

# Reimagining Calling and Collaboration for the Flexible Work Office

## Insights, Implications, and Questions for Readiness

### How do you power growth in the future workplace?

The changing workplace and new technologies are providing new challenges for enterprises. How do you reset your communications and collaboration technologies for the office of the future? Does your office environment still need desktop phones? Is it valuable to have more than one type of meetings and messaging application? Should you consolidate solutions to improve your competitive advantage and how do you plan your network needs to support new cloud-based technologies?

Enterprises are changing the way they operate, with hybrid office and remote work environments putting extraordinary pressure on communication and collaboration systems designed for a more centralized workforce. With “work from anywhere” policies in place and evolving with the return to the office, organizations are tasked with finding cost-effective new ways to keep employees engaged and productive— while supporting employees returning to the office

Organizational leaders are reexamining how they can deliver secure, reliable collaboration solutions in the “workplace of the future.” This white paper highlights the key insights that business leaders need to consider and the implications for their organizations.



### The hybrid work model is the future now



of business leaders believe employees will work remotely at least one-fourth of the time after the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

Business leaders are learning that the digital workplace must integrate and coexist with the physical workplace for the foreseeable future even as workers return to the office and resume business travel. Effective teams need to be able to assemble quickly, anywhere and at any time, since collaboration and problem solving is often done on an ad-hoc basis.

Therefore, communication tools need to provide cohesive support in whatever form is optimal for a worker’s particular situation (office, remote, business travel); or medium (messaging, meeting, calling); or device (mobile handset, PC, laptop, conferencing equipment) that is available at that moment.

Now that the reactive stage of responding to the pandemic has passed, business leaders have an opportunity to be more thoughtful in how they approach their digital workplace strategies. Workplaces are being designed to allow employees to participate fully. Redesigned office conference rooms and huddle rooms with video conferencing capabilities will allow all employees, even those remote, to contribute on a level playing field. In one business survey, 98% of respondents expect there to be at least one remote worker in every meeting.<sup>2</sup>

By 2024, 25% of enterprise meetings will take place in person, down from 60% in 2019.<sup>3</sup> To support this need, enterprises need high quality video and audio. High resolution screens will allow teams to see the nuances of facial expressions that enable workers to understand one another better. Flexible workplaces offer a level of adaptability for organizations and employees that will permit work to be done where it is best suited. Flexible workplaces can improve the quality of life of workers through reduced commuting time and greater ability to care for their families.

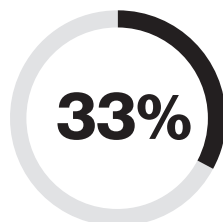
### Implications

- Enterprises have to address a complex work environment that blends continued work at home with a restart of the office.
- Communications and collaboration tools best-suited to support strategic workplace transformation need to be deployed, including collaborative workspaces; calling solutions that support office, mobile, and work at home; and meetings and messaging solutions leveraging video conferencing and document sharing.

### Questions for Readiness

- With the office and work at home converging, how has our work environment changed and can we improve workplace collaboration with more effective calling and collaboration tools?
- Do we have the equipment, phone systems, as well as the collaboration and calling solutions to ensure every function and level of the organization can communicate with one another to achieve their goals?
- Have we upgraded enough conference rooms into video huddle rooms to ensure remote employees can join and contribute to meetings effectively?
- Do we need to invest in the latest desktop phones or should we look for ways to make soft clients with headsets a better experience?

## Modernizing legacy technology investments to the cloud and wireless can transform your ROI



of businesses obtained a measurable ROI for team collaboration investments from increased productivity and reduced meetings and email.<sup>4</sup>

Businesses are upgrading their legacy enterprise telephony and collaboration tools at a rapid pace to improve their technology ROI. In a recent survey, 39% of business leaders have moved enterprise telephony to cloud applications and 54% have moved videoconferencing to the cloud.<sup>5</sup> Investments in collaboration tools such as videoconferencing, team messaging, and document sharing help improve productivity as cloud based tools can simplify work. Enabling the applications to work on a mobile handset also provides additional flexibility options to employees on the move.

Running technology in the cloud provides the flexibility and cost savings to turn up and down services quickly and easily as needed. These changes are typically done by an administrator with a simple 'command and control' online portal application that allows service changes to be made individually for each employee or in batches. The most time efficient portals allow you to make changes to calling and collaboration tools from a single application.

The always-on nature of cloud based and wireless communications means that technology is always updated with access to the latest application innovations and security, making updates simple and cost effective. Businesses can also move at their own pace, migrating services to new technologies while utilizing some services from their legacy systems.

### Implications

- Enterprises should evaluate the ROI benefits of upgrading their legacy enterprise telephony and collaboration tools to IP based cloud technologies and wireless based on improved productivity, reduced cost, and investment flexibility.
- Investments in cloud based technologies should be done in combination with a wireless investment strategy to maximize the effectiveness of both working together.

- Modernization projects can be done incrementally in a dual legacy environment based on site location needs, new office designs, and return to the office plans.

**Questions for Readiness**

- How are we planning and evaluating our long term workplace communications and collaboration investments?
- How are we addressing the flexibility to ramp investment changes quickly and the ROI on older legacy technology?
- Do we have a long term plan for investing in cloud calling and collaboration tools and how are we measuring results?

**Reducing business complexity with a single platform simplifies administration and lowers costs**



reduction in annual operating costs for single-vendor versus multi-vendor UC solutions.<sup>6</sup>

A tightly integrated communications platform portfolio coupled with a data network and wireless provider can offer numerous advantages to an enterprise. Organizations achieve improved team agility and a consistent experience from a single platform solution that improves the flow of information and collaboration between team members. A single platform also allows the creation of a tighter security policy and easier deployment and adoption efforts. It also enables streamlined management and administration from a single self-service portal with less time to manage redundant solutions, multiple vendors, and contracts.

Businesses also experience lower costs with a single vendor approach. A single platform costs \$1,600/user/year, compared to about \$3,100/user/year for separate platforms (includes licensing, staffing and managed services costs).<sup>6</sup> Costs are lowered through improved productivity from advanced calling, high quality video and collaboration tools, and security and network integration of business processes and applications. Vendors also bundle meetings, calling, and team collaboration licensing together to provide additional single platform cost savings.

A robust platform and carrier solution is more likely to have resources to support pre-sales planning and post sales implementation support. Providers can support an evaluation of a business’s telecom infrastructure including bandwidth and feature needs, phased implementation, and API integration with leading enterprise workflow applications. API integrations with third-party applications such as CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) along with inventory and human resources applications can be evaluated. To support on-boarding, experienced providers offer training classes for users and administrators, and services for project management, testing, and implementation support.

**Implications**

- Enterprises should evaluate the benefits of upgrading to a single platform that leverages their data network and wireless services.
- A financial analysis should be completed on the costs of maintaining multiple platforms including staffing and administrative costs.
- Providers should be evaluated on their ability to provide pre-sales and post sales support including a basic network evaluation and on-boarding support for users and administrators.

**Questions for Readiness**

- How are we evaluating and addressing the multiple platforms being used by employees in our business?
- Have we reviewed calling and collaboration platforms to narrow them down to one that meets our needs and complements our network and wireless provider?
- Do we have an implementation plan to migrate from legacy services and have we evaluated migration and on-boarding services that vendors offer to make it easy for employees and administrators to transition?



## Security and reliability from more experienced providers allow you to sleep at night



of business leaders believe security and 41% believe reliability are the top selection criteria for a cloud provider.<sup>5</sup>

Has your business ever experienced a PBX breach with expensive after hours international calls? Have you ever had a disruption of an executive video conference because the security on the platform you were using was insufficient?

Ensuring a distributed workforce can securely access calling and collaboration platforms and tools is a critical requirement when upgrading legacy telephony infrastructure. Cloud-based platforms require enterprise-grade security with end-to-end encryption, anti-malware, data loss protection, and enterprise content management. The most secure platforms have security integrated throughout the platform and network, and not as a separate add-on capability.

The reliability of network performance and connections is critical in today's changing business environment. There are several groups that provide independent network performance evaluations. RootMetrics by IHS Markit provides technology performance benchmarking for the wireless industry by measuring network reliability, accessibility, speed, data performance, call performance, and text performance by wireless carrier.

While data networks and cloud platforms don't have a similar performance measurement system, many enterprises rely on industry analyst evaluations of carrier and platform performance and capabilities, such as the Gartner Magic Quadrant reports.

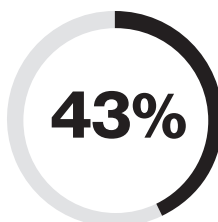
### Implications

- Enterprises should evaluate the security and reliability of cloud-based platforms and wireless networks when upgrading their legacy enterprise telephony and collaboration tools.
- Several groups and analysts provide independent evaluations of network and technology performance.

## Questions for Readiness

- Has a risk assessment been completed on our current legacy solutions and on other, potentially more secure communications and collaboration systems?
- Do our collaboration and communications platforms have enterprise-grade security and how is it integrated into the overall platform?
- How are we thinking about reliability and evaluating it relative to our long term workplace communications and collaboration investments?

## Customer experiences with new cloud technology can improve your competitive advantage



of business leaders believe customer satisfaction is the top metric that businesses use to measure digital transformation success.<sup>5</sup>

Do your online meetings or events with customers have audio or video problems? Are your sales teams missing calls or have long hold times? Do you find it difficult to include external parties in your online meetings? Ensuring your customers receive good service with your communications and meeting applications is critical. Jitter, latency, background noise, long hold times and slow responses are unacceptable to today's customers.

Customers expect a premium experience from their vendors that goes beyond a standard phone call given that the ability to make and receive calls is now table stakes. The ability to make group calls from meeting applications is critical for companies to remain competitive. Collaboration tools such as screen and document sharing and messaging provide capabilities not available on legacy networks. Engaging customers through virtual events allows businesses to more frequently communicate with customers and remain relevant.

Organizations are also looking for digital self-service tools that allow them to maximize more time with their customers. Leading carriers offer robust online portals that let administrators manage calling and meetings together including adding employees to the network, changing features, or monitoring usage through reporting.

---

## Questions for Readiness

- Do we have a plan to measure and improve customer engagements?
- Have we evaluated sales response times to customers and customer experiences with videoconferencing and calling tools?
- Do our administrators have the self service tools to measure customer response rates and webinar quality?

## Conclusion

The rapid changing workplace is shifting adoption of cloud based communications and collaboration technologies.

Customer and employee engagement is driving the move to a single platform solution to improve customer satisfaction, provide a better return on investment, and increase organizational productivity.

Now is an excellent time to re-evaluate legacy communications systems and restructure your technologies to better meet the needs of your customers and organization.



<sup>1</sup> Recreating Work as a Blend of Virtual and Physical Experiences, Harvard Business Review Analytic Services and Verizon, Sept 2020

<sup>2</sup> 2020 Dimensional Research survey, Cisco Systems

<sup>3</sup> 2020 Meeting Solutions Magic Quadrant, Gartner

<sup>4</sup> Workplace Collaboration 2021-22, Metrigy

<sup>5</sup> Communications and Collaboration Investment Priorities, Frost & Sullivan, Feb 2021

<sup>6</sup> Real-World Benefits of Integrated Cloud Unified Communications and Collaboration, Metrigy, March 2021

Network details & coverage maps at [vzw.com](http://vzw.com). © 2021 Verizon. VZWP2200521