A MITEL E-BOOK

LIFE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PANDEMIC

Mitel®

Powering connections

WHERE THE WORLD IS HEADED NOW

The way businesses operate will change long after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. In one form or another, social distancing is here to stay. And that simple fact alone will have a significant impact on the way business interactions will be managed from here on in.

For example, to maintain safety, businesses will need to rely on technologies that allow employees to work from home and still stay connected with co-workers, partners and customers. The same physical proximity that enabled meetings, conferences and collaborations before COVID-19 are already being replaced by digital proximity solutions. And these are enabled by real-time communication and collaboration tools.

Like video, for instance. You likely have already seen how much video is playing a central role in post-pandemic business operations. But video is just one element of the whole communications strategy. As you plan your "new normal" post-pandemic, it can help to consider more than just which video meeting application to subscribe to.

It's clear that the way we do business is being transformed by the pandemic. But what isn't clear is exactly how. In this eBook, we've gathered our best insights and expertise from the minds at Mitel to explore what business interactions might look like in the months to come. In the pages that follow, we provide a snapshot of where the world is headed now, and how you can prime your business for life on the other side of the pandemic.

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> "For many companies, I think the questions now are more focused on when this is going to end, when we go back to work and how we do that."
>
> **Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research**

IS THIS THE END OF THE PHYSICAL OFFICE?

One thing the pandemic has demonstrated is that employee safety comes first. And that has led many businesses to encourage employees to work remotely, even if they're not sick. It's simply one of the most effective ways to make sure employees continue to stay well. Twitter, for example, has mandated all employees to work from home if they have the capability, and the company is optimizing work so it can be performed remotely. Facebook also announced that all its employees can continue to work from home until 2021 at the earliest.

The reality is that employees who don't have to be in the office probably shouldn't be moving back for some time, if at all. For employees who do have to go back, a phased approach to bringing personnel back to the office in structured stages will probably make more sense. Flexible work schedules or shifts can be used to stagger office times for different teams or groups of employees.

Whatever your preference (whether in-office, remote, or a combination of the two), as you plan your post-pandemic standard operating procedure, you'll want to ensure that your chosen method will keep your employees safe. That probably means that a blanket everybody-go-back-to-work-at-once approach is unrealistic.
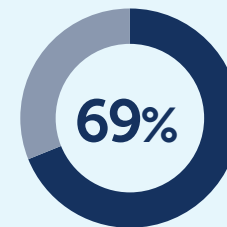
Enabled by video and effective communication and collaboration tools, your business can continue virtually uninterrupted. And your employees can still be productive.
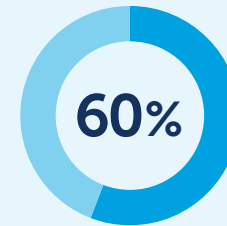
60% of employers have increased the flexibility for employees to work remotely
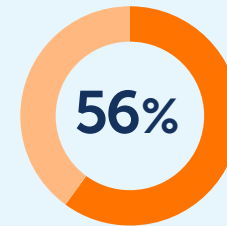
56% of U.S. employees could do at least some of their job remotely

69% of employers offer remote work on an ad hoc basis to at least some employees, **42%** offer it part time, **27%** offer it full time

RISE OF THE HYBRID WORKER

With the physical walls of office buildings and cubicle farms now in question, the way employees function is morphing into something new. The pandemic-created hybrid worker will be connected and productive from anywhere, and focused on work-life balance.

These hybrid workers will have a remote-centric approach to work. Research, planning and preparation will be done at home, and the majority of meetings will be online. When an employee is scheduled to be in the office, that time will be focused on managing all the things that can't be done from home, like major project milestone reviews, large team meetings, customer meetings and product demonstrations.

In many ways, the shift to the hybrid worker would be seamless.

In 2020, Millennials and Generation Z represent a significant proportion of the workforce. These generations expect the same simple, connected communication platforms at work that they use in their personal lives. The flexibility these tools provide has a major impact on how these groups approach their jobs.

Millennials, for example, often avoid face-to-face interactions in the workplace, with 55% preferring online messaging software and 28% choosing email to communicate.

The key to success in this type of work culture is to include all communication preferences. In other words, adopt the same omnichannel approach many businesses are using already with their customers.
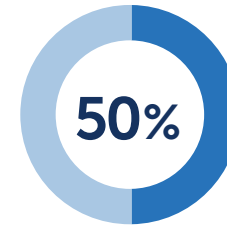
50% of employees globally are already working outside of their main office headquarters for at least 2.5 days a week
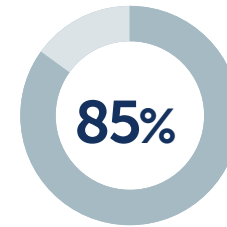
85% of proferssionals surveyed confirm that productivity has increased in their business as a result of greater workplace flexibility[5]
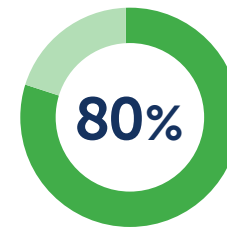
80% of employees confirm that, faced with two similar job offers, they would turn down the one that didn't offer flexible working options[6]

"This is the biggest technology trend that I've seen since Y2K... For the first time, companies are rethinking what they're doing with networking and communications at a strategic level, and that's something we've never seen before."

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst , ZK Research

DIGITAL PROXIMITY AS THE FIRST CHOICE

After the pandemic, creativity in the integration of communication and collaboration tools will play a critical role in the success of your business.

Hybrid workers area already becoming more comfortable with digital methods of communicating and interacting. Video calls, video meetings, online learning and virtual conferences are likely to become second nature. And unified communication tools that keep everyone connected and automate workflows can eliminate some of the complexity.

But not every sector will be able to embrace the shift. Some will still need or want to rely on traditional voice or email-based communication. Therefore, any creative combination of traditional and new technologies that supports the immediate and longer term needs of hybrid workers holds the most promise.

Whatever combination you choose, you'll need to take a hard look at security requirements — at the network and application level, as well as the physical level — for all devices that are going to support your new operating environment and the needs of your hybrid workers.
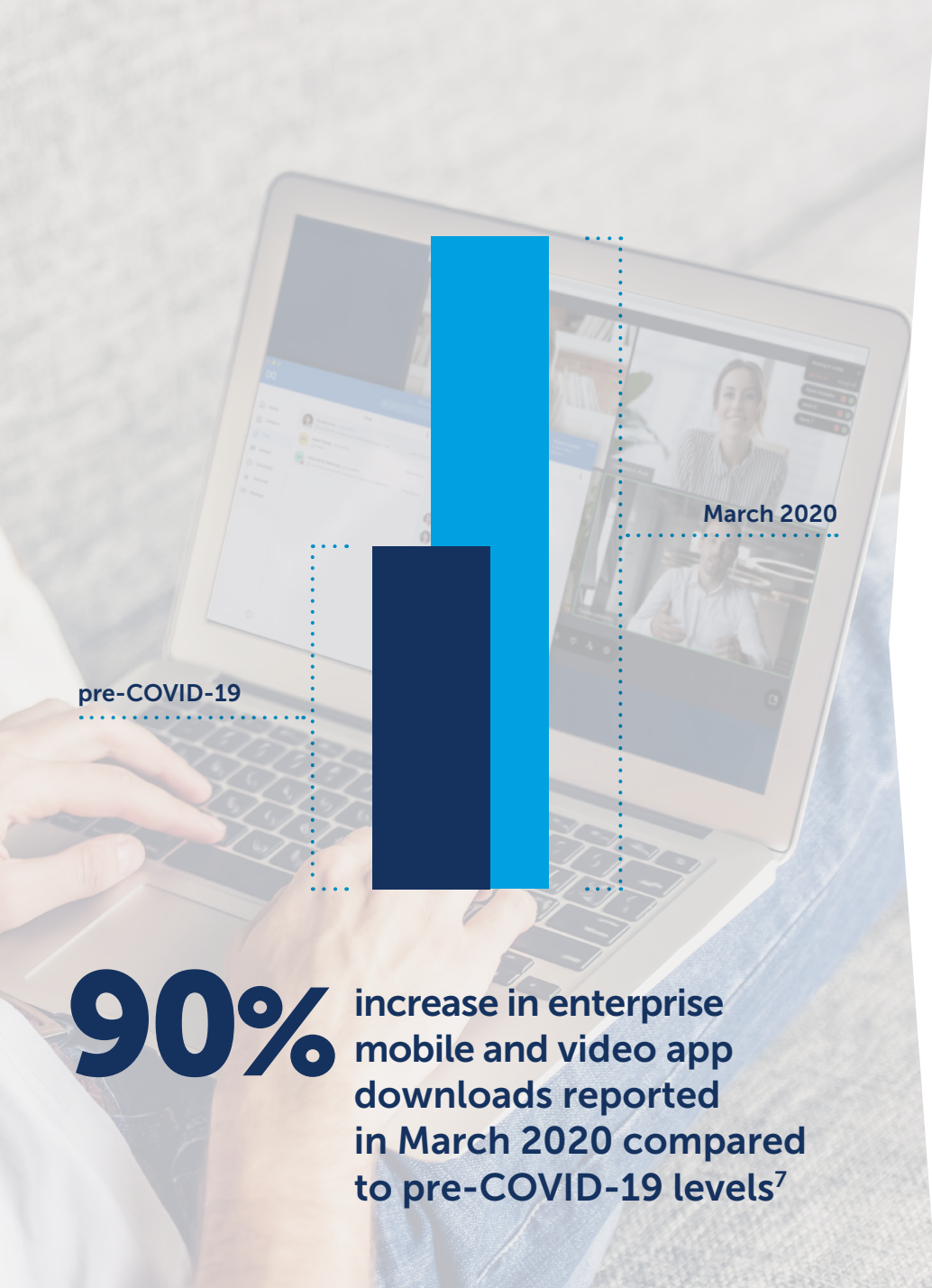
SHIFT TO VIDEO MEETINGS

Probably not a surprise, but we see video will staying on as a key element of your post-COVID-19 operating environment. Businesses that never used video meetings before have already made the shift and many more will follow. It is quickly becoming the preferred meeting tool.

In the short term, video may be the default for conferences, sports events and in some cases travel experiences. These activities will revert to their pre-pandemic normal eventually, but video calls will replace traditional voice calls for everything from employee interactions to customer service and support calls.

As video calls and video meetings become ubiquitous, your employees will need to think about how they present themselves on screen. Some will take to it naturally. Others will need coaching and training that emphasizes best practices and how to have a warm, personable conversation in a digital setting.

Eventually, we'll see video options embedded in many of the business applications we already use. Video will create a seamless communication process that includes voice and data, and immersive interactions will emerge:

- Augmented and virtual reality meetings will be used to enhance interactions and simulate the feeling of "being in the room".
- Virtual reality will be introduced for common processes, like recruiting employees who will be allowed to immerse themselves in a day in the life working at a new company.
- Video will be used by sports and entertainment venues to deliver a complete, immersive experience blended with game data and play-by-play broadcasts.

March 2020

pre-COVID-19

90% increase in enterprise mobile and video app downloads reported in March 2020 compared to pre-COVID-19 levels[7]

PREPARE FOR UC-IOT

Beyond video, the post-pandemic future is set to include innovations that combine unified communications (UC) with the Internet of Things (IoT) to streamline workflows.

UC makes communications between people better through unified and automated processes. IoT enables machines to speak to machines. As business interactions get streamlined to support remote-based communications and accommodate hybrid workers, these two technologies will be combined to create new, interactive UC-IoT communication that will enable people to interact with machines anywhere.

For example, notification services can be combined with a unified communications and collaboration (UCC) solution that provides instant messaging, conferencing, teamwork applications and other capabilities. With this approach, IoT-related communications can be integrated directly into a customer service work stream to increase efficiency and accelerate responses. This will allow repair personnel to log into remote equipment via voice commands and perform diagnostic tests without having to actually go into a building. Ultimately, this will minimize many of the touchpoints related to maintenance and support operations and keep both customers and employees safe.

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"UC-IoT can be a game-changer for smart cities, smart buildings, manufacturing and healthcare as critical information can be analyzed and disseminated to the people that need it quickly. This is an area that is ripe for innovation."

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst , ZK Research

MAKE YOUR MOVE

In these uncertain times, the future is still an unknown. But we can look forward with wisdom based on the behaviors and trends we see today and have understood from the past. Business communications technology is enabling us to connect the dots and bring people, teams and businesses together safely and efficiently. As you plan for business continuity in the months ahead, embrace the hybrid worker and optimize your remote working processes with Mitel communication and collaboration tools that enable teamwork no matter where your employees are.

Make remote teamwork easier by streamlining the flow of communications within a group and centralizing all group interactions into a single, synchronized workspace with MiTeam.

Enable real-time video conferencing across time zones and geographies with MiTeam Meetings, which allows employees to transition between chat, voice and video seamlessly on a single cloud application.

And give employees the ability to join meetings from any device — mobile, tablet, desktop — and any operating system with MiCloud Connect, a cloud-hosted phone system that puts everyone in a meeting with a single click.

GET STARTED

No matter what your future work environment looks like on the other side of the pandemic, it's clear that technology will play a more important role in making digital proximity possible for your employees, partners and customers.

Mitel understands how important communication and collaboration tools will be in a remote-centric operation. Choosing your business communications now, with an eye on the future, will help you be ready to succeed in whatever your new normal will be. And it will provide the peace of mind, safety and business continuity in the unknowns that are to come.

Get the tools and tips you need to maintain productivity and business continuity in a remote working environment.

Contact us today to get your communication and collaboration tools by reaching out to your Mitel representative or call 844.YES.MITEL.

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