ISG Predicts: 10 Key Trends that will radically Reshape the Future of Work

Shafqat Azim
Partner, ISG Digital
Investment in Digitalization of the Workplace has No End in Sight

COVID-19 forced companies and their workforces to transform in a matter of weeks rather than months or years – and that change momentum will continue at breakneck pace over the next three years.

- 80% of Fortune 2000 Organizations more than doubled their investments in the digitalization of their workforce interaction and collaboration capabilities.
- >60% of the Fortune 2000 Organizations have accelerated their investments in Automation and Artificial intelligence to enable their workforce.
- Executives realized that the Hybrid work environment drove their worker productivity to increase by double digits during this time despite the huge metamorphosis taking place, and that these gains are being maintained over long periods of time.
The Metaverse enters our Hybrid Workplace Planning

The metaverse allows for an **avatar-based** hybrid of virtual reality and **mixed reality environments** enabling meaningful and productive experiences for virtual training, offices, events, trade shows, and conferences.

Incumbents like Meta and Microsoft – are rapidly launching **platforms** (Horizon Workrooms & Mesh for Teams and others) to enable **metaverse-like, VR environments**.

Meta budgeted to spend **$10B** last year alone in metaverse.

Hyundai, Siemens, BMW, Chevron, Tyson, Adidas, Johns Hopkins, Mayo Clinic and 20+ other HC Delivery firms have **contracted with startups** like Zepeto and Osso VR to **build VR worlds**.

Banking firm Jeffries predicts that the metaverse will “cause the biggest disruption to human life ever seen”.

Focus on Cybersecurity and Risk Management will Rule the Day

Organizations will be forced to re-think their Cybersecurity & Risk management Strategies for a virtual world using a Cybersecurity Mesh.

- Enterprises move from massive centralized cybersecurity solutions that build a wall around the office to flexible, distributed solutions that protect information assets anywhere, anytime.


- Telemetry-based solutions that provide real-time analysis of workplace technology usage will grow to monitor application and device security and performance to predict and prevent failures at the edge.
The “Gig Workforce” will play a Big Role in New Workplace Strategies

The rising individualism underlined by a “me over we” mentality presents new challenges and opportunities for employers.

- Supplementing or replacing primary income is easier for people, thanks to tech platforms with channels and tools for turning their hobbies and talents into businesses.
- Attracting and retaining the right talent while acknowledging that employees are future-proofing against a long-term relationship with the business will be key.
- Employers will need to assess their suitability for a flexible and remote workforce by giving a booster shot of “we,” to ensure that employees understand their responsibility to—and the benefits of—the collective.
The Enterprise Job Architecture and Career Pathing Reshaped

To succeed in the new Paradigm, People development and engagement will need to take place before, during and after employment.

- CEOs who see talent as the greatest risk to their business growth, increased from 2% in 2019 to > 40% in 2022.
- HR becomes the most important support function in an enterprise from a CEO perspective
  - ~50% of F2000 CEOs expect HR to become more strategic and more data-driven.
  - ~80% expect soft skills to become more important than functional skills.
- Companies will need to attract, train and retain a diverse, loose network of highly skilled, highly adaptable employees, contractors and alumni with strong interpersonal and analytical skills.
Dealing with “Information Trust Bankruptcy” in the Workforce

As our desire for information leans on sources like social media, prolific disinformation leaves us doubting the answers we find as consumers and employees.

- Mass “Information Trust Bankruptcy” – record-low level of trust in all information, augmented by soaring fears around job security, personal safety and societal issues is clouding worker productivity.

- Since the founding of Google ~24 years ago, getting our questions answered at the touch of a button is an expectation we barely think about – at home or at work.

- To rebuild trust, enterprises will need to deploy deeper and broader information layers across the entire workforce.

- Sophisticated and ambitious conversational AI tools influencing the consumer world will enter the workplace.
Return to Office will not be the Same

Use of no-touch solutions will become the foundation of Post-Pandemic Office Design and Architecture.

- Let’s not kid ourselves – Returning to the office will be only for the select cases in which work cannot be undertaken remotely.

- No-touch solutions, such as digital way finders, hot desking and even no-touch coffee machines will become the design norm for office buildings.

- Return to work will be influenced by social distancing norms, regulations and health monitoring policies – and enabling technologies will need to ensure that this experience is not very different from virtual or remote working.
Tech Democratization will require Smarter Workplace Support and Management

Enterprises are considering “low-code/no-code” solutions as tools to help tech-savvy line-of-business (LoB) workers design and automate their processes.

Enterprise IT will need to enable such an environment by ensuring proper governance and standardization, thus supporting self-help capabilities for new citizen developers.

Workplace support personnel will require higher skills than those needed to manage traditional EUC technologies. With IT itself using such platforms to automate routine tasks, such as patch management and file operations.

Organizations will need workplace technologists who can think more strategically about device/app provisioning and security policies with changing technology democratization needs.
The Sourcing of Workplace Services will change Dramatically

Workplace Services being provisioned by enterprises will be highly business centric with each requirement linked to a clear business imperative.

- Providers will be required to deliver end-to-end digital employee experience as enterprises begin to associate business outcomes with workplace technology usage.
- Experience level agreements (XLAs) beyond app/device performance will see a substantial uptake in Provider performance management.
- All MSPs will need to move away from transactional-SLA-focused-workplace-service projects that do not involve any transformative elements for their clients.
The Re-shaping of Partner Ecosystems to account for Local Globalization

The pandemic has recentered companies on their local market, driving them more towards partnerships and collaborations Rather than traditional expansion.

Over the next few years, we will see a focus on local over global continue, driving each industry, ecosystem and community to determine the best path forward into a new way of working.

Given the shift to smaller, leaner, and more agile employee groups working with large amounts of data, companies will find value in partnering closely with competitors to deliver a unique, yet superior product or service.

Industry Alliances are becoming a natural business model (e.g., PHrMA – A Pharma companies alliance for COVID-19 vaccine development, and similar alliances within Utilities, O&G and Healthcare).
3 Things you need to do Tomorrow

1. Leadership, Leadership, Leadership – Strengthen your leadership team’s transformation skills and intellectual capacity.

2. Foster a culture of agility (being agile, not doing agile) across the organization to support future shifts.

3. Have a plan – Develop a roadmap to shift your enterprise capabilities i.e., platforms, processes and management systems, to support the future of work.
ISG (Information Services Group) (Nasdaq: III) is a leading global technology research and advisory firm. A trusted business partner to more than 800 clients, including more than 75 of the world’s top 100 enterprises, ISG is committed to helping corporations, public sector organizations, and service and technology providers achieve operational excellence and faster growth. The firm specializes in digital transformation services, including automation, cloud and data analytics; sourcing advisory; managed governance and risk services; network carrier services; strategy and operations design; change management; market intelligence and technology research and analysis. Founded in 2006, and based in Stamford, Conn., ISG employs more than 1,300 digital-ready professionals operating in more than 20 countries—a global team known for its innovative thinking, market influence, deep industry and technology expertise, and world-class research and analytical capabilities based on the industry’s most comprehensive marketplace data.