Building a Collaborative Digital Workplace

The future of work depends on creating a flexible, collaborative hub with the right tools for a productive employee experience.

It may sound like a cliché, but happier employees really do have a direct line to greater business value. The vast majority (85%) of organizations say that an improved employee experience translates to **better customer experiences** as well as **higher revenues**, according to a late 2021 IDC survey.

But today's distributed workforces have made that a challenging endeavor. IT and business leaders are trying to optimize their real estate investments while accommodating their employees' desire — and expectations — for more-flexible, hybrid work models.

It's possible to have "one office" that crosses the physical and virtual worlds, one that flexes with employees and serves as their hub for both work and life. This united work space also brings agility to organizations struggling to determine the best use of their real estate.

That one office is the collaborative digital workplace.

At the forefront, the collaborative digital workplace delivers an employee experience that meets individuals' productivity needs while encouraging and supporting collaboration. It must be inclusive, so the experience for remote as well as in-office

workers is equitable. In addition, it has to be flexible enough to fluidly adapt as business or employee needs change and must provide a manageable experience for IT.

It's possible to build that digital workplace right now. In fact, given that most companies are rethinking their office and real estate configurations, now is the best time to get started.

This e-book can help guide that journey. First,discover what's holding back collaboration today. It's likely that your organization is facing many of these challenges.

Next, get a picture of what's possible with a reimagined employee experience and explore the capabilities that support the collaborative digital workplace.

Finally, delve into solutions that shape the future of work and a fully integrated employee experience, as well as the digital workplace services that are available.

What's holding back collaboration?

Collaboration is the mother of innovation. Shared work and problem-solving accelerate business outcomes and enable faster decision-making.

Yet, collaborative work has become challenging amid distributed workforces. The global pandemic has caused most companies to implement a wide variety of digital tools — not just to remain operational but also to encourage collaboration and innovation.

"There was a great deal of reactive strategy during COVID," said Ron Xavier, Microsoft Center of Competency leader in Kyndryl's Digital Workplace Services Global Practice. "Organizations meant well; they grabbed whatever collaborative solutions they thought best at the time or the easiest to roll out. That has led to sprawl, a lack of integration, and an employee experience that is not optimal."

Now many organizations are stuck with multiple productivity tools. It's common for

knowledge workers to juggle several videoconferencing solutions as well as email, chat, and document sharing tools — in addition to enterprise apps. The plethora of digital solutions is causing many workers to feel "always on," resulting in digital exhaustion.

"The smorgasbord of collaboration tools inhabiting the virtual-first workplace is — in many cases — undermining the productivity it was originally intended to foster," according to seven-time CIO Mark Settle.

Burnout is affecting IT staff, too. Support staffs are managing multiple tools that often don't integrate. It's extra effort amid the world of remote and hybrid work, which 74% of CIOs say has increased the stress on their IT teams, according to Foundry's "State of the CIO Study 2022."

The problem is not just technology burnout. There's cost sprawl associated with paying for all these licenses, in some cases for software that is not even being used. It also affects

security; the more solutions, the greater the potential for vulnerabilities or gaps that hackers can exploit. Some digital tools weren't built for document sharing, for example, which increases the chance of data leakage.

Meanwhile, IT and business leaders are challenged by the need to reconfigure physical work spaces. Given that many workers don't want to return to onsite facilities or would be willing to do so only a few days per week or month, leaders are figuring out how to provide desk, cubicle, meeting room, and office flexibility.

There are questions to consider, such as: Should employees reserve a desk or a meeting room? What capabilities do we need for collaborative spaces, including hardware and software? How can we encourage ongoing collaboration and not diminish productivity?

Organizations can address these questions by building a collaborative digital workplace.

"It's time to turn the digital tools chaos into an efficient approach that makes the employee experience easy to manage, efficient, productive, and seamless," said Xavier.

Reimagining the Employee Experience

Consider the way that most employees now start their workday. It's steeped in digital processes. Once they open their device, they most often check email first and then dive into tasks and various applications — and a lot of meetings.

In fact, hybrid work has increased meeting volume, according to the most recent Microsoft "Work Trend Index." "Since February 2020, the average Teams user saw a 252% increase in their weekly meeting time and the number of weekly meetings has increased 153%," according to the study.

Given that remote and hybrid work models are here to stay, the reimagined employee experience must be adaptable. It should go beyond simply enhancing how employees work today. Rather, it should set the tone and offer capabilities for the future of work.

Think of it as an intelligent hub that adapts to users, moving with them and their devices between physical and virtual spaces,

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Source: Microsoft "Work Trend Index"

regardless of whether they're working in the office or at home.

For example, at the start of the day, workers open their device and their digital workplace enables them to immediately delve into emails, share documents, and attend meetings — all from one place. The hub enables them to reserve a desk or a meeting room if they're heading into a physical office and alerts them to organizational well-being policies, such as in-office health attestations. It can also marry their personal calendar

with work scheduling for greater work/life balance.

In addition, the digital workplace empowers them with citizen developer capabilities to easily build their own solutions to solve business problems. The right platform functionality democratizes data, connecting users to multiple data sources to create feature-rich business apps without their having to write any code. They can also develop a new automation flow relevant to a specific work function or create a virtual assistant to help with tasks.

The engine for this digital workplace is a powerful platform that is mobile, social, intelligent, secured, cost-effective, and integrated.

Capabilities that support the collaborative digital workplace

There is an overarching requirement for flexible solutions that not only overcome the challenges of the hybrid workforce but also ensure fluidity for the future of work. A collaborative digital workplace includes capabilities that provide a holistic experience for employees as well as IT.

The goal is to move away from disjointed, siloed productivity tools and provide a holistic hub for employees. They simply open one platform at the start of their day and get to work in that space. It should be boundaryless, seamlessly combining physical and virtual capabilities to ensure consistency — no matter if they're working onsite or remotely.

If you're an IT or business leader, you should seek a modern digital workplace that is:

- **Mobile.** You're likely already leveraging software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions that foster productivity regardless of location. However, consider how many different apps employees are accessing, how up to date they are, and whether they're actually being used. The modern workpla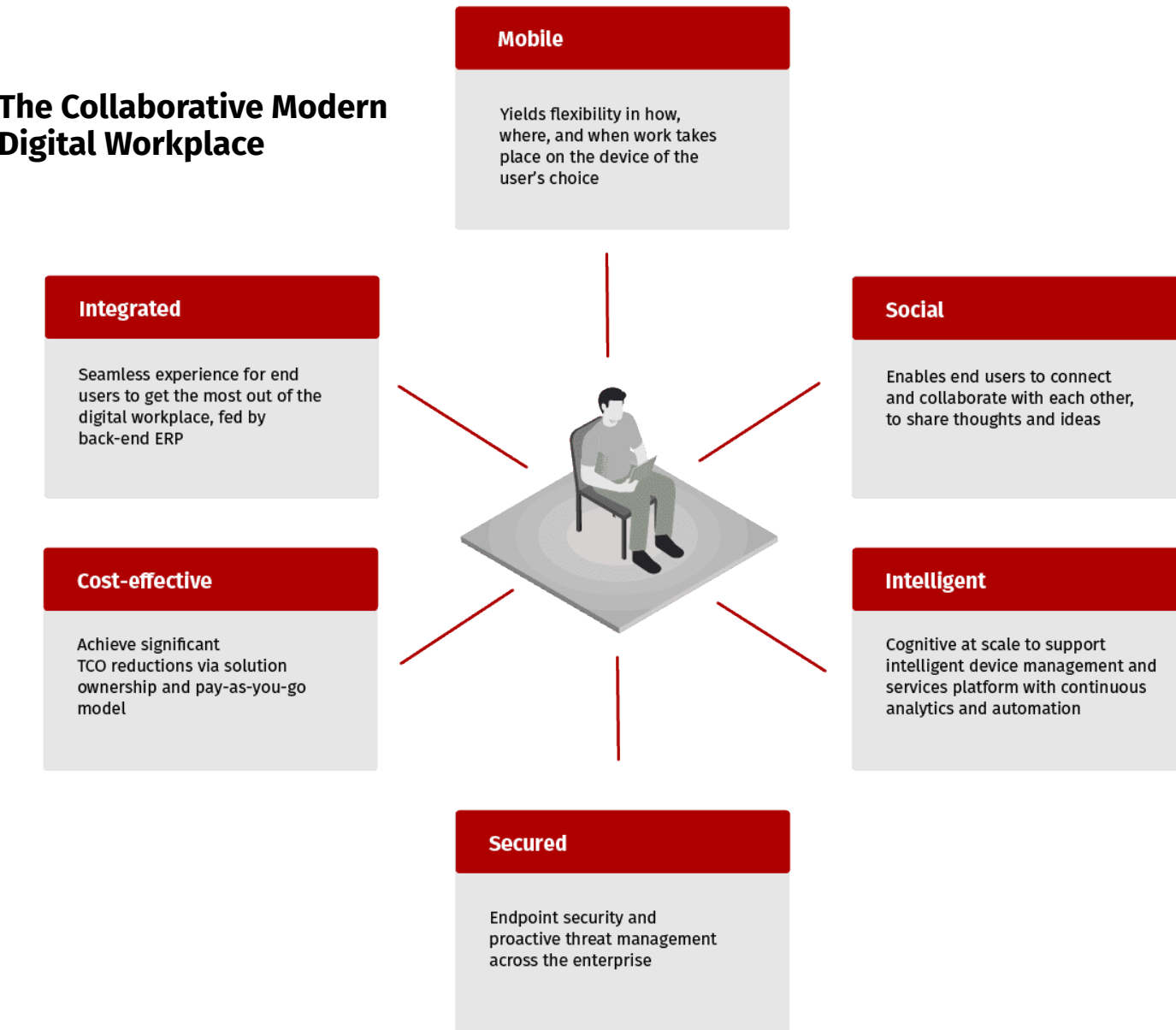ce reduces user friction and enables employees to have "one office" that moves with them. It's a digital hub with all the tools they need in order to do their work.

- **Social.** What do content sharing and workstream collaboration look like in your organization? Leverage familiar tools that provide secure communication and enhance team building with data sharing capabilities that enable work from anywhere, anytime, on any device. And include a self-service app "marketplace" that enables end users to shape a personal collaborative workplace that fits their workflow.

- **Integrated.** Having to log into or swivel between numerous apps can be a waste of an individual's time, and IT has to do more work to manage and secure multiple tools. The digital workplace should be fully integrated with collaboration tools and back-end systems to provide a one-stop hub for greater productivity and streamlined IT management.

- **Intelligent.** The digital workplace should address all types of teams and personas. Therefore it has to be cognitive at scale, so seek built-in intelligence and automation as well as analytics capabilities for proactive IT management. In addition, provide intelligent, low-code functionality to enable citizen development, allowing employees to build workflows that best suit their particular preferences.

- **Cost-effective.** Lean into existing IT investments. Analyze employee adoption and usage of productivity tools to discover where software licenses can be consolidated. Provide self-service functionality as well as rapid access to virtual service agents to resolve issues quickly and cost-effectively. Also ask your solution provider about pay-as-you-go models for reduced total cost of ownership.

Now imagine what it would look like if one tool could provide all these capabilities.

The Collaborative Modern Digital Workplace

Mobile

Yields flexibility in how, where, and when work takes place on the device of the user's choice

Integrated

Seamless experience for end users to get the most out of the digital workplace, fed by back-end ERP

Social

Enables end users to connect and collaborate with each other, to share thoughts and ideas

Cost-effective

Achieve significant TCO reductions via solution ownership and pay-as-you-go model

Intelligent

Cognitive at scale to support intelligent device management and services platform with continuous analytics and automation

Secured

Endpoint security and proactive threat management across the enterprise

The Solution: A Fully Integrated Way to Work

Microsoft 365 provides a digital fabric that binds the organization through the power of cloud for secure communications, collaboration, and creation. It enables any company in any industry to build intelligent and productive employee, technology, and support experiences that span the hybrid world of work.

Microsoft Teams is the central focus of this fabric. It's a boundaryless collaborative hub that can be customized to each type of worker and persona — such as frontline workers, marketing staff, HR managers, customer service agents, and business analysts. Teams provides a canvas for the data and applications that employees use in their natural flow of work.

For example, when users open Teams at the start of their day, all the tools they need are powered up in one space, whether that's Outlook, SharePoint, Yammer, OneDrive, Power Platform, or something else. They can also use their everyday business apps — such as enterprise resource planning (ERP), project management solutions, and developer tools — in the same workplace, reducing their need to constantly open and close multiple systems.

Companies can embed Microsoft innovations such as Context IQ into their Teams hub, which adds intelligence and analytics for a frictionless employee experience. It can proactively suggest a document or a file when a user tries to attach one, rather than having to search for and copy and paste it in an email. Context IQ also has intuitive functionality for recommending available times to schedule meetings, without

individuals' having to toggle between calendar and email apps. Plus, it uses logic to enable workers to easily add people to emails or tag colleagues in comments.

Teams includes a host of other employee productivity capabilities:

- Teams Connect provides secure conversation channels — alongside internal comms channels — for faster collaboration with external stakeholders. Employees can quickly open a shared space with partners

or suppliers, for example, and start conversations, meetings, document sharing, and more. All of the shared channels incorporate advanced security and compliance capabilities as well as information protection tools to ensure secure communications.

- Meetings also become streamlined and more productive in Teams. Microsoft Viva Insights, for example, uses intelligence and analytics to help managers monitor time spent in meetings, incorporate digital agendas to stay on track during discussions, and set alerts or reminders to take meeting breaks. Teams also incorporates dynamic view technology to bring everyone into the room and make hybrid meetings — where some participants are remote and others in the office — more inclusive and engaging.

- Employees can shape their workflows and innovate by using Power Apps, which enables individuals to intuitively build their own solutions to address business

problems. For example, an HR manager might create an app to track employee onboarding processes. Or a customer service supervisor could build a tool that makes it easier for customers to confirm, cancel, and rebook product delivery appointments.

- Teams makes it easier to manage physical facility requirements. If an individual plans to work at the company's offices, that person simply uses the hot-desk feature in a Teams display to choose and reserve a space and/or a meeting room.

There are many more opportunities to shape productive employee experiences. For example, Teams offers feature-rich event and webinar capabilities for presenters as well as attendees, including a virtual green room, structured Q&A, and curated attendee experiences.

Benefits for the Technology and IT Support Teams

The digital workplace must also provide efficiencies for IT departments. Leveraging Teams as the hub, organizations can improve and secure the technology experience and streamline IT support.

- **Mobile and secure**
  Boundaryless collaboration requires that trust — in users, apps, devices, and smart things — happens in real time. That starts with Azure Active Directory (AD), a holistic identity and access management system. Azure AD provides single sign-on, multifactor authentication, and conditional access to protect users from cybersecurity attacks. It unifies internal and external identity management for improved security visibility, streamlined IT management, and a frictionless user experience.

- **Social and productive**
  IT personnel also benefit from a productive, secure hub where they can collaborate with internal and external partners to accelerate incident response and handle support issues. For example, the integration of
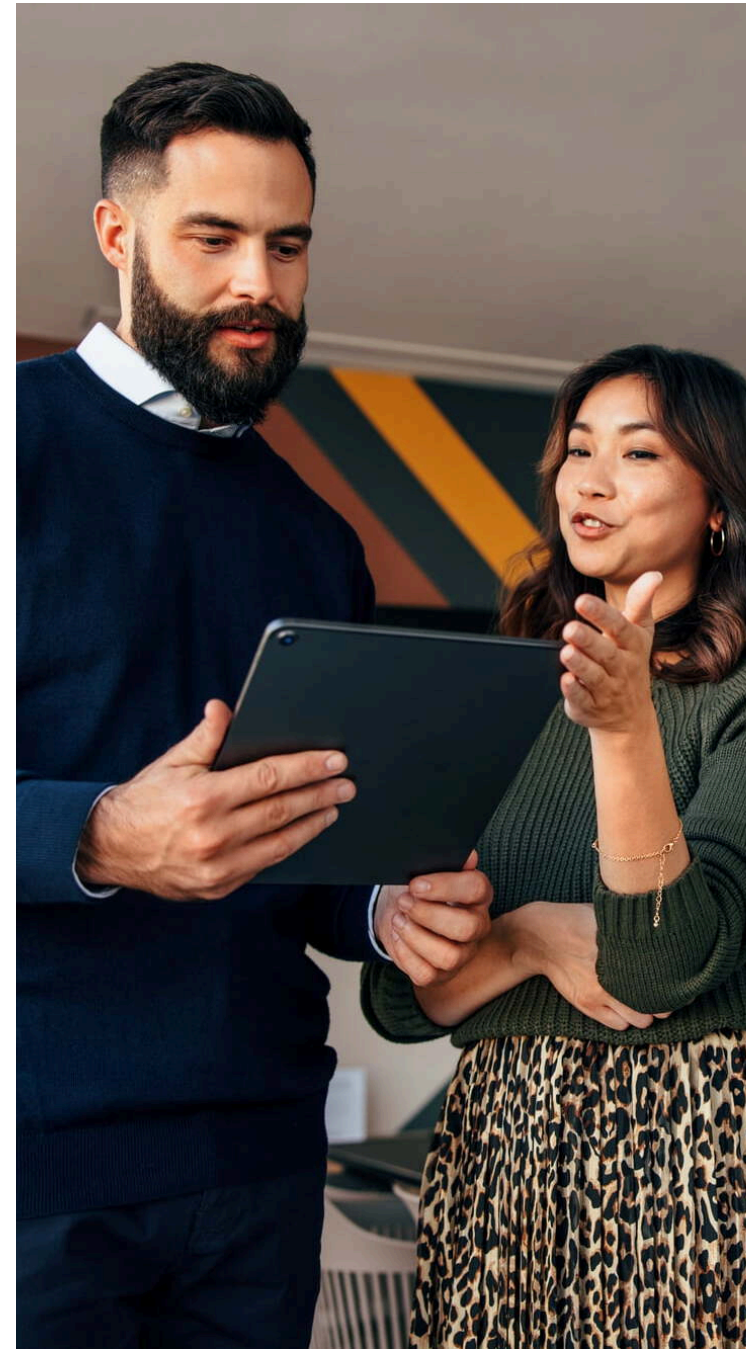
[ServiceNow](#) into Teams enables IT staff to quickly initiate meetings with relevant stakeholders to discuss incident response, collaborate on case management documents, and rapidly problem-solve.

- **Integrated**
  Teams seamlessly connects with back-office apps. Solution providers including SAP, Atlassian, ServiceNow, and Monday.com have built collaborative capabilities directly into Teams. This not only ensures a seamless experience for end users in their digital workplace but also saves time and effort for IT staff.

- **Intelligent**
  Using proactive and intuitive tools within Teams, IT can bring greater efficiencies to end users, IT support teams, and the overall organization. Embedded AI and analytics capabilities, for example, can collect intel from any organizational device anywhere to determine its health and usage as well as identify issues before they become problems. These features also detect whether individuals are lagging in adoption of tools and how/where they're using data. Using this information, Microsoft Power Platform can proactively offer education and training.

- **Cost-effective**
  Self-service functionality offers benefits for users and IT. For example, the self-service marketplace on Teams affords individuals the opportunity to customize their digital workplace without having to wait for IT assistance. In addition, organizations can work with a service provider such as Kyndryl for consumption-based billing for greater efficiencies and lower total cost of ownership.

Another support benefit: An all-in-one digital contact center, powered by Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Teams, brings together unified communications and customer-service capabilities. It not only provides a 360-degree view of customers across all channels but it also uses the collaborative capabilities of Teams to resolve issues faster.

In addition, the solution has embedded intelligence, chatbot/virtual agent functionality, interactive voice response, and extensibility with other business applications.

Finally, all of these features can be leveraged with the IT infrastructure you have today. Microsoft uses cloud-based software and functionality to ensure that Teams streams to any device, regardless of its operating system.

Digital Workplace
Collaborative Services:
The Kyndryl Experience

Organizations are experiencing IT skill set shortages across all roles — from integration and architecture to customer experience and change management — according to Foundry's "State of the CIO Study 2022." That's why many IT leaders are turning to their partner ecosystem for deployments and support.

Microsoft is a Kyndryl Premier Global Alliance Partner. The alignment was named Best Partnership of 2021 by Constellation Research for bringing business value to customers.

This partnership enables Kyndryl to use Microsoft tools such as Teams to enable the future of work for its customers. The company can help envision, build, implement, support, and evolve the right collaborative digital workplace for your employees.

"We look holistically at all the pieces — employee, technology, and support experiences — and interconnect them to make Teams the hub for work and life," says Kyndryl's Xavier.

Using its deep expertise in Microsoft Cloud, Microsoft 365 and Teams, Kyndryl takes a data-driven approach to building a digital workplace that matches your company and regional cultures.

"Our global reach gives us insights beyond technology implementations," Xavier says. "We have expertise in countries around the world, so we understand individual cultural concerns as well as specific regional requirements such as around security and privacy."

Every company is unique and may be on a different maturity level with its Microsoft environment. Kyndryl meets you where you are and offers a range of services to create

Support for the Full Life Cycle of the Digital Workplace Journey

Service engagement life cycle provides clients with multiple entry points, based on maturity of the transformation journey.

KYNDRYL SOLUTIONS

Advise
- Evaluation and planning
- Microsoft 365/Teams visioning and readiness workshops
- Evaluation of business gaps, challenges (i.e. merger/acquisitions)
- Proof of concepts/ROI
- Security assessment and planning
- 2–5 weeks engagement

Build/Move
- Architectural design
- Transition and transformation
- Active Directory and Security
- Build and deploy
- Migration to Office 365/Teams/SharePoint/Intune/AVD
- Align strategic direction with cloud

Manage
- 24x7 worldwide support
- Administration, monitoring, and reporting
- Ongoing license optimization
- End user training and support
- Self-help resources
- CSP management

Microsoft 365 · Office 365 · Exchange · SharePoint · OneDrive · Microsoft Teams · Yammer · Microsoft Azure

Software-as-a-service (SaaS) management, monitoring, and reporting tool

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and support the end-to-end life cycle of your digital workplace.

It's one thing to build and implement a digital workplace, but it's critical that employees actually use the tools and gain the benefits. That's where Kyndryl can provide significant value. Its Adoption Services platform uses cognitive analytics and automation to understand how individuals are interacting with their productivity tools and then applies proactive intelligence to guide them toward greater efficiency.

For example, if a user continues to attach files in an email rather than sending a link to the attachment in OneDrive, Kyndryl's intelligent engine can drive educational content to that person.

"Individuals may not be leveraging the collaborative capabilities that drive efficiency, whether that's assigning tasks, using lists, or doing other integrations in Teams," Xavier says. "So we use analytics to determine how

folks are using the tools and whether they're taking advantage of all the functionality."

The Adoption Services platform — which can be integrated directly into your Teams environment or knowledge management system — can also help you get a handle on tech sprawl by assessing the tools in use and usage data. Armed with this information, you can make better decisions about which technologies to continue licensing and supporting — and get a better picture of potential security risks.

Kyndryl also offers project management, migration, and managed services to accelerate the implementation of and support for the digital workplace. For example, the company's thousands of Microsoft-certified experts can monitor, analyze, diagnose, and remediate issues. They can also address change management, manage Teams and channels, handle application-programming-interface (API) integrations, and more.

Next steps on the collaborative journey

It is not too soon to build your collaborative digital workplace. The hybrid world of work requires a reimagined experience that marries physical and virtual spaces.

Start by assessing your real estate requirements and how to make the best use of those investments. Think about the need for desk, office, and meeting room flexibility.

Next, look at data about how employees are using existing collaborative tools. What are the adoption and usage rates? Are they using multiple conferencing solutions?

"Finally, tie together the pieces — the real estate and digital collaborative tools — to reimagine how people work together," Xavier says.

"Teams brings together the physical and virtual worlds in a seamless, frictionless way, so employees have everything they need in

one place," Xavier says. "That's the key to the future of work."

Re-imagine Your Digital Workplace

Kyndryl, the world's largest IT infrastructure services provider, is helping organizations plan, build, implement and manage Teams hubs to fuel collaboration, elevated employee experiences and better bottom line results.

- An integrated Teams hub with the collaboration tools that work best for your workforce, including OneDrive, Yammer, Viva, and more. Kyndryl can help define familiar features that promote and increase user productivity while also ensuring that all systems and sharing capabilities are fully compliant with industry and government regulations
- Microsoft Power Platform, including Power Apps to empower citizen developers
- Integration with your critical business applications, such as for ERP
- Predefined templates for specific personas to speed deployment and user adoption
- IT support, including implementation of self-service functionality and global managed support
- Consumption-based billing based on license utilization, as well as end-to-end license management
- Kyndryl is a Gold Microsoft Partner - Azure Expert MSP with advanced specializations in Kubernetes on Microsoft Azure; SAP on Microsoft Azure; Analytics on Microsoft Azure

For more information, visit Kyndryl.com

Thank you for reading