



## **The New World of Work Requires Collaboration to Thrive**

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Prepared by:

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## Introduction: The Evolving Workplace

The workplace is significantly different compared to just a few years ago. Younger workers have invaded the workforce and are leading the charge toward a more flexible work environment. This increased flexibility has a direct impact on an organization’s ability to compete today. Competitive advantage is now based on making the best decision possible, while involving the right people, as quickly as possible.

Historically, the most effective form of collaboration has been in-person meetings. As the “office” becomes increasingly more virtual, organizations need a way to preserve that “in-office” experience no matter where workers are. For example, a single project team may be composed of a sales leader in Japan, an account manager in France, a technical expert in Hong Kong and a customer in the US. All of these constituents must be brought together into a single, virtual workspace on a moment’s notice.

The trend toward increased flexibility and the demand for better collaboration are evolving the workplace in the following ways:

- **The workplace is no longer a physical location.** The workplace used to be a place where workers went and performed specific tasks. Today’s workplace is a set of capabilities that allows workers to collaborate better with one another. The new world of work requires individuals to collaborate in real time from any location using whatever mode they wish.
- **Workers must have a consistent and wide choice of collaboration tools—such as video conferencing, web sharing, chat and presence—when in the office, when at home or when mobile.** This will enable workers to use the best collaboration tool for any given situation. The goal should be a seamless transition between the office space, the home office and anywhere else workers may be.
- **The new workplace requires a collaboration platform specifically designed for this era of cloud, mobility and consumerization.** This allows organizations to provide workers with a broad set of tools that are fully integrated with one another. Historically, collaboration has been deployed via a disjointed set of tools that offer little integration between them.
- **Video is taking over as the primary collaboration tool.** To fully harness the power of collaboration, teams require not just audio conferencing and data sharing but also the ability to incorporate the visual medium. Visual cues can help participants interpret body language, reduce misunderstandings and improve retention of information. Some proof of this comes from a recent ZK Research study, which reveals that meetings that incorporate video end 73% sooner than ones without. Also, 38% more information is retained in meetings when visual communications are used.

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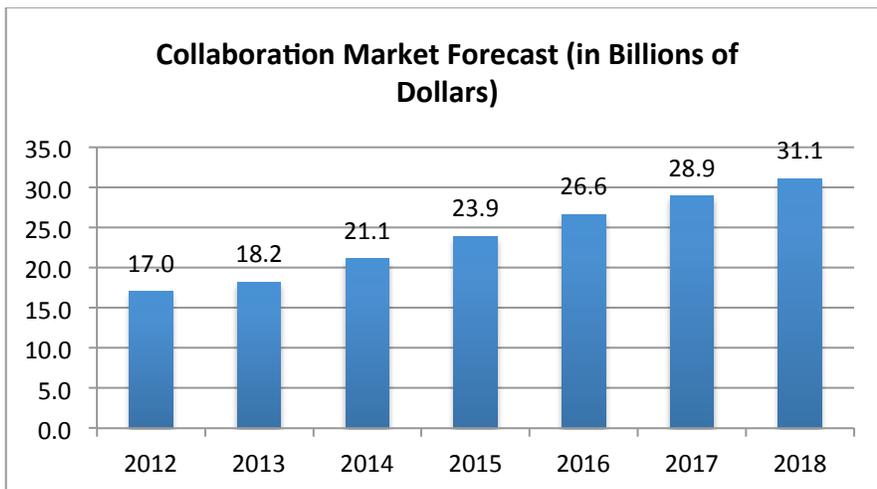
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- **Mobile collaboration is now a must have.** The new workplace isn't static, nor is it located in a single location. For example, a worker must have the same collaboration capabilities when sitting in the corporate headquarters in France and when traveling through China. Multimode, multilocation collaboration is a mandatory part of doing business to harness the power of the extended enterprise.

In the new workplace, collaboration shifts from being a “need-to-have” technology to being a “must-have” technology. This is the primary reason the collaboration market will grow from \$17 billion in 2012 to \$31.1 billion in 2018 (Exhibit 1). To fully embrace collaboration to enable the new workplace, organizations must take a strategic approach and consider their needs today as well as in the future.

**Exhibit 1: Healthy Growth Projections for Collaboration**



Source: ZK Research, 2013

## Section II: Defining a Collaboration Platform for the New World of Work

A robust collaboration platform is required to enable the new world of work. This differs from legacy deployment methods, where each collaboration tool—such as voice, video, conferencing and contact center—was deployed independently. The legacy deployment model led to an inconsistent user experience, high deployment costs and a lack of integration across products.

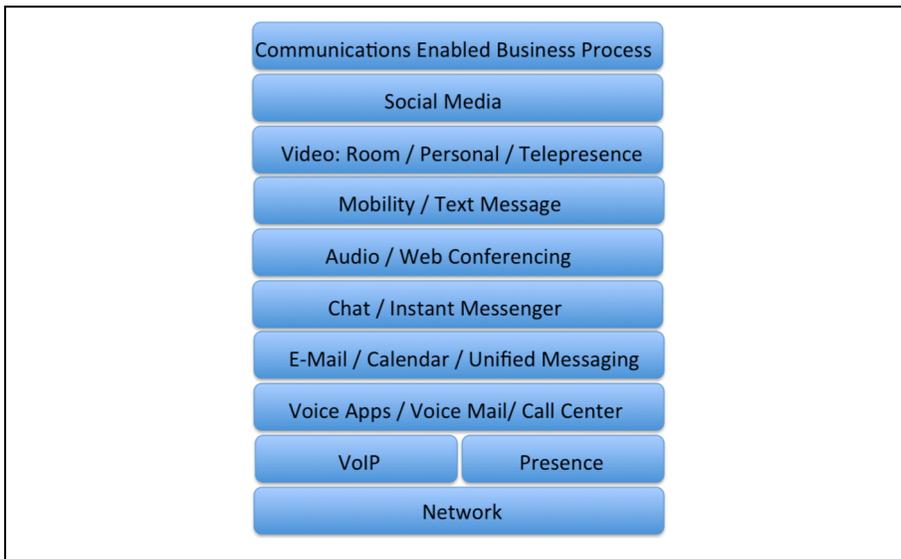
What's required today is a foundational collaboration platform in which IT departments can give workers the tools to collaborate effectively now, and then add other collaborative applications in the future. Organizations that want to enable the new workplace should seek out a collaboration platform with the following attributes:

- **A broad set of collaboration functions, including but not limited to voice, call center,**

**video, conferencing, mobility, presence, chat and contact center:** The collaboration landscape is continually evolving as highlighted by the ZK Research Collaboration Taxonomy (Exhibit 2). Although it's unlikely that any single user will utilize all of these functions, most workers will use a subset of them—making it important to offer workers a wide range of tools.

- **Multiple deployment models:** When it comes to deployment choice, one size does not fit all. Some organizations choose traditional on-premises deployments, while others opt for virtual infrastructure, and some choose cloud. The collaboration platform must support any deployment model the customer may choose that fits the organization's unique needs, including hybrid environments. The variety of deployment models means that organizations should be able to find an exact match to their unique environment, needs and business model.

## Exhibit 2: ZK Research Collaboration Taxonomy



Source: ZK Research, 2013

- Support for multiple types of workers:** Traditional collaboration solutions focused on supporting internal corporate workers. A collaboration platform today should support all types of workers including in-office, home office, mobile, and also B2B and B2C users. Organizations must have the ability for a customer in Italy to quickly talk to a technical support person in Germany, for example, meaning the solution must extend anywhere, quickly and easily.
- Architectural approach:** Communication systems used to be self-contained products that were often run on a dedicated network. Although this model proved to be highly inefficient, the products were relatively easy to deploy. Today's collaboration tools require multiple servers, application infrastructure, wired and wireless networks, and other components that must be brought together. An architectural approach can address many of the "end-to-end" challenges in deploying collaboration solutions, such as maintaining quality of service across the network, creating a consistent user experience and rapidly provisioning new users. Taking an architectural approach can shorten deployment times, improve user experience and lower the overall cost of running the solution by 30% compared to "best-of-breed" deployments. Selecting the right architecture also ensures the solution will work both today and well into the future as more capabilities are added.
- Lower total cost of ownership:** Although newer systems have significantly more features, they require less hardware and are easier to manage. This lowers the overall total cost of running the communication systems.
- Standards-based solutions:** As noted earlier, collaboration is a continually expanding set of functions. This means no vendor can offer a solution that encompasses the entirety of collaboration, making vendor interoperability a must. Choosing an open, standards-based solution is the only way to truly ensure that the solution deployed today will work with solutions from other collaboration vendors in the future. Vendors that support standards such as Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and Extensible Messaging and Presence Protocol (XMPP) offer the highest likelihood of interoperability.

### Section III: Deployment Strategies for Collaboration

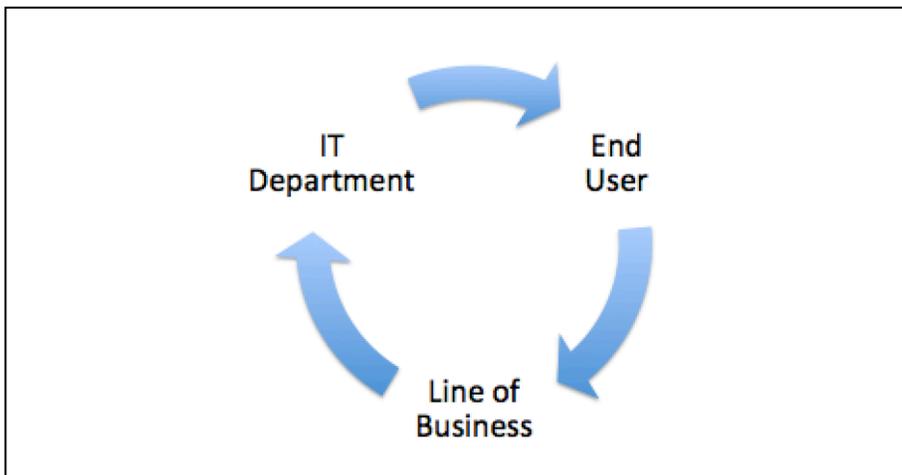
When it comes to collaborative applications, there are numerous methods for deployment. This is also true for collaborative applications. There is no single, right method that can be applied across every organization in every region of the globe. Instead, organizations should focus on how to optimize user experience and the manageability of the infrastructure. To accomplish this, IT leaders should focus on the following three constituents (Exhibit 3):

- **End user:** The end user is often forgotten when it comes to new application deployment. The end user requires a great, consistent user experience across multiple devices and multiple locations. The experience must be intuitive and consistent. An inconsistent user experience means workers are likely to get frustrated with the tools and not use them, resulting in a wasted investment.
- **Line of business:** The ability to collaborate in real time with members of the extended enterprise has the potential to raise productivity to unprecedented levels. However, this can only occur if the collaboration solution is embraced by the line of business and is easily integrated into the business process. At a minimum,

collaborative applications should streamline existing processes; but ultimately, they should be a platform for new process creation. For example, customer service processes can be improved by being able to quickly identify and bring remote workers into conversations.

- **IT department:** A collaboration solution with a great user experience and high business value can still fail if it is difficult to manage. Any technology solution today must meet the cost savings objectives of the IT organization, be easy to deploy and supportable post deployment, and be secure.

### Exhibit 3: The Three Constituents for Collaboration



Source: ZK Research, 2013

As organizations head down the path of deploying a collaboration solution, there are many factors and options to consider, including the following:

- **Current infrastructure:** Every organization has legacy infrastructure in place for its current collaboration solutions. Companies must decide what to do with the current technology. Upgrading the existing technology might make sense for in-office employees, but likely won't meet the needs of remote workers as well as B2B and B2C connections. Not every organization can afford to or has the technical skills to "rip and replace" legacy infrastructure, so the strategy should be to leverage existing assets as long as they are useful. This can be accomplished with staged deployments. In addition, many older assets can be reused or repurposed in the same environment as the new infrastructure.

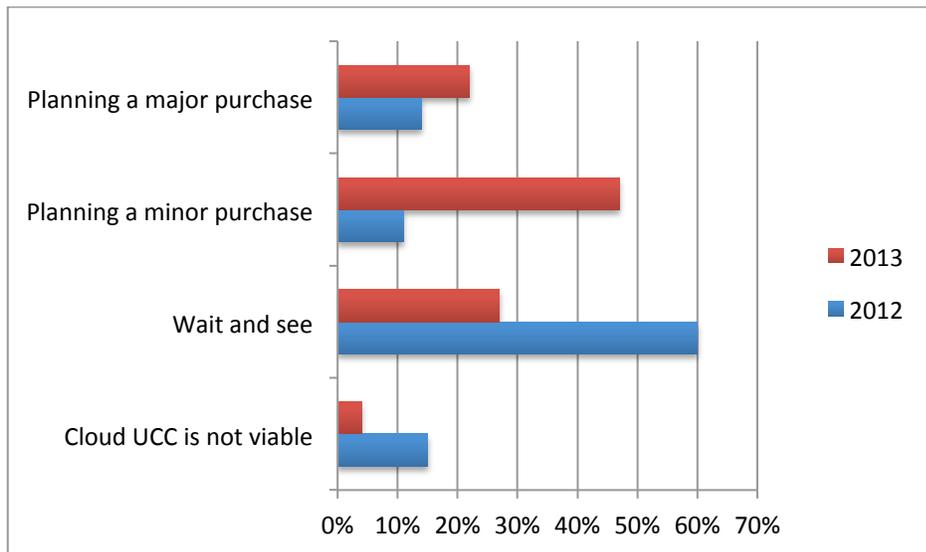
- **New premises-based solutions:** The new solutions available today are optimized to be deployed in a data center, not a wiring closet. This means they can leverage more efficient data center resources such as cable plants, power, cooling, centralized backup and administration. Any organization that is considering purchasing a new system should consider deploying it as a data center resource, and then using the company network for distribution of the service.
- **Cloud-deployed solution:** Cloud computing is more than viable for collaboration today. In fact, a 2013 Unified Communications and Collaboration Survey shows that the attitudes toward using a cloud-based solution are markedly different from just a year ago (Exhibit 4). In 2012, only 25% of organizations were considering a major or minor cloud-based unified communications and collaboration (UCC) solution. In 2013, that

number jumped to 69%. Cloud creates a flexible deployment model to deliver collaboration functions to any worker, in any location, on any device, and is well aligned with corporate bring your own device (BYOD) strategies. Cloud also increases business agility and can reduce the cost of running UCC.

- **Cloud infrastructure:** As popular as cloud-based applications are today, many organizations are looking to build their own private clouds. Although this may seem appealing, the complexity of building a private cloud can be overwhelming. Organizations that want to leverage a cloud model should seek out pre-integrated, pretested and validated solutions to minimize the complexity of cloud deployments.

- **Remote worker solutions:** Historically, remote solutions either offered a very limited subset of the features available when workers were in the office, or required users to invoke a VPN client to create a “tunnel” back to the headquarters. What’s required is a solution that provides an “in-office” experience no matter where the worker is. It’s critical that the solution be completely seamless to the end user.
- **User experience:** No matter what the deployment model, an absolute mandatory consideration for the deployment is maintaining a consistent and intuitive user experience across various devices, operating systems and locations.

**Exhibit 4: Cloud Unified Communications and Collaboration Is on the Rise**  
*What is your opinion of cloud-based unified communications and collaboration?*



Source: ZK Research, 2013

Ultimately, most organizations will choose a hybrid implementation that leverages a private cloud model where appropriate, and then augment the deployment with public cloud services. The mix of public versus private is something that the organization needs to decide based on regional compliance issues, risk tolerance and how much customization the company requires.

Deploying an end-to-end collaboration solution to enable the new workplace can be a daunting, difficult IT initiative if the right technology is not used. Organizations looking to maximize user productivity and minimize complexity should choose a solution that can be deployed quickly, offers a broad range of

collaborative functions and can scale easily as the business requires.

### Section IV: What to Look for in a Solution Provider

Worker mobility, geographic diversity and a focus on business agility have made a virtual workspace a must-have for companies today. Organizations must provide the most productive and efficient in-person collaboration experience in an increasingly dispersed work world where people are no longer in the same physical vicinity.

IT leaders must focus on deploying a robust collaboration solution that can meet the needs of the business today and in the future. IT decision makers should use the following as a guide to select the best solution for the business:

- **Fit for any size business:** Organizations should choose a platform where the deployment can start small and then scale up when required. This provides excellent investment protection because the solution can grow with the business.
- **Best-in-class video solution:** Video conferencing has become a core collaboration application for organizations today. However, poor-quality video can be highly disruptive and cause user frustration. Ensure the solution has the highest quality video capabilities so workers can collaborate face to face whenever required.
- **Seamless extensibility outside the traditional organizational boundaries:** Most collaboration solutions are designed to work only on the internal network. Remote workers, B2B partners and other external constituents often require virtual private network (VPN) connections or other intrusive means of connecting. Choose a solution that can facilitate seamless collaboration whether the user is on or off the organization's network.
- **Architectural approach:** Deploying UC can be difficult given the complexity of solutions today. Choose a solution provider that leverages an architectural approach for a rapid, pain-free, secure deployment that meets the needs of the business today as well as in the future.
- **Broad set of services and support:** Today's technology platforms can offer significant cost savings compared to legacy products if deployed correctly. However, many organizations will not have the necessary experience to bring about an efficient and smooth migration. Choose a solution provider that offers a broad set of lifecycle services that can help IT professionals at all stages of the deployment. This includes pre-deployment, implementation and post-deployment capabilities.
- **Rigorous partner certifications:** A successful collaboration deployment requires more than just leading-edge technology. Typically, a systems integrator or value-added reseller will perform many integration tasks on behalf of the vendor and will have a significant impact on the deployment. Choose a solution provider that has a comprehensive, rigorous testing process and third-party audit process to ensure superior levels

of professional service, security and 24x7 support.

## Section V: Conclusion and Recommendations

For organizations today, competition is based on speed: speed of innovation, speed of decision making and speed of reacting to global changes faster than the competition. The changing business environment is redefining the workspace as workers now must be able to perform their jobs equally well when at their desk, at home or on the road. This means customers must shed legacy thinking of what a workspace is, consider it more a set of capabilities than a physical location, and arm the workforce appropriately. Consequently, ZK Research recommends the following to IT leaders who are looking to maximize the productivity of their workforce:

- **Move collaboration to the top of the priority list.** Give workers the tools and functions to have rich, real-time collaborative sessions with other individuals. Focus on mobility, video and the capability to extend collaboration outside the corporate walls.
- **Understand the various deployment options.** Premises-based solutions might have worked well in the past, and they might be the right answer for your particular company. However, take the time to explore managed and cloud services as a way of at least augmenting the current deployment.
- **Focus on the user experience.** Providing a high-quality, consistent user experience will ensure that collaborative applications are embraced and used by the workers, and deliver the results the organization was expecting.