



A Guide to Agile Change Management

Take advantage of hybrid cloud
with VMware Horizon

This guide, written by Brian Madden, EUC industry analyst and expert, explains how your business can be more agile when leveraging hybrid cloud with VMware Horizon®.

Hello, fellow IT professional! If you're reading this, you probably feel like you're in the final stretch of two of the most significant years of change that the IT industry has ever faced, and you're most likely looking forward to the world of work getting back to "normal." But have you stopped to think about what normal actually looks like, especially in the context of end-user computing (EUC)?

From my perspective, I've spent the past 25 years of my career focused on EUC, helping organizations figure out how to securely deliver their business apps, files, data and processing to their users, regardless of where they are or what type of device they're using. Some organizations figured this out decades ago and have been leading the charge, while others have been reluctant.

Obviously, the events of 2020 and 2021 quickly changed millions of people's perspectives on the importance of remote work. Countless news profiles were written about organizations who, in 1 week, flipped from "everyone works in the office every day" to "we are now a 100 percent remote-working organization."

Those of us in EUC embraced "our day in the sun" and relished the opportunity to step up and help keep our organizations running while the world learned how to deal with the pandemic and organizations learned how to operate with 100 percent of their workforces being remote.

Early in the pandemic, much of the "future of work" narrative was, "The world of work has changed forever!" and "The office is dead!" But after over a year of working from home, people were champing at the bit to get back into the office, and the narrative quickly flipped to, "Maybe the office isn't dead yet," and "Office life is expected to return for many, but not all."

So as an EUC professional, what are you supposed to do? On the one hand, the whole world learned about the importance of flexibility in IT systems, so everything we've been preaching about for the past 2 decades got accelerated and adopted. But on the other hand, if everyone just goes back into the office and things go back to the 2019 definition of "normal," does that mean that we in EUC land will also take a huge step back?



New ways of working

From an EUC perspective, if there's one takeaway from the pandemic, it's that we've proven people can effectively work from anywhere as distributed teams. We've also learned that lots of people—many of whom never thought they'd think this—enjoy working from home and actually prefer it.

That said, many other people who worked remotely for 18 months realized that they really, REALLY like going into an office, and they can't wait to get back.

And ... There's a third group of people who'd like to get the best of both worlds. They don't want to commute to the office 5 days every week, but they also like the camaraderie of spending time in the office with other humans. This group prefers the hybrid office approach, going to the office on some but not all days. Ironically, the early-pandemic warnings about “office space is dead” don't seem to be panning out. A hybrid office approach still requires the same amount of office space as before the pandemic because everyone's “hybrid” preference is to go to the office the same middle days of the week!

The bottom line, though, is that moving forward, there won't be a single way to work. While it might slightly vary from organization to organization, the developing reality is that every organization is going to have to support workers both in and out of the office.

In other words, every EUC professional needs to support a multimodal employee experience. Even if your organization plans for a full return to the office, there will always be employees who are traveling or working from home on sick days or for other reasons—not to mention the possibility of another pandemic or some other major disruption causing everyone to work remotely for a while. So again, *every* EUC professional needs to support a multimodal employee experience moving forward.

And *every* EUC professional needs to remain agile.

The word “agile” has specific meanings in IT (e.g., *agile* software development), but when talking about how EUC professionals need to remain agile, the word “agile” is literal. We all got a free pass for not being prepared for the pandemic that hit in March 2020. So when getting all our users working remotely took some trial and error, that was okay.

Well, that was okay *once*. No free pass next time. And while we all hope there won't be a next time, none of us want to bet our careers on it.

If we've learned one thing from last time about what will happen if there's a next time, it's that we have to be ready to flip a switch in an instant. We have to be agile.

The easiest way to have the agility for that next time is to build it into your everyday processes and IT life today. That way, when next time comes, you won't have to do or prep for anything—you'll already be agile.

While that sounds like a meaningless platitude, in reality it's something you can do today. Even if your organization plans for a 100 percent return to the office, you still need to be a “work from anywhere” organization to accommodate employees working outside the office for a variety of reasons. So if you put the proper systems in place and equip all your users to be able to work from anywhere, you shouldn't care on a given day whether 5 percent or 95 percent of your employees are remote. But from a technical standpoint, that's not quite so easy.

To understand why, think back to how you hastily implemented your emergency “everyone is now remote” policy in March 2020. If your organization was like most, you already had solutions in place to accommodate your remote workers. However, your solutions were likely built and sized to support the typical handful of employees who were remote on any given day—a small fraction of your total workforce. Contrast this with 2020's use case: 100 percent of employees are 100 percent remote until further notice.

Most employees rely on one or both of the following two technologies to work remotely:

- A VPN, typically an appliance that runs in your data center that lets users securely connect to your corporate network from the outside
- Virtual desktop infrastructure—or VDI—allowing users to securely control a Windows desktop running in your data center from any device, even their home Macs or kids' Chromebooks

But even for organizations that had these technologies in place before the pandemic, the user demand was several orders of magnitude higher than what had been planned for or built, leading to lots of scrambling to repurpose servers to add more capacity to support everyone working remotely.

The lesson learned in early 2020 was that organizations who embraced the cloud were able to achieve the agility they needed without scrambling to procure or repurpose hardware for their data centers. Agility is one of the benefits of the cloud—you can scale up, and back down, with the click of a mouse. If you need more, just pay more, and it's done!

But there's another agility benefit to the cloud that people didn't consider before 2020. While most organizations have just one or two data center locations, the cloud has edge locations and data centers all over the world. The importance of this became obvious as the 2020 pandemic's restrictions evolved from a few weeks of shelter in place to a year-plus of basically not being able to do anything we were used to. When that transition occurred, people scattered. Everyone knows people who left where they were living and moved to another city, state or country. And as things open up, we all know people who aren't planning to return.

In other words, in the old days of 2019 and before, if your organization was in a single metropolitan location with a single local data center, all your remote users would still be “local” to the city that your organization is in. But in the 2020+ definition of remote, you probably have some users who are *R E M O T E*!

Users who are thousands of miles away from you probably will not have a great experience if they connect to a VPN host that’s far from them or use a VDI machine that’s two continents away. So moving forward, what do you do to remain agile?

Leverage a modern VDI platform, delivered as a service

Today’s VDI technology was invented 15 years ago, but it’s largely been a niche solution leveraged for specific use cases. Most EUC professionals view VDI as just part of an EUC solution rather than *the solution*. That said, people have been joking for over a decade that each subsequent year would be “the year of VDI.”

If any year could make the case for being the year of VDI, it’s 2020, because virtual desktops and apps saved the proverbial bacon for many IT professionals. But because VDI was only a small subset of most organizations’ EUC estates before 2020, most of these same organizations spent the early part of the pandemic patching together a solution by repurposing whatever servers they could get their hands on to become VDI hosts.

The same “anywhere” challenges previously discussed cropped up in VDI land too. Even if an organization was able to dramatically increase its VDI hosting capabilities, the resultant farm still had the critical flaw that it was built only in a single location while employees were connecting from unexpected distances from the corporate office. All the VDI host capacity in the world won’t make up for the speed-of-light issues encountered when trying to run a graphically intense VDI session from the other side of the world.



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For these reasons, the most successful VDI expansions during the pandemic were those that leveraged the cloud. Not only were those organizations able to build out their environments faster—a few clicks of a mouse versus repurposing physical servers—but they were also able to spread those environments across several cloud edge locations to ensure that a “local” VDI desktop host was available to employees wherever they happened to be.

But in this case, leveraging the cloud is not the same thing as moving 100 percent to the cloud. Organizations who already had a VMware Horizon environment in place in their own data centers simply added cloud hosts to support additional users, augmenting the desktops they continued to host via their on-premises Horizon VDI hosts. In these cases, the organizations could use the Horizon Control Plane to manage hybrid workloads—on-premises and cloud-hosted VDI desktops—from a single pane of glass.

At the same time, Horizon customers can switch to Universal licenses—a license that lets you provide desktops to your users regardless of whether they’re on premises or cloud hosted, allowing you to focus on delivering the right desktop to the right user at the right time.

Maximize business agility with Horizon subscription

Even though every customer’s journey is different, all customers’ journeys start with the same goal: to create an agile workspace in which any user can securely work from anywhere on any device in the way that makes the most sense for the user at the time. Horizon subscription licensing delivers the flexibility and choice to enable modern, cloud native SaaS and hybrid services across your existing on-premises and cloud deployments on your own terms.

With Horizon subscription, you can harness the elasticity of the cloud for hybrid use cases, such as disaster-recovery burst-capacity needs, simplify the delivery of desktops and apps to enhance employees’ digital workspace experiences, outsource management of your entire desktop infrastructure by leveraging desktops as a service, or start your transition migrating applications to the cloud.

In today’s IT environment, in which change is the only constant, it’s never been more important to keep your options open. We made the shift to subscription licensing to let you take advantage of the full benefits of VMware hybrid and multi-cloud capabilities in a modern, predictable subscription model, when and in the order that makes sense for you.

The agile, anywhere workspace is within reach, and VMware will help you get there.

