

Transformation & Improvement “The Digital Workplace”

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An organisations “Digital Agenda” or “Digital Transformation” sets out its vision, aims, plan and status for leveraging current and emerging “Digital Technologies” to attain its business goals and vision in the “Digital Era”. An integral part of any “Digital Agenda is the “Digital Workplace”. The “Digital Workplace is the eco-system that Individual and Team Stakeholders engage with and leverage “Digital Technologies” in carrying out their roles.

This paper defines and elaborates both the “Digital Agenda” and the “Digital Workplace” and demonstrates the relationship between both and the mutual dependencies.

It provides a high level guide to managers and leaders as to how to approach implementing the relevant “Digital Workplace”

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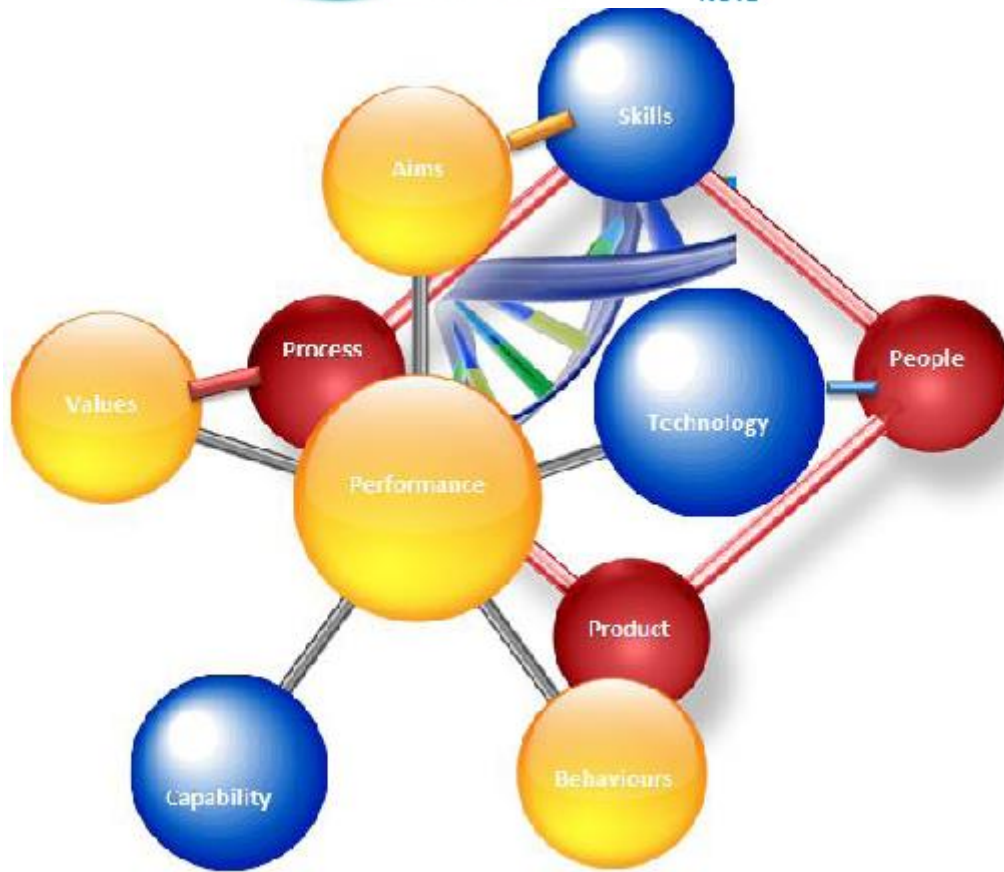
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Introduction

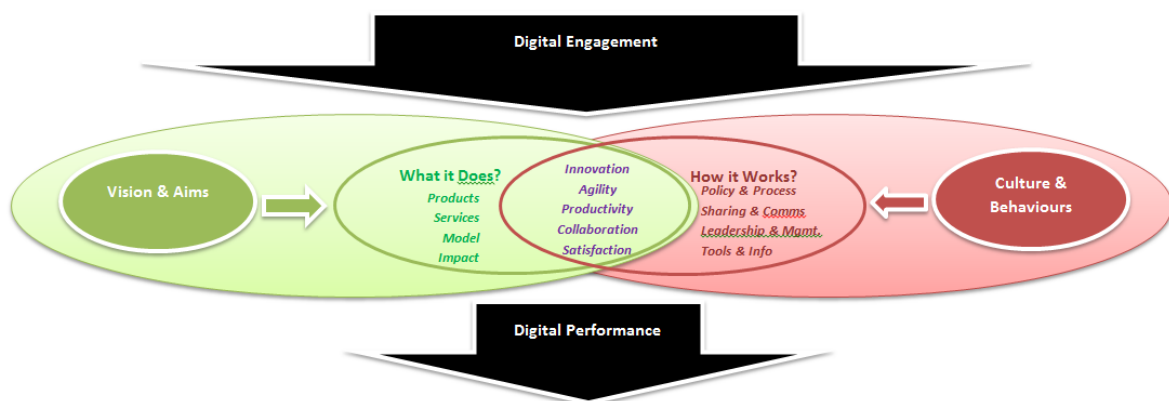
“**The Digital Agenda**” for an organisation is a catch all term for “**Digital Business**” &/or “**Digital Transformation**” and related technology adoption. It is often associated with terms and discussions that relate to “**SMACIT**”, **S**ocial, **M**obile, **A**nalytics, **C**loud and the **I**nternet of **T**hings. Though “**SMACIT**” really only relates to the current hot technologies and their function/application. So we need to have a clearer definition as to what exactly we mean when we invest time and resources on the organisations “**Digital Agenda**”. So let us consider a better description that sets an appropriate scope for any organisation to set and implement a “**Digital Agenda**”, we can then focus on “**The Digital Workplace**” as a key component of it.

Description/Definition of “Digital Agenda”

An organisations “**Digital Agenda**” describes its vision, strategies ,and plans in the context of current and future performance and value it creates for stakeholders through leveraging Digital Technologies & Ecosystems. It reflects the roadmap for transforming “What is does?” & “How it works?” to achieve its aims by having clarity on the developing relationship between its physical and virtual resources. Think of it as the DNA of the organisation, i.e. the coded messages that make up the characteristics of the organisation and how leadership engineer the changes to this DNA to achieve better outcomes through “**Digital Technologies & Ecosystems**”. Another view might be “How does an organisation release its Talent?” through “**Digital Technologies & Ecosystems**” to enable Innovation, Productivity, Agility and Stakeholder Satisfaction leading to “**New & Improved**” Business Models, Products, Services, Practices & Capabilities.



Every organisation is different , they have different business models, industries, processes, markets, cultures, aims and capabilities so their “**Digital Agendas**” will differ, reflecting their DNA and how they wish to change it. That said the structure and make-up as in the image above will be similar as will their access to “**SMACIT**” and other Digital & Information technologies.



As we consider the organisations “**Digital Agenda**” the two key questions above “What is does? & How it works?” expand to include the individual view in the context “What they do? and How they Work?” which determines their “**Digital Workplace**”.

“What they do ?” is about roles and how they might change as a result of the “Digital Agenda”

“How they work ?” is about practices and how they might change as a result of the “Digital Agenda”

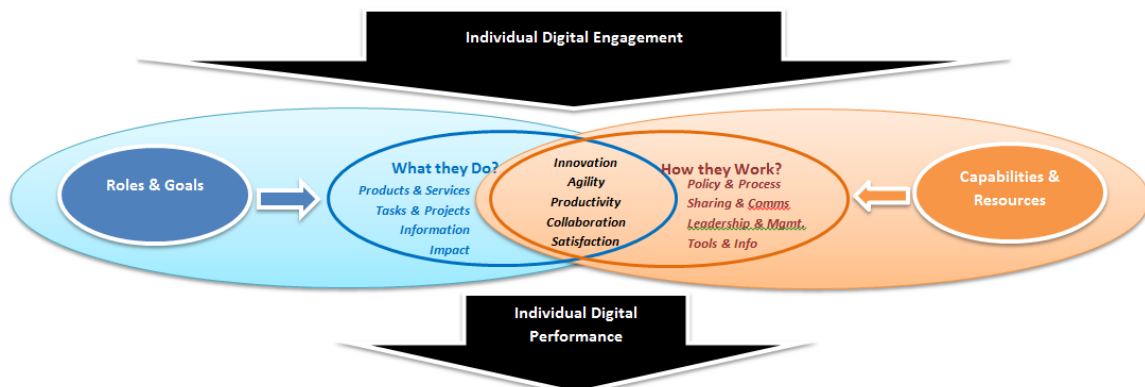
Thus leading to what their “Digital” workplace might look like?

“The Digital Workplace”

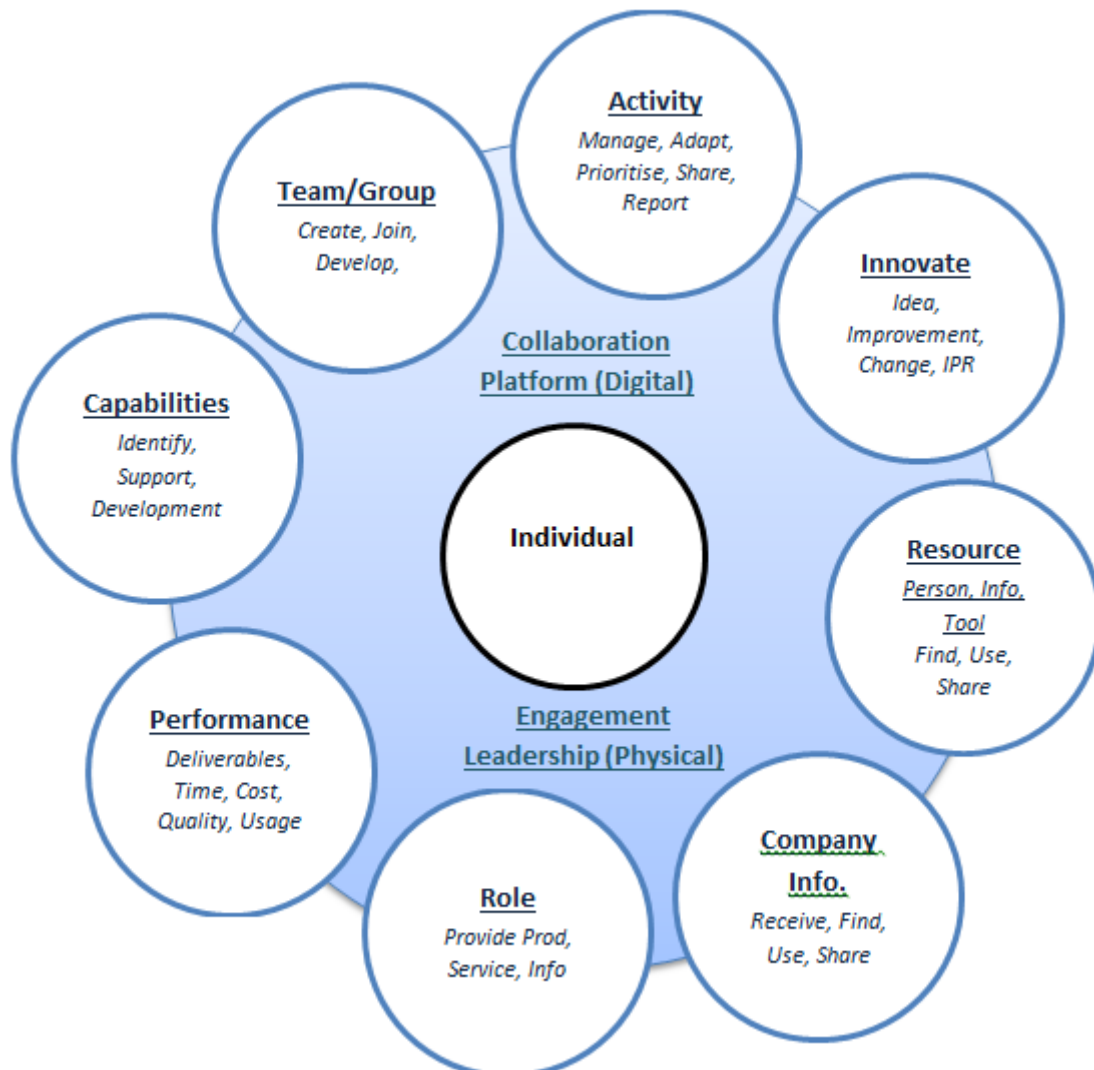
The “Digital Workplace” describes the people based eco-system as it exists today and as it evolves to develop & support an organisations “Digital Agenda”. In particular it is about how individuals interact with each other and with machines ? (In the broad sense – Digital Technologies & Eco-systems) to create and, add value for the organisation and its stakeholders, and achieving its aims and performance standards. Leadership must ensure that individual stakeholders are enabled to participate in the “Digital Workplace” (I use the words stakeholder & individual rather than staff or employee, because in the virtual digital organisation there are likely to be participants who exist outside the formal organisation). The “Digital Workplace” is that part of an organisations DNA where the individual resides.

Digital Technologies are changing the way we work and communicate and blurring the boundaries between work & home life coupled with multi-generational workforce who have different capabilities and experience that must be aligned and leveraged as an organisation adopts emerging new technologies.

As an organisation leverages Digital Technologies how individuals work? and interact changes and when we consider the opportunities that the organisations Digital Roadmap enables we need to consider those capabilities (Skills & Knowledge) individuals require to be able to participate in the “Digital Workplace”.



Now let us take a look at the “Individuals ecosystem” as it relates to their engagement and effectiveness:



Traditional Leadership is what assures the potential for employees to have a positive engagement with the company and its business, understanding their role and value in the big picture and having access to the supports that enable them continuously increase that value. The primary enabler for the employee to engage and contribute relates to the ecosystem resources available and in the “Digital Era” collaboration platforms and tools play a major role, often integrating traditional point solution employee productivity and support tools into a single integrated portal with extensive communications and sharing functions.

Let us now look at the constructs above:-

Role:- This is the core of the individuals mandate and commitment, it relates to the capabilities, activities and tasks that define the deliverables/outputs the company requires from the individual. Tangible and Intangible outputs such as Products, Components, Artefacts, Services & Information as examples and the related performance standards. In

the Digital Workplace many aspects of the core and support activities for a role will leverage technologies and require the requisite “**Digital Competencies**”, these may be as simple as having access to user friendly applications to acquiring more complex skills around the development and application of technologies.

Performance:- Elaborates current and target performance levels the company needs, employee commits to, and both aspire to continually exceed. It is usually broad and covers balanced score card role related performance as well as employee competence development. It can provide benchmarking and sharing to leverage the performance characteristics across the organisation. In the Digital Workplace the ability to capture and present performance data is greatly enhanced and Business Intelligence (Analytics) tool can be powerful in enabling individuals and teams drive performance improvement.

Capabilities:- The individual must look at their eco-system and consider its ability to enable the individual perform at their best to achieve their role functions and objectives, this includes competencies (Skills & Knowledge). Continually seeking to improve these organisation & individual eco-system capabilities. In the Digital workplace the Individual may become aware of new technologies, or be provided with new technologies as part of their process and role and develop these capabilities to enable innovation and performance improvement.

Team/Group:- Though individuals may carry out their role alone, they exist and depend on teams and groups, these may be the functional team they are part of in the organisation, project teams, or special interest groups. In the Digital Workplace how teams Form, Strom, Norm & Perform is greatly enhanced by Digital Technologies, creating a more agile organic culture that can quickly react to and adapt to opportunities and change.

Activity:- Describes the tasks and groups of tasks that the individual carries out to achieve their role functions and to engage with their ecosystem. In the Digital Workplace they may have access to a range of Digital Tools to plan, track, manage and execute their tasks. Digital Transformation often requires the acquisition to competencies to apply new applications and technologies to their tasks and the impact it may have on changing their eco-system.

Innovation:- Innovation is not only about finding and using current and new Digital Technologies, but leveraging those technologies in the Digital Workplace to improve the level of value creation by the Individual in their eco-system and for the organisation overall. Digital Technology can enable innovation and must be driven by the overall aims of the company and the individuals role function. The Individual may create new or improved Products and Capabilities improving Agility, Responsiveness, Outcomes and Stakeholder Satisfaction.

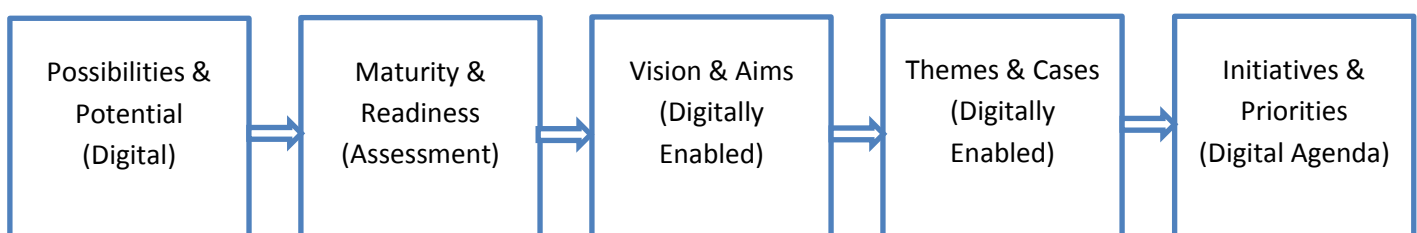
Resources:- There are extensive resources available in most organisations “Men , Materials, Methods, Machines, Knowledge and Information”. “Digital Technologies” enable the

Individual to Search, Find, Share, Adapt and Use these resources more effectively and efficiently. These Resources are organisation Assets and leveraging technology allows every individual to improve the return on these Assets again improving responsiveness, sharing best practice and enhancing re-use.

Company Information:- Refers to all the relevant knowledge and information Assets in the organisation, but specifically here we are concerned about the Individuals engagement, alignment and commitment to the organisation, its teams and stakeholders. In the “Digital Workplace” the physical location of individuals and teams may be distributed and many may be in mobile roles moving about day to day. Sharing Policies, Procedures, News, and Priorities is an essential part of the engagement process, as is enabling Individuals and Teams contribute to the knowledge and information Assets. Digital Communications & Collaboration Tools can play a major role in employee engagement, motivation and alignment.

Setting and organisations “Digital Agenda”

The process for setting an organisations “Digital Agenda” requires the leaders to do some thinking outside the box , Naturally they must create a Business/Organisation Vision and aims, but before we dive into what the primary control and driver that sets the agenda, we should acknowledge that the pace of change and breadth in emerging technologies and their application may mean they lack an appreciation of what is possible (and relevant of course) either because of normal inertia around the way the organisation is led or managed or lack of knowledge and understanding of the Digital Technology, its ecosystems and its application potential. Often education and awareness is a starting point and this can be provided by internal or external subject matter experts. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into too much details, however below we discuss some of the main points. Another approach is to have an expert facilitate the leadership discussion and process in setting the Digital Agenda. A high level approach to the overall process is shown below:-



Digital Technology (Legacy & New)

Rather than focus on “SMACIT” which is limiting, the key considerations should include:-

Access:- How? Where? Whom? What? & When? Individuals (Use case personalities) who engage with our organisation and the Devices that need to be interconnected to enable applications.

Applications:- Software enabled Features, Functions & Tools that do things? Or enable things to be done? COTS, Bespoke, SaaS etc.

Information:- Data & Information required by Individuals (use cases), Devices & Applications to achieve the aims of the organisation and its processes.

Infrastructure:- Virtual & Physical (Platforms) that host Applications & Information, where they reside? How they connect? How they are accessed?

Models:- Business, Operational, Privacy, Data, Security and Technological, The architecture, relationships, rules and dependencies, Standards and integration.

Capabilities:- Competencies (Skills & Knowledge), Processes, Men, Materials, Methods, Machines, Money & Measurements.

Now let us consider “SMACIT” and what each means, bearing in mind there are many other technologies and/application categories that are also part of the “Digital Agenda” but as the SMACIT terms are in widespread use it’s good to elaborate a little.

Social:- Here we are talking about those technologies that are enabling changes in behaviours, How we work? How we live?. They enable new and improved communications, collaboration, products and models. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram represent public social platforms as an example. SharePoint, IBM Connections, Drupal, PBWorks etc.

Mobile:- Here we are talking about devices that enable mobile stakeholders have access to engage with the organisation, its information, people, systems and products/services. Key considerations are the device type itself e.g. Mobile Phone, PDA, Tablet, etc. , Its platform Windows, Android , IOS being most common and the applications that run on the device whether purchased, free or bespoke/configured for the organisation.

Analytics:- Tools and Applications that enable users to create business value from the organisations, shared or public data. Terms such as Big Data, Business Intelligence etc. are often associated with Analytics. There are many different types of analysis and presentation, Forbes lists 18 in their [paper](#), some popular general tools include IBM Watsonanalytics (SaaS), SAP (Business Intelligence) BI, Qlik view, Microsoft BI as examples.

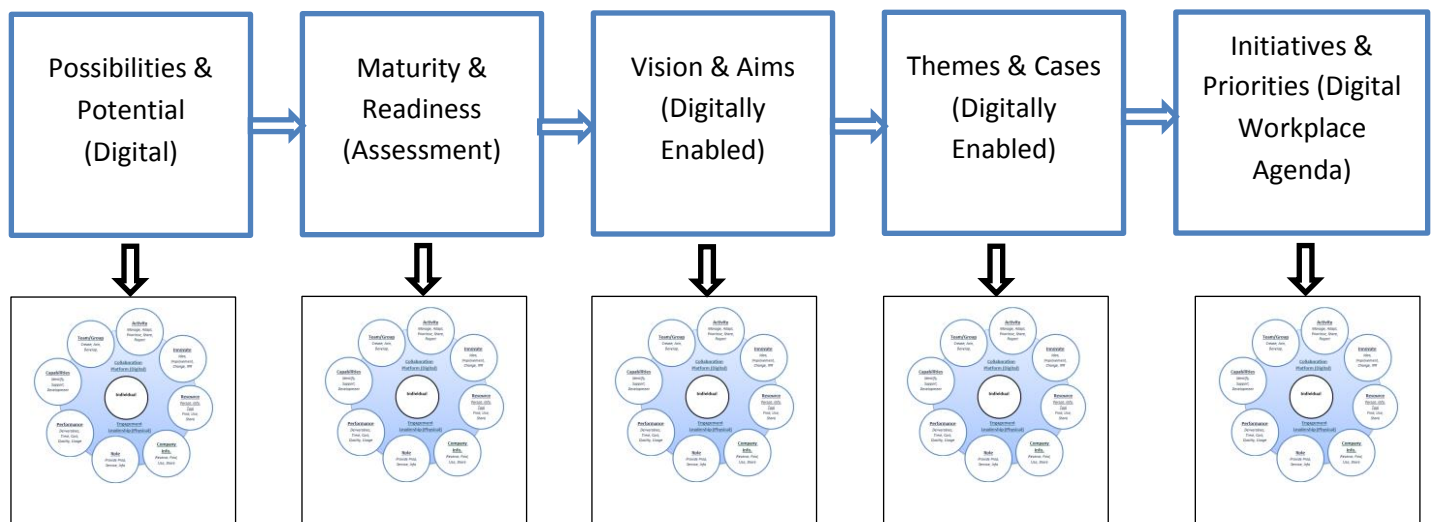
Cloud:- The cloud is best described as a public, private or hybrid set of IT virtual resources that exist outside the individuals or organisations physical location and if relevant ownership

and control. The Cloud consists of interconnected and shared hardware such as servers, Middleware and applications. Cloud services are described in many ways and some of the popular terms are Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), Software as a Service (SaaS). They enable greater flexibility to scale and reduce the cost and use of IT resources to reflect demand and use and can reduce capital expenditure by moving to more variable cost models.

The Internet of Things (IoT):- This is the evolution of the internet to include the integration and use of the resources on and accessible through the Internet by machines, Devices and Sensors. Creating the level of automation, remote control, data and information access to end user applications. It is often associated with connecting mobile, remote and harsh environment devices , however it is much broader than that and includes consumer products, Industrial products and many other types of device connectivity.

Understanding & Transforming the “Digital Workplace”

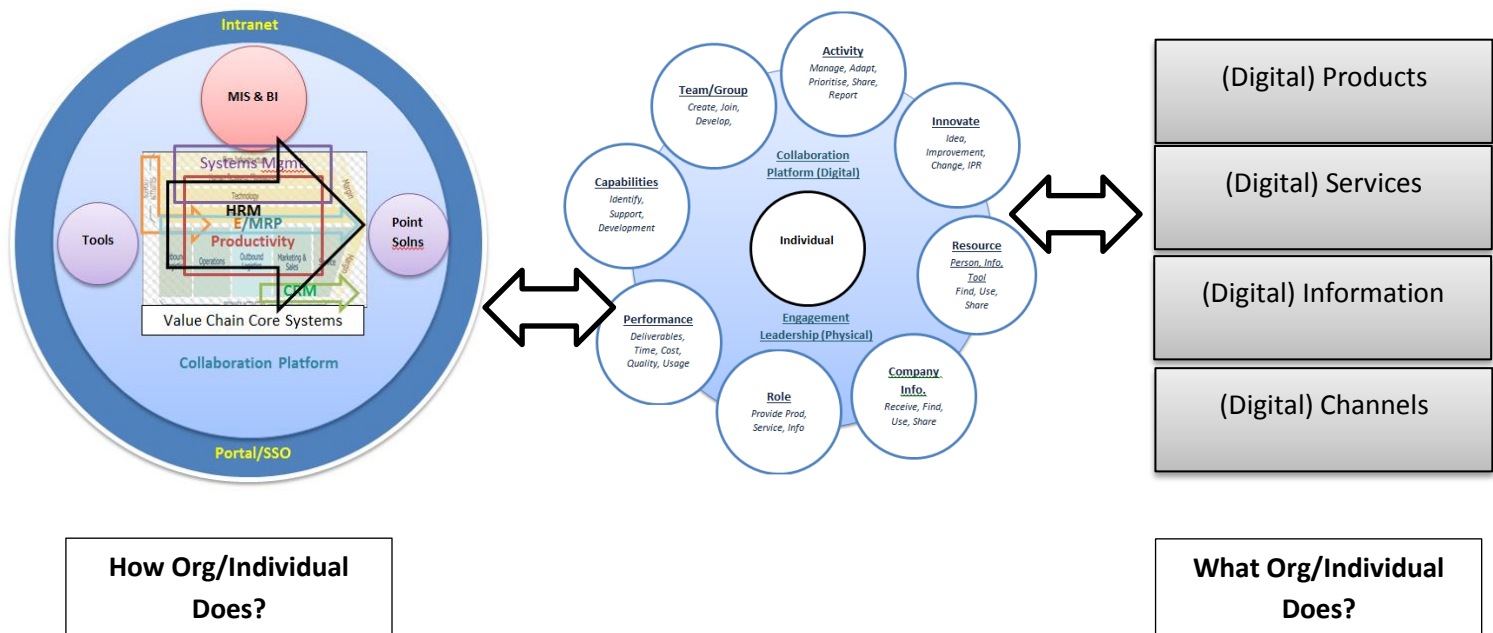
As part of any organisations “**Digital Agenda**” it needs to consider the individual eco-system and how it may be impacted as well as leveraged through “**Digital Technologies**”. It is a critical subset of the “**Digital Agenda**”. A similar model may be used to understand and transform the Individuals Digital eco-system in alignment with the organisations “**Digital Agenda**”.



What we are considering is transforming and improving the organisations and individuals performance through leveraging “**Digital Technologies**” taking into consideration of both the impact of the organisations “**Digital Roadmap**” and the opportunities to release the individuals talent and enhance their satisfaction. The success of an Innovative digitally mature organisation is not just through considering the technology applications that will enable transformation and improvement but clearly considers each individual (user personality – e.g. user role and intent) contribution and experience is the overall program.

An individual's "Digital Eco-System"

Below is an image of how an individual's Digital eco-system might look. These days organisations often have a single sign on via their portal to all IT resources, in some cases they will have a single vendor provided enterprise applications platform, in other cases they will have a range of platforms with some level of integration, most organisations will also have individual and team point solutions that specifically related to productivity or role specialist function.



Conclusions

An organisations "Digital Agenda" and/or "Transformation" has a strong relationship and dependency with its "Digital Workplace Agenda". Because Digital Products and Services (Outcomes for the organisation – What the organisation does?) and Its internal Digital applications and tools (How it does it?) touch each individual stakeholder and team, it is essential to have Digital strategies, Plans and implementations aligned between both "Agendas". The key questions for any organisation are:-

Have we an appropriate "Digital Agenda" in place? And,

Are our Individual & Team Stakeholders ready to engage and leverage current and new technologies?



Related Papers & Links

[@Note 13 “Pitfalls & CSF’s for Social Collaboration”](#)

[@Note 19 “Creating Digital Advantage” “The Digital Agenda”](#)

[@Note 20 “Digital Business Maturity & Performance”](#)

[@Note 21 “The 8 States of Digital Business Maturity”](#)

[@Note 24 “Collaborative Performance Management Model”](#)

[@Note 27 “Digital Value Improvement Model”](#)

[Gaining Traction & Results from Social Collaboration Platforms](#)