

New Collaboration Tools Raise Productivity to the Next Level



Most employees in the corporate workforce now operate as part of teams that include colleagues who either telecommute or work in different offices. They also interact closely with clients, contractors and third parties from around the globe.

Improving collaboration has emerged a key challenge for medium and large enterprises over the past few years. The fundamental need for employees to communicate visually and to collaborate with others working in remote locations has shifted the structure and processes of the modern corporate workplace. From huddle rooms to boardrooms, companies are restructuring their meeting spaces to meet the new collaborative demands of their businesses and to empower workers to be more productive.

To keep pace with these changes, collaborate tools have been evolving quickly. Simply providing the ability to collaborate with dry-erase technologies once seemed sufficient, that those solutions are no longer enough. The collaboration tools that businesses adopt must be able to drive productive teamwork by offering features tailored to end users. Companies should find the right collaborations solutions that address specific needs, which may require a variety of solutions that support different collaboration models. Fortunately, a powerful new generation of technologies has arrived to meet these challenges.

Matching Specific Needs

To be effective, collaboration tools must help employees solve business problems efficiently. But not all collaboration sessions are the same. Some focus on ideation, while others are centered around sharing information or collaborative problem-solving. Different tasks require different means to communicate effectively, which means that companies should match their collaboration tools to the specific needs of end users.

At the most basic level, interactive whiteboards still have a vital role to play in huddle rooms, training rooms and smaller collaboration spaces. They allow teams in the same room or in different locations to work together – brainstorming ideas, sharing images and reviewing materials jointly. To enable more extensive sharing and problem-solving, however, collaboration tools need to be able to allow multiple employees to log into the network and share their screens. Finally, gold-standard collaboration tools for larger meeting rooms and boardrooms, as well as for highly collaborative teams and enterprises, should be able to connect many users, allowing them to share their screens and show high-definition video and other content.

Assessing Key Features

To enable dynamic, real-time collaboration and sharing, collaboration hardware and software tools must be modular and flexible. In other words, they need to play well with others and offer future-proof solutions.

In terms of hardware, displays and projectors should provide large surfaces and deliver crisp, high-resolution video conferencing to ensure end users remain engaged and can easily view shared materials. Depending on specific needs, a dedicated conferencing camera and quality audio speakers may be required. The goal is for users to feel as if they're in the same room with everyone else.

The hardware should include an integrated OPS option slot to future-proof investment while minimizing computing footprint and easing installation. Whether it incorporates an LED screen, projector or whiteboard, a collaboration system's interactive element should be intuitive, allowing users to engage with the canvas using natural movements, such as scrolling with a finger or drawing with a stylus – all without slowing or interrupting the workflow.

The rise of bring-your-own-device policies in offices means that collaboration software should integrate a wide range of devices: desktop computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones. This also requires broad OS compatibility, including Windows 10, Mac, Android, Chrome. Collaboration software should also allow users to wirelessly share their screens and even download files onto devices, so that, for example, videos run without lag. Collaboration solutions should save a record of a session, including all visuals, audio and notes, so users can later refer back to key parts of the session.

To fulfill specific collaboration need, companies can custom fit components together or buy an all-in-one solution. Manufacturers offer a wide range of solutions, ranging from hardware or software products that will plug into your existing equipment to hardware solutions preloaded with collaboration software.

Making the Right Choice

To maximize productivity, enterprises need to foster better real-time collaboration between widely dispersed teams and stakeholders. New collaboration tools leverage the advances in display and networking technologies to boost the effectiveness of business meetings by providing interactive and videoconferencing experiences that ensure participants remain engaged and focused on the collaboration rather than on the tools. With their intuitive interfaces and practical tool sets, these collaborative technologies are finding their way into every corporate space from the boardroom to even training rooms.

Whether a company needs a simple interactive whiteboard or a best-in-class collaboration solution – or something in between – robust, flexible and versatile solutions are now available to fit any need.

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