

Conference Calls

**TAKING WORKER COLLABORATION
TO THE NEXT LEVEL**



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INTRODUCTION

While the need for business meetings remains the same, the way they're conducted is changing. Think of all the meetings you've been to in the past few weeks. How many of them took place in person? More often than not, meetings today are conducted digitally.

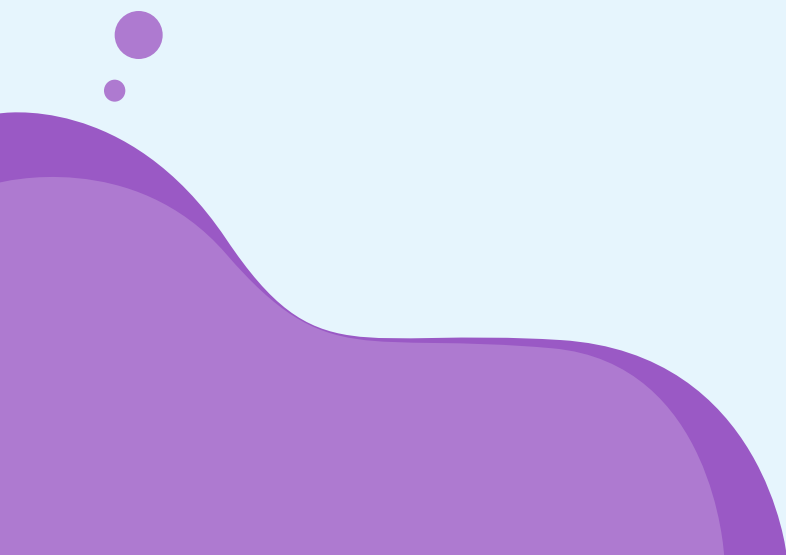
In a world defined by global collaboration and remote workers, conferencing tools have emerged as a critical platform for communication—both internally and externally. With all the technology we have available at our fingertips, it's easy to take the possibility of easily communicating across the globe for granted.

Yet, in today's business landscape, clear, crisp, and glitch-free conferencing technology plays a significant role in how we communicate and the way we work.

As the landscape continues to disperse, the popularity of conferencing tools will continue to increase. But, it isn't just making our ability to communicate easier, conferencing is reshaping work culture.

CHAPTER 1

Rise of the “anywhere, anytime workforce”



Workers today connect to their offices from all over the world and location is no longer a deterrent to most employers. While many companies began connecting with outsourced workers as a way to save money, they have since learned that this opens them up to a much larger, more diverse talent pool—and improved workforce productivity, collaboration, and culture as a result.

Of course, running decentralized, disruptive offices connected to anywhere, anytime workers demands a new breed of communications technology that can provide instant accessibility from anywhere in the world. Ultimately the aim should be that two or more people situated in different cities, countries, regions or hemispheres can talk and work together just as effectively as if they were in the same room.

Unfortunately, most collaborative technologies haven't completely mastered the fundamentals—they can still be difficult to deploy at scale and cumbersome to use. While they are solutions, they are by no means perfect yet.

If collaborative technology isn't well-liked or easily understood, it won't be used. Employees will either avoid communication altogether or swap out their existing tools for unapproved shadow services—and this can create significant security issues. Further, if the tools available aren't being used, they won't be able to justify their own cost of ownership. It will just be wasted money.



The challenges facing collaborative technology

Modern teams operate in different time zones and across multiple channels. They may be working in different platforms and environments, but in the end, they need to have an accessible, coherent and consistent experience.

Today's collaboration tools should bring together all of an organization's communications within a singular, all-in-one resource. Moreover, they should be flexible and scalable enough to work in a variety of environments, while still remaining secure. As large organizations continue to grow into additional locations, these communication solutions will need to be able to support larger numbers of employees and more diversified teams.



The changing employee profile

We're seeing the work environment shift more than ever, and the employee profile changing with it. 40% of employees now [work from home on a regular basis](#), yet they still want to form meaningful and productive relationships with their coworkers.

In the past, the lack of cohesive collaboration tools created significant alienation among remote workers, leaving employees who worked from home or other locations unable to

successfully buy into the company culture. Organizations failed to properly integrate remote workers into the system, making it harder for them to work as a team.

Employees want to be able to connect with each other—and the right conferencing and communication system can help. Conferencing solutions provide better communication between employees, stakeholders, and management so that they can connect and interact with each other as though they're in the same office.

With the right software, employers are able to:

- Collaborate across disparately located teams
- Interview candidates from long distances
- Stay in touch with employees working remotely
- Host seminars for large numbers of individuals
- Keep secure recordings from prior meetings

Of course, that requires that employers invest in the right software—and the right training for their employees.

While there are many platforms available for communication and connectivity, the right solutions are able to support large numbers of employees, provide high-quality, low latency calling, and remain secure.



The advantages of new conferencing solutions

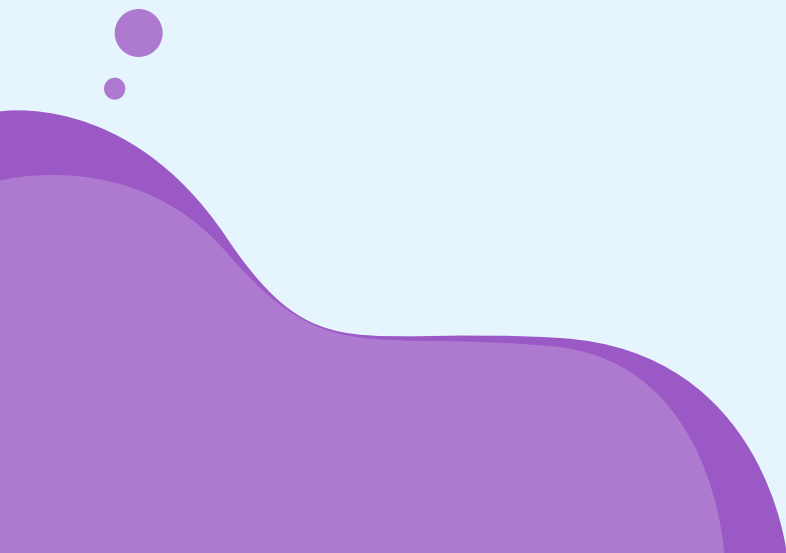
While many conferencing solutions in the market do work, they often make it prohibitively difficult to connect. Often, video conferencing solutions provide slow, low-resolution video, which lead to awkward and incomplete conversations. Difficult video conferencing solutions make employees disinclined to connect with each other, in addition to leading them to “self solve” their solutions.

Regardless of if video is your first choice, voice is still one of the fundamentals of conferencing. By using both video and voice in more effective conferencing solutions, businesses can improve upon the overall effectiveness of their collaboration. HD voice calling, unlimited callers, intuitive messaging, and crystal-clear video conferencing all make it easier for employees to connect with each other, wherever they are.

Through cloud-based services, communications can be securely supported, as well as easily scaled. Companies can connect with hundreds of workers all across multiple sites, on a single easy-to-use framework. These tools offer tremendous advantages over existing tools by supporting improved coordination, becoming fresh sources of increased productivity.

CHAPTER 2

Voice's place in conferencing



Today's distributed teams make it necessary to discover new, more efficient ways to interact with team members digitally. Novel solutions like Slack and Microsoft Teams may provide supplemental channels to voice, but they still incorporate the ability to make phone calls as a core feature. And, as we are seeing in a supposedly mature market, there is still plenty of room for innovation when considering voice services for collaboration tools. In most conferencing applications, there is also potential for improvements in terms of the fundamentals—quality, reliability, functionality.

That's why teams searching for conferencing platforms must focus on an organization's functional needs, its teams' preferences, and how easy a solution will be to implement and maintain. Those three areas can point leadership toward a voice solution that doesn't just solve problems—it can actually deliver better results and facilitate more productive conferencing.



Using tech to keep it simple

New technologies may seem alluring in terms of the new features and use cases they promise, but often core functionality is lost in the pursuit of the Next Big Thing. The idea of conducting meetings in virtual reality, or lightening the burden of scheduling with an AI assistant, can seem like a dream come true—that is, until the mechanics of those solutions come into focus.

Even providers with [best-in-class reliability](#) can fall prey to locations without strong Wi-Fi and broadband or with poor reception. Add video into the equation and conference quality can suffer even more. Given that our research has previously shown that [60 percent of remote employees](#) rate the quality of their current

video conferencing solution as average or worse, it's clear that improving the core functionality of existing technologies remains a major priority for providers and organizations with remote teams that need these services.

This is why voice remains an essential element of remote meetings. While video is becoming integral to a growing number of meetings solutions, the bandwidth it requires means quality can still often be affected. That's why dialing in from a phone number remains a trusted method, even among seasoned remote workers. In fact, between [20 and 40 percent of attendees](#) still use dial-in to join conferences, and nearly [30 percent of remote employees](#) prefer speaking on the phone to speaking on video.



Better technology for improved collaboration

It's time for organizations to prioritize technology that makes life easier for their teams. From connecting with collaborators in emerging markets where limited broadband speeds mean video is not yet prevalent to boosting overall productivity, voice conferencing can make a significant impact on how organizations get work done.

→ User experience

Regardless of a team member's physical location, she should still be able to hear her team members loud and clear. And that can be a real challenge in areas where broadband infrastructure is less reliable. Teams need solutions they can count on, that offer seamless on-demand connectivity, absolutely no latency in sound, and [features that are as flexible and nimble](#) as the team members using them.

→ Seamless collaboration

Meetings characterized by latency issues and dropped calls can drain productivity. Those lost minutes eventually add up to thousands of unproductive hours, discouraging team members from using collaboration tools in the future. The most effective conferencing systems are built on reliable communications infrastructure, ensuring that attendees can dial in with a rock-solid, low latency phone connection no matter where they are located.

→ Effortless integration

The average tech stack for any organization is full of solutions that don't always talk to each other. That means it's more important that collaboration platforms aren't just afterthoughts—in fact, they should be at the center of any telecommunications stack. Collaboration platforms that can be easily integrated with solutions for whiteboarding, messaging and note-taking are capable of breaking down silos and enable information transfer quickly and easily.

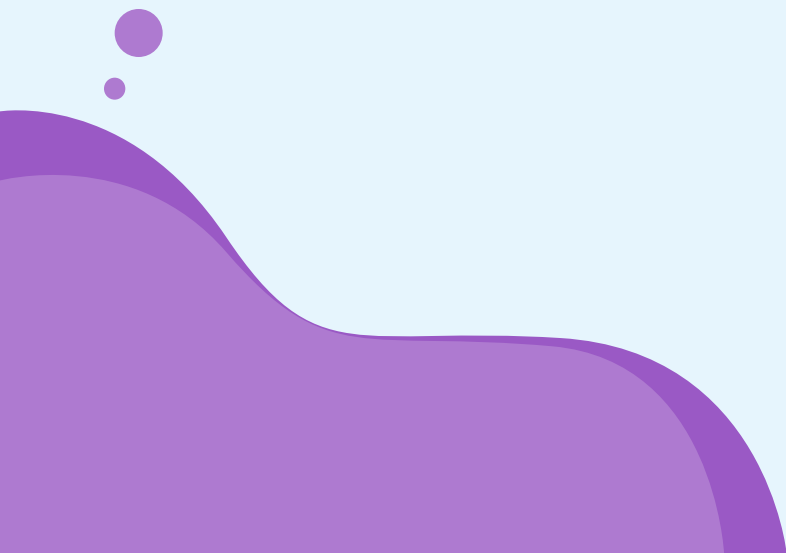
→ Reliable security

The mandate for secure communications has never been higher: millions of devices now connect to enterprise systems to extract and deliver data. But just as emerging technologies provide opportunities for companies to communicate more effectively, they also present opportunities for threats like ransomware and corporate spyware to swipe sensitive information. Solutions with multiple layers of security can put CIOs at ease, protect valuable data and ensure communications remain private.

The only constant in technology is change, but the needs of remote employees and distributed teams remain the same. Voice is the most central element of a successful meeting—and without it, productivity can crumble. The better the voice solution, the more easily teams can get work done and get it done well.

CHAPTER 3

Changing the culture
of collaboration



“Digital transformation” has become an omnipresent buzzword. But it’s also an inevitable process for every company that wants to stay competitive and relevant in the modern age. With nearly every state in the U.S., not to mention many countries in Europe, [reducing or eliminating](#) their spending on legacy copper lines in favor of fiber that can support VoIP, communication is a critical element of digital transformation. The need is even more acute for companies with distributed teams, either across the continent or the globe.

But that’s only one half of the equation; the other is facilitating collaboration between teams. Together, communication and collaboration ensure continued connectivity and a steady flow of information that drives better business outcomes. The more seamlessly a team can communicate and collaborate, the faster they can achieve their targets.

Cost can be a significant business driver too. Any communications solutions that helps companies save money by improving operational efficiency represents a worthwhile investment in the long run.



How to make remote work

When remote workers are [24 percent more likely](#) to feel happy and productive in their roles, the most effective companies understand the benefit of employing team members regardless of their physical location. And today’s remote workers are more connected than ever: nearly 50 percent of Americans are [involved with remote or virtual team work](#). You can assume that also means they expect and prefer a multi-platform approach to communication. Voice and email are now table stakes for office communications, yet, key technologies such as chat, SMS, and video are leveraged by remote workers to do their jobs. From voice to chat all solutions must be completely reliable.

What does this mean for companies looking for scalable solutions that help them deliver digital transformation? It means:

- ✓ Choosing solutions that have the most important features built-in and integrated, rather than disconnected.
- ✓ Delivering intuitive messaging, HD voice calling, and crystal-clear video conferencing
- ✓ Leveraging each of these technologies to encourage better, more effective collaboration—before, during and after meetings.



Win by collaborating in the cloud

Cloud-based communications don't just allow teams to collaborate more quickly; they also make it easier for teams to share more information. Here are a few ways the right cloud-based communications choice can help teams get the most out of collaboration:

→ **Clearer audio and video help people connect**

It's more than the ability to see or hear teammates—it's the ability to see and hear them clearly that matters most. When teams have crystal-clear audio and video, it can help remote meetings be more productive.

→ **Integrated solutions are easiest to use**

Instead of cobbling together a telecom tech stack from different offerings, using platform-agnostic telephony services gives you the ability to get plugged into more markets with reliable, quality dial-in numbers.

→ **Connections accelerate teamwork**

Instead of dealing with country codes and other location-based communication marketers, cloud-based solutions can offer both compliance and interconnection right out of the box. That means teams spend less time getting onto calls, and more time conducting them.

→ **Working across teams is faster in the cloud**

Not even being on different continents should keep employees from working across teams. A cloud-based communications solution gives a company a single platform for collaboration, providing a seamless way for teams to create and share both ideas and content.

Digital transformation isn't a single project. It's often an ongoing process and a mission that keeps companies nimble and competitive. Without the foundation of a strong, cloud-based communications solution, any attempt at digital transformation isn't just incomplete, it's ineffective.

Conclusion

Conferencing is the new norm in corporate communications. And conferencing tools are the key to communicating in a global business landscape. The modern workforce spends a lot of time in conference calls because, with a wide variety of features to choose from, it has never been easier to hold a meeting digitally.

Conferencing tools will continue to develop. But, as organizations expand their global footprint, the quality, reliability and functionality of voice will continue to play a key role in how we communicate.

Conferencing tools allow everyone to make more meaningful business and personal connections, on any device, anytime, anywhere in the world. With the abundance of solutions available, workers expect the best experience when communicating remotely. Not only are they making collaboration easier, but conferencing tools are also morphing a new culture of work.

Get in touch with [Bandwidth](#) to learn more about cloud voice and messaging services for conferencing platforms.