

# MAKING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PERSONAL

User Adoption by Design

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## Context Setting – Current Environment in 2020

It would be remiss to immediately talk about our model for user adoption of digital technology without first acknowledging the current situation that businesses and citizens face today. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is causing profound impacts to our personal and professional lives, and all industries across the globe. The long-term effects of this situation are difficult to predict, but many businesses and industries will be significantly affected in the short to medium term.

The events of early 2020 have also meant that getting the right technology to the right people has become even more important. As a result, these events have seen an unexpected positive impact on the execution of digital workplace strategies. Mass enablement of remote working is sustaining organisation cultures during a period of significant challenge, with meaningful impacts upon user engagement and future expectation of the workplace environment in a “post pandemic” era. We have seen a mass acceleration of key technical projects that will recalibrate the future digital agenda. The digital workplace and ensuring that organisations engage their users in the right way with an effective adoption strategy, will be key enablers in aiding organisations to rebuild their businesses.

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A KEY ENABLER IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA WILL BE ENSURING THAT ORGANISATIONS ENGAGE THEIR USERS WITH AN EFFECTIVE ADOPTION STRATEGY

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# Setting the User Adoption Scene

Making digital transformation personal is all about putting people at the centre of the adoption of new technology. It's about making sure that you engage, accommodate and empathise with all your workforce at all stages of the process: from inception, planning and development, to implementation and beyond. Get this right, and you will rapidly unleash the potential of your people.

And yet, Harvard Business Review Analytic Services<sup>1</sup> reported in 2018 that only 31 percent of senior executives surveyed believe their company is “very forward-looking” in its approach to workplace strategies, processes, and technologies. Furthermore, the same report states that “...employee experience is at an all-time low, with less than 15% of workers saying that they are engaged at work.”

Now again, some of these perceptions will be changing right now, as organisations make Herculean efforts to keep their businesses running as efficiently as they can throughout this global crisis. And one of the main ways they are doing this is by appropriately equipping the most important facet of their organisations: their people.

Regardless of outside forces, though, the importance of user adoption remains as critical as ever. This paper therefore explains what user adoption is and why it is so important, before dissecting reasons for past failures in The Adoption Challenge chapter. It then introduces our comprehensive approach to delivering successful end-to-end user adoption, via a framework which enables companies to overcome the challenges. The paper then concludes by articulating the benefits of getting user adoption right.

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**GET THIS RIGHT, AND YOU WILL RAPIDLY UNLEASH THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR PEOPLE**

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However, before launching into this detail, it is important that we first understand the rapid and unprecedented era of technological change that we live in today, and how the events of 2020 are pushing this change ever-faster. It is also important that we identify the ramifications for the multi-faceted workforces that are working at the front line of this change.

## A Cultural Revolution

Even before the world crisis of 2020, digital technology was changing the way that we live our lives. As Microsoft recently stated: “every industry, every economy, and every aspect of how people manage their daily lives is being reshaped<sup>2</sup>.” They also state that previous industrial revolutions gave rise to progress that moved at a linear pace, but that transformation today is exponential, naming our era as “the Fourth Industrial Revolution”. Similarly, the World Economic Forum states that the speed of current progress has no historical precedent<sup>2</sup>.

Clearly, therefore, businesses must respond – and rapidly so. However, in doing so, they must also consider the impact on their workforce. More specifically, they need to empathise with, empower and enable their people. This, in turn, will help to drive business growth and create competitive advantage – because although evolving technology is powerful, it is enhanced, amplified and optimised by the people who use it.

But, of course, people are different. The degrees of understanding, accepting and adopting “change” – this being times of great disruption when old ways of working are rapidly becoming obsolete – can vary dramatically. The trick is to plan for and to support all denominations: from those who embrace change, to those who fear it. To do this, we need to consider the forces driving change, as well as their implications for the workplace. And even more importantly, we need to consider their impact on today's multi-faceted workforce.

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**THE SPEED OF CURRENT PROGRESS HAS NO HISTORICAL PRECEDENT<sup>2</sup>**

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# The Multi-Faceted Workforce

Today's workforce is massively diverse. For the first time in history, the modern workforce spans five generations<sup>2</sup> (see below for a brief definition of each). However, diversity goes way beyond just these five groupings, and even within the same demographic - generation or otherwise - people interact differently with others, they learn differently, they work in different ways, and they interact differently with technology, too. Drilling down another level, workplace technology will differ itself as you move from one working environment to another - from the shop floor to the warehouse to the office to the home office; from retail stores to call centres - and even to the boardroom. There is no "one size fits all".

Unsurprisingly, therefore, this multi-faceted workforce, with its multi-faceted needs, attitudes and approaches to work, is affecting the way in which business can adapt to our rapidly-changing technology landscape. At the same time, employee expectations of workplace technology and tooling available to them are also evolving, and even before the Coronavirus crisis, a new culture around the way we work was emerging.

Elsewhere, the growth of external business partnerships dictates that communication and information sharing must now span multiple organisations and communities, often on a global scale. And teams are moving away from the traditional hierarchical and organisational structures, to a more fluid and dynamic model; members working in distant locations now collaborate through shared experiences that make it feel like they are in the same space.

Driving this workplace revolution are the Millennials. They are currently the largest generation in the workforce, and by 2025, they will constitute 75 per cent of the global workforce<sup>3</sup>.

Meanwhile, Generation Z is already surging into the workforce. These digital natives expect flexibility about where, when and how they work, so they can connect, communicate and collaborate with colleagues, suppliers and customers at their convenience, any time, any place; indeed, "staying connected" is central to their lives.

Statistics bear out this revolution, with a 50 percent increase in collaboration demands over the past decade or so<sup>4</sup>, while today, people work on twice as many teams as they did just five years ago<sup>5</sup>. However, at the same time, 75 percent of Millennials are also increasingly requesting the option to work remotely, too<sup>6</sup> - backed up by research which suggests that teams including remote workers tend to be more productive than teams consisting of just people who work in close proximity<sup>7</sup>. This viewpoint is now being backed up by widespread evidence of effective remote-working during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Finally, in terms of learning and training, needs will differ again. For example, recent studies have found that the average attention spans of the different generations tend to vary significantly<sup>8</sup>. This has implications for how businesses manage the flow of information and knowledge among employees, customers and partners.

Given the many different needs, skills, roles, expectations and personas that exist within such a varied workforce, it should now be a little clearer as to why the adoption of new technology and tooling isn't straightforward and, in many cases, can be highly problematic. The question is: how do we accommodate the needs of everyone? This is where the concept of User Adoption comes in.

The following table provides a summary of the five generations that currently inhabit our workforce.

Generation	Birth Years	Definition
The Silent Generation	1928 - 1945	People who came of age after World War II, and who focused on careers and passivism over activism.
Baby Boomers	1946 - 1964	People who came of age in the 1960s & 70s, an age of privilege and increasing affluence.
Generation X	1965 - 1980	The "MTV Generation", who came of age in the 1980s & 90s, and includes an ever-increasing maternal presence in the workforce.
Millennials (Gen Y)	1981 - late 90s	People who came of age between the mid-1990s and 2010ish and are hence comfortable with digital technology and social media.
Generation Z	Late 1990s -	People coming of age over the last five years or so, for whom forming and conducting relationships with people via mobile technology is simply how the world and workplace is supposed to work.

# What Is User Adoption?

User Adoption is a service or concept designed to ensure that investment in digital transformational projects has a quicker return, by helping to optimise user adoption of new technology, tooling, processes and services. User Adoption focuses on how the transformation will impact the user by contextualising the value of the new technology and tooling to the way the user works, so they can see why and how it can improve their working life. It's about focussing on the people rather than the technology itself and seeing it through their eyes.

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## ENABLING PERMANENT BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AND EMBRACING INNOVATION TO DELIVER A TRUE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

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Furthermore, digital transformation is largely happening at all levels of all businesses, so these businesses need to engage with all their people to optimise their digital potential – and to maximise the business return on investment. As Nextthink state: “Increasingly, savvy managers are realizing that the key to unlocking the full potential of IT investments, lies in their users fully adopting and embracing it<sup>9</sup>”.

Key to delivering successful uptake of new workplace technology, is the approach to build and deployment – as achieving an optimal return on new technology investment is more dependant than ever on ensuring that new technology is adopted rather than just implemented. Having a user community who can use and understand their new technology is a critical foundation of successful digital transformation within the workplace.

User adoption should therefore incorporate the following facets:

- An end-to-end, user-centric approach, with a clear understanding from the start, of who the technology change will affect, and the expected outcomes.
- An ability to look at technology change from the perspective of the many different user groups and personas. This will require tailored, relevant and strategic user engagement.
- Clear communication, so users understand why the change is happening, as well as what is changing. This will drive positive change that users will embrace and see real value in.
- A drive of behavioural change in users, that supports business growth and productivity.
- Measurements of success.
- An understanding that user adoption doesn't stop at the end of the project; you need to keep monitoring and reinforcing both the message and training, as required.

Other organisations agree with this user-centric approach. For example, Nextthink state: “A good awareness campaign informs, involves, and inspires end users, resulting in higher adoption rates<sup>9</sup>.” Meanwhile, Microsoft adds: “Business leaders must commit to defining and changing behaviours. The powers of technology are only truly realised when they are in the hands of people<sup>10</sup>.”

# Why Is User Adoption So Important?

User adoption is important because it focuses on people rather than technology – as it is the former who enhance, amplify and optimise the latter. If you listen to your users and harmonise their needs with the vision of your architects, solution specialists and chosen suppliers, you will implement the right infrastructure and workplace. Forrester emphasises this in a slightly different way, stating: “IT decision-makers need to focus their attention on minimizing the current perception gap between IT and end-users <sup>11</sup>.”

Elsewhere, recent Microsoft research provides compelling evidence that digital collaboration and teamwork correlates with business success<sup>2</sup>. Their study revealed that the fastest-growing companies communicate over email and share documents twice as much as slower-growing companies, are more than twice as likely to have employees collaborating using cloud-based tools and are three times as likely to use chat-based digital workspaces – thereby reaping many of the productivity benefits that digital transformation brings.

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**More specifically, here are eight reasons why successful user adoption of digital transformation is so important:**

1. It ensures that you meet the expectations of a changing, dynamic workforce.
  2. It keeps users informed, engaged, confident and enthusiastic throughout transformation. No surprises, minimal disruption.
  3. It realises the full benefits and value of Digital Workplace investment.
  4. It mitigates against the negative impacts of transformation, embracing technology innovation to deliver a truly digital workplace.
  5. It mitigates against the risk of Shadow IT.
  6. It makes sure that all productivity improvements and new features are understood and available to all.
  7. It ensures an end-to-end impact of the expected outcomes.
  8. This end-to-end, user-centric approach also ensures the voice of the user is heard and acted upon at all stages, meaning that their opinion is considered before it's too late to go back.
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# The Adoption Challenge

“Everything begins and ends with the user. If you don’t get your users on board from day one, whether that’s the people seeking help or those providing it, your adoption rates will be low<sup>12</sup>.”

Modern digital transformation for the workplace can be complex and challenging, with many different elements requiring consideration and planning – such as new technology, new processes, evolving security and new tooling. Each of these facets must then combine to improve productivity for the business and enable the user to operate in new and more effective ways.

However, many organisations end up implementing disparate components of a digital workplace, that may well seem to support their strategic agenda, but are often unsupportive of user and business goals. This is often the case when the focus is technology-driven rather than on improving user experience and productivity. As Gartner states: “IT departments often deploy Unified Communications solutions, only to find that user adoption fails to achieve the usage levels expected<sup>13</sup>.”

Elsewhere, some organisations see user adoption purely as a training challenge, and usually at the end of a solely IT-led exercise. Gartner again states: “Digital workplace programs will fail to enable digital business transformation if they are treated as individual, IT-driven technology projects<sup>14</sup>.” Microsoft agrees. They see the processes of IT-led deployment and activation as being “usually achieved” but the processes of adoption as “usually poorly achieved or not done<sup>2</sup>.”

In worst-case scenarios, the impact on the user is not considered until the end of the programme, and digital transformation completely fails to align to user requirements. This results in poor levels of adoption and a low return on investment.

Consequently, understanding what users need must be the starting point before adopting new technology. If you don’t design well at the outset, with the users’ needs foremost, then no matter what effort you put into adoption, your employee take-up rate will likely be poor.

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Another important facet of user adoption is managing anxiety. Look at these statistics for employee-centric challenges that were recently compiled by Microsoft<sup>15</sup>:

**61%**

of UK leaders agree alterations in tasks create anxiety among employees

**59%**

say where tasks are automated, employees are concerned about job security

**39%**

say the introduction of new technologies makes them feel anxious

**49%**

find employees express fear of change when digital transformation initiatives are introduced

**Yet, only 23%** of UK business and IT leaders say their organisation is undertaking a major programme to change its workplace and organisational culture

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Clearly, helping to avoid anxiety about the deployment of new technology is critical, if a business wants to see a return on its investment and an improvement in its efficiency. A poor adoption approach can result in users sticking to old behaviours and working patterns, because they either don’t understand it or don’t know how to make it work for them. Worse, they may develop shadow IT. And even where there is evidence of users leveraging new technologies, they often don’t understand their full benefit or potential, while other more tech-savvy users perhaps haven’t had the “what’s in it for me?” message properly communicated.

It is therefore important to ensure that there is clarity as to business expectations of users, and to ensure that users can verify that new solutions will add value and help them in their daily work. A flexible and tailored approach to adoption is required that consistently checks back with the user, so that they feel involved in the process and understand the value of the new ways of working. This helps users to understand what is happening, and how, why and when it is happening. In this

way it is possible to offset user frustration and confusion about the technology deployment, by demonstrating that it is being done for them as opposed to just being done to them!

It is also important to remember that this is not just a one-off activity. Businesses need to maintain ongoing user engagement throughout the life of the transformation project and beyond, to ensure both ongoing adoption and a deeper understanding of the business value of the new technology. And to drive this cultural and behavioural change, a multi-departmental effort is needed, with Digital Workplace teams including HR, Corporate Communications and Facilities teams, whilst also maintaining close alignment with business leaders.

And finally, another important part of the adoption challenge is to come up with measurable outcomes of success so that these can be assessed in the months following implementation. Done properly, user adoption will make the move to digital a seamless integration of the new with the old.



# How To Approach User Adoption

At Computacenter, we believe that a comprehensive and structured framework is required for end-to-end user adoption, along with the required expertise needed to drive it. Such a framework should focus very specifically on contextualising new technology to align to the functional needs and benefit of your users, whilst also ensuring that focus is maintained on the user at every stage of transformation.

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## A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK THAT HELPS IT LEADERS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL USER ADOPTION OF A DIGITAL WORKPLACE INITIATIVE

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Similarly, the core objective should be to deliver business change, by giving your users the ability to quickly and easily integrate a solution into their day-to-day working lives, and to do so because they want to and see the value in doing so.

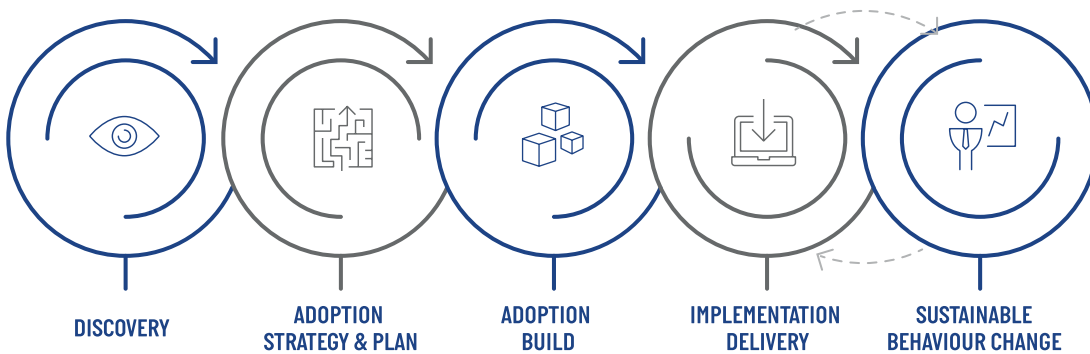
To support this framework, it's important to understand how different user personas directly relate to different user needs, different levels of business value and different technology use cases. Understanding this positions your organisation very well in terms of recognising the impact of digital transformation on your users, your business and your IT department.

It is also important to have your user adoption framework led by skilled HR and Communications consultants, working together with skilled IT consultants who understand the technology solution details. The framework should then operate in full alignment with your project and programme management functions to ensure that any technology roll-out achieves the highest levels of user adoption possible.

At a high level, the framework captures the requirements, builds out an adoption strategy and then delivers the strategy through manageable sprints. All this activity includes the right mix of communication, education and support, along with establishing effective measurement criteria which is continually being reported back.

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Pictorially, the framework is represented as follows:



### DISCOVERY

This is the most important stage and is all about gaining an in-depth understanding of your unique scope, culture, business drivers and success criteria. This is achieved by focusing on:

- Understanding your culture and goals, and the ways in which your organisation engages with its people and different business units.
- Considering people, locations, roles, languages, work patterns, processes, and special requirements, and using this to baseline different user communities and build user profiles. This ensures that later communication, training and value assessment is much more personal and targeted.
- Understanding how new digital workplace tooling would align, how it would support your business strategy, and how it would help drive user productivity.

- Understanding the potential impact of change to the daily working lives of your users and their roles, as well as how your organisation's culture deals with change.
- Building an understanding of your technology environment, by creating technology matrices aligned to your deployment approach. This helps assess matrix benefit per user profile.
- Engagement of your key stakeholders to ensure alignment with their strategy for communication which, in turn, will ensure that they help drive and affect change.
- Working with your IT function and business engagement leads, to ensure there is a clear understanding of the strategic and business process alignment to your technology deployment.
- Appointing Business Champions to act as the voice of your users and to consolidate all user feedback.

## **ADOPTION: STRATEGY AND PLAN**

An adoption strategy and plan should consider four core pillars: user, business, technology and process, with programme measures built around them to ensure real impact is realised. However, the user remains key. By helping your users to understand why change is happening, how and when they would be affected, and what technology would benefit which processes, communication becomes simpler, as does measurement of return on investment. The adoption strategy and implementation plan should include:

- Analysis using functional matrices of the tooling being considered for the digital transformation – this is to understand any functional overlaps between technologies.
- A Hothouse workshop to add user input to the plan, strategy and impact assessment. Attendees should include Adoption Lead, plus your Business Champions and key stakeholders.
- Understanding and agreeing the delivery approach, phasing and success measures required.
- Provisioning the dependencies required to achieve effective and complete end-to-end implementation.

The output from the above is a strategic plan that will include:

- The overarching communication and adoption framework for the programme approach, by user profile and tool, along with the detail of how the two will interact.
- Training plans aligned to user profiles.
- Definition of key success criteria and how they will be measured.
- Provisioning requirements understood for end-to-end enablement.
- Creation of a programme microsite, to be used as a one-stop-shop for all programme collateral.
- [Optional] Plans for the deployment of floor-walkers on the day of service Go-Live, plus the option to develop local TechCenter and Service Desk solutions, if required.

## **ADOPTION: BUILD**

During the build stage, it is crucial to ensure the impact to your users and your business is understood, contextualised, communicated, publicised and then trained for maximum value. This should include:

- The co-creation, with nominated users and business reps, of the microsite for programme collateral.
- Design and production of the communications and training collateral, ensuring that for each user profile, your appropriate communications or training lead is engaged.
- Conducting ongoing reviews and collaboration with the Business Champions.

- Creating an adoption recovery plan in case Go-Live needs to be delayed.

All supporting collateral is developed in line with the outputs of the Discovery phase, ensuring alignment to the different user profiles and how they would best consume information, training and broader learning activities.

## **IMPLEMENTATION DELIVERY**

This stage delivers the implementation sprints for deployment of the adoption strategy; sprints being easier to manage, with very clear outcomes, whilst also helping your users to absorb the new technology in a phased approach. Implementation also involves constant user feedback, with results assessed throughout to provide a comprehensive insight into progress and results. Key elements of this stage are as follows:

- Launch the microsite.
- Put user and operational enablement in place – i.e. technology ready to deploy and enabled.
- Put soft-launch pilots in place for User Acceptance Testing.
- Execute the communications and training plan, with continuous review and iteration of messaging.
- Deliver the implementation sprints for the deployment of the adoption strategy.
- Deliver seamless technical deployments with user-focused go/no-go process in place.
- Following the launch, keep users supported through a “hyper-care” period to pick up on technical issues and end user problems – i.e. via TechCenters, Floor-Walkers, Self-Service portals, etc.
- If required, implementation of the adoption recovery plan.
- Otherwise, commence reporting on key and defined success measures to track adoption.
- Channel user feedback to the business.

## **SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

This final stage assesses the impact, extent and value of user adoption, such as assessing levels of behavioural change within your user base and measuring the extent to which they have become the norm. This should include engaging Business Champions for feedback so that content – such as the microsite and FAQs – can be updated and refreshed as required.

Also important is to keep measuring adoption rates of the new technologies. This could be via financial measurements (reduction in mobile spend, travel, or software licensing costs), behavioural measurements (number of log-ins, returning users, hit-rates on knowledge articles), or via user satisfaction (surveys and completion of customer satisfaction forms).

# Benefits of User Adoption

The Adoption Framework discussed in the previous section helps the CIO to plan and deliver an outcome that delivers a return more quickly and helps to build user trust in IT. It ensures that your users will adopt and sustain new ways of working that really do add value and improve their working environment, and hence the business benefits from improved productivity and a motivated, engaged workforce.

Here are a few summarised benefits to be realised from a successful User Adoption Framework delivery:

## FOR THE CIO

- Maximises and accelerates the return of technology investments.
- Helps to improve security posture by removing the desire of users and the business to deploy their own shadow IT solutions, and by enabling the decommissioning of less secure legacy tools.
- Introduces new reporting indicators such as Behavioural Change and User Satisfaction.
- Introduces access to a re-usable adoption framework.
- Discovery output offers a clear picture of future customer technology requirements.
- Builds user trust in IT and improves user satisfaction.
- Predictable rather than unexpected adoption rates.

## FOR USERS

- A user-centric approach to the implementation of a Digital Workplace, rather than a tech-centric approach, therefore making technology a better fit to each job role.
- Adoption of new and more efficient ways of working that add value.
- Exploiting new technology to improve task and process execution.
- Building user trust in IT and improving user satisfaction.
- Facilitating much greater internal collaboration with colleagues.
- Supporting worker flexibility.
- Focus on user-driven improvement
- IT seen as an enabler not a blocker.
- Improving working environment.

## FOR THE BUSINESS

- Helps to mitigate the risk of Shadow IT, and better control how and where corporate data is shared.
- Ensures that the strategic promises of a Digital Workplace, such as employee engagement, collaboration and agility, are targeted, driven, delivered and measured.
- Makes tangible cost savings through collaboration technology enablement – i.e. reduced travel, faster decision making, greater output efficiency, etc.
- Harmonises multiple business functions regarding Digital Workplace objectives and deliverables.
- Thanks to an enabled user base, the business grabs a competitive edge through increased workforce motivation, efficiency and productivity.
- Attracts and retains talent.
- Makes you an IT-enabling business.
- Deployment-to-value time improved.

Computacenter has many examples of successfully meeting the “adoption challenge”, applying the above framework to different deployments of different technologies or services. For example, having successfully overseen a recent multi-channel support transition at a large recruitment specialist, Computacenter’s Service Desk is already seeing 76 per cent of the customers’ IT service transactions taking place online when the target was only 50 per cent. Meanwhile an enthusiastic workforce has provided great feedback, from the IT Production Services Director to Sales Consultants to Credit Controllers. The cost savings, speed-to-service and user engagement implications of this and many other deployments, make a very compelling case for the framework.

In summary, our message remains consistent. You must take your multi-faceted workforce with you throughout the entire adoption process: from discovery around user needs, understanding different user personas and articulating what it means for them and why it is being done; through developing a strategy and a plan for enabling users in the digital workplace; all the way through to build and implementation. However, beyond this point, user adoption is still a factor and is all about ensuring you have sustainable behavioural change. This will enable businesses to significantly enhance the user experience and to optimise business return on investment.

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