

WORK IS CHANGING: People Will Be the Key to Your Success

The Culture of Collaboration: How to Get Your People, Workspaces, and Work Styles in Sync



Collaboration Is More than a Meeting

The definition of collaboration, especially in the enterprise, is evolving. It certainly means more than getting together for run-of-the-mill meetings. What workers and managers really want it to mean is that, together, we're getting work done. Collaboration isn't something you manage to achieve in one day. It's an ongoing effort with challenges and achievements along the way.

Companies know that collaboration is not only key to productivity, but it is central to the way the modern employee wants to work. They aspire to create a true culture of collaboration, where knowledge is

shared, employees are engaged, ideas lead to innovation, and improved productivity results in increased profits.

As organizations become more collaboration-focused, they want to ensure they have the right technology, the optimal workspaces, and the best people and leadership in place. To best determine how you can improve collaboration at your organization, you will want to better understand where you stand with your current collaboration strategy so you can develop a plan of action.

Read this eBook to learn how you can best ensure collaboration success for your organization.

PEOPLE



People want freedom and flexibility, and the newest generations of workers value increasing levels of mobility and collaboration. These characteristics mean workers expect capabilities like video conferencing and content sharing as a given.

To hear more expert insights on the topic of people in a collaboration culture, watch the on-demand webinar, **“Is It Time for a Chief Collaboration Officer?”**

Watch Now

The Power of the People

By its very definition, people are central to the concept of collaboration. But they can also be the greatest challenge to your organization's collaboration objectives.

Employees at all levels may resist change, distrust processes, lack common objectives, or be missing skills necessary to collaborate successfully. Companies need to train employees not only on the tools and technologies, but on virtual collaboration itself, as not all the skills come naturally.

To create a truly collaborative culture, you need everyone to invest in the process. When they are included in the decision-making and implementation processes, employees adopt technologies at a higher rate, generating the expected return on investment. However, to even get to the point of making the right investments, an organization needs to decide who owns the collaboration sphere.

Cisco reports 70 percent of workers either don't know who is responsible for collaboration or feels no one is, so some companies are hiring a Chief Collaboration Officer to develop collaboration strategies. The right leadership is important because, as one study found, employees report being 55 percent more engaged when leaders model sustainable work habits.¹

Positive leadership—in the form of any number of titles—is the first step, but here are some other actions you can take to set your people up for collaboration success:

- **Assess the state of collaboration.** Take an honest assessment of where your organization is with collaboration. Begin by asking employees about their work preferences and where they would like to see changes. Rather than implementing technologies or changing methods piecemeal, you will get a big picture of the kinds of changes you will want to make.
- **Uncover cultural challenges.** Learn where the roadblocks to collaboration are within your organization. Outline what you want your “collaboration culture” to look like and create a plan that includes encouraging openness and rewarding collaborative behaviors.
- **Decide what metrics you will use.** You will want to continually evaluate the value and effectiveness of your collaboration solution. To do so, the company needs to first identify and prioritize goals.

“ What you're looking for is a mindset...You're looking for somebody who can embrace the flexibility, the ambiguity. Who can be comfortable in different spheres and different environments. Who knows when to leverage one approach over another. ”

– David Heather, HR Director, Cisco

WORK STYLES



The modern workplace revolves around a culture of teamwork and flexibility. It does not matter when or where work is done, but workers want to prioritize collaboration and freedom to choose devices, working environments, and more.

To hear more expert insights on the topic of work styles in a collaboration culture, watch the on-demand webinar, **“How Can Remote Workers and Distributed Teams Collaborate Effectively?”**

Watch Now

Flexible Work Styles

A growing mobile workforce is forcing organizations to support flexible and mobile workstyles. IDC predicts that by 2020, almost three-fourths of the workforce will be mobile. ⁱⁱ Technology makes that mobility possible. And not only is technology and its flexible nature changing the workplace, but it is changing expectations about what the nature of work should be like. One survey found that the more senior of a position one holds, the more important flexibility is to them, with 82 percent of senior-level respondents saying work flexibility is a “must have” or “very important” benefit of a job. ⁱⁱⁱ

But managing flexible and dispersed workers is challenging. Managing workers in a virtual environment means, among other things, you don’t always know what everyone is working on. And some employees may resist collaboration efforts because they won’t initially feel comfortable or natural communicating over video conferencing. Here are some steps you can take to boost employee engagement, promote team unity, and improve collaboration among teams and team members:

- **Get face time virtually and in person.** Set an example and expectation among employees by ensuring leadership (yourself included) use video whenever possible. Schedule in-person face time at least quarterly.
- **Be proactive about addressing conflicts.** As soon as tensions arise, reach out to the involved parties.
- **Choose the best technologies.** Consider technologies that mesh with the way your employees want to work to best facilitate collaboration in your workplace.
- **Don’t take yourself too seriously.** Promote teamwork and unity with activities, contests, and meetings just to have fun and build camaraderie.

“ It really does begin to show that many of the great skills you would have as a good leader become even more pronounced when your team becomes more virtual. ”

– Kate North, Vice President, Workplace Innovation at PlaceValue

WORKSPACES



Those in the office need spaces where they can hold impromptu meetings and share information without having to fuss with technology or compete for rooms. Outfit spaces with technologies that allow in-office and mobile workers to work the way they choose.

To hear more expert insights on the topic of workspaces in a collaboration culture, watch the on-demand webinar, **“How Does Workplace Strategy and Office Configuration Allow for Improved Collaboration?”**

Watch Now

Tech-Rich Workspaces

The conference room used to be the only place to meet. But the modern worker doesn't want to necessarily have to book an entire conference room when a handful of team members want to work on a project—often on the spur of the moment. So the huddle space is taking off in popularity. In fact, Gartner predicts video conferencing for huddle rooms will double from 10 to 20 percent of the market in 2016. ^{iv}

Workers—those fresh to the workforce, in particular—are increasingly asking for video conferencing and content-sharing capabilities in the context of these more intimate spaces. Many companies see huddle rooms as an investment opportunity because collaboration improves creativity, productivity and performance, and employee retention, and team performance. ^v

But workspaces don't necessarily mean formal rooms or designated spaces. Flexibility takes a variety of forms, depending on the work and the worker. Innovative ideas are materializing around coworking spaces as well as corporate campuses modeled after higher ed campuses. Architects of these spaces hope to foster team coordination and create an atmosphere of collaboration as well as independence. Rather than assigning desks to workers, companies designate areas by the type of work to be done there. In some of the most modern designs, employees can meet teammates and work in the areas they need to work without being tied to a desk. There may be a home base that serves as a place for casual interactions and home-style comforts. Management trusts employees to work when and where they need to in order to be most productive.

Coworking, hoteling, hot desking, working from the office, or working from home or the coffee shop, are all morphing into one concept that doesn't have to exist in a particular space or even time. People will simply get work done as part of everyday life.

Here are some steps you can take to create the kinds of spaces that will enhance collaboration:

- **Implement room reservation systems.** Give workers the tools to work flexibly and easily hold impromptu meetings.
- **Designate the types of working spaces.** Let everyone know whether spaces are optimized for collaboration, drop-in meetings, quiet work, etc. so workers can be as productive as possible and resources are used as efficiently as possible.
- **Create spaces that are for downtime as well.** The “break room” may be outdated, but employees can find balance in areas where they can get coffee, chat with coworkers, and text family members.

“ We see video becoming pervasive in how we work from our mobile devices to the video capabilities we have in our homes to all kinds of different video capabilities in our offices. We expect that 80 percent of all internet traffic by 2018 is going to be video driven. ”

– Rick Huijbregts, VP of Industry Transformation at Cisco

CONCLUSION

How a Collaboration Solution Provider Can Help

Experienced collaboration solution providers like AVI-SPL, and their partners like Cisco, can help enterprises create cultures of collaboration. By first assessing your company needs, the right integrator will propose the best solution options. They understand security and routinely create hybrid solutions of new and existing AV and IT solutions. They'll help you determine where new technologies will serve your company and where they can integrate with existing investments to create meeting spaces that are easily replicated as well as upgraded. Partnering with a team of certified integration professionals ensures the best outcome when setting the foundation for a collaboration culture in enterprise.

About AVI-SPL



AVI-SPL is the world's leading AV and video communications partner. AVI-SPL designs, builds, and supports the systems and environments that enable communication and collaboration. With highly trained and certified system engineers throughout 34 offices across North America and an international network of solution providers in 30 countries, we've built the infrastructure and partnerships to help any business realize and meet its communication goals. Visit www.avispl.com for more information.

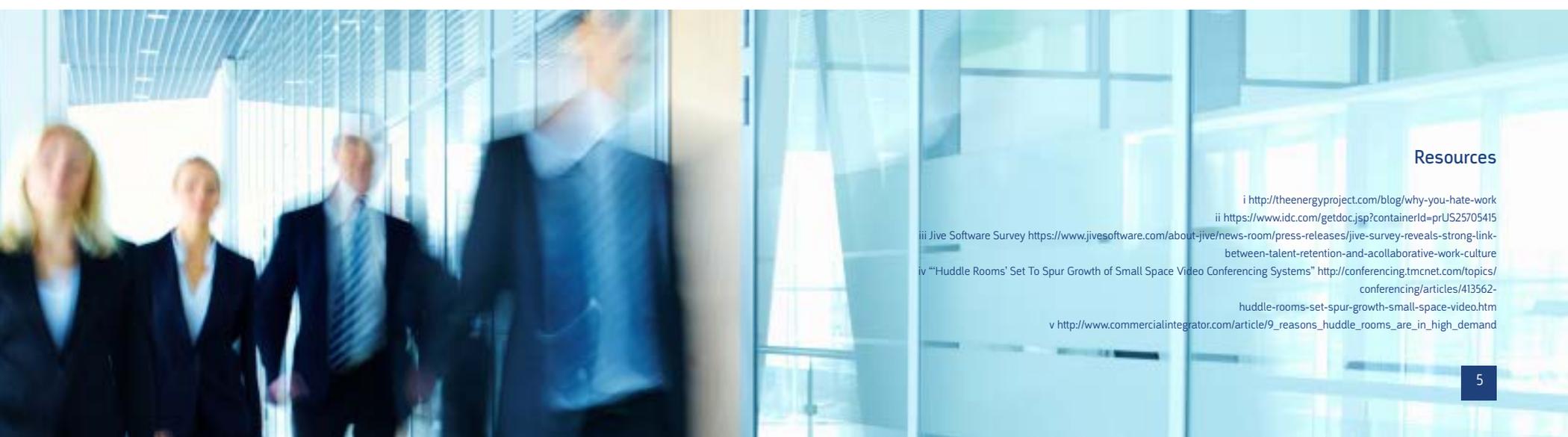
Learn More:

Contact AVI-SPL for a needs assessment on how Cisco can help your enterprise create a culture of collaboration. 1.866.708.50314 or sales@avispl.com.

About Cisco



Cisco is the worldwide leader in IT that helps companies seize the opportunities of tomorrow by proving that amazing things can happen when you connect the previously unconnected. At Cisco customers come first and an integral part of our DNA is creating long-lasting customer partnerships and working with them to identify their needs and provide solutions that support their success. Visit www.avispl.com/solutions/cisco/ for more information.



Resources

- i <http://theenergyproject.com/blog/why-you-hate-work>
- ii <https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prUS25705415>
- iii Jive Software Survey <https://www.jivesoftware.com/about-jive/news-room/press-releases/jive-survey-reveals-strong-link-between-talent-retention-and-a-collaborative-work-culture>
- iv "Huddle Rooms' Set To Spur Growth of Small Space Video Conferencing Systems" <http://conferencing.tmcnet.com/topics/conferencing/articles/413562-huddle-rooms-set-spur-growth-small-space-video.htm>
- v http://www.commercialintegrator.com/article/9_reasons_huddle_rooms_are_in_high_demand