
Workplace 3.0

Redefining the world of work

Introduction

Customer and employee expectations means that your business needs to adapt and adopt new technology advancements and work in new ways to meet these demands.

In this paper we discuss the challenges facing organisations in both the private and public sector. We focus on three key areas: Unified Communication, Managed and Cloud Services and Contact Centre solutions.

We highlight the benefits of each to show you how these three areas can help you to reduce costs, improve employee efficiency, build better relationships with your customers and ultimately gain competitive advantage.

1. Workplace 3.0

Redefining the world of work

The world of work is constantly changing. The continuing economic downturn in the UK and Europe has meant that many organisations need to look at new ways to reduce costs into their business. They also need to consider how to meet changes in customer demand, scaling up or down to manage these fluctuations and ensuring that their employees become more agile and able to respond to opportunity.

Rapidly developing technology and growing employee expectations has led to companies increasingly adopting flexible working strategies that allow staff to work from anywhere using their device of choice with the same access to information as they have in the office.

In this era of always on communication and online social networking, customers are ever more demanding, expecting immediate response to their queries and service and support on their terms. This has led to a greater reliance on online support, with 24/7 accessibility.

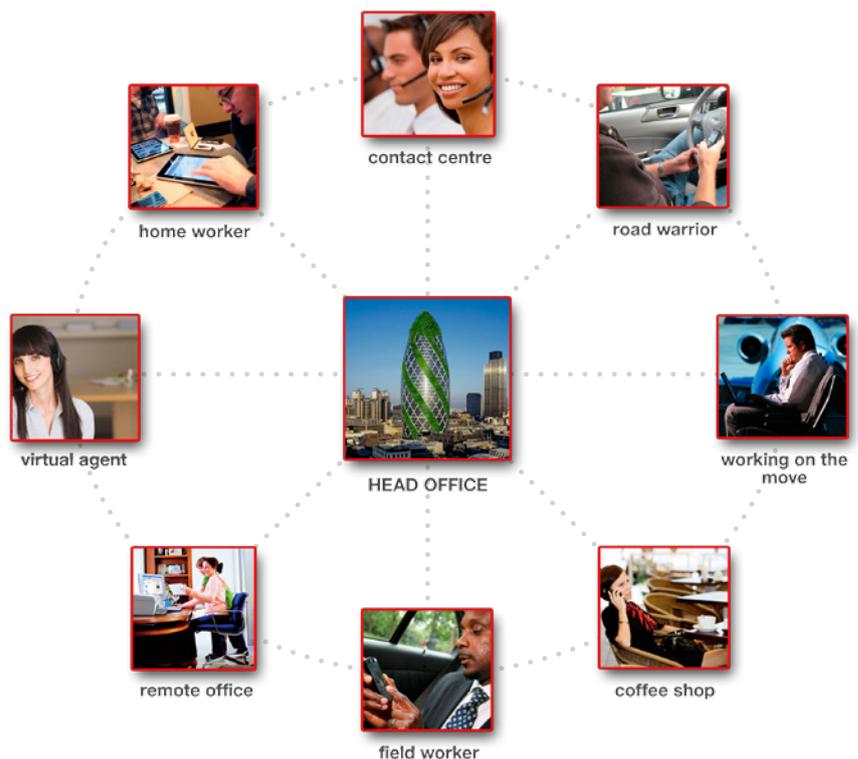
Consumerisation has led to an expectation that the type of intuitive communications people use in their personal lives should be available at work. This has in turn meant the adoption, by many businesses, of cloud services and technologies, changing the way that they plan, consume and account for IT resources and applications. It is creating new opportunities to scale services quickly, and new threats in managing and protecting company information.

Workplace 3.0 is 4net's vision of the business of the future - work will be more about something you do than

where you go to do it. Technology is enabling us to work outside old organisational structures.

We can now work in virtual teams across different locations. Cloud technologies and services, combined with presence and unified communications is enabling people to communicate and collaborate with experts across the country, or even the globe, helping organisations make more informed decisions and to become more efficient and more productive.

These new and emerging technologies can help your employees to work more collaboratively with colleagues, partners or stakeholders regardless of location or device. By embracing Workplace 3.0 you can help your employees to make more informed decisions, provide a faster response to customers and above all help your business outperform the competition.



2. Reducing Costs

One way to help your organisation save money and maximise your IT investment is to reduce total cost of ownership, increase bandwidth over legacy systems and simplify network design through voice, video and data.

Consolidation of contracts and analysis of call spend are quick wins but to achieve the necessary level of support for this increasingly complex environment and drive real cost savings companies need to consider Managed and Cloud Services.

This provides scale and flexibility, and a commercial model that reduces costs and provides an easy to budget pricing model based on either a fixed monthly cost or per user basis. Managed Services and Cloud Solutions simplify the introduction and support of next generation infrastructures and technologies across a multitude of enterprise sites, wrapping this into one predictable monthly price with consolidated billing providing an opportunity for organisations to drive down costs whilst enhancing and improving productivity and customer service.

Contact Centres

Within a contact centre environment, Virtual Agent solutions allow contact centre agents to work from home, remote offices, or anyplace with an Internet connection. It supports both flexible work arrangements and virtual contact centres, giving businesses maximum freedom in the way they recruit and deploy their agents.

Virtual Agent solutions allow home agents to appear transparently to reporting software, wallboards, workforce management software, and other performance solutions.

This high level of integration allows businesses to get the contact centre capacity they need, while still having the flexibility to recruit agents as needed, from virtually anywhere, without paying for the cost of additional office space.

Virtual contact centres reduce real estate, heating, cooling, and other office-related expenses. And improved employee retention can help reduce personnel costs.

Cloud Services

Cloud Services have evolved as consumer behaviour and technology has changed and developed. It offers your organisation the benefit of being able to scale up or down, as business needs change. Your employees can access data from any device from anywhere, making them more productive and you can reduce heavy expenditure on IT services with predictable pricing.

Cloud services help you manage your costs and cash flow, be agile in response to market pressure, simplify your infrastructure and process and collaborate quickly and effectively across organisational boundaries.

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3. Improving Employee Efficiency and productivity

One of the biggest challenges facing businesses today is the consumerisation of IT. The way people gather and share information through social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter etc.), cloud computing, the growth of Internet based technologies at home and the proliferation of personal tablets and smartphones, has seen increased pressure on businesses allow employees to Bring Their Own Device (BYOD) into the workplace.

Previously IT chose the method of communication within a business, but now users are demanding the right to work flexibly – at home, on the move, hot-desking.

This provides a challenge to organisations particularly around network and data security and the delivery of common applications. Companies are under increasing pressure to support or create policies surrounding BYOD in the workplace.

Indeed, research has indicated that 40% of college students and 45% of employees would be prepared to accept a lower salary but have a choice of device than a higher paid job with less flexibility.

Enterprises need to fully enable employees' productivity and flexibility by supporting the range of mobile and tablet devices but also provide the solutions that ensure company data and networks remain secure.

Unified Comms

Other business challenges continue to include a need for better flexibility and greater mobility and improvement of business processes along with a requirement to reduce costs

and gain competitive advantage. Unified Comms in the form of communications and collaboration allows companies to realise these goals.

With many companies moving from traditional management hierarchies to agile and flexible workplaces incorporating collaboration and teamwork there has been a shift from one to one to many to many communications. Integration with the Internet, increasing employee mobility and a move to virtual teams and organisations, along with the need to continually improve business flexibility and adaptability that services based communications provides

Employees working from home still need the same level of connectivity and availability to work effectively with co-workers and virtual teams whilst away from the office. The easiest and most cost effective way to support these people is through IP telephony and UC applications such as softphones, presence, instant messaging (IM) and 'one number' contactability.

Cloud video conferencing is a cost-effective solution that can keep your remote workers, customers and stakeholders in touch on any device, anywhere in the world with a simple managed service fee. This solution integrates with room-based systems with a full suite of enterprise applications, including full video, audio and data collaboration. Cloud video conferencing makes your employees more productive, allows virtual team collaboration, removes the need for travel time giving you back more hours to 'do the job' and supports your green agenda.

Real-time presence allows you to view the availability of all other users and their communication

preferences. This cuts wasted time tracking down available users and leaving messages. For example, a customer support specialist can use the presence application to identify an available expert qualified to answer a particular customer question.

Unified communications also allows coworkers, business partners, and clients to come together and collaborate using advanced data sharing and communications devices. You can exchange ideas, share data and documents instantly, edit a document "live," and more. Examples of virtual collaboration tools include online white boards and a shared document repository.

Bringing the right people together at the right time in the right way is only truly achievable through collaborative working tools.

Contact Centre

One of the major ways that contact centres can achieve an edge over the competition is by increasing the productivity of contact centre agents.

Virtual Agent solutions allow contact centre agents work from home, remote offices, or any place with an Internet connection. Agents from across the country can work from common queues and be measured against the same key performance indicators, ensuring that customer service is consistent regardless of where agents are located.

This high level of integration allows businesses to get the contact centre capacity they need, while still having the flexibility to recruit agents as needed, from virtually anywhere.

Composing staff schedules on a spreadsheet is inefficient and fails to make use of the intelligence you've gathered about customer contact patterns. Ensure that the right agents, with the right skills and training, are on shift exactly when you need them by using automated workforce management solutions.

Workforce Management solutions simplify the complex task of forecasting and scheduling, enabling inbound and outbound contact centres to capitalise on the unique skills and proficiencies of every agent. As a result, you can reduce costs by staffing appropriately to meet your workload, drive business growth, and improve employee effectiveness and retention.

Agent desktop and CRM integration solutions increase agent productivity by consolidating the agent desktop to speed workflow and reduce the need for customers to repeat themselves.

These solutions gather customer information (history, account number etc.) and match it quickly with the right agent in a real-time collaborative session. This increases first contact resolution, driving competitively differentiated service through improved customer satisfaction and revenue.

Presence means that when a customer contact arrives, the agent's portal displays the appropriate experts and their presence. Managers can also create custom views or large groups of experts based on available times and skills.

Social media can be integrated into the agent desktop, making it easier for agents to communicate with customers by automatically capturing and responding to relevant tweets and Facebook updates.

Voice, video and other communications services can be connected directly to business workflows, filtering and delivering the right information to the right people on the right device at the right time.

IVR forms the backbone of self-serve applications that allow customers to retrieve account information, place product orders, complete market research surveys and more.

Intelligent, speech-enabled IVR solutions allow you to serve customers through an automated system in an efficient manner, eliminating the need for agents to fulfill routine inquiries. For more complex transactions and inquiries where an agent is needed, implementing speech authentication software can help you reduce the time it takes for a live agent to complete each call. IVR configuration tools allow your supervisors to manage the IVR in near real time.

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4. Building better customer relationships

The traditional call centre—rows of agents in headsets answering calls—is becoming obsolete. In a consumer-driven, Internet-enabled world, your customers aren't just calling you. They want to reach you via email, IM, text, and more. And simply “taking” calls isn't enough to keep customers loyal—you need to proactively reach out to build relationships, upsell, and solve problems before they become deal-breakers.

In short, you need a contact centre. You need to reach your customers using the communications channels they want. You need to balance inbound and outbound communications so that no one is left waiting. And you have to do all of this while cutting costs, improving agent efficiency, and maximising the value of every customer.

Enhancing the range of contact channels available to a customer should be part of a strategy, not only to offer customers more choice, but to smooth out the peaks and troughs in call volume experience by most contact centres. Although voice will always remain the predominant method of contact for most organisations, new channels will play an increasing part in the new contact centre. New media channels also appeal to certain demographics and types of customers and business organisations.

Changing demographics mean that new generations of consumers are gaining purchasing power and changing the way they want to gather information, make decisions and communicate.

New communications methods such as web self service, IM, web chat and the growing prevalence of smartphones have a huge impact on the way organisations interact with their customers.

Above all customers expect a better customer service, they are more inclined to leave after a single bad service and with access to social media are more likely to broadcast their dissatisfaction.

Customers are increasingly expecting a joined up contact experience and through intelligently managing all your contact media types – phone calls, voice messages, email, text, web chat and fax in a single fully integrated solution you can enhance service levels and improve staff productivity, reducing call handling time and increasing first time call resolution.

5. Create business advantage

The changes in the way we work have provided business with the opportunity to exploit the technology and knowledge of their workforce to enable flexibility, efficiency and mobility within their business. Companies that want to stay ahead of their competitors will need to accept the new technology that will allow them to perform more effectively and efficiently.

By being able to pay on a monthly or per seat/user cost business are able to manage cost and cash flow – only paying for the services they use.

As the UK and Europe recover from the current economic problems, companies can harness Cloud services to enable them to grow and develop with a limited up front investment and no need to expand their internal IT resource

By allowing employees to bring their own device to work and embracing this trend, companies can gain the benefits of a collaborative and flexible workforce.

Managed Services and Cloud Solutions are an opportunity for organisations to bring control to complexity by managing voice and data communications through a specialised supplier, driving down costs whilst enhancing and improving productivity and customer service.

Managed services simplify the introduction and support of next generation infrastructures and technologies across a multitude of enterprise sites by wrapping this into one predictable monthly price with consolidated billing.

Cloud Services have evolved as consumer behaviour and technology has changed and developed. It offers your organisation the benefit of being able to scale up or down, as business needs change. Your employees can access data from any device from anywhere, making them more productive and you can reduce heavy expenditure on IT services with predictable pricing. Cloud services help you manage your costs and cash flow, be agile in response to market pressure, simplify your infrastructure and process and collaborate quickly and effectively across organisational boundaries.

6. In Summary

Workplace 3.0 is more than meeting the needs of the individual and how they want to work, to 4net it's more about how we can help companies maximise the skills of their employees through enabling virtual teamwork and collaboration.

We believe that organisations need to adapt to new ways of working by leveraging technologies such as social media and virtual tools. They need to break down the barriers of the traditional fixed office environment and create virtual teams to collaborate and work from anywhere, from any device.

Unified Communications, Managed and Cloud Services and Contact Centre solutions can help you to meet today's business challenges

4net is helping organisations across the UK and Europe to face today's challenges through their expertise in Unified Communication, Contact Centre and Managed and Cloud Services. Through our consultative approach and understanding of our customers business we can help redefine the way they and their employees work and communicate with customers and stakeholders and gain real competitive advantage.

For further information on 4net please call **0333 323 0700** or visit www.4net-technologies.co.uk



4net's powerful combination of service excellence and technical expertise makes us the partner of choice for organisations who want to transform the way they communicate with customers, staff and stakeholders, reduce costs and gain competitive advantage.

Our contact centre, unified communications, managed services and telephony solutions are designed to address today's complex business challenges, helping you to respond to your customer and staff requirements.

From simple IP Telephony Solutions to Virtual Contact Centres, from Unified Communications to Cloud Services, we partner with best in class vendors such as Avaya, Cisco and ShoreTel to deliver a solutions portfolio that will address today's changing workplace and build tomorrow's future, making 4net the preferred communications partner for many businesses across the globe.