RIGHT
DIGITAL
SOLUTIONS

RIGHT DIGITAL SOLUTIONS:

Define Agile Working

Whitepaper

AGILE WORKING

When people talk about agile working, the conversation will inevitably come round to working from home, flexible hours, and hot desking. All these things play a part but there is so much more to consider.

For years terms like 'agile working' and 'flexible working' have both been used more to fit the circumstances than to genuinely create a new flexible, adaptable, and most of all effective and productive way of working.

Over the last two years this mindset has thankfully changed drastically.

Obviously recent restrictions have forced us to sit down and find more agile ways of working. This is not just in terms of location and hours but in terms of support infrastructure new technology, in fact everything that can inject the maximum flexibility with the minimum of constraints so performance levels and the quality of our work can reach the highest possible levels.

The adoption of new technology has a part to play. Technology allows greater collaboration and communication (internally and externally) and facilitates a better approach to the workplace and management of activity.

However, the truth is that to achieve an agile working model that delivers against your business' objectives, you need to not only promote agility but also act and deploy with agility.

WHAT IS AGILE WORKING?

ACCORDING TO THE AGILE ORGANISATION:

"Agile working is about bringing people, processes, connectivity and technology, time and place together to find the most appropriate and effective way of working to carry out a particular task. It is working within guidelines (of the task) but without boundaries (of how you achieve it)."

Traditionally however, some of the nuance of this excellent definition is lost during internal discussions, especially as one of the most overused definitions of agile working is 'Martini'' working'. If you're old enough to remember Martini's classic strapline - "anytime, anyplace, anywhere" – this will make sense.

For us though, this definition is far too simplistic.

A successful agility model isn't about where you work and what time you work, it is about how well you can work and how much more you can achieve working in these new ways.

THE BENEFITS OF FINDING NEW AND MORE AGILE WAYS TO WORK ARE MANY BUT THE KEY BENEFITS INCLUDE:

1 GIVEN YOU MORE OF A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Smaller organisations competing with established global brands need a way to attract new talent and offering the option to work more flexibly and more efficiently gives you a strong sales message for potential new hires. It also provides a raft of messages you can employ to win new clients.

2 NO MORE OFFICE HOURS

Traditional office hours are a thing of the past so providing the level of service your customers across the world demand means there is a need for alternative shift patterns and for more intuitive and accessible communication methods.

3 INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Studies repeatedly show people who are allowed to work where, when, and how they want, work more productively and do more than they are paid to do as long as they have the systems and tools they need.

4 INCREASED STAFF RETENTION

If you enable people to follow a more flexible work pattern and give them the tools they need to work efficiently regardless of time or location, they will be less likely to find something that suits them better.

When it comes to defining agile working, we would always suggest you start by focusing on performance and outcomes; what are the productivity and operational issues you want agile working to resolve and what do you want to achieve by adopting an agile working model.

FOUR FACTORS TO STRUCTURE YOUR DISCUSSION:

1 TIME

When do your people work and when do your customers/suppliers/partners need them?

2 LOCATION

Where do your people work and where do they need to work?

3 ROLE

What do your people do and what should they do more (or less) of?

4 SOURCE

Who carries out each task, who is involved in each task and who else could carry out each task?

FACILITATING AGILE WORKING

Location is an interesting question. This is probably where agile working ties in most closely to increasingly ubiquitous terms like 'home working' and 'mobile working'.

However, if you place more emphasis on where your people need to work, you will reach a more rounded conclusion that will not only feature working from home but also hot desking, hoteling and 'touchdown' working. None of us can work in virtual isolation and there will come a time where multiple people need to be in the same place at the same time to ensure maximum productivity.

Similarly, when you dive into this level of detail you will immediately see agile working is far more than where you work. It is about creating a new way of working.

This will require you to challenge and change your existing work practices.

It'll involve introducing new technologies.

It'll mean creating new working environments.

And one of the reasons many organisations find agile working a difficult nut to crack is there is no single solution.

Yes, there are common themes, but your agile working model must be specifically designed for you. It needs to address your physical and virtual workplaces, the level at which you need to communicate, the level at which you need to collaborate and the unique ways in which your team can deliver maximum value to your organisation.

Although, as with location, technology is not the be all and end all when it comes to adopting agile working, it is without arguably the principal enabler.

This means you need to find the right technology among all the options on the market, the hardware and digital solutions that will ensure your employees have all the tools they need to perform their tasks efficiently inside or outside the office and at or away from their desk.

While you work towards creating the agile working model you need, your team should never be too far from your thoughts.

One of your objectives must be to create teams that are motivated and engaged to help you create a more responsive, efficient, and effective organisation. This will require you to examine what works best for them and seek out what slows them down and irritates them, after who knows the barriers better than the people who face them every day?

Court their feedback and participation throughout the process. You can even offer incentives for the most innovative and practical suggestion.

HOW DO YOU MAKE AGILE WORKING WORK FOR YOU?

Before you start an agile working project, make sure you understand exactly what is being discussed. As with any concept, agile working has a language of its own so here are a few terms you may come across as you begin to progress towards more agile working:

Presenteeism:

Being in the office for more hours than required (and for more hours than you can be productive).

Flexible working:

What should the ratio be between your in and out of office working hours? And does this ratio work for both the employee and the organisation?

Hot Desking:

Sharing and allocating desks based on immediate need rather than keeping desks for every member of the team in the traditional way.

Unified Communications:

Do your communication options allow people to communicate how they need to, when they need to, wherever they are working from?

Activity Based Working:

A model that focusses on the completion of tasks rather than on the preferred working methods of your people and teams.

Overcoming these requires strong management.

Clear targets and deadlines need to be put in place. You also need to make sure your team fully understands what part they will need to play and why and make them accountable for delivering what you have asked them to. This will include regular reviews and providing additional support and encouragement as required.

As progress is made, people will start to see changes. It might be new software, new hardware, or a brand new working environment but you also need to keep communicating each stage of delivery across the business. These updates should highlight key milestones and individual achievements that have been accomplished thanks to the new agile working processes you've put in place.

AGILE WORKING TRENDS YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF?

As our working environment and working week continue to evolve, so does agile working. The range of different methodologies different businesses are employing to make themselves more agile is continuing to grow but the most popular trends include:

MORE AND MORE BUSINESSES ARE ADOPTING AGILE WORKING

This agile trend is growing year on year. One of the main reasons for this is the fundamentals of agile working lend themselves to any type of organisation and any function with an organisation. This has only been brought into sharper focus as we sought new ways of working to see us through the pandemic.

This trend will only continue at a faster pace as businesses in every sector look to continue to improve the way they operate in an increasingly cash-careful and competitive world while at the same time driving their growth by exceeding their customer's expectations and their competitors' performance.

MAKING AGILE TOOLS MORE SIMPLE

Historically learning agile working methodologies and the tools that support the implementation of these methodologies has been difficult because of their novelty and their complexity.

The same goes for communication and collaboration technology. Cloud technologies offer enormous benefits but, at the same time, outsourcing the responsibility for providing integrated and hosted systems not only reduces the time and effort of implementing new systems but also reduces the cost.

AI AND MACHINE LEARNING ARE NOW ACCEPTED BEST PRACTICE

The application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in agile working has allowed businesses to derive much more value for their data and add another crucial level to their decision making as a result.

AGILE IS MATURING

Most businesses that have adopted agile working practices now have three or more years under their belts. This means they no longer need to be persuaded of the benefits of agile working, they can instead concentrate on improving their processes and infrastructure.

This learning can only benefit other businesses looking to adopt their own agile methodologies.

'ENTERPRISE AGILE'

While agile working was the preserve of IT and tech businesses or departments in the early days, it is now filtering through to every type of businesses and every department.

That said, there still is a long way to go. According to reports only one out of five companies is trying to spread agile working through their entire organisation and only one in ten has agile working up and running across every area of their business.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR AGILE WORKING?

Having looked at what is currently happening within the world of agile working, we'd now like to turn to what is likely to happen in the future.

While everyone involved has their own view, the most common expectations include:

1. VALUE STREAM MANAGEMENT

Managing your value streams in order to reduce costs and maximise productivity will only grow in importance over the next decade.

At the heart of Value Stream Management is the need to streamline every process at every stage and in every department. To achieve this, organisations need to continue to find ways to add value, eliminate unnecessary processes, reach market quicker and enhance both their employee and customers experience.

The right digital solution?

Sometimes either the knowledge or the resource required to streamline specific processes is not available. This is where we believe our managed services offer a practical, effective, and cost-efficient solution.

We have decades of experience supporting SME and FTSE organisations through our fully managed services. Our strategically located team of highly trained technicians are always on hand to resolve any issues first time, every time.

You can outsource the management of your IT, print, and/or software applications to our experts. This allows you to focus on your role and your business safe in the knowledge that we are looking after everything from assessing your requirements to pre-empting and resolving any issues whilst continually adding the maximum value by providing bespoke insight and advice on how best to keep driving down costs and increasing productivity.

Our managed services include:

PrintWatch™ Remote Management

This RDS developed device management tool provides remote management facilities that enable us to manage all our customers print assets the touch of a button.

Right Insight ™

We collate and report on live data that highlights SLA achievement, asset management, when devices are under or over utilised so we can make actionable suggestions as to where you can make instant cost reductions and improvements to your business and digital processes.

2. SCALING AGILITY

While agile working works in pockets within a business, maximum efficiency and minimal cost means agile working practices must be scaled up to include every part of a business, especially when success is dependent on interdivisional collaboration.

The right digital solution?

We believe we offer two instantly implementable solutions that will help you scale up your operational agility:

RDS Visitor Management Systems

Our visitor management systems will revolutionise the way you manage visitors in your business, with the ability to even carry out health and temperature screening and deny access to those who pose a risk.

Under the current and ever-evolving circumstances, it's important to give your customers the option of self-service interactions in your busy reception areas, on your sales floor or at trade shows.

RDS Business Mobile

Although the telephone has been around for decades, it has never been as vital to businesses. As we continue to work from multiple and, most likely, continually changing locations, the telephone remains the most effective way to stay in constant contact with customers and colleagues.

We make telephony simple by bringing all your telephone systems under one roof.

Our team of personal account managers will manage all your telephony needs for you and ensure you enjoy the best possible value for money even if your needs or the available technology changes with no additional or hidden support costs.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR AGILE WORKING? – CONTINUED.

3. EVEN DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

The pandemic has made remote working the norm rather than an exception but to keep things moving forward, businesses will need to ensure they have the required staff coverage to provide the highest level of service for the regions and time zones they serve.

The right digital solution?

Providing the complex system infrastructure required to ensure staff working from multiple locations can deliver the highest level of service is a tough nut to crack but we feel these two solutions will make the process much easier:

RDS Workflow Automation Software

Optimising your organisation's workflow through the introduction of automation software is more relevant than ever.

When implemented correctly, workflow automation has the ability to transform your operational effectiveness – our workflow solutions leverage AI and automation to reduce manual steps and human error.

RDS Digital Mailroom Solutions

Our digital mailroom solutions transform traditional, manual processes by introducing an automated and streamlined approach, helping your organisation free up resources and increase operational efficiencies.

Our systems will automatically extract and validate the information from incoming business mail, convert it to structured electronic information and then categorise and distribute it to the correct user in their current location.

4. BLENDED AGILE DEVELOPMENT

Experience has shown us that trying to implement agile working in one fail swoop doesn't work.

To ensure a smoother implementation more organisations will continue to develop a more blended approach to agile working so they can progress their implementation without impacting the performance or productivity of different units within the business.

The right digital solution?

For us, a successful phased implementation is dependent on collaboration and we have

developed a range of collaborative services that includes:

- **Interactive and Touch Screen Displays**
- **Video Conferencing**
- **Interactive Room Booking Systems**

To make workplace collaboration as seamless as possible all our solutions come with multifaceted wireless communication and collaboration tools that integrate across all locations and with all mobile smart devices.

Whether in the boardroom, huddle space or the classroom, we will help you change the way you work, educate, collaborate, and communicate.

5. AN EVEN GREATER FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER

Despite now being in a very different world the customer is still king. This isn't going to change. This means the agile processes you put in place must benefit your customerbase, whether that's by better meeting their business needs, being able to deliver your products and services quicker or more easily or providing additional extras to cement your competitive advantage.

The right digital solution?

Ultimately all our services are designed to enable you to provide the very highest levels of service and value in place for your customers.

Our video conferencing solutions mean our clients can talk to their customers, suppliers, and partners face-to-face whenever they need to.

Our business mobile services ensure every customer can reach to their point of contact immediately regardless of where they are working from.

Our Workflow Automation Software will reduce manual processes and eradicate any delays so the next step in your relationship is always the fastest and most accurate it can be.

However, one more tangible solution we have introduced is E-signature. Our e-signature and power PDF solutions make it simple for your customers to sign contracts and other agreements immediately, from anywhere and safely thanks to of our highly secure software provider.

6. MORE TECHNOLOGY WILL MAKE YOU MORE AGILE

It's impossible to talk about the future of agile working environments without mentioning technology. We have come a long way in a relatively short time, but future progress is going to require an even higher reliance on technology.

Some of this will of course involve new technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, and AI.

However, some of this will involve making better use of the enormous improvements being made to the technology we already use.
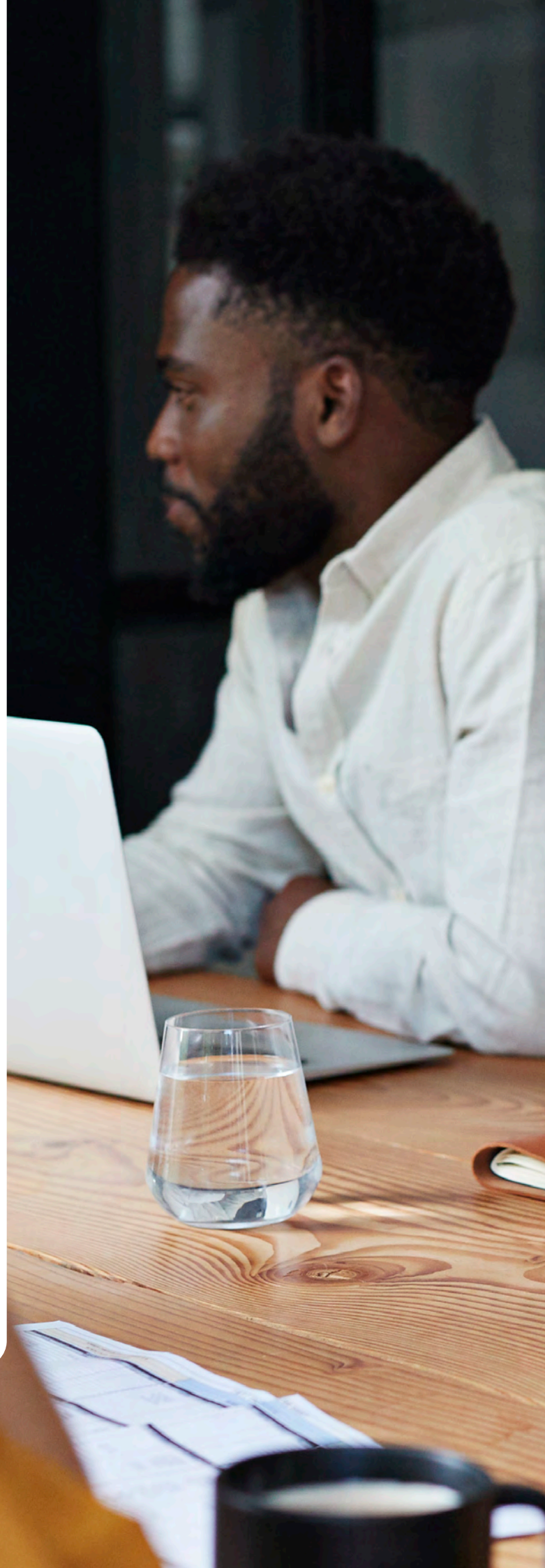
The right digital solution?

As we've explained, we offer a comprehensive suite of technology driven solutions that cover digital print, the mailroom, workflow automation, business telephony, collaborative tools, and video conferencing.

However, an additional option that will help you achieve even greater levels of agility is our Desk & Workplace Management Solutions.

Most businesses have been forced to introduce a hybrid workspace, with that, comes some significant operational changes. Our desk and workplace management solutions allow organisations to manage their workspace from one single platform, making it simple for employees to book desks, find colleagues and be kept informed of changes in the workplace.

Moreover, from a management perspective our Desk & Workplace Management Solutions will make it easier for you to fulfil your responsibility to provide your employees with deep cleaned workspaces and record who has been sitting where and in what proximity to your other employees.

HOW CAN RIGHT DIGITAL SOLUTIONS HELP YOU IMPLEMENT MORE AGILE WORKING PRACTICES?

As a digital transformation specialist, it is our job to help you find the smartest, most efficient, and most streamlined way of working, wherever your team is working from.

We know that as the hybrid workplace is set to evolve at an increasingly rapid pace, your team will have to adopt increasingly agile ways of working. To achieve that, the technology that supports their day to day tasks must be flexible, responsive, and interconnected.

Our workplace innovation expertise will ensure that we create digital solutions designed transform the way you work.

Partly this is a question of technology, making sure your business, your employees and your customers remain totally connected through adaptable, cloud-based solutions.

However, it is also a question of collaboration.

Together we will work out where you can work more smartly so your business becomes more efficient, more sustainable,

more secure, more productive and – ultimately – more profitable.

And, by combining your knowledge of your business and your markets with our years of expertise in improving workflow and performance and our ability to independently source best in class solutions, together we will create the best possible technology infrastructure for your business.

WHAT NEXT?

If you are planning to adjust and adapt to the seismic shift in working patterns currently taking place and to ensure you have everything in place to become more productive and more profitable, a possible first step could be the RDS Digital Agility Audit.

The RDS Digital Agility Audit will uncover everything you'll need to design the right agile working culture and infrastructure for your business.

At the end of the audit you will have a clear, straightforward implementation plan so you can begin to recalibrate the way you work to maximise staff efficiency, drive down costs and develop your office eco-system using the latest technology.

If you would like to find out more about the RDS Digital Agility Audit, please email us at **agileworking@rightdigitalsolutions.com** today.

RIGHT DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

Find out more

Call: 0800 068 3789
Email: agileworking@rightdigitalsolutions.com
Visit: rightdigitalsolutions.com
Or scan our QR code.