Accelerating Modern Workplace Productivity Adoption

A strategic white paper discussing people-focused change strategies to accelerate the adoption of ‘Modern Workplace Productivity’ and realise value from the Microsoft 365 suite

Part 1 of 3
Contents

4 Foreword

5 Introduction

6 Workplace Productivity:
What does it mean to be productive in the future of work?

7 The elephant in the room:
Technology alone is not the solution
Authors

Rishi Nicolai  
Digital Transformation  
Culture Change Specialist, Microsoft

A thought leader in Workplace Productivity and Digital Transformation, Rishi's passion is helping organisations develop the right culture and behaviours to help them excel in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. His focus is ensuring that organisations and individuals adopt technologies that not only help them become more productive, but will also help create 'good' behaviours within the organisation, strengthening the social fabric of society and helping individuals find their passion.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/rishinicolai/

Marie Chua  
Cloud Adoption Specialist  
Microsoft

With a background in business management, Marie champions the need for leaders to redefine the purpose of people's work in today's digital age. She is passionate about demonstrating how we can use technology as a lever to empower individuals to do their best work, thereby accelerating the growth potential of organisations. Always drawn to new trends and thinking that impact the future of work, she strives to help customers succeed with the 'people' side of transformation.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/mariechua/

Reginald (Reggie) Best  
Modern Service Management Lead Solution Architect, Microsoft

Reggie is a leader with more than 20 years of operations experience creating services and delivering information technology solutions for large corporations like Exxon-Mobil. He has created intellectual property for Big 4 consultancies and advised Fortune 100 senior executives on operational excellence. His areas of expertise include accounting, finance, Six Sigma and Modern Service Management.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/reginaldbest/

Content Reviewers and Contributors

Antoni Pulcinella  
Senior Modern Service Management Consultant, Microsoft

Colleen Maguire  
Senior Technical Sales Manager, Microsoft

Chris Mellin  
Senior Business Program Manager, Modern Workplace Customer Success, Microsoft

Deepak Sharma  
Senior Modern Service Management Consultant, Microsoft

Don Taylor  
Digital Transformation Adoption Specialist, Microsoft

James Evans  
FastTrack Principle Program Manager, Microsoft

Jessica Love  
Modern Workplace Marketing Manager

Jimmy Fitzsimmons  
Senior Premier Field Engineer, Microsoft

Joe Stumpf  
Senior Product Marketing Manager, Microsoft

Kristin M. Lawson  
Adoption Specialist, Microsoft

Lara Van Rooyen  
Customer Success Manager, Microsoft

Liz Friedman  
Director, Global Performance, Microsoft

Marc Dudok  
Escalation Engineer, FastTrack Center, Microsoft

Maria Conceição  
Principal Program Manager, FastTrack Centre, Microsoft

Niek Hasselaar  
Adoption Specialist, Microsoft

Ryder Cao  
Associate Architect, Microsoft

Sam Screen  
Customer Success Manager, Microsoft

Spencer Littlejohn  
Senior Business Program Manager, Adoption Services, Microsoft

Steve Green  
Director Business Programs, Adoption Services, Microsoft

Tyson Dowd  
Asia Field Enablement Lead, Customer Success Unit, Microsoft

Editors and Designers

Chiemi Hayashi  
Graphic Designer

Lani O’Brien  
Senior Communications Manager, Microsoft

Ogilvy Australia  
Editor
Digital transformation is at the forefront of business leaders’ minds and at the top of meeting agendas. Almost every organisation is on a quest to realise the promises of digital transformation, but perhaps the most critical question to consider is: What do successful organisations need to do differently to succeed?

The most successful organisations understand ‘digital’ and ‘transformation’ are comprehensive and all-encompassing. Their leaders can articulate how digital capabilities shape key business goals and transform the way different parts of the organisation can work together to achieve these goals. The intent to redefine business capabilities, rather than merely upgrade and optimise, fuels the journey towards true transformational success.

Digital transformation needs to happen across the entire ecosystem, equally within business and IT. Business leaders must commit to defining and changing behaviours and driving a growth mind-set culture as part of the digital transformation journey. It is not just about the technology. The powers of technology are only truly realised when they are in the hands of people. We live in an age in which information is available anywhere and anytime, giving individuals the freedom to connect and create. It’s this very opportunity that defines digital transformation for today’s business decision makers. When businesses drive an information-sharing and collaboration culture in the workplace, they can knock down silos, giving employees the ability to innovate and make better, quicker decisions together.

IT must prioritise differently and change the way it works, to more effectively collaborate, partner and deliver solutions to meet business challenges. Successful organisations understand the need to remove these silos and focus on enabling business and IT to work together to continuously manage change in our age of disruption. When we merely perceive digital transformation as a sprint rather than a marathon, an IT upgrade rather than a chance to uncover modern productivity opportunities, we limit ourselves to an entire world of opportunities to bring more value to employees, customers and stakeholders. Running the digital transformation marathon is about building stamina to continuously accelerate performance.

Microsoft is investing in a Customer Success organisation to enable our customers to innovate and realise value by accelerating adoption of new ways of working as enabled by our cloud solutions. Our goal is to partner and guide our customers to gain greater business value from their investment in Microsoft.

We are dedicated to customer success. Our commitment at Microsoft is to empower every person and every organisation on the planet to achieve more. Your success is our success. We look forward to partnering with you on your digital transformation journey.

Byron Rader
General Manager
Modern Workplace Customer Success
Introduction

Motivation

Improved productivity is top-of-mind for every organisation. Repeated economic crises and a steady increase in competition, brought about in particular by market globalisation, are forcing unprecedented business model innovation and smarter use of resources.

Staying relevant in a fast-moving and competitive market means constantly adapting and staying on the cutting edge of technology. Organisations all over the world have the opportunity to realise their priorities faster, easier and cheaper by rethinking how they get things done and investing in productivity suites such as Microsoft 365. Getting there is not always easy, however. When it comes to technology, the software itself is just one small part of the equation.

Obstacles to success

All too often organisations purchase technology for reasons that have nothing to do with corporate priorities. They want to stay up-to-date or reduce costs. IT decisions are not seen as contributing to corporate objectives in the same way that talent acquisition or financial management do.

Then there’s the challenge of those using the technology. Change is all-too-often seen by employees as an imposition rather than something positive. There’s often a failure to openly share information. People ignore invites to training sessions; proposed changes never take hold and problems remain unsolved.

How does your organisation approach technological change?

Organisations all over the world have been rethinking how they get things done and working to achieve their priorities faster, easier and cheaper by investing in productivity suites such as Microsoft 365. Rapid advancements in technology have made all decision making easier, more immediate, and with greater impact, regardless of whether those decisions have been good or bad. However, getting the greatest benefit from productivity investments depend very much on how new ways of working are integrated into the organisation. Technology is just a tool; it is what we do with it that determines where it helps or hurts the culture of organisations.

This is the first of a three-part series designed to share our experience of overcoming productivity and collaboration issues. We discuss some common pitfalls in designing and leading a Microsoft 365 program as well as the importance of an effective adoption program.

This paper will help leaders refocus, cultivate adoption programs to address cultural and behavioural obstacles and take advantage of the productivity-enhancing capabilities of Microsoft 365.

Embedding new ways of working will help people collaborate, communicate and find information in new and more effective ways. This helps employees grow and creates a foundation for continuous learning and innovation, from the top of the organisation to the customer-facing frontline.

Technology is just a tool; it’s what we do with it that determines whether it helps or hurts organisations and their capacity to meet long-term goals.

1. Taylor, 2012
Workplace Productivity: What does it mean to be productive in the future of work?

Redefining how work is done

People have always had a knack for redefining processes to better our capabilities and expand our potential. We transformed transportation and manufacturing processes with the innovation of the steam engine. Next came electricity, which ushered in the era of modern energy sources, as well as the microprocessor.

During the era of mass production, employers prioritised efficiency over a sense of engagement among employees. Productivity was defined as the ratio of outputs to inputs, whether labour or capital. It was about reducing cost and increasing value. That’s not what we mean by productivity in this paper.

In the fourth industrial revolution, technology is fusing our physical, digital and biological realities, dramatically changing economies and industries. This is fundamentally changing the way people live and organisations compete, but truly grasping these opportunities requires action from leaders. It requires a new understanding of productivity.

What is Productivity 4.0?

In an era of mass production, efficiency was prioritised over employees’ engagement. Today, our work requires us to wear our best ‘cognitive’ and ‘emotional’ hats to reason and make great decisions. Studies show that enabling workers to find a deeper sense of purpose beyond paid work also leads to greater success in achieving business outcomes. Jobs require cognitive skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, but also soft skills such as empathy and cooperation. Our work requires us to act collectively, rather than in a siloed way, to make great decisions. To tap into the power of teamwork and enable employees’ creativity and agility, there’s an urgent need for leaders to put people at the centre, empowering them to connect, collaborate and communicate at the workplace. Work environments must be designed with this in mind.

Maximising attention is another key challenge. As information thrives in various formats and across multiple devices – from desktops to smartphones and wearables – it’s easy for our focus to be pulled in different directions. Leaders need to think about how they empower employees by providing access to the right tools at the right time.

“What is scarce in all of the abundance is human attention”

-Satya Nadella, CEO Microsoft

2. Schwartz, 2015
4. Schwartz, 2015
The elephant in the room: Technology alone is not the solution

Solving the ‘technology problem’

Every organisation exists for a purpose. To achieve these goals, organisations are divided into specialised departments. While this separation can provide focus, it also causes problems as groups become siloed in their missions.

Departments also become siloed in their IT strategies. While driving towards individual goals and missions, they approach IT departments individually seeking solutions to roadblocks. This results in a mismatch of technology that lacks integration capabilities with the rest of the organisation. Additionally, the solutions don’t always do what the employees expect, and there can be significant differences between expected and actual outcomes.

This misalignment could be for a variety of reasons:
• Business didn’t fully understand what they needed
• IT misunderstood the requirements
• The department’s needs have evolved

This mismatch of expectations and reality can leave a bad taste. Instead of seeing the technology as a positive, business departments will view it as a problem and even lose focus on the business challenge they were hoping to address.

To address goal displacement, two actions must be taken:
1. Start with bringing the focus back to the actual business problem/challenges and the organisational goals and missions they are hindering
2. Business departments should design solutions and address the shortcomings in their business processes, enabling employees to better fulfil their roles and manage their responsibilities. Then, identify the right behaviours you want the employees to be displaying, and only after that, identify the right technologies to enable that solution to be implemented quicker, faster and easier.

This change of focus from the technology being seen as an enabler, to a blocker is known as ‘goal displacement’.

Once IT tools have been developed to address areas of concern, the organisation can work on implementing these solutions, creating new and more effective ways of working.

Managing the technological transition

Businesses are managing changes caused by the rapid, technology-driven evolution of all industries. Encouraging employees to understand that change is the new norm and demonstrating the organisation’s ability to manage continuous change is a real test for its leadership. Organisational leadership has a responsibility to drive this change by being active and visible and enabling a mindset where collaboration, communication and the ability to find the right information and people is the norm. Based on Microsoft’s experience working closely with businesses across industries, we’ve developed an approach that helps our customers manage the critical aspects of transition.
What is adoption?

Improving the likelihood of a successful workplace productivity initiative means gaining a better understanding of the different states that organisations may find themselves in during their adoption journey. In Microsoft’s work with customers on Modern Workplace Productivity and their journey to adopting new ways of working, we have defined four phases. Organisations often need to re-think their training strategies for a Microsoft 365 program as it is not just another technology change, it is a change in the behaviours and mindset of the employees.

The four phases that must be understood are as follows:

1. **Deployment:** The process of implementing the technical infrastructure and making the solution available to use. IT departments are often tasked with making the technology available for employees as quickly as possible. This does not always translate into actual usage by employees, who simply turn up to work one morning, turn on their devices and see new applications available. They must then figure out what they are for and how to use them. This also goes for any subsequent changes or updates. Often there is little communication or training provided to employees and this often means that the capability that IT spent time and effort deploying may never be used.

2. **Usage:** Employees use the service made available to them. It’s not all bad news. Many employees enjoy exploring new technology and applications. A common shortcoming, however, is that training provided by IT is often not contextual and does not outline specific examples of scenarios when these features and functionalities should be used. Employees typically remember things that will help them solve a problem they have right now in their workflow, or which will help them easily exploit an opportunity that they have never had before.

3. **Adoption:** Deep, habitual usage that delivers tangible value to the employees, a line of business and the organisation. Over time people get into a rhythm when they get to work, and these things happen without thinking. We often get our morning coffee from the same café, walk the same route from the car park to our desk or lockers and then when we get to our devices, start or working day by checking our emails. These behaviours have become so ingrained in our routine that we’re on autopilot.

Within an hour of receiving training, people have forgotten an average of 50 percent of the information presented, and within 24 hours they have forgotten an average of 70 percent.

40% The portion of our actions driven by habits rather than conscious, informed decisions.

Habits have a tremendous impact on individual and organisational productivity, as well as our personal lives. This makes it fundamental that we activate and drive the right habits around technology adoption at the workplace. Adoption is not about features and functionalities, it is about habitual usage of new technology that delivers tangible value.

4. **Proficiency**: People change their behaviours and leverage the full solution.

While the adoption phase focuses on changing employees’ behaviour, proficiency focuses on ensuring employees can use all the necessary capabilities required to maximise the impact from the organisation’s Microsoft 365 investment. This includes inspecting every aspect of how the organisation performs its work, from individuals to teams and communities, as well as how the organisation works with its customers, partners and shareholders.

**Proficiency** should be the goal for every organisation, and it is achieved differently by each department. Organisational departments are likely to journey towards it at different paces, directly proportional to their desire for change.

**Brushing your teeth – an exercise in proficiency**

Brushing our teeth is an example of a task we all perform habitually outside the office. We do it because it delivers tangible value for us: a clean mouth, fresh breath, more confidence, lower dental costs. Despite this, most of us don’t need to think twice about the behaviour. When we were children, however, it was a different story. Trying to get a two or three year old to brush their teeth regularly can be quite a fight. We don’t simply give them a toothbrush and say, ‘Good luck! See you in 30 years!’; we find carrots and sticks to encourage them to adopt the right, habitual behaviour – kid-friendly toothbrushes, flavoured toothpaste, maybe pictures of what might happen to their teeth if they do not brush. Not only that, but we supervise them to ensure that the work they do is sufficient; we make sure they keep brushing if the job isn’t done yet. So why do we sometimes just give our employees the technology and expect them to make the best use of it without helping them develop ‘good’ behaviours?

---

**Reflecting on your personal behaviours**

**Do you find yourself more productive when you are focusing on one thing, or when you are multi-tasking?**

What challenges do you find when you are jumping between many different activities at the same time? Do you know we all have something called ‘attention’ that enables us to focus?

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (McCallum, 2018), attention is awareness of the here and now in a focal and perceptive way. For early psychologists such as Edward Bradford Titchener, attention determined the content of consciousness and influenced the quality of conscious experience. In subsequent years, less emphasis was placed on the subjective element of consciousness and more on the behaviour patterns by which attention could be recognised in others. Although human experience is determined by the way people direct their attention, it is evident that they do not have complete control over such direction. For example, there are times when an individual has difficulty concentrating attention on a task, a conversation or a set of events. At other times, an individual’s attention is ‘captured’ by an unexpected event rather than voluntarily directed toward it.

Research done by Dr Ramesh Manocha (2008, 2012) from the University of New South Wales’s Faculty of Medicine finds that the ability to focus your attention is significantly improved by using a technique called mental stillness, strengthening the ability of an individual to reduce the distractions caused by thoughts that prevent or delay them from focusing. Additional research on mental stillness, also termed ‘Thoughtless Awareness’ (Deshmukh, 2004; Afranas, & Golcheikine, 2001), enables sharper, internalised attention, to bind together various aspects of our attentional, perceptual and emotional experience into a state of purer, unified awareness.

**Try this experiment**

How can you strengthen your attention and improve your ability to focus and get things done faster? Download the phone app and practice mental stillness and focusing your attention daily.

For free online classes to strengthen your attention, visit [http://www.sahajaonline.com](http://www.sahajaonline.com)
Identifying your win-win business case

Employees want to know why changes that impact them are being made. When *new ways of working* are introduced, employees often look to senior leadership to explain the business need, rather than the technical motivation.

Before making any change, here are some questions to consider:

- Why are we doing this? What is the business outcome that we are looking for? What is the vision?
- What’s in it for the organisation, its leadership and board? For employees? For shareholders?
- Is this the right reason to make the change?
- How do we design the change so that it can have benefits for all the stakeholders listed above?

Dr Kotter, a leading Organisational Change Management publisher, talks about creating a ‘sense of urgency’ as one of the initial steps for any successful change. Author and speaker Simon Sinek highlights the importance of starting by asking and answering the question ‘Why?’. The purpose of any change needs to inspire your audience, so they believe in its importance and have a reason to want to participate in it.

In *Capitalism for the long term* (2011), Dominic Barton argued for two radical shifts in business orientation and approaches to change.

1. Business leaders should replace their short term orientation with a longer term focus
2. Business leaders should infuse their organisations with the perspective that serving the interests of all major stakeholders is not at odds with the goal of maximising corporate value. A well-designed change is the best way to ensure that the organisation will be able to achieve the desired business value in a lean way.
The elephant in the room: Technology alone is not the solution

Your digital transformation journey is a business process transformation opportunity

Changing the way things work often requires the creation of new policies, as well as changes to existing policies, such as working from home, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), data management, data privacy, GDPR, data retention, digital communication and records management. Business process redesign – including IT processes – becomes a crucial element of a Modern Workplace Change Initiative.

#2 Instead of using the traditional ‘paper based internal memo’ approach for physical mail, an electronic mail system is available. However, the process for the message delivery has not changed, and the same process is being implemented using new technologies. As a result, inefficiencies remain.

#3 This uses the same set of technologies as option two, but the process has changed: less effort is required, the process is shorter and quicker, requiring less cost. Your manager is less likely to misplace the piece of paper among all the other bits of paper on their desk.

Consider the following ways of sending information. This is a simple example of how business process re-engineering becomes a critical part of any organisation’s journey towards implementing new ways of working:
Next Steps

Now that you understand the importance of adoption and change employee behavior as part of a Microsoft 365 program, here are the next steps in your journey:

1. Download and read part two of this Accelerating Modern Workplace Adoption series which focuses on:
   a. Successful adoption program and how they differ from current technology implementations
   b. Microsoft 365 as a business enabler
   c. Enterprise Collaboration Architecture (See preview on the next page)
   d. What gets rewarded gets done - Getting Microsoft to use Microsoft
   e. Redefining the CIO’s role

2. Identify the leaders within your organisation who are responsible for changing the way departments work. Share this content series with them.

3. Establish a working group to identify strategic priorities that can be enabled more quickly and effectively by people communicating, collaborating and finding information differently. Read the next part of the paper with your strategic priorities in mind to make these concepts more actionable.

Scan the QR code to download Part 2
Enterprise Collaboration Architecture