

The future of digital teamwork: 5 things your business needs to get ahead.



The latest team collaboration tools should offer searchability, a well-designed user experience, and easy integration with business applications.

Work teams that once huddled together in conference rooms are now meeting in virtual settings from multiple locations around the world. Employees are also sharing information through various messaging platforms and social media tools. The right unified communications (UC) systems can create real business value for organizations.

The latest team collaboration tools should offer searchability, a well-designed user experience, easy integration with business applications, and easy access to the most relevant information.¹

Organizations can gain the type of on-the-go connectivity they need through the use of secure cloud-based business collaboration solutions. Cisco Spark is a cloud-enabled UC service that provides the accessibility and security that teams need to collaborate via a single platform.

Here, we explore five ways Cisco Spark helps businesses maximize the benefits of digital teamwork:

¹ McKinsey & Co., "How Social Tools Can Reshape The Organization," May 2016.

Remain in control with end-to-end encryption and security.

Think about all of the data, files and sensitive communications that companies exchange throughout the workday. There's no question that digital technologies have helped unlock information barriers. But who holds keys to a company's cloud security? Typical business messaging platforms compromise security by directly accessing an organization's content. So what's at stake?

Consider this: 40% of organizations have online team meetings that involve financial data.²

In addition, one-third of organizations have meetings where employees share private customer or patient information, and approximately one in five organizations have web meetings that involve trade secrets.³

When it comes to security, companies can't take shortcuts. Cisco Spark offers several key security features, including:

- HTTPS to encrypt data in transit between devices and servers, which protects the identities of the senders and receivers of the encrypted content.
- Secure Real-Time Transport Protocol for all media, such as voice, video, and desktop share.
- Data that stays encrypted when it's in transit to cloud servers, when it's in use, and while it's in storage.
- Encryption of all content using dynamic keys from the key management service (KMS).



² Forrester Research, "Strategies and Solutions for Secure Webconferencing," December 2014.

³ Ibid.

Seek a solution that grows with you.

Why invest in technology if it's not easily adaptable to your growth or expansion plans?

For example, 66% of executives “have felt that limitations of their software programs have negatively affected their company’s growth.”⁴

Unfortunately, delivering digital collaboration capabilities using premises-based infrastructure can be very challenging because they lack the flexibility your company needs as it grows. Cisco Spark moves all of this complexity to the cloud, so businesses can quickly connect via phone, video, or messaging wherever they're located. Cisco Spark also includes customizable plans that allow companies to easily upgrade from plans that offer video calling to plans that also offer video conferencing.

Plans offer the ability to:

- Meet with up to 25 people.
- Instantly initiate meetings with a single click.
- Join a scheduled meeting from any device.
- Schedule meetings in Outlook by using @spark or @webex tags.

Video conferencing plans offer the ability to:

- Meet with up to 200 people.
- Join on any device, Cisco phones registered to Cisco Spark, Microsoft Skype for Business endpoints, third-party standards-based video endpoints, and more.
- Access to a personal room for each user with his or her own meeting URL.
- Schedule meetings within the platform (no integrated, hybrid system needed).
- Add @webex to an Outlook invitation to automatically populate the body of the invitation with information to join a WebEx-powered meeting or add both @spark and @webex to the location field.

A flexible, customizable collaboration solution frees IT resources to work on projects that are more innovative and growth focused.

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⁴TrackVia Inc., “Frustration: Enterprise Software and the Wave Ahead,” 2017.

Move quickly between communications tools and devices.

Today's on-demand economy keeps employees on their toes. They're constantly moving from one device or communication tool to another.

In fact, 49% of small and midsize businesses say they need to be available at all times to meet the demands of today's digital economy.⁵

Having access to multiple communications tools helps team members get better work-life balance, stay on top of project deadlines, and respond quickly to customer needs. How do companies increase accessibility to these collaboration tools?

Cisco Spark acts as a bridge between mobile and the office, freeing the workforce to:

- Receive calls that are identified as business related. This helps maximize that users are prepared for business calls if they're answering a phone outside the workplace.
- Switch quickly from one device to another during a meeting—advantageous for users who need to leave a meeting early, but want to remain connected. With Cisco Spark, users can turn a phone call into a virtual meeting with one tap, or move a video call from a conferencing room to their mobile phone and then to a new meeting room.



⁵ Digitalist Magazine, "Small and Midsize Businesses: Overcoming the Challenges of Digital Transformation," April 12, 2016.

Consolidate project files and communications in one space.

Anybody who has worked on a project knows how hard-to-find files and miscommunication between team members can impact project goals. Sometimes individual team members choose their own file-sharing and collaboration tools without checking in with IT or even each other.

For example, 90% of organizations collaborate using Dropbox, Google, Skype, LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social networking sites.⁶

This can create confusion and inefficiencies if key team members miss relevant conversations, messages or document updates. Features to consider in a collaboration suite include the ability to:

- Download the messaging app on a phone or tablet to remain connected while away from the office, including access to video calls and shared screens.
- Create an unlimited number of team work spaces as needed.
- Name work spaces based on specific projects, teams, or even a specific sales territory.
- Get creative with whiteboarding or annotate existing documents.

These features are particularly valuable for business units or groups within an organization that are working on specific projects. They also ease the pain of new-hire onboarding and training because organizations can keep all of their hiring documents in one easy-to-access place.

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⁶ Forbes, "How enterprises are capitalizing on the consumerization of IT," March 24, 2014.

Keep existing systems with third-party integrations and support.

If you've already invested in a number of tools and communication systems, you may want to know how you can bring everything together and get more value out of your investments.

Your question makes sense: Modern business projects or work tasks that required two or three systems in the past now can take place over five to 10 applications or more today.⁷

Cisco Spark integrations bring together the tools organizations need—including those they may use outside of Cisco Spark.

Other key features to consider include:

- Self-enabled integrations, bots, and APIs that can be customized to existing processes and work streams.
- The ability to integrate with Dropbox, Google Drive, Sameroom, and other apps.
- A system that's "open" and works with many developers for access to integrations and bots. (Bots can send automated notifications, respond to questions, and even be an in-app assistant.)



Learn more.

To learn more about how Cisco Spark brings together the digital tools organizations need in a secure, mobile environment, visit www.webex.com.

If you're interested in a free trial, visit <https://www.ciscopark.com/pricing/free-trial.html>.

⁷ ZDNet, "So Long, App Silos: and Welcome to the Digital Workplace Hub," December 20, 2016.