Application leaders who lead digital workplace programs must focus on boosting digital dexterity through a systematic effort to deliver relevant capabilities and enable the workforce to use them effectively, taking into account future expectations on how people will work.

**Scope**

A digital workplace program is a business strategy to boost workforce digital dexterity through an engaging and intuitive work environment.

This initiative covers:

- Planning, execution, governance and management of digital workplace initiatives
- Boosting the ability and desire of the workforce to use technology effectively (digital dexterity)
- Designing employee experiences for an engaging and intuitive work environment
- Effective communication, collaboration, networking and employee crowdsourcing
- Digital workplace technologies and markets
- Anticipating and preparing the workplace for the future of work
The ability and desire to absorb and exploit existing and emerging technologies for better business outcomes is what we define as "workforce digital dexterity." Digital dexterity is an ability that leads to fluency in collaboration, adaptability, analytical thinking and creativity. The Gartner 2018 CIO survey provides evidence that dealing with culture and talent are bigger barriers to scaling digital transformation than IT (see "The 2018 CIO Agenda: Mastering the New Job of the CIO").

It is the goal of a digital workplace program to help remove these barriers by promoting digital dexterity through a working environment that:

- Enhances established workplace capabilities (for example, being able to work in any place with any device), and introduces new relevant ones as needed (such as crowdsourcing, citizen development or internal work marketplaces).
- Enables the workforce to use these capabilities effectively.
- Can adapt to changes in the way work gets done.
Top Challenges and How Gartner Can Help

Digital transformation is about more than technology alone. Success in the digital age means identifying opportunities, prioritizing investments and even adjusting business models, as well as ensuring that the workforce is able and willing to embrace an equally disruptive transformation in the workplace. Investing in technologies such as cloud office or self-service business intelligence will be ineffective if the workforce is not able and willing to use them to ask the right questions, collaborate to make the right decisions, and generally make them a natural part of everyday work.

The workplace is where digital transformation meets a community with its own internal dynamics and cultural norms — the workforce. Every work activity is increasingly relying on digital components, and the technology underneath it is changing more rapidly than ever. Digital transformation is about constant, fast and at-scale realignment to ever-changing market conditions and business requirements. Doing this successfully requires that organizations rethink their processes and ways of working in order to be able to propagate change quickly and effectively. The workforce can either become one of the primary drivers of sustained competitive advantage or the weakest link in a digital transformation strategy.

The sections that follow describe the challenges and opportunities facing application leaders who lead digital workplace programs, along with a sampling of our 2018 research plans in each case.

What is digital dexterity and how do we improve it?

Digital dexterity is the ability and desire to exploit existing and emerging technologies for better business outcomes. It goes beyond skills and training. It is an ability that encompasses fluency in collaboration, adaptability, analytical thinking and creativity in physical or virtual spaces, as well as in small intimate teams or large groups and networks. Promoting digital dexterity involves recognizing, motivating and supporting these traits and behaviors in how we hire and bring new people into our organizations; how we measure and reward performance; how we set up and manage working teams; and how we establish organizational structures, processes and systems that encourage rather than discourage innovative value creation.

Digital dexterity depends on having the right mix of people, along with realistic and achievable business goals, that are organized in permissive but safe operational structures and processes, and are able to take advantage of a fully digital working environment.

Digital dexterity in terms of collaboration, adaptability, analytical thinking and creativity can be assessed and promoted at an organizational level, in smaller teams, as well as in individuals. Organizations that fail to develop and maintain a core competency in digital dexterity risk becoming uncompetitive if their workforce is unable to absorb change.

Planned Research

- The Secret to Digital Is Analog: Why Workforce Digital Dexterity Is the Key to Digital Transformations
- The Data Behind Digital Dexterity
How can we evolve the employee experience to drive digital dexterity?

The quality of the employee experience impacts performance, engagement, retention and even attraction of new talent through employees that become advocates of the organization’s brand. The importance of experience in driving behavior has long been recognized in marketing and customer service teams when it comes to customer relationships, and now a positive impact on the employee experience is often an explicit goal of digital workplace programs. However, the way application leaders who lead digital workplace programs approach employee experience is changing. An employee experience that is predetermined and handed to employees by the organization as a rigid set of tools, organizational structures and working practices is giving way to choice and diversity, with more emphasis on enabling, empowering and supporting employees rather than simply provisioning and directing.

Digitization is reaching deeply and broadly into the workplace, thus creating much more nuanced relationships between technology on the one hand, and people as individuals or in groups on the other. It is now becoming easier to open rich communication and interaction channels to frontline workers on one end of the spectrum, while enabling managers to spend more time on connecting employees to the people and resources they need rather than on monitoring and collecting data. Multidisciplinary teams with business and technical members may be given relatively more budget and decision-making autonomy over product development and delivery because their business impact can be measured, and corrected if needed, in real time. This proliferation of technology-mediated touchpoints between workers and the way they work means that, in addition to training and guidance, the design of the employee experience needs to become more intuitive and engaging. It needs to take into account the requirements of specific business context where possible, and provide guidance and support to enable employees to exercise choice and discretion while staying secure and aligned to business objectives.

Our 2018 agenda will highlight the importance of the employee experience in specific business contexts and offer practical tools to help digital workplace leaders deliver it successfully.

Planned Research

- Employee Segmentation, Personas and Journey Mapping for Effective Experience Design
- Crafting Workspaces That Enhance the Employee Experience
- The Continuously Informed Employee
- Taking a Measure of the Employee Experience Gap
- Change Management Checklist for the Digital Workplace Leader
How should we acquire, deploy and integrate workplace technologies?

When it comes to digital workplace technology, it is relatively easy to come up with a long list of tools that can and should be found in a modern workplace. Several factors, however, complicate the technology choices and subsequent deployment and effective use:

- **Dependencies and overlaps:** Some technologies are packaged as complete applications, others are available as services (for example, content services) that can be used by other applications, while others are bundled as broad suites such as Office 365 or G Suite. Architecting coherent solutions with a stable and reliable common core of shared services and repositories, while also retaining flexibility and ease of use at the point of use, is no easy task.

- **Governance challenges:** Digital workplace governance continues to be challenged by personal IT, by business IT budgets, and by regulatory changes such as the introduction of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In addition, it is feasible for some technical development (such as building applications, modelling processes, setting up electronic forms, conducting surveys or analyzing data) to be done by business users via citizen development tools. Finally, in order to boost IT flexibility and responsiveness, some organizations are attaching IT resources directly to specific business activities. Therefore, digital workplace governance boundaries are becoming just as porous as technical architecture boundaries.

- **IT processes:** The IT processes required to manage and deliver workplace services (and IT services more generally) are also changing. This is occurring not only to accommodate more needs and capabilities, but also to establish ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders, including end users, and to ensure continuous delivery and business impact monitoring. This is having a profound impact on the way the IT organization itself is set up, and how it works with technology and service partners.

Our 2018 initiative will guide digital workplace leaders through established and emerging technology markets via Magic Quadrants, Market Guides, Hype Cycles and Cool Vendor reports, along with advice on matching technology to use cases, and best practices on migration, deployment and effective use.

**Planned Research**

- Guide to the different software markets relevant to digital workplace
- Common and emerging capabilities to offer in a digital workplace
- Coordinating content, collaboration and insight for technology deployments for a coherent digital workplace
- Market Guide for Workstream Collaboration
How do we set up, communicate, run and measure a digital workplace program that delivers digital dexterity?

The transition from a digital workplace strategy to an operational, practical program that deals with process as well as cultural changes, is a complex one. An ambitious digital workplace strategy that supports a transformation to a digital business not only needs an incremental strategy that focusses on infrastructure refresh, it also requires preparation, planning, an effort to bring and keep stakeholders on board, and tracking of progress. This requires leadership, team building, the cultivation of alliances, tactical wins that build trust, weighing of constraints, identification of "least bad" options, and management (rather than elimination) of risk. It also requires the charter of the IT organization to expand to include competency around raising digital dexterity. Even as they deal with the realities of execution, application leaders responsible for digital workplace programs must also continually recalibrate their efforts to ensure alignment with their organization’s business priorities.

At a practical level, the complexity of a digital workplace program can be tempered with a coherent set of planning guidelines that links IT investments to business impact, and has frameworks that identify the dependencies and the pressure points at the intersections of technology and culture, and practical guidance that comes from the experience of those who are one step ahead.

During the next year, we will continue to update and enrich our toolkits and frameworks to help digital workplace leaders with these program management activities.

**Planned Research**

- A step-by-step guide to running a digital workplace program
- How to make the case for digital workplace to your board
- How your IT organization must change to deliver a digital workplace
- Building a Strategic Roadmap for the Digital Workplace
- A Guide to Digital Workplace Research

What will the future of work look like and how can we prepare the workplace for it?

Robots did not write this sentence, or any other part of this report. However, technology has been used to collect, categorize, analyze, correlate, dictate, and correct text and data. A lot of popular press headlines are about the impact of automation on jobs and overall employment, but the impact of technologies such as AI on the workplace, at least in the short term, is likely to be more subtle.

Yes, repeatable and predictable tasks will continue to become easier, faster or completely automated through technology, as with text analytics in paralegal work or robotic process automation in transaction processing. But technologies that can learn from data and adapt to context are also seeping into activities that require skill, judgement, creativity or decision making. Rather than eliminating or automating jobs, a more practical concern is how to help people use smart technology to see patterns, look for evidence, learn faster, make better decisions or communicate more effectively.
People using AI will replace people who can’t or won’t use AI. The key here is to plan for human augmentation, rather than only automation. A successful digital workplace program should aim to make smart technology more accessible as part of everyday work.

Our 2018 initiative will include our assessment of the relevant technologies, as well as their effective application and use, especially in augmenting human performance.

**Planned Research**

- Anticipating and Exploiting the Top 12 Future-of-Work Trends
- Five Ways IoT Will Make Physical Spaces Worker-Friendly
- Use Digital Workplace Programs to Pave the Way for AI Augmentation
- A Framework for Applying AI in the Digital Workplace
- Foster Citizen X Practices to Achieve Digital Dexterity

**Related Priorities**

*Table 1. Related Priorities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile, Endpoint and Wearable Computing Strategies</td>
<td>This initiative enables IT leaders to create the endpoint computing environment components of a digital workplace that supports organizations' transition to digital business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Human Capital Management</td>
<td>Human capital management technologies support enterprise efforts to recruit, deploy, develop and manage talent. Gartner’s 2018 research will guide your HCM technology investments and methods of use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytics and BI Strategies</td>
<td>The analytics and BI strategies initiative focuses on the strategies, practices, technologies and products needed to support a variety of users across different types of business problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Gartner*

**Suggested First Steps**

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription

**IT Leader Coverage**

- "A Maturity Framework to Advance Digital Workplace Programs"
- "Introducing the Digital Workplace Strategic IT Services Portfolio"
- "Checklist to Align Technical Architecture With Digital Workplace Goals"
- "Global Digital Workplace Programs Exemplify Promise and Progress Worthy of Emulating"
- "Designing a Digital Workplace That Works the Way You Do"
- "How to Make Collaboration Work With Gartner’s ACME Framework"
- "A Guide to Digital Workplace Research"
- "The Future of Work and Talent: Culture, Diversity, Technology"
- "The Secret to Digital Transformations Is Analog: Why a Digitally Dexterous Workforce Is the Key"
- "Anticipate and Exploit the Top 12 Future Work Trends"
- "Six Steps to an Effective Content Services Strategy"
- "A Maturity Framework to Advance Digital Workplace Programs"

**Technical Professional Coverage**

- "2018 Planning Guide for Collaboration, Content and Mobility"
- "2018 Planning Guide Overview: Thriving in an Era of Change"
- "How to Build the Technical Foundation for a Digital Workplace"
- "Maverick* Research: To Avoid Working for Robots, Make Robots Work for Your Organization"

**Essential Reading**

*Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription*

**IT Leader Coverage**

- "Four Ways for CIOs to Cultivate Digital Dexterity in Leadership and the Workforce"
- "Create a Catalog of Activity-Based Spaces in the Digital Workplace to Improve the Employee Experience"
- "How to Select the Intranet Foundation for Your Digital Workplace"
- "What You Need to Know About Content Services Platforms"
- "Give Content Collaboration Platforms a Bigger Role in Your Content Services Strategy"
- "Adopt Development Disciplines to Ensure Digital Workplace Success"
- "Embrace Workstream Collaboration to Transform Team Coordination and Performance"
- "Improve Search to Deliver Insight"
"Transform Enterprise Search by Introducing Touchpoints to Insight"
"Think Strategically to Reap the Rewards of Moving Content Services to the Cloud"
"Hype Cycle for the Digital Workplace, 2017"
"Predicts 2018: Digital Workplace Programs to Boost Digital Dexterity"
"Predicts 2018: Digital Workplace Technologies"
"Designing for 'Employee Experience' Will Increase Engagement and Business Impact of IT Projects"
"Deliver Digital Business Results by Boosting Workforce Digital Dexterity"
"The Rebirth of Office Space: What Every CIO Needs to Know and Do"
"How to Make Collaboration Work With Gartner’s ACME Framework"
"Recipe for Digital Workplace Execution: Transform the Employee Experience"
"Recipe for Digital Workplace Execution: Transform the Corporate Culture"
"Get Ready for the Impact of GDPR on Content and Collaboration"
"How to Select Collaboration Technology Using Gartner’s ACME Framework"
"Applying AI in the Digital Workplace"
"How to Deploy Digital Signage Without Wasting Time and Money"
"Toolkit: A Metrics Framework to Guide Digital Workplace Program Success"
"How to Cultivate Effective 'Remote Work' Programs"
"Supercharge Autoclassification of Records Through Retention Policies and Schedules"

**Technical Professional Coverage**

"Solution Path for Expanding a Mobility Strategy Into a Unified Workspaces Strategy"
"A Technical Professional’s Field Guide to Team Collaboration"
"Devising an Office 365 Data Strategy"
"How Microsoft Teams Reshapes Office 365"
"What IT Needs to Know About Office 365: Features and Functionality"
"The Continuing Evolution of Office 365 — Advances in Collaboration, Security and Integration"

**Tools and Toolkits**

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription
Evidence

In conducting this research, we gathered information on trends via an online survey that took place between 28 September and 6 October 2017 among Gartner Research Circle members — a Gartner-managed panel composed of IT or IT-business professionals. In total, 170 members participated. Qualifying participants included business end users with either an IT or IT-business focus as a primary role.

2018 Gartner CIO Survey: The 2018 Gartner CIO Survey was conducted online from 20 April to 26 June 2017 among Gartner Executive Programs members and other CIOs. Qualifying respondents were the most senior IT leader (CIO) for their overall organization or a part of their organization (for example, a business unit or region). The total sample is 3,160, with representation from all geographies and industry sectors (public and private). Respondents were provided with six response options for the question "Which of these best describes the stage of your organization’s digital initiative — i.e., your organization’s digitalization efforts?"