Empower your collaborative workforce

Many business leaders would agree that meetings are a reality of the business world. It ensures communication among members and creates a sense of shared purpose to build synergy.

According to Peter Drucker [1], "We meet because people holding different jobs have to cooperate to get a specific task done. We meet because the knowledge and experience needed in a specific situation are not available in one head, but have to be pieced together out of the knowledge and experience of several people."

I love business meetings.

It gives me a great opportunity to observe people's behaviour in a group setting and experience both rational and emotional conversations. Apart from building relationships and sharing information – I am interested in how people influence others to buy-in or build to ideas or make meaningful decisions.

In a recent 3M study they found:

"Almost two thirds (66%) of the meetings involved complex group processes: reconcile conflict (29%); reach a group judgment or decision (26%); solve a problem (11%)".

This is an interesting observation, I have reflected on the past fifteen years, where I have had over 4,000 meetings mainly collaborating with colleagues, partners and customers. I always ensure that we have a clear vision going into the meeting with a clear outcome required. I have also found in more than 50% of those meetings had less than six people. I learnt that if you want the group to focus on a task, proactively contribute by way of fully engaged discussions or decision making then don't invite more than seven people.

Employees need an environment where they can work productively and collaboratively. However, if the environment is not setup right for the right people, meetings can be very unproductive leading to a waste of time and money.

Many organisations are now faced with enabling greater workplace collaboration between mobile, dispersed and disparate teams, customers and different technology platforms. Traditionally, it was only the main boardroom that fully catered with AV equipment and collaborative technology. However, in most cases, the boardroom is only accessed by top level employees. Now, we are seeing that all levels of employees need access to this type of meeting room's technology that enables audio and visual collaboration across the whole organisation no matter where there are.

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What is the right technology for meeting spaces to improve employee engagement?

This will depend on getting the following four business factors right:

1. **Right Culture**
   The willingness of employees to work towards a common goal, right communication and the access to coordination tools.

2. **Unified Communication Technology**
   That is secure, easy to use that can connect to anyone anytime on any platform.

3. **Right coordination tools to help bring people together**
   In the new world of work, visual collaboration tools should be available to everyone. Businesses should not just focus on huddle or scrum space solutions. They should focus on deploying an integrated workplace technology solution to create user-friendly environments that intern create positive work life experiences for all stakeholders.

4. **An integrated ICT eco-system for group collaboration**
   This should be designed to handle the convergence of digital content that facilitates collaboration by various user scenarios to deliver the best business outcomes.

An organisation that focuses on huddle or small meeting spaces, as part of a holistic business collaboration strategy, can create positive work environments and maximise their workforce collaboration. Small meeting spaces create an ambience of intimacy. There is a huge interest in fitting out small areas with the right technology to improve team engagement, integrate mobile and dispersed workforce and show ROI on space management.

As part of a continuous improvement plan, an organisation should also look to manage workspaces using smart workplace management tools to capture utilisation of work spaces, technology acceptance and adoption to improve ROI.

As the saying goes, you *"If you can't measure it, you can't improve it"*.

The new generation of Cloud-based technologies are also fuelling this trend; very cost effective to implement, truly scalable and literally transforming any workspace into a true virtual collaborative workplace.

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[1] Drucker, P. The Effective Executive. New York: Harper & Row, 1967. 15.Erickson, M., Meetings. Available: http://www.catalog.com/napmsv/meet.htm. 1998

[2] Monge, P.R., McSween, C., & Wyer, J. A profile of meetings in corporate America: results of the 3M meeting effectiveness study, Annenberg school of communications, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, 1989. 53.

The future of your business collaboration now depends on getting your Huddle on.

The first step is finding the right workplace technology partner to design a customised solution that works for your business. Contact us today hello@ricoh.com.au

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