

WHY YOUR TECHNOLOGY MIGHT BE LETTING YOU DOWN



This paper explores the conditions regarding businesses' approach to digital transformation in the era in which remote work comes to the fore.

While digital capability opens opportunities in our personal lives, the experience shapes our expectations in our professional lives. As consumers, we use an average of seven different channels to communicate with brands, and we expect brands to be present on our channel of choice. As employees, we expect to collaborate from anywhere, to replicate the same instant connection with our colleagues as we do with our friends.

Thanks to accelerating internet speeds and increasing coverage, coupled with ever-more powerful devices and sophisticated applications, mobile communication improved considerably over the past decade. This coincided with a 25% increase in the number of remote workers in the UK and mainland Europe in the decade from 2008 to 2018.

As millennials came of age and entered the workforce, they brought with them expectations shaped by exposure to technology and instant connectivity. In its Enterprise Insight Report released in late 2019, Cavell Group found 83% of UK

businesses have employees working remotely for more than two days a week, which is expected to increase by 4% over the next two years.

This evolution gives rise to a new problem for businesses to solve: how to keep employees connected and engaged. The growth of remote working threatens to create a more disparate, even fragmented, workforce, posing challenges for businesses to address in order to remain competitive through the evolution of the digital age.

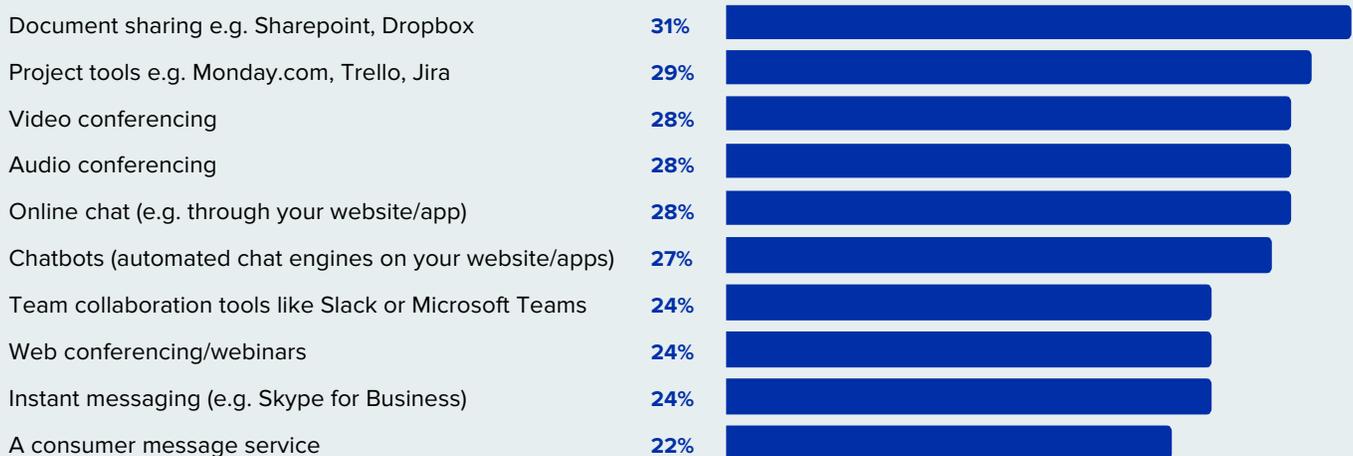
Mobility is a thread in the digital transformation of businesses as they take advantage of technology that facilitates fast communication and collaboration. While the approach was pioneered by businesses with a disparate presence across multiple locations, it's now a vital component of many companies' modern strategies.

A range of different communication and productivity platforms are available to today's organisations, offering tools to help keep the diverse global workforce connected. Indeed, the B2B market has seen an influx of tools to cover every type of interaction conceivable.

Okta's Businesses @ Work report indicates business application adoption continues to rise:

“This year, the average number of apps per customer reached 88: that's a 6% increase from 83 apps a year ago, and a 21% increase from 72 apps three years ago. And now 10% of our customers deploy a substantial 200 apps or more.”

Percentage of businesses likely to adopt tools in the next two years



According to Cavell's UK Enterprise Insight Report, businesses expect to adopt a range of communication and collaboration tools in the next two years. The most popular options are document sharing, project management, remote conferencing (video and audio) and online chat tools. Of the businesses

already using communications and collaboration tools, many expect to put more in place, with video conferencing, project management and team collaboration tools most in favour. There's an expectation that reliance on these tools will grow within organisations.

Percentage of businesses likely to increase reliance on tools in the next two years



While the software is effective, the number of available communication tools is overwhelming to the general user base and the in-house technicians who install and maintain them.

Meanwhile, the availability of such tools enables the creep of “shadow IT” and can exacerbate the infamous “silo effect” lamented by many a CIO.

Infoblox’s [What is Lurking on Your Network](#) report found that 12% of UK organisations are seeing more than 10,000 shadow IoT devices connect to their enterprise networks every day. “82% of organisations have introduced security policies governing the use of shadow IT devices but just 24% of employees are aware of them. Meanwhile, the majority of IT senior management, 88%, believe their policies are effective.

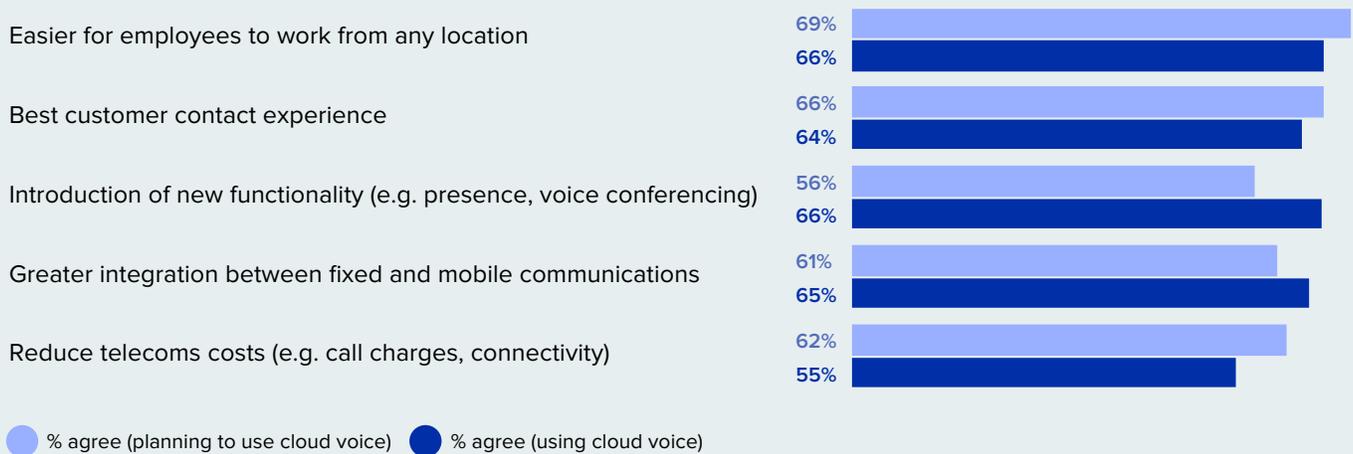
The great potential of digital capability is that it allows companies to be agile and responsive. It suits small teams and short communication lines, enabling people to learn and adapt quickly. This agility gives startups an edge in the innovation marketplace, responding to feedback quickly and completing interactions faster than their bureaucratic competitors. In enterprises, digital capability connects a global workforce and supports business continuity through built-in redundancy and constant development.

As more technology management is sucked into the cloud, requiring less in-house management, this is an opportunity

for businesses to let go of their cumbersome on-premises technology and adopt software as a service (SaaS) for the agility and efficiency it offers.

The benefits of transitioning tech stacks from complicated, expensive on-premises setups to cloud-based subscription services are well-documented, and businesses are paying heed. Cloud communications in particular is an area that’s currently witnessing tremendous growth. Reducing telecoms costs, improving workforce contactability and enabling remote working are important criteria for increasing the adoption of cloud communication services.

Percentage of businesses agreeing with reasons to adopt cloud voice services



Among businesses that have already transitioned their communications stacks to the cloud, many have experienced benefits, such as the introduction of new functionality, improved business continuity and integrating telecoms into workflows, that weren't major drivers of adoption but are welcome nonetheless. Discrepancies between expected outcomes and experienced outcomes do exist, however, particularly around enabling mobile contactability.

The rapid development of technology can mean some businesses are in a scramble to implement the latest technology but are in danger of treating the capability as an end in itself rather than a means to something more strategic. As Ade McCormack, Founder of the Digital Readiness Institute, pointed out in RingCentral's recent CIO Watercooler discussion, "A faster, smarter, cheaper Titanic is still a Titanic."

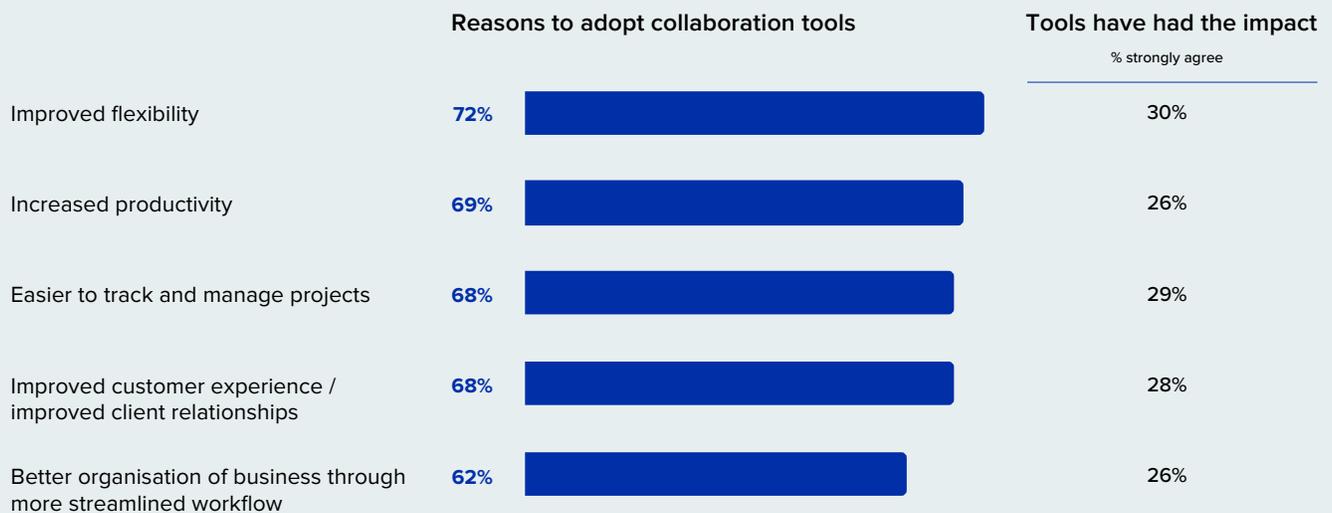
McKinsey echoes this message in discussing the migration of IT systems to the cloud.

"Companies tend to fall into the trap of confusing simply moving IT systems to the cloud with the transformational strategy needed to get the full value of the cloud. Just taking legacy applications and moving them to the cloud—'lift-and-shift'—will not automatically yield the benefits that cloud infrastructure and systems can provide. In fact, in some cases, that approach can result in IT architectures that are more complex, cumbersome, and costly than before."

Technology can enable businesses to be more responsive in the marketplace, secure better talent by offering a more attractive employer value proposition, and generate data-based insights to support business decisions. Its effectiveness, however, depends on its implementation in the business workflow. Sprinkling your business with IoT, blockchain, and AI isn't a catch-all for success in a digital marketplace. As far as the results of implementing technology go, Cavell's UK Enterprise Insight Report shows a third of

businesses strongly agree that collaboration tools have delivered the benefits they adopted them for. Cases of expectations not being met could come down to problems in prior planning, workforce engagement and uptake, or even being mis-sold a solution. When digital tools aren't quite hitting the spot in terms of their intended results, a greater understanding of their roles in business processes, along with better training and education regarding their application, is needed.

Businesses' reasons for adopting collaboration tools, and analysis of their impact



The key to successful digital transformation is to understand and respond to how tools and systems help employees perform better. This is a complicated and challenging facet as it requires understanding people's individuality as well as how they can work together as a contiguous whole. This is a crucial element of a modern business's people operations policy.

From the beginning of the buying process, through selection and rollout, it's imperative to keep in mind how the technology will facilitate the workforce to perform for the business. Among the workforce management considerations is the importance of training to ensure IT skills are at the required level throughout the organisation, especially among late and slow adopters.

Customer-facing brands have already found that the consumer has been one of the key catalysts of digital transformation. The same principle applies to the workforce: providing a positive employee experience is key to engaging and motivating a workforce.

[Research by Jacob Morgan](#) found companies that invested heavily in the employee experience earned more than four times the average profit and twice the average revenue compared to those that didn't. It's definitely worth investing in technology that enables the workforce, but that investment doesn't begin and end at subscribing to a service.

The logic for this makes financial sense; if you recognise that employees are customers of the business, you have more chance of getting the best out of your employees in terms of performance.

The role of a manager is to enable staff to produce their best work. That covers acting as a filter to distractions, shielding from complaints, championing success, streamlining processes and providing tools that facilitate efficient work. Managers need to cover all factors as a whole, addressing the requirement holistically. Tools can help in this regard, but it's senseless to invest in a communications and collaboration suite for the sake of it. The value of the system is in its implementation: how it

will be applied to enable employees to work efficiently, stay engaged with their tasks, support one another where needed, share relevant and valuable knowledge, and save on costs.

The Cavell report found that only 12% of businesses are actually satisfied with their collaboration tools as they are. The majority

wish for improvements to the tools they're using, the most sought-after of which are around consolidation and security. Reiterating the experience of app overload, almost a third of businesses want one single collaboration tool to cover all the required functionality, avoiding the need to add further tools to the stack.

The message is clear: Businesses wish to simplify their reliance on collaboration tools.

Businesses' wishlists for improvements to collaboration tools

Improvements needed to collaboration tools

- If one collaboration tool did everything so multiple tools weren't needed
- If I was more confident in their security
- If they performed better on mobiles
- If user interfaces were easier to use
- Nothing—they are great as they are

Overall



The need for simplification indicates adding functionality isn't necessarily a solution in itself. Investigating how technology can help make business more competitive goes beyond functionality; it's a fully strategic consideration with a strong element of risk management.

With this in mind, medium and larger businesses specifically look for availability of the most advanced solutions. This speaks to the importance placed on future-proofing businesses to cope with the demands of the market in years to come, given the rapid pace of technological development and market evolution.

In identifying business opportunities, and the technology to capitalise on those opportunities, leaders enable the success

of a business. Thus, developing strategies for business enablement precede tactical implementation of technology. Enabling collaboration and facilitating margins need to be addressed in terms of optimising workflows and minimising cost by incorporating efficient tools. The ultimate consideration in maximising performance is that of enabling workforce success by removing obstacles.

That's why, when it comes to selecting cloud services, receiving excellent, trustworthy pre-sales advice from a supplier is the most important factor for most businesses. It's crucial for a business as a client to feel confident in their investment, knowing that this will provide the ROI to demonstrate the new solution is meeting its objectives.

Businesses' top supplier attributes when choosing cloud voice services

Desired supplier attributes for cloud voice

Provides excellent, trustworthy pre-sales advice about best solution

Is the cheapest

Offers a choice of networks

Provides most advanced solutions

Owns its own network

Overall

50%

39%

36%

35%

33%

Putting tools in place is only one step to ensuring high productivity and business performance. The project must deliver an integrated environment that encourages a workforce to stay connected over distance. The process must be managed well to ensure collaboration is working effectively and that the company and its employees are connected in everything they do.

This is an opportunity for leaders to start asking the right questions, clarifying the strategic needs of their business, and enabling a culture of digital transformation. Decisions that enable such a culture need to be made company-wide as genuine strategies intended to achieve business goals such as increasing productivity and lowering costs.

Because digital transformation can require fundamental change in terms of processes and behaviour in an organisation,

adoption isn't always fast and easy. Some businesses still struggle to accept the change in work styles or leave implementation to the discretion of individual managers, underestimating the importance of consistent application.

Making such a shift successful comes down to the culture of an organisation, and this step change is required to begin with the leadership team. When seeking to empower a workforce through technology, leaders must take the needs of the workforce, including the functionality they need from communication and collaboration tools both now and in the future, into consideration.

As with all IT system projects, embracing UCaaS requires forethought and planning from a business-wide perspective.

When business needs and strategic objectives are clearly defined, expectations are much more easily managed and met.

For more information, please contact one of our solution experts. Visit ringcentral.co.uk or call 0800 098 8136.

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