



A better way of working together





Find out more

This guide gives you a flavour of what we have to offer, but we know you probably have lots of questions. Why not get to know us a little better?

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If you have any queries about our services, would like to speak to someone in more detail, or simply want to book a meeting, you can always call the SCC Main Reception on: **0121 766 7000**



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How collaboration technologies can help us call, communicate and interact more efficiently and effectively



THERE ARE BETTER WAYS FOR US TO COMMUNICATE AND COLLABORATE.

While we have certainly got better at it, there are still real issues with the way we connect, communicate and collaborate. We have email, SMS, instant messaging, and multiple voice and video conferencing systems.

We can use all these tools on our PCs, notebooks, tablets and smartphones. Yet we are still not communicating in a really efficient and seamless way. We are losing a lot of time and wasting a lot of energy.

There are better ways for us to communicate and collaborate. But how do we get from where we are now to where we want or need to be? How do we shake off the old ways of working and enable more creative, inspiring environments and ecosystems that work for both the individual and for the organisation?

In this document, we look at the current state of communications and collaboration within the changing landscape of IT and the context of digital transformation. We explain why – in our view – all organisations need to have a clear strategy and plan for the adoption of modern collaboration technologies.

Changing the way we communicate

Everyone is talking about digital transformation. While that term can be interpreted in many ways, what we understand it to mean is that digital technologies are being embraced and used to drive every aspect of the organisation's day-to-day activity.

They are being transformed from a state in which digital technologies were used simply to streamline existing processes and procedures – make them faster and more efficient, to one in which the digital systems are being used to drive the business activity, to seamlessly connect systems and make it possible to do things differently.

To make transformation work, the approach needs to be coherent and joined-up. It needs to encompass every aspect of the organisation's activity.

All too often, it's the difficulty of moving away from the existing processes and ways of working that holds organisations back from delivering really effective digital transformation.

INEFFICIENCY OF EMAIL

The way we communicate is a prime example. We have become highly dependent on email. Yet when you really start to think about it, email is inefficient and slow. Documents sent via email have to be filed away somewhere in a folder. If the recipient works on that document, it has to be renamed and sent back. There are now two documents – and there will probably be more several versions before the editing process is completed. Added to this, users might communicate using instant messaging apps, or even via SMS.

They might also be using multiple devices to do all these things. We are all using different apps and tools to do different things, even though those actions are all related to the same task and objective.

All this is messy, inefficient and disjointed. It gives the organisation little or no control and it is almost impossible to string together the threads of all this traffic, or to make it really secure.

COLLABORATION CAN HELP

By comparison, collaboration solutions are much more effective – especially for team working. They heighten productivity, streamline and accelerate workflows, make more efficient use of skilled people, and reduce costs.

These are the tools that can enable real change and transformation in the way we communicate and work together. Collaboration solutions like Microsoft Teams and Cisco Webex are task-oriented.

You build out from the task, inviting people to participate, holding conversations with individuals and groups, sharing information and making files available to everyone in the team at every stage of the process. There is a single place in which everyone can communicate, share and collaborate on a task or project. This is a much better, more efficient and productive way to work. But right now, we are still trying to overcome our addiction to email. Moving forward might mean actively pushing

users towards collaboration, through training or policy, or allowing users to migrate naturally to the collaboration tools. Or perhaps a combination of both.

In addition, to make them really effective, there must be a firm commitment from management as well as employees, to using conferencing and collaboration tools. It is always easy to attain such a commitment – not only due to our addiction to email, but also due to the past experiences.



TO MAKE TRANSFORMATION WORK, THE APPROACH NEEDS TO BE COHERENT AND JOINED-UP



Changing mindsets

When we talk to customers about their experiences with video-conferencing or collaboration solutions, they will often tell us they have been underwhelmed by the results. While solutions may have worked well enough and delivered some benefits, they won't have always fully-achieved their goals and delivered really good return-on-investment.

Part of the reason for this has been the relatively high acquisition cost of systems. Indeed, this would put many organisations off even considering a purchase in the first place. Equipment would have to be purchased for each end-point. A complete set-up would usually comprise of a large format display and customised video and audio technology, along with specialist software and controls. There would be an on-going maintenance cost.

The system would usually be proprietary and relatively inflexible too. It would be expensive to extend or upgrade and could all-too-easily be overtaken by new solutions and technologies. These systems would often be difficult to set-up and to use. As a result, they would be under-utilised.

People would simply go back to what they were used to – simple voice conferencing, for example, or revert to newer, more intuitive solutions, such as Skype. These experiences have made some organisations be wary of making significant investments in conferencing or collaboration technologies.

The technology has also moved on at quite a pace. And while there is certainly still a place for specialist conferencing solutions – especially in larger companies – most organisations are now gravitating towards team collaboration tools, driven by a combination of the need to modernise working practices to enable more remote collaboration between workers and teams, and the expectations of Millennial and Generation Z workers.

Adoption is also being enabled by the emergence of cloud-based services that can be paid for on a subscription basis. Hardware and devices are now also being offered on the same basis, with the whole solution rolled together into a single subscription package.

This option is very attractive to many organisations as it reduces the risk that they may, due to their past experiences, associate with video conferencing systems.



MOST ORGANISATIONS ARE NOW GRAVITATING TOWARDS TEAM COLLABORATION TOOLS

Why do we need collaboration?

It is not just that email is inefficient – it's no longer meeting our needs and holding the handbrake on digital transformation. We need to find a way of releasing people, so that they can move forward and work and collaborate more intuitively.

This is not rocket-science. In fact, it should be easy. The freedom that continuous access to the web and online services and mobility have given us, means that there is much more of will and desire to work together in teams, to share ideas and thoughts, and to feed off each other. It is the way people expect to work now.



IT IS REALLY ABOUT MEETING THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF USERS

If we can give them that freedom – and give them even more capability to share ideas and interact – we not only accelerate the progress of tasks and projects, but also create an environment much more conducive to be creative and innovative.

One reason this is this happening is to do with the technology we already have at our disposal. In defence of email, it has enabled us to communicate more readily and bring more people into the conversation without having to have everyone gathered in the same meeting room (or on the same conference call), at the same time. Instant messaging has extended that capability, as have conferencing and collaboration solutions like BlueJeans, Microsoft Teams (and Skype before it), Cisco Webex, Google Meet, Zoom and others.

The increased freedom that mobile devices and better mobile and broadband connectivity have given us is also a big factor. We can now send and receive communications and join calls and conferences from almost anywhere. We don't have to be in the same place in order to work together.

Added to this, we have the changing expectations of Millennials and Generation Z workers, who make up an increasing proportion of the workforce. They have grown up communicating and collaborating freely through social media apps and fully expect to be able to do the same thing in the workplace.

They are used to being able to access and use apps and services almost instantly. If the IT department does not provide that kind of freedom and functionality, they will simply find a way of communicating and collaborating that suits them. And every IT manager will be aware of risks that come with shadow IT and how it can be just the thin end of a very awkward wedge.

If you sum all of this up, it is really about meeting the needs and expectations of users, and enabling them to work in better, more efficient, more collaborative ways. From the organisational perspective, it's important that they do this in a secure and compliant way – and if they use solutions without the knowledge of the IT department, it's going to be very difficult to ensure systems and data are completely safe.

Making the right collaboration choice

Of course, you still need to choose the right collaboration solution for your organisation. All the major vendors take a slightly different approach and there are various add-ons and complementary solutions for each of them as well. You will also need to consider the solutions that are already in use, which technologies and vendors are core to your current set-up, and the current and future needs of users.

Officially or otherwise, a number of modern collaboration solutions may already be in use within your organisation. Some of your colleagues may use BlueJeans, Cisco WebEx, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom. Others may be using legacy collaboration or conferencing solutions from the likes of Polycom, Google or indeed from Cisco or Microsoft.

How and where do you start to pull all of these solutions together?

One key consideration before you even begin is whether or not your bandwidth and network connectivity are fit for purpose. The network will almost certainly need to be partitioned and any traffic moving to and from the cloud will also need to be looked at. All these factors need to be considered at the outset and, of course, within the overall context of the organisation's business and digital transformation strategy. Helping you to assess your needs and then plan and manage your journey from where you are today to where you want and need to

be in the future, is an important part of the value SCC AVS delivers. Our approach is to look at where you want to be in four or five years and work backwards. This gives us a clear and simple way to define a course of action, which we can then discuss and develop with you.

The importance of knowing what it is you want to achieve can't be understated. This is where the conversations about collaboration start to get really interesting. It is often the case that, when we first start to discuss the subject, there will be no clear or defined approach to unified communications or collaboration. We can, of course, help you to shape your approach within your overall business, IT and communications strategy, and that analysis in itself can be very revealing.

Throughout this process, it's important to focus primarily on the needs of users. In the end, it is their needs and the way they want and need to work and collaborate that will make the difference to the organisation as a whole. It's also important that they fully understand how the tools will benefit them. Most people do want to work in a different way, but they also need to be willing to adopt new technologies and new ways or working. They will be much more willing to embrace change if their needs are fully considered and they are involved from the start.

The solution you choose must of course, be capable of delivering what both they and the organisation needs.

Here again, with our in-depth knowledge of current solutions and how they can be adapted and used, SCC AVS can really add value.



BANDWIDTH NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED FROM THE OUTSET



Getting ready to adapt

While collaboration is already starting to seep into everyday working culture, how ready an organisation is to adopt it will depend to some degree on its culture, past experiences and the level of confidence users have in the technology.

We can't change everything, overnight. It would be unthinkable to take away web access, WiFi, laptops, smartphones and (at the moment) email, from your workers. This is also becoming true of collaboration tools. They enable teams to interact and stay in touch throughout the day, wherever they are working. Members of the same teams can be located at any distance – even across continents.

People who can't necessarily get to the office easily or as often – such as new parents or someone who is recovering from illness – can keep in touch and ease their way back into work.

But it is not always easy to introduce, partly because of the established ways of working, partly due to the highly-defined hierarchical structure that many organisations still have in place. Older and more established enterprises tend to operate on what is essentially a command and control basis. As a result, they are less able to respond and react to change.

They need to adapt and transform however, or they will find themselves overtaken by the new generation of digitally-driven companies, who tend to have a much less structured and defined hierarchy.

These younger organisations are inherently collaborative and will have been interacting within the organisation and with partners, suppliers and customers, from the day they were formed. As a result, they can be more flexible, dynamic and responsive.



Where do we go from here?

The good news is that everyone understands and wants the way we work, communicate and collaborate to change. This is essential and almost a pre-requisite to digital transformation. But there are real challenges though in getting from where we are now to where we want to be. For many organisations, the first step is simply deciding on the destination, on how it wants people to work and interact.

It may not be possible, or wise, to force technologies onto people – or to remove technologies such as email from them. Indeed, there may be a continuing role for email – in providing a safer and more secure way to send confidential documents to people, for example. The options need to be expanded rather than contracted and restricted. People then need to be encouraged to work in a particular way – they need to be able to see the benefit of collaboration tools, and willingly change their behaviour.

The necessity to change and to adapt for the digitally-driven world is understood. Organisations need to reinvent themselves to enable more flexible, adaptable, dynamic ways of working and interacting with customers and suppliers. That's what transformation is all about. Emerging technologies and as-a-service propositions are giving them the opportunity to do that.

The new generation of workers like to work in a different way - on top of doing a great job they want their work to be fulfilling and rewarding. But believe work isn't everything! They want to be more efficient and effective when they work accompanied by a better work-life balance.

In the end, all of us – organisations and individuals – want the same thing; an efficient, effective working environment that delivers positive results for the customer and sustains and grows the organisation. To do that we need to give people access to tools and technologies that allow them to get the work done. Good collaboration has become vital, not only to efficient working, but to real digital transformation. Every organisation now needs to know exactly where it is today and where it plans to go with its unified communications and collaboration strategy.



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How SCC AVS can help

SCC AVS is a leading integrator of audio visual and collaboration services. We deliver agnostic, client centric solutions across the UK's public and private sector.

Discover

We conduct a thorough assessment of your workplace and then plan the actions needed to help you embark on a digital transformation.

Design

We provide you with the option to have three distinct services; high level design, low level design, transformation plan or a combination of all three.

Supply

Our internal Supply service delivers a complete end-to-end Workplace Productivity solution facilitating product procurement, configuration, logistics, recycling and disposals.

Implement

A suite of services to deploy, migrate and integrate the technology components of your workplace productivity strategy.

Manage

Our team of more than 800 engineers deliver up to a 24/7 four-hour fix support service. These include multilingual options around offshore, nearshore or UK-only based service teams.

Optimise

Optimisation of the workplace is about maximising the user experience. To do this, optimisation of the all aspects of IT can be analysed to identify areas for continuous improvement.

By leveraging SCC's full product and services offerings - with the added value of Rigby Capital's innovative finance solutions - we can support or fully deliver your digital transformation journey.



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