

Most digital workplace initiatives will fail to establish new ways of working

By 2021, only one-quarter of midsize and large organisations will successfully target new ways of working in 80% of their initiatives, according to Gartner, Inc. New ways of working include distributed decision-making, virtual and remote work, and redesigned physical workspaces.



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“Digital workplace initiatives cannot be treated exclusively as an IT initiative,” said Carol Rozwell, distinguished research vice president at Gartner. “When initiatives are executed as a series of technology rollouts, employee engagement and addressing the associated cultural change are left behind. Digital workplace success is impossible without such.”

Emerging change leadership

A new approach for coping with the shifting demands of digital business is emerging for digital workplace leaders — change leadership.

“Digital workplace leaders must realise that their role as the orchestrator of change is fundamentally moving away from previously ingrained leadership practices that view employees as a group resistant to change rather than involving them in co-creating the path forward,” said Rozwell.

Digital workplace A-team

As digital workplace leaders shift their thoughts and actions toward people-oriented designs, they can inspire and engage a cross-disciplinary "A-team" to help strategise new way of working. This A-team — drawn from IT, facilities management, human resources and business stakeholders — envisions how new technologies, processes and work styles will enhance the overall employee experience and enable them to perform mission-critical work more effectively. In the end, organisations that take time to invest in the employee experience will net a 10-percentage-point improvement in employee engagement scores.

Role of the business unit

Successful digital workplace programmes are less about technology and more about understanding what affects the employee experience and making necessary changes to the work environment.

“The business unit leader is the champion of a new way of working in the digital workplace. This is the person who identifies the desired business outcomes, develops the business case and establishes the measures by which success is determined. Without engaging business unit leaders, it will be impossible to successfully grapple with the scope of changes needed,” said Rozwell.

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