ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE - 2021 & BEYOND

Abstract

Organizations are modernizing their workplace to meet the needs of the changing workforce demographics and the other macro trends in the world. Consequently, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been steadily making its way into the enterprise and in the workplace.

The unprecedented spread of COVID-19 has however taken the world by storm. Every organization has felt its effects, regardless of their location, size, or sociopolitical characteristics. This has also brought with it a new set of challenges and accelerated the need for organizations to be more digital and adopt emerging technologies faster.

An effective AI implementation and adoption can address many of the challenges in the new workplace of 2021 & beyond.

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How AI can help in addressing Workplace Challenges

As the world fights one of the worst pandemics, global business ecosystems have been disrupted. Every organization has seen a shift in their workplace and with it a new set of obstacles have appeared.

Some of the most common challenges in workplace during and after Covid-19 are:

- Ensuring employee experience & productivity amidst reduced social connect and collocation
- Finding right information while working remote
- Keeping employees mentally healthy & handling work life balance
- Adapting to rapid policy changes including hiring remote workers, retention & employee engagement
- Adopting "New Normal", like space

allocation considering social distancing for people returning to office

- Upskilling and reskilling employees in remote workplace
- Disruption in new business activity, broken processes, paper-based processes
- Handling hardware and software issues remotely

In Covid-19 era where enterprises are seeing a fundamental change in thinking, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is pushing boundaries

across industries. AI has come a long way in augmenting human potential and helping enterprises globally to adapt to new ways of working.

In today's workplace, AI can handle repetitive tasks across the organization using Chatbots and techniques like NLP (Natural Language Processing), Machine Language. This frees up people in HR, IT, marketing, and other enabling functions to focus on more creative work and solving complex problems.

90% C-level executives reported measurable benefits from deploying AI within their organizations.

Source : Forbes.com
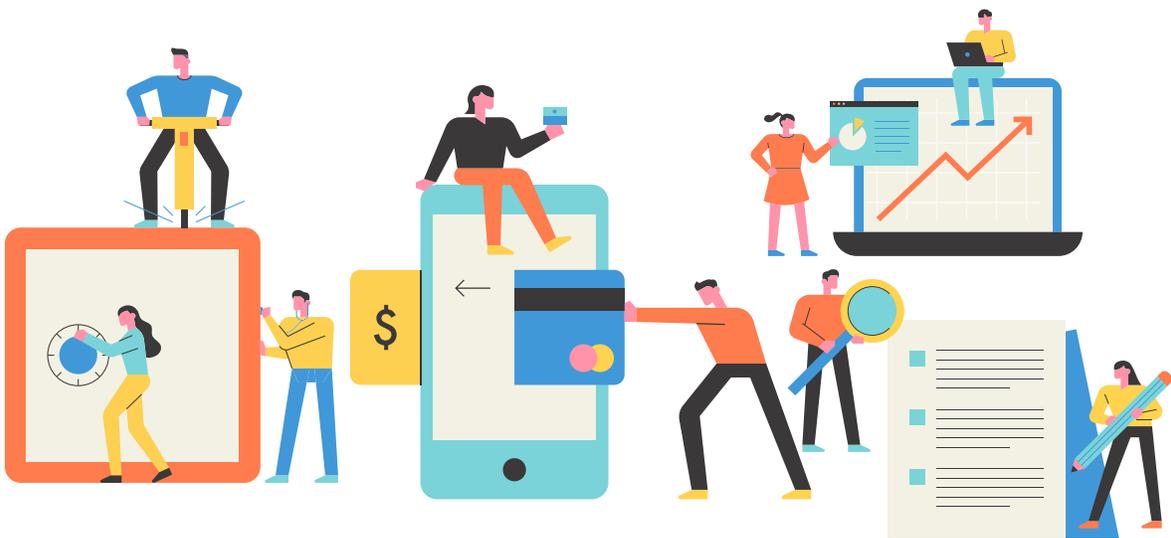
Employee Experience & Productivity

Employee experience & Productivity in the workplace have seen a significant shift in 2020 and many of the changes are here to stay. AI and Bots had started making a mark in the workplace and the current environment will accelerate their use. In the current environment, having large numbers of employees in the office is inadvisable and at the same time it is important to ensure that some essential staff are in office. Workplace bots can step up to address

these current challenges. Some examples are:

- Self-service: Be it raising tickets on behalf of users in systems such as ServiceNow, Jira etc. or automatically resolving issues for them, bots can help without the need for human intervention.

- Office 365 adoption bots provide self-help content including training videos, articles, and program highlights.

- Workplace bot can help in adoption of "New Norms" in post-covid19 era across

multiple channels like SharePoint, Teams and Cortana in multi-languages

- Virtual Assistants like Cortana use AI capabilities to improve productivity by taking care of everyday tasks, such as scheduling meetings, transcribing notes, present the meeting deck or add someone

- AI based Search improves employee productivity by providing a single, unified, and consistent search experience that evolves the definition of search in the remote workplace.

Infosys' AI Search web-part - One-stop place for searching across Office 365 content and other custom data sources.
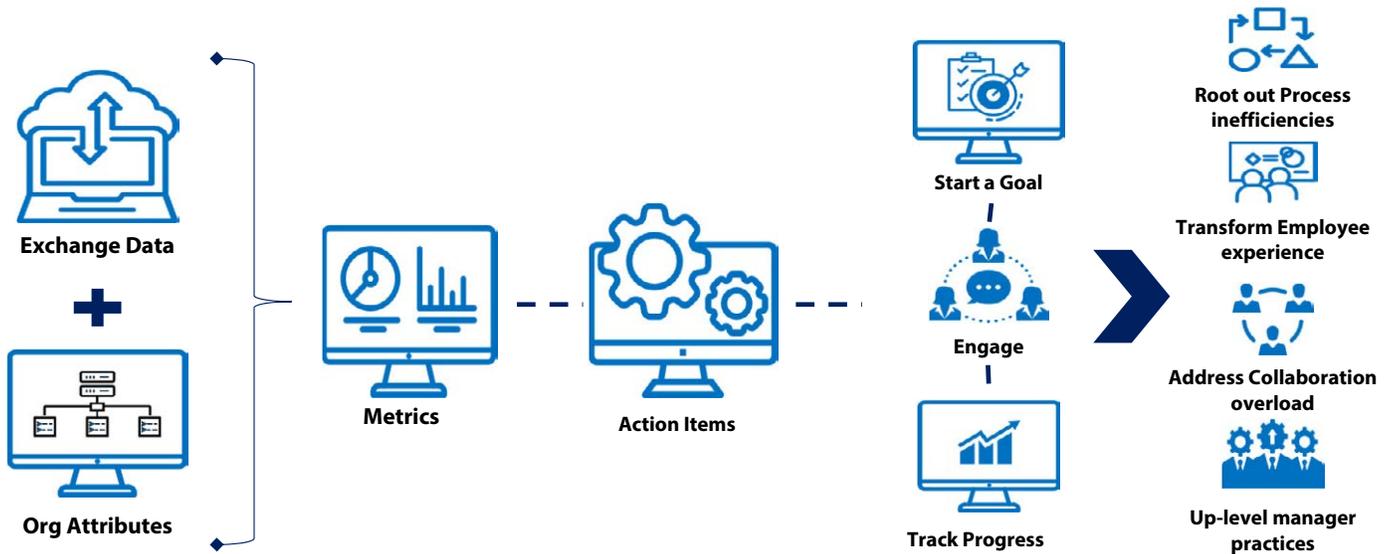
Facilitate HR operations

AI in workplace can help HR professionals perform better by not only lending a helping hand in keeping employees informed about announcements and polices but also in promoting healthy habits and mental wellness.

Workplace Analytics data helps leaders understand collaboration patterns across the organizations and decide on how to root out process inefficiencies, break down organizational silos and address collaboration overload caused by the blurring lines between work & personal space. Workplace Analytics can help to optimize process, improve manger team engagement and productivity.

Exchange Data

+

Org Attributes

Metrics

Action Items

Start a Goal

Engage

Track Progress

Root out Process inefficiencies

Transform Employee experience

Address Collaboration overload

Up-level manager practices

Source: Infosys.com

Emotional AI can help understand employee's behavior, mood, and sentiment with the help of natural language text, voice, and facial expression analysis. HR can use this information for interventions that improve mental health & wellbeing of peoples. Some examples are:

- **Natural language text analysis** - helps to scan written text and figure out whether text is positive, negative, or neutral in sentiment
- **Voice analysis** – Determine employee's sentiment by analyzing speech signals like their vocal pitch, intonation, and tone & words
- **Facial expression analysis** – helps to examine employee's physical and mental states

AI can help adopt to the "New Normal" in the workplace by:

- Automatic space allocation process for people returning to office considering factors like social distancing, productivity, employee satisfaction and proper sizing
- Computer Vision and camera-based AI services can ensure proper protective gear and social distancing are in place.

Up-skilling Talent

As companies adopt newer technologies, Training & Adoption Bots help in upskilling resources across business needs with the help of FAQs, personalized tips, and trainings

- Training bot helps in adoption through multiple channels like SharePoint, Teams and Cortana

- Bot can support multiple languages through machine translation enabling content authors to reach a global audience

- Training bot aids and augments employees with highly personalized content based on their experience and aspirations, and action recommendations

"77% IT decision makers were confident employees in their organization could be trained for the new job roles AI will create in their business".

Source : Infosys.com
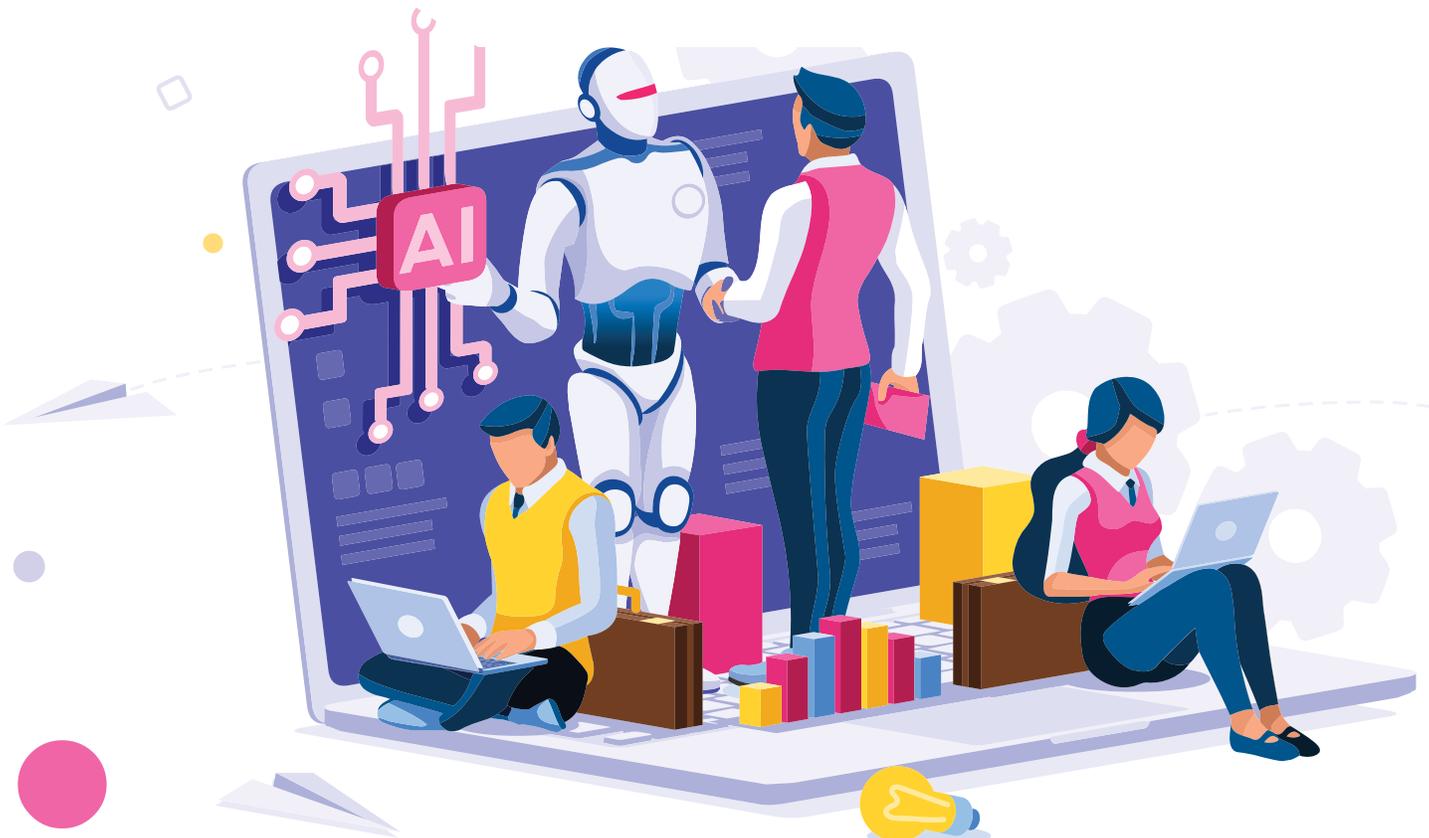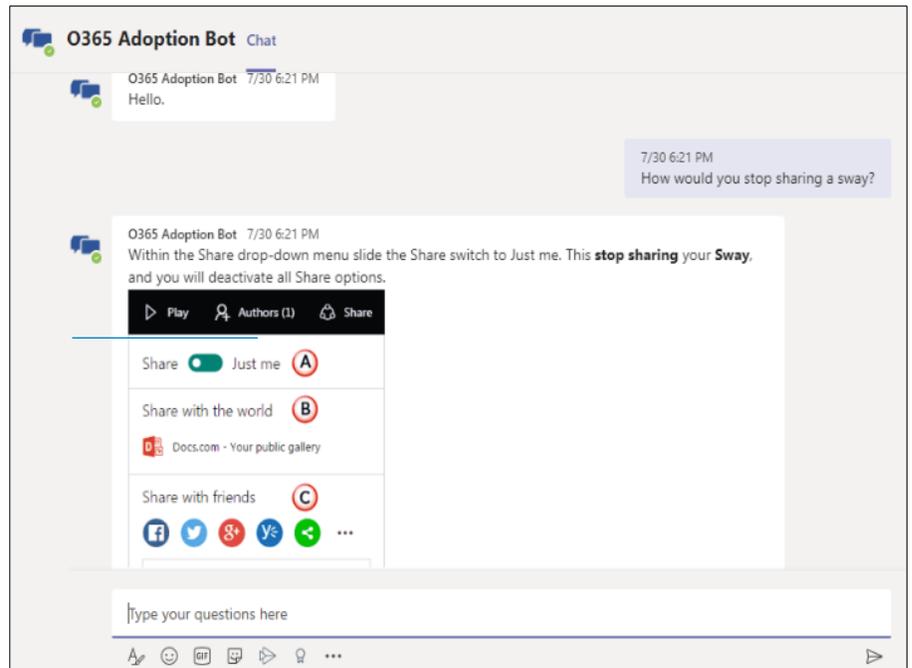
Business Operations & Growth

Artificial Intelligence embedded in business applications helps in improving processes and the overall output of the systems. For example, in supply chain management it will enable improved supply chain automation using virtual assistants.

AI-powered applications are changing the workplace for frontline workers in multiple ways from creating the most efficient routes for fleets, helping with palletized cargo picking, sorting, shelving, moving, and packing in warehouses to ensure workers maintain social-distancing

Computer vision is making it possible to conduct visual quality checks. For example, safety cameras are now augmented with temperature sensors and can alert care staff when employee is having fever symptoms.

"4 out of 5 C-level executives said that their future business strategy will be informed through opportunities made available with AI technology."

Source : Infosys.com
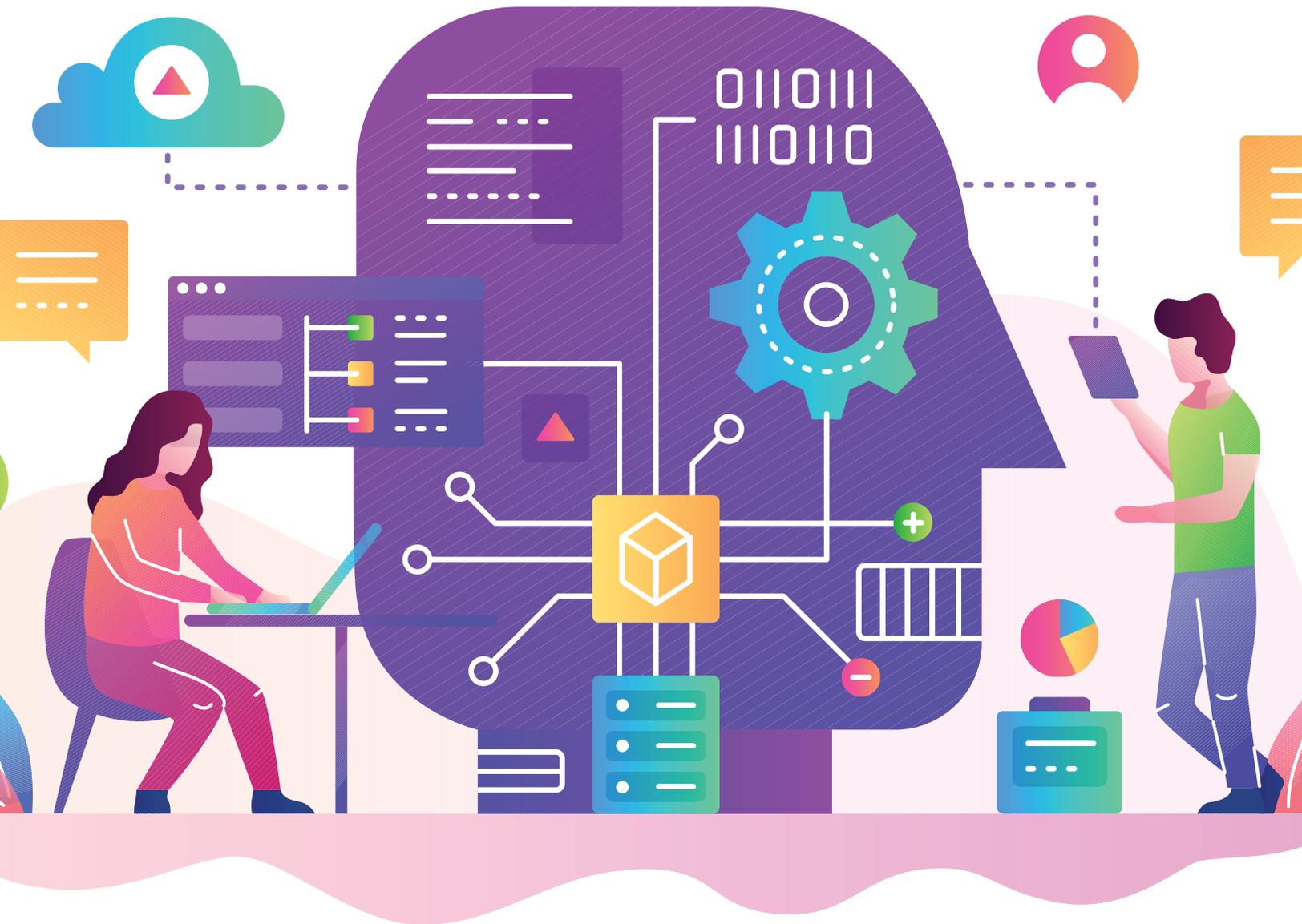
Streamlining IT Operations

Using artificial intelligence, IT organizations can now manage the workplace better even during these times of increased ticket volumes and reduced staff.

Conversational Bots can help ease the load on the support staff by answering user queries and even resolving common issues.

As employees are working remotely, machine learning can help auto-heal issues like high CPU utilization and others by leveraging integrations with products like Nanoheal and NextThink. These will help companies move from reactive to predictive and proactive help-desk approach and automate responses.

How will AI change the Workplace?

A growing number of companies have increased focus on AI and now actively use AI in their digital transformation journey. Organizations today expect their workplace applications to help them maximize productivity through AI.

In 2021 and beyond, adoption of AI in the workplace will be accelerated. AI will pick up many of the repetitive and transactional tasks enabling the human workforce to focus on the critical and strategic areas which provide better value and work satisfaction.

About the authors

Raman Nambirajan

Raman is a Senior Technology Architect in Infosys. He has over 14 years' experience in IT and has performed wide variety of roles across globe. He is focused on architecture, application migration, solutioning, and development in Microsoft technologies.

Pradeep Hegde

Pradeep is a Senior Technology Architect in Infosys with 16+ years of Industry experience covering Architecture and Solution delivery. He has extensive experience in building and modernizing Collaboration & Document Management Solutions for organizations across the globe.

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