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Why Employee Experience Matters in Workplace Transformation

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We are at an inflection point in world history and the new reality, or the "Next Normal", will be marked by fast change and constant disruption. The need for digital transformation has moved from being high on the agenda to being the only item on the agenda, and 47% of UK companies are currently racing to get digitally fit. However, technology alone is not enough. IDC research shows that first and foremost, digital success requires placing employees at the heart of their strategies.

Employees have to be "on board" and fully aligned, connected to their company's strategy, as they navigate a very uncertain future. Employees need to be engaged and inspired through purpose. This connection is energising and motivating and a vital force in the twists and turns of any business strategy.

Adopting an employee-first approach leads not only to greater employee satisfaction but also to better business performance. A positive employee experience can have benefits beyond improved productivity and impact customer satisfaction. Numerous studies by independent think tanks have empirically proven that customer and employee satisfaction are two sides of the same coin, and that "happy employees make happy customers".

Workplace transformation strategies are a top or high priority for 44% of UK companies at present, as they seek to support a distributed workforce with superior employee experience. According to recent surveys, the proportion of UK companies with a primarily home-based workforce will increase from 11% pre-pandemic to 27% post-pandemic, while many other firms will introduce remote working policies for occasional home working. The new workplace is "hybrid by design".

The delivery of a superior employee experience in the new hybrid workplace is requiring profound changes in technology, processes and culture and the joint effort of different enterprise stakeholders, chiefly IT and HR. IDC identifies the following initiatives among successful companies:

- Workplace transformation is business led. Stakeholders focus first on business outcomes (for example, greater customer satisfaction, hours saved per employee) and only then do they design suitable solutions, and user personas, that meet those targets.

- A hybrid working model is secure by design and by default. Security is inherent from the bottom up and permeates every aspect of employees' working day, through intelligent policy automation.
    - Trust in the hybrid workplace takes a multilayer security approach encompassing devices, apps, the network and most importantly employee identity, as the new security perimeter.

- Their intelligent helpdesk has full and systematic visibility into the performance and security posture of their IT estate. They promote the proactive resolution of problems, automation remediation, and self-service. Their aim is to "decongest" the volume of Tier 1 service requests that need human intervention and shift helpdesk engineers to more critical and complex IT issues.
    - IT departments can prioritise what issues to address first, identify their likely causes, and effectively remediate them to limit their impact on the wider organisation.
    - Visualising tools can help optimise IT assets to the individual needs of employees, generating important cost savings.
    - Their onsite tech bars are empowering employees with digital skills for self-service support.

- Employee experience is monitored and measured in real time via telemetry data (from devices, applications, and other IT assets) and employee sentiment. Intelligent analytics produce dashboards with targeted vs. achieved scorings, which can be broken down by multiple categories, and provide relevant recommendations.

Workplace transformation is a journey and there's no quick or easy path to follow. Many companies are outsourcing if not all, at least some of their most complex elements. Trusted IT partners with full life cycle services, sound business acumen and strong capabilities in employee experience are highly sought after.

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