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THE POWER OF COLLABORATIVE COMMS TO TRANSFORM YOUR WORKPLACE



Leading businesses today are engaging in digital transformation, driven by emerging technology and employee expectations about the modern workplace. Many have become accustomed to advanced consumer tech at home from instant messaging, video chat, and social networking. Staff members also want to be able to communicate and collaborate from anywhere using the same tools at work.

Today's new technology can facilitate more fluid and flexible ways of working, which has the potential to increase productivity in the workplace.

What's more, businesses risk being left behind if they fail to adapt to new technology, as many of their competitors will be (or already are) benefiting from digital transformation.

This eBook will highlight four sections:

- 1. Transforming the workplace**
- 2. The limitations of the traditional workplace**
- 3. New forms of collaboration in the digital workplace**
- 4. How collaborative comms can grow your business**





01

Transforming the Workplace.



Digital transformation marks a shift in what we think constitutes “the workplace”. We are moving away from the traditional idea that work must be carried out at a specific time and place (e.g. 9-5 at an employee’s designated workstation) to one where employees can work anytime, anywhere, and on any device of their choosing. In its simplest form, digital transformation is the process of implementing new technology that can significantly change how we work.

It’s important to note that the digital workplace is not a complete re-write of traditional ways of working.

Digital transformation is not a bulldozing process, it’s about taking what’s there and building upon it, to make it more efficient and beneficial to businesses.

Digital transformation can lead to significant **improvements** across the whole business in terms of:

- Employee engagement and satisfaction
- The ability to attract talent
- Customer satisfaction scores
- Time-to-market
- Speed of innovation
- Sales/leads
- Margins/profitability
- Helping businesses scale



Therefore, every business should think of digital transformation as an opportunity for significant progress. Businesses that don't act now risk the financial and competitive damage of falling behind others in their industry. It's not just the 'innovators' and 'leaders' that are taking advantage of technology like collaborative communications—digital technology is becoming commonplace in workplaces around the world. Those reluctant or slow to embrace change risk not only falling behind the first-movers, but behind everyone else as well.

In a survey from 2016, **86%** of business owners believed they had two years to progress without digital transformation before their business would begin to suffer.

59% of the respondents were worried that they may have already missed the opportunity. The truth is that it's not too late, but time is certainly running out.

“In today's world of exponential change, organisations that get too comfortable with the status quo are at major risk of disruption.”

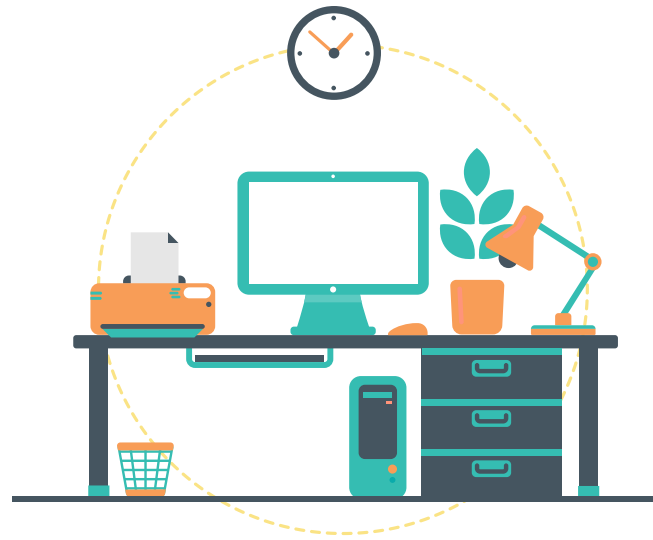
Andrew Vaz,
Global Chief Innovation Officer at Deloitte





02

The Limitations of the Traditional Workplace.



In the traditional workplace, collaboration can be slow, laborious and quite often needs employees working in the same location. This requirement to be in the same place at the same time is a direct result of the constraints of traditional technology.

Let's look at some examples of how existing technology puts a brake on productivity.

Anyone for meetings about meetings?

Meetings are how important information, objectives, and goals are communicated to employees, and where you can share ideas and brainstorm with colleagues on

collaborative projects. But meetings often need to be scheduled well in advance and usually take place in a formal, stifling and uncreative setting.

Many office workers would agree that it's time to re-think how 'meetings' work, believing them to be highly inefficient, as a recent research paper shows. The study indicates that most people believe that meetings have a negative effect on productivity.

On average, employees attend **62** meetings every month, **50%** of which are considered to be a waste of time.




When digging deeper into why, it was discovered that:

91% 

of people admitted to daydreaming during meetings.

39%


admitted to falling asleep during a meeting. 




45%

felt overwhelmed by the number of meetings they attend.

73%

occupied themselves with other work during meetings. 

47%

complained that meetings were the biggest waste of time in their day. 





The death of email?

Many people believe that the arrival of instant messaging has signaled the beginning of the end for email. But, we don't buy it. Email remains crucial to most businesses. It plays a fundamental part to how employees communicate and collaborate. Most employees begin and end their days on their email clients. It is irreplaceable for certain tasks, such as sending long, formal or external communications.

However, email does have its problems.

According to a [recent report](#), the average employee receives 304 emails in a week and checks their emails 36 times an hour. Most people would agree that this is too much, because emails are invariably distracting and time-consuming. Checking emails, let alone reading and responding to them, takes employees away from core work. [It can take some people up to 16 minutes to refocus their concentration after an interruption.](#) Also, email is relatively slow, as it does not facilitate real-time conversation.

“Every industry and every organisation will have to transform itself in the next few years. What is coming at us is bigger than the original internet and you need to understand it, get on board with it and figure out how to transform your business.”

Tim O'Reilly,
Founder and CEO, O'Reilly Media



03

New forms of Collaboration in the Digital Workplace.



So much for the old, let's switch our focus to what's new. What does the digital workplace look like? What are those businesses that are reluctant to change missing out on?

Meetings in the cloud

Digital transformation isn't about making traditional meeting rooms obsolete but about making them much more valuable for employees.

Imagine virtual meetings in the cloud with attendees logging in from various locations around the world, being able to work together, accessing information and sharing files exactly as they would if they had been present in the same room. This isn't the future, it's the digital workplace today. Businesses that don't operate this way risk falling behind.

Employees are connected online via video conference calling technology such as Skype for Business, WebEx, Google Hangouts, and Slack. Many of these tools have instant chat functionality built in, let users share files and screens, and work together on documents.

Other colleagues can be invited into the meeting at a click of a button. Notes can be shared and stored somewhere, so they can be accessed later. And calls can be recorded for people to listen back to later.

The value to the business is huge. When so many people consider meetings in the traditional workplace to be a waste of their time, improving the efficiency of meetings is a no-brainer. What's more, improving productivity and employee engagement will have a positive effect on the bottom line.



Instant communication

The digital workplace gives employees additional options about how they communicate. They can look at the task at hand and decide how they should proceed. The rise of video chat and instant messaging (used in conjunction with email) provides this choice.

We have seen how improved video chat can transform meetings for the better. Instant messaging can do the same for written communication, but not on its own. It will not replace email – what it does is give employees another tool to use to solve business problems.

This has a positive effect on all areas of the business, as employees can solve problems faster and speed up workflows.

Instant chat is also great for sharing ideas, brainstorming, and crowdsourcing ideas.

With Microsoft recently announcing that Skype for Business is merging into Microsoft Teams, there is a move towards bringing together different tools into all-purpose, omnichannel collaboration hubs. This will allow employees to switch seamlessly between video chat, instant messaging, email, and document collaboration. In the digital workplace, collaboration is fluid, seamless and coherent across multiple locations and devices.

“At least 40% of all businesses will die in the next 10 years... if they don’t figure out how to change their entire company to accommodate new technologies.”

John Chambers,
Executive Chairman, Cisco Systems





What would collaborative comms look like in action?

Let's say a company's Marketing Team is working on new sales materials. They have set up a meeting to discuss how the work is progressing and to report their progress to the Sales Team. The Marketing Director sets up a meeting in Calendar and sends out invites to colleagues. Attending the meeting will be the Marketing Director, the Head of Sales, and three Marketing Execs.

The Sales Team is in a different building, so the meeting is set up as a Skype for Business video call. When the calendar sends out the event reminders, all but one of the Marketing team assemble in a meeting room and bring up the call on a big screen. One of the marketing execs is working from home that day, so logs in remotely from his laptop. The Head of Sales logs into the call from her desk in the other building.

The Marketing Director begins by sharing her screen and showing a PowerPoint presentation about their progress, which everyone can also access via OneDrive for Business. One of the Marketing Execs is writing up notes in a shared Word Document, but everyone is encouraged to add comments and contribute to the notes as they go along.

At one point, they decide to look at what their competitors are doing. One of the Marketing Execs seamlessly brings up her screen, sharing it with the others, and talks through a few competitor websites online. Once finished, they move back to the Marketing Director's screen and continue the presentation.



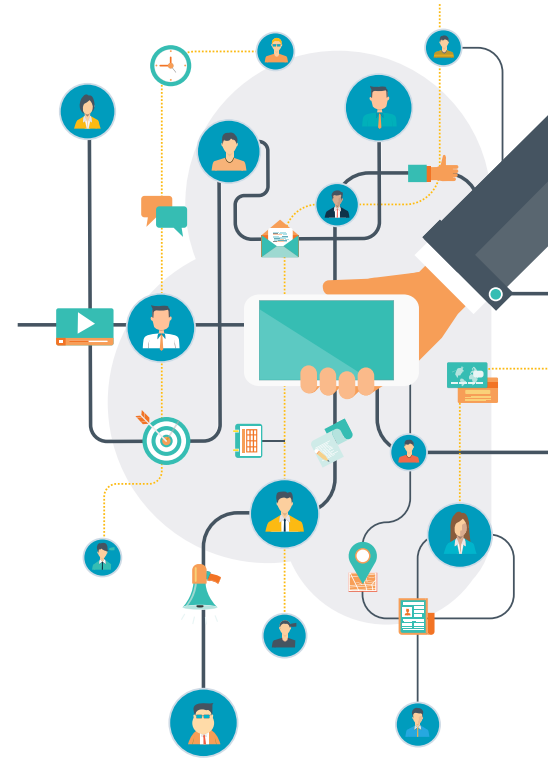
Later in the meeting, a question arises that no one can answer. The Head of Sales thinks that someone in her team will know. She brings up the instant messaging app in Teams and sends a quick message to all her sales execs out in-the-field, using a Group which they regularly use to share documents and communicate with each other. One of the sales execs has the answer and is invited into the meeting to help them solve the problem. In just a few clicks, she is talking with the group and discussing the problem, even though she is currently sitting in an office on the other side of the country.

At the end of the meeting, the Marketing team and the Sales team are fully caught up without ever having left their desks. The meeting notes are stored on OneDrive for future reference, and the team has even managed to get an answer to a difficult question that would usually take days to figure out. Having never left the office, everybody can get back to his or her work with no interruption.



04

How Collaborative Comms Can Grow Your Business.



It's essential that businesses act now or risk falling behind. By the end of 2017, **two-thirds** of Global 2000 companies will have put digital transformation at the center of their business strategy. Reports indicate that businesses that haven't done this will soon follow, with **55%** of organisations yet to take the first steps to digital transformation intending to do so within the next year.

Businesses need to keep up with technological shifts in their industries not only to stay competitive, but to stay relevant. With the pace of technological change set to continue, perhaps even accelerate, businesses risk falling so far behind that it will become difficult to ever catch up.



As we have seen, collaborative comms can transform your business by helping your employees work faster, work smarter and work together more efficiently. When you help your employees perform their jobs more effectively, you empower your whole organisation. This will have a significant effect on the bottom line and help to grow your business in the long run.

Today, people want to work at forward-thinking, tech-savvy organisations that allow for flexible working styles. If your organisation is going to attract the best employees, you need to provide the latest collaborative comms that make this possible.

“In today’s era of volatility, there is no other way but to re-invent. The only sustainable advantage you can have over others is agility, that’s it.”

Jeff Bezos,
Amazon founder

To secure your business’s competitive edge in the digital age, you need to use technology to your advantage.

Contact us at Lanrex to find out how technology can help you take your business to the next level.

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