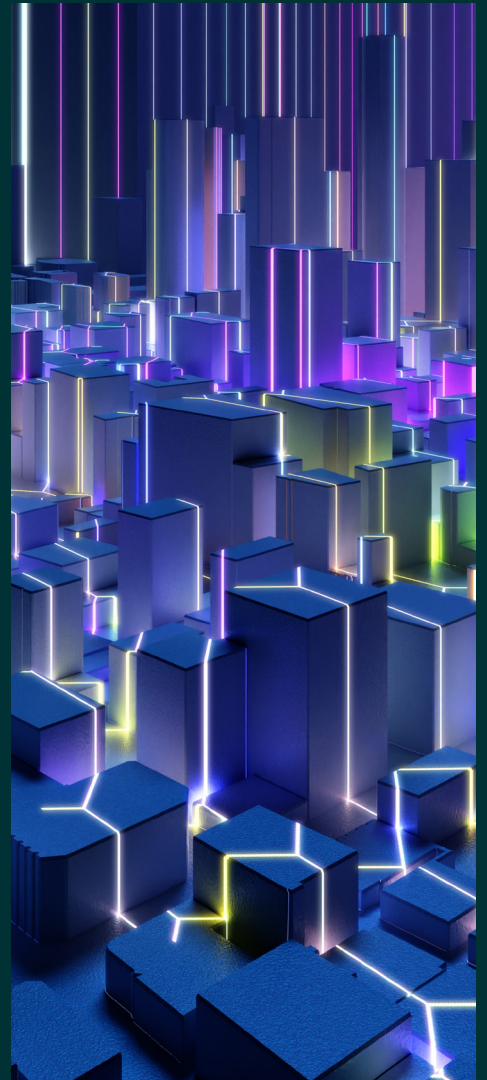


Eight lessons about the future of the digital workplace





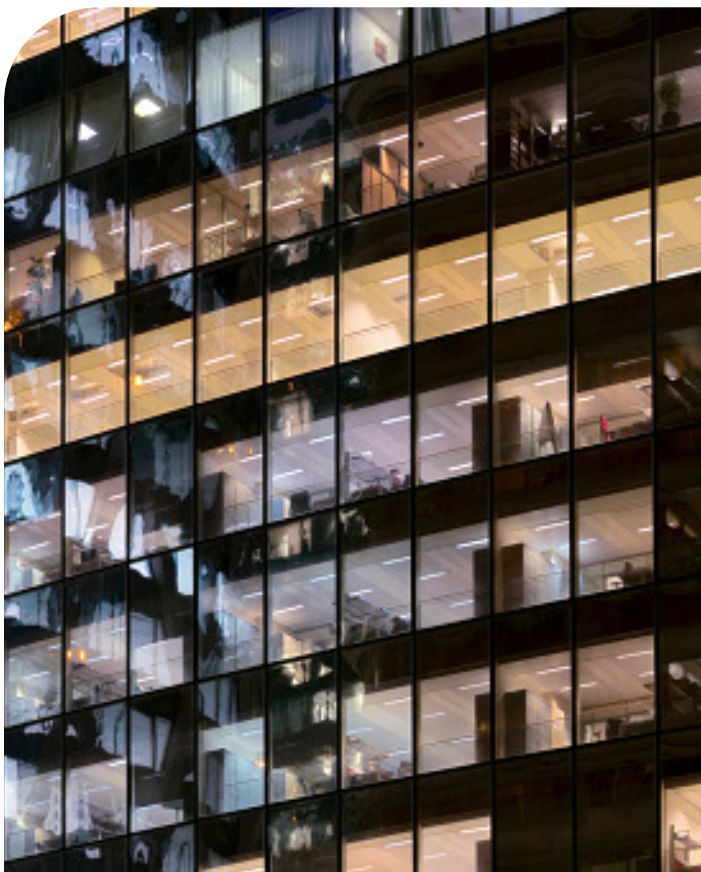
Mark Twain once claimed,
“A man who carries a cat by
the tail learns a lesson he can
learn in no other way.”

The “cat” of the year 2020 is
named COVID-19. By
holding onto its tail, we at
Unisys learned more in five
months about securely
working from home than we
ever knew before.

Lesson 1: Intelligent automation

Before the pandemic, one of our customers invested heavily in automating its IT processes. By the end of 2019, the team saw phenomenal reductions in lead times for complex functions like employee onboarding, application provisioning and employee offboarding. The company had invested in this automation without anticipating COVID-19 but were able to quickly put these automations into practice for employees required to work from home for the first time. These employees could be quickly and automatically re-onboarded and re-provisioned with new tools to work successfully from home: laptop, video collaboration platforms and so on.

Looking ahead, this client’s plans include enhancing these automations with artificial intelligence (AI) to guide a manager through the onboarding/offboarding/provisioning options. This same AI will also be available on every employee’s laptop to guide them through unfamiliar processes as they learn to work from home.



Mature your digital
workplace by first
standardizing, then
automating and, finally,
applying AI-powered
learnings to provide
the agility needed for
unexpected business
changes.

Lesson 2: Merged reality

One of our most fascinating cases during the pandemic came from the healthcare industry, where practitioners were desperate for information and support but equally aware of the importance of keeping their distance. Imagine lifesaving equipment at a hospital failing but repair technicians being unable to travel to the site.

Merged-reality technology enabled remote experts to demonstrate in real time, with hands-on assistance, how the end user could make the repairs and remain productive. Imagine a hospice care provider, restricted from visiting patients, showing a hospice patient's spouse how to clean a port or administer sensitive treatments; or a surgeon walking a primary care physician through an unfamiliar procedure.

Undeniably, providers took lifesaving steps during the pandemic that would not have been as easily accomplished without merged reality.



The pandemic proved the utility of merged reality to reduce travel and speed up support, capabilities that have valuable applications in every industry.



Lesson 3: Virtual desktops in the cloud

Another example comes from the public sector, where a government agency made a heroic transition from working entirely on premises to building an extensive remote work model. In the office, state employees used under-the-desk workstations with large monitors – equipment that was not going home with them. One option might have been to procure thousands of laptops to provision and take home, but with supply chains abruptly interrupted, that was not possible. Instead, the agency transferred its physical desktop contents to the cloud, allowing employees to connect to virtual desktops from their personal devices at home. Of course, this technology requires high connectivity, so it is not for everyone, but it works brilliantly for information workers. Looking beyond the advantages of enabling virtual desktops in the cloud to support remote work, the state department benefits from being able to “cloud burst,” or quickly expand computing capacity from on premises to the cloud when facing increased demand.



Consider cloud-based virtual desktops as one of several tools to power your digital workplace. Cloud bursting enables ready-made disaster preparedness.



Lesson 4: Personas

Enterprises that put some thought into differentiating their employees' digital workplace and support requirements by "persona" find it much easier to keep those employees productive. For example, the air cargo industry, which played a vital role during the pandemic, needed highly responsive and personalized support services for roles such as:

- **Information workers** in marketing, HR and accounting roles (who tend to work in a traditional office environment) continue to use standard service desk support – call the desk, report a problem, get a call back – or perhaps use a nearby IT locker where they leave a laptop to be repaired one day and retrieve it the next without undue inconvenience.
- **Flight crews**, on the other hand, have entirely different support needs. They are too mobile to get a call back, and they might be an ocean away by the time a tablet or smartphone gets repaired. Their support needs are best met with a Tech Café in or near the flight briefing room, where they can receive immediate in-person help. Following the onset of the pandemic, Tech Cafés were often converted to a virtual format, incorporating merged reality to enforce social distancing.
- **Flight maintenance crews** do not have a set physical office and use shared PCs in various locations to do their job. Generally on a tight schedule, they do not want to go to a Tech Café or call the service desk for help. For this persona, a "Tech" button on each PC offers the capability to automatically create a ticket requesting a technician swap out the defective device as soon as possible.



Each industry will have unique employee personas based on types of devices, work locations and support modalities. Tailor the digital workplace and support options for each persona to improve productivity and end-user satisfaction.



Lesson 5 – Sentiment analysis

Multiple studies show that happy employees are productive employees. Yet, too often, leaders have trouble discerning who is unhappy and why they are unhappy – and therefore are unable to help those employees. Sentiment analysis collects data on the service desk interactions of each user, ascribes an emotion to each interaction and highlights trends (both positive and negative) that leaders can use to determine where they need to take action. For example, did the switch to Zoom improve user satisfaction or not? How do employees feel about the latest Windows updates? By taking the emotional “temperature” of their workforce this way, leaders can rapidly correct problems and ensure productivity.

A banking client using sentiment analysis discovered a spike in the worst category – employee disgust – right after a two-week holiday. With a little analysis, sentiment analysis identified the culprit: When employees booted up their laptops after the holiday, all the updates and patches that would normally have taken place incrementally now took place all at once, drastically slowing their laptops. A simple solution moving forward was to have the service desk remotely wake up the computers over the holiday, perform the updates/patches and put them back to sleep.



Don't rely solely on surveys and service-level agreements (SLAs) to gauge employee satisfaction. Complement them with sentiment analysis based on natural language processing of employees' interactions with IT, whether via the chatbot, calls to the service desk or communication with field services. Use the insights gained by sentiment analysis to proactively improve IT support.

Lesson 6 – Digital experience

Just as sentiment analysis measures employee happiness, digital experience measures “PC happiness.” It does so by evaluating various aspects of device performance: Are PCs running out of memory, crashing, booting slowly, etc.? Translating those data points to a digital experience score enables the service desk to dig deeper to understand why a score has changed. For example, as employees shifted from an office environment to working from home, their use of video collaboration tools increased dramatically, inevitably leading some to experience quality issues. Digital experience data not only makes it possible to detect the problem, but also helps to diagnose the cause of the problem and identify the solution. In this case, the problem was not with the PCs themselves, but with network configuration. That discovery allowed for the automatic correction of the issue and for the IT team to advise end users on prevention methods, ultimately increasing remote employee satisfaction and productivity in the long term.



Combining sentiment analysis with digital experience provides a holistic view of the entire digital workplace ecosystem – far beyond what traditional SLAs and end-user surveys can reveal.

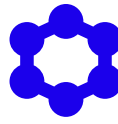


Lesson 7 – Uber-like experience

The pandemic changed the perspective of in-person support. How can tech support be delivered while conforming to social distancing requirements? One way is to adopt the approach of another popular on-demand service: ride-sharing.

Imagine being able to use your smartphone to quickly submit and schedule a field support ticket, provide a photo of the defective device to ensure that the technician brings the right part on the first visit, track the technician as they drive to the employee's office or home, and submit a quick survey immediately after the visit is completed.

This model lets the employee know who is coming, when they will arrive and that they will bring the correct parts for the repair, while properly arming the technician with crucial details in advance for an efficient fix.



Be ready to adopt best practices from the gig economy in your company's IT organization. The Uber-like experience is one of many possible ways to increase efficiency while improving employees' experience.



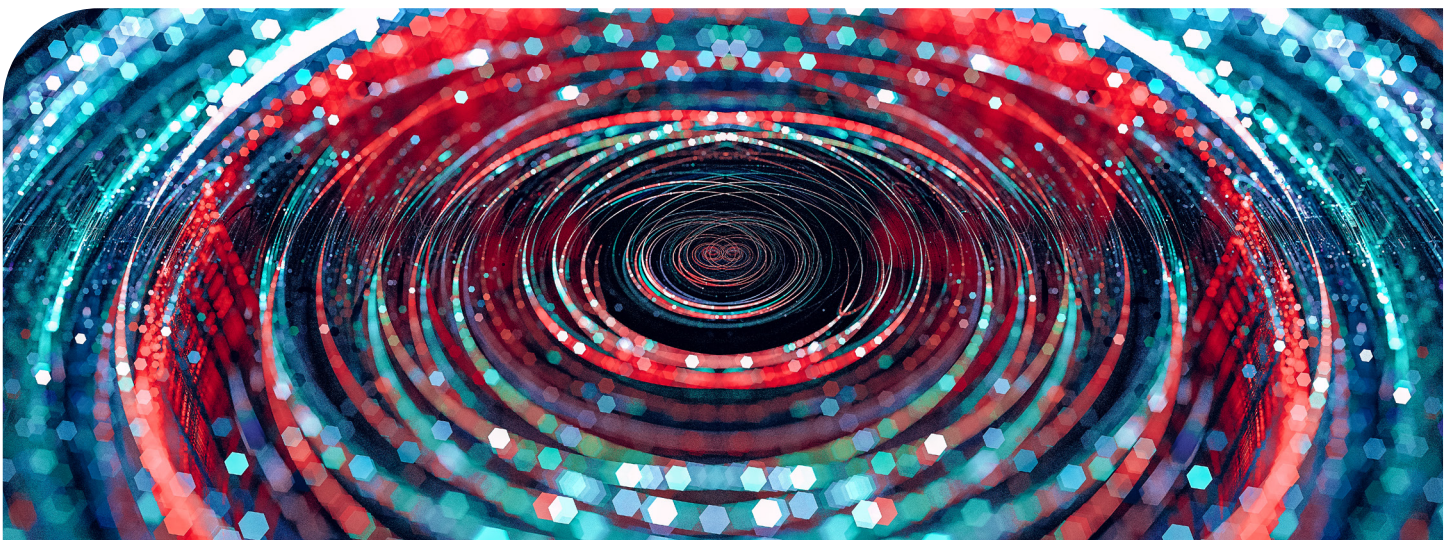
Lesson 8 – Security

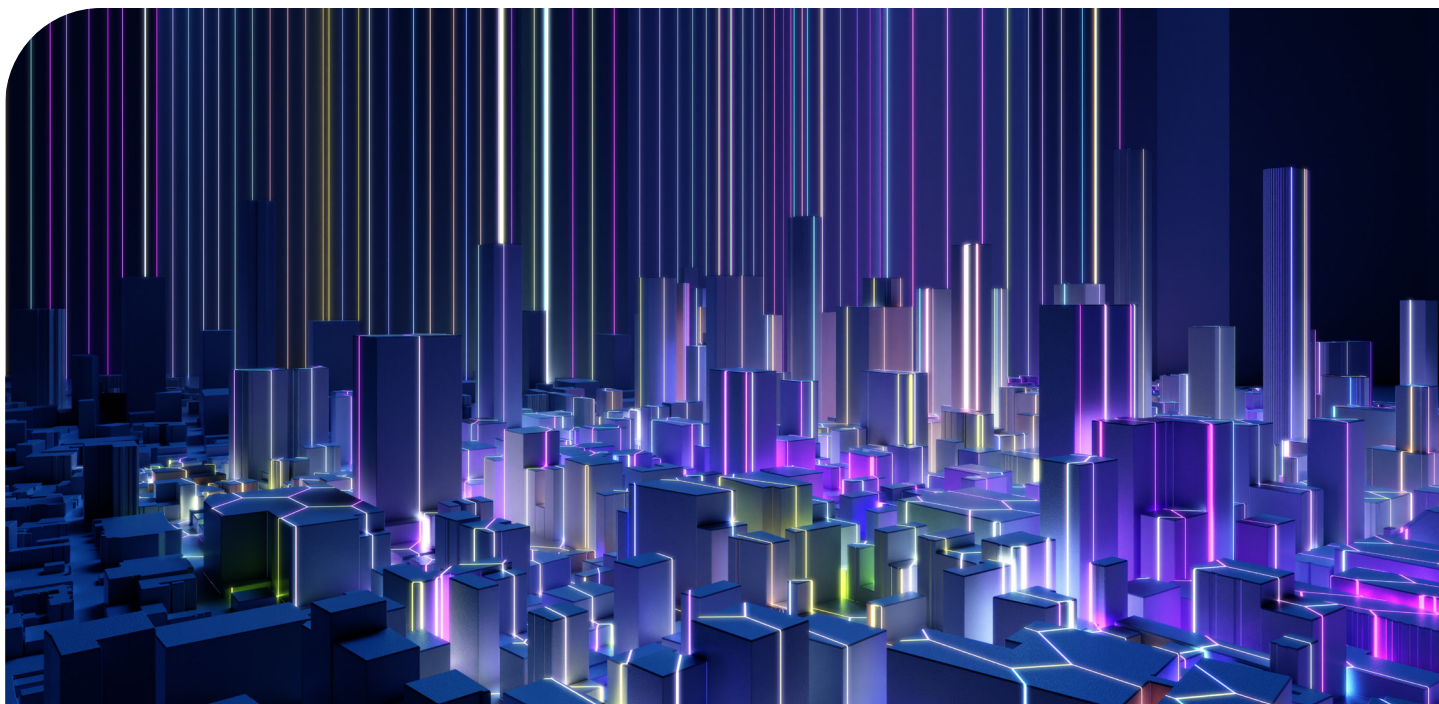
In the rush to mobilize working from home, some enterprises prioritized speed of deployment over ensuring security. Security best practices often took a back seat, and hackers capitalized on the opportunity, as working from home can potentially expose an enterprise to new security risks that did not exist in the office behind the corporate firewall. This is especially true if the company's security strategy has been to protect the perimeter and use VPN to allow remote user access rather than the more advanced security that Zero Trust, micro-segmentation and dynamic isolation can provide. When Unisys mobilized our own employees to work from home, our approach was founded on the following:

- By adopting a Zero Trust model, connections inside the corporate network are viewed with the same level of distrust as random connections coming in from the public internet.
- By eliminating the VPN, a company avoids an expensive bottleneck that has become a prime target of hackers during the pandemic. A hacker gaining access to the VPN can access much of the corporate network.
- Using micro-segmentation, all connections are made at the application level, and each connection can be dynamically turned on/off within seconds if an intrusion is suspected or detected.
- Training employees on how to identify a phishing attack and what to do when they see something suspicious is an important part of a holistic security strategy. During the early days of the pandemic, we saw COVID-themed attacks increase by 30%. Google detected 240 million COVID-related spam emails on its platform per day during May 2020.



Moving to a Zero Trust model makes it much easier to securely mobilize working from home. It also greatly improves security inside the corporate network and reduces the reliance and vulnerability of VPN. The human element is still the weakest link, so providing frequent up-to-date training to employees on their role in data security is essential to keep the company safe.





Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic changed, perhaps forever, how IT will enable and support workers. It caught many enterprises underprepared without a solid work-from-home plan, forcing them to scramble to “just get it done” and even to neglect security protocols, in an effort to maintain some semblance of business operations. It became evident that all business continuity plans must include a proven process for enabling remote and hybrid work.

By embedding these eight lessons in an organization’s operating model and strategy, the digital workplace can be truly secured and delivered to ensure the highest level of satisfaction, productivity and efficiencies at all levels – inside and outside the organization.

For more information, visit unisys.com/digitalworkplace.

In just a few days, Unisys enabled 95% of associates to work from home, across the globe. At the same time, we helped scores of our global clients to do the same.

After the dust settled, an important truth emerged: Enterprises who invested in the digital workplace prior to the pandemic were able to quickly mobilize their employees to work from home in a time of crisis. Here are eight essential lessons that helped our clients to not only survive the pandemic, but also gain a competitive edge in the long term.



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