

INTELLIGENT DIGITAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE FOR THE NEW ERA

Author:

Angela Salmeron

June 2021

Sponsored by



IDC #EUR147967321



Intelligent Digital Employee Experience for the New Era

The Broken Employee Experience and the Great Reset

2020 will go down in history as an inflection point in workplace transformation and employee experience. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on movement, the workplace as we know it has essentially been turned upside down. So rapid and profound was the shift in business priorities and work models that business leaders refer to the past year as the Great Reset.

Above all, IDC sees this phase as an opportunity to retune many working practices that are no longer fit for purpose. Hybrid work is an example, becoming a permanent model for many companies moving forward. According to IDC's recent *Return-to-Work Survey*, only 23% of European office workers will work permanently in the office in 2025.

FIGURE 1
Percentage of Total Office Workers in the Office (2019 vs 2025)

AT A GLANCE

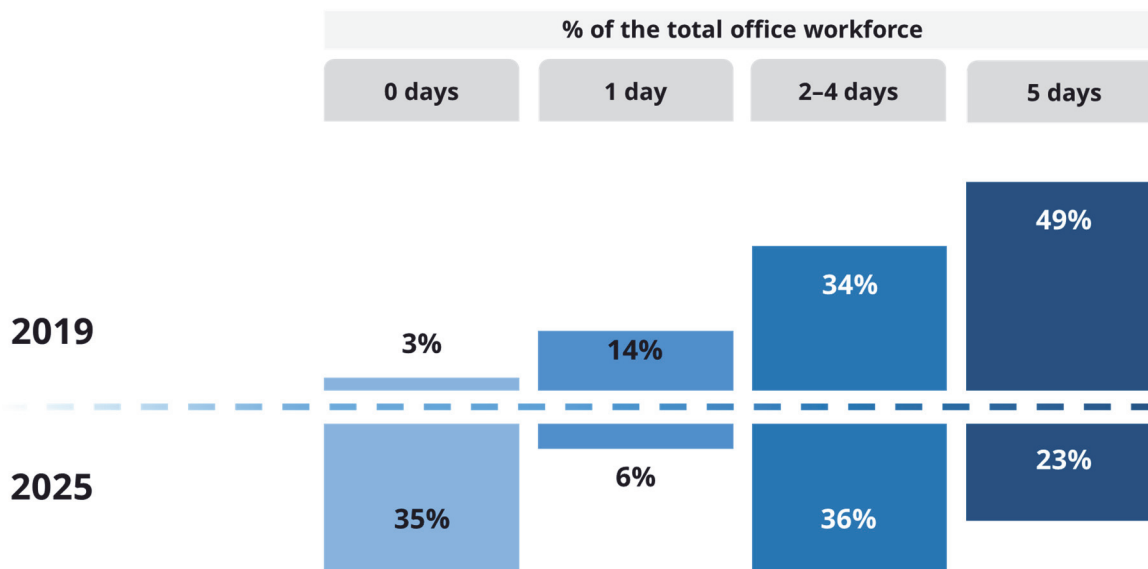
KEY STATS

- » Hybrid work is here to stay: less than 25% of the workforce will work permanently from the office by 2025.
- » 48% of worldwide companies plan to increase investments in digital workspaces in 2021.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Building a solid digital workspace is not a cure for the pandemic but a long-term objective for organizations.
- » End-user parity across different working environments is a top IT imperative.
- » IT support is the biggest IT challenge in maintaining a hybrid workforce.

Number of Days a Week in Office (Europe)



Source: IDC 1Q21 Return-to-Work Survey, February 2021

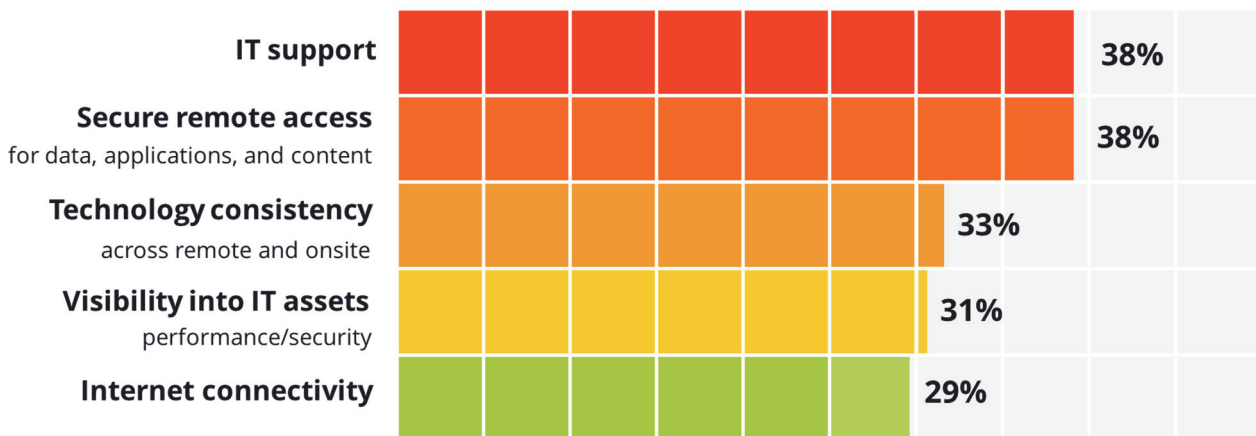
So, building a hybrid workplace for the long term is a business imperative. IDC research shows that 48% of organizations are investing in an intelligent digital workspace to ensure that all employees have the same experience regardless of their location.

The Challenges of Building Employee Experience

Designing a future-proof digital workspace with optimal employee experience is far from straightforward and requires proper consideration and planning. Above all, business leaders need to address the following challenges:

- **Business continuity.** Ensuring uptime and productivity in a hybrid work environment needs a new IT support model. Traditional approaches are not fit for purpose, becoming the top challenge in maintaining a remote workforce (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2
Biggest IT Challenges in Supporting a Remote and Hybrid Workforce



Source: WW Future of Work Survey, IDC, March 2021

- **Digital transformation.** Nearly half of organizations worldwide now claim to be in the advanced stages of digital transformation (DX). However, this rapid shift to new technology is creating new challenges for users. IDC surveys show that using unfamiliar or new technologies is the main obstacle to employee productivity.
- **Business value realization.** The increased economic uncertainty has brought greater focus on realizing value from digital investments and a close ROI analysis. As organizations strive to build resilience, there is a clear need for solutions that provide short-term business impact.
- **Employee engagement.** Even pre-COVID, staff were increasingly calling the shots — showing less company loyalty and a shorter tenure within the company. With the pandemic, employees have even greater expectations when it comes to their overall experience at work.
- **IT workforce augmentation.** Overwhelmed with helpdesk requests, IT departments have realized the need for greater visibility into IT asset performance and related employee sentiment. This in turn has highlighted the need for increased intelligence through AIOps.

Building the Employee Experience of the Future

Modern IT Support for a Modern Workplace

IDC research shows that while many factors contribute to a good work experience, equipping employees with the right tools and technology is what makes them happiest.

This is even more true in today's hybrid working environment. While in the past employee experience primarily revolved around the physical workplace, the shift to hybrid work has placed digital experience at the core of employee engagement. As a result, it's a make-or-break component in the workplace.

Decision makers are coming to realize this. IDC research shows that modernizing the work environment is one of the top 3 strategy priorities for boards of directors worldwide. As such, IT support is under much scrutiny and transformation, and their performance is a top KPI for IT departments.

The journey ahead will not be easy for IT support. Roughly half of companies worldwide still rely on traditional helpdesk processes and have limited visibility into digital employee experience. Moreover, expectations between IT departments and employees can be widely different, creating an experience gap.

To resolve this, many companies are capturing a holistic view of the digital experience, including employee sentiment, and shifting from service-level agreements (SLAs) to experience-level agreements (XLAs).

AIOps for Digital Employee Experience

Artificial intelligence for IT operations (AIOps) is a critical platform for any IT department looking to monitor, manage, and ensure an optimal employee experience in a hybrid working environment. AIOps leverages real-time actionable insights, machine learning (ML), and automation to proactively address IT issues and minimize disruption.

AIOps gathers vast amounts of telemetry data from different IT assets as well as employee sentiment into a single pane of glass. Algorithms remove noise, help identify events, and continuously evolve to adapt to new day-to-day problems. AIOps is embedded into incident management systems and can trigger resolution with or without human intervention (by orchestrating workflows based on a rich set of rules and parameters).

The platform performs the following functions as a single source of truth:

- **Event correlation:** provides insight into how IT events are related to each other
- **Anomaly detection:** compares current and historical data and identifies unusual behavior
- **Predictive analytics:** analyzes historical data to forecast future or otherwise unknown events
- **Root-cause analysis:** identifies the source of a problem, not only its symptoms

- **Proactive support:** resolves a potential malfunction based on gathered data, and provides remediation guidance before impacting end-user experience
- **Optimization by shifting left:** identifies malfunctions early, simplifying their resolution
- **Self-healing:** deflects common incidents through automated resolution

Resolving an incident with an AIOps platform is a game-changer. It sets the foundation for a proactive support strategy and augments the reactive support model to deliver enhanced user experience in a hybrid workplace.

1) Proactive support model

A proactive IT support strategy can address many gaps in the reactive workplace support model. With the right tools, IT teams gain enhanced visibility and insights into potential issues with the right tools and take remediation action before the issue causes significant downtime. A proactive support strategy not only transforms the end-user experience but also reduces the cost associated with the downtime.

FIGURE 3
Proactive Support Model: Building Blocks



Source: IDC, 2021

Essential building blocks:

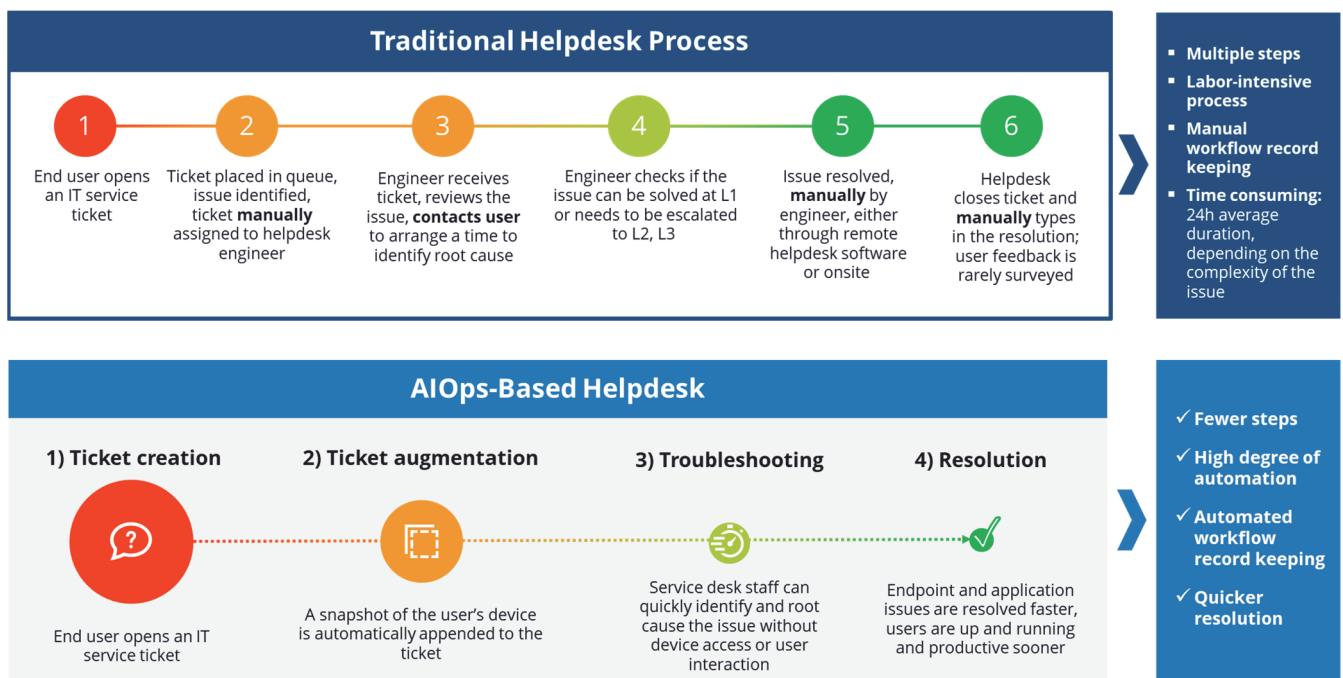
- **Sense:** The substratum of a proactive support strategy is continuous monitoring of the complete end-user computing ecosystem. IT departments need visibility on how users utilize the IT ecosystem and understand what types of issues they are experiencing, even those not raised as a helpdesk ticket.
- **Insight:** IT departments need to generate insightful analysis from device and application metrics and user experience to identify potential issues before they become a widespread problem. An AIOps platform enables the IT team to put all the insights into one unified console and run or qualify the issues at a high level then quickly drill down into details, as required.
- **Action:** Insights must be actionable for a successful proactive support strategy. For instance, if an IT team identifies an application crashing among multiple devices, even before they take any action, they need to know which users are impacted, how the problem is affecting them, the root cause, and the best way to remediate it. An AIOps platform equips IT departments with actionable insight at scale.
- **Automate:** Proactive support should incorporate capabilities for automating the support process, from identifying the issue to addressing it and without manual intervention. This speeds up the entire process without having to deploy extra resources. AIOps enables "shift left" by bringing a whole new level of "L-1" (fixing issues before users identify them).

- **Transform:** Enhanced visibility, actionable insights, and proactive support help IT departments to transform the IT support model by improving uptime, ensuring the right-fit devices and applications, and avoiding unnecessary spending.

2) Augmented reactive support model

With the power of integration, an AIOps platform can augment the support ticket with the relevant device, application, and network information. Support agents can use all that information to gain a better context of the issue and accelerate incident resolution by identifying root causes and automation with minimal or no user interaction.

FIGURE 4
Traditional vs AIOps-Based IT Helpdesk

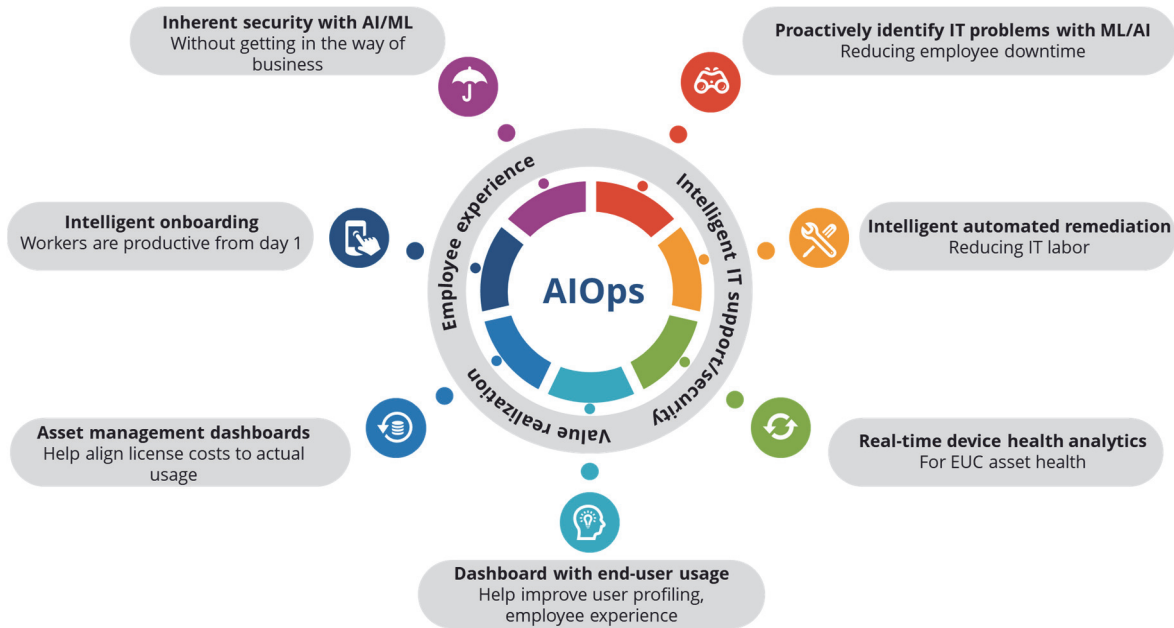


Source: IDC, 2021

The Full Business Value of AIOps

AIOps brings important business benefits to organizations, optimizing the value of digital investments in the workplace, augmenting IT support, and driving employee experience (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 5
AIOps: Business, IT, and Employee Impact



Source: IDC, 2021

The visibility and intelligence to identify and fix problems early are priceless in the current fast-paced digital economy. To better illustrate the full benefits of AIOps in a hybrid working environment, IDC has identified the following business use cases:

- **Business resilience.** AIOps supports hybrid and remote tech-dependent employees. By providing greater IT visibility, helpdesk support can anticipate disruptions and proactively remediate problems before they impact the business.
- **Digital risk management.** As remote employees experience difficulty in adopting unfamiliar technologies, timely and relevant information on usage and sentiment can be crucial, particularly during IT upgrades and large transformation projects. AIOps can also support the piloting phase of new technology and verify that implemented software meets end-user needs and expectations.
- **Employee engagement.** AIOps contributes to greater employee engagement — a major concern among a distributed workforce at present. Capturing employee sentiment builds the perception among employees that their voice is being heard. Easy onboarding and better persona profiles also enable new hires to be productive from day 1 and be equipped with the right tools for their workstyles.
- **IT asset optimization.** Asset management dashboards provide insight into the actual usage of IT assets and help rationalize the increasing licensing costs of a hybrid working model. AIOps can ensure that the right (and not necessarily the most advanced) technology is made available to employees according to their work profiles.
- **IT workforce augmentation.** AIOps reduces the amount of manual intervention required in helpdesks, so that IT professionals can shift to more strategic and complex tasks. For instance, more time can be dedicated to support new DX initiatives and security management.

FIGURE 6
AIOps Business Use Cases

Business Resilience	Digital Risk Management	IT Asset Optimization	Employee Engagement	IT Workforce Augmentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maximize uptime in agile working ✓ Impact on productivity ✓ Business continuity for critical applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Technology adoption and change management ✓ Minimal disruption in technology rollouts ✓ Employee sentiment in transformation projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ROI and technology usage ✓ Cost control ✓ Helpdesk resource optimization ✓ IT asset optimization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Personalized workplace ✓ Enhanced end-user experience ✓ Privacy by design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Optimized IT workflow ✓ Automation and self-healing frees up IT staff time ✓ Innovation and support to the business

Source: IDC, 2021

HCL WorkBlaze

HCL Technologies is a next-generation global technology company that offers an integrated portfolio of products and services through three business units — IT and Business Services (ITBS), Engineering and R&D Services (ERS), and Products and Platforms (P&P). Through its worldwide network of R&D facilities and co-innovation labs, global delivery capabilities, and over 168,000 "ideapreneurs" across 50 countries, HCL delivers holistic services across industry verticals to leading enterprises, including 250 of the Fortune 500 and 650 of the Global 2000.

Headquartered in Michigan, in the U.S., Lakeside Software is a global end-user experience management and automation platform provider with over 250 employees across 5 offices. Its SysTrack AI-enabled platform is deployed at more than 4,000 organizations in 40 countries around the world.

HCL partners with Lakeside Software to provide a platform that enables AIOps to monitor and manage end-user computing devices for optimal user experience.

HCL WorkBlaze Powered by Lakeside SysTrack

HCL's WorkBlaze, powered by Lakeside SysTrack, is changing the paradigm of the workplace support model by enabling real-time monitoring of all the physical, virtual, mobile, point-of-sale (POS), and IoT-enabled endpoints to gather up to 10,000 parameters, providing actionable insights to remediate issues proactively. Metrics are captured every 15 seconds across:

- System performance (including system reliability, performance, and start-up)
- Application performance (including app reliability, response, and focus time)
- User productivity (including user interactions, app latency, and user wait time)

These metrics are combined to quantify end-user experience and build a comprehensive user experience index (UEI). It integrates real-time data with historical data into a centralized interface that provides IT departments with a close-to-real-time pulse on the experience of each user persona as well as the high-level trends experienced over time. This can be critical for business resilience in a changing environment and for the success of DX projects.

HCL provides a dedicated user experience office (UEO) for every WorkBlaze customer. The UEO team enables a proactive and preemptive workplace support strategy, enhances UX, and transforms the business. Its key responsibilities include identifying areas that need instant improvement, enhancing user productivity, and increasing adoption of new digital tools and incident management.

With the UEI, IT departments can identify what issues impact productivity and how to improve scorings for greater work experience. In the event of serious service disruption, critical roles — for instance, customer-facing sales staff — can be prioritized for troubleshooting. This contributes to greater employee engagement and business impact.

The broad gathering of historical data enables the system to identify relevant insights and prevent and remediate issues through a self-healing process.

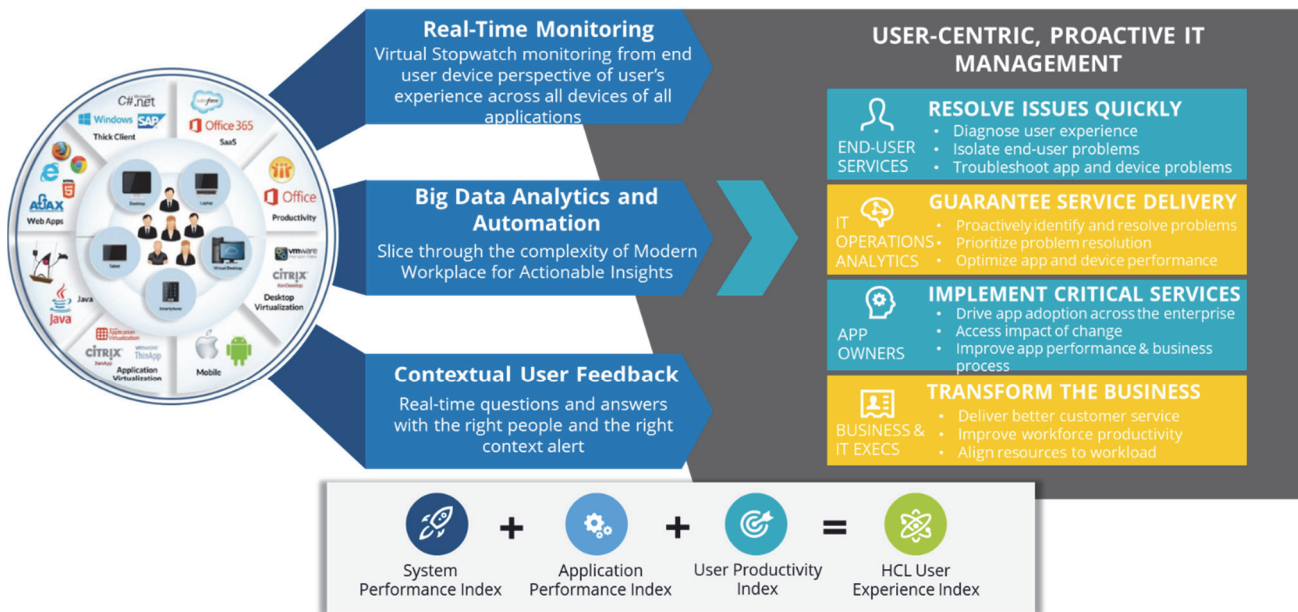
At the heart of the system are WorkBlaze's sensors, unique language expressions that monitor the environment in real time and provide actionable insight through the following mechanisms:

- **Direct notification to the UEO:** WorkBlaze's sensors notify the UEO in case of anomalies and help with root cause analysis and event correlation analysis. WorkBlaze is equipped with an intelligent engine-tapping tool that leverages natural language processing (NLP) through a cognitive API library to enable UEO administrators to type questions into an interface to generate new insights.
- **Triggering contextual feedback surveys:** The sensors capture user sentiment for a complete picture of the environment, providing a numeric score.
- **Auto remediation:** The automated sensors continuously evaluate the environment and trigger remediation scripts when issues arise without any manual intervention.
- **Self-help:** WorkBlaze's powerful sensors also provide an intelligent application for end users to visualize their issues and resolve them based on their user experience index score and remediation scripts.

WorkBlaze empowers IT teams to address issues early, ensuring business continuity. When incidents do occur at an endpoint level, HCL WorkBlaze integrates with service delivery platforms such as ServiceNow to accelerate resolution. Once the helpdesk request is raised, a snapshot of the user's device is automatically appended to the ticket so that service desk staff can identify the root cause without device access or user interaction. HCL claims that this augmented service desk delivery leads to up to 40% faster incident resolution, resulting in an enhanced end-user experience.

FIGURE 7
HCL WorkBlaze

WorkBlaze: Active Workplace Analysis



Source: IDC, 2021

HCL WorkBlaze Case Studies

HCL WorkBlaze has been widely deployed across many companies in the world. This section has selected three customers and illustrates how the solution has turned around large-scale IT problems and delivered benefits to IT, the business, and employees:

- A **global telecommunications** company with an installed base of 83,000 endpoints, many of which were underutilized and under-performing
- A **multinational food, snack, and beverage corporation** with an installed base of 65,000 devices, many of which had non-standardized operating environments, leading to poor performance and avoidable incidents
- A **U.S. drugstore chain** with an installed base of 20,000 devices but running a faulty software version on over 7,000 POS devices, impacting employees and its customers

FIGURE 8
HCL WorkBlaze Case Studies

		Challenge	Approach	Benefit
Case Study 1	Global telecommunications company	Workforce disruption due to poor device performance. Software updates delayed. Many devices and application licenses were not used but are still managed.	WorkBlaze dashboards provided insightful analysis on device, device inventory, and unutilized application licenses. Root cause analysis and custom automation was used for optimal UX.	The IT environment was updated and rationalized with the right fit of devices according to personas. Underutilized licenses were reclaimed, for financial gains.
Case Study 2	Multinational food, snack, and beverage corporation	Poor performance in many applications impacting user experience. Non-standardized environment during the pandemic (problems across VPNs, firewalls & bitlocker, SCCM client).	WorkBlaze identified and fixed issues with automation, addressing old VPN certificates, enabling bitlocker and firewalls.	User experience and security posture notably improved. Patch management followed a regular cadence. Application versions were standardized.
Case Study 3	U.S. drugstore chain	High number of reported incidents and need to improve the overall health of POS devices and their applications. Typical helpdesk issues often remained unsolved, impacting its salesforce.	WorkBlaze used a proactive approach to identify the root cause of poor application performance across multiple versions and resolved it with a version upgrade and consolidation.	POS device performance notably improved over a period of three months with application rationalization, which enabled faster processing of orders.

Source: IDC, 2021

Recommendations

IDC research shows that employee experience is a core KPI for board-level review and its relevance is set to endure in the new era as a driver of innovation and growth.

Only one in five organizations is currently using AIOps, but IDC predicts a faster rollout of these solutions in future. Its business impact, on both bottom- and top-line revenues, is attractive to different stakeholders (e.g., CHRO, CDO, CFO) and not just IT departments. IDC believes that organizations should consider the following when implementing AIOps platforms:

- Ensure a future-proof setup with a scalable cloud-native solution
- Select IT service partners that offer a holistic view on DX and can help align AIOps platforms with other technology implementations
- Reassure employees about data privacy and how their data is being handled
- Liaise with different stakeholders in the company so that the solution fully addresses IT, business, and employee requirements

Sources

- *IDC COVID-19 Impact on IT Spending Survey*, October 2020
- *IDC Worldwide Future of Work Survey*, March 2021
- *IDC EMEA Future of Work Survey*, March 2020
- *IDC EMEA Future Enterprise Resilience Survey*, February 2021
- *IDC COVID-19 Impact on IT Spending Survey*, October 2020
- *IDC EMEA Future of Work Survey*, March 2021
- *IDC EMEA Future Enterprise Resilience Survey*, 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE SPONSOR

HCL Technologies has been consistently recognized as a leader by the best-in-class technology analysts and research organizations in the digital workplace transformation space. With a presence in over 50 countries and a worldwide network of R&D facilities, co-innovation labs, and global delivery centers, HCL has been at the forefront in delivering technology products and services to more than 250 of the Fortune 500 companies. HCL constantly strives to bring the most effective technology solutions to help customers accelerate their digital transformations and deliver the best possible user experience. WorkBlaze, a digital experience monitoring solution, powered by predictive analytics and AIOps, can help enterprises to build an intelligent workplace empowering employees and providing a great user experience. This IDC White Paper helps enterprises to recognize the cogency of having a digital workplace proactive support strategy and the areas which stand to benefit from AIOps.

The paper is a testament to our continued commitment toward partnering with industry leaders like Lakeside Software. To know more about HCL WorkBlaze, visit our website at <https://www.hcltech.com/dwp/workblaze>

About the Analyst

Angela Salmeron, Associate Research Director, European Future of Work, IDC



Angela Salmeron has over 10 years' experience in the ICT industry and is currently an associate research director with IDC's European Future of Work research service, based in London. In this role, she provides coverage of key technology trends across the future of work, including the digital workspace, security and trust, collaborative platforms, and the augmented worker.

About IDC

International Data Corporation (IDC) is the premier global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications, and consumer technology markets. IDC helps IT professionals, business executives, and the investment community make fact-based decisions on technology purchases and business strategy. More than 1,100 IDC analysts provide global, regional, and local expertise on technology and industry opportunities and trends in over 110 countries worldwide. For 50 years, IDC has provided strategic insights to help our clients achieve their key business objectives. IDC is a subsidiary of IDG, the world's leading technology media, research, and events company.

IDC UK

5th Floor, Ealing Cross,
85 Uxbridge Road
London
W5 5TH, United Kingdom
44.208.987.7100
Twitter: @IDC
idc-community.com
www.idc.com

Global Headquarters

5 Speen Street Framingham, MA
01701 USA
P.508.872.8200
F.508.935.4015
www.idc.com

Copyright and Restrictions

Any IDC information or reference to IDC that is to be used in advertising, press releases, or promotional materials requires prior written approval from IDC. For permission requests contact the Custom Solutions information line at 508-988-7610 or permissions@idc.com. Translation and/or localization of this document require an additional license from IDC. For more information on IDC visit www.idc.com. For more information on IDC Custom Solutions, visit http://www.idc.com/prodserv/custom_solutions/index.jsp.

Copyright 2021 IDC. Reproduction is forbidden unless authorized. All rights reserved.

