Computacenter

ERA OF INTELLIGENCE SERIES

Transforming employee experience for tomorrow's workforce

Creating a thriving workplace in the digital era

In the ever-evolving landscape of work, the concept of "Employee Experience" has emerged as a defining factor in an organisation's success.

It's no longer enough to simply offer a job; today's workforce demands an engaging, fulfilling, and supportive environment that supports both individual growth and collective achievement. This shift in focus has given rise to a new paradigm in workplace design, where technology, process, and people intersect to create a truly transformative employee experience.

Over recent years, organisations have faced significant disruptions in work dynamics. Employees have grappled with changes, and their feelings have come to the forefront. We look at three key highlights below.

People-Centric Design

We'll explore how putting people at the heart of workplace design, from physical spaces to digital tools, can enhance wellbeing, boost engagement, and cultivate a culture of belonging, ultimately leading to a more productive and fulfilled workforce.
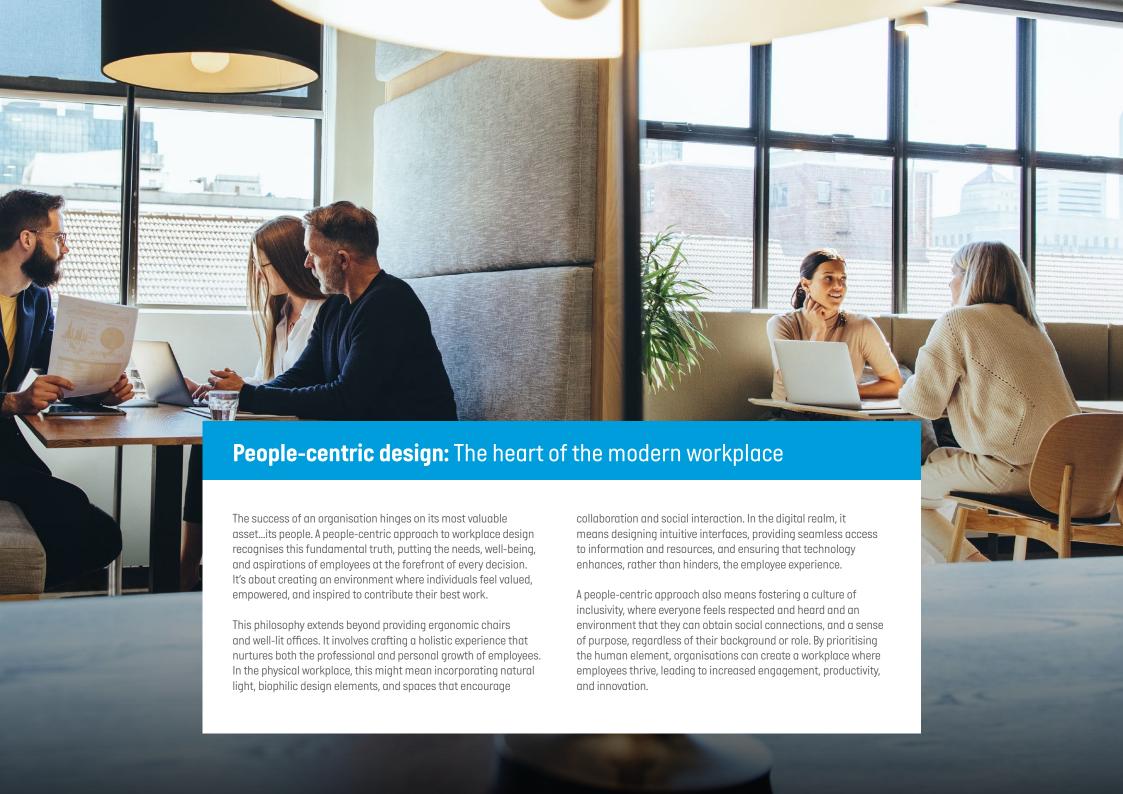

Modern Workplace

We'll examine how technology, such as Microsoft's innovative suite of tools and AI-powered assistants like Copilot, are revolutionising the digital workspace, fostering collaboration, and empowering employees to work smarter, not harder.

Workflow Transformation

We'll uncover how streamlining processes, automating repetitive tasks, and optimising workflows can free employees from mundane tasks, allowing them to focus on higher-value activities that drive innovation and growth.

People-centric design: The heart of the modern workplace

The success of an organisation hinges on its most valuable asset...its people. A people-centric approach to workplace design recognises this fundamental truth, putting the needs, well-being, and aspirations of employees at the forefront of every decision. It's about creating an environment where individuals feel valued, empowered, and inspired to contribute their best work.

This philosophy extends beyond providing ergonomic chairs and well-lit offices. It involves crafting a holistic experience that nurtures both the professional and personal growth of employees. In the physical workplace, this might mean incorporating natural light, biophilic design elements, and spaces that encourage collaboration and social interaction. In the digital realm, it means designing intuitive interfaces, providing seamless access to information and resources, and ensuring that technology enhances, rather than hinders, the employee experience.

A people-centric approach also means fostering a culture of inclusivity, where everyone feels respected and heard and an environment that they can obtain social connections, and a sense of purpose, regardless of their background or role. By prioritising the human element, organisations can create a workplace where employees thrive, leading to increased engagement, productivity, and innovation.

The Evolving Smart Office

Hybrid work is no longer a novelty – it's the cornerstone of modern work life. Occupancy rates in office buildings during 2023 averaged around 35%[1] reflecting a significant shift downwards. Even with some companies mandating increased office presence, a hybrid approach is here to stay.

Technology plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between remote and office work. Companies are adopting varying approaches to workplace location. Some are implementing a hybrid model, requiring employees in the office 2-3 days a week. Others prioritise flexibility, allowing employees to choose their in-office frequency. A smaller number of companies are embracing a fully remote workforce, enabling employees to work from anywhere[2]. "Hybrid" roles are now commonplace on career pages, and this trend is likely to continue.

Flexible spaces: optimising the workplace for a hybrid workforce

For many, the shift to hybrid work presents an opportunity to "right-size" office spaces and improve user experience. As office leases expire, we're witnessing a reduction in square footage, leading to cost savings in expensive city centres.

A lower in-person office occupancy rate with a distributed workforce necessitates a focus on technology solutions. Video-conferencing capabilities are essential tools being implemented in all types of meeting spaces, from huddle rooms to auditoriums.

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Data-driven insights for a functional shared workspace

Data-driven insights can provide a wide range of benefits that optimise the workspace and enhance the overall experience for its users. These benefits include:

Optimised space utilisation
By analysing data on how the workspace is used, you can identify peak hours, underutilised areas, and popular amenities. This allows you to make informed decisions about space allocation, furniture arrangement, and resource distribution, ensuring that the workspace is used efficiently and effectively.

Data-driven decision making
By relying on data rather than intuition or guesswork, you can make more informed decisions about how to manage and improve the shared workspace. This can lead to better outcomes for both the users and the operators of the space.

Increased employee satisfaction and retention
A data-driven approach demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of users. By using data to continuously improve the workspace, you can increase employee satisfaction, loyalty, and retention.

Enhanced user experience
Data insights can reveal user preferences and pain points. By understanding what users need and want, you can tailor the workspace to their specific requirements. This might involve adjusting lighting, temperature, or noise levels, providing additional amenities, or improving the overall design and layout of the space.

Improved productivity
Data can be used to track behaviour and identify patterns that impact productivity. For example, you might discover that certain areas of the workspace are more conducive to focused work, while others are better suited for collaboration. By understanding these patterns, you can create zones that cater to different work styles and help users be more productive.

Cost savings
Data-driven insights can help you identify areas where you can reduce costs. For example, by analysing energy usage data, you might discover that certain lights or appliances can be turned off during off-peak hours. Similarly, by tracking resource usage, you can identify opportunities to reduce waste and optimise procurement processes.

Competitive advantage
In the increasingly competitive market of shared workspaces, leveraging data-driven insights can give you a significant edge. By offering a workspace that is optimised, efficient, and tailored to the needs of its users, you can attract and retain a loyal member base.

The evolving smart office is not just about embracing hybrid work; it's about leveraging data to create a dynamic, responsive, and efficient environment that caters to the changing needs of the modern workforce. This personalised approach leads to a more comfortable and productive workspace, ultimately enhancing the user experience.

Modern workplace: Empowering employees through technology

The modern workplace is a testament to the transformative power of technology. It's a space where collaboration, communication, and productivity are no longer confined to physical offices but extend across geographical boundaries and time zones.

The modern endpoint in 2024 and beyond: a strategic opportunity

The modern endpoint is no longer just a device; it's a critical component of the user experience, influencing how individuals interact with technology, access information, and accomplish tasks. Achieving a seamless user experience with modern endpoints involve several critical factors:

- Personalisation and security
- Efficient device management and provisioning
- Modern operating system
- Optimised battery life, robust connectivity, adequate user training
- Commitment to gathering feedback and providing regular updates.

This multifaceted approach ensures endpoints are not merely functional tools, but also contribute to a positive and productive user experience in today's increasingly mobile and interconnected work environments.

Opportunity to drive change: where to start?

As many organisations approach the 2024-25 financial year, a critical juncture presents itself. 2024 marks the final full budget cycle before Windows 10 reaches its end-of-life in October 2025. While Microsoft offers Extended Security Updates (ESU) beyond this point, the end-of-life deadline is likely to remain unchanged. The recent announcement of a $61 per device cost[3] (expected to double in the second year) for ESU underlines the significant financial burden this may pose for organisations with large device estates. Consequently, developing a robust and well-executed plan for transitioning from Windows 10 is essential.

Beyond compliance: leveraging modernisation as an advantage

We are pleased to see several of our clients proactively addressing this challenge. In these cases, we have assisted in evaluating options and utilising the Windows 10 end-of-life as a catalyst for a unified endpoint management (UEM) strategy. This approach elevates employee experience, streamlines operations, and generates cost savings through license consolidation. These organisations have taken proactive steps to assess device and application readiness. They are selecting future-proofed devices equipped for on-device AI and embracing modern deployment and management solutions utilising a single platform for consistent experiences across all device types.

The benefits of Unified Endpoint Management

Unsurprisingly, clients who have consolidated their endpoint management tools into a single Unified Endpoint Management (UEM) platform achieve significantly higher scores (70% higher according to Gartner's Digital Maturity Assessment) compared to those with fragmented systems. These forward-thinking clients recognise Windows 10 end-of-life as an opportunity for broader advancement, not just an operating system update. They are actively seeking to improve employee experiences, offer wider device options, and achieve greater efficiency. This is exemplified by the integration of Macs into their environment, managed alongside Windows, iOS, and Android using the same unified tools.

By embracing UEM, these organisations are freeing themselves from the complexity and cost associated with outdated or fragmented management platforms. This is a crucial step in realising a consistent and positive digital employee experience across all devices.

It's clear that businesses adopting a Unified Endpoint Management (UEM) platform are reaping significant rewards. They're not only improving their digital maturity scores but also transforming their approach to technology. By consolidating tools and embracing a unified approach, they are enhancing the employee experience, offering a broader choice of devices, and streamlining operations.

3. When to use Windows 10 Extended Security Updates, https://techcommunity.microsoft.com, 2024

The Era of Intelligence with Copilot+ PCs

The arrival of Copilot+ PCs presents a transformative shift in how we interact with devices, maximise productivity and improve employee experience. AI-powered PCs can help automate mundane tasks, streamline workflows, and provide intelligent recommendations, enabling users to focus on higher-value activities and boost overall productivity.

Other benefits include:

Improved creativity and innovation
Copilot+ PCs will empower users with AI-driven tools for content creation, design, and problem-solving, fostering creativity and unlocking new levels of innovation.

Personalised and intuitive user experience
AI will enable devices to learn user preferences and adapt to individual needs, creating a more personalised and intuitive computing experience.

Advanced collaboration and communication
AI-powered features like real-time translation, transcription, and virtual assistants will facilitate seamless collaboration and communication across different languages and cultures.

Enhanced accessibility
AI can help break down barriers for individuals with disabilities by providing tools for speech recognition, text-to-speech, and other assistive technologies.

Advanced data analysis and insights
Copilot+ PCs can process and analyse vast amounts of data in real-time, providing valuable insights that can drive informed decision-making and improve business outcomes.

The advent of Copilot+ PCs is set to revolutionise the digital workplace. By harnessing the power of AI, these devices have the potential to boost productivity, foster creativity, and deliver a more personalised and inclusive user experience. Features like real-time translation, data analysis, and accessibility tools demonstrate the vast potential of AI in transforming how we work and interact with technology.

The arrival of Copilot+ PCs presents a transformative shift in how we interact with devices, maximise productivity and improve employee experience.

Workflow transformation: Optimising efficiency and employee satisfaction

Workflow transformation unlocks the modern workplace's potential by analysing, streamlining and automating processes. This eliminates bottlenecks, reduces errors, and frees up time and resources, improving efficiency and enhancing the employee experience.

When workflows are optimised, employees are no longer bogged down by repetitive, manual tasks. Instead, they can focus on higher-value activities that require creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. This leads to increased engagement, job satisfaction, and a sense of purpose. Automation plays a crucial role in workflow transformation. By automating routine tasks, such as data entry, invoice processing, and report generation, organisations can eliminate the risk of human error and free up employees to focus on more strategic initiatives.

Workflow transformation redesigns processes to eliminate unnecessary steps, reduce approval cycles, and improve communication and collaboration. This creates a more agile, responsive, and efficient environment where employees can thrive.

Microsoft Copilot for 365: A measured approach

Microsoft Copilot for 365 introduces an exciting potential for boosting productivity within Microsoft's suite of applications. Its AI-powered capabilities, like drafting emails in Outlook or summarising meetings in Teams, can streamline tasks and enhance workflows. This integration of AI assistance directly into familiar tools promises to be an asset for users.

While the hype surrounding Copilot is understandable, it's crucial to approach its capabilities with a realistic perspective. AI, while powerful, is still evolving. Copilot's current abilities are best seen as a starting point, with further refinements and advancements expected over time. Managing expectations and understanding its limitations is key to realising its true benefits.

Maximising Copilot's benefits

To truly harness Copilot's potential, organisations should focus on training and adoption. Providing employees with resources to understand Copilot's functions and how to best integrate it into their daily routines will ensure its effective use. Additionally, clear guidelines on data privacy and security should be established to address any concerns related to AI-powered tools.

User adoption is key
Successful implementation hinges on user adoption to realise efficiency gains.

Phased rollout
Start small, pilot the solution with internal champions, and gradually expand access.

Training and guidance
Equip employees with the knowledge to use Copilot securely, ethically, and effectively.

Internal advocacy
Encourage champions to showcase Copilot's time-saving capabilities to build excitement within your organisation.

User adoption remains key to unlocking Copilot's potential benefits. Implementing the solution in phases, can foster a secure and efficient user experience. Ultimately, a measured approach that considers both potential benefits and initial feedback is crucial for optimising the user experience with Copilot for 365.

Use cases

Generative AI like Copilot is reshaping the way we work and create, and we see three main areas it can assist people.

Content creation

AI can generate starting paragraphs to help reduce writers block and inspire imagination to complete the task at hand.

Research Assistant

Delve deeper into complex topics, not just through search results, but interactive Q&A sessions with AI that clarify nuances and expand understanding.

Knowledge transformation

Refine content, effortlessly correcting grammar errors, adjusting tone for different audiences, or even distil lengthy notes into concise summaries.

Summary

We are now in an Era of Intelligence where the modern workplace extends beyond physical and digital spaces - it encompasses the holistic experience we curate for employees. By embracing a people-centric approach, leveraging technology, and optimising workflows, organisations can foster a culture of engagement, productivity, and innovation.

The future of work is one where technology and human ingenuity work hand in hand. As we continue to explore the possibilities of AI, automation, and unified endpoint management, the employee experience will continue to evolve. By prioritising the needs and aspirations of our workforce, we can build a workplace that is not just efficient and productive, but also fulfilling and inspiring for all.

The future of work is one where technology and human ingenuity work hand in hand

Office of the CTO

The Office of the CTO (OCTO) team leads in the exploration and application of technology products and delivery methodology to aid the digital transformation of our customers.

As a team of cross-functional technologists with extensive industry and IT experience we deliver thought leadership, advice and real-world implementation experience to help our customers achieve their goals.

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