

Scaling the collaboration experience in the workplace

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When it comes to scaling a cloud service (and more specifically) a collaboration cloud service - what must-haves comes to mind?



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For me, it's a vendor and service that has experience with millions of users, millions of calls and meetings, billions of messages, 99.999% reliability, and a whole lot of geek talk. These are crucial factors if you are choosing a collaboration cloud service for your business. But there are a few more facets you need to think about.

Enabling your teams and employees to make the best of any and every workspace in today's 'work-anywhere, work-anytime' era is a big one and can be a competitive advantage. And this is why a collaboration experience that scales to different workspaces and devices is so important.

Collaboration is about getting things done, together. It's important to think about where the work gets done, what tools your teams use to get work done and how time, context, and continuity affect their work. The collaboration experience needs to transcend the physical workspaces we occupy, the gadgets and devices we use, and how work gets done over time. It's enabling fluidity in form factors and workflows.

When your experience does not scale...

Here's an all-too-common scenario: You're sitting at your desk working on your laptop, getting ready to join a meeting. Three other people, sitting just a few feet away from you, also need to join the same meeting. So why not just go into a conference room? Easier said than done these days.

So now, you are all walking around the office, carrying your laptops, looking for an empty room or available space. While you all search the floor trying to decipher which rooms are reserved, you finally, settle on a huddle space, put your laptops next to each other and get the dreaded, "meeting join" echo.

And as with almost every meeting and collaboration situation, someone grabs a dry-erase pen and starts whiteboarding on a wall-board while another person provides audio commentary of what's being written to the remote participants.

As you get closer to the end of the meeting, someone else gets the bright idea to point one of the laptop cameras at the board itself and then someone says, "Let's take a picture of this board and email or post it in shared space."

Why do we do this to ourselves?

Of course, you have ways to get around these; you can set up a "stitched together" video conferencing room – with iPads, USB-connected cams, and stuff from seven different vendors. You can have someone send help, spend an entire day stitching it together and then leave sticky notes and printouts on the wall with instructions. This is what you get when you don't have a solution that can scale your workspaces and the way we meet today.

Now, imagine what it's like when your collaboration cloud experience scales...

Actually, you don't have to imagine what it's like – it's already possible with Webex. In fact, many of our customers have already started the workplace transformation journey with Webex and are seeing the benefits of cloud collaboration that actually scales. A poll conducted on Businessstech and Wustalk revealed that 14% of South African employees' organisations use collaboration tools like a channel of communication.

Imagine a collaboration cloud service that scales

On a PC, iPad, or mobile device, simply click the green Webex "Join" button to start a live meeting. You realise four other colleagues sitting in the same area need to join, too, so you all simply move over to an adjacent huddle space.

In the room, the Webex video device, which supports video, audio and screen share, immediately recognises everyone in the meeting. The meeting is connected and displayed on the 55-inch screen with a single swipe of a finger. No dongles, no cables, no echo, and (even better) no one else needs to click anything. Everyone is automatically in the meeting, with laptops connected, ready to collaborate.

What if one of your colleagues needs to take the rest of the meeting in her car? Easy. She just swipes the meeting back to her mobile phone (with no disruption to anyone else) and walks to her car. Once inside and the engine has started, her Webex meeting automatically shifts into "driving mode" like any phone call.

And what's a brainstorming meeting without some whiteboarding?

Simply walk to the Webex Board in the room and start ideating with everyone in the meeting – including remote participants. At the end of the meeting, you now have a digital copy of the whiteboarding session saved to the cloud, which you can later access on your phone or PC to resume where you left off – from any meeting space or even a different city altogether.

And, yes, the person who took the meeting from her car also has the whiteboard available by the time she logs back on as

well. Webex provides a truly connected experience for everyone in the room and gives remote people easy instant access to the same material.

Scaling the experience means making the most of the workspace – including the screens and phones – to effectively participate, collaborate, and contribute with zero disruption, wherever you are and wherever you are going; being able to pick where you left off and always in the most natural way.

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