Digital workplace

— What, why, & how

This guide will help you better understand the digital workplace, as well as how organizations can leverage low-code platforms to build a digital workplace for the future of work.

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What is a digital workplace?

As a digital community we're still looking for a single, widely accepted definition. When doing a web search for it, we get different themes, ideas, and concepts for the term "digital workplace."

Gartner defines the digital workplace as "an ongoing, deliberate approach to delivering a more consumer-like computing environment that is better able to facilitate innovative and flexible working practices."

In simple terms, digital workplaces securely provide new and effective ways of working that improve the employee experience, productivity, and engagement. This helps in achieving business goals better.

It's a workplace that enables employees to access information they need, view business processes relevant to their jobs, and exchange information with anyone effortlessly. In this way, organizations can create a sustainable work environment and ensure employees can work efficiently even while working remotely.

The impact of a digital workplace

With new technologies and software constantly emerging, we see that more businesses are transforming their workplaces by adopting these solutions based on their requirements. These new ways of getting work done are leading us to break with traditional, rigid structures, and instead concentrate on innovation, efficiency, and growth.

Going digital can have more benefits than one might expect. What appears to be just an improvement in one function can have dramatic effects on how we look at work as a whole. Here are a few outstanding benefits of a digital workplace.

Benefits

For your organization

Improved results

Digital workplaces increase the efficiency and productivity of employees by empowering them with the right tools to succeed in the digital era.

Attract and retain talent

A digital workplace facilitates flexibility by providing provisions, such as working from home or accessing information on native mobile apps. This enables employees to be more engaged with their work, and higher employee engagement levels can improve employee retention by 87%. Hence, digital workplaces can be crucial to attracting and retaining the right talent for your organization.

For your employees

Better employee engagement and satisfaction

A digital workplace improves employee engagement by providing them with self-guided learning opportunities, incentivized operations, and other platforms in an open and inclusive environment. Moreover, digital workplace initiatives, such as installing social media tools, also improve employee satisfaction. These factors are vital to your employees' productivity and performance, which can be reinforced with a digital workplace.

Better collaboration

The modern day workforce prefers to have simpler and faster collaboration tools, such as instant messaging, in contrast to more traditional methods, like emailing. A digital workplace can cater to these employee expectations, and improve their collaborative efforts.

For your customers

Improved customer experience

A digital workplace enables employees to respond faster and deliver better service to customers by digitizing all interactions that customers have with your business, both online and offline. And it also facilitates the implementation of new ideas and innovations, such as chat bots, sentiment analysis, onmichannel feedback, and more, which can significantly improve the customer experience.

Adopt the right digital workplace toolbox

Most organizations already have a digital toolbox, with different applications and technologies that their employees use day-to-day to do their jobs. These all combine to create the digital layer of our workplaces. But the key is to evaluate and adopt the right tools depending on job functions and the industry your business belongs to.

Here are the four essential tools that every digital workplace needs:

Communication tools

As more and more workplaces enable remote working, effective communication becomes more important. In a remote work environment, if you don't communicate well, your productivity is going to suffer. In fact, remote work environments make it essential to communicate every bit of information, opinion, and thought process because you don't always have the luxury of facial expressions and body language to get your point across.

However, proper communication tools aren't just crucial for a remote workforce—they also help in-office employee interactions. If something can be resolved via a simple email or text message instead of a full-fledged meeting, it really should be.

Today, there are a broad range of cloud applications available that are focused on facilitating easy communication. All you need to do is find the one that offers the right features and is within your budget.

Productivity tools

Technology has allowed the world to move at a much faster pace. If you're not constantly innovating and taking your products to market faster, chances are you're losing out to the competition.

That's where productivity tools come in. These tools enable employees to manage their workflows in a more optimal way—allowing them to reduce repetitive tasks and focus on what's important. In a study by Ultimate Software, 92% of employees said that having the tools to be able to do their job more efficiently affects their work satisfaction. Which means that productivity tools also have second-order effects in the form of employee engagement and retention.

Today, most employees work with a diverse set of productivity tools. In a content-heavy world that's full of distractions, there are tools that help people work more efficiently, without interruptions. Then there are tools that help people organize their work as per the goals they need to achieve, and focus on completing them in a systematic manner. And there are others that automate repetitive tasks and trigger notifications on important things.

Collaboration tools

There's a subtle difference between collaboration and communication tools. While the main goal of communication tools is to enable seamless interaction between employees, collaboration software goes one step further. These tools are designed to support a group of people—whether big or small—to accomplish common goals within a given timeline in the most effective way.

For instance, writers and editors can work together on the same document simultaneously, allowing them to share feedback as they refine the project together. Other tools allow managers to assign tasks to their teams, assess their workload, and work towards common goals.

Tools like Zoho Connect are the perfect example of strong collaboration tools. They allow companies to get their people and the resources they need together on one platform so that they connect with one another, share ideas and feedback, and collaborate on projects effectively.

Business applications

These tools are designed specifically to allow businesses to digitize specific processes in a department or function of an organization. Here are some of the favourites:

◆ **CRM software**

The right CRM (customer relationship management) tool can make a massive difference to your company's top line. It helps your sales team or customer success teams navigate your entire relationship with your customers, and prospective customers. CRM software helps you keep track of relevant information from the time you reach out to a potential customer to building a long-term relationship with them. At any point in time, you can access things like contact details, sources, dates, number of users, account managers assigned, pricing plans, attended events, and more.

It's important to pick the CRM tool that works best for you—depending on the size of your company, the nature of your product or service, and the industry you operate in.

◆ **HR management software**

The right HR tools can bring in the next level of productivity and employee engagement within your organization. HR tools manage a whole range of HR activities—from payroll to attendance to employee rewards and compensation. Over time, HR tools are incorporating big data and artificial intelligence to work on aspects like employee engagement, performance monitoring, and retention.

◆ **ERP software**

ERP (enterprise resource planning) is the ultimate tool to enhance collaboration and overall productivity. ERP software integrates across various departments to support a range of functions, like accounting, project management, procurement, supply chain operations, risk management, and compliance.

Build a successful digital workplace with low-code platforms

Every company has unique processes and business needs. Although there's typically an underlying method that organizations can follow when planning, building, and deploying a digital workplace, keeping in mind that the key success factor is to bring employees together towards a common goal is integral.
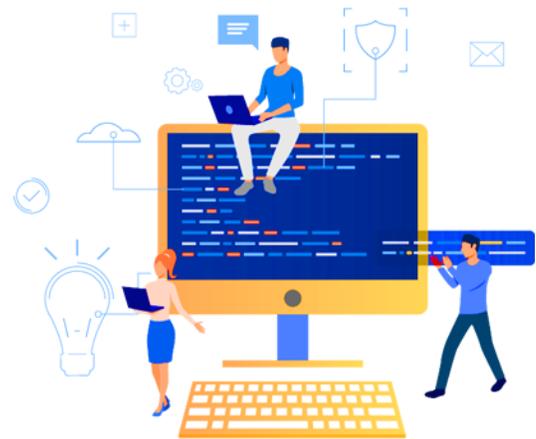
Low-code platforms play a vital role in enabling a well-connected digital workplace. It lets business users and programming experts build applications with modern user interfaces, integrations, data, and workflows that are easy to use.

These platforms provide businesses with the potential to bridge silos, streamline processes and enable teams to collaborate and focus on core innovation. What low-code platforms provide is the potential to modernize applications without rebuilding older applications from scratch. The agility and speed to develop enterprise-grade applications makes low-code platforms the preferred choice.

By adopting low-code platforms, organizations can align teams and enable them to focus on innovation, providing the necessary support to your digital transformation strategy and revenue-generation initiatives. Here are a few ways in which   low-code accelerates a digital workplace:

- ◆ Easy migration

- ◆ Faster development

- ◆ Improved user experience

- ◆ Higher availability

- ◆ App backlog reduction

- ◆ Increased ROI

Low-code can be the first step towards a truly digital workplace—where businesses ensure they remain competitive by providing a digitally unified and secure experience for both employees and customers. They enable organizations to create enterprise applications that are designed to adapt to experiences instead of devices.

Customer stories

Some leading organizations have taken advantage of Zoho Creator's digital workplace solutions to achieve growth in their business.

Aboitiz Equity Ventures

Aboitiz Equity Ventures is one of the largest conglomerates in Asia. It was started in the late 1800s as a hemp trading business, and today its investments are predominantly in banking and financial services. With $8.1 billion in assets and 3,600 employees, Aboitiz is recognized as one of the best-managed companies in the Philippines.

Business challenge

They didn't have a proper system to track all their CSR activities, and had difficulty managing their internal processes in spreadsheets. The IT team needed a solution to help them quickly create apps to manage $300 million of their CSR funds across all business units.

Solution

The team built a web application in Creator for managing all their CSR tasks in a measurable, transparent way. Based on its success, they created over 40 business apps for different needs. Currently, these app are used by 4,000+ employees.

Results

By the end of 2019, AEV saved over $670K dollars through the efficiency brought into their application development processes by Zoho Creator. They automated 1,000+ transactions, increasing productivity by nearly 50%

"To date, we've deployed 46 applications with mobile and web capabilities using Zoho Creator, and when comparing it with other platforms, we realized that we've saved $670k. Zoho Creator brings agility and speed to digital transformation."
- Jojo Guingao, Chief Digital Officer, AEV

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Brioitix Health

Briotix Health, established in 1979, is a leading occupational health company, providing world-class services in industrial sports medicine, office ergonomics, and specialized solutions in workforce performance. Based in the United States, the company serves SMEs to Fortune 500 companies in over 63 countries.

Business challenge

Briotix Health serves different clients, and while each program follows a general model, they differ in workflows, SLAs, billing models, and more. An inability to provide a segregated and controlled multitenancy solution was hampering growth.

Solution

The team built 10+ full-scale commercial products and 200+ product applications on Zoho Creator. Each is multitenant, and can be customized and deployed to different customers.

Benefits

By the end of 2019, they transformed into a digital workforce and saved 68.8%—over $300,000—on technology projects. In the aftermath of COVID-19, Briotix Health was able to launch 6 new products on Zoho Creator to meet changing market demand, and clawed back 70% of revenue loss incurred since January.

"Every business leader is looking for a solution that'll help them get ahead and solve critical pain points, and Zoho Creator has been the most transformative solution I've encountered in my 20 years of business. It has completely revolutionized the way we think about what we do and how we do it."
- Shelby Spencer, CTO, Briotix Health

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Kumi Motors

Kumi Motors, based in Mexico, sells new and pre-owned Kia vehicles, while also providing mechanic services. They have roughly 800 employees spread across 8 branches. Kumi Motors specializes in selling and offering maintenance services.

Business challenge

Kumi Motors needed a solution to streamline information and establish an efficient way of processing all the data they collected. They wanted to move from their inefficient spreadsheets to custom applications that can remove complexities for their growing business.

Solution

The company uses 6 primary apps to run their processes. Applications range from human resource management to inventory management, which enables access to real-time information and economical use of their resources.

Results

They've had a 20% increase in sales, largely because their Creator app functions as their complete inventory management system, tracking vehicles more efficiently than their previous systems. Kumi Motors now makes about 500,000 Mexican pesos per dealership every year, roughly $26,000 US dollars.

"The biggest impact is that the majority of employees can interact on the platform; we started to create metrics that help management make better decisions"

- Eduardo, Chief Developer, Kumi Motors

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About us

Zoho Creator is a digital workplace platform that is powerful and flexible enough to adapt to your business needs. It's intuitive, and comes with a host of templates and plug-ins which enable your teams to create process-specific applications easily. Many of the world's largest organizations use Creator's applications to manage their daily operations by streamlining processes, projects, and tasks.

Pick a business process that has been hard for you to automate, sign up for a free trial, and experience Creator personally.

ZOHO Creator

www.zoho.com/creator

We'd love to talk! Reach out to us

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