Disruption, Diversity, Dilbert, Distance & Droids:
the 'D's reshaping the contact centre.

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A view from 1992…

11 volunteer directory enquiry advisors.
Cutting edge technology:

- Specially designed workstation
- Headset
- Communications control panel
- Videophone
- 2x64 Kb/s ISDN digital channels
- E-mail
- Management Information Systems (MIS)
- Electronic bulletin boards
- Storage unit/ desk

Cost per installation - £11,000!

Operators enjoyed working at home – more time with family & less stress.

Results:

- Service levels improved
- Greater flexibility for peaks and troughs
- Better resilience
- Better skills retention
- Need to maintain systems
- Effective supervision vital
- The myth of the lonely and isolated teleworker – "*I've taken to cooking a lot more and discovered who our neighbours are*".
- **BUT – too costly to sustain!!!**

Disruption: preliminary outcomes of the global WfH "experiment".

- **19%** growth in homeworking in the UK (**47%** of people in employment in the UK did at least some of their work from home, compared to **28%** pre-pandemic*

- **91%** of the UK's office workers would like to work from home at least part of the time*

- **73%** of employees like the flexibility of working from home**

- **89%** feel that they have been equally or more productive working from home**

- As commute times reduce, the working day now starts at **9am** rather than 8am according to network data***

- **60%** will return to the office in the future for community and collaboration****

- The average workday increased by **48.5 minutes** *****

Do | the digital office

* Office for National Statistics
** Nielsen
*** BT Consumer study
****CBRE
*****National Bureau of Economic Research

Digital work is all about productivity – but what exactly is "productivity"?

81%
Improving employee productivity is our top priority

91%
Productivity is the main benefit of improving digital experiences (ITDMs)

81%
If I was CEO improving productivity would be my No 1 priority

50%
You can tell how hard people work from their IM status (ITDMs)

9 in 10
business executives say mobile and collaboration technologies have improved the productivity of their workplace.

Productivity is the main benefit of improving digital experiences (ITDMs)

India	South Africa	Australia
98%	97%	96%

Ireland	Spain	France
94%	93%	92%

Hong Kong	USA	UK
92%	92%	89%

Singapore	Germany	
89%	84%	

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Coronavirus accelerated digital transformation, but there is still a lot to do around culture

Technology has moved fast but culture needs to catch up:

- Trust by default
- Management by checking up, and checking in
- Measure output, not hours
- Management roles harder virtually – management by walking around no longer viable
- Ensure that good cultural behaviours are praised (and bad ones called out)
- Onboarding, brainstorming and training more difficult digitally
- Beware the hybrid – creating a "them" and "us" culture

Do the digital office

The death of Dilbert: the physical contact centre is dead…or is it?

- Customers have been reporting **50%** or less daily occupancy across their properties

- CFOs question whether they need offices. Gartner* suggest that **74%** of CFOs are intending to shift some employees (between 5 and 20%) to home working

- Inequalities exposed between (typically older) home owners and (typically younger) renters/flat sharers

- Introverts & people with higher levels of agreeableness faired better than extroverts & people higher on neuroticism scale**

- Parents (especially single parents) struggled more than those without children**

- Offices will look very different with social distancing measures in place – cleaning, screening and capacity management increases costs

- Hyper-local co-working spaces likely to grow – the "15 minute city"

*Gartner. (2020). CFO Actions in Response to CORONAVIRUS: Week of 30 March 2020.
https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-04-03-gartner-cfo-survey-reveals-74-percent-of-orgs-to-shift-some-employees-to-remote-work-permanently.
**Bernstein, Blunden, Brodsky, Sohn & Waber (2020), The Implications of Working Without Working Without an Office, Harvard Business Review, July 15

POLL QUESTION

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The death of Dilbert:
what does the office/contact centre of the future look like?

Co-working

Homeworking

Work from Anywhere (WFA)

Office based

Activity based working

"The assumption in most organisations previous to the pandemic that you had to seek permission to work remotely switches to you have to seek permission to work in an office" Matt Ballantine.

Embracing diversity

I'm able to bring in extra income and with the flexibility it gives me it does not interfere with my first job as a stay-at-home mum

Martine

I enjoy the opportunity to work from home - the commute is short and I never have to worry about traffic!
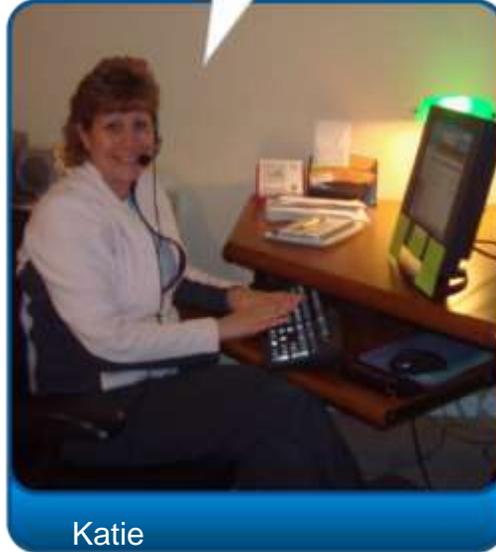
Katie

I'm semi retired. Working from my home, part time allows me a schedule that not only supports the company but also fits with my personal schedule
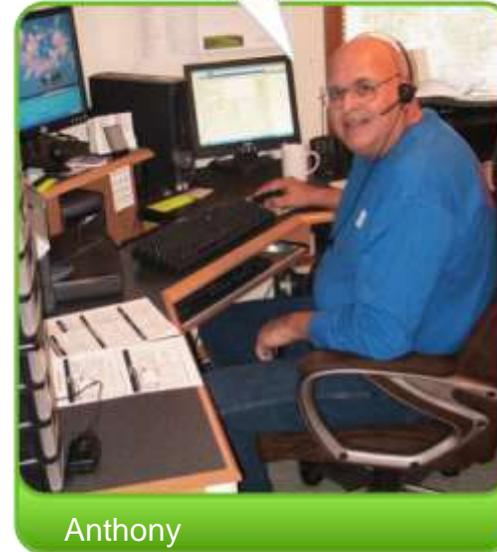
Anthony

The death of distance: meeting culture & the flip to video collaboration

- Employees sent **5%** more emails a day with **3%** more recipients*

- **8%** more emails were sent after business hours*

- Zoom use increased **5x** during lockdown compared to earlier in the year ****

- We had **13%** more meetings, but they were **20%** shorter than pre-pandemic*

- We had **more** contact with our direct team (strong ties) but **less** with other people in our network (weak ties)**

- **51%** have struggled with collaborative tasks***

- "Serendipity" – issue more with non-purposeful communication (not catered for in formal meetings), rather than coffee point conversations (although virtual coffees/happy hours can plug some of these)

*Saden, Poltzer, DeFilipis, Impink, Singell (2020), Collaborating During Coronavirus: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Nature of Work, National Bureau of Economic Research, July.
**Bernstein, Blunden, Brodsky, Sohn & Waber (2020), The Implications of Working Without Working Without an Office, Harvard Business Review, July 15
***Dahnik, Lovich, Kreafle, Bailey, Kilmann, Kennedy, Roongta, Schuler. Tomlin & Wenstrup, What 12,000 employees have to say about the future of work, BCG, August
****BT Consumer study

VR & AR for recruitment, remote diagnostics, training and collaboration

VR for recruitment and training

VR/AR conferencing/ collaboration

AR for remote diagnostics, training and collaboration

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The rise of the Droid: what do execs think about AI and robotics?

56%
Fear the risks to job security associated with robots and AI

67%
Say it would be good to get help from AI in my job

23%
Believe that AI's biggest impact will be in the optimisation of business processes

3 in 5
Agree emerging technologies will mean people work less hard in the future

53%
Say it would be fairer if algorithms and AI agents managed people's work

37%
Agree that they would rather talk to a robot rather than their boss!

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The "SuperAgents" of the future?

Sally	Paula	Natalie	Tony	Chris
the 'Swiss Army knife' advisor	the problem solver	the negotiator	the techie	the crowdsourced advisor

Trainers*   Explainers*   Sustainers*

* H. James Wilson, Paul R. Daugherty, and Nicola Morini-Bianzino (2017), The Jobs That Artificial Intelligence Will Create, MIT Sloan Review, 23rd March

It's not Botman vs. SuperAgent…

…it's Botman + **SuperAgent**

"Computers are incredibly fast, accurate and stupid; humans are incredibly slow, inaccurate and brilliant. Together they are powerful beyond imagination"

Albert Einstein (allegedly)

Thank You

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