A NEW ERA OF WORKPLACE COMMUNICATIONS:
WILL YOU LEAD OR
BE LEFT BEHIND?

A No Jitter Industry Insights Report

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research

Executive Summary

As companies look to institute new strategies for business communications, team messaging and collaboration applications are increasingly becoming important elements of a broader strategy. Results from the No Jitter 2018 Team Collaboration Survey bear this out. Of the 160 primarily U.S.-based enterprise IT professionals who participated in the survey, more than 95% say team messaging and collaboration apps are a necessary component of their future communications strategy. Forty-one percent of respondents were from companies with 1,000+ employees, 43% were from companies with between 100 and 999 employees, and 16% were from companies with fewer than 100 employees.

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Anytime, Anywhere, On Any Device

The way we work has changed — certainly in the last decade, but especially so within the last few years with the rise of the "anytime, anywhere, on any device" business mandate of always-on global companies. Today's knowledge workers are more distributed, highly mobile, and expect to have communications and collaboration capabilities at their fingertips. But the expectations are changing: being able to shoot off a text, send an email, or ring a business colleague from a smartphone no longer suffices. Employees don't just want to be reachable; they want the same rich experiences on their mobile devices as they can get on their desktops or in a conference room — and they want a consistent user experience across devices and communication modes.

Given the mishmash of applications at their disposal for communicating, many find achieving this singular experience but a pipe dream. It's not uncommon for employees today to find themselves continuously jumping from one app to the next — video conferencing for this meeting, Web conferencing for that one, team messaging with this project group, and email exchanges with that one.

Having to use all these various apps throughout the workday, however, is creating challenges for both employees and businesses:

Loss of Worker Productivity — Having to jump from one communications app into another is no small bother, as a recent global survey of 2,000 knowledge workers across all industries found ("From Workplace Chaos to Zen," CITE Research, March 2018). In the survey, 70% of respondents said communications volume is a challenge to getting basic work tasks done. Existing communications tools only worsen the problem: In the same survey, nearly as many respondents said they toggle between different apps 10 times an hour. As further evidence of the chaos, consider results from the No Jitter 2018 Team Collaboration Survey. In this survey, enterprise IT professionals who are responsible for evaluating and/or making strategic technology decisions for their organizations indicated that the overwhelming majority of their workers use disparate solutions for audio calling/conferencing (81%), video conferencing (83%), content sharing (86%), and messaging/chat apps (88%).

App Overload

» Users toggle between different apps **10 times an hour** (CITE Research)

» Most workers **use separate apps** for voice calling, conferencing, video, content sharing, and messaging/chat (No Jitter 2018 Team Collaboration Survey)

Fractured Workforce/Loss of Innovation — The inability for users to collaborate from within a single, unified solution creates unnecessary barriers and hinders effective teamwork. Teams bring in their own tools of choice, exacerbating the problem — for example, engineering works in one collaborative environment and product management in another, with an inability to share easily between these tools. Unfortunately, jumping from one communications environment to another essentially slows the conversation down to a crawl. For example, two employees use email to discuss a project and share files. As they move to a phone conversation, each has to individually search for and share additional files to support the discussion, which they then store in their own repositories. When they decide to open up the discussion to others via an online meeting, for example, new participants need to be brought up to speed on previous discussions. Files need to be shared once again. As employees move through their work day, the same process repeats itself time and again. A lack of persistent context and content severely restricts creative thinking and hampers productivity in the modern workplace.

Competitive Threat/Lack of Agility — With today's fast-paced economy, businesses live and die based on their ability to be agile. As such, communications and collaboration has become a competitive differentiator. Companies that don't do this well will endanger their ability to pull together the best resources and act quickly enough to be effective in their markets.

Collaborative Communications

To close the door on these dangers, companies must streamline the modes of communications in use and embrace a culture of collaborative communications. This isn't just about unifying different modes of communication — although that's foundational. Collaborative communications is about delivering that highly desired unified user experience and enabling a transformation in the way people communicate, collaborate, share content, and manage projects.

6 Hallmarks of Collaborative Communications

» Unified user experience for communicating and collaborating, sharing content, and managing projects

» Seamless experience from one device type to another

» Team messaging as central component

» Voice, video, online meetings, app integrations also supported

» Built on open, intelligent cloud-based conversational platform

» Enables greater agility and increased productivity

It's about an integrated experience across voice, video, online meetings, app integrations and more, with team messaging at the core — whether employees are using their mobile devices, sitting at their desktops, or gathered in meeting rooms. Ultimately, collaborative communications is about allowing greater agility and productivity across a far-flung workforce leveraging an open and intelligent cloud-based conversational platform that supports integrations, chatbots, and artificial intelligence.

And, as businesses embrace the idea of collaborative communications, they must think beyond their corporate boundaries. With an open, intelligent cloud-based conversational platform, businesses can enable seamless experiences not only for internal teams but also teams comprising customers and partners.

The idea of a collaborative communications platform resonates with employees, as evidenced by results from the CITE Research survey noted previously. In the survey, two-thirds of respondents said they felt having a single communications platform would lead to better workflow, improved productivity, reduced chaos, and easier remote working.

Team Messaging: Core to the Future of the Digital Workplace

With data points such as these, making a case for collaborative communications is easy. Collaborative communications gives enterprises the ability to deliver full collaborative capabilities on any device, from anywhere, via a group-centric communications platform. What's more, collaborative communications places the emphasis on people, not technology. This means employees are better able to reach the right people in an organization at the right time and place, via the most appropriate mode of communications. Productivity improves, as does creative work.

Team messaging is increasingly becoming the preferred way of enabling collaborative communications. This is particularly true among workers aged 18 to 44, with 43% of CITE Research respondents indicating that team messaging is their top mode of communications. It's the least disruptive form of communications at work, they found, and most are likely to work with a team messaging app approximately 46 to 60 minutes a day.

That team messaging is rising in importance within the enterprise is also borne out by results from the No Jitter 2018 Team Collaboration Survey. Consider these data points:

- 90% of respondents indicated that employees within their enterprise organizations currently use one or more team messaging tools
- 88% of all respondents said they anticipated a hike in the number of daily users within the next 12 months
- More than 95% of respondents said team messaging apps are a necessary component of their future communications and collaboration strategies

That last statistic is particularly revealing, especially when thinking back to how overwhelming knowledge workers consider the volume of communications to be — with email a particular bugaboo (in the CITE Research survey, 30% of U.S. respondents said they check email more than 20 times a day, and 25% of workers said they found email, along with unscheduled meetings and phone calls, a top disruption). According to the No Jitter survey, respondents believe team messaging apps could help with that overload. Nearly 50% of respondents cited the desire to improve productivity as the primary reason for using team messaging apps.

95% team messaging a necessary component of communications/collaboration strategy

Building a Blueprint for Collaborative Communications

As you consider how best to establish a culture of collaborative communications within your company, the challenge is identifying the right technology approach. Building a solution from the ground up is a nonstarter — doing so would be too costly and complex, not to mention be contrary to the modern workplace ideal of openness. Integrating different apps and functionality into an existing communications platform would be almost as difficult, a cumbersome chore involving hands-on programming of one app integration at a time. Depending on the level of programming expertise, this could get quite costly, too, if outside resources are required. The optimal choice is selecting a communications provider that offers an open, cloud-based platform that supports a variety of conversational modes — with team messaging at the core — and that makes easy work of integration.

If you haven't yet evaluated how to move from outdated communications systems to a cloud-based collaborative communications platform, you best not wait too much longer. With the ability to support a truly collaborative culture comes business agility and speed to decision making — if your company can't keep up, it'll be left behind by competitors.

As you think about the best approach to collaborative communications at your organization, here are five considerations to keep in mind as you evaluate potential partners.

Consistency of User Experience — A first objective should be finding a communications and collaboration solution that provides consistency of experience across various modes. Look for a platform that provides a unified experience and the same functionalities whether employees are using the tools via their mobile devices, from their desktops, or using browser access.

Additionally, employees should be able to transition seamlessly from one communications mode to another, escalating a team chat into a voice call, audio conference, or video collaboration session as the need dictates. As an imperative, be sure that the context of conversations and shared content can carry forward from one communications mode to the next — no time-consuming backtracking or catching up should be required of employees teaming up on projects.

76% device support is a highly important factor when evaluating collaboration apps

Delivering such a unified communications and collaboration experience has been hugely beneficial for Structural Group, a global engineering firm that had previously been stymied by a patchwork of disparate tools — from the GroupMe chat app, to Microsoft Yammer, an Oracle app, and Slack — deployed by different constituencies. Speaking at Enterprise Connect 2018, Structural Group CIO Jason Kasch noted how "the one thing that was missing was a central contact point" where all the people and the information — in context — about them could live.

When IT partnered with RingCentral and gave everybody access to its RingCentral unified app capability, the situation improved, Kasch said. "Everyone started migrating all of their conversations to this [centralized] platform so they could simply converse with everybody else in the company," he added. From a single interface, employees could chat with their teams, dial out to colleagues, initiate video conferences, and so on.

Customization — Look for a platform that allows you to customize the experience for your unique work environment. This means the ability to integrate team messaging with unified communication (UC) capabilities — getting to the point of seamless transition. But it also means being able to integrate your customer relationship management solution or helpdesk system with ease, and allowing for users to customize workflows in their group spaces. In other words, you need a platform that provides open APIs for integration with any of your business workflows, the corporate directory, and other cloud applications.

Security — This is the No. 1 decision factor called out by No Jitter survey respondents for evaluating team collaboration solutions. Evaluate collaborative communications platforms with an eye on their ability to protect content while in transit and at rest, and be sure to check the boxes on compliance standards, as well.

Such considerations were top of mind for Pacific Dental Services, a dental support organization with 10,000+ employees and more than 670 support offices across 20 states. HIPAA compliance and secure texting were critically important as the company evaluated cloud communications platforms that would bring together voice, video meetings, team messaging, and fax, delivering a seamless user experience. Today the company is taking advantage of RingCentral Meetings and Rooms to provide a consistent user-meeting experience using high-definition video, audio, and Web conferencing from any off-the-shelf equipment in conference rooms of all sizes and on any user device. This applies from the C-suite down to the dental offices, with access to an "instant-on" experience for all.

84% security is a highly important factor when evaluating team collaboration apps

And, team messaging factors heavily into the platform use, as a means of streamlining communications across offices through real-time chat, task management, and collaboration capabilities that boost productivity. "Customers and employees expect to communicate using a channel of their choice, and to be efficient we need more than just a phone call," said David Baker, SVP and CIO at PDS.

Search — Here, the value is in being able to search across all conversations, no matter the mode, and to get results supplemented with contextual information.

Personalization — Lastly, don't overlook the "fun" stuff. Users love to be able to personalize their conversations, sharing gifs and adding emoticons to express themselves beyond mere words alone.

An All-in-One Experience

As business communications and collaboration continues to evolve, RingCentral has established itself as the number one cloud communications provider worldwide. The company has pioneered the concept of single-platform unified experience for enterprise communications, including voice, team messaging, and video meetings, that few others can match.

For example, RingCentral's newly released RingCentral mobile app uses a modern, intuitive interface that lets users place phone calls, launch video meetings, and engage in team chats without toggling from one app to another or losing track of productive work. Critical to RingCentral's solution is the fact that it's based on an open platform that allows businesses to customize the solution for their specific needs. RingCentral has developed pre-built integrations with leading enterprise solutions from Box, Microsoft, Okta, and Google, among many others. And RingCentral's open APIs allow customers to integrate capabilities from third-party apps.

Cloud platforms like RingCentral's help solve the app overload epidemic afflicting today's workforce. In its survey, No Jitter found that 60% of enterprise respondents have at least three different collaboration apps in use, and fewer than 10% of these organizations have standardized on a single collaboration app. What's more, team messaging use is on the verge of exploding — 88% of No Jitter survey respondents said they anticipate a hike in the number of daily users to grow within the next 12 months. The arrival of open, intelligent, cloud-based platforms that host these conversations, enable escalation to different modes of communications, and provide contextual intelligence can't come soon enough.

How many different team collaboration apps are in use?

9% *One*

30% *Two*

60% *At least three*

About RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of global enterprise cloud communications and collaboration solutions. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises systems, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect from any location, on any device and via any mode. RingCentral provides unified voice, video, team messaging and collaboration, conferencing, online meetings, digital customer engagement and integrated contact center solutions for enterprises globally. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading business apps and enables customers to easily customize business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world. RingCentral, RingCentral logo and Collaborative Communications are trademarks of RingCentral, Inc.