



The Rise of the Collaborative Enterprise:

DRIVING PROFITABLE GROWTH THROUGH PERVASIVE COLLABORATION

Whether you're focused on engaging your customers, managing a global team or getting the most out of your supplier relationships, you have a clear stake in successful collaboration.

And while collaborative achievement has always been a key factor in business, what's different today is the diverse nature of collaboration. The work world is more global, mobile and virtual than ever. You no longer have to rely upon conventional, face-to-face meetings to get business done.

Now, you can collaborate wherever you are, whenever you are available and with whomever needs to be engaged in the conversation.

Welcome to the new era of *pervasive collaboration*.



As the stakeholders in your highly networked business environment continue to grow, you win through rich communication and effective interaction. Indeed, you win by ensuring all relevant parties can actively participate in the creation of business value (whether it's measured in revenue, process enhancements, team alignment or some other factor).

To thrive as a collaborative enterprise, you have to span the silos and break through the barriers that might otherwise keep you from performing at your best. That won't be easy, but there's no alternative. As recognized companies such as Kroger and Univision have demonstrated, strategic investments in pervasive collaboration are now essential to growth and dynamism.

THE COLLABORATION ECONOMY AND THE FOUR WORKPLACES

To understand the shifting state of collaboration, it helps to consider some of the megatrends that are now driving change. In fact, there are a series of notable trends that challenge status quo thinking in terms of how companies operate, organize and perform:

One trend is the emergence of what some call the "collaboration economy." At the heart of this concept is the recognition that companies must be focused on their core strengths and competencies more than ever. It's necessary to rigorously focus on what sets you apart and delegate or abandon activities that deliver no competitive advantage. That means you'll want to consider openness to more partnerships and alliances, particularly as you target new markets and seek new sources of innovation.

When Procter and Gamble launched its "Connect and Develop" initiative just over a decade ago, it made a big bet on collaboration. At that point, less than 10% of the company's R&D projects involved external partnerships. But the company realized it couldn't stay at the leading edge of innovation if it merely acted alone. So the company set a goal of relying on external research partnerships for 50% of its initiatives. In

2008, P&G surpassed this objective. Its "open innovation" strategy was producing a steady stream of popular products and driving growth to new levels.

Yet another trend is the shifting nature of today's workforce.

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Millennials, who expect and embrace collaboration (often through social media of various kinds), are a key dimension of this workforce transformation. Having grown up with everything from social games to team learning, they are bringing their own mobile devices to work, championing social apps and making significant demands in terms of communications support.

But the workforce is also being transformed by its increasingly global nature. Global companies now have team members collaborating around the planet and around the clock. They bring a wide array of talents, perspectives, cultures and conversational styles into the mix. The fact that these team members are spread out all over the world creates still more complexity in terms of communications.

Finally, it's important to recognize the four workplaces that have emerged: home, office, remote and mobile. While the office represents the traditional hub of activity and infrastructure, many workers are now enabled or encouraged to work from home (at least part-time). Meanwhile, the decentralization of enterprise activities means more work will be conducted remotely (on a client or partner site, for instance) or in a mobile setting (such as an airport, cafe, waiting room or at a little league game).

Communications technology ties these various workplaces together. Your challenge now is to bring simplicity and seamlessness to your stakeholders, enhancing their satisfaction and their productivity. The objective is to make communications technology simple and transparent so that your people can collaborate with ease and perform at their full potential.

SOURCES OF FRICTION: THREE BARRIERS TO PERFORMANCE

As these trends take shape, the barriers to high performance are becoming increasingly clear. In fact, there are several issues that threaten to undermine high quality communication and collaboration. They are sources of friction in a system that must facilitate creative work. Among them:

- **Inconsistent connectivity.** Due to the fragmentation and incompatibility of networks, potential collaborators are often difficult to involve in virtual meetings of all kinds. In the absence of seamless connectivity, it's impossible to productively collaborate. In many cases, key contributors may not be able to join meetings because they don't have appropriate network access. You experience on-network/off-network issues that shut out team members that are

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not on a particular system. While the ongoing digitization of communications (often experienced in the form of VoIP) promised to cut costs and simplify matters, the truth has often been just the opposite. And globalization adds another set of hurdles when people fall outside a certain communications footprint due to local telecom policies that are unanticipated.

- **Excessive complexity.** Even when network issues are overcome, other communication issues may arise. For instance, some potential participants may struggle to join calls, conferences or events because of the complexity of the entry and navigation process. Beyond phone numbers, participants must provide user codes and passwords merely to join. Then, they might have to follow a series of other prompts. The aggravating complexity of the process can thwart the ability of potential collaborators to participate. Such issues get magnified as virtual meetings become more common and more people are affected. Other factors that can become problems are difficulties with pre-event invitations or post-event follow-ups. When such issues cannot be handled with ease, frustration and lost productivity mount.
- **Unproductive meetings.** Few issues are as persistent and vexing to workers today as poor meetings. But they also are a tremendous burden on the enterprise—misallocating resources and undermining productivity. Meeting performance, for instance, is often hindered by a lack of visibility. When you don't know who is in the meeting, you waste a lot of time trying to find out. Meetings also can be ruined due to technical issues when the right media (such as a web presentation) cannot be effectively deployed. Even a lack of best practices in terms of how to run a meeting effectively can undermine outcomes. Extraordinary amounts of resources—most particularly, human capital—are tied up in meetings. That's why poor meeting performance is such a drag on the overall business performance of many enterprises.

One reason many of these issues arise is that companies engage in activities—such as communications network management—that are not core competencies. Thinking that the digitization of telephony and the emergence of VoIP have given them new powers to run their own networks, IT leaders get drawn into various forms of “mission creep.” In fact, actions in one area can create hidden inefficiencies with real costs in other areas. For instance, your people may struggle with onerous dial-in practices, difficult communication tools or the inability to connect outside partners and other parties.

To save money or maintain internal control, they end up undermining the communications initiatives that are so critical to overall performance. By straying from their core strengths, they degrade collaboration and communications. These missteps make it harder than ever to attract and keep top talent. Ultimately, such moves can impede all efforts to compete and grow.

PERVASIVE COLLABORATION SUPPORTS HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK

To become a truly collaborative enterprise, it's necessary to have a platform that will support active and dynamic interaction anywhere, anytime and with anyone. Your challenge is to provide the communications infrastructure and collaborative environments that facilitate the flow of valuable ideas—whether they must flow within your enterprise or across its boundaries.

Given these demands, a growing number of companies have realized they need a pervasive collaboration platform that enables high performance work and dynamic interactions. Wherever. Whenever. Whomever. Among the dimensions of such a platform are.

- **Intuitive, on-demand access.** It's vital that communications and collaboration capabilities be easy to access, navigate and use. When tools and technologies are difficult to use, they impede group creativity and productivity. By making them intuitive and accessible when you need them, you encourage use and facilitate active participation.
- **Meeting management.** You need the ability to track and control meetings if you are to manage them productively. You need the ability to mute background noise and know who has joined the meeting. Ultimately, you will also want to incorporate reporting tools and metrics that help you measure performance.
- **Alerts and notifications.** Pre-meeting invitations/ prep and post-meeting follow-up are similarly critical to the productivity of collaboration. Having the ability to effectively alert invited participants ensures you can maximize attendance and strengthen accountability when it comes to meetings—whether your alerts are delivered

through email, text or some other channel.

- **Scalable and persistent capabilities.** Recognizing that demands are unpredictable and can shift, you want the ability to scale up or scale down capacity as required. You want the ability to support collaboration whether it occurs on a one-to-one or one-to-many basis, as well as the many other variations that are possible. You should be able to scale to incorporate many different types of media. You also want to make content, recordings and media persistently available for those who cannot join a meeting or event when it occurs live.
- **Advanced implementation and integration.** It's vital to have seamless communications and collaboration if you want to craft, refine and create valuable content. That means you must ensure you have the support you need to implement and integrate a unified communications platform. It's a complex challenge. And since it is not your core competency, you will likely need reliable guidance to ensure your rollout, management and maintenance of the platform is handled in a world-class fashion.

Finally, you should expect a solution that delivers performance gains that multiply over time, not merely the appearance of “hard” cost savings that deliver only short-term gains. When communication technology becomes a mere “commodity” in the minds of IT decision makers, it confers no competitive advantage. But it can. Total value equations should account for the vast, ongoing returns associated with productive meetings and interactions among knowledge workers.

Your opportunity with a pervasive collaboration platform is to lay a rigorous foundation of communications and interaction. You want to eliminate friction and facilitate the flow of ideas across boundaries, geographies and time. The payoffs associated with doing this right are counted in terms of productivity gains and profitability growth.

SUCCESS STORIES: KROGER AND UNIVISION

A growing number of companies have recognized that their future success revolves around having pervasive collaboration solutions. Consider these two cases:

Kroger Promotes Consistency Across the Enterprise

The Kroger Co., based in Cincinnati, Ohio, is America's largest grocery store chain and the second largest grocery retailer by volume. Kroger also is the second largest general retailer in the country. As the pre-eminent grocery store chain in the

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U.S., Kroger needs to connect with not only customers, but also employees and vendors around the globe.

Staying in contact requires employees to have a reliable communications provider offering easy-to-use conferencing services, available customer support and simple billing procedures. With its previous provider, Kroger experienced unreliable customer support and widespread confusion over invoices.

To meet its objective, Kroger implemented InterCall On-Demand Conferencing, which includes Reservationless-Plus®, Operator Assisted conferencing and web conferencing from West Unified Communications Services for 2500 corporate-side employees. The Reservationless-Plus conferencing service gives employees access to dedicated conference call bridge numbers, codes and PINs to initiate conference calls.

The service made internal weekly meetings or impromptu calls easy through features like anytime access and scheduling via Microsoft Outlook® and connected Kroger with its customers and vendors through intuitive audio controls and rich multimedia options, including recordings of the meetings for increased engagement.

Moreover, Operator Assisted conferencing gave Kroger the ability to get immediate customer support when required—before, during or after calls. This service meant that Kroger's internal IT team could refocus its attention on strategic departmental issues and no longer be weighed down with the daily issues pertaining to conference call quality and support.

Kroger realized several benefits by moving to West's audio and web conferencing, including: better conference call quality, leading to greater satisfaction among users; the ability to send post-conference call emails for increased interaction among attendees; a simplified conferencing process, reducing the time necessary to address follow-up questions and comments; straightforward billing; and 24/7 customer support.

Univision provides seamless connectivity on an international basis

Miami, Florida-based Univision owns and operates more than 50 TV stations and 70 radio stations in the U.S., along with three TV/cable networks. As the leading Spanish-language media company in the U.S., Univision reports on breaking news and events (such as World Cup soccer) all over the world. Delivering this coverage entails having employees travel to where the news is occurring and coordinating efforts via conference calls.

However, the organization was having difficulty getting quality, consistent support for these efforts from its previous conferencing provider. In particular, those calling in from outside the U.S. had to use different phone numbers depending on their locations, leading to a lot of confusion on which number to call, ultimately resulting in delayed or missed meetings. Incorporating video into HR training sessions was another challenge. Univision needed a provider that would listen to its concerns and provide solutions to the issues it was facing, particularly as they related to collaboration and content creation.

To address this challenge, Univision went live with Reservationless-Plus with Global Network Access and Unified Meeting® for all employees. The Global Network Access solution gives Univision employees a single toll-free number to call (and remember) in order to join conference calls from

anywhere in the world, which has simplified the process greatly for users.

With Unified Meeting, employees take advantage of combined audio and web conferencing solutions so they can control the call from the web interface, as well as share their desktops and slides without requiring participants to download any software.

Such advances have created lots of opportunities for active collaboration and content sharing. The HR department's main objective is to include short videos in their online meetings, so they have rolled out Adobe Connect, which easily slips back and forth between desktop and video sharing. The business-to-business marketing department uses Webcast Studio because it can deliver video broadcasts to thousands of people at once without the need to install software.

Ultimately, Univision realized several benefits by moving to InterCall On-Demand Conferencing, including:

- a rate reduction of 40 percent
- users only need to know one toll-free phone number to join a conference from anywhere in the world
- much higher satisfaction with response times to questions and problems

But the biggest gains come from the ongoing collaboration that enhances the quality and impact of media production as well as the overall performance of the business. By supporting the active application and adoption of conferencing capabilities, West has helped strengthen Univision's position as a collaborative enterprise.

CONCLUSION: THE NATURE OF THE FIRM IN A COLLABORATIVE ERA

In his influential 1937 essay on "The Nature of the Firm," economist Ronald Coase, who would later earn a Nobel Prize, explained that companies create efficiencies that don't exist in markets when activities are conducted at arm's-length. Markets, in that era, were loaded with friction and inefficiency.

But times change.

The Internet and networked communications have radically decentralized and globalized the economy. They have made it possible to identify customers and suppliers throughout the world. They have accelerated the pace, reach and impact of business while dramatically expanding opportunities for collaboration across all boundaries.

With today's pervasive collaboration platforms, it is possible to eliminate much of the friction that would have hindered your performance and productivity in the past. Now, it's possible to collaborate and do business with anyone, anywhere, anytime.

By facilitating the flow of ideas across boundaries, you create opportunities to create wealth. You capitalize on the vast array of possible interactions that emerge in a collaborative economy. And you unleash the full power and potential of the collaborative enterprise.

No longer is business conducted at arm's-length; now the entire global economy is at your fingertips.