

DISTRIBUTED MINDS:

IT Thought Leadership for the Age of Remote Work

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AND INTERVIEWS WITH:

Martha Heller
Alan Nance
Dr. Brennan Jacoby
Gil Cohen





Introduction



By Jon Cairns, VP, Global Solution Consulting
at Nexthink

In March of 2020, our lives at home and at work were changed forever. The global pandemic jolted people out of their typical routines, and forced many employees out of the office and into isolated work environments –

while creating new safety concerns and financial burdens for citizens and companies alike.

Now, we're rapidly approaching the one-year anniversary of this massive shift in our collective experiences. Over the course of that long, difficult year, we've all experienced periods of great hardship – but we've also seen breakthroughs of tremendous growth and innovation.

Digital transformation was already well under way prior to the pandemic. With the widescale shift to remote work environments, that transformation was accelerated beyond what we previously considered possible. We've seen companies become more agile as they adapt to virtual workspaces. Leaders have developed unique strategies to foster a sense of community across hundreds or thousands of home offices. New, ground-breaking technologies have emerged, aimed at keeping employees productive in a time of unprecedented volatility.

During this past year, we've collaborated with a number of esteemed thinkers and innovators in the IT space and beyond, developing content that examines the implications of the pandemic and the innovations that are still very much underway.

We've covered the rise of remote workspaces, the impact on employee experience, necessary shifts in IT messaging and technology deployment, and much more.

To keep you up to speed, we've collected some of those expert insights and conversations in this unique Anthology. As we hopefully pull away from the pandemic, it's crucial for IT professionals to understand in depth what's changed since March of 2020 – and what changes are yet to come.



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Key Lessons in Remote Work from 2020: A CIO Perspective



By Dion Hinchcliffe

The events of 2020 — from the pandemic to the resulting mass quarantines — have been one of the most impactful societal events of this century. Nearly overnight, it has relegated hundreds of millions of workers to their homes, likely through much of 2021 and perhaps beyond. The pandemic has also caused organizations to abandon long-standing expectations and traditions related to in-office working—or to hurriedly rethink and redefine them with the remote worker not only in mind, but as a primary stakeholder.

The pandemic has resulted in a historic migration the likes of which has not seen before in the workplace, especially over such a short time. Within just a few weeks in early 2020, organizations were suddenly required to provide workers with the devices, Internet access, and services that they needed to function independently and autonomously—but safely—from their residences.

This vast shift in workplace has profoundly affected organizations and their workers. Yet little is known to date about the actual issues that workers have faced or what enterprises are having to cope with as they attempt to provide a digital employee experience that can compare in effectiveness to the physical workplace that has just been abandoned *en masse*.



The Way We Work Has Changed

People sequestered at home, distracted by family members and the global crisis as well as by the interruptive rhythms of home life. Disrupted customers struggling with their own remote-access issues. Lost efficiency. Siloed communication. Important business issues going unchecked and unmanaged. These were the worst fears related to remote work during a major worldwide event such as a pandemic.

Yet a growing cohort of data shows that the global shift to remote work, which took most organizations just two or three weeks to accomplish, has resulted in a generally successful transition, at least in terms of basic computing and network access. Along the way, organizations have been swiftly learning about the new nature of remote work itself.

A key data point is telling in this, namely that 96% of IT leaders in October 2020 report they felt digital employee experience was an essential function for them, up from 46% a year ago according to [The Nextthink Pulse Report](#).



Enabling Both Office and Remote Workers Must Be a Priority in 2021

From this, three key lessons can be extracted:

1) TRUST IS THE BASIS OF SUCCESSFUL REMOTE WORK

Remote employees expect a relatively high degree of autonomy because in most cases they will carry out their day-to-day work unsupervised. Managers generally don't have a way to directly supervise remote workers and often resort to productivity measures or worse, monitoring technologies that fail to capture the digital employee experience.

Managers themselves typically swing to extremes on this issue. At one end of the spectrum, managers let go and cross their fingers, hoping their employees are performing and concerned that supervision will be perceived as micromanagement. At the other end of the spectrum, managers impose intrusive measures to monitor and scrutinize every detail of their remote employees' workday.

Fortunately, managing the performance of remote employees doesn't require anything special. First and foremost, managers can inspire trust by defining clear performance expectations, establishing transparent means to measure performance, and instituting regular check-ins to keep an active dialogue with the employee. Evaluations and even the occasional corrective action help build trust when employees know what to expect, when they see that individuals are held accountable for their actions and when they understand how excellence is rewarded.

It turns out that managers and their remote workers are most successful when there's mutual understanding on what their shared goals and objectives are, and that the worker is empowered and encouraged to address "how" those things will be accomplished.

It's also telling that in Constellation Research's dozens of discussions with C-level executives on the topic, everyone has offered up or confirmed that remote work has resulted in higher productivity. This should inspire trust that most of the time, remote work is a positive model.

2) INVEST IN THE RIGHT COLLABORATION TOOLS AND SKILLS

While technology has offered many solutions to in-person and technology-enabled communication, most solutions weren't designed for workers to spend as their dedicated way to work. Video conferencing, messaging apps and enterprise social networks allow people to have effective meetings across multiple locations.

However, a significant amount of interpersonal context is lost when people are only communicating through technology. Most commonly, people express frustration about not being able to fully "read" the room. Subtle facial expressions, tone changes, body language and context can be difficult to catch and interpret, even over video conference.

Another, more pernicious challenge is that most of the meeting technologies being selected are "blocking," in that workers have to be sitting in video or conference calls, instead of getting meaningful work done. Yet, many newer but less well-known collaboration tools — such

as enterprise social networks and team chat tools — allow large scale collaboration around artifacts with everyone being able to communicate and work at once.

In the end, traditional conferencing tools can enable communication with remote employees, but they won't fully engage those employees. Managers need to couple the technology with training their teams on how to conduct productive and inclusive meetings that engage all participants, and to use channels that are most productive for the type of work. Video calls are great for creating human connections, while textual collaboration tools actually facilitate and enable work directly, without interrupting it. By investing in both modern collaboration technology and some simple training on how to get the most from it, managers can set both their remote and local teams up for success.

CIOs should review their collaboration portfolios throughout 2021 and adjust them to be more remote-first, as well as ensure they have effective skill building programs for them.



3) BUILD A REMOTE-FIRST EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

In today's more remote workplaces, people have to go more out of their way to interact with their colleagues. Whether they are structured or informal, planned or accidental, employees within an office have more opportunities to engage each other, have small talk, or overhear useful information.

Worse, the employee experience most workers have now was designed for the office worker. Now it must be rethought and redesigned for the remote worker as well, as a primary persona. This leads us to several key insights:

- **If experience is at the core of employee experience, it should be the organizing principle.** Remote employee experience should be represented as a recognizable capability on the IT side, and used by HR and everyone else to produce the experiences needed that tap into our full capabilities as individuals and organizations. This is a different approach than in the past when organizations acquired individual digital tools, touchpoints, or suites, branded and configured them a bit, and deployed them. Now we need a digital employee experience that forms a consistent “center of gravity” for the worker and their daily activities.
- **Automation, analytics, current and ongoing revolutions in digital experience, consumer-grade user interfaces, low/no-code and the emerging tech spectrum must regularly inform and improve the employee experience.** The employee experience must now evolve as fast as the world. It must therefore be represented in a cohesive but loosely-structured stack designed to change and keep up with shifts in the organization and the world. Most organizations will spend the next five to 10 years getting this model right for them, and it will be an ongoing journey to maintain.

- **The daily moments of the worker must be the unit of employee experience development and management.** This makes it human-centered, value-centered, and aimed at the most meaningful work activities. Disjointed work across many systems must be reorganized into singular job activities (sell a product, build a team, manage a project, get a promotion) that formerly spanned many siloed applications. Unify them into easily customized and personalized digital experience that are contextual, have built-in just-in-time training and can be created by anyone in the organization.

The pandemic highlighted many issues, including the realization that CIOs must do much better helping their organizations reformulate the modern worker journey around the experience model. Combined with urgent needs post-pandemic, especially around well-being and resilience, and it's clear a mandate now exists to do much better for workers.

Most organizations will start at the core of their employee experiences and steadily go outward until they reach diminishing returns. Some will find that it's better to start at the edge and work their way inward. But change they must, because the status quo is near the breaking point in terms of ever-lengthening employee onboarding times, needless cognitive load on workers to manage growing complexity, stagnating worker productivity, and low employee engagement/satisfaction. The future belongs to organizations that sustain modern and effective employee experiences.



This article first appeared on the [Nextthink blog](#)



How AXA Investment Managers Supports User Experience



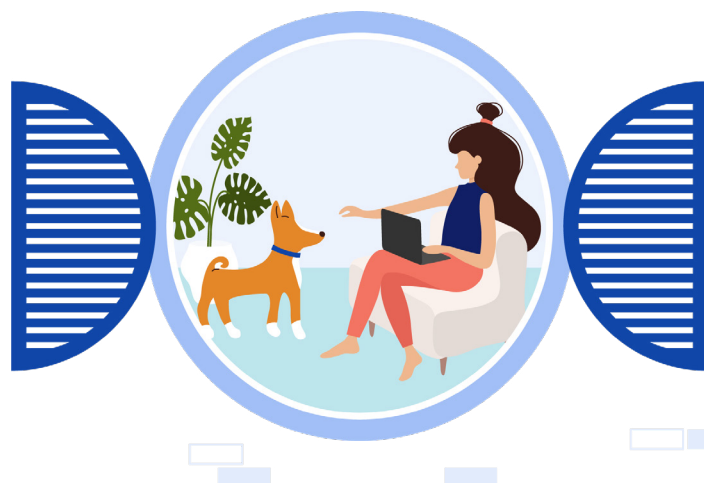
By **Christophe Verducci**
Head of Proximity Services, AXA Investment Managers

I remember a discussion I had with a senior manager at AXA Investment Managers ([AXA IM](#)) right at the beginning of what in France has been termed the “confinement” – or “lockdown” in the UK.

“Do you realize,” he asked me, “that, right now, your team has the most responsibility in the company for our making it through this crisis? It’s not the asset managers or the traders – everything is in your hands. If you can’t guarantee a decent level of support for users, and fix all the issues in front of them, the company is really in trouble.”

It was quite a statement, but it was easy to see why it was true. Almost overnight, we had gone from being a ‘traditional business,’ with HQs, offices, commutes, meeting rooms, and so on, to a highly dispersed one. In the Paris area alone, AXA IM had about 1,500 people [working from home](#). That’s 1,500 independent offices for IT to worry about.

Our ultimate aim was to guarantee the experience of all those remote users – from the quality of internet access, to the reliability and speed of the applications they were using. As long as they were able to keep working and be productive, the company could continue to exist.



No Substitute for Experience

In [new research](#) from Vanson Bourne, senior IT leaders from the UK and US report that digital employee experience has become an essential or high priority to 79% today, compared with 49% 12 months ago. The significant uptick makes sense – the more dispersed, remote or flexible your workforce, the more obviously important users’ digital experience is to an organization’s productivity and bottom line. If you are outside the office, your entire professional experience is mediated through, and dependent upon, technology. Fortunately, we already had the right tools and approach in place to make this dramatic transition work.

Until a couple of years ago, IT support at AXA IM was quite reactive – when someone reported an issue, we had to simply respond as quickly and effectively as possible. What we have since implemented, though, was a [digital experience management platform](#), Nexthink, which allowed us to be much more proactive – with dashboards providing key insights and notifications into our user estate, and the ability to anticipate and fix issues before they become a problem.

This investment and approach paid dividends when we found ourselves having to adapt to 100% remote working almost overnight in the early months of the year.

The requests and incidents for home workers have been totally different from those we would manage on-premise. The main challenge at the outset was to guarantee the quality of the LAN and the network – after that, to guarantee users' experience. One priority here was to simplify the actions of users, and to promote tools such as Zoom, WebEx and Teams.

The proactive capability we had instituted enabled us to observe different behaviors and data from our machines, this time getting in front of remote workers' issues. For instance, we observed that the shutdown buttons on our laptop estate were only triggering hibernation – so we quickly pushed a script to every laptop across the world to correct the issue, before the consequences of this could affect user experience.

Nexthink has enabled our IT teams to be more proactive. In fact, as a result of the monitoring platform, we have created a dedicated brand for proactive [IT support within the company](#) called Precogs. Now our IT teams are going to users to inform them of any application or latency issues and telling them how they plan to fix it. This saves staff time and improves their digital employee experience.

Within just a couple of months of the confinement, we could genuinely say that the company had not only continued to operate, but was functioning well. Employees were very happy with the quality of their experience, their workstation and their laptops, latency was low, and network and the internet access were very good.

We can say with confidence that remote working has been a great success – and our commitment to experience has been a big part of this.

This matters in the medium term as much as it does right now. The future of the workplace remains uncertain, and the capacity to support a more flexible workforce matters just as much going forward as it has supporting an exclusively remote one in the recent past.

We know we are ready to ensure employees have a great experience wherever they are working from.



This article first appeared in [Computer Weekly](#).



“In a Digital Economy, Everything Has to be Collaborative”



Martha Heller
CEO, Heller Search Associates

The responsibilities of a Chief Information Officer (CIO) have always been multifaceted and complex — never more so than in 2020, when the pandemic forced CIOs to quickly facilitate a shift to fully-remote work environments.

Martha Heller, CEO of Heller Search Associates, joined the Digital Employee Experience podcast to explain what she's learned from speaking with numerous CIOs before and during the pandemic.

Digital Employee Experience:

If a CIO had a significant project in front of him, he had to put it on hold, address the remote work and the business continuity planning they need to put into place. Now, it gets back to that digital transformation project that was put on hold. Are they looking at it differently? Is there a different approach now to collaborating with the business and pulling off a big project, in the new world vs. the old world?

Martha Heller:

One of the questions I asked on my listening tour is, “What have you learned about your team, your organization, your capabilities?” And people said things like, I learned how much we can accomplish if we work together. I learned what a motivator having a life and death goal is. I've never seen my team move like this. I've never seen our 80,000 employee population adopt a new technology as fast as everybody adopted Zoom or Teams or whatever we're using.

So my question then to them is, “How do you keep all of that speed and collaboration and productivity when you don't have the life or death burning platform? When the focus is simply growth, revenue, and customer acquisition, and we're not in the middle of a real healthcare crisis. How do you keep that motivation going?” And every one of them said, good question. We're working on that.

So I'm very hopeful that the leadership lessons learned during the last several months can be applied to the future without that healthcare crisis. I don't think that the way companies and CIOs approach digital transformation is going to change dramatically, in terms of organizationally, structurally, as a result of the pandemic. But I do think the collaborative nature of a culture has gotten a boost. Digital transformation is a team sport. IT can't lead it, the business can't do it on their own. Everybody's got to work together. That's hard because we grew up in an industrial environment where it's all about silos and specialization — “I do my thing, you do your thing, and I know what I'm accountable for.”

In a digital economy, everything has to be collaborative. Everything has to be cross-functional. That is a really hard culture to build if it hasn't been your past. Well, during the pandemic, we all worked collaboratively. There were crisis management teams. There was no stopping and saying, wait a minute, what am I accountable for? What are you accountable for? So harnessing that, the culture of collaboration is alive and well during the pandemic. So I don't think it's a new approach to digital. I think it's a stronger sense of collaboration, which is the right approach to digital.



Listen to the full show, CIOs in the Age of Experience w/ Martha Heller, [here](#).



“The Best Technology is the One That’s Actually Used”



Gil Cohen

Founder of Employee Experience Design

How do IT teams support the unique needs of every employee? And in a post-pandemic world, how will businesses provide rewarding experiences for both remote and in-office workers?

Gil Cohen, founder of Employee Experience Design, answered those questions and more when he joined the Digital Employee Experience podcast. Below, Gil touches on the importance of aligning experience and technology, and predicts a promising wave of innovation in the coming months.

Digital Employee Experience:

Is there a tension between the need to treat employees as individuals, and the tendency to provision technology as one-size-fits-all? Can you imagine an approach to users by IT, which is successful because it’s more individualized?

Gil Cohen:

IT is always looking to scale out. The problem is: individuals don’t scale. Individuals have their own personal needs. Can we boil them down to personas and swing a little bit better at what we’re trying to do? Certainly.

But there is a tension because everybody has their own individual requirements. If everybody worked their own way, we’d have no organization. So, there is definitely a tension in trying to ensure that people have their needs met, in a way that’s sustainable for the organization.

Gil Cohen:

When IT develops and improves on digital experience, they need to recognize the role of the human. One of the things I learned working at an IT company is: the best technology is the one that’s actually used. I can’t count how many times my technology friends told me, “Here are two different products. This one’s amazing. This one’s terrible. Everyone uses the terrible one.” It’s all about understanding, “We have human end users, we need to align [technology] with their experience.”

Digital Employee Experience:

The last 10 months have been game changing. We’d never thought we would be using technology the way we are. What do the next six, 10, 12 months look like?

Gil Cohen:

Times like these create innovation. Necessity is the mother of invention. So, we now have so many companies that were forced into remote work, finding new ways to do things. I’m of the strong belief that smart people are [creating technologies] right now based on their audience, based on their markets, that are then going to come out over the next few months.

The future of work isn’t entirely remote or entirely in the office; it’s a hybrid. That’s one of the things that remote work enthusiasts got wrong at the beginning of COVID. They thought, “Oh, we’re all remote, now. Everybody, let’s just stay remote.” And that’s just not how it’s going to be. There are people desperate to get back to the office right now.

Companies will find a way to create that fair hybrid — where remote employees don’t lose opportunities because they’re not in the office. It’s all about making sure there is a level playing field, regardless of where you are working.



Listen to full interview, w/ Gil Cohen [here](#).



Managing Your Invisible Workforce



By Guy Clapperton

To say that things have changed since March 2020 is so commonplace it's becoming trite. Everybody knows that people have worked from home where possible. HR and IT functions have dovetailed as never before.

The HR personnel are therefore likely to be working from home, but they have an additional pressure: they are supporting, and their managers are managing, teams they can't see. Some organizations already had provisions for home workers which is fine, but before the pandemic those were people who wanted to work from home rather than those who were forced by circumstances. Motivating and including the new group requires different management methods.

Technology

Fortunately, the technology was robust enough to deal with the situation at least from a transactional, functional point of view. There has been a great deal of coverage of digitalization over the last few years and this has led to a great deal of technical support including updates and maintenance being performed remotely in the first place. Those same pieces of technology that supported the willing home workers were fit for purpose when it came to the reluctant as well.

The wiser companies used those technical interventions to do more than repair and maintain systems. More on that later, but what really changed was the management of the people involved.



Many standard (if dated) management techniques involve standing over someone and watching them work and understanding that they are working because they are physically in their workplace. When they live in the workplace this is no longer feasible.

A management technique that can be substituted is management by output rather than by face time. Deploying metrics to look at outcomes rather than how long a task has taken can not only enthuse staff to work harder to maximize free time once a task is complete but it also has the benefit of treating them like adults.

An adjustment in trust is essential to manage in this way. Recruiting the right people to work from home is a luxury companies no longer have when it's compulsory but supporting those people so that they do indeed work from home requires motivation and sensitivity. It is also important to understand that too often motivation to work isn't the problem; having the confidence to stop when there is no particular reason to step away from the computer is a skill many employees will have to work on. In the book, [The Smarter Working Manifesto](#) (Van de Houtte and Clapperton, 2014) author Philip Van de Houtte comments that his own workforce at Plantronics (now part of Poly) had to be educated to stop work and allow themselves private time.

Part of this lies in measuring outputs by all means but setting realistic output targets.

People Issues

Something that isn't entirely new to HR but which has received a lot more attention since the pandemic broke is "wellness" – not simply "have you got Covid-19?" but covering mental wellbeing, stress and other related issues. As mentioned, some used technical upgrades and repairs as a reason to touch base. Output-based management based on unrealistic targets can all too easily lead to burnout.

This is another area in which technology can help. Nexthink client ABN AMRO, a large Dutch Bank, deployed the Engage platform. "We often used Nexthink's Engage capabilities to help troubleshoot common end-user problems and to proactively communicate with employees before any planned digital disruptions," said Jelmer Berendsen, Nexthink Enablement Lead at ABN's Digital Workplace team.

The bank also took advantage of Nexthink Engage to identify underperforming devices and connect directly with remote employees. "We were interested in better understanding our remote users, checking in on their wellbeing, and seeing if they needed different digital tools and support," said Berendsen. IT turned to Nexthink's automated campaigns to target certain subsets of users with helpful, on-screen surveys and messages. Their efforts quickly paid off—employees responded in record numbers and the IT team was able to collect meaningful feedback on their colleagues' computing experiences and wellbeing.

It's important to note that the technology is important in the equation but at its best it's a tool to communicate with people. No algorithm is going to be an adequate substitute for a business asking its employees how they are coping; the difficulty arises when there are thousands of them so the process needs to be automated without appearing impersonal. Mechanisms like questionnaires and surveys are terrific but the human beings have to get the questions right.

Solid employee-centric IT is the backbone of managing in this new environment. It's important because things are unlikely to change back to the old ways completely, at least not any time soon. Mastering the management of an invisible team is a business imperative – luckily the change has happened at a time when the tools are available.



This article first appeared on the [Nexthink Blog](#).





How COVID-19 Made IT Experience a Board Level Concern



Jelmer Berendsen

Enablement Lead, Digital Workplace, ABN AMRO



Daan Tuijnman

Product Owner, Digital Workplace, ABN AMRO

For the digital workplace team at ABN AMRO, it wasn't just the COVID-19 crisis itself that was unexpected. If you'd have told us in January 2020 that – within a few months – our tooling and capability would be the subject of direct and regular attention by the board at our company, we would have had trouble believing that, too.

ABN AMRO has long had quite a special focus on employee experience in general. Its philosophy is that a happy, productive workforce will inevitably improve customer experience, and works hard to create this. The outlook definitely extends to employees' experience with technology ('digital employee experience') which our IT teams take extremely seriously.

To monitor and improve this overall experience and perception of IT among users, the digital workplace team doesn't only leverage hard metrics, but perception data also. Before the COVID-19 crisis, we were using Nextthink [Engage](#) (a survey and communication product that allows IT to interact directly with users on their devices without email) to establish this in several areas.



It was this simple but effective approach that allowed us to develop a meaningful dialogue with the people that matter most to IT: the users.

Like so many IT teams worldwide, at the outset of quarantine, we had to transition overnight from partial remote working to working from home for our complete workforce.

Engage was an obviously useful tool in this scenario from an IT perspective: it enabled us to quickly and efficiently survey thousands of users on technical issues. However, it also quickly occurred to us that the same tool could also provide us with a fantastic way of reaching out directly to our colleagues at a time of great uncertainty and stress—to find out how they were doing emotionally as well as technologically.

Were they keeping fit and staying sane?

How was morale?

In short, what was their level of wellbeing?

All these surveys were getting great response rates—30%, 40% and even +50% (with approval rates in the 90% range). Suddenly we were working closely with HR on employee wellbeing. If on the one hand this was a surprising development (and it was) on the other hand it really made sense. When employees work from home, their ‘workplace’ is their tech, their laptop the intermediary between every single interaction with their colleagues, professional and personal.

It wasn’t just HR that was interested in our results, either. Our surveying was quickly receiving direct and regular attention from the board. Following the first wave, we were encouraged to implement ongoing regular surveys so as to be able to track general employee wellbeing over time.

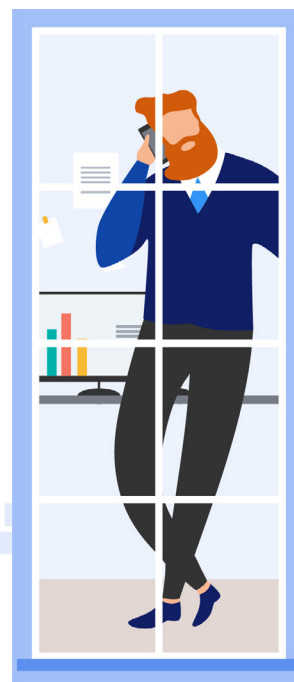
It would be easy to see this high-level strategic engagement as a circumstantial one. Yet as in so many areas of technology, here the crisis has accelerated an existing trend, rather than just created one. In this specific instance, while remote work exacerbates the impact of IT of productivity and wellbeing, flexible work was already an established trend before COVID-19 accelerated its emergence. And in general,

the more IT focuses on the experience of users, the more it will become a strategic partner to colleagues – all the way up to the board, where employee wellbeing and productivity is such an obvious focus.

While this is certainly a testament to the versatility of Nexthink’s tooling, it’s probably only fair to stress that they were able to help with a number of strictly IT challenges during this same period also, providing great visibility and proactive functionality across our dispersed user base. But this was an interesting glimpse into something many IT teams and vendors anticipate in the coming years: IT developing into a much closer strategic partner to the wider business, with a significant role to play both in ensuring employee productivity and wellbeing.



This article first appeared in vmblog.com



THE DIGITAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN NUMBERS

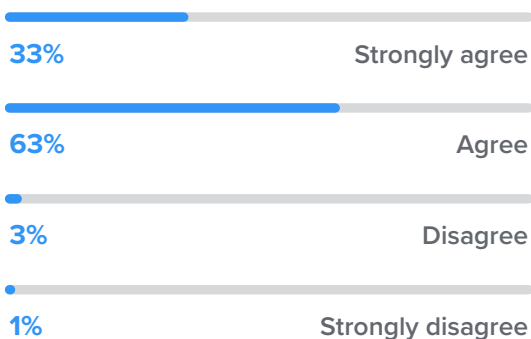
Relevancy & Measurement

We've traced the growing importance around DEX both pre-pandemic, early-pandemic, and in late 2020 by polling top IT executives from the enterprise.

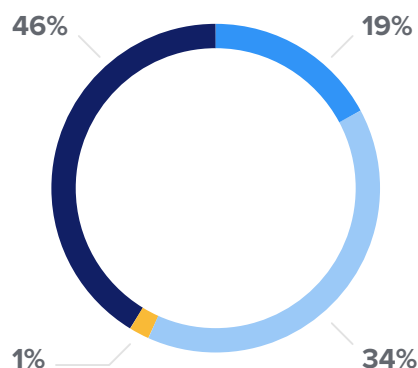
Do you agree that DEX is essential to your IT department?

- Last year (May 2019): **49%** of IT leaders agreed w/ that statement
- Early-pandemic (May 2020): **78%** agreed
- Late pandemic (Oct. 2020): **96%** agreed

The majority of tech leaders agree: Digital Employee Experience is a key priority right now.



But most cannot even measure their DEX, and if they do, they rely on manual methods!



- Yes, we measure metrics manually
- Yes, we have a tool
- No, we don't currently measure employee digital experience
- Unsure

And yet...

- More than 1/3 of the respondents in The Nextthink Pulse Report (34%) admitted that they rely on manual methods to collect experience information; and
- Nearly half (46%) don't measure their employees' digital experiences at all!



Proactive IT & The Future of Higher Education

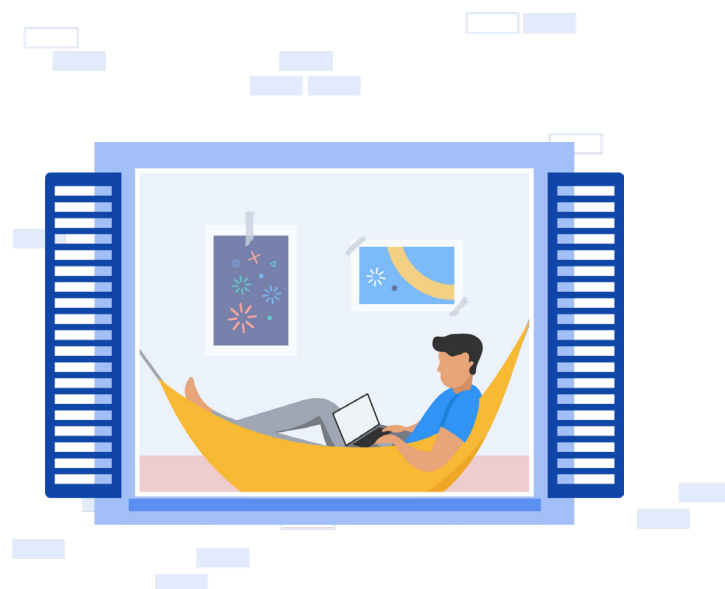


By Matt Hall
Bournemouth University

Higher education is one of the many sectors facing the prospect of profound reorientation in the post-COVID-19 world. Following the government's re-evaluation of approach, which saw students awarded [predicted grades](#) at A-level, many [university leaders](#) are concerned that taking on the extra, successful students would mean a stretch to resources – especially with social distancing and remote learning requirements needed to manage the spread of the virus.

At Bournemouth University we've always placed a significant emphasis on the campus premium experience we offer to students, appreciative of the significant cultural, social, and educational benefits that derive from a lively campus community.

And despite the pressure on the higher education sector, we hope to be able to continue to offer all of these benefits to students in the years to come. But there's no denying that, in the medium term at least, university education is set to become a much more flexible, blended experience for students and educators alike.



University IT Teams

This is only going to work properly with the proactive involvement of university IT teams, who will by and large have to transition from providing a very focused, on-premise service, to something far more fluid.

Most campus IT teams will have enjoyed a baptism of fire to this “new normal” at the outset of lockdown. One thing we're grateful for at Bournemouth University was that we were already talking to Nexthink about plans to provide a better experience to our users, and quickly accelerated the engagement in order to enable and manage an overnight shift to a remote work environment.

The first thing we had to do was accelerate our staff's already ongoing transition from PCs to laptops. The new digital experience software enabled us to instigate greater investigative access to these new devices, by giving us full visibility of end-user experience across our entire estate.

Internet Connectivity

A main challenge around this concerned internet connectivity. On-site it was a controlled environment, and suddenly there was this new piece of infrastructure between IT and our users – knowing what the weak link might be was vital when it came to diagnosing issues impeding productivity; there's no point investigating issues on a laptop, for instance, when the cause is an internet connectivity problem.

When a user called with an issue, we were also now able to find their device and see a graphical timeline of their issues. This helped us get to the bottom of any number of crashes, high CPU usage issues, disk space problems, and connectivity difficulties.

Another useful benefit came from a single view of all our machines, and a score designating their performance. This allowed us to be proactive, solving problems before they impacted users, or before they needed to notify us of them.

Using these tools allowed us to make steep changes pretty much overnight in our support capability. I can't quite imagine what it would have been like if we hadn't implemented it as quickly as we did. We would've managed, I'm sure, but we wouldn't have been able to respond as quickly and with as high a quality of service.

Blended Learning Experience

How teaching will be provided in the future will change over time. For next year, however, we're anticipating and preparing for a more [blended learning](#) experience for students. Our increased capacity to better measure and facilitate employee engagement and wellness is going to be a big part of that.

We've certainly noticed that our services have come to the fore in 2020: our response to the crisis has really established a much greater partnership between IT and the university's broader strategy. IT already underpinned most modern organizations of course, and universities were no different. It's a bit like electricity—few notice when it's working, but when it goes wrong it's very impactful. That's even more true when your users are working, or learning, remotely, or flexibly. For students to continue to have great educational and communal experiences in the years to come, proactive IT is going to be crucial.



This article first appeared in [Open Access Government](#).



The Next-Generation IT Career: More Dynamic, Designer Jobs



By Dion Hinchcliffe

If someone predicted how IT roles will change in the coming years, they'd likely envision tech roles maturing around emerging and high-value new technologies, such as AI, data science, and the cloud, as well as an ongoing focus on cybersecurity across industries and business divisions. These topics frequently come up in discussions with tech leaders about the near future of IT roles. But many would be surprised by two major trends:

- There are radically new positions today that don't fit into the tech categories above; and
- The very employment model for IT itself is shifting beneath our feet.

Perhaps the most significant of the two new trends is the rise of in-demand roles that will change how IT work gets done and how a mix of full-time and gig workers will help deliver results, allowing workers to create designer careers and cherry pick the projects they're most passionate about working on. It also points to how these changes suggest a road map for making strategic career adjustments or corrections that can help IT workers thrive in the years ahead.



Plan for Dynamic, Distributed Remote Teams

Remote work, like the gig economy, is not only expected to increase, driving the need for new tools and approaches to meet deadlines and goals, but it will become the leading new model for employment over the next decade. While some don't expect a full-fledged shift in how IT career paths will unfold, in some cases it will be exactly that. These new work patterns will be available to those who are interested in them, with Gen-Z finding them highly appealing alternatives to traditional employment that gives them consumer-like control of their IT careers. Many CIOs just don't foresee the continued hiring of FTEs and contractors in IT to continue nearly as much as they did before the pandemic.

While individuals who prefer those working models should not have trouble finding those jobs in IT, it's clear that major new shifts in technology talent sourcing are not just coming down the pike, but are here today in the form of popular new online talent platforms that allow just-in-time sourcing of individuals and even entire teams.

Democratization of IT Means IT Careers Must Shift

Widespread adoption of new IT development tools across business divisions that can help employees develop apps and make sense of big data has become a major trend in 2020. In general, IT is experiencing a de-industrialization and de-centralization of IT. Technology is accessible to everyone in the business, with almost no barriers, with literally thousands of SaaS and data services available to the novice. This is pointing to two emerging trends: The rise of low-code development platforms; and tools that make data science and data visualization more accessible to business users.

IT skills are changing dramatically as technology evolves quickly and new practices like DevOps become common, but in rather interesting and unexpected ways. Cloud and SaaS solutions with low-code or no-code capabilities have greatly simplified application development. Organizations are also shifting to cloud platforms to build solutions upon services like ServiceNow and SAP Cloud Platform to rapidly develop major business applications with limited IT support. Rapid developments in data visualization through tools such as Microsoft PowerBI, Tableau, and Snowflake have moved traditional business reporting functions from the obscure corners of IT to the front of the business where analysts across the organization can now easily analyze data in real time and provide advanced visualizations to gain deeper insights into the data.

With so much of the business shifting to self-service IT, the role of IT will be more as a steward and governance function, ensuring data is safe and secure, end-user developed solutions work correctly and are well-supported, and that application lifecycles are managed for an order of magnitude more than in the past.

Automation Will Become IT's Job Function #1

Already, automation has transformed IT workloads and skills, and continued dependence on these technologies is giving rise in demand for IT professionals deeply skilled with automation as well as a shift in roles surrounding the work impacted by them. IT work itself will be increasingly automated, from end-user support to project tracking, with estimates that up to 90% of the existing IT job function will be automated by the end of the decade.

The next-gen IT worker will steadily help automate much of what IT does today from managing IT announcement email distribution lists to setting new application permissions. While these tasks are small in nature, the volume of such work really adds up in IT when it has to be done manually, and so will increasingly be the focus of IT. In short, IT workers will increasingly become automation experts, building capabilities like service chatbots to service inbound help inquiries and otherwise support the business more quickly and at scale.



With automation set to become a major budget and time saver for IT, workers will become more strategic as well as they are freed up to handle bigger picture tasks. “It also creates a better employee experience if they can have their requests handled in a matter of minutes with the use of technology. An IT department’s machine learning platform will proactively resolve a majority of help desk requests, leaving IT staff to deal with creating and fielding more solutions for the business, or more likely, ensuring end-user created ones work well, and that the entire process is self-improving.

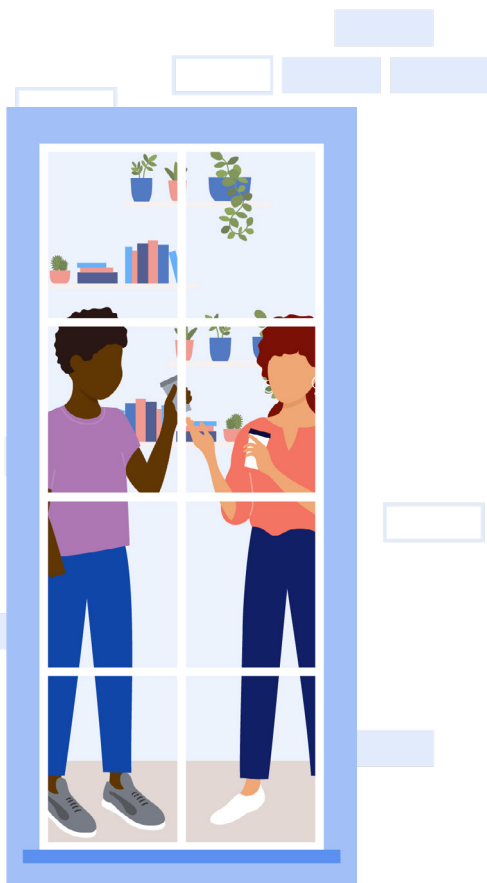
As the CIO of Slater+Gordon, Jon Grainger, noted in terms of this starting to happen already today, “not only am I getting a specific fix suggested to me, and the chance to standardize and fix the problem out of the system, but it’s actually conveying engineering knowledge to the service desk, too.”

In this new IT environment, vast help desk teams will fall to the wayside as they are automated. Instead, more skills relevant to innovation and digital transformation surrounding technologies like IoT, edge computing, and large-scale data operations will predominate.

Those going into IT over the next period will also need the right people, tools and strategies for capturing and analyzing this data at the edge. Many IT executives see automation reducing the amount of menial work people do now, coupled with a need for human-driven, high-level thinking.

There are risks to these developments as well that will leave their mark on IT careers. AI and machine learning will increasingly be used to support and augment employer capabilities, leading employers to focus more on areas requiring high-level human judgment. This will lead to a need for IT staff to be able to both explain why IT systems made the decision they made, or to become human “circuit breakers” to oversee AI that’s not working correctly.

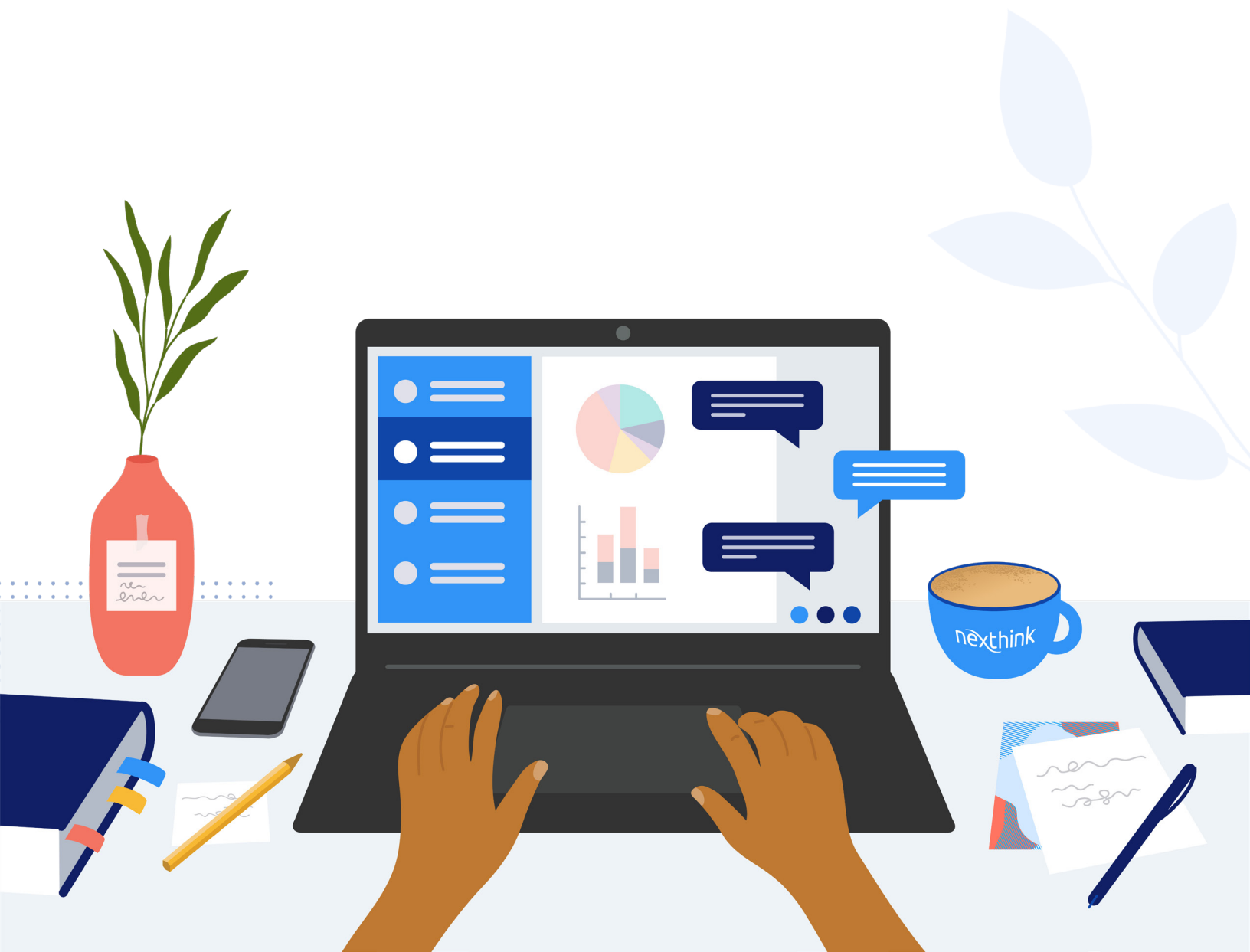
The downside to this shift is it risks hollowing out the employee base towards the more highly educated, which can ultimately exacerbate employee inequality. Additionally, even traditional physical areas of the business previously untouched by technology will find themselves subject to automation, and software solutions will continue to migrate to data and statistical solutions.



IT Careers Will Require Astute System Thinkers

In the end, while a balance of good enterprise technology, data science, and emerging tech skills will serve as the educational base for new IT staff, IT in the future will at its core be about managing the overarching state of the dizzying complexity of IT itself while encouraging end-user self-service and enablement. Demonstrated skills in managing complexity will become a top experience that

employers will hire explicitly for. At the same time, more and more IT staff will become on-demand. This will expose IT staff to far more experiences, situations, technologies, and skills than ever before, both demanding and creating far more multitalented IT practitioners. The next decade holds more change in the IT career than ever before, and it's largely a quantum leap in opportunity and career satisfaction.



“The Most Important Virtue for IT is the Virtue of Clarity”



Dr. Brennan Jacoby

Philosopher & Founder of Philosophy at Work

We’ve all heard from business executives and influencers — but what does a modern day philosopher think about the digital workplace?

Dr. Brennan Jacoby, philosopher and founder of Philosophy at Work, joined the Digital Employee Experience podcast to offer his unique perspective. Below, Dr. Jacoby uses a theory from Aristotle to explain why clarity is the most important virtue IT professionals should strive for when working with virtual end users.

Digital Employee Experience:

You have a great piece out there called the Virtues of Virtual. Speaking of IT professionals specifically, what are your thoughts on the IT pro who is now dispersed from their teams and from the people they support?

Dr. Brennan Jacoby:

What we’re trying to do [with the Virtues of Virtual] is draw on something that Aristotle said. He said that the way to live is to try to strike the balance between extremes. When the pandemic began, we noticed that people tended to react. We did it ourselves. It’s really normal, really human, but it’s unhelpful. We tended to overreact or under react. And Aristotle said that vices tend to be overreactions or under reactions to things, but virtues are just the ways of living in balance.

And so we were looking at distributed teams and virtual work and thinking: “What are the virtues of virtual?” That is, what are the balanced ways of

being between extremes? When it comes to IT professionals, one virtue of virtual that we identified as the most useful is clarity.

So often in this space, communication can be tricky, even though we have more and more ways to connect. The platforms to share content and ideas with each other are numerous — but actual clarity about what’s needed suffers. Any time you have professionals with a vast degree of expertise, like IT, the virtue of clarity is useful. Because in IT you’re understanding what’s going on in all of these incredibly fast-paced, changeable interfaces that we’re all using. When you have that kind of expertise, you run the risk of speaking past each other. Often, distrust comes about not because of anything malicious, but because we just don’t understand where each other are coming from.

A lot of that would be solved if the colleagues that don’t understand the IT professionals spend a bit more time in that world, right? And so the virtue of clarity is about saying: “How clear is the communication?” In this case of IT professionals and employees, clarity isn’t about asking: “Is it accessible?” Rather, [IT professionals must consider]: “What questions might our intended audience still have?”

I’m convinced that a lot of procrastination isn’t because of laziness, but because we just weren’t clear in the first place, and we don’t want to look silly and go back and ask again. If IT professionals can keep pushing forward with new methods for clarity of exchange with employees, that’s only good to be a good thing. Especially when the office is in someone’s home, out of sight. We’re going to have to be much better at developing abilities to clearly communicate.



Listen to the full show, Aristotle in the Digital Workplace (with Dr. Brennan Jacoby), [here](#).

THE DIGITAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN NUMBERS

Ticket & Call Volume Surge

We learned in the early days of the pandemic that many IT leaders were struggling to manage their increased ticket volume, but now we know just how many tickets and calls have come into the average help desk.

Back in May 2020, we discovered that 43% of IT leaders cited increasing support tickets as their biggest challenge since the start of the pandemic. Since then, 70% of tech leaders we polled said their ticket and call volume continue to spike, with a majority of those reporting increases up to 50%.



To what extent has IT ticket and call volume increased since the mass work-from-home transition?

4% 75%+ increase

18% 25-49% increase

48% <25% increase

26% stayed the same

4% decreased





“The Digital Workplace is About Making Talented People Successful”



Alan Nance
Co-founder of CitrusCollab

Alan Nance, co-founder of CitrusCollab, is a self-described “creative disruptor”, whose insights into the science of human experience have helped ignite growth in organizations. In conversation with the Digital Employee Experience podcast, Alan discussed a wide range of topics related to employee experience and the shift in IT from technical to experience-driven metrics.

Below, Alan touches on the concept of micro experiences, and the importance of experience personas in providing tailored IT services to employees across generations.

Digital Employee Experience:

Where do you see the topic of digital workplace going next? Is it the focus on hybrid between virtual and physical?

Alan Nance:

I think, first of all, that the digital experience isn’t going to be one thing. Digital experience is going to be a number of micro experiences. And it’s going to be crafted in terms of experience personas, as opposed to the technology personas we have today.

Most digital workplaces today are capability architectures. They talk about how we communicate, how we store, how we create, how we distribute, et cetera. And we’ve created the technical personas to satisfy our architectural needs. We have the power user, the administrative user, the mobile user,

and what’s going to happen in the future is, everybody’s going to be everything.

So we’re going to have to create experience personas that are much more based on demographic compositions. And I gave this example recently to somebody that, when I was talking to a CIO about his digital workplace plan, and he said to me, “Well, we’re following the best of the breed; we’re following what Forrester and Gartner are telling us.” Basically, it came down to a Microsoft-centric, capability architecture.

And so I said to him, “Your audience for the future are going to be Gen Z and the younger millennials. I can tell you right now that what you are putting together for the next five years is entirely unappealing. So what you’re putting together right now is putting a nail in the coffin of your organization’s ability to recruit, motivate, and retain employees.”

The digital workplace, first and foremost, is about making talented people successful. And so we’re going to have to come up with what I call micro experiences, so that when the Gen Z person is working mobile, they get the capability they need. And when they’re doing that in a Dev Ops environment, they get the capability that they need. And if you’ve got a Baby Boomer like me, who’s got maybe five years to go or 10 years to go, they’re probably very comfortable having a Microsoft-centric architecture. We don’t want to bother them with too much new stuff, especially if they’re administrative, so that needs a much more stable experience.

I think the mind shift is going to be focused much more on those micro experiences. And as a result, we’re going to have to rethink the capability architecture into an experience architecture. We’re going to have to move from technical personas to experience personas.



Listen to the full episode w/ Alan Nance, [here](#).



Adapting to Automation: The Future Proof IT Career



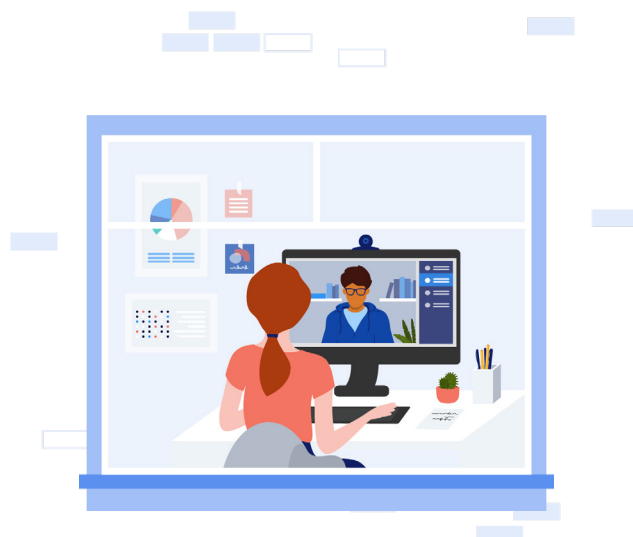
By Vincent Bieri

Everyone knows that automation is set to have a profound impact on the world of work in the coming years. Often called the ‘fourth industrial revolution’, the impact is widely expected to be as profound as the industrial revolution itself. Just as mechanical systems replaced the works of human hands in the 19th century, artificial intelligence is expected to significantly supplant human brainpower in the 21st century, with equally profound impact on our personal and professional lives.

Based on a survey of senior business leaders representing nearly 300 global companies, the [World Economic Forum](#) predicts that by 2025, automation will disrupt 85 million jobs globally in medium and large businesses as employers divide work between humans and machines.

The events of 2020, of course, have only put things into sharper focus. “Covid-19 has accelerated the arrival of the future of work,” says the World Economic Forum’s Managing Director, Saadia Zahidi, referring to the organization’s recently published *The Future of Jobs 2020* report.

But what will it mean for IT professionals in the coming years? It means that, as individual professionals and collectively as an industry, we need to be prepared for radical change.



The End of IT (as we know it)?

For years, generalist IT workers have played a key part within businesses – dealing with everything from a company’s networking and security requirements to computer set-ups, software installations, database management and all manner of troubleshooting.

However, with critical infrastructure abstracted off-site thanks to the cost and efficiency benefits of cloud services like Amazon’s AWS and Microsoft’s Azure, and home-working via collaboration software like Office 365, Slack and Zoom now widespread, it is unclear what the office will even look like five years from now.

For IT, like many other sectors, automation will take on processing and administrative tasks – and in many organizations the impact is already being felt.

As automation helps to make proactive responses possible, the problem-solving IT generalist will see their importance diminished compared to an IT specialist. IT workers with deep and valuable knowledge of a particular area – be it networking, security or the cloud – will play a key role as smaller tasks get commoditised. Furthermore, it’s important to note that value here will be demonstrated by the capacity to translate this knowledge into demonstrable business value.

Alongside core IT specialists, a new breed of business advisor will start to come to the fore as the second key pillar of the IT department of the future – IT advisors that will use their technical knowledge and understanding of the business to advise on tech solutions in ways that go beyond the cost-benefit analysis of partnering with a particular vendor.

These IT brokers will help to find solutions based on a range of factors, including security and privacy requirements. They will be people-focused, liaising with teams spanning from legal to marketing. While they will still make calls on server infrastructure, they won't be on the ground plugging it in or connecting it up. In short, popular culture's IT-worker stereotype will finally step out of the basement and into the light.

Meanwhile, more conventional IT skillsets are already becoming outmoded in many forward-facing organizations. Paradigms are already discernibly shifting.

"I've long suspected that the ITIL model is bankrupt," comments Jon Grainger, Chief Information Officer at law firm Slater and Gordon, "From what I've seen, its model is still based on the response coming back from the users. You don't do anything—you wait. Nexthink allows [our IT team] to be much more proactive."

Sid Suri, the head of marketing for Jira Service Desk, agrees that "the best IT jobs will go to people who learn how to collaborate with both people and technology." Writing on the Atlassian company blog, he says: "The new stars of IT will be the rare few who know how to speak both languages, bringing humans, technology, and AI together for stronger collaborations with even better business results."

Talking to the Business

An important part of the IT broker's future remit will involve paying close attention to how technology fundamentally changes the relationship between customers and colleagues. While this may have previously been out of scope for your typical IT worker, some IT departments have already had a flavour of this during the pandemic.

In recent months companies like Microsoft, Dropbox, Reddit and Twitter have all announced plans to make remote work a permanent option for staff. Twitter was among the first companies to announce this, back in May, while Dropbox announced its "virtual first" approach after commissioning an Economist Intelligence Unit study, which found that knowledge workers are more focused at home and just as engaged as before. Its own internal surveys found that nearly 90% of employees were able to be productive at home and didn't want to return to a rigid five-day in-office work week.

Reflecting on the IT trends that have come to the forefront during this year's crisis, Paul Hardy, the Chief Innovation Officer of cloud-based workflow automation platform ServiceNow, recently told Nexthink that it had "seen the service desk essentially become a customer service desk and the customer desk an experience desk."



“Often in organisations the only service desk they had for employees was the IT service desk, so naturally a lot of the work that the service desk started doing or had to do was actually cross functional or cross departmental,” he says, explaining that it was able to deal with this by automating the “mundane administrative tasks” that the service desk previously dealt with.

For IT professionals ready to embrace change, there are multiple ways in which they can seek to develop their career and expand the scope of their profession.

For years, IT has been at the forefront of providing colleagues – from accountants to salespeople to marketers – with automation technologies. These technologies have enabled their colleagues to grow as professionals, even as they made certain skills outmoded. In the coming years IT will itself be confronted with the same challenge and opportunity.



How Humanistic IT is Finally Retiring the Old ‘Nick Burns’ Stereotype

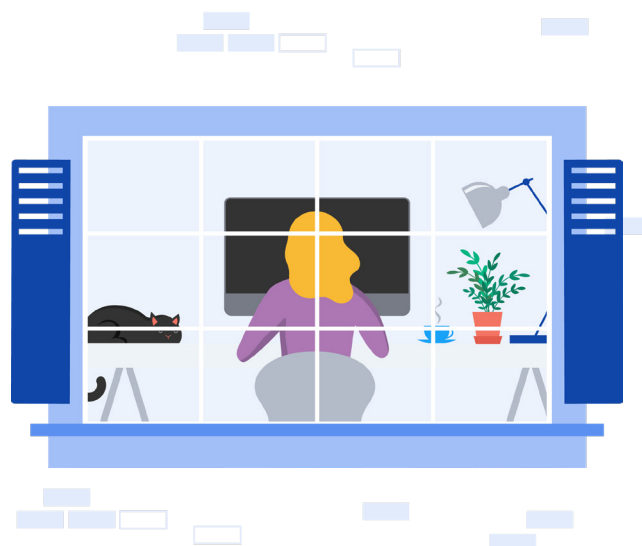


By Tori Paulman
Director of IT Client Services at Pegasystems

I might be dating myself, but I began working in the IT service industry back in the late 90s. During the same time, the now infamous Saturday Night Live comedy skit—[Nick Burns, Your Company’s Computer Guy](#), played by Jimmy Fallon—started to gain popularity for its over-the-top rendition of IT.

For those who don’t know the show, Nick Burns was an abrasive, socially-awkward techie who worked in a corporate office and was periodically called to help fix his colleagues’ IT problems. He was sarcastic, arrogant, and quick to mock his fellow employees for their lack of technical knowledge. In short: Nick Burns was a caricature for poor IT support. But if you strip away the cheeky humor, wacky dialogue, and outdated IT references, the show had a deeper message that still resonates today:

IT support used to be viewed (unfairly I’d add) as a group of detached, inaccessible characters that existed primarily to fix our devices so we could do the important work. That perception, however, has shifted dramatically in the last few years because of two reasons...



The Unlikely Characters Changing IT Employee Experience Today

The problem with Nick Burns, aside from his obvious character flaws, is that he is an IT *technician*, not an IT *consultant*. He approaches problems like a robot, viewing issues exclusively through the prism of hardware and software, and never from the perspective of the employee before him. He lacks emotional intelligence and the ability to infer from human context. Instead, he operates under a series of yes-no questioning and binary logic.

IT consultants, on the other hand, are both emotionally aware and technologically savvy. They act like a double-edged sword, cutting through problems that stretch from your data center, all the way to your employees.

Of course, consultants existed back then, but the perception certainly made it feel like there were less of them—me, I should say. But that perception has changed recently, primarily because of non-technical people; consumers.

The Non-IT Crowd Speaks the Same, Heightened Language of Digital Experience

Like many in IT, I had to work my way up the ladder and prove my worth at every step. But unlike some, I didn't start down this path by tinkering with computers in my basement. I started my IT career as a barista in an internet café, and while I still make a mean latte, the other half of my role sometimes involved helping customers with their first experience with the internet. I fell in love with the feeling of helping someone experience technology through the lens of curiosity and wonder, and I've been chasing that feeling ever since.

Throughout my career I've gradually taken on more and more responsibility in technology leadership roles across retail, entertainment, the non-profit sector, financial services, and software development. And through all this time, I have a secrete formula—kryptonite—if you will, for taking power away from that outdated Nick Burns stereotype.

The secret formula?

Empathy and connection.

I've lost count of the number of users, and even friends, and family who have called themselves “stupid” in the context of technology. We often refer to young people as technology-natives and older generations as late-adopters, and yet I see everyone as a Chief Technology Officer at home. Has anyone ever taken an Airbnb training class? Of course not! And while most people may not fully grasp i9 processor speed, ISP protocols, or cloud computing, they are surprisingly informed, picky, and curious when it comes to technology. They, like all of us, are accustomed to hyper-specific consumer technology experiences.

Alexa, where can I get a cheap, reusable, fair-trade face mask? Preferably pastel-colored and available for delivery tomorrow?

The IT department has finally been invited to sit at the cool kids' table in the high school cafeteria, in large part because non-IT people have grown more comfortable with innovative consumer technologies and are unapologetically dragging those high expectations into the workplace.

This is making room for a new generation of IT leaders that have risen to meet the challenge by delivering excellent service but also powerful experiences.



Humanistic IT & the Leading Force Behind the Movement

Over the past few years, I have shifted focus to deliver what I call Humanistic IT.

Humanistic IT is a human-centered approach to technology leadership that emphasizes the inclusion of each employee as a whole individual. Leaders who learn how to focus on creating an empathetic bond with users more deeply benefit from diverse teams and cultures, tap into lived experiences, and acknowledge external pressures to drive meaningful service excellence. Departments that take a Humanistic IT approach constantly look to include employees in shaping their own digital work experiences, and that effort pays off big time.

This isn't just my opinion—research papers, analyst reports and business articles—all draw a line from human-centric IT services to employee engagement and business success. Companies with high levels of employee engagement report [higher profitability](#), [shareholder value](#), [productivity](#), and longer [employee retention](#) than their competitors.

For the dominoes to fall, of course, you first need tech leaders who are willing to break away from the status quo. The organizations who have done this have primarily been ones whose IT leaders are willing to take risks and relinquish more leadership opportunities to younger and more diverse generations (though we still have a long way to go). We are entering a brave new world in IT support, but unlike the dystopian version described by Aldous Huxley, this one is built for *experience excellence*.

The traditional IT leadership mindset steers towards achieving *service excellence*, often scoring projects based on SLAs, and ignoring or undervaluing the employee's experience. A new generation of IT leaders (and some notable elders) are adopting the shared philosophy of Humanistic IT and are willing to take it further within their respective organizations. Service excellence is table stakes, you can't get to the good stuff if you're unreliable, but these new leaders are recognizing a service-only mindset doesn't do enough to improve the 21st century employee experience. Simply put, you can have award-winning service, in the traditional sense, and be setting your IT team up for commoditization.

Take the old way IT used to measure employee *satisfaction*. Many departments rely heavily on the employee satisfaction score, and when offered without context, it can mislead IT leaders into thinking they are providing good employee experiences. Start with the word "satisfaction", and you'll find it literally means to meet one's needs or expectations, but what if those expectations are low to begin with?

I guarantee if you were lost in the desert without water for a day, you would suddenly find yourself very satisfied finding dirty water from a horse trough. But would your experience be great? Probably not. And would you return to the trough again if you had another choice? Definitely not.

The Right IT Talent Matters for Today's Employee Experience

I think if Nick Burns was a real person, he wouldn't find a job in IT today, and definitely not on one of my teams! The IT industry is maturing, and not to sound too dystopian but I think we are nearing a tipping point where automations and workflow processes are starting to mature enough to take over many of the roles we've needed humans to do. This means that the humans we are recruiting and retaining in the workforce are performing work that requires more creativity and empathy.

Start by developing a new talent profile for your teams with an emphasis on consultative, conversational, and research skills, and the capacity to build relationships and coach non-IT people. Of course, not everyone will tick each box so look to create a diverse team that can be deployed to support an ever changing workforce.

Then use your new profile to evaluate your talent to find, and groom, the empathetic IT professionals you already have and hire the next generation of team members. Pro-tip: they may not be techies themselves. And finally, when given the reigns to your own IT team, create programs that will have your employees calling you the *experience desk*, instead of the *service desk*. I guarantee that you, your employees, and your organization will reap the benefits, and frankly you'll have a lot more fun along the way.



This article first appeared on the [Nextthink blog](#).



About Nexthink

Nexthink is the global leader in Digital Employee Experience management. The company's products allow enterprises to create highly productive digital workplaces for their employees by delivering optimal end-user experiences. Through a unique combination of real-time analytics, automation and employee feedback across all endpoints, Nexthink helps IT teams meet the needs of the modern digital workplace.



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