SUPPORTING TEAMS THROUGH CENTRALIZATION AND AUTOMATION

The "future of work" is now the present — and it happened a lot sooner than any of us expected. The workplace dynamics and hierarchies we knew as recently as 18 months ago have shifted.

The new focus? A work environment more reliant on flexibility than ever before that needs something specific to bring it all together.

Something like centralization. It's a term that should rest at the heart of any processes and solutions deployed in supporting a modern remote workforce.

What is centralization? Bringing specific functions, communications, procedures, and other operational must-haves under one umbrella to decrease some of the physical distance companies are experiencing and create organizational efficiencies.

Centralizing Technology Creates Operational Efficiencies

Reliable, innovative technological tools have become the standard to support teams and their work. The rise in relevance of video meetings, specifically, allows for team interactions where everyone is both seen and heard. And hybrid options that allow in-person and virtual attendees to work in tandem are already in the works, including **Microsoft Mesh.** The VR tool centralizes the team meeting experience, which enhances the connection between team members.

Centralized communication, automated processes and practices, and aligned functionality allow teams to contribute to growth in a sustainable manner. Departments and whole companies are now spread across towns, states, and countries, relying on virtual platforms to keep it all together. And without upgraded technological resources, organizations aren't able to provide their support teams with what they need to excel.

Centralizing Teams to Narrow the Support Gaps

When looking for ways to best serve customers, centralization helps create a common language for an entire department or company. It puts everyone on the same page, creating standardization and efficiencies for everyone so nothing falls through the cracks.

It helped us bring every branch of our compliance department into focus. Where processing background checks and drug tests used to be a drawn-out process, we're now able to bring the retrieval and processing of those findings under one umbrella.

We do the same with our payroll, HR, safety, and workers' comp teams by directing them to the same centralized support team as compliance so everything stays focused and those departments can tend to higher-level tasks. We even centralized candidate communications to keep their experience timely, consistent, and strong. So whether someone is interviewing with our virtual recruiting team through our Live Expert Anywhere (LEA) technology or staying engaged with recruiters through automated communications sent through our Sense platform, centralization provides a streamlined and expedited candidate experience.

Put together, centralization and automation can create a concentration of strategies and tasks that empower teams to zero in on the work that best supports the growth of the business. When work is streamlined, teams can deliver consistently and measurably. **A McKinsey & Co. survey of global business leaders** found that 31% of organizations have at least one fully automated system and 66% plan to automate other systems. It's no surprise that human resources is seeing the most success and efficiency with automation.

The same report found that employees thought their training improved and deepened when HR automated new-hire systems. Automation also helped hiring teams process low-level and high-volume activities (e.g., **résumé assessments**, candidate communication, and candidate-to-job matching) so the team could tend to more urgent and pressing hiring matters. Finally, it was leveraged in tracking time and attendance, again freeing up HR to focus on coaching employees and evaluating their performance.

Implementing Centralization and Automation

When exploring what automation can bring to the table for your company, begin with how it can be implemented. Ensuring your central teams and technology are configured correctly and utilized properly improves the experience, which results in a potential increase in gains and successes. First, you should begin by documenting the business requirements. Once those all come into focus, you can then conduct an assessment of the current state of the business to evaluate ROI, impact on the business, and ease of deployment.

Yes, centralization should help streamline operations. But only to the point where it controls spending, sparks productivity, and enables your team to be at its absolute best. Centralization — via automation or other avenues — should focus on supporting those objectives first and foremost.

Innovation means something different to everybody. It can be as simple as taking a traditionally manual process and automating it, or it can be as complex as reengineering a process that creates the ability to scale.

Still, in both cases, you're simplifying something. You're taking something broad and centralizing it for the sake of your team or customer. But before implementing centralization practices, keep these things in mind:

Take a 10,000-foot look at your organization.

Businesses' size and readiness factor significantly in their ability to centralize and innovate. For example, think about **recruitment processes** that are historically done in person. Face-to-face interactions with a personal touch can lead to inconsistent processes and inefficient experiences for all parties. By automating this process, hiring can be done through a platform that matches skills, attributes, and requirements to a qualified candidate who has visibility and access in real-time through advanced technology.

For example, our **OpEn** app uses automation to streamline some of the more time-intensive elements of the recruiting process. Within the app, associates can search for jobs, apply for them, interview, track progress, and even complete onboarding paperwork. What makes it all so convenient is that it allows our recruiters to still meet candidates where they are while not sacrificing day-to-day responsibilities. Recruiters can tend to business as usual while giving candidates a memorable and safe experience.

What's more, automated hiring helped decrease time-to-fill for our clients. The team was able to increase hiring capacity, as well as provide reporting and real-time tracking and measurement. Simultaneously, centralizing processes can speed up the hiring process and improve the quality of candidates targeted.
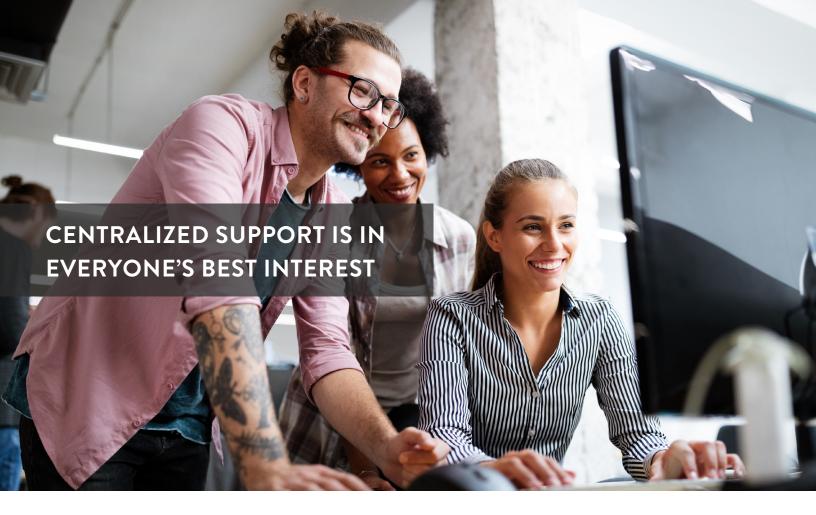
See whether the data supports your decision.

Are you making a change for the sake of change? Or are the numbers telling you it's time? If the data tells you it's time to create efficiencies, lean heavily on those findings and let them dictate whatever action you choose to take.

A great example of innovation born from automation can be seen by the team at **Samsung.** When releasing new products, the company uses customer feedback to drive a **"theory of inventive problem-solving"** (TRIZ) methodology. TRIZ looks at what customers claim to want and how capable the company is at fulfilling it versus what customers say they want and are capable of using.

TRIZ's objective? To paint a clearer picture of how products are serving consumers. Once this data is collected, Samsung fine-tunes its products and production processes to allow scientifically informed creative projects to flourish. If customer feedback tells you that change is necessary, try assessing your production processes and working backward to centralize more supportive workflows.

CENTRALIZED SUPPORT IS IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTEREST

Centralization serves a greater organizational purpose.

No matter how you accomplish it, whether it's through automation or by streamlining communication processes, it's an investment in your most valuable asset: the people serving your customers. This support system allows businesses to utilize their human capital more efficiently — and that is something your team and company as a whole will appreciate.

Integrity Staffing Solutions is a full-service staffing agency and ranks in the top 2% of agencies across the country for quality service based on ClearlyRated's "Best of Staffing" client survey. To learn more about Integrity or for help with your hiring needs, visit **integritystaffing.com** or call **833-446-1300.**