



RETHINKING WORK

Powering collaboration
with companion tech

Opinion White Paper





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INTRODUCTION

The business landscape has shifted significantly in recent years, and many organisations now find themselves on a precipice. Fostering effective collaboration, not just within individual teams, but across business units, is seen as critical to the successful pursuit of business objectives. Equally, as the dramatic rise in remote and hybrid working challenges the opportunity for in-person collaboration, employees are increasingly keen to connect with their colleagues in a way that augments their current working model, turning the spotlight onto the technology at their disposal.

Virtual meeting environments and instant messaging channels delivered through tools like Microsoft Teams have now become the place where work gets done, which has seen your team leverage a growing estate of companion devices as key workspace technology.

Now, as businesses look to optimise modern and flexible working models, an increased level of scrutiny must be applied to ensure that any technology investments are fit for purpose and well-placed to support employees for the long-term.



THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

Whether employees are fully remote, office-based or embracing a more flexible hybrid approach, it is crucial that they are empowered with tools ready-made to support effective collaboration. This goes beyond the quality of hardware itself and places increased focus on the suitability of chosen technology to meet the demands of each employees own environment, circumstances and preferences.

It's only by applying this level of scrutiny that businesses can remove potential blockers and ensure that their investments in software tools and peripheral tech become an enabler to collaboration, rather than an unwanted and divisive blocker.



With multiple factors at play, identifying the right technology relies on the consideration of four key areas:

1



WORKFORCE

Understand the roles they perform

Every member of your team has their own preferences, their own behaviours and unique circumstances. How does this influence the way they work?

2



WORKSPACE

An individual's user environment

Wherever your people are working, are the tools that they've been given appropriate for their environment?

3



WORKSTYLE

How your people get work done

How are your users utilising the tools they are given? What are their preferences and how can you support this?

4



WORKPLACE

Where your business works

Is your office environment set up to effectively support collaboration?



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1 - WORKFORCE

Every member of your team is unique

Your business is only as good as your team, and your collective success is driven not only by their skills and attitudes, but their ability to perform at their best.

With more than a quarter of employees globally now working either remotely or hybrid¹, technology will make or break day-to-day collaboration. Requirements like video calling and working on the move, once considered niche, are now essential, even for in-office employees. The ability to access work from anywhere, put forward a professional representation of themselves on video calls, and collaborate without unnecessary friction are vital to ensuring they can play their part in the success of the business.

28%

The percentage of workers working in a remote or hybrid manner as of 2023.¹



No one out in the cold

With employees increasingly dispersed, it can be difficult to engender a shared purpose and a sense of team. Without the appropriate platform for social interaction and collaboration, remote users can quickly start to feel detached and out in the cold. Wherever your employees are working, your choice of technology needs to ensure that they have the resources to engage with their peers in a way they are comfortable with, and at the level you expect. This is just as true for in-office employees as their remote colleagues. Everyone in your business needs to feel like they are operating as part of a team.



New habits die hard

While many businesses remain committed to an in-office workforce, employees have seen the benefits remote and hybrid working can offer - whether for themselves, or their peers. While these modes of working place a greater strain on your IT, they offer your people a comfortable working environment, more positive work-life balance and flexible routines. As such, your business should be prepared to support your people by providing what they'll need to work remotely effectively.

Maintaining business momentum is also crucial. While a majority of remote employees note that working from outside the office helps them eliminate distractions and work faster, this can only benefit them so long as they have the appropriate technology to support them.

52%

The percentage of employees who report they're able to complete work faster when working from home.²





2 - WORKSPACE

Work is not just a place

The shift towards laptops, notebooks and other mobile devices has seen that your people are increasingly able to take their work with them. They aren't tied to a particular workplace and can switch between locations seamlessly.

As a result, technology has become central to the modern workspace, as you arm your people with a selection of tools to enable them to work as needed from wherever they are. This is particularly true of collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Cisco Webex which have become business-critical platforms to ensuring every user is able to effectively and efficiently communicate with their colleagues, partners and customers.

Hardware is the name of the game

With users working from multiple locations, companion hardware is not just nice to have - it's a key enabler of business value. In order to properly engage and interact with the digital workspace, your people need best-in-class headsets, microphones, and cameras to avoid being left out of the loop. This is true not just internally, but with external communications too. Suppliers and customers, both accustomed to their own evolving work models, expect your team members to be as accessible as their own, which in turn demands a certain level of quality and clarity to ensure a professional representation.





Emphasis on engagement

Wherever your people choose to work, they need to be able to maintain focus throughout the day. Unfortunately, the majority of workspaces are littered with possible distractions, whether that's water-cooler chat with their office colleagues, background noise on a packed commuter train, or inadvertent disruption by another member of their household.

These distractions are a part of working life that we all experience, but minimising their impact as much as possible is the key to helping keep your workers minds on the task at hand. For example, headsets that use active noise cancelling and acoustic fence technology can preserve the quality of the audio experience for both speaker and listener, cutting out unwanted background noise and presenting a more professional image.

1/3 of workers are always or very often distracted during their working day.²



SUPERTOOL: THE HEADSET

The growth of remote and hybrid working has ensured that the headset has become a 'can't-live-without' companion device, enabling users to work wherever they need to without fear of compromising their working environment.





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3 - WORKSTYLE

Your people working their way

Whatever the role each member of your team is performing, and wherever they choose to work, they will have their own thoughts and preferences for how best to go about what they do. This is driven by the demands placed on them by their role and typical work environment but is also guided by individual likes and dislikes. This in turn influences the different tools and technology they use, as well as how they use them.

It's vital, therefore, to provide your users with not just functional technology, but the right technology, with product features and capabilities aligned to the way they want to work as well as their personal taste.

52%

of workers prefer to work from their own dedicated desk.³















The right tools for the job

Armed with insights from the widespread adoption of remote and hybrid working, businesses are now well-positioned to make informed decisions over their long-term investments in collaborative tools and companion devices and can do so confident in the knowledge that these investments will be used effectively.

With remote working and other operational practices now part of the mainstream, your users have begun to develop new preferences and habits as part of a revised workstyle based around the needs of their new environment.

Have they embraced a new level of collaboration with their colleagues? Are they regularly working away from their desk? Are they using their headsets and other technology for extended periods of time?

All these considerations, as well as additional preferences over style and design should inform your device choices, ensuring you provide every user with technology they love and that matches with their own way of working.

CONSIDERATION 	FEATURE 
 Desk-based or a roaming worker?	 Corded, wireless or DECT.
 Intermittent calls or regular use?	 Device design and comfort.
 Connected device?	 Connectivity and platform interoperability.
 Travelling or fixed location?	 Device portability, power source and robustness.



4 - WORKPLACE

An environment fit for every employee

While your users are dispersed across a range of environments thanks to remote and hybrid working set-ups, physical office spaces are still central to your business, especially for a group of users who want the work-life separation of physically going to a place of business. Your IT estate needs to support this group of users in the way it always has done but must also expand to ensure they can easily and effectively collaborate with their remote counterparts.

This includes considerations over network connectivity and bandwidth to ensure your office is able to support the increased volume of video call traffic taking place at any given time.



IT estates have also grown to include multiple collaboration platforms, as well as additional voice and video solutions. To maximise these investments, you need to establish the role they can play as part of your business, and how they can be used to better connect remote workers with their office-based colleagues.



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PREPARING YOUR NEW ENVIRONMENT

As the way your people work continues to evolve, it's inevitable that your physical office space will need some level of adjustment to support effective collaboration.

For in-office employees, the availability and capability of physical meeting spaces becomes increasingly important. As they always have done, these environments need to provide a comfortable and private space for in-person collaboration and ensure that any meetings can take place away from other office distractions.

But physical meeting rooms also need to support frictionless virtual collaboration, allowing remote employees to get the benefits of a shared space with their collaborators, both internal and external. Consider the provision of additional audio and visual technology, and its compatibility with commonly used platforms like Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Thought must be given to the quality of experience, and the clarity of both audio and visual to ensure that every participant can be seen and heard.



SUPERTOOL: PROXIMITY JOIN

Connectivity is only part of collaboration - convenience is also vital. The latest Poly meeting room technology supports proximity join, allowing your users to initiate calls and share screens from their own devices, without needing to connect or interact with physical, communal interfaces within the meeting space.



MANAGING AN EXPANDED ESTATE

Creating a platform for effective collaboration between dispersed employees is just one part of the challenge for businesses. But while this can be satisfied in part by the acquisition and deployment of appropriate technology, this in turn creates an additional obligation for IT teams.

With voice and video technology cemented as part of your business's IT infrastructure, management of this estate becomes an important consideration, with a huge emphasis based on the actions of your users to maintain their devices, but with a need to retain a level of centralised oversight and control.

Just like your other corporate devices, effective management requires the implementation of a suitable platform that allows you to monitor device health and deliver firmware upgrades, as well as gain insights into their usage. This is critical to smooth ongoing operation, maintaining user experience and guiding future technology acquisition.



SUPERTOOL: DEVICE MANAGEMENT

High-quality peripherals support collaboration, but only the best come with tools to help IT teams complete their duties by managing user devices, no matter where they're deployed. Poly Lens allows all HP | Poly devices in your estate to be managed through a single pane of glass, ensuring easier software update delivery and performance tracking. End users can also customise device settings through the Poly Lens app, allowing for self-service when it comes to personal preferences.



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HP | POLY: YOUR FLEXIBLE WORKING PARTNER

With companion technologies playing a big role in your workspace strategy, being able to access the right hardware for both users and your modified office environment is one of the most important decisions a business can make in the interests of short-term necessity and long-term continuity planning.

HP | Poly's enviable heritage in audio and visual technology and communication solutions, means they offer a complete range of innovative products across every area of your estate including headsets, handsets, speakers, cameras and management platforms.

Their uncompromising designs suit every need, mode of connectivity and performance demand, and importantly are devices your people love to use. Together they help support a working model that only effectively meets demands today but is ready to evolve with future changes tomorrow.

Sources

¹ Statista, 2024. Work from home: remote & hybrid work - Statistics & Facts.

² Poly, 2020. All your employees are distracted. The realities of today's open office and what you can do about it.

³ Savills, 2019. What workers want: Europe.





EMBRACE FLEXIBILITY WITH SERVIUM AND HP | POLY

As long-standing HP | Poly partners, we're perfectly placed to help you overcome your unique workplace challenges. Together, we harmonise your existing tools and technology with the latest HP | Poly products and solutions to create the perfect environment, capturing the audio-visual opportunities created by your new experiences to deliver greater value for your business, and help you get the very best out of people and technology.

If you'd like to learn more about the latest HP | Poly solutions, and how we can assist your workplace enhancement strategy please contact your Account Manager, email us at hello@servium.com or speak to one of the team on [+44 \(0\)303 334 3000](tel:+44203033343000).

ABOUT SERVIUM

Servium is dedicated to creating great IT experiences - we seek to win the hearts and minds of IT strategy-makers, professionals and users. Our attitude is that no challenge is too big, no detail too small. We tackle both the ordinary and the extraordinary with the same focus and originality of thought that ensures solutions make a difference. It means we're one partner ready to assemble all the technology and know-how every medium to large organisation relies on. Matched by straight-talking, real-world experience and amazing service, our customers enjoy exceptional value, the product of the best innovation, latest thinking and a thriving ecosystem of technical experts.

