



Understanding the impact a global pandemic has on business processes and how to develop a future-proof strategy

Global pandemics just like Covid-19 have been known to ignite major innovation and change both personally and professionally. For many organisations, the overnight transition from working in a traditional office in contrast to remote working turned out to be quite the headache. It quickly became apparent that important technology and key documents used to perform day to day jobs were all based in the office, leaving organisations with a dilemma on their hands.

Prior to the pandemic, many office based organisations typically adopted the 9am-5pm working day with the majority of employees predominantly based in an office. Although this way of working for some individuals could seem outdated with the current access to technology that we have today, it did work and at the time, was 'the norm'.

From near on 'living at the office' with a considerable amount of time spent commuting, preparing lunches and everything beyond that, to an entire cohort of employees working remotely within an extremely short space of time. Many businesses have found their staff productivity to be extremely high through adopting automated workflows like those within the digital transformation realm. *"The digital journey is a never-ending transformation given the rapid evolution of technology and its wider use."*¹

The impact of the pandemic has changed the way businesses operate now and in the near and distant future. From learning how to manage a team remotely, to coordinating virtual events and communicating via online platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, many parts of our work life have in some aspects hit the pause button and in others, done a complete 180.

Fast forward and organisations are utilising the current technologies that have now become an essential part of the working day, and fundamentally, they are here to stay. *"Despite its apparent drawbacks, technology has also opened a world of possibilities that few could have imagined. People can travel and interact with the world virtually, without ever leaving their living room or office. Nearly every piece of knowledge accumulated since the beginning of time is a voice command away."*²

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¹ <https://workplaceinsight.net/digital-transformation-requires-more-than-just-new-technology/>

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/louisefron/2017/12/03/how-technology-can-transform-workplace-humanity/#351c5df22f00>

Preparing for a new era of work – a catalyst for innovation

According to 'Gartner Research' *"88% of organisations currently either encourage or require employees to work from home"*³. This is the largest remote working environment to date, with a huge number of office based employees now located remotely.

Although some business sectors were privy to remote working prior to the global pandemic, it has, in turn, pushed the majority of sectors that can work remotely to do so whilst adopting the necessary tools and technology in order to be as productive and effective as when in the workplace.

Not only are we now witnessing a shift in the technology used to perform job roles, but also a complete change in employee's personal life. So many more contributing factors have come in to play, such as how much more free time an employee has by enabling them to work from home, saving on fuel / car expenses, and other outgoings that are not so prominent when working remotely.

However, enabling employees to work remotely is more than just supplying them with the necessities to do their job. It's about providing them with the tools they had access to when they were in the office. In order for organisations to do this, they should be thinking less around the traditional operational structures, and focus more on moving into this new era of a post-pandemic digital dependence.

Flexible working by nature

Now that remote working has become a more permanent feature to our working lives and employees have quickly adapted to this new working practice, organisations can continue moving forward with this post-pandemic digital-dependence.

*"Businesses are beginning to appreciate that significant transformational change can offer new opportunities and that traditional workplace models could soon be a thing of the past."*⁴

Just a few organisations can and will remain in a complete remote state, but the majority will embrace greater flexibility to support different work situations and scenarios for their employees.

"88% of organisations currently either encourage or require employees to work from home"



3 <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-03-19-gartner-hr-survey-reveals-88--of-organizations-have-e#:~:text=survey%20of%20800%20global%20HR,80%25%20increase%20since%20March%203.>

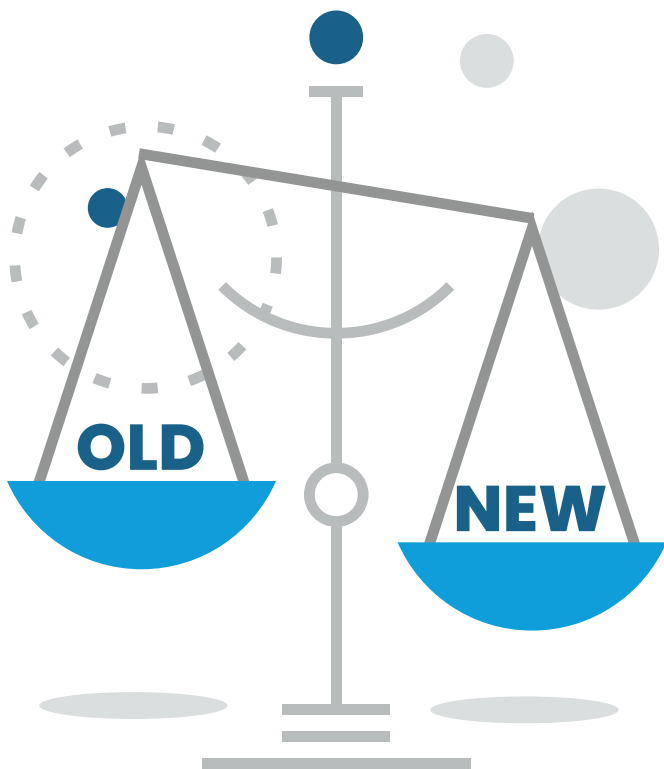
4 <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/technology-flexible-work-uk/46776/>

Pandemic Proofing

The days of total freedom within a workplace may seem as if they are long gone, but hopefully group tea rounds and having a catch-up in the corridors will be back before we know it. For now, organisations should focus time on creating a safe and healthy environment for their employees both in the workplace and remotely.

Quocirca research has already found that *“MPS is viewed as an enabler for digital transformation. For distributed teams to work well together, information needs to be digitised to enable automated workflows. Channel partners are well positioned to design and deliver services to bridge the paper to digital gap.”*⁵

So, as businesses move forward into a post-pandemic future, they need to find a balance between previous operations and what can be implemented going forward in order to create and maintain this new flexible workplace. From e-commerce to a contact-free economy, technology has been a critical tool in the belt in the global response to this crisis, and in a post-pandemic world, we will depend on technology more than ever.



5 <https://quocirca.com/content/can-the-covid-19-pandemic-spur-innovation-in-the-print-industry-channel/>

Transforming Technology

The rapid shift from predominately office based working to a combination of hybrid and remote has accelerated digital transformation full force for many organisations. The development and adoption of new technology comes in many forms. From document management portals, cloud based infrastructure, to new print devices purpose built for the 'remote' / 'home' worker. These solutions are effectively tailored to meet the ever-growing demands of the 21st century flexible worker.

These innovative solutions are changing the digital landscape for the better and enabling workforces around the world to be more accessible both online and offline by utilising these newly developed automated workflows. *"To accurately reflect their staff's changing work experience, leading organizations have begun to implement an entirely new working environment – the digital workplace. By integrating the technologies that employees use (from e-mail, instant messaging and enterprise social media tools to HR applications and virtual meeting tools), the digital workplace breaks down communication barriers, positioning you to transform the employee experience by fostering efficiency, innovation and growth. The key to success, however, lies in the effective implementation of a digital workplace strategy capable of driving true cultural change."*⁶

Back in 2013, in a bid to revolutionise and develop the automated workflow process, HP developed their *Instant Ink* solution to provide ink to workers around the world. Now 7 years on, other similar solutions have been built on the basis of this model, so they are tailored for the flexible business world. To enhance the flexible working experience, Apogee developed the Managed Ink Service which encompasses a Remote Worker Programme. This service supplies users with a brand new HP desktop printer and an on-demand ink service that is delivered straight to your door.

Small differences like a consolidated invoice for all remote workers with a HP device on an identical programme can save valuable time and admin for organisations. This is just the start of the remote worker revolution and we will later highlight other solutions designed and developed since Covid-19 to help enhance the work environment and productivity of your employees.

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The digital workplace...



6 https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/mx/Documents/human-capital/The_digital_workplace.pdf

Innovative solutions

In order to make all workplaces as future-proof and flexible as they can be, Apogee have designed and developed new solutions over the past few months to adhere to all working environments, whether that be office based or remote. *"Over the next decade, technology will only continue to accelerate at its furious pace, and this will inevitably affect employees and how they perform their jobs."*⁷ Here are some examples of Covid Compliant solutions which organisations can adopt to enhance their current operational structure and to become as future-proof and flexible as possible.



Touchless Printing

To help businesses achieve their objective of a 'Touchless' workplace, Apogee have developed the concept of 'Touchless Printing' so staff can print from any device without the need for physical contact.



Device as a Service

Device as a Service can provide all IT hardware, software deployment and support services your organisation needs, combined into a single monthly payment, enabling your staff access to the most up to date technology whether that be in an office or at home.



Document Management solution

The transition to remote working has been highly effective but accessing key documents through collaboration technology is critical for all workers.

Through Apogee's Document Management and Scanning Solutions staff can securely and efficiently access documents via a centralised hub irrespective of their location.



Providing the right technology

More desktop MFDs spread around the workspace minimises employee movement and pinch points by being shared by a small group of users only. Apogee can supply business technology for any working environment which includes a full Managed Print Service of remote support, servicing and toner.



Cloud Printing solutions

By adopting Cloud based technology it means that no matter where your staff are, you can maintain business operations as usual. With Apogee Cloud Print, users can access their documents and will print directly into one simple print interface - regardless of location or multivendor print fleet.



Digitising your mail

Digitise your inbound post from the source straight into one of Apogee's outsource print facilities. We have the ability to scan and digitise the physical post via our document management workflow solution which is then uploaded to a secure portal to be accessed and distributed as required, delivering all your critical communications swiftly and securely to employee inboxes.

⁷ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2020/02/06/how-technology-could-impact-the-workplace-over-the-next-decade/?sh=1bf502993bd2>

Making it a reality

All of these solutions are able to truly enhance your operations and accessibility both remotely and in the workplace. Whether you are at the start of your digital journey or you have already learnt and adapted to this new flexible working environment, remember that we are all learning together and this is just an insight into some of the solutions that are changing our workplaces right now and for the future.

"While the workplace began transforming as far back as the agricultural and industrial revolutions, the widespread proliferation of information technology forever changed the ways in which employees connect, collaborate and communicate."⁸

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⁸ https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/mx/Documents/human-capital/The_digital_workplace.pdf