Podcast 36: – Future of Work

You are listening to HCLTech Digital Workplace podcast, the place where industry experts, analysts and veterans help us identify, understand, and prepare for the upcoming digital workplace technologies and trends. If you haven't subscribed to the channel already, do it now for regular updates. This episode starts in three, two, one.

Nishant – Hello everyone and a very warm welcome! I am Nishant Sharma, Senior Manager at HCLTech and this episode is going to be interesting as our guests will be talking about the future of digital workplace. Our guest for today is **Craig Baty, Distinguished Lead Analyst for ISG Research**, and author of several ISG Provider Lens reports on the Future of Work.

Thank you, Craig, for joining us today.

Craig – Thank you for this opportunity, Nishant on the HCLTech Digital Workplace Podcast. I am looking forward to our conversation.

Nishant –

- Last three years have accelerated the evolution in work and workplaces, by dramatically shifting the norms for where and when work gets done.
- That was enabled through adoption and usage of digital tools for collaboration and work, cloud technology, and more broadly by increased digitalization and automation.
- But while it might be premature to declare the pandemic 'over', attention for most business has shifted from how we keep things on the road to what comes next – to how we build on the shift in technology and practices to make work better. Better for people, for communities and even for the environment.
- As we look to the future the focus is on hybrid – on leveraging the best of distributed work in combination with smarter use of physical place and of technology.

Nishant – During this podcast, we'll take a closer look at the return to physical locations alongside remote or distributed work, and how that can be assisted by technology. We'll also explore how, alongside benefits like better work-life balance, this can help organisations achieve their ecofriendly business initiatives and ambitions, like committing to the Net Zero goal, which becomes even more hassle-free and effective with our solution on sustainability.

And we'll also talk about the role played by digitisation, automation, shift left strategy and augmentation, for the workforce of the (near) future.

Therefore, to kick things off we will start with our Podcast.

Nishant -   So, Craig, what do we mean by hybrid workforce? What changes in this model were triggered by the pandemic and is organizational culture going to play a critical role here?

Craig -
- Introduce ISG predictions (aim here is to humanise the research themes with relatable, real-world examples using questions below)
- Hybrid is more than home and office, but all kinds of different workplaces (inc non-desk-based) plus augmentation with technology
- This is about defining this for the audience at home – we want to focus on the workplace and what hybrid means for organisations

Nishant - The pandemic saw us moving from a crisis mode, but after three years practices and attitudes have permanently shifted and are much stabilized. However, we are now in an evolved space and the rapidly transforming 'new normal' requires the best of both worlds, remote as well as physical.

Nishant - Craig, reading the previous year predictions what struck me was the need to focus equally on technology, people and physical place. Why do you see physical places playing such a central role in hybrid work?

Craig -
- Emphasize on specifics of ISG report on Australia
- Importance of relationship-building and building/sustaining culture

Nishant - So as organisations think about the return to workplaces – of all kinds – how can they balance flexibility and agility with resilience and security?

Craig -
- Borderless office
- Three pillars of work life shift
- Could also talk here about community/culture, relationship building
- Do we want to talk about wellbeing here? Yes

Nishant -   One of things what keeps us coming to work every day is the relationships we have with others. We enjoy being part of a team. How do we build or sustain relationships in a hybrid world?

Craig -
- Organisation culture, national culture, performance management
- Trust – shift in power balance towards employees ("great resignation"/sellers' market for talent). Elevated employee expectations/reduced willingness to put up with poor working conditions.
- Used to base life around work – now work revolves around life

Nishant - People want to work for orgs that are doing the right thing. Hybrid helps to achieve this. For example, reduced travel (commuting, to meetings) led to reduction in emissions, improved air quality in many cities. Moreover, with HCLTech's robust Behaviour Change Management Framework (BCMF) and our collaboration solutions in place, we are trying to ensure that there is an organisation-wide uniformity maintained in communication with and amongst the workforces.

The episode-1 of HCLTech Digital Workplace Podcast on Future of Work has ended. We will resume our insightful discussion with Craig in episode 2.

Stay tuned for this.