

The ultimate playbook:
Achieving effective teamwork
with collaboration





Report by: 



Contents

Introduction	03	
	05	Key findings
Common challenges	07	
	09	The four factors influencing collaboration and teamwork
Checklists for creating your productive collaboration platform	11	
	21	Where to from here?
About this report	22	



Introduction



Thinking about creating a modern workplace environment in your business? Read this.

Every business is looking for an edge, that “1 percent” advantage that lifts their performance above the rest of the market.

In any high performing group, collaboration and teamwork are critical.

Collaboration and teamwork provides a very strong competitive position: It lifts employee performance, customer engagement and innovation yet many organisations struggle to get it right.

Sometimes it's the technology that falls flat, other times cultural issues derail carefully laid plans. As we all know, different tech, different employee demographics and different workstyles can blend to create a very challenging environment that can hinder collaboration and teamwork. Yet winding the clock back to a single, highly limited technology environment in a rigid 9am-5pm workplace simply isn't an option.

The key to achieving effective teamwork? In short, our research reveals that companies need to understand three key things:

- How work styles have changed
- Which tech works best in which role
- What tools employees really want to perform in their jobs

We also found that businesses are struggling with a number of factors including a lack of integrated technology platforms and transforming workplace culture. To help companies overcome these challenges and plan a successful collaboration and teamwork strategy we have split this playbook into four key sections:

- Key findings
- Common challenges
- Four factors influencing collaboration and teamwork
- A checklist to help guide your way



Introduction

Key findings

Common challenges

Four factors influencing collaboration and teamwork

Checklists for creating your productive collaborative platform

Where to from here?

About this report



Key findings



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Key findings



There are four broad factors you need to know about that impact your business' ability to collaborate – workstyles, roles, location and technology. The perfect sweet spot for your company may well differ from others – it depends on your drivers, culture and employee demographics.



Australia has been a consistent adopter of modern workplace strategies for many years and 72% of firms offer some form of modern workstyles and 75% of employees find benefit in these approaches.



Voice calling remains an integral part of any collaboration and teamwork activity, 61% of employees state voice calling is either 'very important' or 'important' to their role.



Variable hours, technology tools and work locations has created a need to integrate and deploy more effective collaboration tools. You can't talk face-to-face with someone if they aren't there.



71% of firms stated they expect to see an even greater need for teamwork and collaboration in the coming 12 months.



New technology solutions provide the opportunity to create integrated collaboration platforms that facilitate modern workstyles in varied locations and enable employees to work more effectively with customers, suppliers and their peers. 71% of mid-sized organisations state these are of either 'high' or 'very high' importance to their digital transformation programmes.



Productive collaboration is more than just working on a document. The top three drivers for improving teamwork and collaboration focus on 1) customer engagement, 2) increasing the company's ability to be more responsive to customer and competitor activities and 3) creating a more agile operational environment for both employees and customers.



Common challenges



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Common challenges

Businesses told us that the most common issues to overcome in creating effective collaboration and teamwork are:



Changing culture

This is a complex issue for many companies and employees. Some embrace change, others shun it. Broadly the issues include middle-managers 'losing the control of their empires', a concern that 'if you're not in the office, you're not working' control issue, 'stickiness' around things have always been conducted in a certain way, etc. Regardless a broad culture change focus is a key issue for all organisations, even those that have successfully embraced modern workstyles. Our research indicates that familiarity with tools (for example Office 365), compared to integrating and deploying unfamiliar toolsets, helps support greater acceptance and adoption



Multiple collaboration tools

There is a wide range of options available for businesses and employees. Some tools are consumer grade and gain ingress via bring your own device/apps and the consumerisation of IT, others are more business-grade capable. Management of this environment, coupled with the number of vendor solutions within each category means organisations can struggle to integrate and manage their collaboration and teamwork environment



The technology cost

Determining an effective 'cost per employee' in a multi-option, part consumer/part business tool environment can be challenging for many companies. The addition of employees also using their own purchased applications can increase complexity and many businesses are looking for an integrated approach that provides transparency into costs.



Security

The combination of BYOD/BYOA consumer tools, business tools, cloud-based solutions and on-premise options is a complex area for security. Recent legislative changes (Australia's Data Breach Notification law, Europe's General Data Protection Regulation, etc) within Australia and overseas have further sharpened business concerns around how employees access, process and use customer data and information.



Introduction

Key findings

Common challenges

Four factors influencing collaboration and teamwork

Checklists for creating your productive collaborative platform

Where to from here?

About this report



The four factors

The four factors influencing collaboration and teamwork

Our research identified four key factors that must be considered when developing a collaboration and teamwork capability.

Workstyle

The type of workstyles offered by an employee's company - e.g. Activity Based Workspaces, flexible working, hot-desking, formal offices, etc.

Technology

The collaboration tools, types of devices and applications used by employees to collaborate in the work with internal and/or external people.



Roles

The type and seniority of an employee's role - e.g. Sales director, marketing assistant, service technician, etc.

Location

The number of locations from where a person undertakes work - e.g. formal office, airport, café, home, etc.

Businesses may have different starting points yet it is the nexus of all four factors that enables effective teamwork and collaboration that moves from just 'working on documents' to supporting key goals of digital transformation, cost reduction and enhancing employee and workspace utilisation.



Introduction

Key findings

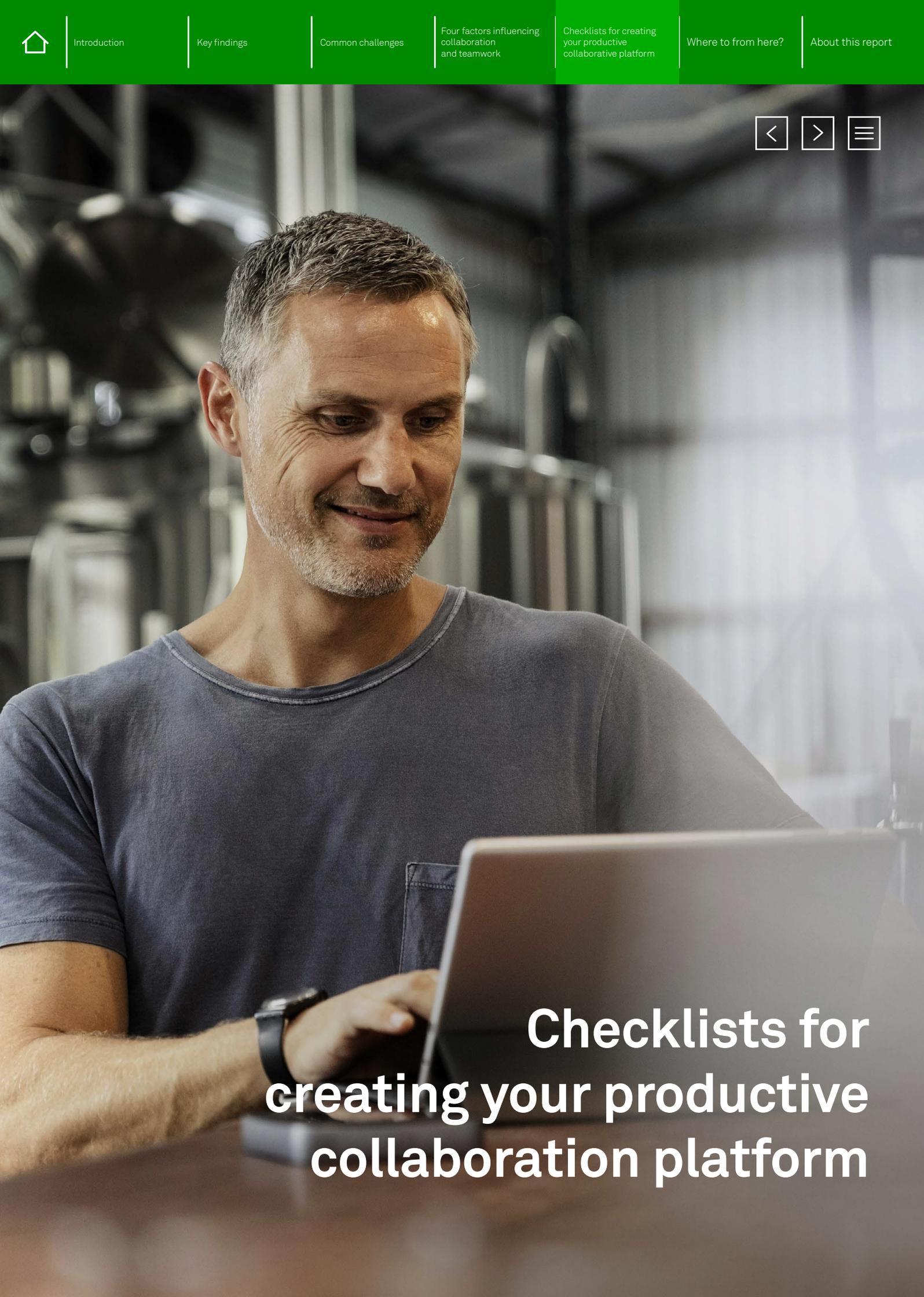
Common challenges

Four factors influencing collaboration and teamwork

Checklists for creating your productive collaborative platform

Where to from here?

About this report



Checklists for creating your productive collaboration platform



Checklists for creating your productive collaboration platform

The first step is to review and begin planning your collaboration and teamwork journey.

We have set out guidelines to help you with each of the four sections we identified as key to developing a strong and successful capability.

Each section starts with an overview of the key findings and is followed with a checklist for you to consider as you plan your collaboration and teamwork initiative.



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Modern workstyles

Did you know that 72% of businesses have adopted workstyles that provide both a ‘very high’ or ‘high’ degree of workplace flexibility and 70% of companies provide a modern workplace approach that supports a responsive environment across locations, technology and working hours?

Why?

The top three motivators for adopting a modern workstyle approach are:

1. The ability to reduce operational expenses (e.g. through reduced real-estate or facilities management expenses)
2. To support digital transformation strategies and programmes
3. A direct result of an office relocation/renovation/retrofit activity

What types?

The five most adopted workstyles are:

1. Mobile working
2. Flexible hours
3. Open plan environments
4. Traditional offices
5. Outcome-based approaches

The benefits?

Businesses pointed to a number of benefits including:

- Workforce productivity improvements
- Reduced facilities costs
- Improved customer engagement
- Higher levels of employee satisfaction

It’s not just business benefits, employees are positive too. Employees cited a clutch of positives including:

- Greatly improved work/life balance
- Better job satisfaction
- Stronger employer loyalty (an important attribute as many companies currently face skills-shortages)

Your workstyles evaluation

Here’s a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

Culture

- What is your current cultural style? Do you have a formal modern workplace strategy?
- How effectively does your culture and strategy support employee engagement, collaboration and teamwork?



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Modern workstyles

Your workstyles evaluation

Here's a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

Working environment

- Have you undertaken an employee audit to understand roles and requirements and created baseline metrics to measure your success?

Yes No

- Does your current workplace environment help or hinder your customer engagement?

Yes No

- Identify 5 companies that you think are leaders in modern workplaces and talk with them about their programmes.

Measurable outcomes

- What HR, tech and legal policies do you have in place or need that support your modern workplace?
- Develop metrics to measure employee satisfaction and engagement, technology effectiveness, customer experience and satisfaction.

Flexible approach

One size does not fit all – make sure you have flexibility in your workstyles and approaches

Communicate, communicate, communicate... the why, what and how of your approach

Be prepared for a large cultural shift over time – revisit the why, what and how on a frequent basis

Leading the way with the new strategy

- Who owns your modern workplace strategy?
- Do you consider modern workplaces and flexibility and important part of your talent management capability? (Hint: 1 in 2 new hires do)
- Do you have a tech platform in place that allows you to mix workstyles, locations, tools and roles?

Yes No

Yes No

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Location

Did you know that only 27% of employees stated that they mostly work from an enclosed office? The remainder work across open plan, activity based workspaces, customer facing locations, field service/outdoor roles and remotely from home or other areas such as co-working spaces.

In fact, 40% of employees felt there was no need for a dedicated desk environment to support their role at all!

The top three options employees prefer when collaborating with colleagues, clients and/or teams:

1. Face-to-face
2. Email
3. Phone (either mobile or fixed line)

This poses somewhat of a conundrum as meeting face-to-face is only possible if work colleagues, external parties and peers are actually in the same location. As our data points out, frequently, they're not.

Your location evaluation

Here's a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

Productive locations

- What do you think are the top 3 workstyles for productive employees? Our research said they are formal offices, home-based/remote offices and outcomes-based flexible hours.
- Do you know your employee to office space ratios?

Yes	No
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- Do you know you can reduce operating costs through a reduction in floor space yet actually increase the number of employees you can accommodate in your office spaces?

Yes	No
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Employee requirements

- Research and audit how and where your employees need to work – this includes 'gig-economy', outsourced and casual roles.
- Create guidelines around acceptable use and behaviour.
- What is your current office layout? Is it open? Closed? Cubicles? How does it need to change to support modern workstyles?



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Location

Your location evaluation

Here's a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

How do your employees work?

- Are your employees clustered into functional areas (e.g. Sales, finance, HR) that restricts collaboration and teamwork activities?
Yes No
- How do you 'flow' work to where it is best performed?
- Do you know on average how many employees work from your office(s) every week?
Yes No

Current environment

- Have you calculated office desk space utilisation in your workplace environment?
Yes No
- Do you have office fixtures that are flexible so that you can create different workspaces depending on different needs at different times?

Existing technology

- How well does your current tech infrastructure support collaboration and teamwork needs in a modern workplace?
- Does your tech platform support multiple approaches such as voice, video, web, messenger and social to enable collaboration in multiple locations?
Yes No

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Role

As modern workstyles have become more embedded, there has also been an increase in collaboration activity.

- 64% of employees stated that their roles required greater collaboration and teamwork in the last 12 months.
- Another 38% said they expected to see an increase in the coming 12 months.
- Employees hold strong views regarding the importance of collaboration tools and teamwork.
- 85% of them agreeing that tools are critical to ensure effective teamwork.
- 57% of employees' time at work is spent in collaborative, teamwork-related activities.

Collaboration and teamwork are not just internal. Modern workstyle roles require collaboration efforts to expand focus from inward-looking, team-based to include external participants such as customers and suppliers.

Your role evaluation

Here's a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

Understanding roles

- How do you plan to manage the increased need for collaboration across teams as well as externally with customers and suppliers?
Yes No
- Have you undertaken employee research to understand role-based requirements?
Yes No
- Have the findings been mapped to workstyles, location and tech considerations?
Yes No

Collaboration requirements

- 53% of employees' collaboration and teamwork includes external engagement. Of that 53% employee collaboration with customers is second highest at 26% just 1% shy of the top ranking internal collaboration within a team or business until (27%)
- Which role(s) require very strong collaboration and teamwork abilities?



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Role

Your role evaluation

Here's a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

Collaboration strategy

- Do you have a 1-size fits all approach regardless of role or do you provide a platform that enables the most appropriate tools for each role?

Yes No

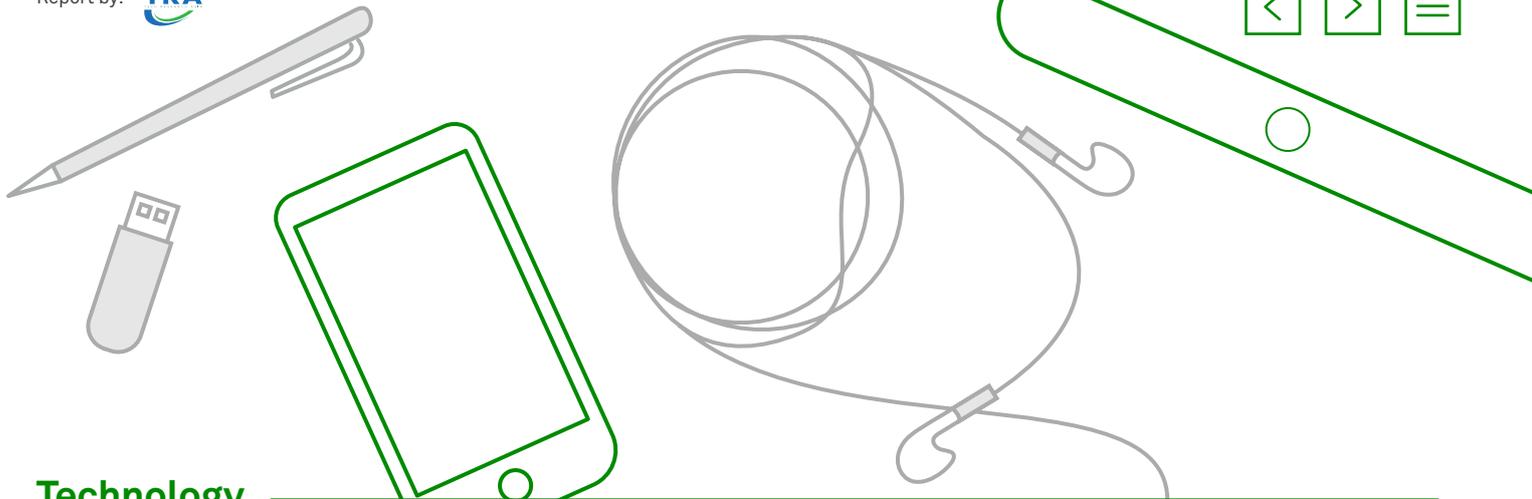
- Do you have a process to capture employee ideas and collaborative output across different roles and locations?

Yes No

Collaboration trends

- Teamwork and collaboration is typically more than 50% of employees' roles. Do you know what sort of collaboration? Is it internal? External? Both? Other?

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Technology

Did you know that only 37% of employees felt that their firm's technology had performed well in meeting the needs of collaboration and teamwork? And that:

- In an average working day, 19 minutes are lost setting up technology collaboration sessions
- Only 46% of collaboration sessions actually start on time
- 9% of all sessions are cancelled due to technology problems.

Mid-sized firms need the capability to allow employees to adopt modern workstyles with a simplified, integrated technology platform that accommodates multiple tools in any given workstyle.

Preferences amongst employees are wide and varied when it comes to their preferred tool for collaboration and teamwork and span a mixture of both business-grade and consumer solutions.

Video, messaging and voice-based solutions rank as the top three most preferred options for both internal and external collaboration and teamwork.

85% of employees state voice calls are important to them when collaborating with teams, and of that number, 1-in-3 view voice as the highest priority tool for them in their role.

Your technology evaluation

Here's a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

Technology foundation

- Do you have a clear, integrated platform for collaboration and teamwork tools or are you using multiple solutions from multiple providers?

Yes No

- Do you allow BYOT (bring your own tech) or are you more corporate devices, applications and data storage use only?

Yes No

Technology supporting collaboration

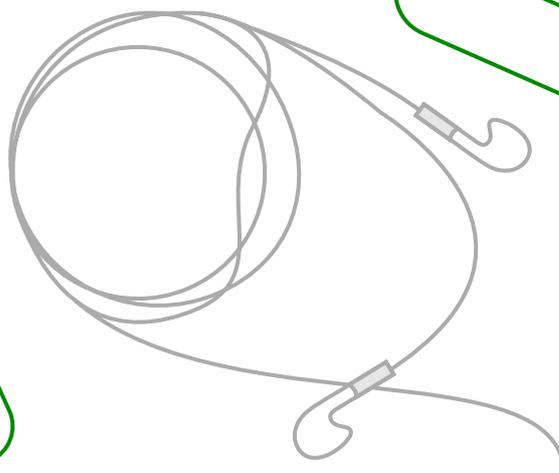
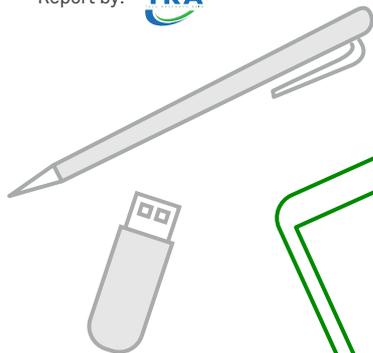
- How important is voice in your collaboration and teamwork strategy?

- Does your tech support internal and external collaboration and teamwork scenarios?

Yes No

- Collaboration and teamwork is more than just working on documents – how do you enable multi-use scenarios?

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Technology

Your technology evaluation

Here's a worksheet to help you start thinking about where you are currently at with your collaboration activities.

Infrastructure and setup

- Does your current network infrastructure support your collaboration and teamwork demands? What does its future capability look like?

Yes No
- Are you softphone only or also still using legacy PBX desktop phones?

Yes No
- Do you know how much time is lost to inefficient setup of collaboration and teamwork tools?

Yes No
- How do you ensure your service providers can seamlessly incorporate new technologies without losing any agility?

Security

- Is your internal workspace offering cable free connectivity and device charging?

Yes No
- How do you manage and secure devices, applications and information in a modern workplace?
- How do you securely share information to teams across multiple devices and locations?

Where to from here?



Today, the vast majority of mid-sized Australian organisations typically offer workstyles that support employees undertaking work activities in multiple locations, using multiple devices.

We identified four factors that are critical considerations for successful modern workplace collaboration and teamwork, namely, workstyle, location, role and technology. Businesses may have different starting points yet it is the nexus of all four factors that enables effective teamwork and collaboration that moves from just 'working on documents' to supporting key goals of digital transformation, cost reduction and enhancing employee and workspace utilisation.

The data revealed that whilst there is good intent, legacy technology platforms have proven to be an obstacle with only 37% of employees stating their tech environment had performed well in meeting collaboration and team work needs. All however is not lost as large technology service providers have deep expertise in working constructively with businesses to help explore tools an options to solve collaboration challenges.

It's also important to conduct a thorough organisational-wide audit to identify your company's and employee's needs to perform successful meetings and have the right tools in place. Ultimately to reach the 1% high performance level, your organisation needs to transform its technology into an integrated, seamless platform that supports multiple tools (voice, video, web, etc) in a secure environment across multiple roles, locations and both employees and external parties.



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About this report

Survey data and demographics

We drew upon data from two distinct surveys, the first of which focused on 141 mid-sized businesses (using the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of between 50-250 employees) drawn from a larger survey of 308 Australian businesses. It explored their adoption of flexible workstyles and the focus and effectiveness of their collaboration strategies and tools in supporting teamwork in a modern workplace environment.

The second survey delved into views of 339 employees (drawn from a larger survey of 1,008 employees) working in mid-sized organisations about the impact of modern workstyles on their employment, the preferred options for collaboration and the tools necessary to work in a more productive, collaborative manner.

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