Enhance employee experience for secure distributed working

A turning point for the way we work

The world of work is at a turning point. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations have accelerated their digital transformation to enable their employees to work from anywhere. This rapid shift to a more distributed workforce has driven a new approach to the workplace.

Organizations are now rethinking their workplace strategies to attract and retain talent and support productivity and success over the longer term. These strategies encompass a range of factors, from HR policies that allow for greater flexibility and choice, to activity-based workspaces that support employee experience, employee wellbeing, and sustainability goals.

Intelligent technology and digitization play a critical role in reimagining the workspace. Organizations need sophisticated analytics to gain insights, make decisions, and measure the impact of their workplace initiatives on employee experience and business outcomes. They also need systems that enable secure access to applications employees use to stay connected and succeed in their roles.

The decisions we make today have a far-reaching impact on how people will experience work and deliver value to organizations in the future. Organizations that set the foundation for employee wellbeing and employee experience now will be in a stronger position to rearchitect their businesses to be more agile and responsive.

86.6% of organizations believe employee needs will be at the heart of the future workplace design.[1]

Employee experience   Digitization   Smart Workplace   Getting started

Employee wellbeing and experience at the forefront

The workplace is as much about where we work as how we work. Protecting the health and wellbeing of employees is the number one challenge to optimizing the workplace. It's also the most recognized benefit of modernizing.

Profitability, revenue generation and improving the customer experience are still the main drivers of an organization's overall business strategy – and they all rely on the performance and productivity of people. The way people connect and interact with others, using their skills, creativity, and intelligence, play a significant role in the success of the organization.

Organizations must therefore develop a robust strategy to accommodate a distributed workforce and repurpose office spaces to provide frictionless experiences that promote productivity, collaboration, connectedness and overall employee happiness.

88.9%
of organizations recognize the value of employee experience as a crucial strategic differentiator, but just 38.3% are very satisfied with their current [technology] capability.[1]

96%
of companies say they could improve work environments with workspace technology.[5]

Employee experience   Digitization   Smart Workplace   Getting started

Why your organization needs to enable secure distributed working

A new era of working is upon us. The current global pandemic, along with globalization, labor flexibility, technology transformation and environmental trends have driven a radical shift in how we work. Looking ahead, organizations must shape an inclusive culture, engaging workforce and a smart workplace. By taking care of the workforce, organizations create higher performing teams that are more resilient and in a better position to care for customers.

A smart workplace moves beyond traditional approaches and legacy infrastructures to accelerate teamwork, ensure secure and seamless collaboration and create meaningful employee experiences. Driving automation, insightful analytics and enhanced collaboration, a smart workplace establishes better quality of work-life balance and fosters an environment of peak profitability. Accelerating adoption of this reimagined smart workplace supports talent acquisition and retention and supports ongoing operations, so organizations are prepared for what's now and what's next.

Rise of the hybrid worker

Throughout the global pandemic, organizations had to enable employees to work remotely and access company resources securely to ensure business continuity, causing the emergence of a flexible and hybrid future of work. Having worked remotely for an extended period of time, employees are now expecting that they will continue to have the flexibility and ability to work from anywhere, at any time and on any device, even as they return to the office in a post-COVID era.

Workplace trends revealed by the NTT 2020 Intelligent Workplace Report[1] show that:

Nearly half (45%) of organizations will install video conferencing/video collaboration spaces to bring remote and office employees together

Almost a third (31.2%) will implement creative/thinking spaces

Over a quarter (27.4%) will reduce individual office desk space with 29.9% increasing meeting spaces

A recent report published by Cisco[5] found that:

<9% of the global workforce expect to fully return to the office after offices reopen

98% expect there to be at least one remote worker in every meeting going forward

53% of organizations plan to reduce their real estate footprint

Going forward, strategies and solutions will need to truly support remote, mobile and in-office workers, and enable consistent collaboration for a hybrid working environment.

A quantum leap in digitization

A global survey of executives by McKinsey revealed that companies accelerated their digitization by anywhere from three to seven years to support business continuity in response to the pandemic.[3] In a matter of weeks, organizations implemented digital solutions that were originally planned to take up to a year – faster than believed possible before the crisis.

67% of senior managers agree the pandemic accelerated their adoption of cloud-based comms, collaboration and productivity tools.[3]

Pre-COVID, **only 19% of organizations** from our survey had more than half of their workforce working remotely, compared to 62% now.[6]

IT teams across industry sectors worked around the clock to make technology available to a more distributed workforce. Many organizations succeeded in implementing a 'technology quick-fix' to ensure immediate business continuity. However, the abrupt shift resulted in, amongst other things, a lag in adjusting IT policies to support the move to distributed working.

Only 30.7% have changed IT policies to help employees work within a new operating model.[1]
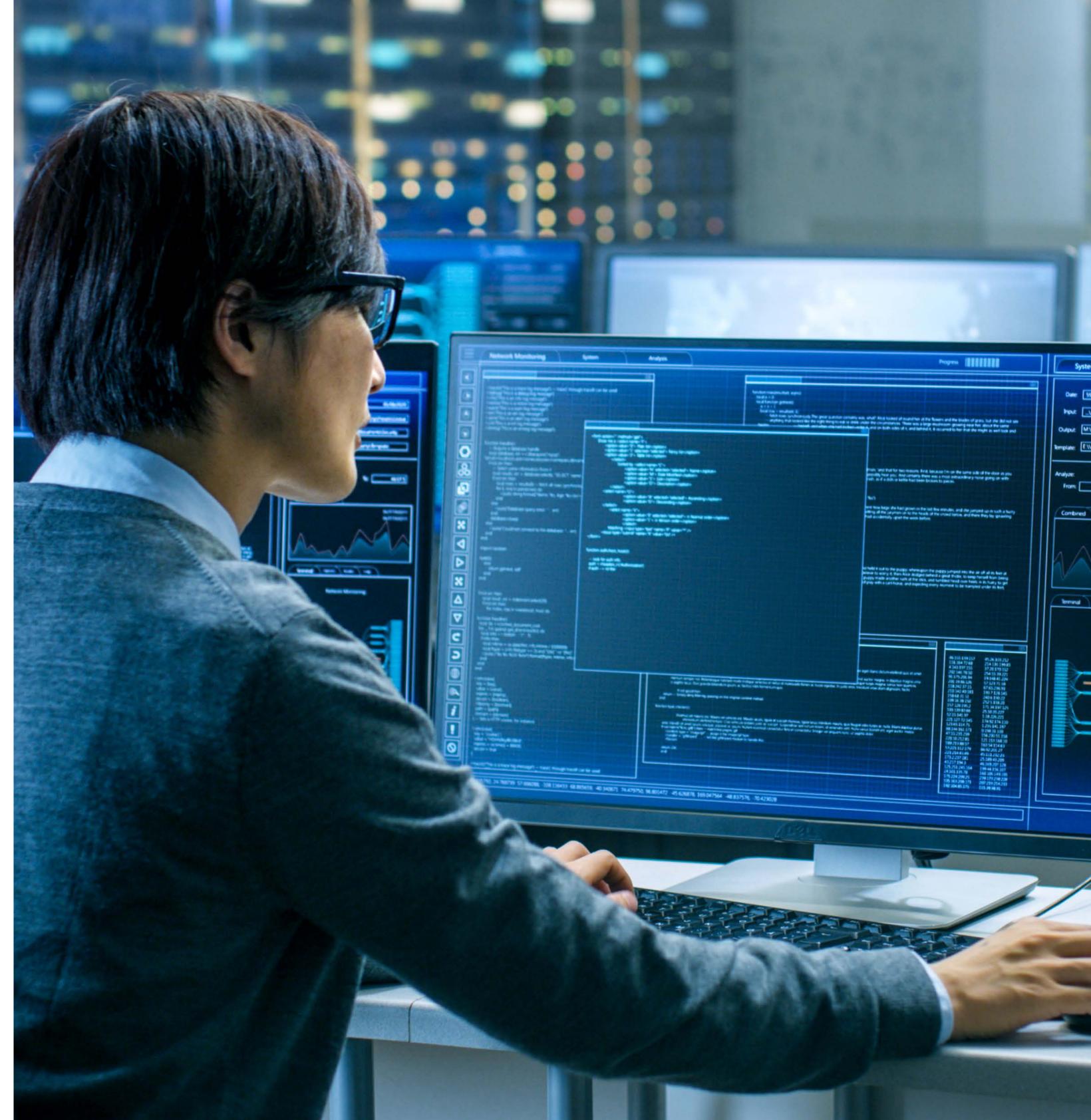
Accelerate collaboration and communication

Provide a frictionless employee experience by investing in a secure collaboration and communication environment, allowing productivity and innovation to thrive.

Create a secure environment where people can work effectively together anywhere, anytime, accommodating individual needs and preferred workstyles.

Our collaboration solutions improve team collaboration, reduce complexity, enhance communications capabilities and ensure a smooth workflow.

Ensure cyber-resilient and cloud-optimized connectivity, allowing users to be connected anytime, from anywhere and with any device.

By 2024, 74% of the new unified communications licenses purchased by organizations will be cloud-based, up from 48% in 2019.[7]

Cybersecurity to support distributed working

The rapid shift to remote working has made the organization's perimeter even less marked and more difficult to defend, especially in light of the increased breadth and volume of threats and attacks on both enterprise and consumer applications.

Sixty-one percent of respondents globally stated that their organizations experienced a jump of 25% or more in cyber threats or alerts since the start of COVID-19. This was also experienced by 55% of small businesses, 70% of medium organizations and 60% of large enterprises.[6]

Only 46.6% have increased their IT security capabilities to keep their organization and employees secure.[1]

Analytics for workplace insights

Analytics can show which applications and features people are using, and enable organizations to measure adoption, usage and productivity. Many organizations are challenged with integrating data from disparate platforms to measure areas of sentiment and wellbeing. This is an area for improvement from both a technology and process standpoint.

For analytics tools to be effective, organizations need to determine what constitutes useful data, an accurate measurement of indicators, and how often that data is reviewed. Employees must also feel comfortable with how productivity is measured and understand how the measurement contributes to their career growth and success, as well as to the success of the business.

The value of smart workplaces

A smart workplace enables organizations to build sustainable environments that accelerate teamwork, ensure secure and seamless collaboration across distributed teams and ultimately create meaningful employee experiences.

A smart workplace helps you:

Empower a distributed workforce

Promote a healthier workplace

Enhance productivity

Be flexible and agile in response to change

Attract and retain talent

Support sustainability

Lower operating costs

Protect against threats, control data access and data leaks

Considerations for a smart workplace

Design spaces that make employees happy

To optimize space usage for maximum impact on positivity and productivity, incorporate employee input into design aspects from the look and feel of the spaces to the names of meeting rooms. Data should either be anonymized to show broad trends or used to adapt the environment to individual preferences, rather than as a management tool for analyzing productivity.

Embrace the dual role of smart buildings

Smart buildings are being designed with environmental sustainability and employee happiness in mind. Activity-based environments center on the type of work to be done and facilitate tasks based on the organization's culture, workplace design and digital platforms. Smart buildings leverage technology to help people work more comfortably while lowering operational costs.

Optimised connectivity

Enable superior employee experience by implementing automated assurance-driven networking that evolves how employees, customers and things connect. An automated and business-aligned network that is secure by design provides data-driven insights and intelligence for an optimized environment based on real-time analytics.

By 2023, more than **50% of large organizations** will connect to cloud providers using direct cloud connectivity from their WANs, up from 10% in 2019.[8]

Getting started

NTT and Cisco have been helping organizations reinvent their workplaces for nearly 30 years, across industries around the globe. We have the breadth of services and technologies to help you reimagine how you get work done with an approach that balances employee happiness and engagement, improves outputs and lowers operational costs – while ensuring everything is secure by design.

Our approach

Advise

Workplace Advisory provides insights on current industry views and best practices help discover, identify and develop a plan to deliver great work experiences
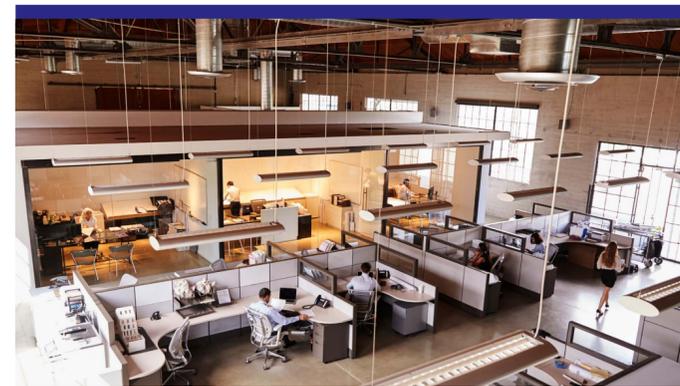
Implement

Achieve effective and efficient design, deployment and resourcing of your smart workplace solutions

Manage

Monitor and operate your smart workplace environment across multiple platforms, be it on-premises, hosted or in the cloud
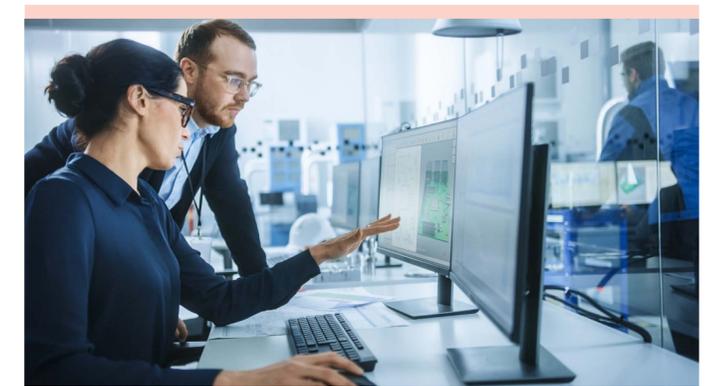
Innovate

An ongoing process to assess and assure optimal value and employee experience

Learn more

See how your workplace compares

Benchmark your workplace transformation progress against other organizations. Take the NTT Workplace Assessment.

Read our latest findings

NTT 2020 Intelligent Workplace Report

NTT 2020 Global Threat Intelligence Report

NTT 2020 Global Network Insights Report

NTT 2020 Global Managed Services Report

Cisco Future of Secure Remote Work Report

The Rise of the Hybrid Workplace

Cisco 2021 Security Outcomes Study

Cisco Future of Work Thought Leadership Initiative

To learn more about our transformative solutions and services, visit us on the web.

Sources:

1. NTT, 2020 Intelligent Workplace Report, July 2020
2. NTT, 2020 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report, April 2020
3. McKinsey, Global Survey of Executives in July 2020
4. Freedom Dynamics, with Cisco, A new perspective on the modern workplace, July 2020
5. Dimension Research, sponsored by Cisco Webex, The Rise of the Hybrid Workplace, Oct 2020
6. Cisco Future of Secure Remote Work Report, October 2020
7. Gartner, Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications as a Service, Nov 2020
8. Gartner, Forecast Analysis: Enterprise Networking Connectivity Growth Trends, Worldwide, Sept 2019