THE FUTURE OF WORK DEMANDS THE MOST FLEXIBLE, COLLABORATIVE AND MOBILE SOLUTIONS YET

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No matter what, 2020 was always going to be a transformative year for businesses. Analysts had predicted this year would see up to half the workforce working outside a traditional office most of the time. Meanwhile, forecasts for cloud migration showed a strong CAGR of 28.89 percent from 2020 and 2025. Our current pandemic sent many companies into digital transformation overdrive, but it didn't create these changes anew. Largely, it has catalyzed plans that were already underway and persuaded reluctant minds that digital transformation is a must.

Today, as conversations evolve from, "*how can we become remote overnight*?" to "*what does the future look like for our business*?" I'm hearing from enterprise clients that their priorities have changed from speed to longevity. They know things will not go back to how they were, and they are being more thoughtful about what compelling work looks like in the months and years ahead.

Going forward, I believe there are three qualities organizations will need to prioritize as they navigate digital transformation efforts: flexibility, collaboration and mobility.

Flexibility is now simply table stakes for businesses. This is illustrated by the massive growth in as-a-service hardware and software solutions. At a time when companies need to conserve cash but also fulfill employees' technology needs, IT solutions that are customizable, scalable and contractual are in demand.

Flexibility is also influencing the design of our physical workspaces. More and more, large companies are exploring decentralized office models. Instead of having 5,000 people in one location, they might have 10 smaller offices where employees can convene in smaller groups and have shorter commutes.

A great example of this model was a project HP just finished in which we helped convert the in-house printing capabilities of a company with hundreds of offices around the world. The workforce needed streamlined access to high-quality print services without having to go to an outside vendor. The answer was HP Roam for Business, an app-enabled, flexible fleet print solution that is now driving new revenue for the company.

Collaboration also looks different when remote working is the norm. In these past months, hallway conversations have disappeared, and our work lives have largely centered around 30- or 60-minute video conferences. One of the biggest challenges ahead for every organization, including HP, is how to drive engagement. Employees want a sense of connection, perhaps now more than ever, and leaders must determine how to enable engagement. We know, for instance, that 90 percent of respondents say printed materials make them more engaged in meetings and make it easier to collaborate, according to HP's survey of more than 2,200 adults in four major markets. Today, businesses can enable that kind of dynamic work in at-home or office settings with agile print solutions. Ultimately, we have to create hybridized digital and physical environments where people can be themselves and be open to collaboration all the time. In doing so, companies need technology that is intuitive to how people want to work, which means it has to be secure, personalized, and, of course, mobile.

Mobility is perhaps the most essential capability clients are investing in right now. The heightened considerations around social distancing have made mobility more than something that enables ease or connectivity; it is also about wellbeing. To that end, mobility has to be part of on-premise and remote IT solutions alike. Something as simple as touchless printing, where you can print from your PC, go to a printer and authenticate and release the files from your phone, is one example. Another is a project HP recently architected for a major e-commerce company that wanted to make some of its platforms more universal, easier to use and global. HP Secure Print, a cloud-native solution, allowed the company's employees to access tools securely from the Internet rather than the company's own intranet, streamlining their employee experience. Every day, we're seeing an increase in requests like this for services and solutions that function more seamlessly in the modern working world.

Ultimately, I believe flexibility, collaboration and mobility are more than characteristics of a productive and digitally mature company. These are the building blocks that companies need to invest in today in order to facilitate great ideas. These solutions are driving a revolution that was already underway—one where our personal and work lives blend and we all extend empathy to our colleagues as we navigate these unprecedented times together. Employees need simplicity so technology becomes an enabler, not a hardship. As we continue to see 2020's transformation unfold, the focus should not be on quick fixes. Customers see this as a long game, and they need the IT solutions to match.