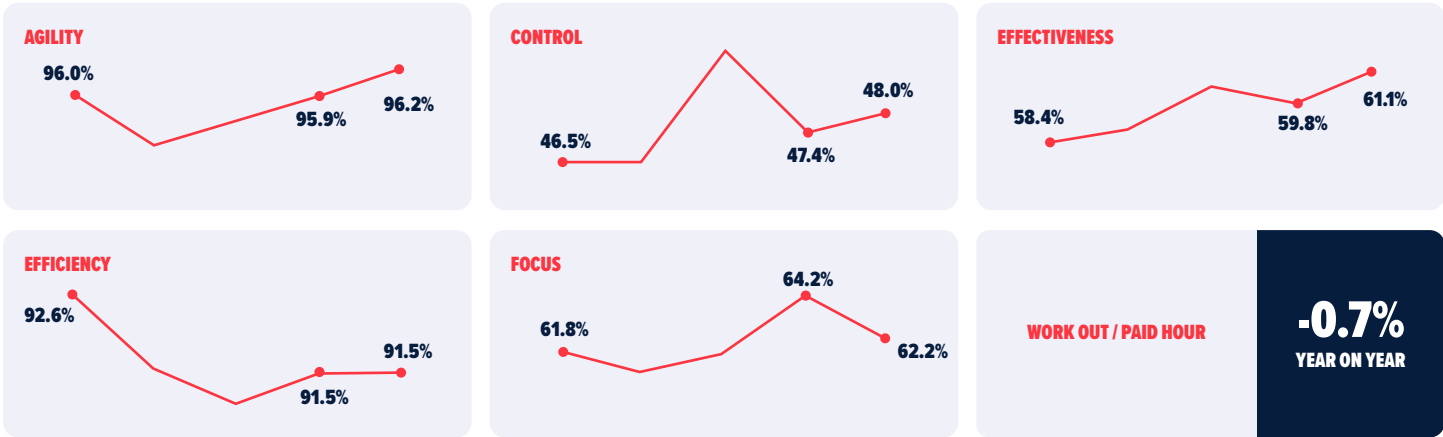
CONTROL – is higher QoQ and YoY, indicating ops teams are consistently meeting the goals they have been set.

EFFECTIVENESS – is higher QoQ and YoY, echoing the improvements in control and agility as teams keep work in progress on schedule.

EFFICIENCY – is unchanged QoQ but remains lower YoY, underscoring wider productivity challenges that is potentially being exacerbated by lower work volumes and over-resourcing.

FOCUS – is lower QoQ but marginally higher YoY, hinting that ops teams may have too much idle time from reduced inbound work.

WORK OUT PER PAID HOUR – is sharply lower QoQ and broadly flat YoY, reflecting the relatively weaker efficiency and focus scores.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

The positive opening of the year maintains the steady progress made in the latter half of 2024, though it still lags the North America and Australia and New Zealand regions. The improvements may also have been supported by reduced work volumes and teams not being stretched sufficiently given the softer efficiency and focus levels, meaning organizations are not getting the most value out of their workers. Against this backdrop, ops leaders need to focus on resource allocation and find ways to boost productivity levels in the second half of the year.

- ▶ The divergence between improved control and falling productivity levels may suggest teams are not being stretched enough, though summer

vacations may impact available capacity, so ops leaders may need to approach any tougher goal setting with this in mind.

- ▶ If focus is falling because of fluctuations in inbound work volumes, ops leaders should take the opportunity to upskill workers and improve employee capacity to handle a greater variety of work.
- ▶ Given challenges around efficiency and work out per paid hour, organizations need to ensure they are investing in AI and automation, focusing on the right opportunities to help ops teams be more efficient.

SPOTLIGHT

BHAVESH VAGHELA

OPS GAME CHANGERS PODCAST HOST & CMO, ACTIVEOPS



Continuous Improvement: Why Organizations Need to Reframe the Meaning of Operational Excellence

A fascinating transformation story from CIBC Mellon about how organizations can reimagine operations with people and purpose at the center.

“

Make continuous improvement, operational excellence, something that every employee is talking about versus the yearly financial target.

— Richard Anton, Chief Client Officer, CIBC Mellon

”

I recently had the pleasure of welcoming Richard Anton, Chief Client Officer at CIBC Mellon, onto the Ops Game Changers podcast. He shared how his teams have been reimaging operations through continuous improvement, purpose, and people.

For many, operational excellence is synonymous with automation and cost-cutting. But Richard has a different view. For him, it's about continuous improvement, about constantly questioning the way things are done, finding new opportunities to evolve, and empowering people to contribute to meaningful change.

Framing change beyond cost-cutting

To achieve meaningful change, ops leaders need to truly understand what individuals do and how work is managed day to day. Richard described how his team examined their operating models and broke down activities across teams. What they found will resonate with many leaders: some tasks existed not because they added value, but simply because “that’s how we’ve always done it.”

By challenging those assumptions, the team was able to redesign processes with purpose. One of the early goals was creating a paperless environment. This wasn’t just about saving cost, it was about reducing friction, freeing up capacity, and setting the business up for the future.

Richard emphasized that transformation cannot be framed purely as a cost-reduction exercise. While efficiency is often a byproduct, the true driver must be clients and people. By focusing on clients and people first, change became something his teams wanted to be part of, not something imposed on them.

Making data the foundation

Another theme Richard emphasized was the central role of data.

Historically, like many operations leaders, he and his team often relied on intuition to make decisions or manage bottlenecks. With the adoption of tools like ActiveOps, CIBC Mellon now has real-time visibility into performance data.

This shift has been transformative. Leaders no longer debate whose numbers are correct, they act on a single, trusted view. Problems can be spotted earlier, decisions are evidence-based, and conversations with executives are grounded in clarity rather than gut feel. That move from instinct to insight has fundamentally changed the way operations run and the way the business perceives the value of operations.

Looking to the future

Richard also shared his perspective on AI and its role in the future of operations. While many speculate about jobs being replaced, he believes financial services will always be a people business.

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AI will take on repetitive, manual tasks, allowing employees to focus on analysis, insights, and client engagement, the areas where human value is irreplaceable. The real opportunity lies in blending people and technology to create operations that are efficient, adaptable, and resilient.

Lessons for ops leaders

What struck me most in this conversation is how Richard framed operational excellence as a continuous journey, not a finish line. For leaders, this means creating the right conditions for ongoing improvement rather than chasing a one-off transformation.

I was equally inspired by his focus on reimagining processes with fresh eyes. So many tasks exist purely out of habit; questioning them unlocks real innovation and creates space for people to focus on what matters most.

And perhaps most importantly, Richard showed how data can become the bedrock of transformation. When leaders move from intuition to evidence, it not only builds confidence in decisions but also strengthens trust across teams and stakeholders.

This episode of the Ops Game Changers podcast is powerful reminder that operational excellence isn't about perfection. It's about adaptability, empowerment, and using data to drive smarter decisions. Richard's story at CIBC Mellon shows what's possible when leaders put people and purpose at the center of operations.

“

Data and insights are absolutely critical to telling the story of how successful the organization is continuously.

— Richard Anton, Chief Client Officer, CIBC Mellon

”

OPS GAME CHANGERS

Reimagining Operations with purpose and people at the center

with Richard Anton, Chief Client Officer, CIBC Mellon

WATCH EPISODE 11



North America



North America saw its OpsIndex score continue to rise in the first half of the year following the slump in performance in the second half of 2024, rising to 60.7 from 57.4 at the start of the year.

Most of those gains came in the first quarter, when there were significant improvements in efficiency and work out per paid hour levels (which then declined sharply in Q2). This performance has come amid a turbulent operating environment, fueled by US President Donald Trump’s tariff increases that have disrupted trade and raised prices for consumers (prices rose 2.7% in the year to June, from 2.4% a month earlier—the fastest pace of increases since February, according to the US Labor Department).^[5]

The US economy also shrank in the first quarter at an annualized 0.2%, largely attributed to a rise in imports ahead of Trump’s tariff announcement in early April.^[6] The IMF slashed its growth outlook for the country in response, forecasting growth of 1.8% this year compared to its previous prediction of 2.7% back in January.^[7]

This backdrop is likely to make inbound work volumes difficult to predict in the second half of the year given the uncertain outlook (and the rush of pre-tariff imports skewing the Q1 GDP numbers). This means ops leaders must ensure agility levels remain robust so they can flex as needed, while also addressing the decline in efficiency levels.

AGILITY – is marginally higher QoQ but lower YoY, suggesting ops leaders may need to do more to improve team flexibility given the more uncertain operating environment which will likely make volumes difficult to predict.

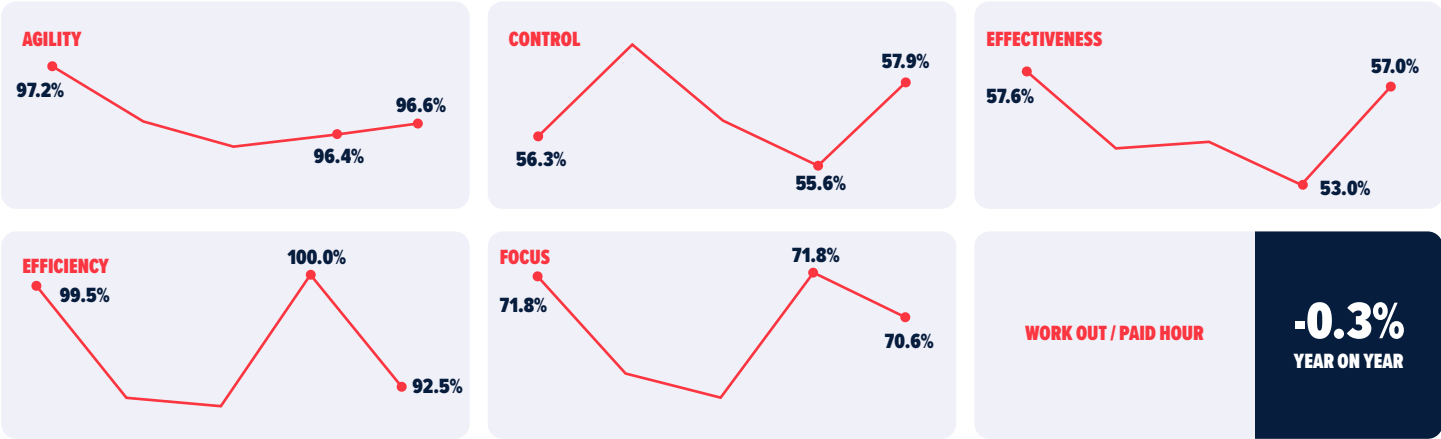
CONTROL – is higher QoQ and YoY, finally reversing the downward trend in control levels seen since the third quarter of last year.

EFFECTIVENESS – is higher QoQ but slightly lower YoY, indicating that teams were getting better at delivering against targets in the second quarter having fallen in the opening quarter of the year (possibly due to tariff-related uncertainty in 2Q and lower work volumes making it easier to keep pace with workloads).

EFFICIENCY – is lower QoQ and YoY, having notched a perfect score in the opening quarter (100), levels dropped sharply in Q2, possibly due to lower work volumes versus available capacity and organizations being stuck in tariff limbo.

FOCUS – is lower QoQ and YoY, mirroring the declines in efficiency levels, though it may have also been exacerbated by political distractions and external factors (Trump’s return, leadership change in Canada, broader geopolitical and trade tensions, and so on).

WORK OUT PER PAID HOUR – is lower QoQ but broadly flat YoY, reflecting the drop in efficiency and focus levels over the past quarter as uncertain operating conditions mean workers are not being pushed to their maximum potential.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

North America’s improved performance over the first half of the year was a tale of two quarters—perfect efficiency levels in the opening three months of the year were quickly erased in the second quarter as tariff uncertainty intensified following Trump’s ‘liberation day’ in early April. Given this backdrop, ops leaders may face a challenging second half of 2025 as the economic impacts of Trump’s tariff agenda become clearer. Improving agility levels to flex resources will be critical if work volumes remain unpredictable (which may ultimately hinge on any deals Trump strikes and what impact that has on individual organizations).

- ▶ North American ops teams have room to improve agility levels given

they were higher in the past—this will be especially important given the potential uncertainty in work volumes and the planning challenges that will create.

- ▶ Ops leaders in the region must seek to maintain 2Q’s improvement in control levels, particularly as tariff-related stresses may impact planning confidence.
- ▶ Ops teams need to increase resource allocation on core activities to improve focus levels, while AI and automation investment should help organizations improve efficiency levels.

SPOTLIGHT

LESLEY LAWRENCE

MANAGING DIRECTOR CANADA, ACTIVEOPS



Cracking Canada's Productivity Problem: Why Operations Hold the Key

Canada has a productivity problem. But is it really just a matter of investing more in technology, R&D, or industrial policy?

“

At the operational level—where people, processes, and capacity come together—the picture of productivity can look very different.

”

For over a decade, GDP per hour worked has lagged behind our G7 peers. Despite a highly educated workforce, growing employment, and rising investment in digital transformation, Canada now ranks 6th out of 7 in labor productivity among the G7 nations.^[8] The message from the OECD, Bank of Canada, and others is clear: if we don't improve productivity, we won't unlock the economic growth we need.

But here's an important caveat. How we measure productivity matters. National indicators like GDP per hour worked capture economic output at a macro level, but they don't always reflect what's happening inside organizations. At the operational level—where people, processes, and capacity come together—the picture of productivity can look very different. And that's where one of the biggest levers for change lies.

What the numbers say

Between 2015 and 2023, Canada's business-sector productivity grew at just 0.8% per year, well below the U.S. and the OECD average.^[9] The OECD's 2025 Economic Survey paints a nuanced picture: this isn't just a story of underinvestment or outdated infrastructure, it's a combination of structural, managerial, and technological challenges.

Fragmented markets reduce competitive pressure and slow innovation. Management practices often don't provide leaders with a clear view of how work is actually getting done. Capital investment per worker remains low, particularly in tools that support everyday decision-making. And while AI is often framed as a solution, adoption in Canada lags behind other countries, with only 12% of firms reporting AI integration into operations.^[10] ICT investment also lags, with Canada spending just 2.5% of GDP, compared to 3.7% in the U.S.^[11]

But technology alone isn't the solution. While AI offers theoretical productivity boosts, those gains are rarely realized without the right operational structures in place. Studies show that when digital tools are deployed without workflow clarity, management capability, or aligned capacity, they can actually increase workload and slow teams down.

The real productivity gap? It's not just about tools, it's about execution. For example, only 8% of Canadian workers use employer-provided AI tools daily,^[12] and global surveys suggest that 77% of employees say AI tools have actually increased their workload or reduced productivity.^[13]

This is precisely why an operational lens matters. Traditional measures like GDP per hour worked capture productivity at a national level, but they often overlook the executional side of how work gets done inside organizations. The ActiveOps OpsIndex, which focuses specifically on operational performance, shows Canadian operations scoring 67.5 in Q2 2025—the highest among regions. That doesn't negate the broader productivity challenge, but it does suggest that within operations there is strength to build on, and a clear opportunity to translate those gains into wider economic impact.

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Productivity lives in Operations

Whether in financial services, the public sector, or beyond, the heart of the productivity challenge lies in how effectively organizations align people, processes, and capacity to the work that matters.

Leaders often want to improve performance but lack visibility into where time is going, which processes are slowing things down, and whether their teams are equipped to meet demand. This isn't just a data issue – it's a management issue. And it's costing productivity every day.

Turning Operations into an advantage

Across sectors such as financial services and the public sector, organizations are beginning to demonstrate what's possible when operations are treated as a strategic priority. The gains come not from chasing the next wave of technology alone, but from improving the fundamentals of how work gets done.

That starts with visibility and giving managers real-time insights into how work is flowing, where time is being spent, and how performance is trending. With that clarity, organizations can begin to optimize capacity, ensuring that the right people are matched to the right work at the right time, whether teams are hybrid, distributed, or in-office. It also means equipping managers to lead more effectively: helping them plan better, coach for performance, and upskilling their teams in ways that strengthen resilience over the long term. And crucially, it creates the conditions for technology to succeed. When AI or other digital tools are embedded into well-managed operations, they amplify productivity and drive real transformation; when layered on top of operational chaos, they can do the opposite.

At ActiveOps, we partner with service operations leaders across Canada and globally to solve this challenge. We help organizations move from reactive effort to proactive control, so they can achieve greater visibility, optimize capacity, develop management capability, and ensure technology investments deliver real value.

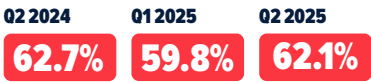
In the Canadian market, this approach has already delivered measurable outcomes: capacity utilization improving by more than 20 percent, backlogs and SLA breaches significantly reduced, employee experience and engagement strengthened, and organizations showing greater resilience when demand fluctuates.

These aren't theoretical gains. They're the outcome of putting operations at the center of productivity thinking.

If Canada wants to close its productivity gap, the answer won't come from one big policy fix or another wave of tech investment. It will come from focusing on the fundamentals of how work gets done, and equipping teams to do it better, every day. Operations are the engine rooms of the service economy. And right now, they represent one of the most overlooked opportunities to drive national productivity forward.

National measures may point to a gap, but operational measures reveal a strength to build from. At ActiveOps, we believe this is where the next leap will come from—not from theory, but from execution.

Australia & New Zealand



Australia and New Zealand’s OpsIndex score improved in the first half of the year, rising to 62.1 from 59.4 at the end of 2024—though it remains below the peak it hit in Q3 of 63.2.

Much of those performance gains were achieved in the second quarter of this year, reflecting improvements in control, efficiency and focus levels. That strong performance comes as Australia’s economic outlook remains tepid, with GDP expanding by just 0.2% in the opening quarter of the year (weighed down by tariff concerns and broader geopolitical worries). However, inflation fell to a three-and-a-half year low in May, raising the prospect of more rate cuts in a bid to fuel growth. Despite those expectations, Australia’s central bank unexpectedly kept rates on hold at its July meeting, pausing the loosening trend having lowered rates twice since February to 3.85%.

Meanwhile, New Zealand emerged from recession in the final quarter of last year, according to data published in March. The brighter outlook is likely to be tempered by concerns around global growth, however. Given this uncertain backdrop across both countries, just as in North America, organizations in the region need to focus on agility levels to maintain flexibility amid more unpredictable work volumes in the coming months.

AGILITY – is unchanged QoQ but lower YoY and lower than all other regions, underscoring a clear area for improvement given the uncertain operating environment and what that might mean for predicting resource needs.

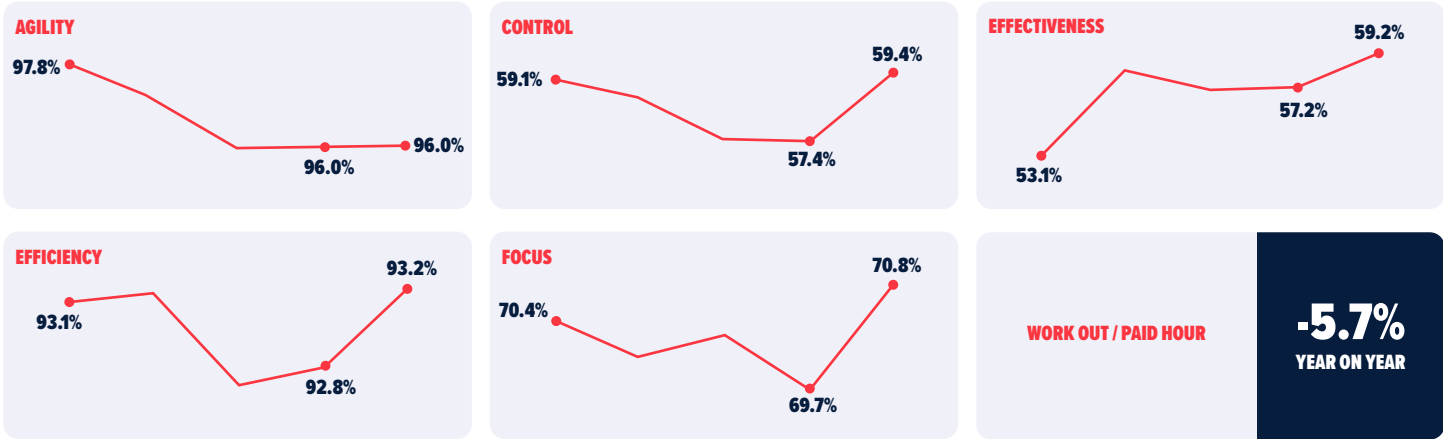
CONTROL – is higher QoQ and marginally higher YoY, rising for the first time since control levels began to slump in the second half of last year, indicating teams are getting better at meeting goals they have been set.

EFFECTIVENESS – is higher QoQ and significantly higher YoY, improving notably in the second quarter of the year as ops teams more consistently meet service expectations.

EFFICIENCY – is higher QoQ but broadly flat YoY, recovering from the slump seen at the end of last year and underpinning the overall improved performance levels.

FOCUS – is higher QoQ and YoY, reflecting time spent on core work that has been driving improved efficiency levels.

WORK OUT PER PAID HOUR – is higher QoQ but still lower YoY, having steadily declined for three quarters in a row until 2Q when stronger control and efficiency levels boosted productivity.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

Australia and New Zealand continues to be the best performing region in the OpsIndex, reviving its upwards momentum after suffering a more challenging period in the latter half of 2024 and putting it more or less in line with where it was a year ago (62.7). With control and work out per paid hour levels finally rising again in the second quarter, ops leaders in the region need to ensure they can maintain that trajectory while also ensuring they have the ability to flex resources to meet any sudden shifts in workloads.

- ▶ The current market backdrop means the ability to flex resources to meet demand fluctuations will be key to maintaining operational performance

gains, therefore organizations in the region must focus on ways to boost agility levels (through upskilling and cross-skilling).

- ▶ Ops leaders need to ensure they can maintain improvements in control achieved during Q2 while navigating the more uncertain operating environment.
- ▶ Investing in AI and automation could help move the needle for efficiency even further and unlock the extra capacity that organizations in the region have long been struggling to find.

SPOTLIGHT

STUART PUGH
CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER, ACTIVEOPS



From the Rugby Field to the Ops Department: How Data Analytics Drives Success

*Like in pro-sports data-driven decision-making
in operations is the key to high performance
and unlocking competitive advantage.*

ActiveOps was proud to be the Official Data Analytics Partner of the Qatar Airways British & Irish Lions Tour to Australia 2025. In a closely fought series for 3 test matches, the Lions emerged with the series win.

For those not familiar with Rugby Union, the British and Irish Lions come together every 4 years for an international tour. Players are selected from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Players who usually compete against each other have to come together and become a highly effective team. Data-driven decision-making is key to achieving high performance and competitive advantage.

The leaders of both sports and business share a common mission: optimizing the performance of humans to drive performance in their respective industries. We see several parallels between sporting analytics and operations where data-powered decision intelligence can boost performance and give your organization the best chance of operational success.

Game analysis / Ops strategy

Successful sports teams don't just turn up on game day and hope for the best; they plan meticulously by analyzing the performance of their own players in previous games and studying the opposition to build a data-driven game strategy that they believe will help them to create momentum, to keep the ball in the right place on the pitch, and ultimately, to help them win. As well as a strategy built to start the game, a half-time and full-time team talk is important to get across any key data points and areas of improvement to build upon the work already done.

The same can be applied to operations. Ops leaders need to build their own game plans that consider work volumes and available skill sets to complete tasks in a way that is aligned with their business's overarching strategic goals. With regular daily or weekly huddles, teams can be kept on track to best understand what the 'win' is for that time period.

With ActiveOps, firms can monitor their KPIs and objectives in real time, ensuring they keep their momentum going as they seek to achieve operational excellence.

Training / Agility

Having the ability to perform on the pitch is about having the skills to follow the coach's tactics and being agile enough to adapt if the game plan needs to change as new information emerges (the opposition's tactics are different than expected, say). Alongside this,

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE ►

to perform at their best, humans (in either industry) need to have the ability to do so. This not only comes from trained skills but from inherent aptitude. Though sports leadership will be about the next training session, the next match, and the next tournament, teams need to succession plan accordingly, thinking about how to bring a team of individuals together for a brief period of time, and make the biggest possible impact.

The British & Irish Lions do this through intensive pre-game training sessions and using data analytics to flag where players could improve certain areas of their game. In addition they are scouting players across four representative countries, to find the cream of the crop and bring the best starting 15 they can to the pitch.

Within the world of service ops, we need to have the skills in place necessary to meet business plans and to cover critical processes. And we are exploring going even further than that: by analyzing the skills of individuals, predicting the activities that they will be good at and fuelling the recruitment process with the knowledge of what to test for.

With ActiveOps, service ops leaders have a real-time view of the skills of all of their team members. They can ensure that critical processes are protected and can develop plans to build the skills they need to meet future business challenges.

Opportunity to perform at their best

In a rugby match, players can't have a great game if the ball never reaches them or they are out of position when they need to make a tackle. Likewise in service ops, for teams to perform at their best, they need a stretching but achievable amount of work to do.

Furthermore, given the physical demands on elite athletes in the modern era, ensuring players are properly conditioned and match ready is critical. Overburdened players in training and teams can risk match-day performance being sub-par. This is where data can be used to better understand fitness levels (distance covered during a game versus a player's average, say), indicating how hard they can be pushed in training. In other words, how much capacity do they have to take on extra workload.

This directly correlates to the world of service ops. With ActiveOps, team leaders can use data to ensure they have capacity to meet work

volumes while also identifying areas where capacity is being wasted, enabling them to adjust resourcing to operate more efficiently and effectively.

Injury prevention / Employee wellbeing

Just as it is important to use data to condition players and make sure they are at peak match fitness, it is also vital to monitor for stresses on players to avoid injuries, something that can have a significant impact on performance if key players are sidelined because they have been over-exerted and not given enough rest and recovery time. As well as this, sleep, hydration and diet all have major influences on performance.

This too can be applied to operations. Within service operations, we all recognize the cost of stress. As ops leaders, we have a responsibility to create a work environment that keeps teams healthy, happy, and efficient. With ActiveOps, ops leaders can use data to improve planning, helping balance workloads more effectively and flex resources where needed to get work completed on time without over-stretching workers and risking burnout or damaging team morale.

Match performance / Ops performance

All of this sporting data, game analysis, training, workload and injury prevention, is used for one reason: ensuring the team can perform at the highest possible level to win the game. Then once the game is over, ops leaders analyze the data again to see where any tactical tweaks need to be made before the next match or where players might need more focused training—setting them up for consistent success. For ops teams, data is central to operational performance, not only to make smarter decisions to drive efficiency and boost productivity, but also to deliver long-term success for the business.

By applying these sporting analytics techniques and using data to improve Decision Intelligence, ActiveOps can ensure ops leaders are better equipped to to set the right strategy, manage fluctuating workloads and maintain peak operational performance so the business can succeed, just as the British & Irish Lions achieved with their series win down under.

Driving performance on and off the pitch

Vinny Hammond, Head of Analysis for The British & Irish Lions, talks about the importance of data in rugby.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)





While the first half of the year has left all regions in a better spot than where they started 2025, the performances in the second quarter may signpost potential stresses ahead. North America's OpsIndex score surged in Q1 but slowed significantly in Q2, coinciding with US President Donald Trump's tariff announcements—weakening the economic outlook and leaving organizations scrambling to plan effectively amid the ongoing trade uncertainty. By contrast, the UK and Ireland and Australia and New Zealand performed strongly in Q2 despite that backdrop, underscoring the unpredictable nature of this environment and the need to optimize agility levels and resource flexibility in response.

By analyzing OpsIndex metrics, our Performance Tracker can help you navigate the uncertainty ahead by identifying the areas you need to tweak to improve operational performance.

Here are the key themes for ops leaders to watch during the second half of this year.

CONNECTED INSIGHTS CAN AVOID OPS FAILURES

While organizations are splurging huge sums of cash on digital transformation, they are often left wondering why their transformation programs are failing to land operationally. In many cases, organizations think that once they have made a tech investment, the job is done. The tech, however, is just the start. Where organizations frequently fall short is that they overlook the execution part—processes are digitized but stay the same, while data and insights remain disconnected. Firms therefore need to entirely redesign workflows while ensuring tools and teams are connected, improving overall operational control.

EARLY-WARNING SYSTEMS WILL KEEP SLAS ON TRACK

Ops leaders can sometimes become too preoccupied with backwards-looking metrics such as output or time spent on tasks, ignoring the operational effort needed to meet SLAs. Instead, organizations need faster feedback loops that can alert ops leaders sooner if they are going to struggle to meet any SLAs, giving them time to respond to get that work back on target.



***From sports stars to ops teams,
the key to optimizing human
performance is better use of data
and analytics.***



STRIVE FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Operational excellence is not just about replacing manual tasks with automation; it is about continuously improving processes to optimize performance. This means putting people and purpose at the heart of all transformation initiatives, identifying where humans can add the most value and stripping away unnecessary processes, effectively redesigning ops from the bottom up. This is not just a one and done exercise, either. This is about constantly evaluating why processes are carried out in a particular way and probing how they could be further improved, ensuring ongoing operational excellence.

DATA ANALYTICS IS THE KEY FOR UNLOCKING HIGH PERFORMANCE

From sports stars to ops teams, the key to optimizing human performance is better use of data and analytics. Just as sports teams use data to get the most out of their players to drive success, so too can ops leaders use data to enhance team performance. Whether it is operational strategy, better capacity and resource management, or identifying skills gaps, data-driven insights can improve the quality of an organization's Decision Intelligence, ensuring ops leaders are making informed choices and attaining and maintaining peak operational performance.

“

*The level of operational control
over performance is fundamental
to an organisation's success.
It is also a differentiator.*

”

RUNNING OPERATIONS 101

OpsIndex: The Metrics That Matter

Financial services operations teams have been heavily focused on improving efficiency. Many organizations have invested in technology, such as RPA.

Others have adopted modern business techniques such as Lean Six Sigma to reduce variation and waste. While that has helped streamline their operations, being more efficient doesn't necessarily mean operations are being run any better.

The level of operational control over performance is fundamental to an organization's success. It is also a differentiator—given the same market context, compliance constraints and customer base, if a company is more agile, it carries less latent capacity and can deliver better service.

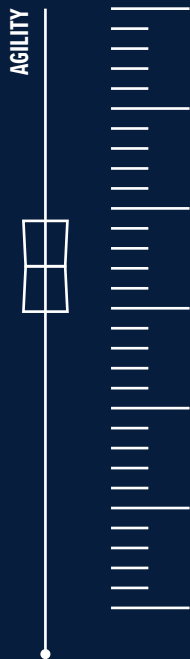
One of the challenges for benchmarking operational processes is comparability. The OpsIndex measures how well operations are being run, within the variety and complexity of the underlying business activities. It provides comparisons against five metrics—agility, control, effectiveness, efficiency, and focus—that are agnostic to processes or business structure and focused on the indicator of how well organizations are running their operations.

This enables operations leaders to track the choices they are making and monitor how those choices interplay with one another—pushing too hard or too little on one metric could negatively impact on others. By contrast, getting the optimal balance right may have a positive impact on other metrics—for example, control leads to greater agility, which delivers improved efficiency.

The OpsIndex rates back-office operations on their performance for each metric and then calculates an overall score. When organizations first embark on this journey with ActiveOps, many start with an overall OpsIndex score of around 30 or lower. Once organizations take steps to improve operational performance, a score of 80 or higher indicates that operations are being run well.

The OpsIndex Score

HOW IS THIS CALCULATED?



AGILITY

Are you well balanced?

Agility measures how flexible your capacity is when moving resources between teams and managing flexitime, overtime and temporary workers to meet shifts in workload

Ability to flex resource to meet the variation in work you experience



Improve your ability to effectively manage your work and people

+1% AGILITY

=1% CAPACITY



CONTROL

Do you have the production control to consistently & reliably meet the goals that you set?

Control measures the ability to create a predictable environment and deliver against a plan

Ability to plan with precision and ambition to deliver against that plan

Improve your ability to manage and execute against your plan

+5% CONTROL

=2% CAPACITY



EFFECTIVENESS

Are you consistently meeting service expectations & service level agreements?

Effectiveness measures how well ops teams keep work in progress on track or ahead of schedule

Ability to maintain WIP at or under planned levels

Improve ability to plan and control against that plan

THE PAYBACK

+EFFECTIVENESS

= IMPROVED SLAs



EFFICIENCY

Are you consistently getting the most out of your employees?

A low score on efficiency means that you are getting less value for money from your workers

Ability to operate consistently at a stretched but achievable rate of productivity

Improve ability to plan and control against that plan

+1% EFFICIENCY

=1% CAPACITY



FOCUS

How well are you focusing your time on core activities?

A high score on focus might suggest you are not investing sufficiently in the training and development needed to boost agility levels

Ability to direct your paid time to core work

Identify if you have enough people skilled to use the tools and focused on the right type of work

+1% FOCUS

=1% CAPACITY

WHY IT MATTERS



WHAT YOU CAN DO

UNDERSTANDING WORK OUT PER PAID HOUR

This metric helps operations managers track how much work is completed per hour of employee spend. For instance, if an organization is paying out for more sickness time, work out per paid hour would decline.

Glossary



AGILITY: measures an organization's ability to flex resource to meet the variation in work. If the score is low, it indicates a mismatch between work and the available resource, creating latent capacity and/or risk to service.

CAPACITY: is the difference between the resources that are available and the work that must get done, if a challenging but achievable pace is maintained.

CONTROL: measures an organization's ability to create a predictable environment and deliver against a plan. A low control environment is less resilient.

EFFECTIVENESS: measures an organization's ability to maintain WIP at or under planned levels. WIP plans are designed to meet service levels, so this is an indicator of the ability to maintain service.

EFFICIENCY: measures an organization's ability to operate consistently at a stretching but achievable rate of productivity. A lower score indicates a higher variation and lower average of productivity.

FOCUS: measures an organization's ability to direct the right amount paid time to core work. This score is likely to fluctuate throughout the year in line with seasonal trends. A low score means more paid time is going to other activities than core work – resulting in an increase in operating costs.

LATENT CAPACITY: measures the time that would have been available to the team had they worked at a higher level of productivity.

OPSINDEX: is the ActiveOps proprietary score that measures how well operations are being run, providing an overall score based on evaluating 5 key metrics: agility, control, effectiveness, efficiency and focus.

PRODUCTIVITY: is a measure of how closely the rate at which a person (or team) performs matches the standard time given to each of the core tasks.



The Quarterly Performance Tracker for Operations is based on the OpsIndex benchmarking data set from ActiveOps.

OpsIndex analyses live operations data with valid measurement and comparison of performance across operations teams. OpsIndex measures operations using five dimensions – agility, control, effectiveness, efficiency, and focus. In addition, work out / paid hour looks at how much work is completed per hour of employee spend – including paid sick days and holidays.

For this report, data from over 30 Financial Services businesses, with over 30,000 employees were analyzed. We looked at the OpsIndex performance January to July 2025. The data covered organizations in the UK & Ireland, Australia & New Zealand and North America.

The OpsTracker provides a snapshot in time every quarter, figures for the OpsIndex and the OpsIndex metrics are the values recorded at time of publication. There may be shifts in the figures registered from one edition to the other due to ongoing changes in customer data.

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About ActiveOps

At ActiveOps, we believe the ability to make every decision – the right decision, at the right time, will transform operations. Our blend of AI and human intelligence delivers the most complete and useful set of predictive and prescriptive insight to help service operations make better decisions - faster.

Service Operations has been in our DNA for 20 years. Our AI-powered SaaS solutions are underpinned by 15+ years of operational data and our AOM methodology that's proven to drive cross department decision-making.

We call this Decision Intelligence for Service Operations – and we are dedicated to the needs of banking, insurance, BPS and healthcare organizations, globally.

With Decision Intelligence, our customers deliver MORE - release 20%+ capacity within the first 12 months and boost productivity by 30%+ leading to MORE business impact. In fact, customer turnaround times are improved substantially, costs are reduced, SLAs are met, and employees are happier and more engaged.

Discover how ActiveOps can help you do more at activeops.com

Choose **More.** Choose ActiveOps[®]