

# The introduction of the Digital Workplace:

Six stumbling blocks and how companies master them.

Digitization has already made its way into the workplace. But many companies still make serious mistakes in implementing the digital workplace (DWP). These can be avoided with the right know-how and strategies, which ensure the efficient and sustainable establishment of the digital workplace in the company.

A complex and constantly changing environment, rising market pressures and the conviction of companies that digitization must become part of their established industry or service-oriented business models – all these have been important issues for some time. The search for solutions increasingly includes an analysis of why companies with existing digital business models are successful: A high degree of customer focus, agility, entrepreneurial spirit in the workforce, error culture and collaboration have emerged as important features in this context. Today, they can be consolidated under the term 'digital culture'. Therefore, companies are looking for ways to adapt their current culture to the new situation.

There is no simple recipe, because a corporate culture is a complex construct. But there are many pieces in this puzzle that can be used to bring about a cultural transformation, for example collaborations between established companies and start-ups: Traditional companies hope for innovative ideas and a transfer of the start-up culture into their own organizations. The relevant opportunities and success factors are examined by the [Start-up Collaboration Study](#) conducted by TU Darmstadt.

The digital workplace is another piece of the puzzle. It is supposed to shape the New Way of Work and hence ensure the success of the digital transformation. The German Social Collaboration Study – the [fourth edition](#) will be released at the beginning of April 2019 – performed an empirical study of the correlations, with clear results: more than 300 executives identify the cultural transformation as one of three major objectives for introducing the digital workplace. And based on more than 1,300 participants, positive effects between a digital workplace and the transformation into a digital culture were also confirmed several years in a row.

The digital workplace clearly changes the way in which employees perform their tasks and collaborate with others. This can lead to higher efficiency and productivity – if the right solutions are applied and the digital culture is adapted accordingly with the help of comprehensive change management. Thus, companies should consider the following challenges:





## Challenges

### **No clear IT project:**

The digital workplace is not just a release change, and it affects more than just IT. The business and departments such as HR are relevant stakeholders in this context. Accordingly, their employees must be involved in the project so that concrete and practical use cases can be developed, thus increasing the benefit of the digital workplace for daily work routines. In addition, the introduction project also requires its own organization. On-going projects (such as the introduction of virtual town hall meetings) must be integrated and implemented across departments.

### **Cross-departmental coordination:**

Frequently, departments have very different expectations when it comes to the digital workplace. While the sales department, for example, looks forward to up-to-date mobile solutions, the corporate communications department wants a personalized intranet. Each department articulates its individual requirements and wants to quickly introduce the required software product. But these different needs can create new obstacles for collaboration and management. This requires a central contact point that coordinates the development and expansion of the digital workplace.

### **Fear of experimentation:**

Many German companies still follow the motto "Thoroughness before speed". But in view of the rapid digital developments, this increases the risk that by always waiting for the optimum solution, the company ends up falling behind. Release cycles of three years are a thing of the past, as Cloud software is now released at monthly and weekly intervals. What is needed is the courage to experiment now – using small, manageable pilot projects. Rough guidelines are needed to prevent uncontrolled growth, i.e. a general idea of what collaboration and the DWP are supposed to look like three to five years from now. On this

basis, companies can quickly pilot different use cases and technologies – and abandon them just as quickly if needed.

### **Heterogeneous IT infrastructure:**

Heterogeneous IT infrastructures, which have grown over the years, present another challenge for implementing a standardized digital workplace. But at the same time, a DWP project also offers a great opportunity for consolidation. Frequently, it also reduces the number of tools by about half. In this way, companies not only increase the efficiency of collaboration but also save on licensing and maintenance costs.

### **Changes in the IT organization:**

Until now, IT organizations in companies were usually organized in separate teams that look after e.g. basic infrastructure such as networks and authentication, voice, e-mail and collaboration and the intranet. Given the mutual dependencies of a uniform and integrated platform for the digital workplace, such an arrangement no longer makes sense. Rather, it requires a comprehensive organization that coordinates all of the services that are relevant to the DWP. In addition, a corresponding DWP Competence Center should also assess the technological developments on a monthly basis; furthermore, it should also clarify potentials and impacts together with the departments in its role as a business partner.

### **Including the employees on the journey:**

When it comes to implementing the digital workplace, companies often focus on the technology and forget to include employees in this process. But the DWP changes the way in which people work and collaborate. Therefore, it is important that the personal and organizational benefits for concrete daily work situations are identified. On the other hand, the exact software product that employees will use in the future is of little interest to anyone outside of the IT organization.



## The solutions

### A structured approach:

A structured approach is recommended to ensure that these challenges are addressed correctly. Based on its experience from numerous projects, Campana & Schott has developed the Digital Workplace Strategy. It begins with the Business Alignment, in which the business objectives are compared to the current and required work methods to determine concrete application scenarios. This is followed by the Service Portfolio Definition, which identifies the concrete services that must be provided. The solutions and tools that must be implemented are identified during the infrastructure planning process based on the target structure, which ultimately leads to the development of a site development plan for the DWP. The last step consists of implementation planning including the road map. Proof of concepts and pilot projects can be implemented concurrent with this process. The Digital Workplace Strategy is not supposed to (and cannot) take too long: Companies should spend three to a maximum of six months on this process.

### Illustrating the requirements, benefits and use cases:

With a compact illustration of the requirements, challenges, benefits and application scenarios, companies can facilitate almost all steps for the conceptualization and planning of a digital workplace. The persona method from the Design Thinking field may be a useful approach in this regard. A persona is a fictitious user with the typical features of the real employees. Using this persona, it normally becomes easier to answer questions such as: How do Marketing employees go about their work today, and how could they work (together) better in the future? What benefits could they and the organization generate from a digital workplace? A persona-specific illustration of the relevant use cases can then be derived for a sample daily work routine.

### Change Management:

Comprehensive change management offers more than just communication and tool training. It links the DWP to the company's strategic objectives and also integrates the executives, who are important models for the acceptance and use of the digital workplace. Using concrete application scenarios, it illustrates the advantages of the future DWP for its users and the organization. Using surveys and usage tracking, results are quantified, and success is increased through adapted measures. Success stories, assistance systems, short explanation videos and gamification approaches are some of the possible components of a change management concept to ensure the long-term establishment of the DWP in the company.

#### In addition, companies should also take the following tips to heart:

- Never lose sight of the big picture; instead, keep the focus on the objectives and the benefits.
- Make sure that top management is included at an early stage and that the digital workplace is linked to the strategic objectives – unexpected things will happen, therefore collaborate to react to changes
- Work as a team, be purposeful when creating project teams, and use future work methods and tools directly in the project, if possible
- Maintain transparency in the team and in the organization, address conflicts

## Conclusion

Implementing digital workplaces is not easy. Companies must be able to define the right focus areas, involve the employees from the beginning, define practical use cases, pursue a structured approach while being flexible enough

to try new solutions, and abandon non-functioning approaches. In addition, the digital transformation is not an end but rather a key component of the triad that is the digital transformation, the digital culture and the digital workplace. With this mindset, the transformation can be successful.

### Campana & Schott

Campana & Schott is an international management and technology consultancy with more than 400 employees at locations in Europe and the US.

For more than 25 years, we have been passionately assisting companies in managing complex change processes – with proven methods, technologies or simply the right people.

The passion for all facets of human collaboration in organizations and projects has driven us since the beginning.

Further information:  
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