*MOBILITY*WARE

The Business of Mobile Collaboration

Mapping the mobile collaboration
ecosystem to drive business results

plantronics.

Your business goals:
The oxygen that fuels a mobile collaboration ecosystem

A workplace isn't any one place—not anymore.

The reason: more and more companies are embracing mobile technology as an essential workforce asset. According to Forrester Research, two-thirds of the North American and European workforce reported spending at least some time working outside a corporate office.[1] And that number keeps growing, with people connecting to their colleagues from home offices, airport lounges, coffee shops, taxicabs, park benches...anywhere on the map, really.[1]

According to our research, 49% of the enterprise workforce identify mobility as a significant part of their work style.[2]

"On every measure regarding where and when individuals work in the context of a regular daily or weekly schedule, employers are getting more flexible," says The Wall Street Journal regarding a survey of U.S. employers.[3] "Two-thirds allow at least some staffers to work at home occasionally, up from 50% in 2008, and 38% allow some workers to do so on a regular basis, up from 23%."

PLACE OR PURPOSE?
Not long ago, a place would define how a team worked together. Location was important. Physical space was important. Staff would come to the same place to work together, meet together, and achieve goals together.

But today, thanks to the widespread use of mobile technologies such as Wi-Fi, messaging, videoconferencing, and virtual workspaces, what matters most is not place, but purpose.

Staff can be located anywhere, but they can still work, meet, and achieve common goals together. They just do it virtually. It's convenient, it's fulfilling, and it's cost-effective. And because location doesn't determine who can be on your team, you can bring in the best, from wherever they happen to be.

But the ability to work remotely also raises some unique challenges. For example, what's the best way to create a cohesive team when they're usually in transit or in different locations? How do you keep them motivated? How do you ensure that they're properly equipped to perform their jobs successfully? How do you ensure that they can meet customer needs from wherever they are? Most importantly, how does equipping your team to be mobile help contain costs, deliver business value, drive positive business results, and keep your company competitive?

Here, we'll answer these questions and provide you with some practical guidance on establishing a mobile collaboration strategy for your organization.

49%
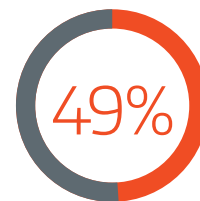
of the enterprise workforce say mobility plays a significant role in the way they work.[2]

[1] TJ Keitt, "Framing The Business and IT Impact Of Mobile and Remote Work," January 27, 2012, available from Forrester Research.
[2] Plantronics Persona Research, 2013.
[3] Lauren Weber, "Employers Are Getting More Flexible—Up to a Point", The Wall Street Journal, April 29, 2014, http://blogs.wsj.com/atwork/2014/04/29/employers-cool-off-on-job-sharing/.
[4] Plantronics Mobile Collaboration Global Survey, 2016.

BUSINESS DRIVER A:
Boosting individual productivity

Flexibility. Access. Productivity.

Mobile technology offers all three for each member of your team. It gives individuals the ability to efficiently work by themselves or with one another, from wherever they happen to be.

Smartphones, laptops, tablets, apps, software-as-a-service, data access, virtual meeting tools: each of these helps to ensure that individuals can work from virtually anywhere—and all of them are seen as essential to maintaining ongoing communications with colleagues. In our global survey, the laptop, smartphone, tablet, and headset ranked as the top four critical communications devices when working remotely.[4]

After all, the promise of mobile technology is to facilitate information sharing and communication—wherever the individual happens to be. Of course, the ability to send email, share files, and exchange messages are just table stakes.

Access to information and maintaining a connection, wherever it resides—in the cloud or on enterprise systems—is critical to enabling an individual's productivity. The key: it must serve as a utility. Always on, always ready to help streamline workflow at all times, in all places.

It's a challenge that's practically universal among our survey respondents: 51% said the biggest challenge they face when collaborating remotely is unreliable network connectivity.[4]

Still, it's not enough to simply equip individuals with these technologies if you want them to be more productive and more collaborative. You need to foster a **culture of collaboration**—a fluid approach to working that encourages each individual to be in continual communication with their teammates, from wherever they happen to be.

When people have easy access to one another—through IM, for example, or a collaboration workspace—it leads to more information sharing in real time, which in turn helps build the collective knowledge of the team, while at the same time strengthening relationships between team members.

The net result: faster, more informed decision making, which in turn helps drive individual productivity.
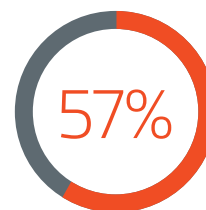
57%
of mobile workers say their laptop is the most critical communications tool when working remotely.[4]
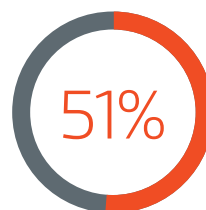
51%
of mobile workers say unreliable network connectivity is the biggest challenge they face.[4]

[4] Plantronics Mobile Collaboration Global Survey, 2016.

BUSINESS DRIVER B:
Building stronger teams

Today, your team members can come from anywhere and be located anywhere. And while having a wide-ranging team has many advantages—a global talent pool and the potential for greater employee retention among them—the key challenge is making the effort to stay in continual contact with one another.

In our global survey, it was clear that many respondents saw the need for continual contact with colleagues. 90% rely heavily on messaging apps (e.g., SMS, Slack, Skype, WhatsApp, WeChat), while 72% rely on collaboration applications (e.g., Jabber, Skype for Business, Webex).[4]

The more that a team is in communication with one another, the more that knowledge is exchanged. And with knowledge-sharing comes more creative thinking, greater innovation, and, ultimately, faster time-to-market.

The inability to have casual meetings with colleagues is one of the top three concerns for mobile workers, along with an inability to have impromptu collaborations and lack of visibility to upper management. Our global survey showed that 30% of respondents feel that one of their biggest

career challenges is missing impromptu collaboration opportunities.[4]

The solution is to have workflow management tools such as unified communications applications, file sharing, and desktop virtualization, each of which can help facilitate collaboration among large, diverse, and divergent groups. The ability to work within a common virtual space (e.g., Spark or Yammer)— where information can be shared in real time and meetings with full video and audio (e.g., Skype for Business, Webex, Jabber) can happen fluidly—helps bridge the distances between team members.

Even with easy access to colleagues, however, individuals need to hone certain skills to help ensure they're being productive and effective.

For example, perhaps the most powerful communications tool anyone has is their own voice. A classic study in human communication illustrates that when one can only hear (and not see) a person speaking, 87% of what is communicated is a result of the person's tone of voice.[5] Speaking and expressing oneself clearly makes a big impact on how successful

a collaborative effort will be. Listening attentively is equally important.

But even the power of the human voice can be rendered ineffective if speakers either don't have the right technology or are unsure how to best use it. Having a headset, for example, that enables a mobile team member to hear and be heard clearly, despite background noise, can make all the difference in boosting team productivity.

72%

of mobile workers say they regularly use collaboration apps like Jabber, Skype for Business, and Webex.[4]

[4] Plantronics Mobile Collaboration Global Survey, 2016.
[5] Albert Merabian and Morton Wiener, "Decoding of Inconsistent Communications," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 6 (1967): 109–114.

Practical considerations for mapping your mobile ecosystem

According to one report, only one-third of business professionals are making use of collaboration tools on mobile devices.[6]

The key: making collaboration a part of your work culture—not just something that is possible with technology, but also integral to the way people feel they should work with one another. Here, we outline five criteria for implementing a mobile collaboration culture in your organization.

[6] Harmon.ie, "The State of Mobile Enterprise Collaboration 2014: From Personal Productivity Toward the Connected Enterprise on the Go," 2014.

1 Make knowledge-sharing part of the culture

Because collaboration technology establishes a single workspace that everyone shares, it can quickly become the natural place for people to exchange information—customer insights, trending topics, helpful tips, and more. The result: collective knowledge grows, individuals are instantly recognized for the knowledge they share, and ideas are generated to move the business forward.

2 Trust your team to do the work

Just because you can't see remote team members does not mean they are not working. It's critical to demonstrate a high level of trust. At the same time, it's important to have clear performance-based objectives. Empowerment and motivation go hand-in-hand toward fostering a productive, cohesive team.

One of the real advantages of a common workspace is that it leads to transparency. Everyone knows everyone else's to-do list, which results in more inclination to be accountable to each member of the team.

3 Make the tools work the way you work

Your mobile collaboration tools—for example, laptop, smartphone, apps, headsets—should naturally align to the workflow itself. The easier and more intuitive they are to use, the more people will be more willing to use them, and the more indispensable they'll become. They, in fact, naturally align to the workflow itself, without friction. And if the tools make your team's jobs easier, team members will go from being users to being advocates, encouraging their work colleagues to use the tools too.

4 Know that BYOD is here to stay

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) was inspired by people who want to be productive outside the office, but who are not equipped with the right tools. In a recent study, nearly 98% of millennials reported bringing their own devices to work.[7] Allowing your team members to use their own devices to access files and data, and communicate with one another while they're out of the office, is a great step toward creating a collaboration culture.

5 Data access is essential

Successful collaborations only happen when information is shared or accessible. And not just information—but the tools to use it, too. With remote access to data and applications, mobile team members can share and cross-reference information from multiple sources from one easy-to-access centralized place to gain perspective and understanding, and help ensure the task gets completed. It's the only way they can be truly productive.

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[7] Oxford Economics, "The Always-On Economy: Survey analysis prepared for Plantronics by Oxford Economics," December 21, 2015.

To sum up…

Mapping a workable mobile collaboration ecosystem starts with examining the individual needs of your team members, then looking at how your team members are working together. It's critical to foster that culture of collaboration discussed earlier, where an individual's efforts are collectively encouraged, but a group's collaborative achievements are recognized and rewarded.
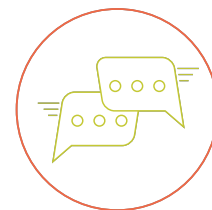
Here's what to expect when you have a mobile collaboration strategy in place…
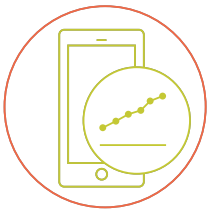
1. Productivity increases with remote access to company resources, data, and people.
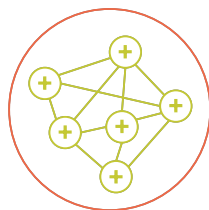
2. Collaborative workflows improve with mobile collaboration tools that enable work to happen from any location.

3. Decisions get made faster with the ability to communicate freely with one another in a multi-point, real-time environment.

4. Remote teams share one community, uniting the enterprise virtually as all team members are in the same space, at the same time.

5. Work and life come together with the opportunity to work alongside one another virtually while maintaining a flexible and adaptable work schedule.

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To find out more about how to best navigate the mobile ecosystem and develop a strategy for your organization, please visit
plantronics.com/mobility

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