

INAIL's Teaching Case

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TEACHING CASES 2023

Abstract

Interest in digital transformation, which in its broadest sense indicates a process of continuous evolution aimed at increasing the reproduction of world capital over time through technological innovation, initially spread among those companies searching for methods designed to better increase their ability to be resilient in future crises. This interest reached its peak during the pandemic period when Public Administrations had to promptly respond to emerging needs and ensure the continuity of services.

The Covid-19 pandemic greatly accelerated the process of digitalization and of organizational transformation within companies and in the Italian public sphere. In this period INAIL underwent a profound transformation that was completed by the creation of the Digital Workplace and culminated in the adoption of the Single Digital Desk.

As a lever for change, the Institute's Central Management for Digital Organization (DCOD) has developed a new approach for the management of technologies and data, as well as a novel way of selecting and dealing with suppliers, and has defined a new strategy for supporting INAIL's transformation from e-government to digital government.

This process has required important changes in the Institute's organizational model in order to harmonize remote work with social interaction and improve the community's well-being.

In line with the vision of an innovative public administration, open to change and sensitive to the issue of organizational well-being, the Institute has transformed the way its employees work through high-level technological solutions and collaboration platforms.

This didactic case uses INAIL's experience to highlight the relationship between various technological trends, the evolution of organizational models and their social consequences.

Introduction

The evolution of information and communication technologies has led to the convergence of two key factors of change within the Public Administration: on the one hand, the growing use of complex systems linked to new technologies has presented new scenarios and new challenges concerning innovation; on the other hand, growing user demand has increased the use of social and mobile technologies, providing a new service model.

The phenomenon of digital transformation has created revolutionary and innovative technologies, increasing productivity, value creation and social well-being. Over the years, many national governments, multinational organizations and industrial associations have adopted digital transformation-oriented strategic visions to manage their long-term policies.¹

INAIL, the National Insurance Institute against Accidents at Work, is a public body that manages compulsory insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases in order to reduce accidents, insure workers who perform hazardous activities, guarantee the reintegration into working life of those injured at work and carry out research to develop control and verification methodologies in the field of safety and prevention.

In this regard, the central role that INAIL plays in the national welfare system requires it to face complicated digital challenges by placing its stakeholders at the center of an organizational and management change strategy.

The functional aspects, the number of users, the complexity and relevance of the services provided, as well as the influence exercised in Italy's socio-economic context, determine its action and impact on society and present continuous challenges in the management of the regulatory evolution, in service demand peaks and, above all, in user involvement in the generation of public value.

The evolution of expectations and the necessity to guarantee a personalized service, one that responds to particular needs and is above all consistent among various interaction channels, determine the new convergence between administrative demands, organizational strategy and technological innovation.

The digitalization process that INAIL has been going through since 2012 is responding to, from a digital transformation perspective, an external context that is rapidly changing and that presents new challenges and opportunities for growth and renewal.

Change is an evolutionary and organizational challenge that, within a complex administration, cannot be linked only to technologies, but involves people and makes them protagonists: there is no change without participation, there is no participation without synergy and communication, and there is no synergy and communication without sharing values and objectives.

Since 2014, through the Three-Year Strategic Plans for Digital Innovation, for the first time the Institute has undertaken the process of elaborating and sharing a strategic vision regarding digital transformation, one that aspires to recast the work processes, the organizational and territorial structure, the technological programs and projects, and the investments in technological innovation.

1. Christof Ebert and Carlos Henrique C. Duarte. "Software Technology and Digital Transformation". research gate.net, 2018.

During the pandemic period, INAIL studied the issue of the Digital Workplace in order to review internal processes both in terms of transparency and of simplification, carrying out an internal survey aimed at identifying the possible areas of digital development based on the emerging needs. The survey was followed by an analysis of emerging organizational models and interventions at a technological level.

The objective of this teaching case is to make people understand, through the digital transformation process that is taking place within INAIL, how technological innovation requires organizational and cultural changes in order to produce positive effects and generate social well-being. Digitalization is not a linear process guided from above, but a synergistic and systemic approach that must be shared and understood within organizations and managed within them.

From this point of view, the subject of the Digital Workplace will be analyzed as a response to the need to review internal processes in terms of simplification and hybridization of workplaces, which must become increasingly prominent from a “relational” point of view, thus asking the “digital” to deal more and more with the professional aspect. The main change pertains to the technological plan, but also to the management of people’s engagement and well-being in order to continue to ensure the achievement of results over a long-term horizon.

Reference context

The concept of digital transformation originated from the spread of digital technologies in different areas of our lives, technologies that have contributed to transforming the global economy and the society in which human beings live and work, influencing every sector of business, as well as everyone's daily experience. Digital transformation and the consequent innovation of the various business models related to this phenomenon have radically redefined consumers' expectations and behavior, changing companies' priorities and altering world markets.²

Given the complexity of the phenomenon, numerous scholars have tried to explore the digital transformation and, although the term does not have a universally recognized definition in the academic field, experts agree that it is the Industrial Revolution 4.0 whose development and diffusion is taking place faster than the previous ones (Schwab, 2016). The first to talk about the digital economy was Don Tapscott in the 1994 book *The Digital Economy: Promise and Peril in the Age of Networked Intelligence*, defining it as, "a network of economic activities, commercial transactions and professional interactions enabled by information technologies that are their pillar".³ In contemporary terms, academic literature and managerial experiences demonstrate that digital transformation occurs when organizations manage to govern the change brought about by technology through the strategic redesign of organizational forms or models, that is, of the hierarchical structures and mechanisms chosen to coordinate the division of labor into distinct functions or roles.⁴

Today, in 2022, it is possible to speak of digital transformation regarding the adoption of breakthrough technologies to increase productivity, social well-being and the creation of public value. The concept of public value was formulated for the first time by Mark Moore, in his study "Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government",⁵ who defined public value as the implementation and realization of collective aspirations, the needs of citizens and their elected representatives, obtained thanks to the action of public bodies.⁶

Many national governments, multinational organizations and business associations have carried out studies in order to develop strategic forecasts to establish long-term policies related to digital transformation.

The digital transformation of organizations is a complex process that concerns the strategic rethinking of organizational models and the renewal of processes and related practices. In fact, the updating of existing technological systems or the adoption of new technologies are not sufficient conditions for activating virtuous transformation processes. On the contrary, almost inevitably they impose changes for which organizations find themselves unprepared.

2. Pc Verhoef, Y. Bart, "Digital transformation: A multidisciplinary reflection and research agenda", *Journal of Business Research*, 2021.

3. Don Tapscott, "The Digital Economy: Promise and Peril in the Age of Networked Intelligence", 1994.

4. Eugenio Nunziata. *Governare la trasformazione digitale*. Luiss University Press, 2020.

5. Mark H Moore. *La creazione di valore pubblico*. Guerini e associati, 2003.

6. Mark H Moore. *La creazione di valore pubblico*. Guerini e associati, 2003.

Historically, the 1980s were characterized by massive investments in information technologies in the face of promising returns. The 1990s were the years in which alignment was sought between strategic objectives and technological development trajectories (IT alignment). The new millennium has brought about the need to develop governance schemes for investments in digital technologies (IT governance) to protect all the stakeholders involved and to benefit their organizational contexts.⁷

Public communication, both as a function of public administrations and as an academic discipline, has gone through numerous changes and profound transformation starting from its institutionalization, which took place with Law 150 of 2000. The drivers that have guided the transformation and digitalization of the Italian PA are evident especially in regulatory provisions of various sorts and levels, such as “Stanca” Law no. 4 of January 9, 2004 on the accessibility of websites to facilitate and simplify access for users and, in particular, for people who are unable to use IT tools. There was also the reform of the Public Administration headed by the Department for Public Function, which, starting from July 13, 2021, through funds from the NRRP, is dedicated to developing administrative capacity at central and local level with the strengthening of the selection, training, promotion and mobility of civil servants, the streamlining of bureaucracy and the digitalization of administrative procedures. The digitalization of the Italian PA was and still is not a phenomenon without controversies and its evolution and change have often encountered factors that have slowed down its implementation, such as the internal bureaucracy’s resistance to change, the emergence of imitating forms of communication on social media without an adequate strategy and correct management supervision, or the recurrence of political cannibalization of the function of public and institutional communication.⁸

In Italy, the real “revolution” was to place citizens at the center of the digital public communication strategy, understood as active subjects vis-à-vis public administrations, bringing the model of digital public communication closer to what Mancini⁹ defined as the “two-way model” in which the “citizen is perceived as an active subject in the communication process, not only in the phase of receiving and re-elaborating messages, but also as a producer of general interest content that is disseminated in administration circles and that also acquires public visibility through the Net.”¹⁰

In order to standardize the PA, in continuity with the “Stanca” Law, starting from 2016 the Agency for Digital Italy has led the IT coordination of the state, regional and local administration, in implementation of article 117, paragraph 2, letter r), of the Italian Constitution by achieving the objectives of the Italian digital agenda, in line with the European digital agenda.

7. Giustiniano, L. *Strategie, organizzazione e Sistemi Informativi: dall'IT alignment all'IT governance*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005.

8. A. Lovari. *Comunicatori pubblici dietro la timeline. La sfida dei social media tra nuove competenze professionali e vecchie resistenze al cambiamento*. Franco Angeli, 2016.

9. P. Mancini. *Manuale di Comunicazione Pubblica*. Laterza, Bari Roma, 2000.

10. “Networked citizens: Comunicazione Pubblica e amministrazioni digitali”.

For this reason, starting from 2017, the Italian PAs implement the Three-Year Strategic Plan for IT, a strategic guidance document that dictates the rules and operating principles for digital transformation in Italy, one that is an essential tool for promoting the digital transition. In particular, the Plan is part of a broader strategic system that includes the Italian NRRP and various plans at European level that illustrate the vision of the public sector and of society over a medium-long term horizon, indicating the strategic macro-objectives for obtaining specific results in the reference target of each public administration.

The first Three-Year Plan was implemented in 2017 and was the result of the collaboration between the Agency for Digital Italy (AgID) and the Digital Team. The subsequent versions – 2019-2021, 2020-2022 and the one in question, 2021-2023 – were developed by AgID and the Department for Digital Transformation (DTD).

The 2021-2023 Three-Year Plan, which will be implemented in spring 2023, clearly and consciously addresses the digital transformation of the Italian PA, establishing the fundamental principles and the usability and interoperability rules to be followed in order to incentivize the growth and digitalization process for businesses and citizens, following the objectives contained in the NRRP.

All of this is widely formalized within the “Strategic model of evolution and interoperability of the information system of the Public Administration” elaborated within the Three-Year Strategic Plan for IT of the PA, which functionally describes the digital transformation, dealing with cross-section topics relating to interoperability and IT security for services, data, platforms and infrastructures.

Fig.1. Strategic evolution model of the Public Administration's Information System

Source: Digital Innovation Observatory

Technological components

1. Services

1.1 Generation and delivery of digital services

1.2 User experience and accessibility of the services

1.3 Digital Single Gateway Application

2. Data

2.1 Sharing and Reusing Data

2.2 Increasing data quality

2.3 Awareness of the data economy

3. Platforms

3.1 Evolving existing platforms

3.2 Increasing adoption and use of platforms

3.3 Increasing and rationalizing platforms

4. Infrastructure

4.1 Quality and safety of local PA services

4.2 Quality and safety of central PA services

4.3 Enhancement of PA connectivity

5. Interoperability

5.1 Encouraging the application of the model

5.2 Adopting model-compliant APIs

5.3 Models and rules for the provision of services

6. Computer Security

6.1 Cyber Security Awareness in the PAs

6.2 IT security of institutional portals

7. Levers for innovation

7.1 Strengthening the levers of the PAs and territories

7.2 Digital skills and inclusion

Smart cities and villages of the future

Network of innovation poles

Innovation as and for the common good

8. Governance of digital transformation

8.1 Improving digital transformation processes

Plan governance

It is in this context that INAIL became a national strategic center and reference point for other institutions, a revolution that occurred through the Institute's ability to modify its mission, developing IT governance capabilities and consequently assuming a leading and driving role in the digital transformation process. Through a change management process, the Institute not only managed to overcome its resistance to change, but also to carry out planning procedures and participate both in the formal aspects of organization such as organization charts, processes and job descriptions, and in "real organizations", in the team, in the culture, values and social aggregations forming it, all with the help of digital technologies. To activate processes that envisage the change of organization models, a structural change management process was applied whereby planning recursively generates the real organization and new, more agile and effective models based on digital and collaborative platforms, in a process of continuous generation that contains high sustainability and high social welfare for employees.

The change management process and the “as is” INAIL model

Within the current scenario, every organization is called to adapt to the dynamics and complexity of its environment by engaging in changes aimed at ensuring its sustainability and guaranteeing the success of its transformation process over time. In this perspective, the role of a dynamic leadership open to change determines the strategic and lasting success of an organization.¹¹

INAIL's digital transformation process began in mid-2012, equipping the Institute with Three-Year Strategic Plans for IT that illustrate the path that the institution intends to embark on to increase economic growth and generate continuous renewal that can be sustainable in the long term.

Investment in technology, to obtain changes within the organization, has inspired INAIL's top management to deeply reflect on the importance of overseeing organizational change within a company. Furthermore, today's reality teaches us that technology, as an enabling factor, and organization, as the context in which people work, deserve the same attention at the time of their enforcement.

The key points that guided the Institute's digital transformation were the change management process and the organizational empowerment strategy, which led to a shared strategic vision, the accurate management of organizational development, the activation of learning processes, as well as to cultural development and to experimenting with innovative solutions.

All this has created the conditions for people to express their potential through new and more effective behavior, which in turn resulted in an increased ability to achieve strategic objectives.

The design and implementation of the change module was carried out gradually starting from 2018. This is because “resistance” to change is a normal reaction, especially if the change is a cultural model that is consolidated over time. A cultural change can in fact generate anxiety in individuals because it requires people to “unlearn beliefs, attitudes, values, assumptions, reference interpretation schemes and to learn new ones”.¹²

The Institute's management therefore decided to develop a series of strategic, organizational and internal communication initiatives with the aim of forming working styles and behaviors that are consistent with the working methods required by the new hybrid organizational model. It developed the workers' capacity to live with change.

To this end, a transversal teaching module was defined for all the profiles in the workforce, initiating the long process of change management within the Institute.

Change management is an integral part of the process of continuous renewal of an organization's management, structure and capabilities to meet the changing needs of external and internal customers. Change is an ever-present feature of organizational life, both operationally and strategically. Therefore, there should be no question about the importance to any organization of its ability to identify where it needs to be in the future and how to manage the changes needed to get there.¹³

11. KK Masmoudi. “Strategic change management process: role of leadership”. *Recherches en Sciences de Gestion*, 2020.

12. Shein, E.H. “Organization cultural and leadership”. San Francisco. John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2017.

13. Burnes, B. *Managing Change: A Strategic Approach to Organisational Dynamics*. 4th edn. Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2004.

The first phase of the change management process was performed through an audience analysis on a sample of INAIL employees to understand the perplexities, doubts, perceptions and expectations concerning the change process underway in the DCOD.

The results of the audience analysis led to the definition of “mental maps” of the participants regarding the specific subjects/problems posed by organizational change. The outcome of the maps drawn up on employee perceptions was a mix of contradictory attitudes: on the one hand, the participants showed curiosity and attention, on the other, they were pervaded by skepticism and a critical sense towards the change underway.¹⁴

The Institute therefore decided to develop guidelines on which the educational objectives of the training course on change management were built.

The second phase of the evolutionary path was that of cognitive reconstruction in order to form an understanding of the model through a classroom didactic procedure aimed at encouraging an exploratory attitude on the part of individuals, thus contributing to transforming “anxiety about survival” into “learning anxiety”. The classroom therefore became the place that spread awareness of the phase of change underway and of the needs that determined it in order to provide understanding and reassurance.

The third phase continued with an organizational empowerment process, which was a development tool increasingly attentive to the social dimensions of human action, one that created conditions of psychological safety with the aim of professionally supporting the Institute’s staff by equipping them with a new reference value system.¹⁵

The theory on which this reasoning is based says that any empowerment action within a company must deal with the ethical thinking that directs organizational action in relation to its collaborators in order to respond to the system in continuous transformation by improving human resource skills.¹⁶

The fundamental levers for activating this process were: the sharing of the strategic vision, partnership and cooperation in the project teams, the intensification of organizational communication and the affirmation of values consistent with the strategic action to induce appropriate behavior. Focus groups, workshops and projects were created for these initiatives involving internal and external resources, project managers and office managers.

The fourth phase in this context was to develop individual and group coaching initiatives, providing the necessary support so that the agents of change could take action individually or in teams and concentrate on each of the identified areas/tasks as levers of change. The result was a comparison with all those who had participated in the construction of the Strategic Plan for IT, from which the CFS (critical success factors) were extrapolated and considered essential elements

14. Eugenio Nunziata. *Governare la trasformazione digitale*. Luiss University Press, 2020.

15. Eugenio Nunziata. *Governare la trasformazione digitale*. Luiss University Press, 2020.

16. S. Capogna. “Empowerment organizzativo e competenze trasversali tra retorica e virtù, sviluppo & organizzazione”. *Electronic journal of management*, 2019.

for effective, comprehensible and coherent organizational communication. This work was fundamental in creating some statements that defined the final output of the strategic vision and values, which then culminated in an internal communication campaign with the claim “we create the digital future”.¹⁷

The fifth and final phase was conducted by involving the management team in a series of workshops where, through a metaphorical game, it was possible to bring out a deeper level of the traits that were believed to drive people’s behavior within the organization. The work carried out was divided into three distinct parts: in the first, a set of values was identified characterizing the state of the culture stratified over time within the IT management; the second part led to the identification of the system of values that it was believed should prevail in DCOD, with a view to the strategic vision, in order for the organization to become successful; the third and final phase was aimed, on the basis of the identified values, at introducing initiatives to activate virtuous mechanisms stimulating those behaviors deemed necessary to support the change of pace in the DCOD mission. The strategic vision, the values and the claim “we create the digital future” have remained unchanged and have provided continuity for the three successive strategic plans.¹⁸

These Three-Year Strategic Plans for IT illustrate the path that the institution intends to follow concerning digital transformation by increasing economic growth and generating continuous long-lasting renewal.

Currently, the Institute has three plans: 2014-2016, 2017-2019, 2020-2022; the 2023-2025 plan is still being drawn up.

The 2014-2016 Strategic Plan found Information Technology to be the generator of value and the main lever of innovation that guarantees INAIL the ability to adapt, as well as the operational flexibility and efficiency necessary to improve its services.

The primary objective of INAIL’s strategic vision was to integrate the support functions of the digital organizational model by distinguishing between the Front Office distributed throughout the Italian territory and the Back Office centralized in regional centers accessible via the network, thus favoring the creation of unified branches with other public administration bodies.

The 2017-2019 Strategic Plan illustrated the path towards INAIL’s digitalization in response to a rapidly changing external context that has presented the Institute with new challenges and important opportunities for growth and renewal. In this case, “digital” has become a key element and an essential tool for making the Institute’s operating model more efficient and enhancing the offer of its services. It has made its digital program user-centric, enabling platforms and focusing on the user both inside and outside the Institute, placing him or her at the center of services and strategic decisions. In this context, the DCOD had the important task of building an efficient synergy between organizational change and digital innovation at the service of all the Institute’s

17. Eugenio Nunziata. *Governare la trasformazione digitale*. Luiss University Press, 2020.

18. Eugenio Nunziata. *Governare la trasformazione digitale*. Luiss University Press, 2020.

structures, collaborating in the dissemination of a new internal culture and in the formation of new skills. The main areas of intervention concerned organization, processes, resources and skills, IT planning and control, the governance of IT supplies and technological architectures. The 2020-2022 Three-Year Plan has undergone profound changes and updates over time, due to the fact that each public administration, depending on the context determined by the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic, has had to adapt both its internal organizational and structural processes and the management of the services provided from a digital point of view. It was necessary for the Institute to implement operating models that led to a reconfiguration of working habits through an adaptation to new skills, methodological approaches and digital solutions. The focus was on creating secure services with characteristics of excellence oriented towards the customer experience, adopting working models based on delocalized cooperation and using digital tools for e-collaboration and content sharing.

The changes triggered by the digital transformation start from the analysis of the current state of business management, tackling the process analysis through associated performance metrics (the “as is” model) to then arrive at the desired situation (the “to be” model) in order to plan and design a process of evolution or implementation of existing processes.

In order to guarantee the current “as is” model of services, the DCOD has adopted an organizational structure divided into various Areas/Offices which provide five main types of services through the platform on the Institute’s website: the INPS and INAIL data exchange, services for the board, those relating to surveillance, accident reporting, medical certificates, services relating to consultations for companies and calculation bases, and occasional ancillary work. To carry out the scheduled activities, it also makes use of the Technological Innovation Consultancy that operates as a staff position of the Central Management for Digital Organization, supporting the evolution and application of the architectural model of the Institute’s technological and information system with research and planning activities.

Digital workplace

Success for established companies in the digital age depends on transforming and redefining work goals with the ultimate objective of creating digital workplaces that improve the experience for collaborators and employees. To meet this requirement, it is necessary to leverage two fundamental aspects: participatory leadership that involves employees; and agile organizational forms that are compatible with the existing organizational structure and culture.¹⁹

The Digital Workplace encompasses all of the information, technologies, collaboration tools and processes used by human resources to perform work functions on any device, at any time, from anywhere. In order to be built and used optimally by all the employees of an organization, the Digital Workplace needs to be based on a coherent and flexible infrastructure that can access and protect information on multiple devices and channels, integrating video and instant messaging to make operations easier and data sharing more effective. Finally, the platform should provide secure access to the information needed on any device.

INAIL started creating the Digital Workplace in 2018 when its top management began to spread a culture of transversal management and collaboration among the offices located in various territories, thus overcoming organizational barriers. After carrying out various market surveys and an internal analysis of the infrastructure with a view to evolution, the objective identified by the Institute was to build a workstation without a physical place: one that no longer had to be reached, but rather to be taken anywhere by the collaborator/employee.

It was a reorganization, consisting of approximately 9,000 employees, 3,700 virtual workstations based on Citrix technology and 5,200 advanced mobile devices, that could operate on the move and remotely. The idea was to create a workstation that could support the Institute's digital transformation strategy, adopting solutions that would initiate the use of new work models. The pre-existing workstation was of the fixed type and therefore certainly not compatible with a rapidly evolving market. The revolution consisted in assigning collaborators to hybrid places, allowing them to operate in an ever-changing relationship with the organization. The hybridization of workplaces is in fact based on three fundamental pillars that concern: "the social dimension", as regards human resource management practices and workers' behavior within organizations; "the technological dimension", with reference to digital technologies that allow employees to work remotely; "the physical dimension", relating to the structure and ergonomics of the environment in which work is carried out.²⁰

In 2019 the Institute decided to launch an experiment on 150 people chosen from all the professional profiles of its workforce, including the top management, in order to transform the employee experience into a new way of working remotely and digitally.

19. Dery, Kristine; Sebastian, Ina M.; van der Meulen, Nick. "The digital workplace is key to digital innovation". *Electronic journal of management*, 2019.

20. R. Cuel, A. Ravarini, R. Ruffini, L. Varriale. "Smart working in Italian Public Administration: A Socio-Technical Approach" *Electronic journal of management* n.3, 2021.

The outcome of this experimentation was a 24-month project divided into four integrated areas: Collaboration, Communication, Content and Support. The project's implementation took place gradually through a communication and training plan and ended with the completion of the platform and the achievement of the results envisaged by the NRRP with the last iterative cycle.

Fig.2 Iterative phases of the INAIL Digital Workplace project
Source. INAIL

The project's iterative phases

Digital working

Adoption of a new way of working based on the principles of smart working and the creation of the first supporting components (priority management, organizational well-being, digital desk, OD News) are Italian initials (Organizzazione Digitale)

Area 1 Collaboration and services

Centralization and customization of access to functional tools for managing work activities in a collaborative model

Area 3 Contents and services

Constantly updated content and personal information and centralized access. Support in the protection of work-life balance

Overall concept

Co-definition of the overall Digital Workplace concept (areas, components, prioritization, etc.) and of the information architecture

Area 2 Communication and services

Centralization and personalization of access to communications (e.g. community, identification and knowledge sharing with SMEs)

Area 4 Services and support

Centralization of the establishment of notifications referring to the various services and simplification of access to production applications and institutional services

The strength of INAIL's model was to leverage the participation of employees in the process of creating the Digital Workplace, focusing on the Institute's philosophy and willingness to bring out the involvement of employees as stakeholders within the organization, both in the formulation of the choices and in the evaluation of the results. All this in order to prevent the development of

strategies from becoming less effective and costlier, in terms of both profitability and the satisfaction of the stakeholders themselves.

The process related to the involvement of employees was divided into four phases, of which the first three were aimed at the conception and development of the Digital Workplace and the last, still in progress, is dedicated to its dissemination within the Institute.

The project's first phase, called "Discovering", had as its primary objective that of bringing out the employees' needs and expectations. In the first six months, feedback was collected that allowed the Institute to gather key information in order to carry out the first recalibrations. On the basis of the experimentation's positive results it was possible to define the five pillars aimed at guiding and orienting the construction of the Digital Workplace. The concepts of proactivity, personalization, simplification, uniqueness and profiling made it possible to launch the first supplies of PCs and smartphones.²¹

All the Institute's employees were equipped with a smartphone, thus allowing even those who benefited from a fixed workstation to use a large part of the individual productivity functions on the move.

In the second phase, called "Co-create", the employees in a "design thinking" workshop were called, in line with the "change management" model, to define the characteristics and functions necessary to meet the needs of the personnel on the digital subject. In fact, one of the keys to the change proposed by INAIL was "collaboration", a real added value for productivity and consequently for business. "Design thinking" encompasses a variety of creative strategies for managing projects or promoting organizational innovation: it helps teams integrate, express themselves and articulate the right questions, as well as identify and formulate innovative solutions aimed at addressing organizational planning problems.²²

The third phase, "Realize", was the real engine of the Digital Workplace. In it the Institute verified the planned initiatives by selecting the operations and materials to support their launch and adapting them according to the guidelines identified in the previous phase. The project helped the Institute promote and adopt new ways of working by exploiting and enhancing the components of Microsoft Office365. This step allowed for greater flexibility, just as Skype for Business as a corporate standard has made it possible to receive calls from both internal and external users. Furthermore, an e-collaboration environment was diffused, particularly MS Teams for activities and projects that require cooperation and the sharing of communication, thus reducing the misuse of emails and face-to-face meetings.

The characteristics of the platform were thus adapted to the needs of the Institute, obtaining the expected benefits both at an individual level, for profiles with very different operations (e.g. officials, doctors, operators, etc.), and for the entire organization, thanks to the rationalization of processes.

21. Emanuele Amato, ICT manager DCOD INAIL, in *Governare la trasformazione digitale*, Eugenio Nunziata, Luiss University Press, 2020.

22. S. Panke, "Design thinking in education: Perspectives, opportunities and challenges", *Open Education Studies*, 2019.

In 2020 INAIL went through the Covid-19 emergency as a phase of evaluation of practices and policies previously adopted for remote and smart working. The experience acquired before and during the emergency period supported the swift introduction of smart working, reinforcing the Institute's principles: culture by objectives, right to disconnect, planning by priorities, trust and dialogue. Smart working during the pandemic produced positive effects, especially in terms of efficiency, performance and staff satisfaction. What emerged was the centrality of human capital, whose resilience has proven to be decisive for designing the work of the future based on the well-being of workers, their professional growth and the continuous updating of their skills.

In line with the pandemic context, in July 2020 the program for the renewal of the physical environment and work spaces present in the offices led to the introduction of the "desk sharing" logic and the booking of workstations via apps. In December of the same year, new tools dedicated to the employee were introduced, such as Priority Management, Organizational Wellbeing, Smart Rooms and the "Ask INAIL" service.

Furthermore, in February 2021 a coworking work area was created at the general management area and the division of spaces of the Central Management for Digital Organization (DCOD) was redesigned from a smart perspective. Also in 2021, the Smart Working Observatory of the Milan Polytechnic awarded INAIL the "Smart Working Award 2021" in the public administration category, in which the Institute was a finalist together with the Bank of Italy. The award was collected in Milan by Stefano Tomasini, Central Director of DCOD, and Business Relationship Manager Francesca Mammoliti during the "Smart Working Revolution: a future to build now" Conference, which presented the results of the research performed by the Milan Polytechnic Observatory, the institute that had monitored the diffusion of smart working initiatives in Italy and studied the impacts and evolution of the health emergency on people's lifestyles and ways of working.

In January 2022 INAIL reached a turning point with the creation of the Single Digital Desk, an access point for the employee to all the tools and contents necessary and relevant for managing the everyday working life.

To share the project's concept and operation, INAIL relied on strong support from its top management and on a smart approach, with the experimentation of initiatives to understand the interest and perception of employees concerning the use of new tools and new ways of working. Open Days were organized to interest and engage colleagues, with digital workstations available to assist them in the possible use of the medium, including direct testimony from the communities that were experimenting with the new ways of interacting. There were also Teams Cafè, informal digital workstations between the office and the coffee machine where one could stop, see colleagues and consultants at work and try firsthand the new tools.

Once the implementation phase is concluded, in the project's fourth phase, "Disseminate", each area will gradually be made available to users, accompanying them in the "adoption" process through information events, support material and targeted communications.

Looking to the future, it is envisaged that the Digital Workplace project will be financed through the C1 "PA Digitalization & Security" component of the MI "Digitalization, Innovation, Competi-

tiveness and Culture” program of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. The Plan will provide for a series of milestones, that is, key events temporally defined for the control and progress of each project and aimed at orienting the technical and planning effort effectively and economically. Managing this phase is crucial for giving full value to the technical and financial efforts, and for guaranteeing full return on investment. For the first quarter (Q1) of 2023, the redesign of INAIL's tools and services is planned in order to integrate them into the Digital Workplace for both internal and external users and the Institute, thus expanding the user base.

In quantitative terms linked to the institution's internal target, the communication and Change Management initiatives are expected to reach INAIL's entire staff by the end of 2023 (Q4) in order to increase their digital skills and make the Digital Workplace easily accessible and usable. This phase will be fundamental for those moments in which it is appropriate for the baton to pass from the development and accompaniment phases to organizational change.

Furthermore, INAIL's entire staff (about 8200 people) will have to actively use the Digital Workplace as a single point of access to tools and services for carrying out work activities. This is because, concerning the value perceived by the business structures and by all personnel, a large part of the credibility of the leadership team of an IT department is at stake.

The aspect that makes INAIL's project an exemplary case for the Italian public context lies in the smart and innovative approach to the evolution of work. INAIL has in fact invested in human capital and has introduced organizational dynamics linked to planning, transparency and results. The Institute's personnel was called upon to design its own Digital Workplace according to the Human Centered strategy that has generated a series of benefits including: the enabling and management of four business scenarios subject to experimentation and the effective adoption of platform tools to support daily operations.

Hybrid work requires placing people and strength at the center. The evolution of this model lies in the fact that it is the Institute's organization that has probed its collaborators' needs and made them its own, and not vice versa. It is an approach that enhances human capital, not only in the management of spaces and working hours, but also in training and building a culture of equal opportunities that gives everyone the same possibility to choose.

The sustainability of INAIL's model is based on the fact that investment in the Digital Workplace project has promoted the diffusion of a new work culture, one founded on employee well-being by leveraging a “distributed” organizational model.

The well-being of the employees depends on their possibility to express themselves, to develop their interests, to be fulfilled and valued, to have good relations with their group and occasionally, even to have fun. People in organizations must have the opportunity to express their dissent, to feel a sense of belonging and to give meaning to their work by cultivating the good that emerges from the context. By highlighting the key factors useful in training people, INAIL has generated a culture of well-being in a way that is compatible with contemporary ways of working and the needs of those who work in modern organizations.

Employing a "distributed" organizational model has allowed the Institute to enact shared leadership by enabling transversal collaboration between employees and various INAIL structures and to raise the level of service to users through the uniform and timely sharing of information. It has allowed for the storage, availability and transmission of data in a secure manner. Accompanying and involving employees in the process of creating the Digital Workplace has made the model sustainable from the point of view of cooperation, since by definition it needs people who are informed, autonomous, free to act and decide responsibly, even in small areas, people who have a broad vision of the process involving them, generating a social context that is consistent with everyone's autonomy and that forms relationships between employees.²³

Furthermore, the project has improved the quality of work, increasing the sense of belonging to the Institute, making work accessible in an efficient and mobile way also to people with disabilities. Indeed, recent studies show that a better balance between office work and smart working favors the transition towards a culture of results and, simultaneously with e-collaboration and video-conferencing technologies, improves the quality of the work-life balance and contributes to more efficient management of urban and inter-urban mobility with obvious benefits for the whole community.²⁴

Despite some initial hesitation on the part of the staff, the Digital Workplace project has been enormously successful and has allowed for exponential growth, even before the remote working induced by Covid-19. It has increased the volume of communication flows and e-collaboration activities between employees. Today the Institute's resources can fully take advantage of the opportunities associated with smart working. The Digital Workplace has allowed for a substantial reduction in costs, greater productivity and higher agility, with the renewal of the workstation adding considerable value to the Institute's digitalization process.

23. R. Di Monaco, S. Pilutti. *Scommettere sulle persone, la forza della leadership distribuita*, Egea S.p.A., 2016.

24. F. Maimone. *Gestire il cambiamento organizzativo con un approccio human centered*. Franco Angeli, 2019.