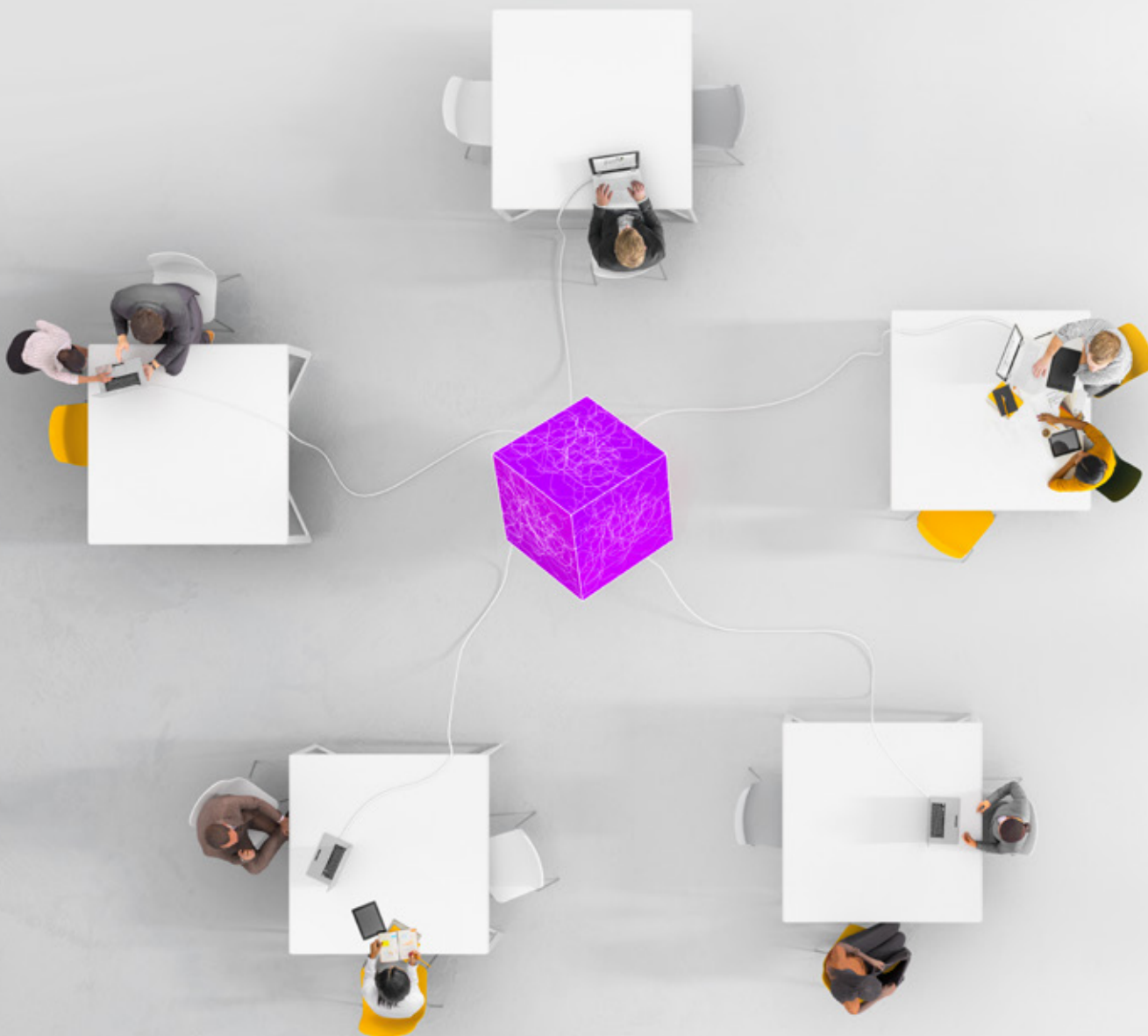accenture

Designing a workplace experience to drive topline growth

You're laser-focused on the customer experience, but are you also thinking about the workplace experience that enables your people to serve customers effectively?

For years, customer experience (CX) has been a key focus for organizations looking for a powerful competitive differentiator. But leading companies are starting to realize that delivering great CX is easier when you have a strong employee experience (EX) creating an environment and a culture that enables and encourages employees to collaborate, develop their skills and be more productive

The fact is that every business outcome—from productivity and efficiency to talent retention, innovation and growth—starts with your employees.

A new approach combining technology, operations, culture and employee experience in a holistic way is now needed to fill out the overall experience picture: This we call WX, or "Workplace Experience."

A great WX is no longer a nice to have, it's a must have. According to Gartner[1], "by 2020, the greatest source of competitive advantage for 30% of organizations will come from the workforce's ability to creatively exploit digital technologies."

Our WX approach embraces the entire workplace to drive sustainable value. It combines technology, operations, culture and employee experience in a holistic approach focused on cost efficiency, productivity and growth.

What does WX add to the discussion? WX is partly about the employee experience, to be sure. But it adds the critical perspective of what platforms, devices, physical spaces, user interfaces, collaboration tools and ways of working are necessary for people to perform at high levels now, and then to innovate toward future business goals and ways of working.

Focusing on WX will drive business benefits including an increase in employee engagement, boost productivity and improve the customer experience. Research has shown that companies delivering a great employee experience outperform the Standard & Poor's (S&P) 500 by 122 percent. And companies with highly engaged workforces are 21 percent[2] more profitable than those with poor engagement.[3]
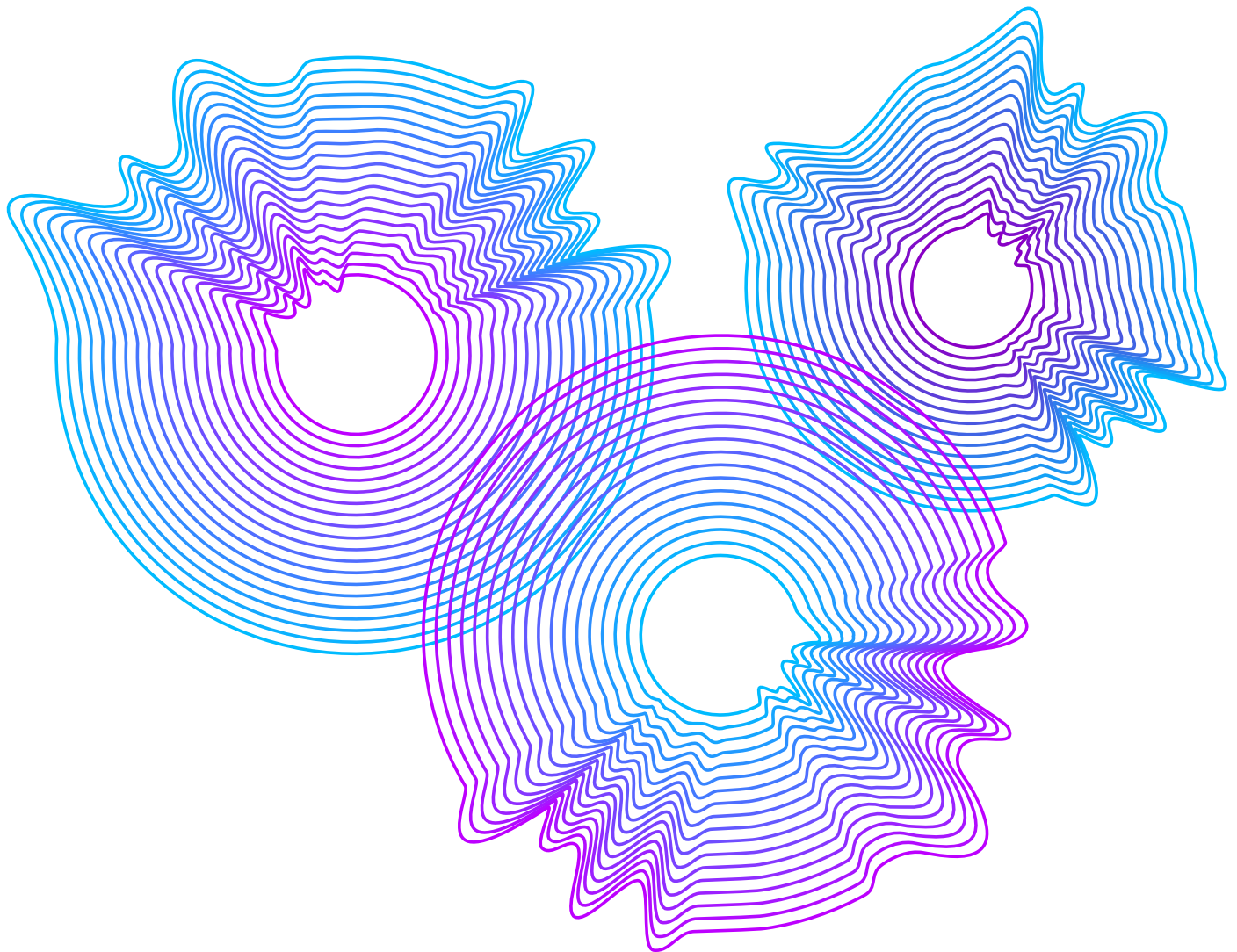
THE MAKE-UP OF THE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

In our WX approach, three key enablers come together to create workplace experiences that drive better CX—and deliver sustainable business value. WX includes both the digital workplace and the make-up of the workforce of the future required to fully take advantage of digital.

Figure 1: Designing an effective workplace experience depends on technology and processes, as well as culture, organization and workforce make-up

Re-imagined culture and employee experience

Workplace **WX** Experience

Modernized platforms

Optimized operations

Instead of addressing transformation in silos, Workplace Experience brings together the key drivers in one, integrated discipline to create sustainable value:

Modernized platforms

In which IT and business leaders work together to design and deploy cost-efficient, highly responsive and secure evergreen workplace platforms to help your people to work in new ways such as augmenting human intelligence with technology. For example, by giving employees the tools to take the point of sale to the customer, wherever they are in the store, increasing customers' propensity to buy and making it easier to complete the purchase.

Reimagined culture and employee experience

Increase the productivity and engagement of your talent by creating enhanced employee experiences that have a direct impact on your customer experiences. Recognizing that employee experience is just as important as customer experience involves a big culture shift, but it's a critical step.

Optimized operations

Drive sustainable growth, new sources of revenue and innovation by putting workplace at the heart of your business evolution. With the right tooling and information, employees can deliver more responsive, personalized, high-quality CX in a profitable manner. It could be as simple as providing frontline employees with mobile, real-time insight into accurate inventory, so they can give customers a faster, more seamless experience.
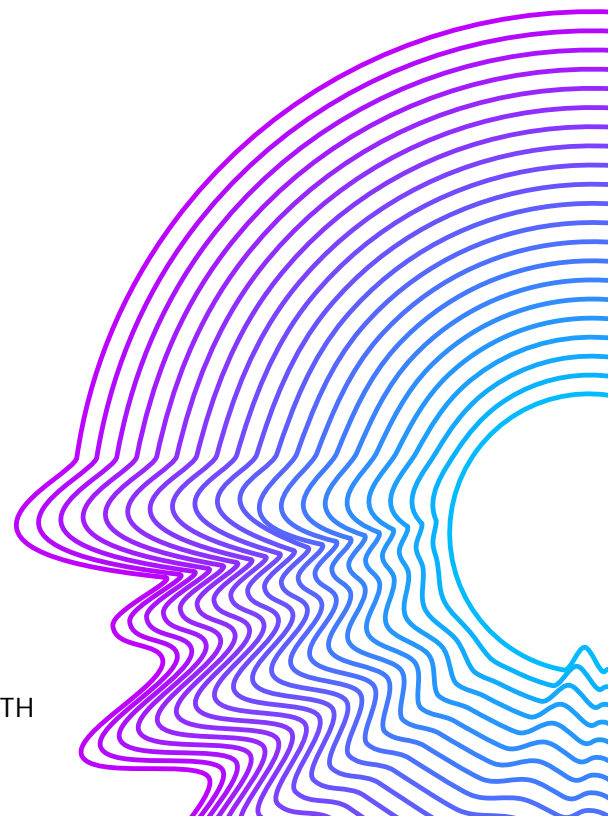
An effective workplace experience is one that helps the workforce transition from doing work on traditional desktops to work on any device, at any location, at any time and over any network connection.

Through the use of analytics, virtualization and cloud-based technologies, companies can work in new, digital ways using cloud and mobility. Employees can communicate seamlessly and securely with one another, as well as customers and business partners, using voice, video, messaging, and content-sharing services.

In designing and maintaining an effective workplace experience, companies should address not only the Technology, but also the following:

Physical experiences

Choices related to facilities and physical workplace environment

Human experiences

Choices related to interactions with others inside and outside the organisation

Digital experiences

Choices related to how employees perform their jobs using technology

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH AT EVERY LEVEL

For WX to work, the business groups within organizations can't work in silos. There must be close collaboration and communication between IT, HR, Operations and Channel leaders to set the WX strategy, pilot and prove the impact on CX and profit, and then scale it out to the entire business.

It's only by working together across business functions that you'll create workplace experiences that engage and motivate employees to deliver outstanding (and profitable) customer experiences. CIO's, CHRO's and CEO's need to drive the right culture in the workplace to change the mindset.

Employees should feel they are enabled and empowered rather than controlled, this should lead to much greater results for the organizations. People are generally comfortable with technology in their personal lives and want more from their workplace or something that matches it. They don't want to feel like they are told what they can and can't do. By empowering the employees with technology, it should allow innovation to develop, rather than be stifled.

It is not a case of the IT department deploying tools and then looking for a problem, it is a case of technology creating a culture that helps employees reach the goals the business requires, anytime, anywhere.

REBOOTING YOUR WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE: WHERE TO FOCUS FIRST

First and foremost, companies should start thinking of subpar workforce performance as a workplace experience issue, not just a technology shortcoming. It is important to remove roadblocks and day-to-day friction exacerbated by too many systems, inconsistent interfaces, and too much information.

Then, several focus areas can put your workplace experience transformation on the right path:

Encourage an agile, collaborative culture

Approaching a workplace transformation from a human perspective creates an environment where support for change starts at the ground floor. This is essential, because it allows your employees to experience the shift as a positive transition instead of a negative one. With a people-first approach, sourcing the new talent you need to succeed will be easier. Likewise, you won't have a hard time holding onto the essential talent you already have.[4]

Design processes from a workplace experience perspective

The mere availability of supporting platforms and technologies isn't enough. Use of those enablers must be integrated or "baked in" to typical processes workers follow to perform their jobs.

Work closely with your security teams

Security is, of course, high on the agenda for any organization operating in the digital age. Security must be integrated with digital workplace services, providing for more complete solutions and immediately addressing some of the top-of-mind concerns of corporate IT.

Diagnose your network readiness

Evaluate LAN, WAN and wireless for cloud communication-based services. This can mitigate the risks of poor quality of service and drive better utilization.

**Perform a segmentation & needs analysis**

Identify specific user needs, scenarios and use cases. Determine individual communication requirements and overall program impact.

Measure and track progress

You're probably thinking that workforce and workplace effectiveness are notoriously difficult to measure and track. In the past, you'd have been right, most of the time. Today, however, companies can perform effective, AI-powered benchmarking, giving them a sense of how their workplace experience capabilities stack up against others in their industry. The benchmark then serves as a kind of "starting point" to help companies see clearly how they progress over time based on their efforts.

Find appropriate expertise

In some cases, managed services for the digital workplace should be considered. It's critical to understand which technologies are right for the business, and both when and how to implement. With a managed services approach, organizations can reimagine their workplace environments, and then avail themselves of a complete lifecycle of services, from upfront diagnostics, strategy and planning through large-scale transformation and ongoing operations.
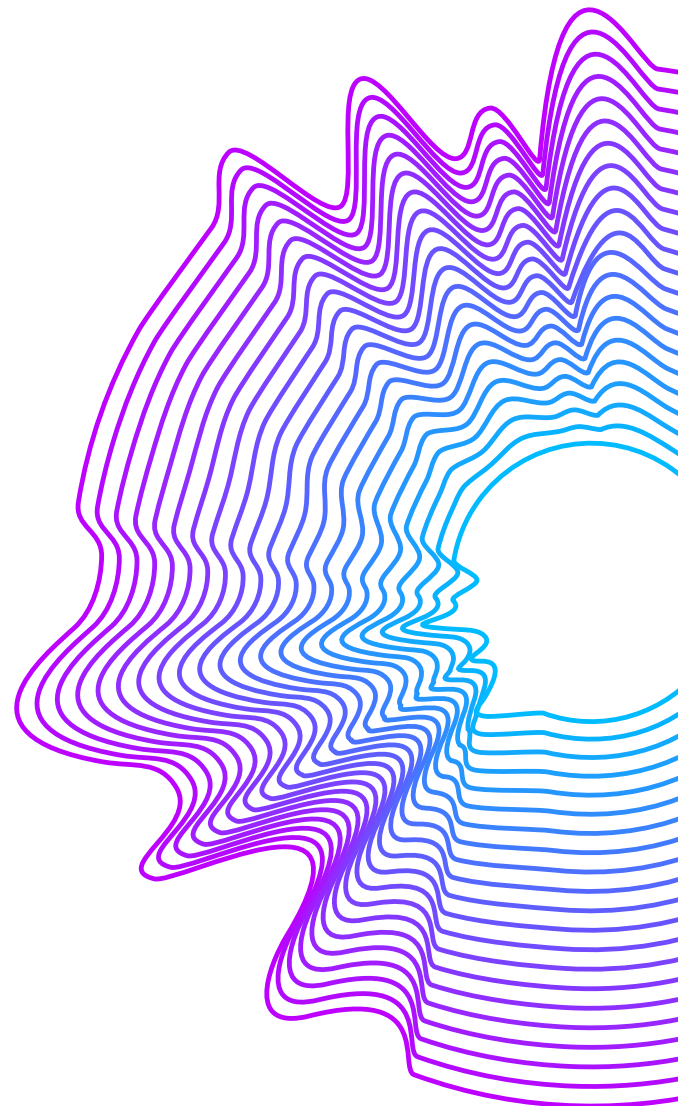
CONCLUSION:
REENGINEERING THE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

The goal ultimately is to re-engineer the end-to-end workplace experience (including EX) so that it has parity with CX. An equation that summarizes this well is: WX + CX = ROI+.[5] That is, if you can integrate your employee/workplace experience (WX) with your methods and systems for delivering a world-class customer experience (CX), you can achieve a higher return on investment than you could by focusing on only one part of the equation.

Notes

1. "How to Market and Sell Digital Workplace Solutions," Gartner, Craig Roth, Feb. 23, 2018

2. Glassdoor study, 2015, https://www.glassdoor.com/press/company-culture-pay/

3. Gallup Q12 meta-analysis report, 2016, http://news.gallup.com/reports/191489/q12-meta-analysis-report-2016.aspx

4. https://www.accenture-insights.nl/en-us/articles/why-culture-key-era-digital-transformation

5. "Employee Experience Reimagined," Accenture, 2017. https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insight-employee-experience-reimagined

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