

# How to Strengthen Your Digital Workplace Program to Sustain Digital Transformation

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Exploiting digital technology for new ways of working often results in technology islands that are remote from employees' needs and cut off from business outcomes. Application leaders should build a flexible digital workplace program that can evolve to sustain digital transformation.

## Opportunities and Challenges

- Digital transformation is, by definition, dynamic, constantly responding and adapting to internal and external changes, thereby disrupting work processes, subjecting employees to strain and undermining productivity.
- The stream of new collaboration tools, plus emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), can pose as much threat as promise, sewing confusion, duplication, inefficiency and unintended consequences into working practices.
- An effective digital workplace program is a systematic decision and operational framework that responds and adapts to change, enabling employees to confidently master new skills, navigate uncertainty and strengthen digital dexterity.
- Continuous development of digital workplace maturity equips employees at all levels to sustain strategic digital transformation initiatives, overcome setbacks and exploit new opportunities.

## What You Need to Know

- Optimizing the employee experience is critical to driving higher digital dexterity, which in turn is an essential ingredient for successful digital transformation initiatives.
- Advancing the digital workplace hinges on phasing in the optimal application and technology investments, easing their adoption, tracking their business outcomes and measuring their value.
- Digital workplace programs require an agile management approach that can iteratively prioritize, adapt, measure and mature the capabilities that support the organization's digital transformation outcomes.

- Broad technology, demographic and socioeconomic forces are already changing work, requiring application leaders to guide the organization's transition to a digital workplace that can shape the future of work.

## Insight From the Analyst

### Digital Workplace Transformation Is Like Weightlifting: Start Light, Persist and Get Stronger to Continuously Advance

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The digital workplace has ceased to be a novelty that has to be explained. Instead, it is an evolving business strategy with a clear objective: to increase employee digital dexterity within your organization. Moving from foundational, through intermediate to advanced capabilities is vital if you, as an application leader for the digital workplace, are to sustain digital transformation for your organization.

In a sense, it's like weightlifting. You start with what you can handle, but you work with a clear goal in mind, strengthening your capabilities over time: foundational, intermediate, advanced.

One example is the evolution and maturation of “employee engagement” to “employee experience,” which is more expansive and comprehensive. Engagement is about the extent to which workers are willing to apply discretionary effort to achieve organizational goals and feel that the organization enables them to do their best work. By contrast, employee experience draws on the comparable idea of customer experience. The overall experience affects engagement, for better or worse.

Employee experience is the employees' perceptions and related feelings caused by the one-off and cumulative effect of interactions with customers, leaders, teams, processes, policies, tools and work environment.

Making the employee experience better is a continuous design process that develops over time as you implement the design changes and assess their effects on employees. This, like so much else about the digital workplace, is an evolution — a type of continuous, deliberate development linked to measurable business outcomes.

Digital transformation ambition can too easily outstrip your existing capabilities and resources. Business stakeholders need you, as an application leader, to assess current capabilities and deficits, help them prioritize these, and then craft a strategy that advances the desired outcomes.

The research reports and other resources in this Special Report will enable you to strengthen your digital workplace program by:

- Designing an employee experience that optimizes engagement and equips employees to sustain digital business outcomes
- Prioritizing the workplace applications and capabilities that IT needs now to achieve those objectives
- Developing the management practices needed for a flexible, adaptable digital workplace program, responsive to business changes and opportunities
- Preparing the groundwork for internal cultural changes, coupled with emerging technologies, that will transform the way your organization works in the future

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## Executive Overview

### Definition

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Sustaining digital transformation requires a digital workplace program that can flexibly respond and adapt to business and technology change. Enabling such a program requires a clear-eyed recognition of the organization's current maturity level for digital workplace capabilities. And it means a realistic strategy for improving that maturity.

Application leaders often fail to regularly assess the maturity of their digital workplace program. This failure makes it difficult to identify where changes or additional investments would be most effective. Implicit in Gartner's definition of the digital workplace is the need for a program that can manage and adapt to the breadth and depth of change needed for advancing digital dexterity.

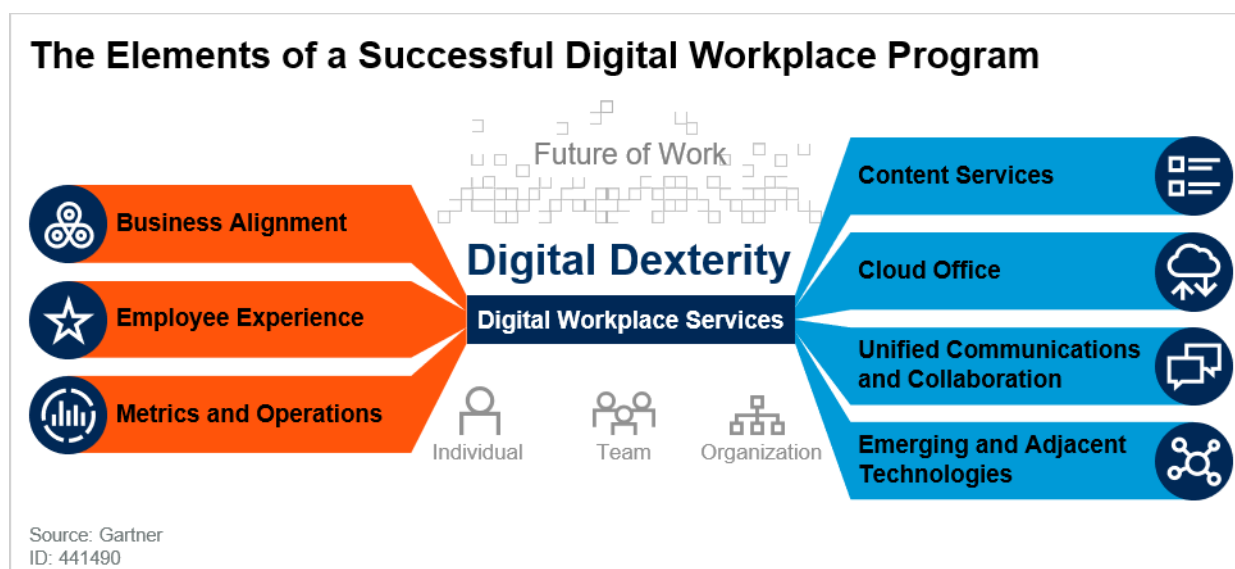
The digital workplace is a business strategy that leverages an engaging and intuitive work environment to boost workforce digital dexterity — the ambition and ability to apply technology to improve business outcomes.

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

### Design the Employee Experience to Align With Digital Transformation Outcomes

Optimizing the employee experience means first understanding what that experience is. Understanding is the foundation for redesigning the experience and for equipping employees with the skills, tools, structures and practices that create sustainable digital dexterity. Application leaders are sometimes guilty of overlooking employee perceptions, feelings, motivations and satisfaction.

Too often, application leaders (and business leaders) treat employee experience too narrowly, as merely a technical or informational deficit that can be rectified with more up-to-date tools, applications and training.

New approaches to improve the employee experience — going beyond updating tools and training — include:

- **Voice of the employee** — Gathering better information on employee perceptions, consolidating feedback and deriving new insights with actionable guidance, all based on a wider set of employee experience inputs.

- **Human engineering** — Using machine learning and other advanced analytics to uncover the most effective ways to change workforce behavior and redesign an optimal employee experience.
- **Design thinking** — Delving into a deeper understanding of employees' needs by using observation, interaction and creativity to shift from a company-centered experience to an employee-centered experience.

The following research notes will enable you to lead the cultural and employee experience change that will sustain digital transformation initiatives.

### Related Research

“Employee Digital Dexterity Is an Essential Element of the Next-Generation Workforce”

“Employee Experience Measurement Maturity Model”

“Market Guide for Employee Communications Applications”

“Cool Vendors for Employee Experience and Enablement in the Digital Workplace”

“Get Ready for the Convergence of Employee Performance and Engagement”

### Prioritize the Application and Technology Investments to Advance Digital Dexterity

Organizations rarely start from a blank sheet of paper when planning digital workplace technologies. Many employee work routines are chained to decades-old personal and team productivity tools that are inadequate for modern workplace needs. In response, organizations are investing in SaaS-based personal and team productivity tools. Yet too often, IT groups treat these investments as an IT-centered exercise focused on operational fitness (uptime, security and governance), rather than on improving how employees get work done.

These SaaS solutions constitute what Gartner calls the “new work nucleus” — a significant reimagining of the way employees operate on a daily basis.

The new work nucleus is a collection of ever-changing, multivendor, SaaS-based personal and team productivity applications that replaces decades-old on-premises applications centered around Microsoft Office.

This nucleus is but one of an array of technology investment decisions facing application leaders and business stakeholders. The following research notes specify application and technology strategies that help to smooth the transition to new technologies, and drive adoption and effective usage on an ongoing basis.

### Related Research

“Office 365 Customers Must Leverage Microsoft Graph API to Maximize Digital Workplace Benefits”

“Create a Culture of Digital Dexterity With the ‘New Work Nucleus’”

“Hype Cycle for the Digital Workplace 2019”

“Toolkit: Is UCaaS a Good Fit for Your Enterprise?”

“Control Content Sprawl With Federations”

“How Vendor Data Location Policies Influence Cloud Office Decisions”

“Market Guide for Cloud Office Migration Tools”

“Maximize the Effectiveness of Office 365 and G Suite With Everyday AI”

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

“Survey Analysis: Google and Microsoft Battle It Out in a Growing Cloud Email Market”

“The Role of Email and Calendaring in the New Work Nucleus” *(forthcoming)*

“The Role of Content Collaboration Platforms in the New Work Nucleus” *(forthcoming)*

“The Role of Documents, Spreadsheets and Graphics in the New Work Nucleus” *(forthcoming)*

“The Role of Workstream Collaboration in the New Work Nucleus” *(forthcoming)*

## Establish a Flexible Management Approach to Adapt and Mature the Capabilities Needed to Sustain Digital Transformation

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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. Doing this successfully requires application leaders to rethink their processes and ways of working so that necessary changes propagate change quickly and effectively.

With an agile management approach, the workforce becomes one of the primary drivers of sustained competitive advantage. Without it, the workforce becomes the weakest link in a digital transformation strategy.

Translating a digital workplace strategy into a practical, effective operational program is a complex task. It cannot be done without an ongoing conversation with business stakeholders and employees. Application leaders must optimize operations for continuous rather than cyclical delivery. Your decisions must be data-driven, using current, reliable metrics.

The following research notes will help you execute your digital workplace strategy, measure its progress, benchmark it and demonstrate its value.

## Related Research

“Achieve Deal Excellence by Comparing Your Workplace Services Against Gartner’s Operational Performance Metrics”

“How to Manage Multitenant Cloud Office Deployments”

“Cloud Office Deployments Require Governance of Applications, People and Content”

“How to Cultivate Effective 'Remote Work' Programs”

“Eight Building Blocks You Need to Construct Your Digital Workplace Plan”

“Toolkit: Understanding the Individual, Team and Leadership Attributes That Drive Digital Success”

“Toolkit: Communicate How the Digital Workplace Makes Digital Transformation Work” (*forthcoming*)

“The Digital Workplace Leader's First 100 Days” (*forthcoming*)

“Supporting Digital Workers Means Diverse Workplace IT Strategies” (*forthcoming*)

## Prepare for the Future of Work by Exploring New Relationships Between Technologies and Talent

The future of work is about establishing and optimizing new and better relationships between technology and talent. Application leaders shouldn't let this relationship — and the way work is done — develop by accident. The powerful forces driving these relationships — demographic and social change and emerging technologies such as AI, advanced automation and arrays of sensors in the Internet of Things — should be harnessed and exploited.

These trends force application leaders to confront unexpected questions:

- How do physical spaces need to change and adapt to synchronize with the digital workplace?
- Will corporate office space and real estate become an advantage or a hindrance to enabling more productive work?
- How can organizations improve their “data literacy” — developing a common way of talking about how data pervades work processes and outcomes, and how it can be leveraged effectively to sustain digital transformation?
- How can inflexible obsolete work processes be transformed to make frontline workers more productive and more satisfied with their work?

These research notes address these questions and issues to enable you to confidently prepare for the future of work.

## Related Research

“An Upsurge in Digital Workplace Programs Is Driving Higher Global Digital Workplace Maturity”

“How We Will Work in 2028”

“Predicts 2019: AI and the Future of Work”

“The Future of Work and Talent: Culture, Diversity, Technology”

“Scaling Digital Leadership — Keep the Momentum Going”

“Predicts 2019: A Dynamic Culture Will Accelerate Digital Transformation”

“Augmented and Virtual Reality in the Digital Workplace: Top Use Cases”

## Peer Perspectives

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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

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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
<a href="#">Digital Workplace Applications</a>	Digital workplace applications support organizations' employees in their daily work as they create and consume content, collaborate and communicate.
<a href="#">Mobile and Endpoint Technologies</a>	Mobile and endpoint technologies provide the technology infrastructure to provide users with access to devices and applications that compose a digital workplace.
<a href="#">Analytics and BI Solutions</a>	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.
<a href="#">HCM Technology Transformation</a>	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

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#### 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 application portfolio that fosters the responsiveness and innovation required to support your digital business goals.

Gartner's [Annual Executive Retreats](#) prepare 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 (Executive Programs) 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

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

- [“Are You Ready for the Future of Work: Gartner Talks With Futurist Tamara McCleary”](#)
- [“Digital Workplace Hype Cycle: Explore the Future of Work”](#)
- [“What the Digital Workplace Will Look Like in 2028”](#)
- [“The Impact of AI in the Workplace and Beyond”](#)
- [“How Midsize CIOs Can Build Successful Digital Workplaces”](#)

## Conferences

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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 Europe](#)
- [Gartner Application Strategies & Solutions Summit](#)

## Articles

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- [“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

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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.

- [“Peer Lessons Learned: Implementing a Data Science and Machine Learning Platform”](#)
- [“Peer Connect Perspectives: How Can I Create an IT Innovation Lab in My Organization?”](#)
- [Browse vendors](#)
- [Browse markets](#)
- [Write a review](#)

## Peer Connect

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[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:

- [“Peer Connect Perspectives: How Can I Explain Digital Transformation to the Board of Directors?”](#)
- [Unified Communications and Collaboration Forum](#)
- [Applications Forum](#)

Join the [Gartner Research Circle](#) — Help shape the future of the industry.

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