



Your Teams Can't Talk If Your Tools Don't.

A COLLABORATION EBOOK.

Do either of these sound familiar?



SCENARIO A: COLLABORATION COLLAPSE

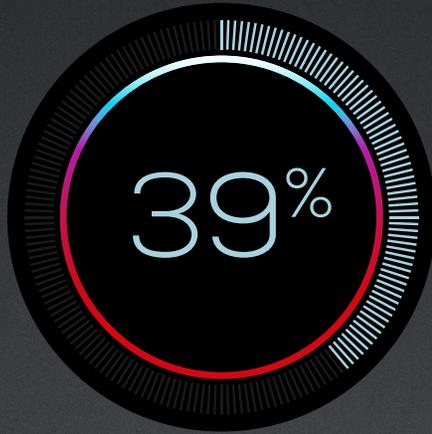
You're out of the office and need to dial in to a meeting where you're the subject matter expert. But you keep getting kicked off the Wi-Fi network, so you can't even share your screen. Your phone connection is spotty and there's an audio delay—plus, everyone sounds like they're in a tunnel. Your IM client keeps crashing, so even your back-channel questions are going unanswered.

You spend the meeting passively participating, unable to answer questions and frustrated that the people who don't have the right information are the ones making the decisions. Your work feels reactive, and you're anxious to check the call off the list so you can move on to the next task, because trying to show your expertise isn't working.

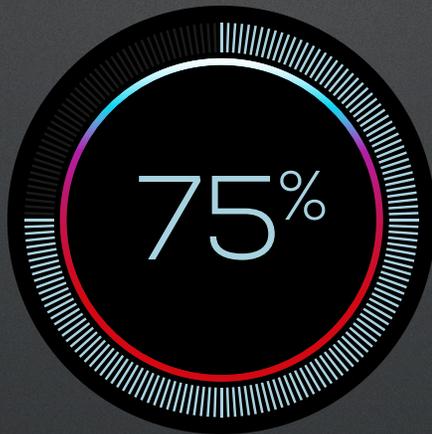
SCENARIO B: COLLABORATION CHAMPION

You're in a different office than the rest of your team. You dial in to a video conference via one seamless link, and are actually face-to-face with them. You can have meaningful conversations while you offer the information people need, and they answer your outstanding questions—with time to spare. Midway through the call, you access files in the cloud to help answer some questions. It's...imagine this...an actual, collaborative conversation—made even more so by having the right tools at your fingertips.





39% OF EMPLOYEES SAY THE PEOPLE IN THEIR ORGANIZATION DON'T COLLABORATE ENOUGH.¹



75% OF EMPLOYERS RATE COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK AS "VERY IMPORTANT."¹

Sound like you?

DOES ANY OF THIS FEEL FAMILIAR—OR WOULD YOU LIKE IT TO?

Being able to function as one cohesive team is a critical component of your success. And today's connected workplaces demand the right technology for collaboration to be at peak performance. So, let's take a look at some of the benefits of true collaboration—and how you can encourage it to happen more.



¹Queens University of Charlotte, "Communicating in the Modern Workplace."

Engagement

HELP EMPLOYEES FEEL CONNECTED TO THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

If the road has a bunch of potholes, lane closures, and lack of signs, it's going to take longer to get to your destination—and you'll be stressed out and tired by the end of the journey. But if you're on a newly paved road with great signage and a working GPS, you'll cross the finish line feeling great, and ready to tackle the next journey.

The same thing is true of technology and collaboration. If you've got unsecured phone lines or a network connection that goes down regularly, your staff will miss out on important information and opportunities to connect—and when people are frustrated that the tools they need to do their job aren't working properly, they become less motivated.



When your IT systems feel connected, so do your employees—to their work, their technology, and their teams. Collaboration is critical to building a community of driven, happy employees who are passionate about the work they're doing and feel like they have a vested interest in the products they create.

Good collaboration offers everyone on a team or in an organization a voice. It doesn't just make people feel heard—it lets them know that they actually are.



ENGAGEMENT QUICK TIP:

Make sure everyone is trained and up-to-date on the tech solutions you offer to make their work easier.



Research indicates that workers who completed tasks collaboratively reported feeling **MORE ENGAGED**, **LESS TIRED**, and **MORE SUCCESSFUL** than those who worked independently.²

²Forbes, "New Study Finds That Collaboration Drives Workplace Performance," June 22, 2017.

Efficiency

GET THE JOB DONE—BETTER, FASTER, RIGHT.

Your team's performance is reliant on the tools you give them—and it's only as good as that. If they're making international calls on rotary phones and sending huge PDFs over a 56.6k dial-up modem, you've got a problem. You're probably not that far back in the Stone Age, but even slightly outmoded tech is cause for concern.

Good communication and collaboration ensure people don't miss details or make easily avoidable mistakes, so being able to work alongside your team members to get the job done is essential to streamlined processes, accurate work products, and quick turnaround times.

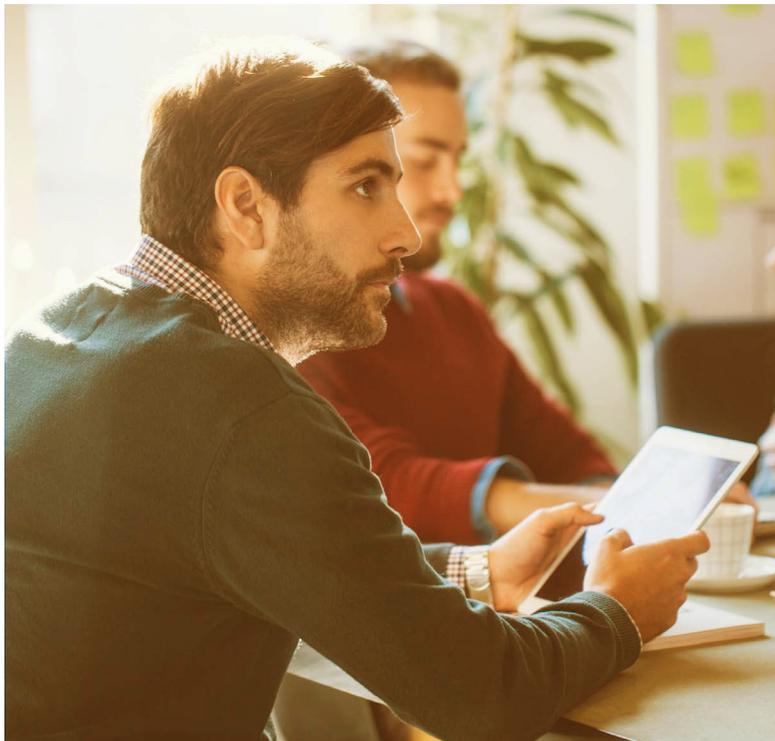


EFFICIENCY QUICK TIP:

Connect across
locations with VPN.



Research shows that collaboration
via **SOCIAL MEDIA** alone contributed
to 20% greater efficiency.³



Integration

WHEN YOUR TECH COMMUNICATES,
YOUR PEOPLE CAN, TOO.

Processes work more smoothly when people can talk to each other. If you're running six different systems that don't communicate (your IM client doesn't integrate with phone or email, or your video conferencing platform only runs with an obscure plugin nobody uses), your teams won't be able to communicate well, either.

For people to be able to communicate with each other, they need to have the right tools. Unified communications doesn't necessarily require that all tech run off of the same platform or from the same vendor. But there do need to be opportunities for integration. Think about the increase of BYOD employees—they're not all using the same smartphones, but they need access to the same resources and information so they can do their jobs.

³Clinked, "The State of Online Collaboration for Business."

Flexibility

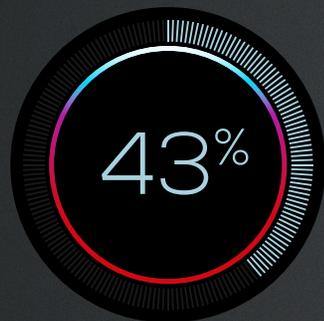
ON THE ROAD? NO PROBLEM.

Anyone with a smartphone knows that the workday doesn't begin—or end—at the office. Chances are you've already checked your work email before brushing your teeth in the morning. Being able to communicate with your colleagues on the fly—or from the train, the carpool lane, or the coffee shop down the street—fosters informal collaboration that makes people feel connected and engaged, even when they're not at HQ.

Or, you could be in the office, but might just not feel like getting up from your desk. You need to be able to work alongside the person who sits two rows down—and the person at a co-working space five states away. Teams need the right tools to foster effective collaboration and produce great work, wherever, whenever, and however they're doing it. Secure connections and ready access to all the information they need are critical.



Make sure people have the collaboration tools they need to do work where and when it works best. Getting online via VPN, accessing data and documents in the cloud, and communicating via both wired and mobile devices are of key importance when you're fostering flexible collaboration.



43% OF WORKERS REPORT
WORKING REMOTELY AT
LEAST SOME OF THE TIME.⁴



In a recent survey, companies with the highest scores for **INNOVATION** also had the most flexible remote work policies.⁵

⁴Gensler Research, U.S. Workplace Survey 2016.

⁵Gallup, "State of the American Workplace," July 2017.



Transparency

NOTHING TO HIDE HERE.

You don't know what you don't know. By increasing collaboration, you might be surprised to learn that someone you hadn't previously tapped for a project is actually the best person for the job. Ask a lot of questions. Use the right tools and provide access to everyone who might need it. And, share—make sure everyone is in the loop when it comes to organizational news, needs, and opportunities. When you're primed to work alongside others with different information and experience than your own, everyone can more clearly see the big picture.



TRANSPARENCY QUICK TIP:

Give employees and partners **CLOUD** access to files.



CREATIVITY QUICK TIP:

Change the way you collaborate.
Hold a **BRAINSTORM OVER VIDEO** or
a creative working session via IM.

Creativity

GET THOSE CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING.

Good collaboration means people spend less time fussing over minutiae and more time focusing on the important stuff. That means there's room to innovate, brainstorm, and work together to find the best solution.

And, as we know, multiple heads are better than one, so why not have your best and brightest work together—virtually, in person, or both—using streamlined collaboration tools like video conferencing, VoIP, IM, message boards, and other social tools to come up with the Next Big Idea?



Now, ask yourself a few questions.

IT'S TIME TO GET COLLABORATING.

Maybe your organization is already reaping some of these benefits of collaboration. Maybe you see an opportunity for a few additional easy wins by making small tweaks. But when it comes time to make big changes in the way you collaborate, the easiest way to begin is by...collaborating.

Start soliciting candid feedback from your teams about collaboration in its current state. What are their pain points? Find out quick, short-term fixes—and then build a longer-term plan, too. Are there tools and technologies that work? What about ones that don't? How and where do employees spend their time connecting? What will you need to do differently?

As you innovate, grow, and adapt, some of your most important assets—your technology and your teams—will need to be along for the ride, collaborating every step of the way.

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