謀
R E S E A R C H

Today's Workers Require a New Way to Work with Their Teams

November 2014

Prepared by:

Zeus Kerravala

Today's Workers Require a New Way to Work with Their Teams

by Zeus Kerravala

November 2014

° °

Introduction: The Way We Work Is Changing

An organization's competitive advantage is no longer based on a single core competency. Instead, the businesses that stay ahead of their competitors are those that can make critical decisions in the shortest possible time—involving the best people and information. These companies tend to be more agile and are able to create new business processes quickly, enabling them to take advantage of marketplace shifts. Those that can do this will leapfrog the competition, while those that cannot will find it increasingly difficult to compete in this new era of business.

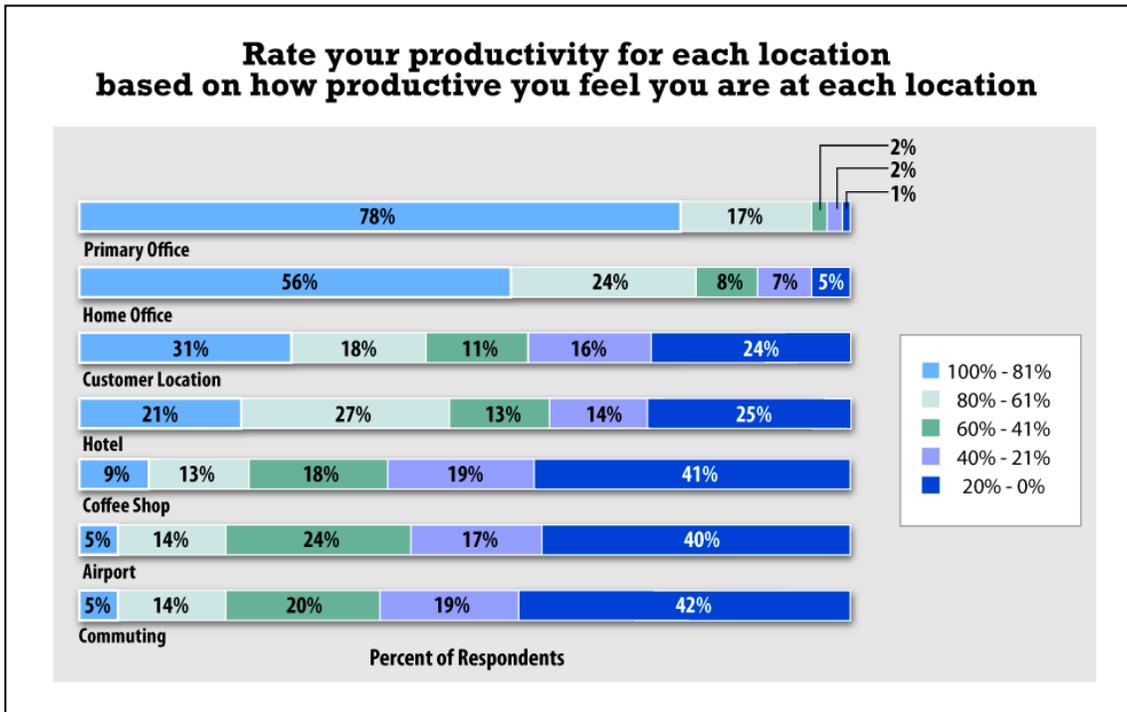These new competitive dynamics are changing the very nature of work. Consider the following:

1. **We are working together differently.** As businesses look to make decisions more quickly, the way we get things done has changed. The requirement for faster decision making dictates that project teams need to be smaller and more nimble. Today, teams need to quickly assemble and collaborate, and then just as quickly disband and move on to the next initiative—all while individual members are juggling multiple projects.

2. **We are working with more people.** Collaboration must now reach outside corporate walls and include the extended enterprise—customers, suppliers, partners and other constituents. The ZK Research 2014 Unified Communications Purchasing Survey revealed that 71% of organizations regularly collaborate with individuals outside the company.

3. **We are working from more places.** The ZK Research 2014 Enterprise Mobility Survey indicates that 48% of employees now spend at least 30% of their time away from their primary workspace. Historically, any worker who was away from the physical workspace was considered less productive than when he or she was in the office. Exhibit 1 shows how productive workers feel they are in different work environments, and it confirms the fact that employees feel most productive in their primary office. Although 78% of respondents feel they are at least 81% productive in their primary work location, that number drops to 56% in their home office. Productivity tends to vary quite widely from location to location. We need tools that meet the needs of workers wherever they are to raise their productivity when outside of the office.

zeus@zkresearch.com

Cell: 301-775-7447
Office: 978-252-5314

ZK Research
A Division of Kerravala Consulting

Influence and insight through social media

Exhibit 1: Productivity Fades When Workers Are Away from the Office

Rate your productivity for each location
based on how productive you feel you are at each location

Location	100% - 81%	80% - 61%	60% - 41%	40% - 21%	20% - 0%
Primary Office	78%	17%	2%	2%	1%
Home Office	56%	24%	8%	7%	5%
Customer Location	31%	18%	11%	16%	24%
Hotel	21%	27%	13%	14%	25%
Coffee Shop	9%	13%	18%	19%	41%
Airport	5%	14%	24%	17%	40%
Commuting	5%	14%	20%	19%	42%

Percent of Respondents

Source: ZK Research 2014 Enterprise Mobility Survey

Working together differently, with more people, and doing so from anywhere in order to be more effective is the ideal. However, today's workers and their teams still have several barriers to overcome:

- **Many business-focused collaboration tools are often limited to internal employees.** To create immediate connections in order to get things done, some workers bring in their own apps that often lack the quality and security of IT-sanctioned business tools.

- **Most organizations use multiple tools to enable project teams to collaborate.** However, the majority of these tools do not work well together, causing a disrupted workflow.

- **It's difficult to move information among tools.** The lack of integrated systems means that the employee is the only real integration point among tools. Consequently, an employee may need to upload documents, notes, presentations and other information to multiple systems and email them to multiple people for a single meeting. This

makes it especially difficult for new team members to catch up and work effectively.

- **Collaboration solutions are optimized for desktop computers.** The majority of available collaboration tools are optimized for traditional desktops and laptops. However, according to the ZK Research 2014 Enterprise Mobility Survey, 84% of knowledge workers now carry a tablet and/or a smartphone, highlighting the need to optimize tools for mobile devices. ZK Research estimates that just three years ago, this number was 71%.

Because worker agility is no longer the exception, businesses need to arm employees with tools that enable them to be 100% productive everywhere, on any device, at any time. What's required is a collaboration solution that enables teams to work together effectively while providing each member with a great individual work experience. Disruption will only slow down the much-needed rapid progress required of teams in today's agile business environment.

Section II: Defining the Next-Generation Solution for Today's Worker

Successful solutions for workers today will deliver an entirely new way for project teams to communicate, collaborate and share information. It's not enough to build a small incremental step up from existing tools. Rather, new solutions will create an unprecedented type of experience that enables different ways for project teams to work together:

- Assemble the people—from both inside and outside the organization—and resources a project team needs very quickly. This helps get everyone together and working on an initiative effectively, with no complicated setup or permissions required.
- Offer both synchronous and asynchronous collaboration capabilities so that a team can be effective during all aspects of a project.
- Connect to existing solutions. This helps fledgling teams avoid any debate about which solution to "standardize" on. And bringing in other tools helps enable a simple, seamless workflow.
- Allow new team members to access existing information when they join. The environment remains the same even as team members come and go depending on their roles during different stages of a project.
- Enable multi-project capabilities so workers can belong to multiple initiatives at once in order to meet tight deadlines.
- Deliver a consistent experience across devices with no loss of productivity, allowing team members to participate while in the office, at home, traveling or at any location globally.
- Be easy to use with a minimal learning curve—or none at all. The complexity of managing disparate tools limits their utilization. An easy-to-use solution means people can be immediately productive.

Together, these capabilities help create a more integrated workflow for today's workers and project teams. This will yield a more efficient workforce that can stay better connected, make decisions more quickly and raise productivity to new heights.

Section III: What to Look for in a Solution Provider

Expanding enhanced collaboration options should be a top initiative for any business or IT leader who wants to maximize team productivity and gain a competitive advantage. Many collaboration applications are available to businesses today, making it difficult to choose a vendor. Use the following list of key requirements to help select vendors that can provide what you need to enhance the work of your most critical teams:

- **Built on a secure cloud back end:** A cloud-based system can scale as fast as the business requires and wherever workers may be. For example, a single project team may include an office manager in the United States, sales managers in Asia-Pacific and EMEA, a mobile channel partner, and a remote worker (Exhibit 2). Scaling a traditional solution to meet the needs of a project team this diverse can be a challenge. Having a cloud back end means the application can reach any worker, anywhere.
- **Integrates with physical environments:** Although applications that enable virtual teams to work together more effectively should be an imperative, people still feel most productive in physical work spaces. A software-based collaboration solution should integrate with physical resources so that the solution has utility even in the office with existing IT investments.
- **Works with existing business tools that workers and their teams use:** The power of a good cloud-based solution is that it can and should connect to other applications and services that users and IT already rely on. An open cloud platform provides choice and better investment returns for IT organizations.
- **Leverages a strong partner ecosystem:** A robust partner ecosystem can provide additional support, services and process integration. Just having a tool won't make people more productive. Organizations can use a channel partner to help with deployment best practices and integrating the tool with existing business processes.
- **Offers enterprise-grade security and management:** Much of the information stored in team collaboration environments is likely highly valuable and needs to be protected. Solutions should include business-grade security and controls such as policy-based access, data encryption and easy-to-understand user management.
- **Provides engagement analytics:** This feature is critical so that businesses can gather and analyze usage data to maximize the value of the solution.

Exhibit 2: Project Teams Are Diverse and Mobile
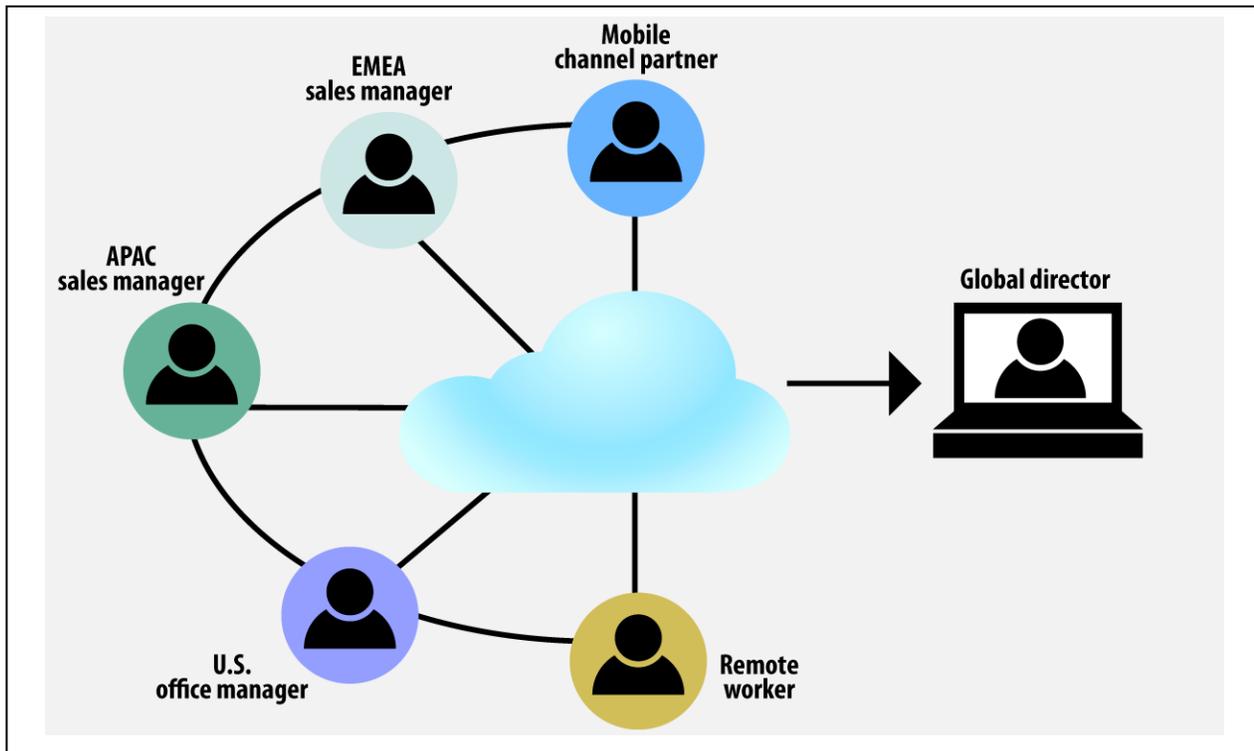
- **Offers a consistent experience among devices:** The solution must enable users to work and collaborate from any location, regardless of device. This means it needs to be platform independent but still provide a consistent user experience across any smartphone, tablet or computer.

Section IV: Conclusion and Recommendations

To unlock the potential for today's workers, businesses need a new type of collaboration solution: collaboration environments in which workers can have a high-quality, easy-to-use experience on any device—one that quickly assembles the people and resources needed for teams to act effectively. Unlike consumer applications, this next-generation business solution must incorporate the needs of the IT department.

Catering to and enhancing the effectiveness of workers must be at the top of every business and IT leader's priority list. Companies that embrace this ideal will gain a competitive edge; those that do not will struggle to remain relevant.

To get started, ZK Research recommends that businesses take the following steps:

- **Align business processes with the needs of the agile worker.** Today's worker has changed the way work is done. Line-of-business managers should continually gather and analyze usage data to streamline business processes and maximize the productivity of their employees.

- **Rethink the organization's meeting process.** The meeting process within most companies relies on distributing documents via email and utilizing a mix of tools to facilitate collaboration among project team members. Businesses should rebuild the collaboration process around a place where information can be stored centrally and accessed by anyone, whether they can physically attend meetings or not.

- **Create one collaboration experience that spans both internal employees and outside constituents.** Most collaboration tools today are designed for either internal or external collaboration. Having to manage multiple systems to address a diverse audience can lead to meeting inefficiencies. ZK Research studies have shown that organizations that use at least three

collaboration tools spend about 10 minutes per meeting just managing the meeting tools.

- **Choose a provider with at least a decade of cloud experience.** There are dozens of cloud solution providers today, and it's critical to choose a proven vendor that knows the cloud. If a vendor does not have proven expertise, its solution may lack sophisticated security, user management or other factors that could put the business at risk.