

The New Everyday: Episode 3

Eileen Burbidge

Digital change swept the UK business landscape in early 2020.

Customers needed support without being able to visit physical stores or offices.

Employees dialled into work from their kitchen tables and their bedrooms.

Businesses previously used to paper-based processes were forced to digitise practically overnight.

We're here to talk about the effects of all this digital transformation.

Welcome to 'The New Everyday' with me Eileen Burbidge, a podcast from Virgin Media Business.

Today's topic is *Jumpstarting Digital Change*, where we're looking in more detail at the opportunities brought about by the rise in hybrid working and how digital services are creating happier employees, more satisfied customers and more productive businesses.

Joining me today we've got Janine Chamberlin, the UK Country Manager and VP of Global Clients Programme at LinkedIn.

Janine is responsible for leading LinkedIn's business in the UK, helping them to connect, learn and find new opportunities.

She has written and spoken extensively on new ways of working in the digital world.

Hi, Janine.

Janine Chamberlain

Hi, thanks.

Eileen Burbidge

Also with us today is Natalie Nelson, Technical Advice Lead for NatWest Mentor.

Day to day Natalie works in the space of horizon scanning, where her teams consult with clients on new trends and considerations. Prior to this, Natalie has 10 years of experience in HR at NatWest advocating for new ways of working.

Great to have you here, Natalie.

Natalie Nelson

Thanks.

Eileen Burbidge

So we can't talk about digital transformation without talking about hybrid working today.

And recent research from Virgin Media O2 Business, done in partnership with the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), found remote working has accelerated digital change.

Remote working has risen from 1.4 days to 2.3 days a week as a direct result. So I'm really curious to hear from both of you.

And maybe we can start with Janine first. In your respective company, so at LinkedIn, what was the approach to hybrid working before the pandemic? And then how's that changed now subsequent to it?

Janine Chamberlain

Yeah, it's an interesting statement as well. Is it that digital change is fuelling remote working, or remote working is fuelling the digital change?

So yeah, it's changed a lot. Obviously.

I think the pandemic has certainly proved that we can do it, that we can work remotely and we can still be productive.

And at LinkedIn, certainly, if I think back two years ago, quite frankly, it would be less common to work remotely or even to work predominantly at home, as opposed to being in the office. We very much have an office-based culture, we've always celebrated collaboration, being together, making sure that we have that connection.

So we've got some really fantastic office spaces where everybody, I think, always really enjoyed coming together.

Now, fast forward to where we are today.

We can hear from our employees, we listen to them through surveys, that still about 90% of our employees want to be in the office some of the time, but almost nobody wants to be in the office all of the time.

And so it's really about bringing those two worlds together.

We see most people coming into the office just one or two days a week and then working remotely the rest of the time, which is a stark contrast to where we were two years ago.

Eileen Burbidge

What about you, Natalie? What differences or how was it before the pandemic? And how is it now?

Natalie Nelson

I think it's actually a lot of similarities from what Janine shared in terms of how LinkedIn works.

I think pre-pandemic in NatWest, it was pretty mixed across teams in terms of, we did have some people in some roles that would work in what we now refer to as a hybrid way.

So working from home, but probably more predominantly, maybe one day, a week, two days a week.

There were lots of teams that wouldn't have worked at home at all.

And you started to touch on, I guess the culture change.

And one of the things that I think is quite interesting to think about is that culture of presenteeism, so I think culturally, maybe in the past, there is an expectation of if people are in the office, they're seen to be productive.

And I guess, leaders as well may think, 'Oh, actually, if I can see my teams in front of me working, I know what they're doing in terms of productivity'.

So that the culture in terms of leadership and how we need to manage teams moving forward, has changed overnight.

So in NatWest, everybody started to work from home apart from obviously there was some roles, such as a branch staff who have never been home workers and won't be prior to the national lockdown.

So we made that decision that that was what we were going to do and luckily, we had the technology set up to enable that.

But quite quickly, leaders in the business had to think, right, I'm now managing teams remotely, how do I check in with them? How do I know that they're doing their job, and they're not out doing washing or, you know, looking after their children? But of course, people were looking after their children, because the children were also in lockdown, it's been a really interesting time.

But now we've come through post pandemic we've been really clear in terms of strategy.

So we have remote-first workers, which I fall into that category, so very much knowledge workers. And we generally go into the office a couple of days a month for collaboration. So not to go and sit on Zoom meetings, but actually to meet people face to face.

And there's real value in that. And I think that's something that Janine mentioned, as well.

We also have fully hybrid workers. So they may be individuals that maybe are in customer facing roles.

And we have some roles that need to be in the office permanently due to regulatory reasons, or because of the physical environment that they need to do their job. So quite a range.

Eileen Burbidge

No, it's really interesting. And I noticed when you were describing the sort of pre and post, you know, situation at NatWest, you talked about how the office-based sort of culture was a lot about checking in, being productive and feeling like one could be more productive if you could see other team members being productive.

And so that really means that managers not only had to, you know, get used to new ways of working and being aspiring leaders, and managing people remotely. But they also had to figure out like you said, how to sort of gauge but also encourage greater productivity with remote and sort of hybrid situations.

And the other thing that I'm sort of recognising is you said, after the pandemic, you now go back to the office and try to have team days in order to collaborate and sort of do more together.

That also brings me to thinking about the fact that there was some other research from that same CEBR study, which also said that of those who have an opinion about remote working, 90% of the employees say that it helps them to build their working day around other commitments, because that improves their work life balance, it saves them time and money, it reduces their commute.

And so as a consequence, employee satisfaction rates are up 3.6%. Is that what you're also seeing at NatWest and LinkedIn?

Janine Chamberlain

Actually, there's a few thoughts coming up for me here. So first and foremost, absolutely. I think this is driven by employees who want this flexibility. They've had this flexibility over the last 18 months, and they don't want to let go of this flexibility where, wherever it is possible.

Do I see a direct correlation between job satisfaction?

I find it hard to give an absolute yes to that, because what I'm also seeing is people are quite drained, I think, after the pandemic, and the ongoing pressure of the pandemic, and now having to think about 'should I actually go into the office, what if I don't show up, and my colleague does show up'?

We've done some research into this. And two fifths of workers in the UK specifically have said that they are concerned there is still a stigma around working from home, and that they're worried that their boss might favour the person who shows up in the office and is directly visible to them.

So I think during the pandemic, it was a fantastic level playing field. Everybody was working remotely, and therefore managers had no choice but to treat everybody in the same way.

But now that we are mixing these two fields, I think we're still learning how to do that well, and managers have to continuously I think, be educated on how to lead with empathy, and how to lead with trust in making sure that everybody is treated in the same way, and still has the same opportunities to thrive regardless of the working location.

So I think there's still some developments that we will see over time, in terms of how this is going to settle for the longer term.

Natalie Nelson

And I think that point that you've talked about in terms of people feeling concerned, and actually, managers have unconscious biases that are not aware of in terms of people in the office, and people who choose to work from home more, because you're right, this is about choice.

I'm seeing a lot of that in external research, as well. So it's quite nice to hear from you in terms of what you're seeing at LinkedIn, I think that's similar for NatWest and a lot, I guess, other larger companies that I'm reading about and smaller as well.

So it's how do we continue to make sure that people are treated in an inclusive way and also leaders are aware that they might have these biases, and how do you measure actually results by outcomes, not by how long you've seen somebody in the office or say, I think there's a lot to do in terms of culture change to catch up with everything that's happened in the last 18 months to two years.

Eileen Burbidge

Absolutely. And you both, you know, made some key points that I want to try and follow up on.

So I've got two forks. I'm going to try and dive into.

One is, you both mentioned how there's more development to come for managers and for leaders. Are you seeing ways of doing that? Do you have any lessons learned? Are you developing programmes for your leaders? Or are you seeing maybe best practices elsewhere?

Natalie Nelson

So I can start and actually talk a bit about what we're doing. So obviously, NatWest Mentor also provides advice to external companies in terms of management and leadership.

So we're looking at how do we incorporate hybrid and remote working into some of our training programmes to help educate workers, we've updated policies, handbooks, because there's quite a lot to think through.

What does that mean for how you reward people, how you recognise them. Are the benefits that you offer still relevant for new ways of working?

So I think it's all about working through this together and learning from each other and experience that yet there's a lot of work.

And there's a lot of work across the bank as well, in terms of, you know, how do you manage your team remotely? How do we keep connecting with people?

And I'll touch on another theme. Now before I stop talking about this very topic, but I can't come here and not talk about the topic of wellbeing? It's something that I'm personally passionate about. I'm very lucky to work with NatWest, who have put very strong focus on wellbeing pre-pandemic, but obviously, we really had to scale that up.

But it's also educating line managers. How do you a) look after the wellbeing of your employees in what is quite fast pace of change at the moment, so during and now post-pandemic, but also we've really had to work with line managers to really help them think about how do you look after yourself and build your own resilience.

Because it's not just the general employees that have struggled with this. Line managers and leaders who your teams are looking up to for support, they're also going through their own dilemmas and struggles and, and balancing work with life, because the lines have become slightly blurred.

Eileen Burbidge

I have to tell you, that's one of my favourite outcomes of the pandemic. I mean, obviously, the pandemic wasn't necessarily a good thing. But if we've got some lessons learned, or we've, we've evolved, you know, in a certain way, whether it's the workplace or otherwise, society at large, one of my favourite normalisations is that of empathy.

And more by now, people at work, you know, we used to have these lines, sort of, we'll talk about work, and you know, I'm working with you as a business colleague, and I'm not necessarily going to go into your personal life, because, oh, that's personal.

And what I love now is that, you know, I'm not saying everyone's nosy, but I think everyone has a bit more empathy now and recognising that everyone's situations before, after they go to work, while they're trying to contribute from wherever they are, is very different.

And we actually got a physical look into some people's workspaces. And you could appreciate that they were working in a certain setup, that might not be the same as yours, but they might have pets going back and forth in front of the monitor or their webcam, or they might have children or people they're looking after, and other people in the household. And it's just this normalisation that people have lives outside of work. And that, as you say, leaders and line managers need to be cognizant of that and recognise how they can support people a little bit better.

Having said that, sorry, Janine, did you have anything else that you've developed, actually at LinkedIn, or maybe companies that you've worked with, to help support managers with their development with this?

Janine Chamberlain

Yeah, I think just going back to the research around what we've called proximity bias.

So we've studied both or research surveyed, rather, both our members on the LinkedIn platform, as well as a number of C-level executives in the UK.

And both groups agree that there's concern around still having a stigma around remote working, and what this might mean for the ability for people to progress in their careers. But what's really promising is that out of the C-level executives, two thirds, have specifically said that they are investing in training for their managers to make sure that they are set up well, for this hybrid world of work.

And in addition to that, they're also freeing up more budgets for social gatherings or social activities to make sure that that connection comes back. And I think people really crave that connection. I was just thinking about this the other day, when, at the height of the pandemic, I guess, when everybody was still working remotely, certainly I and I've seen it a lot around me within the organisation was doing a lot of virtual events and virtual coffee connects and things like that.

But now that this blended world has started, it seems to have fizzled out a little bit, but people still crave that connection, especially because not everybody is in a position to come back to the office yet or doesn't want to come back to the office.

And so I think it's really important that we continue to invest in bringing people together in this blended way, both remote as well as in person, and then how do you do that in a way that everybody feels included? I think that's going to be the where the magic is.

Eileen Burbidge

You're absolutely right. And I think this whole notion of inclusion, or you know, you talked about sort of levelling the playing fields. Hopefully we can carry that forward even as some people start to go back more often than others.

And again with this empathy that different people have different circumstances, which I don't think we were quite as forgiving as before.

So the other topic that I wanted to dive into, based on what you both had said previously, is how we now measure productivity. Are there digital tools to help do this? Is there a way that technology helps to solve this or, or help address you know, any kind of ambiguity about whether or not someone's truly being productive?

How do we equip managers, you know, to gauge that from people when they're working remotely? Any ideas of that?

Natalie Nelson

It's a really challenging topic actually. There's quite a lot of debate on this at the moment, because I guess, there's a piece about monitoring people's work - is that an invasion of privacy, particularly if you know they're in their workplace at home.

Eileen Burbidge

And trust. Trust, isn't it?

Natalie Nelson

Yeah. But I guess it depends on the role. So there's some roles where it's, it's quite easy to measure productivity because of the nature of the work that they're doing and the stats that you have around that.

But a lot of other roles, it's actually about being really, really clear in terms of what expectations are.

So what are the objectives? What does good really look like? How are you going to measure that and have regular good, continuous performance conversations? So I think it goes back to the theme that we've already touched upon in terms of productivity.

Eileen Burbidge

Yep. And actually equipping managers with the tools that they need in the training that they need to recognise this. Would you agree with that Janine?

Janine Chamberlain

Yeah, I totally agree. It's so interesting, because I think measuring productivity, there's absolutely a lot of tools out there. I think any kind of software that you use will give you an ability to somehow track whether people are interacting with it, and how often and how long it takes to resolve things and whatever else.

But I think sometimes productivity measures can almost backfire. Because you might be stimulating the wrong kind of behaviours. Do you really want people to be sending more emails? Probably not. Like you want people to be focused on delivering the results that ultimately, you're aiming for as a company.

And I think the only way that you can make that work well is if you trust people to do their job in the way and at the location where they can do their job.

So I think it's about establishing this foundation of trust, setting clear expectations on the outcomes rather than sort of productivity measures that I really think can create the wrong culture.

Eileen Burbidge

I like that. It basically comes back to making sure our managers are better at communicating, setting expectations, and therefore sort of engaging with people in terms of what's really going to make an impact or demonstrate productivity and contribution.

So maybe taking that a bit, do you think there are certain roles or certain job titles that are better suited for that? Or are going to be quicker for managers to adapt with, for instance, you know, Natalie mentioned customer service, or people that were working with clients, in branches, for example? Or do you think it's actually, we're back to sort of needing to have a level playing field so that there won't be any distinction?

Natalie Nelson

It's really difficult. It's a challenging question goes back to the debate that we've just been talking about in terms of if you focus too much on measures...I think about customer service type roles, for example, you will have stats on how many how many calls they've taken, if they're in a sales function, you'll have stats on how much income they've generated, for example.

But if you focus on the stats too much, and not the behaviours, which will exactly that can lead to issues. So it's all about getting the balance, right. So yeah, much easier to measure performance in those types of roles.

But I think I just go back to the point, and he started to touch on actually, in terms of what you were just saying, around clarity, and being really clear from the start. And I think if you've got clarity of objective, and what good looks like and the behaviours that sit around that and the values, then that's when people will be set up for success.

Janine Chamberlain

Brilliant. Yeah. And what I would add to it, and it's just also based on my own observations over the last 6-12 months, there's something around engagement that drives productivity.

And so I think, if anything managers, in my view, would do well to really focus on engaging their team members, giving them a clear sense of purpose. Why are they doing this? Why is it important that they do this?

Because I think that drives much more productivity, than a set of metrics that everybody needs to tick the box on. Right?

And when you are working remotely, I do believe it becomes easier to feel a little bit detached because you're not constantly surrounded by your colleagues, your work environment, which probably has lots of you know... I'm just looking at myself behind me. There are some wonderful posters that tell me why it's so great to be a part of this company. We don't have that at home. So it does become a little bit easier to get detached. And that's why I think managers should really focus on that engagement and just keeping employees focused on why they're doing what they're doing.

Eileen Burbidge

So picking up from that, actually, it's really interesting because I think one sector that's had to adapt even more quickly than ever has been the health sector.

According to the research we outlined at the beginning of the episode, the sector has seen more than four years of progress with respect to digital change in just 18 months.

Digital acceleration has led to a 7.3% increase in patient satisfaction, and a 5.1% increase in employee satisfaction. We caught up with Dr Ben Wright to talk about the practical implications of digital transformation for patients.

Dr Ben Wright

Hi, so thanks for having me along, today. My name is Ben Wright. I'm the Chief Clinical Digital Officer for East London NHS Foundation Trust. I also practice as a consultant psychiatrist in medical psychotherapy.

So I've been working for East London NHS Foundation Trust during the Covid period and can tell you a bit about our experience for what it's been like for us on the frontline.

I think our institution like many in the NHS suffered from significant organisational inertia. We were very used to doing things in a certain way, having face to face meetings, seeing patients face to face despite the presence of video consultation material and other digital ways of working being readily available for many, many years.

I think the upside of the catastrophe of Covid has been in forcing us to cut out what was no longer essential and making the change to virtual working. Really to carry on delivering care as best we could under the circumstances.

And that absolute requirement forced two main changes. The first was around a change in the way we deliver clinical care. And the second is the way in which we work together collaboratively as professionals both within the organisation and outside the organisation.

In terms of how we changed our ways of working clinically, we moved to virtual consultations, delivering psychotherapy through the media, mainly in our case, of WebEx and the other platforms that we had.

And what was absolutely fascinating over this period, is that our recovery rates increase. So clinical outcomes improved by about five to 10%.

So I did a bit of analysis around that to try and understand why it was that despite the fact that we were no longer seeing people face to face, we were able to get better clinical outcomes.

The first question I asked is why are we cherry picking? Are we just seeing the easy cases and the difficult ones are staying the way and no. In fact, the proportion of people who are coming into the service increased and actually improved.

So that showed we were getting a better access. So a more challenging case mix.

So why was it that people were getting better?

And what we found is that actually the number of completed appointments had improved, that people were less likely to not attend for their appointment, which effectively means that the effective dose of treatment was increasing, and therefore our outcomes were improving.

And I think this was borne out by discussions I've had with the patients who've I've looked after. And they've talked to me about how they can have a really difficult session with me.

I do notice but try not to comment on it that you know, some of them turn up in their pyjamas or their T shirt, not as how should we say as polished as they would normally look, if they came to see me in clinic.

They have incredibly distressing difficult sessions as they would, but I then know that they then you know, can stay on their couch in the safety of their house behind the security of their locked front door as they recover from the session. And don't have to make an exhausted schlep back from the clinic home.

In one case it's actually a patient of mine, she was having a particularly difficult session, and we like to call her co-therapist, her puppy, came up and gave her a good lick to comfort her during a session which was very touching.

But overall, people prefer having therapy in the privacy of their home. And I think that's why we've had better outcomes.

But of course, you'll say quite fairly well what about those that can't? What about those that don't have the equipment or don't have technological skills? We think that's about one in seven.

And in fact, the bigger rate limiting factor is less the access to technology of skills, but actually the private space for many folk, particularly those from more deprived backgrounds, they simply don't have the privacy at home.

So we looked at what we could do with that. And I have to give a shout out to Cisco, who are our digital partners at East London, and particularly their CEO who donated two WebEx boards. And they stood up their engineering team to reconfigure these boards as kiosks.

So the way it works is the patients come in, they sit down, they touch the screen. The screen comes to life. I've already logged in as a therapist. There I am on the screen; I can see them.

And in the privacy of a clinic room which would otherwise be too small for consultation during the kind of Covid era that we're in, they're able to have a confidential consultation with me remotely without any technical skill whatsoever.

And that's worked incredibly well.

And there are many patients who otherwise would not have been comfortable attending for therapy, or not have been able to access therapy who've been able to have effective courses of action.

We plan to roll this out more broadly. So we have rolled out kiosks in our IAPT services in East London and in Bedfordshire.

But we also are putting in a bid to NHS X to provide digital pods for our perinatal patients so that they can access care. And we're thinking of putting them in community locations. And we think that that's going to be able to provide a much more dynamic service.

Because for me to go to one of those community groups, it's going to take me an hour or so to get there, I get to have the consultation, the person may or may not turn up, I then have an hour and a half to get back again, I mean, that's a massive chunk of time.

Whereas if we're using the digital pods, if they don't turn up, or they cancel at short notice, someone else can be slotted in as well.

So it allows massive improvements in efficiency, the process is safe for both the patient and the clinician. It's much more responsive, much more efficient.

And as I said, we often support patients making a transition to using digital assets at home.

And in fact, East London is developing a digital enablement programme specifically for this purpose.

So we hope that in many cases, people will then transition once they've got the confidence into using digital assets at home.

Eileen Burbidge

So that was Dr Ben Wright, Chief Clinical Digital Officer at East London NHS Foundation Trust. And I think that was really, really interesting, because he touched on so many themes, Firstly, that you know, remote, offered some patients really the safety and the privacy that they didn't maybe otherwise have.

And it actually improved what he said, you know, were clinical outcomes and shortened recovery times. But that also uncovered a bit of a digital divide in a way, and that there were some patients who couldn't benefit from that luxury.

And so, what then they did in East London was to set up digital pods so that those patients could realise the same benefits. And I think what's fascinating is that none of this would have come about if it hadn't been for the pandemic, and he sort of described it as what I call a sort of forcing function.

You know, is there anything that chimes with or resonates with the experiences that you've had in terms of trying to improve outcomes, again, productivity, team contributions, deadlines, perhaps, with what you've done at NatWest or for your clients, you know, the mentor network, for example?

Natalie Nelson

Yes, I can think of a couple of, actually quite simple, examples for NatWest Mentor in terms of how we have used digital technology to improve and enable us to continue to serve our clients during the pandemic.

So previously, the majority of the work that we would do would be face to face on client work. And we've got, I guess, one proposition I'll use an example, we do have a training proposition.

So we used to go to offices in-house or we'd have public courses, hotel costs, travel time for both the mentor trainers, but also the businesses.

So within a very short space of time, we've redesigned our training catalogue. So the majority of it now we're able to deliver it via Zoom technology.

And we've also focused on building the skills of our trainers, so they're actually able to deliver training on Zoom, because it's a very different type of skill. It's not as easy to read the room to engage people when they might be sitting at home, you know, looking at their tablet or their PC, saying how do you keep that engaging.

So I think that's a key thing.

We've actually seen customers really like that element of training. So we've shortened the training session, so that they're not full days, they can join sessions from their own office, so they don't have to leave the premises.

And actually, I went on a customer visit over the summer. And I was talking to one of our customers about some health and safety training, and that they had previously had to leave the warehouse that they were in charge of, for three days with overnight stay, and they were on the way home, going back and finishing a day's work at seven o'clock at night.

They said 'God, this is amazing. I didn't realise you could do this course over, you know, two hours over a period of time. So I'm still here to be able to look after my business and help you know, my colleagues and customers'.

So I think that's been a real benefit. Also, where possible, where we've got consultancy services, we've been able to deliver a lot of that again via Zoom technology, where appropriate.

So some of our health and safety services, you just can't do that. You have to be on-site to really see what's going on and how you can support the customer.

But we've seen lots of benefits and I think our employees have enjoyed that. Although they do miss the face-to-face customer interaction at times, but also, you know, there's real benefits for the customers too, in terms of cost-saving time saving, more effective and efficient.

Eileen Burbidge

Sounds like it. Janine, do you see parallels between, you know what Natalie was just saying, but also what Dr Wright was talking about with the NHS.

Janine Chamberlain

Definitely on the online learning, and actually coming back to what we were talking about earlier.

People are craving this flexibility and by offering courses online, it's really easy to do it at a time that suits you.

So I think that obviously has been a big development, LinkedIn offers LinkedIn learning courses. And we've seen quite a lot of progress, I think, within organisations shifting to these digital formats.

The other area where I've seen a lot of improvement, and I think organisations will continue to work in this way is, recruitment.

It's been much easier to line up an interview process and get the right stakeholders involved, because they didn't have to be physically in a specific location, it's much more efficient to do it online, you can have multiple people in a much quicker and much shorter time. Assessing people is, you know, it's very doable. I think, right at the start of the pandemic, I think back of some of my customer conversations then, people were hesitant to hire someone that they would have never met, face-to-face.

So they were like, hmm we're going to see how it plays out over the next couple of months, we'll just do some assessments virtually.

But really, we want to meet the person in real life before we make an offer to someone, and that very quickly changed.

And everybody I think that I speak to, has realised that it's very effective, it's very efficient, you don't have to meet a person in real life, you can actually hire them through a process that is completely virtual.

And then you can onboard them completely virtually as well.

And I think that's here to stay.

Because it's really saved companies a lot of time and a lot of money flying people over, as you said, or travelling to different locations, it's much easier to do it virtually.

Eileen Burbidge

Yeah, I couldn't agree more. And I think we've been talking about efficiency. And we're talking about productivity. But this is another point that actually Dr Wright spoke about as well in another part of the conversation. So I'm going to go back to him in terms of how we need to make these processes in these systems more efficient.

Dr Ben Wright

Well, when I first started as a consultant at the end of the '90s. And I remember, it was a rarity to have a computer, your secretary might have one to do the typing for you. but it was pen and paper.

We've gone from that to really everybody expecting to have access to a digital device, and everybody expecting instantaneous access to electronic health records.

And really, I think what I'm most struck by and probably one of the biggest changes that industry needs to think about is the enormous appetite for digital amongst the NHS in general, and amongst healthcare professionals.

They all know how digital has transformed their lives at home. And they're eager to have a similar experience at work.

And I think, certainly in my organisation we are behind the curve in terms of what people want and what they expect. And I think that industry needs to think about coming with ready-made solutions that work out of the box and are more easily deployed.

If I spend one pound on a digital solution, I can expect to spend two pounds on the configuration and adoption of that solution.

The real costs around digital are not in the solution itself, it's around the transformation process to fully leverage the benefits of that solution.

And I think industry needs to acknowledge that and think about solutions that are much easier to adopt.

Eileen Burbidge

So Dr Wright's really kind of issued a call to action there, I think for all of us in the digital sector or coming from, you know, technology enabled businesses, which is that we need to start thinking about solutions that are inclusive for everybody, easy access, and allow everybody else to participate in the efficiencies that we can see. Would you agree with that?

Natalie Nelson

Yeah, absolutely.

So I think about a lot of the customers that we work with a NatWest Mentor, they won't be office-based, they won't be sat in front of computers.

And actually, even many workers across the UK or globally, aren't office workers.

Say for example, we've got quite a lot of people that we support in construction industry or manufacturing, retail.

So, it's how do you provide digital solutions that are accessible when they might not have a device available at the time and, and also, some people aren't, they're not always comfortable with digital.

Natalie Nelson

So if you think sometimes you think about different generations. Some of the younger generation, that's how they communicate, generally, they're very, very comfortable, and that's how they expect to communicate.

But if you look at older generations, they haven't grown up with digital so they've been going through a change and might not be their initial preference and, and they might not have access to that.

And I know, sort of during the pandemic NatWest, we've done a lot to support some of our more vulnerable customers. So lots of care calls to check they're ok, trying to get cash to them when they couldn't get out to make it to a cash point and the branches weren't open for as long, so we shortened our hours.

So it's just trying to think about different communities and approaches and how can you educate people as well to sell the benefits of digital?

Eileen Burbidge

Well, I was going to say we know NatWest Mentor also does a lot of work with the social care sector, doesn't it?

And so there's a lot of challenges there not to mention sort of vaccination, helping to track that education information, obviously, access to devices and systems that we were just talking about.

We've had a forcing function, which is the pandemic, is that do you think, going to help the outcomes of people in social care through programmes like what you offer at NatWest Mentors, the more that the industry at large needs to do? Would you call it you know, organisations like LinkedIn or those other types of networks? Other ways we can all collaborate?

Natalie Nelson

Yeah, I think there's always opportunity to collaborate.

It's funny you talked about social care, health care has come up today, I think there's some real challenges for those industries at the moment.

You just mentioned vaccinations, well that's now going to be mandatory, and they're probably thinking about what does that mean for the talent pipelines as well, Janine mentioned digital recruitment.

So there's real benefits there. So how can we work with mentors in LinkedIn to help the types of industries? It's quite new to them. So it's around education.

Eileen Burbidge

Yeah, as you say, it's around education. And now it's going to be about maintaining this momentum, isn't it?

And that's what sort of Dr Wright saying - we can't stop now.

And he's actually issuing more calls to action, so that we continue to improve. Janine, do you have any advice for either Dr Wright in the East London NHS Trust, or other people that might be in social care or other sectors about how they can maintain momentum in their organisations?

Janine Chamberlain

So I think what's interesting, you were talking earlier about digitally enabled organisations, which pretty much every organisation now is.

Even in construction. Even in retail.

When I look at the type of skills that every industry is recruiting for, it's about software development, it's about engineering, because all of these industries are now either still in that transformation, or they have transformed because they have had to transform.

And so, that's why you continuously see these figures around, you know, 55% of the population needs to be upskilled or reskilled, in the next three years. That's a lot of reskilling. And that's obviously also where you see the government is investing in reskilling and upskilling as well, particularly with a focus on digital skills.

And so maintaining this momentum for me is about continuing to invest in finding ways to help people get used to this new environment to upskill to reskill, wherever required.

There's no going back, I think is what I'm trying to say.

This is only going to continue to increase because it's made so many aspects of our lives easier and more efficient, so I think we're going to continue to see that.

Eileen Burbidge

It's so interesting, because there's so much more we can talk about, but I think we're nearly running out of time.

So I want to come back to each of you, though, and just take, you know, what would be your biggest piece of advice to decision makers. And so to leaders, we talked so much about equipping managers and you know, helping the development of leaders, but what would be your biggest piece of advice to them on their next phase of hybrid working?

Natalie Nelson

Challenging one, because there's so many things that that we could touch upon.

But I guess I wanted to build on what Janine just said, as well, because that really resonates in terms of thinking about future skills. So the business leaders, I'd say, you know, think about the change that we're seeing, post pandemic, post Brexit, the economy, what will your business look like in the future? What digital transformation do you think you can expect?

And therefore, what does that mean for the types of roles you'll need in your business?

And can you start recruiting for those skills, building those skills now?

And that's been a theme that we've focused on, I guess, in the HR community for a number of years pre-pandemic, and it's it really is coming to the fore now.

Eileen Burbidge

Now everyone has to sort of keep looking forward right, and not to be complacent, I guess. Yeah. Janine, what would be your biggest piece of advice.

Janine Chamberlain

We're in such a unique time right now, you might have read about the great resignation, or we like to call it the great reshuffle.

Every organisation is thinking about how they rebuild, and how they change their workplace, their workforce, and obviously, their digital setup. So there's so much change going on. But that's a unique opportunity for leaders to really think about, what's the shape of the organisation that they want to build, and they can do that together with their employees.

So I would recommend, listen to your employees, work on this together, and shape the future of your business culture actively, because you need that engagement ultimately to be successful in the future.

Eileen Burbidge

I love that. And how you've brought that back to engagement, which we've talked about so much today.

So thank you so, so much, if people want to find out more about what you both do with your respective networks and access. So for example, Janine, how can people find out more about LinkedIn's insights and some of the studies that you quoted, where would they be able to find that?

Janine Chamberlain

Obviously, there's the [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) website, you can find my profile on LinkedIn, there's plenty of articles with references to all of the studies that I have talked about. So I would probably go there.

Eileen Burbidge

Oh, terrific. You might get more invitation requests after this.

Janine Chamberlain

Always welcome.

Eileen Burbidge

Super, Natalie where can people find out more about NatWest Mentor?

Natalie Nelson

So NatWest have our business hubs, if you search for NatWest Business Hub Mentor, we have our own section on the business hub where we publish our thought leadership. We're also on LinkedIn, so follow NatWest Mentor on LinkedIn. And we also have a mentor digital page, where any business owners can sign up for that and just have a look at some of the insights that we share. So yeah, a number of routes.

Eileen Burbidge

Amazing. Thank you both so much for all the work that you do in your organisations and to reach out beyond your organisations to help so many others.

It's been absolutely fascinating to talk to both of you, and also to hear of course from Dr Wright.

For those listeners, please hit subscribe if you want to stay up to date on the latest episodes. For more, join us in the final instalment of the series, A New Everyday Culture, where we dig deeper into workplace culture and business strategy, and how to ensure we sustain the momentum of digital change, ensuring everyone in the UK can benefit.

For more information on the research we've talked about today and how technology is transforming how we live and work for the better, search Virgin Media Business CEBR.

Thank you so much again, Janine.

Janine Chamberlain

Thank you for having me.

Eileen Burbidge

No, it's been a pleasure. And thanks so much Natalie for joining me, really appreciate it.

Natalie Nelson

Thanks. It's been a great conversation.

Eileen Burbidge

Until next time, this is Eileen Burbidge, thanks so much for listening.