

Connectivity 4.0 series – part 3

# Transform the employee experience with Connectivity 4.0

Your road map to building tomorrow's networks and connected technologies to help you attract and retain the best talent.

[vocus.com.au/brilliant-connectivity](https://vocus.com.au/brilliant-connectivity)

VOCUS



# Contents

---

<b>Tackle workplace and workforce disruptions</b>	<b>4</b>
What is Connectivity 4.0?	5
<b>Connect people, not just data</b>	<b>6</b>
Keep employees engaged	8
Why better connectivity enables better employee experiences	9
<b>Automate to boost productivity and engagement</b>	<b>10</b>
Next steps for transforming the employee experience	11
<b>Attract the best people to deliver lasting success</b>	<b>12</b>

---

# Tackle workplace and workforce disruptions

The workplace was changing even before COVID-19. Indeed, 17% of employees globally were remote workers in 2019, according to Gartner. This trend and other shifts — such as the mass migration of enterprise applications and infrastructure to the cloud — were fundamentally changing enterprises' connectivity needs.

“There was a general structural demand for connectivity going on already,” says Daniel McCormack, Head of Thought Leadership (Research) at Macquarie Asset Management, part of Macquarie Group. “But COVID-19 exacerbated that — and with a lot more people now working from home, there's just a much greater need for connectivity.”

It's a trend that's unlikely to be reversed. Gartner predicts that around 47% of Australian knowledge workers will be working from home at least one day a week by 2025 — with 19% saying they would like to work from home full time.

Meanwhile, organisations have been hit hard by labour and skills shortages. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recorded 470,900 job vacancies in August 2022 — up 40.8% year on year.

One in four businesses reported having at least one vacant position, more than twice the number at the beginning of the pandemic, according to the ABS.

The implications of these fundamental changes to both the workplace and workforce are still being felt by employers. Where they had to 'wing it' during the pandemic as employees were sent home en masse, organisations must now have longer-term strategies and solutions in place to support remote workers, and attract and retain the best talent.

That's not easy given the changing attitudes to work, as evidenced by trends such as the 'Great Resignation' and 'quiet quitting'. Employers need to work harder to engage employees. And that means providing the best possible user experience no matter where employees are located — a goal that generally can't be achieved with a few simple fixes or new apps.

For many organisations, it requires modernising their infrastructure and software platforms to enable employees to reliably and securely access vital business data and apps from anywhere. Platform modernisation is also needed to unlock the potential of transformational technologies such as analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) that can enrich the employee experience and deliver meaningful productivity improvements.

Extracting full value from these platforms, however, requires a whole-of-business technology transformation. That includes addressing critical issues such as how to connect and integrate the huge quantities of data widely distributed across applications and systems, both in the cloud and on-premises.

Enter Connectivity 4.0, a new era in which network technologies and business needs have evolved and come together to make fast, resilient and ubiquitous connectivity a reality.

---

**In this paper, we explain how embracing Connectivity 4.0 can help organisations build the future-proof networks and connected technologies needed to transform the employee experience.**

## What is Connectivity 4.0?

Just as the transition to Industry 4.0 is revolutionising business by integrating digital services and processes into every aspect of operations, Connectivity 4.0 can revolutionise the way those services connect with each other and the world around them.

Connectivity technologies have evolved through several eras, from the original public switched telephone network to early computer networks, the internet and beyond. And as businesses have become more connected, they have adopted an increasing range of technologies. However, choosing those technologies has traditionally involved balancing performance with flexibility and availability.

Connectivity 4.0 is a new era in which these technologies have evolved to the extent that organisations no longer need to compromise. Together, these technologies can provide ubiquitous connectivity across terrestrial and subsea fibre, regional 4G and 5G mobile services, satellite coverage, and private long-term evolution (LTE) campus networks.

What's more, you can choose a mix of technologies that provides both fibre-like performance and unprecedented resilience, along with

the network flexibility and availability your business needs.

Connectivity 4.0 is paving the way for high-speed, low-latency applications like autonomous vehicles and widespread sensor networks. But it's also driven by the need for ubiquitous connectivity for core business needs right now — including building mission-critical services, enhancing the employee experience, and achieving ESG objectives. It does this by unlocking a new level of pervasive connectivity, enabling organisations to reimagine what's possible like never before.

---

**For more details about this new era in connectivity, see [Connectivity 4.0: the new business imperative](#). In this paper, we explain Connectivity 4.0 in-depth — the technologies driving it, how it works and why you need to embrace it, so your organisation can reimagine what's possible like never before.**

---

# Connect people, not just data

The large-scale shift to remote working during the pandemic was a learning experience for employers and employees alike. Both groups had to navigate the challenges of transferring their job responsibilities online while dealing with reduced physical contact with co-workers and their familiar office environment.

“For people to have a productive work environment, or to work effectively and efficiently in any sort of work environment, the technology needs to be reliable, simple for everyone to use, and problem-free,” says Amber Kristof, Chief People Officer with Vocus.

Vocus was able to transition 90% of its more than 1,300 Australian employees to remote work by leaning on online collaboration tools.

The company shifted meetings online and organised social catch-ups and wellness initiatives to ensure that the technology-enabled work didn't become too isolating for staff.

Vocus's human resources team reached out regularly to support employee well-being, using surveys and check-ins to see how people were handling the new work arrangements. A cross-functional management group supported input from every part of the business, ensuring that diverse voices were heard as the working culture remained in a state of flux for the better part of two years.

For many team members, the shift to remote work was illuminating because remote collaboration software proved to be a great leveller. “With a greater emphasis on setting aside time to build connections, many team members connected more often than pre COVID, and in fact, had never done that much team connectivity with interstate colleagues before,” Kristof explains.



*Vocus was able to transition 90% of its more than 1,300 Australian employees to remote work by leaning on online collaboration tools.*

“They were building relationships with people they had never sat on a team call with — and they felt more connected, just because we had simple-to-use technology that meant they got to know people personally. They now have very different relationships than they did before.”

In this sense, connectivity was as much about people reaching out to each other as it was about the core business of moving data. And despite the assumption of many managers that employees needed to return to the office full time to regain past productivity, survey after survey shows that the benefits of increased connectivity mean employees can now expect flexible, remote work to be a permanent part of their working lives.

As well as enabling collaboration between workmates, enhanced connectivity is proving to be a critical way of supporting employee well-being and retention. Just as it supports connectivity across industrial environments, better connectivity is also fundamental to supporting human-centric outcomes such as occupational health and safety and mental health support. It can support the general well-being of remote workers by providing connectivity to family and friends.

# Keeping employees engaged

Over time, broad adoption of Connectivity 4.0 will normalise this level of seamless collaboration — allowing employees to build everyday communities across home and business spheres without having to think about the technology underlying it.

Whether in the office or in the field, businesses will be able to design next-generation employee experiences around the ubiquitous, reliable connectivity that makes collaboration possible.

That ensures videoconferencing calls are simple and reliable, and online collaboration is seamless and quick. But Connectivity 4.0 is also likely to increase the use of automation to assist employees in performing many of their most routine tasks.

Yet the benefits of improved connectivity extend much further than simply making workers happier or more efficient. Surveys suggest that the Great Resignation's aftershocks will continue to shape hiring policies for some time. One recent Robert Half survey found that 44% of employees were planning to look for a new job in the second half of 2022 alone.

Although 48% said they were leaving for salary reasons, others cited lack of career progression opportunities (37%), unhappiness with the content of their job (30%), lack of flexibility (25%) and a high workload (23%).

Similarly, the main reasons people stay in their current jobs are flexibility (53%), their relationship with managers and co-workers (42%), the content of their job (35%) and company culture (35%).

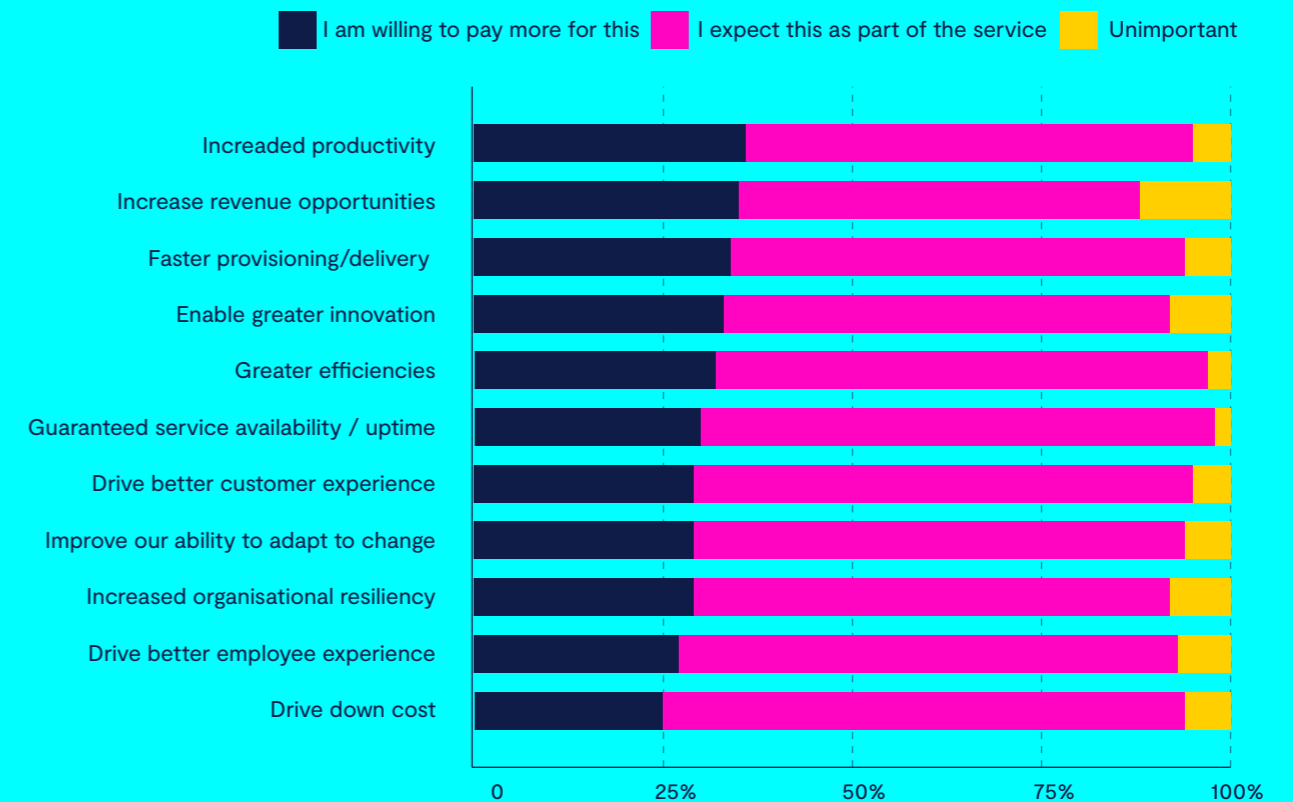
Only around one in three employees is staying for the salary — an instructive point for employers seeking to reconstitute their workforces in an era of distributed and remote work, enabled by enhanced connectivity.

There is much more to employee retention than just higher salaries, it seems. Employees want to be engaged in new challenges. Employers can support this with investment in modern, scalable connectivity technologies that make their workplaces more attractive to potential recruits — and give them the skills they will need to function in the digitally transformed future.

“They were building relationships with people they had never sat on a team call with — and they felt more connected, just because we had simple-to-use technology that meant they got to know people personally. They now have very different relationships than they did before.”

## Better connectivity enables better employee experiences

The disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic not only permanently changed the way businesses operate, but also reset employee expectations about the way they want to work. Supporting these new paradigms requires fast, reliable and scalable connectivity to deliver a better employee experience. Indeed, recent Vocus research found that respondents would be willing to pay their telecommunications providers more if it would help them.



Source: Vocus research. 2022

# Automate to boost productivity and engagement

McCormack identifies AI and automation as key technologies for improving productivity and freeing up workers to focus on more engaging activities that add more value to the business.

Automation has come a long way in recent years, aided by increasingly intelligent technology and service-based cloud infrastructure. For example, the latter generally provides developers with application programming interface (API) hooks that let their applications communicate with core systems without human intervention.

This ease of access is driving a surge in robotic process automation (RPA), which to date has been mostly installed within specific business workflows for repetitive tasks, such as document handling and processing.

Business spending on RPA tools will increase by 19.5% this year, Gartner predicts, as organisations increasingly dive into the technology and push towards a broader idea of ‘hyper-automation’.

This involves combining application environments with RPA capabilities to produce more sophisticated and capable automation platforms. AI capabilities will underpin many process-agnostic software capabilities such as process mining, task mining, decision modelling, integration platforms as a service and computer vision to extend the reach of automation platforms.

This means businesses can build automation processes that take in data from all manner of sources, and interact with the world around them in completely new ways.

Integrating AI-driven computer vision into a manufacturing facility will, for example, allow the rapid evaluation of manufactured products or packaging for defects. Integration with the operational technology (OT) systems on that line will enable those systems to work in step with the automation platform — for example, by slowing down a conveyor belt to provide enough time for a robotic arm to remove a defective item.

The potential applications are endless — and they are fundamentally enabled by the ubiquitous integration that Connectivity 4.0 brings.

By delivering a consistent operating platform that is available to employees and business processes wherever a company needs them to be, the new paradigm enhances employee experience. It opens the door to a world where technology not only brings people together but also enables intelligent processes that save workers time they used to spend doing repetitive tasks.

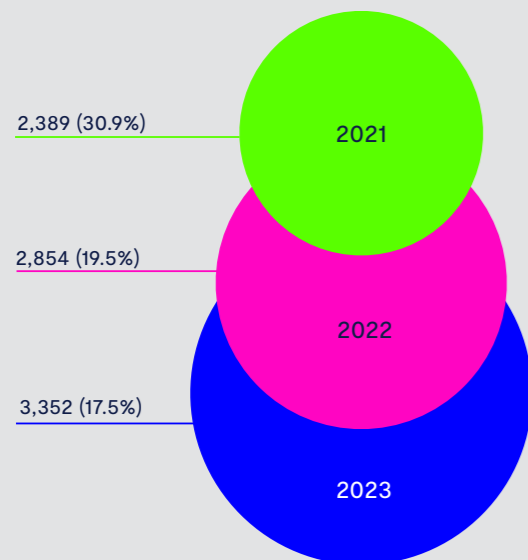
In the long term, Kristof says, it will be crucial for employers to use automation to support employees, to maintain their satisfaction and keep valuable workers from walking out the door.

This is particularly important when staff shortages are commonplace and those at work feel increasing pressure to compensate.

“Doing gap analysis work to identify technical and leadership development needs and desires will help us make sure we’ve got the people in our teams today who can be here for those future roles,” she explains.

“By using our new technology to help our people to be future-ready, we can encourage them to stay because they know we’re going to invest in them being ready for the future.”

Worldwide RPA software end-user spending forecast



Source: Gartner (August 2022)

## Next steps for transforming the employee experience

1

### Support a flexible future

Years of labour market disruption have changed the dynamic between employer and employee. Embracing Connectivity 4.0 will support your employees’ desire for more flexible working arrangements by enabling them to work in whatever way makes the most sense for them.

2

### Help your employees stay connected

New hybrid cloud architectures allow services, devices and people to be connected in completely new ways. Explore this new paradigm to not only improve your existing business, but also to find new ways that it can improve the employee experience overall.

3

### Use automation to support your workers

Better connectivity makes automation more viable than ever — so use it not to replace your employees, but to offload routine work and free them to add value in new ways.

# Attract the best people to deliver lasting success

Buffeted by the winds of the pandemic and trends like the Great Resignation, the workplace is unlikely to ever be the same as it was in the past. Employees are demanding greater engagement, involvement with more meaningful projects, and support for whatever work-life balance suits them. Failing to meet these expectations could see invaluable skills walk out the door.

Meanwhile, remote work has fundamentally rewritten the employee experience. Staff shortages have pushed companies to deepen their commitment to hyper-automation as they look for new ways to do more with less.

By transitioning to Connectivity 4.0, you'll have the fast, resilient, ubiquitous network needed to support collaboration and automation, and other tools to help attract and retain the best people. And your organisation will have the skills and talent needed to deliver lasting success.

**That's just the start. By embracing Connectivity 4.0, your organisation will be well placed to tackle other fundamental business challenges, such as building resilient mission-critical services and achieving sustainable growth. By unlocking a new level of pervasive connectivity, your organisation can reimagine what's possible like never before.**



**We thank the industry experts and Vocus experts for their contribution to our report.**



**Daniel McCormack**

Head of Thought Leadership (Research),  
Macquarie Asset Management,  
Macquarie Group



**Amber Kristof**

Chief People Officer, Vocus

Vocus, Australia's specialist fibre and network solutions provider, owns and operates 25,000kms of secure, high-capacity fibre connecting all Australian mainland capitals with Asia and the USA. Vocus' network includes the 4,600km Australia Singapore Cable (ASC) from Perth to Singapore via Indonesia and the 2,100km North-West Cable System (NWCS) from Port Hedland to Darwin, connecting offshore oil and gas facilities. Vocus owns a portfolio of well-recognised brands catering to enterprise, government, wholesale, small business and residential customers across Australia.

[vocus.com.au/brilliant-connectivity](https://vocus.com.au/brilliant-connectivity)

**VOCUS**