GET THINGS DONE! The digital workplace.

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What do Bill Gates and Kaiser Wilhelm II have in common? Both were witnesses of a modernisation which meant radical change in society. And both assumed that these developments would have an expiry date. While Kaiser Wilhelm II forecasted that the car would not replace the horse as a means of transportation, the founder of Microsoft believed that the internet would just be a hype.

Every time people have newly developed technology at their fingertips, structures break up and change. When the internet and mobile computer technology came about, the possibilities for corporate communication and collaboration also gradually developed enormously: from telephone to video conference, from post to email, from email to the shared cloud. New work forms go hand-in-hand with the progressive digitisation of the workplace.

The ideal image of the digital workplace?

In a somewhat exaggerated way, you could characterise the digital workplace as follows: paperless, wireless and office-less! In practice, the vision of the digital workplaces covers a series of measures which make processes more efficient and information and communication between

people faster and better in terms of quality. Essentially, this is a question of ending data confusion and making company-relevant applications and productivity tools available to everyone everywhere. At the digital workplace, the common working method is transported beyond boundaries. Allowing, among other things, numerous collaboration tools such as chat and comment functions, video conferences or the possibility to work on documents together, independent of location and at the same time. In addition, it is possible to automate company processes supported electronically and make eLearning available in the form of knowledge platforms. Digital workplaces should offer an intuitive, useable working platform for all employees, partners and customers.

Up to the cloud.

Cloud computing is ascribed a particular meaning here: in the cloud, storage space, computing power, or application software are available and work processes are structured. Employees have access to all information relevant to them. Productivity and collaboration tools make it possible for employees to work with any device from any place at any time. What is really exciting here: tasks, projects and documents can be worked on together online – of course, independent of location. Inefficient email communication, false data statuses or laborious download and upload processes belong to the past. The cloud-based data connection also ideally includes leading operational information systems such as ERP or CRM systems. These support the user with their day-to-day work, for example by bringing in relevant data. The systems cleverly remain in the background, however. The employees enter the digital workplace by entering a user-friendly portal and can access all data relevant to them from anywhere. This could be data for projects, working groups, but also data relevant to customers or partners.

Tell your colleagues what you're currently working on.

Social collaboration tools promote interaction between employees. In (public) chat forums or virtual pinboards, informal as well as formal information can be exchanged. Users post questions in the virtual space, colleagues with the required knowledge answer them. Discussions about products and services also contribute to your personal build-up of knowledge and at the same time, promote innovations within the company.

Conclusion.

The digital workplace is not just a question of technology. It also requires a company culture who can see changes as opportunities and managers who motivate their employees to collaborate

online. Not least, it also requires a spacious environment which has only very little to do with the classic idea of an office.

The generation of digital natives in particular demands more flexibility and consciously search for employees who take into account their demand for more freedom and modern communication. And in this way, the digital workplace is also becoming an increasingly important criterion in the “war for talents”. There are still many more options for the digital workplace for the future, which up until now have perhaps not even been identified or developed. It is a constantly changing and above all optimising process that surely has not changed working life for the last time.