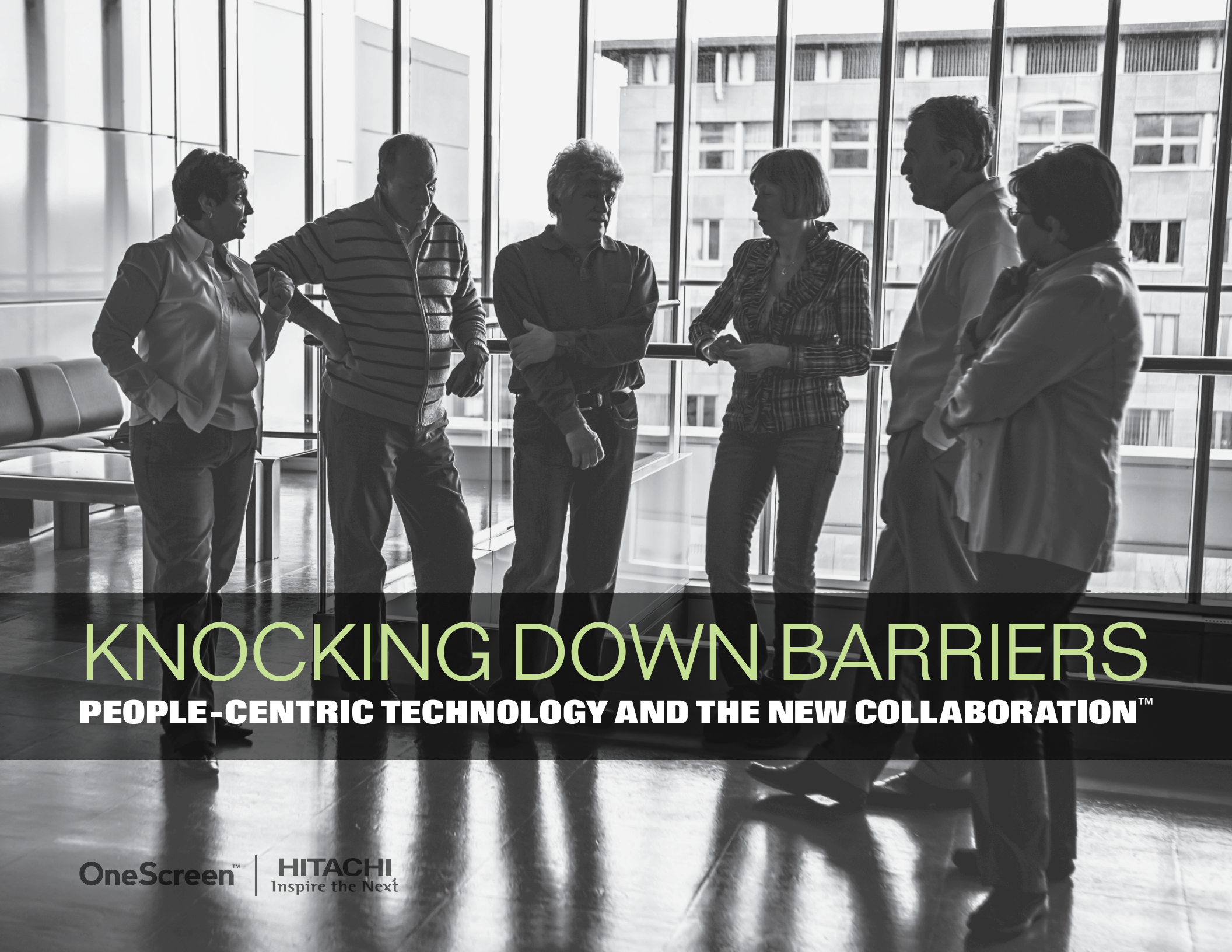


KNOCKING DOWN BARRIERS

PEOPLE-CENTRIC TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEW COLLABORATION™

OneScreen™ | HITACHI Inspire the Next

INTRODUCTION

The days of struggling with needlessly complex collaboration technology are ending and a new era of intuitive, simple, less technical collaboration is beginning.

If you're a buyer, user, or purchase influencer of communication and collaboration technology, you'll want to read on.

As long as there have been workers there has been collaboration. Ironically, the more technology that has been introduced to improve our work, the more difficult it has become to actually collaborate. Why is that? And why is it, in this day and age, we cannot do something about it?

The truth is, we can. This eBook offers insights into how the tools we use are fundamentally shifting from being technology-centric to being people-and-performance-centric. A sea change in how we work together is underway. The affects will be extensive and significant.

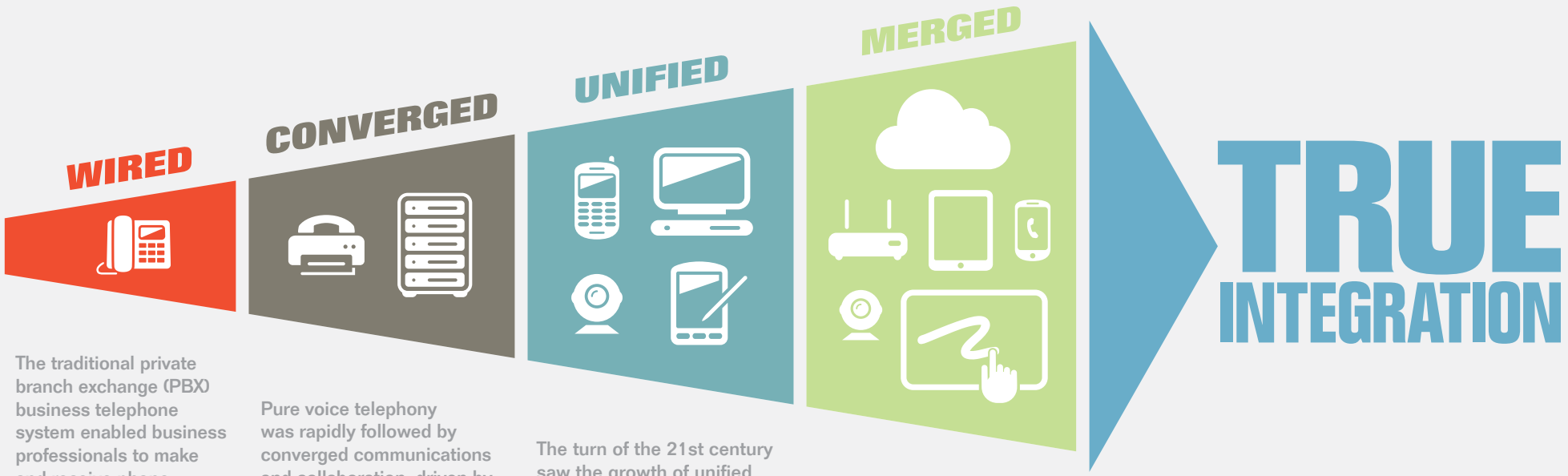
01

EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGY

WHY IT IS WHAT IT IS

Tracing the evolution of any technology can be a daunting task and that is especially true of communications and information technology – what today is generally being called Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC).

UCC is a complex beast, evolving from a diverse gene pool stretching back a number of decades and spanning a wide range of individual technologies. To gain a quick and basic understanding of it, it helps to think of evolutionary epochs:



The traditional private branch exchange (PBX) business telephone system enabled business professionals to make and receive phone calls over several lines right at his or her own desk, spawning audio conferencing, one of the earliest forms of technological business collaboration.

Pure voice telephony was rapidly followed by converged communications and collaboration, driven by advances in IP telephony, networking, privatization, and the rise of multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) in the 1990s that enabled voice and data to travel over the same network.

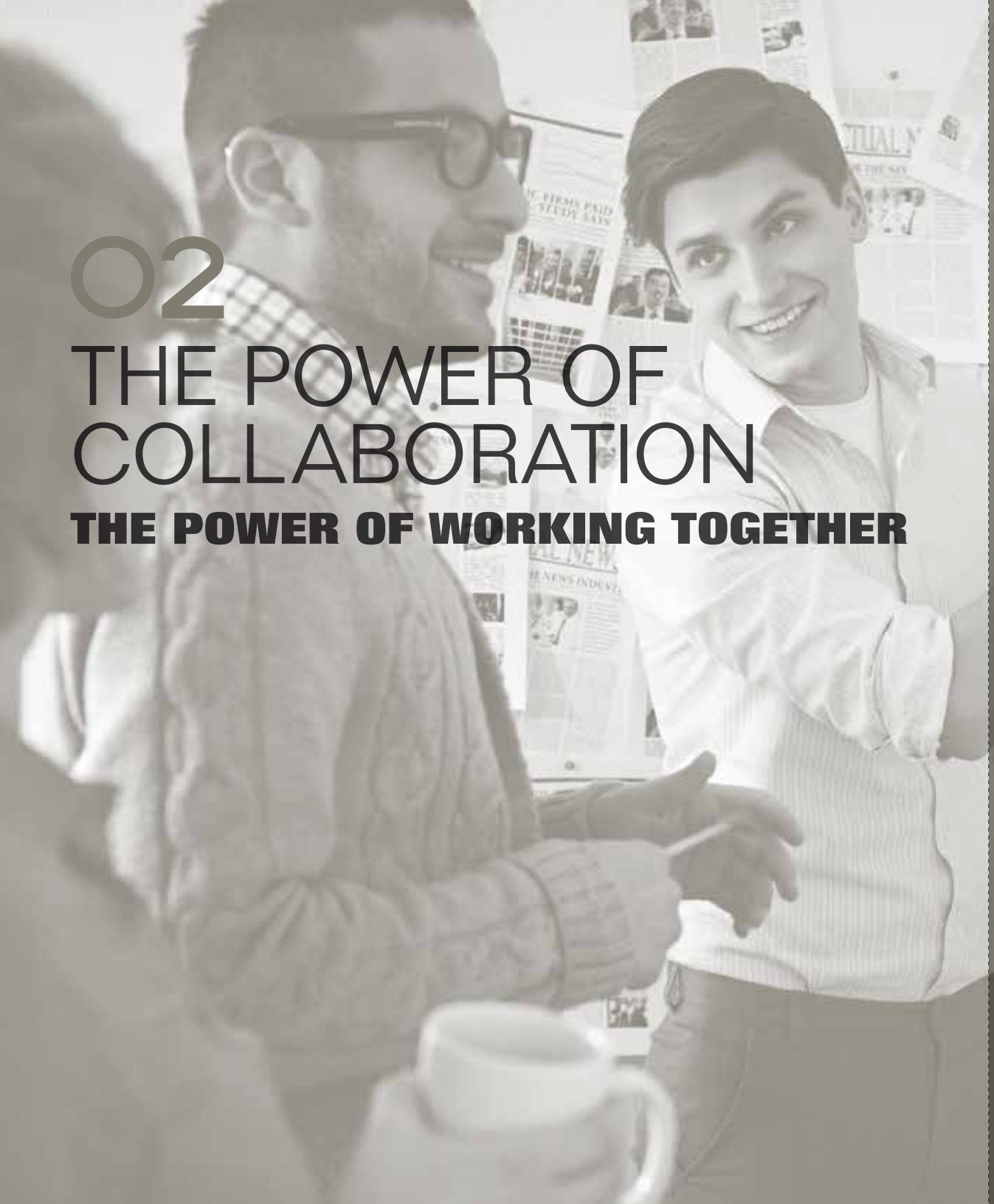
The turn of the 21st century saw the growth of unified communications using such off-the-shelf communication tools as text messaging, IP telephony, audio and video conferencing, data sharing, integrated e-mail apps such as Outlook, organizational tools such as Notes, and even web-based interactive whiteboarding.

We're now in the age of merged communications, fueled by high-bandwidth, high-speed networks; wireless technology; open source operating systems; scalable, cloud-based services; and more unified collaboration tools.

Today, in this Merged Epoch, the challenges come from the technology manufacturers themselves. Many operate in what appears to be engineering-driven vacuums, continuing to focus solely on the technology, creating singular, vertical solutions requiring proprietary hardware and software while ignoring how workers really want to work and collaborate.

Once again, as we saw with the earlier UCC epochs, the stage is set for a revolution. The technology and tools are available and within reach for the kind of collaboration and efficiency that fosters maximum productivity and innovation. We are now in the perfect storm of technological capacity and user expectation, straining to break the constraints of technology-focused solutions and foster unfettered collaboration. Merging technologies is not enough. They need to be efficiently and seamlessly integrated for effortless, intuitive use that enables the sum to be much greater than the various parts.

It's time for workers to be able to focus on the task, not the tools.



02
THE POWER OF COLLABORATION
THE POWER OF WORKING TOGETHER

The rapid globalization of nearly every aspect of modern work life is driving the need and desire for collaboration like never before. Today, businesses the world over see collaboration, supported by broadband Internet service and mobile technology, as the key to faster and more effective innovation, product development, and project management. In short, true collaboration is the key to success.

For the first time, tools are available to create the kind of comprehensive, intuitive, communication ecosystem that will enable co-workers – in-room, intra-office, and intra-enterprise – to finally work together more easily, more productively, and more often. Now, organizations can finally realize the benefit of people working together; can finally see the bottom-line impact that collaborative technology has promised for so long.

Fully-realized, interactive, real-time collaboration fosters:

- ☑ Better co-worker interaction
- ☑ Stronger team bonding
- ☑ Greater operational efficiencies
- ☑ Greater work productivity
- ☑ Better, more informed decision-making
- ☑ Improved identification and access to internal and external expertise
- ☑ Better customer relations
- ☑ Faster turn-around times
- ☑ Unbridled innovation
- ☑ Faster time-to-market
- ☑ Reduced costs

COLLABORATION EFFECTIVENESS

According to a recent survey of over 600 organizations by the Aberdeen Group, enterprise-wide, strategic collaboration produces a number of beneficial results, including improved effectiveness in several of the areas mentioned above when compared to more casual, ad hoc use of collaborative tools:

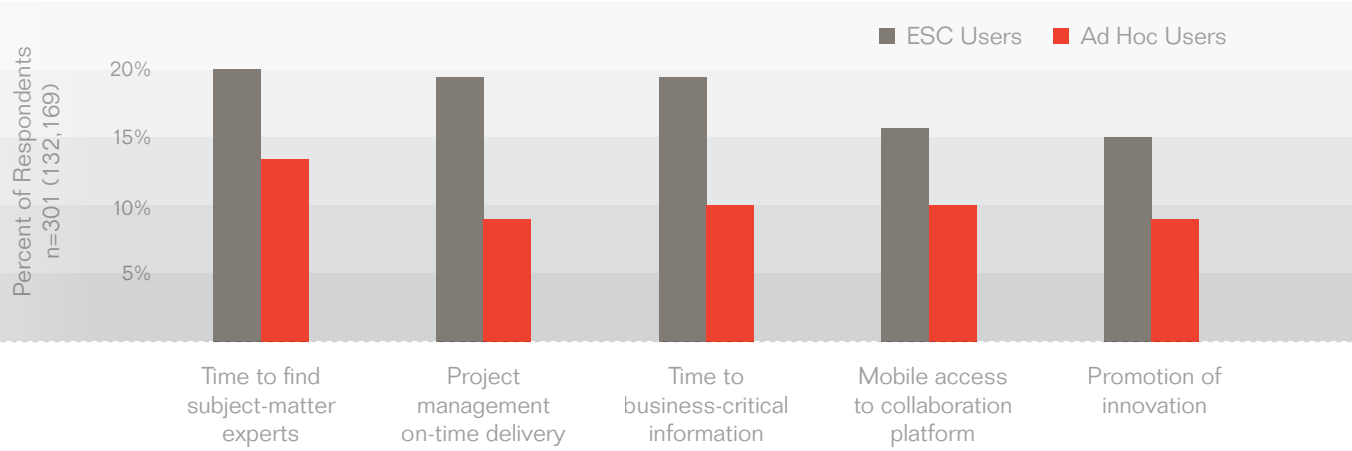


FIGURE 1
Source: Aberdeen Group, October 2013

COLLABORATOR'S ADVANTAGE

The many benefits of effective collaboration were even more dramatic when benchmarked against non-collaborators:

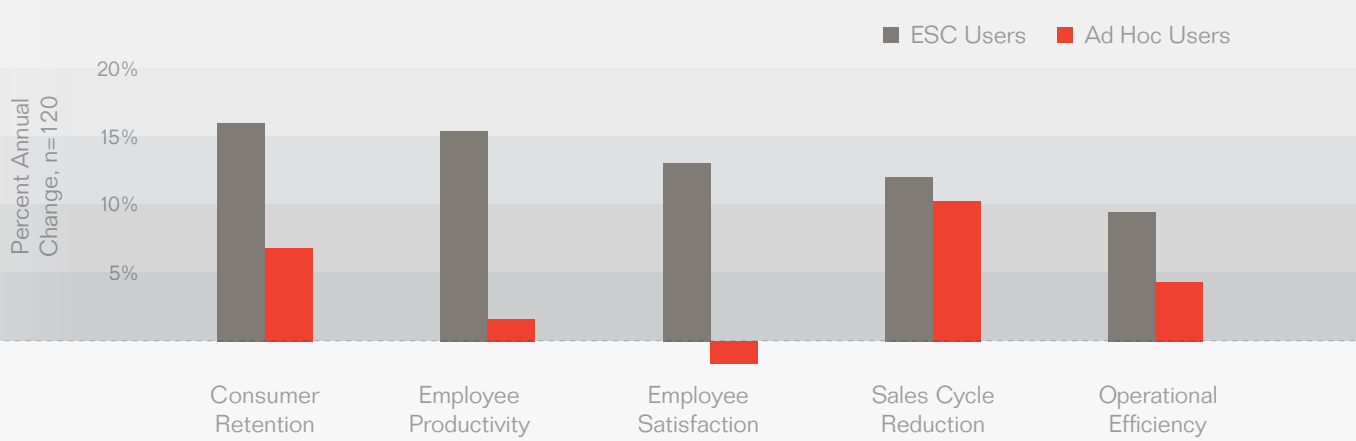


FIGURE 2
Source: Aberdeen Group, October 2013

THE REAL QUESTION THEN IS NOT WHETHER COLLABORATION IS EFFECTIVE, IT'S HOW DO WE MAKE IT WORK THE WAY WE DO?

03
THE CHALLENGE
MAKING COLLABORATIVE TECHNOLOGY WORK THE WAY WE DO

What's particularly frustrating about the state of collaborative technology today is that it doesn't have to be this way. Surprisingly, however, "we have met the enemy and he is us", as the classic comic strip character Pogo once famously proclaimed.

In this case, the "us" are the technology developers and manufacturers themselves. Collectively, the industry has been guilty of making things needlessly complicated with proprietary software, hardware, and cabling that often make integration – or even simple use – frustratingly difficult and oftentimes impossible. In fact, many manufacturers have fallen prey to the technological trap of "engineering for engineering's sake" – creating technology-centric collaborative solutions without regard for how they are actually used by real people in the real world.

Yet the benefits of collaboration and the technology that can help us collaborate are endlessly touted by manufacturers pushing their individual solutions. It's no surprise, then, that both IT professionals and average enterprise users alike are skeptical about the true effectiveness of the tools, questioning the actual return-on-investment they can provide. After all, if collaboration is such a big deal, why isn't everyone doing it? The main reason, according to a Forrester Consulting survey, has been a variety of technical barriers that have limited adoption and use, including:

COST

Effective collaboration often requires face-to-face interactivity. That traditionally means video conferencing for out-of-office collaboration, which has remained an expensive proposition relegated to the executive suite and high level meetings, not day-to-day team productivity where the real benefits of collaboration lie.

USER FRUSTRATION

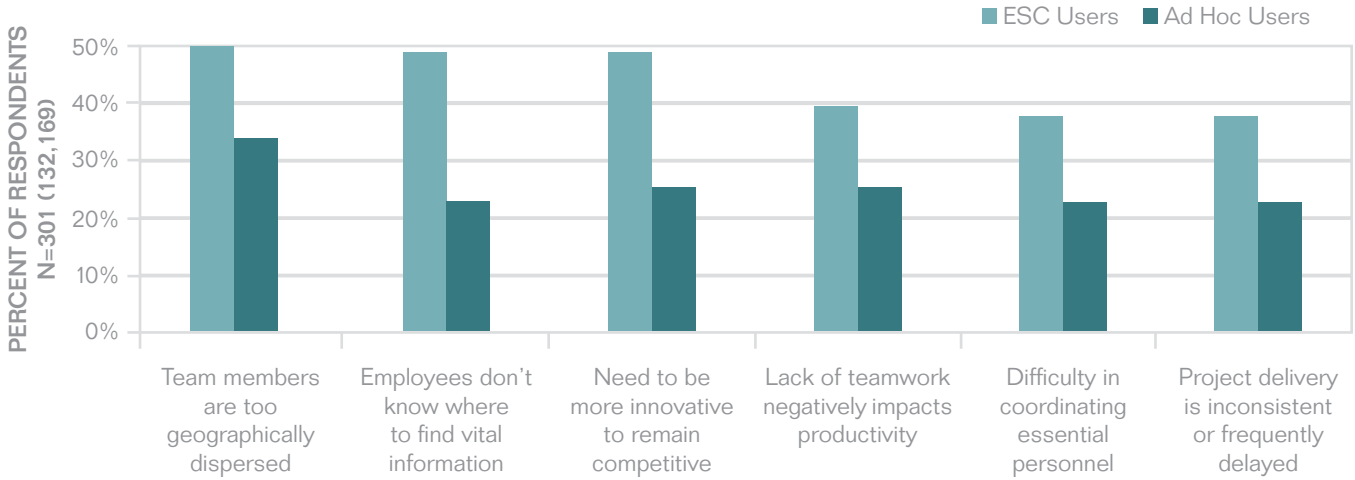
Brought on by incompatible and proprietary technology, lack of necessary training, and inadequate features.

LIMITED REACH

Many enterprises provisioned collaborative technology for internal use only, driven by cost and the difficulty of establishing reliable and high quality external connections and integration.

Once again, manufacturers aren't helping matters. Many technology providers are concerned more about market share than the sharing of ideas. With communication and collaboration systems still in the midst of an IT/AV convergence, buyers of collaborative technology continue to be faced with a bewildering array of hardware, software, networks, cloud-based solutions, mobility choices and a seemingly endless number of options, none of which adequately address the true nature of how co-workers intuitively prefer to work.

ENTERPRISE COLLABORATION'S TOP PAIN POINTS



As we have seen, truly effective, intuitive, and real-time collaboration has been hindered at every turn by a variety of stumbling blocks. Collaborative technology providers have willfully muddied their own waters, ignoring – intentionally or not – what the marketplace really needed and wanted. As a result, collaborators continue to be frustrated by a number of "pains" for which they suspect there is a cure, they just don't know where to find it.

What's lacking is not technology, but true integration.

Collaborative teams don't need a stop-gap fix enabling disparate technologies to finally work well together. They need a solution that actually minimizes technology's impact on team dynamics and productivity. A solution that moves beyond being techno-centric to one that is people-and-performance-centric.

While this might seem counter-intuitive to some, the benefits are both profound and empowering. Let's consider what blogger J.P. De Clerk of communications services company BT calls the "6 Cs of people-centric collaboration". These 6 Cs provide insight into what makes people-and-performance-centric collaboration so powerful and effective.

6 C'S OF PEOPLE-CENTRIC COLLABORATION

CONFIDENCE

Personal, real-time interaction enabled by hi-def video conferencing builds trust among team members, encourages cooperation, and creates confidence both in the team and the work it produces.

CONSISTENCY

Because people-centric collaborative solution enable workers to work the way they want they work more consistently and reliably, minimizing confusion, mistakes, waste, and delays.

COMPREHENSION

Unified communications enable better, more informed collaboration which produces richer, more effective content that in turn improves comprehension and understanding.

CHOICE

People-centric collaboration provides workers with the opportunity to work where and how they work best, using the communication tools and processes they like best to maximize creativity and production.

CONVENIENCE

When the technology-centric stumbling blocks of siloed processes, software and hardware incompatibility, and feature-driven solutions are removed, it becomes so much easier and convenient for people to work together. Collaborative teams stop working around communication and collaboration technology and begin working better because of it.

COMMUNICATION

People-centric collaboration takes advantage of all the communications tools people like to use – email, chat, text, social platforms – to create an easy-to-use, intrinsic infrastructure for dialog.

04

THE NEW COLLABORATION™

WORKING TOGETHER MADE EASY

So what does a truly integrated, intuitive, people-not-technology-centric collaborative ecosystem look like?

Over the past few decades the UCC world has evolved from separate, isolated tools that enabled limited collaboration to individual solutions sharing common networks to a new, platform-agnostic, intuitive, comprehensive approach to collaboration. Unified Communication and Collaboration is now poised to begin a new epoch of fully-integrated, mutually-supportive, truly-interactive collaborative solutions – **something we're calling the New Collaboration™**.

The most salient feature of this remarkable new era is the significant shift away from a techno-centric UCC model to a people-and-performance-centered one. Paradoxically, what makes it so powerful is what it doesn't have: an intrusive technology presence.

Instead, the hallmark of the New Collaboration™ is just how little technology seems to matter. This new collaborative ecosystem revolves around what it does, not how it does it. In fact, the better it enables and encourages collaboration, the less workers are even aware of it.

There are several driving forces behind this new concept in working together, including the widespread acceptance and use of social media and presence technology which has helped remove the barriers of time, distance, and availability for teamwork. Organizations, freed from technological constraints, are now able to freely harness the collective intelligence of their distributed workforces and create stronger, more comfortable relationships between remote team members, partners, and customers.

The result is a new definition of what it means to collaborate. Gone is the old emphasis on technological solutions – "this is what it is and how it works" – replaced by a new and more productive paradigm: "this is what it does, based on how you like to work, who you need to work with, and what you want to work on, right now."

One of the most valuable aspects of the New Collaboration™ is something fundamentally old: the human bond. According to workplace psychologist Dr. Nicola Millard, the lynchpin of truly effective collaboration is one of the oldest of human traits – trust. According to Millard, people instinctively will not share knowledge fully with others without some form of bonding and a certain level of trust. Building interpersonal trust requires communication and the most effective way to communicate is conversationally, face-to-face. The New Collaboration™, with its seamless integration of a variety of hi-definition audio and video conferencing and digital collaboration tools, enables the richest interpersonal interaction possible using network connectivity.

"...how you like to work, who you need to work with, and what you want to work on, right now."

New Collaboration™ even looks different; for starters, not a whole lot of devices, cabling, and complicated software. Instead, it's a single, multi-touch, richly-interactive, high-definition screen enabling users to access tools, information, and each other with a simple touch or swipe of the screen.

A separate category of communication and collaboration product is introduced: hubware. Instead of juggling separate devices, users can focus on one screen that enables team members to easily work with a wide range of applications, content, and formats with zero concern for compatibility or connectivity. No longer struggling with technology, they're finally working faster, easier, and better because of it.

What makes the New Collaboration™ even more exciting is that it shatters the old paradigm of technology trickle-down – expensive first generation solutions that only large enterprises with deep pockets could afford. The new hubware scenario outlined here utilizes existing devices and platforms, re-imagined and integrated in new ways to vastly improve their efficiency and effectiveness without the high cost of initial development. The New Collaboration™ and the technology that enables it is well within reach of even the smallest organizations and enterprises.

05

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS COLLABORATION

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCE CENTRIC SOLUTIONS

As more collaborative technology manufacturers get onboard with the New Collaboration™ model of people-and-performance-centric instead of techno-centric solutions, collaborative teams will become increasingly innovative, productive, and efficient. The expanding adoption of enterprise-wide social media methodologies will foster simpler, faster, and more streamlined communications – according to Gartner, by 2014, social networking services will replace email as the primary vehicle for interpersonal communications for 20 percent of business users. This kind of on-demand availability and common user interface and experience (UI/UX) will only fuel the demand for simpler, more intuitive, and more flexible UCC **that not only enables, but encourages ad hoc, on-the-fly collaboration that can jumpstart innovation and increase productivity across the room, the enterprise, and the world.**

On the other hand, companies and organizations that continue to be hobbled by legacy UCC systems with their inefficient and inflexible patchwork of devices, software, and cabling will find themselves growing steadily less competitive and relevant as they struggle to communicate and collaborate internally and externally.

The New Collaboration™ will, in large part, help enterprises of all sizes future-proof their collaborative capabilities to stay ahead of the curve by providing an open-source, highly flexible and scalable solution that supports the addition of new UCC services and technologies with minimal effort and expense.

What's truly exciting is that this unparalleled and unbridled level of collaboration is not some idle conjecture destined for the distant future.

The New Collaboration™ is here. Now. The New Collaboration™ is a new way of thinking and working together to move business – your business – forward today. Are you ready to embrace it?

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In Special Partnership With
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When collaboration technologies work together, business can realize the benefit of people working together. Clary Icon manufactures OneScreen™ h1, a hubware solution. OneScreen h1 facilitates collaborators natural need to flow from tool to tool while accessing a variety of content, data, and people required for productivity. Headquartered in San Diego, Clary Icon has offices in Miami, Colombia, and Pakistan. Discover what your screen skills can do today at **claryicon.com**.

Hitachi Solutions America, Ltd. is a leader in interactive presentation technology and touch software solutions. Hitachi's StarBoard Software enables remote collaboration in real time, immediate access to relevant content, and annotation capabilities over digital media. StarBoard Software helps interactive collaboration happen more often – around the world or in the same room. Find out more at **us.hitachi-solutions.com/starboard**.

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