Reinventing the employee experience at Microsoft

At Microsoft, our employees define the identity of our company. We come to work every day to carry out our mission—to empower every person and organization on the planet to achieve more—and we require a work environment and experiences that live up to the boldness of that mission.

Microsoft Core Services Engineering and Operations (CSEO) enables and supports Microsoft employees with a work environment and experiences that empower them to create and innovate from day one. The CSEO vision for the Productive Enterprise initiative is to provide our employees with efficient, seamless access to technology, powerful tools for individual and collaborative work, integrated information discovery and intelligent facilities, and workday experiences, from new hire to retirement.

Enabling employee productivity is a key investment in our ongoing digital transformation. The nature of our employees' work continues to evolve and change as we leverage AI, digital assistants, mixed reality, consumer apps, and multidevice scenarios. We're using our own products, such as Microsoft 365, to create the opportunity for more personalized and interconnected employee experiences. We're encouraging our employees to be the agents for our digital transformation, to expedite our transformation. You can learn more about our digital transformation initiatives by reading "Inside the transformation of IT and operations at Microsoft."

Focusing on the employee experience

Productive Enterprise focuses on reimagining the employee experience at Microsoft. We're rethinking how we work across physical and digital experiences. By better fulfilling our employees' needs, we are building a more solid foundation for our entire business.

We're taking a data-driven approach to building the reimagined employee experience. We've leveraged extensive research to better understand how we can create a meaningful and delightful user experience. We're using qualitative and quantitative data—including data from the rich telemetry that we have integrated into our products and solutions—to provide a specific understanding of where users' key needs reside. We want to truly engage and empower our employees, to provide an environment that inspires them. However, great user experiences rely on a solid foundation, so we prioritize the experiences that we deliver based on a hierarchy of needs, as referenced by the following figure.
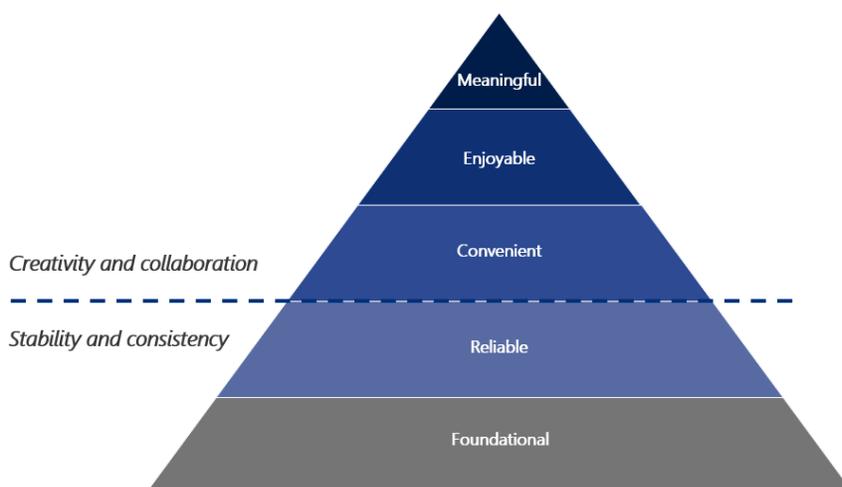

Figure 1. Building user experiences with a hierarchy of needs

Experiences can only be meaningful and enjoyable, and unleash the users' creativity and collaboration, if they're built on a firm technical foundation. For example, we can't provide an innovative and immersive Microsoft Teams meeting experience enabling seamless teamwork unless the network services that support them operate smoothly and efficiently.

We ensure that the basic needs and functionality of employees' experiences are continually met and adapted as technology and user demands change. Ultimately, we want our productive enterprise to enable our employees to reach new levels of productivity and achieve more.

Investing in our employees

To deliver our vision for a reimagined employee experience, we're investing in multiple aspects of our technology and culture. The following figure illustrates the six primary investments we're making.
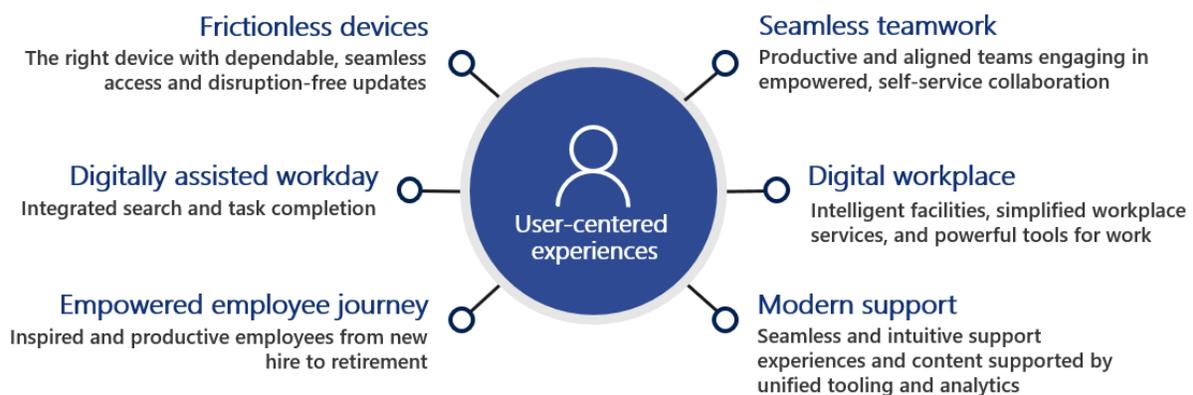

Figure 2. The six investments of the Productive Enterprise initiative

To make our Productive Enterprise vision a practical reality, our core six investments combine to create a reimagined employee experience that reflects an intentional shift away from traditional product service models and puts the user at the center of all our efforts. Each of these investment areas has a specific focus, but none stands on its own; each contributes to a set of interrelated services and products with interdependencies.

Frictionless devices

Our investment in frictionless devices helps employees achieve more by equipping them with efficient devices and convenient access to apps, sites, services, documents, and data. To achieve this vision, we're improving our device management and access functionality to create the best possible user experience. Additionally, we're addressing the top user issues that we've discovered and validated through our extensive research:

- **The right device and easy setup.** We want our employees to have best-in-class devices and the right device for their individual needs as they do their job. We also want to provide a quick and easy setup process for devices so that users can be productive quickly. We've refined our device deployment and management methods to create a new device setup experience that takes minutes, not hours, to complete. We're creating a unified experience for selecting and purchasing devices that's built on personalized needs for each user at Microsoft.
- **Seamless access.** Our employees need seamless access to Microsoft resources to do their job on any device from anywhere. They expect to have easy, secure access to work-related apps, sites, services, documents, and data on a Microsoft–managed device. We're also providing alternatives for non-managed environments such as virtual desktops and web access. We're leading the effort to define and implement modern device management via Microsoft Intune. We're designing seamless access to:
  - Provide consistent and reliable access to Microsoft resources across devices by using Azure Multi-Factor Authentication.

- • Enable automatic roaming of users' apps and settings across devices.

    - • Provide users with the tools to easily find and install internal apps of their choice.

    - • Facilitate universal management of client devices, ensuring that users and devices are as secure as possible.

- **A dependable device.** A dependable device is the primary tool our employees need to be creative, innovative, and productive. Our employees expect the day-to-day use of their device and its core products and services to be free from disruption by performance and reliability issues. They also expect that when an issue does arise, it is proactively resolved with little to no user involvement. We're using Office 365 ProPlus and Azure DevOps—with Windows as the foundation—to support a dependable user experience, and we're continually ensuring that quality and reliability are top priorities in Microsoft products and services.

- **Disruption-free updates.** We want our employees to experience consistent and continued productivity, even when their devices receive product and service updates. We're delivering disruption-free updates with Windows Update for Business and Microsoft Intune to make the update process for devices transparent and seamless. We're using idle time to install updates and working to maintain specific device state when operating system updates occur. We're creating and implementing a user-centric update experience across all software, giving our employees control over how and when updates are applied. We're ensuring that the readiness, compatibility, and deployment of these updates are simple and efficient.

Seamless teamwork

Achieving more together is the goal and essence of seamless teamwork. Our collective success depends on our ability to maximize the productivity of our interactions with each other. Our vision is to enable Microsoft employees to have the most productive collaborations possible and to feel successful in all activities throughout their day. Seamless teamwork aims to improve team productivity and satisfaction through a set of experiences that foster collaboration and increase engagement in a connected, natural way. We recognize that our employees need to feel productive in all work scenarios—from their individual focus time to virtual meetings, team interactions, and engagement across the company.

We're focusing on three areas that combine to produce a seamless teamwork environment, increase employee engagement with our company's digital transformation, and build a greater sense of belonging to a unified Microsoft team:

- **Leadership and community engagement.** We're encouraging our employees to engage openly across the organization to help achieve the company's mission and values. We're providing employees a community environment where they can use integrated tools like Yammer to share each other's ideas. We're using Microsoft SharePoint Online self-service and collaboration capabilities to improve publishing experiences that encourage more sharing across the company and reduce costs for our publishers. We're also increasing knowledge sharing throughout Microsoft by using live events in Microsoft 365, to help provide clarity and build trust in corporate leadership and company strategy.

- **Productive and aligned teams.** Our employees communicate and collaborate openly in a team-first mindset, which drives productivity and inclusion. Using cloud-default content storage improves team-based workflows and alignment. Using Microsoft Teams as a hub for collaboration, we're enabling more streamlined productivity and enhancing our business-data security. Working on content together encourages healthy teamwork behaviors such as sharing ideas and faster decision-making.

- **Empowered, self-service collaboration.** We're helping our employees feel empowered by working in a more secure, compliant, and manageable cloud environment that protects against data loss and the risk of oversharing. Our strategy drives self-service collaboration with Office 365 services, so that our employees and business groups can collaborate with colleagues inside and outside Microsoft.

Digitally assisted workday

The digitally assisted workday is intended to make resources such as information, people, files, and answers easily discoverable and contextually integrated throughout the employee experience. The digitally assisted workday isn't only about how our employees search for information. It's also about how highly relevant information is presented to our employees before they even know they need it. We believe that the digitally assisted workday facilitates a major shift toward increased employee productivity and a more productive enterprise.

The digitally assisted workday places our employees in an environment where they can readily find the key person who can answer the question that no one else can address. We're enabling our employees to locate the document that they need quickly, and to be informed about an app that will double their productivity, or quickly and easily accomplish frequent or tedious tasks in context. The digitally assisted workday focuses on two areas:

- **Integrated search.** Our employees must always be able to find relevant and accurate information. We're building integrated solutions that enable employees to receive detailed and focused enterprise search results across all our data, targeted to user intent. Employees no longer have to look through extensive search results, struggling to find what they were originally searching for. Instead, we're providing a more consistent search experience like the one that our SharePoint Online–hosted company portal sites deliver. Our employees' enterprise search experience spans across the entire Microsoft product portfolio and internally developed apps and solutions. We're also providing personalized news around employees' topics of interest, so they're better informed and have at hand the information they need to do their jobs.

- **Integrated task completion.** Our employees have the tools to complete common and tedious tasks quickly and easily. Users typically search for information to either learn more or to complete a task. Our employees receive well-placed, easily discoverable solutions through automated task completion. Conversation-based digital assistants provide quick access to task actions by enabling interaction using voice or text. Task automation improves productivity through an assisted, natural, and conversational experience that helps employees plan and optimize their day.

We're streamlining the digitally assisted workday by implementing Microsoft MyHub, an app and web portal that helps unify the employee experience. MyHub puts common tasks, including commuting, managing benefits and pay, scheduling dining, navigating our campus, and more within a centralized tool that enables Microsoft employees and partners to simplify their lives at Microsoft and be more productive, do their most innovative, strategic work and focus on what's most important.

Digital workplace

We're creating a connected, accessible, and sustainable workplace that's designed to inspire our employees and engage our visitors. This digital workplace is the convergence of digital and physical experiences that differentiate Microsoft from its competitors. We're sparking innovation, promoting transparency, fostering community, and increasing company pride by enabling productive enterprise throughout Microsoft.

The digital workplace is also designed to create frictionless and secure access for our employees to buildings and services throughout Microsoft facilities. Employee workspaces should immediately customize to their personal preferences—both physically (temperature, lighting, and sound) and digitally (documents, apps, favorites, and more). We're creating configurable workspaces that adjust to the demands of high-frequency collaboration and organizational shifts. Our digital workplace efforts center around three focus areas:

- **Getting here – getting to and around work efficiently.** We're reducing the time employees spend moving to and around Microsoft workplaces while improving environmental sustainability. From morning commutes to navigating buildings, to getting home at the end of the day, efficiently getting around is a foundational need for our employees and the communities where our workplaces are located. We're creating intelligent facilities and making improvements in areas such as intercampus transportation, indoor and outdoor wayfinding, and visitor arrival and check-in.

- **Being here – having dynamic access to workplace services.** We're making interaction with the workplace simple and friction-free. Our workplaces are well designed for their purpose, well maintained, reliable, and fundamentally digitally accessible. As a result, our employees can enter buildings securely, reserve conference rooms, arrange dining reservations, and use other campus resources effectively.

- **Working here – having powerful tools for effective collaboration and focus.** We're creating a physical and digital workplace within our buildings that offers the most powerful tools for getting work done, both when our employees are working collaboratively and when they're focusing on their own work. We're creating a collaboration experience that effortlessly moves from physical to digital, changing the thought process from *rooms* to *spaces*. We're reimagining how those spaces can be presented and used and making collaboration possible anywhere—across the table, across campus, or across the globe.

We're also using AI to process occupancy, motion, and environmental data from our buildings. We're integrating that data by using Microsoft Graph, to help anticipate space needs, adjust schedules and meeting locations, and proactively communicate to employees in real time. We've launched this initiative in several buildings around the globe. We're extending capabilities to larger portions of our campuses through new buildings and remodeling existing buildings to create the best-in-class employee experiences.

Empowered employee journey

We want our new employees to be productive immediately and add value right away. We also want to continue to foster that value every step along the way in their careers. In the empowered employee journey, a candidate finds a job opportunity at Microsoft through the digital marketplace and applies for the position with their LinkedIn profile or other relevant social media profile. The candidate is selected for the next round of interviews by using AI, which also accounts for employee diversity. Soft skills are evaluated by using online tests. After a job offer is made, the onboarding process begins with only a few added pieces of data. During this time, the candidate can quickly choose from a relevant selection of benefits, with recommendations that are powered by AI. The candidate can choose their preferred devices for work and access learning opportunities before their first day, so they can understand more about Microsoft culture and their job.

On the empowered employee journey, all human resource (HR) activities are digitized and powered by data-driven insights, content, process automation, and other AI engines. Employees can easily find and complete HR-related transactions through portals and virtual assistants on all device types. Additionally, employees receive personalized recommendations for learning, networking, mentoring, and other collaboration opportunities.

We're investing in our employee development tools to ensure that our employees' experiences with Microsoft provide the same or better level of satisfaction and engagement as they encounter with consumer experiences. On the empowered employee journey, our employees will:

- Be productive from day one. Our employees are immersed in the Microsoft culture and receive a working laptop, network access, and credentials to set their Microsoft career in motion. Before they start their jobs, employees connect with the people and teams they'll work with to ease their transition.

- Use other Microsoft digital properties to find HR-related content and tools.

- Create a personalized dashboard where they can centrally manage their employee profile data and monitor benefits usage.

- Receive recommendations on benefits, learning, jobs, and mentoring.

- Use digital assistants to search for information and complete many of their daily tasks, such as setting up mentoring opportunities, engaging in training activities, or accessing employee benefits.

Modern support

The modern support investment is focused on transforming how we deliver support capabilities to our employees across physical and digital interactions at Microsoft. We're creating an environment that enables our employees to be creative, innovative, and productive by providing a support experience that focuses on identifying and remediating issues automatically before employees are aware that they exist. We're also enabling more seamless support

interaction for employees by giving them broad and inclusive access to support with in-context tools that create a friction-free support environment.

Our efforts are producing world-class, quality support services. These industry-leading services ensure that operational deliverables create a positive impact on both people and processes while remaining fully optimized and cost effective. We're focusing on three primary areas to enable modern support at Microsoft:

- **Seamless support.** We want our employees to have a simple and transparent support experience. Our employees' day-to-day issues will be automatically identified and rectified without disrupting their productivity. We're enabling employees to engage support in whatever context best suits them: within an application, in person, or by using virtual agents, social media, phone, or email. We're investing in technology that enables self-healing and remediation capabilities that are unobtrusive to employee workflow.
- **High-quality and intuitive knowledge content.** We continue to enable self-help and virtual-agent modalities. Our employees will be automatically presented with accurate, meaningful, and simple-to-follow content that enables them to mitigate issues and continue to be productive.
- **Unified tooling and analytics.** Our support agents need to be equipped with the proper tools, allowing them to fix issues quickly and support employees. We're developing connected tools and correlated platforms that increase the reuse of information and leverage data related to the support environment, creating a seamless experience for our agents and employees.

Conclusion

Our employees are Microsoft's greatest asset, and we're empowering them to embrace and champion digital transformation at the company. Our investments are creating better work experiences for our employees by enabling them to innovate, create, and collaborate seamlessly among the teams in which they work. We're moving our entire organization toward a digitally assisted workday in an interconnected and integrated digital workplace, to provide the most productive employee experience possible. The Productive Enterprise initiative is taking our vision of a reimagined employee experience and creating an environment in which our employees are engaged, empowered, and prepared to participate in a new and exciting stage in the growth and success of Microsoft.

For more information

Microsoft IT Showcase

microsoft.com/itshowcase

Read about the major initiatives that are helping to transform Microsoft