



Building the New Workplace

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The power of people, culture and technology

“Approximately 700 of the companies currently on the Fortune 1000 joined the list within the past decade. That’s double the turnover we saw just two decades ago. Why the shakeup? Tech-savvy customers and digital-native startups have changed the competitive landscape.”

—Forrester Research, [Unleash Your Digital Business](#)

Sometime in the last decade, we crossed into a fresh phase of the digital era. A new generation of companies born in the cloud—like Airbnb (lodging), Snapchat (messaging), Uber (transportation) and Zillow (real estate)—are using entirely new business models to disrupt the status quo.

Google Chairman Eric Schmidt calls this “the new digital age.” Barriers to entry are falling away as Moore’s Law drives down the cost of computing. Even the smallest businesses can now sell to the entire world.

And it’s not just born-in-the-cloud businesses that are driving change. The fast food industry is reinventing itself digitally, speeding up operations with big-data analytics and making life easier for customers with mobile ordering and payment apps. In the automotive industry, new generations of digital car displays are becoming the next screens in our connected lives. In fashion and retail, even 150-year-old Burberry has reinvented itself as a thoroughly modern company, with its revenues nearly tripling to over \$3 billion from 2006–13 due to digital initiatives.¹

Google CEO Larry Page remarked at a TED conference earlier this year that companies mainly fail because “they miss the future.” And as a business leader, you’ve probably been thinking about the opportunities and threats this new digital future offers for your business.

Almost since its founding, Google has worked to help businesses succeed with digital. Marketing solutions like AdWords and DoubleClick have helped the web work for brands around the world. With [Google for Work](#), we’re taking the best of the Google consumer products used by hundreds of millions of people—including Gmail, Drive, Docs, Maps, Chrome, Hangouts and Google+—and enhancing them with enterprise-class management, security and support for businesses. And, with [Google Cloud Platform](#), we’re offering the technical infrastructure that underlies all these services directly to developers so that they can build their own great services and applications.

The goal of Google for Work is simple: provide a platform that helps business teams communicate, collaborate, develop, innovate and thrive. We’re also trying to help senior leaders think about the changing nature of work: how to create high-performing workforces, drive innovation and speed up processes by building on a modern technology infrastructure.

¹ “The Burberry CEO Who Reinvented a Heritage Brand for the Digital Age.” CNN, October 15, 2013. <http://goo.gl/0s8Dl2>

Why transformation is high on the agenda

Transformation initiatives are going on everywhere. According to a 2013 KPMG survey of more than 900 business executives, 93% of U.S. multinational companies are in some stage of transforming their business models.² 33% are assessing or planning a transformation initiative, 29% have started to implement one and 31% have completed one or more.

Why the massive push for transformation? The answer is simple: better business performance. A 2012 study from Capgemini Consulting and the MIT Center for Digital Business analyzed more than 180 large companies in multiple industries over a two-year period and found that companies with superior digital capabilities outperformed their less digitally-capable industry peers by significant financial margins: 9% higher revenue, 26% higher profitability and 12% higher market value.³

People, culture and technology

In providing Google for Work solutions, we've seen a wide range of business transformation agendas. Companies are finding new and better ways to work. Everything is changing—from business models to technology infrastructures to how employees work together.

Google for Work solutions are currently being used by more than five million of these businesses globally to become more connected, mobile and agile.

This new kind of workplace is built on three main pillars—people, culture and technology. Each of the pillars has its own set of requirements, but the three of them are not completely separate from one another. They overlap and intersect in a number of places. The third pillar, technology, cuts across everything, since technology is an enabler of people and of culture. We believe it's useful to think about business transformation in these three broad dimensions.

“I knew that switching to Google's platform would not only fix our communications problems, but help our 3,000 employees be both more innovative and more effective.”

—Todd Teske, CEO, **Briggs & Stratton**

People: Work the way you live

In the new digital age, your competitive edge often comes from knowledge, innovation and speed of execution.

The workforce is changing. Millennials and digital natives bring new expectations to their jobs, conditioned by their daily use of consumer technology. They expect fast, simple tools with no need for manuals or training.

For instance: Woolworths, the retailer with 3,000 locations across Australia and New Zealand, uses Google App Engine to build its own “Tap to Support” app.

² “Business Transformation and the Corporate Agenda.” KPMG, November 27, 2013. <http://goo.gl/F3QRNJ>

³ “The Digital Advantage: How Digital Leaders Outperform Their Peers in Every Industry.” Capgemini Consulting and the MIT Center for Digital Business, November, 2014. <http://goo.gl/qEYFJn>

The app helps Woolworths' managers stay on the shop floor and focus on customers by letting them log a support ticket with the company's national support office in just one click. It all happens on the tablet they carry; there's no need to go back to a PC in the office and file paperwork.

Today's workers want immediate access to all their information, from anywhere, using the device that happens to be in their hands—whether it's an employer-issued laptop or their own personal smartphone. They want to work from any location at any time.

To put it another way: today's workers want to work the way they live. And even more than previous generations, they want their work to be engaging and satisfying. Employers need to respond to those desires, think differently and knock down technical barriers to productivity in order to truly empower their employees.

All this adds up to a new mindset about how we work: one that drives knowledge, innovation and quick execution, but also attracts and retains the digital natives who are the next generation of workers.

We share more ideas on this topic in [Work the Way You Live: What the office can learn from the smartphone](#)



Watch how Woolworths encourages employees to embrace work and life together. [↗](#)

Culture: Create a culture of innovation

The speeding pace of change in the new digital age makes innovation more important than ever. Even the most basic industries can be disrupted at any time.

Taxis and taxi meters have worked more or less the same way since the 1890s. Sure, meters switched from mechanical flip to electronic display in the 1980s, but the basic procedures for hailing and paying for a cab (not to mention running a cab company) haven't changed much. Yet in less than five years, Uber has changed every part of that equation and shaken the industry with an app-enabled, mobile-first business model.

That's the kind of innovation it will take to stay ahead in the future. To create these new cultures of innovation, many businesses are now embracing practices like 10x thinking, rapid iteration and fast failing and learning.

Like many companies, Google places enormous importance on culture. We've invested significant thought, effort and resources in building and maintaining ours. Innovation is a core principle and it's one of the areas that executives from other companies ask us about most.

We've identified some key practices that help create an innovative workplace, and we share those in a new paper: [Creating a Culture of Innovation: Eight ideas that work at Google.](#)

“With traditional enterprise environments, information is siloed ... leaving a business to operate as the sum of many independent parts. We’re moving away from this toward a more progressive hybrid cloud model, with Google at the foundation. In this new environment, positive feedback loops accelerate, and we can bring together multiple solutions and data sources, all built in the cloud, and look at our business holistically.”

—Eric Singleton, CIO, and Alan Mariotti, VP of IT and Security, [Chico’s FAS, Inc.](#)

Technology: Embrace the cloud

In the new digital age, every company is a digital company. Data is a core asset. [Coca Cola](#), for example, was created in 1886 and served about 9 glasses of soda a day in Atlanta. Today Coca Cola is a strong player in the digital space. For the 2014 FIFA World Cup, Coca Cola used cloud technology to build their “Happiness Flag,” the world’s largest digital mosaic made up of images submitted by people all around the world. Through cloud technology, Coca Cola was able to process, store and compute the data needed for the project. The technology model for the new digital age is pure cloud—the ability to make your data safe, secure and accessible without being hindered by on-premise software or servers and storage devices to buy, install and maintain.

The economic benefits of a pure cloud infrastructure are compelling: shifting from large capital investment costs and depreciating assets to pay-as-you-go operations, while profiting from the downward trend in cloud computing prices over time.

But beyond the economic benefits are the agility and freedom that cloud solutions like Google Cloud Platform provide: developers have the power to design whatever they need with the flexibility to start small and scale up as needed.

[Ocado](#), which calls itself “the world’s largest online-only grocery retailer,” has built its business in the cloud. Employees share documents and emails, make calendar entries and collaborate in the cloud as they deliver groceries to hundreds of thousands of people all over the U.K. Today they reach over 70% of British households and ship over a million items a day.

“We rely on Google Cloud Platform to do the heavy lifting on data processing and integration so we can focus on what we do best: getting quality groceries to customers in the quickest time possible,” says James Donkin, General Manager Technology for Ocado. Customers can even follow their deliveries with Ocado’s “Where’s My Order?” app that’s integrated with Google Maps to show them if their lettuce and bananas are still in the warehouse or on the way to their door. The cloud makes it all possible.

The migration to the cloud is still in its infancy. The investment bank Piper Jaffray estimated last year that only 9.7% of all enterprise computing has truly moved to

the cloud so far (and we think the number may be even lower).⁴ This has created an enormous opportunity for businesses to improve both the economics and the agility of their IT operations by moving to the cloud.

The way forward

“Uncomfortably excited.” That’s a phrase that’s often used at Google to describe the feeling you get when you’re about to take on a big, hairy objective without really knowing how you’ll do it, or if it can even be done. We think it’s an entirely healthy and desirable state of mind—the nervous energy that comes when you take intelligent and calculated risks in pursuit of meaningful goals.

As you transform your own team, we invite you to think more deeply about these topics with the two white papers we’ve just mentioned:

- [Creating a Culture of Innovation: Eight ideas that work at Google](#)
- [Work the Way You Live: What the office can learn from the smartphone](#)

A third paper in the series will be published soon; it will cover all the ways that cloud technology can set your IT team free to innovate. We’ll announce the release of the cloud perspective on our Google for Work social pages.

If you’re looking for new ways to innovate now, please call us at **(855) 778-5079**. We’d love to be your partner in uncovering new possibilities for your business.

[Contact us](#)

⁴ “47 Stats You Need to Know About the Google Apps Ecosystem.” Gail Axelrod, BetterCloud Blog, October 23, 2013. <http://goo.gl/FbDeMJ>