

The Definitive Handbook for Thriving in

THE MODERN

WORKPLACE



Contents

The Definitive Handbook.....	01
Contents	02
What is a modern workplace?.....	03
Digital communication tools.....	04
Hybrid working	05
Teamwork and collaboration.....	06
Working from home	07
How virtual desktop solutions can liberate your business	08
Remote working.....	09
Hybrid meetings.....	10
Talk to us.....	11



What is a modern workplace?

Most of us can picture the traditional workplace – people logging in and out every day, watched carefully by their bosses; computers glowing; printers whirring and servers running twenty-four hours a day; output-driven with rigid structures – maybe the smell of coffee brightening up people’s days...

But what about a modern workplace? How does that look? Most of us are just beginning to imagine the possibilities that new technologies and flexible attitudes post-Covid pandemic mean for our working lives.

‘Modern workplace’ is a term used to describe a positive, collaborative, flexible business culture suited to the modern worker, fuelled by innovation and digital tools.

Productivity and efficiency are still the focus for businesses but ways to achieve those things are changing.

A modern workplace describes an organisation that has the vision and expertise on hand to leverage digital tools. They use the cloud, video conferencing platforms and chats to create an agile work environment. They generally have an open attitude

90% Of post Covid remote workers plan on working remotely for the rest of their careers. (Buffer)



A modern workplace describes an organisation that has the vision and expertise on hand to leverage digital tools. They use the cloud, video conferencing platforms and chats to create an agile work environment. They generally have an open attitude to people working from anywhere (WFA) and working from home (WFH).

This digitally enabled economy demands new ideas, information and business models. They need to continually expand, combine and shift into new ventures. As a consequence, workers (and employers) have to repeatedly refresh their digital expertise. It’s essential that they meet these challenges and get to grips with modern workplace technology.

Here we explore some of the common features of today’s modern workplaces and a little bit about how IT can support

Digital communication tools

Digital communication is how we share information using computers, smartphones and other digital devices.

There are a number of digital communication systems:

- Email
- Instant messaging
- Social media
- Video conferencing
- File sharing

For businesses to operate effectively in the current environment they will have to use these tools to enable increasing instances of people choosing to work from home or remotely. Plus people simply not wanting to travel unnecessarily for in-person meetings.

Some of the habits picked up during the pandemic have definitely stuck and workers value highly their work/life balance. We also have Gen-Z to accommodate and, broadly, they are people who prioritise their time, health and mental health over their jobs (no bad thing, obviously!).

6 essential ingredients to introducing digital comms systems to your business

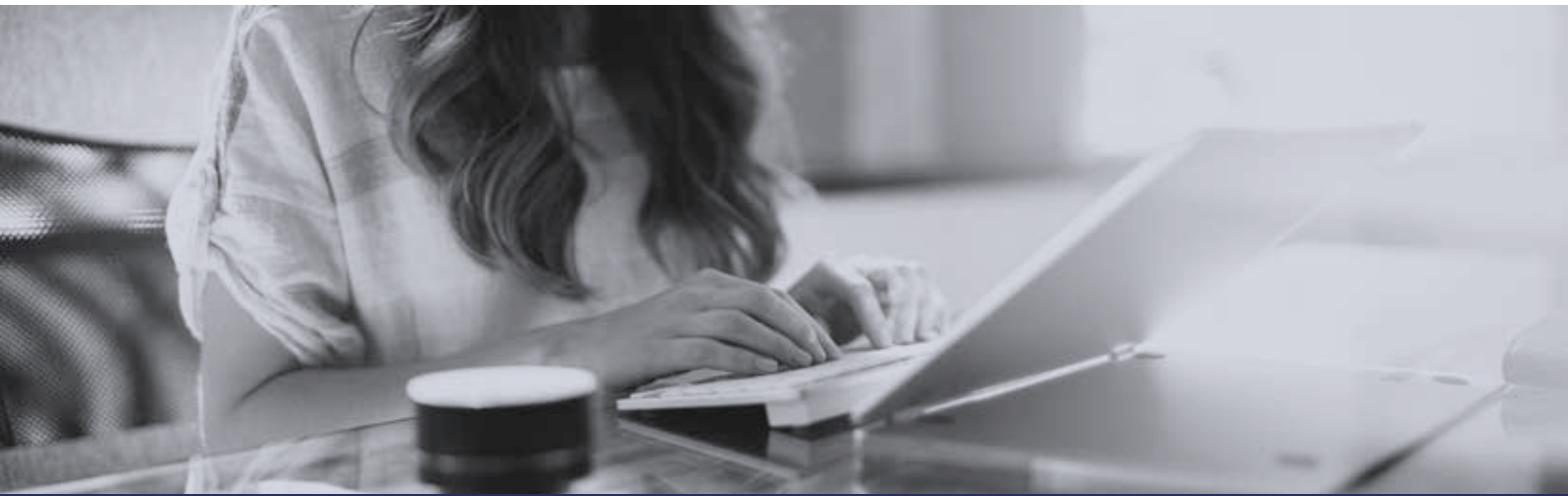
- Communicate the change to the team
- Train people on the platform Make a plan for urgent messages
- Start the new communication method - be efficient but thoughtful, and remember to always have important conversations face to face
- Give and receive feedback regularly, and act on changes needed

Important:
Encourage offline connections between employees to avoid any sense of isolation people may feel.



Many of us are now exploring how AI is making digital communication more efficient, personalised and effective. Look out for:

- Chatbots
- Automation of repetitive tasks eg. email marketing
- Voice assistants



Hybrid working

With hybrid work, the workplace is no longer inside the four walls of an office. It's an ecosystem of employees working from home, in co-working spaces, and the office. People can expect to move between various locations depending on the work they need to get done.

It's a people-first system that's intended to increase productivity and job satisfaction, while addressing the serious challenges of remote work, such as isolation and lack of community.

These are the four most common model for hybrid working:

- **Remote-first**

People work remotely most of the time with occasional visits to co-working spaces or the office for team building, collaboration, and training. In this model, the company may not have an office space and relies on team members to get together when they see fit. Twitter adopted this model and allows all employees to work from home.

- **Office-first**

People have the opportunity to choose a few days a week to work remotely. Google started the change to this type of working in 2019. Their employees work in the office three days a week with the option of working remotely for the other two.

- **Fixed**

Business managers set regular days and times when people can work remotely or go into the office (whether it's team-by-team or whole-organisation rules). American Express uses this model.

- **Flexible**

People can decide on their location and working hours based on their priorities for the day, even choosing to work from a café, if that's what they want. For a sense of community, to meet with their teams, or attend training sessions, they can opt to go in to the office. Cisco offers its employees the option to choose where they work on any given day.

The biggest challenge of hybrid working is going to be maintaining the feeling of people being connected.



Organisations who succeed at optimising hybrid working methods will be ones where it becomes embedded in the culture through clear leadership, communication, training and support (including technological).

Teamwork and collaboration

In today's fast-paced and highly competitive environment, teamwork and collaboration are more important than ever before. They will likely involve the use of digital tools and technology to share information and resources easily.

Remote teamwork – 4 common challenges to productivity

- Lack of communication
- Scheduling
- Technical issues
- Lack of face-to-face communication

Today's tools to support successful teamwork and collaboration

1. Project management software

Familiar names: Trello, Asana, Jira

2. Cloud-based file sharing

Familiar names: Google Drive, Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive

3. Virtual meetings and video conferencing

Familiar names: Zoom, GoogleMeet, Microsoft Teams

4. Social media

Familiar names: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook

5. Communication apps

Familiar names: Slack, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp

6. Virtual whiteboards

Familiar names: Miro, Lucidchart

7. Learning and development platforms

Familiar names: Udemy, LinkedIn Learning, Coursera



Collaboration and teamwork have become more complex, fast-paced and therefore challenging. But they are more important than ever before. Ultimately, teams – and businesses – that are able to leverage technology, embrace diversity and inclusion, focus on results, and remain flexible and adaptable, are more likely to achieve their goals and succeed in today's rapidly changing business environment.

Working from home

People who work from home can be employees who previously worked in an office and have changed to remote working, or they can be freelancers and self-employed individuals.

There are clear benefits to people being able to choose to work from home. Similarly, there are drawbacks for both businesses and the individuals. Getting the balance right is going to be the challenge for anyone exploring the options.



Advantages

- Better productivity and fewer distractions
- Increased independence
- Improved flexibility
- Better technical skills
- Less absenteeism
- Rises in job satisfaction
- Decrease in stress and cost of commuting
- More job opportunities and branch networking

But working from home is not for everyone. While many people love the flexibility that remote work brings, for others the loss of an office environment and the social contact it provides can be a major challenge.

Common drawbacks

Working from home may just may not suit some people's personality

- Feelings of isolation
- Performance management issues
- Too many distractions
- Lack of boundaries

At the heart of any company's decision regarding working from home there will have to be a commitment to consistent communication, review and feedback. Being agile and keeping up with the pace of change and the developments in people's attitudes to their workplaces will be key. Truly understanding people's needs and being in a position to offer leadership on the issue will separate those organisations who win from those who lose out.

25%

In a Statista study for 2022, 25% of respondents stated that their biggest struggle when working remotely is not being able to 'unplug'.



How virtual desktop solutions can liberate your business

A virtual desktop is a workstation that exists virtually and can be accessed from any location via the Internet. It has an image of an operating system that is shared by other virtual machines on a central network.

As remote and hybrid work become widely adopted, businesses are turning to virtual desktops.

Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)

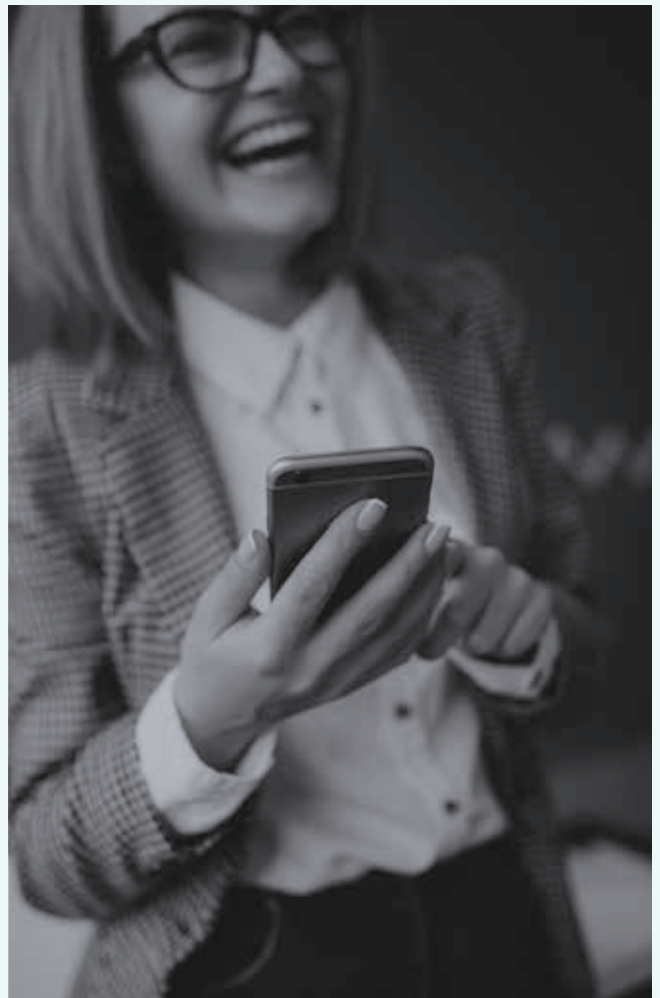
IT infrastructure that lets you access enterprise computer systems from almost any device (such as a PC, smartphone, or tablet). This eliminates the need to provide — and manage, repair, and replace — a physical machine. Authorised users can access the same company servers, files, apps, and services from any approved device through a secure desktop client or browser.

What are the advantages of VDI?

- Centralisation of desktop management in an individual department. This makes maintaining and updating systems easier because end users don't need to bring physical devices to the office.
- Increased data security. The data is not on the employee's device but on an external server. So, if the gadget is stolen, the information is still protected.
- Ease of mobile access for employees. As we have seen before, a VDI allows access to the company's tools from any authorized device. This improves teleworking and quick response to emergencies.
- Cost reduction and contribution to the environment. Access from any device eliminates the need for specific or more powerful equipment, which would increase the company's expenses. At the same time, they are more sustainable than traditional energy-saving equipment.

Popular virtual desktops available for small businesses

- Windows Virtual Desktop/Microsoft Azure
- Amazon WorkSpaces
- V2 Cloud



Remote working

Remote work allows professionals to work outside of a traditional office environment. The beauty of remote working is that people can choose to work in a way that makes the most sense for their lives.

How remote work benefits employers

- Higher productivity
- Cost savings eg rent and office furniture
- Engaged employees

What are the benefits to employees?

- A more flexible lifestyle
- Better health and wellness
- Renewed passion for their job

Dealing with the cyber security risk

A remote work environment can raise the risk of a data breach or other cyber attack.

Companies that follow cyber security best practice can drastically reduce their chance of suffering a costly or devastating cyber attack:

- Establish and enforce a data security policy
- Equip employees with the right tools, technology and education
- Frequently update network security systems
- Regulate the use of personal devices
- Institute a 'Zero Trust' approach – always verify IDs, devices and services
- Make sure all internet connections are secure
- Don't overload the Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- Require employees to use strong and varied passwords
- Use multi-factor authentication
- Track employees' remote work practices
- Train employees well and supply them with robust IT support.



If you can overcome the challenges of cyber security risks and potential staff disengagement, pursuing a policy that makes remote working an option for your business will mean you reap the rewards of increased staff morale and productivity.

Two-thirds of managers surveyed reported an increase in productivity from their remote employees.

Forbes Magazine



Hybrid meetings

Hybrid meetings feature at least one group of in-person attendees connecting virtually with other meeting attendees. This type of modern meeting room combines the benefits of in-person and virtual interactions so that each event can reach its highest potential.

Hybrid meeting rooms – what are the benefits?

- Accessibility
- Better collaboration
- Flexibility
- Increased participation
- Wider reach
- Cost savings
- Sustainability
- Recording



And the drawbacks?

There are definitely times in hybrid meetings when remote attendees can feel left out. It's also much harder to pick up social cues when you're sitting in front of a laptop screen.

The hands-on elements of a meeting can exclude remote attendees too. For example, writing ideas on Post-it Notes.

And finally – surprising to nobody – tech issues can kill a meeting before it's even started. And it's usually the remote attendees who will suffer most.

Popular technologies used to support hybrid meetings:

- Video Conferencing Platforms
- Collaboration Tools
- Document Sharing and Cloud Storage
- Room Booking and Scheduling Software
- Hardware Integration
- Audience Engagement Tools

Hybrid meeting rooms provide flexibility, inclusivity, cost savings, and environmental benefits. They leverage technology to enhance collaboration and reach a wider audience. When planned effectively, with clear goals in mind, they can be highly productive, especially when supported by appropriate technology.



Talk to us

For more information about The Definitive Handbook for Thriving in the Modern Workplace book an online call with us today!

TechWyse provides remote working systems that can help you stay compliant with the new laws.

Book your online call and get the best solutions for your business

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