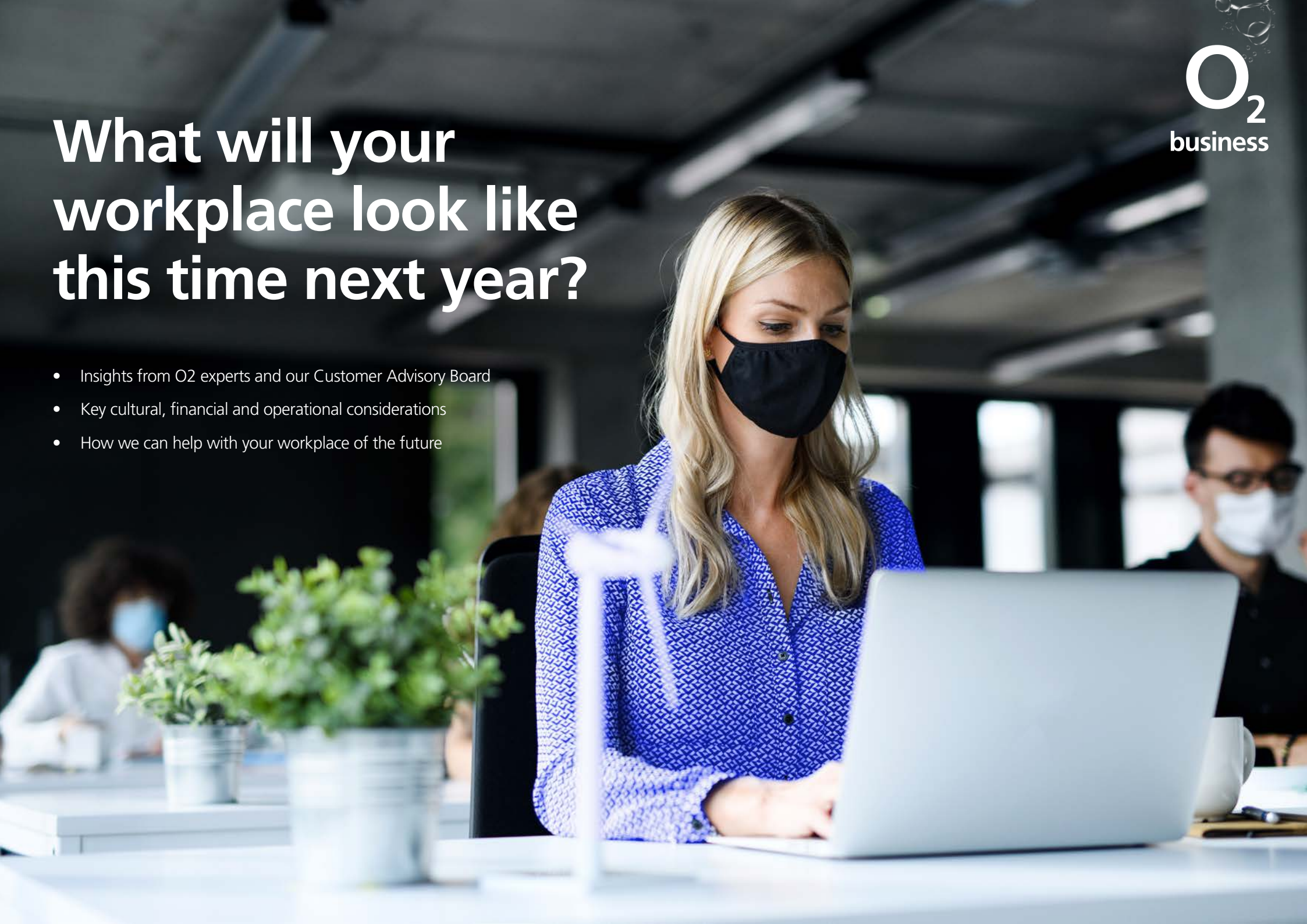


What will your workplace look like this time next year?

- Insights from O2 experts and our Customer Advisory Board
- Key cultural, financial and operational considerations
- How we can help with your workplace of the future



Contributors

No one can deny that the way we work has already undergone a rapid and fundamental change. Yet there remains plenty of uncertainty about what the future workplace might look like.

Different businesses in different sectors have different factors to consider. Yet at a fundamental level, the workplace has always been the combination of people, places and technology.

So we asked our in-house experts and Customer Advisory Board about the changes and challenges they are seeing. How the future workplace is going to take shape. And ways in which you could get there a lot faster.

What is the O₂ Customer Advisory Board?

This is a small group of senior executives from a cross-section of O2's customer base. They meet regularly to discuss business and industry issues.



What changes are affecting the workplace?

Even before the global health crisis, businesses were embracing digital transformation programmes. Yet the new business environment means many have brought forward their plans to change working practices. As the way we work continues to be affected by external factors, what will be the lasting impact on the workplace itself?

To answer this question, we've explored the three pillars of any typical working environment.





1. People

The workplace is nothing without people. Retail may be different to Construction and Construction may be different to Professional Services. Regardless of sector, it's unlikely that people will be able to co-habit workplaces as they did before.

We'll have to find new ways to collaborate 'in person'. The list will have to extend beyond video calls or shared documents. So it's likely to include hybrid spaces as well as Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality technologies that support real-time collaboration, creativity, training or customer service.

There will be more pressure from employees to avoid business travel. Even commuting. And this could change where people choose to live or extend the areas businesses can recruit from. An increase in flexible working will have a knock-on effect on work culture. Although people will still want to meet up regularly and form personal bonds as they have done in the past.

The nature of work tasks will change too. So managers will need to adopt new methods of measuring productivity. For example, AI-powered productivity tools.

Meanwhile, the time that people work could become more fluid. The whole notion of the 5-day week might even disappear. Especially as we witness a further rise in the gig economy and reliance on freelance expertise.



2. Places

The personal and cultural changes that are already underway will affect offices, sites and stores. The leap to working from anywhere will result in smaller office spaces and a growing number of collaboration hubs. These will need the flexibility to handle unpredictable peaks and troughs in demand at different times.

Consumer habits are changing too. Stores and hospitality spaces will have to adapt according to these new behaviours. Just as they have done successfully in the past.

Health & Safety monitoring will become more important than ever. Whether it's for on-site house builders or home workers, companies will be expected to protect their employees while they work. This will mean risk assessments, display screen equipment (DSE) reviews and HR policies need to adapt.

Flexible working will give employers more options to recruit from a wider pool of talent, from further afield, and even from overseas. This could see central sites closed if companies are near to the end of lease arrangements. For those that aren't, there might need to be a radical rethink about what to do with all that space.



3. Technology

Any wholesale shift away from central workplaces will mean an increasing reliance on technology and connectivity.

Across the economic spectrum, work continues to be reshaped entirely by digital capabilities. Whether that's a home worker with remote access to high performance computers, a crane operator using a VR headset or a field sales rep crunching big data on a tiny laptop.

More and more people are joining the workforce with very specific expectations of how technology should work for them. Rolling out new corporate devices. Keeping people connected. And providing secure infrastructure to protect data. None of this is static.

Businesses will have to build in flexibility. Partly so they can adapt to changing circumstances and national, regulatory or personal needs. And partly to maintain control over critical infrastructure.

There are important questions about the financial implications too:

- Can the cost savings from office rents be reinvested in home working set-ups?
- Should employees expect grants for better broadband access or new devices?
- How can businesses avoid 'paying twice' for office and home set-ups?
- Will regulatory and tax changes make things easier or harder for employers?

The big question is how will all of these changes create challenges or opportunities as you look to remodel your workplace?

Key considerations

It's never easy to predict the future. So perhaps it's better to think of what comes next in terms of the three areas where change will have the most impact on the workplace. In particular, the likely challenges and opportunities you could face.

	Cultural	Financial	Operational
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for freedom to choose work styles • Decision-making becomes less visible • Remote leadership becomes harder • Increasing meeting fatigue • Risk of less collaboration and innovation • Less opportunity to build and maintain relationships • Change in business etiquette • Increasing divide between site and home workers • WFH staff wellbeing and lack of screen breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual cost of offices and WFH provisions • Increase in security investments • Potential upskilling required • Cost of couriers to and from multiple locations • Loss of retail/hospitality revenue • Larger budget required for online collaboration • Potential allowances for WFH broadband and/or local collaboration hub memberships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data privacy issues with WFH • Decrease in IT resilience across multiple scenarios • Greater use of BYOD • Change in 'normal' working hours • Increased demands on corporate connectivity • Lack of suitable technology • Increased use of data for personnel monitoring • New policies, procedures and workflows to cover sites and WFH • Transparency in measuring productivity • Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff at home
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinvesting time previously spent commuting • Offices/stores/sites become social hubs • Opportunity to pursue other interests • More inclusive 'workplaces' • Wider pool of talent available • More time for wellbeing or innovation • Less stress, sickness and/or absenteeism • Face-to-face time more important so more gets done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New forms of supply contracts • Lower costs for facilities • Better retention of talent • Uplift in productivity through highly motivated staff • Savings in travel and expenses • Lower fixed staff costs from greater use of freelancers • Cheaper regional collaboration hubs compared to a city centre HQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better environmental credentials • Data-driven decision-making at every level • Chance to reimagine workflows • More forensic planning and management • Use of automation for tasks that are harder to complete at home • Natural upskilling of employees through adoption of digital technologies and collaboration

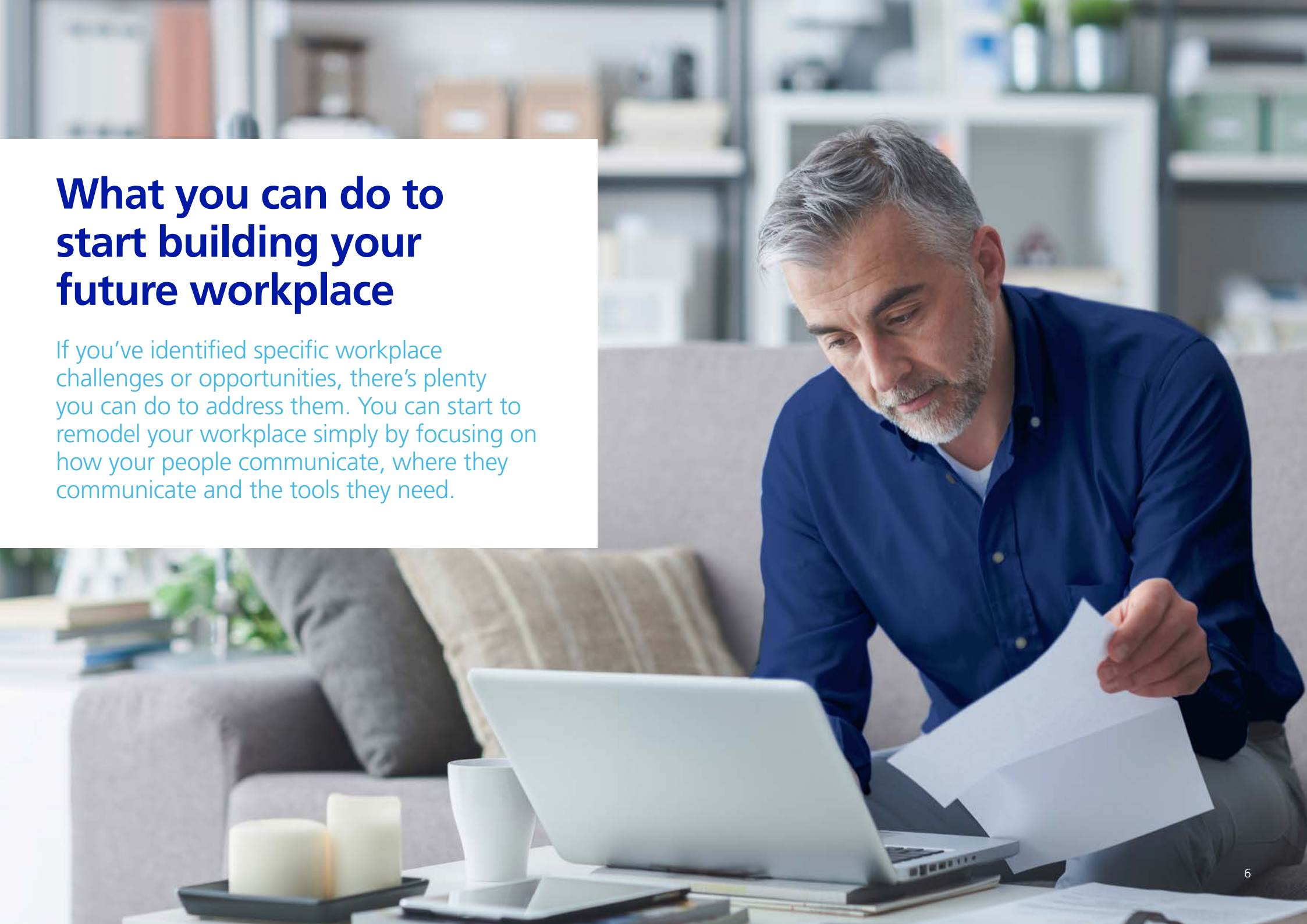
From the considerations above, clearly some will be more important to you than others

Let's explore how we can support changes to the cultural, financial or operational changes within your business to create the future workplace



What you can do to start building your future workplace

If you've identified specific workplace challenges or opportunities, there's plenty you can do to address them. You can start to remodel your workplace simply by focusing on how your people communicate, where they communicate and the tools they need.



Focus on the cultural

Personal interactions are changing. Partly due to the global situation. Partly because we've all seen that digital tools can bring us together. We may meet less frequently but those 'meetings' will become more meaningful. Meanwhile, day-to-day digital interactions can be made more sophisticated. Businesses will also need to do more to ensure compliance with health and safety for those staff who do not return to the workplace.

In other cases, managers will also need to figure out the best technologies for individuals as much as for whole teams. And see that time saved from commuting can be reinvested at work and for personal wellbeing. The same tools can also encourage people into the workforce who live in different places or would have found it hard to access the physical workplace in the past.

Perhaps the simplest way to look at these cultural challenges and opportunities is to look at the next level of impact. How will new workstyles or leadership techniques affect workplace **control**? What will changes to face-to-face interaction mean for **productivity**? And how will less time spent travelling or in a physical workplace alter people's **behaviour**?

These three elements are critical to the cultural life of your organisation. And they are three areas where O2 can provide support.



How we can help you respond

Home workers, remote workers or occasional workers need instant access to the tools they need to do their jobs. Our **Digital Workplace** solutions put the best digital and mobile tech in the hands of your people quickly and easily. So they can collaborate effectively and your business can run smoothly while taking the pressure off your IT team.

Our **Voice and Unified Comms** will provide the voice lines, conferencing and call recording required to manage a dispersed workforce more easily while remaining compliant. All underpinned by our **Connectivity solutions** to provide the trusted secure links for your business.

And with our **Workforce Management** solutions, you'll find it easier to manage staff schedules. So staff only come in when they're needed and no one's travelling unnecessarily.



Digital Workplace solutions



Voice and Unified Comms solutions



Connectivity solutions



Security solutions



Business Mobile solutions



IoT solutions



Professional Services + Data and Insights solutions

		Challenges						
		Digital Workplace solutions	Voice and Unified Comms solutions	Connectivity solutions	Security solutions	Business Mobile solutions	IoT solutions	Professional Services + Data and Insights solutions
Cultural	Control	Demand for freedom to choose work styles	●	●			●	
		Decision-making becomes less visible		●				●
		Remote leadership harder	●	●		●		●
		Increasing divide between site and home workers	●	●	●	●		
	Productivity	Risk of less collaboration and innovation	●	●	●			
		Less opportunity to build and maintain relationships	●	●	●			
	Behaviour	Change in business etiquette						
		Increasing meeting fatigue	●		●	●		
		WFH staff wellbeing and lack of screen breaks		●	●			
	Opportunities							
	Control	Less stress, sickness and/or absenteeism	●	●				
		More inclusive workplaces	●		●		●	
		Wider pool of talent available	●			●		
	Productivity	Time previously spent commuting/travelling can be reinvested	●	●	●			●
		Offices/stores/sites become social hubs	●		●		●	●
		Face-to-face time more important so more gets done			●		●	●
	Behaviour	More time for wellbeing or innovation		●				●
		Opportunity to pursue other interests	●			●		

A case in point

The Very Group

As the UK's largest integrated retailer and financial services provider, The Very Group owns the Very and Littlewoods brands. Customer experience is critical to the profitability of the business. To maintain that close connection to consumers, The Very Group needed to redefine its colleague communications. That way, its workforce could collaborate from different locations and better serve customers.

Take a look at what we did for The Very Group



Focus on the financial

Providing home working technology and paying for traditional workplace infrastructure could mean businesses pay twice. This might be a short-term problem though. It could be that real estate savings and reduced travel costs in the future more than make up for the extra kit required to keep everyone working effectively.

Investing in the tools to help people work from anywhere will support a mix of workplaces in the long-term. With office space, stores or sites being repurposed and money saved on business travel, there could be funds available to invest in further digital

transformation projects. This focus on flexibility also supports a more cost-effective way to employ experts. With secure collaboration tools and connectivity infrastructure, there is less friction when onboarding talented freelance expertise.

The financial impact of change is often measured in terms of assets or the value-add from people. Changes to premises, lower fixed costs and investments in reforming the workplace provide absolute figures. Individual productivity or retraining may be harder to attribute a number to. Yet it is helpful to differentiate these two categories.

On the one hand, it's useful to be able to see the near-term cost savings or investments required to maintain your **business or estate**. On the other hand, it's possible to attribute approximate value to a future uplift in productivity or the impact of upskilling your **people**.

These are two areas in particular, where O2 can support you on your workplace journey.



How we can help you reduce costs

People working from anywhere need tech they can rely on. Our **Digital Workplace** team can help you select the best devices, delivering them preconfigured, charged and ready to use, and apps to keep people working efficiently. Our **Managed Logistics** service makes sure everyone gets their devices quickly. It's also there if anyone's device is lost, stolen or broken so team members get a new one as soon as possible. Saving time and money that would have been wasted waiting days for a new device.

Our **Commercial & Professional** services provides the expertise to help review your digital workplace, security and infrastructure needs. If you're planning a larger-scale transformation project, **O2 Capital**¹ can help you with financing options to spread your investments in new devices, hardware, software or professional services over a period up to five years.

We'll support your strategic infrastructure investments too. Our **Connectivity** team can advise you on the fixed and mobile technologies you need to future-proof your business and make sure that you get your money's worth over the long-term.

Our **Cyber Security** team can assess your workplace for any gaps in protection. With state-of-the-art security partners from our Security Marketplace, we can pinpoint the right cyber security services and support at the right price for you.



Digital Workplace solutions



Voice and Unified Comms solutions



Connectivity solutions



Security solutions



Business Mobile solutions



IoT solutions



Professional Services + Data and Insights solutions

		Challenges						
Financial	Estate/ business	Dual cost of offices and WFH provisions	●	●	●	●	●	
		Increase in security investments				●		●
		Cost of couriers to and from multiple locations		●		●		
		Loss of retail/hospitality revenue			●		●	
	People	Upskilling required for new services like VR or AR						
		Larger budget required for online collaboration						
		Potential allowances for WFH broadband and/or local collaboration hub memberships	●	●	●			
	Opportunities							
	Estate/ business	New forms of supply contracts						
		Lower costs for facilities	●		●		●	
		Saving in travel and expenses	●	●	●	●		
		Lower fixed staff costs from greater use of freelancers						
		Cheaper regional collaboration hubs compared to a city centre HQ	●		●	●		
	People	Better retention of talent	●			●		●
		Uplift in productivity through highly motivated staff	●	●		●		●

A case in point

Slough Borough Council

Slough Borough Council (SBC) had ambitious savings targets. It needed to cut costs and increase the value for money from mobile communications. The Council clearly saw an opportunity to integrate the technologies it relied upon and develop an industry-leading IT strategy. One that would put it in a position to serve its community well for years to come.

See how we helped SBC



¹. Assets to be insured for its full replacement value and for third party liability at all times. Terms apply.

Focus on the operational

Working away from the traditional workplace has brought many operational challenges. Managing dispersed teams and different working hours. An increased reliance on non-corporate devices for collaboration. And concerns over data compliance and security.

The bandwidth of personal broadband connections will have been tested to the limits. And businesses know that employees need support for better home tech if they are to carry on working effectively and securely.

New workplace practices, workflow processes and health and safety policies will come from recent change. This provides a chance to re-evaluate how productivity is measured. This is also the point at which the business can look into its environmental impact and improve sustainability.

All of these operational factors can be defined as affecting your **core business**. Or affecting the **individual**. Both are equally important to your future state. And they are both areas where O2 can support you in your transition.



How we can help you stay productive

Today's workflows are dependent on technology. With our **Business Mobile** solutions you can make sure the right tech is in the right hands. You'll get better deals on the devices you need for your employees. Our experts can help you with the deployment and management of a large-scale rollout. And we can recycle your old devices too to help you reduce your environmental impact.

If you're looking to see how the Internet of Things could change your business, our **IoT** team can show you what's possible. They can advise you on the business case for a tailor-made IoT setup that can provide future **Data and Insights** to help you make better operational decisions in real-time.

Our **Connectivity** solutions will bring together your people, sites or machines right across the UK. Whether you need super-fast fixed lines, VPNs or LTE-M for IoT and mobile 5G. And **O2 Gateway** will bring your entire comms infrastructure together. This means just one contract and one point of contact regardless of how many sites you have.

Underpinning all this are our **Cyber Security** solutions that will keep your data moving securely between all your devices and locations. A Zero Trust approach turns security thinking on its head. Instead of assuming everything behind your firewall is secure, you assume it isn't. It means the network must verify every access request. And this security posture keeps you (and your data) safe.



Digital Workplace solutions



Voice and Unified Comms solutions



Connectivity solutions



Security solutions



Business Mobile solutions



IoT solutions



Professional Services + Data and Insights solutions

		Challenges						
Operational	Core business	Data privacy issues with WFH				●		
		Decrease in IT resilience across multiple scenarios			●	●		
		Greater use of BYOD			●	●		
		Increased demands on corporate connectivity			●			
	Individual	Change in 'normal' working hours	●			●		
		Difficulty in identifying the best technology						●
		Increased use of data for personnel monitoring			●	●	●	
		New policies, procedures and workflows to cover sites and WFH						
		Transparency in measuring productivity	●					●
		How to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff at home				●	●	●
	Opportunities							
	Core business	Better environmental credentials	●	●				
	Individual	Data-driven decision-making at every level	●					●
		Chance to reimagine workflows						
		More detailed planning and management						●
		Use of automation for tasks that are harder to complete at home	●		●			
		Natural upskilling of employees through adoption of digital technologies and collaboration	●					●

A case in point

ISS

ISS looks after the facilities for hundreds of organisations across the UK. Its people need to be able to respond quickly to a huge range of customer requests. ISS is working with O2 to make sure the right technology supports their people wherever they are working.

Find out how we supported ISS



Why O₂

Wanting teams to work better away from the office? Needing to reimagine your working environment? Or launching a new set of services built around an IoT capability? Whether your starting point is cultural factors, financial needs or operational changes, our portfolio has got you covered. With expert advice from our Professional Services team, we can help you decide what you really need. From Voice & UC to Digital Workplace to Internet of Things, our services are all built around our secure and state-of-the-art connectivity.

Click on the icons to find out more from our website

Connectivity

See how our connectivity solutions can improve productivity and support digital transformation

Cloud services

Uncover how we can help you manage secure connections to all the major public cloud platforms

Business Mobile

Find out how our approach can boost collaboration, increase security and save you time, underpinned by a flexible range of tariffs, data plans and bolt-ons

Customer engagement

Discover how our leading insights platform and business messaging services can get you that much closer to your customers

Security

Find out about our range of cyber security solutions to protect your business, your people and your data

Professional Services

Read about how our team of experts will help you make the right technology choices for today and tomorrow

Voice & UC

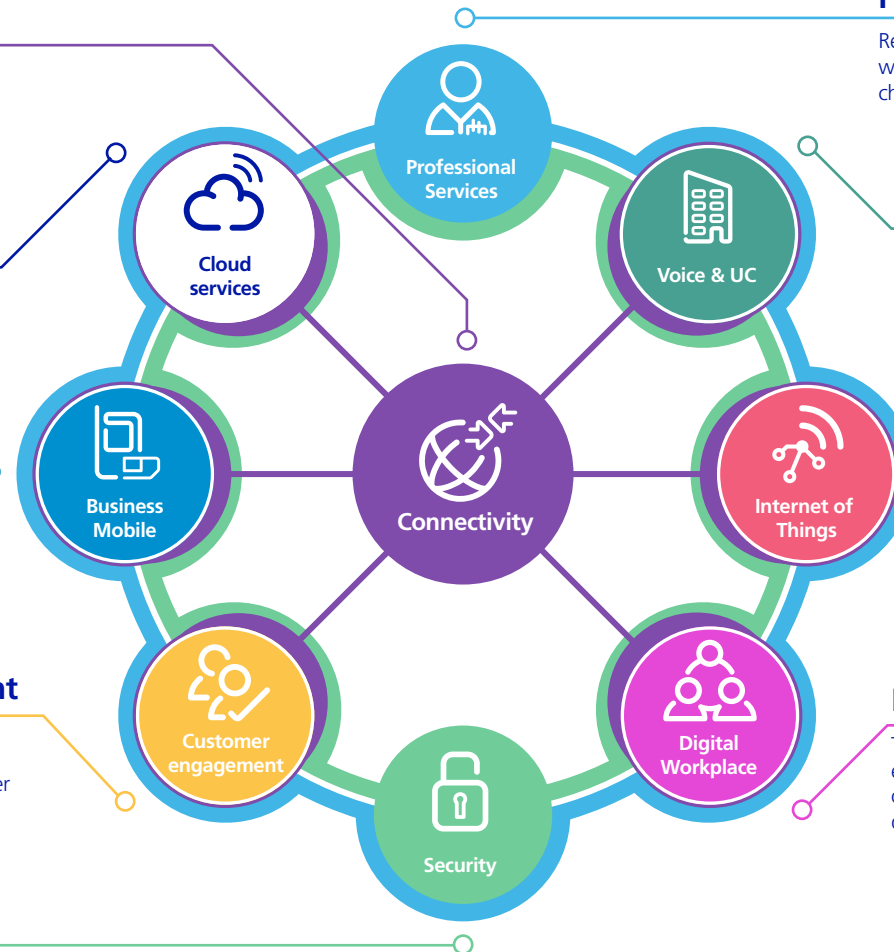
View some of the simple ways we can get your teams talking together from any device in any location

Internet of Things

Learn where our expertise can help you quickly set up and start seeing the benefits of IoT

Digital Workplace

Take a look at how you can empower employees to work anywhere, anytime on any device through a range of digital platforms, devices and apps



What next?

We can help you take action today to deliver your workplace of tomorrow. But we get that one size rarely fits all. Your business is no doubt very different to others in your sector. Let alone in any other industry. That's why we don't start by talking about us. We start by talking about you.

Talk to us

If you want to talk through anything you've read here, [email](#) our team or call us on **0800 955 5590**

Take the test

Learn more about how your workplace is on the transformation journey with our Digital Maturity Assessment [Learn more](#)

Get further insights

Take a look at our latest insights and research [Read more](#)