

Compliments of  Mitel®

Mitel Special Edition

Team Collaboration & Communications FOR DUMMIES® A Wiley Brand

Learn:

- Why collaboration is imperative in today's competitive business landscape
- How team collaboration tools can boost productivity and your bottom line
- What to look for in a team collaboration solution



Lawrence C. Miller

About Mitel

A global market leader in enterprise and mobile communications, Mitel powers more than 2 billion business connections and 2 billion mobile subscribers every day. Mitel helps businesses and mobile carriers connect, collaborate, and provide innovative services to its customers. Its innovation and communications experts serve more than 60 million business users in more than 100 countries and 130 mobile service providers, including 15 of the top 20 mobile carriers in the world. Mitel is uniquely powering the mobile enterprise by using the real-time cloud.

Mitel offers a broad portfolio designed to meet the customer engagement needs of any-sized business and provide a future-proof solution that seamlessly scales as business requirements evolve. With solutions ranging in sophistication from basic routing and reporting to digital media and workforce management, Mitel is uniquely positioned in the industry as a single vendor offering a full suite of contact center capabilities suitable for deployment on premises, in the cloud or a hybrid of the two.

Complemented by a variety of service options, including managed services, user training, and design and deployment support, Mitel delivers end-to-end support for your superior customer experience.

For more information, visit www.mitel.com and follow on Twitter @Mitel.

Team Collaboration & Communications

FOR
DUMMIES®
A Wiley Brand

Mitel Special Edition

by Lawrence C. Miller

FOR
DUMMIES®
A Wiley Brand

Team Collaboration & Communications For Dummies®, Mitel Special Edition

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2017 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, The Dummies Way, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. Mitel and the Mitel logo are registered trademarks of Mitel. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, or how to create a custom *For Dummies* book for your business or organization, please contact our Business Development Department in the U.S. at 877-409-4177, contact info@dummies.biz, or visit www.wiley.com/go/custompub. For information about licensing the *For Dummies* brand for products or services, contact BrandedRights&Licenses@Wiley.com.

ISBN: 978-1-119-27939-6 (pbk); ISBN: 978-1-119-27940-2 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher's Acknowledgments

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Project Editor: Carrie A. Burchfield

Acquisitions Editor: Katie Mohr

Editorial Manager: Rev Mengle

Production Editor: Siddique Shaik

Business Development Representative:
Molly Daugherty

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	2
Icons Used in This Book.....	2
Chapter 1: Understanding the Collaboration Imperative	3
Maintaining Competitiveness Is Challenging.....	3
Speed Is Key to Competitive Advantage	6
Employee Demographics Are Changing.....	7
Employees Are Geographically Distributed	8
Corporate Structure Has Evolved	11
Chapter 2: Tracing the Evolution of Collaboration and Communication	13
Looking at the Past	13
Assessing the Cost of Stagnation.....	15
Glimpsing Ahead to the Future	17
Taking a Look from the IT Perspective	18
Taking an Organizational Perspective.....	20
Chapter 3: Considering Different Team Collaboration and Communication Use Cases	23
A Day in the Life of	24
Streamlining Team Communications	24
Walking a Mile in Your Employees' Shoes	25
Enabling Knowledge Sharing and Seamless Access to Experts.....	27
Conducting Meetings and Managing Projects	28
Chapter 4: Exploring Mitel's Team Collaboration and Communications Solution	31
Unifying Work Streams.....	31
Keeping Projects Moving Forward.....	34

**Chapter 5: Ten Features of a Great Team
Collaboration and Communications Solution37**

Work Stream Messaging..... 37

Easy Document Sharing and Annotation 38

Seamless Pivoting Across Devices Within the Stream 39

Single Intuitive User-Friendly Interface..... 40

Real-time Communications Reachability 41

Event and Interaction History 41

Different Options for Different Teams and
Team Members..... 42

Flexible Deployment Options 42

Introduction



The biggest investment and often competitive advantage in any business is the employees. Maximizing employee productivity has significant impact on the bottom line for any business. Today's employees use mobile devices and mobile apps — smartphones, email, social media, sharing tools, and more — in practically every aspect of their personal lives. As a result, society has become more connected, in general, sharing ideas, thoughts, and memories with the digital universe. These mobile devices and apps are also influencing the way your employees collaborate and interact professionally. Today's businesses must embrace the mobile lifestyle and find innovative new ways to adapt these productivity-enhancing tools to a professional setting for effective team collaboration and communication.

About This Book

Team Collaboration and Communications For Dummies, Mitel Special Edition, consists of five short chapters that explore

- ✔ Why team collaboration and communication is so important, how it can impact businesses, and why it needs to be a priority for your organization (Chapter 1)
- ✔ How team dynamics have changed over time and will continue to evolve and what businesses need to do to help improve team productivity, competitiveness, agility, and decision making (Chapter 2)
- ✔ What it takes to become a collaborative enterprise from the perspective of your team members, IT staff, your customers, and partners (Chapter 3)
- ✔ How Mitel can help you improve your team collaboration and communications with the MiTeam solution (Chapter 4)
- ✔ What “must-have” features you need to look for in a team collaboration and communications solution (Chapter 5)

Foolish Assumptions

It's been said that most assumptions have outlived their uselessness, but I assume a few things nonetheless. Mainly, I assume that you're an executive, manager, or team member in a business or organization of some sort, and you're looking for exciting new ways to improve the communication and collaboration of team members with each other, clients, and/or vendors within your workplace. I also assume that you're not necessarily an information technology (IT) professional, and you're trying to understand how different team collaboration and communication use cases can impact your business. As such, this book is written for non-technical readers — I even spell out all those confusing acronyms (like “IT”) for you.

But technically, even if you're a technical reader, you'll still want to read this book because when you finish reading it, you'll be able to communicate with your organization about ways to improve team collaboration and communications and lay the groundwork for an IT strategy to quickly achieve your organization's team collaboration and communication goals.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, I occasionally use special icons to call attention to important information. Here's what to expect:



This icon points out information that you should commit to your non-volatile memory, your gray matter, or your noggin' — along with anniversaries and birthdays!



If you seek to attain the seventh level of NERD-vana, perk up! This icon explains the jargon beneath the jargon and is the stuff legends — well, nerds — are made of!



This icon points out helpful suggestions and useful nuggets of information.



This icon points out the stuff your mother warned you about. Okay, probably not. But you should take heed nonetheless — you might just save yourself some time and frustration!

Chapter 1

Understanding the Collaboration Imperative

.....

In This Chapter

- ▶ Differentiating your business for competitive advantage
 - ▶ Maintaining business agility
 - ▶ Building effective cross-generational teams
 - ▶ Moving beyond physical offices to the “human cloud”
 - ▶ Creating a collaborative organization to drive productivity
-

In this chapter, you take a high-level look at different factors driving the collaboration imperative in modern business, including the changing nature of competition; the changing workforce, workplace, and workstyles; and the importance of business agility.

Maintaining Competitiveness Is Challenging

Maintaining and increasing competitive advantage in today’s dynamic, global economy is a major challenge for businesses in every industry. Companies can no longer simply differentiate their products and services along a single dimension such as price, features, quality, or support. With the possible exception of commodity goods and services, the lowest price doesn’t guarantee a sale, poor quality is never acceptable, and customer service requires far more than a friendly smile. Instead, perceived value, functional match to requirements, exceptional quality, and total customer experience across all touch points are all important aspects of the new competitive norm.

Team collaboration defined

Within a business or organization, a team is a group of individuals with different skills, knowledge, and experience, working together toward a common goal, such as completing a specific task or project, or defining an ongoing business process. Teams may be more or less permanent or long-term, such as a product development team, or ad hoc and short-term, such as a quick team lunch meeting. Successful teamwork requires highly efficient and effective collaboration across the entire team. Types of team collaboration include

- ✓ **Synchronous** interaction and activities (such as phone calls, face-to-face meetings, and video conferences) that occur in real-time
- ✓ **Asynchronous** interaction and activities (such as discussion boards, team workspaces, and document management repositories) that can occur across different geographic locations at different times

There are many applications and services available today to provide teams with different communications capabilities — from simple voice conference calls to more complex videoconferencing with telepresence. Some of these tools also provide limited “collaboration” capabilities during the communication session, such as text messaging, desktop sharing, and/or group editing. But team collaboration is about much more than a single session or event.

A robust team collaboration solution extends beyond one-time synchronous, events to provide continuity and context for the team throughout the entire life of a project or activity, enabling them to successfully interact and work together at different times (“time shifting”), across different time zones (“following the sun”), and over geographic distances and multiple locations (remote and mobile working).

The key value of a team collaboration solution is that all members of the team can get relevant information that can be consumed synchronously in real-time, or asynchronously at other times. All information related to the activity is maintained in a repository where it is always available to the appropriate team members when they are available and ready to consume the information.

So, for example, a team member who misses an important meeting due to a scheduling conflict can easily review the meeting minutes and notes (as well as a recording of the meeting, if configured) — which are all available in the team space, in order to quickly get up to speed, and join a discussion forum to provide feedback and input to the rest of the team.

Many individual team members today use their mobile devices for practically all facets of business today, including their team collaboration and communication activities — from phone calls and text messages to

emails, schedule management and document review. Mobile apps are built into many business applications today so mobile collaboration and communication are key to any team solution. A team collaboration solution must therefore also integrate with the full range of mobile devices and endpoints that team members use to work together, including smartphones, tablets, desktop and laptop PCs, and even high-end video collaboration rooms. The team collaboration solution enables the team to optimize the media and modality to best meet the individual team member needs and solve the issue at hand.

Finally, a team collaboration solution dramatically simplifies the process of using modern collaboration and communication tools for the team. An “official” team collaboration solution eliminates the challenges associated with what you’re doing today — managing a multitude of different solutions, which sometimes creates more challenges and minimizes the value for the team. Instead of requiring a team member

to manually coordinate team activities among other team members, the team collaboration solution does the heavy lifting. This capability enables team members to focus on their work, not the team collaboration processes and tools themselves. By combining high-value synchronous meetings with a full range of tools (including video, voice, text, screen and app sharing, shared whiteboard, and more) with the ability to maintain team velocity asynchronously between events, the team collaboration solution is the ideal catalyst to drive team productivity.

Team collaboration enables teams to work together better and therefore be more productive, improving the outcome of team projects. With better access to the information and resource required to make informed decisions, teams can make better decisions. And by making it easier to be and stay involved across the organization, businesses can get better commitment to team decisions, which drives better and faster quality execution.

Additionally, businesses must find innovative and creative new ways to engage, attract, and retain their customers. While it’s well understood that attracting a new customer costs dramatically more than keeping an existing one — as much as ten times more — it’s never been easier for customers to find, research, and move their business to your competitors.

And customers want to deal with businesses that not only provide the highest quality goods and services they need, when they need it, and at a price they’re willing to pay, but also that are socially responsible — with their employees, their partners and suppliers, their communities, and

their environment. Inefficient business processes and toxic corporate cultures inevitably affect the bottom line (profits), but increasingly impact the top line (sales) as well. In a time when costs are constantly being evaluated, inefficiency equals waste — which no one wants to see or hear about. Everything you do as a business must stand up to public scrutiny — customers don't necessarily want to know how the sausage is made, but they also can't look away from a train wreck.

Speed Is Key to Competitive Advantage

Change is the new normal in today's global economy. The scope and rate of change that your organization experiences can be influenced by many factors. The state of the economy, company growth, changes in technology, and the dynamics of a particular market or geographical location all contribute to often turbulent times. To remain competitive and take advantage of new opportunities, your organization must be able to anticipate change, constantly evolve, and adapt quickly. You can improve business agility in your organization in several ways:

✓ **Enable rapid and quality decision making and action.**

When customers demand new products and services or your organization needs to make changes to existing offerings, time is of the essence. To support today's ever shrinking product life cycles, design, manufacturing, sales, service, finance, and other teams must collaborate across different geographic locations and time zones with different technologies to enable rapid decision making and effective action.

✓ **Make team collaboration a critical key performance indicator (KPI).** With fully integrated teams sharing information and working together effectively, you can streamline your business processes to eliminate non-value added activities, reduce costs, increase margins, and focus on customer experience, lifetime value, and fostering an ethos of continuous improvement (see the sidebar, "Team collaboration defined" earlier in this chapter). Organizations that define a KPI based on adoption and use of team collaboration tools and develop programs

to drive the new capabilities will see strong impacts on overall results.

- ✓ **Anticipate change and leverage real-time data to identify new opportunities.** Access to real-time data, which includes a real-time understanding of “what’s happening on the street,” requires getting input from “the feet on the street” by inviting others to be part of corporate teams. This ability enables you to quickly adapt and make changes when new opportunities or changing conditions emerge.

Employee Demographics Are Changing

We currently have a diverse workforce made up of multiple generations — Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964), Generation X (born mid-1960s to early 1980s), and Millennials (born mid-1980s to early 2000s) — and workforce demographics are changing as the oldest of the Baby Boomer generation turned 70 in 2016, well beyond the full benefit age for Social Security. According to PWC, 50 percent of the global workforce will be comprised of Millennials by 2020.

Such a diverse workforce is divided by a wide range of different perspectives, personal preferences and ways of work. For example, Baby Boomers generally tend to favor formal structure, Generation X is characterized by security, while Millennials seek autonomy in the workplace.

Today’s younger workforce, which has grown up using the web and advanced personal computing devices, appears to be more open to new ways of working. For example, Mitel research shows they’re more welcoming to the idea of online and virtualized working. Traditional working patterns are also under pressure, as Mitel data shows that the majority (81 percent) of workers now want to break free from their organization’s 9-to-5 culture in favor of flexible hours and working locations.

Technology influences almost every aspect of our daily lives and an almost insatiable appetite for gadgets and cutting-edge technologies is influencing the workplace like never before.

While businesses used to be the main drivers of telephony, computing, and communication adoption, it's clear they're no longer setting the agenda. Instead, the dominant force in technological advancements has become the end-user. And the dramatic trend to the cloud, both in consumer and business, is changing the way people consume applications and information.

The *consumer imperative* (also known as *consumerization*) is a technological trend among Millennials (as well as Generation X) in which consumers and end-users are driving the technology landscape in their organizations and the businesses with which they interact, by adopting the personal applications and technologies that they use in their everyday lives (such as social media, event planning, and group instant messaging) for business use.

Research from Mitel shows the bring your own device (BYOD) trend is no longer in its infancy, as around two-thirds of employees are using their own smartphones, tablets, and other devices for work (hmm, more than two-thirds of the workforce is comprised of Millennials and Generation X — coincidence?). Modern businesses and organizations need to embrace technological solutions that work the same way the majority of their employees now work and live — with team collaboration as a central part of their daily professional and personal lives.

Employees Are Geographically Distributed

Popular workforce trends such as flexible hours, mobile and remote working, and *hoteling* (also called *hot desking*) are changing the traditional office environment. Many businesses have embraced the personal cloud and virtual working and find that they no longer need physical office locations where employees regularly go to work in order to function effectively.



Hoteling involves multiple workers sharing a desk on different shifts as opposed to each employee having his own personal desk.

The shift in working practices has moved well beyond the need to accommodate individual requests for flexible home working options. Employees are demanding new ways of working — whether it's from a coffee shop, logging into a network from another site, or setting up a home office. And they're more than content to do all their business on a smartphone — in fact, many expect to be able to do so. Yet, despite overwhelming evidence over the past decade showing higher productivity among employees that are permitted to occasionally work from home, many businesses and managers are still resistant to this new work model.

One challenge that must be addressed in this new work paradigm is that having people working from all over the world, in different ways and at different times, makes it difficult to ensure everyone is accessing and finding the same information, documents, and other resources across the entire team. This situation can result in costly delays, miscommunication, errors, and mistakes — teams often can't wait for a team member in a different time zone to come online in order to access the latest and greatest information. But technologies such as team collaboration and communication tools, virtualization and the cloud, and mobility and BYOD trends enable innovative working environments that are no longer tied to a physical office location and provide the catalyst for the personal cloud. These capabilities enable team members to provide updates wherever they are, at any time, and on any device, so other team members can always have access to the latest and greatest information.

If members of your team are among the skeptical crowd and tend not to believe more subjective measures of productivity, such as higher employee morale, consider the following: According to Global Workplace Analytics (globalworkplaceanalytics.com), 50 percent of the U.S. workforce holds jobs that are compatible with flexible teleworking arrangements, and 79 percent of those workers say they would work from home if permitted. If those employees worked from home just half of the time, the total economic benefit would be more than US \$700 billion annually.

Specifically, businesses would

- ✔ Save over \$500 billion a year in real estate, electricity, absenteeism, turnover, and productivity costs — more than \$11,000 per employee per year.

- ✓ Increase national productivity by 5 million person-years — approximately \$270 billion worth of work.
- ✓ Save on operating expenses such as office space, furniture, utilities, office supplies, janitorial services, security, and maintenance.

Employees would

- ✓ Regain the equivalent of two to three weeks of free time per year spent commuting.
- ✓ Save \$2,000 to \$7,000 in transportation and work-related costs, as well as daycare and after-school care costs.
- ✓ Save more than \$20 billion in fuel costs.

The nation would

- ✓ Reduce greenhouse gases by 54 million tons — the equivalent of taking almost 10 million cars off the road.
- ✓ Reduce wear and tear on highways and roads by over 119 billion miles a year.
- ✓ Save almost 90,000 people from traffic-related injury or death and reduce accident-related costs by over \$10 billion a year.
- ✓ Save over 640 million barrels of oil valued at over \$64 billion a year.

Making it easier for teams to work together from anywhere is well worth doing. Not only can businesses enjoy hard cost savings, but also they can make better decisions through better team collaboration and communication with access to the best available information.



Businesses that continue to rely on centralized, physical offices in the future will view and use them in an entirely different way, turning them into hot desking and collaborative working environments. Desk space will be a shared resource, utilized by multiple workers with “plug and play” technologies such as team collaboration and communication tools and desktop virtualization. Therefore, businesses need to equip their teams for success by giving the mobility they demand with secure access to all the data and information they need

to make better informed decisions — all while keeping your intellectual property and sensitive data safe.

Corporate Structure Has Evolved

Hierarchical org charts are fast becoming relics of a bygone era of work. Modern corporate structures are comprised of diverse cross-functional teams that are dynamically created to work on specific challenges, tasks, and projects. Thus, climbing the corporate ladder has lost its relevance — today's workforce is instead engaged in a highly collaborative game of corporate Twister!

The collaborative organization as defined by William Halal of George Washington University integrates stakeholders into a more productive whole to serve both capital and society, and is modeled on the following three principles:

- ✔ Sharing information increases the level of trust and understanding.
- ✔ Political coalitions solidify common support.
- ✔ Collaborative problem solving creates economic and social value.



The longer it takes key team members to access information, make decisions, and act on those decisions, the bigger the potential negative impact to the entire organization in terms of lost opportunities, lost revenues, and lost profits. In other words, poor team productivity is costly.

Paul Adler, Charles Heckscher, and Laurence Prusak, writing in *Harvard Business Review*, identify the following organizational efforts as necessary for building a successful collaborative organization:

- ✔ Defining and building a shared purpose
- ✔ Cultivating an ethic of contribution
- ✔ Developing processes that enable people to work together in flexible but disciplined projects
- ✔ Creating an infrastructure in which collaboration is valued and rewarded

Technology, of course, is a key component in building the collaborative organization. Gartner defines this technology component as the “digital workplace” that

- ✓ Enables new and more effective ways of working
- ✓ Improves employee engagement and agility
- ✓ Exploits consumer-oriented styles and technologies



Team collaboration and communication tools are key enabling technologies in the modern collaborative organization.

Chapter 2

Tracing the Evolution of Collaboration and Communication

.....

In This Chapter

- ▶ Looking at team collaboration and communications of the past
 - ▶ Extending mobility to the entire organization
 - ▶ Getting ready for 5G and the Internet of Things
 - ▶ Bringing the “shadow IT” culture to light
 - ▶ Adopting a mobile-first, cloud-enabled, Millennial-focused strategy
-

In this chapter, you explore the evolution of business communication and take a look at where team collaboration and communication is headed.

Looking at the Past

It's not uncommon for two team members in an office today, sitting in adjacent cubicles, to send instant messages to each other throughout the day rather than simply looking up and having a face-to-face conversation! But in the not too distant past, most team communication and collaboration took place in person, over the phone, or — more recently, via email.

Although the pervasive use of technology — particularly in the above example — may seem a little impersonal and counter-productive, it's actually quite interesting to consider just how

inefficient our past modes of communication and tools for collaboration really were. For example

- ✓ **Formal face-to-face meetings** required searching the calendars of team members to find a convenient time for everyone (and possibly requiring some to travel, which added travel expenses and lost productivity for the business), then reserving a conference room — which in itself could be quite a chore. During the meeting itself, someone might be tasked with taking (and later disseminating) meeting minutes, while some or all of the other team members take their own notes.
- ✓ **Making a phone call** required looking up someone's phone number in a directory (paper or electronic), “dialing” (the long lost art of sticking your finger in a rotary dial) — or, more correctly, “entering” a phone number, then
 - Waiting for someone to answer (hopefully the person you were trying to reach)
 - Leaving a voicemail (perhaps a bit frustrating)
 - Getting a busy signal (perhaps a little more frustrating)
 - Looking up another phone number for the person, entering the number, and repeating over and over until you finally reach the person or leave a voicemail (definitely frustrating)
- ✓ **Sending an email** provided some improvement in communication as it created a record of conversations, and documents could be attached and distributed to a group of recipients. But important details could easily be lost in a busy (also known as “cluttered” or “typical”) inbox, or buried in a chain of reply messages. Other issues with email communication include
 - Email isn't really the most effective method for real-time communication because an email message can be misunderstood and email delivery isn't always reliable.
 - Far too often, someone important is unintentionally omitted from a key email thread, or — at the opposite extreme — someone inevitably clicks “reply to all” by accident and creates a maelstrom of emails

that other team members have to filter out of their inboxes.

- Following an email conversation thread, even in more recent email clients that can sort emails by threads, is confusing and inefficient.
- Sharing documents as email attachments results in multiple, inconsistent versions of documents and frustrates team collaboration efforts.
- Email systems aren't designed to be document repositories — ask your email administrator why your email is so slow. I promise (fingers crossed) you won't get a snarky reply.

The next evolution of business communication systems introduced Voice over IP (VoIP), which enabled voice and data networks to be converged for more efficient utilization of expensive telco circuits and different forms of communication to be unified in new, advanced tools and applications (such as unified communications and team collaboration and communications).

Assessing the Cost of Stagnation

Today, mobility is a key trend in team communication and has a huge impact on how teams collaborate and communicate. Mobility extends well beyond knowledge workers to also include service personnel who must increasingly be immediately available to your customers from anywhere. In addition to mobile communications, smartphones and tablets provide the ability for team members to collaborate and be productive from practically anywhere with powerful mobile apps that provide the same functionality as traditional desktop applications. These include file sharing apps, social networking, knowledge databases and wikis, and business process applications (such as Salesforce.com).



For businesses that fail to embrace the mobility trend, some potential costs include

- ✓ **Missed opportunities:** Your customers and partners — both new and existing — demand agility, flexibility, and convenience from the organizations they do business

with — from anywhere, at any time, and on any device they choose. They want fast answers.

- ✔ **Lower customer satisfaction:** After the initial sale or business transaction, the customer experience has only just begun. Your customers and partners expect outstanding service and support throughout the lifetime of your business relationship — from anywhere, at any time, and on any device they choose. Businesses need to learn from their customers and be able to pivot and respond across the business quickly and easily.
- ✔ **Greater security and legal risks:** The mobility trend is a reality for today's workers, whether your organization embraces it or not. For those organizations that don't embrace it, team members will often download and use their own mobile apps to get their work done — creating a culture of “shadow IT”, increasing the risk of a data breach due to a lost device or compromised file sharing service with sensitive data stored on it, potentially exposing the organization to regulatory non-compliance penalties, and significantly increasing the cost and scope of legal discovery.
- ✔ **Less team diversity and lower retention:** Mobile technology enables employees to work from practically anywhere, which means organizations that embrace the mobility trend can expand their talent pool well beyond their local geographic area. Furthermore, modern workers — particularly Millennials and Gen Xers — expect flexible working environments that enable them to be productive from anywhere.
- ✔ **Lost team productivity:** Time spent traveling to and from the office and team meetings, particularly when you're offline, is non-productive. Having the capability to quickly setup and conduct online virtual meetings with team members — wherever they are and on any device they choose — is a huge boost to team productivity. Access to team collaboration services designed with the mobile workforce/device in mind is key to minimizing lost productivity. The faster team members can find the latest and greatest information — and stop asking if something is the latest, the better.



According to a recent *Forbes* article, a global survey found that 43 percent of employees prefer flexible work over a pay raise. And Gartner reports that 70 percent of mobile professionals will do business on mobile devices by 2018. Hiring new people — and not necessarily getting the “cream of the crop” — costs businesses still more.



The cost to organizations that fail to embrace the mobility trend in team collaboration and communication will be further exacerbated — potentially to the point of loss of viability as a going business concern — in the very near future, as new technologies such as 5G and the Internet of Things (IoT) come to fruition.

Glimpsing Ahead to the Future

The next-generation mobile network, 5G, is on the horizon and built for a future in which everyone and everything is connected. 5G will be the communications network of the digital future — a future that will deliver

- ✓ Faster mobile connections in more places (such as on planes and trains, in large buildings, and in remote areas)
- ✓ Support for billions of smart machines, devices, and sensors (such as driverless cars, drones, wearable technology, smart meters, and remote factory equipment) that can tell you everything you need to know about your products or services and how they’re being used
- ✓ Greater security, flexibility, availability, interoperability, and battery life

5G will enable the IoT and will transform businesses and entire industries.

Therefore, creating a “collaborative enterprise” corporate philosophy — one in which everyone can collaborate and communicate with ease and efficiency — is more important than ever to be prepared for the world of tomorrow. Team collaboration and communications will become still more critical to the success of businesses, enabling dramatically more effective teams, rapid team formation, and ultimately significant business value.

For example, the greater bandwidth, higher reliability, and security available with 5G LTE will provide the ability to prioritize certain types of traffic (such as video) with “network slices” in 5G networks. This also helps team members use a variety of collaboration technologies from anywhere — such as using their smartphones as a mobile “hotspot” to conduct a high-definition video conference while traveling on a high-speed train through a remote mountainous area or on a transcontinental flight. Although 5G is still a few years away, one thing that’s certain is that it will significantly impact how people communicate and collaborate across teams.

With the IoT, businesses will be able to collect real-time data about how their products are performing, thereby enabling proactive remote service and support for their customers. The faster that businesses can act on data collected from their IoT products, the more successful they will be in the market.

Finally, medical IoT devices will be able to transmit potentially life-saving health data to a patient’s entire team of medical professionals in real-time, for example, enabling them to instantly join a video conference in order to collaborate together and determine the correct diagnosis and the best treatment for a patient.



As technology continue to evolve at a rapid pace, organizations need to develop and implement a team collaboration and communication strategy that will enable them to fully leverage all the benefits of 5G LTE and the IoT in the near future.

Taking a Look from the IT Perspective

In the not too distant past, IT was the gatekeeper of technology for most businesses and organizations, responsible for vetting new systems and applications, as well as deploying, supporting, and maintaining them throughout the organization.

However, employees today are much more tech savvy, and in many organizations, they're empowered to make technology choices for themselves. As evidence of this trend, one recent report found that the average employee uses

- ✓ More than 16 different cloud services
- ✓ Approximately 3 different content sharing services
- ✓ Up to 3 different collaboration services

As more of these consumer-oriented apps “storm the gate” — often without IT's involvement or awareness — a “shadow IT” culture has emerged in many organizations. A shadow IT culture creates many challenges for an organization including

- ✓ Lost productivity and inefficiency due to different teams being unable to collaborate or communicate with various incompatible and unfamiliar tools
- ✓ Growing frustration by team members due to a lack of consistency in the tools they use across different projects, and the inability of IT to support unknown and incompatible apps and services
- ✓ Security and compliance issues due to a loss of visibility and control of data that may be shared and stored in different cloud-based content sharing services
- ✓ Increasing costs due to the requirement for IT to support an ever increasing number of apps and devices, and no economies of scale as different teams procure their own apps and tools independently
- ✓ Loss of confidence by customers and partners due to the use of inconsistent and sometimes unreliable apps and “freeware” that projects an unprofessional image

While the pervasiveness of shadow IT isn't ideal for IT departments, what it does for the business is shed light on the types of applications their employees deem beneficial to performing their jobs. Armed with this knowledge, IT can then seek out solutions that address the needs of employees, can be utilized throughout the business, and fit within their strategy/architecture.

Taking an Organizational Perspective

The team collaboration and communication tools and options available to teams today create a powerful, yet potentially dangerous dichotomy: Creating connected, collaborative teams or a “collaboration center/strategy of excellence” presents many benefits to the organization, but without a well-defined team collaboration and communication strategy for the entire organization, it can result in a hodgepodge of poorly used (or misused) tools among different teams throughout the organization.

An organizational strategy must address the competitive and workplace realities of today and the future and fully leverage new and evolving technologies. Such a strategy needs to be

- ✔ **Mobile first:** Our world is becoming increasingly mobile. 5G and other technological advances will continue to drive the mobile imperative for the foreseeable future.
- ✔ **Cloud enabled:** The cloud is everywhere and expanding. In the cloud, businesses can deliver better services to their customers faster, and teams can easily access data from various systems, processes, and applications. Machine-to-machine (M2M) communications and the IoT will make the cloud even more ubiquitous in the future by leveraging newer cloud models such as mobile edge computing and fog computing to move data, communication, and compute-intensive operations closer to the various devices that teams use to collaborate and communicate with each other.
- ✔ **Millennial focused:** Millennials now comprise more than one-third of the U.S. workforce and will comprise half of the global workforce by 2020. As Baby Boomers retire and Millennials (followed by Centennials) join the workforce in growing numbers, the technologies and tools that they use need to reflect their workstyles and preferences: They must be simple to use, flexible to meet the diverse needs of the individual or team, and available on the user’s device of choice.

Eliminating productivity roadblocks with team collaboration technology solutions

Even the most effective teams occasionally fall victim to productivity roadblocks — emergency fixes, urgent projects, and impromptu meetings are sometimes inevitable. But the most frustrating roadblock is often the most avoidable: technology. Today's collaboration solutions have evolved to a point where technology failures or lack of information should rarely, if ever, derail your team's productivity.

How many of the following productivity roadblocks apply to your team?

Team Roadblock #1: Time wasted trying to connect with the right team members.

According to McKinsey and Company, the average worker spends 20 percent of their time searching for information and tracking down colleagues.

Why it's unnecessary: Today's communications applications offer presence information to completely eliminate this frustration and hours of wasted time. In fact, 60 percent of firms with the proper team collaboration tools in place saved three hours a week per mobile worker, according to network integrator Nexus.

Team Roadblock #2: Getting bogged down in email

The average office worker now sends or receives 121 emails daily, according to research by the Radicati Group.

Why it's unnecessary: Applications for real-time communication enable real-time answers and cut down on inbox anxiety. Effective team collaboration tools can even reduce emails by 40 percent.

Team Roadblock #3: Poor connectivity when out of the office

Business travel, flexible working options, and remote team members are becoming more and more commonplace, meaning work is no longer a place you go — it's a thing you do.

Why it's unnecessary: It's now virtually essential for businesses to ensure team members have all the necessary tools for collaboration and an in-office experience, no matter where they are. The good news is, having a solid mobility strategy can boost user satisfaction, cut costs, and increase productivity.

Team Roadblock #4: Application overload

Does it feel like every team in your organization uses different platforms for file sharing and communicating? Does it take über tech skills to navigate your systems and network to find the information you need?

Why it's unnecessary: Today's team collaboration applications can eliminate pain and frustration by consolidating all your team communication channels into one experience that's mirrored across all the devices that your team members use.

Chapter 3

Considering Different Team Collaboration and Communication Use Cases

.....

In This Chapter

- ▶ Exploring the possibilities with team collaboration and communication
 - ▶ Understanding how the changing workforce works
 - ▶ Staying connected, conducting meetings, and managing projects
-

To be successful in today's fast-paced market, both speed and accuracy are key in modern businesses. Making the right decisions quickly can not only help assure being first to market with a new offering that delights customers but also can be the difference between being a leader in the marketplace or a follower. To achieve this, businesses need to introduce business tools and solutions that can break down organizational silos and bring together diverse employees and teams to make a project, big or small, successful.

With team collaboration solutions, employees and teams can engage in productive communications that foster new ideas and innovative solutions — translating to better business performance and success. In this chapter, you spend a day in the life of others to experience different team collaboration and communication experiences.

A Day in the Life of . . .

Work, and especially team-based activity, isn't static; it's a continuously changing and evolving process that involves collaborating to solve a problem, measuring results, and improving the output, whether it's speed to market, quality of service, or return on investment (ROI).

A workflow is a steady stream of context with faster currents in some portions of the project and slower demands in others. Like a stream, it meanders its way with an inconsistent ebb and flow of people, conversations, collaboration, and content. The key is that the time domain of the work stream must be visible and accessible, including future events, past documentation, and revision history.

A team collaboration and communication platform brings together core collaboration and communication tools into a single interface, which helps to improve the quality of decisions being made by the team and can benefit team members in many different scenarios. In this section, you explore a few typical scenarios including

- ✓ Streamlining team communications
- ✓ Enabling knowledge sharing and seamless access to experts
- ✓ Conducting meetings and managing projects

Streamlining Team Communications

Employees often have to make several attempts to contact others in the organization, particularly in larger organizations with multiple offices and locations.

To help streamline team communications, team members need the ability to

- ✓ Manage their business communications all in one place while multitasking across different projects and team activities.

- ✓ Be more effective at working together with information and updates available any time, on any device.
- ✓ See if others are available or when they will be free for a real-time connection.
- ✓ Maintain the context and information about projects as they multitask across the range of activities most employees are involved in today.

Key capabilities to look for in a team collaboration and communication platform to help streamline team communications include

- ✓ Presence and Awareness information
- ✓ Communications escalation
- ✓ Easy and secure file sharing
- ✓ Single number reachability
- ✓ Communications mobility
- ✓ Point-to-point video
- ✓ Persistent communication across multiple channels such as instant messaging (IM), file sharing, and collaboration

Walking a Mile in Your Employees' Shoes

For many of today's working professionals, their days begin with a mobile device in hand. Sometimes even before getting out of bed, workers are busily reading emails, reviewing their calendar for the day, and catching up on other current events — all on a mobile device from the convenience of their homes. The reality is that today's workforce preferences and demographics are changing. Work is no longer a destination; instead, it's an activity that can increasingly be performed from practically anywhere. As a result, employers need to develop new working models that embrace this new reality, or they risk creating potential employee engagement issues in the workplace.

One challenge for employers is managing how and where work gets done with a diverse, multigenerational workforce — comprised of Millennials, Generation Xers, and Baby Boomers — that can work from anywhere and at any time.

Particularly among Millennials, there's an inherent expectation that employers should accommodate flexible working arrangements and provide the essential tools that enable them to be productive from anywhere. For example, working from home has become the “new normal” with advances in technology (such as smartphones, Wi-Fi, collaboration tools, and cloud-based business applications) that no longer tie employees to an office and enable them to be productive from anywhere at any time. The potential benefits of flexible working arrangements — to employers and employees alike — are significant and include

- ✓ Higher productivity and less inefficiency as employees are able — and willing — to work from anywhere, at any time, and on any device
- ✓ Flexible or shifting working hours that more readily accommodate different time zone interactions, remote teams, and preferred working times
- ✓ Greater employee satisfaction, workforce diversity, and higher retention
- ✓ Lower personal expenses, for example, associated with lengthy daily commutes and child care costs
- ✓ Healthier work-life balance in a connected, “always on” world



Forrester Research found that in organizations that have implemented BYOD, 76 percent reported improvements in employee responsiveness and decision making.

Many of the perceived barriers to flexible work environments are also disappearing as technology and changing attitude about work continue to evolve. For example, managers traditionally worried about being unable to monitor and supervise their employees if they allowed teleworking policies. However, newer technologies actually provide greater insight into employee productivity, particularly with respect to team collaboration and business communications systems.

Another potential concern was the lack of direct interaction between coworkers and team members. Although it may seem counterintuitive, team collaboration and communication happens far more often today in modes other than face-to-face meetings and interactions.



A recent PwC study found that 41 percent of millennials prefer to communicate electronically at work than face-to-face or even over the telephone. Gartner suggests that by 2018, 50 percent of team coordination and communication will occur via mobile group collaboration apps.

Businesses and organizations of all sizes and in all industries must embrace a team collaboration and communication strategy that is

- ✓ Mobile first
- ✓ Cloud enabled
- ✓ Millennial focused

Enabling Knowledge Sharing and Seamless Access to Experts

Many businesses have internal groups and teams that often require assistance from others within the organization. For example, service technicians may require additional information in the field, and different customer-facing teams often have to make several calls to resolve customer issues. Likewise, sharing information is also critical for teams, for example, while collaborating on a document or a new product and “virtual” teams that rely on each other every day and can benefit by knowing who the “expert” is on a given topic.



Benchmarking studies by *Metric Net* indicate that first call resolution is the single biggest driver of customer satisfaction, and a study conducted by *Consumer Relationship Metrics* found that customer satisfaction ratings will be 35 to 45 percent lower when a second call is made for the same issue. Faster, real-time access to the business or the team that has the information needed to answer questions the first time is a

great example of how team collaboration tools can benefit the business.

A team collaboration and communication tool enables team members to reach out to others in the organization to provide real assistance to your customers. Improving first call resolution and empowering field employees not only positively impacts the cost of operations, but also simultaneously improves customer satisfaction and retention. A team collaboration and communication platform should have key capabilities to enable knowledge sharing across teams and throughout the organization, including

- ✓ Real-time private and group chat
- ✓ Real-time video chat from desktop and mobile devices
- ✓ Dynamic profiles that modify communication options and routing
- ✓ Easy access to real-time collaboration services such as audio conferencing, document collaboration, web sharing, and more
- ✓ Ability to invite outside parties into real-time conferencing
- ✓ Mobile-first design providing an “in-office” experience via web-enabled and mobile devices



Keeping your customers happy requires connecting with them in innovative new ways. Social media has become a powerful tool for customers to express their opinions and experiences about their business interactions. For more information on how to connect with your customers via social media, download your free copy of *Customer Experience For Dummies*, Mitel Special Edition, at www.mitel.com/cx-for-dummies.

Conducting Meetings and Managing Projects

Team-based projects and meetings have traditionally happened in a single location with a few remote or mobile participants. However, today team members are now often mobile and comprised of individual team members (including external participants) located in different offices and time zones.



In a survey conducted by Wainhouse Research, respondents indicated they attend an average on nine meetings each week. Of those meetings, 54 to 80 percent typically included remote participants.

For example, a multinational organization working on a project or service to be offered globally may need to conduct regular team meetings to manage the following:

- ✓ Requirements coming from sales and marketing teams
- ✓ Application development teams located across the globe
- ✓ Testing and quality assurance
- ✓ Customer feedback requiring fast resolution for any problems identified and possible product/service modifications
- ✓ Sales teams that need to get up to speed quickly about a new product/service release or enhancement

As remote and mobile working increases, companies are looking for tools to facilitate team collaboration, enabling teams to be more agile and productive from anywhere, at any time, using any device.

A team collaboration and communication tool can help organizations

- ✓ Reduce travel costs
- ✓ Increase team productivity
- ✓ Improve time to market and competitiveness

With a team collaboration and communication tool, you can eliminate the need for many meetings simply by posting questions for the whole team without all being together in an email conversation thread or meeting. Individual team members can respond when it's convenient for them, and the platform logs what everyone says so team members can quickly go back and forth on issues that don't require real-time discussions.



Organizations often have meetings so everyone can share ideas with the team, but what you need to remember is that while you want to share with the team and all have an opportunity to contribute, you don't necessarily need to do it in real-time to be efficient.

Key capabilities to look for in a team collaboration and communication platform to help conduct meetings and manage projects include:

- ✓ Document annotation and collaboration
- ✓ Document review with voice and video
- ✓ Collaborative task and to-do lists

Chapter 4

Exploring Mitel's Team Collaboration and Communications Solution

In This Chapter

- ▶ Enabling team collaboration and communications with MiTeam
 - ▶ Managing complex projects with MiTeam
-

In this chapter, we introduce Mitel's team collaboration and communications solution: MiTeam.

Unifying Work Streams

MiTeam is a team collaboration and communications tool that embraces this natural workflow continuity and provides a single, unified experience with rich collaboration and real-time communications to support how real teamwork is achieved today. It provides highly collaborative and persistent workspaces for team-based meetings, conversations, content sharing, annotation and collaboration, information storage, and project management. With MiTeam, you can reduce organizational silos — which helps improve the quality of decisions being made — and increase your speed to market with one converged collaboration application that

extends beyond your company walls to mobile employees, partners, and customers.

MiTeam provides a highly collaborative, persistent workspace for team-based meetings, conversations, content collaboration, and project management. MiTeam improves collaboration and communications for both formal and informal teams alike, in projects of any size, which drives better, more informed decisions and greater results. Completely integrated with MiCollab, team messaging as a single Stream includes all of the following capabilities:

- ✓ **Streams:** Workspace chat sessions for groups large and small that can track a project or activity from start to finish, including the ability to conduct group discussions, add and mark-up files, assign action items, and launch meetings
- ✓ **Search:** Powerful search capabilities that help you quickly find the information you're looking for within a Stream
- ✓ **To-Do:** Assign and track action items to ensure team members understand what needs to be accomplished and who is responsible
- ✓ **Meet:** Quickly create tap-to-connect collaborative sessions on the fly by selecting the required participants and then entering the real-time meeting with a single tap of the Meet/Join button directly within a Stream

MiTeam seamlessly synchronizes everything relevant to your team into Streams, making teamwork easier and faster — whether your project lasts a day or a year, with two people or twenty. Streams are persistent collaborative workspaces that continuously archive your team's history of messages, content, annotations, and tasks for future reference (see Figure 4-1).

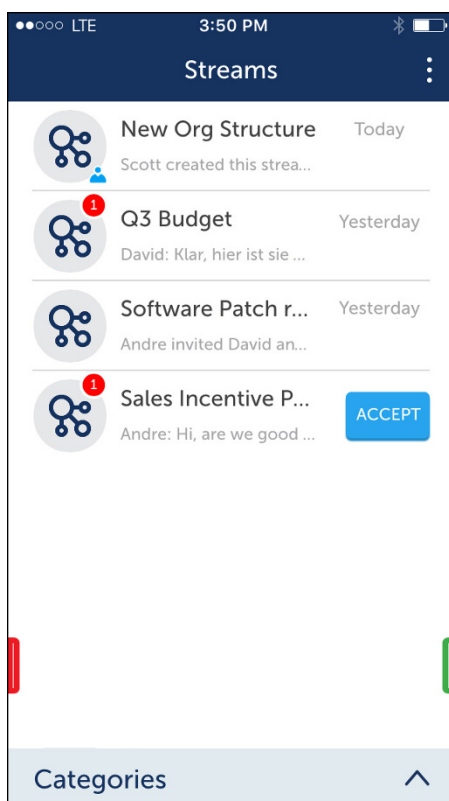


Figure 4-1: MiTeam Streams keep teams organized.

With MiTeam, you can instantly start a real-time voice or video collaboration session with colleagues, partners, or customers, directly from your mobile device, with advanced call-control capabilities (see Figure 4-2).

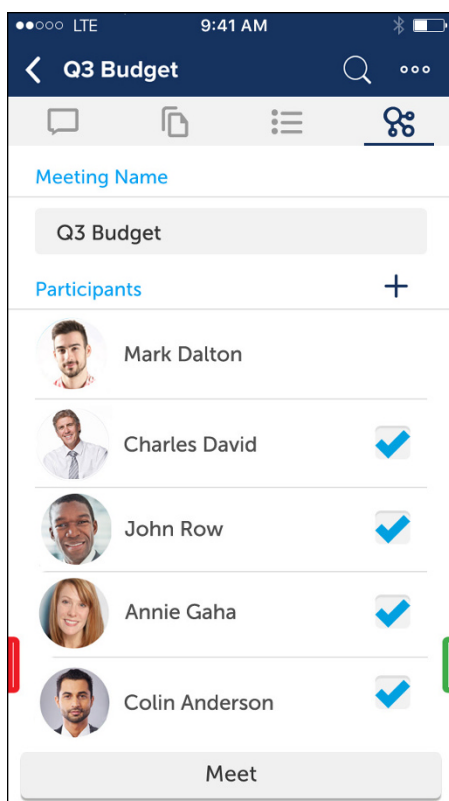


Figure 4-2: MiTeam enables real-time voice or video collaboration directly from your mobile device.

Keeping Projects Moving Forward

Team projects can often be sprawling and hard to organize. Ideas, action items, decisions, and documents can exist in multiple locations and formats, including email, instant messages (IMs), voicemail, online storage, individual hard drives, and more. This makes it hard to quickly find or share information.

MiTeam seamlessly integrates into MiCollab to allow employees within and outside the Stream to effortlessly collaborate

within a single business-wide solution, including powerful messaging, content sharing, white boarding, and real-time voice and video meetings. All the collaboration tools you need are at your fingertips in an intuitive and open environment.

With MiTeam, you can

- ✓ Keep up with projects, stay connected with colleagues and clients, and eliminate cumbersome emails with powerful layers of embedded collaboration.
- ✓ Centralize all project related communications, content, tasks and content review into a persistent workspace.
- ✓ Empower employees to work where and when they need to with content sharing, collaborative meeting, and team conferences via their mobile devices.
- ✓ Consolidate teamwork and unified communications capabilities into a single, business-wide application, helping drive better decision making, effectiveness, and business agility throughout the business.
- ✓ Integrate and embed external services directly into your MiTeam experience to automate alerts, seamlessly import content and annotate files, never leaving the application.
- ✓ Expand teams past the physical boundaries of your own organization to include external guests, from anywhere around the globe.
- ✓ Enable new team members to hit the ground running and geographically dispersed team members in different time zones to quickly get up to speed on what happened while they were asleep, by viewing interactions with full context, accessing shared documents, listening to recording of meetings, and tracking project tasks.



MiTeam is the natural extension of today's team collaboration experience that more closely aligns to how teams actually work together in the always-on, mobile-first workplace. Available with Mitel's cloud or on-premises based MiCollab options, Mitel MiTeam has the flexibility to work with the deployment model that makes the most sense for your business.

Chapter 5

Ten Features of a Great Team Collaboration and Communications Solution



In This Chapter

- ▶ Making it easy for team members to collaborate and communicate
- ▶ Moving seamlessly across devices with one easy interface
- ▶ Supporting teamwork in real-time
- ▶ Adapting to different team and team member requirements
- ▶ Enabling easy integration, deployment, and scalability



In this chapter, we describe ten (okay, eight) key features that you should demand in your team collaboration and communications solution.

Work Stream Messaging

Work, and especially team-based activity, isn't static; instead it's a continuous process that involves collaborating to solve a problem, measuring results and improving the output, whether it's speed to market, quality of service, or return on investment (ROI).

Team collaboration tools allow team members to “reach” each other via a collaborative workspace (“streams”). Work stream messaging embraces this natural workflow continuity and provides a single, unified experience with rich collaboration and

real-time communications to support how real teamwork is achieved today:

- ✓ By keeping all pervasive chats, collaboration, and content (such as documents, presentations, PDFs, and more) within a persistent workspace, new teamwork members can get caught up in a matter of minutes.
- ✓ Keep up with projects, stay connected with colleagues and clients, and eliminate cumbersome emails with powerful layers of embedded collaboration within a single, shared application.
- ✓ Consolidate teamwork capabilities into a single window pane, centralizing chats, content sharing, collaborative whiteboard sessions, pictures, videos, presentations, and add rich graphic and vocal annotations.
- ✓ Conduct face-to-face meetings with team members even if you aren't in the same room with them using multi-party video integration.
- ✓ Expand teams past the physical confines of your own organization to include remote employees, contractors, and even partner or customer contacts, anywhere around the globe and on any device.

Easy Document Sharing and Annotation

The ability to easily share and annotate materials, including notes, revisions, mashups, and voice/video clips, is an integral capability in a team collaboration and communications tool. Whether you're sharing your screen to walk someone through a new process or collaborating directly on a shared document in real-time, your team collaboration application should make teamwork simple, regardless of geographic distance. By having the information in the stream workspace, a "single source of truth" can be easily managed to avoid replications and changes.

A collaborative experience that's natural to the user and inclusive to workflow leads to increased sharing of knowledge, insights, and ideas among team members and other

employees, ultimately making the business flatter and enabling more informed decisions to be made.

Seamless Pivoting Across Devices Within the Stream

E-commerce and retail customers increasingly expect to be able to seamlessly pivot from one device to another, enabling them to do their shopping and research wherever they are and from any device, then conveniently complete a purchase when they're ready. For example

- ✓ A customer might begin researching an item that he'd like to purchase on a retail website, from his desktop computer at the office during his lunch break.
- ✓ Later that afternoon, he continues his research on his smartphone while riding the train home from work — picking up where he left off earlier with several options already filtered out, and only his desired choices displayed. He narrows his choices to three possible products.
- ✓ Later that evening, he completes the purchase on his tablet by selecting one of the three products. He opts to pick up the item in a store near his home over the weekend.
- ✓ That weekend he drops into the store, where a store associate pulls up his order on a kiosk, prints his receipt, and hands him the item.

Team collaboration and communications should be as seamless and transparent as this type of shopping experience.

An effective team collaboration tool makes collaboration and communications — whether it's voice, messaging, document annotation, project management, or other team functions — easy. It should be easy to go from a document review to a conference call to an instant message. And, just as you're no longer tethered to a desktop computer, your team collaboration tool shouldn't tether you to your desktop computer or to a single device. It should work seamlessly across all of your devices.

The major benefit? Being able to easily transition from work to home to client site — using the mobile device best suited to a particular situation without losing touch — means team members can work effectively no matter where they are.



So, in order to keep real-time communications in real-time, a good team collaboration tool will synchronize your conversations and interactions across all devices so you're constantly connected and current. This way, team members on the go can jump from their laptops to their mobile phones without any costly gaps in communications.

Single Intuitive User-Friendly Interface

As is the case when introducing any new technology, you want to remove any barriers to user adoption. Typical reasons why people resist new technology include

- ✓ Lack of comfort with the change
- ✓ Not enough time to incorporate the change
- ✓ Unable to see the value of the change

Your team collaboration tool needs to reduce stress and relieve anxiety by providing immediate and clear value in the first thing your team members will see: the user interface. A clean, modern interface that is similar to the interfaces they use in their various personal apps makes it easier for team members to learn how to use a new tool and reduces confusion that prevents them from seeing the tool's value.

A good team collaboration tool simplifies your work life, makes you more productive, and saves you from the hassle of flipping back and forth between different applications to find the information you need. It should help you handle all interactions, including talk, chat, work streams, video, collaboration sessions, and conferences, from a single interface to truly maximize efficiency. It should let you choose the best communication method for each of your interactions. This creates a single “source of truth” for all business information, allowing team members to bring together all of the information they

need, categorized by project, subject, or person, and instantly retrieve IM conversations, documents, and more.

Real-time Communications Reachability

With all of the options available today for communicating with each other in real-time, sometimes our biggest challenge is figuring out the best way to contact other team members. Do they prefer to be called on their office phone, home phone, or mobile phone? Or do they prefer a text message, instant message, or email? And what's their phone number or email address?

Instead of having to try different ways to reach someone, your team collaboration and unified communications tool should manage it for you — based on team members' and employees' presence and availability information and their preferred contact methods. All you need to do is select the name of the person you want to reach and how you want to contact them — the app takes care of the rest. But in order for the app to “take care of the rest” it must be fully integrated with different communications tools such as instant messaging, phone systems, and video conferencing software, as well as team collaboration tools such as document collaboration suites.

Event and Interaction History

Team membership often changes, especially on longer lived teams. Often, new members are brought into a workgroup midway through a project. No problem — your team members can catch up on the entire history from a great team collaboration tool. Need to recall a specific detail? Gone are the days of wracking your brain to remember whether it was discussed by email or IM. A team collaboration tool worth its salt puts this information at your fingertips and significantly cuts down on time wasted digging through various inboxes and chat histories.

Different Options for Different Teams and Team Members

Team collaboration and communications isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. Different teams have different requirements and individuals have their own personal preferences for how they collaborate and communicate with others.

A team collaboration and communications solution should offer the flexibility for teams and individuals to choose the options and features they need and prefer, whether it's video conferencing, desktop sharing, instant messaging, or any other option in a single, harmonious solution that addresses all of their needs.

Flexible Deployment Options

Business requirements change over time and your team collaboration and communications solution needs to offer flexible options that will enable it to adapt to your changing needs. An on-premises solution may be your best option today, but as your business grows you may need to move to the cloud, or vice versa.

Your team collaboration tool should also complement, not disrupt, your existing IT infrastructure in order to lower your total cost of ownership (TCO) and maximize your ROI. Depending on the level of integration, you'll often see extra features and functionality from a tool that leverages your existing systems.

Your team collaboration platform should also provide extensibility and scalability that enables you to integrate new and existing business applications through an open application programming interface (API). Additionally, an open API will enable you to custom develop additional capabilities, such as task management functions (for example, assigning tasks to team members, creating to-do lists, and others) and guest access (adding team members that are external to the organization to participate in projects, document annotation, and collaboration, among others).

Finally, you need to have confidence that the team collaboration and communications tool that your employees and team members use to make better decisions, increase productivity, and differentiate your business don't fall into the wrong hands. Security is of the utmost importance in any computing environment, and a team collaboration and communications platform is no exception. Look for security features that include

- ✓ **Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)/Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption for data in transit** (such as between devices, browsers, and the cloud)
- ✓ **Strong server-side encryption for data at rest** (data that is stored on servers and/or in the cloud)
- ✓ **Granular access control** that enables team members to share content with other team members and provide the appropriate level of access — but not too much access
- ✓ **Detailed audit trails** that provide information about who accesses what data, when they access it, and what they do to it
- ✓ **Geolocation of services** to ensure that the team collaboration and communications tool (and your data) is always available when your team needs it — even during a disaster (and in some cases, especially during a disaster)



Look for a solution that's easy to implement, administer, and support — and is secure — to keep your IT department happy. Examine the resources and technology you have in place and pick a team collaboration tool that's a good fit for both.

Prioritize team collaboration and communications within your organization

Your biggest investment and competitive advantage in your business is often your employees. Maximizing employee productivity has significant impact on your bottom line. Today's employees use mobile devices and mobile apps in practically every aspect of their lives — that includes the business world. These devices and apps influence the way your employees collaborate and interact professionally. It's time to embrace the mobile lifestyle and find innovative ways to adapt these productivity-enhancing tools to a professional setting for effective team collaboration and communications.

- **Impact your business** — *strengthen your collaboration skills*
- **Evolve your team dynamics** — *improve team productivity, competitiveness, agility, and decision making*
- **Become a collaborative enterprise** — *find out what it takes*
- **Discover the Mitel MiTeam solution** — *improve your team collaboration and communications*



Open the book and find:

- The must-have features for a team collaboration and communications solution
- How to differentiate your business for competitive advantage
- Ways to build effective cross-generational teams
- How to enable team collaboration and communications with MiTeam
- Ways to manage complex projects with MiTeam

Making Everything Easier!™

Go to Dummies.com
for videos, step-by-step examples,
how-to articles, or to shop!



WILEY END USER LICENSE AGREEMENT

Go to www.wiley.com/go/eula to access Wiley's ebook EULA.