# TRANSFORMING THE UNIVERSITY WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY:
## STRATEGIES FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT IN A FUTURE-READY UNIVERSITY

### Introduction

Welcome to our latest monthly newsletter. This edition underscores the critical importance of continuous improvement in the ever-evolving work environment. It aims to empower the University workforce to not only adapt but to thrive in this fast-paced era of rapid change. In this edition, we will find insightful perspectives, expert guidance, and best practices designed to support our professional growth and contribute to our collective journey toward excellence. We believe that by embracing continuous learning and development, we can shape a brighter future together.

As we navigate an era marked by rapid technological advancements, global competitiveness, and evolving workforce dynamics, universities must reassess and adapt their approaches to workplace productivity. Transformation, in this context, refers to a fundamental shift in how universities operate, moving beyond incremental changes to embrace innovative and holistic improvements in academic and administrative environments. At the University of Lagos, we are uniquely positioned to lead this transformation by fostering a culture of agility, efficiency, and competence that prepares us for future challenges. This is a call to action to reshape the university workplace, ensuring that productivity

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is not just enhanced but fundamentally redefined to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. In this edition, we explore the importance of optimising workplace productivity in the university setting, emphasising the need for strategic intervention and growth-oriented solutions.

### Definitions

Workplace productivity: This refers to the efficiency with which individuals and teams utilise time, knowledge, and resources to achieve institutional goals. It encompasses both quantitative measures (e.g., research output and administrative efficiency) and qualitative aspects (e.g., work satisfaction, collaboration, and innovation).

**Efficiency:** It is the ability to maximise output with minimal wasted effort or resources, while inefficiency manifests as delays, redundant processes, and suboptimal outcomes. Productivity thrives in an environment of strategic planning, technological integration, and skilled workforce development.

**Competence:** This represents the collective expertise, experience, and adaptability of university staff, including academic, administrative, and technical personnel. Competence is a driver of innovation and service excellence, while incompetence leads to stagnation, errors, and decreased institutional credibility.

Productivity, at its core, is about maximising potential, delivering quality education, impactful research, and seamless administrative operations. Unproductivity, however, signals lost opportunities, disengagement, and inefficiencies that hinder institutional progress.

### Workplace Dynamics



University workplaces are dynamic ecosystems, comprising faculty, researchers, administrators, and support staff. Each unit functions interdependently, requiring seamless communication, collaboration, and resource alignment. The rise of digital workspaces, flexible working models, and global academic networks further necessitate a rethinking of traditional work structures.

The introduction of cutting-edge technologies, data-driven decision-making, and digital collaboration tools presents an opportunity to enhance productivity. Universities must adopt a proactive approach to integrating these advancements, ensuring that staff members are not just equipped but also empowered to perform optimally in an evolving landscape.

### (I) Efficiency vs. Inefficiency

Efficiency in the university workplace entails completing tasks with precision, leveraging technology, and optimising workflow processes. Efficient institutions prioritise innovation, automation, and talent development to maximise impact.

On the contrary, inefficiency emerges from outdated processes, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and poor resource management. Time lost to redundant administrative procedures, ineffective meetings, and fragmented communication systems reduces institutional effectiveness. Addressing inefficiencies requires strategic interventions, streamlining workflows, embracing automation, and fostering a results-oriented culture.

### (ii) Competence vs. Incompetency

A university's competitive advantage lies in the competence of its workforce. Faculty excellence, administrative proficiency, and technological adeptness contribute to a thriving academic environment. Continuous professional development, upskilling initiatives, and knowledge-sharing platforms are crucial for maintaining and enhancing competence.

Conversely, incompetence can manifest in poor research output, inefficient service delivery, and misalignment with global academic trends. To mitigate this, institutions must invest in structured training programmes, performance-based incentives, and leadership development initiatives that empower staff to excel in their roles.

### (iii) Productivity vs. Unproductivity

Productivity is the lifeline of an institution's success, it drives research breakthroughs, enhances student learning experiences, and ensures operational excellence. A productive university nurtures a culture of accountability, goal-setting, and strategic visioning.

Unproductivity, on the other hand, leads to stagnation, underutilization of talent, and missed growth opportunities. Universities

must cultivate a high-performance culture by setting clear objectives, recognising achievements, and fostering an environment that values innovation and efficiency.

**Strategies for Turnaround in Productivity**



To address inefficiencies, incompetencies, and unproductivity, universities must adopt holistic strategies aimed at revitalising workplace productivity:

1. **Implementing Digital Transformation:** Leveraging technology, automated administrative systems, AI-driven analytics, and virtual collaboration tools enhances efficiency and reduces redundancies.

2. **Investing in Professional Development:**



Regular training, certifications, and mentorship equip staff with relevant skills, ensuring competitiveness in their respective domains.

3. **Fostering a Collaborative Culture:** Encouraging cross-departmental synergy, research partnerships, and team-based projects promotes knowledge exchange and operational effectiveness.

4. **Empowering Leadership:** Leadership development programmes ensure that decision-makers inspire, guide, and motivate teams toward institutional excellence.

5. **Monitoring and Evaluating Performance:** Data-driven performance assessments help identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement, fostering a culture of accountability.

6. **Creating a Supportive Work Environment:**



Work-life balance initiatives, mental health programmes, and staff engagement activities contribute to a motivated and productive workforce.

**Conclusion**

Transforming workplace productivity in a university setting is not merely a pursuit of efficiency, it is a commitment to building a resilient, innovative, and future-ready institution. By tackling inefficiencies, enhancing competence, and fostering a high-performance culture, the University of Lagos can position itself as a leader in higher education and research. Productivity is not an end but a journey, one that requires strategic investments, visionary leadership, and an unwavering dedication to excellence. A future-ready university is one that continuously evolves, embraces change, and empowers its people to achieve greatness.

**Professor Olufemi Saibu, 2025.**