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Empowering people in a digital-first world

The future of work with
Fujitsu Work Life Shift

Contents

People first and foremost

"The relentless pace of new technology means very different ways of working lie ahead. But the focus should always be on people and what it can do for them."

Andrew Davis
Head of Global Digital Workforce Strategy
Fujitsu

For all of us, there's been an extraordinary amount of change to cope with in recent years. From the dramatic introduction of hybrid working to the meteoric rise of generative AI, all within an ever-hostile economic environment – the world of work, and our lives around it, have shifted. And there's no indication of things slowing down.

After doing a sterling job of navigating these changes, many businesses now find themselves at a crossroads. AI is no longer just a motif of science fiction, but a transformative force reshaping the workplace. And organizations are racing to uncover its potential.
But faced with an array of open-ended possibilities, most are uncertain what "good" looks like and how to proceed. It's daunting and there is, by no means, one right way to master this technology as a powerful tool for business. The only exception to that rule? The need to consider the employee experience (the people this technology will directly affect).

If the last few years have taught us anything, it's that understanding what's good for employees is good for business performance. Organizations need to strike a healthy balance in exploring the opportunities this emerging technology offers and empowering their people – ensuring they are placed at the heart of every decision. And that comes from developing a 'human-centric' approach.

In this guide, we'll discuss what a human-centric workplace looks like and how you can create one with Fujitsu 'Work Life Shift'.

Work Life Shift supports sustainable workforce transformation by reimagining how we live and work, to drive positive change for our environment, our society, and our economies.

Human-centric expertise

The acceleration of change is only set to gain momentum – along with continual, worldly complexities to contend with such as constrained resources, fiscal limitations, and general uncertainty about the future. Making it hard for organizations to arrive at strategic decisions while having to adapt at pace.

Fujitsu is always looking ahead to deliver the most relevant expertise in workplace transformation. This comes from our belief in corporate responsibility – we understand the most important aspect of any organization is its people, and we care about prioritizing them.

Our human-centric approach is why we're trusted to enable more than three million workers worldwide.

Our expert: Andrew Davis, Head of Global Digital Workforce Strategy, Fujitsu

With over 20 years' experience working with technology and a background in engineering, consultancy, and strategy, Andrew is passionate about people-first, sustainable transformation. Helping organizations create a more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable future for all through the human-centric adoption of technology.

"What's critical to understand is successful workplace transformation is only partly about the technology you employ. Really, it's about the people."

It's *still* a question of work-life balance

When hybrid working took off globally it was mainly a reactive measure, assumed to be temporary. For organizations that could offer hybrid models, they had to adapt quickly, with little time to assess the ins and outs of how it would work long term – you know, you were there.

But we've had these models in place for some time now.
And yet if you ask people to explain what hybrid working is, most will describe it as simply splitting their hours between the office and home. We believe the concept should be much bigger than that.

For employees, hybrid working has had a profound impact. From parents being able to attend school events to pet owners fitting dog walks into the working day, the flexible nature of these setups has led to a host of new expectations. Whereas once, it used to be about fitting life around work. Now, it's about making life and work fit together harmoniously.

But there's a tension in the air

More and more, we're seeing organizations reintroduce firm rules, such as mandated days in the office. At the same time, many employees want to continue working remotely or be allowed flexible hours.

Of course, there are different reasons for this exertion of control across industries. Whether it's a decision based on data sensitivity and governance or it's down to a perceived need to monitor behavior more closely – even just an attempt to boost culture. It's important not to forget that lots of people prefer the social advantage of working from an official workplace too.
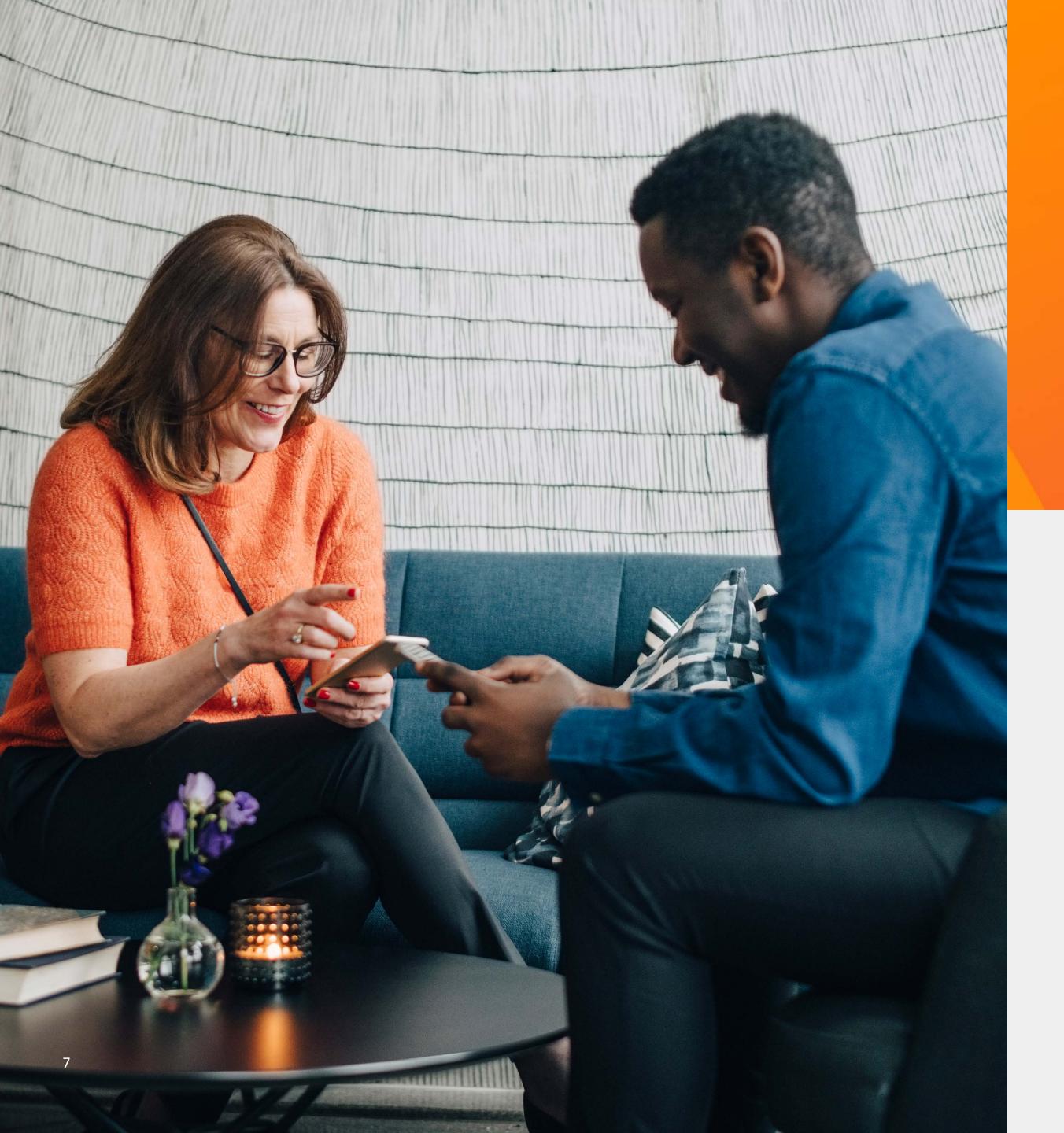
Meanwhile, there is less opportunity for employees to switch jobs or go elsewhere. In October 2023, US job openings fell to 8.7 million (a 6.6% decline) – a stark difference from 2021 during the 'Great Resignation' and recruitment period. Trends suggest more people are staying put possibly because of rising costs, sometimes in conflict with salaries.

"We're no longer living in a period of plenty but a period of constrained resources. This is putting enormous pressure on individuals as well as organizations."

Andrew Davis
Head of Global Digital Workforce Strategy
Fujitsu

It's up to every individual organization to decide what works best for their people. But the key is not to make decisions based on perceived performance alone – or dictate rules top-down without internal consultation. This risks creating high numbers of disengaged employees or 'quiet quitting', leading to significant challenges with retention, motivation, wellbeing, and more. One size fits no-one. So, the focus should be on empowering people by giving them the freedom to choose what suits them best.

Performance dividers

Without a human-centric approach, it's hard to imagine how any organization can transform successfully.

"There's been a notable shift towards focusing more on employee experience than technology, which is a good thing. But there's still a long way to go to ensure we successfully empower and enable people."

Andrew Davis
Head of Global Digital Workforce Strategy
Fujitsu

People are, without a doubt, the most important asset of any company. In an increasingly AI-enthralled world, this becomes more important than ever. Without understanding how to get the best out of your people, you're likely to face a range of issues. Let's call these performance dividers.

01 The hybrid contention

Hybrid working, as mentioned, is not just an ongoing question of physical location or use of office space. It's really about choice. As we move forward, there are likely to be big winners and losers – organizations who understand and are prepared to offer this kind of autonomous freedom, and those who can but don't.

According to Institution.com, [65% of survey respondents want to be full-time remote employees, and 81% said they would be more loyal to their employer if they had flexible work options](). That's important because soon, we're likely to be looking at a more skills-based economy and a rise in freelancing. So, long-term thinking about flexibility is essential.

If you want to hold onto your best people, keep them motivated, and attract similar talent, you need to keep up with expectations and make purpose-driven decisions that recognize unique needs – not provoke friction.

02 Costs

With uncertain economic conditions still looming, businesses have felt compelled to introduce tight resource and budget constraints. In some cases, this has left staff to cope with increased workloads. But the real cost of this is more than just financial. Employee burnout is a key issue. In the race to modernize with AI, however, many organizations are looking to technology to solve this problem. It won't in itself.

The generative AI cycle is reaching a point where savvy business owners now expect to see a quick return in value. And the novelty will soon wear off if they don't. The best way to ensure speed in value is to make your investment decisions based on how they will make users' day-to-days easier, so they can be more productive and have more time and energy to innovate. This is why employee wellbeing, productivity, and engagement must continue to be the focus, even in financially challenging times.

03 Skill gaps and uptake

No matter how useful a new piece of software potentially is – without the skills and talent to make it work in day-to-day operations, it will fail to produce any notable wins. Success depends on fundamentally adopting new ways of working.

There's already an urgent need for digital upskilling. In fact, the World Economic Forum estimates that before 2030, 23% of global jobs will change due to technology. And the introduction of new AI tools just increases that pressure if there's not a serious focus on training.

With the upcoming rush in demand for AI talent, organizations need to be mindful of not only training people up, but nurturing them to keep hold of those skills. This will help reduce the effort and cost of recruiting in the war for talent. It's also the right thing to do in terms of investing in human capital for a fairer world.

But it's not easy. A key challenge will be in getting people to change their ways of working and mindsets to gain successful uptake. This takes careful planning and hard graft – across the whole organization, not just for employees with laptops. This is why a human-centric approach is vital.

04 Sustainability concerns

In all the hype around AI, there's a risk of progress against sustainability targets slowing down. What's more, the high compute power needs of AI for data processing and model training could potentially reverse progress, but sustainability should be a key consideration when exploring any new technology. In the face of numerous, complex global crises – the world depends on everyone, including organizations, being responsible and taking action.

For Fujitsu, the definition of sustainability is much broader in scope than environmental issues. It includes addressing global societal issues too, such as cybercrime, poverty, and human rights issues. And it's a mistake to think technology can't assist progress.

People, planet, and prosperity

At Fujitsu, the future we envision is a sustainable society where no-one is left behind.

Fujitsu Uvance aims to help customers grow their businesses and solve societal issues, sustainably. We're using data to activate cross-industry collaboration that drives unimaginable approaches and insights. So, together, we can achieve carbon neutrality, develop a digital society, and improve people's wellbeing.

There's no excuse now – organizations need to demonstrate an active focus on sustainability. People, particularly younger generations, rightly expect it. Promoting flexible working to reduce travel and office space, and ensuring responsible device lifecycle management all helps as we work towards net zero carbon emissions. With the high running power that AI demands, it's even more important to look at these areas where impact can be minimized.

In addition, it's vital to improve the diversity of workforces and provide digital upskilling opportunities that allow people to flourish. This all helps you make a positive contribution to the planet and society – sustainable transformation needs to be seen as a strategy for success, not a cause of conflict, in the workplace.

Performance multipliers
(strategies for success)

Fujitsu Work Life Shift takes a human-centric approach to workplace transformation. It's built on four core pillars:

AI-powered employee   Free your workforce with AI technology

Work your way   Entrust people to choose when, where, and how to work

Employee enablement   Build a digitally dextrous workforce

Working sustainably   Leave a positive impact

"At Fujitsu, we really recommend taking a human-centric approach to implementing AI. If you take a purely technology-view, users are more likely to either fail to take up the tech, or to misuse it."

Andrew Davis
Head of Global Digital Workforce Strategy
Fujitsu

Augmenting people with technology is a vital focus for any company looking to maximize the value of AI. By freeing your workforce from mundane, repetitive tasks, you'll empower them to think, be creative, and focus on what truly matters to them (and you as an organization).

Human experience makes the real difference to changing how you deliver services, not for the sake of change – but for the sake of people. That includes everyday AI support, such as assisting with research and writing emails, as well as 'game-changing' uses.

For example, using Computer Vision from Fujitsu's Kozuchi – a suite of adaptable, end-to-end AI platforms – we have developed image recognition solutions to automate, analyze, and interpret visual data. These solutions return valuable, actionable insights – whether that's to help retailers optimize product placement through customer behavior or assist manufacturers by detecting defects on the production line.

What about concerns around generational gaps? Thanks to its conversational nature and user-friendly features, AI tools are easier to pick up than any technology that's come before it – for people of all ages. As long as employees can access training and engage in guided discussions, they'll feel integral to AI transformation and quickly realize the benefits.

Desré works at a car manufacturing plant. She struggles with a laborious and heavy workload, but her company has just introduced a gen AI-led search tool that works across the company's systems. This makes it much quicker for her to easily identify parts for specific models without having to sift through big, individual manuals. She's now got more time for creative work, and able to pursue a more dynamic career path within the organization.

Work your way

When you empower your people to work their way, giving them the autonomy and flexibility to choose when, where, and how to work, they'll be their most productive and engaged. This means your workforce gets the choice they crave, while meeting your business objectives. In other words, it's about getting your 'employee value proposition' right. So, you can promote a healthy work-life experience, with the right technology to support.

Most companies already have tools like Microsoft Teams in place to support hybrid teams. Now, it's about taking that to the next level. AI-powered digital assistants can help you make remote collaboration work all the time, across locations and time zones – without disrupting the continuity of a project. But as with all technology, the challenge comes in effective adoption. Without implementing new, asynchronous ways of working, there will always be inherent risk when introducing new tools, such as an impact on culture, disconnected workers, or reduced productivity.

Fujitsu's Human-Centric Experience Workspace (HX Workspace) helps avoid this risk through our co-design approach and modern digital workplace. Through structured workshops and targeted interviews, co-design builds a detailed understanding of the needs of your people. That way, we can tailor our modern workplace solutions to help you provide employees with the flexibility to work where, when, and however they choose. In short, it's a people-focused approach to work out which solutions will best address their needs before deployment. The long-term results? You'll have the best pick of talent, plus more productive, engaged employees to drive your organization forward.

David has family commitments and wants to work abroad for a month, so he can tend to his elderly parents overseas. His organization has found a way to make this work. By deploying HX Workspace, the business has enabled David to work in a frictionless fashion and stay in close contact with his colleagues while in a different country. As a result, he's a happy, motivated employee.

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Employee enablement

Putting the individual at the center of your new ways of working and understanding their overall experience will enable you to build a more digitally dextrous and resilient workforce.

Typically, we measure technology incidents on SLAs. If a system breaks, someone will phone the IT helpdesk. But that's only capturing part of the picture. When you use journey maps and analytics to measure the employee experience, you start to deeply understand all the other, less reported impacts on productivity. So, you can then fine-tune employees' day-to-day by focusing on those moments that matter to them and to you.

To future-proof, you need to provide your employees with a frictionless digital experience and seamless access to the support and learning they need. Then, you can make continuous learning part of your culture. Fujitsu can help you determine the right areas to measure, so you understand your employees' experience. And our experts can guide you to improve those experiences that ensure an engaged, connected, and adaptive workforce with the latest digital skills.

Jess is not a typical desk worker, but she still needs to use a range of company systems to get her work done. To help Jess, her organization has introduced Fujitsu HX Workspace to continuously monitor her experience. Using experience maps, Fujitsu experts have identified that by developing a simple, low-code solution, Jess can perform all her tasks from a single application – which she can easily access on her company device. This has increased her productivity and decreased her frustration.

Working sustainably

To succeed in making work more sustainable, we need to put humans at the center. Implementing technology to enable remote working, reducing business travel, or downsizing office space only delivers the benefits when people change their ways of working. This is where truly understanding the needs of your people lets you rethink how work gets done. And supports you reaching your ESG goals through thriving, inclusive workforces.

When reviewing processes from an environmental perspective, it's important to establish what you want to achieve. For instance, when looking to reduce carbon emissions, taking a modular approach to device refresh cycles is key. Everyone likes to receive a shiny new laptop, but extending the life of employee devices can make a real difference when your people buy into the change.

AI capabilities can also help with uncovering new, unexpected areas to promote efficiency and inclusivity. Think, HR using AI to identify and remove problematic bias terms in job descriptions. So, don't be afraid to explore the possibilities but do it with human value at the heart. It's important to check in regularly with employees, facilitate open conversations surrounding AI, and give them the ability to explore tools.

Raj is in IT. He has an objective to help reduce carbon emissions. His organization asks him to explore Analytics and AI options as part of its transformation plans. With Experience-as-a-Service from Fujitsu HX Workspace, Raj can now easily evaluate the lifetime of devices, how people are working, what applications they use, and more. The analysis via a dashboard means Raj can model new sustainability measures to understand their impact and which to prioritize first, so he can maximize the value to his organization.

The Fujitsu advantage

The world is evolving at an unprecedented pace, driven by technological innovation. Staying ahead demands a fundamental shift to a human-centric approach.

Fujitsu's immersive Co-Design workshop program accelerates your sustainable transformation. Powered by our unique Human-Centric Experience Design (HXD), we work closely with you to understand your challenges deeply and develop individual solutions to reach your goals. Always, the lens is on experience.

With Fujitsu, you'll have long-standing expertise and experience to guide you on your journey. We've been developing our human-centric approach for more than eight years. And our large R&D investments, sustainability focus, global reach, and local knowhow is here to support your business far into the future.

Work Life Shift:

Your transformation starts here

At Fujitsu, we understand workplace transformation is about people – your people.

We have the human-centric vision, experience, and expertise to guide you on your journey. Our eight global delivery centers and understanding of complex workplace environments mean we can provide the service you need wherever you are on the planet.

Let us help you create a workspace that enables your people to be their happiest, healthiest, and most productive selves. One that's as sustainable as it is technologically excellent, now and for the future.

Talk to us about your transformational goals today.

> Visit our [website](#) to learn more.

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