Human-centric workstyle transformation

Fujitsu

WBCSD Future of Work case study

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Summary

As the workplace evolves we see an increasing understanding of the value of diverse talent, a normalizaition of remote working, an advancing digitization and an increased sense of employer reponsibility. Firms must correspondingly adjust their business practices to ensure they are flexible, supportive and inclusive. With the help of its human-centric approach, Fujitsu uses ICT and Artificial Intelligence to offer employees more satisfaction and flexibility while enabling productivity and decreasing lost time.

Company background

Fujitsu Ltd. is a Japanese multinational information technology equipment and services company headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. It has approximately 140,000 employees across the globe and its products and services are available in over 100 countries. For Fujitsu, empowering people and building a connected society are the mission of technology and innovation.

Future of Work challenge

Attracting and retaining diverse talent, preparing employees for new types of work, and differentiating from competitors to become an employer of choice are becoming paramount concerns for business.

Digitalization and globalization have driven a trend of companies having a global, diverse and off-site workforce. This is increasing the complexity of internal communication and collaboration, requiring companies to transform their processes and workstyles.

The rapid changes taking place in the world of work are creating unease among workers and society, which has increased the expectation for companies to show leadership and stewardship and a new sense of responsibility towards balancing technological advancements with impacts on individuals and society.

Business case

Fujitsu's investments in workplace technologies and its people-centric approach are aimed at strengthening its global competitiveness, stimulating digital innovation, and improving the work-life balance of employees. Moreover, streamlining and unifying IT processes across all Fujitsu employees (a process that began in 2010), has contributed greatly to employee enablement, reducing time lost to administration and inefficiencies. Fujitsu's Senior Vice President Takahiko Kouketsu explained that Fujitsu's internal unified communications platform has allowed for a reduction in travel representing "an annual saving of several hundred million yen for business travel expenses in Japan alone." Not to mention 20 new patent applications resulting from collaborations on internal social networks.

20

new patent applications

By prioritizing future of work as it relates to the company and society in general, four main drivers were identified: (1) Agility to doing business – meeting customer needs without restriction and without compromising on ICT security nor deliverables; (2) New business innovation and opportunities through sharing breakthroughs, best practices and insights among companies, customers and employees; (3) inclusivity and encouraging diversity in teams (i.e. regarding office arrangements, working hours, family care or disability) and; (4) operational cost management – for own operations as well as of its customers.

The future of work represents, above all, a valuable proposition for a diverse group of stakeholders. Employees, customers, customers' employees and society can benefit from digital inclusion, social mobility, and commitments to employ apprentices and graduates. Overall, this represents a development of SDG-enabling solutions.

"AI will empower people. Opportunities will come from exploration, discovering unfulfilled 'jobs to be done' and innovating ways of delivering them."

Fujitsu Technology and Service Vision 2018

Fujitsu's solution

The workforce and office of the future should be considered with respect to two key challanges. While business leaders cite strong leadership and talent as the key contributors to a successful digital transformation, they also note the fear of change as a serious inhibiting factor and a source of concern across workforces.

Fujitsu adopted a design thinking approach to tackle these challenges and address workforce transformation, giving rise to the *Human Centric Experience Design*. This threefold process of (1) vision creation, (2) concept development and, (3) business evaluation, can be leveraged to make businesses succeed in their mission.

Adopting a human-centric design thinking approach to advance workstyle transformation within its own company, Fujitsu identified work-life balance, communication, productivity and employee growth as areas for action. Subsequently, Fujitsu developed solutions to transform employees' workstyles and to prepare them for a highly digital future.

Embracing technology as an opportunity to empower workers' creativity, and to support their move to higher value tasks, Fujitsu developed a **human-centric artificial intelligence frame-work,** called *AI Zinrai*. Within this framework, AI is developed and deployed to support internal staff and external customers with image recognition, language processing, demand forecasting, knowledge search and classification as well as other repetitive and time-consuming tasks.

In response to the growing demand for an appropriate work-life balance, Fujitsu has promoted the development of programs that support all employees to be as effective as possible. This allows for flexibility in delivering both work duties and caring for family and dependents, an increasingly important area, particularly in ageing societies.

In addition, Fujitsu has been increasing its utilization of ICT, such as in the implementation of its **Global Communications Platform** and a Telework System, where employees are given flexibility in their choice of work location, be it from home, or from a more convenient office, as well as more flexible working hours where the specific role can accommodate it.

Similar telework practices were already in place in other regions and operating countries, such as the UK. But in Japan, culturally and historically, companies have been centered in office locations where teams sit together. With the enablement of technology and growing importance of embracing the values of diversity and inclusion, things are changing. This groundbreaking shift was supported by the workstyle recommendations issued by the Japanese Government in 2018.   Fujitsu Limited started applying telework within Japan in 2017, reaching all its approximately 35,000 employees in the country, and became one of the first Japanese organizations to adopt these working style practices.

Fujitsu's *Global Communications Platform* was launched in 2014 to improve internal communication across 500 Group companies and all Fujitsu staff around the world. The Platform
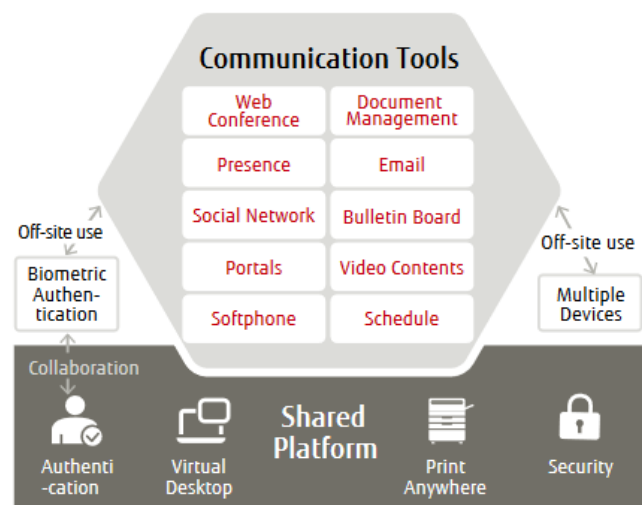

Figure 1: Elements of Fujitsu's Global Communication Platform

includes web conferencing and voice communication over the internet to facilitate high quality communication, while an in-house social network consisting of more than 4,500 communities enables people to share ideas and knowledge across departments. By connecting employees worldwide in real time, Fujitsu was able to reduce commuting and business travel expenses, and improved worker productivity and wellbeing.

Another software developed by Fujitsu for the purpose of transforming workstyles aims to strengthen management of time and overtime at work, and to transform employees' mindsets towards individual working styles that allow for a better work-life balance.

Fujitsu's software:

- Encourages managers and general employees to think together about efficient ways of working, keeping time in mind;
- Enables flexible ways of working, without being confined to a specific location, whether from home, a satellite office, on a business trip, or in transit;
- Manages time and overtime at work.

Based on its own experience with internal communication and Artificial Intelligence, Fujitsu launched the *Digital Global Communication Service* in 2016, providing support to customers from concept development through to the operation of a communications platform, and its *AI Zinrai* platform has become a key product in the Fujitsu portfolio.

Results

95% of the Fujitsu workforce actively participates in web conferencing, with 1.7 million meetings hosted on the platform during the fiscal year to March 2017.

The activities of around 4,500 communities on Fujitsu's internal social network resulted in 20 innovative patent applications and significant cost savings.

The future of work and related programs can also be viewed in a more holistic context with respect to sustainable development. By embracing new workstyles, some jobs can move from cities back to the countryside, providing economic development and sustainable economic growth to areas suffering from depopulation. This move would also enable more sustainable consumption patterns and agriculture practices, as well as reducing the environmental impact of daily commuting and the associated negative health effects of the pollution this generates. These factors contribute to SDGs 2, 3, 8, 9 and 11, respectively: Sustainable Food and Agriculture; Good Health and Wellbeing; Decent Work and Sustainable Economic Growth; Sustainable Industry, Innovation and Infratructure; Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Key success factors

Human centered approach

Creating a people centric vision and approach to innovation and co-creation of digital transformation solutions enabled Fujitsu to develop a powerful narrative on how a positive future of work can be realized. A people centric approach also facilitated to shift the focus on employee experience first, which by default resulted in better value to customers.

Transforming mindsets

Changing the perception of employees, customers and society from technology being a challenge to embracing technology as an opportunity remains a key success factor to increase social acceptance of technological innovation in the workspace.

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