



# Optimising the employee experience in the Digital Workplace: from great service to a **great experience**

WHITEPAPER **Digital Workplace**



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## INTRODUCTION: THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE IS ABOUT PEOPLE. NOT TECHNOLOGY.



Economies grow. Markets evolve. And new challenges arise for businesses to deal with.

**Over the last decade, the biggest shift in the way we do our jobs has been the move to hybrid working.**

For millions of employees, the idea of “the workplace” being synonymous with a building in the city centre now seems strange. The office is now a flexible concept; commutes take seconds; kitchen tables do double duty as desks. And this trend was obvious long before the lockdowns.

Its enabler? **Technology.**

When broadband connectivity became cheap and fast, people discovered videoconferencing and whiteboarding let them collaborate from afar. When applications went to the cloud, logging in from outside the office became easier. While webinars and podcasts let organisations share their thoughts and materials with a worldwide audience. It was a brave new world where anything seemed possible.

And then reality set in.

## INTRODUCTION: THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE IS ABOUT PEOPLE. NOT TECHNOLOGY.

Today, businesses are discovering that the real challenges of hybrid working go beyond megabits, gigahertz, and screen size. They're about people, and their changed expectations for the future of work.

Without the subtle cues and norms a physical office provides, it's easy for employees to feel disconnected from the company they work for.

Without meaningful communication, the relationships that help people work as a team don't develop. With fewer chance encounters around the office, ideas flow slower.

And if they feel distant from their managers, it's harder for people to learn and improve. (And equally hard for those managers to help.) All of which affects business performance – fundamentally.



So employee effectiveness in the Digital Workplace isn't an IT issue. It's a **business** issue. One that affects *all* major functions: HR, Finance, the C-Suite, and the IT department itself.

Of course, Getronics is a technology partner. But we're all about solving business issues; technology is just our toolbox. (When you've been around for nearly 150 years, you learn a lot about what really matters.)

In this paper, you'll see how the right approach can strengthen all those shared experiences and cultural understandings that make your company unique – and your employees productive and effective.

It's about going beyond the Service Level Agreement ... and making your people feel truly part of a unified whole. Call it an "**Experience Level Agreement**" – providing the technology that makes people feel empowered and valued, without anyone feeling they're missing out.

Let's start with the factors your Digital Workplace strategy needs to address.

20%

*of workers say their  
IT services make  
their jobs easier.*

Gartner



# THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE: STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

The first challenge of the DWP is to understand there *is* still a challenge. You may have hit multiple numerical KPIs: everyone on Office365, bandwidth in the gigabits, availability at five-nines. But it's possible – and in most cases, probable – that your IT success metrics aren't measuring what matters: the **user experience** that connects all the moving parts of your business into a high-performing whole.

The challenges are twofold: **organisational** and **personal**.

## All organisations have silos – the trick is to make them work

Different departments are there for different tasks, and to do them efficiently each needs its own space to operate in – often derided as a “silo”. But understand there's nothing inherently *wrong* with silos. This picture of the organisation, with teams separated by function, has been around for several centuries and it isn't going away. It's logical, it's efficient, and it works for most business models.

Where it causes trouble for hybrid working is that it's an **office-centric** model. For most of history a department's resource requirements were shaped by its physical location: the factory floor, the corner office, the basement suite. Which led to silos operating as standalone units, sealed off from the business as a whole – or (worse) seeing other departments as competitors.

And *that's* where the organisation starts getting dysfunctional.

**The answer to this challenge:** don't seek to “break apart” silos – build bridges *between* them, in ways that foster easy communication and collaboration. The more you can standardise SaaS across the business, the more you can settle on common ways of working, and the more you can offer everyone the same quality of experience when they deal with your Service Desk or IT Support. And the less they'll feel they're in competition for resources.

It's a **human-centric** model of organisational design. And in a hybrid world, it's better.

## See people as the emotional creatures they are – not work units

Putting people at the centre continues at the level of the individual. But where the organisational challenge is to **build bridges**, the challenge for people's personal productivity is different: to help them feel positive, enabled, and comfortable operating autonomously.

After all, the key challenge for anyone working away from the office is to feel they're in control: confident they have the resources and abilities to do their job effectively. Without these emotional assurances, the silo problem multiplied by a thousand, with each *person* in isolation.

**Our answer here?** The strategy is to make sure you know what makes your people feel connected to company culture.

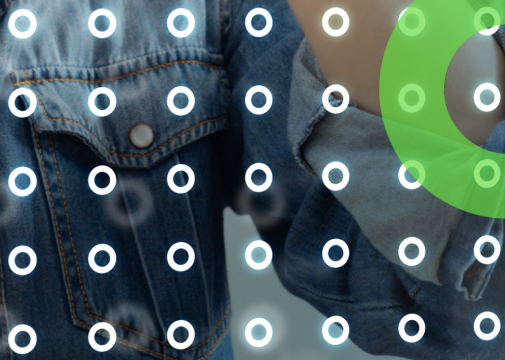
It means clear and straightforward channels for communication with colleagues and managers, so everyday work isn't frustrating. It means fostering a sense of “story”: the feeling they're on a career path with prospects, and not disadvantaged by flex working.



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Friction: the real business-killer

There's a unifying idea here. At both organisational and individual levels, the strategy is the same: **remove friction from the process.**

The move to hybrid working isn't a one-off event. It's a continual process of change and transformation. There will always be that next percentage point of poor user experience to solve; every new application, every new device, every new policy needs to support this goal. Because ultimately hybrid is about enabling people – not controlling them.

With our goals summarised, let's look at a real-world scenario of what such a setup could look like.



Even without making technology choices, it's possible to map the Critical Success Factors into a conceptual model. The basic premise: it's focussed fully on the employee experience, putting the person at the centre of the process.

They're not cogs in a machine – they are the machine. Some principles:

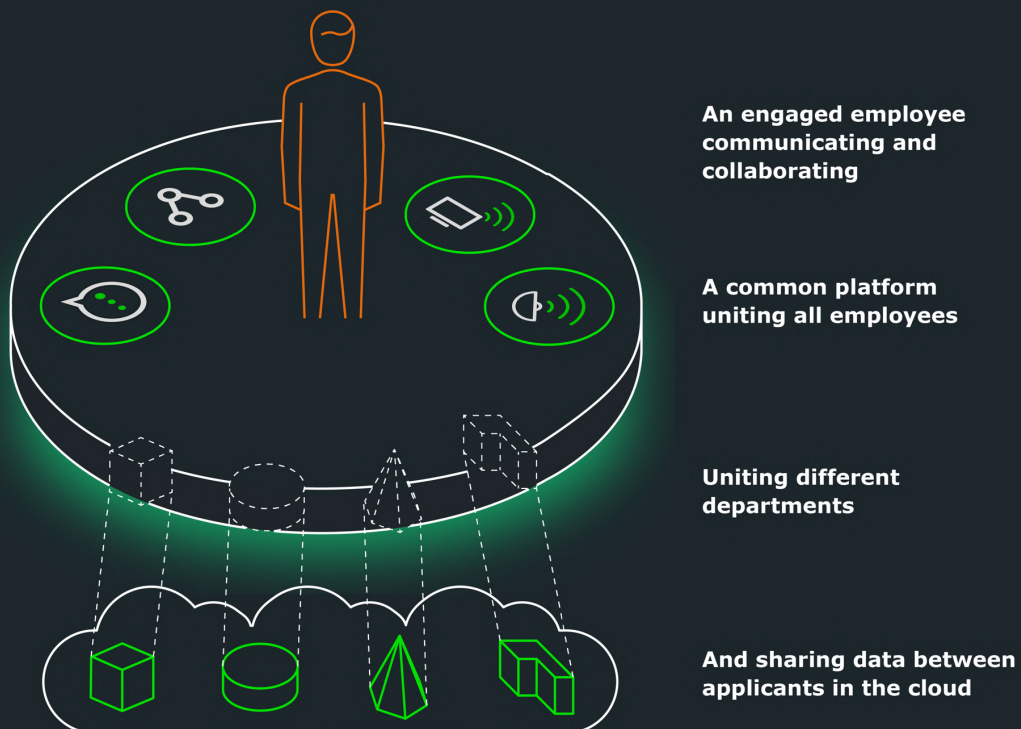
- Think hub before network, with the employee at the centre
- A common platform across the enterprise, for a level playing field
- Repetitive actions are automated, but human connection is not
- Senses and surfaces data from multiple sources to show the Big Picture
- Enables two-way communication with employer – listening as well as talking!
- Success criteria mainly human satisfaction metrics, not machine targets
- Accept diverse devices, but unify their security

## Think hub before network, with the employee at the centre

“Digital dexterity” means maximising your employees’ ability to use their digital tools – and the best way to do that is centralise major sources of information like training documents, people profiles, and help resources in one place.

It's harder than it seems, since many departments may have gone the “shadow IT” route and developed their own repositories of information, in proprietary formats not shared with the rest of the enterprise. Which makes gathering data for reports and metrics more difficult – and beds in habits that can be hard to change.

**But the prize is worth it.** With a digital hub centralising collaboration, communication, and culture, your people can find all their applications and information in a consistent place – and it's always-on, always up-to-date, and easily accessed at all times. While driving employees to a single place also encourages deeper and easier collaboration.



## A common platform across the enterprise, for a level playing field

While different departments may have individual preferences for how they communicate – Slack channels for the IT crew, conference calls for your marketers, and so on – it's wise to bring your business communications together for easier management of workflows.

The good news: this doesn't mean limiting your people.

Cloud services can integrate different applications and channels across the organization, still allowing diversity of choice but housing them within a shared environment. The benefits are broad: a trusted source for gathering data for metrics, a central location for business boosts like up-to-date employee directories, and most of all a consistent approach to security. A DWP strategy doesn't mean forcing people to use a common application – but it does bring them onto a common platform.

And the diversity it supports goes beyond apps. The Digital Workplace, not being limited to an office building, treats differently-abled people – those with physical impairments, neurodiverse natures, and even varying cultural practices – as fully empowered members of the workforce, providing a variety of ways for their diverse talents to contribute even if they're homebound.

## Repetitive actions are automated, but human connection is not

Over-automation is a motivation killer. When people feel corralled and controlled, they see their jobs as box-ticking and work-to-rule. Precisely the opposite of the ideal scenario for effective digital working.

The solution: make sure your model automates only the parts that people can't add value to. Repetitive actions that transform data in predictable ways are ripe for being automated – and should be. But anything that tries to turn human creativity and intellect into an automated process should *not*.

Random conversations, get-togethers that don't involve work, meetings that ask how people feel that rather than have a strict agenda – these are the factors that make employees feel accepted and valued. They help to build the innovative, optimistic corporate culture all employers crave.

So in a human-centric Digital Workplace, **automate only what humans can't add value to.**



## Senses and surfaces data from multiple sources to show the Big Picture

Most data-driven conclusions suffer from incomplete data. So your Digital Workplace scenario should seek to address this – and having that common platform will help. Ask yourself: what data is truly important to the organisation, and where is it?

Connecting different data sources and applications can reveal insights and opportunities that can make a huge difference. Perhaps two departments are duplicating work, unknown to each other; perhaps there's a dataset in Team A that could help Team B. A true digital workplace doesn't limit use of data to the silo that created it.

Of course, a common problem is too *much* data. So it's essential to limit access to the people who need it, while masking it from the people who don't. A set of "personas" for different job roles achieves this – basically, a set of permissions that sets out the applications and resources a job description needs. This maintains security, too.

## Enables two-way communication with the employer – listening as well as talking!

Traditionally, many organisational IT platforms have been more about broadcasting than conversations. But in the hybrid working model, where the old cues of personal interaction and shared experience are sparser, it's vital to keep your communication two-way.

You've heard of VoC, or "Voice of the Customer". But who serves those customers and makes your company successful? Your employees. Which means a "Voice of the Employee" programme is just as important. Using worker sentiment to take the pulse of employee happiness and guide your HR initiatives confirms you're open to their concerns – with a positive impact on employee retention.

## Sets success criteria according to human satisfaction, not machine targets

A British banking entrepreneur once told managers to "Measure – but don't target. Because if you set numerical targets for a task, people's behaviour will skew towards whatever improves that metric for them."

What does this mean for the Service Desk? Here's an example. A common metric is to measure average call or chat length, because it tells you how long it's taking to solve a problem. But if you misguidedly set a target for that activity – like offering a bonus for keeping calls under 10 minutes – you're cheapening the experience. Particularly for a stakeholder with a difficult problem.

So another part of our Digital Workplace model involves gathering softer, more subjective metrics like employee satisfaction – the things that really matter in making your company a sought-after place to work. Find the metrics that work for you, and make them part of your DWP model.

## Accept diverse devices, but unify their security

People working from home don't want a standard office PC on their dining table. Increasingly common is BYOD: Bring Your Own Device. So a true DWP strategy needs to enable them.

Modern cloud-based security can keep a constellation of different devices safe, even if they're used by other family members. With applications in the cloud, identification and authentication that applies to the individual user not the device, and fine-grained permissions for accessing each app and its data, you can keep control over your business's information without needing to control your users' devices. Another good thing.

With our conceptual DWP infrastructure modelled, let's move next onto how you manage it for ongoing gain.

All IT management is a dynamic process; it's why a common platform and unified security make good sense. But this need for ongoing management is also an opportunity. In this section you'll see where those chances for improvement are, as you turn your digital workplace strategy into business reality across your organization.

- Planning the route from SLA to XLA
- Empowering your Support and Service Desk
- Seeking out new automation opportunities
- Using insight from data as a management tool
- Predictive AI can fix before failure
- Patches and upgrades "over the air" at all times



## OPERATING, SUPPORTING AND IMPROVING THE DWP



### Planning the route from SLA to XLA

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) may be the basis of most IT implementations, guaranteeing things like bandwidth and application uptime. It'll always be the basis of your contracts with providers. But it's only part of your **goal**: to reach an idealized "Experience Level Agreement", demonstrating to all your users that their interactions with their work and colleagues are consistent and positive, favouring no geographical workplace over another.

Metrics for this "XLA" are substantially different to any written SLA. They're people-driven rather than service-driven, denoting how satisfied and productive people feel at work. So ask questions that inform you how well your IT infrastructure is performing for them.

Do they feel they're spending too much time setting up IT instead of using it? Do they fully support the technology choices they have, or are they semi-secretly using non-approved options because they're more useful? Do people generally report the same levels of happiness with their workplace, or are there marked differences between those in the office and those working from home? Some of the answers may not be fun to hear – but that's the point. To give all your people the same positive experience, you need to know where you're starting from.

Why do this? Because engaged people are productive people – and that's a business metric you can measure in aggregate. So make sure your plan includes a path to this destination – with exceptional focus on the people most distant from the physical HQ.



### Empowering your Support and Service Desks

Many support staff are wonderful jacks-of-all-trades, able to help anybody in the organisation. But there's a way to make their lives easier. Different groups of people in your company require different levels of support – and defining them into **support personas** offers advantages.

Any support work knows the same queries come up again and again, from the same set of job functions. And there are numerous ways to turn this into an advantage. When job role X calls in, he/she can be directed to the technician most able to help automatically. And if the same problem keeps arising time after time, that's a signal to solve it at source with a change project.

The Service Desk isn't just for solving trouble tickets – it's a great source of business improvement ideas.

In brief, a persona-based support model means each employee will always get the skills and experience he/she needs when a ticket is opened – because the persona tells Support what that job role needs most. Making support interactions smoother, faster, and cheaper over time.



## Seeking out new automation opportunities

As the DWP evolves and your processes transform, there'll be a host of opportunities to automate workflows that didn't exist previously. So make finding them a part of your ongoing operations.

One approach is to map the major processes in your business, and see where they involve human resources in predictable and repeatable actions – because those activities are ripe for automating, freeing your people for more creative tasks. With AI becoming part of the Digital Workplace, automation can go as far as you want it to.

Perhaps common service queries can be answered with a specialised chatbot rather than a human. Or patterns of tickets can be analysed, showing you where a process is at fault and needs transforming. Every trouble ticket contains valuable insight into root causes – so look for them.

## Using insight from data as a management tool

When you bring employee workflows together on a unified platform, it lets you use data for more than departmental reports. That data becomes a *strategic tool* – fuelling powerful analytics and opportunities across devices, connections, cloud services, and other infrastructure. Sometimes, a small insight can make a big difference.

Many companies use employee tracking software, but it's too often used to monitor and control rather than empower and improve. For instance, patterns of logins and work can show where people need more access to a critical app, or greater capacity in a key database, or even whether their equipment isn't right for the task.

So instead of planned companywide IT upgrades once a year, think of your IT management as a process of constantly finding out where IT needs are, and answering them.

### Predictive AI can fix before failure

Following on from this comes another role for AI. Already, in many organizations, IT bottlenecks and bugs are predicted before they happen, thanks to “red flags” in data; AI is evolving not just to see them, but to take action.

AI as a technology is still in its early days, but results are impressive and the pace of development is fast. So even if it's not part of your technology stack at present, it's worth looking into its potential for keeping your systems running smoothly.



### Patches and upgrades “over the air” at all times

The job of Endpoint Tech Support is no longer going around desks fixing issues hands-on: the buzz phrase is “Zero Touch Deployed”. Cloud services and managed platforms allow app updates and resources to be delivered to devices using whatever connection they’re using, from the office Ethernet to home broadband.

So make sure there’s a place in your plan for ongoing unified endpoint management technology, letting you orchestrate your operations from a single source. It removes a workload from both end users and support technicians – and closes gaps in your whole infrastructure that might otherwise go unplugged until a user visits the office.

Of course this list isn’t exhaustive. But it gives you an idea of the possibilities. Now for some of the outcomes they deliver.

A unified DWP benefits everyone – but not in the same way. Let's look at what our model delivers for various departmental heads ... going all the way to the top.

- The Human Resources team
- The Finance function
- The IT department
- The Corporate Suite

## Human Resources: building satisfaction, driving retention

The goal of many HR departments isn't obvious: it's to **keep you happy**. And that's not some warm-and-fuzzy dream. Happier employees are more open about their problems, less reactionary and defensive, take constructive criticism more easily. And stay with the company longer. The Digital Workplace, properly executed, can help on every measure.

Gartner Predicts 2022: Digital Workplace is Foundational for Employee Experience

“

*Digital friction caused by multiple, siloed, digital work experiences and organizational attachments to in-person styles of work have significantly contributed to employee fatigue and burnout”*

## Making communication and collaboration easier...

Combating those risks start with enabling **more meaningful communication**. Less friction in understanding situations means deeper engagement, while a sense of belonging reduces frustration and leads to a more positive experience for employees. And the ability to support working from anywhere gives HR a wider talent pool to fish in.

## ...while appealing to a diverse talent pool

Combating those risks start with enabling **more meaningful communication**. Less friction in understanding situations means deeper engagement, while a sense of belonging reduces frustration and leads to a more positive experience for employees. And the ability to support working from anywhere gives HR a wider talent pool to fish in.

## HR is the custodian of the employee experience

That's ultimately what a DWP strategy brings to HR: it enables Human Resources to act as the guarantor of a positive employee experience, by offering an integrated set of tools and applications that serve and support every job role, wherever that individual is based and whatever their personal circumstances.



### The finance function

Finance thrives on information – and a large part of any financial professional's day is involved in gathering it rather than working on it.

The data-sensing and data-driven nature of a good Digital Workplace strategy is a huge help in supplying timely, complete, and accurate (TCA) data to the right people at the right time. But according to financial professionals the benefits go much further.

“

*As clients move into the cloud, the big story is a move from CapEx to OpEx: predictable ongoing expenses rather than big upfront investments. But beyond that, there's a huge opportunity in understanding our clients' businesses in depth and building the expense model that best fit their strategy.”*

**Sereshan Gopaul**

CFO UK and Europe, Getronics

## A unified platform for data-driven decision-making

Integration is the watchword of the Digital Workplace – because from the end-user viewpoint, getting the right perspective on data from different sources and subject to different reporting standards is hard. Enterprise-wide platforms like SAP answer a different purpose to desktop apps like Office365; without integration, rekeying and duplication are common. Creating that unified view of data is the ambition of a truly Digital Workplace, with great benefits for the finance team.

## Satisfying security at all levels

Security breaches aren't just bad for data – they're bad for business. In addition to red ink on the P&L, companies are exposed to fines from regulators and lawsuits from customers. A Digital Workplace strategy treats security – from the hardened perimeter that stops bad actors attacking, to the fine-grained roles and permissions that identify and authenticate each authorised individual – ensure no company secrets get into the wrong hands, reducing risk across the board.

## Turning digital infrastructure into a strategic finance tool

But perhaps the greatest advantage of the Digital Workplace for Finance is the options it enables for the company's financial strategy. Different approaches to capital and operational expenditures can present costs in the most efficient way, making every dollar and Euro work harder; policies can change over time as the company's priorities do. With an integrated DWP approach, financial strategy and IT strategy come together.

## Empowering Finance to do what it does best

High-performing F&A has always run on good data. The Digital Workplace makes it available to the team – timely, complete, and accurate, integrating multiple applications and data sources to give a single version of the truth to everyone.





### The IT department

Making the Digital Workplace a reality may sound like a nightmare for your IT staff – but properly executed, it's more like a dream. Getronics' Stephen Homer talks about achieving this "digital dexterity":

*"Integrating a disparate set of devices and people may sound complex, but bringing them together in our DWP model actually makes it simpler to manage, upgrade, support, and improve. The key is to automate what's automatable – freeing your people for more productive tasks!"*

### Stephen Homer

Digital Workplace Portfolio Manager, Getronics

### Reducing total cost of ownership

That's why Digital Workplace embraces trends like BYOD (Bring your own device) for both office-based and remote workers: it reduces the total hardware costs of serving each user without creating risk. But that's just the start.

### ...and right-sizing everyone's IT needs

The bigger idea involves equipping everyone with what they need, without over-servicing – or (worse) underserving them. Data can tell you who needs more bandwidth or processing crunch, or when a resource is under strain, or when capacity needs dialling up to cope. The goal is to match supply with demand precisely – so the user experience stays "just right".

### Automating service tasks

Another DWP win for IT is seeing where processes are repeated or repetitive ... and automating them. There are big opportunities at the service desk (assigning common queries to a chatbot), in lifecycle management (predicting failure and obsolescence ahead of time), and optimising cost centres (by finding more efficient ways to do things).

Overall, it's a story of being able to do more with less – which means more budget freed to invest elsewhere.

### Optimising IT investments for greatest productivity

That's where a DWP approach scores for the IT team: letting them do more, with less, increasing departmental ROI as a concrete outcome. And contributing to a dependable, even enjoyable technology experience for the whole workforce.

# OUTCOMES FOR DIGITAL WORKPLACE STAKEHOLDERS

## The Corporate Suite

Perhaps the biggest benefits accrue to the C-Suite. A thousand little improvements and optimisations, in aggregate, give the organisation competitive advantage – from greater performance per worker, to happier people, to reduced compliance issues and their legal risks.



*Digital technology initiatives and a focus on the workforce are the top business priorities for 2022 to 2023. The intersection of the two – talent and technology – is what we call workforce digital dexterity.”*

## The Future of Work Trends

A Gartner Trend Insight Report (2021)

## Cost savings that add up

Lights left on for too many hours. Meeting rooms unused and unproductive. Hardware devices gathering dust in desks; square footage and parking areas at low utilisation rates. Corporate advantage starts with simple cost management – and the Digital Workplace lets the board set initiatives.

## Enabling accurate decision-making

Good decisions need good data. And the best data comes from integrated sources, with all applications connected and reporting in a way that guides insight. The Digital Workplace sees your business as its data, and makes sure that data is made meaningful.

## Surfacing strategic opportunities

Information drives insight. Ultimately, the value of the Digital Workplace to the C-Suite isn't about engaged employees, or productive IT, or strategic financing, important as these all are: it's about seeing where the business could go next ... and how to get there. The unified data, connected people, and optimised resources of an enterprise adopting a DWP strategy is the enabler.





**That's the Digital Workplace as we imagine it here at Getronics: performing, delivering, improving people's lives. And it can be yours on a surprisingly fast timescale.**

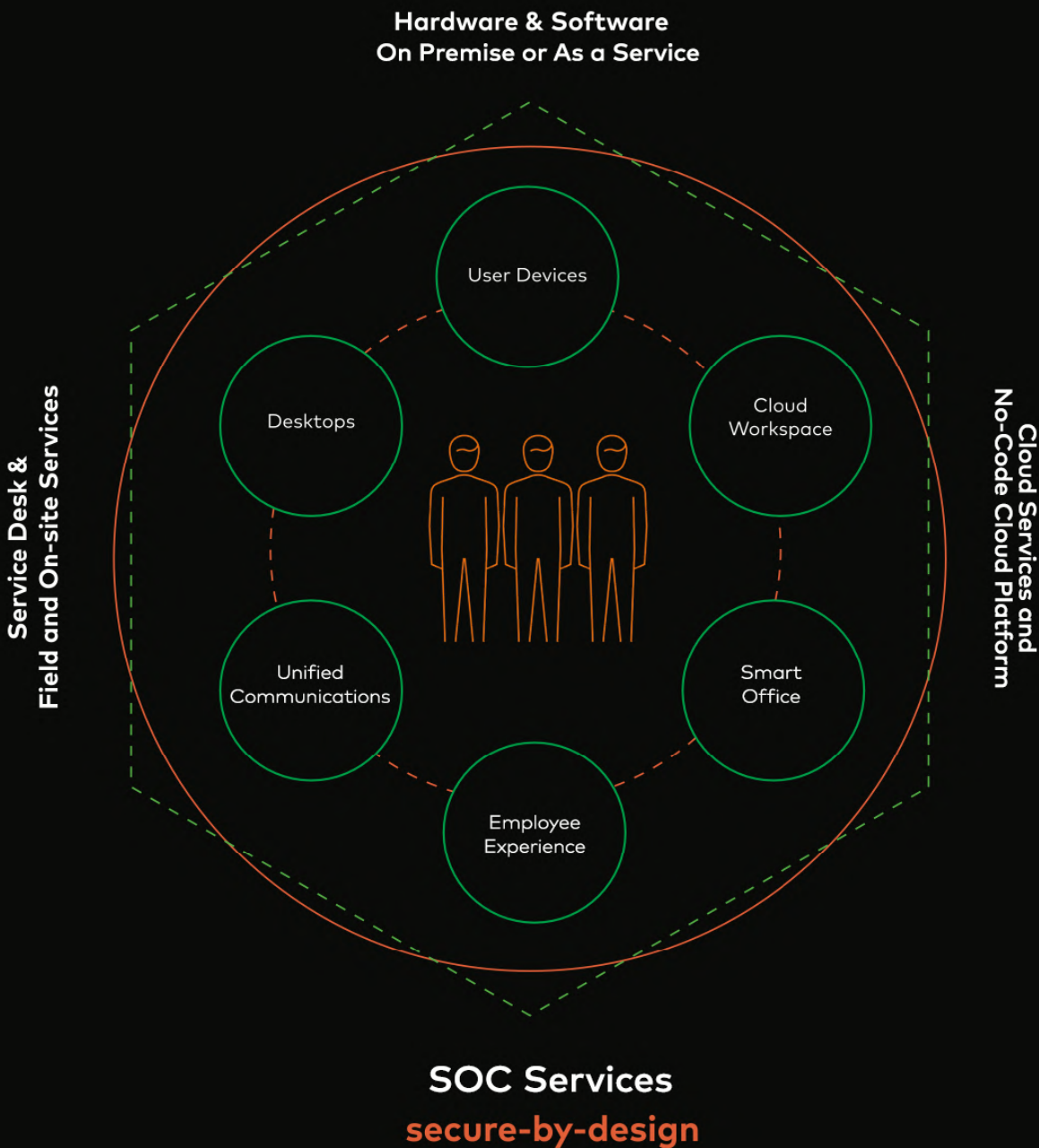
**But there's one final point we'd like to leave you with.**

So much of IT transformation in the last few years has had a dark side. As companies tried to see the DWP as simply a virtual replication of the office HQ, they forced remote workers – in all their diversity – to behave as if they were in the office, taking part in unnecessary meetings and having their work monitored in needlessly intrusive ways. Leading to “digital distraction” as people brought office practices into their homes. “Digital fatigue” as work became a series of metrics to meet, not tasks to achieve. And emotional overload, as connectivity to colleagues became harder amid a sense they had to be “always-on” 24 hours a day.

The risks were myriad: productivity plummeting, optimism fading, and an intense feeling of disconnection. With the Digital Workplace, that's changing.

The ideal DWP of today is neither office-centric nor virtual-office-centric, but human-centric, designed to empower each employee to produce his or her best work while giving them a real sense of reward and satisfaction for doing so. It's the future – and we'd like to help you get there. Contact Getronics and [talk with one of our experts](#).

PLACING THE **USER AT THE CENTER**  
OF OUR FOCUS



**Getronics recognized in the 2023 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Outsourced Digital Workplace Services**

Getronics has been recognised as one of only 17 companies selected by Gartner to be part of 2023 Magic Quadrant for Outsourced Digital Workplace Services (ODWS). [Read here](#) about our position in the Magic Quadrant and how we can help your organization succeed in the ever-evolving digital workplace landscape.