THE 7 DYNAMICS OF
THE NEW WORK PARADIGM

How the pandemic is reshaping the equilibrium between
people, technology, offices and their organisation

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INTRODUCTION

We are currently in the midst of a tectonic shift in our relationship with work and the dynamics that make up the work paradigm. The last two years have provided us with an opportunity to step-back, re-evaluate our lives and the role of work within them. The mass adoption of technology-based working made working from home, for many, a very real and appealing alternative to the traditional 9 to 5 in the office. However, we remain in a transition; still navigating and trying to understand what this post-pandemic work paradigm should look like and how we should all act within it.

As part of this transition, there is an ever-increasing focus on human health, mental wellbeing and purpose. Organisations are recognizing that retaining the old models of professional success no longer result in attracting and retaining the best talent. In a recent survey Gartner found that 65% of employees said the pandemic has made them question and rethink the place that work should have in their lives, highlighting that the war for talent has shifted from a competition on salary to a competition on which company can support the best total lifestyle[1]. Tesla recently announced the end of remote working for their global workforce. Its competitor's response? A direct address to Tesla and Space X staff to join their organisations and work "from almost anywhere, anytime". Despite personal preference, it is clear that the new work paradigm is radically reshaping the role of work, offices and technology in our lives and as a result, has the opportunity to redesign the way in which we innovate, build relationship and connect. This paper looks to explore the new dynamics that arise from the traditional pillars of work and evaluates the opportunities and risks for organisations and employees alike.

DEFINITIONS:

Purpose

An employee or organisations reason for which an activity is done, or product provided. To provide benefit for something bigger than oneself.

Individual

Employees and their experiences, needs and nteractions with work, organisations, and technology.
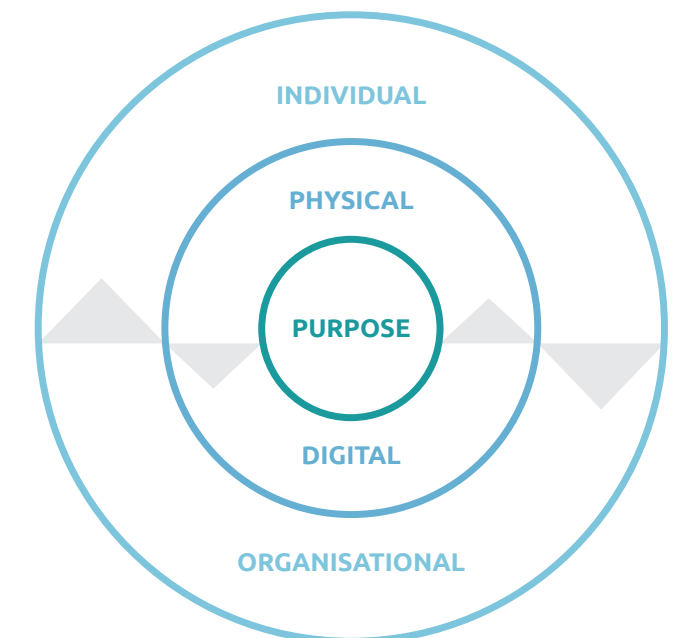
Organisational

An organised group of people with a particular purpose, product or services to deliver to a specific client group.

Physical

Any office, home, third-space environment where work is carried out.

Digital

Technologies, platforms, and systems that enable employees to work and connect virtually in a 24-hour environment.

Source: The work paradigm

1 DYNAMIC 1
INDIVIDUAL & INDIVIDUAL
THE UNIVERSAL AND ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF PURPOSE THROUGH WORK

The relationship between individuals and organisations has traditionally been based on showing up and delivering work in exchange for salary and the ensuing ability to build a comfortable lifestyle. Typical career trajectories focus on vertical promotion achieving increasing autonomy and financial freedom[2]. However, as we emerge out of the pandemic, many of us, especially younger generations, have to deal with a raised pension age, increasing difficulty of homeownership and worsening economic climates that erodes whatever personal wealth we have accumulated[3 4]. In response to this, as characterised by "the great resignation" there is a growing population of workers evaluating whether a simpler job with a smaller salary to enable better wellbeing, is a good trade off[5]. Traditional motivations of salary and status are less valuable in an increasingly constrained economy where an 80-hour work week may still not deliver the financial rewards once promised. On top of this, people are reconsidering whether the new car is really worth it when it comes at the expense of added work pressure and even less time to spend with loved ones and on your own wellbeing. The risk of these choices is that a smaller salary for a better work-life balance may not be sustainable in an escalating economic environment of price increases, inflation and economic instability. The next test in this new work paradigm is whether we can change our spending habits to accommodate this desire for a greater focus on wellbeing and a decreasing focus on traditional 'career success'. Regardless, employees are searching for meaning and purpose in what they do; more so than financial reward[6].

Whilst purpose is a personal driver, employees are expecting organisations to provide them with a sense of direction, intention, and understanding that the contribution we are making means something. Without the connection to a pre-defined purpose at work, increased attrition has been shown to follow[7]. A recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, reported that 63% of millennials, under 35, said the primary purpose of organisations should be improving society instead of generating profit. Purpose is a potential barrier to accessing younger talent and retaining more experienced employees, who perhaps have earned their money and now seek to spend the rest of their careers "doing something that matters". Successful organisations recognise that they must cater to this increasingly important dynamic. Elastic, an international software developer is well known for its 'remote-first' working model. With over 2,000 employees working globally from home or one of Elastics small satellite offices, their focus is on supporting employees to maintain a healthy relationship with work and their personal goals in life through allowing employees to choose not only where to work, but when; making time for a mid-day run, collecting or dropping off the children or meeting a friend for coffee. They go further by providing 40 hours per year to be spent serving charities and the community and match up to $1,500 for charitable donations. The provision of paid time away from work not only enables employees to pursue what makes them tick, within a context of work, but also builds trust and connection between individuals and organisations. Organisations have a role to play in enabling their employees to be in close proximity to purpose and as a result, the opportunity to benefit from a happier, more productive and engaged workforce.

The next test in this new work paradigm is whether we can change our spending habits to accommodate this desire for a greater focus on wellbeing and a decreasing focus on traditional 'career success'

2 DYNAMIC 2
INDIVIDUAL & ORGANISATIONAL
THE GROWING NEED FOR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND THE BALANCE OF "I" VS "WE"

Prior to the pandemic, remote work was not unheard of, but across some cultures an unusual and fringe activity – often permitted out of necessity or where there was minimal operational impact. However, the mass remote working movement of the last two years has not only demonstrated en-masse that it can work, it has arguably adjusted employees experience of what work and life can be. Over the past two years, our experience of work has been arguably more personalised than ever before. Working from the comfort of our own homes, wearing our personal clothes, and being surrounded by friends or family has provided us with a greater ability to understand what does and does not work for us. Although not all working from home experiences have been positive, it has ignited conversations about required changes that need to be made to working practices and workplaces to improve our experience. This collective push-back demonstrates what organisational psychologist have known for years: that we need to see ourselves and our culture, reflected within the organisations and the spaces in which we work in order to build connection. An increasing distillation of employee groups and their needs is fuelling the drive towards more diverse workspaces. Increased awareness and open communications on personality, gender inclusivity, environmental footprint and a greater appreciation of neurodiverse needs is generating a level of understanding of how our environments have the opportunity to help or hinder us, at an unprecedented rate. The focus now is on spaces designed with humans in mind rather than maximizing work output. Human-centric, mind-friendly design standards are evolving and aimed at accommodating the full range of psychological and biological needs of employees.

But as our ability and need to personalise increases, what is the point at which our need for 'I' overrides the need for 'We'? Tackling this changing dynamic will involve not only finding the balance of managing more diverse groups of individuals, but also ensuring group connectivity and cohesion.

"Our need for personalization is nothing new. It is arguably the corner stone of being human. We need personalisation to feel that our choices and values are valid, have meaning and are met in in the world. But work has remained, until recently, a relatively homologous routine of five-day work weeks and ubiquitous working practices. Has the pandemic and the successful 'tech-first' communication experiment changed the way we work, forever?" **Sophie Schuller**

3 DYNAMIC 3
INDIVIDUAL & PHYSICAL
THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE AS AN ENABLER FOR CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

The proliferation of employee-based surveys over the past two years, tells us that there is a clear preference for hybrid working. However, we also see a disconnect in the data. With a recent survey highlighting that whilst 73% of employees want to continue to work from home, 67% of employees prefer a face-to-face collaboration[7]. This suggests that contemporary design and utilisation of offices may not be providing employees with the elements that they want in order to leave the comfort of their homes. Is the office space and the interactions it can generate worth the commute? In a 2021 article, Brian Kropp, chief of HR research for research firm Gartner commented that whilst everyone is back in the office, we are still working via video; a meeting profile recently given the nickname of 'in-person zoom calls[9]'. This may represent a temporary state of figuring out how we split work between home and within an office environment, but on the other hand, these results may represent the limitations of virtual interactions and a sense of loneliness that comes from a 2-D human contact. Happy to be on Zoom, as long as we are 'in person'.

The office in its contemporary design and function, clearly does not work for everyone. Workspace design goes beyond looking nice and is required to facilitate relationships, innovation, learning and social support[10]. Collaboration spaces are often characterized by comfy sofas and free sodas to 'hang out with our work mates'. However, design is not deterministic. For example, designing open planned offices to stimulate connection and creativity may work for some, but others who are sensitive to stimulation or just need to concentrate may feel excluded. A 2018 journal article highlighted that open plan office spaces can impact the performance of neurodivergent employees[11]. According to consultancy and auditing firm Deloitte, somewhere between 10% and 20% of the global population is considered neurodivergent[12]. With this in mind, our work environments may not accommodate up to 20% of our work populations. Combine this with the fact that approximately 20% of the western population is suffering from mental health issues within 2021 and the need for inclusive, mind-friendly environments becomes more prominent[13]. Traditional office environments are typically designed for extroverts who feed off of buzz and energy. However, designing a one size-fits-all office can impact employees' ability to connect, foster and maintain relationships.

"In a hybrid work setting, we can reap the benefits of working remotely and collaborating face-to-face. It allows many of us to accommodate both our personal needs and what our work requires. While the individual's perspective is often the starting point, we need to realize that effective hybrid work also requires coordination, agreement and purpose on a team, and even organisation-level. Only then will place truly serve as an enabler." **Julia Schlegelmilch** (Ph.D.)

4 DYNAMIC 4
ORGANISATIONAL & PHYSICAL
STRENGTHENING THE COMPANY CULTURE IN ANY TYPE OF WORKPLACE

Traditional workplace environments have previously had to encompass all aspects of functional work. Quiet, dedicated focus, collaboration and team events. Assuming that all aspects of work happen in one place, meant that little attention needed to be placed on a curated experience or organisational branding for employees; coming to work was the experience. However, as digitalisation continues to blur the boundaries between being in and out of the office, and employees increasingly elect for working from home, the value and function of the physical workspace is changing. In a recent study, C&W's XSF employee engagement survey found that between 70% to 83% of employees were expecting some degree of working from home over the long term, following a return to the office. Wider research also shows an increasing trend towards focused concentration work to be done at home, whereas the office is seen more as a social vessel for collaboration and connection. To adhere to this new dynamic where employees are fewer number of days in the office, organisation can leverage the physical space, by creating a space that fully immerse employees in the organisational brand. Much like retail theatre and immersive theme-park experiences, organisations could focus their design and facility management operations around a concentrated and curated version of their brand, which could maintain and strengthen the connectivity to culture that may be lost as increased remote and hybrid working becomes part of our new routine. Organisations such as Lego, Netflix and Ikea have invested much into ensuring connectivity to brand and culture, regardless of whether an employee is in product development or the accounts department. Organisational culture and brand are a direct communicator of organisational purpose – immersing potential and current employees in this deeper purpose might be the quickest way to access, attract, and retaining a healthy, energised and engaged workforce.

5 DYNAMIC 5
INDIVIDUAL & DIGITAL
THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING VIRTUALLY

It is not a new idea that digital technology offers a way to connect with each other across locations. However, the mass adoption of these interactions, nick-named 'the great experiment' is arguably one of the defining characteristics of the pandemic. The proliferation of the office as a virtual connection is increasingly enabling people to stay in their preferred physical environments, whilst still engaging in work and associated activities. The benefits of virtual work are pronounced and profound. Providing accessibility to the workplace for people who have previously been excluded, such as those with physical and psychological limitations to traditional models of work, or those with more nuanced working patterns, such as caregivers and parents. Further the ability to work across time zones with a truly "follow the sun" model of 24-hour work and the ability to radically reduce or eradicate commute times, therefore driving environmental reductions and, increasingly, time (in theory) for well-being have all been identified as positive changes within this new work paradigm.

However, there are limits to remote collaboration and a corresponding necessity for the importance of place. According to a new study co-authored by Xiao-Ping Chen, bonding and building social capital within organisations worsens when fostered through primarily virtual relationships. Chen's'study confirms that workers are far less effective at building relationships when they primarily communicate with colleagues virtually rather than in person. This deficiency in relationship-building can result in poorer team coordination, efficiency, and productivity. Wider

Current technological solutions and physical setups do not facilitate an equal and inclusive working environment that allows us to blend these two worlds. This raises the question; How can we create unstructured settings that enable spontaneity in a hybrid work environment?

network effects can also be seen when working remotely, in the office and in between. Research shows that our core network, for example people being part of the same team, intensifies when working with remote models, but our distant network and new connections shrinks. Whilst both virtual and in-person communications and network impacts hold distinct value to the creation of social and organisational capital, an appreciation of each person-place interaction must be considered in order to ensure that the ecosystem of work caters to the generation and nurturing of both existing and new relationships.

With the pandemic behind us, increased hybrid working is leading to a lack of unstructured and informal engagement. Current technological solutions and physical setups do not facilitate an equal and inclusive working environment that allows us to blend these two worlds. This raises the question; How can we create unstructured settings that enable spontaneity in a hybrid work environment? Github, an internet hosting and software development company, recently authored a remote playbook, providing helpful advice and guidelines to managers and employees alike. This included guidelines to make meetings optional with well documented notes and a clear agenda for those that are unable to make it and to ensure that those who met in person vs virtually are not held at a disadvantage. Virtual meeting technology has advanced beyond video calls and offers the possibility to meet in a virtual world where we are represented by avatars which we can customise to be accurate representations of how we look in real life - or not. Our avatar will be able to be anywhere, anytime; we can choose locations that inspire us, work environments that suit us, and collaborate with people who share similar interests and not just similar postal codes. These virtual worlds and structures will undoubtably change the design, use and function of our homes, offices, and routines. They will require new skills and mindsets and favor those who show high levels of resilience, adaptability and creativity. However, such alternate realities may also challenge us to think about what relationships really are; how they should be managed, nurtured and created. Despite the endless benefits of an increasingly technological world, when is too much technology, too much? Will we be able to unplug?

7 DYNAMIC 7
PHYSICAL & DIGITAL
OPTIMIZING THE INTERSECTION OF THE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL WORK ROUTINES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE ORGANISATION

As the intersection between the physical and the technological is increasingly blurring, smart functionalities seem to have permeated everything from our coffee machine, the air conditioning units and even our sleep. The proliferation of tech-enabled buildings is supporting our ability to reduce energy, improve user experience and is providing a wealth of data on employee work patterns and insights. Sensor technology is nothing new, but the ability to connect desk utilisation with environmental building management systems to triangulate data is. The combination of this technology is providing numerous opportunities to evaluate the interdependency of environment, employee behavior and satisfaction. Assuming significant enough data sets, these insights have the opportunity to predict employee satisfaction and behavior informing real estate and workplace strategy.

These opportunities are not only limited to in-person office environments. Of course, the pandemic provided an opportunity for us to en-masse test remote working and whilst many have returned to the office – most do so for a few days a week only. As such the technological interface between in-person and remote meetings (hybrid working) is driving the need for design changes to the office; how we collaborate and even how we share and disseminate knowledge. Asynchronous working across time zones is made possible by the physical location of work being superseded by a laptop and Wi-Fi connection. Of course, the value of the office is now more important than ever, however this is widely regarded as a place of connection rather than deep work; therefore, highlighting the assentation of technology from an enabler to a vessel in of itself.

As future technology grows, the position of tech as a place continues with immersive technologies replacing in person meetings, virtual reality replacing in-person product testing and meetings in the metaverse; all providing more opportunity for us to engage in discussion and work with those that are not limited by our immediate office or local geographical environment. Further, by expanding the location of work to be accessible from almost anywhere, opportunities are opening for those previously excluded from office-based work to reengage with the workforce. Whether it is a physical disability, geographical distance or language; technology is providing an alternative dimension of the new work paradigm that has the opportunities to literally break down walls.

6 DYNAMIC 6
ORGANISATIONAL & DIGITAL
THE BOUNDARIES OF A DATA-DRIVEN SOCIAL COMPANY

Can we create a pocket-size organisation? The term SATAWAD (secure, anytime, anywhere, any device) describes the desired modus operandi of a future organisation. When professionals leave their offices, they do not want to leave convenience behind.

As we are exploring new places, times, and devices to work from, we want our companies to ensure us that we are working in a secure environment. We want to be adding value when we feel most productive, from our device of choice. While advancing in this area, we are blurring the traditional work-life borders. To curate high-quality, personalised work environments and experiences, companies require more information who we are and what we want. Our favorite beverage, dietary requirements, and preferred temperature and how well we slept last night can all impact our experience of the workplace and ultimately, our output. To prevent the imaginable Black Mirror scenarios, we need to define where the lines can and maybe should be blurred and what part of our digital footprint is sacred. As our ability to

collect, interpret and utilise data within almost every aspect of our life increases, competing GDPR regulations render some useful insights inaccessible. But who is right? Access to universal data to improve our lives or the right to personal privacy? This also means that we need to decide where the responsibility lies to make the choices to blur or not to blur with the individual or with the organisations.

Furthermore, within the office tedious, repetitive processes can be automated and application letters can be pre-screened by recruitment algorithms. At the same time, we see protests in the street and in the online communities when retailers try to replace their store workers by machines and self-checkout options. Automation has the opportunity to reduce workload and free our time up for higher-knowledge work, but inevitably it will also replace jobs that are currently still desired. The question is, will we be able to execute a balanced transition to ensure that our social systems have sufficient time to adjust?

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OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE

Are we creating a working aristocracy? That question is born out of the realization that not all employees have the job, economic, social, and psychosocial resources to experience the dynamics described within this point of view. As we drive future work and lifestyle paradigms through the connectivity of technologies, "choosing where to work to suit our personal needs, it begs the question: "Are we spoiled? And what about everyone else?". The modern professional expects to be supported through digital products and workplace professionals, so that we might focus on other important activities. However, this highlights that we do not have the same number of hours in a day. Not everyone can achieve professional success, personal health, and wellbeing in the same way. We are not created equal, and this new work paradigm has the opportunity to increase the existing gap. It is not beyond believe that IoT, Big Data, robotisation and other innovations will enable the fortunate to constantly measure and improve themselves and their environment will have a direct and negative relationship with the eradication of entry-level, physical labour jobs, whether directly or through supply chains. Truly successful organisations need to ensure that they have a plan to provide improvements in working conditions, lifestyle, and support not only for those that occupy a desk in the head office, but also for manual, on-site or the

non-office-based workforce. Further, the convenience gained through technological advancements gives us a unique opportunity to look beyond the borders of the firm. With these time savings over more repeatable tasks, how can employees use this time to benefit our global society rather than just the organisations or themselves? Can we work with diverse supply chains to support smaller, minority owned businesses to provide services and products to multinational organisations? Can we share our knowledge with teenagers in developing countries, limited by geography and access to education by using technology to span across distances? Can we spend our time eradicating carbon consumption from our society? Our ability to understand that the global, social, and business challenges we are facing will not be solved from an isolated, ivory, silicon tower will determine whether we succeed to create a new, sustainable work paradigm.

As we all settle into the new normal following the last two years, the concepts of fairness, equality and consideration will rule our organisations and societies. Whilst we are currently embedding and adapting to the 7 dynamics of the new work paradigm, the inclusion of environment and society is likely to further disrupt the status quo and drive a redefinition of not only the way we work, but our lives in general.
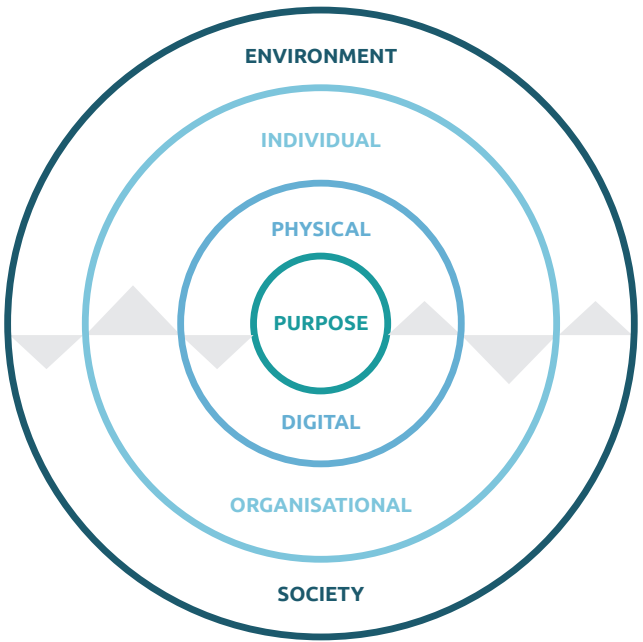
"It is purpose that created us. Purpose that connects us. Purpose that pulls us. That guides us. That drives us. It is purpose that defines us. Purpose that binds us. Because as we both know, without purpose, we would not exist."
Wachowski, L. & Wachowski, L. (Directors) – The Matrix reloaded (2003)

Table 3: The future new work paradigm

AN INVITATION TO EXPLORE AND DISCUSS HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR NEW WORKING PARADIGM

As we start to understand these new dynamics, we expect to see increased focus on employee informed workplaces and technology strategies. For any organisation who has "returned to the office" and is realising that what where you came back to is not what you left, an understanding of the dynamics raised in this paper and how they will impact the business is key to future success.

Both the authors and organisations involved in writing this point of view would welcome the opportunity to support you in helping you understand how the raised dynamics may impact your business. For real estate location, portfolio, and workplace strategy, please contact Cushman and Wakefield and for support on workforce and technology strategy support, please contact Capgemini Invent.

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9   https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/09/27/return-to-work-in-person-hybrid/
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At Capgemini Invent, we help our clients to embrace innovation and transformation to get the future they want. By combining strategy, technology, data science, and creative design expertise with an inventive mindset, we partner with our clients to innovate and transform their business, helping them navigate today, while plotting a course for the future. For further insights on the future new work paradigm discussed in this paper please contact:

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C&W's Occupier Strategy and Total Workplace team brings a wealth of strategic consulting and business transformation experience, as well as neuroscience, social anthropology, and environmental psychology. We believe that for workplaces to facilitate the next generation of work, we must first start with how humans work, build social capital and how to deploy to achieve business objectives. For further insights into the workplace elements discussed in this paper please contact:

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