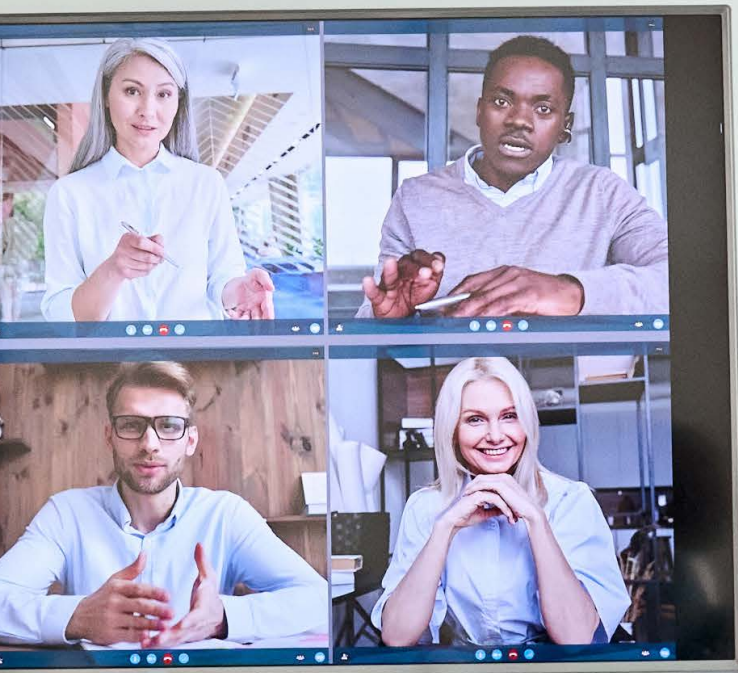


Realising a digital future for business and professional services

Key insights into achieving an effective digital transformation



Introduction

The business and professional services sector covers a diverse range of industries. Despite their different operational models and areas of expertise, all share similar goals and challenges. Across the board, organisations are battling to be more sustainable, to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive marketplace, to keep their data and operations safe from cybercriminals and to make remote working as productive and positive as possible.

It's a challenging time. But within these challenges there's significant opportunity. Digital solutions like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and 5G enabled technology are already revolutionising business and professional services – improving operations in organisations as diverse as consultancy, law, food services and recruitment.

Throughout the sector, organisations are embracing innovation to create secure, seamless and collaborative experiences for colleagues, customers and clients. And where organisations were once hesitant about the cost and potential risks involved with adopting new digital technologies, the tables have turned. Today, the greatest risk is to do nothing while competitors embrace digital transformation and power ahead to secure an increasing market share.

The pandemic highlighted what a powerful business driver digitalisation is. It facilitated a global shift to remote working and the pace of adoption and innovation is increasing.

The legal AI software industry alone is set to grow at a rate of 29.2% and be worth US \$2.3 billion by 2027. [🔗](#)

To build a productive, competitive, innovative, secure and sustainable business that's ready for whatever the future holds, organisations need to progress their digital roadmaps.

We've created this whitepaper to support your digital journey. I hope it helps shape your plans for the future.

Do get in touch if you'd like to discuss anything further. [🔗](#)



Simon Warner
Global partnership sales director, BT



This whitepaper will examine:

- what's happening in the business and professional services market
- our point of view on the landscape
- the key roadblocks to digital transformation in the business and professional services sector
- innovations to drive your digital transformation
- prioritising sustainability in business services
- how to implement effective digital transformation
- our proposition for digital transformation
- why BT for business and professional services?
- digital industry in action

What's happening in your market

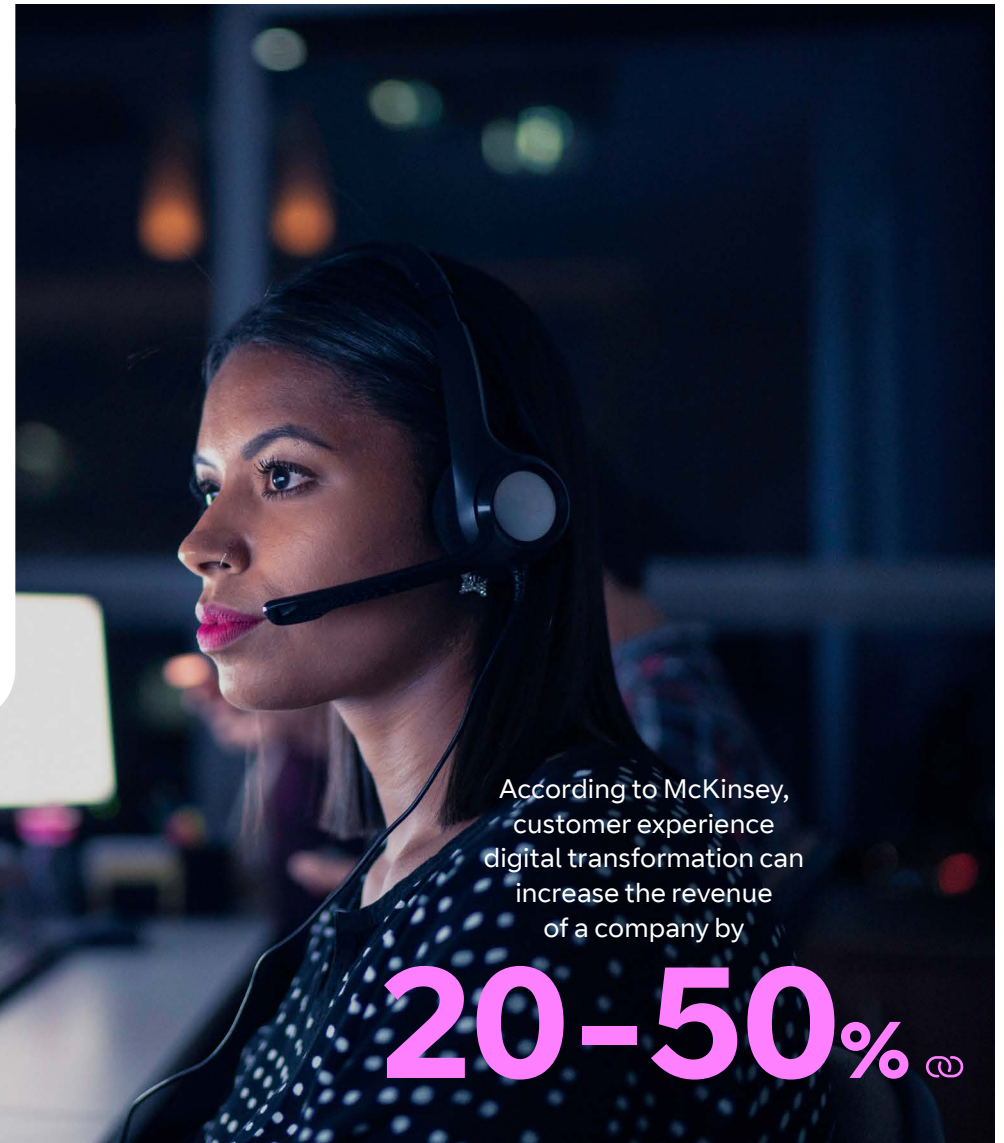
Although adoption of digital transformation has been a mixed bag in the business and professional services sector, three key factors are now making the business case for digital transformation more compelling than ever.

Transformation driver #1 – meeting the expectations of today's hybrid worker

Speed was key when setting up home and hybrid working en masse in early 2020. People needed the connectivity and collaboration tools to work from home, and they needed them immediately. Now the dust has settled, it's time to be more strategic. Seamless connectivity is still at the heart of a productive hybrid experience, but **48% of businesses say they're also planning to accelerate digitalisation and automation to support new ways of working**. This will simplify business functions, boost security and help employees to collaborate across a wider range of functions, disciplines and geographically dispersed markets. From giving temporary workers secure access to devices, to making meetings more productive through easier document sharing - digital transformation is pivotal in creating tomorrow's workplace. And with the right strategy, smart tech-enabled work won't just be more productive, it'll optimise employee and customer experience and wellbeing, too.

Transformation driver #2 – seamless optimisation of the customer experience

When grappling with different priorities as they roll out digital transformation, CIOs must keep customer experience front of mind. Customers today want their interactions with businesses to be effortless and they're inclined to look elsewhere if an experience isn't up to scratch. If they have to use multiple touchpoints to engage with an organisation, or if they're passed onto a different customer service representative, they expect all their information to be current – with no need to repeat themselves.



According to McKinsey, customer experience digital transformation can increase the revenue of a company by

20-50% 

What's happening in your market

Transformation driver #3 – setting an example for clients

Economic uncertainty, fuelled partly by the pandemic, has accelerated both cloud adoption and reliance on the gig economy. Service packages are becoming productised with a greater emphasis on subscription services and remote self-service. As organisations across various sectors rethink their business models to capitalise on these developments, business services need to keep up. Using digitalisation to take advantage of emerging business models and to become more efficient gives a two-fold return on investment (ROI): both the solution itself and the boost to brand perception.

Maintaining credibility means adopting a 'do as I do', not a 'do as I say' approach. Clients are far more likely to put their trust in and accept guidance from firms that are already harnessing digital innovations. Technologies like 5G-enabled sensors are being used to create touchless, traceable experiences and business services firms that can show the benefits of these innovations will command a greater market share.



In a CFO study conducted by PwC,

48%

of survey respondents said they're planning to accelerate digitalisation and automation due to the pandemic's impact on old ways of working. ☁

Our point of view

A risk-averse approach to digital technology has steered many business services organisations in the past. Concerned about brand reputation, security and costly downtime, many boards felt that the safest option was to sit tight. But that business case doesn't hold true anymore. Today, emerging business models and growing customer expectations mean standing still is the greatest risk to business.

As the pandemic highlighted, it's the organisations that are agile, digitally optimised and innovative that are best placed to prosper in an uncertain future.

Realising the benefits of digital technology doesn't need to be incremental. As the early months of 2020 showed, decades-old operational practices can be upended almost overnight with organisation-wide commitment.

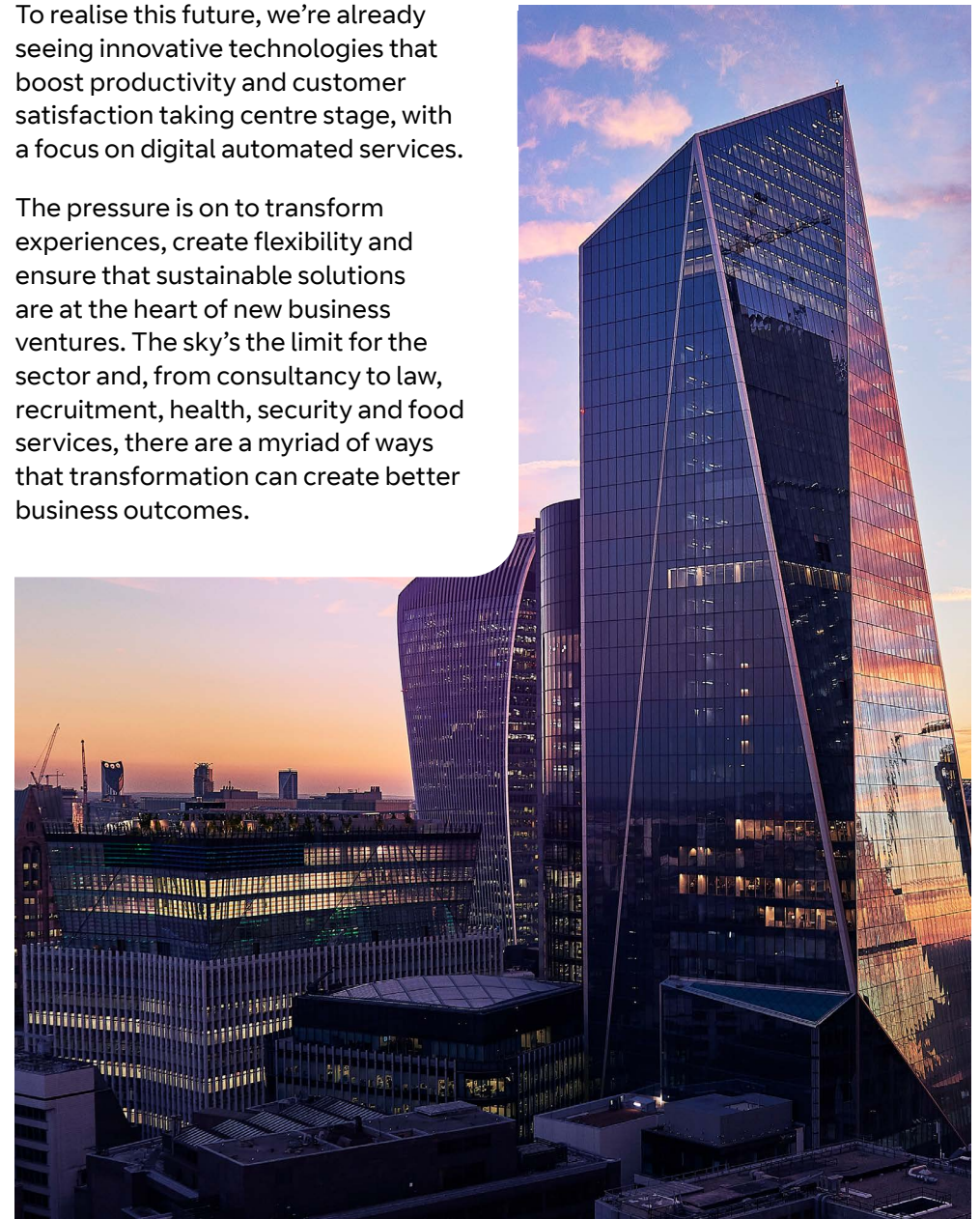
Five-year plans were rolled-out in weeks and suddenly cybersecurity, remote collaboration tools and network connectivity were hot topics.

But much of the digitalisation that happened then was done reactively, in a scramble to keep operating. Leading business services organisations are now changing that agenda so that they proactively drive the change from this point on, rather than hurriedly adapting to circumstances. This involves a mind shift away from trepidation at the thought of change towards being eager to embrace the possibilities of transformation.

It's an opportunity to reimagine the future. One that's centred around new ways of working, more efficient business processes and more responsive customer care. It's a future where there's less money spent on buildings that don't meet business needs, and more investment in making homeworking or hybrid working an effective way to operate. It's a secure world, where a Zero Trust approach to cybersecurity checks the identity and integrity of devices before allowing access, freeing employees to work safely from anywhere. And it's all about improving experiences – for customers and for employees.

To realise this future, we're already seeing innovative technologies that boost productivity and customer satisfaction taking centre stage, with a focus on digital automated services.

The pressure is on to transform experiences, create flexibility and ensure that sustainable solutions are at the heart of new business ventures. The sky's the limit for the sector and, from consultancy to law, recruitment, health, security and food services, there are a myriad of ways that transformation can create better business outcomes.



The key roadblocks to digital transformation in business services

In our experience of working with business and professional services organisations to achieve digital transformation, we've found that the same issues, concerns and attitudes emerge. Recognising what's holding your organisation back allows you to address those roadblocks in your digital transformation strategy.

1. Analysis paralysis – knowing where to begin

There's a huge range of digital vendors and options to choose from, and many businesses don't know where to start. They're aware of the need to be more flexible, agile, forward thinking, innovative – but what does this look like in reality? Without a clear purpose and the right expertise, it's hard to critically assess digital solutions. And without the confidence to recommend a solution to the CIO, projects often end up abandoned.

2. Uncertainty about new business models

New business models have emerged rapidly following the pandemic and these structural changes have a knock-on effect on decision making. How will freelancers or gig-economy workers impact the business model? How will subscription-based service packages fit in? What will the role of 5G powered sensor technology be in delivering a contactless, pre-orderable and traceable experience? Many organisations feel that, until they can answer these questions and more, they can't move forward with a digital transformation strategy and roadmap.

3. Cybersecurity risk

Globally, ransomware attacks are on the rise, and the attack surface is widening as employees and contractors access systems remotely. Sensitive personal and financial information is foundational for business services, and a security breach for these organisations doesn't just tarnish their reputation – it could seriously compromise their clients' data and brands, too. The rapid cloud adoption seen during the pandemic has redrawn security perimeters – but has cybersecurity kept up? As organisations upgrade their infrastructure and add new, innovative technologies into their estate, there's a growing understanding that these need to be supported with enhanced security architecture that protects against any newly introduced vulnerabilities.

4. Securing board-level buy-in and progressing your pilot

There's a very real risk that, without strong commercial models and clear ways of demonstrating a rapid ROI, the organisational mood will be against wider digital transformation, and nothing will get past pilot stage. Often organisations don't have board-level sponsorship for wider change or clear proof of value data to support the business plan and haven't included using efficiency savings to fund innovation in their strategy.

5. Hybrid working is a step change for employees

For numerous job roles, the transition to remote working has been difficult. Access to collaboration tools has been part of the puzzle but developing new ways of working without face-to-face contact has been a learning curve. Struggling to make the most of this new environment, user adoption can become a stumbling block.

The key roadblocks to digital transformation in business services

6. How much budget should be allocated to transformation?

Every sector has limited budget and there's always a contest over where to spend it. In today's uncertain economic environment, caution about making new investments is high and the push towards cost savings is strong. Add to this the uncertainty about the end goal of transformation, and a business case full of highly technical jargon, and there's understandable concern over how much money should be funnelled into digital projects.



7. The scale of the data management task

Accurate, free-flowing data is essential for digital transformation, but many organisations are starting from a point where their data is stuck in silos. It feels like a gargantuan task to digitalise complicated paper trails and bring the data together across many different systems to create a clear, overall picture. Convoluted approval processes and a lack of agility are also business-wide stumbling blocks that can stall digital transformation entirely.



Innovations to drive your digital transformation

The diversity of business and professional services means there's no single digital technology that's dominating industry transformation. Instead, a number of technologies are being used across various operations to drive specific business goals.



Innovations to drive your digital transformation

Here are three innovation areas that are shaping the way organisations within the business services sector operate:

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning

Both professional services and recruitment are already getting value from AI for quantity-based tasks like shortlisting candidate CVs and business auditing. The time saving capabilities alone are transformative; AI processing can cut the 23 hours required to screen and select for a single hire, for example, down to an almost instant result. And as robotics, AI and machine learning continue to develop, they're making it easier to fully understand clients' data and customer wants. This could transform customer care. Already AI-powered chatbots are increasingly tackling simple queries, freeing up human agents to deal with more complex customer issues. And these advances are welcomed by customers.

58%

of customers like the idea of organisations using technology like AI to identify them by their voice and save time on a call. 🔄

2. 5G

5G is a major enabler when it comes to rethinking traditional business models and driving competitive advantage. A watchword across various industries, it facilitates innovation through low-latency and high-reliability connectivity. Because it's far less likely to drop out than 4G, it's being used by many organisations within business services to create contactless, touchless, pre-orderable and traceable experiences. It's transformative for food services in particular as it facilitates rapid site deployment of technologies like self-service kiosks. With thousands of locations to manage, reliable self-service kiosks are strong revenue drivers, their 'always on' nature meaning revenue is never lost to glitches. And with evolving safety regulations at many sporting and event venues, this technology is also helping organisations to minimise both service disruption and face-to-face contact.

By 2025

1/3

of the world's population is estimated to have access to 5G networks.

China is leading the charge and installed an estimated

580k

5G base stations in 2020. 🔄

3. SD-WAN

SD-WAN is a virtual WAN architecture that lets organisations securely connect users to their applications using any combination of network transport services. In practical terms, it enables better performance and a better experience on complex business critical applications. It also provides greater bandwidth to support new digital and automated business models that can be used to make operations more effective and productive. Better connectivity also drives stronger collaboration initiatives, so sales, service and contact centre staff can work together efficiently regardless of location. And that gives a boost to the customer experience, too. Add to this the significant cost-savings of a scalable, flexible and secure service and it's a cornerstone of digital transformation among many business services organisations.

95%

of organisations said that digital transformation was an important or essential driver for implementing SD-WAN within their organisation. 🔄

Prioritising sustainability in business services

Sustainability is shooting up the agenda of every business services organisation, driven by pressure from all angles. Ambitious government commitments mean around **90% of the world is now covered by net zero targets**, while customers have already made their expectations clear - **28% of UK consumers have shunned a business they have sustainability concerns about.** 🔄

Business services needs to lead from the front. And professional services firms are particularly under the spotlight as they put together annual reports for clients that include sustainability progress updates. It's damaging to client confidence when firms don't have their own quantifiable initiatives to publish, too.

Digital technology offers opportunities across the board to become more sustainable. From using more energy efficient technologies like 5G, fibre networks and the cloud to reduce the carbon footprint of data traffic, to optimising supply chains to make them traceable, ethical and sustainable.

Here are three key ways that technology can promote sustainability within the industry:

1. Reducing travel emissions

Reducing employee travel to central offices and co-located meetings makes a huge dent in an organisation's carbon emissions. And a shift in business model to a more agile, cloud-based, remote working infrastructure is a prime opportunity to cut travel. Collaboration technologies such as video conferencing, document sharing and mobile technology all support this hybrid business model that reduces road and air traffic.

2. Building smarter

When people do need to get together, intelligent buildings, equipped with digital technology, mean premises can be more environmentally friendly. Intelligent buildings bring digital technology into a building by design. Digital capabilities are woven into the structure, using Internet of Things (IoT) devices and machine learning capabilities to monitor operations and generate insights into how energy use can be optimised. There's almost no aspect of a building that can't be optimised – walls, water pipes, machinery, refrigeration units, ceilings, doors, windows, desks,

appliances, air ducts. With so many ways to make meaningful changes, sustainability returns can follow quickly.

The real estate sector is one of the most carbon intensive sectors, accounting for

38%

of total global greenhouse gas emissions. 🔄

3. Providing sustenance, sustainably

When it comes to food services, the supply chain is the most critical sustainability frontier. Initiatives like sustainable farming and reliance on local produce are most effective when used in conjunction with digitally optimised supply chains. These are built around cloud-based partner ecosystems, so every link in the chain can pivot quickly to optimise operations and minimise carbon emissions. Digital supply chains mean less waste and greater control as leveraging big data gives end-to-end visibility of every step from farm to plate – ideal for keeping customers informed about exactly

what their meal cost the environment. Digitalisation makes it easier to adapt quickly to changes and mitigate any negative impact on the climate.

Weaving sustainability into every aspect of strategy

The potential for sustainability is increasing as innovation and digitalisation grow within the sector. The critical point is see sustainability as a thread that runs through all aspects of business operations.

Digital transformation can support sustainability by:

- reducing travel within the recruitment sector by using Virtual Reality (VR) to create more immersive interview experiences and inductions
- using collaboration tools to hold meetings and facilitate document discovery during global auditing projects
- introducing IoT motion-sensor lighting and heating to office blocks and hospitality venues so that these facilities only use energy when essential.

How to implement effective digital transformation

While digital transformation looks different for different business services organisations, success is built on choosing infrastructure that offers the right security, service and management. The best way to achieve this is using a clear and complete roadmap supported by organisation-wide buy-in.

Baseline before you begin

Your journey to unlocking all the benefits of digital transformation as an agile, connected organisation must start with a thorough understanding of where you are right now. Any strategy needs a baseline to limit the unknowns that could hamper progress later down the line. Look at your processes and tasks, reviewing each to see if it delivers the outcome you need. With a clear idea of what you want to change and the capabilities you require, you can put together a comprehensive roadmap.

Think big to plan comprehensively

Bear in mind that digitalisation should be aspirational as well as solutions driven. Often, clunky legacy systems and inefficient analogue processes become too much for the

departments using them and they demand change. But think beyond these obvious challenges. Include future projections for where you'd like your business to be in one, five, ten years' time – things like incorporating 5G connectivity to enable new innovations like augmented reality and VR for enhanced call centre experiences. Digitalisation is a golden opportunity to get your organisation ahead of the curves of customer demand and market trends, so you're leading, not following.

Let strategic prioritisation guide your roadmap

With a comprehensive view of what you want to achieve, look at how the sequence of projects will affect your organisation during the overall digital transformation process. Depending on the area of business services, priorities can differ wildly, so this prioritisation needs to be tailored to your organisation. It's important to take likely returns on investment into account, too. It could be that the cost savings of, for example, ripping out legacy systems, ultimately fund the rest of the roadmap.

Build security into every aspect of your roadmap

Security is foundational for every digital evolution and it's most effective if it's planned into your transformation from the very beginning. Collaboration tools, self-service kiosks, cloud-based data management – all of these solutions drive more efficient business practice and better customer service, but they can also widen an organisation's attack surface. Developing these solutions but thinking of security as a separate function and leaving it as just an add-on leaves you vulnerable to malicious actors. Instead, prioritising security at the beginning of a digital project and building in security by design gives you the freedom and peace of mind to explore the full potential of digitalisation.

Remember the importance of people in transformation

Many organisations lack the expertise in-house to navigate digital transformation, so consider bringing in the right human resources. Be realistic about the range of skills you'll need to cover all aspects of the delivery, including technical, administrative, financial and security activities.

It's also vital to take your people on your digital journey with you. Countless organisations have found their digital projects dead in the water thanks to a lack of user adoption. Workplace culture is a huge factor in digitalisation success, so digital upskilling needs to be a priority. Reluctance to transition to new ways of working should be met with effective training, and timescales that allow everyone to get to grips with any new tools they have. Part of this is making sure everyone understands the end-goal and how digitalisation will ultimately make the business more successful and tasks easier.

Plan to continue your digital evolution

The process of being a digital-first organisation doesn't stop because your business, your market context and technology keeps evolving. This will change what 'digital first' means, and there'll be work involved in staying current. However, it's far more manageable to make small, regular changes than to undertake a complete overhaul years down the line. Plan in periodic reviews to check how your organisation is performing and explore what further capabilities could benefit your business.

Our digital business and professional services proposition

We provide industry-specific, global managed services that enable secure data distribution across global supply chains, operations and businesses.

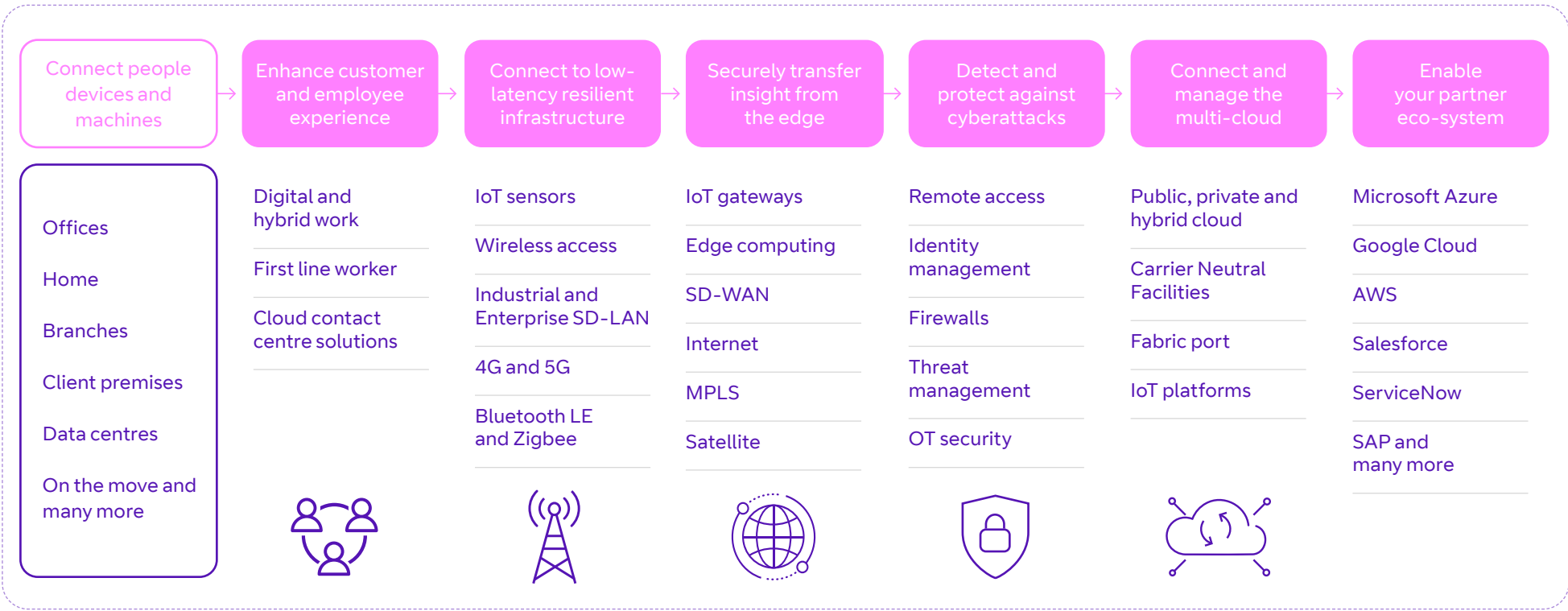
Our ambition: to become the world's most trusted connector of people, devices and machines.

To power the digitalisation of your business, we can help you with:

- an end-to-end-infrastructure design, based on composable architectures
- the products, tools and services to support your digitalisation globally
- a service framework supporting your business on a scalable basis
- a security-by-design approach that protects your data, assets and business.

What your business can achieve with our business and professional services solutions:

1. ensure your network infrastructure is digital-ready
2. resolve your cybersecurity challenges
3. deliver your data securely and globally to improve business outcomes.



Industry-specific global managed service across **infrastructure, security and digital workplace**

Why BT for digital business and professional services

We work from a business-centric standpoint

Our digital transformation solutions have been heavily influenced by the hundreds of conversations we've had with business services customers. Our experts have used these insights as the bedrock for developing a portfolio of solutions that are tailored to our customers' needs.

We're experts at building successful business cases

Our experts work closely with the in-house teams heading up transformation initiatives. We know how important it is to be armed with all relevant information in order to build a compelling business case. We translate the technology into tangible deliverables that CIOs and boards can easily digest, making it easier to get projects off the ground so businesses can start enjoying the benefits sooner.

We build trust before solutions

We understand that solutions that feel imposed upon business services teams are rarely as successful as those that are co-created. Recognising that your people know more about your business than we do, we value the trust of your teams on the ground and work collaboratively with them to develop a solution.

We're security specialists

Our experience and expertise in protecting governments, nation states, critical national infrastructure and large global corporations from over 6,500 cyberattacks each day gives us a ringside seat on the complex security threat landscape. We use this unique position to support organisations to detect and respond to threats in a Zero Trust world with real time visibility and monitoring, drawing on the expertise of our 3,000 security experts and 350 consultants based in our security operations centres around the globe.

Our renowned global network

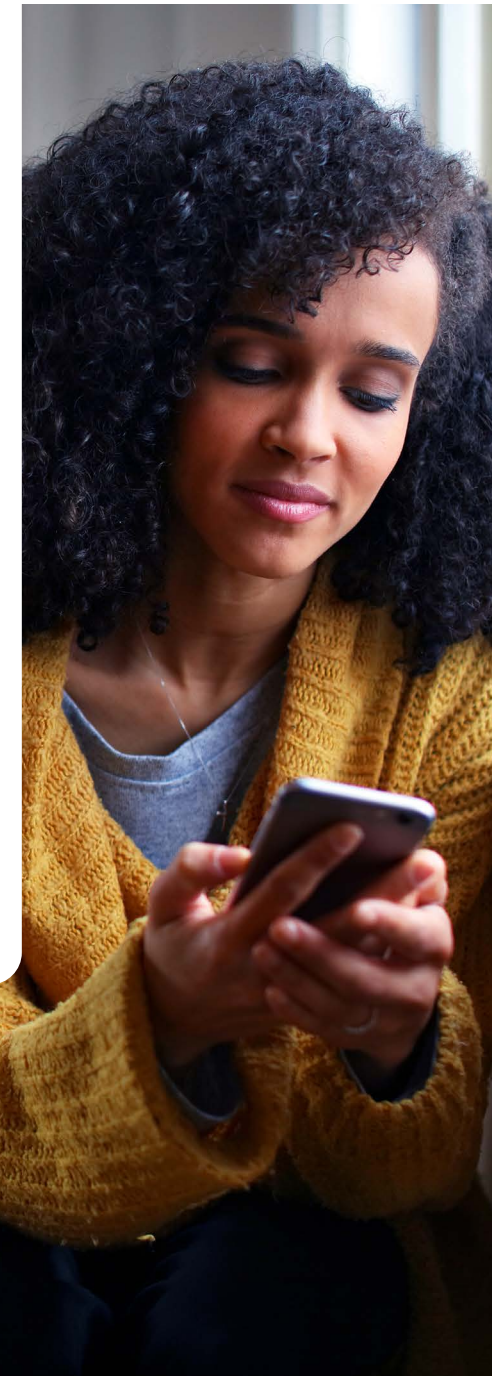
We're a reliable partner with global experience and credentials, and the research and development capabilities to turn the latest innovations into resilient and trusted services on a global scale. We've delivered thousands of solutions globally with our ever-increasing choice of secure services and solutions.

Our approach means that multiple technologies and legacy systems can be easily managed to create a single, secure global network infrastructure for your business.

We own over 60,000km of terrestrial fibre used to deliver backbone and access across multiple regions and countries – enough to go around the Earth 1.5 times.

The breadth and depth of our portfolio

Through our broad portfolio of solutions, we can easily integrate with the collaboration applications, data and third-party cloud providers you need globally. Then our end-to-end management of your entire solution simplifies operations for you – and improves user experience for your team and your customers. Our portfolio combines our deep expertise and extensive capabilities in cloud, networking and security services.



Our extensive and experienced partner ecosystem

We offer an ecosystem of partnerships to transform the way you run your operations. Our links with leading public cloud providers delivers flexible connectivity into hyperscalers and regional datacentres. And, through leading industry partnerships, we blend the latest specialist technologies into what we offer.

Our investment in R&D and innovation

A commitment to innovation is part of our DNA. We've invested £2.5bn in research and development over the last five years, making us the third largest investor in R&D in the UK. Our 13,000 scientists and technologists worldwide have filed over 10,000 patents since 1990 to push forward the boundaries of what we can help our customers achieve.

We take an open approach to innovation, working in close collaboration with our customers and strategic partners or specialist innovators such as universities, government organisations, standards bodies and technology companies. Our innovation scouting teams are always scanning the horizon for ideas and expertise generated by third-party organisations that we can incorporate into our search for the next technological breakthrough.



Our own BT Labs at Adastral Park is a globally recognised centre for telecoms research and a key source of UK Intellectual Property, and our 4,000 scientists, IT experts, engineers and collaboration partners based there continue to push the boundaries of innovation.

Our long-standing commitment to sustainability

We've been on a climate action journey for over 25 years, since setting our first carbon reduction target in 1992. Since 2016/17, we've reduced the carbon emissions intensity of our operations by 57% and have reduced carbon emissions by 19% in our supply chain over the same timeframe. We've pledged to be a net zero and circular business by 2030, and 2040 for our supply chain and customers.

Making digital transformation happen

Our experts are ready to help you bring digitalisation to life in your organisation. To find out how to unlock the potential of digital transformation, get in touch with your account manager today or visit our webpage. [🔗](#)

Digital industry in action

A dynamic network for the future

The challenge

A global professional services organisation wanted to digitally transform their out-of-date, disparate and expensive collaboration platforms into a secure, agile platform.

The solution

Our portfolio partner ecosystem, offshore capability and supplier management capabilities took away their headache. We introduced network visibility and resilience to create a more dynamic network.

The result

The organisation now enjoys a reduced total cost of ownership as well as lower travel costs. And both collaboration and productivity have improved, resulting in a better user experience.

A productive digital workplace

The challenge

One of the world's largest consultancy and audit firms wanted to break into new markets while at the same time maintaining complete data confidentiality and strong lines of communication.

The solution

We drew on our 'big organisation' understanding, unrivalled portfolio and global reach to create a secure communication solution that could meet the needs of the firm's global operations.

The result

Mobile and remote workers can now collaborate safely and securely at speed with one another and their customers.

Making security integral to business

The challenge

One of the world's largest accounting and professional services organisations wanted to become a digital business, but they were concerned about potential security breaches in the process.

The solution

Our executive team and portfolio leadership drew on their extensive expertise and experience to put together an effective strategy that would keep the organisation secure throughout their digital transformation.

The result

They now have consolidated, future-proofed and secure infrastructure on which to build a digital business. They also successfully reduced their carbon footprint thanks to the strategy we helped put in place.





Offices worldwide

The services described in this publication are subject to availability and may be modified from time to time. Services and equipment are provided subject to British Telecommunications plc's respective standard conditions of contract. Nothing in this publication forms any part of any contract.

© British Telecommunications plc 2022. Registered office: One Braham, Braham Street, London, England E1 8EE. Registered in England No. 1800000.

February 2022