

VMware FITT ICT Trends: Write up from Sydney Event

Wasn't the elegant backdrop of the Doltone House a splendid setting for VMWare FITT ICT Trends luncheon event in Sydney this year on 13 September?



If you weren't one of the 240 people in attendance, you missed out on some enthusiastic discussion on how offices are changing to embrace new work styles as well as the impressive food and service. Our topic for the day was "The future way of working" and our four panelists and moderator included:

- Asanga Wanigatunga, Product Marketing Manager - VMware Australia and New Zealand
- Elizabeth Bushell, Director, Salesforce.com
- Bridget Gray, Managing Director, Harvey Nash
- Robert Evans, Partner Channel Marketing Manager, Microsoft Australia
- Vanessa Sulikowski – Collaboration Technical Lead – APJC CISCO

Each panellist brought a unique story of how activity based work was introduced into their environment and how their organisation has embraced the concept and benefits of permitting employees to work from home. Salesforce's technologies for telecommuting are so well developed, Liz quoted, that when one employee needed to move to SA (where Salesforce doesn't have an office) he was able to continue working full-time as a telecommuting staff member.

Our audience made good use of the Q&A time, exploring the areas of reengagement, sustaining a work culture, evolving work styles and measuring success. As telecommuting has been in practice for over 10 years in Australia, our audience demonstrated an interest in understanding what types of office redesigns are occurring. The panel responded that completely new office structuring techniques are necessary to engage the telecommuting worker, such as:

Duplicating the benefits of home work in the office space by creating quiet spaces, gaming rooms, creative areas and even a sick room to foster the benefits the employee might get working from home

Introducing a social element to the office to allow telecommuters to capitalise on their face-to-face interactions with office staff.

Creating areas which directly support collaborative arrangements — such as huge face-to-face work spaces accommodating large project teams as well as smaller 2 person 'huddle' rooms.

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The audience indicated they struggled finding tangible mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of the tele-commuter (against the internal employee who is seen but may not be as effective). Robert, discussed Microsoft's self-empowering performance review system at length which balances a staffer's work commitments against accomplishments. "Delivering results are always the best metric", said Robert.

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Bridget warned that you need a good design for telecommuting. "The 'hot desk-ing model just doesn't work. It is necessary to get an executive sponsor who is involved and savvy on the topic.' Said she. 'You need to recognize that it is about evolving work styles – not simply sharing a desk'.

Asanga suggested building a 'telecommuter profile' which discusses the collaboration needs, the technology requirements, to determine the extent of mobility which could be available to each staffer.

Another interesting riddle was the idea that – with no one in the office – how do you create a kinship with other staff and what might the key technologies be to encourage the camaraderie normally found in an office setting? The panel had a range of suggestions, including chatter, discussion groups, video-cam for meetings, instant photos on emails and social media sites and planned social activities to encourage engagement with other staffers.

The lively discussion will undoubtedly continue at FITT's ICT Trends events Melbourne and Brisbane over the next two weeks.

FITT would like to thank our panelists, moderator and engaged audience for a great event and fantastic day! We'll see you at the next event!



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