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eBook

Digital Workplace: the Gateway to Hybrid Workforce_

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At the beginning of 2020, organizations had to haphazardly switch to remote work. Initially, the transition seemed like a temporary measure. Two years onward, fully remote and/or hybrid work has progressively become the dominant mode of collaboration.

> **"**
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> A **quarter** of the global knowledge workers will work from home most of the time this year. Another **45%** — two to three days per week.
>
> Gartner ↗

Despite the initial setbacks and operational challenges, the majority of workers (83%) now name the hybrid model as the "optimal for them". Alas, only 40% presently feel that they can be equally effective when working onsite and remotely[1].

Why is there such a disparity in aspiration and actuality? Because corporate operational models and managerial approaches have not fully caught up with the new ways of working. Traditional management practices were focused on coaching people to work faster and harder with their hands — first on conveyor belts, next around the office headquarters.

However, the nature of work has changed significantly between the early 20th and 21st centuries. Over 1 billion people[2] now perform the so-called "knowledge work" — analytical, creative, theoretic, conceptual, and other high-level knowledge activities, aimed at developing products or services (primarily digital ones).

Knowledge workers stand at the vanguard of digital transformations — a shift to generating value through digital-first business models and obtaining market differentiation via technology investments. Leaders are bullish to find innovative ways to derive value and drive revenues.

Yet, in their aspirations to bigger targets, many overlook the fact that great talent needs suitable tools and processes for performing value-oriented work and delivering innovative thinking.

[1] The Future of Work. Accenture. Retrieved January 13th, 2022.

[2] 2019: When We Exceeded 1 Billion Knowledge Workers. Gartner. Retrieved March 10th, 2022.

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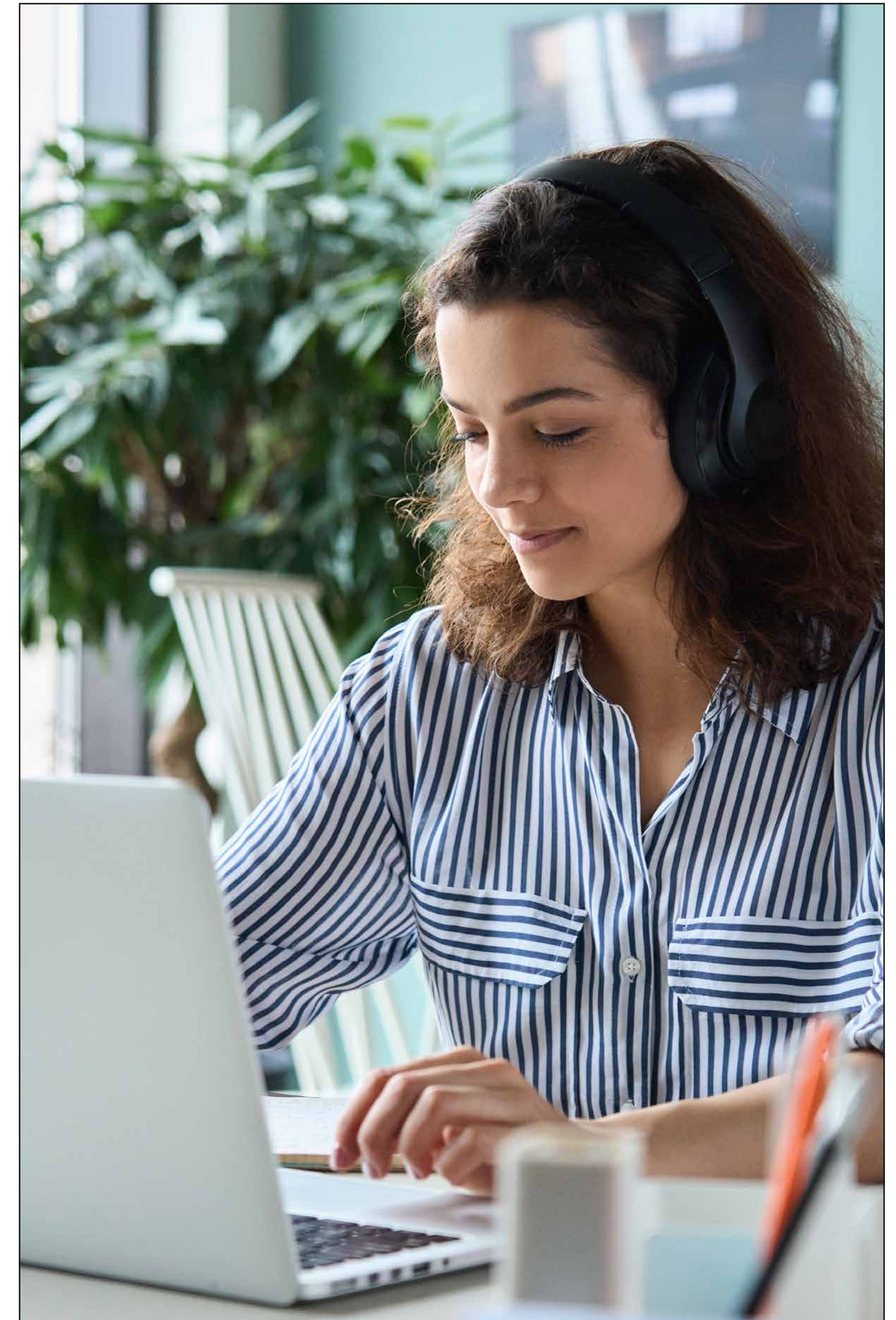
What is a Digital Workplace?_

The Digital Workplace (DWP) is a collection of operational practices and software solutions that enable more effective, agile, and location-agnostic ways of working.

Traditional workplace design was centered on improving physical office layouts and corporate intranets to create a satisfying and streamlined work experience. However, as employees now work from different locations — home, office, or at the client-site — companies need to cultivate a new environment, conducive to digital-first, productive-anywhere work.
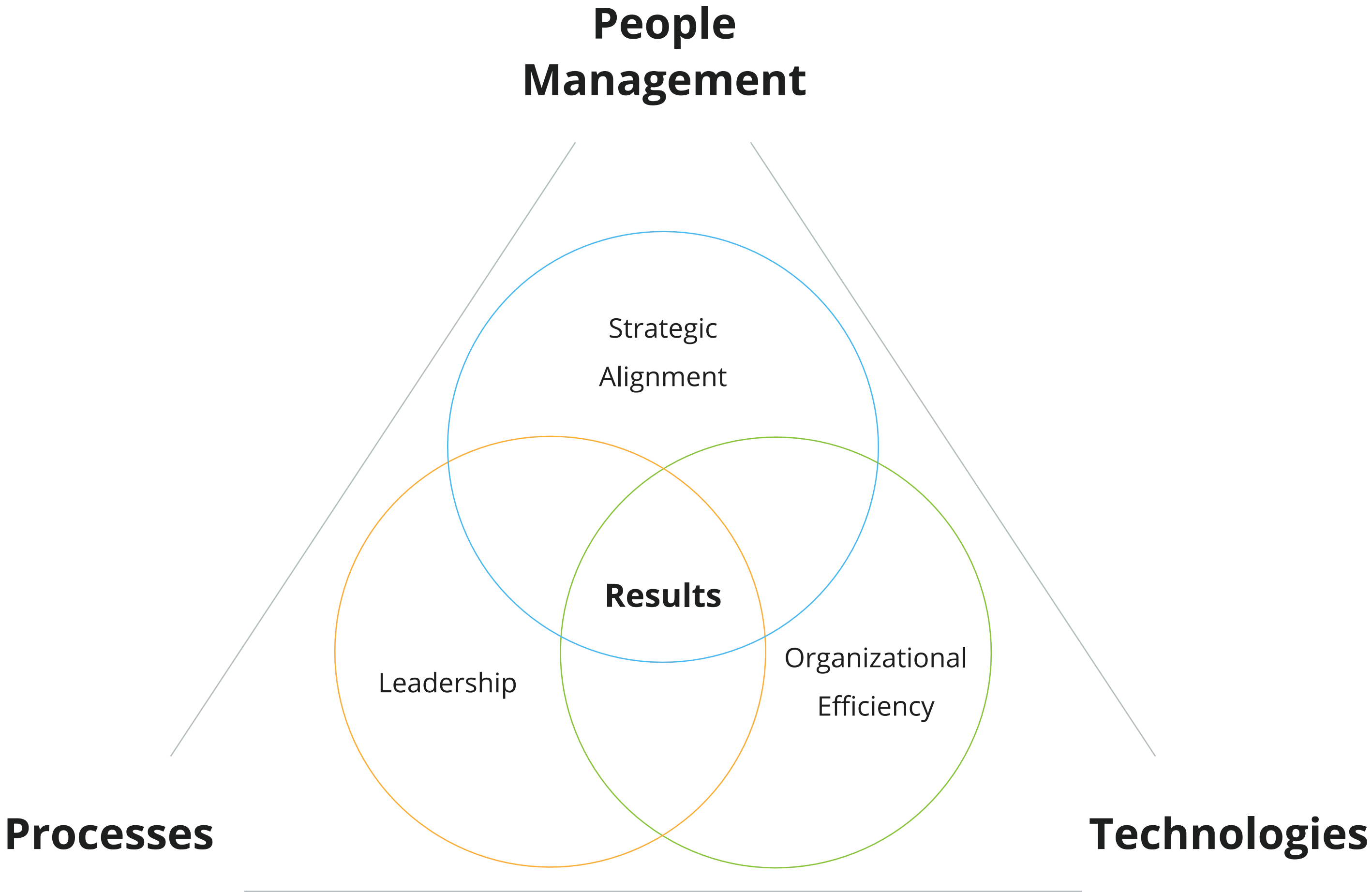
> **"**
>
> **63%** of high-growth organizations have enabled productivity-anywhere workforce models.
>
> _____
>
> Accenture ↗

Three Elements of Digital Workplaces

People
Management

Strategic
Alignment

Results

Leadership

Organizational
Efficiency

Processes

Technologies

Processes:

Adaptable, effective workflows with reduced dependency on the worker's location.

- Semi-automated standard operating procedures (SOPs)

- Workflows, aligned with the nature of work

- Employee flexibility in selecting and configuring optimal flows

Technologies:

Integrated workspace platforms, offering a collection of business apps, analytics solutions, and automation tools across devices.

- Connected core business applications

- Multiple communication and collaboration tools

- Knowledge sharing repositories

- Employee mobility solutions

- Self-service analytics

- Personal productivity and automation tools

People management:

New team structures and individualized approaches to setting up talents for a high degree of success.

- Proactive communication and empowerment over rigid workplace rules

- A higher degree of autonomy and individual accountability

- New collaboration and communication models, accounting for async work

- Self-access to learning opportunities, training, and upskilling

- Emotional and physical support at a distance

Why Now is the Time to Rethink Your Ways of Working_

During the imposed transition to remote work, many organizations left communication and collaboration practices unchanged. This led to meeting burnout and a constant flow of disruptive instant messages. Instead of taking the advantage of new asynchronous communication mediums — from discussion forums to voice/video memos — many transposed existing practices onto distributed work environment with a little degree of success.

Digital has changed what we work on and how we get the job done. With the new levers for value generation in place, businesses now also need to complete a wider range of transformations across:

- **Team structures:**
  functional teams > vertical organizations

- **Cooperation models:** coherence > coercion

- **Individual performance:** autonomy > isolation

- **Joint work:** distributed > co-located

- **Training and development:**
  personalized > standardized

Hybrid work environments offer employees more flexibility in terms of when, where, and how to get their jobs done. The challenge, however, is to create an environment where collaboration and communication micro-opportunities emerge at the right time and place, rather than being imposed by policies or result only out of necessity.

Types of Collaboration Models

	Synchronous Work	Asynchronous Work
Co-located	Working Together, Together	Working Alone, Together
Distributed	Working Together, Apart	Working Alone, Apart

Examples: onsite meetings, offsite team meetups, joint strategic sessions, 1:1 meetings

Examples: "deep" work, training/upskilling, async check-ins

Source ↗

Tech Alignment

Connectivity products — cloud collaboration platforms, human capital management (HCM), and learning management systems (LMS) among others — make remote work possible. Nevertheless, they make up only a small percentage of what is needed to support hybrid workforces in the future.

From adaptable cybersecurity controls to unconstrained access to locally hosted applications, a great host of considerations goes into adapting existing IT infrastructure for distributed work.

Digital Workplace Benefits

Desktop virtualization

Intelligent automation

Centralized and secure management and support

Improved incident response and recovery

Data-driven insights

Sensitive data protection and access control

The added value of employee flexibility

Bottlenecks occur when remote workers cannot access on-premises applications. For that reason, migration to the cloud has become a core part of digital workplace transformations. Cloud-based infrastructure enables secure access to work-critical business tools and corporate data, while also establishing better visibility across the growing IT infrastructure portfolio. Unified identity and access management, more efficient ITSM, and consistent security coverage are some of the happy "by-products" of cloud transformation that leaders gain as part of DWP adoption.

Successful Adopters of Hybrid Work

Microsoft

Slack

JPMorgan Chase

Salesforce

Amazon

Fujitsu

Deutsche Bank

Twitter

SIEMENS Siemens

Digital Workplace as the Pillar of Better Talent Management_

The benefits of digital workplace platforms extend beyond allowing teams to work from any location faster and smarter. They also help leaders improve **employee engagement, job satisfaction, creativity, and sense of purpose** — four crucial factors for employee retention.

The high levels of fatigue and ambivalence have ultimately led to the "Great Resignation" — the mass exodus of experienced talent from the workforce. Talent shortages are now acute across nearly all sectors. Such

knowledge-intensive industries as technology, financial services, telecom, media, and manufacturing are facing the most pressure to retain and hire for open roles. Over 55% of leaders agree that turnover rates will increase further this year, while talent acquisition will remain constrained[3].

While digital platforms alone cannot force your employees to stay with your company, they are the essential pillar of creating better employee experience.

What is Employee Experience?

Employee experience is the sum of actions your company takes to design, introduce, and cultivate a work environment that amplifies talent potential and empowers people to achieve outstanding results.

Workforce Still Seeks Greater Support from Employers

64%
of workers[4]

Felt burned out in 2021. That is a 21% increase compared to the year before.

20%
of global workers[5]

Say they feel engaged at work. 15% identify themselves as highly disengaged and at risk of leaving.

31%
of employees[5]

Feel disgruntled and another 15% express apathy towards the future of work.

[3] Talent shortage moves to a chronic problem in 2022. Korn Ferry. Retrieved January 13th, 2022.

[4] Overwhelmed: Threats to Employee Wellbeing Persist & Employer Support Remains Critical. meQuilibrium. Retrieved January 13th, 2022.

[5] U.S. employee engagement holds steady in the first half of 2021. Gallup.com. Retrieved January 13th, 2022.

[6] The Future of Work. Accenture. Retrieved January 13th, 2022.

Benefits of Digital Workplace

Direct Benefits

○ **Enhanced productivity** due to easy access to data, structured workflows, curated document access, transparent metrics, and personalized task lists — all accessible from any device or location.

○ **Reduced operational costs.** Digital workplace solutions help automate and eliminate redundant workflows, increase personal efficiency and cumulative outputs of employees.

> "
>
> Employees earn back on average **65 to 108 hours per year** with the Microsoft Teams platform.
>
> Forrester ↗

> "
>
> Microsoft Teams platform provides the organization with enterprise-grade security and advanced IT controls, decreasing the probability of a breach by **1% to 5%**, depending on the level of adoption.
>
> Forrester ↗

○ **Increased revenue.** Speed up time-to-market for new products and services by operating agile, efficient, and empowered teams. Improve customer service levels and tap into new revenue streams.

○ **Security-rich environment.** Implement adaptable security controls and granular permission access to corporate systems for external users. Benefit from built-in, innovative security monitoring tools.

Indirect Benefits

○ **Amplified employee engagement.** Provide greater support to hybrid employees by proactively addressing their day-to-day needs and aspirations for professional growth and development.

○ **Higher employee satisfaction.** Develop a people-first culture, promoting diversity of thought, freedom of expression, and a sense of connection to a greater purpose.

○ **Elevated customer experience.** When your organization is flexible, coherent, and effective from within, it is capable of leaving a stronger mark with the consumers.

Digital Workplace:
a Collection of Use Cases_

Digital workplace isn't a standalone offering — it's a compendium of new workflows and tools, designed to match the nature of work your teams do. In that regard, DWP platforms act as a technical springboard for a variety of use cases.

Such platforms help connect different departments within your organization into a unified virtual collaboration space, where teams can work separately and jointly on specific tasks or company-wide initiatives. In this section, we illustrate several use cases you can enable with Microsoft digital workplace solutions.

Procurement	Finance	Marketing
HR	**Digital Workplace**	Security
Quality assurance	Sales	and more
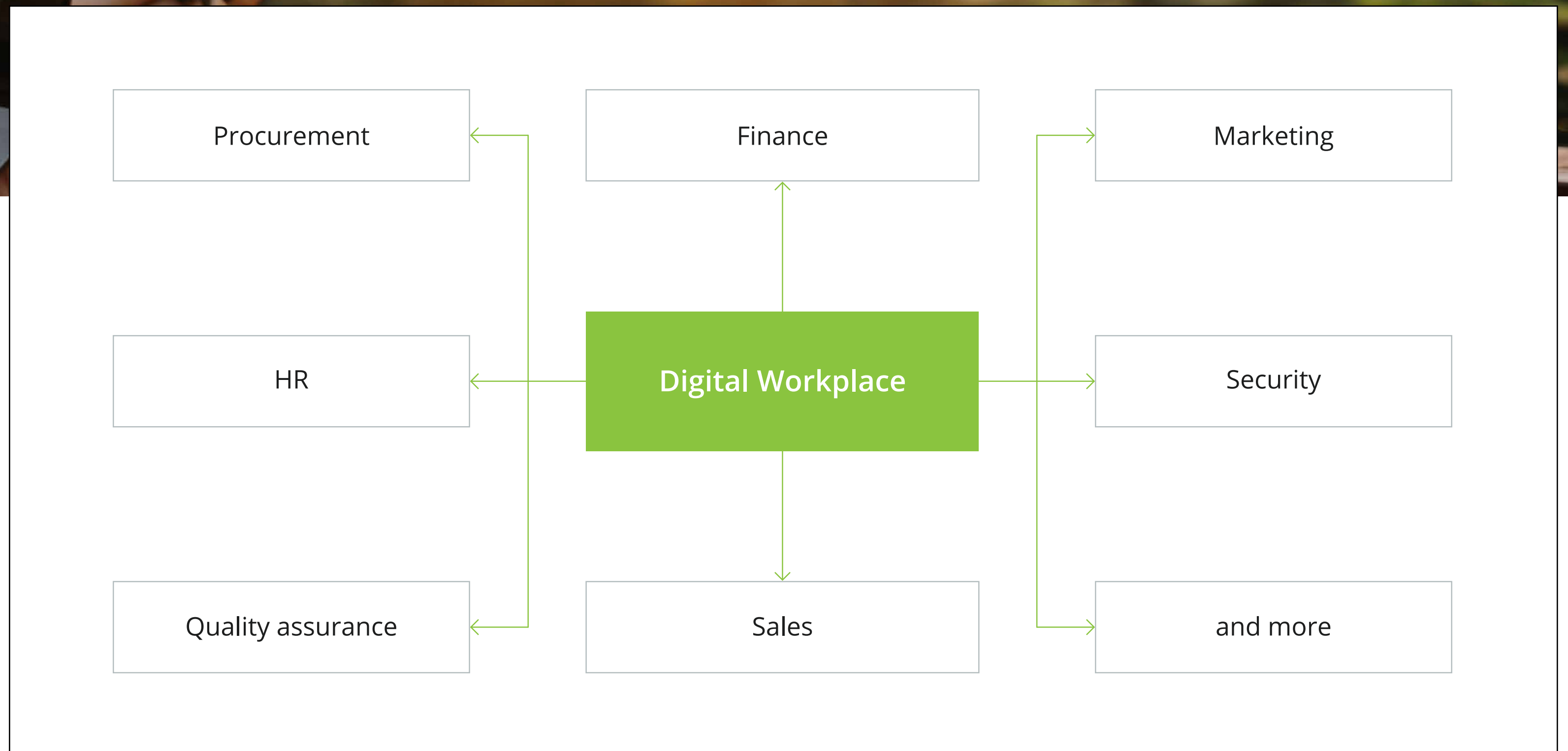
Access from Anywhere

Whether your employees are meeting with clients, working on the floor, or checking in from a home office, they would have access to the information they need at their fingertips. Modern DWP solutions such as Microsoft Teams and Microsoft 365 come with complementary mobile, tablet, and web apps. Each solution can be further extended and integrated with other products from the ecosystem or augmented with custom integrations with other business products or IoT devices.

Solutions you can develop:

○ Employee portals / digital workspaces

○ Complementary mobile apps

○ Connected solutions for fieldwork

Knowledge Sharing

Create and curate all company information in a secure, permissioned repository. Set up online knowledge databases with convenient access to educational articles, technical documentation, video tutorials, interactive training materials, and online courses. You can configure your DWP platform to serve as an experience portal to your internal employees, catering to every leg of their journey — onboarding, day-to-day work, and upskilling.

Solutions you can develop:

○ Employee portals / digital workspaces

○ Corporate wiki

○ Learning hubs

○ Employee center

○ ITSM knowledge base

○ Compliance database

○ HR policy portal

○ Personal reports and dashboards
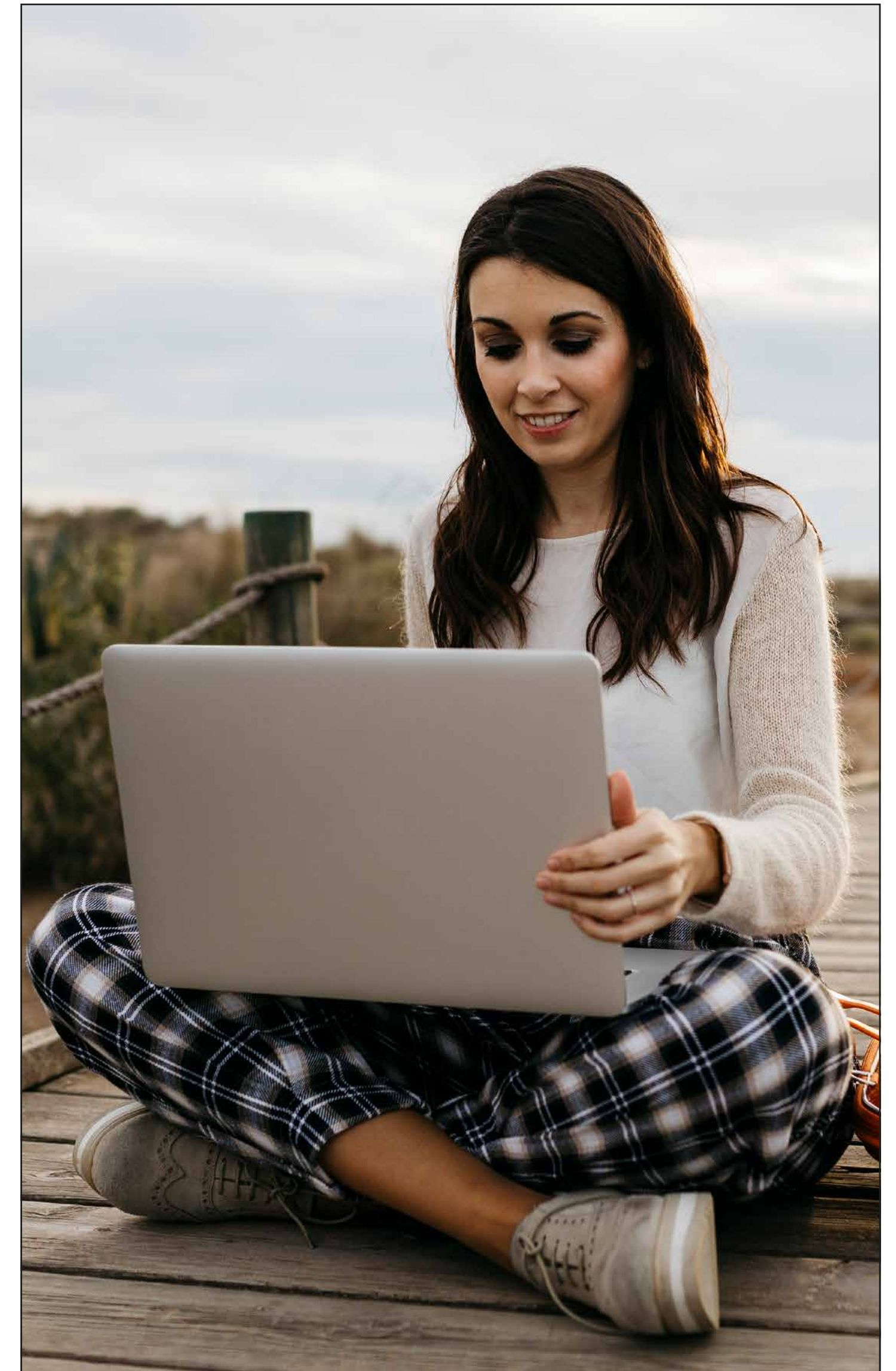
Dynamic Collaboration

Help your teams stay connected without disrupting their focus due to task- and screen-switching. Create workflows that combine both face-to-face and asynchronous collaboration tools. Enable your people to create personalized communication schedules and protect time, while being kept in the loop on priority issues using a set of custom notification controls. Receive access to workplace analytics to understand how your people perform.

Collaborative solutions:

- Microsoft Teams
- Microsoft Viva
- Microsoft Planner
- Microsoft OneNote

Unified Service Delivery

Provide employees with a convenient space for requesting different types of services and support when they need it. Improve internal service delivery across functions by developing a streamlined flow for processing, approving, and adjusting different requests — be it a change in working hours or a procurement query for extra supplies. Obtain complete visibility into the speed, quality, and satisfaction with the corporate services provisioning.

Functions you can cover:

- HR & People Operations
- IT service management
- Procurement
- Legal services
- Field service management
- Facilities management

Employee Experience Management

Minimize the inflow of requests and confirmation by adopting a unified portal for HR and people management. Manage payroll, work shifts, vacations, and absences from a single interface and send dynamic updates to people concerned. Ensure that every employee receives timely access to company assets, tools, and data they need to perform their work, plus any extra 1:1 support they need to stay engaged, productive, and motivated.
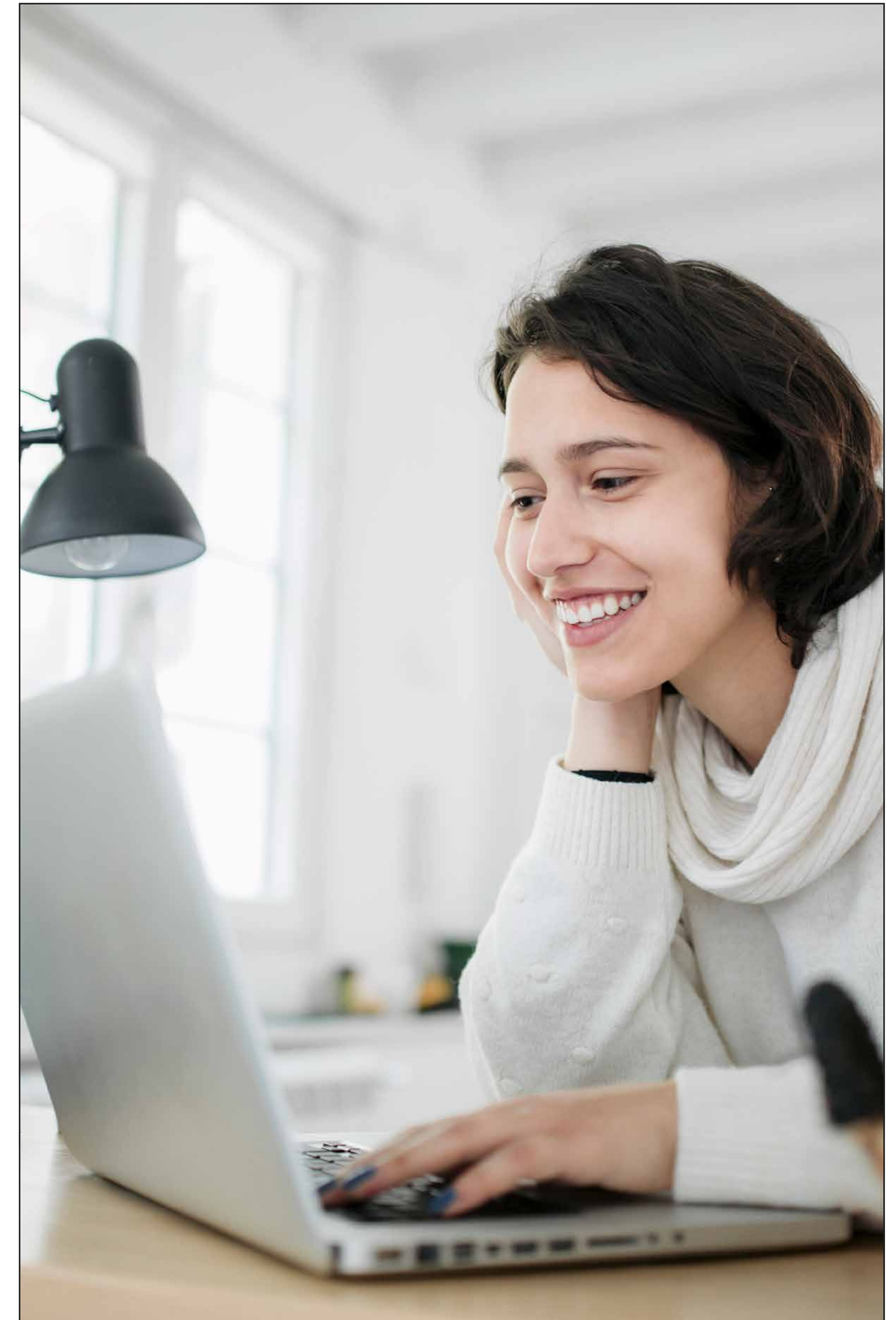
Solutions:

○ Shifts in Microsoft Teams

○ Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance

○ Microsoft Viva

Personal Productivity

Enable your people to learn more about their style of work through personalized reports and analytics. Microsoft provides a collection of tools to collaborate at a distance and around the office premises. From robust search across all shared documents to efficient task management and customizable notification schedules, your people can choose to select how they prefer to communicate, exchange updates, and lead projects to successful closure.

Solutions:

○ Microsoft Viva Insights

○ Microsoft Teams

○ Microsoft Planner

○ Microsoft 365

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# Assembling Your Digital Workplace Toolkit with Microsoft

Microsoft is a long-term leader in workplace solutions and as of recently — a trailblazer in cloud connectivity. Among Global 2000 companies, 56% use Microsoft Azure[7] as a cloud infrastructure provider for critical business applications.

Microsoft Teams and **Microsoft Viva** are the two company flagship products for online collaboration. Each comes with a set of robust native features and capabilities for integrating custom solutions — both full-code and low-code, using such tools as Power Apps. Each platform provides access to other innovative solutions from the vendor such as seamless and secure identity management (Azure AD), self-service business analytics (Power BI), or integrations with other popular products like Microsoft Dynamics 365.

Similar to furnishing an office, Microsoft lets you select the ultimate configuration of tools your people need to stay happy, effective, and productive.

[7] Microsoft Azure has an edge over Amazon Web Services at big companies, Goldman Sachs Survey says. CNBC. Retrieved January 14th, 2022.
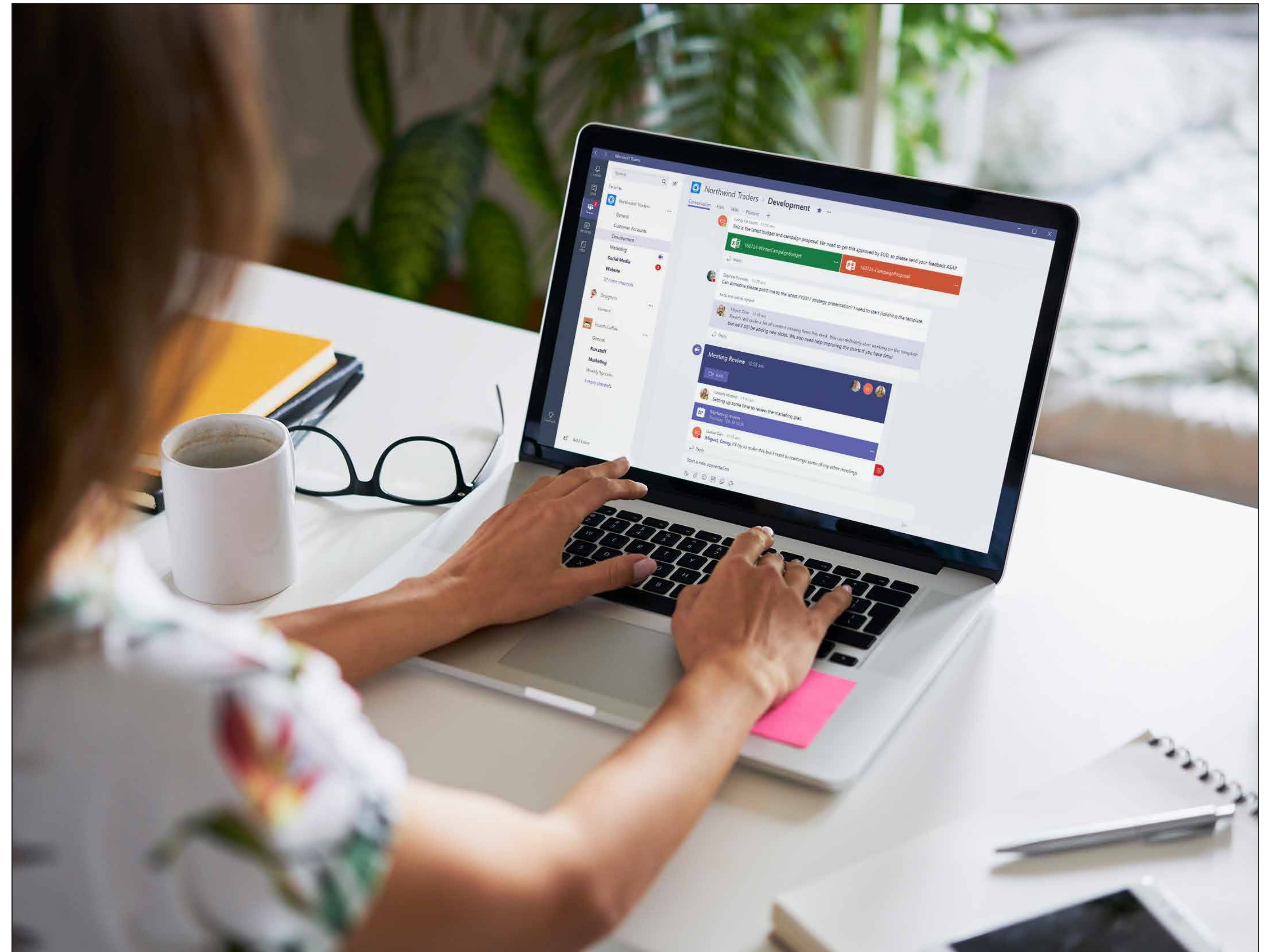
Infopulse Digital Workplace Solution: Design Examples
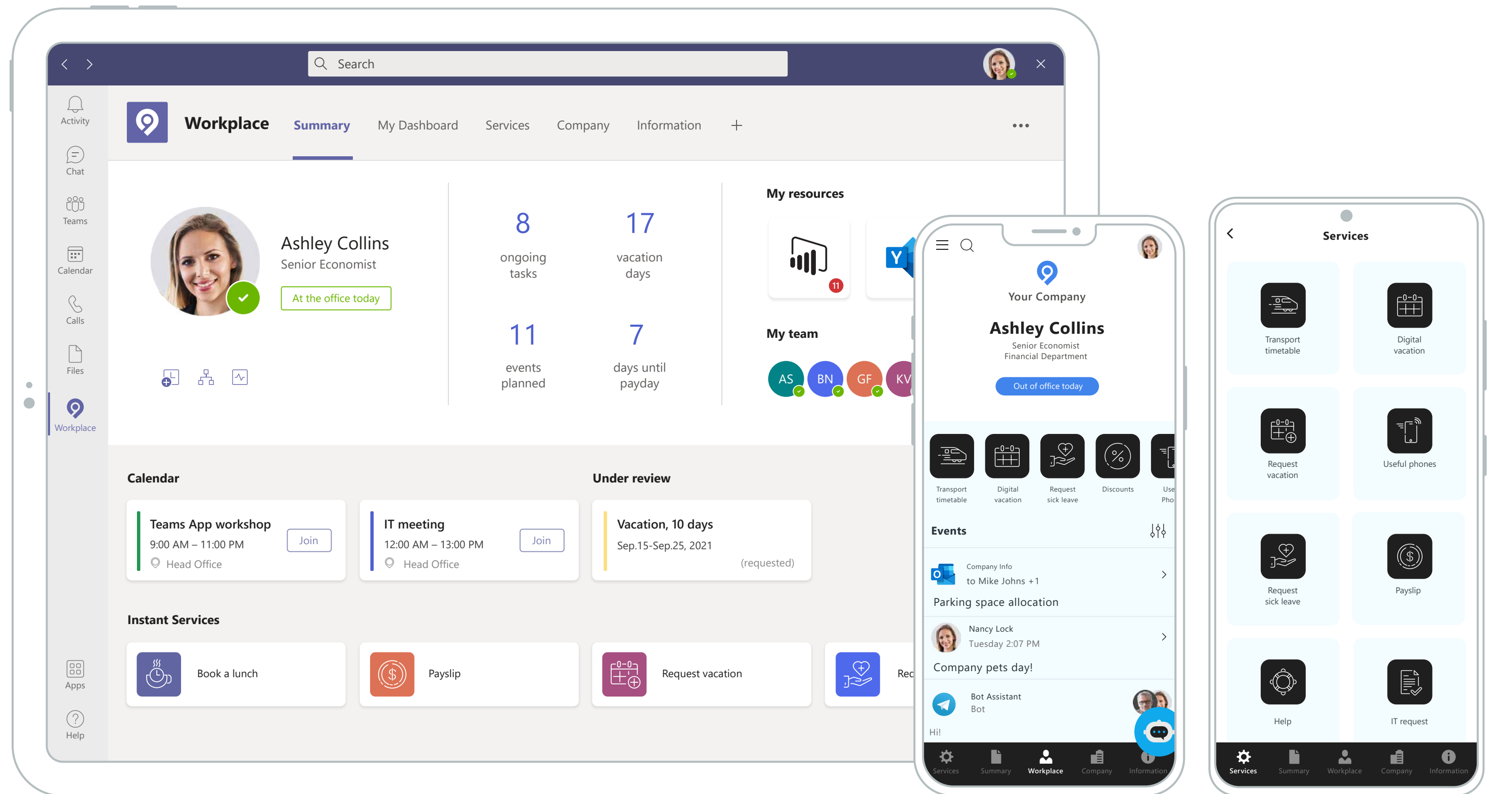
Desktop and Mobile Platform

A digital workplace is a hub, featuring a collection of connected apps and services under its hood. From this perspective, Microsoft Teams acts as a presentation layer for users — intuitive, customizable, and dynamically updated. You can choose the general workspace layout for different teams and functions and equip it with all the apps they need to perform their job.

Solutions to include:

○ Instant messaging and video conferencing

○ Business and productivity apps

○ Collaboration and knowledge sharing tools

○ Task and project management

○ Corporate services and self-service tools

○ Personal reports and analytics

Chatbots and Smart Assistants

Help your teams get settled at their digital workspace and progressively discover new powerful features with the help of intelligent assistance. Digital fluency allows people to get the most out of the technology they are using and develop more agile ways of working. However, every person starts at a slightly different learning stage. To ensure steady progress, you can integrate low-code Power Virtual Agents chatbots into the Teams platform to promote knowledge sharing and provide self-service user support.

Solutions chatbots can provide:

○ Information look-up

○ Knowledge sharing

○ New user onboarding

○ Self-service user support

○ Simple query resolution

○ Automated tasks management

○ Personalized coaching

○ Access to self-service functionality

Intelligent Automation

From booking meetings to filling standard forms, a lot of hours go to waste handling mundane tasks. Codify semi-automated workflows for manual, repetitive, and error-prone tasks to shift your teams' focus to more value-oriented work. Microsoft Teams integrates directly with Power Automate — a non-invasive, intelligent workflow automation platform. Power Automate lets you build integrations between different apps and then run standard process execution automatically. The biggest advantage of Power Automate is that you can start with simple digital process automation scenarios such as aggregating approvals and then introduce more complex RPA or intelligent automation scenarios.

Solutions Power Automate can provide:

○ Connect over 500 apps to build automated workflows

○ Use pre-made code flow templates for common actions

○ Automation for web, mobile, and desktop apps

○ Access to pre-made AI builder for process flow automation
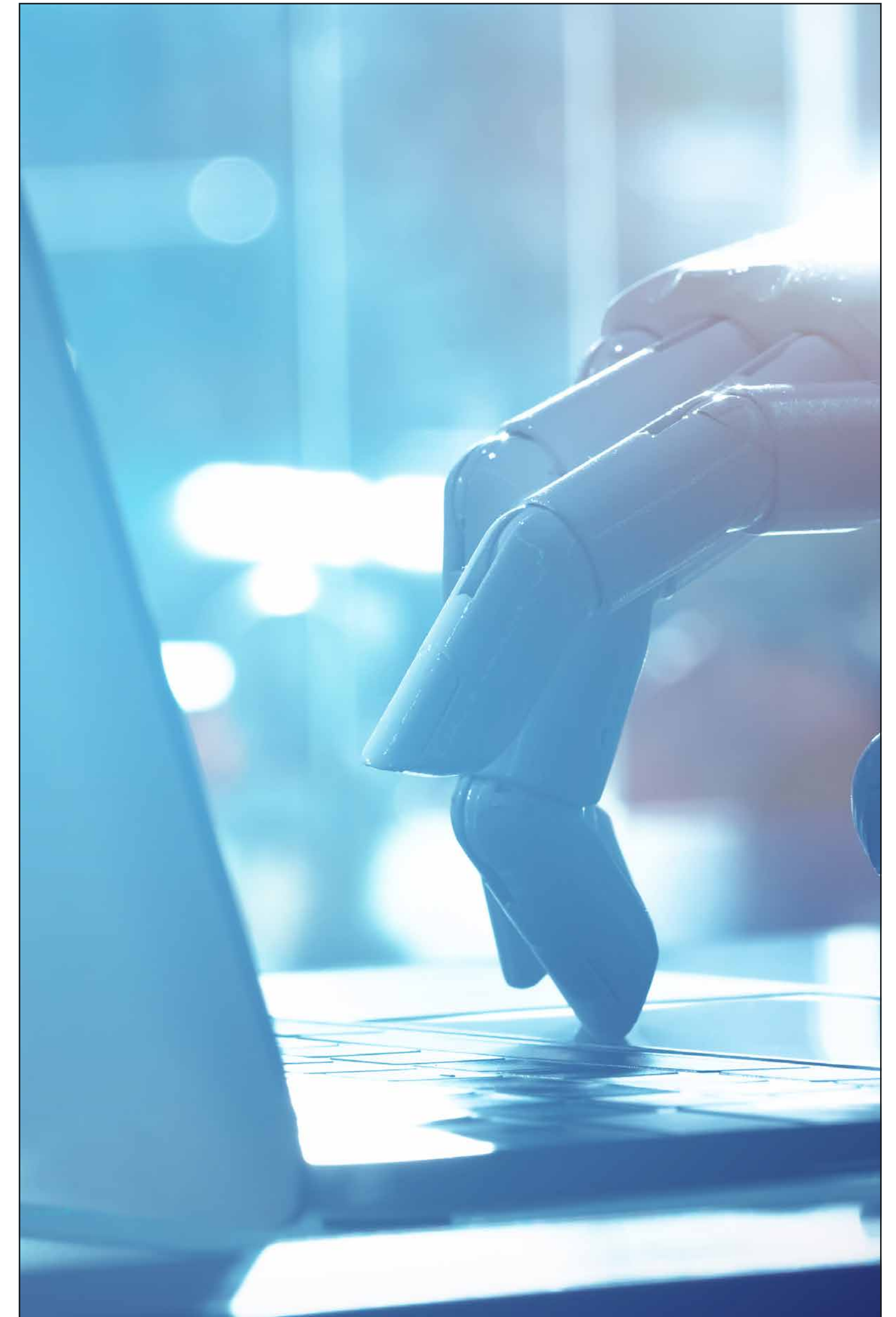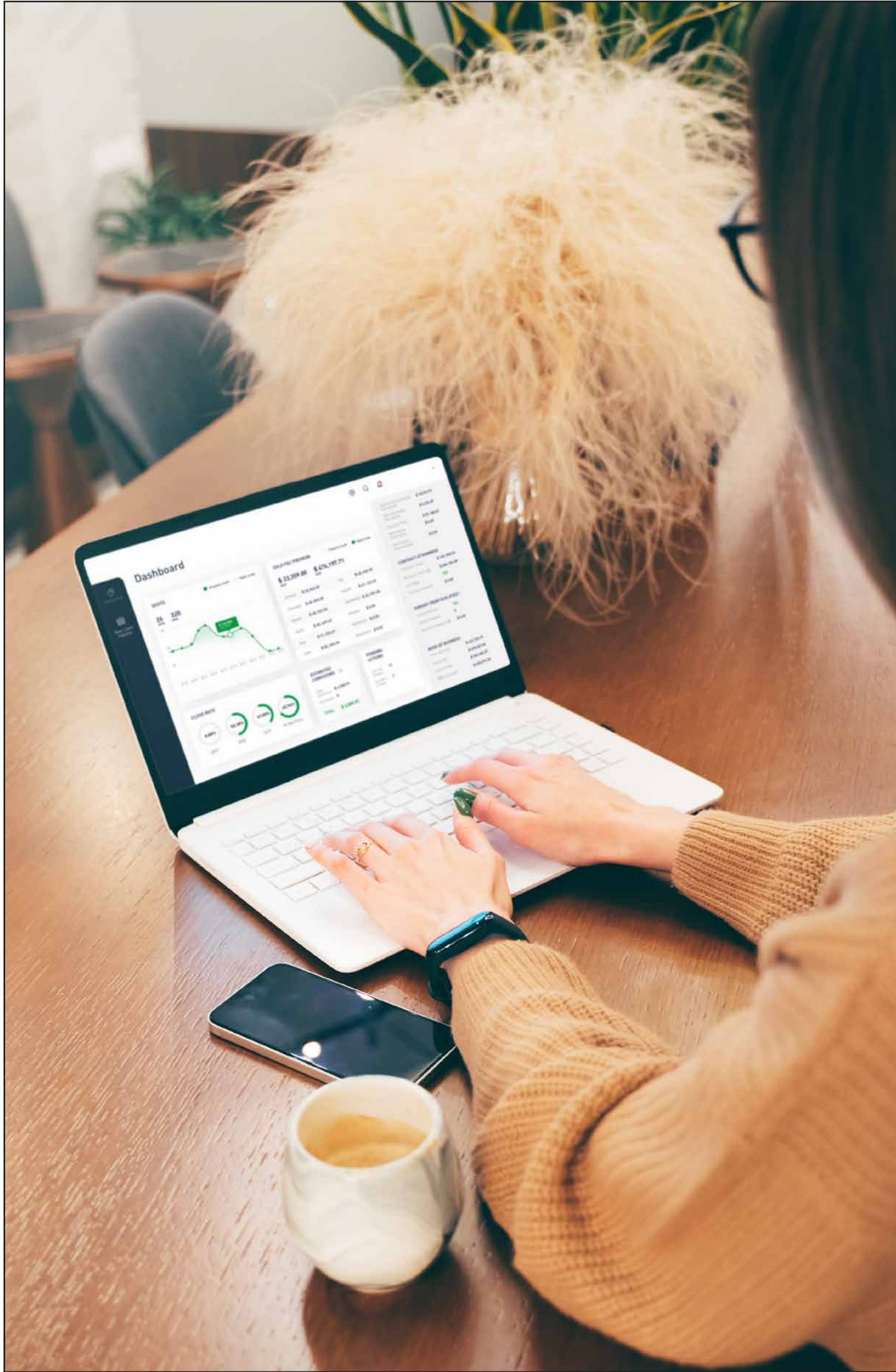
Real-Time Analytics

Learn about your employee wellbeing, engagement, and satisfaction using Viva Insights — a background, privacy-oriented tool, collecting insights about your teams' work styles. The app helps employees (and their managers) develop more productive habits — protect their time, take timely breaks, focus attention on most relevant information and high priority tasks (thanks to an AI-based task manager).

On a wider level, you can bring Power BI capabilities into Teams to discern findings and collaborate on reports. Bring data to every corner of your organization in a matter of several taps and empower your teams to experiment with self-service analytics.

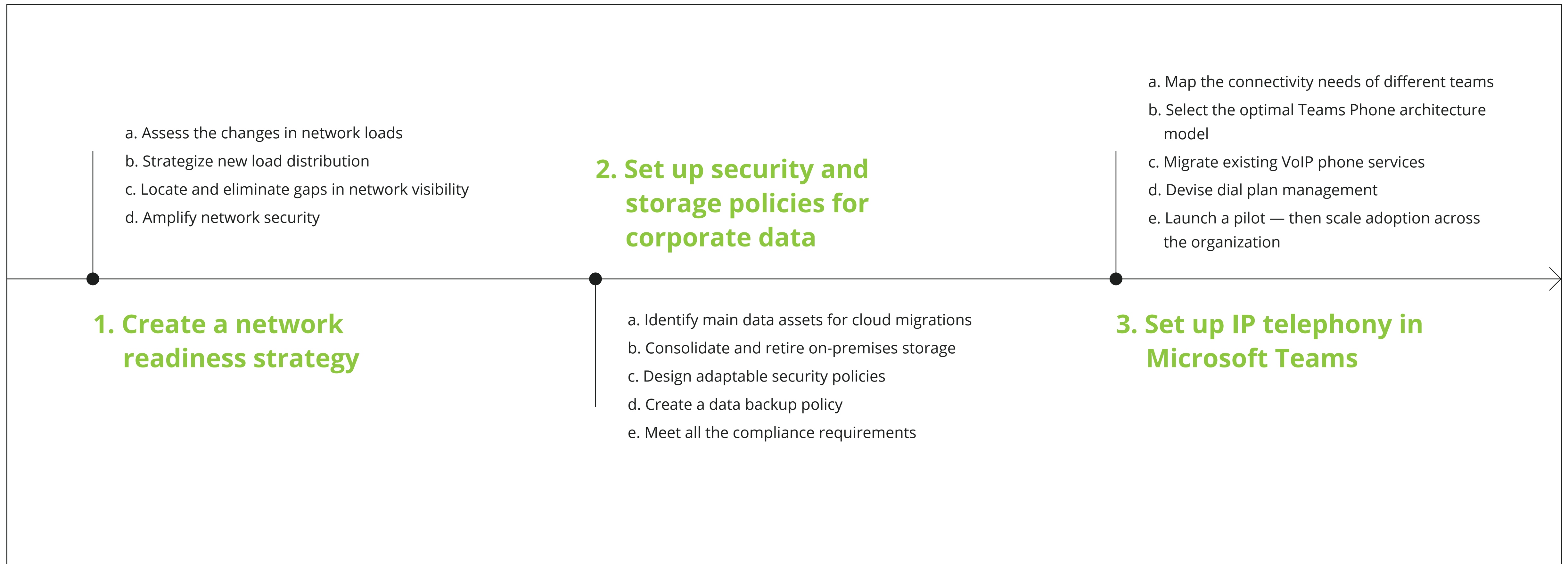**Solutions analytics tools can provide:**

- Data-driven decision-making

- Real-time collaboration on reports

- Hotkey access to latest insights

- Self-service report generation

- Workplace analytics and team reports

- User activity reports

- Team effectiveness reports

- Employee outcome reports

- Personalized user insights

Getting Primed for Digital Workplace Adoption_

Digital workplace adoption assumes "stitching together" the currently disparate business systems and team-specific processes into a consolidated cloud-based hub, where all workflows are delivered as consumer-like experiences.

To understand how different elements of your technical estate can be connected for optimal performance, Infopulse suggests the next steps:

a. Map the connectivity needs of different teams

b. Select the optimal Teams Phone architecture model

c. Migrate existing VoIP phone services

d. Devise dial plan management

e. Launch a pilot — then scale adoption across the organization

a. Assess the changes in network loads

b. Strategize new load distribution

c. Locate and eliminate gaps in network visibility

d. Amplify network security

2. Set up security and storage policies for corporate data

1. Create a network readiness strategy

a. Identify main data assets for cloud migrations

b. Consolidate and retire on-premises storage

c. Design adaptable security policies

d. Create a data backup policy

e. Meet all the compliance requirements

3. Set up IP telephony in Microsoft Teams

a. Create a reference architecture

b. Select the optimal plan and license(s)

c. Configure connections with other
   Microsoft products

d. Design and setup individual team workspaces

a. Design a set of standard profiles
   for different teams

b. Set up Microsoft Viva Insights
   (workplace analytics)

c. Help teams configure personalized
   productivity metrics

5. Create an employee onboarding plan

4. Integrate Microsoft Teams with corporate systems

a. Integrate Viva Learn into Microsoft Teams

b. Set up an employee training module

c. Conduct training and onboarding for all teams

6. Configure employee workspaces

a. Determine which other systems should be
   integrated into Teams (CRM, ERP, etc.)

b. Prioritize top candidates for integration

c. Progressively add connectors to other
   business apps

8. Add a chatbot for routine task automation

Learn more about
digital workplace ↗
adoption

7. Integrate corporate business applications into Microsoft Teams

a. Use Power Virtual Agents to design a simple
   chatbot for routine task automation

b. Or consider custom chatbot development to
   tackle more complex tasks

About Infopulse

Infopulse, part of the leading Nordic digital services company Tietoevry, is an international vendor of services in the areas of Software R&D, Application Management, Cloud & IT Operations, and Cybersecurity to SMEs and Fortune 100 companies across the globe. Founded in 1991, the company has a team of over 2,300 professionals and is represented in 7 countries across Europe and the Americas.

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