

NTT DATA 2024 Workplace Transformation Perspective

Tech-wise, human-centric:
a blueprint for next-generation
employee experiences



The workplace reimagined

Customer excellence. Increased revenue. Stronger competitive standing. Fueled for innovation. These are all familiar outcomes organizations are focusing on as part of their digitization and modernization programs.



Indeed, spending on digital technology is reported to grow at eight times the rate of economic growth in 2023, helping to establish the foundations for successful digitalization.

Enter workplace transformation: a critical focus for organizations globally, driven by an imperative to boost employee experience. According to CEOs, it's their number-one priority in the context of customer experience (CX), with 94% linking employee experience (EX) improvements to bottom-line success.

Driving this considerable change, in part, has been the need to accelerate the acquisition of new skills in the areas of artificial intelligence, deep learning, cloud and analytics, to name but a few. Organizations have been forced to cast nets beyond their immediate locale to attract (and retain) talent, ensuring they can keep up with the constant changes in business strategy and customer demands.

But arguably the biggest accelerator of workplace transformation was the "forced" and enduring distribution of workforces everywhere because of the pandemic. Organizations had to accelerate modernization programs suddenly and dramatically, and reconsider what their workplaces looked like overnight.

¹ IDC FutureScape: [Worldwide Digital Business Strategies 2023 Predictions](#).

² NTT DATA: [2023 Global Employee Experience Trends Report](#).

Workplace transformation considerations

Reimagining the workplace offers significant opportunities for organizations to align closely with the wider outcomes driving business transformation. However, it requires careful planning and considerations, namely:

01



Executive buy-in:

Securing (and then managing) executive support hinges on several factors, including recognizing the need for transformation in the first place, fears about disruption to the business and potential cost implications. Running through any executive's mind is the question, "How do these considerations weigh up against improved outcomes?"

02



Limitations of existing infrastructure and skill sets:

As organizations look to leverage technology to adapt work environments to meet the demand, there could be limitations with existing infrastructure, such as interoperability, scalability and functionality challenges. Importantly, people must have the right skills to take advantage of new technology to reap the benefits.

03



Cybersecurity demands:

With increased reliance on technology, particularly artificial intelligence, cloud and operational technology, the risk of data breaches and cyberthreats rises. Organizations are challenged with the need to prioritize cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive information and critical infrastructure, while maintaining the trust of employees, customers and partners.

04



Moving fast and slow: A bimodal approach:

With ongoing transformation projects, there needs to be a balance between immediate needs and paramount change. Adopting new technologies can be complex and there might be disruptions to daily operations. Compatibility issues, data migration and the need for specialized training can also pose challenges.

05



Supporting a distributed workforce:

Employees need access to the right tools and support to work either remotely or in a hybrid scenario. Transitioning to remote work or a hybrid model requires robust technological infrastructure, reliable connectivity and a proactive, zero trust stance to security.

An integrated technology strategy

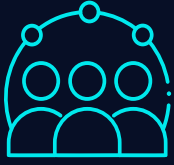
Workplace transformation involves making dynamic and exciting changes to the way work is done. It's about redefining processes and reshaping organizational culture for the better, leveraging new and, in some cases, advanced technology to sharpen the delivery capabilities of organizations.

To become digital leaders, enterprises must deliver technology "as one". Integrated, not siloed. The benefits are plentiful, such as a seamless flow of information across multiple systems. This in turn drives better, and real-time, insights, boosts productivity and ultimately helps deliver a greater customer experience – among many other things.

There's no longer room for "discrete delivery" or "shadow IT". Driving successful workplace transformation outcomes means unifying the platform and the experience, across a variety of technologies, to bring together sales, product and delivery.

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Collaboration

According to NTT DATA's 2023 Global Employee Experience Trends Report, technology enablement and the use of collaboration tools is the top organizational priority for enabling EX strategies in the coming 12 months. Nowhere have we seen such dramatic changes in the way we work in the past few years than in how we communicate and collaborate.





The increase in hybrid working, for example, has seen many organizations redesign their workplaces. With the office now viewed as hub for collaborative engagement, a focus has been on digitally enabling these spaces. And with numbers in the office fluctuating, organizations are also reconsidering the resources they need. They're using technology to better track, monitor and report on occupancy rates and energy use, to name but a few.

Whether employees are in the office or working remotely, technology is the critical enabler in deciding how and when they want to collaborate. New, intuitive collaboration solutions, which are almost always cloud-based, are deeply aligned with an organization's operational needs. These include access to information anytime, anywhere, the ability to scale, cost-efficiency, security and ease of use.

These benefits all help contribute to increased user satisfaction and have a positive impact on productivity, no matter where employees are located. There are a range of collaboration tools available that help deliver this by providing a consistent user experience across the various platforms used on mobiles, laptops and desktops and in meeting rooms.

Furthermore, AI and machine learning are fast rising to the top of the list of EX enablers. More organizations are using these types of collaboration solutions to improve EX for office workers. But those thinking ahead are already expanding the vision to include field workers and other employees whose jobs take them out of the office environment.

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For example, AI capabilities built into collaboration solutions can help analyze data related to remote employees' wellbeing. This includes work patterns, how and when they communicate, as well as indicators that signify a rise in stress levels. This information can be used to proactively address the wellbeing of remote team members.

Emerging EX solutions will also enable organizations to measure and report on EX, with much of this automated via AI. They'll be able to optimize EX by learning from employees' interactions with each other – how they interact, or how long it takes them to find answers to their questions – and improve their workspace management as needed. In such a tight knowledge-worker labor market, EX plays a huge role in both attracting and retaining people.

Deeper data analysis and subsequent insights can also lead to greater operational efficiencies that help support

compliance with, for example, data privacy regulations. In fact, nearly all organizations (95%) now agree that integrating quality-monitoring and analytics tools, with a focus on compliance, is a high priority and integral to workforce-optimization tools.

Integrated EX tools are pivotal in helping to create a productive workforce. A seamless user interface, good user experience and intuitive design are paramount across work settings –meeting rooms, factory floors, a home office or even an unconventional location, such as a car or cafe.

However, organizations should consider factors beyond the software installed on employees' devices. Integrating these tools with fast, reliable and robust underlying network infrastructure, for instance, is crucial.





Connectivity

The network is a critical component of modernization efforts, helping employees gain access to the information they need, fast. According to [NTT's 2022 - 2023 Global Network Report](#), 93% of organizations recognize that their most pressing business and digital transformation challenges are linked to and directly affected by the network.





Employees can have the latest collaboration tools, but if the network connecting them isn't fit for purpose, experience suffers and the tools are effectively useless.

These challenges have become even more pronounced as workforces are increasingly distributed.

Encouragingly, most senior leaders recognize the impact of a poor network in this regard. In the NTT network report, 72% say low levels of network maturity negatively affect their delivery and goals, and 94% agree that cloud-based workloads – a crucial component in workplace transformation – demand greater availability, scale and performance from the network. Despite this recognition, the report states that around 50% of senior executives still need to align their technology strategy with their business goals.³

A well-designed and modernized network infrastructure is a core foundational element for successful workplace

transformation. But what network-related best practices should organizations implement to ensure their efforts are successful?

Your network strategy should be considered holistically as part of an integrated technology strategy – and, crucially, aligned to business goals. Consider how and where your people work as well as the number of devices connected to the network. This will help to determine the use of the network and bring to the surface potential challenges that could affect performance and experience.

There's no coincidence that organizations outperforming their competitors have made this strategic alignment. They don't consider the network as IT spend. Instead, they think of network return on investment in terms of workplace transformation business outcomes, such as driving better user experiences.



³ NTT 2022 – 2023 Global Network Report

There are also sustainability benefits to be gained. For example, smart-office systems can detect occupancy and adjust the surroundings accordingly to bring down energy usage and thereby reduce an organization's environmental footprint. NTT DATA's research found organizations that have aligned their network strategy with their business needs are almost three times⁴ as likely to reduce their environmental footprint via network technologies as those that have not. Investment in transformation and the network go hand in hand. Top-performing organizations are accelerating their investment in digitalization and understand immediate transformation challenges are directly affected by the network. They're pressing ahead with implementing

leading technologies such as multicloud networking, edge computing, SD- WAN and 5G to support their workplace transformation strategy and reach outcomes quicker.

Network modernization is an ongoing process that requires considered planning, continuous monitoring and constant adaptation to evolving technologies and business needs. This is forcing organizations to seriously consider the future of their network architecture, scale up and invest in new skills.

And they must do it all securely. A fully managed secure access service edge (SASE) solution, with an integrated networking and security capability, enables more secure remote and mobile access and can help reduce cost and complexity.



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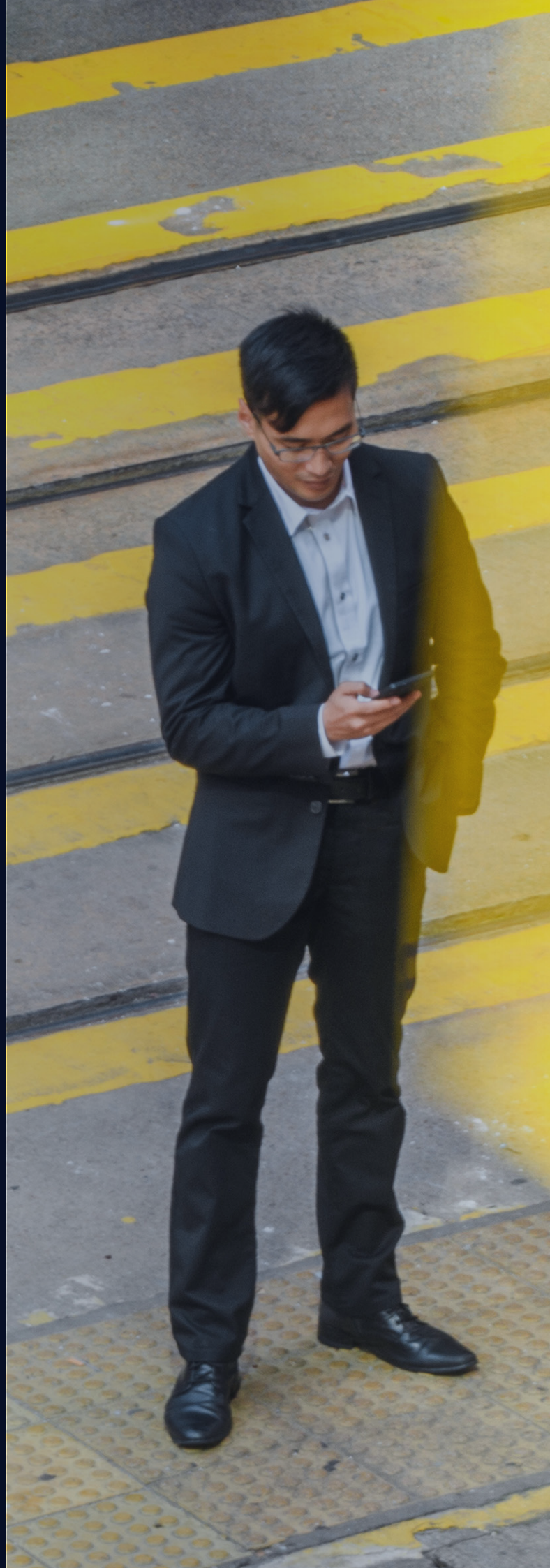


Security

Cloud has revolutionized the way organizations leverage technology. It's the driving force behind enabling workplace transformation outcomes. But as workforces have become increasingly distributed, attack surfaces have grown and systems are more disparate.



³ NTT DATA: 2023 Global Employee Experience Trends Report





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Working with a trusted partner can circumvent that challenge, enabling the business to become more cyber resilient, cost-effective and, of course, provide much needed support if skills and resources are lacking.



NTT's research found that only 46% of senior executives agree strongly that their current cybersecurity controls are effective in protecting and enabling their employees wherever they work.⁵

Despite cloud delivering improved and continually updated cybersecurity controls, the way employees access applications and data requires new security approaches, such as zero trust. The desire to transform workplaces means organizations must pay attention to securing access to company systems, information and applications – particularly as AI becomes increasingly sophisticated and abused by threat actors.

Keeping systems and applications secure is paramount and must be embedded in the core of any cloud-delivered solution or application, whether it's part of a workplace transformation program or not.

Cybersecurity is a balancing act. Go too far and it can stifle innovation and have a severe impact on productivity. Be too lax and there's potential for the floodgates to open.

As organizations find a balance between cybersecurity and technological advancement, robust security measures are needed to protect sensitive employee and corporate information as well as mission-critical systems – and this requires intentional leadership, prioritized cybersecurity investments and a secure-by-design mindset. This is why top-performing organizations are nearly three times more likely than others to fully involve their CISO, Data Protection Officer and/or cybersecurity team in their decisions about workplace transformation.⁶

However, many organizations don't have sufficient security and privacy controls in place to protect and enable their employees, partners and users. Working with a trusted partner can circumvent that challenge, enabling the business to become more cyber resilient, cost-effective and, of course, provide much needed support if skills and resources are lacking.

⁶ NTT DATA: [2023 Global Employee Experience Trends Report](#)



Everything software-defined

Changes to the workplace have created the perfect environment for implementing software defined infrastructure. As a proven path to greater agility, scalability and competitive advantage, it's become a centerpiece for workplace transformation in many organizations. It enables enterprises to focus on what's essential: applications and business outcomes.





The move to software-defined has seen an increasing reliance on outsourcing amid a higher-than-usual degree of macroeconomic uncertainty and lack of talent. By 2025, rising demand for digital talent, coupled with high attrition rates, will force enterprises to increase outsourcing.⁷

To move through and beyond legacy technology, organizations must balance the development of software-defined infrastructure with the evolution of their current hardware-dependent infrastructures. This approach is creating a new “blended” infrastructure focused on business outcomes.

Intent-based working, for example, which supports new business models and ways of working, is helping organizations to realize benefits such as increased speed to market and time to value from investments.

The result of implementing software-defined infrastructure is that organizations are able to deploy solutions and services quicker to better enable their employees. They also benefit in other areas, such as centralized policy enforcement. This ensures greater governance and compliance across the network, for example, reducing the number of points of weakness or potential threat of noncompliance across the organization. It will also free up in-house expertise.

⁷ IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Digital Business Strategies 2023 Predictions.

Driving successful workplace transformation

Organizations undergoing workplace transformation should consider the integration of technologies from more than just a technical standpoint: they should view it as a strategic imperative. It forms the backbone that supports a more connected and collaborative workplace, while establishing a foundation for innovation.

An integrated approach ensures a seamless flow of information and operations across workplace tools and systems. This in turn helps develop a more continuous, connected and consistent employee and customer experience, and a single engagement with all customers and users, from the front end to the back end, across all interactions.

Organizations can also be more agile and responsive to change through an integrated approach. It enables faster decision-making and provides a strategic agility to pivot and change deployment easily, spinning up new or changed services or facilities at will.

Importantly, the business can achieve sustainability targets more easily through improved insights into carbon and energy usage. With 95% of organizations agreeing that a sustainable workplace helps to attract and retain talent, they can create effective, energy-efficient products, platforms and experiences that help meet customer and employee expectations.

By integrating cutting-edge technologies and fostering a culture of adaptability, organizations can navigate the challenges of today and position themselves for sustained success in the future. Workplace transformation is a dynamic journey that provides organizations with the autonomy to thrive when everything around them is experiencing rapid change.

Learn more about NTT DATA

We see an interconnected world where technology brings people, data and things together. For businesses, connection matters more than ever. We strive to help you successfully adapt to the way you work. Let us know how we can help you.

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List of abbreviations

AI	artificial intelligence
CISO	Chief Information Security Officer
CX	customer experience
EX	employee experience
IT	information technology
SASE	secure access service edge

