O2 business

Create a digital workplace

Let people work at their best

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What is a digital workplace?

A digital workplace brings everything together – technology and people – to make it quicker and easier to get things done.

It includes the devices themselves and all that's needed for your people to work smarter – from email, instant messaging, and virtual media to social media tools or line of business and HR applications.

In this environment your people work securely while being at their most productive, supported by better communication and collaboration.

Achieving better balance

As technology becomes more advanced, your people can add to their skills and do more than ever before. And they can do it any time – thanks to easy connections, anywhere.

But the length of the working day hasn't changed along the way.

To get everything done, while still maintaining a good work-life balance means working smarter – and this can only be done through a digital workplace.

Do you really have a digital workplace?

The digital workplace is a world away from traditional office, shopfloor or site, where people are faced with rigid ways of working, using only company-supplied tools.

A true digital workplace removes the technological boundaries that limit how your people work. IT is no longer imposed on people.

Your people can work the way they want, where they want, using the devices they choose; as a result, they are happier and more productive, and absenteeism is lower.

To get there means a new people-first mind-set, the sort of mind-set that's already part of everyday digital life.

And that starts by providing the same consistent, secure experience, across desktop, laptop or any IT device, whether it's part of bring your own device (BYOD) or a company asset.

Your people are more productive in a digital workplace

Does a digital workplace pay off? Yes. When your people can work anywhere, anytime on virtually any device, the evidence is that good things happen.

Companies reported

83%

83% boost in productivity[1]

61%

resulting in 61% increase in profits.[1]

More business happens remotely

43%

43% more from remote workers than in-office.[2]

Absenteeism

69%

69% lower[3]

Morale

80%

80% better[3]

[1] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/future-technologies/evolution-of-remote-working/
[2] https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrealoubier/2017/07/20/benefits-of-telecommuting-for-the-future-of-work/#1f99826b16c6
[3] https://remote.co/10-stats-about-remote-work/

The seven drivers of a digital workplace

Putting people at the heart of the digital revolution means that IT has to create an environment where they can do their best – work securely, work together and work successfully. To do so:

Mobility – Think mobile first

Smartphones, tablets and such are good work tools. After all, they are a key part of our everyday lives. Our email, videos or status updates on social media, like LinkedIn, have an increasing amount of security and privacy protection in place.

These work well outside of the business. So why can't the same level of convenience be adopted at work, with data, especially when timely access to information is crucial?

You need to embrace mobile devices as you have the desktop, giving your employees the freedom and flexibility they are used to on their own devices, while still retaining control and management.

Cloud Adoption – Aim high for the Cloud

Moving from on-premises-based technology to the Cloud is more than just a saving on the cost of running and maintaining services. Now your workplace is where you are. You and your people are free to access services on demand – just log on and get your job done. It's a frictionless workplace experience that ensures a quicker time-to-value.

Security – Zero Trust beats the castle and moat

The traditional 'castle and moat' approach to network security will no longer do. That assumes that everything inside the castle (the corporate network) is secure and free from threat, with the moat keeping the enemy outside the gates. But maintaining security at the perimeter (endpoints) isn't so clear-cut these days when your people are using smart devices to connect from anywhere and everywhere.

As attacks are just as likely to come from inside the network as out, the best model to adopt is Zero Trust Security. Everyone and every device trying to access the network is treated with the same suspicion. They have to pass strict identity verification, whether they are inside or outside the network.

Information overload – Data, data, everywhere

There's no shortage of information. It's on the phone, sitting in applications, on the Internet and elsewhere. But do we all need access to intranet pages, social media platforms and file stores or is there better way to combine them? Does IT really want to see the latest marketing tweets or Marketing need to know where server manuals are stored?

A digital workplace provides us with the tools to make sense of the information available. We can control what individual employees see, so that it's relevant, easily accessible and digestible.

The seven drivers of a digital workplace

Geocollaboration –
Get teams talking

People make the difference in every business.
Do you have the top talent in your office?
Can you have the very best if recruitment is limited,
geographically at least, to those who are willing
to come in and work from the same place, everyday?

This at a time when the path to growth for most
organisations is through mergers and acquisitions,
or through partnerships and outsourcing. With
office space also becoming more expensive, it
means that employees and external experts are
dotted around the globe.

So how do they talk together, work together most
efficiently? Well, inside the virtual digital workplace
it's through connectivity and collaboration tools that
get the right people together, wherever they are
physically located, with the right information to push
the boundaries on what the business can achieve.

Quicker deployment –
Do the job now

People have things to do, places to be, deadlines to
meet. They need the tools to do their job right now
not when they're next at a desk. At the same time
they don't want to be burdened with length security
processes. They want a simple and quick sign-on
regardless of whether they're using mobile and tablet
or PC, iOS or Android. With zero-touch activation it's
possible to manage sign-on automatically without
heavy involvement from the user or anyone else.

Intelligence, Insights and Automation –
Smarter working for all

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in a digital workplace
helps you work smarter. It is not about replacing
your people with bots. It is about using AI and
machine learning to automate analysis of big data,
where it's not always humanly possible, so as to
identify trends and insights. Not only does this save
time, it enables your people to make better and
quicker business decisions. And they are free to
do so, as more routine tasks – such as monitoring
battery health to see when they need replacing –
can be automated.

Journey to the new digital world

People love a digital workplace. It makes their job easier. They can connect, share ideas, gather feedback, and work with colleagues and customers in real-time, anywhere they want.

Forbes[1] found that empowered employees – where people have easy access to the apps they need – are five times more likely to report increased personal productivity and almost four times more likely to say their companies are more desirable places to work.

But that payback only comes if people know that the digital technology is there and it works.

The real art to achieving a digital workplace is making sure employees fully adopt the technology. To do that we need to look at how they work and make them the central focus for any change.

Take, for example, moving apps to the Cloud, such as HR, travel booking and expenses. There's probably an ID for each app, which means remembering multiple passwords.

From an IT point of view, the use of different passwords does mean that if one is hacked the others are safe.

From a people-first view it's very different. Who wants to remember several passwords? In practice, your people will try and get away with using the same password for every app. They just want to get things done, with the minimum delay.

Technology such as single sign-on and Zero Trust methodologies allows IT to think people-first and deliver a better experience, while maintaining security and control.

[1] The Impact of a Digitally Empowered Workforce, Forbes Insights and VMWare

Four types of apps and services for your digital workplace toolkit

What you need in your digital workplace kit bag will vary from everyone else. There is no one size fits all. Defining what it should contain is a key part of IT strategy.

Productivity – Make the everyday productive

Look at the apps and services your employees use every day – whether a spreadsheet, line of business or HR application, such as holiday booking form. How could you change these to suit how your people work and make it simpler for them to carry out their daily tasks?

Endpoint management – Keep remote workers happy

Every one of your apps or services is consumed through a device, whether that's a smartphone, tablet, laptop or similar. In a digital workplace, IT has to manage that experience and ensure it's a good one. It doesn't matter how smoothly the Cloud migration for the service went, if ultimately it doesn't work on their device. To the employee it is still a bad service to be avoided.
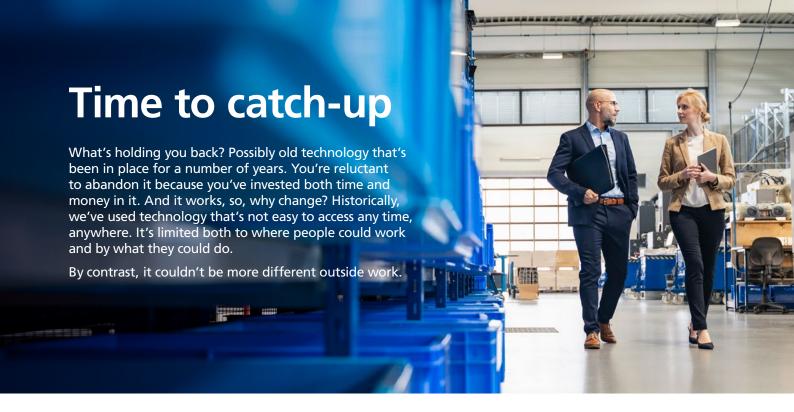
Collaboration and Communication – Work together anywhere

Getting the right communication and collaboration apps breaks down barriers. It gives your employees the freedom to connect with the people and information they need, as they need. Whether these are virtual team rooms, instant chat sessions, knowledge sharing wikis, corporate social media platforms or even blogs and vlogs, it's all about a digital workplace where there's secure access for employees to everything needed to do their job.

Security – Secure a better employee experience

The changing nature of cyber attacks and the evolution of the workplace to be anywhere and everywhere means that a Zero Trust Security architecture is essential. With no clear network boundary, everything is potentially hostile. Single sign on, multifactor authentication and velocity checking platforms can help protect this 'never trust, always verify' environment that your people are already familiar with through their personal digital devices.

Time to catch-up

What's holding you back? Possibly old technology that's been in place for a number of years. You're reluctant to abandon it because you've invested both time and money in it. And it works, so, why change? Historically, we've used technology that's not easy to access any time, anywhere. It's limited both to where people could work and by what they could do.

By contrast, it couldn't be more different outside work.

Avoid shadows

We all live a digital life outside of work, so why should it be any different inside the workplace?

We expect our workplace technology to move at the same speed. When it doesn't, it's no surprise that employees will take matters into their own hands and set up their own solutions.

This shadow IT, running outside of normal IT systems, isn't happening simply because someone thinks it's cool or because they mean to breach security. It's most likely they want to get some information to a client, such as a response to a RFP, before their competitor does.

They have no idea – and probably not the time – to use a server on the office network. But they know it's a matter of minutes to download an app, sign in with an email address and get going.

Even if they know that company devices and systems are available, they may not use them. They may feel, rightly or wrongly, that the company device doesn't measure up to the one they personally use – either because performance is poor, or it has been so locked down that it barely allows them to do what they want.

Changing workforce

Just as responsibilities for choosing devices in the workplace are changing, so is the make-up of the workforce. It's more diverse than ever.

Everyone has their own expectations of working life and the work-life balance they want to achieve. Often this is based on the technologies they use and what's happening in their personal life. Some may be caring for elderly parents and need greater flexibility in how they work. Others, particularly younger workers, want the option to work remotely. 68% say this alone would be a key factor in choosing who to work for[3].

It's never about the tech, it's about people

The rise of smarter working is down to the people in your workforce, aided by the technology. It's not technology driving change, it's people. Technology just lets it happen more easily. It does involve a change in mind-set – particularly for IT. Stop thinking of the people that work for you as users. That's IT-talk. Think of them as people. People who have a host of priorities that they have to get done. Put what they need to do at the heart of your processes – in everything from HR to sales – and you'll find you'll engage with your people more and get more from them.

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[3] https://remote.co/10-stats-about-remote-work/

See what a digital workplace delivers

The digital workplace is more diverse than ever – supporting a workforce that encompasses several generations, in widespread locations, using a growing range of smart tools from mobiles to tablets to wearable tech.

Yet organisations that adopt a digital workplace find it brings real advantages:

- People work with the technology they know best.

- They can achieve more through greater collaboration and feedback, by working across teams in different locations.

- The work-life balance is just that – balanced, thanks to flexible working.

- Cloud may not always cut costs compared with traditional hardware investment and maintenance but it can always change the way you invest your resources.

- Easy and secure access, anywhere, creates a frictionless workplace that delivers quicker time-to-value.

- Information overload is banished with digital tools that ensure the right people get the right information at the right time.

- Email is back to what it does best – handling emails – with better solutions available for real-time messaging and carrying attachments, documents or images.

- Remember why you're in business – connect more quickly with customers and clients by creating secure, shared spaces to get things done.

- Switch to new tech and get your people up and running with the tools they need in minutes, not weeks.

The ultimate benefit though of a digital workplace is to save wear and tear on your people – and the planet – by reducing your organisation's carbon footprint. Now people no longer need to travel to meetings. They have the digital tools to work from virtually anywhere and collaborate in a virtual space.

The arrival of the latest mobile network, 5G, and its rollout across the UK over the next few years, is likely to accelerate the uptake of digital workplaces. Once fully up and running, 5G will operate at 10x the speed of the already pacy 4G. With no lag in response it also has greater capacity to run many high-demand services at the same time. It offers even more connections, in an instant, and has virtually unlimited scope to change the way we work in and out of our normal workplaces.

Start talking about a digital workplace

People want to work better and smarter – and they are not waiting for IT to help them do it.

Locking down the technology they can use and limiting choice isn't the answer. A digital workplace is.

You need to understand the technology you already have in place to achieve this and what else is required. More importantly, you need the processes to make sure your people will adopt the technology.

That means putting people first. Understand what makes them happy and balance that with what they need to do their job well.

It's part of an IT strategy that's not just about what technologies to use. It's a wider conversation, with the entire business from C-suite to HR, legal and others, on where the organisation is, where it needs to be going and how your people can best do the job.

A digital workplace, with technologies that work well together and are readily adopted by people, then creates the right environment to make it happen.

But before putting the right technology in place, you need the right strategy, business culture, and HR policies in place.

How far are you on the journey to a digital workplace?

Creating a digital workspace shouldn't just be an ambition; it's already a reality for many organisations. Are you ready to reach the same gold standard? Whether you're just starting the journey or have begun and want to pick up speed there's no time to delay.

The changing technological landscape coupled with the seven drivers shown here – from mobility and security to intelligence and automation – are essential to create a digital workplace.

It's an environment where your people can do their best and be their best – and play their part in catapulting your business through a digital revolution.

Find your best route to a digital workplace.

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