Top 10 Ways IT Can Boost Value and Efficiency With a Digital Workplace

See how IT can move beyond the help desk and maximize their skills as key partners in the digital transformation of the whole organization.

The current workplace trends

The forces driving change in today's workplace are also transforming the role of IT.

## BYOT and BYOA have transformed the role of IT in the workplace.

Not so long ago, everything in the workplace that involved a computer was managed by the IT department: desktops, servers, software, printers — you name it. IT chose it, paid for it, and owned it.

IT would buy the most cost-effective solution in an era where User Experience (UX) was not top of mind for many software vendors, and then manage its day-to-day use. Everything changed when employees began bringing their preferred mobile devices onto the network, working remotely on their own computers, and using cloud apps like Box, Dropbox, and Google Docs to access and share information. Suddenly, corporate intranets and shared storage repositories became idle and legacy workplace machines became stagnant with outdated, incomplete, and rarely-used data.

As a result, business data became siloed into numerous apps and services within departments, making it difficult to find crucial information. Today, users are leading the way in their technology choices by selecting apps with a user experience that transfers much of the day-to-day management away from IT. They're able to self-manage or enlist the help of the team manager. Yet, IT has an essential role in vetting, choosing, and deploying technologies into the broader digital ecosystem.

IT is the most qualified, experienced department when it comes to enabling organizations to make smart technology choices. Read on and discover how to position IT as a strategic advisor to digital transformation.
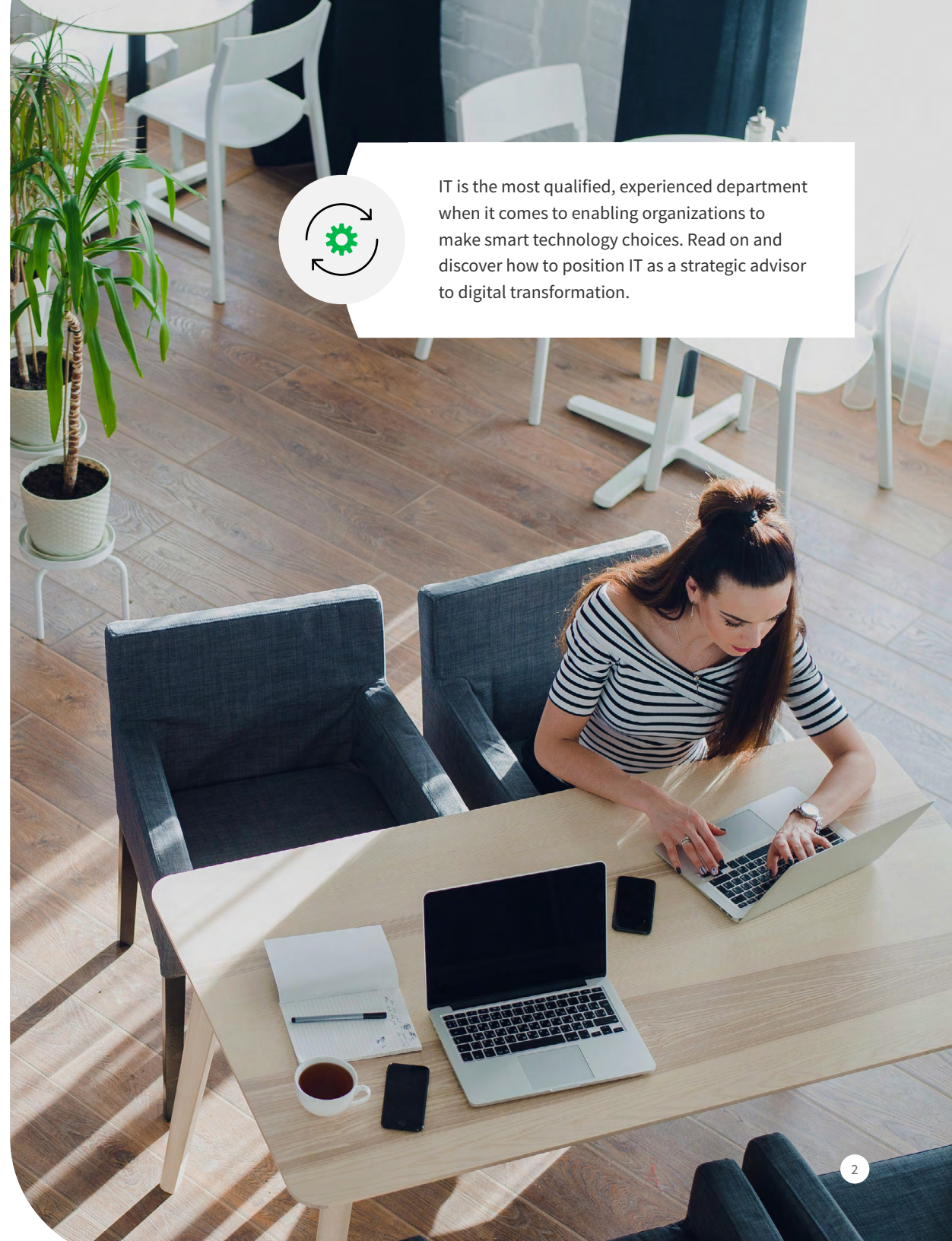
IT guidance is critical for effective digital workplace solutions

With more and more employees self-managing their technology and tools, IT has shifted from its 'old world' focus on managing the day-to-day maintenance of applications, controlling permissions, and answering user questions. In the new world of work, IT should be orchestrators of the broader digital ecosystem.

Today's digital workplaces are most successful when they're not managed by IT, but by a dedicated digital workplace manager — someone whose job performance is tied to its effectiveness. The digital workplace manager is responsible for promoting the community, interacting with employees, publishing and reviewing content, and tracking any common issues or ideas for improvement. He or she works closely with internal stakeholders, including HR, the C-suite, and any other teams responsible for areas such as employee engagement, internal communications, onboarding, policy management, or governance.

IT can be a vital partner to the organization during deployment and training, and the expert adviser on technical issues and configuration. While there are numerous roles that IT could play in deploying and managing a digital workplace solution, it's best positioned to advise on the following:

▶ Security and authentication requirements

▶ Integrating best-of-breed applications

▶ Costs and compatibility with the technology ecosystem

▶ Training requirements

▶ Technology road map and centralized visibility into

▶ the requirements of other departments

By deploying the right digital workplace solution, IT can deliver many business benefits to employees as it pushes control to the user via self-service, DIY, and digital workplace-based support.

When there's a central hub housing policies, procedures, and tips and tricks, employees have the autonomy to learn and work at their own pace, without having to ask IT for help.

By adding speed and flexibility to IT delivery, digital workplace solutions allow IT to focus on digital transformation strategy, innovation, and policy — while managing complexity across the entire organization.

Now, let's take a closer look at how a digital workplace solution enables IT to be key players in the creation of a more productive, cohesive, agile workplace.

The following are 10 ways a digital workplace platform can increase the value and efficiency of IT in your organization

1 Empowers IT to unite disconnected workplaces

We live in the age of the empowered employee. To attract and retain the best talent, organizations are letting people choose where and how they work — granting them anywhere access, BYOT, self-service information, and consumer-like user experiences. This is especially true for millennials as they grow into more critical roles.

As the generation gap widens, it's important to acknowledge that the digital workplace is just as much about people as it is technology. Re-wiring it involves modernizing an organization's brand, values, and ways of working. A digital workplace needs to be designed for, and backed by, the people who use it.

As a result, digital workplace solutions have emerged as the mission-critical tool to band people, technologies, processes, and information together. A tool that was traditionally thought of as an IT-sanctioned document store or link farm can now serve as a sophisticated platform that connects the entire organization — across borders, boundaries, and corporate structures.

With IT championing the adoption of a digital workplace platform, they can be key proponents of technology capable of transforming the way work happens throughout the organization.

2 Supports IT's ability to rationalize tools across the organization

Employees use the apps and services (even consumer apps) they believe support their productivity, regardless of IT policies. But IT is still on the hook for security and costs. Enabling staff productivity is also a challenge, as intellectual property exists in email, email attachments, supported tech, and user-selected tech.

The role of IT has changed, but users' behavior and expectations have not adapted. The challenge for IT is to reconcile competing visions. They need to find a better way to support people's preferred apps and devices, but also their various work styles. They need to urge conformity when it's warranted to reduce risk or optimize cost, but be flexible when it leads to greater productivity and engagement.

Saying yes to every employee demand is not the answer: it adds both risk and complexity. In addition, relying on employees to understand new functionality, processes, and the best places to store and communicate information can ultimately lead to underutilization, data silos, and even abandonment of the solution entirely.

Yet preventing employees from using their tools of choice can be an exercise in futility. The more viable solution is for IT to work together with users and digital workplace managers to enable employees' preferences within secure, policy-driven, and contextual digital workplace.

3

Curate and drive adoption of sanctioned productivity apps

Employees don't always know how to select the right app for the right job. By integrating all of the best personal productivity apps and enterprise systems into purpose-built digital workplace solutions, IT can facilitate a center of gravity that brings operations back together, increases awareness, and supports greater accessibility.

IT can collaborate with HR and Communications to ensure the digital workplace supports the physical workspace (its hierarchies, rituals, workflows, look and feel). Culture and employee engagement considerations must also be intertwined with these investments: users should want to opt-in to the new digital workplace, and never be forced to participate.

Integrate apps and systems, automate workflows, and educate users.

4

Helps streamline IT workflow

A digital workplace platform helps marry the interests of users, the business, and IT. It centralizes knowledge management, so users can find information without diving into archived email, chats, or disparate file stores — and without asking IT for help.

While upholding the diversification of tools, Igloo creates a company-wide platform to publish, present, and find content. As a result, the digital workplace is the ideal place for an "IT Help Desk," where employees can find out about approved cloud applications and services as well as third-party devices, and request help finding solutions to problems that their list of apps/services doesn't currently solve.

5

Strengthens IT governance, compliance, and security

A digital workplace platform enables IT to easily control authentication and role-based access, and enable single sign-on to increase employee efficiency. It provides easy access to IT policies, documentation, instructions, and contracts, while tracking training compliance.

It puts employees' preferred tools under IT's security umbrella, which translates into higher usage, fewer risky shadow IT solutions, and better compliance with governance policies.

6

Helps control IT costs with cloud hosting

Igloo leverages the value of the cloud, which delivers a 2.1x ROI advantage compared to on-premise solutions according to Nucleus Research. It replaces expensive on-premise legacy solutions and eliminates costs for hardware maintenance, upgrades, and unused licenses.

9
It is more IT-friendly than other solutions on the market

With SharePoint, business users come to IT for simple things like creating project pages within the intranet and publishing content to those areas so teams can collaborate.

With Igloo, all of this can be managed through tiered management roles (across departments and project teams). Roles and access can be controlled at a site, solution, page, or content level, making it easy for IT administrators and digital workplace managers to distribute and revoke accountability as required.

7
Integrates with third-party applications

Organizations can allow employees to build their personal Igloo the way they want by bringing in the file sharing and productivity apps they're already using. At the same time, IT can rest easy because they still manage the overall permissions and SSO authentication.

A few of the current integrations that should be included are: file sharing apps like Dropbox and OneDrive, real-time conversation platforms such as Slack, calendaring apps like Google Calendar and Outlook, and work specific apps like Salesforce, Zendesk, and GSuite. IT can also build their own Igloo apps using the Igloo APIs, documentation, and development tools.

10
Changes the perception of IT from a service center to a strategic partner for digital transformation

As day-to-day management of the digital workplace shifts to the community manager and other supporting roles, IT can work to change internal perceptions of what services they do (and don't) provide. Ingrained perceptions of the IT team as the fix-it crew will then evolve to encompass IT's broader role.

When IT is caught up in the tactics (upgrades, user content support, and hardware maintenance), it prevents them from adding the tremendous strategic value the business needs. An effective digital workplace solution will support this transition by delivering self-serve opportunities and community forums that employees want to use.

With Igloo, IT can create and strengthen relationships with HR and Marketing by facilitating a better employee experience through improved workflows, centralized communications, and greater collaboration between teams. And an improved employee experience inevitably leads to better customer experiences and company performance.

8
Helps IT to realize intangible benefit for the entire organization

Along with measurable financial results, deploying Igloo impacts organizations in ways that are removed from direct financial impact. The digital workplace facilitates stronger connections and relationships between employees, so that values and strategies are aligned. This connectedness can improve corporate culture, engagement, and collaboration.

Igloo for IT

Although today's employees want to be in the driver's seat when it comes to choosing technology, they still need IT as their expert guide. With Igloo, IT can move beyond the help desk and maximize their skills as key partners in the digital transformation of the whole organization.

IGLOO

Igloo is a leading provider of digital workplace solutions, helping companies move beyond traditional intranets to inspiring digital destinations that improve communication, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and culture. All Igloo solutions are 100% cloud-based, mobile-enabled, and integrate with leading enterprise and cloud apps.

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