



# Successful transition to a digital workplace

How HR can guide financial services companies  
in supporting their mobile workers.

Workshifting, flexworking, smart working... whatever the term, working 9-5 at a desk in an office is no longer the norm for many industries. Mobile and workspace delivery technologies allow people to work from just about anywhere. Although financial services professionals have always met with clients to conduct business, mobility is transforming these important interactions.

Mobile working—supported by a vast array of mobile technologies—is beginning to change the way financial services professionals such as planners, wealth managers and insurance agents interact with prospects and clients. Customers are demanding fast and flexible communications, transactions and information using mobile devices, apps and collaboration tools. Advisors and agents who have relied on the phone and face-to-face meetings “need improved ways to engage, like using their smartphone, laptop and tablet to make presentations and modify them as per client needs.”<sup>1</sup>

But until now, security and compliance concerns have been holding back the mobility wave in financial services. According to The Enterprisers Project, “...financial services professionals still find themselves all too often chained to their desks.”<sup>2</sup> Reluctance to adopt mobile working can hamper a financial services firm’s competitive position with tech-savvy, mobile-first clients. For example, millennial customers expect their financial advisors, bankers and insurance agents to be mobile and highly responsive to their needs using their favorite digital channels. Otherwise, they are quick to find a more mobile alternative.

Beyond security issues, mobile working presents other challenges to financial services companies, including building team relationships, shaping corporate culture and managing people effectively. Give people the option of mobile working without preparing for these challenges, and you risk losing more than you gain. That’s where Human Resources (HR) plays a crucial role.

Since mobile working is first and foremost about people, HR is in a unique position to support mobile workers—from recruitment to onboarding to advancement. Making your processes and policies more mobile-friendly can make your people happier and more loyal.

In this paper, supported by customer success stories, you’ll find out how smart HR teams can use industry best practices to chart a path to successful worker mobility by:

- Helping managers identify the ideal roles, people and opportunities for mobile working
- Helping facility planners design office spaces with mobile working in mind

<sup>1</sup> [Revolutionizing financial advisory services with mobility](#). Infosys white paper. 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Yvette Jackson. [Financial services needs to get over its reluctance and go mobile](#). December 28, 2015.

- Finding innovative ways to keep mobile workers engaged
- Collaborating with IT to make sure mobile workers have the tools they need to be productive

### The workforce is changing—and the workplace needs to adapt

In the past, financial services companies dictated where and how their people worked—usually on a PC at an assigned desk. But this is changing fast. A new generation of workers that grew up with smartphones and social media is entering the industry, and they expect the same mobility at work as they enjoy in their personal lives.

A Forbes article noted, “Workplace flexibility is more in-demand in the financial sector than almost any other sector, yet there is no flexibility. 94% of millennials said that workplace flexibility is important to them but 28% of those said that it was worse than they expected when they started their job.”<sup>3</sup>

Of course, there will always be some financial industry jobs (bank branch operations, inside sales) that tie employees to a fixed location. But plenty of financial services work can now be done anywhere—from home, at the client’s office or while traveling—and employees expect to have that option.

### A competitive edge in recruitment

The financial services industry has a cultural tradition of caution and conservatism. Many organizations, especially those with aging workforces, now feel pressure to change this culture to appeal to young people. They know that flexibility, collaboration and choice can really set them apart when it comes to recruiting top talent. For example, mention to a candidate that they can work remotely to cut down on commuting, or that you’ll give them a tablet with all the latest collaboration software, and it might be just the thing that makes them choose your company over a competitor.

This point is especially relevant to financial services IT organizations. According to Gartner’s survey of financial services CIOs, over a quarter of the respondents indicated that talent is the single biggest barrier to preventing them from achieving their objectives.<sup>4</sup> They therefore depend upon all the advantages they can harness in recruiting talent.

### Better technology, happier employees

One reason why financial services companies are becoming more open to mobile working is that new technologies give them greater control over what their people do and see when they remotely access applications. They’re feeling more comfortable about data privacy, information security and regulatory compliance.

Another reason is that they recognize how mobile working can support their strategic goals by making them nimbler as an organization, gaining a competitive market advantage with customers and making their employees happier and more productive.

*“[Mobility] is not just an issue of productivity—it’s an issue of retention and employee satisfaction. And satisfaction and retention and productivity will drive customer loyalty. That is the Holy Grail of what we’re trying to get at.”*

**Dave Codack**

VP Employee Technology  
& Network Services, TD Bank

<sup>3</sup> Dan Schawbel, [Top 8 Workplace Trends In The Financial Services Industry](#), November 5, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> *Gartner 2016 CIO Agenda: A Financial Services Perspective*, David Furlonger, February 19, 2016.

The Gartner survey of CIOs found that customers of financial institutions do not expect digital channels to completely replace human interactions. Rather, they should be integrated to support a customer's lifecycle.<sup>4</sup>

Today's financial services landscape is being heavily influenced by the preferences of millennial customers who, in addition to having different financial requirements compared to the previous generation, have a very different approach to interacting with bankers and planners.

- They expect real-time, mobile access (web, mobile app) to accounts, information and people
- They want financial institutions to be proactive, not reactive
- They are looking for timely education and assistance throughout major financial transactions, such as mortgages and loans

This means financial organizations with mobile workers—from call center representatives to financial advisors to claims adjusters—are in a prime position to appeal to these young consumers. Alternatively, according to Forbes, "...about half of affluent Millennials (48%) say they're open to switching to another company offering better products and services."<sup>5</sup>

### Helping managers identify mobile working opportunities

Some managers might be reluctant to give their people the option to work outside the office because they're worried about overseeing work or keeping sensitive financial information secure. But with the right technology to ensure security and reliability, the potential benefits of mobile working can turn into tangible rewards for both workers and their companies.

Here are some of the benefits that could help convince a skeptical manager:

- Mobile working is a great fit for project teams of experts from around the world as they can meet and collaborate easily, cost-effectively and conveniently—even at the last minute.
- It's also ideal for heads-down, creative focus by letting people work when and where they concentrate best and feel most inspired.
- New technologies make it easier than ever for mobile workers to be productive, access the right resources, keep their work secure and effectively collaborate.
- Mobile working means more-responsive call center reps, financial planners, claims adjusters and others, leading to better-satisfied customers. For example, a mobile claims adjuster can submit a full claim at the scene of an accident using his phone or tablet to accelerate payment for the repair.
- Mobile working is also an important part of a business continuity plan, which is critical to avoid downtime and the potential loss of millions in revenues. In the event of a planned or unplanned interruption, workers who have mobile access to their workspace can keep business going.

<sup>4</sup> Gartner 2016 CIO Agenda: A Financial Services Perspective, David Furlonger, February 19, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Laura Shin, [How Millennials' Money Habits Could Shake Up The Financial Services Industry](#), May 7, 2015.

Of course, mobile working might not be right for everyone. Here are some considerations to help HR and managers decide which roles and people are a good fit. Those with the following characteristics are ideal for mobile working:

- Their output and performance can be measured regardless of whether they work in the office or remotely.
- Onsite equipment or technology is not required for them to do their job properly.
- They should be motivated self-starters, with good time management skills.
- They should be tech-savvy enough to work with video conferencing, online file sharing tools and virtual desktops and apps.

The benefits of mobile working to the business and its workers are tremendous. However, even if employees do a great job remotely, occasional in-person meetings are still important to keep relationships strong—and build new ones. The goal is to provide many different options—whether powered by technology or old-fashioned in-office interactions—for people to build the connections they need to be productive.

As a Fast Company blog put it, “...nothing galvanizes people more than working within a connected team... it’s this person-to-person interaction that fortifies relationships, enables better project communication, and creates a sense of loyalty that leads people to make sacrifices for one another.”<sup>6</sup>

### Designing office spaces with mobile working in mind

Whether employees are moving around the office or working remotely, their performance and job satisfaction are influenced by the spaces surrounding them. HR can give both office space planners and mobile workers useful advice on setting up their workspaces.

For example, Toronto, Canada-based TD Bank aimed to make its employees more mobile so they could become more productive, satisfied and loyal. The bank’s “Flexible Workspace” initiative optimizes ROI (return on the individual, in the company’s interpretation). Powered by Citrix technology, this workspace—featuring unassigned seating—gives employees the freedom to move around within the office for better collaboration. They can also work productively out of the office, on any device, to serve customers better.

Suncorp Group is one of the largest general insurance groups in Australia and New Zealand, and a leading regional bank. Its “Smart Environments” project uses cloud computing and desktop virtualization to transform the traditional office environment into an open, campus-style setting. Mobility in the office has allowed Suncorp to reduce its real estate overhead to save money and also promotes easier collaboration. Mobility in the field enables employees to investigate and process claims on the scene for higher customer satisfaction.

<sup>6</sup> Maren Kate Donovan. [7 Best Practice Tips For Successfully Working Remotely](#). August 4, 2014.

For both organizations, mobility is a key aspect of business continuity, as well. The ability to work from anywhere during a disaster or other interruption protects employees' safety and allows them to be with their families while they continue to provide essential banking and insurance services to customers.

In addition to helping design these types of open workspaces for in-office mobility, HR can provide guidance to remote workers on how to set up their own office space, including tips for:

- Choosing the right chair to avoid back strain and tiredness
- Adjusting a screen to prevent eye strain and neck pain
- Using footrests, wrist rests and laptop stands to stay comfortable and healthy
- Taking regular breaks to stretch and change position
- Using a headset when phone calls are frequent, such as in contact centers

### **Finding innovative ways to keep mobile workers engaged**

Engaged employees will go above and beyond their "official" role to do a great job. Mobile working can cut both ways here.

On one hand, it has the potential to make people feel less engaged because it separates them from their co-workers, which can make them feel isolated.

But on the other hand, mobility can make people feel more engaged because it lets them work where and when they feel most comfortable. Mobile workers can often accomplish more, especially during non-business hours, and respond more quickly to requests, because they have fewer distractions. They can also focus more effectively on each customer interaction.

But engagement doesn't stop at quality and productivity. It also helps determine how happy employees are, and how loyal they are to the company. And just as importantly, the more engaged each employee is, the better your overall corporate culture and the happier your clients will be.

HR can also recommend activities that will help people get the most out of mobile working and build good relationships with their colleagues. For example, people who will ultimately work from home or the field could spend several weeks in the office first, getting to know their managers and colleagues in person and soaking up the corporate culture. Once they're remote, these workers can use video and web conferencing to stay in touch. They can also test out remote technologies with their customers, and if the customers are not comfortable, the workers can meet them wherever is most convenient.

Here are some additional ideas for keeping mobile workers engaged:

1. Invite mobile workers to all-hands team meetings on site
2. Hold team get-togethers, whether in the office or at an offsite location
3. Encourage regular visits to the office, whether they're weekly, monthly or quarterly
4. Hold focus groups with mobile workers to make sure they have everything they need to do their best
5. Introduce a mentoring or buddy system where mobile workers are paired with non-mobile colleagues to keep them looped into everything going on in the office
6. Arrange in-person team building activities like volunteering or club sports
7. Develop a mobile app for your company that feeds employees useful information as it comes up
8. Profile mobile workers on your intranet, with an accompanying video, to help people learn more about their colleagues and what they're working on
9. Encourage feedback about mobile working through surveys, or as part of your evaluation process
10. Create a collaboration site where team members can share work, documents and ideas

### **Putting the right technology in place**

While HR works to make sure mobile workers get the support they need, managers should work with the IT team to make sure these employees have the right set of technology tools. In addition to making the mobile devices available to workers, the IT team needs to implement the infrastructure to support high-performance, secure and intuitive mobile workstyles.

Critical enablers for productive, flexible working include:

- Existing wireless and remote access infrastructure to enable people to work from anywhere in your workplace
- Secure delivery of business and productivity apps to any device—employee or company owned—with high performance and an exceptional user experience
- Secure document access, sharing, syncing and storage
- Web-based collaboration solutions that offer screen sharing, video conferencing and the ability to host scheduled or impromptu virtual meetings
- Remote help desk services to ensure uninterrupted, high-performance access and availability for mobile workers

### Looking forward to greater mobility

Although “financial services companies have been slow to jump onto the digital bandwagon,”<sup>7</sup> according to CMO.com, this scenario is changing rapidly. Mobile working is becoming a critical initiative in today’s financial organizations because it:

- Allows them to meet client demands for fast, flexible and highly responsive service
- Helps them attract and retain top talent, especially when it comes to the newest generation of workers
- Supports their core business strategies, including increasing revenue from digital channels, raising productivity, controlling costs, supporting globalization and enabling business continuity
- Provides a competitive advantage in reaching key demographics, including young customers, with services at any time, from any location

As banks, brokerages, insurance companies and others adopt mobility in the workplace, HR can play a vital part in its success, from designing the right policies and programs, to advising on office, home and mobile work environments. Most importantly, HR can guide employees and their managers along the path to effective, satisfying and productive mobile workstyles, ultimately delivering the business outcome that all financial institutions are aiming for.

Learn more about how Citrix solutions can enable your digital workplace at [www.citrix.com](http://www.citrix.com).

<sup>7</sup> Giselle Abramovich, [15 Mind-Blowing Stats About Financial Services And Digital Marketing](#), February 26, 2014.

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