

Building a Modern Digital Workplace



Hybrid and remote work scenarios are on track to become a permanent fixture in the enterprise:

- [Pew Research reports](#) that 54% of employed adults want to work from home after the global pandemic ends, compared to just 20% who worked from home before the coronavirus outbreak.
- [Research by the professional network Blind](#) found that 64% of the respondents would forgo a \$30,000 raise in exchange for a permanent work-from-home arrangement.

As a result, IT organizations are challenged to support today's workforce with tools that equip employees to work from anywhere while erasing barriers of time and space and supporting the organizational culture.

IT must not only provide employees with computing, network, and software resources to empower the distributed and digital workforce but it must also provide support, protect critical data, and ensure that virtual teams can work productively.

In this new paradigm, the employee is at the center of the hybrid workplace. Motivated, happy employees demonstrably improve the customer experience. In a [recent IDC survey](#)¹, 85% of the respondents said that a better employee experience and higher employee engagement translate to a better customer experience, higher customer satisfaction, and higher revenues for their organization.

“It used to be that everything was funneled through email. That's been transformed into a multichannel environment where employees choose what channels they want to use to engage across the organization. The challenge many organizations face is ensuring that this new environment is seamless and delivers a great experience for the employees and enhances collaboration and organizational culture, not hold it back,” says Dan Perlick, vice president, Digital Workplace Global Practice at Kyndryl. “If the solution is not a positive experience, the engagement won't be there.”

A data-driven approach

The new digital workplace requires a data-driven approach to seamlessly integrate applications and data, simplify workflows, and enhance the employee experience. Changes forced on organizations by the pandemic present an opportunity for them to rethink the way work is done. “There's no better time to implement automation than

right now,” Perlick says.

“You can’t be scared of it. The ones that are implementing automation are seeing a payoff in employee experience and productivity across the business.”

Each touchpoint² — including procurement, devices, applications, management, and support — must be integrated into a seamless and secure whole. The experience for the remote worker needs to be as transparent as that of the office employee. IDC refers to this as “experience parity,” which it defines as “a comparable employee experience for a hybrid workforce that ensures that all workers securely interact with corporate resources (including people) with a consistent experience and context across locations.”

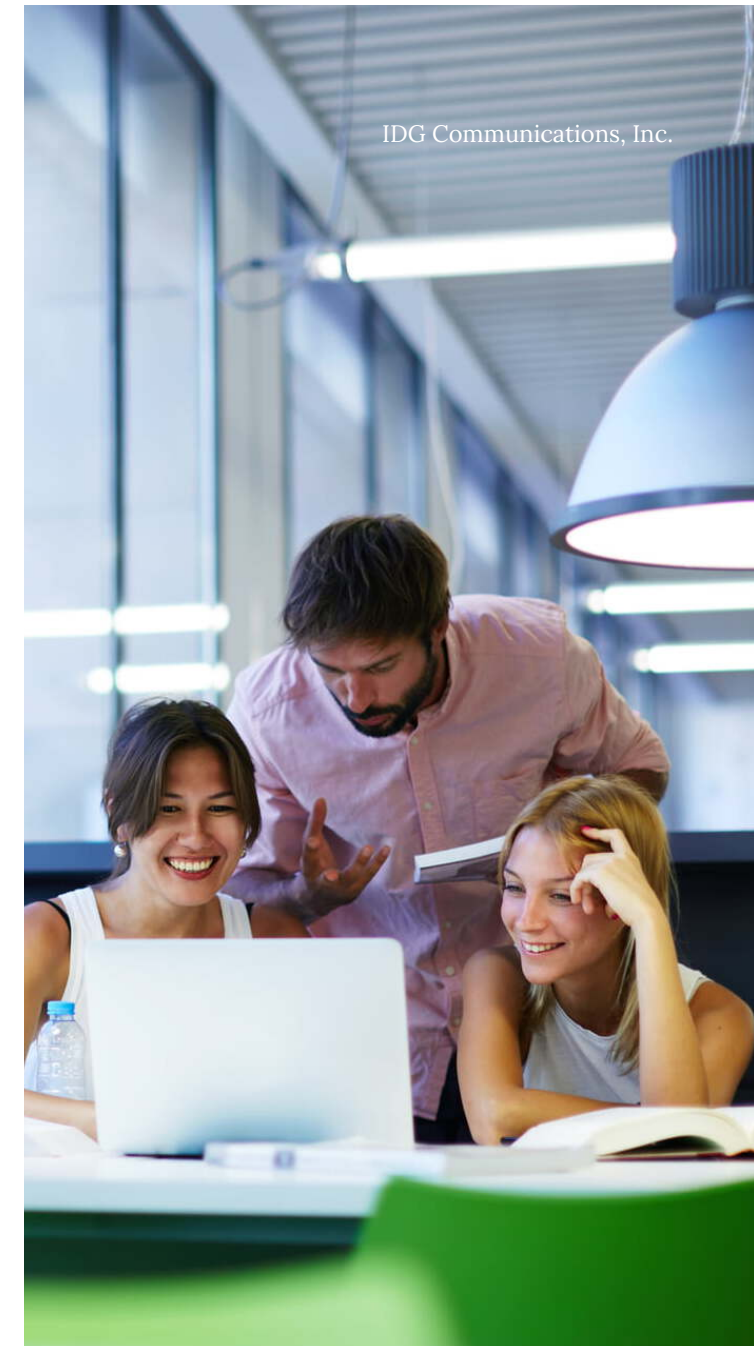
[IDC research](#) shows that many organizations

are already making investments to support this new reality: “Nearly half the companies surveyed by IDC indicated that their hybrid work technologies, policies, and processes were ‘in progress’ with most key resources available to remote employees with some lingering access or user experience issues.”

“Investment in digital and work transformation technologies aligns with organizational imperatives around improved business resilience and increased employee productivity,” notes Amy Loomis, research director, IDC [Future of Work](#). “We are also tracking a direct correlation between spending levels with stronger momentum toward achieving experience parity for hybrid workers while lower spending levels aligned with more limited or ad hoc approaches.”

¹ IDC blog, “Employee Experience and Customer Experience – What is the Connection?,” September 17, 2021

² IDC, “IDC Future of Work Survey Data Shows That Hybrid Work Models Are Still Evolving Amid Ongoing Uncertainty and Efforts to Achieve Employee Experience Parity,” IDC #prUS48252521, Sept 21, 2021



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Enabling the Distributed Workforce



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o enable the new distributed digital workforce, IT teams should focus on five key areas:

1. **Create a digital workplace.** Simplify workflows and integrate current applications and data to enhance the employee experience. This has the collateral benefit of reducing costs through automation and “self-healing” technology. Cloud-based solutions ensure that employees always have access to the most-up-to-date software without the need for intrusive manual updates. Cloud-based identity and access management solutions support zero-trust principles for higher levels of cybersecurity that are transparent to customers.

Collaboration is an essential element of the digital workplace. The pandemic has driven many organizations to adopt virtual meeting apps, but now the opportunity is to go beyond communication and drive collaboration

in the hybrid workplace. “We are helping our customers transform the hybrid workplace back to a ‘team sport’ where you can collaborate and contribute from your dining room table as easily as you can from the conference table in the office. We want to provide experience equity to the remote employee,” Perlick says.

2. **Innovate and manage digital experiences.** Identify new opportunities for improving employee experience and productivity across the organization, with integrated analytics that deliver insights and innovative ideas. For example, in a service desk scenario, remote device management and trend analysis can help organizations reduce call volumes and end user frustration by identifying problems before they affect a large number of people and taking proactive steps to solve them before they break. Perlick calls this capability “looking around the corner.” “If you’re starting to see trends, be able to recognize them



and be proactive about addressing them before they spread throughout the organization,” he explains.

3. **Deliver omnichannel IT support.** Apply analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation to provide a consistent, personalized experience that adapts to user preferences. Tools include voice response, self-service portals, FAQs, chatbots, and phone contact with live agents. “Instead of being on hold with the service desk, give employees an option to deflect messaging and communication to a convenient time and with a service agent who knows their background,” Perlick says.
4. **Modernize endpoint management.** Support secure and consistent employee experiences when accessing applications and data, regardless of the device being used. This includes seamless access from PCs as well as mobile devices. It may also include the option of virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), which

delivers preconfigured computing environments to users securely from a central server, regardless of the device they’re using. Implementing VDI requires a good understanding of employee personas, since not all users prefer it, but Perlick believes that VDI could be appropriate for most task-based workers.

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5. **Automate routine processes.** Organizations can achieve significant cost efficiencies by using technologies such as chatbots to answer common

questions. Scripted workflow solutions also improve efficiency by replacing manual tasks with automated tools that enable parallel serial workflows. For example, robotic process automation (RPA) encompasses a new set of tools that organizations can use to automate repetitive data entry and other highly manual information management tasks.

Organizations are expected to spend more than \$30 billion on digital workplace optimization over the next several years. The need is compelling, given that [Gartner reported](#) that only 13% of employees are fully satisfied with their work experience and [Gallup found](#) that 48% of working Americans are actively searching for jobs or watching for opportunities in the months following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

New considerations and outcomes

Workplace redesign has benefits that fall directly to the bottom line. IDC³ says organizations that invested in digital



transformation (DX) technologies in 2020 enjoyed a 20% increase in employee productivity.

- By taking advantage of recent **technology innovations**, companies can significantly reduce costs and enhance both employee and customer experience by offloading routine tasks to AI-enabled tools. Automation reduces stress on employees and lowers turnover rates.
- The combination of analytics, automation, and AI creates an **intelligent support infrastructure** that continuously learns with each employee interaction, helping deliver improved end user experiences and productivity. Help desk agents can diagnose and fix problems in employees' computers before the users even know something is amiss.
- **Experience outcomes** are measured with experience-level agreements (XLAs), which

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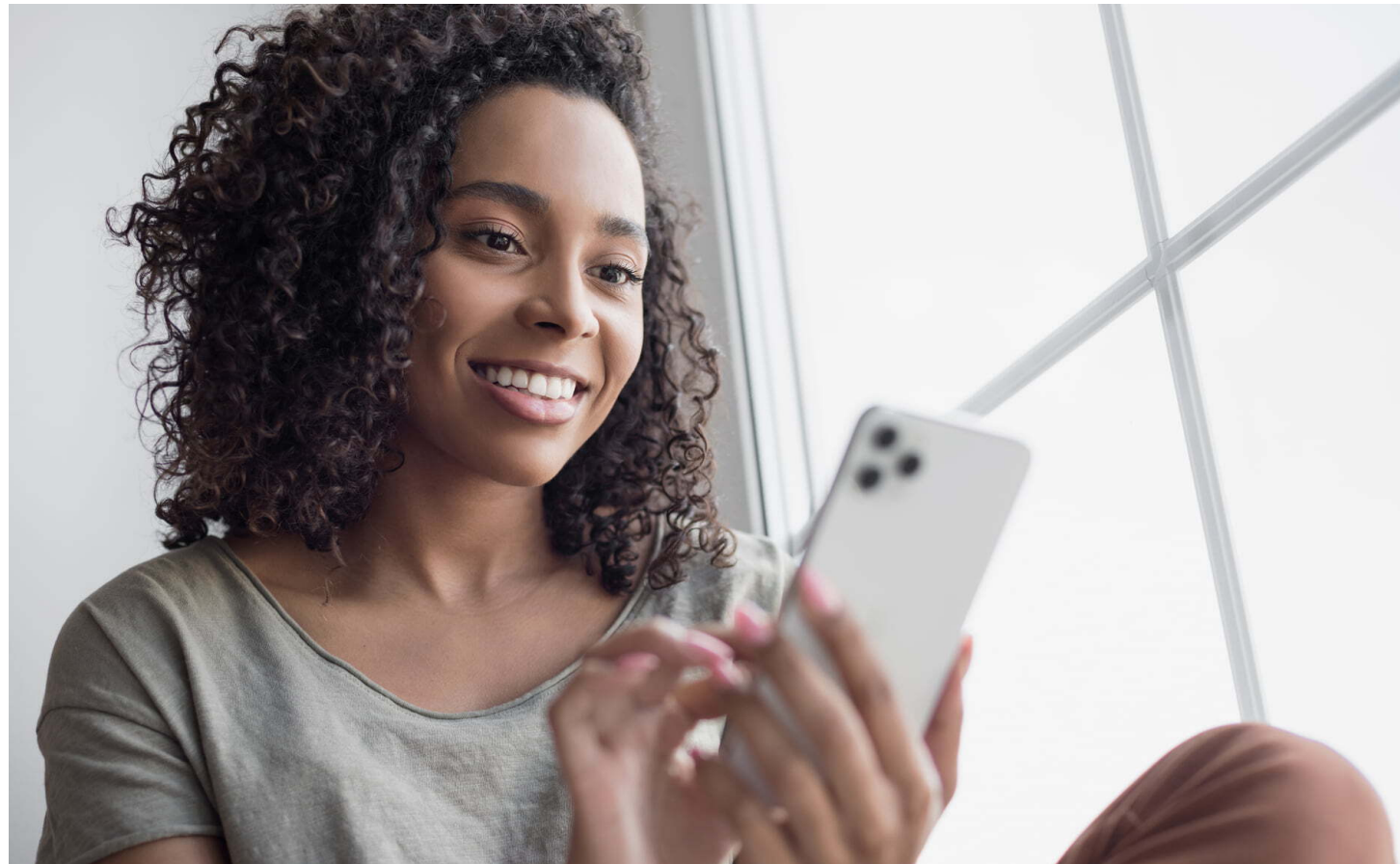
go beyond service-level agreements (SLAs) to focus on what's most important to the end user. Metrics include satisfaction scores on surveys, Net Promoter Scores, website response times, and time-to-resolution of customer support or employee service ticket requests.

“SLAs recognize that delivering on service levels is inadequate if the end user is not satisfied with the experience,” Perlick says. “The goal is to resolve issues to the satisfaction of individuals and not offer one-size-fits-all solutions.”

- Deploying self-service portals and FAQ resources such as chatbots can improve employee satisfaction as they take on repetitive chores, while reducing costs. One government agency reduced the number of monthly calls to its service desk by half with self-service tools. A financial services firm reduced the average time to resolve service tickets by 96%. Automating service desk interactions improves both employee and agent experience, by using AI to answer the most common questions

without involving a human operator. End users see a faster resolution to their problems, and human agents are freed up to spend more time focusing on issues that require human attention.

³ IDC blog, "Employee Experience and Customer Experience – What is the Connection?,"
September 17, 2021



Envisioning a Transformed Workplace

Employees lose productivity when their IT tools and devices aren't working properly.

In a modern digital workplace, employee experience is abstracted away from physical devices. The impediments of infrastructure and technology are reduced, so that people can focus on getting work done rather than managing apps and devices.

There are desktop virtualization solutions available today from such respected companies as Microsoft, VMware, and Citrix that work on any device and enable a smartphone user to have the same latitude of functionality as a user on a desktop PC.

VDI users aren't encumbered by the need to use only certain devices or to come into the office to work. The approach is more secure, because data resides on a secure

During COVID-19, one Kyndryl client was challenged to enable remote work for more than 100,000 employees, of whom about one-third had no access to corporate computers. Because the client's industry is heavily regulated, the solution had to adhere to tight controls on information disclosure.

Kyndryl deployed "emergency footing" services that included the rollout of Citrix Virtual Desktop Infrastructure on a public cloud in three major regions around the globe. Cisco Secure Remote Access Service was deployed to 30,000 users who lacked VPN access, and the VPN support head count was increased by 25% for six months. Identity and access management, multifactor authentication (MFA), and end-of-life remediation were also implemented consistently and completely to minimize risk. A Microsoft Teams rollout was also accelerated to enhance collaboration and communication among all users.

With the help of dedicated project managers, program managers, executives, and employees working together, the client's business experienced zero downtime during the crisis. The success of the virtualized solution has enabled the company to sustain productivity levels and identify future cost-saving opportunities.

server rather than an endpoint device. If a computer malfunctions, the user can switch to another one and be up and running in minutes. Work happens anywhere, and the experience is consistent.

New approaches to collaboration

With physical meetings likely to remain largely off the table for the coming months, organizations have become more creative about collaboration. Digital businesses are revisiting the way projects and meetings are run, to eliminate the traditional barriers of time and space.

- Collaboration platforms can now keep teams up to date with secure communication and enhanced data-sharing solutions that truly enable people to work from anywhere.
- Collaboration tools also pave the way to self-service capabilities for tasks such as IT provisioning, expense reporting, and benefits administration. Extensible

platforms and easy-to-use no-code development tools enable users to build workflow and reporting platforms that suit their exact preferences.

- The use of these platforms enhances team building, plus maintaining and enhancing the organizational culture. As people become comfortable with hybrid work environments, they become less constrained by physical limitations and more willing to work with colleagues in other offices and regions.

Although the concept of allowing employees to provide for their own services was nearly unheard of a few decades ago, cloud computing has changed the dynamic. More than 60% of U.S. consumers now say they prefer to take care of their own information needs rather than speaking to a customer service representative.

This preference translates to IT services as well, where business users can increasingly choose the applications they want from company “app stores” without the

intercession of IT administrators. Cloud-delivered collaboration services support distributed teams with minimal installation and configuration overhead.

Self-selected collaboration services can improve employee morale by enabling people to engage in conversations on their terms and use the platforms to keep current and receive emotional support. They can also troubleshoot technical problems with peers rather than calling IT support.

An experienced service provider can combine collaboration and productivity solutions from top vendors and present them in a marketplace that employees can use as needed.



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An organization that is responsible for managing and securing one of North America's busiest transportation systems was faced with supporting a mostly remote workforce in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. The organization also had to manage an influx of 8,000 monthly calls about work-from-home practices. The company's revenues were hit hard as usage of its services fell due to quarantines. Security was a big concern.

Rather than wrestle with the complexities of maintaining infrastructure, the company chose to outsource responsibility for the service desk, warehouse management, servers, storage, backup, Microsoft 365, and SharePoint support to Kyndryl.

Kyndryl provided collaboration, multimedia messaging, virtual desktops, and associated workplace support services with the full inclusion of remote workers. SLAs were changed to stress goals rather than transactions, creating metrics that were more adaptable to business needs. The IT environment was transformed from chaotic and unstructured to consistent and stable. All services were expedited, due to the pandemic, for delivery within weeks.

The result: The number of monthly service desk calls was cut by 50%, and the transition to a fully virtual service desk was completed in 10 weeks, not the months that were estimated in the original plan. The customer rated its satisfaction with Kyndryl's performance and support at 10 on a 10-point scale.



A New Way to Work

Consider a hypothetical example of how **cloud-based solutions** can come together to enable a digital workforce of the future.

- Confronted by the need to rethink workflows and collaboration in the wake of the shift to remote work, a company turns to cloud infrastructure and service providers to enable a quick pivot to a distributed workforce.
- Employees working in home offices are given access to virtual desktops that move with them from device to device. Their experience in the office is identical to that at home, enabling them to move fluidly from location to location without disrupting workflows.
- Security and data protection are ensured, because workspaces are provisioned from



With 90,000 employees around the world supported by leading technology, IP, and tooling, Kyndryl has extensive digital workplace expertise with strategy, implementation, and management services to help improve the employee experience, increase operational efficiency, and deliver solutions that equip employees to work from almost anywhere.

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the cloud and data is maintained and protected centrally.

- Collaboration software is used to shift team projects to virtual conferences and shared workspaces that don't depend on physical proximity. The platform also allows employees more scheduling flexibility.
- All meetings become virtual, with participants engaging over video calls that allocate the same amount of screen space to each person, regardless of their location. Remote workers can thus participate on the same footing as office employees.
- Rather than confining remote workers to an audio conference bridge, the setup enables each person to participate on an equal basis, with shared views of supporting materials such as slide presentations and whiteboards.
- An internal app store is created to enable people to pick and choose their own approved workplace tools and begin

using them immediately without relying on IT assistance.

- The IT organization is freed from routine and user support tasks to focus on accelerating the company's move to the cloud.
- Expertise from experienced infrastructure management providers helps guide the company toward the right combination of public cloud, private cloud, hybrid cloud, multicloud, and/or on-premises data center services.
- While work continues uninterrupted, thanks to managed software services, the technical staff migrates selected mission-critical systems to the cloud in side-by-side collaboration with the service provider.
- Proactive and predictive support using analytics, AI, and automation addresses problems before they occur, and when support is required, it's delivered in an omnichannel way —

however the employee desires: chat, voice, video, chatbot.

- As workers return to the office, the company is in a better position to adapt to future disruptions as well as to allocate its resources to new opportunities without the impediments of technology silos.

The bottom line

Workplace transformation needs to put the employee at the center and should be approached as a holistic, enterprise-wide project that encompasses both a data-driven analysis of the current work environment and a vision of what it will look like in the future.

“We need to put standards in place, improve application integration, and make touchpoints automatic instead of ad hoc,” Perlick says. The strategy should include zero-touch provisioning and seamless support across the office, home, and mobile environments. “The way to do that is

with an end-to-end process that focuses on ease of use for the employee,” Perlick adds.

When choosing a transformation partner, look for companies with global scope, a broad range of cross-industry experience, and an ecosystem of trusted partnerships.

Partners should have the resources to bring deep expertise to bear on your organization’s challenges as well as the technical skills to guide you through the transition.

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