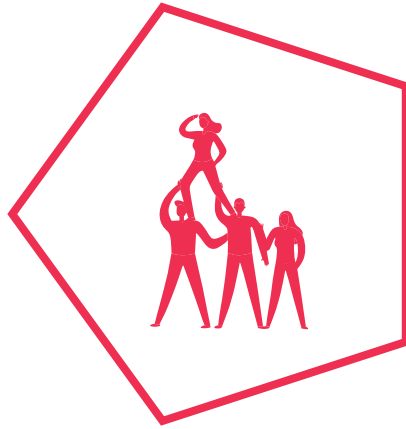# Humanising the Digital Workplace
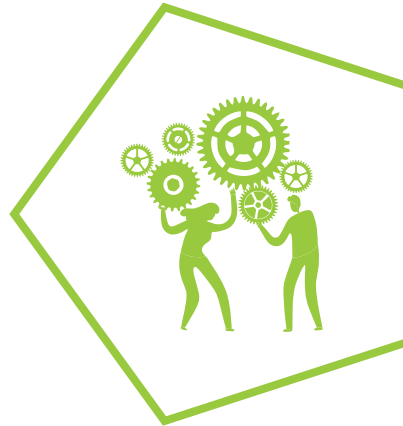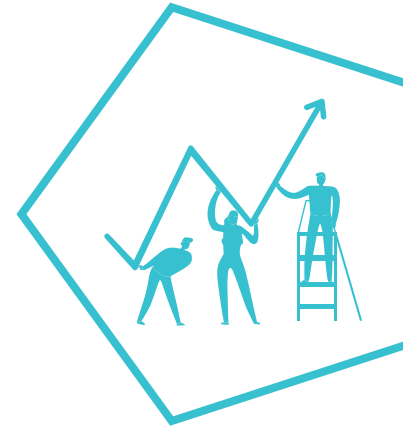
Richard M Marshall, PhD

COVID-19 will have a permanent impact on how we work

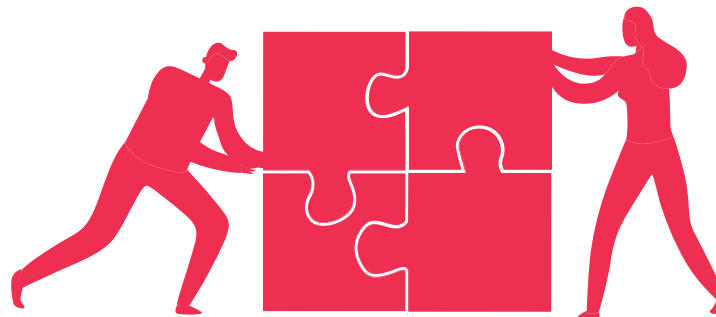**Restructuring Work**

Modernising Technology

Optimizing Budgets

Updating Skills

And needs powerful, new, *humanised* digital workplaces

76% of companies are still evolving their COVID-19 response. [1]

44 mins spent everyday on average looking for information, increasing with every additional platform used. [2]

50% of all city-based jobs can be done at home. [3]

75% of employees maintained or improved productivity when working from home, including 51% with improved collaboration. [4]

[1]https://www.forbes.com/sites/deloitte/2020/09/15/the-perseverance-of-resilient-leadership-sustaining-impact-on-the-road-to-thrive

[2] https://www.adaptavist.com/remotework

[3] https://www.nber.org/papers/w26948.pdf

[4]https://www.brandknewmag.com/what-12000-employees-have-to-say-about-the-future-of-remote-work/

Restructure work around human needs

Purposeful Culture

At a time of crisis, it is good to be able to find everyone to a meaningful purpose. All statistics show that companies with a clear purpose are the most successful with the highest employee engagement. Revisit your purpose and make sure everyone understands it. It forms the basis of your corporate culture.

Intentional Communication

Humans crave warm, friendly, easy to absorb communication yet most corporate communications departments think those are signs of weakness. Humanise contact through informality, casual language and above all video, showing that seniors leaders are human too, driving engagement and empathy.

Remote Equality

All too often remote and on-site workers end up with different experiences. It is important to correct this as some workers return to offices. Equality is best achieved by treating everyone as remote if anyone is remote. Information is written down, enhancing transparency, and everyone joins meetings by video with equal chance of contributing.

Resilience Not Efficiency

Decades of obsessive cutting in the name of efficiency have left companies and people with little to no resilience in the face of change. Balance needs to be restored going forwards, restoring resilience and flexibility to be ready for future crises by developing an understanding of risk and mitigation strategies.

Mutual Trust

Leaders must restore the trust that has all too often been crushed out of the workplace. Managers are stressed that remote workers are not performing while those same workers are stressed by overwork to demonstrate their engagement. Managers must earn the trust of their employees and will find that productivity rises.

Leader Actions

- Master purpose
- Train for trust
- Check-in regularly
- Relax into comms
- Remote-friendly rules
- Prioritise resilience

Refresh your employee experience

Search First

Use search to bring the information and services to the users, not vice versa. In our private lives we turn to Google and YouTube to discover services and to learn. Enterprise IT needs to adopt the same paradigm, surfacing services via search, playlists and curated content, especially video. Remove or hide the old departmental silos.

Remote First

Even the name digital workplace reflects the fact that traditional IT infrastructure was imagined in support of a physical office with remote access a reluctant afterthought. We need to flip this around, and make remote access the priority, with appropriate security models and a focus on open, collaborative communications.

Video Enabled

Video is unique in its ability to drive engagement with short, punchy content. Especially informal, short-form content. Smartphone recordings are perfect to build a connection; there's no need for heavy scripts and rich production. But video places demands on infrastructure and apps need to be designed for a great digital video experience.

Keep It Social

Connecting people is fundamental to building the community of trust and social tools are core to that. From the simplicity of an instant chat client such as Slack or Teams to the intrinsic social model of tools such as Github, the ability to share, comment and review are keys to building trust and transparency if your organisation.

Radical Simplicity

It sometimes seems that IT departments revel in complexity, layering complex, unintuitive systems on top of each other. It's time for a radical makeover of those systems, ditching those that are no longer fit for purpose and moving to modern, user-centric systems that embrace the trends listed here. It's time for a truly digital workplace.

Leader Actions

• Clear out IT deadwood
• Think remote first
• Adopt search
• Design for video
• Teach video making
• Enable social tools

Optimise budgets

Understand Your Spend

Everyone is looking at saving money due to the current dire economic conditions, but simply slashing budgets is not the best way to do it. Before cutting, assess the value of and return on each spend. Learning is easily cut, but in turbulent times its value is immense, enabling employees to adapt to rapid change while maintaining compliance.

Clean House

What systems and processes in your business are never or hardly ever used? Those should be the first to be radically simplified if not completely removed. Analytics tools become key in this process, showing what people actually use rather than what management and IT would like to think they use.

Combine

As businesses rush along they often add systems and capabilities but rarely remove the old ones. Mergers and acquisitions often bring with them duplicates. Now is the time to bring them together, reducing costs and simplifying workflow. Don't just force fit systems, take a step back and see how the combined system will make people more effective.

Optimise

Purchasing a new system to replace an old one might seem an odd way to save money, but often newer IT systems of all kinds off better experiences while costing less to run and maintain than their predecessors. Cloud-based solutions offer use-based licensing which may be cheaper than on-prem, especially when hosting is taken into account.

Invest

Research shows that as much as 80% of IT budgets are spent simply keeping the lights on, leaving little to invest in new systems. This needs a radical overhaul, with more money available for digital transformation, focussing on productivity and engagement through learning, especially using video.

Leader Actions

- Analyse your spend
- Delete unused systems
- Explore new options
- Reduce complexity
- Consider cloud tools
- Invest in transformation

Optimise budgets

Start From The Top

The senior levels of your organisation need to make learning a priority, and leader by example. Whether it is learning to manage remote workers with confidence or to understand the importance of cybersecurity, the senior team needs to show that they too are learning at work. They may also potentially be coaching, creating a learning culture.

Make Learning Easy

Corporate learning systems sometimes seem designed to make learning a chore, with too many hoops to jump through, opaque structures and stilted curricula. Discovering and consuming learning material should be easy and convenient allowing employees to use it wherever they are, when they need it, and on the most convenient device.

JIT Video

When it comes to engaging training short videos are proven to be the most effective mechanism. Watching a short video at the point when someone needs to learn or refresh a new skill ensures the information is absorbed as it is needed immediately. Short-form video is also great for CPD, filling otherwise deadtime such as waiting for clients.

Microlearning

Traditionally structures of curricula and certification evolved around a classroom model, while instant learning was based on learning by doing with more experienced workers. Modern work practices have smashed those structures, but modern technology has replaced them with the ability to learn in easily-digestible chunks as and when needed.

Learning Journeys

Different people learn at different speeds and do not all need to learn the same things. Personalised training addresses these needs better than a fixed set of modules. Self-directed learning journeys are the ideal way of enabling your people to find the content that best suits their needs.

Leader Actions

- Create a learning culture
- Don't hide learning
- Use short videos
- Make time for learning
- Let people find content
- Give out badges

TRIGGER

Work need,
Curiosity,
Manager,
Schedule,
Development plan

PERSONALISED NUDGE

DISCOVER

Curated,
Search,
Playlists,
Recommendations,
Peer suggestions

CONTINUOUS LEARNING CULTURE

APPLY

Immediately applicable,
Fix learning in memory,
Visible utility,
Encourage further learning

LEARN

JIT,
Short form,
Video

ASSESS

Quizzes,
Badges,
Compliance,
Certification

Build a humanised digital workplace

Focus On The Person

Flip the conventional model that makes employees cogs in a grand machine: adopt a one-team approach. Prioritise usability and human factors over unnecessary complexity and corporate structures and use a service delivery approach, not siloed by technology or department. Make services as easy as possible to find and use and boost productivity.

Where And When

Remote-first thinking forces the adoption of clean, transparent digital processes that can be used from anywhere on the most convenient device. It is no longer acceptable to limit services to specific browsers or devices, nor to the internal network. This may need a radical rethinking of security and infrastructure, will reap rich rewards.

Search And Learn

Learning should be an integral part of every worker's day. Learning should occur at point and time of need, not to an arbitrary schedule. Realising this cultural shift requires an equal change in delivery model, where learning becomes a just-in-time service reached by workers searching for training in the skills they need and consuming them as needed.
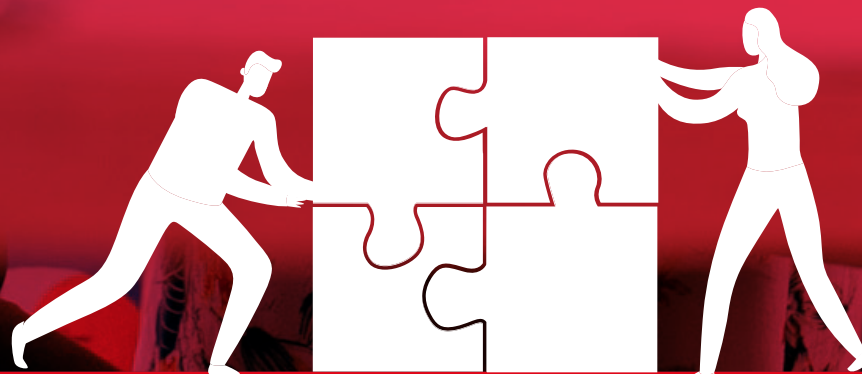
Refresh For ROI

Investing in replacing clunking, expensive old systems with new, cloud-based services might sound expensive at a time of financial stress, but it is likely to save money in even the short term. Explore how usage-based licensing and the cloud will provide a long-term benefit in ROI.
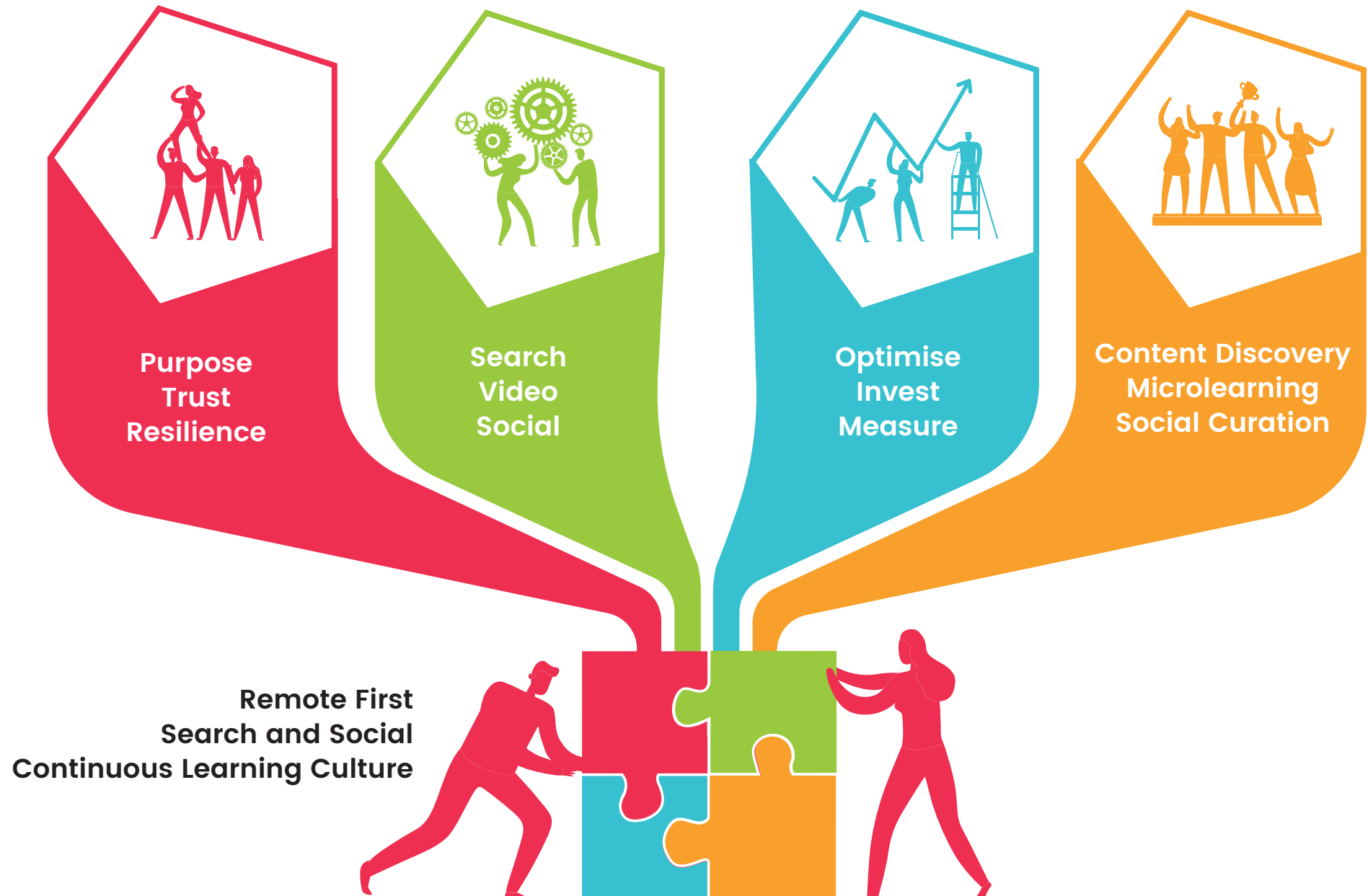
Demand Feedback

Most corporations make it very clear that they do not want feedback on their systems. This needs to change and starting to genuinely seek the views and needs of users and use it to tune systems. Create a ratings system so that users can score systems and learning content directly. Use the feedback to improve and truly humanise the workplace.

Leader Actions

- Become one team
- Use service delivery
- Link search and video
- Integrated video
- Refresh technology
- Allow ratings

Adopt humanising factors to create a productive, humanised digital workplace

**Purpose
Trust
Resilience**

**Search
Video
Social**

**Optimise
Invest
Measure**

**Content Discovery
Microlearning
Social Curation**

**Remote First
Search and Social
Continuous Learning Culture**

5App Digital Hub

The 5App Digital Hub has been designed to support the search-and-learn process with a consumer-grade experience. 5App humanises corporate content, whether for learning or communications. It enables personal learning journeys, shared playlists and search-based discovery. The digital hub is ideal for surfacing content from multiple sources in a cohesive, human whole.

The 5App Digital Hub is cloud-based, easily integrated with your SSO, secure and makes content available on any device. 5App brings a joyful experience to learning and communications. How much more human can you get?

5APP digitalHUB

Built around the human experience
- Modern UX
- Easy to use
- Purposeful
- Accessible from any device, anywhere

Modern, cloud-native technology
- SaaS delivery with important integrations
- Built to scale from small to global team sizes
- Video native include CDN-based global optimisation
- Playlists, curation and social experience

Budget-friendly licensing
- Replace multiple systems with one front end
- Use-based licensing
- Easily scaled costs - up and down
- No hidden costs

Cultivate a learning culture
- Just-in-time learning delivery
- Curated playlists
- Self discovery
- Reluctant learner friendly

Reach your people with

digitalHUB

The human face of the digital workplace

www.5app.com