Microsoft

EMBRACING THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

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01
NEW WORLD, NEW WAYS OF WORKING

For years, we've heard about the digital transformation set to sweep through the world of business and beyond.

Some were sceptical. But now it's happening – at speed. It took a global pandemic to spark this acceleration, but it's already touched every level of society, including government, industry and individual consumers.

■ Microsoft

While this remarkably rapid and exciting shift is taking place, the shadow of economic unpredictability looms large.

It's radically reshaping infrastructures, practices, relationships, even cultural attitudes, and some changes, such as the reliance on remote working, seem irreversible.

However, while this remarkably rapid and exciting shift is taking place, the shadow of economic unpredictability looms large.

A recent BBC report[1] revealed that the IMF is forecasting a growth rate of 5.9 percent for the UK economy during 2021. However, given the current economic climate, any predictions are more uncertain than usual.

On top of COVID-19, there are other major economic factors to take into account. With Britain and the EU locked in complex trade negotiations, the true impact of Brexit is still unknown. This could influence future investment decisions. The UK has also seen record levels of indebtedness. In May 2020, debt rose to 100.9 percent, the first time it's exceeded 100 percent of GDP since the early 1960s.[2]

On the ground, many businesses are taking a serious hit to productivity due to supply-chain disruption and new workplace safety and hygiene practices. According to a CNN news report[3], offices are going to have to make costly changes to be virus-safe and ready for a full workforce return.

Dig a little deeper and we see that during this time of upheaval and hyper-accelerated change, many organisations have simply sought to replicate how they previously worked in the office in a virtual environment. But is this the optimal way for organisations to operate in the 'new normal'?

PROJECTED GROWTH FOR

2020

1.9%

BELOW FORECAST[4]

IMF World Economic Outlook, 2020

As a tentative recovery takes shape, we believe this crucial moment offers the workplace some unique opportunities for innovation and creativity. Just a handful of statistics using Microsoft internal data from the first half of 2020 gives a sense of the direction of travel:

- **5 billion Microsoft Teams meeting minutes in a single day**

- **Video used twice as much in Teams meetings**

- **1 billion Windows 10 devices, up 30 percent year on year**

72%
of UK employees and managers report a desire to continue working from home

'For remote working to be a success, the first thing we need to change is how we think about it' blog, 2020

There's also an increasing recognition that new workplace policies may be here to stay. Our research has found that while 83 percent of UK managers expect to have more flexible work-from-home policies post-pandemic, 72 percent of UK employees and managers report a desire to continue working from home, at least part-time.

Yet on the other side of the coin, increased remote working raises a particular concern. Sixty-two percent felt less connected to their team working from home.[5]

In short, we're seeing some remarkable shifts in working patterns. So this e-book aims to explore the 'New World of Work'. It's a huge subject and we'll tackle it by asking four key questions:

1 **How can organisations best drive productivity in a hybrid workplace?**

2 **How can we humanise our employees' experience of work?**

3 **What might tomorrow's reimagined workplace look like?**

4 **What's the best way to go about nurturing resilient teams?**

02

A CHANGE IN
THE AIR

Understanding your concerns

Dealing with the pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge. And the crisis has highlighted some crucial issues and pain-points.

Taking care

The pandemic has demonstrated a pressing need to look out for people. That can include everything from introducing flexible working and best practices, to considering creative ways to maintain employee satisfaction and wellbeing.

Protecting productivity

Leaders looking to maintain the commercial vigour of their organisations are increasingly seeking to harness the power of data and workplace analytics, and improve cross-organisational communication.

Doing the right thing

Organisations are also mindful that they need to address issues of compliance, trust, identity, safety of information and privacy, effectively manage employee lifecycles, and implement the correct health and safety measures.

Meeting customer needs

Customers and service-users including consumers, university students and hospital patients expect an ever-higher level of service. Harnessing digital tools can help organisations satisfy that demand swiftly and safely.

Remote working

Most UK managers expect to implement more flexible work-from-home policies, even after the pandemic has passed. Many employees are equally keen to embrace remote working. This new mindset may permanently reconfigure the workplace. If so, new challenges will swiftly emerge.

Learn more about **Productivity in a hybrid workplace**

Changing times, Changing attitudes

One of the more remarkable things to come out of the pandemic is a marked attitudinal shift on the part of employers and employees alike. Both have expressed a desire to see greater emphasis on wellbeing, inclusiveness and a sense of community at work.

This new attitude may have been driven, at least in part, by some serious concerns that have surfaced during the pandemic. Thirty percent of workers report increased burnout. While the key concern for front-line workers is a fear of catching COVID-19, remote workers worry about the breaking down of work/life boundaries and the tendency to put in longer hours.[6]

The question is: how can we support this desire to refigure the workplace, so that it boosts inclusivity, diversity and creativity, while enabling employees to work in a fulfilling, productive and safe way?

Discover how you can **Humanise work**

Recognising the need for digital transformation

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a watershed moment for the digital transformation of business. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella says, "We've seen two years' worth of digital transformation in two months."[7]

But research reveals an alarming UK digital skills gap. While a recent Lloyds Banking Group report[8] states that 11.7 million people lack the digital skills needed for everyday life, a 2020 McKinsey survey[9] found that 87 percent of executives say they have skills gaps in their business.

87%
of executives say they have skills gaps in their business

Beyond hiring: How companies are reskilling to address talent gaps, McKinsey & Company, 2020

So how can we help organisations and employees gain the skills they need to achieve more in the changing world of work?

Companies recognising the need for increased agility are also looking to invest in resilience. Those that fortify their people, places of work and processes with digital tech are likely to recover faster and emerge stronger than others.

See **Build resilient teams**

> **We've seen two years' worth of digital transformation in two months.**
>
> Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft, April 2020

Maintaining and building profitability

In a recent Boston Consulting Group survey, 65 percent of executives said they anticipate increased investment in digital transformation. And for good reason. The report states that:

"

Companies that use digital levers can expect their profit margins to increase, on average, by 12 percent to 20 percent. They will generate as much as 50 percent of the additional profits in the first year, thereby generating the resources needed to fund the rest of the transformation journey.[10]

"

The Digital Path to Business Resilience, BCG, 2020

Digital transformations build long-term resilience and increase profitability

PERFORMANCE

12% to 20%

additional EBIT[1]

(about half of it within 12 months)

AGILITY

40% to 50% faster speed to market[2]

(in about 3 months)
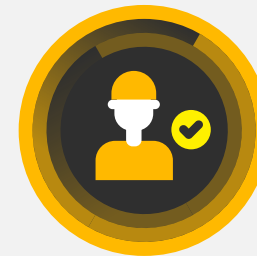
ENABLEMENT

20% to 30% higher workforce productivity[3]

(about half of it within 6 months)

STABILITY

Up to 60% less IT error and rework[4]

(in 6 to 9 months)

Source: BCG analysis and case experience.

[1] According to BCG's Performance Improvement through Digitization 2019 study, based on analysis of 40 digital resilience levers.
[2] Enabled by applying advanced analytics to economic indices and establishing a control tower for high-frequency demand forecasts.
[3] Achieved with AI and smart working tools such as chatbots, workflow automation, and decision-support systems.
[4] From BCG experience in the insurance sector, achieved by designing cybersecurity in a uniform way for all applications and platforms.

Fit for the future

Companies that embrace innovation are likely to be far better prepared to face future challenges. That enlightened approach can manifest itself in many ways.

Weaving AI into your organisation can transform the way people work. Using a common platform to store and share content can help organisations extract more value out of their knowledge. And exploiting the latest technology can make smart meetings a reality, where participants can collaborate and contribute effectively and safely, wherever they're working.

Look ahead to **Future work**

Exploiting the latest technology can make smart meetings a reality

Microsoft

With every challenge comes opportunity

As organisations recover, they have a precious chance to reimagine the way they operate. Those that do, stand a better chance of gaining and maintaining a competitive edge.

Some may embrace the flexibility of temporary spaces, such as remote-working environments and hotels. Offices may become occasional drop-in venues for customer meetings, creative workshops and team-building opportunities.

Whichever direction organisations take, there'll be an increasing need for tools that enable people to work wherever they are – at an office, remotely, or on the move. Technology is key. A recent Forrester Study[11] reveals that, "86 percent of survey respondents with Microsoft 365-powered Surface devices deployed agreed that their organization is better able to support a remote workforce, compared to 71 percent of respondents using non-Surface devices."

But it's not just about the physical workspace and hardware. Businesses also have the chance to boost productivity with AI that can harness an organisation's knowledge via the cloud. And with more remote working, there's an opportunity to draw on a deeper pool of talent drawn from a wider geographic area.

This cultural change, supported by company leaders and enabled by tech, has the potential to give businesses both the resilience and competitive muscle to thrive in a decidedly unpredictable world.

When, where, and how we work is fundamentally changing. And Microsoft is in a position to track the trends that are reshaping the future of work. In a recent keynote address[12], Jared Spataro, CVP of Microsoft shared the latest research. It reveals that while the global shift to remote working has brought positives, such as increased empathy between teammates, challenges like elongated working hours and meeting fatigue need to be addressed.

Customer Story

ARUP: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AT SPEED

> " The first challenge was keeping people connected and able to work with their clients. Luckily, we had already made the decision to shift to Teams. "
>
> Rob Greig, Group CIO, Arup, September 2020

For over seven decades Arup has been at the forefront of design and engineering. When COVID-19 struck, its existing cloud transformation journey was vastly accelerated.

Rob Greig, Group CIO thinks cloud transformation is the foundation for digital transformation and his team were challenged with the task.

Setting a new direction

Initially, Greig met with pockets of resistance, but pressing on his team mapped out 3,000 servers and 400 applications that could either be lifted and shifted to the cloud or transformed. By the end of 2019, they were moving 10 workloads to the cloud per month. And then COVID-19 hit.

Responding fast

As Greig remembers, "The first challenge was keeping people connected and able to work with their clients. Luckily, we had already made the decision to shift to Teams."

Arup also needed to facilitate access to the high-performance specialist applications critical to its work, and relieve pressure from its traditional infrastructure. Shifting to Microsoft 365, Teams, SharePoint and Dynamics 365 achieved just that.

Windows Virtual Desktop was another asset. Greig was initially reluctant, but one of the engineers did a demo for him and said, 'this is as fast, if not better, than the workstation I have on my desk in my office'.

Arup is now running 45 percent of all workloads in the cloud. And for Greig, there are fewer barriers to cloud adoption and innovation. As he puts it, "Once you have that culture of rolling forward, you start to get that momentum and the business starts to think of the ways it can benefit from being digital by default."

Explore the full Arup story.

03

PRODUCTIVITY IN A
HYBRID WORKPLACE

Giving people the freedom to be more productive

Rapid advances in cloud-based technology make it easier than ever for employees to stay connected and productive.

While Microsoft Office apps on Microsoft 365 allow remote workers to access resources, share and work together with others, Microsoft Teams acts as a vital virtual central hub that enables all workers to collaborate. It's underpinned by Microsoft Sharepoint, a secure content store.

Using cloud-based technology can also help to address those clear and rising concerns about isolation. For instance, collaboration tools within Microsoft 365 such as Outlook, Teams and Stream actively encourage communication and meaningful interactions.[13]

The crucial role that hardware has to play shouldn't be underestimated either. A recent Forrester Study[14] states that, "88 percent of survey respondents indicated that Microsoft 365-powered Surface devices had helped their employees become more collaborative, compared to 79 percent of respondents without Surface devices."

Many organisations, such as Lloyds Banking Group, have taken strategic control of their modernisation journey by exploiting the potential of Microsoft Managed Desktop. Delivering end-to-end device management and security monitoring, it helps you focus on your digital transformation while keeping everyone productive, secure, and up-to-date. As John Chambers, Chief Information Officer says, "As part of our digital transformation we're creating a modern digital workplace and I am really excited about the impact of this new technology."[15]

> "
> **As part of our digital transformation we're creating a modern digital workplace and I am really excited about the impact of this new technology.**
> "
>
> John Chambers, Chief Information Officer, Lloyds Banking Group, 2020

Digitising your business

Forward-thinking businesses are rapidly adapting and automating to:

- **Cope with the pressures of remote working**

- **Overcome disruption, for example when people have to use new and unfamiliar tools**

- **Simplify laborious paper-based processes**

- **Plug gaps in systems with additional functionality**

- **Ensure that vital collaboration continues**

Swiftly addressing these issues is crucial, and fortunately there are solutions out there that can simplify the whole digitisation process.

Microsoft Power Platform, including products such as Microsoft Power BI, Microsoft Power Automate, Microsoft Power Apps and Microsoft Virtual Agents can give you the ability to analyse data, build solutions, and place innovation at the heart of your organisation's DNA.

A single-view dashboard shows owner, usage level, connections, licensing and more. And you can easily automate essential processes using no or low code apps.

SharePoint Syntex also uses advanced AI and machine teaching to capture, classify and manage information, helping you turn content into knowledge, improve security and compliance, and cut down on time consuming manual tasks.

While digitising your business can also help streamline and protect your operations, customer service is another area that can be significantly improved. With Microsoft Dynamics 365 you can learn from every transaction and respond with meaningful interactions.

When the health crisis hit, many organisations, like the Care Quality Commission (CQC), had to move fast. It needed to support the NHS, other health and social care providers, and patients. So it used Dynamics 365 Customer Voice to quickly deliver an emergency response that was highly secure, robust, scalable, and accessible.

> **"We plan to use machine learning and AI in Dynamics 365 to provide insights about where to focus our attention, and to share meaningful analytics with providers and the public."**
>
> Mark Sutton, Chief Digital Officer, CQC, 2020

It allowed them to survey more than 10,000 home care providers. They then processed the data using Dynamics 365.

CQC is already looking ahead. As Mark Sutton, Chief Digital Officer says, "We plan to use machine learning and AI in Dynamics 365 to provide insights about where to focus our attention, and to share meaningful analytics with providers and the public". See the full CQC story.

With periods of disruption likely to continue, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management is another useful tool. It gives total visibility of your supply chain. So you can keep it resilient and capable of dealing with rapid fluctuations in supply and demand.

Of course, while many of us are working from home, countless others are out in the field. Microsoft Dynamics 365 Remote Assist empowers technicians to collaborate more efficiently by working together from different locations. Available on HoloLens, Android or iOS devices, it allows them to share their real-time view with experts, and access critical information whenever it's needed.

It may be a cliché, but at times of rapid change, knowledge can be powerful. While interrogating data can help you gain crucial business insights, analytics and AI can help people understand what they need to focus on, access the information they need, and measure their use of time to improve their effectiveness and personal wellbeing.

By leveraging technology you can implement processes that increase efficiency, reduce costs, and drive scale and customer reach. Documenting internal processes, measuring key performance indicators, and incorporating automation enables you to plan, learn from, and make more informed decisions.[16]

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Making your digital workspace *work*

An effective digital workplace thrives on innovative and proven technology. Tech that employees love using, because it lets them communicate, collaborate, and create with agility.[17]

Empower your employees to drive business goals, Digital workplace, Microsoft

Microsoft 365 is an integrated cloud platform that encourages productivity, engagement, and collaboration through a smart, efficient operating system, mission-critical enterprise-grade security tools, and seamlessly integrated workplace-productivity apps such as Teams, Word, Excel and PowerPoint.[18]

Another milestone in the evolution of computing is Windows Virtual Desktop, a desktop and application virtualisation service running in Azure. It enables secure remote working by allowing users to access their desktop and apps from anywhere via a virtualised Windows 10 experience optimised for Office 365 ProPlus. With Windows 10 multi-session, you can run multiple concurrent user interactive sessions easily with the same deployment for more cost efficiency. And many customers are already licensed to use Windows Virtual Desktop via their Windows 10 Enterprise licenses.

Cloud migration and boosting productivity

Cloud migration can help your organisation act faster, innovate, and focus IT operations on what matters most. Key to enabling and encouraging the 'work anywhere' approach, it allows you to:

- **Scale workloads, applications and networking capacity on demand to meet business needs**

- **Stay secure and resilient across hybrid work environments**

- **Optimise costs at a time of constrained IT budgets**

- **Migrate data with confidence to leverage cloud analytics services and gain business insights**

Migrating to the cloud also gives your employees constant, secure access to vital productivity tools such as those available through Microsoft 365: Teams, Outlook, Word, OneDrive and more.

CNTW: TRANSFORMING THE WAY HEALTHCARE TEAMS WORK

> "We knew the technology could help keep staff working, even if they were having to isolate or shield themselves."
>
> Darren McKenna, Director of Informatics, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, 2020

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest mental health and disability Trusts in England, providing services to 1.7 million people.

Like many healthcare providers, it's faced huge disruption in the wake of the pandemic.

Delivering services, maintaining standards

Initially, the Trust invested in Microsoft Teams to explore how much staff travel time and expense could be saved each year. But when COVID-19 struck, Teams had the potential to play a greater role.

The priority was to ensure people remained safe while delivering services to the same high standard. Kirsty Charlton, Clinical Manager of the Trust's Autism Services says that Teams offered a rapid solution: "We knew the technology could help keep staff working, even if they were having to isolate or shield themselves."

Keeping connected

To help communities stay in contact with frontline services, the Trust also installed Surface Hub 2S as all-in-one digital whiteboards in a number of locations. Remote workers used Surface Go 2 as a lightweight laptop with tablet functionality, and Surface Pen capabilities for easy data capture.

With staff using Teams to communicate with patients and each other, the Trust has been conducting around 1,100 Teams meetings per day since the pandemic began.

Revell Cornell, Infrastructure Manager has the last word: "The main impact of the Teams, Surface Hub collaboration during COVID-19 is the ability for staff to carry on providing amazing care to patients."

See the full CNTW story.

04

HUMANISE
WORK

Humanising the employee experience

The experience of the past few months has revealed some positive benefits of working remotely, including less commuting, increased employee productivity and improvements in performance. And numerous reports suggest that a growing number of employees will want to continue working remotely in a post-pandemic world.

To some extent, remote working has connected people on a more personal level. The occasional glimpses into other people's lives may have made us more empathetic and understanding. But there are growing concerns about isolation and a sense of disconnect. Counteracting this and protecting the wellbeing of employees is a challenge we are keen to recognise.

Maintaining a connected experience

Sometimes, it can be all too easy to focus on organisational efficiency and productivity. But this is a human challenge with a simple question: how can you support your employees so that working remotely isn't a lonely experience?

One answer is to set up a cloud-based home office with Microsoft 365. Features like Office apps, Teams and OneDrive give people the power to stay connected with colleagues through chats, calls and meetings, access emails, calendars and files, and securely save their files.

Most recently, we've introduced a new feature called Teams Together. It uses an AI segmentation model to place participants together on a shared background and shows face and body movements to enhance interaction. It's designed to make it easier to manage sessions, and reduce the cognitive load when engaging for long periods onscreen.
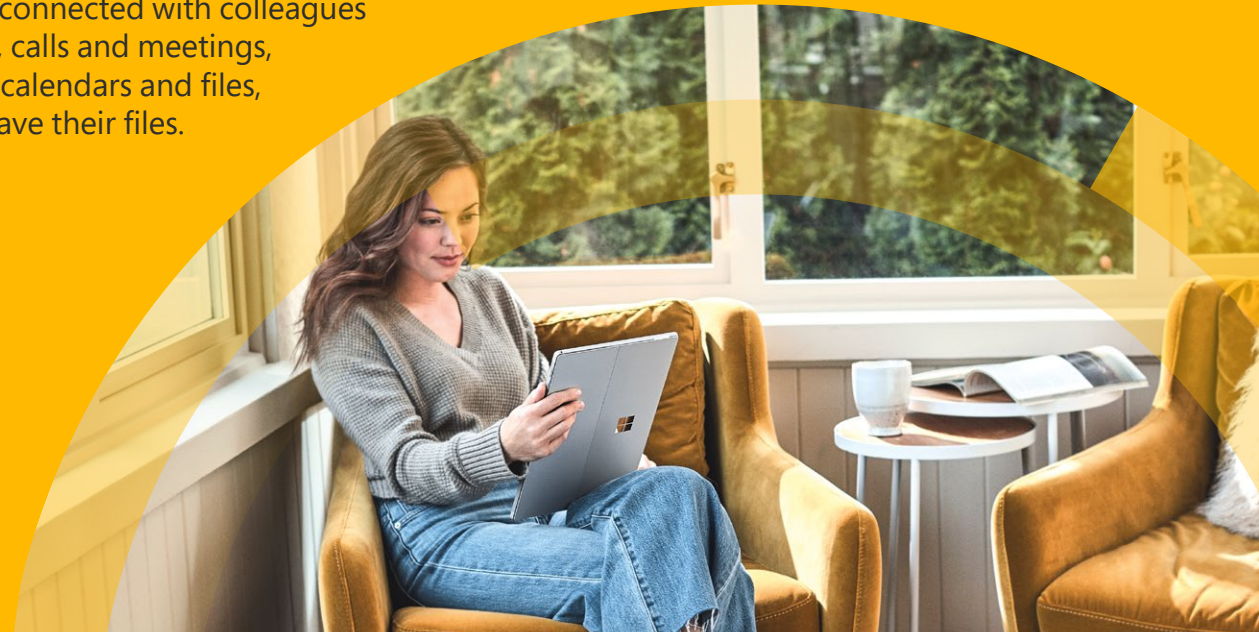
Other new features include custom layouts, which allows people to make presentations more engaging, even gaining the ability to include a presenter's video feed transposed onto the foreground of the slide they're showing. With breakout rooms, organisations can easily split participants into smaller brainstorming or workshop sessions. And then there's recap, giving participants instant access to transcripts, recordings and any files shared during a meeting.

But what about the fact that remote working can sometimes lead to longer working hours? Microsoft MyAnalytics gives people the opportunity to view work patterns and manage their time to enhance their sense of wellbeing.

Within Microsoft 365 Dynamics Human Resources, we also have a range of specific HR solutions to strengthen links with your employees and maintain a nurturing environment.

Having the right hardware is crucial too. The Forrester Study[19] mentioned earlier reveals that,

86% of survey respondents with Microsoft 365-powered Surface devices agreed that their organizations successfully improved employee experience, compared to 76% of respondents using non-Surface devices.

The Total Economic Impact™, Forrester Consulting, 2020

Surface devices were also described as:

more flexible to the changing nature of the 'workplace,' allowing employees to remain productive whether working from their office, a communal space, a coffee shop, or their couch.

The Total Economic Impact™, Forrester Consulting, 2020

Nurturing your people and culture

With endorsement from the board, organisations have the power to make the hybrid workplace a success. But to get there, teams need to embrace new technology through adoption and change management methodology. That won't happen overnight. It calls for proactive management.

Senior management can help by speaking with one voice and focusing on three key areas: **leadership**, **culture** and **technology**.

Leadership

It's important to devise a strategy that helps people work effectively regardless of location, enables collaboration, encourages creativity and maintains a sense of cohesion and shared purpose. Regular and clear communications from leaders can help keep people feel valued, 'in the loop' and an important part of an organisation's mission and culture.

Culture

People are the beating heart of any organisation. An effective culture gives them the means to be productive, and the power to innovate, adapt and progress.

Technology

Having the right technology platform can nourish a strong community culture.

When these three areas work in concert, it encourages the sort of improved co-operation that's possible through Teams – a single, safe space in which employees can chat, call, meet and generate ideas.

Fostering diversity and inclusion

In April 2020, the IDC produced an influential survey – The Impact of Employer and Employee Engagement.[20] It reveals that focusing on diversity and inclusion has a profound impact on creating a 'people-first' culture in which employees feel part of one team shaping business outcomes.

Establishing a standardised approach to employee engagement increases employee commitment and productivity, lowers costs, and generates higher profits. And an increasing amount of research on the effects of overall Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) measures, emphasises the positive financial implications of 'doing good' as a company.[21]

Inequality and reduced social mobility are often driven by lack of quality education and work opportunities. But the increasingly digital workplace, with its need for different skill sets and flexible working, can contribute to overcoming some of these problems.

Whatever the post-COVID-19 digital workspace looks like, inclusion and accessibility can be driven by a simple mantra: 'leave no one behind'.

Supporting wellbeing and accessibility

Work-related stress has a negative effect on wellbeing. And it has economic repercussions too, with many working days lost to illness.

Leaders can support the mental health of their employees by promoting a culture of sharing and learning, and by empowering employees to manage their work-life balance.

During the pandemic, this issue has become even more urgent, with workers reporting increased burnout, and many experiencing a rise in work chats between 5pm and midnight.[22]

Support can take many forms. Line managers can monitor workloads and take action if needed. They can also stress the importance of regular breaks and holidays, screen downtime and ignoring work emails out of hours.

Perhaps paradoxically, tech has a role in supporting wellbeing. Within Microsoft 365, employees can access the MyAnalytics dashboard, while individual users can use it to see their own activity levels and get automated help to improve their focus and wellbeing. Managers can detect broad themes and trends across their organisations. At all times, data privacy is paramount.

Remote workers have also lost some of those breaks in the day that allowed them to recharge.

So next year we'll be adding a feature to Teams that lets people schedule a 'virtual commute', to give them a productive start in the morning and a chance to disconnect in the evening. And because 70 percent of people feel that meditation could help them reduce their stress levels, we've partnered with Headspace to bring users a curated set of mindfulness experiences and science-backed meditations.[23]

A culture that promotes individual wellbeing and accessibility is naturally going to be more diverse and inclusive. Tech has a role to play here too. Microsoft products and services are designed to empower people with vision, hearing, neurodiversity, learning, mobility or mental health disabilities.

Windows 10 and Microsoft 365 apps have built-in and third-party accessibility features, which let users choose how to interact with their screen and work effectively, whether they have a disability, personal preference, or simply a unique work style.

Microsoft 365 comes with accessibility built-in to give people with different abilities the freedom to create, communicate and collaborate. For instance, Office 365 applications work seamlessly with screen readers and keyboards on most devices, Tell Me lets you quickly access commands without navigating the command ribbon, and Office Lens helps you transform text on a printed page into digital content that can be read aloud.

And in a world increasingly being shaped by AI, it too is being harnessed to amplify human capabilities and support people with disabilities. For instance, the University of Texas is working with Microsoft Research on an Ability Initiative to improve the accuracy of automatic image descriptions of photos captured by people with no or poor vision.

And in a world increasingly being shaped by AI, it too is being harnessed to amplify human capabilities and support people with disabilities.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM: ENRICHING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

To say we are at the beginning of this journey is an understatement.

Dr. Luis Neves, Faculty of Engineering and Digital Learning Director, University of Nottingham

Limited by ageing hardware, the University of Nottingham needed a scalable, long-term computing solution that could empower new ways of learning, researching, and teaching.

It soon focused on Microsoft Azure and Microsoft 365, with particular emphasis on Microsoft Teams.

The university began its cloud migration traditionally, but had to swiftly adapt when COVID-19 struck. Nick Mount, Digital Learning Director for the Faculty of Social Sciences says, "It was clear from the get-go that Microsoft Teams and the rest of our Microsoft infrastructure were going to be absolutely central."

Innovating in the era of remote learning

"In terms of delivering real-time remote learning sessions, Teams really showed its mettle," says Dr. Neil Hughes, Digital Learning Director and Director of Modern Language Teaching, Faculty of Arts. "I've been able to move to a more interactive lecture format, with some students more engaged than they were during normal face-to-face sessions."

Reinforcing access and equality

Another challenge the university faced was unequal access for students with inferior computers. So the university turned to Windows Virtual Desktop – a desktop and app virtualisation service running on Azure.

Dr. Luis Neves, Faculty of Engineering and Digital Learning Director says, "Windows Virtual Desktop is an equaliser, because it grants every student access to the same computing power."

Delivering scalability

Researchers at the university used to be limited by the processing power of their computers. But as Ross Shonfeld, Technical Manager and

Cloud Solution Specialist points out, "With Azure, we can now spin up a 64-core virtual machine to help them advance their work."

Researchers can also benefit from Azure Cognitive Services. It offers speech-to-text capabilities that enable them to transcribe audio to text in more than 30 languages.

It's clear that the university has already found the move to Azure advantageous. But the best is yet to come. "To say we are at the beginning of this journey is an understatement," says Dr. Neves.

Learn more about the University of Nottingham's journey.

05

FUTURE

WORK

Embracing AI and automation

How can incorporating innovation and AI into your organisation enhance its value and enable everyone to use technology in a meaningful way?

Exploiting the potential of AI can:[24]

- **Help optimise business processes to improve efficiency, cut costs and generate new revenue**

- **Empower employees and increase productivity by reducing time spent on repetitive tasks, as well as facilitating machine teaching and reinforcement learning**

- **Improve customer service with end-to-end customer management, and real-time behaviour prediction and data monitoring**

In the current crisis, selling to customers has become a digital rather than a face-to-face skill. Microsoft Dynamics 365 Sales empowers organisations to provide an end-to-end digital buying experience across every stage of the customer journey, from demand response to transaction. Businesses can adjust to fluctuations in demand by scaling their sales resources, arming digital sellers with training/skilling and next best action enablement resources. In addition, with unified relationship data across the full customer lifecycle, organisations can utilise artificial intelligence to generate actionable insights to create more meaningful customer connections.

In times of uncertainty, front-line workers, customers, and citizens reach out in higher volumes seeking guidance, reassurance, and clarity. Microsoft Dynamics for Customer Service provides built-in intelligence, automation, and mixed reality to ensure teams are properly resourced to provide real-time support. Collectively, these technologies empower your service teams to act as the trusted front line of your company – by providing meaningful insights and connected experiences from anywhere, at any time.

Making the most of knowledge management

The most effective way to create, share, use and manage your organisation's knowledge is through a multi-disciplinary approach. That means using a common platform to store and share your content – from HR handbooks to data-security policies.

Microsoft SharePoint is a globally popular solution. You can use it simply as a medium for intranet sites. But organisations can also adapt and build useful things with it – from basic content repositories for teams to large-scale systems that track sophisticated business processes.[25]

Another day-to-day way to share knowledge is through Teams. As millions of us discovered during lockdown, you can use it to easily share files and store them by Chat or Team group.

And there's another knowledge management tool that lets you integrate your entire knowledge network: **Project Cortex**.

It uses AI to deliver 'just-in-time' knowledge within the apps you use every day. It scans and analyses content across teams and systems, extracting important information, and auto-organising content into shared topics like projects, products, processes and customers. So you can access knowledge topics from Teams, Outlook and Sharepoint, anywhere, anytime, within a consistent Microsoft 365 user experience.

Enabling smart offices and meetings

Physical meeting spaces aren't going to disappear. But with people working across multiple locations, not just a single room, they'll need to be more carefully managed, responsive to user needs, and conducive to collaboration.

Smart offices

Azure Digital Twin allows you to model your physical space digitally. You can then add the real-time location of people in that physical space, and what devices they're using. Hooked up to Microsoft Internet of Things (IoT) devices through the cloud, it creates a totally joined-up experience:

- **Employees admitted from lobby to office areas via facial recognition – no ID cards**

- **Visitors auto-checked-in on arrival and connected to wireless network**

- **Kiosks on each floor use IoT sensors to show visitors room availability in real time**

- **Wayfinding app shows visitors how to get to their room**

- **Employees book a room with a single click**

IoT sensors linked to Azure Digital Twin allow facilities managers to auto-control office temperatures, lighting and ventilation – enhancing personal comfort, simplifying management and cutting costs. See how Microsoft is turning its HQ into a smart campus.

As the pandemic fades, and organisations gain the confidence to return to the workplace, Azure IoT can help safeguard the work environment, by reducing the risk of transmission with contactless interfaces, proximity monitoring and thermal screening.

And with Power Platform, you can use a set of apps and dashboards to determine the readiness of workplace locations, identify COVID-19 hotspots, and keep employees safe with self-service tools and screening.

Smart meetings

To help create workspaces where people can collaborate effectively and safely, both remotely and from the work site, it's important to enable an experience where every attendee is a first-class participant. As organisations continue the transition back to the office, shared space devices like Microsoft Teams Rooms and Surface Hub will be critical tools in delivering the ultimate hybrid workplace experience.

You can deploy Microsoft Teams Rooms into spaces of any size, from very small huddle areas to extra-large conference rooms. And with new Surface Hub 2S, you can make the most of an all-in-one digital whiteboard, meetings platform, and collaborative computing device that brings people together, no matter where they're working.

"

The ability for our teams to seamlessly connect to meetings, share content, work through issues in whiteboarding sessions regardless of location through Microsoft Teams and on Surface Hub ensures we can keep cargo moving at all times, regardless of circumstances.

"

Fabio Catassi, Chief Technology Officer at MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company

SHAKESPEARE MARTINEAU: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE TODAY

> **Without those devices, much of the firm wouldn't have been able to work from home securely.**
>
> Dal Virdi, IT Director, Shakespeare Martineau

The experience of top UK law firm, Shakespeare Martineau, reveals how innovation, exploiting the latest technology and creating a collaborative working environment can strengthen an organisation's ability to overcome future challenges.

Seeking to provide people with the right working tools, the company started to identify the technologies it needed.

"It was really important to facilitate agility across the firm," says IT Director, Dal Virdi. "Microsoft Surface gives our staff the freedom to work in a way that suits their lives whilst maximising productivity."

When COVID-19 hit, fee earners used their new Surface laptops to operate at home. "Without those devices, much of the firm wouldn't have been able to work from home securely," continues Virdi.

The new Surface laptops also enabled the team to optimise the user experience, by deploying Microsoft 365 apps, including Teams and OneDrive. To support deployment, users were given permissions to securely log on to the firm's Azure tenancy to access and download scripts they could then run to automate the new upgraded build on their Surface laptops.

Better Teams working

Another challenge for all law firms is client confidentiality. So enabling internal users to access key Microsoft apps had unexpected benefits. As Virdi explains, "Because of the security concerns around other video conferencing platforms, many clients will only use Microsoft Teams for calls and collaboration."

A COVID-19-secure environment for the future

Almost everyone in the firm now has their own Surface laptop, Arc mouse and personal headset, and offices are being reconfigured to be pure hot-desking environments that are clinically clean.

Shakespeare Martineau's roll-out of Surface devices has delivered improved morale, increased productivity, reduced downtime, an increase in billable hours and enhanced client satisfaction.

See the full Shakespeare Martineau customer story.

06

BUILD RESILIENT
TEAMS

Creating a culture of continuous learning

"

An effective culture not only gives people what they need to work in the here and now, but also the power to innovate, adapt and progress for the future.

"

Nick Hedderman, Modern Work
and Security Lead, Microsoft UK

People drive your business, and it's important to support them in as many ways as possible. Beyond facilitating remote work and new safety processes, that includes helping to re- and upskill your employees.

"

The most successful organisations will be the ones that transform both technically and culturally, equipping their people with the skills and knowledge to become the best competitive asset they have.

"

Simon Lambert, Chief Learning Officer for Microsoft UK

1. Assess current workforce skills

2. Determine future needs

3. Create a plan to bridge the gaps

The key is to create a culture that embraces continuous learning. Perhaps the most effective first step towards that goal is to identify your organisation's skills gaps and then create a roadmap to get your business where it needs to be.

With this approach, technology can be seen as a feature that optimises employees' experiences, enhancing everything from individual productivity to job satisfaction and peer-to-peer learning.[24]

Creating a learning environment can arm your employees with the skills they need to thrive within the hybrid workplace. And taking an inclusive approach can pay dividends too. In many instances, that can be achieved by simply asking people what they want to learn, listening to feedback, and then responding to it.

For employees who aren't office-based, Dynamics 365 Guides is a smart way to support and encourage learning. It delivers timely on-the-job guidance, sharing step-by-step holographic instructions, photos, videos and 3D models that can help reduce errors, reinforce skills, and close knowledge gaps.

Managing your talent for success

From the way people job hunt to staff management, huge shifts were taking place in the world of work long before the pandemic struck.

Technology now gives organisations new ways of working, hiring, and interacting with employees. Advanced HR management systems can help seek out the best potential recruits. And once someone's part of the team, those same systems can energise their personal development.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Human Resources is an HR management platform that delivers everything you need to optimise human resource management and care for your people. It works seamlessly with other Microsoft Dynamics 365 apps, Microsoft 365 services like Outlook – and LinkedIn.

Microsoft

Moving forward with crucial workforce insights

Many organisations are eager to adapt. And they know where they want to be. But getting there can be difficult if you don't understand where you are right now.

That's why having a clear picture of how an organisation is functioning is crucial to enhancing employee productivity and their working experience. Microsoft Workplace Analytics can help you delve deep to understand and reshape your workplace culture.

Using data from everyday work in Microsoft 365, it gives you a dynamic view of how people are interacting, allowing you to respond swiftly to improve employee experiences, and sharpen customer focus.

That can help foster productivity, but it can also protect wellbeing. With Workplace Analytics and MyAnalytics now integrated within Teams, you can assess how your workforce is faring in these challenging times, and act fast to take action if needed.

You can use the insights to promote skills, nurture new leaders, or break down silos and develop powerful cross-disciplinary networks. Microsoft Dynamics 365 Human Resources has a role to play here too. It lets you manage:

- **Admin details** – comprehensive worker info from hire to retire

- **Performance vs. salary information** – implement and track profile-based time management and generate pay information to export to a payroll system

- **Upskilling** – review performance, implement worker goals, and set up, deliver and analyse training courses

Microsoft

Finding and nurturing skills for new roles

Arming your people with the right skills can ensure that everyone moves forward together, and that all are capable of making a meaningful contribution.

Those organisations that build talent streams and make informed use of AI and automation can make it easier for employees to optimise the knowledge at their disposal. It's becoming clear that actively embracing a culture of ongoing learning can lead to more resilience, adaptability, and ultimately, improved performance.

Moving forward, the transformed digital workspace is going to see an increased demand for new skills. Indeed, over the next five years, estimates suggest there will be approximately 149 million new tech jobs. So it's crucial that businesses start thinking today about the skills they might need tomorrow.[27]

While Microsoft Envision UK has recently launched 'Get on 2021', a five-year campaign to help 1.5 million people build careers in technology, our digital skills website is a powerful learning hub that reinforces our commitment to helping people achieve more.

And both Microsoft Learn and LinkedIn Learning represent a huge reservoir of professional courses that people can easily access, as and when they need to.

AN ESTIMATED
149 MILLION
NEW TECH JOBS OVER THE NEXT
5 YEARS

10 roles and skilling resources for job seekers in the new normal, Microsoft blog, 2020

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN: CREATING A RESILIENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

" Remote learning is going to remain as one of the toolsets we'll use to enhance the student experience. **"**

Dr. Derek Foster, Computer Science Programme Leader, University of Lincoln

The University of Lincoln has an international reputation for the quality of its teaching and research.

Cloud computing plays an important role in the university's highly ranked Computer Science programme. But when COVID-19 struck, Microsoft cloud solutions began to play an even more important role for all students.

Continuing learning through COVID-19

Usually, Computer Science learning takes place at the university's impressive new Isaac Newton Building. But in March 2020, that changed suddenly.

Like many higher education institutions, the university had to quickly adapt its teaching and learning approach to ensure that students and staff could continue to enjoy a safe and positive experience. Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Liz Mossop says, "We moved very quickly to move all our teaching and learning online within 24 hours."

Digital delivery into the future

Microsoft Teams helped teachers and students to adapt. Dr. Derek Foster, Computer Science Programme Leader says, "Microsoft Teams had a really important role to play in terms of one-to-one support, smaller group meetings, as well as larger group meetings. Students picked it up very, very quickly."

The close integration of Microsoft Teams with other essential learning tools, such as Microsoft Word, as well as the security and integrity of the Microsoft 365 platform, are highly valued by staff and students alike.
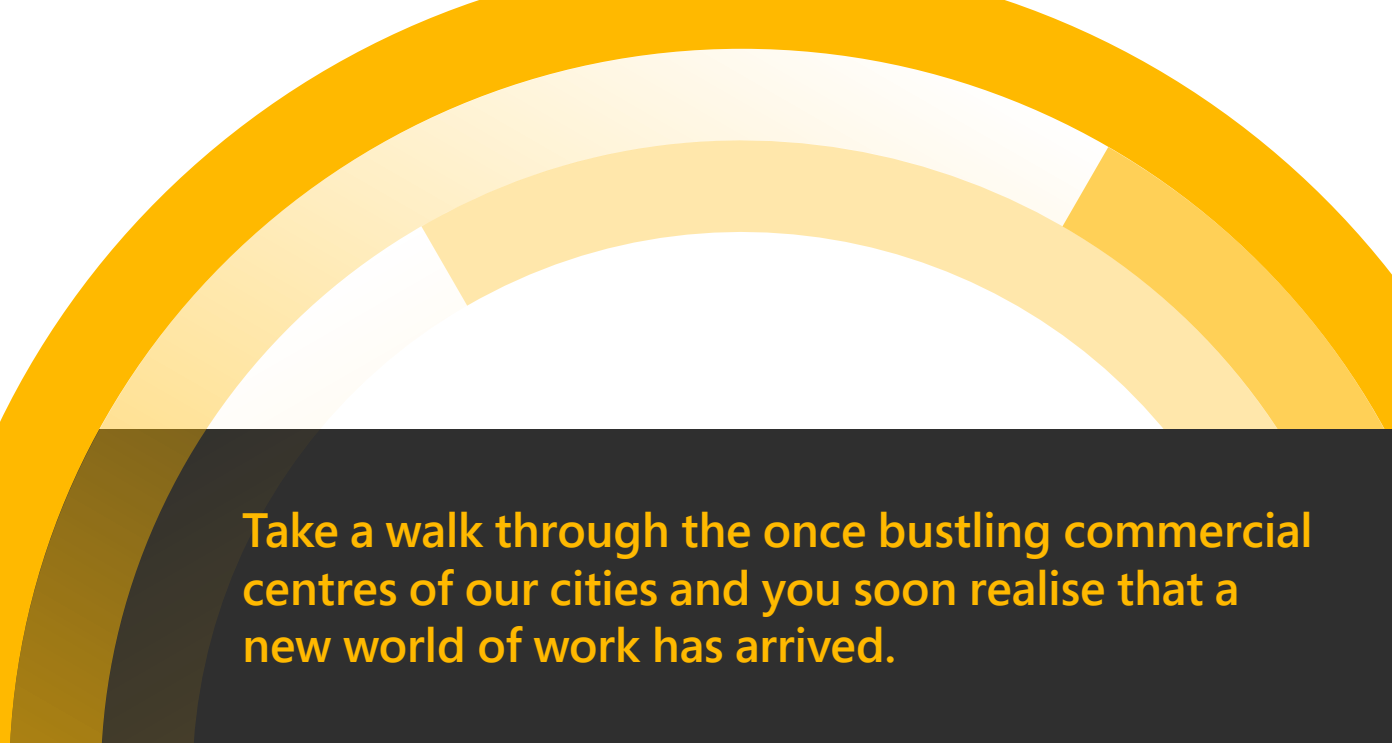
Given this success, the university plans to integrate Microsoft Teams into its ongoing operations. Dr. Foster says, "Remote learning is going to remain as one of the toolsets we'll use to enhance the student experience."

Read the full University of Lincoln customer story.

07

MAKING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION A REALITY

Take a walk through the once bustling commercial centres of our cities and you soon realise that a new world of work has arrived.

The hybrid workplace is here. So organisations are having to rapidly rethink how they manage their people and processes. Being successful is all down to focusing on clear leadership, a willingness to embrace new cultures and the informed use of technology.

The new workplace can be reimagined with cloud computing that can boost productivity, harness the power of knowledge and protect what matters most. It can also be enlivened by enabling employees with devices that empower and engage them.

We are here to help make your digital transformation a reality. As a result, you can create a more agile and competitive organisation, develop a culture that fosters continuous learning, and deliver an improved bottom line.

Above all, you'll be setting your people free from an outmoded workplace culture and ready to achieve their potential in a more intelligent, technology-enabled world.

Learn more

Productivity in a hybrid workplace:
Teams
Remote Assist
Windows Virtual Desktop
Microsoft Dynamics 365

Humanise work:
Microsoft 365
Teams
Accessibility features

Future work:
Surface
Power Automate
Dynamics 365 Customer Insights
Teams Hardware

Build resilient teams:
Digital Skills
Workplace Analytics
Microsoft Learn
AI Business School

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