



Agile working in the digital age:

a practical guide

Are you making the most of being
able to work anywhere?



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Business agility is about more than flexible working

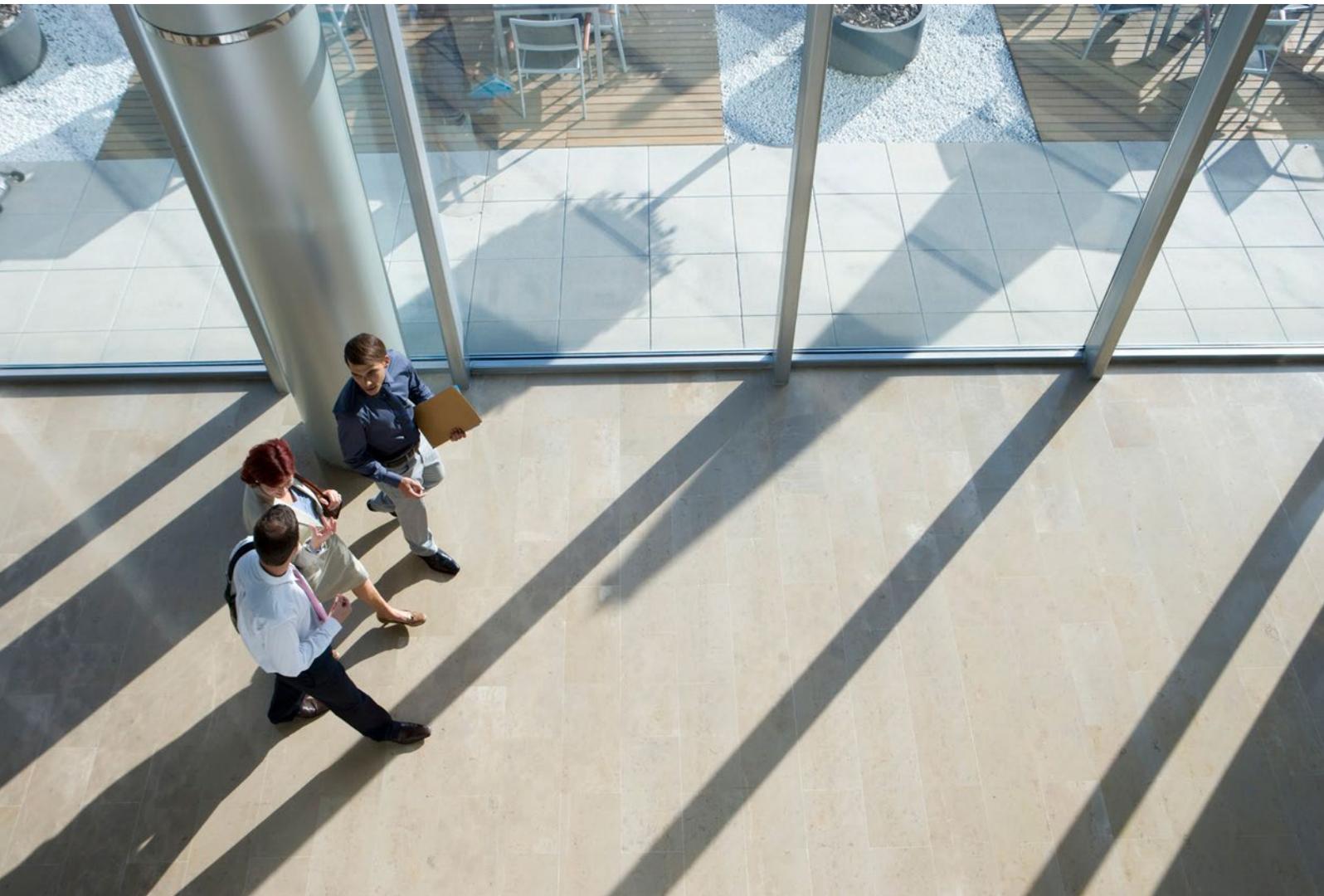
Continuous high-speed communications and the latest digital technology open up a world of opportunity for organisations to transform the way they manage and do business.

It paves the way for a new world of agile working – where organisations can respond and adapt quickly to emerging opportunities, connecting the right skills, teams and information as circumstances demand.

Where ‘flexible working’ placed the emphasis on home and remote working, the vision for agile working is about being able to work productively and do business from anywhere.

Connecting with people, information, services and ‘things’ on demand, from any location, paves the way for new business models, improved differentiation and happier teams. And it’s in these more ambitious and creative applications that the technology’s real value lies.

Often, all that’s missing is the vision. We’ve created this eBook to highlight what else you could be doing to enhance the way you do business.



The transformative power of agile working

Untethering people from particular places, or being able to set them up quickly from anywhere, paves the way for all kinds of service innovation:



- Banks can keep local services alive in sparsely populated areas with fully-equipped mobile banking buses that travel between villages on certain days of the week
- Airlines can spring up in busy airports at peak times of the year, without needing a permanent check-in area
- Setting up fully-functioning IT, communications and payment facilities at temporary events, such as festivals and shows, is quick and simple.

Improving targeting and success rates

If people can find ways to do a better job and see results more quickly, their work becomes more meaningful and satisfying. Take the community maintenance teams who clean up our streets. Guided by residents' mobile photo uploads, or information relayed from smart sensors, they can target problem spots more quickly. Or engineers who can fix more faults first time, because they can instantly access help via video or virtual reality when faced with a new situation or complex problem.

With continued advances in the Internet of Things, drones and artificial intelligence, people don't even have to go into some situations at all – accident scenes, chemical hazards, unsafe buildings, mines or sewers, for example. Technology can send back all the information they need, or complete the trickier or riskier tasks for them, freeing teams to do something more interesting instead.

Opening up new opportunities

In this always-connected, cloud-based world, it's easier than ever for businesses to adapt quickly and cost-effectively to evolving requirements or short-lived situations. We've already listed some examples, but there are many more.

Like the ability for retailers and delivery companies to re-route parcel or food deliveries at the last minute, or professional services firms using specialist freelancers on demand for temporary contracts – no matter where in the world those experts are.

When companies do things differently with better results, this poses a direct challenge to organisations still tied to traditional ways of doing things.

Even on a day-to-day basis, the case for breaking free from old norms has become indisputable:

Overcoming the limitations of the 9-5

Digital channels and the global market have put pressure on organisations to be available outside the 9-5. Technology makes this possible without overloading individuals or increasing salary costs. After-hours customer care can be shared out between team members working from home. And project work can be handed over from London to New York, from San Francisco to Singapore, as the local business day ends. Everyday collaboration tools make it easy to form partnerships and find new people too.



Dr Nicola Millard, our Head of Customer

Insight and Futures, has devoted her career to predicting future workplace habits, says she only needs four things to work effectively from anywhere – all of which are enabled by our own agile working strategy:

“Good coffee, good cake” – that’s non-negotiable, she says – “good connectivity, and the company of others”. And that could just as easily be achieved in the hubbub of a coffee shop or airport lounge as in an office, she notes.

Hear her thoughts about the future of agile working [here](#).

Boosting wellbeing at work

If people can work from home or from shared workspaces in their local area, the cost, stress and time associated with commuting are significantly reduced. A 2017 UK study found that people with long commutes are 33% more likely to suffer from depression, 37% are more likely to have financial worries and 12% are more likely to report multiple aspects of work-related stress¹. This, along with being unable to balance work and family life, conflicts with employee wellbeing – a growing focus for businesses².

Offering work flexibility can boost employee morale, engagement and loyalty. In the book *The Agility Mindset*³, Fiona Cannon, Diversity and Inclusion Director at Lloyds Banking Group, suggests that 45% of UK employees value this over pay.

Meeting employee expectations

Alternative ways of working are likely to become increasingly important as time goes on. A survey of millennials by FlexJobs found that 85% want to telecommute 100% of the time, 54% want to work a flexible or alternative schedule, and 39% want to be freelancers or contractors⁴. Organisations competing for the best new talent will need to accommodate these needs.

1. A study of more than 34,000 workers across all UK industries, developed by VitalityHealth, the University of Cambridge, RAND Europe and Mercer, examined the impact of commuting, along with flexible and homeworking, on employee health and productivity.

2. New data shows employee wellbeing rising up UK corporate agenda, HR News, July 2017

3. *The Agility Mindset*, Fiona Cannon OBE, 2017, ISBN-10: 3319455184; ISBN-13: 978-3319455181

4. Survey: Changing Workplace Priorities of Millennials, FlexJobs, September 2015: [View Source](#)

So what's stopping you?

People used to worry about changing the traditional pattern of work. They thought letting staff plan and manage their own time could lead to chaos, and that using data outside the company firewall would result in a security meltdown. But technology has made all these worries obsolete.



Visibility & control

Today, the cost of resisting progress far outweighs any concerns about anarchy, lost productivity, or reduced visibility of what people are doing. Managers are quickly realising that empowering people to give their best has far better results than trying to control people and make them 'work to rule'. What's more, collaboration forums and tools are so advanced that it's never been easier for even highly dispersed teams to stay connected at a distance.

Security

No one cares more about security than service providers like us – our reputation is staked on keeping clients' data safe. What's more, using the cloud boosts business continuity – because of the high standard of resilience and backup we automatically apply, you'll always have access to your data and applications.

Productivity

Connecting and collaborating through the cloud has been found to boost productivity by 28%. People can work uninterrupted from their place of choice, and conversations and projects can continue no matter where other team members are.

Conferencing, screen-share and video or text-based chat tools have become such an everyday part of life, it's second nature for people to keep discussions going across distance. Even audioconferencing has advanced to the point that it's possible to clearly differentiate between similar-sounding voices, and cancel out background noise.

What real transformation looks like

Connecting F1 race teams anywhere in the world –
for just a couple of days at a time

For Williams Martini Racing, keeping pace with the market means reacting to real-time data feeds sent from trackside teams to a UK base to optimise car performance during races. Even shaving off a thousandth of a second from lap times can make the difference between winning and losing.

These fantastically high-speed connections, which could be with locations anywhere in the world, are set up and dismantled within a week. See all the action [here](#).



Bridging the oceans – charting Land Rover Ben Ainslie's sailing success

Teams don't come much more dispersed than one trying to bridge the ocean in a global sailing contest. The Land Rover Ben Ainslie Racing team has successfully used water-resistant tablets and watches along with hundreds of sensors on its boat, plus voice communications, to send critical information back to shore. See how they did it [here](#).

Making public sector resources go further

In the public sector, connecting people across distance is a lifeline to overstretched services and those who need them. On hospital wards, in communities and in emergency situations, continuous information access means front-line workers can spend more time where they need to be: with patients or local residents.

At Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust, community healthcare professionals now have secure, remote access to a detailed patient history so they can see more people without having to go back to base to look up and update records. Read the case study [here](#).

Supported by strong connections, organisations have an opportunity to pool resources and achieve more, overcoming budget pressures. For instance, we've helped Surrey County Council and neighbouring local authorities come together and share information with over 20 separate agencies - including emergency services, healthcare, and education. Follow the story [here](#).

We're helping to transform [policing](#) too, by enabling forces to connect and share insight – not just with each other, but also with the public.

The building blocks for success

Real innovation is possible when companies think more boldly, make better connections, and are willing to push deeper into the cloud – where so much is now possible.



An appetite for transformation

You probably have an idea of the transformation your business needs to achieve. We can help you develop that vision and put a plan into place, drawing on the exciting projects we're helping major clients with every day. You can get a feel for the many ways we could help [here](#).

A suitable network

A strong, fast, continuous connection is essential to keep everyone and everything in sync – whether that's remote team members collaborating on the fly, or specialist teams responding to live data streams from IoT sensors and devices. So you'll need to make sure you have a fit-for-purpose [digital network](#). If connected 'things' is part of your vision, find out how we can help [here](#).

Openness to the cloud

Once you're doing things in the cloud, you're already set up to be more agile in the way you group people and allocate resources, because it's so easy for everyone to connect in from anywhere.

Costs are more manageable, because you pay according to usage and you don't have to worry about supporting, maintaining or updating systems (as your service provider, we look after everything for you). You can ramp up or scale down capacity on demand, too, so you shouldn't ever be paying for more than you need. Better still, services are automatically secured and backed up.

Find out more about our cloud-based agile working and remote collaboration solutions [here](#) and [here](#). It's a subject we [blog](#) about regularly too, so check back for the latest news.

Old ways of working are on their way out:

63%
of workers expect the standard eight-hour work day will soon belong to the past

68%
expect to work remotely instead of commute to an office every day⁵

Workforce priorities are changing:

30%
of the workforce is already made up of non-traditional workers

46%
of workers would choose to be an agile worker⁶

Offering new ways of working is good for employee wellbeing, engagement and retention:

Agile workers are more likely to love their jobs⁷:

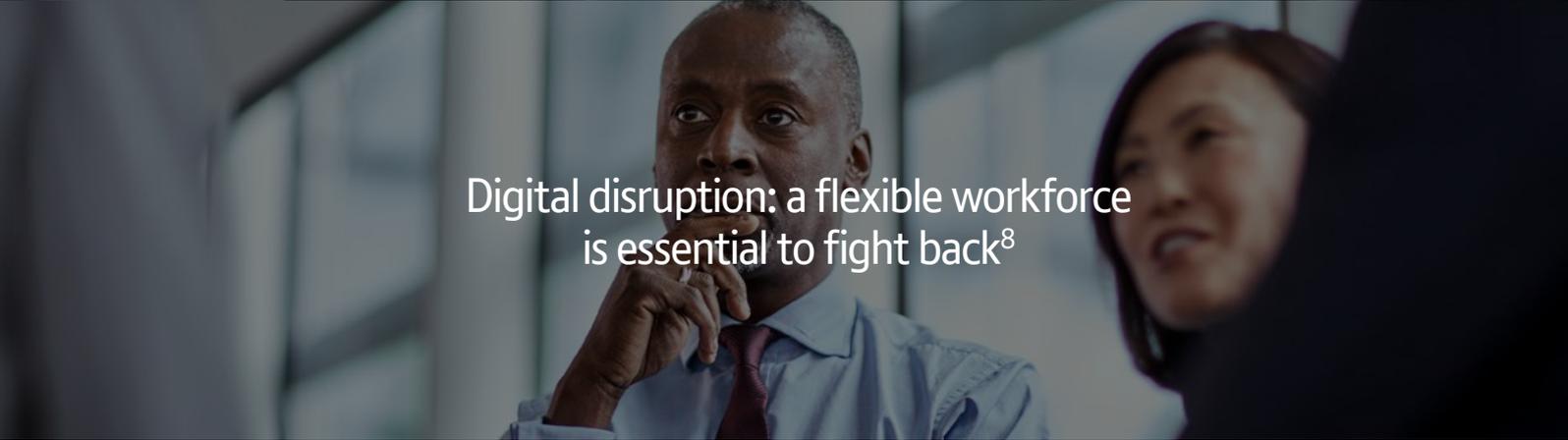
24%
of office workers
love their jobs



38%
of mobile workers
love their jobs



45%
of telecommuters
love their jobs



Digital disruption: a flexible workforce
is essential to fight back⁸

Just
13%
of UK companies are ready to respond to digital
disruption and create “the organisation of the future”;
despite 88% believing this is a priority⁹

Why us?

Whatever your strategic goals, we're the perfect partner to help deliver them. That's thanks to our experience of helping some of the world's biggest organisations transform what they do using the latest technology solutions.

By partnering with us, you'll benefit from:

- Access to the largest and most advanced digital communications infrastructure in Britain, including the UK's most pervasive 4G mobile network. We've also got over 19 million Wi-Fi hotspots across 113 countries, to keep your people connected wherever they are.
- Our extensive cloud expertise. We've got secure data centres all over the world, to keep your applications and data safe.
- Our investment in and insight into what's coming in the future. We're one of the largest R&D funders in the UK, with over £10 billion of investment planned for the next 5 years. It means we have a clear idea of where technology is going next, and can help you prepare for it.
- Our expertise in security and resilience:
 - We have an unrivalled security infrastructure and employ 2,500 security specialists who can advise you on any aspect of IT and communications security.
 - The MoD partners with us to access our secure and resilient network services.
 - We offer industry-leading service level agreements, covering delivery, availability and core network performance, as well as options of up to 99.99 per cent availability, backed by a money-back guarantee. So by partnering with us you'll feel in safe hands.

We understand change is a constant

On top of our commitment to innovation, we help 98 per cent of the FTSE 100 keep up with change. We're also a trusted partner to a diverse range of public sector organisations, from local government to the NHS and blue-light services.



5. PwC survey of nearly 1,400 workers, 2016: [View Source](#)

6. Workplace 2025 (survey of 1,500 business executives and 3,160 workers), Randstad, a globally operating human resources consultancy based in the Netherlands, December 2016: [View Source](#)

7. Leadership IQ survey, February 2016: [View Source](#)

8. Digital disruption: a flexible workforce is essential to fight back, Hays Viewpoint, November 2016: [View Source](#)

9. 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey: [View Source](#)

It's clear that one of the key needs for organisations is to serve their customer better. And as customer expectations rise, this becomes increasingly difficult for businesses to achieve. However, our range of products and solutions are designed to overcome this need and allow businesses to become more responsive.

More information

To find out more about any of our solutions or how BT could help transform the way your organisation delivers service to customers, visit **business.bt.com/solutions** or contact your account manager, or call us on:

0800 707 6320