

White paper

# Best practice guidelines for the future of work

Future-proofing your enterprise in times of unprecedented digital transformation

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With the pandemic pressuring organizations to automate processes and refine remote workspaces, change is all around us. Enterprises must embrace their digital transformation now if they hope to survive. To help secure the future of your workplace, this guide will walk you through the changing state of enterprises and best practices for digitizing leaders. You will also have access to useful takeaways and predictions related to the future of work from experts across industries.

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Contents

How a pandemic pushed digital transformation into high gear	3
The cross-industry trends driving change	4
The cost of doing nothing	5
How to secure your organization's future	6
Future-proofing your organization with OpenText and Microsoft	7
About OpenText	8

## How a pandemic pushed digital transformation into high gear

It's no exaggeration to claim that the onset of COVID-19 created a fundamental "tipping point" for digital transformation.

While organizations in every vertical have been undertaking digital transformation in some form for years, the pandemic gave technology adoption all-new gravity and urgency.

"Slow and steady" would no longer win the race.

Physical distancing requirements made it necessary to support viable remote work for large parts of the workforce. They also put new pressure on organizations to adjust how they approach "business as usual" and learn to sell, service, and deliver on customer expectations from a remote environment.

Digital initiatives that were under consideration or planned for the future became immediate strategic concerns, and timelines changed from years to weeks—or even days.

The result: The abrupt shift to all-remote work helped many organizations uncover opportunities for digital collaboration and knowledge-sharing. It also exposed gaps in the digital skill sets needed to operate and maintain those environments long-term.

Meanwhile, the frequency and intensity of cyberattacks increased as malicious actors looked to exploit the confusion around a new and different scenarios.

### Adapting to pervasive, permanent change

In the 'new normal' environment that's persisted since March, we've observed a clear difference in the ways people work, how they learn new skills, and how they perceive their employers. Most workers adjusted to new work environments, schedules, equipment, and software. Many learned new skills or digital competencies.

Whether these changes will continue after the immediate public health crisis ends is unclear. But what we already understand about the future of work is that:

- A "digital-first" strategy won't be optional
- Technology will continue to be the cornerstone of business continuity and resilience
- Remote work will be much more common
- Building an innovation culture and mindset will be critical

### The future of work in focus

The pandemic has prompted fast and wide-reaching change worldwide in both the public and private sectors. Business and technology leaders in many verticals have viewed technology changes made of necessity as a launching pad for more impactful digital transformation.

To succeed, leaders will need to consider the possible outcomes and act quickly on opportunities to position their organizations for the best advantage.

In this guide, we'll explore the possibilities and pitfalls of the future workforce and offer guidance for leaders from the perspectives of **government, financial services, and manufacturing.**

**"Remote work is not an excuse for a lack of data hygiene or records management protocol. At the end of the day, you're still going to be held accountable."**

Brian Chidester,  
Senior Global Industry Strategist,  
Public Sector

### **The cross-industry trends driving change**

As the COVID-19 crisis evolved, common patterns and trends have emerged between enterprises in an effort to keep people safe and get work done. Even industries that once held a siloed view of themselves are now looking more to their counterparts to evaluate what's working—and what isn't.

This kind of cross-industry collaboration and knowledge sharing will play a significant role in shaping the future of work for every industry. Now, enterprises everywhere are being pushed to digitize faster to meet the following, consistent needs:

#### **Bridging remote work and regulatory compliance**

The expectation for enterprises to be transparent and accountable hasn't gone away just because of the pandemic. Nor has remote work excused a lack of data hygiene or records management. The complexity of handling data only continues to increase as people access protected systems and data remotely.

Enterprise leaders will need to find ways to equip their people to be more productive—and remain compliant—in a flexible or remote environment.

#### **Transitioning from low to high-value work**

The move to digitize and automate mundane tasks to increase employee productivity isn't new. However, the pandemic sent this change into overdrive with a shift to collaboration and remote access tools.

In manufacturing, traditional factories now have access to tools and services that can help automate repetitive work and free up the number of people needed on-site at a time. For example, Tom Leeson stated that Schneider Electric turned a 63-year-old plant in Lexington, Kentucky into a paperless, digitally-connected "smart factory" in a two-year-period and has already achieved ROI.

Other industries are also feeling pressure to shift from low to high-value work amid this remote environment as better technology and skills are readily available. Outdated, slow digital platforms no longer produce effective user experiences for employees and customers, and hinder overall productivity.

#### **Safeguarding Staff**

Before the pandemic, employee safety plans typically consisted of in-person regulations and processes.

Now, there's a growing urgency to explore new ways to use technologies remotely to pandemic-proof facilities and minimize safety risks to employees on-site. By implementing new cloud-based and collaboration-focused technologies, employers can reduce the number of people required on-site and lower the risk of spreading infection.



**"The organizations that didn't provide a safe environment and didn't stand by their employees are going to lose trust. And even though there are high unemployment rates, there are still jobs out there. And their employees will leave."**

Monica Hovsepian

**"There are the thrivers, who embrace technology, become more and more innovative and move forward, and then there are the survivors, where they have difficulty justifying investment in technology. The digital market is too competitive for that."**

Tom Leeson

## The cost of doing nothing

It doesn't matter whether your enterprise falls in the manufacturing, government, or financial industry—those who fail to adapt will lag behind. Doing nothing will trigger a series of consequences for your entire organization.

## The cost of employees

Retaining skilled employees can be a challenge for even the best organizations. Without digitizing, organizations can't compete with other employers.

**Ernst & Young predicts** that 75% of the global workforce will be composed of Millennials by 2025.

Continuing to rely on legacy systems and outdated work processes prevents this top talent from making the most of their skills. The public sector doesn't always have the budget to match the high salaries that private businesses can offer for similar positions with better systems and software.

Additionally, enterprises that don't offer remote work as an alternative to unsafe workplaces won't seem dependable or flexible and will ultimately have higher staff turnover.

## The cost of customers

Enterprises that can't continue supporting customers, nor provide personalized, reliable services in a convenient way, will lose their loyal customer base.

In fact, **41%** of banks in the U.K. are no longer paying to cover victims of phishing attacks. We're already seeing these institutions lose their competitive edge against banks that *are* willing to invest in advanced customer support and cyber protection.

## The ultimate price your organization pays

Right now, organizations that ignore the push towards digitization are hanging by a thread, and it's only a matter of time until they fold completely.

As opposed to the manufacturing and financial industries, where enterprises can lose business, the inefficiencies of public facilities come at the expense of the taxpayer.

For government organizations, around 80 to 85% of IT budgets are dedicated to maintaining legacy infrastructure, rather than investing in competent technology.

**"With the majority of competition coming from digital-first organizations and the largest banks with the ability to invest in digital solutions, the cost and functionality of branches needs to be reconsidered. In a post-pandemic environment, consumers equate 'convenience' with digital app speed and UX. The consumer has made the shift to digital... the question is whether traditional financial institutions will."**

Jim Marous

### **How to secure your organization's future**

In a digitally driven world, enterprise leaders are striving for progress to remain competitive and relevant to employees and customers. Now that the pandemic has advanced the world forward, there is no going back.

While no one knows exactly what the future will look like, you can give your enterprise all the tools and processes needed to power through unexpected hurdles.

#### **Investing in agility**

The past few decades alone have brought 9/11, stock market crashes, and of course, a pandemic to the forefront of society, which have all severely impacted multiple industries.

Change is inevitable in society. Organizations need to be agile enough to continue moving forward in the future while navigating these disruptions to daily life.

Enterprise leaders must consider how they can adapt their existing processes to continuously enhance their employee and customer experience. A major part of this process will include reskilling and upskilling employees and relying on new talent to guide organizations through a digital transformation. Successful digital strategies need to be delivered from the top executives and then be reinforced by all levels of the organization.

#### **Be proactive with technology**

Rather than panicking during an unexpected workplace disruption, take preventative action by prepping your enterprise with the right technology and information to pivot at a moment's notice. This means doing two things:

- Equip yourself with actionable insights from your organization's data
- Streamline how products and systems function to ensure your enterprise is flexible enough to support change

When it comes to the future of work, interoperability—the way that digital systems communicate and work with one another—and information management will be driving forces.

[According to the Digital Banking Report](#), 81% of financial leaders believe that the move to remote work has produced an opportunity for enterprises to enhance creativity and increase productivity.

**"You don't know what the next technology's going to be that's going to disrupt the enterprise business or the future of work. But we do know that there is going to be disrupted technology. You need to make sure you're investing in a platform that has extremely high interoperability, so when those third-party applications or disparate data points come into your enterprise, you can be able to adapt, and adjust, and fold them into your strategy."**

Brian Chidester

## **Future-proofing your organization with OpenText and Microsoft**

From the rise of cybersecurity attacks, data and compliance challenges, as well as the pressure to accelerate digital transformations, the future of work will be rooted in innovation, scalability, and collaboration.

The bottom line is that these challenges will produce positive side-effects across industries.

Organizations require a solution that can help them take advantage of this opportunity and stand strong throughout their digital evolution.

### **How OpenText and Microsoft will help you build a solid foundation for the future**

Information is a powerful tool that can help control the fate of your organization. Together, OpenText and Microsoft empower enterprises by providing critical information management (IM) capabilities and insights.

OpenText brings popular information and content management tools to familiar Microsoft applications, including Microsoft Office 365. Building on a long list of extended content management (ECM) tools, OpenText has expanded its existing offering to integrate with Microsoft Teams. Enterprises can make the most of this new integration by bridging internal silos, boosts workplace productivity, offer Enterprise strength information governance, and speed digitization.

To remain resilient and competitive, finding a secure remote work solution is no longer optional for organizations.

Leveraging Microsoft Azure's secure cloud platform, [OpenText](#) customers can navigate their applications remotely and with ease. Customers can benefit from numerous Information Management (IM) solutions plus Carbonite offerings listed on [Azure Marketplace](#) and [AppSource](#), all tested and certified on Microsoft Azure.

### **The pandemic: a catalyst for necessary change**

The pressure to digitize has always been in the background for organizations. Up until this point, many enterprises have been able to function successfully on legacy technology and software.

However, the pandemic has changed that.

As enterprises continue their journey into the new normal, they have two choices: either continue innovating to move forward or get left behind.

Employee engagement levels and the quality of customer experiences are now entirely dependent on how well enterprises can adapt to a digital future.

Ongoing pressures to build efficient and intuitive remote workplaces, create stronger defenses against cyberattacks, and become flexible enough to adapt to future disruption hold the key to long-term survival.

Organizations that can make these changes in stride will pave the way for resilience and efficiency in the future.

**"The pandemic is accelerating the movement of all kinds of activity into online and digital channels. Innovations that were underway before it struck are massively accelerating. As we come out of it, they will be far more advanced in technology and market size."**

Jo Ann Barefoot  
CEO of Barefoot Innovation Group

## About Microsoft

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. its mission is to empower every person and every organisation on the planet to achieve more.

## About OpenText

OpenText, The Information Company, enables organizations to gain insight through market leading information management solutions, on-premises or in the cloud. For more information about OpenText (NASDAQ: OTEX, TSX: OTEX) visit: [opentext.com](https://opentext.com).

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