Microsoft

Insider's Guide to the Modern Workplace

Guidance for Business Leaders

The Modern Workplace

Digitization, demographic change and an abundance of data have left an indelible imprint on the modern workplace. By the end of 2018, 66% of Global 2000 CEOs will have digital transformation at the heart of their corporate strategy with the aim of spurring new growth. In the next several years, more than 50% of the workforce will be made up of millennials, championing more open collaborative workspaces, a greater sense of purpose, and a deeper connection to their company's mission. And by 2020, experts estimate that the total amount of digital data created will mushroom to 44 zettabytes, a 10-fold increase from just 2013.

In a world where new technologies are disrupting entire industries, it is increasingly clear that people and the innovation they drive are every company's most important asset. While most executives would nod their head and agree with that statement, data suggests that employee experience is at all-time lows with less than 15% of the world's workers saying they are engaged at work. This should not be surprising when you consider that on average, a knowledge worker suffers an interruption every 3 minutes, has 8 windows open on their computer, checks their email 30 times per hour, feels that 47% of their time in meetings is unproductive and spends a full 20% of their working time simply looking for the information they need to do their job. What makes this problem even more urgent for companies to solve is that we live in an era where employees have more opportunities than ever before to completely opt out of traditional career paths in favor of a number of attractive options offered by the gig economy. Companies no longer must just convince top talent to join them versus the competition, but also have to make a case for why they should take a traditional job at all.

It is time for a new culture of work. One that is marked by a shift to more open, collaborative environments and the ability for employees to work anywhere and anytime they choose. One that inspires creative thinking and agility instead of routine process. One that rewards dynamic teamwork and data-driven problem solving over command and control. One that enables employees to feel more connected to each other, and to the organization. And one that protects company and customer data and mitigates the risks posed by increasingly sophisticated cyber threats, all while minimizing total cost of ownership.

Nurturing this new culture of work inside your organization requires a combination of cultural change, the right technology, and thoughtful workplace design. You will need to make available purpose-built tools to unlock creativity and innovation in your workforce, enable and accelerate teamwork, democratize data and analytics for constant improvement and address robust security and compliance requirements. Most importantly, it will require your leadership and commitment to act as a role model for a new way of working. In that spirit, we offer this practical guide to help you get the most from Microsoft 365 and foster a new culture of work inside your own organization.

Creativity

There may be nothing more important in the modern workplace than augmenting the human ingenuity of your workforce with AI-powered tools that unleash creativity and fuel innovation. Microsoft 365 harnesses the power of data and interactions to deliver a uniquely relevant and powerful experience for every user, magnifying the impact and potential of their daily work by providing new ways to create, connect to relevant information and identify insights while working with others inside and outside your organization.

Ideation and Content Creation

To stay ahead of customers and competitors, organizations are hungry to find ways to improve ideation and reduce the friction in taking an idea from brainstorm to prototype. New co-authoring, intelligence, inking and 3D capabilities in familiar Office applications like Word, Excel and PowerPoint make it easy for employees to quickly mock up concepts, share with others and then work together in real-time to perfect the solution. AI takes this to the next level by facilitating new methods of input, such as dictation that can be transcribed and translated, as well as cloud-powered design suggestions that help anyone create polished slides and captivating motion effects with just a few quick steps. Once your presentation is ready, auto-translation allows you to display subtitles directly on your presentation in up to 60 languages, making it more impactful for a global audience and for those who are deaf, hard of hearing or simply working in a location with background noise. Storing files in the cloud with SharePoint and OneDrive enables employees to access files from anywhere and safely share content with anyone inside or outside your organization. You can even attach a link to a cloud file to an email in Outlook so that recipients automatically get access to the latest, up to date content, without needing to reconcile multiple versions of a file.
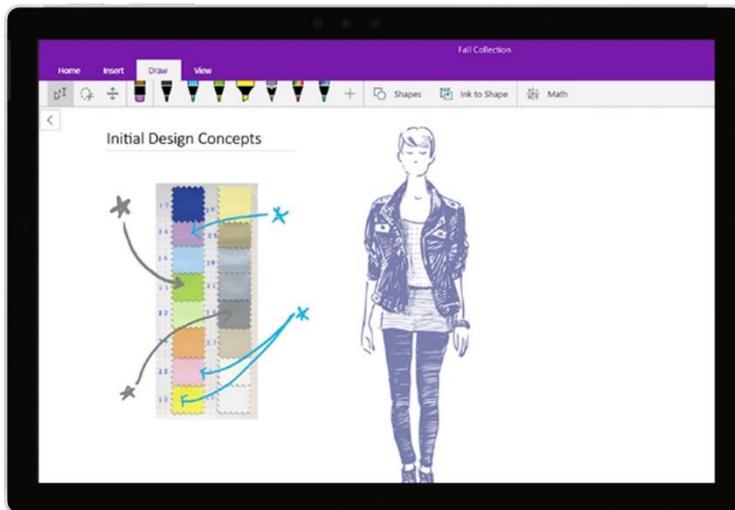
💡 Tips

- Save all files in OneDrive for easy collaboration and access anywhere.
  Find out more ▶

- Take your PowerPoint presentations to the next level by adding another dimension with 3D models.
  Find out more ▶
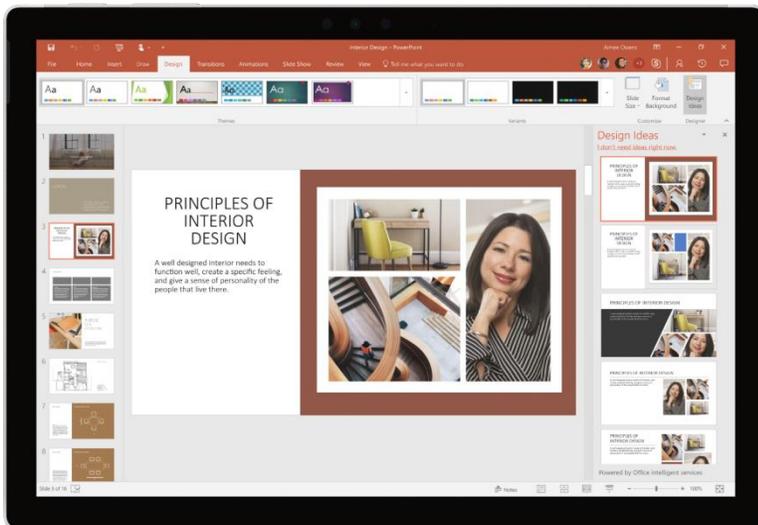
Digital Notetaking

With the growing volume of information and rapid pace of innovation in businesses today, taking notes is more important than ever. OneNote serves as a canvas to capture, organize and share your notes from any device. You can record or handwrite notes, annotate documents, or sketch out your next big idea with the natural feel of pen and paper and the power of digital ink. You can even snap a photo of a whiteboard and Office Lens will digitize the notes on your behalf. Built-in translation fosters collaboration and powerful search scans across voice-recorded, typed and even handwritten notes.

◌ Tips

- Create a section for notes for 1:1 and team meetings.
  Find out more ▶

- Take handwritten notes and convert them into text.
  Find out more ▶

- Use the built-in translator to translate text into a different language.
  Find out more ▶

Content and People Discovery

Maximizing organizational productivity and agility means that it is important to be able to build on the work and expertise of others. While a simple idea, this is often tough in practice – how do you sift through millions of documents and find just the one you need? How do you pull in the right experts from inside and outside your company to help finish a project? To find the information and people you need, Microsoft 365 provides a pervasive search and discovery experience that combines AI with company-wide data and signals, to discover relevant information, subject matter experts and even trending topics. You can search using natural language, just as you do on the web. Store files in OneDrive and SharePoint and they can identify text in images, so it's easy for you to find whiteboards, screenshots and receipts with intelligent search. And once you've found what you need, AI-powered services allow you to import that information directly into Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. We've also integrated LinkedIn profiles with Microsoft 365 so that you can identify experts both inside and outside your organization with the click of a button.
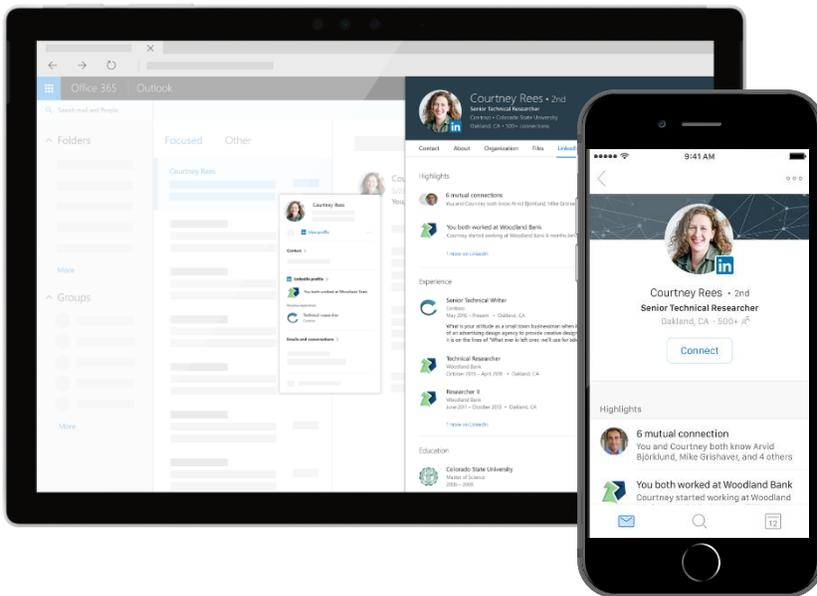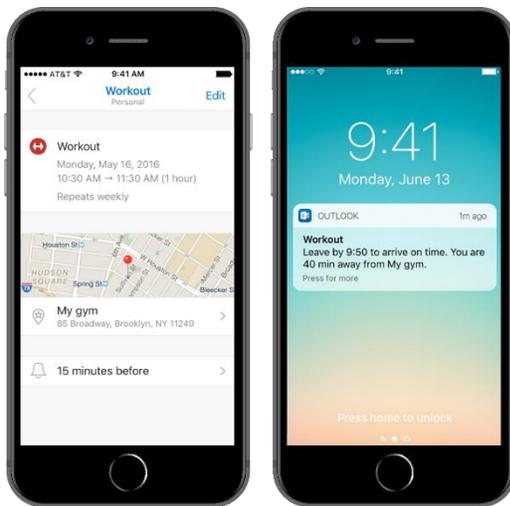
Mobile Productivity

In the past, the workplace was thought of as a physical location, one where employees would work in offices and come together for meetings in a shared physical space. Today, however, increasingly work happens on the go, with nearly half of professionals stating that they believe the use of a mobile device is critical for productivity. To satiate this hunger for mobile productivity, we've put the workplace in your pocket by delivering applications like Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, OneDrive, and Microsoft Teams to popular mobile platforms, including iOS and Android. You can create, chat, share and present – all from your device of choice, and even access company intranet sites while at home or traveling.

We've brought AI to Outlook to help users get more done with a Focused Inbox that filters less important mail out of view so you can focus on the mails that matter most. Cortana helps Outlook mobile users stay on top of their day by providing reminders when it's time to leave for an appointment - with directions for both driving and public transit— while taking into account current location, the event location, and real-time traffic information. We've also introduced mobile-specific capabilities like MileIQ, that automatically track mileage and make it easier to deduct expenses and ensure you are reimbursed. These powerful mobile experiences are secured so apps and data remain protected. We recommend deploying these mobile capabilities to your employees to help them maximize productivity even when they are not in the office.
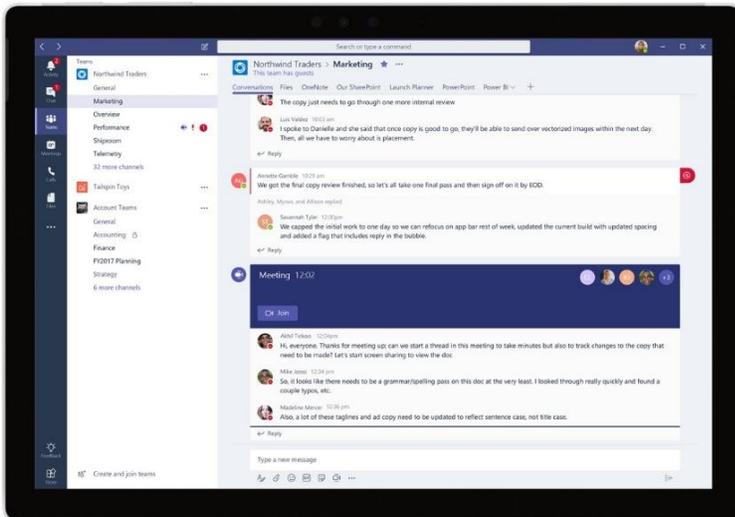
Teamwork

A critical step in fostering a new culture of work is setting the tone for how individuals in your organization connect with one another and exchange information. Most of us participate in two distinct modes of collaboration, an 'inner loop' of people with whom we actively work on a regular basis, and an 'outer loop' of people that we connect with more sporadically. For those people you work closely with on high-velocity projects and core deliverables, Microsoft Teams is the ideal tool since all team conversations, files, meetings and associated apps are in a shared workspace that is accessible to teammates inside and outside the organization. When reaching across the organization to connect with your outer loop on a common role, interest, or goal, Yammer is an ideal tool since everyone in the organization can openly share information, find expertise, and ideate since groups and conversations are open by default and therefore discoverable by everyone.

Projects and Virtual Teams

To keep pace with rapid change and involve subject matter experts, wherever they may be located, organizations must embrace tools and habits that enable employees to dynamically swarm around a project before dispersing to the next. Microsoft Teams is a great way to allow employees to self-form teams around important projects by organizing conversations, files, meetings and tools into a single hub for teamwork. The entire team, including outside consultants and gig workers, can access everything they need to move a project forward, including the specific applications required for the project such as Adobe Creative Cloud, SurveyMonkey and GitHub. Teams is also fully integrated with Microsoft applications including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PowerBI and Stream, so the team can collaborate and access information without leaving their shared workspace. All files are automatically stored natively in SharePoint, and team members can even customize intranet sites with project details and announcements for your broader organization. Among many potential scenarios, Teams is particularly useful for kicking off marketing campaigns, optimizing sales pursuits, and organizing IT and engineering efforts.
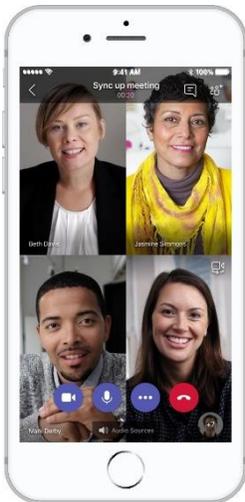
Meetings

The average knowledge worker spends nearly one third of her or his week in meetings, but the majority of people believe better preparation and more interactive discussion among attendees would make these meetings more productive. To transform meetings, use the rich audio and video and intelligent meeting capabilities in Microsoft Teams to bring people together. In Teams, the collaboration begins the moment the meeting is scheduled – attendees connect on persistent chat to prepare for the meeting and share relevant documents. It's easy to learn more about participants by hovering over their profile to see their organizational and LinkedIn background. During the meeting, video and screen share foster connection and focus among the group while new AI services currently in development provide auto-translation, transcription and recording so that participants get more out of the experience and anyone who missed the meeting can easily go back and watch the meeting. Following the meeting, notes and action items will be automatically transcribed and distributed to the group.
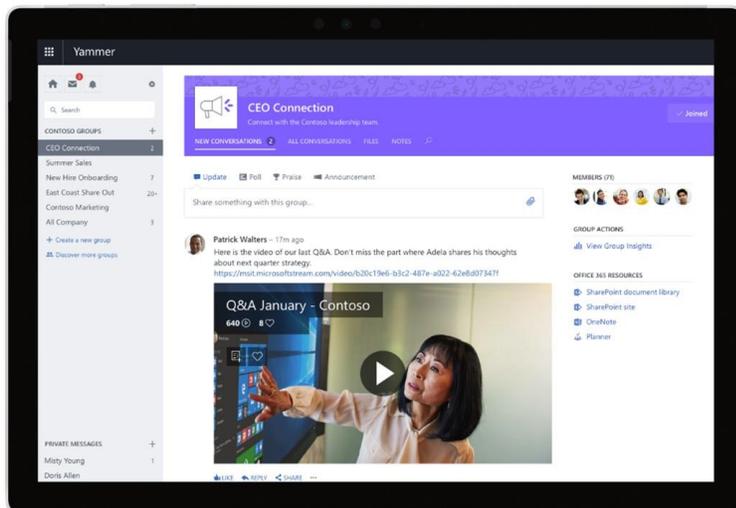
Employee Community

In many large organizations, especially those with multiple geographic locations, employees feel disconnected from each another and the decisions made in headquarters, impacting employee engagement and impeding cultural transformation. One of the most important steps you can take is to connect with your employee community in an open and transparent way. Yammer is an enterprise social network that allows your company to bridge organizational siloes, build communities and drive companywide initiatives forward. We recommend holding regular town hall meetings where you can take questions and discuss important topics for the organization. These meetings can be joined in person or remotely and recorded for later viewing using Skype Meeting Broadcast and intelligent video capabilities in Microsoft Stream. Questions can be submitted and discussed prior to or during the broadcast in a public, organization-wide Yammer groups which are ideal for facilitating open conversations, debate and ideation. In addition, Yammer is great for employee communities of interest and company-wide communications needs. We also recommend creating a modern intranet using SharePoint communication site templates to publish curated news, important announcements and video streams accessible to any employee, regardless of device or location.

Enterprise Video

The human brain processes video 60,000 times faster than text – this makes video one of the most effective means of communicating with employees. While video is ubiquitous in our personal lives, it's still costly to produce inside organizations and tough to distribute securely. We recommend you incorporate video into internal training, employee communications, such as town hall meetings, and as a way to keep global teams connected. Microsoft Stream enables everyone in the organization to create, discover, and share videos securely, and it integrates into the collaborative apps employees use most including Teams, OneNote, SharePoint and Yammer. AI-powered features such as audio transcription and face detection make finding relevant content easy—even for specific words or people shown on screen, whether in a single video or across all your company's videos.
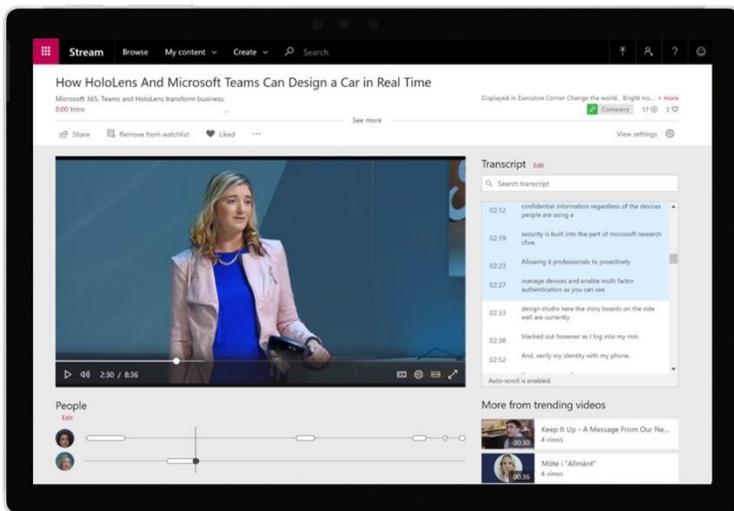
Modernize Distribution Lists

Email is the ubiquitous system of record for most business leaders today – it is where many of us go to start a discussion and stay up to date on a broad range of issues. Historically, however, it has been difficult to create distribution lists and facilitate communications with groups of individuals. Groups in Outlook lets employees create a shared inbox, which works just like a traditional distribution list, except new members can also view prior discussions to quickly get up to speed. It is also integrated with OneNote for shared notetaking and SharePoint for cloud files and team sites and news to help share content. Among many potential uses, we recommend using a group in Outlook to help your leadership team or direct reports stay up to speed on a variety of topics and modernize legacy distribution lists. As you schedule meetings with your leadership team and others, use the new Calendar.help service currently in Preview that combines the speed of AI with the personal touch of Cortana as your personal assistant to schedule meetings on your behalf.
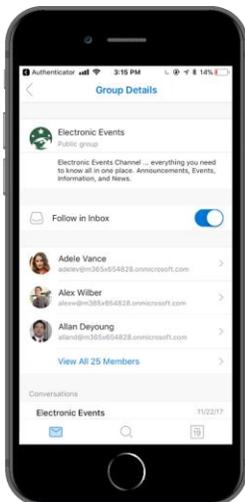
Analytics

In the modern workplace, if you're not improving, you're falling behind, so it's important that you and your employees make the most of data, analytics and AI to constantly learn and improve business decision-making. Microsoft 365 includes powerful capabilities to help you make better, data-driven decisions.

KPIs and Dashboards

In a world of constant distractions, it can be a challenge to get employees to rally around the few KPIs that really matter for your business. To build a shared sense of purpose, we recommend using analytics capabilities in Excel and PowerBI to build and publish a dashboard so people across your organization can view important business metrics. These dashboards can be created by anyone and accessed from the web or a mobile device to allow employees to visualize, drill in and deeply analyze business data to assess what is working and how their actions contribute to overall results and priorities. They can even search using natural language, asking a question and receiving suggested charts and graphs of the data as a result. Consider building a dashboard to track your organization's revenue growth, gross margin and customer satisfaction and then enabling employees to not only see this top-line data but also investigate trends by geography, product line or customer segment.
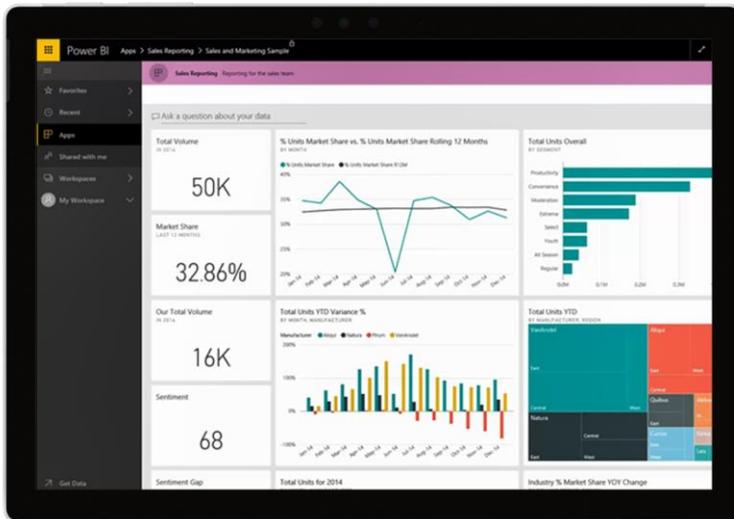
Employee Insights

So much of what we do in our personal life today is measured – you can track the number of steps you've taken, the number of calories you've consumed, even the number of times you wake up in the night – all with an aim of improving health, happiness and well-being. It's interesting, then, that while we spend nearly half of our waking hours at work, many of us have yet to apply this same rigor to our work habits. MyAnalytics addresses this need by giving each employee a personal dashboard so they can see how they spend time in the workplace and who they spend it with. Data-driven changes in work habits can add up to significant productivity gains: MyAnalytics users typically recover 4-5 hours per week by running more efficient meetings, writing more concise emails, and proactively blocking focus time in advance. It's important to note that MyAnalytics is designed to protect individual privacy and only the employee can see the data in their dashboard.
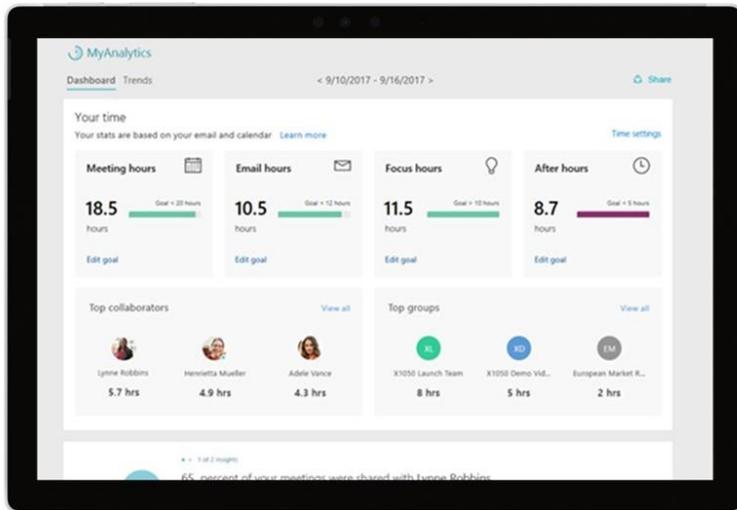
Organizational Insights

As a business leader, it can be difficult to spot big issues that hinder productivity in your organization. For example, what's the best way to organize people and workspaces to optimize cross-group collaboration? How do you identify and promote traits that lead to improved sales productivity? How do you mitigate employee engagement problems and maximize efficiency? To help you make better business decisions, we recommend using Workplace Analytics. Workplace Analytics utilizes aggregated and anonymized email and meeting data from Office 365 and customized data sources to deliver deep and unique insights about how your organization actually works so you can maximize productivity. It also allows you to introduce change initiatives based on behavioral data and then measure the success of these programs over time.

💡 Tips

- Learn how simple changes in work habits and team norms can boost productivity and free up time for innovation.
Find out more ▶

- Open and pin the MyAnalytics Outlook add-in to get productivity insights – like your email read rates and after-hours impact on co-workers – throughout your work day.
Find out more ▶

- Ask your Office 365 Administrator to assign MyAnalytics licenses to your users.
Find out more ▶

💡 Tips

- Learn how to get started with Workplace Analytics.
Find out more ▶

- Sponsor a Workplace Analytics workshop to explore using collaboration data to gain unique insights into how your organization works.

- Contact your Microsoft account team to learn more.

Enterprise Considerations

Embracing a new culture of work also means finding new ways to manage and secure your productivity infrastructure while minimizing costs and employee impact. Microsoft 365 performs beautifully on Macs, PCs and popular mobile platforms and is designed to simplify management and provide a complete set of intelligent security capabilities to help you meet these needs.

To address fast-evolving security threats and critical new compliance regulations, including the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we recommend taking advantage of the integrated security and compliance capabilities built in to Microsoft 365. These advanced capabilities utilize billions of signals from the Microsoft Intelligent Security Graph to protect employee login information, safeguard against complex phishing attacks and keep critical company information from falling into the wrong hands. Microsoft 365 meets important industry standards like ISO 27001, HIPAA and FISMA and advanced compliance capabilities enable you to address data residency requirements, handle e-discovery requests and ensure data is properly classified, managed and retained.
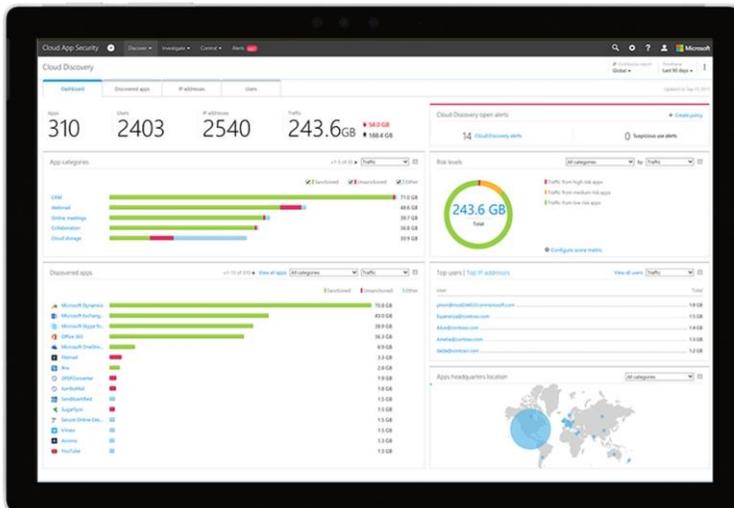
At this point, you are probably wondering how to get started on your own journey towards the modern workplace. To help you realize business value quickly, we have built a customer success service called Microsoft 365 FastTrack. This resource, included with Microsoft 365 plans, provides a set of best practices, tools, resources, and engineers who can help IT stakeholders plan, deploy and adopt the tools you need to accelerate your transformation.

Summary

We recognize that transforming the employee experience is not easy. Sustaining significant change in the employee experience requires not only the right digital tools but also your business leadership to have a sustained impact. Our summary recommendations are as follows:

- **Facilitate ideation and reduce time from idea to prototype** with new co-authoring, intelligence, inking and 3D capabilities in Word, Excel and PowerPoint and OneDrive

- **Capture, organize and share ideas** from any device with digital notetaking in OneNote

- **Discover and leverage relevant information** and subject matter expertise from inside your company and beyond with people insights, including LinkedIn profile integration

- **Ensure employees can be productive while mobile** by encouraging employees to install Office apps like Outlook, OneNote, Word, Excel and PowerPoint on their mobile device

- **Recommend that employees create a hub for teamwork** using Microsoft Teams when starting an important project or virtual team

- **Maximize meeting productivity and inclusiveness** by making every meeting a voice/video meeting with Microsoft Teams and leveraging inking capabilities in Whiteboard

- **Promote employee community and engagement** by holding regular town hall meetings and creating a space for cross-company discussions on topic of interest with Yammer

- **Deliver more effective internal training** and employee communication with enterprise video in Stream

- **Keep your leadership team up to date on a variety of topics** and modernize distribution lists using new group capabilities in Outlook

- **Build a culture of data and shared sense of purpose** with dashboards and reports that can be viewed by anyone on your team using PowerBI

- **Help employees build healthier work habits**, including how they spend time and who they spend it with, using intelligent capabilities in MyAnalytics

- **Spot and address big issues** that hinder organization-wide productivity with analysis and reporting in Workplace Analytics

- **Address fast-evolving security threats** and meet compliance requirements such as GDPR using tools integrated directly into Microsoft 365.

Microsoft is with you on this journey and committed to partnering to help you foster a new culture of work inside your organization.