DXC
TECHNOLOGY

**The future of work
is now**

Executive summary

Technological, economic and geopolitical forces are driving transformative shifts in both work and place. We identify five trends shaping the modern workplace and address their critical implications for the future of work.

1

Good employee experience wins the war for talent. We highlight the importance of a seamless employee experience across various domains, including HR, skilling and workplace management. Understanding employee motivation and efficiency drives changes to business processes and becomes a key differentiator in talent acquisition.

2

Virtual is the new real. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to virtual work, making technology central to maintaining employee engagement. Virtual collaboration tools, inclusive communication and a culture that reflects organisational values are crucial for a connected global workforce.

3

Net zero as standard. The trend of making "net zero" a standard parameter for services reflects a growing emphasis on environmental sustainability. The adoption of advanced technologies and processes is key to achieving net-zero goals and aligning with the values of a diverse workforce.

4

Trust corporations to enable privacy. Trusting corporations with personal information, including privacy and security measures, becomes essential. Privacy concerns impact employee engagement, and organisations need to prioritise privacy to build trust.

5

Loving your AI advisor. The integration of AI advisors as personalised and empathetic entities signals a turning point in the concept of work, with employees becoming attached to their workplace AI advisors. This aligns with the broader theme of technology as a collaborative partner, contributing to a more productive and innovative work environment.

In the backdrop of these trends, we emphasise the challenges and complexities of digitising continually moving and evolving workspaces. We discuss the need for a strategic and integrated approach to balance technology, human experience and external factors, providing implementation suggestions. Furthermore, the shift from a singular focus on value to considering diverse values within the modern workplace is highlighted, emphasising the importance of understanding unique industry dynamics, organisational cultures and individual perspectives. We call for a deeper perspective on people and cultural change within value flows, advocating for an integrated approach beyond short-term technology standardisation.

Embracing potential: A deep dive into modern workplace trends

Driven by technological, economic and geopolitical factors, both work and place are changing dramatically.

Five key trends are emerging for the modern workplace. As organisations navigate dynamic socioeconomic landscapes and experience the impact of digitisation, they are compelled to redefine their workplaces. From the rise of remote collaboration to the integration of cutting-edge technologies, we unravel the nuanced threads of the emerging workplace.

Good employee experience wins the war for talent

Employee services will grow together between HR, skilling, employee care, (virtual) site services and workplace management. The most attractive companies will provide an employ experience that merges interfaces, processes and communication styles, from centralised attention management to interlacing corporate and private demand automatically. Having the best AI advisor will become a differentiator in hiring, as it will make the employee experience seamless and easy.

Recognising and addressing the erosion of employee engagement is paramount. Employers require strategies that foster positive work environments, encourage open communication and provide opportunities for professional growth.

Addressing talent challenges requires a multifaceted approach. Organisations must proactively respond to technological advancements, changing demographics and shifts in market demand. Recognising and addressing the erosion of employee engagement is paramount. Employers require strategies that foster positive work environments, encourage open communication and provide opportunities for professional growth.

Employee disengagement is a global concern with far-reaching consequences. Employers need global strategies to enhance engagement, considering cultural nuances and individual needs to create a unified and motivated workforce. Acknowledging the changing nature of work is essential, as is providing technology-enabled flexibility, redefining traditional work structures and cultivating an environment that adapts to the diverse needs and expectations of modern talent.

People gravitate to employers that offer the best end-to-end employee experience. This drives loyalty, productivity and optimal business outcomes. Leveraging technology strategically is vital for

attracting and retaining talent. This includes tools that enhance collaboration, improve remote work capabilities and provide a seamless digital experience, while addressing potential challenges related to digital fatigue and over-reliance on technology. Prioritising employee well-being through a comprehensive approach to workplace care is integral. This includes promoting work–life balance and mental health support and fostering a culture of empathy in which people feel valued.

To create a successful employee experience, companies must have both a plan to implement and the capability to steer themselves effectively on the journey by measuring meaningful and relevant outcomes. A developed product or service concept with an end-to-end implementation plan is a rarity that sets market leaders apart.

Measuring the outcomes of employee experience implementations is complex, and the measurement of employee satisfaction continues to evolve conceptually, as do all other aspects of employee experience.

Virtual is the new real

The COVID-19 pandemic led us down a path towards a different work style. It enabled global collaboration, albeit in a form lacking in terms of privacy and scope. Soon, realistic-looking avatars will project images of ourselves, and the virtual coffee pot will be the norm. Corporations have an opportunity to lead or lag here, as people will use these tools, regardless — and in the process, they'll open a variety of doors through which corporate information can be leaked.

In a virtual work setting, maintaining employee engagement is critical. As physical distance grows, organisations must use virtual tools and strategies to foster a sense of connection, collaboration and shared purpose. Addressing the erosion of engagement requires innovative approaches to virtual team building, communication and recognition. Understanding the global impact of engagement emphasises the need for virtual platforms that transcend geographical boundaries. Virtual collaboration tools, inclusive communication and a virtual culture that values engagement contribute to a more connected and productive global workforce. These enable truly global teams that embrace diversity and inclusion, though they also raise the importance of establishing supporting corporate global values and policies.

In a virtual-centric environment, technology plays a leading role. Embracing virtual reality, collaboration platforms and advanced communication tools becomes imperative. The modern workplace relies on technology to enhance productivity and facilitate seamless virtual interaction, reinforcing the notion that virtual is the new real.

Effectively managing a diverse virtual workforce demands nuanced approaches tailored to a wide array of user needs. This underscores the importance of comprehending and accommodating diverse perspectives, cultural nuances and individual requirements within the virtual realm. Meeting the demands of a modern workforce requires virtual tools that are both inclusive and accessible. These tools must facilitate the sharing of personality and interests in a manner that is abstract yet personal. Embracing these comprehensive strategies promotes inclusion and enhances the overall functionality of virtual collaboration. It also ensures the tools employed mirror the diversity of today's professional landscape.

Balancing values and value in a virtual context entails harmonising corporate and organisational values with the dynamics of the virtual work environment. This involves cultivating a virtual culture that mirrors and promotes the organisation's values while ensuring that virtual work contributes tangible value to both employees and the business. It underscores the imperative to seamlessly integrate values into virtual practices.

Recognising the inevitability of a virtual future positions companies to embrace change proactively and navigate the landscape successfully.

As we transition to the workplace of the future, continual adaptation to emerging technologies, evolving employee expectations and the dynamic nature of virtual collaboration become paramount. Recognising the inevitability of a virtual future positions companies to embrace change proactively and navigate the landscape successfully. Companies must establish new performance management and financial models that incentivise change and enable individual and collective ownership of outcomes. Success lies in transforming resistance to change into a culture of continuous improvement.

Net zero as standard

Increasingly, corporations will refuse to buy services that are not "net zero". With natural disasters increasing in occurrence, customer demand for representation that they are not contributing will be the norm. Every service and solution will sell based on its environmental score, in addition to its security score and its AI advisor integration score.

Net-zero measures and service attributes are becoming a critical factor in corporations' processes for selecting software, services and partners. Partners will be judged on their ability to provide net-zero-enabling services and net-zero services, as well as whether they are net zero themselves. We can expect to see an increase in operational measures in this respect — expanding well beyond the current green-energy and carbon-emissions scores into biodiversity and the handling of water, waste and hazardous materials.

Technology plays a pivotal role in achieving net-zero goals in the modern workplace. Advanced technologies enable organisations to optimise energy consumption, reduce their carbon footprint and enhance overall efficiency. From remote collaboration tools that minimise the need for travel to smart building systems that improve energy efficiency, technology is integral to the shift towards a net-zero standard.

A diverse workforce includes people with varied environmental concerns and preferences. Assessing the needs of this workforce involves considering sustainability preferences. Implementing a net-zero standard aligns with the values of employees who prioritise environmental responsibility, contributing to a workplace culture that respects and accommodates diverse perspectives on sustainability.

Successfully balancing values and value entails seamlessly integrating sustainability values into organisational culture. Adopting net zero as a standard is a tangible manifestation of an organisation's commitment to environmental values that transcends mere compliance. This aligns with the growing societal expectation for businesses to contribute actively to environmental stewardship. By embracing a net-zero standard, organisations showcase their dedication to values that prioritise sustainability alongside the creation of economic value.

The ease with which employees individually value these efforts streamlines the process, reducing the scope of change management required. Deploying a net-zero strategy necessitates corporate ownership and planning, a clear vision and goals, and a commitment to execution. It also requires scrutiny of business processes and decisions from a net-zero perspective. This comprehensive approach enhances environmental responsibility and contributes to a corporate culture that seamlessly intertwines values with business activity.

Shifting into the future requires organisations to anticipate and address the environmental challenges ahead. Adopting a net-zero standard positions organisations as forward-thinking and environmentally conscious. It signals a commitment to sustainability trends that are likely to become increasingly central to future business practices. As part of the broader shift towards sustainability, the net-zero standard positions organisations as leaders in future-focused workplace practices.

Trust corporations to enable privacy

Personal IT security is becoming increasingly complex. In parallel, we are using a growing volume of connected devices that are all potentially vulnerable. We trust our corporations to provide a safe work environment. We trust them with healthcare and IT security. Why not trust them to help us secure our personal data as well, giving employers one additional reason to win the war for talent?

In an increasingly complex world, even technology specialists cannot completely secure all personal data. This raises questions of trust and employee assistance in securing privacy and private data.

Employers have a valid level of self-interest in data security, as does every individual challenged with juggling privacy and security. Global cloud, software and service providers are perceived as having an interest in personal data. In an environment lacking in trust and stability, employers have the opportunity to set themselves apart by providing corporate data services and including privacy-related capabilities as part of the employment packages they offer. Privacy is a fundamental aspect of employee engagement. Facing the erosion of engagement involves addressing concerns related to data privacy. When employees trust that their privacy is respected, it positively impacts their engagement levels.

The evolving nature of work requires redefining what constitutes work. Trusting corporations with the privacy of remote and flexible work arrangements becomes central to this shift. Acknowledging and addressing privacy concerns reflects the changing landscape of work and the need for responsible privacy practices.

The increasing focus on privacy aligns with the growing recognition that people need to trust their employers with their personal information. Organisations that prioritise robust privacy measures build trust and credibility with their people.

A diverse workforce brings varied privacy expectations. Assessing and respecting the privacy needs of a diverse workforce aligns with the trend of trusting companies to customise privacy measures based on individual needs, thereby fostering a culture of inclusion and respect.

A culture of leaders encompasses ethical leadership, including responsible handling of employee data. Trusting corporations to prioritise privacy reflects a leadership commitment to ethical practices, building a culture where employees feel secure and confident in their leadership's commitment to privacy.

Loving your AI advisor

Your chatbot transcends mere functionality; it becomes personal and capable of empathy. With a personalised AI-generated appearance that can be customised, it becomes an omnipresent companion. Whether enhancing productivity or sparking creativity, it is continuously present, adapting to an array of work areas.

AI-based advisors have seamlessly integrated into our evolving work environment. Some operate discreetly behind processes while others take on explicit roles. The immediate future promises a competitive landscape of AI advisors spanning many technical niches, from workplace and desktop support to HR and process engines. Their evolution is marked by the shift to increasing personalisation. Capabilities extend beyond mere chat to include visual presence.

The next competitive frontier revolves around customisation. Users can tailor an AI advisor's appearance, search and answer parameters, communication style, and even personality, encompassing language style, origin and mood. The key question of preference arises, with the focus shifting from ease of use to the more nuanced criteria of comfort of use and pleasure of use. Users will likely model their AI advisors on idealised versions of themselves, celebrities or significant individuals in their lives.

Imagine an AI advisor with a familiar and likeable appearance, who is always ready to assist and contributes seamlessly to your work. As this narrative evolves, companies are urged to choose AI advisors based on their potential to elicit affection from employees. This goes beyond functionality; when employees genuinely like their AI advisors, ease of use increases and internal change management overhead decreases.

The central role of AI advisors in the modern workplace cannot be overstated. The capacity for employees to embrace and form attachments to these digital companions emphasises their significance in enhancing efficiency, providing valuable insights and streamlining tasks. This underscores the theme of technology as a valuable workplace partner contributing to an increasingly productive and innovative work environment. The interplay between personalised AI advisors and human experience will reshape the landscape of the future workplace.

The use of AI in the workplace is redefining traditional notions of work by introducing new modes of support, collaboration and decision-making.

As the concept of work undergoes transformation, the integration of AI advisors reflects a turning point. The use of AI in the workplace is redefining traditional notions of work by introducing new modes of support, collaboration and decision-making. Liking your AI advisor aligns with this turning point, emphasising a positive and collaborative relationship between humans and AI in the evolving landscape of work.

Assessing the needs of a diverse workforce includes recognising different preferences and work styles. When people like their AI advisors, this signifies an ability to create AI personalities that resonate with diverse individuals and consider cultural sensitivities and personal preferences. Well-designed AI advisors play a role in fostering a workplace culture of inclusion and acceptance.

Value — which way is up?

Gravity is shifting as the focus moves from value to values. Every industry is different, every organisation is different, and every person is different.

Understanding value flows is critical in the modern workplace, marking a shift from a singular focus on value to a broader consideration of values. Recognising the uniqueness of each industry, organisation and person is paramount in understanding the diverse elements that influence the workplace. By comprehending how values intersect and influence the flow of value, organisations can optimise processes, enhance collaboration and align with evolving expectations. This nuanced understanding is pivotal for achieving business outcomes that resonate with the diverse stakeholders involved in the modern business ecosystem.

Action: The rest is rhetoric

The modern workplace is shaped by key themes and actions that define its trajectory.

First, the vital role of trust is emphasised as the cornerstone of transformation. Trust fosters collaboration, encourages innovation and enables the workforce to embrace change confidently.

Second, hyper-personalisation emerges as a crucial consideration, with the recognition that tailoring experiences for both employees and customers is imperative. This customisation improves satisfaction and engagement.

Third, the core role of security takes a long-term perspective. Acknowledging its fundamental importance is safeguarding sensitive data and maintaining a resilient workplace infrastructure.

Fourth, modernising the workplace is a leadership journey. It involves strategic decision-making, adapting to technological advancements and unlocking the full potential of talent. This process not only enhances organisational efficiency but also propels growth and innovation.

Transitioning to the workplace of the future will require conscious and proactive change, transparent corporate governance, and a clearly articulated corporate change and evolution strategy, enabled via a robust plan with clear goals and supported by corporate enterprise architecture. The commitment to execution must be embraced throughout the organisation, with collective CXO ownership.

In summary, the key calls to action for the modern workplace revolve around trust, hyper-personalisation, security and leadership-driven modernisation. These considerations collectively shape a dynamic, adaptable and employee-centric work environment that is pivotal for sustained success in the business landscape.

Glossary

AI advisor
An AI advisor refers to a virtual assistant or chat bot, that leverages advanced algorithms, machine learning and Generative AI capabilities to provide guidance, support, and execution capabilities. Functioning as a digital companion, an AI advisor is designed to assist individuals and teams in various tasks, decision-making processes, and problem-solving. Key characteristics include Native Language Processing (NLP), personalisation, continuous learning, multifunctionality, decision support and integration with backend fulfilment systems.

Employee disengagement
Employee disengagement refers to a state in which employees lack motivation, commitment and enthusiasm in their work. It is characterised by a decreased emotional connection to their job, colleagues and organisation. In the context of modern workplace trends, addressing and preventing employee disengagement has become a critical focus for organisations aiming to foster a positive work environment and enhance productivity. Key indicators and factors associated with employee disengagement include lack of motivation, low productivity, project delays and limited initiative. It entails a reduction in job satisfaction, negative impact on team dynamics, high turnover risk and impact on organisational culture.

Addressing employee disengagement involves implementing strategies such as employee recognition programs, professional development opportunities, open communication, active employee engagement and work–life balance initiatives, and meaningful work assignments.

Employee experience
Employee experience refers to the overall journey and interactions that an individual has with their employer throughout their tenure with an organisation. It encompasses every touchpoint and aspect of an employee's involvement, from the initial recruitment process to their daily work environment and ultimate departure from the company.

Key elements of the employee experience include recruitment and onboarding, work environment, company culture, work assignments, career development and work–life balance. It also encompasses recognition and rewards, communication, wellness and well-being, performance feedback, and exit experience. By focusing on enhancing the employee experience, organisations aim to create a positive and engaging workplace, leading to higher employee satisfaction, productivity and retention. It reflects a comprehensive approach to talent management that goes beyond traditional HR practices and emphasises the importance of treating employees as valued contributors to the organisation's success.

Future of work
The future of work refers to ongoing and anticipated transformation in the nature of employment, the workplace and the skills required for success in response to technological advancements, societal shifts and evolving organisational structures. The concept encapsulates the changes that are reshaping how, when and where work is conducted as well as the skills and attitudes that will be crucial for individuals to thrive in the emerging professional landscape.

Key elements of the future of work include digital transformation, remote and flexible work, collaborative technologies, skill evolution, and the gig economy. It also encompasses employee well-being, diversity and inclusion, adaptive leadership, human–machine collaboration and global connectivity. Understanding the future of work is crucial for organisations and individuals alike to prepare for and navigate the evolving professional landscape successfully. It involves embracing change, fostering a culture of continuous learning and staying tuned to emerging trends and technologies that will shape the workplace of tomorrow.

Hyper-personalisation
Hyper-personalisation refers to an advanced level of personalisation achieved using sophisticated technologies, algorithms and data analytics. In the modern workplace, hyper-personalisation entails tailoring experiences, content and interactions to individual users with an unprecedented level of granularity. This approach goes beyond traditional personalisation methods by leveraging real-time data, machine learning and artificial intelligence to create highly individualised and context-relevant experiences.

Key aspects of hyper-personalisation for the modern workplace include individualised experiences, dynamic content delivery, predictive recommendations, adaptive learning, smart automation, personalised communication, behavioural analytics and user-centric design. In the employee work environment, it allows corporate and business processes to adapt to personal preferences, interests and even moods. The implementation of hyper-personalisation requires a robust technological infrastructure, a comprehensive understanding of user data privacy considerations, and ethical practices in handling sensitive information. When effectively deployed, hyper-personalisation enhances employee satisfaction, engagement and productivity by creating a workplace experience tailored to individuals' unique needs.

Modern workplace

Modern workplace refers to a contemporary and evolving work environment that embraces advanced technologies, flexible work arrangements and innovative practices to enhance productivity, collaboration, employee well-being and identification with the employer. In the context of modern workplace trends, the concept represents a departure from traditional, static workplaces towards more dynamic, digital and employee-centric models. Key characteristics of the modern workplace include digital transformation, flexibility and remote work, collaborative technologies, and inclusive and diverse culture. They also include employee experience, smart workspaces, Agile methodologies, data-driven decision-making, continuous learning and emphasis on well-being.

The modern workplace is no static construct; it is characterised by an adaptability to technological advancements, changing workforce dynamics and evolving expectations of employees and employers. Organisations embracing the modern workplace paradigm aim to create an environment that enhances productivity, fosters innovation, and attracts and retains top talent in a rapidly changing business landscape.

Modernisation

In the context of modern workplace trends, modernisation is the strategic process of updating, transforming and adapting organisational practices, processes, structures, responsibilities and technologies to align with contemporary standards and evolving needs of the workforce. It involves a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to enhance efficiency, collaboration and overall performance within the workplace. Key aspects of modernisation in the workplace include technological upgrades,

digital transformation, Agile work methodologies, employee-centric approaches and cultural evolution. It also involves flexibility and remote work, data-driven decision-making, innovation and creativity, collaboration tools, and security and compliance. It also includes changes of organisational and job responsibilities, assignment and measurement of work, and learning and upskilling.

Modernisation is an ongoing and dynamic process that reflects an organisation's commitment to staying relevant, competitive and responsive to the changing dynamics of the business environment. It involves a comprehensive approach that considers technology, culture and organisational practices to create a modern and adaptive workplace.

Net zero

Net zero refers to a commitment or goal aimed at balancing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere with an equivalent amount removed or offset. This concept is a key component of sustainability and environmental responsibility within organisations. Key aspects of net zero include carbon neutrality, emissions reductions, offsetting strategies, environmental stewardship and sustainability reporting. It also includes renewable energy adoption, supply chain engagement, employee engagement, compliance with standards, and continuous improvement.

Net-zero initiatives reflect an organisation's dedication to addressing climate change, contributing to global sustainability goals and assuming responsibility for its environmental impact. A prominent trend in the modern workplace, net zero underscores the importance of integrating ecological considerations into business strategies and operations.

Personalisation

Personalisation in the context of modern workplace trends refers to the tailored and bespoke experiences provided to individuals in the work environment based on their preferences, needs and characteristics. This involves leveraging technology and data to create more individualised and user-centric interactions, ultimately enhancing employee satisfaction, engagement and productivity.

Key aspects of personalisation include bespoke workspaces, tools and devices, as well as technology preferences, learning and development paths, work arrangements, and communication preferences. It also includes wellness programs, recognition and rewards, task and project assignments, feedback and performance management, and employee experience platforms.

Personalisation is driven by the recognition that employees have diverse needs and preferences. By embracing personalisation strategies, organisations aim to create a more inclusive, supportive and engaging work environment that recognises the individuality of each person.

Privacy

In the context of modern workplace trends, privacy refers to an individual's right to control and manage their personal information within an organisational setting. It encompasses the protection of sensitive data, personal details and communications from unauthorised access or disclosure.

Key aspects of privacy in the modern workplace include data protection, confidentiality, employee monitoring, consent and compliance. It also includes access controls, secure communication, employee rights, training and awareness, technology safeguards, and incident response. Privacy considerations are essential in

fostering a trustworthy and respectful work environment. Striking a balance between organisational needs and individual privacy is crucial for maintaining a positive workplace culture and complying with evolving legal standards.

Talent

In the context of modern workplace trends, talent refers to the collective skills, capabilities, expertise and potential of individuals and groups in an organisation. It encompasses the diverse abilities and attributes that employees bring to the workplace, contributing to the overall success and competitiveness of the organisation. Talent is about existing expertise as well as the capacity for continuous learning, adaptation and innovation.

Key aspects of talent in the modern workplace include skills and expertise, potential and growth, diversity and inclusion, as well as recruitment, acquisition, retention and engagement. It also includes leadership and management, succession planning, collaboration and team dynamics, adaptability and innovation, employee experience and performance management, and talent analytics. Talent management in the modern workplace involves a comprehensive approach that goes beyond traditional skills assessment, recognising the multifaceted nature of individuals and their potential to contribute to organisational success in dynamic and evolving environments.

Trust

Trust in the realm of modern workplace refers to the confidence, reliance and belief in the credibility, integrity and reliability of individuals, teams or organisations in the work environment. Trust is a foundational element of effective collaboration, innovation and a positive organisational culture.

Key dimensions of trust in the modern workplace include reliability, integrity, competence, communication, collaboration and consistency. Empathy, accountability, respect, adaptability, feedback and leadership are also core elements. Building and maintaining trust is an ongoing process involving consistent behaviour, effective communication and a commitment to ethical principles. Trust is a valuable asset in the modern workplace, influencing employee engagement, collaboration and the overall success of organisations.

Workplace

In modern workplace trends, the workplace refers to the evolving concept of where work is conducted and the environment that surrounds professional activities. Traditionally associated with physical offices, or travelling sellers, the modern workplace encompasses a broader scope that includes physical, virtual and hybrid spaces where people engage in work-related tasks.

Key aspects of the workplace include digital infrastructure, cultural environment, flexible work arrangements, wellness and well-being, technology integration and adaptability, collaboration spaces, and diversity and inclusion. Understanding the multifaceted nature of the modern workplace is vital for organisations seeking to optimise their work environments, enhance the employee experience and stay attuned to emerging trends in work practices.

Workspace

In the context of modern workplace trends, a workspace refers to the designated area or environment where individuals conduct their work-related activities. This term encompasses physical locations, digital interfaces and hybrid arrangements, reflecting the evolving nature of work. The concept of a workspace has expanded beyond the traditional office cubicle and car travel to include diverse settings that cater to the flexibility and varied preferences of modern professionals.

A workspace can be physical, digital or hybrid. Key components of the modern workspace include collaborative workspace, flexible workspace, co-working space and remote workspace. Components also include hot desks, digital collaboration tools, workspace ergonomics and workspace as a service (WaaS). Understanding the nuances of the modern workspace is crucial for organisations aiming to create environments that enhance employee productivity, collaboration and job satisfaction. It involves an integrated approach that considers both physical and digital elements in response to evolving work practices and preferences.

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