

# Collaboration in the Hybrid Workplace

How technology can rebuild the employee experience and help Small and Medium-Sized Business teams stay connected



# Welcome to the New Workforce



Since 2020, everything about work has changed—from **where** we work, to **how** we get the job done, to **why** we do it in the first place.

The pandemic flipped the global workforce on its head, sending many Small and Medium-Sized Business employees to work from home overnight. Throughout the hiatus from the office, these employees grew accustomed to the flexibility remote work provided and the wellbeing consideration their employers offered.

As a result, employee priorities shifted. Today, Small and Medium-Sized Business teams are asking their employers to continue providing the benefits, positive culture, and flexibility offered during the pandemic, and they're not backing down. In fact, 43% of the global workforce has given their leaders an ultimatum—accommodate these needs, or risk losing your top talent.<sup>1</sup>

In response, employers across the globe have decided to shift their workforce to a hybrid model. Of these organizations, 91% plan to complete the transition in the next five years.<sup>2</sup> However, the thought of permanent hybrid work has many questioning the return on this investment. How can teams be productive if they're not all working in the same office? Will the quality of meetings suffer and render brainstorming sessions useless? What will happen to the employee experience?

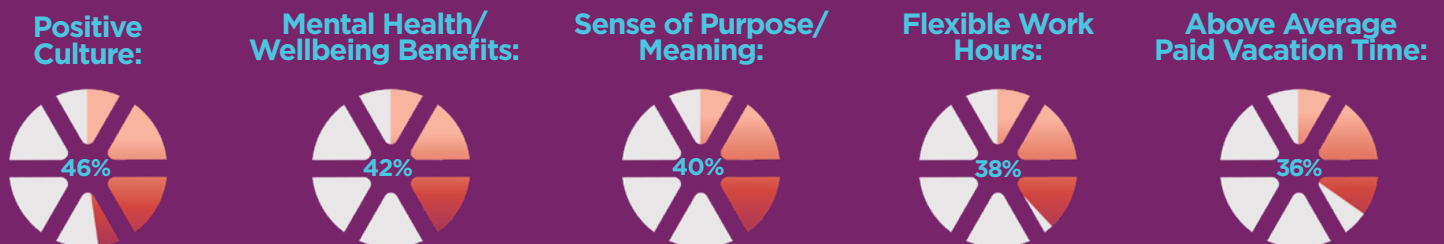
This white paper explores how Small and Medium-Sized Businesses can leverage technology to help rebuild the employee experience and empower team collaboration in a hybrid environment. We'll take a deep dive into current trends that are re-defining the global workforce, explore the growing human relationship with technology, and discover new opportunities that await.

## Doing Business in an Employee's Market

Before 2020, a daily commute to and from the office was the norm. But the experience has changed. As teams were dispersed to their home workspaces, they began to realize that it is possible to be a dedicated worker **and** have a life. If they felt their employer didn't share this sentiment, they started looking for a new one who did.

This shift in priorities led 17% of people to leave their jobs in 2020 alone.<sup>1</sup> In 2021, 18% called it quits.<sup>1</sup> If employers aren't prepared to adapt their workplace and meet the deal-breaking priorities of today's employees, this trend will continue to rise. No longer focused on "the grind," **employees are rediscovering what it means to be human.** They want a workplace that offers the opportunity to build connections, while maintaining the flexibility of a hybrid environment.

### What's Most Important to Today's Workforce?<sup>1</sup>



## Making Hybrid Work the Norm

Employees want hybrid workplaces to become permanent. This will challenge Small and Medium-Sized Businesses to digitally transform and rethink the employee experience to support that transformation. It's a big ask. But the good news is—hybrid work technology is more accessible than ever before.

Thanks to pandemic-driven innovation, the workforce has access to high-performance video conferencing solutions, reliable instant messaging apps, and secure data sharing designed to help teams stay engaged and collaborate effectively. This, in turn, contributes to workplace culture and can help foster the genuine positivity and sense of belonging today's employees seek.

## Hybrid Work Goes Global

The suddenly dispersed workforce of 2020 relied on digital collaboration tools to keep moving forward. As a result, **global usage of tools such as cloud storage and sharing, real-time mobile messaging, and virtual meeting solutions skyrocketed.** In fact, workers across the globe reported spending only 33% of their meeting time in-person in 2021—a 30% drop from 2019.<sup>3</sup> This shift is expected to continue as Small and Medium-Sized Businesses worldwide adapt to a permanent hybrid work environment.

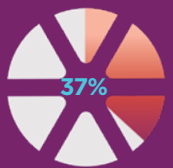


**81% of enterprise organizations have begun the move toward a hybrid workplace, with 31% already fully adopted.**

Microsoft Zero Trust Adoption Report, July 2021

While most enterprise organizations are moving forward with hybrid workplace plans, rates of full adoption are inconsistent across global markets. For example, Australia and New Zealand currently lead the pack with 37% of organizations at full adoption<sup>2</sup>, while only 20% of organizations in Germany are fully hybrid.<sup>2</sup> In addition, 94% of businesses worldwide<sup>2</sup> are worried about how their teams will handle the transition.

**Unsafe app Downloads:**



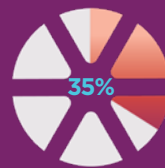
**Increased IT Workloads:**



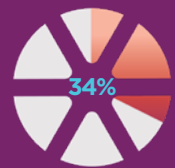
**Ransomware Attacks:**



**Phishing Attacks:**



**Improper Use of Devices:**



## The IT Challenge

The terms “digital transformation” and “hyper-digital workforce” can either make IT teams jump for joy or break out in a cold sweat. Either way, responsibility for the shift to a permanent hybrid workplace will fall to IT. There will be some challenges to overcome, such as:



- Deploying equipment for remote work
- Managing device updates remotely
- Maintaining security across data and devices



- Enabling access to company data
- Promoting effortless collaboration
- Empowering teams with the tools they need to stay engaged

**But, with great challenge comes great opportunity.** Your IT team can directly impact business growth with technology designed to tackle these challenges and keep teams connected—even when they're apart.



# Hyper-Digital Transformation



Our relationship with technology has come a long way in a short time. Broadband internet, for example, was a luxury that didn't start to replace dial-up until the early 2000s. By the time the first iPhone was introduced in 2007, only about half of all Internet users had broadband.<sup>4</sup>

Today, we rely on our smart devices and access to high-speed internet to support our lives and help us work from anywhere. **Technology empowers people to do the unthinkable.** It helps us learn faster, work smarter, and collaborate better to make discoveries that transform our world.



**The most successful technology transformations put humans—committed leadership and empowered employees—at its center.**

EY Tech Horizon 2022



Technology in business is no longer a differentiator. It's not even a luxury that's nice to have. It's a strategy and success must-have that has redefined how the world does business. In fact, a recent survey revealed that 72% of executives recognize a need to digitally transform by 2024 to compete in their industry.<sup>5</sup> This recognition is up from 62% in 2020<sup>5</sup>, indicating that the transformation is already underway.

To truly differentiate your business and pull ahead of the digital dawdlers, you need to leverage powerful technology across all aspects of your business. **In other words, you need a hyper-digital transformation.** A successful transformation, however, requires more than laptops and tablets. It involves taking a step back to analyze how technology can create workplace flexibility and drive growth.

## Tech's Role in the Employee Experience

The right technology can help a Small or Medium-Sized Business increase operational efficiency, improve customer acquisition and retention, and enhance the employee experience. It can also create new opportunities in the workforce by allowing employers to think bigger about strategy.

When technology is used to automate processes, enhance security, and enable data sharing, there's no longer a need to assign talent to those tasks. This helps employers encourage more strategic thinking by developing new employee roles that blend business and technology skills together. In fact, 51% of major employers have already begun rethinking their employee career paths to fit a more digitized world.<sup>5</sup> As digital capabilities evolve, we'll see roles expand—analysts will become strategists and administrators will become experience champions.

Reliable technology also simplifies communication and empowers collaboration and productivity. With a powerful, secure cloud solution, Small and Medium-Sized Businesses can enhance the review process with customers and mitigate communication issues. This can help reduce friction between customers and employees, leading to a better overall experience. In addition, reliable conferencing and instant messaging solutions can empower collaboration, keeping teams connected from anywhere.

## How Does Tech Boost Employee Morale and Retention?

### Creates a Greater Sense of Purpose

Digitizing workflows and automating repetitive tasks allows employers to create more strategic job opportunities.

### Reduces Friction with Customers

Building data flows for direct customer feedback simplifies the revision process and reduces miscommunication.

### Presents a Consistent Experience

Equipping teams with tech solutions for effective collaboration provides a consistent employee experience across a hybrid workforce.

# Rebuilding the Employee Experience



More than one-third of today's employees are more likely to look for a new job than return to the office full-time.<sup>6</sup> **Fortunately, the right technology can turn “the office” into any place work gets done.** That could be at home, in a coffee shop, at a coworking space, or anywhere else your employees feel most productive. However, they still want to feel connected with the team and the culture, no matter where they're working.

## Top 5 Perks Hybrid Workers Want<sup>6</sup>



- Location Flexibility
- Collaborative Tech
- Honesty & Transparency
- Support for the Shift to Hybrid
- Fresh Office Spaces for On-Premises Workdays



The challenge then becomes, how do you rebuild the employee experience in a way that accommodates the need for flexibility and connectivity, without sacrificing productivity?

Providing hybrid teams with reliable, intuitive conferencing technology can help you respond to this challenge. For instance, the Complete Conference Room solution from Lenovo offers a powerful combination of audio, video, and presentation technology to make collaboration effortless for hybrid teams. With Complete Conference Room, your business will be empowered to rebuild the employee experience, inspire productivity, and encourage team members to build stronger working relationships.

## Better Conferencing, For All

Lenovo Complete Conference Room will allow your business to connect teams and ideas, wherever they are. This solution offers high-performance audio and visual technology, designed to enable seamless, equitable collaboration, and give all team members a voice in meetings. Choose the perfect configuration for your room size, whether you need to equip five closet-sized spaces, a massive board room, or a mixture of both. Complete Conference Room will help you take conferencing and the hybrid employee experience to the next level.

[Click here to learn more.](#)





# Healthy Meeting Culture

When it comes to hybrid work productivity, employers and employees are not aligned. Studies show that 54% of business leaders believe employee productivity levels decrease when they work from home.<sup>1</sup> However, 80% of employees indicate that their productivity has not suffered, with many stating they are more productive working from home.<sup>1</sup>

How can there be such a deep divide between leadership and employees on this subject? When we dig a little deeper, we find that **the average for after-hours work has increased by 28% since employees started working remotely.**<sup>1</sup> This does indicate higher levels of productivity, but raises a new question. Why are so many people struggling to get work done during office hours? The answer: meetings.

**Meetings per person have increased 153% since employees started working remotely.**<sup>1</sup>

These statistics should alarm business leaders for two reasons: (a) their teams are having trouble getting work done during business hours, which causes work/life balance frustrations, and (b) meeting time is cutting into productive work time. These factors will quickly lead to burnout—employee experience kryptonite. To close this gap and make flexible work sustainable, your organization needs to establish a healthy meeting culture.



## Healthy Meeting Culture ABC's



### Assess the Need

Is a meeting necessary? Ask your team to explore the topic through chat or email when possible. If a meeting is needed, train your team to use the “required” and “optional” features to help people prioritize their time.



### Block Time

Wall-to-wall meetings drain energy and zap motivation. Encourage your team to schedule breaks and focused work time on their calendar, protecting part of their day from meetings. Keep meetings as short as possible, and stick to the allotted meeting time.



### Create Agendas

Agendas keep meetings focused. Require the meeting organizer to create or acquire an agenda and share it with the team ahead of time. Record meetings and send them, along with any notes on the agenda, to all attendees.

## Solve Meeting Problems with Lenovo

Lenovo Cloud Solutions for Microsoft 365 offers a wide array of tools, apps, and benefits designed to help your hybrid team stay productive. The communication and collaboration capabilities of Teams will keep your workforce connected, while Microsoft 365 integration across apps makes scheduling meetings, organizing calendars, sharing files, and sending instant messages effortless. [Click here to read more.](#)

# Data Collaboration for the Greater Good

The successful transformation to a hybrid workforce will have a positive impact on employee morale and retention. Teams will be empowered to work together anytime, anywhere with the right combination of hardware and software. Plus, these solutions will help employees streamline their day-to-day work, giving them more time to think deeper and work smarter.



## But what if the collaborative potential could extend further?

Emerging technologies are an unstoppable force in the world today. When we leverage this tech across the workforce, the promise of new business models and opportunities will develop. For instance, secure data sharing is expected to encourage more organizations to engage in data collaboration. By safely bringing data together, organizations could tackle common challenges and pursue mutually beneficial revenue, operational, and research opportunities.

Deloitte's Tech Trends 2022 Report<sup>7</sup> presents a few ideas. For example, food suppliers could anonymize and pool their data to try to solve the mystery of supply and demand. Pharmaceutical researchers and doctors could leverage a secure data-sharing ecosystem to bring life-saving innovations to market more quickly.

These speculative ideas give us a glimpse of what the future of technology in business could look like, even outside day-to-day office life. With secure, reliable digital collaboration tools, businesses will have the power to go beyond rebuilding the employee experience. We'll see organizations collaborate for the greater good.

Whether you're trying to solve supply and demand issues, looking for ways to bring medicine to market more quickly, or pursuing a solution to expand access to clean drinking water, the right technology can create endless opportunities to impact change.

## Move Forward with Lenovo

This is an exciting time for technology in business. Constant innovation will continue to provide new opportunities to enhance the employee experience with faster data sharing, expanded virtual capabilities, and instant communication solutions that help teams maintain strong working relationships. With Lenovo as your trusted partner, your business will be empowered at every stage of your hybrid journey with powerful hardware, software, and support.

# Digitally Transform with Lenovo



## ThinkBook 13x Gen 2

The Lenovo ThinkBook 13x Gen 2 offers the power and performance your team needs to take on each day. Built on the Intel® Evo™ platform, equipped with a Windows 11 Pro operating system, and enhanced with AI Meeting Manager and Dolby Vision® & audio, this device is optimized for a premium conferencing experience. [Click here to view the full ThinkBook family.](#)

## Complete Conference Room

The Lenovo Complete Conference Room solution powers hybrid teams with smart, efficient, modern collaboration tools. Your team can innovate from anywhere with this simple, flexible conferencing solution, equipped with premium technology to offer an immersive experience for all. [Click here to learn more.](#)

### Features & Benefits:

- Compatible with the latest conference platforms (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet)
- Enables secure sharing and collaboration
- Gives IT full control of all conference rooms from one console
- Easy deployment and integration
- Scalable for any meeting or organization size

## Cloud Solutions for Microsoft 365

Lenovo Cloud Solutions for Microsoft 365 enhance productivity across all aspects of your Small or Medium-Sized Business. Offer employees simplified access to Microsoft cloud tools, equipping them to collaborate, present, and work from anywhere. Lenovo will help you digitally transform faster, while also minimizing costs, mitigating risks, and gaining a competitive advantage for your business. [Read more by clicking here.](#)

## Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is designed to help your hybrid workforce stay connected and access shared content anytime. Employees can share files from the cloud, chat, call, and conference with high-quality audio and video, all from this intuitive platform. Cloud storage ensures that shared files are always available, and data encryption protects sensitive information, giving your hybrid team the freedom to collaborate without hesitation.



# Inspire Unthinkable Collaboration

The future of the global workforce is hybrid. However, hybrid teams will still look to employers to provide a consistent employee experience regardless of their work location. This will require a hyper-digital transformation and challenge business leaders to rebuild the employee experience, or risk losing top talent.

Luckily, we've been through this before. Pandemic-driven innovations in workplace technology have given us the tools to empower individual productivity, enable successful meetings and brainstorming sessions, and ensure a positive employee experience from anywhere.

Now it's time to turn yesterday's innovative ideas into today's mainstream resources. It's time to transform the workforce with the right combination of high-performance audio and video equipment, reliable PCs and accessories, and powerful software. It's time to ensure that all employees - whether in-office, remote, or hybrid - have equal opportunity to engage, collaborate, and contribute to the success of your brand.

But you don't have to do it alone.

With Lenovo as your trusted partner, you can leverage powerful, reliable technology to rebuild the employee experience and keep your hybrid workforce connected. Together, we can inspire unthinkable collaboration that helps business relationships and human connections thrive.

*Is your workforce ready for a hyper-digital transformation? Get started today by visiting [Lenovo.com/whynovo](https://lenovo.com/whynovo).*



Empower collaboration, productivity, and a positive employee experience from anywhere with unthinkable hybrid work technology from Lenovo.

Go hybrid with Lenovo by visiting [Lenovo.com/whylenovo](https://Lenovo.com/whylenovo).



<sup>1</sup> Work Trend Index 2022. "Great Expectations: Making Hybrid Work Work." Microsoft. March 2022.  
<sup>2</sup> Microsoft. "Zero Trust Adoption Report." July 2021.  
<sup>3</sup> Gartner, Inc. "Digital Worker Experience Survey." August 2021.  
<sup>4</sup> Plusnet. "A History of the Internet." 2021.  
<sup>5</sup> EY. "2022 Digital Investment Index." 2022.  
<sup>6</sup> Qualtrics. "2022 Employee Experience Trends." 2022.  
<sup>7</sup> Deloitte. "Tech Trends 2022 Report." 2022.