Microsoft
Surface
Authorised Reseller

Computacenter

THE MANY FACES
OF PRODUCTIVITY

LET'S GO

A NEW MEASURE OF PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity is no longer measured by the hours an employee spends in the office, in the field, or on the shopfloor. In today's distributed workplace, it is all about outcomes.

Remote and distributed working at scale is now a fact of life. More employees than ever are working from home and this has forced a rethink about workforce productivity. At its simplest, this means enabling people to do what they do as efficiently as possible.

The need to keep a distributed workforce productive has been brought into sharp relief. Add to this the prospect of a global recession and shrinking budgets, and it's clear that organisations must empower employees to work at their best – from anywhere.

Employees and employers alike no longer expect the traditional restrictions of 9-to-5 office work to apply if they are to be productive. But what does productivity look like today? How should it be measured?

The 'presenteeism' measure of time spent in the office has become outdated. But introducing technology into the measurement of productivity has both negative and positive implications that must be worked through to ensure your employees are comfortable with these new metrics.

People who have adapted well to working from home have seen their output increase as they avoid unproductive time travelling to and from their usual workplace. Of course, in other instances, productivity has dipped as employees suddenly forced to work from home have struggled to collaborate and use the tools available to them.

In this Executive Briefing, we look at the changing face of productivity, including the roles played by automation, collaboration and data analytics. We describe how Computacenter ensures organisations reap the benefits of both the Microsoft 365 productivity cloud and Windows 10 Operating System. We also consider the new organisational structures needed to enable a distributed workforce.
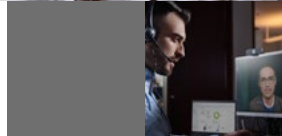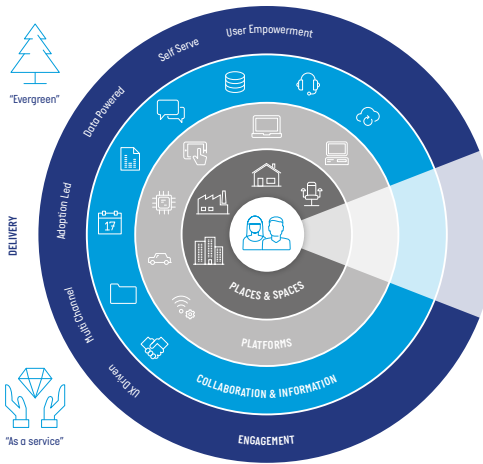
PEOPLE FIRST

Productivity should be viewed at a personal (employee) as well as the organisational level.

In today's digital workplace – whether that's at home, on the road, or in the office – employees are increasingly seeking intuitive and empowering tools to help them do their jobs more effectively.
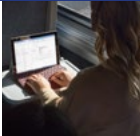
But are there too many ad hoc tools in play and is this hindering productivity? It is not uncommon for an organisation to have four or five tools with which to send a message, and the same for video calling, voice calls, or file storage. This technology is often implemented inconsistently and thus is counterproductive.

As digital workplace tools continue to proliferate, employees need to understand what's in their work toolkit and be given the knowledge to exploit it effectively. The easier the tools are to use, the higher the level of productivity.

The circular diagram labels (outer to inner):

- "Evergreen"
- DELIVERY
- "As a service"
- Self Serve
- User Empowerment
- Data Powered
- Adoption Led
- Multi Channel
- UX Driven
- USER EXPERIENCE
- PLACES & SPACES
- PLATFORMS
- COLLABORATION & INFORMATION
- ENGAGEMENT

Digital Workplace Vision

Enabling users and their business in a digital world

User Centric Solutions
Provide an effective and intuitive working environment

Flexible working environments and locations
Physical and virtual environments enable users to be effective anywhere

Device choice and diversity
Deliver the devices and tools aligned to User needs and preferences

Collaborative Working
Enable effective communication, collaboration and information sharing across teams, business and partners

Multi-channel and proactive User support
Provide support, adoption and User experience, aligned to User requirements

Analysing workstyles

At Computacenter, we advocate focusing on employee experience to ensure people truly benefit from technology. User-centricity is a core component of our vision for a digital workplace – see the Digital Workplace Vision diagram, as shown above. In this vision, we put your people first in solutions that extend into both the physical and virtual environments, where the right devices, tools and technology platforms enable effective collaboration, communication and information sharing. Where employees are engaged in your digital workplace strategy, empowered by a user experience designed around their needs, and with multi-channel access to information and support.

As part of a Workstyle Analysis, we spend a lot of time on persona-based productivity, understanding exactly what people need to be productive before recommending the appropriate tools. What's right for a midwife, for example, will be completely different to what a marketer or app developer needs to be productive.

There are some great aids in the Microsoft toolkit to help boost productivity using data and insights. For example, MyAnalytics in Microsoft 365 gives users personal feedback on how they're spending their time and offers tips to help them work smarter.

Employee experience

The way in which organisations use technology to support productivity is another important contributor to employee experience. The focus must be on your people. This has never been as important as it is today now that millions of employees worldwide are working from home.

Making it easy to get work done must be the mantra. Microsoft 365 offers a solution with its best-in-class Office applications, powerful cloud services, device management, and advanced security. Then, once you've equipped your people with the best technology for their individual needs, they'll simply want it to work. When it goes wrong it must be fixed quickly or risk damaging morale and emotional wellbeing.

At Computacenter, we provide ongoing support that ensures our customers – and their employees – can take full advantage of Microsoft 365 and the 30-plus tools within it.

There's also a big talent upside to putting your people first. Prospective employees with the right skillsets will now start to look at organisations and how they offer the ability to work remotely, the kind of tools they provide, and how they enable interaction with services and colleagues. The employee experience implications in terms of talent retention and attraction must be part of your technology choices.

In the end, if your people aren't productive, your customer experience and your ability to do business will be affected.
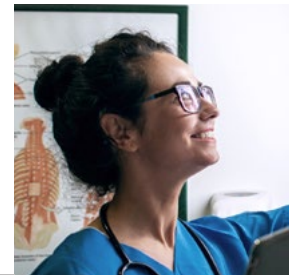
FROM HOURS TO OUTCOMES

We have established that productivity is predicated on helping people to work at their best and in a way that suits them. This means giving employees the means to select the location and device that's right for the task at hand, whether it's a smartphone, Microsoft Surface, or laptop at work, at home, or on the move.

Then what? How do you put in place the new business metrics needed in this distributed workplace? Metrics that take you from 'the hours put in' to 'delivering outcomes'?

Moving from 'presenteeism' to 'output' metrics must be approached sensitively. Companies often say that there is a tricky balancing act to get right between rewarding employees based on the outputs they generate and being seen as a 'spy' on the workforce.

Employees need to believe that the technology being deployed to measure and evaluate their output will help them be more successful. It will steer them towards better working practices and, ultimately, greater job satisfaction.

Managing time

This is important as evidence suggests that many people are spending longer at their desks while working from home because they're not having to commute to and from work. While this might have a short-term impact on productivity, in the longer term it has the potential to be detrimental to employee health.

The personal productivity insights enabled via MyAnalytics are a great asset here. Employees get to see things like their own level of focus, how much time they spend on calls, and how effectively they are networking with their co-workers. This is personal information, so it's then up to each employee to act on it to improve their own productivity, health and wellbeing in the workplace. We're expecting these capabilities to be extended still further.

Measuring usage

Then there are the analytics used by the business, such as the workplace analytics within Microsoft 365. This type of analysis enables the business to view all the Microsoft toolsets in play across the organisation and measure usage. For example, if only 50 per cent of the workforce is using a collaboration tool only 50 per cent of the time, do you need to provide training on the tool to get more uptake and a better ROI with improved productivity?

Microsoft is working on enhanced analytics to give better insight into device health, which could improve both the employee experience and productivity levels. For example, analytics that measure how much processor is being used, which affects the speed of the machine, or what the bandwidth is like, can help to drive adaptive and pre-emptive support.

Ethical monitoring

There is an interesting angle that business leaders also need to consider here – that of ethics. During the early days of Covid-19 lockdown, users reported that some of the collaboration tools on the market were too invasive, with one measuring the engagement of people on video calls.

Even before the pandemic, increasingly sophisticated tools for data gathering and employee monitoring were making their way into the digital workplace. While this offered a view of productivity for employers, it also raised employee concerns about privacy. Appropriate policy and correct usage of these tools will help to avoid this issue.

Business leaders would be wise to promote ethical monitoring with the emphasis on employee wellbeing, which is especially important at a time when meetings aren't being held face-to-face. It's not about 'big brother' but about using analytics into user behaviours to manage people's hours remotely for better work allocation and to ensure staff stay healthy and happy.
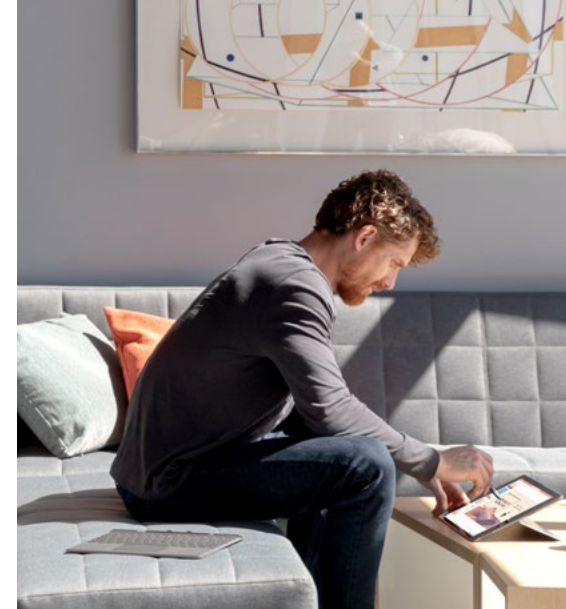
AUTOMATING FOR PRODUCTIVITY

No discussion on productivity and the tools that enable it would be complete without specific reference to automation.

Increasingly, routine, repetitive, and simplistic tasks are being automated with technology. We recognise that this can be a concern for those employees who find their roles reduced by automation. So, it's important that they're made aware of how automation can free them up to do more value-added work that requires their intelligence, creativity and decision making.

At Computacenter, we provide advisory services around Microsoft 365, suggesting ways in which our customers can use the tools more productively and automate manually intensive processes.

After demonstrating the Microsoft Teams capabilities to the midwifery team in an NHS Trust, we helped to move them from paper-based rostering to faster, more efficient digital means of allocating shifts. It had previously been difficult for nurses to change a shift at short notice. Moving the process onto Microsoft Teams and utilising a mobile app meant the nurses had more time to spend with the new mums and babies in the community and less on manually changing a rota.

Automated workflows

Within our own organisation, we have replaced a heavily manual workflow process in our sales function with automation. This has not only cut day-to-day admin but means that our salespeople have more time to spend with their customers and business partners.

Another example might be a robotic process that extracts data coming into the organisation by way of multiple forms and inputs the relevant data into the financial reporting application. All with no manual input. And with more efficiency and accuracy than is possible manually.

This is digital transformation in action. We're increasingly seeing organisations boosting their productivity in this way. It's all about using the right kind of technology and introducing an automated workflow that supplements the human workflow.
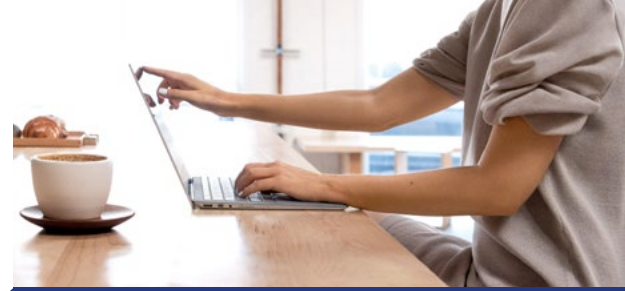
More power, less effort

Microsoft Power Platform is a leading set of tools and one of the more sophisticated in the Microsoft 365 toolkit. It enables organisations to digitise, automate processes and build applications with minimal human intervention.

At Computacenter, we're working with customers to help them build and develop their automation capabilities on the Power Platform. For example, with Power Virtual Agent you can create a text chatbot that yields productivity gains by removing the need for human interaction with automated text replies to simple predefined questions.

We know that many organisations aren't yet exploiting the full productivity benefits of Power Platform. Our advisory services are designed to make this happen.
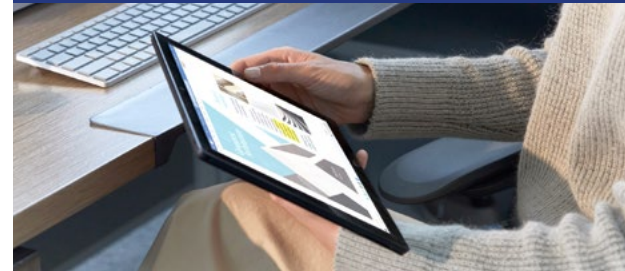
STAYING PRODUCTIVE

Floods, extreme weather conditions and, of course, a global pandemic. How do you maintain productivity when the unexpected happens?

We had to move quickly when our customers asked us to support their employees and the sudden shift to remote working at the outbreak of Covid-19. How could we keep people productive as things went wrong?

From infrastructure and services, to rapidly deployed mobile devices, we pivoted away from office-based support to enabling employees in their homes.

Innovative approaches, such as virtual engineers and virtual tech bars were complemented by the linking of our own Microsoft Teams platform with those of our customers. Where employees suddenly found themselves at home without access to the right technology to collaborate and keep working, we stepped in. We worked with our customers to ship out devices of all type, including Microsoft products, across the remote workforce.

Suddenly, all organisations have realised that they need to build in access to work, from anywhere, into their business continuity plans. And, at Computacenter, we continue to work with Microsoft to build the capability to support users, wherever their devices and applications are.

Access to work

Microsoft is continually investing in the accessibility of its products as Microsoft 365 evolves. Using our Workstyle Analysis to understand individual needs, we assess and deploy Microsoft tools such as Windows Hello face recognition, laptops with fingerprint recognition, and real-time audio transcription in Microsoft Teams. These all help to support inclusion and diversity polices embracing those who might otherwise not be able to engage in proactive workplace decisions and collaboration. Microsoft plans to expand these tools with combined real-time transcription and translation.

As the future of work is increasingly out of the office, these tools will empower a new workforce, opening a new talent pool by enabling more people to work in a way that's right for them.

As the UK's only Surface Authorised Service Provider, Computacenter is uniquely placed to help our customers by deploying the right devices to them at scale – wherever their people work – and by keeping them up and running on the rare occasion that things go wrong.

SIX STEPS TO GREATER PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity rests on giving employees the technology they need to work at their best, however they choose to work.

Work from anywhere, at any time. It's a simple proposition and one that Computacenter brings to life with flexible hardware solutions, cloud technologies and the right devices and support services based on individual employee needs.

Whether it's the mobile, flexible, and intuitive technologies within the Windows 10 Operating System, or the powerful productivity tools in Microsoft 365, the right technology drives productivity.

Always current technology

A productive digital workplace demands technology that is always current, devices that are continually refreshed, and operating systems and applications that are never out of date. We work with Microsoft to build and create this evergreen technology landscape for our customers.

We adapt our solutions to different workstyles and provide people with new ways to be more productive. From moving our customers away from their legacy platforms onto Microsoft 365, to ensuring user adoption of the best devices for their roles, we empower people to do more for themselves. Keeping them working, fulfilled and productive in all eventualities.

Finding answers

We believe that IT and business leaders must work with each other to ask – and answer – a set of six important questions that will guide how they future proof the productivity of their remote and distributed workforce:

1. Do you know what your people do on a day-to-day basis and what they need to do it?

2. Do your people have the knowledge they need to use the tools you've invested in?

3. Does your organisation recognise and reward people who identify processes or tasks that could be streamlined to make them more efficient?

4. Do you offer guidance to managers on how to encourage and support their people if their ways of working have changed?

5. Are your people aware of the possibilities of automation and the tools available to them?

6. Has your approach to working time and working life changed since March 2020 and, if so, how has this been communicated to your employees?

GET IN TOUCH

For more information about Computacenter's partnership with Microsoft and how it helps to accelerate business in a hybrid IT landscape, please contact your Computacenter Account Manager, call 01707 631000 or email enquiries@computacenter.com.

Visit our website to find out more about how Digital Me solutions from Computacenter are already helping to empower, equip and assist our customers' teams.

Learn more **here**

About Computacenter

Computacenter is a leading independent technology partner, trusted by large corporate and public sector organisations. We help our customers to source, transform and manage their IT infrastructure to deliver digital transformation, enabling users and their business. Computacenter is a public company quoted on the London FTSE 250 (CCC.L) and employs over 16,000 people worldwide.

www.computacenter.com

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