The key to federal workforce transformation: Deploying the right technology for the job

BY FEDSCOOP STAFF

The rapid evolution of smart technologies is creating both a new world of possibilities at work — and new pressures to meet changing workforce expectations.

With technology advances multiplying roughly tenfold every five years, employers looking to attract and retain the best talent need to prepare for a workforce that's already in transformation.

Recent surveys and independent studies show how workplaces are being buffeted by changes in technology and the growing dominance of millennials — the largest generation in the workforce today.

According to a recent global **workforce study** commissioned by Dell EMC and Intel, 44 percent of workers surveyed feel their workspace isn't smart enough. And one-third of workers say the technology they have available in their homes is more cutting-edge than what is available at their place of work. Meanwhile, a new work app is released every seven minutes, according to other Dell EMC research.
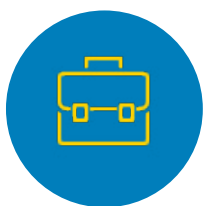
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It isn't just about having the latest technology. With half of global employees currently working remotely a few times a week, according to the study, the need for

reliable technology to help workers balance productivity and quality of life concerns in a remote environment has grown increasingly important.

That's especially true of millennials, who put a premium on workplace flexibility and mobile-friendly technology. Two in five millennials would quit their jobs over poor workplace technology, the **study reported**. And eight in 10 say the decision to take or decline a new position would be influenced by available technology.

Making workers productive

Technology has become a driving force that contributes to job satisfaction and therefore to the ability for organizations to attract and retain new talent — and that's just as true for government agencies as for commercial enterprises, says Steve Harris, senior vice president and general manager for federal business at Dell EMC.

"It's essential that agencies have the ability to tailor innovative technology to individuals and the way they really want and need to work," he says. "An empowered workforce is a creative and collaborate workforce. Technology is more than just functional. It can be transformative."

Moreover, investing in available state-of-the-art technology makes smart business sense for agencies. It helps workers serve the public more productively.

It also allows agencies to operate more flexibly and securely.

"There's an urgent need to upgrade endpoints" to improve security, says Harris. "But on top of that, you have the added benefit of increasing productivity as you carefully select and then customize the equipment that employees are using."

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Transforming the .gov Environment

The federal government has made great strides toward enabling modernization. The recent passage of the Modernizing Government Technology (MGT) Act opened the door to what many hope will be a kind of "golden age" of government IT modernization. In addition to a central modernization fund managed by the General Services Administration, access to agency-level working capital funds will certainly spur investments in new systems.

Federal chief information officers now have greater authority to move forward with modernization plans. At the same time, agency leaders are also more accountable to report back to Congress on their modernization progress. While agencies must contend with competing budget demands, the push to modernize their IT systems will not only be the key to improving government services; it also lays the foundation for greater federal workforce success and transformation.

The good news is, advances in IT — from virtual data centers to mobile devices with secure operating containers — are all making it more affordable for agencies to modernize their IT systems in modular steps and empower employees to work where and when they need to, more securely than ever before.

Workforce Enablement = Agency Enablement

Lots of technology providers claim to focus on designing systems around the way people work. But only Dell Technologies can provide an end-to-end experience that takes into account hardware, software and everything

in between. Dell's merger last year with EMC — and its portfolio of partners and solutions — put the company in a unique position to deliver an entire ecosystem of converged infrastructure, as well as customized workstations, desktops, notebooks, ruggedized systems and peripherals, says Kirk Lewis, marketing director for Client Solutions at Dell.

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The company's leadership in enterprise storage, virtualization and data protection make it possible to set up new systems faster, improve existing end-to-end productivity and significantly enhance overall lifecycle manageability and security, Lewis says.

It also makes it easier and less expensive to support a variety of work environments. There isn't just one office for the federal worker. Whether they are in an office building, mobile, or operating in a highly specialized environment, the **right tools** are essential for them to accomplish their mission.

- **Office workers.** Federal employees who report to an office every day have the same requirements for speed and facility as those in the field. They need a technology set-up that allows them to be the most productive at their desks, with options like dual-displays, wireless mouse and keyboard, and easy portability between meeting rooms and conferences.

- **Mobile workers.** Employees that spend all or a majority of their time outside the office — field agents or public health care workers, for example — require a reliable and secure remote platform. Since they usually don't have the ability to go to an on-site tech center, remote access, remote wipe and other IT security features like VPN or virtual desktops keep them safe and productive.

- **Specialized/rugged workplace.** Rugged users are operating in conditions that can range from dusty to damp to downright dangerous, and they need to be able to rely on their equipment, no matter the conditions. Products that empower workers in these roles are Dell's 2-in-1 products, for example, along with mobile-specific peripherals like a multi-functional 5-in-1 adapter or Dell's hybrid power adapter that can charge a PC and phone at the same time.

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End-to-End Transformation

"As you improve [performance] and increase productivity and end-user satisfaction, you also create more dependence on that digital workflow, so availability becomes important," notes Harris. "When you lose a day of productivity, or you lose data because of system down time, that's actually much more expensive than refreshing your assets in the first place."

The ultimate goal for agencies is to modernize their IT systems and empower their employees securely while working within the confines of their existing budget and staff resources. By partnering with Dell EMC on end-to-end solutions, services and security, agencies can better manage the lifecycle of their equipment — with Dell PC Lifecycle management software and services, for instance — and save time and money. That in turn allows agencies to redirect more of their workers' time and energy to their mission.

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Today's workers want to be more efficient, productive, mobile and flexible. They also expect modern technology and connectivity in the workplace to behave like, and reflect, what they have grown used to in their personal lives. Transforming the workforce and retaining talented professionals requires innovative tools, new devices, up-to-date applications and secure mobility. This is how workforce transformation is achieved.

*Learn more about how Dell EMC can empower your agency's **workforce transformation.***