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Working Digitally

New trends in Sales and Business interactions

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Executive Summary

Until this year, the idea of remote working raised a myriad of questions. From what are we remote? Our colleagues? Our clients? Our office space or manual processes? Trailing organizations are now reacting to this new environment with stop-gap digital tools. Average organizations are extending existing “work from home” (WFH) practices to all applicable employees rather than only those who merited special treatment. What of the leading organizations? Since this is our new-normal, we can gather insights about our future from these leading organizations. They champion “Digital working” regardless of location, with teams, tactics, and technologies similarly leveraged whether in the corporate office, on the road, or in the home. Trace3’s analysis looks at what we can expect from the future and how to best prepare for sustained digital working approaches.

Report Scope

Based on the variety of data sources being analyzed, digital working trends have diverged into three clear organizational archetypes defined by the behaviors of reactive, responsive, and proactive organizations. The scope of this report is the analysis archetypes, specifically exploring the four domains of organizational change that impact this business capability.

This study was conducted from the customer's point of view, gathering feedback from actual users, client use-cases, published information, and direct information from industry experts. It analyzes each archetype on the four components found to be most critical to customer success:

- Employee Engagement
- Process Management

- Data Access and Security
- Digital Tooling

Research Method

This Trace3 Research Trend Report's scope is based on research requests received from Trace3 customers and field engineers. From these requests, relevant areas of the technical landscape were mapped out including the identification of affected 360 View use cases and the primary players in these use cases, plus the mandatory and desirable feature sets defined. Key vendors were then given the opportunity to present, describe, and demonstrate their current product offerings. After detailed analysis, comparison matrices were compiled and refined from which predictions and recommendations were drawn.

Did You Know...

- 56% of the U.S. workforce holds a job compatible with remote work. [1]
- Until COVID-19, only 3.6% of the compatible workforce worked at home half-time or more. [1]
- During the stay-at-home orders, an estimated 48% of the workforce works in non-corporate offices. [2]
- The #1 objection to allowing work from home is loss of immediate control by management. [1]
- 27% of organizations (Trailing) had no continuity plan to accommodate working from home. [3]
- 63% of organizations (Average) had some plans but lacked the tools or technologies at scale. [3]
- 10% of organizations (Leading) had mature remote working practices in place. [3]

Landscape

Looking forward, 78% of organizations anticipate the need for sustained digital working strategies for a significant portion of their workforce. This change represents a significant advantage to leading organizations, as well as an opportunity for trailing and average organizations who make the investments to close the gap. Long-term studies show organizations with the most mature digital working strategies can increase market-share, productivity, and employee retention while decreasing expenses and environmental impact. The benefits are, in part, directly related to WHF initiatives as well as the necessary supporting digital transformation strategies implemented by the most successful organizations.

For this study, organizations were stratified into three distinct archetypes that indicate maturity in digital transformation directly related to remote working.

- **Trailing Organizations (27%):** Trailing organizations have no corporate plans for remote working or the plans are ad-hoc; developed on an individual case basis. They lack standardized tactics for engaging employees, digitizing processes, maintaining productivity, accessing data securely, or provisioning technologies.

- **Average Organizations (63%):** Average organizations have some corporate governance for remote working or work-from-home scenarios but are limited to employees who have special needs or as a special perk. They often have a variety of legacy remote working technologies such as virtual private networks (VPN) and traditional end-point security, as well as a limited number of fully digitized business processes. They also lack standardized tactics for digital employee engagement, productivity management, secure access to data and orchestration, and automation tools.
- **Leading Organizations (10%):** Leading organizations have the most mature digital working strategies designed for sustained, long-term digital working. Most of these organizations are digital natives or legacy organizations that have invested heavily in digital transformation activities and organizational change. They have robust corporate governance and digital working practices are available to all applicable employees. They also have modern digital working technologies in place such as cloud-based desktops, application publishing, zero-trust security and identify, and access management capabilities fully deployed.

As we look deeper into the capabilities and strategies of leading organizations, certain distinct trends emerge around Employee Engagement, Process Management, Secure Data Access, and Digital Tooling. Additionally, the most successful organizations have strategies to mature these distinct disciplines in parity with one another to ensure continuity in organizational change. The most challenged organizations rapidly scale out digital tooling in a reactive manner without equally maturing governance and process management capabilities resulting in data breaches, employee disengagement, and lost productivity.

The most successful organizations have approaches to address the following top three considerations.

- **Employee Engagement:**
 - Productivity management: *management tools and techniques to measure employee productivity individually, as teams, and corporately.*
 - Communication: *In addition to digital collaboration tools, organizational expectations around the use and standardization of communications.*
 - Training and Onboarding: *Programs for training and coaching employees accustomed to digital working.*
- **Process Management:**
 - Identification: *ability to catalogue and triage mission-critical process in operations and sales.*

- Digitization: *a focus on digitizing processes whenever and wherever possible.*
- Automation: *technical and organizational capability to automate processes.*

- **Secure Data Access:**
 - Secure file access: *capability to provide secure and auditable access to files and data marts across devices, locations, and hosting architectures.*
 - Identity and Access Management (IAM): *Ability to positively identify employees, clients, and partners via multi-factor authentication.*
 - Analysis and visualization: *real-time access to analysis and visualization of internal and external trend data; specifically, for sales, operations, finances, and productivity.*

- **Digital Tooling:**
 - Collaboration tools: *focused standardization of collaboration tools including video conferencing, chat, office productivity suites, and idea generation.*
 - Supply chain and Capacity Management: *strategic partnerships for access to flexible end-user computing and data center capacity.*
 - End-point and Network Security: *zero-trust and micro-segmented security architectures*

Trace3's Take

Forecasts

There are four key predictions that can be made today for **trailing** organizations:

1. Those who presume a return to previous business conditions will continue to experience drastic negative outcomes in sales and productivity in the short-term with marginal improvements over the long-term.
2. Organizations that make strategic and rapid investments in becoming leaders in digital working still have significant opportunities to capture new opportunities and differentiate themselves within their industry.
3. Select organizations in this archetype will leap-frog average organizations in digital capabilities and market-share due to the aggressive pursuit of new digital working models and a willingness to take on new risks.
4. Strategic partnerships to rapidly implement new, aggressive, consumer-oriented, and holistic digital work models will determine the haves and have-nots of this archetype.
5. The value of large, commercial real estate holdings will plummet and challenge the organization financially and culturally.

There are four key predictions that can be made today for **average** organizations:

1. In the short-term, successful organizations will modernize and standardize key security, visualization and collaboration tools to ensure long-term sustainability of digital working capabilities.
2. Most average organizations will remain average due to slow or ineffective do-it-yourself responses to adopting digital working strategies.
3. Select organizations will take advantage of disruption in business practices to differentiate themselves by making aggressive investments in new technologies, strategic partnerships, and internal organizational changes.
4. Organizations that are slow in maturing digital working capabilities or presume a long-term return to traditional work models will fall back to trailing organizations and continue to see an erosion of business.
5. Office space will be retooled to accommodate mobile workforces and in-personal collaboration

There are four key predictions that can be made today for **leading** organizations:

1. Leaders will reduce costs in travel and office space and reinvest in products, services and features that continue to differentiate their organization.
2. Adoption of new platforms by leaders will determine winners and losers in the technology space.
3. Venture capitalists and private equity funds will make aggressive moves to invest in startups that enable digital working as well as acquire companies in not-digital industries that are advanced in digital working capabilities.
4. Leaders will secure preferential relationships with vendors, suppliers, contractors, and clients as they lead their industry to a new business model.

Recommendations

Trace3 recommends the following:

1. Trailing and average organizations should develop new or leverage existing strategic partnerships to rapidly adopt technologies and practices that are sustainable long-term to prevent and manage productivity erosion and shadow-IT growth. Avoid “technology only” solutions that don’t include the necessary additional practices such as employee engagement and process management.
2. Get aggressive about digital employee engagement and productivity management to empower team leaders and members to evaluate the effectiveness of changes and improve productivity in new working conditions.
3. Adopt tactics for identifying, digitizing, and automating processes. New, powerful tools and proven plans are available to transform work processes; however, when rapidly implemented they can be significantly disruptive culturally and require careful oversight. Avoid inventing your own approach.
4. Move away from traditional file and data-sharing techniques to SaaS-based productivity platforms. Integrate with appropriate IAM platforms, multi-factor authentication, and

ensure access monitoring and auditing for employees, clients, and vendors.

5. Adopt Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) technologies like zero-trust and micro-segmentation architectures as soon as possible. VPN and flat-networking leave key assets vulnerable to attack and exfiltration, especially with remote workers.
6. Lock down supply chain partnerships that can provide responsive and flexible access to end-user and data center capacity as well as new economic models. Scaling up and down based on shifts in business conditions is critical to IT finance management.
7. Standardize collaboration tools. Too many tools create organizational confusion and lost productivity. Don't let perfect become the enemy of good.

Appendix

Sources

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