Intelligent Digital Workspaces and the Future of Work

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Inflexible work environments have existed for as long as modern work. In many ways, modern technology only digitizes bad experiences, recreating inflexible frameworks in software or creating new barriers to productivity and efficiency.

A primary goal for today's organizations is to transform "head count" into a productivity-driving engine which increases business value. This requires the attraction and retention of first-class talent. To this end, it is critical that individual workers and teams operate in agile, flexible work environments with technology as an underlying enabler, not a hindrance.

The inflexible digital infrastructures in many enterprises are not set this way. This challenge, an inflexible work environment, is one of four primary challenges IDC identified as impeding work transformation.

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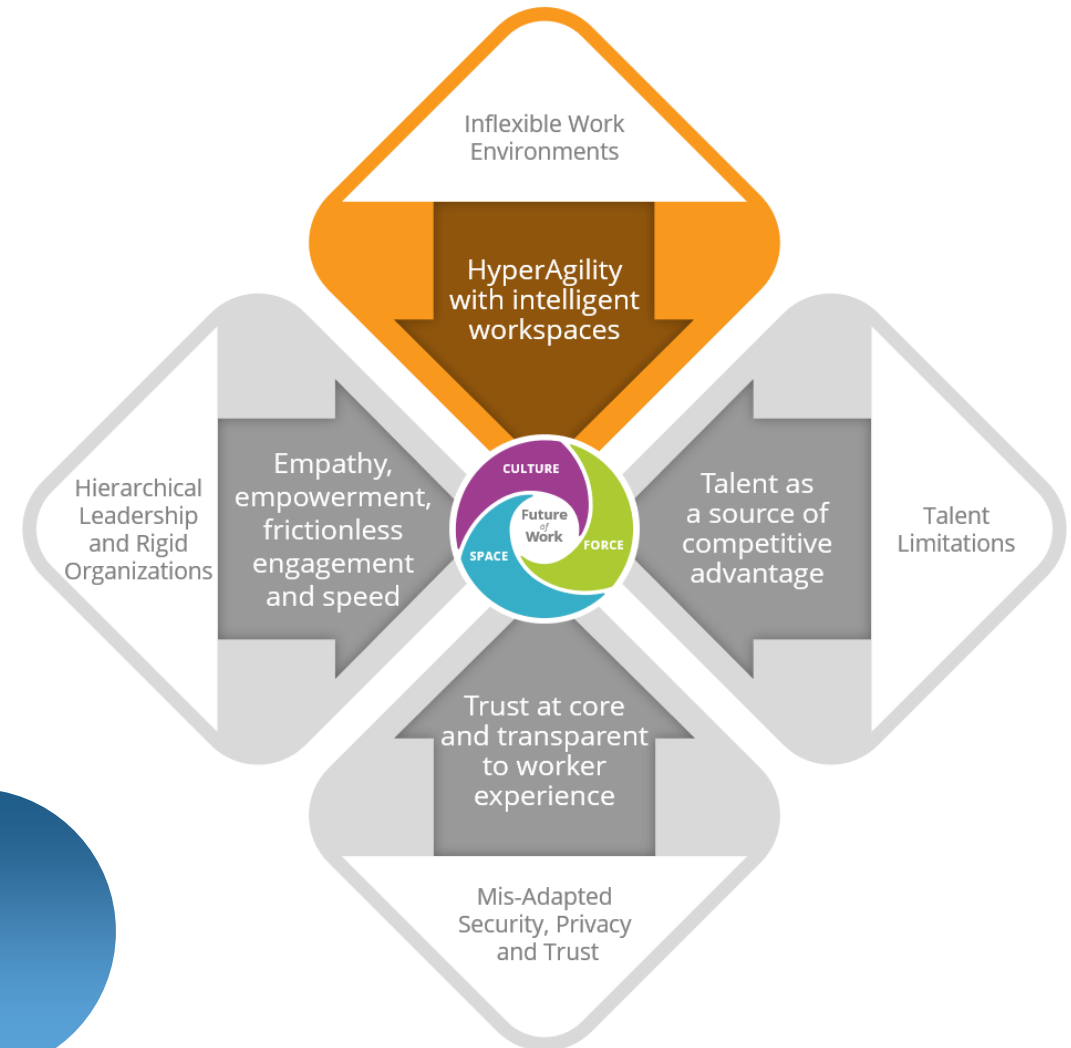
The agile workspace is constructed around the idea of of responding to work as it emerges from the chaotic data, people, process, partner, and technology environment of modern business. It creates a consistent context, maintains a flow of work, and organizes action by a combination of digital and human workers entitled to an array of data, digital, physical, intellectual, and workflow assets.

IDC is introducing the concept behind the **intelligent digital workspace**. The worker is at the center of the intelligent digital workspace paradigm.

- **Universal device access** is the initial interface to a digital layer of applications, tasks, data, and workgroups and communities.
- **Workspace infrastructure** binds the interfaces, experiences, and underlying data and business IP which provide the guardrails, boundaries, and security of the overall workspace.
- **AI, machine learning, and analytics** technologies proactively recommend the next best action and provide access to the resources required to complete that action.

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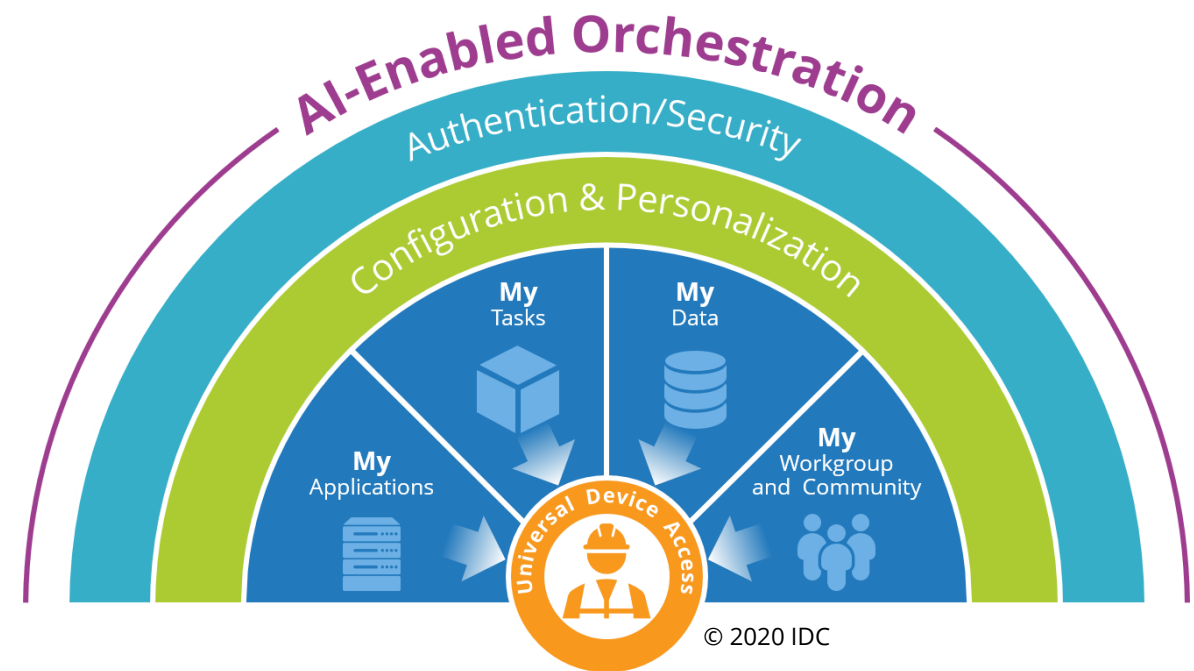
The Opportunity for Technology Suppliers

In the era of multiplied innovation, organizations are scaling digital transformation beyond just IT or siloed line-of-business initiatives to the very DNA of the entire organization. The IT architecture in many organizations is still a jumble of 2nd platform tools mixed with some 3rd platform technologies.

In IDC's Future of Work survey of nearly 800 IT decision makers, nearly one-third of respondents cite this issue as their top barrier to work transformation initiatives.

The evolution of work environments throughout the first two decades of this century is neither agile nor dynamic enough to allow businesses to thrive, let alone remain competitive, going forward. Technology suppliers are uniquely positioned to help organizations address legacy issues holding back businesses from transforming how their employees operate and interact.

Advice for Business Leaders

- **Learn from your early workspace adopters**. Identify where collaboration applications are in use in the enterprise, learn who is using them and how. Think of what the needs will be, not just what they are.

- **The new knowledge worker**. All connected employees, partners, and customers are redesigning how work is done. Partners and customers are slowly moving from the buyer/seller relationship to a maker/partner relationship.

- **A workspace for every worker — thinking beyond office-based employees.** IT leaders should interpret and visualize what an intelligent digital workspace means for their internal customers and constituents.

- **Workspaces are human-powered.** Like any community, there is a need for people to create, moderate, and support the success of the community. Often forgotten is the need for ample head count, increased awareness and governance, analytics analysis, and moderation for community success.

- **Look for technology platforms from the framework of the three digital workspace levels.** Organizations should consider any new technology purchase or implementation within the context of the digital workspace layers framework — physical, digital, and management.

At the worker and group organizational level, digital transformation requires IT to leave behind old ways of thinking about how employees work with computers, software, and data, and rethink this in the context of an intelligent digital workspace. The intelligent digital workspace is not a product, service, or techno-philosophic concept; it's the thoughtful deployment of IT resources and community to individual workers and teams, with the ultimate goal of getting things done and driving new business value.

To learn more about IDC's Future of Work research, contact your Account Representative or read the latest blog @ http://bit.ly/IDC_FoW_Blog.

The IDC report Intelligent Digital Workspaces: Enabling the Future of Work, Doc #US45716919 introduces the concept behind intelligent digital workspaces for the future of work.

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