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ECOSYSTM PREDICTS

The Top 5 Trends for Digital Workplace in 2022

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Introduction

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The first impact of the pandemic and the disruption it caused, was organisations scrambling to empower their remote employees. Over the last 2 years, significant investments have been made on collaboration platforms and tools. Now organisations are having to work towards making these workplaces truly hybrid where organisations have to ensure that all employees get the same experience, irrespective of where they choose to work from.

In 2022, organisations will continue to invest in building the Digital Workplace (Figure 1) and address the associated technology, people, and process challenges.

FIGURE 1: KEY BUSINESS PRIORITIES FOR 2022

51%
Digital Workplace

50%
Process Automation

46%
Customer Experience

40%
Digital Products & Services

Ecosystm Rates the Future of Work Predicts for 2021

Human-centricity Will be Front and Centre of Organisational Priorities

This was right and wrong. Many businesses stepped up – but too often it was reactive and not proactive. And few businesses have begun to develop true hybrid cultures, which would be indicative of a human-centric focus

Technology Will Bond with Facilities and Operations - Connecting with HR Will be a Challenge

In the short window that many businesses had back in the office, this definitely happened. We saw tech teams work closely with their peers (apart from HR!) to provide a broader digital workplace capability.

Office Spaces Will Become Truly Digital

Who knew this pandemic would go on for so long? Many offices still lie somewhat dormant or under-utilised – and office-based employees are still second-class passengers on the digital workplace train.
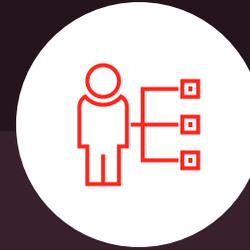
Providers Will Deepen Digital Workplace Offerings, but the Market Will Not Consolidate

While Slack was acquired shortly after this prediction was made, it didn't cause significant market consolidation as Salesforce was not a collaboration leader. Otherwise, the prediction was accurate.

Industry-centric Digital Workplace Services Will Emerge and Witness Rapid Growth

They emerged – slowly – and didn't see the rapid growth that we expected. In the end the platform suppliers dipped their toes into creating industry capabilities – and while some are impressive, adoption has been slow.

#1 Businesses Will Make Significant Investments in Hybrid Work Cultures

Many businesses today are struggling to create a vision of where their organisation will land on the office/remote/hybrid work spectrum. Some expect employees to return to the office. Others are planning for hybrid, but don't really know what that means. While the focus is often on what technology to use and how it will support employees, in 2022 we'll see HR teams step up and build out a hybrid work culture. Not that they haven't done this to date – but the efforts were often reactive and focused on fixing specific pain points.

But your business will never return to the way it was in 2019. And your culture needs to change along with your practices and processes. I expect some businesses will promote themselves as having great hybrid work cultures – but they can only succeed with these messages if they have put in the hard work to build their culture.

We might even see a list of "best hybrid workplace employers" in 2022. If no one else does it, Ecosystm might!

> Hybrid cultures don't just invent themselves – they are the results of real work and strategy. And this includes building the type of culture that rewards the desired outcomes and actions.

Tim Sheedy
PRINCIPAL ADVISOR, CLOUD, AI & CX

#2 New Metrics to Define Productivity Will Be the Hallmark of the Digital Workplace

With the change from physical to digital, employee productivity levels remain an area of concern. As employees keep moving between physical and digital workplaces, organisations need to put additional KPIs in place to ensure that productivity levels are maintained – and at the same time keep an eye out on the emotional wellbeing of the employee. Even after nearly 2 years of dealing with remote employees, organisations have not yet managed to get the right mix of this.

Rethinking business processes and investing in the right technology will be important to keep/increase employee productivity levels. People managers are finding different ways to keep the interactions with their teams going; and employees the right way to work in teams. Hours spent has become less relevant; and business value and work/task completion are the primary metrics.

The need to measure these new metrics will see organisations investing in new tools and technology. There will emerge a new generation of managers and organisations that can successfully incorporate and measure these "new metrics".

> **2022 will see managers and organisations use technology to redefine employee productivity. The best practices that will emerge will help us define a successful Digital Workplace.**

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#3 Digital Workplaces Will Aim for Simplicity

The new Digital Workplace requires multiple layers of digital environments for day-to-day applications including communications and collaboration tools. We have seen these environments intersect with each other and organisations have faced interoperability issues. In designing and building new Digital Workplace capabilities, organisations will keep an eye out for how they intersect with new workspaces and how to build in greater monitoring capabilities. Tracking where the inefficiencies lie and identifying how they can be solved is going to separate a great experience from a good experience.

Composable experiences will also grow in importance as enterprises use APIs for better integration of workflows and applications; these experiences will be on multiple cloud environments and in some instances on-premises too. Organisations will work towards keeping their employee experience (EX) simple, irrespective of where the experiences are hosted. Paying attention to interoperability and ensuring that the EX initiatives are effective will be critical.

> Organisations do not want to build multi environments and find that the employees find accessing information painful; they don't know how to use a new technology; are continuously facing dropouts; or that the tools can't be used because of interoperability issues.

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#4 Hyper Immersive Experiences Will Emerge to Support Hybrid Work

Immersive digital experiences will start becoming critical in sustaining the way we connect, engage, meet and collaborate. The videoconferencing-only mode of communication has been used extensively over the last two years and is now the breeding ground for innovation.

How can more users participate dynamically across video and collaboration? How to incorporate AR/VR more meaningfully to simulate real interactions? How can the experience be almost like a conversation over coffee? How can demos with clients be more immersive? What are the new ways of engaging the audience at hybrid events?

New immersive ways of engagement will change and drive new thinking around collaboration; including working together on a project. Client pitches and presentations will start becoming immersive and organisations will find it easier to explain abstract concepts through these technologies – even during in-person interactions.

> As they look to that hybrid model, enterprises are going to innovate around the interplay between the experience of employees working from the home and in-office employee experience.

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#5 The Battle for the Enterprise Collaboration Platform Will Get Serious

The major collaboration players have all picked up their games in the second half of 2021 – improving an already impressive set of platforms with new features, new partnerships and new capabilities to improve personal and business productivity. This has set the stage for an enthralling 2022, where Microsoft, Zoom and Cisco will go hard at customers to be the collaboration platform of choice. Salesforce and other providers will also strengthen their investments, but they will need to work hard to improve their market share.

As enterprises rationalise their investments and build out their hybrid working strategies, they will deepen their investment with fewer providers. Hardware purchases in conference and meeting rooms will be made with specific software partners in mind. Internal processes will be surfaced through specific platforms, and new software capabilities will be acquired with the main collaboration partner's ecosystem in mind.

> The major collaboration providers have added hundreds of new features and functions to their platforms over the past 18 months. In 2022 this will accelerate – but driven as much by partner ecosystems as by the vendors themselves.

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