

# CLIENT: TALK TALK

## Workforce 2025 campaign



### Report part 1

The thirtysomethings grew up with the technologies above but fortysomethings are just as fluent. All ages use social networks, they all use instant messenger, whether that's Skype, Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp. And then they come into work and the IT slows right down for them. Video conferencing isn't as widely used when they've been on Facetime all weekend. Control of computers is by keyboard and mouse or maybe a touch screen, when they've been talking to Alexa, Cortana and Siri in their spare time.

This is going to make for a frustrated generation unless something is done. Notably, a lot of companies cite technology limitations as their biggest frustration right now. Just under half of British workers said that a slow Internet connection was their top time waster at work while 36% criticised their laptops for being too slow.

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### Flexible working at the core

Optimism also surrounds flexible working practices over the next decade.

One third of respondents in the survey considered that the Monday to Friday working week would become redundant over the next 10 years, delivering greater flexibility to employees.

While 56% of decision makers considered that the ability to work anywhere would improve working practices (shooting up to 67% of London-based employers). So 55% of leaders will prioritise enabling their employees to work anywhere, safely and securely, over the next decade.

This doesn't mean it's easy or indeed a solution. In the very early part of the century, when a large telecoms company set up one of the early working-from-home-using-technology experiments, it found that after a year most of the employees asked to come back to the office. It wasn't the technology letting them down, this was robust and has only become smaller and cheaper. It was the people issues.

Whether it was because they missed the buzz of a lively office or even small stuff like being forgotten off the list when someone was organising a work trip to the theatre, people started to feel excluded.

This hasn't gone away. In "The Smarter Working Manifesto" (Vanhoutte and Clapperton, 2014), the authors note the extensive research undertaken by audio specialist Plantronics when it moved to the work-anywhere ethic (which it called Smarter Working). It surveyed its employees about exactly what they wanted. It asked them about their home working conditions, for example taking into account the difficulties in working from home if they have small children. It came across the house pricing conundrum - a 25 year old might be temperamentally suited to working from home. The job and their tasks might be admirably matched to flexibility, but at that age they are unlikely to have their own home unless things become more affordable very quickly.

Ultimately, management styles need to change alongside technology. Not everyone is going to be suited to flexibility, which is something organisations must recognise and be able to adapt to. Implementing flexibility effectively is going to be a process rather than something to switch on or off. Providing the right technological support is one element to making it a success, but businesses must look beyond this if flexibility is going to work for both the employee and employer.

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2017

33% Considered that the Monday-Friday working week will become redundant.

24-7 365

>30% British employees believe jobs will be supported by AI and robotic process automation (RPA).

56% Decision makers considered that the ability to work anywhere would improve working practices.

55% Leaders will prioritise enabling their employees to work anywhere, safely and securely.

2027

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Part two: Tomorrow's vision:  
Business ex machina

TalkTalk  
Business

Report part 2

This report begins by outlining where British businesses are today, and what they can do to start preparing for the future now. Then, we will set out an exciting vision for the future, placing technology front and centre, and helping you understand how to future-proof your business for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We will then provide helpful tips for how businesses can close the digital distance between their workforce and technology.

The world is changing, and it is an exciting time to talk about innovation in business. Technology is the way to empower people for a more productive and motivated workforce, and I strongly believe technology will make British businesses stronger and better.

We hope this report will leave you feeling as excited and inspired about the future as we are. While creating the workforce of the future may seem daunting, it is extremely rewarding to draw a clear path for the years ahead, with an understanding at every junction about how to maximise and leverage all of the wonderful innovations around us. We speak from experience, as at TalkTalk, we have heavily invested in our own workforce, not least with the recent opening of our new Soapworks office in Salford Quays. It is a future-proof space that gives employees the ability to flourish with the right technology and a flexible approach to working.

The future certainly looks bright, and we are looking forward to showing you what it will look like.

Welcome to:

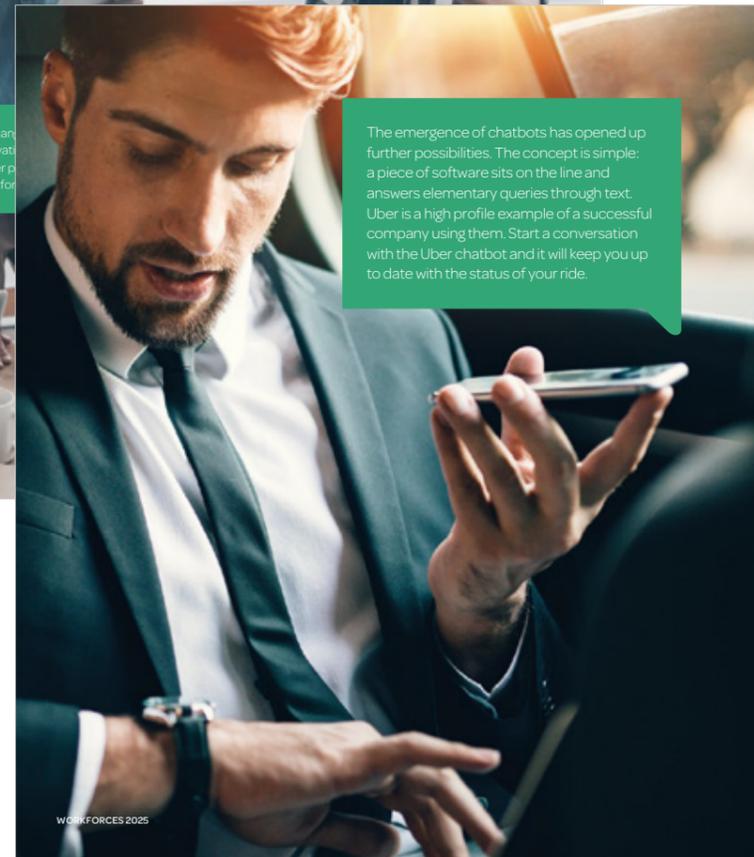
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"The world is changing,  
talk about innovation,  
way to empower people,  
motivated workforce."

The emergence of chatbots has opened up further possibilities. The concept is simple: a piece of software sits on the line and answers elementary queries through text. Uber is a high profile example of a successful company using them. Start a conversation with the Uber chatbot and it will keep you up to date with the status of your ride.



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### Putting artificial intelligence to work

People can mean different things when they talk about artificial intelligence so it's worth clarifying definitions. AI is a development of robotic process automation (RPA), which can be self-explanatory: it takes a robotic (or repetitive) process and automates it. Essentially if something is rules-based and predictable it can be automated with RPA. A good example is the contact centre, for some time callers have been able to use their keypad or voice commands, but it will be a piece of software rather than a human being actually putting them through to the right contact.

The emergence of chatbots has opened up further possibilities. The concept is simple: a piece of software sits on the line and answers elementary queries through text. Uber is a high profile example of a successful company using them. Start a conversation with the Uber chatbot and it will keep you up to date with the status of your ride. In some countries, you can click on an address through Uber's Facebook page and the chatbot will arrange a ride for you. This is all happening now through today's technology.

There are many other examples and they start to impinge on the next stage, artificial intelligence (AI), which effectively thinks for itself. This may take the form of listening to natural language and either responding to it or translating it, or perhaps both; it might involve doing something more advanced and moving into machine learning, which is where futurist Graeme Codrington starts to find it even more exciting. "Machine learning is when you say to the system, I'm not quite sure what this is or what to ask, please find me an answer."

Google and Facebook are both good examples of companies maximising the potential of this sort of technology.

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Report part 3

### Part three: Changing the nature of business: the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Vast changes are being shaped by technology around the world, leading many to dub this wave as the "Fourth Industrial Revolution". Whilst different people have different explanations of which Industrial Revolution started when, it's worth looking into the phases through which industry has travelled. Why are the new technological advances we are currently seeing in the workplace just as significant as those that came before and defined previous Industrial Revolutions?

The first is the one just about every schoolchild will recognise as the "Industrial Revolution" - when mechanisation started take over in the UK and humankind got the machines to do the heavy lifting. The second is a little different, and refers to the period in which mass production became significant. "Rightly or wrongly, I suppose Henry Ford is the iconic picture we think about in the Second Industrial Revolution," says Futurist Graeme Codrington. "We learned you can't just take the machine and replace the people to get the benefits. It was in the second revolution that we realised that machines can do things people can't, so to get the benefit you have to redesign the process."

The Second Industrial Revolution was as much in the head as in the mechanics. Codrington comments that the full mechanisation that happened in this era led to things like the production line, which you can't do with people alone.

The Third Industrial Revolution starting half a century ago with technologies like the transistor to computers, the Internet and

Codrington considers that we're to the Second Industrial Revolution new technologies for a while, but redesigning systems, processes we live and work, to take account. This is the Fourth Industrial Revolution which the machines can take over processes through robotics, software. And just like a century isn't about the machines taking new ways for us to work with the research has plenty to say about look like and it's obvious that we prepare for completely new ways

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#### The Four Industrial Revolutions



#### The shape of a revolution

Something that's already happening is that the nine to five culture is giving way to flexible working practices and the workforce is going to be dispersed. Ultimately this will lead to the liberation of the employee without any sacrifice of productivity. Just under half (42 per cent) of employees are expecting the end of the nine to five working culture. As we previously said, this is going to throw out challenges to managers and employees who will have to work with and manage people who are not physically present, but ensure they still feel part of the team and remain productive.

One logical inevitability is the technology that will be required; 46 per cent of employees reported in the survey that having a secure and reliable Internet connection at work that can handle increasing demands for speed and data transfer was crucial. You can combine that with the notion of flexibility; "at work" inevitably now means "wherever I happen to be working".



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The nine to five culture is giving way to flexible working practices ...  
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Part four: Smarter work futures:  
Closing the digital distance

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Report part 4

This is significant because these age groups will be moving into management and very senior roles over the next decade – these are the people who will make these changes happen.

It's perhaps a little counterintuitive, then, that just 19 per cent of employees are expecting to see virtual meetings with customers or suppliers in the next decade. When it comes to attending virtual events, this got a slightly larger response with 24 per cent, but this is still fewer than one in four. In contrast, when asked if they believe their business would be likely to incorporate VR in the next decade, just 8 per cent of UK employees responded positively. The jury is out in Silicon Valley as well. In October 2017 the BBC interviewed Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Apple's CEO Tim Cook on the future of VR; Facebook saw it as becoming pervasive (note that his company had just bought a VR firm) while Cook thought it would be niche, with augmented reality becoming important.

It's almost certain that more wearables will emerge, but the key point is how they are going to be used and implemented.

Culturally the incoming generation will be more comfortable with the notion of wearables than its predecessors, with many using smartphones and watches to track heart rate, steps and sleep quality. It may be that this is reinforcing the idea of confidentiality of data – people often feel that their phone is part of their personal space, not that of the employer. Also, there could be an interesting debate to be had about why employers shouldn't know how productive someone is!

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### Change may be bigger – the practical steps

If we're going to be bold, Futurist Graeme Codrington suggests we're going to do a lot more experimentation and this means allowing ourselves to fail from time to time. "We've got to get out of the management mindset that says we'll do things only if we have 100 per cent proof of concept and 100 per cent ROI," he says. "Now we don't want people to think they've got to ruin their business with experiments; experiments can be phased in." So instead of suggesting everyone will work from home in one week's time, you might

have a pilot scheme in which one group got that far, he suggests. In fact, you might have two or three people doing it in different ways to see what works. "You should be deliberate about those experiments so it's not just 'anything goes', it's a distinct policy."

So, if there were one major takeaway from this report it might be that you need to be prepared to experiment and even stand up to the finance department when not everything produces an immediate return on investment. The IT department needs to be encouraged and empowered to put innovations in. IT needs to be cool again!

A second, related point, is that IT can't be solely the domain of the IT department any more. Change and innovation has to be shot through the company culture, with all employees feeling that they can bring ideas and innovations to the company table. A third point would be that this is only going to work with the right partnerships in place. A business specialising in, say, manufacturing, isn't going to want to acquire the skills to create a VR app suddenly, and nor should it. You need to be working with the right people in a partnership approach. Finally, the attitude to technology needs to change; it's not a threat, as we'll see in the next section.

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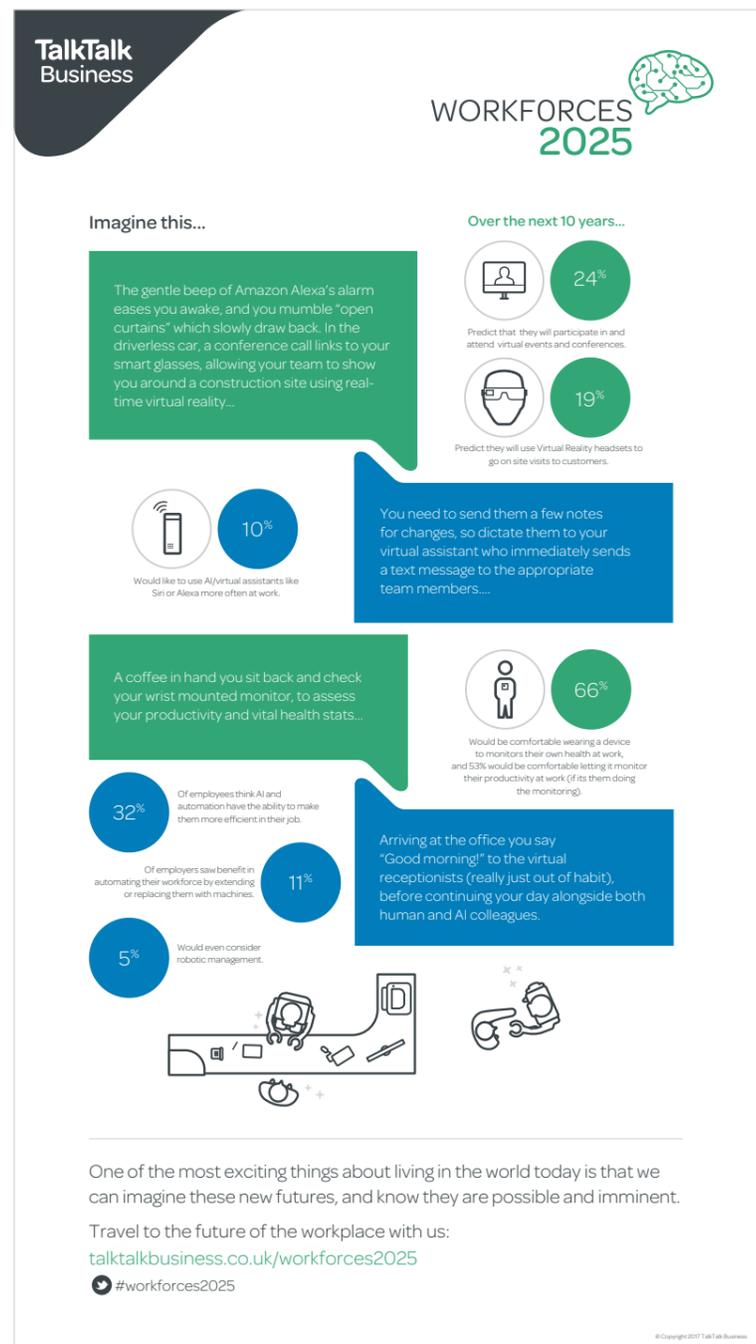
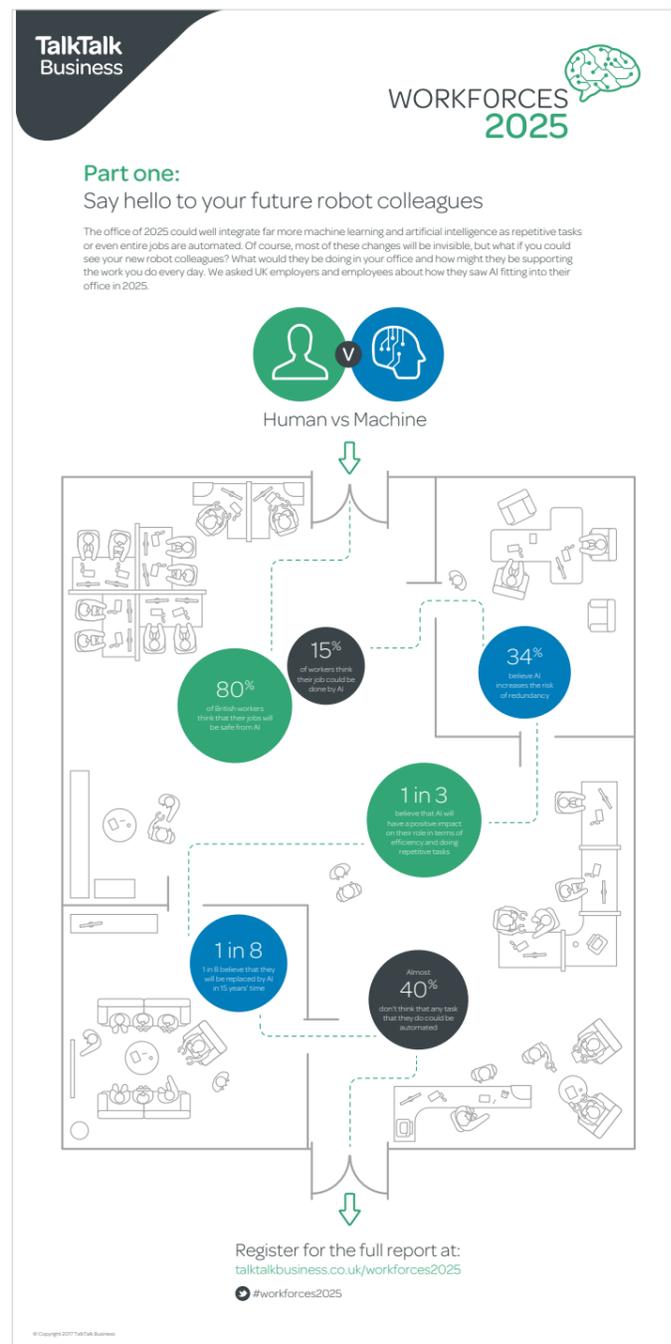


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Logo

Infographics