

A Digital Workplace Is Crucial to Digital Transformation

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Digital transformation efforts will struggle to achieve their full potential unless employees have the ability and ambition to engage fully in the organization's digital journey. Application leaders should prioritize digital workplace initiatives, and deploy the tools needed to enable them.

Opportunities and Challenges

- Many innovations are available to improve the quality of the employee experience, which is vital to the success of digital transformation initiatives.
- IT faces a major reorientation to meet a growing demand for unified, contextual employee experiences that span workspaces, organizational boundaries and new ways of working.
- Successful digital workplace programs must align with digital transformation goals, clearly define the opportunities to improve productivity and effectiveness through better digital dexterity, prioritize technology investments and enable the workforce to embrace disruptive change.
- The impact of technology on the nature of work is increasing in breadth and depth, with the advent of artificial intelligence capabilities that learn from and adapt from data — in effect becoming almost co-workers.

What You Need to Know

- The realization that the employee experience — the perceptions and feelings caused by complex interactions with colleagues, systems and processes — has a powerful effect on performance is taking root in digital workplace strategies.
- Application leaders must balance support for well-established workplace service categories with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, modern meeting applications and collaborative work management.
- The digital workplace strategy, in collaboration with business stakeholders, should prioritize the business capabilities that will enable the workforce to support the organization's digital transformation ambitions.

Insight From the Analyst

Your Digital Transformation Journey Will Be a Dead End Unless Your Employees Are on the Road With You



[Jeffrey Mann](#) — VP Analyst

Two digital workplace trends are converging, creating new risks and opportunities for application leaders.

First, awareness is growing that the digital workplace is vital to the success of digital strategies.

You cannot become a digital business unless you have a digital workplace.

Employees must take the organization on that digital journey. If they're left behind, you won't reach your destination. This awareness is elevating digital workplace to a C-suite priority.

Second, emerging technologies are driving more capabilities for working together more easily. Cloud, digital experience platforms, video, artificial intelligence, insight engines and new ways to analyze data — to name a few — are all very new and useful in building the digital workplace. We call this constellation of new capabilities the “new work nucleus.”

The intersection of these two trends creates a key opportunity for forward-looking application leaders responsible for digital workplace initiatives. Organizations must encourage digital dexterity by transitioning to more collaborative, agile, mobile, analytical, innovative and creative ways of working. But workers at all levels lack the guidance, engagement, support and willingness to embrace new skills and disciplines. They, and their organizations, are in danger of stalling or falling behind on this critical digital journey.

The research reports and other resources in this special report will enable you to:

- Align your digital workplace program with the most important digital transformation objectives
- Identify the workplace applications and capabilities that IT needs to deploy to achieve those objectives
- Administer and sustain a successful digital workplace program
- Develop and deploy new technologies to reshape work and the workplace

Regards,

Jeffrey Mann

Executive Overview

Definition

Digital transformation will fail without a willing, informed, equipped and engaged workforce. Yet all too often, the employee experience is an afterthought for business and application leaders. They ignore the relevance to workers of the proven lessons from marketing and customer relationship management regarding the customer experience. Many of the same techniques used to create happy customers can be applied to encourage productive employees.

Digital transformation requires a workforce that is not only skilled and able to change, but also willing to adapt to new ways of working. Employees need to become, and remain, digitally dexterous. Achieving this dexterity in the service of digital transformation is where organizations will experience the power of the digital workplace (see Figure 1).

The digital workplace is a business strategy that leverages an engaging and intuitive work environment to boost workforce digital dexterity — the ambition and ability to apply technology to improve business outcomes.

Workforce digital dexterity is the basis for the three fundamental goals of any digital workplace program:

- To advance digital dexterity through a working environment that delivers a comprehensive set of business-relevant services.
- To enable the workforce to use these services effectively.
- To do the above continuously in a responsive and agile manner.

Figure 1. The Elements of a Successful Digital Workplace Program



Research Highlights

Create the Employee Experience and Culture That Enables Flourishing

The quality of the employee experience affects all aspects of work: performance, engagement, retention and even attraction of talent.

Lead the way for choice and diversity in skill sets by equipping your employees with the right tools, structures, policies and practices. This effort reflects the degree and amount of change required by successful digital workplace programs; this is cultural change. It's the kind of change that is hard to lead and manage, yet it's the kind of change that enables employees and organizations to thrive.

These research notes will enable you to lead the cultural and employee experience change that digital transformation requires.

Related Research

“Measure Workforce Digital Dexterity to Optimize Digital Workplace Outcomes”

“Make Your Digital Workplace Employee-Friendly With These Six IoT Best Practices”

“Measuring Employee Engagement: Past, Present, Future”

“Critical Capabilities for Talent Management Suites”

Digital Workplace Applications

IT faces a growing demand to deliver unified contextual experiences across workspaces and new device types.

Meeting this demand requires a major rethink of IT’s role in supporting people and technology. This track helps digital workplace leaders boost IT responsiveness and understand the applications of the modern workplace.

A key issue for application leaders for the digital workplace is matching employees’ desires and the organization’s requirements to specific enabling technologies. To do so involves balancing widely divergent individual preferences with the organization’s need for standardization. Many previously exotic and expensive technologies — such as high-quality video, artificial intelligence and brainstorming tools — are becoming much more available and affordable. Business users are becoming much more familiar with digital collaboration tools. The range of collaboration capabilities is expanding rapidly.

As a result, IT organizations are struggling to keep up with issues such as:

- Keeping costs under control
- Establishing effective governance of the new applications and the data they create
- Facilitating tools’ adoption and training for users
- Deciding which new technologies to prioritize for maximum impact
- Tracking the vendors’ product roadmaps and matching them to organizational strategies
- Collaborating with new stakeholders, such as HR leaders, business leaders, security leaders and infrastructure managers, about digital workplace decisions

These research notes guide application leaders in choosing and deploying the digital workplace applications that will form the backbone of their organization’s digital strategy.

Related Research

“Toolkit: Workshop for Kicking Off an Enterprise Search and Insight Project”

“Predicts 2019: Digital Workplace Applications”

“Use AI to Hack Your Tricky Meeting Problems”

“Market Guide for Workstream Collaboration”

“Eight Steps for Modernizing Employee Communications in the Digital Workplace”

“Toolkit: Sample RFP for Content Services Platforms and Content Collaboration Platforms”

Digital Workplace Program Management

Digital transformation is about more than technology; it is also about constant realignment, fast and at scale, to ever-changing market conditions and business requirements.

Successful digital transformation requires that organizations rethink their processes and ways of working, so they can propagate change quickly and effectively. The workforce becomes either a primary driver of sustained competitive advantage, or the weak link in a digital transformation strategy.

Three key issues that application leaders for digital workplace programs must address include:

- **Strategy planning and business alignment** — Identifying, defining, prioritizing and communicating business-relevant digital workplace capabilities. Establishing a digital workplace program management organization to oversee program strategy and collaborate with business stakeholders.
- **Employee experience and governance** — Developing digital workplace roadmaps, including governance, change-management best practices and new methods of improving the employee experience to increase engagement and digital dexterity.
- **Change management, metrics and operations** — Transitioning from traditional operating models to modern continuous delivery models that are responsive, agile and metrics-driven.

These research notes offer guidance about establishing a digital workplace program, engaging with strategic stakeholders, creating appropriate governance structures, and identifying metrics for tracking progress and aligning with business priorities.

Related Research

“Use ‘Change Leadership’ Principles to Propel Your Digital Workplace Program to Success”

“Predicts 2019: Digital Workplace Programs — Follow the Signposts to Digital Dexterity”

“Toolkit: Board-Ready Slides for Your Digital Workplace Program”

“Hype Cycle for the Digital Workplace, 2018”

“How to Select Collaboration Technology Using Gartner’s ACME Framework”

“Understand Five Key Types of Worker to Energize Your Digital Workplace”

Future of Work

Application leaders for digital workplace programs must bring together technology and people to build tomorrow’s businesses, platforms and ecosystems and must prepare employees to flourish in them. Creating a future of work that is effective and ethical will depend on keeping in mind this interrelationship of technology and people. One of the most important new examples of such interrelationships is the use of AI in business.

In the near-term, AI will be effective in automating and augmenting an array of jobs, both existing and new.

These reports highlight new ways of technology-enabled thinking and working, and human performance versus automation.

Related Research

“The Next Phase of Unified Workspace Evolution: Contextual Workspaces Optimize a Digital Workplace Strategy”

“Applying AI in the Digital Workplace”

“Solve Business Problems With Everyday AI in Digital Workplace Applications”

“Cultivate Citizen X Practices to Maximize Digital Dexterity”

“A Maturity Framework to Advance Digital Workplace Programs”

“Use Digital Workplace Programs to Augment, Not Replace, Humans With AI”

“Predicts 2019: AI and the Future of Work”

Peer Perspectives

Learn from your peers to help support decision making and leverage best practices.

These peer perspectives provide a complementary view alongside Gartner’s expert research.

“Peer Lessons Learned: Implementing Content Services Platforms”

“Peer Lessons Learned: Implementing Content Collaboration Platforms”

“Peer Lessons Learned: Implementing Unified Communications”

“Peer Connect Perspectives: Culture Hacks Get Things Done”

“Gartner Peer Insights ‘Voice of the Customer’: Content Collaboration Platforms”

“Gartner Peer Insights ‘Voice of the Customer’: Meeting Solutions”

“Gartner Peer Insights ‘Voice of the Customer’: Content Services Platforms”

“Gartner Peer Insights ‘Voice of the Customer’: Unified Communications as a Service, Worldwide”

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Key Initiatives for Continuous Insight

All your initiatives are important, but some are mission-critical.

Key Initiatives organize the vast Gartner resources around the projects and programs at the top of your list, helping you achieve demonstrable business results efficiently and cost-effectively. Key Initiatives represent how we deliver ongoing insight throughout the year to help you tackle your top priorities. Be sure to track all Key Initiatives that relate to your top priorities. As a first step, see [Analyst Picks for Application Leaders](#).

- “Digital Workplace Applications Primer for 2019” explains how digital workplace initiatives rely on the applications and technologies that facilitate and advance digital dexterity. Application leaders responsible for these initiatives need to know how to acquire, deploy and manage them for maximum success.
- “Digital Workplace Program Primer for 2019” outlines how application leaders in charge of digital workplace programs must align their plans with the ambition of their organizations for digital transformation and the need for digital dexterity. They must design workplace services for engagement, build them for scale and run them for continuous change.
- “Digital Workplace for Technical Professionals Primer for 2019” looks at how digital workplace initiatives rely on the applications and technologies that promote and facilitate digital dexterity. Technical professionals responsible for these initiatives need to know how to acquire, deploy and manage them for maximum success.

Other Important Initiatives for Digital Workplace

- “Artificial Intelligence Primer for 2019” reviews how organizations now employ AI in data-rich aspects of their operations. Based on the 2019 Gartner CIO Survey, 14% of organizations employ AI and nearly 50% intend to do so in 2020. CIOs should shift to operational use of this technology in 2019.
- “HCM Technology Transformation Primer for 2019” explains that digital business transformation and changing worker desires are disrupting existing methods to acquire, motivate, develop, reward, service and manage talent. Our 2019 research will help application leaders align their HCM technologies to digital workplace initiatives and emerging workforce needs.
- “Application Development and Platforms Primer for 2019” poses that the tectonic shift from project-centric to product-centric delivery in IT means that development organizations must fundamentally change. Application leaders must splice new digital DNA into their teams, transforming their development and platform strategies to excel in the era of digital products.
- “Mobile and Endpoint Technologies Primer for 2019” explains that infrastructure and operations leaders must continue to modernize their mobile and endpoint infrastructures to provide users with a digital workplace that can enable and empower workers. Skills, processes and technology must be modernized to address user needs.

Related Priorities

Table 1. Related Priorities

Priority	Focus
Digital Workplace Applications	Digital workplace applications support organizations' employees in their daily work as they create and consume content, collaborate and communicate.
Mobile and Endpoint Technologies	Mobile and endpoint technologies provide the technology infrastructure to provide users with access to devices and applications that compose a digital workplace.
Analytics and BI Solutions	Analytics and business intelligence (BI) solutions entail systematic, sustained action to plan, select, deploy and manage analytics technologies that will deliver business outcomes and business value.
HCM Technology Transformation	HCM technologies support enterprise HR processes such as talent acquisition, posthire talent management, HR service delivery, workforce management, and workforce analytics/reporting.

Source: Gartner

Related Resources

Gartner Annual Executive Retreats for Application Leaders

Building the Applications' Foundation for Digital Responsiveness

Application leaders are constrained by large, complex legacy portfolios that impede rapid delivery of new capabilities and innovative solutions to support digital business objectives. Join your peers to learn how to build an applications portfolio that fosters the responsiveness and innovation required to support your digital business goals.

Gartner's [Annual Executive Retreats](#) equip application leaders to optimize their performance and the performance of their teams and businesses. These research-based peer meetings focus on our members' most important business challenges for the year, and combine practitioner discussions with our research into what the best companies do.

Note: The Annual Executive Retreat for application leaders is designed specifically for Executive Program (ExP) Team Plus Partners and Enterprise IT Leaders (EITL) Team Plus Leaders who are heads of the applications function within their organization. Annual Executive Retreats are available once per contract year.

Webinars

Get actionable advice in 60 minutes from the world's most respected experts. Keep pace with the latest issues that impact business.

[“Digital Workplace Hype Cycle: Explore the Future of Work”](#)

[“What the Digital Workplace Will Look Like in 2028”](#)

[“Digital Workplace Hype Cycle: Explore the Future of Work”](#)

[“The Impact of AI in the Workplace and Beyond”](#)

[“How Midsize CIOs Can Build Successful Digital Workplaces”](#)

Conferences

From digital workplace to application architecture and development, application leaders for customer experience and technologies should [attend](#) one of our many conferences around the globe.

[Digital Workplace Summit 2019 North America](#)

[Digital Workplace Summit 2019 Europe](#)

Articles

[“Gartner Top Technologies and Trends Driving the Digital Workplace”](#)

[“Exploit Everyday AI in the Digital Workplace”](#)

[“The Recipe for a Digital Workplace”](#)

[“5 Types of Workers That Can Revitalize Your Digital Workplace”](#)

Peer Insights

Gartner Peer Insights is a free peer review and ratings platform designed for enterprise software and services decision makers. Reviews go through a strict validation and moderation process in an effort to ensure they are authentic. Choose enterprise IT software and services with confidence. Read verified reviews from the IT community.

- [Browse Vendors](#)
- [Browse Markets](#)
- [Write a Review](#)

Peer Connect

[Peer Connect](#) is a private community in which Gartner clients can exchange insight and advice on their mission-critical priorities. Join the discussions occurring in these Forums to ask questions and share insights on Key Initiatives:

- [Unified Communications and Collaboration Forum](#)
- [Applications Forum](#)

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