

5 Ways to Get Strategic about the Digital Workspace

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The Digital Workspace

Cool applications, advanced analytics, next-gen collaboration, and every other “next big thing” in IT won’t matter until they’re in the hands of the people who get your business done. And today, the place where technology powers individual productivity is the digital workspace.

If you’re an enterprise leader, it’s your responsibility to make sure your IT team has a viable strategy for equipping, enabling, and empowering every individual in your enterprise with the best and most capable of today’s incredible digital technology.

This white paper offers C-level leaders a concise, practical guide to digital workspace strategy. It provides a brief overview of digital workspace principles—and then outlines five key aspects of digital workspace strategy that are best championed at the executive level.

By reviewing this material, you can quickly improve your ability to lead your company’s pursuit of digital excellence—which is a core requirement for business success in an increasingly digital world.

What is a Digital Workspace?

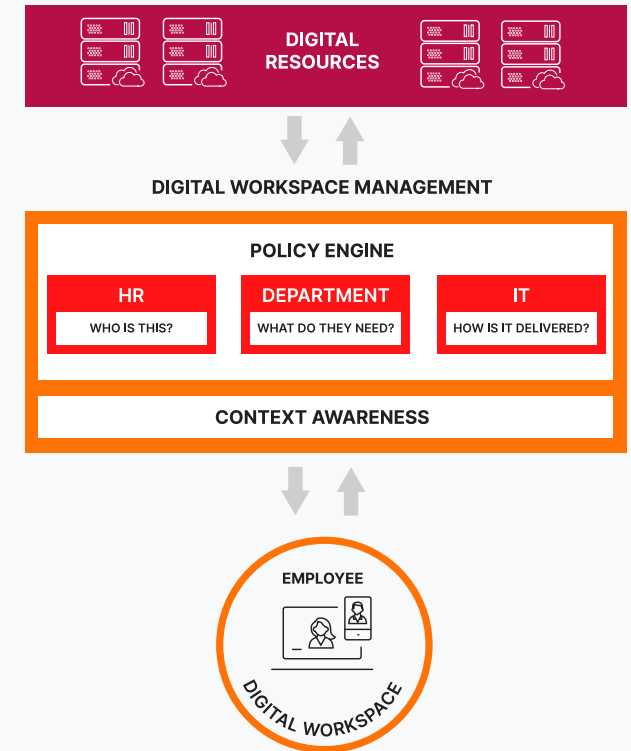
Every time a person uses a digital device—whether a desktop PC in their office, a laptop at home, or a smartphone at an airport gate—they virtually enter into a digital workspace. This digital workspace is comprised of all the digital resources they have access to at that specific time and place via that specific device and network connection: apps, data, documents, communications tools, etc.

At many organizations, this digital workspace is not especially well governed or managed. The process of providing—and, when necessary, revoking—an individual employee's access to any given digital resource is generally slow and manual. Employees' access privileges for specific resources also tend to be based solely on their ability to confirm their identity with a password. So, those privileges are the same whether they're sitting at their desks or using public WiFi.

When organizations adopt digital workspace best practices, the relationship between people and technology becomes vastly superior. Those best practices include:

- **Unified management of digital workspaces** to ensure consistency of access policies, IT provisioning processes, compliance reporting, etc., for all applications and technology services, including physical, virtual, and cloud-hosted.
- **Policy-based automation** that ensures each person's digital workspace is promptly populated with the resources they need to do their job—and promptly de-populated when they change roles or leave the company.
- **Session context controls** that automatically limit or enhance digital workspaces as appropriate given session context attributes such as location, time of day, and safety of network connection.
- **Self-service capabilities** that allow LOB managers to administer IT privileges and employees to discover and opt into available digital capabilities.

Every enterprise has digital workspaces. But what distinguishes a great enterprise from a competent one is how intelligently and consistently it governs, provisions, and secures those workspaces.



Digital workspaces are comprised of all the resources an employee has access to on whatever device they are using at a particular time and place.

Strategic Issue #1: Business agility

Markets have become extremely volatile. To survive and thrive in such market environments, your business must be highly nimble and adaptive.

Enterprises are making significant investments in technology that enable this agility. Those investments include DevOps (which enhances agility by accelerating the speed with which IT can develop code and safely get it into operational production) and cloud (which enables IT to increase and decrease its digital capacity in real time).

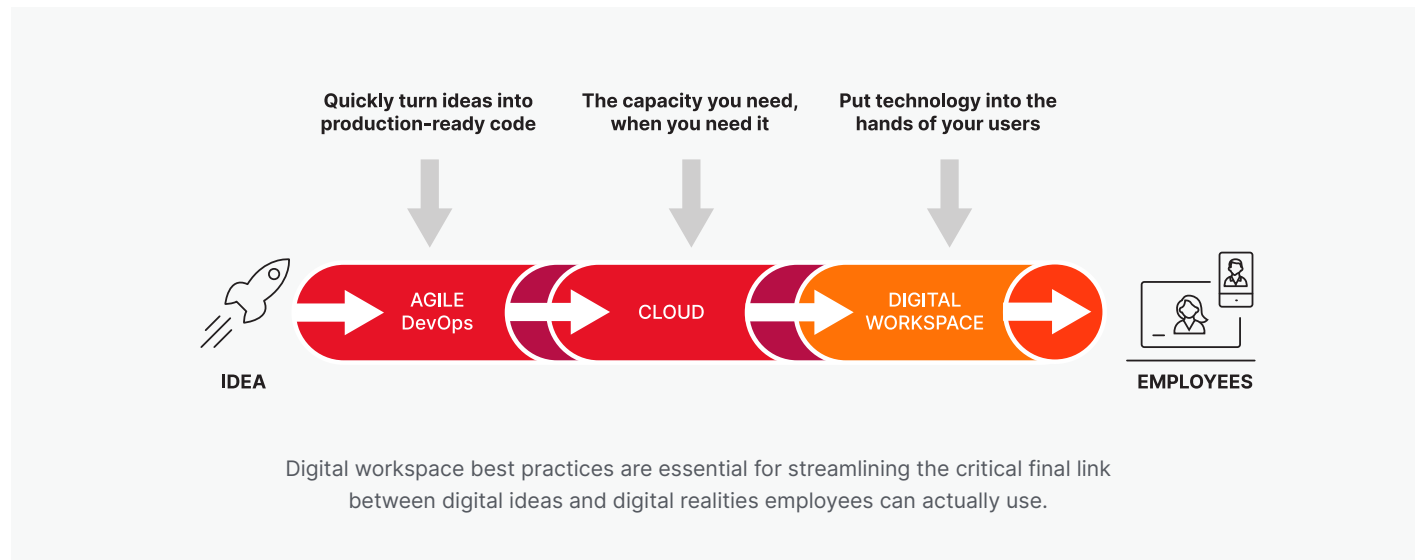
The missing link in technology-related business agility is often inadequately automated management of the digital workspace. In fact, best-practices management of the digital workspace significantly enhances business agility in multiple ways, including:

- **More agile adoption of new enabling technologies.**
The more quickly and confidently you can add new capabilities to people's digital workspaces, the more quickly and confidently your business can respond to escalating customer demands, shifting distribution channels, and other market changes.

- **Greater organizational/staffing agility.**
Businesses often have to respond to changing market conditions by re-organizing LOBs, reducing the workforce in some areas, and on-boarding new workers in others. In a tech-centric world, the ability to modify everyone's digital workspace immediately and appropriately is key to the rapid execution of these organizational changes.

- **Faster M&A assimilation.**
Automated, policy-based provisioning of digital workspaces supports M&A execution and accelerates time-to-benefit—since it makes it much easier to securely provide large numbers of new employees with whatever new technology resources they need.

Business agility, in fact, depends on workspace agility. So if you want to make your company more agile, you must pay attention to the way your IT team provisions and de-provisions digital workspaces.



Strategic Issue #2: Cyber-risk and cyber-compliance

Businesses are making major investments in cyber-security—and for good reason. High-profile breaches keep making the headlines, demonstrating how technology drives business risk at the same time it drives business performance. So, it makes sense to invest in security measures that range from network intrusion detection to threat analytics.

Defense against insider threats, however, is often a blind spot. IT does all it can to make sure that employees only have access privileges to appropriate resources and that any attempts to exceed that appropriate access can be detected quickly. But when an employee is terminated or quits, it can often take IT weeks to de-activate all of their existing application accounts, passwords, and privileges. And some are never deleted at all.

That leaves your business chronically vulnerable to dangerous, non-compliant data access by former employees who may be disgruntled or working for a competitor.

Properly engineered access management fully mitigates this cyber-risk by simply eliminating employees' workspaces in their entirety, immediately and automatically at the moment the corporate HR system registers their termination.

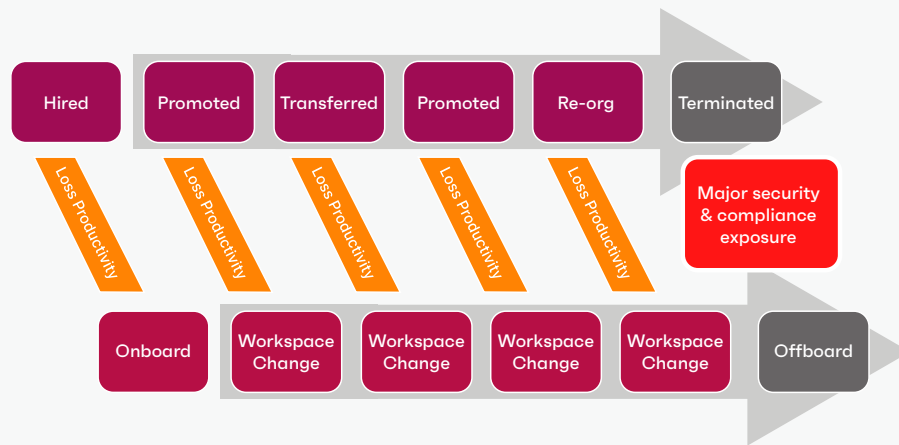
This automated, comprehensive elimination of the employee's workspace access also fulfills compliance requirements by ensuring prevention of unauthorized data access by ex-employees—and by creating a highly reliable, self-documenting mechanism for that access prevention.

Best-practice workspace security improves your company's "digital hygiene" in many other ways as well. It allows IT to limit employee privileges appropriately when they work on non-secure public WiFi networks. It supports geo-fencing. It allows multiple users to share devices without cross-contamination of their personal accounts.

The core principle is this: Your IT team doesn't just need to secure devices. It must also secure the user sessions that occur on those devices. The best way to do that is by adopting best practices for governance of your digital workspaces.

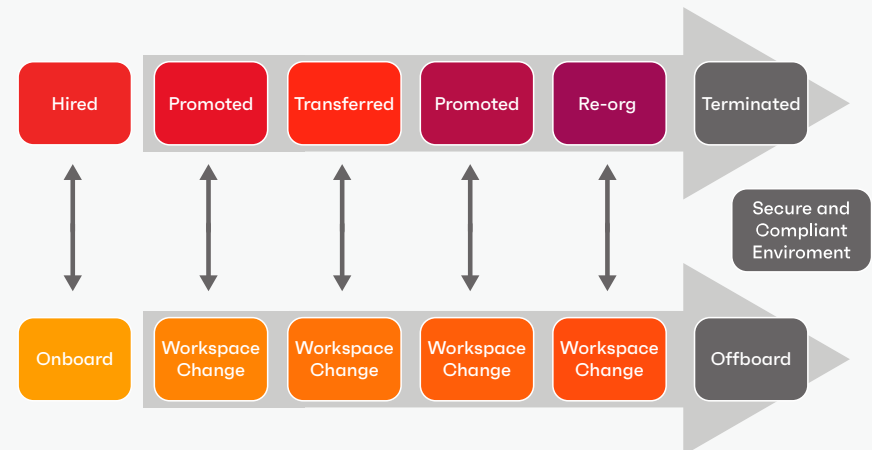
Con't
Strategic Issue #2:
Cyber-risk and cyber-compliance

Conventional Workspace Lifecycle Management



Most companies are highly vulnerable to access privileges that remain active long after employees leave or are terminated.

Automated Employee Lifecycle



With automated workspace access management, all access privileges are revoked immediately the instant an employee leaves the company.

Strategic Issue #3: Technology ROI

Once upon a time, enterprise-technology spending was relatively small and non-strategic. IT managers still tried to get the most bang for their budget buck, of course. But the consequences to the business of less-than-ideal ROI were not especially grave.

That situation has changed dramatically. Corporate IT spending has increased substantially. Yet, even so, IT spending can't keep pace with the relentlessly escalating importance of technology to the business. It is therefore vital that every dollar you spend on technology be used as effectively as possible to move the needle on the performance of your business.

That can't happen if there's a lot of process "friction" between the digital capabilities your business has already paid for and the people who need to actually use those capabilities to get work done.

Here again, your digital workspace strategy is key. With digital workspace best practices, your business can:

- **Speed time-to-benefit** for new and updated technology capabilities by more quickly building them into the digital workspaces of all appropriate employees.
- **Maximize uptake of technology capabilities** by both building them into people's workspaces and making them more visible to everyone who is authorized to use them.
- **Reduce software license costs** by sharing concurrent licenses across the enterprise more efficiently and avoiding audit dings.
- **Improve visibility into use of digital resources** through unified workspace metrics that enable you to make better decisions about IT budgets and employee education.
- **Get more done** with fewer resources through automation of key, repetitive tasks.

Manual, fragmented administration of workspace moves, adds, and changes can't provide these benefits. On the contrary, conventional IT administration slows time-to-benefit, inhibits user uptake, wastes licenses, and limits visibility into user behavior.

Strategic Issue #4: Employee engagement

In today's highly competitive knowledge economy, human capital can be more valuable and harder to find than financial capital. And business performance can be more contingent than ever on how intently employees are engaged in their work day in and day out.

Unfortunately, most companies don't do a great job of optimizing employee engagement. This is especially true when it comes to millennials with high workplace expectations.

Especially problematic is the way arcane approaches to the digital workspace turn off Digital Natives who have grown up with technology—and who therefore expect to get the tools they need when they need them, rather than having to jump through hoops and wait days or weeks for even their simplest requests to be fulfilled.

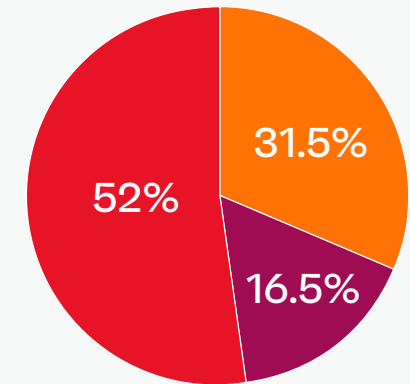
Digital workspace best practices create a very different working environment by:

- Ensuring that your people have the digital tools they need, when they need them.
- Speeding IT's responsiveness to digital service requests.
- Providing policy-bounded IT self-service for employees and LOB managers.
- Enabling IT to expand its portfolio of cloud/SaaS service options without adding budget/resource-burning administrative burdens and costs at the same time.

Above and beyond these tangible impacts, well-managed digital workspaces contribute substantially to a technology-forward corporate culture.

That's very helpful for promoting employee engagement—and for optimizing retention of millennial talent that won't stick around a business that feels stuck in the "top-down" past.

Gallup's Three Types of Employees



- Engaged employees:** Those working with passion and feeling a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.
- Not-engaged employees:** Those who have essentially "checked out." They are sleepwalking through their workday, putting time — but not energy or passion — into their work.
- Actively disengaged employees:** Those who aren't just unhappy at work — they're busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

Gallup's extensive research on employee engagement reveals that less than one-third of the workforce perform their jobs with passion.

Strategic Issue #5: Innovation

Technology-related innovation is critical to business success. Whether you're building software-based value-adds into your products or wowing your customers with a new mobile app, you have to stay technologically aggressive to keep your business competitive.

One of the biggest obstacles to technology innovation is the disproportionate allocation of IT resources to low-value "keeping the lights on" (KTLO) tasks. These operational tasks consume as much as 80% or more of many organization's IT resources—leaving proportionally little time and money left over for higher value projects.

Policy-based automation, self-service, and other digital workspace best practices reduce KTLO burdens by:

- Freeing IT staff from routine tasks such as service activation and ad hoc process scripting
- Allowing IT to add services without adding overhead
- Avoiding the creation of redundant services through better promulgation of existing services across the enterprise

The result: More IT resources and talent are freed for innovation-oriented projects that move the needle on business performance and customer experience.

No one should mistakenly assume that cloud eliminates the KTLO-vs.-innovation problem. Sure, cloud offers operational flexibility, and it allows you to exchange multiple internal (and often obscure) IT CAPEX and OPEX costs for a visible bundled OPEX invoice from a service provider. But, your total costs are not necessarily lower. And, IT must still plug those cloud/SaaS services into your people's workspaces.

In fact, as your company sources more digital capabilities from a larger number of cloud/SaaS providers, the administrative work required to plug the right capabilities into the right workspaces can actually increase, rather than decrease. So it's more important than ever for you to make sure that administration of your digital workspace is automated effectively—and that appropriate policies are applied everywhere at all times.

Conclusion

There's one other factor C-level business leaders should consider when it comes to digital workspaces. Much of the media hype surrounding technology these days focuses on what companies like Google, Facebook, and Amazon are doing to grow their digital businesses. But...

- **Facebook** doesn't have to terminate your Facebook account when you change jobs.
- **Amazon** doesn't care whether you're at your office or on the beach, as long as you place an order.
- And **Google** didn't have to buy you your browser.

Enterprise IT faces a very different set of challenges when it comes to delivering technology to employees. These challenges revolve around critical business imperatives such as productivity, cost, security, compliance, and accountability.

Business leaders who recognize the strategic importance of technology—and who understand the special challenges enterprises face when it comes to technology governance—will also recognize how important it is to re-think the digital workspace.

Without that re-thinking, there will always be a disconnect between technology investments and the people who use them. Improving your ability to lead your company's pursuit of digital excellence is a core requirement for business success in an increasingly digital world.

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