DIGITAL WORKPLACES
BRINGING TO LIFE A NEW WAY OF WORKING
THE WORKPLACE IS CHANGING

Digital transformation is redefining the way Accenture works every day, creating the opportunity to rethink how almost everything is done. This includes transforming the role of the traditional office into digital workplaces.

“The office used to be a place to get work done,” says Jason Warnke, managing director, Accenture Internal IT. “But times have changed. The growing digitization and globalization of work are creating new paradigms for the workplace. The workplace is now becoming a destination where people, technology and place come together to enable multi-mode ways of working.”

To drive the transformation of Accenture’s workplaces, a team of individuals from internal IT and Accenture’s global Workplace group were given a blank slate in how to shape new, digital workplaces. The ground-breaking journey ahead will impact Accenture’s global network of major locations and the delivery centers over the next five years and beyond.

USER-EXPERIENCE, TECHNOLOGY-LED DESIGN

What will Accenture’s digital workplaces be like? How will they empower Accenture people in new ways and even change the way they work? How will Accenture spaces support delivering innovative services? The internal IT/Workplace team addressed these and other questions as they began shaping a vision and strategy for the design of the next generation of office space. The team collaborated with Fjord, part of Accenture Interactive, who brought their skills in user experience and design thinking. From the start, the team recognized that what they were shaping was a new workplace experience with technology playing a major role.

“The vision we are creating for the Accenture digital workplace,” says Jane Flynn-Royko, Global Workplace Strategy Lead for Accenture, “is to enable an experience that is people driven, technology forward, and ‘place making’—a destination that people are drawn to.” This vision translates into places where technology meets physical space to create the experiential. Accenture’s digital workplaces will support environments that focus on the user experience, inspire innovation and creativity, support collaboration and enhance client and team engagement and interaction.

The strategy is to lead with the technology that will meet these user experience goals. “What differentiates Accenture’s approach, we believe, is using design thinking in shaping our spaces and then solutioning them with technology,” says Paul Ellwood, Global Solution Architect for Accenture. “Not only do we appeal to users’ needs, but our approach includes a good number of standard products so that when our people go to different Accenture sites, they know exactly how to use the technology.”
The team is leveraging Accenture’s significant investments in social, mobile, pervasive video, broadcasting and secure network together with leading immersive technology solutions. “We look to leverage a mix of standard and emerging technologies that are fit for purpose—all while focusing on business value, customer experience and supportability,” says Tina Kucherovsky, Digital Workplace Strategy Lead for Accenture.

The technologies chosen are organized into a menu of options. These offerings are broad ranging—spanning scalable and secure network, video and broadcast, application services, IoT sensors, high-end audio and video collaborative devices, and connected devices and applications. Examples include Accenture’s deployment of Microsoft Surface Hubs for touch-enabled team collaboration, Aruba beacons for navigating within an office, sensors for gathering real-time data about a building’s energy use, and immersive rooms with high-end sound and video walls that provide touch-enabled collaboration. The intent is to mobilize innovative solutions to engage clients and employees. “With the mission of leading with innovation, we considered what was available at Accenture and what was possible, while at the same time evaluating which technologies were fit for purpose based on use cases we developed,” says Monika Sawyer, Digital Solution Architect Principal for Accenture.

Many of the technology selections are based on the insights, experience and results gained in working with teams around the world in developing Accenture’s diverse types of spaces, including Innovation Centers, Liquid Studios and Digital Studios/Hubs. One such center is The Dock, in Dublin, a multidisciplinary research and incubation hub. It contains thousands of sensors that intuitively control everything from heating to lighting by leveraging a cloud-enabled IoT platform (CPaaS). Additionally, its AV infrastructure connects all LCDs displays to show the same content, enabling employees to more easily connect with each other and with clients. A custom-built mobile app lets a mobile device serve as an employee’s badge to gain access to the building, request and manage meeting and work spaces, and surface what people and skills are at their disposal.

Video broadcasting capability is also deployed at The Dock, allowing anyone to record videos or broadcast town halls across the office or externally from this location.

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The local team has also deployed a custom kiosk solution that informs but also engages employees to interactively connect on fun facts or things happening around the office. When a fit, these and other technologies will be leveraged across other Accenture locations.

For the design of a digital workplace—whether a new or existing Accenture space—a logical yet flexible approach needed to be developed to ensure usability, consistency, and to stay within budgets. The answer was to shape a universal approach that encompasses core elements, but one that allows for local expression. For the core element of space types, for example, the team designed various types of work space zones, such as meeting rooms, multipurpose team spaces, movable and wireless workspaces, and client zones. A specific local location team then determines what types of zones to incorporate based on its local business needs.

With Accenture offices and operations in more than 200 cities and 55 countries, Accenture’s corporate real estate team was instrumental in defining a three-tiered approach to the development of corporate space, with tiers categorized by a mix of size and function. Investments were then tailored to tier types to provide consistent client and employee experiences within each space type. “In order to deliver this new vision, our IT process needed to rotate to support ‘the new,’” says Christy Nelson, Digital Workplace Delivery for Accenture. “This required Accenture to create a comprehensive approach for project delivery and operational excellence.”

**WORKING IN “THE NEW”**

Creating digital workplaces is one of many aspects of creating a digital-first enterprise for Accenture. “Digital workplaces will help Accenture people connect and innovate in new ways that best serve Accenture clients,” notes Warnke. “They will not only provide more capabilities for getting work done, but also enable a level of innovation previously not possible by knitting the physical with the virtual to amplify the innovation experience.” Digital workplaces will also help in attracting and retaining new and existing talent. And they will help Accenture remain competitive and show its organizational capability of working in “the new.”

As Accenture pursues its digital workplace journey, it will be able to move at a fast pace while undertaking new space development due to the company’s already significant technology investments. Plans are to continue transforming Accenture’s pipeline of office spaces for the next five years—and beyond, because with digital, the journey is never ending.

The internal IT/Workplace team continues to evaluate the user experience journey as it learns from existing build-out efforts and plans for the next ones. “We’re always thinking with a user design hat on,” adds Warnke. “And we’re increasingly using analytics to understand how to design and optimize future spaces.”

**ABOUT ACCENTURE**

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 401,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at www.accenture.com.