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Editor's Letter

Having gone through a few years of drastic change in the way we work and live, the post-pandemic period has heralded a new era of business. While nothing ever stands still of course, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, fluctuation in the world economies and political events have had a profound impact on how organisations can be successful. Every change presents challenges and opportunities, but as a business it is important to understand as well as learn from them to adapt and succeed in years to come. As a Fortune 500 solutions integrator, we work with many businesses and help them navigate change by supporting their IT transformation journey. As such, we are seeing some phenomenal technology adoption and transformation stories, and are witnessing organisations that really understand their employees, market and industry needs.

In this context, we have dedicated the latest issue of Tech Journal EMEA to the "New Era of Work" – what it looks like for companies, the opportunities it presents and the technologies that can support those new or adapted business objectives. It features an in-depth interview with EMEA President of Insight, Emma de Sousa, about her views on the "New Era of Work" and her predictions for the next 12 months, as well as views from Insight's General Managers across Europe as to how workplaces are transforming regionally. In this edition, experts discuss technologies such as Intelligent Edge and the Metaverse that have the potential to drive strategies and business success, and Angela Hughes, EMEA HR and People Leadership Director at Insight discusses the "War for Talent" and how organisations can adjust their recruitment. Insight EMEA Director of Talent, Karen Radford, looks at how the hybrid workspace set-up impacts employee career progression, and how companies can ensure the same opportunities are offered in hybrid working as in office working environments.

We hope you enjoy the read!



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If you would like to be kept up to date with the latest technology trends and digital transformation success stories of EMEA-wide companies, make sure you subscribe to the [Tech Journal here](#).

EXPLORING New Horizons with INTELLIGENT EDGE:

Strategies for Success

Intelligent edge is not just about real-time data collection. It's about reaching a new vantage point — one built on smart moves and full-scale operationalisation.

Here's how you do it.

Whether it's computer vision, predictive maintenance, or anomaly detection, it doesn't matter what form of Artificial Intelligence (AI) the business is buzzing about — without strategy and operationalisation, it can't be that intelligent of an investment. Intelligent edge is no exception. Businesses are eager to embrace it, but that can't be done thoughtfully without expanding your view and examining all your options.

So let's explore intelligent edge: how it works across the IT ecosystem, and the types of client conversations to ensure maximum ROI and lasting success.

Level set: What is the intelligent edge?

Traditionally, data gets generated, moves to a data centre or the cloud, and gets processed and finally accessed. There is lag and latency in this method. Intelligent edge brings that processing (or some part of it) right down to where that data is generated. This leads to quick data analysis and more intentional business decisions.

But to realise lasting success with intelligent edge, we need to start thinking about it across categories: Your hardware, infrastructure, software and security at the edge — and all the careful planning and orchestration required to reap its many benefits.

Six ways you'll run smarter with intelligent edge

- 1 Faster decision-making
- 2 Better visibility and transparency
- 3 More efficient workflows (through automation)
- 4 Reduced operating costs
- 5 Enhanced productivity
- 6 Increased reliability

New paths for edge devices: distributed intelligence

When you think of how to collect and [store data](#) traditionally, you might envision a data centre with big compute racks. Think bulky form factors. But your form factors don't always need to have a large footprint to embrace intelligent edge. It all depends on your business use case. You may be able to distribute your form factors, leveraging smaller hardware with an aggregation point at the edge itself, and that can have a bigger compute component.

Remember: An edge device is any piece of hardware that controls and processes the data and flow between where the data is generated and the [enterprise network](#).

It's an empowering definition, because you can still run your software on a very small device like an Intel NUC, Lenovo, HPE or Dell Gateway, all of which could run on a CPU — then take your stack and move it to a bigger compute. That compute could have dedicated GPUs, IGPU or multi-processors.

Businesses can even use their existing hardware and bring that intelligence closer to it. In manufacturing and retail, we're seeing the use of existing (not specialty) cameras doing analysis of how space is being used. You have options. It's just a matter of knowing what those options are (which many businesses today do not) and determining which works best for your use case and objectives.

Navigating edge applications

Of course, we can't look at edge devices in a vacuum. The applications that power them are equally important. Today, there are software stacks that are built with specialisation. For instance, software stacks can be given an AI model, and that stack will know exactly how to run on a GPU, an IGPU or an FPGA. The AI model can even be accelerated with a deep learning toolkit like Intel OpenVINO or NVIDIA SDKs.

This flexibility is a gamechanger. Form factors will keep changing at the edge, but you won't need to keep developing separate, "snowflake" solutions for every new hardware that comes to the forefront.

The future of work is agile — that means not having to rearchitect an entire application because of one new requirement.

The applications don't need to be complex.

Many businesses think they need machine learning or deep neural networks to thrive with intelligent edge. Not necessarily. Even an application running simple threshold-based anomaly detection is a form of intelligent edge. An application could have just 100 lines of code and run auto-threshold, alerting you if a value reaches above or below a predefined level. In this case, that application would still give you business intelligence that's actionable — and therefore valuable.

One of the most important considerations for edge applications is this: They should be extensible, not monolithic. How you build your applications for today and tomorrow is critical. Ask yourself: What use cases down the line will we be able to leverage this application and hardware for? Are we pigeonholing ourselves by only solving for today? The future of work is agile — that means not having to rearchitect an entire application because of one new requirement.

More ways to thrive — and threats to stop

Edge locations create more interconnectedness between hardware, software and applications. They also create more entry points for cybercriminals. Thinking more holistically about [security](#) has never been more important. A code can be developed securely, but how that code functions across the organisation must be seriously considered. This includes where the code executes and the data that it's using. Think of security vulnerabilities such as Log4j that can strike without warning. Without any mechanisms to update code across the edge ecosystem, business operations can be caught off guard and severely hindered.

Don't let security complexities deter you from reaping the benefits of intelligent edge. Security is complex with or without an intelligent edge. Most of the businesses we work with just need guidance to get organised and strategic with how they secure the many moving parts of their business. Security is a layered approach, and the complexity of securing your edge solution from the ground up (device to [cloud](#)) will depend largely on:

- The business use case
- The layers of security that will be required (based on the risk profile of your business outcome)
- The architecture of the solution

Making headway on computer vision

[Computer vision](#) is a base component that enables edge applications. But computer vision by itself doesn't hold a great deal of value.

Layer applications on your computer vision models that consider the operationalisation of those models.

That means being able to run multiple models simultaneously, providing different ways to alert and take actions based on the results of each model.

Success at the edge starts with a powerful mindset shift that strategy and planning is everything.

Cont.

Managing at scale makes the mission worthwhile

Operating at the edge across three locations is one thing, but what about 400 locations? What about 3,000? As businesses continue down the intelligent edge path, they will accrue multiple generations of gear in the field (spanning different form factor types with diverse use cases). A well-rounded plan for ongoing monitoring, administration and optimisation across that ecosystem ensures the intelligent edge continues to provide value back to the business. As you scale to multiple deployments across locations, a [managed endpoint](#) monitoring strategy will be key. This will ensure the workloads that are delivering business outcomes are secure and stable.

Your new way of working after your investment must be sustainable. [Managing](#) all your edge hardware, software and security at scale will give you a consistent outcome.

How to get started

Success at the edge starts with a powerful mindset shift that strategy and planning is everything. The biggest piece of advice we give businesses thinking of adopting an intelligent edge solution is this: Understand the value of solving a problem, then look for the appropriate technical solution. This helps create an investment strategy for the solution and a clear value proposition. It also helps determine the risk profile for that solution. So, what should you do first once you're ready to invest time and resources into an intelligent edge initiative?

Focus on a simple use case that could solve a business problem you're facing. Any task that's done in a repeatable way is fair game for a Minimum Viable Product (MVP).

Envisioning workshops have been invaluable for our clients in terms of pinpointing use cases, requirements and success criteria for productive pilot projects. Once you have [proof of value](#), make sure your MVP moves forward into production.

The horizon is full of opportunities. Enjoy the view.

The future of work is agile — that means not having to rearchitect an entire application because of one new requirement.

A look at what's possible

ENERGY

Power grid maintenance, pipeline optimisation, smart turbines

TRANSPORT

Roadways and intersections, mass transit, airports

RETAIL

Inventory checks, Augmented Reality (AR) fitting rooms, shopping trends

MANUFACTURING

Factory networks, plant efficiency, asset monitoring

HEALTHCARE

Medical asset tracking, temperature tracking, patient monitoring, wayfinding

CONNECTED CITIES

Smart lighting, waste management, security, public connectivity

Path to safety: Traits of strong edge security

- Alignment to a cybersecurity framework, such as [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#) (NIST) (across edge hardware, infrastructure and software)
- Well-documented policies and processes
- Exception-based security (not one-size-fits-all)
- Centralised visibility and unified controls
- Consistent end user training
- Security as business continuity (regular testing, assessment and tweaking as needed)

Start your journey

No matter what your goals are, you can build a winning intelligent edge strategy spanning hardware, software, security and beyond.

[See how we can help.](#)

END

NEW ERA of WORK

Insight | INTERVIEW

Emma de Sousa
EMEA President, Insight



The world is ever-changing. In 2000, the world had 413 million internet users¹ - last year (2021), the recorded figure was 4.9 billion.² Technology is constantly evolving, and its implementation can support business growth and impact the workplace. A recent survey from IDC revealed that 60% of executives believe “digital transformation to be their most critical growth driver in 2022”.³

The past few years have had a profound impact on the rate of innovation and change in technology – and this rapid change has affected the workplace. From hybrid to remote working, digital events and conferencing – the workplace for many organisations looks quite different to what it did a few years ago. We spoke to Emma de Sousa, President of Insight, EMEA, about her views on the changing world of business and technology and the trends over the next 12 months.

Cont.



? **How do you feel the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted business and the adoption of technology?**

I definitely think the past two years have expedited the growth of certain technologies and innovations – we can see this in the roll out of 5G connectivity, the expansion of the cloud, and the rapid momentum that immersive reality is gaining. The changing workplace during COVID-19, with the shift to remote working for many, forced businesses to trial new technologies and solutions that they may not have considered before. Many organisations are now seeing the advantages of these solutions and services and are interested in adopting them long-term. Whilst technology won't replace talent, businesses are seeing the opportunities these advanced solutions create in the post-pandemic labour shortage, enabling business operations to continue whilst searching to fill open positions. These solutions also create an opportunity for organisations to modernise and respond to increased competitive demands.

What I am hearing from our clients is signalling a clear shift in mindset - whilst companies used to invest in and adopt single tech solutions, they are now thinking more widely about the end-to-end process and investing in technology across their entire business. The pandemic has contributed greatly to this, as business operations nowadays are much more dispersed, covering a network of global employees and remote or hybrid workers. In order to enable connectivity, communication and transactions across such vast networks, wide-scale technology adoption can save time and money.

? **What do you see as the most important trends that organisations need to be aware of and implement to be successful in this new era of work?**

Every organisation is different and the needs and strategies for success are often dependent on numerous factors. I believe keeping an eye on emerging technologies is key. Solutions such as automation, IoT, AI, Intelligent Edge, Mixed Reality can transform business operations if adopted in the right way. During the Covid-19 pandemic, businesses that were ahead of the curve when it came to the implementation of new technologies were at an advantage, allowing them to react to the rapid changes in the market more quickly and on a larger scale. Those organisations that had already looked into or adopted cloud solutions, for example, would have found the sharing of data amongst employees working in different remote working/office/hybrid working setups a lot more streamlined than those that didn't.

Seeing technology as a driver for productivity and resilience is important, and businesses that digitalise and embrace that technological transformation throughout their organisation will be better prepared for future changes.

Cybersecurity is often cited as a trend, but it runs deeper than that. Security is critical consideration for organisations and should always be top of mind. The past few years, if not months, have shown that cybercrime is not slowing down. In fact, it is constantly evolving, impacting single and global markets, as well as countries. Adopting a zero-trust approach in your business, across your entire organisation and supply chain network, can help to futureproof your company. Organisations need to be prepared and cover all bases continuously to ensure they are as protected as they can be. The increase in hybrid working has definitely made this more difficult, dispersing the workforce and moving many business operations to the cloud. Geo-political unrest in one corner of the world can impact and pose a threat to your global company's security network. One employee that is not up-to-date or informed regarding security protocol can put your entire business in danger. This is why cybersecurity will remain a constant focus in the future. For me, the new era of work doesn't just mean organisations embed cybersecurity into the fabric of the business, but continuously monitor and update security processes and operations.

? **When you mention emerging technologies, which ones in particular should organisations be looking out for?**

Intelligent Edge. While traditionally data is generated, moved to a data centre in the cloud and processed there, Intelligent Edge enhances this by bringing the processing to the data generation point. Organisations can analyse data quicker, resulting in faster and more precise business decisions. This holds amazing opportunities in every industry – take healthcare for example. Intelligent Edge can support the remote monitoring of a patient's heart or lung performance – where real time data is crucial. Relying on cloud or remote data processing in this case could delay the results and therefore hinder the medical practitioner's ability to respond and aid the patient swiftly. With the Edge's possibility to give access to data's true value, workflows are shortened, and revenues can be increased based on analysis. Intelligent Edge also provides added cybersecurity protection, housing, and analysing data closer to the source, and therefore guarding confidential and sensitive information.

Automation and AI are also going to become integral to many organisations' success stories, as these solutions' enable organisations to shorten workflows and increase efficiency. The success of these technologies means focussing on using technology for the right jobs, freeing up employees' time to dedicate to more meaningful tasks. Insight recently supported a client that, as part of their inventory processes, manually inspected and scanned over 300,000 documents every month. Insight supported the company to set up an automated process using computer vision, in order to scan and file the pages automatically. This not only saved the company time and money with the manual process removed, but also reduced human error in information processing. Used correctly, automation can drive business success.

What continues to be a prevalent trend is the metaverse and mixed reality and the potential it holds for a number of industries. In healthcare, offering consultations in the metaverse could ease patient treatment and allow for quicker diagnosis; in manufacturing settings, training engineers remotely could improve operations. The metaverse signals a new 'engaging experience', the full benefits of which are still being unlocked. Companies that have their fingers on the pulse of the metaverse and mixed reality may have numerous advantages in the coming years. For example, one of our clients, Alder Hey Children's Hospital, is utilising Microsoft's HoloLens 2 in conjunction with Remote Work Assist to provide remote medical training and enhance patient care. The mixed reality allows medical trainees to observe cutting edge clinical procedures without having to be in the operating theatre – reducing the number of staff in operating theatres or on ward rounds, and therefore limiting the risk of infection and increasing efficiency for patients and staff. Hospital staff and colleagues are also able to consult with one another without needing to be physically in the same room, allowing for professional exchange and allowing expert opinions to be shared without constraints of geography.

? **If emerging technologies can be a differentiator for business, what role do you see technology playing in the new era of work?**

The pandemic has proven that technology can be a huge asset to an organisation when implemented correctly – offering flexibility and consistency to businesses in times of great change. Having gone through such an intense period of completely changing how companies operate, sometimes within weeks, a lot of organisations have come out the other side more flexible, and also open to new possibilities. Technology can serve not just as a tool to protect your organisation and add flexibility to your operations, but also contribute to streamlining practices and ensuring growth.

We work with businesses that are digitally transforming their operations, meaning they are not only able to simplify supply chains and track success better, but also communicate much faster on a wider scale, share data securely and collaborate on projects. I see technology as continuing to play an integral role and look forward to supporting many more organisations in embracing the solutions that will help accelerate their digital transformation journey. **END**

1. <https://ourworldindata.org/internet>

2. <https://www.statista.com/topics/1145/internet-usage-worldwide/#dossierKeyfigures>

3. <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/library/pulse-survey/executive-views-2022.html>

Read on for more interviews with Insight's General Managers ...

Thomas Kuehlewein
General Manager DACH



? What does the new era of work look like in your region (particularly after the global events in the last two years)?

Working from home has become an obvious requirement for everyone. During the pandemic we rethought our working environment and culture of collaboration. We decided to close offices and worked out a modern home office policy with our German workers council. Our new trust based working model has been very well received by our teammates and we will transition to a modern hybrid working model in our remaining office in Raunheim as well. Post pandemic, our goal is to share our insights with our customers and partners to help providing even a better working environment than before the pandemic.

? What are the challenges in your region to this new era of work?

Socialising and wellbeing are clear challenges in this new area of hybrid work. It is very important to foster events and meetings so that teammates get together to spend personal time on the job as well as on private matters. As an employer we are obligated to care even more about the mental health and wellbeing of our teammates. Therefore, we initiated as so called "Wellbee" team working on continuous offers for our teammates to support their health, happiness, and productivity.

? What are the opportunities in your region to this new era of work?

The opportunity for our customers is to get consulted by individuals that have gone through the transition to a hybrid working environment. Therefore, we can help our customers not only with the technical and secure solutions needed but also with our experience to transform a working culture. For ourselves we can offer our teammates much more flexibility that enables them to better manage their work-live balance.

Our teammates get the opportunity to take over more ownership how to organise their priorities. Our modern hybrid working culture is attracting more talents.

? What impact has technology had in your region and how does this look going forward?

Technology has been the easy part to the new area of work. The question is how to put the pieces together and how to manage the change of how we will work together. Interestingly we have seen massive growth in selling devices. Next to security services and enabling hybrid meeting environments, the need for adoption & change management services has gone up and we see a massive demand for our device as a service offerings. Next to cloud we see our product business and warehouse services further growing. **END**

Read on for more interviews with Insight's General Managers ...

Pietro MarrazzoGeneral Manager
Southern Europe

? What does the new era of work look like in your region of Italy & Spain (particularly after the global events in the last two years)?

The new era of work in Italy looks like it will be a period of great change and upheaval. The country has been hit hard by the global economic crisis, and the last two years have seen a number of major political and social events that are likely to have a significant impact on the way Italians work. There is a lot of uncertainty about what the future will hold, but there are some clear trends that are already emerging. One of the most significant is the rise of the gig economy, which is giving more people the opportunity to work flexibly and independently. This is likely to continue, and it will have a major impact on the way businesses operate.

For Spain, there has also been some profound change over the last years to shape the new era of work. The health situation has accelerated the changes that had already begun previously, unleashing a far-reaching technological and social revolution. The role that IT departments play in companies is growing more and more, acting as the engine and rudder of innovation. It would be correct to say that any business is an IT business.

Another trend that is likely to continue in Italy and Spain is the move towards more remote working. With technology making it easier to stay connected, more and more people are likely to work from home or from co-working spaces. The last two years have also seen a rise in the number of people working freelance or on a self-employed basis. This is likely to continue, as more people look for ways to escape the traditional 9-5 work model. All of these trends are likely to have a major impact on the region's economy and the way people work.

? What are the challenges in your region to this new era of work?

The challenges in our region to this new era of work are:

- Ensuring that our workforce is skilled and knowledgeable enough to take advantage of new opportunities.
- Encouraging our businesses to embrace new technologies and processes.
- Supporting our workers through this transition period.
- Ensuring that employees have the appropriate equipment and resources to work remotely.
- Ensuring that all data and communication systems are secure and accessible.
- Responding quickly and effectively to any security incidents that occur.

? What are the opportunities in your region to this new era of work?

The opportunities in my region are vast. With the rise of the internet and technology, there are a plethora of opportunities for those who are willing to work hard and learn new skills. One opportunity is that our region has a large number of people who are unemployed or underemployed. This means that there is a large pool of potential workers who could be hired to do many of the new jobs that will be created in this new era of work.

There are many online and offline businesses that are looking for employees who can work remotely, which opens up a whole new world of possibilities for those who want to work from home.

Additionally, companies can attract and hire people all over the world thanks the hybrid working approach.

? What impact has technology had in your region and how does this look going forward?

Technology has had a profound impact on my region. It has changed the way we communicate, the way we work, and the way we live. It has also had a huge impact on the economy, making it possible for businesses to operate more efficiently and to reach new markets.

Looking forward, I believe that technology will continue to have a major impact on our region. It will help us to communicate more effectively, to work more efficiently, and to live more sustainably. **END**

Read on for more interviews with Insight's General Managers ...

Rogier StolkGeneral Manager
Northern Europe

? What does the new era of work look like in your region (particularly after the global events in the last two years)?

The past two years have taught us that looking after ourselves and others is key to our welfare. The world is a better place if we keep an eye on each other and protect one others interest. The notable consequence of the pandemic is the change in behavior. We are maintaining our distance and keeping each other in mind. We know and have learned that it's in our own interest to consider other people's interest, and this principle has proved its value.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place in the Netherlands has compelled employers and employees to adopt a new vision for work, such as working from home. Homeworking impacts the traditional office environment, and the implications for workers and companies, and that's no different in other countries. However, a lot of workers in the Netherlands already benefited from our country's great flexible work culture. Over 14% of the Netherlands' workforce was already used to working away from the office, before the pandemic. The Netherlands has long led the global shift toward remote work.

The advantages of our flexible work culture led also to new developments in the hybrid working space. Not only the adoption of new technology to remotely communicate and work together, but also in terms of policies. A lot of employers offer their employees a budget to create a comfortable and productive home working set up, and help to arrange coworking spaces if needed. Besides that, in the Netherlands we are fortunate enough to be a country where 98% of homes have high-speed internet access, with the right combination of technology, culture, and approach to make remote working successful.

We learned that hybrid working is the way forward in which we can benefit from talent across countries and continents and that borders do not exist anymore.

? What are the challenges in your region to this new era of work?

Now that we know that hybrid have expanded dramatically during the pandemic, the legal framework regulating them in the Netherlands has lagged behind and employers may need to fill the gap with their own policies. Dutch law does not yet have many rules regarding remote working.

Hybrid working is also a crucial employment condition after COVID-19. One in three Dutch workers says they would change jobs if their employer required them to go back to the office full-time. 85% of employees also do not want the boss to stipulate the days on which they have to come to the office; they want to decide that for themselves.

We can state that we lack the physical interaction with each other if we are not balancing the new era of work in the correct way. So, it's imperative to drive and continuously reinforce as leadership the importance of the human touch by physically interacting with teammates. So as an employer we do have a responsibility to encourage employees to return to the office. Otherwise, how do we make sure we are inclusive, how do we make everyone feel part of the team when only part of the team is together during the week? How can you grow and learn from other teammates in a hybrid setting? These are good topics to consider and think about. It will be a constant challenge to strengthen and sustain team cohesion in hybrid working models. Leaders will need to foster and nurture the team cohesion when people are working in multiple places.

? What are the opportunities in your region to this new era of work?

Now we have the opportunity to rethink the workplace and the organisational culture: better work-life balance, less commute stress, better carbon footprint, location independence. Next to that, it seems that if employers will not offer the option of hybrid working in the future, this might lead to less employee engagement, lower well-being, and more outflow of team members.

Hybrid working in combination with new technology enables us to co-create across countries and continents. Teammates can work from where they reside the best which opens new insights and creates new connections in our brains which leads to creativity and consequently better business outcomes.

In the Netherlands we truly welcome foreign talent. Being able to work in a hybrid model, it's a great opportunity to attract and keep these talents working within our economy.

Hybrid meetings are increasingly facilitated in the Netherlands. We see that companies rapidly trying to get the right technology and spaces in place to make this possible.

? What impact has technology had in your region and how does this look going forward?

Technology not only changed the way we work, but also the way we live, communicate, and entertain ourselves. Technology has completely transformed our world. It made our lives easier and more efficient. A lot of industries, like manufacturing, healthcare and finance, have grown through embracing technology, it created even new sub industries like Fintech. In the Netherlands we have a real good climate for Startups. We are in the top of the European Digital Startup scale over all the indicators required from a policy standpoint for improving and developing ecosystems for entrepreneurs. This is very beneficial for digital innovation and our economy.

Now and in the near future, Artificial intelligence and machine learning will play a leading role in influencing digital transformation and operational efficiency. To meet evolving customer needs and accelerate digital transformation, more industries will start leveraging AI. IT will also create even more actionable data to create a safer world. Other developments like the metaverse can also become a huge contributing factor for the growth of the virtual economy. **END**

Read on for more interviews with Insight's General Managers ...

Richard Ramos
General Manager France



? **What does the new era of work look like in your region (particularly after the global events in the last two years)?**

The pandemic has challenged many elements of our daily lives. It has made us reconsider our habits, routines, and values, both in our personal and professional lives.

France tends to be an extremely centralised country economically, and in France we have seen a large movement of families to the countryside over the past years. In this movement, a lot of companies that have not been able to provide their employees with flexible working conditions have seen them leave in favour of organisations that allow them to work remotely with proven technologies.

On the flipside, where employability and possibilities have been extended for employees, companies that could usually only recruit locally have in turn been able to extend their search to the national territory.

Despite all these upheavals, the social link remains essential in France and within all companies. It is up to organisations to cultivate and develop the associated resources.

? **What are the opportunities in your region to this new era of work?**

Most challenges encountered are also opportunities. Companies must therefore expand their recruitment and look for talent and profiles that would not necessarily have been expected in the pre-COVID-19 period, and that fit the changing world and the new opportunities companies face. Another opportunity can be found in elevating and improving the workplace through the right technology and training, and equipping employees with the right tools.. In the end, its about being innovative inside an organisation as well as externally.

? **What are the challenges in your region to this new era of work?**

- Communicating a company's shared objectives clearly and regularly.
- Rethinking modern work and company organisation
- Reconstructing the corporate culture by focussing on training managers in new performance management styles.
- Being innovative in recruiting talent.
- Training and equipping employees to be effective and dedicated to their employers.
- Rethinking the notion of physical offices that are now too big and too empty.

? **What impact has technology had in your region and how does this look going forward?**

A government scheme, supported through loans, has helped companies manage the transition into the new era of work. Also, technologies such as Teams have changed the way we live and the companies that have been quick to equip themselves over the past two years have been the most successful.

The future of technology remains the cornerstone of the country's economy and we are already seeing solutions like the metaverse being developed in many future projects.

The French and European market cannot develop without technology. They are vital for all organisations and all markets in terms of collaboration, development, security and permanent innovation

In conclusion, technologies offer a breath of fresh air for national and international collaboration. **END**

THE WAR FOR TALENT: WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY WE HIRE

The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing Great Resignation have helped contribute to this shift of mindset on both sides, causing significant ramifications when it comes to available talent and as such, placing further pressure on organisations. While it was mainly professionals aged between 20 and 30 leaving jobs at the start of the pandemic, this pattern is shifting. According to people analytics provider Visier's "Stop the Exit" report, which considers resignation rate percentage increase by age group, while the 20-25 year age group still has the highest resignation numbers, older age groups are joining the trend.¹ In fact, the rate of increase for age groups that are typically slower to change has increased at a significant rate, with resignations rates for employees aged between 30 and 50 climbing by over 38%.² Reasons as to why perhaps people in the latter age group are leaving their positions are numerous: changes in priorities, early retirement, better opportunities, mental health reasons, looking for more flexible work set ups, and so on. But I think it's more than that. The pandemic has had a profound effect on how people feel about life and work. While organisations continue to find their feet after two years of pandemic life, the working from home set-up, furlough and isolation have undoubtedly disrupted society, causing a marked change in mindset. But many organisations have not prepared for this and simply proceeded with their operations, culture, and recruitment

processes as before. In a time where the market is candidate-driven and many companies are eagerly looking for skilled candidates to fill their many vacancies, organisations need to change the way they hire in order to attract talent.

Understanding the shift in priorities and changing expectations of employees is key for organisations to succeed in the hiring game, in my opinion. To stand out from the crowd, you need to know what attracts modern jobseekers – and tailor your job search around this. According to Flexjobs 10th Annual Survey, 58% of those surveyed said they want a fully remote job, and a further 39% of respondents would seek hybrid arrangements.³ These findings highlight that employee mindsets have changed. Whereas five years ago the request to work from home permanently or in a hybrid set up would have been rare, it is now seen as a requirement, rather than a nice to have. Yet, according to a survey by Timewise, only 26% of job ads highlight the offer of flexible working in the UK.⁴ This means three out of four jobs that are advertised do not include flexible working offers. If offering flexible work is a possibility, then I think organisations are missing a trick and could be appealing to a far wider group of talent. At Insight, we implemented flexible working opportunities quite some time before the Covid-19 pandemic. This was based on employee feedback and the fact that



Written by

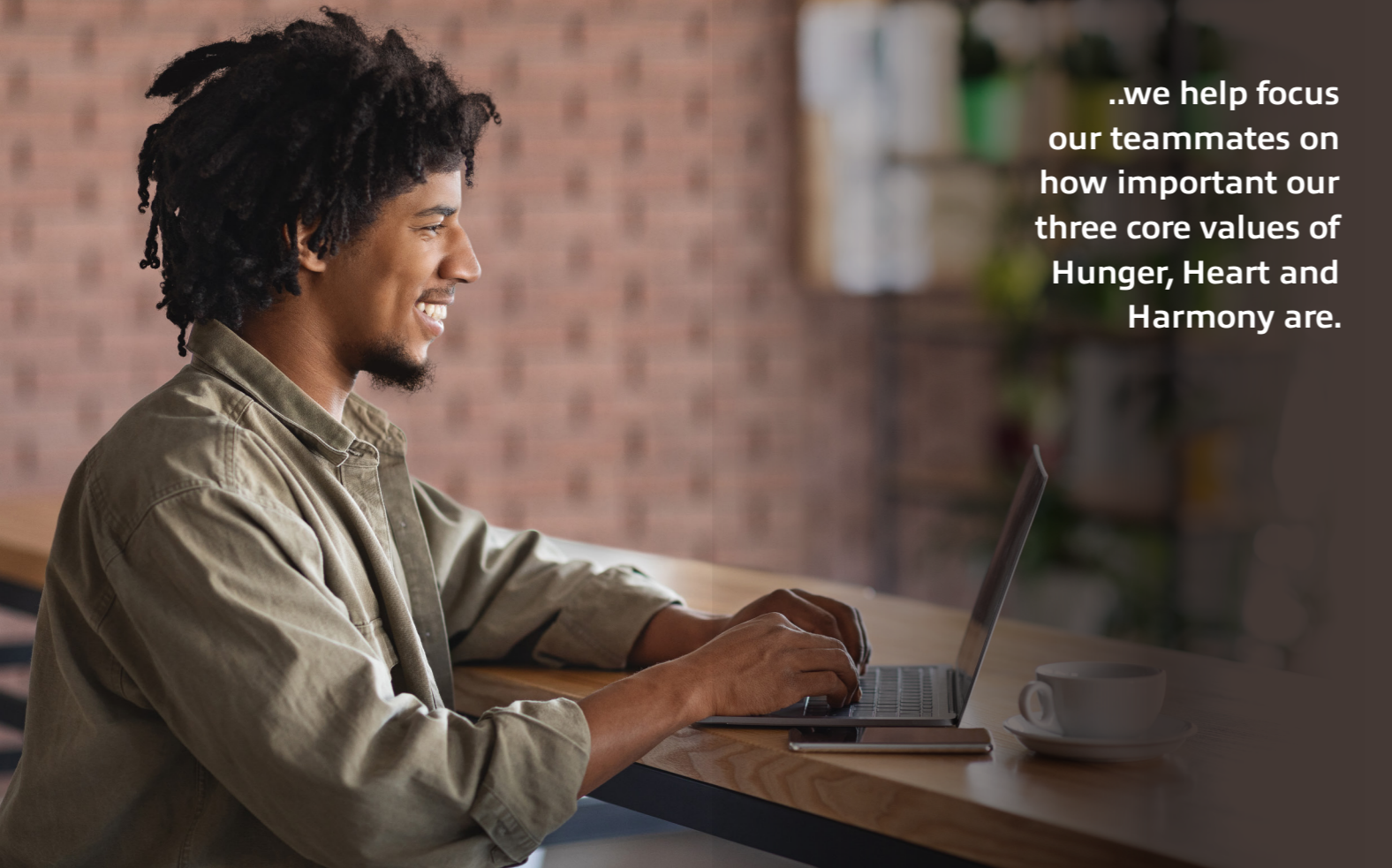
Angela Hughes
EMEA Vice President -
Human Resources, Insight

For decades, organisations have been trying to win the "hiring game" – finding the right people for their organisation. This is by no means an easy feat, as it requires not only finding candidates with the right skills and capabilities to perform the job, but also the right attitude and mindset to develop further and reach their potential. It has been argued that in the current climate, organisations need just as much luck as competent recruiters and recruitment strategies in order to find that 'perfect candidate'. However, I'm of the view that what businesses have previously defined at the 'right hire' has adapted and changed, as have the expectations of candidates, who now have different priorities when it comes to selecting their 'ideal' next role.

Understanding the shift in priorities and changing expectations of employees is key for organisations to succeed in the hiring game, in my opinion.



Cont.



..we help focus our teammates on how important our three core values of Hunger, Heart and Harmony are.

huge success and attracted a plethora of applicants, who, not only have transferable skills, but all share the same determination to succeed in a new field.

Concentrating on creating a culture that employees feel valued in can also aid in attracting individuals with a similar mindset, bind employees to an organisation, and potentially increase talent retention in the long run. Insight was awarded Best Workplace in EMEA 2021 by Great Places to Work®. I consider the reason for this, and our greatest asset, to be our people, who in turn have helped to create a fantastic company culture – which is a major selling point for new and existing talent. We have created platforms for employees to give feedback, which allows us an organisation to make changes and help keep employee satisfaction high. At a time where individuals are shifting their focus from high-powered careers to more flexible, productive, and balanced lifestyles, an organisation’s culture can be that winning factor – and one companies need to advertise if they have it.

A global McKinsey executive survey highlighted that 7% of executives do not believe their companies can retain highly talented people.⁸ It is imperative organisations address this. At Insight, we place a lot of emphasis on development and support. We recognise that people need to feel they are growing both professionally and personally, and we have

focused our leadership goals and development programmes on just that. Teammates are empowered to own their own development, and we focus on inspiring and investing in them to make those goals a reality. We’ve also put extra focus into the outcomes of our values, and right from interview stage, we help focus our teammates on how important our three core values of Hunger, Heart and Harmony are. We have found this extra sense of focus and purpose really helps people to feel a part of something, and that in turn feeds our award-winning culture. Our average retention of teammates in the UK is almost seven years, and the feedback we receive overwhelmingly states that the number one reason they choose to stay is the culture of the business and the people who make it happen.

The war for talent is real and many are losing the game. While no one appears to have a winning formula, after all, skilled workers are still scarce and job openings continue to grow, it could be worth reassessing how we search for talent, how we look after existing employees and the culture the organisation has cultivated. Whilst we can’t all be winners in a talent war, the time has come for organisations to modernise and overhaul the way in which they hire and seek to retain staff.

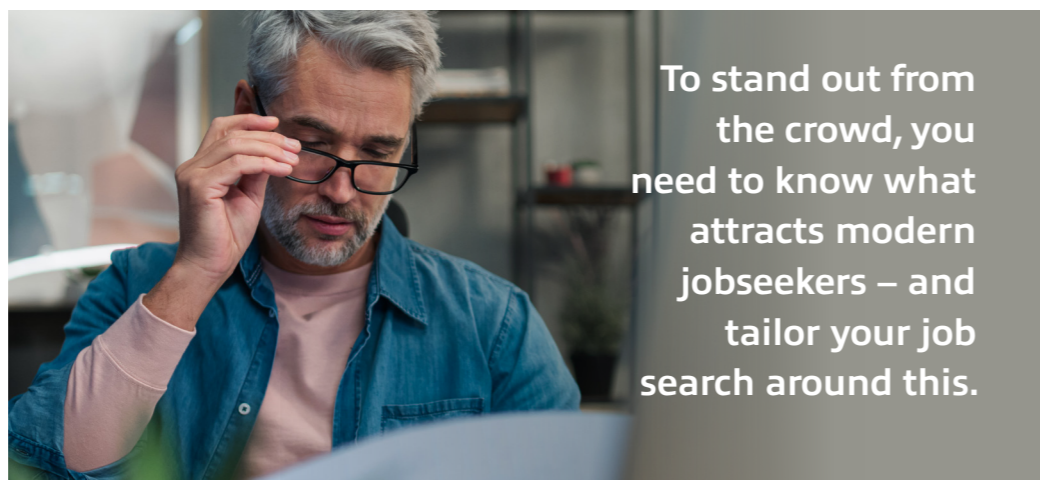
we work in an industry where this is possible. Reducing the number of hours spent commuting, having more flexibility when it comes to parenting duties such as helping kids with their homework and doing the school runs, and creating an environment where the demands of work and life can be balanced, are key to why many of our employees have taken to hybrid working. The working-from-home COVID-19 lockdown period has shown many the advantages of working more flexibly – and the demand is now growing from the employee side.

The pandemic also laid bare the value of skilled workers, particularly when it comes to digital skills, which have become essential in our increasingly technological world. When Fortune, together with Deloitte, surveyed a pool of CEOs from global organisations, they found that 73% of CEOs agreed that the principal threat to their 2022 business strategy would arise from shortage of skills and labour.⁵

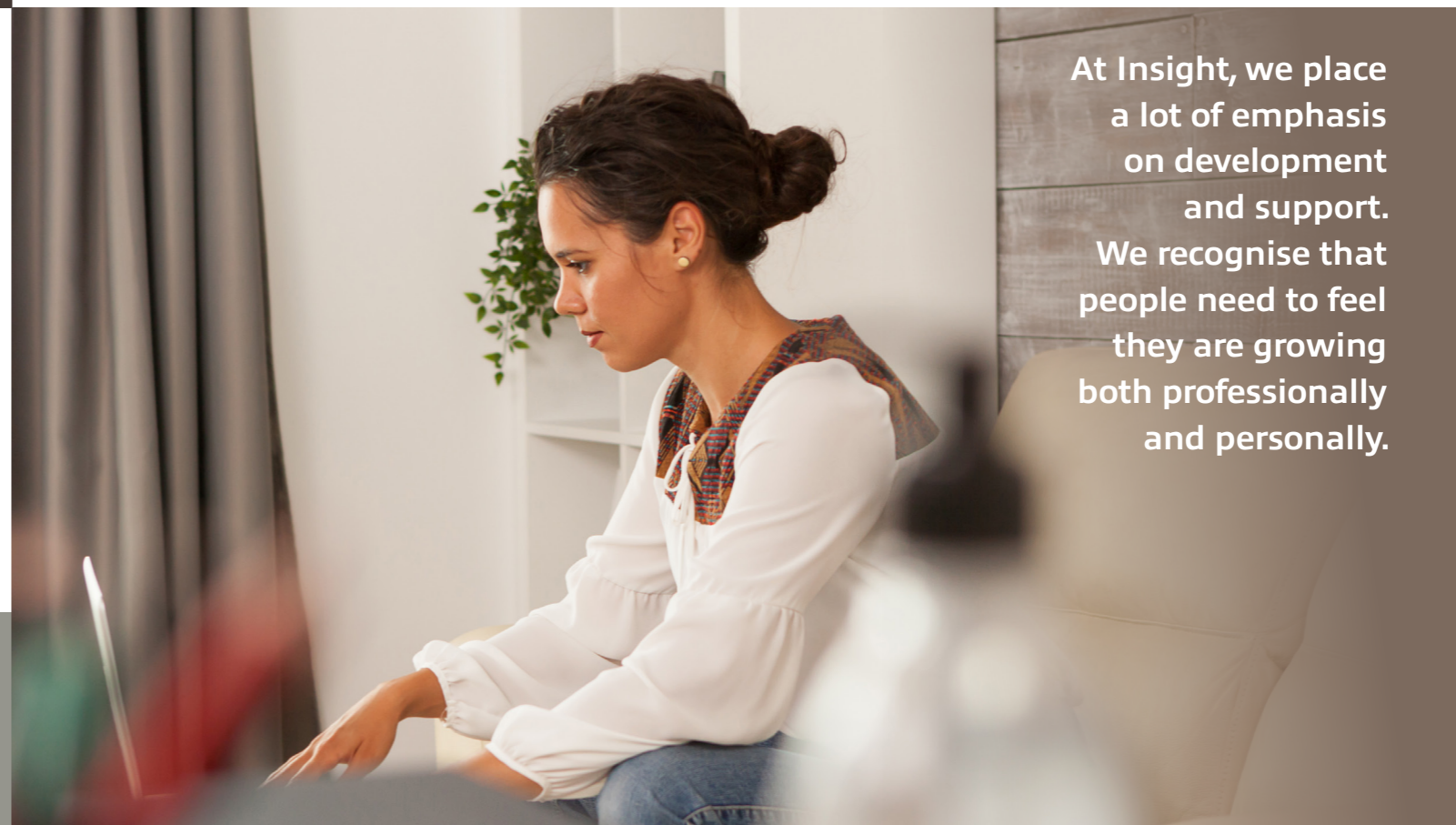
“Looking for skills and competencies” was the number one priority for HR leaders hiring in 2022 according to GartnerHR survey⁶, and similarly, LinkedIn reported a yearly 21% increase in job postings advertising skills and responsibilities instead of qualifications over the last year in the US.⁷ In the technology sector, the lack of available skilled workers looking for a specific job is causing a serious skills gap. This places further pressure on businesses, with companies needing workers with the right skills to lead and continue with

the rapid digital transformation adopted by organisations during and post the Covid-19 pandemic. Businesses could therefore consider moving to a transferrable skills-based model of hiring, where there is opportunity to be had. This is not just true for the employer, but also the jobseeker, who may have been dissuaded from applying if they felt they didn’t have the relevant qualifications or job experience in that field.

By recognising that there is a wider skills shortage, but also understanding the opportunity to be had in this area, companies will need to provide investment, training and development opportunities across a wide spectrum of areas. We have sought to address this as an organisation with the launch of Insight’s Skills Academy, a 24-month programme designed to entice individuals with no background in IT and provide them with the chance to start a career in the technology industry. Insight’s Skills Academy has proven a



To stand out from the crowd, you need to know what attracts modern jobseekers – and tailor your job search around this.



At Insight, we place a lot of emphasis on development and support. We recognise that people need to feel they are growing both professionally and personally.

1. Visier Report: Stop the Exit
2. Visier Report: Stop the Exit
3. <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/workers-quit-employers-revoke-remote-work/>
4. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/flexible-jobs-index/>
5. <https://www2.deloitte.com/ro/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/studiu-deloitte-fortune-companiile-sunt-mai-ingrijorate-de-deficitul-de-fora-de-munca-decat-de-pandemie-in-urmatorul-an.html>

6. <https://emtemp.gcom.cloud/ngw/globalassets/en/human-resources/documents/trends/top-priorities-for-hr-leaders-2022.pdf>
7. <https://hbr.org/2021/06/you-need-a-skills-based-approach-to-hiring-and-developing-talent>
8. “McKinsey Global Survey: War for talent 2000,” <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/attracting-and-retaining-the-right-talent>

END

IT'S TIME

To transfer those skills

Be ambitious

If you're looking to take your first step into tech - Insight's Skills Academy can help. This two year programme is more than just a course. It's more than just a job. It's the start of a career.

[Insight's Skills Academy](#)

Insight 

Career Progression in a Hybrid Workplace

When it comes to promotion is it a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'?



Written by

Karen Radford
Insight EMEA Director
of Talent

Can you progress your career from home? Insight's EMEA Director of Talent, Karen Radford, explores what organisations need to do to address the challenges of career progression in a remote or hybrid work environment.

Cont.

Organisations really only grow and prosper when talented employees are encouraged to progress their careers within the business. In a highly competitive recruitment environment, it makes perfect sense to look for the next generation of both senior leaders and employees wanting to upskill and grow in a new direction within the current workforce. That should be great news for hard-working employees who are keen to grow, as career progression comes in many forms and is not always a vertical pathway.

As remote and hybrid working has become the norm for millions of Europeans, does it present a barrier to career progression? Does remote/hybrid working make an employee invisible? Absolutely not. After all, a manager would be quick to identify an underperforming remote worker. There is a joint responsibility between the employer and the employee to ensure that people do not feel invisible. If they do, they are increasingly likely to progress their career by joining another company at a higher level.

One of the major lessons to come out of the remote/hybrid/flexible working shift has been the growing sense of

autonomy that people have over their work environment – and their careers. While some organisations across Europe may be demanding that people return to the office, many organisations are encouraging people to work wherever they perform best. The tools and technology rolled out to enable people to work from home at the start of the lockdown is still available and has evolved rapidly in the two years since. People have the freedom to decide which is the best arrangement for them. It could be in the office, at home, or in a multi-user shared environment. It is important to focus on outputs and outcomes, as opposed to how long an employee is sat at their desk or screen.

The problem is that there may be a lingering fear that 'out of sight, means 'out of mind' when it comes to promotion. This could be legitimate. While employees have largely embraced hybrid working, some organisations still have a stigma about working remotely. There could be unconscious bias at play by people who see those who work from home as not committed to the business, or not as serious about their careers as those who travel in each day. Organisations have to address this. One way is to use the same tools, technology

and systems that enable home working to enhance the employee experience through effective virtual collaboration. The systems can be used to encourage opportunities for employees' voices to be heard and create new ways for employees to benefit from growth opportunities. The digital employee experience is as essential as the physical one. If you can get this right and eliminate bias, the business's whole progression strategy actually becomes genuinely fair and equal. It puts the focus on the employee's performance to tell the story of their commitment and suitability for progress rather than their ability to turn up at an office and get more 'face time' with the boss.

Organisations must become more adaptable and recognise that today's – and especially tomorrow's – workforce will have much more autonomy over the direction their career will take than previously. The old thinking around presenteeism being the measure of commitment to furthering your career is not only outdated, it is dangerous [for an organisation's health and will stifle growth.

Businesses can only grow when they give their people the opportunity to grow. As hybrid work becomes more

prevalent, organisations are going to be challenged to find ways to encourage growth and progression at every stage of a person's career. At Insight, we have recognised the value of bringing new people into the technology industry. This is about more than filling vacancies it is about bringing in new ideas and breathing new life into the solutions we deliver to customers. It is also about encouraging people to find the roles that they are passionate about in order to deliver their best work, and progress in a career they love.

With Insight's Skills Academy, people with no previous IT experience now have the opportunity not simply to start a career in the technology industry but to discover the area that best suits them. That could be in services or sales, in Cloud and Digital Transformation or however technology evolves during their career.

To succeed in hybrid working, organisations will have to work harder and smarter to provide equal opportunities for career progression whatever the working environment. This means ensuring an inclusive experience and supporting employees on a more human level. It really is all about focusing less on the 'Resources' in HR, and much, much more on the 'Human'.

Karen Radford
Insight EMEA Director of Talent

END

When it comes to career progression, organisations may need to work harder to have equality of opportunity for pay, promotion and development. This means incorporating the new flexible way of working within HR or people strategies, programmes and policies to ensure no one is left behind.

Many Blackbaud employees engage in hands-on volunteer efforts in their local communities.

Blackbaud Empowers Social Good with Application Modernisation

By relocating business-critical applications to Azure, this global software provider enhances performance and security for its customers in the social good community.

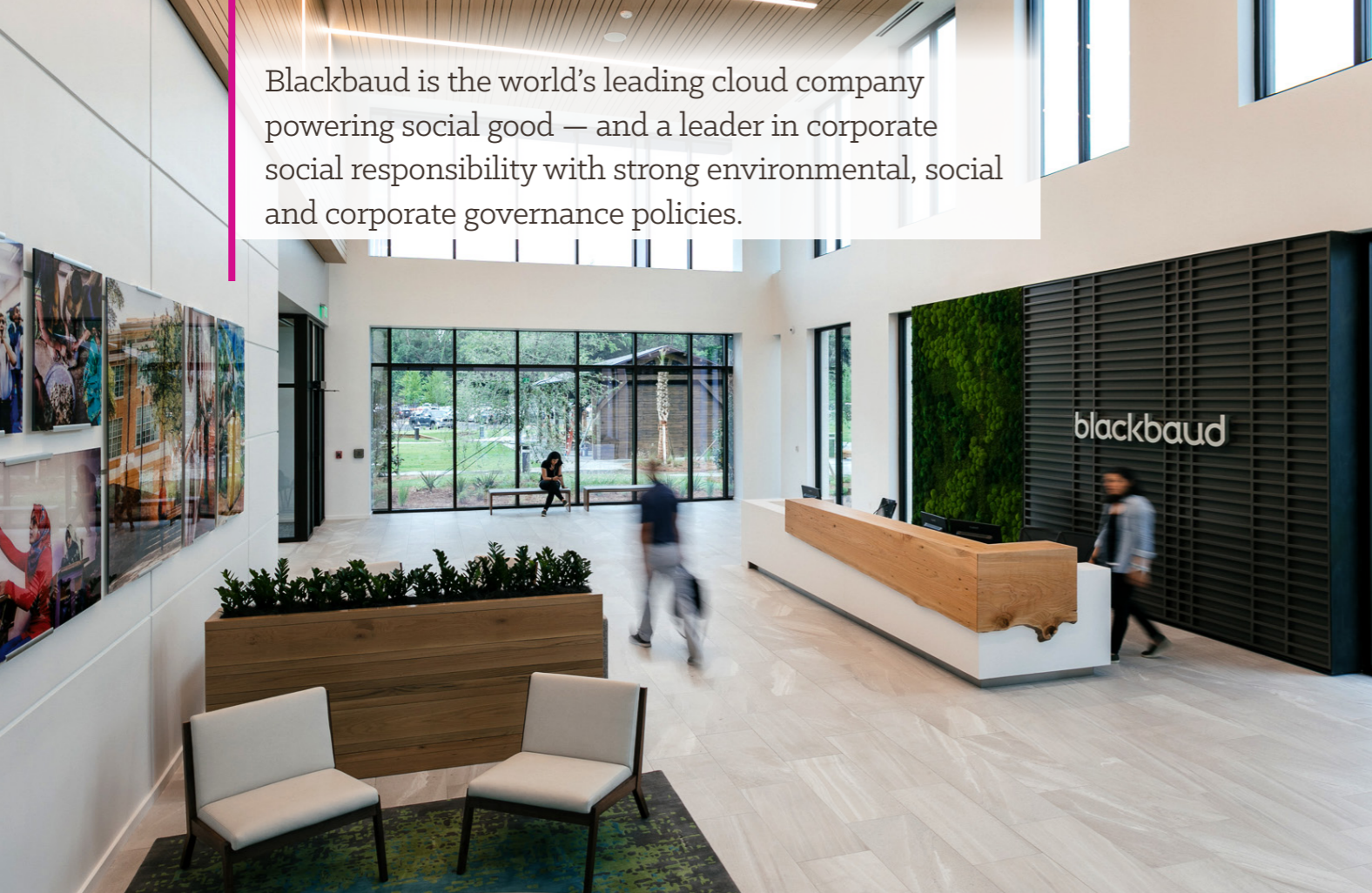


Written by
Krista Leland
Senior Content Strategist,
Insight

As a marketing strategist and dedicated writer for Insight's Digital Innovation team, Krista devotes her skills to researching, developing and positioning content related to some of today's most cutting-edge technologies. She draws on nearly a decade of marketing, education and technical writing experience to distil complex topics into highly practical and valuable resources for today's IT leaders.

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Blackbaud is the world's leading cloud company powering social good — and a leader in corporate social responsibility with strong environmental, social and corporate governance policies.



included identifying eligible hosted customers, evaluating the technical feasibility of migration to Microsoft Azure, scheduling and coordinating the migrations, then performing the relocation and validating post-migration functionality.

Blackbaud CRM is highly configurable, and customers using the product often have intensely specialised environments. This created additional layers of complexity when it came to the next phase of relocation efforts. As Blackbaud's team developed scripted processes to set up net-new Blackbaud CRM environments in Azure, Insight built additional scripts to assist with the export and import of existing Blackbaud CRM customer data. This included proprietary modules used to streamline the process of backing up and restoring IIS web configurations, SQL databases, Active Directory users and many other custom application components.

Insight's team worked directly with Blackbaud CRM customers to develop and execute project plans — from evaluation and scheduling to custom coding work, testing and support. They also added functionality to the Azure environment as needed to meet individual customer requirements.

Together, Insight and Blackbaud successfully executed 14 Blackbaud CRM relocations and more than 900 Blackbaud NXT relocations in 2021 — resulting in reduced infrastructure costs, improved uptime, streamlined processes and enhanced customer security.

As the migration project extended across the global organisation, Insight served as a consistent source of expertise and direction for internal and external stakeholders alike.

Jonathan Doonan, the development services manager at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland, explained the benefit of this coordination: "For the actual implementation, we had everyone choreographed down to the last minute, so we knew exactly where they should be and what they should be doing. This was a huge migration, and it wasn't to be taken lightly. With this amount of data, you can never predict how long it will take." Because the university team was well prepared and had worked closely with the Blackbaud and Insight teams, he said, "going live was a great success."

Like all modern organisations, non-profits depend on technology to manage operations and deliver services to constituents. From foundations and healthcare groups to museums, universities and private schools, charitable organisations around the world rely on solutions from Blackbaud to fulfill their missions of social good.

Since 1981, the company has delivered software, services, data intelligence and expertise to help their customers make the most of every dollar. With products to support fundraising, grant making, donor management, marketing, analytics and more, Blackbaud equips agents of change to maximise the impact of their work.

Opportunities for app modernisation

For many years, Blackbaud's software solutions and company data were hosted on different data centres around the world. But the organisation recognised the opportunity to modernise and streamline the way it delivered hosted services to customers by offering the benefits of the public cloud.

Their private cloud systems limited the ability to expand services into locations without established data centres, adding complexity to scaling capacity and consistent deployment of features and customisations. Blackbaud's infrastructure engineering leaders saw an opportunity to better manage costs and offer new services. They knew a shift to the public cloud would increase agility, security, capacity, and cost efficiency, allowing them to better meet the needs of social good organisations around the world.

Finding a partner and a path to the cloud

During their consumption agreement with Microsoft in 2018, Blackbaud's IT team began seeking out partners to support their migration project. Microsoft recommended Insight as a result of our close technical partnership and deep experience with Azure. Two other vendors were also considered, but Insight demonstrated a unique willingness to work collaboratively within the company's requirements to meet the immediate goals of the migration.

With the cloud agreement in place and the support of this new partnership, the project was ready to launch.

A private cloud hosting infrastructure distributed across numerous global data centres limited scalability and added complexity to the management of the company's flagship software products.

A programmatic migration strategy

The migration plan focused on customers using Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT® and Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT® — the company's flagship fundraising and financial management tools for non-profits — as well as Blackbaud CRM™, which provides comprehensive customer relationship management for larger organisations.

Blackbaud's infrastructure engineering team built out the tooling needed to relocate Raiser's Edge NXT and Financial Edge NXT products into Azure, but individual customer migrations were initially performed on a one-off basis. Insight developed a programmatic approach to execution and took on the bulk of the implementation efforts. This



Blackbaud has developed a strong culture around giving back to the community, with many employees volunteering independently as well as through company-coordinated activities.

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Future plans for long-term social impact

Together, Insight and Blackbaud successfully executed 14 Blackbaud CRM relocations and relocations for more than 900 customers involving Raiser's Edge NXT, Financial Edge NXT or both in 2021.

The migration has allowed Blackbaud's IT team to reduce infrastructure costs by taking advantage of additional burst capacity in Azure during major upgrades. This approach has also reduced scheduled downtime, allowing routine maintenance to be performed more strategically. In addition, newly consistent scripting, standards, and automation, supported by Insight, have simplified and accelerated general processing and delivery while ensuring any unexpected issues can be rapidly resolved.

Most importantly, however, these modernisation efforts have enabled non-profit, social good organisations to continue to grow, transform and maximise their social impact around the world.

Raiser's Edge NXT and Financial Edge NXT users such as

Lambda Legal, which migrated to Microsoft Azure in a matter of hours, have benefited from seamless functionality.

"Post-migration, one of the most noticeable differences has been the decreased time that more complex queries and exports take to complete," said Fran Cohen, Lambda Legal's director of donor databases. "Overall," she added, "the migration to Microsoft Azure is allowing us to spend more time on the key functions of our jobs in order to better support Lambda Legal's mission of achieving full recognition of the civil rights of LGBT people and everyone living with HIV."

Meanwhile, those leveraging Blackbaud CRM now have a dedicated environment offering enhanced security, greater availability and access to new features. Benedict Chiu, head of data and technology for the Australian Conservation Foundation, a community of more than 700,000 people, expressed the value of the relocation project for his organisation. "The migration to Azure has kicked off a new cadence of upcoming work that will significantly benefit us by streamlining our operations, enabling more advanced

data analytics, gaining better insight on our donors and the opportunity to utilise additional services."

This initial engagement has established an ongoing relationship of trust and collaboration between Insight and Blackbaud. In addition to ongoing migration and modernisation efforts, Blackbaud has engaged Insight to conduct a comprehensive cloud and data centre strategy assessment.

"Our partnership with Insight has allowed us to accelerate our migration to the public cloud," shared John Yeager, Blackbaud's senior director of application management for infrastructure engineering and cloud operations.

"That acceleration, in turn, has allowed more of the social good organisations that Blackbaud empowers to realise the flexibility, security, capacity, speed of innovation and ease of automation offered by the public cloud."

Krista Leland

Senior Content Strategist, Insight

Canada's Eden Foundation uses cloud-based Blackbaud solutions to support fundraisers for mental health.

Are legacy apps holding you back?

Whatever your mission, Insight will ensure your applications and ecosystem are up to the task.

END

4 Ways to Secure your Modern Workplace

...and how Microsoft 365 E5 could support this

Written by

Rob O'Connor

EMEA Technology Lead - Security, Insight



The shift to remote working during the pandemic has redefined the modern workplace. Flexible hybrid working and decentralised models have resulted in organisations rethinking their strategies and operations – and the Microsoft 365 E3 licensing solution has supported many in their hybrid working needs. But now, more than ever, is it important to consider your security strategy.

The hybrid working model means data that is critical to your organisation is no longer stored in your datacentre – its distributed across multiple cloud services. These endpoints – the laptops your users work on all day at home, the servers in the cloud keeping your e-commerce platform running – are a constant target of phishing attacks, malware, ransomware, etc. The risks of such a security breach and the associated bad publicity, reputational damage and potential fines are too high a risk to take, so organisations need to ensure they have a strong set of controls in place.

Beyond establishing a zero trust approach for your business, organisations can look at investing in a multiple point solution to protect their data, network, applications, and cloud. However, this can be expensive and leave blind spot in your visibility. The latest Microsoft 365 E5 provides enhanced tools to support organisations meet the rising security threats – but is this the right solution for you?

To aid you in identifying how you can best protect and secure your organisation (and what technology can support this), I have outlined the key points you should consider when securing your workplace.

1. Microsoft Defender for Cloud Apps

Previously known as Cloud App Security, this solution/asset gives visibility into the cloud services that users are leveraging and allows you to exercise control in a granular way. You can set the parameters of what users are allowed to do within the cloud services. For example, if you discover that the bid team is sharing documents using a non-sanctioned cloud application which you deem is risky, you will want to prevent them from uploading information, while still allowing them to download information from customer and partners.

Benefit to you: Today, almost all organisations are using sanctioned cloud applications, and users will find their own

cloud applications to get their work done. Some of those cloud applications might open up your organisation to risk of data theft, or storing data in geographies which are not compliant with GDPR etc. Microsoft Defender for Cloud Apps helps you stay compliant and secure, guiding your users to applications you know to be fit-for-purpose.

Alternatives: You could add a Cloud Access Security Broker (CASB) from another vendor, but you would not benefit from the out-of-the-box integrations with other services such as Microsoft Information Protection and Data Loss Prevention. This may end up in a higher total cost of ownership, with lots of professional services needed to integrate and maintain.

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2. Azure AD Premium Plan 2

Part of the Microsoft E5 license, this plan combines a number of features to strengthen your controls on who can access what – or “identity”. Access reviews reduce the IT overhead of managing who can access documents across the organisation by moving the burden of maintaining access lists from IT to the data owners in the business. Identity Protection, Privileged Identity Management and Risk based Conditional Access provide additional layers of security to ensure that administrators are connecting securely and from approved locations and devices and at the time of day you expect.

Benefit to you: Identity is a key pillar of a Zero Trust approach and is the glue which connects remote users to cloud data in a modern workplace


Alternatives: You could achieve this with other vendors by adding a number of different tools, but and it would not provide the simple ease of use, integration, and management benefits of E5.

3. Defender for Endpoint P2

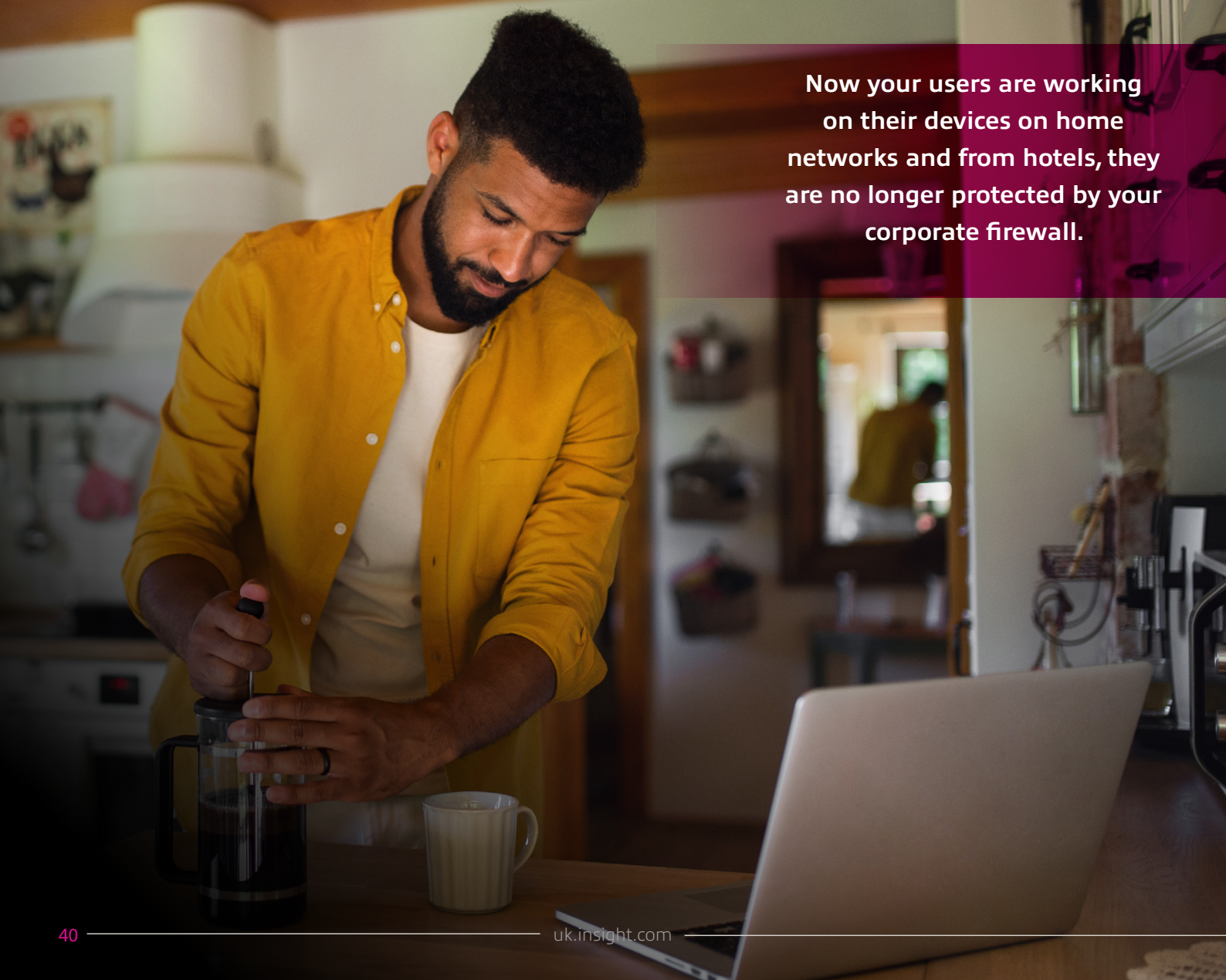
This builds on the basic ‘defender for endpoint’ functionality to provide full endpoint detection and response, automated investigation, and remediation, as well as threat and vulnerability management. It is also part of the E5 solution.

Benefit to you: Now your users are working on their devices on home networks and from hotels, they are no longer protected by your corporate firewall. This means they must have a much stronger set of security controls to prevent the devices from being breached and used to gain access to your organisations network. You need to be able to identify, detect and remediate threats effecting your endpoints in real time, wherever they might be in the world.

Alternatives: While you can provide this with a third-party product, you will lose out on the tight integration, reporting and ease of use of a best-in-suite approach.



The hybrid working model means data that is critical to your organisation is no longer stored in your datacentre – it’s distributed across multiple cloud services.



Now your users are working on their devices on home networks and from hotels, they are no longer protected by your corporate firewall.

4. Information Protection P2

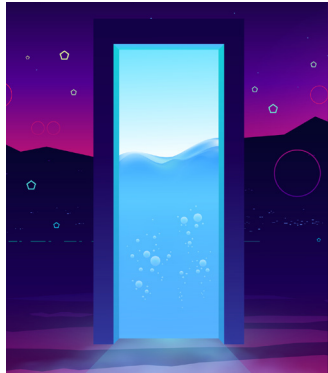
Included in the E5 license, Information Protection P2 provides the ability to assist users to classify their data more effectively. Classifying data (for example as “Public” or “Sensitive”) can help to ensure the right controls are applied to that data. E5 provides more automated features, for example helping users by recommending the right classification – guiding them to follow your corporate policies. You can warn users if they are about to overshare information via email, and you can scan your on-prem files and classify them automatically.

Benefit to you: Under-classifying a document means it will not be protected as well as it should be. Over-classifying files is also a problem as it results in a security policy being applied that is too stringent, leading to user frustration and

additional costs. Helping users to classify their data correctly is especially important where the workforce is dispersed across home offices and may not have local IT support at their location to help them.

Alternatives: There are no real alternatives to this, beyond hoping your users classify their data correctly!

Regardless of your organisations size, industry, or location; the changing workplace is confronting us all with the challenge to protect one’s business from risk of security threats, and to overcome governance and compliance challenges. At a time where investing in the right technology could set you up for success and establish a true modern workplace for your organisation, many are seeing the benefit of moving to a tightly integrated suite of security controls such as Microsoft’s E5.



To find out how E5 can benefit your organisation, download our [e-book](#) and speak to our licensing experts to discuss how to upgrade to Microsoft 365 E5 and keep your business more secure.

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THE

METaverse: an opportunity for businesses of all sizes?

The metaverse promises to be a game-changer, like the internet was when it first came along. Just as today's internet is unrecognisable from its earliest days, the metaverse will follow the same sort of trajectory.

Some expect that, in as little as two or three years' time, we'll be wondering what we ever did before the metaverse.

Without spending too much time on definitions, the metaverse is a like a 'real-world' internet, where people can interact in virtual environments without being physically present¹. At the moment the 'real-world' element is experienced through virtual reality headsets.

So, the big question is, what does the metaverse mean for businesses? It may seem like something you wouldn't consider or prioritise now as you can't see how it will help your business, but it is getting closer and, yes, it will deliver benefits to organisations of all sizes. In fact, I will talk you through some examples of where the metaverse can positively impact your business today.



Written by

Antony Taylor
Technology Lead at Insight



Mixed reality technology is already being used to great effect in medical surgical scenarios.

Greater collaboration and democratisation

The past ten to 20 years has seen a strong technology focus on collaborative working practices – from file sharing, instant messaging, document synchronisation and video-conferencing. The metaverse promises to take this to the next level. Adapting business processes to use mixed or assisted reality will reduce costs for businesses as well as encourage greater collaboration. People can experience working in the same room, around the same table, on the same machines even. Project work and product development allows colleagues to share the same view of the project or product’s status in real-time. What’s more, everyone has the equivalent voice or presence. Just as they would in a real-life setting. The metaverse removes the ‘present vs remote’ divide that people often experienced in meetings nowadays.

Faster, easier prototyping

By replicating the real world in a virtual environment, the metaverse means that physical products – for example, a

backpack, clothing – can be virtually prototyped faster. It reduces the cost associated with design iterations and the time needed to reproduce different sized and coloured models. Manufacturers can reduce time and cost at the design stage and get early feedback from users and focus groups.

Improved customer experience

Hosting virtual environments for customers enables a business to present its brand experience in an immersive way. In ways very similar to prototyping above, customers can try on products such as clothes via an avatar. This is already used by several retail sites but extending the simulation right up to the checkout gives customers a more complete interaction with your brand.

Restaurants can host virtual dining experiences where each person orders their food delivery via an online menu and enjoys a connected experience with the people around their table.

By replicating the real world in a virtual environment, the metaverse means that physical products can be virtually prototyped faster.



Servicing plant and machinery

Mixed reality technology, like Microsoft’s HoloLens, is already being used to great effect in medical including surgical scenarios. This technology is also equally applicable and already being used to service vehicles, production lines and other machinery, where the manufacturer’s engineer is able to service or repair the product remotely via an on-site/customer’s operator. This can result in quicker and more effective exchange of information, as verbal clarifications and visual 3D explanations go hand in hand. There are also significant cost savings available to organisations that offer remote servicing through mixed or assisted reality as they can scale servicing and deliver training without increasing core overheads.

Get ready for the metaverse

Forward thinking organisations already have the metaverse on their horizon. They are investigating ways to incorporate virtual and augmented reality into their business processes and customer experience. As it’s still early days, there are practical steps that businesses can take to prepare:

- Increase digitalisation – get the technology you need to build an online presence or expand your existing presence.
- Consider what the metaverse could do for you in the future. This might mean rethinking your business model and taking necessary steps now.
- Look at opportunities to improve your business processes with mixed/assisted reality
- Engage with partners who are already delivering AR and VR solutions to explore different options.

Preparation will vary by industry, by your challenges and the type of customers you have. Now is the perfect time to investigate what the metaverse can do for you, and how it can expand your horizons.

Discover the solutions from Insight that can help businesses prepare for tomorrow’s technology today

1. You’ll find a more detailed description that examines the ‘What, Why, Who, When, Why and How’ of the metaverse in our latest [Tech Journal](#).

END

Bekaert overcomes language barriers in Microsoft 365 adoption with training and support from Insight



Story Snapshot

Employees at Bekaert, a global leader in steel wire transformation and coating technologies, are collaborating across the world with Microsoft 365. The company, headquartered in Belgium, asked Insight to help develop an adoption roadmap, provide training, and measure the success of the tools. In addition, Insight also installed a multilingual chatbot to assist Bekaert's service desk.

Launching the project

Insight helped Bekaert by organising workshops and evaluating the maturity level. The first workshops included basic training, such as using Teams or OneNote for example. After each training, the participants are asked to take a survey and share some topics they find interesting for future workshops. The project launched in October 2021 and after just six months Bekaert noticed that people started asking for more advanced trainings.

In addition to the webinars, Insight also helped build a network of digital champions, people who receive extra training to become ambassadors. Bekaert now has 13 champions who are active in the different regions, covering most languages in the organisation.

To track the adoption of the Microsoft Office 365 tools, Bekaert developed a one-year roadmap with several milestones and KPIs. Insight measured the use of the tools with solutions such as CoreView and Microsoft Productivity Score.

Chatbot support for Bekaert's service desk

Part of the project was the implementation of a chatbot to support the IT service desk. This bot helped employees create tickets for issues that need the attention of an IT expert. Bekaert wanted to make the solution available in multiple languages. At first, they thought of using Power Virtual Agent to build the chatbot. However, this tool required users to recreate the bot for each individual language. Insight therefore suggested Microsoft Bot Framework, which is a more advanced version of the tool.

Solution & Outcome

With Insight's support, a fully operational chatbot system was built that speaks four languages: Chinese, Spanish, English, and Dutch. Simon Verlae, IT4IT Epic Leader at Bekaert, comments: "Thanks to Insight's pragmatic and flexible approach, we were able to deploy the chatbot in a short time frame." In fact, the project was completed in just two months, and the chatbot was easy to use because it is embedded in Microsoft Teams. This also meant that users now have an additional channel to contact the service desk. As a next step, Bekaert is looking to make the bot more intelligent and enable automatic resolution of basic questions.



"Thanks to Insight's pragmatic and flexible approach, we were able to deploy the chatbot in a short time frame."

On the right track

Thanks to Insight's support and assessments, Bekaert knows they are on the right track.

For example, **84% of the 10,000 employees** are now using OneDrive and SharePoint to share documents. And about three in four people communicate with Teams.

Bekaert offers four learning paths that cover all possible use cases for both beginners and more advanced users.

Moreover, **80% of the languages** in Bekaert's network are supported by the learning framework and the availability of digital champions.

As for the chatbot: within the first weeks, the service desk found that **20 to 25% of their tickets** were coming through this new channel.

This makes the work of the IT team more efficient.

Background & Challenges

Collaboration tools are an essential ingredient of a successful hybrid work environment. Bekaert had already migrated to Microsoft 365 before the pandemic, but COVID-19 certainly increased the need for training and change management. Some of the questions that were frequently asked by Bekaert's users were: "how can we organise brainstorm sessions outside of a physical meeting room? How can we share a document and work on it together without sending dozens of copies by e-mail? How do we attend a seminar or share the recording of an online meeting?"

An additional challenge was the fact that Bekaert has nearly 10,000 users working in more than 40 different countries. Instead of offering training and support in just one language, Bekaert wanted to ensure that most of the staff could find guidance in their native language. To help them do this, Bekaert turned to Insight to support in increasing the awareness of Microsoft's tools among its employees, while providing them with access to learning opportunities, as well as tips & tricks. "We wanted a partner who could help us set up webinars and an information corner for our employees," said Koen Vereeken, Global IT Lead Technology Infrastructure at Bekaert. "Insight knows Microsoft's products, has the right expertise to guide our users and brings in survey materials to measure adoption rates."



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Why Application Performance Management Should be a Top Priority for Organisations

Insight | INTERVIEW



Santo Orlando
Practice Director Services TSG, Insight

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In 2022, the average company uses 200 apps.¹ They are fundamental in performing business functions, allowing a company to run seamlessly and manage a lot of data. Whilst data and cloud management have been in the spotlight in recent years as key business priorities, applications have been quietly growing and gaining momentum.

What is being done to manage and protect them? Santo Orlando, Practice Director Services TSG at Insight, speaks about the changes that businesses have experienced in recent years when it comes to applications, and the importance of managing application performance for any organisation.

Why are applications essential to organisations nowadays?

Applications have become the backbone of many businesses. Not only are they needed to store and organise data, but they provide organisations with the opportunity to engage and communicate with users, as well as drive business functionality. Applications can also ensure consistent branding and business performance in a scalable way. In short, applications are crucial to the majority of organisations today.

Would you say the use and reliance on applications for businesses has changed over the past years?

Organisations operate very differently today as they may have done ten or even five years ago. The amount of data collected and stored is growing, the services companies offer have multiplied and the scale and speed at which this takes place is immense. Applications are no exception to this.

Nowadays, many applications run on a microservice based architecture, meaning organisations have an intrinsic network of services that connect with one another – and that connects the business, users, and employees. Often found in a multi-cloud set up, applications that a business owns or operates via, can start with just a handful, and grow into a huge app portfolio – due to the scalability of the cloud. Applications can therefore allow organisations to expand and grow rapidly, and to service users on a global scale seamlessly – but they also carry a lot of challenges if they are not managed properly. This is why Application Management Services are so important.

What difficulties could organisations run into if their apps are not managed properly?

Revenue loss is definitely one of them. Each second of delay in application response time equates to a business losing money. Whether this is caused by a bug or slow app performance or a wider security breach. Take last year’s Facebook’s outage for example – the application going down for a few hours is estimated by Fortune to have cost the company 100 million dollars in revenue.² Depending on your business size, this could be hugely damaging to a company and brand.

Without ability to observe apps, organisations are also unable to respond and repair application performance issues in a timely manner, and therefore cannot accurately calculate the business impact that app performance issues might have caused.

In addition, lack of app performance management can make an organisation an easy target for security breaches and hacker attempts - and a lack of visibility across application performance means the organisation is unable to react as fast as possible. There is also the danger of user complaints and the damage to your brand as a result.

You speak about Application Performance Management – what does this entail exactly?

Simply put, Application Performance Management provides organisations with a deeper understanding of the behaviour of their applications. It means having visibility over the availability and efficiency of one’s business applications,

being able to adapt these and respond to events within and outside your organisation. It also encompasses looking at factors such as business process, user experience, all software components including middleware and infrastructure, networking, security and database and data platform of an application itself. Gaining this understanding can empower organisations to ensure a quick response to fix any issues that may arise. Furthermore, organisations can reduce or even avoid downtime and slow app performance by gaining this comprehensive understanding and management of their application portfolio.

How can organisations take steps to ensure good App Performance Management?

There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, it really depends on the business and its digital journey. Generally, managing application performance encompasses and includes various departments, solutions and services across the business. Finding a partner with the relevant specialism to support this journey can be a good first step.

At Insight, we have a dedicated team to assist organisations - please contact us.

Santo Orlando
Practice Director Services TSG, Insight

1. <https://productiv.com/resources/the-state-of-saas-sprawl/>
2. <https://fortune.com/2021/10/04/facebook-outage-cost-revenue-instagram-whatsapp-not-working-stock/>



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We are incredibly proud to have been recognised as a Visionary in the Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Software Asset Management Managed Services. We believe this demonstrates our focus to deliver real value with great client experience across all our regions.

To read a complimentary copy of the Gartner research report, please [click here](#). For more information on Insight, visit insight.com.

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