



The workplace revolution

A CGI Advisory Services PoV



The workplace revolution challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic unleashed changes that had previously seemed unthinkable – we really can work productively from anywhere and at any time.

The pandemic forced organisations to rethink how their staff worked. Almost overnight, we all had to learn to adjust to a completely new way of working, as many office-based workers were provided with a device as a means to connect to their company's IT portfolio remotely, and communication through video conferencing became the “new norm”.

Technology enabled flexible, but also efficient and productive working, and in turn, organisations had to trust that their employees would work in a responsible manner throughout those difficult times.

For many, there is now light at the end of a very long tunnel, and normal ways of life are starting to return: but what will the “new norm” bring us?

CGI helps clients to develop the vision, roadmap, operating model and framework they need to respond and rebound in the face of changing economic, market and business dynamics. The pandemic caused a workplace revolution; we are here to help clients reinvent themselves as a modern workplace that embraces the “new norm” and meets workers’ new expectations.

The new norm

For workers

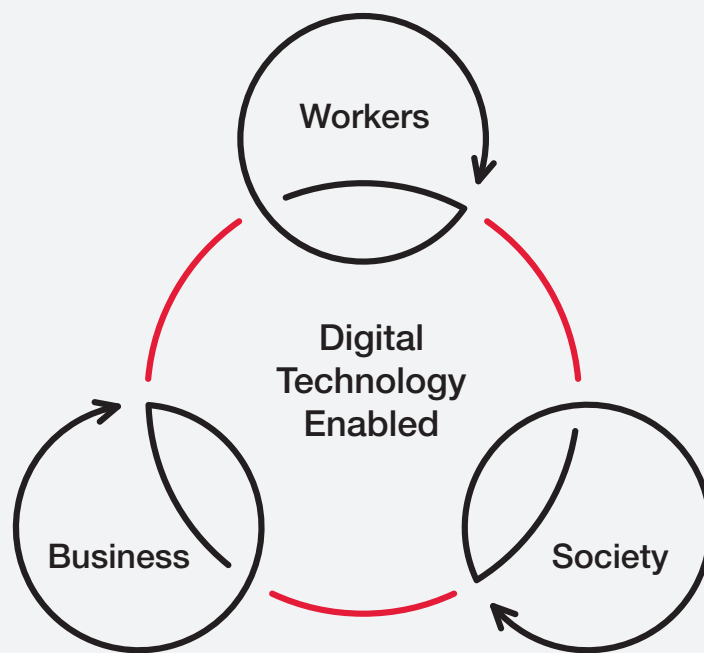
Working from home offered one main benefit for most: flexibility. Gone was the long commute into work and all of the inconvenience that brought. Instead, workers embraced an easier, flexible regime at the start and end of their working days.

However, there was also a noticeable down side. Whether it was the unscheduled coffee machine or corridor encounter that encouraged impromptu conversations, gaining clarity to problems from a colleague sat beside you, or success in driving a sale across the line, that intimacy with colleagues and customers was now impossible.

This is where the “new norm” empowers workers with the best of both worlds: the ability to seamlessly work from anywhere (not just at home) and at any time to maintain that flexibility, but with the added benefit of travelling to the office or client to ignite that professional relationship or friendship as and when desired or required.

Bring back the opportunity to articulate to customers the value proposition through body language and enthusiasm (something harder to do over video conferencing), and also the ability to better understand their stance. This will return speed to the pursuit, sales and delivery process.

Furthermore, the ability to come into the office to socialise and regain a sense of belonging will be key to workers’ mental health. The office environment will need to change too though: the office is not just there to work from, but to socialise, interact and express ideas. Out are the rows of dedicated desks, now replaced by more flexible, multi-tenanted spaces that promote interaction and creative thinking.



For mental health, the ability to come into the office to socialise and gain a sense of belonging is key. The office is not just a place to work from, but to socialise, interact and express ideas. The office environment will therefore need to change; out are the rows of dedicated desks, replaced with multi-tenanted spaces that promote interaction and creative thinking.

The business

The largest barrier is out of the way: workers can do their jobs remotely. However, to enable effective and productive remote working, the business' processes need to be examined to see how they can be adapted and optimised.

Few companies have embraced this as a permanent "new norm"; they therefore need to reconsider their current governance structure, the delegation of authority, office policy and also updating employee expectations and contracts. Each of the business' processes will need to be examined and re-engineered to enable digital means of conducting business. For example, removing paper-based processes and switching to electronic online processes with the appropriate level of approval and intervention to make sure they operate as required.

This will also require workers, partners and customers to align to the new digital processes, with the customer and worker experience remaining a primary focus.

For instance, the worker re-training themselves to do their work without paper-based communications or processing, and the customer adapting to new ways of requesting and receiving services.

Processes also have to be adapted to limit the amount of manual intervention, so there is no reliance on location-based working. For non-office based workers, such as those in manufacturing, re-engineering process controls, driving more automation and the removal of reliance on manual checking will be a key consideration moving forward.

And of course, the "new norm" should drive our sustainability responsibilities; to reduce our carbon footprint through reduced travel, minimise consumption and maximise reuse. Also very importantly, the companies that embrace the "new norm", engaging with workers, partners and customers in the right way, will retain and attract talent.

Society

For many, the physical workplace was an integral source of social interaction and friendship. Working remotely therefore means that local communities now play a much more important role in the "new norm", supporting and improving quality of life.

Social media will play a key role in encouraging local community involvement and interaction through the sharing of information and social interaction.

The digitalisation of business processes will also aid working in the “new norm”, for instance, the introduction of digital documentation systems based upon role and driven by the business process. Also, optimising business processes to ensure they are not cumbersome to operate and manage by layering in automation and artificial intelligence, starting a process of self-learning that enables continuous improvement and evolution.



What is the challenge for IT?

For many, a company laptop was the device enabling a connection into their company's IT systems. In the "new norm", digital workplaces in the cloud will become a key driver, enabling companies to avoid the cost of expensive devices. Also, gone are the over-engineered office LANs, local IT requirements for device authentication, file and print servers.

Putting a company's workplace out into the cloud provides a safe and secure means for workers to choose their own devices to suit their ways of working. The flexibility of BYOD (bring your own device) will be attractive to many, and for those who choose not to adopt this approach, a browser-enabled device is all that is required.

Additionally for the business, technology enables the ability to track workers – but not in a "Big Brother" fashion! This means that organisations can provide the flexibility their workforce expects whilst still knowing where they are and for what purpose.

In the near future, enhanced video conferencing with the drive of virtual reality will also make a key difference to the remote working experience, enabling a collaborative approach as if the group are in the same room.

CGI Advisory Services

We have developed solutions that address the digital transformation challenges around key areas of IT, as well as other business functions.

Our Workplace Advisory Service helps clients to unlock business value by connecting, equipping and empowering their teams through common values, a strong culture, and providing the right tools for getting their jobs done effectively.

Our clients benefit from the following:

- A unique combination of organisational development, cultural change and technology competencies
- Our in-depth industry expertise, benefitted by our proximity to clients and global resources
- Implementation of advanced workplace technologies, including intelligent automation, data analytics, mobility and cloud
- Industry-leading workplace IP solutions for resource allocation, scheduling, communication and collaboration
- Digital workplace capabilities developed through innovation with clients
- On time and within budget delivery, from strategy development to sustainable results.



About CGI

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world.

We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments. Across hundreds of locations worldwide, we provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

Our commitment: Insights you can act on.

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